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Inspiration from Tatters
Reconstructed ancient Greek plays on the modern stage

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INSPIRATION FROM TATTERS: RECONSTRUCTED ANCIENT GREEK PLAYS ON THE MODERN STAGE

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Ph.D. in Classics

Abstract

This thesis in Classical Performance Reception Studies asks how some fragmentary ancient Athenian dramas—a satyr play (Sophocles' *Trackers*), and several tragedies (the lost plays of Aeschylus' trilogy about the Danaids, Sophocles' *Tereus*, and Euripides' *Hypsipyle* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*) have informed some experimental theatre productions since the late 1980s. Between the introductory and concluding chapters, the four central chapters of the thesis analyse, in chronological order of their production, the following new dramatic works incorporating or otherwise responding to the ancient fragments: Tony Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, which premiered at Delphi in 1988 but was revived in 1990 at the National Theatre; Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale*, first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1989 and, Joanna Laurens' *The Three Birds* (Gate Theatre, 2000); Silviu Purcărete's *Les Danaïdes* (Avignon, 1996) and, Charles Mee's *Big Love* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville, 2000); Tasos Roussos' *Hypsipyle* (1997) and, David Wiles' *Hy]ψ[ipyle: A Fragment* (Royal Holloway University of London 1997); and Colin Teevan's *Alcmaeon in Corinth/Cock o' the North* (Live Theatre, Newcastle, 2004). The context, content and production styles of each new production are discussed in tandem with the remains of the ancient play available to the modern playwright—papyrus fragments, book quotations, ancient hypotheses, scholarly editions and translations into modern languages of these, vase-paintings, the ancient reception of the classical Greek plays in later literature, other ancient literary sources such as ancient comedy, epic poetry and mythographers' works, and secondary scholarship on and philological reconstructions of the ancient texts. But in addition to this empirical exercise in the analysis of the process of making new theatre practice from ancient theatrical tatters, I ask why fragmentary plays have proved so inspirational outside the academy over the last three and a half decades; the answers lie in the fragments' susceptibility to being arranged and interpreted in ways that speak to very modern concerns with the shape of the family, patriarchy, anti- and postcolonial theory, migration and immigration, displacement, diaspora, social class, violence and war.

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Notes on Texts and Editions

In this thesis I have scanned in the relevant quotations and citations from collections of the ancient Greek fragments in order to avoid the introduction of error with such messy and often lacunose ancient texts. In the case of *Trackers*, where the Greek text is very substantial, I do not reproduce it but refer the reader to the Loeb edition with translation of Sophocles' fragments by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1996). For Sophocles' *Tereus* I have used the Aris & Phillips edition with commentary and translation by Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy (2006). For Aeschylus' *Danaids* trilogy I have used the new Loeb of Aeschylus' fragments edited by Sommerstein (2008) and the papyri hypothesis reproduced in Garvie (2006). The edition of *Hypsipyle* reproduced here is that in the Aris & Phillips *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays* ed. Collard, Cropp and Gibert vol. 2 (2004); the fragments of *Alcmaeon in Corinth* is the Aris & Phillips of Collard and Cropp (2008*a*).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Scope of this Thesis

The journey of survival that texts from the world of the ancient Greeks took in order to be available for subsequent generations was certainly a difficult one. These journeys were purely reliant on individuals acknowledging the need to preserve the documents written by their ancestors and making them available to future audiences. This has meant that what we have obtained today is only a small percentage of the work that was created from that epoch and it gives us the smallest of insights into what culture and life may have resembled at the time. In regards to the ancient Greek tragedy of fifth-century BC Athens, the yield would appear, from what has survived, to be represented by just three playwrights: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, although two plays—*Prometheus Bound* and *Rhesus*—may be the work of other hands. Other surviving documents indicate that we have only the tiniest selection of the output of even these three men,[1] with collectively only thirty three individual plays in a complete – or deemed complete – state of existence. And yet it is on the basis of these texts that we have formed our – admittedly narrow – view of ancient drama.[2]

These representative tragedies have diachronically been held in regard and adopted as prestigious building blocks of what we now view as 'Western Culture'.[3] Although they were also studied intensively by ancient scholars and rhetoricians, the

[1]E.g. the articles on each tragedian in the Byzantine Lexicon, *Suda*, although such information must be used with caution as it was written much later than the fifth century BC and from what we can tell has a number of different contributors.
[2] See Herington (1985).
[3] See Hall (2015).

tragedies did enjoy revivals and staged adaptations throughout pagan antiquity,[4] which helped to preserve some of the texts and also influence other genres of literature.

Subsequent to the rediscovery of manuscripts containing the texts of the Greek tragedies in the European Renaissance, productions of the plays have crossed the boundaries of time; they have have been translated, analysed and performed repeatedly.[5] The themes, which reach the public through performance, are debated in the media, and some of the tragic plots have been assimilated into popular culture. The stories of Aeschylus' *Persians*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Euripides' *Medea*, for example, have appeared in various mediums other than theatre, including opera, musicals, film, the visual arts, poetry, comic books and fiction.[6] Through their impact on other forms of discourse and worlds of ideas, such as psychoanalysis, their cultural penetration has been deep and longlasting.[7]

Scholars have also, for hundreds of years now, discussed these plays at length, concentrating on what I would describe as 'the golden canon of ancient drama'. However, alongside these complete texts, there is the opportunity to expand the discussion of ancient Greek drama, by engaging with the plethora of plays that survive in fragmentary form. Fortunately, the historic work of the compilers of the fragments quoted by ancient scholars, now wonderfully supplemented by new tragic texts that have been found on papyrus and published since the early twentieth century, has made

[4] See Easterling and Hall (2002); Hall and Wyles (2008).
[5] There is now a large amount of scholarly literature on this subject, much of it the work of the Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama at Oxford University. See especially Flashar (2009), and the introduction to Hall and Harrop (2010) 1-9.
[6] For more examples, see, on opera Michael Ewans (2007) and Marianne McDonald (2001). On *Persians*, see Bridges (2007). On *Medea*, see Hall, Macintosh and Taplin (2000). On Greek theatre and fiction please see the forthcoming publication: Justine McConnell and Edith Hall (eds.) *Ancient Greek Myth in World Fiction* (London, 2015). On Classics and Comics, see Kovacs and Marshall (2011).
[7] Especially through Freud's 'Oedipus Complex'; see Macintosh (2009) with further bibliography.

it possible for us to extend our appreciation of the ancient genre far beyond the limits of the fully extant canon.[8]

Yet, in my view, there has until recently been a serious vacuum when it comes to academic engagement with the lost plays extending beyond highly speculative attempts at reconstruction. In general, the percentage of scholarly output on fragmentary theatre material is much lower than the amount of analysis that takes place of their complete counterparts. Rudolf Kassel, the great editor of comic fragments, published an essay on collectors of fragments, 'Fragmente und ihre Sammler', in 1991.[9] He discussed the work of J. Hertelius (Jacob Hertel), a Swiss schoolmaster who published an edited bilingual Greek/Latin collection of comic fragments in Basel in 1560, *Vetustissimorum et sapientissimorum Comicorum quinquaginta, quorum opera integra non extant, sententiae, quae supersunt: graece et latine collectae et secundum litteras Graecorum in certos locos dispositae.* The Renaissance gentleman knew that his research might be of little interest to other scholars but that these snippets were important. He says that many scholars will think little of his work, 'quod tantum fragmenta sint' [because they are merely fragments], but he would reply that the best authors had used these sententiae like pearls and

[8] These collections of fragments known as *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* have been made available due to the hard work of a number of scholars. The first edition was published as a single volume by August Nauck (1856) but was revised and amended into five volumes: Snell, Bruno (ed.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta Vol. 1. Didascaliae Tragicae, Catalogi Tragicorum et Tragoediarum, Testimonia et Fragmenta, Tragicorum Minorum* (Göttingen, 1971); Kannicht, R. & B. Snell (eds.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. II: Fragmenta Adespota /Testimonia Volumini 1 Addenda / Indices ad Volumina 1 et 2* (Göttingen, 1981); Radt, S (ed.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 3: Aeschylus.* (Göttingen, 1985); Radt, S (ed.) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. IV: Sophocles* (Göttingen, 1977); Kannicht, R. (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. V: Euripides* (Göttingen, 2004). These volumes are discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

[9] Kassel (1991). This is now available in English translation as part of the edited volume, McHardy, F. et al (eds.) *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens* (Exeter, 2005) 7-20.

precious stones to adorn their writings, 'ob castitatem, paene dixerim etiam pietatem' [on account of their purity, I might almost say their piety].[10]

This disparity between the respect accorded to the complete relative to fragmentary plays in the history of classical scholarship has been the result of several factors, including the far greater accessibility of the complete plays in terms of published texts, and especially of translations into modern languages. Until fairly recently it was very difficult to read the fragments at all. Secondly, scholars approaching ancient theatre studies from a thematic perspective—for example, a discussion of the role of the chorus within ancient tragedy—will inevitably find fragmentary plays frustrating or even impossible to use as evidence. However, as McHardy, Robson and Harvey proposed in the introduction to their 2005 collection of essays, *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, we are now in a period where classical scholars are engaging with Greek tragic fragments on a far more intensive level and 'scholars of all disciplines are choosing to engage with fragmentary texts in ways previously unexplored'.[11] But the most encouraging development is that fragments and lacunae are beginning to be seen—at least amongst classicists who engage in creative practice as well as scholarly analysis—less as a problem than as an opportunity. Take, for example, poet, translator and classicist Dr Josephine Balmer's excellent study of the difficulties of dealing with fragmentary material in regards to poetry in her book, *Piecing Together the Fragments: Translating Classical Verse, Creating Contemporary Poetry*, which was published in 2013. She comes from a classical poetry viewpoint rather than Greek drama, but her notion that the fragments are

[10] Unfortunately I have been unable to consult a copy of this old and valuable work, and so quote from Harvey (2005) 11.
[11] McHardy, Robson and Harvey (2005) 1-6.

informative as well as inspiring rings true with many of the scholars with whose work I engage in this thesis.

