

A STUDY OF THE RECURRENT CHARACTERS IN  
GREEK TRAGEDY, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO THE EXTANT PLAYS OF EURIPIDES

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
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by

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis examines the recurrent characters in Greek Tragedy. This category comprises the named and human personae but excludes types and deities. The study was originally concerned with the extant plays of Euripides only. However it soon became clear that a comparative analysis of Aeschylus and Sophocles was necessary, to assess the contribution of the earlier playwrights and to establish, in its proper context, the achievement of Euripides. The findings indicate that the degree of consistency in the characterization is much higher than has hitherto been recognized. The evidence for this judgement is based upon literary and stylistic considerations, as well as upon the general behaviour and thoughts of the characters concerned. The first chapter is devoted to Aeschylus. Here it is argued that he began the practice of using recurrent characters because it was appropriate for the trilogic format of the plays and his philosophic view of the continuity in the cosmic and human order. For the first time, too, the psychology of the characters assumed importance and the sympathy of Aeschylus for women is revealed. The second chapter centres upon Sophocles. He extended the scope of the device by employing it in dramas that were connected in themes and ideas but not written as a set trilogy at the same time. The consistency in his personae throws fresh light on his belief in the fundamental unchangeability of human nature. The next three chapters deal with Euripides in the following order: the male characters, then the female characters, and finally the lesser characters. Influenced in his views by Aeschylus, Euripides advanced further, with the result that the device reached its

height under him. It became a means of conveying his beliefs about the effects of war and conflict between human beings, and of achieving psychological realism in his characterization.



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It would not be possible to conclude without a special mention of my wife. Her gentle encouragement and steadfast endurance have enabled me to complete this thesis, and, for this reason, it has been gratefully dedicated to her.

## TO MY WIFE

ἦλθες, ἔγω δ' σ' ἐμαυτόμαν  
ὄν δ' ἔφυξας ἔγαν ἡρένα καλομένην πόδι.

(Sappho)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	7
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	10
CHAPTER ONE : Aeschylus . . . . .	28
CHAPTER TWO : Sophocles . . . . .	74
CHAPTER THREE : Euripides I. Male Characters .	133
CHAPTER FOUR : Euripides II. Female Characters .	200
CHAPTER FIVE : Euripides III. Lesser Characters .	257
CONCLUSION . . . . .	290
APPENDICES . . . . .	294
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	309

SOME ABBREVIATIONS

<b>I</b>	<u>The Greek Tragedians</u>	
	Aeschylus	Aes.
	Agamemnon	Ag.
	Choephoroi	Choe.
	Eumenides	Eum.
	Oresteia	Orest.
	Persae	Pers.
	Prometheus Vinc-tus	P.V.
	Septem Contra Thebas	Sept.
	Supplices	Suppl.
	Euripides	Eur.
	Alcestis	Alc.
	Andromache	And.
	Bacchae	Ba.
	Cyclops	Cyc.
	Electra	El.
	Hecuba	Hec.
	Helena	Hel.
	Heracleidae	Heracl.
	Hercules Furens	H.F.
	Hippolytus	Hipp.
	Ion	Ion
	Iphigenia in Aulide	I.A.
	Iphigenia in Tauris	I.T.
	Medea	Med.
	Orestes	Or.
	Phoenissae	Phoen.
	Supplices	Supp.
	Troiades	Tr.
	Sophocles	Soph.
	Ajax	Aj.
	Antigone	Ant.
	Electra	Elec.
	Oedipus Coloneus	O.C.
	Oedipus Tyrannus	O.T.
	Philotetes	Phil.
	Trachiniae	Trach.
<b>II</b>	<u>Other Ancient Authors</u>	
	Aristotle	Arist.
	Athenaiōn Politeia	Ath. Pol.
	Poetics	Poet.

Herodotus	Hdt.
Homer	Homer
Iliad	Il.
Odyssey	Od.
Pindar	Pind.
Isthmian Odes	Isthm.
Nemean Odes	Nem.
Olympian Odes	Ol.
Pythian Odes	Pyth.
Thucydides	Thuc.

### III Periodicals

L'Antiquité Classique	AC
American Journal of Philology	AJP
Journal of the Australasian Universities Languages and Literatures Association	AUMLA
Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies	BICS
Classical Bulletin	CB
Classical Journal	CJ
Classical Philology	CP
Classical Quarterly	CQ
Classical Review	CR
Classical Weekly/Classical World	CW
Etudes Classiques	EC
Eranos	Er.
Greece and Rome	GR
Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies	GRBS
Helmantica	Helm.
Harvard Studies in Classical Philology	HSCP
Journal of Hellenic Studies	JHS
Mnemosyne	Mnem.
Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society	PCPS
Philologus	Phil.
Phoenix	Phoen.
Revue des Etudes Anciennes	REA
Revue des Etudes Grecques	REG
Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Assoc.	TAPA
University of California Publications in Classical Philology	UCPCP
Wiener Studien	WS
Yale Classical Studies	YCS

IV Miscellaneous

Fragment(s)	fr(r)
Oxford Classical Text (edition)	OCT
Scholia	Σ

N.B. Throughout this thesis, the most frequently used works, editions or commentaries of the Greek tragedies are cited by the author's surname (without initials) and an abbreviated title only. Full details (of place where published and date etc.) may be found in the Bibliography at the end.

## INTRODUCTION

### I Definition of the Subject

The term recurrent characters comprehends, in this thesis, the named human personae who appear in more than one play by the same tragedian.<sup>1</sup> The category excludes types, whether named or unnamed, such as messengers, children or servants,<sup>2</sup> and also supra-human beings such as gods and goddesses.<sup>3</sup>

The extant Greek plays have been the main source of the material used in the thesis.<sup>4</sup> The fragmentary remains have, of course, been consulted, but did not prove of great relevance for this study. The portrayal of character requires a suitable context in which to assess fully how a particular figure is treated throughout any drama; the isolated words or phrases of the lost plays inevitably lack such a context, although they are interesting, in their own right, and can provide additional evidence. But great care needs to be taken, in case the fragmentary plays and their characters should be misinterpreted.<sup>5</sup>

Greek Tragedy employed, in the main, the traditional legendary and mythical stories and figures for its plot and characters.<sup>6</sup> But the playwrights were also allowed, within the general framework, a wide scope for the exercise of their own artistic creativity.<sup>7</sup>

It has therefore been necessary to establish, as far as possible, how much the characterization is due to the tradition, as enshrined in the sources that the dramatists employed. These are, of course, mainly Homer, the Cyclic Poets, the didactic poets (like Hesiod), the elegiac and lyrical poets (like Theognis, Semonides, Stesichorus, Alcman), and the later poets (like Pindar). Much that was available in the fifth century B.C. is now lost to us, but those sources can still prove valuable in assessing the originality of the individual tragedians.

The scholia to the various plays have been useful, as a secondary source material, whereby we can find out the views of the ancient critics themselves concerning Greek Tragedy. They also provide information about our lost sources and about the non-extant plays.

Throughout this thesis, more emphasis is attached to what the characters themselves say or think. This "façon indirecte"<sup>8</sup> is opposed to the method of characterizing by which figures are described or commented upon by others in the drama (whether of their physical or of their temperamental natures).<sup>9</sup> It can be a useful supplementary means of building up the general pattern given to any character, but must be applied carefully, since the characters often differ in their opinions of other people, at various times,<sup>10</sup> and they are not always objective or unbiased in their estimation.<sup>11</sup>

## II A brief Survey of earlier Criticism

A great number of studies on the characterization in Greek Tragedy have devoted much attention to the academic controversy between plot ( $\mu\upsilon\tau\theta\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ ) and character ( $\psi\theta\omicron\varsigma$ ),



which Aristotle first propounded thus: ἔτι ἄνευ μὲν πράξεως  
 οὐκ ἔν γένουτο τραγῳδία, ἄνευ δὲ ζῳῶν γένουτ'  
 ἄν . . . ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἶον ψυχῆ ὁ μῦθος  
 τῆς τραγῳδίας, δεύτερον δὲ τὰς ζῳῶν . . .  
 (Poet. 1450a. 6. 23ff and 38f.). The whole question

seems to me, however, very artificial, and I have therefore considered it unnecessary to enter, at length, into the arguments here.<sup>12</sup> A drama, if it is to be successful, must surely combine a story which is worth telling and a properly-structured arrangement of its events, with a mode of character presentation that is both dramatically and psychologically convincing and quite consistent with the action. I feel, with many critics,<sup>13</sup> that Aristotle exaggerated the one element in tragedy at the expense of the other. Although the present thesis is concerned primarily with one component (character), I have endeavoured to bear in mind that a divorce between it and plot is neither desirable nor possible.

Another problem which has exercised the time and energy of many scholars is the interpretation placed upon Greek Tragedy by Tycho von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff and his followers.<sup>14</sup> He argued that both plot and character were subordinate to dramatic exigencies, and that the dramatic effect of the single scene or situation was more important than the whole: "... was [die Personen] sagen und tun, ist restlos den dramatischen Zwecke des Ganzen untergeordnet".<sup>15</sup> E. Howald expanded Tycho's views to the whole of Greek Tragedy,<sup>16</sup> and W Zürcher devoted a whole book to Euripides, where he concluded that: "... die Personen, wie Euripides sie gestaltet, durch die Handlung und für die Handlung existieren und ... ihr Bild verblasst oder gar sich auflöst, sobald wir es jenseits der dramatischen Fabel, in der

psychologischen Abstraktion festzuhalten suchen".<sup>17</sup>

Several British scholars have followed in the footsteps of these Continental writers and been in general agreement with their basic tenets.<sup>18</sup>

Since the Greek Tragedians were composing dramas which were produced at important religious and competitive festivals, in the theatre, it was clearly essential for them to make their plays as effective (dramatically and theatrically) as possible. But it would be fatuous, in my opinion, to believe that they had no other aims in mind when they wrote. The mark of the creative and original playwright consists of the ability to combine dramatic exigencies with appropriate and consistent plot development and characterization, as well as the expression of his own (profound) ideas about life. Indeed, if everything were subordinated to the single scene or movement, the only possible results would be, to use Aristotle's words, that the playwright, ἀγωνίσματα . . . ποιοῦντες καὶ παρὰ τὴν δύναμιν παρατείνοντες τὸν μῦθον πολλάκις διαστρέφειν ἀναγκάζονται τὸ ἐφεξῆς.  
(Poet. 1451b.9.37f).

The subject of recurrent characters in Greek Tragedy, as defined above, is one which has been neglected and about which many assumptions have been made. A number of critics have thought that no particular significance should be attached to the characterization of the recurrent personae. A.E. Haigh, writing of Sophocles, well summarized, many years ago, this point of view so: "In general, even when the same hero re-appears in different plays, he is depicted in a new character, to suit the altered circumstances".<sup>19</sup> More recently, F. Will has expressed agreement with that remark thus: "There is little

continuity among the treatments of the same character in Euripides".<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the critics who have examined some of the recurrent characters have treated the matter in a bewildering variety of ways and with an amazing diversity of results. Apart from scattered comments in the standard handbooks<sup>21</sup> and editions,<sup>22</sup> the study of these characters has fallen into two distinct categories. In the first, there are the general works which analyse certain characters throughout the gamut of Greek Literature (from Homer onwards). Prominent here are H.F. Graham, P.R. Headings, W.B. Stanford, J.F. Nyenhuis, G.K. Galinsky.<sup>23</sup> The main concern of these writers is to present a comparative view of the development of the characters in the different authors. In the second group may be included the studies of particular figures in the several tragedians. Many years ago, F.M.B. Anderson and L.D. Peterkin dealt with (respectively) the Aeschylean Clytaemnestra<sup>24</sup> and the Sophoclean Creon.<sup>25</sup> In view of the larger number of surviving dramas by Euripides, it is natural to find more works written about him on this topic. P. Masqueray, D.G. Harbsmeier, E.M. Blaiklock, P.H. Vellacott, in particular, have discussed a number of male and female characters in his tragedies.<sup>26</sup>

There appears, however, to be little consensus among such scholars. Some (like Peterkin and Masqueray) have argued strongly in favour of regarding the portrayal of the recurrent personae as consistent; others (like Anderson, Blaiklock and Harbsmeier) have felt that, whereas there is a certain level of continuity in the depiction of some characters, yet it is not

the case with regard to others in different plays.<sup>27</sup>

### III Origins and Aims of the Thesis

But, despite the work that has already been done, there still seemed ample scope for a more comprehensive and systematic study of all the named recurrent characters in Greek Tragedy. The aim has been to pierce through the former generalizations and assumptions, in order to see whether there may be any pattern in the portrayal of these figures.

The thesis began originally with the extant dramas of Euripides, because more of his works survive, but it became clear that an examination of Aeschylus and Sophocles was necessary because it was impossible to look at him in isolation, and a comparative study of the three tragedians was felt to establish, in its proper context, the achievement of the dramatists concerned. That is why a strictly chronological sequence of tragedians is followed throughout. Any results obtained are, of course, not absolute, on account of the lost dramas, but they do possess validity, since we appear to have a reasonable cross-section of their works.<sup>28</sup>

It is necessary to enquire, at this point, into the possible reasons why the tragedians should employ the device of the recurrent personae. This may help to account for the use to which they severally put it.

Scholars have concentrated upon the philosophic, moral and social ideas which are revealed in Aeschylus' dramas.<sup>29</sup> The great cosmic frame on which his tragedies depend and their trilogic format have resulted in the conclusion being drawn by some that, "... the poet is interested not in a person but in a

doom . . . . The characters in these dramas are not men, but superhuman powers".<sup>30</sup> Yet it is difficult to credit that such creations as (e.g.) his Prometheus, Io, Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra are lacking in individuality or are merely the instruments of some external power fashioned to convey the solution to abstract problems. A few writers have been prepared to admit that, in the later works, there appears to be a greater interest in character. Eteocles has, therefore, been termed "the first clearly studied individual character in dramatic literature",<sup>31</sup> and Bruno Snell has pointed out that, "Aeschylus was the first to show clearly that when a man acted some mental process was involved".<sup>32</sup> Others, too, have spoken of the growing importance of the characterization in his dramas.<sup>33</sup> Many writers, nevertheless, remain unconvinced by these statements, and, in a fairly recent book, it is said categorically that Aeschylus' personages are "pure creations independent of the specimens of humanity found in the world of the senses".<sup>34</sup>

If it be accepted that the moral and philosophical thoughts transmitted in Aeschylus' dramas are of significance and were advanced for the age,<sup>35</sup> then it seems a fallacy (to me) to regard him as incapable of creating individualistic figures or uninterested in their psychology. Aeschylus, I think, paved the way (so to speak) for the later tragedians. It is indeed partly because the characters in certain plays, like the Sept., Orest., P.V., are so vibrant with life that they have retained their appeal today. Even in the Pers. and Suppl. the characters are not mere ciphers. The fear and grief of Atossa (Pers. 159ff, 176ff, 433ff, 598ff), the pained disillusionment of Xerxes (Pers. 907ff), the anxiousness of Danams (Suppl. 176ff);

the ferocity of the inimical Herald and King (Suppl. 872ff), are all depicted in a remarkably convincing manner.

It is hoped, therefore, that the study of the recurrent personae in Aeschylus' dramas will prove useful in confirming, in an area that has so far been relatively neglected, that characterization is a significant factor.

The connected trilogy is a literary device particularly suited to the presentation of Aeschylus' profound ideas.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore only natural to find recurrent figures throughout those plays, but I hope to make clear, in the course of the thesis, that the level of consistency in their portrayal is much higher than is generally recognized. I would, in fact, suggest that it is the very phenomenon of the trilogic form which may be held responsible for this affinity. By stressing the unity of the figures throughout the trilogy, Aeschylus is thus able to emphasize the continuity and stability in the cosmos. The changes that do occur are seen to be, not violent or sudden, but gradual and in line with the past. Tradition appears to remain constant in its slow adaptation to the developing situation.<sup>37</sup> The characterization of the recurrent figures in the Orest. is thus appropriate to the philosophic ideas embodied in the trilogy. As living creations, they add much to the trilogy and provide the element of

verisimilitude essential to any act of mimêsis: ... μιμῶνται οὐ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, . . . ἤτοι βέλτιόνας ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἢ χείρονας ἢ καὶ τοιούτους.

(Arist., Poet. 1448a.2.1ff.: cf 1448a.3.26f).

Sophocles' own ability to portray character has long been noted. The writer of the Sophoclean βίος stated (with some exaggeration) that he could ἐκ μικροῦ ἡμιστεχίου ἢ λέξεως

μῆας ἄλλον ἕθοσ πολεῖν πρόσωπον (βίος 21, 1f). Many critics have felt that one of the chief differences between the Sophoclean and Euripidean modes of characterization is that, as Aristotle said, Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν [ἀνθρώπους] οἷους δεῖ πολεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἶσιν (Poet. 1460b.25.33f).<sup>38</sup>

The distinction has, in my opinion, been overdrawn. The inner tragedy of Sophocles' heroes and heroines lies not so much in their noble idealism, as in their several obsessions. Ajax, e.g., is preoccupied by the aim of revenge, bringing death upon himself by his unbalanced attitudes and actions; Electra is obsessed by the thought of her brother and father to the point of madness; Philoctetes is filled with hatred and driven wild (physically and mentally) by his sufferings. We may pity them and even understand their reactions, but their conduct, when viewed in the general context, is far from admirable or a source of emulation for others.<sup>39</sup>

In analysing the recurrent characters of Sophocles, I aim to show that they possess τὸ εἶμαρ (Poet. 1454a.15.24), and that they are, from the dramatic and psychological points of view, convincing human beings. If they appear to lose, in the process, some of the idealistic aura that often surrounds their names, it only serves to emphasize their very closeness to life.

The attitude of Sophocles towards human nature (φύσις) is an important component in his utilization of the recurrent personae. He seems to have believed that it was an innate quality, fundamental and unchangeable, in mankind.<sup>40</sup> It will be suggested, as we shall see in the chapter on Sophocles,<sup>41</sup>

that the continuity in the reappearing figures is quite marked. I should argue that Sophocles' beliefs in *ψύσας* may, partly, at least, account for this. Is it not also a further indication of the way in which he *παρ' Αισχύλῳ ... τὴν τραγωδίαν ἔμαθε* (*βίος 4,1*)?

The psychological realism in the characterization of Euripides is acknowledged by most scholars.<sup>42</sup> H. Hunger speaks e.g., of the "deutlich ausgesprägte Interesse des Euripides für realistische Charakterisierung".<sup>43</sup> Now, the device of the recurrent characters has been termed by one modern critic as a "powerful adjunct to ... realism, since the reappearance of the same name in different works somehow confers an air of authenticity on the person named ...".<sup>44</sup> Although the remark refers to a different writer (Balzac) and to a different genre (the modern novel), it is nevertheless applicable, in my view, to Euripides, as well. The appearance of the recurrent characters in each drama is complete in itself, but it also enriches our understanding of the character in the other play(s) and puts him in perspective. Traits that are merely hinted at in one tragedy are given more emphasis in another, or develop in accordance with the circumstances. The end product is a creation whom we think to be no artificial figure but a real person just like ourselves. It is thus the intention here to demonstrate how Euripides exploits this device as another means of achieving psychological realism in his plays.

The attitude of Euripides to *ψύσας* is far more complex than that of Sophocles. The former seems to have been affected by the continuing debate on the subject among the intellectuals at Athens in the second half of the fifth century B.C.<sup>45</sup> Some



writers feel that Euripides, like the Sophists, attaches more importance to μάθησις (education), than to φύσις (innate breeding).<sup>46</sup> Others, again, regard the situation as not quite so clear, and it has been said that, "Mit so grosser Zuversicht wie bei den Sophisten wird bei Euripides nie von den Erfolgen der Erziehung gesprochen".<sup>47</sup> Certainly, a number of passages in his plays testify to the doubt which Euripides apparently feels regarding this question (Hec. 592ff, El. 367ff). Further, the contrast between Iphigenia and her brother Orestes and sister Electra is interesting: although all the members of the Atreid House have been subject to the consequences of the Trojan War, they behave quite differently. Whereas Orestes and Electra become more and more corrupted by its effects, Iphigenia remains true to her loving nature, although she did, of course, have a different environment, which was distasteful to her.<sup>48</sup> The interplay between μάθησις and φύσις is, therefore, highly intricate in Euripides.

The youngest of the three tragedians also, as I hope to suggest in the ensuing chapters, capitalizes on the continuity in the portrayal of his reappearing characters, and in fact takes it to its logical development. In this way, he underscores the starkness in the contrast between the different characters and emphasizes the discordant feelings of optimism and pessimism in his thought during the Peloponnesian War.

In sum, then, the aims of this thesis are, firstly, to point out the full importance of the device of recurrent characters in Greek Tragedy, especially Euripides (owing to the greater evidence available); and, secondly, to argue how far and for what reasons its use varied in the three tragedians.

Although it would hardly be possible to present an entirely new view of a genre (Greek Tragedy) and of an author (Euripides) so well known as these, it is hoped, nevertheless, that this study may shed more light on an area that has been so far insufficiently examined.

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

- 1 A full list of the characters examined here, and the plays where they appear, will be found in Appendix I. The only exceptions are the Euripidean Hermione and the Sophoclean Heracles. The former has been omitted because her character, although important in the And., is underplayed in the Or. and lacks significance; apart from a few lines (Or. 1323ff) she is little more than a  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\sigma\omega\tau\tau\omicron\nu\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\acute{o}\nu$ . Heracles has not been included since he is, in the Phil., a deus ex machina, and is therefore outside the scope of this thesis. In that play he seems to represent the psychic breakdown in Philoctetes' mind (Webster, Phil., ad 1409). It is thus inappropriate to compare him with the human character in the Trach.. G.K. Galinsky's attempt to do so appears, in my opinion, misguided (The Herakles Theme (Oxford, 1972), pp 46 and 52).
- 2 Such characters play a role in all the extant Greek dramas and have been the subject of a number of important investigations, notably: R. Kassel, "Quomodo quibus locis apud veteres scriptores Graecos infantes atque parvuli pueri indicantur describentur commemorantur" (inaugural diss. Univ. of Mainz, 1951); G. Erdmann, "Der Botenbericht bei Euripides" (diss., Univ. of Kiel, 1964); J. Keller, "Struktur und dramatische Funktion der Botenberichte bei Aischylos and Sophokles" (diss., Univ. of Tübingen, 1959); D.P. Stanley-Porter, "Messenger Scenes in Euripides" (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, 1969); G.A.W. Denny, "Minor Characters in the Tragedies of Euripides", BICS, 2 (1955), 26 - 7.
- 3 See the studies of A. Spira, Untersuchungen zum Deus ex Machina bei Sophokles und Euripides (Mainz, 1960), and E.H. Klotsche, The Supernatural in the Tragedies of Euripides (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1918).
- 4 With the exception of the Rh., which I do not believe is of Euripidean authorship. For further details on this point, see Appendix VI.
- 5 Scholars have, for years, tried to clarify the structure, plot and themes of the lost plays, with varying degrees

- of success and not always with the same results. Webster, T.E., is perhaps one of the soundest authorities. On the hazards of the theorizing about the non-extant dramas, see now A.J. Podlecki, "Reconstructing an Aeschylean Trilogy", BICS, 22 (1975), 1 - 19.
- 6 Arist., Poet. 1453b.14.22ff; 1453a.13.17ff; cf. also Lord Raglan, The Hero (London, 1936), p 28; V. Woolf, "On Not Knowing Greek", The Common Reader, (London, 1948), p 42; R. Lattimore, Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy (London, 1964), pp 2f and 6; B Vickers, Towards Greek Tragedy (London, 1973), pp 268f.
- 7 The freedom of the tragedians may be discerned from their different versions of the Atræid theme (Aes., Orest.; Soph., Elec., Eur., El. and Or.), and from Euripides' unfettered handling of the traditional material in his Phoen: Iocasta is allowed to survive the discovery of Oedipus' sins, and Oedipus to live on in the Palace, despite the ghastly revelations. See H.C. Baldry, "Aristotle and the Dramatization of Legend", CQ, 4 (1954), 151 - 7, and "The Dramatization of the Theban Legend", GR, 3 (1956), 24 - 37.
- 8 G.J.M.J. Te Riele, Les femmes chez Eschyle (Groningen, 1955), chpt I, uses the phrase in this sense.
- 9 Physical descriptions by others: Aes., Eum. 40ff., P.V. 145ff.; Soph., El., 745ff, Trach. 763ff., Phil. 211ff.; Eur., Med. 1074f., Supp. 1032, Tr. 37f., Hel. 1204, Or. 385ff., Ba. 234ff. Temperamental descriptions by others: Aes., Ag. 10f., P.V. 944ff.; Soph., O.T. 300ff., Ant. 237 and 491f.; Eur., Alc. 773ff., Hipp. 950ff., H.F. 1082ff., El. 931ff. and 945ff., Phoen. 1647, I.A. 638f.
- 10 On this point, see the sections on the Euripidean Odysseus and Helen,
- 11 cf., for example, the prejudices of the old female servant apropos Clytaemnestra in the Choe. (below, pp 35f. ) and of Electra apropos Helen in the Or. (below, pp 235f).
- 12 For a useful summary of the critical literature, see C. Garton, "Characterisation in Greek Tragedy", JHS, 77 (1957), 247 - 54, and "The chameleon trail in the study of Greek Tragedy", Studies in Philology, 69 (1972), 389 - 413; G.H. Gellie, "Character in Greek Tragedy", AUMLA, 20 (1963), 241 - 55.
- 13 e.g., G.F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957), p 253 (ad Poet. 1450a.15); F.L. Lucas, Tragedy in relation to Aristotle's "Poetics" (London, 1953), pp 120f.; G.J.M.J. Te Riele, Les femmes chez Eschyle, chpt. iv.
- 14 His work, Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles, first

published at Berlin in 1917, was left uncompleted by him because of the author's premature death on the field of battle, and included a chapter, on the O.C., written by his father Ulrich, incorporating Tyche's research methodology and preliminary findings. (The book has now come out in a second edition, in 1969).

- 15 ibid., p 227.
- 16 Die griechische Tragödie (Munich, 1930).
- 17 Die Darstellung des Menschen im Drama des Euripides (Basel, 1947), p 182.
- 18 cf. A.J.A. Waldock, Sophocles the Dramatist (Cambridge, 1948), Preface et passim; R.D. Dawe, "Inconsistency of Plot and Character in Aeschylus", PCPS, 9 (1963), 21 - 62; H. Lloyd-Jones, "Tycho von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff on the Dramatic Technique of Sophocles", CQ, 22 (1972), 214 - 28.
- 19 The Tragic Drama of the Greeks, (Oxford, 1896), p 157.
- 20 "Remarks on Counterpoint Characterization in Euripides", CJ, 55 (1960), p 339; cf. Grube, D.E., pp 31f.
- 21 e.g., G.M. Kirkwood, A study of Sophoclean Drama (New York, 1958), p 150; C.H. Whitman, Sophocles (Cambridge, Mass.:1951), p 202.
- 22 Jebb, O.T., Introd., p. xxix; Dale. Hel., Introd., pp viif.
- 23 "The Character of Agamemnon" (diss., Univ. of Southern California, 1952); "The Tiresias Tradition in Western Literature" (diss., Univ. of Indiana, 1958); The Ulysses Theme (Oxford, 1963); "Homer and Euripides" (diss., Univ. of Stanford, 1963); The Herakles Theme.
- 24 "The Character of Clytaemnestra in the Ag. of Aeschylus", TAPA, 60 (1929), 136 ; 54, and "The Character of Clytaemnestra in the Choe. and Evnm. of Aeschylus", AJP, 53 (1932), 301 - 19.
- 25 "The Creon of Sophocles", CP, 24 (1929), 263 - 73.
- 26 Euripide et ses Ideés (Paris, 1908), chpt. v (cf. "Agamemnon, Ménélas, Ulysse dans Euripide", REA, 6 (1904), 173 ; 204); "Die alten Menschen bei Euripides" (diss., Univ. of Gottingen, 1968); The Male Characters of Euripides (Wellington, 1952), Ironic Drama (Cambridge, 1975), chpt. v.
- 27 A fuller discussion of their views is given below, in the chapters devoted to the individual characters.

- 28 It is interesting that the much higher proportion of Euripidean characters treated here reflects the greater number of extant plays by him, while the near equal proportion of Aeschylean and Sophoclean characters corresponds with the parity in number of their surviving dramas: see Appendix I for details.
- 29 e.g., H.W. Smyth, Aeschylean Tragedy (Berkeley, California: 1924); A. Lesky, "Die Orestie des Aischylos", Hermes, 66 (31), 190-214; E.T. Owen, The Harmony of Aeschylus (Toronto, 1952); F. Stössel, "Aeschylus as a Political Thinker", A.J.P., 73 (1952), 113-139; R. Kuhns, The House, The City, the Judge (Indianapolis, 1962).
- 30 W. Jäger, Paideia, trans. G. Highet, I, ii (Oxford, 1939), p. 252; cf. C.E. Hajistephanou, "The use of 'physis' and its cognates in Greek Tragedy" (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London: 1968), pp. 17 and 221f.
- 31 G. Murray, Aeschylus, the creator of Tragedy (Oxford 1940), p. 143.
- 32 The Discovery of the Mind, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer (Oxford, 1953), p. 106.
- 33 So, C.R. Post, "The Dramatic Art of Aeschylus", HSCP, 16 (1905), 15ff.; H.J. Rose, "Aeschylus the Psychologist", Symbolae Osloenses, 32 (1956), p. 21; W.B. Stanford, Aeschylus in His Style (Dublin, 1942), chpt V, passim.
- 34 M. Hadas and M. Smith, Heroes and Gods (London, 1965), p. 6; cf. D.W. Lucas, The Greek Tragic Poets (London, 1959), p. 11; Kitto, F.M.D., chpt i-iii, passim, and G.T.<sup>3</sup>, chpt. iii, passim.
- 35 The controversial views concerning Aeschylus' beliefs held by H. Lloyd-Jones, "Zeus in Aeschylus", JHS, 76 (1956), 55-67 (cf. The Justice of Zeus (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971) pp. 84 ff.), and Denniston/Page, Ag., introd., passim, have not convinced me, or many other critics: see now, in refutation, L. Golden, In Praise of Prometheus (North Carolina, 1966), chpt. V, passim and Kitto, P., pp. 38 ff.
- 36 See especially G. Meautis, Eschyle et la Trilogie (Paris, 1936); W. Jäger, Paideia, I, ii, pp. 252 ff. It has been suggested that the connected trilogy was a new idea developed by Aeschylus late in his life, a decade or so before he died: T.B.L. Webster, "The Order of the Tragedies at the Great Dionysia", Hermathena, 100 (1965), pp. 22 f.; C.J. Herington,

- "Aeschylus: the last phase", Arion, 4 (1965), 387 - 403. But the evidence presented is too insufficient to admit of a categorical acceptance or rejection.
- 37 Aeschylus is careful to underline the continuity between past, present and future in the Orest: cf. Athena's words of encouragement to the Erinyes/Eumenides at Eum. 794ff., 834ff., 851ff., 1003ff., 1021ff.. This is, of course, in harmony with the modifications made to the Athenian Constitution in 462 B.C.: The Areopagus lost some of its powers, but it continued to subsist as an important link between past and present, and as a stabilising element between order and anarchy in the Athenian πολις: see C. Hignett, A History of the Athenian Constitution (Oxford, 1970), chpt. viii passim and O.C.D.<sup>2</sup>, S.V. "Areopagus".
- 38 cf. C.R. Post, "The Dramatic Art of Sophocles", HSCP, 23 (1912), 71 - 127; Webster, I.S.<sup>2</sup>, pp 41ff., and chpt. iv, passim.
- 39 This interpretation is, of course, contrary to Knox, H.T., passim: for further details, see the chapter (below) on Sophocles.
- 40 See, e.g., Lesky, G.T., pp 125f; C.E. Hajistephanou, The use of 'physis'..., chapt ii, passim.
- 41 infra, pp. 74ff..
- 42 For exceptions, see W. Zürcher, Die Darstellung des Menschen im Drama des Euripides, et al. : supra, pp. 12f..
- 43 "Realistische Darstellung in den Spätwerken des Euripides", Commentationes Vindobonenses, 2 (1936), p 27; cf. A. Lesky, "Psychologie bei Euripides", Euripide: sept exposés et discussions (Geneva, 1958), pp 123 - 150, and "Zur Problematik des Psychologischen in der Tragödie des Euripides", Gymnasium, 67 (1960), 10 - 26.
- 44 F.W.J. Hemmings, The Age of Realism (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1974), p 60; cf. H.J. Hunt, Balzac's Comédie Humaine (London, 1964), pp 95ff. Note how the Spanish author Galdós models his own recurrent situations and characters closely upon Balzac's, in his novelas españols contemporáneas.
- 45 On this debate, see Lesky, H.G.L., pp 338, 246, 349f., 356, 359, 374; A.W.H. Adkins, Merit and Responsibility (Oxford, 1960), pp 187f. (with n. 21); Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, pp 15, 22f., 696f, with the copious references to the original sources and modern critics.
- 46 e.g., Webster, I.S., pp 46ff.
- 47 Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, p 697 (n. 3).

48 For details, see the sections below on these characters.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### RECURRENT CHARACTERS IN AESCHYLUS

In this chapter the recurrent characters all appear in the Orest., a trilogy which is dated to 458 B.C.<sup>1</sup> The three persons to be examined here are: Clytaemnestra, Aegisthus, Orestes. A strictly chronological order of the tragedies will be employed both in the present chapter and throughout the thesis.

#### I Clytaemnestra

Up to the time of Aeschylus, Clytaemnestra was regarded, for the most part, by Greek writers either with outright condemnation or with (at best) utter indifference. She is mentioned but once in the Il. (1, 113), and there are a number of references to her in the Od. In this epic her rôle is subordinate to Aegisthus<sup>1</sup>, although the contrast between the behaviour of Penelope and that of Clytaemnestra is made plain.<sup>2</sup> On several occasions the language used of her is highly critical (Od. 3, 265; 3, 310; 4, 92; 11, 421ff). The fragmentary nature of the Cyclic writers and of the didactic and lyric poets precludes any categorical statement as to their treatment of her. However, one can say tentatively that it was a neutrality bordering onto hostility (Hesiod, frr. 23 and 176, 5 - 6 M/W;

Stesichorus, frs. 219 and 223 PMG). Later, Pindar (Pyth. XI) is, in fact, quite explicit in his criticism, describing her as a  $\nu\eta\lambda\eta\varsigma$   $\gamma\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}$  (28) and condemning her desire for a  $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$   $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota$  (31).<sup>3</sup>

Such then was the literary tradition when Aeschylus came to write his Orest.. An examination of her character in the trilogy will show how the tragedian utilized this tradition to make his own creation.<sup>4</sup>

Most critics have paid closer attention to Clytaemnestra's personality in the Ag., nor is it agreed whether she changes from play to play, during the course of the trilogy, and her portrayal is regarded as critical for Aeschylus' assessment of Clytaemnestra.<sup>5</sup>

(i) "Agamemnon"

Clytaemnestra's highly imaginative powers are seen to be at work from her first major speech, the so-called Beacon Narrative (281ff). The free interchange of tense, mood and aspect makes it a memorable speech. Note, e.g., the imperfective participle  $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\alpha}\mu\pi\omega\nu$  (281), the inchoative imperfect indicative  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\mu\pi\epsilon\nu$  (283), the simple aorist  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\sigma\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi\mu\tau\omicron$  (285), the historic present  $\sigma\eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\epsilon\iota$  (293), the mixture of imperfective and aoristic participles in 295 - 7, the strong aorist  $\acute{\omega}\tau\rho\upsilon\nu\epsilon$  (304), the present infinitives in 304 and 307, the historic present  $\nu\epsilon\iota\kappa\epsilon\iota$  and aoristic participle  $\delta\rho\alpha\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$  in 314. Since critics have discussed this trait, there is no need to dwell on it at length.<sup>6</sup>

It will, however, be worthwhile to note briefly other instances in the play in order to point out the importance of that characteristic. The account of the sack of Troy (320ff) is expressed in graphic language. The imagery in the following

lines is particularly striking:  $\delta\acute{\omicron}\phi\omicron\varsigma$   $\tau'$   $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\phi\acute{\alpha}$   $\tau'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\chi\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\varsigma$   $\tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omega$   $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\tau\alpha\iota$  /  $\delta\epsilon\lambda\chi\omicron\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau'$   $\acute{\alpha}\nu$   $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}$   $\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\omega$   $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\epsilon\nu\nu\acute{\epsilon}\pi\eta\varsigma$  (322f). The speech before

the Herald is a masterpiece which is full of vivid half-truths (600ff, 606ff, 611ff). The same is true of her speeches to Agamemnon (855ff and 931ff). In the first address to her husband, the elaborate but deceitful version of the effect of his absence on her denotes the imaginative quality of her mind. Lines 887ff. are particularly noteworthy, because of the rich vocabulary as in the following phrases: ... ἐπίστυτοι / πηγαῖ  
κατεσβήκασιν (887f), τὰς ἀμφὶ σοὶ κλαίονσα λαμπτηροχίτας /  
ἀτημελήτους κλέν (890f), λεπταῖς ὑπὸ κώνωπος ἔξηγαρόργην /  
ῥεπαῖσι θωύσσοντος (892f). A few lines further on, Clytaemnestra speaks of herself as remaining at home τῶν σταθμῶν κύνη /  
σώτηρα ναὶς πρώτου (896f): these words are reminiscent of her earlier utterance at 607f.

To Cassandra, also, she employs similarly graphic language. She alludes to Heracles (1040f) and then threatens her, using a highly figurative expression (1066f). Moreover, in the account of Agamemnon's death that she gives to the Chorus (1379ff), the succession of present and past tenses in the first person,<sup>7</sup> and the goriness of the description in 1388ff, underline her imaginativeness. Finally, the words that she uses to describe Agamemnon's desire for Cassandra and his other paramours (1439ff) betray her contempt for him in a remarkable way. The following expressions are especially worth noting: λυκαντήριος (1438),<sup>8</sup> μαλίγμα (1439),<sup>9</sup> εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς  
ἑρῆς χλιδῆ (1447),<sup>10</sup> and lines 1440ff. grimly recall her words at 607f. and 896f. (above).

It is, therefore, the range of imagery and vocabulary which serve to underscore her imaginative powers.<sup>11</sup>

Clytaemnestra is clearly such a dominant woman that she presents to our view a number of masculine qualities, and she is, on occasion, described thus: γύναξ, κατ' ἄνδρα σώφρον' εὐφρονῶς λέγεις (351: cf. 10f). R.P. Winnington-Ingram has made a definitive collection of the instances where her masculinity is stressed.<sup>12</sup> Concomitant with this is the intense determination that she displays throughout the play, from her first conversation with the Chorus (264ff), to the tireless efforts at persuading Agamemnon to tread the carpet (905ff), to the narrative of his murder (1372ff).

The Greek Queen is also convinced that her actions are right and upheld by δίκη. In lines 910ff, the collocation of Δίκη (911), δικάίως (913) and σὺν θεοῖς (913) add force to the double-entendre contained within the lines. She then announces to the Chorus the justice of her cause. The tricolon in 1395f, κρεπόντως... δικάίως... ὑπερίκως, lays stress on her point. She is also insistent that Agamemnon has only been killed in accordance with justice (1475ff).<sup>13</sup> Clytaemnestra is not seeking merely to delude herself or convince her own mind by these statements. For, as far as she is concerned, the sacrifice by Agamemnon of Iphigenia was an act of abominable outrage.

The very first reference to that event is made by the Chorus, who speak with disapproval of the sacrifice at Aulis (230ff). Shortly after, in the first Epeisodion, the Queen herself comments on this event, when she says that, unless the Greeks honour the Gods at Troy, ἐγρηγορὸς τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων/γένονται' ἄν, εἰ πρόσπαυα μὴ τύχοι κακῆ (346f). The phrase τῶν ὀλωλότων cannot but hint at the death, not of the Trojans, but of Iphigenia.<sup>14</sup> Once the Greek King has been killed, Clytaemnestra alludes to the death of her daughter several times, with growing

indignation: ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλοτάτην ἐμοί/ῶδ' ἔπιδ' ὄν  
 Ὀργικίων ἀγμάτων (1417f), and then: μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς παιδὸς  
 Δίκην (1432). Note, too, lines 1525ff and 1555ff, which  
 burn with contempt for what her husband did. From these comments,  
 we observe how she has brooded over the loss of Iphigenia and become  
 determined to pay Agamemnon back.

Hints are also given in the play concerning the attitude  
 of Clytaemnestra to Orestes. Of particular import are her words  
 at 877ff. It is surely significant that Aeschylus is the only  
 tragedian who makes her claim to have sent Orestes away.<sup>15</sup> The  
 reason which she gives for doing it has a great deal of basis.  
 We may thus compare the anxiety of the Chorus lest a revolution  
 should break out against the dynasty of Agamemnon on account of  
 the growing hostility toward him (445ff). Moreover, the words  
 εὐμενὴς δορυφόρος (880), as applied to Strophius, reveal that  
 there was nothing sinister in his looking after of Orestes, since  
 it was part of the rights of *ξενία*. It could be suggested that  
 the statement here is simply another of her lies. The great  
 difference, between this passage and the earlier ones which are  
 full of half-truths, resides, I think, in the language. It has  
 already been noticed how elaborate and graphic her words are when  
 she is deceiving the others.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Clytaemnestra's  
 speeches at 887ff and 958ff are highly-wrought. By contrast,  
 her words at 877ff are much simpler, and, for that very reason,  
 have an air of sincerity in them.

The love that she feels for Iphigenia and Orestes seems  
 genuine,<sup>17</sup> and it is plausible, from a psychological point of  
 view, to regard this maternal affection as being the deeper in  
 view of the coldness that seemed to exist (as we shall see below)

between her and Agamemnon.

That their relationship is frigid can be discerned from the manner of Agamemnon's addressing her when he enters the stage (810ff). There is no suggestion of any tenderness although he has been absent ten years at Troy: note his expression of greeting: *Ἀγέδας γένεθλον, δωμάτων ἐρῶν φύλαξ* (914).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, by bringing Cassandra back, he shows how unconcerned he is for Clytaemnestra's feelings.<sup>19</sup> There is little doubt, in my mind, that Agamemnon is portrayed as a haughty, selfish man who deserves little sympathy.<sup>20</sup>

The consequence is that Clytaemnestra has grown to hate her husband so much that she turns to Aegisthus. He had his own reasons for seeking revenge on Agamemnon,<sup>21</sup> and her affection for him seems natural and genuine. She says to Aegisthus upon his arrival: *μηδ' αἰῶς, ἃ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν κακά* (1654). I believe that her feelings for him have been misrepresented by some critics who maintain that she sides with Thyestes' son simply because he is so weak that she can easily dominate him; having failed to do this with Agamemnon, she delights in succeeding with Aegisthus.<sup>22</sup> In my opinion, however, she received from him the love and warmth denied by Agamemnon, and this is therefore an important factor in the relationship between them. Although a woman of great strength and vigour, she is not *αὐτάραξ* and Aegisthus provides her with the love that she needs. At the end of the drama, she says: ... *<ἐγώ> / καὶ σὺ θήσομεν κρατοῦντε τῶνδε δωμάτων <καλῶς>* (1672f).<sup>23</sup> The sentiment implies a trust and co-operation totally lacking between her and Agamemnon.

While Aeschylus neither approves of nor whitewashes her

action in killing Agamemnon, he does not regard her as an essentially evil and nefarious schemer, as many writers have felt.<sup>24</sup> I agree with those critics who find, in his works, a great deal of sympathy for the "âme féminine".<sup>25</sup> The fact that the Chorus (259ff, 350ff, 1399ff, 1407ff) and the watchman (10f, 36ff) and also Cassandra (1231ff, 1257ff) speak unfavourably of her does not mark her out as a character with whom the tragedian can feel no sympathy. In such a male-orientated society, the people who are hostile to her cannot understand why Clytaemnestra is rebelling against her lawful husband. There may be mutterings, as we have observed above, about the rule of Agamemnon, but the palace remains blindly loyal to their king.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, part of the tragedy of the Ag. lies in the antinomy between Clytaemnestra's rights, as a woman, and the extreme measures that she takes, which cannot, despite her hopes (1571ff, 1656),<sup>27</sup> be reconciled with human justice.

In sum, Aeschylus, I believe, tries to understand the behaviour and motivation of Clytaemnestra in a way that previous writers, such as Homer and Pindar, did not. Although he does not attempt a complete rehabilitation of her character, as in the Euripidean fashion, he certainly prefigures much of the later tragedian's thought and influences him.<sup>28</sup>

(ii) "Choephoroi"

Although the rôle of Clytaemnestra is smaller here than in the preceding drama, the impression made by her personality is still very marked.

As soon as the two strangers, Orestes and Pylades, of whose identity she is unaware, come into Clytaemnestra's presence (688ff), she arranges for the necessary *φέρα* to be given to them

(669ff and 710ff). This furnishes an important pointer to her character. She is seen to be no passive woman, but ready and willing to act on her own initiative. Her strength of will is discernible from the fact that, despite her grief on learning of Orestes' supposed death, (a problem discussed a little below), she makes the effort to restrain her emotions and do what is considered correct for the  $\betaένου$  thus: οὗτοι κυρήσεις μετόν ἄφρων σέθεν, / οὐδ' ἔσσαν ἄν γένουο δώμασιν φίλος (707f).

There is, in my view, no reason to suppose that Clytaemnestra's distress is other than sincere.<sup>29</sup> The lines, where she announces how sorry she is to hear of her son's death (691ff), sound as if she really means it. The interjection οὐ γῶ (691) and the exclamations ὡς πορθούμεθα (691) and ἦ δυσπάλαιστε ... Ἄρα, / ὡς πόλλ' ἔπωπας ... (692f), are suggestive of her surprise and sorrow. The adjectives δυσπάλαιστε (692) and παναθλίαν (694) are very emotive, while the word φιλῶν (695), used of Orestes, shows how important this relationship is to her.<sup>30</sup>

Nor is there any cogent reason to trust the Nurse's version of her grief which is alleged to be utterly false (734ff). I have discussed already how partisan is the household in the palace to Agamemnon.<sup>31</sup> The old servant is certainly no unbiased witness. Hostile to the Queen, she readily accepts her lot of female submission, and is no profound thinker. Her language is, as P.T. Stevens has argued,<sup>32</sup> vulgar (especially 749ff), and matches her narrow-minded outlook. She belongs to the "genre comique",<sup>33</sup> and provides some light relief to the play. But the main reasons for her introduction seem to me that she helps to move the  $\muῦθος$  along by agreeing to change the message for Aegisthus, at the Chorus' requests (770ff); and, secondly,



she underlines the latent hostility to the Queen within the palace.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a close analysis of the words that she says apropos of Clytaemnestra (737ff) shows that she did not herself see the Queen laugh since she maintained the sad look in her eyes πρὸς ... οἰκέτας (737). How then could the Nurse, an οἰκέτης, possibly know what Clytaemnestra did in the privacy of her room?

In short, the allegations about Clytaemnestra's hypocrisy are the subjective and prejudiced impressions of an unfriendly witness. The Queen restrains her emotion before the strangers by steeling her mind, but her sorrow is no less for this. If that interpretation is accepted, does it not make Orestes' attempt to murder her, later in the play, all the more dreadful and paradoxical?<sup>35</sup>

The next scene where she appears (885ff), finds her fighting for her very life. She immediately calls to a servant for an axe:

δοίη τις ἀνδροκρήτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος  
εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν ἢ νικῶμεθα.  
ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ τοῦδ' ἀφίκομαι κακοῦ (889ff)

— The rare adjective ἀνδροκρήτα (on this point see further below, p. 38 with n. 45), the repetition of the verbal forms νικῶμεν ἢ νικῶμεθα, and the alliteration, in one line (891), of the endings -ῶμεν/-ῶμεθα highlight the fearless determination of Clytaemnestra. Even when Orestes, after Pylades' words of encouragement (900ff), remains determined to kill her, she refuses to give in, and tries hard, in stichomythia lasting twenty verses (908ff), to ward off death. Her final two lines are characteristically bold (929f). It is hard to accept that she is, throughout the Choe., a broken figure, "haunted by evil dreams, vainly seeking to appease the dead man's ghost, and perceiving everywhere the action of the daimon".<sup>36</sup>

Now, the dream that Clytaemnestra has in the Choe. (first mentioned by the Chorus at 32ff) seems to be part of the literary tradition, and is found in Stesichorus' Orest. (fr. 219 PMG).<sup>37</sup> Aeschylus exploited the legendary datum, not as a means of portraying a conscience-stricken Clytaemnestra, but because it served his purpose as an advance warning of Orestes' coming, which the latter himself admits thus: . . . ἐκδρακοντωθεὺς δ' ἐγώ/ κτείνω νύχ, ἕως τοῦνάλρου ἐννέπαι τόδε (549f). The dream does not imply that Clytaemnestra felt remorse for what she had done to Agamemnon; she is frightened for herself by it. Only when it is too late does she realize its full significance (928f), and she is disappointed because of her misinterpretation of its symbolism.<sup>38</sup>

Clytaemnestra's feelings for Aegisthus are made perfectly clear in the Choe. She refers to their partnership on two separate occasions which have linguistic echoes with one another (672f and 716ff): this emphasises her care and affection for Aegisthus. Later, when she learns of his murder, she exclaims: οὐ γὰρ, τέθνηκας, φίλτατ' Ἀγίσθου βίαι (893). The word βίαι is found often in Homer with the genitive of possession, and adds weight or dignity to the status of a hero by almost personifying the quality represented.<sup>39</sup> The idiom occurs elsewhere in Aeschylus' extant plays mainly in the Sept. (448, 569, 571, 577, 620, 641). This drama was, of course, famous, in antiquity for being Ἄρεως μέγιστον (Aristophanes, Ranae 1021),<sup>40</sup> and particularly suited to its use.<sup>41</sup> Thus, by saying βίαι here, Clytaemnestra suggests how high her regard is for Aegisthus, since the expression recalls the qualities shown by the Homeric heroes.

Her need for love and affection may be discerned, too, in the stichomythia with Orestes. She says in one place: ἄλγος γυναιξὶν ἀνδρῶς εἶργασθαι, τέκνον (920). That line harks back to a like sentiment which she made in the Ag. (861). Such remarks are important because they indicate that Aegisthus furnishes Clytaemnestra with the love that she requires, and that her feelings for him are natural and sincere.

Clytaemnestra's language is also very imaginative and vivid in the Choe. Her expressions of grief on hearing of Orestes' supposed death (691ff) are not only, as we have seen, moving, but also graphic. In these nine lines of text (or ten, if a lacuna is included),<sup>42</sup> we find four metaphors, of which three are considered by an expert on Greek style very striking.<sup>43</sup> The last two lines are particularly rich and worth quoting in full, so: *νῦν δ' ἐν δόμοις βακχέϊας κακῆς / ἱατρὸς ἐλπίς ἔγν' προδοῦσαν ἐγγράφε* (698f): three different tropes can be counted here, viz., *βακχέϊας ... ἱατρὸς ... προδοῦσαν*.<sup>44</sup>

Her second appearance on the stage also suggests this tendency. The epithet with which she describes the axe, ἀνδροκμήτα (889), is graphic and quite appropriate to her character.<sup>45</sup> When she bares her breast to Orestes and pleads with him (896ff) the effect is one of sheer verbal sensuality. The amplification of the vocatives *παῖς* and *τέκνον* in the same line (896) stresses the intimate relationship between the two.

<sup>42</sup>The nouns *παστόν* (897), *οἰλοῖσιν* (898), *εὐτραπές γάλα* (898) are made emphatic by their combination and by their association with the idea of intimacy between mother and son through breastfeeding. An additional literary effect is the sigmatic assonance of σ-, ψ-, φ- (there are 12 instances in the three lines 896-898).  
<sup>43</sup>The result is a highly effective aural and visual picture

of the scene.

The defence which she makes in the stichomythia before Orestes (908ff) furnishes additional examples of the proclivity, which is now under discussion, in her speech. On several occasions she places great emphasis on the fact that she herself bore him: ἐγὼ σ' ἔθρεψα, σὺν δ' ἔγηράναι θέλω (908: cf. 922 and 928). As a corollary of this is her frequent employment of the word τέκνον, which is spoken four times in the stichomythic passage (910, 912, 920, 922). The device is obviously deliberate, in order to weaken her son's resolve.<sup>46</sup> The accumulation of the hard consonants (k and τ) and double consonants (β, φ, θ, ψ) in her last couplet (928f) resound menacingly in his ears; the word ὄφελον (928) brings to mind the earlier references to her dream.<sup>47</sup>

The part played by Clytaemnestra in the Choe., then, is crucial in underlining the dilemma of Orestes; and the treatment of her by the playwright contains elements of understanding and sympathy.

(iii) "Eumenides"

In the final part of the trilogy, Clytaemnestra appears in the Prologos (from 94ff). Her rôle is small but unmistakably powerful. She is seen to be, from the very beginning, much determined to wreak her revenge on Orestes. She, therefore, calls upon the sleeping Erinyes to wake up, thus: εὐδούτ' ἔν, ὡγ'· καὶ καθυδουσῶν τί βῆ; (94). The exhortation is repeated later a number of times (115f, 121, 124), and note particularly the repetition of ὑπνώσταις and ὑπνώσταις (121 and 124), which are found in the same place in their respective lines.

Clytaemnestra's resolve is as fixed as ever in her final speech to the Erinyes (131ff). The succession of short, sharp imperatives here is a feature for remark: *ἄνίστω* (133), *μή... νικάτω* (133), *μηδ' ἀγνοήσης* (134), *ἀλγήσον* (135), *ἔπου* (139), *μάρινε* (139). The participles *μαλθαχθεῖσ'* (134), *ἔπουρίσασα* (137), *κατισχναίνουσα* (138) make an effective accumulation. The asyndeton in 131, 133, 135 and 139 is another literary device which adds force to her characteristic vigour and determination. Clytaemnestra appears, therefore, to be a woman intent upon getting her will done.

Throughout the Prologos, the Queen is insistent that she has been wronged, and her attitude is that of one who is only demanding her due (98ff). The tricolon, *κείνων ὑπο* (99), *πρὸς τῶν φιλάτων* (100), *πρὸς χερῶν μητροτόνων* (102), is given greater emphasis because the three phrases have been positioned at the end of each line. After demanding that the Erinyes repay the sacrifices that they have received from her (104ff), she refers again to the insolence done to her by Orestes (111ff). So vehement is she that one commentary has described her thus: "Clytaemnestra's passion makes her incoherent".<sup>48</sup>

Concomitant with this is her rhetorical and graphic mode of speech. In the following verses: *εὔδουσα γὰρ φρήν ὄμμασιν λαμπρύνεται, / ἐν ἡμέρᾳ δὲ μοῦ'* *ἀπρόσκοπος βροτῶν* (104f), the figurative language should be noted. The account that she gives of the services which she rendered to the Erinyes is very descriptive and impassioned (106ff). The amplification

of  $\chi\acute{o}\alpha\varsigma\tau'$ ... / ...  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha\varsigma$   $\pi\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  (107f), the trope  $\tau\alpha\omega\tau\alpha$   $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\beta$ ...  $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{o}\upsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$  (110), and the unusual word  $\mu\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  (107),<sup>49</sup> all help to create the impression of an imaginative and disdainful woman.

When she complains of Orestes' disappearance (111ff), the simile and metaphor follow immediately after one another, and elaborate the leitmotif of the net and of hunting found throughout the trilogy.<sup>50</sup> In her last three verses (137ff), two more metaphorical expressions are furnished, in 137 and 138f.

That Clytaemnestra makes no mention of Aegisthus or Agamemnon in this play is natural, since here she is seeking revenge for the personal harm done to her by Orestes, and her whole attention is concentrated upon that.<sup>51</sup> It may appear that the attitude of Clytaemnestra to Orestes in the Eum. is incompatible with that in the other two dramas; yet it is not hard to explain this. Clytaemnestra's desire for love and affection has been stressed throughout. When her own son, whom she did love, turns against her and fails to respect the duties incumbent upon him, she regards it as a betrayal in the same manner as Agamemnon's original betrayal of her daughter Iphigenia.

Aeschylus shows, throughout the trilogy, a keen understanding of Clytaemnestra's mentality and conduct. He does not justify her killing of Agamemnon, but neither does he vilify her as many writers had done before and as Sophocles was to do later in his Elec. Although her rôle is obviously greater in the Ag., it is certainly not without significance in the Choe. and Eum., and it is hoped that this imbalance in

the critical literature has been somewhat rectified. A highly purposeful and imaginative woman, Clytaemnestra can be passionate in her love and hate alike, and appears similar, in many respects, to the heroine of La Chartreuse de Parme, Gina Sansevarina, of whom Stendhal writes: "... le malheur extrême avait eu une grande influence sur cette âme ardente, il l'avait fortifiée, et [elle] ne s'emporta point en sanglots ou en plaintes!" (La Chartreuse ..., (Geneva, 1969), II, pp 172f).

## II Aegisthus

Like Clytaemnestra, Aegisthus was always viewed in a bad light by the writers before Aeschylus. I have already stated that, in the Homeric Odyssey, the rôle of Aegisthus in killing Agamemnon was more important than that of Clytaemnestra,<sup>52</sup> and he was condemned by the poet for his actions (Od. 1, 35ff; 1, 299; 3, 194ff). Homer also began the tradition which regarded him as a coward (Od. 3, 310). Writers thereafter tended to stress the part of Clytaemnestra in the plot against Agamemnon, as Hesiod (fr. 176, 6 M/W), Stesichorus (fr. 219 IGS), and Pindar (Pyth. XI, 24 and 37). The result was that he became a man of mollitia, "wily, sensuous and weak".<sup>53</sup>

In the Orest., Aegisthus has been adjudged by critics as a thoroughly low and cowardly person.<sup>54</sup> The fact that, in the two dramas where he appears (the Ag. and Choe.), he is condemned in no uncertain terms by other characters,<sup>55</sup> would appear to confirm that Aeschylus was himself censuring the man. I shall therefore examine the presentation afresh to see whether the prevailing view concerning him is justified or not.

(i) "Agamemnon"

Aegisthus enters this drama at the end (from 1577ff).

The most salient feature of his speeches is the attempt that he makes to sound majestic and strong, but which subsequently falls flat. Thus, the first six lines of his opening address (1577 - 1582) give an impressive effect, for he claims justification for murdering Agamemnon, *χερὸς πατρῴας ἐκτίνοντα μηχανάς* (1582). The next two verses 1583f), however, spoil the effect by the repetition of *πατήρ/πατέρα*, two successive words; this is picked up later: *πατήρ . . . πατρί* (1590f), both of which have been placed in the last foot of consecutive lines.

Also noticeable in the same speech is the accumulation of adverbs ending in -ws: *φίλως* (1581), *τορῶς* (1584), *προθύμως μάλλον* ἢ *φιλῶς* (1591), *εὐθυμῶς* (1592). The repeated breaks after the first foot in four successive lines (1590, 1591, 1592, 1593) are another literary device and quite arresting.<sup>56</sup>

Aegisthus' description of the feast held by Atreus for the latter's brother (1590ff) is in a corrupt state, so that discussion on it is necessarily circumscribed. However, attention should be drawn to the break after *ἔσθιαι* (1597), and to the accusative in apposition, *βορὰν ἄσωτον, ὡς ὄρας, γένοι* (1597), which seems to have been added merely as an afterthought. The structure and content of the next five lines is worth examining carefully:-

*κ' ἄπειτ' ἐπλεγνοὺς ἔργον οὐ καταίσκιον  
ἤμωβεν, ἀρπίπτει δ' ἀπο σφαγῆν ἔρων,  
μόρον δ' ἄφερτον Πηλοπίδαις ἐπέυχεται  
λίκπωμα δειπνῶν βουδύκως τιθαῖς ἀραῖ,  
οὕτως ὀλέσθαι πᾶν τὸ Πηλοσθένους γένος.  
(Ag. 1598ff).*



- The first three lines (1598 - 1600) consist of three short main clauses, complete in themselves, with the chiasmatic-like arrangement of participle and finite verb: finite verb and participle (1598-9). The phrase  $\mu\acute{o}\rho\omicron\nu \dots \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\alpha}\chi\epsilon\tau\alpha$  (1600) looks forward to  $\omicron\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma \dots \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (1602), and has been condemned for that very reason as spurious or a gloss.<sup>57</sup> The impression of this passage detracts from the solemnity of the opening remarks.

Towards the end of the speech (1604ff), Aegisthus reverts to the style with which he commenced speaking, and says:  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega \delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon\delta\epsilon \tau\omicron\upsilon \varphi\omicron\nu\omicron\upsilon \rho\acute{\alpha}\varphi\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$  (1604). The next two lines (1605f) are rather weak, especially the repeated  $\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\alpha \dots \acute{\omicron}\nu\tau'$ . The use of the adverb  $\omega\delta\upsilon\varsigma$  with the verb  $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\gamma\alpha\gamma\epsilon\nu$  in 1607 is redundant, and thus seems an unnecessary addition.<sup>58</sup> He then proceeds to admit his rôle in the plot (1608), and the last two verses of the address (1610f) also sound impressive: the reference to  $\Delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\eta\varsigma$  (1611) harks back to  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\ \Delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\eta$  (1607), and the sentiment of 1611 recalls that of 1582 and 1604.

