Figures tragiques du savoir

Les dangers de la connaissance
dans les tragédies grecques et leur postérité

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Cassandra, between knowledge and suffering

Apollon, you, of Troy – it happens to you
As you demanded! I bring you, homeland,
The dead victim! Then I’m free.

Oedipus, Antigone, Prometheus, Cassandra… these are much more than just the names of mythical characters. In fact, their stories are not frozen in a specific time; rather, they surpass its boundaries. And it is the characteristic plasticity of myths that allows a story first told or staged in the fifth century BC to be revisited, although with a distinct resonance, in later centuries. Thus, every time a novelist, playwright, painter, sculptor or filmmaker borrows a myth, the result is a new reading of that same narrative, since it was written in a different time, which attempts to answer different questions.

Oedipus, for example, is presented as a passive figure by Homer, whereas in Oedipus the King by Sophocles he is the one who takes the initiative, thus focusing the character on the question of knowledge. Twenty years later, the same tragedian uses again the figure of Oedipus, but with different traits. He will also be presented as a tyrant by Seneca in the first century, involved in a love affair in a novel by Corneille in the seventeenth century and used by Pasolini in the twentieth century as a means of criticism of his society’s politics and ideology.

Therefore, the return to the Greek myths is extremely useful and effective, namely to writers. As Angela Belli states,

The value of the mythological character rests precisely in the fact that he is not an individual but a type, an archetype, in fact. Larger than life, he embodies a universal truth. Each member of the audience, regardless of social milieu or psychological drives, can see part of himself in the archetypal character.

The use each author makes of the myths is inherently related to the ideology stemming from historical circumstances. It is the reflection of each historical period. The myths are therefore constantly being updated; all the distinct approaches to them are essential to a genuine understanding of a given society’s worldview. Take, for instance, the Trojan war: although these events, and the problems they present, are quite distant from the twentieth century,

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1 This paper was translated into English by Celina Agostinho, with the exception of the excerpts from the German play, which were translated by Hugo Mendes Amaral. I thank both for their help and support.


they are again the background of literary works written centuries later, which approach matters as distant as post Civil War America, with a Freudian depiction of the characters4, or a philosophical debate on man’s freedom in occupied France5. Adding to this the fact that myths are always in construction becomes particularly important and evident in moments of crisis, whether collective or individual, and in moments of change or even of rupture with the traditional order of things, in an attempt to find new meanings.

Hence, in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, German culture was marked by a strong *hellenophilia*, a result of numerous factors. Especially after the end of World War I with Germany’s defeat, the recovery of myths becomes a necessity, a way to restore a heroic past to the German State. Germanic mythology and the Trojan myth will highly contribute to this end, and therefore are widely used in National Socialist Germany, which finds in them the promise of the millenary Reich it will now try to rebuild6.

For this purpose, it is worth mentioning the historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, whose words in *Kulturgeschichtliche Charakterkopfe* are an excellent testimony of the feeling of the time (the underscores are ours):

> We regarded Greece as our second homeland; for it was the seat of all nobility of thought and feeling, the home of harmonious humanity. Yes, we even thought that ancient Greece belonged to Germany because, of all the modern peoples, the Germans had developed the deepest understanding of the Hellenic spirit, of Hellenic art, and of the harmonious Hellenic way of life. We thought this in the exuberance of a national pride, in virtue of which we proclaimed the German people the leading culture of the modern world and the Germans the modern Hellenes. We announced that Hellenic art and nature had been reborn more completely in German poetry and music than in the poetry and music of any other people of the contemporary world... **Our enthusiasm for Greece was inseparable from our enthusiasm for our fatherland**... We looked back to classical antiquity as to a lost paradise.7

It is in this context that we find a work of Drama entitled *Kassandra: Eine Tragödie*8, by the lyric poet Hans Schwarz. Here we will try to expound the modifications the author made to the classical Cassandra and how they are justified or explained not only by the author’s historical period, but also his ideology9. We will try do demonstrate how the Trojan Princess is here the

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4 *Mourning becomes Electra*, by Eugene O’Neill.
5 *Les Mouches*, by Jean-Paul Sartre.
8 *Cassandra: A tragedy*.
voice of the National Socialism and a clear example of literary practice submitted to totalitarian political principles under the Third Reich\textsuperscript{10}. However, even with these modifications, what we’ll see in the end is still the intimate and inseparable connection between the glory of knowledge and the suffering and disaster to the one who has it.

