

## Sounding Out Homer: Christopher Logue's Acoustic Homer

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This article presents a case study on sound effects in Christopher Logue's adaptation of Homer's *Iliad*, a project that began when Logue adapted Achilles' fight with the river Scamander from book 21 of the *Iliad* for BBC radio in 1959. Logue's Homer has been worked, performed, and reworked for almost fifty years (1959-2005). Albeit the result of accident rather than design, the prolonged time-span for publication has produced a complex publication history, with Logue's Homer poems circulating in different print versions and simultaneously existing as audio recordings (both on LP and CD) and live performances. Within the poems themselves, the stress on sound and music suggest that these performances should inform the meaning of the printed text, leading to a complex interdependence between the written and spoken word.<sup>1</sup>

### Translation and the Living Word

Several twentieth-century translators have been acutely conscious of the potential ephemerality of their translations. Asked about his criteria for translating Homer,<sup>2</sup> Robert Fitzgerald stressed the importance of the living language as a means to engage the reader's imagination (Frank and McCord 1984:50):

One wanted the English to be, as I've already said, fully alive. That this should be so, the colloquial register of the language had to enter into it. How far should you go with colloquialism? Would slang be useful? Answer: practically never. One would avoid what was transient in speech. The test of a given phrase would be: Is it worthy to be immortal?

Whereas Fitzgerald's approach to producing a translation of Homer that is alive privileged diction, his fellow translator, Robert Fagles, stresses the dramatic quality of the Homeric epics and, correspondingly, the importance of performance for his translations of Homer.<sup>3</sup> In an

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<sup>1</sup> The distinction that I draw here between "written" and "spoken" word is one of medium: graphic medium versus phonic medium. See Österreicher 1997:191-92.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald's translation of the *Odyssey* was published in 1961 and his *Iliad* in 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Fagles' translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were published in 1990 and 1996, respectively.

interview conducted in 1999, Fagles illustrated this conception of Homer as performance by quoting the dictum, from Alexander Pope's "Preface to the *Iliad* of Homer" (1715), that "Homer makes us Hearers," adding that one of the most important things for the translator is "to capture the dramatic sense that Homer conveys" (Storace 1999:152). Elsewhere in the interview Fagles reveals that his preferred metaphor for the relationship between the translator and the source text is that of an actor and the role that he has to play (156). This commitment to performance is born out by the success that his translations have achieved as audiobooks, read by the actors Derek Jacobi (*Iliad*) and Ian McKellen (*Odyssey*).

Stanley Lombardo, another contemporary translator of Homer, combines the approaches of both Fitzgerald and Fagles in order to produce a "living" translation.<sup>4</sup> On the subject of poetic register, Lombardo has said that he subjects the diction of his translations to a "fifty-year" rule. According to this rule, the diction of a translation should hold good for fifty years in either direction: that is to say that the language should sound readily intelligible and natural to imaginary audiences projected fifty years back into the past as well as to imaginary audiences projected fifty years into the future.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Lombardo also echoes Fagles in the importance that he assigns to performance as a medium for translation. His translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed with an ear for performance, with feedback from actual performances informing the progress of his work.<sup>6</sup> In addition, he has also recorded audio versions of his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Parmenides Publications, 2006; reviewed in Mulligan 2007) and continues to perform his translations in front of live audiences, animating these performances with subtle but powerful percussion to accompany the stress patterns of the spoken voice. With Lombardo, even more so than with Fagles, the reader who reads the text in ignorance of its potential for performance is deprived of the all-important soundtrack.