Our textual and material evidence for lost ancient theatre productions has been violently destroyed, ripped apart by hostile environments, lost in time and much information about their true contexts of production and plots remains forever secret. And yet, the fragments of these plays offer us an insight into the alternative productions that occurred in the Athenian performance space. It is an important scholarly project to investigate these fragmentary productions, which can so substantially contribute to our knowledge of the theatre of fifth-century Athens. There have been significant attempts to reconstruct the outlines and even individual episodes and speeches from snippets of dialogue that have been found on scraps of papyri in Egyptian rubbish heaps and the odd sentences that have been quoted or referenced in other ancient texts altogether.[12] Papyrus remains and quoted fragments can be supplemented by academic research into alternative ancient versions of the myth, which may have functioned as potential sources for the playwrights of lost tragedies, including the complete plays.[13]

However, it is not only *scholars* who have seen the potential with these lost tragic dramas. Since the 1980s, contemporary theatre has become a forum in which the silent truths surrounding these isolated snippets of text can be explored and used as an inspiration. Using the fragments as a stimulus, playwrights have been able cross the temporal boundary dividing the ancient world from the modern by creating fresh scripts and performances. Unable to recreate these productions in their entirety, they

[12] Amongst the earlier 'reconstructors' Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (1784-1868) and J.A. Hartung (1801-1867) were prominent. A.C. Pearson's edition of Sophocles' fragments (1917) was more circumspect. More recently see e.g. Sutton, D. (1984) *The Lost Sophocles.*

[13] See *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, an indispensable multivolume encyclopaedia that catalogues representations of mythology within art (from now on in this thesis referred to as *LIMC*).

offer their own interpretations, some of which draw upon universal themes and issues, to make these obscure ancient remains accessible to a modern audience and thus give the lacunose ancient play an opportunity to live again. This thesis will focus on a selection of fragmented plays whose extant materials have inspired a group of playwrights to bestow upon them a new lease of life within the world of contemporary theatre. This selection will consist of four ancient tragic productions (Aeschylus' *Danaids* tetralogy, Sophocles' *Tereus* and Euripides' *Hypsipyle* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*), and a satyr play by Sophocles entitled, *Ichneutae*.

My study, which moves constantly between two literary cultures, that of classical Athens and that of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century northern Europe, stands at the intersection of several sub-disciplines within Classics, involving some papyrology, philology, theatre history and Classical Reception Studies. Inevitably this means a wide and complicated range of bibliographical resources has had to be used. In the remainder of this Introduction, I hope to indicate the most important works on which I have drawn in each of these sub-disciplines by organizing my argument into four further sections, numbered 2 to 6. I first outline the difficulties involved in accessing the texts of lost ancient plays throught the available editions and other ancient materials. Then I outline in section 3 the recent history of the emergence of specifically *performance* studies within Classical Reception, and the place of the fragment within those studies. This leads me into section 4 to consider the special allure of the fragment, which requires special handling as a marker as much of absence as presence and a reminder of how much we have lost from antiquity more widely conceived. Within section 5, I discuss the cultural developments within the late twentieth century that will have impacted the contemporary playwrights/directors and ultimately influenced their work. Finally, in section 6, I lay out the precise subject-

matter and titles of the modern plays I will be discussing, along with my methological aims and objectives.

2. How can we engage with the Ancient Lost Play?

Prior to the early 19th Century, the majority of collections of Greek tragic fragments were amassed purely from what we refer to as 'book fragments'. These were quotations or extracts, ranging from a single word to a substantial quotation of a whole speech, that were found within other ancient texts. These snippets could be highly helpful in providing a description of the production or making reference to the name of a character or characters who may have been within the cast. But in a large number of cases these quotations would be incomplete and also lack an account of their context in the play, the name of the playwright or even a correct acknowledgement of the title of play. Book fragments were drawn from a large time period that could include references made by a playwright's contemporary (for example, the comedic playwright, Aristophanes, made mention of a number of Euripides' plays within his productions) to the encyclopedia entry, precis or allusion by a Byzantine scholar, who may be vaguely repeating a source to which he has access but which may be far removed from the production in question. For these reasons, book fragments should be utilized with care and caution.

There have been a number of important collections of these fragments, particularly from the late 18th and early 19th century, such as those published by Karl Wilhelm Dindorf (1802-83), Fredrich Bothe (1770-1855) and Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (1784-1868).[14] However, the volume that until the later twentieth century

[14] For Dindoff's extensive contribution please see Sandys (1908) vol III 144-6 as his bibliography is too vast to include here. For Bothe: *Aeschyli dramata quae supersunt et deperditorum fragmenta graece et latine* (1805), *Sophoclis dramata quae supersunt et deperditorum fragmenta graece et latine, Vol. I & II* (1806), *Euripidis fabularum fragmenta.* (1844). For Welcker: *Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht*

was held in most high regard is Nauck's *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, which was published in 1856 (revised edition in 1889, revised and supplemented by Bruno Snell in 1964).

At the time, Nauck's edition transformed scholarship on ancient tragic fragments. It was far more comprehensive than any before. It featured all known fragments of Greek tragic drama, in ancient Greek or translated in antiquity into Latin, collected from a huge variety of ancient sources, together with well-chosen and impeccably referenced testimonia. Van Looy described Nauck as having put the whole of ancient literature through a sieve which included lexica, Etymologica and Anecdota.[15] Harvey claims that the compiler wanted to keep the volume concise and that he had felt it was best practice to have in-depth discussions and reasoning take place in separate articles, books and publications.[16] But Nauck, while avoiding speculation, did include such testimonia as he thought genuinely aided the scholar: ancient accounts of plots and even some brief indications of those plays that could be reasonably reconstructed, although he went into more detail about these items in the preface to his second edition. The volume was, and still is, seen as an astounding piece of scholarship, providing a culmination to previous efforts but also taking the research possibilities to new levels. It has ever since been used as the fundamental groundwork for any academic research on tragic fragments. Working on what Nauck had created, Snell, Radt and Kannicht later produced their own six-volume edition, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, which went on to include additional book fragments as well as the papyri fragment finds that were uncovered in the early twentieth century.[17]

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auf den epischen Cyclus. Vol.1-3 (1839 -1841). Harvey (2005) 25 claims that Welcker was known for 'for imaginative reconstruction', which will be acknowledged in the upcoming chapter on Aeschylus' *Danaids*.

[15] Jouan and van Looy (1998) lxviii.

[16] Harvey (2005) 27.

[17] *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (1971-2004) Göttingen.

These papyri finds, discovered in archaeological sites in Egypt, where the environment and atmosphere have been more conducive to preserving the fragile organic remains of ancient paper rolls, are our second source of fragmentary material.[18] Although a few have been found elsewhere,[19] most of the significant finds relating to ancient tragic theatre were discovered by Oxford archaeologists Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt during excavations around Oxyrhynchus, an Egyptian city, whose citizens, fortunately for us, used a number of garbage sites in the surrounding area to dispose of their documents. These areas were eventually covered by sand, providing ideal conditions for preservation. In 1896, the two gentlemen began to excavate, and discovered an extraordinary wealth of papyri,[20] which they edited. Keen to share their finds, they began to publish *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* in 1898, in collaboration with the Egypt Exploration Fund. Thus the fragments of the lost plays were shared, with English-language translation and increasingly with helpful scholarly commentary: the publication still of course continues, and new fragments illuminating tragedy are still appearing from time to time. In regards to lost ancient dramas, two of the most significant finds discovered with a substantial amount of text were the *Ichneutae* (a satyr play by Sophocles) and a number of scenes from Euripides' tragedy, *Hypsipyle*, both of which will be discussed later on in this thesis.

The papyri fragments tend to be longer in size than the book fragments but are often highly damaged or corrupted in nature due to wear and tear from time spent in the sand. Occasionally, the papyri are illegible, but in a number of cases whole passages and scenes can be read. Scholars had to retrain themselves to read them, and also radically alter their approach to understanding their contents. The traditional idea

[18] For an overview of the provenance of papyri see Bagnall (2009).
[19] A number of tragic papyri fragments have been found in other Egyptian excavation locations such as Antinoopolis. See Roberts (1950).
[20] For more on Oxyrhynchus see Parsons (2007).

of the fragment had assumed the importance of the literary context in which it was quoted and to which it needed to be restored. In the case of papyrus fragments, however, scholars were finding that they needed first to try to reconstruct and complete broken-off sentences, words and paragraphs. This required exceptional linguistic skills and a vast range of knowledge of other literature in Greek to assist them to at least imagine what might be a plausible supplement within the specific literary context.

What also was discovered during the excavations at Oxyrhynchus were a number of examples of ancient summary—(in Greek, a *hypothesis*)—of the plots dramatized in some ancient tragic productions. Hypotheses can provide invaluable insight into the action of the tragedies, even though they were often written decades or centuries after the productions would have taken place. Again, these sections of papyri can be found in a corrupted state, and need to be handled carefully since their contents can be misleading, slanted or informed by the contingent objectives of their writers, producing the document at such a late date.

The addition of these papyri fragments has transformed our understanding of ancient drama. It has also meant that far more is known concerning a specific number of lost plays. This alone encouraged the conception of the plan to create a new edition of the whole fragmentary tragic corpus, and thus the publication of Snell, Radt and Kannicht's version of *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta.* In the years following, Aris and Philips Classical Texts published their own selected collections in Ancient Greek and English of Sophocles' fragments, translated and edited by Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy (2006-2011), and Euripides', translated and edited by Collard, Cropp and Gibert (1995-2004). They also offered an overview of the other ancient versions of the myth on which the lost play was based, its receptions and in-depth

discussion of the themes, dating and other details. Most notably, they proposed a reconstruction of the production and an ordering of the fragments. Loeb Classical Library also published a number of volumes for each tragedian and the extant fragments of their plays, with translations in English by Sommerstein, Lloyd-Jones, Collard and Cropp.[21] Both of these collections are proving immeasurably beneficial to the field of research on fragmentary ancient theatre, allowing those not trained to a high level, or even at all in the ancient languages to have access to materials with which it was hitherto almost impossible for them to engage.

As previously mentioned, the fragmentary plays that will be discussed in this thesis differ in terms of the extant and type of evidence for them which we possess. In some cases, papyri finds have given us a substantial portion of the play's dialogue, for example Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, but little or nothing to suggest what occurred in the sections that are still missing. In other circumstances, we have only a couple of sentences, possibly in the form of short quotations from an ancient prose author, for the entire play: there is little more than this for Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. Therefore, in order to reconstruct the rest of the production, one will need to look for other sources of information to guide the reconstruction of the sequence of the fragments and fill in the gaps that are missing. A hypothesis may have been discovered that could provide an outline of the main events that occurred within the play and potentially assist with the ordering of the fragments, as is probable in the case of Sophocles' *Tereus*.

[21] *Aeschylus III: Fragments*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein (2008), *Sophocles: Fragments*. Edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1996), *Euripides VII: Fragments: Aegeus-Meleager*. Edited and translated by Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp (2008*a*) and *Euripides VIII: Fragments: Oedipus-Chrysippus.* Edited and translated by Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp (2008*b*).

