

Voices from the Cave: the Chorus and the Figure of Echo in Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale**

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the presence and function of the figure of Echo in *The Love of the Nightingale*. In order to do so I will focus my study on the devices by which Wertenbaker achieves to update the function of the classical chorus throughout a discursive itinerary that digs into the twists and turns of the history of the female voice in the arts. Hence, I will first study the development of the male and female choruses in the plot of the play in order to establish the macrostructure in which the character of Echo is depicted. Then, in the realms of these two collectivities I will expose the strategies by which Wertenbaker splits the voice of the nymph from a male discursive counterpart and etches her words in the experience of other female myths of the unvoiced.

“The silence of the dead can turn into a wild chorus. But the one alive who cannot speak, that one has truly lost all power”.
Timberlake Wertenbaker, *The Love of the Nightingale*

1. The Choruses of *The Love of the Nightingale*

1.1 Two choruses, two functions, two voices and two ways of approaching the distant past through one of the most essential and distinctive features of classical drama. The dual presence of the chorus in *The Love of the Nightingale* is visible proof of Timberlake Wertenbaker's positioning as a link between the two ends of the history of theatre: antiquity and today. It is universally acknowledged that one of the perils of modernizing the Greco-Roman tragedy is to fit the chorus into a structure, an audience and a stage with little resemblances to the ones in which it was originally embedded (Gentili 1984-85; Trypanis 1984-85; Paco 2003). Although modern dramatists have found a number of resources that can assist them in this task (Paco 1999; Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley 2005), the case of *The Love of the Nightingale* is rather problematic because, as far as the depiction of the choruses is concerned, little, if anything, is introduced in this modern version of the myths from their original sources.

Four texts lie behind Wertenbaker's approach to the story of Tereus, Procne and Philomel: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IV. 424-674), Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *The Bacchae*, and Sophocles' *Tereus*. Euripides' tragedies provide the context for two of the most dramatic moments of the play: scene five, where the performance of *Hippolytus* introduces mounting tensions between Tereus and Philomel that result in her rape, and scenes eighteen and nineteen, where Itys is murdered in the midst of the feasts of the *Bacchae*. As far as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is concerned, the lines of the Latin poet

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constitute the main plot of the tragedy. In her revision of the theme, Wertenbaker approaches the Ovidian myths from a political and gender-biased perspective that finds in Hero, Echo, Iris, June and Helena the best characterization of the voice of the Female Chorus. However, there is still a second classical source for this collectivity that goes back to Sophocles' *Tereus*.

Among the extant fragments of Sophocles' tragedy the only references that record the presence of a chorus are Plutarc, *Moralia* 21B & Stobeus, IV 34, 39 and Stobeus III 39, 12.¹ The first of the two excerpts, fr.592 R, corresponds with two different fragments that refer to a concrete prediction of the chorus regarding the human tragedy that is going to be revealed in the play:

ἀλλὰ τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν
τι "χάρι", εἰ κακόβουλο"
φροντὶ "ἐκτρίψει τὸν εὐαίωνα πλοῦτον ;

τὰν γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ζοᾶν
ποικιλομήτιδε" ἄται
πημάτων πάσαι" μεταλλάσσουσιν ὦραι".²

Even though there are instances in *The Love of the Nightingale* in which the thoughts of both the Male and the Female Choruses recall these fragments, there is no clear evidence to demonstrate that Wertenbaker's choruses were drawn on them. On the other hand, as far as the second passage is concerned, fr.584 R, "πολλά σε ζηλω" βίου, μάλιστα δ' εἰ γη" μὴ πεπειρασαι ξένη",³ it is well worth noting the interpretation sustained by José María Lucas de Dios in his translation of the Sophoclean fragments which holds that: "Tal vez, de las conjeturas de interpretación propuestas, la más razonable sea la que ve aquí un diálogo entre Procne y el coro, que estaría compuesto por personas del lugar, quizá mujeres, a pesar de la rareza que supondría ver, en una tragedia de nuestro poeta con título de hombre, un coro de mujeres" (1983: 307 n.1173 to fr.584R).⁴ Should we consider this hypothesis to be true, this second excerpt would be the only clear classical source of Wertenbaker's choruses.⁵ The stage direction of scene four which recalls the first appearance of the Female Chorus in the play reads as follows: "*Procne and her companions, the Female Chorus: Hero, Echo, Iris, June, Helen*" (24).⁶ Procne's companions, would then be the women from Thrace who speak in Stobeus, III 39, 12.