The mention of percussion brings us back to Christopher Logue, the most musical and sound-conscious of Homer's contemporary adaptors. In fact, music has become a byword for Logue's Homer, which is now referred to as *War Music* (1981), a title that initially referred to a single sequence of the poem (Books 16-19 of the *Iliad*). Even the arresting titles of the last two installments (*All Day Permanent Red* [2003] and *Cold Calls* [2005]) bear the subtitle "War Music continued." Logue's adaptation of the *Iliad* meets both the anti-ephemerality clause and the dramatic performance clause established by other translators. His adaptation has inadvertently spanned almost fifty years, and as a work in progress it has consequently been updated with cultural references to an ever-changing present. Interviewed in the *Sunday Telegraph* (March 6, 2005) to coincide with the publication of *Cold Calls*, Logue revealed to the reviewer that his poet's workshop is littered with newspaper cuttings that he might use in his Homer adaptations—the example given is helicopter blades setting off car alarms (Farndale

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<sup>4</sup> See Lombardo's comments on "living poetry" and "living speech" in the "Translator's Preface" to his translation of the *Iliad* (1997:xiii). Lombardo's translation of the *Odyssey* was published in 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Considered during Lombardo's discussion with the audience during a reading at Haverford College, November 18, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> See Lombardo 1997:x-xi on the significance of performance for his translation of the *Iliad*, devised as a "performance on the page for the silent reader" (x).

2005:28).<sup>7</sup> But leaving aside such obvious interventions of the changing world in which he writes, Logue's earliest Homer adaptations have stayed new because contemporary referentiality and language are blended effortlessly with the diction and sound patterns of English literature across several centuries: Chaucer is present, as are Chapman, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Keats, and Pound.

If I have started by situating Logue's work in the context of translations of Homer, it is not because his Homer is a translation in the strict sense of the word, but because translations of Homer have been his constant companions throughout the composition of *War Music*.<sup>8</sup> In Logue's own words, *War Music* is "a dramatic poem in English based on my reading of translations of the *Iliad*" (Farndale 2005:26). In the context of sound effects, what interests me most is the extent to which Logue's Homer displays aural fidelity to the original text, insofar as such fidelity is possible in another language, at the hands of a Greek-less adaptor. In this context it is important to note that Logue enjoyed vicarious proximity to the Greek texts through line-for-line transliterations of the Greek text produced by the classicist Donald Carne-Ross,<sup>9</sup> as well as through listening to classicists vocalize Homer's Greek text for him so that he could hear the sound patterns of the Homeric hexameter.

### Logue's Soundscape

Logue is not just an adaptor of Homer who is attuned to the quality of sound in poetry, but one who has extensive experience of poetry as song and the setting of poetry to music (see Greenwood 2007:158). He is a poet who in the 1950s and '60s collaborated with jazz musicians in setting his lyrics to music, resulting in releases such as *Loguerhythms: Songs from the Establishment*, featuring lyrics that he wrote to be sung at the London nightclub, The

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<sup>7</sup> Logue has followed this practice from the outset; in his biography he recalls how he set about his first adaptation of Homer, entitled "Achilles and the River," constantly turning over the episode in his head and adding to it "from a different part of the *Iliad*, or for that matter, from the day's newspaper" (1999:222).

<sup>8</sup> "The strict sense of the word"—by which I mean translation that is governed by strict criteria of fidelity. However, it is notoriously difficult to establish a normative definition for translation. Translation theory acknowledges a vast spectrum of approaches to translation and, in turn, these different approaches warrant different criteria for judging the success of any given translation. Earlier editions of Logue's Homer poems were marketed as "free adaptations" or "translations." For example, the dust-jacket for the 1962 Scorpion Press edition of *Patrocleia* is subtitled "Book XVI of Homer's *Iliad* adapted by Christopher Logue," with the addition of the adverb "freely" on the frontispiece ("freely adapted"). The 1967 edition of *Pax*, published by Rapp & Carroll, bears the subtitle "Book XIX of The *Iliad* translated by Christopher Logue" on the frontispiece. Later editions ceased to be marketed as translations; instead, the poems began to carry the disclaimer that this was not a translation "in the accepted sense of the word" in their prefatory material (see the Introduction to the 1981 edition of *War Music*). For further discussion of the impact of translation on the reception of Logue's Homer, see Underwood 1998b:56-68 and Greenwood 2007:150-58.