Another source of material to assist in creating a more coherent version of the lost play may come from references that appear in other ancient texts. Ancient Greek writers such as Aristotle commented on a number of productions of which we no longer have complete texts, including Sophocles' *Tereus* (*Poetics* 1454b36, where he refers to the famous recognition by the shuttle). Additional material may come in the form of later plays, including Latin adaptations of the tragedies, by Pacuvius, Naevius or Seneca, for example. But with the exception of Ennius' plays about Alcmaeon, discussed in my chapter 6, there happen to be few relevant later plays in the case of those discussed in this thesis, and anyway such evidence is deeply problematic since later playwrights were very free with their Athenian archetypes.[22] Ancient mythographers including Apollodorus and Hyginus often preserve details of plots which look tragic in origin, but their 'potted' versions of the stories can be misleading.[23] There can be helpful iconographic evidence, for which the major research resources are Trendall and Webster, Taplin, and the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*,[24] and this has been used fruitfully, for example, by Keen, Bardel and Seaford.[25] But even vase-paintings contemporary with the playwrights have their limitations, being unable to provide us with dialogue or an overall structure. The episodes represented may have also have been manipulated by the vase-painters, mural-painters, or later writers.

[22] See, for example, the ancient theatrical reception of Euripides discussed in Rosie Wyles' Royal Holloway University of London PhD thesis, *The Stage Life of Costume in Euripides' Telephus, Heracles and Andromeda; An Aspect of Performance Reception within Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (2007). On ancient lost adaptations of parts of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and how different they were from the original, see Easterling (2006) and Hall (2006*a*).
[23] On the difficulties of reconstructing lost plays where the mythical tradition was very flexible, as in the case of Orestes' adventures, see Hall (2013) chapters 3-5.
[24] Trendall and Webster. *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (1971), Taplin. *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-painting of the Fourth Century BC* (2007), *LIMC* (1981-1999).
[25] See Keen (2005), Bardel (2005) and Seaford (2005).

When it comes to the theory and method of reconstruction, many scholars have assumed that an in-depth understanding of the tragedian's dramaturgical practice, as demonstrated in his surviving plays, can provide a key to 'unlocking' the mysteries relating to the nature and sequence of events in the missing part or parts of the play. I think that while such information may possibly be useful when speculating about certain aspects of general structure—for example, Euripides' fondness for programmatic prologues, ritual aetiologies and gods *ex machina*—it rarely helps when it comes to specifics of the text or details of the production. This avenue of investigation also requires assuming that each playwright invariably 'stuck'to their own 'formula', an assumption which could be highly misleading.

All these sources that could potentially assist in embellishing the fragmented plays are open to being wrongfully attributed or controversial to work with for other reasons. They may also actively hinder our search for the original plot of the dramatist. Quite often there were various interpretations of the same myth offered on the Athenian stage. Playwrights may differ in their interpretations in order to make them more interesting to their audience. For example, Sophocles' *Electra* differs from the play of *Electra* that Euripides created. Across the classical world we have seen a number of instances where myths evolve and change, from which we could certainly conclude that not even what we think are the major points in the myth are fixed unchangeably. There may be core elements of the myth that are involved but there is a need to be very wary about their interpretation.

3. The Fragment in the Light of Performance Reception of Ancient Drama

Each fragmented play that I will be analysing within my research has inspired a playwright or director to bring the material back to life. My research therefore finds

itself located in the area of Classical Reception Studies, specifically the performance reception of antiquity. Pantelis Michelakis noted that this area was a new development in the field, stating, 'in recent decades, the performance reception of Greco-Roman drama has emerged as a subfield of classical reception at the intersect between classics and theatre studies.'[26] It is not surprising that a new approach to reception studies has been established if we look at the sheer volume of productions that have occurred towards the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty- first. Edith Hall addressed this increase and the appeal of Greek tragedy in this statement:

> More Greek tragedy has been performed in the last thirty years than at any point in history since Greco-Roman antiquity. Translated, adapted, staged, sung, danced, parodied, filmed, enacted, Greek tragedy has proved magnetic to writers and directors searching for new ways in which to pose questions to contemporary society and to push back the boundaries of theatre. The mythical, dysfunctional, conflicted world portrayed in the archetypal plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides has become one of the most important cultural and aesthetic prisms through which the real, dysfunctional, conflicted world of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has refracted its own image.[27]

In *A Companion to Classical Receptions* (2008), Hardwick and Stray emphasis the notion that we should move away from a tendency to acknowledge only one 'correct' way of analysing ancient texts—the traditional, philological and aesthetic comparison

[26] Michelakis, P. (2008) 219.
[27] Hall (2005a) 2.

of one text with its supposed 'source'—and instead accept that all texts are received diachronically by other texts in an unceasing process of evolution. Hardwick goes on to argue that even during the classical period, both the Greeks and Romans were already producing their own receptions of stories and plays, which will be seen well documented through my research in the following chapters.[28] Theatre in the ancient world, particularly in the tragic genre, was a world where myths and legends were constantly revised and recycled to create new productions. This is still true today.

The notion of performance reception can be described, in simple terms, as the investigation into the reuse and development of ancient plays through performance subsequently to the original premieres. It looks at these revivals and interpretations, which can be in the original language, translated or adapted, not only for what it can tell us about the classical play but also the historical and social conditions of the playwright/director and their audience. There is no precise way performance reception should be utilised, for it can be practised starting from a number of different viewpoints. By nature it is accepting of multidisciplinary research and often can work alongside a variety of other investigative stances such as psychoanalytical or feminist theory. In order to study something so transient as performance, it requires the need to consult a vast array of primary evidence. This has been noted by Hardwick in her monograph on reception studies, which outlines that evidence can include not only the ancient text and the contemporary script, but also elements such as set and lighting design, costume, movement and acting style.[29] Some additional assistance can be provided through visual aids such as photographs and performance footage, as well as posters and programmes, but often these items can be misrepresentative, lost or

[28] Hardwick and Stray (2008) 21.
[29] Hardwick (2003) 52.

difficult to obtain. Further insight into the exact motives of a playwright or director can be documented through interview but this can have many pitfalls.

The reception of ancient drama can take two main avenues. The first focuses on the relationship between a text and its performance. A researcher would explore the ancient play in its original context, looking for signifiers within the lines that can suggest how the action would have been performed, costume design and directions. With the inclusion of additional ancient material, such as literary accounts, performance spaces and representation in artwork, to inform their views, they would then approach the contemporary stagings looking for comparisons and differences.[30] This technique has been employed by a number of academics in the field of reception studies, but most notably Oliver Taplin, who has a published a plethora of ground-breaking work using this approach, as well as David Wiles and Simon Goldhill who have examined in-depth the elements of Greek theatre performance and how they can be played out on the contemporary stage.[31]

The second avenue for research involves investigating the impact the performance of the ancient text has had diachronically and synchronically. Looking at one ancient play's revivals across a number of years can provide insights into how different political and social contexts can have an impact on the reception of the plot. This socio-historical approach and its advantages have been fruitfully demonstrated by

[30] As discussed by Hardwick (2003) 57.

[31] Oliver Taplin has had a prestigious career focusing on this approach to reception studies and has published a number of well-regarded volumes on the subject including, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), Greek *Tragedy in Action* (London, 1978) and *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-painting of the Fourth Century BC* (Los Angeles, 2007). David Wiles has done extensive research on Greek tragedy from a theatre historian perspective, including publications on *Mask and Performance in Greek tragedy: From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), *Greek Theatre Performance: an Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) and *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning* (Cambridge University Press, 1997). In 2007, Simon Goldhill published a monograph, *How to Stage Greek Tragedy Today*, which documented the issues that one faces when engaging with the ancient play and in order to demonstrate his argument he included references to recent productions from around the world.

the numerous works that have been produced in association with the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama based in Oxford (APGRD). *Medea in Performance 1500-2000* and *Agamemnon in Performance: 458 BC to AD 2004* showcased the reception of these well-known tragedies throughout time and discussed the social contexts and interests of directors and audiences that influenced the work with each new staging. [32] Hall and Macintosh, who both worked on these edited volumes of essays by diverse specialists, also adopted a broadened view of ancient drama in general to look at its impact on the British stage, producing *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*, as well as the acclaimed edited volume, *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium,* which questioned why there was such a renewed interest in Greek tragedy in the world of performing arts during the late twentieth century.[33] Both academics have gone on to produce their own unique monographs on the performance receptions of 'complete' productions such as *Oedipus Tryannus* and *Iphigenia in Tauris.*[34] Similarly, Helene, P. Foley and Marianne McDonald have provided the field of performance reception with invaluable research concerning the performances of Greek drama on the American stage.[35] Their contribution to the field of performance reception is tremendous and it is thanks to these scholars that interest in this type of study has grown and will continue to grow. This has meant that there is a vital need to preserve the histories of these performances in order to assist future scholars with their research. Hall and Taplin became aware of

[32] *Medea in Performance 1500-2000* edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin (Legenda, 2000), *Agamemnon in Performance: 458 BC to AD 2004* edited by Fiona Macintosh, Pantelis Michelakis, Edith Hall, and Oliver Taplin (Oxford University Press, 2005).
[33] *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* by Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford University Press, 2004).
[34] *Oedipus Tyrannus* by Fiona Macintosh (Cambridge University Press, 2009), *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: A Cultural History of Euripides' Black Sea tragedy* by Edith Hall (Oxford University Press, 2012).
[35] Helene. P. Foley, *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage* (University of California Press, 2012), *Euripides' Hecuba* (Bloomsbury Publishing, London 2015). Marianne McDonald, *Ancient Sun, Modern Light: Greek Drama on the Modern stage* (Columbia University Press, 1992).

this requirement and in 1996 established the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at the University of Oxford, with the aim of documenting the history of the performances of ancient plays across time within the areas of theatre, stage, film, opera and dance, and of encouraging playwrights to find inspiration in this specific theatre tradition. The evidence they have collected to date has been astonishing, and within the archive there is access to a plethora of scripts, newspaper and journal articles, posters, programmes, pictures and film footage. The establishment of the AGPRD and its aim to preserve this evidence is highly beneficial to scholars in the field and has assisted this thesis greatly, acting as a springboard for more intensive investigation.

