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published in
Renaissance Studies
2017

DOI (link to publisher)
10.1111/rest.12255

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

citation for published version (APA)
Steenbergh, K. (2017). Weeping verse: Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's Troades (1559) and the politics of vicarious compassion. *Renaissance Studies*, *31*(5), 690-706. https://doi.org/10.1111/rest.12255

Renaissance Studies Vol. 31 No. 5 DOI: 10.1111/rest.12255

Weeping verse: Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's Troades *(1559) and the politics of vicarious compassion*

Kristine Steenbergh

In the month of Elizabeth I's coronation, January 1559, the Oxford student Jasper Heywood (1535–98) dedicated 'a simple New Year's gift' to the new queen.[1] It was a freshly published translation of *Troades*, Lucius Annaeus Seneca's tragedy on the suffering of Trojan women after the defeat of their city. Heywood was the first to translate a Senecan tragedy into English; he later also translated *Thyestes* (1560) and *Hercules Furens* (1561). His example was soon followed by four other men who translated the remaining seven tragedies then thought to have been written by the Roman statesman and philosopher. All ten translations were published as a collection by Thomas Newton in 1581.[2] Heywood's first translation was the entry point of Seneca's dramatic works into the English vernacular; in the course of Elizabeth's reign the tragedies would feed into the extremely popular genre of revenge tragedy. Although these English translations of Seneca's plays are usually viewed through the lens of their influence on this later genre, Heywood did not initiate the translation project out of an interest in the theme of revenge. On the contrary, he reads Seneca's *Troades* as a plea to rulers to resist vindictive reprisals after defeating an enemy. In his translation Heywood explores the tragedy's potential to kindle an affective response in its readers, listeners, or audiences: the response of compassion with defeated adversaries.

I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their valuable feedback and constructive suggestions. This article was written in the context of a research project funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).

[1] James Ker and Jessica Winston (eds.), *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2012), 69. Although the year began on 25 March, New Year's gifts were exchanged on 1 January.

[2] Alexander Neville published *Œdipus* in 1563; John Studley translated *Agamemnon* (1566), *Medea* (1566), *Hercules Œtaeus* (?1566) and *Hippolytus* (1567; not published as a separate quarto); Thomas Nuce published his translation of *Octavia* (?1566), and Thomas Newton completed the collection with his translation of *Thebais* in 1581. He published these ten translations (some in revised versions) as *Seneca's Tenne Tragedies* that year. Of these tragedies, *Octavia* and *Hercules Œtaeus* are no longer considered to be by Seneca. The dates of *Hercules Œtaeus* and *Hippolytus* are based on Jessica Winston, 'Seneca in Elizabethan England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006), 29–58.

In his translation, Heywood adds several passages to the original text in which we hear the voice of the translator. The speaker in these passages not only expresses his compassion with the suffering of Hecuba and the tragedy's other tragic protagonists, but also addresses his readers – especially women – inviting them to experience compassion with the fate of the tragic Trojan characters. Heywood places the figure of Seneca the playwright in a genealogy of compassionate Christian authors who wrote 'weeping verse' with the explicit aim of kindling pity in their readers. The arousal of compassion as the proper response to the tragedy goes against the grain of Seneca's dramatic works as well as his Stoic philosophy. This curious introduction of Seneca into English vernacular drama may have been motivated by Heywood's desire to employ his translation of *Troades* as way to counsel his new queen on her policies towards English Catholics. Heywood, a Catholic who later went into exile and became a Jesuit in Rome in 1562, may have hoped that the tragedy's representation of the devastating effects of post-war vengeance could move his uncommon reader to resist austere measures against England's defeated Catholics.[3] By arousing Queen Elizabeth's pity with the Trojan women, his *Troas* was intended to kindle vicarious compassion with English Catholics, for whom the death of Queen Mary I was as momentous as the fall of Troy.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF SENECA'S TRAGEDIES IN THEIR POLITICAL CONTEXT

Because of their impact on the later genre of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, the Tudor translations of Seneca's tragedies were for a long time analysed almost exclusively in the light of source studies. If they were studied, it was because they were viewed as precursors of later revenge tragedies.[4] In recent decades, however, critics have recognized that 'Heywood clearly did not write out of a desire to jumpstart English tragedy.'[5] As a result, the early Senecan translations are beginning to be read within their contemporary political context. This new approach has rendered conflicting outcomes. In her pioneering work Jessica Winston views the flurry of Senecan translations as part of the Tudor 'advice to princes' tradition that also produced the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559). She highlights the thematic emphasis on the fickleness of fortune and the fall of monarchs in the translators' works and suggests that they offer counsel to those in court and government.[6] In their edition of three of the Tudor Senecan

[3] This political wish was still fervent when Heywood was a Jesuit missionary in England in 1584. With the Catholic gentry and nobility, he worked on a plan to petition Queen Elizabeth for toleration of Catholicism. See Dennis Flynn, 'Heywood, Jasper (1535–1598)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13182, accessed 19 May 2016] and Flynn, 'Out of Step: Six Supplementary Notes on Jasper Heywood', in Thomas M. McCoog, SJ (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the English* Jesuits (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1996), 191.

[4] See Winston, 'Seneca', for a useful overview of this critical tradition (29n2).

[5] *Ibid.*, 47.

