UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Iphigenia in Adaptation: Neoclassicism, Gender, and Culture on the Public Stages of

France and England, 1674-1779

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Theater Studies

by

Rachel Margaret Eller Wolfe

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ABSTRACT

Iphigenia in Adaptation: Neoclassicism, Gender, and Culture on the Public Stages of

France and England, 1674-1779

by

Rachel Margaret Eller Wolfe

This dissertation interrogates the role of adaptation in creating and

maintaining hegemonic cultural formations through a study of two tragedies by

Euripides as they were adapted by neoclassical playwrights during the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries in France and England. Adaptation studies, a relatively new

field of academic inquiry, has thus far largely focused on defining adaptation in

relation to more established studies of translation and intertextuality, and has

primarily concentrated on cross-medium adaptations such as novels adapted into film.

Taking these focuses as a point of departure, this study expands the field of adaptation

studies by looking at adaptation not across medium, but across time and culture,

through the examination of stage plays that were rewritten for public performance in

early modern Western Europe hundreds of years after their initial performances in

ancient Greece. In this context, with no change in medium, the uses of adaptation as a

tool for disguising cultural difference are revealed, refocusing the scholarly

discussion of adaptation from a search for definitions to an exploration of its implications for cultural studies.

Exploring the ways in which new ideas about religion, gender, and morality made unadapted Greek tragedies unsuitable for public presentation on early modern stages, the case studies examine the alterations made in nine different adaptations of the two Iphigenia plays that have come down to us from ancient Athens. Looking at adaptations of adaptations (Gluck's operatic adaptation of Racine's retelling of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, for example) alongside direct adaptations of Greek tragedies, this study argues that local cultural conventions may be threatened by even very recent versions of a story, and that adaptation is leveraged accordingly in order to neutralize such ideological threats. In the process, this exploration traces the ways in which neoclassicism was interpreted and reinterpreted as it shifted times, locations, and genres: from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth, France to England, and spoken tragedy to opera.

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A Note on Translations

This dissertation relies heavily on the analysis of texts, the majority of which were not written in English as their original language. Whenever I give a quote, the quote appears first in its original language with the English translation following in brackets. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.[1] Because textual analysis is my primary method of scholarly investigation, I have attempted to make these translations as literal as possible without being completely unintelligible to those who do not speak the original language. Since my analysis focuses almost exclusively on content rather than the use of poetic devices such as alliteration and rhyme, no attempt has been made in the translations to preserve poetic structure. As a result, many of the translated quotes may appear clunky, unwieldy, or counter-intuitive in English. However, I follow Lawrence Venuti in believing that it is of more value to expose readers to the alien grammatical structures of foreign texts than to shield them from it—the impression so created, while always displaced from the linguistic context of the original, de-naturalizes English by offering alternatives to its structural worldview.[2] Moreover, these close (if unpoetical) translations allow me to analyze the importance of such minutiae as the use of plurals in the original text without leaving my English readers behind. I must ask my readers to bear with my lack of artistry as we delve into an analysis of these foreign texts.

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[1]A handy rule of thumb: if the original language of a quote is French or ancient Greek, the translation is mine. If the original language is Italian or German, another translator will be credited in the footnote.

[2]See Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013).

Introduction

When it comes to neoclassical art, no symbol is more recognizable and (in)famous than the fig leaf.[1] Plastered across the male nudes of painting and sculpture created in imitation of ancient models in early modern Western Europe, the fig leaf decorously hides the male genitalia that had been displayed so confidently in ancient Greek and Roman art. If one's only access to depictions of ancient heroes were to come from neoclassical artworks, it would be easy to imagine that pasting fig leaves to the genitals was *de rigueur* in ancient fashion, so ubiquitous are these startlingly out-of-place detached pieces of fig tree. Yet in ancient depictions of these same heroes, there is hardly a fig leaf to be found on a tree, let alone covering a human body—and indeed, to utilize them in this fashion would never have occurred to ancient artists. The cultures of ancient Greece and Rome were phallocentric in the most literal (as well as the figurative) sense of the term; as Eva C. Keuls points out in *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens*, ancient art was marked by "a display of the phallus less as an organ of union or of mutual pleasure than as a kind of weapon: a spear or war club, and a scepter of sovereignty."[2] In Rome, as well, artistic depictions of the phallus were linked to the power and dominance believed to accrue to the penetrative partner in any sex act—the display of the penis was a display of mastery.[3] In either culture, to depict a mythical hero in the full glory of his

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[1]For a fuller look at the use of the fig leaf in Neoclassical art, see Hugh Aldersey-Williams, *Anatomies: A Cultural History of the Human Body* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013). 203-05.

[2]Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993). 2.

[3]See the extensive evidence for penetration as an act of dominance in ancient Rome presented in Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

male nudity was to associate him with maleness as symbol of both procreative prowess and military might, quite literally to paint him as a figure of domestic and political dominance. By the early modern period in Western Europe, however, the naked body had been refigured as a source of shame, an undifferentiated state in which a king appeared no better than a pauper and a hero could not be distinguished from an ordinary man.[4] Power had become associated with clothing, practices such as sumptuary laws[5] making power visible through dress codes, while the naked body— and especially the sexuality associated with naked genitals—came to read as base, animalistic, and shameful.[6] Neoclassical artists, then, bowing to the altered conventions of their own cultures, imitated ancient paintings and sculptures with one small difference, a difference that—as far as ancient cultural codes are concerned— causes their imitations to miss the whole point.

The example of the fig leaf succinctly summarizes the tensions and contradictions inherent in the neoclassical imitation of ancient classical art forms. Artists of early modern Western Europe, while attempting to imitate the greatness and

[4]On the fear of both nudity and death as equalizing forces in status-conscious early modern thought and art (especially in the case of England), see Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1997).

[5]Sumptuary laws, legal and/or ecclesiastical restrictions on who could purchase certain items, were especially used in Europe to dictate which social classes were allowed to own and wear what kinds of clothing, making a person's rank visible on the body. For an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon, see Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

[6]On the links between nudity, sexuality, and animal nature in early modern thought, see Brian Cummings, "Animal Passions and Human Sciences: Shame, Blushing and Nakedness in Early Modern Europe and the New World," in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 1999).

artistic mastery they so often touted as the central achievement of ancient Greek and

Roman societies,[7] enacted their imitations through a process of alteration that literally

and figuratively covered up that which was important to their ancient predecessors

out of deference to the altered conventions and cultural codes of their own societies.

In this dissertation, it is my aim to interrogate this process as it relates to the

neoclassical imitation of classical tragedy, a performing art form that parallels the

plastic arts which gave us the fig leaf as this most attention-grabbing example of

adaptive change. What are the fig leaves of the neoclassical theater? What are they

covering up? And what are the cultural forces (like the altered cultural coding of the

naked body) that drive such changes? These questions are the starting points of my

investigation. In it, I employ a strategy of comparative textual analysis to reveal the

differences between classical and neoclassical retellings of the same story, then

between neoclassical retellings of that story differentiated by time, genre, or country.

Contextualizing this comparative analysis within scholarship on larger cultural trends

(of which the plays I examine form a part), I use these differences to uncover the

inner workings and purposes of the process of adaptive change.

Adaptation, a relatively new subject of study within the humanities, has thus

far largely been examined as a process (and its associated artistic product) primarily

[7]To give just a few primary sources, see the paeans to the Greek achievement in such seventeenth- and
eighteenth-century works of literary criticism as Jules La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique* (Paris:
Antoine de Sommaville, 1639), e-book; Pierre Brumoy, *Le théâtre des Grecs* (Paris: Rollin pere,
Jean-Baptiste Coignard fils, et Rollin fils, 1730); John Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*,
2 vols., vol. I (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939); and Thomas Rymer, *The Tragedies of the
Last Age Consider'd and Examin'd by the Practice of the Ancients and by the Common Sense of All
Ages in a Letter to Fleetwood Shepheard, Esq* (London: Richard Tonson, 1678).

in need of definition. What is adaptation? What defines it? How is it different from other forms of artistic alteration, such as appropriation, translation, even editing? Discussions of adaptation have revolved around these questions, making the creation of adaptation studies—as a sub-field distinct from translation studies or intertextual studies—a primary goal of analysis. The advent of adaptation studies as a focused field of scholarly inquiry is commonly traced back only to the publication of George Bluestone's book, *Novels into Film*, in 1957;[8] prior to this, studies of adaptations certainly existed but were rarely acknowledged as requiring a special focus or theoretical lens that differed from those used for other types of literary and cultural output. Once adaptation studies did emerge as a distinct field, it was largely focused on analyzing the relative fidelity of any given adaptation to its source text until the advent of Robert Stam's poststructuralist critiques in the year 2000.[9] Since Stam, adaptation studies has centered around adaptation's kinship with, and differentiation from, the related fields of translation studies, intertextuality, and semiotics. Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* introduced the importance of understanding adaptation simultaneously as a process of change (usually instigated by attempting to retell a story in a new medium or a new language) and its associated product, arguing that the product so created functions as a kind of palimpsest, creating a doubled experience in the audience by recalling the old story even as it tells the new.[10] Additionally, her "On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and

[8]George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957).
[9]See Robert Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation," in *Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore, *Rutgers Depth of Field Series* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000).
[10]Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006).

'Success'-Biologically," co-authored with Gary R. Bortolotti, analogized literary adaptation to its counterpart in evolutionary biology, arguing that the 'success' of a story within the literary canon depends upon its ability to change in response to new cultural environments.[11] Julie Sanders in *Adaptation and Appropriation* defined the two terms of her title as differing forms of intertextuality, adaptation being the practice of retelling a story while appropriation borrows elements from previous stories to create new works that 'riff' on old ones.[12] Laurence Raw's recent collection, *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*, gathers scholars from both adaptation and translation studies to wrestle with the question of whether translation, a process which requires adaptive change, can truly be defined differently from adaptation at all.[13] In all of these cases, struggles to define adaptation in relation to related phenomena (as a type of palimpsest, a mechanism contributing to canon formation, a subspecies of intertextuality, or a process implicated in translation) have been the main focus of scholarly inquiry into adaptation.

My goal, however, is not to interrogate how adaptation is defined but rather how it is used. Other scholars have credibly asked and answered the question "What is adaptation?" and even "How does adaptation operate?"; I wish to ask the question "Why adapt?". Arising, as it did, out of literature and film studies,[14] adaptation

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[11]Gary R. Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon, "On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and 'Success'-Biologically," *NLH New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 38, no. 3 (2007).

[12]Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

[13]Laurence Raw, ed. *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation* (London and New York: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012).

[14]For a good scholarly genealogy of adaptation studies as it arose out of literature and film, see Sarah Cardwell, *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel* (Manchester and New York:

studies has tended to focus on the necessity of adaptation when transferring a story from one medium[15] to another: novels turned into films, popular films turned into video games, Broadway musicals turned into movie musicals, and so forth. Coming at the question from my own standpoint as a theater scholar, and looking, without a change in medium, at the adaptation of plays into other plays, my subject loses the ability to appeal to necessity. While some degree of adaptive change must be instituted when changing mediums in order to cater to the respective strengths and weaknesses of different storytelling forms,[16] no change is required in order to present the same story in the same form. Moreover, in the realm of theater, the adaptation of a theatrical *script* represents an especially superfluous form of change, as processes of alteration and interpretation are already built into the mechanics of staging a play.[17] Any theatrical practitioner will tell you that change is an unavoidable component of staging a theatrical text; choices must be made in production about casting, staging, costuming, scenery, gesture, the delivery of a line, and so on, all of which make any given production of a specific script different from every other production that ever has been—or ever will be—mounted.[18] There is considerable room within this

Manchester University Press; Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2002).

[15]Other scholars of adaptation, most notably Sanders, have used the term 'genre' to refer to different methods of storytelling (novels, films, plays, etc.), and refer to 'cross-genre adaptation' when discussing this focus of adaptation studies. However, coming from a background in theater studies, where the term 'genre' refers to sub-types of drama (tragedy, comedy, pastoral, etc.), I choose to retain the use of 'genre' common in my field and instead use the word 'medium' when referring to different storytelling formats. See Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*.

[16]On this phenomenon, see Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, and Christine Geraghty, *Now a Major Motion Picture: Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008).

[17]On staging as an altering/adaptive process, see Katja Krebs, *Translation and Adaptation in Theatre and Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014).

[18]These facts, in part, help to form the basis of Peggy Phelan's famous claims about the inherent

paradigm for adaptive change to happen from production to production without altering a single word of the given script, so to adapt the text itself is to assert a desire for radical change above and beyond the substantial amount that can be achieved through every other area of production. Unlike novels or films, for which nearly identical copies can be produced in practically infinite numbers, plays are already characterized by difference from copy to copy, such that to study adaptive change in the text is to study the form of change least susceptible to the plea of necessity. In such a context, the question "Why adapt?" becomes pressing, and some explanation beyond the demands of the medium is required to answer it.

In the cases that I examine here, involving the adaptation of classical scripts into neoclassical scripts, adaptation is rendered doubly superfluous by the necessity not only of staging, but also of translation. Written in ancient Greek, a language understood by only a small minority of the educated elite,[19] the tragedies on which this dissertation focuses were also subjected to the processes of change inherent in their translation into the various modern languages of Western Europe. Present currents of thought in translation theory—advocated by Umberto Eco,[20] Lawrence Venuti,[21] and Laurence Raw,[22] among others—hold that to alter a text from its

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ephemerality of performance; see Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

[19]On the relative rarity of knowledge of ancient Greek in Western Europe despite the preponderance of Latin speakers, see Robert Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 2004).

[20]Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[21]Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

[22]Raw, *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*.

original language is to radically decontextualize the text from the network of meanings and associations it had in its 'source' language (that is, the language of its original writing) and replace this network with a substitute drawn from the 'target' language (the language into which the translator is converting the text). Translations, therefore, always entail a process of adaptive change subject to the judgment of the translator akin to the processes of interpretation enacted by theater companies in the staging of a play. Adaptation as a process is thus always implied by the process of translation, and ascertaining the degree of change necessary to tip a translation over the line into the designation of 'adaptation' is tricky, since change is inevitable in both. Current scholarship holds that translation and adaptation exist together on a spectrum, through which lines of definitive difference are impossible to draw,[23] and indeed much terminology and many conceptual frameworks are shared by translation and adaptation studies.[24] However, despite these similarities—and despite the fact that the texts I study here have been subjected to processes of translation—I do use the terms 'translation' and 'adaptation' differently in this dissertation in reference to product as well as process. My ability to do so is largely due to the fact that the texts which I study do not fall into the nebulous, contested areas of this spectrum, where changes in vocabulary may lead to shifts in meaning that blur the lines between adaptation and translation. Rather, the plays examined here have been subjected to the kind of large-scale, obvious alteration that traditionally defines adaptation: major plot elements

[23]See Ibid.
[24]For example, the use of the terms 'source' and 'target' when referring to texts, languages, and cultures. I use these terms throughout this dissertation in reference to adaptations and their cultural contexts.

changed and rearranged, whole characters added or dropped, entire scenes thrown out and rewritten from scratch.[25] While I acknowledge that the process of adaptive change is inherent in the act of translating, the wholesale alteration of basic plot elements goes beyond the demands of the new linguistic context to create a wholly new text for which the designation of 'translation' becomes inadequate. I therefore use the term 'adaptation' to refer to new versions of old plays which have been both translated and altered with regards to dramatic structure, and the term 'translation' to refer to new versions of old plays that have been altered in language but not in dramatic structure. Because both are new versions of old plays that have undergone similar decontextualizing and recontextualizing processes, I acknowledge that the difference between them is not oppositional; it is a difference of degree and not kind. Yet, in the cases that I explore here, this difference of degree is of great significance: it is the difference between that which is necessary for intelligibility (translation) and that which is superfluous and optional (adaptation), and the question of "Why adapt?" becomes relevant only in reference to the optional.

As with any scholarly inquiry, my attempts to answer this question are colored by my own positionality and the lenses I choose to adopt in my analysis. As both the

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[25]Of course, changes of this nature are also integral to the writing and editing processes that give rise to a given text in the first place, making the line between 'adaptation' and 'version' also difficult to distinguish in some cases. Again, I am spared the difficulty of this distinction by the mere fact of studying non-liminal cases—because the various adaptations under consideration here are clearly separated by time and place of writing to the extent that there is no question of treating them as 'edits,' I can acknowledge the tendency of these two literary forms to slide into one another at certain points on the spectrum while exhibiting clear differentiation at the outer limits where I am working. For a scholarly exploration that actively wrestles with the problem of defining adaptation as distinct from editing processes, see Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*.

daughter of a cultural anthropologist and a scholar with a background in gender

studies (as the field was reshaped after the 'cultural turn' in the Humanities[26]), I tend

to seek explanations for artistic phenomena within larger cultural structures and

dominant social norms. Rather than looking to the individual psychologies of

playwrights or even characters, my analysis tends to seek commonalities across texts

of a given period, to attempt to uncover the commonly accepted assumptions upon

which many works are built. My analysis appeals to, and consequently critiques,

hegemonic structures for answers to the question of "Why adapt?", and in the process

examines the role of artistic representation—and adaptation specifically—in both

creating and reinforcing these structures. Lawrence Venuti, working in translation

studies, has famously critiqued "fluid" translation (translation that aims at sounding

like it was written in the target language originally) for insulating the reader from the

fact of cultural difference and hence reinforcing ideas of one's own culture as natural,

dominant, or hegemonic;[27] in the chapters that follow, I argue that adaptation does

much the same thing, reinforcing dominant cultural constructions by shielding the

audience from any truly foreign elements that might challenge them. Julie Sanders, in

adaptation studies, has linked the process of adaptation to the process of canon

formation, arguing that retelling a story entrenches it more firmly in the canon;[28] my

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[26]The phrase 'cultural turn' refers to an epistemological shift in the humanities and social sciences away
from positivism and toward a focus on the cultural construction of meaning. On the phenomenon
of the cultural turn, see Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern,
1983-1998* (London and New York: Verso, 1998); and Victoria E. Bonnell, Lynn Hunt, and
Richard Biernacki, "Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and
Culture" (Berkeley, CA, 1999).
[27]Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice*.
[28]Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*.

look at canonized adaptations here adds that the process of bringing a story in line with newer hegemonic cultural codes not only entrenches it in the canon, but allows the canon itself to appear 'universal'[29] by making old stories seem to agree with new belief systems. John Guillory, studying the process of canon formation, has asserted that the appearance of universality or agreement between authors in the Western literary canon is a strategy which allows hegemony to disguise itself as truth;[30] in the case studies below, I demonstrate that adaptation is one of the mechanisms by which this disguise is achieved. In every case, the links between adaptation and hegemonic cultural constructions are my way in as I attempt to answer the question "Why adapt?".

Because I, as a feminist scholar, am especially interested in examining the specific hegemonic constructions related to gender, many of my analyses in the chapters below focus on representations of gender and gender roles as one of the hegemonic constructions that adaptation reinforces. Gender presents an especially fascinating case with regard to adaptive change because—for all of the societies examined in this dissertation and many others—there is a heavy cultural investment

[29]The term 'universal' is used (especially in postcolonial scholarship) to refer to systems of ideas which are believed—almost always incorrectly—to apply to all human groups regardless of historical period, location, or culture. In literature, especially, it refers to works that are said to speak to basic human needs or concerns common to people across time and space, and has traditionally been used as a basic criterion for determining a work's inclusion in, or exclusion from, the Western literary canon. On this aspect of canon formation, see John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993). On universalism as a facet of Western thought processes historically, see Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2006).

[30]John Guillory, "The Ideology of Canon-Formation: T.S. Eliot and Cleanth Brooks," in *Canons*, ed. Robert Von Hallberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

in representing gender roles as arising 'naturally' from differing characteristics inherent to males and females.[31] Present scholarship on gender maintains a distinction, arising from sociological studies done in the 1960s and '70s, between biological sex (characteristics relating directly to the body) and gender (behavioral characteristics subject to cultural coding as feminine or masculine).[32] Gender, in this schema, is virtually always defined as consisting of socially constructed, learned behaviors; while the roots of sex in either social construction or biological science remain a hotly contested topic in scholarship on gender, with Judith Butler arguing for social construction in *Bodies that Matter*[33] while some materialist scholars—notably including Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo[34]—assert that acknowledgment of the physical body as a biological entity is necessary to a complete and engaged view of the sex/gender system. However, regardless of the position one takes on sex, it has become widely accepted in twentieth- and twenty-first century thought to view at least most, if not all, of the sex/gender system as based in social construction rather than biological reality. This view, however, is very new to the intellectual writing of the West, which has traditionally taken the standpoint that gendered characteristics are the organic and unalterable result of traits granted to males and females respectively by natural or divine forces beyond human control. This certainly was the position

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[31] On the social operation of gender, and the ways in which it disguises itself as 'natural' in the Western tradition, see Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 125-51.

[32] For a particularly influential work encapsulating much of the research on this distinction, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[33] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[34] Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, *In-Between Bodies: Sexual Difference, Race, and Sexuality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

taken by surviving philosophical writings from ancient Greece[35] and also by the

societies of seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe studied here,[36] whose

philosophical writings expended a great deal of effort to ensure that proper gender

representation could be assured in various forms of art, literature, and scholarship.[37]

The wish to represent gender as 'natural' rather than culturally constructed dictates, at

its core, that gendered characteristics be invariant, the same across time, space, and

culture. As a result, in cases where the source culture's representation of gender

clashes with the target culture's ideas about this same subject, adaptive alteration is

virtually always employed to bring representations of gender into line with the norms

of the target culture.[38] By focusing on gender as a core component of my analysis,

then, I am able to identify thorough and consistent uses of adaptation as a tool for the

construction and reinforcement of hegemonic cultural formations.

The fact that I take a collective-focused cultural approach to the study of

adaptation is grounded, in part, in the tendency of my topic to push back against the

myth of single authorship. Cultural studies, adaptation studies, theater studies, and, to

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[35]See especially Xenophon Οἰκονομικός (*Oeconomicus*), found in Xenophon, *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium, Apology*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. E. C. Marchant and O. J. Todd, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[36]See the explorations of this in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, eds., *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Anne E. Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); and Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[37]To give just two examples of primary source dramatic criticism which make the 'proper' representation of gender a central concern, see La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique.* (which lists characteristics proper to males and females among its suggestions for believable characterization) and Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis* (who asserts numerous times that female characters must exhibit modesty or be laughed at as unbelievable).

[38]See my explorations of this phenomenon in the chapters below.

some degree, gender studies all lend themselves to viewing texts in terms of collective authorship, and therefore to seeking cultural rather than biographical explanations for textual choices. The 'myth of single authorship,' commonly traced back to the Romantic movement in European literature, holds that artistic and literary output is attributable to the genius of a single individual, the credited author or artist.[39] While this myth has hung on tenaciously in popular belief, in scholarship it was famously destabilized by the publication of Roland Barthes' "*La mort de l'auteur*" ("The Death of the Author"), which argued that the author and her/his biography were irrelevant to literary analysis,[40] and further torn down by Michel Foucault's *L'archéologie du savoir* (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*), which asserted that language and its associated discursive formations are a collective inheritance radically disassociated from individual genius.[41] In addition to this cultural studies approach, which destabilizes single authorship in abstract ways, the particular fields in which I work also allow me to destabilize that same concept in concrete ways. Adaptation, by its very nature, requires one to acknowledge the use of ideas from the source text in the creation of the target text in order to even categorize a given work as an 'adaptation'; to analyze an adaptation, then, is always to admit that the work of at least two authors contributed to the text at hand. The fact that the texts at hand in this study are *theatrical* texts is itself highly relevant; theater is a collective art form, and the creation of a new play is virtually always influenced by the theater company

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[39]For a more in-depth exploration—and refutation—of this myth, see Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[40]Roland Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur," in *L'obvie et l'obtus* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).

[41]Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

that gives it its first performance. Katja Krebs, also working in adaptation and theater, has suggested that theater as a form already troubles single authorship even in the case of an unadapted play,[42] and I am inclined to follow her in this. To give just one concrete example from one of my own case studies, an anecdote from a contemporary memoir indicates that Claude-Guymond De La Touche, the credited playwright of the French neoclassical drama *Iphigénie en Tauride*, was compelled by the actors to scrap and completely rewrite the fifth act of his play only hours before the first performance, adjusting it to their demands and specifications.[43] To treat the resulting printed script as the exclusive brainchild of De La Touche, then, is to ignore the contributions of the actors whose suggestions had a documented impact on at least the fifth act and probably more. Moreover, audience reception,[44] both real and imagined, has a strong impact on the writing of playscripts meant for performance in the consumer-driven market of the commercial theater. To give an example of this: after the first few performances of their opera *Iphigénie en Aulide*, public outcry against the ending caused Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck (composer) and François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet (librettist) to rewrite it to conform to public taste; and it is this altered ending that appeared in the first printed versions of the libretto, as

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[42]Krebs, *Translation and Adaptation in Theatre and Film.*

[43]Clairon et al., *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon, de Lekain, de Préville, de Dazincourt, de Molé, de Garrick, de Goldoni* (Paris: F. Didot, 1857). 335.

[44]This term refers to the difficult-to-document phenomenon of audience reactions to a work, most often accessed through written critiques (either public reviews or private memoires) or the relative commercial and financial success of a given play (number of performances, money made at the box office, etc.). On audience reception as a slippery thing to pin down, but also as essential to our understanding of theater as a public art form, see Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), and also Dennis Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

well as in all subsequent performances of the opera.[45] Even in cases where the reactions of actual audiences do not have such a demonstrable impact on a play, any given playwright, composer, or librettist carries an imaginary audience around in her/his head—predictions about what will and will not fly among audiences (and also censors) in a given place and time shape the writing process of any text intended for commercial performance, as do predictions about what will intrigue and delight, making cultural literacy itself an agent in the collective shaping of a text. Finally, a look at the critiques of credited authorship drawn from feminist studies should caution us not to trust too completely in the names of credited authors; Gerda Lerner in her *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy* explores myriad documented cases from my period of interest in which women who participated in intellectual and artistic circles either wrote under the names of their husbands or co-authored works with male relatives from which their own names were omitted in publication, as works written under a male name were more likely to be taken seriously.[46] While no such phenomenon is specifically documented in the case studies I examine here, similar uncredited inputs from women can be reasonably assumed, especially in the case of Gluck, whose wife Maria Anna von Gluck was an accomplished musician in her own right and who, by all accounts, accompanied him to every rehearsal of his operas and intervened to some degree in

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[45]For the circumstances surrounding this revision and a comparison of the two versions of the opera, see Julian Rushton, "'Royal Agamemnon': The Two Versions of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[46]See Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). 224-26.

the creative process.[47] Likewise, we have much of the preserved correspondence of

Abel Boyer, the adaptor of one of the English dramas examined in chapter three

below, who routinely used literary and artistic discussion as a wooing strategy in his

love affairs with a variety of women, at least one of whom is known to have been

professionally involved in theater: Susannah Centlivre, a prominent English actress

and dramatist.[48] Even in cases where there is no similar documentation, it is more

probable to assume that the credited playwrights examined here discussed their work

with family members and friends, both male and female, and took their suggestions

into account, than it is to discard our knowledge of the common workings of the

creative process and assert that these authors created their artworks totally unassisted.

For all these reasons, I look largely to the collective and rarely to author biography in

offering explanations for adaptive changes in the chapters that follow. While I do not

overtly contest the credited authorship of any text, and do grant that the credited

author is an important figure for the final editorial power (s)he wields over what to

include or not include in the printed version of a script, I also wish to give credit to

the contributions of the various, anonymous uncredited others whose ideas helped

give form to the text at hand. Following Bruno Latour, the scholar whose work on

actor-network theory has changed the way we view cultural transmission in the social

sciences, I use the term 'mediators' to refer to those agents whose influence—if not

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[47]See the collected contemporary evidence for this in Patricia Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[48]See the evidence for this identification and Boyer's correspondence with Centlivre in Rex A. Barrell and Abel Boyer, *The Correspondence of Abel Boyer, Huguenot Refugee, 1667-1729* (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

their names—is present in the plays I study.[49]

For all of these reasons, it is appropriate to treat the adaptations of this study as collective texts, influenced by many contributors both direct and indirect. In keeping with this treatment, I tend not to grant special significance to the maleness of the authors I study despite my focus on gender. Although the credited authors of every play under consideration here are male, numerous uncredited female mediators can be assumed to have shaped the creation of these texts; and indeed, the close reader of the following chapters will find the names of many women whose bearing and influence are known to have directly affected—at a minimum—their production histories (actresses Marie Champmeslé, Mlle Clairon, Mrs. Knight, and Madeleine-Sophie Arnould, and patrons Mme de Graffigny, the Princesse de Conti, Henrietta Maria, and Marie Antoinette among them). Moreover, the cultural ideas about the naturalness of gender and its specific manifestations—which form my focus in the case studies that follow—are not the specific prerogative of one gender or the other; to grant automatic significance to the gender of the author is often to assume that female authors always write to subvert or undermine the gender system while male authors seek to uphold it, a dangerous logical fallacy which denies the pervasiveness and real-world power of gender as an ideological system upheld by both men and women.[50] Ideas about gender are both abstract and collective, and my collective

[49]See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[50]See the critiques of assuming feminist authorship in women made by Susan Bennett, "The Making of Theatre History," in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, ed. Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), and Diane Purkiss, "Introduction," in *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women*, ed. Diane Purkiss, *Renaissance*

approach to authorship allows me to treat them as such.

By taking this broad-scale and unremittingly collective view of adaptive change, focusing on dominant cultural formations, I am obviously ignoring certain important theoretical threads within the various scholarly fields with which my research intersects. The field of gender studies has been greatly shaped and affected by psychoanalytic theory, especially Lacan's notion of the phallus,[51] which feminist scholars have contested in many foundational and important studies, Luce Irigaray's *Speculum de l'autre femme* (*Speculum of the Other Woman*),[52] Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex,"[53] and the myriad writings of Julia Kristeva[54] among them. Theater studies, and especially the study of my own case topic, European tragedy, has consistently drawn on philosophical traditions to explore the meaning and power of that art form, questioning the ways in which tragedy articulates the place of the human within the universal order, pits the

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Dramatists (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1998). Additionally, my readers will have noted by this point that I adopt the terminology of a two-gender system in my writing here; this should not imply that I think there are only two genders, or that the gender binary is stable. However, all of the societies that contributed case studies to my work constructed gender as a binary system of female/woman and male/man, and because my focus is on these constructions rather than the lived experience of any real individuals who may have fallen outside the gender binary, my use of this terminology is meant to reflect the representations constructed by my subjects.

[51]Lacan defines the phallus as different from the penis in that it is a gendered representation of power—males have power while females lack (and attempt to obtain) it. Notions of female lack and of the phallus as power have been both adopted and contested by scholars of gender, who frequently use this psychoanalytic setup to critique gendered ideological systems. See Jacques Lacan and Jacques-Alain Miller, *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychalyse: 1964-1965* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973).

[52]Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1974).

[53]Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Reviews Press, 1975).

[54]Collected in volumes like Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), and Julia Kristeva, *The Portable Kristeva* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

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individual will against social rules, or reveals the inner workings of the soul.[55] Studies

of adaptation, when not drawing upon a change of medium for explanations of

adaptive change, often turn next to an author biography approach, making the

personal beliefs and predilections of the latest adaptor a key element of their

analyses—not wholly unwarranted, since the final mediator to touch a text does have

some considerable influence and power.[56] None of these important scholarly

traditions appear in my own study, not because I devalue their utility, but because a

more exclusive look at the cultural implications and uses of adaptation allows me to

add different and supplemental insights to these fields. All of these scholarly and

discursive traditions focus, in one way or another, on the conflict between the

individual will and collective social norms and rules: psychoanalysis examines the

effect of collective fictions on the individual, the philosophy of tragedy sets up the

tragic as fundamentally about the struggle between the hero and her/his society, and

the author biography approach to adaptive change makes one individual's reaction to

a preceding artistic tradition the basis of comparative analysis. While this kind of

focus on the conflict of individual vs. collective provides an important and necessary

piece of the big-picture exploration of representation and culture, my own interest

centers more narrowly on deconstructing these collective social norms themselves—

[55]For an excellent survey of these questions as they have arisen in the most influential treatises on
    tragedy (by Aristotle, Hegel, Nietzsche, and others), see Jennifer Wallace, *The Cambridge
    Introduction to Tragedy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[56]This is the approach taken by, for example, Margaret Hamilton in "Hayloft's *Thyestes*: Adapting
    Seneca for the Australian Stage and Context," *Theatre Journal* 66, no. 4 (2014), and Tanfer Emin
    Tunç in "Adapting, Translating and Transforming: Cultural Mediation in Ping Chong's *Deshima*
    and *Pojagi*," in Raw, *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*.

on interrogating the nature of their creation, transmission, and social function. By engaging in this kind of collective-only analyses, my work contributes to a fuller understanding of one side of this conflict, one which will, I hope, help to illuminate the discussion for those whose focus is the conflict itself.

Alongside contributing to an understanding of collective cultural constructions, this work on adaptation contributes to the larger debate within the humanities over the relative importance of sameness and difference, continuity and rupture, to scholarship on art and culture. Prior to the publication of Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, historical inquiry in the humanities was largely focused on identifying unifying trends and inscribing history into a teleological, cause-and-effect model predicated on an essential continuity of history.[57] After Foucault's rejection of teleological explanation—and his explorations of rupture, discontinuity, and change in his own historical scholarship—scholarship in the humanities has, by and large, shifted its focus to instances of difference, rebellion, and upheaval, rejecting models based on universal principles or a sense of the human experience as unified and coherent.[58] While this new model has been overwhelmingly embraced by current scholarship, especially in fields related to identity studies, it has also come under fire from a few scholars who argue that a focus on difference and rupture—to the exclusion of sameness and continuity—leads to errors of oversight similar to

[57]See Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*.
[58]For explorations of the state of scholarship after Foucault's innovations, see the collected essays in Jonathan Arac, ed. *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

those spawned by the universalist model and critiqued by Foucault in the first place.[59]

Susan Bennett, for example, writing on the process of canon formation with regards

to women playwrights in theater history, notes that the post-Foucaultian

preoccupation with rupture has caused theater histories to create a narrative that

associates women's writing with gender critique while largely omitting and

overlooking female playwrights who were not radical in their gender politics,

misrepresenting women's place in theater history in a way that is similar but inverted

from traditional canons which excluded women playwrights from inclusion at all.[60]

An exclusive focus on either sameness/continuity or on difference/rupture will

present us with a skewed picture of history. Functionally, the pendulum, having

swung too far in one direction previously, has now swung too far in the other. I am

inclined to agree with this critique, because in the same way that ignoring difference

made us blind to many important realities, ignoring similarity where it exists can do

the same, not only in the realm of history but in cultural and gender studies more

broadly, as well.[61] Adaptation as a subject of study offers us a way to analyze

effectively while thinking through difference and similarity simultaneously, because

adaptation is itself defined by a combination of similarity and difference: a work

without similarity to a predecessor is simply a new work, while one without

[59]See, for example, Richard Rorty, "Foucault and Epistemology," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford and New York: B. Blackwell, 1986), and Bennett, "The Making of Theatre History." (explored below).

[60]Ibid.

[61]Leila J. Rupp, for example, writing in gender and sexuality studies, asserts that similarity must be taken into account alongside difference in her trans-historical study *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women*. See Leila J. Rupp, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). 6-8.

differences from its predecessor is merely a copy. Adaptation maintains a balance between the two, and comparative analysis of an adaptation with its source text requires that we look at both similarity and difference in both the texts and their surrounding cultural contexts. As such, by examining adaptation within this dual context, I hope to offer a model for scholarship that will allow others in the humanities with other interests and areas of research to engage with similarity and difference together.

The case study that I have chosen to utilize in investigating these various aspects of adaptation and culture, Western Europe's neoclassical theater traditions, provides a fruitful ground for investigating the utility of adaptation. The neoclassical movement in art, one aspect of the renewed fascination with ancient Greece and Rome in Western Europe from the Renaissance onward,[62] relied in all its various forms on a celebration of these ancient cultures and the assertion that their artistic output was superior—and hence, a worthy model for modern artists to imitate.[63] Yet underneath the rhetoric of ancient superiority, we find a contrasting and persistent adaptational trend which 'improves' on these 'superior' models through the alteration of elements deemed unsuitable for the modern era.[64] In the neoclassical theater, this

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[62]For an overview of this renewed fascination with the ancient world, see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*.

[63]On this phenomenon in several of its European incarnations, see Richard A. Carlton, "Florentine Humanism and the Birth of Opera: The Roots of Operatic 'Conventions'," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 31, no. 1 (2000); David Lee Rubin and John D. Lyons, eds., *Continuum: Problems in French Literature from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment* (New York: AMS Press, 1989); and Bruce R. Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[64]The idea that modern adaptors 'improved' on ancient models was ubiquitous in the dramatic theory of the time; for a full study on this, see Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660-1710* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

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trend extended to the rewriting of existing ancient theatrical scripts well beyond the

demands of translation; at the same time that the genre of tragedy, drawn from the

ancient theater, was being exalted in prestige above all other theatrical forms, ancient

tragic texts were being rewritten, papered over with the linguistic equivalents of fig

leaves. In the public theater,[65] this adaptational trend was so strong that, between the

year 1585 and the turn of the nineteenth century, all surviving records from the public

theaters of Western Europe show hundreds—if not thousands—of adaptations of

ancient tragedies being performed, while only one production of an actual ancient

script is recorded: the 1585 *Oedipus* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza.[66] For two

hundred years, Greek revival movements were the concern of the most prestigious

and lauded theaters of Europe, yet for those same two hundred years Greek tragedies

were performed almost exclusively in adaptation. These simultaneous and

contradictory aspects of the neoclassical theater in Europe evince an extreme amount

of social pressure toward adaptive change, even in the circumstances (the turning of a

theatrical tragedy into a theatrical tragedy) that would seem to warrant it the least. In

the case of theatrical neoclassicism, where adaptation seems so unnecessary yet

dominates so thoroughly, "Why adapt?" is a relevant question. Why were the original

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[65] This trend did not extend to private performances in scholastic and aristocratic contexts; as we will
see below, the degree to which ancient texts were adapted bore a close relation to the degree of
education enjoyed by its target audience. See "Chapter One: Iphigenia in Transit" below.

[66] On this production as a notable lone case, see Peter Burian, "Tragedy Adapted for Stages and
Screens: The Renaissance to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.
E. Easterling, *Cambridge Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1997), and Fiona Macintosh, "Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century
Productions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling, *Cambridge
Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

texts—even as altered by translation—tacitly deemed so unsuitable for public performance? What did adaptation offer to early modern Western Europe that processes of necessary change (translation and theatrical production) could not?

The answers to these questions lie in the fact of cultural change between ancient Athens and early modern Western Europe and the challenge that this fact presents to Europe's traditional divide between cultural insider and cultural outsider. The ancient Greeks, widely adopted as cultural insiders by many of the nations of Western Europe, were nevertheless separated from their cultural descendants by vast quantities of time and space, and the ideologies of these different societies gelled imperfectly. A wide look at the cultures of both ancient Athens and the Western European nations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries does indeed reveal many similarities. Both societies subscribed to the concept of private property and distributed it unequally according to a system of rank stratification running from an aristocratic male citizen elite at the top to a system of legally institutionalized slavery at the bottom. Both societies had a two-gender system built upon the assumption that males and females were 'naturally' imbued with different personal characteristics which made them suitable for different social roles and tasks. Both societies have been characterized by the particular mixture of ethnocentrism and xenophobia that leads to intolerance of foreign elements within the home country and colonial ambitions abroad.[67] For both societies, religion and the relation between humans and

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[67]For an exploration of this mixture in both the ancient Greeks and their cultural descendants, see Merryl Wyn Davies, Ashis Nandy, and Ziauddin Sardar, *Barbaric Others: A Manifesto on Western Racism* (London and Boulder, CO: Pluto Press, 1993).

the divine was a major preoccupation of thought, speech, and art, coloring a great

deal of the cultural output from both. Yet major differences are also in evidence. The

political difference between the ancient Athenian democracy and the monarchies of

early modern Western Europe has drawn much commentary and exploration,[68] as has

the religious difference between the polytheistic paganism of ancient Greece and the

legally enshrined monotheistic Christianity of Western Europe.[69] These are the

differences which drew open commentary among neoclassical theorists,[70] but they

were accompanied by subtler, less openly acknowledged differences, as well. The

differences which drew the least public commentary also attracted the most fig

leaves—they were the differences which could not be acknowledged openly lest they

destabilize modern assumptions about that which is universal to the human race

across time and space. It is these differences, and the adaptive changes they spawned,

which draw my attention in the chapters that follow, for it is these that truly challenge

the designation of the ancient Greeks as cultural insider.

Since I obviously cannot analyze such trends and changes in every

neoclassical adaptation ever written, I have chosen to focus my investigation in this

dissertation on neoclassical adaptations of the two surviving Iphigenia plays written

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[68]See especially the explorations in John D. Lyons, "The Barbarous Ancients: French Classical Poetics and the Attack on Ancient Tragedy," *MLN* 110, no. 5 (1995), and Edith Hall, "Mob, Cabal, or Utopian Commune? The Political Contestation of the Ancient Chorus, 1789-1917," in *Choruses, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Joshua Billings, Felix Budelmann, and Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[69]On the significance of this religious difference and its effect on the preservation, transmission, and reception of Greek tragedy, see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*.

[70]See, for example, Brumoy, *Le théâtre des Grecs*. on the necessity of bowing to altered political realities in adapting classical scripts, and Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, on ancient paganism leading to dramatic errors based on 'superstition.'

by the ancient tragedian Euripides. The Iphigenia plays warrant attention among their many fellow adaptations on account of their extraordinary popularity at the height of the adaptive trend in neoclassical theater, which lasted roughly from the mid-seventeenth century to the turn of the nineteenth. Not only was Euripides, during this time, the most popular of the three surviving ancient Greek tragedians,[71] but Iphigenia, on the basis of sheer number of translations and adaptations, appears to have been—if not *the* most—at least one of the most popular Greek figures.[72] Her popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the tendency toward adaptation of ancient tragedy was at its most extreme, is made especially fascinating by the fact that it waned at basically the same time that the adaptive tradition did—as the nineteenth century dawned and Greek tragedies came to be performed in translation, Iphigenia's stage presence diminished sharply and other tragic heroes (Oedipus, Medea, and Antigone) took center stage.[73] These trends indicate that something about Iphigenia spoke to the sensibilities of the age that so strongly favored adaptation, and a study of her adaptations may be able to tap into the *Zeitgeist* of the seventeenth and eighteenth century neoclassical theater in a way that figures who were more popular before or after could not.

Even within this narrowed focus on Iphigenia, I cannot treat every Iphigenia

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[71]For a full picture of the evidence of Euripides's extraordinary popularity from the fourth century B.C.E. to the nineteenth century C.E., see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*.

[72]For a complete list of known translations and adaptations of Iphigenia plays from this time, see Jean-Michel Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985). For an exploration of Iphigenia's popularity relative to other Greek figures, see Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[73]See Macintosh, "Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Productions."

adaptation written during these two centuries, of which there are over a hundred

known.[74] Out of the many, I have chosen to focus on those that were especially

popular or influential and on the adaptations that those key adaptations spawned. My

first set of case studies, therefore, drawn from the French birthplace of the

neoclassical adaptive tradition in theater, are all plays which attracted their own

imitators in turn. Subsequent chapters treat the ways that French neoclassicism was

itself adapted as it crossed genres and national boundaries, and the case studies of

these chapters are all adaptations of the French texts studied in the first round. The

specific Iphigenia adaptations I have chosen to study, then, allow me to examine both

the adaptation of classicism into neoclassicism and the adaptive changes to which

neoclassicism itself was subjected. While this focus on adaptive chains allows me to

examine the roles of popularity and canonization in the theater and the adaptive

tradition, it does, of course, necessitate that I leave out a number of other important

Iphigenia adaptations which do not exhibit intertextual relationships to one another.

Luckily, more exhaustive studies of Iphigenia's adaptations during this period have

already been undertaken by other scholars,[75] so readers whose primary interest is in

Iphigenia may be referred to their writings in addition to mine. Additionally, it is

[74]See the full list in Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*.
[75]See, for example, Reinhard Strohm, "Iphigenia's Curious *Ménage à Trois* in Myth, Drama, and Opera," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012); Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides' Black Sea Tragedy*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Susanna Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers: Modes of Greek Influence in Seventeenth-Century French Drama*, Medieval and Early Modern French Studies (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013); Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*; and Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*.

important to note that, while Euripides's plays surface in every chapter of this dissertation, I never treat them alone; this lack of individual analysis is due to the demands of my subject. Because my primary interest is in adaptation and adaptive change, I have no grounds for solo analysis of any one play—even one as important as the Greek source text on which all subsequent case studies are based—as neither change nor continuity can be observed without comparison, and an analysis of the meaning or artistic goals of any individual work lie outside the scope of my project.

It must be acknowledged that this subject, treating as it does one of the core influences in European art and culture,[76] leaves me open to the charge of continuing Eurocentrism in art and scholarship. Focus on the West and the Western canon has come under fire in recent years,[77] especially in the fields of gender and postcolonial studies, and we have seen a much-needed and long overdue expansion of English-language scholarship into the cultures, histories, artistic styles, and theaters of the global South. Notable critiques of Eurocentrism have been leveled by such important scholars as Edward Said in his groundbreaking *Orientalism*,[78] Gayatri Spivak in her foundational postcolonial feminist article "Can the Subaltern Speak?",[79] Samir Amin

[76]Traditionally, Europe's art and culture have been depicted as stemming from two major acknowledged sources of influence: the Hebraic influence of Christianity and its associated Biblical texts, and the Hellenic influence of ancient Greece and Rome. For a study of these two influences on European culture as a whole, see Vassilis Lambropoulos, *The Rise of Eurocentrism: Anatomy of Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[77]Specifically, in the latter half of the twentieth century and all of the twenty-first thus far. See, for example, the critiques of Eurocentric textocentrism in Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research," *TDR* 46, no. 2 (2002), and Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), as well as the critique of Western canon-formation through power and the myth of universalism in Guillory, *Cultural Capital*.

[78]Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[79]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of*

(who coined the term) in his aptly titled *Eurocentrism*,[80] Homi K. Bhabha in his

influential theoretical work *The Location of Culture*,[81] and many, many others. These

important thinkers have influenced a generation of scholars to look beyond the

boundaries of Europe to the rich and neglected histories of the world as a whole,

arming them with the conceptual tools necessary to dismantle the hegemonic

constructions that posited European history and culture as both unitary and universal.

Taking a view of Eurocentrism from without, and using a positionality of exclusion to

critique the center from the margins, postcolonial studies has effectively torn down

the illusion of European universalism through the insistent presentation of alternatives

that lie outside the supposedly universal principles posited by Western theory.

However, it is my opinion that if we use the tools and insights gained by the critique

of Eurocentrism only to study subjects outside of Europe, we risk leaving the

scholarly picture of Europe in the monolithic, unified, and supremacist depiction

created by that very Eurocentric trend.[82] In her exploration of gender, *Am I a Woman?*

A Sceptic's Guide to Gender, Cynthia Eller asserted from a gender studies perspective

that it is possible to critique hegemonic positions not only from without, criticizing

the center from the margins, but from within, destabilizing the center from the center

        Culture, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
[80]Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989).
[81]Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).
[82]Older studies on European art and culture can often reinforce this picture without necessarily openly
        discussing domination. To give just one example, Martin Turnell's *The Classical Moment*, a study
        on French neoclassicism very like mine written in 1948, makes liberal use of terms like 'greatness'
        and 'superiority' in its analysis, creating a hierarchy of quality articulated in absolute terms (thus
        reinforcing ideas of both truth and universalism in European art). See Martin Turnell, *The
        Classical Moment: Studies of Corneille, Moliere and Racine* (New York: New Directions, 1948).

by revealing the internal contradictions and inconsistencies upon which it is built.[83] I wish to do the same with Eurocentrism here. By uncovering the cracks and logical inconsistencies in Europe's classical tradition, one of the foundational influences in Western art, and by revealing the substantial adaptive work required in order to maintain its hegemonic cultural fictions, my work critiques the center from the center. By studying the adaptive work employed not only in the transition of classicism into neoclassicism, but also of neoclassical texts into other neoclassical texts separated by national or generic boundaries internal to early modern Western Europe, my work helps to dismantle the image of Europe as unified and monolithic encouraged by viewing the world in terms of 'the West' and 'the Rest.' Interrogating the mechanisms used to create the illusion of universality within those aspects of the (upper-class, textocentric) theatrical canon that are most valued by its creators (tragedy as the noblest form of theatrical drama and the script as the most literary—and therefore most respectable—element of a play), my work uncovers the magician's tricks necessary to maintain the core elements of the Western canon and, by extension, Eurocentrism itself. Employing theoretical tools drawn from gender and postcolonial studies in addition to those I have drawn from scholarship on adaptation, translation, and theater, I use my highly European subject to reveal the ways in which European universalism, nationalism, and ethnocentrism were created and maintained by erasing inconvenient elements from within.

Additionally, as with any historical subject, we must admit the impossibility of

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[83]Cynthia Eller, *Am I a Woman?: A Skeptic's Guide to Gender* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).

complete accuracy in the depiction of the time periods and ideas under consideration.

Historiography teaches us that the past is irrevocably vanished, and that any

reconstruction we make from historical documents, archaeological records, and the

like will invariably be partial and skewed by the forces which help determine what

does and does not survive over centuries.[84] Even among those texts that do survive—

automatically skewed toward the views of a literate elite who both wrote texts and

were considered important enough to have their texts preserved—it would be

impossible for a single study to represent every contested thread of thought or social

debate contained within them, and our representations are thus partial on account of

several processes of selective elimination. This partial picture is then further distorted

by our own inability to ever truly step outside our own worldview; Thomas

Postlewait, among others, asserts that visions of the past are always filtered through

the lens of the present,[85] and while that is, to some degree, what this study is about, it

is as true of my re-creations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as it is of

those centuries' re-creations of the ancient world. The nature of my topic subjects me

to multiple layers of this phenomenon: this study treats my own perception of early

modern Western Europe's perception of ancient Greece, which in turn I can only

[84]On the irretrievable past, see Thomas Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the uneven survival of texts, see Guillory, *Cultural Capital*.

[85]Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*. See also David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and the various contributors to the collections Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie, eds., *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989) and Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, eds., *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010).

compare to my own time's perception of ancient Greece since I can no more access the ancient world directly than my historical subjects could. Given all these layers of distortion, it is easy to despair of ever hoping to approach the past, especially a past entangled with a more distant past like the kind I examine here. Yet, as a scholar of adaptation and theater as well as history, I find some comfort in the concept of 'ghosting' as raised by Marvin Carlson in *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*.[86] In this important theoretical work, Carlson asserts revisiting and recycling as a central component of theatrical presentation, not only in reused stories (the element I focus on), but also in the re-presentation of scripts in multiple productions, the casting of a single actor in multiple roles throughout her/his lifetime, the re-use of theatrical spaces, sets, costumes, props, lights, sound effects, directors, playwrights, and so on. These recycled elements, perceived as reused by audiences who saw those elements in previous plays, are subjected to a 'ghosting' process by which their previous uses are recalled and rolled into the perception and experience of the present. These ghosts that continually haunt the theater, distorted by memory and time, never perfectly resemble their living incarnations as they were, yet they do bear some resemblance to that past reality—a resemblance which harmonizes with and enriches present experience. While it is true that we can never recreate the past in full, never recapture every detail nor flesh it out to the extent we can the present, we can create a ghost of it: an incomplete and altered, but recognizable, version of the entity

[86]Marvin A. Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

it once was whose presence enriches us. Like an adaptation or a translation, a ghost is marked by the simultaneous expression of sameness and difference, recognizably linked to the thing it was yet just as recognizably changed, neither identical to the living image of the person it was nor quite the image of someone else. A representation of the past may never be a perfect re-creation, but there is a beauty and a fascination in ghosts that draws us to them, that enriches our intellectual experience of the present. And just as it can never be exactly the same as it was, so too it can never be completely different—the past can be understood, if only partially, and a partial understanding is still a form of insight, one that I believe is worth striving for.

Knowing, then, that I am undertaking to paint the portrait of a ghost, let us turn to the actual portrait. The dissertation below consists of four chapters and a conclusion, each focusing on a different theatrical moment in Iphigenia's adaptive chain. Chapter one sets up the historical context of my subject by tracing the evolution of classical tragedy into neoclassicism through the various Greek revival movements that contributed to it, using a broad-scale view to contextualize the more narrowly focused chapters which follow. Chapter two, focusing on the neoclassical spoken drama of France, uses a series of three popular Iphigenia adaptations to explore the uncertain and unsettling place that the ancient Greeks, as the cultural ancestors of the modern French, occupied within the binaristic cultural insider/outsider system, showing how adaptation was used to erase any elements which might challenge this binary construction. Chapter three examines the ways in which French neoclassicism was altered when it was imported to England, a nation

with its own contested ideas about the classical heritage, exploring the internal divisions—and their adaptive fixes—that arose within modern Europe and neoclassicism itself, thus showing how adaptation caters to nationalism by maintaining norms of national artistic taste. Chapter four demonstrates how neoclassical opera, a performance genre which claimed a great degree of accuracy in the re-creation of classical tragedy, avoided re-creating those elements which were too inconvenient by routing its adaptations through the earlier adaptive tradition of the spoken theater, creating the appearance of authenticity while sidestepping a wholesale embrasure of the classical tradition. Finally, the conclusion treats the end of both Iphigenia's popularity and the strong adaptive trend in neoclassicism, examining its final incarnation in the form of Weimar Classicism and the subsequent turn toward performed translations of Greek tragedy that arose with the director's theater. Through these chapters and their associated case studies, we will see how adaptation operates in a number of Greek revival movements to embrace the classical tradition in European theater while keeping its more threatening and destabilizing elements at bay.

Chapter One: Iphigenia in Transit: An Adaptational Overview from Ancient Greece to Early Modern Western Europe

The story of Iphigenia begins, as all stories of adaptation do, *in media res*. The earliest texts we have concerning her are definitively *not* the earliest that were written; the earliest lost texts that we know about might have been preceded by others that we do not know about; and there is no doubt that Iphigenia existed in the oral tradition long before any texts were written about her at all. This chapter traces what we can reconstruct of Iphigenia's adaptational history in ancient Greece from the bits and pieces that have come down to us, gives a brief account of the survival history of the intact Greek versions of Iphigenia's stories, and provides a broad-scale look at their place in the vogue for Greek adaptation that swept Western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This broad historical sweep is intended to give the reader a larger context within which to place my later, more detailed discussions of specific adaptations, as well as to demarcate the qualities which characterize my period of interest (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and differentiate it from the adaptational approaches of the periods which preceded and followed it. In the process of tracing this long view of Iphigenia's adaptational history, I engage with issues of canon formation and how the relative success of particular adaptations may alter a given story's subsequent treatment by later adapters, affecting the balance of difference and similitude or creating new tropes which then become considered essential to the plot. While the long view cannot provide us with the level of cultural insight explored in later chapters, it can give us a general framework for

understanding how adaptations relate to one another, creating conditions of collective authorship that span centuries.

The Greek Iphigenias: Disappearance and Reconstruction

The origins of Iphigenia's adaptational history in Greece are lost in the oral tradition, our only clues being provided by written accounts of ancient religious cults concerning her. M. Platnauer, gleaning what he can from a variety of ancient written sources, speculates that 'Iphigenia,' a name meaning 'strong in birth,' was probably in origin an alternate descriptor/name for the goddess Artemis, who was in one of her aspects a goddess of childbirth[1] and whose cult was associated with Iphigenia in at least two places (including Tauris) and possibly more.[2] Although like most deities, the worship and character traits of Artemis changed from place to place and time to time, certain key aspects of this goddess can be identified as relatively consistent. Artemis is most strongly associated with the hunt; or rather, with wild animals, whose primary purpose in the ancient world was as a food source. Animal imagery, especially concerning bears and deer, is featured as a strong part of her cult. In the ancient world, Artemis was also the major goddess associated with women's rites of passage (puberty, marriage, childbirth, menopause) but was herself a sworn 'virgin' (that is, permanently unmarried)[3] and the goddess of celibacy. As she transitioned into the

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[1]On the various associations of Artemis and the particulars of her worship in different times and places in the ancient world, see Tobias Fischer-Hansen and Birte Poulsen, *From Artemis to Diana: The Goddess of Man and Beast* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2009).

[2]See M. Platnauer, "Introduction," in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ed. M. Platnauer (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), vii-x.

[3]The use of the English word 'virgin' as a translation of the Greek 'παρθένος,' while traditional, is somewhat misleading. 'Virgin' denotes lack of sexual experience, while 'παρθένος' simply means a woman who is post-pubertal but unmarried. Because lack of marriage and lack of sexual

modern world, Artemis largely lost her associations with women's rites, retained her

identity as goddess of the hunt, and saw her aspect as a goddess of celibacy or

chastity increase greatly in importance. The connection with women, however, was

still of great importance in the ancient world at the time of Iphigenia's religious

association with Artemis (or identity as one aspect of her). Consequently, the majority

of religious officials overseeing the worship of Artemis or Artemis-Iphigenia would

have been women.[4] This fact, along with the religious contexts in which Iphigenia is

found—including a festival at Brauron in which the key participants were young girls

called ἄρκτοι (bears),[5] a type of animal particularly associated with Artemis—suggest

that many of the earliest storyteller/adapters to be active participants in the

transmission of Iphigenia myths in the oral tradition were likely women, only the first

of many whose influence is present in the stories we have inherited but whose names

are not. Because so much of ancient Greek myth was wrapped up in the oral tradition

of religious instruction, conceptions of who Iphigenia was and versions of the stories

about her would have had ample time to change and evolve before the appearance of

the earliest written texts about her.

Once we move from this religious oral tradition into the literary tradition, we

experience were considered to be basically identical at the time when English translations from Greek were mainly established, the use of terms like 'virgin' and 'virgin goddess' have been deeply entrenched when discussing both human women and deities from Greek mythology. It should be recognized, however, that such terms have a stricter definition in English than they carried in their Greek incarnation.

[4]It was common practice in Greek religion for the religious officials who oversaw the rites of a given deity to be the same gender as the god in question, with some exceptions (notably Dionysus). Artemis, however, was known as one of the stricter gods in this regard, and the myths surrounding her are rife with punishments for men who stumble upon her rituals, meant largely for women's eyes only. See Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005).

[5]See Platnauer, "Introduction," viii.

find Iphigenia begin to transition into her own figure, at first represented as a goddess or demi-goddess in her own right, separate from—but linked to—the goddess Artemis. Though Iphigenia does not appear in Homer (neither her name nor any recognizable form of her story being present in either Ἰλιάς [the *Iliad*] or Ὀδύσσεια [the *Odyssey*][6]), she was apparently featured in a number of what are called the post-Homeric epics, a series of epic poems, hymns, catalogs, etc. which appeared shortly after the first written versions of the surviving epics by Homer. Much has been made of the fact that Iphigenia does not appear in Homer, and there is some debate as to whether her myth was not yet linked up with the Trojan War by the time of the Homeric compositions (c. eighth century B.C.E.) or whether Homer merely chose to exclude her for thematic reasons.[7] Either way, there is plenty of reason to presume that Iphigenia already existed by this time, minimally as an epithet for the goddess Artemis, because by the seventh century B.C.E. she was already her own figure and definitively linked to the Trojan War myths by her inclusion in Κύπρια (the *Cypria*).[8] That Iphigenia should have come into existence, been segregated from her original religious context, made into a mythic mortal woman of the heroic era, and been grafted onto the Trojan War saga all in the space of a bare hundred years or less is not

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[6]Throughout this dissertation, I attempt to keep the names of literary works in their original languages whenever possible. However, due to the difficulty of recognizing titles written in Greek letters for readers unfamiliar with this alphabet, I have made an exception in the case of Greek texts. The first introduction of any Greek text gives both the original title and the English translation; subsequent references to the same work give only the English version of the title.

[7]For a look at this debate and the evidence for each side, see Joachim Latacz, *Troy and Homer: Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery* [Troia und Homer], trans. Kevin Windle and Rosh Ireland (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[8]See below.

especially likely given the long continuity of both Greek oral history and religion.[9]

Subsequently, her appearance as a mortal-woman-turned-goddess in the post-Homeric

epics strongly suggests a transitional phase between the goddess and the (human)

literary figure of the surviving texts.

None of the post-Homeric epics has survived as a coherent document—

instead, they have been reconstructed from fragments found on papyri and the notes

of later writers and scholars who had access to the original texts. From such

fragmentary reconstruction, we have managed to ascertain that in Hesiod's[10]

Καταλόγοι Γυναικῶν (*Catalogues of Women*), probably written in the eighth or

seventh century B.C.E., "Ἰφιγένειαν οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν, γνώμῃ δὲ Ἀρτέμιδος Ἑκάτην

εἶναι" (Iphigenia did not die, but by the judgment of Artemis [is made] to be

Hecate).[11] Hecate, a household goddess who received substantial praise elsewhere in

the writings attributed to Hesiod,[12] is here portrayed as one and the same with

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[9]For the evidence for the continuity of the oral tradition in Greece before Homer, see Ibid. and also Christos Tsagalis, *The Oral Palimpsest: Exploring Intertextuality in the Homeric Epics* (Washington, DC and Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Hellenic Studies; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2008).

[10]The attribution of this work to Hesiod is traditional but uncertain, as is the case with the attribution of all the post-Homeric epics. As with the Greek tragedies as they have come down to us, and indeed, as with the Homeric epics themselves, these literary remnants are doubtless the work of many hands rather than a single author. On the Homeric and post-Homeric epics as amalgamated versions of centuries of oral tradition (and hence more properly understood as multi-authorial), see Latacz, *Troy and Homer*. On the collective nature of writing in the ancient world in general (including Greek sources as well as Roman), see Sean Alexander Gurd, *Work in Progress: Literary Revision as Social Performance in Ancient Rome* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[11]Hugh G. Evelyn-White, ed. *Hesiod: The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970; reprint, 1920, 1926, 1929, 1936, 1943, 1950, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1967), 204. This work presents both the original Greek text and an English translation; however, the English translation given above is my own.

[12]See Ibid., 108-13. Hecate, incidentally, gained associations with witchcraft in the post-Christian era, though the associations between Hecate and Iphigenia had been dropped by this time and Iphigenia is never associated in the modern tradition with witchcraft. On Hecate as a goddess of

Iphigenia, who was apparently granted this name and the associated powers by Artemis.

