

THE NYMPH KYLLENE IN TONY HARRISON'S *THE TRACKERS OF OXYRHYNCHUS*

Leticia González Pérez

University of Almería

letigp22@gmail.com

Received: 18 February 2017

Accepted: 1 July 2017

Abstract

Tony Harrison's play *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, chosen as one of the 100 best plays of the 20th century by the *National Theatre Millennium Poll*, came in from the desire to bring the Greek genre of satyr play back to stage, since there are scarce satyr plays when compared with the amount of classical tragedies and comedies. *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* is a reworking of the papyri fragments of the satyr play *Ichneutae* (*Trackers*) by Sophocles, which was inspired by the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. This paper analyses Tony Harrison's version performed at Delphi (1988), focusing on the importance of the role of the nymph Kyllene. Although she neither appears in the Homeric Hymn nor plays a leading role in either Sophocles' version or Harrison's, she represents a noticeable theatrical contrast with the satyrs, who feature heavily in Sophocles' *Ichneutae* and Harrison's version. Therefore, the character of Kyllene will be examined to find out which elements from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and Sophocles' *Ichneutae* Tony Harrison has kept and which ones he has modified. Furthermore, I will study the reasons why he has carried out these changes and conclude with an interpretive analysis of Harrison's play.

Keywords: Tony Harrison, *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Kyllene, Satyr play, *Ichneutae*, Sophocles

LA NINFA CILENE EN *THE TRACKERS OF OXYRHYNCHUS* DE TONY HARRISON

Resumen

La obra teatral *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* de Tony Harrison, elegida como una de las 100 mejores obras de teatro del siglo XX por el *National Theatre Millennium Poll*, representa el deseo de revivir el género del drama satírico, del que apenas se conservan ejemplares en comparación con las tragedias clásicas. *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* es una reelaboración de los fragmentos papiráceos encontrados del drama satírico *Ichneutae* (“rastreadores”) de Sófocles, basado, a su vez, en el himno homérico a Hermes. En este artículo nos proponemos analizar la versión de Tony Harrison representada en Delfos (1988) centrándonos en el personaje de Cilene, una ninfa que, a pesar de no aparecer en el himno homérico y de no desempeñar un papel protagonista ni en el hipotexto de Sófocles ni en *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, representa un marcado contraste teatral con los sátiros, quienes, podríamos decir, son los personajes principales del drama satírico de Sófocles y de Tony Harrison. En este artículo analizaremos, pues, el personaje de Cilene y los elementos que han pervivido o han sido modificados en la versión de Tony Harrison. Por último, exploraremos las razones de esas reelaboraciones y propondremos una interpretación crítica de la obra.

Palabras clave: Tony Harrison, *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Cilene, drama satírico, *Ichneutae*, Sófocles

THE NYMPH KYLLENE IN TONY HARRISON'S *THE TRACKERS OF OXYRHYNCHUS*

Leticia González Pérez

University of Almería

letigp22@gmail.com

Introduction¹

The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus is one of Tony Harrison's most distinguished plays, stemming from his desire to bring the Greek genre of the satyr play back to stage in modern theatre (Harrison 2004: 7). Satyr plays belonged to a dramatic tetralogy which consisted of three tragedies and a satyr play composed by the same poet and performed by the same actors, as part of the most important theatrical contest in Athens, *i.e.* the Great Dionysia. The genre of satyr drama usually dealt with heroic myths and included a chorus of satyrs that provided a humorous touch to the myth.² Sutton (1989) gives a detailed explanation of the features of satyr drama:

Invariable use of a chorus of satyrs . . . Use of mythological plots, with mythological travesty a principal source of humour. Absence of satire of contemporary people and events, overt or covert. Use of the same language, metres, and dramaturgic resources as tragedy . . . Use of a relatively few stereotypes of situation, theme and characterization. A typically spirited tone . . . comparative shortness in length . . . Almost by definition a satyr play must have a happy ending.³

Satyrs are half-goat/horse, half-man who worship Dionysos and are usually portrayed drinking wine, dancing and having fun with nymphs. Goldhill (2004: 67-71) clearly defines the satyrs and their main features:

¹ I am deeply grateful to Lucía P. Romero Mariscal for her valuable help and advice, and to the anonymous referees of *Littera Aperta* for their critical suggestions.

² Lissarrague (1990: 236) provides a clear and concise definition: "Take one myth, add satyrs, observe the result".

³ Another explanation of satyr drama can be found in Sutton (1989: 94-100). Nonetheless, Tony Harrison's play *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* ends in the form of a tragedy, a decision that distinguishes it from the original idea of bringing the satyric drama back to stage. This topic will be dealt with in the following sections. It is also explored in González Pérez (2015).

