

THE CUNNING OF HISTORY AND SEAMUS HEANEY'S CURE AT TROY

In their attempt to understand the roots of our failure to learn from history and find ways of preventing war, many contemporary artists are turning to Classical plays and reexamining their critical potentials. This paper will consider several references to Classical drama in modern plays and films, and concentrate on modern adaptations of Sophocles' plays, especially Philoctetes, reworked for the needs of the XX century by the German playwright Heiner Muller and Irish Nobel Prize winner, poet Seamus Heaney.

Key words:

World War II, Holocaust, Fascism, Primo Levi, Egon Savin, The Merchant of Venice, education, poisonous pedagogy, conversion, Liliana Cavani, Jean Anouhil, Antigone, Edward Bond, Jean Luc Godard, Contempt, In Praise of Love, Simone Weil, The Iliad, The Odyssey, Odysseus, Philoctetes, Heiner Muller, Seamus Heaney, Cure at Troy

“Philoctetes. Hercules. Odysseus. /Heroes. Victims. Gods and human beings. /...All of them glad /To repeat themselves and their every last mistake, /No matter what.”

Seamus Heaney, Opening Chorus, *The Cure at Troy*

“It happened in Europe. ...It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say. ...They were not monsters, they had our faces, but they had been reared badly. ...All of them had been subjected to the terrifying miseducation...”

Primo Levi, Conclusion, *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986)

Introduction: wars and cures –

Some thoughts on the European context of Seamus Heaney's dramatic adaptations

The program brochure for the 2004 production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade contained a text on Primo Levi, Auschwitz survivor and noted author on the Holocaust, who committed suicide in 1987 because he could not bear to see new generations being brought up on revisionist histories which claimed that the horrors he had witnessed in W.W.II never happened. Had he lived longer, his anxiety concerning the possible repetition of history and the restoration of Nazism may have been intensified by the disclosure that in the moral world order which claims to have triumphed over fascism it was possible for Kurt Waldheim to serve two terms (from 1972 to 1981)¹ as the Secretary General of the United Nations and move on to become the prime minister of Austria, in spite of files containing documentary evidence of war crimes he was involved in as SS commander in WW II.² Levi might also have been disheartened by the activities which the Catholic Church undertook to canonize Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac, whose collaboration with the Nazis was made public in numerous sources (including *The Rat Lines* ³). He must have been horrified when in 1982 “certain attitudes that are once more in the air” led two German universities to refuse to name themselves after Heine and Einstein.⁴ He was already gone when, toward the end of the year 2000, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union in the Berlin Senate raised the question of the right person to run the Berliner Staatsopera, implying that the Jew Daniel Barenboim was unfit, and the younger Karajan, in all respect in the tradition of his father, more in tune with the prevailing mood of the time.⁵

Earlier on, in the late seventies, 'negationist' theories were launched which denied the existence of gas chambers, or claimed that they were intended merely to

1 See Guy Arnold, *Third World Handbook*, London, Cassell, 1989, p 28.

2 See John Moody, “Caught Up in His Past: Kurt Waldheim’s World War II record returns to haunt him”, in *Time*, March 17, 1998. p. 16. Waldheim appears as one of the main characters in B. Wongar’s novel *Raki*, Marion Boyard Publishers, London & New York, 1994, 1997 (especially revealing are pp. 118–120, 170–176). The first version of this novel was confiscated by the Australian police and never returned to its author, in spite of appeals by Thomas Shapcott and PRN international. The second version was completed on March 7, 1994. About a week later the USA Justice Department released a long-withheld war crimes report on Waldheim, and barred him from entering the USA. In 2004 the case was in the news again.

3 . Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Ratlines How the Vatican’s Nazi Networks betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets*, Mandarin, London, 1991. See references to Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac on pp. 20, 57, 91, 94, 97. See also B. Wongar’s novel *Raki*.

4 *The Voice of Memory: Primo Levi, Interviews, 1961–1987*, edited by Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon, New York, The New Press, 2001, pp. 103–4.

5 Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society*, Edited and with a Preface by Ara Guzelimian, Bloomsbury, London, 2003. p. 169.

kill fleas.⁶ In 1970, the change of moral climate may have precipitated the suicide of another camp survivor, poet Paul Celan. Levi wrote in 1986 that he “could feel a slippage”⁷ in the way that war memories were understood in the world, but that he could never erase from his mind what he had seen in the heart of Europe not such a long time ago: the hair cut from the women in the lagers purchased by German textile industries, used for thermal insulation or as mattress ticking, and human ashes, containing teeth and vertebrae, used as gravel to cover the paths of the SS village located near the camp⁸.

The scope of the phenomena which drove Levi to suicide is, in fact, stupendous. One way to keep track of it is to follow the TLS reports on the new history books inundating the market, for instance, books on Mussolini’s Italy, financed by Berlusconi, which the readers of Curzio Malaparte and Moravia must find amusing; or new accounts of the treatment of the Aborigines in Australia, purged of the ‘leftist’s’ accretions from the sixties; or new ‘corrected’ interpretations of the creation and dissolution of Yugoslavia.⁹ For the manufacturers of these new revised histories the existence of people like the film director Liliana Cavani must be intolerable. Contrary to the amnesiac effects which they are trying to produce, Cavani claims that the generation “which grew up after the war, cannot ever forget history”, and insists that she will continue “telling stories about our Europe” in her own ‘untimely’ way, regardless of how unwelcome they may be to the authorities in power.¹⁰

Seamus Heaney was born in 1939 and, in 1995, became the fourth Irishman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He is three years younger than Cavani and, although the local ‘troubles’ he grew up with in Ireland are different from those

6 Ibid. xxvi.

7 Ibid. p. 110.

8 Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, translated by Raymond Rosenthal, Introduction by Paul Baily, London, Abacus, 1989, p. 170.

9 TLS

10 See Gaetana Marrone’s book *The Gaze and the Labyrinth: The Cinema of Liliana Cavani*, Princeton 2000, chapter 8, “The Essential Solitude: A Conclusion”, pp. 188. In the remaining five pages of the chapter the author of the study writes that Cavani’s “historical” cinema, her portraits of Francis of Assisi, Galileo, and Nietzsche, are essentially a way of seeing, as Foucault suggested, “the conditions in which human beings ‘problematize’ what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live”. Her fascination with the cinema as a means of exploring the most vital problems of European culture has made her one of Italy’s most influential filmmakers of the generation after Visconti, De Sica, and Fellini. Cavani’s cinema, Marrone insists, commands our attention and imagination in the way classical theatre did. It establishes a debate on the anthropological nature of man as an entity who is part of a specific culture. Her cinema is the cinema of “tragic act as a vehicle for transcending reality”. It is essentially a creative act, a constant search for a truth that is not doctrinal but created. Cavani believes “that people want to see adventures of ideas, especially stories that capture their attention, disturb their dreams and decisions, and affect their lives. These adventures ought to provoke in the spectators’ mind the power of doubt and anxiety with which they cannot easily come to terms.”

experienced by Cavani in Italy, his decision to adapt Sophocles's *Philoctetus* (as *The Cure at Troy*, 1990)¹¹ and *Antigone* (as *The Burial at Thebes*, 2004) perhaps springs from a need similar to hers: to look for ways to "tell stories about our Europe" in which its history is not whitewashed, avoided, or 'forgotten', but confronted and understood, 'cured' from the repetition of its worse excesses through exercise of critical judgment and use of the moral and emotional intelligence championed by art.

