

“MY SOUL’S FAR BETTER PART”: HOMER’S HECTOR AS MAN OF FEELING¹

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ABSTRACT. *“My Soul’s Far Better Part”*: *Homer’s Hector as Man of Feeling*. Eighteenth-century sentimentalism may seem foreign to the brutal world of Homer’s *Iliad*. Yet the parting of Hector and Andromache as depicted in the ancient Greek epic was a key symbol of sensibility in British culture at this time. Translations of the scene became staples of poetic anthologies and were quoted in periodicals, conduct books, and novels. The same passage was a popular theme for neoclassical art. This article will explore what attracted readers so persistently to the Homeric farewell scene. In contrast with previous scholarship, which maintains that eighteenth-century thinkers saw this episode primarily as an affirmation of separate, gendered spheres, I argue that interpretations of Hector and Andromache in this period blur the lines between traditionally masculine and feminine traits, transforming Hector into a “man of feeling.” This article begins by outlining how the ideals of sensibility created ambiguities in the construction of masculinity. In the second section, a close reading of Alexander Pope’s translation of the parting scene reveals that he deployed these ambiguities to make Hector a more appealing masculine archetype for a modern audience. Finally, I explore two important eighteenth-century artistic works directly inspired by Pope’s translation, demonstrating how the artists

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Angelica Kauffman and Gavin Hamilton used the parting scene to challenge traditional notions of manly heroism and to highlight themes of love and sympathy within the *Iliad*.

Keywords: *Hector, "man of feeling," sentimentalism, Homer, epic, gender, Alexander Pope.*

REZUMAT. „*Jumătatea desăvârșită a sufletului meu*“: *Hector, personajul lui Homer, ca om sentimental.* Sentimentalismul secolului al XVIII-lea poate părea cu totul și cu totul străin de lumea violentă și brutală a *Iliadei* lui Homer. Însă, despărțirea dintre Hector și Andromaca, așa cum este reprezentată în textul antic grec, devine în cultura britanică de mai târziu un simbol foarte puternic al sensibilității. Traduceri ale acestei scene se găsesc pretutindeni în antologii de poezie publicate la acea vreme, dar și în reviste, manuale de conduită și romane. Același pasaj devine o temă recurentă în arta neoclasică. În acest articol, îmi propun să explorez ceea ce i-a atras atât de mult pe cititorii secolului al XVIII-lea la această scenă homerică de rămas bun. Spre deosebire de alte studii critice, care susțin faptul că gânditorii secolului al XVIII-lea au văzut în această scenă o demarcare clară între cele două sfere ale masculinității și feminității, doresc să demonstrez că Hector și Andromaca sunt înțeleși în această perioadă într-un mod care confundă, de fapt, trăsăturile masculine cu cele feminine și îl transformă pe Hector într-un vrednic om sentimental. În prima parte a acestui articol, explic faptul că idealul sensibilității aduce cu sine o reprezentare ambiguă a masculinității. În a doua parte, propun o analiză atentă a traducerii lui Alexander Pope care arată cum acesta se folosește de astfel de ambiguități pentru a-l transforma pe Hector într-un arhetip masculin care să fie cu adevărat atractiv pentru un public modern. În cele din urmă, analizez două opere de artă vizuală care aparțin secolului al XVIII-lea și care se inspiră direct din traducerea lui Pope cu scopul de a demonstra faptul că artiștii Angelica Kauffman și Gavin Hamilton s-au folosit de această scenă de rămas bun pentru a contesta noțiunile tradiționale despre eroismul masculin și pentru a sublinia tema dragostei și a simpatiei în *Iliada*.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Hector, omul sentimental, sentimentalism, Homer, epopee, identitatea de gen, Alexander Pope.*

Introduction

“[A] tender scene in the *Iliad*, like a cultivated spot in the Alps, derives new beauties, from the horrors, which surround it. Indeed, had he left us but one specimen of the kind, the interview of Hector and Andromache, in the sixth book, this would have been sufficient to show [Homer’s] entire command over our softest feelings.”

Robert Wood, *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1769, xlii)

When Wood wrote these lines in 1769, he summed up a renewed fascination with Hector and Andromache in British culture which stretched back to the late seventeenth century. Their parting scene, in particular, appealed to the widespread literary, philosophical, and artistic interest in what Wood called "our softest feelings," becoming a kind of "touchstone" of sensibility (Clingham 2000, 54). It was ubiquitous in both literary criticism and visual art, and was translated separately for the first time, as a kind of Homeric set piece. As the century progressed, such translations became staples of popular poetic anthologies and were quoted in a dizzying array of periodical essays, conduct books, and novels. Alexander Pope's 1713 version was reprinted separately as a school text as late as 1880 (Homer; Pope 1880 ed.).

Critics including Morgan Strawn (2012), Claudia Thomas (1994), and Carolyn D. Williams (1993) have briefly discussed Pope's translation of the parting scene to illustrate the importance of tender themes in eighteenth-century readings of Homer or to comment on Pope's portrayals of women. The only full exploration of the scene's broader cultural significance in the literature and art of the period is Jonathan Taylor's (2020). Taylor concludes that the contrast between stalwart hero and weepy wife in Homer's text served as a justification for the doctrine of separate masculine and feminine spheres (Taylor 2020, 101). While this is certainly one aspect of the scene's appeal, such an interpretation ignores the importance of sensibility in eighteenth-century thought and the ambiguities it created in the construction of gender. This chapter will first establish those ambiguities through a discussion of some key sources for early eighteenth-century sentimentalism.³ In the second section, a close reading of Alexander Pope's translation of the parting scene reveals that he rejected medieval and Renaissance depictions of Hector as an implacable, hypermasculine warrior, deploying androgynous portrayals of sympathy and grief to create an icon of sentimental masculinity. Finally, I explore two important eighteenth-century artistic works directly inspired by Pope's translation, demonstrating how the artists Angelica Kauffman and Gavin Hamilton used the parting scene to challenge traditional notions of manly heroism and to highlight themes of love and sympathy within the *Iliad*.

