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BECOMING BODY IN EURIPIDES: AFFECT AND OBJECT IN *BACCHAE, THE TROJAN WOMEN,* AND *HECUBA*

By

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An Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Honors

In

The Department of English

Introduction: Becoming Body

The National Theatre of Scotland's 2007-2008 run of *Bacchae,* starring Alan Cumming as Dionysus, is a performance that puts the body on display in all its splendor. Dressed in white makeup, a vibrant yellow vest and skirt, and a curly black wig, Cumming struts about the stage, emulating Dionysus in his rock star form. Due to this androgynous, fluid costuming, the audience monitors both Dionysus' ability to flit between genders and his larger capacity for bodily transformation. NTS's *Bacchae* takes an unflinching look at the vicious nature of a god using his roguish charm to seductively manipulate those around him only to destroy them, but it also portrays the fluidity of the body through heightened song, electric dance, and flashy costuming. Perhaps the most illustrious of the large-scale theatrical affect of the body is the choral Bacchae: swaying and jumping in blood-red vaudeville-style dresses as they belt out their hardcore choral odes. While the stage darkens during their various stasima, red light illuminates the Bacchae's bodies and bold dresses, creating shadows behind them. These fleeting shadows insinuate their counter-body—Bacchic bodies and minds so easily twisted to violence through their frenzy, shifting quickly from docility to brutality but always remaining jubilant.

As is the case with contemporary theatrical productions, prioritizing the body's significance as a theatrical figure has become increasingly prevalent in classical studies, despite the dualism prioritizing mind over body common in ancient thought. Indeed, as Katrina Cawthorn points out in her analysis of the tragic body, "The body is a site that is always changing, mutable, fluid, and incomplete . . . While the classical body by definition bears strong connotations of 'changelessness,' the study of it paradoxically reveals the opposite, the perennially changing body" (15). Because of this constant possibility for further theorization and study, the classical body is anything but stagnant.

Especially in tragedy, we can explore the body in its fullest and most mutable capacities, as it is central and constantly on display through the lived, staged bodies through which the drama unfolds. Here, the body is scrutinized and vulnerable, deeply material in its presence but also pervasive in its utterances and absences. Cawthorn describes these corporeal explorations in Athenian tragedy, writing that exploration into bodily boundaries is especially immanent in Euripides' plays: "The boundaries between male and female, human and animal, Greek and barbarian, noble and poor, appear, for example, to be explored, questioned, and destabilised on the tragic stage" (26). Indeed, Euripides examines, and forces the audience to examine, these questions of what a body *is* and what a body *can be*. By placing the body at the forefront of his works, his characters reflect the suffering and fragility of life, inhabiting and constructing bodies of pain, exuberance, and lament. Bodies can be more than mere material in this way. Euripides constructs both physical and non-physical bodies in his works, highlighting bodies in a state of affective flux.

While many of Euripides' plays exemplify this bodily in-betweenness, my thesis specifically explores *Bacchae, The Trojan Women,* and *Hecuba* using theories of embodiment, predominantly with Deleuzian affect theory. In these plays, bodies are always becoming but never achieve a state of fully-realized embodiment. These unsettled states are not limited to the physical body but are also portrayed through natural elements, the absence of bodies, and sound, showing the materiality and immateriality of bodies and affect. Bodies in Euripides encompass more than their fleshy boundaries, being comprised of the forces, elements, sounds, and affects that animate them.

Spinoza's theorization of the affects and bodies in *Ethics* influences many concepts that are key to my discussion. Spinoza finds that there are three dominating affects—joy, desire, and sadness—and argues that these three affects inform each additional emotion. The way that humans are affected is also distinct to Spinoza: "The human body is affected in a great many ways by external bodies. Therefore, two men can be differently affected at the same time, and so they can be affected differently by one and the same object" (96). Affect, then, is not universal, and is highly dependent on each body and experience. Here, we also see that Spinoza's conception of a "body" encompasses not just the material form of beings but something more expansive. Instead, bodies are not just the physical, corporeal form of humans, but they are also "external," immaterial forces with the ability to affect and be affected. Even Spinoza's physical body can be expanded by affect. He writes that "The human body can undergo many changes, and nevertheless retain impressions, *or* traces, of the objects, and consequently, the same images of things" (70) similar to Sara Ahmed's notion that affect is "sticky," connecting bodies and objects through affective accumulation (29). The body is always compounded with intensities, participating in affective behavior and reflecting its affective encounters. Thus, the body, material or immaterial, is always becoming through the "trace" of affect that it collides with.

To Deleuze and Guattari, bodily existence is also in a constant state of becoming, composed of both materiality and immateriality, as well as intensive forces of affect that interconnect through longitude ("the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed, and slowness") and latitude ("the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential") (*Plateaus* 260-261). Therefore, materiality and immateriality are closely interconnected and reliant on each other in the idea of embodiment. This body is also not limited to the human body but includes other forces which affect has the capability to construct or deconstruct.

Outside of their overarching understanding of a body, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize a certain type of body: the body without organs (BwO). The idea of the BwO was first used by Antonin Artaud in the epilogue of his radio play *To Have Done With the Judgement of God.* Artaud concludes that humans are defective because of their organs and that we must reconstruct our bodies to not be limited. He says, “When you will have made him a body without organs,/ then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions/ and restored him to his true freedom” (Artaud 571). This organless state, to Artaud, is necessary, to avoid categorization, classification, and organization, and instead become filled with pure, fluid, liberated intensity. The BwO does not actually seek to transcend the body and reject organs but rather rejects “that organization of the organs called the organism” and all its constraints (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 158). Deleuze adopts this concept in much of his work, including with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus.*

Deleuze and Guattari write that the assemblage, or a multiplicitous body coded with intensities, has two sides: one facing the strata and the other facing the body without organs. Strata “operate by coding and territorialization upon the earth,” while the BwO does the opposite (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 40). The BwO dismantles itself, transcending mere matter and becoming deterritorialized, destratified, and populated by intensities of pure affect that it produces and distributes. On the other hand, the strata place bodies into categories and “imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences. The strata are bonds, pincers” that strangle the BwO’s freedom (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 159). Because of the inevitability of stratification, the BwO “swings between two poles, the surfaces of stratification into which it is recoiled, on which it submits to the judgment, and the plane of consistency in which it unfurls and opens to experimentation” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 159). Therefore, the BwO, like the traditional body, is also in a state of flux. Due to its in-betweenness and constant construction, the full BwO can never be completely embodied, with only imperfect types of BwO being achievable.

Affect and desire are central to reaching the BwO, for it will cease to exist if unaffected, but it will also become empty if one attempts to reach the BwO detrimentally:

> You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying. That is why we encountered the paradox of those emptied and dreary bodies at the very beginning: *they had emptied themselves of their organs* instead of looking for the point at which they could patiently and momentarily dismantle the organization of the organs we call the organism. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 160-161)

This is the tricky side of the BwO, for reaching it means freedom and escape from stratification, but, if done improperly, it can cause one's emptiness or death. On account of the body's intrinsic desire to gain and make itself a BwO, this desire sometimes acts as a destructive force: "Desire stretches that far: desiring one's own annihilation, or desiring the power to annihilate" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 165). We will see both this "wild" destratification and the desire for annihilation exhibited in Euripides' works.

One example of a BwO is seen in the character Polyxena in *Hecuba*. Polyxena, who is marked for death by Odysseus to fulfill military honors for the deceased Achilles in the aftermath of the Trojan War, completely accepts her sacrificial death without hesitation. When Talthybius reveals the death of Polyxena to her mother Hecuba, he says that Polyxena cried, "'Argives, you who have sacked my city, I am happy to die. Let no one lay a hand on my body. I shall offer my neck with good courage. By the gods, leave me free when you kill me so that I can die a free woman!'" (548-551). He then describes how "Springs of blood welled forth" when her throat was slit (568). Polyxena destratified herself, accepting her fate and willingly offering her throat, thus embracing her impending death. She desired her own annihilation and release, knowing that to stay alive meant to be enslaved and stratified by the Greeks. With the blood emerging from her throat and consuming her body, she becomes blood and fluid, descending into liquid intensity: a true but imperfect BwO.

