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Titelbild: Moa Taylor-Hodin, Alisha Iyer, Eirini Papantoniou, Pollyanna Cohen, Mercedes Bromwich, Faidra Faitaki, Cora Burridge, and Cara Fay as Maenads (from bottom right, clockwise),

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Vorwort der Herausgeberinnen

Vielen von uns wird erst Anfang Dezember klar, dass Weihnachten auch dieses Jahr kommt, nun wirklich nicht mehr fern ist und beinahe schon wieder ein ganzes Jahr verstrichen ist. Viele von uns stürzen sich in den Trubel des Geschenke Kaufens, um endlich an den Feiertagen und in der Zeit zwischen den Jahren, die auf so einzigartige Weise von allem Alltäglichem befreit ist, zur Ruhe zu kommen, Familie und Freunde zu treffen, Kekse und Kuchen zu backen und essen, Bilanz des alten Jahres zu ziehen und Pläne für das kommende zu schmieden.

Auch uns als Herausgeberinnen von **eisodos** geht es ähnlich. Auch wir stellen fest, schon wieder erscheint eine Winter-Ausgabe von **eisodos**, die insgesamt sechste Ausgabe, die das zweite Jahr von **eisodos** beschließt. Auch als Herausgeberinnern bleibt uns daher, wie im letzten Jahr, über die getane Arbeit in diesem Jahr zu resümieren und zu Neuem vorzustoßen. Wir beenden mit dieser Ausgabe unsere Reihe der Theaterkritiken und danken Dr. Julie Ackroyed für ihre Rezensionen, die uns mehr als einmal haben wünschen lassen, selbst die Londoner Inszenierungen zu sehen.

Wir bedauern es, auch in dieser Ausgabe kein Interview veröffentlichen zu können. In der nächsten Ausgabe wollen wir diese liebgewonne Rubrik wieder mit Leben füllen. Wir freuen uns aber, Ihnen in dieser Ausgabe gleich zwei studentische Beiträge aus Großbritannien zu präsentieren: Elizabeth Haynes untersucht einige Gedichte Catulls mittels Sprechakt- & Präsenz-Theorien, Maria Haley schreibt über Senecas Medea und die Auswirkungen auf die Rezeption, wenn man die verschiedenen Aufführungsmodalitäten betrachtet (Lesedrama oder als Inszenierung auf der Bühne).

Zu Neuem vorzustoßen nehmen wir uns für die nächste Frühlingsausgabe vor, die unser drittes Jahr als Herausgeberinnen von **eisodos** einleiten wird. Wir haben nämlich festgestellt, dass uns nach zwei Jahren Arbeit der Fokus von **eisodos** ein wenig abhanden gekommen ist. Vor der ersten Ausgabe hatten wir diesen dahingehend definiert, dass es den Artikeln in **eisodos** darum gehen möge, die theoretischen Grundlagen und Bedingtheiten der Interpretation von antiken Texten zu reflektieren. Dies ist auch in vielfältiger Weise geschehen und wir danken allen **eisodos**-Autoren für Ihre individuelle Ausdeutung des **eisodos**-Programms.

Gerade diese Vielfältigkeit hat uns zur Einsicht gebracht, dass der thematische Schwerpunkt von **eisodos** auf jeden Fall weiterhin ein interessanter ist, aber keineswegs leicht zu fassen. Für uns ist es daher an der Zeit, den Fokus von **eisodos** neu zu durchdenken. Über unsere ursprüngliche Intention hinaus, die theoretische Basis von Literaturinterpretationen offenzulegen und zu diskutieren, möchten wir nun also zum einen allgemein darüber

nachdenken, was genau das Verhältnis von Theorie und Praxis in Literaturinterpretation ausmacht, und, zum anderen und spezifischer, was dies für **eisodos** und seine Ausrichtung bedeutet. Wir stoßen daher in der nächsten Ausgabe eine Diskussion darüber an, was einen Artikel in **eisodos** ausmachen soll und was dieser leisten solle. Wir möchten alle **eisodos**-LeserInnen dazu einladen, an dieser Debatte teilzunehmen. Schreiben Sie uns – als kurzes Statement, Essay oder Leserbrief – Ihre Ansicht zur Ausrichtung von **eisodos** und dem Verhältnis von antiker Literatur und (moderner) Theorie an debatte@eisodos.org.

Jetzt aber freuen Sie sich zunächst auf die vorliegende Ausgabe, die wir Ihnen sehr ans Herz legen. Uns bleibt, Ihnen eine schöne Weihnachtszeit zu wünschen. Kommen Sie zur Ruhe, tanken Sie Kraft und Ideen für das kommende Jahr und bleiben Sie uns gewogen.

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Hear No Evil, See No Evil

The Infanticide of Seneca's Medea on Stage and in Recitation

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1. Scholars from the nineteenth century to the present day have channeled most of their rhetorical and analytical efforts into convincing readers that Seneca's tragedies were intended for recitation and, too often, for recitation alone.[1]

Yet given the progressive case for the staging of tragic episodes, based on Nero's relationship with the theatre and the performative potential of some Senecan scenes,[2] it seems more fruitful to pick up where Fitch and Boyle have left off: to consider how Seneca's *Medea* may have been performed in either mode and how this could have affected the reception of the play amongst a contemporary audience.[3] After all, recitation and performance provided two different ways in which the Roman audience could experience Seneca's tragedy and thus enhance its popularity, in turn, ensuring its textual reproduction and survival.[4]

Therefore, this study will consider how the infanticide scene in Seneca's *Medea* may have been produced in both a full spoken recitation in private and as staged episodes for public performance in the Neronian era.[5] For not only do these modes seem the most likely forms of performance, but they are also the most disparate, and thus will best demonstrate how the different modes could have altered reception of the tragedy overall. Particular attention will be paid to Medea's infanticide monologue and the infanticide dialogue between Medea and Jason, because they were the best-established features of Medea's iconography by Seneca's time, so how these scenes were represented would have been crucial to conveying the character of Seneca's Medea (for scenes resembling the infanticide monologue see Figs. 1–3, which are roughly contemporary with Seneca). Moreover, each passage relates Medea's state of mind and suggests visual details which might serve both

[1] Zwierlein (1966). Pratt (1983) 132–50. Edwards even considers Seneca's purported distaste for actors, in contrast to the authority of orators, as an indication that his tragedies were to be recited, Sen. *Ep.* 11,7. (1994 p. 84). Cf. Fitch (2000) 1–3 for full outline of this tradition.

[2] Suet. *Nero* 11; 12; 20; 21; Tac. *Ann.* 16,4–5; Dio 61,20,3–5; Suet. *Vesp.* 4,4; Plin. *Pan.* 46,4; Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* 5,7; 2,7–21; 3,14–20. Cf. Bartsch (1994) 4–6, Hollingsworth (2001) 137 and Fantham (1982) 48–9.

[3] Fitch (2003) 11; Boyle (2006) 192.

[4] Cf. Hine (2000) p. 43 on manuscript tradition, Harrison (2000) 138 on private reading and performance and Batsone (2009) on oration and stage performance in Roman society.

[5] Sen. *Med.* 740–848, 893ff.

to build tension and to characterise Medea as an avenger; they can therefore provide useful examples within the scope of this study.

2. Let us first look at the infanticide monologue (Sen. *Med.* 893–977). Creon has ordered Medea into exile, Jason has supported this decision in a heated exchange with Medea and she has sent her sons with a poisoned mantle for Creusa, their stepmother and Jason's new wife. Medea's sense of betrayal reaches fever pitch and, understanding her husband's love for their children, as he refuses to let her take them into exile, she contemplates the ultimate form of revenge and self-destruction: the infanticide.