Followers of Dionysus who have the hairy tail of a goat, an ugly snub nose and sometimes hairy legs and a goat's horns too. Satyrs are the most common of all decorations of pots for symposium. They are usually distinguished by their phallic displays, and they do a whole range of things that men might not quite be up to . . . satyrs are like parodic men behaving badly.⁴

The fact that satyr plays were performed after the show of three tragedies in a row could have had various explanations: the first and most universally accepted is a psychological one, since the audience felt a great relief after having witnessed three tragedies.⁵ It could also have been for religious reasons, since the chorus of satyrs was in the sphere of Dionysos, the god whom the audience had come to celebrate in the theatre. Finally, satyr drama may have had a didactic purpose: it could help to teach how to behave correctly through the misbehaviour of the satyrs.⁶

There is only one complete ancient satyr play left, Euripides' *Cyclops*, in contrast to the 32 extant tragedies and 11 extant Old Comedies. This near extinction was probably caused by the changes carried out at the festival of the Great Dionysia in 340 BC, when satyr drama split off from tragedy.⁷

With *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Tony Harrison attempts to bring the dramatic genre of the satyr-play back to life, while also exploring the divisions between 'high' and 'low' art and related class divisions in modern society, since the reception of ancient Greek drama had actually neglected

⁴ Other definitions of satyrs can be found in Hornblower & Spawforth (1998: *s.u.*) and O'Sullivan & Collard (2013: 3).

⁵ As Sutton (1989: 101) explains, satyr drama mocks tragedy and heroic myths in order to ease the anguish the public felt after the three tragedies: "The satyr play provides comic relief by allowing us to escape from the universe of tragedy . . . At the same time, since this is a palpable fantasy world, and since a happy ending is obligatory by the rules of the game, we may be excited by the predicaments of satiric characters without being moved or distressed . . . The satyr play thus presents a roseate vision of life counterbalancing that of tragedy". See also McDonald (1991: 471).

⁶ These ideas can be found in Calame (2010: 78), who explains the functions of the satyr play proposed by Voelke (2001: 30-1 and 381-412).

⁷ "Satyr plays were thenceforth performed independently of tragedy. Thus they no longer served to provide comic relief after tragedy, and it is probably no coincidence that shortly after this date evidence appears for a new kind of satyr play, which retained the satyr chorus but gravitated into the orbit of contemporary comedy, abandoning mythological plots in favour of contemporary satire, and adopting the dramatic techniques and metres of comedy" (Sutton 1989: 103).

these types of plays. Marshall (2012: 557) explains what Tony Harrison's work accomplishes:

But *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* not only changed the public perception of Harrison as a poet; it also changed many people's perception of Sophocles. The tragedian, whose plays had so often over the centuries been held up as *exempla* of the classical tradition, was now associated with the long forgotten and, to some, somewhat embarrassing tradition of satyr plays . . . This play encouraged a reconsideration of the intended function and reception of satyr plays in their original performance context.

Harrison's intentions are not only related to this purpose, but also to his political agenda: in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* he reflects the differences between social classes through his characters, with the gods Apollo, Hermes and the nymph Kyllene representing the upper class, and satyrs the lower class. Tony Harrison includes topics of this sort in the majority of his work, one such example being social injustice towards the working class and his aim to narrow the gap between the educated and the unlearned. Some examples of these recurrent concerns can be seen in his poem "Them and [uz]" or in the controversial poem "V", which received heavy criticism due to its obscene language (Rudd 2010: 1-5).

The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus finds its inspiration in both the play of Sophocles, *Ichneutae*, and the actual search for the papyri that took place in Egypt in 1902.⁸ It is important to bear in mind that Sophocles' *Ichneutae*,

⁸ Tony Harrison wrote two different versions of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*: the first one being performed in the Stadium of Delphi (1988), and the other in the National Theatre in London (1990). Marshall (2012: 559) explains their differences: "For the Delphi production Harrison highlighted the discrepancy between the ancient Greek celebrations, which had taken place in the stadium, and modern cultural divisions . . . For the London production, Harrison drew attention to the community of homeless people who were living in the area adjacent to the National Theatre, associating literacy levels with people's differing fortunes, both within the world of his play and in the real world. Apollo claims for himself poetry, music, and their cultured audiences, while expelling the satyrs from their own play, out of the theater, forcing them to join the ranks of the Southbank homeless, who had similarly been excluded from society by Thatcherite policies". This paper focuses on the Delphi version.

