

Televising Antigone? Understanding the political values of ancient Greek drama in a contemporary media environment

This paper addresses the representation, negotiation and (re)definition of ancient Greek drama, as a principal cultural expression of antiquity, through its adaptation in a contemporary political context. It is based on original research conducted in relation to the performance/case study of 'Antigone' by Sophocles at the Athens Epidaurus Festival in July 2022. The performance was commissioned for the VAST (Values Across Space and Time) project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

'Antigone' continues to enjoy the status of a paradigmatic form of ancient drama, with its values, themes and dilemmas, such as those concerning the exercise of power, gender politics and the opposition between moral and secular law, sparking significant discussion and debate ranging from Friedrich Hegel to Judith Butler. The paper revisits 'Antigone' through the lens of its contemporary interpretation and presents the main research results on the communication and the reception of its values. Data collection followed a mixed methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative research methods, addressing theatre artists (as value communicators) through semi-structured interviews, and audiences (as recipients of the communicated messages and final co-authors of meaning) through questionnaires.

The contemporary adaptation of 'Antigone' at the Athens Epidaurus Festival constitutes a prominent case study in that it maintained the textual structure, set of roles and narrative order of the original, but, at the same time, updated its content in performative as well as spatial terms: it was transferred in a modern political context resembling a western parliamentary democracy, and in a television studio displaying large television screens and transmitting the action on stage in real time. The paper discusses the concomitant associations of meaning concerning the public sphere and the contemporary interpolation of political power and media power, with the latter being signified as a subject, as well as a means, of representation.

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Translating vulnerability in Aristophanes' Wasps

This paper explores acts of translation, appropriation, and reception for the episode after the second parabasis in Aristophanes' *Wasps*. It focuses on the interactions between the old juror Philocleon and the aulos-player Dardanis, whom Philocleon has taken away from her contracted employment at a symposium (Vesp. 1341-1387). Philocleon has all the lines; Dardanis is a mute character. The scene's humor depends on their mutual vulnerability in an absurd situation.

Using

a recent Zoom production of the *Wasps*, this paper examines how that vulnerability, implicit in the Greek text, can be highlighted by an English translation at the same time as it is shifted by casting decisions and acting choices.

Aristophanes implies Dardanis' vulnerability through commodification. She is in bondage (1353), naked, and mute. Her body is subject to the verbal punning of the free males Philocleon and his son Bdelycleon (1373-1377). Her seeming compliance with their requests reads like peritraumatic tonic immobility (Kalaf et al 2017).

Aristophanes implies Philocleon's vulnerability through self-victimization. Philocleon reverses roles with his son, claiming to be a young man awaiting his son's death in order to gain his independence. His statements about his involuntary confinement and lack of control over his assets (1354-1359) reveal the infantilizing treatment he receives at home due to his advanced age and invite speculation that his propositions to Dardanis are a form of hypersexuality associated with dementia (De Giorgi and Series 2016).

A recent Zoom performance of this play demonstrates the dialectical relationship between adaptor, director, and actors (Hall 2004). The translator highlights the vulnerability of Dardanis through blunt expressions in English, paraphrasing the vulgar force of Greek terms in the target language to build a rape culture image for the symposium (MacDowell 1971, Henderson 1991, Harmon 2005, Robson 2012, Rothwell 2019). The Zoom software, though, isolates Dardanis from Philocleon because the actors are in separate locations, their actions confined to solitary

Zoom windows and not blocked out on the same stage floor.

Casting decisions shift vulnerability to the body of Philocleon and empower Dardanis.

Genderbent and age-appropriate casting queer the text, using gender and age for an alienation effect (Hermes & Kopitz 2021). This casting decision effectively incarnates the textual feminization of Philocleon as an old woman that needs to be cloistered indoors for the good of the oikos (Papathanasopoulou 2019). It also creates an antithetical effect, situating a young male

default body in the role of the subaltern. Dardanis acquires physicality and clothing. This Dardanis offers to pay Philocleon compensation with money pulled out of pockets. The actor deploys nonverbal behavior to give Dardanis a response to every proposition from Philocleon. The result is a Dardanis who keeps pace with Philocleon and never shows any fear of (sexual) assault because the older female body enacting Philocleon poses no real threat of physical force.

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