"A kind of Simpathy in Souls": Sensibility and the Complexities of Gender

As Taylor acknowledges, modern scholarship has challenged the idea that rigidly gendered "separate spheres" dominated eighteenth-century British

³ Following John Mullan (1988) *passim* and Thomas Dixon (2015, 69), I use "sentimentalism" and "sensibility" interchangeably.

culture (Taylor 2020, 102).⁴ Although the need for segregation between the feminine and masculine worlds was an important literary trope, other models were emerging, shaped by the ambivalently gendered discourse of sensibility. There is a vast bibliography on sensibility and gender, and I can only discuss a few examples here.⁵ But these widely read philosophical works and periodical articles will reveal evolving ideas of masculinity at the turn of the eighteenth century and help to explain why the love story of Hector and Andromache became a site of engagement with complex notions of gendered ethics.

The discourse of sentimentalism is older than scholars usually acknowledge: the “age of sensibility” is often thought to begin in the 1740s or later (Mullan 1988; Ellis 1996). Yet in the later seventeenth century, theologians were already praising spontaneous outbursts of emotion as signs of a generous human nature designed by a benevolent God. These thinkers included the influential group known as Cambridge Platonists. They believed “that human nature was instinctively sympathetic and that their passions naturally inclined them to virtuous actions” (Barker-Benfield 1992, 67). To have sympathy for those in distress and to exhibit sorrow oneself were both signs of “natural” humanity, even of divinity. For instance, the clergyman Robert South pointed out in 1662 that Christ wept and that his capacity for tender feeling placed him above the Stoics (Barker-Benfield 1992, 68). The Platonist Henry More explained how our “softer” feelings allow us to experience compassion and invite others to have compassion on us: “Nature [...] bestowed on so many of the Creatures when they are oppressed, for the drawing of Compassion toward them [...] a lamenting tone of Voice, the dejection of the Eyes and Countenances, Groaning, Howling, Sighs and Tears.” These expressions would “incline the Mind to Compassion” (qtd. in Barker-Benfield 1992, 67).

The ideas of the Cambridge Platonists shaped the thinking of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, one of the most prominent British philosophers of the early eighteenth century (Barker-Benfield 1992, 105). Shaftesbury was the first to develop the notion of an innate “moral sense,” an idea which would inspire later sentimental philosophers such as Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, and David Hume. This “sense” was “an intuitive [...] emotional response distinguishing good from evil and oriented toward social affection” (Barker-Benfield 1992, 105). Though Shaftesbury was anxious about effeminacy, the idea of a moral sense common to all human beings “by definition could be read

⁴ Vickery (1993) and Klein (1995) were important early challengers to the supposed dominance of “separate spheres” in the eighteenth century. Since then, scholars have discussed women’s involvement in a variety of supposedly masculine worlds: Schellenberg (2007) summarises this scholarship. On men in the domestic sphere, see Maurer (1998) and Harvey (2012).

⁵ Studies of sensibility and gender include Barker-Benfield (1992), Maurer (1998), Ellison (1999), and Harvey (2012).

as something all 'humanity' shared, including women" (Barker-Benfield 1992, 119). By the time Pope was translating the *Iliad*, between 1715 and 1720, the works of both Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists had suggested that the virtuous, instinctive passions which underlie our morality may transcend distinctions of gender.

Such ideas were not limited to the realms of theology and philosophy. Popular periodicals, too, explored the complexities of gendered emotions.⁶ A prominent theme of these discussions, as of the Platonists' writings, was the expression of grief. Tears have been associated with weakness and femininity since at least the days of Plato (e.g., *Republic* 3.395e). The classical humanism of the Renaissance had entailed a particular crackdown on male emotional displays (Capp 2014, 80-82). But during the eighteenth century, male tears became a symbol of virtue for many thinkers (Crane 1934, 206). The moral importance of male tears is demonstrated by the weepy heroes of mid- and late-century sentimental novels (Brissenden 1974, 252-58). But as early as 1709, Richard Steele wrote in the *Tatler*: "To be apt to shed Tears, is a Sign of a great as well as little Spirit" (Steele 1987 ed., I, 471). He suggests that the sources of tears differ for men and women: women weep out of pity for abject suffering, while men, who give greater thought to the "dignity" of behaviour, are more moved by the sight of people trying to control their grief. This distinction affirms a traditional divide between masculine rationality and feminine emotionalism. However, for both genders, weeping may denote "pity" and "reconciliation", symbolising "that Sympathy which is given us for our mutual Good-will and Service" (Steele 1987 ed., I, 471). In suggesting that it was natural to display one's own sorrows and humane to be moved by the grief of others, sensibility challenged models of masculinity predicated on strength and self-control.