Besides these fragments, there is no other text from the Greek-Roman world evoked in *The Love of the Nightingale* that refers to a specific address by a chorus. Therefore, in order to portray the role of the figure of Echo in the construction of the Female Chorus of this play, the next question to be posed in this paper is: how can a 'modern' chorus, with no visible classical referent, bring antiquity close to present aesthetics? In order to furnish an answer to this question, I will first study the presence of the Male Chorus in *The Love of the Nightingale* basing my analysis on its structural role in the tragedy and its approach to the story of the myths. Then, I will set out the main differences that distance the male voices from the Female Chorus and prepare the ground for a modern reappraisal of the figure of Echo.

1.2 If we go back to Aristotle's *Poetics*, the chorus is defined as a fundamental element that structures the tragedy in *prologos*, *epeisodia*, *exodos* and *choral*.⁷ Wertenbaker's Male Chorus of *The Love of the Nightingale*—though not strictly loyal to its original function—keeps some of its structural essence in scenes six and eight. In these passages, the Male Chorus speaks—or sings—alone, with no other character on the

stage, acting as a frame to Philomel's trip to the lands of the North, where the characters of the play will meet their tragic destiny. In scene six, performing the role of a narrative chorus, this group of male voices sails with the audience through the seas up to the Thracian land specifying every coast and promontory of the antique world they travel to. It is a journey both to the remoteness of the geography of our past history and the topicality of the violence of Tereus' desires. The second excerpt, scene eight, sets out the explicative potential of this chorus in depth and reflects on the general meaning and transmission of myths through the paradigmatic cases of Procne and Philomel (Wagner 1999). As a consequence, the prominence of the voice of the Male Chorus in scenes six and eight unites scene seven, the first romantic encounter between Tereus and Philomel, with the classical concept of *epeisodia*.

The remainder of the appearances of the Male Chorus along the text mostly illustrates both the narrative and explicative nature of the chorus that makes these male voices the "journalists of an antique world, putting horror into words, unable to stop the events we [they] will soon record" (37). Generally speaking, Sophoclean choruses of the extant plays were "better at enunciating general principles than at perceiving their application to particular situations" (Sommerstein 2002: 46). Hence, a second trait of Wertebaker's male choral voices derived from the classical introduction of the chorus in a Greek tragedy relies on this ability to "comment on and illuminate the action rather than influencing its development" (Sommerstein 2002: 45). In the role of journalists, they establish the link between the hero, Tereus, and the audience, although they remain outside of the development of the plot of the play. The Male Chorus here functions as a voyeur of the private tragedy of Tereus and Philomel and the spokesperson of their actions in the public sphere.

On the other hand, though they consciously admit at the beginning of the play that "this is not our story" (25) but the story of "two sisters [who] discuss life's charms and the attractions of men" (26), these anonymous voices don't record the crucial events in the lives of Procne and Philomel. On the contrary, they silence Philomel's rape and her lover's death at Tereus' hands—which should be some of their *news headlines*—and, instead, they speak about life, destiny, war and peace. The Male Chorus represents, consequently, the discourse of History in recalling the return of the heroes without giving voice to the parallel sub-stories that retell the myths from the archives. The words of the author transmitted through this chorus are the words that rewrite antiquity in the presentation and exposition of its male voices. But they are also the words that unveil, in the topicalisation of their discourse, the weaknesses of the traditional ways of telling stories and emphasise the need to recover other silenced experiences that still remain concealed in our past.