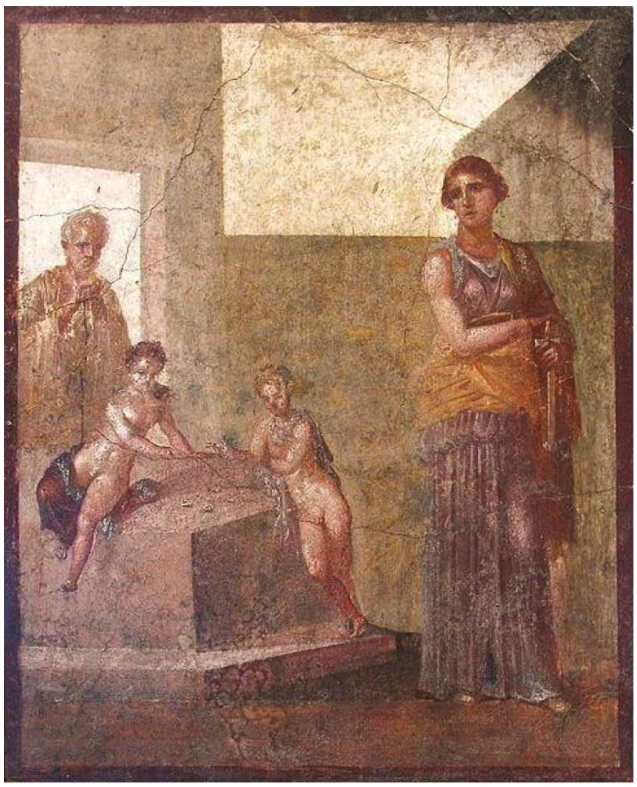

Figure 1: Medea contemplates killing her sons, as we can see she is concealing a sword and looking on anxiously (Braganti (2009) 316–7).

The infanticide scene opens in a monologue that could be represented well either in recitation, to emphasise how Medea articulates the thought process behind her imminent crime, or in performance, to present key visual cues such as her interaction with her sons and her tormented reaction to the Furies. Seneca writes Medea's speech almost entirely as a soliloquy, allowing the listener an insight into Medea's state of mind as she contemplates killing her children. Here Seneca's Medea summons, not the chthonic powers, but rather her own emotions: her *anima* and *ira*.[6] She strikingly addresses these emotions as separate agents with rhetorical questions and imperatives: *quid anime cessas? sequere felicem impetum [. . .] quaere poenarum genus.* ("Why are you slacking, my spirit? Follow up our successful attack [. . .] search out some exceptional kind of punishment.")[7]

So as with the *thumos* faced by Euripides' Medea, Seneca's Medea also disassociates herself from the emotions that drive her revenge.[8] This becomes central to her *psychomachia* as she begins to condemn the *demens furor* that creates her self-division.[9]

In performance this monologue would be filtered through production and gesture to fulfil or deny the audience's expectations of Medea's character from preceding versions of the myth, which would be less easily manipulated were Seneca's *Medea* simply read.

[6] Sen. *Med.* 916 and 918.
[7] Sen. *Med.* 895 and 898.
[8] Cf. Gill (1987) 25.
[9] Sen. *Med.* 930.

Therefore, reciting this initial monologue would allow the audience to focus on Medea's submission to her emotions, whereas staging her alongside other characters, even if stood aside from her silent children, could detract from Medea's internal conflict by implicating the consequences for others rather than for her and her alone. So were Medea's soliloquy recited by a single orator this would emphasise her *psychomachia* as she cries: *variamque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor diducit?* ("Why is anger leading me one way, love another?")[10] In so doing, the recitation would emphasise Medea's role as an anti-Stoic character destroyed by her own anger. Thus in recitation, the focus on Medea's psychology would draw attention to Seneca's Stoicism, which leads him to rebuke those who submit to their emotions.[11]

The power of Medea's anger leads her to engage with the Furies both as agents of her own revenge and agents avenging her previous fratricide. Gill's description of this scene as a "hallucination" seems viable, because an orator could certainly present Medea's reaction through gesture.[12] In fact, Cicero suggests in his treatise *De oratore* that an orator should perform the same skills as an actor, but to a higher standard,[13] whilst Tacitus suggests that under Nero, professional orators would also recite poetry.[14] So contemporary evidence suggests a single speaker would be able to convey Medea's reaction to the Furies.

Alternatively, were Medea's monologue staged, the Furies may have entered the stage to tip the scale of Medea's *psychomachia*.[15] As Goldberg points out, staging the Furies is common in Senecan tragedy; both spirits and Furies speak in *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*.[16] But in *Medea* both the Furies and Apsyrtus' ghost do not speak, whilst they could have simply arrived silently, the timing of their physical interjection seems inappropriate. For whereas in *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon* the Furies appear at the outset and establish the revenge motif, the Furies in *Medea* arrive in the midst of the protagonist's psychological monologue.[17] Moreover, Cicero's description suggests that Romans were familiar with both the Furies physical and psychological intervention, as products of a guilty conscience.[18] Therefore, Apsyrtus and the Furies seem to appear in Medea's mind alone, as seen in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*.[19] So Seneca's audience would witness Medea recoiling back on stage whilst grasping her sons, as the dialogue demands their presence in a stage performance.[20]

This would allow Medea to be staged with her sons alone, which in comparison to the

[10] Sen. *Med.* 937–9.
[11] Sen. *De ir.* 1,9,3; Sen. *De ben.* 7,20,3. Cf. Epict. *Dial.* 2,17,19–23.
[12] Gill (1987) 36.
[13] Cic. *De. or.* 1,124–5. 156. 251.
[14] Tac. *Dial.* 11.
[15] Sen. *Med.* 952; 958–71.
[16] Goldberg (2000) 211; Sen. *Thy.* 1–121; Sen. *Ag.* 1–56.
[17] Sen. *Med.* 952–76.
[18] Cic. *Pis.* 46; 365; 44-6.
[19] Aesch. *Cho.* 1049–50.
[20] Sen. *Med.* 945. Cf. Eur. *Ba.* 576 for reaction displaying action.

recitation would balance Medea's pain against her sons' innocence. This seems particularly poignant because, unlike Euripides, Seneca does not indicate the presence of the children earlier in the play except to deliver the poisoned mantle.[21] Whilst Aristotle had criticised Karkinos' lost *Medea* as lacking pathos for not featuring the children,[22] it seems that Jason has assumed paternal custody, because when Medea asks his permission to take the children with her into exile, Jason's love for them forbids it (*pietas vetat*), suggesting that he has the children in is care.[23] As such, critics such as Guastella and Abrahemsen have argued convincingly that the absence of the children is an anachronistic use of Roman divorce law, whereby Jason would have primary custody, were the marriage legitimate.[24] Jason seems to break this concord by taking the illegitimate children due to his love for them, which in turn provides the perfect revenge plan for Medea. So the impact of the sons' presence is heightened by their previous absence and juxtaposed with the madness of their mother as she talks to her internal Furies.

Ultimately, this monologue could effectively be presented either in recitation or in stage performance. Recitation would emphasise Medea's isolation and her tragic determination to kill her sons, exposing her character in a full recitation of the play in which she is centred. On stage, this episode would isolate a tragic climax that would appeal to contemporary tastes for spectacle, whilst also providing a psychologically complex character through Medea's speech, throughout which an actor might demonstrate his skills.

Overall, each performance mode would filter the audiences' perception of Medea through speech, gesture and context, be it part of the whole narrative or staged alone, be it an isolated speech or witnessed by the children. Were this play read privately, Medea's character would become an issue of reader reception, which would be shaped wholly by each individual's prior knowledge of her character in myth, rather than how a performer is presenting her in this particular adaptation.

An orator, for example, could dictate whether Medea would weep, whether she would look down in shame, reel in anger, or do both intermittently, dictating the emphasis of Medea's dilemma. An actor could alienate Medea in a barbarian costume, or don an anachronistic Roman costume to make her appear more sympathetic to a contemporary audience, allowing this scene to be yet further manipulated by costume and staging. A reader, however, could dictate any or all of these things in their conceptualisation of Medea.

But although Fantham prefers reading as an optimal way to experience Senecan language, it is difficult to suppose that reading would isolate this language aside from the

[21] Sen. *Med.* 843–5.
[22] Aristot. *Rh.* 2,23,28.
[23] Sen. *Med.* 544.
[24] Guastella (2001) 212. N. b. Abrahemsen (2014) 116, notes the perversity of this arrangement, given that Medea and Jason's marriage is not legitimate by the standards of contemporary Rome, so the illegitimate children would be with the *barbara*, i.e. Medea.

trappings of performance, given the thriving performance culture of the time and the reader's invitation to imagine this speech, presented as it is, in a dramatic manuscript.[25] Yet the process of reading detracts from the force and immediacy we could expect of a spoken or staged performance, despite their different dramatic emphases.