\textit{Kassandra}, published in Berlin in 1941 and never translated into any other language, was thought to have vanished during the war. The only known copy is now in the rare books collection of The Library of Munich\textsuperscript{11}. However, thanks to great persistence and a stroke of luck, we managed to find a copy of this book in a used books store in Berlin.

We believe it is important to clarify a few issues prior to the analysis of the play. On the one hand, in XX century German Drama the figure of Cassandra evolves toward autonomy. In fact, whereas in traditional mythology it had always had secondary status and was always integrated in larger narratives related to or about the Trojan War, Cassandra is now elevated to protagonist. On the other hand, we highlight that Hans Schwarz’s \textit{Kassandra} is not the first nationalist treatment of the prophetess\textsuperscript{12}. Indeed, this representation dates back to the nineteenth century, as exemplified by Heribert Rau’s nationalist novel, \textit{Deutschlands Kassandra}, which contains a critical view of the expansion politics of eighteenth century France and praises the greatness and the superiority of the German blood, through the voice of a woman called Cassandra.

However, in the play by Hans Schwarz we find a «völkisch»\textsuperscript{13} use of the Trojan princess. This «völkisch» use of Cassandra is closely related to the use of Myth, namely the Trojan myth, and of Tragedy as a means for national identification. In order to understand this fact, it is important to consider the life of Hans Schwarz, the author of \textit{Kassandra}.

Hans Schwarz was born in 1890 and died in 1967. He studied ancient philology, and was a devoted student of the widely known Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. At the age of 24 he volunteered for World War I, where he was badly injured. Following his return from the front he faced great difficulties to find employment. After a few precarious jobs, he found employment at the Office of Propaganda with the help of the writer Moeller van den Bruck\textsuperscript{14}. There he helped to publicize the so-called «National

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\textsuperscript{11} According to information given in December 2011 by the Professor, Investigator and Director of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal Isabel Capeloa Gil.

\textsuperscript{12} For a review of the evolution of the figure of Cassandra in German literature from “Kassandra” by Friedrich Schiller (1803) to \textit{Cassandra} by Christa Wolf (1985), see T. Epple, \textit{Der Aufstieg der Untergangseheerin Kassandra}, Würzburg, Königshausen und Neumann, 1993.

\textsuperscript{13} This term is derived from the German word «Volk», which means «The People», but also conveys the notions of «nation» and «race». Given the lack of a single English word that encompasses its full set of meanings, we opted to use the German term.

\textsuperscript{14} Author of \textit{Das Dritte Reich}, written in 1923. Its title and some of its content were appropriated by the Nazis.
Revolution» and the ideals of the Battle of Langemarck, that is, youth, nation and sacrifice\textsuperscript{15}. Later on he joined the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers’ Party), known as The Nazi Party\textsuperscript{16}. He was therefore a writer of the Regime, highly regarded for his «strong and virile political attitudes»\textsuperscript{17}. His verses «Poets must march / in formation like soldiers.»\textsuperscript{18} illustrate the role ascribed to literature under the Third Reich: all art forms must contribute to the increase of the Führer’s power.

As the author himself notes\textsuperscript{19}, the tragedy \textit{Kassandra} was written in 1916-1917, in the trenches of Ypern. Subsequently, the play is amended twice: once in 1941, the year when it is premiered (and published as a book), and once six years earlier, in 1935 (one year before its divulgation in the form of copied manuscripts), when the verses of the Chorus are introduced between the acts. As we will see, this modification is crucial for the conveyance of the National Socialist message.

The general outline of the story is familiar to us: Cassandra, King Priam’s daughter and priestess of Apollo, alerts her fellow Trojans to the dangers of bringing the wooden horse into the city. Her warnings are ignored, and when the calamities she foresaw occur Agamemnon takes the prophetess as a spoil of war and brings her to his own land, where both will meet death.