In regards to scholarly work on the performance reception of ancient drama fragments, however, the available publications are much smaller in number. A few scholars acknowledge that contemporary adaptations of the incomplete plays have occurred, but this is usually only as an aside within a larger piece on performance reception or as a footnote. The production that captures most scholarly attention is Tony Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, which stems from the fragmented satyr play, *Ichneutae*. The scholarly attention is perhaps due to the sheer volume of fragments that were uncovered of the lost play, but more likely it was a result of how monumental, original and successful it was as a modern production. This will be discussed further in my chapter 2. In her thesis, Hallie Rebecca Marshall has provided some extensive engagement with Harrison's work and involvement with the ancient text, for which I am grateful.[36] Hall is one of the few academics who has engaged with the reception of fragmentary productions in recent years. She champions the idea of ancient fragmentary plays informing contemporary interpretations, having written on

[36] Marshall (2010).

Harrison' *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* on numerous occasions and assisted in the creation of Colin Teevan's *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, which will be one of the productions discussed at length later.[37]

4. The Romance of the Fragment

The word 'fragment' is generally understood in terms of this definition, as a 'detached, isolated or incomplete part…a part remaining or still preserved when the whole is lost or destroyed' (The Oxford English Dictionary).[38] This sense of isolation from completion has intrigued scholars in many disciplines. In the introduction to Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy's first collection of Sophocles' fragmentary plays they took the view that *everything* historical is fragmentary:

> At one level, a simple answer to this question is that all study of the past is a study of surviving fragments. The past itself is gone.[39]

However, this is not a new concept. Eighteenth-century Britain was intrigued by all versions of fragments. Sophie Thomas recounts in her article on the idea of the fragment during the Romantic period how fashionable people within high society had ruins created in their gardens and even contemporary literary compositions were physically made to look as if they were ancient texts.[40] The idea of something being a fragment was also popular in the style of literature from the epoch. Rather than fragments being sections of old texts that have been lost to time and the elements, what was deemed as fragmentary were writings that had lacked completion due to the author's failings. This is represented in many collections of work by poets and authors

[37] Hall (2007*a*) and Hall (2007*b*)
[38] The Compact Edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1971).
[39] Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy (2006) xxii.
[40] Thomas (2005) 503, See also Kahane (2011) for more on the notion of the ruin within antiquity.

and is particularly striking in Coleridge's incomplete poem, *Christabel* (1797-1800), of which he only ever completed two of the planned five sections. In regards to the classical world, the literary allure that fragmented classical verse had for Bryon and the Rossettis during the Romantic period has been documented in Balmer's monograph on fragments.[41] While I am not in this thesis concerned with the Romantic period's reception of ancient drama, either in performance or in other media, the Romantic attitude towards the idea of the fragment and fragmentation can assist in developing thoughts that can fruitfully be applied, particularly when looking at the contemporary attempts to create something new out of the fragmented play.

What can you do with something that is not complete? It is an item or moment that belongs to an age that can still remain completely alien, even if you have spent your life's work investigating it. Thomas suggests that this is one of the reasons why fragments can be viewed as disturbing entities. They play upon the imagination by promising or suggesting more than what they actually are, while at the same time reminding the recipient/viewer that their promise can never be recovered or fully experienced. They tease the modern spectator with their hidden knowledge. Moreover, fragments simultaneously raise and reject the potential of wholeness and completion. Therefore, in Thomas' eyes, fragments become representative of a sense of disorder and incoherence.[42] However, could the fragment regain its sense of wholeness when it is used as a stimulus to create something new? Or should the fragment be celebrated as it is? These are some of the questions that I hope my research will attempt to answer.

[41] Balmer (2013) 67.
[42] Thomas (2005) 502.

5. Cultural Developments and Influences

It is important to acknowledge that there have been several cultural developments of significance within society and academia during the late – twentieth and early twenty – first centuries that certainly contributed to, what could be defined as, the 'cultural moment', from which a renewed interest in the ancient fragments was born. The majority of the material discussed within this thesis, whether overtly acknowledged or not, has been influenced by the shifts in attitudes towards ideologies concerning topics such as feminism, sexuality and race that started to occur in the 1980s and beyond. Scholars such as Hartman, Curran, Petley and Gaber have labelled this period as the 'culture wars'.[43]

In the United Kingdom and the United States of America, a period of social change was taking place, where the public were starting to question what should be considered 'normal'. Prior to this, entrenched in the fabric of both societies, the thought was that the status quo was a white, heterosexual, patriarchal family. White men appeared to hold dominance in society, and all other groups were marginalised. However, various social movements that were established on both sides of the Atlantic, saw a shift in this view. In the USA, Hartmann claims the 'culture wars' that took place in the 1980s and 1990s rose out the important events of the 1960s.[44] Social movements such as civil rights, Black Power movement, gay rights, the Feminist movement and other identity-related movements, confronted America with new peoples, new ideals and new versions of the idea of the country itself. The concept of what it was to be an 'American' was suddenly publically questioned. While these movements may have not been as immediately successful on a political level, they

[43] For discussion on the 'culture wars', please see Curran, Gaber and Petley's *Culture Wars: The Media and The British Left* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), Hartman's *A War for the Soul of America* (University of Chicago Press, 2015) and Chapman and Ciment's Culture Wars: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Voices and Viewpoints (Routledge, 2014).
[44] Hartman (2015) 1-5.

promoted change on a cultural level, with the results being seen in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. While the passing of the Civil Rights Act occurred in 1964, this was not instantly effective. The 1980s showed that there were massive levels of racial inequality, which prompted intellectuals and the American public to think about what race meant in terms of American identity in new and different ways. Another big topic that affected the general populous was the attitude towards gender. Women and men were expected to behave in certain ways, however the feminist and gay rights movements challenged these conventions, paving the way for women to have more independence, and for sexuality to be discussed openly.

While this period of change was impacting America, in the UK, Margaret Thatcher's 1979 general election victory also marked a significant change in British politics. To many, it felt that the conservative government that she ran only benefited the white, heterosexual, upper class males in a growingly diverse country. There was strong opposition to this from those deemed outside of Thatcher's audience and prompted more discussion on diversity in regards to gender, race and sexuality.[45] It was clear that a number of groups were discriminated against or being marginalised. Social composition was changing within 1980s Britain. A growing proportion of women (and most importantly, married women) were undertaking full-time paid employment, allowing a level of economic independence. Germaine Greer's 1970 publication, *The Female Eunuch*,[46] had become a key text of the feminist movement, and their influence of promoting female independence was coming to the fore. There were also significant shifts in social attitudes, behaviours and institutional regulations surrounding sexuality.

[45] Curran, Gaber and Petley (2005) 4-5.
[46] Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (Paladin, 1970).

Throughout the twentieth century, the topic of sexuality moved closer to the centre of public debate than ever before. The Victorian ideals of keeping sexuality within the confinement of the private heterosexual family started to unravel. The "swinging sixties" had become a metaphor for contemporary social conflict. It was seem by British progressives as an era of excitement that ushered in much needed social change, assisting the promotion of the civil rights movements, decolonisation, women's liberation, gay & lesbian liberation and peace movements, as outlined by Curran, Gaber Petley.[47] The benefits of this shift were continued to be felt in the late twentieth century and beyond.

We can also see a distinct shift in the world of academia, during this time period, particularly in the field of Classical study. The questioning of what 'normal' should be perceived as, which was being debated in the public sphere, was changing the academic landscape in the UK. The 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the 1976 Race Relations Act, which made it illegal to be discriminated against, in regards to education and work, based upon gender and/or ethnicity, was one of many catalysts that saw the field of Classics start to move away from being dominated by white males, and become much more diverse. This prompted interest in the alternative lenses in which to view the classical world. Feminist and queer approaches to ancient texts that were born out of this time period opened up new dimensions of shifting subjectivity and addressed the non –hegemonic discourses that challenged, adapted or subverted entrenched masculine habits of thought. In addition to these new readings, post-colonial and ethnically-focused investigations were soon added. The US academic scene also went through a similar transformation of approach during this time period. While it may have taken some time to take effect, the impact of these

[47] Curran, Gaber and Petley (2005) 10 -13.

changes on both sides of the Atlantic can be seen in the production of important works of research such as the edited volume, *Feminist Theory and the Classics* [48] and the controversial scholarly work by Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*.[49] The world of classical research attempted to become all encompassing, and thus prompted more engagement with ancient texts in translation and an increase in accessibility.

One field within Classics that benefited substantially from these new approaches was the study of ancient theatre and its reception. The arts have long been used as a way of exploring new contentious topics, and as the edited volume, *Dionysus since '69* shows us, Greek tragedy and comedy has been incredibly attractive to modern writers and directors, particularly since 1969, who look for new ways in which to investigate questions in contemporary society and to push the boundaries of theatre.[50] The world of the ancient playwrights has become a place where the dysfunctional and conflicted contemporary world can be reflected. This desire to look for an alternative antiquity, was taken one step further by the small group of directors and playwrights discussed in this thesis. McRobbie claims that postmodern fragmentation can be seen as 'reflective of the ongoing and historical condition of subaltern groups'.[51] If this is indeed true, the playwrights/directors I discuss in this thesis have adopted this approach, which has led them away from the classical canon of plays that have been often used as platforms for discussion, and towards the lost productions of ancient Athens, thus prompting, what I believe, as a revival of interest in the fragmented play.

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[48] *Feminist Theory and the Classics* edited by Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin (Routledge, 1993).
[49] Bernal (1987). For additional perspectives on Bernal's groundbreaking work, please see Jacques Berlinerblau's *Heresy in the University: The Black Athena controversy and the responsibilies of American intellectuals* (Rutgers University Press, 1999).
[50] Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (2004).
[51] McRobbie (1994) 28.

6. My Primary Subject-matter, Aims and Objectives

I see a large chasm within classical scholarship. As discussed above, when classical scholars engage with the fragmented material of ancient drama they tend to do so through the ordering of the surviving material and then speculate on what may have occurred within the rest of the text. There has been very little acknowledgement in scholarship on how these segments of ancient drama have impacted theatre diachronically, even though the field of classical reception and performance studies has grown dramatically around the golden canon of complete plays. It has been remarked that more Greek theatre has been performed in the past 30 years, as indicated by the records available in the APRGD and commented upon by academics such as Hall, than during any other period in history except and since the Greco-Roman era.[52] The surviving Greek plays are highly adaptable to the contexts of a wealth of cultures and socio-political situations, but surely the fragmented plays are capable of this too if given the opportunity?

It is in the hands of a number of playwrights and directors who, particularly since the mid/late 1980s, have developed the belief that the fragment is a sign of infinite possibility and potential. The broken plays have become a basis for renewed creativity and they return them to the theatrical world not just to provide a voice for the lost ancient productions but also to be used in a new storytelling format that encompasses the thoughts and cultural context of the modern world. With so much of our knowledge on the ancient world incomplete and fragmented, surely the idea of the fragment and engagement with it should be greater. However, as demonstrated in the discussions above, there has yet to be a single, sustained piece of scholarly work that investigates a number of fragmented plays and their contemporary receptions in one

[52] Hall (2004) 2.

place. This is the scholarly gap I have set out to fill. By analysing them side by side with one another, perhaps we can learn more about the fragmented play and performance reception.

