AISTHESIS

Aisthesis

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2016 issue of Aisthesis. Now in its fifth year of publication, the journal continues to grow and develop as an essential part of undergraduate engagement in Stanford Classics. We offer great thanks to all of those who have aided in the journal's publication, including the Department of Classics, the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU), and, of course, the many students who submitted their work for consideration. Even now, as we proudly complete this publication, we eagerly look forward to creating the next issue of Aisthesis in 2017 - until then, valete and χαίρετε!

The 2016 Aisthesis Team

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FROM ROMAN POETRY TO RENAISSANCE ART
The Influence of Ovidian Texts on Bernini's Sculptures

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to examine closely the influence of the poet Ovid's texts – primarily the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* – on three of the most well-known sculptures by Renaissance sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini. After providing a brief history of Bernini's life and the cultural context in which he began his sculpting career, the study examines, in order, the works *Daphne and Apollo*, *The Rape of Proserpina*, and *Neptune and Triton* alongside textual excerpts from Ovid's work; each case seeks to identify both visual details and thematic ideas in Bernini's sculptures that reveal the crucial influence of Ovid on this man's *oeuvre*. Beyond merely identifying the links to Ovid in these works, the study additionally considers how Bernini manipulated these Ovidian, "pagan" influences to fit into the Catholic culture in which he worked.

In examining the works of the Renaissance sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini, it becomes immediately apparent that this artist drew heavily from classical texts for inspiration – whether in subject matter or style, a number of Bernini's works heavily reflect classical influence. This study, as a result, seeks to identify and examine more clearly the influences of Ovidian texts on the sculptures of Bernini. A number of this artist's sculptures, through both their subjects and craftsmanship, demonstrate the idea of transformation that is so crucial to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, such that any consideration of Bernini's work becomes meaningless without its appropriate classical context.

In order to analyze Bernini's works appropriately, one must first consider the era in which this artist lived and worked. Born in 1598 at Naples, Gian Lorenzo Bernini began to study the art of sculpting under his father, Pietro, at a very early age. The young Gian Lorenzo was so talented, however, that he quickly established himself as an independent sculptor and gained the patronage of Pope Paul V. During his time in Rome as a young man, Bernini became intimately familiar with the various Greek and Roman works housed in the Vatican, and furthermore developed a deep knowledge of High Renaissance painting.[1] Surrounded by a healthy intellectual community in Rome, Bernini entered into the field of sculpting in an era in which educated citizens were well-

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[1] Howard Hibbard, "Gian Lorenzo Bernini," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1, last modified October 29, 2013, accessed April 3, 2015, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/62547/Gian-Lorenzo-Bernini.

read in both contemporary literature and classical works of the Augustan Era. Of particular note to these literary scholars were the works of the Roman poet Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* often became a source of moralistic interpretations for the devoutly Christian elites of the day. This use of Ovid as a didactic source for the church had begun centuries before in the early 1100s, such that by Bernini's day this poet's work was a well-established feature of the religious and academic community.[2]

Besides this interest in classical sources and religious messages, another driving force behind the flourishing arts of the era was what scholars refer to as the *paragone*. This term, which literally means "comparison," refers to the trend in Bernini's era of artists to compete among themselves based on their preferred art form. At the primary level, poets contended with visual artists to determine which of their media was superior to the other. On a secondary level, within the category of visual arts, painters similarly strove to prove their superiority over sculpture. Bernini himself, primarily a sculptor and architect, thus faced a dual challenge from poets and painters to prove the value of his own work.[3]

Perhaps the most well-known of Bernini's statues is that of Apollo's pursuit of the maiden Daphne; this creation, in its many yet subtle uses of metamorphosis, demonstrates the great extent to which Bernini utilized Ovid's work as inspiration for his craft. Bernini has drawn the tale which this statue depicts directly from Book 1 of the *Metamorphoses*, and has chosen to depict the crucial moment at which Daphne herself *transforms* into a laurel tree. This depiction is uncannily faithful to Ovid's own description of the event:

> …nudabant corpora venti,
> obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes,
> et levis inpulsos retro dabat aura capillos....
> vix prece finita torpor gravis occupat artus,
> mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro,
> in frondem crines, in ramos bracchia crescunt,
> pes modo tam velox pigris radicibus haeret,
> ora cacumen habet: remanet nitor unus in illa.
>
> > (*Met.* 1.527-529; 548-552)

> The wind exposed her body, the opposing breezes
> made her clothes move, and a light breeze made her
> hair fly behind her....When her prayer was barely
> finished, a down-dragging numbness seized her
> limbs, and her soft sides were surrounded with thin
> bark. Her hair was changed to leaves, her arms to
> branches. Her feet, recently so swift, grew fast in

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[2] Ann Thomas Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding the Concept of Metamorphosis," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 6, no. 3 (Winter 2000): 384, accessed April 3, 2015, doi:10.1007/s12138-000-0003-5.
[3] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 391-392.

> sluggish roots, and her head was now a tree's top.
> Her gleaming beauty alone remained.[4]

Although the sculpture does, in fact, represent this instant of transformation almost perfectly, it is not a purely objective portrayal of the tale which makes Bernini's work so remarkable; what is instead so crucial to the sculpture's Ovidian nature is the subtle insertion of transformation into nearly *every element* of the sculpture. Daphne's own body transitions from the rapid movements of the pursuit to the immobile and rigid form of a tree, while Apollo's face reveals the god's transition from lusty joy to confusion. The very experience of *viewing* the statue, some claim, is in itself a study in transformation: according to art historian Ann Thomas Wilkins, the statue originally stood near an entrance in its room at the Villa Borghese; because this arrangement compelled visitors to travel from the statue's rear to front, she asserts, the work in itself became a study in progressive transformation. From the visitor's original view at the rear, Daphne's figure would be all but invisible behind Apollo's own form. As the visitor moved around the sculpture, however, the nymph would have begun to appear, offering the viewer an almost live-action experience of the tale's critical moment of metamorphosis.[5] Some scholars tie this transformation of inanimate marble into vital human forms to yet another of Ovid's stories – that of Deucalion and the flood, in which stones cast by Deucalion himself metamorphose into a new human race to populate the Earth.[6] Regardless of whether such a connection is true or even plausible, however, Bernini has achieved an incredible feat of metamorphosis himself: by creating such a snapshot of the very instant of transition, in which Daphne's hair becomes foliage, her toes take root in the Earth, and her arms develop into branches, the static medium of sculpture becomes a narrative for Ovid's well-known tale.

In addition to these various visual iterations of the pervasive Ovidian idea of metamorphosis, the sculpture of *Apollo and Daphne* represents transformation in several other modes. The Latin inscription which rings the statue's base, although composed by Bernini's patron Maffeo Barberini rather than by Ovid himself, demonstrates the way in which the myth of Apollo and Daphne transforms its message based on contemporary context:

> quisquis amans sequitur fugitivae gaudia formae
> fronde manus implet baccas seu carpit amaras.
>
> Whoever, in love, pursues the joys of fugitive forms,
> fills his hands with leaves and bitter fruits.[7]

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[4] Frank Justus Miller, trans., *The Metamorphoses*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 39.

[5] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 391.

[6] Ibid., 405.

[7] Paul Barolsky, "Ovid, Bernini, and the Art of Petrification," *Arion*, 3rd ser., 13, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 158, accessed April 3, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737267.

Although these pithy lines recall the brief, moralizing statements which often conclude the episodes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, they more critically demonstrate the way in which Bernini's sculpture converts a pagan, Greco-Roman myth into an extolment of Christian virtue.[8] Such interpretation of Ovidian myth in a more contemporary, Christian context may have been demanded solely by Barberini (who later became Pope Urban VIII), but is worth examination in that it offers this clever statue yet another dimension of subtlety in its theme of metamorphosis.