<sup>9</sup> Logue recalls asking Carne-Ross to produce cribs of the *Iliad* for him "à la Greek," with "Greek word order" (1999:223).

Establishment, which hosted a cabaret.<sup>10</sup> The centrality of sound to Logue's oeuvre is borne out by the fact that a compilation of his poetry, jazz lyrics, and adaptations of Homer has been released as a set of seven CDs entitled *Audiologue*.<sup>11</sup>

In the twentieth century, discussions of sound in translations of Homer tended to concentrate on questions of meter, which was one of the cornerstones of Homeric translation for Matthew Arnold.<sup>12</sup> However, this overwhelming focus on meter has tended to displace the other sound effects that are found in Homer and his translators. In the case of Logue, these sound effects include rhythm, rhyme, sound cues (see the word "thock" below), and the resonance of words both within and across lines through effects such as assonance, consonance, and alliteration.

Sense follows sound throughout Logue's Homer. Consider the following example, taken from his version of the speeches in the embassy to Achilles in *Cold Calls*. Logue has Achilles terminate the embassy with these lines, which meditate on the offense caused to him by Agamemnon's expropriation of his concubine, the captive Briseis: "I did not / Applaud his sticky fingers on my she's meek flesh" (2005:43). The sound effects in this line make the image of Agamemnon pawing Briseis tangible, as the consonance of "sticky" and "meek," and of "she" and "flesh," suggest the friction of contact. Phonetically, the effort of articulating this line (the plosive phonemes in "applaud" at the beginning of the line, and the fricative phonemes s and h) re-creates the tension between the two men and Achilles' distaste at envisaging Agamemnon with Briseis. Although this is not a direct translation of any line in the *Iliad*, it accurately communicates the gist of Achilles and Agamemnon's exchanges over Briseis.<sup>13</sup>

There is a paradox at the heart of Logue's Homer. Reading poetry aloud is a dying practice, as are the arts of elocution and declamation, yet his Homer preserves and perpetuates these institutions. In fact, to call *War Music* poetry, which it manifestly is, is to gloss over its peculiar properties. At a time when, for many readers, the experience of poetry does not necessarily imply the accompaniment of the spoken voice, it is important to stress the phonic dimension of Logue's Homer. *War Music* is a hybrid text, not just in its imitation and manipulation of visual media such as still photography and film, but also in its inventive use of typography to cue the voice and script performance. Logue's textual practice, with its profound phonic affinity, assigns a full role for the speaking voice over and above the demands of meter, in

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<sup>10</sup> See Logue 1999:282. *Loguerhythms* was released by Transatlantic Records in 1963, with Annie Ross singing Logue's lyrics and music from the Tony Kinsey Quintet.

<sup>11</sup> *Loguerhythms* is the seventh CD in this set.

<sup>12</sup> "On Translating Homer" (lectures delivered in Oxford, November 3 1860-January 26 1861; published in 1861). In addition to meter, the other aspect of sound that Arnold highlighted was the "rapidity" of Homer. This preoccupation with rapidity is evident in many twentieth-century translations of Homer. See, for example, Richmond Lattimore's "Note on the Translation," published as part of the prefatory material for his well-received translation of Homer (1961:55): "My aim has been to give a rendering of the *Iliad* which will convey the meaning of the Greek in a speed and rhythm analogous to the speed and rhythm I find in the original." Haubold (2007:36) points out that this "Arnoldian framework" also influenced Milman Parry's research into the composition of oral poetry, leading him to identify rapidity as one of the most important features of bards' oral performances.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Homer, *Iliad* 9.335-57.

a way that is reminiscent of Shakespeare's dramatic art and the rhetorical flair of Milton's verse, both of whose blank verse he echoes. Logue's rhythms are emphatically not Homer's rhythms.