Immersed in this context, and as the counterpart of the Male Chorus, Wertebaker introduces a Female Chorus that complements Procne's experiences and reinserts her story, and Philomel's, into the pages of the history of the ancient and the modern world. Some scholars understand the opposition of the two choruses of *The Love of the Nightingale* as the symptom of Wertebaker's search of a new language of the feminine (Soncini 1996). For my part, I believe that it is not only on this search that Wertebaker focuses the representation of this duality but also by exhibiting two different ways of approaching antiquity, and ultimately, history. So far, I have put forward some of the classical elements that Wertebaker exploits in the Male Chorus in order to expound her understanding of power, gender and theatre. Next, I will expose their presence in the voices of the Female Chorus focusing my analysis on the main difference that confronts the two collectivities: individuality.

Contrary to the anonymity of the Male Chorus, the Female Chorus members are five women from classical literature whose fate, like Procne's or Philomel's, is closely related to the experience of submissiveness and the unvoiced: Hero, Echo, Iris, June and Helen.⁸ In addition, some of them are also allowed, on occasions, to move from outside to inside the action and be involved in the plot by exploiting their traditional distinctiveness. In scene fourteen, for instance, Iris is both the coryphaeus and the bearer of the words that inform Procne of Tereus' fortune.⁹ Furthermore, the remains of the past recovered in the nature of this chorus are also revealed to the audience in the different expressions of grief, fear or tedium that the Thracian women share with Procne.¹⁰ Simulating the classical lyric instances of the *kommós*,¹¹ the interaction between the heroine and the Female Chorus is based on the (in)communication derived from several dialogues that, along scenes four and nine, ponder on some universal topics of female discourse: women and the lack of power, autonomy or words. The features of this (in)communication will be examined further on in this essay through the figure of Echo; nevertheless, it is interesting to point out at this stage that the interaction between Procne and the chorus reaches its zenith in scene eighteen where, as indicated in the final stage direction of scene seventeen, "*She [Procne] begins to dress as a member of the Bacchae, as does the Female Chorus*" (58). The merging of the heroine and the Female Chorus in the music and dance of the Bacchae, together with the fact that both the recognition of Philomel and the vengeance of the sisters take place in the midst of that fusion reinforces the classical legacy of the play. With reference to the development of this scene as a modern reappraisal of *The Bacchae*, it is well-worth noting Wertebaker's closer affiliation to the overwhelming femininity of Euripides' choruses in contrast to those of Sophocles (Rabillard 1999: 105).

To conclude, the de-personalisation of the Male Chorus in opposition to the specification of the Female Chorus is the key to understand Wertebaker's approach to antiquity in *The Love of the Nightingale*. On the one hand, she highlights the limitations of the traditional/patriarchal ways of reading History and myths in the words of the Male Chorus. On the other hand, she bridges these gaps by putting on stage the voices of five women who, reinforced with the characters of Philomel and Procne, speak the silenced pages of their stories through the Female Chorus. The lack of a specific source text in the depiction of the choruses of *The Love of the Nightingale* expands Wertebaker's sphere of action in the topicalisation of these voices of ancient tragedy. Hence, the shades of antiqueness that colour the play through the appearances of the two choruses don't belong exclusively to either one of its two direct sources, Sophocles' *Tereus* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but to the number of invisible hints that Wertebaker selects from the structures that were fixed and transmitted through the texts of other major classical playwrights.¹² Intermingled with the references to these texts, the author introduces present claims of social minorities and power, specially in terms of gender, with the universals transmitted through the Ovidian and Sophoclean archetypes and literary arguments presented in this play. Thus, the structure of the Greco-Roman tragedy is interspersed through the choruses with the needs and aims of the praxis of modern theatre so as to fulfil the expectations of its contemporary audience as well as to transmit the driving forces of ancient drama. In order to further analyse the combination of these two ends in the voices of the Female Chorus, I propose to consider, in the next section of the paper, the figure of Echo as the epitome of the presence of the ancient world, modern drama and women in *The Love of the Nightingale*.