The *Tatler* and its even more famous cousin, the *Spectator*, also promoted a conception of marriage in which differences between men and women might be temporarily elided through love and emotional openness. Though historians such as Lawrence Stone (1977) and Rudolph Trumbach (1978) once argued that the eighteenth century saw the invention of companionate marriage, most scholars now agree that mutual affection had always been important in married life.⁷ But the periodicals' language of "sympathy" between husband and wife presented such affection through the newer lens of sensibility. "There is a kind of Simpathy in Souls that fits them for each other," writes Steele of ideal married love, "and we may be assured, when we see Two Persons engaged in the Warmths of a mutual Affection, that there are certain Qualities in both their

⁶ On the ways in which medical discourse shaped conceptions of both emotion and gender, see Barker-Benfield (1992, 8-9).

⁷ The historians who have disagreed with Stone and Trumbach are legion, but see for instance Okin (1982), Vickery (1993), and Shoemaker (1998).

Minds which bear a Resemblance to one another” (Steele, 1987 ed., III, 9). Within a loving relationship, Steele wrote in the *Spectator*, men could freely express their vulnerability: “I need not dissemble the Sorrow of my Heart to be agreeable there, that very Sorrow quickens her Affection. This Passion towards each other...enters into the very Constitution, and the Kindness flows as easily and silently as the Blood in the Veins” (Addison and Steele, 1987 ed., IV, 237). This image suggests the commonalities between husband and wife: their passions are as similar, as natural, and as fundamentally human as their blood.

Those who embraced the notion of a moral sense common to all human beings did not necessarily reject the doctrine of “separate spheres.” Indeed, women’s sentimental “delicacy” was often the very reason alleged for their unfitness to participate in public life – including by Shaftesbury himself (Barker-Benfield 1992, 118). But the popularity of ideas like Steele’s suggests that a Homeric scene involving the sorrows of a husband and wife could, for eighteenth-century readers, bring out the similarities between them just as much as the differences; could serve as a testament to the emotional responses human beings share across gender divides and across millennia.

Tender-hearted Hector

This eighteenth-century reading of the *Iliad*’s parting scene as a moment of sympathy and shared sorrow constitutes a significant departure from medieval and Renaissance interpretations. Since the Middle Ages, this Homeric farewell had been celebrated as an example of “lion-hearted” manliness, in which an indomitable Hector resists the temptations posed by his wife, castigates her foolishness, and rushes back to battle (Burrow 1993, 205; Marzec 2008, 59-63). Hector’s name had even entered the English language in the fourteenth century as a term for a valiant soldier (OED s.v. ‘hector, n.’). In his famous 1616 translation of the *Iliad*, George Chapman perpetuated the image of Hector as a tough masculine ideal, but with a Renaissance twist: he transformed the Trojan warrior into a Stoic paragon who warns his wife to avoid “extremes of thought” and expresses his own “contempt of death” (Chapman 1956 ed., I, 151, 150; Wilcox 1982, 166). There is some support for this single-minded, hypermasculine vision of Hector in the *Iliad*’s text, especially in the moment when he sends Andromache back into the house: “Go back to the house now, attend to your proper tasks, the loom and the distaff [...] [W]arfare shall be the business of men: all those — and myself above all — who are native to Ilion.” (*Iliad* 6.490-93, trans. Green 2015).

By the late seventeenth century, this inflexible, quasi-Stoic vision of masculinity was beginning to pall. The first stand-alone translations of the parting scene tend to critique and satirise, rather than exalting, Hector’s martial

virtue. Knightley Chetwood lampoons Hector's desire not to appear cowardly before his fellow Trojans: "But I not half so much those Grecians fear, // As Carpet-Knights, State-Dames, and Flatterers here. // For they, if ever I decline the Fight, // Miscall wise Conduct Cowardise and Flight" (Chetwood 1693, 110). Here, Hector admits that his decision to return to battle is motivated primarily by subservience to popular prejudice. The great hero is at the mercy of "carpet-knights, state-dames, and flatterers," who prevent him from pursuing the more peaceful course he knows to be "wise conduct." John Dryden, who included his translation of the scene in the 1693 *Examem Poeticum* anthology which he edited, introduced the piece with a bitter indictment of Homeric heroism generally:

[Homer] stirs up the irascible appetite...he provokes to Murther, and the destruction of God's Images; he forms and equips those ungodly Man-killers; a race of men who can never enjoy quiet in themselves, 'till they have taken it from all the World. This is Homer's commendation, and such as it is, the Lovers of Peace, or at least of more moderate Heroism, will never envy him. (Dryden 1693, 23-24)

Dryden alludes here to the generation of civil conflict – including iconoclasm, a true "destruction of God's images" – which preceded the Restoration. Homeric heroes become symbolic of the violence that had characterized English society throughout much of Dryden's adult life. Hector's martial prowess, so admired by medieval and Renaissance commentators, is implicitly condemned as one more instance of this destructive "appetite." In parallel with translations which undermined the moral significance of Hector's heroism, the noun derived from his name changed its meaning. Members of an infamous drinking society founded in the 1650s called themselves "Hectors," and the word became a term for "a swaggering fellow; a ... bully" (Barker-Benfield 1992 49-50; OED s.v. 'hector, n.'). In a society riven with violence, from the terrors of the Revolution and its aftermath to the riotous tavern culture under Charles II, Hector's martial toughness could too easily become synonymous with gratuitous bloodshed.⁸