It can, therefore, be seen that Aegisthus veers between a lofty mode of speaking and a very ordinary form. This curious amalgam of language betrays the antinomy in his character between reality and pretence.

The dichotomy is underscored further in the quarrel scene between the Chorus and Aegisthus (1612ff). The effect of his grave warnings to the Chorus (1617ff) is lost, to some extent, by the attaching of a genitive absolute at the end of one line (1618), and of an accusative absolute at the end of another (1620). They have little clear connection with the rest of their sentences. In 1621ff, the word order is

unusual. The noun γῆρας (1621) has been displaced and thereby separates the two subjects δεσμὸν and νήστυδες (1621) from each other. The conjunctions καὶ and τε are thus forced to qualify the object rather than the subject of the verb. The hyperbaton of δύαι ... / ἱατρόμαντας (1622) is striking, and the expressions δεσμὸν and ἱατρόμαντας are, in the context, themselves abnormal.<sup>59</sup> The weak repetition of ὄραϊς ὄρων (1622) and the hackneyed phrase πρὸς κέντρα μὴ λάατεσε (1624)<sup>60</sup> are other features of interest in this speech.

When he next addresses the Chorus (1628ff), Aegisthus insults them. The contrast which he draws between Orpheus and the old Chorus (1629f) serves to build up his own stature. Later, in vindication of the assassination, he says: τὸ γὰρ δολῶσαι πρὸς γυναίκας ἔν σαφῶς, / ἐγὼ δ' ὑπεπτος ἔχθρὸς ἦ παλαυγενῆς (1636f). The thought here harks back to his first speech (above) where he devoted much time to narrating the old rivalry between Thyestes and Atreus. The figurative language in 1639ff is extremely trenchant in vein. On closer analysis, one finds that there are certain stylistic anomalies. The construction οὐ τε μή ... / κριθῶντα... (1640f), as applied to a non-finite part of the verb (here a participle) is an extension of the more normal idiom which consists of οὐ μή and infinitive and denotes a strong denial.<sup>61</sup> The phrase φεύξω βαρύνω (1640) is an inelegant ellipsis, since a word such as φεύξω has to be understood. The words ὁ δυσπελὴς σκότω / ἄλιος φύνουκος (1641f) have a touch of wry humour about them, and are thus, under the circumstances, incongruous.

In the last twenty lines or so (from 1649ff) the metre

changes to trochaic tetrameters (catalectic). Aegisthus' threats become greater,<sup>62</sup> but we do glimpse his inner weaknesses through them. The exclamatory infinitives (1662ff) are spoken in such exasperation that the introductory definite article, normally present, has been omitted. This is yet another example of his tendency to compress words and phrases in his excitement.

In addition, throughout the Ag., we observe how circumspect and cautious Aegisthus is. In the allusions that he makes to his part in the plot against Agamemnon, he says that he was θυραῖος (1608) and an ὑποπτος ἐχθρὸς... παλαγευγῆς (1637). It does not imply that he is a coward, for the enmity between the two branches of the family was very great, and it would be natural for him to take such precautions.

Aegisthus' actions are understandable in human terms, and his behaviour is the consequence of his own traumatic experiences early in life, viz, the monstrous banquet given by Atreus to Thyestes and the long exile abroad by Aegisthus. During this period, he must have brooded deeply over his insecure existence and the need for vengeance. We have observed how many times he refers, during his brief appearance on the stage, to these factors. The most poignant remark on the subject comes thus:

τρίτον γάρ ὄντα μ' ἐπὶ δέκ' ἀθλίῳ πατρὶ  
 συνεβέλωνε τυτθὸν ὄντ' ἐν σπαργάνοις,  
 τραφέντα δ' αἰδῆς ἤ Δίκη κατήγαγεν.

(Ag. 1605ff)

- The corruption in the text here<sup>63</sup> may perhaps be due to the fact that he is speaking in a deliberately emotional manner which caused difficulties for the later copyists who

then compounded the linguistic difficulties.

To condemn Aegisthus out-of-hand, then, appears a very facile move to me, and misrepresents Aeschylus' aim. I shall, however, deal with the Choe. now, before drawing any general conclusions.

(ii) "Choephoroi"

Aegisthus enters the Choe. from 838ff. In his opening line (838) the amplification of the last two phrases (οὐκ ἔκκλητος ἀλλ' ὑπάγγελλος ) produces a grandiose effect. This is continued in 841ff. The metaphorical expression loses some of its cogency, however, when one notes, first, the repetition of εἶν ... εἶν (841f.), and, then, the hyperbaton of εὐμοῖς / . . . / ἐλκαίνουσι καὶ δέδηγμένους (841 and 843). Some lines later, he says: εἰ πρὸς γυναικῶν δαίματόμενοι λόγοι / πεδάροισι θρήσκουσι, θνήσκοντες ματρίν; (845 f.). The jingling sound of the alliteration in θρήσκουσι θνήσκοντες might be said to detract from the figurative language of line 845. Towards the end of the scene, Aegisthus uses two images connected with sight and blindness (852ff.). The iteration and parechysis of εἶτ' ... παρών (852) and εἶτ' ... μαθῶν (853), again, does not really contribute anything to the underlying idea.

It can thus be perceived that Aegisthus' language shows a blend of superficial solemnity and underlying flatness.

In his refusal to commit himself when he first hears the story of Orestes' death, he asks the Chorus: πῶς ταῦτ' ἐληθῆν καὶ βλέποντα δοξάσω (844). Then, pouring scorn on the emotional

outbursts of women (845f.) he says: *τί τῶνδ' ἄν εἶπος ὥστε δηλῶσαι φρονί;* (847). Aegisthus also refuses to admit the veracity of the news until, *ἰδεῖν ἐλέγξαι τ' εἶ θέλω τὸν ἄγγελον* (851). These remarks suggest, to my mind, that he is a cautious man at heart and acts in a very circumspect way.

It is plain that Aegisthus lacks self-confidence in his own abilities, but tries to conceal it as far as possible. It is also clear that he has not been portrayed as a particularly evil man. He expresses sorrow over the news of Orestes' death. The old Nurse had, of course, contradicted this a short time before when she said: *ἤ δὲ κλύων ἑκαίνοσ εὐφρανεῖ νόον / εὐτ' ἄν πύθηται μῦθον . . .* (742f.). In reply, it could be argued that she is, as we have already observed, prejudiced against Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus. The particle *ἤ* does, in fact, possess an air of subjectivity on the speaker's part.<sup>64</sup> She has not yet even seen Aegisthus; so her statement can only be an opinion. Although he may feel relief at hearing the news, it must be remembered that no suggestion is entertained in the play of any threat to Orestes from Aegisthus.<sup>65</sup>

In short, Aegisthus seems to be presented, in the Choe., without unnecessary acrimony, although his weaknesses are laid bare.

The dramatist does not appear to have followed the legend tamely and made of Aegisthus a very wicked or sensuous person. He suggests that the man's behaviour is motivated from deepseated causes originating in the quarrel between Atreus

and Thyestes and stemming from his traumatic experiences in early life. In both the plays, this may account (at least in part) for the antinomy in his character and language. The contrast between him and Clytaemnestra is obvious. Aeschylus' dramatic ends are served by his movement away from the literary tradition, because it underlines the problem, basic to the Orest., of reconciling the conflicting claims made by the various disputants. Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus do have grievances and the dramatist is not without sympathy, but the manner of righting them is clearly seen to be incorrect.

## II Orestes

In the Iliad there is but one brief mention of Orestes (9, 142ff). The Odyssey has many references to him, and he is held up (in 1, 298ff; 3, 306ff, for example) as an "example of filial piety to Telemachus".<sup>66</sup> Although the poet does not make it clear whether Orestes actually killed Clytaemnestra herself, along with Aegisthus, it is definitely implied (Od. 3, 309ff) that she was slain by him, but Homer takes pains (Od. 3, 309; 4, 544ff) to ensure that he is exculpated from any blame at all.<sup>67</sup> The Cyclic poets also describe Orestes' revenge on Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus, but it is not known whether they too were sympathetic to his cause or not.<sup>68</sup> Stesichorus, in his Orest. (210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219 PMG), deals with the story, and, although the details are missing, one fragment (217, 21ff PMG) refers to Apollo's bow and arrows being given to Orestes, which implies that the god approved of his action and tried to extricate him from the Furies. Hesiod (23(a), 28ff M/W) also appears to have justified the murder: The adjective ἐὶ[οῦ] (28) describing

Orestes, the verb ἀπε[τέλειατο...] (29), and the epithet applied to Clytaemnestra, [...ὑπερήν]ορα (30), certainly militate in favour of that view. In the eleventh Pythian Ode, Pindar vindicates Orestes when he says: . . . ἄλλ' ἄ χρονίω σὺν Ἄρει/ πέφνεν τε μάτερ' ὀκεί τ' Ἀέλοιοι ἐν φοναῖς (54f). In fine, the tradition before Aeschylus' Orest. looked favourably upon Orestes, at the same time as condemning Clytaemnestra.

Aeschylus introduces Orestes into the last two elements of his trilogy, viz, the Choe. and Eum.. The question whether he has a moral awareness of his guilt in murdering Clytaemnestra or not has taxed many critics. Some have maintained that he feels no contrition or remorse, since he knows that his action is right.<sup>69</sup> Others have challenged this point of view, believing that Orestes fully knows that his action is one of atonement, as well as of revenge, and that he is stricken by a guilty conscience.<sup>70</sup> I, too, think that there is a great moral conflict in Orestes' mind as to the propriety of murdering his own mother. An analysis of his conduct and portrayal in the two tragedies will, it is hoped, demonstrate the validity of this standpoint.

(i) "Choephoroi"

In the Choe., Orestes is depicted as accepting what he believes to be the duty laid upon him by the manner of his father's death. Despite the fragmentary nature of the Prologue,<sup>71</sup> we notice how Orestes prays first to Hermes (1f), then to his father (8f), and finally to Zeus (18f).

Following this, Orestes mentions, in the first Episodion, that Apollo has threatened him as part of his design

to persuade Agamemnon's son into killing Clytaemnestra. The language of Apollo's threats is colourful and imprinted well into Orestes' heart: *κῆφορθεάων πολλά, καὶ δυσχειμέρους / ἄκτις ὕψ' ἔπαρ θερρῶν ἐβαυδόμενος* (271f). Herein lies the very crux of the problem. The pressure from Apollo is so great that he finds it difficult to resist the god's injunctions, but at the same time his mind is uneasy and he shrinks from the task. Moreover, there are, as he admits later (299ff), other factors urging him on, which complicate the situation further. The dramatic presentation of his mental conflict is discernible most clearly in the *κόρμος* scene (306 - 478).

Scholars have long since discussed these lines in detail, and it would serve little purpose to analyse them here at great length.<sup>72</sup> But the *κόρμος* provides an important insight into the attitudes of Orestes, and I shall therefore confine my attention to the points that seem to be the most relevant for this thesis.

It is significant that not once in this scene does Orestes refer to Clytaemnestra as his mother, although he constantly addresses Agamemnon as "Father" (315, 346, 456). It is certainly indicative of how "rattled"<sup>73</sup> Orestes appears throughout the *κόρμος*. In 434ff, one notes: the repetitions of *ἄτιμωσ* (434), *ἄτίμωσεν* (435), both placed in the second foot of their respective lines, and of *ἕκαστι μὲν βαυρόνων* (436), *ἕκαστι δ' ἄραν χερῶν* (437), where the preposition has a slightly different nuance of meaning in each case; the euphemistic expression *νοσφύσας* (438) (meaning *ἀποκτείνας*); and the fatalistic wish *ἄλοιμαν* (438). Such literary devices do not give the impression of a man who is full of confidence



and hope.

Moreover, Orestes makes a number of abject appeals to Zeus (382ff, 408f) and to his father (315ff, 345ff, 456). In itself, of course, such supplicating is normal, but, when a comparison is made between the attitude of Orestes and that of the Chorus and Electra, the distinction is plain. By contrast, they are utterly determined and immovable. Electra, for example, remarks on one occasion: *λύκος γὰρ ὡστ' ὑμόφρων ἄσαντος ἔκ/*  
*μητρός ἐστι θυμός* (421f), and on another: *εἰς εἰς δαΐα/πάντολμε*  
*μητέρα . . .* (429f). The Chorus, too, spur Orestes on. They remind him of how Agamemnon was buried (439ff) and exclaim: *κλύεις πατρώους δάσ ἑτίμους* (443).

There is, then, in my mind, little doubt that a great struggle is taking place within Orestes' mind during the *κόρημος*. His conscience is troubled by the pressure imposed upon him by Apollo, Electra and the Chorus, and it is hard for him to resist them. The interpretation of Wilamowitz and Srebrny, therefore, seems to me more convincing than that of Schadewaldt and Conacher.

After the *κόρημος*, Orestes voices the need for his mother to *θανεῖν βιαίως* (549), and, later, that both she and Aegisthus *δολῶ γε καὶ ληθῶσιν, ἐν ταύτῃ βρόχῳ/θανόντες...* (557f). But he never actually elaborates on how she will die, although he takes evident pleasure in describing, at length, the fate which will befall Aegisthus (571ff.). Nor does he say the word "mother", but uses the demonstrative pronoun instead (547, 548, 550). Does Orestes dare only to think and speak of his mother's death in very general terms, since

he cannot envisage the terrible deed clearly in his mind?

In the first scene between Clytaemnestra and Orestes (668ff.), he announces the false story of his own death. The precision of the account is noteworthy:-

γένος μὲν εἶμι Δαυλιῶς ἐκ Φωκῶν,  
 στείχοντα δ' αὐτόφορτον οὐκεία σαγή  
 ἐς Ἄργος, ὡς περ δῶρ' ἀπεψύγην πόδας,  
 ἀγνῶς πρὸς ἀγνώτ' εἶπε συμβαλῶν ἀνήρ  
 ἐξιστορήσας καὶ σαφηγνίσας ὄδον,  
 Στροφιῶς ὁ Φωκεύς. . . .

(Choe. 674ff.)

- The structure of this period is loose, the order of words confused. The δ' clause (675) has its object (i.e. Orestes) placed first and this is followed by the elaborate details (στείχοντα, αὐτόφορτον, ἐς Ἄργος, ἀπεψύγην πόδας). In the next line (677) we find the hyperbaton of πρὸς ἀγνώτ', which is divided by the adjective ἀγνῶς from the phrase that it qualifies. The word ἀγνῶς, standing in the first foot, is itself separated from ἀνήρ with which it agrees. The polyptoton (ἀγνῶς ... ἀγνώτ') should also be noted. The two participles συμβαλῶν and ἐξιστορήσας are separated by α-syndeton, while ἐξιστορήσας and σαφηγνίσας are connected by the particle καί. The combination produces a distinctively discrepant effect.<sup>74</sup> At the end of the period, the ἀνήρ is named as Strophios: the hyperbaton is very forceful.

The overall impression obtained is that Orestes, now, for the first time, face-to-face with his mother, is very unsure of himself. He had based his plan on the expectation of seeing, not Clytaemnestra, but Aegisthus (571ff.). His mental confusion at being forced to modify the original stratagem could

not be more effectively shown by Aeschylus.

Furthermore, the prosopopeia, wherein Strophius' supposed words are quoted (680ff.), furnishes another pointer to the state of his mind. The use of the participle *τεθνεωτ'* after the verb *εἶπε* (682), in oratio obliqua, is most unusual,<sup>75</sup> and provides additional testimony to Orestes' disturbed mentality.

Another noticeable feature of his language in the present scene is the frequency of the word *ἔερος*, its cognates and compounds. Thus, his speech at 674ff, contains three examples (674, 680, 684), and that at 700ff. has five instances in only seven verses (700, 702, 703 (bis), 706). Although the idea of *ἔερος* is of cardinal importance in Greek Tragedy<sup>76</sup>, it has a more particular significance here. Its importance lies not only in the insight which we are given concerning Aeschylus' attitudes<sup>77</sup>, but also in the light which is shed upon Orestes' mental condition. The continual references to this idea <sup>(ἔερος)</sup> and the very repetition of the words associated with it are significant in suggesting how troubled he is. By harking back to the same point, Orestes displays his embarrassment at standing in the very sight of Clytaemnestra.<sup>78</sup>

During the final confrontation between mother and son (885ff), Orestes hesitates at the last minute and appeals to Pylades: *Πυλάδε, τί δρῶω; μητέρ' εἰδεοῦμαι κτανεῖν* (899). The deliberative questions emphasize the bewilderment in his mind. It is only the mention by his companion of Apollo (900ff) which stimulates him into action at such a crucial point. Note the first mention of the word *μητέρ'* (see further below).

Notwithstanding, before Clytaemnestra's searching

questions, he finds it necessary to justify his conduct on a number of occasions (911, 923, 925, 927). In the end he is forced to confess: ἔκανες ὄν οὐ χρεῖν, καὶ τὸ μὴ χρεῖν πάθε (930). The second co-ordinate clause is indicative of his moral awareness.<sup>79</sup> The continued reluctance of Orestes to call her "mother" is, as before, deliberate.<sup>80</sup>

Upon Orestes' re-entry onto the stage, after the murder of Clytaemnestra (972ff), we are left in little doubt as to the full effect of the crime on his mind. The corpses of his mother and of Aegisthus are spread before him, enrobed in the garment that had formerly covered Agamemnon's body.<sup>81</sup> At first,<sup>82</sup> Orestes attempts to sound calm and collected, but gradually (from 980ff), his language becomes more and more emotional. He is throughout obsessed by the idea of the robe that covered Agamemnon's corpse. He calls it at one point τὸ μυχάνημα, δεσμὸν ἀθλίῳ πατρὶ (981), and later mentions it again (998ff). The amplification of the synonyms ἀγρευμα (998), δίκτυον (999), ἄρκυν (1000), and the accumulation of the alliterative phrases ποδένδυτον (998), ποδιστήρας πέπλους (1000), which recall the earlier expressions πέδας ... πέδον (982), are salient characteristics in this passage. The second person singular generalizing optative (1000) suggests, also, the vagueness of a distraught mind.

Orestes now calls Clytaemnestra "mother" (986 and 988f), the first time that he has so mentioned her in this scene. He then proceeds to condemn her in even more abusive terms (991ff). Here, the anticipatory relative clause ἣτις ... (991), the slight metrical break after τέως (993), an unusual

occurrence,<sup>83</sup> and the omission of the  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  corresponding to  $\nu\acute{\upsilon}\nu$   $\delta'$  (993), are striking features. The rhetorical questions towards the end (994ff) and the further metrical break after  $\delta\omicron\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  (994) are suggestive of his emotional disturbance. Finally, the phrase  $\mu\upsilon\rho\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\alpha} \dots \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  (994) harks back to the earlier contemptuous remark about his mother's being a  $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\eta\varsigma$   $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\upsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$  (249). In fact, the very exaggeration of Orestes' charges against Clytaemnestra denotes a man who, despite the loud verbal assurances, is inwardly troubled. The last two lines of this speech (1005f) have a strained word order which is thoroughly in keeping with his mental distress.

In sum, the first discourse after the murder shows the deterioration in his mind. His language becomes more exaggerated and he can scarcely restrain his thoughts. By trying to vindicate his actions in this manner, he only succeeds in betraying his uneasy conscience.

The next speech (1010ff) displays the same obsession with the robe/trap, as when he says:  $\dots \mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota} \theta\acute{\epsilon} \mu\omicron\iota / \varphi\acute{\alpha}\rho\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\delta' \acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\beta\alpha\psi\epsilon\nu \text{Αἰγίσθου} \beta\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma$  (1010f). A few lines later he returns to the subject with this remark:  $\mu\alpha\tau\rho\omicron\kappa\tau\omicron\nu\acute{\omega}\nu \gamma' \acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha \mu\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\omicron$  (1015). At the very end of the speech, Orestes admits the enormity of what he has done (1016f).

The contradiction contained in the phrase  $\acute{\alpha}\beta\eta\lambda\alpha \nu\acute{\iota}\kappa\eta\varsigma \dots \mu\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\omicron$  (1017) is emphasized by the hyperbaton which divides the noun from its adjective.

At 1021ff, he makes a final attempt to prove that he is quite sane and justified. In lines 1026ff the phrase  $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\kappa \acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\upsilon$   $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\kappa\eta\varsigma$  (1027) is stressed by its position in the line. For the third time he says  $\mu\acute{\gamma}\tau\epsilon\rho'$  (1027) and abuses her strongly.

It is precisely when he is vindicating, to the outside world, his stance that he vilifies his mother. Does it not suggest that he is full of self-doubt and putting on a grandiose show in front of others?

Orestes then comments how Apollo had directed him to slay Clytaemnestra, and puts himself under the god's protection (1030ff). It demonstrates once more how important an actuating force Apollo has been apropos Orestes. When he speaks, soon after, of being *τησδε γης ἀπόφευγος* (1042), the reference calls to mind his earlier allusions to the idea of *φευγία* in the scene with Clytaemnestra.<sup>84</sup> Now, the irony implicit in the remark is quite plain.

The concluding verses of the drama depict how Orestes is overwhelmed by the Erinyes. Only he can see them (1048ff). The Chorus itself are not able to discern these creatures (1051f). Orestes insists that he is afflicted by the *μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνας* (1054), and flees from the scene, remarking: *ἐλευόμην δ' ἐκουκέτ' ἄν μαιναιμ' ἐγώ* (1062).

The Erinyes symbolize, as pointed out by J. Ferguson,<sup>85</sup> the externalization of Orestes' sense of guilt. Only he can see them because he struck the blow which killed Clytaemnestra.<sup>86</sup> But it must be emphasized that his actions were the consequence of his own conscious choice. Like his father at Aulis, he *ἀνάγκας ἔδου λέπιδον* (Ag. 218).<sup>87</sup> He did not, in the last analysis, have to follow the course urged by Apollo and the others. If one thing is clear, in my opinion, about Aeschylean drama, it is surely that man takes the *προαίρεσις* facing him (Arist., Poet. 1454a.15.3) of his own accord.<sup>88</sup>

Aeschylus' own reaction to the murder is one of

modified disapproval. R.P. Winnington-Ingram has argued, in a stimulating paper, how ambiguous is the Delphic morality of vengeance, and concluded that the tragedian, "cannot but regard matricide as wicked, the god who could order such a deed as an imperfect god, since his justice is bound up with this low ideal".<sup>89</sup> The argument which I have been advancing, that Orestes has a full moral awareness of his actions, militates in favour of that interpretation.<sup>90</sup>

One further factor, which has only been briefly touched upon so far,<sup>91</sup> serves to highlight the idea of Orestes' guilt and responsibility. This is the theme of *φέρω* which runs throughout the central portion of the Choe. (554 - 854). During this period, Orestes constantly underlines the fact that he and Pylades are *φέρω* or refers to the idea of *φέρω* generally (560, 562, 575, 656, 662, 674, 680, 684, 700, 702, 703 (bis), 706). His hosts, Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus, for their part, are pleased to give to them the *φέρω* which they feel are deserved (668, 710, 711 (Clytaemnestra), and 706 (Aegisthus)). It will be recalled that, in the Suppl. (917ff), the Herald is criticized because he tries to abduct the daughters of Danaus and act, contrary to the laws of hospitality. In the Ag, (399ff), Paris is condemned for abusing the duties of a guest-friend in the home of his host. Similarly, Orestes also violates the responsibilities, incumbent upon a *φέρω*, by acting in a deceptive way. He compounds the crime of matricide as a result of such behaviour.<sup>92</sup>

The Aeschylean Orestes is, then, presented as the human symbol of the unsatisfactory situation created by the system of private vengeance, which is supported by Apollo. He is, however,

not dehumanized, nor does he subsist as an abstraction of the profound moral problems mooted in the play. His mental conflict is portrayed quite realistically. He is not a puppet moved by cosmic forces but takes the decision of his own free choice, despite the pressure applied upon him. The effect of such a choice on his conscience is, as we have seen, devastating by the end of the tragedy.

(ii) "Eumenides"

In the Eum., the rôle played by Orestes is, of course, much smaller than in the previous tragedy. It does not mean however that he lacks all significance, as some have held,<sup>93</sup> but there has certainly been a shift in dramatic emphasis away from the figure of Orestes to the Erinyes and Athene.

Orestes' dependence upon Apollo is given prominence throughout the drama. He is discovered by the Pythian Priestess lying in the "Holy of Holies", blood-drenched and surrounded by the Erinyes (40ff). His first words comprise an appeal to Apollo (35ff). He is next seen in the first Epeisodion, after his arrival in Athens, and once more he prays thus:  $\delta\iota\tau\epsilon\sigma\sigma' \text{ Ἄθελνα, Ἀπόλλωνος κελύμασιν / ἔγκλω} \dots$  (235), and then adds further on:  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\upsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\sigma\upsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\phi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \text{Ἀπόλλωνος χριστήριος}$  (241). In his following speech (270ff) he mentions Apollo again (283), and later explains more fully the involvement of Apollo in his actions (465ff): the threats which he alleges were spoken by Apollo hark back to his statement in the Choe. (269ff). As Orestes is being interrogated by the Erinyes (585ff), he is forced to make another appeal to Apollo (609f, 744).

Moreover, he often reiterates the fact that he has



undergone a number of purificatory and cleansing rites since killing Clytaemnestra. He speaks of having an εὖ προστρόπακλον οὐδ' ἀπούβαντον χέραι (237), and of talking ... ἄφ' ἀγνοῦ στόματος (287). Later still, he repeats that he is οὐκ... προστρόπακος (445). The most elaborate description of the rituals comes in 276ff and 448ff.<sup>94</sup> The fact that he should place so much emphasis on the Apolline rites of purification (ministered by the god's servants) is surely suggestive of that great self-doubt and anxiety which were to the fore in the Choe. He continues to hide behind the support offered by Apollo, and to absolve himself of blame by appealing to the god.

The Erinyes are, in the Eum., presented visually on the stage. This should not be taken to imply that Aeschylus literally believed that they were fashioned of "matérielle corporelle".<sup>95</sup> They still represent, as in the Choe., the guilty conscience of Orestes, and are introduced onto the stage, both because they are a symbol of his moral awareness and also because they are a tremendous theatrical tour de force.<sup>96</sup> I do not think that Aeschylus was such an archaic poet that he could only regard those creatures in a *physical or literal sense*. The reason why they were not visualized in the Choe. is not far to seek. That play was drawing to an end, and any further dramatic stimulation would be aesthetically gratuitous and theatrically bathetic, since it would ruin the surprise effects of the opening scene in the Eum.<sup>97</sup>

The presence of the Erinyes, as the symbolic representation of Orestes' conscience, confirms how θεομωγῆ (40) he is, and shows that he has still failed to achieve peace of mind, despite the lustrations of the Apolline religion.

Orestes is forced, as a last resort, to appeal to Athene for help, since Apollo alone cannot save him. His requests to her are all based upon her own self-interest, and he promises that she will have: αὐτόν τε καὶ γῆν καὶ τὸν Ἄργεῖον λεών/ πλοῖον δικαίως ἐς τὸ πᾶν τε σύμμαχον (290f).

The promise is reiterated later (762ff). Without her support there is surely no doubt but that Orestes could not have subsisted in his continuing state of guilt and anxiety.

On a number of occasions, he attempts to vindicate his crime thus: ἀντικόνους ποναῖα φιλτάτου πατρός (464), and again: πέποιθ', ἄρωγὰς δ' ἐκ τάφου πέμπει πατῆρ (598), but, as in the Choe., he is not entirely convincing. The phrase τὸν πᾶσαι μάθεις which was spoken by the Chorus in the Ag. (177) has often been held to imply that, in the final element of the trilogy, Orestes has learned his lesson, through time and suffering, and is now deserving of salvation.<sup>98</sup> This view does not persuade me. For we have noticed that Orestes continues to be full of self-doubt and troubled by an uneasy conscience. The manner of his acquittal itself proves most instructive on examination. It has been suggested (most convincingly in my opinion) that Athene's own ψῆφος is not a casting vote, but actually constitutes the twelfth pebble and thus causes a tied vote: νικᾷ δ' Ὀρέστης καὶ ἰσόψηφος κρίθη (741).<sup>99</sup> The inference from this is clear. In the eyes of the majority of mankind (symbolized by the six guilty votes) Orestes' action is indefensible.<sup>100</sup>

It is of great import, for our true understanding of Orestes in this play, that he should have been acquitted by a mere technicality. He is plainly not absolved personally from

guilt.<sup>101</sup> The Erinyes themselves do not accept the decision at first (Eum. 778ff, 808ff, 837ff), and have to be cajoled and threatened by Athene into acquiescence (Eum. 794ff, 824ff, 848ff, 903ff). Even then, significantly, they still dwell submerged, but present, beneath the mound of Ares, ready to strike whenever it should be necessary (Eum. 851ff, 1003ff).<sup>ic2</sup>

If the interpretation of the Erinyes, as the symbol of Orestes' conscience, is valid, then it follows that his guilt also remains ever within his psyche. He has simply been allowed to live free from the demands and violence of the vendetta, but his inner moral awareness has not been purged. The system of the lex talionis has been ended, as an act of state, so that, in the words of Athene:

Ἀρχαῖος ἔστω πόλεμος, οὐ νόμιμος παρῶν,  
 ἐν ᾧ τις ἔσται δεινὸς εὐκλείας ἔργος.  
 Ἐνοικίου δ' ὄρνιθος οὐ λέγω μάχην.

(Eum. 864ff.)

The χάρις is granted to Orestes for the future well-being of the city, not to exculpate him as an individual. He is given protection at the end of the trilogy, so that the πόλις should no longer be convulsed by the private vendetta of old and peace may prevail.

In both plays, Orestes seems to have undergone no deep inner change; his self-doubt and moral consciousness remain throughout. It is not suggested that Aeschylus' main concern in the trilogy is with and about Orestes. He is, however, representing, in human terms, the inner conflict that such men face before a system of private vengeance. It is necessary for the playwright to depict his characters as naturalistically as possible, so that their behaviour and motivation may seem

realistic. By so doing, he demonstrates the universality of his philosophic ideas. Orestes is thus no characterless and abstract figure. Greater emphasis is afforded him in the Choe., because the situation does not, of course, remain static, but equally it would be wrong to deny him any importance in the Eum.

In sum, the recurrent characters are an important device in Aeschylean Tragedy. The essential continuity in their depiction seems appropriate for the trilogic format of the plays. The connected trilogy enables Aeschylus to emphasize the stability of life and the gradual evolution in the development of the cosmos and of mankind. Aeschylus was, I believe, the first tragedian to see how this device might be utilized and added it to the repertoire of dramatic techniques and instruments.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE.

1. See the Hypothesis to the Ag.
2. Jebb, Elec., Introd., p.xi.
3. The confusion over the exact date of Pyth. XI (474 or 454 B.C.) is reflected in the divergent comments found in the Σ. With regard to modern critics, the later date is favoured by L.R. Farnell, The Works of Pindar: A Critical Commentary (London, 1932), pp. 222f.; C.M. Bowra, Pindar (Oxford, 1964), pp.402ff.; I.During, "Klutaimestra - ἡ γυνὴ γυνομένη", Er., 41 (1943), 91-123. In support of the earlier date, see A. Puech, Les Pythiques (Paris, 1951 = Budé edition), pp.15ff.; P.W.B. Burton, Pindar's Pythian Odes (Oxford, 1962), pp.60f.; and D.C. Young, Three Odes of Pindar (Leiden, 1968), p.2 (with nn. 2 and 3). The communis opinio appears to regard 474 B.C. as the more likely date, with which I agree.
4. The reader is also referred to the Euripidean portrayal of this figure (below, pp. 222ff).
5. F.B. Anderson, "The character of Clytaemnestra in the Ag. of Aes.", TAPA, 60 (1929), 136-154, and "The Character of Clytaemnestra in the Choe. and Eum. of Aes.", AJP, 53 (1932), 301-319; Sidgwick, Choe., Introd., p.XVI; and L. Golden, In Praise of Prometheus, chpt iv, passim, espec. pp.63f. (with n.2), all concentrate upon the Ag., and lay little emphasis upon the other two plays; to these scholars Clytaemnestra is a wicked and hypocritical woman. On the other hand, E.R. Dodds, "Morals and Politics in the Oresteia", PCPS, 6(1960), 19-31; B. Vickers, Towards Greek Tragedy, pp. 403f., and G.J.M.J. Te Riele, Les femmes chez Eschyle, p.17, think that she changes during the trilogy, becoming a broken and spiritless woman in the Choe., but they exclude the Eum. from consideration.
6. e.g., W.B. Stanford, Aeschylus in His Style, chpt.v; F.R. Earp, "Studies in Character: Agamemnon", GR, 20 (1951), 49-61.

7. Recently, D.J. Conacher, "Interaction between Chorus and Characters in the Orest.", AJP, 95 (1974), 324, has remarked on how insistent she is that she was responsible for the deed.
8. Found only in Aeschylus: cf. Choe. 764 and P.V.991.
9. For this word used in a sexual sense, see Fränkel, ad loc., and also Eum. 107 (infra, n.49).
10. The term παροψώνητρα with an erotic connotation is the more effective for being an ἐπαφὴ λογόμενον. I prefer χλιδα for the reading χλιδαῖς by Fränkel and Denniston/Page, Ag., ad loc., as do Murray, O.C.T. of Aeschylus, and Thomson/Headlam, Orest., ad Ag.1447. With the sentiment of the line, Fränkel aptly compares Soph., Trach. 538
11. L. Golden, In Praise of Prometheus, pp. 66ff., holds that this characteristic is the product of a warped mind, and believes that she is of a pathologically violent temperament. His interpretation is unconvincing and hypercritical.
12. "Clytaemnestra and the Vote of Athens", JHS, 68 (1948), 130-147.
13. It is true that the Greek tragedians usually account for an action on both the human and the divine level: double determination. On this, see Kitto, F.M.D., pp.5f. and 71ff., who has a very good discussion. In this particular instance, however, it acts to underline her belief that she has been justified in taking such a course against Agamemnon because of the sacrifice of her daughter.
14. So Denniston/Page, Ag., ad loc.
15. The other tragedians make servants responsible, of their own accord, for this action: a τροφεὺς in Eur., El. 15ff., and a Paidagogus in Soph., Elec. 11ff.
16. Above, pp. 29f..
17. The fact that no mention is made of Electra should not be construed as denoting indifference or hostility to her. The omission is surely due to the economy of the tragedy; as Arist. said (Poet. 1455b. 17.8) it is ἔξω τοῦ μύθου.
18. Such formality is not necessarily to be expected on a public occasion: contrast the warmth in the emotional feelings at Aes., Suppl. 180ff. (Danaus and his daughter), Choe. 235ff. (Electra and Orestes); also Soph., Elec.

1224ff. (Electra and Orestes); Eur., H.F. 514ff. (the entry of Heracles), Hel. 625ff. (Helen and Menelaus). Note, too, the sterility of their relationship in Euripides' I.A. (below, pp. 187, 226)

19. Admittedly, it appears to be a custom of the Homeric "Heroic Age" for men to take concubines home from the wars: cf. the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon over Briseis in Il. 1. But it does not follow that the Attic dramatists approved of the mores with which their legendary characters were associated; these customs had to be utilized since they were treating of the old heroic times.
20. The spirited defence of his character by Fränkel, Ag., ad 974 et passim, and J. Fontenrose, "Gods and Men in Orest.", TAPA, 102 (1971), 71-109, has been ably countered by (inter alios) Denniston/Page, Ag., ad 931ff.
21. Below, pp. 43ff., especially 46-49.
22. See R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytaemnestra and the Vote of Athens", JHS, 68 (1948), 132, who writes: "She hated Agamemnon ... not because she loved Aegisthus, but out of a jealousy ... of Agamemnon himself, and his status as a man".
23. Despite the corruption contained within these lines, Fränkel, Ag., ad loc., notes that "ἐγώ was rightly put into the text at the end of 1672 by Canter".
24. e.g., Sidgwick, Choe., Introd., passim; L. Golden, In Praise of Prometheus, pp. 63ff.; R.M. Doyle, "Aeschylus' Ag.: a study in Selfishness", CB, 38 (1961), 22-3 and 25-6: cf n. 4 to this chapter.
25. G.J.M.J. Te Riele, Les femmes chez Eschyle, p. 81; cf. C.R. Post, "The Dramatic Art of Aeschylus", HSCP, 16 (1905), pp. 48ff.; L.A. Post, "Feminism in Greek Literature", Queen's Review, 248 (1927), pp. 354ff.
26. cf. the similar attitude of the Nurse in the Choe. (below, pp. 35ff.).
27. The wishful thinking on the part of the Queen, that there be no further bloodshed, is also part of Aeschylus' point, and underscores the tragic paradox.
28. On the use which the tragedians made of each other's works, see A.R. Bellinger, "Achilles' son and Achilles", YCS, 6 (1939), 1-13.
29. contra Pohlenz, p. 118, who says, "... wir keinen

Zweifel hegen, dass sie kaum mehr empfindet als "Agisth ...". See, too, Sidgwick, Choe., and 691-99, and Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, p. 82.

30. This is not to deny that she might feel RELIEF that he is dead and therefore poses no threat to her, but that is far from proclaiming (secret) happiness over it. For further discussion of line 691, see n. 44 to this chapter.
31. Above, p. 34.
32. "Colloquial Expressions in Aes. and Soph.", CQ, 39 (1945), 95-105.
33. G.J.M.J. Te Riele, Les femmes chez Eschyle, p. 18.
34. There is another (less important) reason for her entrance: we see how dramatically isolated Clytaemnestra is in the tragedy, since all around her (save Aegisthus) are inimical.
35. R.D. Dawe, "Inconsistency of Plot and Character in Aeschylus", PCPS, 9 (1963), pp. 53f., argues that Clytaemnestra's words at 691ff. are genuine, but that the Nurse's reaction is also natural, since each is appropriate to the immediate context. This view, which subordinates everything to the single scene, appears to me to reduce the artistic creativity of such a master as Aeschylus ad Absurdum: see my remarks on that literary school in the Introduction.
36. E.R. Dodds, "Morals and Politics in the Orest.", PCPS, 6 (1960), p. 30; cf C.R. Post, "Dramatic Art of Aeschylus", HSCP, 16 (1965), pp. 51f.
37. cf. the account of the dream in Soph., Elec. 417ff.
38. That dreams portend the future and do not need to arise as a result of regret or uneasy conscience, see Aes., Pers. 176ff.; also Hdt. I, 209 and VII, 13ff. Such dreams are, of course, an important literary and dramatic device, too.
39. cf. Il. 2, 658; 5, 781; Od. 11, 290; 11, 290; also Hesiod, Theogoneia 332. See, too, the remarks in Autenrieth, S.V., *φύγ.*
40. cf. Plutarch, Moralia 715E.
41. H.J. Rose, "On an Epic Idiom in Aes", Er., 45 (1947), 88 - 99, and "Further Epic Idioms in Aes", Er. 46 (1948), 72, gives a full list of the instances of this periphrastic construction in Aes., and adds, as a synonym, σθέρος in Συμ. 299. L.J.D. Richardson, "Further Remarks on an Epic Idiom in Aes", Er., 55 (1957), 1 - 6, gives his own control of Rose's count, and writes (p.2), "... the Sept. is the most Iliadic; and in it Aeschylus follows Homer the most



- closely, not only in spirit but also ... in its epic phrasing".
42. The conjecture of Blaydes: O.C.T., app.crit., ad loc.
  43. F.R. Earp, The Style of Aeschylus (Cambridge, 1948), p 144: the asterisk marks them off as "striking".
  44. The Aldine ms and some commentators (Headlam/Thomson, Orest., and Choe. 691ff) assign these lines to Electra; but I follow Sidgwick and Verrall, in their editions, ad loc., who regard them as spoken by Clytaemnestra. If they were spoken by the daughter, the only reason would be to further the plot by deceiving Clytaemnestra; this added persuasion on her part, however, is surely unnecessary, since Orestes has already (674ff) given a sufficiently convincing tale to his mother, which requires no further padding. The reasons for assigning them to Clytaemnestra are more compelling: they match her mood of sadness and imaginative qualities of language.
  45. The epithet is not common in the dramatists, occurring elsewhere, in Aes., at Suppl. 678 and Eum. 248 and 956; in Eur., once only at Supp. 525; and never in Sophocles.
  46. Orestes, for his part, indulges in the opposite tendency, refusing to acknowledge her, for the greater part of the drama, as his mother: see below pp. 52, 55. This is, of course, part of Orestes' dilemma and the point of the trilogy.
  47. Interestingly, the very piquancy and forcefulness of the dream's description, as given by the Chorus (527ff) seems to be in harmony with the Queen's highly elaborate and imaginative nature. One is tempted to wonder if that is only coincident or quite deliberate.
  48. Headlam/Thomson, Orest., and Eum. 94ff.
  49. Found only at Aes., Ag. 1439, Choe. 15, and Eum. 107 and 886. Significantly, it is Clytaemnestra who uses the word on two of these occasions, and, although they each have a different nuance of meaning, I would suggest that the occurrence in the Eum. is deliberate and echoes that in the Ag.: on the latter instance, see above, n.9.
  50. On this theme, see especially A. Lebeck, The Oresteia (Washington, 1971), pp 14, 63ff, 132.
  51. She helps, dramatically, of course, to intensify Orestes' predicament, as well as serving to "enhance considerably the atmosphere of unrelinquished gloom and fright" (C.R. Post, "Dramatic Art of Aeschylus", HSCP, 16 (1905), p 48).
  52. Above, p.28.
  53. F. Will, "Remarks on Counterpoint Characterization in

- Euripides", C.J., 55 (1960), p 342. Will (pp 342f) reviews, in his article, all the literary evidence from our sources apropos Aegisthus.
54. e.g. Fränkel, Ag., ad 1629ff, who says that he, "though in origin a Pelopid, is through and through made of common stuff"; cf. Denniston/Page, Ag., ad 1577f, and F. Will, ibid., p 342.
  55. By the Chorus at Ag. 1625ff and 1633ff, also Choe. 111 770ff; by Orestes at Choe. 569ff; by Electra at Choe. 134; and by the Nurse at Choe. 742f.
  56. Fletcher, Ag., ad loc.
  57. Fränkel, Ag., ad loc.
  58. An analysis of the verb κατάγειν, in the sense "reducere (exsulem)", in Homer, Pindar, the three tragedians, Herodotus and Thucydides has revealed no other instances of αἰθεῖς used with κατάγειν thus. The nearest parallels, so far as I am aware, are: Thuc. V, 32, 1 (κατήγαγον πάλιν) and Hdt. VI, 40, 2 (κατήγαγον ὀπίσω). (At Hdt. I, 118, 1 πάλιν ἀπηγέετο is used not in the physical sense, but metaphorically, signifying "told a story"). The rarity of the idiom would tend to suggest that its employment by Aegisthus here is intentional, and helps to betray facets of his character.
  59. Denniston/Page, Ag., ad loc.
  60. LSJM<sup>9</sup>, s.v., λάκτις.
  61. This interpretation of the grammar of these lines is disputed by critics. Fränkel, Ag., ad loc., adopts Wieseler's and Kansten's emendation of μήν for μή. I follow Denniston/Page, Ag., ad loc., in retaining the mss. μή.
  62. A.D. Fitton-Brown, "Aegisthus and the Chorus", CR, 1 (1951), p 134, states that, "Aegisthus throughout expresses his grievances, triumphs and threats with uncompromising directness". In the trochaic verses he becomes even more voluble.
  63. Other parts of this address are also, as I have pointed out (above, p.43) corrupt. A similar cause might well be (partly) accountable for it.
  64. Denniston, G.P.<sup>2</sup>, p. 279f.
  65. On the reasons why Orestes was sent away from the palace, see above, p.32: there seemed to be no danger from Aegisthus. Moreover, in the Choe., Orestes does not mention, as a reason for acting against Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus, that he stood in peril while in exile (see especially 299ff).

66. Kamerbeek, Sophocles' Elec., Introd., p 1.
67. Jebb, Sophocles' Elec., Introd., p xi.
68. Fuller details may be found in Kamerbeek, Elec., Introd., pp 2ff.
69. e.g., H.W. Smyth, Aeschylean Tragedy, ch pt. vii, passim, F. Solmsen, Hesiod and Aeschylus (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1949), chpt. iii; A.J. Podlecki, The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy (Michigan, 1966), pp 71ff.
70. e.g., J.H. Finley, Pindar and Aeschylus (Cambridge, Mass.: 1955), pp 246ff; A. Lebeck, The Oresteia, pp 110ff; R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "The rôle of Apollo in the Orest", CR, 47 (1933), 97 - 104.
71. See now the discussion of A.F. Garvie, "The Opening of the Choephoroi", BICS, 17 (1970), 79 - 91.
72. U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Griechische Tragödie (Berlin, 1899 - 1923), II, pp 143f and 148, and Aischylos: Interpretationen (Berlin, 1914), pp 418ff., argued that the κόμμος showed the great mental dilemma facing Orestes. W. Schadewaldt, "Der Kommos in Aeschylus' Choephoroi", Hermes, 67 (1932), 313 - 354, rejected the psychological interpretation, and thought that Orestes' mind had already been made up before the κόμμος. A Lesky, "Der Kommos der Choephoroi", Sitzungsberichte Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaft, Phil.Hist. Klasse, 221 (1943), 1 - 127, tried to find a via media between those two viewpoints, and he has received support from A. Lebeck, The Oresteia, pp 93ff.. D.J. Conacher, "Interaction between Chorus and Characters in the Orest", AJP, 95 (1974), pp 306ff, has now come out against Wilamowitz's view, and spoken of the κόμμος as an ideal means of arousing both the living (Orestes) and the dead (Agamemnon), but he has failed to take into account S. Srebrny's able defence of Wilamowitz's position in Wort und Gedanke bei Aischylos (Wroclaw, Warszawa and Krakow: 1964), pp 55ff..
73. U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Aischylos, p 205.
74. Usually, in Greek, we find that, in a series of nouns, adjectives or verbs, either asyndeton or polysyndeton prevails (and more often asyndeton). Joining the last two elements only by a connective (the usual English construction) is very rare in Greek: Denniston, G.P.<sup>2</sup>, pp xliv and 289f. When it does occur, a special effect is obviously aimed at: here it is a subtle indication of Orestes' troubled conscience: see the main text (above) for details.
75. The normal idiom in Greek is that εἰπὼν has an indirect object noun clause (ὡς or ἕτε ...): Goodwin, § 753. The participle after such verbs is rare but not unparalleled. One of the examples cited by Goodwin (§910) is Soph., Elec.

676. Variant readings have been given for the ms. πάλλαι λέγω: Pearson (O.C.T. of Soph., ad loc.) and Kells (Elec., ad loc.) prefer τὸτ' ἐνέπω. But I am inclined to follow Jebb (Elec., ad loc.), Kamerbeek (Elec., ad loc.), Dain/Mazon (Budé ed. of Elec., ad loc.) who retain πάλλαι λέγω. In support of this, I would argue that Soph. is perhaps imitating deliberately the passage here at Aes., Choe. 682. Soph. did, of course, know his Aeschylus well: as Headlam/Thomson, Orest., ad Choe. 681f, remark: "In the Elec. of Soph., there is hardly any touch which in one form or other is not already to be found in Aes .." Such a reminiscence would be quite possible.
76. See G.W. Regenos, "Guest Friendship in Greek Tragedy", CB, 31 (1955), 49ff, and "Guest Friendship and the development of plot in Greek Tragedy", CB, 32 (1956), 49 ff.
77. A fuller discussion on this point follows below, p.58.
78. H.J. Rose, "The part of Pylades in Aes's Choe.", Annual of the British School of Athens, 37 (1936/7), 201 - 206, makes the interesting suggestion that the speeches attributed in this scene to Orestes (ie. at 652ff, 658ff, 674ff, 700ff) should really be assigned to Pylades. Under the circumstances, argues Rose, Orestes could not face his mother directly, but hid well away behind his companion who did all the talking. His arguments do not persuade me, since they appear far-fetched. But, in the general area that he underscores Orestes' natural embarrassment and horror at facing his mother, I would fully agree.
79. J.H. Finley, Pindar and Aeschylus, pp 272ff.
80. A. Lesky, "Die Orestie des Aischylos", Hermes, 66 (1931), p 205 (n 1), writes that, "... man sehe nur mit welche erschütternder Wirkung in der Mordszene Orest das Wort μήτηρ meidet ...." In contrast, of course, Clytaemestra emphasizes the relationship between Orestes and herself: see above, p.39.
81. The tableau here seems to be a parallel with that at the end of the Ag.
82. Verrall, Choe., Notes ad locc., gives a masterly survey of Orestes's speeches in the Exodos. In some of the details of the present analysis, I am indebted to his edition, but my general conception of Orestes' character here was formed before I referred to it.
83. Verrall, Choe., ad loc.
84. Above, p. 54.
85. Ferguson, Companion, p 102.

86. A fuller discussion on the signification of the Erinyes in the trilogy may be found below, p. 60.
87. Note the active and transitive sense of the main verb.
88. The conflict between free will and predetermination in the Orest. has been discussed by many critics. It would go far beyond the purposes of this thesis to enter into the question at length. Suffice it to say that I find the views of H. Lloyd-Jones, "The Guilt of Agamemnon", CQ, 12 (1962), 187 - 199, far too fatalistic. E.R. Dodds, "Morals and Politics in the Orest.", PCPS, 6 (1960), 19 - 31, and N.G.L. Hammond, "Personal Freedom and its Limitations in the Orest.", pp 90 - 105 of Aeschylus: A Collection of Critical Essays (ed. M.H. McCall, Englewood Cliffs 1973), however, have underlined, rightly in my view, the fact that the main characters are all free agents and act sua sponte.
89. "The rôle of Apollo in the Orest.", CR, 47 (1933), p 103.
90. The fact that Clytaemnestra's own motives for killing Agamemnon were not white-washed by Aeschylus nor regarded as completely pure makes no difference, I feel, to the question of Orestes' crime.
91. Above, p. 54.
92. The argument propounded here appears to have raised little comment in the critical literature, as far as I am aware. The one exception is G.W. Regenos, "Guest Friendship and the Development of Plot in Greek Tragedy", CB, 32 (1956), p 51, who believes that Orestes "has not actually violated the laws of hospitality; he has merely pretended". This appears to me a very glib and hair-splitting comment. Regenos offers no reasons for his statement, and indeed, to my mind, it goes completely against the tenor of the play.
93. So, e.g., E.T. Owen, The Harmony of Aeschylus, pp. 115f.
94. P. Amandry, "Eschyle et la purification d'Orestes", Revue Archéologique, 11 (1938), 19 - 27, discusses, in detail, the actual technicalities of the rites.
95. J. Toutain, "L'évolution de la conception des Erinyes dans le myth d'Orestes d'Eschyle à Euripide", Mélanges F. Cumont (Brussels, 1936), p 450.
96. cf. the symbolical use of Aphrodite, Artemis, Lyssa and Iris, for example, in Euripides' Hipp and H.F.
97. Tradition held that the Chorus of Erinyes in the Eum. caused so much surprise that, τὰ μὲν νῆπια ἐκψύβουσι, τὰ δὲ ἔμβρουα ἐξαρβλωθῆναι (Αἰσχύλου βίος).
98. So R. Kuhns, The House, the City and the Judge, especially chpt. v; J.H. Finley, Pindar and Aeschylus, pp 275ff.

99. See the close analysis of Eum. 711ff. by Kitto, F.M.D. pp 65f. The formal symmetry in the poetry here seems to be in harmony with Kitto's view that, firstly, the eleven human jurors vote (of whom six condemn, and five acquit, Orestes), and then the goddess awards her twelfth pebble to equalize the ballot. Such is the interpretation of the  $\Sigma$ , ad Or., 746.
100. Even if Kitto's arguments (supra) fail to prove his case, the fact that so many jurors condemn him is, at least, indicative of the repulsion felt over his crime by at least half of mankind.
101. J.P. Vernant, "Greek Tragedy: Problems of Interpretation", The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man (ed. E. Donato and R. Macksey, Baltimore: 1970), p 290, writes that "the procedural convention [of Athene's vote] does not justify [the matricide] or absolve it of guilt". I came across this article after my own discussion (above) had been written.
102. A. Lebeck, The Oresteia, p 145, stresses that the transformation of the Erinyes is a "gradual evolution, part of the play's very structure".
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CHAPTER TWO

RECURRENT CHARACTERS IN SOPHOCLES

The chronology of Sophocles' plays has caused some controversy, but it would be inappropriate for me to enter into the debate at length. The chronological order postulated by (inter alios) T.B.L. Webster, A. Lesky, H. Musurillo and C.H. Whitman<sup>1</sup> has, therefore, been adopted here, viz, Aj. (440s), Ant. (442 or 441),<sup>2</sup> Trach. (before 430?), O.T. (c.429), Elec. (418 - 410),<sup>3</sup> Phil. (409),<sup>4</sup> O.C. (written c. 408 - 406, and produced in 401).<sup>5</sup>

It is not easy to assess fully the significance of the fact that all the Sophoclean recurrent personae, with the sole exception of Odysseus, appear in the three plays which make up the Theban cycle. Is it coincidental or not? Although they do not form a connected trilogy arranged for production at the same time,<sup>6</sup> a number of critics have felt that they are closely linked with one another.<sup>7</sup> It is surely impossible to think that, when Sophocles was writing the Theban plays individually, he did not have the others (consciously) in mind. One could argue that it was Aeschylus' own use of the device of recurrent characters which to some extent prompted Sophocles. Clearly, dramas that are trilogic in form lend themselves more easily, as

we have seen with Aeschylus, to the exploitation of that technique. Sophocles went further, however, by employing it in plays that had only a quasi-trilogic structure (such as the Theban cycle) and even (as with Odysseus in the Aj. and Phil.) in dramas which did not have this connection. It will therefore be interesting to ascertain in this chapter how Sophocles utilized the recurrent personae.

## I ODYSSEUS

The very primitive Odysseus has been discussed by M. Croiset who regards him as a development from "l'histoire primitive des îles de la Grèce occidentale".<sup>8</sup> In the Il. and Od. he seems to be treated sympathetically,<sup>9</sup> and many of the traits acquired here became part of the subsequent literary data.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to trace the exact details of the reception afforded him in the Epic Cycle, Hesiod, and the later poets, but, although the reputation as a man of cunning had been established (Hesiod fr. 198, 2f M/W), he appeared to be admired for his patience and long-suffering nature by many writers (Alcman fr. 80; Stesichorus fr. 209; Ibycus fr. 205 PMG; also Theognis 1123ff W). By the 5th century the evidence is better, and Pindar was critical of Odysseus (Nem. 7, 20ff; Nem. 8, 23). From now on, writers viewed him in an increasingly hostile light.<sup>11</sup> He had a long career on the stage. In Old Comedy he seems to have been treated much in the Homeric manner.<sup>12</sup> As for Tragedy, Odysseus made an appearance in several Aeschylean plays, e.g., Psychagōgoi, Penélope, Ostologoi, Kirkê, and Philoktêtês.<sup>13</sup> In my opinion, it is a hazardous undertaking to attempt, like W.B. Stanford,<sup>14</sup> an assessment of the dramatist's attitude to him on the basis of these few fragments.



Odysseus is a character in a number of plays by Sophocles, such as the Helenês Apaitêsis, Euryalus, Nausikaa, Odysseus Mainomenos, Palamêdês, but not enough is known about these to warrant any general conclusions.<sup>15</sup> In the extant plays he makes an appearance twice during a period that spans forty years, viz, in the Aj. and Phil.. Many writers have supposed that there is a great difference in the depiction of him between the two dramas.<sup>16</sup> Only occasionally has a critic emerged who thinks that the difference may not be so great as is generally admitted.<sup>17</sup> But such comments have been very general and lacked a detailed exposition.

(i) "Ajax"

Odysseus enters the stage in the Prologos with Athene (1ff). From the beginning we notice his obedient and pious attitude to the goddess. On two separate occasions he calls her by name (14 and 74),<sup>18</sup> and then addresses her as  $\varphi\acute{\iota}\lambda\eta$   $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\pi\omicron\upsilon\lambda\alpha$  (38). His trust in her is revealed explicitly in 34f.. Odysseus' reliance upon Athene is part of the tradition deriving from the Homeric epics (Il. 23, 772ff; Od. 5, 382ff; 16, 155ff; 20, 22ff). But Sophocles departs a little from this. For Odysseus is shown to be disapproving of Athene's deception of Ajax and taunting of him (121ff). Significantly, too, when he next appears (1318ff), he makes not even one mention of Athene, although he refers to the gods generally twice in that scene (1332 f. and 1343f). He is, therefore, no blind follower of Athene, even though he values her support.

Another characteristic of Odysseus is his highly cautious and defensive outlook. He is averse from running what he thinks to be excessive risks, and remonstrates with Athene not to bring

Ajax out in his present madness (74, 76, 80, 88). This should not be mistaken for cowardice, since Ajax must surely have presented a dreadful prospect and inspired much fear (91ff). In the later scene, too, this careful attitude is discernible when he warns Agamemnon of the wrath of the gods if Ajax's body is left unburied (1343f).

Odysseus is entrusted with tasks which require his penetrating mind and intelligence to fulfil. He admits to Athene: *μάγν' ὀφειλοντὶς τῆδ' ὑπεύχην πόνω* (24: cf 20). In the Exodus, when face-to-face with Agamemnon, he refers to his *ἑυνηρετέειν* (1329). It reveals his willingness to work for the common good.

Because of his intellectual ability Odysseus can adapt himself to circumstances whereas Ajax cannot.<sup>19</sup> The former makes repeated allusions to the enmity between Ajax and himself, as in the following line where he calls him: *ἄνδρ' ὄυσμενῆ* (18: cf. 78, 1336, 1347). But such animosity does not remain implacable. Gradually, he begins to feel sympathy for the fallen man, and admits in the last speech of the Prologos: *...ἔποικτίρω δέ νιν/δύστηνον ἔρπας, καί περ ὄντα ὄυσμενῆ* (121f): the *parechesis* in the second line stresses his changed feelings. So, too, in the Exodus, he shows his sympathy for Ajax several times and calls him: *ἄνδρ' ... ἄριστον Ἀργείων* (1340: cf. 1345, 1355, 1357, 1380).

Endowed with a more adaptable nature, he employs, before Agamemnon, a number of different arguments on behalf of the burial. Some of these appeal to the selfishness of the Atreids, others to the ideas of honour and justice. Thus, on several occasions, he mentions the demands of *δίκη* (1335, 1342, 1344,

1363), and also emphasizes the friendship between Agamemnon and himself (Odysseus), as in this verse: ἔφεστιν οὖν εἰπόντι  
 τάλῃθι φιλῶ (1328). The concept of φίλον is actually one of the main recurring themes used by Odysseus in this play (14, 38, 1328, 1351, 1353, 1359, 1377, 1400),<sup>20</sup> as is the opposite idea, ἐχθρόν and its synonyms (18, 78, 122, 1335, 1336, 1355, 1357, 1377). Does the stress that is placed upon these two antithetical ideas indicate his adaptable nature? Furthermore, Odysseus takes pains to advise Agamemnon of the personal gain that will accrue to him upon Ajax's burial (1369): it is plainly an appeal based upon the self-centred outlook of the Atreid King. Again, by exploiting several different sorts of arguments in this manner, Odysseus reveals the adaptability of his character.<sup>21</sup>

Another interesting feature of Odysseus' language is his use of the particles γάρ and ὥστε. I have compared the frequency of the two words in the speeches of all the male characters in the play, ie, Odysseus, Ajax, Teucer, Agamemnon, Menelaus. The results are tabulated in Appendix II.<sup>22</sup>

It will be seen that there is a high incidence of γάρ- and ὥστε- clauses in Odysseus' speeches. The difference between narrative and stichomythic verse is statistically negligible. The frequency of these clauses suggests a sophisticated conceptualizing process of thought: he seems to categorize and order his train of thoughts in a systematic way, so that his ideas follow logically on from each other.

By contrast, Ajax rarely uses these particles in narrative and never in stichomythia.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, when he does resort to them, he is seen to be making a great effort to

understand the world and speak logically. Thus, in his address at 430ff, the particle  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  occurs four times (432, 433, 473, 475); in that at 545ff twice (545 and 554); and in that at 646ff six times (650, 661, 666, 678, 682, 690). Apart from Odysseus, he is the only person who says  $\omega\sigma\tau\epsilon$ , and on those two occasions (98 and 452) he is explaining what has happened to him and tries to sound as clear as he can. In sum, Ajax appears to be at his most philosophic level when he employs such particles in the course of his speeches.

The situation is similar for Teucer, Ajax's half-brother. The only important difference is that about one half of Teucer's examples of  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  come in stichomythia or distichomythia. Now, the convention of these verses requires a quick and logical sequence of question and answer, inquiry and explanation; connecting particles such as  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  are therefore to be expected. Although Teucer speaks more narrative than stichomythic speech, the proportion of instances of  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  is lower in narrative. The inference from this is clear. He seems to be even less of a thinking person than his half-brother. Brave and ready to defend Ajax's causes, he lacks self-discipline in his arguments which are full of the passion of an outraged warrior (1093ff, 1266ff). His oratory is dominated by instinct rather than the head.

With regard to the Atreidae, the incidence of  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  is proportionately higher in stichomythia than in narrative. Is this, too, a subtle indication of their slower-witted minds?<sup>24</sup> Menelaus is, in fact, too fond of generalizing (1055ff, 1062ff, 1077ff), and of telling inept stories (1142ff). Agamemnon, for his part, is preoccupied with his own self-importance (1252,

1370ff), and sneers at Teucer's birth (1228ff, 1235, 1259ff), as well as indulging in the odd allegory (1253f).