Cures attempted without prior honest and accurate diagnoses of the disease are not likely to work. If wars have been the shameful landmarks of human history, then the way to stop them is to understand what causes them and how they start. Perhaps wars persist because, in spite of public declarations of pacifism and other best intentions, lies are being taught, and truth and understanding systematically obscured and obstructed. Those who cause wars, and use them to achieve their ideas of victory and success, take them to be natural and unavoidable manifestation of who we are.¹² They see nature, and within it human nature, as fundamentally aggressive, competitive, exploitative. If that were so, to oppose war would be impossible and unnatural, yet such opposition *does* exist, and is based on the belief that wars are *not* what we are but what we can become, what we can be converted into, if betrayal, subversion and suppression of our true nature is carried out in all walks of life. The 2003 Nobel Prize winner, J. M. Coetzee, who wrote about war in *Dusklands* (1974/82), *Life and Times of Michael K.* (1983), and *The Age of Iron* (1990), did not fail to address this topic again in *The Lives of Animals* (1999). His heroine Elizabeth Costello sees war, the horror of the holocausts and the concentration camps, as consequences of the inexcusable closing of the heart and failure of the imagination. "There are no bounds to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination", she insists, yet we choose not to exercise it. Instead, "in a huge communal effort we close our hearts."¹³ Each day a fresh holocaust, yet our moral being seems to be untouched.

11 Seamus Heaney was born in Northern Ireland. In 1981 he joined the Board of Directors of the Field Day Theatre Company, founded in Derry by playwright Brian Friel and actor Stephen Rea. The company was to be the "fifth province" where the four Irish provinces could create an imaginary cultural space form which a new discourse of unity could be forged. *Cure at Troy* was written for this company and premiere there in 1990, under the direction of Stephen Rea.

12 In the Conclusion of his book *The Drowned and the Damned*, Primo Levi insists that there is no need for wars and violence, under any circumstances. He is appalled by what he calls 'obscene' claims that there is a need for conflict, that mankind cannot do without it, and that local conflicts and violence in the streets, factories and stadiums are equivalent of generalized war and preserve us from it, as le petit mal preserves the epileptic from le grand.

13 From Elizabeth Costello's lecture, J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 18–35.

Shakespeare's plays can be read as dramatic studies of the processes through which this type of loss, this subversion and diminishment of our humanity, occurs. In *The Merchant of Venice* a whole range of such 'subversions/conversions' occurs. The Belgrade production chose to anchor itself in the 'conversion' of Shylock's servant Launcelot Gobbo, in Act 2, 2. The situation presented in this scene is quite similar to the 'conversion' the audience is made to witness in *Richard III* (when two paid killers are sent by Richard to assassinate his brother Clarence), or the persuasions and rationalizations dramatized in *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *The Tempest*. Launcelot stands between his conscience and 'the fiend'. After a debate of sorts he follows his tempter's advice, abandons his conscience, and decides to improve his lot by changing masters and serving Basanio (who "gives rare new liveries"). Following this line of development, Shakespeare's "early-modern" Launcelot reappears in Act 5,1 of the Belgrade production as the "late-modern" Italian Fascist, wearing the "rare new" Nazi uniform into which the prejudices of Shakespeare's time became re-packed in the twentieth century. The performance wished to emphasize that the tragedy of Primo Levi, and millions of others like him, is rooted in the betrayal of private conscience for the sake of public 'progress' possible only through the type of moral conversion Shakespeare tirelessly explored..

Sophocles's *Philoctetes* is one of the most impressive plays written on this topic. It was created *after* Sophocles' treatment of similar concerns in *Antigone*. In *Philoctetes*, as in so many Shakespeare plays, a young person stands between his conscience and a tempting promise of success, but is *not* morally converted. Heaney's choice to work on *Philoctetes* puts him in line with a number of other European artists who consider the Trojan War, and other plays of the classical past, crucial for the understanding of our own time. In order to highlight this 'tradition', Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* will be compared with Heiner Muller's *Philoctetes*, Liliana Cavani's version of *Antigone* in *The Cannibals*, and Jean Luc Godard's two films on the revisions of history (*Contempt* and *In Praise of Love*). The shared assumption behind all these works is that the play (or film) can be "the thing" with which to catch the conscience of an age where sympathetic imagination is being lost, and moral and emotional intelligence deliberately trained out of people. Can what is lost be recovered through the 'cure' by art?

Developing historical insight through references to the Greek classics

This particular approach to Heaney and the Greek classics springs out of the research done within two courses developed in 2003/4 with film and theatre students at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. One course examined Love in the modern world, and the title of the other was Europe. The intention of the sec-

ond was to foreground perspectives on European history broader and more complex than those broadcast in support of the current holders of political power. The assumption was that Europe is as Europe does, and that it is by their works, by what they do to each other and to the rest of the world, that the Europeans can best be known. To achieve the desired broader vision the course contrasted images and interpretations of Europe (its relationship with other continents, and most significantly with North America today) disseminated by the international news media, with visions of Europe produced by various contemporary European film and theatre artists, engaged in the development of their own historical sense and striving to work out their own readings of the processes that have shaped Europe's past and threaten to claim its future.¹⁴

In the heterogeneous material covered by the courses a striking number of ingenious references to the Classical origins of our current situation occurred. Robert Altman, for example, links America with Classical Greece in his film *Nashville* (1975) in order to stress, in his complex and intricate way, the persistence of the traditional bond between so called democracies and slavery. In the film, Nashville is referred to as the Athens of the South, and the film ends with its citizens and guests facing the imitation Greek temple on the common green, singing "They may say that I'm not free, but that don't worry me."¹⁵ They do so minutes after witnessing the assassination of a woman whose songs, and breakdowns, unintentionally triggered memories of a different America, whose irrecoverable loss they can survive only by not allowing the remembrance of things past to reach consciousness.