If Hector was to survive into the eighteenth century as an ideal rather than a tired classical trope, he would have to transform from a ruthless warrior into a gentler archetype which would appeal more fully to the modern, war-weary man. Alexander Pope's famous translation of the *Iliad* accomplished that transformation. It is, in some ways, surprising to find Pope at the forefront of a movement to infuse Homer with tenderness. As Strawn points out, Pope is seldom cited as a sentimental author and has been presented by some scholars

⁸ On the violence of society and tavern culture during the Restoration, see Barker-Benfield (1992, 49-54).

as an opponent of sensibility (Strawn 2012, 586).⁹ Janet Todd asserts that Pope viewed sensibility as “a breakdown of traditional aesthetic standards[...] an unfortunate feminisation of culture” (1986, 47); Barker-Benfield vividly describes Pope’s supposed fears of “liquefying the Stoic male[...] and making women the moral focus” (1992, 298). Pope’s views on gender and emotion were complex: at times, he satirized sentiment and wrote condescendingly about women. His portrayal of Andromache is one example. He makes the princess a dependent sufferer who “hung on [Hector’s] hand” while “the big Tear stood trembling in her Eye” (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 351). Hector, meanwhile, appears in some of Pope’s footnotes as a pious patriot who subordinates private emotions to national affairs: “This Hero, tho’ doubtful if he should ever see *Troy* again, yet goes not to his Wife and Child, till after he has[...] discharg’d every Duty to the Gods, and to his Country; his Love of which[...] makes his chief Character” (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 349).

Yet despite such portrayals of helpless femininity and stalwart, emotionally controlled manliness, Pope could also praise both manly and womanly passions. His “Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady” and the Ovidian verse epistle, “Eloisa to Abelard,” both composed while he was translating the *Iliad*, express an acme of despairing love which drew praise from sentimental readers throughout the century (Mullan 1997, 426). Pope’s *Essay on Man* presents passion not as “unmanly,” but as central to the human being:

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
 Their virtue fix’d, ’tis fix’d as in a frost;
 Contracted all, retiring to the breast;
 But strength of mind is exercise, not rest:
 The rising tempest puts in act the soul [...]
 These [passions] mix’d with art, and to due bounds confin’d,
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind:
 The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and colour of our life.
 (Pope 1996 ed., 519-20)

Though Pope stressed the important role of reason in confining the passions to “due bounds,” he also felt that the “strife” of “light and shade” in the human soul gave it “strength and colour.” The beauty and meaning of life consisted precisely in a “liquefying of the Stoic male,” a rejection of the frozen peace of neoclassical masculinity in favour of a tempestuous sea where, Pope wrote, “[God] mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind” (Pope 1996 ed., 519). Steven Shankman’s

⁹ Exceptions exist: Ferguson (1986) focuses on passion in Pope’s verse, and Eustace (2008) sees Pope’s poetry at the heart of American sentimentalism.

readings of Pope's *Iliad* have shown how Pope refused to moralize about the need to suppress unruly passions as Chapman had often done, reveling in the rage of Achilles (1983, *passim*). For Pope, then, the passions are not merely signs of effeminate weakness. Instead, they provide an androgynous form of virtue which can be productively synthesized with reason but also admired in its own right.

In his translation of the parting of Hector and Andromache, Pope created a Homeric hero whose emotions were akin those of his distressed wife. In addition to emphasizing Hector's "Love of his country," Pope makes the Trojan prince a loving husband. Twice, Andromache is described as part of his own soul: first when he sets off to seek her after his visit to Paris' chamber and subsequently when he comforts her in her grief. In the first example, it is the epic narrator who voices this sentiment:

He said, and past with sad presaging Heart
To seek his Spouse, his Soul's far dearer Part.
(Pope 1967 ed., VII, 349)

The second time, Hector uses the phrase himself:

Andromache! My Soul's far better Part,
Why with untimely Sorrows heaves thy Heart?
(Pope 1967 ed., VII, 357)

Thomas (1994, 29) points out that these lines resonate with a growing eighteenth-century conception of marriage as "passionate friendship," and would appeal to those interested in more exalted roles for wives. Such language also suggests that a certain kind of loving dependence might be admirable in husbands. The great warrior is not whole and self-sufficient, but needs his wife, conceiving her as an integral element of his own being.

In the second example, Homer uses the word *δαίμων*, which Chapman had rendered simply as "wife" (1956 ed., I, 149), Dryden as "my wife and mistress" (1693, 467) and Chetwood as the chilly "madam" (1693, 110). But Pope grafts onto Homer a Platonic image of love as a sharing of souls. This image may have more immediate origins in Dryden's Restoration tragedy, *The Conquest of Granada* (1672). There, it is invoked by Queen Almahide when she is forced to banish her heroic lover Almanzor because of her prior commitment to a fiancé she does not love: "Adieu, then, O my soul's far better part! Your image sticks so close, // That the blood follows from my rending heart" (1978 ed., 96). Especially because Pope reuses the rhyme of "part" and "heart," early eighteenth-century readers may have heard the echo of Dryden's famous tragedy. That echo of a tragic woman's voice comes, in Pope's *Iliad*, through the

speech of an epic hero. These passages, then, undermine the rigid distinction Pope maintains elsewhere between masculine duty and womanly tenderness.