Similarly, from a surviving summary of the *Cypria*—an epic poem that formed a sort of prequel to the *Iliad*, was probably composed in the seventh century B.C.E., and is attributed to Stasinus of Cyprus—Iphigenia is at first a mortal woman who becomes a goddess.[13] This text is the first that we know for certain makes her a daughter of Agamemnon and connects her with the Trojan War saga. In a segment that we now, in a post-Euripidean world, refer to as the Iphigenia in Aulis story,[14] Agamemnon boasts that his own skill at hunting exceeds that of the goddess Artemis. In punishment, Artemis sends bad weather to Aulis to prevent Agamemnon's fleet from sailing to Troy. The priest Calchas says that Agamemnon must sacrifice his most beautiful daughter in order to appease the goddess, so he sends for Iphigenia under the premise that she is to wed Achilles. As she is about to be sacrificed, Artemis snatches her from the altar, replacing her with a deer. Artemis makes Iphigenia herself immortal, and sets her up as a goddess in the land of the Tauroi.[15] This may seem quite familiar to those who have read the tragedies of Euripides, but we must approach this version with caution. The original epic is lost to us, and these details are

witchcraft in early modern texts, see Katharine Mary Briggs, *Pale Hecate's Team: An Examination of the Beliefs on Witchcraft and Magic Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and his Immediate Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).

[13]See Martin L. West, *Greek Epic Fragments*, trans. Martin L. West, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[14]This phrase, the English translation of Euripides's title for his tragedy on this particular segment of the Trojan War myth, is commonly used to refer to any retelling of Iphigenia's sacrifice at Aulis. Throughout this dissertation, I use the italicized '*Iphigenia in Aulis*' when referring to Euripides's tragedy, and the unitalicized phrase 'Iphigenia in Aulis story' when referring to the generalized and variable myth upon which it was based.

[15]All of these details can be found in Ibid., 74-75.

drawn from a summary of that epic in Proclus's Χρηστομάθια (*Chrestomathy*), written in the fifth century C.E., roughly a thousand years after the epic it purports to summarize—and also well after the tragedies of Euripides had been canonized. The presence of so many similar story elements does not necessarily mean that Euripides drew on the *Cypria* as the source material for his plays; it is just as likely that revisers issuing later editions of the *Cypria* spiced it up with details drawn from the most famous Attic tragedies. This summary represents just one of many cases in the study of Greek adaptation where separating out lines of influence and disentangling temporal relationships is flatly impossible. Who was adapting who, and when? We cannot know. All we can glean from this picture is that we must be extremely cautious about attributing our own ideas about originality and invention to any given ancient author or text.[16]

Similar reconstructions from summaries and fragments of the lyrics of Stesichorus of Himera, a revered lyric poet of the seventh or sixth century B.C.E., yield three details concerning his treatment of Iphigenia: 1) she was the daughter of Helen and Theseus, given to Clytemnestra and Agamemnon to raise,[17] 2) as in Hesiod, she was identified with the goddess Hecate,[18] and 3) she was lured to Aulis

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[16]On the Greek epics as a partial written record of an oral tradition, and the various uncertainties of authorship and chronology that come along with this fact, see Tsagalis, *The Oral Palimpsest*.

[17]David A. Campbell, ed. *Greek Lyric III: Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, and Others*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 90-93. This detail became very important in the late seventeenth century, when Jean Racine used it to build a whole new version of the Iphigenia in Aulis story which had a huge influence on later adapters. See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" below.

[18]Ibid., 128-29.

via the false promise of marriage to Achilles.[19] Putting this together with the reconstructions of the other two sources from the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C.E., it appears that in the two centuries postdating Homer, Iphigenia was consistently represented as a mortal who was turned into a goddess (usually Hecate) by Artemis on the eve of the Trojan War. Her status as the daughter of Agamemnon, whether natural or adopted, seems to have been established during this time, as well, and possibly the false marriage to Achilles—though again, the popularity of Euripides's plays by the time of the various summaries makes this less certain than other details which do not appear in his plays. Regardless, the post-Homeric era seems to have been the time when Iphigenia inhabited an intermediate status between the goddess of the oral tradition and the definitively human figure of the surviving literary works.

The first references we have to Iphigenia in surviving written texts date from the fifth century B.C.E. and demonstrate a completed transition of Iphigenia from goddess to mortal woman—her identity as a goddess in her own right is never mentioned in texts dated later than the sixth century B.C.E. Surviving fifth-century texts which mention her are overwhelmingly Attic tragedies—aside from these, her name appears only in one Theban poem, Pindar's eleventh Pythian ode, in which she is mentioned only in passing as a possible motivation for Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon.[20] In the surviving Attic tragedies, the earliest references to her come from choral odes in Aeschylus's *Oresteia* trilogy, in which the story of her sacrifice at

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[19]Ibid., 130-31.

[20]See William H. Race, ed. *Pindar: Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 370-71.

Aulis (during which she actually dies) is used as an explanation of Clytemnestra's

motive in killing her husband, Agamemnon.[21] Aside from such mentions of Iphigenia

as backstory for other plots, there are two surviving tragedies which took her stories

as their central themes: Euripides's *Ἰφιγένεια ἡ ἐν Ταύροις* (*Iphigenia in Tauris*)[22] and

Ἰφιγένεια ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι (Iphigenia in Aulis). Because these are the oldest surviving

written versions of these two Iphigenia myths, later adapters and scholars alike have

tended to treat them as 'originals'; however, in addition to the lost texts explored

above, we know that both Aeschylus and Sophocles each produced an *Ἰφιγένεια*

(*Iphigenia*),[23] in the case of Aeschylus definitely antedating both of the surviving

Euripidean tragedies and in the case of Sophocles possibly antedating one or both.[24]

Additionally, it is important to remember that these three dramatists do not constitute

the whole of fifth-century B.C.E. Athenian dramatic production—they are merely the

only ones to have survived from what was a remarkably prolific period in

playwriting. As Robert Garland so precisely puts it in his extensive study on the topic,

[21]Aeschylus *Ἀγαμέμνων* (*Agamemnon*) lines 183-257. See Aeschylus, *Aeschylus II: Agamemnon, Libation-bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*, ed. T. E. Page, et al., trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926). 18-24. In this version, Iphigenia is actually sacrificed (not turned into a goddess and replaced with a miraculous deer), and also clearly dies unwillingly, both differences from Euripides's versions of the story.

[22]There is some disagreement over how to translate this title, because while the ancient Greeks called the inhabitants of what is now Crimea Ταύροι (Taurians), they had no country name for their land equivalent to the English 'Tauris' that is frequently used in translating the title. Most literally translated, the title would read: "Iphigenia, the [implied: one] in [implied: the place/land of the] Taurians." Some scholars have chosen to approximate this by translating the title as "Iphigenia Among the Taurians." Since the play has been referred to using both this title and "Iphigenia in Tauris," and since neither is very exact, I have chosen, for purely aesthetic reasons, to use the title "Iphigenia in Tauris" when referring to this play throughout the remainder of this analysis.

[23]Sophocles's drama appears to have treated the Aulis episode, but the surviving fragments of the Aeschylus play do not really give sufficient information to deduce his topic. See both Ibid. and Hugh Lloyd-Jones, ed. *Sophocles III: Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[24]Aeschylus being a predecessor of Euripides while Sophocles was his contemporary.

Surviving Greek Tragedy:

> The Athenians produced nine tragedies annually at the City Dionysia
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> and perhaps four at the Lenaea. We know the names of 49 Greek
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> tragedians of the fifth century BC and earlier, 44 of the fourth century,
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> seven of the first century AD, nine of the second century, one of the
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> third century, two of the fourth century, and two of the fifth century (as
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> listed in *TGF* I). In short, the number of missing tragedies is
>
> incalculable.[25]

Given that the missing number of tragedies is "incalculable," and given the fact that

we know fifth-century playwrights to have adapted one another, there is no reason to

treat Euripides (or even Aeschylus, for that matter) as though he were the first to

bring these stories to the stage;[26] in fact, it is likely that Euripides was consciously

adapting other dramatists, as we know was his practice from the surviving case of his

highly intertextual Ἠλέκτρα (*Electra*).[27] Therefore, although these two Greek texts

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[25]Robert Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 2004). 2.

[26]And even this assumption would leave out the many adaptations of Iphigenia's stories to be found in other types of writing, such as lyric poetry, heroic genealogies, and even travel guides. See my discussion above for a few examples.

[27]Each of the three surviving dramatists wrote a surviving version of *Electra* (though in the case of Aeschylus, the title is Χοηφόροι [*Libation Bearers*]). Comparison of the three plays yields a series of adaptational relationships to one another in both structure and content that cannot easily be attributed to all three deriving from the same oral tradition—more likely the ancient dramatists were as influenced by one another as by the mythic tradition in which they all wrote. See Aeschylus, *Aeschylus II: Agamemnon, Libation-bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*; Sophocles, "Electra," in *Sophocles II: Ajax, Electra, Trachiniae, Philoctetes*, ed. F. Storr, *Loeb Classical Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913; reprint, 1924); and Euripides, "Electra," in *Euripides III: Suppliant Women, Electra, Heracles*, ed. David Kovacs, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). I have previously undertaken a comparative study of the three Electra plays (among others) which demonstrates these adaptational links; see Rachel M. E. Wolfe, "Woman, Tyrant, Mother, Murderess: An Exploration of the Mythic Character of Clytemnestra in all Her Forms," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 38, no. 6 (2009).

certainly provide the models on which the adaptations examined in the subsequent chapters of this study are based, it is important that we envision Euripides as only one surviving link in an adaptive chain which has long since disintegrated.

Moreover, despite the fact that we continue to confidently print 'by Euripides' on our texts, translations, posters, playbills, and scholarship on these works, there is a plethora of textual evidence that *Iphigenia in Aulis*—or at least the version of it that has come down to us and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century adapters studied here—is the work of a minimum of three different hands. The play was produced shortly after Euripides's death[28] and is thought to have been unfinished when he died; it was completed by Euripides the Younger, either the playwright's son or nephew, prior to the first performance. Later, presumably in the fourth century B.C.E. when revivals of so-called 'old tragedy' were in vogue,[29] a number of extensive textual emendations were made, including both deletions of previously existing lines and the insertion of new ones. David Kovacs attributes this to one unknown actor or producer, whom he refers to as "the Revisor;"[30] but there is no reason to presume, especially if the revisions were made in the context of a particular performance, that these changes

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[28]c. 405 B.C.E.—Euripides died in 407 or 406 B.C. E. For an informative assembly of the information we have on the life of Euripides, see Ruby Blondell et al., "Introduction," in *Women on the Edge: Four Plays by Euripides*, ed. Ruby Blondell, et al. (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 64-89.

[29]In the fifth century B.C.E., the time period from which the surviving Greek tragedies date, new plays were written every year for presentation in the theater festivals. By the fourth century, new works had come to be interspersed with revivals of tragedies that had first been written and presented in previous years, the term 'old tragedy' used to denote a tragedy that had not been freshly written. On this phenomenon, see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*: 13.

[30]See David Kovacs, "Introduction to *Iphigenia at Aulis*," in *Euripides VI: Bacchae, Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus*, ed. David Kovacs, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 158.

were made by one person rather than a variety of adaptors working in tandem. The author behind *Iphigenia in Aulis*, therefore, might be as few as three or as many as scores of different people. The only certainty is that the author is not singular.

As we proceed into an examination of how these texts were taken up by the significantly later adaptors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then, it must be with the awareness that the stories in question had already passed through many mediators before they reached the Christian playwrights of Western Europe. This process has always been easier to see in the case of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, which alongside being the work of several different authors is also a story whose summary can be found in a variety of other surviving ancient texts.[31] *Iphigenia in Tauris*, on the other hand, has traditionally been credited with an unwarranted amount of originality by scholars, some of whom go so far as to make the whole story Euripides's own invention[32] despite the thousands of missing playtexts, the implication that Iphigenia was linked to the Taurians in the much earlier *Cypria*, and the presence of two religious cults linking Iphigenia with the group of people called 'Taurians' by the

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[31]See above. As we will see in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France," Jean Racine, especially, makes extensive and inventive use of these other surviving summaries to craft his own adaptation. Additionally, parallels can be drawn between the Iphigenia in Aulis story and several other ancient treatments of human sacrifice, especially the sacrifice of children by their parents, and most notably the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. See Genesis 22:1-19.

[32]Among the scholars who hold this view are Platnauer, Kovacs, Ewans, and especially Marshall, who makes a belief in Euripides's originality the basis of an argument for the dating of a lost play of Sophocles. See C. W. Marshall, "Sophocles' *Chryses* and the Date of *Iphigenia in Tauris*," in *The Play of Texts and Fragments: Essays in Honor of Martin Cropp*, ed. J. R. C. Cousland and James R. Hume, *Mnemosyne: Supplements: Monographs on Greek and Roman Language and Literature* (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009). For more casual and offhand remarks crediting Euripides with the invention of the Iphigenia in Tauris story, see Platnauer, "Introduction," vii.; David Kovacs, "Introduction to *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*," in *Euripides IV: Trojan Women, Iphigenia Among the Taurians, Ion*, ed. David Kovacs, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: University of Harvard Press, 1999), 148; and Michael Ewans, *Opera from the Greek: Studies in the Poetics of Appropriation* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). 33.

Greeks.[33] Moreover, the Iphigenia in Tauris story serves as a foundational element of

the plot for two other stories found in the *Fabulae* of Hyginus, a second-century C.E.

Latin collection of myths that draws heavily on the content of ancient Greek

tragedies, both surviving and subsequently lost.[34] The stories in question, titled

"Chryses"[35] and "Aletes"[36] respectively, correspond to the titles of known lost

tragedies by Sophocles;[37] and although it is impossible to know for sure whether

these lost plays correspond to the summaries of the same name which appear in

Hyginus, it is not unlikely considering that Hyginus includes summaries of all the

known Sophoclean tragedies in his work.[38] As we cannot date these lost tragedies

with certainty, they cannot truly disprove the hypothesis that Euripides invented the

Iphigenia in Tauris story; even if they do correspond to Hyginus's myths, they may

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[33]The Attic cult of Artemis-Iphigenia at Halae Araphenides maintained that their statue of the goddess had come from the Taurians originally, and Herodotus, a historian of the fifth-century B.C.E., maintained that the Taurians themselves worshiped a goddess called Iphigenia. For a summary of all ancient evidence on both of these cults, see Platnauer, "Introduction."

[34]See Mary Grant, ed. *The Myths of Hyginus* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1960).

[35]Ibid., 101. This myth holds that when Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades escaped from Thoas after the events of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, they took refuge on the island of Zminthe, whose ruler, the titular Chryses, turns out to be their half-brother through Agamemnon's wartime concubine, Chryseis. It is difficult to envision how this myth could exist independently from the Iphigenia in Tauris story.

[36]Ibid., 102. In this story, the titular Aletes, son of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, hears a false report that Thoas has killed his half-brother Orestes in Tauris. Believing himself to be the last heir to the throne of Mycenae, he assumes kingship, only to be killed as a usurper when Orestes, Iphigenia, and Pylades return from Tauris unharmed. Again, this plot is clearly imbricated with Iphigenia's escape from Tauris and is unlikely to have existed independently.

[37]See Hugh Lloyd-Jones, ed. *Sophocles III: Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 100-01 and 340-43. Note that Lloyd-Jones treats the *Aletes* under its alternate title *Erigone* (Erigone and Aletes were siblings, and the reconstructions of the plot suggest that this was the same play, probably revived under a different title).

[38]Compare the total known works of Sophocles (all of which, including the fragments of the lost plays, may be found in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, ed. *Sophocles*, 3 vols., vol. 1-3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994)) to the contents of Hyginus's *Fabulae* (Grant, *The Myths of Hyginus*). For an argument detailing the specific evidence for considering the Chryses myth as a summary of the lost tragedy by Sophocles, see Marshall, "Sophocles' *Chryses* and the Date of *Iphigenia in Tauris*."

have been written after Euripides's tragedy and built upon it. However, such an assumption requires us to set aside our knowledge that the Attic tragedians virtually always based their plots upon known myths rather than inventing stories wholesale, and the overall balance of probability seems to be on the side of Euripides writing his Taurian Iphigenia within an established adaptive tradition. The seductive myth of single authorship,[39] combined with the absence of any other complete adaptations of this particular story from antiquity, can easily make it appear as though this work belonged to Euripides alone; but, as with all theater and certainly all Greek myth, we must keep in mind that these stories arose from, were performed for, and ultimately belonged to the collective.[40] The forgotten adaptors—though written records of their individual contributions are missing or were never made—probably had as heavy an influence on *Iphigenia in Tauris* as they did on *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

The study of these two plays together can lead to similar errors of oversight when it comes to content because they bear different relationships to one another intra- and extra-textually. Within the chronology of the stories themselves, *Iphigenia in Aulis* precedes *Iphigenia in Tauris*. *Iphigenia in Aulis* tells the story of Iphigenia being sacrificed to Artemis at Aulis before the Trojan War, in order that the Greek fleet may get a favorable wind that will let them sail to Troy. Rife with foreshadowing of all the pain that the sacrifice will bring in its wake, Euripides's version of the Aulis

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[39]The validity of which has been questioned for all times and places, including antiquity. For a recent look at the evidence for collaboration in authorship in the ancient world from Plato to the late Romans, see Gurd, *Work in Progress*.

[40]For several interesting studies treating the collective nature of ancient Athenian theater, see P. E. Easterling, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

story technically saves Iphigenia (having Artemis replace her with a deer at the very

last moment[41]), but presents the sacrifice as a bad trade: Agamemnon and

Clytemnestra lose their daughter and gain an ignoble war, tainted in its cause[42] and

marked by sacrilege,[43] plus a chain of intra-familial murders that will tear their house

apart.[44] *Iphigenia in Tauris* takes place significantly after the Trojan War (which is

itself traditionally held to have been ten years long), and concerns the fate of

Iphigenia who—having been rescued from the altar by Artemis at the time of her

sacrifice in Aulis and brought to the land of the Taurians—has herself become a

priestess[45] in a 'barbarian'[46] cult of human sacrifice. She is rescued in the course of the

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[41]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1540-1612.

[42]The idea that fighting to regain Helen is not worth the trade is reinforced several times in the play with the repeated use of negative descriptors for Helen (κακῆς [bad], τλῆμον [reckless], etc.). See Ibid. lines 378-401, 1168-70, 1202-5, and 1253-54.

[43]On the many acts of sacrilege and perversions of proper conduct during the Trojan War (including, notably, human sacrifice), see Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[44]The story, consistent across a remarkable number of surviving adaptations, holds that Agamemnon is murdered after the Trojan War by Clytemnestra and her lover, Aegisthus (a cousin of Agamemnon's who seeks vengeance on him as part of an inter-generational family feud) alongside his prize-of-war Cassandra. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are subsequently murdered by Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, at the urging of his full sister, Electra. More fragmentary parts of the mythic tradition add several more people to the roster of the dead, including the infant twin sons of Agamemnon and Cassandra (killed by Aegisthus), a son of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus named Aletes (killed by Orestes), and, in some versions, Aletes's full sister Erigone (killed by Orestes, though other traditions hold that he rapes and/or marries her instead). On these less-common figures, see Pausanius, *Description of Greece* 2.16.6-7 and Hyginus *Fabulae* 122.

[45]A similar but reduced form of her earlier role as goddess; see above.

[46]This particular word presents an interesting case in miniature for the transformation of the Iphigenia stories over time. In the ancient Greek context, the word βάρβαρος [barbarian] referred to any person or group of people who did not speak Greek as a first language, and applied universally to all groups of whom this was true, regardless of cultural differences or similarities (see Blondell et al., "Introduction," 22-23). By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Western Europe, however, 'barbarian' in its various linguistic incarnations had become associated with any type of violence and cruelty which fell outside the cultural norms of 'civilized' Western European cultures, casting a very different light on the whole context of *Iphigenia in Tauris* in its modern adaptations. See especially my discussion in "Chapter Three; Iphigenia in England" below.

play by her brother Orestes and their kinsman Pylades,[47] with a significant amount of

help from her own ingenuity and the assistance of the goddess Athena. Because of

this intra-textual chronological relationship, it is tempting to address the plays in this

order (Aulis before Tauris), and to treat them as though they were different chapters

in the same story with some measure of internal coherence. Extra-textually, however,

it is important to note that *Iphigenia in Tauris* was written before *Iphigenia in Aulis*,[48]

that they were performed in different festival years, and that ancient Greek

playwrights were in no way artistically bound to retain specific plot points or versions

of a given story between plays concerning the same overarching myth.[49] While these

plays do have a great deal of thematic relationship to one another—both centering

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[47]Pylades in Euripides's version is both their first cousin via his mother Anaxibia, sister to Agamemnon, and their brother-in-law via his marriage to their sister Electra; additionally, he and Orestes were raised together and are thus foster-brothers (Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 674-722 and 912-22). See Euripides, "Iphigenia Among the Taurians," in *Euripides IV: Trojan Women, Iphigenia Among the Taurians, Ion*, ed. David Kovacs, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 218-23. For a variety of reasons, all three of these relationships are usually dropped in the modern adaptations of this story, making Orestes and Pylades the best of friends but not kin. See my explorations in the chapters below.

[48]Presumably c. 413 B.C.E., a few years earlier than the c. 405 date of *Iphigenia in Aulis*. On the dating of *Iphigenia in Tauris* see Platnauer, "Introduction," xiv-xvi. For a dissenting opinion, placing the play a bit earlier than its traditional date of 413 (still placing it definitively before *Iphigenia in Aulis*), see Marshall, "Sophocles' *Chryses* and the Date of *Iphigenia in Tauris*."

[49]In fact, Euripides himself can been seen from his surviving plays to have been internally inconsistent on a myth from play to play—see, for example, the discrepancy between his Ὀρέστης (*Orestes*) and Ἀνδρομάχη (*Andromache*), in which the time and agent of Orestes's betrothal to Hermione changes drastically and serves as a major plot point in each (Euripides *Orestes* lines 1653-55 and Euripides *Andromache* lines 964-78). See Euripides, "Orestes," in *Euripides II: Electra, Orestes, Iphigeneia in Taurica, Andromache, Cyclops*, ed. Arthur S. Way, *Loeb Classical Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912; reprint, 1924), 272-73; and Euripides, "Andromache," in *Euripides II: Electra, Orestes, Iphigeneia in Taurica, Andromache, Cyclops*, ed. Arthur S. Way, *Loeb Classical Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912; reprint, 1924), 488-89. Similarly, in the plays under discussion here, Iphigenia's miraculous survival is immediately known to her family in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (lines 1540-1612), while its being *unknown* to her family serves as a key plot element in both *Iphigenia in Tauris* (lines 563-566) and *Electra* (lines 998-1099). Although in this case, the discrepancy is not necessarily the work of Euripides (since the ending messenger speech which describes her miraculous survival was undoubtedly written by one of his later editors), it does push back against the tendency to view these plays as consecutive episodes in an artistically unified saga of the House of Atreus.

around the figure of Iphigenia and the troubling motifs of human sacrifice and kin-murder[50]—one should not read *Iphigenia in Tauris* as a sequel to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, but as its own story with its own internal coherence and adaptational history.

The Survival of Euripides: Transmission to Early Modern Western Europe

The adaptational histories of both plays continued beyond Euripides in the ancient world, with the writing of Greek tragedy continuing well beyond the fifth century B.C.E. and Roman adaptations of both plays[51] (as well as other stories concerning Iphigenia[52]) written in Latin in the days of the Roman Republic. All of these further ancient adaptations, whether Greek or Roman, have been lost, like the post-Homeric epics surviving only in fragments and summaries. As a result, despite her multivalent portrayals in the ancient world in both literary and religious contexts, Iphigenia's move from classicism to neoclassicism was based almost entirely on the mortal heroine pictured in the works of Euripides, a playwright whose cultural caché

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[50]These motifs, though consistent through all ages and adaptations surrounding Iphigenia, substantially change when it comes to the cultural contexts in which they are found. To give a summary of all these changes here would be unwieldy and distract from my main purpose in this chapter, which is to trace Iphigenia's appearances before analyzing them in more detail in subsequent chapters. Various interpretations of human sacrifice will surface throughout this dissertation. Readers interested in a more focused overview of the significance of human sacrifice in various periods in Western literature should see Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice*.

[51]The Roman playwright Naevius (third century B.C.E.) is known to have written an *Iphigenia* based on *Iphigenia in Tauris* (see E. H. Warmington, ed. *Remains of Old Latin Volume II: Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius and Accius*, 4 vols., vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 120-23), and Quintus Ennius (second century B.C.E.) wrote an *Iphigenia* based on *Iphigenia in Aulis* (see E. H. Warmington, ed. *Remains of Old Latin Volume I: Ennius and Caecilius*, 4 vols., vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), 306-07). Neither play survives. Additionally, there may have been more Roman adaptations of these two stories whose titles and authors have not come down to us—when it comes to ancient records, our own information is so incomplete that the possibility of 'totally vanished' plays must always be kept in mind alongside the 'lost' plays.

[52]Specifically the Chryses story, of which Marcus Pacuvius (second century B.C.E.) wrote a lost version. See Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin Volume II: Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius and Accius*, 192-207.

in both the ancient and modern worlds ensured the survival and subsequent influence of his plays.

Although today we tend to view the three surviving Attic dramatists as relatively equal in prestige and popularity, there is significant evidence that Euripides was consistently the most popular Greek dramatist from the time of his own death in the fifth century B.C.E. right up until the nineteenth century C.E.[53] His plays were regularly revived in the ancient world, as is attested both by performance records and by the degree to which the surviving plays have come down to us altered by the interpolations of later actors/producers.[54] In reaction to this 'corruption' of the texts of old tragedies, official versions of the scripts for all known tragedies by the three canonized dramatists (Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) were put on file in the public record in the fourth century B.C.E. (providing us with the so-called 'Lycurgan version' of these scripts).[55] These Lycurgan versions of tragic texts went on to be further canonized by the scholars at the great library at Alexandria, who analyzed and annotated selected tragedies. These tragedies, complete with added 'scholia,' were subsequently used as teaching texts in schools throughout the Mediterranean basin during all the remaining centuries of the period we know as 'antiquity.' As a result of this canonizing process, far more copies were made of the fifth-century dramas than of any other previous or subsequent retelling of the Iphigenia myths, increasing the

[53]For a thorough examination of all this evidence, see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*.

[54]On these interpolations, see Ibid., 25. *Iphigenia in Aulis*, incidentally, is the play which contains the most interpolations of any surviving Greek tragedy, possibly attesting to its popularity in the ancient world.

[55]On the creation of the Lycurgan version, see Ibid., 25-28.

odds of these particular versions' survival.[56]

What might otherwise have been the continuous popularity and transmission

of these plays was interrupted, however, by the Christianization of the Roman Empire

and its subsequent split into Eastern and Western branches (the Eastern branch,

centered on Constantinople, eventually becoming what we today call the Byzantine

Empire).[57] The process of Christianization led to a long and ultimately unresolved

debate over whether Christians could profit from the teachings of Pagan writers.[58]

Although founders of the early church were divided on this issue, the pushback from

those who were against the continued use of Pagan texts (like tragedies) in schools

and theaters was strong enough to cause the reading and performance of tragedy to

fall largely out of fashion. Instead, Greek tragic texts were used piecemeal during this

period, individual lines being lifted from tragedies and included in books of

aphorisms called *sententiae*.[59] Moreover, the East-West split made quite a difference

when it came to the new uses of Greek tragedy. In the West, such books of sayings

not only obliterated the original context of the drama, but also translated the surviving

quotes into Latin, causing knowledge of the Greek language to largely disappear in

[56]The Iphigenia plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles were likely preserved by this process in addition to those of Euripides. The fact that Euripides's versions alone survive is partly a matter of chance but also partly due to his notable ascendance in popularity over the other two. Though all three dramatists were canonized, there was more call for Euripides's texts among the populace and the working theaters, increasing the total number of copies made of his dramas. It is likely due to this phenomenon that we today have nineteen dramas by Euripides but only seven each of Aeschylus and Sophocles. See Ibid.

[57]For a general history of this split and its lingering political and cultural effects, see H. G. Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe 400-1500, (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1596511.

[58]On the specifics of this debate see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*.

[59]See Ibid.

Western Europe for the duration of the Middle Ages. In the East, complete Greek

tragedies continued to be copied for storage in libraries, and a select group of nine

plays known as the 'Byzantine triads' (three plays each by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and

Euripides) were still used in schools, where knowledge of the Greek language

continued uninterrupted and even served as the language of religion in what would

come to be known as the Greek Orthodox Church. To exacerbate this difference, there

is little evidence of communication or cultural exchange between East and West

during the Middle Ages, the use of Latin vs. Greek serving as a kind of dividing line

across which very little cultural production could flow.[60] Opportunities for cultural

exchange were largely rejected, with the East even serving as a target for Western

crusades during the late Middle Ages; in fact, the sacking of Constantinople by the

Venetians during the Fourth Crusade was probably responsible for destroying a great

many Greek texts which had been preserved up until then.[61] When the Humanist

scholars of the Italian Renaissance began to pay attention to Greek language and texts

once more, then, their studies were so novel in the West as to take the form of a

rediscovery more than a revival of interest.

 This rediscovery was sparked largely by instability in the East. With the

encroachment of the Ottoman Turks on their holdings in Asia from the thirteenth to

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[60]For a detailed look at the East-West split in both cultural and religious terms, see Koenigsberger, *Medieval Europe 400-1500*.

[61]For a broad look at the crusades and the cultural exchanges between East and West they occasioned, see Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr, *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453: Crusade, Religion and Trade Between Latins, Greeks and Turks* (2014). On the destruction of Greek texts during the sack of Constantinople, see Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*: 85.

the fifteenth centuries, many wealthy members of the Byzantine Empire fled, with their libraries, to Constantinople, creating a centralized collection of surviving Greek texts within that city which in some way replenished the losses sustained by the destruction of the Fourth Crusade.[62] When, in the fifteenth century, it became apparent that not even the stronghold of Constantinople was likely to withstand the Ottoman onslaught, many learned Byzantines emigrated to Italy, where they hired themselves out as Greek tutors and translators. This influx of ready teachers of Greek created interest in the language for the first time in centuries among wealthy Italians, of which there were plenty in the wake of the economic dominance Italy had established during the crusades.[63] This renewed knowledge of Greek created demand for Greek texts, especially those which stood in known relationships to revered Latin works, such as the tragedies of Seneca.[64] Manuscript collectors began sailing back and forth between Italy and Constantinople, buying Greek texts (including tragedies) from the collection amassed in Constantinople for sale to wealthy Italian patrons. Initially, such texts were largely status symbols, sold to enhance the prestige of aristocratic libraries rather than for dissemination among the wider public. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, editions of the Greek tragedies began to appear in

[62]See Ibid., 85-95.

[63]On the economic shifts created by the crusades in Italy (and elsewhere), see Daniel Waley and Peter Denley, Later Medieval Europe 1250-1520 (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1569947.

[64]Seneca is the only ancient Roman tragedian whose works survived intact down to the Renaissance, and his plays consequently had a huge impact on the study of classical theater in Western Europe even before the renewal of interest in the Greek texts. On Seneca's influence during this time, see Gordon Braden, Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). See also my discussion in "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" below.

print, the works of Euripides leading the charge.[65]

By this point in history, the surviving Greek tragedies were down to the thirty-three we know today, the other works of the canonized playwrights having been destroyed or lost somewhere in the intervening centuries. Of these surviving works, nineteen are by Euripides and fall into two camps: the ten 'selected' tragedies, which alongside all the surviving works of Aeschylus and Sophocles had been bound together for teaching purposes as the supreme examples of the genre; and the nine 'non-selected' tragedies, which were found in what was evidently one volume of an alphabetical collection of Euripides's complete works. These non-selected tragedies all start with the letters E-K, and this collection includes both of the Iphigenia plays. However, their less-canonical standing in this Byzantine configuration notwithstanding, the Iphigenia plays and the other non-selected plays of Euripides were immediately incorporated into the new, early modern Western canon, *Iphigenia in Aulis* even receiving the honor of being one of the first plays translated from Greek into Latin by the Dutchman who is possibly the most famous of the Renaissance Humanists, Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, in 1506.[66] This translation by Erasmus rocketed *Iphigenia in Aulis* into Renaissance fame in a way that can hardly be overstated—not only did the prestige of Erasmus add to the preexisting fame that

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[65]See Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*: 95.

[66]See Euripides and Desiderius Erasmus, *Euripidu tragodiai dyo Hekabe kai Iphigeneia en Aulidi. Euripidis tragoediae duae Hecuba et Iphigenia in Aulide, Latinae factae, D. Erasmo Roterodamo interprete*, trans. Desiderius Erasmus (Basileae: Frobenius, 1524). Unfortunately, Erasmus does not, at any point in the preface to this wok, indicate why he chose *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* out of all the tragedies he might have translated—we can only speculate as to why Iphigenia might have been singled out for such treatment (see below).

Iphigenia in Aulis had enjoyed merely for having been written by the popular

Euripides, its wide dissemination in Latin also made this play one of the most read

Greek tragedies in Western Europe (where the study of Greek was still confined to the

learned but Latin was the *lingua franca* of scholarship, religion, and diplomacy).

As the fame of the Dutch Erasmus implies, the spread of Greek tragedy and

classically-inspired Humanism did not stay confined to Italy. Nor were translations

out of Greek confined to Latin versions—national languages such as Italian, French,

Spanish, Dutch, English, and German quickly acquired their own translations of the

newly rediscovered Greek tragedies, and Erasmus's choice of *Iphigenia in Aulis* gave

it a boost in this area, too—by the year 1600 it had been translated in to French[67] and

English,[68] as well, and in fact serves as one of the earliest known translations into

English of any Greek tragedy. Iphigenia, in both Aulis and Tauris stories, went on to

experience a boom in popularity across all forms of classical revival in early modern

Europe, drawing more than a hundred different known adaptors to her stories over the

next two centuries.[69] Her popularity during this time—much like the popularity of

Oedipus in our own[70]—was likely due to the combination of being singled out by an

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[67]By both Thomas Sebillet and Jacques Amyot, and both in the year 1549. See translation listing in Jean-Michel Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985). 228-32.

[68]See Lady Jane Lumley, "The Tragedie of Iphigeneia," in *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women*, ed. Diane Purkiss, *Renaissance Dramatists* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1998). In her introduction to the modern reprint of this translation, Diane Purkiss suggests that Lumley made this translation as a companion piece to her father's English translation of another of Erasmus's works, making Erasmus's choice of this play a direct contributor to its early appearance in English. See Diane Purkiss, "Introduction," in *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women*, ed. Diane Purkiss, *Renaissance Dramatists* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1998), xxiii.

[69]For a full list of these adaptors, see Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*.

[70]On the dominance of Oedipus among current Greek adaptations, see Peter Burian, "Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: The Renaissance to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek*

influential thinker (Erasmus in the case of Iphigenia, Freud in the case of Oedipus[71])

and treating themes that resonated with the era: innocence under threat, with its

echoes of Christian martyrdom, was as much a fascination of the early modern period

as transgression and boundary-crossing are to the present. While, as I will show in the

chapters that follow, Iphigenia in her Greek form was not exactly synonymous with

innocence as conceived by Christian Europe, as a virginal[72] woman who pointedly

does not take part in the chain of intra-familial murders for which her family was

(in)famous, Iphigenia presented an eminently workable candidate for adaptive

revision into the kind of symbol for innocence and virtue craved by a thoroughly

Christianized Europe looking to reclaim—and whitewash—the pagan figures of its

intellectual past.

Translations are for Reading, Adaptations are for Performing: The Adaptational

Vogue in the Public Theaters of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The importance of Christian monotheism to the adaptational movement in

early modern Western European theater should not be understated. With the

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Tragedy, ed. P. E. Easterling, *Cambridge Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[71]Sigmund Freud's fascination with Sophocles's tragedy *Οἰδίπους Τύραννος* (*Oedipus the King*)—and his use of it as a case study in several of his writings—is widely acknowledged to have boosted the play's popularity in both performance and adaptation. For a thorough study on the links between Freud and Oedipus and the wider implications of the association, see Peter L. Rudnytsky, *Freud and Oedipus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

[72]Even more virginal than most, given her associations with Artemis, who by the classical revival of early modern Europe was primarily regarded as the goddess of chastity. Virginity, associated in the Christian tradition with holiness and purity of soul, had come to be a shorthand for innocence, rocketing Iphigenia to a position at the top of the morality scale that she had never occupied in ancient Greece. For my discussion of Iphigenia's virginity and its different readings by ancient and modern authors, see "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" below. For a general history of virginity's changing significance in Europe with the coming of Christianity, see Anke Bernau, *Virgins: A Cultural History* (London: Granta, 2007).

reintroduction of high-status pagan cultural texts came the revival of the early

Christian church's debate over whether devoted monotheists can truly gain any

benefit or insight from the wisdom of polytheistic thinkers. Advocates for the value of

ancient literatures were under tremendous pressure to prove that Europe's pagan

forefathers could speak to the concerns of modern Christians in a way that was

consistent with the notion of an invariant universe set up by an unchanging and all-

powerful God.[73] The desire to bring figures from the pagan past into line with

conventional Christian morality was a pressing one, and perhaps nowhere more than

in the realm of the public theater, where pagan stories might be aired for the

consumption of the common people. This confluence of factors led to a general state

of affairs in which the more accessible a given version of a Greek tragedy was, the

more alteration it underwent—specifically, alterations designed to erase traces of

religious and moral difference from early modern conceptions of Christian morality.

We can see this trend most clearly in the differences between reading and

performance practices when it came to Greek tragedy. Despite the rapid spread of

Greek tragic texts—whether in Greek, Latin, or the various national languages of

Western Europe—revival of Greek tragedy as a performance practice was much

slower in coming, and oddly configured when it arrived. In keeping with their

primarily scholastic uses in the Byzantine Empire and their survival as *sententiae* in

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[73] On the pressure to make all cultures, even polytheistic ones, consistent with European conceptions of
a monotheistic universe during the early modern period, see Gary Tomlinson, "Fear of Singing
(Episodes from Early Latin America)," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural
Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); and also Olive
Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the
Americas* (Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1984).

the West, Greek tragedies during the Renaissance served mainly as a tool for teaching

ancient languages and the art of rhetoric to the (mostly) sons and (occasionally)

daughters of Western Europe's aristocratic families.[74] What few performances of

Greek tragedy there were tended to be executed in scholastic contexts, at universities

and aristocratic houses, and almost never made it onto public stages.[75] The one

notable exception, the 1585 Vicenza *Oedipus*, failed to inspire other performances of

translated Greek drama to such an extent that it represents the only known public

revival of a Greek tragedy for two hundred years.[76] Instead, Greek tragedy was

dissected into its component parts, recombined, stitched together with other

performance practices derived from the medieval theater, sanitized in order to be

suitable for consumption by a Christian public, and thrown up onto the public stages

of Europe in a number of different national configurations, each of which represented

a totally different approach to the revival of the Greek theater.

This extreme tendency to adapt when preparing a play for public consumption

is significant given the small degree of overlap between those who had access to the

unadapted texts of Greek tragedy and those who formed the audiences of the public

theaters. While literacy was on the rise in early modern Western Europe, becoming

[74]Though classical learning was mostly confined to men in early modern Europe, there were a few
exceptions to this rule, including, notably, Lady Jane Lumley, the author of the first known
translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis* into English. Like her fellow translators among the educated elite,
Lumley created her translation for reading within her social circle and private presentation in an
aristocratic house—it was never staged in public and printings of it are rare before the twentieth
century. On this translation and the occasional investment of wealthy families in educating
daughters for the status enhancement this could bring, see Purkiss, "Introduction."
[75]For a thorough look at the tradition of private and scholastic performances of Greek tragedy in the
English context, see Bruce R. Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage
1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
[76]On this, see Burian, "Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: The Renaissance to the Present."

steadily more prevalent from roughly 1500 to 1800, its distribution was grossly uneven.[77] Much of the increase in literacy represented the move from educating only the upper classes to educating the upper and middle classes, leaving the bulk of the peasant and working-class semi- or completely illiterate despite the overall rise in literacy. Women's education lagged behind men's in every social class, with even upper-class women's reading and writing skills only comparable to those of men in the middle classes rather than those of their own male peers.[78] And although cities, where most theatrical Greek revival movements got their start, tended to be more literate than the country, literacy within cities tended to vary by district, such that the populations of certain neighborhoods were largely illiterate even in the midst of an overall highly literate populace. Public plays drew crowds from across all social classes, genders, and neighborhoods, but published playtexts of unadapted Greek tragedies, even in translation, were accessible only to those who could read (or had someone who could read aloud to them) and had the money to purchase them (classical texts were quite expensive by comparison with more common reading material like pamphlets, almanacs, or religious texts).[79] Even within the group that could access unadapted Greek plays, it should not be assumed that all did so—studies of book lists contained in wills show that the majority of owned books were religious in nature (the Bible, the Book of Hours) and that ownership of classical or Humanist

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[77]For a thorough and comprehensive look at literacy in Europe over this time period, see R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, England: Longman, Pearson Education Ltd., 2002).

[78]Ibid., 145.

[79]Ibid., 203.

texts tended to be confined largely to the upper classes even as literacy spread down into the middle class.[80] The theatrical adaptations that fueled the Greek revival movements of the public theaters, then, should be acknowledged as the primary or possibly the only avenue of access to ancient Greek tragedy for large demographic swaths of their audiences, particularly women and the lower classes. For such audience members, adaptations do not merely alter their Greek source texts, they supplant them. Reworked, sanitized, and hybridized versions of Greek tragedy were not only the staple fare of the theatrical Greek revival movements, they were the most accessible depiction of Greek tragedy—in both form and content—available to the uneducated.

Variations in the different national movements to practice Greek revival meant that the citizens of different nations were presented with different substitute pictures of Greek tragedy. The first of these heavily adapted Greek revival movements to become a major national trend was Italian opera,[81] a genre that drew upon a selected handful of Greek staging practices for its form and plots derived from Latin myth collections for its content.[82] Over time, this particular form of Greek revival achieved immense popularity throughout Western Europe, itself mutating as it shifted times and countries.[83] In something of a delayed echo of the spread of Greek texts from Italy to the rest of Western Europe, Greek performance practices in the form of Italian

[80]Ibid., 208-15.
[81]Explored in greater depth in "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" below.
[82]Along with medieval and Renaissance influences for its music. For a look at the various historical performance practices that fed into early Italian opera, see Helen M. Greenwald, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[83]See my discussion in "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" below.

opera followed much the same route over a much greater span of time, spreading

from Italy to France, Spain, England, and the German states (among others) and

changing along the way. As it moved, opera was localized and nationalized, the

differences between regional forms becoming points of pride for the various nations

that adopted it, and in the process its associations with the ancient theater were largely

forgotten. Yet its continuing kinship with ancient performance forms caused Greek

elements to resurface again and again, especially when opera met and hybridized with

other theatrical trends informed by classical texts—most notably the trend of French

neoclassicism.[84]

Slightly after the foundation of Italian opera but somewhat before its major

spread, Greek revival surfaced in this different form in France, where serious study of

the Greek philosopher Aristotle and his critical treatise on tragedy led to a codified set

of rules for spoken drama that came to be known as French neoclassicism.[85] French

neoclassicism was largely a movement of form that deployed occasional uses of

Greek content, and was in fact one of the first Greek revival movements to directly

adapt Greek tragic plots.[86] Although the majority of plays written during this

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[84]On the especially Greek effects of the meeting between Italian opera and French neoclassicism, see
    "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" below.

[85]A fuller exploration of this movement is provided in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" below.

[86]The Italians, as stated above, largely used Latin myth collections for their source material. The
    English at this time made occasional adaptations of Latin tragedies and comedies, but rarely
    Greek. The Spanish, one of Western Europe's most vehemently Christian nations during this
    period, tended to reject ancient Pagan drama entirely, instead creating a flourishing national theater
    of their own built more on the tradition of medieval Christian religious drama than on any classical
    model, Greek or Roman. Germany at this time had no national theater to speak of, and indeed, no
    one nation, being (like Italy) broken up into a series of independent duchies. For a broad look at
    national differences and transnational exchanges in early modern Western European theater, see
    Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater* (Aldershot,
    England: Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

movement were French plots presented in a Greek-derived form, some of its most popular and successful plays were direct adaptations of Greek tragedies. Again, *Iphigenia in Aulis* was singled out for special treatment here, serving as the source text for the most popular play of French neoclassicism's most famous playwright: Jean Racine's *Iphigénie*.[87] Like Italian opera, French neoclassicism was soon exported to other countries, hybridized with other genres,[88] and otherwise turned into an influential and rather more fluid element of subsequent movements.

It was the influence of French neoclassicism when imported to England that caused the English theater to finally turn its attention to ancient Greece. While Greek revival movements were flourishing in Italy and France, England had constructed a robust national theater tradition that honored 'antiquity' by borrowing both forms and content from Latin-language Roman dramas. Like its parallel Greek movements, this Roman movement was mixed with influences from medieval Christian theatrical traditions[89] and elements borrowed from England's international neighbors on the continent[90] to form a new, hybridized genre rather than strictly reviving an ancient

[87]Jean Racine, "Iphigénie," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768). While not currently Racine's most popular play (that honor is accorded to his *Phèdre* at present), *Iphigénie* was the most popular and successful of his plays in his own lifetime and for about a century afterward (on this point, see John Cairncross, "Introduction to *Iphigenia*," in *Jean Racine: Iphigenia; Phaedra; Athaliah*, ed. John Cairncross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963)). Although Racine adapted the majority of his works from classical models, and hence did not necessarily single out *Iphigenia in Aulis* himself, the extreme popularity of this play attests to the vogue that Iphigenia enjoyed among the Greek heroes and heroines during this time. Racine's version of this play serves as a major focus of this dissertation: his own script is examined in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" below, and adaptations of it form several of the case studies examined in subsequent chapters, as well.

[88]Including opera itself. See "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" below.

[89]On the medieval influences on English theater, see Raphael Falco, "Medieval and Reformation Roots," in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2002).

[90]See, for example, Newman's exploration of the influence of Italian *commedia dell'arte* on English

theater.[91] With the rising cultural influence of French neoclassical drama in the latter half of the seventeenth century, however, English playwrights began to turn their attention to Greek subjects; though interestingly, they largely retained the Latin-based forms of their own theater even when adapting Greek plays. In this particular form of Greek revival, Greek tragedies were rarely adapted directly—instead, English playwrights adapted French adaptations of Greek source texts. In this context, the fame of Racine's *Iphigénie*, coupled with the established translations of *Iphigenia in Aulis* by Erasmus and Lady Jane Lumley, caused Iphigenia to be the "serious heroine who . . . walked all the major London stages more than any other Greek tragic figure" between 1660 and 1734.[92] Indeed, the popularity of both Iphigenia plays all over Western Europe is attested by the sheer number of adaptations they spawned during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: more than a hundred are still known.[93]

The final movement of the hybridized Greek revival vogue was to play out in Germany, where a desire to create a national theater on the models of France and England gave birth to the movement subsequently known as Weimar Classicism.[94] In

comedy: Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

[91]For my discussion of the influences on the English national theater and its encounter with French neoclassicism, see "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" below. For a full-length study on the various ideological and formal threads feeding into the creation of the English theatrical tradition, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*.

[92]Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 33.

[93]In his complete survey of these adaptations, Gliksohn counts 119 published translations and adaptations of the two Iphigenia stories in eight different languages from 1506-1817. See Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*.

[94]For a general look at the movement of Weimar classicism, see David Gallagher, *Weimar Classicism: Studies in Goethe, Schiller, Forster, Berlepsch, Wieland, Herder, and Steiner* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010). On the place of classicism within the longer scope of German theatrical development, see Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger, *A History of German Theatre* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

this immensely successful theatrical experiment, the influences of France and

England on both form and content were hybridized with German national

performance forms and strong principles of classicism in art derived from Johann

Joachim Winckelmann's influential eighteenth-century writings.[95] More than any

other Greek revival movement, Weimar Classicism embraced the idea of festival as

central to ancient Greek theater, and went out of its way to create large-scale

theatrical events that would serve as rallying points for entire communities. The

German Greek revival movement was also unique in the heterogeneity of its

borrowings from the ancient theater; rather than following set dramatic forms as other

neoclassical movements had done, different classical elements were incorporated into

different plays at the discretion of the playwright and the director. This element of

choice, in part, helped give rise to the 'director's theater,' an approach to theatrical

production which emphasized the director as a creative visionary layering

interpretation onto the playtext.[96] The spread of this approach to dramatic production

coincided, at last, with the rise of public performances of Greek tragedy in

translation—as directors began to harness the interpretive (and hence, adaptive)

power of staging, the heavy textual adaptations of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries

finally fell by the wayside. Before they did, however, Weimar Classicism gave Greek

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[95]Winkelmaan, an eighteenth-century art historian and archaeologist, had a great influence on both the interpretation and popularity of classical arts of all kinds in Germany. See his enormously successful book, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (Baden-Baden and Strasbourg: Heitz, 1966). For a recent English translation, see Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity* [Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums], trans. Alex Potts (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2006).

[96] See Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

adaptation its swan song in the form of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, an immensely influential play which also represented the only adaptive version of *Iphigenia in Tauris* ever to meet with international success. This variant of the story, a paean to the Enlightenment ideals of cooperation, toleration, and the universal advance of Western civilization, was to have a huge impact on both the adaptive tradition of the Iphigenia in Tauris myth and the larger project of the European Enlightenment both at home and abroad.[97]

As this rapid survey of Iphigenia's journey from prehistoric Greece to early modern Western Europe shows, the process of adaptation is varied and convoluted, dependent on many factors, and intimately intertwined with the process of canonization. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, the critical acclaim garnered by *Iphigenia in Aulis*, especially in its popular variant as Racine's *Iphigénie*, led to a dual process of canonization/adaptation that kept this particular story relatively static, even as it moved between countries and genres over time. Although *Iphigenia in Tauris* proved equally popular as a source text judging by sheer number of adaptations, the general agreement among early modern Europeans that Euripides's version was unstageable[98] led to a far greater array of extremely divergent retellings

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[97]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Flensburg: Futura-Ed., 1989). On the play and its influence, see Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides' Black Sea Tragedy*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a famous critique of this play's contribution to the greater European colonial project, see Helga Geyer-Ryan, "Prefigurative Racism in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*," in *Fables of Desire: Studies in the Ethics of Art and Gender* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994).

[98]See, among others, the comments of De La Grange-Chancel on this topic in the preface to his adaptation of this play. François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," in *Oeuvres de Monsieur De La Grange-Chancel*, ed. François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1758), 88. In "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France," I speculate on several possible reasons for this declaration of the play as unstageable—see below.

of the story, demonstrating that with a lesser degree of canonization comes greater flexibility of narrative. Yet even with these generalities in mind, we will find in the coming case studies instances of continuity in *Iphigenia in Tauris* and change in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, showing the process of adaptation to be dependent on both similarity and difference in each and every case.

The similarities and differences that I examine are intimately connected with culture and the creation of authoritative worldviews, and as such—as in the case of the Greek adaptive chains with which I began this chapter—must be understood within the context of the collective. Though it may be tempting, when examining eras for which we have authorial names and more extensive author biographies, to ascribe the shifts in these adaptational chains to our post-Romantic notions of individual psychology, my analysis here attempts to push back against that trend. Dominant formations, collective cultural fictions, and hegemonic narratives form the subjects of my analysis; and these adaptations, with their attendant similarities and differences, evince how these things assert themselves in the process of mediation by many hands, both named and unnamed. Throughout the analysis that follows, I will refer to texts and characters using the names of their credited authors—*Euripides's* Iphigenia vs. *Racine's* Iphigenia and so forth. My use of these names, however, is meant as a shorthand to refer to the combined mediators who gave rise to the particular text in question; "Euripides" therefore refers to a minimum of Euripides, Euripides the Younger, and the Revisor, and actually encompasses all those whose contributions led to the story as presented in that form. The modern playwrights, too, although referred

to by name in their texts and prefaces, should be treated only as the final mediator

through whom a plethora of inherited ideas have flowed before coalescing into the

text at hand. It is for this reason that my explanations of adaptive changes, when I

offer them, are always based upon large-scale cultural trends rather than the

biographical details of individual authors' lives. The individual (modern) author,

having final say over what does or does not go into his[99] text, *is* important; but his

choices are both limited and inflected by the bounds of the language, culture, and

social group within which he writes.

    With all of these precautions in mind, then, let us turn to the complex dance of

sameness and difference created by the two Iphigenia plays in partnership with each

other, with their later adaptations, and of those later adaptations with one another.

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[99]I use the male pronoun here because the credited playwrights I treat in subsequent chapters are,
without exception, male. I have no doubt, however, that uncredited women did make contributions
to many of these texts, even if only through casual discussion with the credited male authors. See
my discussion in the introduction above.

Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France

Though Iphigenia had been studied across Western Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was in the seventeenth century and in France that she began to gain recognition as a popular figure of the public stage. Neoclassicism, the name that we, in later years, have given to France's particular brand of Greek revival movement, provided not only Iphigenia but many other figures of ancient tragedy with new stages to walk on after centuries of being largely confined to the library and the classroom. In this chapter, I examine neoclassicism's engagement with its classical sources through a study of the Iphigenia adaptations it produced, with an eye specifically to the cultural problems posed by incorporating Greek stories into the government-sponsored self-presentation of absolutist, colonial France.

This engagement with the classical part of French neoclassicism centers around the challenge it presents to binary thinking within a historical period notorious for its use of binarism. Binary thinking denotes a learned, culturally inherited way of thinking about the world that is founded on oppositional pairs, from constructions as innocuous as up/down or night/day; to somewhat more loaded categories such as inside/outside, forward/back, or light/dark; and extending to such problematic binary oppositions as man/woman, civilized/savage, good/evil, and true/false. Binary thinking has historically played a huge role in European culture[1] and especially in

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[1]Some scholars trace this preoccupation back to the influence of Manichaeism, a religion of the third and fourth centuries C. E., many of whose doctrines were absorbed into early Christianity especially via the writings of Augustine of Hippo, who was a Manichaean before converting to Catholicism. Although Augustine contested many of the tenets of his former faith, their oppositional frameworks of good/evil, light/dark, spirit/body had a major influence on his thinking and writing, and Augustine in turn remains one of the most influential Christian theologians to this

creating and maintaining divisions between 'Us' and 'Them,' insider and outsider,

whether those divisions be based upon nationality, sexuality, religion, linguistic

group, race, gender, physical or mental ability, or any other specific characteristic

used to articulate difference. Such distinctions, in the case of Europe nearly always

organized hierarchically (with difference automatically implying membership in a

superior or inferior group) have repeatedly come under fire in academia, most often

from within fields such as postcolonial studies, gender studies, and queer studies,

where those populations most damaged by being labeled different and inferior serve

as the object of study.[2] An emerging interest in the possibility and use of 'third

terms,'—that is, new categories which do not fit into and therefore challenge binary

oppositions—has been independently articulated by several scholars working within

several disparate fields and subfields,[3] and informs much of the writing on categories

of 'Us' vs. 'Them' being done in a multitude of disciplines.[4]

    Such studies, focused on what has come to be known as the Self/Other

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day. On Manichaeism, its influence on early Christianity, and its involvement with the writings of St. Augustine, see J. Kevin Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy*, ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

[2]Critiques of binary thinking have come from scholars and works as notable as Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) and Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[3]See, for example, Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), writing from gender and queer studies; and VèVè A. Clark, "Developing Diaspora Literacy and Marasa Consciousness," *Theatre Survey* 50, no. 1 (2009), writing from postcolonial and performance studies. Both works take as their primary subject of interest the use of third terms to challenge binaries.

[4] Cross-cultural studies on the existence and operation of 'third genders,' especially, has done much to destabilize the Western binary with the most insistent claim to 'naturalness,' that of the dyadic male/female gender system. For a collection of studies surrounding this important contribution to the dismantling of binary thinking, see Gilbert Herdt, ed., *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

dichotomy,[5] clearly demonstrate the ways in which this imaginary construct falls short of representing reality, and it is not my intention to merely re-draw those same conclusions here. Rather, I aim to show how the process of adaptation, in the context of French neoclassicism, has been used to create and maintain the illusion that the Self/Other dichotomy *does* represent reality, and been used as a tool for erasing existing third terms which would otherwise present a challenge to binary thinking. The ancient Greeks, as a people who no longer existed but whose literary and ideological constructs had come down to modern France as a cultural inheritance, presented an ontological challenge to the Self/Other dichotomy in early modern French thought. Unlike France's definitively 'othered' colonial subjects (e.g. Native Americans) and international rivals (e.g. the English), the ideas of the long-vanished Greeks were incorporated into the French national character and held up as part of a carefully cultivated French cultural aesthetic.[6] Yet there were elements of Greek culture, traces of which are clearly present in their surviving texts,[7] which could not be incorporated into the French sense of 'Self' without profoundly altering that category and blurring the distinction between the French and various cultural 'Others.' The ancient Greeks were thus neither 'Self' nor 'Other' with respect to the early modern French, but a third term, the cultural ancestor, the 'Other-Self.' This, like all

[5]Tamise van Pelt traces the development and use of this phrase from Plato through such influential modern thinkers as Levinas, de Beauvoir, Kojève, Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre, Fanon, Bhabha, Butler, and most especially Lacan. See Tamise van Pelt, "Otherness," *Postmodern Culture: An Electronic Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism* 10, no. 2 (2000).
[6]Greek influences being actively codified into the platforms of institutions whose job was specifically to standardize and promote French culture. See my discussion of the *Académie Française* below.
[7]For specifics, see my discussions of the case study plays below.

third terms, posed a danger to binary thinking, and thus could not be incorporated into dominant cultural formations without alteration. Specifically, the Greeks in an unmediated form as the 'Other-Self'—culturally different from the French 'Self'— could not be exposed to the (possibly) uneducated and impressionable masses who made up the audiences of the public theaters. While the original or translated texts of ancient Greek plays were studied by (primarily) male members of the educated elite, only heavily adapted versions of these plays were presented before the both gender- and class-mixed public. As a result, Greek plays destined for performance on the public stage and in the vernacular were subjected to a process of adaptation whose primary purpose seems to have been the erasure of all traces of real[8] cultural difference between ancient Greece and modern France: a process that would turn the ambiguous 'Other-Self' into an acceptable version of the wholly unambiguous 'Self' fit for presentation on the public stage.

In order to demonstrate this process, this chapter is broken into four sections. The first sets up the heavy cultural investment of the French nation (as represented and dictated by the power centered around its absolute monarchy) in incorporating Greek cultural output, and especially tragedy, into its national self-presentation. The second, third, and fourth sections each focus on a given adaptation of one of the

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[8]I use the word 'real' here to distinguish differences in the organization and perception of reality from superficial or aesthetic cultural differences (in clothing, food, architecture, etc.) which do not present a fundamental threat to a modern French worldview. Polytheism, for example, as we will see below, was highly threatening to a monotheistic Christian worldview if engaged on its own terms—yet it could easily be disguised as a merely superficial difference by making it appear as if the various pagan deities of ancient Greece all agreed with one another and presented a single, unified divine will (functionally becoming a single, omnipotent being). See my discussion of Racine's *Iphigénie* below.

Iphigenia plays, interrogating through a close reading of both Greek source text and French adaptation what alterations or erasures have been made and why. In the process, a picture emerges of those elements of Greek culture which were deemed unsuitable for the public stage, and how the threats presented by these elements were neutralized in the process of adaptation.

The 'Neo' and the 'Classical' in French Neoclassicism

The artistic movement that we now call neoclassicism, despite its beginnings in Renaissance Italy, began to gain international acclaim and recognition only when it met up with French absolutism as a form of Greek revival co-opted into France's project of national centralization and cultural domination. During the seventeenth century, France began a major shift in its governmental organization from a decentralized, semi-feudal system of relative provincial autonomy to a highly centralized, absolutist monarchy.[9] As a part of this shift, the newly centralized government began to exert control over areas of national production which had previously been relatively unrestricted, including literary and dramatic output. In the case of literature and drama, such control was achieved through the founding of the *Académie Française* [French Academy], the first of several government-run academies set up to create and enforce a unified—and uniform—vision for French creative output. Within the borders of France, this unified vision served as one of

[9]For a long view of these developments, see G. R. R. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966). For a more detailed look at the concept of absolutism and both its strengths and shortcomings when applied to this historical period, see Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London and New York: Longman, 1992).

many absolutist power structures, giving the centralized, monarchical government control over French language and literature in the same way it had control over such things as taxation and military might. Outside the borders of France, this standardized form of literary output created a distinct and recognizable 'French style' suitable for export that could be codified, admired, and imitated by others—including those 'Others' brought into the French fold by its colonial ambitions. France's colonial strategy at this time, in the Americas and elsewhere, was based largely on the idea of its own cultural superiority—native peoples, once exposed to the magnificence of the French language, food, literature, and lifestyle, would be so eager to adopt these things that they would willingly submit to French political rule.[10] This strategy, however, required that French culture be standardized to the point that it was easily recognized and grasped by cultural outsiders; the standardization of style created and enforced by the Academy was thus intimately connected with French nationalism as both a domestic and a colonial construct.

Yet in the case of drama, specifically, this 'French style' was openly founded on precepts drawn from ancient Greece. More than two thousand years, roughly two thousand miles, and a great deal of cultural difference separates fifth-century B.C.E. Athens from seventeenth-century Paris, and yet, over the course of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, a form of tragedy based on the ancient Greek model was purposefully constructed and adopted by the intellectual and court circles

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[10]For a more detailed exploration of the links between the *Académie Française*, colonialism, and French culture as codified for export, see Sara E. Melzer, "'Voluntary Subjection': France's Theory of Colonization / Culture in the Seventeenth Century," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

surrounding the French monarch as one part of the project to standardize and export French culture. Taking primarily Aristotle's *Περὶ ποιητικῆς* [*Poetics*][11] and Horace's *Ars Poetica*[12] as a basis and joining a critical conversation begun in Italy,[13] French intellectuals such as La Mesnardière,[14] l'abbé d'Aubignac,[15] Boileau,[16] and La Bruyère[17] argued the proper structures, aims, and subjects of tragedy on the basis of imitation of *les anciens* [the ancients], an imaginary group comprised of all surviving authors from Homer (eighth-century B.C.E. Greek) to the poets of the last days of the Roman Empire (fifth century C.E.). The form of tragedy which emerged out of this debate—notably Greek-inspired yet far from identical to the tragic forms of ancient Athens—came to be hailed as a French achievement and, as a result, standardized and policed by the *Académie Française*.

This form of tragedy was centrally characterized by a series of rules hailed as deriving from 'the ancients' but in reality the new invention of absolutist France. Such rules included the 'three unities' (stipulating that the play must be unified in time, place, and action); '*vraisemblance*' [verisimilitude], the requirement that the action be

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[11]Written in the fourth century B.C.E. in Greek.

