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EURIPIDES

Stories, texts & stagecraft

Edited by Mattia De Poli

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Table of contents

1.	<i>Queer Outrage and Tragic Characters from Sophocles' Antigone to Euripides' Bacchae</i> Davide Susanetti	7
2.	<i>In the Suburbs of Argos. Electra and the Dialectics of the Excluded. Thoughts on the Mythological Narration in the Euripides' Electra</i> Nuala Distilo	21
3.	<i>L'Antigone d'Euripide</i> Anna Miriam Biga	31
4.	<i>Self-Definition and Rehabilitation: Oaths in Euripides' Helen</i> Caterina Di Daniel	43
5.	<i>When is a Mother Who Solves a Mystery: The Monologue of the Muse in Pseudo-Euripides' Rhesus.</i> Stefania Santoni	53
6.	<i>Electra Loves Asyndeton. A Survey on Asyndetic Series of Imperatives in Ancient Greek Drama</i> Mattia De Poli	63
7.	<i>Hippolytus' Songs and Musical Innovations in the Attic Tragedy</i> Mattia De Poli	73
8.	<i>A Case of Aposiopesis. Note on Euripides, Iphigenia among the Taurians 827-836</i> Mattia De Poli	79
9.	<i>Iphigenia among the Taurians 725-901: A Study on the Recognition Scene in the Attic Tragedy.</i> Mattia De Poli	85
10.	<i>Bibliography</i>	103

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1.

**Queer Outrage and Tragic Characters from
Sophocles' *Antigone* to Euripides' *Bacchae***

Davide Susanetti

1. During the last years, we watched commotions and witnessed demonstrations flaring up almost everywhere in the world. As the markets keep shaking and political crisis deepens, outrage seems to spread at speedlight, from North Africa to Europe, from South America to Asia. Does that mean that even outrage is becoming, like anything else, just global? Can it actually play a role in reshaping political frameworks and agendas? Does the effects and the results of outrage depend on gender and identity? Identity categories can be – as Butler wrote¹ – «the normalizing categories of oppressive structure» or, on the contrary, «the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression». If indignation and outrage are reactions to political crisis and discrimination, which identity configuration can turn outrage into the project of a new alternative? A rigid and fixed identity risks to be snared up in the forms and the dynamics that caused the very crisis. On the contrary, a queer subjectivity can be more innovative and successful if “queer” implies – as Sedgwick argued – «the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonance and resonances».²

In Greek dramas we find outraged characters who defy the city and its hierarchies with different outcomes. Is their success or defeat linked to their identity and gender? Can those stories be compared to modern outrage? Clearly, the premodern outrage is not the same passion that spurts nowadays. But there is an uncanny familiarity that is worth investigating. From present to past, from past to present: a «pratique contrôlée de l’anachronisme», as Loraux recommended.³ Understanding antiquity means also choosing the anachronism we want to identify ourselves with.

¹ BUTLER 1991.

² SEDGWICK 1993.

³ LORAUX 2005: 132.

2. At the beginning of Sophocles' *Antigone* (100 ff.), a sunbeam is shining on Thebes. The nightmare of war is over. It is time to dance and sing. It is time to cast the horrors of blood and violence behind us. The city wants to live once again; it wants to forget. But, if the oblivion is to be complete, it has to be unanimous and absolute. What will happen if somebody is bent on remembering? Or conversely: what happens if somebody, hastily and in their own interests, wants to delete all traces of what took place? In both cases there is a dire threat: the restless ghosts of the past will be stirred up, they will spread like a plague, like a scourge. The «ray of sun» fades in the diseased stench of a rotting carcass.

On the battlefield, the two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, lie dead, one killed by the other. The throne is now occupied by Creon, whose first act is to make an announcement: «Eteocles, who died fighting for our city, having excelled in battle, shall be entombed, and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest. But for his brother, Polyneices, who came back from exile, and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers [...] to lead its people into slavery [...], it is proclaimed to our people that none shall grace him with sepulture or lament, but leave him unburied, a corpse for birds and dogs to eat» (194-205). Creon justifies his decision with the need to make a clear distinction between «friends» and «foe»: the two fundamental categories in politics. A «friend» can only be someone who cherishes the city, who fights in defense of their country, who will give their all for the glory of the homeland. Neither blood nor family ties count.

On the stage, Creon's ban is an element of disruption, a clean break with the past: it is putting forward a new bargain. Or at least it appears to be so. Creon, however, is neither a new man nor a new political figure. Brother to Jocasta, brother-in-law to Oedipus, uncle to his two fratricidal nephews. Creon has always been lurking around the throne, prowling the palace. He succeeds to the throne precisely because he is the closest relative to the two dead men. He is woven into the web of bloodlines, he is part and parcel of the past that all want to cast behind them, that he himself wants to delete. His political opportunism spurs him to show himself different from his past, to distance himself from the élite to which he belongs. He shrugs off the ignominy hanging over his clan. By doing so he deftly wipes out all discredit and all recollection, thus regaining his own virginity.

But, it is a girl – a virgin indeed – who foils his plan. Antigone rebels against the ban, argues with it and decides to breach it: «Polyneices' body must be left unburied, no tomb to mark its resting place [...]. This is what noble Creon has ordered me and you to do. Me, do you realize?» (29-32). The «me» that Antigone repeats speaking to her sister is important. Antigone feels charged, she feels

she has been individually targeted.⁴ Antigone is in a state of turmoil: her cheeks flare up, her heart is «hot», burning with passions. She wants to carry out the burial rites the god of death demands, at whatever cost. Antigone performs the deed and, not once but twice, tosses a handful of Theban soil over the body. She has no choice, she is an outraged young woman.

«Indignez-vous», «Time for outrage», as Stéphane Hessel recently rallied youngsters; those who by birth missed the resistance and the massacre of the Second World War. «Indifference – as he writes in his bestselling pamphlet – is the worst possible outlook [...] but some things in this world are unacceptable. To see this, you only have to open your eyes. I tell the young: just look, and you'll find something».⁵ Many young men around the world have heeded the call, airing their grievances against the political policies that are depriving them of their future. Many women have voiced their outrage at the sleazy scandals and corruption of politics. «Rise up» was the call-to-arms that echoed through the squares; a demand for change and a viable alternative to the degenerate, fraudulent male power structure. Antigone, too, is a young woman. Antigone, too, has opened her eyes and has seen enough to fire up outrage, enough to take a stand against the man who governs her city. But what kind of outrage burns in her? Where does it come from? Has this fire been started by an unacceptable situation? By a dysphoric status quo? Does our heroine make her noble gesture in reaction to the ban issued in her own town? Is this all it boils down to? A specific episode at a particular moment in time? Or is it an issue with deeper roots? What can we hear in her voice? Is it the anger of a woman who wants to speak her mind, who wants to break the ban? «We were born women – the meek and yielding Ismene reminds her – as who should not strive with men; next, that we are ruled of the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet sorer» (63-64).

When Antigone is arrested, she stands by her gesture when facing Creon: not the slightest weakening, she does not renounce her deed, she is not afraid of this elder before her. Creon is hounded by an idea of order: his speeches are full of references of the absolute order that must govern his city, his words stigmatize anarchy as the greatest evil. Antigone has no time for Creon's rhetoric: his idea of order means nothing to her. Creon has no time for Antigone's rhetoric: her words are outrageously insulting. Antigone and Creon are two incompatible and impermeable realms. Furthermore, Antigone transgresses the boundaries of gender: «both Antigone's act of burial and her verbal defiance become – as Butler wrote in her *Antigone's Claim* – the occasions on which she is called 'manly' by the chorus, Creon and the messengers».⁶ The virile ruler of the city fears to become fully unmanned by Antigone's defy: if the criminal who

⁴ On Antigone as moral agent see FOLEY 1996.

⁵ HESSEL 2010: 16.

⁶ BUTLER 2000: 8.

buried Polyneices goes unpunished, «Now I am no man, but she the man» (528). Antigone thus appears to assume «the form of a certain masculine sovereignty».⁷

What should we see in all this? Is Antigone's outrage the fury of youth unwilling to go along with things and no longer prepared to bow down to the elders? The indignation of a female subject who is no longer prepared to bow has had enough of the way in which power has been managed by men? Is it the reaction of sons and daughters accusing their fathers of abuse and misconduct in their oppressive grip on power? Are they determined to uncouple the chains of law and order that has only fostered outcasts and unhappiness? Some have rewritten this legend in this key. In Liliana Cavani's film, *The Cannibals*,⁸ Antigone is a middle-class girl who no longer wants to be eaten up by inhuman power. She is no longer prepared to be part of a society where the corpses of the rebels and the dissidents are left to rot in the streets unheeded by everyone else. Her courageous rebellion will gather a following. At the end of the film, a growing number of youngsters will follow her footsteps; the wall of indifference and fear has crumbled, it is the beginning of a new political movement. But is Sophocles' Antigone driven by this same outrage? Can her individual case become an example for and a figurehead for a new way of articulating politics? Antigone is driven by *orge*, by «anger», by an «impulse» that pushes her to action in the name of her name and their dead. It is *orge autognotos*: a passion that decides for itself and governs itself against everything and everybody (875). *Gignosko* is the verb of knowledge and thought. Antigone's *orge* is both spirit and governing reason. Her *orge* prompts powerful words with which to justify and defend her gesture: justice, piety, the unwritten laws of the gods, the afterworld (450-470). Her argument is blindingly and stunningly strong, those who listen to her embrace her cause and are overcome by her same passion. This special kind of *orge* makes Antigone into an *autonomos* figure, one who lays down the law herself, who governs herself in contrast with the *nomoi*, against the laws that govern the city. She will be brought to justice for this: «Of your own will you alone of mortals, while yet alive, descend to Hades [...] The respect you showed is a noble kind of respect; but power, in the hands of him to whom it belongs, is no way to be flouted» (821-875). With these words the chorus of Theban elders describe Antigone's destiny as she heads towards her grave. There is a further hitch, however. On closer inspection, it is clear that this young woman's *orge* is not actually «autonomous»; it is not a free, original passion. It is not her own. Differently from what Cavani and Hessel urge, Antigone's outrage is not truly different from the background she is rebelling against. «The nature of the girl is savage and stubborn, like her father – goes on the chorus of elders –: she doesn't know how to surrender to misfortune» (471-472). Antigone has an *omos*

⁷ BUTLER 2000: 9.

⁸ On Cavani's work see BUSCEMI 1996. On Antigone's myth in contemporary culture see also FORNARO 2012; SUSANETTI 2005: 167-188.

character, «raw, wild», as «raw and wild» as her own father: Antigone has her father's temper. She embodies and repeats his fate. Antigone is, in Sophocles' piece, «the Erinys of the mind», the curse of madness that plagues the whole dynasty (603).⁹

The «wild» Antigone could only be mistaken for an impassioned heroine through misunderstanding. «I was not born – she claims – to share hatred but to share friendship and love» (523).¹⁰ Her refusal to «hate» has nothing abstract or universal about it: it has neither the features of peace nor builds harmony. The *philia* that is shared has a clearly defined meaning. It is a blinkered «love» for what is identical to and like her: her brother, her father, those born of the «same» womb, Jocasta's. It is an obsession with *autos*, an identity of «self» that is reproduced in each member of the family.¹¹ The *philia* that Antigone claims is a radical «homosociality», as dangerous and destructive as the hate against which she appears to have risen up against.

Through her *orge* Antigone does not open a new history. Oedipus' catastrophe is updated, the catastrophe of an impossible and indiscernible legitimacy: political power ashamed to discover that it is founded on horror.¹² Antigone is repressed truth that comes back to haunt them, the nightmare that hounds the city and its institutions, the deviance it can neither quell nor contain. Antigone is the past that, on the threshold of death, gobbles up by the present leaving a new trail of dead bodies.¹³ The justice, the mercy and the gods she calls on are part and parcel of the tainted scenario that she is unable to and doesn't manage to overcome. There is no way to distinguish between the ethic that Antigone brandishes and the impurity and the crime she reviles. It is for this same reason that it is impossible to easily separate Antigone from her antagonist. In Sophocles' play, Antigone and Creon are two faces, one as deranged as the other, of the same twisted family, two faces of a power clique torn inside and headed for self-destruction.¹⁴ Their anger, their outrage are doomed from the outset, bound for failure and defeat because they are unable either to regenerate or to break with the infamy hanging over their past and their saga.¹⁵

Antigone is a virgin but she acts like a man. She is still alive but she says to be already dead: «My life has long been dead so as to help the dead» (559-560). She belongs to the city but is wild like a beast. She loves his brother but this love covers a transgressive desire: «I am his own and I shall lie with him who is my own» (73). Antigone blurs gender boundaries, identity categories and lines

⁹ On the «wild» world of Antigone see also SEGAL 1981: 152 ff.

¹⁰ On this line see PETROVIC 2001; SUSANETTI 2012: 259.

¹¹ For use and meaning of *autos* in the drama see LORAUX 1986a.

¹² On Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* see STELLA 2010b.

¹³ On the past that comes back cf. BOLLACK 1999: 113-115.

¹⁴ See BELTRAMETTI 2002.

¹⁵ SUSANETTI 2011a: 143 ff.

of kinship, but she is «not quite a queer heroine»¹⁶ because her action implies a regressive perspective and doesn't break with a sick origin. She emblemizes the fatality of heterosexual incest as repetition of her father's fate and her brother's violence. At the end, the heroine is nothing: «not a bride, not a mother, not a sister: she is only the figure of Oedipus' curse»,¹⁷ Antigone's outrage is the fruit of the political incest played out in Oedipus' story. It is a wretched family where fathers, sons and brothers mingle and blur into a monstrous muddle; this is the democratic city state in which the brotherhood of citizens drowns in endless squabbles between political factions, trials, accusations, ulterior motives and mutual vilification¹⁸. Antigone's outrage does not quell the demons, but actually continues to fuel them in a vicious circle where politics breeds like a cruel massacre, a poisoned exchange, treacherously forsaking shared goals and manipulating memories. Antigone's anger is *autognotos* and *autonomos*, she is obeying her «law», but this law is the law that rings with the impossibility of civic coexistence. In this story, the only rotting corpse that nobody is able to hide is the cadaver of politics, the carcass of democracy, left there for all to see.

This Antigone belongs to the world of death, this Antigone who bemoans herself and her fate, this Antigone who when on the brink of death boasts the privilege of her noble birth, bears a strong resemblance to the «unhappy youths» described by Pasolini: «monstrous» offspring, «criminal» offspring, sons and daughters who have not «freed themselves from their fathers' wrongdoing», these sons and daughters are far from «blameless» either in their words or their deeds.¹⁹ What is to be done with the outrage, then? Should it be supported unquestioningly as Hessel maintains? Or should we look closely at what it is and where it is going? Should we check the spirit to avoid ending up ensnared in the same trap as Antigone and Creon? If we decide to deal solely with outrage – as Luciana Castellina points out in her comment on Hessel's text²⁰ – it is easy to get tangled in «antipolitics» or in «resignation» because «one feels *no* other world is possible». It all ends up being destiny, the plan of fate, a catastrophe beyond everyone's control, a misfortune we can weep over together. We are angered, we are upset, we lose ourselves in nostalgic daydreams of a long-defiled innocence. In the wake of wailing and weeping, things are liable to stay the same or worsen. Nothing changes and the contradiction stays put within the city walls and institutions. Sophocles' dramaturgy repeats this dynamic over and over again. It shows conflicting opinions clashing, it reveals the rotten core of the city and its men, it heightens, to the point of overwhelming us, the aggressive discourse of politics. The characters shout, curse, argue in a *stasis*

¹⁶ BUTLER 2000: 72.

¹⁷ STELLA 2010a: 41.

¹⁸ On incest as symbol of democratic city see STELLA 2010a: 38-39.

¹⁹ PASOLINI 1999: 541.

²⁰ CASTELLINA 2011: 18.

glosses, in a «verbal insurrection»;²¹ they kill themselves and each other. The dramatization enacts the conflict, reproduces it but does not analyze it in the etymological sense. That is to say, it neither presents nor reveals solutions, even those that lie beyond the on-stage time-span. This dramatization lifts the shroud and shows the rotting carcass of politics, but then this shroud is put back over the body one again. Following the outrage and the mortal conflict all of the characters resign to the same conclusion: «All of this was the will of Zeus»²² or they weep over the meaningless «progeny of men: a man is nothing; his happiness is fleeting. Your example stands before me, your destiny, poor Oedipus».²³ Sophocles' dramaturgy can be said to be a contrivance, a device that will always tick away inside the political system: it is the outlook of one who is inside the chambers of power, it is the outlook of an insider who is both blowing the whistle and covering up, who both yanks back the curtain and puts up a smoke-screen.²⁴

This is why we never have a real turnaround, we never have a “healthy” outrage that can grow into a plan and an options. The pattern Sophocles describes is a system where the independence of the players – even Antigone's – is inauthentic and nonexistent. It is a system that exploits the independence and the outrage of those involved in order to feed itself. Those involved believe themselves to be independent and outraged – like Antigone does – when in fact all they do is feed the mechanism. Thus, the “plague” keeps it grip on the city, prolonging the affliction.²⁵ With each bout, the system implodes, but actually survives and revives itself, leeching off the very same logic and dynamic. Only the victims who sacrifice themselves in the name of their outrage change. Creon remains in power. He is weakened by his guilt and his errors, but he is actually even more useful for it. What is better than a weak and coercible leader? A leader who is left in his place so as to be maneuvered by hidden forces, antidemocratic forces.

3. Another outlook is called for if we are to deploy outrage with a different aim and impact. A different outlook, or better, another's outlook; the outsider's outlook. The stranger who can lay bare all the petty games with insight, an Other who can tinker with his own and others' feelings, who can turn outrage into a mousetrap, a carefully staged pageant. The Sophoclean pattern of implosion is antagonistic to the Euripidean pattern, where the system explodes and is shattered forever. As it happens in *Medea* where a sophisticated outrage is at work. The outrage is sophisticated because Medea, the barbarian, the foreigner,

²¹ Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 635.

²² Sophocles, *Women of Trachis* 1278.

²³ Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 1186-1188.

²⁴ SUSANETTI 2011a: 10-11.

²⁵ SERRA 1994: 127-128.

the restless and ruinous sorceress, in Euripides' dramatization acts as and operates as an avatar of an intellectual figure.²⁶ Within the walls of her home, Medea cries out in pain, curses Jason who has betrayed her, invokes death and destruction on her enemies and resoundingly summons the gods to witness the unfairness she has suffered. Outside, the chorus and the distressed wet-nurse are alarmed to hear her shrieks. But when Medea steps out of the house and shows herself in public, she is completely different. She is unruffled, collected, clear-headed and rational. She ruminates on the ill-repute of the knowledgeable – intellectuals, in fact – and stresses how unfair and unfounded this reputation is (291-304). She is careful to add, however: «Yet, I am not so very wise» (305). In other words: «I am not such a threatening intellectual» for the system, «I am not a foreigner who has come here to do you harm». Medea seeks benevolence and complicity from the women in the chorus. She cajoles the King of Corinth in order to gain the time necessary to put her plans into action. She tricks the King of Athens into granting her political asylum after the crime. In her first exchange with Jason, it is true, she lets herself go, once more, to anger and outrage: she lashes out at the adulterer, she accuses him. But this outrage is a liberty she takes in full awareness. She is not acting in the heat of the moment but with a precise purpose of letting off steam: «You did well to come, for it will relieve my feelings to tell you how wicked you are, and you will be stung by what I have to say» (472-474). Immediately afterward, she answers Jason's speech more mildly, purposely to put the philanderer in a tight spot: «I will talk to you as a friend [...] I will do it, for you will be shown up in a uglier light by my questions» (499-501).

Mistress of *metis*, of cleverness, Medea fits in perfectly with the make-believe of theater and the play-acting it implies: this may be its most unsettling aspect. Medea, methodically, manipulates, almost hypnotically, the thoughts and reactions of those who cross her path. Faking and disguising, delivering «speeches sweet to hear» (314), she overwhelms all reticence, compels others to give fatal agreement and defines the actual conditions of her revenge. Fiercely critical of the deceit in rhetoric, Medea herself is an artist of words and parlance. Her expertise lies not only in fitting the circumstances but also in targeting the listener's sex, and accordingly adjusting her eloquence: she speaks to the women of the chorus in one way and men she wants to strike in another. When the time is ripe, whenever it is necessary or gainful, Medea hides her outrage and her true motives. Medea is the perfect director of a play, her interlocutors, actors unaware and unseeing. Medea weaves, inch by inch, her web of revenge, which is the plot of the tragedy itself: she feigns and deceives, instigates a reaction, draws a blueprint, sets timing and pace for her deeds.²⁷

²⁶ See also PADUANO 1968: 297 ff.

²⁷ SUSANETTI 2007: 51-59.

Thus her outrage becomes effective: it is successful and leaves her enemies no means of escape. There are no gods, there is not clash with an unfathomable fate, there is no transcendent scenario in which to set the events taking place on the stage. It is all in Medea's head: the play is her *mechane*, her own clever «deceit» (1010). Medea can take full responsibility for her *mechane*, it is all her own work. Medea toys with and flirts with others' feelings, but also with her own which she turns into a display.

When she is on stage alone, when only the women's chorus is within earshot, Medea appears, in certain moments, to be telling the truth: she seems to reveal, once more, the true face of her cruel outrage, the anger that had reverberated within the walls of her own house, within her chamber. In these moments, the Medea we see is torn apart: she talks to herself, with the parts of herself; her soul, her heart, her hand. She goads herself to go on, to see things through. In the well-known monologue which comes before the infanticide, Medea wavers: «Do I or do I not slaughter them?», «Do I commit this monstrosity or do I go before I burden myself with this abomination?» (1042 ff.). The monologue appears to be a moment of reckoning, an outburst between clear thinking and folly, looking straight at the gaping wound in her soul, wrestling between her outrage and the last gasps of pity. Are we sure that this isn't just more public spectacle? A show that Medea wants to perform for her audience, to the women in the chorus, before making the last move in her heinous revenge plot? Are we sure that this deep torment is not simply a rhetorical ploy? Yet another lure for those watching and listening? The rhetoric of a soul torn between two opposites, between good and evil, between violence and mercy, is a typically tragic feature. But are the options really open or is the die cast? Maybe there was nothing left to decide once Medea had cried out to «fire up her heart», to «stir up her anger» as the text says (99) – winding up the clockwork bomb that will explode before the play closes. Is the monologue truth or sham truth? Let's not forget that shortly before this one Medea had faked another monologue. In order to trick Jason, she had affected self-condemnation, pretending to agree with him (870-882). To be sure of being believed she had revealed what she had said to herself to him. She then launched into a monologue which had never actually been spoken, parading phony psychology before him. In this way, Medea reaches her goal and tricks everyone into believing that what she does is fatally “necessary” – when, in fact, the only “necessity” is her giving birth. Medea recites, at a certain point, a line that critics have dwelt upon: *thymos de kreisson ton emon bouleumaton* (1079).²⁸ How are we to interpret this sentence? «Anger, ardor, is it stronger than reason»? Or else: «My anger steers all of my decisions and my intentions»? Both interpretations are true, but on different levels of dramaturgy. «My ardor is greater than my reason» belongs to the level

²⁸ SUSANETTI, CIANI 1997: 202-203.

where Medea wants to perform to her audience. Even she wants to be pitied. Even she wants to come across as a tragic character, a tragically split character through whom something acts and over whom it prevails. But is this really Medea? The reality that can be glimpsed behind the scenery, the truth within the closet is quite another. «My soul, my outrage governs my plot, governs the drama, the tragic plot I am building». In politics – we can ask ourselves – is it really worthwhile for ardor to be heartfelt? Is it really worthwhile to reveal our deepest feelings? Could it be that Medea is efficacious and successful precisely because she is two-faced and never lets the mask slip.

Medea's outrage is the knowing outrage of a cognizant outsider, as such this person is able to undermine everything because they do not belong to the sick system: they can be neither contaminated nor compromised by it. It is the forceful outrage of a queer subject, a subject that is unclassifiable and equivocal: «I'm different from the majority of the mortals» (597). Medea says «We women» (231), but her atrocious vengeance calls to mind Ajax in Sophocles, as both characters are moved to criminal action and carnage by their concern for the possibility of becoming an object of derision for their enemies (384, 404, 805-806, 1049, 1355).²⁹ Like a warrior wounded in his honour and in his prerogatives, Medea sows death to punish the offence perpetrated against her spousal bed. Like a warrior and a hero she speaks to her own heart and hands, which must be ready to kill (496-497, 1056, 1242-1244). She even gets to the point of wishing for the battlefield, for war and the weapons of men, as a desirable context of risk and peril (249-251). She is a foreigner, but also undeniably “Greek” when she flips her enemies' own classifications and mindset around and uses it against them. She is human, but also a wild beast and a mythical monster: a lioness (1358) or the savage Skylla (1343). She is human, but also goddess when she appears on the chariot Helios has given her (1320-1321). Beyond any doubt, she kills her own children,³⁰ but does so to exact her revenge. But are they really children, the puppets that appear on stage? Are they not a metaphor for a severed tie, an entanglement that must be cut in order to get rid of all the snarls in this tangled system?

4. Medea's queer outrage is the blueprint for Dionysus in the Euripides' *Bacchae*. There too Dionysus is just play-acting: he pretends to be a foreigner, to be someone else, he toys with others' feelings, he teases them and leads them to misadventure. Dionysus too is queer. He is male and female. An androgynous beauty that seduces who looks at him: «What long hair! You surely are not one of those who wrestle in the gymnasium, with those locks of yours reaching your cheeks ... they make you attractive! And such fair skin! You surely avoid

²⁹ See Sophocles, *Ajax* 367, 454, 961; and SUSANETTI 2007: 48.

³⁰ On motherhood and infanticide in the drama see BELTRAMETTI 2000.

the sun on purpose: always in the shadow, hunting for sex, handsome as you are» (435-439) He is human and divine: son of a god and a mortal woman. He belongs to Greece but he appears as a barbarian man. He is the disturbing portrait of Otherness while at the same time standing for what is very near and intimate.³¹

Dionysus is outraged with Thebes. The city does not embrace his cult and it vilifies the memory of his mother Semele. Thebes thinks the myth of Dionysus' birth far-fetched, if not an outright lie. Members of royal family say that Semele was one of the many women who invented a hierogamy to cover the shame of an illicit affair. Those who govern the city refute what is sacred or else exploit it like any other means for holding onto power, a political lie. Cadmus invites his nephew King Pentheus to proclaim Dionysus a deity regardless of the truth or his own personal beliefs. It matters little whether Dionysus is a god, or whether he even exists. What matters is that the king makes this proclamation in the interests of his own and the family's power, as it will bring the ruling household prestige Tiresias allegorises and rewrites the myth: he speaks as a Sophist and uses the theoretical baggage of a modern intellectual, offering an interpretation that deliberately manipulates what is sacred.³² And so, Thebes deserves to be destroyed, to be annihilated. Dionysus is a god who punishes impiety, but he is, at the same, the illegitimate son returns to claim his rights from a family that has disowned and excluded him:³³ the bastard who acts in defence of his mother. His furious revenge slowly and intentionally eliminates his relations, destroying their prerogatives and their privileges.

Dionysus exploits all the resource of theater in order to punish his opponents:³⁴ he overwhelms his victims with special effects and illusions, he strips his enemy of his identity and of his gender. Everything turns into magic and deceit. His antagonist, the young Pentheus, king of Thebes, erupts with fury, lashes out verbally and physically in reaction to the foreigner's taunts. Dionysus steps back to watch. Dionysus remains *hesychos*, «quiet», «calm»: he smiles (439, 636). His anger is hidden. On stage he lets others rise up. This queer Dionysus turns into the household fiend, the ghost that haunts the powerful élite: it shows up the insufficiency and ineligibility of this élite, he profits from its blindness and its prejudices.

As a result of Dionysus' scheming, as a result of his on-stage play-acting, Pentheus finds himself in Oedipus' situation. Pentheus stumbles towards his fate in Oedipal obliviousness, a comparison that is effectively underlined by the dialogue between Pentheus and Dionysus. In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Tiresias accuses Oedipus of not knowing who he is, what he is doing and whom

³¹ On queer Dionysus see FUSILLO 2006.