[6] See Winston, 'Seneca'; Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*; and Winston and Ker, 'A Note on Jasper Heywood's "Free Compositions" in *Troas* (1559)', *Modern Philology* 110 (2013), 564–75.

translations, Winston and James Ker write that Heywood 'is most active as an interpreter when he seeks to convey that the play can teach a lesson' to rulers.[7] Tanya Pollard follows Winston when she refers to Heywood's Hecuba as an icon of the instability of fortune, while her article as a whole also stresses Hecuba's potential – especially in the Greek tradition – to be perceived as a threat to unjust rulers.[8] Linda Woodbridge, who has argued that the translators worked together as a group to promote active resistance to tyranny and governmental religious persecution, also takes up this idea of the translation's threat to tyrants.[9] She views the tragedies as addressed not to members of court and government, but to English subjects, for whom the translation of the tragedies into the vernacular would have made them more accessible. Appearing contemporaneously with 'bombshells of political resistance' such as Ponet's *A Short Treatise of Politic Power* (1556) and John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), the translations could inspire English subjects to resist tyranny.

These political readings of the Elizabethan translations of Seneca's tragedies, however, do not address the way in which the passions function politically in these plays. An analysis of the role of compassion in Heywood's translation throws new light on the question of the political intent of his New Year's gift to his new queen. The arousal of emotions such as compassion, grief, anger and vindictiveness was a key way for literary texts to engage with their immediate political context. As Cora Fox notes, emotive rhetoric was perceived as even more potent in the Renaissance than in our current age.[10] Compassion was one of the key political emotions of the period. In his work on Charles I and Mary Queen of Scots, John Staines points to the pivotal role of compassion in early modern political debates. He argues that 'we need to recognize the political function of sympathy, the effect the tragic history [. . .] is having upon its readers. Early modern writers and readers were sensitive to the emotional effects of texts, and the pleasures and dangers of its pathos, pity and compassion unsettled them.'[11] Several critics have noted that it is especially through the translation and imitation of (female) classical figures and their emotions that literary

[7] Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, 28.

[8] Tanya Pollard, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?', *Renaissance Quarterly* 65 (2012), 1060–93 (at 1078).

[9] Linda Woodbridge, 'Resistance Theory Meets Drama: Tudor Seneca', *Renaissance Drama* 38 (2010), 115–38; and *English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the translations as a project and the 1581 collection edited by Thomas Newton, see also Tara Lyons, 'English Printed Drama in Collection Before Jonson and Shakespeare (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champagne, 2011), 52–93. For a useful overview of criticism on the translation in its contemporary political context, see Winston, 'Early "English Seneca": From "Coterie" Translations to the Popular Stage', in Eric Dodson-Robinson (ed.) *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Senecan Tragedy: Scholarly, Theatrical and Literary Receptions* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), esp. 183–87.

[10] Cora Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 7.

[11] John Staines, *The Tragic Histories of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560–1690: Rhetoric, Passions, and Political Literature* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 6. See also Staines, 'Compassion in the Public Sphere of Milton and King Charles', in Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds.) *Reading the Early Modern Passions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 89–110.

texts impacted the contemporary English political context. *Troas*' tragic protagonist Queen Hecuba was practically shorthand for the emotional impact of classical literature: in humanist education, Hecuba was a symbol of the power of literature to move its audiences. Schoolboys were taught to perform her role, to imitate and thus bring to life her passions with the aim of moving and persuading their audience. The role of the Queen of Troy was a key example of the rhetorical device of *prosopopoeia*, in which an orator speaks as another person, imitating and experiencing the feelings of a character removed in time, space, and language.[12] Hecuba therefore not only stood for the experience of intense grief, but also, and this is important for my argument, for the conveyance of that grief across time and space to new audiences: her character symbolizes the power to transmit tragic tales, harnessing their affective power in new (political) contexts. Hecuba, then, not only functioned in early modern culture as an emblem of the moving powers of rhetoric and theatre; she also evoked associations with the political impact of that affective power. As Lynn Enterline puts it, 'weeping for Hecuba' was a way, however deviously, to turn a figure that weeps for others into a way of weeping for oneself and one's own cause for complaint.[13] Harnessing the audience's compassion for Hecuba's suffering for new political causes was not without its dangers: early modern authors warn that the arousal of compassion may kindle unorthodox sympathies.[14] Heywood sought to use these wayward forces of vicarious compassion to kindle pity in the heart of his new monarch, employing Hecuba's affective force for his own cause of complaint.

SENECAN TRANSLATION AND THE POLITICS OF VICARIOUS COMPASSION

In the 'Epistle' Heywood dedicates his translation of Seneca's *Troades* to the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth I. He writes that he would not have attempted 'so dangerous note of presumption', especially 'when ofttimes is the pen the onlye accuser in some pointes of him that therwith doth endite', if he had not known his new sovereign to be so well disposed towards her subjects, as well as wise and learned. Since he knows that his majesty enjoys reading 'the sweete sappe of fine and pure writers', he presents her with 'a simple new yeares gift':

> a piece of Seneca translated into English, which I the rather enterprise to give to Your Highness, as well for that I thought it should not be unpleasant for

[12] Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 139. See also Pollard, 'What's Hecuba'.

[13] Enterline, *Schoolroom*, 132.

[14] On the wayward effects of compassion with female characters in Shakespeare, see Heather James, 'Dido's Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 (2001), 360–82. On the unexpected effects of the imitation of female tragic figures in humanist education, see Enterline, *Schoolroom*. On female grief and revenge see Marguerite A. Tassi, *Women and Revenge in Shakespeare: Gender, Genre, and Ethics* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2011). On the Ovidian Hecuba in Renaissance literature, see Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion*; and on the Euripidean Hecuba see Pollard, 'What's Hecuba'.