In addition to this transformation of moralizing overtones, Bernini's work demonstrates yet another Ovidian principle that art should seem quite natural. This idea interestingly evokes Ovid's own tale of a sculptor and his work – that of Pygmalion and Galatea. In describing this man's efforts as a sculptor, Ovid's highest praise is that Pygmalion's work conceals its own artificiality (*ars adeo latet arte sua*, *Met.* 10.252). This principle, in turn, reappears in the work of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who seems to have taken this principle of lifelike art quite seriously. Most crucial to this idea is a seemingly insignificant portion of the *Apollo and Daphne* statue: its base. Behind the figure of Apollo, Bernini has sculpted two unobtrusive stones on the statue's foundation. Although these rocks play no meaningful part in the overall story of the sculpture, they are so remarkably lifelike that it is clear Bernini furnished a great deal of attention and care on their creation; the sculptor has, in fact, transformed rock into an imitation of itself.[9] In this way, by concealing his own art, Bernini has yet again inserted an element of Ovidian philosophy into his own work.

Housed alongside *Daphne and Apollo* at the Villa Borghese is another of Bernini's most widely-acclaimed works, *The Rape of Proserpina*. In a fashion similar to that of the *Daphne* statue, this sculpture, which depicts Pluto's abduction of the young Proserpina, employs Ovidian principles in its carefully crafted portrayal of a Greco-Roman myth. As in the case of *Apollo and Daphne*, this sculpture finds its parallel in the works of Ovid:

> paene simul visa est dilectaque raptaque Diti:
> usque adeo est properatus amor. dea territa maesto
> et matrem et comites, sed matrem saepius, ore
> clamat, et ut summa vestem laniarat ab ora,
> collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis,
> tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis.
>
> (*Met.* 5.395-400)

> Almost simultaneously was she seen and loved and
> carried away by the god: so precipitate was his love.
> The terrified girl called sadly for her mother and
> companions, but more often for her mother. And
> since she had torn her clothing at its upper edge, the
> flowers which she had gathered fell out of her

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[8] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 393.
[9] Barolsky, "Ovid, Bernini, and the Art of Petrification," 160.

loosened tunic; so much innocence was in her
youthful years.[10]

This scene obviously connects to Bernini's own depiction of the frenzied and
terrified Proserpina; although the sculpture lacks the flowers which Ovid
describes here (a symbol of the girl's transformative loss of innocence), a similar
passage in Ovid's *Fasti* confirms Bernini's faithfulness to the Roman poet's
interpretation of this story:

> ipsa crocos tenues liliaque alba legit.
> carpendi studio paulatim longius itur,
> et dominam casu nulla secuta comes.
> hanc videt et visam patruus velociter aufert.
> regnaque caeruleis in sua portat equis.
> ilia quidem clamabat "io, carissima mater,
> auferor!" ipsa suos abscideratque sinus:
> panditur interea Diti via, namque diurnum
> lumen inadsueti vix patiuntur equi.
>
> (*Fasti* 4.442-450)

> Proserpina herself picked dainty crocuses and white
> lilies. Intent on gathering, she, little by little, strayed
> far away, and by chance none of her companions
> followed her. Her father's brother saw her, and no
> sooner did he see her than he swiftly carried her away
> with his dusky horses into his own realm. She cried
> out, "Dearest mother, I'm being carried away!" and she
> tore her robe. Meantime a road is opened up for the
> god; for his horses are unaccustomed to the
> daylight.[11]

This idea of pursuit and subsequent abduction yet again evokes the idea of sinful
lust and its consequences, as in the inscription found on the base of the *Daphne
and Apollo* statue; in this instance, however, the beautiful young woman is not
so lucky as to escape the desire of her pursuer, and instead finds herself in the
Underworld as a consequence of Pluto's rapacity.[12] Consequently, although
Bernini quite faithfully depicts the tale of Proserpina's rape as told by Ovid, this
sculpture represents a transition from Roman myth to a moralizing Christian
message against the consequences of insatiable lust.

 Even more apparent in this sculpture than in that of *Daphne and
Apollo*, moreover, is the idea of art concealing its own artificiality; yet again,
Bernini transforms his art into a lifelike medium. Art critics offer particular

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[10] Miller, *The Metamorphoses*, 265-267.

[11] James George Frazier, trans., *The Fasti*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 1951), 221-223.

[12] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 396.

attention to the way in which Bernini has depicted the physical interactions of Pluto's and Proserpina's bodies; the most intriguing instance of such physicality is the way in which Pluto's hand seems to sink into the flesh of Proserpina's left thigh. This illusion of stone becoming flesh vividly recalls Ovid's own story of Pygmalion once more, wherein the form of his beloved Galatea suddenly transforms from cold marble to a warm body:

> et credit tactis digitos insidere membris….
> temptatum mollescit ebur positoque rigore
> subsidit digitis ceditque.
>
> <div align="right">(Met. 10.258; 283-284)</div>

> He caresses it with loving hands that seem to make an
> impress…. the ivory seemed to soften at the touch, and
> its firm texture yielded to his hand.[13]

By linking the *Rape of Proserpina* with the tale of Pygmalion, Bernini has inserted two transformations into a single statue: the myth of Proserpina has shifted into that of Pygmalion, and Bernini has himself become this unparalleled sculptor by transmuting cold marble into seemingly soft flesh.[14] As a result, although the storylines found in Ovid's work obviously play a crucial role in inspiring the subject matters of Bernini's sculptures, Ovid's ideal form of art (wherein the work conceals its own affectations) even more critically guides Bernini's *style* in sculpting.

The final statue to be examined in this study continues the pattern of a mythological duo in marble: Bernini's *Neptune and Triton*, although less well-known than either of the aforementioned sculptures, nonetheless displays significant characteristics of Ovidian influence. The pair of deities depicted in this sculpture does not correspond *perfectly* to any passage of classical literature; some scholars have suggested that this scene represents Book 1 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, wherein an irate Neptune calms the seas after a storm incited by the wind god Aeolus. This passage, however, features Triton only briefly, and nowhere does the text mention this god playing his characteristic conch shell. Thus, the passage to which Bernini much more likely turned for inspiration is yet again from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

> nec maris ira manet, positoque tricuspide telo
> mulcet aquas rector pelagi supraque profundum
> exstantem atque umeros innato murice tectum
> caeruleum Tritona vocat conchaeque sonanti

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[13] "The Metamorphoses," in *Perseus*, ed. Brookes More (Tufts University), accessed April 3, 2015, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0028.
[14] Paul Barolsky, "Bernini and Ovid," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 16, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 29, accessed April 3, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23204950.

> inspirare iubet fluctusque et flumina signo
> iam revocare dato.
>
> <div align="right">(*Met.* 1.330-335)</div>

> The anger of the sea subsides, when the sea's ruler lays
> by his three-pronged spear and calms the waves; and
> calling sea-green Triton, showing above the deep, his
> shoulders overgrown with shell-fish, he orders him to
> blow into his loud-resounding conch, and by that
> signal to recall the floods and streams.[15]

Although the Neptunian figure which Bernini depicts in his sculpture stands in a rather aggressive pose, an examination of textual evidence suggests that this passage is, in fact, that which corresponds most closely to the artist's sculpture. Investigation of the passage's context, too, hints that Bernini may have favored this scene over Vergil's. This excerpt from the *Metamorphoses* refers to Neptune's end of the deluge which only Deucalion survives. Readers in Bernini's era could hardly have failed to notice the correlation of Deucalion's tale with that of Noah in the Christian Bible; both stories convey the results of divine anger and utter destruction of the human race by torrential flood.[16] Yet again, Bernini has managed to transform the elements of a pagan, pre-Christian myth into a piece of art that subtly hints at Christian messages – in this instance, to beware the divine wrath of God.