which is an adaptation of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*⁹, is the hypotext of Tony Harrison's play. *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* begins with two archaeologists, Grenfell and Hunt, who travelled to Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1907 in search of papyri, with the help of a team of Egyptian men, the fellaheen. In the second part, Grenfell is possessed by Apollo, Hunt turns into Silenus, the leader of satyrs, and the fellaheen become the chorus of satyrs. Grenfell/Apollo is obsessed with finding a specific papyrus, the *Ichneutae* by Sophocles, and hence orders Hunt/Silenus and the satyrs to find it. In the third part, after finding the fragments of the satyr drama, they enact the *Ichneutae* itself: Apollo orders the satyrs to find his lost cattle and should they be successful will be rewarded with gold and freedom. Eventually, they discover that Hermes has stolen the cattle, killed them along with a tortoise and used their body parts to create a new instrument: the lyre.¹⁰ The end of the play is the main refiguration¹¹ by Tony Harrison, since it does not finish with a happy ending, but in a tragic way, unlike a traditional satyr drama¹²: when the satyrs discover the lyre, they desperately want to play it, but Apollo refuses to allow them to do so as he does not consider them cultivated enough. On top of that, their reward does not come in the form of proper gold, but of ghetto-blasters wrapped in gold foil courtesy of Kyllene.¹³ The play ends with a monologue by Silenus about the rejection satyrs constantly suffer. At that moment, the chorus transforms into hooligans, burns the rest

⁹ As explained in the abstract, this paper focuses on the analysis of Kyllene through a comparison between the satyr drama *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* and its hypotext, Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, as well as the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*.

¹⁰ This division has been made according to the analysis of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* carried out by Cámara Arenas 2001:130-34.

¹¹ I employ the term 'refiguration' meaning "selecting and reworking material from a previous or contrasting tradition", in this case, the Sophoclean version of *Ichneutae*. Part of the vocabulary used in this paper follows the ideas of Hardwick (2003: 8-11).

¹² It is important to point out that Tony Harrison does not change the end of Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, which is lost, but that he adds his own 'tragic' ending where the fragments of Sophocles' play break off. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this remark.

¹³ "Each of the 'gold bars' is in fact a 'ghetto-blasters' wrapped in gold foil" (72). From now on, all quotes from *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* belong to this edition of the Delphi version.

of the papyrus, where its only connection to culture lies, and then, after making a ball with its remnants, uses it to play a football match.¹⁴

This paper will analyse the role of the nymph Kyllene in Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, comparing Harrison's text to its Sophoclean source, as well as the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the text which also underlies the Sophoclean satyr play. I will examine which features of Kyllene or related details have remained more or less unaltered among the different versions of the story, and which details Harrison has changed, exploring the reasons for these changes and concluding with a critical analysis of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*.

Nymphs and satyrs. Mythological background and literary sources for Tony Harrison's Kyllene

In *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Kyllene is forced into making her first appearance by the satyrs, who disturb her calm by dancing around her while she is resting in the expeditionary tent. Harrison explains that she is a nymph as well as a caryatid, the latter especially evidenced by the theatrical fact that she puts a pediment on her head when she gets out of the tent. Both Kyllene and the chorus of satyrs are portrayed in this play as supporting figures. However, while the satyrs are like the atlantes from the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens, Kyllene bears similarity to the caryatids from the Erectheum in the acropolis of Athens. There are great differences between them, as the satyrs point out:

2

Them girls are straight but we're not straight
but bent and straining underneath the weight.

3

Though it's tons of marble that she holds
A caryatid still looks like a centerfold

4

The Theatre of Dionysos. Have you seen
the poor satyrs there supporting the scene?

5

¹⁴ However, in the National Theatre version, the satyrs become homeless people and they use the remnants of papyrus for their bedding outside the theatre itself, which reminds the National Theatre audience of the homeless people they have walked by on the South Bank in London before entering the theatre.

We're only half human so we can be shown
sweating and straining underneath the stone.

6

Caryatids carry as their name suggests
but no sweat ever tricked down their breasts . . .

9

Caryatids can, but satyrs aren't allowed
to carry tons of marble and still look proud. (55)

In ancient Greek mythology, nymphs are depicted as lovely, young, female supernatural beings. They have different personalities and ways of living, depending on their habitats, but most of them are carefree, beautiful and cherish living away from humans and responsibilities. Also, some of them enjoy dancing and promiscuous sex with satyrs (Hansen 2003: 40-42). Moreover, nymphs and satyrs usually live in the same places, like mountains and forests, far away from people, and some nymphs have a sister/mother-like relationship with satyrs (Voelke 2001: 218-219). Nymphs are also depicted as *κουροτρόφοι* (*kourotrophoi*), as Larson (2001: 8) explains, "providers of the motherly attention required by an infant".

The nymph Kyllene, who cares for the infant Hermes in the plays of Sophocles and Harrison, does not appear in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. In the Homeric hymn it is his mother Maia, also a nymph, who is responsible for the new born god¹⁵:

Muse, sing of Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia, lord of Cyllene and
Arcadia rich in flocks, the luck-bringing messenger of the immortals whom
Maia bare, the rich-tressed nymph, when she was joined in love with Zeus, -
-a shy goddess.¹⁶

¹⁵ The only reference to Kyllene found in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is Mount Kyllene in Arcadia. In *Ichneutae*, Mount Kyllene is also mentioned at the beginning of the first fragment. Since Tony Harrison's play is based on *Ichneutae* by Sophocles, Mount Kyllene is also mentioned after Grenfell's transformation into Apollo, without any references to the nymph prior to her first appearance: "I've been all over Greece. So far! So far! . . . Thessaly, Boeotia, the Doric (space...space...space...) then quickly to Kyllene, that's this place. (42)

¹⁶ Quotes from the Homeric hymn are taken from the translation by White G, Evelyn (n. d.), available on-line.