In spite of the immense cultural and historical distance that separates them, it is helpful to introduce an analogy between the orality of Homeric epic and the significance of the spoken word in Logue's poetry. In the case of Homeric epic, although the oral-derived, traditional status of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is not disputed, a great deal hangs on the participle "derived," as it is impossible to establish the precise relationship between the textual versions of the epic that are read today and putative, original oral performances. As scholars routinely note, the Homeric epics are incontrovertibly textual.<sup>14</sup> Rather than reading transcripts of a performance or hearing a genuine oral linguistic register, readers of Homeric epic are confined to looking for performance cues, for hints of oral traditions, and scrutinizing the text on the page in the hope of decoding the poem's communicative economy.<sup>15</sup> In Logue's case we are dealing not with orality, but rather the tradition of poetry as collaboration between text and voice. Logue's Homer circulates as a written text and the written word is fundamental to the process of poetic creation. However, without sound the potential of his Homer is unvoiced.<sup>16</sup> This is confirmed by a comment that Logue made about the fundamental importance of performance for poetry in the context of a discussion about the role of poetry readings: "The Literary voice is a fabrication. In verse, sound and sense are inextricable. Read silently, or aloud, poems perform" (1999:242).<sup>17</sup> Similarly, writing about the rhythmic properties of the Homeric hexameter, Ahuvia Kahane has suggested that "even in writing this rhythm remains an event: it calls for a speaker/reader/hearer [. . .] it is a performance" (1997:111).

The importance of sound as a function of poetry is not in itself remarkable, but Logue privileges sound effects to a degree that is rare in contemporary poetry outside of the spoken word performance circuit. This is where the analogy with Homeric epic proves useful. In an article on the textualization of traditional oral works, John Miles Foley starts with the practice of Dennis Tedlock's transcription of the songs of a Native American tribe, the Zuni, which he describes as a process of "mapping the oral event onto an augmented textual surface designed to bear more and different kinds of meaning than the conventional printed page" (Foley 1997a:2). According to Foley, Tedlock's approach to converting the Zuni songs into print employs a set of visual, typographic cues that result in an oral supplement to the printed text, amounting to "the overdetermination of the reader's activity" (*idem*).

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<sup>14</sup> The bibliography on this subject is huge. For a brief and accessible summary see Bakker 2003. On the tension between text and oral tradition in Homer epic more generally, see Foley 1991, 1997b, 1999, 2002:22-57, and Haubold 2007:espec. 41-44.

<sup>15</sup> Foley 1991 and 2002:109-24. See Österreicher 1997:207: "What exactly is the oral in oral poetry?" For an insight into different conceptions of the relationship between orality and performance, see the essays in Bakker and Kahane 1997.

<sup>16</sup> See Steiner 2002:6: "*War Music* is conceived for the ear and many of its splendours only unfold when read aloud."

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also Underwood 1998b:82.

Similarly, readers of *War Music* are confronted with a poem written not just with the spoken voice in mind, but with performance in mind as well.<sup>18</sup> Logue's Homer has a rich performance history, ranging across radio, CD, and stage.<sup>19</sup> Its success on stage, whether read by the poet or actors, or adapted and performed by theatre companies, is a testimony to Logue's dramatic art.<sup>20</sup> As with Homeric epic, so with Logue, the poet's verbal art cannot be disentangled from performance. The layout of his poem is often likened to a script, with the very deliberate alternation of text and blank space controlling the pace at which the reader moves through the text, signaling performance.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Logue's Homer contains a veritable soundscape; to the sound of the dramatic voice we can also add music, insofar as his language strives to reproduce both visually and aurally (on the page and in the ear) the music of war.