Besides the two primary figures of Neptune and Triton in this piece, some critics propose that the complicated swirls of Neptune's cloak are intended to suggest the shape of a leaping dolphin. Although this may seem a far-fetched proposition, Ovid *does* insert dolphins into the aforementioned tale of Deucalion's flood:

> silvasque tenent delphines et altis
> incursant ramis agitataque robora pulsant.
>
> <div align="right">(*Met.* 1.302-303)</div>

> Dolphins dart amid the trees, meshed in the twisted
> branches, beat against the shaken oak trees.[17]

Ann Thomas Wilkins suggests that the odd, surprising appearance of this dolphin may connect to the many physical improbabilities found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or that perhaps it was intended as a direct link to the streaming fountain in which the sculpture originally stood.[18] Regardless of precisely *what*

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[15] "The Metamorphoses," in *Perseus*.
[16] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 405.
[17] "The Metamorphoses," in *Perseus*.
[18] Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding," 406.

this dolphin stands for, however, Bernini has accomplished an impressive, dual-layered metamorphosis: first, by reproducing the imposing figures of Neptune and Triton, he has transformed text into sculpture. Secondly, by developing this subtle and almost unnoticeable delphine shape, the sculptor has managed to transform the "cloth" of Neptune's cloak into an animal's "flesh." Consequently, Bernini's work *Neptune and Triton*, although less well-known than either of the previously-discussed works, epitomizes the vital influence which Ovidian texts and ideas held over Bernini's art.

　　　　Altogether, the sculptures of Gian Lorenzo Bernini display the overt influence of classical antiquity which was characteristic of this artist's day. In particular, Bernini's sculptures reflect the themes and ideas found in the extensive works of the Augustan poet Ovid. The manifestations of this influence, however, appear in numerous forms through Bernini's sculptures. Subject matter is one of the most obvious indications of Bernini's classical fascination, as his most well-known works feature such various heroes and deities as Aeneas and Apollo. More subtly, however, Bernini's sculptures reflect both his dedication to the eminent Catholic Church and his careful attention to Ovid's general philosophies of art. The sculptor's work *Daphne and Apollo* epitomizes the physical and emotional transformations apparent in Ovid's texts through its carefully-designed depiction of the very moment at which Daphne becomes a laurel tree. *The Rape of Proserpina*, in turn, primarily reflects Ovid's value of art concealing its own artificiality, because such details as Proserpina's yielding thigh recall the skill of Pygmalion in transforming his art into lifelike depictions. Finally, the sculpture *Neptune and Triton* indicates both Bernini's religious intentions and his skill in transforming subjects from one medium to another. Although Bernini undoubtedly drew from a variety of classical sources – both visual and textual – for inspiration and guidance during the sculpting process, it is clear that without the influence of Ovid's stories and ideas, this sculptor's work would have been drastically less complex and inspiring.

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MYTH AND THE MEMORY PLAY

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses analysis of the opening prologue and parodos of Euripides' *Bacchae* to inquire more broadly into questions about the applicability of narratology to drama. It offers a reading of the ways in which Dionysus' opening prologue relies on mnemonic devices associated with epic memory, and of the contrasts between Dionysus' and the chorus' memory. It argues that these moments of contrast are crucial to understanding the dual role that tragedy plays in collective memory: on the one hand as a reflection of other commemorative genres, and on the other hand as a device of collective memory in its own right.

Euripides' *Bacchae* opens with Dionysus narrating his arrival in Thebes, then summoning the chorus on stage.[1] They enter, singing the parodos. The subject matter addressed in Dionysus' prologue and the choral parodos is almost identical: Dionysus' birth, the Asian maenads' arrival in Thebes, the Theban maenads' departure for the hills, and the mythical etiology of the drum that the maenads beat as part of their cultic dance. The parodos conforms to all the formal conventions of a freestanding dithyramb (and bears a close resemblance to Pindaric fragment 70b).[2] As they sang and danced, probably equipped with some of the paraphernalia of Bacchic cult, and walking slowly into the orchestra, the chorus would convincingly have played the role of Asian maenads progressing into the city, as well as of Theban maenads progressing out. They would even have enacted the birth of Dionysus: "use[d] their equipment—torches, rhomboi, drums—to make present phenomena that belong above or beneath the earth: stars, thunder, lightning."[3] In fewer than three-hundred lines, we have been given two versions of the same story: once, through "oral narration," and a second time through "embodied action." What—if anything—do we learn from this redundancy? How do these two accounts relate to each other? Should the chorus be seen as acting out Dionysus' memories?

These formulations raise difficult questions about the relationship of 'action' to 'narrative' in Greek tragedy. Given that Greek tragedy tells a story through a combination of storytelling and enactment, can it be considered

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[1] E. R. Dodds, Bacchae, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), ad loc.

[2] Richard Seaford, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1996), 55-56.

[3] Seaford, Richard, "The Politics of the Mystic Chorus," in *Choruses Ancient and Modern*, ed. Joshua Billings, Felix Budelmann, and Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 267.

narrative at all? In a discussion of the role that narratology can play in the study of Greek tragedy, Francis Dunn distinguishes between two approaches: one which limits itself to "narratology in drama" and another which insists on the possibility of a "narratology of drama." The former operates within the more narrow conception of narratology as defined by Gérard Genette, for whom narrative required "the presence of a narrator." Its proponents study the inset narratives within plays, but not the narrative strategy of the play as a whole. Irene De Jong's application of narratology to messenger speeches[4] and Euripidean opening prologues[5] falls under this category. The latter, on the other hand, "is comprehensive."[6] It aims—often by analogy to "narratology of film" —to use narratology to better understand how a play as a whole communicates its 'version' of a 'story.' Gould, for instance, advocates this approach, positing the figure of an implied author on the grounds that drama—like, supposedly, all other forms of narrative—involves a 'discrepancy' between "story time" and "discourse time."[7] The 'implied author' is the agency behind that discrepancy.

Instead of pursuing either of these approaches, this paper will pursue a version of the approach that Dunn herself advocates. She suggests that narratology can be useful in doing careful readings of passages in which particular characters temporarily step in to play a narratorial role in relation to the action of the play as a whole. As examples of these homodiegetic narrators, she suggests the speaker of the Euripidean opening prologue[8] and the chorus.[9] The beginning of *Bacchae*, discussed in the openings of this paper, however, requires us to confront a problem that Dunn's article neglects: how tragedy's different homodiegetic narrators relate to each other.

I want to suggest that Dunn's methodology can be productively expanded by thinking about the relationship of Greek tragedy to collective memory. In *The Greeks and Their Past*, Grethlein proposes that—rather than treating historiography as the privileged genre of collective memory—we think about all genres as involving some "use" of the past, and distinguishing each on the basis of their distinctive contribution to collective memory. This approach is, as Grethlein himself shows in an analysis of Aeschylus' *Persians*, fruitful for the closer study of drama. But Grethlein elides the dual role of Greek tragedy in relation to memory; Greek tragedy both participates in its society's collective

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[4] Irene F. De Jong, *Narrative in Drama: The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-speech* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

[5] Irene F. De Jong, "Sophocles *Trachiniae* 1-48, Euripidean Prologues, and Their Audiences," in *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts*, ed. Rutger J Allan and Michel Buijs (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[6] Francis Dunn, "Sophocles and the Narratology of Drama," in Grethlein, Jonas, and A. Rengakos, eds. *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, ed. Jonas Grethlein and Antonios Rengakos (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2009), 1.

[7] John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 319-334.

[8] Dunn, "Sophocles," 5.

