Skenè Texts DA - CEMP
Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England
General Editor Silvia Bigliazzi

A Feast of Strange Opinions: Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes on the English Renaissance Stage

Edited by Marco Duranti
and Emanuel Stelzer

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S K E N È   Theatre and Drama Studies

CEMP - Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England

The series of CEMP volumes offers studies and fully annotated scholarly editions related to the CEMP open-access digital archive. This archive includes texts pertaining to the genres of the paradox, of the paradoxical fiction, and of the problem, which were published in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and which are currently unavailable online and/or not open access (https://test-01.dlls.univr.it/teipublisher-cemp/apps/cemp-app/index.html). Our digital archive features diplomatic, semidiplomatic, and modernised editions of selected works, furnished with critical apparatuses and editorial notes, alongside related documentary materials, which, in turn, are relevant to poetic and dramatic texts of the English Renaissance. These texts provide fundamental testimony of the early modern episteme, functioning as a hinge joining widespread forms of the paradoxical discourse in different genres and texts and within the development of sceptical thinking.

The project is part of the Skenè Centre as well as of the Project of Excellence Digital humanities applied to foreign languages and literatures (2018-2022) Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Verona (https://dh.dlls.univr.it/en/).

Contents

Contributors

Silvia Bigliazzi is Professor of English Literature at Verona University, where she is the Director of the *Skenè Research Centre* devoted to drama and theatre studies. Her fields of interest include Renaissance poetry, literature and the visual arts, and translation for the theatre (co-ed. *Theatre Translation in Performance*, Routledge 2013). She has translated into Italian John Donne's poetry (Rizzoli 2012[2]), *Romeo and Juliet* (Einaudi 2012) and *Double Falsehood* (Rizzoli 2012), and, for the theatre, Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) and *Macbeth (*2016). On Shakespeare she has published two monographs (*Oltre il genere. Amleto tra scena e racconto*, Edizioni dell'Orso 2001; *Nel prisma del nulla. L'esperienza del non-essere nella drammaturgia shakespeariana*, Liguori 2005) and several miscellanies (*Revisiting the Tempest. The Capacity to Signify*, Palgrave 2014; *Shakespeare,* Romeo and Juliet*, and Civic Life*, Routledge 2016; *Shakespeare and Crisis. One Hundred Years of Italian Narratives*, John Benjamins 2020). In 2019 she published *Julius Caesar 1935: Shakespeare and Censorship in Fascist Italy* (Skenè). Her recent researches include: the reception of classical drama in the English Renaissance, the reception of Graeco-Roman paradoxical and sceptic traditions in the English Renaissance, and the study of the Italian novella tradition behind Shakespeare's plays. She is the co-General editor of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*, as well as of the series *Global Shakespeare Inverted* (Bloomsbury) and *Anglica* (ETS). She is the PI of the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narrative Sources, Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination) and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England).

Fabio Ciambella is Research Fellow of English Language and Translation at Sapienza University of Rome. Previously, he was a Research Fellow of English Language and Translation at the University of Tuscia, Viterbo, and Junior Research Fellow at the same university. He received his European PhD in English Language and Literature from the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" (2015). His privileged fields of research include the relationship between dance and early modern and Victorian literature and language, historical pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition, topics about which he has published extensively. In 2013 he published a book about dance in nineteenth-century England (from Jane Austen's novels to Oscar Wilde's *Salome*). In 2016 his PhD thesis was awarded by the Italian Association of English Studies (AIA) and his study about dance and the Copernican Revolution in Shakespeare's canon was published the following year. His latest book, *Dance Lexicon in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Corpus-based Approach* (Routledge, 2021), is a corpus-based analysis of dance-related lexis in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. He is currently writing a volume on how to teach English pragmatics through Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). He contributes to the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination) and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England).

Francesco Dall'Olio is currently a postdoc fellow at Verona University. He obtained his MA in Philology and History of Antiquity from the University of Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, in 2013, and in 2014 the Scuola Normale's diploma. In 2019, he received his PhD in Philology, Literature and Linguistics from the University of Verona. Twice a visiting research fellow at the Gallatin School for Individualized Studies (NYU) as part of his PhD programme, he has extensively worked on the reception of Greek literature in the early modern age, with a focus on early modern English literature and drama. His publications include articles on Alexander Neville's translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (2018), Thomas Preston's *Cambises*

(2020), and on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* A book-length study on the early modern English reception of Greek notions of tyranny is forthcoming. He contributes to the digital project CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England).

Marco Duranti holds a PhD in Greek literature from the Universities of Verona and Freiburg i. Br. (2017) and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Verona. His present research focuses on the reception of ancient Greek literature in early modern England. He has published articles and book chapters on Aristophanes' dramaturgy, Euripides' tragedies, with a focus on *Iphigenia Taurica*, as well as on the reception of Greek theatre in early modern continental Europe and England. He is the author of *"Ecclesiae et Rei Publicae": Greek Drama and the Education of the Ruling Class in Elizabethan England* (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022). He contributes to the digital project CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England).

Francesco Morosi is a post-doc fellow at the University of Pisa. He studied at the Scuola Normale Superiore and the University of California-Berkeley. His main interests are in the field of ancient Greek drama and its modern and contemporary reception. He has devoted most of his studies to Aristophanic comedy and to Aeschylean as well as Sophoclean tragedy. He also works on performance studies and is a theatre practitioner himself, as a dramatist and translator: recently, he translated Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* for Robert Carsen's production in the Greek Theatre in Siracusa (2022). He is currently working on the reception of ancient Greek and Latin comedy in Elizabethan and Jacobean England and on a commented edition of Aeschylus' *Eumenides.* He is part of an international project on the theory and practice of translating classics.

Beatrice Righetti is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Aosta Valley and a former doctoral student in Linguistics, Philology and Literature at the University of Padua. Her doctoral project deals with the reception of paradoxical writing and the *querelle des femmes* as regards the literary figure of the talkative woman in six-

teenth- and seventeenth-century England and Italy. Her main case
study is the literary and theatrical character of the English shrew
and the Shakespearean shrew in particular. She has published on
Renaissance women writers and Shakespeare's plays, mostly *The
Taming of the Shrew*, focusing on both the use of paradoxes and the
relationship between metamorphosis, gender-based violence and
power relations. She contributes to two digital projects directed by
Silvia Bigliazzi ("Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas
and their European Dissemination", SENS; and "Classical and Early
Modern Paradoxes in England", CEMP) and to "From Paradise to
Padua" directed by Alessandra Petrina.

Emanuel Stelzer is a researcher at the University of Verona. He is
the author of *Portraits in Early Modern English Drama: Visual Cul-
ture, Play-Texts, and Performances* (Routledge, 2019) and of *Shake-
speare Among Italian Criminologists and Psychiatrists, 1870s-1920s*
(Skenè Texts and Studies, 2021). Together with Silvia Bigliazzi,
he has edited the volume *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean:* Ro-
meo and Juliet (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022). His articles have
appeared in journals including *Critical Survey*, *Early Theatre*, *The
Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, *English Studies*, *Notes
and Queries*, *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, and *Skenè: Journal
of Theatre and Drama Studies*. His main interests are early modern
English literature and drama, textual studies, and theatre history.
He contributes to the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narra-
tive Sources: Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination)
and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England), of
which he coordinates the early modern section. His work on Wil-
liam Sampson has earned him the *Huntington Library Quarterly*
Centennial Essay Prize; he has also translated into Italian Philip
Massinger's *The Picture* (Aracne, 2017) and John Milton's *Comus*
(ETS, 2020). He is managing editor of *Skenè: Journal of Theatre and
Drama Studies* and contributes to *The Year's Work in English Studies*.

Carla Suthren is a researcher at the University of Verona, work-
ing with Silvia Bigliazzi on the 'Early Modern English Choruses'
database (Prin 2017). She received her BA and MSt degrees from

the University of Oxford (Magdalen College), and her PhD from the University of York in 2018. Since then, she has been a researcher on the *Crossroads of Knowledge in Early Modern England* project led by Subha Mukherji in Cambridge, and has taught at Cambridge and at UCL. She has published on Jane Lumley's *Iphigenia*, and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, and she is currently working on her first monograph, entitled *Tyrannous Passions: Shakespeare and the Renaissance Reception of Euripides*.

The *Eidolon* Paradox: Re-presenting Helen from Euripides to Shakespeare

Carla Suthren

Abstract

This chapter explores the early modern reception of Euripides' *Helen*, particularly with regard to the false *eidolon* of Helen which Euripides presents as having gone to Troy in place of the real one, who remained in Egypt. It identifies Helen's *eidolon* as a site at which three main forms of paradox intersect: the semantic, the rhetorical, and the logical. The *eidolon*'s paradoxical nature makes it a fertile figure for exploring the paradoxes inherent in all acts of mimetic representation, especially the embodied form of drama. The chapter begins with a paratext included in most sixteenth-century editions of Euripides' complete works: a short essay 'On the *Eidolon*'. It looks at the various ways early modern writers translated the word "*eidolon*", in order to establish a nebulous semantic field of reference. In light of this, it examines works by Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare within a wider discourse generated by Helen's paradoxical *eidolon*.

Keywords: Euripides; Shakespeare; Marlowe; Spenser; *eidolon*; Helen

Everyone knows the story of Helen of Troy: the face that launched a thousand ships. The dominant tradition as represented in Homer identifies her elopement with (or abduction by) Paris as the cause of the Trojan War, launched by the Greeks to get her back. But there is another version. What if Helen never went to Troy at all? In Euripides' play *Helen*, the gods instead created an *eidolon* of her which went to Troy in her place, while she herself remained in Egypt for the duration. Helen's *eidolon*, I suggest, can be read as a site at which multiple forms of paradox intersect. These might be categorised as follows: 1) semantic, in that the word '*eidolon*' carries within itself potentially contradictory meanings; 2) rhetorical, in

that the *eidolon* exists in order to counter received opinion (*doxa*); 3) logical, in that it both is and is not the thing it represents.[1] This third category makes the *eidolon* a particularly fertile figure for exploring the paradoxes inherent in all acts of mimetic representation, and especially the embodied form of drama. This chapter will explore the early modern reception of Helen's paradoxical *eidolon*, locating works by Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare within a wider discourse generated by the *eidolon*.