References to the Classical past are often used to generate insights out of which the entire structure of the film evolves. For instance, the performance of *Electra* with which Bergman's *Persona* opens, enables the film's protagonist Elizabeth, an actress, to come to a deeper understanding of history and of her own personal story within it. Elizabeth realizes that *Electra*, the roles she plays in the theatre, may represent *not only* what she as an actress does, but what she as a person is: an accomplice in matricide. This shattering epiphany makes her gradually realize what kind of matricide is in progress in our culture, and to what extent her

14 Besides Bresson, Bunuel, Bergman, Tarkovski, Bertolucci and Greenaway film artists who received special treatment in the course were brothers Dardenne, brothers Quay, Roy Andersson, Lukas Moodysson, Lars Von Trier, Werner Herzog, Michael Hanneke, Elem Klimov, Andrzej Wajda, Damjan Kozole, Jovan Zivanovic, Dusan Makavejev, Mathieu Kassovitz, Alain Resnais, Jean Luc Godard, Franco Brusati, Gillo Pontecorvo, and Liliana Cavani. In the course on Love, for theatre students, special attention was given to the plays by Harold Pinter, Caryl Churchill, Edward Bond, Howard Barker, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, Martin Crimp, Sam Shepard, Robert Wilson and Shelagh Stephenson and, outside the English speaking world, to Jean Anouilh, Heiner Muller. Report on the 2003/4 'findings' will appear in the second volume of my book *On Change*.

15 See Herman Daniel Farrell's play *Justice* (2002).

own inability to love her child has paved the way for a world in which children are openly collected and shipped off to concentration camps, with no hesitation or shame. Only after this understanding of the persistence of history through the destructive frames of mind and roles it has taught us to internalize, can protest become possible, such as Elizabeth's silence, or the self immolation of the Buddhist monk which she watches on television, in the hospital where she has been taken for a cure.¹⁶ In fact, in Bergman's film her 'sickness' (her new and growing understanding of what is going on in history, her withdrawal from betraying words and lies into a cleansing silence) is the beginning of the cure. Just as Lear's maddening encounters with the truth are cures for the sickening insensitivity with which men 'who will not see because they do not feel' are afflicted.¹⁷ When the moment of self-recognition happens and the mind throws off the shackles of poorly understood and wrongly played roles, it becomes and remains free, even in the most fragile and afflicted body.¹⁸

The subversive potential of Greek drama is the reason why so many modern artists resort to it. Its power to generate liberating insights often turns 'ordinary' people into Dedaluses, who become ready, like James Joyce's Stephen, to stand alone and proclaim their 'Non serviam!' An indirect tribute to this power is made even in Tim Robbins's film *The Cradle Will Rock* (1999). The film follows the efforts of Marc Blitzstein and Orson Welles to stage the eponymous musical in New York in 1936, under the auspices of the Federal Theatre Project. The Project director Hallie Flanagan is called before the HUAC (the Dies Committee) and asked to reveal the full identity of Marlow, the source frequently quoted in her texts and, in the view of the Committee, undoubtedly a communist.¹⁹ When the US Senators are told that the man in question was Shakespeare's contemporary they are taken aback but quickly recover, stating that even the Greek Classics, they have been told – Sophocles, Aristophanes – were dangerous communists all.

Robbins reminds us that his film, about the rise of fascism and the persecution of artists in the thirties, is "mostly a true story". A completely true account of the era can be found in Erick Bentley's play *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?*, based on the transcripts from the hearings of the Un-American Activities Committee

16 Similar awakening happens in *Hamletmachine*, when Heiner Müller's Ophelia realizes that in her uncritical adoration of her father and passive submission to patriarchal will and ideology, she is Electra. During his 1975/6 stay in America Müller was appalled by the complacency, complicity, and conformity that he saw among the young. In *Projection* 1975, he said he feared that "in the century of Orestes and Electras that's rising, Oedipus will be a comedy". See Carl Weber, *Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage*, PAJ, 1984.

17 Gloucester, in *King Lear*, 4, 1.

18 Lear, in *King Lear*, 3.4.

19 See reference to the same event in C. Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama*, Volume One: 1900-1940, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 231.

taken during the investigations of leading American artists and intellectuals in the next two decades, the forties and the fifties.²⁰ The individuals whose activities were investigated were suspected of being insufficiently patriotic and un-American because, like Paul Robeson, with whose testimony the play ends, they wished to change the unjust society they saw around them, and refused to equate justice with the interests of the unscrupulous moneyed elites. In December 2003, four performances of Bentley's play were staged in London by the Tricycle Theatre Company.²¹ The European premiere of the musical *The Cradle Will Rock*, for reasons which will be obvious to many, took place in Lyle in 2004, the year when that city was chosen to be the cultural capitol of Europe.

The relating of the sickness of our time to the long tradition of persecution of artists and other free thinkers was reinforced by the staging of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* during the UnConvention festival, organized in New York in protest of the September 2004 Republican Convention. Theatrical events like these were staged to give the silenced majority of peace activists a chance to voice their opposition to "perpetual wars for perpetual peace", interventionist regime-changes, and other acts of "mercy" and "justice" through which history of our time is being written.²² Heaney, too, may have decided to translate and adapt Sophocles' *Philoctetes* in 1990, and *Antigone* in the first years of the new millennium, because these plays throw a dangerously clear ironic light on the nature of ethical subversions through which the current 'triumphs' of civilization over barbarism occur and are celebrated. These plays clarify why, today, 'the algebra of infinite justice'²³ spread by the promoters of democratic imperialism²⁴ inspires such powerful resistance. In the staging of Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* at the Abbey Theatre in the spring of 2004, the TLS reviewer reported references to Iraq and the American Patriot Act(s).²⁵ Anouilh's *Antigone* (first performed in 1944 to encourage resistance against the German occupation of France) was staged in September 2004, during the UnConvention play festival, perhaps out of the same need to oppose fascism in the form in which it manifests itself today.²⁶

20 See Eric Bentley, *Rallying Cries: Three Plays (Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?, The Recantation of Galileo Galilei, From the Memoirs of Pontius Pilate)* Washington, New Republic Books, 1973

21 The performances were organized for the benefit of PEN and the International Committee for Artist's Freedom.

22 See, for instance, the works of Gore Vidal, Arundhati Roy, Naomi Klein. One very obvious target of the 'revision through omission and obliteration from history' is the Non-aligned movement, of which Yugoslavia was a founding member. In 1961 the first conference of NAM was held in Belgrade, and in 1989 the ninth. In 2006 the fourteenth NAM conference took place in Havana, with 118 states attending as full members. The fifteenth summit is to be held in Egypt, in 2009.