I argue that in Euripides' *Bacchae, The Trojan Women,* and *Hecuba,* many bodies are on display: material bodies, immaterial bodies, elemental bodies, and sonic bodies. These characters, particularly Dionysus and the two representations of Hecuba, engage in unceasing interplays of affective resonances and frictions amongst these various bodies in their bids to achieve the unbound, though ultimately unachievable, liberation of the BwO. They are always becoming and never stable, and they eventually reach the unsatisfyingly empty BwO. This bodily instability mirrors the instability of the body of the audience: a mutable body of intensity that affects and is affected by other characters, the chorus, and the similarly mutable body of spectators. These concepts, while particularly illustrated in these plays, apply to the wider field of tragedy and performance studies. Bodies, both of actor and audience, are always on display in the theatre—fluid and sometimes volatile. This thesis is thus divided into three chapters: Flesh, which focuses on the corporeal body of Dionysus in *Bacchae;* (No)Thing, which examines the interplay between material presence and absence in *The Trojan Women;* and Sound, which analyzes the sonic body that Hecuba builds to territorialize and deterritorialize herself in *Hecuba*.

Flesh

"They all played ball with Pentheus' flesh" (Bacchae 1135)

As Herbert Blau discusses in *The Dubious Spectacle*, "the primary architectural space of the theater is and always has been the body of the actor, subject as it is to the dematerializing power of the gaze that dissolves all space into itself" (50). Blau offers that this architecture has "breathing skin" and is "A carnal space to begin with—blood, bone, tissue, muscle, nerves—the stage, the loft, the pit, the wings, the entire institutional superstructure of the theatre hangs upon a breath" (50). All these bodily interactions and corporeal excesses converge in the theatre—taking up space, interacting with other bodies, with actors "literally dying in front of your eyes" (Blau 51). The physical body is the ultimate focal point of tragedy. Bodies are in our view as we observe the stage, and they inspire our imagination when they exit. Theatre confronts us with the materiality of the flesh yet causes us to consider our own embodiment with the affective ties to our mutual mortality. Thus, there is an inherent affective link between the physical, material body in tragedy and the body of the audience.

While all performance deals with flesh, materiality is especially prevalent in Euripides' *Bacchae*. The numerous physical transformations and depictions of torture and suffering in the play offer an especially salient demonstration of fleshy bodies. Cawthorn touches upon these "theatrical becomings" and determines that *Bacchae* reflects many metamorphoses, as "when Pentheus dresses as the female, changing from male to female, from live body to dead body, from whole body to fragmented body" (26). Pentheus is not the only character in *Bacchae* to undergo these becomings. From the beginning of the play, Dionysus rhetorically affirms his human body, and he later experiences many bodily shifts, moving from god to mortal, from mortal to animal, and eventually altering back to his godly form to distribute punishments to the mortals who did not respect his power.

Along with these concrete physical transformations, bodies in *Bacchae* also occupy a variety of spatial relationships, which create new affective bodies altogether. Rush Rehm expounds upon these spatial relationships in *The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy,* writing that the following types of bodily relationships occur in *Bacchae*'s capacities and potentialities:

> juxtaposition (disparate bodies placed in proximity), contact (the physical effect of one body on another), union (the coming together of different bodies) and fusion (that process extended to the transformation of many elements into an unexpected whole), separation (the drawing apart of formerly united or fused elements), confusion (the chaotic interaction of different elements that achieves no stability), and fragmentation (the destructive division of a primary entity, breaking it apart and breaking it down). (201)

The different collisions between bodies help to create the dynamic space of the theatre. Like Cawthorn and Blau, Rehm recognizes the fluidity of the body as presented onstage, occupying the potential to dissolve and melt into new spaces. Although all of these embodied relationships occur, confusion and fragmentation are heavily featured in *Bacchae.* Because confusion and fragmentation deal with instability and the breaking down of bodies, there is a strong connection to the BwO's chaos, destruction, and deterritorialization.

Bacchae's theatrical embodiments invite us to consider a broader range of immaterial, affective embodiments, and the complex interrelations among them. I argue that Dionysus methodically constructs his body in *Bacchae*, confronting the audience in his staged, material form, but also presenting an immaterial body that exists solely in the words, imaginations, and actions of others. By seeking bodily fluidity, Dionysus occupies a fluctuating body that transcends the stagnant fleshy boundary of merely god or mortal. He compounds his body through his followers, seeking out a larger corporeal body of supporters to try to make himself more celebrated as a deity. Occupying numerous bodies and performing numerous transformations, Dionysus tries to escape bodily constraints to become a BwO. Although the full BwO resists stratification and territorialization, Dionysus still engages in this behavior to avoid "wildly destratifying," all in hopes that he will reach his BwO. Rather than some of the empty, suffering BwO that will be examined later in my thesis, *Bacchae* demonstrates that BwOs are not just "sucked-dry, catatonicized, vitrified, sewn-up bodies" but that the BwO can also be "full of gaiety, ecstasy, and dance" in Bacchic frenzy (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 150).

In *Bacchae*'s prologue, Dionysus explains his presence in Thebes after traveling through Asia. Almost immediately upon entering, Dionysus says that he has "transformed [his] appearance from god to man" to disguise himself on the earth (3-4). Dionysus dismantles himself through physical alteration, creating a "new" body: one that is mortal mass rather than a fluid deity. However, by confronting the audience with his fleshy body, he simultaneously alerts us to its overt fabrication. His mortal disguise is much like the body of an actor offering an abstraction of character in human form. In doing so, Dionysus works to construct his BwO by deconstructing what he says to be his "real" body:

> Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 160)

Dionysus is this crafty surveyor, calculated and ruthless in obtaining his desires. He opens his body to permit new forms of embodiment that all are part of his greater plan. While he is in a human form, he is acting as a deceiver. We have yet to observe Dionysus' true godly BwO, so he first presents us with the materiality we are familiar with.

After introducing himself to the audience, Dionysus clarifies that his godliness has been disputed by his mother's family. The house of Cadmus does not believe that Semele had a son with Zeus, but they instead assume that she was covering up an improper relationship with a mortal man. Dionysus seeks revenge against defamation by Cadmus' family (and specifically the new king of Thebes, Pentheus) and complains,

> [Pentheus] fights against the deity in my person, pushes me from my libations and makes mention of me nowhere in his prayers. To pay him back for that, I shall show to him and all the Thebans that I am a god. After I have set things to rights here I shall move on to another land and reveal my godhead there. (46-50)

Pentheus' rejection infuriates Dionysus. By Pentheus not viewing him as a deity, spurning his rituals, and refusing to pray for him, Dionysus feels defensive and unseen. He needs verbal affirmation to fully perceive his own existence. Dionysus seeks to gain respect and approval from Cadmus' house as if the words and approval of others will create and reignite his godly body. However, this intense reaction reflects Dionysus' insecurities as a lesser deity, since he says he will "reveal [his] godhead" in another location after proving that he is a god in Thebes. Therefore, we understand that this is a cyclical process that his body will ultimately go through—constantly constructing and deconstructing itself through the affective dynamics of different contexts and according to Dionysus' desires for recognition no matter where he goes.

Dionysus repeats that he changed his body toward the end of the prologue, saying that "It is for this reason that I have changed (*ἀλλάξας*) to this mortal form and transformed (*μετέβαλον*) my appearance to human shape" (53-54). The word *μετέβαλον*, translated here as "transformed," coming from *μεταβάλλω*, is an especially revealing choice, for it denotes a sudden, forced shift into a new form. This word choice adds urgency to Dionysus' goals. The repetition and continual usage of verbs denoting bodily alterations insinuate that Dionysus is insecure in his mortal form, perhaps because his status as mortal and god is not fixed. His physical body is not stagnant, nor is his attitude toward his identity. However, this instability replicates the instability of the BwO, fluid and fluctuating, vibrating with affect.