### Echoing Homer

I propose to develop this discussion of sound in Logue by exploring what he does with a single simile from Book 16 of the *Iliad*. In the interests of the pace of his narrative, Logue has cut many of the similes in the Homeric episodes that he has chosen to adapt.<sup>22</sup> However, in those that he retains, he typically supplements the details present in Homer and maximizes the play on the senses that is a feature of the most vivid Homeric similes. In the early editions of his Homer adaptations (*Patrocleia*, 1962 and *Pax*, 1967), the similes were printed in italic font in order to mark a change of pause or lull in the narrative. This is how he reads the similes when you listen to the audio version of the poem: as a pause for breath that allows the listener to gather their senses and to punctuate the narrative with a vivid interlude. Following Logue, Lombardo employs this convention of rendering similes in italics and performing them in a different register (1997:x):

In performance, I found myself isolating the similes somewhat and marking them—pausing a little before and after, changing the voice, dropping any percussion I may have been using—in order to bring out their quality as poetic events distinct from the poetry of the narrative and speeches. I

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<sup>18</sup> See Hardwick 2004:346-49 on performance poetry in Logue and other contemporary adaptations of Homer.

<sup>19</sup> On the performance history of *War Music*, see Underwood 1998a:61 and 1998b:82.

<sup>20</sup> At a recent colloquium in celebration of Logue's work, participants were treated to a performance of parts of *War Music* by members of the Old Vic Theatre School (Institute of Greece, Rome, and the Classical Tradition, University of Bristol, November 7, 2007). I was intrigued to learn that Bristol Old Vic currently uses Logue's Homer to introduce first-year drama students to the rhythm and cadences of blank verse.

<sup>21</sup> See the reflections of Liane Aukin on the recording of *War Music*: "Logue's musicality reminds us that words not only convey everyday meaning but are a notation. The punctuation, gaps between the lines, the length of a line, the changes of font indicate changes of pace, of tone, of variations in pitch and volume and, at times, of silence" (Logue 2001b:9).

<sup>22</sup> For a recent discussion of Logue's "assimilation" of Homeric similes, see Taplin 2007:181-84. See also Underwood 1998a:62-64.

found that the narrative resumed with a kind of quiet power after a simile had been given full attention in this way, and that the audience's engagement with the performance was deepened.<sup>23</sup>

The simile that I examine here occurs in Book 16 of the *Iliad*, and compares the noise produced by the Greek and Trojan forces fighting over the body of the Lycian warrior Sarpedon, an ally of the Trojans, to the crashing noise that arises in a mountain glen as two woodcutters fell trees (*Iliad* 16.633-37). To put Logue's version in context, I quote the Greek text (passage 1), followed by Martin Hammond's straighter prose translation of the simile (passage 2), before giving Logue's simile (passage 3) in three different versions—the 1962 version (a), the 1981/2001 version (b), and the audio recording (c):

### 1. Homer *Iliad* 16.633-37

τῶν δ' ὡς τε δρυτόμων ἀνδρῶν ὀρυμαγδὸς ὄρωρεν  
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσης, ἕκαθεν δέ τε γίγνεται ἀκουή,  
ὡς τῶν ὄρνυτο δούπος ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης  
χαλκοῦ τε ῥινοῦ τε βοῶν τ' εὐποιοιητάων,  
νυσσομένων ξίφεσιν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν.

### 2. Hammond 1987:286-87

Then like crashing that arises in the glens of a mountain when woodcutters are at work, and the noise can be heard from far away, so from the wide-wayed earth rose up the thud and clash of the men's bronze and leather and well-made ox-hide shields, as they thrust at each other with swords and double-pointed spears.

### 3. Logue 1962:27 and 2001a:159

#### (a) 1962 edition of "Patrocleia"

*Try to recall the pause, thock, pause,  
Sounds that are made when axebledges follow  
Each other through a valuable wood.  
Though the work is going on on the far  
Side of the valley, and the axebledges are  
Muted by a mile of clear, still standing air,  
They throb, throb gently in your ears.  
And occasionally you can hear a phrase  
Spoken between the men who are working  
More than a mile away, with perfect clarity.*

Likewise the sounds of  
Spear against spear, shield against shield, shield

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<sup>23</sup> Compare Martin 1997:144 on the rhythmic properties of Homeric similes, which "punctuate the narrative, giving it an almost musical rhythm and providing episodic definition."