[12]Written in the first century B.C.E. in Latin.

[13]Primarily by Castelvetro, whose *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta* [*Poetics of Aristotle Translated into the Vulgate and Explained*] (my thanks to Loredana Carletti for this translation) had an incalculable influence on the way that Aristotle was read and understood by subsequent Western European dramatic theorists. Aristotle and Lodovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta* (Basel: Pietro de Sedabonis, 1576).

[14] Jules La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1639), e-book.

[15]Ll'abbé d'Aubignac, La Pratique du Théâtre, (Amsterdam: Jean Frederic Bernard, 1715), http://books.google.com/books?id=5EvaydTjLQoC&pg=PP22&dq=d%27Aubignac+Pratique+du+th%C3%A9%C3%A2tre&hl=en&sa=X&ei=InRzVL39OIa0oQTMzoDACw&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=d'Aubignac%20Pratique%20du%20th%C3%A9%C3%A2tre&f=false. e-book.

[16]Nicolas Boileau Despréaux, *L'Art poétique suivi de sa IX-e satire, et de son épitre à M. de Lamoignon* (Lyon: Tournachon-Molin, 1805).

[17]Jean de La Bruyère, *Les caracteres* (Paris: Laurent Prault, Libraire, 1768).

plausible or credible (a subcategory of which dictated that characters act in accordance with the characteristics 'naturally' accruing to their age, rank, and sex); and '*bienséance*,' the observance of propriety (which kept unsavory things like death off the stage).[18] These rules, despite being greatly expanded from the barest hints in Aristotle and Horace, were widely attributed to the wisdom of 'the ancients' and held up as models for modern playwrights to follow. To give just one example of this exaggerating process, the three unities were universally attributed to Aristotle but are not all found in his work. Aristotle discusses the idea that plays should follow the progress of a unified action,[19] makes some offhand mention of the reduced timescale of tragedy by comparison with epic verse,[20] and does not mention a unity of place. The first dramatic theorist to extrapolate from Aristotle and to lay the three unities out as rules was the Italian Lodovico Castelvetro, who was widely read and copied by successive waves of dramatic theorists all over Europe.[21] After his writing, the three unities were treated as though they were both truly Aristotelian and actual rules for the writing of classical drama, despite the fact that they were regularly broken by actual ancient dramatists. This process alone is an excellent example of the erasure of specificities and differences that characterized writing and thinking about 'the

[18]For a thorough exploration of these 'rules,' their derivation from Aristotle and Horace, and the changes of interpretation they underwent as they moved from place to place and critic to critic, see Marvin A. Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[19]Aristotle *Poetics* VII. See Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Aristotle: Poetics, Longinus: On the Sublime, Demetrius: On Style*, ed. Stephen Halliwell, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[20]Aristotle *Poetics* V.

[21] See Aristotle and Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta*. On the widespread influence of this text, see Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*.

ancients' from the Renaissance through about the nineteenth century.

Moreover, unlike Aristotle and Horace, whose critical works on tragedy as a genre postdated the majority of the surviving plays they purported to address, French dramatic critics wrote consciously prescriptive works intended to be read and followed by the playwrights of future dramas, making the neoclassical movement more rigid and formalized than the classical movement it supposedly aimed to imitate. The use of strict aesthetic rules in the composition of tragedy, then, was not precisely a recurrence of an ancient practice, though the rules themselves were ostensibly derived from ancient sources. Rather, these aesthetic principals and their strict enforcement were the effects of an absolutist, colonial government for whom standardization served both as a method of control and an effective strategy for cultural export.

Nor were these prescriptions as easily ignored as they might have been in other times, countries, or circles. During the period both before and during the establishment of the *Académie Française*, an active *salon* culture in Paris had worked to define a social circle of *Hommes de Lettres* [Men of Letters], aristocrats or aristocratic hangers-on whose speech, deportment, and *bon goût* [good taste] set them apart from the rabble and the provincial French. The *salons*, a series of private literary clubs hosted largely by aristocratic women in their own homes, were centers both for critique and for the presentation of new works by artists who aspired to gain favor from the most respected circles.[22] In order to gain and retain admittance to these

[22]The majority of the most famous and influential *salons* were founded by aristocratic women,

exclusive groups, one had to cultivate an aesthetic sense in line with group ideas

about 'good taste,' particularly with regard to artistic works—including plays, and that

most supreme of theatrical arts, tragedy.[23] As Nicholas Hammond explores in his

article "Highly Irregular: Defining Tragicomedy in Seventeenth-century France," this

carefully cultivated valuation of tragedy among the Paris elite was in part a pushback

against the popularity of the 'hybrid' form of tragicomedy popular all over Europe as

the most commercially successful performance genre.[24] During the rise of the

professional, public, and commercial theaters toward the end of the Renaissance, the

need to generate revenue from all social classes simultaneously caused playwrights to

mix the conventions of comedy (which focused on lower-class characters) with the

conventions of tragedy (which focused on upper-class ones). Tragicomedy, having

gotten its start in Italy where the earliest commercial theaters were established, was

particularly associated in France with foreign theatrical practices (Italian, Spanish)

and enjoyed more popularity in the provinces than in the capital. In the *salons*, where

aristocrats convened specifically to cultivate a kind of 'good taste' different from that

of provincials, foreigners, and the lower classes, a renewed interest in 'pure'

including such celebrated names as the Marquise de Rambouillet, Mme. de Scudéry, and Mme. de La Fayette. The membership of the *salons*, however, was definitively co-educational, with many prominent men as regular participants. For an informative list of the *salons* and an exploration of their gender composition, social power, and differing ideologies, see Anne E. Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

[23]La Mesnardière, for example, refers to the genre of tragedy using glowing and superlative language throughout his *Poëtique*, referring to it in the very first section of his writing as "*la plus noble*" [the most noble] genre of poetry. See La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique*: 6.

[24] Nicholas Hammond, "Highly Irregular: Defining Tragicomedy in Seventeenth-Century France," in Subha Mukherji and Raphael Lyne, eds., *Early Modern Tragicomedy*, Studies in Renaissance Literature, vol. 22 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

tragedy—demarcated by a clearly-defined set of rules that set it apart from the more popular tragicomedy—became the order of the day. And what better way to define this more refined theatrical genre than by hearkening back to the ancients, who so resolutely separated comedy from tragedy?[25] The new, French tragedy, built upon a foundation of ancient philosophy and drama, allowed the Parisian aristocracy to create an image of French national artistry that might command the kind of respect afforded to the artists of Athens's Golden Age. It was this particular version of Frenchness (aristocratic, Parisian, conformist) that was to be held up and touted by governmental institutions like the *Académie Française* as that which was truly French and worthy of export to—and imitation by—foreign countries, not the heterogeneous mix of provincial dialects, customs, and theatrical styles that truly comprised France's reality.[26] When a play or playwright stepped outside this narrow set of aesthetic criteria, threatening the standardization of French 'good taste,' both the members of the *salons* and the Academy lost no time in issuing harsh critiques to get the playwright back into line.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in the *Querelle du Cid* [Dispute over *le Cid*], which took place over the course of 1637 and into 1638, only a few short years after the Academy's initial founding.[27] This particular pamphlet war demonstrated the

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[25] As Hammond points out, only two ancient plays were ever tentatively put forward as ancient examples of tragicomedy (Euripides's Κύκλωψ [*Cyclops*], a satyr play from fifth-century B.C.E. Athens, and Plautus's *Amphitryon*, a comedy from the third-century B.C.E. Roman Republic), and even then, this designation was up for debate and hotly contested by some of the staunchest upholders of tragic supremacy, including the abbé d'Aubignac. See Ibid., 78-79.

[26] On the heterogeneity of French culture and the aristocratic project to override, centralize, and standardize it, see Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*.

[27] The *Académie Française* was founded in 1635 and Corneille's *Le Cid* was written in 1637. Critiques

willingness of the Academy and its aristocratic supporters to harshly censure artists

who did not follow its rules.[28] In this case, the artist was Pierre Corneille, one of the

most celebrated (and subsequently canonized) playwrights of his time. His

tragicomedy *le Cid*, adapted from a Spanish source play, was a popular success but—

in addition to being a hybridized genre of foreign origin—broke with several rules on

dramatic form as laid out by the Academy, primarily the three unities. The unities of

time, place, and action dictated, respectively, that plays should take place within a

timeframe of no more than twenty-four hours, at a single location, and should focus

on one problem of dramatic magnitude (as opposed to a series of independent events).

Despite the fact that these rules were not always observed by ancient dramatists—

Aristotle having expressed his preference for them nearly a century after all of the

surviving tragedies had already been written—the *Académie Française* made it clear

in the Dispute over *le Cid* that it meant for neoclassical playwrights to follow them to

the letter, popular opinion notwithstanding. The Academy's scathing critique, *Les*

sentiments de l'Académie Française sur la Tragi-Comédie du Cid [*The sentiments of*

the French Academy on the Tragicomedy le Cid],[29] combined with the various

pamphlet critiques of other playwrights, were enough to drive Corneille not only to

in pamphlet form began to appear almost immediately, authored by members of both the *salons* and the Academy. The Academy's formal critique of the play was written the following year, capping the debate in 1638. See Jean Chapelain, *Les sentiments de l'Académie Française sur la Tragi-Comédie du Cid* (Jean Camusat: Paris, 1638).

[28]Readers interested in a more in-depth exploration of the *Querelle du Cid* and its role in establishing the authority of the Academy are encouraged to see "Chapter 1: Theater and Study in the Querelle du *Cid*" in Jessica N. Kamin, "Playwrights on the Threshold Between Stage and Study: Paratexts and Polemical Texts in Seventeenth Century French Theater" (dissertation, University of Washington, 2012), http://hdl.handle.net/1773/20540.

[29]Chapelain, *Les sentiments de l'Académie Française sur la Tragi-Comédie du Cid*.

issue revised versions of the play more in line with neoclassical rules (tellingly

recategorized as a tragedy), but also to obey these rules scrupulously in all his

subsequent dramatic works.[30] Through this early power struggle, the Academy

established its dominance in theatrical matters: *it* would set the standards, *it* would

enforce them, and the standards in question would be built upon an ancient (read:

Aristotelian) foundation.

Even within this narrow and fairly unified set of criteria for what tragedy

should be, however, there were factions and differences of opinion. The *salons*, the

pioneers of this codifying movement, were informal, co-educational, and largely run

by women, who wielded substantial cultural power through them as taste-makers

despite barriers to their making direct and acknowledged contributions as playwrights

or official censors. Their ideas, highly influential in the Parisian theater scene, were

often adopted by official ministers of the state—most notably the absolutist minister

Cardinal Richelieu and, later, Louis XIV—for the purpose of training young (male)

artists in the proper execution of artworks. The process of codifying these unofficial

cultural ideals into official French cultural products, however, always entailed some

degree of change, and this change often centered around placing greater emphasis on

the ancient contribution (competence in ancient languages being largely the domain

of highly educated male government officials). Emerging out of the *salon* culture, the

Académie Française, founded in 1634 on the orders of Cardinal Richelieu, took the

aesthetic criteria already in circulation as exhibiting 'good taste' and raised them to the

[30]See Pierre Corneille, *Corneille: théâtre complet* (Paris: Le Catalogue des Lettres, 1998).

level of absolute commandments, placing an even greater emphasis on ancient models in the process. Whereas membership in the *salons* had been composed of a mixture of individuals, some of whom had no training in classical languages (including most women), the Academy was made up exclusively of men with classical education, and its dedication to imitating the ancients in both form and (often) content was markedly stronger. These differences were a major contributing factor to the second famous dispute to rock French neoclassicism: the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* [Dispute of the Ancients and the Moderns].

This second dispute was in many ways an argument between the (formal, masculinized, erudite) Academy and its defenders and the (informal, feminized, less educated) *salons* and their defenders. In the process, this dispute figured the Academy as an institution that upheld the authority of ancient subjects and languages as well as ancient forms. Generally held to have begun in the 1680's with the publication of Charles Perrault's *Le siècle de Louis le Grand* [*The Century of Louis the Great*],[31] this debate ran hot throughout the 1690's and into the turn of the century, cooling somewhat but not completely dying out over the course of the eighteenth century. Though ultimately, the debate touched on a number of subjects in a variety of areas of life (science, technology, literature, art, religion, and gender roles, to name just a few), my area of interest is the part of the dispute surrounding literature generally and drama specifically. In brief, this dispute was over the continued utility of studying and

[31]Charles Perrault, *Le Siècle de Louis de le Grand* (Paris: J.B. Roguare, 1687). It should be noted, however, that the publication of this work is more likely to be evidence that the debate had already started than to be its starting point. For a work to be printed for public distribution, there must be some indication of a general interest in the topic already in existence.

recycling ancient subject matter. The 'Ancients'—that is, the defenders of the ancients[32]—argued for the supremacy of ancient Greek and Roman models and the value of imitating them, while the 'Moderns' rebelled against the idea that only those educated in ancient languages (that is, aristocratic men) were properly fit to judge the value of art, claiming that the 'good taste' of modern France (a group expanded out to include aristocratic women and some middle-class men) was equal or superior to that of the ancients.[33] It was within the larger context of this debate that most adaptations of Greek tragedies were written.

Despite the seeming opposition between the positions of the two factions, much of the debate took as its starting premise the question of how France could best recreate the success of ancient Athens as a center of cultural refinement to which the whole world looked. As Sara Melzer so eloquently explores in her article "'Voluntary Subjection': France's Theory of Colonization/Culture in the Seventeenth Century,"[34] France, at this time, was on a mission to make itself the most magnetic culture in the world. The founding of the academies—and especially the *Académie Française*—was meant to promote and enhance the prestige of the French language and French culture, making France a model for others to imitate both in Europe and worldwide.

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[32]Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I refer to the 'Ancients' (capitalized) to mean the seventeenth-century defenders of ancient superiority and to 'the ancients' (lowercase) to indicate the Greek and Roman authors, of the second century C.E. and earlier, who were the objects of this defense.

[33]For an in-depth look at this dispute and its discourses on both gender and education, see Elizabeth L. Berg, "Recognizing Differences: Perrault's Modernist Esthetic in *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*," *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* X, no. 18 (1983).

[34]Melzer, "'Voluntary Subjection': France's Theory of Colonization / Culture in the Seventeenth Century."

This approach to cultural dominance, which Melzer calls alternately "soft colonization" and "voluntary subjection," is in many ways an attempt to recreate the lasting cultural dominance of ancient Athens: though militarily conquered, first by Sparta and subsequently by Rome, Athens's cultural output remained so seductive that its conquerors continued to imitate and spread Athenian language, literature, and values long after the conquest. Though France certainly did not aspire to be conquered militarily (and indeed prided itself on its military dominance during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), it did aspire to be such a linguistic and social force that even those not directly under its political dominion would imitate its customs—and ultimately, chose to put themselves under its political dominion, as well.[35] With this overarching national goal in mind, the Dispute of the Ancients and the Moderns was not necessarily a dispute over *whether* France should aspire to imitate the ancient Athenians, but rather *how* best to do so. The Ancients' position was basically that if Athenian culture had done it once, it could do it again; direct imitation of all that was best from antiquity (including, notably, its literatures and its restriction of public decision-making to the most highly educated men)[36] would turn France into Athens reborn. The Moderns' position held that what had made Athens so appealing was its dedication to fully expressing that which was Athenian—being true to its own national character. Therefore, the best way to successfully recreate its results was to express that which was most quintessentially French; writing new,

[35]See Ibid.
[36]On the facet of this argument that attempts to restrict women's involvement in the public sphere, see
    Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies* and Berg, "Recognizing Differences."

French plots and creating new, French forms for literature, as well as extending jurisdiction over what constitutes 'good taste' to those who spoke only the vernacular (including most members of the *salons*).[37] This debate evinces the complexity and ambiguity of the French elite's relationship to ancient Greece. The very fact that such a dispute could exist—and garner so much attention—during this period testifies to the influence that reverence for 'the ancients' had in the powerful upper echelons and taste-makers of French society at this time.

Yet despite the official power wielded by the Ancients, despite the *Académie Française* and its prescriptions toward imitation of ancient literary forms, despite the fierce defense of ancient authors mounted by the Academy and its allies, when it came to the presentation of ancient tragedy on the stage a flourishing adaptive tradition—even among those who professed themselves defenders of 'the ancients'— gave the lie to a rhetoric predicated on the idea that the ancients were superior, or even equal to, the French. Greek tragedy, when it made its way to the French stage, did so through several processes of change. Firstly, though all educated men could read and write Latin (Latin still being the language of international diplomacy and scholarship, although it was imminently to be replaced by French),[38] only a few of the highly educated could read Greek. Most Greek tragedy therefore passed through Latin translation before being read by its French adapters, and in some cases was translated from Greek to Latin to French (rather than straight from Greek to French) before

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[37]For an analysis of this argument, see Ibid.

[38]In 1714, French was used for the first time in a written peace treaty for the Treaty of Rastadt. See Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*: 260.

being adapted by playwrights who read neither Latin nor Greek.[39] Once through these

various processes of translation, tragedy, at a minimum, would have to be restaged,

since the theatrical conventions were so different between the two performance

contexts[40] and no record of the original Greek music or choreography existed.

Scenery, costumes, and other visual elements would have to be reinvented, adapted to

the conventions of the rectangular indoor theaters of modern France so different from

the massive outdoor amphitheaters of ancient Greece.[41] The French actors, trained in

an entirely different tradition and raised in a completely different culture, would

certainly have interpreted and played their roles differently from their ancient Greek

[39]The first translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis* into Latin was done in 1506 by Erasmus; it was
subsequently translated into French by both Thomas Sebillet and Jacques Amyot, both in the year
1549, then again in 1678 by Pierre Perrault. The first known translation of *Iphigenia in Tauris* into
French was published by Nicolas de Malezieu in 1713. For an extensive look at the various
versions and translations of the Iphigenia plays in circulation during this time, see Jean-Michel
Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de
France, 1985). The translations listed above and in his work, however, are only the translations
which were both published and survived long enough for us to know about them several centuries
later. There were doubtless others in circulation both privately and publicly. Since it was not *de
rigueur* for playwrights of the time to document the translation paths of the particular sources they
consulted, we can only speculate on the translation trajectory that precedes any given adaptation—
although such speculation has been done, and been done well, by Susanna Phillippo in her book
Hellenic Whispers: Modes of Greek Influence in Seventeenth-Century French Drama (see Susanna
Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers: Modes of Greek Influence in Seventeenth-Century French Drama*,
Medieval and Early Modern French Studies (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013)). On the
relative prevalence of Latin translation vs. education in Greek (and the resulting increase in
probability that any given source will have passed through Latin), see "Chapter 5: Refugees and
Publishers" in Robert Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 2004).

[40]Such differences included the physical construction of theaters, costuming conventions, the use of
masks, the composition of the audience, and the occasion of performance. For an excellent
resource on the various aspects of production in the theater of fifth-century B.C.E. Athens, see P.
E. Easterling, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1997). On the physical aspects of theatrical production in seventeenth-century
C.E. France, see Peter D. Arnott, *An Introduction to the French Theatre* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and
Littlefield, 1977).

[41]On the physical construction of ancient Greek theaters, see Audrey Eunice Stanley, "Early Theatre
Structures in Ancient Greece: A Survey of Archeological and Literary Records from the Minoan
Period to 388 B.C." (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1970). On the architectural
design and constraints of early modern French theaters, see Arnott, *An Introduction to the French
Theatre*.

counterparts, not least because seventeenth century theater had long since dropped the use of masks and made the expressive human face a focal point of artistry in performance—a change that is bound to radically alter perceptions of character and emotion by audience and actors alike.[42] Yet despite the substantial opportunity for alteration presented by the processes of both translation and staging, Greek tragedy was virtually always subjected to an additional adaptive process in the form of a new and substantially altered playtext before it was deemed suitable for presentation before a public or even a court audience. The playwrights of this time did not merely transpose ancient playscripts in accordance with French language and staging conventions, they altered plots, added subplots, forced every script into a five-act structure, and did away with choruses entirely, replacing them with throngs of minor named characters who could serve as confidantes to the main ones. Moreover, the characterization of both protagonists and antagonists altered significantly, in most cases amounting to a wholesale Gallicization of the Greek characters, including conforming them to early modern ideas of Christian morality, theology, and 'natural' gender roles.

These changes become especially significant in light of the polarized terms of debate created by the Dispute of the Ancients and the Moderns. All of the playwrights

[42]These differences form a fascinating subject in and of themselves, but lie outside the scope of my project here, which focuses primarily on textual forms of transformation. Luckily, other scholars have given this subject the attention it deserves. On the discomfort with masking traditions exhibited by most monotheistic cultures and the difference in acting styles necessitated by the wearing or discarding of masks, see David Wiles, "The Use of Masks in Modern Performances of Greek Drama," in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millenium*, ed. Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

I examine here have aligned themselves with the 'Ancients' merely by virtue of choosing to adapt Greek plays. Despite the rigidity of the Academy's rules on form, the subject matter of plays was a more open field, and adaptations of actual Greek dramas represented only a minority of new tragedies staged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[43] To choose a Greek subject, then, was to assert the continued value of Greek myth; yet to adapt it post-translation was to covertly point out its flaws, to point up what had to be changed in order to make it suitable for contemporary French audiences. The changes reveal this unacknowledged interplay of admiration and disgust, the whitewashing of those aspects of the cultural ancestor that do not fit with the 'natural order' as envisioned by a Christian Europe. As we will see, this whitewashing allows the 'Other-Self' to blend more easily into 'Self,' subtly hiding the fact that there is any kind of 'third term' in play at all.

It is to these alterations that I will turn in the discussions which follow, for it is in these that one can find the traces of what has been covered up in order to hide the threateningly high degree of cultural difference between Paris and Athens. In order to maintain the fiction that Paris *was* the new Athens, and that French culture was as powerful as Greek culture, these extraordinarily different cultural formations had to read as the same. The ancient Athenians, the cultural ancestors of the modern Parisians, had to appear unambiguously compatible with their distant descendants in

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[43]In his survey of French tragic output during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Geoffrey Brereton shows how Greek subjects competed for stage time with subjects drawn from Roman history, the Bible, medieval romances, French history, and popular novels—ultimately making up only a fraction of the total. See Geoffrey Brereton, *French Tragic Drama in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Methuen and Company, 1973).

every way if those descendants were to lay claim to the Athenian legacy of cultural dominance. Ironically, the French were to tout their similarity to the ancients via a process of *adaptive* change which erased any evidence of *cultural* change, ensuring that any version of a Greek tragedy staged in French, for a French-speaking audience, would be devoid of that which was too Greek, too 'Other,' to be presented to the masses. In this way, neoclassical French tragedy could claim to play up the 'classical' and play down the 'neo' by in fact doing the opposite—suppressing elements which were truly classical and making that which was new appear timeless and universal. In this way, 'the ancients' could be marshaled in support of the cultural constructions of modern France, while simultaneously creating the illusion that those constructions were not modern at all, but truths as relevant to the ancient world as they were to the modern—and by extension, as relevant outside France as within it. Such illusory 'universals' formed the ideological foundation upon which much of European colonization—soft or otherwise—was built,[44] and helped to maintain the fictive binary by which the ancient Greeks could be wholly incorporated into the modern (cultivated, official) French 'Self' promoted by France's newly centralized absolutist government.

Racine's *Iphigénie*

Jean Racine, the most celebrated author of neoclassical French tragedy, was already in the process of being canonized in his own lifetime. His plays were

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[44]On the role of universalism in the European colonial project, see Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2006).

presented at court and discussed in the *salons*; his scripts were both read and performed repeatedly in scholastic, public, and private contexts. Critics praised him, private diaries record excursions to see performances of his plays, and aristocratic patrons (including Louis XIV) saw to it that he received a salary for his writing even when budget shortages lowered the pay for other playwrights.[45]

In his own lifetime, *Iphigénie*, Racine's adaptation of the Iphigenia in Aulis story, was the playwright's most popular work.[46] It was first performed for the court at Versailles in an open-air performance in 1674 and was later revived to great success at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, one of the largest and most celebrated public theaters in Paris. Gaining international as well as local success, Racine's *Iphigénie* was subsequently translated into a number of other European languages,[47] and itself spawned several adaptations, three of which I will examine in the chapters that follow. Although in terms of his posthumous fame, *Iphigénie* has been eclipsed by others of Racine's works,[48] its extreme popularity in its own time ought to make us aware of the broad-based appeal of the Iphigenia in Aulis story in this particular

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[45]On Racine's continued pay, see Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*: 482. For an informative series of studies on Racine's public and critical reception during his lifetime and shortly after his death, see Nicholas Cronk and Alain Viala, eds., *La réception de Racine à l'âge classique: de la scène au monument: études* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2005).

[46]On the status of *Iphigénie* as Racine's most popular work during his lifetime, see Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers*, 304; and John Cairncross, "Introduction to *Iphigenia*," in *Jean Racine: Iphigenia; Phaedra; Athaliah*, ed. John Cairncross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 33.

[47]These languages included Dutch, English, Italian, German, Russian, and Spanish, and made Racine's the most translated adaptation of the story after Euripides's own during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For a full list of the translations in question, see Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*.

[48]Most notably *Phèdre* (1677). Jean Racine, "Phèdre," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768). On this play's rise in ascendency over *Iphigénie*, see Cairncross, "Introduction to *Iphigenia*."

adaptation at this precise historical moment. Examining the ways in which Racine

adapted the story, then, gives us some clues as to what had to be altered about the

Iphigenia in Aulis story in order to turn it into a popular success in late seventeenth-

century Western Europe, pointing us toward what was likely considered unacceptable

about ancient versions of the same.

Racine's major innovation, in his own opinion and others', was his inclusion of

an "*autre Iphigénie*" [other Iphigenia], a second girl who is both the double and the

opposite of the real Iphigenia.[49] Racine, however, staunchly on the side of the

'Ancients' in the Dispute of the Ancients and the Moderns, takes special care in his

paratexts to disavow the novelty of this major change to Euripides's play, attempting

to disguise what is new in his version by claiming it as old. Denying himself credit

for this innovation, Racine claims instead to have 'found' (*trouver*) this second

Iphigenia in the writings of "*Plusieurs auteurs*" [several authors] (by which he means

several *ancient* authors), of whom he mentions by name only Steisichorus, a lyric

poet, and Pausanias, the author of an ancient travel guide.[50] This 'other' Iphigenia is

given to be not the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, as she is in all

surviving dramatic versions of the story,[51] but rather the daughter of Helen and

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[49]Jean Racine, "Préface de l'auteur à *Iphigénie*," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De
    Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768), 26.
[50]Ibid., 24-26. This is a bit of a sleight-of-hand, as the Steisichorus reference is not extant. Rather,
    Pausanias himself cites Steisichorus as one of his own sources (Pausanias Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις
    [*Description of Greece*] 2.22.6, anthologized in David A. Campbell, ed. *Greek Lyric III:
    Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, and Others*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard
    University Press, 1991)). Racine is therefore taking one reference and dividing it out to two
    authors, in order to give himself more backup from 'the ancients.'
[51] This includes not only the two Iphigenia plays, but also the entire *Oresteia* of Aeschylus,
    Sophocles's *Electra*, and Euripides's *Electra* and *Orestes*. There is no reference to an alternate
    parentage of Iphigenia in any surviving Attic drama.

Theseus. What Racine pointedly (and no doubt purposefully) fails to mention in this preface is that in all the recountings of this version found in ancient writings,[52] this daughter of Theseus and Helen is given to Clytemnestra to raise, and so comes to function in precisely the same way in the myth as she does when she is said to be the birth-daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. The "other Iphigenia" is thus, in the writings of the real 'ancients,' the *same* Iphigenia with an alternate parentage. Yet for Racine, who spends much of his preface professing himself a defender of the superiority of ancient authors,[53] the two versions open the door for him to split Iphigenia into two characters, allowing him to modify some of the more unsuitable elements which exist in Euripides's tragedy while *appearing* to exhibit the utmost fidelity to 'the ancients.'

The first of these unsuitable elements, acknowledged by Racine himself in his preface, is the miraculous *dénouement* in which Iphigenia, at the last second, is swapped for a deer by the goddess Artemis. As Racine writes,

> *Quelle apparence que j'eusse souillé la scene par le meurtre horrible*
>
> *d'une personne aussi vertueuse & aussi aimable qu'il falloit*
>
> *représenter Iphigénie? Et quelle apparence encore de dénouer ma*
>
> *tragédie par le secours d'une déesse & d'une machine, & par une*
>
> *métamorphose qui pouvoit bien trouver quelque créance du temps*

[52]These recountings include Pausanias (referenced above) and Antoninus Liberalis (13; *Metamorphoses* 27). See Ibid. and Antoninus Liberalis, "Collection of Metamorphoses," in *Anthology of Classical Myth: Primary Sources in Translation*, ed. Stephen M. Trzaskoma, R. Scott Smith, and Stephen Brunet (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004).

[53]See Racine, "Préface de l'auteur à *Iphigénie*," 27-31.

> *d'Euripide, mais qui seroit trop absurde & trop incroyable parmi*
>
> *nous?*
>
> [How would it have appeared if I had defiled the scene by the horrible
>
> murder of a person as virtuous and as loveable as it was necessary to
>
> represent Iphigenia? And how would it have appeared furthermore to
>
> end my tragedy with the help of a goddess and a machine, and with a
>
> metamorphosis which could well have found some credence in the
>
> time of Euripides, but which would be too absurd and too unbelievable
>
> among us?][54]

Two points are worth pulling out of this explanation. The most obvious, of course, is

the comparison in which Racine finds the substitution unbelievable in his own day,

while retroactively attributing credence of it to ancient audiences. Yet when one reads

through Racine's own tragedy, one finds at least three instances of real prophecies,[55]

in addition to an altered *dénouement* which avoids the deer substitution but which still

includes a sudden thunderstorm (bringing with it the winds promised by the

sacrifice), a self-lighting fire, and reports that one of the soldiers saw Diane

(Artemis).[56] What, then, makes the substitution of a deer (and the accompanying

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[54]Ibid., 25-26.

[55]These three instances are referenced in Act I, scene i; Act II, scene i; and Act V, scene vi. See Racine, "Iphigénie," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768), 41, 75, and 200-01. Because Racine's drama is not furnished with line numbers in most editions, yet exists in many versions, I will give both the page numbers from the particular edition I used and also act and scene numbers for all citations from this particular play.

[56]All of these phenomena are described in the final messenger speech in Act V, scene vi. See Ibid., 202-04. Interestingly, the Latin names of individual gods are frequently used in neoclassical French tragedy in place of the Greek ones, a remnant which testifies to the Greek texts' common path of reaching French by way of Latin.

removal of Iphigenia to Tauris) unacceptably unbelievable while prophecy, visions, and divinely-inspired weather are not?

In order to answer this question, I will point to theological differences between fifth-century B.C.E. Athens and seventeenth-century France. While both had a concept of divine action affecting the affairs of humans, Greek myth frequently includes the direct intervention of specific gods into the events of the story—gods are constantly picking up humans and whisking them away; transforming them directly into plants, animals, and natural phenomena; and appearing to deliver their missives in person, especially at the end of plays.[57] Not only do the pagan gods of ancient Greece take an interventionist stance on human affairs, they also work at odds with one another, often taking opposite sides in conflicts.[58] In the tradition of Christian monotheism, however, God is presented as an invisible being who operates exclusively through intermediaries, including prophets (Moses, John the Baptist), visions of angels (like those experienced by Jacob and Mary), and the alteration of natural phenomena (the burning bush, the multiplication of loaves and fishes).[59]

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[57]In fact, this occurs so regularly that there is a specific term for this phenomenon, ἀπὸ μηχανῆς θεός [god from the machine], which refers to the practice of suspending an actor dressed as a god above the action of the play by means of a crane. Even today, this phrase is still in common parlance in its Latin form, *deus ex machina*.

[58] The most famous example of this is to be found in Euripides's Ἱππόλυτος [*Hippolytus*], in which the title character's pious dedication to Artemis and his accompanying vow of chastity angers Aphrodite, whom he has scorned by this action. See Euripides, "Hippolytus" in *Euripides II: Children of Heracles, Hippolytus, Andromache, Hecuba*, ed. David Kovacs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[59]On Moses, see the entire biblical book of Exodus; on John the Baptist, see Matthew 3, Mark 1, and Luke 3; on the vision of Jacob, see Genesis 32; on the vision of Mary, see Luke 1; on the burning bush, see Exodus 3; and on the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, see Matthew 14.13-21. Readers interested in the topic of biblical interpretation among the French humanists (a group to which all the playwrights examined here could reasonably be said to belong) are encouraged to see Erika Rummel, ed. *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008).

Looked at in this way, we can see that Racine has not removed the divine or supernatural elements as being 'unbelievable,' but rather has altered the behavior of Artemis to be in line with Christian conceptions of what the divine is and how it operates.[60] In Racine, she is welcome to speak so long as she does so through human voices;[61] she may appear, but only as a vision, not an actor;[62] and while she may control the weather and the fire, she may not directly transport humans and animals to different locations. Moreover, references to Artemis or to other individual Greek deities are significantly diminished in Racine; in their place come a flood of references to "*les Dieux*" [the gods] collectively, and even more to "*le Ciel*" [the sky/Heaven], tacitly covering up any possibility of disagreement between individual gods and indeed hiding any evidence of their individuality.[63] Thus, while Racine's

[60]In the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, for example, which has many parallels with the sacrifice of Iphigenia, God speaks to Abraham through messengers (angels) but not directly, and causes a ram to wander into Abraham's path rather than enacting a direct substitution for Isaac. See Genesis 22:1-19.

[61]In this case, Calchas, who is reported to speak both prophesies as if directly transmitting the words of the goddess. See Act I, scene i and Act V, scene vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 41, 200-01.

[62]This particular change is subtly executed through the replacement of a sacrifice in which "πᾶς τις" [everyone] saw the miracle (Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* line 1582) with one in which "*Le soldat étonné dit que, dans une nue, / Jusques sur le bûcher Diane est descendue*" [The soldier said that, in a cloud, / Diane descended as far as the pyre] (Act V, scene vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 203). The subtle change between everyone seeing the miracle and one individual saying he saw it functionally changes Artemis from a real presence to a vision.

[63]The word "*Dieux*" [gods] appears roughly seventy times in the play, while only three individual gods are referred to by name (Diane, Jupiter, and Thetis). The Greek text, conversely, makes reference to sixteen individual gods—not counting references to named rivers, which are also the names of their respective river gods, or to gods whose names double as concepts (fate, victory, etc.)—and to three specific god groups: the Muses, the Nereids, and nymphs. All of these references are dropped except where the god in question has a direct bearing on the plot (Thetis and Zeus/Jupiter being ancestors of characters in the play while Artemis/Diane demands the sacrifice). "*Ciel*" [Heaven] likewise is referenced thirty-seven times in Racine despite meriting a grand total of one reference in Euripides (αἰθὴρ [the upper air], Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* line 365). Racine shares this tendency with both of the other French playwrights discussed in this chapter—in no instance does a French playwright retain all the mentions of individual gods found in Euripides, and in every instance references to "the gods" collectively and "Heaven" are added.

Iphigénie nominally has a polytheistic setting, the net effect of all these references is to paint a picture of a unified divine will—the gods all work in tandem with one another, making their collective wishes known through the operations of a just (and heavily Christian) 'Heaven.'[64]

Fundamental differences in beliefs about the divine and its relationship to the human are reduced to mere aesthetic differences by this Christianization of the pagan gods. While the Greeks inhabited a world where a series of capricious and demanding gods, often at odds with one another, could directly touch and shape human life, the Christian French inhabit and portray a world where the interpretation or misinterpretation of the (one) divine will as conveyed through signs is the fundamental concern of human religion. Racine's version of the Iphigenia in Aulis story, reflecting this altered conception of the divine, not only does away with direct intervention and true polytheism, but also makes misinterpretation of Artemis's will the central lynchpin of his plot: while the Greek oracle was never in doubt, confusion over which of the two Iphigenias the French oracle calls for drives the whole action of Racine's *Iphigénie*. In truth, the use of the "other Iphigenia" allows Racine to avoid too pagan a representation not merely by obviating the miraculous deer substitution, but more fundamentally by turning the play's central problem into a recognizably Christian one concerned with the correct interpretation of an obliquely delivered divine command.

[64]It is worth noting that Racine was not only writing in a Christian society, but was himself a devout Jansenist—a reform branch of the Catholic church particularly active in France at this time. For a history of the Jansenist movement, its religious dogma, and its political significance, see Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*.

The second major point of interest in Racine's own explanation of the "other Iphigenia" is that he felt it "necessary" to represent Iphigenia as "virtuous" and "loveable." Why? Why must Iphigenia be virtuous and lovable? And how does this characterization of her differ from Euripides's?

A search for the answers to these questions leads us to a plethora of tensions between the Greek and French dramatic traditions. Following Aristotle, the theorists of French dramatic form held that the aim of tragedy was to excite in its audience the emotions of pity and fear.[65] Writing about characterization in this context, La Mesnardière, the first French dramatic theorist to write an extensive treatise on Aristotle's *Poetics*, held that the heroes of tragedy had to be virtuous in order to be pitied—otherwise, the trials they faced would seem deserved and not excite the proper emotional response in the audience.[66] Racine takes it as a given that Iphigenia should be virtuous, and since he was writing in a tradition shaped by La Mesnardière and others, it is easy to see why. If the audience is to pity Iphigenia, she must seem a virtuous maiden unfairly doomed to die. The tension of this apparent injustice drives the plot, while the revelation at the end makes clear that the guilty Eriphyle (the cover name for the "other Iphigenia"), not the innocent Iphigenia, is the one whose blood is demanded by 'the gods,' thereby allowing the play as a whole to excite pity without besmirching the divine will.

This delicate balancing act is executed within a number of 'givens' which are

[65]See Aristotle *Poetics* XIII, La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique.*, and d'Aubignac, *La Pratique du Théâtre.*
[66]La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique.* These sentiments are noted numerous times, but readers are referred especially "*Chapitre IV: Les Parties de la Tragedie, appellées de Qualité.*"

specific to seventeenth-century France and alien to ancient Athens. The idea that only

the guilty are fit for sacrifice—or rather, for death, sacrifice not being a part of

seventeenth-century French customs—while the innocent are not reflects both sacred

and secular elements of France's (officially Catholic) culture, while being a diametric

opposite to ancient Greek views on sacrifice. Religiously, Christianity builds upon the

Biblical philosophy that "the wages of sin is death"[67] to create a theological

worldview predicated on the idea that the wicked are punished and the virtuous

rewarded—death and life being the ultimate expressions of the respective stick and

carrot. Though in this case the death and life in question are literal, Biblically they are

often figurative, as in the case of the eternal (after)life promised to believers in

Heaven.[68] Literal life and death work in the same fashion, however. Death is often

prescribed as a punishment for wickedness in the Bible, as in the commandment to

execute adulterers,[69] whereas the continuation of life is frequently depicted as a

reward for virtuous behavior (as in the sparing of both Noah and Lot from the

destruction of their respective wicked societies).[70] Religiously, the idea that death is

the proper response to guilt and life the proper reward for virtue is habitually

reinforced in scripture, and in an era when church and state were not even remotely

separate, France's Catholic government also reinforced this pattern through its laws.

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[67]Romans 6:23. This English phrase comes from the King James Bible (1611). This phrase appears in
the Louis Segond French Bible as "*le salaire du péché, c'est la mort*" (Epître de Paul aux Romains
6:23), a translation which could hardly be closer to the English phrase quoted above.
[68]Also referenced in Romans 6:23, among others.
[69]Leviticus 20:10.
[70]For the story of Noah's survival when God flooded the earth, see Genesis 6:5-8:22. For the story of
Lot's survival when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, see Genesis 19:1-29.

The secular expression of this same philosophy was found in the use of capital

punishment by the state, which enforced the law through the frequent—and often

gruesome—public execution of criminals.[71] As Sarah Covington has argued, the

practices of both public execution and mutilative punishments for crimes were

intended to serve as visible evidence of criminality and guilt—if a person suffered

bodily harm in the public eye, it was to mark them as guilty and therefore deserving

of the torments they suffered.[72] Thus, while seventeenth-century France did not

practice human sacrifice *per se*, the act of killing a human being in public was not

unknown and had specific associations with guilt in the judicial sense of the term.

That guilty Eriphyle should die at the end of the play is therefore in line with a French

sense of justice, both divine and legal, and thus does not upset their cultural norms in

the way that a divine demand on the innocent Iphigenia's life would.

    While the ancient Greeks also did not actually practice human sacrifice,[73] they

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[71]Katherine Ibbett examines the relationship between public executions and theatrical practices during this time in her study on politics and the roots of neoclassical theatrical conventions. See Katherine Ibbett, *The Style of the State in French Theater, 1630-1660: Neoclassicism and Government* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009).

[72]Sarah Covington, "'Law's Bloody Inflictions': Judicial Wounding and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). Although this particular article takes England as its case study, many of the beliefs and practices associated with public execution were held in common on both sides of the channel. In fact, as late as the eighteenth century, France was known for staging some of the most heinous and controversial public executions, including that of Robert-François Damiens, whose execution by drawing and quartering in the mid-eighteenth century sparked a significant debate over the morality of continuing to treat even criminals with such cruelty. On this debate and the explicit links drawn between capital punishment and human sacrifice during the Enlightenment, see Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice*.

[73]At least by the fifth century B.C.E.—there is a great deal of speculation and disagreement among scholars on whether human sacrifice was practiced in Greece's prehistory. For a thorough presentation of the debate and the evidence for and against, see Dennis D. Hughes, Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece, (New York: Routledge, 1991), http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=FSnxxida5D0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=greek+sacrificial+practice&ots=SGCrTE8uaT&sig=PH7oolRIR3BTZ_4c0UPoeXu9lGA#v=onepage&q=gre

did religiously practice the sacrifice of animals, and included this as part of the opening rituals for the theatrical festivals in which Euripides's play would have been presented.[74] In these animal sacrifices, the animal in question is a gift for a given deity, and as such must be pure and unblemished—to offer anything less than the best would be to insult the god one is attempting to honor.[75] In fact, in some versions of the Iphigenia in Aulis story (including its recap as it appears in Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*) Iphigenia's sacrifice is demanded specifically because her father Agamemnon, being a pious man, promised Artemis a gift of the "κάλλιστον" [loveliest thing] his land produced during the year of her birth.[76] The idea that the sacrificial victim should be guilty or impure,[77] then, could not be more oppositional to the ancient Greek context of the sources on which Racine draws to create his adaptation; for them, it is Iphigenia's virtue which makes her *suitable* for sacrifice, not the other way around. The fundamental conflict in the Greek context, then, is over whether Agamemnon can bear to offer that which is most precious to him in trade for the conquest of Troy. Even when the miraculous deer substitution of the ending is

ek%20sacrificial%20practice&f=false.

[74]For resources on animal sacrifice as a part of dramatic production in ancient Athens, see T. B. L. Webster, *Greek theatre production* (London: Methuen, 1956); Arthur Wallace Pickard-Cambridge, John Gould, and David M. Lewis, *The dramatic festivals of Athens* (London: Oxford U.P., 1968); and Ruby Blondell et al., "Introduction," in *Women on the Edge: Four Plays by Euripides*, ed. Ruby Blondell, et al. (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).

[75]On the importance of this rule to the House of Atreus series of myths in particular (to which both Iphigenia myths belong), see Froma I. Zeitlin, "The Motif of the Corrupted Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96(1965).

[76]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* line 21. See Euripides, "Iphigenia Among the Taurians," in *Euripides IV: Trojan Women, Iphigenia Among the Taurians, Ion*, ed. David Kovacs, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[77]There is a link in the Greek tradition between guilt and impurity—those who commit crimes (the guilty in the judicial sense) are held to be polluted by their act, and are considered to defile those with whom they come into contact. For a full treatment of this topic, see Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

taken into account, the ancient Greek Artemis *still takes Iphigenia* to be her living

priestess if not her burnt offering—the ancient Agamemnon always loses his daughter

in this trade, whereas the modern Agamemnon always retains her.[78] In the French

context, the conflict centers around belief or disbelief of the oracle demanding

Iphigenia: it is a test of faith[79] rather than a proposed trade. Relations between the

human and the divine in the ancient context are founded on reciprocity: 'I give you,

you give me.' In the modern context, such relations are founded on obedience:

humans, having faith that the divine will is ultimately just, should obey even when

they can't see the big picture—all will eventually be revealed as perfectly in line with

unalterable patterns of good and evil, innocence and guilt, reward and punishment.

The need for Racine's innovation in the form of Eriphyle is thus a direct

product of the religious shift in cultural context from ancient Greece to seventeenth-

century France. Moreover, the separation of the two Iphigenias is demanded by a

further cultural schism between ancient Greece and modern France: their respective

views on the concept of female virginity. Since both cultures acknowledged bilateral

kinship structures and practiced the patrilineal inheritance of property, knowledge of

paternity—and thus, control of female sexuality—was an important concern in both

contexts.[80] In order to be certain about paternity in a time before such things could be

[78]My use of the word "always" in this construction refers to the fact that this pattern is consistent
    across all known works for these two time periods, not just the plays of Euripides and Racine. For
    the ancient works, see "Chapter One: Iphigenia in Transit" above; for the modern works, see
    chapters three and four below.
[79]Such tests of faith are common in the Judeo-Christian context, and include both the sacrifice of Isaac
    referenced above and the entire book of Job.
[80]On kinship structures, the economics of kinship, and marriage practices in ancient Greece, see Beryl
    Rawson, ed. *A companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Chichester, West Sussex,

tested genetically, each woman of childbearing age had to be restricted to exactly one

male sexual partner: fewer, and she would produce no children; more, and the

paternity of her children would be unknown. Women in this shared cultural context

thus walk the knife's edge between being too accessible and too inaccessible to men,

and both extremes provide their fair share of negatively inflected cultural

stereotypes.[81] Such stereotypes are employed as shaming mechanisms to encourage

women to stay on the knife's edge, and—regardless of their real-life effectiveness[82]—

the proper deployment of these mechanisms in fiction has been a major node of

cultural anxiety for both ancient and modern dramatic critics, who are concerned that

U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). For an exploration of the same in early modern Western Europe, see David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Jon Mathieu, eds., *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Developments (1300-1900)* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

[81]These can be seen in our own culture in the dual phenomena of slut-shaming and the image of the frigid, man-hating feminist (who is frequently portrayed as a lesbian). For some explorations of these phenomena, see Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff, eds., *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and Subjectivity* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Kristin J. Anderson, *Modern Misogyny: Anti-Feminism in a Post-Feminist Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). In early modern Western Europe, these phenomena had their rough equivalents in the whore and the coy beloved, who was frequently described as 'cruel' to the pining (male) lover on account of her reticence. See James Turner, ed. *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Among the ancient Greeks, the adulterous wife and the independent, masculinized sworn virgin filled these roles. See Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975). For a generalized exploration of social stigmas surrounding female sexuality, see Edwin M. Schur, ed. *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984).

[82]Numerous studies take as their subject the gap between representation and reality on this and other issues. My concern here is with pure representation and the construction of ideas in the abstract, so I do not offer any historical data on the actual restrictions on or deployment of female sexuality in these periods. Readers interested in these topics are encouraged to consult Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* on what we can reconstruct of sexual realities in ancient Greece; Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: Politics, Family, and Law in Early Modern France* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) on illegitimacy as evidence of illicit sexual behavior in early modern France; and John C. Fout, *Forbidden History: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe: Essays from the Journal of the History of Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) for a look at the disparities between ideology and reality in the context of modern Europe more generally.

theatrical representation encourage the 'right' type of behavior in women spectators.[83]

Yet despite these many commonalities, the specific stereotypes and beliefs

surrounding this particular node of cultural anxiety differed greatly between the two

contexts—ideas about the 'correct' depiction of female sexuality thus differing as

well. The most flagrant difference, in this case, concerns which side of the knife's

edge women were considered most likely to fall off: in ancient Greece, women were

considered the lustful sex, and were apt to practice indiscriminate sex with anyone if

you let them;[84] while in early modern Western Europe, women were considered to be

the 'passive' sex, needing to be wooed, lured, or cajoled into having sex with men.[85]

As a result of this difference, female virgins of childbearing age—falling outside of

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[83]See, for example, the accusations of misogyny leveled against Euripides in the ancient context because he made his female characters guilty of adultery (explored in Blondell et al., "Introduction," 80-83) and the critical discussions in France on *vraisemblance* which held that depictions of immodesty in females were unbelievable (see for example La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique*: 123-24). Additionally, for a look at concerns surrounding representations of female sexual behavior in the English context, see Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[84]Numerous scholars of gender in the ancient world have analyzed this belief. Among others, see Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*; Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Laura McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[85]Unlike its later and more famous manifestation in the nineteenth century, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries this line of thinking did not necessarily imply that women didn't *enjoy* sex—rather, the belief in the fundamental *passivity* of female sexuality held that they wouldn't seek it out unless acted upon by an outside force. Even among those writers who attributed a natural lust to women, it was treated as a given that this natural lust must be awakened or kindled by some external catalyst, be it a man, a novel about love, or the passionate music of opera. For an analysis of several examples of this phenomenon, see "Chapter 4: Boileau and Perrault: The Public Sphere and Female Folly" in Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies*. For an exploration of this phenomenon as it was formulated during the Renaissance, see Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *Renaissance Discourses of Desire* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993). For its subsequent mutation into beliefs about female frigidity and downright distaste for sex, see P. M. Cryle and Alison Moore, *Frigidity: An Intellectual History* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

the shared ideal for women's sexual behavior on the side of 'too few men'—invoked

opposite impressions of their gendered identity and attributes. In a context where

women were considered 'naturally' inclined toward sex (Greece), female virginity was

a break with femininity and a denial of one's properly feminine nature. Greek virgins

are therefore depicted as having qualities and concerns traditionally coded 'masculine'

rather than 'feminine.'[86] In a context where female sexuality was dominantly depicted

as characterized by passivity and inertia, conversely, the female virgin came to

symbolize the embodiment of femininity: having been born a virgin, the passive

woman remains in that state indefinitely unless acted upon by an outside force. The

preservation of virginity in early modern Europe is therefore an inherently feminine

act rather than a denial of femininity. Western European traditions hold up the female

virgin as the most pure, innocent, and proper example of femaleness, with the

religious image of the Virgin Mary as the crowning example.[87]

Writing in this context, then, Racine had another reason to represent Iphigenia

as 'virtuous and loveable.' Starting from his inherited datum (Iphigenia is a παρθένος

[unmarried woman / virgin]),[88] Racine inflected this point with his own culture's

interpretation of it: Iphigenia = virgin = epitome of proper femininity =

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[86]See, for example, the discussion of virgin goddesses as the divine patrons of occupations typically
reserved for men (such as war, justice, and hunting) in Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and
Slaves*: 8.

[87]On both the influence of the Virgin Mary and the twelfth-century transformation of the image of the
virgin from fundamentally masculine to fundamentally feminine, see Anke Bernau, *Virgins: A
Cultural History* (London: Granta, 2007).

[88]For some sources on attitudes toward virginity in seventeenth-century Western Europe, see Ibid.;
Maud Burnett McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins from Thecla to Joan of Arc* (New York: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2003); and Marie H. Loughlin, *Hymeneutics: Interpreting Virginity on the Early
Modern Stage* (Lewisburg, London, and Cranbury, NJ: Bucknell University Press; Associated
University Presses, 1997).

virtuous/right/good/praiseworthy = loveable.[89] In order to enact this cultural spin,

however, he was compelled to change Iphigenia's character in ways designed to make

her more 'feminine' in opposition to her Greek counterpart. Most notably, he changes

Iphigenia's underlying motivation for agreeing to be sacrificed at Aulis. In Euripides's

version, Iphigenia gives the play its most famous speech when she agrees to go

willingly to the sacrifice; not for feminine reasons relating to home and family, but

out of a desire for glory and martial honor which explicitly codes her as masculine:

> οἷα δ' εἰσῆλθέν μ', ἄκουσον, μῆτερ, ἐννοουμένην· κατθανεῖν μέν μοι
>
> δέδοκται· τοῦτο δ' αὐτὸ βούλομαι εὐκλεῶς πρᾶξαι, παρεῖσά γ'
>
> ἐκποδὼν τὸ δυσγενές. δεῦρο δὴ σκέψαι μεθ' ἡμῶν, μῆτερ, ὡς καλῶς
>
> λέγω· εἰς ἔμ' Ἑλλὰς ἡ μεγίστη πᾶσα νῦν ἀποβλέπει, κἂν ἐμοὶ πορθμός
>
> τε ναῶν καὶ Φρυγῶν κατασκαφαί, τάς γε μελλούσας γυναῖκας μή τι
>
> δρῶσι βάρβαροι μηκέθ' ἁρπάζειν ἐᾶν τὰς ὀλβίας ἐξ Ἑλλάδος, τὸν
>
> Ἑλένης τείσαντας ὄλεθρον, ἣν ἀνήρπασεν Πάρις. ταῦτα πάντα
>
> κατθανοῦσα ῥύσομαι, καί μου κλέος, Ἑλλάδ' ὡς ἠλευθέρωσα,
>
> μακάριον γενήσεται. . . . θύετ', ἐκπορθεῖτε Τροίαν· ταῦτα γὰρ μνημεῖά

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[89]Notably, this same logic dictates that her guilty opposite, Eriphyle, must not be. And indeed, there are strong hints in the play that Eriphyle is not a virgin: in her speech to her confidante confessing her love for Achilles, she makes reference to "*les cruelles mains, par qui je fus ravie*" [the cruel hands by which I was ravished/abducted] and to "*me voyant presser d'un bras ensanglanté*" [seeing myself pressed by a bloody arm] (Racine, "Iphigénie," 80, Act II, scene I). While neither image is conclusive on the subject of Eriphyle's possible rape by Achilles, they are suggestive enough in the context of a speech about sexual desire to mark her as 'impure' by a standard in which virginity is characterized not only by lack of sexual experience, but also by maintaining a decorous mental distance from physical sexuality (on early modern depictions of the loss of virginity through impure thought, see Bernau, *Virgins: A Cultural History*). Iphigenia, although also in love with Achilles, limits her protestations of love to talk about marriage, duty, and the well-being of her beloved, in opposition to Eriphyle's carnal focus on body parts.

μου διὰ μακροῦ καὶ παῖδες οὗτοι καὶ γάμοι καὶ δόξ' ἐμή.

[Hear, mother, such things as came to me while ruminating: since it is given to me to die; I want to do this with renown, having indeed moved out of my way that which is low-minded. Consider that I speak well here between us, mother; toward me all of Greece the majestic now turns its gaze, and in my ferry [in my care] both the ships and the sacking of the Phrygians, that the barbarians may no longer do some great thing in thinking to steal women from prosperous Greece, having paid with ruin for Helen, whom Paris carried off. All of these things I will draw to myself in dying, and my renown, in having set Greece free, will become blessed. . . . Sacrifice, pillage Troy; for these things will long be my monument and these my children, my marriages, and my glory.][90]

To the ancient Greeks, who dictated that women should keep indoors and not be exposed to public view while specifically mandating their male citizens' participation in both public forums and war,[91] all of the triumphant desires expressed by Iphigenia in this speech are coded 'masculine'—her visibility before "all of Greece," her personal power over the fate of the army, her bloodlust for the sacking of Troy, her desire for "glory" and "renown," and her willingness to die in the cause of war. And indeed, much of this coding carries over to the French context, where Racine swaps

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[90]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1374-99.
[91]For a study that focuses especially on this separation of gendered spheres as it relates to tragedy, see Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*.

this speech for several in which Iphigenia professes her willingness to die out of filial

duty instead. Speaking to Agamemnon for the first time since learning about the

sacrifice, Iphigenia begins with the following lines:

> *Mon pere!*
>
> *Cessez de vous troubler; vous n'êtes point trahi.*
>
> *Quand vous commanderez, vous serez obéi.*
>
> *Ma vie est votre bien. Vous voulez le reprendre.*
>
> *Vos ordres, sans détours, pouvoient se faire entendre.*
>
> *D'un oeil aussi content, d'un coeur aussi soumis*
>
> *Que j'acceptois l'époux que vous m'aviez promis,*
>
> *Je sçaurai, s'il le faut, victime obéissante,*
>
> *Tendre au fer de Calchas une tête innocente,*
>
> *Et, respectant le coup par vous-même ordonné,*
>
> *Vous rendre tout le sang que vous m'avez donné.*
>
> [My father!
>
> Cease troubling yourself; you are not betrayed.
>
> When you command, you will be obeyed.
>
> My life is your property. You wish to take it back.
>
> Your orders, without delay, could make themselves understood.
>
> With an eye as pleased, with a heart as submissive
>
> As when I accepted the spouse that you had promised me,
>
> I will be capable, if it is necessary, obedient victim,

Of tendering to the sword of Calchas an innocent head,

And, respecting the blow ordered by you yourself,

Of rendering you all the blood which you have given me.][92]

For Racine's Iphigenia, war, glory, and Greek honor are matters of total indifference and barely worth a mention. The vast majority of her speeches, like that given above, frame her willingness instead as relating to the debt of life she owes to her father, and hence are driven by the markedly feminine virtue of domestic obedience to the male head-of-household. In the speech which comes closest to appropriating the concerns of the Euripidean Iphigenia, the Racinian Iphigenia does say that she is willing to die so that *Achilles* may win glory on the battlefield at Troy,[93] thus displacing a masculinized desire for her own war glory onto a male loved one, transforming her desire into a properly feminine concern for the well-being of family members.[94] In this way, the 'public' concerns of the masculinized Greek Iphigenia are replaced by properly feminine 'domestic' concerns of home and family, reflecting the gendered separation of the spheres common to both cultures while simultaneously masking their different portrayals of female virgins' gendered identities.

This change, too, has a religious dimension. In the new, Christian association

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[92]Racine, "Iphigénie," 145-46. This speech appears in Act IV, scene iv.
[93]Ibid., 182-84. This speech appears in Act V, scene ii.
[94]While Achilles, in Euripides, is neither a loved one nor a family member to Iphigenia, Racine makes them (chaste) lovers who had been betrothed before the action of the play even starts. As with most other Racinian changes, this is a modern twist for which the author can claim ancient precedent—he has merely made the fictive betrothal of the ancient sources into a sincere one. For ancient sources on the false marriage to Achilles, see my discussion in "Chapter One: Iphigenia in Transit" above.

of female virgins with the Marian tradition,[95] the female virgin through her definitional purity is closer to God. Religious virginity, especially in Catholic contexts like that of seventeenth century France, allows an individual to more closely imitate the semi-divine figures of Mary and Jesus, who counted virginity among their many other virtues of goodness, wisdom, charity, humility, and self-sacrifice.[96] While celibacy in the Catholic tradition is praised in both sexes, virginity (total inexperience) as distinct from celibacy (abstinence) is marked out for special comment and commendation in the case of women, for whom it constitutes a privileged identity—hence the common references to 'The Virgin Mary' and virtually none to 'The Virgin Jesus.' For a woman in this religious tradition, to bear the title of 'virgin' is to declare oneself obedient to a divine plan that assigns sexual passivity to females; God, in His divine wisdom, created the separation of the sexes and attributed different characteristics 'naturally' to each. By her virginity, a woman aligns herself with the chastity and modesty proper or 'naturally' adhering to her femaleness. Both an imitation of Mary and the most perfect expression of one of woman's 'natural' characteristics (sexual passivity), it follows that the female virgin—at least as she is fictionally represented—must exhibit other Marian and God-given female virtues:

[95]In addition to the references on virginity given above, for the connection of virginity with the religious and moral traditions of Christian Europe see Laurence Lux-Sterritt and Carmen M. Mangion, eds., *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality: Women and the Roman Catholic Church in Britain and Europe, 1200-1900* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* (Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); and Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[96]On the influence of Mary and Jesus on Christian perceptions of virginity, see Bernau, *Virgins: A Cultural History*.

kindness, obedience, and nurture of the family among them.

True to form, Racine's Iphigenia does exhibit all of these characteristics, alongside the noble impulse of self-sacrifice. Unlike Euripides's Iphigenia, who initially begs to be spared[97] before ultimately acquiescing to the sacrifice,[98] Racine's Iphigenia professes her willingness and obedience from her very first speech on the topic.[99] In every part of the play, including the statements analyzed above, she makes family the centerpiece of her motivation—even when she professes her love for Achilles, she is careful to stipulate that this love is partly born out of obedience to the parental will: "*Sa gloire, son amour, mon pere, mon devoir, / Lui donnent sur mon ame un trop juste pouvoir*" [His glory, his love, my father, my duty / Give him too just a power over my soul].[100] In addition to these domestic virtues, she is repeatedly referred to as showing kindness to her enemy, Eriphyle. When we first meet Eriphyle, her confidante Doris (one of the many minor characters who replace the chorus) says to her: "*Maintenant tout vous rit; l'aimable Iphigénie / D'une amitié sincere avec vous est unie*" [Now all laugh with you; the loveable Iphigenia / Is united to you by a sincere friendship],[101] and toward the end of the play, upon Eriphyle's death, we are told that "*La seule Iphigénie, / Dans ce commun bonheur, pleure son ennemie.*" [Only Iphigenia, / In this collective joy, weeps for her enemy].[102] Such an effusion of Christian charity well becomes a virgin in the Marian tradition, and lines up nicely

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[97]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1211-52.
[98]Ibid. lines 1374-99 (quoted above).
[99]Act IV, scene iv of Racine, "Iphigénie," 145-46. (quoted above).
[100]Ibid., 34. Act II, scene iii.
[101]Ibid., 74. Act II, scene i.
[102]Ibid., 204. Act V, scene vi.

with her obedience, domesticity, and nobility to create a picture of a character both "virtuous" and "loveable" by seventeenth-century French standards.

Not only does Racine's Iphigenia merely exhibit all these maidenly virtues, she takes them to extremes. Her commitment to obedience is so absolute that both Clytemnestra and Achilles at various moments in the play must appeal to it in order to try to talk her *out* of being obedient to Agamemnon.[103] This brief exchange between Iphigenia and Achilles, just after he has asked her to run away with him to escape death, is telling:

> IPHIGÉNIE
>
> *Qui? Moi! Que, contre un pere osant me révolter,*
>
> *Je mérite la mort que j'irois éviter!*
>
> *Où seroit le respect, & ce devoir suprême . . . ?*
>
> ACHILLE
>
> *Vous suivrez un époux avoué par lui-même.*
>
> *C'est un titre qu'en vain il prétend me voler.*
>
> *Ne fait-il des serments que pour les violer?*
>
> *Vous-même, que retient un devoir si sévere,*
>
> *Quand il vous donne à moi, n'est-il point votre pere?*
>
> *Suivez-vous seulement ses ordres absolus,*
>
> *Quand il cesse de l'être, & ne vous connoît plus?*
>
> [IPHIGENIA

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[103]Ibid., 159. (Act IV, scene iv) and Ibid., 185. (Act V, scene ii).