23 See Arundhati Roy, *Algebra of Infinite Justice*.

24 See the Berkeley students' internet journal *Bad Subjects*.

25 See Sara Paretski's text "The new censorship" in *The New Statesman*, June 2, 2003.

26 Reported in *American Theatre*, July/August 2004, p. 19. Very direct opposition to the war in Iraq will appear in the play *Entrenched by the Oath*, based on the true stories of U.S. soldiers sent there to perform their patriotic duty.

In the year 1969 Sophocles' *Antigone* attracted the attention of one more artist, the Italian film director Liliana Cavani. She used the play not solely as a vehicle of protest but, as she points out, a proper location for a more complex enquiry into the failure of protests and betrayal of revolutions.²⁷ *The Cannibals*, her film version of the play, was inspired by the evens in 1968. In an interview held in 1970 she said: "In *I cannibali*, and beginning with *Antigone*, I intended to use the myth and universal symbols to avoid the revolutionary speech that had become a cliché by 1969–1970. As everyone knows, two months following the events of May '68, all slogans, posters, and catch phrases were sold out and overused by the establishment... *I cannibali* is not the chronicle of a revolution but a spectral analysis of reality beyond the various episodes that characterized the demonstrations. I believe it is a comprehensive analysis". (Marrone, 2000: p. 58)

In 1990, talking about the same film she again insisted that she made it in response to the great babel of 1968. Since language had become meaningless, she wanted to make a film which would restore the value of silence and pure gesture, and which would reclaim an ethical order because, like, Sophocles, she too "believed in an inherent, ethical nucleus of reality". (Marrone, 2000: p. 59) In line with these views her *Antigone* and *Tiresias* (who is omitted from Anouilh's version) have no slogans and work alone. By turning away from corrupt and corrupting culture to "nature and precultural being" (Marrone, 2000: p. 215) Cavani hoped that her modern *Antigone* in *I cannibali* would provide a corrective critical contrast to the fashion-following, slogan-buying 'revolutionaries' she saw on the streets of Italy, and by doing so spur recognition and renewed faith in the power of *true* ethical protest.²⁸

Cavani's descent through history towards the myths and archetypes that inform it is paradigmatic of many modern artists who, like Heaney, feel best defined as just such 'seers and dowers'. Cavani first graduated from the University of Bologna with a degree in literature and a dissertation on the fifteenth century poet Marsilio Pio. She intended to be an archeologist, but was to do her 'digging' in the medium of film, after completing her second course of studies at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematography in Rome. She started her film career as a freelance director for RAI-TV. Her first major assignment was a four-part

27 Author of such films as *Francis of Assisi*, 1966; *Galileo*, 1968; *The Guest*, 1971; *Milarepa*, 1973; *The Night Porter*, 1974; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1977; *The Skin*, 1980; *Beyond Obsession*, 1982; *The Berlin Affair*, 1989; *Francesco*, 1989; *Where are you? I'm Here*, 1993; and in 2002, *Ripley's Game*, with John Malkovich in the leading role. Her latest film, *Einstein*, was released in Italy on October 26, 2008. *The Cannibals*, Cavani's third film, was made in 1969.

28 See Gaetana Marrone, *The Gaze and the Labyrinth: The Cinema of Liliana Cavani*, especially chapter 3, "Metaphors of Revolt: The Dialogic Silence in *I cannibali*", pp. 57–77. For a detailed study of the life of the *Antigone* story in drama, prose fiction, philosophic discourse, political tracts, opera, ballet, film, and the plastic arts, see George Steiner, *Antigones*, Oxford University Press, 1984.

series on the history of the Third Reich. She then went on to connect the holocaust in Europe with the treatment of Negroes in America and wrote *Black Jesus* (1965/6), *Malcolm X* (1968), and *Intolerance* (1969), but money for projects containing such insights was never found. During the same period she also worked on Dostoevsky and Shakespeare, and wrote a teleplay adaptation of *Coriolanus*.²⁹ In 1974 she published a screenplay on Simone Weil. Cavani was not to make that film either, but the life of Simone Weil became the formal framework and inspiration behind Godard's 2002 film *In Praise of Love*. Describing the way Cavani works, a colleague recognized that in the way she evokes the social perspective, the ideological culture, the moral tensions in which facts are rooted, "she seems to be imitating her beloved classical playwrights".³⁰

Changing the human image: poisonous pedagogy from Sophocles to Anouilh

In the notes for the staging of *The Crime of the Twenty-first Century*, in a kind of apology for similar attempts to see the future by looking back into the past, Edward Bond, another explorer and re-fashioner of both Shakespeare and the Greek classics, states: "The future does not depend on our individual acts of kindness and integrity. They are just tears shed over our impotence. **The future depends on how our culture understands itself, on the public understanding of the individual, on the human image** – the image we paint on the mirror so that we may know ourselves. Theatre is a necessary part of that understanding."³¹ He also reminds us, like Coetzee in Elizabeth Costello's lecture in *The Life of Animals*, that to possess such understanding we must combine the activities of reason and imagination, as drama does, because imagination can, *in the present*, already live through the future effects of our present conditions. We should be afraid of the future, Bond says: we have been there before.³²

Pursuing the same thought in an interview with Brian Logan, published in *The Guardian* on April 5, 2000, Bond stressed that what Shakespeare and the Greeks

29 Perhaps it is worth remembering that T.S. Eliot also falls into the 'tradition' this paper is trying to chart. In 1930 Eliot produced dramatic fragments of *Coriolan*, inspired by Beethoven's 'Coriolan Overture', and in 1939 wrote *The Family Reunion*, his own version of the story of Orestes. Eliot's biographer Peter Ackroyd notes with regret that the end of the 'Coriolan' experiment marked a decisive change in the direction of Eliot's creative life. Had Eliot continued to experiment "we may speculate that his own art would have taken an entirely different shape" and become more, rather than less startling and innovative. See Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, London, Abacus, 1984, pp. 190–191. Like Liliana Cavani and Godard, Eliot, too, was a great admirer of Simone Weil, and wrote prefaces for the English translations of her works, most of which have been reissued as Routledge Classics.

30 In *Marrone*, p.5.

31 "People Saturated with the Universe", written in 2000 for *Le Theatre National de la Colline*.

32 Edward Bond, *The Hidden Plot: Notes on Theatre and the State*, London, Methuen, 2000, pp. 188–192.

were able to do was radically question what it meant to be a human being. To do so is a great feat, Bond insists, if we keep in mind the enormous persistent pressure which is exerted on people *not to do so* but to conform unresistingly to bureaucratic definitions and other dictates and dogmas of ‘authority’. Dissatisfied with the state of theatres in Britain today Bond adds: “Do you really think that what happens at the RSC and the National Theatre or in your average television show is doing that?”