“If you bend over the stream and search for your
reflection, Tereus, this is what it looks like”.
Timberlake Wertenbaker, *The Love of the Nightingale*

2. Echo as Myth, Chorus and Character

From the fifth Century, Echo is documented in the Ancient World not as a mere repetition of a sound, but as a whole mythical subject (Cancick 2004).¹³ From these very first appearances, two other classical archetypes, Pan and Narcissus, share Echo's destiny throughout her literary history. The common ties between the stories that relate the nymph to either one or the other are generally founded on the limitations of her discourse.¹⁴ Based on these links, the transmission of the figure of Echo has traditionally disappeared into oblivion compared to the high presence of Pan and Narcissus in the history of Western Arts. Contrary to this tendency, the twentieth century has been specially prolific for the revision of the figure of Echo; however, there is still a gap in the scholarly work devoted to modern receptions of the myth that needs to be bridged.¹⁵ After an extended literary history under the shadow of Pan or Narcissus, the Ovidian nymph starts to gain importance in the arts and becomes, for instance, an epitome of the stark representation of human existence in Samuel Beckett (1935) or the voice of the colonies in Marlene Nourbese Philip (1989). In this arduous undertaking, full of important achievements, the portrayal of Echo has been modelled incorporating some of the features that are to be found in Wertenbaker's play *The Love of the Nightingale*.

As stated above, one of the main sources for Wertenbaker is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the middle of the crossroad between the boundaries of antiquity and today's broader horizons, the playwright interweaves the words of Echo in three scenes in which her discourse is sheltered and enhanced by the voices of the other four classical women that structure the Female Chorus. Together, these women illustrate the appropriation of antiquity by a female discourse that retells the traditional stories of physical and verbal violence perpetrated against female voices and bodies. In the realms of their appropriation, the depiction of Echo as a character is developed gradually all the way through the play; meanwhile, the identification of the Female Chorus with Procne through their shared experiences occurs. In this depiction, the particular features of the nymph coming both from the traditional development of the archetype and the innovations incorporated by Wertenbaker meet in the two tropes that I propose to revise in this section: the linguistic structures of Echo's discourse and the selection of the lexical items of her utterances.

If we look back to the sources, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (III. 340-511) Echo is depicted through fragmentation. The two metamorphoses that she endures, Juno's punishment and her consented self-dislocation after Narcissus' denial, determine the nature of the idiosyncrasies of her rhetoric of the body and speech: “*corpus adhuc Echo, non uox erat; et tamen usum/ garrula non alium, quam nunc habet, oris habebat,/ reddere de multis ut uerb nouissima posset./ Fecerat hoc Iuno,....*” (*Met.* III. 359-362).¹⁶ And Echo's voice breaks when it's doomed to depend on the subjectivity of the other: “*... et in aëra sucus/ corporis omnis abit, uox tantum atque ossa supersunt:/ uox manet; ossa ferunt lapidis traxisse figuram./ Inde latet siluis nulloque in monte uidetur,/ omnibus auditur sonus est, qui uiuit in illa*” (*Met.* III. 397-401), her body is silenced and her identity torn apart.¹⁷ This fractured condition is reproduced by Wertenbaker in the discourse of the nymph not only as a tool against the ruling power but also as a distinctive attribute that personalises her discourse amid the amalgam of

female identities that shape the Female Chorus. Contrary to the Male Chorus, the women of the Female Chorus never speak together. Their appearances are dominated by a series of enjambed questions and thoughts that are articulated by their own individualities. At the same time, they universalise their claims giving voice to Procne's struggles which, on most occasions, are also their own.