3. Unlike Medea's monologue, her ensuing dialogue with Jason (Sen. *Med.* 977–1027) would have been harder to represent in recitation. In order to distinguish the dialogue and Medea's asides, this issue could be alleviated were there a second speaker to enable a dramatic reading of this dialogue. But both Pliny and Juvenal suggest a single speaker would deliver a recitation, typically the author, thus it may be the case that various gestures, stance and intonation were used to distinguish different characters, as in the *libretti* of contemporary pantomime performance.[26] There is no reason to suppose that a single orator would not be theatrical in his reading, particularly as Cicero aligned his skills with those of an actor.[27] However, reciting these interactions would surely garner less pathos than staging the interaction of a cowering nurse, a scornful Jason and a resolute Medea shown by several actors.

The dramatic timing of the murders is also tricky to convey in recitation. Fitch's suggestion that the first son is killed when Medea promises to appease her brother's shade *victima manes tuos placamus ista* (with this sacrifice I placate your shade)[28] seems accurate, not least because the boy's death is confirmed at 974, as she declares *caede incohata* (now the killing has begun).[29] It seems the second son is alive up until line 1008 as Jason protests *unus est poenae satis* (one boy is enough to punish me), and at line 1018 seems to be offering himself in exchange for the remaining son: *Infesta, memet perime!* (Kill *me*, violent woman!).[30] Therefore Fitch's placement of the second murder at 1019 after Medea states *misereris iubes* (you bid me have pity) would amplify the cruelty, but also the defiance of the act itself, here before the father, as Medea concludes *bene est, peractum est* (Good, it is finished.).[31]

Whilst the timing is implicit in the dialogue it could have been made clearer through pauses and gesture in recitation to maximise dramatic timing. Cicero suggests that orators should have *gestus paene summorum actum* (the bearing of the most consummate

[25] Though Fantham favours reading Seneca's plays as the most satisfactory mode, there is no evidence to suggest that the manuscripts available would clarify the entrances, exits and the distribution of dialogue that are at issue in performance; this is not the case in the 'codex Etruscus' of c. 1093 AD. Falkner discusses how the purpose of copying tragic manuscripts shapes the way they are written and transmitted effectively, though her discussion focuses on Greek tragedies scribed in the Hellenistic period. (2002 pp. 344 ff.) For embedded stage directions in Roman comedy consult Brown (2007) 175–82, Frost (1988), Reynolds (1983) 378–9 and Bain (1977) 156–171.

[26] Juv. *Sat.* 1,1–6; Plin. *Ep.* 3,18,4. Cf. Zanobi (2008) 229.

[27] Cic. *De or.* 1,124–5; 156; 251. Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10,5,6 where Quintilian speculates on the potential limitations of oratory in comparison to acting.

[28] Sen. *Med.* 970–1. Fitch (2003) 431.

[29] Sen. *Med.* 970–4. N. b. this timing is also affirmed in Boyle's (2014) translation.

[30] Sen. *Med.* 1008 and 1018.

[31] Sen. *Med.* 1019.

actor), but Quintilian specifies that an orator should use only natural gestures rather than gestures imitative of action.[32] Thus, if recited in accordance with these contemporary conventions, an orator would not mime Medea's stabbing of her children as a pantomime actor may have done, which may blunt the dramatic force of the infanticide.[33]

Yet visually, the potential dramaturgy of this scene may well have been imagined amongst an elite audience attending a recitation, as frescoes of Medea's contemplation have been found in Pompeii and Herculaneum (see Figs. 1–3[34]). Within the dialogue of the play itself Jason suggests Medea's elevation onto the *frons scaenae*: *en ipsa tecti parte praecipiti imminet* (look there she is, leaning over us from the edge of the roof).[35] So although recitation lacks the visual impact of a theatre performance, the audience would be able to visualise key aspects such as Medea's dominant, elevated position based on the dialogue and thus appreciate the metatheatrical nature of the murder. Indeed, when Medea climbs atop the roof the most important audience is not Seneca's listener, but Jason, as Medea realises on his arrival: *derat hoc unum mihi, spectator iste* (such crime as I did without him was lost).[36]

Figure 2: Medea contemplates killing her sons, she may be holding a dagger her left hand, but the image somewhat is distorted by her blue shawl (Braganti (2009) 239).

Thus, as Erasmo suggests "theatricality replaces theatre as characters become their own audience."[37] The dialogue between Medea and Jason could also convey this power dichotomy and distinguish the change in speaker were it performed by a single narrator—particularly if, like the performers of Roman pantomime, he changed position to indicate

[32] Cic. *De or.* 1,128; Quint. *Inst. orat.* 11,3,88. Cf. Dutsch (2002) 260.

[33] Zanobi (2014) 137 goes as far as to suggest that miming the infanticide, as a pantomime performance would garner more *pathos* than a staged slaughter. Whilst considering the influence of contemporary pantomime helps to contextualise Roman tragedy, the physical presence of the sons seems an important contrast to the imagined Furies were this scene staged thus, in this case, mimicry seems deficient.

[34] Cf. Vout (2012) for full discussion on Medea in Roman artwork.

[35] Sen. *Med.* 995.

[36] Sen. *Med.* 992–3.

[37] Erasmo (2004) 121.

a new speaker.[38] Jason's strained weeping voice as he pleads with Medea to spare their second son could easily be contrasted against Medea's frenzied cries of triumph.[39] Thus Medea's position in literary tradition is brought to the fore and she becomes the canonical witch of tragedy in anticipation for her defining *scelus*—the infanticide itself.[40]

This theatricality is again reflected in Medea's infamous self-assertion *Medea nunc sum: crevit ingenium malis* (now I am Medea: my genius has grown through evils).[41] In this respect, Seneca's Medea seems to become her own canonical character, and much of this metatheatrical role-play is elicited in her dialogue. Tarrant suggests that this kind of intertextual role-play "was probably suggested to Seneca by Ovid," as Hypsipyle vows *Medeae Medea forem*, (I will be Medea to Medea) in Ovid's epistle to Jason.[42] However this seems reductive, because when Seneca's Medea asserts her character it is not just a role to be played, as seems to be the case with Ovid's Hypsipyle, but it is a point of no return in her characterisation.[43] Not only does Medea become the Euripidean version of herself, she becomes the villain Jason has forced her to be. Seneca has made this clear in Medea's aside as Jason approaches: infanticide is a recovery of all he had taken from her.[44] So, as Medea has it, all that remains is for Jason to witness the monster he has made.[45]

Overall, in recitation the emphasis of these scenes is on Medea's self-identification through language; as Motto and Clark suggest, Seneca's tragedy is closer "to declamations, to elegiac laments," in this case because Medea's monologues "develop and explore the theme of a single mood."[46] Recitation places emphasis on Medea's oscillation between *amor* and *ira* as an anti-Stoic tragic heroine and the power of her language to explore and satisfy these passions.[47] However, the effectiveness of the infanticide dialogue in recitation relies on the audience's ability to imagine it by recalling contemporary artwork and the orator's ability to communicate the dramatic timing of the boys' murders and the change of speaker in the ensuing dialogue.

Alternatively, in order to consider the staging of the infanticides this potential display of onstage slaughter must be reconciled with Seneca's own views on public displays of slaughter on the gladiatorial games. Only then can we consider staging to have been a viable concern for Seneca when he wrote the infanticide scene. As Wistrand points out, Seneca's accounts of spectacles in the arena are ambivalent.[48] In Seneca's *Seventh Epistle*,

[38] Zanobi (2008) 119.
[39] Sen. *Med.* 1002–5; 1008; 1018–21.
[40] Sen. *Med.* 907, 932–3.
[41] Sen. *Med.* 910.
[42] Tarrant (1995) 222 on Ov. *Her.* 6,151.
[43] Sen. *Med.* 923: 933–4; 1016.
[44] Sen. *Med.* 982–94.
[45] Sen. *Med.* 994.
[46] Clark / Motto (1988) 72.
[47] Sen. *Med.* 868.
[48] Cf. Wistrand (1990) 2.

for example, we see distaste for the spectacle of death at the games, yet more particularly for the negative impact it has on the spectator claiming *Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desidere* (nothing is more damaging to good character as the habit of lounging at the games).[49] Therefore, Seneca seems to have been unimpressed by gratuitous horror in the arena and the relish it was met with by the audience. But the idiosyncratic horror of Seneca's tragedy is a fictitious warning against the dangers of submitting to anti-Stoic emotion and it is, as we shall see, performable on the Roman stage.