An interesting forecast of what the arts in the post modern era will be doing is included in *The Cradle Will Rock*. The US steel and oil tycoons who in 1936 morally and financially supported the Nazi war industries (and probably had investments in the I.E. Farben in Auschwitz, where Primo Levi worked during his imprisonment) hid their patronage of Hitler and Mussolini behind public patronage and support of the arts. As financial enablers and facilitators they had almost complete control not only of the production of art but also of its interpretation and distribution. In Robbins’s film, after the fiasco with the Diego Rivera mural, they are seen making the decision to commission and exhibit only abstract shapes and colors with no recognizable social relevance, and encourage in the media, schools and universities, discussions of formal and aesthetic properties of art and not its ethical concerns and contents. That was, they said, enough to keep the ‘elites’ preoccupied. The control of the other end of the social spectrum, the masses, was to be achieved through mass production and distribution of stupefying popular entertainment.

Even though it often seems that this plan was successfully implemented and that it continues to produce the desired results today, ‘bad subjects’ still continue to exist. The desire to continue the task of radical questioning, and the need to resist all reductions of the freedom to do so, may explain modern writers’ obsession with Shakespeare and the Greeks. Under their inspiration and with their aid they have populated modern drama with a new generation of insuppressible rebels and heretics. To this “tribe that asks questions” belong not only Jean Anouilh’s Antigone, but his St. Joan and Jeannette, Juliet’s modern inassimilable emanation. On stage, Anouilh’s heroines all come to life in scenes identical with the central episode in *Antigone*. In the ‘seduction’ scene, where Anouilh’s Creon teaches Antigone how to be happy (in the same manner that, in *Philoctetes*, Odysseus teaches Neoptolemus how to ensnare the soul of Philoctetes with his words, and for his “duplicity and complicity” earn the reputation of “a wise man and good”) Antigone challenges the value of the life she would be granted in return for unquestioning submission to external authority:

“What are the unimportant little sins that I shall have to commit before I am allowed to sink my teeth into life and tear happiness from it?” she asks. “Tell me:

to whom shall I have to lie? Upon whom shall I have to fawn? To whom must I sell myself? Whom do you want me to leave dying, while I turn away my eyes? I spit on your idea of life with your promise of humdrum happiness – provided a person doesn't ask too much of life. I want everything of life, I do, and I want it now! I want it total, complete: otherwise I reject it! I will not be moderate. I will not be satisfied with the bit of cake you offer me if I promise to be a good little girl. I want to be sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die!"³³

In Anouilh's later play *The Lark*, about St Joan, an even more frightening confrontation and attempted seduction/conversion occurs. The play makes it clear that Joan is being tried for her gentleness, humility and Christian charity. She displays these traits spontaneously and freely in all her transactions. The Inquisitor, who will take her life, reminds her that he stands for the Holy Inquisition "alone qualified to make the distinction between Charity, the theological virtue, and the uncommendable, graceless, cloudy drink of the milk of human kindness". Threatening Ladvenue, a young cleric seduced into courage by Joan's authentic adherence to the loving-kindness with which Christ loved, the Inquisitor adds: "Experience will soon make plain to you that youth, generosity, human tenderness are names of the enemy. ... Surely you can see if we were so unwise as to put these words you have spoken into the hands of simple people they would draw from them a love of Man. And the love of Man excludes the love of God." When Joan refuses to deny her voices and her private conception of God, the Inquisitor promises her that "the hunting down of Man will go on endlessly" because man can humiliate the state or church Idea at the highest point of its Power simply by saying "No" without lowering his eyes. "As long as one man remains who will not be broken, the Idea, even if it dominates and pervades all the rest of mankind, will be in danger of perishing. ... Say to us 'I submit to you,' say simply 'Yes'" he pleads with Joan.

In literature, pedagogical situations like these abound. As Sophocles pointed out, and Primo Levi learned by living through the consequences, the young are taught to do what they are told, and not what their nature tells them to do. (Heaney, p. 56) Since holders of power maintain their control through indoctrination and intimidation,³⁴ confrontations with 'authority' which literature and the other arts

33 Jean Anouilh, *Five Plays*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1958, pp. 42–43.

34 This topic is explored more extensively in my paper, "Charcoals or Diamonds? On destruction of moral and emotional intelligence (or 'soul murder') in Shakespeare's plays", presented in the seminar on Shakespearean Childhoods: Representing and Addressing Children in Shakespeare's Works and Afterlife, held during the first British Shakespeare Association Conference organized by De Montfort University in August of 2003. Published in *Facta Universitatis*, University of Nis, Vo. 3, No. 1, 2004., pp. 57–72.

provide need to be scrutinized with great care. They throw light on the most important turning point in life, the moment when exposed to mental or physical pressure, human beings either discover they are equipped to resist external threats (and become who they really are) or succumb to the pressure, give themselves up to be commanded, and become someone else. Antigone's rejection of controlled and reduced life and Neoptolemus' ability to 'hear voices' – commands of justice that overrule what Odysseus and the other Greek warriors stand for (Heaney 67), demonstrate quite literally what Bond expects drama to convey: that we *do* seek to be fully human in spite of our inhuman societies, that we desire to be innocent, and that tragedy is the search for that innocence.

Changing Odysseus: *Philoctetes* in Germany, Croatia and Ireland

Liliana Cavani wrote that she makes films “in order to know”, in order to glance around the corner. Everything that Edward Bond has done or is motivated by the same intention: to enhance our ability to understand why human search for innocence is such a tragic affair, and what it is we must do to “sail at last out of the bad dream of our past” (Heaney, p. 79). In the already quoted notes on *The Crime of the Twenty-first Century* Bond writes: “Human beings must have justice. Democracy can no longer create justice – justice is incompatible with what we must do to sustain the economy and everything based on it. The markets are free, we are not... Ivan Karamazov said there could be no God because a God could not endure – and so would not allow – the suffering of one little child. Then what of the human suffering of the last century? If we were human could we endure it? Do we allow it only because we have no power to prevent it? **No, the power to do it is simply the power to prevent it misused.** God is dead, humankind is still not born. We are not human because we are socially mad... We build our madness into our weapons and our machines. We misuse the machines that could help us and so even they destroy us. The human situation is a paradox.”

