

**Christina Kkona**

*Université Bordeaux Montaigne*

*France*

### **Albertine in Anne Carson's queer journeys: from Stesichoros to Proust**

Defying binaries and established categories, Anne Carson's oeuvre operates at the intersection of prose and poetry, word and image, classical and contemporary worlds, literature and criticism, and challenges the boundaries between self and other, male and female, myth and reality. If in *Geryoneis*, Stesichoros rewrites Hercules' tenth labor from the point of view of Geryon, in *Autobiography of Red* (1998), Carson rewrites *Geryoneis* transforming the imperialistic drive into a passionate love affair that leaves the red – winged monster in desperation. The two characters, renamed and middle – aged, meet again in *Red Doc* (2013), a sequel explicitly “haunted by Proust.” In these hybrid verse novels dealing with Eros and Thanatos, time, memory and loss, Carson mocks literary scholarship and publishing conventions experimenting with the materiality of book form (L. Plate), questions of authorship and even the possibility of meaning. To deal with “the desert of ‘after Proust,’” Carson publishes a year later, *The Albertine Workout* (2014), a list of 59 reflections (plus appendices) on Proust's novel, emphasizing the pathologies of the Albertine cycle and repeating platitudes of Proustian criticism. However, during a preview reading of this work, she claimed that this naïve rewriting of one of the most paradigmatic works of queer culture is not hers but rather the first academic treatise of the queered mythical monster that serves as a protagonist to her novels (J. Thorp). Thus, this paper aims at examining how Albertine's story, as the queerest aspect of the *Recherche* (Landenson), becomes the opus of Geryon as embodiment of otherness in terms of gender, race and humanness, emerging from within a series of translations, rewritings, metamorphoses and textual migrations. It will therefore focus on gender configurations across time and literary landscapes beyond familiar territories.