Odysseus, therefore, towers well above all the other characters in the play apropos of reasoned and orderly presentation of thoughts and language.

Another trait observable in him is his egotistical nature. He refers to himself by means of the personal pronoun or adjective no fewer than eighteen times (14, 18, 21, 24, 29, 31, 80, 121, 125, 1322, 1336, 1338, 1347, 1357, 1361, 1365, 1367, 1401). The following line is worth quoting in full, so: τῷ γὰρ με μᾶλλον εὐκὸς ἢ ἑμαυτῷ πονεῖν; (1367). The sentiment here reveals the great multiplicity of motives involved in Odysseus' actions. He is certainly a humane man and wishes to do Ajax good, as we have noticed. On the other hand, there are non-altruistic reasons involved in his attitude toward Ajax. If he feels sorry for the way in which Athene has been treating him (121ff), he is also afraid of meeting Ajax for his own safety (74ff). The burial of this hero is also expedient from a political point of view, inasmuch as it will be (so Odysseus says) in accordance with τοὺς θεῶν νόμους (1343) and will therefore not alienate them from the state: we have already seen that service for the common good is an important factor in Odysseus' character. Moreover, he would surely not be oblivious to the fact that the credit for Ajax's burial will redound to his name. Indeed, the change in the attitude of Ajax's supporters to him is immediate and significant. Until the closing scene, the Chorus is very hostile towards Odysseus (148ff, 189, 955ff: cf. Tecmessa at 303, 952f, 971). Then, in the Exodus, they become more friendly (1316f and 1374f: cf.

Teucer at 1381ff).

Odysseus is thus a very complex person. He survives precisely for the reason that Ajax cannot: he is adaptable and works in the service of the state, while the other hero is fiercely individualistic and intransigent. Odysseus is also motivated (a factor not always taken into account by critics) by various considerations in a blend of unselfishness and expediency.

(ii) "Philoctetes"

Odysseus has been condemned by most scholars as a "mere schemer ... [lacking] all savour of greatness or nobility" or as an "outright villain, a persecutor".<sup>25</sup> It seems to me, however, that the picture of him has been blackened beyond measure in the Phil.; the result obtained is the opposite to that in the Ajax, where, as I have suggested, critics have tended to concentrate on the altruistic side of his character.

Throughout the Phil. Odysseus looks to the gods for help and support. Thus, before leaving the stage at the end of the Prologos, he mentions: Ἀθάνα Πηλεΐδης, ἡ σὺν ἡμῶν Ζεὺς (134).<sup>26</sup> Later he speaks of Zeus himself (989f): the triple invocation is highly impressive and very solemn. He refers to the gods on a number of other occasions (1233, 1235, 1293). Odysseus is not a thoroughly despicable character who is unconcerned with religious demands. He has a case, and he acts in the belief that the gods approve of it.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, it is plain that throughout the drama Odysseus is wont to refer to the overriding duty which binds

him to perform his tasks. He says that he has been:  $\tau\alpha\chi\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\delta\prime$   
 $\epsilon\rho\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\ \tau\omega\nu\ \alpha\nu\alpha\sigma\sigma\acute{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ \epsilon\upsilon\pi\omicron\ (6)$ . He repeats this on  
 subsequent occasions (15, 52f, 990). Other people also comment  
 upon the importance which he attaches to serving and to obeying  
 his superiors, particularly the Chorus (1143ff) and Philoctetes  
 (1010 and 1023f).

Odysseus' concern with the Greek army generally is  
 revealed clearly in the scene with Neoptolemus (1222ff). The  
 first reference to the army comes in the following line:  $\xi\upsilon\mu\pi\alpha\varsigma$   
 $\text{Ἀχαιῶν λαός, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐγώ}$  (1243), and it is  
 followed by similar comments later (1250, 1257, 1294). The  
 repetition in most of these verses of the adjective  $\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\alpha\varsigma$  (or  
 $\xi\upsilon\mu\pi\alpha\varsigma$ ) is striking.

It seems, then, that the drama poses the existence of  
 two conflicting sets of duty: the one (Philoctetes) is based  
 upon individualism; the other (Odysseus) is based upon service  
 to the Greek cause as a whole. Both sides are sincere, and, in  
 a way, both are equally right and equally wrong.<sup>28</sup> Philoctetes  
 must return to Troy (it is fated), but the manner of Odysseus'  
 effecting it leaves much to be desired.

The cautious attitude displayed by Odysseus in the Aj.  
 is also at work in the second play. Thus, in his opening  
 speech to Neoptolemus, he advises that they should take care:  
 $\mu\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\ \mu\prime\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\ \dots$  (13). His solicitude is brought  
 out similarly, thus:  $\mu\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \lambda\acute{\alpha}\beta\eta\ \mu\epsilon\ \pi\rho\omicron\sigma\pi\epsilon\sigma\acute{\omega}\nu\ \dots$  (46). It  
 is the fear of Philoctetes' hatred for himself and for the  
 Greeks which induces him to employ cunning and cleverness vis-à-  
vis Philoctetes. The emphasis placed upon  $\delta\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\sigma\omicron\varphi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha$   
 (14, 77, 101, 107, 128f) does not suggest that he is, per se, a

nefarious trickster, but that it is characteristic of his outlook to avoid unnecessary risks.<sup>29</sup> His ability to act with forethought prevents Philoctetes from killing himself (1003): the quickness of the command is stressed by the lack of any connecting particle. Moreover, when he refuses to fight a duel with Neoptolemus (1257f), he is not behaving in a cowardly way. He fully realizes the uselessness of such a fight, since it would not advance their cause, but could only risk the death or serious injury of one or both of them.<sup>30</sup> For a similar reason, later on, Odysseus flees from Philoctetes (1299ff), because a man armed only with a sword is no match against one having a bow. The scene is not comic, nor is Odysseus behaving in a cowardly fashion: his reaction is natural.

The special talents marking him off from other men are his intellectual and critical faculties coupled with his eloquence. In his first speech during the Prologos, Odysseus points out the repulsiveness of Philoctetes' wound and its dire effect upon their sacrificial customs (7ff). The metaphorical expression  $\nu\acute{o}\theta\omega \dots \delta\iota\alpha\beta\acute{o}\rho\omega$  (7) is very graphic in its description of the physical horror of the wound, and the hyperbaton further intensifies the effect. The words  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \sigma\tau\acute{\rho}\alpha\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon\delta\omicron\nu$  (10) show that the decision to send Philoctetes away was not due to a single person, but was the result of a communal vote. The asyndeton in  $\beta\omicron\omega\upsilon\upsilon \sigma\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omega\nu$  (11) and the repetition of  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\alpha$  (7) and  $\sigma\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omega\nu$  (11) add weight to the hideousness of the affliction. The impression evoked by the passage is, that the exiling of Philoctetes, if harsh, was no arbitrary action, since it was affecting the immolatory practices of the Greeks. It is certainly suggested that the gods did not



disapprove, in the first instance, of Philoctetes' banishment.

Odysseus' long description of the cave where Philoctetes lives (16ff) is designed, according to some critics,<sup>31</sup> solely to dupe Achilles' son. The language in which it is couched is significant. The expression ἐνθάκῃσιν (18),<sup>32</sup> the word ἀρπυιότροπος (19),<sup>33</sup> and the expression αὐλοῦ (19)<sup>34</sup> render the passage very graphic. But I do not think that Odysseus is merely saying this for its own sake. Were the description not true, it would be obvious to Neoptolemus' eyes. The treatment meted out to Philoctetes does not therefore seem quite so inhumane as the latter makes out, nor lacking in religious scrupulosity.<sup>35</sup>

The plan revealed by Odysseus for recovering Philoctetes (54 - 69) matches the language in which it is expressed, and underscores the remarkable intellectual and eloquent powers of the speaker. Despite the doubt concerning the two opening lines (54f),<sup>36</sup> of even greater significance is the fact that the phrase οὕτως εἰκλέψουσιν (55) is grammatically obscure. In their several editions (ad loc), Jebb maintains that it is used with δεῖ (like Aj. 556), while Webster believes it to be a final clause, so that the natural infinitive with δεῖ must be λεγέειν (57). Is it over-subtle to conjecture that the very ambiguity of the language is deliberate and suggests the complexity of Odysseus' nature?

In the long and involved period ending at line 65, the arrangement of phrases and clauses is quite logical and orderly. A free interchange of subject and of finite and non-finite verbal forms subsists throughout the period. In 58 - 9 the subject (expressed in the second person singular) refers to Neoptolemus,

and the finite verb  $\pi\lambda\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  is followed by the participle  $\beta\epsilon\kappa\lambda\epsilon\pi\acute{\omega}\nu$ . From 60ff., the subject changes to "the Greeks", and the finite verbs are  $(\acute{\omicron}\nu\kappa) \epsilon\gamma\chi\acute{\omega}\sigma\alpha\nu$  (62) and  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omicron\sigma\alpha\nu$  (64), while the non-finite forms are  $\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\lambda\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  (60),  $\mu\omicron\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  (60),  $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  (61) and  $\delta\omicron\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota$  (63). In line 63 the participles  $\epsilon\lambda\theta\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\iota$  and  $\alpha\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega$  agree with the unexpressed pronoun  $\sigma\omicron\acute{\iota}$  (= Neoptolemus). Finally, in lines 64f., the subject reverts to Neoptolemus and the verbs comprise the subjunctive  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta\varsigma$  (65) and the present participle  $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\nu$  (64).

The sequence of thoughts and clauses is systematic and methodical. The plan for taking Philoctetes, in itself the product of a fertile but logical mind, is expressed clearly and logically. It is indicative of his intellectual powers of reasoning and of speaking.

Odysseus is not reluctant to praise the physical courage of Neoptolemus and his father Achilles. On two occasions he calls the son  $\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha\acute{\iota}\epsilon\varsigma$  (51 and 1068) and speaks of the father thus:  $\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \text{ } \epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\acute{\omega}\nu$  (3: cf. 96). He compares Philoctetes, too, with  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\sigma\iota\nu$  (997). Odysseus can admire such qualities of bodily prowess, but at the same time he realizes that, by itself, this is insufficient to bring success. He makes a very interesting admission to Neoptolemus (96ff.). The alliteration and paronomasia of  $\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu \dots \acute{\alpha}\rho\gamma\omicron\nu$  (97) and  $\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu \dots \tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\gamma\alpha$  (99) are to be noted. It is precisely because of his superior intellectual attitudes that Odysseus has been able to adapt himself according to circumstances, whereas the other heroes rely much more upon their physical resources.

Furthermore, the apparent inconsistency shown by Odysseus in the play, when he veers between emphasizing now the importance of Philoctetes (14, 101, 103, 107, 981ff., 997f.) and now that of his weapon (68f., 77f., 113, 115, 1055ff.), seems to me deliberately ambiguous and is not mere capriciousness on his part. It serves to underline his adaptable nature.<sup>37</sup>

His approach is one of realism in the world, as these verses also demonstrate: *χῆπτον δικαίων κάγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν κρείσσους ἐν λόβῳ μου μάλλον οὐδὲν εὐσεβῆ(1052)*. It is not that Odysseus lacks all religious scruples or is a complete machiavellian, but that his mores differ from those of the others.

Finally, one other important trait can be discerned in Odysseus, viz, his egotism. In approximately 150 lines of speech, Odysseus uses the personal pronoun or adjective over 30 times. Of these occurrences, the nominative case of the pronoun (*ἐγώ / ἑγῶς*) is particularly significant and occurs on 13 occasions (5, 25, 120, 124, 132, 980, 990, 994, 1049, 1058, 1061, 1243, 1293). In the other cases it is spoken a further 22 times (8, 12, 46, 47, 65, 66, 70, 74, 75, 84, 126, 134, 975, 977, 995, 1048, 1051, 1057, 1062, 1069, 1231, 1247). This proclivity reveals his self-confidence and ebullience. It is also noticeable that he only gives up the attempt to take back Philoctetes and the bow when his life is threatened by the sick man (1293ff.); until then he is irrepressible in his desire to help the Greek cause

Between the two presentations of Odysseus in Sophocles' dramas there is a shift in dramatic emphasis. In

the one (the Aj.) the playwright has put less stress on the ability of Odysseus to employ cunning and stratagems, but far more stress on this trait is laid in the other (the Phil.). The reason is not difficult to seek. In all human inter-relationships, people react differently with different persons. In the first tragedy, Odysseus approached the question of Ajax's burial by using a variety of arguments based upon political expediency, Agamemnon's selfishness and his own self-interest. But, since Philoctetes is so hostile to Odysseus and so intransigent by nature that he will not be moved even by Neoptolemus's persuasion, the Ithacan King must obviously try another approach. If this is not vindicated by the outcome of the drama, neither can Philoctetes' stance be said to be justified: the antinomy between private and public interests is finely balanced.

Fundamentally, then, the character of Odysseus is the same in both dramas. He is the man of intelligence and caution who works on behalf of the state. His realism enables him to adapt far more readily to changing circumstances than heroes such as Ajax and Philoctetes. Indeed, by a masterly stroke of artistry, Sophocles has contrived to demonstrate exactly how Odysseus can adapt (without affecting his essential nature) by giving a different emphasis to his multifarious traits in each of the two plays.

## II CREON

Creon, the brother of Iocasta, had only a very shadowy existence before the fifth century B.C. His name is mentioned in the Il. (9, 84; 19, 240) but he is of only minor

significance in the epics, as indeed in the Cyclic poems<sup>38</sup> and Hesiod (Scutum 83). The name "Creon" was applied to a number of Greek rulers, and warnings<sup>39</sup> have been given not to confuse the brother of Iocasta with an earlier Theban king who was the father of Megara, the wife of Heracles (Od. 11, 269; Pindar, Isthm. IV, 70). He was named but once by Aeschylus in his Sept. (474), and it is unlikely that he played a rôle in the other elements of that trilogy.<sup>40</sup> In fact, before Sophocles wrote his Theban dramas, it seems that Creon was, as one authority has put it, "... in der Labdakidensage wohl nichts weiter als der 'Herrscher' gewesen, der als Füllfigur dient, um den Thron zu besetzen, wenn der König tot oder regierungsunfähig ist".<sup>41</sup>

Sophocles was the first poet, then, so far as we know, to raise Creon from the shade to which he had been consigned by earlier writers, and to give him a distinctive existence of his own. He appears in each of the three Theban dramas. Previously, either it has not been considered of sufficient importance to enquire whether the portrayal of this character remains consistent or not in those plays,<sup>42</sup> or such efforts as have been made to establish the continuity have met with little approval.<sup>43</sup> It is thus appropriate to examine these tragedies afresh.

(i) "Antigone"

One of the most salient features of Creon's character here is the repetitive nature of his language and thought.<sup>44</sup> In his first major speech (163ff), which has been called by critics the "inaugural address",<sup>45</sup> the following points are worth noting:  $\omega\rho\theta\omega\sigma\epsilon\lambda\upsilon$  (163) and  $\omega\rho\theta\omega$  (167) follow within four lines

of each other; ὤλοντο (171) and ὀλωλότων (174) are also in close proximity; ὄρων is repeated at the end of two lines (184 and 185); there is a three-fold repetition of φίλον (183), φίλον (187), φίλους (190), and of φρονήμασιν (169), φρόνημα (176) and φρόνημα (207); further, σωτηρίας (186) is iterated later in the cognate form σώσασα (189); and καταλθὼν ἐθέλησε μὲν (200) is followed in the next verse by κατάκρας ἐθέλησας δ' (201). Moreover, in the ensuing stichomythia between Creon and the Chorus (215ff), he says, in one line, σκοποῖ (215) and, in another, ἐπίσκοποι (217).

This tendency manifests itself in his next speech (280ff), which is addressed to the Guard. Here, he loses control of his temper, with the consequence that (as will be discussed in some detail later) the mannerism becomes even more accentuated. The conversations between him, Antigone and Ismene (from 441ff) furnish additional support. Thus, ὑβρίζειν (480) is followed by ὑβρις (492), δέδρακεν (482) by δέδρακῶσαν (483); ἀνήρ is repeated twice in one line (484); the verbs ἔχων and ἔχω are contained in the same verse (498); the phrase δουσεβῆ τιμῶς (514) is picked up later by the inverted τιμῶς ... δουσεβῆ (516), and φίλος (522) by φιλητέον φίλει (524) - note the polyptoton here. Creon constantly disparages women, as we see from                      lines 525, 571, 578f, and the sentiment of 491f is echoed further on in 561f..

In the encounter with his son Haemon (631ff), we see the same predisposition at work: the phrase ... γονάς/... φύσαντες... (641f) is picked up within a few verses by φετύσει (642), τέκνα (645) and φύσει (647). His hostile attitude to women is revealed in another passage (648ff), where

the affinities of language and sentiment with the previous references on the subject are obvious. Moreover, in 669, the conglomeration of three infinitives and the cognate forms ἄρχεῖν ... ἀρχέσθαι are striking. In the space of twenty lines (645ff), we find no fewer than four generalizing ὅστις clauses (645, 661, 663, 666). Actually, this tendency is marked throughout all his speeches in the drama, and altogether there are twelve examples of each expressions (178, 182, 209, 285, 479, 495, 580, 645, 661, 663, 666, 1045ff). Scholars have stressed this already,<sup>46</sup> but I do not believe that sufficient importance has been given to the fact that the present scene contains so many examples in such a short space: I would suggest that it is further evidence in support of the contention that he repeats his words and phrases with greater frequency as he grows more excited.<sup>47</sup> Finally, one should note these iterations in the agon also: ἄκοσμα (660), τοῖς κοσμομένοις (677), τοῖς ἀκοσμοῦντας (73); ἕσσητέα (678), ἕσσηνες (680); σέβειν (730), δέβων (744), σέβει (797), σέβειν (780); φρονεῖν (727), φρενώσεις ... φρένων (754), φρονεῖτω (768).

Creon has, in addition, a penchant for using commercial terms connected with money and trade. The words κέρδος or κερδαίνω are spoken seven times by him in the drama (222, 310, 312, 326, 1037, 1047, 1061). There are five references to precious metals (295, 322, 1038, 1039, 1055), and the term ἔρπελιον, in various tenses and moods, is found on three occasions (1036, 1037, 1063), with μίσθος and its cognates another three times (221, 294, 302).<sup>48</sup>

What conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing analysis? Creon is clearly wont to lecture people and make general inferences

from his statements, in order to make them more impressive. To support his viewpoint, he repeats words and thoughts and employs redundant modes of expression. By so doing, he conceals, behind the façade thus erected, his innate weakness.

Creon's attitude to the state, which he equates with himself and puts before other loyalties, need not detain us long, since it has, of course, been adequately treated by critics before.<sup>49</sup> Note, however, the number of times that he uses the word πόλις in the course of the play (163, 167, 178, 191, 203, 209, 289, 296, 656, 657, 662, 666, 673, 734, 738, 776), as well as the synonyms πάτρις (182), γῆ (199, 518) and χθών (736). It is interesting that, after the scene with Haemon, he never again alludes to this concept: with Teiresias' warnings ringing in his ears, he is absorbed in his private grief.

Creon is far from an impious man who pays no attention to the interests of the gods. In the first lines of his opening speech, his concern for the gods is fully revealed (163f), as it is later (199ff). He inveighs against the traitor who: ναοὺς πυρῶσιν ἤλθε κινεῖν (286). The hypophora in 288f is arresting and emphasizes his belief in the support of the gods. He also speaks of the δυσσέβεια of those who are opposed to him (300f, 514, 516). In spite of this conviction, Creon, as Bernard Knox has suggested,<sup>50</sup> eventually adopts an extremist position. The first glimpse of this is discernible in 486ff, and, later, he admits to Haemon that traitors (like Antigone) can expect no mercy from him: ἀλλὰ κτενῶ. πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐφουρνείτω Δία / βύβαιμον ... (658f). That attitude reaches its most passionate crescendo when he says: οὐδ' ἔνθ' ἔλωσ' οἱ Ζηνὸς δειπτοὶ βορᾶν / φέραν νενεράσαντες



ἐς Διὸς ὀρόρους

(1040f). He seems here

to be repudiating the very god in whose name he has hitherto been acting. How does this come about? It is not that he holds the gods in little account. He is certainly frightened by Teiresias' words and angry at being crossed by him, but he cannot bring himself to confess his mistake. He is driven to say what he would not normally contemplate as a result of his fierce temper.

Another important trait in his character, which has only been briefly mentioned in this study so far, is his thumos. The first Epeisodion presents the initial hints of this, when Creon interrogates the Guard. His temper mounts up gradually as the breathless questions (237, 244, 248) suggest. He overreacts to the discovery of the burial rites performed over Polyneices' corpse by assuming that a plot is afoot (296ff). The iteration of the demonstrative pronouns ( τοῦτο, τούτ', τούτ' ) and the four finite verbs in the present tense produce a lively, staccato effect. A few lines on, he threatens the Guard (304ff). The three participles positioned in the first foot of their respective verses (307, 309, 310) make an immediate impression. The succession of four verbs, in the second person plural, inside five lines (307, 309, 311 (bis)), also matches his hasty temperament by depicting an abrupt and relentless train of thought.

The first words spoken to Antigone (441f) are brusque, and the personal pronoun is repeated in 441. His ensuing lines (444ff) are also gruff: the pronoun is again iterated (444 and 446) and the sentiment of 447 recalls that of 442. Compare, too, his opening comments to her sister Ismene (531ff). The

bluff unceremoniousness of the address is underscored by the repeated pronoun (531 and 534), the imperatives (534), and the comparison between her and an 'ἐχθρῶν' (531f.). The extravagance of the language seems to be in harmony with the excitability of his temperament, and harks back to the equally graphic expressions used by Antigone at 473ff.: here the alliteration of the π- sound (472, 475, 476, 478) and the agglomeration of the synonymous participles (476 (bis) and 478) vividly portray his temper.

Further, when he argues with his son, the passage at 673ff. bears a distinct resemblance with 296ff. (above): the repetition of the demonstrative pronouns and the accumulation of finite verbs in the present tense are noteworthy features. The similarity appears to be intentional and renders even more effective his fierce thumos.

In short, the repetitions in his language and thought become far more marked as his temper increases.

The playwright depicts clearly the weaknesses in Creon's character. But it would be unfair, in my view, to regard him, as some writers have contended, as the typical Greek tyrant, wicked and unscrupulous.<sup>51</sup> The conflict between Antigone and Creon is balanced between two forces which have right and wrong on their side: "Antigone a raison", remarks Camus, "mais Creon n'a pas tort".<sup>52</sup> Both have their limitations and both adopt extreme positions which lead to their ruin.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the picture of Creon towards the end of the tragedy is full of sympathy. When Teiresias leaves, Creon begins to realize (all too late) the truth: ἐγνώκε καὶ τὸς καὶ τὰ πρόσθ' ἄλλ' ἔφρασε (1095), and in 1108ff.

The following points are worthy of note: the sluggish rhythm in the first half of 1108 (there are five long syllables and one short syllable) is superseded by the quicker metre in the second half; while the conglomeration of short words in 1108-1109 and the repetition of words and phrases in those lines give a staccato effect. By these means, the anxiety of Creon is well shown. When we next meet him (1261ff) he is broken and dejected - his inner weakness fully bared. 54

(ii) "Oedipus Tyrannus"

From the time when Creon first enters the stage (87ff)

the tendency to repeat his own thoughts and language is made plain, as in the earlier drama. In the Prologos, the following points may be noted: τύχου (87), εὐτυχῶν (88), both in the final feet of their respective lines; λέγω (87), λέγοιμ' ἄν (95); the polyptoton φόνω φόνω (100); πλὴν εἰς τις (118), πλὴν ἔν οὐδέν (119); ἔφρασκε (110), ἔφρασκε (114), ἔφρασκε (122), all in the second and third feet of their verses. The similarity in sound of πάλιν (100) and πόλιν (101) is also of some import: they are both found in the last foot of consecutive lines and bring to mind the like collocation in the Ant. (163 and 167), where Creon is again speaking.

He appears next in the second Epeisodion (512ff), and once more this trait is given prominence: μοι (518), μοι (520); φέρον (517), φέροντι (519); κακός (521), κακός (522); ἔξ ὀργμάτων ὀρθῶν and κάψ ὀρθῆς φρένος (528); κατηγορεῖν (514), κατηγορεῖτο (529); ἀντάκουσον (544), ἄκουσον (547); πάθην... παθεῖν (554), an example of etymologica figura; χρῆσειν (595), χρῆσοντες (597); the tricolon νῦν νῦν νῦν (596f); με (596), με (597); πᾶσι and πᾶς (596); τοὺς κακοὺς ... χρηστούς (609f) and τοὺς χρηστούς κακοὺς (610); φύλον (611) and φυλεῖ (612); χρόνω (613), χρόνος (614). 55

At the very end of the drama (1422ff), the same proclivity is discernible when he remarks in one place: ἐκμαθεῖν τί πρακτέον (1439), and in another ἐκμαθεῖν τί δραστέον (1443). Note, too,

the iteration of κρατεῖν (1522) and ἐκράτησας (1523).

Concomitant with that is Creon's generalizing and philosophical expressions. In 110f, the paronomasia of ἵγ' οὐρούμενον and τὰ μελούμενον is noteworthy, and the phrase: ... εἰ τι ν' ἄν δοικῆς (584), is an example of the generalizing second person singular. A few verses later, he remarks: οὐτ' ἄλλος ὅστις σωφρονεῖν ἐπίσταται (589). The generic ὅστις clause echoes the mannerism in the Ant.. In addition, in 613ff, the second person future indicative and optative tenses are yet another instance of the generalizing clause, and lines 674f. mark a further principle of general application.

The tendency to repeat his words and make general statements is a means of highlighting Creon's basic weakness and insecurity vis-à-vis Oedipus and the Theban throne. He is unaccustomed to the responsibilities of ruling, as he admits himself (584ff), and, in any case, Iocasta and Oedipus, more dominant characters, have kept him in third place behind themselves. The language and thought of Creon appear, therefore, to be aimed at bolstering his own self-image before the outside world.

Creon is extremely loyal to the πόλις and its lawfully constituted authority, and places their demands before everything else. His obedience to Oedipus, the legitimate ruler, is revealed as soon as he returns from Delphi (91f) and throughout the rest of the scene (95ff, 100f, 103f). Significantly, too, he says the word πόλις twice (101, 104), γῆ twice (104, 110), χῆρα once (97) and χθών once (97). In his second stage appearance he is anxious <sup>not</sup> to seem disloyal (κακός) to the state (521f), and, once more, he is obedient to Oedipus, answering his

questions (557ff) and asserting his satisfaction with the present responsibilities devolved upon him (584ff). At the close of the drama, when Oedipus is no longer the rightful king, Creon is able to tell him: ... πάντα μὴ βούλου κρατεῖν/καὶ ἔχρ' ἐκράτῃσας οὐ σοὶ τῷ βίῳ συνέσπετο (1522f): now he is acting as the legal Regent in Oedipus' place and thinks the latter has no power to give such orders.

Creon is also very sincere in his belief in the gods and their oracles. He is full of hope when he enters the stage in the Prologos, and optimistically trusts in the Oracle (87f, 96f, 106f). He later urges Oedipus to go to the Oracle himself to test the veracity of his words (603f). During the Exodus, he bids Oedipus go indoors well away from the sun's light (1424ff). There is, indeed, nothing very new in the ideas expressed here,<sup>56</sup> but it presents an insight into his religious scruples and conventional ideas, and reminds us of his similar desire to avoid μίσος in the Ant. (885ff).<sup>57</sup> His obedience to Apollo is also shown in the admission to Oedipus that he would have been immediately banished: ... εἰ μὴ τοῦ θεοῦ/πρώτιστα ἔχρηστον ἐκμαθεῖν τί πρακτέον (1438f): the sentiment is repeated a little later (1442ff). When the deposed king asks to be expelled for the last time, the reply is immediate and exactly the same: ... τοῦ θεοῦ γ' αὐτεῖς δοῦναι (1518).

Although the thumos of Creon is not quite so marked in this play, nonetheless he does not remain throughout, as it has sometimes been argued,<sup>58</sup> little more than a colourless and phlegmatic character. He begins to lose his temper with Oedipus during the second Epeisodion. When he becomes more excited, his language grows more repetitive, as we have already

noticed (above). The change to antilabê at 626ff. is also suggestive of the mounting animosity between the two men: Creon matches Oedipus in repartee for repartee. Furthermore, the adoption of trochaic tetrameters (catalectic) at 1515ff.<sup>59</sup> and the further antilabê at 1516ff. convey the effect of the increasing anger and hostility between the two men. Creon abruptly gives a command to Oedipus (1521). The lack of a connecting particle before the imperative  $\sigma\tau\epsilon\tau\chi\epsilon$  makes it even more brusque. The last two lines that he speaks (1522f), where he interrupts Oedipus, reveal his annoyance over the way in which the latter has delayed obeying him and made insistent demands. There is, then, to my mind, little substance in the belief that Creon is utterly stolid during the drama, in marked contrast with the passionate Oedipus.

Since Creon's rôle in the O.T. is smaller than in the Ant., it cannot be expected that his portrayal would have such precision as in the other drama. Nevertheless it is hoped that the preceding discussion has disclosed a far greater similarity in the two presentations. It is now appropriate to examine the final tragedy before we proceed later to a fuller analysis of the characterization.

### (iii) "Oedipus Coloneus"

In the last Sophoclean play, the importance of the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\varsigma$  to Creon is emphasized as soon as he arrives on the stage (728ff). In 735ff, the amplification of the phrases  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega\varsigma$   $\epsilon\iota\pi\omicron\iota/\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\omega\upsilon\upsilon$  (737f) and  $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\epsilon\omega\varsigma$  (739) accentuates the significance of this idea to Creon. A little later he reverts to the same theme (741f). Towards the end of the speech (756ff), Creon

again mentions the πόλις . Of particular interest here are the repeated words πατρῴων... πατρώους (756 and 758) and the reference to τῆδε τὴν πόλιν (758). As the conflict between the two men increases, Oedipus is told: πόλει μάχῃ ... (837). Creon then becomes even more insistent upon his viewpoint (849ff). The word κέρειδα (850) is emphasized by its position in the first foot.

Creon also condemns Oedipus' behaviour in 852ff.. The verbal reminiscence between the verse: ... χρόνῳ γάρ, οἷδ' ἔγωγ, γνώσῃ τὰδ' (852), and his statement in the O.T.: Ἐν χρόνῳ γνώσῃ τὰδ' ἄσφαλῶς (613), is very striking. Yet another reminiscence occurs when Creon tells Oedipus: ... μὴ 'πίτασθ' ἔ μὴ κρατεῖ (839): this line picks up his final injunctions to Oedipus in the O.T. (1522f). In both instances, Creon stresses the fact that Oedipus is no longer the lawful king and therefore has no power to demand obedience. It should be added that, in a total of 100 verses spoken by Creon in the play, the word πόλις is used seven times (733, 739, 758, 837, 858, 939, 949), and various synonyms on a further four occasions (728, 857, 850, 871).

He appears to be sincere in his religious beliefs. When he says: ... εὖ νυν / πρὸς θεῶν πατρῴων, Οἰδέπους, ... (755f), the preceding epithet intensifies the effect of the noun qualified, by emphasizing the relationship between the Gods and the city.<sup>60</sup> He invokes Zeus (882), and then refers to the asylum awarded to Oedipus by Athens (944ff). The comment about his being: ... πατρόκτονον / κἀνάγνον ... (944f) echoes the Chorus' own outraged reactions to the discovery of Oedipus on their soil (228ff). It also harks back to Creon's statements

about *πίστεμα* in the other two plays and is another pointer to his orthodoxy.

Creon is apt, in this tragedy, to repeat his diction and thought. He comments several times upon his old age and the fact that he is powerless in Attica (733, 875, 957f). He also alludes to Oedipus' temperament on a number of occasions (804f, 954f). Note, in 954f, the iterations of *θαυαίνω* ... *θαυνομένων* (an example of epiphora) and of *οὐδέ* ... *οὐδέ*, as well as the alliteration of the ou - and initial α - sounds. Several times he refers to the fact that Oedipus and his daughters are part of his family (813, 849f, 830, 832, 854), and employs such emotive adjectives to describe them, as *παλαίπρω* (740), *γέρον* (744), *δυστηνον* (745), *δύσμορον* (749, 804). Although Creon is convinced that he has acted rightly, for the good of the *πόλις*, he is keenly aware of the hostility of Oedipus and Antigone toward him. The repetitions in his language reflect his inner weakness vis-à-vis the more dominant Oedipus.

It is significant, too, that when he defends himself before Theseus, his language becomes more repetitive, as may be seen from 941, 951, 956, 958: in each of these lines the verb *πράσσω* is spoken (in a variety of tenses and moods). The repeated *ἀντιδρᾶν* in 953 and 959 is also noteworthy. By harping on the same theme, he is attempting to add credence to his cause.

In fine, repetition is an important stylistic means of depicting an aspect of Creon's character. He thinks his actions are justified, but needs to convince others, particularly Oedipus and Theseus. The use of this literary device conveys his essential weakness by comparison with Oedipus.



It is plain, during Creon's stage appearance, that he has a propensity to become highly excited and angry. The more he is opposed by Oedipus, the greater does his temper grow. He says, in one place, that he will take the blind man with him (860), and, shortly afterwards, following Oedipus' curse (864ff), he announces: οὗτοι καθέξω δόμον, ἀλλ' ἄγω βίη/κεῖ μόνος εἶμι τόνδε καὶ χρόνῳ βραδύς (874f). This decision contradicts his earlier statement that Oedipus would not be touched (830). Why does the change occur? The motivation of the man is understandable. Creon has been so thwarted in his encounter with the more forceful Oedipus, that he tries to recover his self-esteem by taking even stronger action against his opponent. He admits to Theseus that he would not have done it: ... εἰ γὰρ μετὰ παρὰς / αὐτῷ τ' ἄρα ἤρᾳτο καὶ τῷ μῶ γένοι (951f).<sup>61</sup> Once more, we see how, in his temper, Creon says and does what he would not usually have intended.

Indeed, the explanation for Creon's bullying manner in this scene lies not so much in the fact that he is a thorough scoundrel,<sup>62</sup> but in his basic inferiority and weakness. Like Oedipus, he is an old man, but does not possess the former's strength of mind and determination. His threatening behaviour is the direct consequence of this inadequacy and constitutes a natural human reaction. Nor is Oedipus entirely in the right. Both men are one-sided and led to extreme measures by their own limitations.<sup>63</sup>

The portrayal of Creon is not static in the three Theban dramas. We see him at different times in his life and in different dramatic contexts. In one play he is a major character and in the other two he is a minor character. This

fact obviously affects the emphasis given to the various facets of his portrayal. The Ant. sees him at the height of his power; determined to prove his worth, he is stern and quick-tempered with those who oppose him. In the O.T. he seems a gentler person, anxious to obey the legitimate sovereign, although hints are given of his hot temper and belief in the omnipotence of the polis. Finally, the sketch in the O.C. appears to blend together these different aspects: he has tasted power but not yet become king; he tries mild persuasion with Oedipus, but he fails and then uses threats, as his thumos grows and his frustration increases. But, essentially, he is the same character throughout the tragedies. He is far less forceful than Oedipus, and tries to hide his innate weakness and prove his own worth. He is not a wicked man, but he is brought to ruin by his excessive devotion to the state. The tragedy of Creon may be said to resemble, in many ways, that of the famous Roman princeps of whom it was said: "et omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset" (Tacitus, Histories I, 49).

### III Antigone

Antigone and Ismene<sup>64</sup> do not seem to have any significant part in the legend concerning Oedipus, their father, before Sophocles. Homer makes no mention of children by Oedipus to Iocasta, in their incestuous marriage, and, in the Cyclic Epic, Oidipodeia, the mother of Antigone and Ismene is apparently named as Euryganeia (Pausanias 9, 5, 11; Pherecydes ad Eur., Phoen. 53). There are no references to them, in the evidence available to us, until Mimnermus (fr. 21 W = Hypothesis II (by Sallustius), ad Ant.). Ion of Chios (fr. 740 PMG = Hypothesis II, ad Ant.) also mentions them briefly. At the

end of Aeschylus' Sept. (961ff.) Antigone and Ismene are supposedly introduced, but the doubt remains a lingering one whether it is spurious and a later interpolation.<sup>65</sup>

In Sophocles, Antigone appears in the Ant. and O.C., and she is a κωφὸν πρόσωπον at the end of the O.T. (1478ff.), but, here of course, no delineation of character is given.

(i) "Antigone"

The motivation and conduct of Antigone have been discussed by many writers. Their views have ranged from admiration,<sup>66</sup> to indifference,<sup>67</sup> to cynicism bordering on hostility.<sup>68</sup> To give a full-scale character sketch of her, therefore, would only repeat much of what has already been said.<sup>69</sup> It is, accordingly, the intention to concentrate on the salient points, particularly the κόππος (806ff.) and her lengthy address following it (891ff.).

The second Epeisodion (384ff.) contains the agōn between Antigone and Creon, until the entrance of her sister (526ff.). She and Ismene engage in a stichomythic conversation (536ff.), and then, from 561ff., she is silent for the rest of the scene,<sup>70</sup> and is absent from the stage during the second stasimon, also the third Epeisodion (the agōn between Haemon and Creon), and the third stasimon. She does not make a further statement until the κόππος scene (806-882).

The main theme here consists of her reaction to the fate which she must encounter of dying husbandless and childless. In the first strophe (806ff.), the constant harking back to the idea of marriage is made explicit by the accumulation of phrases: ἑπεινάτων (813), νυμ-/γάμος (814f.), ἕμνος (815), ἕ-/μνήσασιν

(815f.), *νυμφεύσω* (816). Note, too, the three words denoting death (811, 812, 816). The close of the second strophe (847ff.) shows how preoccupied she is with going to her death: *φίλων ἄκλαυτος* (847). She seems to take a morbid delight in elaborating all the details of her fate (850-852). Upon turning to the second antistrophe (867ff.), we find that the motif of her unmarried status is sustained by the word: *ἄγαμος* (867) and the phrase: *δυσπότρων... /... γάμων κυρήσας* (869f.). The expression *μέτοικος* (868) echoes the earlier *μέτοικος* (852), and the participle *θανών* (871) recalls her preoccupation with death. Finally, in the epode (876ff.), we should note that: the tricolon *ἄκλαυτος ἄφελος ἀνυμέναι- /ος* (876f.) is very effective in emphasizing her concern about dying unwed;<sup>71</sup> the adjective *ἄκλαυτος* (876), in fact, is repeated from 847; and in 881f. she reverts to her plight in having no one to lament her (*οὐδέ τις φίλων*).<sup>72</sup>

The most significant feature of the *κόμμος*, then, seems to be the bitterness which she feels because she has been deprived of marriage and children. Hitherto she has taken pains to glorify her action, as in the following line:....

*καλόν μοι τούτο πολούση θανεῖν* (72: cf. 96f., 502ff.). But, in the present scene, she is full of self-doubt and rancour, which reach their climax in her iambic speech immediately following (891ff.).

This soliloquy has often been regarded as partly spurious, although there seems little agreement as to which lines ought to be deleted and/or retained.<sup>73</sup> For my part, I think that the address is genuine, in toto. It is well suited to her mood at that moment. In the very first line,

she remarks: ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαυρῆς (891), and it is significant that the term νυμφεῖον is associated with the idea of marriage. She reverts to the other important motif found in the κόρη, when she talks of dying ἐν νεκροῖς (893), and of being ὀλωλότων (894): both expressions have been put at the end of two successive lines. A few lines later, the anaphora in 898f. underlines not only her love for parents and brother, but also her mental conflict over the death which faces Antigone. She is trying to derive some kind of ontological sense out of her existence and convince herself that her actions are indeed right.<sup>74</sup>

It is in this light that we should discuss the statement which has caused the greatest controversy, when she says that she is prepared to die only for her brother (905ff.) The motif is borrowed from Herodotus (III, 119, 6).<sup>75</sup> But, under the circumstances, it is far from incongruous, since it highlights both her doubts and her tremendous devotion to Polyneices. This thought remains her last hope and consolation; it helps her to withstand the trials which she is about to undergo. Antigone is also spurred on by her inimical attitude to Creon, who, she says, is about to ... ἐπαρτάνειν/καὶ δευῖα τοῦραν. (913f). It is this combination of love for her brother and hate for her uncle which, despite her self-doubts and even in her despair, enables Antigone to stay resolute. Within a few lines (916ff.), Antigone mentions once more her sorrow at not having a husband. Of importance here are the amplification (916-917), the tricolon: ἄλεκτρον ἀνυμέναιον οὔτε τοῦ γαμοῦ/γέρος λαχούσαν ... (917-918), and the reference to her dying: ... ἐρήμος πρὸς φέλων ἢ δούμορος

(919): the reminiscence with the language of the *κόμος* is striking.

It seems to me that Antigone has sublimated her desires for a husband and children into a passionate devotion for Polyneices, and has derived comfort from the ties of the family. Indeed, for a moment towards the end of this speech, she almost loses that belief in the gods which has sustained her so long (922ff.): this is the lowest point in her morale. She suddenly seizes control of herself again and her hatred for Creon prevents her from breaking down (925ff). Her strength of will now begins to return, and she proclaims, in lyric verse, to the Chorus:

λεύσσετε, Θήβης οὐ καιρανίδαί,  
τὴν βασιλευδᾶν γούνην λοιπὴν,  
οἷα πρὸς οὐρανῶν ἀνδρῶν πάσχω,  
τὴν εὐσεβῶν βεβίσασα.

(940ff)

The transformation in dramatic emphasis between the portrayal of Antigone in the earlier and later parts of the drama reveals how psychologically convincing the characterization is. It would be naïve to regard her as an idealistic representative of the objective criterion of *dikē*. Neither Antigone nor Creon is free from personal blame, and they assume positions of extremism which are diametrically opposed, the one from strength, the other from weakness. She is her father's daughter, and it is precisely this elevation, into the subliminal self, of her frustrated desires, as symbolized by her <sup>></sup>έρως for Polyneices, which has made her behave thus vis-à-vis Creon.

(ii) "Oedipus Coloneus"

Since Oedipus' personality dominates this tragedy, most editors and critics have been much less interested in Antigone, and treated her simply as a παράρρηγον of him.<sup>76</sup>

From the start of the drama, she is drawn in sharp contrast with Ismene (as in the Ant.). Antigone has accompanied Oedipus throughout his exile (345ff) and her devotion is made plain from her very first words (14). He is dependent upon Antigone, and she acts as his eyes (16ff, 24ff), guide (173, 182f, 197f, 200f), and adviser (31f, 171f, 217). She retains her confidence because she believes their cause to be just. Hence, in her appeal to the Chorus (237ff), she absolves her father from blame by speaking of his ἔργων/ἀκέντων (239f).

She assumes that the gods are on her side (247f, 252ff), and on several occasions proclaims the justice of their conduct (1189ff, 1201f). This is connected with the tremendous resolve which she displays. Her insistence is particularly marked in the Exodos. To Ismene, she says: πάλιν, φίλα, σὺθώμεν (1724) and then: ἔμενος ἔχει με (1725). She is also very demanding before Theseus, and asks to be allowed to visit her father's grave (1756f) and then to be sent back to Thebes (1768ff). The εἶλον πως... clause (1770f) underscores the set purpose of her mind by its vividness.<sup>77</sup> Note, too, Oedipus' comments about his daughter's strength of will in 345ff.

Antigone stresses the importance of the family bond throughout the drama. On no fewer than nine occasions she uses the word φίλον in one case or other (201, 250, 321, 1103, 1108, 1194, 1698 (bis), 1700). The family relationship forms one of the main pleas by which she tries to induce her father to relent

and see Polyneices (1181ff). She begs her father to yield to his very own daughter's pleas and to his son's expressed wishes (1184, 1201).

Moreover, as soon as Polyneices enters the stage (1249ff), her loving attitude toward him is revealed when she announces his presence to Oedipus (1250ff). The reference to his weeping (1250f) is an emotional touch, and designed to evoke her father's sympathies. But Oedipus refuses to speak to him at first.<sup>78</sup> Antigone is thus forced to counsel Polyneices to plead with their father himself (1280ff). The epithet *ταλαίπωρ*' (1280) recalls her first words to Oedipus (*πάτερ ταλαίπωρ*', 14), and the parechesis in the phrases, *ῥήματα*' (1281), *τέρψαντα* (1281), *δυσχερᾶνανε*' (1282), *κατακλιθέντα* (1282), together with the oxymoron *φωνήν... ἀφωνήτους* (1283), highlights her concern for Polyneices.

The climax of Antigone's feelings for him comes in the stichomythia (1414ff). The accumulation of highly emotional questions (1420f, 1424, 1427, 1431, 1439) suggests that she is much worried over his safety. The antilabê towards the end of the scene (1438, 1439, 1441, 1442) strengthens the effect of her anxiety.

It is clear, then, that Antigone is devoted to her brother Polyneices. This passionate concern for him could be regarded as the product of her own inability to marry and have children, owing to the single-minded care that she has given to Oedipus over the years. Does she look upon Polyneices as the child that she has been unable to bear? Notice the reference to him as *ὦ πάτερ* (1420)<sup>79</sup> and the almost maternal commands to him (1413, 1441). It appears, in short, that she has sublimated her



desires into ἔρως for her brother Polyneices (as in the Ant.).<sup>80</sup>

Antigone's attitude toward Ismene is quite different; at best, it is one of ambivalence. Thus, when Ismene comes on to the stage for the first time, Antigone says:

... γυναῖχ' ὄρω  
 στείχουσαν ἡμῶν ἄσπον, Αἰτνάλιας ἐπὶ  
 πῶλον βεβῶσαν· κρατὶ δ' ἡλιωστερῆς  
 κινῆ προσώπα Θεσσαλῆς νεν ἀμπέχεται (311ff).

- The detailed description of Ismene's appearance seems to contain a trace of envy and jealousy. It could be argued that she is simply painting a picture for a blind man. Yet it is significant, in my view, that Antigone should describe the entry of her sister in such glowing terms. The Chorus might well have introduced her, as it does so many times in Greek Tragedy.<sup>81</sup> By allowing Antigone to speak here, the playwright underlines the contrast in the outward appearance of the two girls and shows that Antigone herself is well aware of the fact.

Interestingly, during the scene of reconciliation between Oedipus and Ismene, Antigone does not say anything. She is silent (from 324 - 493) for a total of over 150 verses. Indeed, when she breaks this taciturnity (494), her statement is utterly lacking in warmth of sentiment.<sup>82</sup>

The Exodos provides additional evidence of her attitude to Ismene. Antigone is quite amazed at her sister's reluctance to follow her and reproves Ismene so: ἀγε με, καὶ τότε μ' ἐνάρεσον (1733). After this cutting remark Ismene makes a brief comment (1734 - 1736) before falling silent for the remainder of the scene.

In fine, Antigone's feelings for Ismene appear to be (at best) laodicean. The familial love is confined to the male

members and particularly Polyneices.

Antigone seems, in both the dramas, a strong woman, convinced that her cause is upheld by religion and justice because of her familial affection. But underneath the veneer lurks a woman whose natural needs for a husband and children have been frustrated and shattered by the revelations of the Labdacid House. She has been forced to sublimate these desires subconsciously in order to give herself the strength of will to live. The emphasis is, of course, different in the plays. The O.C., the first drama in the chronological sequence of events, views her some time before the crowning tragedy and the decision to bury Polyneices. Here she is moved by love and devotion, but hints are given of her underlying feelings of frustration. In the Ant., on the other hand, during the first part of the play, we meet the same determination and familial affection. Then she begins to have grave doubts and weakens in her resolve; for the first time she utters consciously her suppressed bitterness. But the fundamental homogeneity between the two portrayals is clear.

#### IV Ismene

83

Ismene has been dwarfed by her sister and father in the plays where she appears (Ant. and O.C.). This fact helps to explain the comparative lack of interest in her as a separate persona. To many critics, her importance seems only to lie in the contrast that she presents vis-à-vis Antigone.<sup>84</sup> But I do not think that sufficient account has been taken of the dramatic significance of Ismene in her <sup>own</sup> right.

(i) "Antigone"

Ismene first appears in the Prologos, where her opening address to Antigone (11ff) makes an immediate impression. The large number of negatives: οὐδέεις (11), οὐθ'... οὐτ' ... (12), οὐδέεν (16), οὐτ' ... οὐτ' (17), is effective in forming a deliberate echo of Antigone's preceding speech (1ff), and suggests a less secure and more introspective character, accustomed to taking the lead from her sister. In the stichomythic passage between the two sisters (39ff), the array of questions asked by Ismene (five in five verses: 39f, 42, 44, 47) is remarkable. Her next lengthy speech (49ff) is also of significance in establishing her character. The parchesis of αὐτοφώρων (51), αὐτοσυργῆ (52) and αὐτοκτονούντες (56) produces a highly repetitive effect in her language, and emphasizes, by the connotations of the prefix αὐτ-, the enormity of her parents' actions. The thought and language of 55 - 57 recall those of 13 - 14, especially: ἀδελφῶν δύο (55) and δύοιν ἀδελφῶν (13), μῦαν καθ' ἡμέραν (55) and μῦα ... ἡμέρα (14), ἐπ' ἀλλήλων χέρων (57) and χερὶ δειπῆ (14). The ensuing dialogue (78ff) furnishes additional points for comment. Ismene's words in 78 are reminiscent of an earlier phrase by Antigone (77), and the expression βία πολιτῶν (79) harks back to νόμου βία (59). Moreover, the word ἀμύχρον (in a variety of cases) is repeated three times in thirteen lines (79, 90, 92).

The repetition of her own words and the echoing of Antigone's statements indicate that she is much weaker than her sister and almost nervous in her presence.

Let us now examine the second scene where she appears (536ff), to compare the presentation there. In Ismene's first couplet (536f) the succession of three finite verbs in the first

person singular and the amplification of the second verse (537) are salient features. The next couplet (544f) contains four negatives in the first line and the iteration of  $\theta\lambda\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\iota\varsigma\dots$   $\theta\lambda\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\iota\varsigma$  in the second. Furthermore, the diction of 548 is repeated later (566), and the six questions that she asks Antigone and Creon in twelve stichomythic lines (548, 550, 552, 554, 566, 568) highlight her nervous personality. Ismene's declaration of wishing to die with her sister (536ff) is the logical extension of her verbal imitations. Well aware of the gulf between Antigone and herself, she tries to minimize it by proving her own worth in the light of her sister's actions.

That she is fearful of disobeying the law is revealed on a number of occasions. In 59f, the use of the vivid conditional clause<sup>85</sup> evinces how real this fear is. The variety in the syntax of 61 - 64 is in keeping with her timidity. Here, several subordinate clauses are joined together in a very loose way. In 61 the infinitive is qualified by  $\chi\rho\acute{\eta}$  and followed by an object noun clause; the next verse (62) has a participial phrase preceded by  $\omega\acute{s}$ ; while line 63 contains another noun clause; finally, in 64, the infinitive is also dependant upon the preceding verb  $\chi\rho\acute{\eta}$  (61).

Ismene's concern for and love of her sister appear genuine enough, as the emotive adjectives describing her suggest (39, 47, 49, 82). The verb  $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\delta\epsilon\delta\omicron\upsilon\mu\iota\alpha$  (82) is rare<sup>86</sup> and emphasises her anxiety over Antigone. The final words that she speaks in this scene (99) show her refusal to turn against Antigone, although the latter has been quite indifferent to her. Significantly, both Creon (491f) and the Chorus (526ff) comment upon her mental distress.

She is deeply affected by a love for the rest of her family. The graphic description of the self-inflicted deaths of her two brothers (13f and 55ff), which has been examined above, is indicative of their effect on her mind. Equally vivid is her account of the self-blinding of her father and suicide of her mother (49ff). The cacophony of the words (51-52) is stressed by the accumulation of the hard double consonants and the sigmatism which recall the harshness of the actions themselves.<sup>87</sup>

Another feature of her character is the emphasis that she places upon the need to think and plan in advance. Hence, she counsels Antigone a number of times (44, 61, 99). By basing her arguments upon reasoned and rational grounds, Ismene hopes that they will thereby gain more credence and respect. The irony of such a stance comes after Ismene's announcement of intending to die with her sister, when she is described by Creon as: *ἄρτιος / ἄνρου πείκνθαι* (561f).

In short, Ismene is essentially an introverted and nervous person, and she lacks the strength of Antigone. Both her diction and her actions reveal this fact. At the same time, her affection for her sister and the rest of the family is genuine.

(ii) "Oedipus Coloneus"

From the time when Ismene first enters the stage (324), she demonstrates her devotion to the family (324f, 327, 330). Oedipus himself draws the contrast between the way in which his sons have treated him and the love shown by his two daughters (339ff). Ismene is described in these terms: ... *φύλαξ δέ μου / πιστή κατέστης, γῆς ὅτ' ἐβήλανόμην* (355f). Moreover, in the

Exodos, she laments her father's death in a very moving passage (1689ff). She also has much sympathy for Antigone in this scene (1715, 1718, 1734).

It is interesting that, whenever she refers to her brothers, she never actually condemns their actions. Instead, she speaks of them so: εἶς' οὐδέρ' εἶσι· δεινὰ τὰν κείνοισ  
 τανούν (336: cf. 365f). Her statements seem wrapped in euphemism and litotes. She is careful, moreover, to stress that the blame for what they have done should be ascribed to an external agency (371ff).

A further characteristic of Ismene's style is the tendency to repeat her thoughts and words. She, therefore, constantly alludes to her difficulties in tracing Oedipus and Antigone. The iteration of the adverb πολύς (325f) is noticeable. A later passage (361ff) suggests her emotional disturbance. The present participle is positioned at the beginning of three successive lines (362, 363, 364). The alliteration of the κ- sound is a salient point, as are the etymologica figura: κῆρυμαθ' ἀπαθόν (361), and the redundancy of αἰδέομαι πάλιν (364). In the paraleipsis, παρῆες' εἴσω (363), the second word is also pleonastic. She comments in two further places on her difficulties (328 and 508f). The cognate forms πονεῖν and πονοῦν (508f) hark back to the phrase πονοῦσ' (364).

By laying the accent on her own efforts, Ismene gives the impression of wanting to be placed on a par with her sister Antigone who had undergone much physical discomfort (345ff), (747ff). Although Ismene's duties were valuable and risky, as Oedipus admits (353ff), they did not involve personal hardship. The difference in the life styles of the two sisters was made plain by Antigone when Ismene first enters the stage (311ff),<sup>88</sup>

and she must certainly have been aware of Antigone's indifference and envy.

Her attitude toward life is far more accepting than that of Antigone, as the following line shows: ἀλγῶ κλύουσα τῶντ' ἐγὼ, φέρω δ' ὄμωσ (420: cf. 371ff and 394).

Ismene is shocked at Antigone's exhortations to return to the tomb of their father. Although she is sincerely grieved over Oedipus' death, she cannot bring herself to think and act like her sister. The occurrence of five questions within fewer than ten verses (1724, 1725, 1727, 1729f (bis)) denotes her surprise and perturbation. She falls silent after her remarks at 1734ff, and does not speak again in the play. The silence is dramatically effective and underlines her distress at the choice presented to her by Antigone.

Ismene is thus loving and devoted to all her family (parents, brother and sister alike). She is deficient in the resoluteness that characterizes her father and sister, and is accordingly very sensitive to the criticism of others. Her mode of speaking matches that trait. In this respect, the similarity with her uncle, Creon, is apparent. Ismene seems to be no unsympathetic character. Despite the indifference and insults of Antigone, she refuses to spurn her sister and tries to imitate Antigone's words and actions. That she is temperamentally unsuited to the ideals of her sister is no necessary disparagement to Ismene.

#### V. Oedipus

There is no need to discuss at great length the legendary and literary tradition regarding Oedipus. It has been analysed by

many writers, and the monumental work of C. Robert still remains of seminal value today.<sup>89</sup> Two fairly recent studies in

English which deserve mention are those by H.C. Baldry and E.L. de Kock.<sup>90</sup> The earliest references to Oedipus are found in

Homer's Il. (23, 678ff) and Od. (11, 271ff) and in Hesiod

(Erga 161ff, Theogony 325ff, frr, 192 and 193 M/W). The Epic

Cycle also dealt with the fate of Oedipus and his family,<sup>91</sup> and

he featured in the later iambic poets (fr. 70 W) and lyricists

(fr. 672 PMG, fr. 222 SLS). The Labdacid House was a

prominent theme in fifth century drama (e.g., Aeschylus'

trilogy on the curse of Lains), and Aristotle wrote that:

πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ τοὺς τυχόντας μύθους ἀπηρίθμουν,  
 νῦν δ' ἔτι περὶ ἐλάχιστης οἰκίας αἰεὶ κάλλιστα τραγωδίας συντίθενται,  
 οἷον περὶ Ἀλικρέωνος καὶ Οἰδῆου... κτλ (Poet. 1453a. 13,

17ff).<sup>92</sup>

Oedipus has the main rôle in the two Sophoclean tragedies named after him. A number of critics have maintained that the portrayal of Oedipus is similar in these plays,<sup>93</sup> but many scholars have tended to stress the supernatural and daemonic element in the Oedipus of the later drama.<sup>94</sup> Very recently, P. Easterling has tried to counteract this interpretation by emphasizing the human element in the tragedy and by underlining the fact that Oedipus remains throughout a man, "who behaves in a characteristically human way ... all that is implied in the course of the play is that Oedipus has been promised a specially favoured end ..."<sup>95</sup> I am in wholehearted agreement with this viewpoint, and it will therefore be the objective, in the ensuing discussion, to lay the accent on the humanistic aspect of his characterization in both the tragedies.



No attempt will be made to add yet another full-scale character sketch of Oedipus to those already existing,<sup>96</sup> but I shall concentrate upon the salient features of the depiction.

(i) "Oedipus Tyrannus"

We are immediately struck by the degree of self-confidence and self-esteem of Oedipus in this play. He refers to himself in the opening speech as: ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους καλούμενος (8: cf. 397). The grief that troubles the city is stated to be his alone: μόνον καθ' αὐτόν, καὶ δέν ἄλλον ... (63), and he announces his intention to cleanse the pollution: αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ (138).

His great egotistical nature is revealed, too, in the abnormally large number of personal pronouns and adjectives that he uses. I have counted nearly 200 instances.<sup>97</sup> He is supremely reliant upon his own qualities. Even at the end, when the revelation of what he has done is made known, he has still not lost the overriding belief in himself. He therefore continues to dominate the conversation with Creon (1422ff),<sup>98</sup> and is impassioned in his words before the Chorus (1414f).

To the gods, and especially Apollo, he shows honour, throughout the play. It was Oedipus, in fact, who had sent Creon to the Delphic Oracle (69ff). There are some seventeen references to Apollo or the Oracle by Oedipus (70ff, 77, 80f, 133, 136, 146, 242f, 244, 253, 305, 788, 830, 965, 992, 994ff, 1011, 1329). The gods in general are mentioned on a great number of occasions (269, 275, 280, 326, 536, 738, 1037, 1410, 1432, 1471, 1479).

Oedipus' excitable temperament, before Teiresias (316ff), Creon (532ff) and the Slave (1121ff), is so well known as to

warrant little attention here.<sup>99</sup> It is an essential part of his nature and remains with him to the end, when he is extremely insistent with his demands (1515ff).

In the Exodos, Oedipus' affection for his daughters is made plain. Their arrival on the stage, as *κωλύξ πρόσωπα*, heralds a touching scene as Oedipus holds them lovingly and comments sadly on their fate (1462ff, 1486ff). But towards his sons he appears uninterested, and dismisses their problems thus:

παύων δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀστέων μὴ μοι, κρέον,  
 τροχὴν μέμνηται. ἄνθρωπος εἶσιν, ὥστε μὴ  
 σπάνην ποτὲ σχεῖν, ἐνθ' ἂν ᾤσιν, τοῦ  
 βίου. (1459ff).

-His attitude to Polyneices and Eteocles is therefore insensitive and almost uncaring, in stark relief to the reverentia that he feels for Ismene and Antigone.

At the conclusion of the O.T., then, Oedipus is by no means a broken or demoralized man. His self-esteem and egotism are unconquered and help him to face up to the collapse of his world.

## (ii) "Oedipus Coloneus"

Throughout the O.C. the old king is convinced of his own self-righteousness and self-importance. He names himself on no fewer than four occasions (3, 109, 222, 1395). At first, he is indeed disconsolate and feels sorry for himself (1ff). But gradually he grows more and more self-confident. His initial despondency is only temporary and the consequence of his long banishment. Thus, he protests his innocence before the Chorus (270ff, 510ff), before Ismene (421ff), before Creon (761ff) 960ff) and before Polyneices (1348ff). He becomes filled with renewed boldness and expectation. When he says, in

the first Epeisodion, *νῦν δ' οὐδὲν εἰδώς ἐκόμην ἔν' ἐκόμην* (273), the sentiment is reminiscent of his remark in the O.T. (397) and suggestive of his self-confidence.