Pope's Hector does not, however, merely exhibit tenderness in the parting scene. He also displays an impassioned, uncontrollable grief. The emotional climax of Pope's portrayal comes when Hector imagines the destruction of Troy and the enslavement of his wife. In Homer, Hector laments:

ἀλλ' οὐ μοι Τρώων τόσσον μέλει ἄλγος ὀπίσσω,
οὔτ' αὐτῆς Ἑκάβης οὔτε Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος
οὔτε κασιγνήτων, οἳ κεν πολέες τε καὶ ἔσθλοι
ἐν κονίῃσι πέσοιεν ὑπ' ἀνδράσι δυσμενέεσσιν,
ὅσσον σεῦ, ὅτε κέν τις Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων
δακρυόεσσαν ἄγηται ἐλεύθερον ἦμαρ ἀπούρας.
(*Iliad* 6.450-55)

Yet it's not the Trojans' coming miseries that so concern me
not what Hekabē will endure, or our sovereign Priam,
or my brothers, so many, so valiant, who all may end up
trodden into the dust by their hate-filled enemies— no,
it's your grief I think of, when some bronze-corseleted Achaian
will lead you away, weeping, your day of freedom gone...
(trans. Green, 2015)

There is deep pathos in these lines, both in the ruin Hector imagines for his society and in the way he subordinates all other sorrow to his grief for Andromache. The lines echo the famous passage in which Andromache calls Hector "my father, my lady mother, my brother" (*Iliad* 6.428-30, trans. Green 2015). While Hector has not, like Andromache, lost all his other loved ones, he does claim that for him, too, conjugal love is more significant than any other relationship in his life.

Translators before Pope render this passage in a tone of controlled, elegiac sadness. Dryden (1693, 445) writes that the projected loss of his family members and ruin of Troy create not "half of the concern I have for thee," using the moderate and reasonable-sounding word "concern" to describe Hector's grief. This is in fact a fairly literal translation of Homer's μέλει. Chetwood writes, "But all compar'd with you does scarce appear // When I presage your case, I learn to fear" (1693, 107). The intensity of Hector's "fear" is dampened by the language of rational contemplation that surrounds it: "learn," "compar'd," "case." Only Pope transforms this speech into a cry of anguish:

Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates;
(How my Heart trembles while my Tongue relates!)
The day when thou, imperial Troy, must bend...
And yet no dire Presage so wounds my Mind,

My Mother's Death, the Ruin of my Kind,
Not *Priam's* hoary Hairs defil'd with Gore,
Nor all my Brothers gasping on the shore;
As thine, *Andromache!* Thy Griefs I dread;
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
(Pope, 1967 ed., VII, 355)

Pope adds a series of horrific images to the Greek: where Homer's Hector envisions only ἄλγος [...] Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος[...] κασιγνήτων, "the pain of lord Priam [and] of my brothers," Pope's imagines Priam's "hoary Hairs defil'd with Gore" and the brothers' "gasping." He combines this list of miseries with a prophecy of utter destruction nowhere to be found in the original: "The Ruin of my Kind." Playing on the similarity between the words "kin" and "kind," this line evokes not only Hector's family or even the city of Troy but the entire human race – "mankind." This language conveys the despair he associates with such defeat. After this long build-up, the short phrase by which Hector designates the one grief that trumps all others – "As thine, *Andromache!*" – takes on a special poignance. *Andromache's* long, resonant, foreign name takes up nearly half the syllables in its line and underscores her position as the single most important figure in this long catalogue of woes. It disrupts the smooth, end-stopped flow of Pope's heroic couplets, where sentences almost never finish in the middle of lines, as if Hector's sorrow had broken the rhythm of his speech. Rather than simply describing Hector's grief, Pope vividly represents his uneven syntax. The monosyllabic simplicity of the following statement, "Thy Griefs I dread," enhances the sense of an unaffected expression of fear and sorrow, while the internal caesuras after "trembling" and "weeping" lend a similarly halting quality to line 579. Pope's Hector also admits to his own trembling here: "How my heart trembles while my tongue relates!" This line, alongside Hector's vision of the "trembling, weeping" *Andromache*, presages the images of sensitive male and female bodies which would become so prominent in sentimental fiction.¹⁰ Husband and wife are united by their shared physical responses to grief.

A final intimation of Hector's overwhelming sorrow appears in Pope's footnote to his prayer for *Astyanax* (ll. 604-615 of the translation). Pope comments on the discrepancy between the hopes Hector expresses here for his son's future welfare and his later predictions of the dire fate of Troy. He suggests that these predictions are not prophecies, but rather the tragic visions of a mind plunged in misery: "These Forebodings of his Fate were only the Apprehensions and Misgivings of a Soul dejected with Sorrow and Compassion, by considering the great Dangers to which he saw all that was dear to him expos'd" (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 356). Hector's "soul" is laid low by his "sorrow" and

¹⁰ On sentimental bodies, see Mullan (1988) 201-40.

love for those around him. He is subject to “Apprehensions” and “Misgivings.” The contrast with the single-minded, “lion-hearted” warrior of medieval interpretations and with the controlled Stoicism of Chapman’s Hector is stark.