In Euripides' *Helen*, the *eidolon* initiates an obsession with doubling, which affects both plot and language, and reflects and enacts the epistemological concerns at play. Charles Segal has shown that *Helen*'s combination of the "passage between real and ideal worlds" characteristic of romance and the "mistaken identities and delusions of the recognition play" has the effect of "invit[ing] paradox and irony to a high degree" (1986, 224). The play's characteristic linguistic mode utilises figures of speech which are related to paradox, such as antithesis, oxymoron, and polyptoton; Helen, for instance, simultaneously left and did not leave her husband's bed (ἔλιπον οὐ λιποῦσ', "I left without leaving", 696). "Name" (ὄνομα) is repeatedly contrasted to "body" (σῶμα) or "mind" (νοῦς) (e.g. 66-7). From Helen's opening prologue stories are multiplied, from the two versions of Helen's birth to the fate of her brothers, and characters cannot determine which is true. What 'they say' is inextricably related to 'reputation' (or 'being called' something), which is both unreliable and of utmost importance. Seeing is not believing, since ocular proof cannot distinguish Helen from her *eidolon*. Faced with two Helens, Menelaus is confronted with the gap between name and thing, and reasons that there may also be two Zeuses, two Troys (on which, see Marco Duranti's chapter in this volume). Generically too, the play has often been described as a tragicomedy, holding in the irresolvable tension of paradox two antithetical generic modes. Moreover, as Segal goes on to argue, "This play, with its recurrent antitheses between appearance and reality, *onoma* and *pragma*, is simultaneously about the nature of reality and the nature of language and art" (1986, 225).

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[1] I take these categorisations from Silvia Bigliazzi's chapter in this volume.

Segal's description here articulates the paradox encapsulated in the *eidolon*, simultaneously about the nature of reality (on the one hand), and language and art (on the other).

In its vindication of Helen through the device of the *eidolon*, which it presents as a correction to the pre-existing narrative, the play participates in a tradition of literary paradox. According to Cicero, paradoxes are "surprising, and they run counter to universal opinion", a definition in accordance with "the Greek root of paradox, whose etymology – *para* ['beyond'] + *doxon* [*sic*] ['opinion'] – suggests a reversal of common belief or convention" (Platt 2009, 2). In fact, Peter Platt locates the mythological character of Helen at the very origins of the tradition of the rhetorical paradox: "The mock encomium is the earliest surviving paradoxical literary form, dating from the defenses of Helen written by Gorgias and Isocrates in the fifth century BC" (2009, 20). As the most beautiful and terrible of women, the object of hyperbolic praise and hyperbolic blame, Helen seems to generate paradox, inviting a proliferation of strategies for defending the indefensible. The device of the *eidolon* literally splits her into two, so that one can be the 'good woman' worthy of praise, and the other the 'bad woman' to be blamed, emblematising the common misogynistic fantasy.[2] Gorgias and Isocrates defend Helen without making use of the *eidolon*, though Isocrates does refer to Stesichorus, the archaic poet with whom Helen's *eidolon* apparently originated (10.64). A further permutation is offered by Herodotus (2.1.113-21), who agrees that Helen was not at Troy but in Egypt all along, while dispensing with the device of the *eidolon* and replacing it with logic: if the Trojans had had her, he says, they must surely have given her back to prevent the destruction of their city.

Early modern readers of Michael Neander's *Aristologia Euripidea Graecolatina* (1559), a kind of printed commonplace book of extracts from Euripides with Latin translations designed for students, were invited to place Euripides' *Helen* in the context of the proliferation

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[2] Eleanora Stoppino refers to the "duplicitous or wavering attitude towards the legend of Helen" among Renaissance readers and writers since her "voyage from Sparta to Troy was . . . visible in two opposite ways: as kidnapping or eloping" as "the Helen paradox", producing praise and blame for each alternative (2018, 33-4).

of these defences of Helen. Neander gives some prominence to *Helen*, placing it second in his collection after *Hecuba*, as opposed to its sixteenth position in editions of Euripides' complete works. Neander arranges the plays thematically, beginning with those dealing with the Trojan War, and values *Helen* in this context. As well as the argument for *Helen*, he provides the relevant extract from Herodotus. Moreover, Neander also includes Isocrates' oration in praise of Helen as a kind of appendix to the whole volume. Though Neander stresses the device of the *eidolon* in relation to the play's plot, in his excerpts from the play he is more concerned with pursuing his project of providing edifying and sententious extracts for his student readers. It is worth noting that early modern writers might follow Neander's interests rather than ours: William Vaughan, in *The Golden Grove Moralized* (1600, sig.K.7.*r*.) quotes "Eurip. in Helen": "there is a certain desire of friends, to know the miseries of their friends" (*Hel.* 763-4; Neander extract 30), and Thomas Gataker chose as the epigraph to *The Spiritual Watch* (1622) lines 941-3 (Neander extract 36), which he quotes in Greek followed by a Latin translation, on the importance of children living up to the nobility of their fathers. But Neander does also include Theonoe's observation that "though the mind of dead men does not live, it has eternal sensation once it has been hurled into the eternal upper air" (1014-16), on which he comments: *Anima immortalis. De eo uide Phaedonem Platonis* ("The immortal soul. On which see Plato's *Phaedo*"). This connection to Plato and questions of the nature of the soul are also raised in a short essay "On the *Eidolon*" which early modern readers might encounter in their texts of Euripides.

1. On the *Eidolon*

What is an *eidolon*? Publishers of Euripides' complete works, from the Aldine *editio princeps* in 1503 throughout the sixteenth century, evidently felt that this was a question in which their readers might be interested. Ten out of the thirteen editions printed before 1600 included a short essay "On the *Eidolon*" (περὶ εἰδώλου in Greek, or *De Idolo* when translated into Latin).[3] This was attributed to the

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[3] The essay is found among the prefatory materials to the editions of

Byzantine scholar Manuel Moschopulus, but was actually extracted
by him from a longer theological work by the eleventh-century
polymath Michael Psellus, thus entering the manuscript tradition
inherited by Aldus Manutius.[4] The essay is an attempt to disentangle
the paradox contained by the word '*eidolon*' itself, which, Psellus
explains, is commonly used in two contradictory ways. "It is carried
away by contrary senses", he writes (διαφόροις ἐννοίαις ἐκφέρεται)
– the Latin translation has *distrahat*, which conveys even more
vividly the idea that the word is being pulled violently in two
different directions.[5] On the one hand, he observes, "we say that
souls are *eidola* of physical bodies" (εἴδωλα τῶν σωμάτων φαμὲν
τὰς ψυχάς); on the other, "all philosophers say that *eidola* are the
inferior [images] of superior things" (φιλόσοφοι δὲ ξύμπαντες, τὰ
χείρωνα, εἴδωλα τῶν κρειττόνων φασίν). For both statements to
hold, logically we would have to conclude that the soul is inferior
to the body, which for Psellus cannot be true.

Having established this paradox, Psellus attempts to solve
it by showing that both statements can indeed be true, while it
also remains true that the soul is superior to the body; in other
words, to demonstrate that it is what W. V. Quine might call a
"veridical" paradox (1966). Psellus' argument runs as follows: 1)
eidola are inferior images of superior things, and the soul is by
nature superior to the body, so the body must be an *eidolon* of the
soul, not vice versa. 2) When souls are made visible to us, this is
according to our own limited perceptual abilities, which is why
they appear to be modelled on corporeal forms but indistinct and
shadowy; in this sense souls are the *eidola* of physical bodies. 3) The

1503 (Venice, Greek), 1537 (Basel, Greek), 1541 (Basel, Latin), 1544 (Basel,
Greek), 1550 (Basel, Latin), 1551 (Basel, Greek), 1558 (Frankfurt, Greek), 1560
(Frankfurt, Greek), and 1571 (Antwerp, Greek). In the 1562 (Basel, Greek/
Latin) edition, it has been moved to the end where it is provided in Latin. It is
not included in the editions of 1558 (Basel, Latin), 1562 (Frankfurt, Latin), 1597
(Heidelberg, Greek/Latin), or in the 1602 Geneva edition (Greek/Latin).

[4] British Library Arundel MS 522, ff 62*v*.-65*v*., for example, attaches
Psellus' essay to Euripides' works and attributes it to Moschopoulos.

[5] The Greek text is reproduced in Westerink and Duffy 2002, 50-1, to
which I refer for convenience. The Latin translation appeared first in the 1541
Basel edition.

physical body and its senses are inferior to the mind and its ability
to reason, so the body is an *eidolon* of the soul. What appeared to
be a contradiction in step 2) turns out to be further proof of the
inferiority of the body, with its limited physical senses. This allows
Psellus to resolve the paradox to his own satisfaction, though in the
process the discussion has turned back on itself so many times that
it takes a fairly diligent reader to sort it out. The discussion of the
eidolon paradox seems to require or produce a high concentration
of linguistic and syntactical doubling and repetition: "Because of
these things, therefore, the soul is an *eidolon* of the body; and again
the body is an *eidolon* of the soul . . ." (διὰ ταῦτα μὲν οὖν εἴδωλον
σωμάτων ἡ ψυχή· αὖθις δὲ σῶμα, ψυχῆς εἴδωλον), Psellus writes,
using the characteristic Greek idiom μὲν . . . δὲ ("on the one hand . .
. on the other"), which is able to keep both sides of the paradoxical
equation in play at the same time.

If paratexts (at least in theory) work in "the service of a better
reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it" (Genette
1997, 2), the presence of Psellus' essay in so many editions suggests
that a pertinent early modern reading of Euripides might involve
thinking about the *eidolon*. Psellus uses the ghost of Polydorus in
Euripides' *Hecuba* as a brief example of the soul-as-*eidolon*, but the
play by Euripides which demonstrates most overt interest in the
concept of the *eidolon* is of course not *Hecuba*, but *Helen*. As Segal puts
it, the central antitheses of *Helen* surround the contrasts between
"appearance and reality, body and spirit (160-1)", which, he argues,
"looks ahead to the Platonic attempt to distinguish appearance from
reality in a deeper sense" (1986, 257). Like Neander, Psellus refers
his readers to Plato's *Phaedo*, which discusses the nature of the
soul. Elsewhere, as Segal notes, "Plato too used Stesichorus' myth
of the phantom Helen as a parable of the evils we suffer when we
are deceived by the 'false' beauty and 'false' pleasures of the sense
world (*Rep.* 9.586BC)" (1986, 258).