Moreover, the recurrence in his speeches of the personal pronoun or adjective is another indication of the self-esteem that has sustained him during his times of misery and despondency. The longer he is on the stage, the more numerous become the examples of these pronouns and adjectives.<sup>100</sup>

Oedipus also emphasizes that he is bringing a reward to Athens (*κέρδος, χάρις, βοήθεια, τέρψις*), and says: *ἔγω γὰρ ἔπος εὐσεβείης τε καὶ φέρων/βοήθειαν ἄσπετος τοῦτοδ'...* (287f: cf. 72, 91f, 576ff). In all these lines, the accent has been put upon the self. The climax to this conviction occurs in his final speech (1539ff), when, supremely confident, he leads the way to the tomb. The words of the messenger (1587ff) are important and confirm Oedipus' own statements. This "rejuvenation" is, in itself, not unparalleled. Similar occurrences take place in Euripides' Heracl. (794, 796, 843ff) and the Ba. (170ff), and it has been suggested that they are psychologically natural and possible.<sup>101</sup> It may well be that, in his last tragedy, Sophocles is making use of the Euripidean examples in his final presentation of Oedipus. The fact that the latter behaves in this manner could be the natural consequence of his remarkable self-confidence and strength of will; there is no compelling necessity to postulate highly elaborate supranatural theories.

Oedipus has faith in the omnipotence of the Gods and he retains trust in Apollo and the Delphic Oracle. He speaks of Phoebus or his oracles on a number of occasions (86ff, 354,

452ff, 603, 623, 970), and looks to the other deities for help too (84ff, 95, 101, 277, 403, 421, 628, 864ff, 1010ff, 1124f, 1382, 1389, 1511, 1536ff, 1540, 1548). They are, however, kept in the background, and the action of the drama works through the will of Oedipus.

It is interesting that only at the very end of the tragedy (1579ff) does the supernatural element obtrude itself, and then the figure of Oedipus is no longer on the stage. The mystery of his demise, as narrated by the Messenger (1586ff), is puzzling, but one must bear in mind that the heroization of Oedipus at Colonus was a datum of the legend and the description by the Messenger is, of course, very effective from a theatrical and dramatic point of view. Even here, the playwright presents features and gives hints which emphasize the human aspect. The scenes between father and daughter (1598ff, 1638ff) are very poignant. The actual death of Oedipus is not explicitly described (1653ff), but it is left ambiguous whether he was taken up mysteriously to heaven or that he simply threw himself into the chasm whither they had originally (1590ff) proceeded.

In fine, the stress throughout the play is put on the human aspect, and the divine plane is, while present, confined to the background.

Oedipus' love for his daughters is manifest in the O.C. He is grateful for their assistance (345ff, 445ff, 1365ff), and there are many intimate and moving scenes between them (1ff, 324ff, 1099ff). Conversely, Oedipus dislikes his sons and is wont to contrast their treatment of him with that of his daughters (342ff, 1360ff). The hatred for them is fully

revealed in the scene between Oedipus and Polyneices (1249ff), where the son is abused in the most contemptuous of terms.<sup>102</sup> In his lengthy speech replying to Polyneices (1348ff), the old man refuses to address him directly at first (1348 - 53), and then bursts out: 'ὅς γ' ἔτι κλέυσται, ... (1354), continuing in like strain for a further forty lines (up to 1396). Towards the end, he curses Polyneices (1383ff): the κ- and σ- sounds suggest hissing and the length of the period indicates how he has allowed his temper to take control of his reason.<sup>103</sup>

The virulent disdain for his sons is the logical outcome of his indifference towards them in the earlier play. It is tempting to wonder how far this lack of concern for their fate is responsible for the way in which the sons themselves treat their father. To the man who speaks of: ἡ χάρις χάρειν ψέποι (779), like has been rendered for like by his own children.

One final point needs to be touched briefly, i.e., the thumos with which he is endowed in the O.C. I have already discussed (above) his impetuous reactions when face-to-face with Polyneices, and indeed this trait is apparent throughout the tragedy. His speech to the Chorus (258ff) becomes increasingly impassioned and fiery, and gives hints of his innate θυμός. Later, he is full of anger in the scene with Creon (728ff), and displays particular acrimony at 761ff, 864ff, 960ff. As one writer has said, "The whole spirit and the hot temper of the younger Oedipus are still with him in his old age."<sup>104</sup>

Oedipus dominates the stage in the two dramas, and his self-confidence is remarkable: this is the chief motivating force in his behaviour. His faults and failings are in no way

minimized by the dramatist, and a realistic presentation is given of this very human king. The consistency in the portrayal renders him a person who inspires awe rather than admiration.

## VI Teiresias

Teiresias appears in two plays by Sophocles (Ant. and O.T.). Full studies of the seer have been made in recent years by the American writers, P.R. Headings and W.H. Owen.<sup>105</sup> Both of these works appear to have been written independently and both suggest that the rôle and characterization of Teiresias are consistent throughout the two tragedies, since he epitomizes the Greek *μάντις*.<sup>106</sup> The continuity in the legendary tradition is shown by the following points: Teiresias enters blind and with the aid of someone else (Ant. 988ff; O.T. 297ff); he gives sound advice and warnings which are ignored (Ant. 1023ff, 2064ff; O.T. 316ff, 412ff); he rages furiously at those who oppose him (Ant. 1048ff; O.T. 350ff); he announces his prophecy with due solemnity and formality (Ant. 1064ff; O.T. 452ff); he takes pride in the trappings and status of being a seer (Ant. 1012; O.T. 408ff); he speaks out and acts on behalf of the city, in order to protect it from danger (Ant. 1023ff; O.T. 300ff).

Why then was Sophocles content to follow the traditional die of Teiresias' character?<sup>107</sup> The reason is probably that, for Sophocles, the main emphasis should be placed upon the major characters and the important mental conflicts within the dramas. The prophetic utterances were a necessary datum of the myth, but ought not to be given undue prominence lest the former be obscured.

Sophocles thus followed Aeschylus in utilizing the device of recurrent characters. It seems to have fitted well with his belief in the unchangeability of human nature, as the introductory and concluding chapters discuss at greater length, to depict the continuity in the characterization of the personae. It is clear, moreover, that the psychology of the characters is becoming more naturalistic, and that the tragedies themselves pose antinomous sets of conflicting duty which each have some validity. The characters are not drawn in absolutely contrasting shades of white and black.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- 1     I.S., chpt i; G.T., pp 94ff; The Light and the Darkness (Leiden, 1967), chpt x; Sophocles, chpt iii.
- 2     Hypothesis I, ad Ant.
- 3     The Sophoclean Elec. is regarded as later than the Euripidean: for details see below, p. 251f. and 230.
- 4     Hypothesis II, ad Phil.
- 5     Hypothesis I and II, ad O.C.
- 6     Walker, Ichneutae, Appendix, pp 595ff, argues (strangely) that the Ant., O.T. and O.C. are a trilogy composed for production in 411 B.C. The evidence adduced is not particularly strong or persuasive, and is contrary to the external testimony of the Hypotheses.
- 7     So H.C. Baldry, "The Dramatization of the Theban Legend", GR, 3 (1956), 24 - 37; G. Méautis, Sophocle (Paris, 1957), passim; R.G. Tanner, "The Composition of the O.C.", For Service to Classical Studies (ed. M. Kelly, Melbourne: 1966), pp 153 - 192. For a contrary view, see H. Bacon, "Woman's Two Faces: Sophocles' Views of the Tragedy of Oedipus", Science and Psychoanalysis Decennial Memorial Volume (N.Y., 1966), p 12, who argues that they are not trilogic in any way.
- 8     "Observations sur la légende primitive d'Ulysse", Mémoires de l'Institut National de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 38 (1911), 0 213.
- 9     See J.T. Sheppard, "Great-hearted Odysseus", JHS, 66 (1936), 36 - 47.
- 10    For instances, see below, pp. 76, 124 (n. 21), 125 (n. 29)
- 11    W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, pp 96ff, contains a full discussion on this change, and refers it to the political background in Greece during the period.
- 12    See E.D. Phillips, "The Comic Odysseus", GR, 7 (1959), 58 - 67.



- 13       Mette, ad locc.
- 14       The Ulysses Theme, pp 103ff.
- 15       The reader is referred to Nauck,<sup>2</sup> ad locc., and Pearson, ad locc., for further details.
- 16       e.g., W.K.C. Guthrie, "Odysseus in the Ajax", GR, 16 (1947), p 117; J. Davaux, "Etudes sur le personnage d'Ulysse dans la littérature grecque, d'Homère à Sophocle" (thèse, Univ. of Louvain: 1946), chpt viii, G. Méautis, Sophocle, pp 24f; W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, pp 103ff.
- 17       G.H. Gellie, Sophocles (Melbourne, 1972), p 133.
- 18       Athene's identity would surely be obvious as soon as she enters the stage, not only from her costumery, but also from her opening verses (1f). Odysseus' naming her would not, therefore, be necessary simply as a means of identifying her to the audience; it contains more significance than that. On the relationship between Athene and Odysseus, see Σ ad Aj 14, 34, 66.
- 19       On the intransigence of Ajax, see Knox, H.T., chptt.i and ii, passim, and "The Ajax of Sophocles", HSCP, 65 (1961), 1 - 37; also I.M. Linforth, "Three Scenes in Sophocles' Ajax", UCPCP, 15 (1954).
- 20       Interestingly, in 1361, the verb φάω is spoken by him in the idiomatic sense "I am accustomed" (LSJM<sup>9</sup>, SV, φάω). It may well be that the choice of this particular verb, instead of a synonym, is deliberate, because in each of the two preceding lines (1359 and 1360) a cognate form is also used.
- 21       Odysseus, was, of course, noted for his eloquence in Homer: Il 2, 109ff; Od 6, 149ff; 14, 191ff. But Sophocles avails himself of that trait for his own purposes by underlining his cynical and adaptable character.
- 22       All the lines counted were iambic, and no lyric verse was included, since Odysseus himself speaks none, and, in any case, iambics are, as Aristotle (Poet 1449a. 23ff) observed, the speech of everyday conversation, whereas lyric is not, of its very nature, logical or argumentative.
- 23       The reason that he never says γάρ in stichomythia may be due to the state of his mind at that time. In the prologos, he is utterly deranged and gloats over his conduct, and, in the first Epeisodion, he is not really replying to his concubine's statements, but laying down irrevocable commands. In addition, the total number of stichomythic lines spoken (25) is very small.

- 24 One might conjecture that the two Atreidae come so near (statistically) because they are brothers, just like Ajax and Tencer who are also closely related to each other.
- 25 F.J.H. Letters, The Life and Works of Sophocles (London and N.Y.: 1973), p 279, J.P. Poe, Heroism and Divine Justice in Sophocles' "Philoctetes" (Leiden, 1974), p 13; cf. P.W. Harsh, "The rôle of the bow in the Phil. of Soph", AJP, 81 (1960), pp 409f; M.H. Jameson, "Politics and the Phil", CP, 51 (1956), pp 219f; W.N. Bates, Sophocles (N.Y., 1969), p 162.
- 26 She is traditionally his tutelary goddess, as I pointed out above, p 76.
- 27 Even J.P. Poe, Heroism and Divine Justice in Soph's "Phil", pp 24f, admits that the gods are on Odysseus' side, although elsewhere (see note 25 above) he shows little sympathy for him.
- 28 The French playwright has expressed the point well, so: "... les forces qui s'affrontent dans la tragédie sont également légitimes, également armées en raison ... la tragédie est ambiguë, ... chaque force est en même temps bonne et mauvaise". ("Conférence prononcée à Athènes sur l'avenir de la tragédie", Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles (Paris, 1962), p 1703). Also, cf M. Hadas, A History of Greek Literature (N.Y., 1950), p 75.
- 29 The prototype of this is, of course, to be seen in Homer. Contrast, e.g., Odysseus' actions with Diomedes' in Il 10, espec. 248ff; cf, too, Od 22, passim and 24, 489ff: his behaviour is entirely defensive. What Sophocles does, as we shall see, is to make him intellectualize and rationalize the tendency far more deeply than before.
- 30 cf Jebb, Phil, Introd, p xxxi.
- 31 So, Webster, Phil, ad loc., who describes the speaker as a "house agent implying that the cave's desirability mitigated its cruelty".
- 32 A hapax legomenon: A.A. Long, Language and Thought in Sophocles (London, 1968), pp 70f.
- 33 Found only in Sophocles: F.R. Earp, The Style of Sophocles (Cambridge, 1944), p 50.
- 34 Very rare in Sophocles, since elsewhere it is found only (and this is interesting) at Phil. 954.
- 35 For Philoctetes' own account of his exile, see 268ff. Throughout the play he displays unmitigated hostility toward Odysseus and his family (204f, 417, 428ff, 625, 1019ff, 1123ff, 1311). Although his behaviour is understandable, in human terms, he does lose some

sympathy as a result of his continued intransigence and refusal to compromise, both at the behest of the Chorus (1095ff) and at the request of Neoptolemus (1314ff): note particularly that the statement: ἔσται δ' ἔκουσίωσιν ἔγκανται βλάβαις (1318), refers particularly to Philoctes. Moreover, the fact that Philoctetes is made to return to Troy by the intervention of the deus ex machina (1409ff) is ironic under the circumstances of his stubborn intransigence, and removes the stalemate that had resulted before the appearance of Heracles. Whatever may be the exact meaning of the ending (discussed more fully in A. Spiro, Untersuchungen zum Deus Ex Machina, pp 32, 82, 147) it is no great victory for either Philoctetes or Odysseus.

- 36 Webster, Phil, ad loc., thinks it better to put a comma at the end of 55 instead of a period, to enable the sentence to run on from 54 to 65, and not from 56 to 65. It is not, however, a point of great import, nor does it affect my argumentation.
- 37 A.E. Hinds, "The Prophecy of Helenus in Soph's Phil," CQ, 17 (1967), 169 - 180, discusses fully the literature on the subject. I do not believe that critics have given sufficient attention to this factor in their explanations.
- 38 For further details, see Kamerbeek, O.T., Intro, pp 2ff.
- 39 e.g., Stanford, ad Od 11, 269; O.C.D.,<sup>2</sup> S.V. "Creon".
- 40 Schmid/Stählin, I, ii, p 211.
- 41 R.-E., Suppl. IV (1924), col.1048, ll.46ff.
- 42 There is no mention of this at all in, e.g., C.M. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy (Oxford, 1944) or H. Weinstock, Sophocles (Wuppertal, 1948).
- 43 L.D. Peterkin, "The Creon of Sophocles", CP, 24 (1929), p 264, writes that, "the Creon of the three plays is essentially the same individual". But, more recently, Kitto, G.T.,<sup>3</sup> p 117, agreeing with the earlier remarks of Jebb (O.T., Intro, p xxix), explicitly rejected this interpretation, and he has since been followed by other writers: G.M. Kirkwood, A Study of Sophoclean Drama, p 132 (n. 28); T.G. Rosenmeyer, "The Wrath of Oedipus" Phoen., 6 (1952), p 92. Although a few scholars of late (as G. Méautis, Sophocle, p 151 et al. locc.; and M.G. Shields, "Sight and Blindness Imagery in the O.C." Phoen, 15 (1961), pp 63 - 73) have tried to argue against that trend, the claims made are very general and (like Peterkin's article) lack literary and dramatic substance.
- 44 See my remarks on the importance of this stylistic device apropos the Euripidean Orestes, below, p.194 (n.85).

- 45 First coined by C.M. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy, p 68, and repeated by Knox, H.T., p 84; cf the comment by the  $\Sigma$ , ad loc.
- 46 e.g. A.J. Podlecki, "Creon and Herodotus", TAPA, 97 (1966), pp 359ff.
- 47 See below, pp 92f..
- 48 R.F. Goheen, The Imagery of Sophocles' "Antigone" (Princeton, 1951), pp 14ff, discusses such imagery at length; cf H. Musurillo, The Light and the Darkness, chpt iv.
- 49 e.g. F.J.H. Letters, The Life and Works of Sophocles, chpt. vi, espec, pp.169ff; K. Reinhardt, Sophokles (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1933), chpt. iv; Jebb, Ant, Introd, passim.
- 50 H.T., pp 101ff.
- 51 e.g. E. Howald, Die griechische Tragödie, p 107, describes him as "... ganz ... böse ... ein willkürlicher Tyrann ..."; cf C.H. Whitman, Sophocles, p 90.
- 52 "Conférence prononcée a Athènes ...", p 1703.
- 53 cf J.S. Margon, "The death of Antigone", California Studies in Classical Antiquity, 3 (1970), 177 - 183. The reader is also referred to the section (below) on Antigone.
- 54 A more general discussion of his composite portrayal in the three dramas follows at the end of this section (below, pp 100f.).
- 55 It is the combination of all these iterations which is significant, even though many of the Greek words are common.
- 56 cf Eur. H.F. 1299ff and I.T. 1222ff.
- 57 Contrast the sketch (above) of the Sophoclean Odysseus' religious views.
- 58 e.g., G.H. Gellie, Sophocles, pp 88f and 102; G.M. Kirkwood, A Study of Sophoclean Drama, pp 132ff.
- 59 Interestingly, it is Creon<sup>who</sup> first introduces this rhythm at 1515.
- 60 cf Ant 199.
- 61 R.G. Tanner, "The Composition of the O.C.", For Service to Classical Studies, p 160, regards the contradiction by Creon as added proof of his theory, that the O.C.

- was composed in two parts at separate times. To my mind, Tanner's arguments are stultifying. He appears to take little account of the realistic portrayal of the characters in the drama. Creon's words and actions are, in my opinion, motivated naturalistically by Sophocles, and there is no need to postulate such elaborate hypotheses of widespread interpolation.
- 62 So S.M. Adams, Sophocles the Playwright, pp 170f, and G.H. Gellie, Sophocles, pp 171f.
- 63 For further discussion of Oedipus' character, see below, pp 116ff.
- 64 The literary tradition concerning the two sisters has been combined because they were always associated together.
- 65 H. Lloyd-Jones, "The End of the Seven Against Thebes", CQ, 9 (1959), 80 - 115, reviews the ancient evidence and the critical literature. He concludes that this ending could well be genuine. To enter into the controversy at length would be beyond the scope of this thesis, but I am not convinced by Lloyd-Jones' arguments, and am therefore inclined to regard it as spurious: see Kitto, G.T.,<sup>3</sup> p 50 with n.1, whose literary and dramatic reasons against are very cogent, and D.L. Page, Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy (Oxford, 1934), p 30f, who also argues strongly against.
- 66 I.M. Linforth, "Antigone and Creon", UCPCP, 15 (1961), 183 - 260; Knox, H.T., chptt.iii and iv, passim; G.H. Gellie, "Motivation in Sophocles", BICS, 11 (1964), 1 - 14; E.B. Bongie, "The Daughter of Oedipus", Serta Turyniana (ed. J.L. Heller and J.K. Newman, Chicago and London: 1974), pp 239 - 267.
- 67 J.S. Margon, "The Death of Antigone", California Studies in Classical Antiquity, 3 (1970), 177 - 183; R.F. Goheen, The Imagery of Sophocles' "Antigone", chpt v; Norwood, G.T., pp 137ff.
- 68 M.K. Flickinger, The (H)amartia of Sophocles' Antigone (Iowa, 1935), passim, espec. pp 72f; Ferguson, Companion, chpt xiv, passim.
- 69 e.g. on her devotion to the family, see 21ff, 73ff, 461ff; on her strong, resolute and intransigent determination, 45f, 71f, 80f, 443; on her conviction that she is quite justified in what she does, 450ff, 538ff; on her attitude to Ismene, 69ff, 546ff.
- 70 The attribution of lines 572, 574 and 576 is a matter of controversy and confusion in the mss. It seems to me that all the verses belong to Ismene. From a strictly symmetrical viewpoint that appears the most appropriate arrangement. When Ismene enters the stage, at 526, she speaks thus: from 536 - 547 she has three distichomythic

couplets; then (548 - 558) she speaks six lines of stichomythia and her sister five; in 559 - 564 three couplets are spoken each by Antigone, Creon, Ismene; and, finally, in 565 - 576 Ismene and Creon have a stichomythic conversation in which each says a total of six verses. (Creon concludes the scene by speaking the last five lines from 577 - 581).

Therefore, to give 572 to Antigone (Aldine ms), 574 to the Chorus (Boeckh) and 576 also to the Chorus (all mss save A) would serve only to ruin gratuitously the highly symmetrical format.

Moreover, it seems out of tune with Antigone's psychological makeup to assign 572 to her. Any reference by her to Haemon would, therefore, be, in my view, scarcely credible: see the discussion on her psychology in the main text.

- 71 cf the tricolon in Shakespeare's Hamlet I, v, 77, where the ghost speaks of undying "unhansel'd, unanointed, unanel'd".
- 72 Strictly speaking, the allegation here is incorrect, since Ismene is still alive and would naturally lament, with all sincerity, her death. Thus, by οὐδὲν ἀσ φέλωτον, I believe she refers solely to her brother Polyneices.
- 73 Jebb, Ant., Comm, ad loc. and Appendix, pp 258ff, would strike out the whole of 905 - 912. With this C.H. Whitman, Sophocles, pp 93 and 263f (n.3), concurs, as do Pohlenz, p 188 and D.L. Page, Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy, p 142.
- For a contrary view, see W.R. Agard, "Antigone 904 - 920", CP, 32 (1937), p 265; C. M. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy, p 95; S.M. Adams, Sophocles the Playwright, p 54. These critics have argued that the entire speech should be kept, on the grounds that it is convincing and natural.
- 74 The interpretation of E. Howald, Die griechische Tragödie, p 107, is, to my mind, untenable. He argues that Antigone's change of mind is due solely to dramatic reasons, to derive the maximum of effect from the scene.
- 75 For a fuller account of the influences of Herodotus on Sophocles, see T.B.L. Webster, "Sophocles and the Antigone", Proceedings of the African Classical Association, (1958), 28 - 32. It seems to belong to the realm of folktale: How and Wells, A Commentary on Hdt., I, pp 294f.
- 76 G.M. Kirkwood, A Study of Sophoclean Drama, p 150, writes, apropos the characterization of the two sisters, that, "there is no pronounced distinction between them, except just at the end, where their characterization ... seems designed to link this play with the Antigone".
- 77 On the literary effect of this clause, see Goodwin, § 487.

- 78 He remains silent from 1252ff, and says not one word until 1348. Even then, he directs his thoughts, for the first six verses (1348 - 1353), not to Polyneices, but to the Chorus.
- 79 In the O.C., Polyneices is the elder brother (374f, 1295), a fact contrary to the usual interpretation where Eteocles is the elder (O.C.D.<sup>2</sup>, S.V., "Eteocles"). It is also emphasized that he is the leader of a great army (378ff, 1301ff). The use of the words  $\tilde{\omega} \pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}$  seems, therefore, to have more significance than as a mere token of sisterly love.
- 80 That it should be Polyneices and not Eteocles may be due to two reasons: (1) it was part of the legend; (2) she felt sympathy for him because he had not been well treated by Eteocles. It is not that she does not like the latter; indeed it is expressed stated, in the Exodos, that she wants to stop:  $\tilde{\omega}\nu\tau\alpha \varphi\acute{\omicron}\nu\sigma\tau\omicron\tilde{\iota}\nu \delta\mu\alpha\lambda\eta\mu\alpha\iota\varsigma$  (1771f). But Polyneices is obviously her "favourite". The exact relationship between her and Eteocles is not given prominence, owing to the economy of the drama and because it is  $\tilde{\epsilon}\tilde{\phi}\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .
- 81 cf Aj. 1316f; Elec. 324ff; O.T. 297ff; Ant. 526ff. (= the entry of Ismene, introduced by the Chorus); Phil. 539ff; O.C. 549f, 1096ff, et passim in Greek Tragedy.
- 82 The silence of Antigone is all the more remarkable when we remember how she dominates the other scenes where the two sisters are present and where Ismene is the one who says little (720ff, 1096ff, 1249ff, 1670ff).
- It might be argued that dramatically it is more effective for Oedipus and Ismene only to speak at this juncture. But the argument seems vitiated by the consideration that Antigone is so bound up in her father's fate and exile that one might expect her to make some comments on Ismene's news, as it is presented by her.
- 83 On the legendary background concerning Ismene, see the section on Antigone (above, pp 104f) and n.64.
- 84 e.g., Webster, I.S., chpt. iii, passim; W.N. Bates, Sophocles, pp 89ff.
- 85 Goodwin, § 447, provides a valuable summary of the uses of this idiom.
- 86 Found only here in Sophocles: F.R. Earp, The Style of Sophocles, p 29 (column 2).
- 87 W.B. Stanford, The Sound of Greek (California, 1967), passim, is a proponent of the view (adopted by ancient critics like Dionysius of Halicarnassus) that certain sounds have, per se, a symbolic meaning. I think that Stanford's position is too extreme, but equally so is G.M. Messing, "Sound Symbolism in Greek", Arethusa, 4

- (1971), 5 - 23, who refuses to attach any significance at all to certain sound patterns.
- 88 For details, see above, p 108.
- 89 C. Robert, Oidipus, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1915).
- 90 "The Dramatization of the Theban Legend", GR, 3 (1956), 24 - 37; and "The Sophoclean Oidipus and its antecedents", AC, 4 (1961), 193 - 201.
- 91 On this, see Jebb, O.T., Introd, pp xiiff; Kamerbeek, O.T., Introd, pp 1ff.
- 92 cf the remarks in the Introduction (above, p 10 together with n.6).
- 93 e.g., C.H. Whitman, Sophocles, pp 200ff; Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, pp 392f; Knox, H.T., chpt vi, pp 144ff.
- 94 H. Musurillo, The Light and the Darkness, pp 130ff, has compared the end of the OC to the apotheosis of Moses (Deuteronomy 34, 1 - 8) and of Elijah (II Kings 2, 9 - 12); cf also S.M. Adams, Sophocles the Playwright, pp 176f; C.M. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy, pp 310ff; G. Méautis, Sophocle, chpt v.
- 95 "Oedipus and Polyneices", PCPS, 193 (1967), pp 1f.
- 96 See especially A. Cameron, The Identity of Oedipus the King (N.Y., 1968); B.M.W. Knox, Oedipus at Thebes (New Haven, 1966).
- 97 See Appendix III for the full list of occurrences. These figures are based upon my own analysis of the play. B.M.W. Knox, Oedipus at Thebes, pp 21 and 202 (n.29) has remarked that, in the first 150 verses of the play, fourteen lines end with some form of the personal pronoun or adjective and another fifteen begin likewise.
- 98 Between 1422 and the conclusion of the drama Oedipus speaks 78 lines and Creon 24.
- 99 cf C.M. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy, p 193, who writes that, "Oedipus is like the Homeric Achilles whose anger is an inevitable part of his disposition but none the less does him grievous harm".
- 100 In total there are about 70 instances: Appendix III.
- 101 G. Devereux, "The Psychosomatic Miracle of Iolaus: a hypothesis", Parola del Passato, 26 (1971), 167 - 195. Devereux is a specialist (increasingly rare nowadays) in both Greek and Medicine, and he therefore avoids the extreme and fantastic theories of many psychiatrists who lack this necessary intimate and sensitive appreciation of classical literature.



- 102 On the difficulty which Antigone experienced in persuading Oedipus just to talk with Polyneices, see above, pp. 106f..
- 103 For a fuller discussion of the scene, see now P.E. Easterling, "Oedipus and Polyneices", PCPS, 193 (1967), 1 - 11.
- 104 W.N. Bates, Sophocles, p 71.
- 105 "The Tiresias Tradition in Western Literature" and "Teiresias: A study in Dramatic Tradition and Innovation".
- 106 cf N. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New Jersey, 1957), p 216.
- 107 On the contrast with the Euripidean Teiresias, see chpt v below, pp. 278ff..
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### CHAPTER THREE

#### EURIPIDES I : MALE CHARACTERS

In this study, the chronological scheme postulated by T.B.L. Webster has been accepted.<sup>1</sup> The exact dating of the individual plays does not, for the most part, affect the argumentation here, but, wherever the chronology is crucial to our understanding of a tragedy, a more detailed discussion will be given at the appropriate place.

It is a major assumption of the present thesis that it is proper to utilize the evidence from all the extant plays by Euripides at the same time. This includes the pro-satyric Alc. and the satyric Cyc. These are, of course, fourth-part dramas in their respective tetralogies and meant to be sportive (and even, in places, obscene). Yet the comedy is not of the low sort, but wryly amusing. The difference, in dramatic treatment and tone, between the satyric (or pro-satyric) and ordinary plays is, as one critic has put it, "less a difference of dramatic quality or genius than a difference of genre".<sup>2</sup> Moreover the ideas expressed in and the underlying meaning of these dramas are intended to be taken seriously.<sup>3</sup>

#### I Heracles

It hardly seems necessary to give an account of the

legendary background concerning Heracles, because he is such a famous hero, and, in any case, G.K. Galinsky has recently covered the ground fully.<sup>4</sup> I shall therefore concentrate upon the two plays where he appears.

(i) "Alcestis"

Many scholars have regarded Heracles as playing merely a comic rôle in this drama.<sup>5</sup> Although this view has been rejected by others,<sup>6</sup> there is disagreement whether the portrayal here is linked with that in the H.F.<sup>7</sup>

It is apparent, as soon as Heracles enters the stage and converses with the Chorus of old men (476ff), that he is a man of action. He announces the deeds that he is forced to perform for Eurystheus (481: cf 491 and 1150). As one might expect, the word *κῆνος* (in different cases) is spoken several times by him, not only in the opening scene (481, 487, 499) but also in later scenes (1027, 1035, 1149). He is fearless and admits that nothing can terrify him (505f). Such fearlessness is also discernible in the description of his proposed fight with Death to recover Alcestis (837ff). The speech is an example of the figure known as diatyposis, as the following points indicate: the accumulation of future tenses in the first person singular (844, 847 (bis), 851, 853), the emphasis on the physical struggle by means of his hands (837, 847, 854), the alliteration of *π* in 845 (*πίνοντα, πηλοῖον, προσφαυρότων*), and the metrical effect in that line (a preponderance of long syllables over short), which render the account of the struggle very graphic. In addition, line 848 is an obvious echo of 505 (above), and serves to accentuate his self-confidence.<sup>8</sup>

The feigned account of the way in which he obtained the slave woman (1025ff) provides further evidence of his

physical prowess. Again, he stresses the importance of his hands throughout the scene (1025, 1113, 1115, 1117). Moreover, when he alleges that he was successful in the contests of *πυγμαγῶν καὶ πάλων* (1031), the words hark back (ironically) to the real wrestling-match at the tomb which he did win.

Heracles had, of course, been depicted from the beginning of the literary tradition as a man of great strength and courage, and his most popular cult titles were *καλλίνικος* and *ἐλεγκτικός*.<sup>9</sup> Euripides, however, is careful to underline the philosophic and mental attitudes of the hero as well as his physical attributes. He admits that it is his destiny to help mankind: *ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἔπειπεῖν μὲν πόρους οἷόν τ' ἐποί* (487: cf 499f). He is disarmingly frank and denies to the Chorus that Diomedes' horses could be pyrognathic or anthropophagous (492ff).<sup>10</sup> He has no qualms because the horses belong to Ares, the god of War, and dismisses them in a few words (501ff). By minimizing the fantastic side to many of the stories about Heracles, Euripides emphasizes the very human quality in him.

Similarly, Heracles treats the anthropomorphic Death no differently from the rest of his adversaries (843ff). Whether the intervention of Heracles in the Alcestis-Admetus story is Euripides' own invention or not must remain a matter of conjecture.<sup>11</sup> What is significant, however, is the selection by Euripides of this myth and of these characters for use in his drama. He suggests, by using Heracles, that the courage of the man lies in his philosophic outlook as well as in his physical strength. The defeat of the sons of Ares, the god of fell war and destruction,<sup>12</sup> is symbolic of the conquering of human fear,<sup>13</sup> and the success against *Θάνατος* represents the suppression of

all human dread of death. Heracles' mind can be comic and sportive, but it can also be serious and reflective; for that reason he is fully human.

The scene with the Servant (773ff) has been regarded by some critics as a slice of boisterous Aristop<sup>h</sup>anic Comedy.<sup>14</sup> But the humour is of the wry sort common in Euripides.<sup>15</sup> It would be a mistake to think that Heracles is riotously drunk. The Servant, devoted to Alcestis (767ff), cannot understand why he is behaving thus in a house of mourning and is therefore hostile to him (750, 766). Heracles had been quite duped by Admetus (513ff) and he is convinced that he can enjoy the *ἑὴν* offered him as much as he wants. He notices the scowls that he is given and the sadness around the house (773, 774, 777, 797, 800), but such is his implicit trust in the friendship of Admetus that he believes the story concerning the *ἄθροτος* [ *γυνή* ] (533).<sup>16</sup> His feasting is no wanton display of revelry, but highlights the different attitudes of Heracles and Admetus, as we shall presently see, towards *εὐχία* and *ἑὴν*.

Heracles' incessant admonitions to the Servant (775, 788, 794f) and his philosophic moralizing (782ff, 785f, 788f, 790f, 799, 800ff) have an inner seriousness. Throughout the present scene he stresses humanity and the human condition, so: *τὰ θνητὰ πράγματα, οἷός τις ἔχεις φόβον* (780: cf 799). Later a passage spoken by him (782ff) is reminiscent of earlier remarks by Pheres (692f and 722). The thought is not, from a philosophic viewpoint, original, since it may be found as early as the *Od.* (11, 488ff). But it does show that, beneath the superficial gaiety of Heracles' manner, resides a profound belief. By voicing such words, he reveals his basic

unselfishness.

The reaction of Heracles to the news that Alcestis has been, all the while, dead is swift and genuine. The urgent, pressing questions (810, 812, 816, 819, 820, 822), the double question (822), and the antilabê (819) are indicative of his amazement at the lies told by Admetus. The abruptness of the next speech (826ff) is revealed by the accumulation of several participles and finite verbs together (826, 827f, 829f, 831f); further, the verbal reminiscences between 829 and 795 and between 832 and 796 are arresting. The exclamatory genitive and the epexegetical infinitive in one line (832) and the genitive absolute in the next (833) confirm the impression of his distraught mind.<sup>17</sup>

To Heracles the ideals of *φιλία* and *φένια* are very important, since they represent the essence of a human being's worth. The significance of these ideas has been discussed by some writers before,<sup>18</sup> and I need, therefore, only deal with the more important points. It is surely important that the word *φένος* is used eleven times by Heracles (476, 538, 540, 542, 774, 816, 854, 1117, 1120, 1128, 1148), *φίλος* five times (530, 1008, 1011, 1081, 1095), and the compound *φιλοφένος* twice (830, 858). The efforts that he makes in the drama to trace and bring back the wife of Admetus are pointers to his own belief in the overriding necessity to live by and work for those ideals.

The very contrast between Admetus and Heracles lies in the fact that the latter, although deceived by the king, still endeavours to help him. When he returns from the tomb, the words with which he first addresses Admetus (1008ff) are suggestive of his surprise at the treatment meted out by his friend.

The teasing of Admetus in the final scene (1072ff) does not just provide light entertainment, but serves Heracles' purpose in testing the friendship of the king. It is only after he accepts the strange woman and is then informed who she is, that Heracles comments: ... καὶ δίκαιος ὤν/τὸ λουπὸν, Ἄδμητ', εὐσέβει-  
 περὶ ζένοῦς (1147f): note the position of ζένοῦς in the iambic line. His confidence in Admetus has now been restored.

The service that Heracles renders mankind is, then, not merely confined to physical assistance, but also pervades the mental and philosophical sphere. He is essentially a humanist, cynical of supranatural phenomena and regarding human affairs as of prime importance. It may be objected that, were this the case, why does he call himself the son of Zeus on two occasions (838f and 1119f), and insist that Alcestis may not speak for two days since it is: αὐτῷ Θέμῳ (1144ff)? The statement concerning her inability to talk is, as E.P. Trammell has shown,<sup>19</sup> due to traditional beliefs about the dead which even Heracles could not overcome, since they were so deeply rooted in the human psychê. There is an important dramatic reason, too, inasmuch as the silence of Alcestis before her husband is more moving than any words that she might speak. As for the allusions to his divine parentage, they, again, are traditional (Hesiod, Scutum 1 - 56; Pindar, Isthm. VII, 6ff), and we know from Homer (Il. 6, 21ff and 6, 198ff) that great heroes liked to boast of their divine genealogy.

Heracles is, therefore, no low comic or burlesque figure, but is seen to be fundamentally a humanist. To explain Alcestis' abduction from the tomb does not necessitate adopting

the highly ingenious but quite unconvincing explanations of some writers.<sup>20</sup> In fact, Euripides' play stands on two levels. On the first the traditional story is told in dramatic form; and on the second is placed the revelation of *φιλία* and *φιλανθρωπία* through the symbolical recovery of Alcestis from the throes of death. The person who does this is greater than most by virtue of his strength, but is no less human for that reason.

(ii) "Hercules Furens"

Some writers have maintained that the Heracles of the H.F. is a realistic study in psychological abnormality;<sup>21</sup> others have contended that he is utterly blameless and is laid low by an agent which is completely external;<sup>22</sup> and others again have felt that he exemplifies the Aristotelian hamartia.<sup>23</sup> These points of view are not irreconcilable, however, for the Greek dramatist tended to externalize those forces which we explain psychologically, as his attempted explanation of a fact of human existence.<sup>24</sup> The situation is thus, as ever in Euripidean drama, highly complicated.

The greatness of Heracles as a warrior is admitted by all the characters in the play who are favourable to him, viz, Amphitryon (174ff), Megara (460ff), the Chorus (348ff), and Theseus (1169ff, 1250ff). Even Lyssa, responsible for his misery, praises him (849ff). Heracles' first appearance on the stage confirms that impression, for he promises a swift vengeance on Lycus (565ff). The positioning of the personal pronoun at the beginning of 565 and of *ἐμῆς χερός* at the end emphasizes Heracles' involvement in the revenge. The conglomeration of future tenses (in the first person) in this speech (566 (bis), 568, 570) mark him out as a man of action and remind us of the



description of his encounter with Death in the Alc. (840ff): in the two scenes his self-confidence is accentuated. Note, too, the use of the adjective καλλινίκω (570) which is repeated later (581f).<sup>25</sup>

His next appearance on the stage reveals how he continues to retain his old ferocity and strength of will, although he is disillusioned with life (1255ff). He replies to Theseus' exhortations, not to look upon the dead bodies of his sons any more, with annoyance (1415, 1417), and the words that he speaks, when resolved to commit suicide, are characteristic of the man (1148ff). The extravagance of the language here and the mass of rhetorical questions are in keeping with the boldness and strength of the man. On three separate occasions in the scene, he refers to his old πόνου (1275, 1279, 1353),<sup>26</sup> and the synonym μόχθος or its cognates occur in two other places (1270, 1369). Although Heracles is, as suggested by D.J. Conacher,<sup>27</sup> somewhat disenchanted about his πόνου, the fact that he decides to live indicates that he has not disavowed them utterly, and that the bitterness is temporary.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to this physical strength, Heracles is in possession of certain mental attributes, like his counterpart in the earlier drama. Foremost amongst them is his belief in family love and friendship (φιλία). The importance of this was long ago recognized by J.T. Sheppard,<sup>29</sup> and his work has been of seminal influence upon later scholars.<sup>30</sup> But, so far as I am aware, the relationship between the Alc. and the H.F. in this respect has not been sufficiently brought out, and I shall therefore compare the two tragedies.

Heracles' astonishment, during his first appearance,

at seeing Megara and the children outside the palace gates in mourning garb (525ff) is shown by the array of questions which he asks. In the thirteen lines of stichomythia (533ff) all but one verse consist of questions, some triple (540), others double (533, 546), the rest single (542, 544, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 558, 560). His reaction to the fate of his family is thus immediate and genuine.

In the Exodos, also, Heracles' feelings of regret for what he has done to his own family and his love for them are made clear in the conversation between him and Amphitryon (1112ff). The four questions and exclamations within two lines (1134, 1136) underscore his severe distress. The jerkiness in the metrical rhythm of 1361 is suggested by the two resolutions in the first and third feet and by the strong break after *τυμῶν* coincident with the parenthesis. In 1364 we find another sharp break in the third foot. The hysteron-proteron in 1360 is expressive of his distraught condition.<sup>31</sup> The reference that Heracles makes to the *λυγρῶν φιλημάτων/τέρψας* (1376f) is important: the sensuous pleasure which parents derive from their children is a common motif in Euripides.<sup>32</sup> The closing lines of the drama (1418ff) are full of pathos. The language and sentiment of 1424 recall, as writers have often remarked,<sup>33</sup> his earlier statement (631f).

It is, in fact, the concept of *φιλία* which leads him, in time, to believe that life is still possible, despite his involuntary crimes. Theseus, his old *φίλος*, persuades him that suicide is not the right answer and that he should not renege his previous existence on earth (1322ff). Eventually, Heracles agrees: *ἐγκαρτερήσω βίωτον* (1351), and he even decides to retain

his bow, after an initial mental struggle (1382ff). By keeping it, he demonstrates that he will face the future with his former might and determination, since the bow is symbolic of his strength. Towards the end of the play, Heracles speaks of his relationship with Theseus as:  $\xi\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\acute{o}\varsigma \gamma\epsilon \varphi\acute{\iota}\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\nu$  (1403) and the thought is repeated later (1425f).

The friendship between them is reciprocal, for Theseus is, of course, repaying Heracles for all the assistance which he has freely given in the past (1169ff, 1336f, 1415ff). The two heroes interact upon each other. Although the story of his descent into Hades and rescue of Theseus is part of the legend,<sup>34</sup> it is exploited with good effect in this tragedy. It is the counterpart of his fight with Death in the Alc. By surmounting this  $\pi\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , Heracles overcomes the human fear of death and helps his friend Theseus.

It is also significant that Heracles remembers the dog Cerberus even though he has suffered so much pain (1386f). The emotive adjective  $\zeta\epsilon\lambda\lambda\acute{\omicron}\omicron\upsilon$  (1386) is suggestive of his essential unselfishness, and the fact that he still thinks of others shows the continued existence of his humanity.

In a number of places throughout the drama, Heracles' beliefs concerning the gods seem to border on contempt, as the following line shows:  $\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\theta\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma \epsilon \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma, \pi\acute{\rho}\omicron\varsigma \delta\epsilon \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma$   $\xi\gamma\acute{\omega}$  (1243). He is especially harsh toward Hera (1253, 1303ff, 1392f), and elsewhere he completely denies the stories current about the gods (1341ff). He even doubts his own divine paternity (1263ff). The exclamatory opening words here (1263) are full of cynical contempt.<sup>35</sup> But it does not follow that the statement contradicts the Alc., where, as we have observed,

he speaks, with pride, of his genealogy. Heracles is, at this moment in the H.F., in the most despondent period of his distress and only wishes to die. The remark is therefore understandable in view of his mental condition. Indeed, at other times in the course of the play, he is called the son of Zeus with laudation (1ff, 170f, 353ff). Whether the title is considered a source of honour depends upon the mood of the characters at a given moment. The complexity of his religious attitudes is highlighted, too, by the comment, during his first stage appearance, that: ... οὐκ ἐπιβόω/θεοῦ προσευτᾶν τοὺς κατὰ στέγας (608f). It is therefore too simplistic to regard him either as wholly orthodox or as an atheist.

The intervention of Hera in the tragedy (through the medium of Lyssa and Iris) is symbolic of a certain force in human life.<sup>36</sup> Hera, I think, represents τύχη or συμφορά in human life.<sup>37</sup> Heracles himself alludes to the idea on two occasions (1294 and 1349f). This is the factor which cannot be foreseen but affects all alike, whether noble or wicked. That Heracles is himself afflicted by the force underlines his basic humanity and his close ties with mankind. In his own suffering, Heracles receives support from a fellow human being, and he is thereby able to live with a renewed sense of purpose.

Despite the difference in the tragic scope of the Alc. and H.F., there is a significant degree of consistency between the two portrayals of Heracles. In addition to possessing the attributes of the legendary hero, he is shown to have certain inner qualities and <sup>be</sup> firmly embedded in a humanistic frame. The comic side of his character is, of course, apparent in the pro-satyrical drama, but the special nature of the dramatic genre

accounts for that feature, nor is it in any case given undue prominence. In the H.F. everything is profoundly serious and there is no touch of comedy. Nevertheless, the idea of *επιείκεια* transcends all other beliefs, in both the plays, and Heracles is seen to be the benefactor of mankind because he is part of humanity himself. The result is a clear affinity between the dramas. I shall return to the characterization of Heracles at the end of the section on Theseus, when we shall be in a position to compare them.

## II Theseus

Theseus has many similarities with Heracles. It is still a source of doubt whether Theseus was a legendary figure reflecting some dim historical character,<sup>38</sup> or a person adopted by the Athenians from Thessaly and Troezen and hailed as their national hero to rival the Argive-Theban Heracles.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Theseus appeared prominently in Greek literature of all periods, and it would go far beyond the confines of the present study to enter into the details of the myth.<sup>40</sup> But it is certain that the tale was "influenced by that of Heracles and it is not surprising that he is made Heracles' friend and contemporary".<sup>41</sup>

### (i) "Hippolytus"

Theseus first enters at 790. Absent during the first half of the drama while his wife Phaedra was on stage, he returns to find her dead and the palace plunged into grief. He appears to be genuinely distressed. The three questions in one line (801) and the double question in another (803) vividly portray his reaction. When he divests himself of the *στέρνονος* (806f),

we are reminded of the situation in Aeschylus' *Ag.* (1264ff) where Cassandra strips off her Apolline garb. Theseus' lament over Phaedra's death (817ff) is expressed in strophic correspondence and dochmiacs alternating with pairs of ordinary iambic trimeters. W.S. Barrett, in his edition, has analysed the lament in detail and concluded that, "the pattern of Theseus' lament is contrived to bring out the effect of a strong man fighting to control a violent grief."<sup>42</sup> Then, while reading the fateful deltos, Theseus, overcome with emotion, repeats (875) an earlier remark (846) and bursts into lyric again (877ff). The mixture of dochmiacs and lyric iambics, the repetition of βὸλ βὸλ (877) and οἶον οἶον (879), and the amplification of ἀπό... ὀλόγμενος οὐχομαι (878) recall his former exclamations (810, 839, 846) and are indicative of his grief. His next utterance is also in dochmiacs (882ff), before he reverts to iambs in denunciation of Hippolytus (885f).

During the rest of the present scene and throughout the ensuing ones, the disgust which he feels over his son's behaviour can scarcely be repressed.<sup>43</sup> After refusing to address Hippolytus directly (911ff and 916ff), he proclaims aloud, on no fewer than three occasions, how Phaedra and he have been abused by his son (943f, 1040, 1073). In the next scene, he refers to the crime another three times (1165, 1172, 1266). The verbal reminiscences in these passages highlight the king's incredulity that his own son should have defiled the family bond (ψιλία).

The measures taken by Theseus against his son are swift and hard. He first curses him (887ff) and then formally banishes Hippolytus from the πόλις (893ff). His actions have

been criticized by some writers as impetuous.<sup>44</sup> Yet, what else might reasonably be expected? On account of his oath (601ff), Hippolytus cannot or will not tell Theseus the truth: it is a mark of his character to keep the oath. Neither the Chorus (sworn to secrecy in 710ff) nor the Nurse (dismissed at 706ff and no longer seen again) are in a position to advise Theseus of the truth. The only evidence before him, therefore, is the deltos, and, since his love for Phaedra is quite genuine, his behaviour is understandable.<sup>45</sup>

I can find no evidence in the play, as several critics have argued,<sup>46</sup> of any lack of affection for Hippolytus by Theseus. In fact, when he comes on to the stage, for the first time, he asks with concern if his children are well (799), and amongst them Hippolytus (as the eldest) must be included. It is also significant that he should have added the sentence of exile to that of the curse. Whilst there are good dramatic grounds for this,<sup>47</sup> other considerations may well have motivated Euripides, too. The banishment suggests, to my mind, that Theseus did not really want his son to DIE. Throughout the scene the emphasis is placed upon the exile, not the curse (897f, 1048ff, 1053f, 1065, 1084f, 1089). Hippolytus admits that he is astonished that his father had not straightaway killed him, as he would have done in Theseus' position (1041ff).

The final scene in the play, when father and son meet for the last time (1407ff), is very moving, and it is hardly credible to suppose that their affection is not sincere. Interestingly, Theseus addresses Hippolytus as *τέκνον* four times here (1408, 1410, 1446, 1456) and calls him *υἱός* (1452). This contrasts with the other scene, where he does not once use

such a term of endearment.<sup>48</sup> It suggests that normally their relationship is good, and that in the Exodos this natural affection is re-established.<sup>49</sup>

In fine, then, there are no grounds for impugning the existence of real love between Theseus and Hippolytus. It is, in fact, the ideal of  $\varphiιλία$  which renders the father angry enough to denounce his son, and it is this factor which reconciles them in the end.

Connected with Theseus' sense of family love comes his service to the polis (Athens) and to mankind in general. Theseus mentions in one place (976ff) his exploits against Sinis and Scyron, and the reference emphasizes both his physical prowess and his assistance to the world. The fact that we are informed in the Prologos (34ff) of Theseus' absence for a year from Athens, because of his strong actions against the Pallantidae, is another indication of his strength and courage.

The poet does, however, choose to emphasize the mental qualities of Theseus more than the physical. An examination of his attitude toward religious affairs will help to bear this out.

As the king of the polis, Theseus may be expected to perform the priestly functions that were part of a monarch's prerogatives.<sup>50</sup> Certain residuary sacral responsibilities subsisted for the  $\xi\rho\chi\omega\nu \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$  in fifth century Athens: this official was the legacy of the former king.<sup>51</sup> Hence, we find that Theseus has been away, during the first part of the Hipp., on a religious mission as a  $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  (792 and 806f).

But how pious is Theseus? B.M.W. Knox has thought that his religious outlook is distorted and only skin-deep, with limited belief.<sup>52</sup> There is certainly much to be said for this



viewpoint, although I do not agree completely with Knox's interpretation of Theseus as the typical Athenian politician.

The scepticism of Theseus extends as far as the  $\alpha\rho\alpha\iota$  which he uses against Hippolytus (895ff), and it may be adduced as another reason for the imposition of the sentence of exile, since he is not certain whether the curse will work. If he acknowledges that Poseidon is his father (887, 1169f), he does so only because it suits his cause. Similarly, when he refers to the gods (836, 1258f), it emphasizes the enormity of Hippolytus' supposed crime and strengthens Theseus' own stance.

His disparaging remarks about the Orphic and Bacchic mysteries (952ff) are uttered in anger and comprise a dramatically effective device; they also suggest how cynical he is. Moreover, he is quite unconcerned about the consequences of  $\mu\lambda\omega\sigma\alpha$  and tells his son:  $\delta\epsilon\iota\phi\omega\sigma\alpha\iota\ \delta',\ \epsilon\pi\epsilon\omega\delta\eta\ \gamma',\ \epsilon\varsigma\ \mu\lambda\omega\sigma\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda\theta\upsilon\theta\alpha\varsigma,\ / \tau\omicron\ \sigma\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\sigma\omega\pi\omicron\nu\ \delta\epsilon\omega\rho'\ \epsilon\nu\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\iota}$  (946f). How then can this statement be reconciled with his expression of thanks to Hippolytus for absolving him from pollution (1448, 1450)? The fact that he receives absolution (as it were) from his own son, a fellow human being, and not from the high priests and by means of the rituals described in Aeschylus' Eum. (235ff, 276ff, 445ff), suggests how far the action has been brought down to the human plane.

Indeed, for the last 23 lines of the drama (1444ff), Theseus and Hippolytus are left alone on the stage, with the Chorus mute and their presence almost forgotten: the dramatic interest is concentrated solely upon the actors. The reconciliation between father and son is thus seen to be an act that only human beings can share. A note of optimism, however

faint, lies in the tragic ending. For we glimpse the fundamental humanitarianism of the scene and discern the significance of the bond of φίλῶν between Theseus and his son.

The attitude of the Athenian king toward religion is therefore very complex. His scepticism should, in my view, be explained, not in terms of political manoeuvrings, but as the expression of his humanism based upon love and friendship.

(ii) "Supplices"

To many critics, the characterization in this play has seemed to lack all significance and Theseus particularly is felt to subsist only as the "image ... boni principis".<sup>53</sup> Few writers have held that his portrayal is realistic.<sup>54</sup>

The physical strength of Theseus and the fame that has been won as a consequence are emphasized in the drama. Adrastus sings of his praises thus: ᾧ καλλένικε... ἀνκβ (113),<sup>55</sup> and later he calls him: ποιμέν' ἐσθλόν (191).<sup>56</sup> Theseus speaks of his deeds himself in a very exalted passage (338ff). The phrase κολαστής τῶν κακῶν (341) is picked up later (575), and line 342 is reminiscent of Heracles' statement in the Alc. (487). On many occasions, Theseus (like Heracles) mentions the labours that he has undergone. The word κόνος is the phrase most often spoken (345, 393f, 573).<sup>57</sup> The aim of these labours is, as he admits, to help mankind by preserving its νόμος and δίκη (522ff: cf 530 and 563). The assistance which he renders to mankind is thus based intimately upon considerations of humanity.

His initial refusal to help Adrastus (195ff) is motivated in a very realistic manner. The Chorus remarks upon his youth (250f),<sup>58</sup> and he is against all unnecessary war and slaughter, so

that he readily criticizes Adrastus' behaviour in waging battle against the Thebans (161, 229ff, 248ff). This conviction would not, as G.M.A. Grube has correctly pointed out,<sup>59</sup> have struck the Athenian audience at the time as self-righteous or priggish. We also learn, from Theseus' lips, that he would prefer to try persuasion rather than force (383ff).<sup>60</sup>

After listening to his mother's exhortations to change his mind (297ff) Theseus agrees to help Adrastus. He has been termed "putty in his mother's hands"<sup>61</sup> for doing so. That is a harsh verdict. The reason for the acceptance of his mother's advice is to be found in the importance that he attaches to the family relationship ( $\psi\lambda\iota\alpha$ ). His devotion to Aethra is so obvious that it requires little detailed exposition. The very first words that he says to her (88ff) show his anxiety over Aethra's long absence from the city, and he is deeply disturbed (286ff) to see her weep. He admits to his mother the duties that children have vis-à-vis their parents (361ff).

On several occasions, he refers to the concept of  $\psi\lambda\iota\alpha$  in the allied sense of friendship generally (223ff, 296, 385ff). Note that the sentiment of line 296 harks back to Heracles' statement in the Alc. (1008ff) apropos Admetus. After recovering the corpses and arranging for their proper burial, Theseus addresses the Argive king (1166ff). The word  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$  (1169) picks up the earlier mention (385) and underlines the fact that the assistance given to Adrastus is a freely-given act of  $\psi\lambda\iota\alpha$ .

The crowning deed of friendship that Theseus performs is to help wash and prepare the dead bodies for burial (764ff). He has no repugnance or fear of doing this, and seems firmly

embedded in a humanistic frame. Similar to this is his anxiety lest the mothers should see their sons' disfigured bodies (942ff).

Most critics have supposed Theseus to be quite orthodox in the play.<sup>62</sup> D.J. Conacher, however, doubts whether the piety is real, and suggests that it is only superficial. Theseus' "theological position", to employ the phraseology of the Canadian scholar, is reminiscent of "that peculiarly Homeric mixture of commonsense and superstition".<sup>63</sup> Although Professor Conacher has treated the question at some length, my own examination was made independently of his work, and it is hoped that the following discussion will reinforce his conclusions.

The attitude of the Athenian king to the gods is ambivalent throughout the Supp.. In one place he attaches importance to the art of divination (155ff, 211ff) and in another he criticizes it strongly (220f). The word  $\xiουδας$  (220) suggests dependence and compulsion and thereby implies moral condemnation by Theseus. He also seems hostile to the gods (226ff) and this is confirmed later when he speaks thus:  $\tauρυφε$  ...  $\delta$   $\deltaαίμων$  (552). The verb here, as often, has a contemptuous signification,<sup>64</sup> and this emphasizes the cynicism of the king vis-à-vis the gods. Moreover, he scoffs at the superstition that, unless the Seven are buried, they will take revenge (544ff). The accumulation of deliberative questions in these lines accentuates his scorn. The question:  $\tauίς$   $\delta'$   $\acute{\epsilon}κ$   $\delta\rho\acute{\alpha}κοντος$   $\thetaοοῦ$   $\acute{\alpha}ν$   $\gammaένοιτ'$   $\text{Ἄρης}$  (579), recalls the similarly contemptuous statements of Heracles.<sup>65</sup>

It is plain, therefore, that the Athenian king is concerned primarily with human beings. He is personally willing to hand over the ashes of the dead men to the Argives as a  $\chiάρις$

(1165ff). But the sudden intervention of Athene at the end (1183ff) prevents it, and introduces a grim note. Not only is Theseus not allowed to do as he wanted, but also the Argives are made to swear to become the allies of the Athenians in the future, as well as take revenge in due course for their present losses at Thebes. The parties concerned naturally obey her instructions.<sup>66</sup> But it is significant, in my opinion, that

the expression which Theseus uses in assenting to her order is: τὸνδ' ἐν ὄψεσιν εὐβόησαι ... (1229). The verb echoes the participle εὐγυῖς (220) (above). Does the poet imply in this subtle way that, by following Athene's words, men will only experience disaster similar to that which afflicted Adrastus?

The conclusion of the play helps to stress the absolute humanism of Theseus. He is the one person prepared, without any formal oaths or promises in return, to give assistance to his fellow men.

Euripides does not appear to me to be presenting a highly nationalistic and laudatory picture of Athens,<sup>67</sup> nor is Theseus depicted as the embodiment of the Athenian ideal, as some critics have argued.<sup>68</sup> He is indeed called a democratic sovereign in the play (349ff, 403ff, 429ff). But it should not be taken, per se, as a great source of praise for Athens, because the involvement of Theseus in the democratizing process at Athens was part of the legendary tradition (Arist., Ath. Pol. 41; Plutarch, Theseus 24f). Moreover, the intervention of Athene marks her off as the personification of chauvinistic nationalism.<sup>69</sup> This force is destructive since it appears to have no end and only leads to further death. If she is the patroness of Athens and if she is portrayed in an ironic light by

Euripides, how can it be supposed that he is composing an encomium for Athens?<sup>70</sup>

The characterization of Theseus is important inasmuch as he is no cipher, but a person who is essentially humanistic in his outlook and behaviour.

(ii) "Hercules Furens"

As soon as Theseus enters the stage in the Exodos (1163ff), he speaks to Amphitryon. He emphasizes that he has come to assist his friend Heracles. The military terminology should be noted: ἔνοπλος ... κόρου (1164) σύμμαχον ... δόρυ (1165), πόλεμον ... μάχην (1168), συμάχων (1171). The phrase χαρὸς ... τῆς ἐμῆς (1171) also suggests his personal bravery. Later, Theseus alludes to the former exploits that have won him fame (1326f), and this acts as a reminder of his physical courage and service to mankind.

Euripides concentrates far more, however, upon Theseus' mental attributes. The word φίλος is spoken eight times by him in a variety of cases (1215, 1223, 1225, 1234 (bis), 1252, 1338, 1398), and χάρης four times (1223, 1238, 1322, 1336).

Encouraged in this fashion by Theseus, Heracles decides to remain alive, because his faith in humanity has been restored.<sup>71</sup> The φίλια of Theseus plays a prominent rôle, then, in giving Heracles confidence again.

The religious attitudes of Theseus are, as in the other two plays, complex. The description of him as a "kindly and orthodox gentleman" by one scholar<sup>72</sup> appears somewhat oversimplified. On the one hand, we discern that his attitude towards μίσημα is enlightened (1218ff). Theseus' attitude toward μίσημα is enlightened, as lines 1202 and 1218ff indicate. The rhetorical questions in two successive verses (1218 and 1219)

are indicative of his contempt for the traditional ideas associated with pollution. A few lines further on, he remarks: τί οὐδ' οὐ παύεται θυγῆτος εἶν τα πρᾶγματα (1232: cf. 1234). It is, I would suggest, because of his essential humanism that Theseus is able to view *ἄγος* thus; it is, as S. Barlow has remarked, "a triumphant rebuttal of the old views of morality".<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, Theseus' remark to Heracles (1227f) does not presuppose an ingenuous and pious belief in the gods. The reference to ἐκ θεῶν (1228) is surely of no greater significance than the English expression, "Act of God", under which head are classified all manners of chance occurrences that happen without warning.<sup>74</sup> In another speech that he makes to his friend (1314ff), the rhetorical questions and the assonance of the initial syllables (οὐ ... οὐ ... οὐ) underscore the case which he is putting before Heracles. Theseus is, of course, trying to convince him not to commit suicide, and is therefore employing all the arguments that he can to persuade him. The reference to the gods is thus part of the general coaxing tone noticed above. The conditional clause (1315) seems to cast doubt on the stories themselves and has an ironic undertone.<sup>75</sup> The very fact that Theseus chooses to tell Heracles how the gods are supposed to indulge themselves in such activities helps to accentuate the humanistic element of his character.

Finally, the repeated indefinite relative clauses and the generalizing subjunctive mood (1338f) suggest doubt in Theseus' mind. Also significant is the lack of any reference to specific deities in his speeches, except for the goddess Hera (1191). If the symbolical interpretation of this deity, as the representation of τύχη, is valid,<sup>76</sup> then it will be seen that

her importance for Theseus lies only insofar as she personifies a certain impersonal force in the cosmos.

In sum, far from being a very orthodox believer, Theseus displays scepticism apropos religious matters. The gods represent vague powers existing in the world of men.