This grief-stricken loss of control brings Hector’s emotional state close to that of his wife. If she “hangs on his hand,” physically incapacitated by sorrow, he too is “dejected,” a word which etymologically evokes a man “thrown down” in the face of misfortune. Andromache’s speech, like Hector’s, is punctuated by frequent exclamation marks and interjections: “Too daring Prince!” “Oh grant me Gods! [...] All I can ask of Heav’n, an early Tomb!” (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 351). These examples do not negate the fact that Andromache’s weakness provides a foil for Hector’s strength. But they do complicate such binaries, suggesting that Hector, too, possesses a tender soul capable of being overwhelmed by sorrow. Even his ultimate dismissal of Andromache is in Pope’s version a matter of hesitation:

No Force can then resist, no Flight can save,
 All sink alike, the Fearful and the Brave.
No more – but hasten to thy Tasks at home,
 There guide the Spindle, and direct the Loom:
 Me Glory summons to the martial Scene
 The field of Combate is the Sphere for Men.
 (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 358)

Though Hector unambiguously affirms the doctrine of separate spheres in line 635, Pope implies Hector’s reluctance to end the conversation in the phrase, “No more – .” The dash creates a pause in which one can almost hear Hector marshalling his strength, becoming with an effort the glorious warrior once again. Adeline Johns-Putra writes, and Taylor repeats, that “the true warrior easily forgets or dismisses the seductive or weeping woman” (Johns-Putra 2001, 64; Taylor 2020, 106). But parting is not easy for Pope’s Hector, who fully shares in Andromache’s sorrow.

This portrayal of Hector represents a turning point in the reception of Homeric masculinity. In places, Pope’s translation and notes uphold the binary opposition between stalwart men and trembling, passionate women. But the hero’s farewell to his wife brims with a newly sentimental pathos. These outbursts of “Sorrow and Compassion” ushered in a new fashion for finding in the Homeric hero a modern man of feeling.

Pope’s version of this Homeric farewell became canonical as few other English translations of Homeric passages have done. Its appearances in anthologies and other literary collections during the eighteenth century support the idea that readers at this time valued the scene not primarily for its assertion of separate gendered spheres, but rather, as Pope wrote, for its representation of

"Love, Grief and Compassion" (Pope 1967 ed., VII, 349). Two popular anthologies glossed over or suppressed the moment when Hector sends Andromache back into the house. John Newbery, "the founding father of children's literature" (Brown 2006, 352) included excerpts of Pope's translation in his book *Poetry Made Familiar and Easy to Young Gentlemen and Ladies* (1769). He quotes some of Andromache's speech, Hector's prayer for his son, and the tearful parting as Hector assumes his helmet, but passes by Hector's actual dismissal of his wife with a summary: "Another short Speech, wherein Hector endeavours to allay his Wife's affliction, and advises her to mind her domestic employments, while he obeys the call of honour, and acts in the proper Character of a Hero" (Newbery 1769, 207). Despite the fact that Newbery calls Hector's actions "the proper Character of a Hero," it is significant that he does not quote the passage in question, which means that more of the reader's attention is devoted to scenes of mutual pity and sorrow than to Hector's assertion of man's place in the world of combat and woman's necessary domestic confinement. The novelist and playwright Oliver Goldsmith's anthology of verse for women, *Poems for Young Ladies* (1785), is cited by Taylor (2020, 110) as an instance of the parting scene's utility as a bulwark for the concept of separate spheres because other poems included in the book praise women's retreat from the world. But Goldsmith only quotes Andromache's speech to Hector and Hector's initial, grief-stricken reply, excising their final separation (Goldsmith 1785, 125-30). While not incompatible with the ideology of feminine retirement expressed in other parts of the anthology, this scene represents love and suffering; it is not deployed by Goldsmith for its portrayal of a hero sending his wife into the house. The scene served as evidence that Homer shared the ideals of mutual tenderness which flourished in the age of sensibility.

After the publication of Pope's translation, such sentimental interpretations of the parting scene proliferated in English literary criticism. Canonical monographs like Thomas Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735, 332-3) or Robert Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1769, 165-7) discussed its portrayal of sympathy and love at length, while a rash of periodical articles ensured that the scene was a topic for polite conversation as well as scholarly exegesis.¹¹ In these sources, the parting is typically hailed as "tender" and "pathetic," and Pope's translation of it is often quoted. Pope's interpretation of the scene as a depiction of intense love and compassion thus became integral to eighteenth-century audiences' appreciation of the *Iliad* as a whole.

¹¹ E.g.: [Anon.] "Essay on Epic Poetry." *British Magazine* 8 (1767): 485-88; [Anon.] "A Summary of the Trojan War." *New Lady's Magazine* 2.24 (1787): 21-23; [Anon.] "On the Pathos of HOMER and the Characters of the ILIAD." *The Town and Country Magazine* 24 (1792) 134-36.

Seeing Sensibility: Hector and Andromache in Eighteenth-Century Art

This reading of the parting scene reflects a prominent strand of its representation in visual art, where it was a highly popular subject; there were more individual illustrations of this scene than of any other derived from Homer's poems throughout Europe in this period (Wiebenson 1964, 25). The fact that "feminine" sensibility of the kind we saw in Pope's translation pervades many artistic portrayals of the parting is no coincidence, since artists were often directly inspired by Pope.