The three scenes in which the five voices come on stage—scenes four, nine and twenty—follow a similar pattern. First, the general topic of the scene is introduced by a sentence or a reflection presented either by Procne or Hero; then, the topic is discussed and developed by the rest of the women. As the scenes come to an end, the voices begin to take a definite semantic or linguistic shape in accordance with their classical identity, which, in the case of Echo, is particularly illustrative of Wertenbaker's revision of the myth. Thus, when the words of the nymph escape from the homogenised discourse of the chorus, Echo's speech is broken, and the prototypical syntactic schemes of Subject+Verb+Complement distorted. The verbal element, and consequently the characterisation of the state of the subject or the action, disappears in favour of the nominal construction. In these cases the petrification of Echo's utterances is indicative of a discursive victory based on choices. In my opinion, although they might also be considered the remains of the male power in her subjectivity, the fragmentation of the discourse and the non-representation of the body have been transformed this time into positive signs of identity. Hence, Echo's final appearances in each of these scenes reflect her individuality as follows:

ECHO: Gone, Procne, the words? ... Silent, Procne, who? ... Tereus ... Tereus
A beating of wings.... (30-31)

ECHO: Tereus ... A welcome ... Silent. (43)

ECHO: Image, Echo. (64)

ECHO: No end ... Metamorphosis. (67)

These utterances are a series of nominal sentences that structure the story of Procne and Philomel through the legacy of the patterns and imagery that shape the figure of Echo in Ovid's poetry. One peculiarity defines her discourse this time: that it's the balanced counterpart of the traditional hegemony, the Male Chorus, and not its subordinate.

Together with this fragmentation, Echo also shows evidence of the second trait inherited from the classical tradition that is rooted in the metamorphoses she suffers: repetition. Due to Juno's punishment, Echo can only repeat the last words articulated by the son of Cephisus in her encounter with Narcissus: “*‘ecquis adest?’*, *et ‘adest’ responderat Echo*” (*Met.* III. 380) and “*‘huc coeamus’ ait, nullique libentius umquam/responsura sono ‘coeamus’ rettulit Echo*” (*Met.* III. 386-387).¹⁸ In Wertenbaker's play, however, the nymph pieces together the string of words that she is destined to repeat in a new pastiche that, while keeping its original intention, is distinctive of the process of re-appropriation of the space of the speaker that she experiences all the way through the play. This process of repetition is developed in a twofold approach. On the one hand, Echo rephrases the syntactical construction of the sentences without introducing any significant or visible semantic modifications. On the other, Wertenbaker founds the repetition of the nymph not so much on structural motivations but on the need to fulfil her discourse with words stemming from her own subjectivity.

As regards the first type of repetition, a single instance is enough to illustrate this procedure: in scene four, Procne meditates on the creation and production of language and the need for a shared cultural or even gendered competence in order to set oneself up as a positive speaker in the processes of communication. In these meditations she believes her words to have disappeared ever since the separation from her sister Philomel. In the manifestation of this experience, understood by the Female Chorus and shared by the individuality of each one of its characters, Echo states:

PROCNE: Where have the words gone?

ECHO: Gone, Procne, the words? ...

PROCNE: ... Where is she now? Who shares those games with her? Or is she silent too?

ECHO: Silent, Procne, who?. (30)

Assimilation through repetition and questions for answers as a token of a lack of understanding. Echo's replies to Procne's wails exemplify both the union and the segregation established between the main character of the play and the Female Chorus through their (in)communication. For, even though they find difficulties in assimilating each other's interests and anxieties as members of two different cultures—the logical and artistic Athens and the warlike and visceral Thrace—their voices are assembled in a single tune when it comes to feel, attain or defend the universal principles that they share as women or subjugated individuals.