We soon see that Dionysus crafts an additional unstable body—a body of followers. The audience learns that Thebes is the first Greek location that Dionysus visited after traveling through Asia and gaining Bacchic followers, or maenads: "I came to this city [Thebes] before all others in Greece when I had set Asia dancing and established my mysteries there, so that I should be a god manifest to mortals" (20-23). Dionysus' wish to be "a god manifest to mortals" reinforces his insistence that everyone knows his identity as a god. He has "roused to Bacchic cries, fastening a fawnskin around their bodies and placing a thyrsus, my ivy-clad weapon, in their hands" (24-26). Dionysus has specific symbolic clothing items to mark his followers: a fawnskin and a thyrsus that represent their loyalties and belonging to him. Dionysus also instills madness upon the women of Thebes as an act of revenge, forcing them to join his Bacchic followers. He describes his process of capture, stating that the women he drove away from Thebes "live on the mountain in a state of violent delusion. I have forced them to wear the trappings of my rites . . . all the women, I have sent maddened from their house" (32-35). By utilizing words like "forced," and "sent maddened" it is obvious that, while the Bacchae may feel a sense of release, it is an illusion. These frenzied women are a material representation of the BwO that Dionysus attempts to create, connoting his godly power.

These maenads, now stratified by Dionysus through physical materials and their minds' displacement, create a territory. Once Dionysus exits, the chorus of Bacchae comes together to sing the parados. After proclaiming their reverence for Dionysus, the Bacchae sing,

> O Thebes, nurse of Semele,
> garland yourself with ivy,
> be abundant, abundant with green
> berry-rich bryony
> and consecrate yourself in Bacchus' worship (*καταβακχιοῦσθε*)
> . . .
> At once all the land will dance
> to the mountain, to the mountain where waits
> the horde of women
> stung to frenzy (*οἰστρηθείς*) from their looms and shuttles
> by Dionysus. (105-109, 115-119)

We see that the maenads are under Dionysus' complete mental and bodily control. This is a form of stratification and "act of capture," for strata "consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 40). The "form" here reflects the physical materials the Bacchae place on their bodies, like the fawnskin, thyrsus, and ivy, and that they are imprisoned in a trance-like state, "stung to frenzy." Dionysus is using his followers, controlling and governing their attire so that they are an extension of his physical body and an aggregated BwO that compounds his own flesh with theirs. Further, because the Bacchae give an imperative for Thebes to "consecrate yourself in Bacchus' worship," or the evocative verb *καταβακχιοῦσθε,* meaning to almost burst with

Bacchic frenzy, we understand that part of the Bacchae's job is to promote Dionysus, and to themselves capture and stratify potential followers. The chorus in Greek tragedy typically reflects the audience, so this body of followers extends to the viewers—acting as propaganda for Dionysus.

While the maenads feel as if they are freed into a state of *ἔκστασις,* or a release through madness, they are securely stratified by Dionysus in a fictitious trance. They feel liberated, but they are actually controlled and surveilled. Their bodies are in a state of in-betweenness just like Dionysus', for their joyous actions change depending on his orders (as we see later in the tragedy when they move from docile to vicious). The maenads' trance ensures their connection to Dionysus, but also shows their purpose in the BwO, as they are similarly "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 40). Because the BwO does not oppose organs but rather organization, the Bacchae act as quasi-organs for Dionysus' body and identity. With these followers, he creates his BwO to be "populated by multiplicities," spanning all through Greece (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 30). This is the multiplicitous, corporeal human body he announced his intention to create at the beginning of the play, which now expands outward.

Some of the citizens in Thebes are entranced by Dionysus (predominantly because they are under his spell), but Pentheus is not impressed. He has no hesitation in making his distaste for Dionysus known. Not believing that Dionysus is a true god, he orders the leader of the maenads to be brought to him to be punished. A servant adheres to his wish and leads Dionysus onstage, telling Pentheus that the remainder of the Bacchic followers escaped from prison. When Pentheus is first introduced to the "stranger" Dionysus, he says, "Well, physically you are not unhandsome, stranger, to a woman's taste at any rate . . . You have long flowing locks . . . They fall right by your cheek, laden with desire" (453-456). As well as the overt homoerotic tone presented here, we see a direct correlation between Dionysus' body and desire. Dionysus' plan to get revenge has officially begun. Dionysus soon asks Pentheus what his plans are for him:

> DIONYSUS. Tell me what I must suffer. What fearful thing will you do to me?
>
> PENTHEUS. First I shall cut off your love-locks.
>
> . . .
>
> Now give me this thyrsus from your hands.
>
> . . .
>
> We shall guard your body inside in prison. (491-493, 495, 497)

Notably, all these punishments are bodily and material, with Pentheus removing both Dionysus' hair and thyrsus and restraining his body in prison. Pentheus tries to take power from Dionysus, removing his traditional symbols, and thus attempts to negate any relation to Bacchic revelry. Seizing these materials works to deterritorialize Dionysus, for if Dionysus no longer has material to form his territory with, his power is destabilized and dispersed. With no symbols of power, he is lesser.

Yet, as he can flit between god and mortal, Dionysus breaks out of prison with ease, eluding stratification out of self-preservation. He cries out for his followers' attention, burning down the house of Pentheus and asserting his dominance. He seeks the control and stability of a uniform status as god through his followers, but also "constantly eludes that judgment, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized" like the BwO (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 40). He tells the Bacchae, "lift up your bodies, take courage, and put away this trembling from your flesh" (606-607). Because he depends on his followers to take part in his body, Dionysus needs their affect and devotion to remain unwavering. In the narration of his jailbreak, however, Dionysus refers to himself in the third person as well as the first person, indicating an unstable sense of self. He calls himself "Bacchus (*Βάκχος*)" (623), "Bromius (*Βρόμιος*)" (631), and a "Bacchic god (*Βάκχιος*)" (632), all in close succession. The different flows of his identity overlap here and in other scenes of the play, indicating his bodily and mental fluctuation.

This incongruous use of his self-referential statements occurs again distinctly when Dionysus puts his plan of revenge into action. He declares, "Dionysus, it is your work now," insinuating a shift from mortal to god, even if it is in mindset alone, and then says, "[Pentheus] shall recognize Dionysus the son of Zeus and see that he is by turns a most terrifying and a most gentle god to mortals" (849, 859-861). Again, Dionysus is insistent that Pentheus see him as a god and so wishes to instill upon him a severe fate: being slaughtered to death by his crazed mother, Agave. However extreme it may seem, this is part of Dionysus' search for his BwO, for desire in the BwO can manifest as the desire to annihilate (Deleuze and Guattari 165). Dionysus himself has this desire—he wishes to utterly destroy those who disrespect him, especially Pentheus, to make them a spectacle. While Deleuze and Guattari argue that "the masochist uses suffering as a way of constituting a body without organs and bringing forth a plane of consistency of desire," it is also the case, regarding Dionysus, for the sadist (155). Dionysus forces Pentheus into a trance-like state, like his maenads, and makes him put on women's clothes to "spy" on the Bacchae. Pentheus, in his trance, notes that Dionysus looks like a bull, but Dionysus tells him that "It is a god who walks with you," indicating that he is appearing in his godly form (924). Dionysus' transitions between mortal and god, and even his assumed appearance of a bull, get him closer to the BwO he has been aiming for. These transformations materially suggest what Dionysus' rhetorical fluidity with his altering names did previously—he is becoming a BwO before us, but notably, he can only do so through the interplay of all the various bodies he has seized to extend and expand his own.