Moreover, while Psellus' main focus is philosophical-theological,
he also connects the *eidolon* to mimetic representation in the realm
of art.[6] In common usage, he points out, we say that this or that

[6] In his theological writings, Psellus typically takes "a problem [of scrip-
ture] and elucidates its philosophical background by drawing on his im-

bronze statue (*aenea statua* in the Latin, translating the Greek ὁ χαλκοῦς) is an *eidolon* of Heracles, or Theseus, or the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus. He uses this to illustrate the proposition that an *eidolon* is an inferior image, in agreement with Aristotle's statement in his *Physics* that "ἡ τέχνη μιμεῖται τὴν φύσιν" (194a 22, usually translated as "art imitates nature"). But the specific formulation that Psellus arrives at is that created artworks are "*eidola* of the truth" (εἴδωλα δὲ ἀληθείας), which opens up space for a paradox of mimesis which Aristotle goes on to express: ἡ τέχνη τὰ μὲν ἐπιτελεῖ ἃ ἡ φύσις ἀδυνατεῖ ἀπεργάσασθαι, τὰ δὲ μιμεῖται ("art on the one hand brings to completion things which nature is unable to perfect, while on the other hand it imitates them", 199a 16-17). As, traditionally, the most beautiful woman ever to have lived, Helen uniquely represents the paradox of mimesis as articulated by Aristotle, as an anecdote about the painter Zeuxis, known to the Renaissance in various forms, illustrates.

According to Cicero in *De inventione*, the citizens of Croton employed the painter Zeuxis to produce a series of paintings for their temple. He decided "to paint a picture of Helen so that the portrait though silent and lifeless might embody the surpassing beauty of womanhood".[7] Needing a model, he asked to see "what girls they had of surpassing beauty".[8] The Crotonians, instead, "showed him many very handsome young men" so that he could imagine the beauty of their sisters.[9] Zeuxis requested to see "the most beautiful of these girls . . . so that the true beauty may be transferred from the living model to the mute likeness".[10] When the girls had been assembled, he chose five to use as models "because he did not think all the qualities which he sought to combine in a portrayal of beauty could be found in one person, because in no single case has Nature made anything perfect and finished in

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mense knowledge" of the Greek philosophers, particularly Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists (Louth 2007, 341).

[7] 2.2.1: "ut excellentem muliebris formae pulcritudinem muta in se imago contineret, Helenae pingere simulacrum velle dixit". Text and translations from Hubbell 1949.

[8] 2.2.2: "quaesnam virgines formosas haberent".

[9] 2.2.2: "ei pueros ostenderunt multos".

[10] 2.2.3: "ut mutum in simulacrum ex animali exemplo veritas transferatur".

every part".[11] Zeuxis' art will be able to perfect what nature cannot provide. As Tim Whitmarsh puts it,

> the story is an allegory of the power of human artifice to transcend nature: by judiciously selecting your models, you can create a work of ideally beautiful (written or visual) art that transcends the particularity of the world in front of our eyes. Frankensteinian without the freakishness, Zeuxis' Helen expresses both a beauty that exceeds the possibilities of real physical bodies, and the power of graphic creativity to assemble existing parts into new wholes. (2018, 135)

However, the canvas at the heart of the anecdote is left blank. Rather than resolving the paradox of mimesis, the text instead represents it, offering a series of substitutions in place of Helen. This is the function of the diversion of the beautiful boys, apparently pointless since the Crotonians subsequently show him the girls anyway. It raises the suggestion that male beauty might be closer to the ideal than female beauty, that perhaps a beautiful boy might better represent Helen than a beautiful girl – something that the early modern stage in general and Marlowe in particular will be interested in. In Cicero's anecdote, we are being asked to *imagine* the beauty of the girls based on the partial representation offered by their brothers, opening up the gap crucial to the operation of mimesis.

This illustrates the second paradox of mimesis, according to which it is "a deception wherein he who deceives is more honest than he who does not deceive, and he who is deceived is wiser than he who is not deceived" (ἀπάτην, ἣν ὅ τ᾽ ἀπατήσας δικαιότερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατήσαντος καὶ ὁ ἀπατηθεὶς σοφώτερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατηθέντος).[12] This paradoxical statement is attributed to Gorgias (speaking of tragedy) by Plutarch, who quotes it twice in the *Moralia* (15d and 348c). The paradox applies to both poet, who

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[11] 2.2.3: "Neque enim putavit omnia, quae quaereret ad venustatem, uno se in corpore reperire posse ideo quod nihil simplici in genere omnibus ex partibus perfectum natura expolivit".

[12] Text and translation from Babbitt 1927. On Gorgias' paradox, see Grethlein 2021, 1-32.

perpetrates a just deception, and audience, which is knowingly deceived. Segal has connected this idea to the functioning of Euripides' *Helen*, in which "[a]s the kaleidoscope of the play's antitheses between appearance and reality turns before our eyes, we become aware that the play *qua* play is itself a term in those antitheses" (1986, 264). Though Euripides never brings the *eidolon* on stage, its existence is a reminder that the 'real' Helen in front of us is equally a representation, both real and not real. The *eidolon* is referred to as a μίμημα at 875, an "imitation" of Helen, just as the actor in turn imitates Helen. Craig Jendza has recently argued that the escape plot engineered by Helen "is, in effect, a play-within-a-play whereby Euripides facilitates metatheatrical reflection by engaging with the methods by which dramatists create, cast, and produce dramas for audiences. The deception contains a metafictional narrative intended to be staged for an audience (Theoclymenos and the Egyptian sailors), characters feigning new identities (Menelaus as the witness and Helen as the grief-stricken widow), and the adoption of new costumes (Menelaus's rags and Helen's black clothes, shorn hair, and bloodied cheeks)" (2020, 96). But whereas for the success of the dramatic and intra-dramatic plots Menelaus and Theoclymenos must be absolutely deceived, by the *eidolon* and by Helen respectively, we as the audience must be knowingly deceived, in order for the overall act of dramatic mimesis to be successful.

In Euripides, Helen's *eidolon* is crucially indistinguishable from its original, or from an actor: it breathes, and speaks, and can be embraced. In her prologue, Helen describes its creation:

> Hera, annoyed that she did not defeat the other goddesses, made Alexandros' union with me as vain as the wind: she gave to king Priam's son not me but a breathing image she fashioned from the heavens to resemble me. He imagines – vain imagination – that he has me, though he does not. (31-6).

In spite of its realism, it is made out of sky (οὐρανοῦ, 34), and is described as a νεφέλης (cloud) at 750 and a νεφέλης ἄγαλμα at 705 and 1219; ἄγαλμα is commonly used to mean "statue", though it can also be an "image" more generally. The airy imagery extends

further: the metaphor in ἐξηνέμωσε (32) – beautifully translated by Jean-Antoine de Baïf as "Tourne tout son espoir en vent" ("turns all his hope to wind") – connects the substance from which the *eidolon* is made to the effect of its existence. The *eidolon*-Helen is empty or vain (κενή) at 36 and 590, and eventually disappears, "swept out of sight into the sky's recesses, vanished into the heavens!" (605-6). The physical nature of the *eidolon* as both solid and airy is connected to its ontological status as real and not real, and is reflected in the nebulous semantic field which extends through early modern translations of the word "*eidolon*" itself.

As Psellus found, the word "*eidolon*" contains a paradox, in that it holds in tension potentially contrary meanings. When Psellus' essay was translated into Latin, it appeared as *De Idolo*, using the Latin word (*idolum*) directly derived from the Greek εἴδωλον. Interestingly, though *idolum* continues to be used in Psellus' essay, early modern translators do not use it for Euripides' own uses of εἴδωλον in the text. In fact, Psellus himself notes at the end of his essay that term εἴδωλον has been "rejected by the religion of the Christians"; in the Church fathers an *idolum* had become a false idol. In a Protestant context, it becomes further associated with Catholic practices. *Idolum*, then, inevitably brings such theological connotations with it, which evidently direct translators of Euripides tended to avoid. But some other early modern responses to Helen's *eidolon* choose either to ignore or to activate them. In his commentary on Helen, Stiblinus finds a moral in how humans are led on "by *idolis* of Helen", while Natale Conti in his *Mythologiae* reports that "some assert that [Paris] returned to his country with an *Idolum* of Helen, as Euripides thought" (6.23). Ronsard, who plays with the alternate Helen myth throughout his *Sonnets pour Hélène*, imagines himself in the position of Paris, "[e]mbrassant pour le vray l'idole du mensonge" ("[e]mbracing in reality the idol of my dream", I.LX). Likewise Spenser, as we shall see, uses "Idole" twice in the context of his own explorations of Helen and her *eidolon* in *The Faerie Queene*.

For the occurrences of εἴδωλον in *Helen* itself (34, 582, 683), translators tend to opt for *simulacrum* or *imago*. The connotations which come with these words are summed up by Thomas Thomas in his 1587 dictionary, who defines *simulacrum* as "An image of a

man or womn [sic], the proportion of any thing, the shadow, figure, likenes, semblance, counterfait, picture, or paterne of a thing", and *imago* even more extensively as "An image: a similitude, an appearance, a representation of a thing: a liknes, a couterfaite, a vision, an idle toy, a fansie, an imagination: a paterne, an example, the proportion, the resemblance, the figure: a pretence, colour, or cloke: a cogitation conceived in the minde". From Thomas' definition a strong connection emerges to the visual arts, and indeed *simulacrum* was the word used by Cicero to refer to Zeuxis' painting of Helen in *De inventione* (2.1-3). It is also the term favoured by Stiblinus in his commentary on *Helen*, and by Neander. Erasmus, in *Ciceronianus*, writes that Paris "fought a war for ten years for the Helen he had carried off and all the time was embracing a false image of Helen [*mendax Helenae simulacrum*], because the real Helen had of course been carried off to Egypt by a stratagem of the gods". George Buchanan, in *De iure regni apud Scotos*, relates that "after the real Helen had been left in Egypt with Proteus", the Greeks and Trojans "struggled for ten years over her likeness [*simulacrum*]".