Regarding the other kind of repetition, it introduces the last topic of my dissertation on the figure of Echo: the selection of the lexicon in the dialogues with her fellow women. As it mostly appears in the re-writings of the myth that work on the repositioning of the voices of the minority (Cocoran 2000; Segal 2000), Wertebaker re-senses Echo's words employing the fragmentation and the repetition as mechanisms of superseding the burden of her tradition. Then, in conjunction with these devices, the author introduces a third component, inherited as well from the Ovidian poem, that is rooted in the ability of Echo to denote with extra meaning the utterances that she repeats from the others (Bonadeo 2003). Let us remember her responses to Narcissus in the passage of the love chase of the *Metamorphoses*:

Forte puer comitum seductus ab agmine fido
dixerat 'ecquis adest?', et 'adest' responderat Echo.
hic stupet, utque aciem partes dimittit in omnes,
voce 'veni' magna clamat: vocat illa vocantem.
respicit et rursus nullo veniente 'quid' inquit
'me fugis?' et totidem, quod dixit, verba recepit.
Perstat et alternate deceptus imagine vocis
'huc coeamus' ait, nullique libentius umquam
responsura sono 'coeamus' rettulit Echo,
et verbis favet ipsa suis egressaque silva
ibat, ut iniceret sperato brachia collo.
ille fugit fugiensque 'manus complexibus aufer!
ante' ait 'emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostril.'
rettulit illa nihil nisi 'sit tibi copia nostril'.¹⁹ (*Met.* 379-393)

Echo's answers in these lines have been much alluded to in recent scholarship in order to address to the nymph's ability to find an expression of her own in the midst of the

barriers imposed both by Juno and Narcissus. In *The Love of the Nightingale*, when the fragmentation and the repetition of the discourse are actioned, they frame a semantic content that brings the story conveyed closer to Echo's experience. Hence, when the nymph perceives the testimonies of her fellow women, Wertenbaker fills her discourse with complete images forged in her own subjectivity that evolve in the transmission of the myth derived from the classical archetype:

HERO: The sky was so dark this morning ...

PROCNE: It'll rain. It always rains.

IRIS: Again.

HERO: I was not talking meteorologically. Images require sympathy.

ECHO: Another way of listening. (43)

JUNE: We show you a myth.

ECHO: Image. Echo. (64)

The Echo of *The Love of the Nightingale* rewrites the signifier of the image/metaphor and enhances its signified incorporating a scope of references to the sign as a whole that belong to her sole experience. 'Image', 'Echo', 'Metamorphoses'... they are all part of the semantic field of the discourse that returns so as to explicit the still not totally erased burdens of the character, and her efforts to supersede them.

To conclude, David Ian Rabey defines *The Love of the Nightingale* as "the culmination of Wertenbaker's questioning of the terms and conditions of using language, making moral judgements and being human" (1990: 527). In the realms of these main issues, Echo comes on stage sharing the burden that the classical tradition has imposed on her subjectivity with a minority of voices that, like herself, fight against the imperialistic modes of self-definition that forget them as individuals. Hence, both as a character and as member of the Female Chorus, Echo finds the ways to overcome Narcissus, or the Western rejection towards her need to belong: she's able to speak the story of her collectivity by re-imagining the language of the hegemony, and also to reinsert the concepts of vengeance and violence in the scope of a feminine sphere usually more connected with passivity and silence. The identification between the experiences of Echo and Procne, through the corrupted and mutilated self-reflection of Tereus/Narcissus on the waters, is the most visual illustration of this achievement:

TEREUS: I have no other words

PROCNE: I will help you find them

The body of Itys is revealed

If you bend over the stream and search for your reflection, Tereus, this is what it looks like. (66)

In addition, Wertenbaker exploits a second device—which is also founded on the nymph's depiction both as an independent character and as a member of the Female Chorus—that considers in depth Echo's struggles to raise her discourse to the levels of authority. Sharing her fragmented and repetitive voice with June—Juno, the perpetrator of her first transformation—is the ultimate stage in the process of her self-recognition. Not only has Echo reached an independent linguistic definition, but she has also freed herself from the bond between the oppressor and the oppressed. All in all, in *The Love*

of the *Nightingale*, Echo is a Thracian woman who experiences Procne's wails, who dances and avenges her suffering and witnesses her metamorphosis; but above all, she is the mythic woman who is able to speak her own voice, truth and experience.