[9] Ibid. 6.

memory of myth (as Grethlein explains) and *also* reflects—through its allusions to many different poetic forms, religious practices, and political monuments—the varied and composite quality of that collective memory. As a consequence of this dual role, myth in Greek tragedy is often accessed—sometimes in conflicting versions—through characters' 'personal memory.' These transformations of what, in other genres, are the devices of collective memory, instead into the devices of personal memory can be carefully observed. Dionysus' memory of his birth makes subversive use of the mnemonic devices associated with epic memory in just this way. At the same time, insisting on tragedy's relationship to existing modes of collective memory allows its intertemporality to emerge; different characters stand in different relationships to the mythical past. Dionysus' opening prologue, side-by-side with the choral parodos, offers one such instance of the coexistence and contrast between two forms of memory.

Modern drama gave rise to the theoretical notion of the 'memory play' to describe plays in which the characters enact one character's memory: "Like the dramatic monologue, with which it has much in common, the memory play is one of those hybrid genres that cut across established generic categories of poetry, drama, and narrative. With their limitation to a single speaker who usually reveals key episodes of his or her life, the dramatic monologue and the memory play combine poetic diction with dramatic presentation and storytelling elements."[10] At first glance, the term seems helpful to explaining the opening of *Bacchae*. But the fact that—in the case of *Bacchae*—these personal memories are also myths implicates a whole other set of questions, forbidding any obvious distinction between personal and collective memory, or between personal memory and myth. Treating the opening of *Bacchae* as a memory play, by consigning the chorus to enacting the events of Dionysus' memory, ignores that Dionysus and the chorus access the mythical past very differently. In doing so, it elides the subtle tensions that in fact exist between the version of the mythical events narrated by Dionysus and the version enacted by the chorus. It treats memory as though it has an existence independent of being remembered, an extension of the fallacy that elevates one 'version' of the story to the status of 'fabula,' or 'reality.' Unlike personal memory, myth has an existence 'independent' of any one person's individual memory, but not independent of memory writ large. The chorus does not enact Dionysus' memories of his own birth; it cannot. Rather, the chorus itself remembers Dionysus' birth, and remembers the mythical etiology of the Bacchic tambourine. Its performance is the method whereby it itself remembers. Dionysus, as the Chorus leader, plays a role in the ritual that allows the chorus to remember; nevertheless, there are tensions between his memory and theirs.

Dionysus' opening prologue—both by its performance style and its contents—recalls rhapsodic performance.[11] Irene DeJong argues that, although

[10] Nünning and Sommer, 347.
[11] Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, trans. John Halliday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 74; Lowe, "Euripides," 270-71. Irene F. De Jong, "Sophocles," 27. De Jong writes, "If I would have to give a parallel for this kind of

they seem usually to be spoken on an empty stage, opening prologues nevertheless always have an implied audience whom the speaker repeatedly acknowledges: occasionally another character, but more often the audience itself. The specific linguistic acknowledgments of the presence of listeners are similar to those found in epic. More broadly, a poet alone on stage, in communication with an audience, summoning the mythical past to the present, evokes the performance style of epic. On the level of the opening prologue's content (and sometimes even formal properties, as in the case of the teichoskopia) the model is often explicitly Homeric: "The prologues also glance consciously toward epic, as the *Helen* does in its Odyssean features or the *Orestes* with its Odyssean motif of the day of Menelaus' return (53-56). The *Phoenissae* shifts surprisingly from Jocasta's narrative of Oedipus to a teichoskopia reminiscence both of *Iliad* 3 and of Aeschylus' *Septem*, with the Paedagogus playing Helen to Antigone's Priam (*Phoen*. 119ff)."[12] These allusions set up, from the very opening of the play, "tension between tragedy as continuity with epic (and other forms of mythical narration), and tragedy as interruption of that tradition by its new departures in both form and content."[13]

In the case of Dionysus' opening prologue in *Bacchae*, as in the case of the teichoskopia, I think we can find evidence of allusion to a particular narratological device employed by Homer. Dionysus recounts the story of his own birth by two distinct syntactic constructions in the opening lines of the prologue. In the first account of Dionysus' birth the prologue evokes the syntax of prayers or descriptions of cult objects; "ἥκω Διὸς παῖς τήνδε Θηβαίων χθόνα/ Διόνυσος, ὃν τίκτει ποθ᾽ ἡ Κάδμου κόρη" (1-2), the actor playing Dionysus announces. Dionysus transitions into his account of the birth with a relative pronoun (whose antecedent is himself) and temporal adverb: "Διόνυσος, ὃν τίκτει ποθ᾽"(2). "ὅν ποτε" is a common phrase in poetry and hymn; used "to introduce places of cult, list their powers, and tell legends connected with their birth,"[14] it sets the scene for entry into the mythical past. It is clear, then, that the passage is meant to evoke the transitions into the mythical past of other poetic genres, treating Dionysus like a cult figure or object. But it also has a very clear and particular narratological antecedent in Homer, the formula: καί ποτέ τις εἴπῃσι καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων/ νηῒ πολυκλήϊδι πλέων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον:/ ἀνδρὸς μὲν τόδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,/ ὅν ποτ᾽ ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ.[15]

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storytelling, by one speaker but with obvious acknowledgement of an audience, it would be the Homeric epics. It has often been remarked, from Plato in his *Ion* onwards, that the Homeric rhapsodes in fact were some sort of actors. Why would Euripides not have hit upon the idea to turn his prologue-speaker into some kind of rhapsode?"

[12] Charles Segal, "Tragic Beginnings: Narration, Voice, and Authority in the Prologues of Greek Drama," *Yale Classical Studies* XXIX (1992):108.
[13] Ibid. 109.
[14] Bruce Karl Braswell, *A Commentary on the Fourth Pythian Ode of Pindar* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 64-65.
[15] Homer, *Iliad*, 7.87-90.

The second half of Dionysus' account (5-10), however, suggests a different narratological model, the "wandering focalizer": "a 'man', 'traveller', or mere 'someone'…[who] wander[s] through the setting of the story or witness[es] an event as an anonymous focalizer."[16] ὁρῶ δὲ μητρὸς μνῆμα τῆς κεραυνίας/ τόδ᾿ ἐγγὺς οἴκων καὶ δόμων ἐρείπια/ τυφόμενα Δίου πυρὸς ἔτι ζῶσαν φλόγα,/ ἀθάνατον Ἥρας μητέρ᾿ εἰς ἐμὴν ὕβριν (6-9), Dionysus announces. Arriving at and perceiving his own monument (marked, just like τόδε σῆμα, by a first person deictic pronoun) Dionysus—on the one hand—appears as τις ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων, part of the reception context that epic imagines on its own behalf. On the other hand, in the first account that he gave of his own birth he has already cast himself in the syntactical role of the man whose legacy the monument is intended to preserve: ὅν ποτ᾿ ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ, part of the mythical past. Dionysus has appropriated one of the mnemonic devices of epic memory to the recall of his own personal memory. In epic the relationship between past and present maps onto a relationship between character and narrator; there are moments where this mapping is made less obvious, but—by and large—it helps to uphold the distance between the hic-and-nunc of performance and that of the 'fabula'. In using epic memory to remember episodes in his own life, Dionysus casts himself in both roles at the same time.

This appropriation of epic memory for Dionysus' own personal memory is effected not only by the dual role that Dionysus plays, but also by the particularities of the word order used to describe Dionysus' perception of the monument. The delay between Dionysus' perception of the monument (ὁρῶ δὲ μητρὸς μνῆμα) and his pointing towards it (by a first person deictic, implying a knowledge differential in his favor between him and his listeners) seems to suggest that Dionysus first remembers that the monument should exist, and then locates it physically in his surroundings. τόδε σῆμα, the Homeric formula, by contrast, leaves no room for such a delay.