Undue emphasis is not placed upon the fact that Theseus is an Athenian.<sup>77</sup> As the king of Athens, he does mention the city several times (1166, 1323, 1333), but none of the references has a particular emotional colour other than as his home.<sup>78</sup> Theseus also takes pains to underline the fact that he will look after Heracles. The large number of personal pronouns and verbs in the first person singular (1324ff and 1336ff) evince his own involvement. In two different places (1254 and 1334f) he refers to Greece generally and takes pride in so doing. It is additional evidence that he represents not one Greek πολίτης, but the whole of Hellas and of mankind generally. Euripides' portrayal of Theseus here differs considerably from that of Sophocles who writes, in his O.C., a complete eulogy of Athens and regards its king as a partisan and patriot of the first order.<sup>79</sup>

The greatness of Theseus seems to lie in the combination of his physical and mental qualities. In the Hipp. greater prominence is attached to his love for the family, although we do not forget the services that he has done for mankind. The dramatic interest, in the Suppl. and H.F., shifts to the other (closely allied) idea of φιλία, that of friendship. Theseus is thus humanistic in his outlook. In these dramas both the Argive Heracles and the Athenian Theseus transcend their native countries, eschew all nationalistic feelings, and pay no



undue heed to the chauvinism of the polis. The time when these plays were composed featuring Heracles and Theseus was a period of gloom and darkness in Hellas. The only hope, for Euripides, seems to reside in the spirit of *φιλία* and *φιλανθρωπία*. The end of the H.F. suggests that the poet did think it possible for men to live in peace, so long as internecine strife were ended and peace restored.

### III Orestes

An investigation of the character of Orestes<sup>80</sup> in all the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides has recently been undertaken by J.F. Glass.<sup>81</sup> The writer found that the depiction of Orestes' mental abnormality in the El.<sup>82</sup> and the Or. was consistent. But he drew quite a different conclusion for the And. and I.T.. The And.<sup>83</sup> was felt to be a piece of anti-Spartan propaganda in which Orestes is introduced solely in order to help the machinery of the plot; while the I.T.<sup>84</sup> was viewed as important only for its plot, with characterization a poor second. Although I agree with Glass' interpretation of the El. and Or., I find his views on the other two dramas wholly inadequate. I shall, therefore, concentrate upon the And. and I.T. before examining the El. and Or.

#### (i) "Andromache"

Orestes' appearance comes in the fourth Epeisodion (831ff). His unstable and excitable nature makes a vivid impression upon the reader. One of the most important stylistic devices employed by Euripides, in his depiction of Orestes, is the use of repetition in his speeches.<sup>85</sup>

The following examples of verbal repetition in his

language can be noted: *κεῦτο χόσδα τυγχάνει* (888), both words from the same basic stem; *τί χρήρα*, a common idiom, is spoken twice in four lines (896 and 901), and later the indefinite *τι χρήρα* is found (957); *συμφορά* (905), *συμφορά* (913), *συμφοραῖς* (980), *ἔμφοραν* (983); *τις ὄστis* (915); *ἔμμενον ... μένει* (961); *οἴκων τῶνδ'* (963), *οἴκων τῶνδ'* (966), *ἄπ' οἴκων* (984), all of which are in the same metra in their respective lines; *φόνου* (915), *φόνῳ* (962), *φόνον* (977), *φόνον* (996), each in the last foot of their verses; *ἐνδύουσι ... ἐνδύδως* (965); *γάρους* (973), *γηράμ'* (975); *τύχας* (973), *τύχαις* (979), *τύχας* (982);<sup>86</sup> *φεύγων... φεύγω φυγῆς* (976) is a remarkable accumulation of the etymologica figura; *ὑβριστής* (977), *ὑβρισε* (994); *ἔλγουν μὲν ἔλγουν* (980); *ἔχθραν* (1006), *ἔχθρων* (1007).

The overall effect seems to be that Orestes is unbalanced, nervous and anxious. It is not hard to discern the reason for this. The murder of Clytaemnestra is in the fore of his mind. He harks back to it constantly (973f, 977f, 999). The hostility that he feels for Neoptolemus (993ff, 1002ff) may be partly accounted for as a kind of cloaking of his own terrible crime. Underneath the bold face stands a broken and unstable man.

His persecution mania is part of the abnormal mentality. He burns with the idea that injustice has been done to him, and inveighs against Menelaus for his lack of faith (966ff). Orestes also criticizes Neoptolemus because he had

ill-used him (971ff, 1001ff). This psychological complex is surely another example of his desire to cover up his guilty feelings concerning Clytaemnestra's death. His proud boast (999ff), for all its speciousness, represents, in my opinion, his subconscious need to vindicate what he has done. The word *μυτρωφόντης* (999) is emphatic by position. It is the knowledge of that crime which has made him conceal his underlying feelings.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, from the very beginning of the scene, we notice how cautiously and deceptively Orestes behaves before Hermione. He lies to her (885ff, 900ff), and then denies it all (959ff). The remarks that he makes about the assassination of Neoptolemus (993ff) are full of ambiguity.<sup>88</sup> This appears to be deliberate. The mendaciousness and cautiousness that are displayed may be interpreted, again, as the consequence (in part) of his unbalanced mind.

The desire to take Hermione away (964 and 984) is not only crucial to his plan for revenge on Achilles' son. It also fulfils his need for someone from whom he may derive support. That he is in no wise self-sufficient is suggested by lines 985f.<sup>89</sup> He requires the presence of Hermione as a fillip to his own self-esteem.

The characterization of Orestes in this drama is not, to my mind, a propaganda exercise against Sparta, nor is his rôle clumsily introduced merely to assist in the movement of the plot by extricating Hermione from her error. His entry, in fact, underlines the skill of the poet in linking together the mythic strands of the two houses of Peleus and Atreus,<sup>90</sup> and in promoting one of the major themes in the play, i.e., the

far-ranging effects of the Trojan War upon the Greeks and Trojans involved.<sup>91</sup> The portrayal of Orestes is thus realistic and one of the notable features of the dramas. Although Euripides cannot be said to think of Orestes as admirable or his actions as justifiable, he hints at the possibility of a better nature in him. Orestes seems to have a genuine fondness for Hermione (896f, 959ff), and we regret the demise of what he might have been.

(ii) "Iphigenia in Tauris"

The playwright takes pains to demonstrate the unstable condition of Orestes' mentality. Some critics have thought that the picture of his unbalanced mind is not sustained throughout the whole drama, and that, in the latter half, we see a renewed Orestes, with a clear sense of purpose and resolve.<sup>92</sup> But, in my opinion, the tenor of his language and thought matches his abnormal psychology from the beginning to the end of the drama. Both his first lengthy speech (77ff) and his final long address (939ff) betray how excitable and nervous he is. Concentration will, therefore, be devoted, firstly, to those important speeches.

In Orestes' speech during the Prologos (77ff), the first sentence (77 - 84) consists of an anacolouthic and rambling period. Here we find an accumulation of many verbs, finite and non-finite, indicative and optative, with a free interchange of first person singular and first person plural. All these verbs give the effect of astonishing rapidity. The two parentheses (91, 95) are also suggestive of a highly fluid state of mind. The asyndeton and hyperbaton (94) are salient points to note. Another significant feature is the repetition

of key-words and phrases, so: ἐλθῶν (82), ἔλθοιμι' (83), ἐλθεῖν (85); λαβῆν (87), λαβόντα (89); ἔξεπλῆσα (81), ἐκπλήσονται' (90); the double alpha-privative in 94; πόνων (83), πόνων (92), πόνου (95). The more excitable he is, the shorter becomes the length of his sentences (contrast 93ff with 77ff), and more deliberative questions are asked: from 96ff there are four (96, 97f, 98, 99f). The use of the three moods (optative, subjunctive, indicative) in the successive rhetorical questions (96 - 98) emphasizes his instability, as does the repeated εἶν (98). In the last three lines of the speech (101ff), the conglomeration of three finite verbs in the first person plural in three consecutive verses, and the repetition of θανούμεθ'... θανεῖν (102) mark a resounding conclusion. There can surely be no doubt concerning the unstable nature of Orestes' mind.<sup>93</sup>

A similar situation may be found in the last narrative speech that Orestes makes (939ff): here, the identity of the man is now known to Iphigenia, and plans are being laid to escape to Greece. The opening verses of the address (940ff) have the same anacolouthic technique as in the first speech (above). The lines are almost incoherent, with three changes of subject in three successive clauses (940 - 943). The language of 941 is reminiscent of the earlier 79f, and later he repeats the allusion to the Furies (971). Other verbal iterations may be cited, so: ἔπερψε Λοβίας (943), Φαίβος μ' ἔπερψε (977); φέων (947), φέουσι (955); σιγή (951), σιγή (956); μητρὸς (940), μητρὸς (57); ἔσωσε (965), σώσει (975), σώσον ... ἔσωσον (984). Interestingly, the verb ἐλγουν (956) recalls the expression ἐλγουν γέν ἐλγουν in the And.

(980): in both cases the phrases are in the first foot of their respective lines. The repeated  $\text{—}\beta$  in 955 ( $\text{’}\beta\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\beta\alpha\iota, \beta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\upsilon\varsigma, \gamma\beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$ ) is also exceptional and to be noted: the harsh double consonants could be regarded as indicative of his excited mood.

In fine, the conglomeration of all the verbal repetitions (even of common words) in the two speeches and the reminiscences between them combine with the loose and rambling nature of the language in general to provide a good insight into Orestes' mind.

It might be argued that the later address does not contradict the view that Orestes has undergone a complete transformation in the play because occasional lapses are allowable. I find it hard to accept this. Orestes' next appearance on the stage, following his capture, comes in the second Epeisodion (467ff). He seems to talk more coherently in his sister's presence. There is a good dramatic reason for this: it is the common practice in Greek Tragedy, that the characters should crystallize the issues at stake in an articulate manner, so that the plot may move forward naturally.<sup>94</sup> The scene is, in fact, extremely important, since we discern the effects of all the  $\text{’}\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\lambda\omicron$  upon him.

Orestes' pride and his reticence to speak (482ff, 494ff) are slowly whittled away in the course of the conversation with Iphigenia, and his disillusionment becomes more deeply embedded, as the sentiment of 572f suggests. This disenchantment is highlighted further when he remarks:  $\text{’}\delta\lambda\omega\lambda\epsilon\text{—}\omega\varsigma \text{’}\delta\lambda\omega\lambda\epsilon \tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu \epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\sigma\iota\nu$  (575). Later, he refuses the chance to live and says he would rather be sacrificed than Pylades (597ff). The dramatic needs of the plot (Orestes must be the one<sup>chosen</sup> to die, so that the Recognition scene may be

effectively staged) are in complete accord with the psychology of Orestes. For he has lost the will to live, and death seems the best way out for him. Not only does it seem an honourable course of action, free from *ἔσχατον* (605ff, 689ff). It will also provide him with the relief from the anguish that he has so long suffered.

Unable and unwilling to live any longer, Orestes is perhaps exaggerating the impact of his self-sacrifice in order to gain from the world the modicum of respect which it has withheld since Clytaemnestra's death. His self-sacrifice ought not, I think, to be regarded as an altruistic act of free will; it has been forced upon him by circumstances and by his mental condition. His action is thus born of despair, for Orestes is, by his own admission: *δυσσεβῆ καὶ δυστυχῆ* (694).<sup>95</sup> Moreover, Orestes' interest in the details of the actual manner of the sacrifice (617ff) seems almost ghoulish and morbid, and is another indication of his unbalanced nature.

I have dwelled at some length on the possible motives for the desire of Orestes to die alone, in order to throw fresh light on the interpretation of his mentality.

The reliance of Orestes upon others, especially Pylades and Iphigenia, is given prominence. Pylades is his bulwark, as we see from the Prologos and from the Cowherd's speech (260ff).<sup>96</sup> The discovery that Iphigenia is really his sister results in his turning to her for support, as well. In the last hundred lines of the third Epeisodion (937ff), Iphigenia is the one person who dominates the stage. She speaks altogether 67 verses, leaving Orestes only 30. She devises the plan for the escape, since her brother's suggestions are neither practical nor realistic

(1020ff). The question: *ἄρ' ἔν τύραννον διολέσαι δυνατόμεθ' ἔν;* (1020), seems characteristic of the man who killed his own mother and wanted to die himself.<sup>97</sup> The measure of his reliance upon others may be discerned from the fact that he only puts away the desire to be killed, after the reconciliation with Iphigenia, who has inspired him with fresh confidence.

The timidity of Orestes is glimpsed throughout the drama. In the Prologos he has to be prevented from running away by Pylades, and he forlornly comments: ... *ἀλλὰ πρὶν θανεῖν, νεὺς ἐπι/φεύγωμεν ἢ περ' ἐναυστολήσομεν* (102f). Moreover, the thought behind his suggestions for escaping (1024, 1026) instantly remind us of his decision in the first scene: ... *χωρεῖν.../ὅπου χθονὸς κρύψαντε λήσομεν θέμας* (118f).

The impression which is conveyed of Orestes' character is that he is a cautious and weak man who is mentally unable to rely on his own resources and stand alone. His very last words in the play (1055), with the unfinished sentence and the tame wish, do not, to my mind, suggest a transformed and optimistic person who has now risen above his former troubles.<sup>98</sup>

The conclusion of the I.T., with the intervention of the deus-ex-machina, is artificially contrived but quite deliberate. It points, of course, to the aetiological significance of the myth;<sup>99</sup> yet it has a deeper meaning. The intentional entanglement of the plot because of the *Ἰεῦός* ... *ἀνεμῶς* (1394) necessitates the arrival of Athene (1435ff) to give the Greeks divine assistance. Does Euripides imply, by this ending, that there was no possible human escape for the matricide and that even innocent people (such as Iphigenia) can



become involved in the total collapse?

The only ameliorating feature in this picture is Orestes' devotion to Iphigenia and Pylades. Throughout they give him support and his affection for them seems genuine enough. We feel some pity for him, as in the And., since that good trait has become tainted and corrupted.

(iii) "Electra" and "Orestes"

Many discussions have appeared about the character of Orestes in the El. and Or.<sup>100</sup> There seems to be agreement that the portrayal is consistent between the two plays, as I stated at the beginning of this section. It will not however be inappropriate to give a brief resumé of the main features of the depiction.

The instability of his mental condition is reinforced by his diction. The incoherence should be noted in the following speeches: El. 82ff, 367ff; Or. 268ff, 640ff; and the excessive repetitiveness of his words in these: El. 83f, 85, 89ff, 295f, 599, 612, 624, 967; Or. 257, 546f, 562f, 1164ff, 1170ff. Emphasis is placed upon his sense of guilt over murdering Clytaemnestra and persecution complex following it: El. 959ff, 1292ff; Or. 260ff, 268ff, 551ff, 935ff. Highly dependent upon his  $\varphi\lambda\omicron\iota$ , he is unable to act on his own: El. 82ff, 962ff; Or. 725ff, 1100ff, 1118ff, and is seen to be a man of caution, timidity and deceit: El. 107ff, 220ff, 967ff; Or. 1400ff, 1578ff. He does not cut a very impressive figure in either of these dramas. Again, the only hopeful sign is his genuine concern for Pylades and Electra: El. 579ff, 1308ff, 1325ff, 1340f; Or. 211ff, 804ff, 949ff, 1047ff. But the sympathy that he wins here does not compensate

for his general behaviour, since he becomes involved in ever-worsening activities. Significantly, too, in the Or., an artificial ending occurs, as in the I.T., when Apollo appears as the deus-ex-machina and saves Orestes and his φίλοι.<sup>101</sup> Once more, the supranatural conclusion suggests the impossibility of the real situation, and demonstrates (ironically) that both guilty and innocent parties alike face destruction.<sup>102</sup>

The portrayal of Orestes appears to be, in essentials, consistent throughout the four plays. It is a realistic presentation of a man too weak to resist the pressure of the people around him and becoming ever more savage with the passing of time. Capable of behaving nobly, Orestes has never been allowed to develop these qualities freely. In the background lies the Trojan War, whose effects have convulsed Greeks and Trojans alike, and perverted normal modes of behaviour.<sup>103</sup>

#### IV Menelaus

Menelaus never became one of the greatest of Homeric warriors nor was he in the same class as Achilles and Ajax, but he was far from a coward (Il. 5, 48ff; 13, 581ff). In the Od. (4, passim; 15, 57ff) the picture of him is more refined, and we glimpse a domestic and bourgeois king who has admirable qualities and is concerned about the fate of Odysseus and Telemachus. Hesiod also emphasized the heroic prowess of Menelaus and called him ἀργυρόφρατος (frr. 204, 89 and 93 M/W). Later poets, in particular, gave increasing prominence to the abduction of Helen and Menelaus' efforts to find her, and tended to minimize his warlike nature, while stressing his love for her: Ibycus (fr. 296 PMG), Stesichorus (fr. 190 PMG), Pindar (Nem. VII,

28). In the process, he began to be viewed with more criticism in Greek Tragedy, as we see from Sophocles' Aj. (1047ff).

A number of studies have been made of Menelaus' character in Euripides and it is felt by most scholars that the portrayal is critical. In attacking Menelaus, the poet is thought to be inveighing against his country's mortal enemy in the Peloponnesian War, viz, Sparta. But it seems to me a misrepresentation of Euripides' artistic sensibility to regard him as writing propaganda for the Athenian cause.<sup>105</sup>

(i) "Andromache"

The asyndeton of Menelaus' opening lines (309f) is abrupt. The later threat (315) develops further the impression of his blustery nature. The language seems intended deliberately to maintain his outward pretence. The next speech that he makes to Andromache (366ff) has an exaggerated air. The reference to the capture of Troy (369) and the military terminology: ... σύμμαχος καθίσταμαι (371), seem incongruous with the context of the words. The parenthesis (370f) reinforces that effect. The thought and language of 382 are reminiscent of 315. Later in the scene he reverts to the semblance of ruthless determination with his command: λαβέσθε μου τῆσδ', ἀμπελίσθωντες χεῖρας (425). The same tone is discernible at 515ff and 537ff. Menelaus stresses his involvement in the treatment meted out to Andromache in the scene with Peleus (579f and 583).

Another aspect of his boastful nature consists of the tendency to make exaggerated statements on general topics. The comment (above) about friendship (374ff) is, as a recent editor has said, "an amplified and thereby much weakened form of the

proverbial κούνη των υἱῶν".<sup>106</sup> The praise of the Trojan War (681ff) is patently overstated, as the following phrases suggest: πλεεστον ᾠφέλιγος (681), ἔβησαν εἰς τᾶνδρεον (683), ὁμιλία / πάντων βροτοῦσι γίνεται δεδασκαλος (683f).

Some writers have regarded Menelaus as a wicked and contemptible figure in this play.<sup>107</sup> The approach of Keith Aldrich appears, to my mind, more worthwhile. He has maintained that Menelaus' chief fault lay in the inability to stand up firmly before the women in his family (i.e., Helen and Hermione).<sup>108</sup> I would proceed further and argue that his fulminating and blustering manner seems to be the direct consequence of his own inadequacies as a man and as a king. His bullying ways represent the subconscious desire to gain the recognition as a great leader which has hitherto been lacking for his self-esteem. From the brief examination (above) of the literary tradition, it is clear that Menelaus had obvious potential which Euripides could develop for dramatic and entertainment value. But, in exploiting this legendary background, he was able to relate it to his own ideas and create a psychologically realistic study.

Let us now consider other ways in which the playwright succeeded in presenting his character. The contempt that Menelaus displays towards barbarians (647ff) is an important factor. It is the mark of inadequate people to find scapegoats for their own inferiority and to make use of prejudice or hostility against a certain ethnic group. Thus, Menelaus is projecting blame upon the Trojans as a means of concealing his own weaknesses. In this respect, he and his brother Agamemnon are closely linked, and the similarity cannot be

coincidental.<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, the growing hostility of Peleus, a fellow Greek, to Menelaus (590ff) exasperates the Spartan king further, since he is defending the very barbarians whom Menelaus condemns. The verbal abuse by the latter (645f, 745f) is a final attempt to prove himself superior.

The sudden departure of Menelaus, after his speech at 729ff, is dramatically necessary at this juncture, but it is fully in accord with his character. He is neither a physical coward nor afraid of fighting Peleus,<sup>110</sup> but he has become psychologically unable to remain in the public gaze any longer. All his boastful talk has been countered by Peleus and Andromache, so that he is now completely at a loss and needs time to recover. Interestingly, his excuse for leaving is a military one (733ff). But the language gives him away: the repeated  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\varsigma$  (733, 734) and the awkward hyperbaton of ...  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\varsigma$  ... /  $\Sigma$   $\pi\alpha\rho\tau\eta\varsigma$   $\pi\delta\lambda\epsilon\varsigma$   $\tau\epsilon\lambda\varsigma$  ... (733f) contrive to show that he is extemporizing on the spur of the moment.

In addition, Menelaus has a feeling of guilt which he cannot eradicate. Both Andromache (324f, 362f) and Peleus (590ff, 602ff) constantly fling into his face the responsibility of himself and Helen for the recent war and suffering. He is therefore forced to vindicate their conduct before such united opposition. In so doing, he shifts the blame upon others (680), and his defence, that the war was of positive benefit to Greece (681ff), is also intended as a justification.

Although Menelaus is obviously fond of his wife, it is an extreme view to call it "uxoriousness".<sup>111</sup> I would suggest that he bestows such attention upon her, because Helen becomes

the symbol of proving his masculinity, and he must defend her as much for his own sake as for hers.

(ii) "Troiades"

The Spartan king enters in the third Epeisodion (860ff). The periphrasis in the first sentence (860 - 862) is very ostentatious, and throughout the speech the emphasis is put upon himself, so: *τῆν ἐμὴν* (896), *χαρίσσομαι* (861), *ἐγώ* (862), *εἶμι* (863), *ἔλθοι* (864), *με* (864), *ἐξ ἐμῶν* (865). The contemptuous word *ἕνεκαπέτης* (866) is reminiscent of his strictures against foreigners in the And.. The repeated use of the word *ἄγῳ* in different moods (871, 875, 877) evinces the violent and blustery appearance of his nature, as do the commands addressed the guards (880ff). Note the frequent reference to the need for them to kill Helen (874 (bis), 878).

The bullying tone of such words is only a covering for his real nature. The first hint of this comes in his justification for the expedition against Troy (864ff) which is not totally convincing. With Helen's arrival upon the stage (895ff), the hints become more explicit. He mentions twice that he has not the time to engage in argument (901, 905), and emphasizes the reason for taking Helen away by saying that he wishes to kill her (902, 905). The demand for the agôn between Hecuba and Helen has clear dramatic force. Nevertheless, the yielding by Menelaus is plausibly motivated. The weak king is shown to be unable to resist the two determined women. The indifference with which he apparently speaks is belied by the increasing excitement of the language. Of particular note are the cognate forms: *δῶρον* (911), and *δώσω* (913 (bis)), and the hyperbaton of: ... *τῶν σὺν δ' οὐνεχ'...* *λόγων* (912).

After the debate, Menelaus reacts by denouncing Helen (1036ff).<sup>112</sup> The hostility to Helen is not difficult to explain. It is dramatically necessary, and, in any case, the condemnation is only superficial. He wishes to become, as the Chorus puts it: εὐγενῆς ἐχθρὸς (1035), and the fulminating manner is therefore only an outward semblance. Hecuba is not deceived as to his real intentions (1044f, 1049, 1051).

Menelaus tries to make light of her fears with the wry joke (1050) and by announcing that Helen will not travel in the same ship (1052ff). He continues to assure Hecuba that Helen will die in Greece as soon as they arrive home (1055ff). He then states that: ...ῥᾶδιον γινεῖ οὐ τόδε (1057). The attempt to make his task seem very hard is really contrived to demonstrate an iron resolve on his part.

Menelaus' attitude towards Helen is dictated by his need for her. Although there is an element of sexual desire present,<sup>113</sup> it is not the most important reason. He looks to her as a means of concealing his own inadequacy and proving himself to the world.

### (iii) "Helena"

Menelaus' first appearance on the stage (386ff) crystallizes the way in which he is portrayed throughout the rest of the drama. The opening speech is couched in specious terms (especially 386 - 93), and it sounds like a second Prologos. All the attention is concentrated upon him: ἐγώ (400), ἔλωμαι (401), εὐλοῦμαι (403), πεπλευμένα (405), μ' (406), μ' (407). But we soon discern that it is only the outward show, when he begins to make quasi-philosophic reflections

(417f). Amongst the literary effects to be noted in 418ff. are: the repetitive cognate forms κακῶς (418) and κακίῳ (419),

the unusual spelling of ἀγῶν (418) for ἀγῶν<sup>114</sup> (pronunciation of this form, on the stage, would make clear to the audience that the spelling is different and suggests, to my mind, that it is an intentional device), and the strongly anacoluthic construction in ll. 433f. Moreover, a number of critics<sup>115</sup> have commented on the theatrical points: Menelaus' beggar-like apparel (423f) and demeaning conversation with the old portress (437ff). These verbal and dramatic effects combine here to belie the outward show of Menelaus' greatness.

The initial effect is sustained in the later parts of the drama. He wrestles mentally (483ff) to understand the Portress' references to Helen's presence in the Egyptian Palace. Unable to solve the problem, he resorts to the tactic of boasting in order to engender confidence in himself (501ff). The prejudice revealed by the phrase: οὐδεὶς εὐδὲ βασιλεὺς (501), is a deliberate ploy to hide his own feelings of inferiority. The word βασιλῆν (502) is also inappropriate,<sup>116</sup> and, again, emphasis is laid upon himself by the expressions τοῦμόν (502), ἐγώ (503) and the self-appellation Μενέλαος (504). A few lines later he receives a great deflation to his self-esteem when he considers that, although a king himself, he must beg for food from another king (508ff). The admixture of these different tones reveals the complexity of his character.

The climax of the endeavour to show his greatness as a commander comes in the suicide pact that he makes with Helen (835ff) and in his appeal to Theonoe (947ff). In the speech to his wife (especially 842ff), he attempts to sound courageous and convincing. The repetition of: κτανῶν ἐπεὶ κτανῶ (842) is reminiscent of his language in the Troi. (874ff) (above). Another salient feature is the number of verbs in the 1st person:



λέγω νεόμυθα(843), κατασχευῶ (845), λήψομαι (846). Menelaus makes use of a vigorous and blustery mode of address to Theonoe (especially 969ff). The gory description of the killings which he and Helen will carry out (978ff) is significant for its ghoulish effect. Specially prominent among the vivid details are the death blow (983f), the pollution of the tomb (984ff), and the number of negative particles: οὐ ... οὐτε .../οὐτ' ... οὐδέεις ... (988f). Although he gives the impression of being highly resolved, we do obtain a glimpse of the inner reality, since the language is overstated, and his emotional breakdown before the Priestess (991f) renders the fissure obvious.

Euripides is therefore depicting a man unsuited to the demands and responsibilities which he makes for himself. Divergent descriptions of his character have been given by scholars. He has been viewed as a romantic and idealistic figure,<sup>117</sup> as a mere braggart soldier,<sup>118</sup> as a miles gloriosus,<sup>119</sup> and as an insincere fop.<sup>120</sup> Such compartmentalization does not seem to me to account sufficiently for his behaviour. It is necessary to examine the relationship between Menelaus and Helen, his wife, in order to understand better the motivation of the Spartan.

Menelaus' attitude to her is not, in my view, determined by uxoriousness or lust. She is the one person who provides him with the inspiration and support that he needs. We notice throughout the play what a dominating figure she is. Helen wins Theonoe over (894ff), devises the plan for escape (1032ff) and succeeds in persuading Theoclymenus (1193ff). Menelaus takes second place in this, and his own ideas are all

impracticable and expressed in typically grandiose fashion (1039f, 1043f, 1047f). When the Egyptian king questions him (1250ff), one cannot help but feel that he has been well rehearsed by Helen to give the correct responses: he seems to reiterate all the suggestions made by her in the previous scene (1049ff). During the final encounter between the Greeks and the Egyptian (1369ff), the conversation is confined entirely to Helen and Theoclymenus; Menelaus speaks merely the concluding invocation to Zeus (1441ff).<sup>121</sup> His taciturnity is visually and psychologically significant.

In sum, Menelaus' relationship with his wife consists not of mere enslavement to her physical charms, but of assistance in glossing over his essential inadequacies as a man and as a king. She enables him to retain his self-esteem. He lacks confidence in himself but tries to conceal it under a façade.

(iv) "Orestes"

In Menelaus' first speech (356ff) the following points should be noted: the grandiloquence of the expression: κύκλω γὰρ ἐλεχθεῖσαν ἀθλίως .../... ἔστιν (358f); the symmetry of the clauses: τῇ μὲν ... τῇ δ' (356f); the correspondence of the participles: ἔλθων and ἔδων (357); and the positioning, at the end of consecutive verses, of: προσδέρομαι and καταστένω (356, 357). Is this not the same Menelaus whom we have seen before, with his fondness for stylized and boastful language?

Before Orestes, Menelaus is very cautious, although his stance is not unsympathetic (380ff). He is horrified at the dreadful sight presented by Orestes (385, 387, 389, 391),

but shows no wish to find out the details of Clytaemnestra's murder and the onslaught of the Erinyes (393, 409). His grief seems genuine, and confirms the few remarks made on the subject in his opening speech (366ff). From 427 on, his questions are aimed at eliciting, as far as possible, the opinion of the Argive Assembly about Orestes' matricide. Upon being told what their reaction is, he comments:  $\bar{\omega}$  γέλωτος, ἔμελλε συμφορὰς ἐς τοῦδ' ἔλθον (447). The exclamation is surely not the mark of a very self-confident warrior.

The Spartan king greets Tyndareus in a formal and stiff fashion (476).<sup>122</sup> It suggests that Menelaus is quite nervous in the presence of his famous father-in-law. Tyndareus himself is far from friendly to him (483ff) and speaks of his barbarian ways (485). The Spartan's reply emphasizes the virtue of being ἑλληνικόν (486), and the later stress on σοφῶς and σοφόν (488, 490) is intended to defend his position against Tyndareus' cutting remarks.<sup>123</sup>

The silence of Menelaus for over 140 lines (491 - 633) is due to dramatic reasons, to allow the agōn between Tyndareus and Orestes to proceed apace. It also furnishes an insight into the psychology of the Spartan. It may be assumed that throughout the debate Menelaus is considering his own position carefully. He is addressed by name three times by Tyndareus (507, 534, 622), but makes no reply until accosted by Orestes (632). Even then he says little for another 41 lines (636ff). The silence, therefore, suggests how preoccupied Menelaus is with his own thoughts.

I shall now analyse in detail the reply that he eventually makes to Orestes (682ff). The repetition of the prefix  $\epsilon\upsilon\beta\omicron\mu\pi\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\alpha\iota$  (683) and  $\xi\upsilon\beta\epsilon\iota\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\iota}\xi\alpha\iota$  (685), which, by its very signification, emphasizes the concepts of assistance and co-operation,

and the antithetical expression in 686 have a cumulative effect in suggesting that Menelaus really would like to help Crestes. He goes on to explain why his assistance can only be of a limited kind (688ff), and takes pains to stress his own inability and powerlessness (688, 689, 690, 691, 694f).<sup>124</sup> The phrase *Μελαργεῖος ἄρπυς* (692) adds a touch of stateliness.<sup>125</sup> He later reverts to the theme of being physically unable to help his nephew (711ff). Note here the military expressions: *ἀλκή* (711), *ἀγχι* (712), and *ῥοτατα* (713). Also of significance is the nautical language which Menelaus employs (698ff, 706f). Maritime imagery is, of course, common in Greek literature, because seapower played such an important rôle in Athenian life.<sup>126</sup> But the metaphorical expressions have a greater emphasis in this context. The stress on military and nautical diction, with the concomitant implications of action and strength, is in marked contrast to Menelaus' avowed powerlessness. The dichotomy between expression and intention is thus total.

In my view, there is no need to think that Menelaus is a complete hypocrite who knows no shame.<sup>127</sup> The behaviour of the Spartan arises from his basic inadequacy and his realization of it. Moreover, his promise to use *παρθενούς* *Μόρως* (692: cf 705) in defence of Crestes is not, per se, base. We must remember that, until he spoke in the Assembly, there was a distinct possibility of his escaping punishment (917ff). But Crestes then condemned himself out of his own mouth (931ff). Is it not possible, then, that Menelaus perceived, during the debate, that the issue was beyond remedy and decided, in the absence of armed force, to say nothing

because the cause was hopeless? The presence of Helen was, in any case, dangerous (57f and 102ff), so that Menelaus may have considered it expedient not to arouse the Argives further against his wife, if he should interfere.

Menelaus appears for a second time, during this play, in the Exodos (1554ff). Here, he and Orestes are engaged in stichomythia, while the life of Hermione is at stake. The full importance of Helen for him is now revealed. Menelaus talks of her sincerely thus: καὶ τὴν τέλειαν ἀθλίαν ἑμάρτ' ἐμὴν (1564: cf 1585). He is utterly resourceless when Helen disappears (1583). Although Orestes interrupts Menelaus in three successive lines when he is speaking of his wife (1613, 1614, 1615), the Spartan king is so preoccupied with his own thoughts that he takes no notice of and makes no reply to Orestes. The support that he has gained from Helen is now gone, and the façade has collapsed. The sadness in his words (1673ff) is indicative of the loss that she represents.

(v) "Iphigenia in Aulide"

Menelaus' arrival on the stage in the first Epeisodion is heralded by the old servant (303). His first words are abrupt and contain no connecting particle (304). In the brief encounter with the retainer, the Spartan assumes a blustering manner and threatens him (311). He is also contemptuous towards the slave (313, 318). Later in the play (371f) his scorn for barbarians is quite undisguised. Such prejudice is comparable to that shown in the other dramas.

The Spartan king is highly scathing in his condemnation of Agamemnon's behaviour (317ff), and is especially critical of his brother's political manoeuvrings

(337ff). He stresses that Agamemnon had willingly agreed to sacrifice Iphigenia (358ff). Here, Menelaus is projecting his own powerlessness and inadequacies in the face of his brother, the Commander-in-Chief.

He calms down upon the entry of the Messenger (414ff), so that, when he next speaks, the tone is a little different. His address (473ff) has caused much controversy and scholars are divided whether it is a sincere *μετάνοια* or a clever ploy or a clumsy dramatic device to move the action of the plot.<sup>128</sup> It is difficult to give a complete answer to the vexed question, and a number of different motives are probably involved. His concern for Agamemnon seems genuine enough (471, 477ff, 489ff, 496f), and it is clear, from the deliberative questions (485ff), that he is emotionally affected by the proposed sacrifice of Iphigenia. Furthermore, the *μετάνοια* highlights the inability of Menelaus to remain firm in his stance and points to the inner weakness in his nature, since he is afraid in case the whole blame for the sacrifice falls upon his shoulders.

The situation in which Menelaus criticizes his wife Helen, as in the following line: *Ἐλέργην ἔλασμα, τὸ καὶ οὐ  
δύτι τὰ γὰρ θεῶν*; (488: cf 485ff, 494), is similar to the Tr. (876ff, 1036ff). This condemnation does not imply that he hates her or no longer wants her. In any argument to persuade Agamemnon to reverse the decision concerning the sacrifice, it would be natural, as well as theatrically effective, to criticize her, just as Agamemnon had himself earlier abused her (467ff). Menelaus is following his brother's lead, to evade culpability.

The dialogue between the brothers (513ff) is important because it again shows Menelaus' desire to appear determined. He fulminates loudly against those who might dare to oppose the preservation of Iphigenia's life, viz, the Army (515, 517), Calchas (519, 521), and especially Odysseus: *φδοτιμὴν γὰρ ἔνεχεται, δεινῶν νόμων* (527: cf 525). We see here the threatening Menelaus of the beginning of the scene. One feels that he is putting on an act because he realizes that Agamemnon will carry out the sacrifice, sua sponte, and that the responsibility is not his own. Even though he may have been genuine in his grief, he must also feel relief that the action, for the recovery of his wife, is proceeding as planned.

A fuller discussion of the character of Menelaus in Euripidean drama will be given after we have examined Agamemnon, his brother, but it is worth making a few points at this juncture. The portrayal of Menelaus is similar throughout the five dramas. There are, of course, differences. Thus, in the And., Tr. and I.A. his blustering manner is emphasized, and in the Hel. and Or. his boastfulness. He criticizes Helen in the Tr. and I.A., and praises her no less strongly in the And., Hel., Or. But those differences are just aspects of the same personality, and are due mainly to the dramatic needs of the various plays. They all serve to underline the essential weakness in Menelaus' mentality and his dependence upon Helen.

V Agamemnon

Agamemnon is accepted by all the Greeks as their commander-in-chief in the Il.. He is proud (Il. 9, 153ff), capable of harsh vindictiveness (Il. 6, 55ff ; 11, 136ff), fickle and indecisive (Il. 7, 398ff; 9, 31ff). The picture however is not overdrawn and he still remains the respected  $\delta\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  (Il. i, 172, et passim). In the Od. the contrast is drawn between Clytaemnestra's treatment of Agamemnon and Penelope's of Odysseus (Od. 2, 254ff; 3, 521ff; 4, 91f). But, as in the Il., the portrayal is far from eulogized, and his bullying impetuosity is apparent (Od. 3, 136ff; 11, 404ff; 24, 199ff). The fragmentary evidence of our sources after Homer suggests a sympathetic attitude on the part of the Greek poets, e.g., Ibycus (fr. 292, 20ff PMG), Stesichorus (frr. 215 and 216 PMG), Pindar (Pyth. XI). With regard to the tragic genre, Aeschylus' creation is overbearing, proud and self-centred (Ag. 810ff).<sup>129</sup> The character in Sophocles seems petty-minded in his abuse of Teucer (Aj. 1228ff; 1255ff, 1257f, 1262f), full of his own self-importance (Aj. 1246ff, 1252), and demanding absolute obedience (Aj. 1352). By neither tragedian is he idealized.

(i) "Hecuba"

From the beginning of his appearance on the stage (726ff), Agamemnon is preoccupied with his own being, putting himself first and everyone else last. In his first speech to Hecuba (776 - 735), he uses the personal pronoun on no fewer than four occasions (727, 729, 730, 735). He endeavours to maintain his dignity at all times and, even when the Trojan



Queen has seized the initiative, he makes a virtue out of a necessity by giving her permission to carry out her stratagem (898ff.).

In the speech assenting to act as a judge (1240ff.), he reveals his egotistical nature by the words: *μοι* (1240), *ἐμοι* (1243), *ἐμῶν* (1243), *ἡμῶν* (1248). He plays no part in the stichomythic wrangle between Hecuba and Polymestor (1255ff.) until the Thracian mentions his name (1279). At that point, Agamemnon ejaculates: *οὗτος σὺ, καίνῃ καὶ καυῶν ἐρᾶς τυχεῖν* (1280). We hear no more of Hecuba from now on. It is the Greek king who assails the Thracian and orders him to be removed. Significantly, in his anger, Agamemnon begins three successive orders to the guard thus: *οὐχ ἔλθετ'* ... (1282), ... *οὐκ ἐφέθετε στόμα* (1283), and ... *οὐχ ὅσον τᾶχος/... ἐκβλεπέτε πού* ... (1284f.).

So full is he of his own self-importance that he cannot understand the feelings of other people. As Hecuba is about to ask for help against Polymestor, he interrupts her (754f.), and his reply sounds very glib: ... *ῥᾶδιν γὰρ εἶσι*. His expressions of condolence (783, 785, 856ff., 1287) do not appear to be deeply felt, but a matter of *τὸ θεῖον*. The argument used by Hecuba which finally wins Agamemnon over is clearly based, as scholars have observed,<sup>130</sup> upon the self-interest of Agamemnon and his *ἔρως* for Cassandra (826ff.).

The style of Agamemnon, like his brother's, is sometimes very grandiose. His opening address in the Exodos (1109ff.) furnishes a good example. The incongruity of the reference to *Ἥχῳ* (1110f.) is manifest in the context of the fell destruction around Troy. The vocabulary matches the incongruity. The

contrast between κρωγῆς (1109) and ἔσυχος/.../ἦχῶ (1109ff.), and between ἔσυχος (1109) and θόρυβον (1111) or κτύπος (1113), suggests the unsuitability of the language. The verses where Agamemnon judges the dispute (1240ff.) are also important. The position of ἔχθρα and καὶ at the beginning and end of the same line (1240), and the noun ἀνάγκη (1241) serve to exaggerate the difficulties facing Agamemnon. The attack on the barbarians and the praise of the Greeks (1247f.) are reminiscent of Menelans' strictures. The hypophora (1249f.) stresses the impossibility of the situation for Agamemnon. The correspondence of the antithetical phrases: τὰ μὴ καλὰ and τὰ μὴ φαῖα (1250f.) is another noteworthy point. By overstating his problems and reflecting about them in this way, Agamemnon is seen to bolster his own image.

In the passage where Agamemnon explains why he cannot help Hecuba as he would wish (852ff.), emphasis is attached to the importance of the Greek στρατός (855, 858, 860). He is incapable of resisting the demands of the army, although he is its commander-in-chief. The determination of Hecuba to wreak revenge upon Polymestor by herself draws an incredulous comment from the Greek king (876ff.) The five questions within four lines are suggestive of his disbelief. Is he pouring scorn on the idea precisely because he is full of envy in his own powerlessness? Compare, too, the following remark to Hecuba: καὶ πῶς γυναιξὶν ἀρρένων ἔσται κρατος; (883), which underscores his own inferiority.

Agamemnon's final speech in the scene (898ff.) acquiesces in the plan of Hecuba. The stress which is laid upon στρατῷ (898), the last word in the verse, is further

evidence of his timidity. Too weak to overcome Hecuba's insistence for revenge or to punish Polymestor himself, the Greek king allows the situation to drift in the vague hope that he will not lose face himself.

(ii) "Iphigenia in Aulide"

Several critics have noticed a connexion between the Agamemnon of the Hec. and that of the I.A., but their treatment of the matter has not been very satisfactory, lacking depth and explanation.<sup>131</sup>

Agamemnon first appears at the beginning of the Prologos (1ff.). The scene has caused much controversy owing to the confused nature of the mss.. Some scholars have contended that it was subject to interpolation in antiquity;<sup>132</sup> others have maintained that both the metres (iambic and lyric) are genuine and in the order as given in the mss. (i.e., 1-163)<sup>133</sup> For my part, I can see no reason why the Prologos should not stand as it is,<sup>134</sup> especially when the experimental and innovatory nature of many of Euripides' later plays is borne in mind.<sup>135</sup>

The use of the iambic and lyric metre in the opening scene coincides appositely with the confused state of Agamemnon's mind at this juncture. The tempo of the initial anapaests (1-48) testifies to the excitability of the king. With the change to iambs from 49ff., he explains clearly the sequence of events leading up to the present impasse. The rhythm helps to crystallize the facts,<sup>136</sup> as well as evincing the erratic behaviour of the king. The number of times that he changes his mind about the sacrifice in a comparatively short period is remarkable (95f., 97ff., 108ff.). The

arguments employed are also interesting. Initially, he blames Menelaus (97f), then he says that he wrote the letter himself (98f), and, finally, he stresses the nobility of his own character (107f). The reversion to anapaests (115) suggests that Agamemnon has relapsed into an unsettled and insecure condition. In 122f the matching of mood and metre is plain: the first spondaic line is solemn, but, in the second verse, he seems to break down, as the four successive short syllables in the middle show. The rhythm of 144ff is very light and indicative of his fluid state. It appears, from the Prologos then, that Agamemnon is lacking in firmness of character.

The next encounter with him comes in the first Epeisodion (317ff). As in the previous scene, different metres are employed. The disagreement between the brothers consists, firstly, of trochaic tetrameters (catalectic) (317 - 401). This metre heightens the tension and emphasizes the excitability of the Argive king. In addition to focussing our attention upon the altered dramatic situation,<sup>137</sup> it corresponds with his changeable nature. That Agamemnon was certainly not expecting to see his brother can be divined from the a-metrical exclamation ἔα (before 317). His attitude is defensive, because of the discovery by Menelaus of the letter, and provides further evidence of his deepseated weakness. Menelaus himself sums up Agamemnon's mentality in two passages (334 and 346ff) where he tells how οὐ βέβαιος (334) the Argive is.

Agamemnon, in fact, possesses all the pretensions of leadership but is unable to assert his authority. He is subject to the whims of the Army and admits: ... τῶ τ' ὅχλῳ δουλεύομεν (450). That attitude is discernible more clearly in the final

exchange between the brothers, before Clytaemnestra's arrival. Agamemnon emphasizes the importance of the Army (514, 518), and displays his fear of Odysseus' influence over the Army (526 and 531ff). A full count of the references which Agamemnon makes to the word στρατός in the I.A. has revealed that, in each instance, it occupies the last foot of the verse (95, 518, 531, 661, 735, 1264). I would suggest this is more than coincidental. Significantly, too, Clytaemnestra knows her husband well and tells Achilles that Agamemnon is: κακός τις ἔστι καὶ λίαν ταρβῶν στρατόν (1012): is the position of the common noun in the final foot a touch of intentional irony on her part?

Nor has Agamemnon any more strength of will or confidence vis-à-vis his wife. In the two scenes where they appear together, (685ff and 1098ff), Clytaemnestra is the dominant figure. Against her thunderbolts of criticism (725ff), he can only counter with a weak: κῆδος (739), but even that is interrupted by her, and he has no opportunity to complete his sentence (739ff). His frustration and exasperation are shown in the exclamation: ὄργου (742), but his wife stalks off, leaving him alone (742ff). Similarly, later in the play, Clytaemnestra tells him: ἔχ' ἔρως (before 1133) and interrupts him again (1138). The result is that he is forced to say: ἴδου σιωπῶν (1144), and so he remains mute for over 100 lines (1146 - 1254).

To compensate for his inadequacy, Agamemnon indulges in the pretence of trying to be a greater man than he really is. Hence, he dwells at length, in the opening anapaestic lines, on the responsibilities of leadership and his disillusionment with it (21ff). It seems to be an attempt to justify his conduct

and thereby escape censure. In 161ff, the sentiment is quite unoriginal,<sup>138</sup> and sounds inappropriate coming from the lips of a Greek commander. By speaking in this manner, does Agamemnon hope to obtain the sympathy of the old retainer and demonstrate his own lack of culpability? It is interesting that, throughout the scene with Menelaus, he blames everyone except himself (391f, 392, 506ff), and, in the scene with Iphigenia, too, the responsibility is put upon others (659, 682f).

As a corollary of that is the contempt that he feels for barbarians. In the Prologos, he scathingly remarks, apropos Paris: ... ἀνδρῶς γένεσσι γυναικῶν στολῆ/χρυσῶ δέ λαμπρῆς, βαρβάρω - χλιδύματι (73f). The scorn reaches its height in his last speech in the drama, where he makes appeal to Greek chauvinism (1265f and 1273ff). With the increasing need to vindicate the course of action against Iphigenia, Agamemnon now says that the Greek expedition is, as it were, a grand Crusade to establish Hellenic supremacy over Oriental barbary. He tells his daughter: ἀλλ', Ἐλλάς, ἣ δέσσει, κἀν θέλω κἀν μή θέλω / θῶρά σε ... (1271f). He couches his behaviour in such terms in order to render it more honourable than he knows it to be.

Some critics have accepted Agamemnon's words here at face-value and interpreted his decision as derived from a genuine belief in the Panhellenic ideal.<sup>139</sup> Others, moreover, think that he was so bound up in the nexus of Anankê and Tuchê that the choices open to him were not free.<sup>140</sup> But these views are not quite convincing. To my mind, Agamemnon's decision to allow the sacrifice is born of his innate weakness. As in the Hec., he cannot resist those who have a more dominating nature than himself and apply pressure upon him. His fatalistic attitude seems (to

me) self-induced, as an excuse for his own inferiority.

Concomitant with that aspect of Agamemnon's character is his tremendous pride and gratification at being the commander-in-chief of the Greek allied forces at Aulis. The description of the army in the Prologos (80ff) is very interesting. The accumulated phrases (82f) and the emphatic position of: *καρτέ στρατηγεῖν ... / εἶλοντο ...* (84f), are suggestive of his pride. With this passage we can compare his final address (1259ff).

Here the external trappings of power are again stressed, thus:

*χαλιεῶν... ὄπλων* (1260), and the desire for glory is expressed so: *...ἔβλεψεν κλεῶν βάρθρον* (1263). Note, also, that Menelaus refers, in the altercation with his brother, several times to the way in which Agamemnon sought the supreme command of the army (337f, 350, 354f).

We need not doubt that, in his own way, Agamemnon loves his children. He speaks fondly of Orestes the baby (465ff) and of Iphigenia (460ff). Likewise, the first scene between father and daughter (640ff) is very moving and Agamemnon's affection seems genuine. But, even in his grief for her fate, all the attention is centred upon himself. There is a hint of self-pity in the conversation with the old retainer (136f), and this attitude is maintained in the speech following the departure of the first Messenger (442ff). His personal misery is emphasized by such exclamations as: *ὄμοι, τί φῶ δύστηνος*; (442: cf 443). The personal pronoun and adjective are used with great frequency (445, 451, 454, 456 (bis), 459, 467). During his last appearance, on the stage, he proclaims: *ὦ πότνια μοῖρα καὶ τύχη δαίμων τ' ἐμός* (1135). As Hans Strohm has remarked, "Agamemnon liebt seine Tochter - aber auch

sein Amt".<sup>141</sup>

The relationship between Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra, however, is very cold. He constantly addresses her (directly and indirectly) in a highly formal manner, thus: ὦ Λήδας ἕπρος (116: cf 686, 1106), or as: ἀγαγεῖν τὴν ἑμὴν (99: cf 50, 104, 454). Not once does he employ any term of endearment such as φίλη. It is probable that there was never much tenderness between them throughout the literary tradition.<sup>142</sup> Euripides utilizes this trend in order to accentuate the self-centredness of Agamemnon and to draw out the sharp contrast in their behaviour and character. The sterility of their relationship contributes to our appreciation of Agamemnon's character, by showing yet another facet of his fundamental inadequacy.<sup>143</sup>

Agamemnon is thus temperamentally unsuited to the responsibilities of his high position, but he is anxious to maintain it and vindicate himself. He is revealed, throughout the two plays, as a weak person who allows events to dominate him and is unable to stand firm in the face of pressure.

The two brothers, Agamemnon and Menelaus, have then a close affinity with one another, and, indeed, the third male representative of the Atreid House, Orestes, is also linked to them in character and behaviour. Their fundamental inadequacies, as people, are depicted by the tragedian in a psychologically convincing manner.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Webster, C.N., passim, and T.E., pp. 3ff. (= lists of plays and dates), has modified Zielinski, Trag., II, espec. pp. 238ff. Ceardel, R.F., is a useful work and can provide corroborative evidence, but the general principles behind his analysis are not free from criticism: Dale, Hel., Introd., pp. xxivff., and Stevens, And., Introd., pp. 18f. (with n.2 on p. 18).
- 2 W. Arrowsmith, Cyc., Introduction, The Complete Greek Tragedies (ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, Chicago: various dates), III, p. 224.
- 3 cf H. Röhlich, Die Euripideische Tragödie (Heidelberg, 1968), pp. 43ff.; Dale, Alc., Introd. pp. xxif.; W. Arrowsmith, ibid..
- 4 The Herakles Theme, chptt. i and ii, passim.
- 5 D.L. Drew, "Euripides' Alc.", AJP, 52 (1931), p. 316; S.E. Smethurst, "Heracles and Iolaus", CJ, 45 (1950), pp. 288f.; W.C. Greene, Moirai, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought (Cambridge, Mass.:1944), pp. 195f.; A. Lesky, Alkestis: Der Myth und Das Drama (Vienna and Leipzig, 1925), pp. 82ff.
- 6 e.g., T.G. Rosenmeyer, The Masks of Tragedy (Texas, 1963), pp. 233ff.
- 7 G.K. Galinsky, Herakles Theme, chpt. iii, pp. 66ff., does not notice any continuity in the depiction; whereas Dale, Alc., Introd., p. xxi, believes the similarity is greater than has been generally acknowledged, but does not proceed to argue the point.
- 8 The speech also acts as a proleptic Messenger's narrative. The details are so vivid that only a brief account of what happened is presented later (1140 and 1142): Dale, Alc., ad 837ff.
- 9 cf G. Murray, "Heracles, the best of men", Greek Studies (Oxford, 1946), pp. 106-126.

- 10 There is also an element of Euripidean sarcasm in this reference to the accepted tradition; but it is not inappropriate to Heracles' character.
- 11 H.L. Ebeling, "The Admetus of Euripides viewed in relation to the Admetus of tradition", TAPA, 29 (1898), 65-85, and Conacher, E.D., pp. 332f., have doubts concerning Heracles' involvement in this legend before Euripides. Dale, Alc., Introd., pp. xiiiiff., however, is inclined to follow U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (Isyllos von Epidaurus (Berlin, 1886)) in believing that he was part of the tradition prior to Euripides. Fuller references are given in Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, pp. 338ff.
- 12 cf Homer, Il. 4,441 and 5,455.
- 13 Fear (Φόβος) is himself a son of Ares: Homer, Il. 11,37; Hesiod, Theogonia 934.
- 14 Ferguson, Companion, pp. 520f.; C.R. Beye, "Alcestis and her critics", GRBS, 2 (1959), 111-127.
- 15 cf Menelaus' joke about the βραδός of Helen at Tr. 1050.
- 16 G. Meautis, "L'Alceste d'Euripide", Alma Mater, 1945, p. 395, thinks that Heracles' acceptance of the invitation to hospitality is due to the fact that the Greeks always "lui (Heracles) refusaient la sensibilité et la pénétration ... Sans réflexion, sans examen, il admet qu'il s'agit d'un deuil étranger, d'une femme étrangère". I find this view unconvincing, as the main text suggests.
- 17 Grube, D.E., p. 142 (n. 1), thinks that Heracles is affected in this way, because he was "guilty of a ritual sin" (by offering libations in a house polluted by death). In my opinion, however, Heracles is shocked more at Admetus' deception than at such religious considerations.
- 18 e.g. D.M. Jones, "Euripides' Alc.", CR, 62 (1948), 50-55; A.P. Burnett, "The Virtues of Admetus", CP, 60 (1965), 240-255.
- 19 "The Mute Alcestis", CJ, 37 (1941), 144-150.
- 20 e.g., A.W. Verrall, Euripides the Rationalist (Cambridge, 1895), chpt. i., passim; D.L. Drew, "Euripides' Alcestis", AJP, 52 (1951), 295-319; J. Kott, "The Veiled Alcestis", Theatre Quarterly, 2 (1972), 49-59.
- 21 A.W. Verrall, Essays on Four Plays of Euripides (Cambridge, 1905), chpt. iii, espec. pp. 183 and 198; E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, chpt.

- vii, passim; Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, H.F., pp.297ff., J.C. Kamerbeek, "The Unity and Meaning of Euripides' Heracles", Mnem., 19 (1966), 1-16; S.E. Smethurst, "Heracles and Iolaus", CJ, 45 (1950), 288-293 and 322-326.
- 22 G.K. Galinsky, Herakles Theme, chpt. iii, espec. pp. 63ff.; D.W. Lucas, The Greek Tragic Poets, chpt. v, espec. pp. 214ff.; Kitto, G.T., pp. 235-247.
- 23 R.D. Dawe, "Some Reflections on Ate and Hamartia", HSCP, 72 (1968), 88-123; J. Bremer, "Hamartia" (Amsterdam, 1969), chpt. vi, espec. pp. 179ff.
- 24 cf Aphrodite in the Hipp.
- 25 On the importance of this epithet, see above, p.135 (with n.9).
- 26 cf the use of the word during his prior stage appearance (575, 597).
- 27 E.D., p. 87 with n. 12.
- 28 On the rôle played by Theseus in helping him to change his mind, see below, p. 154.
- 29 "The formal beauty of the H.F.", JHS, 10 (1916), 72-79.
- 30 e.g., D.W. Lucas, Greek Tragic Poets, pp. 214ff.; H.H.O. Chalk, "Ἀρετή and βία in Euripides' H.F.", 82 (1962), 7-18.
- 31 Byrde, H.F., ad loc.
- 32 cf Med. 1074f. and 1399f.; also And. 758.
- 33 e.g., Byrde, H.F., ad loc.; Grube, D.E., p.260 (n.2).
- 34 See the references in R. Graves, The Greek Myths (2 vols, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1966-67), I, pp. 363ff.
- 35 cf Hecuba's exclamation at Tr. 835f.: she, too, is at a very low point in her morale (below, p.212).
- 36 Conacher, E.D., p. 81, denies that there is any symbolical meaning in the tragedy but does not substantiate his claim. D.W. Lucas, Greek Tragic Poets, p. 220, thinks it has such a meaning, but denies that it may be τὸ χη.
- 37 On the importance of τὸ χη in Euripidean thought, see Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, pp. 444 and 701ff.
- 38 So M.P. Nilsson, The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology (N.Y., 1963), p. 264, and Cults, Myths,

- Oracles and Politics in Ancient Greece (Lund, 1951), pp 51ff.
- 39 e.g. G. Thomson, Studies in Ancient Greek Society (2 vols, London: 1949 - 1955), I, p 264; R. Graves, Greek Myths, I, p 326.
- 40 On this point, see particularly Roscher, V, s.v. "Theseus"; R.-E., Suppl. XIII, s.v. "Theseus"; G.E. Nevard, "The Myth of Theseus" (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London: 1975), passim.
- 41 O.C.D.<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Theseus"; cf W.R. Halliday, Indo-European Folk Tales and Greek Legend (Cambridge, 1933), pp 53ff, and M. Hadas and M. Smith, Heroes and Gods, pp 22ff.
- 42 Barrett, Hipp., ad 817ff.
- 43 D.J. Conacher, "Some Questions of Probability and Relevance in Euripidean Drama", Maia, 24 (1972), pp 206f, has pointed out the psychological appropriateness of his generalizing utterances over Phaedra's corpse (916 - 942).
- 44 e.g., R.Y. Hathorn, "Rationalism and Irrationalism in Euripides' Hipp.", CJ, 52 (1957), pp 212f; B.M.W. Knox, "The Hippolytus of Euripides", YCS, 13 (1952), pp 3 - 31.
- 45 It could be argued that Theseus may have had a subconscious suspicion of an affaire d'amour between his young wife and handsome son, and that the deltos triggered off the reaction. This view, however, fails to take account of Theseus' attitude to his παῖδες, which demands implicit trust in them; only when he believes that it has been abused does he take such drastic action.
- 46 e.g., G. Norwood, Essays on Euripidean Drama (Los Angeles, London, Toronto: 1954), p 88; Grube, D.E., p 195.
- 47 cf Barrett, Hipp., ad 887 - 9.
- 48 Correspondingly, Hippolytus calls Theseus "father" frequently before their quarrel in the third Epeisodion (902, 905, 910, 923) and in the Exodos (1407, 1445, 1453, 1457), but, during the rest of time, when he is on bad terms with Theseus, it is seldom used (933, 1000, 1041, 1042).
- 49 Hippolytus' own attitudes are affected by the consciousness of his bastardy (1455), but he does not appear to blame his father personally for his status.

- 50 cf Il. 1, 312ff; 2, 324; 5, 528ff; 8, 236ff, where Agamemnon is discharging his priestly duties.
- 51 cf Arist., Ath. Pol., passim, espec. 57.
- 52 "The Hippolytus of Euripides", YCS, 13 (1952), pp 25ff.
- 53 W.J.W. Koster, "De Euripidis Supplicibus", Mnem., 10 (1942), p 171; cf Collard, Suppl., Introd., p 30.
- 54 One of the few exceptions is W.D. Smith, "Expressive Form in Euripides' Suppliants", HSCP, 71 (1966) p 159.
- 55 The epithet καλλίνικε recalls the cult-title of Heracles (above, p 135 ).
- 56 The expression ποῖμν is used as a mark of great respect: cf Il. 2, 243; Aes., Suppl. 767; also St John's Gospel, X, passim.
- 57 Although πόνοος in 573 is a disputed reading (OC T, app. crit., ad loc.), it seems better than ἔθλοος (Nauck). Collard, Suppl., ad loc., the most recent English editor, accepts πόνοος without argument and does not even obelize it in his text.
- 58 Grube, D.E., p 232 (n.2), suggests that perhaps ADRASTUS is the subject of the verb ἤγαγον (250). His arguments are unconvincing, since the most natural subject of the verb is Theseus, who was the last person to speak before the choric utterance here. Grube himself is only rendering the Greek text ambiguous where it is unequivocal.
- Collard's preference for Elmsley's reading ἤγαγον (Suppl., ad loc.) is also hard to credit, because, in the context, it is out of place.
- 59 D.E., p 232.
- 60 Note that, even when he has recovered the corpses, by pitched battle, he does not allow Thebes to be sacked, nor unnecessary destruction to be caused (669ff and 723ff).
- 61 Ferguson, Companion, p 316.
- 62 e.g., A. Croiset, Histoire de la littérature grecque (4 vols., Paris: 1887 - 1889), III, p 319; G. Zuntz, The Political Plays of Euripides (Manchester, 1955), chpt. i, passim.
- 63 Conacher, E.D., pp 101ff.
- 64 LSJM<sup>9</sup>, s.v.
- 65 Above, pp. 135f. and 142f.