I intend to question why there has been a renewed interest from practitioners in the plays from antiquity that are fragmented since the 1980s, a period of time that has seen a flurry of theatrical activity in regards to the incomplete play. The collection of plays, both ancient and modern, that are presented within this thesis have been selected with a number of reasons in mind. My approach commenced with looking at the contemporary productions and, from a practical point of view, how much material was available initially. A few of these adaptations had already attracted scholarly focus, however the majority had yet to be acknowledged in the academic sphere. In some cases, documentation such as informative reviews were scarce, and all that was available consisted of the script and the occasional reference on a website. In addition, to narrow my focus, I investigated our current knowledge on the fragmented plays that these modern versions were based upon, and the possible interactions that the directors and playwrights may have had with the original subject matter. Furthermore, the primary reason for why I have chosen these productions for intense study is due to the value they offer us intellectually. The contemporary plays that are examined in the forthcoming chapters, while individually offer very different approaches to the idea of the fragment, they are collectively representative of the new attitude that occurred in the late twentieth century towards classics,[53] and the need for a new way to engage with classical theatre and contemporary issues. Whether they are aware of it or not, my chosen playwrights and directors work within an avant-garde postmodernist frame. They have been influenced by the ground breaking events and movements that have

[53] I have outlined these changes in attitude earlier within this introduction.

occurred in the later parts of the twentieth century, and their works are reflections on this. If modernism looks at fragmentation as a loss of completeness, postmodernism sees the status of the fragment as something to be celebrated.[54] The plays I have selected certainly do this in their own manner, and assist us in understanding why this renewed interest in the lost plays appears to occur. The investigation will deal with the extant evidence from the ancient plays featured, which will see me engage with the surviving data and query the existing scholarship and thought on areas such as fragment allocation, plot summary, characterisation and production themes. I will go on to showcase how the contemporary playwrights/directors have taken this information and brought the ancient plays back to the stage. This will include discussion on all the following: the playwrights' / directors' motives for the productions, the level of involvement within the texts of the extant ancient material; decisions concerning the plot; the creation of new themes; and what sort of 'message', if any, for a contemporary audience. By presenting this research, I propose that an informed discussion can take place on why engagement with this subject field is important. I hope to provide at least provisional answers to the question: What is the appeal of these fragmented plays for contemporary playwrights?

This thesis is an examination of aspects of both the classical world and of modern theatre and, therefore, needs to draw upon a number of resources. Not only has my research involved locating and consolidating the ancient fragments from each of the five fragmented plays, but also, like a detective, seeking out other evidence from the Greco-Roman period that could– with caution– assist in providing clues to a potential plot summary, character list or dialogue topic. As will be shown in the following chapters, these details came from a variety of source material which

[54] While the definition of postmodernism is fluid, there does seem to be a general consensus that fragmentation plays an important part of this theory as discussed by Faigley (1992) and Gall (2014).

included discussion by Roman mythographers, references from poetry and, in at least one case, artistic representation. I devote the first part of each chapter to the extensive analysis of what fragments remain of the ancient play, as well as other sources that may provide us with possible plotlines for what has been lost, for example, detailed accounts of other classical literary works are included. I believe it is important to present this evidence as fully as possible so that we gain the best possible picture of what may have occurred within the story. I am aware that we cannot be certain whether the original Greek production influenced subsequent works or that a commonly agreed mythological plotline existed for each ancient play, however these literary texts can provide us with some context for our surviving fragments, as snippets of dialogue are often discovered in an isolated manner with no theatrical commentary, and, in addition, can offer potential information on what may have occurred during the performance. Moreover, I have presented the extant evidence in an in-depth, descriptive manner for these ancient materials may have been accessed by the modern playwrights during their creative process and influenced their approach. For the correlating contemporary adaptations that are discussed, an extensive study of each was needed. I will provide detailed plot outlines of the modern adaptations for I believe posing the classical evidence and contemporary production summaries side by side are essential to the research in this thesis. This juxtaposition showcases how these plays have developed from their ancient roots, the directors/playwrights' style of dramaturgy and what choices have been made to create this new piece of theatre. In addition, a number of the scripts were difficult to locate and therefore, due to their lack of availability, I saw a need to document a detailed account of the plot. Archival material such as interviews, photographs and recordings were essential to provide some basic context and initial research, but in the case of some of these productions,

documentation and surviving evidence was lacking and needed the input of individuals' recollections. While I only contain a selection of my interviews with some of the playwrights/directors that are featured in this thesis, I have spoken to a number of individuals who were involved in a production or witnessed a staging who have assisted me by providing context or alternative avenues to pursue that would have been unrecorded. In regards to the interviews, of which transcripts are attached at the end of the thesis, these were highly insightful and offered the opportunity to tailor my questions to each. I am grateful for their involvement, especially since I was asking them to comment on events and decisions they made ten or twenty years ago.

As I commenced investigating the field of fragmented plays and their contemporary realisations, I begun to discover that there had been a larger number of playwrights engaging with fragmentary plays than I first realised, much more than would be able to be discussed in this thesis. Therefore, decisions were made to provide only a selection of what has occurred. Pragmatically, this selection process was based on what materials were available; the impact the contemporary production has had in the world of theatre and the opportunities for discussion. A few of these adaptations had already attracted scholarly focus, however the majority had yet to be acknowledged in the academic sphere. In some cases, documentation such as informative reviews were scarce, and all that was available consisted of the script and the occasional reference on a website. In addition, to narrow my focus, I investigated our current knowledge on the fragmented plays that these modern versions were based upon, and the possible interactions that the directors and playwrights may have had with the original subject matter. Ultimately, the primary reason for why I have chosen these productions for intense study is due to the value they offer us intellectually. The contemporary plays that are examined in the forthcoming chapters, while individually

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There is currently no 'correct' or agreed way to conduct research within the field of ancient Greek theatre production. As outlined by Hall, and mentioned earlier in this introduction, the research area of Performance Reception is still developing.[57] Due to its highly subjective nature it presents a number of challenges for academic study. Hall claims that 'no two scholars will practice Performance Reception in the same way'. [58] This is incredibly true as approaches to the study of performance differ widely due to the plethora of theories that work alongside reception studies and types of material to take into consideration.[59] Theatre productions are performative events by nature and therefore difficulties can be met trying to document something that is considered incredibly transitory. Fischer – Lichte considers that the ephemeral state of theatre means that we will never be able to truly document the performance and the reception

[55] I outlined this period of change earlier in this introductory chapter.
[56] The definition of postmodernism is highly debated, but there appears to be a general consensus that fragmentation plays an important part of this theory as discussed in the works of Faigley (1992) and Gall (2014).
[57] Hall (2010) 1-4.
[58] Hall (2010) 13.
[59] For discussion on different approaches to Performance Reception, please see: Hall (2010) 14-26.

experience of the audience.[60] It is due to this truth that I have chosen to take on a number of different approaches to the reception of the plays within this thesis.

The productions within this body of research are all considered adaptations of their original ancient play, therefore it is important to look at what we have in terms of the original stimulus and its influence on the modern play. It is vital to overtly outline these plots and significant changes to showcase the development of the new production, but also to inform as their stories are relatively unknown in comparison to the complete ancient Greek tragedies that are regularly performed and canonically discussed. This style of analysis is very much connected with my main approach towards the contemporary recreations. I have chosen an author-centric style of research for it can assist in drawing connections with social, aesthetic, and intellectual agendas of the directors and the societies in which they are operating. While we can look at the text, production materials and audience members' reactions post-event, there will always be gaps in knowledge, especially when a production has taken place a number of years prior. My interest lies in the decisions made by the playwright/ director. There are many theories on authorship and ownership concerning productions of theatre,[61] however, in my view, I believe that the playwright/director takes the key role in creating the piece of art presented, and his/her thoughts concerning intentions and the purpose of staging, whether these are conscious or subconsciously made, are valuable in discussing the reception of theatre. I am aware that taking an author-centric approach to my research could be seen as flawed, however, in some cases, the most informative sources on these productions surround the role of the playwright/director. I understand that this style of research should be navigated with acute awareness for

[60] Fischer-Lichte (2010) 31.
[61] For more on authorship in theatre, please see: D.Keith Peacock's *Changing Performance: Culture and Performance in the British Theatre Since 1945* (Verlag Peter Lang, 2007) and Elaine Aston and George Savona's *Theatre as Sign System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance* (Routledge, 1991).

there are many traps that one can fall into. Within the field of contemporary literary study, scholars such as Bennett and Mitchell debate the reliability of author-centric research, and suggest that it should be disregarded during analysis.[62] This has developed out of the theory known as the 'Intentional Fallacy', which was outlined by Wimsatt and Beardsley in their essay on authorial intention,[63] implying that an author's intent cannot be confirmed through their text. Mitchell claims that by taking the view of focusing on the author, it promotes the idea of 'the author as ideal reader of his works, and that authors' statements on the meanings of (or intentions behind) their own works cannot, therefore, be contradicted'[64]. Bennett claims that by approaching a living author to ask their intention on a particular text, that we will receive 'another text (his or her answer), which would then, in turn, be open to interpretation'.[65] However, he also acknowledges that when reading a text or viewing a production, it can be difficult to disassociate what we know – or think we know- about the author, and therefore it could be argued that it is important to acknowledge this.[66]

One of the reasons why I have chosen to be fairly author-centric in my research is that materials such as commentaries and reviews, on the one hand, can provide valuable research, but, on the other hand, can also be misleading. Today, we live in a world where theatrical reviews can be published by anyone online through mediums such as blogs and websites. In regards to my chosen productions, I did utilise this evidence in some cases but I did so with caution, due to their questionable validity and small contribution of new information. For many of the lesser known plays discussed

[62] Bennett (2004) 18 -27; Mitchell (2008) 1-21.
[63] W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley, The Intentional Fallacy. *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1946), pp. 468-488.
[64] Mitchell (2008) 11.
[65] Bennett (2004) 22. For more on the role of the author, please see Bennett's other work: *The Author* (Routledge, 2005).
[66] Bennett (2004) 26-27.

in this thesis, there was a lack of published opinion. Quite often the only details one could extrapolate were the performance date, location, casting, and perhaps the link the modern play has with its ancient stimulus. A possible explanation for this is that, due to the complexities and uniqueness of these reimagined fragmented productions, reviewers found it difficult to write extensively about this new approach. They would be unable to refer to previous versions of these plays, unlike with productions of canonical texts such as *Medea* and *Oedipus Rex*. The fragment adaptations find themselves unable to fit into the usual canon of classical theatre and adaptation, nor do they find themselves fitting comfortably under the title of a brand new play. This contributed to my reasoning for focusing on the playwright/director's choices and intent.