Angelica Kauffman, the century's most famous female artist and one of two female founding members of the Royal Academy, produced several paintings of Homeric subjects.¹² She was also a great reader of Pope, frequently depicting his "Eloisa to Abelard."¹³ On a visit to Kauffman's studio in 1768, the author Helfrich Peter Sturz found the artist with Pope's Homer lying nearby (Rosenthal 2006, 20). Given her sustained engagement with his works, Kauffman's paintings on epic subjects should be interpreted not simply as depictions of Homeric myth but also as artistic responses to Pope's translations.¹⁴

Kauffman's *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache* (1768; fig. 1), featured in the Royal academy's first exhibition in 1769, catapulted her to fame. Modern critics have remarked on Hector's androgynous physique and uncertain stance in the image. For Albert Boime (1987, 113), he is a "wistful juvenile, who wears his helmet uneasily"; for Angelica Goodden (2006, 124), he is "alarmingly feminine for a man about to go to war." Taylor (2020, 116) even suggests that Kauffman offers "a partial rewriting of Homer, in which Andromache wins the argument and Hector (whom Kauffman has incline his head towards Andromache as if he is indeed heeding her advice) succumbs to the temptation to surrender himself to domesticity." What has been less discussed is the way the painting stresses the shared nature of the couple's grief. While Andromache leans on Hector, he also seems to lean on her, inclining not just his head but also his body towards hers as he gazes down toward their son. The scene around them is dark; yet a clear light illuminates Hector's face, Andromache's neck and shoulder, and the embrace of baby and nurse in one field of vision as they stand on the same level plane. Taylor (2020, 116) argues that viewers knew this experience of unity was only a brief deviation from the gender-segregated conventions of epic, and thus downplays its subversive qualities. But the painting itself glorifies the

¹² On Kauffman's portrayals of Homer's *Odyssey*, see Rosenthal (2006) 15-41.

¹³ One example is the *Farewell of Abelard and Héloïse*, 1780. Oil on canvas, the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.

¹⁴ Rosenthal (2006, 35) notes how closely Kauffman's paintings of Penelope follow Pope's translations.

loving interaction before Hector's return to battle, asserting its beauty, significance, and worthiness to be represented on a large canvas in the Royal Academy (it is 157.5 x 201 cm). By painting this phase of Hector and Andromache's conversation, as opposed to his dismissal of Andromache or one of the battle sequences involving Hector in the *Iliad's* next book, Kauffman tells viewers which parts of the story to value. The moment she chose was one of mutual passion, mutual grief, and even mutual weakness between a loving husband and wife. Like the anthologies that skimmed over objectionable or less compelling passages within the parting scene, paintings could isolate and celebrate particular moments while suppressing the broader epic trajectory.

Kauffman's painting not only elides the distinctions of gender; it also complicates distinctions of class. Hector and Andromache are placed in close proximity to their servant, and her loving interaction with Astyanax mirrors their own. The nurse and baby gaze affectionately at one another just as Hector and Andromache do, and the infant reaches out his hand to caress her, as Hector joins hands with his wife. In typical portrayals of this scene, such as that of Gavin Hamilton which is examined below (fig. 2), nurse, baby, or both look toward Hector and Andromache, drawing the viewer's eye away from them and back to heroic couple. But here, baby and nurse become their own self-contained pair, their shared affection as worthy of depiction as the scene of romantic love. Through her sympathetic, detailed depiction of the nurse, Kauffman further de-emphasizes the heroic narrative of battle and highlights the beauties of domestic life. Her painting opens up the radical possibility that serving woman, princess, and hero all possess the same capacity for tenderness and love.

This ideal of tender-hearted heroism appears even in the parting scene painted by the Scottish artist Gavin Hamilton (fig. 2), which at first glance seems to construct a rigid dichotomy between strong hero and weak wife. In contrast with the feminine Hector depicted by Kauffman, Hamilton highlights the masculine power of Hector's body: the muscles of his chest, right arm, and leg are clearly defined, and his spear appears poised for action. With his left hand, he makes what could be seen as a firm gesture of denial while Andromache melts into a posture of supplication. Hector's "towering" physique led Anne K. Mellor to assert that Hamilton's painting "clearly suggests that the emotional bonds of family love must be given up for the good of the state" (Mellor 1995, 132). Yet Hamilton's Hector gazes down at his wife, in sharp contrast with other versions of the scene like Jean Restout's (1727, fig. 3) and John Flaxman's (1793, fig. 4), where Hector looks away from his family to invoke the aid of the gods and to symbolize his unshakeable focus on his heroic destiny. Despite his manly body, the face of Hamilton's Hector painted in soft, almost feminine curves. Astyanax reaches toward him – a revision of Homer's text, where the baby is afraid to look at his helmet-clad father – and in this context, Hector's left arm might also be

stretching out as he prepares to carry or caress his son. Given these details, is not so clear that the Trojan hero renounces “the emotional bonds of domestic love.”

Hamilton’s painting, unlike Kauffman’s, is crowded with figures – warriors, suppliants, and Hector’s charioteer – which are not mentioned in Homer’s parting scene. This crowd was a convention in paintings of Hector’s farewell, visible in Antoine Coypel’s 1708 version (*Hector’s Farewell*, oil on canvas, Musée des Troyes) and Restout’s 1727 one. These figures may suggest a panoramic vision of Troy under siege, with soldiers heading out to battle and women praying at the temple of Athena, as they do in *Iliad* 6.289-310. Whatever the reason for their presence, Hamilton’s chaotic group of spear-brandishing warriors makes the battle feel frighteningly close both to the supplicating women and to Hector and Andromache themselves. The boundaries between domestic and military worlds appear highly permeable. This portrayal suggests that Hector is not renouncing the affections of home for the glories of war, but rather facing a rising tide of conflict which has already enveloped both himself and his wife. War is not a heroic choice but a terrifying inevitability, and Hector must fight to protect those he loves.