Soon after, Pentheus receives his fatal punishment. As Rehm notes, this is a significant bodily scene, for "The transformation of the mountain glen from a *locus amoenus* to a bloodsoaked battleground marks the play's most radical shift from fusion to confusion, and from unity to separation" (206). The shift to confusion and separation marks the chaos of the maenads, unstable, ripping Pentheus' once whole body apart. The messenger exposits the scene to the chorus of when Pentheus is destroyed by his mother and the maenads. He first depicts the idyllic scene where the maenads sat, placid, by saying,

> the maenads sat, their hands occupied in delightful tasks. Some of them were restoring what had been a thyrsus by wreathing it again with locks of ivy, while others were singing Bacchic songs to each other in antiphony, like fillies released from the patterned yoke. (1050-157)

Yet, their temperament soon changed when Dionysus ordered them to avenge his honor and destroy Pentheus. Up until this point, Pentheus was in a trance, but Dionysus releases him so he experiences vengeance completely. Although he begged his mother not to kill him,

> Agave, frothing foam and whirling her twisted eyes, was far from sanity. The Bacchic god held her possessed, and she paid no heed to Pentheus. She seized his left arm in her hands, set foot on the wretched man's ribs, and tore out his shoulder . . . Everyone shouted out together—Pentheus groaning as long as he went on breathing, the women yelling their cries of triumph at the sacrifice . . . The body lies in scattered fragments, one bit beneath the jagged rocks, another in the wood's thick foliage. (1121-1124, 1131-1133, 1137)

The maenads' bodies move from violence to tranquility, equally trance-like in both states. The sharp contrast between the beautiful scene of maenads twisting ivy and singing joyous tunes and the bloody mania of murder is jarring. Even though we do not see the maenads in action onstage, the bodies engaging in murderous activities are nonetheless immaterially constructed. They may seem to be released from the organization of organs in their ecstasy, yet the maenads' bodies are still stratified by Dionysus' Bacchic spell.

In the final scene, the audience finally gets to observe the material result of the maenad's murder: the fragmented body of Pentheus. Agave brings onstage the corpse of Pentheus, not knowing that it is her son in her Bacchic trance. As Elaine Scarry considers in *The Body in Pain*, "World, self, and voice are lost, or nearly lost, through the intense pain of torture" (35). We see these losses through Pentheus: his sense of self has been detached when he donned women's clothes, he lost his voice through his organs being splattered and ripped out of him, he can no longer able to articulate his narrative, and he is deterritorialized and splayed open but still physically taking up space as a pile of flesh brought onstage. However, since the BwO is "all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organization," it replicates what Dionysus seeks (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 30). Dionysus has had Pentheus destroyed so that he can better understand the BwO because Pentheus' bodily fluidity is what he aims for.

When Agave is released from her Bacchic frenzy, she experiences just what Dionysus wished to impart on his enemies: "infinite pain and misery" (1282). Even though he is not onstage during this reveal, Dionysus revels in Agave's shock, and his immaterial presence is felt. He then doles out punishments to the Thebans. Cadmus and Harmonia are sentenced to become animals, and Agave and the other women are exiled. It is notable how Dionysus gives these punishments of bodily transformation—it seems as if he is still unsatisfied with his ultimate recognition and is unfulfilled in his own body. When Cadmus responds that their punishments are too harsh, Dionysus cries, “Yes, for I, a god, was treated with outrage by you,” once again reminding us that he, indeed, is a god (1347).

(No)Thing

"All is scattered and gone,/ and unhappy Troy is no more" (The Trojan Women 1323-1324)

In addition to altering the physicality of fleshy bodies in *Bacchae,* Dionysus simultaneously wields non-corporeal elements, manipulating them and fusing flesh and non-flesh in his expanded BwO. We see Dionysus' connection to the elements presented throughout the play, like in the frenzied maenads' pastoral bliss when the Bacchic women sing,

> Euoi!
> The soil flows with milk, it flows with wine, it flows
> with the nectar of bees.
> The Bacchic god, holding on high
> the blazing flame of the pine torch
> . . .
> lets it stream from his wand. (142-148)

This passage captures the seductive and captivating mixture of earth, liquid, and flame. While here, the elements are presented as idyllic, we see how they can quickly turn nightmarish, altered into immaterial nothing. The elements can be destructive forces that dissipate material into nothingness, as reflected when Dionysus summons the earthquake's power with chants:

> DIONYSUS. Io, Bacchae,
> hear my voice, hear,
> io, io, Bacchae.
> . . .
> CHORUS. Ah, ah!

> Soon the palace of Pentheus will be shaken apart
> and collapse.
> Dionysus is everywhere in the palace.
> . . .
> DIONYSUS. Kindle your thunderbolt's flashing fire, burn the house of Pentheus to nothing, to nothing. (576-578, 587-589, 894-895)

Dionysus' repetition of "io" and "hear" when gathering and calling out to his followers creates a sonic territory, one where he asserts the presence of his body even when not onstage. Not only does the Bacchae's exclamation that Dionysus is "everywhere" reassert the god's capacity to be anyone and anywhere without corporeal constraints, Dionysus' manipulation of earth and fire to demolish Pentheus' house to "nothing, to nothing" displays how the affective use of elements can obliterate and deterritorialize materiality. At this moment, Dionysus is populated by pure intensities, as is a full BwO, but his constant desire for identity through external recognition is persistent in his need to be seen onstage and off. Dionysus' most destructive elemental use here is through fire—something also present in *The Trojan Women*, which begins and ends with Troy ablaze.

When examining the nothingness that the elements and material can become, we consider how immateriality and nothingness can still be considered a body. Concerning bodies and their thing-ness, Elizabeth Grotz evaluates that a body

> is both a thing and a nonthing, an object, but an object which somehow contains or coexists with an interiority, an object able to take itself and others as subjects, a unique kind of object not reducible to other objects . . . animate bodies are objects necessarily

> different from other objects; they are materialities that are uncontainable in physicalist terms alone . . . they are the centers of perspective, insight, reflection, desire, agency. (xi)

Therefore, bodies can be things and nonthings, predominantly needing to be able to affect and be affected. Grotz's understanding of bodies as "materialities that are uncontainable in physicalist terms alone" implies that bodies and things can, indeed, be immaterial, and move in and out of the boundaries of physical materiality. Thing theorist Bill Brown also draws attention to the essence of things, which we can use as a framework to discuss the thingness and nothingness of bodies:

> We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. (4)

Bodies are similar to things and objects, and we are confronted with the "bodyness" of a body when it "stops working for us" or producing affect. Is it no longer a body, or is the nonfunctional body only then at its peak bodyness? *The Trojan Women* probes these questions.

From the beginning of *The Trojan Women,* we are thrown into a quickly dissipating world after Troy has been sacked by the Greeks. The innocent are sacrificed, women are selected as captives, and water and despair seep onto the shores of the Thracian Chersonese. This play deals with the materiality and immateriality of bodies that are simultaneously de/reterritorializing themselves, asserting their presence physically and nonphysically, seeking a BwO. We also observe how elemental forces of affect work to ignite and destroy bodies, colliding and combining to create bodies themselves. While full BwOs are never reached, empty BwOs are attained. *The Trojan Women* illustrates the belonging and non-belonging, presence and non-presence, materiality, and immateriality of bodies that are in the process of constructing and deconstructing themselves to reach their BwO. The negations and absences counter-balance the presence in the play, creating a tension of process and of becoming. Even absence and emptiness can create affective becomings, for “Affect marks a body's *belonging* to a world of encounters or; a world's belonging to a body of encounters but also, in *non-belonging*, through all those far sadder (de)compositions of mutual in-compossibilities” (Seigworth and Gregg 2). Affect is still asserted, sometimes even more powerfully, through absence.

At the beginning of *The Trojan Women,* the sea god Poseidon enters and delivers the prologue about the remnants of the Trojan War. He reveals how the Greeks were victorious that Troy is now destroyed:

> For since the time when Phoebus and I set up the stone circle of towers around this land of Troy with our straight rules, good will toward the city of the Phrygians has never left my heart. Now it is smoking. Sacked by the Argive spear, it lies in ruins . . . The sacred groves are desolate and the sanctuaries of the gods are awash with blood. (3-9, 13-14).