In order to provide insights into these plays, I have been lucky enough to perform a number of interviews with some elusive theatre directors and playwrights to discuss their material. Despite having to be selective on the productions I engage with, my research covers a number of contemporary stagings, with some ancient texts discussed in reference to two adaptations, but each of them suggests to us something new about how the original production may have been, as well as the mind-set of the contemporary playwright.

I have chosen five lost Attic plays; four tragedies and one satyr play and therefore this thesis had been divided into main 5 chapters, with each focusing on one ancient play and the adaptations that have been inspired by the surviving fragments. In each chapter, I will first clearly lay out the evidence (which can include an extensive discussion of the fragments themselves and versions of the myth/story that appear in the literature of later antiquity) that survives for the ancient play, any academic engagement with the surviving materials and hypotheses on the plot of the lost play. I

intend to question the ordering of the surviving fragments that scholarship has already provided and in some instances offer my own reordering and thoughts on how the ancient plot would have played out. I will then showcase the contemporary adaptation through a detailed discussion of the plot, explain how the playwright/director has engaged with the fragmentary material and how their new version compares to the original. The final part of each chapter will discuss what we can learn from comparing the ancient with the contemporary and what themes or moments stand out from both.

The concluding chapter in this thesis will pull together all the plays discussed earlier, and draw inferences from a collective comparison. I will draw out the themes of each to see if there if there are any connections or reasoning why these fragmented plays appeal to a contemporary playwright/director and what can they tell a modern audience about ancient drama and how it is revived. Using this framework, I will present new insights into how the fragmented ancient play has theatrically been engaged with since the early 1980s.

Chapter 2

Sophocles' *Ichneutae*

1. Introduction

Over a hundred miles south-west of Cairo is el-Behnesa, the ancient Oxyrhynchus, the city named for its tutelary sharp-nosed fish. Oxyrhynchus flourished in antiquity for many centuries and was governed by many different empires—the Persians, the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Byzantines and the Arabs. But by 1897, when two British classicists, funded by the Egypt Exploration Fund, arrived to look for early Christian papyrus texts, it was a neglected village. Bernard Pyne Grenfell and Arthur Surridge Hunt, who had both been educated at The Queen's College, Oxford, were amazed and delighted when hundreds of papyri were found in the mounds surrounding the ancient city which seem to have functioned as rubbish dumps.

Between then and 1907, Grenfell and Hunt found many other ancient texts, some of which had disappeared many centuries before, including lyric poetry, works by Callimachus, and fragments of Euripides. The texts, most of them now in the Sackler Library at Oxford, have been edited and published since 1907. The longstanding leader of the project today is Professor Peter Parsons, who also published the best general book on Oxyrhynchus and its remarkable texts, on which most of my background information in this chapter draws, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Lives in Roman Egypt* (2007).

The discovery of the tatters of Sophocles' *Ichneutae* in 1907 was a particular moment for a number of reasons. One was that it provided more evidence for a genre that until then had been represented almost exclusively by one complete script, that of Euripides' *Cyclops*. It also shows Sophocles, famed tragedian, writing humorous drama in a much lighter vein. Over seventy years after the discovery, it

inspired a new play and production incorporating the fragments. Premiering in 1988 in the ancient Greek stadium of Delphi, it is the earliest of the reconstructed plays to be studied in detail in this thesis and therefore takes pride of place in the discussion. In the late 1980s, following the success of his translation of the *Oresteia*, directed by Peter Hall, at the National Theatre, Harrison wrote what is seen by many as the most groundbreaking and significant of all the adaptations of fragmentary ancient Greek theatre, *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*. It is itself a self-conscious reflection on the historical plight of incomplete plays in cultural history. It incorporates the fragments of *Ichneutae* (*Trackers*), with its dramatization of the story of the satyrs who tracked the cattle of Apollo stolen by Hermes. But the plotline contextualizes the discovery and, furthermore, the historical treatment of the fragments, which leads to a recreation of a lost production as well as situating the new drama within the wider dramatic context of 1980s Britain. *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* was a huge success and has subsequently been voted one of the best plays of the twentieth century by the National Theatre Millennium Poll.

At the heart of Harrison's dramatic conception is the identification of Grenfell with Apollo. They share 'astounding intellectual snobbery'.[67] Shocked when he finds out that texts containing Greek poetry have turned into disgusting garbage, he exclaims:

> Converted into dust and bookworm excreta,
> riddled lines with just ghost of their metre.
> All my speeches, all my precious words
> mounting mounds of dust and millipede turds.[68]

[67] Hall (2015*a*) 14.
[68] Harrison (1991) 40.

He has nothing but contempt for the rowdy satyrs, who are, as is implied, very much working-class since they began the play as local Egyptian manual labourers hired by Grenfell and Hunt to do the hard work at Oxyrhynchus. As Edith Hall has put it, Harrison 'thus used the very history of the papyri to explore, through creative adaptation of Sophocles' precious text, the contrasts between "low" entertainment and "high" art—intellectual property monopolised by elites and used to exclude their inferiors from education, power and privilege.'[69]

Scholars have approached Harrison's production from different perspectives. Some, such as Marianne McDonald, have acknowledged the play's impact on the wider performance reception of ancient drama.[70] Others, including Oliver Taplin,[71] Steve Padley[72] and Hallie Rebecca Marshall,[73] have looked, amongst other things, at the themes of politics, culture and class struggle that seem to be at the core of Harrison's adaptation, as with his other works. In addition to this, a handful have investigated the fragments in a more traditional academic manner.[74] My intention is to bridge the gap between these previous studies by looking at both the Sophoclean fragments and Harrison's alternative version, but from a distinctive perspective. Violent destruction plays an integral part in the fragment's physical survival and I suggest that this is reflected in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* in a variety of ways.

By integrating the fragmented original into a complete new play, Harrison ensured that Sophocles' unique, mutilated satyr play could be heard by a contemporary audience. In this chapter I will firstly outline the extant evidence available for the satyr play and how it was discovered. I will then conduct a discussion

[69] Hall (2015*a*) 14.
[70] McDonald (1992) 471.
[71] Taplin (1991) 458-64.
[72] Padley (2008).
[73] Marshall (2010) 234.
[74] Green (1957) 10.

which will outline how Harrison engaged with this material in order to create *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* and the constitutive elements he deployed to make the production whole. The final part of this chapter will look at a number of themes that Harrison touches upon, such as class, social disillusionment and violence, investigating how they manifest themselves both within the satyr play section of his drama and the second half.

2. Surviving evidence for Sophocles' *Ichneutae*

As we have seen, the stimulus for *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* was the fragmented Sophoclean satyr play, *Ichneutae*. Translated as 'The Searchers' or 'Trackers', it was uncovered during the excavations at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1907. What was considered by Hunt to be a fair sample of the text was discovered on papyri, which, despite being highly broken up, were reassembled by the team and close to 400 lines were deemed intelligible.

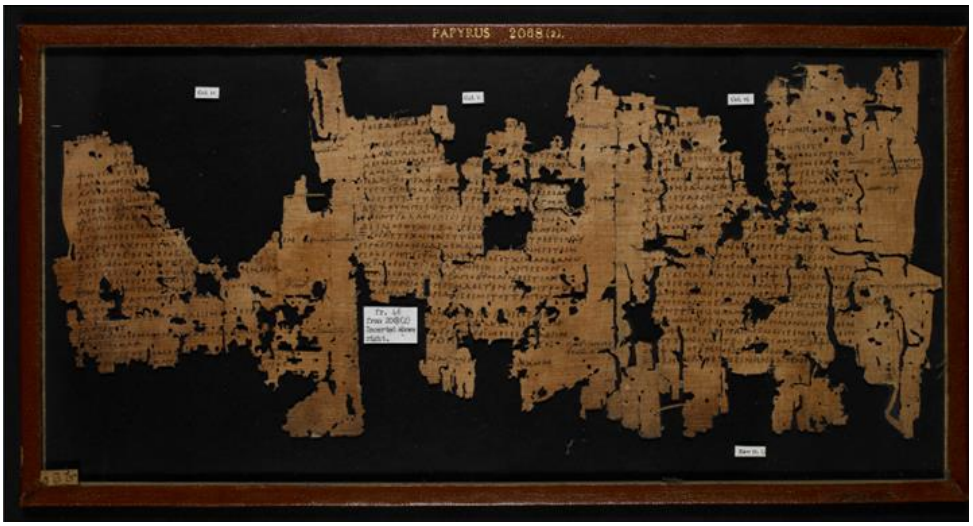


Fig1. P.Oxy. IX 1174 col. iv–vi, © The British Library Board, Papyrus 2068 (2).[75]

[75] British Library image number: G70023-22. A photograph and details of this image can be viewed online at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=papyrus_2068_f001r (last accessed 27/11/2015).

The figure above (Fig.1) is part of the *Ichneutae* fragmented papyri roll and displays the lines from columns iv-vi. One can certainly see how damaged the original has become and the problems that scholars face trying to decipher the material. It has been violently ripped apart, shredded, and hacked to pieces by the environmental elements to which it has been subjected whilst lying in an ancient rubbish dump. Something that was once whole and perfect now appears dilapidated and incomplete. This notion of violence, resonating from the surviving papyri's current state, I believe directly influences Harrison's treatment of the ancient play. As we shall see in the final section of this chapter, the idea of violence done to the material substantially affects Harrison's reconstruction of the latter part of the play.

Hunt suggested in his presentation at the Annual General Meeting of the Egypt Exploration Society that the amount of papyri discovered was potentially representative of 'half the original whole' and that a fair assessment of the plot could be made, which goes as follows.[76] The cast consisted of Apollo, Silenus, Cyllene, Hermes and a chorus of satyrs. We learn from the remnants of Apollo's opening monologue and the first part of the Sophoclean fragment that the action takes place on Mount Cyllene.[77] The god has lost his prized cattle and has conducted a search for the animals in various central Greek locations including Thessaly and Boeotia.

With as yet no success, Apollo has arrived in the Peloponnesian area, offering a reward to whoever can locate his herd. Silenus, the leader of the chorus, enters on hearing Apollo's voice and offers his assistance and the aid of his 'sons', the satyrs, in locating the cattle. Apollo agrees on the reward of a gold wreath and release from slavery for Silenus and his helpers. A short ode takes place before Silenus and the

[76] Quoted in Harrison's introduction. Harrison (1991) 13.