In the Homeric hymn, Maia is aware that her son has stolen the cattle, so she does not get involved in the confrontation between Apollo and Hermes, but since she knows the Little God has made mischief and has to tell the truth, she scolds him:

How now, you rogue! Whence come you back so at night-time, you that wear shamelessness as a garment? And now I surely believe the son of Leto will soon have you forth out of doors with unbreakable cords about your ribs, or you will live a rogue's life in the glens robbing by whites. Go to, then; your father got you to be a great worry to mortal men and deathless gods! (h.Merc.155-161)

In Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, it is Kyllene who takes care of baby Hermes instead of Maia. The reasons for Sophocles' choice of this other female character here is unclear. The following quotation indicates, however, that Kyllene's presence in the story was justified by explaining that she is nursing the baby Hermes because Maia is unwell, and she also provides information about Hermes parentage and the circumstances under which he was conceived: "Zeus (came) secretly (to the dwelling?) of Atlas' daughter . . . In secret from the deep-girdled goddess . . . he fathered a single soon . . ." (F 314 col. x, ll. 268-270 Radt).¹⁷

As such, in *Ichneutae* Kyllene is a *κουροτρόφος*. She changes Hermes' nappies, feeds him, and is naively surprised by how much he grows every day:

I'm nursing (him) in my arms, for (his mother's) strength is buffeted by storms of sickness. His (food) and drink and bedding, (as well as) his swaddling, his cradle-care, -- these I stay and (set in order) night and day (F 314 col. x, ll. 270-276 Radt).

In contrast to Maia in the Homeric Hymn, in Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, Kyllene refuses to admit that Hermes has stolen anything, and she even explodes with anger when the satyrs blame Hermes for stealing the cattle:

¹⁷ The translations from Sophocles' *Ichneutae* belong to O'Sullivan & Collard (2013). They also refer to Kyllene in the introduction to their translation "The scene is in Mt Kyllene in Arcadia (v. 37), close to the eponymous nymph Kyllene's cave (a setting which is however not revealed until her entry at 211)".

As far as I'm concerned ...or if you think to profit at all... and delight your heart . . . (who) by definite report (is) Zeus' son . . . youthful talk in one newly born . . . (neither?) was he born a thief on his father's side (nor?) does thieving prevail . . . (among?) his mother's people . . . is . . . look for the thief, . . . attach the crime (to) whomever it comes home; but it's improper to attach it like this to him! You've always been a child, however: now you're new to manhood you're rampant like a goat with a flourishing yellow beard! It's wrong to blurt out stupid and ridiculous things, and to suffer for them later at the gods' hands, to make me laugh (F 314 col. XIV 358-70 Radt).

Her stance towards the satyrs is of superiority, which is manifested since her first appearance in line 221:

You beasts of the wild, why have you invaded this grassy, wooded hillside, the home of wild things, with this loud shouting? What's this technique? What's the change from the work you had before in pleasing your master, when you were always drunk with wine and had fawn-skins slung round you?- and you balanced a place . . . uttered a divine voice (F 314 Col. IX 221-28 Radt).

This superiority can also be perceived in the peculiarities of her language, as O'Sullivan & Collard (2013: 341) explain, "Cyllene's measured language (especially in 262-89) is set off by the satyrs' constant tumble of words".

In *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* Kyllene is also in charge of baby Hermes. As in Sophocles' version, the nymph is a *κουροτρόφος*:

" . . . because his mother Maia / doth languish in a fever nurse I in these arms. / But the babe doth burgeon greatly day by day. / 'This a great wonder to me and a fright. / Born six days ago and yet hath boyhood reached" (57-8).

However, her haughtiness and elitism prevent her from truly nursing the baby. As evidenced in the previous quotation, she does not explicitly explain how she nurses the baby, contrary to the Kyllene from Sophocles' *Ichneutae*.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, her contempt for the nursing chores is made hilariously clear by the following conversation between Hermes and Apollo:

¹⁸ "I'm nursing (him) in my arms, for (his mother's) strength is buffeted by storms of sickness. His (food) and drink and bedding, (as well as) his swaddling, his cradle-care, --these I stay and (set in order) night and day (F 314 col. X, ll. 270-276 Radt).

“Apollo: That papyrus you’re wearing. It’s full of warm crap. / Hermes: That nymph’s too snooty to change a kid’s nappy. / I can’t help it, can I, if I’m all crappy” (66).