> Your Grace to see some part of so excellent an author in your own tongue (the reading of whom in Latin I understand delights greatly Your Majesty) as also for that none may be a better judge of my doings herein than who best understandeth my author.[15]

Heywood seeks to win Elizabeth's approval of his work by foregrounding a shared love for Seneca between the translator and his sovereign. As a boy, Heywood had been educated in the company of Princess Elizabeth at court, where his father was playwright and music tutor.[16] The translation of Greek and Latin texts would have been part of their shared humanist education: the queen was taught Greek and Latin by Richard Cox and William Grindal, a pupil of Roger Ascham who in his *The Schoolmaster* proposes the method of double translation as the most suitable for private education. Indeed, Elizabeth is considered to be the author of a later translation of a chorus from *Hercules Oetaeus*.[17] Heywood thus wraps his gift in a reminder of the time he and the queen spent translating classical texts together.[18]

Books presented to the queen in the context of the New Year's tradition often had a political aim. As Jane Lawson suggests, 'several of the New Year's gifts Elizabeth received in the early years of her reign were designed to discover or direct her religious inclination, as it was unclear what type of Protestantism would emerge from the Elizabethan Settlement.'[19] Despite their shared education, Heywood and Elizabeth did not share the same religious convictions. Jasper Heywood was a member of a Catholic humanist family. His mother was a niece of Sir Thomas More and his father a life-long Catholic who had supported Queen Mary when she was still a princess. Jasper's brother Ellis was secretary to Cardinal Pole during his Italian exile, until he returned to England under Mary I to become a member of the hierarchy of the English church. When Mary died and was succeeded by her sister Elizabeth, English Catholics held their breath. As Dennis Flynn writes, 'the two-year period during which Heywood published his translations [...] was arguably the period of the most portentous political development in the history of England.'[20] Heywood, an irenic Erasmian Catholic, dedicated all three of his translations to members of

[15] Heywood, *Troas*, in Ker and Winston (eds.) *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies,* 70. All further references to the play will be to this edition.

[16] Dennis Flynn, *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 40; Flynn, 'Heywood, Jasper'.

[17] The passage Elizabeth translated shares with *Troas* a concern for the fickleness of fortune and the unstable position of a monarch.

[18] As Ker and Winston write, there is 'no direct evidence for Seneca's place in Latin language teaching in grammar school, yet at least some viewed Seneca as an important part of early education' (Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, 5n12).

[19] Jane A. Lawson, 'The Remembrance of the New Year: Books Given to Queen Elizabeth as New Year's Gifts', in Peter Beal and Grace Ioppolo (eds.) *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing* (London: British Library, 2007), 146.

[20] Flynn, *Donne*, 47.

the new Elizabethan government.[21] Apart from the queen, they are Sir John Mason (*Thyestes*) and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (*Hercules Furens*), both Privy Counsellors. Although these dedications have been read as signalling a sympathetic attitude to the new government, Flynn argues that they are also evidence of Heywood's 'discontent and foreboding about the course of Tudor policy' under Elizabeth.[22] In Flynn's view, the choice of play combined with warnings about the slipperiness of majesty that Heywood inserted into his translation 'surely urge the queen's circumspection and humility' and suggest the futility of a monarch's personal wishes in the face of the obligations of monarchical rule.[23]

Whereas Flynn and Winston have highlighted the ways in which the translation seeks to instil a sense of apprehension into its royal reader, Heywood also inserts passages that invite readers to feel sympathy with the tragic suffering of the protagonists. If one of Heywood's strategies is indeed to remind the queen that her position as monarch is unstable – 'The Greeks now stand where Troy late fell; each thing may have his fall' – another strategy, and one which has so far received little critical attention, is the arousal of her compassion.[24] If we connect the translation's appeals for compassion to the religio-political context of January 1559, then it is possible to see how Heywood invites the queen to feel with the tragic fate of Hecuba and Andromache in order to also arouse compassion, vicariously, with the fate of English Catholics.[25]

WHAT'S HECUBA TO HEYWOOD?: THE TEARS OF THE TRANSLATOR

In the preface to the reader, Heywood writes that he has in several places 'augmented' and altered the tragedy, since he believed the Latin text he was working from to be imperfect. Because he was not sure whether this was Seneca's intention or whether elements perhaps went missing in the text's transmission, Heywood decided to 'suppl[y] the want of some things' with his own pen, adding a chorus after the first act, a scene at the beginning of Act 2 and rewriting an unsatisfactory chorus at the end of Act 3.[26] Winston and Ker have shown how he amalgamated lines and details from Seneca's other plays in his

[21] *Ibid.*, 47.
[22] *Ibid.*, 47.
[23] *Ibid.*, 45.
[24] Heywood, *Troas*, II.iii.70.
[25] Winston briefly suggests this possibility of a more emotional reaction to the play when she writes that Heywood compares the fate of the women of Troy to that of the Catholics in England to 'perhaps urge [. . .] compassion in the new queen,' to whom the translation is dedicated (Winston 'Seneca', 46). Allyna E. Ward argues that the play 'offer[s] counsel with the goal of influencing the queen toward a position of religious toleration' and 'offers Elizabeth careful counsel on the employment of clemency in her new role by way of careful analogy' in *Women and Tudor Tragedy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), 75–108 (91 and 87 respectively). Whereas Ward relates Heywood's counsel to Seneca's idea of (rational) clemency, I argue that Heywood appeals rather to what Seneca would call *misericordia*, or passionate pity.
[26] Heywood, *Troas*, 'The Preface to the Reader', 72.

additions to *Troas*.[27] Analyses of these alterations and additions have focused on the ways he foregrounded the precarious position of the ruler: 'Heywood seems to have viewed the play as an admonition to those in power [. . .] emphasizing the unpredictability of fortune, a theme that is already central to the play.'[28] A number of these added passages, however, do not admonish the monarch, but seek to evoke her compassion.