From the very beginning of the play, the Trojan princess is characterized as possessing superior national awareness, in comparison to her fellow Trojans, clearly a consequence of her gift of prophecy. This is promptly expressed in her warnings and her attempts to prevent the hauling of the horse into the city. Cassandra knows what will happen and this knowledge is felt with suffering as we had already seen in \textit{Agamemnon}, by Aeschylus: «Ah, the marriage, the marriage of Paris, that destroyed his friends! Ah me, Scamander, my native stream! Upon your banks in bygone days, unhappy maid, was I nurtured with fostering care. (...) O the sufferings, the sufferings of my city utterly destroyed!»\textsuperscript{20} (v.1156-1167). Although we do not fully agree with Isabel Capeloa Gil, who believes some verses of the Greek tragedies to possess «nationalist traits»\textsuperscript{21}, we do however consider to be evident that Hans Schwarz used Cassandra’s strong attachment to her homeland (typical of Greek mentality) and the suffering her prophecies provoke with an exacerbated nationalist imprint.

\textsuperscript{16} To know more about his life, see O. von Nostitz, \textit{Ein Preuβe im Umbruch der Zeit: Hans Schwarz (1890-1967)}, Hamburg, Hans Christians Verlag, 1980.
\textsuperscript{17} E. Weißser, «Hans Schwarz», \textit{Die Neue Literatur}, 38, 1937, p. 113-122, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{19} H. Schwarz, \textit{Kassandra}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{20} All quotations from this text are from: Aeschylus, \textit{Agamemnon}, translated by H. Weir Smyth, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1926.
\textsuperscript{21} I. Capeloa Gil, \textit{Mitografias - Figurações de Antígona, Cassandra e Medeia no drama de expressão alemã do séc. XX}, vol. I and II, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda, 2007, p. 306, n. 20. We believe the Greeks were patriots but not nationalists, a modern concept they did not possess.
In act I of Hans Schwarz’s drama, Cassandra begs Priam, her father and King of Troy, to prevent the bringing of the horse into the city, going so far as to say that the one to allow it will be «a criminal»\(^{22}\). Seeing that her warnings are ignored by the king and anticipating the misfortunes lying ahead, Cassandra laments:

\[
\text{I oscillate between pity and contempt}
\]
\[
\text{For you are too weak and coward to believe!}
\]
\[
\text{Oh, I deplore only the poor people}
\]
\[
\text{That are subject to such Princes!}
\]
\[
(...) 
\]
\[
\text{Do not betray your people!}^{23}
\]

This image of the weak and treacherous leader is perfectly integrated in the identification of the mythical time of Troy with the contemporary time of Germany, present from the beginning of the play. The parallelism is evident: the Trojan defeat is the German defeat in World War I. The German people (Trojans) were betrayed by their weak leaders (Priam) who, eager for peace (the main reason for their decision), made choices (the hauling of the horse into the city) that have only lead the People to defeat, due to their disregard for the warnings made by the most perceptive among them (Cassandra and Laocoön). Therefore, Priam, who in \textit{Agamemnon} is praised by Cassandra for his countless sacrifices for the city, is now characterized by Hans Schwarz as weak, cowardly, villainous, anxious and even intoxicated with the celebrations of peace. In sum, a traitor.

In contrast to Priam, Cassandra emerges as entirely identified with the People. This is visible in the vocabulary she uses, with the repetition of words such as «Heimat», «Vaterstadt», and «Vaterland» (terms with different senses of «Nation» or «Homeland») and statements such as: «Now we are one, You my people and I»\(^{24}\).

We can now better understand the author’s decision to represent Agamemnon and Cassandra as in love with one another: the conflict between Cassandra’s loyalty to Troy and her attraction to Agamemnon (who stands for the enemy) is the core of this tragedy. Such closeness between Cassandra and Agamemnon is not an innovation, given that it is well-attested since the Homeric Poems. But even in the classical world the portrayal of their relationship varies. Whereas in \textit{Agamemnon}, by Aeschylus, the Trojan princess is deferent toward the Greek king – she not only calls him «my master» (v. 1225) and «noble lion» (v. 1259) but also states that she will cry for both her own fate and his –, in the \textit{Trojan Women}, by Euripides, Cassandra’s hatred of Agamemnon is manifest: she perceives their involvement as a means to avenge her family (v. 403-405). Thus, in Hans Schwarz’s drama, Cassandra’s relationship with Agamemnon can only be perceived as a betrayal of her people. Because he is the enemy, that relationship represents treason. And Cassandra is constantly seduced by an imposing and noble Agamemnon, by his

\(^{23}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 45-47.
\(^{24}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 23.
words, his behavior, his charisma. It is a leader with heroic traits that rescues her from the burning temple of Apollo in act II. It is a good and fair leader that, in act III, hits the guard Cassandra had identified as the one who had hit the Trojan old man.