³² STELLA 2007; SUSANETTI 2010: 15-20.

³³ On the "return" of Dionysus see BELTRAMETTI 2007.

³⁴ On theater and metatheater in the drama see SEGAL 1997: 215 ff.

he lives with (366-367). Dionysus accuses Pentheus of the same blindness: «You don't know how you live, you don't know what you see; you don't even know who you are» (506). Unlike Oedipus, however, Pentheus has no investigations to conduct or past to piece together to discover his true identity. Indeed, Pentheus is brashly aware of who he is: «I am Pentheus, son of Agave and Echion» (507). But this knowledge will not save him; nor is his knowledge of himself the root of the problem, besides the fact that he and Dionysus are related. The Oedipal language, however, is merely a sign that Pentheus is being delegitimized as king. With perfect timing, the plot rushes towards its tragic *déjà vu* ending. Dionysus, the «queer bastard», exploits the fatality of incest, the curse of Oedipus, as a destructive signifier against the «straight» ruler of the city.

Dionysus tempts Pentheus with the idea of spying on the maenads. The King would be ready to pay in «gold» to gain access to that spectacle. He imagines the mount of Thebes as an outdoors brothel of sorts: the women of the city would be there getting drunk on wine, having sex squatting like beasts among the bushes, in the shade of trees. He is obsessed with the cultural and androcratic topos of the feminine as disorder, as something visceral and insatiably genital. The king, however, does not only want to watch the maenads; he wants to spy on his own mother and watch her in a state of sexual abandon. Pentheus envisions a primary scene and he regresses to being a child spying on his mother; he wants to discover what she does with her body and what she desires outside her mother-son relationship: a primeval desire and oneiric fantasy that want to come true. But Pentheus has to take one last step in order to satisfy his desire: disguise himself as a maenad, «become a woman» (822). This seems like a clever move to avoid being discovered, but – as later events prove – his disguise is merely a symbolic transition that leads to his downfall. Dressing as the opposite sex pertains to the rituality of celebrations and rites of passage, and it is part of the mythobiography of heroes.³⁵ In Pentheus's case, however, no positive rite of initiation coincides with the Dionysian costume.

Pentheus thus wears the long robe of the maenads and the coif typical of the women of Asia; he ends up dancing and shaking the thyrsus. His entrance on stage in this disguise functions as a degraded and degrading epiphany of sorts (912 ff.). Dionysus states that Pentheus is a perfect and adequate image of his relatives: «you resemble one of the daughters of Cadmus» (917); seeing the king is like «seeing one of them» (927). The king in his turn wants to be sure he is imitating the model in the best possible way. The desire to see the mother translates into the desire to be like her. Pentheus, dressed like a woman and transformed into a bacchant, is concerned with looking like his aunts and his mother Agave, resembling them and imitating their gait and posture. If assuming a sexual gender is a matter of *performance*, the scenes

³⁵ On ritual gender crossings see GALLINI 1963.

in Euripides's work exemplify this logic and all its consequences. The king – who as a son should imitate the male model provided by the father – makes a twisted transition to the feminine: he becomes bacchant, woman and mother in a mimetic process carried out under the perfidious supervision of the god. The phantoms of sexuality, freed by Dionysus's smooth-tongued strategy, become a fatal shroud wrapped around Pentheus: a loss of identity which reaches its culmination in dismemberment. Whereas the lustrous kingliness of Oedipus falls ruinously at the horrifying discovery of parricide and incest, Pentheus can be liquidated simply by means of the symbolic identification with his mother, with Dionysus-worshipping Agave, fierce and blood-thirsty: the last in a line of maddened heroines and infanticidal mothers repeatedly portrayed by Greek tragic theatre. As soon as the king of the city, the male holder of power, coincides with the sanguinary appearance of the homicidal queen, with the mask of the "evil mother", all order implodes. The queer avenger has turned Oedipal pattern against the city in order to destroy it and its politics.

5. Euripides' play, Dionysus' play-acting doesn't allow us to lament the human flaw, it doesn't let us weep for the lineage of the mortals. Nothing is left standing. It is the ultimate destruction. Thebes is an open city: a vacuum. The vicious circle, the circle of sick politics is forever broken and has disappeared without a trace. When Euripides wrote the *Bacchae*, he had retreated to Macedonia. From abroad his intellectual dramatic art, his queer theatre could voice triumphant outrage and wholesale condemnation. But what is left in the space made vacant? Dionysus predicts that Thebes will be overrun by Barbarians, that it will become vulnerable to attack. It will no longer be the Greece it was. And Athens will go the same way: the dreams of an empire are shattered, swallowed up in the mirage of expansion and conquest, Athens becomes an outpost, a satellite of another empire, Alexander the Great's empire. In the vacuum created by Dionysus' outrage and revenge all that's left is the survivors' fear and dismay: the fear of impoverishment, the fear of losing prestige, the fear of being enslaved by other peoples, slaves to the Barbarians; slaves to those peoples they had always looked down on, they had always scorned. Dionysus' purposeful outrage and Medea's independent outrage both produce wreckage.

Euripidean Medea and Dionysus are system troubleshooters. They liquidate the corrupt systems and affiliations: "obscene" elite liquidators. Theater indulges its audience – the weakest and the most vulnerable – with a vision of sweet revenge: the dream of a perfect "clean up" which sweeps away all the "scum" of the city. This wish is also a frightening nightmare, a warning to all those who are to blame for that system. But, once the curtain comes down what are the options open to those who are heading home? What can sprout out of this debris, of this fear? The dream of a new bargain, of a new community that will play by new rules? A community that will make more trustworthy and freer use

of feelings? A community where feelings are truly independent and foster wider forms of inclusion? The *Bacchae* and *Medea* as they were re-written or staged in the 70's offered this prospect.³⁶ But in the vacuum of fear and outrage another prospect emerges: that of surrendering to anyone, surrendering to another, even more abominable master, submitting to an alluring power that is both shrewder and more miserly. Dionysus' smiling face, his collected outrage can hide this too. It is not enough to indignantly say: «I won't stay in this city any longer», as Oedipus and Antigone do. This only serves to keep you a prisoner of the system. But also what Dionysus achieved with his outrage is risky, it is the gateway to more authoritarian outcomes: it is the surest way to subjugate others. In a critical scenario, outrage can take on a positive connotation only if it is channeled into a widespread appeal for more involvement in politics. Outrage should be the first step towards to widespread engagement. Hence Hessel's second pamphlet is titled: «Éngagez-vous», «Get Involved».³⁷

³⁶ SUSANETTI 2005: 95-99, 234-40.

³⁷ HESSEL 2011.

2.

**In the Suburbs of Argos.
Electra and the Dialectics of the Excluded.
Thoughts on the Mythological Narration
in the Euripides' *Electra*.¹**

Nuala Distilo

The comic Anthiphanes, in the 189 Kassel-Austin fragment, stated that among all the forms of art, tragedy is the luckiest one because the spectators already know the story that's about to be shown when they go to the theatre. To the Electra's viewers, in the spring of a not perfectly identified year between 423 and 417 BC,² during the Great Dionysia, Euripides reserved an unexpected scenery. In place of the waited front of Agamemnon's dark and majestic palace, abode of Atreus' sons and their indescribable crimes, the viewers found themselves facing just a semi desert scene, a mountain's cliff, maybe, and, far away, the humble home of *Autourgos*, a man who has to farm with his own hands in order to eat (cf. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.141.3; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 5.4). The strange character appearing in the background and starting to act out the prologue doesn't help the astonished, and no more lucky, spectator find his path within a myth he thought, in fact, until a few minutes before, to know until a few minutes before. «O river of the Argive land, the streams of Inachus» (1),³ with these words the farmer, still unknown character, starts the drama, and only after more than thirty lines unveils that he, poor and humble owner of the house that usurped the scene at the Agamemnon's palace, is Electra's husband. The absence, therefore, indicates from the first words a tragedy whose plot unravels in the suburbs of Argos, far from the palace, far from the tradition, in a remote place, where Electra isn't an orphan princess anymore, but the humble wife of

¹ See CAREY 2008; MEDDA 2007; SUSANETTI 2007; BATTEZZATO 2001; DUPONT 2001; FOLEY 2001; BELTRAMETTI 1998; EASTERLING 1988; ARNOTT 1973; BAIN 1981.

² Probably in the spring of 423 BC: see DISTILO 2013.

³ Translation here is on the basis of the text I edited in DISTILO 2012: *ad locum*.

a peasant who says, or believes, to be a princess, sent away from a palace that isn't there, and that no one of the presents has ever seen, given in marriage to a man she judges unworthy for her.

When Electra enters the scene, wearing rags, miserable, with short hair and a jug of water on her head, pronouncing an invocation to the night, no one of the spectators can recognize her: «O black night, nurse of the golden stars, in which I go to the river's streams, bearing this pitcher resting on my head- not because I have come to such a point of necessity, but so that I may show to the gods Aegisthus' insolence»⁴ (54-58); if the farmer hadn't just narrated a by now already knew backstory, no one would believe that she actually is Agamemnon's daughter. The reference is for antiphrasis to the Aeschylean Electra that in the *Libation Bearers* (84 ff.) makes her first appearance with another vase, the one for the libations to pour on her father's grave. Her vase is therefore full and she goes to the burial to honor the king killed long before; deceiver libation, of course, because sent by Clytaemnestra, his murderer; but here, the hypocrisy is replaced by vacuity, dreariness: Electra's vase is empty, it waits to be filled with water, so that she could, with her humble action, show the gods what has been the daughter of that kind whose tomb waits in vain honors and offers has been reduced to. It's true, however, that it's also a necessary action. In the suburbs of Argos there's no time to pour the libations, the everyday life's struggles burden on them: «For no idler, though he has the gods' names always on his lips, can gather a livelihood without hard work» (80-81), reminds us again the farmer, while he distances to go to the fields before dawn, leaving the poor Electra alone with her moans and tears.

In Sophocles' *Electra* the prologue is declaimed by Orestes who shows the reasons for his return, in this tragedy, on the other hand, there is not a trace of Orestes: no one knows whether he's still alive or if someone, tempted by the bounty put on his head by Aegisthus (another Euripidean innovation), has already killed him. Electra's husband doesn't limit himself to reading the prologue: he shows the point of view of a narration that isn't recognized in the myth's tradition, through the display of people that are not the sovereigns of the Argive land and everyday objects that make their first entrance in a tragedy. The exposition, almost exhibited, of the bodies, starting from his own, poor, shabbily dressed, suspicious (50-53: «And whoever says I am a fool if I do not touch a young girl when I have her in my house, let him know that he measures soundness of mind by worthless standards of judgment, and he himself is a fool») and, right away, Electra's body, thin, skinny – *xeros* – balmless, covered with rags and, moreover, with her head completely shaved, as a sign of mourning.⁵

Poverty, misery, daily struggles took the place of the grudge and the hate towards the murderers. If a crime has been committed, years before, it is only

⁴ For the translation here and hereafter see COLERIDGE 1938, 2: *ad locum*.

⁵ See FOUCAULT 2005: especially 19-21 on Euripides' *Electra*.

remembered as the cause of a loss: the loss of the wellness and the wealth, that Electra regrets more than the father and the brother, and on which she compulsively insists during her cries: «In what city and what household do you wander about, my wretched brother, leaving your pitiable sister in our ancestral home, to great pain? Come to me, the unhappy one, as a deliverer from this pain, oh Zeus, Zeus, and as a defender for my father against his most hateful bloodshed; bring the wanderer to shore in Argos» (133-139).

The farmer's story, then, looks like the story of a poor idiot that doesn't mean what the tradition had used the viewers to anymore. Electra's anger becomes *mania*, obsessive and absolute madness that ignores the surrounding reality, and whose only goal is to take revenge on those who took away everything she had.

Electra's narration, twists, hence, in the dialectic of the excluded («And, mother - for I live as a slave in this miserable house, cast out from my father's home», as she reproaches her mother at 1004-1005): sent away from the father's house – *ekbeblemene* – in a sort of claustrophobia of thought, isn't able to divert attention from what could happen in the palace, that she, in fact, can't see and can't know; Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus' unrestrained romances, soaked in Agamemnon's clotted blood, the two lovers who killed the legitimate king, the wild luxury in which she represents her mother become the feature of her own resentment: «But my mother, with a new husband, makes her home in a bed stained by blood» (210-212), and again «and this man here of a dear father, though you were wronged in no way by us; and you made a shameful marriage with my mother, and killed her husband, who led the armies of Hellas, though you never went to Troy. You were so foolish that you really expected, in marrying my mother, that she would not be unfaithful to you» (916-920), she would say, blaming on Aegisthus' already lifeless body.

While the Sophoclean Electra is able to tell what she sees happening in front of her eyes day by day, in a non-stop present that refuses to flow, the Euripidean lead can only presume, victim of her own mind's ghosts, what she can't see and her thought goes even further, Euripides seems to suggest, the horror committed by the two killer lovers. Agamemnon's murder, his death bath is, indeed, almost forgot at the moment when the revenge takes place; not a single word is said by Electra in the *rhesis* on Aegisthus' dead body, anyway not before having recalled his wild and profligate sexual behaviour and his ambition. The two crimes don't seem linked by anything but the mythological memory, present in the Choral songs, which causes the division, that cannot be reassembled anymore, that the Euripidean drama presented, transformed the place where that murder, long before, took place, in somewhere else, where the main characters of the tragedy won't be able to enter, neither before nor after the matricide; all the plot takes place in the countryside and the place where the queen would be killed is the miserable abode of the farmer, pressured, as we

could see, by everyday life needs, and subjected to the common laws of man. Here the murders have nothing of royal, there are no revenges to fulfil because the house's walls don't carry the shouts of Thyestes' unfairly slaughtered sons, and the suffered yell of a dying king mixes with his murderer's joyful one. Here, the sons of Tantalus become savage killers, murders perpetrated by two poor people against a well-dressed woman. The woman will become their mother, but only after their hands have been dripping blood from her throat. At this moment, the circle is put together again and the Argive farmer's abode identifies with Agamemnon's cursed house, as the Chorus states in front of the two desperate matricides: «There is no house more pitiable than the race of Tantalus, nor has there ever been» (1175-1176).

There are, as Gorgias in the *Encomium of Helen* (fr. 82 B 11)⁶ suggested, different ways of interpreting the reality, each one plausible and interchangeable. The rhetoric art of persuasion makes a speech better than another one, a story more plausible, a legend more believable; a farmer's wife can also tell, from this point of view, her own story rewriting it in parallel to another, more famous, mythical story and be plausible. Until the murder of Aegisthus, Electra and Orestes narrate a story that is not theirs, they tell events that are far away in space and time, they live only on other people's torments and memories.

The disintegration of the oikos.

«I have come from the mystic shrine of the god to Argive land, and no one knows it, to repay my father's murderers with murder» (87-89). Phoebus' obscure Oracle leads the stranger, Orestes, and brings him to Argos, to take the revenge on his father's murderers as the Homeric tradition requires. Orestes' return it's a topic element of the saga: the male heir driven away, for fear, by his mother, who got herself a new lover and doesn't hesitate to destroy her son to please him, to the point where a desolated Electra will remind the stranger who asking about her mother: «Women love their husbands, stranger, not their children» (265).

The theme is displayed in similar ways by the three tragedians, but Euripides adds a discordant element when it's evident how Orestes has actually come back, but without an accurate design on how to act. It looks like as if he were guided more by chance than by the oracle of Apollo in all his actions: and so we can deduce early that he hasn't got a clear plan and doesn't know exactly where her sister is; he only arrives near her abode, near the boundaries of the Argive land, by chance, because he decides from the beginning that he isn't going to cross the city walls because he fears being exposed (94-101: «And now

⁶ DIELS, KRANZ 1952.

I do not set foot within the walls, but I have come to the borders of this land combining two desires: I may escape to another country if anyone on the watch should recognize me; and, looking for my sister (for they say that she lives here, joined in marriage, and is no longer a virgin), I may meet with her and, having her as an accomplice for murder, I may learn clearly what is happening within the walls»).

Right from the first lines, Orestes' behaviour is clear; he, far from wanting to coldly start a legitimate revenge, only looks interested in escaping more easily as he's near to the border: from this point of view his return, even if it's an integral part of the Myth, is emptied from its meaning. The absence of Agamemnon, of his palace, and of his burial become a drama's *leitmotiv*, which makes the lack of a strong manly power a big problem. The palace, the very place representing this power, becomes deprived of it, while the presence of Electra's poor abode, implicitly claims, for antiphrasis, the occurred substitution: the masculine is supplanted by the feminine and Orestes's confusion by Electra's determination. The house, *oikos*' interior, man's exclusive property, is in fact the place of the femine dominium par excellence, the only one, for the Greek woman. Agamemnon's palace is still an unreachable and distant "elsewhere", that Orestes, for the time being, doesn't desire. The here and now is, again, the suburbs, that contrast with a centre where the protagonist can't find his own identity. The house is traditionally a property of the male, of the father, that leaves it as inheritance to the direct male progeny: Orestes' denial of getting near the palace is, metaphorically, a rejection of the entire *oikos* of the Sons of Tantalus; he doesn't entirely accept Apollo's oracle, and doesn't identify as Agamemnon's son. He's the alien par excellence, stranger to Electra, to his father's old pedagogue, but, above all, to himself.

The arrival in the city of a member of the royal family, the stranger, resolved on retaking what's his and revenging on who committed an injustice, is the centre of the Euripidean *Bacchae*, where Dionysus, undercover, reaches Thebes to avenge his mother Semele's death and establish the *Dionysian* cult and *ritual*.⁷ In Argos too there is a father to revenge, a prediction to fulfil, but we observe a mystification of the *topos*: the stranger grasps on his mask and strongly refuses to unveil his identity even to his friends, even to his only ally. He gives up being Orestes because this new ego's weight is too heavy. He doesn't recognize his sister, but mistakes her for a servant, and he doesn't recognize his father's pedagogue and he insults him, «to which of your friends, Electra, does this ancient remnant of a man belong?» (554). In front of the daily reality, beyond what he'd imagined for years in the faraway Phocian land, he is no longer able to bear the inheritance of the Atrides' *genos* and he tries to rewrite another story. In this new representation he's just a friend of Orestes', a dear relative

⁷ For a recent study of the Euripides' *Bacchae*, see SUSANETTI 2010 and bibliography.

sent to gather information on his sister, ready to suffer with and for them, like Pilades, mute but close to the Orestes character for all the drama. Electra talks, then, about her extreme poverty, about how she is supposed to sew her own clothes, about her loneliness, about the distance between her and the centre of her life, Agamemnon's palace, and the real marriage she strived for, the ones with the divine Castor, in place of the «deadly marriage» she got. To her misery she compares the wealth of her mother, whose slaves live in better conditions than her. While no one remembers the blood poured by deceit anymore, the new sovereigns offend and insult the old king and his legitimate progeny, Orestes. The message is clear, Orestes has to come back and revenge take revenge, yet the alien doesn't cede give up and persists in the fiction. Orestes' problem is ontological, for this reason the story of an Argive farmer's wife, unknown and unrecognizable, cannot clear up his doubts: saying that Orestes isn't dead, as happens in the *Libation Bearers* and in the Sophoclean *Electra*, and leaving the task of recognizing him to his sister, is not enough, because here no one brought the knowledge of his death, here everyone believes he's still alive, but not there. He's scared and he doesn't expose himself. Here Orestes becomes the stranger.

The victim and the torturer.

While Orestes enters the house to enjoy the poor farmer's hospitality, waiting for the arrival of Agamemnon's old pedagogue, on the scene, the Argive women that make up the tragedy's Chorus start telling a different story. Story of heroes and well-known challenges, in a distant age in time and space that looks like it's escaping from the drama's narrative space. Glorious ships that once upon a time sailed towards Troy, guided by a lovely dolphin and young Nereids looking for Hellas's light, «the son of Thetis», Achilles. In front of an alien who denies himself, the Argive women recognize the existence of a mythical reality behind which the challenges hide accomplished by the one who was the uncontested leader of that Trojan expedition: the mythologeme of Iphigenia's sacrifice, never explicitly quoted in this song, is nevertheless underlying the narration of ventures that concern, at the beginning, precisely that Achilles through whom Agamemnon will weave the deceit of the marriage and, in the final episode, the cruel revenge of the deceived queen. The display of the bodies, typical of the first part of the drama, is now replaced by the light that spreads out, reflected by the water spurts of the dolphin and by the golden arms forged by Hephaestus, until it returns, incarnating a hero, Achilles, called indeed «Hellas's light», image that concludes the first turning point of the Stasimon. The purity of this characters accompanies a subtle, yet misleading, promise of victory in the field of a heroic paradigm that excludes human sufferance. The one outlined here is not the Homeric Achilles: it represents more the evocation

of a dream of an idyllic mythology that shatters in a way as unexpected as well-timed.

The transition to the second strophic pair marks a change of the point of view: the myth is no longer perceived through the young Nereids' dreamy eyes, following the rhythm of the dolphin's dance and the sound of the *aulos*, but the focus moves on the tormented and agonizing testimony of a man escaped from the atrocities of that war: «I heard, from someone who had arrived at the harbor of Nauplia from Ilium, that on the circle of your famous shield, O son of Thetis, were wrought these signs, a terror to the Phrygians» (452 ff.). The description of that shield is now entrusted to the eyes of whom had been frightened by it: Achilles is not represented as the splendid Hero who will lead the Greek to victory anymore, but more like a cruel warrior that inexorably brings his enemies to death and terror generated by terrible monsters represented on his armour, «bringing defeat to the eyes of Hector» (Homer, *Iliad* 22.132-137). The song's tone has now inexorably changed: Perseus holds the Gorgon's head that brings «in their talons prey from singing», a victim subdued and killed with deception.

The *metabole* of a horrible creature that seduces to kill, through a play of figures promptly juxtaposed, reminds of Clytaemnestra, the cruel woman who weaved to the «the lord of such mighty warriors», a terrible deceit at her return. The queen becomes then that monster that, as the Gorgon, waits to be slaughtered, killed by a hero that doesn't exist yet. And the Chimera's image, whose murder by Bellerophon is only allusively mentioned, but not yet represented; a monstrous creature portrayed in a moment in which it's still, in the meantime, terrifying and terrified Annihilate and kill, therefore, is a necessity for Orestes, a duty required not only by the Oracle of Apollo, but by the entire Argive community: murdering his own mother to fulfil a punishment that has waited, by now, for unutterable time. Weapons are not object of artistic description anymore, but – at this point soaked in Agamemnon's blood (476-477: «On the bloody hilt four-footed horses were prancing, while over their backs black dust rose up») – become tools for an avenger. All the gods are the ones who will send Clytaemnestra «to a tragic death» (that the spectators will see at 1226 ff., when she'll lie lifeless on the scene) and he is the chosen one to perpetrate that murder, as Perseus who decapitates the Gorgon and Bellerophon that kills the Chimera: but Orestes is also the son of the Gorgon and the Chimera, the myth can't completely represent the ineffability of a way more complex and dialectic reality, a world in which heroes and monsters identify and confuse, where the torturer is also the victim, he's mother and son, he's son and matricide. A world in which light is replaced by contamination, the *miasma* from where all the members of this family are struck, the blood of Agamemnon that still lies clotted in the palace, and the Iphigenia's one, that gushes from her throat.

The mask and the man.

The arrival of the old Agamemnon's pedagogue to the steep hill where the Electra's house is located represents the point where the ancient past and the present narrated in the drama meet, the difference between a nonsense story narrated by a poor farmer and the last chapter of the Tantalus' sons' saga. Agamemnon's burial ritual, already described by Orestes, is, in this lines, remodulated by the old pedagogue on the basis of a reconciliation with the ancient story of the myth. If someone has dared to honour Agamemnon's abandoned grave, this can't be anyone but Orestes. But while in the young stranger's words the execution of this funeral rites almost constitutes the very same fulfilment of his mission (90-93: «During this past night, going to my father's tomb, I wept and cut off a lock of my hair as an offering and sacrificed over the altar the blood of a slaughtered sheep, unnoticed by the tyrants who rule this land») that doesn't require any other offerings, in the old man's words it fills with expectation. Orestes, in the shoes of the stranger who leaves Electra's house, still thinks that he can end the visit with impunity: a sheep's blood has been poured, and the ritual has been fulfilled. Agamemnon has been killed, «So he brought him up all unaware of his doom» (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.535), sacrificed in the animal's place, Orestes returns the sacrifice in an attempt to reassemble the circle without fulfilling the oracle.

Nomos and *physis*, law and nature, conflict: the breaking of the blood tie that binds inexorably mother and son that the complete fulfilment of the oracle implies, and that the young stranger wants, only in words, to accomplish, would return Orestes to a ferocity that has nothing to do with him, to an animal brutality of the ones that practice cannibalism and kill innocent victims, their own relatives, for vengeance; it would bring him back to the primitive form of savagery that doesn't know the *nomos*, the law, the *polis*' tradition, and compares the sons of Pelops with beasts. The stranger's *nomos* doesn't match the mythical one, which strongly requires the return of an avenger hero: and so the old man's character represents the myth that catches up with the story, the myth's *nomos* that requires the execution of the revenge, against the *polis*' law, as an act of *eusebeia* towards the father, knowing that it constitutes, at the same time, *asebeia* towards the mother; he metaphorically represents the place where Orestes, last descendent of the Pelops' ancestry tainted by now for generations, has to deal with the civilization's, Gods', and Man's law.

The old man enters the scene crying, moved because someone visited Agamemnon's abandoned tomb and left some signs there, some *tekmeria*, the ones that, according to the tradition, ever since Stesichorus (fr. 40 Page) and Aeschylus (*Libation Bearers* 168 ff.), will allow Electra to recognise her brother.⁸

⁸ For the recognition scene in Euripides' *Electra* see GALLAGHER 2003; KOVACS 1989; HALPORN

The curl, his footprint, the *exyphasma* – the mantle in which young Orestes had been covered before being sent to safety to Strophius, far away from the Argive land –; the mythological Electra, remembers Aristophanes in the parabasis of the *Clouds*, she recognises her brother from the curl and that hadn't led to any doubts. But the Euripidean Electra refuses to identify him through some of the aspects of a world she doesn't own anymore. Her reply, rational and determined, aims at demolishing the arguments adduced by the pedagogue. It's not the parody of another drama, even though the quote from the *Libation Bearers* is at some points literal, but more the highlighting of the incompatibility between the two worlds, represented respectively by the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus and the *Electra* by Euripides. There isn't, in other words, for this Electra, but neither for Orestes, a *genos* in which they can recognise themselves through external signs as the locks similarity or the footprint; there isn't, in the society outlined in this drama and underlying the Euripidean representation, an *oikos*, the Atreus' or the Pelops' one, in which the two brothers can place themselves. Electra's sceptical reply seems to be therefore the acknowledging that this house, this ancestry, before being able to be pieced together, has already been inexorably destroyed.

For his part Orestes denies what Electra rejects: he pretends he doesn't understand what the old man's says; he too refuses to identify in Orestes, in what the old Agamemnon's Pedagogue (the old king's and not the Orestes' as in the sofoclean Electra) is trying to show. He simulates surprise in front of the curiosity that he raises in the old pedagogue: «*Or.* Oh! Why does he look at me, as if he were examining the clear mark impressed on a silver coin? Is he comparing me to someone? *El.* Perhaps he is glad to see in you a companion of Orestes. *Or.* A beloved man, yes. But why is he circling all around me?» (558 ff.); while it's clear that he has already understood, he continues to keep the stranger's mask on his face until when, with the recourse to the expedient of the scar, the old man forces him to give up. The guarantor of the Atrides' *nomos*, the father's loyal servant, consigns to Orestes an exile past and a matricide future, he turns the stranger to Orestes and the farmer woman to Electra. The myth finally rejoins the story, and the characters start to act and interact following an already written script. Capable director and demiurge, the Agamemnon's pedagogue will set up the arrangements for the murder of both tyrants and he, pretending to be the humble and obedient servant, will lead the two to the matricide. The denial of the myth is not possible anymore, but there is no past to connect together brother and sister, who keep, at least until the murder of Clytaemnestra, representing different worlds. This brother and this sister, as well as this mother and this children, at the matricide moment, are not alike because they don't belong anymore, Orestes mistakes Electra for a servant, and

when his mother, at the end of the drama, approaches with a shining wagon and surrounded by Phrygian slaves, he has to ask Electra who she is, and only then he gets a psychophysical breakdown.