Who? Me! That, daring to revolt against a father,

Would merit the death that I went to evade!

Where would be the respect, and this supreme duty . . . ?

ACHILLES

You will be following a spouse avowed by he himself.

This is a title which he in vain attempts to rob me of.

Did he only make these vows in order to violate them?

You yourself, who keep to a duty so severe,

When he gave you to me, was he not your father?

Do you only follow his absolute orders

When he ceases to be so, and no longer knows you?][104]

Having already tried every other means at his disposal to keep Iphigenia from throwing her life away in obedience to Agamemnon's commands, Achilles must finally appeal to his own authority *as conferred by Agamemnon* to try and sway her into obeying him instead. Iphigenia is almost comically obedient and dedicated to family values, in addition to being the soul of kindness. In short, Racine's Iphigenia delivers the ultimate expression of femininity promised—in the Christian French context—by her identity as a female virgin, in line with 'nature' and the will of God. Gone is the masculinized, martial virgin of ancient Greece, the thinly veiled stand-in for the heroic soldier; in her place is the dutiful daughter, the sweet and innocent victim who forgives those who persecute her. No foreign, Greek conceptions of

[104]Ibid., 71-72. Act V, scene ii.

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gender are allowed, here, to upset the neat French divisions of feminine/masculine, domestic/public, or obedient/dominant.

Racine's play made a number of other alterations to the Greek script: diminishing the role of Menelaus, expanding the role of Achilles and making him the lover[105] of Iphigenia, and adding Odysseus/Ulysses to the play, to name just a few. But the thing that he became known for, the thing that his later adaptors imitated, and the thing which he himself signaled out for comment in his preface to the play was the splitting of Iphigenia into Iphigenia *and* Eriphyle, good and evil, innocent and guilty. As the discussion above demonstrates, attempting to unravel even this one adaptive choice reveals a complex web of similarity and difference between the (pagan) Greek and (Christian) French contexts. It shows how, despite the protestations of Racine and others on the side of the 'Ancients' of their ancient forebearers' supremacy, even such ardent admirers found fault with the overtly foreign, pagan, inappropriate, and 'unnatural' elements of Greek culture clinging to the ancient texts. The adaptations which came out of their zeal, including Racine's *Iphigénie*, work hard to alter, erase, or cover up these elements before presenting the newly cleansed stories to a French Christian public. Their ardent rhetoric, praising the ancients and downplaying or denying their own adaptive contributions,[106] does equal

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[105]In the French context, this word (*amant*) is used to mean literally 'one who loves,' not to connote a sexual partner.

[106]See, for example, the famous paragraph from the preface to *Iphigénie* in which Racine, handing over to the ancients all praise for anything good in his tragedy, declares that "*Le goût de Paris s'est trouvé conforme à celui d'Athenes*" [The taste of Paris is found to conform to that of Athens], in spite of all the evidence to the contrary given by his significant adaptive changes. Racine, "Préface de l'auteur à *Iphigénie*," 27-28.

but opposite work in attempting to defuse the threat of cultural difference by insistently defining the cultural ancestor as 'still us,' even as the script covers any tracks which might lead an audience to define the cultural ancestor as 'them.'

De La Grange-Chancel's *Oreste et Pilade*

François-Joseph de la Grange-Chancel, although never canonized to the same extent as Racine, was quite famous in his own time.[107] An up-and-coming young writer in the literary and court scene at roughly the time when Racine was leaving it, De La Grange-Chancel's impressive scholastic success at a Jesuit school in Bordeaux landed him a position in the household of the Princesse de Conti, who subsequently introduced him to a number of famous names in the court and *salon* circles, including Racine. With the assistance and patronage of this famous playwright, De La Grange-Chancel presented his first tragedy, at the tender age of seventeen, to great success. Thereafter, De La Grange-Chancel made his career as a professional playwright, becoming one of the most well-known of his time. His time, however, happened to be classified in retrospect as the forgettable years between the '*Grand Siècle*' [Great Century] of the Sun King (roughly 1643 through the 1680's) and the '*Siècle des Lumières*' [Century of the Enlightened] (roughly the 1720's through 1789) which was to follow,[108] relegating him to obscurity in the long run despite his prominent position

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[107]For a summary of De La Grange-Chancel's career and production history, see Jean-Noël Pascal, *L'Autre Iphigénie* (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1997). 12-26.

[108]There is some disagreement as to both when the *Grand Siècle* ended (upon the death of Louis XIV or the waning of his popularity?) and when the *Siècle des Lumières* can be reasonably said to have begun, given that it refers more to an intellectual movement than to a time period *per se*. However, for our theatrical purposes, it is a general truism that playwrights who were neither contemporaries of Racine nor of Voltaire are typically overlooked, meaning that even popular playwrights from roughly the 1690's through the 1720's are largely forgotten.

among his contemporaries.

Oreste et Pilade, one of the playwright's early triumphs, was first performed in 1697, when it ran for nineteen performances (an unusually high number for the time), and was reprised regularly right through the year 1738, amassing a grand total of forty-nine performances.[109] Some of its success may have been due to De La Grange-Chancel's status as the new voice in the scene, and some was also undoubtedly due to the play's own relationship to Racine's celebrated *Iphigénie*. De La Grange-Chancel, writing some twenty years after the success of *Iphigénie*, credits Racine with inspiring his adaptation of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*.[110] Moreover, the actress who created the role of Iphigenia in *Oreste et Pilade* was Marie Champmeslé, the same actress who had first played Iphigenia in Racine's *Iphigénie*. Now considerably older—and in fact, roughly the same amount older as the character of Iphigenia would be given the mythical timeline of the Trojan War plot[111]—La Champmeslé was a roaring success and gave De La Grange-Chancel's play the feel of a sequel to Racine's famous work.

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[109] These performance statistics can be found in Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers*, 89.

[110] François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," in *Oeuvres de Monsieur De La Grange-Chancel*, ed. François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1758), 87-89.

[111] Iphigenia was sacrificed at the beginning of the Trojan War. The Trojan War itself lasted ten years. It must have taken Agamemnon at least a year to get home, given that his slave-concubine Cassandra had already borne him twins in some accounts by the time he arrived back in Mycenae. After his murder, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are commonly said to have ruled Mycenae for seven years before Orestes returned to murder them in turn. Thereafter, in order to be in accordance with all the things that the exposition of *Iphigenia in Tauris* says happened to him in between, Orestes must have had enough time to go to Athens for his trial, subsequently travel to consult the oracle at Delphi, and finally make the sea-voyage all the way to Tauris, for which let's assume at least one year; maybe two. This timeline would imply that 19-20 years have elapsed between the action of *Iphigenia in Aulis* and that of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, fitting perfectly with the twenty-year gap between the inaugural presentation of Racine's play and De La Grange-Chancel's.

The idea that *Oreste et Pilade* somehow rode Racine's coattails to success is written all over the play's paratexts as well as its reception history. De La Grange-Chancel's preface, written for a collection of his complete works compiled toward the end of the playwright's career, fairly drips with Racine. Mentioning that Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris* had been considered "*au nombre de ceux qui ne peuvent être traités*" [among those which cannot be treated] (that is, adapted sufficiently for public presentation),[112] De La Grange-Chancel attributes his boldness in daring to do so to Racine's Eriphyle innovation which, though having no direct bearing on the *Iphigenia in Tauris* story *per se*, had demonstrated that the miraculous intervention of gods in the Greek plays could be successfully replaced by other plot devices more '*vraisemblable*' [credible / seeming true].[113] And indeed, De La Grange-Chancel's replacement of divine intervention at the end of his play bears more than a passing resemblance to Racine's—where Euripides had the goddess Athena appear in person to speak,[114] De La Grange-Chancel has the death of a guilty individual cause a sudden and drastic change in the weather favorable to the innocent protagonists,[115] once

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[112]Ibid., 88. This assertion is probably based, at least in part, on the fact that the two previous attempts to adapt *Iphigenia in Tauris* for the French stage had been such colossal failures that, after running for less than a handful of performances each, neither was ever even printed for circulation in script form; consequently, these plays have been lost to history. Additionally, Racine himself had written the first act of a Taurian Iphigenia play which he subsequently abandoned, deciding that the subject could not be made into a good French drama. De La Grange-Chancel, a pupil of Racine, was certainly aware of this as he states explicitly in his preface to *Oreste et Pilade* (Ibid.). In writing his own Taurian Iphigenia, then, De La Grange-Chancel is purposefully taking on a challenge attempted and failed by the great masters of the previous generation, making his own success all the more prestigious. On the failed production histories of the French *Iphigenia in Tauris* attempts prior to De La Grange-Chancel, see Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers*, 74-88.

[113]De La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et Pilade*, 88-89.
[114] Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1435-91.
[115]De La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et Pilade*, 191.

again not excising the miraculous but merely bringing it into line with Christian theology. In Racine, Eriphyle's death had caused the wind to pick up and the sacrificial fire to light (both miracles based in natural phenomena rather than direct intervention by a corporeal god); in De La Grange-Chancel, the wind and sea are stormy and agitated until Thoas dies, at which point they instantly calm and the skies clear. These endings, similar in structure, both replace what had been *dea ex machina* endings in Euripides featuring the direct intervention of visible goddesses. De La Grange-Chancel's assertion that his replacement of unbelievable elements (the corporeal presence of a god) with credible ones (miracles in the Christian style) is modeled on Racine seems to bear out.

In reading his preface, one would think that the replacement of the *dea ex machina* was De La Grange-Chancel's major modification to *Iphigenia in Tauris*; it is certainly the only thing that he feels compelled to explain. De La Grange-Chancel even goes so far as to say of Euripides's play: "*j'y vis des scenes intéressantes qui sembloient ne me devoir coûter que la peine de les traduire*" **[**I saw here interesting scenes which it seemed must cost me only the labor of translating them].[116] The clear implication of such a statement is that De La Grange-Chancel has put into French, but otherwise not significantly altered, the Euripidean text (with the exception of the aforementioned 'more believable' ending). This implication is misleading in the extreme. *Oreste et Pilade* represents a major restructuring of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, not only altering the ending, but also grafting on a whole new plot, relegating

[116]Ibid., 87.

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the Euripidean plot practically to the status of sub-plot, and even within this reduction chopping the Euripidean plot in half and throwing out the whole latter portion. While Racine, De La Grange-Chancel's acknowledged model, functionally preserved the structure of the Euripidean play from which he worked while changing key details, De La Grange-Chancel's text is practically a testament to the idea which he refutes in his preface: that *Iphigenia in Tauris* is, in seventeenth-century France, unrepresentable.

While Euripides made Iphigenia's escape from Tauris the central dramatic action of his play, for De La Grange-Chancel it is the deposing of the tyrant, Thoas. This character, in Euripides's play the king of the Taurians from whom Iphigenia escapes, is no more than a minor obstacle in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, easily duped and only made a real threat by the intervention of the god Poseidon.[117] In *Oreste et Pilade*, by contrast, he is a major antagonist and practically the play's central character. Moreover, he is presented as the usurper of a throne to which he has no legal right, making the restoration of the rightful monarch, not Iphigenia's escape, the main goal toward which the action of the play is directed.

De La Grange-Chancel's replacement of Athena, by his own admission in his preface,[118] comes in the form of this rightful monarch, the princess Thomiris, a character invented by De La Grange-Chancel. Following Racine, who credits ancient authors with creating Eriphyle who is really, by and large, his own invention, De La

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[117]Thoas immediately agrees to all of Iphigenia's demands (Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1160-1221) and when he discovers her deception, he is only able to pursue her because a sea swell prevents her flight (Ibid., lines 1411-19).
[118]De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 88-89.

Grange-Chancel claims to have "*trouvai dans le sujet même le caractere du personnage que je cherchois*" [found in the subject itself the character of the person that I sought].[119] Where in the subject he found her, though, remains unspecified and is not readily obvious even to a close reader of Euripides's text—the name "Thomiris" never appears in Euripides, no female Taurian of any significance is ever even hinted at, and there is no implication that Thoas is anything other than the secure and acknowledged leader of the Taurians. The only hint of a Taurian queen in the adaptive tradition of the Iphigenia in Tauris story comes from the surviving cast list of a lost play, *Oreste*, written by the French playwrights Boyer and Leclerc in 1681, which lists an "ORITHIE, Reine de la Tauride" among its personages and which, tellingly, lists Thoas himself as "*tyran*" [tyrant] rather than "*roi*" [king].[120] When De La Grange-Chancel says he "found" Thomiris "in the subject itself," then, what he probably means is that he found her in an earlier and markedly less successful French adaptation—though, like Racine, he leaves this modern source unspecified and hushed even as he touts the genius of Euripides and disingenuously exclaims over how little he has had to change from the ancient original.

With the inclusion of Thomiris, *Oreste et Pilade*, despite its title, becomes primarily a play about the power struggle between Thoas and Thomiris, a Taurian succession drama in which Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades are little more than pawns. Iphigenia serves as the catalyst for the conflict between the two; Thoas, who ascended

[119]Ibid., 89.
[120] For this cast list and an analysis of its implications, see Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers*, 85-88.

the Taurian throne on the basis of a marriage contract with the female heir apparent, Thomiris, breaks the marriage contract once he has become king in order to marry Iphigenia (in whom he had no romantic interest in Euripides's version). Iphigenia resists the marriage. Meanwhile, Thoas has been informed by a prophecy (again pointing up the suitability of real prophecy even within the French rules of *vraisemblance*) that a Greek named Orestes will be his downfall (this prophecy, too, is De La Grange-Chancel's invention). When Orestes and Pylades are shipwrecked on his shores, Thoas orders Iphigenia to sacrifice them so that Orestes may die and he (Thoas) may avoid his prophesied downfall. Thomiris, on the other hand, wishing to bring Thoas's downfall about, works tirelessly to save the trio and help them escape, thereby depriving Thoas of both his security and his intended bride, while simultaneously serving the function of 'aid from a higher power' formerly fulfilled by Athena. Whether Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades escape, then, becomes primarily a matter of importance to others, their death or their freedom bearing more on the Taurian succession than on their own lives.

This increased emphasis on issues of rulership and succession has more than a little to do with the changed political contexts in which Euripides and De La Grange-Chancel respectively wrote. Thoas, despite the many differences in his characterization between the two plays, is a king and structurally the antagonist in both. Within the context of democratic Athens, where Euripides wrote and produced his version, there is no contradiction between these two aspects of Thoas's character—in fact, one of the common proofs of the inferiority of barbarians among

the Athenians was their servile obedience to kings, in contrast to the free status of Athenian male citizens.[121] The fact that Thoas is a king does not preclude him being an antagonist when presented before a people that defines itself in opposition to kingship. De La Grange-Chancel, however, writing near the end of the reign of Louis XIV, presented his play in a country and time where absolute monarchy was not only firmly established, but exercised direct control over the theater through the *Académie Française*. To retain Euripides's antagonist king would have been *literally* unrepresentable for De La Grange-Chancel—no theater would have touched his script, and even to circulate it in writing would draw the wrath of the Academy, if not worse.

To retain Thoas as antagonist, then, it became necessary to strip him of his kingship by making him an unlawful usurper; and subsequently, to make him both more threatening and more evil, so that he might serve as a proper warning against those who threaten the sanctity of true monarchy. In fact, De La Grange-Chancel's characterization of Thoas is almost perfectly in line with La Mesnardière's prescriptions in *La Poëtique* for how to treat a tyrant:

> *. . . que les perfections, s'il est vray qu'il en ait quelqu'une, soient toujours infectées en lui par la contagion d'un vice, & qu'il n'y ait rien de si pur, qu'on puisse dire avec raison qu'il soit digne de ce Thrône d'où il fait partir les miséres qui affligent tant de Peuples.*
>
> [. . . let his virtues, if it is true that he has any, be always infected in

[121]On this and other stereotypes about barbarians, see Blondell et al., "Introduction," 22-23.

him by the contagion of a vice, and let there be nothing so pure, that

one might reasonably say that he were deserving of the Throne from

which he dispenses the miseries which afflict so many People.][122]

In one of the clearest examples of how neoclassical scripts followed dramatic theory

during this time, this French Thoas fulfills this prescription to the letter, and is indeed

more vicious than his Greek counterpart. While the Greek Thoas oversees the

sacrificial cult out of a genuine sense of religious duty, the French Thoas institutes the

sacrifice of Greeks to ensure his personal safety in the face of a threatening prophesy.

The Greek Thoas treats Iphigenia with the respect due to a priestess, while the French

Thoas's unbridled lust for her causes him not only to try to force her into marriage,

but also to break his own engagement and thereby usurp a throne that does not

lawfully belong to him. De La Grange-Chancel, writing within a literary and political

context that will not allow a king to be a villain, must consequently make his villain

the opposite of a king: a vicious usurper. Moreover, the deposing of this tyrant, and

the restoration of the rightful monarch, are plot elements which are rendered

necessary by the very inclusion of a tyrant character—to depict a tyrant who

unproblematically retains his throne (as Euripides's Thoas does) would violate the

neoclassical sense of poetic justice which dictates that vice be punished and virtue

rewarded at the end of every play.[123] The cumulative effect of all these logical steps

(Thoas = antagonist = tyrant = vicious = deposed) is to greatly expand Thoas's role

[122]La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique*: 121.
[123]Hence Racine's famous use of Iphigenia and Eriphyle. See my discussion above.

and importance in the absolutist French version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story, correspondingly shrinking the role of Euripides's central trio of Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades.

Within their much-reduced role, Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades do not even play out within the subplot the whole of Euripides's plot concerning them. In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, roughly the first half of the action concerns Iphigenia and Orestes meeting one another by chance and, through a series of discussion points, discovering one another's identities. The second half follows the concocting and execution of their plan for escape: Iphigenia tells Thoas that the pair cannot be sacrificed to Artemis as ordered because the crime of matricide has made them impure—they are not a suitable gift for the goddess.[124] In order to purify them (and the statue of Artemis, which their presence has defiled), she must perform a number of rituals involving washing them in seawater, for which she asks Thoas's permission.[125] Thoas agrees and, having made their way to the shore by this deception, Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades escape by ship with the help of Athena, stealing the statue of Artemis and bringing it back to Athens[126]—a dramatic rendition of the origin myth of the ancient Artemis-Iphigenia religious cult at Halae Araphenides, which maintained that their statue of the goddess had come from Tauris originally.[127]

In his version, De La Grange-Chancel scraps the entire second half of this

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[124]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1157-75.
[125]Ibid. lines 1176-1214.
[126]Ibid. lines 1198-1499.
[127]On this ancient cult, see M. Platnauer, "Introduction," in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ed. M. Platnauer (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), vii-x.

plot. The plan for escape (and the theft of the statue) is conceived and executed by Thomiris, but entirely off-stage; she merely arrives in the fifth act to triumphantly announce what she has done.[128] In its place, De La Grange-Chancel extends the first half (the chance meeting of Iphigenia and Orestes/Pylades to the mutual recognition) out to the length of three acts, effecting the recognition only in Act IV, and additionally making that scene the last time that any of these three characters appears onstage. For Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades, the mutual recognition constitutes the fulfillment of their plot—once they know one another's identities, they can provide no more dramatic interest.

It is this excision of the second half of the plot which interests me most about De La Grange-Chancel's adaptation. De La Grange-Chancel goes to great lengths to avoid it, delaying the recognition between Iphigenia and Orestes through a number of verbal elisions and plot twists which strain credulity and seem to be unnecessary. In order to buy time for this truncated plot to span the entire play, De La Grange-Chancel has Orestes and Pylades become separated on their arrival in Tauris, so that each may take the time to lament the presumed death of the other before their joyful reunion,[129] in addition to each getting to meet with Iphigenia separately, thereby

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[128]De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 183-86.

[129] Phillippo traces this plot element back to a private entertainment in Latin given for the Hapsburg Emperor and Empress at a Jesuit college in Linz in 1680 (Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers*, 83-84). De La Grange-Chancel was himself educated at Jesuit schools, though notably *not* the one at Linz, and moreover would have been only three years old at the time of this performance. Extensive program notes for the performance survive, however, including a plot summary, and De La Grange-Chancel might conceivably have read them as a part of his education. If so, this provides another example of an uncredited and obscure modern contribution to the play De La Grange-Chancel so resolutely paints as ancient.

doubling the number of scenes before the final recognition. He has Thomiris, in an attempt to delay the sacrifice and thwart Thoas, instruct Orestes to hide his name from everyone, thereby ensuring that he will not reveal his identity to Iphigenia even as the conversation circles closer and closer to their shared birthplace and parentage.[130] Even with these various dramatic obstacles, De La Grange-Chancel cannot fill more than half the onstage time with these three characters talking past each other, and the Taurian succession plot is given so much stage time that it seems more like an attempt to fill the remaining space than a background to justify Thomiris's final actions in aiding the trio. Why spend so much time, effort, and care bending over backward to avoid adapting the second half of the play?

The obvious answer, at least from our own twenty-first century point of view, is that the second half of Euripides's play is too blatantly pagan. As the explanatory myth for a local religious cult, the whole point of this ancient Greek tragedy is the establishment of idol worship in an Athenian district—a subject obviously unsuited to presentation in a resolutely Christian country. However, this easy answer is tempting but unlikely for two reasons: firstly, De La Grange-Chancel does not actually excise references to the statue of Artemis from his script,[131] which one would expect if idol worship were the problem; and secondly, no one in the audience, aside from the most extraordinarily erudite and dedicated of Grecophiles, could reasonably be presumed to know anything about the cult of Artemis-Iphigenia at Halae Araphenides, making

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[130]Thomiris's instructions are given in Act III, scene iv, and the exchanges between Orestes and Iphigenia occur in Act III, scene vi and Act IV, scene vi.
[131] See De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 183-86.

the religious point of Euripides's second half so obscure by default that no special measures are necessary to cover it up. Instead of jumping to the easy but unlikely religious explanation, then, I will offer up two other possible contributing factors to this decision.

The first, familiar from our discussion of Racine, is the different valuations of guilt and innocence in association with sacrifice or public death. In the ancient Greek plot, the whole premise for the trio's escape is the need to purify the guilty victims so that they will be fit for sacrifice. In the modern French context, which dictates that guilt and death accompany one another, this premise would never fly. In fact, in De La Grange-Chancel's version, by contrast, Iphigenia is initially reluctant to sacrifice Orestes *until she learns that he has murdered Clytemnestra*, at which point she becomes determined to go through with it, no matter the cost.[132] When confronted by her confidante Cyane (a minor character who serves as replacement for the chorus) as to her change of heart, she offers up Orestes's guilty status as making him deserving of sacrifice:

> CYANE
>
> *La justice a toujours guidé vos passions;*
>
> *De tous leurs mouvemens elle est inséparable:*
>
> *Mais quand à l'un des grecs vous étiez favorable,*
>
> *Quel sujet contre l'autre arme votre rigueur?*
>
> IPHIGÉNIE

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[132]Ibid., 147.

Ah! ne rappelle point ce qui me fait horreur.

Contre lui mon courroux à chaque instant s'augmente.

Il a tué ma mere; il l'avoue; il s'en vante;

Il me l'a dit, Cyane. A cette impiété,

Oses-tu m'accuser de trop de cruauté?

CYANE

Je demeure interdite & muette à ce crime:

Votre fureur est juste & sa mort légitime

[CYANE

Justice has always guided your passions;

It is inseparable from all their movements:

But when you are favorable to one of the Greeks,

What subject arms your severity towards the other?

IPHIGENIA

Ah! do not remind me of that which makes me feel horror.

Against him my wrath increases at every instant.

He has killed my mother; he has confessed it; he has boasted of it;

He said it to me, Cyane. At this impiety,

Do you dare to accuse me of too much cruelty?

CYANE

I stay dumbfounded and mute at this crime:

Your fury is just and his death legitimate][133]

In order for Orestes's death to be just, he must be guilty. This fact is self-evident to all the characters in the play, even the evil Thoas, who begins the play with a speech about the remorse he feels for having sacrificed other Greeks before Orestes who may have been innocent:

> *Que de sang a depuis arrosé son autel!*
>
> *Que d'innocens punis pour un seul criminel!*
>
> *Ces meurtres redoublés, ces sanglantes victimes,*
>
> *Sans adoucir mes maux multiplioient mes crimes.*
>
> **[**What blood has afterward watered her [Artemis/Diane's] altar!
>
> How many innocents punished for only one criminal!
>
> These redoubled murders, these bloody victims,
>
> Without lessening my sorrows, they multiply my crimes.][134]

Given this complete reversal of which characteristics are considered necessary in a proper sacrificial victim, it is difficult to imagine how De La Grange-Chancel could have gone about making Euripides's version of the escape plot palatable to a seventeenth-century French audience. Yet this, by itself, does not completely explain its absence from his adaptation—Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades might have come up with some other plan for escape entirely, and still retained the basic action of *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Instead, De La Grange-Chancel gives the duty of plotting the

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[133]Ibid., 161-62.
[134]Ibid., 97.

escape to Thomiris, and has it all happen behind the scenes. Why?

This question leads me to the second possible factor in this adaptive decision: Iphigenia's character. If Thoas, the antagonist king, must be converted into a vicious tyrant in order to maintain neoclassical French ideals about proper characterization, then Iphigenia, the virgin priestess, must be converted into a virtuous woman. This conversion is necessary because the ancient Greek Iphigenia, as portrayed by Euripides, does not read as virtuous in the modern French context at all. In Euripides's text, Iphigenia—older than her Aulidic counterpart but still a masculinized virgin, and now the priestess of a fierce virgin goddess—invents a plan of escape completely inimical to seventeenth century ideals about the virtuous behavior of holy virgins. This plan requires her to lie: first, by claiming that Pylades is also tainted by the crime of matricide (he is not); second, by making up a story about the statue of the goddess turning away from her intended victims in horror (it didn't); and thirdly, by professing a false intention to Thoas (she claims she is going to the shore to purify them, while in fact she is going to escape).[135] All of these lies she speaks onstage without flinching. Later, we are told that she covered her flight by yelling loud prayers as though she were performing the purification rituals.[136] Moreover, she is a thief—she blatantly steals the statue of Artemis from the temple, a crime which she even acknowledges might be displeasing to the goddess by begging her forgiveness on two separate occasions.[137] She has thus betrayed not only Thoas, into whose care

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[135]Eurpides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1173, 1165, and 1191-1201.
[136]Ibid., lines 1336-38.
[137]Ibid., lines 1082-88 and 1398-1402.

Artemis had entrusted her, but the goddess whom she was sworn to serve. Even before these actions, the Iphigenia of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris* has shown herself to be pitiless: learning from Orestes the fates of the key players in her own aborted sacrifice at Aulis, she expresses repeated wishes that they die and suffer;[138] she cavalierly proposes a bargain to the two men in which she will spare one if he will carry a letter for her while declaring that the other must be killed, despite having just revealed her own power to spare victims;[139] and upon learning Orestes's identity, Iphigenia demands proof before treating him with anything other than aloof coldness.[140] This Iphigenia—cold, calculating, intelligent, resourceful, and deceitful—is hardly a fitting heroine for a seventeenth-century play. Although an older Iphigenia might not bear the same ideological weight of innocence as the blushing maiden of Racine's Aulis play, as a virginal religious devotee (in Catholic France practically a stand-in for a nun) she must still be, minimally, a virtuous woman. To depict Euripides's deceitful Taurian Iphigenia on a French stage would violate standards of both propriety and *vraisemblance* in a world where to 'seem true' fiction must reflect ideology.

In deference to these concerns, De La Grange-Chancel's Iphigenia is practically the polar opposite of this ancient Greek iron maiden. The French Iphigenia retains only one vestige of Euripides's in that she falsely reports a vision of Artemis to Thoas, in which the goddess supposedly told her not to marry Thoas and to spare the

[138]Ibid., lines 531-39.
[139]Ibid., lines 578-96.
[140]Ibid., lines 793-830.

life of her intended Greek victim. When confronted by her confidante about it, however, she defends herself as follows:

> *Si ma fierté se porte à des démarches vaines,*
>
> *C'est l'orgueil de ce sang qui coule dans mes veines.*
>
> *Voudrois-tu qu'un tyran souillât sa pureté?*
>
> *Et pourrois-je descendre à cette indignité?*
>
> *Pardonne aussi, Déesse, à la pieuse estime*
>
> *Que la pitié m'a fait prendre pour ta victime.*
>
> *L'appui de l'innocence est l'ouvrage des cieux,*
>
> *Et c'est une vertu que d'imiter les Dieux.*
>
> [If my dignity leads to vain approaches,
>
> It is the pride of this blood which flows in my veins.
>
> Do you desire that a tyrant should defile its purity?
>
> And could I descend to this indignity?
>
> Pardon also, Goddess, the pious esteem
>
> Which pity has made me to put upon your victim.
>
> The support of innocence is the work of the heavens,
>
> And it is a virtue which imitates the Gods.][141]

This speech contains two central points: that the lie was spoken to defend her (sexual) honor, which she knows the goddess holds dear; and that she devoutly believes what she reported to be the actual will of the goddess—or rather, "the heavens" or "the

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[141]De La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et Pilade*, 107.

Gods," all of which ultimately equate to one another and to Artemis in the familiar monotheistic French construction of Greek religion. Her deception, therefore, is in service to—rather than in spite of—a higher power, and moreover was spoken to an unlawful tyrant who does not carry the mandate of Heaven. In this way, De La Grange-Chancel draws the teeth from Iphigenia's lies, making them devout and just, a claim they never carried in the ancient Greek version. De La Grange-Chancel's Iphigenia is also not a thief—the statue she carries away at the end is freely given to her by Thomiris, the rightful ruler of the Taurians.[142] Finally, far from being cold or unfeeling, De La Grange-Chancel's Iphigenia fairly overflows with pity, charity, and warm feeling, especially toward family.[143] Pity causes her to attempt to save the life of Pylades, even before she knows his identity *or* the fact that he comes from Argos and can aid in her desire to get home.[144] Even this desire, more vividly described than in the Greek version, is framed in terms of regaining warmth and tenderness in the bosom of her family:

> *Je brûle de revoir la grece ma patrie,*
>
> *D'admirer, d'adorer, couvert de tant d'exploits,*
>
> *Ce grand Agamemnon, chef des grecs, roi des rois;*
>
> *D'entendre, d'embrasser Clitemnestre ma mere,*
>
> *Les princesses mes soeurs, Oreste mon cher frere.*

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[142]Ibid., 184.

[143]The care of family being the primary responsibility of women in both the ancient Greek and early modern French contexts. See Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves,* and Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment.*

[144]De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 107-08.

Quels transports à me voir ne sentiroient-ils pas?

Mon pere, qui long-tems a pleuré mon trépas,

Retrouvera sa joie à l'aspect d'une fille

Qui n'a point démenti son auguste famille

[I burn to see again Greece my fatherland,

To admire, to adore, covered with so many exploits,

This grand Agamemnon, chief among the Greeks, king of kings;

To hear, to embrace Clytemnestra my mother,

The princesses my sisters, Orestes my dear brother.

What transports would they not feel to see me?

My father, who for a long time has wept my death,

Will rediscover his joy in the sight of a daughter

Who has not at all denied her august family][145]

True to such strong family feelings, and in contrast to her ancient Greek counterpart, she not only immediately believes Orestes when she learns of his identity,[146] but also seems to have some instinctive knowledge of it beforehand. Upon first catching sight of each other, the siblings proclaim their amazement and sense of familiarity and comfort with matching lines:

ORESTE

D'où vient, en la voyant, que ma fureur me quitte?

[145]Ibid., 109.
[146]Ibid., 166-67.

IPHIGENIE

D'où vient qu'à son aspect je me sens interdite?

[ORESTES

Whence comes it that, upon seeing her, my fury abandons me?

IPHIGENIA

Whence comes it that at the sight of him I feel speechless?][147]

In seventeenth-century France, the shared tenderness of kinship cannot be thwarted even by not knowing one's kin relationship to another; the heart knows even when the head does not.

In all of these ways, De La Grange-Chancel's Iphigenia shows herself to be the same virtuous and lovable—and now, also devout—feminine Iphigenia of Racine. Her character has extremely little in common with the calculating and masculinized Iphigenia of Euripides. Where the old Iphigenia was cerebral, the new Iphigenia is ruled by emotion; if the old Iphigenia was ruthless, the new Iphigenia weighs carefully the moral implications of every step she takes. To attribute the escape plot— even a new escape plot—to this new Iphigenia would be to associate her too strongly with her clever, but amoral,[148] antecedent. In order to remain the pure, feminine holy virgin of Christian France, Iphigenia must give up schemes and deception in favor of

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[147]Ibid., 141.

[148]Amoral in the French context only—to lie to, cheat, or steal from barbarians does not break the classical Greek moral code "τοὺς φίλους . . . εὖ ποιεῖν καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς δικαιοσύνην" [to do good to friends and punish enemies with harm] (for this quote and a more extensive discussion on this code, see book I of Plato's *Πολιτεία* [*The Republic*], Plato, *Republic*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013). 18-25). It is only in the new, Christian morality that lying and stealing become wrong in absolute terms.

warm feeling and true faith in the divine plan.

The extreme restructuring of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, most pointedly its deletion of the whole second half of the play, therefore belies De La Grange-Chancel's carefully constructed picture of how easy it was to modify this supposedly untreatable story for a seventeenth-century French audience. New cultural attitudes about the 'proper' characteristics pertaining to such ideologically loaded figures as kings and holy women have, in fact, rendered a substantial portion of this play dangerous or unbelievable. Had De La Grange-Chancel decided to represent a lawful king who supports human sacrifice, or a calculating, ruthless, and masculine Iphigenia who would only sacrifice the innocent, it could potentially have shattered the illusion that French ideas about the characteristics accruing to certain ranks and genders were universal, recognized in antiquity as well as modernity. The true depth of cultural difference between the cultural ancestor and 'us' would have been exposed, threatening the clear duality of the carefully constructed insider/outsider binary. De La Grange-Chancel's radical changes to his source material, far from arbitrary, serve to maintain dominant French cultural fictions by sanitizing Euripides's play before allowing it to be presented on the public stage; his disavowal of these changes, similarly calculated, maintains the illusion that the cultural ancestor was similar enough in the first place not to require such sanitization. This sleight-of-hand, moreover, would have been much harder for audiences of his time to catch than it is for the twenty-first-century scholar—the first known French translation of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris* did not appear until 1713, sixteen years after De La Grange-

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Chancel's *Oreste et Pilade*.[149] To those who spoke only the vernacular, then, De La Grange-Chancel's claim to have closely followed Euripides would have been difficult to disprove. Once again, *adaptive* change is used to mask *cultural* change, and is carefully deployed in those contexts where the uneducated (who could be in the audiences of the public theaters) might be exposed to Greek stories.

De La Touche's *Iphigénie en Tauride*

Claude Guymond De La Touche, unlike his predecessors in the French Iphigenia tradition, was not a professional playwright.[150] In fact, *Iphigénie en Tauride* was the only drama he ever wrote for public presentation, and though there are rumors that he might have written plays while in training to be a Jesuit priest (training he never completed), it is also the only known dramatic work by De La Touche. Instead, De La Touche made his living as a lawyer, merely dabbling in writing as a member of a *salon* run by Mme de Graffigny. It was through this *salon* that he met the actress Mlle Clairon, who championed his piece for presentation at the Théâtre Français, where it received its first production in 1757.[151] Despite the complete obscurity of its author, *Iphigénie en Tauride* was a smash hit. It was revived numerous times both in Paris and in the provinces, received several printings as a text to be read, and spawned a number of critical reviews, alongside its famous operatic

[149]See Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à l'Europe des Lumières*.

[150]For a short biography on De La Touche, see Pascal, *L'Autre Iphigénie*: 35-48.

[151]Interestingly, the final act of the piece was rewritten by De La Touche only a few hours before the first performance at the insistence of the actors and to their specifications, making *Iphigénie en Tauride* one of the playscripts which we know with certainty to have been influenced by the artistic contributions of actors during production. See Clairon et al., *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon, de Lekain, de Préville, de Dazincourt, de Molé, de Garrick, de Goldoni* (Paris: F. Didot, 1857). 335.

adaptation by Guillard and Gluck[152] and a parody by Favart presented at the *Théâtre Italien*.[153]

De La Touche, writing a full sixty years after De La Grange-Chancel's adaptation, put forward for an eighteenth-century audience newly enthralled by the cult of sentiment[154] a version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story midway between Euripides and De La Grange-Chancel in terms of influence. In the intervening time, French absolutism had weakened somewhat; the monarchs of France still ruled, but with the demise of the Sun King (Louis XIV), direct administrative control by the monarch himself over every aspect of life waned. France's colonial project continued, though somewhat less starry-eyed, as the magnetic culture strategy was no longer young and had not proven to be as effective in the colonies as hoped.[155] In the realm of art and literature, the publication of the Englishman Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* in 1740 had popularized sentimental literature across Europe, and the theater was not slow in following suit—the plays of the eighteenth century, in France and elsewhere, made tender emotion and human feeling under the most dire of circumstances its central concern.[156] Showing the influence of all these

[152]Discussed in "Chapter 4: Iphigenia in Music" below.

[153]These two adaptations, plus all of the known critical reviews, can be found anthologized in Pascal, *L'Autre Iphigénie*.

[154]De La Touche was writing alongside such contemporaries as Louis-Sébastien Mercier, a terrifically prolific playwright whose plays depicted the most virtuous of characters as the most emotional and the most capable of reforming vicious characters through the moral example of their tender feeling. See Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Théâtre complet* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970).

[155]On the changes in French colonial approaches in the New World over time, see Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*.

[156]On the sentimental movement in France, see Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*, ed. Jane Milling and Kathryn Lowere, Performance in the Long Eighteenth Century: Studies in Theatre, Music, Dance (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013). For the novel that kicked off the movement, see Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin,

changes, De La Touche's version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story is less concerned with kingship than was De La Grange-Chancel's, demonstrates greater colonial anxiety, and takes the modern French focus on emotion to new heights. Scrapping the Taurian succession plot so necessary in absolutist France, De La Touche makes his Thoas a truly barbarian king instead of an illegitimate one—a demonized stand-in for France's colonized 'Others.' The removal of this extra plotline, besides refiguring the character of Thoas, brings the play closer to its Euripidean source text, with a renewed focus on the characters who actually appear in the ancient Greek tragedy. Though De La Touche borrowed more and added less than De La Grange-Chancel with respect to Euripides's play, he too found the delayed recognition of brother and sister to be the most interesting part of the plot and stretched it out accordingly, actually giving the escape plot even *less* attention than De La Grange-Chancel by having his protagonists overthrow Thoas rather than escape from him.[157] Unlike De La Grange-Chancel, however, De La Touche, thanks largely to the sentimentalist tradition in which he was writing, was able to make this family reunion the main focus of his play, and found no need to augment it with a Taurian succession plot or any other added story.

Sentimentalism, an aesthetic style primarily concerned with depicting the power of tender emotion, swept the theaters of Europe in the eighteenth century. Building upon preferences already present in the late seventeenth century for

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1971).

[157]In the final scene of the play, Pylades simply rushes into the room and murders Thoas to general rejoicing. Claude Guymond De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Breinigsville, PA: Nabu Public Domain Reprints; repr., 2014). 76.

expressions of deep feeling and relationships founded on the purest human kindness, sentimentalist drama made the shedding of sympathetic tears the goal for both characters and audiences and depicted such emotions as the key to awakening the natural virtue of humankind.[158] In many ways the artistic arm of the greater project of the European Enlightenment, sentimentalism touted the ability of shared human feeling to advance people beyond backwards practices of barbarism and violence, into a harmonious and virtuous society based on empathy and reason.[159] Writing within this tradition, De La Touche was able to build on the foundation of tender feeling laid out for him by De La Grange-Chancel: the deep friendship of Orestes and Pylades, each fighting for the honor to die for the other; the instinctive recognition between brother and sister despite their long separation; and Iphigenia's virtuous opposition to the 'savage' tradition of human sacrifice are all elements added to the Iphigenia in Tauris story by De La Grange-Chancel and greatly expanded upon by De La Touche. These elements, which had been nods to French preferences about characterization in the seventeenth century, became points of dramatic interest in and of themselves in the eighteenth, elevated by sentimentalism to the status of main plot. The recognition plot—half of Euripides's play and a mere sub-plot in De La Grange-Chancel— becomes the main focus here, and allows De La Touche to turn what was the foundation myth of a pagan cult into a sentimentalist family drama, complete with tears, sighs, self-sacrifice, expressions of the deepest love, and the triumph of virtue

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[158]On the importance of tears, see Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*.

[159]On overcoming violence and barbarism as a part of the Enlightenment project, see Dorinda Outram, "The Rise of Modern Paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment*, *New Approaches to European History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; reprint, 2013).

over vice. This struggle between virtue and vice, the forerunner of the 'good vs. evil' plot so familiar in our own day, has an explicitly colonial coding in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, with the virtuous Greek characters representing the enlightened civilizations of Europe and the vicious Taurians strongly associated with the sterotypic imagery of the colonial 'Other' in circulation at this time. De La Touche's version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story, therefore, blends the sentimentalist focus on virtue with colonial ideology to create an adaptation that is binary, clear-cut, and highly focused on the tensions of cultural insider/outsider—and to do so, of course, it must profoundly alter and erase the Greek 'third term.'

This alteration is achieved, in part, through a structural reworking of both De La Touche's source plays (*Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Oreste et Pilade*). In order to stretch the recognition plot out to the length of a full play, De La Touche largely manipulates entrances and exits. While Euripides effects the recognition in the form of two scenes between Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades, (separated by a third in which Iphigenia is absent)[160] De La Touche manages to make it span a full seventeen scenes by having the characters split up, for one reason or another, after every new significant bit of information is acquired—allowing them to analyze (and agonize over) it individually, in pairs, or with confidantes before coming back together to discover the next piece. While many of these interruptions are new to De La Touche's version, he also borrowed scenes De La Grange-Chancel. As in *Oreste et Pilade*,

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[160]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 456-1088. Although the Greek texts are not actually divided into scenes, for ease of comparison I count each entrance or exit as the start of a new scene, after the French tradition of dividing scenes in this manner.

Iphigénie en Tauride has Orestes and Pylades arrive separately after a shipwreck rather than simply landing safely in Tauris as they do in Euripides, so that they may have individual scenes lamenting one another's loss and subsequently be reunited, both extending and adding more occasion for the expression of strong feelings to the beginning of the plot. Also following De La Grange-Chancel, he separates them again just before the point when Iphigenia entrusts her letter to Pylades,[161] thereby allowing the recognition to be delayed significantly beyond when it occurred in Euripides.

Indeed, it is the entrusting of this letter which effects the recognition in Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, lending the whole thing a vaguely comic tone. With Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades all present in the scene, Iphigenia addresses Pylades thus:

> ΙΦΙΓΕΝΕΙΑ
>
> ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστῃ, παιδὶ τἀγαμέμνονος· . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> ἡ 'ν Αὐλίδι σφαγεῖσ' ἐπιστέλλει τάδε
>
> ζῶσ' Ἰφιγένεια, τοῖς ἐκεῖ δ' οὐ ζῶσ' ἔτι· . . .
>
> ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
>
> ποῦ δ' ἔστ' ἐκείνη; κατθανοῦσ' ἥκει πάλιν;
>
> ΙΦΙΓΕΝΕΙΑ

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[161]In De La Grange-Chancel, Pylades is the first to be captured in Tauris after being separated from Orestes by a storm—it is before Orestes too is found that Iphigenia attempts to charge him with her letter. See De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 124-28. In De La Touche, all three begin the business of the letter together, but Orestes is conducted off for sacrifice before Iphigenia gives Pylades the letter and tells him the intended recipient. See De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 44-49.

ἥδ' ἣν ὁρᾷς σύ·

. . . .

ΠΥΛΑΔΗΣ

ὦ ῥᾳδίοις ὅρκοισι περιβαλοῦσά με,

κάλλιστα δ' ὀμόσασ', οὐ πολὺν σχήσω χρόνον,

τὸν δ' ὅρκον ὃν κατώμοσ' ἐμπεδώσομεν.

ἰδού, φέρω σοι δέλτον ἀποδίδωμί τε,

Ὀρέστα, τῆσδε σῆς κασιγνήτης πάρα.

[IPHIGENIA

Report to Orestes, child of Agamemnon . . .

. . . .

The one sacrificed in Aulis sends these things by letter

Living Iphigenia, but yet not living to those in that place; . . .

ORESTES

But where is she? Having died, has she come back?

IPHIGENIA

She is the one that you see;

. . . .

PYLADES

O, you having invested me with easy oaths,

And I having sworn the best ones, I will not have them for long,

But instead let us fulfill the sworn oath.

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> Look, I bring a letter which I give to you,
>
> Orestes, from this woman here, your sister.][162]

This Greek version of the recognition scene was evidently not sufficiently serious or full of feeling for the French tragedians of either the seventeenth or the eighteenth centuries, who routinely prefer to have Iphigenia and Orestes intuit one another's identities, then circle closer and closer to having their suspicions confirmed as more and more conversational hints are dropped.[163] In this way, Iphigenia and Orestes have time to savor their hope, their wonderment, and ultimately their transports of familial love at leisure, making the reunion scene much more focused on the tenderness of human feeling than it is in its cerebral Greek version. The only way in which this can be reliably accomplished is to separate Orestes from Pylades, and to have Iphigenia entrust Pylades with the letter recipient's name only out of earshot and in circumstances which make it difficult for him to get back to Orestes. In the use of this and several other devices, De La Touche follows De La Grange-Chancel, managing to turn half of the Euripidean play into the whole of his own play and creating a result focused much more on emotion than on the practical details of escape.

Even chopping up and stretching out Euripides's first plot point cannot give De La Touche a whole five acts' worth of material, so, in a sentimentalist focus on Iphigenia's virtue that winds up closely associating goodness with colonial values, he fills the space with a number of lengthy passages by Iphigenia to one character or

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[162]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 769-794.
[163]See De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 141-47 and 64-66.; and De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 23-27, 34-35, and 57-62.

another, speculating on the morality and theology of the human sacrifices she is tasked with performing.[164] In a weirdly Roman twist on this Greek play,[165] De La Touche lends an oracular function to the sacrifices, having Thoas read his future in the entrails of the victims.[166] Iphigenia spends much of the play expressing her horror at this concept; pointing out the barbarism of Thoas in the most xenophobic sense of the term; and insisting that, as her own rescue from the altar by a goddess has shown, the gods do not approve of human sacrifice.[167]

In this she expresses a sentiment common to both ancient Greece and early modern France, but one that is given much more discussion and weight in the French context and which, moreover, has gained a certain resonance with European depictions of the colonial 'Other.' The numerous descriptions of gruesome sacrifices, much more common in De La Touche than in either Euripides or De La Grange-Chancel, call to mind the horrific images of human sacrifice and cannibalism[168]

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[164]To give just one example, this preoccupation makes up the majority of the dialogue in the entirety of Act I. See Ibid., 4-16.

[165]For an especially thorough and instructive look at the differences between Greek and Roman practices of animal sacrifice, including the Roman use of sacrificial entrails for divination, see Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Whether De La Touche was conscious of this difference is debatable; like the Roman names for gods, this may be the unintentional fallout of writing in a tradition which lumped two linguistic groups and more than a thousand years' worth of writers into the unitary category of 'the ancients.'

[166]See De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 10-11, 28, 36, and 74.

[167]Ibid., 11-12.

[168]For a thorough history of the place occupied by the cannibalistic Other in the European imagination during the colonial period, see Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Colombus to Jules Verne* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997). On European associations of human sacrifice with the colonial 'Other,' specifically in the context of the New World, see Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a study on the concept of savagery (which included these two characteristics, among others) in the French colonial context, see Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*.

circulated in the stereotypic imagery of (primarily) native American cultures in the xenophobic, colonial literatures of the time. In defending the practice of human sacrifice to Iphigenia, Thoas, the barbarian king, argues the following:

> *Quoi! les Peuples, armés du glaive de la guerre,*
>
> *De flots de sang humain pourront couvrir la terre!*
>
> *Leurs chefs ambitieux, au soin de leur grandeur,*
>
> *Pourront tout immoler dans leur aveugle ardeur!*
>
> *Nous-mêmes, dans le creux de nos antres sauvages,*
>
> *Nous pourrons subsister de meutre et de ravages!*
>
> *Nous pourrons dévorer nos ennemis vivans,*
>
> *Et nous désaltérer dans leurs crânes sanglans!*
>
> *Et les Dieux en courroux, ces Dieux par qui nous sommes,*
>
> *Ne pourront demander, pour victimes, des hommes?*
>
> [What! the People, armed with the sword of war,
>
> With floods of human blood can cover the earth!
>
> Their ambitious chiefs, to the care of their grandeur,
>
> Can sacrifice all in their blind ardor!
>
> We ourselves, in the hollow of our savage lairs,
>
> Can subsist on murder and ravages!
>
> We can devour our living enemies,
>
> And quench our thirst in their bloody skulls!
>
> And the Gods in wrath, these Gods from whom we exist,

Cannot demand, as victims, men?][169]

This short passage contains just a few of the many linguistic tropes associated with

savagery, cannibalism, and the animalization of human beings (i.e. the use of the

word "*antre*" [lair/den/cave]) used in conjunction with Thoas in particular and the

Taurians in general. Taken together, these references paint a picture of the Taurians as

a demonized and vividly colonial 'Other,' capable of the worst kind of violence—

specifically, ritual murder and cannibalism, two kinds of violence which Christianity

renders unnecessary through the mysteries of the crucifixion[170] and communion.[171] As

Derek Hughes has explored in his thorough study of human sacrifice in European

literature, Europeans during the colonial period marked their own difference from the

colonial 'Other' partly in terms of the kinds of violence practiced: judicial and military

violence were 'civilized,' while ritual murder—especially when accompanied by

cannibalism, as in the case of Aztec human sacrifice—was 'savage' and horrific.[172]

While human sacrifice is a staple element of both Iphigenia stories, references to

cannibalism had never surfaced in them prior to De La Touche's version. The

inclusion of this imagery, coupled with the increased emphasis on ritual and

superstition lent to the sacrifices by their divinatory function (another new addition in

De La Touche), marks this version of human sacrifice as specifically outside of both

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[169]De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 13.

[170]The one human sacrifice which was forgiven in the form of the resurrection and rendered all others
   unnecessary. See "Chapter 8: The New Testament and the Lamb of God" in Gilhus, *Animals, Gods
   and Humans*, 161-82.

[171]The ritual cannibalism of the body of Christ. See Roch A. Kereszty, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb:
   Eucharistic Theology from a Historical, Biblical, and Systematic Perspective* (Chicago:
   HillenbrandBooks, 2004).

[172]See "Chapter 4: The Discovery of America" in Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice*.

Christianity and civilization—while human sacrifice in Racine was a Christian test of faith and in De La Grange-Chancel the individual crime of a paranoid usurper, in De La Touche it is the barbaric custom of a savage people, the marker of an 'Othered' and inferior group.

This increased focus on the colonially inflected cruelty and barbarism of the Taurian cult creates a heightened contrast with the (sentimental) Christian kindness, sensitivity, and human feeling of the newly emotion-driven Greek protagonists, creating an opposition between savagery and civilization (encoded as 'vice' and 'virtue' respectively) only brought thematically into the forefront of the story by this adaptation. De La Touche, most clearly of any of the dramatists analyzed thus far, makes his story centrally concerned with setting up clear definitions between 'us' and 'them,' 'Self' and 'Other.' In order to properly manufacture this contrast, however, he must alter the *Greek* portrayal of the main characters he has inherited from Euripides (as discussed above, cold, pragmatic, and cerebral) into warm, loyal, and passionate stand-ins for Christian France. Iphigenia, once again stripped of masculine traits, feels horror at the sight of the altars,[173] describes herself as "*timide*" [timid] on two occasions,[174] is centrally characterized by her pity and compassion for others,[175] and in this version even has the decency to faint dead away (twice!) when she learns of Orestes's identity.[176] Orestes and Pylades, during their disagreement over which of

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[173]De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 4.
[174]Ibid., 7 and 9.
[175]To list only the instances in which Iphigenia herself refers to her pity (because a list encompassing all the times that other characters reference it as well would become unmanageable), see Ibid., 30-31, 34-35, 37-38, 47, and 49.
[176]Ibid., 60-61.

them should die, abandon their Euripidean arguments based on reputation and honor (each saying that it would be shameful to outlive the other)[177] in favor of passionate protestations from each that to outlive his dear friend would be a torment.[178] Such altered characterization in the case of all three protagonists works to replace the entirely too Greek motivations based on reasoned argument with newly sentimentalist French motivations springing from the heart.

The degree to which De La Touche must rewrite his (ostensibly) Greek protagonists in order to effectively set up the dual oppositions of Greek/Taurian, civilized/savage, virtuous/vicious is telling. The erasure of the third term in the Self/Other dichotomy is possibly more evident here than in any other play analyzed so far—the cultural ancestor, too alien to the morals, gender roles, and sentiments of the day, cannot serve as a proper stand-in for 'Self' in this binary cultural encounter without significant alteration. In the theological arguments over morality, immorality, and the divine will which provide much of the main action of the play, Iphigenia and her fellow Greeks cannot stand in for 'good' in the divine battle of good and evil unless they are first sufficiently Gallicized. De La Touche, like his predecessors Racine and De La Grange-Chancel, must force the cultural ancestor to fit neatly into the category of 'Self' by erasing differences where they are too unpalatable, by strengthening similarities where they exist, and by manufacturing them where they do not. Adaptation, taking over at the point where even translation and performance

[177]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 674-92.
[178]De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 38-43.

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cannot hide the differences, does the work of fully erasing the third term in the binary, thus defusing the threat that such 'third terms' present to a cosmology founded—theologically, morally, culturally, and socially—on binary opposition.

All three of the dramatists examined in this chapter used the adaptive process as a mechanism for erasing the third term and subsuming the cultural ancestor into the newly standardized ideas of Christian French national selfhood. As we will see in the next chapter, the need to remove the 'foreign' element of these ancient Greek characters and plots extended as the circulation of the stories did. As the plays of neoclassical France were taken up by imitators, translators, and adapters in other European nations, processes of adaptive change were similarly employed to conform these plays to local conventions—even to the point of attempting to erase the French contribution. In the coming chapter, we will see how the same localizing impulse that drove the processes of neoclassical French adaptation made those very plays unsuitable for import without alteration into other national theatrical traditions and contexts. The adaptations spawned by these adaptations were also to be employed in the service of a project of normalizing early modern cultural constructions, whether based in custom, science, religion, or the emergent nationalism that went hand-in-hand with European colonialism.

Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England

On January 30, 1649, the people of England did the unthinkable by publicly executing their monarch, Charles I, in a spirit of Republicanism that denied the divine right of kings. This act sparked a series of circumstances that would link England's theatrical history to its political history more closely than they had ever been tied before—quite an accomplishment, considering England's long tradition of using the stage to comment on contemporary politics.[1] After the execution, theaters in London were shut down for the duration of the English Commonwealth,[2] with a few permitted performances toward the end but reopening in full only with the reinstatement of the monarchy in 1660.[3] When they reopened with the coming of Charles II, it was in a significantly altered form: one that owed no small debt to the flourishing neoclassical theaters of France.

The importation of French neoclassicism to England created a kind of multivalent culture clash, in which the theatrical traditions of four different cultures (England, France, Athens, and Rome), disguised as only three (England, France, and

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[1]For just a few explorations of the pervasive links between theatre and politics in the English tradition even prior to the period I examine here, see Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David M. Bevington, *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre, and Politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[2]Which is not to say that performance of plays ceased entirely—there are many documented cases of private or surreptitious performances of plays during the period. However, the open, public, and legally permissible staging of plays was shut down. For a thorough exploration of both secret performances and the printing of plays during the English Commonwealth, see Dale B. J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642-1660* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

[3]On the slight instance of permitted performance in 1658, see Cedric C. Brown, *Patronage, Politics, and Literary Traditions in England, 1558-1658* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993).

'the ancients') would meet, merge, wrestle, and change one another in the form of both the plays themselves and works of dramatic criticism. Discussions of what theater ought to be, and who got it right, dominated literary criticism from the Restoration on in a sort of English extension of the Dispute of the Ancients and the Moderns—but with the added layer of disputing which of the vastly different interpretations of the ancient theater and its 'rules' prevalent in England or France was the 'correct' one. Influential dramatic critics like John Dryden,[4] Thomas Rymer,[5] and John Dennis[6] published numerous treatises debating the styles and merits of the English, the French, and 'the ancients,' invariably concluding with the superiority of English conventions—derived in large part from the Roman theater[7]—over French conventions—drawn more from the Greeks, especially Aristotle.[8]

The adaptations of ancient scripts that were written in the midst of this critical melee provide a fascinating look at the dominant cultural trends in play: English adaptations of French adaptations of ancient Greek source plays known to both cultures through translations mostly funneled through Latin before arriving in the vernacular. These plays loudly assert their Englishness and thus their difference from

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[4]John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Writings*, ed. John L. Mahoney (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965).

[5]Thomas Rymer, *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd and Examin'd by the Practice of the Ancients and by the Common Sense of All Ages in a Letter to Fleetwood Shepheard, Esq* (London: Richard Tonson, 1678).

[6]John Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939).

[7] In combination with elements drawn from the medieval theater. For an exploration of the various sources feeding into the development of English theatrical conventions, see Bruce R. Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[8]For the specific theatrical conventions in question and their derivation from Roman and Greek sources respectively, see "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" and below.

the French while simultaneously claiming to have better realized the theatrical goals

of the ancients—a claim which makes sense only when viewed in the context of the

ancient Roman adaptors of the Greek (Athenian) scripts. These plays thus asserted

difference (English and not French) even as they brought French plays to the English

stage, often in extremely similar scripts. They asserted sameness (with the ancients)

by routing Greek plays through Roman staging conventions, an alteration somewhat

disguised by the subsuming of both Greek and Roman theaters into a unified concept

of the ancient world as a single cultural whole. Although the English knew that there

were differences between Greece and Rome, and these were occasionally discussed in

English dramatic criticism,[9] the differences that were pointed up in these

commentaries tended to be differences of form only (act and scene divisions in

Roman scripts but not in Greek,[10] for example), not differences of culture. Greek and

Roman religions, for example, were treated as exactly equivalent and

interchangeable, as attested by the use of Latin names for Greek deities and the

complete lack of awareness that Greek sacrificial practices contained no elements of

prophesy or divination.[11] More importantly, the Greeks and the Romans were viewed

as sharing the same aims and vision for the theater, with continuous attempts in

English dramatic criticism to combine the theatrical treatises of Aristotle and Horace

[9]See, for example, the separate explorations of the practices of Athens and Rome in the critical works
of John Dennis (Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, 166-67).
[10]See Ibid.
[11]As explored above in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France." On divination as a part of Roman
sacrifices only, see Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to
Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

into a single ancient vision for the drama.[12] The interplay of sameness and difference

in these adaptations is thus much more complex than the simple formulas of

sameness-with-ancients / difference-from-French attempt to make it.

Iphigenia was an especially popular figure within the sub-genre of

neoclassical adaptation in England. Although this chapter is devoted only to spoken

tragedies explicitly based on French originals,[13] Iphigenia also appeared in a number

of ballets, court masques, operas, and tragedies adapted directly from Euripides.[14] In

their comprehensive study of adaptations of Greek tragedy in the English theater,

Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh go so far as to dub Iphigenia the "serious heroine

who had walked all the major London stages more than any other Greek tragic figure

[from] . . . 1660-1734."[15] This level of popularity, in keeping with Iphigenia's fame in

France and Italy during the same time period, demonstrates that her appeal in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was truly a pan-European phenomenon.[16] In her

specifically English incarnation, Iphigenia became linked with the popular new genre

of 'She-Tragedy,'[17] a type of drama encouraging spectator identification with the

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[12]For a fuller exploration of this process in dramatic criticism, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*.

[13]Which interestingly seem to be clustered right around the turn of the eighteenth century—more thoroughly English adaptations of the Iphigenia stories dominated before (most notably including Charles Davenant's *Circe*, 1677) and Italian-inspired Iphigenia stories took center stage after (most notably Handel's opera *Orestes*, 1734). The moment of Iphigenia's French vogue in England seems to roughly correspond with the drastic swell in Huguenot immigration which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 (see below).

[14]For a full catalog and analysis of English adaptations of the Iphigenia stories, see Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[15]Ibid., 33.

[16]On Iphigenia's popularity across Europe during these two centuries, and its possible origins in the famous translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis* by Erasmus, see "Chapter 1: Iphigenia in Transit" above.

[17]See below.

heroine on a personal level. Thus, while the Iphigenia of ancient Greece had been primarily religious in signification,[18] and the Iphigenia of France had come to be a symbol for innocence,[19] the English Iphigenia was presented primarily as an object of pity, undergoing a series of trials for which English audiences were encouraged to weep. This bringing of Iphigenia down to a personal level, highly characteristic of the proto-sentimentalist[20] bent of She-Tragedy and the English theater in contrast to the Greek, the French, and even the Roman, is one of the many aspects in which a native English dramatic tradition asserts its dominance even as it weaves in threads drawn from the theatrical cultures of other places and times.

In my discussion of the three plays below—John Dennis's *The Tragedy of Iphigenia*, Abel Boyer's *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*, and Charles Johnson's *The Victim*—I focus primarily on disentangling these various cultural threads to show how these four different national groups influenced one another on the English stage. In the process, I demonstrate the extent to which even the most revered foreign texts must be routed through local conventions in order appear on the public stage: while

[18]See my discussion in "Chapter 1: Iphigenia in Transit" above.
[19]See my discussion in "Chapter 2: Iphigenia in France" above.
[20]I use the term "proto-sentimentalist" here because the genre of She-Tragedy (including all the plays examined here) antedates the commonly acknowledged beginning of the sentimentalist movement in art and literature with the publication of the English novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* in 1740 (see Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971)). However, there are many commonalities between the aims of sentimentalism and those of She-Tragedy, including the focus on strong identification with the protagonists, a concern with modeling virtue even under great duress, and the idea that tears are a benchmark of the story's success. Consequently, I view She-Tragedy as one of the contributing artistic factors that led to the birth of sentimentalism in the English nation, and do include some discussion of sentimentalist tropes in my writing about it below. On the conventions of She-Tragedy, see Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006). On the conventions of sentimentalism, see Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000).

originals or translations might be performed in private, public performance was

reserved for those foreign texts that had been adapted sufficiently to *appear* English,

despite the lingering influences of previous incarnations from other times and places.