A third overlapping field of references becomes even more shadowy. Psellus used the ghost of Polydorus in Euripides' *Hecuba* as an example, and the *dramatis personae* in Greek editions of Euripides' complete works specify Πολυδώρου εἴδωλον, unanimously translated into Latin (including by Erasmus) as *umbra*, which Thomas poetically defines as "[a] shadow: also a colour, semblance, appearance, or likeness: the first drawght in painting or drawing, before any beauty or trimming come therto: the bare shadow of a thing drawn, darkenes". *Umbra* does not tend to be used directly in translations of *Helen*, though Stiblinus concludes that Euripides shows how due to human blindness disasters occur "merely because of an *umbra*". It shades into similar terms, however. In his commentary on the *Aeneid* (often printed in the sixteenth century), Servius refers to the *phantasma in similitudinem Helenae Paridi datum* ("*phantasma* in the likeness of Helen given to Paris", II.592 (see also I.651), and in his translation of the prologue to *Helen* de Baïf renders εἴδωλον as "fantôme". In *The Joy of the Just*, Gataker writes that those who think they can achieve joy without faith "deceive and delude themselves, embracing . . . a figment instead of Helen with Paris, a counterfeit shadow of mirth instead of true joy".

The language of shadowy *eidola* resonates strongly with Platonic philosophy, which will be an important element of Spenser's engagement with Helen's *eidolon.*

2. "So liuely and so like": Spenser's Poetic *Eidola*

In "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie", Spenser produced a couplet which functions neatly as a gloss on Psellus' central preoccupation in his essay on the *eidolon*: "For of the soule the bodie forme doth take: / For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make" (132-3).[13] The tidiness of the couplet, with its perfect rhyme, suggests a resolution of the paradoxical linguistic duality perceived by Psellus which gave his essay its particular shape. But Spenser's "forme" takes on the function of Psellus' "*eidolon*", mediating between "bodie" and "soule"; its placement in the first line associates it with the former, while in the second line it is bracketed with the latter by the punctuated caesura. Performing this manoeuvre produces a reduplicative effect: each of the two lines begins with the same word and ends with the same sound, with the key words "soule", "bodie", and "forme" each repeated in a slightly varied order. For Spenser, the "soule is forme", while the body *has* form. This doubleness of "forme" means that in the Garden of Adonis episode in *The Faerie Queene* Spenser can write that "formes are variable and decay" (3.6.38), enacting precisely the linguistic paradox observed by Psellus (since it appears incompatible with the statement that the "soule is forme").[14] The formulations of both Psellus and Spenser on this topic are indicative of the significance of the *eidolon* or "forme" within Platonic and Neo-Platonic discourse.[15] For Rosalie Colie, Spenser's exploration of the relationship between form and substance in the Garden of Adonis and the Mutabilitie Cantos of *The Faerie Queene* constitutes a "paradoxical reformation of the relation of being to becoming", which further manifests itself in his constant fascination with "veils, disguises, . . . the difference between

[13] Quoted from De Selincourt 1910.
[14] Quotations are from Hamilton 2007.
[15] On Spenser and Platonism, see the special issue of *Spenser Studies* dedicated to the subject (Boris et al. 2009).

appearance and reality, between substance and metaphysical being" (1966, 341, 349). Meanwhile, Angus Fletcher, also focusing on the Mutabilitie Cantos, argues that they "are modelled after" the paradoxical "rhetorical tradition of . . . the ironic defense of women" (2002, 8). I have been suggesting that the logical and rhetorical paradox (as represented by Colie's and Fletcher's readings of *The Faerie Queene* respectively) come together in Helen's *eidolon*, with which Spenser engages specifically in Book 3.

The myth of Troy, as we are reminded here, has a particular relevance to Spenser's narrative and to his iteration of a national mythology. In Merlin's prophecy we are informed that from Britomart "a famous Progenee / Shall spring, out of the auncient *Troian* blood" (3.3.22); later on she remembers that she has been told she is "lineally extract" from the Trojans, since "noble *Britons* sprong from *Troians* bold, / And *Troynouant* was built of old *Troyes* ashes cold" (3.9.38). Britomart's recollection of the prophecy comes in the context of Paridell's account of his lineage, in which he briefly recounts the story of "Sir *Paris*" and "Fayre *Helene*" (3.9.33-5). Paridell's tracing of his descent from Paris through his son Parius, who went to live on Paros, and had a son called Paridas (3.9.36-7), also figures his downward literary trajectory, from epic hero to "permanently reduced version of Paris", as David Mikics puts it, in his exploration of Spenser's quasi-polyptotonic wordplay here (1994, 108). Paridell describes Paris as the "[m]ost famous Worthy of the world" (3.9.34), an exaggeration coloured by Paridell's desire to emulate his ancestor in his own adulterous pursuit of a "second *Helene*, fayre Dame *Hellenore*" (3.10.13). Her name encodes her as this "second *Helene*" (Helen-o'er), while suggesting that she represents the negative tradition of "Helen-whore" ("of a wanton lady I do write", Spenser says at 9.1.6).[16] In this "shrunken, trivialized" (Maguire 2009, 175) retelling of the Trojan narrative, then, Spenser gives us an extreme version of the orthodox misogynistic interpretation of Helen.

Prior to this, however, Spenser's introduction of the true and false Florimells also engaged Euripides' counter-orthodox version. Florimell links herself to Helen through her projection of a second

[16] See Maguire 2009, 176.

Trojan War in her defence:

> How soone would yee assemble many a fleete,
> To fetch from sea, that ye at land lost late;
> Towres, citties, kingdoms ye would ruinate,
> In your auengement and dispiteous rage. (3.8.28)

In Euripides' *Helen*, Proteus the king of Egypt was Helen's protector, while after his death his son threatens her chastity: "Spenser's Proteus combines the behaviour of father and son" (Hamilton 1992). Thomas Roche has argued that "by juxtaposing his versions of the alternate and Homeric Helen myths Spenser is presenting a Neoplatonic explanation of the Troy story and . . . his two Florimells are really the philosophic prototypes of the conflicting Helen myths – true and false beauty" (1964, 162). What is more, as David Quint points out, "the false Florimell [is] herself a second version in the poem of the demonic *eidolon* that Archimago manufactures in the false Una at its beginning" (2000, 37). If, as has been suggested, Book 1 was at least revised or completed if not completely written after Books 3 and 4 already existed in some version, we might see the Helen-*eidolon* originating in Book 3 and spreading its implications throughout the whole text.[17] The episode with Archimago, who is both "archi-mago" and "arch-imago", and the false Una established "both Spenser's textual exploration of the kinds of duplicity that inhabit all metaphoric imitation, and his attempt to limit that duplicity to the text itself", as A. Leigh DeNeef puts it (1982, 95). The false Una and the false Florimell, both created using "Sprights", are each described with the identical phrase as "So liuely and so like" (1.1.45; 3.8.5) their originals. Spenser refers to the false Florimell as an "Idole" specifically (at 3.8.11 and 4.5.15); for him, the Christian and particularly Protestant inflections of idolatry are active here.

If according to our first paradox of mimesis art is at once superior and inferior to nature, within a Christian context this causes problems for the artist, whose acts of creation hover dangerously between appropriate homage to an originating deity and usurpation of this power. As created work of art, the *eidolon* focuses this ambivalence.

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[17] See Bennett 1942. As Quint observes, Archimago "seems to have read the rest of the poem in advance" (2000, 32).

Of the Witch's creation of the false Florimell, we are told that "euen Nature selfe enuide the same, / And grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame / The thing it selfe" (3.8.5). The possibility that the counterfeit might shame the thing itself becomes entangled with the specific parameters of poetic language, Spenser's own artistic medium, as the process of creating a woman uncovers the problems of describing a woman. The false Florimell is literally constructed out of the stock images of the Petrarchan tradition of love poetry: her body is made "of purest snow" (6), her eyes are "two burning lampes", her hair is of "golden wyre" (7). The problem becomes clear when we remember how the "real" Florimell was first described at the beginning of Book 3: her "face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone, / And eke through feare as white as whales bone: / Her garments were wrought of beaten gold" (3.1.15), while "her faire yellow locks behind her flew . . . All as a blazing starre" (16). The false Florimell is a materialisation of the figurative language used to describe female beauty, which designedly undercuts that language itself. And it uncovers a problem, even a paradox, reversing the usual relationship of "seeming" to "being" (in which the latter is superior): the 'real' Florimell can only be 'like' these things, but the false Florimell actually *is* them. The text attempts to assure us that "golden wire was not so yellow thrice / As Florimell's fair hair" (3.8.7) – nature *is* superior to artifice, being is better than seeming, and it is possible to tell the difference if you look closely. But this distinction collapses again immediately, since "who so then her saw, would surely say, / It was her selfe, whom it did imitate, / Or fayrer than her selfe, if ought algate / Might fayrer be" (3.8.9). The confusion of pronouns between "her" and "her selfe" is symptomatic, while the possibility that the false Florimell might be fairer, that the counterfeit might shame the thing itself, is maintained in the conditional.

Spenser engages playfully with the semantic field of the *eidolon* in both Book 3 and Book 1. Once created and given to the Witch's son, the false Florimell proves "[e]nough to hold a foole in vaine delight: / Him long she so with shadowes entertain'd" (3.8.10). In the next stanza, he goes walking "with that his Idole faire, / Her to disport, and idle time to pas" (3.8.11). This idol/idle pun can be read back into the "ydle dreame" of Una (1.1.46) which Archimago sends

a Spright to fetch in order to afflict the Redcrosse Knight (we might remember too that if Paridell is "Paris-idle" then he might also be "Paris-idol"). While one Spright fetches the dream, his twin is used by Archimago to create "a Lady . . . fram'd of liquid ayre" (1.1.45), very much in the language of the εἴδωλον ἔμπνουν οὐρανοῦ ξυνθεῖσ᾽ ἄπο (33-4). Archimago is referred to as a "maker" in relation to this act of creation; the Greek word for 'maker' is *poietes*, from which we get our term 'poet', and in early modern English a poet might often be referred to as a 'maker'. [18]

In Spenser, the theological imperative that an *eidolon* must be a false idol coexists with a neo-Platonic interest in "forme", and an investigation into the paradox of mimetic representation. While Spenser is primarily concerned with his own medium of poetic creation, the creation of the false Florimell prompts a striking evocation of dramatic performance, and the specific conditions of the Elizabethan stage. To bring the *eidolon* to life, the Witch chooses "A wicked Spright yfraught with fawning guile, / And fayre resemblance aboue all the rest" (3.8), whom she costumes as Florimell ("Him shaped thus, she deckt in garments gay, / Which *Florimell* had left behind", 3.9). This male Spright is presented as a boy actor expert in taking on women's roles:

> Him needed not instruct, which way were best
> Him selfe to fashion likest *Florimell*,
> Ne how to speake, ne how to vse his gest;
> For he in counterfesaunce did excell,
> And all the wyles of wemens wits knew passing well. (3.8)[19]

Here the *eidolon* becomes not merely a work of art, but the work of art in its specifically embodied form, taking us from *eidolon* as art to actor as *eidolon*. We might imagine just such a talented boy actor taking on the role of the *eidolon*-Helen in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*,

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[18] Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy* writes that "The Greeks called him 'poet', which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages. It cometh of this word, *poiein*, which is 'to make', wherein, I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen have met with the Greeks in calling him a 'maker'" (Alexander 2004, 46-7).