Moreover, Cassandra’s treason is placed at a higher level. She cannot belong to Agamemnon. In fact, she cannot belong to anyone, because she already belongs to someone, and that someone is a god, Apollo, whom she was offered to as a child, by her father, Priam. And even though she experiences his love as a punishment and with suffering, she knows that there is an inviolable connection between the two of them.

Furthermore, Apollo, to whom the Trojan people now turn for salvation, is always present throughout the play, whether as a statue or as a shadow, thus constantly reminding Cassandra of her duties toward him, that is, her duties of loyalty and obedience. When, in act IV, in the rocky island where Agamemnon promises his love to Cassandra, she finally gives in and nestles in his arms, after burning her ribbon, a symbol of her condition of prophetess, Apollo does not abandon her. On the contrary, he reaffirms his authority. And when Cassandra speaks to him and he turns his back on her, the prophetess knows what she has to do, and explains it to Agamemnon: «He calls me to duty!» Here, Apollo is identified with the Führer, to whom the People owe loyalty and obedience. Not even the strongest feeling of all – love – can break that link between the leader and his People, because it is sacred, and therefore indissoluble. This way, Hans Schwarz transforms religion into politics, once and for all.

There is, on the other hand, a different voice at the end of each act, the voice of the Chorus. In act IV, the night Cassandra and Agamemnon spend together on the rocky island, its words are crucially important: «If you want to commit an outrage, terrible days will come, / Flames will wrap you up in madness!» Thus, the Chorus represents a collective voice, the voice of the community. Here, Hans Schwarz employs the same resource as Attic tragedy, that is, as stated by Jean-Pierre Vernant, one «personnage collectif et anonyme (…) dont le rôle est d’exprimer dans ses craintes, ses espoirs, ses interrogations et ses jugements, les sentiments des spectateurs qui composent la communauté.» This usage of the Chorus is one of the most distinctive characteristics of nationalist drama. Hans Schwarz uses it here as a means to show the spectator how the events just represented on the stage should be comprehended. In fact, it is the verses of the Chorus that carry nationalist undertones the most: «You can abandon your God, / Promise your

25 Ibid., p. 39.
26 Ibid., p. 103.
27 Ibid., p. 105.
enemy your body, / You cannot escape your people, / Or else your longing becomes felony!

The power of the people, constituted in the community of blood and race, is inescapable. The People has one only blood. It runs through its veins. Without it there is no life. Thus, there is a relation of consanguinity that comes from the beginning of time and was used as the main justification for one of the greatest atrocities in History. It is in this relation that we can find the concept of the superior race. In Hitler’s own words in Mein Kampf: «The sin against blood and race is the hereditary sin in this world and it brings disaster on every nation that commits it.»

Hence, it should not strike us as odd that the Chorus demands Agamemnon’s death. He does not have their blood running through his veins, he is the enemy:

What you love, you will slay in pain!
What you fled will fulfill the curse!

We rather want to go into exile,
We rather die on the roadside
Than not to resist the senses anymore,
For the foreign countries change us.
(…)

Mother night (…)
Fill our hearts with that courage…

Thereby, Hans Schwarz alters the traditional myth in which Agamemnon is killed by Clytemnestra as revenge for Iphigenia’s sacrifice. Although he preserves the relationship between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the same deadly intention, the same purple carpet, the same hatchet is now in Cassandra’s hand, who is now the one who will kill Agamemnon. Here another aspect of the myth is recovered, one that relates Cassandra to the vindictive deities who are responsible for persecuting and punishing sinners and restoring justice, and who lead Heraclitus to write: «The sun will not overstep his bounds, for if he does, the Erinyes, helpers of justice, will find him out» and who Cassandra herself identifies with in the Trojan Women (v. 457). In fact, in this tragedy, Cassandra directly takes the role of an Erinye. It will be her forced union with Agamemnon that will lead to the murder of the King and, long afterwards, to the death of Clytemnestra by the hand of Orestes.