Were the infanticide staged, the first child seems to be killed on the *pulpitum* as Medea cries *victim manes tuos placamus ista* (with this sacrifice I placate your shade), suggesting a sacrificial slaughter on the altar.[50] Having restrained her living son, most likely now holding him at sword point, Medea would then have dragged the body to the *scaenae* roof, as suggested by Jason's claim that she leans over a *praecipiti.*[51] Though Fantham finds this logistically unlikely, we should remember the actor need only drag the body into the *scaenae,* wherein both sons could ascend unseen and be brought out again for her final confrontation with Jason.[52] However the staging of Medea throwing down the body of her second son seems less likely, as this would presumably require the substitution of a dummy, as seen in Greek tragedy.[53] But for a Neronian audience accustomed to seeing the mutilation and torment of *real* bodies and the discarding of *real* corpses in the arena, this substitution would be obvious and might jeopardise the tension of the scene. Yet if we look at the Latin more closely, the imperative Medea uses when compelling Jason *recipe iam natos, parens*, can be translated as "accept," "receive," or as in the Loeb, "recover" which rather suggests Medea simply leaves the children behind to be retrieved.[54]

As Beacham argues, Medea would have been able to exit the roof of the public theatre on a *pegma*, a suspended wooden platform, to recall Medea's chariot, as such a device is attested in contemporary literature.[55] What Beacham fails to explain is just how different the use of the *pegma* would have been from Euripides' use of the *mechanē*. In contrast to the function of *deus ex machina*, which assimilates Medea with divine power in Euripides' tragedy, the *pegma* was typically used for gladiatorial triumph in Roman spectacle.[56] Thus this staging would elicit Boyle's theory on the performative duality of infanticide "as a gladiatorial slaughter before Jason and a sacrificial slaughter to placate her own anger,"

[49] Sen. *Epist.* 7,2,5.
[50] Sen. *Med.* 971–2.
[51] Cf. Bieber (1961) 151ff.
[52] Fantham (1982) 36.
[53] Mastronarde (1990) 265 suggests dummies were most likely used on the chariot of Euripides' Medea, but this seems less likely for a Roman production given that the audience is accustomed to seeing corpses.
[54] Sen. *Med.* 1024. See *OLD* s. v. "*recipere.*" Fitch 2002 Loeb translation: "Now recover your sons as their parent."
[55] Juv. *Sat.* 4,121–2; Suet. *Nero* 12. Cf. Beacham (1992) 180.
[56] Suet. *Claud.* 34; Suet. *Calig.* 26.

because of the location of the murders.[57] But above all, this form of staging would also incorporate the metatheatrical outlook of Seneca's day: Medea performs a sacrifice for Apsyrtus' shade, she performs a gladiatorial triumph before Jason and she performs a dire warning on the excesses of passion to Seneca's audience when placed onstage.

Staging the infanticide in this way would also clear up the issue of dramatic timing which seems to blunt the impact of a recitational performance. Although, as discussed above, gesture and dramatic pause could have been used to indicate the timing of the sons' deaths, this could not replace the dramatic effect of seeing them killed onstage: a distinct digression from Euripides' off-stage violence.[58] The duality of the sacrifice is also underscored by the first person plural *placamus*, which suggests that, through infanticide, Medea destroys both her sons and *herself* in order to avenge the wrongs she has done and the wrongs done to her. By staging Medea alone with her sons as she slays one at the altar, the force of this address to her unseen brother is heightened; not only does Medea sacrifice her son, she sacrifices her role as a mother to her role as a sister.

On the whole, staging this extract of Medea in the public theatre would have increased remarkably the tension created by the dramatic timing of the infanticide. In recitation, capturing the heat of Medea and Jason's exchange might have been possible; but this mode may not have produced the same impact as seeing the actors engaging in stichomythia face-to-face, and the logistics of representing the murders would also be difficult. This could also be the case were the scene read, as there is no evidence to suggest that the change of speaker would be altogether clear, nor that there would be any directions as to where and when the boys are killed. Thus, if read, this extract would lack the immediacy of recitation and the vocal delivery of the characters' pain, without necessarily clarifying the logistical issues that would be a problem in recitation.

But staging these episodes, either separately or as a whole, would allow the audience to see Medea's wild appearance, her gestures of pain and her supremacy over Jason as she ascends the *skēnē*. Most importantly, the dramaturgy of the infanticide that is suggested in the dialogue would amplify Medea's motivation for the infanticide as a sacrificial retribution on the one hand and a gladiatorial coup on the other: as an offering to redeem her role as the daughter and sister, and as a severance of her role as the *coniunx* (wife) and the *mater* (mother).[59]

4. The duration and intensity of these scenes reflects Medea's transformation as she washes away crimes against her paternal family with the blood of her own family. Whether staged together as an infanticide episode, or delivered in full in recitation of the play, within the infanticide scenes Medea herself undertakes a performance before Jason to fulfil her role as avenger.

[57] Boyle (1997) 132.
[58] Eur. *Med.* 1236; 1294.
[59] Sen. *Med.* 982–5; 1009–13.

It seems that scholars are justified in promoting recitation as a performance mode in so much as Medea's 'Roman' rhetoric is comfortably embedded into the plot. But recitation would struggle to convey the tragic timing of the infanticide which would reduce the impact of Medea's speech; the performative gestures attested by Cicero and Quintilian could only do so much to convey these horrors in comparison to the advantages of staging. So although a recitation would relate the intricacies of Medea's motivation for revenge, her *psychomachia*, without visual distraction, it would fall short of fully emphasising the symbolic nature of the infanticide that could be represented on stage.

Figure 3: Medea contemplating the murder of her sons.

Though we cannot provide concrete evidence for the staging of Seneca's tragedies, neither can we definitively rule them out on the basis that recitation was popular. Nor can we ignore the fact that, as tragedies, they demand some contextualisation by the actor, orator and the reader; thus, championing reading as the ultimate way of experiencing Seneca is misleading, and as we have seen, reading seems ineffectual in comparison with performance. The contemporary evidence suggests that episodes of Seneca's *Medea* could have feasibly and effectively been presented as a tragic spectacle: not simply of murder and malice, but as spectacles of Medea's passion, incorporating the fury and the filicide that preoccupied the Neronian era.

In recitation the monologues of Seneca's tragedy provide opportunities for himself, or perhaps other reciters, to show their proficiency in Roman oratory by displaying Seneca's rhetorical structure and arguing from another's perspective convincingly, whilst presenting an adaptation of the play in full for more general critique. However, scenes that demonstrate fast-paced action and intense debate between characters, such as the infanticide dialogue, would lack the necessary visual tension in a full recitation and appear as a consequence of the climactic *psychomachia*, rather than the climax of the tragedy itself.

Yet in performance, the spectacle of Medea's *psychomachia* as it anticipates her infanticidal crescendo appeals to the theory of this scene being staged as an episode from the infanticidal monologue to the end, that the visual significance of the sacrificial killing to come may be emphasised by Medea's interaction with her children. In a staged episode of the infanticide, from conception to execution,[60] Medea's battle with her family is the climax as she looks down on Jason and kills her sons; by contrast, Medea's battle with her emotions would

[60] Sen. *Med.* 893–1027.

appear as the climax in a full spoken recitation.

The work of a writer praised by his contemporaries,[61] Seneca's tragedy can only be fully appreciated by considering how the influence of contemporary pantomime and spectacle enhanced its versatility, rather than simply equating rhetoric to recitation. For although, as we have seen, recitation and staging each alter the presentation of Medea, they both fulfil the purpose of Roman performance in Nero's era by providing opportunities for the performer to showcase his talent, be it spoken or staged, and in turn shape the audience's reception of the *Medea*.