This is a city that has been torn apart, sacked by the Greeks, on fire, and dead. Poseidon blames Troy’s “death” on Athena, saying, “If Pallas, the daughter of Zeus, had not destroyed you, you would still be standing on your foundations” (45-47). Here, the “you” is Troy, personified. A thing-place is now made into a person, its body torn down and broken. This body is constantly in the process of becoming, even through its destruction. Troy’s material structure and the bodies of the dead soldiers move from solid to liquified blood mingled with the seashore and then become immaterial and gaseous through the “smoking” fire. Troy as person is occupied now inversely by things—all the people who once occupied and belonged to its land. Its inhabitants no longer belong to Troy, a now “desolate” land.

Poseidon points to a body onstage, indicating Hecuba, the former queen of Troy: "And if anyone wishes to look upon this unhappy woman, here is Hecuba lying in front of the entrance, shedding many a tear for many reasons" (38-39). To the reader of this play, until this point, it was unknown that Hecuba was onstage, but to the viewer, her silence while physically present makes Hecuba all the more distinct onstage. The physical body of Hecuba is onstage and exhibited during the entire prologue, yet she remains silent: a body without a voice. She does not assert herself through her voice, so she is reduced to a material thing not engaging in affect. Yet, the absence of sound invites more scrutiny of her body. We also observe the beginning of a becoming-liquid process, as she is "shedding many a tear." While the Trojan soldiers have become blood, she is becoming her tears and sorrow. Just as Dionysus complied his body with followers, Hecuba compiles hers with water as a bodily extension.

Poseidon's recognition of Hecuba as a body, not merely matter or a non-thing, seems to ignite and animate her ability to affect. His words breathe life into her. Hecuba finally speaks: "Up, unhappy woman! Lift (*ἐπάειρε*) your head/ and your neck from the ground! This is no longer Troy,/ we (*ἐσμεν*) are no longer Troy's queen" (98-100). Here, there is a juxtaposition between the imperative second-person singular verb *ἐπάειρε* and the first-person plural pronoun *ἐσμεν* when Hecuba speaks to herself. She alternates between positioning herself as part of a collective subject and as a singular object. She animates the non-working body with her voice to become a body, but a networked body. Both Poseidon's breathing into Hecuba and Hecuba's breathing into a multifaceted body and the audience illustrate how the relationship between breath (and even sound) "reminds us how fluid the boundary between self and other can be, both in the domain of the felt and in explanations of what people suffer and what they do" (Holmes, *Symptom* 88). Hecuba was so closely connected to Troy as its queen that she now understands herself obsolete along with it.

In her following speech, Hecuba continues to erase Troy and its people from all meaning. Hecuba continues her lament, chanting, “Country, children, husband—all are gone (*ἔρρει*)./ O the surpassing grandeur of my ancestors/ now cast down—so you were nothing then!” (107-109). The use of the word *ἔρρει* denotes absolute annihilation, for the verb *ἔρρω* can also denote a slow type of death or disappearance. Thus, Hecuba’s losses are not just ripped from her quickly, but her suffering is drawn out. This usage is similarly seen when Hecuba declares,

> Oh, oh!
> Troy, unhappy Troy, you no longer exist (*ἔρρεις*).
> Unhappy too are those who leave you,
> both the living and the dead (*δμαθέντες*). (173-176)

Again, Troy is personified as a person and inversely as a thing and Hecuba uses the verb *ἔρρω* to denote annihilation. *Δμαθέντες* is another interesting word choice here. Rather than the traditional ancient Greek word for dead (usually *νεκρός* or *θάνατος*) *δμαθέντες* (from *δαμάζω*) more often suggests one that is conquered or overpowered. Thus, Hecuba equates the Trojans, even the ones who were not slaughtered in the war, as dead.

Hecuba continues, questioning, “Why should I be silent? (*τί με χρὴ σιγᾶν;*) Why should I not be silent? (*τί δὲ μὴ σιγᾶν;*)/ Why should I lament? (*τί δὲ θρηνῆσαι;*)” (110-111). With the particle *δὲ* filling in the missing *με χρὴ*, we see that, while there still is a shadow of presence, the absence of the self is abundantly clear. Hecuba initially places herself in these questions at first, taking ownership, before reverting to using *δὲ* to highlight her non-belonging, even in her own utterances. A shadow of Hecuba’s self is retained, but these questions become displaced on the greater city of Troy and her fellow Trojan captives. Additionally, *θρηνῆσαι* is an aorist infinitive rather than the previous present infinitive of *σιγᾶν,* so that question could be translated as "Why should I have lamented?" which plays with the temporality of the moment to illustrate Hecuba's fluctuation in and out of her own organized embodiment. Here, Hecuba's questions are revealing—through nothing and silence, she is unable to voice herself, and without lamentation, her voice and tears are taken away. She can, in that way, only become some-thing through vocal and liquid affect.

Hecuba swings between these contrasting questions, just as a BwO swings between stratification and the plane of consistency "in which it unfurls and opens to experimentation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 159). She struggles with how to express herself, whether it be through vocalization, silence, or corporeal configurations. We see Hecuba's openness to bodily experimentation when she continues:

> How wretched I am in this heavy fate
> which makes me lie here as I do, my limbs spread low,
> stretched out on my back on the ground's hard bed.
> Alas for my face, alas for my forehead
> and my ribs, how I long to twist and turn my back and my spine
> now to one side of my body, now to the other,
> as I endlessly weep and lament. (112-118)

The influence of affective sorrow on Hecuba's body is visible here, for she depicts her fate as "heavy" and forces her to lie on "the ground's hard bed." Hecuba laments her body and physical existence, as seen when she says "Alas for my face, alas for my forehead,/ and my ribs," wishing to disappear into nothing and "disarticulate, cease to be an organism" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 159). Hecuba seems as if she is attempting to shed bodily constraints, twisting and turning her body and asserting itself materially, but additionally wishing to inhabit something outside of herself—again dissolving into pure tears and lament in her sorrows. She mixes all the phases of matter: solid, liquid, and air particles produced by sound. Lamentation is in a distinct place of in-betweenness, for it can be made material through the tears and physical manifestations of the body, as well as immaterial through the sonic wails and cries and affective emotions. This attempt to jump to a new body is part of the process of deterritorialization in an ultimate search for a BwO.

Wondering out loud to the chorus about how she will be enslaved to return to Greece, Hecuba ponders,

> where, where on earth shall I live as a slave
> like a drone, Hecuba the wretched,
> corpse-like,
> the image of the fleeting dead. (192-195)

The specific words that Hecuba uses to describe herself show how she is drawing closer and closer to nothingness, especially since she is going to be taken away from her fatherland. The further she gets from Troy, the less she exists. "Drone" denotes that she is languidly moving about the world while in pain, and "corpse-like" and "image of the fleeting dead" highlight how she is almost dead. After all, the BwO "is not a projection; it has nothing whatsoever to do with the body itself, or with an image of the body. It is the body without an image" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 8). But, here, Hecuba is merely an image: an immaterial no-thing and empty. Physical, material bodies are necessary for constituting a body, but this theory is similar to Brown's, for we confront and scrutinize bodies and things when they no longer work or are affective. Because the BwO is non-productive but not affectless, Hecuba is frantically deterritorializing herself and is in the process of becoming an empty BwO.