As the nurse adds nuance to Kauffman’s painting, so the other figures in Hamilton’s tableau heighten the scene’s pathos and further undermine the sense of separate masculine and feminine spheres. To the left, one warrior leans on another, perhaps in fatigue. His posture, though not as abject as Andromache’s, does mirror hers, especially as he lacks a helmet and the soldier on whom he leans wears a crested plume like Hector’s. This helmeted figure is holding a shield before his friend’s chest to protect him. Tenderness and dependence on others, then, appear in warriors as well as in delicate female characters. To the right, a little boy huddles near a weary or wounded man. The boy’s position, with his arm outstretched before the older man’s body, might be simply fearful, but it also suggests a pitifully futile attempt to shield him from danger. This pair could thus be interpreted as an ironic mirror image of the warrior shielding his friend on the other side of the painting. So although Hamilton does present the predictable contrast between the overwhelming sorrow of Andromache and the manly resolution of Hector, that contrast is complicated by Hector’s own pained, sympathetic expression and by the images of other wounded or demoralized men. War, the painting reminds us, makes victims of all kinds of human beings, and its crises throw into sharp relief many forms of self-sacrificing love.

This painting was part of an influential series of six enormous depictions of the *Iliad* which Hamilton completed in Rome from the late 1750s through the 1770s. Hamilton, like Kauffman, was likely inspired by Pope: as Lindsey Errington (1978, 12) remarks, “the emotional content [of Hamilton’s paintings] is purely of the eighteenth century, and the suffering of a kind not [...] recognisable in the Greek [...] It is almost certain[...] that this extraneous element crept into the

paintings as a direct result of Hamilton's too faithful rendering of his chosen text – not Homer's original, but Alexander Pope's free and sometimes inaccurate paraphrases" (Errington 1978, 12). Of the six paintings, one represents the parting scene and one shows Andromache mourning Hector's death. As Duncan Macmillan (1999, 48) explains, "[Hamilton] took the violent, heroic story of the *Iliad* [...] but he modified it significantly, creating from the story of Hector and Andromache an equal, parallel plot to the story of Achilles and Patroclus. Thus, he contrasts their gentle, domestic love with the violence of Achilles' anger which destroys it." This feature of Hamilton's compositions was shaped by his own exposure to the philosophy of "moral sense" alongside Adam Smith at Glasgow University, learning "that morality itself depends on feeling" (Macmillan 1999, 51). Though Macmillan correctly argues that femininity is a key source of "feeling" in Hamilton's works, the figures in the foreground of his parting scene suggest that compassion can, in the interstices of battle, transcend distinctions of gender and age.

Conclusion: Becoming A Tender-Hearted Hero

Eighteenth-century reinventions of the parting of Hector and Andromache, then, are more ambivalent and complex than Taylor allows. They represent not solely a reification of gendered divisions but also an exploration of the permeability of those divisions, of the crises which bring men and women into the same emotional world. As the century progressed, some thinkers began to see Hector's supposed domesticity and tenderness as a model for masculinity in everyday life. A 1779 article in the *Hibernian Magazine*, one of Ireland's most popular eighteenth-century literary publications, urges the pleasures of domesticity for modern men. The authors take Hector as an exemplar of "the happiness of domestic life":

Among the great variety of pictures which the vivid imagination of Homer has displayed throughout the *Iliad*, there is not one more pleasing than the family-piece which presents the parting interview of Hector and Andromache [...] We are refreshed with the tender scene of domestic love, while all around breathes rage and discord [...] A professed critic would attribute the pleasing effect entirely to contrast, but the heart has declared [...] that it is chiefly derived from the satisfaction that we naturally take in beholding great characters engaged in domestic and amiable employments. ([Anon.] 1779, 504)

In an extraordinary reversal, the scene that had so clearly indicated the separation of male and female worlds to medieval and Renaissance readers becomes here an instance of how those worlds might be beneficially united. The author does

not suggest that men should give up employments in the public sphere, and he acknowledges Hector's status as a great warrior ("we are pleased to see that arm, which is shortly to be employed in dealing death...employed in caressing an infant son") ([Anon.] 1779, 503; 505). Yet he implies that the moral center of life lies in domestic pursuits: "To partake with children in their little pleasures is by no means unmanly. It is one of the purest sources of mirth. It has an influence in amending the heart [...] The duties called forth by the relations of husband and father are of that tender kind which inspire goodness and humanity" ([Anon.] 1779, 503). The Homeric hero may belong on the battlefield and the eighteenth-century gentleman in the "senate-house or at the bar" ([Anon.] 1779, 503) but both also belong in the home. Moved by Pope's translation of the parting scene and by the art and literary criticism it helped to inspire, eighteenth-century readers sought to become tender-hearted heroes.

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LIST OF FIGURES



Figure 1. *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache.* By Angelica Kauffman, oil on canvas. 1768. Saltram House. ©National Trust Images/John Hammond



Figure 2. *Hector's Farewell to Andromache,* oil on canvas. 1775. © The Hunterian, University of Glasgow.



Figure 3. *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache.* Oil on canvas. Private collection (Sotheby's New York).



Figure 4. After John Flaxman, *The Meeting of Hector and Andromache.* Etching by James Parker. 1805. In *The Iliad of Homer engraved from the Compositions of John Flaxman R.A., sculptor.* Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, Robert Harding Evans, and John and Arthur Arch: London, 1805. ©Royal Academy of Arts, London