[19] See Roberts 1997, 74.

a play which engages directly with several moments in Book 3 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

3. 'Heavenly Helen': Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

If Archimago was figured as a devilish poet, Mephistopheles in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is a dramatist, who stages theatrical entertainments to distract Faustus from the possibility of salvation. At the point of signing away his soul, Faustus appears to see a warning inscribed on his arm ("*Homo, fuge!*", A 2.1.76, 80).[20] To cement him in his purpose, Mephistopheles brings on a masque of devils "to delight his mind" (81). When Faustus asks, "Speak, Mephistopheles; what means this show?" he replies: "Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal / And to show thee what magic can perform" (82-4). On the one hand, as is often noted, Faustus has sold his soul for a mere "show", signifying "nothing". But at the same time, by revealing that Mephistopheles' art *is* the dramatist's art, Marlowe does indeed show us what the magic of theatre can perform for our delight. If magic is merely theatre, then theatre is, really, magic. As Andrew Sofer argues, "*Faustus* traffics in performative magic not in the service of skepticism, as some critics have argued, but to appropriate speech's performative power on behalf of a glamorous commercial enterprise, the Elizabethan theatre itself" (2009, 2). *Faustus* is a play that is interested in performance, in both the modern and early modern senses, and in what Platt identifies as the "paradoxical nature of theatre itself", the way that "something on the stage always provides a 'natural perspective that is and is not'" (2009, 4).[21] This inherently paradoxical nature of theatrical performance was "all the more pronounced" due to the performance conditions of the early modern English public stage, "when the acting took the form of boys playing women" (Platt 2009, 164) – a somatic fact which *Faustus* suggestively registers at a key

[20] I quote from Kastan 2005, which provides the A and B-texts separately. I give references to both only where the texts differ substantially.

[21] See Crane 2001 on the early modern uses of the word "perform", which "had the primary meaning 'to carry through to completion; to complete, finish, perfect'" (172).

moment in relation to its staging of a "heavenly Helen" (A 5.1.84).

Dustin Dixon and John Garrison have recently used Euripides' *Helen* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* to explore "Helen and her *eidolon* as embodiments of the artificial doubling and duplicitousness that theatrical mimesis requires" (2021, 52). They identify Lucian as the "bridge between Euripides' erroneously slandered heroine and Marlowe's devilishly beautiful Helen", since Marlowe's most famous lines – "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" (A 5.1.90-91) – have long been connected to Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*.[22] Lucian's character Menippus, faced with Helen's skull, asks: "Was it then for this that the thousand ships were manned from all Greece, for this that so many Greeks and barbarians fell, and so many cities were devastated?".[23] The Lucianic source perhaps invites us to see the skull beneath the skin of Marlowe's Helen, shifting our perspective somewhat in the manner of an anamorphic painting like Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, in which a change in the position of the viewer suddenly reveals a grinning skull.[24] But Faustus is not holding a skull, like Menippus or Hamlet; instead, Marlowe presents us with a living, breathing representation of Helen. In doing so, he engages with the wider discourse in which Helen and her *eidolon* form a locus of overlapping paradoxes. In fact, the very same lines which draw on Lucian also contain an echo of Book 3 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, in which Paridell tells of the "stately towres of *Ilion*" (3.9.34).

Patrick Cheney has argued that it is precisely this book, and specifically the Helen material, "that Marlowe had his eye on when composing *Doctor Faustus*" (1997, 212). Cheney offers several parallels. Marlowe's Third Scholar speaks of Helen "[w]hose

[22] Dixon and Garrison 2021, 65; attention was first drawn to the Lucian parallel by Tupper 1906.

[23] Εἶτα διὰ τοῦτο αἱ χίλιαι νῆες ἐπληρώθησαν ἐξ ἁπάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ τοσοῦτοι ἔπεσον Ἕλληνές τε καὶ βάρβαροι καὶ τοσαῦται πόλεις ἀνάστατοι γεγόνασιν; (5.2). Text and translation from MacLeod 1961. As Dixon and Garrison point out, Marlowe could also have used Erasmus' Latin translation (2021, 65).

[24] Platt, drawing on Baltrusaitis, *Anamorphic Art*, sees anamorphic paintings as "visual paradoxes", which "dismantle truth in order to provide a different perspective" (2009, 27).

heavenly beauty passeth all compare" (A 5.1.29); Spenser has "whose soveraine beautie hath no living pere" (*FQ* 3.1.26). Cheney notes that *Faustus* 1.3.1-4 (". . . And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath") contains an imitation of *FQ* 3.10.46 (". . . Did dim the brightness of the welkin round"), and that this comes specifically "from the episode of Hellenore among the satyrs" (1997, 209). Where Faustus means to "wall all Germany with brass" (A 1.1.88), at *FQ* 3.3.10 Merlin "did intend / A brasen wall in compas to compyle / About *Cairmardin*". Finally, Cheney draws attention to "Faustus' claim that he has made blind Homer sing to him about Paris and Oenone, since Homer sang no such song"; in *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser mentions that Paris "[o]n faire Oenone got a lovely boy" (3.9.36) (1997, 212).[25] Perhaps Marlowe was also struck by Spenser's theatrical description of the Spright as boy-actor at 3.8.8, but where Spenser's Spright is impersonating Florimell, Marlowe, like Euripides, stages Helen. In Faustus' response to his Helen-*eidolon* the body of the boy-actor hovers close to the surface:

> Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
> When he appeared to hapless Semele;
> More lovely than the monarch of the sky
> In wanton Arethusa's azured arms. (A 5.1.105-8)[26]

In suggesting that Helen's matchless beauty can best be described through comparison to the brightness and loveliness of masculine deity, these lines both queer Faustus' response to his Helen and gesture towards the male body performing her.[27] Like Cicero's

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[25] *2 Tamburlaine* is also interested in the idea of re-writing Homer: Tamburlaine imagines that if Zenocrate had "lived before the siege of Troy, / Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms / And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos, / Had not been named in Homer's Iliads, - / Her name had been in every line he wrote" (3.4.86-90).

[26] Marlowe alters the myth here, implying that Jupiter slept with Arethusa instead of the river-god Alpheus, who could hardly be called "the monarch of the sky".

[27] And within the fiction, perhaps the (male?) demon impersonating her. Faustus is echoing the turn of thought expressed by Mephistopheles earlier in the play: "She whom thine eye shall like, thine heart shall have, / Be she as chaste as was Penelope, / As wise as Saba, or as beautiful / As was bright

Zeuxis, early modern audiences were required to imagine female beauty by looking at male bodies. But, paradoxically, it might be precisely this gap between seeming and being which engages the action of the imagination, crucial to the functioning of mimesis. A boy actor may not simply be the only way of representing Helen available to Marlowe, but in fact the most effective.[28]

As Sofer puts it, "[d]oubleness of vision colors almost every aspect of *Doctor Faustus*" (2009, 10); texts, authors, structures and perspectives are all doubled. The play has supported interpretations of Marlowe's theology as both orthodox and heterodox; along with many critics, Faustus' pursuit of knowledge is motivated by a desire to "[r]esolve me of all ambiguities" (A 1.1.80), but this the play notably frustrates. In fact, Sofer reads Faustus' trajectory in the play as an attempt to be certain, once and for all, that he is damned: to resolve, in other words, the theological paradox of predestination.[29] As Martha Rozett explains, "[a]t the core of the play is the same central paradox which defines Elizabethan Puritanism: predestined election to salvation or damnation determines the spiritual state of each soul at birth, yet repentance is everywhere and at all times possible" (2004, 81). This produces a "consistent strain of inconsistency in *Faustus*: equivocations structured by theological-political disputes over the relationship between bodies and minds, matter and spirit" (Maus 1995, 90). In Platt's formulation, the "discourse of paradox" is one "in which opposites can coexist and perspectives can be altered" (2009, 1). The play fulfils this function through what Jonathan Dollimore terms the strategy of "the inscribing of a subversive discourse within an orthodox one, a

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Lucifer before his fall" (2.1.151-4). John D. Cox notes the "similarity" of these moments "to the undisguised homoeroticism of *Hero and Leander*" (2000, 113); Stephen Orgel notes the inversion here in that "the moral and intellectual ideals are female, but the ideal of beauty is male" (2002, 225).

[28] Dixon and Garrison draw attention to the tradition (as found in Lyly's *Euphues*) that Helen had a scar on her chin, which imperfection paradoxically enhanced her beauty; they conclude: "Within the calculus of Lyly's formulation, perhaps we can imagine how an actor who is clearly not Helen would be the most accurate" (2021, 59).