Soon, the women of Troy find out about their assignments to the Greeks as slaves and concubines. Hecuba learns from the herald Talthybius that she will be taken as Odysseus' slave back to Greece, and Cassandra, in a frenzy, expresses her excitement to become Agamemnon's slave. Cassandra sings, "Dance, mother, lead the dance,/ twirl your feet this way and that,/ join with me happily as I move mine!" (332-334). Thalia Papadopoulou draws attention to this scene, saying that, due to the bouts of lamentation throughout the play, "Cassandra's joyful song constitutes a surprise. The enthusiastic tone of her celebrating hymn bursts out like a rapid stream determined to sweep all the prevailing despair away and spread instead light and joy" (518). Cassandra brings us out of the dreary mood for a moment through her dancing and song, inviting us, too, to twirl and join in her frenzy. Just like the maenads in *Bacchae*, Cassandra, while somewhat "released" from her body, is nonetheless stratified by godly powers. As Hecuba will later declare to Andromache, Cassandra "no longer exists" outside of her frenzy (616). Cassandra is soon led offstage, and Hecuba faints, distressed by Cassandra's maddened speeches.

Hecuba calls on the gods, saying, "I wish to sing my swan-song over the blessings of my life. In this way I shall enhance the pathos of my sufferings" (473-475). Hecuba's "swan-song" indicates that it is her final performance and vocalization. Yet, "enhanc[ing] the pathos of [her] sufferings" actually increases Hecuba's capacity for affect. Decreasing her bodily life, she increases her population of intensities. Hecuba tells the chorus to "take me to my straw pallet on the ground with its pillow of stone so that I may collapse and die, harrowed by my tears. Consider no prosperous man to have good fortune until he is dead" (509-510). The chorus brings her back to the pallet she was on at the beginning of the play—tears acting as a blanket draped over her, but unable to shelter her fluctuating body.

After Hecuba's lament, Andromache enters with her son Astyanax, and the two women sing a funeral dirge. They lament the loss of their city and families, saying that Troy is now "smoldering," engulfed in flames, and lying in ruins (595). Andromache draws attention to the material destruction that the Greeks have brought upon them through this elemental interaction, as well as its faltering thing-ness as Troy is burned to ash and ruin. The two women soon learn that Astyanax is sentenced to death, to not avenge his father, Hector, in the future and seek to harm the Greeks.

Talthybius later returns with the corpse of Astyanax, carried on his father's shield (1116). The body of Astyanax is of particular interest to scholars, as he remained silent throughout the whole play but is still an essential player. In a way, Astyanax's corpse can symbolize the complete death, or even a second death, of Troy, for his murder was used to eliminate future warring. Hecuba prepares Astyanax's body to be buried, for Andromache has been taken away from Troy: "[Hecuba] then addresses Astyanax directly. She mourns individual body parts and speculates on the happiness he might have had. When she recalls his mouth, she remembers the past and words that he once spoke, as he promised that he would be the one to bury her with all care" (Dué 230). By invoking his body parts, she tries to reignite Astyanax's affect and breathe life into him, almost as if he will return to the land of the living through performing these rituals. Yet, as Troy is no longer a land teeming with life, Hecuba fails.

Victoria Wohl draws attention to Astyanax's thing-ness, writing that "Minus its vital breathing and animating spirit, the human body is reduced to—or revealed as—a mere body, an inert thing, nothing more than its own physical mass" (20). Just as Hecuba was laying on the ground for much of the play, as if dead, the actor playing Astyanax would be doing the same—still breathing in this performance but embodying a dead thing. Therefore, through the subtle rise and fall of the body, we can more clearly see what makes us alive and affective: breath. In order to animate a body and resist becoming mere mass and declining into utter nothingness, breath as elemental air is essential to being a body. Hence, Astyanax's delicate breath reflects the still-desired possibility for Troy to overcome its death—even if it is just a flicker of hope.

Sound

"A fresh song of woe will come to woeful women" (Hecuba 84)

Similar to *The Trojan Women*, *Hecuba* deals with states of belonging and non-belonging, for both deal with the aftermath of war and the seeking of bodies from Trojan victims. Although the character Hecuba was heavily focused on in *The Trojan Women*, we get a deeper, psychological look into her character in *Hecuba.*

Just as *The Trojan Women* begins by the seaside in a state of flux, *Hecuba* follows suit. Appearing on the seashore, the ghost of Polydorus, son of former Trojan leaders Hecuba and Priam, states that he has "left the gates of darkness where the dead are hidden and Hades dwells apart from the gods, and come to this place" (1-3). It is uncommon for ghosts to appear in the prologue of Greek tragedy, so *Hecuba* automatically unsettles both audience and reader in its departure from traditional conventions. Polydorus describes his current state of non-existence after being flung into the sea and drowned by supposed guest-friend Polymestor: "And I lie sometimes on the shore, sometimes in the rolling waters, carried on the constant ebb and flow of the waves" (28-29). He states that he is "unwept (*ἄκλαυτος*)" and "unburied (*ἄταφος*)" (30). Noting the presence of alpha privatives, the adjectives Polydorus describes himself with go hand in hand with him being a sort of non- (or "un") person. Further, the contrast between Polydorus' occupation in the sea's waves (wet) and the fact that he is unwept (dry), provides an interesting insight into the idea of water as a necessary feature to have an affective body. Because Polydorus is not buried yet he is dead, he is in a cultural liminal space, for a proper burial for the dead was important for the Greeks, and a lack of burial could signify that he is still partially imprinted on the Earth. Because he is "unwept," Polydorus is not being affected by others, feeling as if he is not remembered or not understood as dead. He has not received the kinds of impassioned lamentations that Hecuba demonstrates in *The Trojan Women.*

Turning attention to his lack of body as a ghost, Polydorus asserts, “Now I have left my body empty and I flit about above my dear mother Hecuba. This is now the third day on which have hovered here” (31-33). This emptiness of body is striking. Despite having no physical body as a ghost, Polydorus still can affect characters onstage and in the audience, so he creates his body through his performance and speech. Yet, Polydorus also erases his corporeal body through his utterances by telling the audience that he is an empty body. Polydorus is both no-thing and some-thing in this way. Through abandoning his body, Polydorus does something similar to the BwO: removing any type of organization and becoming occupied only by affective intensity. Yet, Polydorus’ body is that of an “empty or dreary” BwO, set free by his becoming water after being drowned by supposed guest-friend Polymestor, and not set free by his own will. Thus, this body has been “wildly destratified” and could explain why Polydorus is only able to appear as this phantom spirit, doomed to hover above his mother. He has no organs, and his body is empty and is becoming or even being water, billowing as affect, and reduced to water vapor.

Hecuba, too, is in the process of becoming water and moves toward an empty BwO. Hecuba uses sound as pure, immaterial affect—pulsating and rippling, mimicking the waves of water—to create her body. When she first speaks, we are immediately plunged into Hecuba’s monody of lament in a lyrical anapestic meter for her son, for anapestic meter is “mainly linked with lamentation . . . and profound emotional distress” (Lourenço 31). Thus, this ode invites us into the realm of aural vibrations and sensations, however grim these sonic qualities may be. These sounds of lamentation that endure throughout *Hecuba* are significant to the de/reterritorialization process of both the BwO and the refrain.

Just as Dionysus created a territory of flesh with the maenads and the elements played a role in bodily construction for the Trojan captives, sound can also function as an affective extension of the body that aggregates in the becoming of a BwO. As the BwO resists territorialization, it also resists the territorial refrain, and can even seek to overturn it. The refrain is an assemblage that Deleuze and Guattari describe as, generally, "*any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into territorial motifs and landscapes*" (*Plateaus* 323). The refrain is used when a milieu, or a block of space-time, is threatened by chaos, and so rhythms are established to create stability (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 312). Deleuze and Guattari theorize that "A territory borrows from all the milieus; it bites into them, seizes them bodily (although it remains vulnerable to intrusions)," emphasizing the territory's visceral intensity (*Plateaus* 314). This type of control is just what the BwO strives to renounce. Sound in the refrain works to territorialize itself through habit and repetition, while sound in the BwO acts as a pure block of affect that is an intensity of reverberating, deterritorialized desire.