Directing the reader's expectations away from the masculine terrain of the Trojan battlefield towards the feelings of the mothers whose children were killed by the Greeks, the 'Preface to the Tragedy' foregrounds the compassion of the translator with those whose tragic suffering he renders into English. The desire to share in the suffering of Hecuba and her children is a driving force behind Heywood's practice of translation. In his view, classical texts can only be conveyed across time and space into the hearts and minds of their new audiences if the translator is not only able to understand the texts' original language, but also to partake of the passions of its protagonists. The idea that an author should himself experience the feelings he is describing was a staple in classical rhetoric and Tudor humanism. Thomas Wilson's *Art of Rhetorique* (first edition 1553), for example, discusses the role of the passions at length. Following Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian, he considers it necessary for the orator to experience the passions he wishes to convey to his audience:

> Neither can any good be done at all when we have said all that ever we can, except we bring the same affections in our own heart, the which we would the judges should bear towards our own matter. For how can he be grieved with the report of any heinous act [. . .] except the orator himself utter such passions outwardly?'[29]

Drawing on this rhetorical tradition, Heywood considers it the task of the translator to share in the passions of the protagonists whose tragedy he is rendering into English. His speaker actively foregrounds his compassion with the Trojan women's suffering: 'To make report thereof, ay woe is me,' the translator tells his readers.[30] The preface and the translation proper are regularly punctuated by expressions of the translator's sorrow or compassion such as 'ay' and 'alas'.[31] Such use of interjections was generally recognized as an effective way to convey the orator's passions in Renaissance rhetoric.[32] Heywood's speaker foregrounds the grief he feels at narrating Hecuba's tragedy, attracting the reader's attention to his emotional investment in the tale he tells.

[27] Winston and Ker, 'A Note', *passim*.

[28] Winston and Ker, 'A Note', 565–66.

[29] Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, Peter E. Medine (ed.) (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 163.

[30] Heywood, *Troas*, pref. l. 47.

[31] *OED* s.v. 'alas, *int.*' 1 and s.v. 'ay, *int.*' 2a. For examples in the translation proper, see *Troas* III. i. 7; III. i. 18; III. i.27; III. i. 158; III. i. 161.

[32] See Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604; STC 26040), sig. N3r.

Ultimately, Heywood considers this experience of compassion a prerequisite for the craft of the translator. The speaker in the preface wonders whether it is even possible to translate properly without having experienced the same grief as Andromache, whose son was thrown from the towers of Troy:

> What ruthful tears may serve to wail the woe,
> Of Hector's wife that doth her child forgo?
>
> Her pinching pang of heart, who may express,
> But such as of like woes, have borne a part?
> Or who bewail her ruthful heaviness
> That never yet hath felt thereof the smart?
> Full well they wot the woes of heavy heart.[33]

The passage asks searching questions about the capacity of the author or translator to express the pain of the characters he describes. Heywood's speaker wonders whether anyone can express the suffering of a tragic character if they have not themselves experienced 'like woes'. Can he lament the suffering of Hector's wife if he has not himself lost a child? The emotion that the translator seeks to feel for the characters is not pity in the modern sense; it is not a feeling *for* the character's suffering, but a feeling *with* that in Tudor England went by the name of 'compassion' or 'pity.' Forty years before the Prince of Denmark wonders at the tears in the eyes of the player who tells – 'ah woe!' – the tale of the Queen of Troy, Heywood's preface asks similar questions in the context of the practice of translation.[34] 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to her,/That he should weep for her?'[35] Hamlet and Heywood alike are concerned with the question how those telling a tragic tale can share the pain of their characters to convey it to a new audience.[36] But whereas Hamlet wonders why an actor would weep for Hecuba, Heywood is more concerned with the question whether he is at all able to access Hecuba's suffering so that he can weep *with* her. He asks whether the translator can ever comprehend feelingly, and thereby share, the extent of the Trojan women's pain.

To be able to imagine the women's suffering, Heywood's speaker turns to a classical source of inspiration. He invokes the three Furies, since these goddesses of revenge prompted the tragedy of Troy and are therefore the only agents who can help him tap into the pain and grief suffered by Hecuba and Andromache. In Seneca's tragedies the Furies are often invoked to infuse

[33] Heywood, *Troas*, pref. ll. 76–82.

[34] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Harold Jenkins (ed.), (Walton-on-Thames: Methuen & Co., 1997), II. ii. 498.

[35] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II. ii. 553–54.

[36] On the character of Hecuba and the communication of pain through time and over distance in the theatrical tradition, see Jan Parker, 'What's Hecuba to him. . .that he should weep for her?', in Jan Parker and Timothy Mathews (eds.), *Tradition, Translation, Trauma: The Classic and the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 245–61.

protagonists' bodies with vindictive rage.[37] In the case of Heywood's translator, however, they inspire compassionate writing:

> Thou Fury fell that from thy deepest den
> Could'st cause this wrath of hell on Troy to light,
> That workest woe, guide thou my hand and pen
> In weeping verse of sobs and sighs to write,
> As doth mine author [=Seneca] them bewail aright.
> Help woeful Muse, for me beseemeth well
> Of others' tears with weeping eye to tell.[38]

As in Seneca's tragedies, the furies possess the translator's body, instilling it with an overwhelming passion. The force of the fury connects Heywood to the 'woe' of the Trojan women and guides his hand to write 'in weeping verse of sobs and sighs'. The physical experience of compassion that the fury instils in the translator results in a form of writing that similarly embodies grief – it is made up of sobs and sighs.