The cultural and temporal discrepancies thus revealed show adaptational chains for

the complex examples of intercultural interplay they are.

Culture Clash: How the Gallicized Greeks Met the Anglicized Romans

The route that these four cultures took to all arrive on the English stage at the

same time is a fascinating one. While the French were busy creating a national theater

based upon the example of the Greeks and the precepts of Aristotle in a 'top-down'

model governed by the aristocracy and the French Academy, the English by the

seventeenth century had already established a thriving professional theater scene on

the basis of a 'bottom-up' economic model in which the tastes of London's urban

populace determined who would make money (and therefore keep making plays) and

who would fail.[21] The market-driven nature of English drama was, in fact, so

ingrained that attempts to create a 'top-down' model by establishing a national theater

in the French style were discarded as impossible practically the moment they were

raised right through the middle of the twentieth century, when a national theater was

finally established in 1949.[22] Though the patronage of the aristocracy was still a

financial and political consideration in the London theater scene from the

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[21]On the economics of the early professional theater in England, see, among others, William Ingram, *The Business of Playing: The Beginnings of the Adult Professional Theater in Elizabethan London* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992) and Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[22]See Marion O'Connor, "national theatre movement: Britain," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

beginning—the names of such famous and successful theater companies as "The King's Men" being a case in point[23]—a far greater percentage of the funding for English theaters came from performance revenue, and aristocrats were far less likely to publicly lambast a play for failure to uphold aesthetic standards set by the elite, as had been the case in France in the Dispute over *Le Cid*.[24]

English theater was by no means a free-for-all, with institutionalized censorship a part of English theater from the first professionalization of the industry.[25] Censorship began with the Master of the Revels, an office appointed by the monarch which became linked to theatrical censorship shortly after the creation of the first freestanding professional theaters in the sixteenth century. This office empowered the holder to license plays for performance both before the public and before the court. Later, the powers of censorship were transferred to the Lord Chamberlain under the Licensing Act of 1737, under which licensing operated in much the same fashion: if the censoring authority (whether the Master of the Revels or the Lord Chamberlain) withheld his license, a play could not be performed as submitted but might be rewritten and resubmitted for consideration. This basic pattern of censorship through

[23]On the operations of aristocratic patronage of the theater during this time, see Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall, *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a specific study on the various economic influences on the King's Men over time, see Melissa D. Aaron, *Global Economics: A History of the Theater Business, the Chamberlain's/King's Men, and Their Plays, 1599-1642* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

[24]See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France."

[25]For a thorough study of censorship in England's early professional theaters, see Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England: Buggeswords* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000). On the place of censorship in England's print culture during this time, see Randy Robertson, *Censorship and Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England: The Subtle Art of Division* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

licensing was a constant presence in the English theater from the sixteenth century right through the middle of the twentieth, when it was finally repealed under the Theatres Act of 1968. Censorship in English theater thus took the form of a kind of screening process by which plays were either verified as suitable or rewritten to be made suitable before they were allowed public presentation. Yet unlike in the case of France, the rejection of a license was almost always political rather than aesthetic in nature; so long as a play did not too openly undermine the government, a playwright's choices about such matters as dramatic structure, verisimilitude, and the use of language were more a matter of catering to the whims of a large and heterogeneous populace than to those of a small, organized, and powerful aesthetic watchdog. Rules about dramatic form and structure—or even about shocking content provided the shock was not political in nature—were virtually never recorded as reasons for rejecting a play in the extensive logs kept by the Masters of the Revels.[26] Notably, under this system, with political propriety virtually the only concern of censorship, the use of stories or settings from antiquity thrived. In one particularly transparent case, a play that was turned down by the Master of the Revels for political criticism of the Spanish court was licensed when the author transposed the setting from modern Spain to classical antiquity and resubmitted the play with virtually no other alteration.[27] Because antiquity offered a safely distanced vantage point from which to view contemporary politics, the use of such settings could be—and often were—

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[26]For a detailed study on the contents of these logs, see Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England: Buggeswords.*
[27]On this case, see Ibid., 6.

employed to skirt this politically-focused brand of English censorship.

The relative aesthetic freedom and flexibility of this 'bottom-up' model meant that the early professional theaters in England drew heavily on the popular and profitable entertainments which antedated them, many of which were bloodsports. In fact, many of the first professional theaters were housed in buildings that had been used (or were still used) for various entertainments based on animal fighting—the Cockpit Theater (which had been a literal cockpit for betting on rooster fights) and the Hope Theater (which was used as a bearbaiting arena both before and after it had been converted into a theater) being two examples of this type.[28] The English penchant for animal fights drifted easily into an affinity for a version of tragedy that featured sensational spectacles of violence and death, and this particular form of theater came to be acknowledged as a distinguishing mark of the English national character by observers both at home and abroad. The Englishman Thomas Rymer, to give just one of many examples,[29] in the preface to his popular translation of a French critical text, R. Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, both repeats and confirms the French charge of bloodiness in the English theater:

> . . . in general he [Rapin] confesses, that we have a Genius for Tragedy

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[28]For an architectural history of these and other theaters, see Richard Leacroft, *The Development of the English Playhouse: An Illustrated Survey of Theatre Building in England from Medieval to Modern Times* (London and New York: Methuen, 1988). On the links between theater and animal bloodsports in the London's early professional theaters, see Heather F. Phillips, "Of Beasts and Men: Animal Bloodsports in Early Modern England" (Doctoral Dissertation, Tufts University, 2013).

[29]See also Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy." and René Rapin, "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie," in *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie . . . By R. Rapin* (London: T. N. for H. Herringman, 1674).

above all other people; one reason he gives we cannot allow of, viz.

The disposition of our Nation, which, he saith, *is delighted with cruel*

things. 'Tis ordinary to judge of Peoples manners and inclinations, by

their publick diversions; and Travellers, who see some of our

Tragedies, may conclude us certainly the cruellest minded people in

Christendom. In another place this Author sayes of us, *That we are*

men in an Island, divided from the rest of the world, and that we love

blood in our sports. And, perhaps, it may be true, that on our Stage are

more Murders than on all the Theatres in Europe. And they who have

not time to learn our Language, or be acquainted with our

Conversation, may there in three hours time behold so much

bloodshed as may affright them from the inhospitable shore, as from

the Cyclops Den.[30]

Rymer then uses this discussion to call for reform of the theater, making it clear that

when he says "we cannot allow of" such accusations, it is not a statement that the

charge is false but rather a call to action to make it so.[31] Other English critics were

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[30]Thomas Rymer, "The Preface of the Translator," in *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie . . . By R. Rapin* (London: T. N. for H. Herringman, 1674), n.p. In this and the other quotations from seventeenth-century English texts throughout this chapter, I retain original spelling, punctuation, and italicization, with one single exception: I have not retained the use of the long "s," which to modern readers looks like an "f" and can distract from the meaning of a passage by making it difficult to read. Consequently, I have replaced them all with the short "s" which is the only one currently in use in my own time's version of English. If a text has come to me by way of a later printing that has already standardized spelling or otherwise altered these things, I give the text as it appears in the version that I cite in the corresponding footnote.

[31]And indeed, this call was one of many at the turn of the eighteenth century as English tragedy began to shift its focus from violent political spectacle to more domestic and sentimental concerns. The most famous and influential of these calls for reform was the anti-theatrical treatise of the Reverend Jeremy Collier, who condemned, among other things, what he saw as the stage's

more resigned to this particular aspect of their national theatrical character, Dryden

stating in his influential *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* that

> . . . whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or
> nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will
> scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from
> them.[32]

Such a widely acknowledged penchant for violent spectacle marked a sharp

difference between the English popular theater and the French aesthetic theater,

which, in imitation of Greek models, had banned death from being represented

directly on the stage. This difference sparked something of a pamphlet war in the

realm of dramatic theory, with the French complaining that the gory English plays

violated the rules of theatrical decorum[33] while English critics of French

neoclassicism countered that the talky deaths of the French stage would never fly

among 'beef-eating Englishmen.'[34]

The widely acknowledged English affinity for these two types of public,

popular entertainment (bloodsports and theater), combined with the preference for

teaching and reading Latin over Greek common throughout Western Europe at the

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promotion of revenge killings in tragedy. See Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage* (London: Samuel Birt and Thomas Trye, 1738), 341-43. The rise of She-Tragedy as a genre is, in part, attributed to the reforms on violence and immorality (especially sexual immorality) condemned by this tract. See Marsden, *Fatal Desire* and my own discussion of 'She-Tragedy' below.

[32]Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 43.

[33]See, for example, Rapin, "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie," 111.

[34]This amusing term—and references to the consumption of beef in general—is often thrown around by English critics as a shorthand for the supposedly more 'masculine' tastes of the English, which seem to have included having a stomach both for onstage violence and tougher foods like beef.

time, meant that the influence of the ancient theater on the modern in England found more resonance when channeled through Rome than through Greece. Like the English, the Romans had valued spectacle and excitement in their theater, performing it alongside and (in Rome) combining it with bloodsport.[35] The Greek tragedies, though often focused on themes of murder and violence, were light on the practice of violence as spectacle, involving mostly talk about violent acts with the occasional display of a dead body after the fact.[36] The Roman adaptations of these tragedies, surviving solely in the works of the Latin playwright Seneca, are rife with onstage killings, suicides, mutilations, and sacrifices, showing the audience much of the action that they were only told about in the Greek source texts.[37] Taking their cue from these Roman adaptations, the early professional theaters in England revived the genre of tragedy in a significantly different fashion than did their Greek-inspired neighbors in France, creating hundreds—if not thousands—of plays that featured staggering body counts at the end, nearly all of whom had died onstage. Even though

[35]On bloodsports and entertainment in Rome, see Garrett G. Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[36]On the practice of offstage death in Greek tragedy, see P. E. Easterling, "Form and Performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[37]There is some debate in modern scholarship over whether the works of Seneca were performed plays or merely 'closet dramas' meant to be read by a literate audience of aristocrats (see, for example, Patrick Kragelund, "Senecan Tragedy: Back on Stage?," in *Seneca*, ed. John G. Fitch, *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)). However, whether or not Seneca's plays were actually performed in ancient Rome did not seem to be a matter of any debate among the seventeenth-century English, who read and treated his plays as plays, and held him up as a model for actual, performed playwrights to imitate (for a thorough exploration of Seneca's portrayal among the seventeenth-century English, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*). Seneca's influence on the practices of English drama, therefore, is governed more by what his plays indicate happened onstage than by what did or did not actually happen on real Roman stages.

the blood and death was all pretend, unlike the animal fighting entertainments the theater rivaled,[38] a trip to the English theater was consequently every bit as exciting as watching a bearbaiting.

Violence and spectacle were only one part of the English theater's carefully cultivated affinity with the theaters of ancient Rome. The early professional theater in England, once it became popular enough to start constructing freestanding theater buildings of its own in the sixteenth century, drew heavily on the writings of the Roman architect Vitruvius, who had described in writing the architectural layout, principals, and building materials used to construct Roman theaters. It is to the writings of Vitruvius that the freestanding outdoor theaters of the English Renaissance owe their circular shapes, use of wood in construction, acoustic design, and three-door stage layout, among other factors.[39] For dramatic criticism, the English turned first to Horace and the *Ars Poetica*, and only later, upon the more widespread importation of French neoclassicism in the late seventeenth century, to Aristotle's *Poetics*. For examples of excellence in poetry, they turned to Virgil as much as Homer, and for excellence in tragedy to Seneca more often than any Greek tragedian, even though there were more Greeks to choose from in numbers of both playwrights and plays. The dramatic structures for both tragedy and comedy in the English theater

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[38]And also unlike some Roman theatrical entertainments, in which convicted criminals were sometimes cast in plays so that they could be executed live onstage during the characters' death scenes. See Hugh Denard, "Lost Theatre and Performance Traditions in Greece and Italy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, ed. Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and also Richard C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

[39]On the use of Vitruvius in the construction of early modern English theater buildings, see Leacroft, *The Development of the English Playhouse*.

were drawn from a blend of the medieval theater—which featured sprawling stories spanning centuries and various locations across earth, Heaven, and Hell—and Roman 'New Comedy,' a form which involved parallel structures of both plots and subplots, rejecting the more streamlined focus on one incident that dominated Greek drama (both tragedy and comedy), Roman tragedy, and French tragedy.[40] The results of this blend were plays without set limitations on place of setting or time span, which typically featured a dual structure of plot and subplot in which two related but parallel actions unfold simultaneously. This characteristic English form, loudly decried by the French as a violation of the three unities and especially of Aristotle's rule that tragedy should represent a unified action,[41] was staunchly defended by the English, who could claim ancient precedent through the comedies of the ancient Romans.[42]

Yet despite the heavily Roman mood that dominated references to—and borrowings from—the ancient world in early modern English theater, English critics persisted in referring to 'the ancients' as a whole, and periodically would throw in Homer, Sophocles, or Euripides alongside Virgil, Seneca, or Plautus to illustrate a point.[43] Showing no particular awareness of temporal distinctions between the two, references to Latin and Greek playwrights were mixed together and often even treated

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[40]On all of the preceding types of Roman influence on the forms and spaces of English drama, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*.

[41]This rule, a part of both Aristotle's own definition of tragedy and the modern 'three unities' derived from his work, can be found in Aristotle *Poetics* 1.6.

[42]For an English defense of the plot-subplot form, see Rymer, *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd*. On the influence of Roman New Comedy in creating this form, see Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

[43]See, for example, Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 50, where the author uses Homer and Virgil side-by-side in order to assess the comparable achievements of English poets.

in reverse order, with Roman authors as the first go-to for examples and Greeks called in as backup.[44] Disregarding cultural differences between the ancient Romans and the ancient Athenians, notions about 'ancient' drama were pulled from both Horace and Aristotle in combination, as though they had been co-authors or contemporaries writing with a unified aim.[45] English theater thus managed to preserve the blurry and indistinct category of 'the ancients' in its own version of neoclassicism even as it built a system different in almost every conceivable respect from French neoclassicism. If French neoclassicism could be more accurately termed neo-Aristotelianism, the early English professional theaters might easily be dubbed neo-Roman; both are drawn from 'the ancients,' but the overlap between them in both dramatic theory and performance practices is slight at best. While the French theater made the use of the Aristotelian 'three unities' imperative, the English regularly employed Roman-derived parallel plot structures that overtly broke with the unity of action, and (drawing on the medieval tradition) showed little regard for the unities of time and place, as well.[46] French rules of propriety, modeled on the Greeks, banned onstage violence while English popular taste made Romanesque violent spectacle a major focus of the action.[47] French dialogue, drawing on the rhetorical Greek model, made lengthy

[44]See, for example, the use of 'the ancients' as examples in the most famous of anti-theatrical treatises from the seventeenth century: Collier, *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage.* In this work, Collier regularly calls in the ancients in order to negatively compare the modern playwrights, but he does so in virtually every instance by citing Latin playwrights first, then Greek—demonstrating both the greater emphasis placed by the English on the Roman theater tradition and their relative disregard of the temporal distinction between the two.
[45]For a comprehensive view at the ways in which Aristotle and Horace were entangled in English dramatic criticism over a number of centuries, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700.*
[46]See Rymer, *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd*: 24.
[47]See Rapin, "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie," 111. For a study of the influence of Seneca

speeches the dramatic focus of a play, while in England dialogue and action were more integrated.[48] The only principle of neoclassicism apparently uncontested between France and England seems to be the necessity of *vraisemblance*/verisimilitude—mostly a modern construction but one which can, with effort, be supported by drawing on either Aristotle or Horace.[49] Critics on both sides of the channel liberally used 'unbelievable' (or variations thereof) as an adjective to lambast violations of the home nation's theatrical conventions. This tactic was employed both in cases where the two nations agreed and in cases where they disagreed: inappropriate characterizations (among them the depiction of immodest women) were 'unbelievable' to both,[50] for example, while the French convention of retaining one physical location for the entirety of each act was 'unbelievable' to English critics.[51]

The encounter between these two forms of neoclassicism brings us back to the beheading of Charles I which opened this chapter. French neoclassicism and English neoclassicism might well have stayed on their own rails for the most part and ignored one another had it not been for this extraordinary disruption of the English political system, which threw out the aristocrats who had been the patrons of the theater

on both violent spectacle and language in the English theater, see Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[48]See the discussion in Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 41-42.

[49]On this concept in Aristotle, Horace, and Renaissance dramatic criticism, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*.

[50]For an English critique of immodest women as unbelievable, see Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, I: 12-13. For a French critique of the same, see Jules La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1639), e-book. 123-24.

[51]See Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 45-46.

companies and the employers of the censors. In their place, the parliamentary

government instituted a series of laws drawn from Puritan religious reform, which

included the closing of all theaters on the basis of what they saw as the theater's

inherent immorality.[52] During this time, plays were printed to be read, but, with very

few exceptions toward the end of the Commonwealth,[53] were not allowed to be staged

publicly. While the theaters were closed in England, the aristocrats who had

supported them largely spent their time in exile on the continent, in the company of

the escaped prince who would become Charles II. Although this exile court moved

around, spending time in territories owned by Spain and Holland, the bulk of its time

was spent in France, the native country of Charles II's mother, Henrietta Maria (aunt

to Louis XIV, the famous 'Sun King' who presided over much of France's

consolidation of cultural power through neoclassicism).[54] When Charles II was

reinstated as king of England in 1660, it was with a noted taste for foreign theater,

particularly Spanish and French, which the reopened theaters hastened to honor in the

form of translations of both scripts and dramatic treatises from these languages.[55]

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[52]The discussion of Puritan moral objections to the theater is a large and fascinating topic in itself, and one which I do not have the scope to address here, but upon which many other scholars have written. For a study devoted entirely to this phenomenon, see Colin Rice, *Ungodly Delights: Puritan Opposition to the Theatre: 1576-1633* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1997).

[53]On the movement of plays from stage to print during this period and its effect on the conditions of English theater, see Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642-1660* and Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660-1710* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). On the few exceptions to the prohibition against public staging, see Brown, *Patronage, Politics, and Literary Traditions in England, 1558-1658*.

[54]See "Chapter 2: Iphigenia in France," above.

[55]On the prevalence and impact of translation from these languages on English drama at the time, see Dorothea Frances Canfield, *Corneille and Racine in England: A Study of the English Translations of the Two Corneilles and Racine, with Especial Reference to Their Presentation on the English Stage* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1904). On the relative dominance of adaptations from various other nations, including Spain and France, see Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*.

These translations, now printed as well as staged in a continuation of the vogue for printed plays that had developed in England during the Commonwealth,[56] circulated widely and sparked discussion on the topics of French decorum, verisimilitude, the three unities, actresses onstage (a practice in imitation of the continental model instituted by Charles II with the reopening of the theaters in 1660), and of course, contests over who understood the ancients better, the French or the English.

After this first wave of theatrical importation from France, deriving from the influence of the upper class in the form of the newly reinstated court, a second wave hit a quarter century later in the form of middle-class, Huguenot refugees from France. The Edict of Nantes, a major and influential piece of French legislation dating from 1598 protecting Protestants within the nation from persecution by the Catholic government of France, had been steadily worn away over the course of nearly a century and was finally revoked entirely in 1685.[57] Protestant Huguenots in France, who had found themselves more and more vulnerable to abuses by neighbors and government officials, had been slowly emigrating from Catholic France in favor of the openly Protestant countries of Northern Europe, Holland and England in particular. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, slowly became quickly, and the Huguenots emigrated in droves. The Huguenot refugees tended to be middle class, skilled, educated, and literate, and their appearance in England both created a flow of

[56]On the rise of print culture during the Interregnum and its lasting impact on English drama, see Ibid.
[57]Both the introduction of a law requiring religious toleration and its revocation had major and lasting impacts upon attitudes toward religion and government throughout Europe. For a more in-depth look at the Edict of Nantes and its significance, see Ruth Whelan and Carol Baxter, *Toleration and Religious Identity: The Edict of Nantes and Its Implications in France, Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, Ireland and Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2003).

written documents across the channel and provided such documents with an ample supply of bilingual translators invested in creating bridges between French and English language groups.[58] The vogue for printed plays and wide circulation of critical treatises meant that French Huguenots living in England could read, translate, and mail dramatic texts that flowed in both directions, to and from acquaintances on both sides of the channel. Moreover, as Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh have pointed out, the shared Protestant religion of the French Huguenots and the bulk of the English populace meant that such translations were considered politically safe despite their close ties with Catholic France.[59]

[58]On the demographic composition of the Huguenot refugees, see G. R. R. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966). On the influence of these refugees on print culture and bilingual communication across the channel, especially with regard to theatrical treatises and texts, see Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* and the introduction to Rex A. Barrell and Abel Boyer, *The Correspondence of Abel Boyer, Huguenot Refugee, 1667-1729* (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

[59]See Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*: 34-35. There is, of course, some danger in creating a simplistic equation between Englishness and Protestantism and between Frenchness and Catholicism—religious affiliations in both government and populace were highly contested during this period. However, despite the toleration of Protestantism embodied in the (eventually revoked) Edict of Nantes, the government of France was always officially Catholic. England, on the other hand, see-sawed between the two religions, as monarch after monarch overturned the official state religion espoused by his or her predecessor. This state of affairs continued from the reign of Henry VIII through the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the English peacefully overthrew a monarch sympathetic to the Catholics in favor of the solidly Protestant William and Mary. The plays that I deal with in this chapter were all written after the Glorious Revolution, several by Huguenots or descendants of Huguenots, and thus are adaptations written by Protestants under a Protestant government of source texts written by Catholic playwrights under a Catholic government. In these cases, the idea that Huguenots formed a politically and religiously safe bridge between (Protestant) English and (Catholic) French cultures is applicable, but should not be taken as a complete depiction of religious and national affiliations as a whole. I encourage readers interested in a more complete picture to consult the numerous political histories that have been written on England of the seventeenth century, for example Maurice Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 6, Pelican History of England (London and Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1952); and G. E. Aylmer, *The Struggle for the Constitution 1603-1689: England in the Seventeenth Century*, Blandford History Series: The History of England (London: Blandford Press, 1968). For a fuller study on the links between this political history and the development of literary styles in seventeenth century, see Christopher Hill, *A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion, and Literature in Seventeenth Century England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

With cultural exchange on such a widespread scale came the theatrical debates over the French neoclassical rules for drama, a subject which had not touched the English theater before these two waves of French importation. French critics, interpreting Aristotle among others, often held up the English as an example of theater which broke the ancient rules for drama, taking place over several days or even weeks and months (breaking the unity of time); moving locations not only from act to act, but also from scene to scene (breaking the unity of place); adding subplots (breaking the unity of action); and violating the rules of decorum though its liberal use of onstage deaths.[60] English critics, owning these conventions but balking at the imputation that their national theater had failed to imitate the ancients, would respond by drowning their French critics in examples of ancient dramatists (largely Romans) who had done exactly the same thing.[61] Tellingly, much of the debate was not over the validity of the rules themselves (most English critics would begin from a place of nominal acceptance of the ancient rules), but rather over the interpretation of them. Who is to say that the unity of time should be a day, when the action of the play could more probably unfold over a few days and still present a unified whole?[62] Wasn't the French practice of contorting the action so that it could all take place in one room itself a violation of verisimilitude when characters from different social classes could

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[60]Among them Rapin, "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie."

[61]See especially Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy." This tactic was not without some justice even in the case of the Greek dramatists, as Aristotle had written his rules a good century after the plays he analyzed and seemed to be writing what *should* be done rather than what the Attic tragedians had, in fact, done. See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

[62]See Ibid., 45.

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never be expected to inhabit the same space?[63] Subplots should be allowable within the unity of action provided the characters it concerned also related to the main plot and mirrored it thematically.[64] And of course, the answer to the onstage death critique was always Seneca. The foundational assumptions of this debate, that 'the ancients' were a coherent group and were worth imitating, were rarely questioned. Even critics like Dryden, who firmly came down on the side of the Moderns and did attempt to question such assumptions, would claim independence from slavish adherence to the ancients one moment, then turn right around and use them as examples to support another argument the next.[65] In the ongoing contest for dominance over dramatic form between France and England, 'the ancients' were ubiquitously called in as referees, despite the facts that the ancients were never a unified group, in critical theory or in any other arena of life; they had been dead for centuries and had no way to make any actual judgments on the debate; and their precepts were drawn from two vastly different theatrical traditions, separated by significant quantities of time, space, and cultural inheritance.

Despite the defensive postures assumed by both countries over the superiority of their respective dramatic traditions, the coming of French theatrical theories and practices to England did change English theater in tangible ways. In particular, the

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[63]See Ibid., 45-46.

[64]See Ibid., 40-41 and Rymer, *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd*: 24.

[65]Having spent the first twenty-seven pages of his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* laying out all the reasons that the moderns excelled by comparison to the ancients, for example, Dryden goes on in this very same document to use the ancients as examples by which to judge the strengths of modern playwrights, saying "Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing." Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 50.

introduction of actresses on the English stage, offering the female body as a spectacle

unavailable to playwrights of a previous generation, led to the vogue for 'She-

Tragedy,' creating a new type of tragedy focused on a female protagonist and her

domestic concerns rather than the grand, male-centered dramas of war, revenge, and

royal succession that had dominated the previous era in English drama.[66] She-

Tragedy, attempting to obey both precepts of Horace that drama should "delight and

instruct,"[67] encouraged plays that could capitalize on the sexual titillation offered by

the display of real female bodies onstage while still offering a lesson congruent with

conventional moralities which discouraged female sexuality. At the beginning of the

eighteenth century especially, concern with the preservation of female morality

through the proper depiction of heroines and their behavior ran high on account of the

1698 publication of the Reverend Jeremy Collier's *A Short View of the Profaneness*

and Immorality of the English Stage, a scathing treatise that lambasted English plays

particularly for depicting (and thereby encouraging) unrestrained female sexuality.[68]

The result of this negative public scrutiny, combined with the still relatively novel

availability of actual female actors to play the roles of women, was a parade of plays

about suffering but virtuous heroines who offered a moral model to the (presumably

[66]On the phenomenon of She-Tragedy, see Marsden, *Fatal Desire* and Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*. Readers interested in representative and successful examples of She-Tragedy from the period are encouraged to read the immensely popular plays of Nicholas Rowe, especially his smash hit *The Fair Penitent* (1702). See Nicholas Rowe and Malcolm Goldstein, *The Fair Penitent* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969).
[67]For a thorough examination of this precept as it appears in Horace and in early modern English literary criticism, including the discrepancies created by translation and the filtering of Horace through Renaissance Italian theorists, see Robert Matz, *Defending Literature in Early Modern England: Renaissance Literary Theory in Social Context* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[68]Collier, *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*.

female)[69] spectators in the house while simultaneously being subjected to various troubles, often distinctly corporeal in nature, which drew attention to their bodies for the delight of (presumably male)[70] spectators. Sexual troubles offered the greatest degree of both goals, with rape, the threat of rape, or semi-consensual but highly coercive sex[71] the most popular source of the heroine's woe; this allowed for titillation while inculcating 'virtue' through the heroine's sexual reticence and subsequent suffering. Indeed, the suffering of the heroine demonstrated penance and therefore virtue, as women who enjoyed their (sexual) bodies might well be interpreted as loose and wicked. As a result, the pained or grief-stricken female body was the main focus of such drama, with heroines weeping, sighing, and fainting as their dominant actions. Intended to elicit a sympathetic response in both female and male spectators, She-Tragedy—in many ways a precursor to sentimentalism[72]—encouraged its audiences to identify with and weep for the protagonist, whose trials were both severe and undeserved. The domestic focus of She-Tragedy, alongside its emphasis on tears, placed this new variant of tragedy more in line with the sentimental tragedies that

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[69]For an excellent study on the concern with the female spectator and her possible reactions to She-Tragedy in the critical theory of the day, see Marsden, *Fatal Desire*.

[70]While in practice, I'm sure many female spectators enjoyed the spectacle of the female body and many male spectators may not have cared for it, the critical discussion about actresses in the seventeenth century tends to be articulated through a heterosexual matrix that presumes women will identify with the heroine while men will desire her. On this topic, see Ibid.

[71]This was the variety used in many of the most popular She-Tragedies of Nicholas Rowe, whose title character in *The Fair Penitent* falsely believed she was consummating a clandestine marriage, while the title character in *Jane Shore* (1714) was powerless to stop a king from stealing her from her legitimate husband. See Rowe and Goldstein, *The Fair Penitent* and Nicholas Rowe and Harry William Pedicord, *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974).

[72]On the sentimentalist movement in art and literature (including theater), which is commonly traced to the publication of the English novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* in 1740, see Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling*.

were to gain popularity over the course of the eighteenth century than with the bloody

English revenge tragedies of an earlier era; yet, as we will see, even these tame

tragedies proved more prone to spectacle and violence than their French counterparts.

Iphigenia, in her neoclassical French incarnation as a perfect model of feminine virtue

who nevertheless suffers under threat of some form of corporeal harm (sacrifice,

enslavement, rape) throughout both of the plays concerning her, was the perfect

vehicle in the age of She-Tragedy for an examination of ancient precepts, French

neoclassicism, and the English theater.

Dennis's *The Tragedy of Iphigenia*

Among the first English adaptations of a French Iphigenia play was *The

Tragedy of Iphigenia*, written at the turn of the eighteenth century by the prolific

English dramatic critic John Dennis and based on De La Grange-Chancel's *Oreste et

Pilade*.[73] A highly educated, though humbly born, man of letters, John Dennis was

one of the outspoken critics in the thick of the fray over the relative merits of French

and English theater, especially as filtered through their different understandings of the

ancients.[74] A passionate advocate for the moral utility of the drama, and especially

tragedy, Dennis was known both for defending the English theater against its critics

within the nation and for giving it a central place in the rivalry between England and

France.[75] An admirer of 'the ancients,' he was nevertheless wary of adopting what he

[73]See my discussion of this play in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.
[74]A more complete picture of the general statements I make here about Dennis's various beliefs can be found by reading Edward Niles Hooker's collection of John Dennis's complete critical works. Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*.
[75]See Ibid., 10.

calls "the *Grecian* Method" wholesale, believing that the differences of climate

between Greece and England made certain themes unstageable in England which had

been accepted in Greece and vice-versa.[76] Among these, he singled out for comment

the Greek practice of allowing female characters to talk about sex, a subject naturally

inappropriate for the 'modest' sex but which a warmer climate might have

corrupted—demonstrating simultaneously an awareness of cultural difference with

the ancients and a rejection of those differences as unsuitable for representation in

proper English She-Tragedy.[77] As a student of Dryden and Locke, a vehement Whig,

and a proud Englishman, Dennis was heavily invested in the concept of liberty while

simultaneously (and paradoxically, from a modern standpoint) a strong supporter of

English colonialism. Especially distrustful of Catholicism and what he termed

"priestcraft," Dennis was a champion of religion based on reason and human

fellowship and devoid of "superstition."[78] Having traveled on the continent, and

specifically to France, Dennis had the opportunity to witness French theater firsthand

[76]Ibid., 11. Differences of culture that we tend to attribute to historical specificity were frequently attributed to differences of climate by Europeans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who believed in a universal human nature and God-given natural laws, but accounted for undeniable cultural differences through an analogy with vegetation, which grows differently in different parts of the world. On this phenomenon and other eighteenth-century theories for explaining aspects of human difference, see Jenny Davidson, *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[77]See Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, I: 11-13.

[78]For Dennis's major treatise on religion and the stage, see Part III, Chapter I of his *The Usefulness of the Stage* (Ibid., 183-85). Of course, to the twenty-first-century reader, what separates a reasonable religion from a superstition is impossible to define and the terms are relatively meaningless. Dennis does not define precisely what counts as reasonable vs. superstitious religion either, but his writings seem to suggest that any element of religion based on ceremony and symbolism falls under the category of "superstition." This position certainly has some bearing on his choice to write a Taurian Iphigenia play, which in the modern adaptations always involves the dismantling of the practice of human sacrifice (despite the fact that in the Greek play the main characters merely escape from it).

and form opinions about it. Tinged with his strong English nationalism, the opinions were nonetheless positive enough to tempt him to undertake the project of adapting French plays—especially those based on ancient source texts[79]—for the English stage.

His *Tragedy of Iphigenia*, performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields during the winter of 1699/1700, received six performances and some critical commentary, both good and bad. It was never revived, and like most of Dennis's other plays, was largely overshadowed by his work as a dramatic critic, which was considered his true forte by most of his contemporaries and later posterity. Despite the fact that the play was not a great success, the script does model several modes and theatrical devices that were popular at the time in a variety of plays—including many of the most salient elements of She-Tragedy—and presents a very English version of this French updating of a Greek myth.

In terms of structure and genre, Dennis's play builds on elements drawn from De La Grange-Chancel while simultaneously entrenching this new version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story firmly within English conventions drawn from both traditional English comedy (a genre which owes a large debt to Rome) and She-Tragedy. Interestingly, the overwhelming Englishness of this play, its strong links with comic convention, and its transmission through France are all disavowed in its own epilogue, written by Colonel Christopher Codrington, which instead asserts its

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[79]Dennis considered Racine's *Phèdre* as an adaptational project in addition to his completed adaptation of De La Grange-Chancel's *Oreste et Pilade*. See Ibid., 74.

similarity to the Greek source text in no uncertain terms:

With Pride he [our Bard] *owns, that 'tis his glorious Aim*

To court and to possess the Tragic Dame.

How can he court, or how can he possess,

Who shames the Goddess by a foreign Dress?

That decks her like a trivial merry Muse,

Or a rank Strumpet, strolling from the Stews?

Yet thus disguis'd she oft has here been shown,

To all her genuine Votaries unknown,

Yet still you thought the motly Garb her own.

Oft have you seen her with the Comic Muse,

Walk hand-in-hand, Grimace and Posture use,

Debase her Majesty, and Terror lose.

. . . .

Our Bard resolves to steer a diff'rent Course,

And travel upwards to the Grecian *Source;*

Where he at first saw the chaste awful Maid,

And with observing Eyes her Charms survey'd.

Those Charms he would with a bold Hand express,

Nor make them fainter by an English *Dress.*[80]

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[80]John Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," in *The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis* (London: J. Darby, 1718), 98.

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Reading this epilogue, one would think that Dennis had merely undertaken an English

translation of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, bypassing De La Grange-Chancel

entirely and neither bowing to the common trends of English drama nor mixing his

tragedy with comedy.[81] Neither could be further from the truth. Solidly building upon

a foundation inherited from De La Grange-Chancel, not only does *The Tragedy of*

Iphigenia lace the Tragic Muse firmly into an English dress, it gives her an English

tailor's alteration of a Paris original, fairly ties her to the Comic Muse, and sets both

to wandering around the stage in a manner that invites more ridicule than terror.

If Euripides's play had focused mainly on the origin story of a Greek religious

cult, and De La Grange-Chancel's on issues of succession and legitimate rulership,

Dennis's version is built around two themes: romantic love and the correctness of

England's project of colonial expansion. Of these two themes, the focus on love

allows Dennis to generically re-align the Iphigenia in Tauris story, introducing

elements traditionally associated with comedy and restructuring the plot in ways

congruent with the Roman-derived English interpretation of ancient dramatic rules.

Romantic love, totally absent from Euripides's text in any form, was added in by De

La Grange-Chancel, who made Thoas's breaking of his engagement with Thomiris the

play's central dramatic conflict, had Thoas in love with Iphigenia, and changed

Iphigenia and Pylades from in-laws to lovers.[82] Taking up this French addition and

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[81]The mixture of tragic and comic conventions was far more acceptable in England during this period
(and previous ones) than it was in France. For a French satire on the English convention of mixing
comedy and tragedy dating as far back as Shakespeare, see Jean-Bernard Le Blanc, *Lettres d'un*
François (La Haye: J. Neaulme, 1745).

[82]In Euripides's version of the play, Pylades is already married to the sister of Iphigenia and Orestes,
Electra (Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 674-722). This detail is unanimously dropped by

expanding it into every corner of the plot, Dennis makes romantic love the driving device of his play, allying it more closely with English comedy (in which love-plots and jealous rivalries are the main focus of the action)[83] than with tragedy.

In Dennis's version, a female replacement for Thoas called only "Queen of the Scythians," meets and falls in love with Orestes. Next, Orestes and Pylades meet Iphigenia and both fall in love with her, while she falls in love with Orestes. The Scythian Queen then goes to Pylades and offers to spare both him and Orestes from sacrifice if they will agree to marry local women, specifically Orestes to marry herself and Pylades to marry Iphigenia. Pylades brings this proposal to Orestes, who rejects it because of his love for Iphigenia. Discovering that they are both in love with Iphigenia, the friends quarrel but ultimately resolve not to let their romantic rivalry spoil their friendship.[84] The Scythian Queen, however, is not so generous, and upon learning of Orestes's love for Iphigenia decides to have her sacrificed instead—a move which, in a not-so-subtle dig at the kind of "priestcraft" Dennis so despised, is obviously calculated to get rid of her romantic rival but which she justifies by the

modern adaptors of the play, alongside two other familial links between Pylades and Orestes (they are both cousins and foster-brothers, see Ibid. lines 912-22). This alteration, which is remarkably consistent across the board, is probably intended to make the friendship between the two men seem all the more exceptional—if they have no family obligations to one another, the selfless acts they perform for one another appear to spring from pure affection. On the importance of the Orestes/Pylades friendship in seventeenth-century literary criticism and thought, see Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides' Black Sea Tragedy*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). On the addition of romantic love to Greek texts as a staple of the neoclassical updating of Greek tragedy, see Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*.

[83]On the generic conventions of early modern English comedy, the importance of love and sex to those conventions, and the inheritance from Roman New Comedy, see Alexander Leggatt, "The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy," Cambridge University Press, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521770440.

[84]See Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 54-55.

claim that Diana had demanded Iphigenia as a victim at Aulis but never received her.[85] In making this claim, she winds up inadvertently revealing Iphigenia's identity to Orestes, who joyfully announces his own, generously hands over Iphigenia to Pylades since he obviously cannot marry his own sister, and agrees to marry the Scythian Queen, whom he has already stated would be his second choice anyway.[86]

If this sounds like the plot of a Shakespearean comedy, that's probably because it very nearly is. This complicated dramatic structure, full of plots and sub-plots, lovers at cross-purposes, hidden identities, and the neat disentangling of this knot at the very end when everybody marries the right partner, is the bread and butter of England's popular twist on Roman New Comedy.[87] 'New Comedy,' distinguished from 'Old Comedy' in the ancient world by its domestic rather than political focus, centered largely around issues of love, sex, and marriage, with mistaken identity as its driving force.[88] Employing complex parallel plot structures (especially in the case of the Roman playwright Terence, who had a palpable influence on Renaissance dramatists[89]), the typical New Comedy plotline moves from a state of confusion and discord in the beginning to tranquility and harmony in its ending. These staple elements were taken up by the writers of English comedy, who made some slight

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[85]See Ibid., 63-64, 90.
[86]See Ibid., 90.
[87]The 'incest averted' plotline is, incidentally, also characteristically English, and was widely used in both comedies and tragedies of the day. See Richard A. McCabe, *Incest, Drama, and Nature's Law, 1550-1700* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[88]On the conventions of Roman New Comedy, see Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience*.
[89]On the influence of Terence—and New Comedy conventions in general—on Renaissance comedies, see Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy*.

alterations (decreasing the instances of intergenerational strife, for example, while increasing the number of intragenerational romantic rivalries) but retained love and mistaken identity as the central concerns of structurally complex plots that resolve harmoniously at the end—usually by means of a double wedding.[90] De La Grange-Chancel's version of the Iphigenia in Tauris story—employing a plot-subplot structure driven by romantic intrigues and focused on the hidden identities of Iphigenia and Orestes to the complete exclusion of the second half of Euripides's play—offered his English adaptor Dennis a way into this otherwise excessively Greek story. Further playing up and complicating the romantic intrigues, and excising the Taurian succession plot, Dennis was able to alter this neoclassical French drama into a recognizable form of English theater as derived from Roman sources.

The Tragedy of Iphigenia, despite the explicit use of the word "tragedy" in the title and its focus on noble, heroic characters drawn from an actual Greek tragedy, thus has far more in common with Roman-derived English comedy than with tragedy of any stripe in terms of both structure and content. The play's *denouemont*, for example, in which all the characters appear onstage together in one lengthy final scene that brings tension to a height (with Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades all under threat of sacrifice) then suddenly resolves it through the revelation of hidden

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[90]By making these comparisons between ancient Roman 'New Comedy' and early modern English comedy, I do not, of course, mean to imply that Roman comedy was the only source feeding the conventions of English comedy—like all revived ancient forms, it was hybridized with influences from the medieval theater and from other European traditions, especially the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. However, because my concern here is the influence and incorporation of ancient sources, I focus exclusively on the Roman contribution. For a more complete look at the sources and conventions of early modern English comedy, see Ibid.

identities, is characteristically English, used both in the typical resolution of comedy and in the English variants on the Iphigenia in Aulis story.[91] Euripides (the Younger) ended his tragedy with divine intervention and a *dea ex machina*, De La Grange-Chancel with the (reported) death of a tyrant and the restoration of a throne; Dennis ends his with the resolution of all confusion and a double wedding. Greek religion turns into French politics turns into the staple elements of English comedy as this story becomes progressively more disassociated from tragic convention. The fact that Codrington criticized the practice of showing the Tragic Muse hand-in-hand with the Comic in the epilogue to this play is so ironic that it is hard not to believe it intentional. *Iphigenia in Tauris* has, admittedly, been difficult to fit neatly into the conventions of tragedy since Euripides's version of c. 413 B.C.E. and has always had a happy ending. De La Grange-Chancel's version, also employing a plot-subplot structure and rife with romantic entanglements, took the first steps in the comic direction—but its ultimate focus on monarchical succession and the overthrow of tyranny lent it at least a hint of tragic gravitas that Dennis's *Tragedy of Iphigenia* lacks. Were it not for the suffering of its virtuous heroine, in line with all the conventions of She-Tragedy, and the constant threat of human sacrifice, there would be little to align it with the genre of tragedy at all.

These two tragic elements also represent significant (and significantly English) reinterpretations of the Iphigenia in Tauris story. In this new version, even this cult of human sacrifice, seemingly the source of all that is tragic in the action,

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[91]On which see below.

becomes little more than a threat tactic wielded by the Scythian Queen to get what she wants in the various struggles over love. She seems to be able to turn this sacrificial cult on or off at will, with little to no regard for the gods and their demands. Indeed, the divine in any form is less present in this version than in any other Iphigenia play examined in this study, Aulis or Tauris. Not only are the sacrificial rules unclear and changeable, but Iphigenia in this version was not even brought to Tauris by Artemis/Diana. Instead, in an account fairly loaded with the conventions of a good English She-Tragedy, we are given a completely secular alternative for how Iphigenia wound up in Tauris: the ten-year-old Iphigenia was brought to Aulis under the standard story that she was to marry Achilles, but Clytemnestra discovered the lie and, prevailing upon Agamemnon with storms of tears (a key element of She-Tragedy),[92] smuggled her out of Aulis, sending "a *Lesbian*[93] *S*lave in Shape, and Size / And Age resembling [hers]"[94] to die in her stead. The captain of the ship on which they escaped, though, instead of delivering Iphigenia to safety as her parents had instructed, kidnapped her, with clear intent to rape her upon arrival at his homeland.[95] Luckily, they were shipwrecked on the coast of Tauris, where a band of "Natives" promptly attempted to rape Iphigenia and her six female attendants, but were mercifully stopped by the unlikely circumstance of being chosen for sacrifice to

[92]Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 13.
[93]"Lesbian" in this context refers to a nationality (person from the island of Lesbos), not to a sexual identity.
[94]Ibid., 14. This particular substitution for Iphigenia is no doubt a nod to Racine, who had the Lesbian slave Eriphyle die instead of Iphigenia in his famous *Iphigénie*. See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.
[95]Ibid., 15.

Diana that very night.[96]

Not only is the Iphigenia of this story portrayed as being so young that her virtue and status as a symbol of innocence are practically assured, she then—through no fault of her own—spends the rest of the story dodging the threat of sacrifice, a kidnapping, and two (two!) rape attempts. Despite this highly corporeal ordeal, she emerges with her virtue intact, and is thus able to continue fulfilling her function as the suffering, virtuous She-Tragedy heroine for the duration of the current story with its renewed threat of sacrifice—which in this version redoubles back on her in addition to its traditional focus on Orestes and Pylades. Constantly homesick, persecuted by the Scythian Queen who is both her captor and her romantic rival, and guilt-ridden over the part she is expected to play in the sacrifices of Orestes and Pylades, the Iphigenia of the main play is treated to her fair share of laments, sighs, and tears—fulfilling her role as She-Tragedy heroine most explicitly in the fifth act, when she attempts to stab herself rather than participate in the barbaric cult of human sacrifice.[97] This attempted stabbing, the first of many to be dramatically stopped by interposition throughout the remainder of the last act,[98] aligns the play with tragic convention not only because it demonstrates the heroine's suffering, but also by referencing the lengthier English tradition of onstage suicide and death to which the French objected so strenuously. Although none of the attempted stabbings are, in this case, completed, the fact that the fifth act is so rife with them is a hallmark of English

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[96] Ibid., 16.
[97] Ibid., 83.
[98] Ibid., 83-85.

tragedy as characterized by violent spectacle.

This blend of conventions drawn from comedy and She-Tragedy, both staunchly English in form,[99] lend themselves to a similarly English exploration of the themes traditionally associated with the Iphigenia in Tauris story. One major alteration of theme is to be found in Dennis's secularization of what was, at least in its Greek form and to some extent in the French, a religious story. England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was by no means a secular nation, as Christianity was firmly entrenched in law and practice. However, the era of John Locke ushered in a philosophical trend toward regarding the problems of human society as human creations, rather than expressions of the will of God. In his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), Locke lambasted the theory of the divine right of kings from a theological perspective, replacing it instead with a view of monarchy as a human creation, instituted by the people and ultimately subject to their will.[100] This influential work (along with his other writings) spurred a new way of looking at politics and society, one that was inclined to seek explanations for social forms in human-to-human relations rather than in divine order. Drawn from and pertaining to English political philosophy, Locke's ideas were somewhat localized to England, and represented a concern specific to the nation as well as the era. Dennis, a student of Locke, reflects this (English) focus in his secular interpretation of the Iphigenia in Tauris story. In this sensationalized and literally godless account, the events of both

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[99]As, indeed, is the mixture of the two. Many English critics took pride in the English 'invention' of the tragicomic form. See, among others, Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 28-29, 40.

[100] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Dublin: J. Sheppard and G. Nugent, 1779).

Aulis and Tauris are shown to be entirely a function of human whims and actions; Calchas and the Scythian Queen, the priestly stand-ins for the gods, are treated with skepticism and derision, shown to be acting from self-interest rather than true faith. The only whiff of the divine in this play comes in the form of dreams and oracles, both real phenomena that can be explained in human terms. This represents a major shift in the story's focus from both its Greek and its French incarnations, in which the relation of the human to the divine, and whether the divine might really demand human sacrifice, were questions that were at least taken seriously, if only to be ultimately answered in the negative. Here, the question is hardly even asked, and the relation of human to human—a primary concern of the English in the era of John Locke[101]—provides the action of the play, whether it be in the love plots, the cult of human sacrifice, or the enmeshed focus on colonial conquest.

Let us turn, now, to what seems to be Dennis's principal political aim in writing this play: vindicating the colonial project. As I explored in the previous chapter, France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was engaged in a policy of 'soft colonization' that made cultural dominance a key element of that nation's project to become the 'new Athens.' In a neat parallel to their differing sources of theatrical inspiration, England at the same time was beginning a colonial project more solidly based in the military conquest favored by the Roman Empire.[102] English use

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[101]On the influence of Locke's political philosophy on drama at this time (and the influence of other widely-read philosophical minds such as Hobbes, as well), see Derek Hughes, *English Drama 1660-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[102]On the ideological links between the Roman Empire and the British Empire, see Richard Koebner, *Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

of the word 'Empire'—a designation explicitly associated with ancient Rome and its newer variant, the Holy Roman Empire—to describe the nation's colonial project was on the rise, and was a subject eagerly espoused by Dennis, who maintained that his work as a playwright and theater critic was his own personal contribution to England's imperial ambitions. Dennis articulates these links specifically as part of an artistic rivalry with France, stating:

> I love my Country very well, and therefore should be ravished to see that we out did the *French* in Arts, at the same time that we contend for Empire with them. For Arts and Empire in Civiliz'd Nations have generally flourish'd together.[103]

In the case of *The Tragedy of Iphigenia*, Dennis truly delivers as far as this ideology is concerned. Explicitly challenging the dominance of French drama by remaking a French play in English form, Dennis moreover uses this play to propagandize on the natural and moral correctness of English politico-military conquest of 'barbarian' nations. Making the Greek characters into stand-ins for 'superior' English conquerors and the Taurians into infantilized colonial 'Others,' Dennis neatly rolls the Iphigenia in Tauris story into the English colonial project to become the new Roman Empire.

This colonial theme illuminates the ideological importance of both the newly intensified focus on love and the absence of the pagan gods. While adaptations of the Iphigenia in Tauris story from Euripides on have always focused on the cultural insider/outsider divide, with the Greek characters as the cultural insiders and the

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[103]Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, I: 10.

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Taurians as the barbarian Other, Dennis takes this theme to new heights, making the colonial education and reform of the inferior barbarian Other the main focus of every interaction between Greek and Taurian. To this end, Dennis actually abandons the use of the word 'Taurian,' a designation specific to the inhabitants of the Crimean peninsula in ancient Greek, replacing it with 'Scythian,' another ancient Greek term which applied to all the peoples of central Eurasia. In the early modern context, the term 'Scythian' had come to refer to the tribal peoples of Northern Europe who most resembled Native Americans, and indeed explicit connections had been made between them.[104] This subtle but significant change expands the scope of what has become, in Dennis's retelling of it, a Greek colonial project to both dominate and enlighten a backwards and inferior race occupying a large swath of territory.

This theme, combined with the increased focus on love, leads to Dennis's most major innovation of the Iphigenia in Tauris story: his replacement of Thoas with the unnamed "Scythian Queen." Depending on whether one is looking from the vantage point of Euripides's or De La Grange-Chancel's text, this may represent either the gender switching of Thoas or the combining of Thoas and Thomiris into a single character. Either way, the effect is the same: Thoas/Thomiris/Scythian Queen is now predisposed by 'nature,' in accordance with seventeenth-century colonial ideas about race and gender, towards submission to her new Greek overlords in both the cultural and the sexual realm. Indeed, Dennis's twin themes of love and colonialism

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[104]See the exploration of these equivalencies in Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1984).

complement each other in this character and are nowhere more blatant than in the scenes and plot points concerning her. At her first appearance on the stage, she encounters Orestes and Pylades, in this version not yet captives, in an exchange that loudly and boldly states how the ideologies of colonialism and gender intersect:

> SCYTHIAN QUEEN:
>
> Ha! what are you? that thus with Arms unlicens'd,
>
> And these Majestick Miens,
>
> Appear on *Scythian* ground, that calls me Sovereign!
>
> ORESTES:
>
> Well may you wonder at us, we are Men,
>
> And those are Creatures you ne'er saw before.
>
> QUEEN:
>
> Yes, I'm a Woman, born to command Men.
>
> PILADES:
>
> No, to command *Barbarians*, we are *Grecians*.[105]

This exchange, linking barbarians with femininity by denying them the designation of "Men," illuminates the Scythian Queen's role as a doubly subservient 'Other,' both barbarian and female. These subservient roles, moreover, are not only imposed on her from without by the scornful Greeks, but resonate with her internal nature. While any twenty-first-century reader would presume the Scythian Queen to be insulted at such a swaggering and pompous introduction, which establishes a clear hierarchy between

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[105]Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 21.

male/Greek/superior and female/barbarian/inferior, the female replacement for Thoas instead falls in love at her first sight of "Men." The source of her passion, perfectly in line with the colonialist and sexist ideologies encoded in the passage above, is described later in the play as stemming from the inherent excellences of these masculine invaders:

> EUPHROSINE:
>
> Tho Nature had indu'd her with a Mind
>
> Above her Climate, and above her Sex,
>
> Still as a Woman, she was born to love,
>
> Yet Love she never knew before this Hour.
>
> For you [Iphigenia] still whisper'd to her listning Soul
>
> So much of *Grecian* Worth, and *Grecian* Virtue,
>
> That she has utterly contemn'd her *Scythians*.
>
> All you have said these noble Youths make good,
>
> These are the only Objects worthy her
>
> That ever she beheld, and at the Sight
>
> Her sympathizing Soul took speedy fire.[106]

Love, within this gendered ideology, can only be inspired in a woman by a man who is her superior. The Scythian Queen, as an exceptional example of both her race and her sex, has no superiors within her own kind, and thus is not tempted by love until she first meets a Greek (read: European) man, who is by his nature so superior that he

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[106]Ibid., 27.

is above even her. In both this passage and the previous one, male Scythians are casually discounted with a word, written off both as examples of "Men" and as possible romantic partners for the Scythian Queen. In this scheme, there is no room for the male cultural Other to exhibit true masculinity and be worthy of the title of "Men." Cultural Others, like women and children, are made to be dependent on and subservient to Greek/English/European men.[107] The fact that Thoas/Thomiris/Scythian Queen is, in Dennis's version, "a Woman, born to command Men," leads to two conclusions within this particular brand of colonial sexism: firstly, that she is only able to maintain control over her populace as a woman ruler because the men she commands are inferior, feminized barbarian males not worthy of the capitalized designation of "Men"; and secondly, that her dominion over her country is automatically illegitimate, since the 'natural' order—as evidenced by this hierarchical conception of romantic love[108]—is for men to command women.

Both these conclusions are borne out by the continuing action of the play. In every fight scene between the Scythian males and the Greeks, whether enacted onstage (in true English style[109]) or narrated, the warlike and masculine Greeks

[107]On the inclusion of Greeks, Englishmen, and Europeans within the unified sphere of cultural insiders in the theory and dramatic criticism of the time, see David B. Kramer, "Onely Victory in Him: The Imperial Dryden," in *Literary Transmission and Authority: Dryden and Other Writers*, ed. Earl Miner and Jennifer Brady (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[108] On the rising importance and changing conceptions of romantic love around the turn of the eighteenth century in London, and especially the connections between romance and male domination over female partners, see Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, vol. 1 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[109]It should be noted that French versions of the Iphigenia in Tauris story never contained onstage battles, the direct representation of fighting being a violation of French rules of theatrical decorum. Dennis, however, drawing on the English tradition of violence as spectacle, has his Greeks easily best the Scythians in an onstage swordfight. See Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 22.

soundly beat the feminized Scythians with almost laughable ease, even if the
Scythians vastly outnumber the Greeks. The story of one such battle, delivered by a
male Scythian to Iphigenia and her confidante Euphrosine, is representative of the
way such combats are treated throughout the play. Having set up that he was one of
innumerable Scythians fighting against four "Grecians" without success, he relates
Orestes's possession by a fit of madness, at which point he says of Pylades:

> SCYTHIAN:
>
> He, neither fled nor fought, nor yet submitted,
>
> Another's Danger took up all his Soul,
>
> Regardless of his own.
>
> For now th' Entranc'd beginning to revive,
>
> Lay strongly struggling on the Beach with Fate;
>
> At which all our *Scythians* all their Rage recover'd,
>
> And at him levell'd all their deadly Javelins;
>
> When he who stood before him shrieking out,
>
> Threw himself backward on the prostrate Wretch,
>
> And made his Breast the Buckler of his Friend.
>
> EUPHROSINE:
>
> The noble Deed deserves eternal Fame.
>
> IPHIGENIA:
>
> 'Tis a true *Grecian* Action;
>
> An Action truly worthy of the Clime,

Fertile in Heroes and in Demi-Gods.

EUPHROSINE:

That Action sure might melt even *Scythian* Hearts.

SCYTHIAN:

It did not only melt, but ravish them.

The Godlike Deed with general Shout applauding,

Down we unanimously threw our Javelins,

And the Contention that remain'd,

Was who should save the *Grecians*.[110]

This passage, and many others like it, show the Greeks not only to be unconquerable

against staggering odds, but also represents them as having an innate superiority that

is instinctively recognized by the Scythians, who, like their lovesick queen, *want* to

be ruled by such exemplary men. In this and other instances, the Greeks conquer not

only through force of arms, but by providing a superior example that wins the

Scythians voluntarily to their cause.[111] As Hall and Macintosh show in their analysis

of this drama in *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914*, the play is set up

as a case of the Greeks teaching the Scythians "a series of Lockean lessons on

contracts, consent, and the subordinate role of religion in diplomacy and politics,"[112]

the inherent value of which are so self-evident that the Scythians immediately adopt

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[110]Ibid., 30.
[111]This phenomenon, incidentally, smacks strongly of the French colonial strategy of voluntary subjection explored by Sara E. Melzer, "'Voluntary Subjection': France's Theory of Colonization / Culture in the Seventeenth Century," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).
[112]Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*: 49.

the invaders' viewpoints on each subject as soon as they are presented.

This is in fact what happens at the end of the play, when the Scythian Queen, driven by her female 'nature' to fall in love with Orestes, and having been schooled in the values of true civilization by the Greeks at every turn, voluntarily relinquishes her rule of the land to him, recognizing him to be the superior ruler and realizing the value of having a strong, European male as the head of state:

> QUEEN:
>
> Thy Soul's surpassing Greatness I admire!
>
> Which Heaven, that form'd it, sure design'd for Empire;
>
> Accept of mine, thy wiser nobler Sway
>
> Will polish these Barbarians into Men.[113]

The act of "polish[ing] these Barbarians into Men" places the newly crowned Orestes into the paternalistic role of colonial father-figure, who will take the childlike male barbarians in hand and teach them in the ways of civilization and masculinity that will enable them to become true "Men." The Scythian Queen, as a woman and a barbarian herself, had no resources either to masculinize or to civilize her figurative children. Bowing to the clear superiority of a Greek male leader, the Scythian Queen, as a representative of her whole people, voluntarily places herself into a subordinate relationship to Orestes for her own and her country's improvement—an action for which she is finally rewarded with marriage to Orestes,[114] a move that both

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[113]Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 88-89.
[114]Ibid., 96.

legitimates and institutionalizes her newfound subordinate status.

Such a solution, it need hardly be pointed out, could not have worked so neatly had Dennis retained the male Thoas of his literary predecessors. In the imperial English vision put forward by this play, colonial subjects, children, and women are all represented as equivalent and virtually interchangeable, marked by their natural inferiority and proper subordination to Greek/English/European men. That the ruler of the barbarians should be a woman removes any contest between her gender and her ethnic identity; from all angles, she is able to fit neatly into the subordinate role offered to her by this paternalistic colonial scheme. In this way, Dennis manages to sneak in De La Grange-Chancel's concern with legitimate rulership without including the two characters of Thoas and Thomiris or even openly engaging in the debate: even if her rule is justified by an uncontested succession, the Scythian Queen cannot be a legitimate head of state because of her dual status as a barbarian and a woman. Her kingdom thus comes off as low-hanging fruit, ready for picking by the true Grecian "Men" who have come to claim it as its natural rulers. As with the case of her French predecessor, the usurping Thoas, this female Thoas has had to be transformed in order to fulfill her proper role in a modern version of *Iphigenia in Tauris*; as a figure who upholds early modern European cultural expectations about gender, ethnicity, personal characteristics, and legitimate rulership.

The picture thus created is one that reads as very 'English' on the outside—the conventions of She-Tragedy and English comedy combined with Lockean political values and the strong colonialism (and intersecting sexism) of the new British

Empire. Yet, just as the play is structurally built upon foundations derived from France and ancient Rome, thematically it gives an English gloss to underlying ideologies already present in the play's contributing sources. Many of the gendered and colonial elements are merely the English variants of cultural values shared by Athens, Rome, France, and England as nations with some common cultural inheritances, diffused and differentiated though they might be.

It is hardly a controversial claim to say that the Athenians, Romans, French, and English were all ethnocentric cultures that believed in their own cultural superiority and right to dominate others, and in this sense Dennis's colonial vision represents a point of continuity within the adaptive theatrical tradition he engages. That such domination should be accomplished through voluntary subjection (as symbolized through romantic love), though, is a dividing line that sharply separates the ancient civilizations from the modern ones;[115] and the Lockean political rhetoric marks this particular colonial vision as staunchly English.

Likewise, every culture under consideration here espoused a gender model predicated on male dominance and female submission; but the belief that such a model was natural and stable, and that all people would naturally gravitate toward it, is a modern Western European construction with no counterpart in the ancient world, where male dominance was depicted as fragile and under the constant threat of female rebellion.[116] That romantic love is the mechanism which drives male

[115]The associations between colonialism, voluntary subjection, and romantic love are clearly established in French colonial rhetoric as well as in English; see Melzer, "'Voluntary Subjection': France's Theory of Colonization / Culture in the Seventeenth Century."

[116]This phenomenon will be discussed in much greater depth in "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music"

dominance/female submission, moreover, is a more specifically English view, since in England, a growing trend toward viewing love as the basis for stable and prosperous (yet hierarchical) marriages was already infiltrating much of the writing on gender and the legal system.[117] For the French, by contrast, who prided themselves on improving ancient texts through the inclusion of love plots,[118] romantic love was more frequently treated as a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in marriage and gender relations, the thing that tempted individuals to abandon marriage contracts they should, by rights, honor.[119]

In all these examples, sameness and difference are both constantly in play, demonstrating how difficult it can be in the mixed cultural context of imported French neoclassicism to claim one without acknowledging the other. *The Tragedy of Iphigenia*, like its fellow English neoclassical adaptations, demonstrates both the continuity of Western European values from classical times to modern and its discontinuities. Certain core beliefs (e.g. ethnic superiority, male dominance) and forms (e.g. tragedy of the upper classes) may remain the same, but how they are

below.

[117] For a look at this phenomenon, especially as it relates to She-Tragedy, see Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*. For a detailed historical study of this phenomenon in law and practice, see Lawrence Stone, *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England, 1660-1753* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[118] On this, see the importance granted to love in La Mesnardière, *La Poëtique.*, among others.