Against spear around Sarpedon's body.

**(b) 1981/2001a edition of "Patrocleia"**

Try to recall the pause, thock, pause,  
 Made by axe blades as they pace  
 Each other through a valuable wood.  
 Though the work takes place on the far  
 Side of a valley, and the axe strokes are  
 Muted by depths of warm, still standing, air,  
 They throb, throb, closely in your ear;  
 And now and then you catch a phrase  
 Exchanged between the men who work  
 More than a mile away, with perfect clarity.

Likewise the sound of spear on spear,  
 Shield against shield, shield against spear  
 Around Sarpedon's body.

**c) Sound Clip taken from Logue 2001b, CD 5, track 13**



In Logue's adaptation, the nouns denoting sounds in the Homeric simile (*orumagdos*, *akouê*, and *doupos*)<sup>24</sup> are amplified in the evocative phrase "pause, thock, pause," which conveys the stilted rhythm of the axe-fall and also alludes to the pace of the poem and the pauses in the reading voice.<sup>25</sup> The axe-strokes are "muted" and "throb, throb" in your ear; then, to the sense of sound, Logue adds touch—the "warm, still" air. Further amplifying the sound effects in the Homeric simile, he adds voices—snatches of the woodcutters' conversation—to the sound of the axes in the Homer.

Notwithstanding his dependence on English translations of Homer, it is important to be alert to Logue's capacity to mimic the sound effects of Homer's Greek, which he gleaned by listening to classicists such as Donald Carne-Ross and Jasper Griffin read out Homeric hexameters. In the last three lines of Logue's version of the following simile, the sibilance of

<sup>24</sup> *orumagdos* ("noise" or "sound"); *akouê* ("hearing" or "sound heard"); *doupos* ("thud" or "dull noise").

<sup>25</sup> Logue echoes this simile in miniature elsewhere, where he uses the sound effect "thock" to describe the noise of war—"Arrows that thock," and describes the Greek warrior Bombax taking heads "Like chopping twelve-inch logs for exercise" (2001a:177).

Logue's verse seems to echo the last line of the Homeric simile "*nussomenôn xiphessin te kai egchesin amphiguoisin*" (*Iliad* 16.637), which contains five sigmas that conflict with the hard, clashing consonants  $\xi$  (*xi*),  $\kappa$  (*kappa*),  $\chi$  (*chi*), and  $\gamma$  (*gamma*) to produce the sound of metal on metal:

Likewise the sound of spear on spear,  
Shield against shield, shield against spear  
Around Sarpedon's body.

If we look at the two different versions of Logue's adaptation of this simile, we see that references to sound are less obtrusive in the revised version, published in the 2001 edition of *War Music* (previously published in 1981). In the 1962 edition there is more explicit, aural vocabulary: the noun "sounds" in the second line, the verb "hear" in the eighth line, and the participle "spoken" in the penultimate line. These three words have dropped out in the revised version, which is no less audible but more discreet in its use of aural vocabulary. The 1962 version also employs the device, referred to above, of rendering the similes in italics: typography mimics the acoustic design of the poem as spoken word, signaling that the voice should slip into another, quieter, slower register.