Heywood's invocation of the fury as his tragic muse may surprise readers of early modern revenge tragedies, but he is not the first to call on her for this purpose. In fact, Heywood here imitates the opening of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* – a poem that similarly narrates the tragic fate of two victims of the Trojan war.[39] In the opening stanzas of Book I, the speaker of Chaucer's poem wonders about his ability to transmit the 'double sorwe of Troilus' to his readers. He invokes the help of the fury Tesiphone to help him write: 'thow help me for t'endite/Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write.'[40] Describing himself as the 'sorwful instrument' helping lovers to express their lamentations, Chaucer's speaker, like Heywood's, considers the narrator's grief as a precondition for the transmission of their tale. Inspired by Tesiphone, his aim is to 'write [Troilus and Cressida's] wo [. . .] and for to have of hem compassioun,/As though I were hire owne brother dere'.[41] Both Chaucer and Heywood call on the fury as the source of the woes they are about to describe, and invite her to afflict them with the pain that will enable them to write in weeping verse; a writing fuelled by compassion with 'others' tears'.[42] With his imitation of Chaucer's opening stanzas, Heywood places himself in a line of men who feelingly rendered the

[37] See for example Heywood, *Thyestes*, in Ker and Winston (eds), *Elizabethan Seneca*, II. i. 75–77.

[38] Heywood, *Troas*, pref., ll. 50–56.

[39] This connection is also discussed by Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, who view Heywood's allusion to Chaucer as a way to 'present himself as a solemn, tragic poet in his own right' (23).

[40] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in F. N. Robinson (ed.) *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 473 (*Troilus and Criseyde*, Book I, ll. 1, 6–7). Heywood's 'Preface to the Tragedy' acknowledges its debt to Chaucer also in its *rime royale* rhyme scheme.

[41] Chaucer, 473 (*Troilus and Criseyde,* Book I, ll. 10, 14, 49–51).

[42] Heywood also appeals to the fury in a poem prefacing his translation of *Thyestes*. See also Kristine Steenbergh, 'Green Wounds: Pain, Anger and Revenge in Early Modern Culture', in Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Karl Enenkel (eds.), *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 174–77.

tragic fate of Trojan victims so that their readers could feel compassion with them. At the root of this genealogy is the author of his source text, Seneca.

CONTESTED COMPASSION

Heywood's translation makes for a peculiar introduction of Seneca the playwright into the English vernacular, since the Stoic philosopher is styled as a poet of compassion. The characterization of the Roman playwright as one who 'bewails aright' the miseries of Troy may be unexpected for those familiar with his Stoic philosophy.[43] After all, Seneca argued that the passions have no part to play in the process of rational decision-making. Seneca's tragedies do not present as clear-cut a view of the role of affect, however. The question of how to relate the drama to the philosophical prose works is the subject of continued debate which has the potential to render the 'figure of the philosopher-playwright [...] maddening for the literary critic'.[44] Heywood, however, views compassion as the core of the classical playwright's writing practice. Even the volume of tragedies that Seneca shows the speaker in his dream vision in *Thyestes* is produced from curdled emotion, as the verses are written in ink distilled from the congealed tears of a weeping myrrh tree.[45] The heartwood of the myrrh tree is pierced to let the myrrh trickle out and harden into droplets called 'tears'. With this image, Heywood depicts Seneca's works as part of the Christian tradition, for like the pelican, myrrh and incense trees were used in early modern culture as a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and compassion. Francis Bacon, for example, writes that if a man 'be compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree that is wounded itself when it gives the balm'.[46] By styling Seneca as a compassionate dramatist, Heywood includes him in a Christian tradition of weeping verse.

The experience of compassion that Heywood seeks to kindle in his readers was problematic in Senecan philosophy precisely because of its possible political effects. Seneca applied a firm distinction between rational clemency [*clementia*] and passionate pity [*misericordia*], which he views as a dangerous emotion. The distinction between the two forms of compassion is gendered: Seneca characterizes the passionate type of identification as typically feminine: 'such as are old women and tender hearted females, who weepe to see them weepe, that are condemned, who would willingly breake up prisons, if so be they were

[43] Heywood, *Troas*, pref., l. 54.

[44] Gordon Braden, *Anger's Privilege: Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 29. The sixteenth-century translators of Seneca's tragedies were perhaps less troubled by the conundrum of the discrepancy between the philosophical and dramatic works, since they may not have considered the poet and the philosopher as the same man. See Braden, *Anger's Privilege*, 69. On the other hand, some of the translators of his tragedies do link the philosopher and the dramatist and tie his prose works to his plays. See Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, 7–10.

[45] Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, 148 (*Thyestes*, pref. l. 240–41).

[46] Francis Bacon, 'Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature', *Essays*, in Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 364.

permitted to doe it.'[47] Because compassion can lead to such irrational decisions, Seneca advises rulers only to make a rational decision to be clement, but to avoid passionate pity. The dangers of *misericordia* are also brought into focus in *Troas* itself, where pity is considered a dangerous emotion in times of war. When Ulysses comes to take Hector and Andromache's surviving young son Astyanax, his mother appeals to the Greek general's compassion. She reminds him how Hercules once spared Priam out of pity, and asks the Greeks to mollify their hearts like him. Ulysses, however, has the interests of Greece close at heart when he replies: 'Of truth the mother's great sorrow doth move my heart full sore./But yet the mothers of the Greeks of need must move me more,/To whom this boy may cause in time a great calamity.'[48] Like Seneca in his essay on clemency, Ulysses mistrusts compassion. For him, fellow-feeling must always be weighed against the communal interests of his own nation. His primary concern is his 'careful trust of peace unsure', and if he loses sight of this interest, compassion can lead him to take actions that run counter to his responsibilities to the Greeks.[49]

Seneca's advice not to feel with the suffering of others posed a problem for Christian neo-Stoics in the Renaissance. Whereas Justus Lipsius in *De Constantia* (1584) thinks it 'certainly a sickness' (*vere enim aegritudo*) to feel compassion with another's misfortune (he describes pity as a 'publick Feaver'), other Renaissance authors wrestled with the conflict between Seneca's condemnation of passionate fellow-feeling and the central role of compassion in Christian religion.[50] As John Staines explains, 'in Christ, the Christian God becomes human, feels pity and even cries for His creatures, and then freely offers them a wholly undeserved mercy, not a rationally calculated clemency.'[51] Seneca's *Troades* played a role in these debates. The Jesuit father Martinus Delrius (Del Río), responds to Lipsius' condemnation of the feeling of pity in a commentary on precisely this tragedy. He writes that those who do away with compassion 'condemn the Church, which praises, encourages and embraces *compassion and pity*, they condemn Our Lord who more than once felt *compassion and pity* for others' misfortunes, more than once groaned and wept.'[52] For Delrius and other Christian humanists, the Stoic argument against compassion was problematic as it was irreconcilable with Christ's compassion with mankind. In his *Discourses*

[47] Thomas Lodge, *The workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, both morrall and naturall* (1614; STC 22213), sig. Eee5r.