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List of Illustrations

Catullus the Ventriloquist

Physical Appropriations of the Mouth and Voice of the Roman Reader

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1. Catullus seems to have had something of an oral fixation. Many of his poems focus directly on someone's mouth, but he also indirectly focuses on mouths in poems which discuss or create silence, or those that imitate conversations between Catullus and other characters which the reader is apparently 'overhearing'. However, Catullus' fascination with the mouth could be said to extend beyond the page. In a culture where poetry was often read aloud,[1] he uses his reader's real mouth and voice as a device by which to talk about mouths and voices. This mouth-within-a-mouth concept has already been discussed in the context of sexual invective, in the form of a mouth (called the *os impurum*) which has been befouled by oral sex or fæcal matter and contaminates the person who owns it with legal *infamia.* The majority of previous scholarship focused on metaphorical appropriations, but even that which has discussed literal appropriations has focused entirely on the appropriation of the reader's mouth, and left aside the simultaneous appropriation of the reader's voice. To shed new light on old ground, this essay will primarily discuss the real, tangible ways in which *os impurum* poems and non-sexual performative poems affect a reader's mouth and voice with an aim to showing the implications of a bodily reading of poetry.

Studies in Speech Act theory, reading aloud, and especially the recent work of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht on Presence Theory analyse the physical effects of reading upon the body and support the idea that written words can appropriate the voice of the reader when read aloud. We see this in the dramatic style and performative effect of poem 42, which essentially turn readers into actors. Thus, Catullus does more than silence his readers metaphorically: he physically appropriates their *os* (understood as both mouth and voice), filling it with filth, sex, and even with his opinions. Catullus lowers his readers to a more bodily, performative sphere which is enjoyable, yet profane. For this reason, even in jest, Catullus leaves them at the mercy of Roman *infamia.*

[1] For the most part, this essay does not discuss the issue of silent reading in antiquity, and assumes that, while it was not impossible to read silently (see Knox [1968]), most poems discussed could have been spoken aloud at least some of the time. Stevens (2013) 6 suggests considering Catullus' as a hybrid style: "We may thus understand Catullus's poetry as recommending itself for mixtures of both oral performance and silent reading, as well as responding to such mixtures, whose complexities have yet to be completely teased out."

Several relevant yet undiscussed literary theories that analyse the real effect of words support a wider study of Catullus' mouth poems.

J. Svenbro draws several conclusions about reading in Greece. He first concludes that the nature of the reader-writer relationship is like the pederastic paradigm, seeing the reader (who reads aloud) as the *eromenos* and the writer as the *erastes*,[2] saying:

> "By making available his vocal apparatus, an ... 'intimate' organ ... the reader puts himself into a passive role similar to that in a pederastic relationship. By reading it, he is subjected to the inscription."[3]

Ancient sources underpin this idea that, in reading, the reader was violated by the words of the writer, for example, in this graffito:[4]

> amat qui scribit, pedicatur qui legit
> qui ascultat prurit, pathicus est qui praeterit
> ursi me comedant et ego verpa[m] qui lego[5]
>
> The one who writes loves, the one who reads is buggered
> The one who hears is aroused, the one who passes by is submissive
> May bears eat me and I, who read, eat a penis.

And this *priapeum*:

> Cum loquor, una mihi peccatur littera; nam T P dico semper
> blaesaque lingua mihi est.[6]
>
> When I speak, one letter is confused by me; for "T" you I say as "P"
> I bugger always and my tongue is lisping.

If spoken words commandeer the reader's voice, and put words in their mouth, then certain types of utterance are more susceptible to appropriation. In Speech Act Theory, J. L. Austin proved that certain utterances can be both descriptive and performative. For example, in the context of a marriage ceremony, saying "I do" is the actual act of marrying[7]. Acknowledging the idea of performative utterances opens a new category for some of Catullus' poems: those which perform the very act they describe. Daniel

[2] Svenbro (1993) 198. In Ancient Greece the *eromenos* was the younger male lover, the *erastes* the adult male in the socially accepted erotic relationship.
[3] Svenbro (1993) 3.
[4] Fitzgerald (1999) 50.
[5] CIL 4.2360
[6] Vergilian appendix 7.
[7] Austin (1975) 6.

Selden examined the "illocutionary force of the utterance and its perlocutionary effect"[8] in Catullus. The illocutionary force is what Catullus intends to do with his words, but Selden draws attention to the importance of the other, real effects these same words have: the perlocutionary effect. He describes how Catullus "shifts critical attention from what his work reveals to what it does and how it operates as a captation, a seductive force or lure that emerges in the act of reading."[9]

Thus, we have a Roman belief and practice of putting embarrassing words in readers' mouths and examples in which Catullus writes speech acts which entrap the reader into speaking a deed. The final puzzle piece comes from H. U. Gumbrecht's novel idea of 'Presence Effects' or the effect that aesthetic works have on the audience's physical body. Gumbrecht astutely notes that the scholarly focus on meaning and hermeneutics often ignores the physical effects of art. Herein lies the room for further evaluation: in Gumbrecht's eyes,

> "poetry is perhaps the most powerful example of the simultaneity of presence effects and meaning effects – for even the most overpowering institutional dominance of the hermeneutic dimension could never fully repress the presence effects of rhyme and alliteration, of verse and stanza."[10]

D. A. Russell underlines the importance of literature's impact on its audience, saying in his introduction to *Ancient Literary Criticism*:

> "The Greeks (and the Romans after them) always seem to have been primarily concerned with the element of persuasiveness or convincingness in literature ... Normally, two motives were understood: the need to make people do what you wanted, and the desire for reputation as a master of men's minds."[11]

Finally, J. Gadamer, quoted by Gumbrecht, asks:

> "Can we really assume that the reading of such texts is a reading exclusively concentrated on meaning? Do we not sing these texts [*Ist es nicht ein Singen*]? Should the process in which a poem speaks only be carried out by a meaning intention? Is there not, at the same time, a truth that lies in its performance [*eine Vollzugswahrheit*]? This, I think, is the task with which the poem confronts us."[12]

[8] Selden (1992) 484.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Fitzgerald (1999) 11.
[11] Russell / Winterbottom (1972) xv.
[12] Gumbrecht (2004) 64.

Taken together, these pieces of theory corroborate the idea (understood in ancient times) of a physical effect on the reader, and that the author could manipulate the restrictions of reading aloud to make the reader speak things in the guise of poetry which could have a real life effect on them: *infamia*.

This paper acknowledges that it is impossible to know the responses of all readers of the authorial intentions of living authors, let alone ancient ones, but, for the sake of fluidity, the phrase 'Catullus wants or thinks' will still be used. Without claiming authority over authorial intention, this keeps readers in the mindset of considering Catullus' actions to be intentional choices made by a author in his self-presentation with his audience. In short, this paper does not pretend to know how Catullus felt or thought, but frames the discussion in the context of deliberate writing.

2. Let us first look at the mouth appropriation in Poem 97. The cleanliness of the Roman mouth was of paramount importance to how people perceived its owner, and was particularly susceptible to desecration in invective. William Fitzgerald puts it most cogently: "the word of the Roman is sacred and the place from which it issues must be kept pure by members of the community of speakers."[13] Typically the scatological filling of the mouth was the weapon of choice in invective, since the legal Roman requirement for a pure *os* only codified an already universal human disgust with putting foul things in our mouths. No example bears out this Roman preoccupation with a clean mouth more than Poem 97's discussion of Aemilius and his mouth, which is befouled by a comprehensive array of filthy associations.

In 97, Catullus pulls no punch to construct what Ferguson called "the crudest and coarsest of all Catullus's lampoons."[14] Catullus opens with the typical comparison between someone's mouth and anus (common in Greek epigram[15]) which insinuates that someone has so befouled their mouth by being or acting foul that there is no difference between the anus and the mouth. Catullus denies the reader the chance to draw their own conclusions, permitting no doubt or questioning that Aemilius has a mouth so foul that it smells worse than his arse (1–4). Thus he answers our confusion at Aemilius' seductions by concluding for us (*putemus*, 11) that whatever sort of girl would associate with him would not hesitate to perform any foul act.

Rather than choosing only one impure contact, Catullus links Aemilius' mouth to an anus, a *cunnus*, urine, and even a mule in heat (5-8). These lines build up a trifecta of images so foul that the revelation about Aemilius' success with the ladies leaves us surprised and perplexed.[16] The vocabulary is inventive (the word *ploxenum* is a dialectical *hapax legomenon*), foul (*culus; cunnus*), and clinical (*gingiva*)[17]. In these ways, Catullus

[13] Fitzgerald (1999) 11.
[14] Ferguson (1985) 303.
[15] Fitzgerald (1999) 80.
[16] Quinn (1971) ad loc.
[17] Ferguson (1985) 303.

is truly "wallowing in the foulness he creates and rejects."[18]

By narrating in the first person (*putavi*, 1), Catullus suggests that he has endured Aemilius' mouth firsthand, making Catullus seem like a legitimate plaintiff. If Catullus suggests that he actually had to suffer the foulness which emanates from both ends of Aemelius, it gives him good reason for such explicit complaint. Catullus makes his persona suffer the indignity of contamination from Aemilius, but through this indignity, he renders said persona trustworthy.