The misuse of power and the misuse of education are key generators of the paradox. In his excellent 1980 translation of *Philoctetes* into Croatian Dinko Stambuk notes, in the Afterward, that the play was performed when Sophocles was 87 years old, and that Sophocles' intention in writing it was to glorify a man who chose isolation and solitude rather than the company of tyrants, and men willing to become their slaves.(p. 78) Stambuk claims that Sophocles foresaw the coming crises of Athenian democracy and meant, with the story of *Philoctetes*, to fortify the will of the Athenian people against the seductions of political manipulators and misusers of authority. *Philoctetes* refuses to be saved and 'cured' by rejoining the same group of people who had unjustly excluded him from human society. He abhors the unprincipled behavior of the Greek leaders, and encourages young

Neoptolemus to follow his original instinct and reject them also. Stambuk sees Philoctetes as a kin to Oedipus and Antigone, and uses the same terms as Cavani to qualify his outcasts and moral outsiders. Are these savages, or merely individuals forced to turn their backs on an immoral, brutalized society in order to remain human, he asks. In the lyrics of *The Cannibals*, in Cavani's film originally sung in English, the conscientious objectors and 'bad subjects' (called savage, crazy, pagan cannibals) celebrate their wild and happy free minds, and promise that even killed, they will refuse to die. (p. 212)

Heiner Muller's version of *Philoctetes* had a hugely successful premiere in Munich in 1968, but was actually conceived ten years earlier, in 1958, when Muller himself was a virtual exile, and when he also wrote *Heracles 5*, and his own version of *Oedipus Tyrant*. He continued to think Classical and, in his efforts to understand better the root causes of the tragic events of recent history³⁵, he wrote several versions of *Medea*, and translated four Shakespeare plays. Like Shakespeare, he built almost all his works from existing material, not because he was a literary thief or only a gifted tailor who could make clothes out of rags and rags out of clothes, as some have objected³⁶, but because he wished to examine the strategies used to highlight ethical concerns in the works of the past, in order to discover how moral and emotional intelligence can be kept alive in the present, in the political and cultural climate calculated to produce profound ignorance and total moral amnesia. As an incorrigible questioner he was suspected by both the East and the West but disregarded these pressures and, preserving both his unhappiness and his integrity, explored relentlessly his specific historical situation: the socialist and capitalist postwar reconstructions.

The comparisons he was able to make in the present (between East Germany and West Germany, Europe and America) were deepened by his studies of the historical insights available in Shakespeare and the Classics. As a result of this complex involvement with history, in his *Philoctetes* he was able to add to other people's valuable insights into *the cunning of history*,³⁷ his own even more valuable insights into *the history of cunning*. He did what Sophocles had done: con-

35 On p. 429 in Wilhelm Hortmann's *Shakespeare on the German Stage* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). Muller is quoted complaining that Europe in 1990 is more completely and irrevocably in ruins than Berlin was after the Second World War.

36 Jonathan Kalb, "On the becoming death of poor H.M.," *Yale Drama*, 1996, p. 70.

37 Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: The Holocaust and the American Future*, New York, Harper & Row, 1978. In the Introduction William Styron states that the author makes us understand that the etiology of Auschwitz is embedded deeply in a cultural tradition that stretches back to the Middle Passage from the coast of Africa, and beyond, to the enforced servitude in ancient Greece and Rome. Rubenstein is saying that we ignore this linkage, and the existence of the sleeping virus in the bloodstream of civilization, at risk of our future.

centrate, in his *Philoctetes*, more perceptively than the other authors of Classical adaptations, on Odysseus, on the causes and consequences of his 'conversion'.

For all of us, but especially perhaps for the Irish, the contrast between the Ulysses in James Joyce's novel and Homer's *Odyssey*, and the very different man we see in Sophocles' play, should be of some interest. Joyce's Odysseus, Leopold Bloom, tells the Citizens: "It's no use... Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred". In Heaney's version of Sophocles, when Philoctetes complains about what Odysseus has done to young Neoptolemus, he says:

"Odysseus, you have taken everything I ever had and was. The best years of my life, my means of self-defense, my freedom, the use of my two hands. Everything that made me my own self, you've stripped away. And now you're going to take my second self. This boy. He's your accomplice but he was my friend. With you he does what he is told, with me he did what his nature told him. I made him free, you only fouled him up. Look at him there, he can't look me in the eye, he knows he is contaminated. My body may be corrupting but with him it is the mind, and you did that. You spread death-in-life. Here I am, like a lost soul bound for Hades, being led away out of the house of life and light and friendship."³⁸

What is the true nature of the social disease Sophocles is trying to uncover in *Philoctetes*, and why is Odysseus made to be its carrier? How does the contamination come about? How does it spread? What is the cure that Heaney, at the end of his version of the play, is half ready to believe possible? Why is *Philoctetes* considered a tragedy, if in the course of the play nobody dies? What is Sophocles saying about processes that can turn living into a greater tragedy than dying? For the analysis of *Philoctetes* as a cautionary re-examination of the history of Odysseus, and for a closer look at the modern re-visions of this original revision, two films of J.L. Godard can be of great help: *Contempt*, his 1963 film about the making of a new, American film version of the *Odyssey* (based on Moravia's novel *Il Disprezzo*), and *In Praise of Love (Euloge de l'Amour)*, his 2001 feature-length meditation on the equally momentous revisions of history that are in progress now.

38 Seamus Heaney, *Cure at Troy*, London, Faber in association with Field Day, 1990, p. 56. In David Grene's translation of Sophocles' play (1957) this passage, in which Philoctetes is prevented from committing suicide and so escaping Odysseus, is very different from Heaney's inspired translation/addition. This is Grene's version of Philoctetes' dirge: "You who have never had a healthy though nor noble, you Odysseus, how you have hunted me, how you have stolen upon me with this boy as your shield, because I did not know him one that is no mate for you but worthy of me, who knows nothing but to do what he is bidden, and now, you see, is suffering bitterly for his own faults and what he has brought on me. You shabby, slit-eyed soul taught him step by step to be clever in mischief against his nature and will."

Changing the *Odyssey*

One of the hopes for Europe may lie in the fact that, as parts of its classical tradition, its psyche stands embodied in two, and not just one epic, in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in the story of war (justified and made 'just' by numerous inexcusable rationalizations) and the story which attempts to preserve for memory a contrary state of mind – the desire to resist war, military life and sacrilegious slaughter, and long for the opposite, for home and for remembered goodness, found in the love for the whole living universe and the joy that the existence of other human beings can bring.

Simone Weil, who lived for this other tradition and hated war, asked to join the nursing units and to be sent to the first line of the combat zone because she wished the soldiers, faced with the horrendous realities of war, to have before their eyes not just acts of men killing men but acts of man helping man, acts of compassion and kindness, to remind them of the beauty and reality of love.³⁹ That was her way of showing that in the inferno of the living, which is what the war she was witnessing was, she certainly was not of it, and not for it. When, in another war, Joan, who was to become first a heretic and then a saint, was caught cradling in her arms a dying English soldier and crying, her 'milk of human kindness' (Anouilh deliberately uses a Shakespearean reference) freely given to the enemy, her courage to be in the war but not of it, removed her from the membership in the Catholic Church.⁴⁰ In light of these two examples the hero of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* is important because he can be seen as the archetype of the original human being in us, the one that does not want war and that, if tricked, or blackmailed into taking part in it, longs only to return to the reality of home, this other, different life.