But for the Athenian audience that watches the play from the theatrical cavea, reminds us Antiphanes, Orestes is the matricide, Electra's brother and Agamemnon's son, put on a path that has no deviations from the show's shared norm which is at the same time ritual, tradition and *nomos*. The swerve that the story told so far keeps underpinning must be overcome depending on a common rituality that can't be betrayed. The stranger's research of his identity must come to an end, and Orestes must accept his fate, no matter whether or not he's persuaded by it: Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra must die.

3.

L'Antigone d'Euripide

Anna Miriam Biga

Parmi les nombreuses tragédies d'Euripide dont nous n'avons que des fragments, il en y a une dédiée à Antigone.

Malheureusement, nous ne connaissons que peu de fragments, dix-neuf selon l'édition de Kannicht, et la plupart d'entre eux sont aussi très brefs.

Une indication plutôt vague en raison de son extrême brièveté au sujet de la trame de cette tragédie est contenue dans l'*hypothesis* qu'Aristophane de Byzance avait écrit pour l'*Antigone* de Sophocle, dans laquelle l'érudit alexandrin avait signalé les différences parmi les intrigues des deux textes.

Voici les mots d'Aristophane:

κείται ἡ μυθοποιία καὶ παρὰ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Ἀντιγόνη· πλὴν ἐκεῖ φωραθεῖσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἴμονος δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν καὶ τέκνον τίκτει τὸν †Μαίμονα.¹

L'ancien savant, donc, nous parle d'une tragédie qui montre d'importantes différences par rapport au texte de Sophocle, mais qui met néanmoins en scène les événements qui ont eu lieu immédiatement après la mort de Polynice, quand il est nécessaire de réfléchir sur la sépulture de son corps.

Quelques savants² avaient supposé que le témoignage le plus sûr pour reconstituer l'intrigue de l'*Antigone* d'Euripide est la *Fabula* dédiée à cette héroïne: cette *Fabula* nous raconte des événements concernant le destin du fils qu'Antigone et Hémon ont eu en secret, parce que Créon avait ordonné à son fils de tuer Antigone en raison de sa désobéissance; le jeune homme toutefois, pris d'amour par elle, l'avait sauvée en la confiant à des bergers.

¹ Aristophane de Byzance, *Hypothesis d'Antigone de Sophocle*: «Le sujet est traité également par Euripide; sauf que là, Antigone, prise sur le fait en compagnie d'Haemon, (lui) est donnée en mariage et qu'elle donne le jour à un fils du nom de †Maimon» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 194, où les savants signalent que Nauck suggère que le nom de l'enfant est Maion, parce que in Homère, *Iliade* 4.394 il y a un fils d'Hémon appelé Maion).

² JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 195, citent Welcker, Mayer et Robert.

Le fils d'Hémon et Antigone, devenu adulte, revient à Thèbes pour des jeux et dans cette occasion Créon reconnaît son petit-fils grâce à un signe sur son corps que tous les descendants des Spartes ont sur la peau. Malgré l'intervention d'Héraclès, Créon ne cède pas et Hémon tue son épouse et se donne la mort.

Selon cette interprétation, l'*hypothesis* d'Aristophane de Byzance doit contenir les antécédents de l'intrigue mise en scène par Euripide.

L'hypothèse la plus probable semble quand même celle de considérer les mots de l'ancien savant alexandrin comme le témoignage le plus sûr pour connaître la pièce d'Euripide: comme l'a déjà remarqué Inglese,³ le fragment 176 nous fournit une preuve de cette théorie.

Le personnage qui prononce ces vers dit:⁴

θάνατος γὰρ ἀνθρωποισι νεικέων τέλος
ἔχει· μαθεῖν δὲ πᾶσιν ἔστιν εὐμαρές
τίς γὰρ πετραῖον σκόπελον οὐτάζων δορί
ὀδύνασαι δώσει, τίς δ' ἀτιμάζων νέκυν,
εἰ μὴδὲν αἰσθάνοιντο τῶν παθημάτων;⁵

Le fragment a été transmis par Stobée qui, comme d'habitude, ne signale pas qui prononçait les vers et n'offre aucune indication pour comprendre de quel point de l'intrigue les vers sont tirés.

On peut affirmer que ces mots sont adressés à Créon, pour le faire changer d'avis, pour éviter que le corps de Polynice soit laissé sans sépulture, mais il est plus difficile de comprendre qui les prononce: Antigone est le premier personnage auquel on pense, mais il convient de rappeler que dans la tragédie écrite par Euripide l'héroïne était moins seule que dans la pièce de Sophocle: Hémon aussi avait participé à la sépulture de Polynice. Il faut aussi rappeler que d'autres personnages auraient pu être concernés par le destin du corps de Polynice ou bien par l'avenir d'Antigone, comme Ismène ou Tirésias; Aristophane ne parle pas de ces personnages, mais son résumé de la pièce est très synthétique et son but était de signaler les différences entre les textes de Sophocle et d'Euripide; par conséquent il a raison de ne pas mentionner les personnages qui n'ont pas un rôle fondamental pour l'intrigue ou qui apparaissent pas dans toutes les deux pièces.

Malgré tous ces doutes, ce fragment est suffisant, comme on l'a dit, pour corroborer le choix de faire confiance à Aristophane parce que celui qui pro-

³ INGLESE 1992a: 180.

⁴ Le texte des fragments est le même de l'édition de KANNICHT 2004.

⁵ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 176 = Stobée 4.44.4: «Car la mort met fin aux querelles des hommes. Tous peuvent l'apprendre facilement: de fait, qui fera souffrir un bloc de pierre en le perçant de sa lance? Qui encore en outrageant les morts alors qu'ils sont insensibles à la souffrance?» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 205; dans leur édition les mots ἔχει· μαθεῖν δὲ πᾶσιν ἔστιν εὐμαρές [«Tous peuvent l'apprendre facilement»] sont signalées comme apocryphe).

nonce le fragment parle de la mort, du destin du corps, du sens de l'outrage sur un cadavre et ces considérations apparaissent très importantes au lendemain de la mort de Polynice, mais elles ont par contre peu d'intérêt dans la situation envisagée par Iguine, plusieurs années après cet événement.

Comme l'a déjà remarqué Inglese,⁶ le fragment 176 est aussi très important parce qu'il suffit à montrer une importante différence par rapport au texte de Sophocle en ce qui concerne la réflexion sur l'outrage perpétré sur le cadavre; le personnage qui prononce le fragment va en fait nier le sens même de ce geste, tandis que dans le texte de Sophocle le débat s'articule autour du problème de la légitimité de l'édit de Créon ou de la nécessité de la sépulture en tant que loi posée par les dieux.

Le savant observe donc qu'Euripide a réfléchi sur la question du destin des corps et sur le problème de la sépulture aussi dans une autre tragédie, dans *Les suppliantes*, notamment dans le débat qui oppose Thésée à l'héraut de Thèbes. Dans ce débat, Thésée exhorte à laisser les corps des héros à la terre, d'où ils proviennent, tandis que leur souffle vital est destiné à revenir à l'éther.⁷

Cerri⁸ avait déjà montré qu'il existe un étroit lien entre l'*Antigone* de Sophocle et *Les suppliantes* d'Euripide, dû en premier lieu au fait que tous les deux ont la sépulture en tant que thème central, thème qui est à la base du fragment en analyse ici.

Une nouvelle démarche en cette direction a été proposée par Susanetti, qui a montré que *Les suppliantes* vont indiquer une solution à l'impasse dans laquelle Créon et Antigone se trouvent dans la tragédie de Sophocle: la confrontation qui les oppose vient du fait que Créon n'arrive pas à faire une distinction entre Polynice qui, vivant, avait marché contre Thèbes et son corps, tout comme pour Antigone ce corps constitue toujours le lien de φιλία vers son frère qu'elle doit respecter. L'approche de Thésée dans *Les suppliantes* va proposer une possible solution du conflit en proposant une différence entre les ennemis et leurs corps: «La scomposizione dell'uomo nei suoi elementi costitutivi, il dualismo che distingue tra corpo fisico e ψυχή-πνεύμα elimina alla radice la contraddizione che aveva consumato Antigone e Creonte».⁹

Cette possible solution au problème proposée par Thésée se base sur une réflexion qu'on retrouve plusieurs fois dans l'œuvre d'Euripide,¹⁰ une idée qui

⁶ INGLESE 1992b: 252. Dans la note 13, le savant signale que Petersmann et Jebb aussi avaient fait la même observation.

⁷ Euripide, *Les suppliantes* 531-536.

⁸ CERRI 1979: 78-80.

⁹ SUSANETTI 2007: 252-254 (la citation est tirée de 254).

¹⁰ On retrouve cette idée dans le fragment 839 du *Chrysis* d'Euripide: Γαῖα μέγιστη καὶ διὸς Αἰθήρ / ὃ μὲν ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν γενέτωρ, / ἢ δ' ὕγροβόλους σταγόνας νοτίας / παραδεξαμένη τίκτει θνητούς, / τίκτει βοτάνην φύλά τε θηρῶν· / ὄθεν οὐκ ἀδίκαυς / μήτηρ πάντων νενομίσται.

semble s'être diffusée à Athènes pendant les mêmes années de la vie du poète: l'inscription pour les soldats tombés dans la bataille de Potidée dit que l'âme de ces soldats est accueillie par le ciel, les corps par la terre.¹¹

Il est difficile pour nous de comprendre l'origine de cette idée, qui peut naître de la pensée de philosophes comme Anaxagore ou Diogène d'Apollo-
nie,¹² ou bien de croyances traditionnelles iraniennes, peut-être mêlées à ces réflexions philosophiques.¹³ De toute façon, on peut affirmer que le discours de Thésée est dans le signe de la nouveauté, que sa réflexion porte sur une pensée récemment élaborée et qu'elle s'inspire à des idées arrivées à Athènes peu d'années auparavant.

Les mots que l'on retrouve dans le fragment 176 de l'*Antigone* arrivent aussi à remettre en question le sens de l'outrage sur le corps de l'ennemi tué et soulignent comme le *véκυν* n'a pas de sensibilité, en allant insister sur la différence entre l'homme qui avait combattu contre sa propre patrie et son cadavre.

Il y a quand même une différence remarquable entre le fragment de l'*Antigone* et les mots de Thésée, parce qu'on peut dire que dans le vers du fragment l'impasse de l'identité entre l'ennemi et son corps est surmontée par un raisonnement qui pose ses racines dans des idées anciennes.

Le personnage qui prononce ces vers en fait parle d'un homme qui essaie de percer une pierre de sa lance, image qui ridiculise tout de suite son attitude parce que le geste est évidemment inutile, mais le choix de comparer le cadavre à la pierre peut aussi être expliqué par la similitude supposée par les Grecs anciens entre les deux, montré par Vernant: qui franchit le seuil du monde des morts étant encore vivant est destiné à être muté en pierre par les yeux de la Gorgone,¹⁴ Pindare parle en fait de λιθίνος θάνατος pour décrire la tête de la Gorgone avec laquelle Persée tua les habitants de Sériphe.¹⁵

/ χωρεῖ δ' ὀπίσω / τὰ μὲν ἐκ γαίης φύντ' εἰς γαῖαν, / τὰ δ' ἀπ' αἰθερίου βλαστόντα γονῆς / εἰς οὐράνιον πάλιν ἦλθε πόλον· / θηήσκει δ' οὐδὲν τῶν γιγνομένων, / διακρινόμενων δ' ἄλλο πρὸς ἄλλου / μορφή ἑτέραν ἀπέδειξεν, «La Terre est immense et aussi l'Éther de Zeus: lui est le père des hommes et des dieux; elle, quand elle a reçu les gouttes humides de la pluie, enfante les mortels, enfante les plantes et les races des bêtes: et c'est à juste titre que pour cette raison elle est considérée comme la mère de toutes choses. Ce qui vient de la terre retourne ensuite à la terre, ce qui est d'origine éthérée remonte vers le pôle céleste. Rien ne meurt de ce qui naît, mais chacun d'eux, se séparant de l'autre, se présente sous une autre forme» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 2000: 387). Il est possible qu'une allusion à telle doctrine est contenue aussi dans le fragment 182a de l'*Antiope* d'Euripide: Αἰθέρα καὶ Γαῖαν γενέτετραν αἰείδω, «Je chante l'Éther et la Terre, mère de tout ce qui existe» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 242). Dans ce cas il est toutefois impossible d'exclure que le vers soit dépourvu de cette valeur philosophique. Voir BIGA 2015: 62-72.

¹¹ IG I³ 1179 (<http://telota.bbaw.de/ig/IG%20I%C2%B3%201179?qString=1179>) = LEWIS, JEFFERY 1994.

¹² ASSAEL 2001: 45-60.

¹³ BURKERT 2004: 110-124.

¹⁴ VERNANT 1970: 226 note 2, avec référence à Homère, *Odyssée* 9.634-635.

¹⁵ Pindare, *Pythiques* 10.46-48.

Le corps d'un homme vivant est chaud, est capable de se mouvoir, de se fléchir et de parler; une pierre au contraire est froide, immobile et muette. Le poète Théognis, en pensant à sa propre mort, parle de son corps comme d'une λίθος ἄφθογγος.¹⁶

Le choix de comparer le corps à une pierre qu'on voit dans le fragment 176 pourrait donc amener les spectateurs à penser à cette idée bien enracinée dans leur culture depuis des siècles.

Dans ce fragment on peut observer la présence de οὐτάζων δορί, deux mots qui portent à penser à Homère. Le verbe οὐτάζω en fait se trouve soixante-six fois dans l'*Iliade*,¹⁷ dont dix-neuf liée au datif δουρί,¹⁸ le même substantif que l'on trouve dans le fragment dans sa forme ionique, qui ne pourrait pas trouver sa place dans cette position du trimètre. Dans treize de ces cas on peut lire οὐτασε δουρί comme conclusion du vers,¹⁹ et on trouve une fois οὐτα δὲ δουρί dans la même position dans le vers²⁰ et une fois il y a le datif δουρί en enjambement au vers suivant.²¹ Le verbe οὐτάζω se trouve aussi quatre fois dans l'*Iliade* avec le datif χαλκῶ qui indique la lance.²²

Le verbe est utilisé dans l'*Odyssée* seulement sept fois, comme on peut le comprendre si on pense au différent contenu du poème, mais dans quatre cas il se trouve avec un datif qui indique la lance.²³

Il est possible de remarquer que le verbe οὐτάζω n'apparaît jamais dans l'œuvre d'Hérodote ou de Thucydide.²⁴

Dans les poèmes homériques, ce mot décrit le geste du guerrier qui attaque son adversaire, qui sort de la protection de son bouclier: il s'agit de l'instant où le héros recherche la gloire en tuant l'ennemi et en même temps s'expose au risque de lui donner la gloire étant tué.

Dans le fragment, le verbe est utilisé pour décrire le geste ridicule d'un homme qui essaie de percer une pierre, geste qui, évidemment, n'implique aucun

¹⁶ Théognis, 569-570; l'exemple est cité par VERNANT 1970: 226-227, avec la note 1 (227).

¹⁷ Dans les notes suivantes des autres cas seront signalés pour des considérations particulières; à ces cas il faut ajouter: Homère, *Iliade*, 5.361, 5.376, 5.458 = 5.883, 6.64, 7.273, 11.490, 11.491, 11.658 = 11.825 = 16.24, 11.660 = 16.26, 12.764, 13.192, 13.552, 13.546, 13.607, 14.128, 14.379, 14.424, 14.443, 14.447, 14.489, 14.493, 14.511, 14.517, 14.518, 15.745, 15.746, 16.311, 16.322, 16.467, 17.86, 17.601, 20.455, 20.459, 20.469, 21.68, 21.397, 21.577.

¹⁸ Aux cas signalés dans les notes suivantes il faut ajouter Homère, *Iliade* 4.525, 11.421, 14.443, 16.317, 17.344, 19.53.

¹⁹ Homère, *Iliade* 5.56 = 20.42, 5.336, 5.458 = 5.883, 7.258, 11.338, 11.426, 13.438, 13.646, 14.443, 14.476, 15.523, 15.528, 16.597, 17.344, 17.601.

²⁰ Homère, *Iliade* 16.311.

²¹ Homère, *Iliade* 20.472.

²² Homère, *Iliade* 5.132 = 5.821, 12.427, 13.561.

²³ Homère, *Odyssée* 22.293, où le datif est ἐγγει μακρῶ, et 294, qui se termine avec οὐτα, complété en enjambement par δουρί au vers 295. Dans 22.356 le verbe se trouve avec χαλκῶ. Dans 11.40 il est suivi par χαλκήρεσιν ἐγγείησιν. Les autres cas sont 9.301, 11.529 et 19.449.

²⁴ Dans Euripide on retrouve ce verbe seulement autre deux fois: *Hippolyte* 684 et *Héraclès* 199; on le retrouve aussi dans *Rhésos* 255.

danger: l'acte du combat est prolongé au-delà de son terme naturel, la mort, et il va par conséquent perdre tout son sens.

Le mot οὐτάζω est employé dans l'*Iliade* pour raconter l'outrage perpétré par les Danens sur le corps d'Hector, le coup de lance que tous les Achéens ont donné à son cadavre.²⁵ Le verbe en lui-même n'est pas suffisant à rapprocher le texte du fragment au passage de l'*Iliade*, mais le contexte paraît semblable: dans les mots d'Euripide le coup de lance est infligé à une pierre, mais le fragment concerne un cadavre; l'outrage du corps d'Hector est le plus brutal parmi les outrages infligés ou menacés dans le poème, il vient compléter une sorte de *climax* de violence,²⁶ en raison de la cruauté des gestes, mais aussi parce que Achille le répète pendant plusieurs jours.²⁷

En raison de cette réitération, Apollon proteste devant les autres dieux, en rappelant tous les sacrifices qu'Hector avait fait aux dieux et les fautes d'Achille, qui avait perdu son ἔλεος, sa pitié; pour conclure son raisonnement, Apollon signale que Achille était en train d'outrager κοφῆ γαῖα, terre insensible.²⁸

Dans le discours d'Apollon cette question est mentionnée en passant, elle n'est pas le cœur de son argumentation: le dieu raisonne en terme de respect dû aux normes divines par les hommes; par contre, dans le fragment 176, on voit une logique humaine qui s'appuie uniquement sur l'insensibilité du corps après la mort, ce qui, selon celui qui parle, est bien évident à tous les hommes.

Nous n'avons qu'un fragment de l'*Antigone* qui parle du corps et il est donc impossible d'exclure que le personnage qui prononce le fragment 176 n'ajoute d'autres arguments, comme ceux proposés par Apollon concernant l'aspect religieux du problème ou comme ceux utilisés par Thésée dans *Les suppliantes*, mais c'est de toute façon suffisant pour observer cet élément de confrontation avec le passé héroïque qui est absent dans les autres textes.

Le premier vers du fragment permet aussi de noter une autre différence par rapport à l'*Antigone* de Sophocle, parce que le personnage qui le prononce dit que la mort est la fin des discordes et cette phrase va avoir une valeur que l'on peut définir politique.

Les discordes rappelées ici sont toutes les catastrophes des Labdacides, les malheurs d'Oedipe et la guerre fratricide qui s'est conclue peu avant le dialogue dont le fragment est tiré, mais les spectateurs savent que les malheurs peuvent ne pas être terminés parce que, comme Sophocle le montre, le choix d'interdire la sépulture de Polynice peut en causer d'autres, peut même détruire la lignée d'Oedipe avec celle de Créon et peut laisser Thèbes sans roi. Comme on l'a dit,

²⁵ Homère, *Iliade* 22.369-374.

²⁶ SEGAL 1971: *passim*, mais en particulier 30-47.

²⁷ Homère, *Iliade* 24.12-18.

²⁸ Homère, *Iliade* 24.33-54.

ce choix naît de l'incapacité de Créon de distinguer le corps de Polynice de l'ennemi qui avait attaqué Thèbes.

L'affirmation contenue dans le fragment va donc imputer la responsabilité d'autres éventuels malheurs à celui qui refuse de voir dans la mort la fin du conflit: la mort de Polynice est la fin de la chaîne de souffrances qui ont affligé sa famille, il s'agit selon qui parle d'une réalité facile à comprendre. Si les malheurs continuaient, cela serait dû à Créon qui n'aura pas été capable d'accepter la mort comme terme de la guerre, qui aura continué sottement de percer de sa lance une pierre en causant des conséquences funestes pour sa famille et ses concitoyens.

Au début de l'*Antigone* de Sophocle, les vieux de Thèbes qui entrent sur la scène chantent leur soulagement pour la victoire et souhaitent la paix, mais on peut observer dans leur mots la fragilité de ce vœu: ils rappellent l'assaut contre la ville, la victoire de Thèbes, la mort que le deux frères Étéocle et Polynice se sont donnée mutuellement,²⁹ mais ils abandonnent tout suit ces souvenirs et invitent à fêter et à oublier tous les événements qu'ont eu lieu.³⁰

Le péril de la guerre vient de disparaître et il est donc possible que le chœur invite à la λησμοσύνη parce qu'il sait qu'il est inutile de le revivre une fois de plus dans la mémoire en évitant de rouvrir des blessures, mais l'oubli peut aussi être un choix politique visant à laisser dans le passé des conflits qui ne sont pas résolus et qui risquent par conséquent d'exploser à nouveau.³¹

Le mot λησμοσύνη n'est normalement pas employé en Grec en sens politique,³² mais il peut rappeler une conduite connue par les spectateurs athéniens, la conduite expliquée comme le choix de μη μνεσικακεῖν, de ne pas rappeler les malheurs subis, une sorte d'amnistie.

Thucydide, par exemple, nous raconte un épisode concernant la ville de Samos, où les Athéniens interviennent pour aider les démocrates à triompher sur les oligarques; après leur victoire, ils choisissent de condamner ceux qui étaient les plus responsables des malheurs passés, mais de ne pas garder rancune envers les autres oligarques, qui restent dans la cité et tous ensemble la régissent démocratiquement, en oubliant la guerre intestine qui avait eu lieu.³³

Le conflit a déchiré la ville, les citoyens concernés et qui pourraient être considérés coupables sont trop nombreux pour utiliser une forme normale de justice: il faut oublier cette blessure trop profonde pour permettre à la cité de vivre à nouveau.

²⁹ Sophocle, *Antigone* 100-112.

³⁰ Sophocle, *Antigone* 148-151.

³¹ Pour le problème de l'oubli qu'Antigone ne partage pas dans la pièce de Sophocle voir SUSANETTI 2011a: 143-149.

³² Voir SUSANETTI 2012: 187-188.

³³ Thucydide 8.73.6.

À Thèbes, où les vieux chantent pour la victoire, il y encore le corps de Polynice sans sépulture, le roi Étéocle est mort, le nouveau roi a été choisi en tant que son parent le plus proche: les liens avec la famille maudite d'Oedipe, avec le passé de cette ville qui a été bouleversée par la guerre sont encore très étroits. Dans ce contexte dans lequel les racines du conflit ne sont pas complètement coupées, le choix de les oublier peut sembler comme une solution, mais, comme la pièce de Sophocle le montre, si tout le monde n'est pas disponible à oublier ce qui s'est passé la blessure s'ouvrira à nouveau.³⁴

Le fragment d'Euripide propose par contre un point de vue différent, parce qu'il affirme de manière plus claire que l'histoire de Polynice est terminée avec sa mort, qu'il n'a y aucun sens de chercher une revanche sur son corps et que les discordes qu'il a causées sont terminées: il n'y a rien à oublier parce que la mort est la fin du conflit.

Les conséquences du refus d'accepter la mort comme terme des discordes apparaissent dans le fragment 173:

οἰκείος ἀνθρώποισι γίγνεσθαι φιλεῖ
πόλεμος ἐν ἀστοῖς, ἣν διχοστατῆ πόλις.³⁵

Ce fragment est connu grâce à Stobée³⁶ qui ne fournit aucune indication utile pour comprendre le personnage qui le prononçait ou son contexte et par conséquence il est très difficile de faire des considérations sur un fragment si bref: il pourrait s'agir des mots d'un personnage qui voit la ville déchirée ou bien des vers prononcés par quelqu'un qui craint que la ville se déchirera ensuite.

Cependant, comme Inglese l'a noté,³⁷ le fragment est suffisant pour observer une différence par rapport à la pièce de Sophocle où Hémon parle d'une ville qui approuve à l'unanimité le geste d'Antigone.³⁸

Il faudrait préciser que la position des citoyens de Thèbes dans l'*Antigone* de Sophocle n'est pas facile à comprendre, malgré les mots d'Hémon qu'on a rappelés: on ne voit sur la scène que les vieux qui forment le chœur et qui ne montrent ni plein soutien ni opposition claire aux décisions de Créon³⁹ et ils sont si froids avec Antigone portée à sa tombe qu'elle croit qu'ils sont en train de se moquer d'elle.⁴⁰

À défaut d'une preuve sur la scène les mots d'Hémon peuvent sembler une tentative de convaincre Créon à changer d'avis plutôt que la vraie pensée des citoyens.

³⁴ SUSANETTI 2011a: 143-146.

³⁵ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 173: «D'ordinaire une guerre intestine surgit chez les habitants, quand la cité est coupée en deux» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 206).

³⁶ Stobée 4.1.22.

³⁷ INGLESE 1992a: 179.

³⁸ Sophocle, *Antigone* 692-700.

³⁹ Voir par exemple Sophocle, *Antigone* 211-214.

⁴⁰ Sophocle, *Antigone* 806-990, notamment 839.

Malgré ces incertitudes, on peut affirmer que le fragment 173 nous révèle une Thèbes qui est beaucoup plus intéressée au destin d'Antigone, qui ne se désintéresse pas du sort de la jeune fille et que ne se limite pas à la plaindre secrètement.

Il semble impossible dans ce cas de penser à des mots prononcés pour tromper Créon, parce qu'ils révèlent qu'il y a des partisans d'Antigone, mais il y a aussi des défenseurs de Créon et la présence de ces derniers n'a jamais été clairement envisagée dans la pièce de Sophocle.

Thèbes est coupée en deux, il n'y a pas Créon seul contre tous comme le montre Hémon dans la tragédie de Sophocle: la situation paraît plus semblable au final probablement apocryphe des *Septes contre Thèbes*, où le chœur se divise quand l'héraut annonce la décision des magistrats d'interdire la sépulture de Polynice et une partie est prête à désobéir avec Antigone tandis que l'autre suit la volonté des magistrats.

Le fragment est très bref, mais il semble difficile de le considérer comme marginal dans la pièce, parce qu'il montre une ville qui se trouve dans une impasse, qui est déchirée, et où l'harmonie ne peut pas être reconstituée facilement.

Il y a aussi deux autres fragments qui abordent des questions qu'on peut définir politiques: le fragment 171 et le 172.

Le premier dit:

δεῖ τοῖσι πολλοῖς τὸν τύραννον ἀνδάνειν⁴¹

Le second, dont le texte présente des difficultés, est ainsi proposé par Kan-nicht:

οὐτ' εἰκὸς ἄρχειν οὐτ' ἐρχῆν †εἶναι νόμον†
τύραννον εἶναι· μωρία δὲ καὶ θέλειν.⁴²

Les deux font partie du florilège de Stobée,⁴³ qui ne donne jamais d'indications sur le contexte d'où les fragments qu'il cite sont tirés, et par conséquent il est difficile de comprendre leur exacte valeur dans la tragédie; il est néanmoins utile de les mentionner parce qu'ils montrent qu'une réflexion sur la conduite de Créon par rapport à Thèbes était abordée dans la pièce, dont le fragment 173 n'est pas le seul indice d'un intérêt pour la réaction de la communauté, même si ces fragments ne permettent pas de comprendre si cette thématique fût centrale dans un débat ou bien si elle apparût quelques fois sans être approfondie.