Hecuba illustrates how song and sound can act as this pure intensity of affect and surge through and ignite one's body. Hecuba is reduced to mere gasps and cries as the play persists, unwilling and unable to articulate anymore, even after her attempts for vengeance. This desire for revenge is not completely fulfilled; she still has more desire for it but will be punished with her inevitable fate. Hecuba's heightened affect takes her further from her humanity, but closer to being solely populated by sonic intensities in the BwO. The deposed Trojan queen manipulates deterritorialized sound blocks of the BwO and the territorialized refrain to simultaneously escape bodily constraints and ground herself in this time of chaos and woe with a body compiled with sound.

In her opening speech, Hecuba pays meticulous attention to her body, describing, “And I, leaning on my bent arm as on a stick,/ will set one foot before the other/ as I stir my slow limbs to speed” (64-66). Hecuba scrutinizes herself in great detail, trying to convince herself that she occupies a body, and trying to stir up her body’s movement through her verbalizations. She calls for the other captive Trojan women for help, both physically and mentally, singing, “take me, carry me, guide me, support me (*λάβετε φέρετε πέμπετ᾽ ἀείρετέ μου*)” (62). Through these imperatives, Hecuba attempts to create structure and stability through a sonic territory, or refrain, around her, but the original Greek suggests disjuncture. Because *πέμπετ᾽* and *ἀείρετέ* are elided, the strict -*ετε* endings are disrupted. While subtle, this divergence foreshadows that she will ultimately not succeed. This is because, just as the BwO can be constructed improperly, impediments and intrusions to the refrain are dire: “A mistake in speed, rhythm, or harmony would be catastrophic because it would bring back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 311). Therefore, maintaining a cohesive, clear refrain is essential to a territory’s survival, just as it is important to carefully construct one’s BwO. Thus, we understand that Hecuba has begun the process of becoming an empty BwO.

The chorus brings bad news that Polyxena, Hecuba’s daughter, is going to be killed as a sacrifice to Achilles in the aftermath of the Trojan defeat by the Greeks. They tell Hecuba to incite the gods to try to save Polyxena before it is too late. Hecuba, still in anapestic lyric meter, sings,

> O my sorrow! What shall I cry out?
> What echoing lament?— (*ποίαν ἀχώ, ποῖον ὀδυρμόν*)
> I, Hecuba, miserable in my miserable old age (*δειλαία δειλαίου γήρως*)
> and my slavery (*δουλείας*) too hard to bear,

> too hard to endure? My woe, my woe (*οἴμοι*)!
>
> . . .
>
> Where can I turn? This way—
>
> or that? (153-157, 162-163)

Hecuba dissolves into her echoing woe without the ability to figure out what to cry out. A sonic reverberation happens explicitly through her use of the word "echo" and echoes of sound blend into her literal utterances of lamentation. There are similar sonic qualities in the mutating forms of *ποίαν* and *ποῖον*, as well as *δειλαία*, *δειλαίου*, and the later *δουλείας*, all in close succession, sonically presenting her body melding with her voice. She finally tries to articulate her woe with *οἴμοι*—a visceral word releasing the culmination of her sadness. She cannot decide how to move her body, unsure of what path to take but also of how to navigate materially in the world. By attempting to escape her organs and dissolve into pure echos of sound, Hecuba's journey to reach the BwO begins, for the BwO "is already under way the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off, or loses them. A long procession" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 150). Hecuba sloughs off her physical body in return for a sonic body.

Hecuba then sings, "O you women of Troy, who have brought me bitter tidings,/ brought me bitter sorrows,/ you have destroyed me, destroyed me utterly" (165-167). Hecuba repeats "brought me bitter" and "destroyed me" here, almost stuttering and also faltering in her refrain. These strong verbs relaying Hecuba's destruction illustrate how she is starting to destratify and descend into nothing but her laments. She cries for Polyxena: "O my child, daughter/ of the unhappiest of mothers, come out,/ come out of the house, hear what your mother has to say!" (172-174). Hecuba goes on a rampage of repetition, focusing on vocalization with "hear" and "say," understanding that she soon will only be able to affect through sound.

Ill-fated Polyxena enters the stage and begins a sonic interlude with her mother. Polyxena mourns Hecuba rather than herself, singing,

> And I weep for you, my mother, and your misery
> with unceasing laments,
> but for my own life, its outrage and its shame,
> I shed not a tear. (211-214)

Weeping and tears are wrapped together with lament and woe, with Polyxena almost weeping *into* Hecuba. Polyxena asks Odysseus to lead her offstage, stating, "my heart has melted with my mother's songs of woe (*θρήνοισι*) even before my slaughter, and I am melting hers with lamentation (*γόοις*)" (432-434). Since Polyxena asks Odysseus to "lead [her] off," on her way to certain death, specifically because her "heart has melted with [her] mother's songs of woe," Polyxena's death has already begun. Song and lamentation here can melt, alter, and meld affect. This is the "language of lament," as Casey Dué says in *The Captive Woman's Lament in Greek Tragedy*:

> Polyxena and Hecuba each melt in reaction to the laments of the other. The most common Greek terms for songs of lament, *goos* and *thrênos*, are used to describe the kind of speech and song the women employ. This grief is specifically associated with both the tears of epic and the sorrow of a captive woman, in what is undoubtedly a traditional image. (196)

The language of lament seems to be full of the undulating flows of tears and water moving from bodily materiality to pure shrieks and cries. This transition of woe and liquid into sonic affect can be seen as part of the deterritorialization process. Mario Telò's *Archive Feelings: A Theory of Greek Tragedy* also equates "the subject's dissolution into the intensity of water" to "something similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s body without organs” (38). While Polyxena’s death to escape slavery makes her a BwO, Hecuba’s BwO is still underway. Polyxena is then led offstage, accepting her fate openly to escape the strata’s pincers, and thus reaches her BwO through a bloodied slaughter.

Soon after Hecuba learns of Polyxena’s fate, a serving woman arrives to tell Hecuba that Polydorus’ body has been discovered washed up on the shore. Knowing that Hecuba hoped that her son is alive, the serving woman says, “O my mistress, most unhappy woman, unhappier even than my words can express, all is over with you. You no longer exist though you see the light of day. You have been destroyed. Children, husband, city—all are gone” (666-669). Here, a character reinforces that Hecuba no longer exists and is completely destroyed, denoting all that she has lost. Hecuba’s transition into a non-being being vocalized by an external person is significant, as her deterritorialization and ruin are observed internally and externally. Also significantly, by drawing attention to the purpose and the subsequent death of Hecuba’s children in this scene, “the body is the focus of the dramatic power” (Segal 183). With attention placed on the body, Hecuba’s next affective sonic laments provide a strong contrast, pulling us out of the material realm.

When she realizes that both her son and her daughter are dead, the play’s significant shift occurs, marking the beginning of Hecuba’s desire for revenge. Hecuba cries,

> All is over for unhappy Hecuba—I no longer exist (*οὐκέτ᾽ εἰμὶ δή*).
> (sings) O my child, my child,
> Alas (*αἰαῖ*)! I start a frenzied melody.
> . . .
> I cannot believe, no I cannot believe, this new horror which I see

> New disasters are born from the old ones,
> and no day shall ever linger
> without my groans and tears. (682-684, 688-692)

Hecuba rejects the bounds of her physical body with “I no longer exist *(οὐκέτ’ εἰμὶ δή)*,” again becoming an “image of the fleeting dead” like in *The Trojan Women.* While she is still present onstage and through her voice, she does not exist in the traditional body, but rather the BwO, with her organs displaced. She replaces her fleshy embodiment with a purely affective, sonic experience and expresses herself through a “frenzied melody.” This juxtaposition between these words is significant to Hecuba’s displacement, for a “melody” implies territorial order, like the refrain, but a “frenzied melody” evokes a disorganized, heightened affective sound. Hecuba becomes her “groans and tears,” unable and unwilling to latch onto any solid materiality in her distress. Through becoming groans (sound) and tears (liquid), she is melting into her words, vanishing into herself with the alpha-privatives. In *Liquid Antiquity*, Holmes says, “the fluid dynamics of bodies also posed a constant threat to order and well-being, especially with the rise of humoral medicine in the fifth century BCE” (19). Hecuba’s bodily fluidity poses a threat to order, specifically the organization of her organs, and her material embodiment. With these groans, tears, and her guttural cry of *αἰαῖ,* Hecuba embodies the BwO, for “In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, [the BwO] utters only gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated blocks of sound” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 9).