In a similar vein, a good deal of syntactic ambiguity and confusion characterizes Dionysus' second account of his own birth: τόδ᾿ ἐγγὺς οἴκων καὶ δόμων ἐρείπια/ τυφόμενα Δίου πυρὸς ἔτι ζῶσαν φλόγα,/ ἀθάνατον Ἥρας μητέρ᾿ εἰς ἐμὴν ὕβριν (7-10). Dodds and Seaford suggest we understand the problematic anacoluthon between the smoldering ruins and the ἀθάνατον ὕβριν as a relationship of loose apposition. If the syntax in the case of the μνῆμα enunciates the process whereby the μνῆμα yields information, the lack of any syntactical relation between the burning palace and the hubris suggests something about the obscurity of this process—as though certain steps of the connection may be thought in Dionysus' head but are never specified out loud. The monument may evoke particular, strong images; the connections between them are, presumably, known to Dionysus, but they are left the reader to infer. These syntactic delays and oddities suggest discrepancy between Dionysus' location and organization of events in his own memory, and his mapping of those events onto his surroundings, and into a temporal order that distinguishes the present moment

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[16] Irene F. De Jong, *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 69.

from the past. There is a danger here of slipping into a developmental narrative, in which different poetic genres correspond to progressively more developed states of consciousness. But the point is not that tragedy permits its characters to have more developed personal lives, but rather the fact that the coexistence in tragedy of many different forms of memory makes each character's access to myth appear relative. Myth is no longer solely dependent on any one individual memory. 'Personal memory'—in contradistinction to collective memory—emerges from this relativism, and not from the fact that tragedy reflects a more advanced or more aware form of consciousness than other poetic genres.

The parataxis of Dionysus' account of his own birth is particularly striking since it stands in such stark contrast to his emphasis on causation in the rest of the opening prologue. Very few of the events Dionysus narrates are told in temporal sequence; instead, they are told in a string of explanatory relationships that bridge past and present. "ἵν᾿ εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς" (20), "ἐπεί" (26), τοιγάρ (32), γὰρ (36), ὧν οὕνεκ᾿ (47), ὧν οὕνεκ᾿ (53) all serve to reiterate the connection of the Maenadic activity that Dionysus incites to the Thebans' denial of his divinity. Only the story of his own birth, announced in the prologue's only genuine historical presents (2,42) is exempt from this back-and-forth between past and present.

Dionysus' description of maenadic activity (24-25,32-36) is broken into two parts, so that his own participation in Dionysiac ritual is not made directly the cause of the women's madness. He shouts and dresses himself in cultic apparel (24-25), *since* the sisters of his mother deny his divinity (26-30); *therefore* he has stung them, driving them—frenzied—out into the hills (32-36). The prologue evinces a total lack of interest in the mechanism of his control over the Bacchants. Although he uses cultic language (especially in 24-25) it is *not* Dionysus' words in the prologue that compel the Maenads to dance, but the words of Bromios that they quote to themselves during the *parodos*: "Ὦ ἴτε βάκχαι,/ ὦ ἴτε βάκχαι" (152-153), "εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος" (165). ("εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος" was a real cry, shouted during Dionysiac rituals, attested in sources outside of *Bacchae*). This emphasis distinguishes the opening prologue from any other representations of maenadic activity in *Bacchae*. The first messenger speech represents maenadic activity as a sequence of events. The chorus is interested in the etiological explanations of Maenadic costume and behavior.

In fact, these differences in the way in which memory is represented go hand in hand with subtle differences to the content of memories. There are discrepancies between Dionysus' and the chorus' versions of myth. Dionysus tells a short version of his own birth, omitting the juicier second half of the story, in which—after his mother is killed by jealous Hera's thunderbolt—he is brought to term in Zeus' thigh. The chorus by contrast, focuses on that second half, devoting most of the antistrophe (and first stasimon, 520-530) to narrating the birth of Dionysus to what happens after his mother's death. In the aetiology of the tambourine, Dionysus attributes considerably more importance to his own role in the invention of the tambourine than does the chorus.

The chorus' dithyramb sets up the relationship of past to present very differently than Dionysus' 'epic' narration. Dionysus' account uses the word

τύμπανα—a word that had clear associations with the cultic prop that the chorus in the Great Dionysia was most likely carrying. The chorus by contrast uses a bizarre periphrasis: βυρσότονον κύκλωμα τόδε. Seaford suggests one possible reason: "periphrastic reference to musical instruments in the narrative of their invention implies that they are as yet unnamed."[17] This story is told from the vantage point of the past, with the limitations to knowledge that vantage point entails. Yet the "μοι" (125) is a projected indexical; no matter which chorus sings this dithyramb, the drum will always have been discovered on its behalf (this is clear especially from the use of a first person deictic to describe the tambourine). Access to the mythical past is through the isomorphisms between the 'original' performance of ritual and every subsequent performance of that ritual. The connection between Dionysus' birth and maenadic activity, for instance, is not a narrative connection, but the visual parallel between crowning someone with snakes and crowning someone with ivy.

Reading Dionysus' birth and the musical etiology in terms of two contrasting processes of memory (Dionysus' personal memory and the chorus' memory) makes us more sensitive to the deep ambiguities in *Bacchae*'s relationship to the mythical past. It is easy to fall into the trap of believing that the main tension in the first half of *Bacchae* is between Dionysus' account of his own birth, and the account that is popular in Thebes. But insisting too strongly on the conflict between Dionysus and the Thebans overlooks the fact that there are discrepancies even between Dionysus' and the chorus' version of his own birth. Indeed, Dionysus' version of his own birth sounds more like the version that Teiresias will later recount to the Thebans. The discrepancies between the god's and his celebrants' memory of myth introduces a much more unsettling tension than the simple fact of human ignorance and stubbornness can.

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[17] Seaford, "Bacchae," 163.

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DESIRE AND ABILITY
The Case for Appetite

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ABSTRACT

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates places great importance on the structure of the soul, breaking it down into three warring factions—appetite, spirit, and reason— that correspond to the structure of the ideal city. However, upon further examination, this conception of the soul and its application to the conception of a "perfect" city, Kallipolis, may be too narrow a view of human beings. When trying to identify where in the human soul Socrates places desires like intellectual achievement and innovation as well as artistic endeavor (different types of appetite), one instead finds inconsistencies in Socrates's definition of appetite. How can it be that appetites, which are called ruling desires, are meant to rule over appetite itself? Socrates's conception of the soul must be expanded to accept appetite as a wide range of good desires, which would perhaps lead to the acceptance of more appetites in the ideal society that would allow for the admission and appreciation of beauty in art and poetry.

Plato's *Republic* attempts to answer the question of what justice is and how it can be achieved both within and through an individual in society. Socrates, the dominant voice in the dialogue, uses the comparison between the human soul and a city to examine what justice looks like on macroscopic and microscopic levels; justice in the individual is reflected by justice in society, and vice versa. An education appropriate to both the ruling desires and capabilities in one's soul is of the utmost important to achieving this just, well-functioning city because of how it prepares individuals to fulfill their natures and perform their proper roles in society. In the *Republic* Socrates creates elaborate systems of education and class sorting based on his understanding of the human soul, but his is a limited understanding that does not account for certain cases, as when one's ruling desires and abilities conflict. This conflict demonstrates that he understates the importance of appetite, and consequently his systems of education and class separation must be altered in order to achieve the kind of justice he has defined.

Socrates's vision of justice is based on the idea that each person in society is born with a specific, unchangeable nature, or soul, that classifies one into a particular class and societal role to create a well-functioning city in which all citizens are as happy as they can be not individually, but within society as a whole. Socrates reaches this conclusion by looking at justice within the individual and compare it to what justice would like on a macroscopic, societal scale "to see if the larger entity is similar in form to the smaller one" (369a). As

is discussed later in the text, the form of the soul involves segmentation into three aspects, reason, spirit, and appetite, which translate to three classes in society: philosopher-kings, auxiliaries, and producers (wage-earners and pay-masters). This city-soul analogy demonstrates the tight relationship Socrates sees between the nature of a human being and their place in society; in his mind the structure of his society must mirror the structure of the human soul.