[48] Heywood, *Troas*, III. iii.1–3.

[49] On compassion as both fostering and threatening a national politico-religious identity, and on poetic narrative as having a 'troublingly limited ability to channel [. . .] compassion in the appropriate direction', see Van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer,2012), 173–215 (at 175).

[50] Van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion*, 220.

[51] Staines, *Tragic Histories*, 18.

[52] Delrius, *Syntagma*, quoted and translated in Ronald Mayer, 'Personata Stoa: Neostoicism and Senecan Tragedy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994), 164–5. See also Jan Papy, 'Neostoic Anger: Lipsius's Reading and Use of Seneca's Tragedies and *De Ira*', in Karl A. E. Enenkel and Anita Traninger (eds.) *Discourses of Anger in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 139–40.

upon Seneca the Tragedian (1601), however, the neo-Stoic essayist Sir William Cornwallis also turns to Seneca's *Troades* to argue that compassion with defeated enemies is abhorrent. 'The pitie of tears', he writes, 'is too waterish to do good; bewailing being an unnecessary slothful affection.'[53] With reference to the words '*victus pati*' in *Troades*, Cornwallis writes that if the vanquished bewail their adversity this 'drawes the minde to an extreme basenesse, to an extreme follie'. Lamenting one's fall is inappropriate, since 'in the Victor [it] stirreth up eyther contempt or pitie, the best of which [= pity] in a noble mind is more abhorred, then the worst part of fortune.'[54] In Cornwallis' view, those defeated in war should rather look upon their misfortune as an opportunity to demonstrate strength of mind and temperance, than seek to arouse the compassion of their vanquishers.

'GOOD LADIES HAVE YOUR TEARS IN READINESS': AROUSING THE QUEEN'S COMPASSION

Heywood's translation of *Troas*, then, is rather un-Senecan in its emphasis on experience of compassion. What is more, it not only foregrounds the translator's compassion with the protagonists, but also emphatically seeks to arouse the compassion of the audience. This happens most prominently in the three stanzas added at the close of Act 2, which announce the tragic scene of the execution of Hector and Andromache's young son Astyanax.[55] Worried that the boy might become a threat, Greek soldiers are about to throw Astyanax off the only tower still standing in Troy. The speaker reports that tears stain his eyes when he thinks of the sorrow that Andromache will suffer in the next scene.[56] He freezes the action for a while to prepare his listeners for the scene that will inevitably follow.

> O dreadful day, alas, the sorry time,
> Is come of all the mothers' ruthful woe;[57]
> [. . .]
> To see the mother her tender child forsake,
> What gentle heart that may from tears refrain,
> Or who so fierce that would not pity take,
> To see alas the guiltless infant slain.
> For sorry heart the tears mine eyes do stain,
> To think what sorrow shall her heart oppress,
> Her little child to leese remediless.

[53] William Cornwallis, *Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian*, Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints (Delmar: New York, 1978), sig. G8v.

[54] *Ibid.*, sig. C2r–v.

[55] Heywood added a Chorus to Act 1; a scene in which the ghost of Achilles appears at the start of Act Two; three stanzas to the Chorus of Act 2; and replaced the Chorus of Act 3 with one of his own devising.

[56] Heywood, *Troas*, 2. Cho.50–70.

[57] Ker and Winston render this as a genitive singular (mother's), but I think Heywood means to imply that all mothers would share in Andromache's grief – as he does also in the 'Preface to the Tragedy' (see above).

> The double cares of Hector's wife to wail,
> Good Ladies have your tears in readiness,
> And you with whom should pity most prevail
> Rue on her grief, bewail her heaviness:
> With sobbing hart lament her deep distress:
> When she with tears shall take leave of her son,
> And now, Good Ladies, hear what shall be done.[58]

The repeated appeal to 'good ladies' in these lines could be addressed to the chorus of lamenting Trojan women within the play, but as Ker and Winston also write, the address is 'an open-ended reference'.[59] The words move outside the play metatheatrically to address women reading, listening to, or perhaps watching the play in performance.[60] Heywood's dedication of the translation to Queen Elizabeth invites a consideration of this address to 'good ladies' in the specific context of the Elizabethan court. I argue that, like Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry*, Heywood views the tragedy of Hecuba as a means to 'stir the affects of [. . .] commiseration' and 'dr[a]w abundance of tears' to 'mollify' a ruler's 'hardened heart'.[61]

Heywood's dedication to Queen Elizabeth makes it clear that he intended his new queen to read his text. Although the translation does not appear on the gift roles for the New Year's ceremony of January 1559, this does not mean the book was not received by the court. Jane Lawson notes that 'while the gift may have been acceptable, the giver may not have held the proper status to be included on the gift rolls. This status was determined partly by office or rank in the peerage and partly by personal acquaintance and recognition by the queen.'[62] New Year's gifts offered a possibility of gaining access to the monarch, which was normally difficult to obtain since the Privy Chamber was like a 'cocoon' inhabited by women.[63] Books presented as New Year's gifts, however, did often make their way into this feminine space. The gift rolls show that such books were placed in the custody of Blanche Parry, Lady Katherine Howard, and Mary Radcliffe, who were the queen's Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber. Jane Lawson writes that 'the queen's pleasure assured that some items remained with her,' such as

[58] Heywood, *Troas*, 2. Cho.50–70.