In Tony Harrison’s version, Kyllene does not actually care about Hermes’ theft of the cattle, so after telling the satyrs about the affair between Zeus and Maia and the creation of the lyre, she leaves the stage, moaning that she is not in the right play, at the same time, ignoring their complaints about the death of an animal (Harrison 2004: 62). Furthermore, she acts in a nonchalant way towards the satyrs and she even treats them badly, one example being when she warns them not to divulge the story of the love affair between Zeus and Maia: “I must advise you ere I do commence, / should you disclose what I to you disclose, / there will be severest suffering in store” (57). Another interesting example is the scene of Kyllene speaking in riddles, enticing the satyrs to try and work out how the lyre was created, in which Tony Harrison follows Sophocles’ *Ichneutae* quite faithfully:

Satyr 5: Excuse me, but how can a summat dead, like, sing?

Satyr 6: Ay, how come a voice came from a dead thing? . . .

Kyllene: Dead it has a voice. Alive it was dumb.

Satyr 11: Give us a clue. Is it bent, fat, short or what?

Kyllene: ‘Tis spotted and shaped somewhat like a pot.

Satyr 12: A leopard, of course, or some sort of cat.

Kyllene: No, sorry. It isn’t at all like that.

Satyr 4: Not a crab, not a lobster, not a crustacean?

Satyr 5: Then it’s gotta be the bug part of creation.

Satyr 6: A Beetle? The Edna horned scarab, mayhap? . . .

Satyr 8: Does that horrible noise come from outside or in?

Kyllene: From what you may call the creature’s crust.

Satyr 2: Solve the damn riddle. My head’s going to bust . . .

Kyllene: The beast’s called a tortoise. The invention’s the lyre. (58-60)

Kyllene in Tony Harrison’s *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*

In my view, Tony Harrison makes use of Kyllene primarily in order to emphasise the differences between, on the one hand, the upper social classes, to which gods and goddesses, such as Hermes, Apollo and Kyllene herself belong, and, on the other hand, the lower classes, those of satyrs. More specifically, Kyllene represents Tragedy,¹⁹ and her depiction here equates the

¹⁹ It is noteworthy that the first line which the character of Kyllene utters on stage sounds like ‘paratragedy’: “ὡς ἀπολλύμαι κακῶς... O woe! O woe!” (54). Kyllene’s

idealisation of tragedy with the idealisation of classical Greek architecture, which privileges the ahistorical image of white marble sculptures gleaming in the Greek sunlight. In contrast, satyr plays, represented by the chorus of satyrs, are not perceived by the audience as ‘high’ art. Similarly, satyrs are always seen as untamed and unrefined. What is more, the nymph represents a particular element of irony in the play: she is depicted as a caryatid, endowed with elegance and grace, but at the same time she is actually a nymph, *a priori* belonging to the same natural and unsophisticated realm of the satyrs. In this way, she highlights several themes of the play.

In *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Kyllene appears on stage dressed as a caryatid²⁰, as per the same scene in Sophocles’ *Ichneutae*, where her elitism was already noticeable, as mentioned before. Here is Tony Harrison’s translation:

Bestial creatures! Wherefore have you brought
to this secluded spot your uproar foul?
What novel sports are these? They are not they
wherewith of old you made your master glad,
who clad in his fawnskin and with thyrsus high
was wont to chant of yore the holy hymns
with, for escort, nymphs and youthful throngs? . . .
Your fragments of furore reached me down there
and then an utter cacophony commenced.
I feared that you would do my person harm (56).

As the chorus of satyrs points out, she has the characteristic elegance of a caryatid; she actually supports a pediment gracefully and without losing the slightest trace of beauty. On the contrary, the satyrs’ appearance is all contorted, sweaty and unpleasant.

Furthermore, in Tony Harrison’s play Kyllene does not get involved in the conversation the way she does in Sophocles’ *Ichneutae*. After pointing out that the instrument which is being played by Hermes is the lyre, created

complaints are actually tragic, although they are stated not in a tragedy but in a satyr play, which is why she repeats the same line before leaving the stage, when she adds: “I’m not in the right play. I’d better go” (62). Moreover, Tony Harrison’s stage directions refer to Kyllene as “Tragedy”: “*Exit Tragedy pursued by a Satyr*” (62).