Socrates posits that justice is achieved when each member of society is educated to perform a specific role well according to their nature, or which of the three aspects of the soul "rules" over them. He therefore defines justice as "doing one's own work and not meddling with what is not one's own," (433a-b). Philosophers should have nothing to do with crafting, and craftsmen should have nothing to do with passing judgment, etc. The way these individuals are formed to understand and perform their role in society is crucial, which is why Socrates spends so much time discussing the differences in education between citizens with differing natures. Education is the middleman between the soul and justice, and because it must be tailored to fit the person's soul in order to achieve justice, a misunderstanding of the human soul leads to improper education and incomplete justice. Achieving justice, then, depends on the correct conception of the soul. If the conception of the soul is wrong, education will not lead to the fulfillment of one's nature, and justice will therefore not be achieved in the way Socrates imagines.

Socrates's conception of the soul is a tripartite model based on a hierarchy of three aspects, reason, spirit, and appetite, each of which has its own desire. Each person yearns for the fruits of one of these three aspects of the soul, which means that "there are three primary types of people, philosophic [learning-loving], victory-loving, and profit-loving" (581c). In this model, each "love" (or desire) of something is what rules the person and determines their nature, or which aspect of the soul dominates them. "Philosophic" refers to the rational aspect, which seeks truth and reason, "victory-loving" refers to spirit, which seeks honor, and "profit-loving" refers to appetite, which seeks food, drink, and sex. Having distinguished between different types of desires, Socrates then imposes a value judgment on each of them, in which reason is a "better" nature than appetite (431a). When put into this kind of hierarchy, appetite represents the lowest, basest, most animalistic drives of humanity. Those people whose souls are ruled by appetite have the "worst natures" and are deemed "inferior people" (431c-d) because of their desires for earthly pleasures. Meanwhile, a love of learning or a love of honor show that one's soul is ruled by reason or spirit, respectively, which demonstrates one's worthiness for the two guardian classes, the philosopher-kings and auxiliaries, respectively.

But upon further examination, this tripartite "desire model" of the soul is incomplete, for citizens must also be *capable* of fulfilling their roles; prospective guardians in particular must exhibit certain traits in order to be worthy of guardian education. Socrates lists several specific traits that someone must *not* have in order to become a philosopher-king, such as petty-mindedness and a "cowardly and illiberal nature," (486a-b). They also cannot be a liar (485c), a money-lover (485d), a slow learner, or a forgetful soul (486c). There are strict

criteria, then, for the abilities one must have in order to be accepted to this class, even though Socrates's city-soul analogy would suggest that the structure of one's soul (identifying one's ruling desire) would be enough to place one into a social class. In pointing out the capabilities one must have to be a philosopher, it would seem that having a desire for truth and learning is not enough on its own, and this poses an important question: if the dominant aspect of the soul is what determines one's role in society, is each aspect of the soul a *desire* or a *capability*?

Socrates assumes that capabilities and desires are one and the same, but this is a dangerous assumption to make. When Socrates asks, "Isn't it generally true that the types concerned with the care of the body partake less in truth and being than do those concerned with the care of the soul?", he assumes that people who have the capabilities for philosophizing will not be appetitive, and that people who are appetitive or spirited will not be lovers of truth (585c-d). From experience we know this isn't always so. For example, a person may have a strong desire to seek truth but not have the intellectual capability to form or follow logical trains of thought and come to the right conclusions. In fact, Socrates's interlocutors may be perfect examples of this kind of person. These men are people who are clearly seeking truth as evidenced by their engagement with Socrates in the act of philosophizing, so they would be considered learning-loving people, but it seems that they often come to the wrong conclusions, and Socrates must correct them. Thrasymachus is an especially good example of someone who holds strong opinions about philosophical matters, such as the concept of justice versus injustice, but cannot follow Socrates's arguments nor convincingly communicate his own. What happens to such a person in the tripartite class system? He cannot be explained by Socrates's model of the soul since their desire for truth would make him unsatisfied in the producer class, while his incapability to reason properly would make him a dangerous philosopher-king. A conflict between abilities (which Socrates says are fixed from birth) and desires leaves these types of people unable to do what is proper for themselves within the education and class system of Kallipolis, and so they are unable to achieve justice. There must be a separation between desires and abilities, for it is possible to have one, but not the other.

The problem in Socrates's conception of the soul may be that, in the "ruling desire" model, Socrates recognizes that there are three types of desires corresponding to each aspect of the soul, but later defines appetite—one aspect of the soul—as desire itself. While discussing the different attributes of each type of soul, Socrates says, "In just the way a city is divided into three classes, the soul of each person is also divided in three…the three also have three kinds of pleasure, one peculiar to each, and the same holds of appetites and kinds of rule," (580d). Just as there are three kinds of pleasures (truth, honor, and food/drink/sex), there are desires for each of these pleasures which are the "ruling desires" that were discussed earlier, but Socrates refers to them here as "appetites." However, this poses a problem: how can it be that each aspect of the soul has a type of appetite associated with it when one of those aspects of the soul is appetite itself? Appetite can't represent both desire for food, drink, and

sex *and* desires for higher things like truth unless appetite *is* desire itself, encompassing all kinds of desires, low and high. If there are truly different desires corresponding to truth, honor, and food, drink and sex, then it seems that they must be dissociated from each of the three parts of the soul and all be attributed solely to one aspect of the soul, appetite. This would create a model of human nature that focuses more on the different functions of each aspect of the soul rather than the desires for each. Instead of organizing the three aspects of the soul in a hierarchy, each is now an equally good and necessary part of our nature. Without desire for honor, spirit still exists, but it can be thought of as an instinct for survival. Reason is still needed to curb appetite, keeping us from excess, but appetite in return fuels reason. Appetite provides the driving force for philosophers because of the pleasures associated with intellectual discovery and understanding. It is a system of checks and balances between them, a relationship of mutual critique and support in which they simultaneously push and pull at one another.

Models of the Soul

	Desire	Ability
Reason	for learning, truth	to reason, come to logical conclusions
Spirit	for honor, victory	to fight, make war
Appetite	for food, sex, money	to desire

In light of the change in the way the soul must be viewed, how does this change education correspondingly in order to achieve justice? This may seem like a simple reorganization and redefinition of Socrates's fundamental ideas about the soul, but this new view of the soul has important implications when it comes to the structure of society. It can no longer be said that there are only three types of people and that people must be categorized into three distinct social classes, since each person's nature and individual justice comes from the intersection between their desires and abilities. Additionally, it allows for a more comprehensive view of the human soul because appetite can now encompass a wide range of desires, not just the three that corresponded to the three aspects of the soul. The desires for beauty and for creation, for example, were not reflected in the soul and in society before, but perhaps can be appreciated (maybe through a new "role" in society) in the new version. Appetite is viewed in this light as necessarily good, and education must change in a way that encourages all appetites instead of drying them up (except perhaps for the unlawful ones, like

eating one's own children). This encouragement applies to low desires, like those for food and sex, as well as high ones, like the desire for intellectual discovery, but education should also teach the use of reason to reign in these appetites, for an excess of any appetite is not a good thing. This broader understanding of the soul opens up room for many different types of people to achieve justice within themselves and society through the expansion of roles beyond the three that Socrates describes in the *Republic*. What exactly these new roles are and how they translate to the structure of society (perhaps in a class system, perhaps not) can be left to another discussion, but it is safe to say that from this new vantage point, a greater number of people would benefit from a view of the soul and a corresponding education that considers both desires and abilities in determining their best role in society and thus the achievement of justice.