- 66 In Greek drama, the commands of a deus-ex-machina are always obeyed: cf Soph., Phil. 1445ff; Eur., And. 1273ff, Ion 1475ff, Or. 1666ff. In all of these plays a supranatural ending is imposed over the natural consequences. The result is the full exposure of the irony implicit throughout the play and now emphasized by the artificial conclusion. For further details, see below, pp. 163f. and 165.
- 67 Many writers, following the Hypothesis to the drama, have felt that it is an ἐγκύβριον Ἀθηναίων: Pohlenz, p 353; G. Zuntz, Political Plays of Euripides, passim; H.R. Butts, The Glorification of Athens in Greek Drama (Iowa, 1947), passim.
- 68 e.g., Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, p 444 (n.1); G.E. Nevard, "The Myth of Theseus", chpt. v.
- 69 cf Ferguson, Companion, p 316.
- 70 L.H.G. Greenwood, "The Suppliants of Euripides: an Interpretation", PCPS, 166/8 (1937), 3 - 4, and Aspects of Euripidean Tragedy (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 92ff, thinks that the play has an underlying touch of irony, but I do not accept his critical estimate of Theseus.
- 71 On this, see further above, pp. 14f; cf, too, A.W.H. Adkins, "Basic Greek Values in Euripides' Hec. and H.F.", CQ, 16 (1966), 193 - 220.
- 72 Grube, D.E. p 259.
- 73 The Imagery of Euripides (London, 1971), p 85.
- 74 cf Theseus' comment at 1240: οὐρανοῦ δυσπραξία.  
E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (California, 1951), chpt. ii, passim, gives a penetrating insight into the importance of such factors in Greek life and thought.
- 75 cf the similar qualification at Hel. 17f and 259 (below, chpt, iv, n.80).
- 76 See above, p. 143 (with nn. 36 and 37).
- 77 contra W.C. Greene, Moirai, p 184 (with n.49).
- 78 The word πόλις or πόλισμα here signifies merely the inanimate buildings and walls. J. Fontenrose, "Poseidon in the Troiades", AFAN, 1 (1967), 135 - 141 and "Response to a Reply on 'Poseidon in the Troiades'", AFAN, 2 (1968), 69 - 71, has shown convincingly (contra J.R. Wilson, "A Reply to 'Poseidon in the Troiades'", AFAN, 2 (1968), 66 - 68) that such nouns can refer simply to the physical aspect of the city and need not have, per se, any emotional significance.

- 79 C.H. Whitman, Sophocles, p 205, says that, "Theseus represents Athens ... he is ... the embodiment of the most enlightened kind of democratic individualism".
- 80 On the literary background to this character, see the section on Aeschylus (above, p 49f).
- 81 "A Comparative Analysis of Seven Presentations of Orestes in Greek Tragedy", (M.A. diss., Univ. of London, 1956).
- 82 On the date of this play, see below, p. 251f..
- 83 I regard the And. as written between the Hipp and the Supp, and probably before the Hec., about 425 B.C.: Stevens, And., Introd., pp 15ff, has an excellent summary of the evidence and critical opinions.
- 84 On the special dramatic nature of the I.T., see below, chpt. iv (n.103).
- 85 The subject of iteration in Greek Tragedy and Literature generally has been discussed by many critics. Some have looked upon such repetitions as unintentional and condemned them as inappropriate: A.B. Cook, "Unconscious Iterations", CR, 16 (1902), 146 - 158 and 256 - 267; J. Jackson, Marginalia Scaenica (Oxford, 1955), Addenda A and B, pp 220ff. Others have felt that they are so common to the Greek ear as to cause no offence, if indeed they were ever noticed consciously: Campbell, Sophocles, I, pp 82ff; Collard, Supp., ad 166 - 17. There is, nevertheless, another school of thought which maintains that they are a deliberate literary effect. As one of the most recent writers has remarked, "... if many of the repetitions ... can be shown to have an explicable function then it will no longer be fair to make large assumptions about Greek indifference to repeated words". (P.E. Easterling, "Repetition in Sophocles", Hermes, 101 (1973), p 14: cf T.C.W. Stinton, Euripides and the Judgement of Paris (Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, 1965), p 18 (n.2).
- This argument broadly applies to the three tragedians of the fifth century B.C. It is not, of course, being suggested that the repetitions in Orestes' speeches are exclusive to him. I do contend, however, that the very frequency of the device in his language, and the fact that it seems consistently maintained in all the plays where he appears, militate in favour of regarding it as a deliberate means of characterizing him. Similarly, we have already seen, in the chapter on Sophocles, how the device appears to be intentionally exploited apropos Creon and Ismene, with different results.
- 86 In itself the word is not unusual; but it is the conglomeration of the instances in such a brief space

(ten lines) that marks it off for comment.

- 87 It is also Euripides' psychological version of the legendary story of the *κῶδρα* that Orestes received from Apollo.
- 88 For a good summary of the critical literature on the subject, See Stevens, And., ad 1008.
- 89 Note the irony here, since he has killed his own flesh and blood.
- 90 On the legendary background, see Stevens, And., Intro., pp 1ff.
- 91 K. Aldrich, The "Andromache" of Euripides (Nebraska, 1961), pp 77ff, gives a very interesting interpretation of, as he calls it, the play's "philosophic unity".
- 92 e.g., J.F. Glass, "A Comparative Analysis ...", p 79; Grube, D.E., p 330; D. Sansone, "The Sacrifice Motif in Euripides' I.T.", TAPA, 105 (1975), p 295, who remarks that Orestes, "transcends the barbarism which characterizes the family".
- 93 C.H. Whitman, Euripides and the Full Circle of Myth (Cambridge, Mass: 1974), p 5, writes that this speech "grammatically and rhythmically echoes the voice of a man distracted".
- 94 cf Med. 96ff (lyrics) 214ff (iambics); Hipp. 198ff (lyrics), 311ff (iambics); Tr. 308ff (lyrics), 353ff, 424ff (iambics), 444ff (trochaics).
- I disagree with D.J. Conacher, "Some Questions of Probability and Relevance in Euripidean Drama", Maia, 24 (1972), 199 - 207, who regards such a "psychic switch" as psychologically impossible. The economy of the drama renders such a device necessary, but it does not, in my opinion, detract from the realism of the characterization.
- 95 The self-immolation of Evadne (Supp. 990ff) is similar, because she too, is suffering from undue psychological strain. Contrast however the self-sacrifices of Polyxena (Hec. 342ff) and of Menoecus (Phoen. 991ff), which are acts of free choice, taken as a *χρῆσις* for others.
- 96 For further details of their relationship, see the section on Pylades (below, p.21ff).
- 97 He was also the man responsible, in the And., for Neoptolemus' murder, and he even attempted, in the Or., to kill his hostess.
- 98 Interestingly, it is only as a result of second-hand reports that we obtain a picture of Orestes' courage, from the Cowhand's speech (321ff) and the Messenger's speech



- (1327ff). Even here the Taurians are clearly no match. But on the stage itself there is little indication of any great heroism.
- 99 cf. Grube, D.E., pp 329f; Conacher, E.D., pp 310ff; Platnauer, L.T., Introd, pp xviii f..
- 100 Amongst the most important specialist studies may be cited: J.T. Sheppard, "The EL. of Euripides", CR, 32 (1918), 137 - 41; E.T. England, "The EL. of Euripides", CR, 40 (1926), 97 - 104; W. Krieg, "De Euripidis Oreste" (dissertatio inauguralis, Univ. of Halle: 1934); H.G. Mullens, "The Meaning of Euripides' Or.", CQ, 34 (1940), 153 - 158; M.J.O'Brien, "Orestes and the Gorgon: Euripides' EL.", AJP, 85 (1965), 13 - 39; D. Ebenezer, "Zum Schluss des Or.", Eirene, 5, (1966), 43 - 9; H. Parry, "Euripides' Or.", TAPA, 100 (1969), 337 - 53; C. Wolff, "Orestes", Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays (ed. E. Segal, New Jersey: 1968), 132 - 149; S.L. Schein, "Mythical Illusion and Historical Reality in Euripides' Or.", WS, 88 (1975), 49 - 66.
- 101 On the ending of the Or., cf especially D. Ebenezer, "Zum Schluss des Or.", Eirene, 5 (1966), 43 - 49.
- 102 It might be objected that the capture of Hermione by Orestes and Pylades in the Or. contradicts the story of his arrival at Phthia to take her back home, in the And. It does not however affect the general arguments about his character, for he displays similar traits in those two dramas. The means of depicting them must differ, of course, in accordance with the individual plot.
- 103 For further discussion of this point, see below, chapt. v, passim.
- 104 e.g., P. Masqueray, Euripide et ses Idées, p 230, says "Sans doute devant un public athénien, Ménélas avait le tort d'être Spartiate". So, too, E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, chpt. v, passim; D.G. Harbsmeier, "Die alten Menschen bei Euripides", p 164; L.A. Post, From Homer to Menander (California, 1951), p 144.
- 105 This point is discussed further above (pp/55f) and below (p.203).
- 106 Stevens, And., ad loc.
- 107 A.P. Burnett, Catastrophe Survived (Oxford, 1971), pp 139ff; P.N. Boulter, "Sophia and Sophrosyne in Euripides' And.", Phoen., 20 (1965/6), 51 - 58; V. Johnson, "Euripides' And.", CW, 48 (1954/5), 9 - 13.
- 108 K. Aldrich, The "Andromache" of Euripides, pp 71f.

- 109 Racial prejudice was a trait common among the Greeks at that time and is a sentiment echoed in other Euripidean works, e.g., by Jason in the Med. But it is not the whole explanation in the case of the Atreid brothers.
- 110 cf Conacher, E.D., p 179.
- 111 E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, p 75, thinks that he is governed through and through by this vice.
- 112 Menelaus here appears to contradict his statement in the And. (680). It is, however, only a slight difference and is due to dramatic exigencies and because pressures on the field of battle are not the same as those in peace.
- 113 Note the sexual connotation in the word  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$  (913, 1038).
- 114 Dale, Hel., ad loc.
- 115 e.g., S. Barlow, The Imagery of Euripides, p 80; Dale, Hel., ad loc.
- 116 It is a vulgarism bearing the colloquial meaning "grub": LSJM<sup>9</sup>, s.v.,
- 117 H.E. Meirow, "Some Innovations of Euripides", CW, 29 (1936), 113 - 116; A.J. Podlecki, "The basic seriousness of Euripides' Hel.", TAPA, 101 (1970), 401 - 18.
- 118 Ferguson, Companion, pp 417ff.
- 119 Grube, D.E., p 339.
- 120 E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, pp 85ff.
- 121 Such invocations are, of course, a traditional motif: Aes., Choe. 306ff; Eur., EL. 671ff.
- 122 On the significance of such formal greetings, see above, p 33 (with n.18).
- 123 N.A. Greenberg, "Euripides' Or.: an Interpretation", HSCP, 66 (1962), 157 - 192, concludes that the concept of  $\epsilon\omicron\phi\iota\alpha$  represents the self-seeking of Menelaus, while that of  $\varphi\lambda\iota\alpha$  demonstrates the altruistic relationship of Orestes and Pylades. S.L. Schein, "Mythical Illusion and Historical reality in Euripides' Or.", WS, 88 (1975), 49 - 66, and R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "Euripides: poiêtes sophos", Arethensa, 2 (1969), 127 - 142, regard Menelaus as the typical sophistic politician of the 5th century.

I am not, however, convinced by these interpretations,

- since the frequency of the word *σοφός* in Menelaus' speeches could be due to the philosophizing tendency noticed in the other plays and might therefore be intended to reinforce the outward front that he has built up around himself. The political allusions seem to me farfetched, in any case.
- 124 I accept (with Wedd, Or., ad loc) that 695 is genuine. For a contrary view see Murray, OCT, ad loc.
- 125 cf Soph., Elec. 4 and Eur., El. 1, which produce a similar effect.
- 126 See further R.F. Goheen, The Imagery of Sophocles' "Ant.", pp 44ff; F.R. Earp, Style of Aeschylus, p 105f; E.M. Blaiklock, "The nautical imagery of Euripides' Medea", CP, 50 (1955), 233 - 237.
- 127 W. Krieg, "De Euripidis Oreste", pp 18f, describes him as "mollis" and speaks of the "Menelai pravitatem".
- 128 On this question, see especially Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, pp 360ff; Conacher, E.D., p 256; E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, p 100. R. Bogaert, "Le revirement de Ménélas (I.A. 471ff)", E.C., 33 (1965), 3 - 11, provides a useful summary of the critical literature on the subject.
- 129 See above, p. 33 (with n. 20)
- 130 Conacher, E.D., pp 162ff; M. Orban, "Hécube, drame humain", EC, 38 (1970), p322.
- 131 e.g. E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, chpt. vi, passim; H.F. Graham, "The Character of Agamemnon", pp 98ff; J. Scholtze, "Der Charakter des Agamemnon von Homer bis Euripides" (diss., Univ. of Vienna: 1939), pp 101ff.
- 132 Murray, OCT, ad loc.; D.L. Page, Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy, pp 130ff; A. Lesky, Die Tragische Dichtung der Hellenen (Gottingen, 1956), p 198.
- 133 Headlam, I.A., ad loc.; Webster, T.E., pp 258f; B.M.W. Knox, "Euripides IA, 1 - 163 (in that order)", YCS, 22 (1972), 239 - 261.
- 134 C.W. Willink, "The Prologue of the I.A.", CQ, 21 (1971), 342 - 364, believes that the whole of the Prologos is genuine, but re-arranges the order of the verses. His arguments for the latter course are not totally convincing.
- 135 This includes dramatic and theatrical devices, music and metre. See now, for a good summary of the evidence, T.B.L. Webster, "Euripides: Traditionalist and Innovator", The Poetic Tradition: Essays in Greek, Latin and English Poetry (Baltimore, 1968), pp 27 - 42.

- 136 cf above, p 161 (with n.94).
- 137 cf Soph., O.T., ad finem.
- 138 The thought is traditional and may be found, in, e.g.,  
Hdt. I, 32, 6 - 9; Soph., Trach. 1ff; Eur., Hec.  
627f, Troi. 509f.
- 139 e.g. F.M. Wasserman, "Agamemnon in the I.A.: a man in  
the age of crisis", TAPA, 80 (1949), 174 - 186; E.  
Valgiglio, "L'Ifigeneia in Aulide di Euripide",  
Rivista di Studi Classici, 5 (1957), 47 - 72.
- 140 e.g., H. Vretska, "Agamemnon in Euripides I.A.", WS,  
74 (1961), 18 - 39.
- 141 Euripides: Interpretationen zur dramatischen Form  
(Munich, 1957), p 138.
- 142 cf Homer, Od. 11, 422ff; 24, 96f; Pindar, Pyth. XI,  
passim; also of the Aeschylean version of their  
relationship in the Ag. (above, p. 33).
- 143 The final scene in the play (espec. 1578 - 1629) is  
very suspect and corrupt: Murray, OCT, ad loc..  
Because of the uncertainties involved here, it has  
been decided not to take these lines into account in  
the present thesis. The discussion of this drama  
will therefore cease at 1531.
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### EURIPIDES II : FEMALE CHARACTERS

The major female characters come under discussion in this chapter, and the plays will be treated in chronological order, as in the preceding chapter.

#### I Andromache

Andromache, the devoted wife of Hector in the Il. (6,437ff.; 22,447ff.; 24,723ff.), continued in this rôle throughout the literary tradition and is mentioned by, e.g., Sappho (fr. 282 IGS) and Aeschylus (fr. 247 Mette). She provided in all likelihood the inspiration for the Sophoclean Deianeira.<sup>1</sup> In the And. of Euripides, she has been viewed as the typical hero's wife<sup>2</sup>, although J.E. Nyenhuis has interpreted her not in terms of the classic bride, but as a contemporary housewife embroiled in a domestic quarrel<sup>3</sup>. His viewpoint, however, does not seem to have met with much support and therefore requires further consideration. But he feels on the other hand that her portrayal in the Tr. does not waver far from the Homeric conception<sup>4</sup>.

#### (i) "Andromache"

The Prologos opens with Andromache on the stage as a

suppliant before the shrine of Thetis. The information that is given (lff.) is obviously essential for the audience at the beginning of the drama, but is also relevant to her character. As might be expected, in view of the Iliadic tradition, she mentions her dead husband many times, not only in this scene (4, 8f., 97, 107f.), but also in the rest of the drama (222ff., 399f., 403, 523ff.).

Her position as a slave in the household is insecure, but she seems to have made the most of it, and her relationship with Neoptolemus is far from cold or lacking in affection. The birth of her son Molossos by him has sealed the bond between them. The following lines suggest that real tenderness exists amongst them: ὁ γὰρ φυτεύσας αὐτὸν οὐτ' ἐγὼ πάρα/προσώφελῆσαι, παιδί τ' οὐδέεν ἔστ' ἀπὸν (49f: cf 75f.). The old Retainer herself gives a similar opinion (77f.). Andromache, moreover, tells Menelaus, in the second Epeisodion, that Neoptolemus will not tolerate any harm done to his child (339ff.). She also advises Molossus to go to his father, thus: Ἰακρύα τε λείβων καὶ περιπύσσων χέραι/λέγ' οἷ' ἐπράβρα ... (417f.). It appears then that Neoptolemus has satisfied Andromache's physical and emotional needs, to a great extent, and that the child has strengthened the connexion between them.

Conversely, on other occasions, her attitude is more unfavourable to Neoptolemus, and she talks of sleeping with him against her will (24f., 30, 36, 38, 390f., 403). Does she feel guilty, at a subconscious level, over her relationship with the Phthian, because she is afraid of betraying her love for Hector? It will be recalled that she speaks about her acquiescence in Hector's mistresses (222ff.). But with the

changed conditions attendant upon her slavery, she now finds herself in the position of being the mistress of Neoptolemus and growing more fond of him. She cannot totally reconcile that with her love for Hector. The psychological realism in her dilemma is thus a subtle touch, and Euripides has given a new dimension to the traditional picture.

This is noticeable from other aspects of her character. It is only natural that she should feel regret for her former life in Troy, and the elegiac threnody emphasizes it (103ff.).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the statement that she "epitomizes the pathetic woman whom the war left in its wake" is too sweeping.<sup>6</sup> For she has not allowed herself to sink into abject grief, but has faced up to the new situation following the destruction of Troy, and canalized her sorrow into different directions by means of the relationship with Neoptolemus and the birth of Molossus.<sup>7</sup>

Further, Andromache has a strength of mind and an irrepressibility which contrast sharply with her formal status and with Hermione's nature. She stands up to the two Trojans throughout the play, criticizing them strongly. Although it is dramatically necessary for her to resist Menelaus and Hermione, the tone of her speeches is well suited to her character. Her hatred of Hermione is, in fact, apparent in the Prologos and she refers to the girl contemptuously as:

τὴν Ἀλέκωναν Ἐρμιόνην (29). But it is in the first Epeisodion that her feelings are revealed in all their force. She constantly mentions Hermione's youth and consequent immaturity (184f., 192, 196, 238, 326). Is there a hint of jealousy on the part of the Trojan woman who is somewhat older? The reference to the καλλός of Hermione (207) is also

suggestive of envy. Several times Adromache disparagingly speaks of the sexual proclivities of the Spartan girl (218f., 229ff., 240ff.). The charges are wild and exaggerated. It is interesting that she stresses how an obedient wife should behave in order to please her husband (207ff.). The statement is effective from a dramatic viewpoint. But one wonders if Andromache is hiding her own subconscious guilt feelings at succumbing to Neoptolemus under these remarks to Hermione.

The paradox in the play lies in the fact that, although Andromache apparently accepts her inferior status as a woman vis-à-vis Hector and Neoptolemus, she is depicted as a very strong and determined person. The scene with Menelaus (309ff.) shows this clearly. The opening lines of her first speech (319ff.) consist of a semi-soliloquy<sup>8</sup>, before she goes on to condemn the Spartan king as  $\varphi\alpha\lambda\alpha\sigma$  (325). Her remark at 333 is peremptory and has been suspected by some critics<sup>9</sup>, but it portrays vividly her disdain for him, and (in my opinion) should be retained. She insults the name of Hermione in front of Menelaus' face (326, 345f., 350f.) and casts aspersions on his wife (362f.). The fiercest denunciation comes in her statement about the Spartans (445ff.). The verses here have often been called by scholars a propagandist attack by Menelaus on Sparta, the mortal enemy of Athens at that time.<sup>10</sup> The argument is not convincing, for the speech can be explained in other ways. It seems very much in character and highlights the vehemence of her animosity against Menelaus and his family.

Before Peleus, too, Andromache makes insistent demands (559ff.). She remarks that she had tried to warn



him before of the dangers threatening her and Molossus (561ff.) and reiterates how wicked Menelaus and Hermione are. In the space of four lines we find five participles (567, 568(bis), 569, 570), which convey the rapidity of the actions of Menelaus and his daughter, and emphasize her contempt for them. Andromache then almost threatens the old man by saying that, unless he saves them: ... *θανοῦμεθα / ἀσχεπῶς γὰρ ἔσμεν, δυστυχῶς δ' ἐροῦμεν...* (575f.). Even when Menelaus goes off in defeat, she does not abandon her aggressiveness, but warns Peleus to watch out for any ambush (752, 755f.).

In short, Euripides has moved well away from the Homeric conception of Andromache. She has risen above the level of a mere sufferer and victim, and, although she looks back with regret to the old days with Hector, she has managed to adapt herself to the changed situation and won favour with her new master.

(ii) "Troïades"

Andromache is present in the second Epeisodion (577ff.). Since the Trojan War has only just ended, Andromache's sense of loss over Hector's death is, as might be expected, the more keenly felt. She refers to him on a number of occasions during her short appearance (587, 590, 610f., 646ff., 673ff., 742ff., 745ff., 752ff.). She makes a long speech to Hecuba (634ff.), where she says how the fate of Polyxena is preferable to her own, and then (646ff.) outlines the kind of life that she used to lead with Hector. The passage may be aptly compared with the And. 222ff. (above) Hitherto we see that she has been very tolerant and obedient

to her husband.

It is also clear, from her later remarks, that Andromache is under intense mental strain apropos her thralldom to Neoptolemus. She is afraid lest she should betray Hector by sleeping with the Greek, and actually take pleasure in it, adding:

καὶ τοὶ λέγουσιν ἕως μὲν εὐφροσύνη χαλᾷ  
τὸ δυσμενές γυναικὸς εἰς ἀνδρὸς λέχος·  
ἀπέπτυσ' αὐτήν, ἕτις ἄνδρα τὸν πάρος  
καίνοισι λείτροις ἀποβαλοῦσα, ἄλλον φιλεῖ.

(665ff.)

- This subconscious fear is, as Leo Aylen has remarked, "a superb psychological study".<sup>11</sup> Although she wishes to convince Hecuba that death is preferable, Andromache herself seems to be uncertain. A real conflict subsists in her mind over the best course of action facing her. I would, therefore, suggest that the doubt and guilt to which Andromache is subjected here are the counterpart of her ambivalent attitude to Neoptolemus in the other play.

The later decision of Andromache to accept, with reluctance, the marriage to the Greek warrior comes about for two main reasons. Firstly, Hecuba argues (686ff.) that Andromache should not think of dying, but urges her to live on for the sake of Troy's future: τίμα δὲ τὸν παρόντα δεσπότην σέθεν (699). Secondly, the decision of the Greeks to execute Astyanax (709ff) deprives Andromache of her last remaining link with Hector, his father. She thus says to her son: ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς δέ σ' εὐγενεῦ' ἀποκτενεῖ, / ἢ τοσούτων ἄλλων γίγνεται σωτηρία (742f: cf 745ff). She is now free to follow Hecuba's advice, however painful it is.

Moreover, in the midst of all her troubles, she retains a strong spirit of resistance, and exclaims against the Greeks so: ὦ βάρβαρ' ἐβουρόντες Ἕλληνες κακά / τί τόνδε παῖδα κτείνετ' οὐδ' ἐν ἄλτιον ; (764f). The outburst is reminiscent of that against the Spartans in the And. (445ff). Soon after, she gives a violently-worded denunciation of Helen (766ff). Such criticism is indeed part of the legendary background,<sup>12</sup> but it also provides a perceptive insight into her irrepressible nature. In her final verses (774ff) the quick outburst of the two tribrachs followed by a spondee (774)<sup>13</sup> is devastatingly effective in expressing her indignation. The repeated words ῥίπτει (774), ῥίπτειν (774) and ῥίπτει (778) should also be noted. The adjective καλόν, at the end of the line (778), has a definite ironic overtone.<sup>14</sup> The last sentence (778f) highlights her resolve to accept Neoptolemus, since she has no-one else left.

Euripides appears, then, to have added fresh light to the picture of Andromache, the bride of Hector. It is more fully developed in the And. since her rôle is greater there. But the germ of the idea is present in the Tr.. We feel pity for the Trojan princess, but she is no humble and unassuming Deianeira nor the forbearing Iliadic wife of Hector. She learns, through the sufferings of war, to fight for survival and improve her position as far as she can.

## II Hecuba

In the Il., Hecuba was the type of loving mother and matriarchal queen (6, 251ff; 22, 430ff; 24, 281ff; 24, 746ff). The picture persisted throughout the literary tradition (Simonides

fr. 559 PMG; Pindar, Paeon VIII). Gradually another side to her character arose, and some lyric writers held that she was transformed into a hound of hell after the Trojan War (fr. 965 PMG).<sup>15</sup>

Scholars have hitherto felt that Hecuba is a different woman in the two Euripidean plays where she appears, and that the Homeric picture is degraded in the Hec., but remains scarcely altered in the Tr.<sup>16</sup>

(i) "Hecuba"

The play opens with the entrance of the ghost Polydorus, who (1ff) explains the background information and announces (53) the approach of Hecuba. In seven lines (52 - 57) he gives a vivid description of her condition, and the contrast between her former prosperity and present misery is emphasized by the juxtaposition of *παρανυκῶν δόμων* (55) and *δοῦλεον ἕγχερ* (56). As soon as the old queen herself enters the stage (59ff), we notice how much she has suffered. The stress that is laid upon her old age and infirmity (59f, 63ff, 156, 169ff) and upon her recent enslavement (60, 157) is natural under the circumstances, but renders her description of the dream (76ff) more graphic. The news brought by the Chorus (105ff) only confirms Hecuba's fears and deepens her misery (154ff).

Yet, for all her wretchedness, she manages to speak boldly to Odysseus in the attempt to save the life of her daughter (213ff). The *ἄγών*-scene is unusual, because three participants speak (Hecuba, Polyxena, Odysseus).<sup>17</sup> After appealing to the good service that she did the Ithacan king and demanding recompense (239ff, 251ff), Hecuba proceeds to condemn

Helen (265ff). Although she argues that it is wrong to:  
 ἀνδρωποσφαγεῖν / πρὸς τὺμβον (260f: cf 288f), her desire to  
 see Helen sacrificed (265) reveals the essential contradiction in  
 her stance and is the first suggestion of the Queen's latent  
 ruthlessness. Her pleas fail (438ff), yet she can still remark  
 with venom: ὡς τὴν Λαίαναν σύγγονον Διοσκόρου / Ἑλένην  
 χέουμι ... (441f).<sup>18</sup> The traditional antipathy for Helen is  
 used not just for its own sake, but to give a glimpse of Hecuba's  
 character.

The kindness of the Greek Herald (484ff)<sup>19</sup> helps to  
 revive the resources of Hecuba's mind. She is, of course, pained  
 to learn that Polyxena has been sacrificed (511ff), but is  
 gratified to hear of the noble way in which she died (585ff).  
 At this point, she makes a long speech (585 - 628). Determined  
 to find reason for all the recent events, the Trojan Queen  
 philosophizes about the influences upon man's nature (592ff).  
 This passage has been criticized as an example of Euripides' love  
 of rhetorical moralizing.<sup>20</sup> One must remember, however, that  
 Hecuba takes pride in being of the royal blood and had earlier  
 (282ff) alluded to it in front of Odysseus. Her belief in the  
 importance of a person's breeding is thus natural. Now that her  
 old way of life has changed, she is forced to derive as much  
 comfort as possible from the thought of the nobility of her  
 family's breeding. It is one of the last refuges of hope  
 remaining for her. She reverts to the question of Troy's former  
 greatness towards the end of this speech (619ff).

The first half of the play now comes to an end. We  
 have seen that she possesses a double aspect to her character,  
 although the aggressive side has been so far kept in the

background.

The third Epeisodion opens (657ff) with the arrival of a female Retainer carrying the body of Polydorus. His death is the blow that finally shatters Hecuba's reason. The lyric verses that she speaks (684ff, 689ff, 694ff, 699f, 702ff, 710f, 714ff) are highly emotive and indicative of her distress. Realizing who is responsible for the death of her son, she spits out: ...  
 πο δὲα βένων ; / ὦ κάταρατ' ἐνὶ φῶνι ... (715f). Despite the arrival of Agamemnon (726ff), she does not address him for some time, but talks to herself (736ff, 741f, 745f, 749ff) and reflects what she is to do, until she says: πολλὰν ἀνάγκη ... (751).

Hecuba wishes to enlist Agamemnon's help in order to avenge herself on Polymestor. Her long speech (787ff) is, therefore, appropriate. Unheedful of sound or syntax, she gives vent to her indignation with the Thracian king. Note in particular the repetition of: ἀνοσιώτατον βένου (790), ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον (792); <sup>and</sup> the conglomeration of five participles in four lines (792, 793, 794, 795 (bis)). Moreover, in lines 794f, the fact that 5 out of 6 successive words end in -ων serves to strengthen her point and underlines her anger. Hecuba's mention of the immorality of Polymestor's conduct harks back to the earlier reference to νόμος (291f). The failure of these arguments results in her persuading Agamemnon to help by using his love for Cassandra (812ff). To some writers it is a thoroughly distasteful statement which marks the climax of her moral degeneracy.<sup>21</sup> But her actions seem to me to have been viewed in too moralistic a light. What is clear is the tremendous effect of the war and the suffering upon her mentality: all the normal values have changed.

The other aspect of her nature dominates Hecuba from

now on. She is even set on meting out the punishment by herself (875) and grimly reminds Agamemnon of the revenge wrought by women in the past (886ff). In the short scene with Polymestor (953ff), the irony is pervasive. Hecuba is stern and unrelenting during the assault on Polymestor and urges her fellow-Trojan women on: ἄρα σσε , φείδου μηδέν, ἐκβάλλων πύλας (1044). Similarly, in the agōn with the Thracian (1132ff), the queen is unrestrained in her abuse and unrepentant about her actions (1197ff). If the scene is a little artificial, it is not completely inappropriate, because it highlights the hatred of the Trojan and underlines her emotional disturbance. Hecuba also displays no fear in front of the Greek king and addresses him bluntly (1232ff). The final stichomythic conversation between Hecuba and Polymestor (1255ff) shows that the Trojan Queen no longer cares for what will happen to her, nor is she alarmed over the prophecies concerning her death (1259ff). She admits: οὐδέν μέλει μοι σοῦ γέ μοι δόντος δεινῆν (1274). A glimpse is obtained of the former loving queen when she dismisses, with fearful disdain, his prophecy about Cassandra thus: ἄπεπτος· ἀντιῶ ταῦτα σοὶ δίδωμι, ἔχειν (1276: cf 1278). If she is not concerned for herself, she is still anxious over the fate of her family.

The irony in the revenge that Hecuba takes against Polymestor resides in the fact that, while he was guilty of abusing the rights of φείνη, she too becomes a culpable party by deceiving him under the guise of acting as his φείνη. The connection between this play and the Cyc., in date and themes, is clear: the Trojan Queen and the Ithacan King have both perverted the moral standards of society in avenging themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Although our sympathies may be with Hecuba, the revenge against Polymestor is an extremist action which cannot be condoned.

(ii) "Troïades"

The dramatic situation in the Tr. is similar to that in the Hec., although certain differences subsist,<sup>23</sup> but they are not so crucial as to render a comparison between the two plays impossible. Hecuba provides the unifying factor in both, but the Tr. is of course, a drama of tremendous group suffering as well as of individual distress.

Poseidon delivers the opening monologue and draws attention to the presence of the Trojan Queen on the stage (37). In her first lyric address (98ff), the most important themes are the loss of her family and city, the affliction of old age and of infirmity, and the misery of her thralldom. The picture of unrelieved suffering continues in the ensuing scenes, with the Chorus (153ff), Talthybius (235ff) and Cassandra (308ff). Covert hints are however presented early on of another element in her character. Thus, she speaks of Helen as a *στυγρῶν ἄλοχον, Κάστορι δῶβαν / τῷ τ' Εὐρώτῃ δυσχεραίων* (132f). The tricolon is an affective indication of her contempt. She inveighs in like terms against Odysseus (282ff). Once more, these sentiments are significant because they highlight her indignation and suggest that she is not being portrayed simply as one who suffers. In the later scenes, as we shall discern, it becomes more obvious.<sup>24</sup>

Andromache enters the stage in the second Epeisodion and, after a period of mutual lamentation (577ff), she informs Hecuba of Polyxena's death (622ff). The queen is upset, but not



totally surprised (624f: cf 260ff). The presence of Andromache and Astyanax furnishes her with renewed determination. She tells her daughter-in-law: οὐ τῶτόν, ἦ καὶ, τῶ βλέπειν τὸ κατθανεῖν / τὸ γινεῖν γὰρ οὐδέν, τῶ δ' ἐνεαίεσεν ἑλπίδες (632f). She reinforces the argument later by urging Andromache to accept Neoptolemus as her new master for the sake of Astyanax, who will grow up: Τροίη μάλιστα ἠφέληγ' ... (703). Moreover, in exhorting her so: φίλον δῶσῶσα δέλεαρ ἀνδρῶν σῶν τρόπων (700), Hecuba seems to show an insensitiveness similar to that when she used the Πείθω argument in the other drama.

With the re-entry of the Herald and the removal of Astyanax for execution (709ff), the queen begins to experience a complete collapse of mind, as in the Hec.. From 709 - 883 she speaks but nine lines (790ff). The silence is very strange, because hitherto she has dominated the stage. It is indicative of the paralysing effect upon her mind of Astyanax's death. She seems to be in a semi-conscious state, until Menelaus appears (860ff). She utters, at that juncture, the famous exclamation about Zeus (884ff). It may well be that Euripides has been influenced by contemporary philosophic beliefs.<sup>25</sup> But the remark is certainly in keeping with her mood of intense mental reflection. The presence of Menelaus rouses her to action for the last time. Seeing her chance to take revenge on Helen, she quickly says: εἰπά σοι, Μενέλαε, εἰ κτενεῖς δόρυχα σὴν (890). The full force of her hatred for the woman is revealed in the present scene. She quite relishes the thought of killing Helen (909f).

The agōn between the two women thus begins (914ff).<sup>26</sup>

Although it is a highly dramatic device, the scene is not included merely for the theatrical effect. For it externalizes the innermost psychological feelings of the Trojan Queen. She attempts to reduce Helen's arguments ad absurdum (971ff). Not only is it an example of Euripides' rationalizing tendency, but it also suggests how reflective she is and how disillusioned she has become as a result of the war. There appears to be, however, a tinge of jealousy in her references to Helen's beauty. The words that she speaks are very incisive: ὄν [Paris] εἰσοδοῦσα βαρβάρους ἐσθλήμασι χρυσῶ τε λαμπρὸν ἐβλαργύωθης ὑρένας (991f).<sup>27</sup> Later, she draws attention to the comely appearance of the Greek woman, which contrasts sharply with that of the Trojans (1022ff), and denigrates the behaviour of Helen in Troy (998ff). Hecuba never directly counters Helen's arguments about trying to escape from the city (952ff), but criticizes her for failing to commit suicide (1010ff). The speech of the Trojan Queen ends with the exhortation to Menelaus to slay his wife as an example to all women: ... Ὀνήσκειν ἔτις ἔν προδῶ πόαν (1032).

Towards the close of the scene, Hecuba is insistent that Helen be killed on the spot (1044f), and, though she is rebuffed here, she refuses to desist from insulting the Greek woman, or from speaking bluntly to Menelaus (1049, 1051). The effort made by Hecuba to ensure that Helen is executed is surely indicative of a far more aggressive nature than is often realized, and suggests how war affects everyone, irrespective of rank or race.

The failure of her hopes and the return of Talthybius with the corpse of Astyanax (1123ff) marks a return to the

mournful Hecuba of the Prologos. She sums up her position thus: *γρῶς ἄπολις ἄτεκνος ἄθλιον θάπτω νέκρον* (1186). But, on a number of occasions even now, her anger flares up, and she fulminates against Helen (1213) and Odysseus (1224f). She tries to rationalize the situation by following Cassandra's lead (398f) and suggesting that: *ἀφρανεῖς ἔν' ὄντες οὐκ ἔν' ὑμνήθημεν ἔν' / μοῦσαις ἰοῦδᾶς δόντες ὑστέρων βράτων* (1244f). She immediately denies this (1246ff), but it is significant that she should remain, in the midst of her woes, a fighter. At the end of the play, Hecuba has no more trust in the gods (1280f) and, as in the earlier play, does not care whether she dies by making an attempt on her own life (1282f).

The element of ruthlessness and aggressiveness in her nature is not so prominent in the Tr. as in the Hec., but the link between the two portrayals is clear. Euripides seems to have exploited the later accretion to the legend concerning her transformation into a hound of hell. In neither play can she be described as the classic queen and mother, and the old moral standards are seen to have changed with the onslaught of the war.<sup>28</sup>

### III Helen

Helen, the daughter of Tyndareus, always seemed to represent for the Greek writers a paradox: the beautiful, semi-divine creature was at the same time the cause of a long war and of much suffering. J.E. Nyenhuis<sup>29</sup> has shown how different authors either revealed both of these aspects simultaneously (Homer, Il. 3, 125ff; 6, 346ff; 24, 764ff; Od. 4, 121ff and 259ff; Stesichorus, Hel. and Orest. frr. 187ff and 210ff PMG;

Tbycus fr. 282 and 296 PMG; Hdt. I, 3f and II, 112ff), or concentrated on the bad side (Alcaeus fr. 134 LGS; Pindar, Isthm. VIII, 57 and Pyth. XI, 33; Aeschylus, Ag. 62, 402ff, 448), but very few actually depicted her in a completely good light (Gorgias, 'Ελένης Ἐγκώμιον, passim Diels 311).<sup>30</sup>

She makes an appearance in three Euripidean dramas, as well as being mentioned in six others (Cyc., And., Hec., El., I.T., I.A.). The vast majority of critics have felt that Euripides' attitude towards her remains hostile, throughout these plays, and that the only exception is the Hel.: the different presentation of her in this drama results from the new dramatic mode and the effect of the lighter piece upon the depiction of all the characters.<sup>31</sup>

(i) "Troïades"

Helen is present in the third Epeisodion (895ff) with Menelaus and Hecuba. Her first words (895 - 90) have a touch of temerity and pride, and are perhaps suggestive of fear. She says with pained anguish that she has been handled roughly by the guards (896f). The request that she be allowed to speak in her own defence (899, 903f) is a traditional motif,<sup>32</sup> and should not be mistaken for haughtiness. Her lengthy speech (914ff) has been described as "artificial",<sup>33</sup> but, granted the formal nature of the agōn, the address is important for its penetration into her character.

The speech begins with a προσίμιον (914ff),<sup>34</sup> and in 919-931 she tries to transfer the blame for the sufferings of the Greeks and Trojans upon others: first Hecuba (919f), then Priam (920ff), and finally Paris himself because of his judgement (923ff). It is a natural human reaction to place the burden of

responsibility upon others.<sup>35</sup> But these propositions are not so ridiculous as they may seem. One should remember that the Tr. was (in all probability) part of a connected trilogy, in which the Alexandros appears to have dealt with the recognition and acceptance of Paris by his family, after he was exposed at birth.<sup>36</sup> He was, accordingly, a doom-laden child destined to bring suffering upon Troy. Viewed in such a light, Helen's strictures against the Trojan royal family are not perhaps so untenable.

The Greek woman places some emphasis upon the fact that it was her physical charms which attracted others: *Κύπρις δὲ τοῦτον εἶδος ἐκπαυλουμένη / δῶσεν ἐπέσχετ'...* (929f), and then: *... ἰλόγην ἐγὼ / εὐμορφίᾳ παραθείσα ...* (935f). The *κάλλος* of Helen was certainly a significant feature in the Iliad (3, 154ff; 3, 437ff) and of course throughout the subsequent tradition. Euripides went further than this, I would suggest, by accentuating that aspect and giving more force to the idea that Paris acted selfishly under the goad of sensual pleasure, and was therefore himself culpable.

The next argument used is that the Trojan War has actually benefited the Greeks (931ff). It picks up Cassandra's statement (398f), and is a pointer to the enthusiasm with which the Greeks took up the standard in order to increase their power and earn glory, and employed Helen's abduction as their pretext.

At this juncture, Helen, reverting to the earlier remarks about her *κάλλος*, mentions the all-pervading influence upon mankind of Aphrodite (938ff and 945ff).<sup>37</sup> These statements highlight once more the voluptuous nature of Paris' attraction to her and the lustful basis of his seduction. She makes clear why she could not resist him, thus: *ἄν [Paris], ὦ κάκιστε, σοῖσιν ἐν*

ἔσθους λιπῶν / Σπάρτης ἀπῆρας ἠγὲ Κρησίων χθόνα  
(943f). The contemptuous vocative is indicative of her

bitterness. Does Euripides intend a veiled criticism of the militarist frame of mind which seeks adventure and glory while the family are left behind alone?

The allegation (951ff) that she was prevented from escaping by the Trojans is interesting. The alliteration of π and the frequency of the heavy spondaic feet (955-958) produce an exciting effect in the narrative of her escape attempts. Wilamowitz would delete two lines (959f),<sup>38</sup> although I think they should be retained, since βίαι (959) anticipates the later: ὁ γὰρ βίαι γγεί (962),<sup>39</sup> and the participle ἐρπύρασ (959) emphasizes the violence used against her. With Lenting,<sup>40</sup> I prefer to read εἰκόντων Φρυγῶν instead of ἀκόντων Φρυγῶν (960), since it strengthens her case about the intimidation that she experienced from Deiphobus.

In the final lines of the speech (961ff), Helen harks back to the previous themes, that she has not been rewarded for all the benefits which she has bestowed upon Greece (962ff: cf 932ff), and that resistance against the gods is foolish (964f: cf 940ff and 946ff).

Hecuba naturally rejects all these arguments, as we have already discerned, but she herself is quite prejudiced and her judgement is affected by what she has suffered in the long war.

At the very end of the scene, Helen begs her husband for mercy: συγγίγνωσκε (1043). The word recalls her earlier plea: ... συγγνώμη δ' ἐμοί (950). Now, indeed, we notice the full effects of the fear that she has tried to suppress for so long. She seems a genuinely frightened and pitiable person in this scene.

(ii) "Helena"

The sources of the εὐωλοῦν story and the tale of Helen's sojourn in Egypt are well known (Homer, Il. 6, 289ff; Od. 4, 351ff; Hesiod fr. 358 M/W; Stesichorus, Helena: Palinode frr. 192 and 193 PMG; Hdt. II, 112ff).<sup>41</sup> In the Hel. of Euripides, there is no doubt but that she is treated with sympathy, and she remains the dominating figure throughout the drama. Owing to the general consensus about her depiction in the Hel.,<sup>42</sup> I have not felt it necessary to give a detailed analysis.

Helen stresses her innocence and her regret for the bad name that she possesses (22ff, 42f, 52ff, 66f). She argues strongly that she was not to blame for the war (36ff), and is particularly aggrieved at the abuse heaped over her husband by Teucer (78f). Later, in the kommos, she bewails her abduction by Hermes (243ff).<sup>43</sup> She, then, in a second quasi-Prologos speech, bemoans to the Chorus how unjustly she has been blamed (235ff). Note, in particular, her remarks that: *τέρως γὰρ ὁ βλος καὶ τὰ πρᾶγματ' ἐστὶ μου, / τὰ μὲν δὲ Ἑρᾶν, τὰ δὲ τὸ κάλλος αἰτίον* (260f). Helen tells Theonoe, also, how detested she is (894ff), and comments: *Ἐλένην γὰρ οὐδέ τις ὄστις οὐ στυγεῖ βροτῶν* (926).

Moreover, Helen is genuinely concerned about her family. She speaks with tenderness of Hermione (282ff and 933ff), as well as of her mother and brothers (200ff and 280ff). She yearns with intense longing after Menelaus her husband (63ff, 340ff, 528ff), and is naturally overjoyed when reconciled with him. Throughout the Recognition scene (625ff), Helen sings in lyric metre of her newly-found happiness. It is clear, then, that she is very much in need of the love and affection from her family which have long

been denied her.

She does, however, possess a resourcefulness that has managed to sustain her in hope during her stay in Egypt.

Although she <sup>is</sup> plunged into despair after the conversation with Teucer (131ff), her expectations are renewed by Theonoe's revelations (523ff). It is Helen who devises the plan of escape and persuades Theoclymenus (1193ff and 1399ff).<sup>44</sup>

The Dioscuri, in their epiphany, prophesy immortality for Helen (1666ff). This is the counterpoint of the situation at the end of the Or. during Apollo's presence (Below).

(iii) "Orestes"

Helen is present with Electra in the second half of the prologos (71ff). The usual interpretation of her character is one of condemnation.<sup>45</sup> But the opening lines of her first speech (71 - 74), in my opinion, sound full of sympathy for the plight of Electra and her family. The adjectives τέλεινα (73) and πλήμων (74) should be noted. It might be thought tactless to call her: παῖ Κλυταιμίστρας (71) and: παρθένε μακρὸν δὲ γήκος... (72), but, as we shall see in due course, Helen has a genuine love for her dead sister, and it would only be natural for her to speak of Electra's connexion with her. The reference to her virginity is also an expression of kindly sympathy rather than an indiscreet remark.<sup>46</sup>

On a number of other occasions, Helen reveals her pity for Orestes and Electra (75f, 88, 90, 92), and her attitude stands in stark contrast with that of Tyndareus (479ff). She speaks of Clytaemnestra with affection, too, as in the following statement: καίτοι στένω γε τὸν Κλυταιμίστρας μῆρον (77: cf 80, 90), and is anxious to send libations to Clytaemnestra's grave



(94ff, 112ff). If she were simply performing the normal religious conventions by doing this, why should Helen risk the safety of her own child? She thus overcomes her fear for Hermione (108, 124f) for the sake of Clytaemnestra.<sup>47</sup>

In the stichomythia between the two women (83ff), Electra refuses to be reconciled, while Helen is very compliant (100, 110), and genuinely wishes to be friendly with her niece. Her original request, that Electra should take the offerings to the grave (94ff), is not in fact a hint of indifference towards the girl's feelings. It should be remembered, firstly, that her fear of being seen in public is not unreasonable (57ff, 103), and, secondly, that she is not contradicted by Electra when she speaks of the shame (*αἰσχρόν*) in sending servants (106). Until the plan to send Hermione was adopted, who else could she ask, in the first instance, but Electra?

Moreover, as in the Tr. and Hel., Helen is aggrieved at her reputation and remarks: ... πρὸς Ἴλιον / ἔπλευσ' ὅπως ἔπλευσεν  
 Θεογονεῖτ' ἰότητι (78f: cf 120f). She knows that she is vulnerable to criticism but feels that she should not be held culpable.

With the departure of Helen, Electra's contempt for her aunt is revealed in the most glowing terms (126ff), as we shall discern in the section devoted to her. Later still, Orestes, Pylades and Tyndareus all join Electra in condemning her strongly (245ff, 518ff, 649ff, 742ff, 1105ff, 1131ff, 1181ff, 1533ff). Apart from Menelaus, only the Phrygian slave (interestingly the representative of the very people conquered and enslaved in the Trojan War) speaks of her with any sympathy. His description of her domestic life within the Palace (1426ff) seems influenced by

the Od. (4, 124ff) and is almost idyllic in its setting.

Helen's joyful welcome of Orestes and Pylades is met in return by deceit and mercilessness. The final mention of her comes in the Exodos when Apollo announces the miraculous apotheosis of the Spartan Queen (1633ff). It is certainly strange that the woman who has been execrated throughout the drama should then, in the end, achieve everlasting bliss, and become the veritable focus of our sympathies on account of the murderous intentions of Orestes et al.

(iv) Other Plays

In the other dramas where Helen is mentioned, most of the references are uncomplimentary.<sup>48</sup> The reasons why she is vilified thus are not far to seek. Andromache, Hecuba, Cassandra, Clytaemnestra and Peleus have all suffered much as innocent victims of the Trojan War, just as Iphigenia had, although in different circumstances. Their hostility is therefore understandable. Electra, Orestes and Agamemnon treat her as a *εχθρικός* to cover up their own inadequacies and faults. Menelaus' apparent hostility, in some dramas, has already been explained (above). Polyphemus denigrates not only Helen but also the Greeks generally, while the Chorus in the Cyc. has genuine sympathy for all the sufferers of the Trojan War, for which they hold Helen responsible.

The few references to her which are not critical<sup>49</sup> come, as one might expect, from her family. The only exceptions to this are Cassandra, whose attitude toward Helen tends to waver between indifference and hatred, and the Phrygian slave (above).

The variation in the outlook of the characters to her

suggests that the comments are highly subjective and should not be interpreted as the encapsulation of Euripides' own thought. It is important to bear in mind that she does not appear herself in these plays and she has thus been given no opportunity to state her own case.

In the three dramas where Helen appears there is, I think, no acrimony in the portrayal. If she seems more aggressive in the Tr., the reason is that she is battling for her very life. In the Or., she is mild with Electra since she is anxious not to cause her further distress. As for the Hel., both traits are present at the same time: she is forceful in saving Menelaus and herself, but also displays gentler qualities. Throughout these dramas, Helen is conscious of the evil aura around her name and is genuinely aggrieved at the injustice of the opprobrium. Euripides' sympathies appear to lie not only with Hecuba and Andromache, the innocent victims of the war, but also with Helen who is herself a victim of violence and abduction.

#### IV Clytaemnestra

There are two appearances of Clytaemnestra<sup>50</sup> in Euripidean drama, in the El.<sup>51</sup> and in the I.A. I argued in the chapter on Aeschylus that this tragedian began to reverse the trend of hostility to Clytaemnestra and that he seemed to possess a more favourable attitude towards her. It will therefore be interesting to inquire how Euripides treated this character in his plays.

##### (i) "Electra"

The character of Clytaemnestra in this tragedy has excited admiration from some scholars<sup>52</sup> and blame from others.<sup>53</sup> In my opinion, it is the duality in her nature which has led to such

opposing interpretations. She has of course the dignitas that we would expect of a royal matrona, and, fully conscious of her position as a queen, she is concerned with her children like a loving mother. On the other hand, she has an independent outlook which cannot but come into conflict with those who try to repress her.

Clytaemnestra's entry upon the stage (993ff) is formal and stately. Her first speech (993 - 1003) shows immediately the devotion that she feels for her children and her sadness over Iphigenia's death. She mentions the latter a further five times (1011f, 1019, 1020ff, 1029, 1044f): all these references come in the same speech (1011 - 1050), and the constant reversion to the theme is suggestive of her outrage. Such concern for Iphigenia had been stressed by Aeschylus also,<sup>54</sup> but Euripides takes pains to emphasize her kindly feelings for the other daughter, Electra, whom the earlier poet had ignored. The queen adopts a reconciliatory attitude by allowing her to speak freely (1049f, 1057, 1059),<sup>55</sup> tolerating her invective (1117, 1119, 1123) and agreeing to help her perform the necessary rituals, after her supposed child-birth (1132ff). The emotive vocatives:  $\tilde{\omega}$   $\pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}$  and  $\tilde{\gamma}\epsilon\kappa\tilde{\nu}\tilde{o}\nu$  (1057, 1102, 1106, 1123) are another indication of her tenderness for Electra. Clytaemnestra tries to understand and make allowances for her daughter's natural love for Agamemnon (1102ff). It should be remembered, too, that Clytaemnestra was responsible for saving the life of Electra immediately after Agamemnon's death, as the Peasant himself admits (27f).

With regard to Orestes, apart from a brief allusion to him early on in her address (1041ff), she makes one specific mention of him (1114f). The tone of her words here consists of

a mixture of sorrow and fear, rather than of bitterness and hatred. She is afraid because Orestes: *Θυμωτέρα* (1115), but the statement does not imply that she would like to see him dead. It is interesting that the Peasant, who is in no way a friendly character towards her, says that Orestes was removed from the Palace: *χερὸς ἐπ' Αἰγίσθου* (17), and he does not include Clytaemnestra in this description.

Clytaemnestra is, of course, utterly contemptuous of Agamemnon. During the present scene, she continually refers to him as the father of Electra (1011, 1018, 1048, 1050, 1102) or of Orestes (1115). But very rarely does she acknowledge him as her own husband (1031 and possibly 1110):<sup>56</sup> it is surely tantamount to a refusal to admit his relationship with her. Significantly, no similar reticence subsists vis-à-vis Aegisthus. She calls him *ψέλον* (1038) and *πρότερον* (1138).<sup>57</sup> The contrast in her attitudes towards Agamemnon and Aegisthus is not, of course, new. But whereas Pindar and Agamemnon stressed the rôle of Clytaemnestra more than that of Aegisthus, Euripides gives greater weight to the part played by the latter in the events at the Palace, even though he does not personally appear in the EL.<sup>58</sup> The later poet, in fact, continued and expanded further the more favourable attitude of Aeschylus apropos this pair, as I shall discuss in greater detail below.<sup>59</sup>

Not only does Clytaemnestra display her dignitas when she first enters the stage (993ff), but she also maintains this stance throughout the rest of the scene. She is astonished at Electra's performing the tasks of a slave (1007) and desires that all the proper rites be performed after her alleged childbirth (1128, 1130). Although it could be said that this is the kind of

behaviour to be expected of a royal queen, yet, at the same time, she possesses a strong personality and an independent will which do not allow her to accept her husband's orders without question.

In her lengthy speech to Electra (1011ff), she attacks, first, the invidious reputation of women (1013 - 1017). The structure of these lines is suggestive of the intensity of her feelings. The aposiopesis following λέγω δέ (1013) is emphasized by the conjunction καίτοι (1013)<sup>60</sup> and by the caesura in the second foot of that verse. The brevity of the first three sentences (1013 - 1015) then gives way to the more complex period (1015 - 7) and is complemented by the short rhetorical question (1017). The reduplication of στυγεῖν ... στυγεῖν (1017) and the use of the synonyms μισεῖν (1016) and περιότρως (1014) underline the queen's outraged emotions. She reverts to the same theme later in the speech when she comments on the temerity of Agamemnon in bringing back Cassandra from Troy (1033f). The word ἐπεισέργηκε (1033) has a pejorative air, signifying the introduction of something evil.<sup>61</sup> The dual form νυμφὰ δύο (1033), never very common in Greek, and the adjective ἄτοκος (1034) stress the enormity of his act.<sup>62</sup> The verb κατείχομαι (1034) has, to use one critic's phrase, "a special appropriateness"<sup>63</sup> since it implies that they were lodged together under one roof. Then, after voicing a general complaint about the double standards of behaviour which men apply vis-à-vis women (1035ff),<sup>64</sup> she proceeds to utter a more specific dissatisfaction with Agamemnon and Menelaus (1041ff). The succession of three rhetorical questions inside five lines (1041 - 1045) and the hyperbaton in the purpose clause (1042 - 3) show her distaste for the human sacrifice. We learn later that she even dared to act in an independent fashion, and the asyndeton:

ἔκτελν' ἐτρέφθη (1046) emphasizes her part in the plot.

Moreover, the decision to go indoors and help her daughter (1132ff) is freely-given, but Clytaemnestra does add to her retainers a command (1136f). It is clear then that she has far more affection for Aegisthus than for Agamemnon and is anxious to please him, but she does not permit herself to lose her independence of thought and action, for she helps Electra of her own accord.

I do not find convincing the view that Clytaemnestra feels remorse for the murder of Agamemnon.<sup>65</sup> The allegation of the old Servant concerning her avoidance of the public (643) actually contradicts his earlier statement (641). Since he is so hostile to her (641), his opinions are not trustworthy. If she were afraid, why should Clytaemnestra have gone immediately to Electra's house? The daughter herself had no doubts that she would indeed come (656). The sorrow that Clytaemnestra feels is born, not of remorse for what she has done to Agamemnon, but of genuine maternal pity for Electra's plight.

(ii) "Iphigenia in Aulide"

As soon as Clytaemnestra enters (607ff), one is struck by the lack of emotional sensibility in her greeting to Agamemnon (633ff). The phrase: ... ἔφειτ' οὐκ ἔπιστοσθαί... (634) is repeated towards the end of the scene (726). But the irony in the remarks is revealed when she says: ἐλθὼν δὲ τ' ἄβω πρῶστε, τὴν δόγην δ' ἐγώ (740). This statement heightens our awareness of her independent nature. The manner of her introduction to Achilles (827f) also seems significant, because the reference to Agamemnon comes last in the list of titles. When she learns, from the old retainer, of Agamemnon's intention

of killing their daughter, her contempt for him is expressed in graphic terms (876, 912f., 1012).

The last scene between husband and wife (1098ff.) provides the greatest demonstration of her disdain for and independence of Agamemnon. Her first question (1109) is abrupt, and she refuses initially even to accost him in a direct way.

Although she demands that he should speak (1131, 1133, 1135), she is quite unwilling to hear him out, for he is interrupted at one point (1138) and also told: ἔχ' ἤσυχος (1133).<sup>66</sup>

Clytaemnestra censures Agamemnon in a long speech (1146ff.), which seems to represent the release of all her pent-up frustrations with him. After a short προῤῗμιον (1146f.), she tells of her first marriage to Tantalus (1148ff.). This apparent innovation<sup>67</sup> in the legend by Euripides emphasizes the hatred of the queen for Agamemnon, who is held responsible for killing her former husband and son. The signatic alliteration (1151f.), in which there are eight σ-sounds, the use of βλαῖως (1152), which picks up the earlier βλά (1149), and the hyperbaton of: γαστρῶν ... τῶν ἔμῶν (1152), all serve to express her rage with his murderous actions. The queen then says how she has tried hitherto to be a good wife to him (1158ff.), and proceeds to criticize Helen (1168f.), a theme to which she reverts at the end of the address (1204f.). From 1171ff., Clytaemnestra details the results which Agamemnon may expect if her daughter is killed.

The description of her grief (1174ff.) is very moving<sup>68</sup>, and she utters a threat against him, thus: μή δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν μήτ' ἀναγκάσῃς

ἔγέ/κακὴν γένοσθαι περὶ σέ, μήτ' αὐτὸς γένη (1183f.). The repetition of the negative particles here (μή, μήτ', μήτ') has a cumulative effect in stressing her anger and emotional frustration with

Agamemnon. The final mention of Agamemnon by Clytaemnestra is made



to Iphigenia. She repeats her earlier threats (1455, 1457), so that the relationship between them is seen to be completely lacking in warmth. By the end of the play, she has firmly resolved on avenging him.<sup>69</sup>

Clytaemnestra, on the other hand, has a genuine love for her children. She is anxious about her young son Crestes (621f.), and, out of affection for Iphigenia, she does not seem to mind the fact that her daughter is *φιλοπάτωρ* (638).<sup>70</sup> The news of Iphigenia's proposed sacrifice comes as a severe shock, and the trochaic rhythm (855ff.) blends in with her emotional distress. Another means of conveying this is by the large number of rhetorical questions (874, 876, 878 (bis), 880, 882, 884) and exclamations (874, 876, 886, 888). After the initial outburst of grief, Clytaemnestra launches the counteroffensive to save her child's life (890ff.) and is insistent in her demands to Achilles (900ff.)

With the failure of Clytaemnestra's pleas in the final confrontation between Agamemnon, Iphigenia and herself (above), she can only lament thus: *ὦ τέκνον, ὦ ἔβου, / οὐ γὰρ θανάτων <τοῦ> σοῦ μελέα* (1276f.). The *aeolic* metre underlines her sorrow. The stichomythia between the queen and her daughter (1433ff.) is full of pathos. Clytaemnestra agrees to all the requests of Iphigenia (1436ff.), save that she cannot forgive Agamemnon (1454ff.). The antilabê of the last few lines (1460, 1464, 1465, 1466) evokes the painful atmosphere as Iphigenia endeavours to free herself from Clytaemnestra's grasp.

It is difficult, therefore, to credit the remark that Clytaemnestra is, "more concerned with the wrong ... done to herself by Agamemnon's deception than with the imminent loss of

her daughter's life".<sup>71</sup> Whilst she is embittered by her husband's actions, Clytaemnestra's concern for Iphigenia seems genuine and her grief is indissoluble. Moreover, hints are given in the text of a happy family life between the children and their mother (738, 1180ff, 1447ff). We should also bear in mind the references that she makes, in sorrow, to the murder of her first child by Tantalus (above).

Clytaemnestra's sense of dignitas is as strong here as in the EL. Notice particularly the orders which are given to the servants in her first speech (615ff), and her concern that the marriage ceremony be performed with all due rites (716ff). The constant reference to Achilles' divine genealogy (626, 698, 702, 708, 819, 836, 901, 903, 1339), is also indicative of her personal pride in the supposed match with Iphigenia, as is the argument used to persuade Achilles, viz., that he is bounden in duty to help Iphigenia, since his name was spoken as being that of her husband (903f, 905, 906ff, 910, 986f).

In both the plays, it is clear that Clytaemnestra has a duality in her nature, and her desire for independence does not allow the queen to feel satisfied only with her royal dignitas. Euripides has in the EL. altered the Aeschylean portrait by making her more reliant upon Aegisthus, and the latter in turn discards much of his traditional mollitia. Nor is Clytaemnestra depicted as a wicked person by Euripides. He goes further than Aeschylus in his sympathetic attitude towards her. Her mildness in the EL. is due to the fact that she wishes to be reconciled with her daughter and is genuinely sad over her plight. The I.A. sees a more indignant woman who speaks out violently against Agamemnon since she is fighting to save Iphigenia's life. But

the portrayal of her is fundamentally the same and shows a loving mother who could be an affectionate wife if she found someone worthy of it.