Now Hans Schwarz turns Cassandra into the Erinye of the race, as demanded by his national-socialist ideology. In the words of Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Propaganda Minister, «The enemy can bomb our houses to rubble. The hearts of the people will burn with a hatred that cannot be extinguished. The

30 H. Schwarz, Kassandra, op. cit., p.105.
32 H. Schwarz, Kassandra, op. cit., p. 105-106.
33 See v. 356-361, 403-405 and 460-461.
hour of revenge will come.»\textsuperscript{34} Cassandra will do what Apollo (in the name of the Nation) demands of her, thus subjecting herself to a higher authority:

\begin{quote}
Apollon! – (Quiet stammering.)  
My Lord! – My saviour, you! – My bridegroom!  
I’m home! – Take my veil away! –  
I’ll stay with you – I want to do everything  
You demand! - I can’t go on! - Oh!!\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

It is both odd and meaningful that Hans Schwarz ascribes to Cassandra a statement like «I can’t go on». Out of context, this statement could lead us to believe that Cassandra had struggled with that feeling. An interpretation of this play as a tragedy of conflict would then be available to us. As José Pedro Serra affirms: «In broad strokes, the tragic conflict presents itself under two forms: either as a dilemma, or as a clash that threatens to destroy those involved in it.»\textsuperscript{36} Starting with the second hypothesis, how can we speak of a «clash» here if Cassandra has total and absolute knowledge of all things? As a prophetess, she knows what will happen and what her fate is. Early on in the play, in act II, Cassandra foresees the events of the horse, the destruction of Troy, her own father’s death, her love for Agamemnon and his death, as well as her own. And can we speak of a «dilemma»? Can we handle the problem of Cassandra’s obedience to a divine order as a dilemma? This possible dilemma is promptly resolved by Cassandra herself in act I, more precisely with her answer to Myrtis, when she asks Cassandra why she does not flee the city: «Because no one can flee»\textsuperscript{37}. Cassandra is aware that she is only a spectator of her own fate, and that she does not have the power to change it. The notion of conflict surpasses her, since there is no possibility of choosing at all. She is only the physical instrument of a higher will.

And it is here that we find the tragic. There are superior forces – Apollo – that compel her to revenge. But Cassandra does not truly have control over her own actions, she simply acts accordingly to fate, which has already been decided and, more than a duty, is an inescapable obligation, beyond all free-will. An obligation she must fulfill both as a priestess of Apollo and as a citizen of Troy. Therefore, when Cassandra says «I can’t go on», she is not answering a dilemma she has faced and made a decision on. This is simply the lament of someone who suffers, but also accepts and fulfills her own fate.

It cannot go unnoticed that this attitude carries echoes of the majestic Cassandra in \textit{Agamemnon}, especially in her reaction to adversity. She is a superior character, somewhere in between the human and the divine. Also in \textit{Agamemnon}, Cassandra refuses to leave the place where she knows death awaits her, thus evidencing her heroic character. In this play, we find in Cassandra the same characteristics the Chorus leader notes in \textit{Agamemnon}: «a

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{34} R. Bytwerk, «Nazi Propaganda by Joseph Goebbels 1933–1945», 1999 (this paper can be read at \url{http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goebmain.htm}), p. 186.
\item\textsuperscript{35} H. Schwarz, \textit{Kassandra}, op. cit., p. 115.
\item\textsuperscript{36} J. P. Serra, \textit{Pensar o Trágico: categorias da tragédia grega}, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2006, p. 199.
\item\textsuperscript{37} H. Schwarz, \textit{Kassandra}, op. cit., p. 37.
\end{footnotes}
courageous spirit» (v. 1302) and to «die nobly» (v. 1304), in contrast to the Commander of the House of the Atrides, who will have «a death unbefitting a king» (The Libation Bearers, v. 479). It should also be noted that, in Kassandra, the prophetess declines Clytemnestra’s aid in the killing of Agamemnon, alleging that she is used to the blood of the sacrificed animals, which is what Agamemnon will be to Apollo. But she also refuses to kill him in his sleep. She prefers to face him upfront38, thus demonstrating her superior character.