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THE ALTERNATE TRADITION
Cassandra, an "Anti-Epic"

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ABSTRACT

Epics are often described as long poems that were originally narrated orally. They are a direct representation of the ancient classical world, but are still revered even now. This genre can be defined by a variety of characteristics, such as themes of adventure and glory, dominant roles of the gods, and centering on the legends of heroes. Christa Wolf's 1983 novel *Cassandra* recounts the tale of the Trojan War from the Trojan perspective using the female voice of Cassandra, a woman who is labelled as mad and is repeatedly ignored. However, in order to tell her tale through a female protagonist, Wolf must use the structure of the anti-epic, as this would not be possible in classical tradition. To create this anti-epic, Wolf utilizes narrative misconstruction by beginning the novel at the end of the plot line rather than *in media res*; she also dismisses significant classical themes by stripping Achilles of his *kleos* and heroic features, undermining masculinity, depicting war as meaningless, revoking *xenia*, omitting divine intervention, and restructuring oral poetry. It is with these literary tools that Wolf is able to empower the female voice and present the alternate tradition.

Ancient Greek and Roman "authors" such as Homer and Virgil have contributed to the classical tradition through the composition of their literary works, most notably, their epics. Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, as well as Virgil's *Aeneid*, are quintessential heroic tales of journeys, battles, and conquests. These three pieces of literature, along with other works throughout history, share certain thematic and structural similarities that are used to define the genre of epic. Although Christa Wolf's *Cassandra* is based on ancient epic characters and an epic battle, it can be argued that this work is not an epic, but in fact, an anti-epic. Supported by the misconstruction of its narrative and its dismissal of significant classical themes such as *kleos*, heroism, masculinity, war, *xenia*, divine intervention, and oral poetry, Christa Wolf juxtaposes her novel *against* the ancient literary tradition of epic. Ultimately, this allows Wolf to create a narrative for her protagonist, Cassandra; she is then able to tell the story of the Trojan War not only from the Trojan perspective, but from a woman's perspective, thereby empowering the female voice - something the classical tradition failed to accomplish.

One of the most well-known characteristics of the epic genre is the plot structure of *in medias res*, Latin for "in the midst of things."[1] By delving into the plot line immediately, this literary tool both engages the reader and sets the tone of the entire work from the very beginning of the story. Homer's *Iliad* reads, "Rage: Sing, Goddess, Achilles' rage, Black and murderous, that cost the Greeks Incalculable pain…Begin with the clash between Agamemnon—The Greek warlord—and godlike Achilles."[2] This opening passage tells the reader exactly what the story is going to be about, and also begins with the major focus point of the plot, the opposition of Agamemnon and Achilles. It is this confrontation that fuels Achilles' anger and later motivates him to fight in the war, therefore unraveling the story. Virgil's *Aeneid* begins, "I sing of arms and of the man, fated to be an exile, who long since left the land of Troy and came to Italy to the shores of Lavinium; and a great pounding he took by land and sea at the hands of the heavenly gods because of the fierce and unforgetting anger of Juno."[3] These lines portray the entire purpose of Aeneas' journey, his arrival to Lavinium—not only to find a new home for those exiled after the burning of Troy, but to establish what would later become the Roman Empire. Both of these passages are great examples of epics constructed using *in medias res* because they capture the essence of the muse, set up the narrative, and create the overall tone of the work. In direct contrast, *Cassandra* begins at the end of the plot line, "It was here. This is where she stood. These stone lions looked at her; now they no longer have heads. This fortress—once impregnable, now a pile of stones—was the last thing she saw."[4] This specific passage precedes Cassandra's death, and is also paralleled at the end of the novel, representing the end of her life, and the conclusion of her story. Wolf intentionally begins her story at the end rather than at the middle of the action in order to recount the events that led up to this situation, because it is Cassandra's progression that is most important in this novel. The focus of the plot is placed on Cassandra's impending death as well as her experiences throughout the Trojan War, and therefore it is logical to use the ending as a starting point to retell the story from Cassandra's perspective.

Ancient warriors who fought in battle typically sought after one thing besides victory - *kleos*, or "heroic glory."[5] In Homer's *Iliad,* Achilles says, "My mother Thetis, a moving silver grace, Tells me two fates sweep me onto my death. If I stay here and fight, I'll never return home, But my glory will be undying forever…."[6] Achilles craves the eternal glory that was earned after dying in battle, the type of glory that meant that your name would never be

[1] Kevin O'Nolan, "Homer, Virgil and Oral Tradition," *Bèaloideas* 37 (1969): 126.

[2] Stanley Lombardo, trans., *The Essential Homer* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), *Iliad* 1.1-3, 7-8.

[3] David West, trans., *The Aeneid* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 1.1-5.

[4] Christa Wolf, *Cassandra* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Inc., 1984), 1.

[5] Charles Segal, "Kleos and its Ironies in the Odyssey," *L'Antiquité Classique* 52 (1983): 22.

[6] Lombardo, *Iliad* 9.423-6.

forgotten. Charles Segal writes, "In *The Iliad*, a warrior's kleos is more important than life itself, as Achilles' ultimate choice makes clear."[7] Achilles would rather die on the battlefield and be remembered a hero than go home without his glory. In Wolf, there are many instances in which Cassandra wishes that Achilles not receive his *kleos*: "May his name be accursed and forgotten,"[8] and, "If only I could wipe out the name, not merely from my memory, but from the memory of all living men. If I could burn it out of our heads—I would not have lived in vain. Achilles."[9] A warrior's *kleos* meant a great deal in the classical tradition, and Wolf intentionally uses the female character of Cassandra to strip Achilles of his glory, not only to weaken him as the ideal hero, but also to revoke a major thematic element found in epics. Cassandra's deep hatred for Achilles because he killed her brother, Troilus, justifies her desire to prevent him from receiving *kleos*.

By detracting from Achilles' glory, Wolf is ultimately extinguishing Achilles' purpose for living and his heroic position. There are various instances in the novel in which Wolf transforms the perception of Achilles from the great Greek warrior into a vicious and animalistic creature who is ruthless in his killing: "Achilles the Greek hero desecrates the dead woman…even the Greeks felt that Achilles had gone too far."[10] Although there are moments in *The Iliad* where Achilles kills, his actions are justified, and the deaths are not unforgivable. Achilles is the embodiment of the strong and valiant Greek warrior, and is often accompanied by the epithet "swift-footed,"[11] while Wolf chooses to refer to him as "the brute": "Then Achilles the brute came. The murderer came into the temple, which darkened as he stood at the entrance."[12] There is vast distinction between the Achilles described in the classical tradition and this savagely violent person that Wolf depicts as a "murderer." By destroying all of the virtues that Achilles represents, Wolf ultimately de-synthesizes the ideal classical hero, and then goes on further to displace the role of men in general.

Most of the great epics are focused completely around the lives and tales of men, and although there are brief mentions of women, these women rarely stand on their own. Nevertheless, they have strong narrative voices. Cassandra claims that "all men are self-centered children,"[13] and seems to have a disliking for most of the men in the story, excluding Aeneas and Anchises, who are both compassionate and understanding towards her. There are various instances in which Wolf interestingly blurs the line of power in *Cassandra*, most straightforwardly through Hecuba. Hecuba is the queen of Troy, as well as Cassandra's mother, and she is an example of a powerful and respected woman in the novel. Cassandra says, "Night after night he used to go in to my

[7] Segal, "Kleos and its Ironies," 22.
[8] Wolf, *Cassandra*, 25.
[9] Ibid., 9.
[10] Ibid., 120.
[11] Lombardo, *Iliad* 1.66.
[12] Wolf, *Cassandra*, 74.
[13] Ibid., 9.

often-pregnant mother, who sat in her megaron, in her wooden armchair, which closely resembled a throne, where the king, smiling amiably, drew up a stool."[14] This quote well defines the relationship between the king and queen of Troy in the novel. It is Hecuba who is sitting in "her megaron," a room traditionally used for meetings (specifically, court meetings). This indicates that not only is Hecuba present where the council meetings take place, but it is referred to as "her" megaron, further implying that the meetings held there are, in a way, hers. There is also a clear distinction between the armchair that resembles a throne which Hecuba sits on, and the "stool" that Priam sits on, thus creating the image of the powerful wife and her husband, rather than the authoritative king with his wife by his side who is so commonly seen in the classical tradition. In addition, this quote also portrays Hecuba's role as a woman, for she is described as "often-pregnant," therefore exemplifying that she is able to embody both political power and fulfill her role as a mother simultaneously. Cassandra later further exclaims that, "The palace guard barred Hecuba the queen from taking part in the sessions of the council. Now (I thought when I heard), now order in the palace is collapsing…."[15] Cassandra's faith in her mother proves that Hecuba is truly the one that has the intelligence and skill to run Troy, not her husband, Priam. This role reversal of men and women is unique to this novel, and would not be found in a classical epic.