This trustworthiness is important, since Catullus cannot make the hidden joke in his poem work without trust. In 97, we can clearly identify the three roles in a joke identified by Freud: the teller of the joke, butt, and audience who witnesses the joke.[19] These positions change throughout the course of the poem but, in the beginning, the readers feel safe. Being in the position of the audience, surely they cannot be the butt. Catullus lures his readers into a false sense of security by first identifying Aemilius, and then his girlfriend as the butts.

However, the final two lines of the poem drastically subvert the roles of the joke at the audience's expense through their forced articulation of another's foul deed. The final two lines are as "gratuitously repulsive"[20] as the lines describing the foul comparisons. As Godwin puts it, "the disgust ... is cumulative: not just *culum lingere* ["to lick the anus"] (although that is bad enough) but to do it to a hangman (worse) and one who has dysentery at that."[21] Catullus takes a foul deed, adds a socially-hated recipient[22], and surpasses himself with *aegroti* ("sick"). The girlfriend originally appears to be just another butt of the invective for the audience to ridicule, but ultimately serves as a vehicle for Catullus' joke at the audience's expense.

As Fitzgerald points out, the poem's four final words make all readers who read this poem aloud form the same disgusting act with our mouths as the girlfriend does.[23] She is presented as foul because she would tongue the anus of a sick hangman, but in reading this poem aloud, our mouths are forcibly filled with the same sickening deed. We may not come into contact with a physical anus, but our tongues lap at the liquid "l" sounds in the words *aegroti culum lingere carnificis.* Since the purity of the mouth can be contaminated by any sort of foulness, even by voicing the foul words the reader also suffers contamination. In the beginning, Catullus seemingly engineers a simple joke at Aemelius' expense, but (by playing on the necessary use of the mouth in reading aloud) he also abuses the audience's trust by entrapping them in a real life joke disguised as poetry. Ultimately, the truest contamination which occurs in this poem is the befouling of the readers' mouths.

[18] Richlin (1992) 113.
[19] Freud's *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* quoted in Fitzgerald (1999) 174 or Richlin (1992) 60.
[20] Thomson (2003) ad loc.
[21] Godwin (1999) ad loc.
[22] Thomson (2003) ad loc.
[23] Fitzgerald (1999) 80.

3. Let us now turn to poem 28. Catullus discusses irrumation in several of his better-known poems (like 16), although generally the poet is cast as the irrumator. The narrator-irrumator is hardly a rare *topos* in invective, a genre which Richlin notes is filled with priapic authorial personae who threaten transgressors with their *phalloi*[24]. Richlin points out that such sexual threats are often "a metaphor for assertion of a questioned dominance over personal property."[25] The word *irrumare*'s semantic implications (from *ruma* "to give or make to suckle"[26]) suggest that the primary function of irrumation was not sexual pleasure, but silencing someone by physically filling their mouths, and rendering them literally *infans* (wich means both "infant" and "unspeaking")[27].The threat of irrumation is so great that 16 has even been called "a kind of verbal public rape"[28] and Fitzgerald observes that "irrumatio becomes a figure for the poet's power to assign his own meaning to those who, perforce, are silent while he speaks."[29] Other scholars have made similar observations about enforced reader-silence. In *Phrasikleia*, Jesper Svenbro writes that,

> "at the moment of reading, the reading voice does not belong to the reader, even though he is the one using his vocal apparatus to ensure that the reading takes place. If he lends his voice to these mute signs, the text appropriates it: his voice becomes the voice of the written text."[30]

It is strange that 28, which uniquely depicts enjoyed irrumation, has received comparatively scarce attention. Given the taboo on voluntarily submitting to irrumation and the legal consequences of *infamia*, accounts of irrumation wherein the victims enjoy themselves are rare. In 28, Catullus mentions his metaphorical irrumation by the praetor Piso, using erotic (not disgusting) vocabulary and twisting the usual angle of invective so that his readers share the irrumated victim's humiliation, not the irrumator's dominance:

> O Memmi, bene me ac diu supinum
> tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti.[31]
>
> Oh Memmius, you face-fucked me long and well and slowly on my back with that whole log of yours

Similarly to poem 97, this first-person narration focalises the reader's view of the poem through Catullus's persona to share his experience. Reading aloud, the reader uses the pronoun *me* to refer to the victim – indicting themselves as irrumated. As they continue

[24] Richlin (1992) 58.
[25] Richlin (1992) 140–1.
[26] Ernout / Meillet (1980[4]) s. v. *ruma*.
[27] Fitzgerald (1999) 65.
[28] Richlin (1992) 13.
[29] Fitzgerald (1999) 66.
[30] Svenbro (1993) 46.
[31] Catullus c. 28,9–10.

the vocabulary conveys enjoyed passivity on the part of Catullus (and thereby, his readers). His description of irrumation borders on pornographic, provoking the readers with his diction to picture a violation which is shameful, and enjoyably so. He describes himself on his back (*me ... supinum,* 9), which is perhaps the most vulnerable and restricted position in which to perform oral sex. While other positions which Roman art depicts for fellatio grant a measure of control to the fellator (including the ability to stop fellating and leave), the position Catullus describes is luridly passive. With Catullus flat on his back, his irrumator must be straddling his face, penetrating his mouth deeply from above. This position is entirely passive, allowing neither participation nor escape on Catullus' part: he must lie back and take it.

Catullus' vocabulary in lines 9–10 could express the duration of his hardship, inducing pity for his supine vulnerability, but his use of the words *bene*, *lentus*, and *diu* all imply luxurious satisfaction in the act. Fitzgerald notes that "though ancient thought about sexuality tended to attribute pleasure only to the active participant in a sexual act, it is the mouth of the speaker that enjoys the assonance and alliteration of lines 9 and 10."[32] The long syllables force the reader to linger over the already uncomfortable idea. Just as Memmius took his time with the irrumation, so, too, Catullus forces the reader to savour the act. This language, especially combined with Catullus' use of *tota ista trabe* (a uniquely-Catullan[33] euphemism conveying strength and size) to refer to the offending member, is erotic. Catullus withholds the actual verb, *irrumasti*, ensuring that the reader has dwelt on the description before realising what he is describing. Catullus titillates the reader by erotically triggering their imagination.

Scholars like Richlin usually assume that the reader enjoys invective

> "for its own sake; to enjoy such poetry the reader must pick up on the feeling in the invective ... and translate it into his own experience, identifying it with his own similar feelings."[34]

The aggressive male reader can derive a sense of satisfaction from reading invective he identifies with and onto which he can project sexually violent feelings. However, with the appropriation of a third party's mouth, the invective target becomes more nebulous. In 28, the reader is identified with Catullus (the victim), and so reader and writer share debasement. Catullus twists the enjoyability of invective by inverting it, making the readers share in the humiliation of being irrumated, not the victory of irrumating another.

4. Poem 42 enacts a form of peasant street-justice called a *flagitatio*, wherein, provoked by anger, an aggrieved party (in this case, Catullus) collects a mob before setting out to find the wrongdoer. Having found their target, the mob stands either around their

[32] Fitzgerald (1999) 69.
[33] Adams (1990) 23.
[34] Richlin (1992) 141.

victim or outside their house[35]. Since the *flagitatio* was a form of justice that was most effective in a shame culture, wherein reputation was a form of currency, the greater the number of people who heard the charge and joined in the heckling, the more effectively the reputation was tarnished with shame. The oral nature of a *flagitatio* makes it a performative speech act and means that, in reading aloud a poem which contains the elements of a *flagitatio*, the reader actually delivers the same street-justice.

