

ISSN 0197-2227

Classical
and
Modern
Literature:

**A
QUARTERLY**®

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 4
SUMMER 1998

CLASSICAL AND MODERN LITERATURE: A QUARTERLY (ISSN 0197-2227) is published by CML, Inc. in October, January, April, and July. Office of Publication: RR5 Box 782, Spencer, Indiana 47460-0782. Address all correspondence to: CML, Inc., P.O. Box 629, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808-0629. Subscription rates, U.S.A.: institutions, 1 year \$24.00, 2 years \$43.00, 3 years \$65.00; individuals, 1 year \$20.00, 2 years \$36.00, 3 years \$54.00. Other countries add \$5.00 for each year's subscription to cover postage. Single copy rates: \$6.50. Residents of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin add appropriate Sales Tax. Checks should be made payable to: Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly, and mailed to CML, Inc., P.O. Box 629, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808-0629. EDITORS: James O. Loyd, Virginia León de Vivero.

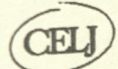
SUBSCRIBERS: Kindly notify CML and your local postmaster immediately of any change of address.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
CML, Inc.
P.O. Box 629
Terre Haute, Indiana 47808-0629

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by CML, Inc. for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) Transactional Reporting Service, provided that the base fee of \$1.00 per copy, plus .10 per page is paid directly to CCC, 21 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970. 0197-2227/98 \$1.00 + .10. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as copying for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes. For these purposes write CML, Inc.

© 1998 CML, Inc.

MEMBER



Council of Editors
of Learned Journals

ΔΩΡΕΑ
ΕΛΛΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΙΚΟΥ
ΠΑΙΟΝΙΔΗ

PHANTOMS' LAST WORDS: TWENTIETH-CENTURY AVATARS
OF HELEN OF TROY AND CASSANDRA

JUANA CELIA DJELAL

for Elli &
Panicos -
With even
more love -
Juanita

"I FADE AWAY, and to myself am an eidolon," says *Faust's* Helen.¹ Goethe's *Faust* is one in a long line of works dating back to the sixth century B.C.E. that treat Helen of Troy as a phantom. The disbelief in Helen's real presence at Troy is matched by the more common disbelief in the words of Cassandra. Scornful of Apollo, she would pay for her scorn with the lack of credence granted her utterances. For one who would be foremost a prophet, incredulity has the effect of rendering her no less a phantom than Helen's fate as wraith, whether their phantomness be conferred by glosses on epic, as in the case of Helen, or by the ire of a spurned god, as with Cassandra.

There are ample grounds beyond such phantomness for conjoining Helen and Cassandra. Each suffers a societal death. Cassandra, as a prophet of Apollo, would have been credible as an extension of the god's power. Having rebuked the god's amorous advances, she is rendered incomprehensible. Her self-assertion proves a destructive act that also works contrary to the interest of the community that deems her mantic pronouncements madness. Her lack of credibility in Troy therefore marks her as absent.

Helen too is an absent presence, both in her homeland of Sparta and as an image of herself, wrought by Zeus, in Troy. The power of her absence, exacerbated throughout Greece by the ensuing absence of its able-bodied male population, gone to war in Troy for her retrieval, condemns Helen for breach of fidelity to home and country. This condemnation prevails as well amongst the Trojans who abhor the fatal image of the Spartan queen. Popularly construed as willful defiance of social norms by Helen herself, her rape by Paris is assimilable to Cassandra's defiance of Apollo's amatory insistence. Both are deemed socially reprehensible and equally disruptive of community.

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part 1 & 2*, trans. Charles E. Passage (Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1965), part 2, line 8881, 304.

© 1998 CML, Inc.