⁴¹ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 171: «Le tyran doit plaire à la foule» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 206).

⁴² Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 172: «Il n'est pas dans la nature de commander †...† C'est folie également de vouloir dominer seul ses pairs» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 206).

⁴³ Stobée 4.7.6 (le premier), 4.8.5 (le deuxième).

Compte tenu des considérations vues à propos du fragment 173, on peut rappeler le fragment 160:

νέοι νέοισι συννοσοῦσι τάφανῃ.⁴⁴

Il est comme les autres sans contexte et le vers ne semble même pas complet,⁴⁵ mais il montre les jeunes qui souffrent avec les jeunes, ce qui peut offrir un faible indice d'une fracture générationnelle dans la ville, qu'on peut imaginer entre les jeunes qui comprennent que la mort est la fin des discordes et les vieux qui restent liés à la conduite d'Achille qui outrage un corps.

Le fragment 162a semble aller dans la même direction:

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔξω λέκτρ', ἃ τοι καλῶς ἔχειν
δίκαιόν ἐστιν οἴσι συγγηράσομαι.⁴⁶

Le personnage qui le prononce, Hémon sans doute, affirme vouloir un mariage utile pour ceux qui vieilliront avec lui, en confirmant que son intérêt est le même que celui des jeunes et est différent du point de vue de ceux qui appartiennent à une génération précédente.

On peut ajouter aux fragments considérés aussi le 170:

οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος,
καὶ βωμὸς αὐτῆς ἐστ' ἐν ἀνθρώπου φύσει.⁴⁷

Les sens possibles d'une référence à la Persuasion sont nombreux, mais c'est aussi la divinité qui s'oppose à la violence et qui permette l'accord entre les hommes:⁴⁸ elle pourrait reconstruire l'harmonie à Thèbes et résoudre le conflit entre les partisans d'Antigone et ceux de Créon en permettant de trouver une solution pacifique.

Il semble donc possible de supposer que le texte montrait une ville déchirée où les jeunes et les vieux soutenaient des positions opposées par rapport à l'édit de Créon et au geste d'Antigone et Hémon et où l'intervention de la Persuasion aurait pu au moins être invoquée pour guérir cette blessure.

Cette hypothèse est évidemment appuyée sur des indices très fragiles: les fragments considérés sont peu nombreux, brefs et sans contexte; même notre connaissance de la tragédie est très lacunaire et cela ne fait qu'ajouter d'autres

⁴⁴ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 160: «Les jeunes souffrent avec les jeunes †de ce qui leur échappe» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998:205).

⁴⁵ KANNICHT 2004: 264, signale qu'il faut penser qu'au vers suivant il y avait un participe comme ποθοῦντες ou μερμινώντες.

⁴⁶ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 162a = POxy. 3214. 2-4 (ed. Haslam) et Stobée 4.22e.113: «J'aurai des noces, dont, vois-tu, il est juste qu'elles soient favorables à ceux avec lesquels je vieillirai» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 207).

⁴⁷ Euripide, *Antigone* fr. 170 = Orion, *Florilège* 1.1: «Il n'existe d'autre sanctuaire de la Persuasion que la parole et son autel se trouve dans l'être humain» (traduction de JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 209). Le premier vers se trouve aussi dans Aristophane, *Les grenouilles* 1391.

⁴⁸ BUXTON 1982: 42 et 58.

incertitudes à l'interprétation des fragments parce que le cadre où nous devons les insérer reste peu clair et la lecture proposée ici, qui met en évidence leur possible valeur politique, ne reste qu'une des lectures vraisemblables.

Cependant, les fragments considérés selon ce possible point de vue sont au nombre de huit et, même s'il ne s'agit que de peu de vers par rapport à la tragédie entière, ils représentent à peu près un tiers de ceux connus.

L'*Antigone* d'Euripide a souvent été considérée comme une tragédie visant à montrer le mariage qui couronnait l'amour entre Antigone et Hémon, une pièce où Euripide peut montrer son habileté dans la mise en scène de la passion amoureuse, une sorte de consolation pour des spectateurs déçus par la conclusion triste de la tragédie de Sophocle;⁴⁹ Aelion a supposé que la nouveauté introduite par Euripide par rapport à Sophocle était le choix de montrer une Antigone plus humaine, plus liée à son amoureux.⁵⁰

Il a donc semblé utile de proposer cette autre interprétation, qui ne va pas exclure complètement d'autres interprétations possibles, parce qu'elle rappelle que le texte contenait aussi des pistes de réflexion sur des problèmes politiques importants, il pouvait aborder des thèmes complexes comme le destin du corps après sa mort.

Il est impossible pour nous de comprendre si ces réflexions étaient bien développées dans le texte au point de constituer une partie importante de la tragédie ou si elles n'étaient que des brèves références à ces problèmes et cela ne nous permet de proposer un bilan du texte dans son ensemble.

Même s'il n'y a pas d'indices suffisants pour soutenir une lecture qui donne plus d'importance aux conséquences sur Thèbes qu'aux événements concernant Antigone et Hémon, les éléments rappelés précédemment semblent inviter à une interprétation plus prudente du texte, à mettre en question la conviction que le grand conflit montré par Sophocle est, dans la pièce d'Euripide, rabaisé à un confit domestique.⁵¹

⁴⁹ GHIRON-BISTAGNE 1993: 258-259. L'opinion de WEBSTER 1967: 183-184, est semblable: selon le savant, Euripide a choisi de traiter de manière moins brusque l'amour entre Antigone et Hémon qui n'était en Sophocle qu'un prétexte pour souligner la solitude de Créon.

⁵⁰ AÉLION 1986: 74-75.

⁵¹ Cela est la conclusion qu'on peut lire dans JOUAN, VAN LOOY 1998: 201.

File riservato ad esclusivo fine di studio

4.

**Self-Definition and Rehabilitation:
Oaths in Euripides' *Helen*.**

Caterina Di Daniel

Euripides' *Helen*, probably composed in 412 BC, after the Athenian defeat in Sicily, has been subject to a wide variety of interpretations by critics, without any sure results, in deciding how should we read and interpret every detail of Euripides' work and on how his audience could respond to it. Between the lines of this tragedy many scholars perceive irony, disillusionment, agnostic ponderations; others discern even nihilism. Another side of the critics tries to demonstrate that this work is a literary experiment which shares only a few elements with tragedy in its traditional features and has instead some points in common with comedy, especially because it puts on stage misunderstanding and a certain kind of absurdity. Moreover, *Helen* has also some traits in common with the Hellenistic novel, thanks to its adventurous and intricate narration and the exotic setting. Nevertheless, in his research on the so-called "Escape Tragedies", Matthew Wright has highlighted how *Helen* suits an innovative dramatic type that can be as "tragic" as the previous, despite some evident differences in comparison to the other classical texts gathered under the definition of tragedy.¹ In particular, Wright's dissertation focuses on the fact that Euripides does not invent a "new" myth of Helen, but actually takes advantage of the elements he found in the different versions, devising an original and unexpected plot that could have caused a sense of amazement and bewilderment in the spectators, used to recognizing in tragic plots, as we suppose, stories they all well knew.² By this technique the mythological tradition is called into question and the impression we can sense from the text is of uncertainty, confusion and

¹ WRIGHT 2005.

² WRIGHT 2005: 67, for a synopsis of the different versions of Helen's myth in the main literary sources.

destabilization. Euripides firstly makes his characters speak and display to the audience their own myth, a narrative device that Wright calls «metamithology», then he shows off the deconstruction of the traditional mythic plot and a new assembly of its elements.³ The tragic matter of *Helen*, in this case, is based on the impossibility to define reality and truth in a world made of appearance, voices and rumors, episodes and events reported by others, a world inhabited by double identities that can be challenging to discern. What is worse is that language is not enough to determine an iridescent reality populated by ambiguous characters, in which *doxa* and *aletheia* do not necessarily fit to one another, as well as bodies and names.⁴ Unpredictable and nasty divinities, Hera and Aphrodite, are responsible for human sufferings, and yet they remain unappealable and absent. The main concern shown by the characters in this drama is their own story, their fame and the opinion others have about them, their *kleos*, that becomes an asphyxiating weight to bear.⁵ Undoubtedly there is a sinister shade of humor in the dramatic play: dialogues among characters reveal their difficulties in matching thoughts with words, no less than words with facts and, at the same time, neither the direct sight of material bodies is something they can firmly rely on. For his version of Helen's myth, Euripides seems to invent the *eidolon*, an aery copy of Helen, modeled by divinities in order to shape it into her:⁶ now that Helen has a double, she is recognizable in her physical beauty, but, at the same time, unidentifiable in her authenticity, for her name recalls other events, namely those of the war of Troy. Even though many scholars have underlined the relation between this Euripidean tragedy and the Aristophanic comedy, we still have to be prudent:⁷ a part of irony is undeniably present, but it is also evident an atmosphere of bitterness and frustration, achieved with typical tragic effects. There is no doubt that disappointment and uncertainty were probably widespread emotions shared by a citizenship that had experienced them for

³ WRIGHT 2005, especially chapter 2: 56 ff.

⁴ For a summary about all the problematic themes emerging in the *Helen* see also SUSANETTI 2007: 158-179.

⁵ About *kleos* and its double meaning in the entire tragedy see MELTZER 1994: 234-255. Menelaus in particular tries to stand out as a powerful hero, covered with glory after the Trojan war. He insists on the celebrity of his name and deeds, but his stage presence is damaged by his look: he is the victim of a shipwreck, his clothes are ragged and he is mistreated even by the porter. He would like to face Theoclimenus, but in the end he is persuaded by Helen to entrust their fate to her stratagem. After all, *kleos* depends on what is said, on the use of language: whatever the content may be, it could be false or true, language is the way of transmission and language is not always efficient and univocal.

⁶ See WRIGHT 2005: 82 ff. Mythical stories about phantoms created by gods with air or clouds are not rare, nevertheless we are not allowed to say that Euripides was the first poet to use this element in Helen's myth, neither we know if some other author invented it before him.

⁷ MUREDDU 2003. There was probably an intertextual joke between Euripides and Aristophanes: the first presented the protagonist as a beggar in the *Telephus*, and the comedy writer in the *Acharnians* teases this choice. Euripides alludes to Aristophanes' parody in the *Helen*, which, we said, has some comic features: see the initial pages of PIPPIN-BURNETT 1960.

real during the critical historical period of the Peloponnesian war. Meanwhile, citizens had participated to philosophical debates of contemporary sophists, which concerned even language, its potential and its relation with truth.⁸

Since in this tragedy characters move around in a mysterious and unknowable dimension, and they are not knowable to themselves and to others, maybe it is not a coincidence that the protagonist swears two oaths, in a desperate and ineffective effort to declare herself as a victim and as an honest and virtuous wife. Her aim is to show how she really thinks to be or how she wants to appear from an external view.

In a recent article Isabelle Torrance analyzes two sections in which Helen speaks under oath and explains her interpretation of the functions these «speech acts» have in the entire plot:⁹ her thesis is principally that Euripides includes these passages to enlighten Helen's virtue and loyalty to her husband and, consequently, to emphasize Menelaus' courage, too.

In the first passage, Helen, after having received from Teucer the news that Menelaus has been missing for years and is supposed dead, leaves all her hopes to be rescued and taken away from the barbaric Egypt and its tyrannical king, Theoclimenus, who really longs to marry her although this is not her will. At lines 306 ff., indeed, a dialogue takes place between the chorus and the protagonist: the theme they discuss is the truthfulness and trustworthiness of stories reported by other people. At the end of their discussion, both the chorus and Helen agree that rumors shouldn't be taken too much in account, even because words are not enough to define actual truth about what factually happens. It makes no sense to despair and feel grief for a dead husband if there is no evidence he is really dead. After all, in the prologue the protagonist herself questions the mythic tales about her own birth and her parents, and, what's more relevant, she tells a different version of the episodes happened before the war of Troy: in fact, she never fell in love with Paris and nobody except her knows the true story, but she is still guilty of having caused a terrible war, as everybody thinks. She is the only one who knows that, by a divine plan, an *eidolon* with her resemblance had been brought to Troy and that the whole war was futile. At a later time, she shows her skepticism and puts under investigation the information heard by Teucer about all the heroes involved in the war of Troy and their subsequent destiny. After that, she decides to accept the suggestion

⁸ WRIGHT 2005, chapter 4: 226 ff. An entire section of Wright's study is dedicated to the analysis of relations between the Euripidean tragedy and the critical thought of philosophers and sophists in classical Athens. One of the most interesting subjects of discussion is the connection between words and their real referents. Sophists had their theories apropos this, theories that probably Euripides hints at. Wright (307 ff.) explains also the possible link to Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*. See PIPPIN-BURNETT 1960, as well, for the problem of *Helen's* comic timing in some scene and characters, but even for the cross references to Anassimander's and Anassimene's philosophical thought about *aither*. These allusions are frequent in Euripides' work.

⁹ In the prologue see: 16-21; in the dialogue with Teucer see: 117-122, 134-150.

of the other women to consult the soothsayer Teonoe, Teoclimenus' sister, in order to learn about Menelaus' fate by her semi-divine voice¹⁰ and she invokes the Spartan river Eurota to swear she will commit suicide if she'll hear that her husband is no longer alive.

Ἐλ. σὲ γὰρ ἐκάλεσα, σὲ δὲ κατόμοσα,
 τὸν ὑδρόεντι δόνακι χλωρὸν
 Εὐρώταν, θανόντος
 εἰ βάξις ἔτυμος ἀνδρὸς
 ἄδε μοι – τί τάδ' ἀσύνετα; –
 φόνιον αἰώρημα
 διὰ δέρης ὀρέξομαι,
 ἢ ξιφοκτόνον δίωγμα
 λαμορρύτου σφαγᾶς
 αὐτοσίδαρον ἔσω πελάσῳ διὰ σαρκὸς ἄμιλλαν,
 θῦμα τριζύγοις θεαῖσι
 τῷ τε σήραγγας Ἰδαί-
 ας ἐνίζοντι Πριαμί-
 δα ποτ' ἀμφὶ βουστάθμους. (348-359)

Torrance thinks the indecision on the more appropriate way of killing herself is a clue to affirm Helen's real intention to commit suicide and that the invocation to the river of her native country solemnizes the oath formula, which is already effectively grave due to the opening anaphora and to the metrical structure, so that it is evident to the audience how meaningful her affection for Menelaus is.¹¹ However, if we examine again the context in which this oath occurs, just after the dialogue between chorus and protagonist about the falsity of words in many occasions (305-310), Euripides' choice to put an oath here is not so ingenuous: an oath is a speech act that has a performative power over reality and its prerogative is to fulfill what is expressed in the formula. Every time Euripides uses the oath as a narrative device, even in all the other plays, the scene means to explore, from a philosophical perspective, the assumed identity between words and facts and between facts and thoughts.

It is worth noticing that the sentence pronounced by Helen is quite self-referential: instead of explaining why her life could be unbearable without her husband, she dwells on the different types of death she should prefer and, at the end, she chooses the more outstanding and magnificent option for a woman, that of stabbing herself with a sword, exactly as if she was a sacrificial victim

¹⁰ Even Theonoe, who is a fortune-teller and, consequently, represents gods in the drama, is not exempt from a certain ambiguity: if it is true that she always know the truth, why doesn't she reveal to Helen that Menelaus is already landed in Egypt? Why does she talk only about a forthcoming arrival? Even in the dialogue between Menelaus and the messenger a doubt is insinuated about soothsayers and oracles: maybe they're less valid than *gnome* and *euboulia*, two human qualities (744 ff.).

¹¹ TORRANCE 2009.

on an altar.¹² This point induces us to consider the possibility that she is not sincerely worried about her husband and his hypothetical death, but she cares only about how she herself should die to make her fame glorious and splendid.¹³ She does not want to marry a barbaric man, she prefers the more glorious suicide by sword, she also compares herself to a sacrificial virgin:¹⁴ the tragic heroine makes all these choices in order to be juxtaposed to a chaste and devoted wife, whom she struggles to look like. The same choices are indicated by Hecuba as honorable and appropriate to a faithful wife in *Trojan Women* (1012-1014). In fact, talking to Helen, Hecuba explains that a virtuous woman, if kidnapped by a man unwillingly, would have preferred to die rather than to betray her legitimate husband.

Ultimately, it seems as if Helen was longing with all her forces to personify a character that, according to the mythical tradition, she simply cannot be, whereas, at the same time, Euripides does not clarify to the spectator if the original myth should be contested: we never know if tradition should be taken for granted or it should be questioned. The protagonist could be trustworthy or not, the play does not offer a clear answer. Another consideration can be added to the previous one, looking at line 352. This is sometimes ascribed to the chorus, other times to Helen and its attribution is not sure: τί τὰδ' ἀσύνητα; «what are these incomprehensible things», literally.¹⁵ If the speaker were the chorus, as it seems by the lines subdivision in the manuscripts, it would mean that the women are interrupting Helen while she is talking, to ask her what the sense of her speech is, even if she has not said anything so strange yet. Because of metrical reasons, Kannicht¹⁶ prefers to ascribe this aside phrase to

¹² Feminine death *par excellence* is, in tragedy, suicide: LORAUX 1988. Committing suicide would not be “manlike” for a man, especially hanging. Women instead quite often choose between hanging and slaying themselves with swords. Concerning this passage in the *Helen*, Loraux explains that the tragic heroine makes plain her will to die in an evident and heroic way, just like warriors: bleeding. A detail is significant in this sense: she is so obsessed with a bloody imagery that she talks of hanging using a strange expression, *phonion aiorema*, which means, literally, «gory suspension». Obviously, hanging cannot be bloody, but she is flying high with her imagination to the nobler alternative she has to kill herself (18).

¹³ Some lines before, interplaying with the chorus, she had said that her sufferings derived from being exiled against her will, unfairly blamed and enslaved to barbarian people. Her only hope to get back to her previous *status* was that her husband rescued her (269-292). On this point see also SCHMIEL 1972: 282.

¹⁴ At lines 299-302 Helen is complaining about her misfortune caused by her beauty and explicates her will to die by sword, because it will be more glorious: these lines are considered interpolated by the majority of scholars.

¹⁵ *Asynetos* is pointed out by ALLAN 2008: 190, for being a peculiar adjective recurring in the last Euripidean plays.

¹⁶ In KANNICHT 1969, 1: 146 and 2: 110-111, the line is attributed to Helen. On the contrary it is a Chorus' line in CAMPBELL 1950. In the critical apparatus ALT 1964 notices that the two branches of tradition L and P comply with one another assigning this line to Helen, whereas, only at a later time, an arbitrarily made correction spread in the tradition, referring the line to the chorus.

Helen: this second option could make sense if we interpret it as the protagonist thinking aloud. In fact, it could be that she started swearing and then realized that the premise to her oath was quite uncertain. She does not know exactly what the truth is about her husband, so she explicates here that she does not even trust the precondition to her speech.¹⁷ The term *baxis*, used by Helen, in its first significance means “gossip”, “rumor”. Therefore the protagonist quickly degrades to gossip the news received about the death of Menelaus. These two elements oblige us to a reflection: no oath exists that can be efficiently fulfilled without its formula’s inner workings founded on analogy and homeopathy. Generally, oaths are supposed to create something in reality on the base of that same analogy: if the analogy expressed in the formula is real, then what has just been said must become real. «If Menelaus is dead-but, actually, I don’t know-then I’ll kill myself» this type of utterance is at least suspicious and does not work to perform the sentence. If we assume that this line was said by Helen, the oath reveals all its ambiguity: which kind of benefit will derive by a similar speech act, based on the ignorance of reality rather than on knowledge? The implicit supposition contained in the formula partially undermines its performative potential. Who will be the recipient of Helen’s demonstration of faithfulness and valor, if her husband is not there and could be dead? Why is she swearing now and not after receiving the eventual confirmation that Menelaus is departed? It does not make sense if we do not presume that she feels the necessity to swear an oath before knowing the truth: if Menelaus at the end were still alive, she would no longer be able to play the part of the loyal and desperate wife. Actually, she wants to demonstrate to herself *in primis* that she is honest, and she wants to do it in a solemn way, representing herself just like a heroine that chooses a glorious death and releases from infamy. She wants to be a tragic character. Euripides shows us a faithful Helen, as Torrance thinks, in any case the question of this tragedy is not her loyalty, but her effort to get free from an accuse that traps her in a mythical role that she denies. Generally in tragedies the oath scene is used to produce some unavoidable turning-points in the plot, since it binds the characters’ future actions. This oath instead does not have any narrative function and probably the tragedian introduces it to ponder on the inconvenience and unease of using linguistic categories that,

¹⁷ DE POLI 2011: 218-219. Depending on the interpretation of the pronoun *tade*, we find different attributions of the line. If the reference is not the news of Menelaus’ death, considering that the chorus has just put in doubt it with Helen, the reference could be to lines 350 ff. «L’inciso interrogativo, inserito subito dopo la frase condizionale» could be «la reazione pessimista all’insensato atteggiamento di chi lascia ancora la porta aperta alla speranza. Elena segue il consiglio del Coro, si reca da Teonoe, ma è intimamente sfiduciata: ogni esitazione le appare come un assurdo rifiuto della realtà, incomprensibile di fronte a fatti ritenuti certi» (219); so, the line could express the refusal to delude herself expecting a positive ending or excitation in accepting that the voices are true: in any case the protagonist has a critical attitude towards what she hears from other characters.

in the end, do not really perform nor even describe anything. This oath ends up with placing again Helen in her mythical part, in the field she belongs to: appearance.

The second oath sworn by Helen is inserted in the dialogue between her and Menelaus at lines 835 ff. After the famous *anagnorisis* scene,¹⁸ the two spouses just reunited, look for a way of escaping together from Egypt and get away from Theoclimenus. Helen proves to be particularly enterprising in organizing the plan, so that some scholars have underlined the passivity of Menelaus' character compared with that of his wife. He had already convinced himself of Helen's identity with some reluctance and hesitated to believe in the story of an Hera's phantom identical to his consort (1566-1596),¹⁹ furthermore in this precise moment he expresses the doubt that, if he will die, she could easily settle down again with the king and that she is now complaining about the eventual new marriage just because she is talking with him face to face. He then accuses her to be a *prodotis*, a betrayer, since she is going to consent, willingly or unwillingly, to the new marriage, when he will be gone. The woman reacts promptly trying to swear an oath, but she is immediately interrupted by her husband who suggests the right words for her oath.

Με. φέρ', ἦν δὲ δὴ νῶν μὴ ἀποδέξῃται λόγους;

Ἐλ. θανῆ· γαμοῦμαι δ' ἢ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ βίᾳ.

Με. προδότις ἄν εἴης· τὴν βίαν σκῆψασ' ἔχεις.

Ἐλ. ἀλλ' ἀγνὸν ὄρκον σὸν κάρα κατώμοσα ...

Με. τί φῆς; θανεῖσθαι; κοῦποτ' ἀλλάξεις λέχη;

Ἐλ. ταῦτῳ ξίφει γε· κείσομαι δὲ σοῦ πέλας.

Με. ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν δεξιᾶς ἐμῆς θίγε.

Ἐλ. ψάύω, θανόντος σοῦ τόδ' ἐκλείψειν φάος.

Με. κάγω στερηθεῖς σοῦ τελευτήσειν βίον.

Ἐλ. πῶς οὖν θανούμεθ' ὥστε καὶ δόξαν λαβεῖν; (832-841)

¹⁸ See SCHMIEL 1972, for the identification scene and the dialogue between husband and wife. In particular, it could be that Helen manipulates the conversation to gradually convince Menelaus using his heroic pride as a lever. About the epirrhematic amoibaion between the two partners at 625-697 see also BELARDINELLI 2003. Generally, in the *anagnorisis* scenes the male character speaks in iambic trimeters, so that it becomes evident his self-control and his rationality that mark him as a man, counterposed to the feminine part that normally expresses herself in lyric meters, conveying excitement and enthusiasm. It happens in this case, as well, but at the end of their discussion Menelaus is moved and let himself be infected by his wife's emotions, so that he starts singing too. The different attitude emerges because Helen looks at the future with hope and positivity, instead Menelaus is still confused and is now forced to think about the Trojan deeds, on which is based his glory, as a completely futile adventure. There is an allusion to the Odyssey in the *anagnorisis* scene between the two spouses, but the roles are inverted. In both texts the husband arrives looking like a beggar, but in the tragedy it is not Helen who questions Menelaus, but the opposite (167). Compared to the other tragedies in which he is involved, this Menelaus is quite a different character: he is sensitive, he is concerned with bravery, but in the end Helen is the most enterprising and daring (resembling Odysseus).

¹⁹ On the peculiar structure of this *anagnorisis* and its relation with philosophical perspective, see MUREDDU 2005.

Scholars note that at the beginning it seems that Helen wants to swear that she will not marry another man after the hypothetical death of Menelaus, but then, since her spouse is expecting her to say that she will directly commit suicide if this will happen, Helen gets the suggestion, accepts the new condition and adds that she will slay herself even with his sword, in order to please him.²⁰ The element of the sword and that of suicide recurs, although in this case the oath is expressed in the way Menelaus wants it to be: in this passage as well a shadow veils Helen's sincerity and her true intentions. After that, Menelaus asks her to seal their pact with a handshake. Only at this point he reciprocally adds his own promise that he will die too if she will be killed before him: so his involvement in the oath is belated and makes it clear that he is not so bold and self-confident.²¹

Certainly, even before, Helen had sworn that she would have killed herself with a weapon if she had known that he was dead, so between the two oaths there is a substantial coherence. Still, due to her husband's disbelief that links her to the adulterous eidolon, she's not able to prove her loyalty to him spontaneously and she is not given the time to affirm her faithfulness with her own words, so that suspicion remains about what she wanted to say. Again she is forced to fall back on her mythical role. It is worth noticing that at line 841 Helen asserts that if they will have to die by suicide, they are going to do it in the most glorious way. The couple is evidently obsessed with *doxa*, appearance, and with *kleos*, fame, so that both partners along the entire play explicate their desire to embody or at least resemble models of virtue, courage and glory. They both, on the contrary, can't find inside the Euripidean plot an actual fulfillment for this longing and seem instead quite unsuitable or inadequate to personify any model of chastity and faithfulness or bravery and heroism.²² This last oath too, in Torrance's opinion, is indicative of Helen's honesty: she even solemnizes it in a way that is more appropriate for divine oaths, when she starts with the *incipit* «I swear by your head...» (835).²³ This is a recurrent expression that can be found in several literary passages: first of all *Iliad* 15.36-46, where Hera swears to Zeus by his head that she has not incited Poseidon to influence positively on the Achaean victories. In this Iliadic scene the goddess is evidently manipulating the oath and its formula without saying anything false,

²⁰ ALLAN 2008: 240.

²¹ SCHMIEL 1972: 289.

²² In the end, paradoxically, what saves the protagonists is a stratagem, a lie, and not their bravery. The successful scheming makes appearance seem reality: Theoclimenus is deceived with a false death of Menelaus and a fake funeral rite celebrated at the sea on a ship. On the same ship Menelaus and his surviving crew will exterminate the Egyptian soldiers and they will be incited by Helen, who exalts glory and blood, remembering us precisely of that *eidolon* because of which Achaeans and Trojans had died "gloriously" at Troy. In the end this Helen is exactly what the myth wants her to be.