²⁰ “*Kyllene finally emerges from the tent. She is a caryatid, like those supporting the pediment of the Erectheum in Athens*” (54).

with body parts from a tortoise and Apollo's cattle, she leaves the stage almost being sexually harassed by the satyrs:

Kyllene is tipped off the stage, losing her pediment. Four Satyrs try to lift it and can't. Kyllene bends and lifts it up on to her head again with effortless Olympic lift. Kyllene tries to exit and finds her way blocked each time by a lascivious Satyr. Finally Kyllene escapes to the tent and closes the flap (62).²¹

Tony Harrison characterizes Kyllene as a caryatid with a clear purpose: caryatids play an important role in Greek aesthetics and culture together with philosophy, politics and art in general, as Schweizer (2006) explains regarding their reception in the 19th century, "in literature, art and historiography, they were stylized as symbols of Greece, Classicism, and even art in general". As a matter of fact, Tony Harrison's Kyllene speaks in a 19th century, Victorian way, as he himself includes in the stage directions, "Kyllene speaks only 'high' Victorian verse of the kind that Greek tragedy used to be translated in" (54). One fine example of this can be seen in the following quotation:

Now I know not what possesseth you
nor what crazed folly spinneth you awry...
I heard like hunters' halloos from deep within,
a cry when keen trackers close upon their prey
and hap upon the beast deep in its lair.
And then such harsh words as thief
assailed mine ears and some god's proclamation (56).

Indeed, she uses a complex syntax full of hyperbatons: "Zeus hither hied where Maria doth abide / and all unbeknownst to Hera, hither hied / and made the fair one his clandestine bride" (57).

Kyllene is both a caryatid and a nymph, *i.e.* a blend of feminine beauty and sensuality, especially for a modern audience (hence the word "nymphomaniac"²²). Harrison seems to use this juxtaposition to highlight

²¹ As previously mentioned, in the Delphi version, Kyllene also complains that she is not in the right play. See McDonald (1991: 476): "Kyllene exists while pursued by the satyric pack protesting she is not in the right play".

²² "Nymphomaniac" comes from the term "nymph" which makes reference to the semi-divine creatures. At the same time, the term "nymph" originates from "nympha", which stands for "bride". (*Oxford English Dictionary* [2004] s.v. 'Nymph', 'Nympha', 'Nymphomania').

Kyllene's sensuality, which is emphasized with the lascivious attitude of the satyrs towards her, probably with the aim of testing a very cultivated audience that might feel uncomfortable when faced with that situation.

In *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, social differences between educated and uneducated characters are explicitly portrayed. As such, McDonald (1991:484) shows these social differences through a comparison between Kyllene's language and the satyrs', which reveals the writer's well-known and unhidden agenda:

So also in our Trackers of Oxyrhynchus the language ranges from the caryatid-like Kyllene: 'They are not they / wherewith of old you made your master glad, / who clad in his fawnskin and with thyrsus high ...' to the satyr translation of these lines: 'She means Dionysus, pissed, sang us old songs!' Or even Leeds dialect, 'summat's been flayed'.²³

According to McDonald (1991: 479), "Whereas Apollo, Kyllene, Grenfell and Hunt come from London; the satyrs definitely come from Leeds". There is a great deal of cultural baggage that comes with these differences in dialects in England, part of which involves the perception of educated vs non-educated, but also upper class vs working class, and north vs south.²⁴ Accordingly, it is worth insisting on the idea that, throughout this play, Harrison aims at bringing two opposing sides together: 'high' art, to which Apollo, Kyllene, Hermes and the educated people in general belong, and 'low' art, where satyrs and the lower classes are nowadays perceived to be. It is clear that the play condemns the hiatus between the upper and lower classes.

In spite of its 'satyr-genre' spirit, *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* actually ends like a tragedy, deprived of a happy ending: after receiving the ghetto-blasters from Kyllene, the satyrs do not know what to do with them. Then, they hear the screaming of Marsyas from these devices, the satyr who decided to play the flute Athena had thrown away, because she did not like the look on her face as she blew it. Finally, Marsyas was flayed alive by Apollo after challenging him to a duel.²⁵

²³ Tony Harrison was born in Leeds and grew up with the local accent, but he got himself educated and refined it, as explained in his poem "Them and [uz]".

²⁴ I acknowledge one of the anonymous reviewers for this remark.

²⁵ I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out that the story with Marsyas and Apollo is similar to the story of Athena and Arachne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Silenus tells this story as part of a final speech with great mourning, and since he knows satyrs have no place in highbrow culture, he decides to leave the stage and lets the satyrs continue destroying the remnants of the papyri and use them to play a football match as hooligans. This portrayal of satyrs as hooligans in the version for Delphi, where the famous sport competition known as the Pythian games took place every four years, probably has different purposes.²⁶ Firstly, football hooligans were infamous during the 1980s around Europe for their violent and disruptive behavior. Secondly, hooligans appear in Harrison's other works, where he includes them in order to condemn the social and political inequalities that exist between different classes, as in this play.²⁷ As Burton (1991: 25) explains, Harrison sees satyrs as savage outcasts deprived of opportunities to become part of culture, which is somewhat similar to the situation of football hooligans; they, along with this sport, represent "popular" culture, as opposed to "high" culture where tragic plays and cultured people belong. Furthermore, whilst at the beginning of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, the satyrs are represented as joyful, coward and lustful, like the ones in the ancient satyr plays, at the end they become violent and prefer to turn to destruction as a way of protest. This is the attitude of hooligans, as well exemplified in Harrison's poem "V", in which they vandalized Harrison's parents' graves with graffiti and beer cans: they resent the world they have been excluded from.²⁸ The final speech by Silenus is worth quoting:

And why shouldn't Marsyas or me aspire
to be virtuosos of the flute or . . . lyre? . . .
For them it would have been quite enough
to have given it just one abortive puff,

²⁶ There are several references to the Pythian games throughout the play, for example, when Silenus invites the audience to sing fragments of *Ichneutae* to bring the chorus to the stage at the beginning of the play, "*there is a strong chant which is echoed by the ancient voices of the eight thousand Ghosts at the ancient Pythian games*"(45). Furthermore, these references to the Pythian games help Tony Harrison explore the division in modern society between art and sport, as elitist culture and popular culture (Marshall 2007: 399). As the playwright explains "In the Pythian Games with its athletics and flute contests, poetry and drama, held on this site, such a division would have been incomprehensible. As would the division between tragedy and satyr play, 'high' art and 'low' art" (19).

²⁷ I owe these remarks to one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper.

²⁸ See also Marshall (2007: 401).

a buffoonish ballooning of the brutish cheeks
 producing a few, and inexpert, squeaks,
 that would have amused them and been OK,
 but Marsyas, man/animal, he learned to play . . .
 But the Apollonian goes for his gun
 when it suddenly dawns on him the swine
 the pearl is cast before by one divine
 knows it's a pearl, and not some novel food
 and aspires beyond dumb swinetude.
 When he enters the Culture it represents
 they reach for their skin-removing instruments. (85)

As Padley (2008) argues, Silenus' speech, given once Kyllene has left the satyrs on their own with their ghetto-blasters, encapsulates "the recurring questions of the social and cultural value of 'high' art when the majority of a society is denied access to its products". Symbolically, satyrs are not allowed access to the lyre, and therefore to the world of cultivated music to which both Kyllene and Apollo belong.²⁹ They are only given the opportunity to gain access to popular culture, embodied by the ghetto-blasters (Marshall 2007: 400).

Conclusion

To sum up, Kyllene is a secondary character whose involvement in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* is qualitatively different from the same character in Sophocles' *Ichneutae*. The reasons why Sophocles decided to use Kyllene instead of Maia remain unknown.³⁰ Tony Harrison decides to follow Sophocles' storyline but makes Kyllene's role more significant than in *Ichneutae* mainly due to his political agenda. In *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, Kyllene is at the beckon call of Apollo and the Olympian gods, implying she stands for the values of highbrow culture, which is ultimately denied to the satyrs, who remain confined to lowbrow culture.

²⁹ I thank one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper for drawing my attention to the fact that Harrison associates barbarity, in the sense of oppression, with Apollo, as can be seen in *The Gaze of the Gorgon*.

³⁰ It might seem that Sophocles' purpose was to emphasise the localism of the play, the relation between Hermes and Kyllene as a nymph and the mount of Arcadia as the bucolic space where the play takes place.

Tony Harrison wants to prove that 'high' art takes advantage of the unlearned and lower classes for its own benefit, which also creates a vast gulf between them, because unfortunately there seems to be no room within the intellectual elite for uneducated people.

To accomplish this goal, Harrison provides the nymph with elaborate, haughty language, a feature that highlights the differences between her and the satyrs; as Tony Harrison makes clear, she represents Tragedy (62), a literary genre which belongs to 'high' art, unlike satyr plays, which have been traditionally relegated to 'low' art. Furthermore, while the satyrs are depicted as crouching Atlantes holding up the stage like the figures in the Theatre of Dionys in Athens, she is depicted as a stiff sleek haired caryatid, "like those supporting the pediment of the Erechtheum in Athens" (54). Furthermore, her nonchalant attitude towards the satyrs is obvious during her entire participation on stage, underlining her elitist position regarding those bestial creatures.

Nevertheless, the extensive modifications which Tony Harrison has made can be found mainly at the end of the play, in particular, when the satyrs respond to the rejection towards them with great violence. This play censures the exclusion by society, not only of satyr plays, which have been relegated to 'low' culture over the centuries, but also of everything dealing with 'low' art. Tony Harrison warns the audience and cultivated people in general that they should be careful not to be like Kyllene, Hermes or Apollo in the sense of enjoying culture but not allowing people from the lower classes to be a part of it.