Godard entered the new millennium working on his feature film *In Praise of Love*. There is nothing surprising in his choice since, from *Breathless* on, all of his films have had the same aim, and all represent his unfolding lament over the loss and extinction of love, whose power he continues to praise and celebrate. Because the lament and the love are not rendered through the formulas of escapist cinema and clichés of commercial entertainment, the audiences addicted to these sources often fail to recognize what is being communicated. Godard's experiments ask not only what being human is, but how free to be human we actually are in our modern 'democracies'. Within his provocative opus the film *Contempt*, made four decades ago, and his very recent film *In Praise of love*, reveal how he approached his most important themes in different periods of his life.

39 See Megan Terry's play *Approaching Simone*.

40 See Anouilh's play *The Lark*.

With remarkable consistency Godard's investigations of the quality of life in the modern world have led him into quarrels with America. The primary reason are the wars it has been inflicting on the population of this planet ever since the official end of the last World War. In Godard's view (implicit in his films) its wars are made possible (and may possibly be successful) by an undetected different war that it is engaged in and passionately committed to. The topic of *Contempt* is that other permanent war against love. By changing, in his *Contempt*, only one detail in the already psychologically sophisticated novel written by Moravia, Godard created a prophetic film, an x-ray of the current state and fate of Europe, whose accuracy is only now becoming evident.

Although seemingly simple, the plot of *Contempt* in fact uncovers the myth behind present history, endowing the story with both political and archetypal resonance. The plot concerns an American producer who comes to Europe to make a film: he pays an Italian studio, a French screenwriter and a German director to change the story of the *Odyssey*. They take the money and do it, change the epic, and although they see nothing momentous in what they have done (after all it is 'only a movie') the mythical structure of the European psyche is altered. Cured, in the view of those who are paying for the change, pruned and cleansed from the imagination and memory of home, love, dog, plow, tree, marriage bed. Without the *Odyssey*, there is only the *Iliad*, only *Troy*, the epic of war, with no rival story to command interest and promote distracting systems of value and ideologies.

In Godard's film *In Praise of Love*, the buying and altering of past and present truths continues. To make clear his view that the corruption is spreading and progressing, Godard uses a reference to France, found in Shakespeare, very different from the one he used in 1987, in his version of *King Lear*. In *Lear* the reference was to the king of France who, in Shakespeare's play, marries Cordelia and takes up the truth that the English king had cast away and banished from his kingdom. France, in Godard's 2001 film, is a very different country. The French are now eagerly selling their stories of the Resistance movement to Hollywood, and when thinking of Shakespeare they remember only *Henry V* and the French princess in a hurry to learn a few words of English to greet the conquerors.

What Hollywood versions of history have become can be seen in the screen version of the novel *The English Patient*. In the movie the key confrontation between 'the English patient' and the sapper, which concerns the dropping of the Atom bomb on Hiroshima, does not exist. It had to go because it led, in the novel, to a passionate outburst against colonialism and an implicit conclusion that the nuclear bomb did not put an end to fascism but merely gave it a new, resurrected life. The sentimental love story, and the exotic Sahara setting remain, the complex study of war and how betrayal of love always precedes it, is gone. In the

like manner, Godard insists in his 2001 film, all other stories involving true resistance are bought and altered so that in the popular imagination only the defused, politically correct Hollywood versions of history persist. People who do not sell out, however, continue to exist. In his film *In Praise of Love* Godard is trying to say that they will never disappear, but our ability to see them, know them and appreciate them, might. The hero of Godard's film wishes to pay artistic homage to Simone Weil, to build her a fitting 'monument' in art, while in 'real life' the new Simone Weil, whom he knows but cannot quickly enough comprehend, lives unloved, unsupported and unrecognized, and commits suicide when the pressure and solitude become unbearable. What is lost is not being recovered and Shakespeare's concern for our future, voiced in *The Winter's Tale*, continues to be relevant in Godard's ode (or eulogy) to love.

In light of all these, what importance can *Philoctetes* have for us to day? In the already quoted, most beautifully rendered passage in Heaney's adaptation, an important point is made: behind the visible ills and visible wounds a much more dangerous invisible corruption exists. Helpless to change anything, prevented from committing suicide, the visibly damaged Philoctetes cries out against the invisible dangers we fail to register and resist. Lamenting over Odysseus' conversion of Neoptolemus he says: "My body may be corrupting but with him it is the mind, and you did that. You spread death-in-life." (Heaney, p. 56)

Like *Philoctetes*, *In Praise of Love* is about growing up, about becoming an adult. The Greek play shows that it has become virtually impossible to develop, mature and ultimately become wise, because children are taken out of such developmental paradigm and forced into another, where identity comes with the prescribed uniform, administrative rank, or the latest fashion, and where inside these the growing, thinking, feeling human being dies. In *Philoctetes*, Heiner Muller's 1968 version of *Philoctetes*, this point is elaborated in a significant addition to the Greek original. In order to seduce the boy and convince him of the inevitability of war and the ethics and the logic that support it, Odysseus describes to Neoptolemus how Achilles, his own father, was 'cured'⁴¹ of his feminine nature, and how he secured his manhood by reaching out for weapons and heading for war. He describes, as well, his own desperate attempt to feign madness in order to avoid war, and the 'cure' used in his case to wean him from home and peaceful life. Muller's Neoptolemus is an exemplary, 'timely' young man, who does not resist the 'pedagogy' he is exposed to but learns quickly and quickly surpasses his teacher. In Muller's version Neoptolemus kills Philoctetes. He is very different from Heaney's youth whose sympathetic imagination identifies him with the

41 Filoktet, prevela sa nemačkog Vera Gligorijević-Milovanov, Scena, časopis za pozorišnu umetnost, Sterijino poyorje, Novi Sad, 1970, Godina VI, Knjiga II, Broj 5, Septembar-oktobar 1970, str. 109-110.

wronged and suffering outcast, and who rejects Odysseus' prioritization of national interest and personal gain by saying: "The commands I am hearing overrule/ You and all you stand for./The jurisdiction I am under here/Is justice herself. She isn't only Greek". (p. 67) In Muller's world no such inner voices are audible.

One of the tragedies in *Philoctetes* is that Odysseus, the man forced to go to war in order to save the life of his own son, is presented in the act of seducing and recruiting for destruction somebody else's child. This scene, this pedagogical situation, has a brilliant parallel in Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* where a young boy is being converted to the religion of money by a man who cries with admiration and amazement over the innocence and talent of his own child, but is ready without hesitation to exploit and corrupt other people's children. Ravenhill's modern seducer is a producer of television entertainment and a dealer of ecstasy. "Get the money first!" are the opening words of his Bible, and the good book he uses to spread his gospel contains no mention of the word love. In a similar fashion, in *Philoctetes*, of the three men on stage Odysseus, the seduced victim who has become the seducer, is the only one who does not speak of home.