Notes

¹ Cf. Carden 1974. In the case of Sophocles' *Tereus*: Aristotle, *History of Animals* 633^a 17; Sch. Homer, *Illiad* XV 705 Erbse; Stobeus, IV 22, 45; Stobeus, III 39, 12; Stobeus, IV 44, 58; Herodianus, II 16-3; Stobeus, II 10, 25; Stobeus, III 13-21; Stobeus, III 20-32; Stobeus, III 22, 22; Stobeus, IV 29, 12; Plutarc, *Moralia* 21B and Stobeus, IV 34, 39; (593, 4-6 Pearson) Stobeus, IV 34, 40; Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454, 30.

² "But, what satisfaction is there in numerous fortunes if foolish efforts grind the richness of a blissful life?// For man's existence is altered in every age by twisted misfortunes" (my translation).

³ "Much as I envy your life, I envy it more if you haven't known the strange land" (my translation).

⁴ "Maybe, the most reasonable of all interpretations might be the one that reads here a dialogue between Procne and the chorus. This chorus would be formed by local people, possibly women, in spite of the strangeness of having a female chorus in a tragedy written by this poet and entitled after the name of a man" (my translation).

⁵ Together with these references, it is my belief that Wertenbaker's knowledge of the classics brings to light another set of plays that may lie beneath the choice of a male and a female chorus in this play. I refer here to both Euripides' and Seneca's *Medea*: the notable difference between the choruses of the two tragedians—the former introducing a female chorus more sympathetic with the heroine than Seneca's group of repressive elders—has been much recalled in modern productions of the two tragedies. In *The Love of the Nightingale*, Wertenbaker might presumably be appropriating this discursive tool of both ancient and modern drama in order to explicit the connections between the language of these two ends of the history of theatre.

⁶ This and further references to the play are from Wertenbaker 2000 (1989).

⁷ Sommerstein explains this structure as follows:

The first choral song is called the *parodos* ('arrival'), and subsequent ones *stasima* ('standing songs', i.e. songs sung after the chorus had stationed itself in the *orchestra*); the spoken scene which in most plays precedes the entry of the chorus is the *prologos* ('prologue'), and spoken scenes between choral songs are *episodes* ('additional entrances', i.e. scenes marked off by the entrance of actors in addition to the chorus); the term *exodus* ('exit') denotes all that part of the play that follows the last full choral song. (2002: 20)

⁸ In Aristophanes' *The Birds*, the playwright individualizes the members of the chorus in their entrance. The coryphaeus introduces every bird in an individuality that is supposed to have been reproduced in the external depiction of the actors. Even though the coryphaeus in Aristophanes' play is Tereus, there's no evidence of the use of this text as a main source for Wertenbaker. At present, this individualization of the chorus is a common device employed in the revision of classical drama by contemporary playwrights. For instance, for the world premiere of the English version of Antón Arrufat's translation into Spanish of Aeschylus' play *Seven against Thebes* in Glasgow, staged at the Ramshorn Theatre in 2001, "[t]he costume of the chorus of women evoked images of women in conflict zones—Central America, Eastern Europe, Palestine. They were given specific characters and relationships with the Champions. The Champions

were de-personalized in one choral ode, wearing three-quarter coloured masks.... ” (Hardwick 2005: 223).

⁹ Iris is described as a Messenger of the Gods in Homer *Illiad* 2, 786 etc. (Cancick 2004).

¹⁰ The conclusions exposed in Bañuls (2001) concerning the introduction of female choruses in classical texts are of high importance in order to understand Wertenbaker’s approach to antiquity.

¹¹ As Sommerstein states: “[It’s] defined in the *Poetics* as a ‘lament uttered jointly by the chorus and from the *skēnē*’, but used more broadly by more recent critics to denote any lyric or mainly lyric passage in which both chorus and actor(s) participate (a modern alternative is *amoibaion*, ‘exchange’)” (2002: 21).

¹² Though not very frequent, there are isolated instances in Greek drama in which more than one chorus is introduced in the same play: in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, for example, there are two different semi-choruses—one of them male and the other female. Although there is not a clear source behind the differentiation of the choruses in *The Love of the Nightingale*, it is interesting to note this connection with classical drama, which illustrates the playwright’s high knowledge of antiquity.