²³ TORRANCE 2009: 3-5.

but at the same time to cover the truth avoiding Zeus' anger. Exactly the same use of this phrase is in the *Hymn to Hermes* 274-276, where the young winged god offers to swear an identical oath to his brother Apollo, but in the end he eludes it. Torrance thinks that Helen's oath is not influenced by the irony of these two texts because Euripides does not allude to them with the purpose of showing the ambiguity of Helen's speech. Rather, in Torrance's opinion, other texts demonstrate that another link is the right one: the formula is used only for divine oaths, as it is in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* 26-28 and in Sappho's fragment 44a. In the first Artemis swears by the head of Zeus to keep herself virgin, in the second one the same words are used by Demeter.²⁴ Certainly there is the possibility that Euripides referred to these texts to make her Helen semi-divine and to make us believe in her oath of chastity and fidelity, thanks to the comparison with these two divine virgins. In any case, we don't need to suppose a conscious will of the author to recall these texts and their contents in particular, because similar hypotextual interferences are an obvious and natural course of the literary creative processes. It is undeniable, anyway, that Helen's character uses and wants to use deliberately the chastity rhetoric just in the moment in which she faces Menelaus and wants to convince him that she has been a faithful wife and she will ever be, but this does not mean for the audience that her speech is completely lacking malice. Besides this consideration, it can't be ignored the parallel with the more famous scene of Hera in the *Iliad*, and the fact that this casts the shadow of skepticism and irony over Helen's words. We cannot assume as a matter of facts that Euripides alludes to it with sarcasm regarding his heroine reliability, but we cannot ignore as well the far wider celebrity and popularity of *Iliad's* passage, compared with that of the other texts.

In conclusion, the two oaths we find in Euripides' *Helen* are not a device intended to prove the sincere faithfulness and loyalty of the protagonist, but, on the contrary, they operate to let in the ambiguity a character that is bond to appearance and that desires to affirm herself rehabilitating from her bad fame of betrayer. Moreover, the oath scene has here, like in many other passages of Euripides' works, the function of reflecting difficulties in the use of language, in words interpretation and in understanding the truth, which maybe remains not cognizable and not communicable.

²⁴ In Sappho fr. 44a the oath line regarding the father's head is variously integrated. See FERRARI 1987.

File riservato ad esclusivo fine di studio

5.

**When is a Mother Who Solves a Mystery:
The Monologue of the Muse
in Pseudo-Euripides' *Rhesus*.¹**

Stefania Santoni

The aim of this work is to talk about a female figure who recurs very frequently in Greek poetry, but acquires unusual and atypical traits in the text of Ps. Euripides. This character is the Muse, the mother of Rhesus.

[...] ἡ γὰρ ἐν σοφοῖς
τιμὰς ἔχουσα Μοῦσα συγγόνων μίᾳ
πάρειμι, παῖδα τόνδ' ὀρώσ' οἰκτρῶς φίλον
θανόνθ' ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν. [...] (890-893)

Through these verses, the Muse appears on the scene of *Rhesus*.² The topic of the tragedy is well-known and it is the same of the tenth book of *Iliad*. After that Odysseus and Diomedes foiled a raid of Dolon on the Greek camp, they evaded the guards and enter the Trojan camp. They then kill the asleep Thracian king Rhesus, assisted of Athena.

The author of *Rhesus* chooses to introduce the Muse, the protagonist's mother, at the end of the tragedy. Moreover, very significantly he gives her a voice: in this tragedy, the Muse is a character who speaks herself. In fact, while in the epic genre the Muse inspires the poet and she's a passive element or better said an element which acts as an interface, in the *Rhesus* she produces herself a speech.

We are at the end of the tragedy and the author needs to solve the mystery about Rhesus' death. It is necessary to introduce a divine element and so he

¹ I am grateful to Laura Napoli, met in Los Angeles (January, 2016) during a conference organized by EuGeStA (European network on Gender Studies in Antiquity): in that occasion she talked about the Muse in Pseudo-Euripides' *Rhesus*. I was her discussant. Following her speech some reflections raised in my mind and that is when my research on the Muse started.

² For a comment on *Rhesus* see LIAPIS 2012; FRIES 2014.

chooses the epiphanies of two goddesses: Athena and the Muse, who have a similar function. Just as the Greeks are unable to achieve their goal without divine assistance, the Trojans need the supernatural to solve the mystery of Rhesus' death; that's why the two goddesses seem to have a specular role in the tragedy.³

The aim of this work is to explain the several aspects coexisting in this special female figure. More precisely, her role of *mater dolorosa/lacrimosa* will be analyzed as well her *status* of wise woman as deity. Let's start the analysis of our female character.

After showing her divine nature, the Muse presents herself as a mother, a desperate woman for the her child's death:

ἰαλέμῳ ἀθιγενεῖ,
τέκνον, σ' ὀλοφύρομαι, ὦ
ματρὸς ἄλγος [...]. (895-897)

By reading the above verses, the reader clearly immerses himself into an elegiac poem. We know that in Greek culture there was a specialization of literary genres both for topics and poetic forms of expression: some kinds of orality were only feminine, like γόος and θρῆνος, whereas man sang the paeon or the cry sound to accompany the noise of weapons. So the Muse's lament is a gender language, typical of the female sex. Yet it seems interesting to question this particular point. Is θρῆνειν appropriate to the Muse? In a fragment of Sappho (fr. 150 Voigt) we read that ἐν μοισοπόλων οἰκίαι θρῆνον οὐ πρέπον.⁴ But according to post-Homeric tradition,⁵ more precisely to Pindar and Apollodorus, the mother of Rhesus is Euterpe, the Muse with the ἀυλός, the musical instrument of lament and elegiac poetry. Furthermore, if we consider the Greek word used in her speech to indicate the lamentation, we note that the word is ἰαλέμος. According to the Pindaric tradition, ἰαλέμος is a lament song which has the function to celebrate the death of Ialemos, one of the children of Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry.⁶ So θρῆνειν seems to be appropriate to the Muse.

As Nicole Loraux argues, «per il genere tragico l'occasione di anettere la Musa all'evocazione ripetitiva del lutto come musica era troppo ghiotta. E da questo punto di vista, c'è forse in Euripide un'allusione polemica a Saffo quando il coro dell'*Alceste* annuncia che i servitori delle Muse (*mousopoloî*) celebreranno la gloria della giovane donna sia sulle sette corde della lira, sia negli inni senza lira».⁷ The scholar proceeds by supporting the presence of sinister and *noir*

³ FRIES 2014: 5.

⁴ For a discussion of the lament of the Muse see PELLIZER 2010; FANTUZZI 2007; PALMISCIANO 1998; DE MARTINO 1958. For the language of lament see LORAUX 1986b and SEGAL 1993.

⁵ FANTUZZI 2007: 185.

⁶ FANTUZZI 2007: 190.

⁷ LORAUX 2001: 116.

evocations of the Muses in several tragedies: in Aeschylus⁸ there is a reference to a song of good *omen* while in *Medea*⁹ there is a Muse of the women's race; we find a gloomy Muse of the Erynnyes in the *Eumenides*¹⁰ and a Muse of threnody who sings for the dead in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.¹¹ Finally, in a fragment of *Hypsipyle*,¹² a Muse in tears has been evoked. All these elements allow us to believe that the θρήνειν seems to be appropriate to the Muse. But we will better specify about the elegiac aspect of our female figure, later on this work.

We know that the lament of a mother represents the literary *topos* of the *mater dolorosa/lacrimosa*, which means the mother suffering for her son or her daughter's death. Some examples are: in the mythological repertoire, it's known Demeter's grief for the bereavement of Persephone. Also mentioned in our tragedy, Persephone was subtracted from her mother through a kidnapping alluding to a matrimonial kidnapping.¹³ Another *mater dolorosa/lacrimosa* is Thetis, mentioned in the speech of the Muse:

βαιὸν δὲ πένθος τῆς θαλασσίας θεοῦ
οἴσω· θανεῖν γάρ καὶ τὸν ἐκ κείνης χρεῶν. (974-975)

Along with these mothers, also Eos becomes part of the *topos* of the *mater dolorosa*, whose weeping holds her son Mnemon, a Trojan soldier killed by Achilles. There is a beautiful image about Eos' pain, which is painted on a *kylix* by Duride from Samo, located at Louvre Museum (fig. 1).

In this image we see the suffering mother holding her dead son in her arms, precisely in the same gesture of our Muse. In fact, before the Chorus (887 το νεόκητον νεκρὸν ἐν χειροῖν) and after she herself declares to hold in the arms her lifeless son. This representation is very strong and powerful; it seems to convey an energy and force not typically feminine. The Muse seems to find masculine force, or probably her *status* of *mater dolorosa* does not allow her to keep a distance from the body of Rhesus. We can assume that it is a ritual gesture. However, we know that this gesture is an iconographic module which will survive over time, like the Virgin and Christ. Also, it is interesting to reflect on Rhesus' body. At the end of the speech, the Muse asks the queen of Ades, Proserpina, to leave the ψυχή of her child:

οὐκ εἶσι γαίας ἐς μελάγχμιον πέδον
τοσόνδε Νύμφην τὴν ἔνερθ' αἰτήσομαι,
τῆς καρποποιοῦ παῖδα Δήμετρος θεᾶς,
ψυχὴν ἀνεῖναι τοῦδ' [...] (962-965)

⁸ Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women* 694-695.

⁹ Euripides, *Medea* 195-197, 421, 1085, 1089.

¹⁰ Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 308.

¹¹ Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 144-145, 183-184.

¹² Euripides, *Hypsipyle* fr. 4.6-9.

¹³ PELLIZER 2010: 2.

What did ψυχή mean in ancient times? Whereas we say that human beings have a soul, in ancient world a human beings hasn't the ψυχή, but he or she becomes ψυχή in death. The ψυχή is a sort of duplicate of the dead person: reproducing exactly his physical appearances. But the ψυχή is not corporeal, it's impalpable. Although same for everything, it continues to emphasize the absence of the dead person. When there is the ψυχή, the person whose image is reproduced is irretrievably lost. So the Muse needs an image of Rhesus, she needs a *simulacrum* which recalls her son. The simulacrum is the ψυχή, that is a ghost of physical appearances which doesn't deteriorate, differently from the σῶμα.¹⁴



fig. 1 Eos and Memnon

To complete her role of *mater dolorosa*, the Muse leaves the lament and starts bearing a grudge against the responsible for her son's death. In her speech we read:

ὄλοιτο μὲν Οἰνεΐδας,
 ὄλοιτο δὲ Λαρτιάδας,
 ὅς μ' ἄπαιδα γέννας
 ἔθηκεν ἀριστοτόκοιο·
 ἄθ' Ἑλλανα λιποῦσα δόμον
 Φρυγίων λεχέων ἐπλευσε πλαθεῖς'
 ἔνπ' Ἰλίῳ† ὤλεσε μὲν σ' ἕκατι Τροίας,
 φίλτατε, μυριάδας τε πόλεις
 ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκένωσεν. (906-914)

Then, the Muse gets angry against the deity who made Rhesus died:

¹⁴ PULIGA, PIAZZINI 2007: 171-172. To discuss about *psyche* and *eidolon* see VERNANT 1992a; VERNANT 1992b; BETTINI, BRILLANTE 2002: 132-157; BETTINI 1994: 16-24; MATELLI 2015.

καὶ τοῦδ', Ἀθάνα, παντὸς αἰτία μόρου,
 – οὐδὲν δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς οὐδ' ὁ Τυδέως τόκος
 ἔδρασε δράσας - μὴ δόκει λεληθέναι. (938-940)

As Nicole Loraux argues, the intimacy of the pain results in an accentuation of the feeling of physical contiguity, it is increasingly acute as it is through the death that is evident it cannot be extinguished.¹⁵ During this access path to insight, we meet gestures coded by the ritual: they are the same gestures of all mothers and they allow each mother to express her bereavement in its generic signs. In the epic, the mother is the one whose pain gives the signal of social bereavement. How? She rips her hair and screams a deep cry of pain. She sings a θρήνος during a ceremony or she holds in her arms a bloody body.¹⁶ In this *topos* of the gestures, the mother of Rhesus is not an exception: she holds the body of her dead son too. The sight of the corpse is the highest point of πάθος: the body is the guardian of the memory so to see it lifeless is heartbreaking.

After checking the loss of the son through the body, the pain of the mother turns into rage. It is up to goddesses who are mothers, as our Muse, to cross the bounds: from pain to rage, from rage to rebellion.¹⁷ The Muse feels a pain that doesn't forget and it feeds on itself. For this reason a mother affected by bereavement becomes dangerous for herself and for those around. Loraux calls this changed pain μῆνις, a memory-ire we know from *Iliad* and Achilles. According to the Greeks, the μῆνις is black like a son of the Night; it is terrific, durable, hard to appease. It is incessant, endless: its strong point is the ability to be inextinguishable.¹⁸

The μῆνις affects our Muse too: she refers to Achilles' death turning to his mother Thetis. The mother of Rhesus says that Pallas will not be able to save Achilles and these words seems to be a certainty, a consolation, almost a challenge:

βαιὸν δὲ πένθος τῆς θαλασσίας θεοῦ
 οἴσω· θανεῖν γὰρ καὶ τὸν ἐκ κείνης χρεῶν.
 θρήνοις δ' ἀδελφαὶ πρῶτα μὲν σὲ ὑμνήσομεν,
 ἔπειτ' Ἀχιλλεῖα Θέτιδος ἐν πένθει ποτέ. (974-977)

It is an image very significant because the bereavement of Thetis is one of the most important of the mythological repertoire. As the Muse, Achilles' mother is struck by μῆνις: Thetis is angry because she was forced to marry a mortal, also because she knows her son will die in Trojan war. Noteworthy is the fact that the fury of the mother has moved to the son: the maternal μῆνις became Achilles' μῆνις. Between mother and son, bereavement and ire become

¹⁵ LORAUX 1991a: 37.

¹⁶ LORAUX 1991a: 38.

¹⁷ LORAUX 1991a: 43-44.

¹⁸ LORAUX 1991b: 202.

inseparable.¹⁹ So, evoking the pain of the goddess of the sea, the Muse tries to find a consolation, a suffering sharing: her μήνις can appease by seeing another mother suffering. Although the Muse speaks about the funereal song, played by her and her sisters played for the future dead, she seems to find consolation in Achilles' death. The θρηῆνος of the Muses for Achilles' death is testified by both Homer (*Odyssey* 24.60-62):

Μοῦσαι δ' ἔννεά πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὅπι καλῆ
θρήγεον· ἔνθα κεν οὐ τιν' ἀδάκρυτόν γ' ἔνόησας
Ἀργείων· τοῖον γὰρ ὑπώρορε Μοῦσα λίγεια.

and Pindar (*Isthmean Odes* 8.56- 60):

τὸν μὲν οὐδὲ θανόντ' αἰοδαὶ ἔλιπον,
ἀλλὰ οἱ παρά τε πυρὰν τάφον θ' Ἑλικώνια παρθένοι
στάν, ἐπὶ θρηῆνόν τε πολύφραμον ἔχεαν.
ἔδοξ' ἄρα τόδ' ἀθανάτοις,
ἔσλόν γε φῶτα καὶ φθίμενον ὕμνοις θεᾶν διδόμεν.

Between grief and promise of immortality, we are witness of a funeral oration of Thetis' son: the Muses themselves, with their beautiful voice, sing for Achilles: it is up to divine holders singing to observe the best of Achaeans.

Through this first part of the analysis, we understood that the Muse suffered a remarkable transformation compared to her original *status*. When she becomes a complete and utter character, as in our case, and when she gains a own space in the drama, Dionysus, the cantor, Μελπόμενος, replaces Apollo, the guide of the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne.²⁰ The Muse is no longer tied exclusivity to singing and music, but she finds her identity also in moral and intellectual life. She is no longer the origin of the art of the poet, but she becomes the result of it. In the tragedy, it's not the Muse that creates the poet but on the other way round, it is the poet who creates the Muse.²¹

As Nicole Loraux wrote, «decisamente le Muse non sfuggono alla spirale luttuosa che caratterizza la tragedia. È vero che queste compagne di Apollo hanno pericolosamente avvicinato Dioniso, e di fatto è la definizione stessa del genere che associa le divine detentrici del canto al dio dell'altrove. Per aver conquistato i cori tragici, partendo dai cori apollinei, la Musa può ben dare il suo nome a quel desiderio di musica che la tragedia mette in scena a proprio uso e consumo. Al di sotto della finzione del conflitto, al di sotto della figura dell'incompatibilità – Apollo e il θρηῆνος, le Muse e Dioniso – i tragici si sforzano così di parlare della sconcertante complicità tra le sentenze luminose e gli accenti strani del lamento cantato».²²

¹⁹ LORAUX 1991a: 48-49.

²⁰ LORAUX 2001: 119.

²¹ SAÏD 2007.

²² LORAUX 2001: 121.

Reading *Rhesus*, we find two imagines of the Muse. Indeed, before she appears on the stage, she is qualified by adjectives which completely associate her with the singing and the hymns (352-393 μελωδός, 651 ὕμνοποιός). She is the personification of the singing, as in epic poetry. However, when she appears to the stage holding her son dead in her arms, she has anything to do with the ancient Muses, found in *Iliad* while they are singing at banquets of the gods. As previously seen, *Odyssey* shows the Muses linked to pain dimension: they sing at Achilles' funerals, by making the Argives cry. Usually when the Muses are outside of tragic context, the poet tends to talk about the beauty of their singing and the clarity of their voice.²³ In *Rhesus*, instead, a tragic context, the Muse becomes a character who feels emotions, πάθος: she is a mother in mourning. That is the reason why she is identified with the Muse of pains evoked by the chorus of the *Trojan Women* (609 μοῦσα ...ἢ λύπας ἔχει): she has been categorized in the series of mothers of Euripides universe that we find in *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*, *Suppliant Women*.²⁴ It is about mothers who share Thetis' same condition: all of them lost a son, after vainly warned them about the negative fate waiting for them in Troy. There is an indissoluble connection between woman and bereavement. The plaintive lament is female: it is not about men, who might be troubled by an excessive mimesis of the pain by the female genre. During the funeral parade, women are the first in groaning and crying, especially mothers like our Muse.

In a monologue full of a vocabulary of moans, groans and tears, the Muse creates a θρήνος that is able to get her pain across, as we can see from the chorus that is united to her pain:

ὄσον προσήκει μὴ γένους κοινωνίαν
ἔχοντι λύπη τὸν σὸν οἰκτίρω γόνον. (904-905)

This tragic Muse is at the opposite pole from the Muses of Hesiod, where they are described as heart free from sorrow. There is a perfect coherence between the narration of the tragedy about the Muse and what is shown by putting her on the scene; in a highly full of πάθος and empathic context, the archaic Muse evolved: she learned to feeling emotions and to externalize them.²⁵

But now we return to Hesiod and, drawing to close, we focus on divine *status* of the Muse.

In *Theogony*, Hesiod tells that, after addressing the Muses, while he was putting the livestock out to pasture at the foot of the Mount Elicon, the Muses had appeared and gave him a laurel branch. This is the more ancient testimony of the motif of poetic investiture, the consecration of a poet who receives from a deity the charge to sing something. The Muses in fact, ordered to Hesiod to sing

²³ SAÏD 2007: 29-30.

²⁴ LORAUX 2001: 115-117.

²⁵ LADA-RICHARDS 2002: 82, said: «within the heightened emotionality of the Athenian theatrical context, the archaic Muse has learned to fell».

the seed of the blessed, always living: but they also order to poet that he must sing them at the beginning and at the end.

In what way does the action of the Muses realize? We know that they inspire the song, they blow it into the poet, conveying the knowledge of a very distant time. This is possible because, as Hesiod says, the Muses know what it is, what it will be, what it was.²⁶ Therefore the Muse is a female figure linked to wisdom. And this aspect is clear in our tragedy, too. Her cognitive *status* discovers as soon as she appears on the stage as a *dea ex machina*: she is the one that knows the truth about Rhesus' death and so she is the one able to reveal who is the responsible. Thus, she is a prophetic woman. The father Zeus and the mother Mnemosyne transferred on her the gift of σοφία, that is the ability to know more than the others. The link between σοφία and the Muse is found in various testimonies. In Homeric epics, the Muse not only presides to singing and music but she is also custodian of a wisdom that does not know either time or space (Homer, *Iliad* 2.484-485), so much that it is compared to Calchas' wisdom, who knows past, present, future (Homer, *Iliad* 1.69-70). In Empedocles, for example, the Muse presides at the wisdom of philosophy.²⁷ But she can supervise the divination, the art of architect Daedalus: her patronage extends in the culture and in the education of civilization.²⁸ It is significant that in Euripides the Muse is explicitly combined to σοφία, when Medea asserts that female gender approaches to σοφία peculiar to Muses.

In *Rhesus*, in what way does the Muse react to the death of her son? How does the Muse decide to use her σοφία? In the text we read these verses:

κρυπτός δ' ἐν ἄντροις τῆς ὑπαργύρου χθονός
 ἀνθρωποδαίμων κείσεται βλέπων φάος,
 Βάκχου προφήτης ὥστε Παγγαίου πέτρων
 ᾤκησε, σεμνός τοῖσιν εἰδόσιν θεός. (970-973)

The Muse chooses to transfer to her son her own features of a prophetic woman: she decides to give birth again to Rhesus as a prophet of Bacchos in Thrace. If we read carefully the monologue of the Muse, we find three explicit references to the strict tie between mother and son in the context of sharing of knowledge and prophetic *status*. At verses 890-891 the Muse declares to be one of the sisters honored by the Wise (ἡ γὰρ ἐν **σοφοῖς** τιμὰς ἔχουσα); at verse 949 she says that she will not give other Wise (**σοφιστήν**); finally, at verses 970-971 she describes her son as ἀνθρωποδαίμων, as the prophet (**προφήτης**) of Dionysus. Therefore we understand that σοφία is a key aspect of the Muse: it is not without reason that verbs like μουσῶω and ἐκμουσῶω are related to teaching

²⁶ Hesiod, *Theogony* 34.

²⁷ MURRAY 2004: 372.

²⁸ SAÏD 2007: 31.

and then to knowledge. On the contrary, words like ἀμουσία and ἀπόμουσος are synonyms of absence of education, civilization, humanity.²⁹

In conclusion, we can say that the Muse is a character related to knowledge, creation and production: through her divine *status*, she solved the mystery about the death of her son and she gave birth to him as a prophet. For this reason it could be argued that the Muse is the key to understand the whole tragedy.

²⁹ SAÏD 2007: 31.

File riservato ad esclusivo fine di studio

6.

**Electra Loves Asyndeton.
A Survey on Asyndetic Series of Imperatives
in Ancient Greek Drama.**

Mattia De Poli

Introduction.

A theory about the use of asyndeton was first offered by Aristotle (IV BC)¹ and in the same period asyndeton often recurs by orators and playwrights, such as Demosthenes or Menander.² Nevertheless, in the archaic poetry it is already attested by Homer – as the ancient rhetoricians knew³ – and also lyric poets used it somehow.⁴ Step by step, in the late V BC asyndeton arrives to Athens, where the Sophists – like Gorgias – wisely and widely exploited it⁵ and dramatists, too, were well aware of the effects they could obtain by asyndeton, although sometimes this rhetorical figure has been neglected by modern scholars.⁶

¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.12 [1413b-1414a]; see SIFAKIS 2002: 155-158. Cf. Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* 19-20; Demetrius, *On Style* 193-194. As for the rhetorical handbooks dealing with *tricolon* as a particular case of asyndeton, see BOCCOTTI 1975.

² See DENNISTON 1952: 99; FERRERO 1976. Both Demosthenes and Menander are usually quoted by Aristotle, Pseudo-Longinus and Demetrius: see the previous note.

³ See ANGELI BERNARDINI 2008: 52. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.12.4 [1414a]; Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* 19.2.

⁴ ANGELI BERNARDINI 2008: 52, singles out three different kind of asyndeton in lyric odes according to the context: 1) in programmatic sections, when the poet urges himself or the chorus to start or stop singing, go on with the song, select or omit arguments (cf. Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 4.37-38, 69-70, 7.48-51, 68-72); 2) in gnomic sections; 3) in narrative sections with different effects.

⁵ DENNISTON 1952: 99.

⁶ For instance, BREITENBACH 1934 doesn't mention asyndeton among the rhetorical figures in the Euripidean lyrics. For a list of asyndeta just in the Euripidean monodies, see DE POLI 2011: 361. Also Latin playwrights took advantages from the use of asyndeton: see BINI 1981, referring to both Plautus and Terentius.

According to the ancient rhetoricians, it «produces amplification»⁷ and «gives the idea of an agitation which both checks the utterance and at the same time drives it on».⁸ Modern scholars usually agree with this interpretation,⁹ focusing on some effects like emphasis, strength and pathos. Now, if we consider that imperative as a verbal mood is used to give an order and the speaker assumes that the wished action or situation materialise as soon as possible,¹⁰ the effect of two, three or more different imperative verbs in an asyndetic series will be even more striking.

As we might expect, a tricolon of imperatives is in Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes* (fr. 11 a 22): εἰ δέ του μετέχοντος ἀκούσας, ὅστις ἐστίν, αὐτὸς ἐλθέτω, φανήτω, μαρτυρησάτω. If Odysseus' accusation relies on a participant, Palamedes invites his prosecutor to let him «come forward, show himself, bear witness», so the accusation will gain much in credibility. Although the effect of this particular asyndeton is slightly weakened by the usage of the third person, it is anyway an insistent demand: Palamedes is forcing the witness to come and face the indicted.

Now I will focus on asyndetic series of different imperative verbs at the second person: first in the Aristophanean comedies and in the Euripidean satyr-plays and tragedies, then within the utterances of Electra as a tragic character.¹¹

Some cases in the Aristophanean comedies.

In the Aristophanean comedies we find asyndetic series of the same repeated verb and they probably produced singular effects, like «the cry of soldiers when no quarter was to be given».¹² But sequences of imperatives without any conjunction¹³ are made up also of different verbs, as in the four following passages.

⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.12 [1413b]: ἔχει οὖν ἀϋξήσιμν.

⁸ Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* 19: τὰ γὰρ ἀλλήλων διακεκομμένα καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον κατεσπευσμένα φέρει τῆς ἀγωνίας ἔμφασιν. [...] τοιαῦθ' ὁ ποιητὴς ἐξήνεγκε διὰ τῶν ἀσυνδέτων.

⁹ LAUSBERG 1960: 353; BECCARIA 2004: 92.

¹⁰ Imperative expresses a stronger order than exhortative conjunctive or optative with ἄν: KÜHNER, GERTH 1898, I: 233-238.

¹¹ DENNISTON 1952: 99, makes a distinction between «*asyndeton at the comma*» or «half asyndeton», when it involves words or clauses, and «*full asyndeton*» or «asyndeton at the colon or full stop, *between sentences*», that is much rarer. A string of verbs like imperatives (or nouns or adjectives) is an half asyndeton, but sometimes in poetry such a distinction is not easy to be followed, so I avoid it.

¹² STARKIE 1909: 66, referring to Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 280. For the usual couple παῖε, παῖε, cf. Aristophanes, *Knights* 247, *Wasps* 456, *Peace* 1119. An «impressive tricolon in asyndeton» is in Aristophanes, *Birds* 851, but here the three verbs are present indicative: see DUNBAR 1995: 505. On series of imperatives in Aristophanes, see CAMPAGNER 2001: 12.

¹³ On the other hand, a particular effect was produced also by a series of imperatives in polysyndeton, as in Aristophanes, *Knights* 251-252.

After destroying by fire Socrates' school, in *Clouds* 1508 δῖωκε, παῖε, βάλλε ... Strepsiadēs urges himself (and secondly his slave Xanthias)¹⁴ to run after the philosophers and beat them, using a perfect tricolon within a spoken iambic trimeter.

In *Wasps* 1326 ἄνεχε, πάρεχε ...¹⁵ a drunk Philocleon probably uses a formulaic expression and literally addresses himself while holding a torch, but he indirectly commands other people following and hassling him to back away, just threatening them by the torch: a couple of imperative verbs shapes two tribrachs, probably corresponding to a trochaic meter because of the following catalectic trochaic trimeters.

In *Birds* 364-365 ἐλελελεῦ· χῶρει, κάθες τὸ ῥύγχος, [...] / ἔλκε, τίλλε, παῖε, δεῖρε· κόπτε πρώτην τὴν χύτραν¹⁶ the choryphaios speaks to the other birds of the chorus, although it is likely he does the same actions he speaks of, so they all together ward off the two human beings: after a war-cry, the choryphaios gives the birds the instructions to get ready for the assault (364), then he urges them to start their attack (365).¹⁷ Both 364 and 365 are catalectic trochaic trimeters.