[77] As the surviving Greek text of *Ichneutae* is very substantial, I will not reproduce it here. For more on the text please see the translation of Sophocles' fragments by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1996).

satyrs start their search. They detect tracks which lead them to a cave, but their investigation is stopped short when they hear a strange noise coming from inside. This prompts alarm among the satyrs and, in a cowardly manner, they refuse to go ahead into the cave. Silenus gives a morale-boosting speech to his chorus and the hunt resumes briefly until another bout of strange sounds is heard, throwing the search party into chaos. A now scared Silenus threatens to leave.

But greater calm returns to the group, and in order to discover who is inside the cave, they make a loud commotion outside by jumping up and down and kicking. Cyllene emerges from inside the cave, concerned about the racket that they are making. She explains that she is concealing a secret from Hera; she is nursing the child Hermes, son of Zeus and Atlas' daughter. The boy has grown unnaturally quickly in the six days since his birth. He has already invented a new instrument from the shell of a tortoise and cowhide and has named it the lyre. Cyllene informs them that the sound they heard had derived from this object. The satyrs continue to quiz Cyllene on the subject of the instrument and conclude that Hermes is the cattle thief since he used cowhide in the manufacture of the lyre. Cyllene protests that the child is innocent and an argument ensues.

This is where the fragment breaks off. The conclusion of the play is unknown for it has failed to be preserved. Due to the substantial amount available of this satyr play, scholars have speculated on how it may have ended and 'reconstructed' its subsequent action in different ways. D.L. Page proposed that Apollo would have appeared after the argument and therefore have bestowed the promised prizes on Silenus and his satyrs.[78] Page assumed that, in line with the story as narrated in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the child then appears and offers Apollo the lyre to

[78] Page (1942) 26.

suppress his anger. However, whilst the *Hymn* does offer a possible answer, the main plot of Sophocles' production shows that he has radically altered various aspects of the myth from the way in which it was previously portrayed in the *Hymn*. In *Ichneutae*, the tracking takes place on Mount Cyllene rather than near Pylos as described in the hymn (*Hymn. Hom.* 4.216). The local mountain nymph, Cyllene, is named as Hermes' maid by Sophocles, whereas the role is often attributed to his mother Maia (as implied in *Hymn. Hom.* 4.1-19). These and other discrepancies between the two sources indicate that it would be problematic to rely upon the myth outlined in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* as a source for a speculative ending.

3. The Satyr Play as Theatrical Form

Trying to determine the conclusion of *Ichneutae* is a highly perplexing exercise, since the satyr play is such an elusive theatrical form. Roger Lancelyn Green suggests that is because we have no exact comparison in our own literature, nor in the rest of the global cultures, today.[79] One might propose that the satyr plays were similar to Mystery plays of the Middle Ages, which focused on serious and religious subject-matter, but were however interjected with small bursts of farce. *Cyclops* by Euripides is the only complete satyr play in current existence and therefore our only complete or substantial textual point of comparison in regards to style and structure; however, descriptions in theatrical commentaries by ancient authors still exist as well as visual evidence that can be found on vase-paintings depicting the satyric costume. From these sources we can see that the satyrs possessed animalistic personality traits which also appeared in their physical appearance.[80] Whilst they seemed predominately

[79] Green (1957) 9.

[80] For more on Satyric drama see: Casaubon, I. (1605), *De Satyrica Graecorum poesi, & Romanorum satira libri duo* (Paris), reproduced in facsimile with an introduction by P. E. Medine, New York 1973.

human, the bestial body manifestations started as characteristics of horses and later on in the classical period progressed to attributes of goats, according to Richard Seaford in his introduction to *Cyclops*. Seaford defines a satyr as 'an ambiguous creature, cruder than man and yet somehow wiser, combining mischief with wisdom and animality with divinity'.[81] However, Green asserts that the satyrs were never goat-like and instead had 'bristly hair, broad noses, pointed ears, even tails – but that was all'.[82] They were meant to appear primitive and semi-wild in comparison to civilized man and the satyrs' personalities were those at best of unsophisticated savages; they were completely amoral.[83] The satyrs were closely associated with the god Dionysus, and described by Pat Easterling as 'part of the god's entourage'.[84] Their social status is clearly established when their relationship to the god is discussed in satyr play, *Cyclops*, where they are often referred to as slaves to the deity.[85]

Within the fifth-century Athenian playbill, a satyr play would have been performed after a set of three tragedies by one playwright. Often the plots would involve mythical subject matter, more light-hearted than the previous shows. Sutton asserted that the 'purpose of classical satyr play was to supply comic relief after tragedy';[86] however this view is conjectural, with a number of scholars believing the plays had an alternative purpose.[87] Green proposes that the satyr play would offer a similar religious experience in comparison to the tragedies, which would evoke the same sense of *katharsis* of the emotions, however with a different approach and

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Also see: Collinge, N.E. (1958-9); Griffith (2002) 195-258; Krumeich, Ralf, N. Pechstein and B. Seidensticker (1999); Lassere, F. (1973); Lissarrague, F. (1990*a*); Lissarrague (1990*b*) 228-3; Seidensticker, B. (2003), 100-21; Hall (1997) 13-37; Brommer, F. (1937) and Brommer, F. (1959); Steffen, W. (1971) 203-26; Sutton, D.F. (1980); Ussher, R.G. (1977) 278-99.

[81] Seaford (1984) 7.

[82] Green (1957)10.

[83] Green (1957)10.

[84] Easterling (1997) 38.

[85] E.g. Euripides *Cyclops* 709.

[86] Sutton (1980) 6.

[87] See Seidensticker (1979) and Collinge (1989).

function.[88]

It is generally assumed that in all satyr drama, as in *Cyclops*, the myths and legends of gods and heroes were approached with a burlesque feel. The plot would have been well known to the audience, but a satyric spin would have been introduced where the satyrs would assist in a task in order to gain freedom. As a consequence humorous scenes would ensue, sometimes resulting in the satyrs being introduced to new inventions such as wine or fire. Sutton asserts that 'almost by definition a satyr play must have a happy ending',[89] which is evident in the surviving satyr play, *Cyclops*, as the satyrs break into joyous song while they exit. In what has proved to be a highly influential article, François Lissarrague suggests that there is a 'sociological' formula for a satyr play:

> The recipe is as follows: take one myth, add satyrs, observe the result. The joke is one of incongruity, which generates a series of surprises....Tragedy poses fundamental questions about the relations between mortals and gods, or it reflects on such serious issues as sacrifice, war, marriage or law. Satyric drama, by contrast, plays with culture first by distancing it and then reconstructing it through its antitypes, the satyrs.[90]

The high, and at times, elaborate idiom and style of tragedy were abandoned for the different tone of these comic scenarios, while not yet fully crossing over into the genre of comedy. Sutton claims that unlike the comedies of Aristophanes, and his fellow comedic playwrights, satyr plays generally avoided allusion to contemporary figures

[88] Green (1957) 20.
[89] Sutton (1980) 6.
[90] Lissarrague (1990*b*) 233-6.

and situations.[91] Harrison seems to contradict the 'atopicality' principle in his adaptation, but this will be discussed later on in this chapter. The verse of satyric drama also contained many colloquial words which were beneath the dignity of serious tragedy and the choral dances were wanton and wild. It is thought that the length of the satyric performance was only half the running time of a traditional tragedy. The satyrs were the only characters that appeared farcical, while the rest of the cast would have been stereotypical. For example, in Euripides' *Cyclops*, Odysseus retains a similar version of the heroic character to that which he possesses within Homer's epic *Odyssey*.

Having an approximate sense of satyr drama's performance style and plot is helpful when looking at the fragmented ancient production that has been uncovered in the *Ichneutae* papyri. Due to its fragmented state, contemporary performance is very rare. Despite this however, the plot lives on in Tony Harrison's adaptation *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*.

4. Tony Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*

Tony Harrison was not a novice playwright when he undertook this challenging project. Although there is as yet no biography or autobiography, it is essential to acknowledge his background and education as contributing influences in his works.[92] He studied Classics at university level and throughout his career has shown a keen enthusiasm for the usage of classical imagery in his poetry as well as adapting and translating various 'complete' Greek tragedies including the *Oresteia*, the Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound*, Euripides' *Hecuba* and (in an as yet unpublished play) *Iphigenia*

[91] Sutton (1980) 8.
[92] For more on Tony Harrison and his works see: Astley (1991); Byrne (1997) Byrne (1998); Rowland (2001); Hall (2007*a*) 83-108.

in Tauris.[93] His interest in ancient drama and the ritualistic aspect of this type of performance had started at a young age. Harrison claims that the community aspect was reminiscent of a celebration he experienced as a child where even 'normally taciturn people [were] laughing, singing, dancing'.[94]

Harrison was awarded a scholarship to Leeds Grammar School at the age of eleven, taking up an opportunity that his working-class family would not have been able to afford in normal circumstances. Here he undertook a Classical education, and indeed acted in a production of Euripides' *Cyclops*, but yet he felt isolated and discriminated against when he refused to let go of his working class roots and retained his thick Yorkshire accent instead of 'neutralizing' his dialect and embracing the Received Pronunciation voice:

> At school I was never allowed to read verse out loud because of my Yorkshire accent. They said I was a barbarian, not fit to recite the treasures of our culture.[95]

This prejudice and isolation that Harrison experienced created an awareness within him of the class structure in Britain and the exclusionary role played by high culture and even of advanced literacy. His background was rendering him inarticulate in the view of his teachers, who would often chastise him for his accent and lack of eloquence. However instead of evoking a sense of shame for his class, it prompted a desire to embrace his—for grammar school—unconventional background:

[93] For more information on this, please look at Edith Hall's paper 'Tony Harrison's Prometheus: A View from the Left' (2002) and Hallie Marshall's paper 'Remembrance Is Not Enough: The Politics of Harrison's *Hecuba*' (2008). On the *Iphigenia in Tauris* play, there are plans for a premiere on BBC Radio 3, see Hall's report, published online at http://edithhall.co.uk/theatre (last accessed 14/11/15). Parts of the unpublished play were recited by the poet for the first time on July 5th 2015 at a conference on ancient Greek theatre around the Black Sea held at King's College London.
[94] Harrison (1991) 3.
[95] Fay (1991) 289-290.

> My own education led me to believe that I had an inarticulate background, which gave me a deep hunger for all modes of articulations; I learned many languages, obsessively, and also threw myself in to becoming a poet, which is for me a supreme and ceremonious mode of articulation. [96]

He soon realized that the more knowledgeable he became, the more conscious he was of what he 'owed to the goad of the inarticulate',[97] and that he should attempt to make society aware of the cultural divide that exists in Britain.