## V Electra

Electra is not mentioned by Homer, nor does she appear in the Cyclic poets (so far as is known from the evidence available). Hesiod is the first writer to refer to her (fr. 23(a), 16 M/W). The lyrical poet Xanthus (fr. 100 PMG) equates her with the Laodikê of Homer (Il. 9, 145 and 287). It is also probable that Stesichorus adopted the name Electra from Xanthus (or perhaps even Hesiod) for use in his Oresteia.<sup>72</sup> In Aeschylus' Choe., she takes second place to Orestes, but there is no lack of psychological realism in her depiction.<sup>73</sup> By contrast, she is the dominant figure in Sophocles' Elec., which was (in all likelihood) written just after the Euripidean drama, but before the Or.<sup>74</sup> If (as I believe) the ironic interpretation of Sophocles' play is to be preferred,<sup>75</sup> it is plain that the poet has been influenced by Euripides. At the same time, the inner nobility of the Sophoclean Electra is apparent and, as we shall in due course see, stands in contrast with the character of the Euripidean woman.

### (i) "Electra"

Many critics have recognized that Electra is a masterly study in psychological characterization.<sup>76</sup> In this thesis, therefore, I shall concentrate on the important features and then compare it with the Or.

Electra appears to revel in her own self-pity and humility. She complains bitterly about tasks that she need not

perform (54ff, 309f) and refuses to keep herself clean, as well as lamenting her pitiful condition and the consequent inability to go to the festivals (175ff, 198ff, 239ff, 300ff, 1004ff, 1139ff). She admits, not without a sense of inverted snobbish pride, that the people call her:  $\alpha\theta\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha \text{ Ἡλέκτρα}$  (113, 366). One of the main reasons why she deports herself thus is out of hatred for Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus: she wants to show how wicked they are (57f). She, therefore, cannot help but indulge in the most biased invectives against them, which are the product of her own perverted imagination.

The speech that she makes before the decapitated head of Aegisthus (907ff) provides the most noteworthy example of this tendency. Its content has been condemned by critics as distasteful and its style as poor.<sup>77</sup> But, to my mind, the address is a remarkable piece of theatre and psychologically convincing. The first seven verses (907 - 13) suggest that Electra is savouring the thought of what she is about to do. Then (914ff) she begins to show signs of increased excitement, as evinced by the polysyndeton and by the preponderance of iambs over spondees.<sup>78</sup> The allegation that Aegisthus is a cuckold (918ff) is completely unsubstantiated, since, in the rest of the drama, there is no shred of evidence that Clytaemnestra had any other extra-marital affaires save with Aegisthus. Her prejudice is revealed further when she calls him:  $\text{Ὀ τῆς γυναικός - οὐχὶ τᾶνδρῶν ἔγ γυνή}$  (931). I have already discussed<sup>79</sup> how Euripides reversed the traditional conception of his mollitia and emphasized his full part in the events at the Palace and in the  $\text{πῶλλες}$  generally (9f, 12f, 17, 23f., 25ff, 31f, 641ff, 774ff). Moreover, Electra's statement about his newly-found  $\text{ῥᾶβδος}$  (938ff) rever-

berates with envy and harks back to the earlier statements (above) about her own poverty. Towards the end of this speech (945ff), Electra again makes a wild allegation, and this time concerning his so-called sexual promiscuity. No other character mentions this in the play, although it would be an obvious target for criticism were it true. It contradicts, also, her recent comment about his being a cuckold, and, in fact, it is suggestive, as will be discussed in more detail below, of her own deep-seated emotional and sexual frustrations.

Additional evidence of her biased attitude towards Aegisthus can be gleaned from the description of how he is supposed to have insulted her father's grave (323ff). Included in her remarks is the phrase: *ὣς λέγουσι* (327). It is plain, therefore, that she is speaking from hearsay only,<sup>80</sup> and, since she wishes to evoke the sympathies of the Stranger (whom she does not yet suspect to be her own brother), she may be expected to exaggerate her case.

Electra makes the boldest of assertions to Clytaemnestra's face about her behaviour during Agamemnon's absence in Troy (1060ff). By accusing her of immoral conduct in this period (1069ff), Electra reverts to her earlier statements (918ff). She also mentions the comely appearance of her mother (1071ff, 1074f), and cannot resist linking the *κάλλος* with her sexual misbehaviour: the adjectives *κακῆς* (1073) and *κακῆς* (1075) have an erotic connotation.<sup>81</sup> Electra is also envious of the contrast between her own and Clytaemnestra's appearance.

Such wild charges are, I think, indicative of Electra's perverted mentality. Her own sexual desires have been forcibly and unnaturally suppressed, since her marriage with the peasant

is unconsummated (43ff). She admits on several occasions that she is still a *παρθένος* although, in name, a married woman (255, 257, 259, 261, 271) and avoids for that reason the company of *γυναῖκες* (311). In the Exodos, after Clytaemnestra's murder, she reverts to the subject in a series of short rhetorical questions (1198ff).<sup>82</sup>

The unnaturalness of her marriage stands in contrast with that of Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus, and it is, I would suggest, an additional source of jealousy. Like Pentheus,<sup>83</sup> Electra has an almost morbid pathological delight in discussing the alleged sexual behaviour of others, and, in her own frustrated prurient nature, she exaggerates what she thinks they may be doing. Note especially the statement about Aegisthus (945ff): the disclaimer *οὐ κωλύω* (945) and the paraleipsis *σωπαῖ* (946) and *ἀνιψίστη* (946) are salient features. So, too, the aside which is spoken at the end of the scene with Clytaemnestra (1144ff) recalls her earlier reference to their living together (212): the word *χάρων* (1143) may have an ironic sexual overtone.<sup>84</sup> The censure of Helen and Clytaemnestra as *ἄμω πασιῶ* (1064) draws further attention to her obsession with sex, on account of the erotic overtones of the epithet.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout the play, in fact, Electra is impelled by the negative and destructive emotion of hate. She feels no compunction or regret at the end, even when her mother is dead.<sup>86</sup> She proclaims aloud her own responsibility for and part in the murder (1183f, 1224f, 1230f). Before the Dioscuri, too, she is as resolute as ever and utterly defiant (1295, 1303f).<sup>87</sup>

But Electra's determination to kill Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus and her refusal to be reconciled have also resulted

in the development of an excitable and nervous disposition (215ff, 757, 759, 765, 767f). It is, indeed, a nice psychological touch to give this obsessed woman the alternating emotions of euphoria, at the prospect of success, and acute despair, at the prospect of failure. It helps to explain, moreover, her mixture of optimistic hope and pessimistic disillusionment whether Orestes will eventually return home or not.

Electra does feel pity for her father and loves him dearly (122ff, 141ff, 157ff, 200ff, 318ff). Her affection for Orestes is also sincere (130ff, 201ff, 229ff, 1314f, 1321ff, 1332ff), although she is sometimes disappointed in him as her avenger (503ff, 968ff). For the Peasant, too, she has a not unsympathetic attitude (67ff, 253ff).

The Euripidean Electra thus differs from the Sophoclean in that hate has devoured her entire being and unbalanced her mind. Such warmth as she possesses is subsidiary to her ill-will. The killing of Clytaemnestra is an act contrary to all the precepts of *φιλία* and also of *ξενία* since she had offered her mother hospitality. In Electra's statement that: *ἔδου, φίλα τε καὶ φίλα / φάρσα τὰδ' ἀμφιβάλλονεν* (1230f), the irony is quite explicit.

(ii) "Orestes"

Although there are differences in the dramatic situation of the two plays,<sup>88</sup> they are not so grave as to preclude a comparison from being drawn. It is not difficult to understand why some critics have considered that the depiction of Electra varies considerably in the two plays.<sup>89</sup> An ancient scholar described her thus: *φιλαδέλφου κόρης ἔθος καὶ λόγους ἐμιμήσατο*,<sup>90</sup> and with that view many modern writers have concurred.<sup>91</sup>

Her affection for Orestes (34ff, 217ff, 960ff, 1025ff) and for Agamemnon (17, 25ff, 195ff) is genuine and follows naturally from that displayed in the El. She is also motivated by other feelings, viz, hatred and malice. There is no sudden change in her character, yet the movement accelerates as the play progresses and the latter emotions become more and more predominant.

In the opening monologue, Electra's hostility to her mother is apparent from her description of Clytaemnestra as:  $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\omega\tau\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\varsigma$  (24). She justifies the murder of her mother (28ff, 162ff, 191ff) and feels no remorse for the deed.<sup>92</sup> Throughout, she is proud to proclaim her rôle in the murder (32, 1235). For Helen, too, Electra feels nothing but hate, and this gets more marked in the course of the drama. The first specific reference to her (19) is very derogatory, and her jealousy of the woman is revealed by the way in which she speaks of the comfort that Helen derives from her daughter Hermione (62ff). The arrival of Helen on the stage (71ff) displays fully her malicious feelings. She speaks sharply and brusquely. The friendliness of Helen's mode of address contrasts strongly with the coldness of Electra's (81ff). The pointed mention of the good fortunes of Helen and Menelaus (86) is tinged with envy. When she says:  $\delta\psi\acute{\epsilon}\ \gamma\epsilon\ \varphi\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\alpha\varsigma\ \epsilon\tilde{\upsilon},\ \tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\ \lambda\epsilon\pi\omicron\sigma\sigma\prime\ \acute{\alpha}\iota\sigma\chi\rho\omega\varsigma\ \theta\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (99), the verse harks back to her statement in the El. (1111). In fact, the scene between aunt and niece is a deliberate echo, in my mind, of the confrontation between mother and daughter in the El.. As soon as Helen departs, the full force of Electra's indignation is revealed (126ff). How far is the description of Helen's coiffure true? We do not, of course, know how the scene would have been acted at the time of Euripides.<sup>93</sup> But I would



suggest that Electra is so jealous that she is only imagining what she would like to see. The phrase *σύνουσα μάλλος* (129) is reminiscent of the way in which she voiced her envy for Clytaemnestra in the El. (1071ff).

Electra's malice towards Helen gradually becomes worse. In the fourth Epeisodion (1177ff) she hits upon the plan to kidnap Hermione and exults in the determination of Orestes and Pylades to kill Helen (1191, 1196). The language which she employs concerning the abduction of her cousin is grim and vivid: ... *βίβλος δὲ χροῖ/δέρη πρὸς αὐτῇ παρθένου σπλάσαντ' ἔχεν* (1193f), and then: ... *καὶ σὺ σφάξε παρθένου δέην* (1199). When she hears Helen's cries, the triumphant gloating of Electra (1299ff) bears witness to her growing frenzy.

The ensuing scene with Hermione (1313ff) shows how the young girl is mercilessly deceived by her cousin. While affecting a pleasant disposition, Electra cannot resist an ironic dig at Hermione's mother: *σὴ μητρὶ προσπεσοῦσα τῇ καγ' ὀλβίῃ* (1338). After completing the capture of Hermione, Electra announces with evident pleasure: ... *φάσγανεν δὲ πρὸς δέρη/ βέλλοντες* ... (1349f): the similarity with 1193f and 1199 (above) is obvious.

It is interesting that, as the drama proceeds, Electra's attitude toward Menelaus becomes more hostile. At first she is prepared to tolerate him in the hope that he may help her (53ff, 241f), but then she begins to insult him in ever stronger words when she realizes that he cannot help them (1056f, 1200ff, 1351f). To Electra, it seems as though everyone connected with Helen is tainted, and her loathing of the entire family approaches the point of madness. The remark that Orestes makes about his

sister: ὦ τῶς φρένας ἄρσενας κεκτημένη (1204) is very fitting, since it betrays how corrupted she has become.

Electra's mood varies between hope and despair. This is a naturalistic effect in view of the intense pressures on her mind. At the start of the drama, she is brought to a state of nervous collapse as a result of her constant tending of Orestes (83ff, 221f) and anxiety for his health (34ff, 132ff, 253ff, 311ff). She is convinced that all is lost when Orestes and Pylades return from the Assembly (1018ff). The exclamations (1018, 1020, 1029) and the short sentences (1025, 1033) underline her excitement. The κῆρυξ (1246ff) suggests how nervous and disordered her mind is. The variety of metres employed (dochmiac, aeolic, bacchic, iambic/trochaic) matches her mood of foreboding and hope. The blend of ruthlessness and nervous weakness in her behaviour is surely the logical consequence of her very way of life, that is to say, the obsession with hate and the desire to see her enemies killed.

In the course of the drama, it is made plain that Electra is frustrated by the lack of a normal married life, with husband and children.<sup>94</sup> When discussing the murder of her father, she says: ... ἔνθ' ἕκατε, παρθένω λέγειν / οὐ καλόν· ἔω τοῦτ' ἄσκαφος ἐν κοινῷ σκοπεῖν (26f). The sentiment is reminiscent of a comment that she made in the El. (945f), and, again, it contains a trace of suppressed prurience. To the Chorus, also, she laments her status (204ff, 309ff). The tricolon (310) is graphic and the adjective ἀφιλος seems to denote the absence not of friends or relatives generally, but more specifically of a husband.<sup>95</sup> Deprived of a proper married life herself, Electra is utterly jealous of Helen's and Menelaus' union.

Electra's outlook on life is very pessimistic, as her first lines in the drama suggest (1ff). She has some reason to think thus, in view of the evils that have undoubtedly afflicted the Pelopid House. I cannot help but feel that there is an element of self-pity in her sorrow. She admits time and time again that she has tirelessly served her brother (83, 93, 221f), and her habit of saying that she will not dwell long on the woes of her family nor find fault with them (4, 14, 16) is quite affected. For she then proceeds to list all the troubles of her house (5ff, 932ff) and imputes the blame to Apollo (28ff, 162ff, 191ff). The paraleipsis is thus ostentatious. She is also wont to lament her condition in front of the Chorus (180f, 200ff) and the Messenger (860). During the ritualistic θρήνος (960ff), Electra is full of grief, and the last three verses (1010ff) are particularly noteworthy. In my opinion, she is depicted as a self-made martyr.

The prime motivating forces in Electra's behaviour are hatred and jealousy. The gentleness that she apparently shows at the beginning of the Or. is gradually consumed by the growing desire for further murder. The picture in the El. is of almost unrelieved grimness. There is no reason to doubt her love for Orestes and Agamemnon, but the idea of φιλία has been corrupted by the destructive emotions within her. In both plays, Electra's embitterment and hate reduce her to the point of madness. We glimpse clearly, in the background of the two dramas, the consequences of the Trojan War upon the Atreid House.

VI Iphigenia

Homer makes no mention of Iphigenia,<sup>96</sup> and she appears first in the Cypria of Stasinus, where Agamemnon is forced to sacrifice her, but Artemis intervenes at the last moment by substituting an animal and spiriting the girl to the land of the Taurians.<sup>97</sup> The story of the miraculous substitution is continued by later writers such as Hesiod (frr. 23(a), 17ff and 23(b) M/W),<sup>98</sup> and Stesichorus (frr 215 and 217, 25 PMG). Other poets, however, thought that she was actually sacrificed by her father, and prominent among these were Pindar (Pyth. XI, 22ff), Aeschylus (Ag. 218ff et passim, and probably the lost Iphigenia (134ff Mette)),<sup>99</sup> and Sophocles (El. 533ff, 575f, and the fragmentary Iphigeneia (284ff Nauck<sup>2</sup>)).<sup>100</sup> The name of Iphigenia was also linked with various cults and rituals (eg, Hdt. IV, 103), and was even regarded as one of the titles of Artemis herself.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, when Euripides came to write his version of the legend, a number of different stories were available to him. It has been shown by one writer how Euripides may have combined the separate traditions in such a subtle manner that the discrepancies between them were not immediately or overtly clear.<sup>102</sup>

(i) "Iphigenia in Tauris"

The opening monologue<sup>103</sup> is spoken by Iphigenia. The effect of the attempted sacrifice upon her mind is apparent from the beginning. Twice she alludes to it in this speech (6ff, 24ff), and constantly throughout the rest of the play (175ff, 203ff, 359ff, 565, 783ff, 852f, 856ff, 863ff, 1082ff). It is

indeed, as Maurice Platnauer has said, an "idée fixe" for Iphigenia.<sup>104</sup> That she should be possessed by such feelings is not surprising when one remembers how young she was at the time of the events at Aulis (17ff) and the sort of existence that she has had in the land of the Taurians as a priestess of rites involving human sacrifice (34ff).

Some critics have maintained that an apparent contradiction subsists in the I.T., whether Iphigenia actually sacrificed Greeks herself or not.<sup>105</sup> But there seems to be only one passage (253ff) which is quite incompatible with the others, and that should, according to one commentator,<sup>106</sup> be deleted on linguistic grounds. Another passage (588ff) which has been considered contradictory signifies no more than that Iphigenia was unable to assist individuals to escape, but could allow one of the people in a party of sacrificial victims to escape, while the others remained behind: this is precisely what happens of course in the case of Orestes and Pylades (582ff).

Iphigenia is, in fact, merely in charge of the PRELIMINARY rites (40f, 622). She is, for the most part, reticent about the details of the sacrifice, preferring to use euphemistic expressions such as: τὰ δ' ἐνθάδ' ἕμεος ὄρα ὑποτιμῶμεθα (343: cf 467f, 470f, 725f). The only time that she is more explicit comes in reply to a specific request for information from Orestes (617ff). She is also anxious to stress the fact that she has been constrained to act as a priestess of these rites and does not want to be blamed for doing so (33f, 586f, 595, 620, 637). Moreover, her own attitude to the victims has always been, as she admits:

γληνός... καὶ φιλοκτερίμων ζεί(345). The sympathy that she feels for the Greek who had written the δέλεος testifies to her friendliness (584ff). In addition, she soon loses the hostility which she once said, in a moment of acute distress, would be displayed in the future (348ff). For, immediately she sees Orestes and Pylades, Iphigenia feels sorry for them (472ff). The a-metrical  $\psi\epsilon\sigma$  and the questions about their identity are suggestive of this pity..

In sum, I believe that the contradictions in Iphigenia's rôle vis-a-vis the human sacrifices have been exaggerated and her attitude misrepresented. The manner in which she wrongly interprets the dream (42ff) shows what a sensitive person she is.

Iphigenia is, of course, bitter towards the Greeks who were responsible for the events at Aulis, viz, Calchas (16ff, 531, 533) and Odysseus (24f, 533, 535). She is more shocked than angry over her father's part in the sacrifice (3): the verb ἔσφαξεν has been put into the first and the noun πατήρ into the last foot, so as to emphasize the enormity of his action. She later refers to her father's intentions in more detail (359ff). The simile (359), the stress on Agamemnon's relationship to her (360), the parenthesis (361), and the oratio obliqua (364f), all serve to enhance her sorrow over what he did. There are a number of other places in the drama where she mentions, with mixed feelings of regret and grief, the name of her father (211, 784f, 852ff, 864, 1083). But she never reaches the state of rancour and embitterment of her sister Electra, and can still feel pity upon hearing the news of his death: τέθνηκε ; πόλα συμφορῆ ; τάλαν' ἐγώ (549: cf

553).<sup>107</sup> She remarks, later, that she is willing to die:...  
 οὐχὶ τῷ κτανόντι με / Θυμουμένη, πατρῶνον [δῶικον] ὀρθώσασα ...  
 (992f). Nor can she remain angry with Artemis for long (9ff,  
 34ff, 380ff, 467, 587), because she appeals to the goddess for  
 help in the escape, in a way that is far from angry or  
 demanding, but in fact very friendly (748, 1082ff, 1230ff).

It is the capability to love which excels in Iphigenia  
 and overrides the bitterness that she once felt. She is  
 kindly to her mother throughout the play and employs the  
 sympathetic adjective *τῶνδ' ἄμω* to describe her (210). The  
 pictures that she paints of her family life at home in Greece  
 (365ff) are indicative of her love for Clytaemnestra and her  
 brothers and sisters. She is deeply affected by the news of  
 the troubles at her home and remarks: *Ἐ πανδάρκρυτος ἔ κτανούσασα*  
*χῶ κτανών* (553: cf 557, 559, 924). Bewildered at  
 the conflict between her parents, Iphigenia is thus distressed  
 to learn of their deaths. I cannot therefore agree with the  
 critic who speaks of Iphigenia's talking "without emotion" of  
 Clytaemnestra.<sup>108</sup>

The devotion of Iphigenia to Orestes is apparent  
 throughout the drama and requires no detailed exposition. The  
 dream that is wrongly interpreted causes her much distress  
 (42ff).<sup>109</sup> She makes a deeply moving *θρηῆνος* for him in  
 anapaestic dimeters (with frequent spondaic substitution  
 (143ff). Her happiness at seeing Orestes in the Recognition  
 Scene is ingenuous and sincere (827ff).

She is so transported with joy at being reconciled with  
 her brother, that Iphigenia is prepared to put her own life at  
 risk in order to save him and maintain the family name (989ff).

Her excitement is conveyed by a number of literary devices: the reduplication of  $\theta\epsilon\lambda\omega$  (991, 993), the hyperbaton (992f, 995f), the rhetorical questions (998), the parenthesis (999), and the jingling repetition of  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota \dots \gamma\acute{\iota}\gamma\upsilon\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$  (999, 1001). The self-sacrifice is thus a freely-given act of  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$  for her family and differs considerably from Orestes' own desire to be immolated.<sup>110</sup> The idea of  $\varphi\acute{\iota}\lambda\acute{\alpha}$  is an important theme in her speeches (583, 590, 640, 736, 744, 1056, 1059, 1065, 1069, 1070, 1401, 1402), and we discern that it is an ideal which she strives to enforce, as the basis of her way of life.

Iphigenia's attitude to Achilles also needs to be examined. She mentions his name several times (24f, 216f, 369ff, 537ff, 819, 856ff) and seems to have a certain sympathy for him, because he was unwittingly connected with the deception which led to her sacrifice at Aulis. It is interesting to note that, despite her own grief, she can still have regard for others like Achilles who are not in the family but deserving of pity. It is, therefore, a further indication of her beneficent disposition.

(ii) "Iphigenia in Aulide"

Iphigenia appears for the first time in this play during the second Epeisodion (607ff) when Clytaemnestra enters bringing her daughter for the ostensible wedding ceremony.<sup>111</sup> She is called by her mother  $\varphi\acute{\iota}\lambda\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\rho$  (638), and the stichomythic conversation between father and daughter underlines her tender feelings for him (640ff). She bases her appeal to Agamemnon, in the next confrontation (1120ff), largely on the affection



which has always subsisted between them (1220ff), and she quotes, in oratione recta, the speeches which they would make to one another at home (1223ff). She wants to live and tells him: μή μ' ἀπολέσης ἄωρον· ἐδὺ γὰρ τὸ φῶς/βλέπαι· τὰ δ' εἰπὸ γῆς μή μ' ἰδεῖν ἀναγκάσης (1218f). She makes a similar remark a few lines later (1250ff). The failure to convince him (1255ff) results in Clytaemnestra and her daughter being left alone (1276ff). The young girl laments her fate and refers to her father in a mixture of sorrow and bitterness, thus: ὁ δὲ τεκνῶν με πάντων τάλαναν/ὦ μάτερ ὦ μάτερ / οὐχέται πρόδους ἔργμον (1312ff: cf 1317f).

If she is so unhappy at that juncture, why, then, does she later announce her intention of dying freely on behalf of Greece (1368ff)? Her *μετένοια* has been criticized, from ancient times, as inconsistent with the rest of the play.<sup>112</sup> I prefer to follow the scholars who regard the change as motivated in a psychologically natural way.<sup>113</sup> During the stichomythia between Achilles and Clytaemnestra (1343ff), Iphigenia is silent. This period represents for her a time of deep mental reflection. At the end of it, she comes to the full realization that little can be done, despite Achilles' brave words (1357ff), to prevent her death. As a consequence of this discovery, Iphigenia, in her *ψυχία* for Agamemnon, overcomes the natural fear of dying, and she even pleads with Clytaemnestra not to be angry with her father (1368ff). The speech justifying her sacrifice (1374ff) contains many verbal echoes of Agamemnon's own words, as in the following: 1381f = 1266 and 1275; 1379f = 1265 and 1274; 1387ff = 1259f; 1386

and 1390f = 1271f; 1400 = 1273ff. These reminiscences comprise an important pointer to her love for Agamemnon. A further reason for acting thus is her attitude to Achilles. She has much sympathy for him and does not want him to risk his life for hers (1371ff, 1392ff). She displays her admiration for him, too, when she says: ... σὺ δ', ὦ θεέε, / μὴ θυγῆσκε δὲ' ἐπὶ μύδ' ἀποκτείνης τινα (1418f).<sup>114</sup>

It is, therefore, necessary, in my opinion, to look upon her self-sacrifice not as an abstract heroic gesture to save Greece,<sup>115</sup> but as the inevitable consequence of her close relationship with and affection for Agamemnon. Significantly, one of her last utterances is: ... καὶ πατὴρ ῥέπος / ἐνδεβλοῦσθω βυρῶν ... (1471f).

Moreover, Iphigenia is loyal to and fond of her mother. During her first appearance she asks Clytaemnestra not to be angry at her excitement over seeing Agamemnon (631ff). The dittographiae in these verses should not be altered, because they suggest how overjoyed she is.<sup>116</sup> In the later scene, she speaks of Clytaemnestra during the appeal for mercy before Agamemnon (1243f). The final verses of stichomythia between mother and daughter also highlight the concern of Iphigenia for Clytaemnestra (1433ff). She does all that she can to ensure that her mother is not too distressed and attempts to effect a reconciliation between her parents: πατέρα τὸν ἄμων μὴ στυγέι, πῶσιν γε σόν (1454). She is truly aggrieved at the open hostility between her father and mother.

The drama does, in fact, furnish a delightful picture of the family life led by Iphigenia at home. Devoted to Orestes,

she is seen carrying him in her arms during the second encounter with Agamemnon (117ff), and she makes use of the infant in her speech to the king: *ἄδελφε, μικρὸς μὲν σὺ γ' ἐπίκουρος φίλος, ἴθρως δὲ συνδάκρυσον, ἐκέτευσον πατρός* (1241f). Iphigenia addresses her brother later, thus: *ἦ φίλτατ', ἐπεικούργας ὅσον εἶχες φίλος* (1452). She also mentions her sisters in an affectionate tone (1448, 1450). The significance of the bond of *φιλία* to her is indicated by the number of times that the word is spoken by Iphigenia (648, 652, 1222, 1229, 1238, 1241, 1452).

Occasionally, Iphigenia makes a bitter comment about the apparent causes of the Trojan War. To Agamemnon, she says: *ὄλοντο λόγχοι καὶ τὰ Μενέλεω κακῶ* (658: cf 1236f, 1283ff, 1334f, 1417f). But this acrimony toward Menelaus, Helen and Paris is not taken to extremes, and even with Helen her tone can be gentler (1382). The emotion of *φιλία* is clearly stronger than that of hatred in her mind.

Iphigenia is, as we have discerned, a much gentler and milder person than her sister Electra. She is sustained by *φιλία* and in her the values associated with this idea are not corrupted. The contrast between the two sisters is thus obvious. Although Iphigenia appears to be more embittered in the I.T., the feeling does not last long, and she contrives to assist her fellow Greeks and *φίλοι* as far as possible. The disillusionment with the sacrifice at Aulis in the earlier play is not inconsistent with her desire for self-sacrifice in the I.A.. The decision to die willingly was taken under a frenzy of loyalty to her father. The subsequent transportation to the land of the Taurians and the constraints placed upon her

would, from a psychological viewpoint, be quite sufficient to result in a deep sense of disenchantment. But the arrival of the *Chorus* causes the dissipation of this bitterness, and she is willing, once again, to sacrifice herself in order to protect the members of her family: the parallel here between the two dramas is clear. In short, the portrayal of Iphigenia stands in marked relief to that of the rest of her immediate family, Agamemnon, Orestes and Electra.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 See J.E. Nyenhuis, "Homer and Euripides", pp.130ff.; Stevens, And., Introd., pp.iff.
- 2 J.C. Kamerbeek, "L'Andromache d'Euripide", Mnem., 11 (1943), 47-76; V. Johnson, "Euripides' Andromache", CW, 48 (1954/5), 9-13; K. Aldrich, The "Andromache" of Euripides, pp.70ff.; H. Erbse, "Euripides Andromache", Hermes, 94 (1966), 276-97.
- 3 "Homer and Euripides", pp.256ff.
- 4 ibid., pp.263ff.; cf Grube, D.E., pp.288ff.; 'Rheby' pseud. , "The Daughter of Troy", GR, 2 (1955), 17-22.
- 5 For further details, see D.L. Page, "The Elegiacs in Euripides' Andromache", Greek Poetry and Life, pp.206-230.
- 6 K. Aldrich, The "Andromache" of Euripides, p.47
- 7 She does not, of course, as we have seen, forget Hector, but the situation at the start of the drama is by no means typical of her daily life at Phthia.
- 8 cf Barrett, Hipp., ad 616ff.; Stevens, And., ad 319-23.
- 9 See Murray, O<sub>CT</sub>, ad loc.
- 10 Σ ad And. 445ff.; Kitto, G.T., pp.228ff.; Grube, D.E., p.212.
- 11 Greek Tragedy and the Modern World (London, 1964), p.140.
- 12 See below, p. 214 ff..
- 13 I read, with Haun, καὶ ῥίπτει in 774: OCT, ad loc.
- 14 See Med. 514, Tr. 420, Or. 1316, Ba. 1163.
- 15 For a fuller account of the tradition, see J.F. Nyenhuis, "Homer and Euripides", chpt. iii, passim. He maintains that the first hints of the later transformation of Hecuba may be found in the II. (6,254ff.; 24,200ff.; 24,751ff.), when she expresses her hatred of, and desire for revenge on, Achilles, and tries to dissuade her son and husband from meeting the Greeks. But that interpretation seems to me doubtful, because it would be natural for her to inveigh against the man who has just slain her eldest son in battle: see J.C. Kakridis,

- "The rôle of the woman in the Iliad", Er., 54 (1956),
- 16 D.G. Harbsmeier, "Die alten Menschen bei Euripides", pp.70f., calls her, in the Hec., "das sich rächende Weib" and, in the Tr., "nur noch die Dulderin"; cf J.F. Nyenhuis, "Homer and Euripides", chpt. iv, passim; Conacher, E.D., pp.137ff. and 155ff.
- 17 See J. Duchemin, L'Αἰὼν dans la tragedie grecque (Paris, 1958), pp.74f. and 141f.
- 18 For a similar sarcastic use of the attributive adjective, cf. And. 29.
- 19 See below, chpt. v, p. 257ff..
- 20 e.g., Hadley, Hec., ad loc. For a contrary view, see the stimulating paper by D.J. Conacher, "Some questions of probability and relevance in Euripidean Drama", Maia, 24 (1972), 203ff.
- 21 Hadley, Hec., ad 836, talks of the "doubtful delicacy of lines 825-830"; cf C.E. Hajistephanou, "The use of physis ...", p.143.
- 22 See further below, chpt. v, p. 267 et passim.
- 23 e.g., no mention is made, in the Tr., of Polydorus, and Hecuba is unaware of the death of Polyxena until the appearance of Andromache in the second Epeisodion.
- 24 Conacher, E.D., pp.137ff., sees a rhythm of hope rising and falling in the play, and thinks that this accounts for the vicissitudes in Hecuba's attitudes. He has a point but seems to overstate it.
- 25  $\Sigma$  ad Tr. 884ff.; Tyrrell, Tr., ad loc.; Grube, D.E., pp.34 and 288.
- 26 See also the section on Helen, p.215f..
- 27 On the sexual overtones of  $\epsilon\gamma\kappa\epsilon\mu\alpha\pi\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  and its cognates cf El. 102f.
- 28 The extant fragments of the third element in the trilogy of 415 B.C., Alexandros, do not allow a full examination of the portrayal of Hecuba there. But it is interesting that B. Snell, Euripides Alexandros und andere Strassburger Papyrus mit Fragmenten griechischer Dichter (Berlin, 1937), p.66, thinks that Hecuba here displays "etwas von dem wilden Ungestüm" as in the Hec. (Quoted in D.G. Harbsmeier, "Die alten Menschen bei Euripides", p.71 (n.2)).
- 29 "Homer and Euripides", chptt. ii and iii, passim.
- 30 Sophocles does not seem, from the available evidence,

to have been so interested in Helen. There are few references to her. Although the names of two plays about her are known, viz, <sup>Ελένης ἀπειθήσους</sup> and <sup>Ελένης γάμος</sup> (Nauck<sup>2</sup>, ad loc), it is not possible to assess the treatment of her by <sup>the</sup> poet.

- 31 P. Masqueray, Euripide et ses Idées, pp. 240-55; D.G. Harbsmeier, "Die alten Menschen bei Euripides", Appendix, pp.132-165; J. Alsina Clota, "Studia Euripidea II: Helena en Euripides", Helm., 8 (1957), 197-212; Conacher, E.D., p. 289; Dale, Hel., Introd., p. viii.  
One of the very few exceptions to this state of affairs is the recently published work by P. Vellacott, Ironic Drama (Cambridge, 1975). I was able to consult the book only after my own research and preliminary writing had been started. Vellacott devotes a section of his work (chpt. v) to the character of Helen in the Euripidean corpus, and concludes that the commonly-accepted view of her needs revision. His approach to the problem is very different from mine, and he regards the treatment of Helen as completely ironic. Vellacott's interpretation (much influenced by A.W. Verrall's) is often extremist and can be erratic, and his account of the ingrained hostility to women on the part of the fifth-century Athenians has apparently taken no notice of the work on the subject by, e.g., A.W. Gomme, "The position of Women in Athens", Essays in Greek History and Literature (Oxford, 1937), pp.89-115; H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1958), pp.219ff.; D.C. Richter, "Women in Classical Athens", CJ, 67 (1971/2), 1-8. This remains one of the main faults in the discussion by Vellacott.
- 32 cf And. 186f.; Tr. 907; also Soph., Aj. 1328f.; Elec. 554f.
- 33 Grube, D.E., p. 293.
- 34 cf Hipp. 983ff.; H.F. 170ff.; El. 907ff.; Hel. 894ff.; Phoen. 499ff.; Or. 491ff.; Ba. 266ff.; I.A. 1211ff.  
This was, of course, the normal practice in Greek rhetoric: J. Duchemin, L'Ayῶν dans la tragedie grecque, pp.167ff.
- 35 See the sections (above) on Menelaus and Agamemnon.
- 36 On the reconstruction of the Alexandros, see G. Murray, "The Trojan Trilogy", Mélanges: Gustave Glotz (Paris, 1932), pp.645-56; also Webster, T.E., pp.165ff. The attempt by G.L. Koniaris, "Alexander, Palamedes, Troades, Sisyphus: a connected Tetralogy? a connected Trilogy?" HSCP, 77 (1973), 85-124, to show that they were an unrelated trilogy has not proved convincing.
- 37 cf And. 680. It is a common motif to blame the gods in Greek literature: Il. 3,164; cf J. Duchemin, L'Ayῶν dans la tragedie grecque, p.199 with n.10. But there

is a greater significance here, as the main text above suggests.

- 38 OCT, ad loc.
- 39 cf the repeated οὐχ ἔκδοσ' at And. 36 and 38 (above).
- 40 OCT, ad loc.
- 41 For a modern account, see especially Schmid/Stählin, I, iii, 1, pp.50lff.; and Conacher, E.D., pp. 286ff.
- 42 In addition to the general handbooks, see especially A.N. Pippin, "Euripides' Helen: a Comedy of Ideas", CP, 55 (1960), 151-163; A.J. Podlecki, "The basic seriousness of Euripides' Helen", TAPA, 101 (1970), 401-18; C.P. Segal, "The Two Worlds of Euripides' Helen", TAPA, 102 (1971), 553-614.
- 43 cf Creusa's lament, Ion 888ff.
- 44 For further details see above, p. 172f..
- 45 e.g., Wedd, Or., ad 71-131; W. Krieg, "De Euripidis Oreste", pp.19ff.; Grube, D.E., p.376; F. Will, "Remarks on Counterpoint Characterization in Euripides", CJ, 55 (1960), 338-44.
- 46 It is also crucial for our understanding of Electra's character that she feels bitter over her virginity and is jealous of those who possess what she lacks: below, p. 235f. and 237.
- 47 Note, too, how the Phrygian eunuch remarks on the gifts that Helen has dutifully made for her sister (1436).
- 48 See Appendix IV A.
- 49 See Appendix IV B.
- 50 On the legendary background, see above, p. 28f..
- 51 The date of the El. is not known for certain, although the period 421-416 B.C. seems probable. For a long time, it was felt that the Sophoclean Elec. was written before that of Euripides: e.g., L. Parmentier, "Une scène de l'Electre de Sophocle", Mélanges: Weil (Paris, 1893), pp.333-54; F. Chapouthier et al., Euripide (Budé ed.), IV, p.189; R. Goossens, Euripide et Athènes (Paris, 1962), pp.540ff.; Conacher, E.D., p.202 (with n.9). In recent years, however, a reaction has set in, and the Euripidean play is now felt by more and more critics to precede the Sophoclean version, with a date around 419 or 418: Kamerbeek, Sophocles' Elec., Introd., pp.5ff.; A.M. Dale, "The Electra of Sophocles", For Service to Classical Studies: Essays in Honour of Francis Letters, pp. 71-77; Webster, T.E., pp.15 and



- 143f.; Kells, Sophocles' Elec., Introd., p. 1 (with n.2); G. Zuntz, The Political Plays of Euripides, pp. 64ff.
- 52 e.g. E.T. England, "The Electra of Euripides", CR, 40 (1926), 97-104; Murray, trans. of Electra, Notes, ad 998ff.
- 53 e.g. Webster, T.E., p.146.
- 54 See above, p. 31f..
- 55 It is important to note that Clytaemnestra gives her complete permission to speak before she even asks for it (1049f.). Electra's remarks (1055f., 1058) are thus quite gratuitous.
- 56 Editors are uncertain whether 1110 should have as its reading ἄστυ (=Agamemnon) or ἄστυ (=Aegisthus): OCT, ad loc.
- 57 If ἄστυ is preferred in 1110 it would be a second example of the appellation: see above, n.56.
- 58 Note the significance attached to Aegisthus by the Peasant (1ff.) and by the Messenger (774ff.).
- 59 F. Will, "Remarks on Counterpoint Characterization in Euripides", CJ, 55 (1960), 338-344, briefly touches upon what he calls the "rehabilitation" of Aegisthus in Euripides.
- 60 The conjunction is employed, in this particular instance, when a speaker is "pulling himself up abruptly" (Denniston, G.P., p.557).
- 61 cf Alc. 1056; H.F. 1267; Hipp. 867 (with the note of Barrett, Hipp., ad loc.); also fr. 781.50 Nauck<sup>2</sup> (=Diggle, Phaethon 259) and Phaethon 292<sup>c</sup> (Collard, Supplement, s.v.)
- 62 cf Soph., Trach. 539f.
- 63 Denniston, El., ad loc.
- 64 cf Med. 244ff.
- 65 So Denniston, El., Introd., p.xxx; Norwood, G.T., pp.254ff.; S.P. Young, The Women of Greek Drama (N.Y., 1953), chpt. i.
- 66 An unusual a-metrical phrase, because normally, in iambic trimeters, only a single word is put into an a-metrical position: cf I.A. 1132, 1185; Or. 1051; Hel. 99.
- 67 See Headlam, I.A., ad 1150.

- 68 cf Alc. 945f.
- 69 It may be objected that the threats here contradict her statement in the El. (1030f.). It is, however, a natural human reaction to utter threats in the heat of the moment. Her anger would then have subsided over the years, but flared up again when Agamemnon commits the crowning folly of bringing home his mistress (El. 1032ff.).
- 70 cf her words at El. 1102ff.
- 71 Conacher, E.D., p.259.
- 72 Jebb, Elec., Introd., pp.xxiff.; Kamerbeek, Elec., Introd., pp.2f.
- 73 See F. Solmsen, Electra and Orestes (Amsterdam, 1967), p.7 et passim.
- 74 cf n.51 above.
- 75 See especially the series of articles by J.T. Sheppard: "The Tragedy Electra According to Sophocles", CQ, 12 (1918), 80-88; "Electra: A Defence of Sophocles", CR, 41 (1927), 2-9; and "The Electra Again", CR, 41 (1927), 163-165; also R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "The Electra of Sophocles: Prolegomena to an Interpretation", PCPS, 183 (1954/5), 20-26; and Kells, Elec., Introd., passim, who provides a most useful summary of the critical literature on the play and comes out in favour of Sheppard's interpretation (with suitable modifications).
- 76 e.g., E.T. England, "The Electra of Euripides", CR, 40 (1926), 97-104; J.T. Sheppard, "The Electra of Euripides", CR, 32 (1918), 137-141; M.J. O'Brien, "Orestes and the Gorgon: Euripides' Electra", AJP, 85 (1964), 13-39.
- 77 Denniston, El., ad loc.; Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, pp.334f.
- 78 Normally, in the first and third feet of the line, spondees tend to predominate over iambs: E. Harrison, "Verse Weight", CQ, 8 (1914), 206-11.
- 79 See above, p. 224 (with n.n. 58 and 59)
- 80 For similar qualifications made by speakers, cf Hel. 17f., 259; Ba. 216, 233. The effect is to inculcate doubt in the mind of the audience (and reader): cf also chpt. iii, n.75.
- 81 cf Hipp. 410, 412, 651, 654; Med. 575, 586; Or. 585, 925, 1139.
- 82 Denniston, El., ad loc., thinks that the wish of Electra for νυμφικὰς ἐὼνας (1200) is "quite unnecessary",

because she is already married. But the point is surely that the partnership between them is no true marriage because it has not been consummated. She wants a full and normal wedded life, not an enforced celibacy with a nominal husband.

- 83 Ba. 222ff., 453ff., 485, 487, 814, 957f.
- 84 LSJM<sup>9</sup>, s.v., Χάρις, III.2.
- 85 Denniston, El., ad loc.
- 86 contra R. Goossens, Euripide et Athènes, p.545, and J. de Romilly, L'évolution du Pathétique d'Eschyle à Euripide (Paris, 1961, p.117).
- 87 One ms (P) assigns 1295 to Orestes, another (L) to Electra. Murray, OCT, ad loc., remarks, "nunquam adloquitur Orestes deos; illa [Electra], ut solet, audacior est". R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "Euripides, Electra 1292-1307", CR, 51 (1937), 51-52, and Denniston, El., ad loc., both give 1295 to Orestes. Their arguments, however, are not very convincing, and I, therefore, prefer Murray's reading.
- 88 e.g., in the Exodes of the El. brother and sister are about to leave each other, whereas the Prologos of the Or. shows them awaiting the Ψήφος of the Argive Assembly.
- 89 e.g., Lesky, G.T., p.189.
- 90 Σ, ad Or. 218.
- 91 A. Lesky, "Zum Orestes des Euripides", WS, 53 (1935), p.41; W. Krieg, "De Euripidis Oreste", pp.13ff.; E. Rawson, "Aspects of Euripides' Orestes", Arethusa, 5 (1972), 155-167; Ferguson, Companion, p.553.
- 92 It is true that some mss. divide 194 into lyrical antilabê between the Chorus and Electra: Murray, OCT, ad loc. But Wedd, Or., ad loc., assigns the whole line to the Chorus. This course seems to me to accord more nearly with Electra's attitude to Clytaemnestra in the drama.
- 93 The Σ, ad loc., accepts Electra's words of criticism apropos of Helen.
- 94 Although no mention is made of the Peasant in the Or., it will be recalled that her marriage to him in the other play was unconsummated and therefore abnormal: she did not regard it as a natural (or even seemingly) union. The different dramatic circumstances of the two plays do not measurably alter her psychological makeup.

- 95 cf Soph. El. 188, where ἄλλος refers to a husband.
- 96 At Il. 9, 145 and 287, Iphianassa is named as a daughter of Agamemnon. But to equate her with Iphigenia is a dubious undertaking: Headlam, I.A., Introd., p viii (n.i).
- 97 See Pearson, I, p 219.
- 98 At fr. 23(a), 17 M/W the name of the girl sacrificed is Iphimede, but there can be no doubt that Hesiod is referring to Iphigenia here.
- 99 Little is known about the Aeschylean Iphigeneia, but it seems a reasonable conjecture in view of the attitude taken by the poet in the Orest.
- 100 It is impossible to give a categorical statement about Sophocles' Iphigeneia, although he clearly implies that she was killed in the Elec. The doubt concerning his Chryses is even greater, and it is an unknown quantity whether the plot concerns Orestes and a still living Iphigenia or not: see Pearson, II, pp 327f; H.G. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Literature (London, 1965), p 176; Platnauer, I.T., Introd., pp xiif.
- 101 For further details, see Platnauer, I.T., Introd., pp viiff; OCD, S.V. "Iphigeneia".
- 102 A.O. Hulton, "Euripides and the Iphigeneia Legend", Mnem., 15 (1962), 364 - 68.
- 103 Some writers have felt that the characterization in the I.T. is unimportant: E.M. Blaiklock, Male Characters of Euripides, Introd., p xvff, and Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, chpt xi. The reason proffered for this is that the dramatic mode is much lighter, like the Hel. Such an interpretation is, in my opinion, extreme, and I believe that the characterization is more significant than is often acknowledged and the general tone of the play more serious.
- 104 I.T., Introd., p vi; Chapouthier et al., Euripide, IV, pp 127ff.
- 105 e.g., Grube, D.E., "Note", p 331; D.L. Page, Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy, pp 77f.
- 106 Platnauer, I.T., ad loc.
- 107 Some mss read θαυῶν for κταῶν in 553: OCT, ad loc. I prefer θαυῶν because her distress at Agamemnon's death seems genuine, and, in conjunction with τέθυκε (549), greater emphasis would thereby be placed upon her grief, if θαυῶν is accepted.
- 108 Ferguson, Companion, p 403.

- 109 C.H. Whitman, Euripides and the Full Circle of Myth, pp 3f, gives a full literary analysis of the opening monologue, including the description of the dream.
- 110 See above, p. 161f. (with n. 95).
- 111 The major dramatic difference from the I.T. is that there Iphigenia went away for the marriage alone, unaccompanied by her mother. This change, however, does not materially affect the characterization of the girl, as we shall see below.
- 112 E.g. Arist., Poet. 1454a, 31f, and, in modern times, Kitto, G.T. 3, pp 363ff.
- 113 e.g. Lesky, G.T., p 196; P.W. Harsh, A Handbook of Classical Drama (California, 1944), p 249; C.E. Hajistephanou, "The use of PHYSIS and its cognates in Greek Tragedy", pp 135ff.
- 114 Dramatically, of course, the poet is also concerned to avoid the suggestion of HORROR in her death.
- 115 contra H. Strohm, Euripides p 142; E. Valgiglio, "L'Ifigenia in Aulide di Euripide", Rivista di Studi Classici, 5 (1957), p 70; B. Snell, The Discovery of the Mind, p 130.
- 116 So Headlam, I.A., ad loc.
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CHAPTER FIVE

EURIPIDES III : LESSER CHARACTERS

In this chapter, the characters under discussion (Talthybius, Odysseus, Pylades, Teiresias) play minor rôles in the dramas where they appear. The only exception is Odysseus in the Cyc., where he has one of the leading parts; yet that play is of a special type, being satyric in genre, and, in any case, his function in the Hec. is but short and supplementary.

I Talthybius

A Spanish scholar examined, not long ago, the figure of Talthybius throughout the gamut of the legendary tradition up to Euripides.<sup>1</sup> He showed how Talthybius represented the very type of the Heralds, the descendants of Hermes.<sup>2</sup> In Sparta especially he seems to have had a cult and been worshipped.<sup>3</sup> J. Palli Bonet proceeded to discuss the Euripidean Talthybius, but his treatment here was not so satisfactory because it lacked a detailed analysis of the text.

(i) "Hecuba"

The rapport between the Trojan Queen and the Greek Herald is plain as soon as he enters the stage (484ff). The four sharp rhetorical questions within six verses (488ff)

underline his amazement at her condition. Other literary devices highlighting his anxious concern include: the amplification (489), the anaphora of the two balancing clauses (492f), the tricolon (495), the alliteration of the k- sound (496), and the exclamations (497). His gentler encouragement and kindly assistance in raising her (499f) are made more poignant by the emotive adjectives: *δυστήνε* (499: cf 496), and: *πάλανευκον*.

When the Herald announces to Hecuba the reasons for his arrival (508ff) the hyperbaton (508 - 9) suggests that Talthybius wanted to make the grievous statement about Polyxena's sacrifice as quiddy as possible. The rhythm of 508 is also important, for the initial spondaic foot denotes hesitation before he lets slip the truth in the ensuing three iambic feet. Then (518ff) he tells Hecuba how her daughter died. The first three verses (518 - 21) reveal his personal grief for Polyxena. Later, the simplicity of the phrase: *πέλας δ' ἐγώ* (524), is indicative of his involvement in the girl's fate. The metaphorical expression describing Polyxena's movements as: *σκήπτωμα μύσχου* (526), shows the unnaturalness, to Talthybius, of the whole sacrifice, and the word *μύσχου* also has overtones of pity.<sup>4</sup> The highly repetitive nature of his shouts to the Greeks to be quiet (532f) is not without significance. It indicates, I think, that the Herald is so overcome with emotion as to be incapable of adding anything else to the peremptory commands.<sup>5</sup>

The account of Polyxena's actual death is narrated in such a way (542ff) that the sympathy of Talthybius is quite plain. The use of the figure eidolonpeia (547ff, 563ff), the intricate mass of detail (557ff, 568ff, 571ff), and the emphasis

upon the free will with which she died (548ff, 558ff, 563ff), contribute to arousing our pity for her. Many critics have considered that the description of the sacrifice has an almost idyllic or mystic quality about it.<sup>6</sup> But, in my opinion, it has been exaggerated. Traces of ugliness emerge occasionally

in the narrative. Thus, the phrase *ἄλγος κέρως* (566) harks back to the earlier words of Talthybius: *ὄγος παλῶς ὀϊκτός* (519), and stresses the pain which the speaker feels on recalling what has happened. The emphatic repetition of *ὄϊ θέλω... θέλω* (566) and the staccato effect of the clauses (567f) produces a sharp contrast with the preceding description: Talthybius' own views seem to obtrude very forcefully. One cannot but note a tinge of

irony in Talthybius' comment about the way in which the Greeks strove to give her a fitting burial (573ff). The adjective which is used of the Greeks, *εὐκαρδῶς* (579), grimly recalls the adverb employed by Polyxena: *εὐκαρδῶς* (549).

The final lines spoken by Talthybius (580ff) are addressed particularly to Hecuba herself. The superlative degree of the epithets (581, 582) is indicative of his inherent sympathy for her plight. By the principle of Ringkomposition, we find that the sentiment in these verses harks back to the words that he said upon first entering the stage (484ff), and his feelings of pity are thereby emphasized.

That Talthybius gives such a pro-Messenger speech, instead of the detached and nameless *ἄγγελος*,<sup>7</sup> is important, because it stresses his basic humanity in the face of war and emphasizes the very enormity of the sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

It should also be observed that Hecuba's own attitude to the Herald is far from hostile (505f), and the rapport between them is therefore seen to be mutual.

Talthybius takes pains to assert his subordination to the Greek army and its leaders, and says: ... *πέμπουσι δὲ με/δισσοί τ' Ἀτρεΐδαι καὶ λείως Ἀχαιικός* (509f: cf 503f). He



mentions the presence of the Greek army on a number of occasions (521, 530, 533, 542, 544, 553). He appears moreover to be making an apologia for his actions to Hecuba on account of the emphasis which is placed on his superiors, and he implies that her death was inevitable and could not be stopped by him. This is a subject to which I shall return after the discussion of his character in the other dramas.

(ii) "Troïades"

To a number of critics, Talthybius is a harsh and unsympathetic character in the Tr., and very different from the Hec.<sup>9</sup> A fairly recent article has militated against this view, but little explicit comparison was made with the Hec., as the title of the work itself suggests.<sup>10</sup>

The Greek Herald enters, for the first time, at the beginning of Epeisodion I (235ff), and we immediately discern his compassion for the Trojan Queen. He addresses her twice in the vocative case (235, 237) and underlines the fact that he is well known to her (235, 237). He is careful to give the news of the fate of the Trojan women, gradually, to minimize Hecuba's grief. Nine lines elapse (240 - 248) before he mentions the first selection. The repetitiveness of some of the stichomythic lines (243, 246) is perhaps indicative of his nervousness. When he eventually tells the truth, he implicitly criticizes the Greeks on a number of occasions. Agamemnon's desire for Cassandra is termed: *σκότλα νυμφευτήρια* (251), and the epithet has a definite pejorative touch, repeating the words of Poseidon in the Prologos (44).<sup>11</sup> A little later, Talthybius refers disparagingly to the *ἔρως* (255) with which Agamemnon is afflicted.<sup>12</sup> In his next utterance (259), the adjective *μέγ'*, as applied to

Agamemnon, is ironical as the context.<sup>13</sup> The Herald is thus in no wise friendly to his king.

As soon as the discussion centres upon Polyxena (260ff), the reticence of Talthybius makes itself felt.<sup>14</sup> He stalls for time at first (261), and then answers the questions in a totally ambiguous way (264, 268, 270). By doing this, he spares the Queen's feelings and shows his own distaste for the matter. With his reply (277) to the question about the fate of Hecuba, the two resolutions (anapaest and dactyl) and the consequent frequency of short syllables are suggestive of his desire to answer as quickly as possible and avoid embarrassment.

Following the conversation with the Queen, Talthybius becomes alarmed at seeming flames in the Trojan huts (298ff), as evinced by the interjection (298), the series of hurried questions (298, 299ff), and the parenthesis (299). There is a mixture of reasons for his alarm: fear of the army (304f) and genuine concern for the Trojan prisoners (302f). Moreover, his reaction to the news of Cassandra's entry and to her dire prophecies is calm (408ff). He makes allowances for the state of her mind (408, 414f, 417), and, out of pity, shrugs off her warnings by refusing to inform the Greek leaders (408ff). Here the poet blends the tradition concerning the inability of people to understand Cassandra's true prophecies with his own conception of the Herald as sympathetic to the plight of the Trojan women. Although Cassandra criticizes him (424ff), it is significant that no other character does so, throughout the play, and, indeed, the invective is natural in view of her mental condition and excitability. In the final verses which he speaks in the present scene (421ff), Talthybius is gentle with

Hecuba. The connective  $\delta'$  (421) should be noted,<sup>15</sup> and the reference to Penelope is designed to reassure Hecuba.

The second Epeisodion depicts the return of Talthybius (709ff). He treats Andromache with politeness (709 - 710), and does not wish to be accounted personally responsible for the decision of the Greeks regarding the execution of Astyanax (710 - 711). In the ensuing stichomythia between Andromache and him (712ff), Talthybius displays his basic humanity and distaste for the proposed killing. The technical word  $\xi\delta\sigma\theta\epsilon$  (713) underlines the fact that the decision was a politico-military one and suggests his own lack of culpability.<sup>16</sup> The aposiopesis and the caesura which coincides with the period (713) evince Talthybius' emotional state. He is evasive in his next reply (715), and the alliteration of the  $\omega$ - and  $\omega\varsigma$ -sounds shows how painful he finds it to tell the truth. He is finally forced to admit the decision of the Greeks (719): the initial iambs contrast with the slower spondaic opening of the previous two verses (715, 717). He blames Odysseus in the next three lines (721, 723, 725), and seems unaware of Andromache's exclamations of anguish (720, 722, 724).

He admonishes Andromache not to fight against the decision to no purpose (726ff). The accumulation of negative particles (727f, 733f, 736) reveals his firmness, but the jingle at the end of the last two lines in this speech (738, 739) highlights his gentleness and the fact that he would prefer to use persuasion to violence. Talthybius employs lyric metre in his final lines during the scene (782ff). The adjective  $\mu\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  (783) underlines the pathos of the situation,<sup>17</sup> and the expression:  $\psi\eta\psi\omicron\varsigma$   $\xi\iota\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\eta$  (785) confirms that the military are to blame, and not himself.

The parechesis (787, 788) is another noteworthy feature.

Talthybius is certainly not, as alleged by one scholar, a man of "unimaginative stolidity" in this scene.<sup>18</sup>

The Greek Herald then enters the stage during the Exodos (1123ff), in order to bring the corpse of Astyanax to Hecuba. The compassion that he feels for Andromache is made plain by his admission of: *πολλῶν ἔμοι / δαικρύνων* (1130f). Although he says twice that the time for interring the dead child is limited (1149, 1154f), he takes care to ensure that Astyanax is buried with all due honour (1143f, 1147). Talthybius also describes how he washed the body himself (1150ff), and is prepared to dig the grave (1153ff). It is, of course, true that he wants to leave Troy as quickly as possible (1148f, 1155), but he is also genuinely concerned to do all he can for the Trojan victims.

His last entry on to the stage comes at 1260ff. He asks the Chorus and Hecuba to get ready for the journey to Greece in a kindly way (1265f, 1269f): in each case the connective particle is added,<sup>19</sup> and the vocatives denote his sense of pity. By contrast, the language employed apropos of the Greek officers is blunt and offhand (1260ff). Hecuba's vain attempt to commit suicide (1282f) provokes a sympathetic reaction from the Herald (1284).<sup>20</sup>

The frequent references by Talthybius to the Greek army and its commanders are as noticeable as in the earlier play. He explains himself as: *ἔλθόντα κήρυκ' ἐξ Ἀχαιικοῦ στρατοῦ* (236), and often alludes to the forces throughout the tragedy (711, 715, 721, 734, 735, 739, 1267). The Greek generals are also mentioned on several occasions (248, 277, 295, 409, 421,

1270, 1285). It suggests to me that Talthybius feels somewhat uneasy about his relationship with the Greeks and wants to minimize his own connexion with the people responsible for so much suffering.

(iii) "Orestes"

Talthybius is mentioned a few times in the course of the Or., and is roundly abused by the Messenger (887ff). J. Palli Bonet believes that he is subject to criticism because Euripides hated the Spartans by whom the Herald was revered.<sup>21</sup> Yet it must be remembered that Talthybius himself never appears in person during the play, and his words are quoted at second hand by a prejudiced reporter who makes no effort to conceal his support for Orestes and Electra. It is, moreover, dubious whether Euripides was ever such a propagandist for the Athenian cause.<sup>22</sup>

Talthybius is, in short, not properly characterized in the Or., and it, therefore, does not seem legitimate in my opinion to compare it with the other two dramas where he has a speaking rôle.

Talthybius' sympathy for the Trojan victims is apparent in both the Hec. and the Tr. Since he has a greater part in the latter, the portrayal is obviously fuller. At the same time, the Herald is well aware of the contradiction in the situation, in that he has to carry out the orders of the Greeks even though they are personally distasteful for him. There is no reason to doubt the fact that Euripides felt Talthybius was basically a good man who stands in contrast to the rest of the Greeks. Nevertheless, he has his limitations, and cannot be

dissociated completely from the Greek actions, despite his attempts not to be considered culpable. He takes pains to alleviate the distress of the Trojan victims, but his own inadequacies are also apparent.

## II Odysseus

Odysseus<sup>23</sup> plays a rôle in several Euripidean dramas that have survived only in fragmentary form, e.g., the Palamedes<sup>24</sup> and the Philoctetes,<sup>25</sup> but the present study has been confined to the two extant dramas, the Hec. and Cyc.<sup>26</sup> The character of Odysseus in these plays has been described by critics as base and evil,<sup>27</sup> and very rarely has that interpretation been challenged.<sup>28</sup>

### (i) "Hecuba"

Odysseus enters at 218ff. The initial impression conveyed by his appearance is not, to my mind, unfavourable. He seems anxious to avoid causing too much pain for Hecuba, and asks her not to struggle against the impossible in order to prevent her daughter from being taken away (225ff). He freely admits that she had helped him once when he was secretly in Troy (242, 244). The Ithacan king is, in fact, kindly towards Hecuba throughout his stage appearance. This trait is more fully revealed in his speech at 299ff.

Here, he addresses her politely by name (299) and then tries to coax her into listening to him by means of the imperatives: *διδάσκου*, and *μηδέ ... / ... δυσχερῆ πολεῖ* (299f). He is desirous of helping her, as far as possible, and the emphasis upon the pronoun *ἐγώ* (301) and the amplification: *ἔτοίμος εἶμι κοῦκ ἄλλως λέγω* (302), suggest that his

determination to assist her is genuine. Later on in the speech, he describes to Hecuba the effect of the war upon the Greek women left at home (321ff). Note the accumulation of emotive adjectives (322, 323, 324), the assonance of the ending, the etymologica figura (324), and the hyperbaton of the relative clause (325). The lines show that Odysseus is certainly not without humanitarian feelings.

When Polyxena turns to address him (342ff), Odysseus refuses to face her, in case he should be forced to reject her pleas as a suppliant (345). Were he ~~an~~ callous person, would the Ithacan have deigned even to do this? Furthermore, Hecuba's desire to be allowed to die with her child (383ff, 391ff) is denied by Odysseus, but he is far from unkindly in his manner. He calls Hecuba:  $\omega$  γέρον (389), and the polyptoton (394f) accentuates his insistence that she should not die. He then reiterates (396ff) the words which he spoke to her earlier (225ff) (above).