[29] "Stretched on the rack of uncertainty, Faustus seems determined to settle the question once and for all" (Sofer 2009, 20).

vindication of the letter of an orthodoxy while subverting its spirit"
(2004, 119).[30]

The play's doubleness of vision comes to a climax of sorts in
its representations of Helen in 5.1: as Maguire puts it, "everything
to do with Helen is doubled"; "she appears twice, between two
cupids [in the B-text], and is herself a double' (2009, 152). In this
scene, too, the "tension between orthodoxy and blasphemy which
runs through the whole play is at its strongest" (Snyder 1966, 575).
Though united in appreciation of the poetry of Faustus' great
speech in response to Helen, critical opinion has been divided
on its significance. Is this the moment when Faustus is, finally,
damned? Or does it offer, even fleetingly, some compensation for
what Faustus has lost, just as Homer's old men of Troy found in the
sight of Helen? Orgel argues that "there's no indication here that
the woman who appears this time, whatever she is, is an inadequate
reward for Faustus's pains" (2002, 228).[31] For Orgel, Helen represents
"the quintessential emanation of humanist passion": "a literary
allusion, the paragon from his classical education, Homer's ideal"
(ibid.).[32] Similarly, Alison Findlay finds that "[w]hile the audience
recognize that [Faustus] is deceiving himself, they are tempted
to share his belief that immersion in the classics will allow him
to transcend the Christian heaven and hell. Helen represents
the climax of this alternative existence" (1999, 23). Marlowe's
principal source, *The English Faust Book*, unambiguously stresses
the orthodox misogynistic presentation of Helen who "looked
roundabout her with a rolling hawk's eye, a smiling and wanton
countenance", causing sleeplessness in the students who have seen
her, from which the narrative voice draws this moral: "Wherefore
a man may see that the devil blindeth and inflameth the heart with

[30] Alan Sinfield argues that "[t]he theological implications of *Faustus* are
radically and provocatively indeterminate" (1992, 234).

[31] Dixon and Harrison consider that Faustus' question might express "dis-
belief", or (like Lucian's Menippus) even "a kind of disappointment when he
beholds the legendary beauty" (2021, 58).

[32] Ornstein agrees that Helen is an "incarnation of poetic aspirations",
but disagrees on the value of this: "For a despairing Faustus . . . the beauty of
Helen is no anodyne. There is no depth or intensity of experience that com-
pensates for mortality" (1968, 1381).

lust oftentimes, that men fall in love with harlots, nay even with furies, which afterward cannot lightly be removed" (Jones 1994, 163). *Faustus* certainly offers us this possibility, making "her use as a figure of final temptation and damnation" unsurprising (Findlay 1999, 15); but in its difference from the *Faust Book* it opens up space for alternative counter-orthodox readings, as Findlay's work has powerfully demonstrated.

Two sections from *The English Faust Book* provide material for the two apparitions of Helen in 5.1.[33] In chapter 45, the students ask to see "Helena of Greece", and Faustus obliges; Marlowe's scholars likewise ask for "Helen . . . that peerless Dame of Greece" (5.1.11-14), and at Faustus' command "*Music sounds, and* HELEN *passeth over the stage*" (24 SD). Ten chapters later (chapter 55), the *Faust Book* briefly describes "How Doctor Faustus made the spirit of fair Helena of Greece his own paramour and bedfellow". The changes that the Helen episodes undergo from source to play necessarily relate to the shift from prose narrative to embodied drama. Where chapter 45 of the *Faust Book* describes Helen's physical attributes in some detail, this description is essentially replaced in the play by the audience's experience of watching her pass over the stage; indeed, Marlowe chooses instead to emphasise here the inadequacy of language to draw a portrait of Helen ("Too simple is my wit to tell her praise", says one of the scholars). As Sara Munson Deats has recognised, Marlowe's shaping of his material assigns a significance to the figure of Helen which is lacking in the source material; "In the source . . . Helen does not appear at a time of spiritual crisis nor is she an agent of Faustus' damnation. She occupies a subordinate position as one of the long procession of Faustus' amours" (1976, 13). As Deats notes, Marlowe's crafting of the source material so that Helen's two appearances directly frame the Old Man's speech exhorting Faustus to repent elevates her to a key symbolic position.

Doctor Faustus stages a 'Helen' whose ontological status is radically indeterminate. The literal answer to Faustus' question ("Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?") is, from one perspective, no: this is a boy actor in a Helen costume. Even within the fictional bounds of the play, the nature of the 'Helen' we see

[33] On Helen in *The English Faust Book*, see further Maguire 2009, 148-51.

before us is called into question by two prior episodes. Earlier in the play, when Faustus asked for a wife, the stage directions indicate that Mephistopheles brings him "*a Devil dressed like a woman*" (A 2.1.143 SD), or a "*Woman Devil*" (B-text).[34] David Bevington interprets this as a manifestation of the "utilitarian" nature of the B-text, as opposed to the "literary and metaphorical" A-text: "the surmise that it is in fact a Devil dressed like a woman is safe enough, but it is an interpretative statement. What the company must provide here is an actor dressed like a woman Devil, not a Devil dressed like a woman" (2002, 49). While this may or may not be the case (it is quite easy to imagine how a company might provide an obviously male devil in a dress), the paradox that it points to is one which *Faustus* plays with – what *is* the difference between a woman devil and a devil dressed like a woman, especially when the theatrical body producing both is male? For Orgel, when Mephistopheles "produces . . . a devil dressed as a woman furnished with fireworks", this is "at once an allegory of lust and of theater" since "the only beautiful women this stage provides are sparkling female impersonators" (2002, 225). If Faustus rejects this one "for a hot whore", he literally embraces the 'Helen' of Act 5; Dixon and Garrison read this "as the experience of a playgoer encountering an actor", like the real-life audience "choosing to be moved by a performed spectacle" (2021, 62).

A similar moment occurs when the Emperor asks to see Alexander the Great and his "paramour" in Act 4. Faustus is at pains to explain that "it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust"; instead, "such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear" (A 4.1.45-8; 51-2).[35] The Emperor is warned not to try to interact with the spirit

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[34] This is quite different from the *Faust Book*, in which Mephistopheles simply uses violence to dissuade Faustus from thoughts of marriage (which is holy).

[35] Both the Emperor's request and Faustus' caveat come from the *Faust Book* ("their dead bodies are not able substantially to be brought before you, but such spirits as have seen Alexander and his paramour alive shall appear unto you in manner and form as they both lived in their most flourishing time", Jones 1994, 148).

actors – to observe, essentially, the usual conventions of theatrical spectatorship. Nonetheless, he is enthralled by the quality of the performance: in the A-text, he exclaims, "Sure, these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes" (69-70). Again, it is drawn to our attention that the actors' own true substantial bodies can either (or both) reinforce the fiction of the realism of the illusion created by the spirits, or break it by reminding us that no spirits are actually involved at all (this is not magic, but theatre). In the B-text, the stage directions indicate that "*the* EMPEROR . . . *leaving his state, offers to embrace them, which* FAUSTUS *seeing, suddenly stays him*"; "My gracious lord, you do forget yourself", Faustus warns, "These are but shadows, not substantial" (100-1).

In his later encounter with Helen, Faustus forgets his own advice, stepping through the fourth wall to embrace the actor and write himself into the fictional world of the performance. The stage directions in both texts simply specify "*Enter* HELEN", making it impossible to distinguish the *eidolon* from reality, the boy actor from the part he plays. In fact, the B-text has "*Enter Hellen*", its preferred spelling orthographically underlining for its early modern readers the oxymoronic pun encoded in the request Faustus makes to Mephistopheles for "heauenly Hellen" (sig.G.iv.*r*). The A-text, conversely, uses the spelling of "Helen" more familiar to us, but shortly before her entrance has Faustus refer to "our hel" (sig.E.iv.*v*), maintaining the visual connection. Marlowe effectively transposes into an appropriately Christian register the Greek pun linking Helen's name to the root of the verb meaning "to destroy".[36] In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the Chorus comment that Helen was appropriately named, since she is "ἑλένας, ἕλανδρος, ἑλέπτολις" (689-90), literally "ship-destroyer, man-destroyer, city-destroyer"; Anne Carson's translation uses the same trick as Marlowe, calling her "hell to ships, hell to men, hell to cities" (2009, 34). At the same time, Marlowe's "heavenly Helen" toys again with the idea of substantiality. Euripides' *eidolon*-Helen was made from the οὐρανός

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[36] Marlowe was not the only one to do this. Maguire 2009, 77: "In Peele's *Edward I* Mortimer plays on the name of his beloved: 'Hell in thy name, but heaven is in thy looks'".

("sky" or "heavens", 34), and Faustus praises his own version of her as "fairer than the evening air / Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars" (A 5.1.103-4). For Maguire, what is at stake for Marlowe is "the duplicity of language": "Marlowe exploits the *eidōlon* tradition and does so in a way that emphasizes Helen's role as an emblem for the sign system in which you do not get what you seek but a substitute for it" (2009, 152). If the *eidolon* paradox is partly a linguistic phenomenon, it also embodies that phenomenon. The discourse of the *eidolon* facilitates the paradoxical double-vision in which the substantial bodies of actors can simultaneously function as shadows, instigating a mode of meta-dramatic reflection which appears to have particularly fascinated Shakespeare.

4. "The Name and Not the Thing": Shakespeare's Helens

Troilus' declaration that Helen "is a pearl / Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships / And turned crowned kings to merchants" (*Troilus and Cressida*, 2.2.81-2) gives a typically mercantile twist to Faustus' lines: this play, obsessed with the language of economic exchange, substitutes Helen's "price" for her "face".[37] In a world where market value is determined by what the customer is willing to pay, "Helen must needs be fair", as Troilus says, "When with your blood you daily paint her thus" (1.1.86-7).[38] In an inversion of the Homeric elders finding compensation for the losses of war in Helen's beauty, here the losses of war *determine* Helen's beauty. The characters in Shakespeare's bitter retelling of this Trojan War episode are simultaneously unable to escape from the mythical weight of their own names, and unable to live up to them; Helen, symptomatically, is reduced in her only scene to "my Nell" (3.1.131). No *eidolon* here exists in order to shift the blame from this Helen, whom Diomedes openly calls a "whore" (4.1.68). Within the logic of the play, one woman is much like another, and Cressida

[37] Quotations are from Bevington 1998. The description of Helen as a "pearl" seems to have been fairly common; in the *Faust Book* she is described as "that famous pearl of Greece"; similarly in *Euphues* she is "the pearl of Greece" (Salzman 1998, 144).

[38] Hector's opinion that Helen "is not worth what she doth cost / The holding" (2.2.49-50) is still expressed in the same language of exchange.

122 of 56

is set up as a second Helen: also described as a "pearl" (1.1.96), her beauty is repeatedly compared to Helen's.[39] As Bevington puts it, "Troilus' love for Cressida . . . ends in a murderous rivalry between two men for whom the woman serves solely as the contested object of possession"; "Cressida acts out Helen's role in this encounter, as she is expected to do".[40] In performance, the element of doubling between them can be further emphasised: "In the RSC production of 1968, the women were visually indistinguishable" (Maguire 2009, 93).