In Logue's lines not only do we have the internal echo (the rhythm "pause, thock, pause" of the woodcutter's strokes corresponds to the sound of "spear on spear," "shield against shield," "shield against spear"), but the chosen sound effects also echo previous translations, leading to the amplification of Homer in another, intertextual, sense. In his "Author's Note" at the beginning of *War Music*, Logue (2001a:vii) tells the reader that when he started out he relied on five famous translations of the *Iliad* [George Chapman (1611), Alexander Pope (1720), Lord Derby (1865), A. T. Murray (1924), and E. V. Rieu (1950)].<sup>26</sup> His mention of these translators clearly establishes that the composite history of the *Iliad* in English translation is the source for his own adaptation, rather than a putative Homeric Greek original.<sup>27</sup>

Garry Wills has suggested (2003:xv) that there is a debt to Chapman in Logue's version of the simile, although he does not say where the debt lies. I think he must be referring to the fact that Chapman slows down the course of the simile by pausing to dwell on the felling of the trees, which he describes in two different ways for emphasis: "chopping, chopping still" and "laying on on blocks and trees" (1998:339):

And then, as in a sounding vale (neare neighbour to a hill)  
Wood-fellers make a farre-heard noise, with chopping,  
                  chopping still,  
And laying on on blocks and trees: so they on men laid lode,  
And beate like noises into aire both as they stroke and trod.

<sup>26</sup> See Underwood 1998a:*passim*, but espec. 56-57; and Hardwick 2004:347-48.

<sup>27</sup> Armstrong (2005:176) discusses the theoretical implications posed by translations, whose "source text" is "a whole *series* of previous translations with perhaps only *some* input from the 'original,' or even none at all."

In Chapman's version the anadiplosis of "*chopping, chopping still*" and "*laying on on blocks and trees*" also slows down the verse. Similarly, Logue's "pause, thock, pause" halts the flow, as does the highly idiosyncratic detail of the "valuable wood" in the third line. I have debated the significance of this adjective with several audiences and have received a number of suggestions; whatever the rationale behind Logue's choice of this particular word, by the time the reader/listener has stopped to think about it, "valuable" has done its work in pausing the narrative.

The detail of the "axe strokes" (present in the 1981/2001 text of "Patrocleia," but not in the 1962 text) arguably takes after Chapman's description of the warriors, like the woodcutters, striking with their weapons ("as they stroke and trod"). While the pace of Logue's simile may derive its pace from Chapman's version, the ternary unit "pause, thock, pause" simultaneously winks at Pope's "Blows following blows." It is also in Pope's translation that the sound effects are most explicit: Pope's verse realizes the sound effects in Homer, performing the echo between the tenor of the simile (the thud / *doupos* of the weapons), and the vehicle (the sound / *orumagdos* of the woodcutters) (1906:329; Book 16, lines 766-72):

And thick and heavy sounds the storm of blows.  
As through the shrilling vale, or mountain ground,  
The labours of the woodman's axe resound;  
Blows following blows are heard re-echoing wide,  
While crackling forests fall on every side:  
Thus echoed all the fields with loud alarms,  
So fell the warriors, and so rung their arms.

Pope's couplets bristle with sound-effects: the "shrilling vale" and the "crackling forests," as well as the internal echo: "the labours of the woodman's axe resound"—a sound effect that itself resounds in the next line in the participle "re-echoing" and subsequently in the line "Thus echoed all the fields with their loud alarms." Matthew Arnold judged Pope's rhyming couplets to be an alien intervention that highjack the movement of the poem by pairing lines that are independent in the original, changing the movement of the poem (1960:106). However, in this instance I would argue that the rhyming couplets are felicitous in that they enhance the very sound patterns that are present in both the form and the content of the lines. The rhymes call to each other, promoting the echo.

Commentators on this passage in Homer remark on its highly visual nature. For example, Richard Janko suggests that the detail of the sound carrying (*hekathēn de te gignēt' akouē*) "implies an observer; in fact both we and Zeus are watching" (1992:391). I would argue that this simile has a metapoetic function as well: the echo of the sound suggests the potential of the scene to travel to remote audiences, listening to the performance of the poem and visualizing these images in their minds' eye. Through evoking a familiar sound-image, the Homeric narrator bridges the distance between the war at Troy and the world of his audiences. Similarly, Logue situates the audience in the poem, with the detail that the axe strokes "throb, throb, closely in

your ear.”<sup>28</sup> He is not alone in doing this; Robert Fitzgerald also imports the audience into the poem by translating the phrase *hekathen de te gignet' akouê* (“the sound is heard from far away”) as “the echoes ringing for listeners far away” (Fitzgerald 1974:292).