Plotting her revenge against Polymestor, Hecuba laments to Agamemnon, demonstrating how desire can work to deterritorialize one’s body: “I wish I had a voice in my arms and hands and hair, and in the feet on which I walk, whether by the skills of Daedalus or one of the gods, so that they could all weep together and clasp your knees, urging arguments of every kind”

(837-840). Hecuba seeks a disorganized, fluid body with her flesh entirely integrated with sound, shifting from material to auditory, with her voice and body both having the ability to weep and produce tears. Deleuze and Guattari argue that a disregard for the traditional bodily organization is a major step in reaching the BwO:

> Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly? (*Plateaus* 150-151)

Hecuba's pleading to be heard and enact revenge is intermingled with her body, sound, and fluid, reinforcing how a BwO is sought through deterritorialization and the population of intensities with desire at its core. Agamemnon takes pity on Hecuba, and he agrees to help her in her scheme. Hecuba enacts her revenge on Polymestor along with the chorus of Trojan women, and they blind him along with two of his sons in a scene remnant of *Bacchae*'s battle between Pentheus and the maenads.

Hecuba ends with an exchange between Polymestor and Hecuba, where Polymestor tells Hecuba about her unfortunate fate:

> POLYMESTOR. But perhaps you will not be happy when the sea-water . . .
>
> HECUBA. carries me to the shores of Greece? Do you mean that?
>
> POLYMESTOR. No, when it closes over you after you have fallen from the masthead.
>
> HECUBA. Who will force me to leap?
>
> POLYMESTOR. You will climb up on the ship's mast on your own.
>
> HECUBA. With wings on my back? Or some other way? Tell me.
>
> POLYMESTOR. You will become a dog with fire-red eyes.

. . .

HECUBA. Shall I die where I fall or survive and live out my life there?

POLYMESTOR. You will die. (1259-1265, 1270-1271)

Scholars interpret this scene in many ways, with some saying that she is turning into a dog to escape her human woe. While Dué suggests that “the most common view of the transformation is that it is emblematic of the degradation caused by war” (188), Mark Ringer believes that Hecuba “is granted an eternity as something rugged, frightening, and divine, as befits a woman who transcended (not declined from) normal human limits” (128-129). This degradation is part of Hecuba’s body undergoing the deterritorialization process, and her transcendence of typical limits is her becoming a BwO. Telò argues that Hecuba’s transformation marks her BwO: “Hecuba’s transformation into a dog—before or after she climbs up to the masthead—could be seen as expressing the same deterritorializing process of fluid dissipation as her plunge from it” (174). Hecuba’s struggle between de/reterritorialization throughout the play results in her stuck-ness in water and her empty BwO. The sea acts as a medium between life and death—rather than becoming a full BwO, she still is an empty BwO, blurring the line between water and flesh.

For the last almost 20 lines, Hecuba does not speak but is spoken to, almost as if her “death” has already begun. Agamemnon addresses her, saying, “And you, poor Hecuba, go and bury the bodies of both your children” (1288). Hecuba’s pain and lack of catharsis and true vengeance on Polymestor have caused her emptiness. She can no longer use sound to animate herself, but she still goes about the process of lament through burial. Therefore, *Hecuba* ends with a silent Hecuba, affectless and marked to drown, leaving an empty space onstage that her body previously occupied for the entire performance.

Desire: A Conclusion

In the preface to her translation of *Hecuba* in *Grief Lessons,* Anne Carson says, for Hecuba,

> Revenge brings her to life. Why? Because the world after a world war becomes a simple place. It is divided simply into the dead, who are the majority, and those who have somehow managed not to die, whom we call the living. How they live is not important.
>
> Revenge is a form of desire. It is on the side of things living. (95-96)

Indeed, revenge as "a form of desire" helps drive Hecuba to her empty BwO and becoming water, for desire is the ruling force in all BwOs. Desire manifesting as revenge underscores how desire can be a detrimental force in the BwO, yet it still makes it a functional assemblage: "The BwO is desire . . . Even when it falls into the void of too-sudden destratification, or into the proliferation of a cancerous stratum, it is still desire" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 165). We especially see these harsh acts of violent retaliation committed by Dionysus and Hecuba in their desires for revenge and a BwO. Indeed, all these three plays analyzed in my thesis depict the ultimate desires of their characters, and how "Desiring-machines make us an organism" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 8). *Bacchae, The Trojan Women,* and *Hecuba* all illuminate how desire can mold people into their fluctuating bodies, and how the characters desire a type of power in even their emptied-out BwOs.

Dionysus is obsessed with external validation in *Bacchae* and cannot figure out how to make a distinct, central body without the appreciation and respect of others. He longs for a recognized godly body and works toward this goal by causing his enemies pain and entrapping followers in any way he can. As a "lesser god," with his mother having been a mortal, Dionysus does not want to have to explain that he is powerful. He demands that all mortals accept his godliness for granted. Dionysus desires the greatest and grandest body—one that cannot be ignored and stratifies Bacchic women as an extra-corporeal territory. Though appearing as a human may seem counterintuitive if he wishes to appear as a god, Dionysus manipulates the Thebans with his transformation from a godly form. Because of his deep-seated insecurity, he resorts to sadism and murder. What fuels Dionysus' BwO is his desire for power over those who humiliated him by forcing others to go through a similar humiliation. Placing Pentheus under a spell, forcing him to put on women's clothing (which Pentheus resists due to his embarrassment), and then publicly slaughtering him and displaying his body, Dionysus' sadism reflects the wild and untamed destratification that is lethal to a full BwO.

The captives in *The Trojan Women* similarly want a recognized body and power, but they instead want to have ownership over their own bodies and escape slavery. Rather than entrapping followers like Dionysus, the women desire freedom from the stratification of the Greeks after the war. Within their own individualized wishes for bodily autonomy, the women want Troy to be a body again and not reduced to an immaterial no-thing in its destruction. Through these desires, material presence, absence, and oftentimes the use of elements, play a significant role in illustrating how the Trojan slaves maintain their thing-ness and search for the BwO. Yet, as the women, including Hecuba, observe Troy being burned to the ground and crumbling as an earthquake overpowers the city, we understand that there is little hope for a complete release from bodily constraints, no matter how ferociously they try to release themselves to gain independent power.

The focal point of *Hecuba* is Hecuba's de/reterritorialization and construction of a BwO through her lamentation. Hecuba desires a free body, but she also wants to escape her body as a release from life and as a means of revenge and gaining power over Polymestor. Yet, Hecuba's desire for revenge could only get her so far, and she does not gain a fully satisfying outcome. Her children, husband, and city are still gone, and with them, a large piece of her that she can never replace. Hecuba's cries and laments do not completely release her, and even in her transformation into a dog and final descent into water, she is still an empty BwO. These two plays centered around the Trojan War show a more somber side of the BwO through the decay of bodies and a once-powerful city.

While a range of embodied but not fully-realized BwOs appear in these plays, each relies on a presentation of a distinct, central corpse pertinent to desire: *Bacchae* with the dismembered remains of Pentheus resembling the BwO Dionysus seeks; *The Trojan Women* with the departed body of Astyanax, representative of the "dead" land of Troy and the desire for one last affective breath; and the slain, drowned body of Polydorus that instigates Hecuba's active search for revenge. These corpses serve as a lucid reminder of what happens when affective desire is not regulated. As observers of tragedy and through all of these bodily displays, we view the wide range of material and immaterial bodies that one can achieve. The audience members are able to explore these characters' search for a BwO and concoct their own methods for attaining a state of liberation.

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