Also displaced onto Cressida is the existential crisis precipitated by the *eidolon*. She experiences this split herself, telling Troilus, "I have a kind of self resides with you, / But an unkind self that itself will leave / To be another's fool" (3.2.143-4). George Peele's "Tale of Troy" depicts a similar split in Helen:

> And for her hart was from her body hent,
> To Troy this *Helen* with her Louer went
> Thinking perdie a part contrary kinde
> Her hart so wrought, her selfe to stay behind. (1589, sig.B.ii.*v.*)

Dixon and Garrison comment: "The desiring heart is seized upon, or 'hent,' in the moment and leaves the hesitant body behind, thus creating a double of the self" (2021, 64). The sense of anxious self-alienation in the face of the simultaneous longing for union with and fear of being subsumed by the desired other, which Cressida expresses, is mirrored in the classic misogynistic bifurcation (as Bevington puts it) of "women into idealized mother figures and those who are sexual objects", culminating in Troilus' paradoxical perception that "This is and is not Cressid" (153) (1998, 47).

Troilus and Cressida is the only play in which Shakespeare puts Helen of Troy onstage. But two other plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *All's Well That Ends Well*, feature characters named Helena; these have been read in the light of the mythological

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[39] E.g. Pandarus: "Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair as Helen; and she were not kin to me, she would be as fair o' Friday as Helen is on Sunday" (1.1.71-3).

[40] Maguire 2009 further points out that Helen and Cressida were widely associated in the early modern imagination as wanton women (92).

resonances of Helen of Troy by Laurie Maguire (2007) and Katherine Heavey (2014). The names Helen and Helena were used interchangeably, so Faustus can declare that "all is dross which is not Helena" (A 5.1.96), while the characters in *MND* and *All's Well* can both be addressed as "Helen". As Maguire has shown, for early modern readers, "there was no other referent for Helen/a . . . Helen meant only one Helen – Helen of Troy" (2007, 75). Maguire argues that Shakespeare was engaged in a revisionist project to demonstrate that "someone named Helen can be sexual without being wanton, can be desiring and chaste" (107); this is, of course, precisely what Euripides does in his *Helen*, and Maguire considers that in the case of *All's Well* "the fact that Shakespeare wrote a drama very like Euripides' *Helen* can be seen not as coincidence but as influence" (109). Heavey, on the other hand, is interested in the comic potential of references to Helen of Troy, arguing that Shakespeare "make[s] sport of his female characters, by inviting his audience to view them as less accomplished successors to the classical Helen" (2014, 428). While these interpretations differ in nuance, they both suggest that Shakespeare's approach to Helen was in some important way paradoxical. I would like, then, to expand these discussions in light of the early modern discourse of the *eidolon* which I have been tracing, and specifically Helen's *eidolon* as a site of overlapping paradoxes which facilitates exploration of the nature of theatrical mimesis.

One significant revisionary effect of the *eidolon*-Helen was to problematise the epic tradition of the Trojan War, explicitly calling the glory of Troy into question. Stiblinus explains that "the play by means of the veiled symbol of the deceitful image, on account of which the two most powerful nations carried on most savagely a ten-year war, signifies that often among stupid and blind mortals it comes about that merely because of a shadow huge disturbances arise, resulting in general slaughter".[41] Euripides' Messenger asks:

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[41] "Praeterea involucro praestigiosi simulacri, propter quod duae potentissimae gentes decennium crudelissime bellum gesserunt, notat saepe fieri apud stultos ac caecos mortales ut propter umbram tantum ingentes motus non sine publicis cladibus exoriantur". Text and translation (by Meghan Bowers) from 'Stiblinus' Prefaces and Arguments on Euripides (1562)'.

"So we suffered in vain for the sake of a cloud?" (νεφέλης ἄρ᾽ ἄλλως εἴχομεν πόνους πέρι; 707), and having heard the story declares that "the city was sacked in vain" (πόλις ἀνηρπάσθη μάτην; 751). Segal notes that "[e]nding with battle and war enables Euripides to keep a certain bitterness of mood" (1986, 263). In her final speech, Helen and the (now departed) *eidolon* seem to merge. She cries: "Where is the glory of Troy?" (Ποῦ τὸ Τρῳκὸν κλέος; 1603), demanding to be fought over in a miniature replay of the Trojan War. Using a trick, the armed Greeks slaughter their unarmed enemies – Helen's question has the effect of radically calling into question the value of victory purchased in such terms, whether in Egypt or at Troy. We might recall Achilles' slaughter of the similarly unarmed Hector in *Troilus and Cressida*. The wars in *All's Well* are likewise overwhelmingly arbitrary – the King cares nothing for the outcome and tells his subjects that "freely they have leave / To stand on either part" (1.2.14-15). Scene 3.1 fleetingly "raise[s] moral/political issues" concerning the wars; as Susan Snyder observes, "to bring up and then suppress the causes of the hostilities creates a different effect from just omitting them" (Snyder 1993, 15). The contrast between the heroic pomp and splendour of the military parades and the reality, which is characterised by confusion and unheroic accidents (3.6.48-53), is emphasised.

In *All's Well*, the epic tradition of Troy is alluded to, notably refracted through the dramatic works of Marlowe and Shakespeare himself. Lafeu declares, "I'm Cressid's uncle, / That dare leave two together" (2.1.97-8), while the clown Lavatch spouts a parody-version of Marlowe's lines, which Shakespeare had already used in *Troilus and Cressida*: "'Was this fair face the cause', quoth she, / 'Why the Grecians sacked Troy?'", he sings (1.3.69-70). From this perspective *All's Well* "is an inverse *Helen* play"; this "Helen is shunned, not sought. Bertram goes to war to avoid her, not for love of her" (Maguire 2007, 108). The play's characteristic mode is that of paradox, which originates with Helen, whose very first lines express her experience of herself such terms: "I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too" (1.1.52). At the beginning of *Helen*, too, the heroine has recently lost a father-figure, and is grieving over her apparently hopeless fidelity, in this case to her husband. Both Helens are urged to moderate their grief in conventional terms:

"Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living", Lafeu replies (1.1.53-4); σύμφορον δέ τοι / ὡς ῥᾷστα τἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου φέρειν, the Chorus tell Helen at 253-4, in a passage excerpted by Neander who translates it as "sed commodum tibi, / Quàm facilimè [sic] necessitates uitae ferre" ("but it is expedient for you to bear as easily as possible the necessities of life", my translation).

The first lines spoken by the Helen of *All's Well* might be termed a veridical paradox, since they are paradoxical in expression, but contain no actual logical paradox when correctly understood. In fact, we might say that the veridical paradox (of which the riddle forms an important subcategory) constitutes the play's fundamental mode of operation, in terms of the construction, expression, and resolution of the plot. In Act 1 Scene 3, Helen tries to reconcile the two apparently irreconcilable statements that the Countess is her mother, but the Countess's son is not her brother: "Can't no other / But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?" (1.3.162-3). This is solved, somewhat too easily, by the Countess: "Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law" (164). This too-easy solution leads to Bertram's apparently unsolvable list of requirements:

> *When thou canst get the ring upon my finger,*
> *which never shall come off, and show me a child*
> *begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me*
> *husband. But in such a 'then', I write a 'never'.* (3.2.60-3)

This in turn leads to the paradoxical riddles of the final scene, from Paroles' "He loved her, sir, and loved her not" ("As thou art a knave and no knave", the King replies, 5.3.247-8), to Diana's "Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty" (287), and to her final riddle, in which "one that's dead is quick" (301).

Euripides' *Helen* is also quite fond of formulations which express apparent paradoxes through linguistic doubling and negation. The statement that Helen both left and did not leave her husband's bed (ἔλιπον οὐ λιποῦσ', 696) is of course resolved through the device of the *eidolon*, just as in *All's Well* the riddles of the final scene are resolved through the revelation of the bed-trick through which Helen and Diana had functioned as doubles. But although the "meaning" (302)

is thus revealed, the paradoxical mode of experience established by the plays cannot be so easily resolved. In the final scene of *All's Well*, the King (surprised to see Helen, who was supposed dead) recapitulates Faustus' question when faced with his own Helen: "Is there no exorcist / Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes? / Is't real that I see?" (5.3.302-4), he asks. Shakespeare goes one further than Marlowe, and has his Helen reply: "No, my good lord; / 'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see / The name and not the thing" (304-6).[42] The issue at stake here is the same as in Euripides' scene between Helen and Menelaus, in which the latter, like Shakespeare's King, doubts the functioning of his eyes (τὸ δ' ὄμμα μου νοσεῖ; he asks – "are my eyes sick?", 575). Helen demands: "Look: what more do you need? . . . Who then shall teach you, if not your own eyes?" (σκέψαι τί σοὐνδεῖ; . . . τίς οὖν διδάξει σ' ἄλλος ἢ τὰ σ' ὄμματα; 578, 580). But in the context of the *eidolon* the appearance of her body (σῶμα, 577) – or the actor's – simply cannot provide indisputable evidence of identity. Similarly Bertram demands physical proof that he is the father of the child Helen claims to be carrying, which the body of Shakespeare's Helen and her male actor can never satisfy: "If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly, / I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly" (5.3.313-14). As in *Faustus*, this is a moment which plays with metatheatre ("Is't real that I see?"), and with the body of the boy actor beneath the Helen-costume. The language used by Helen, moreover, brings us back to the semantic field associated with the *eidolon*, particularly when she calls herself a "shadow".

Shakespeare apparently enjoyed the joke that Helen's namesake should repel suitors rather than attract them, since he had already used it in the earlier *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which Maguire has called "Shakespeare's most classically complex Helen play" (2007, 78). Here, it is Hermia who has two suitors competing over her, while Helena fruitlessly pursues Demetrius; Peter Holland connects this to Ovid's question in the *Ars Amatoria* 2.699: "scilicet Hermionen Helenae praeponere posses" ("Would you be able to prefer

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[42] Given the questions of collaboration and authorship surrounding *All's Well* (on which see Maguire and Smith 2012 and Taylor and Egan 2017, especially Loughnane, Nance, and Taylor), I use "Shakespeare" as a convenient placeholder.