Finally, in *Birds* 1720-1721 ἄναγε, δίεχε, πάραγε, πάρεχε· / περιπέτεσθε μάκαρα μάκαρι σὺν τύχῃ¹⁸ the whole chorus is singing: the first four verbs (1720) «blend three technical military commands [...] with what was probably a ritual shout at wedding processions»,¹⁹ so the birds divide into two groups, and then they both start fluttering (1721) – and dancing – for the bride, Basileia, and the bridegroom, Peisetairos. We must understand the four second person singular imperatives and the second person plural one as self-intended orders. 1720 is a sequence of four tribrachs, probably corresponding to a trochaic dimeter, while 1721 is a catalectic trochaic trimeter starting by a tribrach and with other solutions.

¹⁴ «Chase them, hit them, pelt them ... », SOMMERSTEIN 1982: 155. The attribution of 1508-1509 is a debate: see DI BARI 2013: 287-300. Generally, I follow DOVER 1968: 268. MASTROMARCO 1983: 90-91, is right referring εἰδῶς (1509) only to Strepsiadēs, but the imperatives at 1508 could be a kind of self-exhortation and the slave could co-operate with his master.

¹⁵ «Lift the torch high, hold it near ... », STARKIE 1897: 360. For similar translations, see MASTROMARCO 1983: 545; COULON, VAN DAELE 1924: 74-75. These verbs are often translated as «Stand up! Make way!» (MACDOWELL 1971: 306) or «Stop! Make way!» (SOMMERSTEIN 1983: 129), and STARKIE 1897: 360, considers them like a «stereotyped Bacchic cry». Anyway, I believe that they originally were shouted by a person holding a torch during a (wedding) procession, like in Euripides' *Trojan Women* 308 (see DE POLI 2011: 149-150), and later they started meaning something like «Stop! Make way!», even without any torch there, maybe like in Euripides' *Cyclops* 203 (see USSHER 1978: 77-78): for this shift of meaning, see DUNBAR 1995: 754. An «ambiguous» meaning for this couple of imperatives was suggested by SEAFORD 1984: 142-143.

¹⁶ «Eleleleu. Forward! Level your beaks! [...] / Pull them, pluck them, hit them, flay them! Strike the pot first», SOMMERSTEIN 1987: 59.

¹⁷ For the words at 365 probably alluding to a children's game, see DUNBAR 1995: 277.

¹⁸ «Arise, divide, deploy, make way! / Fly around him who is blest with blest fortune!», SOMMERSTEIN 1987: 195.

¹⁹ DUNBAR 1995: 753.

Generally, these lines are uttered as a shout and military language is surely a great influence on most of them,²⁰ but case d) is slightly different because the chorus has no hostile intention: here imperatives are just meant to lead precise choral movements and dance in the orchestra for an happy event like the marriage of Peisetairos and Basileia. Otherwise, a single character – eventually helped by someone else – expresses his own anger, fury, aggressive intent against other people, and tribrachs or trochaics fit his excitement well.²¹

Some cases in the Euripidean satyr-plays and tragedies.

Also in satyr plays and tragedies a series of second person singular imperatives in asyndeton is usually a symptom of one's agitation and it means force and violence as either aggression or reaction. As far as Euripides is concerned, we can single out a couple of instances, that have something in common with those in the Aristophanes' comedies (and in lyric odes).

In *Cyclops* 203 ἄνεχε, πάρεχε²² Polyphemos is holding no torch: so, although he utters the same words as Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1326, their translation can't understand any reference to it. The Cyclops, addressing Silenos and the other Satyrs, gives them the order to stop frenzy and make room: even if he doesn't use any specific military term, his approach has much of «the style of a sergeant-major».²³ These «bullying imperatives» mirrors his «despotic nature»²⁴ and shape two tribrachs that fill into an iambic trimeter and express Polyphemos' «agitation»²⁵ as well as his «impatience and anger».²⁶

Otherwise, in *Trojan Women* 308 ἄνεχε, πάρεχε. φῶς φέρω, σέβω, φλέγω²⁷ a singular wedding ceremony is happening on the stage: Cassandra has been taken by Agamemnon as his concubine but, as a visionary, she feels happy like a true bride since she foreknows that the Greek hero will be killed because of her. No one can understand her joy, so Cassandra celebrates the rite by herself and plays a double role as both a bride and a ministrant, singing and holding a torch:

²⁰ As for war-cries, military commands or even cries of no quarter, see STARKIE 1911: 312, and DOVER 1968: 268 (cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1508); DUNBAR 1995: 276-277 (cf. Aristophanes, *Birds* 364-365) and 753 (cf. Aristophanes, *Birds* 1720).

²¹ As for an instance in “new comedy”, cf. Menander, *Dyskolos* 81 πάρες, φυλάττου, πᾶς ἄπελθ' ἐκ τοῦ μέσου, expressing Pyrrhios' agitation: see FERRERO 1976: 86-87. In Latin comedy, cf. Plautus, *Curculio* 88-89, with comic effect; Terentius, *Andria* 334, with pathetic effect: see BINI 1981: 117.

²² «Get out of the way! Make way!», O'SULLIVAN, COLLARD 2013: 91.

²³ SEAFORD 1984: 142.

²⁴ O'SULLIVAN, COLLARD 2013: 158-159. About the effect produced by these imperatives, see also USSHER 1978: 77-78.

²⁵ SEAFORD 1984: 142-143.

²⁶ O'SULLIVAN, COLLARD 2013: 158-159.

²⁷ «Hold up the fire, display it! ... », MORWOOD 2000: 47, with a slight change, because he writes φέρ' as a third imperative. About the textual matters at this line, see DE POLI 2011: 149-150.

the two imperatives – the same as in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1326 and Euripides' *Cyclops* 203 – are self-intended orders here as usual in ritual songs.²⁸ They don't imply any hostile intention toward the other Trojan women around her, but joy is blended with murderous fury against Agamemnon: these two tribrachs in a plausible iambo-cretic sequence (*ia cr ia*) express agitation and anger again.²⁹

Electra's voice and tragic asyndeton.

Electra is the protagonist or one of the main characters in several tragedies: Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Euripides' *Electra*, Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes*. Now we are going to focus on asyndeton in these plays, mainly on strings of second person singular imperatives uttered by her.

In the eldest drama *Electra*, Orestes or the chorus often use imperatives to give orders, lament something or implore someone, but these verbs are never in an asyndetic series if we just except ἴδετε ... ἴδεσθ' ... (406-407): Orestes is the speaking character, he is lamenting over his family's misfortune and begging the Gods of the underworld to look at him and his sister and to help them, but it is properly a kind of anaphora, being two forms of the same verb repeated.³⁰ Anyway, it is inserted in the great *kommos* sung by the Chorus, Orestes and Electra, that is one of the highest emotional peaks in this Aeschylean tragedy.³¹

A true pathetic asyndeton is in Euripides' *Electra* 592-593: ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον, ἴει λιτάς,³² a dochmiac or iambo-cretic line (*2dochm* or *2cr ia*). The Argive maidens fully express their happiness for Orestes' return home in a short choral song (585-595),³³ that is the only lyric section at the end of the recognition scene in this play. Here the dramatic function of asyndeton looks like that at the end of Aristophanes' *Birds* with the same joyful atmosphere.³⁴

In the same play this rhetorical figure recurs again at least four times:³⁵ it

²⁸ Such imperatives look very like those in lyric odes: see above, note 4, as for the exhortative function (1).

²⁹ See LEE 1976: 125-127; SUSANETTI 2008: 161 note 62; DE POLI 2012: 116-120.

³⁰ See UNTERSTEINER 2002: 292. «There is probably no significance here, other than metrical, in the *variatio*»: maybe «the middle adds emphasis to the command or wish» (GARVIE 1986: 152).

³¹ See GARVIE 1986: 122-125; UNTERSTEINER 2002: 255-257. It is probably an iambo-dochmiac context. For another instance, cf. 725 (chorus), discussed below. At the beginning of 491 (Orestes) and 492 (Electra) the verb μέμνησο is repeated in anaphora, but there is the correlative δέ. Cf. Euripides, *Electra* 672-673.

³² «Raise hands, raise voice, send prayers», CROPP 1988: 45.

³³ As for this infraepisodic choral song, see CENTANNI 1991: 45-48.

³⁴ In Euripides' *Electra* 592-593 imperatives are probably intended not only to Electra but also to the chorus itself.

³⁵ Asyndeton is avoided at 1227-1228 (attributed to Orestes by modern editors, instead of the chorus), if we write καὶ at the beginning of 1228: for the critical matters, see DISTILO 2012: 593-594.

is employed in different situations and forms, but always by Electra. At 223 ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ' ὧν ...³⁶ asyndeton is easy to explain because of her agitation and fear: suddenly Orestes stops hiding and shows himself to his sister, together with Pylades, but she doesn't recognize them and tries to repel those strangers and avoid their touch. In the prologue asyndeton is a main feature of Electra's monody (112-166). A string of nouns is at 143 ἰαχὰν αἰοιδὰν μέλος Ἰίδα³⁷ in the second strophe: the woman was going for water from the stream, holding a pitcher on her head; now she takes it off because she wants to raise her mournful song. She leaves her work: her new condition as wife of a farmer, living far from the royal palace and the city,³⁸ has charged her with that task, but she doesn't accept such punishment at all and finally she rises up. After refusing to go for water, she makes her protest aloud, crying and singing her lamentation, that is emphasised by asyndeton in a dochmiac context.

Such a final rebellion will enlighten two other asyndeta in this monody. One combined with repetition is in the anapaestic lines repeated as a refrain at the beginning of the first strophe (112-113) and antistrophe (127-128): σύντειν' (ῶρα) ποδοῦς ὀρμάν· ὦ, ἔμβρα ἔμβρα.³⁹ Echoing work songs,⁴⁰ Electra urges herself to carry out her task, but in her heart she considers it like an unfair punishment and the following participle κατακλαίουσα («in lamentation»), sounding like an aprosdoketon, explicit her opinion and feelings. These imperatives in asyndeton are self-intended orders, but we must suppose these words uttered as an attempt to force her will.

Mesode, inserted between the strophe and the antistrophe of the first pair, has another asyndeton (125-126): ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόνον, ἄναγε πολύδακρυον ἄδονάν.⁴¹ Some words in these glyconic lines, first of all the three imperatives but also the noun ἄδονάν, are reminiscent of wedding songs, but they are once more mixed with other words explicitly referring to lamentation, such as γόνον and πολύδακρυον. Here asyndeton is striking and underlines Electra's sufferings, because her marriage to the farmer is as unfair as her general condition. So, when a stranger tries to touch her (223), it will be her final humiliation before the joy for Orestes' return home.

Asyndeton is well-suited to the Sophoclean Electra, too. Two cases are inserted in prayers, another one is in the reunion duet. In *Electra* 115 we find the first instance of a series of second person imperatives: ἔλθετ', ἀρήξατε,

³⁶ «Get away; keep your hands off those ... !», CROPP 1988: 19.

³⁷ «A wail, a song, a chant of Hades», CROPP 1988: 15. For textual and metrical matters, see DE POLI 2011: 125-128.

³⁸ For the particular condition of Electra in this play, see DISTILO, in this book (chapter 2).

³⁹ «Hasten on (for it is time) your urgent step; O, press on, press on», CROPP 1988: 13.

⁴⁰ See DE POLI 2012: 130-132. A similar asyndeton in a work song is in Euripides' *Cyclops* 55-56, although imperatives are addressed to the ewes here.

⁴¹ «Come, rouse the same lament, stir up the pleasure that comes from many tears», CROPP 1988: 13.

τείσασθε πατρός φόνον ἡμετέρου.⁴² In the prologue the protagonist of the play sings an anapaestic monody (86-120), lamenting her misfortune and finally praying the gods of the underworld to help her. At 110-120 the anapaestic feet often show a dactylic inversion, a usual phenomenon in solemn context:⁴³ it is evident also at 115, that express the first and main request in Electra's prayer using a perfect tricolon. She is asking for help, just like at 1380 αἰτῶ, προπίτνω, λίσσομαι:⁴⁴ three present indicative verbs meaning ask build up another perfect tricolon, again in the right middle of a prayer uttered in spoken iambic trimeters by Electra, that now addresses the sun-god Apollo. At the very beginning of the play she is all alone and hopes that Orestes comes back home, but her soul is totally intent on taking vengeance upon her mother and Aegisthus for Agamemnon's murder. Later, after Electra has recognised Orestes, when her brother and Pylades go into the palace to kill Clytemnestra, she repeats her prayer with a similar strength⁴⁵ and the same intention. First Electra «calls on them [i.e. chthonic deities] directly without fear of the consequences», then her «petition is a truly pious one which the god will now bring to a successful end».⁴⁶ Different pity, the same purpose, the same anger.

This change in Electra's behaviour is a consequence of Orestes' return home and even in the highest emotional part of the recognition scene, the reunion duet, she uses asyndeton to express her crazy happiness (1234-1235): ἐμόλετ' ἄρτίως, ἐφηύρετ', ἦλθετ', εἶδεθ' οὐς ἐχρήζετε.⁴⁷ If we except the first verb, that is followed by a temporal adverb, shaping a dochmiac (1234), the sequence is unbroken and again shaped as a perfect tricolon made of three indicatives in a full iambic trimeter (1235). The joy expressed by the choral song in Euripides' *Electra* 592-593 is now directly attributed by Sophocles to a singing Electra.

Finally, *Orestes*, a later Euripidean play, shows another face of Electra as tragic character in a different situation. She is looking after her suffering brother and tries to prevent any noise that might wake him up. Such a careful Electra asks the Argive women to make no sound walking or speaking: she is so worried about Orestes' sleeping that she gives them orders trice and each time she uses second person imperatives in asyndeton, first in two spoken iambic trimeters (136-137 ἡσύχῳ ποδὶ χωρεῖτε, μὴ ψοφεῖτε, μῆδ' ἔστω κτύπος)⁴⁸ and

⁴² «Come, bring help, avenge the murder of our father», LLOYD-JONES 1994: 177. Cf. Pseudo-Euripides, *Rhesus* 370-371 ἐλθε φάνηθι, τὰν ζάχρυσον προβαλοῦ Πηλεΐδα κατ' ὄμμα πέλταν, «come, appear, hold before you your richly gilded shield» (FRIES 2014: 255).

⁴³ See DE POLI 2013: 110-117.

⁴⁴ «I ask, I fall before you, I implore», LLOYD-JONES 1994: 303.

⁴⁵ See KAMERBEEK 1974: 179.

⁴⁶ FINGLASS 2007: 131 (comparing 110-120 to Orestes' prayer at 67-72), 500 (comparing 1376-1383 to Clytemnestra' prayer at 655-659).

⁴⁷ «Now you have come; you have found, you have arrived, you have seen those whom you desired!», LLOYD-JONES 1994: 287. See KAMERBEEK 1974: 163; FINGLASS 2007: 473.

⁴⁸ «Walk with quiet step, make no noise, let there be no clattering», KOVACS 2002: 427. I consider

then in lyrics (140-142 σῖγα σῖγα, λεπτὸν ἵχνος ἀρβύλας τίθει, μὴ κτύπει, μηδ' ἔστω κτύπος, ἀποπρὸ βᾶτ' ἐκεῖσ' ἀποπρὸ μοι κοίτας, and 149-150 κάταγε κάταγε, πρόσιθ' ἀτρέμας, ἀτρέμας ἴθι· λόγον ἀπόδος ...),⁴⁹ mostly dochmiacs and with some repeated words that are probably expression of a frightened and annoyed Electra.

Even praying a chthonic deity as the Night in a dochmiac song,⁵⁰ she asks her some relief for the Agamemnon's troubled family (177): Ἐρεβόθεν ἴθι, μόλε μόλε κατὰπτερος.⁵¹ At a first sight, it has nothing to do with the prayer to the gods of the underworld at the beginning of Sophocles' *Electra*, but suddenly the young woman reveals her dark side. After the foot-noise, produced by the chorus at 183, she changes her mind: speaking with the Argive women, she focuses her attention on Orestes' present condition and remembers the matricide. So, in another short dochmiac songs, that is in strophic response with the prayer to the Night, Electra abruptly claims that her mother first slew and then was slain (195 ἔκανες ἔθανες), using a couple of indicatives in asyndeton and directly addressing her mother, in a way that reveals her desperate anger.

In the Euripidean drama a string of two or three adjectives with privative ἀ- in asyndeton usually recurs in laments;⁵² nevertheless the perfect tricolon ἀνάδελφος ἀπάτωρ ἄφιλος⁵³ in *Orestes* 310 has much more in common with «Nestor's strong language» in Homer's *Iliad* 9.63-64 ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος ὃς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόνεντος.⁵⁴ The eldest Homeric hero utters a gnomic sentence that is intended to avoid any division among the warriors of the Greek army after a pessimistic speech of Agamemnon and the proud reaction of Diomedes: it is a kind of curse or public oath of allegiance. In the Euripidean tragedy Orestes has just invited Electra to enter the palace and have a rest, because he needs her assistance in every acuteness of his disease, and she accepts this invitation claiming her total dependence on him in a sort of private association.⁵⁵

Again, brother and sister have got a plan, a criminal one: after their mother died, now they will murder Clytemnestra, their aunt, in order to punish

these words as an example of asyndeton although μηδ'. Cf. also 141.

⁴⁹ «Softly, softly, your footsteps lightly place, take care to make no sound! Go back from the bed, please, go back!», KOVACS 2002: 427. «Come near, come near, approach gently, gently tread, and tell me ... », KOVACS 2002: 429. At 136-137 and 140-142 I follow KOVACS 2002, but these lines are disputed both for the attribution and for the authenticity. See WILLINK 1986: 103-107; DI BENEDETTO 1965: 34-35. For an analysis of 149-150, see WILLINK 1986: 109.

⁵⁰ For the attribution of this prayer to Electra, see DE POLI 2011: 262-264.

⁵¹ «Come from the Erebus, come winging», KOVACS 2002: 431.

⁵² Cf. Euripides, *Andromache* 1216, *Hecuba* 669 [and 810-811, slightly different], *Suppliant Women* 966, *Trojan Women* 1186, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 220, *Helen* 689.

⁵³ «Being without brother, father or friend», KOVACS 2002: 445. See WILLINK 1986: 136.

⁵⁴ «A clanless, lawless, hearthless man is he who loves the horror of the war among his own people», MURRAY 1999: 399. See HAINSWORTH 1993: 67.

⁵⁵ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* 6.429-430.

Menelaus who refused to defend his nephews in the public assembly. While Orestes and Pylades are in, she stays outside and looks if anyone arrives on the street. She is fully intent in his role, so she urges also the Argive women of the chorus to be very careful with an asyndeton between two sentences in prosodiacs and dochmiacs (1266-1267): ἐλίσσετέ νυν βλέφαρον, κόρας διάδοτε πάντα διὰ βοστρύχων (*pros 2dochm*).⁵⁶

Finally, the action. Electra is excluded from it, staying outside the palace, but her words have even more strength than Orestes' arms. Actually he doesn't kill Clytemnestra, but she does, shouting in enoplian (1302-1303): φονεύετε καίνετε θείνετε ἄλλυτε.⁵⁷ It doesn't matter what really happens inside the palace: it is likely Menelaus' wife dies and it is enough. In Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* Electra is not on the scene since 584 and, while Orestes and Pylades enter the palace together with Clitemnestra, the chorus sings a short song, but it prays just for help (725 νῦν ἐπάκουσον, νῦν ἐπάρηξον) and later, when also Aegisthus goes in, it asks for Orestes' victory (855-868 εἴη δ' ἐπὶ νίκῃ), but it doesn't want to look like an accomplice (872-874). Otherwise, asyndetic utterance is not usually concurrent with the murder. Neither in Aeschylean *Eumenides* 130 λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ· φράζου nor in Pseudo-Euripidean *Rhesus* 675 βάλε βάλε βάλε. θένε θένε <θένε> the chorus' voice sounds as bloody as Electra's voice in *Orestes*, although they are all beastly somehow.⁵⁸

Conclusion.

Asyndeton is widely spread in ancient Greek drama and it usually emphasises highly pathetic moments, as rhetoricians observed: metrics is usually a clear symptom. Great emotions – desperation and joy, frustration and anger – are particularly proper to a tragic character like Electra, so it is quite easy that asyndeton is more well-suited to her rather than the chorus or other characters like Orestes: it is evident mainly in Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes*, where Electra plays a role and uses asyndeton, that were not attributed to her in the previous tragedies.⁵⁹ Sophocles prefers perfect tricola,⁶⁰ while comedy is

⁵⁶ «Wheel your eyes about, turn your glance in all directions through the locks of your hair», KOVACS 2002: 553. For the structure of this asyndeton, cf. Eschylus, *Libation Bearers* 406-407, above.

⁵⁷ «Slaughter her, slay her, smite her, finish her», WEST 1987: 149. For the textual matters and the attribution of these lines, see DE POLI 2011: 292-293.

⁵⁸ For Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 130, see SOMMERSTEIN 1989: 106. For Pseudo-Euripides, *Rhesus* 675, see FRIES 2014: 370-371. For Euripides, *Orestes* 1302 (attributed to the chorus), see WILLINK 1986: 296; WEST 1987: 272.

⁵⁹ One might compare Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 770-773 and 779-780 (chorus) with Euripides, *Orestes* 1337-1343 (Electra): both have some asyndeta.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sophocles, *Ajax* 896 οἴχωκ', ὄλωλα, διαπεπόρημαι (Tecmessa).

a possible influence on Euripides' *Orestes* also for the series of four imperatives.

“Basic” form (2 elements)

Aeschylus	<i>Libation Bearers</i> (406-407,) 725; <i>Eumenides</i> 130*.
Euripides	<i>Electra</i> 112-113* = 127-128*, 223; <i>Orestes</i> 177*, 195, 1266-1267

Tricolon (3 elements)

Euripides	<i>Electra</i> 125-126, 143, 592-593; <i>Orestes</i> 136-137, 149-150*, 310
Sophocles	<i>Electra</i> 115, 1380.

“Expanded” form (4 elements)

Euripides	<i>Orestes</i> 140-142, 1302-1303
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Aristophanes

“Basic” form	<i>Wasps</i> 1326 (cf. Euripides, <i>Trojan Women</i> 308; <i>Cyclops</i> 203).
Tricolon	<i>Clouds</i> 1508.
Combined form	<i>Birds</i> 364-365 (“basic” form + “expanded” form + single element), 1720-1721 (“expanded” form + single element).

* with repetition of the same verb.

7.

***Hippolytus*' Songs and Musical Innovations in the Attic Tragedy.**

Mattia De Poli

A general survey.

Many features of the songs in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC)¹ are unusual or actually original, as far as we can guess.

First, in the prologue (61-71) a group of attendants following the protagonist plays the role of a secondary chorus, which is also in two earlier Attic tragedies – in Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* (463 BC) 1034-1061 and *Eumenides* (458 BC) 1032-1047 – but always right at the end of the exodus, so it appears after the main chorus.² The Danaids and their maidservants or the Argive guards³ sing in a dialogue form and the Athena's women cult-personnel perform the processional song while the Erynies-Semnai are leaving. In both these Aeschylean cases the secondary chorus has some interaction with the main chorus, but in Euripides' *Hippolytus* the attendants have neither dialogue nor involvement with the women of Trozen: when they start singing at 121, the secondary chorus has already gone away (113).⁴

¹ For the chronology, see AVEZZÙ 2003.

² Maybe, another secondary chorus is again in Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* 825-865, in the middle of the play, but it is very uncertain: see FRIIS JOHANSEN, WHITTLE 1980, 3: 171-174, 306-308. Euripides employed a secondary chorus also in later tragedies, like *Antiope* (427-423 BC), *Phaeton* (420 BC or later), *Alexander* (415 BC).

³ On the identity of this secondary chorus, see TAPLIN 1977: 230-238; MIRALLES 2011; NARDIELLO 2007.

⁴ If we suppose that the secondary chorus shares the space with the main chorus, probably the seven lines prayer to Aphrodite (114-120) uttered by one of the *Hippolytus*' servants is necessary even to let the attendants exit and the women of Trozen enter.

Then, the main chorus sings a quite rare infraepisodic song (362-372)⁵ in the first episode, but the most relevant is that it is in responson with a monody (669-679) sung by Phaedra in the second episode: it has no real parallel in tragedy.⁶ Moreover, monody is a feature of Euripides' poetry and, although the first solo song we can list is probably Heracles' one in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (later than 438 BC) 993-1042, Euripides exploits it more largely and originally: in this play three different characters sing a monody for each one⁷ and in the exodus Hippolytus' solo (1347-1388) is the first instance of an astrophic actor's song in Attic drama.

Finally, Theseus' monody (817-851) has a peculiar internal structure: it consists of a traditional strophic pair and strophe and antistrophe are separated by two lines spoken by the chorus (834-835), just like Eumelus' monody in *Alcestis* (438 BC) 393-415 and many other ones in later tragedies, but in each stanza four dochmiacs alternate with a couple of iambic trimeters three times before a final sequence of seven dochmiacs. Such alternation is usual in epirrhematic amoibaion, that was performed by two characters or a character and the chorus, so it seems that in Euripides' *Hippolytus* Theseus plays both roles just singing his monody. Usually «the contrast in metre ... serves to bring out a contrast of emotion: the dochmiac character excited or distraught, the iambic character calm».⁸ One would expect a male character, a hero and a king like Theseus to be calmer even in sufferings, but he feels completely upset and disrupted after his wife's death: so the original metrical structure of that monody mirrors his internal conflict between violent grief and self-control.⁹

This general survey shows that in *Hippolytus* Euripides uses some innovative or rare solutions in choral songs (an independent secondary chorus, infraepisodic choral song) and explores different possibilities also for actor's songs: every single monody in this play has a singular form (in correspondence at distance with the infraepisodic choral song or astrophic structure), even the more traditional one (strophic but "epirrhematic" structure).

⁵ In earlier tragedies we find other choral songs like this just in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* 152-163 and Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* 205-224. See CENTANNI 1991.

⁶ According to BARRETT 1964: 224-225, «this correspondence at a distance, though not uncommon in comedy, is remarkable in tragedy: *Orestes* 1353-1365 ~ 1537-1548, two stanzas from the Chorus sandwiching the scene with the Phrygian, is not real parallel». Anyway, the attribution of the infraepisodic song to the Chorus Leader is unnecessary, since chorus' lines are in responson with actors' lines also elsewhere: see DE POLI 2011: 27-31. Cf. Euripides, *Orestes* 140-165, and see DI BENEDETTO 1961.

⁷ See DE POLI 2011: 6; DE POLI 2005.

⁸ BARRETT 1964: 319.

⁹ According to BARNER 1971: 292, Theseus sings an epirrhematic amoibaion by his own. See DE POLI 2011: 35-38.

The epirrhematic amoibaion (569-595).

At the end of the first episode a self-confident Nurse enter the palace in order to inform Hippolytus about Phaedra's erotic passion and persuade him to return it. Then the chorus sings the first stasimon, that looks like a hymn to Eros: not a real celebration, but a pray with some apotropaic formulas. Suddenly Phaedra interrupts the choral song and asks for silence (565), because she is listening to the voices coming from inside the palace. The women of Trozen can't hear anything, but they finally obey (568). Now Euripides inserts an epirrhematic amoibaion (569-595):¹⁰

Φα. ἰὼ μοι, αἰαῖ· ὦ δυστάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν παθημάτων.	570
Χο. τίνα θροεῖς αὐδάν; τίνα βοᾷς λόγον; ἔνεπε, τίς φοβεῖ σε φήμα, γύναι, φρένας ἐπίσσυτος;	
Φα. ἀπωλόμεσθα· ταῖσδ' ἐπιστᾶσαι πύλαις ἀκούσαθ' οἷος κέλαδος ἐν δόμοις πίτνει.	575
Χο. σὺ παρὰ κληῖθρα, σοὶ μέλει πομπίμα Φάτις δωμάτων· ἔνεπε δ' ἔνεπέ μοι, τί ποτ' ἔβα κακόν;	580
Φα. ὁ τῆς φιλίππου παῖς Ἀμαζόνος βοᾷ Ἴππόλυτος, αὐδῶν δεινὰ πρόσπολον κακά.	
Χο. ἰὰν μὲν κλύω, σαφὲς δ' οὐκ ἔχω· γεγώνει δ' οἶα διὰ πύλας ἔμολεν ἔμολέ σοι βοά.	585
Φα. καὶ μὴν σαφῶς γε τὴν κακῶν προμνήστριαν, τὴν δεσπότην προδοῦσαν ἔξαιδαι λέχος.	590
ὦμοι ἐγὼ κακῶν. Χο. προδέδοσαι, φίλα. τί σοι μήσομαι; τὰ κρυπτά γὰρ πέφηνε, διὰ δ' ὄλλυσαι,	(Φα. αἰαῖ ἔ ἔ)
πρόδοτος ἐκ φίλων.	595

Ph. Oh, alas, alas! Oh, what suffering is mine!