Now, to bridge the gap with national-socialist ideology, it is noticeable that Hans Schwarz’s Cassandra, as Isabel Capeloa Gil refers, is «stuck in an image of herself, that of the Trojan nationalist visionary, which is determined by an ideological discourse that commands self-denial, the subjection of the self to the principle of the charismatic leader’s will and to the community’s tragic necessity.»39. Thereby, Hans Schwarz needs only to make one last change to the traditional myth so that his ideological frame will be complete: instead of being killed by Clytemnestra, Cassandra will offer the Nation the utmost gift she – or anyone – can give, that of her own life: «Apollon, you, of Troy – it happens to you / As you demanded! I bring you, homeland, / The dead victim! Then I’m free!»40 Cassandra can only be free if she obeys and fulfills her duties, her obligations and her heroic sacrifice in the name of the Nation. And thus Hans Schwarz subjects her «to the higher demands of communitarian doctrine, turning her into a utopian idealist of a millenary Reich, which demands her sacrifice in the altar of the Nation.»41.

It is also worth mentioning that whereas in Agamemnon Cassandra dies as punishment for the hybris she displayed when she rejected and deceived Apollo42, in Kassandra Hans Schwarz turns her suicide into salvation and expiation for her crime, i.e. the night she spent with Agamemnon. Only after giving her own life for the Nation Cassandra will be free. Here we can clearly see, again, echoes of Goebbels’ words who, in 1936, had outlawed plays depicting the horrors of World War I and required their replacement with plays glorifying self-sacrifice in the name of the Nation: «The duty of the individual during war extends to sacrificing his life for the life of his nation (…) Only such willingness to sacrifice transforms a collection of individuals into a people, and in a higher sense, a Nation.»43.

We believe to have demonstrated that, by centering the narrative on the conflict between Cassandra’s loyalty to Troy, represented by Apollo, and her attraction to Agamemnon, as well as by using solutions such as Cassandra’s killing of Agamemnon and her own suicide, Hans Schwarz alters the traditional mythological narrative in the exact locations that are to him essential for the transmission of national-socialist ideology, built on the defense of the Nation, the race and the blood. Throughout the play nationalism is more and more

38 Ibid., p. 122.
40 H. Schwarz, Kassandra, op. cit., p. 124.
42 Displaying here the traits of individualism and stubbornness many modern reworkings of the myth of Cassandra will be based on.
exacerbated, and it is made an attempt to demonstrate that war is a necessary evil, so that the People can assert itself, and that the desire for peace can only lead to destruction. All this culminates in the reestablishment of order through blood. In Hans Schwarz’s hands, as Isabel Capeloa Gil notes, «Cassandra becomes an allegoric metonymy for Troy, embodying and defending the values of discipline, faith, obedience and self-denial in response to communitarian demands, and reaffirming the bond between blood and Nation through individual sacrifice.»

We cannot end this paper without referring that, paradoxically, the same myth can serve different purposes. This is what happens to the figure of Cassandra in these troubled times. For example, in the poem «Kassandra», by Heinz Politzer, the prophetess is identified with the Jews, warning to the dangers of Nazism. Also Friedrich Walters, who was exiled in France, and Erika Mitterer, who preferred to stay in Germany although she opposed the regime, used the figure of Cassandra in their writing from a humanist point of view. Each one of these writers had a different relation with National Socialism, yet they all used the myth of Cassandra. In sum, what they all have in common is what Theodore Ziolkowski called «the hunger for myth».

It is true that Kassandra by Hans Schwarz undeniably represents a dark period in the life of this myth. From emblem of the tragedy of knowledge, she is made into an icon of propaganda for an ideology that lead to one of the greatest crimes against humanity ever committed. However, as stated by Lévi-Strauss, «il n’existe pas de version “vraie” dont toutes les autres seraient des copies ou des échos déformés. Toutes les versions appartiennent au mythe.»

Thus we return to the idea that opened this exposition, that is, that myths are dynamic entities and that their use, namely that of the myth of Cassandra, is a reflection of each time. However, we also see that Cassandra’s vast knowledge has been, throughout history, synonymous with suffering. She is, therefore, a clear illustration of how knowledge and disaster go hand in hand.

Let us await, then, especially in a time of crisis with several «Cassandras» that continue to be unheard, for the answers this new century has for the desperate question Cassandra asks in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon: «Why then do I bear these mockeries of myself, this wand, these prophetic chaplets on my neck?» (v. 1264-1265).

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44 I. Capeloa Gil, Mitografias, op. cit., p. 473.
45 Friedrich Walters wrote Kassandra in 1938, when he was exiled in France. Erika Mitterer wrote Die Seherin in 1942.