Hermione to Helena?", Holland 1994, 61). Alison Shell, however, has suggested that Shakespeare might have arrived at the name "Hermia" via Spenser's *Shepheard's Calendar*, in which a helpful note by "E.K." mentions "Himera, the worthy poet Stesichorus his idol, upon whom he is said so much to have doted that, in regard of her excellency, he scorned and wrote against the beauty of Helena. For which his presumptuous and unheedy hardiness he is said by vengeance of the gods (threat being offended) to have lost both his eyes" (Shell, 2015, 83).[43] Though E.K. omits any direct mention of the *eidolon*, his use of the word "idol" here constitutes a knowing wink in that direction, and in any case, as Shell observes, the story was fairly well-known in the period. Shell argues that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare made "sharp, specific use of Stesichorus's story and the commentary it generated" (85). In particular, she connects Demetrius' palinodic recantation by the end of the play to that of Stesichorus, and examines the theological implications of the *eidolon* in the context of the Reformation. Whether or not the *eidolon's* relation to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is precisely Stesichorean (via Spenser), it resonates with the features of the more general early modern reception of Helen's *eidolon* which I have been tracing here. The *eidolon*'s submerged presence notably "complicates the relationship between being and seeming" (95).

As Shell's analysis indicates, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is concerned with being and seeming, knowledge and doubt, and the value of perceptual evidence for interpreting external reality. When the confusions of the forest have been resolved, Hermia's experience is much like Menelaus' double world provoked by the sight of Helen: "Methinks I see these things with parted eye, / Where everything seems double" (4.1.186-7). Helena agrees with a similar note of wonder and doubt: "So methinks; / And I have found Demetrius, like a jewel, / Mine own, and not mine own" (4.1.188-9). She uses the same syntactical formulation as the Helena of *All's Well*

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[43] The identification of "Himera" as Stesichorus' mistress rather than birthplace is a characteristic "error" on the part of E.K., as Shell details, possibly also coloured by the story of the "Hermia" believed by Renaissance commentators to have been a prostitute beloved by Aristotle (Shell 2015, 83).

to express the paradoxical nature of her experience: "The name, and not the thing", "Mine own, and not mine own". The mythological Helen is mentioned explicitly by Theseus in Act 5:

> . . . The lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name. (5.1.10-17)

The lover's delusion articulated by Theseus is of course a manifestation of the "racialized language" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hall 1995, 2);[44] it is also rather like the delusion that Menelaus suspects he may be suffering from, when he sees Helen in Egypt, where he knows she should not be. This speech may, as Percy Smith notes, be the first time that Shakespeare comments on the art of theatre in a play. Here we find the familiar semantic field of the *eidolon* – embodiment, forms, shapes, composed (by the poet) from airy nothing. Theseus goes on to make the association between actors and shadows: "The best in this kind are but shadows", he says, "and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them" (5.1.210). The connection is reiterated in the epilogue ("If we shadows have offended . . . "), a liminal part of the play in which the actor steps forward and addresses the audience, speaking both on behalf of the company and in character: even more than usual, this is and is not Puck.

The familiarity of these lines perhaps tends to smooth over some of their strangeness. Amy Cook writes:

> Associating actors with shadows is one of the "loose or extended use" definitions listed in the OED, which can be "Applied rhetorically to a portrait as contrasted with the original; also an actor or a play in contrast with the reality represented," and it does not warrant a footnote for the editors of the Riverside or the Folger, so one

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[44] On this discourse in relation to Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, see Hall 1995, 1; 22-4.

supposes it makes sense. But *how* does it make sense? (2016, 99)

She points out that "[i]n performance, the actor playing Puck is not a shadow; he is no less real or physically in front of us than the person standing next to us in the yard of the Globe" (100). The OED actually cites *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as being the first instance of the word "shadow" being used in this way in English; whether or not this is the case, Shakespeare is thinking with it here in a new way within his own works. If we understand his use of the word "shadow" here as connected to the idea of the *eidolon* (which might be an *umbra* or *phantasma*), substance and insubstantiality can paradoxically coexist. Shakespeare's Helens, as Maguire has shown, always exist in uneasy relation to their mythological namesake. The doubling this produces generates a particular kind of ontological uncertainty which we might associate with the *eidolon*, and which lends itself to reflections upon the nature of the embodied form of mimetic representation of the early modern stage.

5. Epilogue: "Helen's cheek but not her heart"

The flexibility of the *eidolon* allows it to stand in for the constructed artwork of any kind – poetic, dramatic, or visual – as well as for the false idol or philosophical form. Euripides' Helen-*eidolon* draws attention to the fact that the 'real' Helen on stage is also an *eidolon*, and raises epistemological questions which are only resolved to the extent that we accept the conventions of the romance plot. Greek tragedy is not prone to the kind of explicit metatheatrical self-reflection that we find in Shakespeare, for instance, but it can enlist other art forms to reflect upon its own processes. In *Helen*, we find what Edith Hall calls (arguably) the moment in Greek tragedy at which "the material presence of the actor's mask is with most force brought to the audience's conscious attention" (2010, 54). Helen wishes that she "had been wiped clean like a statue and made ugly instead of beautiful" (εἴθ' ἐξαλειφθεῖσ', ὡς ἄγαλμ' αὖθις πάλιν, / αἴσχιον εἶδος, ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ λάβω, 262-3).[45] As Hall comments,

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[45] I give the Aldine text here; Teubner reads ᾽λαβον, but the textual variation does not alter the sense.

since "'Helen' herself is but a male actor wearing a sculpted mask painted with beautiful colours", in "drawing attention to this false 'face' the actor draws attention to one of the illusory conventions of the theatrical performance in which he is participating" (281).

In Spenser, as we have seen, the *eidolon* is used as a figure for poetic creation, but it becomes easily contaminated with the language of the stage, with the male Spright impersonating a female character much as Marlowe's "spirit"/boy actor impersonates Helen. Interestingly, *Doctor Faustus* seems to be concerned solely with the *eidolon* in the context of embodied drama, to the deliberate exclusion of other art forms: in *The English Faust Book*, the students ask for and are granted a "counterfeit" image of the Helen they have seen, in the form of a painting. An opaque, supernatural Zeuxis-figure thus hovers between the lines of *The Faust Book*, but is banished entirely from the play.[46] Spenser, on the other hand, opens *The Faerie Queene* Book 3 with a Proem which mentions Zeuxis by name, bemoaning that his subject "liuing art may not least part expresse, / Nor life-resembling pencill it can paynt, / All were it *Zeuxis* or *Praxiteles*" (2). Even "Poets witt, that passeth Painter farre / In picturing the parts of beauty daynt" will struggle with this task (2). Spenser therefore begs pardon of his "dredd Souerayne", since "choicest witt / Cannot your glorious pourtraict figure playne, / That I in colourd showes may shadow itt" (3). If in Zeuxis' portrait of Helen art to some extent transcended nature, here he is reduced to mere imitation.[47]

Shakespeare in some ways comes closer to Spenser than Marlowe in his multiple and varied approaches to the idea of Helen and her *eidolon*. Orlando, in *As You Like It*, paints a literary portrait of Rosalind after the fashion of Zeuxis:

> *Therefore heaven Nature charged*
> *That one body should be filled*
> *With all graces wide-enlarged.*

[46] In a strange detail, the *Faust Book* reports that after receiving the image of Helen, the students "soon lost it againe" (Jones 1994, 163).

[47] Boccaccio indeed considered that the *simulacrum* painted by Zeuxis must have failed to represent Helen's beauty, as art cannot match nature (*De Mulieribus Claribus*, chap. XXXV).

> *Nature presently distilled*
> *Helen's cheek but not her heart,*
> *Cleopatra's majesty,*
> *Atalanta's better part,*
> *Sad Lucretia's modesty.*
> *Thus Rosalind of many parts*
> *By heavenly synod was devised,*
> *Of many faces, eyes and hearts*
> *To have the touches dearest prized.* (3.1.138-49)

In composing his Rosalind out of "many parts", Orlando is of course careful to specify that Rosalind has "Helen's cheek, but not her heart", performing the familiar splitting of Helen into two (good and bad, outer and inner). Rosalind deposes Helen: she is now the ideal woman composed "of many faces, eyes and hearts". The image is deliberately grotesque: we are supposed to laugh at Orlando's amateur verses, as Rosalind and Celia do. By offering us Orlando as a parody-Zeuxis, Shakespeare comically exaggerates the paradox of mimetic representation expressed by Cicero.

Since Zeuxis' portrait of Helen as a constructed artwork is itself an *eidolon*, a *simulacrum*, its association with Euripides' *eidolon*-Helen seems natural. Ronsard, for instance, plays with both stories in his *Sonets pour Helene*. Sonnet LIII, for example, begins: "Lorsque le Ciel te fit, il rompit le modelle / Des vertus, comme un peintre efface son tableau"; she is "la forme la plus belle", so that neither "couleur, ny outil, ny plume, ny cerveau" can equal her. We find the same nexus of ideas in Shakespeare's Sonnet 53, which is concerned with substance, imitation, and art:

> What is your substance, whereof are you made,
> That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
> Since every one hath every one one shade,
> And you, but one, can every shadow lend;
> Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
> Is poorly imitated after you;
> On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set
> And you in Grecian tires are painted new;
> Speak of the spring, and foison of the year:
> That one doth shadow of your beauty show,

> The other as your bounty doth appear,
> And you in every blessed shape we know.
> In all external grace you have some part,
> But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

As in Spenser and Ronsard, we are once again in Platonic territory here: "The philosophical basis of the sonnet is drawn from the Platonic contrast between substance and appearance", as Helen Vendler puts it (1997, 258). Vendler identifies an "illogical paradox" at the heart of the sonnet, in the subject's simultaneous singleness and multiplicity: though "one", he generates a multitude of forms, including the poem itself. In fact, the poem turns out to be more about the poet than the beloved, as it reflects on Shakespeare's own previous works, including *Venus and Adonis*, and other sonnets ("Speak of the spring . . ."). Most interestingly, as Katherine Duncan-Jones points out, the image of the fair youth dressed as Helen in "Grecian tires" is one "that Elizabethan audiences would have seen either in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* or Shakespeare's *TC*" (2010, 216). At the mathematical centre of this sonnet, we find Helen and her theatrical *eidola*. The shadows of Sonnet 53 are the shadows cast by Helen's paradoxical *eidolon*.

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