Ch. What is the word you uttered, the message you cry out? Tell us, lady: what report is it that affrights you, rushing upon your heart?

Ph. I am destroyed! Stand next to this door and hear what kind of turmoil is falling on the house.

Ch. You are by the door. Tidings transmitted from the house are for you to tell. Tell me, tell me, what disaster has come upon you?

Ph. It is Hippolytus, son of the horse-loving Amazon, who shouts, calling my servant dreadful names!

Ch. I hear a voice, but I do not hear its message clearly. Utter aloud to me what kind of cry it is that comes to you through the door.

¹⁰ This is my personal arrangement of the text. For a discussion of textual matters, see DE POLI 2013: 172-174.

Ph. It's clear enough. He calls her pander for the wicked, one who has betrayed her master's marriage bed! Oh, disaster!

Ch. You are betrayed, my friend! What can I do for you? What was hidden is now revealed and you are ruined – (*Ph.* Oh! ah!) – betrayed by one close to you!¹¹

Scholars often compare this amoibaion to other duets in the Euripidean tragedies, where usually one of the principal characters sings the lyric lines (mainly dochmiacs), while another character or the chorus leader uttered the spoken ones (often iambic trimeters) and the difference in delivery mirrors the contrast between the former's excitement and the other's calm. So William Barrett can conclude that «here the situation is reversed», since Phaedra mostly uses spoken trimeters expressing her «quietude of resolved despair» and the Chorus «breaks into the agitation of dochmiacs».¹² But this statements are grounded on later Euripidean tragedies, like *Andromache* (426-421 BC), *Trojan Women* (415 BC), *Ion* (414? BC) and *Helen* (412 BC)

Formally the situation is not reversed, if we just consider the earlier Aeschylean tragedies: both in *Seven Against Thebes* (467 BC) at 203-244 and in *Suppliant Women* (463 BC) at 348-454 the Chorus sings lyric lines and a character speaks in iambic trimeters and, if the young women of Thebes and the Danaus' daughters are really excited, Eteocles and the Argive king Pelasgus are quite calm and firm in their own decisions.¹³ So, accepting that «there is no wild outburst» in Phaedra's voice,¹⁴ we should admit that Aeschylus' poetry had an influence on this amoibaion, that is not innovative at all.

On the other hand, Phaedra shows her final determination to suicide only at 599-600, after the end of this amoibaion, and the women of Trozen are very clear in stating that she is crying (571-572; cf. 569 and later 591, 594) and she is frightened (573). The Chorus is actually worried about her situation and tries to express its sympathy through many interrogative sentences, but we can't imagine Phaedra as an indifferent and well-determined woman at that moment. A better parallel is Tecmessa in Sophocles' *Ajax* (450? or 440? BC) at 879-973, after discovering Ajax' suicide: both the female characters seem to become conscious of their own situations (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 575; Sophocles, *Ajax* 896 οἴχωκ', ὄλωλα, διαπεπόρημαι) and interweave iambic trimeters with *extra metrum* cries (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 569, 594 and cf. 591 probably *in metro*; Sophocles, *Ajax* 891, 893, 937, 939).¹⁵ They are in absolute loneliness and the choruses can't really support them, but Tecmessa's inability to find a remedy

¹¹ Translation adapted from KOVACS 1995: 179-181.

¹² BARRETT 1964: 266-267. See also HALLERAN 1995: 199; KANNICHT 1969, 2: 175-176.

¹³ See DI MARCO 2009: 257, 265-266.

¹⁴ BARRETT 1964: 267.

¹⁵ For a deeper analysis, see DE POLI 2013: 159-177, also comparing Euripides, *Alcestis* (438 BC) 861-934, *Medea* (431 BC) 96-213 and 1270a-1281, *The Children of Heracles* (430-425 BC) 73-110.

(Sophocles, *Ajax* 920 τί δράσω;)¹⁶ moves to the chorus' inadequacy to make any suggestion (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 592 τί σοι μήσομαι;): Phaedra will later find a solution by herself in suicide. So iambic trimeters don't imply determination and strength of mind of a character but, set against lyric metres, they mark the distance between him and the chorus, his solitude and maybe his shock.

Finally, the choral song is monostrophic and consists of four short stanzas: as far as we know, it is a structure quite usual in comedy¹⁷ and we find it also in the Euripidean satyr-play, *Cyclops* 483-518, but it has no parallel in tragedy. Again a traditional pattern like the strophic song is forced.

Conclusion.

Hippolytus' songs show that, even when taking from Aeschylus or Sophocles, Euripides is always attempting innovative solutions. This play belongs to an initial stage of the Euripidean work,¹⁸ but it probably marks the starting point in the evolution of his poetry within the framework of the so-called "New music".

¹⁶ Cf. Euripides, *Alcestis* 1271.

¹⁷ Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 836-841 ~ 842-846 ~ 847-852 ~ 853-859 (x4); *Knights* 973-976 ~ 977-980 ~ 981-984 ~ 985-988 ~ 989-992 ~ 993-996 (x6), 1111-1120 ~ 1121-1130 ~ 1131-1140 ~ 1141-1150 (x4); *Thesmophoriazousae* 959-962 ~ 963-965 ~ 966-968 (x3); *Frogs* 397-402 ~ 403-408 ~ 409-413 (x3); 416-418 ~ 419-421 ~ 422-424 ~ 425-427 ~ 428-430 ~ 431-433 (x6); 814-817 ~ 818-821 ~ 822-825 ~ 826-829 (x4). See PRATO 1962.

¹⁸ For similarities in the amoibaia, POPP 1971 groups *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Suppliant Women* and *Electra*, but I would prefer to group *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus* and maybe *The Children of Heracles*. Popp's selection works well for the monody.

File riservato ad esclusivo fine di studio

8.

**A Case of Aposiopesis.
Note on Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836.**

Mattia De Poli

A “new” reading ...

After a long series of critical interventions and corrections on the text of Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836, a “new” reading is possible. This is my suggestion:

<i>Ιφ.</i> ὦ φίλτατ’, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, φίλτατος γὰρ εἶ,		<i>3ia</i>
ἔχω σ’, Ὀρέστα, τηλύγετον.		<i>penth^{ia} cho</i>
χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν, ὦ φίλος, ... 830		<i>penth^{ia} dochm</i>
<i>Ορ.</i> κἀγὼ σε, τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται.		<i>3ia</i>
κατὰ δὲ δάκρυ, κατὰ δὲ γόος ἅμα χαρᾶι		<i>3cr</i>
τὸ σὸν νοτίζει βλέφαρον, ὡσαύτως δ’ ἐμόν.		<i>3ia</i>
<i>Ιφ.</i> ... τότε’ ἔτι βρέφος		<i>cr</i>
ἔλιπον ἀγκάλασι νεαρὸν τροφοῦ, 835		<i>2dochm</i>
νεαρὸν ἐν δόμοις. [...]		<i>dochm</i>

Iph. O dearest – nothing else: you are dearest! –, I hold you, Orestes, petted child. Away from our country, Argos, my dear, ...

Or. And I hold you, the dead woman, as it is thought. Tears and sobs, mingled with joy, bedew both your face and mine.

Iph. ... at that time, when you were still a babe, I left you, a newborn, in the arms of a nurse, a newborn in the palace.

Now the adjective τηλύγετος (828) maintains the usual Homeric meaning,¹ that is «born late» and so especially «cherished»² or «only child», and in

¹ A different meaning (“distant from”) is supported by RENEHAN 1976: 35-36, and STINTON 1990: 15.

² KIRK 1985: 290, referring to Homer, *Iliad* 3.175; HAINSWORTH 1993: 76, referring to Homer, *Iliad* 9.143. See also CHANTRAINE 1999: 1114.

general «darling son», «petted child».³ In the Euripidean text it refers to σ', that is Orestes, like in *Iliad* 9.143 (= 9.285): Iphigenia is underlining that her brother is the only male child in the royal family at Argos, so he was petted when he was a babe, because he was the only heir of the kingdom.⁴ Agamemnon's point of view as a father was nearly the same as Iphigenia's, since «the male children are the pillars of the house» (57), that is they are very important for all the family, both parents and sisters.

As a consequence, the words χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος Ἀργόθεν (829-830) can't depend on τηλύγετος, but they could refer to the Orestes and Iphigenia's present situation among the Taurians and their embrace far from their homeland Argos.⁵ Anyway, I prefer to mark a full stop after τηλύγετος and «away from our country, Argos» is just Iphigenia «at that time», when Orestes was still a babe and she left him. We can compare these words to lines 218-228, as well as lines 834-836 have a clear parallel at lines 231-235,⁶ although this amoibaion is less formal than Iphigenia's monody as for the language: I mean that τηλύγετον (828) is more familiar and tender than σκηπτοῦχον (235), and χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν is as brachylogical as pleonastic in a way that is coherent with the present emotional state of this female character, while the rhetorical structure at lines 231-235 uses various tools in order to emphasise the mournful tone of her song.⁷

Orestes' claim καὶ γὼ σε (831) is right the answer to Iphigenia's words ἔχω σ', Ὀρέστα (828), while τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται (831)⁸ refer to the general opinion among the Greeks about the eldest Agamemnon's daughter after her sacrifice at Aulis and balance both τηλύγετον (828) – regard for Orestes vs. regard for Iphigenia – and χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν (829-830) – false opinion about Iphigenia's fate vs. true Iphigenia's fate.

At 834 Diggle suggests to emendate the corrupted words τὸ δέ τι βρέφος and write ὄν ἔτι βρέφος «ἔλιπον», restoring a full dochmiac and introducing a

³ LIDDEL, SCOTT, JONES 1968, s.v. τηλύγετος. Maybe, other Homeric influences on these lines are: 1) τηλύγετος + λείπω (cf. Homer, *Iliad* 3.174-175 θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιπούσα / παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικὴν ἔρατεινήν), although in the Euripides' text they are not in the same sentence; 2) ἀπό + -θεν (pleonastic: cf. Homer, *Iliad* 8.365 ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν, 24.492 ἀπὸ Τροίηθεν), although Ἀργόθεν is a mere apposition of χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος.

⁴ Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 235 Ἀργεὶ σκηπτοῦχον Ὀρέσταν (Iphigenia speaking of her young brother).

⁵ See ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΥ 2006: 279.

⁶ In these two texts some words recur literally (231 = 835 ἔλιπον, 232 = 834 ἔτι βρέφος) or with some little changes (232 νέον ... θάλας ~ 835-836 νεαρὸν ... νεαρὸν, 233-234 ἐν χερσὶν ματρὸς πρὸς στέρνοις τ' ~ 835 ἀγκάλαισι ... τροφοῦ, 235 Ἀργεὶ ~ 836 ἐν δόμοις).

⁷ Etymological figure (218 ἀξείνου ... ξείνα, 225-226 αἰμορράντων ... αἰμάσσοσ'), alliteration with asyndeton (220 ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος ἄπολις ἄφιλος), anaphor (221-220 οὐ ... οὐδ', 227-228 οἰκράν τ' ... οἰκρόν τ', 232 ἔτι ... ἔτι ... ἔτι ...).

⁸ About the comma before τὴν θανοῦσαν, see WILLINK 1989: 46 note 7.

relative clause that strictly reconnect 834 (ὄν) to 830 (ὃ φίλος).⁹ Actually, single cretics often recur among the dochmiac series in the following Iphigenia's monody (869-899), and 881-882 τόδε τόδε σόν, ὃ μελέα ψυχά, χρέος ἀνευρίσκειν (*cr dochm dochm*) with the fully resolved cretic (five short syllables) are very similar to 834-836 (*cr 2dochm dochm*).¹⁰ Matthiae's τότε ἔτι introduce a temporal adverb, which has – like other temporal adverbs (νῦν or ποτέ) – an important function in the narrative structure of the Euripidean “dithyrambic monodies”.¹¹ Anyway, I believe that 829-830 are the beginning of a syntactical period ending at 834-836. Asyndeton between 827-828 and 829-830 has a parallel in a previous Iphigenia's monody, between 203-207 and 208-217.¹² Again, we can consider χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν (830) just like ἀ μναστευθεῖς ἔξ Ἑλλάνων (208) or τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται (831), that is one only syntagm, or – better – 829-830 is the equivalent of a subordinate clause, whose verb – a participle, such as πεμφθεῖσα, βληθεῖσα, ἀρπασθεῖσα or σπασθεῖσα – is understood:¹³ maybe it is too difficult for Iphigenia to find the right word that can explain what happened at Aulis after the Artemis' intervention (Iphigenia may wonder whether it was a salvation – πεμφθεῖσα – or a violence and a misfortune for her – βληθεῖσα, ἀρπασθεῖσα or σπασθεῖσα) and probably Orestes just fills Iphigenia's hesitation at this emotional peak with his words (831-833). Anyway, the ἀπό-complement at the very beginning of the period underlines Iphigenia's “exile” in the remote region where the Taurians lived.¹⁴

So 829-830 are an example of aposiopesis with a missing participle in a split sentence. Syntactical peculiarities like this are not unusual in the Euripidean plays.¹⁵ In particular, we can compare *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836 (lyric) with *Ion* 525-527 (trochaic catalectic tetrameters) as for the dialogical structure:¹⁶

Ἐο. ὡς τί δὴ φεύγεις με; σαυτοῦ γνωρίσας τὰ φίλτατα ... 525
 Ἴων οὐ φιλῶ φρενοῦν ἀμούσους καὶ μεμνηνότας ξένους.
 Ἐο. κτεῖνε καὶ πῖμπρη· πατρὸς γάρ, ἣν κτάνης, ἔση φονεύς.

⁹ DIGGLE 1981: 277, in the *apparatus criticus*.

¹⁰ See DE POLI 2011: 167-173.

¹¹ Cf. Euripides, *Orestes* 1483 (Phrygian Slave's monody). See DE POLI 2012: 148 and 156. In this amoibaion, we can consider 830 and 834-836 like a “dithyrambic section” (see DE POLI 2012: 149).

¹² See DE POLI 2011: 165-166.

¹³ In the prologue Iphigenia says that Artemis stole her away and carried her (30 πέμψασά μ') to the land of the Taurians. Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 878 ἀπὸ πόλεως, ἀπὸ φόνου πέμψω, *Helen* 694-697 ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἀπο·πρὸς ... ἔβαλε ... ἀπὸ πόλεος ἀπὸ τε σέθεν, *Hecuba* 91 ἀπ' ἐμῶν γονάτων σπασθεῖσαν, 512 μητρὸς ἀρπασθεῖσ' ἄπο.

¹⁴ For a similar emphatic ἀπό-complement, cf. Euripides, *Bacchae* 64 Ἀσίας ἀπὸ γαίας.

¹⁵ For further cases in the Euripidean plays, see DE POLI 2008. For other similar expressions (interrupted speech or *sermo fractus*) in this tragedy, see MASTRONARDE 1979, 66-69.

¹⁶ These lines are part of a “false” recognition scene, that between Xouthos and Ion: at that moment of the play the former is sure to be Ion's father. For their interpretation, see HARTWIG 2007, defending Page (and Grégoire)'s text.

While a character is speaking or singing, a subordinate clause is separated from the principal one by the intervention of another speaker. While Ion seems to answer Xuthos' question (525), it is evident he doesn't understand his words and Ion's claim (526) causes Xuthos' hyperbolic reaction (527) with an unexpected change of mind. On the other hand, Orestes probably tries to support his sister, focusing on their present feelings, but he doesn't understand her statement about their past sufferings, as τότ' finally shows (834): there is no actual change of mind in Iphigenia's speech, so Orestes' intervention is quite ineffective. Euripides' *Phoenician Women* 1735 offers another parallel:

φυγάδα πατρίδος ἄπο γενόμενον,
ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν που

since the vocative is inserted between the two clauses, the second level subordinate (with a participle) and the first level one, just like ὦ φίλος (830).

... and the manuscript reading.

This reading mostly corresponds to the text of the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, as it is written in the most important medieval manuscript (*Laurentianus plut.* 32.2, charta 140 recto):¹⁷ it only needs the emendation of τὸ δέ τι (834) into τότ' ἔτι (Matthiae).

A full stop is clearly marked after τηλύγετον and a large blank space divided this adjective from the following words χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος. The text is similarly laid out at 844-845 (charta 140 verso),¹⁸ where a full stop is marked after ἀμπτόμενος φύγηι (844) and another large blank space divided this word from the following words.¹⁹

832 is attributed to Orestes, even it is a melic line (3cr), but modern editors usually change the manuscript attribution of 832 as well as 861-871,²⁰ so Orestes is a non-lyric character in this tragedy. Single melic lines are anyway attributed to another male character in the recognition scene of Euripides' *Helen*, Menelaus, who certainly sings 642-643 (2ba 3ba), 654-655 (2dochm dochm), 659 (2dochm)

¹⁷<http://teca.bmlonline.it/ImageViewer/servlet/ImageViewer?idr=TECA0000369877&keywords=euripides#page/293/mode/1up>.

¹⁸<http://teca.bmlonline.it/ImageViewer/servlet/ImageViewer?idr=TECA0000369877&keywords=euripides#page/294/mode/1up>.

¹⁹ Cf. 846, after Μυκῆνα φίλα. It doesn't mean that the punctuation in the medieval manuscript is always correct: Page's reading of *Ion* 825-827 needs a change of it (see HARTWIG 2007). Probably the blank space has a metrical function, showing the *cola* division, like the *dicolon* (:) after the iambic trimeter at 827 and between two dochmiacs at 836-837 or word division ἀγκάλαι | σι at 835-836.

²⁰ See KYRIAKOU 2006: 286-287.

and maybe 637 (*ia ba ba?*):²¹ in particular, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 831-833 (*3ia 3cr 3ia*) are very similar to *Helen* 658-660 (*3ia 2dochm 3ia*).

Finally, 833 is attributed to Orestes and undivided,²² just like *Ion* 1462 **τοῦμόν** λέγουσα καὶ **τὸ σὸν** κοινῶς λέγεις.

²¹ See BELARDINELLI 2003: 164-165; WILLINK 1989: 47, 52-61.

²² Division of 833 between Orestes and Iphigenia is supported by CROPP 1997: 33-34.

File riservato ad esclusivo fine di studio

9.

***Iphigenia among the Taurians* 725-901:
A Study on the Recognition Scene in the Attic Tragedy.**

Mattia De Poli

Introduction.

Reading commentaries on Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Euripides' *Electra*, or Sophocles' *Electra*,¹ one can be quite sure about the presence of a recognition scene in those tragedies. The only challenge could be to find the line where we can mark the beginning or the end of these scenes,² but there is no doubt that it is a part of the drama, and a meaningful one. Massimo Di Marco³ speaks of a "recognition scene" only for these three tragedies, while referring to other ones he usually prefers the single word "recognition". Now the point is whether

¹ For Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, see VALGIMIGLI 1925: 104-112; GARVIE 1986: 86-88, who considers the "recognition" – but it would be better to speak of a recognition scene – just like the "kommos" at 306-478 (122-125); CONACHER 1987: 106; UNTERSTEINER 2002: 209. Also MATTHIESSEN 1964: 108-111, focuses on the *Erkennungsszene* in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*. For Euripides' *Electra*, see AÉLION 1983, 1: 113-118; CROPP 1988: 134-142. On the recognition as a theme developed throughout this tragedy see BASTA DONZELLI 1978: 73-92. For Sophocles' *Electra*, see e.g. KAMERBEEK 1974: 14-17; KELLS 1973: 193, 198; MARCH 2001: 209, 212; LLOYD 2005: 56-57; FINGLASS 2007: 437-438, 455-457, 468-471. For a more detailed analysis of the recognition scene in Sophocles' *Electra* see also MATTHIESSEN 1964: 114-119.

² I suggest to find out recognition scenes in these lines (eventually including the so-called "recognition duo" or "recognition duet"): Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 164-245 (so also GARVIE 1986: 86); Euripides, *Electra* 487-595 (see CROPP 1988: 134, splitting it into "recognition" at 487-523 and "celebration" at 585-595); Sophocles, *Electra* 1174-1287 (see MARCH 2001: 209, 212). Scholars are not always clear in fixing the beginning or the end of the recognition scene; and, when they are, sometimes they don't agree with each other. According to MATTHIESSEN 1964: 108, the recognition scene in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* begins at 166; according to UNTERSTEINER 2002: 209, it goes down to 305. KELLS 1973: 193, shows the beginning of the recognition scene in Sophocles' *Electra* at 1176, while FINGLASS 2007: 455, fixes it at 1171; KAMERBEEK 1974, 149-162, considers 1098-1231 as a single scene, followed by an *amoibaion* (1232-1287).

³ DI MARCO 2009: 126, 246.

“recognition” and “recognition scene” have the same meaning or not, because, if they have not, it might be a surprise reading of a recognition scene also in Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.

Actually, some scholars don’t mention any “recognition scene” in this play, although they are well aware of the great dramatic function of the “recognition” in the plot. Henri Grégoire deals with the “reconnaissance” just in the chapter “Succès de l’Iphigénie: le témoignage d’Aristote”⁴ and again here and there in the footnotes⁵ without any relevant addiction. More recently, Poulheria Kyriakou focuses several times in her commentary on the process of “recognition”, that starts at 467 and seems to go on until 826: she says indeed that «a longer amoibaion (827-99) [...] follows the recognition», that is «the siblings’ recognition duet».⁶

In the early part of the 20th century Maurice Platnauer and Hans Strohm wrote something different in their commentaries on *Iphigenia among the Taurians*. The former links the recognition between Iphigenia and Orestes to a specific part of the drama, that he calls «recognition scene».⁷ Moreover, showing the structure of this tragedy, he singles out 725-1088 as the second scene within the third episode and notes: «This is the main scene of the play and contains the ἀναγνώρισις».⁸ About ten years later, Strohm mentions the presence of an «Erkennungsszene» in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, because it reaches the first emotional peak («Höhepunkt») of this drama, but he says nothing more about it.⁹ Such idea was finally better developed by Vittorio D’Agostino and Kjeld Matthiessen: the former wrote a paper,¹⁰ the latter a chapter in one of his works, and both focuses on the recognition scene in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.¹¹

Finally, when Ester Cerbo analyses the evolution of some features of the recognition scene in the Euripidean plays, she adds two others, *Helen* and *Ion*.¹²

⁴ GRÉGOIRE 1925: 106-109.

⁵ GRÉGOIRE 1925: 141 note 2, 145 note 1.

⁶ KYRIAKOU 2006: 160, 277; cf. 161, 196-197, 247-248, 267-270, 276-278, 281-282. See also ALBINI 1987: xxiii, 104 on 753 ff.

⁷ PLATNAUER 1938: 121, on 725: «Dramatically they [i.e. the guards] must not be present during the recognition scene». See also vi: «their [i.e. Orestes and Pylades’] recognition of Iphigenia (surely one of the most effective of such scenes in the whole range of Greek drama)»; and xv.

⁸ PLATNAUER 1938: xviii, who divides the third episode (658-1088) into two scenes: the dialogue between Orestes and Pylades (658-724) and the dialogue among Orestes, Pylades and Iphigenia (725-1088).

⁹ STROHM 1949: 23.

¹⁰ D’AGOSTINO 1952.

¹¹ MATTHIESSEN 1964: 129-131.

¹² CERBO 1989 includes *Phoenician Women*, but I believe that the situation in that tragedy is different: Jocasta and Polyneikes don’t need to recognise each other, they just meet after a long time and the mother tries to hug her son. Cerbo is right considering the mother’s monody as an evolution of the usual reunion duo, but the first and most important part of any recognition scene is missed in this play.

And she is right, so the list of ancient Attic tragedies containing a recognition scene seems to be longer than Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Euripides' *Electra* and Sophocles' *Electra*. But the very question whether "recognition" and "recognition scene" have the same meaning or not is still unanswered.

The "recognition".

Every time we read of "recognition" or ἀναγνώρισις, we must be aware that the writer is quite probably referring to what Aristotle wrote on this subject in his *Poetics*, even when he doesn't mention the ancient philosopher. The meaning of the word is evident: «recognition, as the very name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge» (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452a 29-30 [chapter 11]: ἀναγνώρισις δέ, ὥσπερ καὶ τοῦνομα σημαίνει, ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς γνῶσιν μεταβολή),¹³ i.e. a process from unawareness to awareness. Knowledge and awareness imply also a change in the mind and feelings as well as in the general situation, «leading to friendship or to enmity, and involving matters which bear on prosperity or adversity» (1452a 30-31 [chapter 11]: ἢ εἰς φιλίαν ἢ εἰς ἐχθραν, τῶν πρὸς εὐτυχίαν ἢ δυστυχίαν ὠρισμένων).

This process has something in common with «reversal», since they both produce «pity» or «fear» (1452a 38-1452b 3 [chapter 11]: ἡ γὰρ τοιαύτη ἀναγνώρισις καὶ περιπέτεια ἢ ἔλεον ἔξει ἢ φόβον (οἴων πράξεων ἢ τραγωδία μίμησις ὑπόκειται), ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ ἀτυχεῖν καὶ τὸ εὐτυχεῖν ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων συμβήσεται. Cf. also 1453b 11-14 [chapter 14]), so they are very meaningful for tragic effect (1450a 33-35 [chapter 6]). Although we can find recognition as well as reversal also in Greek lyric or epic poetry and novel,¹⁴ Aristotle mostly focuses on tragedy¹⁵ and argues that Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is the finest work because recognition and reversal occur simultaneously.

Finally, the recognition is somebody's recognition (simple recognition), the identity of the other being already clear, or it can involve the one and the other (double recognition): for the latter situation Aristotle finds an example right in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, because «Iphigenia was recognised by Orestes through the sending of the letter, but for Iphigenia to recognise his relationship to herself required a further recognition» (1452b 5-8 [chapter 11]).¹⁶

¹³ An accurate investigation on the ἀναγνώρισις according to Aristotle's *Poetics* is in PHILLIPART 1925. For an English translation of the text, see HALLIWELL 1995, quoted here and further on.

¹⁴ Recognition is a narrative element e.g. in Homer's *Odyssey*, Stesichorus' *Oresteia* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.

¹⁵ According to LANZA 1987: 69, recognition is a structural element in tragedy. MATTHIESSEN 1964: 93-143, argues that the recognition is central in some dramatic plots: 1) return home (*nostos*), 2) recognition (*anagnorisis*), 3) intrigue or device (*mechanema*). Recognition shifted from tragedy first to Greek comedy (especially the so-called "new comedy") and then to Latin comedy: see RICOTTILLI 2014.

¹⁶ Recognition implies a previous condition of ignorance, so we must distinguish it from reunion

The recognition scene.

According to Aristotle, Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is the masterpiece as for the recognition in a tragedy, but no modern commentary finds out a recognition scene within it. Probably because in that drama the recognition is a process displayed throughout the plot. But what about Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*? In this play as well as in other ones, like Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Euripides' *Electra* and Sophocles' *Electra*, the recognition is limited to a part of the drama, the so-called "recognition scene".

It is not one of the parts listed by Aristotle's *Poetics* – prologue, episode, exodos and choral song, i.e. parodos and stasimon (1452b 14-27 [chapter 12]) – and its boundaries are flexible. The recognition scene is often shorter than an episode, because one single episode consists at least of both the recognition and the planning of a revenge, a device or an escape.¹⁷ Also a choral song – an infraepisodic one – has a place in the recognition scene of Euripides' *Electra*.