While no one is so bold as to claim that reading out loud miraculously aligns the reader's sentiments with those of the poet, Austin asserts that, in the case of performative speech acts, the act of reading it out loud unintentionally does perform the same function as doing so with intent, saying, "'I promise to . . . ' obliges me—puts on record my spiritual assumption of a spiritual shackle."[36]

Even if the reader does not agree with Catullus' judgments, they have spoken his words and have enacted the support that he wrote for himself. Catullus exploits both this unintended sympathy from the readers and also the fallible permanence of the written word. J. Derrida notes that the word, "*logos*," is the child of the writer, its father. The father creates and can support his *logos* until it is written, at which point it stands alone, able to say only one thing and unable to defend the father's true meaning[37]. The written word therefore was less trusted than speech since it is prone to unpredictable losses and gains in meaning.

42 presents a discourse (albeit a one-sided one) between Catullus and another character, narrating the woman's silence (*sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur*: "but we aren't getting anywhere, she is not moved at all") and thereby giving the impression to posterity that she has refused her given opportunity to defend herself. This is, of course, entirely unfair since this is not a real event, only the story of one, told by a narrator with a personal investment in the outcome. E. Stevens notes about 55 that, "Catullus is better served by Camerius's silence than he would have been by the man's speech"[38] which is also true of 42.

Catullus addresses his readers indirectly, since addressing the hendecasyllables allows him to speak simultaneously to his overhearing readers. E. Oliensis says about Horace, "in . . . poetic 'situations,' [his] addressee sometimes functions as a conduit for another conversation with an overreader."[39] By reading out the catchy refrain (*moecha putida, redde codicillos / redde, putida moecha, codicillos*: "foul slut, return the tablets, return the tablets, foul slut"), the reader joins in with the attack on the woman. However, the insults Catullus delivers through the audience arguably have a double-target, for, by using the term *mima* as an insult, he condemns the acting profession and implicitly indicts the

[35] Fraenkel (1961) 121.
[36] Austin (1975) 9–10.
[37] Derrida (2004) 82ff.
[38] Stevens (2013) 5.
[39] Oliensis (1998) 6.

audience who recites off his script and acts as his puppet. 42 is another silencing poem which, through its performative nature and dramatic form, allows Catullus to appropriate his reader's voices as they read aloud and make them speak his condemnations like a ventriloquist's dummies.

The fact that Catullus choses literature as his way to provide real world self-defence and punishment suggests that he and his contemporaries viewed the written word as being able to have some effect in reality. In other instances, like 12, Catullus threatens to punish someone with words. In 12,10–1, Catullus offers a choice to the napkin thief Asinius:

> quare aut hendecasyllabos trecentos
> exspecta, aut mihi linteum remitte[40]
>
> So either wait for three hundred hendecasyllables, or return the napkin to me

Evidently, a poem could have a real effect, passing a criticism through the voices of a group of friends. This suggests that Catullus views the power of his own written words as extending audibly and permanently into the real world and having Selden's 'perlocutionary effect.'

5. Catullus uses his poetry as a means of self-defence, and, in certain instances, he adds a bodily dimension to his mouth-poems by playing off of the reader's articulation. Previous study on meaning risks ignoring another important aspect of writing a poem with an oral theme which will be read aloud: the bodily effect. Recent literary theory supports the idea that there is a dimension to the power of poetry which goes beyond hermeneutics and extends to the physical body of the reader.

Genres of literature which discussed the body were considered 'low' genres, such as satire, and by connecting the reader to their own body, Catullus lowers his erudite readers to a more lowbrow form of entertainment. However, this lowering resembles the idea of aesthetic positionality identified by Fitzgerald wherein the reader enjoys the poetry, but must be passive to the writer in order to receive the opportunity to read the poetry. There exists a fundamental and obligatory exchange of power whereby the reader cedes control and dominance in exchange for a worthwhile reading experience.[41] Catullus lowers the reader to a bodily level and enjoys it, profaning their mouths with foulness and impugning the validity of their opinions by making them act out his scripts while being entertained by the process of their own debasement.

The real question is what Catullus gains from lowering his readers to a more bodily sphere. There are two possible ways to look at the presence effects of Catullus' mouth poems. One reading recognises the power of rendering a reader *infames* (even through

[40] Catullus c. 12,10–11.
[41] Fitzgerald (1999) 2–3.

unintentional performative utterances) as a way of silencing opposition and grasping at authority. However, more in keeping with the lighthearted tone found in much of Catullus' corpus, another reading sees the bodily engagement to be a clever way of making readers engage with the physical and low aspects of reading with their own bodies in an enjoyable way. This reading seems more in line with Catullus' literary interests. Catullus' experiments with literary styles which adopt folk practices suggests a pre-existing engagement with the lower genres like a *flagitatio* or satirical presentations of himself and others. Catullus certainly demonstrates a willingness to defend himself against his critics (as in 16), but his playful wordplays and preference for *sal ac leporem* ("wit and charm") indicate a poet who would enjoy the added emphasis of a physical and thematic link between his words and his world.

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About the Author Elizabeth Haynes is currently studying for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education in Latin with Classics at the University of Cambridge. Her undergraduate studies at University College London focused on literary theory and rhetoric, especially in Catullus. Her future research will focus on comparing the effectiveness of using self-deprecation and self-vaunting as persuasive techniques for first-person narrators to convince their readers to believe in their authority.

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Theaterrezension
UCL Classical Drama Society: Bacchae *by Euripides**

Dr. Julie Ackroyd
The Open University

UCL's (University College London) Classical Drama Society have a reputation of creating a high standard of production which is always highly accessible, well attended and succeeds in creating a new audience base for Ancient Greek and Roman drama in translation. Dating back to 1997 their productions began with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and take place in February, the society actively making the link between their production and the fact that it occurs at the traditional time of the ancient Athenian Drama Festival, the Lenaia. Their performance venue, Bloomsbury Theatre, provides a home for a range of free supporting activities and academic lectures from established and often well-known academics which are designed to provide outreach to schools and undergraduates from other Universities as well as the general public. This successful series of events and performances are, the majority of years, presented to a theatre filled to capacity. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that it is primarily the students themselves who direct and produce the production with support from the staff of UCL and other Universities. The team are rightly proud that they produce a "long-running commitment [...] to the modern production of ancient drama" with low ticket prices in order to attract a wide ranging audience.[1]

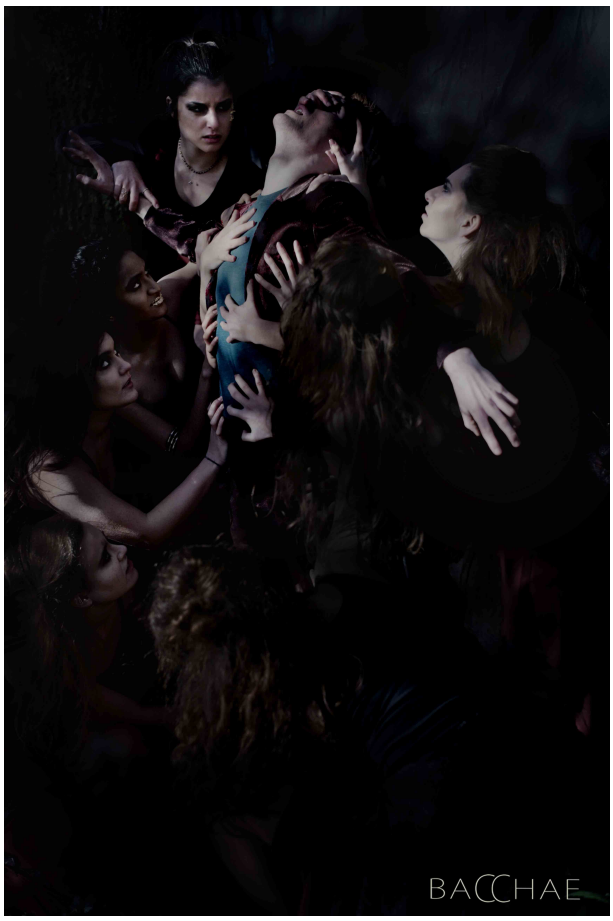

Figure 1

This year's director, Emily Louizou, is in her second year of studying English Litera-

* 10^{th}–12^{th} February 2015, Bloomsbury Theatre, London. National Student Drama Festival, 28^{th} March–3^{rd} April 2015, Scarborough, UK. 4^{th} International Festival of Greek Drama, 23^{rd} April 2015, Ancient Messene, Greece.