Reflections of this process are becoming evident in the other arts as well. In the wonderful explorations of music and society, with which Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said enriched their friendship, they too came to discuss Odysseus and the Odyssey. To Barenboim's account of the psychology of tonality in Beethoven's Fourth Symphony Said added his observation that there is a parallel between the exploration of Beethoven and of Homer. "What you have described", he said "is an allegory that corresponds to one of the great myths that we find in literature, which is the myth of home, discovery, and return: the odyssey. ... That's one kind of very powerful experience. We find another in the Iliad, which is that of wondering and homelessness. (...) In the case of the *Iliad*, there's a certain sense in which Homer is really talking about a pure death-like force. There's a kind of senselessness to it. This is a war that's been going on for ten years. What's the purpose of it? Combatants have forgotten the original cause almost completely. And there's a certain exercise of arms, the martial spirit, and a kind of recklessness, which has no purpose, in the end, except combat itself". He finds that "expression of a kind of homelessness and a kind of permanent exile" is increasingly becoming the hallmark of modern music (*Parallels and Paradoxes*, pp. 48-49).

The subversiveness of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is enormous, its ambiguities as great. In the course of the play young Neoptolemus manages to resist Odysseus only in order to succumb, in the end, to the dictates of 'higher authority', the invisible 'god', Hercules. If we postulate that the intention of the play is coded in his very name (Neoptolemus, new war) then the plot of the play becomes the demonstration and dramatization of the process by which new wars are engendered, or

generated. In *Hamlet* Neoptolemus appears as Pyrrus, the murderer of old Priam, the destroyer of Troy, the account of whose bloody exploits precedes the speech about Hecuba that the Danish prince wishes to hear. Perhaps what Sophocles wanted to highlight in the ambiguous ending of his play is the warning that when moral struggles seem to be over, they are not over. They are, actually, never over. As Nietzsche well knew, agreeing with another classical source, Pindar, it is difficult to become what one really is precisely because such enormous social forces are set against that feat.⁴²

The narrowing of options and the promotion of a controlled definition of what it is that makes us human could be observed in the TV programs that accompanied the 2004 Olympic games held in Athens. A survey of Greek culture was prepared to accompany one of the broadcasts, ostensibly in order to supplement the display of muscles and physical prowess recorded and rewarded by the games. As the lady presenter talked of culture, all the images chosen to illustrate the glory of ancient Greece were of Hercules in the act of overcoming and 'civilizing,' with his enormous club, one 'enemy' after another. The greatness of civilization was almost completely equated with physical force, with the amount of destruction that can be visited upon 'others'. There was no mention of the Hellenistic heritage that caught Heaney's attention in Sparta, in 1995, and inspired him to use it in his Noble lecture, in his ode to the restorative power of poetry and art: a representation of Orpheus, not Hercules, taming and civilizing the world around him with his music, found on a votive panel possibly set up to him by the local poets of that warlike city-state.⁴³ Drawing my inspiration from one of Seamus Heaney's poems that also modernizes the meaning of the classical past, I put on the cover of my book *On Change* (2003)⁴⁴, the depiction of the battle between Hercules and Antheus.⁴⁵ I did so because this mythic combat identifies the source of the view of history that prevails today and that rests on the implicit assumption that civilization means technological supremacy and that it begins with the triumph over inferior 'others' who draw their strength from their bond with nature, from sympathetic participation in its creativity and harmony. Today, we are forced to be the children of that 'triumph', of that 'victory': the uprooting from nature is

42 See Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo: How one becomes what one is* (1888).

43 See Seamus Heaney, Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1995, the Internet Nobelprize.org. Seamus Heaney's 1995 Nobel Lecture should be compared with Harold Pinter's 2005 Nobel Prize Speech, for a closer study of the interesting similarities and differences in their views on art, truth, and politics.

44 Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar, *On Change* (O Promeni: kulturoloski eseji 1992–2002), Belgrade & Nis, 2003.

The picture used for the cover is Hans Baldung-Grien's *Hercules et Antee*, painted around 1530 and exhibited in the Museum of Strasbourg.

45 See Seamus Heaney's poem "Hercules and Antheus", in *North*, London: Faber, 1975, p.53. The significance of these two figures has been interpreted in many different ways. It would be interesting to study the political logic behind these selective and incomplete accounts..

ubiquitous, men with clubs have become gods, and war is the way of life they choose for us and drive us into.

There are, therefore, two 'cures' being practiced, simultaneously, in our culture: the cure from love, so that war becomes our only reality, and the cure from war, which would mean a return to love and recovery of lost properties of being, without which, Shakespeare's Greek oracle declares in *The Winter's Tale*, there can be no future. There are also two uses that bows, and all other tools, can be put to. There is *xenia* we once practiced, but also *xenophobia*, the poisonous pedagogy of the damned, which has replaced it. We are being told daily, by our media, to rejoice because so many are being 'cured', freed and civilized by the technologically innovated club of Hercules! Which of the two cures is being applied?

LUKAVSTVA ISTORIJE I DRAMA ŠEJMISA HINIJA ISCELJENJE KOD TROJE

Rezime

Rad se bavi analizom strategija koje savremeni umetnici koriste da bi izrazili svoju zabrinutost razvojem događaja u drugoj polovini dvadesetog veka i prvoj deceniji novog milenijuma. Tražeći korene neprekidnom ponavljanju ratova i stalnom porastu raznih drugih oblika nasilja, oni preispituju pedagošku praksu na kojoj počiva kontinuitet zapadne istorije i otkrivaju u dramama klasične Grčke, posebno u Sofokleovom Filoktetu, značajnu inspiraciju za društvenu praksu kojom bi se iscelili, i oslobodili, dosadašnjeg destruktivnog istorijskog nasleđa. Dve savremene adaptacije Filokteta, Hajner Milerova iz 1968. i Šejmis Hinijeva iz 1990., koja nosi naslov Isceljenje kod Troje, stavljene su u kontekst mnogo šireg interesovanja za klasične tekstove koje se u XX veku pojavljuje u filmskim i dramskim delima autora kao što su Lilijana Kavani, Žan Anuj, Ingmar Berman, Edvard Bond, Žan Lik Godar i drugi. Lukavstva istorije postaju isceljiva kada se, kao u delima pomenutih umetnika, obavi detaljna analiza istorije lukavstava pomoću kojih se destruktivna praksa nameće, tradicionalizuje i ozakonjuje.