Again, the modern concept of dramatic "scene", based on «the sequence of exit and entry» of the actors,¹⁸ doesn't fit that situation: both in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* and in Euripides' *Electra* Orestes comes out of hiding or arrives on the stage after the beginning of the recognition scene and – what is most important – its end is not marked by the exit or the entry of any actor, since the following planning scene involves the same characters of the recognition scene. The difference is only in the argument of the speeches and dialogues: here the identity of one or two characters of the play and the relationship to each other, there the way to take revenge on someone else or to trick someone else in order to reach safety.

So the recognition scene lies on a semantic ground, just like the suppliant or the messenger ones, but it has some formal evidences such as words, objects and gestures, that are very important. It is safe that the *anagnorisis* as well as the *peripeteia* is a dramatic element of great relevance but, when this process is limited within a part of the play, its effect is even stronger, so the tragedians had to build up a recognition scene very carefully.

when two people meet again after a long time such as Polyneikes and Jocasta in the prologue of Euripides' *Phoenician Women*. Recognition and reunion display similarly on the tragic scene (e.g. recognition / reunion duo or duet expressing surprise and joy), but there is no need to prove one's own identity. See above, note 12.

¹⁷ For revenge, cf. Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 84-584 (1st episode) and Sophocles, *Electra* 1098-1383 (3rd episode); for device, cf. Euripides, *Ion* 1250-1623 (exodus); for escape, cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 456-1088 (2nd episode).

¹⁸ TAPLIN 1977: 49-60.

The recognition scene within a tragedy.

The recognition scene hasn't a fixed position within a tragedy but takes different places, depending on the plot and the relevance of the recognition to it. So we find it as a part of the first episode in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (164-245),¹⁹ of the second episode in Euripides' *Electra* (487-595), of the third episode in Sophocles' *Electra* (1174-1287)²⁰ or even of the exodus in Euripides' *Ion* (1369-1511).

Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* has a particular structure and the recognition scene is just a part of the "huge" second episode (and a part of the scene 4):

Verses	Part	Scenes	Characters
1-122	Prologue	scene 1 (1-66)	Iphigenia
		scene 2 (67-122)	Orestes, Pylades
123-235	Parodos	---	Chorus, Iphigenia (amoibaion)
236-391	1 st episode	scene 1 (236-343)	Herdsmen, Iphigenia, Chorus Leader
		scene 2 (344-391)	Iphigenia
392-455	1 st stasimon	---	Chorus
456-1088	2 nd episode*	scene 1 (456-642)	Chorus Leader, Iphigenia, Orestes, [Pylades and Servants]
		scene 2 (643-657)	Chorus, Orestes, Pylades (amoibaion), [Servants]
		scene 3 (658-724)	Orestes, Pylades, [Servants]
		scene 4 (725-1088)	recognition scene: (725-901)
planning scene: (902-1088)	Pylades, Orestes, Iphigenia, Chorus Leader		
1089-1152	2 nd stasimon	---	Chorus

¹⁹ According to GARVIE 1986 and CITTI 2006, the first stasimon doesn't correspond with the *kommos* (306-478) but with a choral song (585-651): it is implicit that the first episode goes on from 84 until 584, including an infraepisodic choral song (152-163) and a *kommos*. I agree with them, being this first episode a "monstre" episode or – quoting TAPLIN 1977: 338 – «one huge act» from 84 to 584.

²⁰ This recognition scene is a part of the third episode, if only we consider 516-1057 as one episode, the second of this tragedy. On the matter, see MARCH 2001: 173; KAMERBEEK 1974: 114. If we split these lines into two groups, the recognition scene is a part of the fourth episode.

* FERRARI 1988: 16, finds one only act from 456 until 1088, framed by Iphigenia inviting first the servants (470-471, and again 725-726) and later the couple of foreigners (1079-1081) to enter the temple.

1153-1233	3 rd episode	---	Toaos, Iphigenia
1234-1283	3 rd stasimon	---	Chorus
1284-1499	exodos	scene 1 (1284-1306)	Messenger, Chorus Leader
		scene 2 (1307-1434)	Toaos, Messenger, Chorus Leader
		scene 3 (1435-1499)	Athena, Toaos, Chorus

Here the beginning of the recognition scene as well as of the scene 4 corresponds with the entry of Iphigenia (725) who takes a tablet to Orestes and Pylades on the stage, that starts the process of knowledge and awareness.²¹ Objects have a similar function in the recognition scenes of both *Libation Bearers* and *Ion*: in the Aeschylean tragedy *Electra* steps out on the stage and sees a lock of Orestes' hair upon the Agamemnon's grave, while in the Euripidean drama *Pythia*, Apollo's priestess, leaves the stage after giving *Ion* the basket where his mother abandoned him as a newborn and which still contains some evidences of his identity. In Euripides' *Electra* the rational criticism against the material evidences of Orestes' identity used by Aeschylus involves the whole process of recognition, so here the scene starts with the entry of a person, an Old man who is necessary to the success of the meeting between brother and sister.

Then, before the end of the scene 4, the end of the recognition scene in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* is marked by a sentence of the Chorus Leader at 900-901: ἐν τοῖσι θαυμαστοῖσι καὶ μύθων πέρα / τάδ' εἶδον αὐτῆ κοῦ κλύουσ' ἀπ' ἀγγέλων:²² these words are a confirmation of the new awareness of *Electra* and Orestes about their identity, while the following lines of Pylades (902-908) invite them to stop embracing (χειρῶν περιβολὰς) and crying (οἴκτων) and find a way to leave from that barbarous country in order to «see salvation's glorious face» (τὸ κλεινὸν ὄμμα τῆς σωτηρίας). Again in *Ion* a two lines sentence spoken by the Chorus Leader marks the end of the recognition scene (1510-1511): μηδεὶς δοκεῖτω μηδὲν ἀνθρώπων ποτὲ / ἄελπτον εἶναι πρὸς τὰ τυγχάνοντα νῦν.²³ Elsewhere Orestes himself tells his sister *Electra* to preserve her joyful embraces for a later time (Euripides, *Electra* 596-597: εἶέν· φίλας μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων / ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὶ αὐτὰ δώσομεν) or to let go all superfluous words (Sophocles, *Electra* 1288 τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφερες) in order to focus on the plan for their father's revenge and not fail the moment (1292 καιρόν).

²¹ About the function of the tablet promoting the process towards the recognition, see FERRARI 1988: 15. See also further, note 32.

²² «This is miraculous and beyond words! And I have seen it with my eyes, not heard it by report», KOVACS 1999: 245.

²³ «In the light of what has just happened let no one think anything impossible», KOVACS 1999: 501.

The recognition scene in Iphigenia among the Taurians: the structure.

This recognition scene consists of two different sections. The first one is a sequence of iambic trimeters, the usual spoken verses of the Greek tragedy:

a) Orestes recognises Iphigenia (725-797)

725-752	<i>Stichomythia</i>	Pylades and Iphigenia take an oath
753-787	Dialogue	Iphigenia reveals the message written on the tablet
788-797	Dialogue	Pylades gives the tablet to Orestes

b) Iphigenia recognises Orestes (798-826)

798-804	Dialogue	Iphigenia refuses to recognise Orestes
805-826	<i>Stichomythia</i>	Orestes provides proofs of his own identity

It is divided into two parts, the first corresponding to Orestes' recognition of Iphigenia and the second to Iphigenia's recognition of Orestes. Even if the whole section has a circular structure with a *stichomythia* at the beginning and another one at the end, at first tension is addressed out of the stage because Iphigenia insists asking one of the strangers to bring her message to Argos, but later it is concentrated on the stage because Orestes has already recognised his sister and wants her to recognise back him.

The second section consists of a lyric-epirrhematic *amoibaion* and a monody: Orestes mostly goes on with the iambic trimeters, spoken or semi-lyric (chanted delivery),²⁴ while Iphigenia sings her lyric verses:

c) joy and new concerns (827-901)

827-849	<i>amoibaion</i> : a mixture of dochmiacs, iambics and cretics	Iphigenia and Orestes express their joy
850-867	<i>amoibaion</i> : regular sequences of dochmiacs, iambics and cretics	Orestes and Iphigenia cry their past misfortune
868-899	Iphigenia's monody: mostly dochmiacs or other meters	Iphigenia is worried by the future events
900-901	a couple of iambic trimeters	Chorus Leader shows his surprise

²⁴ The manuscript attributes three lyric verse (832[-833], 865, 867) to Orestes, but modern editors usually give them to Iphigenia: see KYRIAKOU 2006: 279-280. GRÉGOIRE 1925: 145, saves just 832[-833] to Orestes: see DE POLI, in this book (chapter 8); WILLINK 1989: 46-47; BELARDINELLI 2003. On the other hand some iambic trimeters are also in Iphigenia's lines (828, 843, 845) and they could be semi-lyric. About the delivery of acatalectic iambic trimeters, see DALE 1968: 86.

In the *amoibaion* the difference between metrical variety and metrical regularity with an increasing of dochmiac sequences reflects a change in the mood, joyful and mournful, of the characters: at first they are happy because they have recognised each other and met again; then they remember the unlucky events happened to their family and themselves. Finally a concerned Iphigenia sings a monody expressing her anxiety about their future: she is particularly worried about Orestes' salvation and she can't find an escape. Indeed, at this moment it is all up to her, but she feels an aporetic state: such a preoccupation is quite usual in the recognition scenes of the other tragedies, but here it is well expressed by a solo song in order to underline her loneliness.

Although lyric lines are often hard to number, in the recognition scene of Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* the spoken section and the lyric one have almost the same length: the first, corresponding to a double recognition, takes about 100 lines (725-826), while the second takes about 75 lines (827-899).

Every recognition scene has a spoken section, but sometimes it has no lyric section: the recognition scene in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* has none, consisting of less than a hundred iambic trimeters (164-245); in Euripides' *Electra* the lyric section is just made of a short choral song that concludes the recognition scene (585-595). Anyway, that pair is elsewhere quite usual:

Author	Tragedy	Spoken section	Comment of the Chorus Leader	Lyric section	Conclusion of the Chorus Leader
Aeschylus	<i>Libation Bearers</i>	164-245	---	---	---
Euripides	<i>Electra</i>	487-584	---	585-595 (choral song)	---
	<i>Ion</i>	1369-1444	---	1445-1509 (Ione – Creusa)	1510-1511
	<i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	725-826	---	827-899 (Iphigenia – Orestes)	900-901
Sophocles	<i>Electra</i>	1174-1229	1230-1231	1232-1287 (Electra – Orestes)	---

The recognition scene in Iphigenia among the Taurians: the main features.

Dealing with the constitutive elements of the recognition scene in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, we will focus on these aspects: gestures like embraces, terms of *philia* and the sequence “surprise – incredulity – joy – tears – angst for the future”.

Usually actor's movements on the stage are just hypotheses supported by some words and allusions of the text. Embrace is the most important action of any recognition scene, because it underlines the goal of this part of the plot. Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* have no explicit allusion to such a gesture, but Electra and Orestes probably hug each other at line 233. Elsewhere one of the two main characters says ἔχω σε, «I embrace you», and often the other one answers something similar:

Author	Tragedy	Character	Words suggesting embrace	Answers
Euripides	<i>Electra</i>	Electra	579 ἔχω σ'	579 κάξ ἐμοῦ γ' ἔχημι (Orestes)
	<i>Ion</i>	Creusa	1440 ἐν χερσίν σ' ἔχω cf. 1452 μῶν οὐκ ἔχειν μ' ἔχουσα;	1443 ἐν χερσίν σέθεν (Ion)
Sophocles	<i>Electra</i>	Electra	1226 ἔχω σε χερσίν; cf. 1285 νῦν δ' ἔχω σε	1226 ὡς τὰ λοιπ' ἔχοις ἄει. (Orestes)

In Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* the situation is alike:

Author	Tragedy	Character	Words suggesting embrace	Answers
Euripides	<i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	Iphigenia	829 ἔχω σ', Ὀρέστα	831 καγὼ σε (Orestes)

Two characters on the stage usually pronounce these words referring to the hug in the spoken section of the recognition scene, before the emotional burst, but here Iphigenia and Orestes embrace at the beginning of lyric-epirrhematic *amoiibaion*.

In fact an attempt was earlier made by Orestes, as suggested by his words within an iambic trimeter (796 περιβαλὼν βραχίονι), but Iphigenia²⁵ avoided it because she didn't know the identity of the stranger yet. A similar situation is also in *Ion*: Creusa is soon aware that Ion is her son (1404-1405), while he still needs some evidences about his relationship to her.

We really don't know how long these embraces take on the stage, but later Iphigenia shows that she is worried about the possibility of leaving her beloved brother she has met after a long time (843-844 δέδοικα δ' ἐκ χερῶν με μὴ πρὸς

²⁵ 798-799 are assigned to the Chorus Leader in the manuscripts, followed by WAY 1912; MURRAY 1925; GRÉGOIRE 1925; PLATNAUER 1938; STROHM 1949; SANSONE 1981; FERRARI 1988; MUSSO 2001. But some modern editors and scholars, following Monk, prefer to give them to Iphigenia: D'AGOSTINO 1952: p. 36; ALBINI 1987; DIGGLE 1981; KOVACS 1999; and possibly KYRIAKOU 2006: 264.

αἰθέρα ἀμπτάμενος φύγη), so we may suppose that a kind of physical contact, a hug with arms or, at least, with hands, between the two characters can still last during the recognition scene.

Recognition restores a relationship of *philia* between sister and brother, mother or father and son. In the part of the tragedy before the recognition scene they often address each other using words that underline reciprocal unfamiliarity:

Speaking character	Addressed character	Words of unfamiliarity	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Orestes	Iphigenia	(ὦ) γύναι	483, 496, 498, 542, 546 (cf. 724)	Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1106 (Orestes to Electra) Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 237 (Ion to Creusa)
		ὦ ξένη	597 (cf. 665)	
		ὦ νεᾶνι	619 (cf. 660)	
Iphigenia	Orestes (and Pylades)	(ὦ ταλαίπωροι) ξένοι	479, 612 (cf. 468)	
		(ὦ) ξέν'	509, 547*	Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1112 (Electra to Orestes) Euripides, <i>Electra</i> 247, 259, 265, 283 (Electra to Orestes) Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 339 (Creusa to Ion)
		ὦ τάλας, ὅστις ποτ' εἶ	628	

In Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* the female character attests her unfamiliarity to the strangers Orestes and Pylades again at the beginning of the recognition scene (728 ξένοι) and generally, in this tragedy as well as

* DIGGLE1981: 266, is the only editor who prints μένε instead of ξένε at 547, but no explanation is given about it. FERRARI 1988: 131 note 46, considers μένε as a typographical mistake there.

in the other ones, nothing changes until someone gives the evidences of his/her own identity. At that moment the commonest word is the superlative adjective φίλτατε/φιλιτάτη/φίλιτατον, often joined with a noun referring to their relationship:

Speaking character	Addressed character	Words of <i>philia</i>	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Orestes	Iphigenia	ὦ φιλιτάτη μοι σύγγον'	795	Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1224 φίλιτατον (Electra to Orestes)
		ὦ σύγγον'	851	Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 1437 ὦ φιλιτάτη μοι μητέρα / 1443 ὦ φίλη μοι μητέρα / 1451, 1468, 1477, 1497 μητέρα (Ion to Creusa)
Iphigenia	Orestes	[ξέν']	[798]	[Aeschylus, <i>Libation Bearers</i> 220 ὦ ξέν' (Electra to Orestes)]
		ὦ φίλιτατ'	815, 828	Aeschylus, <i>Libation Bearers</i> 235 ὦ φίλιτατον μέλημα δώμασιν πατρός (Electra to Orestes) Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1224 ὦ φίλιτατον φῶς, cf. 1281 ὦ φίλ' (Electra to Orestes)
		<ὦ> σύγγον'	858, 870	Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 1439 (ὦ) τέκνον, 1458, 1470, 1476, 1497, 1509 ὦ παῖ (Creusa to Ion)
		cf. 833 τὸ σὸν νοτίζει βλέφαρον, ὡσαύτως δ' ἐμόν*		Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 1462 τοῦμόν λέγουσα καὶ τὸ σὸν κοινῶς λέγεις (Ion to Creusa)

In *Iphigenia among the Taurians* the shift from *xenia* to *philia* results more complicate because of the double recognition: when Orestes makes the first attempt to hug Iphigenia in his arms after recognising her, he also addresses her some usual words of *philia* (795 ὦ φιλιτάτη μοι σύγγον'), but she immediately rejects him as a stranger (798 ξέν'),²⁶ emphasising again the gap between him and Artemis' priestess. Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* offer a parallel to this situation, when Orestes tries to persuade Electra about his identity, but she can't understand his words yet (220).

²⁶ See note 25. Even if 798-799 are to be assigned to the Chorus Leader, Iphigenia seems to be suspicious about the stranger's identity at 803-804.

* About the attribution of this line, see note 24. We can assign it both to Orestes and to Iphigenia: the rhetorical effect produced by the two possessive adjectives is safe.

Surprisingly, tenderness emerges in Iphigenia's words to Orestes before he gives the main evidence to prove that he is her brother: he just remember the contest between Atreus and Thiestes, that a young Iphigenia embroidered on a cloth, and immediately she addresses him some words of *philia* (815 ὃ φίλτατ'). In Euripides' *Electra* the main character addresses the same words to the stranger-Orestes when he announces that her brother is still alive (229), even if she doesn't know that he is in front of her.

Iphigenia adds that the stranger-Orestes' words about her past and youth set him closer to her heart, they touch her (815 χρίμπτηι *vel* κάμπτεις),²⁷ so we may suppose that also the actors on the stage get closer to each other, a first step towards their embrace, but this is just an hypothesis.

Later, when the process of recognition is finally over, Iphigenia repeats the adjective φίλος, both in the positive and in the superlative form, three times within few lines, as if she would like to remove her previous suspicions. Now Orestes and Iphigenia can state their relationship without doubts: 851 (Orestes to Iphigenia) and 858 (Iphigenia to Orestes). The *sympatheia* between the two brothers is attested by their common tears and underlined by the two possessive adjective set as a frame to the iambic trimeter at 833, like those in *Ion* 1462 expressing Creusa and Ion's common happiness.

These recognition scenes stress the tragic irony at maximum, so the characters can't go on with their ignorance and the revelation of their true identities is now necessary (744 ff.; cf. 611-612). Anyway, when by chance one of the characters recognises the other as a relative, it is hard to keep *surprise* under control and this emotion is often expressed by the rhetorical question «what to say?». While Iphigenia is saying that her written message is addressed to her brother Orestes at Argos (774-779), he understands that she is his sister and immediately cries: τί λέξω; (777). The same reaction is also in Sophocles' *Electra*, after Orestes hears a young woman he can hardly recognise as his sister calling him while she is holding the funerary vase containing the supposed ashes of his corpse (1174). On the other hand, also Iphigenia is surprised when she recognises Orestes, so she can't find any word: τί φῶ; (839).

Speaking character	Rhetorical question	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Orestes	τί λέξω;	777	Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1174
Iphigenia	τί φήεις;	808	cf. Euripides, <i>Electra</i> 570 πῶς εἶπας; (<i>Electra</i>) cf. Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1220 πῶς εἶπας; (<i>Electra</i>)

²⁷ I would prefer the manuscript reading κάμπτεις to Wecklein's χρίμπτηι; the meaning is anyway quite similar.

Surprise is the first step on the way to *joy* and *happiness*, that are joined with sung verses and called with different names by Orestes – *τέρψις* (797) – and Iphigenia – *χαρά* (833), *χάρις* (847). But they both describe their emotion using also the word *ἡδονή* (Orestes at 794, Iphigenia at 842).

Speaking character	Terms of joy	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Orestes	τέρψις	797	Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1278 (<i>Electra</i>)
	ἡδονή *	794	
Iphigenia	χαρά	833	Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 1448 ἀδόκητος ἡδονή (<i>Creusa</i>), 1461 μακαριωτάτας ... ἡδονάς (<i>Creusa</i>)
	ἄτοπος ἡδονή *	842	
	χάρις	847	

According to Iphigenia, this «pleasure» is «strange, extraordinary» (842 ἄτοπον ἡδονάν), the adjective expressing an idea implicit in Orestes' question: «where in the world do we find ourselves?» (777 ποῦ ποτ' ὄνθ' ἠύρήμεθα;). He is conscious that their reunion is an unexpected situation since his first attempt to embrace Iphigenia (796 ἀπίστω ... βραχίονι): it is like a miracle (797 πυθόμενος θαυμάστ' ἔμοι). On the other hand, she believes it is even stranger (839 θαυμάτων πέρα ... τάδ' ἀπέβα) and the Chorus Leader's closing sentence underlines this aspect (900 ἐν τοῖσι θαυμαστοῖσι καὶ μύθων πέρα). Orestes says that he feels shocked (795 ἐκπεπληγμένος). Iphigenia is not explicit as her brother, but her different reactions – tears mixed to joy (833 κατὰ δὲ δάκρυ, κατὰ δὲ γόος ἅμα χαρᾶι) – attest that she feels so, too.

Speaking character	Terms of surprise	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Orestes	ἐκπεπληγμένος ἀπίστω ... βραχίονι πυθόμενος θαυμάστ' ἔμοι	795	cf. Euripides, <i>Electra</i> 580 οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἦλπισα (<i>Orestes</i>)
		796	
		797	
Iphigenia	θαυμάτων πέρα ... τάδ' ἀπέβα	839	cf. Euripides, <i>Electra</i> 570 ἀνέλπιστον λόγον, 579 ἀέλπτως (<i>Electra</i>) cf. Euripides, <i>Ion</i> 1395 φάσμα τῶν ἀνεπίστων, 1441 ἄελπτον εὔρημ' (<i>Creusa</i>) cf. Sophocles, <i>Electra</i> 1262-1263 ἀφράστως ἀέλπτως τ' (<i>Electra</i>)
Chorus	ἐν τοῖσι θαυμαστοῖσι καὶ μύθων πέρα	900	

Happiness is linked to their present situation and Iphigenia knows that (838 εὐτυχοῦσά μου ψυχά). Orestes hopes that they will be happy also in the future (841 τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχοῦμεν ἀλλήλων μέτα), since they were unlucky in the past, and, although they were well-born, he remembers their previous misfortunes: the attempt to sacrifice Iphigenia at Aulis and Orestes' mortal danger in Taurian land (850-851 γένει μὲν εὐτυχοῦμεν, ἐς δὲ συμφοράς, ὧ σύγγον', ἡμῶν δυστυχῆς ἔφου βίος).

Fortune can easily change and happiness slides towards *fear*, so Iphigenia now feels worried about their future, mainly Orestes' future (843 δέδοικα): he has come unexpected and is in her arms at the present time, but he could vanish again, soon and definitively. Her monody (874-899) deals with this argument, wandering how she can help Orestes and save both her brother and herself, the last heirs of Atreus.²⁸

Speaking character	Terms of fear	Lines	Parallels in other tragedies
Iphigenia	δέδοικα	843	Eurpides, <i>Ion</i> 1452 ἔτι φόβωι τρέμω (Creusa)

The recognition scene in Iphigenia among the Taurians: characters and objects.

Beside Iphigenia and Orestes, the recognition scene involves two other characters: Pylades and the Chorus of Greek captive women, which are both in a loyal relationship to them.²⁹ True strangers has been already sent away, out of the stage: a first group of servants, who lead the two prisoners in front of Iphigenia, has entered the temple (470-471); other servants, who watched them when she went to take the tablet, was soon invited by her to enter the temple and help preparing the rite of sacrifice (725-726).

In this double recognition scene Pylades has an important role. First, taking Orestes' place (745, and mainly 753), he is the director of the dialogue with Iphigenia and invites her to say the addressee and the content of her written message, so Orestes can recognise his sister after hearing her name and his own. On the contrary, the Chorus plays a marginal role because the Chorus Leader just attests the recognition between Iphigenia and Orestes with a couple of iambic trimeters at the end of the scene.³⁰ It is anyway a complex situation,

²⁸ Electra is often left at the margin in this tragedy.

²⁹ See D'AGOSTINO 1952: 29: «alla scena del riconoscimento non assisteranno se non persone fidate, come sono le donne del coro». A detailed analysis of the characters of this tragedy is in KYRIAKOU 2006: 30-37.

³⁰ About the attribution of 798-799, see note 25. If they are to be assigned to the Chorus Leader, he has a role in the recognition scene as an impediment.

certainly more complicated than in other tragedies, since it involves three speaking characters (ie three actors) and the Chorus/Chorus Leader, like in Euripides' *Electra* (without any silent character):

Author	Tragedy	Speaking characters	Silent Character
Aeschylus	<i>Libation Bearers</i>	Electra, Orestes, Chorus	---
Sophocles	<i>Electra</i>	Electra, Orestes, Chorus	Pylades
Euripides	<i>Electra</i>	Electra, Old man, Orestes, Chorus	Pylades
	<i>Ion</i>	Creusa, Ion, Chorus	---
	<i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	Iphigenia, Orestes, Pylades, Chorus	---

The involvement of another character on the stage makes the recognition scene more spectacular, but such an effect is produced also by some objects used as evidences of one's identity. They are clearly of great relevance to the recognition of Orestes in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*:

Evidences	a curl, some footprints, a cloth made by Electra
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but Euripides criticises them as implausible and introduces one more in his *Electra*:³¹

Implausible evidences	a curl, some footprints, a cloth made by Electra
Plausible evidence	a scar on Orestes' face

In Sophocles' *Electra*, in a previous scene, Chrysothemis finds a curl on Agamemnon's grave and supposes it is Orestes' hair, but Electra claims that it proves nothing about Orestes; later he arrives as a messenger and gives her an urn that is supposed to contain Orestes' ashes, but it is just a false evidence of a false message, because Orestes is still alive; finally his ring with Agamemnon's seal is the crucial evidence:

Potential evidence	a curl
Misleading evidence	an urn containing Orestes' ashes
Crucial evidence	a ring with Agamemnon's seal

Objects have a great potential and Euripides seems to be aware of it although his sceptical attitude towards them, so in *Ion*'s recognition scene he introduces

³¹ All these evidences are introduced by the Old man, who is crucial to the recognition of Orestes.

the basket where Creusa abandoned her new-born son: it contains clothes, whose an unfinished one is embroidered with the Gorgon's figure, a golden necklace with serpents and a crown made of olive branches. After a long time all those things are still uncorrupted and it looks like a miracle.

Anyway, they have no voice and every time they need someone speaking instead of them. So it happens also in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, when Orestes recognises Iphigenia: she takes the tablet with the written message addressed to her brother at Argos on the stage, but it has no effect until Pylades asks her to read it aloud.³² Later, when Iphigenia recognises Orestes, objects have a more important function but they are not visible on the stage: Orestes just remembers clothes embroidered by his sister with the contest between Atreus and Thiestes, some holy water, a curl and Pelops' spear in Iphigenia's room at Argos, and it is enough.

Concrete object	a tablet
Evoked objects (memories)	some clothes embroidered by Iphigenia with the contest between Atreus and Thiestes, some holy water, a curl and Pelops' spear

Conclusions.

Now I believe that any doubt about the presence of a recognition scene in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* has vanished. A part of this tragedy (725-901) has some features in common with Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (164-245), Euripides' *Electra* (487-595) and Sophocles' *Electra* (1174-1287), where scholars usually single out other tragic recognition scenes. Some peculiarities are coherent with Euripides' criticism towards objects and evidences, but he was able to build up a situation of great impact anyway: characters, gestures, words make it even more spectacular. So we can also understand why the recognition scene had a wide spread in Attic tragedy and comedy between the end of the 5th century and the whole 4th century BC until the so-called "new comedy". Sure, the ἀναγνώρισις is first attested in Homer's *Odyssey* and this poem was a clear model down to the 4th century AD, e.g. to Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, but classic drama – and, as far as we know, mainly Euripides' tragedies – played an important role in developing all its potentiality.

³² About the dramatic function of the tablet with the written message, see SUSANETTI 2007: 194.

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