Along with the negation of *kleos* mentioned earlier, Wolf treats the topic of war in a similar way. Cassandra says, "We were not allowed to call it war."[16] She can see no purpose in this war, especially when she realizes that the object that they are fighting over, Helen, does not actually exist, but is a phantom.[17] In the classical epic, war is often glorified: "When a young man is killed in war, Even though his body is slashed with bronze, He lies there beautiful in death, noble."[18] This death is seen in a positive light. Wolf purposefully strays from the classical plot line in this novel in order to make a point—that they are fighting for nothing, and that this masculine concept of war is not as hyped-up as it is thought to be. In the ancient world, war and death are commonly characterized as "beautiful" and "noble," but rather than removing the topic of war completely, Wolf instead chooses to display war as meaningless and destructive, once again flipping the portrayal of a classical concept, and adding to the construction of her anti-epic.

Another common theme in epics, especially Greek epics, is that of *xenia*. *Xenia* is defined as "guest-friendship." and refers to the "honorable treatment of guests and hosts"; it is "guaranteed under the highest authority, that of Zeus himself."[19] The guest-host paradigm that *xenia* embodies is

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[14] Ibid., 13.
[15] Ibid., 92.
[16] Ibid., 71.
[17] Ibid., 69.
[18] Lombardo, *Iliad* 22.80-3.
[19] Laura M. Slatkin, "Homer's *Odyssey*," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John M. Foley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 319.

representative of Greek culture, and is clearly depicted in Homer's *Odyssey*: "How many times have you enjoyed the hospitality of others, Hoping that Zeus would someday put an end To our hard traveling? Unyoke their horses And bring our new guests in to the feast."[20] Wolf violates this idea by revoking the term altogether: "At the head of the table were Priam, Hecuba, and Menelaus our guest: henceforth no one was supposed to call him our 'guest-friend'…[We were to use] a new word. In exchange for it we gave away the old word "guest friend."[21] By getting rid of this phrase, Wolf is deviating from the customs of these ancient civilizations, and is therefore, in a sense, establishing her own. The novel, *Cassandra*, as a whole is about moving away from the old tradition and embracing the new tradition, and Wolf's dismissal of *xenia* exemplifies this perfectly. Simultaneously, by getting rid of *xenia*, Wolf is also dismissing the gods, since *xenia* is directly linked to Zeus, the most powerful of all the gods.

Epics by Homer and Virgil flourished in a time where what is now labeled as "myth" functioned as religion. Those who read these works worshipped the gods on a daily basis, and thus the incorporation of these figures into stories was typical because they were so well known. Gods and goddesses possessed powers and abilities above those of humans, and it was common for them to play a role in the lives of mortals. For example, in *The Iliad,* Hector says, "I hear the gods calling me to my death…Athena tricked me. Death is closing in And there's no escape. Zeus and Apollo Must have chosen this long ago, even though they used to be on my side. Well, this is fate…."[22] The goddess Athena has directly presented herself to Hector and then tricked him, causing his death at the hands of Achilles, ultimately resulting in the Greeks winning the war. In *Cassandra*, there is very little divine intervention and not many references to the gods at all. There are no detailed conversations between the gods and the mortals, merely the mention of the gods in passing. The character of Cassandra goes as far to say, "For that time, I had stopped believing in gods,"[23] eliminating the gods altogether. Wolf chooses to omit the gods from her novel because she is writing in a time where the worship of these powerful pagan figures no longer exists. Her interpretation of Cassandra's character is much more modern, and therefore by removing the gods from the plot line, she is not only adding to her anti-epic, but is also reaffirming that her representation is contemporary, and speaks to an audience greater than just those of the classical civilizations.

One of the most fascinating aspects of ancient epic was the fact that they were told primarily by male bards and passed down orally from generation to generation, with the story changing a little bit each time.[24] The power of the

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[20] Stanley Lombardo, trans., *The Odyssey* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 4.35-9.
[21] Wolf, *Cassandra*, 55.
[22] Lombardo, *Iliad* 22.325, 328-31.
[23] Wolf, *Cassandra*, 98.
[24] Minna S. Jensen, "Performance," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John M. Foley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 47-9.

voice and storytelling was revered for centuries until written literature took precedence. In oral poetry, there is a direct flow of words from both the speaker and a connection to the muse that inspires him. Conversely, during the entirety of this novel, there are no references to the muses, the narrator is a female, and she often feels like she is ignored, or unable to speak her mind, saying, "Only much later did I learn to silence myself; what a useful weapon."[25] Rather than using her words, Cassandra believes that it is her silence that will be to her benefit, once again opposing the epic tradition that emphasizes storytelling. As Cassandra nears her death at the hands of Clytemnestra, she says:

> Send me a scribe, or better yet a young slave
> woman with a keen memory and powerful voice.
> Ordain that she may repeat to her daughter what
> she hears from me. That the daughter in turn may
> pass it on to her daughter, and so on, so that
> alongside the river of heroic songs this tiny rivulet
> too may reach those far away, perhaps happier
> people who will live in times to come.[26]

This passage directly places Cassandra's narrative side by side with those "heroic songs" of the past, and here the most important variation from the classical epic is so vividly seen - a female narrator. Cassandra asks for a female slave, who will tell the story specifically to her daughter. Wolf's choice of words and gender is deliberate, as she wants to remind the reader of the importance of the female voice. Although Cassandra fails to use her words throughout the novel, here, as her death approaches, she wants her story to be known, and while she does not get the scribe she desires, it is Wolf who then tells her story, occasionally alternating between the phrases "she" and "I," thus intertwining the role of the narrator and the author.

Wolf constructs her novel in opposition to the great and timeless Greek and Latin epics in order to make a very specific point—that the story of a woman, through the eyes and voice of a woman, cannot be told within the genre of classical epic. Ancient epics were stories about men, their journeys, and their triumphs, and although *Cassandra* is about these same epic heroes, Wolf must deviate from the structure of the epic in order to center her story on Cassandra, a Trojan princess. By breaking down the pillars on which the epic genre is supported, Wolf is then not only able to express the narrative of a protagonist from the losing side, the Trojans, but can give this protagonist a female voice. It is pertinent to the story that Wolf resurrects these classical themes in order to deconstruct them, and it is only by mentioning them that she can present the inverse. By rejecting classical topics such as *in medias res*, *kleos*, heroism, masculinity, war, *xenia*, divine intervention, and oral poetry, Wolf can create this anti-epic that tells the story of Cassandra, a woman who

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[25] Wolf, *Cassandra*, 47.
[26] Ibid., 81.

was caught in the midst of an epic battle, and who was often cast aside and unheard. Cassandra's female voice is both intriguing and inspiring, and through Wolf, she is able to tell the story of the Trojan War in a way that the great classical epics never could. It is the structure of the anti-epic that allows for the presentation of the alternate tradition, an illumination of opinions and ideas that the classical tradition failed to acknowledge—the female voice.

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Resources

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