[119] This is, of course, the major plot point in De La Grange-Chancel's play, as romantic love prompts Thoas to break his engagement with Thomiris and therefore usurp her throne. See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above. For some views of this particular representation of romantic love in other French literatures of the seventeenth century, see Mitchell Greenberg, "*L'Astrée*, Classicism, and the Illusion of Modernity," in *Continuum: Problems in French Literature from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment*, ed. David Lee Rubin (New York: AMS Press, 1990); and Domna C. Stanton, "The Ideal of *Repos* in Seventeenth-Century French Literature," *L'Esprit Créateur* XV, no. 1 (1975).

understood, interpreted, and represented changes so drastically from time to time and culture to culture that even the difference of two years and neighboring countries was too much for Dennis to import De La Grange-Chancel's play unaltered. Thoas had to be split into Thoas/Thomiris and then recombined into the Scythian Queen in order for first the French and then the English to try to make sense of the Greek/barbarian relations embedded in Euripides's original, refocusing this encounter with 'Otherness' from religion to politics to colonialism. The dramatic conventions associated with this 'tragedy,' despite the use of this same descriptor for all versions of the Iphigenia in Tauris story from Euripides through Dennis, had to be radically altered as they passed from classical to French neoclassical to English neoclassical—acquiring elements from Roman New Comedy, neo-Aristotelian French tragedy, and English She-Tragedy along the way. Despite what the epilogue might say, Dennis's Tragic Muse does, in fact, appear in an English dress, albeit one that exhibits similarities to both French and ancient fashions. As we shall see in the next two sections, even writers who tried much harder than Dennis to maintain the inherited structures and themes of their source texts could not ignore the specific cultural demands of the English theater, tailoring these Gallicized Greek tragedies to make them suitable for public presentation in the new Rome.

Boyer's *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*

While Dennis freely adapted De La Grange-Chancel to create his tragedy, substantially altering characters and plotlines at will, the English adaptors of Racine's celebrated *Iphigénie* were far less bold. Abel Boyer, the first of these, was a Huguenot

refugee who resided in England from 1689 until his death in 1729, and was widely considered to be one of the few Frenchmen who ever fully mastered the English language.[120] Lauded as a superb translator and language teacher, Boyer was a prime example of the Huguenot role as intercultural mediators between the ideas of their homeland and those of their adopted country. Coming from a wealthy and respected Protestant family in France, Boyer made his living by his intellect while in exile, working as a tutor of French for the children of English aristocrats—and in the process turning out a widely acclaimed bilingual dictionary and a French grammar which together became the standard for teaching the language for a century.[121] He also ran a circle of Huguenot intellectuals, translated innumerable treatises and pamphlets, and otherwise capitalized on his significant language skills throughout his life to make his name as a man of letters. More a scholar and a writer of many genres than an expert on the theater, Boyer wrote far more histories and polemics than he did plays (and the plays themselves tended to be liberal translations from French source texts rather than original works). In addition to his considerable work on bridging the linguistic gap between French and English, Boyer was acclaimed for his classical scholarship, having mastered Latin and Greek as well as the two contemporary languages. When Boyer chose to undertake a translation from French, it was often of a work derived from classical literature—his translation of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, which was so in demand that it reached a nineteenth edition, being his most famous

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[120]For a more complete biography of Abel Boyer, including the approbations of numerous
    commentators on his language skills, see Barrell and Boyer, *The Correspondence of Abel Boyer*.
[121]On the reception of Boyer's dictionary and grammar, see Ibid., 8-10.

and successful.[122]

One of these translation projects was *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*, which was acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane also in the winter of 1699/1700 as a rival production to Dennis's *Tragedy of Iphigenia* at Lincoln's Inn Fields. In this play, Boyer adapts Racine's *Iphigénie* so closely as to blur the distinction between translation and adaptation. Indeed, the second printed edition of the play describes *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis* as Racine's play "translated into *English*, with considerable *Additions*, by Mr. Boyer."[123] As paradoxical as such a statement may sound to twenty-first-century ears,[124] Boyer's text proves it to be a remarkably accurate description. From Act I, scene i through Act V, scene iv,[125] Boyer's text

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[122]See François de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon, *The Adventures of Telemachus, the Son of Ulysses, in Twenty-Four Books* [Les aventures de Télémaque: fils d'Ulysse], trans. Abel Boyer, 19th ed. (London: Printed for J. Buckland [and others], 1778).

[123]Abel Boyer, "Advertisement," in *The Victim: Or, Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis* (London: James Knapton, William Taylor, J. Baker, and W. Lewis, 1714), n.p.

[124]While most current scholarship agrees that translation and adaptation exist along a continuum with no possibility of drawing a clear demarcating line between them, there are certain standards in common parlance for deciding which of the two labels to use for any given work. Among them is the belief, current in our own century, that while a translator obviously must *change* words, to *add* or *subtract* words (especially in the case of whole sentences that have no equivalent in the original or are dropped entirely from the translation) is to tip the balance from translation into adaptation. In the seventeenth century, however, definitional standards for distinguishing translation from adaptation, and also adaptation from plagiarism, were still relatively new and very much in flux, with the use of any one of these given terms determined more by the personal preference of the speaker than by any kind of commonly understood definition. On the difficulty of distinguishing between translation and adaptation in both scholarly discussion and common usage, see Laurence Raw, ed. *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation* (London and New York: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012). On the definitional fuzziness in seventeenth-century England between adaptation and plagiarism, see Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*.

[125]The act and scene numbers given here are drawn from the equivalent act and scene divisions in Racine, which Boyer follows so precisely that they serve to indicate the proper locations in his text, as well. However, the printed edition of Boyer's play follows the English convention of declaring a new scene when there is a change in location, rather than the French convention of declaring a new scene whenever a character enters or exits the stage. Because by this English method of accounting there is only one long scene per act in this play, Boyer's text has no scene divisions at all, making an analysis of his dramatic structure needlessly difficult. Consequently, I use Racine's scene numbers to analyze both his and Boyer's texts, as there is a precise one-to-one correspondence between them in function, if not in name.

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reproduces Racine's dramatic structure exactly, with the same characters appearing in the exact same order to deliver the same plot points. There is no information in Racine's text that is not revealed to the same characters and in the same manner, nor any additional information in Boyer's that creates additional plot twists. Instead, we get an English version of the plot of *Iphigénie* in a rendering so faithful that the temptation to call this a performed translation—as opposed to a new adaptation—is considerable.

Yet this context of literary fidelity makes the knowing alterations that Boyer *did* make all the more significant, and together they provide a precise picture of those elements of French neoclassicism that simply could not make it onto the stage in an English public theater. Racine's play, though popular all over Western Europe, took more than two decades to reach the English stage. Although *Iphigénie* had entered the European theater scene in 1674, after the reopening of the English theaters, Boyer's 1699/1700 'tradaptation'[126] was the first version of it to see public performance in England, and consequently may be viewed as the first version considered sufficiently likely to please an English audience (and therefore financially viable to mount). Remarkably, despite its almost excessive fidelity to Racine, the praise that Boyer's text drew from English critics centered around its slim difference from its French source, one critic famously declaring it "so entirely free from any gallicisms, or even

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[126]This term, coined by Michel Garneau, has entered scholarly discussion in both translation studies and adaptation studies as a designation for texts occupying that nebulous area on the translation-adaptation spectrum where traditional definitions of the two terms fail. See Susan Knutson, "'Tradaptation' *dans le sens Québécois*: A Word for the Future," in *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*, ed. Laurence Raw (London and New York: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012).

the least vestige of the foreigner in it, that it is in that respect superior to many of our modern tragedies."[127] How did Boyer, so faithful in plot and dramatic structure, manage to anglicize Racine enough to draw this praise?

Boyer's first concession to the conventions of the English stage was to abandon Racine's rhyming Alexandrines in favor of the blank verse in iambic pentameter that had dominated English-language drama since the Renaissance. The use of both rhyme and verse in drama were a matter of some debate in the ongoing pamphlet wars of French and English dramatic criticism, with both the champions of rhyme and its detractors associating rhyme with the French style and blank verse with the English. This is consistently asserted, for example, in John Dryden's *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, a semi-fictionalized account of a lengthy argument he had with three other dramatic critics on the merits of various national theaters, both ancient and modern, but especially the French and the English. In one representative passage, his opponent in the debate says of the French:

> I should now speak of the beauty of their rhyme, and the just reason I
> have to prefer that way of writing in tragedies before ours of writing in
> blank-verse; . . . and I can see but one reason why it [rhyme] should
> not generally obtain, that is, because our poets write so ill in it.[128]

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[127]David Erskine Baker, Stephen Jones, and Isaac Reed, *Biographia dramatica, or, A companion to the playhouse: containing historical and critical memoirs, and original anecdotes, of British and Irish dramatic writers, from the commencement of our theatrical exhibitions; amongst whom are some of the most celebrated actors. Also an alphabetical account, and chronological lists, of their works, the dates when printed, and observations on their merits. Together with an introductory view of the rise and progress of the British stage.*, 3 v. in 4 vols., vol. I:1 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees ... [et al], 1812). 54.

[128]Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 37.

Although himself both an Englishman and a proponent of the use of rhyme, this critic

holds up the French as its masters and the English accomplishments as lackluster.

This national scheme of associating the French with rhyme and the English with

blank verse is so entrenched that it forms a base term of the debate; whether English

or French, advocate for rhyme or advocate for blank verse, one is indisputably the

French style and the other the English. While few disputed the necessity of writing

tragedies in verse (both the Greeks and the Romans had written their dramas in verse,

after all),[129] the use or discarding of rhyme was one of the rallying points around

which national dramatic styles were distinguished. By abandoning rhyme, Boyer

symbolically allied his drama with English nationalism.

The choice of a different verse structure, however, does not typically threaten

the status of a given text as a translation, since even the translators of classical texts

realized that trying to fit the rhythms of modern French or English into a meter

originally developed for ancient Greek or Latin can only strike the listener as

bizarre.[130] A more significant alteration exercised by Boyer was the frequent breaking

up of what had been monologues in Racine and turning them into dialogues. Greek

tragedy, emulating the rhetorical style of the ancient Athenian courts and

governmental Assembly, frequently employs a kind of debate structure in which one

character presents a whole case while another stays silent to listen, then the other

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[129]On the use of verse in Greek plays, see T. B. L. Webster, *The Greek Chorus* (London: Methuen, 1970). On the use of verse in Roman plays, see Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience*.
[130]For a thorough exploration of the issues facing the translator of verse, and the specificity of metre to different language groups, see Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

character presents a long, point-by-point rebuttal of the original character's argument.[131] French neoclassical plays tend to imitate this Greek model, having the opposing parties in a scene politely listen to one another's entire list of points before responding, while point-by-point dialogue is more preferred in English plays.[132] When passions run high and antagonists meet in English drama, interruptions and immediate rebuttals are common. Cognizant of this, Boyer strays from translation in order to create a performable English version of Racine by breaking up monologues in ways that heighten excitement and tension without actually adding anything new to the plot. To give just one example, in the final scene of Act I, Agamemnon and Ulysses debate the justice of sacrificing Iphigenia. In Racine, though the passions are certainly high, this scene is broken up into a simple debate structure: one lament by Agamemnon is rebutted by one monologue from Ulysses, Agamemnon makes a short concession speech, and the scene is over.[133] In Boyer, by contrast, the lines switch off five times in place of Racine's two, despite adding no new content to the scene. Compare Agamemnon's ending concession speech from Racine . . .

> *AGAMEMNON:*
>
> *Seigneur, de mes efforts je connois l'impuissance:*
>
> *Je cede, et laisse aux dieux opprimer l'innocence.*

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[131]On the similarities in the structure of ancient Greek speeches in tragedy and in other institutions such as the law courts and the political Assembly, see Richard P. Martin, "Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, ed. Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[132]See Dryden's exploration of this phenomenon and defense of the English practice in Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 41-42.

[133]See Act I, scene v in Jean Racine, "Iphigénie," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768), 25-26.

La victime bientôt marchera sur vos pas,

Allez. Mais cependant faites taire Calchas;

Et m'aidant à cacher ce funeste mystere,

Laissez-moi de l'autel écarter une mere.

[AGAMEMNON:

Lord, I know the powerlessness of my efforts:

I concede, and leave the gods to oppress innocence.

The victim will soon march to your pace,

Go. But yet make Calchas keep quiet;

And helping me to hide this macabre mystery,

Allow me to keep a mother from the altar.][134]

. . . to its equivalent in Boyer's version:

AGAMEMNON:

My Lord, I find how weak and impotent,

All my Efforts would be t'oppose the Gods.

And since it is decreed, that Innocence

Must be opprest, I---, no---, I'll ne're consent:

Oh! Cruel Fate! Inexorable Gods!

ULYSSES:

My Lord, remember

Your solemn Vows, and dread th' Almighty Powers.

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[134]Act I, scene v in Ibid., 26.

Consult your Safety---; Nay, consult your Honour.

AGAMEMNON:

Oh! Hard Necessity!

Oh! Wretched Father! Yet, engage the Priest

To Silence for a while: Let me, at least,

Be Guiltless for one Moment: Let me hide

From *Clytemnestra*, my black, my barbarous Arts;

And spare her tender Heart the cruel Sight,

Of a dear Daughter bleeding on an Altar.[135]

Boyer retains most of Racine's main points (Agamemnon is powerless, the gods oppress innocence, Ulysses's aid is enlisted to keep Calchas quiet and prevent Clytemnestra from witnessing the sacrifice), and adds nothing in the new line from Ulysses that this character has not already said earlier in the play. Yet in the English context, this added line is necessary to properly demonstrate Agamemnon's struggle—he must not be allowed to collect his thoughts so tidily as he does in Racine. The concession of powerlessness and the request for help keeping Clytemnestra away are separate thoughts, and so in the English version they must also be separate lines.

Alterations like these are significant because they represent an acknowledgement on Boyer's part that certain elements of the 'classical' in

[135]Abel Boyer, *The Victim: Or, Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*, Second ed. (London: James Knapton, William Taylor, J. Baker, and W. Lewis, 1714). 11.

neoclassical French drama are ill-suited to the different theoretical constructions and ancient inheritances of the English theater, even though this theater commends the accomplishments of 'the ancients'—a group that presumably includes Greeks as well as Romans—loudly and often.

Such revisions, although they demonstrate a keen awareness of the national differences that separate English theatrical tastes from French, are not readily obvious to anyone who has not carefully scrutinized both texts. More obvious are the "considerable *Additions*" referred to in the "Advertisement" at the front of the play. These additions include a song at the beginning of Act IV which is sung to Eriphyle (but really informs the audience of her inner emotional state), and a revised ending (on which more in a moment). The song, informing us in different words of Eryphile's jealousy and destructive tendencies, adds nothing that the play does not contain already in its spoken sections. It is, however, a pointed nod to English theatrical tradition, which will often include a song in its spoken drama that has intradiegetic reason to be there (i.e. sung by a minstrel, as in this case, or by a character in circumstances where a real person might reasonably be expected to sing, as Desdemona does when getting ready for bed in *Othello*).[136] Like the subtler alterations discussed above, the song is Boyer's way of showing the English that he knows and respects their theater, a way to anglicize Racine.

[136]See Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act IV, scene iii, lines 24-56 (William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan, Third ed., The Arden Shakespeare (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997): 290-92). On the place of music and song in early modern English drama, see Erin Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton: Language, Memory, and Musical Representation* (Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); and Katrine K. Wong, *Music and Gender in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

It is the finale, though, which represents the biggest departure from his

otherwise tame and faithful anglicization of this script. This is the moment where

concordance between the French and English versions of neoclassicism becomes truly

impossible. Up until Act V, scene v, Boyer had followed the signature style of

neoclassical French dramatic structure by making each act take place in a single

location and within an uninterrupted flow of time. In the last scene of his play, he

radically breaks with this convention, writing in an "*Exeunt Omnes*" and a change in

location mid-act[137]—exactly the kind of break with the neoclassical unities that

French critics found so distasteful about English theater. At this point in Racine's play,

the characters of Arcas and Ulysses enter to give the inconsolable Clytemnestra a

summary of what has happened to her daughter at the altar in a scene that closely

resembles the equivalent messenger speech in Euripides (in form, if not in content).[138]

Boyer, aware that English theatrical tastes would never permit the tragic denouement

to be simply related to the audience in a speech, takes us to the site of the sacrifice.

Pulling out all the stops, Boyer indulges the English taste for spectacle with the

onstage raising of an altar "*near the Sea-Shore,*" a singing chorus of priests, a

weeping Agamemnon, a trembling Eriphyle, a resigned and grim Iphigenia, and the

inclusion, for the first time, of several characters who do not even appear in Racine's

play, including Calchas, Menelaus, and Nestor—a nod to the more expanded casts of

English dramas, which were often written for larger companies than neoclassical

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[137]Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 51.
[138]Compare Act V, scenes v-vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 76-79 to Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1532-1618.

French plays.[139] Only moments into the scene, we get the following spectacular scene direction: "*As* Iphigenia *is leading to be sacrific'd, the Sun is Eclips'd; Screaks in the Air; Subterranian Groans and Howlings; Thunder.*"[140] This clearly supernatural set of effects plays specifically to the strengths of the English theater, which habitually made use of such devices as thunder machines and trapdoors to represent the subterranean or demonic realm.[141] Following these portents, the kind of violence scrupulously avoided by the French neoclassicists breaks out onstage, with Achilles (and Patroclus, another new character unseen in Racine) rushing in with swords drawn, the attempted sacrifice of Eriphyle by Calchas, and Eriphyle's dramatic onstage suicide, complete with a dying confession of her love for Achilles.[142] And it doesn't stop there! In a twist that breaks the conventions of both French neoclassicism and ancient Greek tragedy, Diana appears "*in a Machine*" but inexplicably *does not speak*, merely passing over the stage and out of the scene in silence.[143] In a Greek tragedy, the only purpose served by the appearance of a god at the end of a play is to make the will of the divine known through speech; a silent *dea ex machina* would be

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[139]Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 51. On the size and operation of neoclassical French acting companies, see Peter D. Arnott, *An Introduction to the French Theatre* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977). On the establishment of comparatively larger English acting companies, see Ingram, *The Business of Playing*.

[140]Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 53.

[141]For a more thorough account of the use of stage machinery in the English theatrical tradition, including its links with classical revival, see Lily Bess Campbell, *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance: A Classical Revival* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960).

[142]See Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 53-54. The dying confession, a dramatically effective moment full of pathos, was a conventional element of English tragedy. On the links between death and narrative closure in the English tragic tradition, and thus the enmeshing of death with the revelation of secrets, see Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1997).

[143]Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 54.

both pointless and absurd. In neoclassical French tragedy, the divine is banned from direct representation onstage, known only through oracles and the verbal reports of human characters.[144] In Boyer's English version of Racine's scrupulously neoclassical play, the goddess still speaks only through oracles; but without the messenger speech where a soldier is reported to have seen Diana,[145] there is nothing for it but to show the goddess onstage. In attempting to create a faithful live rendition of events that were only narrated in Racine, Boyer undercuts the purpose for which these things were represented the way they were in his source text(s). The appearance of Diana in narration is uncertain, purposefully so; the appearance of Diana onstage is about as certain as it gets, and suddenly begs the question of why the goddess didn't just deliver her instructions clearly in person in the first place. The misinterpretation of oracles—the thing that drives the plot in both *Iphigénie* and *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*—now seems more like divine cruelty than human error. Yet at this price, Boyer has been able to purchase a spectacle of suspense, supernatural events, and death very much in keeping with the Roman-derived values of an action-packed English tragedy.

This ending is probably the best single example of the confused quadricultural knot that can occur when French neoclassicism is imported to the English stage. Conventions originating from Greece (the *dea ex machina*), Rome (staged suicide), France (indirect contact with the divine), and England (supernatural storm effects) can all be observed, yet when mashed together in this way may create confusion and

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[144]See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France."
[145]Act V, scene vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 79.

result in elements that are nonsensical when looked at from the perspective of any one component culture—like the silent *dea ex machina*. Moreover, the odd juxtaposition of this mashed-up ending with the otherwise scrupulous fidelity to Racine shows the power of local cultural convention when it comes to publicly staged plays—a straightforward translation of Racine, the thing that Boyer seemed to be attempting to write, is inadmissible on the English stage. In order to transition from merely a read to a performed text, even the neoclassical *Iphigénie* had to undergo an anglicizing process in which its title was far from the only thing altered beyond the demands of mere translation.

Johnson's *The Victim*

In a twist that further blurs the lines between various forms of literary appropriation, the performance of Charles Johnson's *The Victim*, another adaptation of Racine, at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in 1714, created quite a stir. Johnson, unlike the other authors examined in this chapter, was a professional playwright whose plays were very popular, and made him one of the major names of the London stage toward the beginning of the eighteenth century (although he has largely been overlooked and forgotten since). An Englishman and a man of the theater, Johnson's version presents a fascinating contrast—and incendiary competition—to the French-born translator Abel Boyer's variation on the same play. At the request of Robert Wilks, the actor-manager of Drury Lane at the time and Johnson's personal friend, Johnson had prepared an adaptation of Racine's *Iphigénie* for performance at the Theatre Royal some fourteen years after Boyer's play had been acted in the same spot.

Upon its performance, an irate Boyer, insisting that *The Victim* was a plagiarized version of his own *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*, decried Johnson in print, wrote a scathing poem in verse on how Johnson had not only robbed him of Iphigenia but murdered her by making the play worse, and to top it all off released a second print edition of his own play in which he co-opted Johnson's title and dedication, now calling his play *The Victim: Or, Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*.[146]

This entire history becomes especially surprising if one takes the time to read both plays, as it quickly becomes apparent that Johnson's text would certainly not count as plagiarism by any twenty-first-century definition of the word. Although Johnson, like Boyer, decided to stage the end of the tragedy rather than have it delivered by messenger speech, these endings are not identical,[147] nor has Johnson stolen any of the wording from Boyer's *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*—the theft of precise words being the major way that we define plagiarism today. Instead, Johnson has translated Racine in his own, far more liberal, way; and while he too follows Racine fairly closely in terms of dramatic structure, Johnson clearly felt himself more free to alter plot points for dramatic effect. As a result, Johnson's play is more clearly an adaptation than the 'tradaptation' of Abel Boyer and steals (practically)[148] nothing directly from Boyer's version.[149] Rather, both of them having undertaken to anglicize

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[146]See the many front matter emendations to Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 53.
[147]Though they are similar enough to raise suspicion—see my discussion below.
[148]For two possible exceptions to this blanket statement, see my comparison of the two endings below.
[149]In terms of the text, anyway. According to Hall and Macintosh, the role of Clytemnestra in both plays was taken by one Mrs. Knight, and her presence in the same capacity in both plays would undoubtedly have enhanced their similarity in performance, if not on the page. See Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*: 80.

Racine without too much alteration, the two plays have wound up in a very similar

place by following the same route. This similarity, however, at a time when ideas of

literary property were relatively new and the definitions surrounding appropriation

and plagiarism were still in flux,[150] was sufficient to enrage Boyer, who clearly

viewed this alternate English adaptation of Racine as a theft.

Such a reaction is fascinating given the appropriative journey this play took to

arrive in either of its English forms in the first place. A fifth-century B.C.E. Athenian

text, clearly altered by at least one fourth-century hand (still in Greek), adapted into a

significantly altered French text (via French and Latin translation, in addition to

Greek[151]) translated into English, and finally adapted to be in accordance with

English theatrical traditions and staging conventions—any one or all of these steps

might be considered thefts of one kind or another. Yet Boyer, who made his living by

translation, clearly does not consider translation to be a form of theft; rather, the

offense lies in having two different versions of the same story appear in the same

language (and the same medium). Indeed, a close reading of his scathing indictment

of the 'plagiarism' reveals that his principal grievance seems to be the fact that he lost

money because the Theatre Royal chose to commission a new adaptation of Racine

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[150]For an excellent and thorough study of this emerging phenomenon, see Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*.

[151] In her close study of Racine's working notes for the creation of *Iphigénie*, Susanna Phillippo demonstrates that although he definitively read Greek and worked, in large part, directly from Euripides's source text, Racine also drew upon lines of influence from Thomas Sébillet's 1549 French translation, which was itself not translated directly from the Greek, but rather from Erasmus's 1506 Latin translation. See Susanna Phillippo, *Hellenic Whispers: Modes of Greek Literary Influence in Seventeenth-Century French Drama*, Medieval and Early Modern French Studies, vol. 13 (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013): 1-2.

rather than reviving the one he had already written. Consider his closing point in the diatribe:

> . . . the manner in which his[152] [Boyer's] *Performance,* and *Himself,* have been abused is so *flagrant* and *injurious,* that he designs, in a few Days, to publish a short *Dissertation on the Present Management of the Stage, Addressed to my Lord Chamberlain,* wherein he shall set in a true Light, the Pernicious Consequences of such *Unfair Practices* both of some *Writers* and *Players*; and in particular, inquire into the Reason, Why Mr. *Wilks* declined to revive, this very *Tragedy,* for the Entertainment of the Duke D'Aumont, who, by his Secretary Monsieur l'Abbe Nadal, had Intimated to Mr. *Boyer*, his Desire to see it represented; which Mr. *Boyer* signified to Mr. *Wilks?*[153]

Puzzling all this out, it seems that Boyer had been asked about the possibility of reviving his tragedy by a French nobleman; Boyer than proposed the revival to Mr. Wilks, the actor-manager of Drury Lane, who did indeed put up an English adaptation of Racine's *Iphigénie*—just not Boyer's own. The "abuse" that Boyer suffered, then, was less Johnson's stealing of his play than it was Johnson's stealing of his performance slot, as an analysis of the two plays will bear out.

Let us turn, then, to Johnson's text and its actual similarities to—and departures from—both Boyer and Racine. Johnson, proficient in French but

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[152]Boyer, like many playwrights of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, writes about himself in the third person here, doubtless in order to make it seem like his scathing judgments upon Johnson emanate from a more impartial third party.

[153]Boyer, "Advertisement," n.p.

definitively more a playwright than a translator, and an Englishman by birth, seems to have had slightly less reverence for the status of Racine's masterwork than did Boyer. From the very first scene, he makes substantial alterations to the text to make it more exciting, bringing it more closely in line with English theatrical traditions than Boyer ever did. Euripides, Racine, and Boyer all open the play with Agamemnon expostulating on his situation to the servant whom he is about to charge with preventing Iphigenia's arrival in Aulis.[154] Johnson, the first in this particular adaptational line to break with this tradition, gives us an expository dialogue between two servants that is remarkably reminiscent of the opening of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

> *(Enter* Arcas *to* Euribates, *who is waiting at the King's Pavilion.)*
>
> EURIBATES:
>
> Who's there?
>
> ARCAS:
>
> A Soldier and a Greek, *Euribates*.
>
> EURIBATES:
>
> Say what important Care has rais'd you thus
>
> Before the Sun, do the Winds swell our Canvass,
>
> Shall these Confed'rate Kings, whose valiant Bands
>
> Lay here extended on the Strand of *Aulis,*
>
> Leagu'd against *Troy,* shall they at last Embark,

---

[154]See Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1-162; Racine, *Iphigénie*, Act I, scene I (Racine, "Iphigénie," 13-18); and Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 1-5.

And visit like a Storm that Pride of *Asia?*[155]

Immediately conveying to us the location (Aulis), the characters (Greek soldiers), the

goal (to sack Troy), and the situation (no wind), this meeting between two servants in

the night, complete with the opening line "Who's there?"[156] makes the informed

reader/spectator practically expect to see the ghost of Hamlet's father enter at any

moment. And indeed, after roughly the same amount of exposition as was given by

the night watchmen in *Hamlet*,[157] Agamemnon enters, no ghost, but certainly a king

and father with a grievance, looking for help from these waiting servants. Rejecting

both the French and the Greek beginnings of the play, Johnson instantly aligns his

version with one of the most revered plays of one of England's most revered

playwrights.[158]

This altered opening kicks off a version of Racine's *Iphigénie* which, while

retaining all of that playwright's major additions (the Iphigenia-Achilles love plot, the

inclusion of Eriphyle as substitute sacrificial victim), never hesitates to throw in an

extra character, scene, or plot twist where it would please an English audience. One of

the more notable examples of this is the inclusion of Menelaus as a character.

Menelaus, Agamemnon's first antagonist in Euripides's version of the play, had been

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[155]Charles Johnson, *The Victim* (London: Ferd. Burleigh, 1714). 1.

[156]The exact same opening line as Shakespeare's play. See Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, scene i, line 1
(William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006). 147).

[157]Compare Johnson, *The Victim*: 1-4 with Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, scene i, lines 1-50
(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*: 147-51).

[158]Today, of course, it would be perfectly accurate to refer to Shakespeare as "England's most revered
playwright" with no qualifying "one of" in front. In the early eighteenth century, however, he still
vied with Ben Johnson and the playwriting team Beaumont and Fletcher for the top spot. On
Shakespeare's place in the nascent English canon of 'literary' playwrights, see Kewes, *Authorship
and Appropriation*.

dropped by Racine in favor of Ulysses—a more decorous substitution that had

allowed Racine to demonize this character and avoid showing brothers behaving

toward one another in a less-than-fraternal manner.[159] Johnson, retaining Ulysses in

this capacity but also bringing back Menelaus, was likely influenced in this decision

by the fame that the Menelaus / Agamemnon argument of Euripides had gained in the

English dramatic criticism of the day. English analyses of Euripides's *Iphigenia in*

Aulis tended to emphasize Agamemnon's dilemma in having to choose between his

roles as a father or as a statesman, presenting the choice of whether or not to sacrifice

Iphigenia as a legitimate moral quandary between the interests of the private citizen

and the interests of the state.[160] This political reading of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, clearly

emerging out of the intense English focus on the common man's involvement in

government that had been sparked in part by the political theories of John Locke,[161]

contrasted sharply with French readings of the play, which tended toward the

religious and focused largely on the *divine* mandate for the sacrifice rather than the

political one.[162] Within the English critical context, the discussion between

Agamemnon and Menelaus over whether or not to go forward with the sacrifice was

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[159]For the Agamemnon/Menelaus confrontation in Euripides, see Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* 317-542. The equivalent scene between Agamemnon and Ulysses can be found in Racine's *Iphigénie*, Act I, scenes iii-v (Racine, "Iphigénie," 22-26).

[160]See especially Rymer, *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd*: 137-38 and John Dryden, "Preface," in *Troilus and Cressida: Or, Truth Found Too Late* (London: J. Tonson, 1679).

[161]Locke's theories invested supreme power in the people, even under a monarchy, rather than in God, changing the focus of political justifications from the divine to the human realm. For a more complete look at the influence of John Locke on political thought at the time, see Frederic Robin Ward, "The Early Influence of John Locke's Political Thought in England, 1689-1720" (Dissertation, University of California Riverside, 1995) and Craig Thomas, *There to Here: Ideas of Political Society: John Locke and His Influence on 300 Years of Political Theory* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

[162]See my discussion in "Chapter 2: Iphigenia in France" above.

not viewed as a case of the scheming Menelaus trying to convince his brother to murder an innocent for his own personal benefit, but rather as a legitimate debate over the relative merits of private sacrifice for public gain. In this capacity, the Euripidean debate had featured in dramatic criticism on the ancients as a scene called out for particular praise. Consider this telling summary, taken from the preface to John Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*, in which he claims this scene as the model upon which he partially built his own play:

> *The foundation of the Scene was this: The Grecians were wind-bound at the Port of Aulis, and the Oracle had said, that they could not Sail, unless Agamemnon deliver'd up his Daughter to be Sacrific'd: he refuses; his Brother Menelaus urges the publick safety, the Father defends himself, by arguments of natural affection, and hereupon they quarrel. Agamemnon is at last convinc'd, and promises to deliver up Iphigenia , but so passionately laments his loss, that Menelaus is griev'd to have been the occasion of it, and by a return of kindness, offers to intercede for him with the Grecians, that his Daughter might not be sacrific'd.*[163]

To describe Menelaus as "*urg*[ing] *the publick safety*" is an extremely generous portrayal, considering that the Greeks were under no direct threat from the Trojans in what was unambiguously an offensive war on their part. The phrase "*return of kindness*" likewise implies a sympathy toward Menelaus and an inclination to

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[163]Dryden, "Preface to Troilus and Cressida," n.p.

represent him as a virtuous man on *one* side—not the *wrong* side—of a tough moral debate. Johnson, then, aware of the popularity and critical acclaim garnered by this ancient scene, undertook to bring it back into the drama despite Racine's excision of it. Adding the character of Menelaus to his play, he manages to sneak this scene back in between Agamemnon's confrontations with Clytemnestra and Achilles in Act IV, playing up the sympathetic angle of fraternal compassion to such an extent that one stage direction indicates that Agamemnon "*Falls on* Menelaus*'s Neck, and weeps.*"[164] In a rare example, this proves to be a case in which the English found the French neoclassicists not Greek enough.

Other alterations are more modern in their outlook. The romantic rivalry between Iphigenia and Eriphyle, a solidly modern and Racinian addition to the Greek story, proved to be too subtle for Johnson, who needed the spectacle of open enmity between his heroine and antiheroine to enhance the suffering of both and allow the audience more enjoyment of the story's links with the genre of She-Tragedy. In fact, his preface pointedly directs the audience toward such a generically informed reading of the play:

> *Anxious to please, he* [our Author] *now revives the Dead,*
>
> *And raises* Iphigenia*'s mournful Shade;*
>
> *From* Grece, *and* France, *with equal Care and Toil,*
>
> *Transplants her to* Britannia*'s happy Soil:*
>
> Athenian *Maids, two thousand Years ago,*

---

[164]Johnson, *The Victim*: 45.

With weeping eyes beheld this Virgin's Woe;

Attend; and you may drop a generous Tear,

Blush not that suffering Virtue is your Care;

Indulge the rising Sorrows in your Breast;

'Tis great to Grieve for Innocence distrest.[165]

In addition to the rather obvious appeal to "*suffering Virtue,*" the idea that the goal is to shed tears and the specific focus on the female members of Iphigenia's audience[166] both mark this as a story that, despite being imported from Greece and France, is intended to fit right in with the tradition of English She-Tragedy. In order to deliver on this promise, Johnson loads up his Iphigenia with even more cares than she possessed in Racine's version by making her aware of Eriphyle's enmity and dastardly plans for her.

This he achieves with slight but significant tweaks to scene structures that Racine had already put in place, managing to substantially alter the relationship between these two characters without altering the dramatic structure. In a scene, drawn straight from Racine, where Clytemnestra comes to take Iphigenia away after belatedly receiving Agamemnon's second letter instructing them not to come to Aulis, a simple shift in Clytemnestra's report provides the catalyst for this more open

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[165]Charles Johnson, "Prologue," in *The Victim* (London: Ferd. Burleigh, 1714), n.p.

[166]The idea that women were the major fans and target audience of She-Tragedy was widespread. Even Abel Boyer had counted his play a success despite its short run precisely because it had "*pleas'd the fairest Part of the Town . . . the Ladies*" (Abel Boyer, "Preface," in *The Victim; Or, Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis* (London: James Knapton, William Taylor, J. Baker, and W. Lewis, 1714), n.p.). On women as the target audience of She-Tragedy, see Marsden, *Fatal Desire*, and Hall and Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914.*

confrontation. Here is Racine's version of the encounter:

CLYTEMNESTRE:

Ma fille, il faut partir sans que rien nous retienne,

Et sauver, en fuyant, votre gloire et la mienne.

Je ne m'étonne plus qu'interdit et distrait

Votre pere ait paru nous revoir à regret;

Aux affronts d'un refus craignant de vous commettre,

Il m'avoit par Arcas envoyé cette lettre.

Arcas s'est vu tromper par notre égarement,

Et vient de me la rendre en ce même moment.

Sauvons, encore un coup, notre gloire offensée:

Pour votre hymen Achille a changé de pensée;

Et, refusant l'honneur qu'on lui veut accorder,

Jusques à son retour il veut le retarder.

[CLYTEMNESTRA:

My daughter, it is vital to depart without anything holding us back,

And to save, by fleeing, your reputation and mine.

I am no longer surprised that, speechless and preoccupied,

Your father seemed to see us again with regret;

Fearful of exposing you to the affront of a refusal,

He had sent this letter to me by Arcas.

Arcas saw himself tricked by our wandering,

And came to deliver it to me this very moment.

Let us save, at once, our offended reputation:

Achilles has changed his mind about your marriage;

And, refusing the honor we hoped to accord him,

Wants to delay it until his return.[167]

Relating here what the audience already knows to be only half the contents of the letter,[168] Clytemnestra carefully conceals from Iphigenia the excuse—invented by Agamemnon—that Achilles's change of heart is due to a newfound passion for Eriphyle. In Johnson's version, however, Clytemnestra does not selectively relate the contents of the letter to Iphigenia, but rather hands her the whole thing to read herself:

CLYTEMNESTRA:

Daughter, we must again revisit *Argos*,

Haste, let us fly and save us from Dishonour.

I now no longer wonder, *Agamemnon*

Gave us so cold a Welcome to the Camp.

    (gives Iphigenia *the Letter.)*

Behold this Letter, which was sent by *Arcas*,

Sent to prevent our Journey; but the Message

Miscarry'd, while our Chariot stray'd last Night

In *Aulis* Woods.

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[167]Act II, scene iv in Racine, "Iphigénie," 35-36.
[168]The whole contents of the letter were revealed in Act I, scene I. See Ibid., 17-18.

IPHIGENIA:

Alas! What do I see?

He writes us here, the mighty son of *Peleus,*

Achilles cools, and wou'd defer the Rites

Of Marriage, till he comes from *Troy* victorious?

. . . .

And that this Change, this unexpected Coldness

Proceeds from young *Eriphyle*, his Captive.[169]

Having personally seen Agamemnon's fabricated story that Achilles is in love with

Eriphyle, Iphigenia then relates this detail to Eriphyle herself who, overjoyed at the

news, freely confesses her love for Achilles to the distraught Iphigenia.[170] This is a

major departure from Racine, in which Iphigenia does indeed accuse Eriphyle of

being in love with Achilles but, not under any delusion that Achilles might love her

back, Eriphyle vehemently denies the charge.[171] Later in Racine's play, Iphigenia

regrets her accusation and apologizes for adding to Eriphyle's sorrows.[172] In

Johnson's, Iphigenia and Eriphyle spend the rest of the play covertly trying to get rid

of one another,[173] their open enmity providing more tension to the drama and adding

urgency to Eriphyle's attempts to sabotage Iphigenia. All the same intrigues take place

in both Racine and Johnson, but because they are colored by a known and open

[169]Johnson, *The Victim*: 20-21.
[170]See Ibid., 22-23.
[171]See Act II, scene v in Racine, "Iphigénie," 37-38.
[172]See Act III, scene iv in Ibid., 44.
[173]See examples of attempts by both to get rid of one another at Johnson, *The Victim*: 26-27, 30-31, 39, and 52.

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rivalry, Johnson is able to get more dramatic mileage out of them—including double the female suffering—in a no-holds-barred English version of the restrained French original.

In all of the examples listed above, Johnson has departed from Racine and hence from Boyer, who made no such significant alterations to Racine's plot. Where the similarities—and hence Boyer's accusations of plagiarism—most come into play is in the one way in which they both depart from Racine: staging the play's ending. It is here that we find the most justification for Boyer's claim, because while staging the ending is an obvious choice in the English context, the two plays' respective manners of doing so are suspiciously similar. In comparing the two scenes, we find a series of common elements: both include the presence of characters not previously seen in the play (including Calchas, Nestor, and Patroclus), in both there is a chorus of priests who begin the sacrifice with a song (though a different song in each case), divine storm effects are used, Achilles bursts in with an army and Calchas delivers the second prophesy (though these elements happen in different orders), Eriphyle commits suicide rather than be killed by the priests, and the wind starts up after her death.[174] Of these, the majority also appear in Racine's narrative of the scene: Calchas is certainly present (though there is no mention of Nestor or Patroclus), the gods suddenly alter the weather, Achilles attacks and Calchas delivers the second prophacy, and Eriphyle tells the priests to stand off and stabs herself, at which point the wind

[174]See Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 51-55 and Johnson, *The Victim*: 60-64.

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starts up.[175] Of the commonalities, therefore, the only elements not directly derived

from Racine are the presences of Nestor, Patroclus, and the chorus of priests. In

staging a sacrifice scene, the opportunity to write and sing a hymn to Diana is not to

be missed, and as these hymns are entirely different songs,[176] the chorus of priests

might very well be coincidental. Achilles, breaking onto the scene with his army and

ready for battle, could hardly be expected to show up without Patroclus, whose

constant presence at his side has been a staple point of Achilles's character in virtually

all modern portrayals of him.[177] More suspicious, however, is the presence of Nestor,

who in both versions says and does nothing, begging the question of why he appears

in the stage direction at all, and especially why two different playwrights would

independently choose to include him.[178] Similarly, both playwrights have moved the

divine weather from its position after Eriphyle's suicide, where it was in Racine, to

the moment when Iphigenia is being led to the altar—a moment that had been stopped

in Racine not by the manifest presence of the gods but by Achilles' entrance.[179] How

this particular and very specific change might have been independently hit upon by

both playwrights is relatively hard to fathom, seeing that it does not add the

opportunity to show off particularly English stage effects, merely moves it to a

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[175]See Act V, scene vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 77-79.

[176]Compare Boyer, *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*: 51-53 to Johnson, *The Victim*: 60-61.

[177]On the various representations of the Achilles/Patroclus relationship in the most well-known literary
texts about them from antiquity to the present, see Marco Fantuzzi, *Achilles in Love: Intertextual
Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[178]Nestor does not even appear in the Euripidean version of this incident, making it even more probable
that Boyer's accusations of plagiarism may not be entirely specious. See the final messenger
speech in Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1540-1612.

[179]See Act V, scene vi in Racine, "Iphigénie," 77-78.

different place in the scene. It seems likely that Johnson, if not directly copying from a printed version of Boyer's text, probably had retained some specific impressions from seeing or reading *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis* earlier, and had reproduced those parts of the ending he found the most striking.

Where the endings differ, however, they differ significantly. Johnson removes Boyer's nonsensical mute *dea ex machina* entirely, replacing the goddess with a prophetic and vindictive speech by Eriphyle in her dying moment that, for the first time since the introduction of Racine's happy ending, recontextualizes the Iphigenia in Aulis story within the greater mythic structure of which it is a part. Casting a shadow over the otherwise-happy ending inherited from Racine, Eriphyle speaks aloud the context which Racine and Boyer's audiences knew, but had been asked to forget:

> ERIPHYLE:
>
> Take, take Libation from the Royal Veins
>
> Of *Theseus*---Consecrate your nuptial Joys
>
> In *Helen*'s Blood---Hah! my Prophetick Soul[180]
>
> Looks downwards---and behold my rising Vengeance;
>
> I see the cursed House of proud *Atrides*
>
> Falls by it self---behold, the King of Kings
>
> Bleeds by the Partner of his Bed and Throne.
>
> Now mad *Orestes*, with his Mother's Blood,

[180]Another line borrowed from *Hamlet*. See Act I, scene v, line 40 in Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

> Expiates his Mother's Crime---the Gods pursue him.
>
> Haunt him, ye Furies, seize his guilty Mind,
>
> Let Love, Despair and Love urge him, like me,
>
> To seek Relief from inexpressive Tortures
>
> In an untimely Grave.[181]

What had been in Racine and Boyer a clear-cut case of virtue rewarded and vice punished now feels more like a new link in the long tradition of English revenge tragedy, where disaster overtakes protagonist and antagonist alike, with the flavor of the newer and more popular She-Tragedy layered over.[182] The dying Eriphyle, gruesomely inviting her enemies to drink from her opened veins, weaves a vision of the future in which her emotional and physical sufferings will be avenged. This sacrificed maid, whose hopes have been raised and dashed too often by her self-absorbed captors, scorned in love and faced with Iphigenia's open rivalry, will witness their horrible futures as a vengeful ghost. The saving of Iphigenia does not foreclose the fall of the house of Atreus, and the French neoclassical formula for rewarding virtue and punishing vice[183] is subverted. In its place, the endless suffering that marks English tragedy—in both its revenge tragedy and She-Tragedy forms—takes over.

If Boyer's play represented the minimum amount of anglicization required to make Racine stageable, Johnson's gives us a more complete picture of what Racine's version might have been had it been written in England originally. While certainly not

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[181]Johnson, *The Victim*: 63.
[182]For an overview of the English tradition of revenge tragedy, see Fredson Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959).
[183]See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

plagiarized wholesale, as Boyer claims,[184] Johnson's play gives us an alternative look at the same project Boyer had undertaken: to make Racine's masterwork viable as an English tragedy. Despite their differences, the fact that both did so through many of the same mechanisms (increasing sensationalism, adding spectacle, bringing the violence onstage, and making visible that which was invisible in Racine) reveals much of what differentiated French neoclassicism from its English counterpart around the turn of the eighteenth century. While both revered 'the ancients' and strove to emulate them in dramatic theory, form, and often content, their respective aesthetic configurations of this common goal were incompatible in many respects. In Dennis's tragedy as well as Boyer's and Johnson's, dramatic emphases are changed, staging conventions altered, and spectacle enhanced for performance before an English audience accustomed to Roman-derived models of theatrical classicism. Ideologies of colonialism, romantic love with its associated implications for gender, and governance are newly inflected with English cultural values that draw upon the Romans for their models, and which differ from their French versions even as the French versions differed from the Greek. Neither French nor English neoclassicism is more properly 'classical' than the other, nor does either truly recapture the ancient theater it attempts to imitate. Instead, both are a testament to the power that local custom holds over the forms taken by a single story as it travels from time to time and place to place. If the Tragic Muse, long separated from her native home, is going to

[184]Indeed, though the ending may well have been inspired by Boyer's version, the play is different enough in all other respects to dodge Boyer's claim that it is "no other than *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis.*" Boyer, "Advertisement," n.p.

show up in London dressed in French garb, she had better put on an English dress

before walking the boards of the English public theater.

Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music

Of all the attempts to revive the ancient theater in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe, opera was by far the most deliberate and meticulous. Much has been made of the idea of opera as an 'invented' art form;[1] that is, an art form that was conceived in theory before it was attempted in practice. It is commonly held that opera as a performance genre was the brainchild of the Florentine Camarata, a group of Italian humanist intellectuals, musicians, and artists who met near the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth to discuss and write on the topic of the arts. The birth of opera, a type of theater that is entirely sung rather than spoken, is attributed to their treatises on the ancient Greek theater, which at the time was believed to be sung throughout.[2] Although scholars have disputed this 'creation

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[1]See, for example, Richard A. Carlton, "Florentine Humanism and the Birth of Opera: The Roots of Operatic "Conventions"," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 31, no. 1 (2000); Lydia Goehr, "The Concept of Opera," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Emanuele Senici, "Genre," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Jean-François Lattarico, "Lo Scherno Degli Dei: Myth and Derision in the Dramma per Musica of the Seventeenth Century," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012); Robert C. Ketterer, "Helpings from the Great Banquets of Epic: Handel's *Teseo* and *Arianna in Creta*," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012); Michael Ewans, *Opera from the Greek: Studies in the Poetics of Appropriation* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); and Marianne McDonald, *Sing Sorrow: Classics, History, and Heroines in Opera* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).

[2]On this belief, see Roger Savage, "'Something like the Choruses of the Ancients': The *Coro Stabile* and the Chorus in European Opera, 1598-1782," in *Choruses, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Joshua Billings, Felix Budelmann, and Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Peter Burian, "Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: the Renaissance to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling, *Cambridge Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Current theories about the nature of fifth-century Athenian drama no longer hold this view, positing instead that the choral odes and certain metrical sections were sung, while other passages were spoken. Some metrical analyses even posit recitative-like middle grounds between speech and song in Greek tragedy for certain sections. For a full analysis, see Peter Wilson, "Music," in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. Justina Gregory (Malden, MA; Oxford; and Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, 2005).

myth' from a variety of angles—some attributing the creation of opera to other

Italians of roughly the same time period,[3] others tracing the long history of musical

development from court entertainments and religious oratorio to argue that opera was

a shift in a tradition rather than a new invention at all[4]—there can be no doubt that an

impulse toward Greek revival can be counted within the large assembly of factors that

fed into opera's emergence at the turn of the seventeenth century.[5]

Unlike the theatrical movements discussed in previous chapters, opera was not

conceptualized as an attempt to reform and improve the existing theater using

principles derived from ancient sources. Rather, opera represented, for those who

wrote about it, a paradoxically new/old form—a type of performance that was not in

practice, not a modification of any living theater tradition, but a true revival of a dead

one. Opera appears in the earliest writings about it[6] as an attempt at the literal

reconstruction of the forms used to present theatrical pieces in ancient Athens.[7]

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[3]See particularly W. Kirkendale, "The Myth of the "Birth of Opera" in the Florentine Camerata Debunked by Emilio de'Cavalieri: A Commemorative Lecture," *The Opera Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2003).

[4]Among them Frederick W. Sternfeld, *The Birth of Opera* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993); Gary Tomlinson, "Pastoral and Musical Magic in the Birth of Opera," in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, ed. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Monika Hennemann, "Operatorio?," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Goehr, "The Concept of Opera"; and McDonald, *Sing Sorrow*.

[5]Primary source documentation of this Greek revival impulse can be found in Claude V. Palisca, *Girolamo Mei (1519-1594): Letters on Ancient and Modern Music to Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni Bardi*, ed. Armen Carapetyan, Musicological Studies and Documents (American Institute of Musicology, 1960); and Piero Weiss, *Opera: A History in Documents* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Current scholarship which treats the Greek revival impulse in the operatic tradition includes Wendy Heller, "Opera Between the Ancients and the Moderns," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ewans, *Opera from the Greek*; and McDonald, *Sing Sorrow*, among others.

[6]For a collection of these writings and analysis about them, see Palisca, *Letters on Ancient and Modern Music*.

[7]See Ibid. and also Weiss, *Opera: A History in Documents*.

Despite the fact that there was no record of the music that was played to accompany Greek drama, the attempts of musicians from the seventeenth century onward to compose music inspired by the ancient world was concerted enough to create a whole musical genre known to this day as 'classical.'[8] Although sung stories predated opera in the form of oratorio[9] and the dramatic representation of stories kept a flourishing spoken theater tradition alive, the idea of staging (secular) stories entirely with singing characters was specifically inspired by Girolamo Mei's work on ancient language and theater, in which he posited that the musical sound of ancient Greek gave their dramatic poetry the quality of sung speech.[10] The continuation of his work by other theorists and musicians led to the invention of *recitative*, a type of instrumentally accented singing midway between speech and song proper.[11] Inventors and proponents of opera even advocated for the use of that most characteristic and, for the spoken theater, problematic of Greek dramatic devices: the chorus. While spoken drama did everything it could to get rid of the chorus—most commonly by replacing them with individual characters known as confidantes—the opera brought it back with a vengeance. Operas incorporated both groups of singers, who added polyphonic weight to the composer's arsenal of musical tools, and later *corps de*

[8]On the various influences that gave rise to classical music, including the 'return to Greece' aesthetic, see Michael Raeburn and Alan Kendall, *Heritage of Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[9]Although the word "oratorio" to describe musical reenactments of religious stories did not come into usage until the eighteenth century, the practice far antedated the use of the term, and also preceded the invention of opera. See Hennemann, "Operatorio?".

[10]See Girolamo Mei, letter to Vincenzo Galilei, 8 May 1572, printed in Palisca, *Letters on Ancient and Modern Music*: 90.

[11]On recitative, aria, the differences between them, and the theory that got attached to each over the course of opera's long history, see Damien Colas, "Musical Dramaturgy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

ballet, who performed dance numbers at key moments in the action.[12]

Admittedly, the act of re-creation did not extend to all elements—opera was

performed indoors, stopped short of using masks[13] and rarely, if ever, confined itself

to only three actors in the main roles. In fact, the differences and similarities between

Greek tragedy and opera fall into a telling configuration: those elements which can be

recorded in written form (characters, poetry, music, choreography) tend to be

consciously modeled on their real or imagined Greek counterparts, while visual

production elements (actors, space, costumes, scenery) bow to contemporary tastes

with no noted or concentrated effort at historical re-creation. Given the much-

discussed logocentrism of European cultures[14] and the fact that Early Modern

humanists' access to the ancient world was almost purely textual rather than

[12]French opera, especially, gained a prominent reputation for the quality of its dancing choruses; see Peter D. Arnott, *An Introduction to the French Theatre* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977).

[13]For a fascinating look at the influence of Christian monotheism on the European discomfort with masking, see David Wiles, "The Use of Masks in Modern Performances of Greek Drama," in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millenium*, ed. Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[14]The most famous work on logocentrism at present is Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). Explorations abound of Derrida's logocentrism as projected back into Europe's history, even as far as the ancient world. For some examples, see Jasper P. Neel, *Plato, Derrida, and Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988); and Erin O'Connell, *Heraclitus & Derrida: Presocratic Deconstruction* (New York: P. Lang, 2005). This is not, of course, to say that Europeans were *exclusively* interested in words and concepts—had visual elements been wholly unimportant, they would not have bothered with costumes and scenery at all, yet much time, money, and appreciation was poured into operatic spectacle. Logocentrism as a concept merely suggests that words in these cultures had more gravitas, commanded more respect, and inspired more serious critical discussion than did visual elements. On the eighteenth-century conception of words as somehow validating the non-linguistic elements of opera (including music), see Charles Dill, "Ideological Noises: Opera Criticism in Early Eighteenth-Century France," in *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006). On the importance of visual spectacle in opera, see Katherine Syer, "Production Aesthetics and Materials," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Veronica Isaac, "Costumes," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

archaeological (that phase of the European romance with Greece was to come into vogue in the nineteenth century), this division between ancient and contemporary elements makes a good deal of sense. In the ways that could be reconstructed exclusively from a study of the tragic scripts and theatrical treatises that had come down to Renaissance Europe from ancient Greece, opera was a revival of the ancient theater. In the ways that could not easily be recorded in such scripts and treatises, it was not. Opera, then, although it would not stand up as a re-creation of the ancient Athenian theater by current standards of historically-informed performance,[15] served as exactly that by the text-based standards of late Renaissance Europe. The formal elements of opera were consciously constructed on the Greek model, with an opera—as written—closely approximating the conception of Greek tragedy held at the time.

This particular style of Greek revival, this experimental new/old dramatic form, proved to be wildly successful across national boundaries, class divisions, and centuries. Initially performed as court entertainment for wealthy patrons in the Italian aristocracy, opera was soon taken up by the Venetian Republic, one of the few Italian cities not governed by a central ruler. In the Venetian Republic, freed from the aristocratic exclusivity of a court setting, opera boomed. It became a popular entertainment, performed for a wide public as a commercial enterprise.[16] The public

[15]For a particularly good examination of current practices surrounding historically informed performance in opera, see Mary Hunter, "Historically Informed Performance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[16]For an analysis of the Venetian influence on launching opera as a pan-European phenomenon, see Ellen Rosand, "Venice: The Cradle of (Operatic) Convention," in *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (Aldershot, England and Bulington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

opera houses of Venice, thriving during an era when tourism to the Venetian *carnivale*

drew those wealthy enough to travel from all over Western Europe, made the new

genre available to audiences not just from other Italian cities, but also from France,

Spain, England, and the Germanic states.[17] These audience members, often wealthy

and influential individuals in their home countries, brought stories of this bold new

theatrical style back to the various courts of Europe. Soon, opera spread to these other

aristocratic courts, first through the wholesale importation of Italian opera (in which

composers, singers, and dancers were invited to travel to other parts of Europe to give

performances), and subsequently through the creation of local opera schools and

troupes. As more and more of these local resources were established, the audience for

opera grew correspondingly. While only the moneyed court circles could afford to

pay a troupe to travel from Italy, middle-class opera patrons were able to attend the

public opera houses that began to spring up in urban centers such as Paris, Vienna,

London, and Madrid. Although opera developed into a variety of sub-genres and

geographically specific styles as it was adopted by different nations—for example,

the differentiation of Italian *opera seria* from French *tragédie en musique*[18]—opera as

a popular musical-dramatic form remained a pan-European phenomenon whose

international character was bolstered periodically by the common exchange of

[17]On the spread of opera from Venice to other European countries, see Louise K. Stein, "How Opera Traveled," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[18]For a wide-ranging look at the national transformations of opera as it traveled and differentiated from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, see John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

traveling singers, composers, and powerful patrons.[19] Even in the context of France

(to which we shall return in a moment), a country that is famous for preferring its

own artistic output and which initially resisted the importation of Italian opera,[20]

arguments over whose operatic style was most truly French tended to center around

the works of foreign-born composers like Lully (the Florentine Italian whose music

dominated the French opera scene in the seventeenth century), Gluck (eighteenth

century Bavarian German), and Piccinni (his eighteenth century Neapolitan Italian

rival).[21] Nor was this international phenomenon short-lived; the popularity of opera as

both an aristocratic and bourgeois entertainment remained high from its early

seventeenth-century adoption in Venice through at least the nineteenth century and,

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[19]The constantly shifting distribution of the European nobility comes into play when considering an art form as costly as opera; on the links between opera's monetary costs and its associations with the upper class, see Valeria De Lucca, "Patronage," in *The Oxford Handbook of Drama*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). When ambassadorships, governorships, and political marriages routinely move wealthy and influential aristocrats between states, these powerful patrons often bring their operatic tastes (and sometimes, composers and troupes) with them. For a particularly good case study of this phenomenon, see Louise K. Stein, "A Viceroy behind the Scenes: Opera, Production, Politics, and Financing in 1680s Naples," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). In the late eighteenth-century French context which is my focus here, there is much speculation that the production and success of Gluck's Iphigenia operas in France was at least partially due to the patronage of the Austrian-born Marie Antoinette, who was Gluck's singing pupil in Austria before her move to France to marry the dauphin. See Patricia Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Alfred Einstein, *Gluck*, ed. Jack Westrup, trans. Eric Blom, The Master Musicians Series (London and New York: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd.; Ferrar, Straus and Cudahy Inc., 1964); and Mark Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters: The Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes* (London: LEGENDA, 2013).

[20]On the nationalistic tensions between various types of musical entertainments in France prior to, during, and after the importation of Italian opera, see Arnott, *An Introduction to the French Theatre*.

[21]Neither Italy nor Germany was politically unified during the time period that I treat here. My use of two monikers to convey the nationality of figures originating from these areas is meant both to reflect the national boundaries in existence at the time and to provide context for any readers unacquainted with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century states which now comprise modern Italy and Germany.

some argue, as far as the twentieth.[22]

Stretched over this vast geographical and temporal space, opera did drift somewhat from its initial conception as a Greek revival movement, gaining a popular identity in its own right that brought it thoroughly out from under the shadow of Attic tragedy. However, its Greek associations were never forgotten entirely—a far greater percentage of opera is based on ancient myth than the equivalent percentage of spoken drama in any national context,[23] and the 'return to Greece' aesthetic underlies many of the reform movements advocated by opera critics and artists.[24] We turn, now, to one of these specifically backward-looking, classical reform movements within opera's long history: the *"retour à l'Antique"* [return to Antiquity][25] that arose in the context of the French *tragédie en musique* in the second half of the eighteenth century. Born of the marriage between the neoclassical tradition in French spoken theater and an attempt to bring opera back into line with the Greek-inspired vision of

[22]For a brief summary of this debate, see Helen M. Greenwald, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[23]In fact, several treatises that wrestle with the problem of verisimilitude in opera make the claim that mythical figures constitute the only appropriate subject matter for opera, as the people who populate the heroic past are the only ones who do not seem laughable when they attempt to speak in heightened modes like poetry and song. See especially Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (Livorno: Per Marco Coltellini, 1763). For an overview of this debate, see Thomas Betzwieser, "Verisimilitude," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[24]The three most well-known examples being the reform movements of the Florentine Camarata, Gluck, and Wagner in the sixteenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries respectively. For explorations of each of these reform movements and their relationship to the classical heritage, see Sternfeld, *The Birth of Opera*; Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*; and M. Owen Lee, *Athena Sings: Wagner and the Greeks* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[25]This term, although not in use at the time, has become the common phrase to the describe the movement by subsequent historians, much like the designations 'Rococo,' 'Gothic,' or even 'Classical.' While I acknowledge the problematics of using a term not current with the subjects themselves, this phrase serves as a useful shorthand for identifying the subset of artists and thinkers of the period under consideration here, who, like the pioneers of most artistic movements, were not organized and had no particular collective name for themselves.

the Florentine Camarata, this movement was sparked (in part) by the publication and

subsequent translation into French of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der

Kunst des Alterthums* (*History of the Art of Antiquity*) in 1764.[26] This exceedingly

popular work, written by a German archaeologist and promoting an idea of the

classical aesthetic as based in nobility, simplicity, balance, and grandeur, revived

interest in classicism in art across Europe.[27] In France, where the classical legacy of

tragic playwrights like Corneille and Racine was a point of national pride,

Winckelmann's popular text sparked a revival of interest in these authors and in the

classical tradition as a whole.[28] The branch of this classicizing movement which

touched on opera centered around two artistic problems: firstly, how to make the form

and music of opera more closely approach the simplicity and grandeur of

Winckelmann's classicism, and secondly, whether the French language and the works

of neoclassical French playwrights might adequately serve as the basis for such

operas. Both problems were debated in pamphlet form[29] before being answered

artistically by the German-born composer Gluck and his Parisian advocates and

artistic collaborators (including, most notably, his librettist Du Roullet). The resulting

operas were subsequently held up as the models of both true classicism and the future

of French opera by a group of ardent French supporters calling themselves

[26]Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (Baden-Baden and Strasbourg: Heitz, 1966).

[27]For a look at the content as well as the widespread and long-lasting influence of Winckelmann's work, see Katherine Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[28]On this revival of interest, see Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*.

[29]See Ibid.

"*Gluckistes*." Opposed to another artistic camp promoting the French operas of the Italian composer Piccinni, the *Gluckistes* advocated the stripping away of superfluous musical ornamentation and a simple dramatic style that would give opera the air of restraint, balance, and tragic gravitas that it supposedly had in its incarnation in the ancient world as Greek tragedy.[30] Putting the music at the service of the drama by encouraging composition that showcased the emotions of the characters rather than the virtuosity of the musicians, expanding the role and dramatic importance of the chorus in order to reclaim its ancient centrality, and streamlining plots to focus in on a single line of action without subplots were all aspects of the *retour à l'Antique* in opera as spearheaded by Gluck.

Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck, the composer of both of the operas examined in this chapter, was the face of the *retour à l'Antique* both through his music and his writings (virtually always co-authored with others) on the subject of classicism in opera.[31] A truly international figure, Gluck was Bavarian by birth but traveled constantly throughout Europe and wrote successful and influential operas in Milan, Venice, Savoy, England, Saxony, Austria, Denmark, Bohemia, Naples, Rome, Florence, and France. Although his early fame was established through the myriad operas that he wrote in the Italian tradition of *opera seria*—a sub-genre far removed from the Greek-inspired classicism of his Parisian operas[32]—in his late career he

[30]On the aesthetic values of the *Gluckistes* and their dispute with their opposing critical camp, the *Piccinnistes*, see Ibid.