¹³ Echo as sound appears in Theophr. de sensu 9 [Empedocles], 53 [Democritus]; Aristot. An. 2,8,419b 25ff, Probl. II, 6, 899a 24-25 and II 8, 899b 25ff.

¹⁴ The two most well-known episodes that relate the figure of Echo with Narcissus and Pan are Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe* respectively. Grazini s.v Echo in Brunel (1992) summarises the two passages as follows:

Ovid tells the story of Echo as a prelude to that of Narcissus, whose disdain is given as the reason for her being changed into a rock; previously she had a body, although she had already been deprived of the power to initiate conversation.... In the first place, she was punished by Juno as a result of her excessive flair for speech which she used to hold the goddess’s attention and prevent her from noticing the adulterous activities of her husband Jupiter. Consequently, when she was stripped of her facility with words and her ability to start a conversation this was because she had spoken too much as well as because she had spoken in a deceptive, even deceitful manner. (383)

The pastoral poem *Daphnis and Chloe*, by Longus gives a completely different version of the story.... In it Chloe is filled with wonder at having heard heavenly music echoed by the earth, and Daphnis recounts how Echo, the mortal daughter of a nymph was brought up by the muses and was able to play every instrument and sing every kind of song. This wonderful gift aroused the jealousy of Pan, who had also been unable to win Echo’s affections ... Pan therefore ‘drove the shepherds and goaters mad’ so that they tore Echo to pieces and ‘scattered her body throughout the world while it was all singing’. The earth preserved both her limbs and her voice.... (384)

¹⁵ The scholarly work devoted to the study of the figure of Echo is still incipient compared to other mythic figures of the Graeco-Roman world. However, there have been scholars like Colby (1919) or Hollander (1981) who have prepared the ground for other more contemporary readings of the myth. The tidal wave of modern reappraisals of Echo that flowed in the last decades of the twentieth century has resulted in some significant works for the study of the transmission of the myth, such as Spivak 1993. For an overview of the transmission of the myth as the female voice of the colonies see

Monrós 2004; for another example of Echo as a character in contemporary British drama see Monrós 2005.

¹⁶ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III. 294-333: “Echo still had a body then, she was not just a voice: but although she was always catering, her power of speech was no different from what it is now. All she could do was to repeat the last words of the many phrases that she heard. Juno had brought this about ...” (Translated and with an introduction by Innes 1990). Further references will allude to this translation of the *Metamorphoses*. The edition used for the Latin version is Anderson 1998.

¹⁷ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III. 334-367: “[A]ll the freshness of her beauty withered into the air. Only her voice and her bones were left, till finally her voice alone remained; for her bones, they say, were turned into stone. Since then, she hides in the woods, and, though never seen on the mountains, is heard there by all: for her voice is the only part of her that still lives....”.

¹⁸ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III. 368-404: “‘Is there anybody here?’ Echo answered: ‘Here!’.... ‘Come here, and let us meet!’ Echo answered: ‘Let us meet!’ Never again would she reply more willingly to any sound”.

¹⁹ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III. 368-404:

The boy, by chance, had wandered away from his faithful band of cofrades, and he called out: ‘Is there anybody here?’ Echo answered: ‘Here!’ Narcissus stood still in astonishment, looking round in every direction, and he cried at the pitch of his voice: ‘Come!’ As he called, she called him in reply. He looked behind him, and when no one appeared, cried again: ‘Why are you avoiding me?’ But all he heard were his own words echoed back. Still he persisted, deceived by what he took to be another’s voice, and said, ‘Come here, and let us meet!’ Echo answered: ‘Let us meet!’ Never again would she reply more willingly and made to throw her arms round the neck she loved: but he fled from her, crying as he did so, ‘Away with these embraces! I would die before I would have you touch me!’ Her only answer was: ‘I would have you touch me!’.

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