[59] Ker and Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca*, 31.

[60] O'Keefe notes that Heywood may have translated *Troas* with a performance at the university or the Inns of Court in mind, but there is no evidence of a performance extant. Jack O'Keefe, 'Innovative Diction in the First English Translations of Seneca: Jasper Heywood's Contributions to the English Language', *English Language Notes* 18 (1980), 92.

[61] Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, Geoffrey Shepherd (ed.), revised and expanded by R. W. Maslen (Manchester and New York: 2002), 98. Sidney refers to Plutarch's rendition of the tyrant Alexander of Pherae's reaction to the suffering of Euripides' Hecuba.

[62] Lawson, 'Remembrance', 159.

[63] Pam Wright, 'A Change in Direction: The Ramifications of a Female Household, 1558–1603', in David Starkey (ed.) *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longman, 1987), 159. On the cultural agency of ladies-in-waiting see also Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (eds.) *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014).

Thomas Phaer's translation of the *Aeneid*, also presented in 1559.[64] These books were not only stored as material objects: an active culture of collective reading existed at the Elizabethan court. Ladies-in-waiting, for example, read poetry together. Sir John Harington circulated his translation of *Orlando* among Elizabeth's gentlewomen.[65] Communal reading was favoured by elite readers in England as late as the sixteenth century and was common at court. Holinshed's *Chronicles* provide evidence of the prevalence of this practice at Queen Elizabeth's court when they describe how: 'the stranger that entereth into the court of England upon the sudden, shall rather imagine himselfe to come into some publike schoole of the universitie, where manie give eare to one that readeth, than into a princes palace.'[66] In the context of this tradition of reading aloud at court, it is interesting that certain aspects of Heywood's translation signal that it may have been intended as a closet play – a text to be recited by one person, or even performed before a small circle.[67] It was not unusual for translations of Greek and Latin plays to be read as closet plays, especially in the tradition of scholarly play reading. These closet performances 'framed their function at least as much in terms of moral and political as philological reading' and sought to intervene in social, religious, and political discourse.[68] Heywood's translation of Hecuba's tragedy into the vernacular, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, may have been intended as such an intervention. Heywood hoped that the queen's compassion for Hecuba and Andromache's suffering might lead her to feel vicariously also for the English Catholics defeated by the death of Mary Tudor. Heywood may have remembered how their shared humanist education 'encouraged in pupils a highly mediated relation to emotion, a tendency to experience what passes for deep personal feeling precisely by taking a detour though the passions of others (particularly those classical figures offered as examples for imitation).'[69] By making Elizabeth and her ladies-in-waiting experience compassion with the tragedy of Hecuba, Heywood may have hoped that the queen's heart would also be mollified when she thought of the position of Catholics under her rule.

[64] Lawson, 'Remembrance', 160. See also Lawson (ed.), *The Elizabethan New Year's Gift Exchanges* (Oxford 2013), 59.190 (Exchange List 1559).

[65] See Lena Cowen Orlin, 'The Private Life of Public Plays', in Richard Fotheringham, Christa Jansohn, and R. S. White (eds.) *Shakespeare's World / World Shakespeares* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 144.

[66] Raphael Holinshed, *The First Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotland and* Ireland (London, 1577), STC 13568, sig. L3r. See also Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47.

[67] See Karen Raber, 'Closet Drama', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28.

[68] Marta Straznicky, *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12 and 16.

[69] Enterline, *Schoolroom*, 25.

Several critics have recently drawn attention to the capacity of Hecuba's tragedy to move its audiences to political action. Marguerite Tassi notes that Shakespearean evocations of the legend of Hecuba occur in contexts in which compassion for grief-stricken mothers who have witnessed wartime atrocities serves to ethically justify these women's subsequent active response in the shape of revenge.[70] Cora Fox writes that Hecuba in the period is most often associated with Ovid's retelling of her tale in *Metamorphoses*, and that it is her grief and subsequent revenge which form the basis for Renaissance references to her figure.[71] As Tanya Pollard has shown, imitations of the Euripidean tragedy similarly focus on the combination of passionate grief and triumphant revenge: 'Euripides' Hecuba uses lament, the ritual voicing of mourning for the dead, to transform her grief into violence that is depicted as both successful and justified.'[72] In contrast to the Euripidean tragedy, however, Seneca's *Troades* does not contain Hecuba's revenge. Heywood's translation, by analogy, does not incite vindictive desires, but advocates compassion for a defeated opponent.

Seneca's version of the tragedy explicitly draws attention to the destructive effects of the persistence of warlike fury are emphasized also in the Latin original.[73] In the Greek camp, the way in which a conquering army should treat the people it defeated is the subject of an extensive discussion between Agamemnon and Pyrrhus. When Pyrrhus seeks to honour the demand of his father Achilles' spirit to sacrifice Hecuba's daughter Polyxena on his tomb, Agamemnon urges him not to stain his father's spirit with more blood. He warns of the dangers of fury: 'The happy sword once stained with blood unsatiable is,/And in the dark the fervent rage doth strike the more amiss.'[74] The anger that is so necessary to fight a war becomes problematic if it persists once the battle has been won. The acts of violence carried out against Troy and its inhabitants after its defeat are no longer heroic feats of war, but take on the character of revenge: 'Now are we wreaked on Troy too much,' says Agamemnon.[75]