[31]Most famously, the preface to his opera *Alceste*, written in collaboration with Ranieri de' Calzabigi. For this and a collection of other primary source treatises on Gluck's classicism as expressed through *Alceste*, see Michel Noiray et al., *Alceste* (Paris: Éditions Premières loges, 2010).

[32]On the conventions of *opera seria* during the time of Gluck's writing, which tended to employ plot-

engaged in the more experimental work of reforming opera, specifically by making it more closely resemble Greek tragedy. Beginning with his collaborations with the Italian librettist Ranieri de' Calzabigi in Vienna, Gluck wrote both operas and treatises intended to strip the genre of musical ornamentation, creating a marriage of music and poetry in which the music would support the words and passions of the libretto rather than express the virtuousity of composers and musicians.[33] This particular aspect of operatic reform was defended by appeal to the belief that such a marriage of words and music had been achieved by the ancients; and indeed, the use of the word 'simplicity' and related terms to describe the resulting reform operas put Gluck's style very much in line with new ideas about classicism as articulated by Winckelmann.[34] Moreover, Gluck, first with Calzabigi and then with Du Roullet, greatly expanded the role and importance of the operatic chorus, a move that was seen as a return to its central role in ancient Greek tragedy.[35] As a result, Gluck was hailed by his contemporaries[36] as the champion of neoclassicism, the reformer who was improving opera by returning it to its Greek roots. Writing of Gluck's first forays into this new kind of opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767), Gluck's librettist and

subplot structures and pull on Roman rather than Greek sources for their subjects, see Reinhard Strohm, *Dramma per Musica: Italian Opera Seria of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

[33]See the defense of this style contained in the preface to *Alceste:* Ranieri de Calzabigi and Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Alceste*, ed. Michel Noiray (Paris: Éditions Premières loges, 2010).

[34]For a collection of several treatises linking Gluck, simplicity, and classicism during the early period of his opera reforms, see Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents*.

[35]See Savage, "'Something like the Choruses of the Ancients': The *Coro Stabile* and the Chorus in European Opera, 1598-1782."

[36]For a collection of such statements about Gluck by his contemporaries, see François Lesure, *Querelle des gluckistes et des piccinnistes: texte des pamphlets* (Genève: Minkoff, 1984).

collaborator Calzabigi claimed that,

> *. . . onde ridotti alla contestura delle tragedie greche hanno il*
>
> *privilegio d'eccitare il terrore e la compassione e di agir sull'anima al*
>
> *pari d'una tragedia declamata.*
>
> [Reduced to the form of Greek tragedy, the drama has the power to
>
> arouse pity and terror, and to act upon the soul to the same degree as
>
> spoken tragedy does.][37]

This assertion, drawing upon the same Aristotelian definitions of tragedy as the
neoclassical spoken theater,[38] differentiates Gluck from other opera composers by his
ability to bring a Greek conception of dramatic aims and form back into the opera, to
"reduce" opera to its former Greek simplicity.[39] As in the case of the Florentine

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[37]Ranieri de'Calzabigi, letter to Prince Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, Vienna, 6 March 1767, published in
Vladimir Helfert, "Dosud Neznámý dopis Ran. Calsabigiho z r. 1767," in *Musikologie*, ed.
Vladimir Helfert (Prague and Brno, Czech Republic: MelPa, 1938), 117. The translation given
here comes from Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents*: 79-
80.

[38]One of the central assertions of Aristotle's *Poetics* is that the purpose of tragedy is to arouse pity and
terror in the audience; this idea was retained and heavily commented upon throughout virtually all
forms of neoclassicism and tragic revival. See Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Aristotle: Poetics, Longinus:
On the Sublime, Demetrius: On Style*, ed. Stephen Halliwell, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge,
Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995). On the influence of this assertion on early modern
neoclassic dramatic theory, see Marvin A. Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and
Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[39] Clazabigi himself paints this "reduction" as consisting in the stripping away of "superfluous
ornamentation" from the music—that is, not including musical passages meant to show off the
virtuosity of composer, singers, and musicians, but rather creating music that serves exclusively to
support the words and tell the story (see de'Calzabigi, letter to Prince Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, in
Helfert, "Dosud Neznámý dopis Ran. Calsabigiho z r. 1767," in *Musikologie*, 117). Later
commentators, however, have pointed primarily to Gluck's reintroduction of the *coro stabile,* a
consistent chorus that participates in the action and remains throughout the opera, as Gluck's most
'Greek' reform. Prior to Gluck's reforms, common practice in opera changed both settings and
choral identities with every new act, the chorus alternately representing several new sets of people
(townsfolk, courtiers, demons, etc.) who were thereby limited in their contributions to the plot. The
choruses of the original Greek tragedies, on the other hand, maintained a consistent identity and
presence throughout the play, and contributed directly to the action. One of Gluck's main reforms
centered around recreating this type of chorus. While Gluck continued to use multiple choruses

Camarata some two hundred years prior, the rhetoric surrounding the newer, better future of opera is couched in terms of a more perfect recapturing of the past, a deeper connection with the revered ancient theater. Nearly two hundred years after its inception, opera's ideal form was still held to be that which most closely approximated ancient Greek tragedy.

Yet there is one obvious disconnect in these far-flung attempts by both the Florentine Camarata and the *retour à l'Antique* to make opera into a revival of fifth-century Athenian tragedy: the libretto. Every other element in an opera, even one that strives to be as perfect a re-creation of Greek tragedy as possible, must ultimately be made from scratch. No scenery, costumes, music,[40] or choreography survives from ancient Greece, so new ones must be built, sewn, composed, and choreographed accordingly. The *texts* of the ancient tragedies, however, had not only survived but were readily available, widely printed, translated into every European language (sometimes even in verse), and were moreover considered to literally *be* librettos, since Greek tragedies were believed to have been wholly sung.[41] Yet before the

throughout his career, the operas he wrote with and after Calzabigi tended to feature at least one chorus that reappeared in several acts and had a direct and sustained influence on the action. On this phenomenon and Gluck's contributions to it, see Savage, "'Something like the Choruses of the Ancients'."

[40]A caveat to this statement: we, in the present day, do have a few bars of Euripides's *Orestes* that were preserved on papyrus and discovered in 1892 (see Thomas J. Mathiesen, Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), http://books.google.com/books?id=Td5odzctae8C&pg=PA116&dq=P.Wien+G2315#v=onepage&q=P.Wien%20G2315&f=false. 116). However, since the composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had no music to go on whatsoever, this statement is true for the context in which I am writing.

[41] For primary sources attesting this belief, see Francesco Patrizi, *Della poetica di Francesco Patrici, la deca disputata: Nella quale, e per istoria, é per ragioni, e per autorità de' grandi antichi, si mostra la falsità delle più credute vere opinioni, che di poetica, à dì nostri vanno intorno. Et vi è aggiunto il Trimerone del medesimo, in risposta alle oppositioni fatte dal signor Torqvato Tasso al*

nineteenth century, no operatic composer set an unadapted Greek tragedy to music for public performance.[42] The librettos of the earliest Italian operas, those early forays into the re-creation of Greek tragedy, were based on ancient subject matter, but tended to be new stage versions of the myths of Ovid and other Roman storytellers whose works had never been written for the stage in the first place.[43] These plays were page-to-stage adaptations, used despite the ready availability of mythical works already written for the stage and, more specifically, for a singing theater. Reinhard Strohm has attributed this choice to the preference among opera theorists of the Italian Renaissance for pastoral tragicomedy, and notes that even among the Ovidian myths, endings were changed to make every opera end happily in accordance with the operatic tradition of the *lieto fine*, or obligatory happy ending (a remarkably enduring convention that dominated the writing of librettos from the birth of opera right through the end of the eighteenth century).[44] The practice of the *lieto fine*, and the

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parer suo scritto in diffesa dell'Ariosto (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, stampator ducale, 1586); and the preface to Ottavio Rinuccini and Jacopo Peri, *L'Euridice d'Ottavio Rinuccini: rappresentata nello sponsalitio della christianiss, Regina di Francia, e di Navarra* (Fiorenza: Cosimo Giunti, 1600). For a modern look at this misconception and its effects, see Burian, "Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: The Renaissance to the Present."

[42] I do not, here, count the 1585 *Oedipus* performed at the Teatro Olimpico, because in that case only the choruses were set to music while the rest of the play was spoken; see Senici, "Genre." For an exploration of the schism between the performance of Greek tragedy in the nineteenth century and the dominant adaptive tradition prior, see Fiona Macintosh, "Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Productions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling, *Cambridge Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[43] On this phenomenon, see Lattarico, "Myth and Derision"; and Wendy Heller, "Daphne's Dilemma: Desire as Metamorphosis in Early Modern Opera," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

[44] Reinhard Strohm, "Iphigenia's Curious *Ménage à Trois* in Myth, Drama, and Opera," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012). Most notoriously changed was the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, likely *the* most popular subject of early opera due to its featuring of a musician as the protagonist. In virtually every known Italian opera on the subject, Orpheus saves Eurydice and lives happily ever after, in stark contrast to the ancient ending where he sinks into despair over the loss of her and

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preference within early opera for tragicomedy, were both driven by financial

pressures in the early commercial opera houses, which—in order to remain

financially viable—had to appeal to a wide audience made up of both upper- and

lower-class attendees.[45] Because tragedy (featuring the sufferings of noble and heroic

protagonists) was assumed to appeal primarily to the aristocracy while comedy

(focusing on the common man) was believed to be more attractive to the working

class, the hybrid genre of pastoral tragicomedy (featuring the interaction of gods and

heroes with lowly shepherds) was favored in order to draw the largest and most

diverse paying audiences. The *lieto fine*, developed in association with this genre, was

a crowd-pleaser, and allowed the further blending of tragic and comic conventions as

tragicomedies often subjected their protagonists to severe trials but had everything

turn out well in the end.[46] Under such financial pressure to appeal to a wide audience,

then, the adaptors of the early Italian operas were more likely to turn to short story

collections, which they could expand upon and tailor to this new genre accordingly,

than to existing tragic scripts which were too exclusive in their appeal to the upper

classes. This explanation, however, while sound, cannot wholly account for the

reluctance to stage Greek tragedy—and especially the Iphigenia tragedies—as opera.

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allows himself to be dismembered by angry Maenads. See the comparative analysis of Orpheus tales and their endings in Vincent Giroud, "Oft-Told Tales," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). On the importance of the *lieto fine* to the operatic tradition, see Sternfeld, *The Birth of Opera*.

[45] On the specific demands to which opera was subjected when it first became a commercial enterprise in Venice, see Tim Carter, "What is Opera?," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Rosand, "Venice: The Cradle of (Operatic) Convention."

[46] On the conventions of early modern Tragicomedy in this and other national contexts, see Subha Mukherji and Raphael Lyne, eds., *Early Modern Tragicomedy*, Studies in Renaissance Literature, vol 22 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

Despite focusing on nobles, many Greek tragedies did include commoners and slaves as characters as well as chorus members, *Iphigenia in Aulis* among them, which features a slave of Clytemnestra's as a key player and catalyst for much of the play's action.[47] Additionally, while changing the ending to a short story as adapted for the stage is certainly less audacious than changing the ending to a play already widely recognized as a masterwork of theater, there are some Greek tragedies that end happily even in their original versions, Euripides's Iphigenia plays being a case in point.[48] Even these tragedies, however, did not serve as the basis for opera until the delayed acceptance of opera in France, where the neoclassical tradition the French had been cultivating in spoken theater met and merged with the operatic tradition imported from Italy. It was in France that Greek tragedies proper first began to make their way onto the operatic stage,[49] and from there they spread to the other parts of Europe that imported or imitated French opera.[50] Still, the Greek tragedies continued

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[47] See Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in which Clytemnestra's slave, despite being named merely "πρέσβης" [old man], serves from the very first scene as the principal opponent of the sacrifice. This character and his role in the action are retained in virtually all modern adaptations of the story, though he is given different proper names in different versions.

[48] And indeed, this is one explanation that may be offered for the popularity of both plays during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Greek tragedies that end happily, audiences could experience the grandeur of the ancients, the pathos of tragedy, and the sentimentalism of a happy ending all rolled into one. Such a combination exerts a powerful attraction, counterbalenced by the repulsion toward certain elements of the plots that caused even such seemingly suitable Greek tragedies to be ceaselessly adapted before public performance. On the fortuitous pairing of the Iphigenia myths with the tradition of the *lieto fine* and its possible impact on their popularity, see both Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[49] See the discussion in Giroud on the role of French neoclassicism in ushering adaptations of actual Greek tragedies onto the stage, Giroud, "Oft-Told Tales."

[50] Most notably Germany. On the influence of French neoclassicism in Germany, see Gloria Flaherty, *Opera in the Development of German Critical Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). On Gluck's role in this, specifically, see Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1991).

to be tacitly barred from *direct* access to the stage; although based on the plots and even the dramatic structures of specific Athenian plays, these French operas on ancient themes were always rewritten. In fact, the plots of many tragedies (including the two analyzed here) passed through several adaptive steps: Greek tragedy → French translation → adapted spoken drama → opera libretto. Adaptation, in this case, is superfluous; while it is easy to grasp the necessity of translating an ancient Greek play into the vernacular before presenting it to a French-speaking audience, and the lack of surviving ancient music makes the composition of new music also necessary, the rewriting of the libretto—and certainly the basing of that libretto on a neoclassical rather than a classical direct model—is wholly unnecessary. So why rewrite it? What can account for the regular inclusion of the last two steps in this adaptive chain?

In the analyses that follow, I account for this discrepancy by examining the librettos of two French operas based on the Iphigenia plays that were written during a moment of operatic reform specifically predicated on a return to the spirit of the ancients. Both were composed by Gluck in collaboration with French librettists for presentation in Paris, both were popular successes, and both are explicitly based on neoclassical spoken dramas rather than directly on their respective Euripidean source plays. The first libretto, a version of *Iphigenia in Aulis* (*Iphigénie en Aulide*) written by François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet in 1774, was widely publicized as a musical version of Jean Racine's *Iphigénie*, a play that still enjoyed popular acclaim as well as literary canonization nearly a century after its writing. The second libretto,

an *Iphigenia in Tauris* (*Iphigénie en Tauride*) started by Du Roullet and either

finished or completely rewritten by Nicolas-François Guillard[51] in 1779, was based

on the spoken drama by Claude Guymond De La Touche, a play that was twenty

years old at the time but had received a successful revival in Paris more recently.

Through a close examination of the intertextual interplay between these librettos,

their acknowledged neoclassical source texts, and their Euripidean textual

'grandparents,' I will demonstrate that the basing of a libretto on a neoclassical spoken

drama allowed an opera to appear as a more 'authentic' return to the ancient theater by

comparison with its immediate predecessor (the neoclassical play), while

simultaneously sidestepping any problematic elements in the truly authentic ancient

texts. The complex arrangement of similarities and differences between these linked

operas, their spoken predecessors, and their Greek ancestors can help us to identify

the mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion that cause the re-presentation of the

cultural ancestor to first be filtered through a more familiar, comforting, and

unambiguous adaptive lens.

Gluck and Du Roullet's *Iphigénie en Aulide*

Iphigénie en Aulide, the first opera Gluck ever premiered in Paris,[52] was the

product of a collaboration between himself and François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du

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[51]The historical record is unclear as to whether the Du Roullet passed on his partially completed work to Guillard or simply handed off to him the task of writing an Iphigenia in Tauris libretto for Gluck. See the preserved correspondence on this topic in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents*.

[52]Gluck already had quite a good reputation in France before the opening of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, but from Paris revivals of operas that had been written for other European courts and cities, particularly Austria and the Italian states. See Ibid.

Roullet, a diplomat who was working at the Austrian embassy in France at the time that he and Gluck met, and who went on to champion Gluck's music in France and to collaborate with him on several more operas.[53] This particular opera, which premiered at the Paris Opéra at the Palais-Royal, was preceded by a series of published letters between Gluck and De Roullet and between De Roullet and the director of the Paris Opéra, in which the participants hyped the coming work as a quintessentially French opera, the one that—by carefully crafting music specifically to suit the power and refinement of the French language—would prove French the equal to Italian in operatic beauty and poetic force.[54] That which was to make it quintessentially French was not only the music, but the libretto—specifically, a libretto created from the spoken play *Iphigénie*, in the eighteenth century still the most well-known and successful work of Jean Racine, arguably the most revered French playwright of all time.[55] In this pre-production marketing campaign, the genius of Racine as a national symbol is stressed so much that the librettist works diligently to erase all traces of his own work; in his letter to the director of the Paris Opéra Du Roullet (speaking of himself in the third person) writes the following:

> *L'auteur de ce poëme . . . s'est fait un devoir de se servir des pensées*

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[53]These two, at least, are the acknowledged authors. As with all the works discussed here, there are a plethora of unacknowledged authors who also contributed to the work. On the interventions of the singers and of Maria Anna von Gluck in the rehearsal process and the eventual shape of the opera, see Ibid. On Du Roullet as Gluck's primary champion in France, see Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*.

[54]See the reproduction of Du Roullet's "*Lettre à M. D., un des directeurs de l'Opéra de Paris*," in Jacques-Gabriel Prod'homme, Écrits de musiciens (XVe-XVIIIe siècles), (Paris: Mercure de France, 1912), http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015007614129;view=1up;seq=11.

[55]On the superlative popularity of Racine's *Iphigénie* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see John Cairncross, "Introduction to *Iphigenia*," in *Jean Racine: Iphigenia; Phaedra; Athaliah*, ed. John Cairncross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 33.

& même des vers de Racine, lorsque le genre, quoique diffèrent, l'a pu

permettre. Ces vers ont été enchâssés avec assez d'art, pour qu'on ne

puisse pas appercevoir trop de disparate dans la totalité du style de

l'ouvrage. Le sujet d'Iphigénie en Aulide m'a paru d'autant mieux

choisi, que l'auteur, en suivant Racine, autant qu'il a été possible, s'est

assuré de l'effet de son ouvrage, & que, par la certitude du succès, il

est amplement dédommagé de ce qu'il peut perdre du côté de l'amour-

propre.

[The author of this poem . . . has made it his duty to use the thoughts

and even the verses of Racine, when the genre, however different, was

able to permit it. These verses have been inserted with such art that

one cannot perceive too much contrast in the complete style of the

work. The subject of Iphigenia in Aulis appeared to me particularly

well chosen in that the author, by following Racine, insofar as it was

possible, is assured of the effect of his work, and that, by the certainty

of success, he is amply compensated for that which he may lose in the

cost to self-esteem.][56]

This marketing angle's focus on the French aspects of the opera almost to the

exclusion by omission of the Greek contribution is misleading in two ways:

musically, it is undermined by opera's generic alignment with Greek tragedy[57] and by

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[56]François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet, Vienna, 1 August 1772, published as "*Lettre à M. D., un des directeurs de l'Opéra de Paris,*" *Mercure de France*, October 1772, 169-74. Reproduced in Prod'homme, *Écrits de musiciens (XVe-XVIIIe siècles)*. 391.

[57]Robert C. Ketterer explores the ways in which this generic alignment was undermined in practice by

Gluck's identity as the composer *par excellence* of antiquarian reform. Textually, *Iphigénie en Aulide* is manifestly not simply a musical setting of Racine's *Iphigénie*, as Du Roullet seems to imply. Although *Iphigénie* was written in verse and could easily have been set to music, Du Roullet altered it substantially—making it more 'operatic' in several respects—in order to arrive at his libretto, alterations that had the effect of drawing it closer to the Euripidean source text than its incarnation in Racine. Ultimately, the libretto that arose was neither Euripides nor Racine set to music, but a blend of the two in which vestiges of Racine's text are woven into a Hellenized—but not quite Greek—whole. These vestiges make for especially interesting objects of study because intradiegetically, given the alterations Du Roullet had to make to Racine's plot, they harm the internal coherence of the story. Extradiegetically, however, they serve as status-enhancing reminders of the work's relationship to the most popular play of France's most popular playwright, putting a thoroughly French mask on the face of this Hellenic story.

The most notable way in which *Iphigénie en Aulide* differs from *Iphigénie* is, ironically, the same way in which *Iphigénie* differed from its Greek predecessor: Eriphyle. While Racine touted his 'discovery' of Eriphyle, the "other Iphigenia," as his one major contribution to Euripides's work, she represents Du Roullet's major excision from his own Racine-based libretto. In accordance with common practices for turning a spoken play into a sung play, the librettist typically reduces the number

the persistent use of elements drawn from Roman comedy (including the *lieto fine*), yet persistently advocated in dramatic theory throughout the entirety of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Robert C. Ketterer, "Why Early Opera is Roman and Not Greek," in *Opera remade, 1700-1750*, ed. Charles William Dill (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

of major characters in order to focus attention on a few talented singers, increases the

number and influence of minor characters in the form of a polyphonic chorus, and

streamlines the action in order to devote the maximum amount of stage time to

reflective arias on the events of the plot, rather than moving straight from one plot

element to the next (the plot elements themselves routinely being revealed in the less

musically interesting form of recitative).[58] Eriphyle, as a redundant inverse double of

Iphigenia, is the most easily removed from the roster of main characters—

understandably, since she did not figure in the list of main characters in the story's

earliest known version anyway—and the removal of her scheming and plotting with

her confidante streamlines the action considerably. Interestingly, even the removal of

Eriphyle was touted more as an alteration of Racine than a return to Euripides:

> *L'auteur, ou, pour parler plus exactement, le rédacteur de ce poème*
>
> *me paroît avoir suivi Racine avec le plus scrupuleuse attention. C'est*
>
> *son Iphigénie même mis en opera. Pour parvenir à ce point, il a fallu*
>
> *qu'on abrégeât l'expression, & qu'on fit disparaître l'Episode de*
>
> *Eriphile. . . . L'intérêt néanmoins étoit altéré par ces changemens; il*
>
> *m'a paru même aussi entier que dans la tragédie de Racine.*
>
> [The author, or, to speak more exactly, the editor of this poem appears

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[58]On all of these practices, see Carter, "What is Opera?". Gluck, it should be noted, was one of the first
composers to take steps toward integrating aria and recitative, since creating music that strictly
reflects the requirements of the plot was a major focus of his reforms (see Darlow, *Dissonance in
the Republic of Letters*). Even his reform operas, however, cannot be said to fully exhibit the
principle of "continuous melody" that was later to be championed by Wagner; Gluck's operas are
still clearly divided between moments of plot advancement in recitative and reflections on
character emotions in aria. See my analysis below.

to me to have followed Racine with the most scrupulous attention. It is

his own *Iphigénie* put into opera. In order to reach this point, it was

necessary that the expression be abridged, and that the Episode of

Eriphyle disappear. . . . The interest was not diminished by these

changes; it seemed to me just as whole as in the tragedy of Racine.][59]

This way of thinking and speaking about the changes instituted by Du Roullet reveals

the extent to which Racine had overshadowed Euripides in the public imagination of

France. The removal of Eriphyle, an act that brings *Iphigénie en Aulide* structurally

closer to the Greek tragedy on which Racine's play is based, by the late eighteenth

century was viewed as novel.

Yet this move is more a return to the past than an innovation of the future,

Hellenizing the opera's portrayal of the divine: with no Eriphyle to be the guilty

object of divine justice, the capricious and pagan gods of ancient Greece return to the

stage. In the rewrite of *Iphigénie en Aulide* (used for the latter half of the opera's

initial run and its printed version[60])*,* Artemis/Diana appears at the end of the play in a

very Greek *dea ex machina* in order to say that she (and the other gods, who still

seem to express a unified will) has been won over by the nobility of the other

characters and changed her mind about the sacrifice.[61] It is this change of mind that is

[59]Du Roullet, "*Lettre à M. D.*" in Prod'homme, *Écrits de musiciens (XVe-XVIIIe siècles).* 389-90.
[60]For a comparison of the two versions of the libretto, see Julian Rushton, "'Royal Agamemnon': The Two Versions of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[61]François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet, Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes, (1907; Paris: Librarie Théatrale, 1907), https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemVersionId=26543. 43.

particularly novel in Gluck and Du Roullet's version, and also particularly shocking

from an eighteenth-century point of view. The Euripidean ending, where Artemis both

demands and takes Iphigenia (albeit alive, and with a deer substituted for the

sacrifice), could easily be read by Christian Europeans as analogous to the tests of

faith offered in Biblical stories like Abraham and Isaac[62] or that of Jephthah's

daughter.[63] Racine's ending, in which a misunderstanding caused Artemis/Diane's

demand on the life of a guilty individual to be read as a call for the sacrifice of an

innocent, also presents a picture of a constant divine will—it is human error of

interpretation that creates distress and confusion in the plot. In Gluck and Du Roullet,

however, Artemis/Diane becomes a capricious and whimsical goddess, whose cruelty

in demanding the death of an innocent is never explained or excused, and whose

decision to be merciful at the end may be good for the characters but also shows

inconstancy and a lack of omniscience ill becoming a stand-in for God. This

representation of the divine is neither the 'life to the good, death to the bad' cosmic

justice of Racine's world,[64] nor a variation on the Biblical faith tests that gave us the

story of Abraham and Isaac, but the arbitrary whim of a truly pagan, ancient goddess

who may toy with human life as she pleases without any recourse to a larger plan.

This portrayal of Artemis is remarkably Greek, even as it deviates from Euripides: the

Greek gods, as personifications of natural forces with real, life-and-death

[62]Genesis 22:1-19. See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above on the reading of both this story and
    Iphigenia's as faith tests.
[63]Judges 11:30-39. This story was routinely linked to Iphigenia from the Middle Ages onward. See the
    exploration in Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice*.
[64]See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

consequences for ancient peoples, were frequently portrayed both as changeable and as having little regard for human life, which they play with and throw away at will.[65] With the removal of both Eriphyle and the deer substitution she replaced, Gluck and Du Roullet have invited a cruel and arbitrary (and pagan) divine figure onto the stage.

Where the removal of Eriphyle becomes truly strange, however, is not in her disappearance from the action but in the retention of elements that Racine included largely to explain and bolster his Eriphyle plot: specifically, the use of the figure of Achilles. The example that best encapsulates this tendency toward the vestigial retention of Eriphyle-based plot elements is the inclusion of Achilles's military expedition to Lesbos. Surviving only in summaries based on ancient works that have since been lost, Achilles's conquest of the island of Lesbos was completely absent from Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, as well it should have been—in ancient sources, the sacking of Lesbos was a part of the fighting that happened *during* the Trojan war, not anterior to it.[66] Racine, however, seeing an opportunity to get his extra antagonist into the action through Achilles's possession of slave women from Lesbos,[67] moved

[65]On the cosmology of Greek religion and the relation of gods to humans within it, see Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005).

[66]The references to the sacking of Lesbos in Homer's *Iliad* have the spoils of the expedition shared between the Greek commanders, implying that the conquest of this island was considered part of the unified war effort and must therefore have taken place after the Greek army had assembled. See Homer *Iliad* 20.92, 21.86-7. Additionally, any glance at a map of the Aegean would tell you that any wind preventing an army from sailing to Troy would also prevent one from sailing to Lesbos, as the two locations are geographically neighbors. However, because both Racine and Du Roullet were writing before Heinrich Schliemann's discovery of the location of Troy in 1868, they might not necessarily have assumed Troy to have been on the Western coast of Turkey, and thus would have been unable to make this connection.

[67]It may be worth remembering here that both ancient Greece and France through the 1790s were slave-holding societies. While the introduction of slavery as a convenient plot device may seem especially shocking or disturbing to us, it would not have been for the (free, possibly slave-owning) audiences in either society under scrutiny here.

the expedition up, making it antedate the episode at Aulis. In fact, this innovation was one of the many that Racine used to triumphantly tout his fidelity to the ancients even as he actively worked to change their stories:

> *Le voyage d'Achille à Lesbos, dont ce héros se rend maître, et d'où il enleve Eriphile avant que de venir en Aulide, n'est pas non plus sans fondement. Euphorion de Chalcide, poëte très connu parmi les anciens, et dont Virgile (*Eglog. 10*) et Quintilien (*Instit. l. 10*) font une mention honorable, parloit de ce voyage de Lesbos. Il disoit dans un de ses poëmes, au rapport de Parthénius, qu'Achille avoit fait la conquête de cette isle avant que de joindre l'armée des Grecs, et qu'il y avoit même trouvé une princesse qui s'étoit éprise d'amour pour lui.* [The voyage of Achilles to Lesbos, of which this hero rendered himself master, and from where he took Eriphyle before coming to Aulis, is also not without foundation. Euphorion of Chalcis, a poet very well known among the ancients, and of whom Virgil (*Eglog. 10*) and Quintilian (*Instit. l. 10*) make honorable mention, spoke of this voyage to Lesbos. He said in one of his poems, by the report of Parthenius, that Achilles had made conquest of this island before joining the army of the Greeks, and that he had in this very place found a princess who was besotted with love for him.][68]

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[68]Jean Racine, "Préface de l'auteur à *Iphigénie*," in *Oeuvres de Jean Racine*, ed. M. Luneau De Boisjermain, *Nabu Public Domain Reprints* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Louis Cellot, 1768), 8.

Characteristically, Racine neglected to mention that Achilles had this princess stoned to death upon conquering the island.[69] Once again, Racine's selective use of details from the ancients serves as a sleight-of-hand to make his innovations seem like reappropriations. Moving from Racine to his operatic adapters, we see disjuncture in the decisions about which of his innovations to conserve and which to exclude. As the acknowledged reason for the military expedition to Lesbos was to get Eriphyle into the plot, there is no logical reason to retain it in a version of the story that no longer includes Eriphyle. Yet Achilles's conquest of Lesbos provides one brief and somewhat disturbing (from a modern standpoint) episode in the operatic version's preparations for the wedding of Achilles and Iphigenia:

> *ESCLAVES LESBIENNES*
>
> *Les filles de Lesbos viennent vous faire entendre,*
>
> *Par l'ordre du vainqueur, leurs suppliantes voix.*
>
> *UNE ESCLAVE*
>
> *Il combattait pour nous; et ses premiers exploits*
>
> *Ont réduit ma patrie en cendre.*
>
> *LES ESCLAVES*
>
> *Vous tarirez les pleurs qu'il nous a fait répandre. [sic]*
>
> *En daignant nous donner des lois, [sic]*

[69]Parthenius Ἐρωτικὰ Παθήματα *[Sufferings in Love]* 21. The English translation of the title I have given here is the one used by J. L. Lightfoot in his English translation of the text; however, despite the traditional euphemistic English translation of "love" for the Greek ἔρως and its various derivations, "Sufferings in Lust" would be more accurate. For a full translation of the episode on Achilles's conquest of Lesbos, see J. L. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea: The Poetical Fragments and the Ἐρωτικὰ Παθήματα*, trans. J. L. Lightfoot (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). 346-49.

[LESBIAN SLAVES:

The daughters of Lesbos come to make known to you,

By the order of the vanquisher, their suppliant voices.

A SLAVE:

He fought for us; and his first exploits

Have reduced my country to cinders.

THE SLAVES:

You will dry the tears which he made us scatter. *[sic]*

In condescending to give laws to us, *[sic]*][70]

Aside from serving as the mouthpiece for a weirdly misplaced piece of colonial propaganda, what is the purpose of this moment in the context of the opera? If a chorus of female voices was needed to enhance the musical appeal of this scene, one was readily available in the form of the women of Iphigenia's train, who have already appeared several times earlier in the opera starting with Act I, scene v. It certainly does not serve to make Achilles seem more heroic, because despite underscoring his military prowess it also highlights his cruelty to these women at a moment that should be about his perfect suitability as a husband for Iphigenia. In Racine, the Lesbian slave (Eriphyle) is used as a foil to enhance Iphigenia's kindness—she asks Achilles to free her as a wedding gift,[71] and meets all of Eriphyle's cruelty with forgiveness and renewed offers of friendship.[72] Here, Du Roullet appears to be trying to give the

[70]Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*. 26.
[71]See Act III, scene iv of Racine, "Iphigénie," 44-45.
[72]See my discussion of this in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

chorus of Lesbian slave women a similar function by having them say that Iphigenia will dry their tears—but the attempt is half-hearted at best, since the way in which she will do so is not by freeing them, but by ruling them, making Iphigenia not a pillar of Christian charity but a colonizer. On a second look, it appears that the sole utility of this reference to Achilles's conquest of Lesbos is to remind the audience of Racine's version of the story—it has no real intradiegetic function in the plot.

The respective roles of Achilles and Clytemnestra, as these two characters play off of one another in the three versions that form this particular adaptive chain, reveal a similarly complex intertextual interplay. In Euripides's version of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Clytemnestra plays a far greater role than she does in any modern adaptation of the story. The Greek *Iphigenia in Aulis* is functionally a series of rhetorical contests between Agamemnon and other characters over the fate of Iphigenia, with Clytemnestra as the final and most powerful antagonist. In this version, Achilles serves as little more than a pretext for Clytemnestra to make impassioned speeches; the scene where she supplicates him to save her daughter's life is one of the more emotionally powerful moments in the play, and it is retained by both Racine and Du Roullet.[73] Yet on either side of this retained scene, both Achilles and Clytemnestra are wildly different in their modern forms than they are in their ancient ones. The ancient Achilles was pointedly *not* in love with Iphigenia, nor she with him—he became an interested party only because his pride was wounded by being used for the plot that

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[73]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 900-16; Act III, scene v in Racine, "Iphigénie," 46-48; and Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*. 28-29.

lured Iphigenia to Aulis without his knowledge. His actual utility to the action of the play beyond the supplication scene is virtually nil, as he does not ultimately fight Agamemnon. The ancient Clytemnestra, on the other hand, goes on from the supplication scene to confront Agamemnon in a truly bombastic encounter in which she upbraids him for murdering her first husband and child in addition to, shortly, their own daughter:

> πρῶτον μέν, ἵνα σοι πρῶτα τοῦτ' ὀνειδίσω,
>
> ἔγημας ἄκουσάν με κἄλαβες βίᾳ,
>
> τὸν πρόσθεν ἄνδρα Τάνταλον κατακτανών·
>
> βρέφος τε τοὐμὸν σῷ προσούρισας πάλῳ,
>
> μαστῶν βιαίως τῶν ἐμῶν ἀποσπάσας.
>
> . . . .
>
> οὗ σοι καταλλαχθεῖσα
>
> . . . .
>
> τίκτω δ' ἐπὶ τρισὶ παρθένοισι παῖδά σοι
>
> τόνδ'· ὧν μιᾶς σὺ τλημόνως μ' ἀποστερεῖς.
>
> . . . .
>
> εἶέν· σὺ θύσεις παῖδα· τίνας εὐχὰς ἐρεῖς;
>
> τί σοι κατεύξῃ τἀγαθόν, σφάζων τέκνον;
>
> νόστον πονηρόν, οἴκοθέν γ' αἰσχρῶς ἰών;
>
> [Firstly, in order that I might reproach you with this first of all things,
>
> you married me unwillingly and grasped me by force, having killed

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my former husband Tantalus; and my newborn you swung to dash

upon the ground, having forcefully torn him from my breast. . . . When

I became reconciled to you . . . I bore children to you, this boy here in

addition to three girls; and by robbing me of one you make me to

suffer. . . . Proceed; you will sacrifice your child; what prayers will

you ask? What prayer for good things to come to you, having slit the

throat of a child? A painful homecoming, since you went shamefully

from your house?][74]

In this powerful scene, which of necessity I have sadly had to shorten here,

Clytemnestra creates a catalog of violence which includes both the past and future

murders that stain Agamemnon's house. Her speech is rife with foreshadowing of the

familiar conclusion to this saga, the chain of murder that will envelop Iphigenia,

Agamemnon, Cassandra, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, and (as perpetrators) Electra and

Orestes.[75] While some vestige of this confrontation remains in Racine, Du Roullet

excludes it entirely, having Clytemnestra and Agamemnon meet only during the

happy ending after the danger of such a confrontation has passed. Even in the retained

version of the confrontation in *Iphigénie*, however, Racine significantly draws the

teeth from it by excising the reference to Clytemnestra's earlier family as well as all

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[74]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1146-1208.

[75]Not to mention the often-neglected children of both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra from their outside liaisons; Pausanius holds that Cassandra bore twin sons to Agamemnon, who were both murdered along with their parents, and Hyginus tells of Orestes's murder of his half-brother Aletes, the son of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, in order to regain the throne of Mycenae at the end of his period of wandering in exile. See Pausanius, *Description of Greece* 2.16.6-7 and Hyginus *Fabulae* 122.

foreshadowing and threats pertaining to her future murder of Agamemnon.[76] These

excisions are important both because they make Clytemnestra's character palatable to

seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences, and because without them both

Racine and Du Roullet are able to portray the Argive royal family as fundamentally a

functional one torn apart by circumstance and easily reunited in the happy

dénouement. Although Iphigenia is not killed in the Greek tragedy from which the

modern playwrights draw their material, the ending—with its foreshadowing of the

bloody future of the royal house—is not exactly what one might call happy. The

weakening of Clytemnestra's character and plot function in the modern adaptations

thus serves to enable the happy endings required by both a neoclassical conception of

divine justice[77] and by an operatic tradition founded on pastoral and tragicomic

themes and largely governed by the *lieto fine*.[78]

This major shift in the characterization of Clytemnestra is not merely a plot

device—it also reflects a shift in the perception of women between fifth-century

Athens and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. Like the shift in the

perception of virginity between the two contexts discussed in Chapter Two above,

gendered ideas about strength, weakness, power, and the fact of male dominance in

both societies change as we move from examining the cultural output of an ancient

Mediterranean society to a modern Western European one. The seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries conceived of women as 'the weaker sex,' a group characterized

[76]See Act IV, scene iv of Racine, "Iphigénie," 59-61.
[77]See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.
[78]On the importance of the *lieto fine* (the obligatory happy ending) in early opera, see Sternfeld, *The Birth of Opera*; Giroud, "Oft-Told Tales"; and Senici, "Genre."

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particularly by traits like indecisiveness, easy surrender, and an impulse to seek

protection from the strong, male figures in their lives.[79] The subservience of women

to men, in this view about the supposedly inherent attributes of the two sexes,

emerges as 'naturally' as the subservience of children to adults; it was considered

fundamentally an immutable arrangement.[80] The ancient Greeks did not perceive the

subservience of women in this way at all. Contrary to the 'wilting flower' image given

off by portrayals of women in many modern plays, operas, and novels, the women of

ancient drama and myth were the possessors of terrifying and extremely dangerous

power. The realms of both magic and deception were thought to belong properly to

women,[81] and the vast majority of the monsters encountered in Greek myth are

female.[82] The female overthrow of male power, especially through violent means,

serves as the basis for many a horror story about the possibility of gender reversal in

myth and drama, even extending to some representations of the theme in comedy.[83]

Clytemnestra is, herself, something of a poster child for this conception of women as

[79]For a comprehensive look at European scientific, religious, and philosophical discourses on women and weakness (among other supposed attributes), see Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[80]Especially during the Enlightenment, logic stemming from assumptions about the inherent and differentiated natures of the two sexes was used to posit the gendered *status quo* as determined by nature and therefore unalterable. See the myriad examinations of this logic in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, eds., *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[81]For an especially thorough discussion of these associations, see Laura McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). Circe and Medea are two of the most famous mythic examples of magic-wielding women who use deception to entrap and destroy men.

[82]Sirens, harpies, Medusa, Scylla and Charybdis, and the monster-mother Echidna are just a few of the numerous famous female monsters to inhabit Greek myth.

[83]Myths about the Amazons, the story of the Danaids, and Aristophanes's comedy *Women in Assembly* all dramatize the cultural nightmare of gender reversal in some way.

dangerous and powerful if unleashed—In Orestes's defense of his own actions in

Euripides's *Orestes*, he cites the idea that if women are allowed to get away with

killing their husbands, there will soon be mass female rebellion and the overthrow of

male domination.[84] Ancient Greek attitudes toward the power dynamics of the two

sexes, then, was highly analogous to the power dynamics between master and slave,

always tinged with the threat of armed rebellion; if women had no official power, it

was because men had taken it away from them, not because they inherently lacked

power or strength. Men, the possessors of power, must be constantly vigilant lest

women, always looking for ways to regain their power, find an opportunity to engage

in violent revolt.

In the Greek version of the story in question here, Clytemnestra does just that.

Pushed to the breaking point by Agamemnon's abuse of her (his murders of her first

husband and son, his sacrifice of their daughter, his taking of a second wife in the

person of Cassandra), Clytemnestra's violent rebellion against Agamemnon is

portrayed in explicitly gendered terms in every surviving Greek tragedy on the topic;

her use of specifically female powers (magic, deception, seduction) in order to

appropriate male power (political rule, personal dominance over her subsequent

husband, Aegisthus) is a recurring theme in the *Oresteia* and the two *Electra*s.[85]

Clytemnestra's speech shaming Agamemnon in Euripides's version of *Iphigenia in*

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[84]Euripides *Orestes* lines 564-72.

[85]For several well-researched explorations of this topic, see the sections on Clytemnestra in Helene P.
    Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); McClure,
    Spoken Like a Woman; Victoria Wohl, *Intimate Commerce: Exchange, Gender, and Subjectivity in
    Greek Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); and Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other:
    Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Aulis[86] must be viewed in the context of this mythic tradition and these ancient Greek

conceptions of gender. Her enumerations of the wrongs she has suffered at his hands

are not merely references to the past, but contributions to the heavy foreshadowing of

this story's familiar future, the setup of a cause for the well-known—and

frightening—effect. There is real danger present in the words of the Greek

Clytemnestra.

By removing these elements, the playwrights of the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries erase Clytemnestra's past and its connection with her bloody

future; they swap out her very real death threats to Agamemnon for a focus on the

protective embrace of a self-sacrificing mother. In both Racine and Du Roullet,

Clytemnestra says that anyone who wishes to kill her daughter must kill her first,[87] a

redirection of the death threats that turns Clytemnestra from sword into shield. The

happy endings engineered by these two modern playwrights, in which Iphigenia is not

even removed to Tauris, foreclose the possibility of Clytemnestra murdering

Agamemnon in revenge for the loss of Iphigenia. Consequently, the modern

adaptations manage to decontextualize the *Iphigenia in Aulis* story from its larger

place in the mythic structure, a structure in which Clytemnestra, the wronged woman,

ultimately does the unthinkable by raising an ax to her husband and king,

appropriating the male role in the archaic Greek code of blood revenge.[88] This piece

[86]Which, remember, as Euripides's last work, undoubtedly postdated the tragedies referenced above.
[87]See Act IV, scene iv in Racine, "Iphigénie," 61; and Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*: 38, 41.
[88]On this code of blood revenge, see David D. Phillips, *Avengers of Blood: Homicide in Athenian Law and Custom from Draco to Demosthenes* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008). Briefly, the archaic code of blood revenge stipulates that the relatives of murder victims are obligated to kill the murderers of

of the puzzle, while of great importance in a culture where the fear of female

rebellion serves as a driving force for myth,[89] gels poorly with seventeenth- and

eighteenth-century French conceptions of women as a gentle, fragile, and

fundamentally moral sex.[90]

The image of woman as gentle, moral, and self-sacrificing wife and mother,

moreover, was a central part of the project of the European Englightenment, which

was in full swing at the time of Gluck's operas. Enlightenment treatises on the

'natural' differences between the sexes tended to take the ideology surrounding

maternal love as their starting point: woman's greater capacity for compassion and

tenderness, as evidenced by her all-consuming love for her children, marked her out

as more 'civilized' and less 'savage' than her male counterpart, to whom violence came

naturally as a corollary to his roles as hunter and protector.[91] Women, in this

Enlightenment gender scheme, were key players in the 'advancement' of humankind

toward civilization—social interaction with women was held to soften and civilize

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their family members. This obligation is further divided into male and female roles: men are to do the actual killing, while a woman's duty is to leverage her cries of grief and lamentation as motivation for the male relatives to track down and kill the murderer—functionally, her job is to talk her male relatives into it. By wielding the ax herself, Clytemnestra under this system is more guilty of gender transgression than of murder; had she, instead, talked Orestes or even her own father Tyndareus into doing the deed, she would not have been culpable under this system. See Zeitlin's exploration of this aspect of the story in Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*.

[89]Even more so, frankly, than the fear of actual slave rebellion did. The greater cultural horror placed upon female rebellion makes sense in the context of ancient Greece, where slaves could be freed by their masters as reward for good behavior and could also purchase their own freedom, but women were perpetual minors under male control, with no viable exit avenue *except* violent rebellion. See Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975).

[90]On the growing trend toward viewing women as fundamentally moral during the Enlightenment, see Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[91]For detailed analyses of these treatises (which were numerous and international in both origin and circulation), see Ibid. and Knott and Taylor, *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*.

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men, expanding their capacity for compassion and lessening their penchant for violence. The movement from savagery to civilization in Enlightenment thinking about progress happened, in part, as the result of a movement from regarding women as slaves to regarding them as the "friends and companions to the male sex."[92] In this conception of gender, violent female rebellion is never a possibility—in fact, female violence of any sort is completely foreclosed by the assumption that women's nature is centrally characterized by love and compassion. Female subordination, on the other hand, is a given; it takes harsher or gentler forms as a result of the degree of 'civilization' achieved by a particular society, but woman is only capable of being man's slave or his helpmeet, never his rebellious murderer or his tyrannical overlord.

As a result of this changed conception of gender, Clytemnestra is allowed to keep her identity as loving mother, trying to protect her offspring in the best tradition of Enlightenment maternal compassion, but any methods of protection she has that might spill over into female violence or threaten the internal structure of her otherwise-happy family are pulled from her toolbox. She may try to persuade Agamemnon to save their daughter, but she may not create an irreparable rift between them or challenge Agamemnon's authority. She can openly declare her willingness to

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[92]Silvia Sebastiani, "'Race', Women and Progress in the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 75. Although this particular English phrasing is obviously not lifted from French treatments of the subject, such theories about women's history and social roles were international in scope, certainly held in France as well as in Britain. For a closer study of these concepts as they appear in French texts, see Jenny Mander, "No Woman Is an Island: The Female Figure in French Enlightenment Anthropology," in *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

die for her daughter, but can make no claims about any willingness to kill for her. Her words may wheedle, cajole, and even shame, they can try to soften Agamemnon by reason or appeals to familial love, but they cannot threaten. This gentler Clytemnestra, detached from the rest of the mythic tradition (which proves her family to have no internal structure whatsoever), has far less dramatic interest or function in Racine and Du Roullet than she did in Euripides.

Yet despite the structural similarity of her role in both Racine and Du Roullet, the addition of Gluck's music actually has the result of greatly expanding Clytemnestra's importance in the operatic version relative to her position in Racine's spoken drama. Gluck gives nearly every one of the most musically interesting arias to Clytemnestra. When she and Iphigenia believe Achilles to be unfaithful, it is to Clytemnestra that Gluck gives the powerful aria of rage and indignation, while Iphigenia's parallel aria is sweet, sad, and slow.[93] After they learn of the plot to sacrifice Iphigenia, Clytemnestra enacts her familiar supplication of Achilles in the form of a virtuosic aria, while Iphigenia only delivers one-liners in recitative.[94] After Iphigenia leaves for the sacrifice, Clytemnestra sings her poetic and macabre vision of what will happen to her daughter, finishing with a desperate and vengeful prayer in aria that Jupiter destroy all the Greeks, one of the most striking pieces of music in the whole opera.[95] So notable was the role of Clytemnestra in this opera, in fact, that an anecdote about the rehearsals for the first production of *Iphigénie en Aulide* holds that

[93]Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*. 18-19.
[94]Ibid., 28-29.
[95]Ibid., 40.

Madeleine-Sophie Arnould, who was playing Iphigenia, complained to Gluck about

her comparative lack of arias, to which he replied, "*Pour chanter des grands airs . . .*

il faut savoir chanter." (In order to sing great arias . . . it is necessary to know how to

sing.)[96] This anecdote is interesting not only because it reveals the role that

performers and rehearsal process can play in shaping the ultimate form of the written

work, but also because it highlights the greater importance that Gluck and Du Roullet

placed on the character of Clytemnestra—after all, they could have cast the stronger

singer as Iphigenia and given the interesting arias to her, but chose instead to make

Iphigenia's signature music soft, sweet, and comparatively weak, reinforced by the

casting of Iphigenia as a soprano voice (associated with angelic softness) while

Clytemnestra is a mezzo-soprano. This choice reflects the seventeenth- and

eighteenth-century tendency to portray virgins as the most feminine (read: weak) of

women, in line with Racine's feminizing of Iphigenia's character.[97] Their addition of

powerful and fiery music to Clytemnestra's speeches, however, highlighting the

musical and dramatic power of the female voice at its most acrobatic, is in many ways

a move back towards the character arrangement of the ancient *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in

which the power of Clytemnestra is a major, and ominous, focus of the drama and

largely overshadows Iphigenia's contributions to the plot.

      Clytemnestra's character, then, shifts from central importance in Euripides, to

relative impotence in Racine, and then to a middling position in Gluck and Du

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[96]The original anecdote, written by Johann Christian von Mannlich, can be found in Henriette Weiss
    von Trostprugg, "Mémoires sur la musique à Paris à la fin du régne de Louis XV," *La Revue
    Musicale* 15(1934): 165.
[97]See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

Roullet, where the structure of the libretto gives her no more power than her Racinian counterpart but the music marks her as the female lead, the *prima donna*. *Iphigénie en Aulide*, far from being Racine's drama in music, is in many ways a return to a more 'classical' portrayal of a powerful Clytemnestra, if a substantially less violent—and consequently more eighteenth-century feminine—one. Opera, in this respect at least, offers a way back in for some of the more ideologically dangerous elements of ancient Greek tragedy through music. While the words of Du Roullet have tamed Clytemnestra just as thoroughly as Racine's did, Gluck's music gives us a glimpse of the dangerous, Euripidean Clytemnestra lurking behind her adaptational descendants.

Achilles, then, who has no function at all in Euripides other than to support Clytemnestra's character development, should logically have hardly any role in the modern adaptations which overtly downplay her (even if, like Gluck, they covertly enhance her through music). Instead, we find his part in the drama increased by Racine's addition of a love plot between him and Iphigenia—a plot which, in Racine's play, also served as the principle motivation for the antagonist Eriphyle. In Racine, Eriphyle's love for Achilles and jealousy of his betrothed, Iphigenia, causes her to reveal the prophecy that calls for Iphigenia's sacrifice, preventing an escape from Auils which Agamemnon had orchestrated for her.[98] This action both enables the tense *dénouement* at the altar and makes Eriphyle sufficiently guilty to be suitable for sacrifice at the end.[99] Achilles thus moves from prop for Clytemnestra's character in

[98]Act IV, scene xi into Act V, scene i in Racine, "Iphigénie," 68-69.
[99]See my discussion of the importance of guilt in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

Euripides to motivation for Eriphyle in Racine, in both cases advancing the plot

through the fact of his presence if not his direct actions. Du Roullet, despite largely

following Racine in his characterization of Clytemnestra and excising Eriphyle

entirely, retains both the character of Achilles and his love-plot with Iphigenia, to the

benefit of the music (which gains a prominent tenor voice in several scenes) but to the

detriment of the plot. Viewed from the perspective of dramatic structure, Achilles's

presence derails the action more often than it advances it. He first surfaces in the

opera when Agamemnon comes up with the idea of telling Iphigenia that Achilles has

been unfaithful in an effort to get her to leave Aulis before she can be sacrificed. This

particular use of Achilles serves as the pretext for Iphigenia to sing about her

heartbreak, then subsequently indulge in a lengthy love-duet with Achilles in which

he denies the charge and wins her back.[100] Musically speaking, this is a great

opportunity for Gluck to show off his skill as a composer. Dramatically, the scene

serves hardly any purpose whatsoever. Whereas in Racine, this lovers' quarrel and

subsequent reconciliation reveals the struggle between the various machinations of

Agamemnon and Eriphyle as both use deception to try to control the situation, in the

Eriphyle-less opera it has little relation to the main plot. Such a device could have

been used to demonstrate the lengths to which Agamemnon will go to save his

daughter; one can easily imagine an alternate version of the opera in which

Agamemnon sings a moving aria about how he must destroy his daughter's happiness

and break her heart in order to save her life—yet no such aria exists in Du Roullet's

[100]Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*. 19-22.

libretto. Instead, Iphigenia hears the lie about Achilles's infidelity from Clytemnestra, who heard it from Agamemnon offstage. Her heartbreak is short-lived, the dramatic stakes of it hardly set up before they are resolved, and both the conception and failure of this plot to get her out of Aulis get no stage time at all, making this episode seem to stand strangely outside the action of the main plot. Like the expedition to Lesbos, the love story of Iphigenia and Achilles feels more like a remnant of Racine than an element of *Iphigénie en Aulide,* a bit of plot strangely unmoored from the context that made it relevant in its previous incarnation. If this love story can be said to serve any dramatic purpose whatsoever in the opera, it might be in Achilles's daring rescue of Iphigenia from the altar at the end;[101] however, Diane shows up a few lines later to more effectively do the exact same thing, citing "*Les vertus de la fille et les pleurs de la mère*" (The virtues of the daughter and the tears of the mother),[102] yet notably not the protective fury of the lover, as reasons why the gods have changed their minds about the sacrifice. Even this small omission from the final speech of the *dea ex machina* reveals Du Roullet's lovestruck Achilles for what he is: a nod to Racine with no truly necessary function in the current plot.

In this blend of elements retained from Racine, excised from Racine, and brought back from ancient Greece, none better exemplifies Gluck's *bona fides* as the face of the *retour à l'Antique* than his celebrated use of the chorus. As in the case of Clytemnestra's characterization, music is the way back into the story for this most

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[101]Ibid., 41-43.
[102]Ibid., 43.

characteristic of ancient Greek elements. Disregarded as too unbelievable for the

spoken theater, the presence of a collective voice in the sung theater was a staple of

opera from the beginning, but it was in Gluck that contemporary critics believed the

chorus truly regained its ancient function as a character in its own right.[103] Prior to the

retour à l'Antique, in French opera choruses had been used to decorate the action both

musically and visually through song and dance, choral sections known as

divertissements breaking up the action with the presentation of light entertainments—

and in fact, these interludes were one of the elements for which French opera was

particularly famous.[104] Despite their centrality as a draw for audiences, however,

traditional operatic choruses in France largely limited themselves to commentary on

the main action, not direct involvement in it.[105] Part of the reforming impulse that

made Gluck the face of neoclassicism in opera was his expansion of the choral role

back out to a true voice of the people, with influence and impact on the action, and

nowhere is this more pronounced than in *Iphigénie en Aulide*. The presence of the

army at Aulis is a major driving force of the action in Euripides's tragedy—once

Iphigenia sets foot in Aulis, Agamemnon gives up on trying to save her, since he

[103]On Gluck's reforms with reference to the chorus, see Ryan Minor, "The Chorus," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). On contemporary reactions to these reforms, see Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*.

[104]See Savage, "'Something like the Choruses of the Ancients': The *Coro Stabile* and the Chorus in European Opera, 1598-1782"; Arnott, *An Introduction to the French Theatre*; and also Joyce Newman, *Jean-Baptiste de Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, Studies in Musicology (Umi Research Press, 1979).

[105]On this characteristic of pre-Gluckian French choruses, see Rebecca Harris-Warrick, "Lully's On-Stage Societies," in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher, and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Catherine Kintzler, "Representations of *Le Peuple* in French Opera, 1673-1764," in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher, and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

knows the army will have their sacrifice at any cost, including the lives of himself, his wife, and his other children.[106] In Racine, Eriphyle manages to block Iphigenia's escape from Aulis by telling the army about the prophecy that she must be sacrificed, causing them (offstage) to prevent her removal from Aulis.[107] In Gluck and Du Roullet, the army finally takes the stage, appearing *en masse* to sing of the prophecy, their desire for war, and their refusal to let the goddess be robbed of her victim.[108] Throughout the entire third act, in fact, the army is seen "*en tumulte*," [in an uproar] and repeatedly sings the following chant:

> *Non, non, nous ne suffrirons pas*
>
> *Qu'on enlève aux Dieux leur victime:*
>
> *Ils ont ordonné son trépas,*
>
> *Notre fureur est légitime.*
>
> [No, no, we will not suffer
>
> That the Gods be robbed of their victim:
>
> They have ordered her death,
>
> Our violence is legitimate.][109]

The repetition of this expression of bloodthirst throughout the whole of the act serves as a kind of musical heartbeat, a constant reminder of time, danger, and fear that allows neither the characters nor the audience to forget the very real threat of death held over Iphigenia by the zealous crowd. No longer allowed to be merely a rhetorical

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[106]Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* lines 1255-75.
[107]Act IV, scene xi into Act V, scene i in Racine, "Iphigénie," 68-69.
[108]Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*. 12-13, 34, 38, 41-44.
[109]Ibid., 34.

shield behind which Agamemnon hides, the mob mentality that makes Iphigenia's sacrifice inevitable is intrusively visible and audible, the implacable chorus a menacing presence with a palpable impact on the action and the music of the main plot. As it had been in Euripides (but not Racine), Iphigenia's sacrifice has been refigured as a case of a whole society offering up its young to death in the cause of war—virtue and vice, and their respective rewards, are no longer the main focus; instead, we see the resurfacing of a very Greek concern with the collective and with collective action.

Euripides's own chorus of Iphigenia's female attendants comes back as well, along with the aforementioned chorus of Lesbian slaves and a brand-new chorus of Thessalonians who serve to celebrate the Achilles-Iphigenia love plot and aid in Achilles's attempted rescue of Iphigenia at the end. Not limited to one chorus like Euripides, nor to a 'chorus' of individual confidantes like Racine, Gluck and Du Roullet are able to show the impact of the individual heroes on the collective—and of the collective on the heroes—at every turn. Beyond adding to the musical richness of the piece, these various choruses serve to emphasize the danger and the mob mentality of both religion and war that drove the *Iphigenia in Aulis* plot in its ancient Greek incarnation. While Racine's play was a drama of individual psychologies—the father torn between love and the obligations of public office, the daughter brave in the face of a horrible filial duty, the lover who puts personal happiness before national obligation, the jealous outsider driven by envy to revenge—Gluck and Du Roullet are able, through the use of the chorus, to bring the plot back to the very public and

collective context it had in the vastly more public and collective ancient theater.[110] In this more collective context, the drama shifts back toward its ancient incarnation as a story that is fundamentally about the lengths to which the mob will go to get what it wants. In a final chorus included in some versions of the score, Gluck and Du Roullet highlight the bloodshed and attendant glory that awaits the army in Troy now that their path is cleared, making the mob mentality theme apparent even in the midst of the 'happy' ending.[111]

Ultimately, Gluck and Du Roullet's opera belies its marketing as 'Racine in music' in two fundamental ways. First, elements in both libretto and music herald the return of Greek themes downplayed or dismissed in the spoken theater (the capricious gods of pagan religion, the powerful female, and the unstoppable force of the collective). Secondly, the opera belies its marketing by the excision of most of the elements that Racine himself heralded as his greatest innovations, and which gave his play internal coherence. Those bits of Racine that do make it into the opera seem forced, disconnected from the operatic plot, and more designed to showcase its connection with the famous playwright than to tell a coherent story. *Iphigénie en Aulide*, drifting more and more back toward Greek tragedy in form and substance, still makes a great show of being based on the neoclassical rather than the classical theater, inviting a comparison with Racine that cannot help but highlight its "return to

[110]On the public and collective nature of the ancient theater, see Paul Cartledge, "'Deep Plays': Theatre as Process in Greek Civic Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[111]Christoph Willibald Gluck and François Louis Gaud Lebland Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide* (San Bernardino, CA: ULAN Press, 2014; repr., 2014). 233-35.

Antiquity" even as the retained Racinian elements attempt to bolster its French credentials. This libretto, seemingly removed from Euripides by at least three adaptive steps, subtly circles back toward that first, Euripidean libretto known to us as *Iphigenia in Aulis.* Yet this is a *selective* closeness to Euripides; even this Hellenized version of the story cannot condone a cold-hearted Achilles, a murderous Clytemnestra, or a masculine Iphigenia—Racine's characters dominate a Greek landscape. As a revival of the Greek theater, opera seems both eager and reluctant to embrace its ancient ancestors, effectively controlling the tension between attraction and repulsion by re-Hellenizing the newer texts of the neoclassical spoken theater while keeping the scripts of the truly ancient Greek tragedy at arm's length.

Gluck and Guillard's *Iphigénie en Tauride*

Iphigénie en Tauride, presented just five years after Gluck and Du Roullet's Aulis opera, was another smash hit for Gluck among the Parisian public. Begun as another collaboration between Gluck and Du Roullet, the work on the libretto was handed over at some point to Nicolas-François Guillard, an up-and-coming librettist whose name appears without Du Roullet on the printed version of the opera. Du Roullet remained involved, however, handling the correspondence between Gluck and Guillard as they haggled over the contents of the libretto by letter.[112] *Iphigénie en Tauride* was "the greatest immediate success of any of Gluck's French operas,"[113] a

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[112]Gluck was in Vienna at the time, so the collaboration between music and libretto had to take place long-distance. Much of this correspondence has been preserved, and gives and interesting insight into the collaborative creative process that goes into the writing of an opera libretto. See Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents.*
[113]Ibid., 199.

testament both to the popularity of Iphigenia as a figure during this time and to the draw of a 'sequel' to his previous hit.

In an about-face from the earlier Iphigenia opera, the public discourse surrounding *Iphigénie en Tauride* adopted a distinctly Greek tone. Despite being explicitly based on the modern French spoken drama of De La Touche,[114] *Iphigénie en Tauride* was nearly always discussed in terms of its Hellenism and *retour à l'Antique* aesthetic; The *Journal de Paris*, in its announcement of the new opera, wrote that "*M.* Guillard, *qui a puisé son sujet chez les les Grecs, a suivi leur manière.*" [M. *Guillard*, who has set his subject among the Greeks, has followed their manner].[115] Gluck's music as well as the libretto was hailed as recapturing the spirit of Greece; the review of *Iphigénie en Tauride* chronicled in the *Memoires secrets*, after praising the opera, states that "*On ne peut qu'applaudir le Chevalier Gluck d'avoir trouvé ce secret de les anciens*" [One cannot help but applaud the Chevalier Gluck for having found the secret of the ancients].[116] Such rhetoric is right in line with contemporary praise of Gluck more generally, which adopts a similarly superlative tone in comparing Gluck's operas to ancient tragedies; the *Gluckiste* François Arnaud famously made the claim that:

> *Toutes les fois que je les* [Gluck's choruses] *entends je me vois rejeté*
>
> *au temps de l'ancienne Athènes, & crois assister aux représentations*

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[114]On De La Touche's spoken drama as the source for Gluck and Guillard's opera, see Mathieu François Pidanzat de Mairobert and Louis Petit de Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets pour servir a l'histoire de la république des lettres en France depuis M. DCC. LXII jusqu'a nos jours; ou journal d'un observateur*, 24 vols., vol. 14 (London: John Adamson, 1788). 106.