[1] UCL CDS, on-line.

ture at UCL and brings a definite vision to the production together with the help of a very able cast and creative team. The cross pollination between UCL and students from other organisations across London also ensures that the production values adhere to a high professional standard. Music composition is overseen this year by David Denyer, a composer currently studying at the Royal College of Music, whilst set design is from Avra Alevropoulou, a second year student at Central Saint Martin's School of Art.

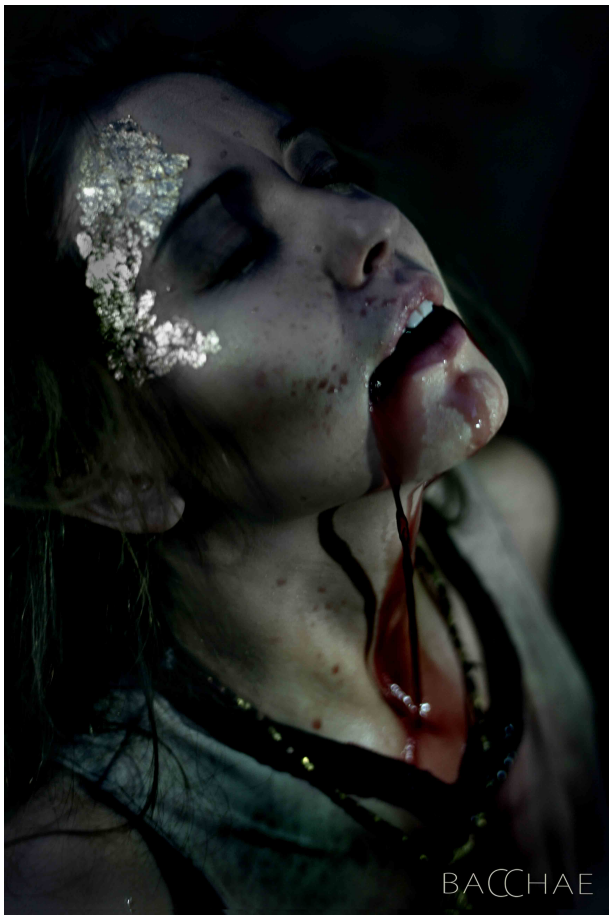

Figure 2

The cast is ably led by Pavlos Christodoulou as a vigorous and solid Dionysus. His performance presents a god who is definitely in control of his actions and those of his followers. As a result the audience are left in no doubt as to whether his need to punish the house of Cadmus will be fulfilled. *Bacchae* is unusual in the canon of Greek plays as it is the only surviving playtext where a major god from the pantheon acts as the protagonist and focus for the narrative. He literally stage manages the events disguising himself as a visitor to Thebes and even helping to dress his victim Pentheus in a new and unfamiliar costume. The role necessitates a strong initial entrance, as a weak performance risks losing the audience. It is therefore good to see that, in this case, Christodoulou has a strong vocal delivery and the presence to take over the stage and command the audience's attention from the start. This is not an easy feat when faced with an auditorium primarily filled with sixth formers and young students who, if they find themselves disengaging from the performance, can be disruptive. The initial entrance of the Bacchants was equally significant as they must at this point be clearly identifiable as being human but at this point in time not ones who are necessarily undertaking human actions with an understanding of the consequences. The decision to have them crawl onto the stage to fawn around Dionysus is a positive characterisation which adds to the understanding of the piece by the audience and begins to crystallise the god's relationship with his followers.

The twelve Bacchants are barefaced and their otherness is indicated by the decision to give them heavy eyed makeup and sculpted highlighting of their cheeks with touches of gold leaf which are also in some cases added to lips and forehead. Their movements are underscored by the music soundtrack which slides between a pre-recorded electronic

score and a group of live musicians who at times join in with the Bacchants on stage and help to punctuate the movement. Their use of mandolin, double bass, flute, guitar and percussion create an exotic soundscape which never ceases throughout the play. On the whole the choral odes were understandable and the choreography provided a very successful indication of the animalistic passions which were brought to the surface through the presence of Dionysus their god, whom they wholeheartedly worshipped in an energetic way. The chorus actively danced their way through the majority of the performance as a cohesive group whose movements mirrored each other's and then at times separated in order to allow those delivering lines to become the focus of the audience's attention. This technique worked well and resulted in intelligible line delivery. However, towards the end of the play where it is obvious that Dionysus will proceed to destroy the House of Cadmus, the resultant frenzy and decision to have the chorus chant in unison resulted in a loss of clarity and a resulting drop in engagement. This was a pity as the meaning of the lines became subsumed by their presentational method. The narrative was however reclaimed by the entrance of Agave carrying the head of her son, Pentheus. It did by this point seem vindictive of the god to mete out punishment to the House of Cadmus by destroying its ruler after the wholehearted acceptance of the god and his rites by the women of the house. Whilst Pentheus himself undoubtedly deserved punishment for his hubristic behaviour against a god it seemed unduly harsh to make his mother physically undertake the killing of her own son in a way which was gratuitous and shocking to her. It is only the performance of Charlotte Holtum, who plays Agave, which makes this scene of revelation palatable and understandable. Holtum has only been in one classical play before, and her touching portrayal of the mother of Pentheus works incredibly well. Her dawning realisation regarding what burden she carries in her hands is chilling to watch. As she discovers that she is holding the head of her son, rather than that of a wild animal which she has caught on the mountain, the event seems vicious and unwarranted. It is out of keeping with the ecstatic welcome and adoration which Dionysus had received on his entry to the city of Thebes. Here is a god who is implacable and for whom no amount of worship can ever be enough to stem his wrath.

In order to challenge Dionysus and balance out his actions against the House of Cadmus, an equally strong and initially confident Pentheus is needed. This role is fulfilled by Adam Woolley who manages to convey the inflexible and haughty ruler in a manner which makes his downfall seem warranted, even if its manner of execution is excessive. The change from leader to led as Pentheus sheds his male garb of a ruler and dons the robes of a Bacchant can sometimes come over as comedic but in this case it does not. Dionysus stage manages the event and Pentheus is a helpless mannequin in the proceedings. Louizou, the director, states that the issues raised in *Bacchae* are timeless and to have them occur in this production in a "no time no space performance" serves to highlight the fact that the performance is "a ritual about the clash between human logic and human

instincts which could be happening anywhere, even inside your own mind."[2] The central driving force of the play is "the moment when something – or perhaps everything shifts inside us, making us lose control."[3] With this approach to the text the whole company have made a Classical play relevant to a new audience. They have successfully challenged the ideas of Greek drama as a male, middle class, passive experience and brought it to life in a way which was clearly appreciated by a young audience who applauded enthusiastically at the end. Groups of students left the auditorium debating the themes which the play had raised and had clearly been engaged by an energetic and modern approach to the text.

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About the author Julie Ackroyd obtained her B. A. (Hons.) in mixed English and Humanities with the Open University in England; she then continued to study with them completing an M.A. in Classical Studies. Having won the Open University Travel Bursary she represented the University, in Epidaurus, at the first conference organised by the Archive of Performance of Greek and Roman Drama run by Oxford University, whilst there she presented a paper on "The Use of Butoh in the Peter Hall production of *Bacchai* for the National Theatre, London."

In 2007 Julie was selected to be part of the judging committee for the Society of London Theatres Olivier Awards 2008 in London. As part of the play panel she viewed seventy eight shows over nine months in order to find and commend the best casts and creative teams working in London theatre.

She was recently awarded her Ph. D. by Birkbeck College, University of London for a thesis on 'The Recruitment and Training of the Child Actor on the London Stage c.1600' and is now an Honorary Associate of the Open University Classics Department.

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UCL CDS: UCL Classical Drama Society website, on-line (Accessed 22/04/2015).

List of Illustrations

[2] Louizou (2015) 2.
[3] Louizou (2015) 2.

Figure 1: Adam Woolley as Pentheus (Center), Eirini Papantoniou, Moa Taylor-Hodin, Pollyanna Cohen, Mercedes Bromwich, Cara Fay, Alisha Iyer, Cora Burridge, and Faidra Faitaki as Maenads (Top left, clockwise), © Lucy Feng.

Figure 2: Charlotte Holtum as Agave/Maenad, © Lucy Feng.