Heywood takes Agamemnon's side in this argument about the treatment of the defeated Trojans, altering his source material to foreground the vindictive nature of the Greek treatment of the Trojan women. He lets Agamemnon ask Pyrrhus: 'What furious frenzy may this be that doth your will so lead?' – a line that is not in Seneca's text and which strengthens the sense that Pyrrhus' wish for retribution is motivated by vengeful anger.[76] This also appears from Heywood's portrayal of the ghost of Achilles, who is one of the driving forces behind the victors' desire for retribution. Whereas in Seneca's original text the

[70] Tassi, *Women and Revenge*, 117.
[71] Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion*, 107.
[72] Pollard, 'What's Hecuba', 1066.
[73] See also Woodbridge, 'Resistance Theory', 118.
[74] Heywood, *Troas*, II. iii. 85–86.
[75] Heywood, *Troas*, II. iii. 87.
[76] Heywood, *Troas*, II. iii. 99.

chorus questions whether spirits exist, Heywood adds a scene to the beginning of the second act in which the 'Spright of Achilles' appears, demanding the sacrifice of Polyxena.[77] Heywood takes care to stress that Achilles' request for retribution is motivated by vindictive fury, suggesting that Agamemnon was right to warn of the 'fervent rage' that reigns once the sword of war is stained with blood. Achilles' spirit threatens that 'the deepe Avern my rage may not sustain,/Nor bear the angers of Achilles' spright [. . .] Vengeance and blood doth Orcus' pit require,/To quench the Furies of Achilles' ire.'[78] By representing Achilles as a vindictive ghost, Heywood suggests that his demand for Polyxena's sacrifice is not driven by his desire to defend his military honour. Instead, the added scene repeatedly stresses that the spirit's demand for revenge originates in Hell: 'From burning lakes, the Furies' wrath I threat,/And fire that nought but streams of blood may slake.'[79] The sacrifice of Polyxena, then, is represented as serving the vindictive desires of the ghost of Achilles. Thereby, the pursuit of vengeance by victors of war is associated with the vindictiveness of the furies.

Heywood's retelling of Hecuba's tragedy is therefore in accordance with the political advice of Agamemnon, who advocates a shift in perspective that would allow the Greeks to consider the Trojans as fellow human beings rather than as enemies. The Greek commander proposes not to take revenge on the Trojan women, but to sacrifice an ox so that 'no blood that may be cause of mothers' teares be shed'.[80] His suggestion enforces the common humanity of Trojans and Greeks by drawing on the shared notion of a mother's compassion for her child. I read Agamemnon's appeal as representative of Heywood's approach to his translation of the play as a whole: the Greek military commander's rhetorical invitation to replace violent retribution with a sense of common humanity, like Heywood's translation, pivots on an appeal to the listeners' compassion.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that Jasper Heywood's first translation of a Senecan tragedy into English shapes *Troas* as a tragedy of weeping verse, as an intervention in early Elizabethan religious politics. A focus on the passions kindled by the tragedy reveals that this intervention not only takes place at the level of genre and plot, but also at the level of the play's emotional effect. The text foregrounds the compassion of the translator with the suffering he describes, emphasizes that a desire to take revenge on a defeated enemy leads to unnecessary suffering, and

[77] Winston states that this addition renders more vivid the supernatural forces that control Hecuba's life, emphasizing her loss of control (Winston, 'Seneca', 44).

[78] Heywood, *Troas*, II. i. 36–7 and 41–2. As John Kerrigan writes, 'Where Seneca's Achilles is briefly irate, Heywood's expansively threatens "the furies wrath" against the [Trojans].' Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 113.

[79] Heywood, *Troas*, II. i. 64–65.

[80] Heywood, *Troas*, II. iii. 98.

invites the 'good ladies' it imagines as its audience to feel compassion with the women of Troy. I read the play's affective operations in the context of the translation's dedication to the recently crowned Queen Elizabeth as a New Year's gift, and argue that Heywood sought to harness the queen's compassion for the Trojan women for his own political purposes. Mollifying the queen's heart by arousing her fellow-feeling with defeated Trojans, he hoped to elicit her compassion with English Catholics defeated by the death of Mary Tudor and the accession of a Protestant monarch. In contrast to Woodbridge's reading of the Elizabethan translations of Seneca, then, I do not read *Troas* as addressed primarily to the English people to stimulate active resistance to an absolutist queen. Although I do certainly agree with Woodbridge's argument that the play opposes religious persecution, I read the play as addressed to the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth I as an attempt to intervene in her religious politics.

Heywood's *Troas* would not be the last instance of of a Senecan tragedy being used to influence Elizabeth's religious policies. In 1588, the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn played *The Misfortunes of Arthur* before the queen at Greenwich. This tragedy, 'the most slavishly Senecan of all English plays', is generally considered to have been intended as topical advice to the monarch.[81] Performed a year after the beheading of Mary Queen of Scots, it warns the queen against the compassion she experienced for her defeated cousin, urging her 'to resist any further indulgence of her passion as all-out war with Spain approaches'.[82] Both Senecan tragedies seek to influence the queen's statecraft. But whereas *The Misfortunes of Arthur* represents compassion as an emotion unfit for a monarch, the first English translation of a Senecan tragedy invites its uncommon reader to experience compassion with its tragic protagonists, in the hope of vicariously inciting her compassion with defeated English Catholics.[83] Enlisting both Seneca and Chaucer in his genealogy of a literary tradition of weeping verse, Heywood places himself at the end of a genealogy of authors who transferred the tragedy of Troy's fall into new times and novel political contexts, each time arousing anew the compassion of its readers and audiences.

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[81] F. L. Lucas, *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 101.

[82] Staines, *Tragic Histories*, 107.

[83] For a sustained analysis of the contested fashioning of Elizabeth I as a merciful queen during her reign, see Mary Villeponteaux, *The Queen's Mercy: Gender and Judgment in Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Villeponteaux does not discuss Heywood's *Troas*.