There are interesting analogies to be drawn between the performativity of Logue's simile and the cultivation of intimacy between speaker and listener in Homeric similes. In Logue's adaptation, the second-person pronouns (“your ear... you catch”) and the instruction “Try to recall” directly involve the reader/audience in the creation of meaning, linking the poem to their experience. Drawing on cognitive theory, Elizabeth Minchin has identified this “cultivation of intimacy” as one of the functions of the Homeric simile (2001:138). Foley suggests a different yet complementary approach; in a discussion of the role that figurative language can play in oral-derived poetry, Foley argues that the pivots in Homeric similes (typically “so,” “as,” and “like”) can be read as performance keys<sup>29</sup> in that “they alert the audience to the nature of what is transpiring and tell them how to take it” (2002:88). Whereas Minchin stresses the cultivation of intimacy through the evocation of shared experience, making the simile and the text within which it is embedded more memorable to poet and audience alike, Foley emphasizes how these similes that demand the audience's attention constitute an important part of the poem's communicative economy.

In this simile from Book 16, both Homer and Logue cue their readers/audiences into an episode in the poem through a rich soundscape in which particular sound-bytes may serve as a hook to the reader. This is not a natural soundscape, since in both Homer and Logue the sound effects of poetry are the product of rhetorical and poetic traditions;<sup>30</sup> but the reality effect—the idea that the simile contains fragments of everyday experience—is an important part of the way in which the poets communicate with their audiences.

## Conclusion

My discussion of this simile from “Patrocleia” has stressed the importance of performance in Logue's poetry, not merely as part of the history of the text but also as a guide to how to make sense of the poem through frequent performance cues. In conclusion, I will suggest that this simile is also typical of the way in which Logue hints at the performative force of his Homer poems. In the simile considered here, he reflects on the success of his own sound effects, claiming the quality of “clarity” for the voices of the woodcutters (2001a:159):

And now and then you catch a phrase  
Exchanged between the men who work  
More than a mile away, with perfect clarity.

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<sup>28</sup> See Taplin 2007:182 on Logue's characteristic use of the second-person pronoun.

<sup>29</sup> For the concept of “performance keys,” see Bauman 1977:15-25.

<sup>30</sup> In the case of Homer this rhetorical and poetic tradition is lost to us and must be constructed retrospectively.

The reference to the reader/audience (“you catch”) hints that Logue’s own words transmit these voices “with perfect clarity.”<sup>31</sup> We can compare this wink at the poem’s own performance with the end of *Cold Calls*, which is also where *War Music* ends.<sup>32</sup> Logue concludes his version of the embassy to Achilles with two striking lines in which the verbally challenged warrior Ajax quotes Shakespeare (2005:44):

Lord, I was never so bethumped with words  
Since first I called my father Dad.<sup>33</sup>

These two lines epitomize the force of Logue’s Homer and his instinct for judicious compression, embodying the character of the Homeric Ajax in just two lines, or indeed in the one word “bethumped.” How appropriate that Ajax should physicalize the effect of language in this way. And last but not least, these lines articulate for the audience the pleasure of reading and hearing Logue’s poetry, an experience that leaves this reader, at any rate, bethumped with the power of words.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Compare Keats hearing Chapman “loud and bold,” and the clarity that results, in the sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (1816). See Greenwood 2007:165-68 on synaesthesia in Logue’s Homer and Keats’ sonnet.

<sup>32</sup> *Cold Calls*, published in 2005, was intended to be the penultimate installment of *War Music*, but now looks set to be the end of Logue’s Homer.

<sup>33</sup> Shakespeare, *King John*, Act 2, scene 1, 467-68: “Zounds! I was never so bethumped with words / Since I first called my brother’s father Dad.”

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