I should insist on the idea that Harrison tries to unite 'high' and 'low' art as well as different social classes in the great majority of his works. However, in this play, he explores the difficulty of achieving this goal, which is the reason for the bitter, tragic ending. Highbrow culture and the people that belong to it will more often than not reject those from lower classes. Likewise, the latter will respond with the same rejection and violence. Peter (1991: 456) rightfully explains Tony Harrison's intention in his reworking of this play. He takes the satyr drama onto the stage, but at the same time he creates a new play trying to make a social statement:

Under the grotesque laughter Harrison is raising immense questions. Apollo becomes a god of elitism, spurning the homely vigour of the satyrs and brutally relegating them to the bottom division of vulgarity. I think Harrison is saying: Look, here is a satyr play by the author of *Antigone*, written for spectators who enjoyed both. We, on the other hand, turn it into high art, performed in hermetically sealed culture places, in Apollonian

insulation, to an audience of cultural thoroughbreds. Meanwhile, the common people are relegated to the brutality of ghetto-blasters, and they hate and despise us for their exile.

Although in quantitative terms on stage is limited, in qualitative terms Kyllene plays a fundamental role in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*. She is the only female character in a hypermasculine play and, in my opinion, adds qualitatively to the theatrical show as well as the divine cast who impersonates elitism in this play. Through her and the remaining characters, Tony Harrison takes a forgotten satyr drama and turns it into a play with political undertones, as Taplin (1991: 454) points out: “Tony Harrison turns an eccentric curiosity from the past into a central commentary on the present”.³¹

³¹ Again I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out the analogies between Tony Harrison and Bertolt Brecht. It is very likely that the former may have been inspired by the latter.

Works cited

- Burton, Rosemary (1991). "Tony Harrison, an introduction." In Neil Astley (ed.). *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies: 1. Tony Harrison*. Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 14-31.
- Calame, Claude (2010). "Aetiological Performance and Consecration in the Sanctuary of Dionysos." In O. Taplin & R. Wyles (eds.). *The Pronomos Vase and its Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 65-78.
- Cámara Arenas, E. (2001). "The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus: Traducción, adaptación, restauración." *ES. Revista de Filología Inglesa* 23: 125-140.
- Evelyn-White, H.G. (Trans.) (n. d.). *Homeric Hymns. IV. To Hermes*. URL: <http://www.theoi.com/Text/HomericHymns2.html#4> Last access: 10 Jan 2017.
- Goldhill, Simon (2004). *Love, Sex & Tragedy. How the ancient world shapes our lives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- González Pérez, Leticia (2015). "Nature and culture in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*." *Revista Tycho* 3: 5-24.
- Hardwick, Lorna (2003). *Reception Studies (New Surveys In The Classics No. 33): Greece and Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, Tony (2004). *Plays 5: The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus, Square Rounds*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Hansen, William (2003). *Handbook of Classical Mythology (World mythology)*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.
- Hornblower, Simon & Antony Spawforth (eds.) (1998). *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larson, Jennifer (2001). *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lissarrague, F. (1990). "Why Satyrs are Good to Represent." In J. J. Winkler & F. I. Zeitlin (eds.). *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 228-236.
- Marshall, Cécile (2007). *Poésie, politique et ironie dans l'œuvre de Tony Harrison*. Littérature britannique. Bordeaux: Université Michel de Montaigne.
- Marshall, Hallie Rebecca (2012). "Tony Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*." In Kirk Ormand (ed.). *A Companion to Sophocles*, Oxford-Malden-Victoria: Blackwell, 557-570.

- McDonald, Marianne (1991). "Trackers' as people's tract". In Neil Astley (ed.). *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies: 1. Tony Harrison*, Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 470-485.
- O'Sullivan, Patrick & C. Collard (eds.) (2013). *Euripides: Cyclops and Major Fragments of Greek Satyric Drama*. Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 1-377.
- John, Peter. (1991). "Review of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* (*Sunday Times*, 01.04.1990)". In Neil Astley (ed.). *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies: 1. Tony Harrison*, Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 455-456.
- Oxford English Dictionary* (2004). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Padley, Steve. (2008). " 'Hijacking Culture': Tony Harrison and the Greeks." *Cycnos* 18.1 URL: <http://revel.unice.fr/cyenos/index.html?id=1681> Last access: 1 Feb 2017.
- Rudd, Andrew (2010). "Harrison, Tony, 1937-1." *Literature Online Biography*. ProQuest LLC.
- Seaford, Richard (ed.) (1984). *Euripides: Cyclops*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schweizer, Steffan (2006). "Supporting figures." In Hubert Cancik & Helmut Schneider (eds.). *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes. URL: http://odx.doi.org.almirez.ual.es/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e15303190 Last access: 19 Jun 2017.
- Sutton, Dana Ferrin (1989). "The Satyr Play." In P. E. Easterling & B. M. W. Knox (eds.). *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. I. 2: Greek Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 94-102.
- Taplin, Oliver (1991). "Satyrs on the Borderline: *Trackers* in the Development of Tony Harrison's Theatre Work." In Neil Astley (ed.). *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies: 1. Tony Harrison*. Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 458-64.
- Voelke, Pierre (2001). *Un théâtre de la marge. Aspects figuratifs et configurationnels du drame satirique dans l'Athènes classique*. Bari: Levante Editori.