[115]Lesure, *Querelle des gluckistes et des piccinnistes: texte des pamphlets*: 427.

[116]Mairobert and Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 14: 58.

des Tragédies de Sophocle & d'Euripide.

[Every time that I hear them [Gluck's choruses] I can imagine myself thrown back to the time of ancient Athens, and I believe that I attend the performances of the Tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides.][117]

With so much discussion of Greece, especially around Gluck's second Iphigenia opera, the French contribution virtually always falls by the wayside, a dramatic shift in emphasis from the Racine-oriented rhetoric of Gluck's first Parisian opera. This exaggeration of the resemblance between the operatic *Iphigénie en Tauride* and its Greek predecessor, however, like the 'Racine in music' marketing, is revealed to be a drastic oversimplification by any close reading of the libretto. Like *Iphigénie en Aulide, Iphigénie en Tauride* blends influences from its direct source (De La Touche's spoken *Iphigénie en Tauride*), its indirect source (Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*) and its own innovations. Like the other modern adaptations of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the operatic *Iphigénie en Tauride* is more substantially altered from its Greek source in the events and focus of the plot than is any version of *Iphigenia in Aulis*. The assertion that this opera is a true revival of Euripides's Tauris tragedy despite its obvious structural affiliations with the neoclassical theater evinces an unwillingness to engage with the Greek tragedy as it is, but rather as the eighteenth-century commentators believe it should have been. The appearance of authenticity is foregrounded here, even as Euripides's own tragedy is kept from the stage by several removes.

[117]Lesure, *Querelle des gluckistes et des piccinnistes: texte des pamphlets*: 245.

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As with other adaptations of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, this is nowhere more clear than in the librettist's choice of where to put the recognition scene between Iphigenia and Orestes. Euripides, as previously mentioned,[118] has the recognition occur halfway through the play, freeing up the second half for an escape plot showing a trio of clever Greeks outwitting the dim barbarian king Thoas. De La Touche drags out the recognition significantly longer, putting it toward the end of the fourth act in a five-act play and devoting most of the remainder of the action to a very eighteenth-century moral agony over the barbarism of human sacrifice[119] and the possibility of kin-murder rather than to plans for escape. Guillard and Gluck take the truncating of Euripides's plot to its extreme, effecting the recognition at exactly the last minute, in the last scene, when Iphigenia has her knife raised to strike the captive Orestes:

> *QUATRE PRÊTRESSES PRINCIPALES* à Iphigénie.
>
> *Venez, souveraine prêtresse,*
>
> *Remplissez votre auguste emploi.*
>
> *IPHIGÉNIE* se traînant à peine à l'autel.
>
> *Barbares, arrêtez, respectez ma faiblesse.*
>
> (Elle frémit en fixant Oreste. Une prêtresse lui présente le couteau
>
> sacré.)

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[118]See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

[119]Although the fifth-century Athenians also did not practice human sacrifice, and Iphigenia does express mild distaste for it in Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris* (see lines 380-91), the main source of the Greek Iphigenia's complaints is enforced exile from her homeland, a truly dismal fate in the ancient Greek worldview. On the importance of exile in ancient Greece, see Sara Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Dieux! tout mon sang se glace dans mon coeur.

LES PRÊTRESSES.

Frappez.

IPHIGÉNIE.

Je tremble, et mon bras plus timide . . .

ORESTE.

Iphigénie, ô ma soeur!

Ainsi tu fus jadis immolée en Aulide.

IPHIGÉNIE.

Mon frère! . . . Oreste! . . .

[FOUR PRINCIPLE PRIESTESSES, *to Iphigenie:*

Come, sovereign priestess.

Fulfill your august employment.

IPHIGENIE, *turning with difficulty toward the altar:*

Barbarians, stop, respect my weakness.

(*She groans, staring at Oreste. A priestess presents her with the sacred knife.*)

Gods! all my blood freezes in my heart.

THE PRIESTESSES:

Strike.

IPHIGENIE:

I tremble, and my most timid arm . . .

ORESTE:

Iphigenie, o my sister!

In this way you were sacrificed in Aulis of old.

IPHIGENIE:

My brother! . . . Oreste! . . .][120]

This final moment recognition scene, making for the greatest possible dramatic tension in the *dénouement*, also forecloses even the possibility of the Greek Tauris play's second half. As in De La Touche's play, Thoas is simply deposed by Pylades, who sweeps into the action of the last scene with an army of Greeks at his back to handily resolve everything the moment the recognition plot has been effected.[121] Like both De La Touche and De La Grange-Chancel, Guillard makes the central focus of the Iphigenia in Tauris story the narrow escape of Iphigenia almost sacrificing her brother, a major shift from the Greek tragedy in which this possibility is barely mentioned before it is resolved and the main focus of the action follows the escape from Tauris with the statue of Artemis—an origin story for a local religious cult on the outskirts of Athens.[122] Given this extreme abbreviation and refocusing of the plot, it is difficult to see how anyone could claim Gluck and Guillard as closer to Euripides than to De La Touche, unless one stops reading Euripides halfway through.

[120]Nicolas-François Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," in *L'Autre Iphigénie*, ed. Jean-Noël Pascal (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1997), 183.

[121]See Claude Guymond De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Breinigsville, PA: Nabu Public Domain Reprints; repr., 2014): 76; and Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 186-88.

[122]On the cult of the 'Taurian' Artemis-Iphigenia in Attica and its importance to Euripides's drama, see M. Platnauer, "Introduction," in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ed. M. Platnauer (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

The claim that the opera is more Greek than its immediate predecessors is not wholly unfounded, however. De La Touche himself had brought the *Iphigenia in Tauris* story back closer to its Greek source in his play than it had previously been in De La Grange-Chancel. Merely by excising the Taurian succession plot and bringing the focus back onto the central trio of Orestes, Pylades, and Iphigenia, De La Touche had moved the story more into line with (half) its ancient predecessor. As with *Iphigénie en Aulide*, the addition of operatic conventions themselves allow Guillard and Gluck to circle even closer to the Euripidean play, most specifically with the use of the chorus.

For most of opera's history, there had been one major difference between the choruses of Greek tragedy and those of opera: continuity. In a Greek tragedy, the chorus represents one group of people (be they slave women, elder statesmen, or Furies) and remains onstage to take part in the action throughout. In opera, however, a penchant for spectacle linked to the use of Italian scenery, which could be changed rapidly between acts, created demand for the chorus to change with the sets, altering costumes and identities as the acts changed location.[123] In both Italian and French opera, the standard had been for the chorus to shift identities between acts, a standard which tied it more to an aesthetic function (like its relegation to the *divertissements*) than to a practical plot function—it is difficult for the chorus to act as one of the characters if its participation cannot span acts in the same way the principals can. Part

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[123]See Savage, "'Something like the Choruses of the Ancients': The *Coro Stabile* and the Chorus in European Opera, 1598-1782."

of the *retour à l'Antique*, then, attempting to bridge the gap between these ancient and modern practices, was to reincorporate the chorus into the action not only by allowing it to affect events, but also by making it a more permanent, stable collective character.

Gluck's reforms of the chorus in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, like the text itself, spans a middle ground between operatic custom and a true return to antiquity. A quick count of the choruses in *Iphigénie en Tauride* gives us four: Iphigenia's train of priestesses, a chorus of Furies that appear in one scene to torment Orestes, and two opposing armies, one Taurian and one Greek, which clash in the final scene. As a four-act opera with four different choruses, this opera appears by the numbers to be bowing to modern convention. However, of these four choruses, three appear in only one scene (and two of them simultaneously), obviously bucking the one-chorus-per-act convention. The remaining chorus, Iphigenia's priestesses, spans all the acts, appearing in the first scene and the last scene and nearly every time Iphigenia is onstage between. This chorus, like the equivalent ancient chorus of Euripides, participates in the action like any other character, bringing Gluck and Guillard much closer to their ancient predecessor in this respect than either neoclassical or operatic convention had previously allowed.

In Euripides, the chorus of priestesses of Artemis, all captured Greeks like Iphigenia herself, has an emotional stake and an active role to play in the action of the plot. Their aid is necessary to enable Iphigenia's deception of Thoas and subsequent escape, and in order to enlist it Iphigenia makes an impassioned speech as she would to any other character:

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ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, εἰς ὑμᾶς βλέπω,

καὶ τἄμ' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστιν ἢ καλῶς ἔχειν

ἢ μηδὲν εἶναι καὶ στερηθῆναι πάτρας

φίλου τ' ἀδελφοῦ φιλτάτης τε συγγόνου.

καὶ πρῶτα μέν μοι τοῦ λόγου τάδ' ἀρχέτω·

γυναῖκές ἐσμεν, φιλόφρον ἀλλήλαις γένος

σῴζειν τε κοινὰ πράγματ' ἀσφαλέσταται.

σιγήσαθ' ἡμῖν καὶ συνεκπονήσατε

φυγάς. καλόν τοι γλῶσσ' ὅτῳ πιστὴ παρῇ.

ὁρᾶτε δ' ὡς τρεῖς μία τύχη τοὺς φιλτάτους

ἢ γῆς πατρῴας νόστος ἢ θανεῖν ἔχει.

σωθεῖσα δ', ὡς ἂν καὶ σὺ κοινωνῇς τύχης,

σώσω σ' ἐς Ἑλλάδ'. ἀλλὰ πρός σε δεξιᾶς

σὲ καὶ σ' ἱκνοῦμαι, σὲ δὲ φίλης παρηίδος,

γονάτων τε καὶ τῶν ἐν δόμοισι φιλτάτων

μητρὸς πατρός τε καὶ τέκνων ὅτῳ κυρεῖ.

τί φατε; τίς ὑμῶν φησιν ἢ τίς οὐ θέλειν--

φθέγξασθε--ταῦτα; μὴ γὰρ αἰνουσῶν λόγους

ὄλωλα κἀγὼ καὶ κασίγνητος τάλας.

[Dearest women, I look to you. It is in your hands whether I have good

things or whether I will be robbed of my dear fatherland and dearest

brother and kin. And first I begin with these words: we are women,

and our kind are affectionate to one another, keeping safest the matters

we have in common. Keep silent for us and help us to achieve our

escape. Good comes to the one who has a loyal tongue. See how three

dear ones have one fortune, either to return to their homeland or to die.

And having been saved, in order that you might share in our fortune, I

will rescue you back to Greece. But I supplicate you by your right

hand, and yours and yours, and by your dear cheek, and by your knees

and by your loved ones at home, mother and father and any children

you may have. What do you say? Which of you say yes and which are

not willing—speak out—in all this? For if you do not accept my

words, I am undone, both myself and my wretched brother.][124]

Iphigenia's use here of numerous rhetorical tricks (claiming natural alliance with her

listeners, exhorting them to good moral behavior, offering a reward for their

compliance, calling upon the things they hold most dear), as well as her admission of

the possibility that the chorus could be split in their opinions, creates the impression

of the chorus as a series of individual characters with agency and impact on the

course of the plot. In the end, she manages to enlist their unanimous aid. The chorus

complies admirably with her request, having a private exchange with a messenger in

which they actively lie in order to prevent Thoas from discovering Iphigenia's escape.

Although the chorus knows full well that Thoas is presently inside the temple, the

chorus leader has the following exchange with the messenger who comes to tell him

[124]Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1056-74.

about the plot:

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ ναοφύλακες βώμιοί τ' ἐπιστάται,

Θόας ἄναξ γῆς τῆσδε ποῦ κυρεῖ βεβώς;

καλεῖτ' ἀναπτύξαντες εὐγόμφους πύλας

ἔξω μελάθρων τῶνδε κοίρανον χθονός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, εἰ χρὴ μὴ κελευσθεῖσαν λέγειν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

βεβᾶσι φροῦδοι δίπτυχοι νεανίαι

Ἀγαμεμνονείας παιδὸς ἐκ βουλευμάτων

φεύγοντες ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε καὶ σεμνὸν βρέτας

λαβόντες ἐν κόλποισιν Ἑλλάδος νεώς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄπιστον εἶπας μῦθον· ὃν δ' ἰδεῖν θέλεις

ἄνακτα χώρας, φροῦδος ἐκ ναοῦ συθείς.

[MESSENGER:

Temple guards at the altar, do you know where Thoas, king and ruler

of these lands, has gone? Opening these well-fastened doors, call this

country's ruler out from the doorway.

CHORUS:

What is it, if it is permitted to speak without having been ordered to?

MESSENGER:

The two young men have gotten away, by the plan of Agamemnon's

child fleeing out of these lands and taking the august statue of the

goddess in the hold of a Greek ship.

CHORUS:

You have told an incredible story; but the king you want to see has

rushed out of the temple in a hurry.][125]

Although their ruse is ultimately unsuccessful and Thoas discovers that his captives

have escaped, he loses precious time by the delay they orchestrate. The effect of their

deception is such that Thoas, when he discovers their part in his priestess's escape,

threatens vengeance upon them.[126] He is only prevented from carrying out his

revenge by the *dea ex machina*, who takes time in her final speech specifically to

protect them:

> τάσδε δ' ἐκπέμπειν χθονὸς Ἑλληνίδας γυναῖκας ἐξεφίεμαι γνώμης
>
> δικαίας οὕνεκ'·
>
> [And these Greek women here, I bid they be sent out of this land on
>
> account of their good judgement.][127]

This Euripidean chorus is a key figure in the drama, a character in its own right

capable of winning divine favor by its decisions, not just commenting upon but also

influencing the action of the play.

[125]Ibid. lines 1284-94.
[126]Ibid. lines 1431-33.
[127]Ibid. lines 1467-69.

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While other priestesses of Artemis appear as confidantes in the neoclassical spoken plays,[128] their impact on the action is minimal—they serve mainly to give Iphigenia someone to talk to, so that she may reveal her thoughts to the audience without appearing to speak directly to them. In the operatic *Iphigénie en Tauride*, however, the active chorus of Greek priestesses is back, serving as both confidantes to Iphigenia (as at the beginning of the play, when they get Iphigenia to reveal her famous dream[129]) and as active participants in the plot. Although they cannot cover Iphigenia's tracks in a story that completely ignores the escape plot, they do make it their business to protect Orestes once his identity is discovered, physically standing between him and harm by using their bodies as a shield.[130] And in fact, their importance as a character is so great that the recognition of Orestes is couched not only in terms of his being Iphigenia's brother, but also their king:

> ORESTE.
>
> *Iphigénie, ô ma soeur!*
>
> *Ainsi tu fus jadis immolée en Aulide.*
>
> IPHIGÉNIE.
>
> *Mon frère! . . . Oreste! . . .*

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[128]Cyane in De La Grange-Chancel and Ismenie and Eumene in De La Touche. See François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," in *Oeuvres de Monsieur De La Grange-Chancel*, ed. François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1758); and De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

[129]Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 160-61. Almost all adaptations of *Iphigenia in Tauris* begin with Iphigenia relating a portentous dream she had—the dream itself, however, varies in content from adaptation to adaptation, using varying symbolism to suggest the death of Orestes. See Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 42-60 and De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 68-70, in addition to the operatic reference above.

[130]Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 185-86.

LES PRÊTRESSES *se prosternant.*

Oreste! notre roi!

[ORESTES:

Iphigenia, o my sister!

In this way you were sacrificed in Aulis of old.

IPHIGENIA:

My brother! . . . Orestes! . . .

THE PRIESTESSES, *prostrating themselves*:

Orestes! our king!][131]

In no other modern adaptation of *Iphigenia in Tauris* has the recognition moment

been interrupted by the words of a character other than Iphigenia, Orestes, or

Pylades.[132] The fact that the discovery of Orestes's identity is of as great an

importance to the chorus as it is to Iphigenia demonstrates their increased importance

in the operatic version of this story, and their structural linkage with Iphigenia herself.

Musically, the chorus not only reflects Iphigenia and protects her interests, but

allows her role as priestess to be concretized through the presentation of enacted

religious ceremonies in which she takes part. In contrast to the music of *Iphigénie en*

Aulide, which almost exclusively related to and revealed the emotional states of the

individual characters, the music of *Iphigénie en Tauride* is often ceremonial in nature,

and recognizably ritualistic. In a scene that calls to mind another part of the mythic

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[131] Ibid., 183.
[132] See De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 164-71; and De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*:
     57-61 for comparison.

saga through reference to the moment of Electra and the empty urn,[133] the chorus holds a funeral ceremony for the supposedly dead Orestes, incorporating ceremonial chants and movement alongside Gluck's stirring funerary music.[134] Toward the end of the play, the chorus of priestesses sings a hymn to Diana while decking Orestes with garlands for the sacrifice, the paganism of the actions (preparing the victim) contrasting with the use of polyphonic music that sounds recognizably like the religious choral arrangements historically used in Christian churches.[135] These staged displays of ritual—musically consonant with the familiar rituals of the funeral and the mass yet enacted under the auspices of ancient paganism—create a strange mixture of the foreign and the familiar for an audience that both exoticized and revered the alien customs of ancient Greece. These choral pieces, centrally a part of the action and one of the major musical draws of the opera, are a far cry from light and inconsequential *divertissements*.

In the context of these staged rituals, Iphigenia's identity as a priestess comes to the fore—specifically her identity as the priestess of a pagan cult for which she feels only an eighteenth-century Enlightenment disgust—perfectly in line with her characterization as found in De La Touche. The project of bringing religious belief into line with the concepts of 'reason' and 'natural laws' was a major philosophical focus of the Enlightenment, which blamed 'superstition' for religious conflict and its

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[133]A famous moment in Sophocles's *Electra* in which the title character mourns over an urn which she has been told contains the ashes of Orestes, but which was, in fact, given to her by the living Orestes himself. See Sophocles *Electra* lines 1108-70.

[134] Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 172-73.

[135]Ibid., 182-83.

resulting atrocities.[136] That the gods should demand human sacrifice seems unreasonable to Gluck and Guillard's Iphigenia[137] (as it had to De La Touche's[138]), and her easy and frequent dismissal of its religious underpinnings—a subject about which her Greek counterpart was distinctly more cautious[139]—can easily be read as characteristic of her rationalist Enlightenment bent.[140] Here we find again a move toward the appearance of authenticity without all of its substance, a French character superimposed upon a Greek background. While moving closer to Greek tragedy in their use of the chorus and the visual elements of the rituals it enacts, Gluck and Guillard retain the connection to modern France through the music and by drawing character traits for their heroine from the neoclassical drama of their own period.

The other major way in which the operatic *Iphigénie en Tauride* achieves the appearance of Greek authenticity by comparison with its more recent neoclassical predecessors is through the return of the ancient convention of the *dea ex machina*. Excised from all the (French)[141] neoclassical spoken versions of both Iphigenia plays, the *dea ex machina* provides ending resolutions to the operatic versions as well as the Greek source plays. In Gluck and Guillard's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, the goddess in

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[136]On the complex interactions of reason and religion in Enlightenment thinking, see Dorinda Outram, "The Rise of Modern Paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment*, *New Approaches to European History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; reprint, 2013).

[137]See Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 182-83.

[138]See De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 4-16.

[139]See Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 35-37.

[140]On the specific appeal of the *Iphigenia in Tauris* story to Enlightenment thinking on religion, see Bram Van Oostveldt, "Spectatorship and Involvement in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Beligium: Leuven University Press, 2012).

[141]The *dea ex machina* did, on occasion, reappear in the English variants of these neoclassical plays. See "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" above.

question changed from the Athena of Euripides to Artemis/Diana (following a

characteristic neoclassical reduction in the number of gods referenced in a given

play), but still provides the grand finale in the form of her descent from the clouds

and accompanying aria. This explicitly supernatural convention, which the

playwrights of spoken theater had gone so far out of their way to avoid in the interests

of *vraisemblance*,[142] was considered so necessary in the operatic versions of these

stories that, in the case of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, it was even put back in out of

deference to public opinion.[143] What changed?

As numerous scholars of opera have noted,[144] attempting to apply the aesthetic

valuation of *vraisemblance* to opera has always been a theoretically tricky

proposition. The characters, who sing their every thought and interpersonal

communication, are unbelievable by definition.[145] Much ink has been spilled by the

early commentators on opera in conjecture over whether the characters should be

supposed to be composing their songs *extempore*, divinely inspired, or merely

speaking in ways that we (the audience) hear as song.[146] Ultimately, if France was

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[142]See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

[143]For a full discussion of the alteration of this ending, including a survey of the contemporary criticism that led to the inclusion of the *dea ex machina* in the second version, see Rushton, "'Royal Agamemnon'."

[144]For a few examples, see Betzwieser, "Verisimilitude"; Carter, "What is Opera?"; and Lattarico, "Myth and Derision."

[145]While current scholarship is quick to assert that characters who express their thoughts in song are no more unbelievable than those who express their thoughts in spoken verse (rhymed or not), this was pointedly *not* the consensus among scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who routinely depicted song as an open challenge to *vraisemblance* while allowing verse to pass without comment. On this discrepancy, see Carter, "What is Opera?" and Betzwieser, "Verisimilitude."

[146]On the various strands of this debate, see Julian Rushton, "Characterization," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

even to allow for the existence of opera as a genre, there had to be some relaxing of the idea of *vraisemblance* as it was defined in the neoclassical spoken theater, an openness to a world of alternate rules which allows for elements of *le merveilleux* (the marvelous or magical).[147] The resulting allowance for that which is less believable but more spectacular led to operatic versions of Greek plays bringing back the physical presence of the gods, not only in the form of the *deus ex machina* but also as characters.[148] The adoption of some conventions belonging to the ancient theater (singing), then led to the adoption of other conventions common to Greek tragedy (the onstage representation of gods and the supernatural) which had been banned from a neoclassical theater built on an Aristotelian—rather than an ancient practice—model. The inclusion of music thus once again serves as the portal through which elements of the Greek theater are able to make their return, contributing in part to the claim that Gluck and Guillard's *Iphigénie en Tauride* feels closer to Euripides than its source play by De La Touche.

Despite the many things about it that create the appearance of Greek authenticity, however, the operatic *Iphigénie en Tauride* is the heir of De La Touche's drama in more than just its plot structure and Enlightenment attitude toward human

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[147]See discussions of this in Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*; Heller, "Opera Between the Ancients and the Moderns"; Geoffrey Burgess, "Envoicing the Divine: Oracles in Lyric and Spoken Drama in Seventeenth-Century France," in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012); and Strohm, "Iphigenia's Curious *Ménage à Trois* in Myth, Drama, and Opera."

[148]As Emanuele Senici has noted, Apollo appears as a character in a great number of operas (Senici, "Genre," 37-38.). Even within the operas currently under scrutiny, the furies famously appear to Orestes in a dream sequence during *Iphigénie en Tauride*: see Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 168.

sacrifice. In many ways, its themes and characters are a continuation of the sentimentalism to be found in De La Touche. Even with the inclusion of *le merveilleux* and the chorus in the action, even with the musical connection to the dramas of ancient Greece, both De La Touche and Gluck/Guillard make the emotions of the characters the supreme focus of the play. Iphigenia's despair and horror at the practice of human sacrifice;[149] the touching and heroic friendship of Orestes and Pylades, whose argument over which one gets to die for the other provides lengthy scenes to both dramas (despite being a brief few-line exchange in Euripides);[150] the instinctive recognition between the long-lost siblings Iphigenia and Orestes[151]—these things form the focus of all the modern adaptations of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, whether operatic or spoken. The role of the Tauris story as origin myth for a long-lost and devalued pagan religious cult is all but forgotten, the heralding of Gluck and Guillard as a faithful return to Greece enabled only by the unwillingness of eighteenth-century critics to engage with the cold logic, foreign religious values, and unacceptable gender constructions of the Euripidean source.

Opera does, in many ways, bring the drama of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe closer to the drama of ancient Greece, but it does so primarily through the return of staging conventions like song and dance, choral odes, and the

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[149]Ibid., 162-63, 69, 74-76, 78, 81-84.

[150]See Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 672-722; De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride*: 38-43; and Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 176-78.

[151]Which is played up as heavily in Gluck/Guillard as it was in De La Touche; in this version, when asked to change her choice of victim from Pylades to Orestes, Iphigenia claims that she feels it is the divine will that she not kill Orestes, demonstrating both her instinctive recognition of her kinsman and reinforcing the idea that while any sacrifice is immortal, the sacrifice of kin is even moreso. See Ibid., 179.

return of *le merveilleux*. When it comes to the content that fills these forms, the eighteenth-century French opera, touted as the most faithful recreation of Greek theater yet,[152] replaces the scripts of the classical theater with librettos drawn from neoclassical theater—librettos which, by being *more Greek* than their acknowledged neoclassical predecessors, can get away unnoticed with being significantly *less Greek* than the surviving ancient scripts they displace. Through the use of these several adaptive steps, opera composers and librettists of the eighteenth century can appear to embrace and celebrate their art form's classical heritage, while keeping the distasteful elements of that heritage at bay. Once again, the process of adaptation serves to cover up inconvenient differences, appropriating those parts of the cultural ancestor that read as 'us' while creating a kind of collective amnesia that allows audiences to forget about the parts that read as 'them.'

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[152]See the opening section of this chapter. On French opera as especially faithful to the Greeks, see, among others, Heller, "Opera Between the Ancients and the Moderns" and Lattarico, "Myth and Derision." On Gluck's operas as particular paragons of this trend, see Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters*.

Conclusion: Iphigenia in Germany and Beyond

In the same year that Gluck premiered his *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Paris, the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe presented the first version of his *Iphigenie auf Tauris* at the court of the Duke of Weimar, one of the independent German states. This play was among Goethe's first forays into theater at Weimar, where he was to spend more than half a century as the official director and coordinator of all theatrical activity.[1] In the process, he shepherded into being the last of Europe's concentrated attempts at Greek revival: the movement that came to be known as Weimar Classicism. *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, one of the most celebrated works of both this theatrical movement and the larger project of the European Enlightenment, was to become the only truly canonized adaptation of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, achieving international fame and influencing the works that came after it in much the same way that Racine's *Iphigénie* had left a permanent mark on *Iphigenia in Aulis*. It also, however, was to be the last of the truly famous and influential adaptations of an Iphigenia story; by the dawn of the nineteenth century, the popularity of Iphigenia as a figure waned, as did the adaptational vogue to which she had been so well suited. As Weimar Classicism, the last of the major Greek revival movements, gave birth to new practices like the 'director's theater' which encouraged new interpretations through restaging rather than rewriting canonical works, performances of actual Greek tragedies (in original or in translation) finally made their way into the

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[1]For a thorough account of Goethe's many years as director of the Weimar theater, see Marvin A. Carlson, *Goethe and the Weimar theatre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

mainstream and onto the public stages. At roughly the same time, the interests of directors and writers—inhabiting a wholly different Europe in the wake of the French Revolution[2]—turned from the themes of innocence and virtue to which Iphigenia had adapted so easily to a fascination with crime and punishment—an interest to which Greek figures like Antigone, Oedipus, and Medea were far better suited.

The waning of Iphigenia as a popular figure forms the subject matter for this conclusion. In it, I will examine her last success, Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, in the context of the last adaptation-focused version of Greek revival: Weimar Classicism. I then examine the turn to new approaches embodied by the increase in performances of Greek tragedy in translation, interrogating the end of the adaptational boom and Iphigenia's popularity within it while tracing the remnants of these practices even as they ceased to dominate theatrical fashion. Finally, I offer a short synthesis, reviewing what this wide-scale look at Iphigenia's popularity in the heyday of Greek adaptation has to teach us about adaptation as a phenomenon and its uses in bolstering dominant cultural worldviews.

Iphigenia in Weimar: Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

Toward the late eighteenth century, Germany was still a constellation of politically independent states and boasted no permanent professional theater tradition

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[2] The particularly bloody overthrowing of the French aristocracy on the basis of the rhetoric that they were criminals, and the continuing series of nominally judicial but largely indiscriminate executions that followed it during 'the Terror,' brought notions of crime and punishment—and particularly political crime—to the forefront of thought and writing all over Europe as never before. On the French Revolution and how it changed both popular understandings of reality and the ways in which these were reflected in art and literature, see Paul Hamilton, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2016).

akin to either the centralized national theater of France or the flourishing popular

model of England. In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, several of the

German states attempted to create national theaters on the French model, establishing

permanent theater buildings open to the public and encouraging the writing of new

plays by German authors in the German language.[3] Goethe undertook to create one of

these permanent theaters at Weimar, capitalizing on the efforts of numerous German

dramatists who had already begun to move in this direction and enlisting their aid.[4]

Prior to Goethe's efforts, theater in Germany had mainly been supplied by touring

theater troupes, some German but many foreign companies primarily from Italy,

England, and France.[5] Goethe, constructing several permanent theater buildings in

Weimar and its outlying communities, drew upon these touring companies for

performers, plays, and inspiration, creating a highly international kind of repertory for

the Weimar theater that produced German, Italian, English, and French plays and

mixed the influences of these traditions.

The last influence, however, and the one which was to give Weimar

Classicism its name, was of course the classical heritage. Johann Joachim

Winckelmann, the German archaeologist whose 1764 *Geschichte der Kunst des*

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[3]For an overview of several of these national theaters, see Anthony Meech, "Classical Theatre and the Formation of a Civil Society, 1720-1832," in *A History of German Theatre*, ed. Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[4]Considerations of time and space prevent me going into detail about these various fellow contributors here, but readers interested in this expansive network of dramatists are encouraged to read David Gallagher, *Weimar Classicism: Studies in Goethe, Schiller, Forster, Berlepsch, Wieland, Herder, and Steiner* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).

[5]For a more complete picture of German theater on the eve of Weimar Classicism, see George Brandt, "German Baroque Theatre and the Strolling Players, 1550-1750," in *A History of German Theatre*, ed. Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Alterthums had such a strong influence on the revival of interest in classicism in France, had an even stronger influence in the German states, where his accomplishment in ancient art history was not only admired but was also a rallying point for ethnic[6] pride. Winckelmann's vision of ancient Greek art as restrained and balanced, expressing nobility and grandeur through simplicity, was a major ideological source upon which Goethe drew in constructing his *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, as well as a source of inspiration for him to draw upon classical models in relation to the kind of theater he was attempting to construct. Unlike the French neoclassical focus on textual dramatic form, Weimar Classicism drew upon ancient Greek theatrical models primarily as aids to creating a community-centered form of theater which would act upon and improve the minds of the citizenry.[7] Like the theater of ancient Athens, which was a community event attended by the majority of the citizens and formed an important part of public discourse,[8] Weimar Classicism aimed to make theater both civic and instructive.

Within this larger, classically-inspired goal, the use of actual Greek influence was substantially less uniform than it had been in the earlier neoclassical movement.

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[6]I use the word 'ethnic' rather than 'national' here because of the lack of a unified Germany as a political entity. German speakers would, however, recognize some kinship and sense of group identity around their shared language, and did when it came to celebrating Winckelmann's accomplishments. For a look at the reception of Winckelmann in Germany and elsewhere, see Katherine Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[7]On the German concept of *Bildung*, the development or advancement of the individual, as a major goal of German theater, see Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Patterns of Continuity in German Theatre: Interculturalism, Performance and Cultural Mission," in *A History of German Theatre*, ed. Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[8]On the civic and communal nature of ancient Athenian drama, see Paul Cartledge, "'Deep Plays': Theatre as Process in Greek Civic Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

German playwrights, far less rule-bound and more individualistic than the French neoclassicists, drew upon many theatrical traditions in many combinations to create their dramas, at times borrowing Greek plots without specifically using ancient forms (as in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*), at others using Greek forms with new plots (as in Schiller's use of choruses in his *Die Braut von Messina*[9] and a three-play trilogy structure to create his *Wallenstein*[10]), and at still others using nothing of the Greeks but Winckelmann's adages about simplicity and grandeur (as in Goethe's *Die Geschwister*,[11] a one-act with simple interactions between only four characters on the theme of noble love that borrows neither forms nor content directly from the Greeks). Within the diverse array of dramatic forms and subjects that populated the Weimar stage, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* stands out both for its strong use of classicism (in subject and in attempts to create Winckelmann's 'classical' mood) and its success; after its 1779 debut, it was regularly revived and formed a core part of the Weimar repertory,[12] alongside its huge influence in literary circles.[13]

Simple in its dramatic structure (with only five characters and a logical and orderly sequence of scenes) and noble in its sentiments, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* embodied the calm grandeur that Winckelmann had associated with the ancient

[9]Friedrich Schiller, *Die Braut von Messina oder die feindlichen Brüder: ein Trauerspiel mit Chören* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1874).

[10]Friedrich Schiller and William Witte, *Wallenstein; ein dramatisches Gedicht* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1952).

[11]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Geschwister: Schauspiel in einem Akt* (Stuttgart: Freya, 1868).

[12]See Carlson, *Goethe and the Weimar theatre* for a complete listing of the many years *Iphigenie auf Tauris* was featured on the Weimar stage.

[13]On the subsequent influence of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* in thought and literature, see Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides' Black Sea Tragedy*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Greeks. In fact, this version of *Iphigenia in Tauris* is so restrained, so balanced, and so simple that, as Helga Geyer-Ryan puts it, "Considered in terms of drama or spectacle the play has repeatedly been described as lifeless, undramatic, abstract, cold, colourless, boring."[14] This description is indeed not far off the mark. Virtually devoid of passion in any sense of the term, the mood of Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* in some respects circles back toward the more cerebral treatment of Euripides's version[15]—and then overshoots it by some distance. Led not by pure sentiment, as the French characters of the *Iphigenia in Tauris* adaptations were,[16] nor by their own natural superiority, as Dennis's Anglo-Greek conquerors were,[17] Goethe's protagonists carefully ponder each of their decisions and actions in the cool light of Enlightenment 'Reason.' 'Reason,' nominally a logic-based common ground which was the natural inheritance of all mankind and hence something upon which all peoples could agree, was, in point of fact, rather a highly Eurocentric blend of assumptions, thought systems, and moral sentiments declared 'universal' and invested with the power to solve the world's interpersonal and intercultural problems by the thinkers of the European Enlightenment.[18] This thought pattern is the moral compass

[14] Helga Geyer-Ryan, "Prefigurative Racism in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*," in *Fables of Desire: Studies in the Ethics of Art and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994): 134-35.

[15] See my discussion of this cerebral treatment in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

[16] See my discussions of sentiment and sentimentalism in the two French *Iphigenia in Tauris* adaptations treated in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.

[17] See my section on Dennis's *The Tragedy of Iphigenia* in "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" above.

[18] On the Eurocentrism of 'Reason' with regards to this play specifically, see Ibid. On Enlightenment notions of 'Reason' more generally, see Dorinda Outram, "The Rise of Modern Paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment*, *New Approaches to European History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; reprint, 2013); and also Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, eds., *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

to which Goethe's characters turn in every moment of dramatic significance, and the reasoning out of various decisions provides the main 'action' (if one can reasonably call it that) of the play. Decisions about religion and morality, about international relations, and about the duties of friendship and debts of personal affection are the main focal points of Goethe's play—and unlike the characters of Euripides, who hatch and execute plans with ease,[19] the characters of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* slowly and carefully reason through to find the 'right' course of action in every little particular. Restrained in both their passions and their actions, constantly demonstrating their nobility by the use of moral reasoning, and never allowing their actions or the plot to become unnecessarily complicated, Goethe's characters are extremely Greek by the German conceptions of the day, even as they lack the action and verve granted to them in their actual Greek incarnation. Like Winckelmann's lauding of the beautiful simplicity of ancient white marble statues that were, in actuality, painted in bright colors in their heyday,[20] Goethe effects his return to Greece by putting the Greeks on the Weimar stage not as they were, but as a post-Winckelmann German audience might imagine they were.

Adding to this both more- and less-Greek picture (like the operatic versions more Greek than its immediate predecessors but less Greek than its Attic source

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[19] See Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

[20] This famous misconception of Winckelmann's has in many ways become a common synecdoche for all European misunderstandings of ancient art, culture, and practices. For his lauding of white statues, see Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity* [Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums], trans. Alex Potts (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2006). On the subsequent artistic influence of this and other misconceptions of Winckelmann's, see Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity*.

text[21]), Goethe's vision of both Iphigenia as a character and Taurian-Greek relations was far from harmonious with Euripides's actual Greek tragedy, even as it reincorporated elements of Euripides that had long been downplayed and ignored. The thing that was so revolutionary about *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, the element which made it stand out to Enlightenment intellectuals and critics, was that it faced head-on the problems which had made other playwrights contort Euripides's script so thoroughly: the deceptive escape plot. Ever since De La Grange-Chancel, the playwrights and librettists of Europe had routinely discarded the second half of Euripides's play, presumably because a virginal (read: pure) heroine who was a liar didn't suit with modern notions of either Christian morality or gender.[22] Goethe, alone among his fellow adaptors, wrestled openly with this problem, if only to resolve it in a manner that presents no challenge to either the morality or the gender constructions of the Enlightenment.

Goethe's Iphigenia is—remarkable as it may seem given the adaptive tradition he is building on—probably the purest Iphigenia yet to walk the stage. As Helga Geyer-Ryan has pointed out,[23] this Iphigenia is not only virginal but totally desexualized, lacking any kind of love-plot with the male characters of the present (as she had in De La Grange-Chancel and Dennis[24]) or even any romantic attachment to Achilles in the backstory (as she had in virtually every post-Racinian version of the

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[21] On this phenomenon in connection with opera, see "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" above.
[22] See my discussion in "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" above.
[23] Helga Geyer-Ryan, "Prefigurative Racism in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*."
[24] Both these versions gave her a romantic intrigue with Pylades, and Dennis gave her an additional one with Orestes prior to the recognition scene. See "Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France" and "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" above.

Aulis story). Thoas, in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, does want to marry her[25] (as he had in De La Grange-Chancel[26]), but rather than being an overbearing tyrant sexually threatening the chaste maiden, he is Iphigenia's host and friend, a man for whom she professes great affection and respect.[27] Yet even in this context of deep friendship, Iphigenia rejects his offer of marriage, claiming only familial tenderness for Thoas and for every other character throughout the play.[28] Walking hand-in-hand with this kind of desexualized affection for all of mankind, Goethe's Iphigenia is also devout in the most Christian sense of the term—the moment she lands in Tauris and is appointed priestess of Diana, she puts a stop to the practice of human sacrifice, replacing it with the very Christian practice of praying for Diana's mercy and the well-being of the Taurian people.[29] It is not until Orestes and Pylades arrive in Tauris at the start of the play that Thoas recommends reviving this ancient tradition,[30]

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[25]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Flensburg: Futura-Ed., 1989). For Thoas's proposal, see Act I, scene iii. Because I do not read German and have had to read this play in translation, in the discussion of this play that follows I will analyze only major plot points, never direct quotes or particular word meanings. Additionally, as was the case with Racine, Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* exists in so many editions and translations that giving page numbers for references is practically meaningless; my references therefore will refer broadly to act and scene numbers that may be found in whatever edition the reader chooses to use. The specific translation that I used in constructing this analysis was the 1793 translation of Goethe's English contemporary, William Taylor. I chose this translation so that I might at least have an accurate sense of the play as Goethe's contemporary fans and imitators read it in other nations; being forced by my limited language skills to at least change country, I wanted to limit any additional travel in time to the greatest possible extent. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Iphigenia in Tauris* [Iphigenie auf Tauris], trans. William Taylor (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1994).

[26]See Act I, scene i in François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," in *Oeuvres de Monsieur De La Grange-Chancel*, ed. François-Joseph De La Grange-Chancel (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1758).

[27]For Iphigenia's professions of affection for Thoas, see Act IV, scene iv; Act V, scene iii; and Act V, scene v in Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

[28]Iphigenia's professions of kindness and human charity toward others are so numerous in the play that they hardly bear cataloging, so for this reference I must simply direct the reader to the play as a whole. See Ibid.

[29]See Act I, scene ii in Ibid.

[30]Act I, scene iii in Ibid.

putting the characters under threat without burdening Iphigenia with any association

to the sacrificial cult. To top it all off, Goethe's Iphigenia, like all Taurian Iphigenias

before her, wishes to return home—but not for the selfish reasons of personal comfort

her predecessors did. This Iphigenia, cognizant of the horrendous crimes committed

by her family from the time of her distant ancestor, Tantalus, wishes to return home

so that she may purify her ancestral house, countering and expiating their crimes of

blood with her purity and goodness.[31]

This Iphigenia is the poster child for ideal Enlightenment femininity. Totally

selfless, characterized by her familial affection and natural care for all mankind, she is

an exemplary model of 'the moral sex.'[32] How, then, to reconcile this purest of

Iphigenias with the deceptive Iphigenia necessitated by Euripides's escape plot?

Instead of sweeping the whole issue under the rug by cutting the escape plot, as had

his predecessors, Goethe gives his Iphigenia several speeches in which she wrestles

with the morality of lying to and stealing from Thoas, who has been her host and

friend, in order to save her brother (who, astonishingly, she recognizes halfway

through the plot with comparatively little fuss).[33] This moral quandary, in fact, serves

as the main dramatic interest of the play, in contrast to all previous modern versions,

[31]See her speeches in Act IV, scene v and Act V, scene ii in Ibid.
[32]On Enlightenment ideas about women's 'natural' morality, especially as an outpouring of their maternal inclination to care for other human beings, see Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Knott and Taylor, *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment.* See also my discussion in "Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music" above.
[33]For Iphigenia's soliloquies on her moral dilemma, see the entirety of Act IV, plus Act V, scene ii in Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. For the recognition of Orestes and Iphigenia, see the whole of Act III.

which had made mistaken identity the focus (virtually always having the plot culminate in the recognition between brother and sister).[34] Ultimately, as she comes face-to-face with Thoas at the end of the play, Iphigenia cannot bear the thought that her escape from Tauris should be tainted by crime—if she is to put a stop to the curse of crime and murder that has plagued her house from the time of her ancestors, she must be pure in all respects. The end cannot justify the means, and even the potential death of her brother and Pylades are not enough to induce her to lie and abet their theft of the holy statue. Chagrined, she confesses all and throws both her rescuers and herself upon Thaos's mercy.[35] Thoas, guided by Enlightenment reason rather than anger, sees the moral value of her gesture. A negotaition follows, in which Thoas agrees to let them go and Orestes and Pylades agree to leave the statue of Diana behind, realizing that the oracle of Apollo instructing them to bring back "the sister" referred to Orestes's sister Iphigenia, not Apollo's sister Diana.[36] Consequently, there is neither a deception nor a theft, and Iphigenia even extracts a promise of continuing friendship from Thoas as she leaves.[37]

This ending, the element of Goethe's play which has drawn the most commentary,[38] manages to take the part of Euripides's play that had been deemed

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[34]See De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade"; Claude Guymond De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Breinigsville, PA: Nabu Public Domain Reprints; 2014); John Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," in *The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis* (London: J. Darby, 1718); and Nicolas-François Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," in *L'Autre Iphigénie*, ed. Jean-Noël Pascal (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1997).

[35]Act V, scene ii in Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

[36]Act V, scene v in Ibid.

[37]Act V, scene v in Ibid.

[38]See Hall's review of commentary on Goethe in Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris*.

'unstageable' in the modern era and turn it into a lesson in Enlightenment morality of the first order. Where discord and violence could have reigned, reason rules. Diplomacy is victorious over deception, theft, and barbaric sacrificial tradition, which Thoas waives at Iphigenia's request.[39] It is the civilizing force of a moral and pure woman, tied to all the men in the play by bonds of chaste affection, that brings about this peaceful reconciliation.[40] Without ignoring the moral problems posed (to a Christian audience) by Euripides's ending, Goethe has negated them. A story that ended with Greeks outwitting barbarians in Euripides,[41] overthrowing their leader in De La Grange-Chancel[42] and De La Touche,[43] colonially dominating them in Dennis,[44] and warring with them in Guillard and Gluck,[45] ends in Goethe with an image of cross-cultural understanding and friendship, the victory of Enlightenment morality through universal reason. This picture is not, of course, quite as equitable and idyllic as it seems on the surface; Helga Geyer-Ryan has explored the unexamined assumptions of superiority that underlie the ending exchange, in which Thoas gives up the ancient practices of his people (in the form of human sacrifice) as well as his prospective bride, while the Greek characters only give up that which turned out to be unimportant anyway (the statue of Diana).[46] Despite these caveats,

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[39]See Act I, scene ii and Act V, scene ii in Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.
[40]In line with Enlightenment ideas about women as a calming and civilizing force on society. See Knott and Taylor, *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*.
[41]Eurpides *Iphigenia in Tauris* lines 1307-1499.
[42]De La Grange-Chancel, "Oreste et Pilade," 189-92.
[43]De La Touche, *Iphigénie en Tauride,* 76.
[44]Dennis, "The Tragedy of Iphigenia," 88-97.
[45]Guillard, "Iphigénie en Tauride: Tragédie lyrique en quatre actes," 185-88.
[46] See Geyer-Ryan, "Prefigurative Racism in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*."

however, it is definitively a more peaceful depiction of the Taurians than its literary predecessors, in which the idea of Greek-Taurian relations based upon mutual friendship and (alleged) respect was never even raised.[47] It is this idealistic, hopeful picture of human fellowship across all nations that made *Iphigenie auf Tauris* such a central text of the European Enlightenment, a movement which firmly believed in the power of reason to unite humanity and create peace in circumstances where superstition and irrationality had previously led to war.[48]

Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, undoubtedly the most influential adaptation of *Iphigenia in Tauris* ever made,[49] was also Iphigenia's swan song. Having risen to a height of moral purity begun by the first Christian reinterpretations of her and capped by this Enlightenment vision of her as the embodiment of civilizing femininity, Iphigenia appeared less and less as the European romance with the heroic and moralizing figures of tragedy waned, to be replaced by a fascination with bourgeois realism; and as tales of virtue gave way, in the wake of the French Revolution, to explorations of crime and punishment. These shifts, begun in part by the German theaters themselves (which pioneered the focus on middle-class characters in tragedy[50]) was paired with the rise of the 'director's theater,'[51] a movement of artistic

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[47] See my analyses of the Taurian Iphigenia adaptations in preceding chapters above.

[48] On the power of reason to overcome violence as a central tenant of Enlightenment thought, see Outram, "The Rise of Modern Paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment."

[49] For a comparative study between this and other adaptations of the Iphigenia in Tauris myth emphasizing Goethe's prominence, see Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris*.

[50] For a fuller exploration of the rise of realism and middle-class protagonists in German theater during this time, see Marvin A. Carlson, "The Realistic Theatre and Burgeois Values, 1750-1900," in *A History of German Theatre*, ed. Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[51] This term refers to a style of making theater which emphasizes the director as the definitive creative visionary and grants more importance to this theatrical role than to others. This term, along with

freedom and individual interpretation that grew out of the heterogeneous mix of styles

to be selected and recombined by German theater directors.[52] This new focus on the

ability to reinterpret plays through staging rather than through writing meant that

further engagement with Greek tragic plots was largely to take place through the

performance of ancient scripts rather than their adaptation. As tragedy moved into the

nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, it would be largely directors, not

playwrights, who refigured and articulated Greek tragic narratives within

contemporary cultural formations.

New Approaches to Adaptation: The Nineteenth Century to Now

Adaptation of ancient Greek tragedy certainly did not disappear entirely with

the advent of performed translations in the nineteenth century, but it did change

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parallel descriptors such as 'the playwright's theater' or 'the actor's theater,' may be used to characterize the general attitude or approach to theater-making in a given place and time. The director's theater is commonly regarded as having become the dominant approach to theater-making in Western counties by at least the twentieth century and continues to the present. On the ideologies that uphold the director's theater as a formation, see Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[52] Different scholars have tended to vary widely in how they pinpoint the beginning of the director's theater as a movement, depending primarily on who they consider to be the first 'modern' theater director—some popular candidates are Max Reinhardt (early twentieth century, Austrian), the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (late nineteenth century, German), David Garrick (mid-eighteenth century, English), and even Goethe himself. Because scholarly opinion is so divided on when to date the start of the director's theater, some may contest the links I draw here between the diminishment of the adaptive tradition and the rise of interpretive power through directing; I, however, take the wide disagreement as a sign that the rise of the director's theater was a large-scale and extremely gradual trend, beginning toward the late eighteenth century with figures such as Garrick and Goethe and expanded upon or consolidated by their successors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the rise in performances of Greek tragedy and the changes in their adaptation were also long-term trends, I see no reason why these theatrical developments should not have influenced one another. On the director's theater, see Ibid. and also in *A History of German Theatre*, ed. Simon Williams and Michael Hamburger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). On the shift from adaptation to performance of Greek tragedy around the same time, see Fiona Macintosh, "Tragedy in performance: nineteenth- and twentieth-century productions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling, *Cambridge Companions to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

substantially. Adaptations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had largely

been billed as sanitized or 'corrected' versions of the Greek tragedies upon which they

were based. Dramatic critics of these two centuries overwhelmingly used words like

'error' when describing elements they did not like in ancient Greek tragedies, and

prefaces to adaptations of Greek plays frequently trumpet the improvements or

'corrections' they have made to faulty Greek originals.[53] The adaptations of the

nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, by contrast, exhibited a new concern

with 'updating' or 'modernizing' stories—that is, with drawing equivalencies between

the contents of ancient tragedies and parallel situations in the present. In practical

terms, this shift in attitudes toward adaptation played out mainly by alterations of plot

giving way to more cosmetic alterations of setting. Older adaptations had been likely

to preserve the character names, national settings, and ostensible time periods[54] of the

original Greek stories while drastically altering plots to suit the cultural sensibilities

of the new time. Newer adaptations flipped this script, primarily concerning

themselves with creating versions of the Greek plots which could be happening *now*,

changing locations and character names with wild abandon while espousing plot

elements that would recognizably tie these altered characters to the adapted ancient

Greek stories. T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion* (1939), for example, presents us with

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[53]For one fascinating exploration of this phenomenon, see Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660-1710* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[54]Although seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theaters rarely aimed for historical accuracy in either costuming or characters' behavior, the language of these adaptations specifically announces that the characters are Greeks, contains references to 'the gods' and other entities that create a thin veneer of polytheism, and otherwise spells out the ancient setting explicitly to the audience. See my discussions in the chapters above.

a condensed but very recognizable version of the entire saga of the house of Atreus

(of which the two Iphigenia plays form the bookends) as played out by

unambiguously modern English characters, names and settings altered but events set

into familiar patterns. Set in the English country estate of Wishwood rather than

ancient Mycenae—and using character names like Amy, Harry, Mary, and Agatha in

place of Clytemnestra, Orestes, Electra, or Athena—Eliot's play nevertheless presents

us with a closely equivalent sequence of intra-familial murders, complete with Furies

pursuing the Orestes figure, a loveless and homicidal central marriage, an abused

daughter-figure who waits at home, and the final killing of the mother by her

children—not, in this English context, through physical murder, but through neglect

and heartbreak.[55] This altered setting allowed Eliot (and other playwrights

undertaking similar projects in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries[56])

to explore what form such chains of intra-familial murder and abuse might take in the

present, with all the attendant modern social context.

    The purpose served by such adaptations seems no longer to be to 'correct' or

'improve' Greek stories, but to demonstrate their continuing relevance; older

adaptations said 'we can make this better,' while new ones boasted 'we can make this

more relatable.' With the advent of the director's theater, staged translations as well as

adaptations tended to take this approach, often putting the translated Greek texts into

[55]T. S. Eliot, *The Family Reunion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939).

[56]See, to name just a few of the most famous examples, Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra: A Trilogy* (New York: Liveright, 1931), Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les mouches: Drame en trois actes* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), and Charles L. Mee, "Agamemnon 2.0," http://www.charlesmee.org/agamemnon.shtml#top.

visual and auditory contexts meant to help the audience draw connections to the present day. A 1994 production of Sophocles's Ἀντιγόνη (*Antigone*) staged in between Greece and Yugoslavia, for example, was presented as a clear critique of current wars, "with armoured personnel carriers, soldiers and log fires providing the backdrop."[57] Such visual cues provide clear examples of the modern tendency to 'update' Greek tragedy, even in cases where the plot, setting, and character names have not been changed.

Iphigenia, though an extremely popular figure during the heyday of 'corrective' adaptation, has proved less of a standout among 'updating' adaptations. Stories about human sacrifice, a topic of intense fascination during Europe's colonial period and its fraught encounter with cultural and religious 'Otherness,'[58] lost something of their topicality as human sacrifice came to be perceived as just one more form of murder and identified with existing European practices such as capital punishment, slavery, war, and genocide.[59] At the same time this change was taking place, interest in tragedy after the horrors of the French Revolution moved away from

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[57]Macintosh, "Tragedy in performance: nineteenth- and twentieth-century productions," 321.

[58]On the reality of human sacrifice in the Americas and its subsequent influence on the European colonial imagination, see Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). On the colonial reading of foreign religious practices as a form of witchcraft or Satanism, see Gary Tomlinson, "Fear of Singing (Episodes from Early Latin America)," in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*, ed. Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). On the associations of human sacrifice with cannibalism and barbarism, see Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Colombus to Jules Verne* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

[59]Hughes traces this change through a series of European texts dating from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, in which human sacrifice comes to be related to all of these phenomena, thus losing its identifications with barbaric ritual and 'Otherness' in the absolute sense. See Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice*.

a concern with innocence, which had made the Iphigenia plays attractive,[60] to a concern with criminality and guilt, in which previously problematic Greek figures such as Medea and Oedipus came to the fore.[61] These figures better embodied the raw violence and perversion of kinship that had come to preoccupy the European imagination in the wake of a Revolution that overturned the entrenched paternalistic class system in the bloodiest fashion imaginable.[62]

Yet Iphigenia (or at least her Aulis incarnation) has certainly not gone away entirely, and continues to be a presence in storytelling in both overt and subtle ways. Overt retellings of the Iphigenia in Aulis story in the twenty-first century include, among others, Caridad Svich's *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart: A Rave Fable* (2001),[63] which, as the title implies, thoroughly modernizes the story by turning it into a rave; and Charles L. Mee's *Iphigenia 2.0* (2007), an adaptation that falls strongly into the 'updating' category with its numerous references to cars, guns, pop music, and an Iphigenia dressed "in the coolest, latest

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[60]Most especially in the context of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century genre of English 'She-Tragedy,' during which virtuous and suffering heroines dominated the stage. See "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" above. Iphigenia, as a young female, was practically synonymous with innocence and virtue during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and indeed, down to the present), despite not having precisely these qualities in her Greek incarnation. See my discussion of this shift in "Chapter Two; Iphigenia in France."

[61]On this shift in interest over the centuries, specifically in the context of England, see Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). On the dominance of the figures of Oedipus and Medea from the twentieth century on, see Macintosh, "Tragedy in performance: nineteenth- and twentieth-century productions."

[62] On the French Revolution and its effect on the European imagination, see Hamilton, *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism.*

[63] Caridad Svich, *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart: A Rave Fable*, (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2004), http://www.aspresolver.com/aspresolver.asp?LALI;PL007533.

American teenage fashion."[64] Just last year, in 2015, Robert Icke debuted a new

adaptation of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* in London's West End which featured a retelling

of the Iphigenia in Aulis story as the first of four acts in a celebrated—and visibly

modern—production that featured the screen-and-mic trappings of televised

politics.[65] Other retellings have been more disguised, but no less influenced by the

canonical status of this ancient Greek story. Even as I was in the midst of writing this

chapter, an episode of the popular TV show *Game of Thrones* aired which contained a

clear adaptation of the Iphigenia in Aulis myth, complete with a foreign priest

(Melisandre/Calchas) urging a duty-driven but reluctant king (Stannis/Agamemnon)

to sacrifice his young but flowering eldest daughter (Shireen/Iphigenia) to an exacting

and powerful god (R'hllor/Artemis) in order to allow the advance of an army which is

trapped between home and battle by inclement weather (snowstorm/lack of wind).[66]

In case these parallels were not enough, we are presented with a scene in which the

daughter expresses her eager wish to help her father,[67] a speech which has been a

staple element of *Iphigenia in Aulis* adaptations since Euripides,[68] and a final moment

in which her mother is bodily restrained from saving her,[69] a favorite device of the

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[64]Charles L. Mee, "Iphigenia 2.0," http://www.charlesmee.org/iphigenia.shtml.

[65] Robert Icke, "*Oresteia*: Press Responses," http://www.roberticke.com/reviews/oresteia.pdf

[66]Game of Thrones, "The Dance of Dragons," *HBO Go* video, 1:03:25, June 7, 2015,
    http://www.hbogo.com/#home/video&assetID=GOROSTGP46204?videoMode=embeddedVideo?
    showSpecialFeatures=false.

[67]Ibid., 30:40-33:32.

[68]This scene, in fact, provided *the* major talking point for early modern discussions of Euripides's
    Iphigenia in Aulis; most modern critics agreed that the greatest flaw in Euripides's tragedy was the
    inconsistency of character in his heroine, who at first begs to be spared and later changes her mind,
    agreeing willingly to be sacrificed. See, for example, John Dennis, *The Critical Works of John
    Dennis*, 2 vols., vol. I (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939). 75.

[69]Game of Thrones, "The Dance of Dragons," 35:16-36:38.

modern retellings which achieved its most famous incarnation in the opera of

Gluck.[70] That the Iphigenia in Aulis myth should resurface so strongly in one of the

most successful television shows of 2015 clearly demonstrates the extent to which

this story remains in the canon and continues to have an impact, even if the heyday of

its popularity has passed.

Adaptation and Culture

Over the preceding chapters, we have seen Iphigenia and her stories shift and

change as they move from time to time and place to place. Some shifts—like the

feminizing of Iphigenia from her masculine and less 'moral' Greek form—represent

clear breaks between ancient and modern belief systems; the change occurred

between the fifth century B.C.E. and the seventeenth century C.E. and stayed

remarkably consistent thereafter. Other adaptive changes—like the addition of love-

plots—had their moment but changed again within a short time-span; although

seventeenth century adaptations of Iphigenia stories routinely included some love

interest, by the Enlightenment ideas about women's desexualized love for mankind

made a gentle but unattached Iphigenia more palatable.[71] Still others were location or

genre-specific, as with the English demand that the ending be staged rather than

reported, even in the otherwise most scrupulously faithful of neoclassical

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[70]See François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet, *Iphigénie en Aulide: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes*, (1907; Paris: Librarie Théatrale, 1907), https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemVersion Id=26543. 40.

[71] The Enlightenment-era plays I have examined here which leave Iphigenia without a romantic interest include De La Touche ("Chapter Two: Iphigenia in France"), Guillard and Gluck ("Chapter Four: Iphigenia in Music"), and Goethe ("Conclusion: Iphigenia in Germany and Beyond").

adaptations,[72] or the resurfacing of the chorus in opera despite its complete absence in spoken drama. In each case, adaptive changes can be linked to larger social trends, whether aesthetic, nationalistic, philosophical, or religious in origin.

Adaptation keeps its finger on the pulse of such trends. The changes that we observe in new adaptations of old stories contain hints about what kinds of characterizations or imagery have become unpalatable or unbelievable as society changes, as well as directing us toward current social conventions and thematic concerns. Yet by bringing old stories into line with the new ideas of the day, adaptation—especially in cases like those examined here where circulation of the source text is limited—may reinforce and naturalize the belief systems of the target culture. Under the guise of making old stories more relevant, more relatable, or more palatable to the present age, adaptation can be used to maintain current hegemonic formations and dominant cultural fictions. Like the "fluid" translations criticized by Lawrence Venuti,[73] the adaptation, correcting, or updating of theatrical works from other times and places is often used to remove elements of the foreign and to create the illusion that the target culture's values and attitudes are unchallenged truths. Especially in the case of gender, which tends to carry a heavy cultural investment in representing the target culture's beliefs as invariant and derived from universal natural phenomena, adaptive change may be used to make such beliefs appear unchanged despite substantial alteration across time and space.

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[72] See my explorations of Boyer and Johnson in "Chapter Three: Iphigenia in England" above.
[73] Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

By looking at adaptation across time and space in this way, as opposed to the more usual focus on change of medium, we can more clearly see this function of adaptation as a tool for the maintenance of dominant cultural constructions. Unlike the much-studied case of novel-to-film adaptation, where audiences in a single country and the span of a few years have at least some access to both the source and the adaptation, the re-writing of a story within the same medium years or even centuries later and in a different country may aim at 'correcting' or supplanting an ideologically threatening source text. In such a case, audiences do not necessarily experience an adaptation as a doubled or palimpsestic experience as Linda Hutcheon asserts in her foundational *A Theory of Adaptation*;[74] rather, the adaptation co-opts the fame and name recognition of the source text, associating that fame with a newer, sanitized, and less culturally threatening version of the story. Within the medium of theater, especially, where substantial concessions to the target culture can be made in the necessary process of staging (and the sometimes necessary process of translation), adaptation stands out as a particularly ideologically driven step, an extra layer of change added on for reasons that are culturally motivated rather than practical in nature.

Adaptation is, as Julie Sanders has pointed out,[75] intimately tied to the process of canon formation, reinforcing the relative importance of a story through its proliferation. In 'supplanting' adaptations of the kind examined here, we have seen

[74]Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
[75]Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

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how adaptation also canonizes by erasing historical specificity, both creating and maintaining the fiction that the canon represents a body of works containing universal truths. In the sort of canon created by this kind of adaptation, traces of real cultural difference are erased. Even a story as culturally specific as the Iphigenia in Tauris myth, serving as the origin story for a long-dead cult of worship at Brauron, may be transformed into a paean to the universal power of reason if treated to enough adaptational change. The use of a child as an object of exchange between gods and mortals in the Iphigenia in Aulis myth can become a commentary on the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice as it travels into a culture that views virtue and vice as the central concern of both religion and human life. In both these cases, ancient Greek cultural specificity is retroactively refigured as evidence of the universality of early modern European cultural concerns. And in an era when figures like Racine, Gluck, and Goethe heavily overshadowed Euripides on the public stage and in the public imagination, the radical change required to enact these universals is like the secret of the stage magician's magic tricks: known only to the educated few. Canons, especially those which promote and reinforce a dominant worldview, are formed by a cultural sleight-of-hand—and the mechanism of this sleight-of-hand is adaptation.

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Commencement of Our Theatrical Exhibitions; Amongst Whom Are Some of
the Most Celebrated Actors. Also an Alphabetical Account, and Chronological
Lists, of Their Works, the Dates When Printed, and Observations on Their
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