The Chorus abuse Odysseus on two occasions (131ff, 141ff), and there is a special dramatic reason: they are bringing the news of Polyxena's death fresh on their lips. But they do not refer to him again in the play, nor is he criticized by Hecuba and Polyxena, the two people most intimately involved in the sacrifice. Indeed, little emphasis, apart from the choric utterances mentioned above, is attached to the traditional association of Odysseus with the idea of  $\delta\delta\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ . These factors indicate that Euripides endowed his character with some humanitarian considerations, and that he is not quite a-moral in his feelings.

The reason for the sacrifice is not far to seek: it is

regarded as an act of state by Odysseus and intended for the benefit of Greece (299ff). Achilles is singled out for special praise because of his valour on the behalf of the Greeks (304f, 309f). From 311ff, his language becomes more animated: the number of rhetorical questions increases (311f, 313f, 315f), the word  $\chi\alpha\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\sigma\theta\iota$  is repeated in the same verse (312), and he draws a contrast between the Greeks and the barbarians (328ff).

Thucydides' diagnosis (III, 82ff) of the deterioration in human conduct following the strife throughout Greece since 431 B.C. is well known, and the "social disintegration" which resulted was extreme. It seems to me that Euripides is here tracing the perversion of noble ideals in mankind as a result of constant war and destruction. The use by Odysseus of the word  $\varphi\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  (311, 328 (bis)) is ironic under the circumstances and suggests a corruption in the ultimate meaning of the concept. Euripides is, in no way, justifying Odysseus' behaviour nor condoning his actions. But he appears to view him as a person capable of goodness, whose humanitarian nature has deteriorated during the long war in Troy. His loyalty to Greece has become excessive and led to the abnegation of the individual conscience and of human morals. Notwithstanding, to regard him, like the Franco-Belgium school,<sup>30</sup> simply as a representative of the late fifth century Athenian demagogue, is to read into the text an over-subtle allusion to contemporary political events, and it is also quite undramatic.

(ii) "Cyclops"

The rapport between Odysseus and the Chorus of satyrs is sustained throughout the drama. As soon as they begin to



converse (175ff), Odysseus says: καὶ μὲν φίλοι γε προσφέρουσθε πρὸς φίλον (176). The polypototon here should be noted. He freely answers their questions concerning the Trojan War (178ff). The Chorus, moreover, refuse to agree with Silenus' lies to Polyphemus (270ff),<sup>31</sup> and it is to them that Odysseus divulges the details of the horrific banquet (375ff). Although much of the narrative takes the place of a Messenger's speech, there are passages where Odysseus' own repulsion over the feast is made poignant. In particular, the reference to the tears that he has shed (405f) and the moving simile (407f) show that he has been emotionally affected by the loss of his men. Odysseus looks to the Chorus for help against the Cyclops and promises them freedom if they help (428ff).

In sum, the relationship which develops between the Chorus and the Ithacan king is not only a dramatic device, but also important as a means of suggesting the sympathy which they have for one another.

Upon first hearing of Polyphemus' delight in cannibalism (127) Odysseus is naturally aghast, but he tries to be reconciliatory towards the Cyclops. In the early speeches to Polyphemus (253ff, 277ff, 285ff), he lays stress on the idea of φειλία (253, 299ff). Another significant theme is the Trojan War. He says that they have come: ... Ἰλίου ... ἄπο / πέρασάντες ἕσθι... (277f), and then he comments upon the consequences of the war (304ff). Here, the words: ἄλλοι ... ἔχρησθ' (304), recall Hec. 394, and the language of 306f is reminiscent of Hec 322ff. The amplification of the adjectives (305, 306, 307) and the metaphor (305) highlight the seriousness of the sentiment. It underlines, as in the other play, the

concern of Odysseus with humanitarian considerations. The dramatic situation in the Cyc. is, of course, different from the Hec., but he is seen to be capable of good throughout both.

The better side of his nature is, however, subject to this limitation: as a consequence of the cruelty shown to his sailors by the Cyclops (382ff), Odysseus is determined to wreak revenge on him. He believes that he is acting in the interests of his sailors (480ff), and his attitude toward them is clearly revealed in the frequent use of the word φίλος when describing them (288, 466, 478, 481, 650: cf ἑταίρων at 409 and 695). To revenge his men seems like an act of state to Odysseus, in which it is his duty to fulfil the demands of serving the bonum publicum and of upholding the idea of φιλία

It is interesting that, with one exception (104) little stress is put, during the first half of the drama, on the traditional fame of Odysseus for being δόλιος, and instead repeated allusions are made to his bravery in the Trojan War (107, 178, 198ff, 282, 295f, 347f, 351f). Then, in the last third of the Cyc., a change occurs. His plan of action against Polyphemus is explicitly described as: ... δόλιος ἢ πιθυμῆα (449: cf 476). Moreover, the justification which Odysseus gives for implementing the strategy, i.e., to rescue the sailors, is untenable. He makes it plain when he re-enters the stage (375ff) that he has easily escaped from the cave (426ff, 478ff). Why, then, do his sailors not act similarly while Polyphemus is still asleep?

It has been alleged that this is a dramatic inconsistency because Euripides was in a hurry to finish the play.<sup>32</sup> But such an interpretation only denigrates the artistic skills of a

great playwright and reduces him to the veritable Swinburnian "botcher". There is something to be said for the view that theatrically it would have been impossible to stage the incident with the stone blockading the cave entrance and the sailors tied under the stomachs of the sheep, which is found in book IX of the Od. But this purely scenic factor is not, in my opinion, the whole reason for the ability of Odysseus to enter and leave the cave at will. Euripides combines the dramatic considerations with the philosophic meaning behind the play. The action of Odysseus against Polyphemus is seen to be unnecessary and ignoble. At the end of the Cyc., Polyphemus gains our sympathy and pity, and Odysseus loses it (663ff). The revenge is not justified by the poet, and, indeed, the references that the Ithacan makes to *ῥεία* and *φιλία* assume, in retrospect, an ironic tinge. The play ends on a grim note, with our attention drawn to the decline in human morals and attitudes and with the Trojan War in the background.

### (iii) Other Plays

Odysseus is mentioned by various characters in a number of other extant plays by Euripides, but he does not actually appear himself. It will be noticed, from Appendix V, that some of these references are critical of Odysseus. But it is unfair to assume, like some critics,<sup>33</sup> that Euripides' own attitude toward him is critical. For, in other references, the attitude of the speakers is not uncomplimentary, and, where he is insulted, good dramatic reasons subsist for the anger of the speakers. It is, therefore, a hazardous undertaking in

those plays to state what the exact treatment of the poet is apropos of Odysseus.<sup>34</sup>

Odysseus is depicted in neither the Hec. nor the Cyc. as a wicked man, but he is seen to possess a distinctive humanitarian outlook, concerned with preserving the ideal of *φιλία* and acting for the common good of his people and of Greece. On the other hand, the debilitating effects of the Trojan War are traced through his behaviour, and the changes wrought in human mores because of the strife are crystallized in his actions and motivation.

### III Pylades

Pylades, the son of Strophius, had long taken a subordinate place to his friend Orestes in the legendary tradition. He is not mentioned at all by Homer, and the first allusion to him in Greek Literature may well be that of Agias of Troezen (c. 750 B.C.) in his Nostoi.<sup>35</sup> Hitherto, no fragments from the lyrical poets have been found which mention him, but the next poet who we definitely know referred to Pylades is Pindar (Pyth. XI, 15f). In the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles he has a very small part. The Choe. contains several references to him (20, 562, 899), and he speaks three lines (900ff).<sup>36</sup> As for the Sophoclean Elec., Pylades is mentioned a few times (15f, 1373), but remains throughout a mute actor.<sup>37</sup> These two persons, Orestes and Pylades, seem, then, until the time of Euripides, to have acted only as the traditional, true and loyal companions, like the Biblical David and Jonathan,<sup>38</sup> and the character of Pylades was endowed with few distinctive features. As one recent critic has put it,

"There can be few characters who are so important in myth, but whose existence is so shadowy".<sup>39</sup>

With Euripides, the situation is a little different, although this does not appear to have been stressed by previous critics. In the El. he is a κωψόν πρόσωπον, but has a very important function. His name is spoken far more often than in the Elec. of Sophocles (82f, 821, 847, 886ff, 1249f, 1284ff, 1340f), and there are many other allusions to his presence (215ff, 341, 346, 361, 414, 500, 511, 547, 779). In two of his plays (the I.T. and Or.), Pylades has a speaking rôle that is fairly extensive and the influence that he exerts over Orestes is striking. His part seems more decisive than, as is often alleged, that of the "traditional ... comforter".<sup>40</sup>

(i) "Iphigenia in Tauris"

Pylades is present with Orestes throughout the I.T. He is more practical and resourceful than Orestes,<sup>41</sup> who is prone to fall into moods of depression and despair. Thus Pylades prevents him from running away in fear (104f): the two verbal adjectives underline his belief that they should not *renege* their resolve. After announcing his plans (106ff), he adds that they should recover the statue in the dead of night (110ff). We find here the third example of a verbal adjective within a few verses, and the phrase: πάλαις ... γυγνύς (112) is indicative of his resourcefulness. In the final lines of this address (114f), the verb *τολμῶσαι* picks up the earlier *τολμητέον* (111), and the collocation: οὐδέεν οὐδ' ἄρα μὲν (115), emphasizes his resolve.

The ability of Pylades for forward planning and his optimism are observable in the third Epeisodion (657ff). He says here that he wishes to die with Orestes (674ff). Pylades

reiterates the shame that he would feel if he left Orestes to his fate (674, 678ff, 683, 686), a point to which I shall return later, and stresses the necessity to die with him (675, 684f). Although the offer is refused by Orestes, Pylades does not lose all hope of safety (719ff). The particle  $\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho$  (719) is strongly adversative,<sup>42</sup> and the hyperbaton of: ...  $\tau\acute{o}$  ... /  $\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\alpha\mu\alpha$  ... (719f) is striking. The metrical breaks in each of the first three feet of 721 are also noticeable. These devices are expressive of his optimistic outlook.

The scene of the oath-taking (725ff) is skilfully contrived by the playwright. Towards the end of the swearing ceremony, Pylades recognizes that they have omitted an important consideration and asks what would happen, were the  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\tau\omicron\varsigma$  lost at sea (755ff). Dramatically, it is necessary for the contents of the letter to be read aloud, but Pylades is the first to broach the subject (and not Iphigenia who might well have done it), so that once again the suggestion is conveyed that he is a man of a more practical nature. Moreover, it is he who eventually brings back the brother and sister from embracing each other (827ff) to the very practicalities of the situation facing them, and the need to find a way of escaping (902ff).<sup>43</sup>

The relationship between Pylades and Orestes is very warm, and there are frequent references to their friendship in the play (310ff, 498, 597ff, 650, 674ff, 716ff, 919, 923). Although it is part of the legendary tradition, the dramatist treats this friendship with a certain amount of irony. The plot which is hatched by Pylades in the Prologos (104ff) is far from an act of courage. The plan of action is utterly dependent upon the:  $\nu\omicron\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\acute{o}\mu\mu\alpha$   $\lambda\upsilon\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  (110). The adjective is rare and

possesses unheroic overtones.<sup>44</sup> The protestations that he makes in order to die with Orestes (674ff), although sincerely intended, as we have seen, are nevertheless highly exaggerated, and are more concerned with the shame that may accrue to him personally (674, 676, 683, 686). The last speech that he makes (902ff) also shows that he does not allow friendship and sentimentality to dominate his head above other considerations.

In short, Pylades is a hard man of determination, in the I.T., who gives Orestes the lead and is concerned to make every operation a success. He is friendly to Orestes and helps him, but Pylades never loses sight of his objectives, throughout the play.

(i) "Orestes"

From his first appearance in the second Epeisodion (725ff), Pylades is almost constantly at Orestes' side. The friendship between them is, of course, a very important factor. But it has, from ancient times, been often misunderstood by scholars.<sup>45</sup> A few critics have argued strongly against this somewhat idealized picture of their  $\varphi\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\sigma$ .<sup>46</sup>

It is interesting that Pylades' entry on to the stage (729ff) coincides with a change in metre to trochaics. The rhythm is particularly suitable here, since it highlights the revival of Orestes' own determination and hope as a result of his friend's encouragement and plans. That Pylades is a man of action is clear throughout. The command in 760, although impossible to achieve, is suggestive of his nature. Full of optimism, he exhorts Orestes to plead his cause before the Argive Assembly (775ff), and also advises him not to tell Electra of their intentions (787ff). Although Orestes seems dubious in case he

should be afflicted by a fit (790ff), Pylades immediately says: ἀλλὰ κηδέσω σ' ἐγώ (791). The final words spoken by him (799ff) indicate his desire to be involved in action and his capacity for optimism.

The fourth Epeisodion (1022ff) sees the next appearance of the two companions, on their return from the Assembly. At first, Orestes is determined to die, and Pylades also wishes to perish at the same time. The situation is similar to that in the I.T. (674ff), and, indeed, the language used by Pylades is reminiscent of the earlier play: compare Or. 1074 and 1091 with I.T. 675 and 685. He takes delight, too, in having assisted Orestes with the murder of his mother (1089: cf 767). But, despite these *statements*, he still does not accept that they are completely defeated, and says that they ought to take revenge on Menelaus (1098ff). The stichomythia between them reveals Pylades' strength of mind and hardness of character. The caesura at the beginning of the second metron (1105) coincides with the break after κτάνωμεν and heightens the pitilessness of his nature. In Pylades' next utterance (1107), the caesura at the end of the last metron is coincident with the strong break after σφάξαντες: the effect is of Pylades' smacking his lips in anticipation of the assault that is about to be launched. Nor will he be deflected from his set purpose. He scornfully looks down upon the Trojan bodyguard protecting Helen (1111 and 1113). The word τρυφάς (1113) is highly derogatory in tone<sup>47</sup> and the rhetorical question is sarcastic. These specious words succeed in persuading Orestes to adopt the plan, and he now begins to ape the abuse of Pylades (1112, 1114, 1116).

The latter proceeds to give the details of how they will



kill Helen (1119ff). The vivid future indicative is used by Pylades throughout (1119, 1121, 1123, 1125, 1127). Then he makes a speech vindicating their proposed murder of Helen (1132ff). The tricolon: ... ἔκτελεν' ... ἀπιώλοσεν .../... ἔδωκεν (1135ff), suggests how he is letting his feelings run away in excitement. He calumniates Helen (1139, 1142) and then his syntax, in one passage (1143ff), breaks down completely. The initial repetition of: οὐ δέει (1143), is succeeded by the aposiopesis: ἔω τοῦτ', and the parenthesis: οὐ ... λέγειν (1144). This causes him to revert to the question of Menelaus (1146f) after leaving him and dealing with Orestes and Electra (1144f). Furthermore, the clause beginning with: δόμους τ' ἔχειν ... (1146),<sup>48</sup> does not follow logically on from the preceding γέν ... δέ clauses (1143ff). Moreover, the repeated phrase οὐ δέει (1143) and the succession of present and strong aoristic infinitives at the end of three successive lines (1143, 1144, 1145) forcefully indicate his determination and excitement. In fine, the loosely - structured period is natural and reflects Pylades' growing excitement.

Pylades' propensity to remain optimistic and never sink into despair is noticeable during the the above address. He believes, whether they are successful in their murder or not, that they will gain κλέος from the general public. The concern of this character for glory, discerned, as we saw, in the I.T. also, is a deliberate parody by Euripides of the old Homeric "shame culture".<sup>49</sup> In what way can the action that is being contemplated by them against a defenceless (1111ff) woman and in guile (1125) be termed καλόν? The efforts of Pylades to justify his posture are exaggerated and only serve to belie it.

At the end of the Epeisodion, Pylades himself brings to

a close the ritualistic invocations of Orestes and *Electra* for victory, when he says: *πανόσασθε καὶ πρὸς ἔργον ἔξορμώμεθα* (1240). The exhortation provides further evidence for the lack of sentimentality in his character and his penchant for action.

In the *Exodos* (1567ff), Pylades is present but says nothing, and Orestes explains to Menelaus the meaning of his friend's silence (1592). From a dramatic point of view, his silence is necessary so as not to breach the convention of three speaking actors in one scene.<sup>50</sup> But Euripides manages to exploit the rule in such a way that the taciturnity is realistic, psychologically, and underscores his preference for action rather than words.<sup>51</sup>

Pylades' influence over Orestes is great. Determined and callous, he is guided by the desire for action, and incites Orestes by his words and encouragement. The Phrygian eunuch described Pylades aptly thus: ... *σεγὰ δόλιος / πιστὸς δὲ φίλος, Θρασύς εἰς ἀλικίαν, / βυνετὸς πόλεμον, φόνιός τε δράκων* (1405f: cf 1410f, 1459).

The significance of Pylades in the dramas of Euripides (*El.*, *I.T.*, *Or.*) is thus greater than many critics have thought. He bolsters up Orestes' nerve and encourages him in every enterprise where they are involved. His friendship for Orestes is true, but Euripides, in my opinion, suggests that the ideal of *φιλία* has become perverted and deteriorated into a callous desire for revenge and destruction. The corruption of such an important element in human conduct is surely connected with the social and political situation in Athens as a result of the Peloponnesian War.

IV Teiresias

The seer Teiresias<sup>52</sup> plays a minor rôle in two Euripidean dramas (the Phoen. and Ba.).

(i) "Phoenissae"

The traditional infirmity and blindness of the Theban seer are mentioned at the beginning of his first speech (833ff) and spasmodically thereafter (843f, 852). Despite those debilities he is strong and hold before Creon and shows much independence of will in his desire to help Thebes. In his first lengthy speech (865ff), he utilizes two main themes, disease and salvation. He, therefore, remarks early on: ...  
 νοσέει γὰρ ἔδε γῆ πάλα, Κρέων (867), and then outlines the woes that have afflicted the city (868ff). Teiresias harks back to the theme of disease later (876f, 884f). To prevent the fall of the city, the seer says that: μὲν ἔστιν ἄλλη μηχανὴ σωτηρίας (890), and the sentiment is repeated a few lines after (893). The idea is continued in the ensuing stichomythia with Creon, thus: ... ἀλλὰ πατρίδι μέγαρα καὶ σωτήρια (918). On two further occasions he gives the cognate forms (948, 952).

Although there is no reason to think that Teiresias' regard for Thebes is other than sincere, Euripides cannot resist aiming the occasional satirical blow at Teiresias' excessive pride in his position as a μάγιστρος. For the playwright suggests several times the personal gratification of the seer at his special faculties (837ff, 855ff). The reference to the χρυσῶν στέφανον (856) indicates that Teiresias wishes to assist people, yet he is not averse from profiting as a result of his mantic powers. Moreover, in the second protracted speech to Creon

(931ff), the prophecy is couched in a curious mixture of highly formal, traditional language, and of more ordinary and commonplace diction. A closer analysis will serve to make the point clear.

The first five lines (931 - 5) comprise one long period. The main verb  $\text{ἴδω}$  (931) is separated by hyperbaton from its infinitive  $\text{δοῦναι}$  (933) and the participle  $\text{ἐπαγγέλλοντα}$  (933), while the relative clause:  $\text{ὅτι} \dots/\dots \text{ἐπίσιτος}$  (931f), intervenes between the main and dependent verbs. The next sentence (936), by contrast, is very short, and accentuates the possibility of victory for the Thebans, if they act in accordance with his wishes. The passage after this (937ff) seems a deliberate echo of the words spoken by the Sophoclean Teiresias in the O.T. (454ff), and recalls the solemn utterances of the soothsayer in the tragedy of his elder contemporary. The thought behind 938f also harks back to the earlier expression (936). In 940f, we have the third reference, within a few lines, to the serpent, and the paronomasia:  $\text{γένους} \dots \text{γένους}$ , is arresting. The prophet then, using the principle of Ringkomposition, reverts (940f) to the words that began his speech (931ff), and this device adds emphasis. The next paragraph (942ff) contains great stress on the unmarried state of Menoecus (943, 947). The aim is to convince Creon of the necessity for his son's sacrifice.

In spite of the outwardly impressive effect of the first part of the speech, Teiresias proceeds to make a remark which appears incongruous by comparison (954ff). The lines have an almost bathetic quality about them, and they completely undercut the former solemn lines. Behind the façade, therefore,

is revealed a man who, for all his concern with the city, is seen to be serving his own ends and taking an extreme pride in the very office which he holds.

It is clear then that the attitude of Euripides towards Teiresias is tinged with irony. The reason for this runs more deeply than the fact that it is typical of his well-known hostility to soothsayers and their art. The demand for Menelaus' death, like that of Polyxena in the Hec., may be thought to have outraged the sensibilities of the poet. Teiresias is not blamed personally for wanting the sacrifice. His duty to Thebes is, like that of Odysseus in the Hec. and Cyc., misplaced. I would suggest that it is the very war in which Thebes is convulsed that has led to the corruption of the usual scale of values and induced Teiresias to act thus. Indeed, the stichomythia between him and Creon (915ff) shows the effect of the war upon the seer. He speaks of Creon's request that the Thebans should not be informed about the need to immolate Menoecus as: *κακῶ* (924: cf 926): the word has an ironic significance under the circumstances.

The function of Teiresias in the Phoen. is thus of greater importance than merely to give the divine message, as some writers have maintained.<sup>53</sup> The demands of the seer emphasize the enormity of the sacrifice which is required, especially since his death achieves nothing of value in the long term. Although the attack on the city is defeated (1465ff), Eteocles, Polyneices and Iocasta all die (1427ff); Oedipus and his daughters are forced into exile (1625ff); and hints are also given in the Exodos (1643ff) about the later conflict between Creon and Antigone. Moreover, it is impossible for us

to be unaware of the later accretion to the legend in which the "Epigoni" attack Thebes and destroy it.<sup>54</sup>

In fine, Euripides has combined in his portrait of Teiresias the attributes of the traditional seer with touches of irony and realism both on the political situation that follows war and on the religious establishment.

(ii) "Bacchae"

Some critics have believed that the portrayal of Teiresias in this tragedy comprehends a mixture of tradition and fifth century sophistic thought which is tinged with irony,<sup>55</sup> but others have opposed this view by contending that Euripides' depiction of him is sympathetic and sincere.<sup>56</sup> Although I agree with some points in the former interpretation, my own approach is a little different, as are the conclusions that I make.

The old age and blindness of the Theban seer are frequently mentioned in the Ba. (175, 185f, 189, 193, 198, 204ff, 210, 324, 365), but he appears to have experienced a temporary rejuvenation.<sup>57</sup> This may be explained as a natural phenomenon,<sup>58</sup> so that the minor inconsistency with the Phoen. is not of great import.

Teiresias is motivated, as in the other play, by varying considerations. He is anxious that the Dionysiac worship be accepted by the ruler Pentheus and by the city generally, and repeatedly asks the king to acknowledge the religion (309ff, 326ff). The themes of illness and remedy assume prominence in his speeches (283, 311, 326f). In his last speech, too, Teiresias shows concern for the safety of the city when he urges Cadmus to go with him: ὑπὲρ τε πόλεως (362).

Throughout his appearance on the stage, we are made fully aware of his position as a seer. The warnings and advice that he gives to Pentheus are reminiscent of those to Creon in the Phoen., and when he tells the king: ... ὡς οὐκ οἶσθα ποῦ ποτ' εἶ λόγων (358), the language harks back to the O.T. (367, 413).

It is partly because Dionysus has associations with the mantic art that Teiresias takes pains to defend the god, as he admits himself (298ff). *The play on the words παντες (298), πανωδες (299), παντελευ (299), and the repetition of the cognate forms παντες ... παντελευ help to stress his gratification for the god's connexion with divination. Here, we can discern less altruistic motives in the behaviour of Teiresias. He is genuinely desirous of serving the city and its ruler, but is fully cognisant of the fact that the involvement of Dionysus with παντελευ will be in his own interests also. For the acceptance of the Dionysiac religion by the people will surely increase the dependence of the city upon himself and Delphi, whose spokesman he is.*

Teiresias constantly emphasizes his own refusal to fight against the god, and he says in one place: οὐδέ ν σοφισόμεθα ποτε δαίμονι (200) and in another: κοῦ θεομαχίῳ ὄν λόγων περθεῖς ἔπα (325). These statements reveal his desire to worship the god in order to protect his interests and prevent any harm coming to himself. The rationalistic explanations that he gives to Pentheus (272ff, 286ff), to justify the Dionysiac cult,<sup>59</sup> highlight the fact that he will do anything in his power to bolster his own position. They confirm that his adherence to

the worship is far from sincere.

The portrayal of Teiresias in the Ba. combines that of the traditional seer who helps the city, sua sponte, with one who is selfish and encourages Dionysianism for his own purposes. The treatment of him is ironic because of the mixture of motives governing his conduct. The assault of the new religion is in itself a war for power and influence. The difference between the situation in the Phoen. and in the Ba. lies in the fact that the struggle is physical in the one, but symbolic in the other. Nevertheless, we see that the writer stresses time and again (616ff, 714ff, 1084ff) the death and destruction to which the Dionysiac worship can lead, as well as the corruption in the normal scale of values which affects many people. The behaviour of Teiresias demonstrates well the enervating effects of such a war.

The actions of the Theban seer in proposing the sacrifice of Menoecus and in urging Pentheus to accept the religion of Dionysus are, I think, indicative of a nature which is essentially similar. They represent the deterioration in human morals which arises from the affliction of war and of strife inside a community.

Now that we have concluded the discussion of the characters in Euripides, it will be appropriate to make a few general remarks about the use to which he puts the device of recurrent personae. It is clear that Euripides exploits the practice far more than the other two dramatists. It is employed in many dramas that are in no sense trilogic or quasi-trilogic, and it helps to emphasize the realism of the



psychology and characterization: the figures involved, as it were, come to life and we see them react to differing circumstances in the various plays. Moreover, the state of war between Athens and Sparta appears to overshadow nearly all the dramas which have survived under Euripides' authorship. Basic human mores become corrupted with the general deterioration in values and standards following such conflict. The continuity in the characterization of the recurrent personae heighten our awareness of this fact. Pessimism seems the dominant emotion in Euripides' thought when we consider the depiction of people such as Electra and Orestes, Menelaus and Agamemnon, Pylades and Teiresias. Although figures like Heracles and Theseus may be said to represent an optimistic strand in his works, it is interesting that they do not appear (in any of the extant plays) after the production of the H.F. The later tragedies redound in fact with the grim effects of the war, and even the Hel. and I.T. contain many profound and poignant glimpses of the social disintegration which was being wrought in Athens towards the end of the fifth century B.C. The only exception to this picture is the character of Iphigenia who stands in stark contrast to her brother and sister. Does she symbolize for Euripides the last remaining source of hope for mankind in the midst of the blackness all around her?

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NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 J. Palli Bonet, "Los heraldos, Taltibio y Euripides", Helm., 7 (1956), 345 - 55.
- 2 On this point, see, too, A.F. Garvie, "The Opening of the Choe.", BICS, 17 (1970), 79 - 91.
- 3 Hdt. VII, 134, 1.
- 4 cf I.A. 1623.
- 5 Although comparison has been drawn with Supp. 669 and Phaethon 118 (Diggle, Phaethon, ad loc.) and Phoen. 1224 (Collard, Supp., ad 669), none of the examples is really similar. The instances in the Phaethon and Phoen. consist of only one line and have no repetitions; and Supp. 669 is actually part of a much longer speech, where, again,  $\sigma\hat{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha$  is not iterated. The occurrence in the Hec. (532f) is, therefore, exceptional.
- 6 e.g., Conacher, E.D., p 159; Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, p 217.
- 7 S. Barlow, The Imagery of Euripides, pp 61f, has described the typical  $\xi\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  as an outsider who must not give the impression of prejudice in his statements.
- 8 In some dramas, the anonymous  $\xi\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  or  $\theta\epsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}\pi\omega\nu$  appears to have sympathy for the people to whom he is revealing the news: Med. 1121ff, Heracl. 630ff, Or. 852ff. But, by allowing the speech in the Hec. to be made by a named character, in his own right, Euripides renders it all the more moving.
- 9 e.g., Conacher, E.D., p 144; 'Rheby' (pseud.), "The Daughters of Troy", GR, 2 (1955), 17 - 22; Kitto, G.T.<sup>3</sup>, p 210.
- 10 K. Gilmartin, "Talthybius in the Trojan Women", AJP, 91 (1970), 213 - 222.
- 11 cf the erotic use of the adjective  $\sigma\acute{\kappa}\omicron\tau\iota\omicron\varsigma$  and its cognate forms in Ion 860, and Ba. 486, 510, 549, 611.

- 12 On the sexual signification of ἔρως, see LSJM<sup>9</sup>, S.V.
- 13 cf Med. 549, And. 461, Ba. 1314.
- 14 The fact that, in the Hec., Talthybius describes the sacrifice in detail does not imply inconsistency in character. The dramatic needs of the two plays are obviously different.
- 15 Contrast the brusqueness in the following scenes where all connectives have been omitted: Aes., Suppl. 906f, P.V. 944ff; Soph., Aj. 1047f, Elec. 1445; Eur., Hec. 1280, I.A. 304, Ba. 255.
- 16 On the political and legalistic sense of ῥέδωξε, see R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions (Oxford, 1971), nos 70, 3; 71, 1; 73, 2; 86, 3.
- 17 A rare word found only in lyric verse: LSJM<sup>9</sup>, S.V. γογγερός; cf Hecuba's use of the adjective at Tr. 790.
- 18 Ferguson, Companion, p 342.
- 19 cf above, n. 15.
- 20 The ms.P. assigns 1284 to the Chorus: Murray, OCT, ad loc. But I see no reason to suspect Talthybius, because it is quite in accord with his nature.
- 21 "Los heraldos, Taltibio y Euripides", Helm., 7 (1956), pp 345ff.
- 22 See above, p 203 (with n. 10) et passim.
- 23 On the legendary background, see above, pp. 75f..
- 24 Nauck<sup>2</sup>, pp 541ff.
- 25 Dion of Prusia, Orationes 52 and 59.
- 26 The Hec. is dated with little doubt to the period 428 - 423 B.C., the most likely year being 425 or 424: Webster, C.N., pp 112 - 120; Ceadel, R.F., pp 66 - 89. Although there is some controversy over the date of the Cyc., I am inclined to put it in the same year as the Hec.: E. Delebecque, Euripide et la guerre du Peloponnèse (Paris, 1951), pp 173ff; D.F. Sutton, "The relationship between tragedies and fourth place plays in three instances", Arethusa, 4 (1971), 55 - 72; Arrowsmith, Cyc., Introduction, p 2 (n.1).
- 27 H. Grégoire, "Euripide, Ulysse et Alcibiade", Bulletin de la Classe de Lettres, Académie Royale Belgique, 19 (1933), p 97, writes that he is, "un profond démagogue, un être cruel et fourbe"; cf M. Orban, "Hécube, drame humain", EC, 38 (1970), p 321; P. Masqueray, "Agamemnon, Ménélas, Ulysse dans Euripide", REA, 6 (1904), 173 - 204; W.B.

- Stanford, Ulysses Theme, pp 111ff; Webster, T.E., p 61.
- 28 One of the few exceptions is J.P. Mahaffy, "The Degradation of Odysseus in Greek Literature", Hermathena, 1 (1873/4), 265 - 275.
- 29 I use the phrase coined by H.D. Rankin, Pentheus and Plato: A Study in Social Disintegration (inaugural lecture, Univ. of Southampton: 1975). Rankin provides a very useful summary of the moral and social breakdown in the Greek κόλως at the end of the fifth century and at the beginning of the fourth century. I had formed my views on Euripides before reading this work, but am pleased to find additional support (in an entirely different area) for my interpretation.
- 30 e.g., P. Masqueray, "Agamemnon, Ménélas, Ulysse dans Euripide", REA, 6 (1904), 173 - 204; H. Grégoire, "Euripide, Ulysse et Alcibiade", Bulletin de la Classe de Lettres, Académie Royale Belgique, 19 (1933), 83 - 106; E. Delebecque, "Euripide et la guerre du Péloponnèse" pp 323ff; R. Goossens, Euripide et Athènes (Brussels, 1962), chpt. v, espec. pp 328ff.
- 31 Simmonds and Timberlake, Cyc., Introd., p xxvi, ascribe to the Satyrs a very facile motive for not supporting their father's deception, and they do not seem to give full attention to the importance of the genuine rapport between Odysseus and the Satyrs.
- 32 Duchemin, Cyc., Introd., p xvii and notes ad 480 and 1290; P.D. Arnott, "The Overworked Playwright", GR, 8 (1961), 164 - 169. For a contrary view, see R.S. Pathmanathan, "A Playwright Relaxed or Overworked?", GR, 10 (1963), 123 - 130, and R.G. Ussher, "The Cyclops of Euripides", GR, 18 (1971), 166 - 179.
- 33 e.g., W.B. Stanford, Ulysses Theme, pp 111ff.
- 34 cf the warnings above, p. 10.
- 35 Jebb, Elec., Introd., p xii; Kamerbeek, Elec., Introd., pp 1f.
- 36 Note, however, H.J. Rose, "The part of Pylades in Aeschylus' Choe.", Annual of the British School of Athens, 37 (1936/7), 201 - 206, who argues that he spoke other lines in the play, too: see above, p. 54 (with n. 78)
- 37 L. Roussel, "Le rôle de Pylades dans l'Electre de Sophocle, est-il muet?", REA, 41 (1939), p 19, believes that he should be assigned several verses in the Prologos; but his views have not met with general acceptance.
- 38 cf I Samuel 18, 1: "And it came to pass ... that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul".

- 39 A.F. Garvie, "The Opening of the Choephoroi, BICS, 17 (1970), p 87.
- 40 Grube, D.E., p 317.
- 41 On the character of Orestes, see above, p. 156ff..
- 42 Denniston, G.P., p 52, writes that the particle can denote, "a break-off, a sudden change of topic": cf LSJM<sup>9</sup>, S.V., ἀρά, 1 and 2.
- 43 A vague hint of this trait appears in the Aeschylean Pylades (Choe. 900ff), but it is given little prominence.
- 44 cf Heracl. 855.
- 45 e.g., Aristophanes the Alexandrian scholar, Hypothesis II, ad Orestem; Webster, T.E., p 249; W. Krieg, "De Euripidis Oreste", passim, espec. pp 16ff.
- 46 Conacher, E.D., p 214; S. Schein, "Mythical Illusion and Historical Reality in Euripides' Orestes", WS, 88 (1975), p 53; H. Parry, "Euripides' Orestes", TAPA, 100 (1969), 337 - 353.
- 47 cf Ba. 969 and 970.
- 48 Some mss. read δ' instead of τ'.
- 49 On this, see especially E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational, pp 17f.
- 50 Attempts have been made to deny the validity of the convention: A.C. Schlesinger, "Silence in Tragedy and the three-actor rule", CP, 25 (1930), 230 - 53. But they have not won much acceptance.
- 51 R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "Euripides: poiētês sophos", Arethusa, 2 (1969), p 130, thinks that the scene pokes fun at the three-actor rule in the typically ironic Euripidean way.
- 52 On the legendary background, see above, p. 121f..
- 53 Conacher, E.D., p 240.
- 54 cf Pindar, Pyth. VIII, 39ff; Eur. Supp., passim; also OCD<sup>2</sup>, S.V., "Adrastus".
- 55 e.g., K. Deichgräber, "Die Kadmos-Teiresiaszene in Euripides Bakchen", Hermes, 70 (1935), p 329; R.P. Winnington-Ingram, Euripides and Dionysus (Cambridge, 1948), pp 44ff.
- 56 e.g., P Headings, "The Tiresias Tradition in Western Literature", pp 13ff.

- 57 cf Iolaus in Eur., Heracl. 843ff, and Oedipus in Soph.  
O.C. 1518ff and note 58 below.
- 58 See G. Devereux, "The Psychosomatic Miracle of Iolaus: a  
hypothesis", Parola del Passato, 26 (1971), 167 - 195.
- 59 For fuller details, see Dodds, Ba., ad loc.
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### CONCLUSION

Certain conclusions have already been drawn throughout this thesis, but it seems proper at this point to integrate them. It is hoped that the present study of named recurrent characters in Greek Tragedy has made, so far as the evidence may allow, certain advances by undertaking a more systematic examination of these personae and by suggesting how great the overall homogeneity is in the portrayal of the characters. The dramatists were clearly not so divorced, in interests and methods, from each other as is often alleged by scholars. But at the same time each of the three tragedians naturally put the device to different ends, in accordance with his individual dramatic and intellectual ideas.

At present, not much is known about the dramatists prior to or contemporary with Aeschylus, apart from (in his early years) the young Sophocles. But it seems a reasonable conjecture that, if Aeschylus did not actually originate the device, he was responsible for turning it into a technique whose value became clearer to the later playwrights. The use of the reappearing characters by Aeschylus confirms how he adopted an increasing interest in characterization as an important element in his tragedies. The compatibility in the depiction of these characters is, as we noticed, appropriate for the trilogic format of the Oresteia,

enhancing as it does the essential continuity in the world and in human existence.

Sophocles developed the technique by employing it in plays that were not formally connected nor part of a trilogy in the Aeschylean manner. The recurrent personae now appeared in plays extending over a period of years, although for the most part they (i.e., the Theban dramas) were still linked to each other in general themes and ideas. The importance of *ψύξις*, as the constant and unalterable factor in human life, helps, so I have maintained, to explain the consistency in his recurrent characters. Conversely, the study of them provides additional evidence in confirmation of the significance of this very idea of *ψύξις* for Sophocles. The present thesis has also stressed the realism of the characterization of the reappearing personae in Sophocles, and it has been thought that former critics have exaggerated the idealistic nature of his characters.

Euripides exploited the device in the single, unlinked plays which by and large formed no trilogic structure even like that of the Theban dramas of Sophocles, but ranged over the whole gamut of Greek Tragedy. He was swift, too, in discerning the possibilities, first glimpsed by Sophocles, which the device of recurrent personae opened up for the portrayal of realistic psychological characterization. This examination has thus served to indicate a new aspect of the naturalistic psychology for which Euripides is well known. Moreover, the technique seems intimately connected with his social beliefs. The contrast in the behaviour and attitudes of the reappearing personae reveals the blend of optimism and pessimism in Euripides' thought during the Peloponnesian War. The doubt over the relative importance of



εἶδος or πρότυπος in his plays is reflected in the contrasting modes of conduct among different people belonging to the same family. The continuity in the depiction of each character underscores this contrast as well as rendering the people lifelike.

The differences between the tragedians are also discernible in their several treatments of the recurrent characters who appear in two or more dramatists, viz, Clytaemnestra, Orestes, Odysseus, Teiresias. The sections in this thesis devoted to the individual characters have provided a detailed analysis of their portrayal. I shall, therefore, confine myself here to a general summary of the distinctive stance adopted by each dramatist.

It has been argued that Aeschylus took the first (tentative) steps in rehabilitating the character of Clytaemnestra or, at least, indicating that she had some justification or provocation for her actions. The Euripidean queen was the logical extension of this portrayal, although the attitude of the younger poet was even more sympathetic and he made of her a very complex character.

In Aeschylus, we have noticed the moral awareness of Orestes apropos of his actions against Clytaemnestra. He is never personally exonerated nor glorified by the playwright. Again, Euripides extended the Aeschylean portrait by drawing the picture of a pathologically abnormal man who (like the other members of the Atreid House, Menelaus and Agamemnon) is socially inadequate and has been led astray by the effects of war.

The Sophoclean Odysseus had an intellectual outlook on life which was regarded as responsible for the ambivalence in his

character, while his Teiresias was invested with all the attributes of the traditional Greek seer. On the other hand, Euripides was more concerned with depicting the consequences of belligerency upon the mentality of these two characters and with showing the deterioration in human morals and attitudes as a result of it.

That the three tragedians should all employ the device of recurrent characters suggests, to my mind, the importance of the link between tradition and innovation in Greek Tragedy. The differences in the way in which they exploited the technique shows on the other hand the essential vitality and efficacy of the traditional modes of the dramatic genre, and emphasizes the artistic creativity of the dramatists. Influenced by one another and using the dramatic modes passed down, the tragedians succeeded in making their own distinctive impression upon this important technique in Greek Drama.

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APPENDIX IA LIST OF THE RECURRENT CHARACTERS AND THEIR  
PLAYS IN EXTANT GREEK TRAGEDY

- A Aeschylus
- Clytaemnestra : Ag., Choe., Eum.
- Aegisthus : Ag., Choe.
- Orestes : Choe., Eum.
- B Sophocles
- Odysseus : Aj., Phil.
- Creon : Ant., O.T., O.C.
- Antigone : Ant., O.C.
- Ismene : Ant., O.C.
- Oedipus : O.T., O.C.
- C Euripides
- (i) Male Characters (major)
- Heracles : Alc., H.F.
- Theseus : Hipp., Supp., H.F.
- Orestes : And., El., I.T., Or.
- Menelaus : And., Tr., Hel., Or., I.A.
- Agamemnon : Hec., I.A.
- (ii) Female Characters (major)
- Andromache : And., Tr.
- Hecuba : Hec., Tr.
- Helen : Tr., Hel., Or.
- Clytaemnestra : El., I.A.
- Electra : El., Or.
- Iphigenia : I.T., I.A.

(iii) Lesser Characters

Talthybius	:	<u>Hec.</u> , <u>Tr.</u>
Odysseus	:	<u>Hec.</u> , <u>Cyc.</u>
Pylades	:	<u>I.T.</u> , <u>Or.</u>
Teiresias	:	<u>Phoen.</u> , <u>Ba.</u>

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## APPENDIX II

A The frequency of ΠΑΡ and ΩΣΤΕ in the "Ajax"

Character	Total No. of Lines	No. of Times ΠΑΡ used	Ratio of ΠΑΡ:Lines	No. of Times ΩΣΤΕ used	Ratio of ΩΣΤΕ:Lines
Odysseus	83	15 <sup>1</sup>	1 : 6	4 <sup>2</sup>	1 : 21
Ajax	210	12 <sup>3</sup>	1 : 18	2 <sup>4</sup>	1 : 105
Teucer	195 <sup>5</sup>	11 <sup>6</sup>	1 : 18	0	1 : 195
Agamemnon	60	7 <sup>7</sup>	1 : 9	0	1 : 60
Menelaus	62	9 <sup>8</sup>	1 : 7	0	1 : 62

(Figures for the ratios have been rounded to the nearest integer).

1. 20, 21, 23, 25, 34, 82, 125, 1318, 1322, 1325, 1336, 1343, 1357, 1365, 1367.
2. 1325, 1335, 1339, 1342.
3. 432, 433, 473, 475, 545, 554, 650, 661, 666 (= τοὺς ἄρ ), 678, 682, 690 (omitting 554(b), a doubtful line).
4. 98, 453.
5. This figure excludes the short exclamatory lines 974 and 1002, but includes 981, 982, 983, 985, which are divided by antilabê and classed as half the value of a normal iambic line.
6. 998, 1010, 1046, 1114, 1121, 1125, 1133, 1135, 1155, 1161, 1389 (= τοὺς ἄρ ).
7. 1250, 1262, 1263, 1320, 1324, 1330, 1348.
8. 1067, 1069, 1073, 1079, 1126, 1128, 1130, 1132, 1159.

B Frequency of  $\mathcal{F}AP$  in Stichomythia and Narrative in the "Ajax"

Character	Total Lines in Stich	Total of $\mathcal{F}AP$ in Stich	Ratio of $\mathcal{F}AP$ : Lines in Stich	Total Lines in Narrative	Total of $\mathcal{F}AP$ in Narrative	Ratio of $\mathcal{F}AP$ : Lines in Narrative	Ratio of $\mathcal{F}AP$ : Lines in Stich and Narrative
Odysseus	34	7 <sup>1</sup>	1:5	49	8 <sup>2</sup>	1 : 6	1 : 6
Ajax	25	0	1:25 <sup>3</sup>	185	12 <sup>4</sup>	1:15	1 : 18
Teucer	23	5 <sup>5</sup>	1:5	172	6 <sup>6</sup>	1 : 29	1 : 18
Agamemnon	19	4 <sup>7</sup>	1:5	41	3 <sup>8</sup>	1 : 13	1 : 9
Menelaus	11	4 <sup>9</sup>	1:3	51	5 <sup>10</sup>	1 : 10	1 : 7

1. 82, 1318, 1322, 1325, 1357, 1365, 1367.
2. 20, 21, 23, 25, 34, 125, 1336, 1343.
3. Excluding the single lines from 333 - 427, which are in LYRIC verse.
4. 432, 433, 473, 475, 545, 554, 650, 661, 666 (=Τολυάρο), 678, 682, 690.
5. 1121, 1125, 1113, 1135, 1161.
6. 998, 1010, 1046, 1114, 1155, 1389 (=Τολυάρο).
7. 1320, 1324, 1330, 1348.
8. 1250, 1262, 1263.
9. 1126, 1128, 1130, 1132.
10. 1067, 1069, 1073, 1079, 1159.

APPENDIX IIIA LIST OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND  
ADJECTIVES USED BY OEDIPUSA "Oedipus Tyrannus"

## (i) Prologos

2, 6, 12, 58, 60, 63, 64, 65, ~~66~~, 73, 76, 85, 86, 94, 132, 135,  
140, 145.

## (ii) Epeisodion I

216, 219, 226, 232, 235, 242, 244, 250, 253, 258, 264 (bis),  
282, 293, 312, 346, 374, 401, 434, 437, 441, 443.

## (iii) Epeisodion II

533, 535, 537, 545, 546, 548, 555, 572, 580, 619, 621, 626, 643,  
658, 669, 676, 688, 701, 703, 726, 740, 744, 765, 767, 768, 772,  
774, 776, 778, 779, 781, 785, 786, 788, 791, 794, 797, 802, 804,  
806, 807, 809, 820, (bis), 823, 824 (bis), 825, 827, 833, 836,  
840, 844, 847.

## (iv) Epeisodion III

951, 954, 957, 967, 968, 969, 970, 974, 976, 994, 996, 997, 1009,  
1011, 1013, 1017, 1021, 1025, 1031, 1039, 1045, 1058, 1062, 1067,  
1069, 1076, 1079, 1080, 1083, 1085.

## (v) Epeisodion IV

1110, 1115, (bis), 1121, 1170, 1185.

## (vi) Exodos

1308, 1309, 1314, 1317, 1323, 1325, 1330, 1332, 1333, 1337, 1340, 1349,  
1355, 1370, 1371, 1373, 1376, 1377, 1379, 1381, 1384 (bis), 1388, 1391  
(bis), 1393, 1395, 1400 (bis), 1401, 1404, 1410, 1414, 1415, 1420,  
1432, 1433, 1434 (bis), 1436, 1449, 1451, 1452 (bis), 1454, 1455, 1458,  
1463, 1464, 1466, 1467, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1479, 1481, 1494, 1507, 1512,  
1518, 1521, 1522.

B "Oedipus Coloneus"

## (i) Prologos and Parodos

6, 7, 11, 21, 23, 25, 33, 34, 46, 49, 81, 85, 86, 87, 93, 94, 96,  
101, 113, 138, 142, 173, 188, 199 (bis), 216 (bis).

## (ii) Epeisodion I

263, 264, 266 (bis), 269, 270, 276, 285 (bis), 309, 320, 344, 347,  
355, 359, 360, 385, 398, 408, 414, 416, ~~419~~, ~~422~~, 427, 431, 434, 438,  
441, 452, 453, 455, 457, 460, 476, 495, 500, 501, 525, 530, 540,  
545, 546, 571, 573, 576, 582, 585, 589, 593, 499 (bis), 600 (bis),  
625, 646, 648, 654.

## (iii) Epeisodion II

724, 763, 765, 766, 772, 781, 784, 789, 798, 802 (bis), 806,  
811, 812, 821, 838, 845, 847, 863, 865, 866, 870, 872, 895,  
961, 962, 963, 966, 968 (bis), 971, 974, 979, 982 (bis), 983,  
984, 985, 986, 989, 991, 998, 999, 1002, 1008, 1010 (bis),  
1043.

## (iv) Epeisodion III

1111, 1115, 1121, 1124, 1126, 1130, 1134, 1137 (bis), 1154,  
1170, 1173 (bis), 1178, 1204, 1207, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352,  
1359, 1360, 1362, 1363, 1367 (bis), 1369, 1375, 1376, 1383,  
1460, 1475, 1487, 1508, 1511, 1518, 1521, 1529, 1540, 1544,  
1547, 1549, 1550, 1555.



APPENDIX IV

A LIST OF REFERENCES TO HELEN BY OTHER  
CHARACTERS IN EURIPIDEAN DRAMA

A Uncomplimentary Allusions

(i) "Cyc"  
177 (Chorus); 179ff (Chorus); 280f (Cyclops); 283f (Cyclops).

(ii) "And"  
103ff (Andromache); 229ff (Andromache); 248 (Andromache);  
362f (Andromache); 594f (Peleus); 602ff (Peleus); 621ff  
(Peleus); 628ff (Peleus).

(iii) "Hec"  
265ff (Hecuba); 441ff (Hecuba); 629ff (Chorus); 943ff  
(Chorus).

(iv) "Tr"  
34f (Poseidon); 130ff (Hecuba); 210ff (Chorus); 357  
(Cassandra); 368f (Cassandra); 372f (Cassandra); 766ff  
(Andromache); 780f (Chorus); 876ff (Menelaus); 890ff  
(Hecuba); 967f (Chorus); 969ff (Hecuba); 1033ff (Chorus);  
1038ff (Menelaus); 1042ff (Hecuba); 1054ff (Menelaus); 1100ff  
(Chorus); 1213ff (Hecuba).

(v) "El"  
213f (Chorus); 1027ff (Clytaemnestra); 1062ff (Electra);  
1083ff (Electra).

(vi) "I.T."  
8ff (Iphigenia); 13f (Iphigenia); 439ff (Chorus); 521ff  
(Iphigenia and Orestes).

(vii) "Hel"  
71ff (Teucer); 81 (Teucer); 110 (Teucer); 116 (Teucer);  
120 (Teucer); 160ff (Teucer).

(viii) "Or"  
19f (Electra); 56ff (Electra); 81ff (Electra); 126ff (Electra);  
245ff (Electra and Orestes); 518ff (Tyndareus); 649ff  
(Orestes); 737 (Pylades); 741 (Pylades); 742ff (Pylades and  
Orestes); 1105ff (Pylades and Orestes); 1131ff (Pylades);  
1153f (Orestes); 1181ff (Electra and Orestes); 1286f (Electra);  
1298 (Chorus); 1302ff (Electra); 1357ff (Chorus); 1386ff  
(Phrygian); 1512 (Orestes); 1533ff (Orestes); 1584 (Orestes);  
1590 (Orestes).

(ix) "I.A."

70ff (Agamemnon); 178ff (Chorus); 381ff (Agamemnon); 485ff (Menelaus); 582ff (Chorus); 682f (Agamemnon); 768ff (Chorus); 781ff (Chorus); 879ff (Slave and Clytaemnestra); 1168ff (Clytaemnestra); 1201 (Clytaemnestra); 1236f (Iphigenia); 1253f (Chorus); 1417f (Iphigenia).

B Indifferent or Complimentary Allusions(i) "And"

680ff (Menelaus); 898f (Hermione).

(ii) "Tr"

398f (Cassandra).

(iii) "El"

1278ff (Dioscuri); 1282f (Dioscuri).

(iv) "Hel"

Throughout all characters are sympathetic to Helen, save Teucer. (Note that Helen herself is full of self-criticism, e.g., Hel. 198 and 199).

(v) "Or"

370 (Menelaus); 1408ff (Phrygian); 1426ff (Phrygian); 1493ff (Phrygian); 1554ff (Menelaus); 1579 (Menelaus); 1629f (Apollo); 1639ff (Apollo); 1773f (Menelaus); 1683 ff (Apollo).

(vi) "I.A."

1382 (Iphigenia).

APPENDIX VA LIST OF REFERENCES TO ODYSSEUS BY OTHER  
CHARACTERS IN EURIPIDEAN DRAMAA Uncomplimentary Allusions

(i) "Cyc"  
104 (Silenus).

(ii) "Hec"  
131ff (Chorus); 141ff (Chorus).

(iii) "Tr"  
282ff (Hecuba); 427ff (Cassandra); 1224f (Hecuba).

(iv) "I.T."  
24f (Iphigenia); 533ff (Iphigenia).

(v) "I.A."  
524ff (Agamemnon and Menelaus); 528ff (Agamemnon); 1362ff  
(Achilles and Clytaemnestra).

B Indifferent or Complimentary Allusions

(i) "Hec"  
229ff (Hecuba and Polyxena).

(ii) "Tr"  
277 (Talthybius); 421 (Talthybius); 721ff (Talthybius);  
1270f (Talthybius); 1285f (Talthybius).

(iii) "I.T."  
536 (Orestes).

(iv) "Or"  
588 (Orestes).

(v) "I.A."  
107 (Agamemnon); 204 (Chorus).

APPENDIX VI

An Excursus on the "Rhesus"

The authorship of the Rh., uncertain even in antiquity,<sup>1</sup> has remained perhaps one of the most insoluble literary problems in Greek Drama. It has been both fiercely defended and attacked by critics as a work of Euripides.<sup>2</sup> The fullest account in recent times is W. Ritchie's The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides (Cambridge, 1964). After a survey of the evidence and critical literature, he argues in favour of Euripidean authorship and concludes that:

The differences between Rhesus and other tragedies of Euripides are superficial and not of a kind to disturb the conclusion we have already established [that it is of Euripidean authorship]. These differences should not blind us to the close affinity in essential character between Rhesus and the rest of Euripidean drama.<sup>3</sup>

His views, however, have not convinced a number of scholars, and E. Fränkel's exhaustive review of Ritchie's book has shown that a mass of evidence subsists against Euripidean authorship.<sup>4</sup> The problem thus remains open, and, indeed, repeated perusal of the Rh. has convinced me that it is not by Euripides.

The drama has been called "ein Soldatenstück"<sup>5</sup> and is replete with adventure and intrigue. There appears to be little of the philosophic or moral insight which would be expected of a tragedian such as Euripides; only the Exodos (729ff) contains any really tragic or serious colour. Moreover, the dramatic and theatrical effects are poor: not much is heard of Dolon after the first Epeisodion (154ff); the ἀγών between Hector and Rhesus (388ff) is monotonous and the speeches are too long and desultory; the fourth Epeisodion (565ff) has an amazing

number of motley scenes, such as the appearance of Athene (595ff) and the clash between Odysseus and the Chorus (675ff), which are almost without parallel in extant Greek tragedy. The general situation, in short, is one of bewildering confusion. On stylistic and metrical grounds, too, the incongruities of language and rhythm make the play suspect.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the characterization in the drama never reaches a particularly high standard, despite the apologia of Ritchie.<sup>7</sup> Hector is weak and fatuous (11ff, 52ff, 137ff, 393ff); Dolon, Rhesus and Diomedes are but boastful warriors (154ff, 422ff, 467ff, 567ff, 624ff); Paris' appearance (642ff) is brief and he seems an ingenuous and insignificant man. Only Aeneas and the Charioteer possess any depth of character, but their rôles are not particularly important (87ff = Aeneas; 729ff and 833ff = the Charioteer).

Odysseus makes his appearance with Diomedes in the fourth Epeisodion (565ff). I intend to make a closer analysis of his character in order to compare the portrayal with that in the Hec. and Cyc. This aspect seems to have been neglected, for the most part, in the critical works that have been consulted.<sup>8</sup> It is, therefore, hoped that new light will be thrown on the continuing debate about the authorship of the drama.

In the Rh., the character of Odysseus is a rehash of other poets, notably Homer and Sophocles. Emphasis is placed upon his traditional resources of cautiousness and cunning. He tells Diomedes early on: ὄρα κατ' ὀρφνῆν μὴ φάλαγγεν ἐντύχης (570: cf 565f, 572), and then advises a return to the Greek ships (582ff), since he is unwilling to take further risks

after capturing Dolon's spoils (587f, 591ff). In the short encounter with the Chorus (675ff), Odysseus has no scruples in deceiving the band of Trojans to secure escape. The eloquence for which he was so famous is also apparent in the clash. Towards Athene he is loyal and friendly, but, again, this is part of the traditional picture. The verses with which he greets the goddess are particularly important, so:

δέσποιν', Ἀθήνα, φθόγγατος γὰρ ἠσομένην  
 τοῦ σοῦ συγγῆγ' ἔγγον· ἐν πόνειρα γὰρ  
 παροῦσ' ἀμύνης τοῖς ἑμοῖς ἄελ' ποτε

(608ff).

- These lines are, as a number of scholars have remarked,<sup>9</sup> reminiscent of Sophocles' Aj. 14ff and 38.<sup>10</sup> The next two verses (611f) also hark back to Aj. 33ff. The verbal similarities must surely be deliberate since they are so striking.<sup>11</sup>

In only one place does Odysseus make any sort of philosophic comment to Diomedes, thus: σώσει γὰρ αὐτὸν ὅστις ἐπιτυχῆ θεῶν/τίθεται· ἤμιν δ' εἰ βλαστέον τύχην (583f). The sentiment is not, in fact, very original, nor does the level of his speeches rise any further above such banal thoughts.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the references to Odysseus by the other characters in the Rh. underline his cunning nature and eloquent speech (498f, 709, 894, 952f). Diomedes himself, although without the rancour found elsewhere in the other characters, describes Odysseus in the following way: τριβῶν γὰρ εἶ τὰ κομπὰ καὶ νοεῖν σοφός (625).<sup>13</sup>

The portrayal of Odysseus in the Rh., then, consists basically of the traditional material from Homer and the later poets, mingled with frequent imitations of the 5th century

tragedians. The characterization is quite different from either the Sophoclean or the Euripidean versions,<sup>14</sup> and the author has added nothing of his own artistic creativity to the portrait. I would suggest that this is a further indication that, in all probability, the Rh. was not written by Euripides. As one Scandinavian scholar writes, "I have nothing against Odysseus and Diomedes, but the plot of the Rh. is no more a tragedy than two gangsters waylaying the first suitable victim to come in their way."<sup>15</sup>

NOTES TO APPENDIX VI

- 1 cf the first Hypothesis: ταῦτο τὸ δράμα ἔναι νόθον ὑπερόργαν ὡς οὐκ ἔναι Εὐριπίδου.
- 2 The following list lays no claim to completeness but includes some of the most renowned critics in the debate. Pro-Euripidean authorship: Murray, trans, of Rh., Introd., passim; G.H. Macurdy, "The Dawn Songs in the Rhesus (527 - 556) and in the Parodos of the Phaethon", AJP, 64 (1943), 408 - 16; Porter, Rh., Introd., passim; H. Grégoire, "L'authenticité du Rhesus d'Éuripide", AC, 2 (1933), 91 - 133; R. Goossens, Euripide et Athènes, chpt. iv, passim. Anti-Euripidean authorship: A.C. Pearson, review of Porter's Rh., CR, 31 (1917), 25 - 27, and "The Rhesus", CR, 35 (1921), 52 - 61; D.W. Lucas, review of C.B. Sneller's De Rheso Tragoedia (Amsterdam, 1949), CR, 1 (1951), 18 - 20; L.A. Post, From Homer to Menander, chpt. vii, pp 209ff; Pohlenz, G.T., pp 463ff; H. Strohm, "Beobachtungen zum Rhesus", Hermes, 87 (1959), 257 - 74.
- 3 W. Ritchie, The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides, p 357.
- 4 Gnomon, 37 (1965), 228 - 41; cf the criticism of Webster, T.E., p 6.
- 5 H. Strohm, "Beobachtungen zum Rhesus", Hermes, 87 (1959), p 257.
- 6 J.C. Rolfe, "The tragedy Rhesus", HSCP, 4 (1893), 72ff, provides a useful summary of the literary and metrical arguments.
- 7 The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides, pp 96ff.
- 8 One of the few exceptions is the Franco-Belgian school (R. Goossens, Euripide et Athènes, chpt. iv, passim; H. Grégoire, "L'authenticité du Rhesus d'Éuripide", AC, 2 (1933), 91 - 133) who believe the Rh. to be written by Euripides in 425 or 424 and link it with the Hec. and Cyc. W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p 111, dismisses the drama in a few words, and, on n.21 to chpt. viii, he summarily treats of the character of Odysseus and favours the Franco-Belgian interpretation (above).
- 9 e.g. A.D. Nock, review of W.H. Porter's Rh.<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge, 1929), CR, 44 (1930), 173 - 174.
- 10 They also recall Eur., Hipp. 86ff and 139ff: critics have tended not to notice this.



- 11 W. Ritchie, The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides, strangely makes no mention of the reminiscences.
- 12 Although Euripides himself seems to be interested in the idea of  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta$ , it was a very common philosophic theme in the Hellenistic Age: Lesky, H.G.L., pp 659f. Since I believe that the Rh. was probably composed at a time well into the fourth century B.C. (L.A. Post, From Homerto Menander, pp 209ff; H. Strohm, "Beobachtungen sum Rhesus", Hermes, 87 (1959), 274), the concept of  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta$  would be entirely appropriate for the ethos of the Hellenistic era.
- 13 See further W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, chpt. viii (n.19); W. Ritchie, The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides, p 202.
- 14 See above, pp. 75ff. and pp. 265ff..
- 15 G. Björck, "The authenticity of the Rhesus", Er., 55 (1957), 17.
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