In 1981, Harrison created his own translation of *The Oresteia* for the National Theatre, where he was able to connect with classical subject-matter as well as explore his own personal interests in contemporary cultural matters.[98] This production was famously directed by Peter Hall, who too was drawn to ancient theatre. Both gentlemen shared preoccupations with the survival of the classical tradition, the arbitrary classification of culture into categories such as 'high' and 'low', 'elite' and 'popular', and the issue of which people were deemed acceptable to enjoy what.

The prejudicial notion that only the elite had the acumen to engage with classical culture was still very much in existence when Harrison and Hall began to collaborate. Hall acknowledged that this Victorian attitude towards knowledge concerning Classics, and in particular ancient theatre, still existed; he articulated the concept that only the upper echelons of society were allowed to connect with this type of material, describing *The Oresteia's* ideal audience as 'public school types and

[96] Haffenden (1991) 229.
[97] Haffenden (1991) 234.
[98] For the script used for the *The Oresteia* see: Harrison, T. *Aeschylus: The Oresteia* (London, 1982). For more information on Harrison and his translation of the *Oresteia*, see: Taplin (2005) 235 – 255.

members of the Church of England'.[99] With this attitude firmly in their consciousness, poet and director went on to challenge the cultural and social problem they perceived through their production. Their aim was to connect with those who were culturally excluded by translating and handling the verse in a Northern dialect, which until this point had usually only been used in popular theatre to distinguish a low-class character or idiot.[100] They also decided to involve the usage of contemporary colloquialisms. As Steve Padley asserts in his article, 'Hijacking Culture. Tony Harrison and the Greeks', the production went 'beyond linguistic and formal considerations in its challenge to the assumed cultural function of the classics in the modern age.'[101]

Using this successful production as a stepping-stone, Harrison continued to experiment with classical subject-matter and the theme of cultural dispossession. He chose another 'complete' tragedy that belonged to the 'golden canon' of classical plays, yet he approached the play as an examination of gender roles, a critique of patriarchal society and a showcase for civil disobedience. *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* was intended to continue his preoccupation with bringing classical material to the masses in a digestible manner and breaking the social hierarchies instilled by the remnants of Victorian thought. This was commissioned by New York Metropolitian Opera but due to the death of the composer, Jacob Druckman, it was never fully realized in the context intended. Instead, Harrison's libretto was performed by Volcano Theatre Company as a play,[102] alongside passages by Valerie Solanis from the *SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) manifesto*.[103]

[99] Goodwin (1983) 237.
[100] For a wide-ranging exploration of this issue, see Helen Eastman's PhD thesis (King's College London 2015). *Greek up North: A Study of Northern Broadsides' Productions of Ancient Drama*.
[101] Padley (2008) 2.
[102] The production was performed at various international locations from 30 April 1991 to 31 December 1992.
[103] The SCUM manifesto was seen as a radical feminist manifesto created by Valerie Solanas and published in 1967. For more on this see: Solanas (1967)

It was on 12th July 1988 at the ancient stadium in Delphi, Greece, that Harrison showcased the world premiere of his production of *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*.[104] Initially intended for a one-off performance, the idea of a single production at a thematically appropriate site is one which has been inspired in Harrison by what was so often the single performance nature of original Greek classical drama, only the most popular examples of which were usually revived. This was his first foray into combining the roles of playwright and director. In an introduction to the script, he explains how he drew upon the features of classical theatre staging for his production that rarely exists in productions today:

> It was a joint production between the National Theatre Studio and the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. I have always wanted to prepare a piece for one performance. This was what the ancient dramatists did. In the theatre, I most admire, poets, and I stress poets, wrote for actors they knew and for a space they knew.[105]

In the same way as Sophocles would have known and written for his main performers,[106] Harrison chose two actors to build his production around, two gentlemen from Yorkshire with whom he had worked on prior productions such as *The Oresteia*. He suggested that it was easier knowing his 'instruments', lead actors Barrie Rutter and Jack Shepherd, on a production such as this.[107]

Harrison also had in mind the venue while he wrote *The Trackers*. Delphi seemed ideal. It is a place built for the worship of Apollo, a key character in

[104] From now on referred to as *The Trackers.*
[105] Harrison (1991) 18.
[106] See Hall (2002*b*) 7-11.
[107] Harrison (1991) 18.

Harrison's production, and where the god's oracle had presided. The majority of the site's buildings still remain, though in various levels of decay, including a temple and a theatre; the production, however, took place in the ancient stadium where performances have been staged in recent years. From Harrison's own account, we learn the drawbacks of staging a production in the open air. He outlines how the technical rehearsal was frequently interrupted by 'wild weather',[108] and eventually abandoned; plans were therefore put into place in case the environmental problems continued to persist. Despite the factors that come into play, such as weather, when using a non-covered theatre, Harrison justified using this space by suggesting that it helped 'dramatize a contemporary division in our culture between sport and art.'[109] The production was staged successfully on the evening of 12 July 1988, and less than eighteen months later, in 1990, the play was revised for a run at the National Theatre, London with significant changes made to the plot and the ending in order to adapt to a different venue, audience, and historical moment. Marianne McDonald noted that Harrison reworks his productions to suit the character of each venue because each place has its own elite and its own marginalized groups.[110] This would explain the existence of the two distinct versions of the script.

Jack Shepherd, the original Grenfell/Apollo, described *The Trackers* as a production that functions on 'several different levels at more or less the same time...an altogether different account of how a discerning class has come to own high culture, keeping it well out of the reach of the undiscerning masses'.[111] In both versions of the production, Harrison seems to have been preoccupied with the concept of social and cultural dispossession as well as giving a voice to the marginalized groups who have

[108] Harrison (1991) 19.
[109] Harrison (1991) 19.
[110] McDonald (1992) 471.
[111] Shepherd (1991) 427.

been overshadowed throughout history due to factors such as slavery, class and gender. Harrison consciously divides the plot into three sections, taking the audience to three different historical periods in order to scrutinize these ideas and demonstrate how they resonate, from the classical to the Edwardian and the contemporary.

Both the Delphi and the London productions open with the archaeologists who discovered the Sophoclean fragment, Grenfell and Hunt. Here Harrison contextualizes the discovery of fragments and how in particular the original *Ichneutae* papyrus scraps were found, informing the audience, through the dialogue between these Edwardian Englishmen, about the process of excavating this kind of textual material. The scene is set in front of Grenfell and Hunt's excavation tent at Oxyrhynchus in 1907. The chorus appears on stage dressed as Fellaheen hired to assist on the dig. Grenfell is preoccupied with discovering the lost Sophoclean text, convinced that it is Apollo's divine command. Hunt even makes references to the title of the fragmented play in his opening speech by claiming that they are the 'Ichneutae' in the context of their excavations, yet all they have found are papyri outlining petitions and reports. Their desire to uncover a piece of drama such as *Ichneutae* is fueled by the introduction of the supernatural presence of Apollo, talking through the character of Grenfell. A dialogue ensues between the archaeologist and Apollo while they share the same actor's body.

The prized papyrus is unearthed and precipitates the full metamorphosis of Grenfell into Apollo and Hunt into the lead satyr, Silenus. The Fellaheen also undertake a transformation and become a chorus of satyrs. Harrison drags his audience into the classical world at this point, entering the middle segment of the production, where a modified version of the plot of *Ichneutae* is enacted.

The playwright fills in the gaps that were lost, with his own interpretations, as

well as highlighting the discourse surrounding the translation of classical texts and style of language used. For example, Silenus and the satyrs use colloquial phrasing, whereas Kyllene opts for a style that in the text is described as a 'tragic tone',[112] reminiscent of the tonality used by translators in first half of the twentieth century (or as a satyr exclaims, as 'Victorian verse').[113] Once he reaches the end of the surviving fragment, Harrison follows Page's suggestion that Apollo and Hermes begin to argue over the lyre until Apollo pulls rank on baby Hermes and claims that he is "scarcely fit to give lyre recitals with pants full of shit."[114]

Now having the lyre in his possession, Apollo performs a recital for the satyrs in order to show off this new instrument. The satyrs become enthralled by the music and enquire whether they are allowed a turn, prompting a burst of anger from the god. He denies them this privilege and reminds them of Marsyas, a satyr who was flayed alive for mastering the *aulos*, an instrument considered to be the property of the gods. Instead he offers the rewards he promised them for locating the cattle, though the gift of freedom is bestowed only on the condition that they stay within the generic confines of the satyr play, which is not true freedom:

> Gold and freedom. You're free, if you stay
> Where you belong, in the crude Satyr Play.[115]

At this point, the Delphi production and National Theatre version begins to differ, which is understandable given the very different natures of the physical and cultural spaces for which the two versions of the play were written. The result is scripts that

[112] Harrison (1991) 56.
[113] Harrison (1991) 54.
[114] Harrison (1991) 66.
[115] Harrison (1991) 132.

are strongly related, indeed virtually identical in the opening sequences, yet distinct from each other, especially towards their respective ends. Harrison begins to break from the classical setting into a third section that emulates a world where the satyrs are introduced to the lifestyle of northern Europe in the late 1980s, the time period in which Harrison was writing. In the Delphi script, the satyrs receive bars of gold. But when these are unwrapped, they turn out to be 'ghetto blasters', which start to play loud music, prompting the panicked group to scatter in fright. Silenus attacks these unfamiliar objects in order to make the noise cease. He then embarks on a monologue, commenting first on the evolution of manmade products and then on the satyr's function. It is not merely to provide comic entertainment through drunkenness and sexual exploits, but to act as a naive inquisitor by querying the unexplained and everything that is taken for granted, whether it be an object or mythical scenario.

Silenus goes on to explain the story of Marsyas' fate, including a tragic description of Marsyas' terrible suffering and death, in which Harrison's play orients itself firmly in the realm of the tragic rather than the comic.[116] He questions whether Marsyas deserved to be punished at all. Silenus then introduces the new generation of satyrs, who now appear in the form of football hooligans and destroy the set by drawing graffiti and burning the papyrus on stage, symbolic of their contempt for high culture. In an exchange with the newly transformed chorus, Silenus suggests that they should be respectful of their origins–that is, of the play and papyrus; the chorus however is more concerned with destruction and anarchy, prompting Silenus to leave. The Delphi production concluded with the satyrs and the archaeologists, Grenfell and Hunt, returning to the stage and giving Sophocles a curtain call through rearranging, with the audience's help, the letters of Sophocles' name that are inscribed in ancient

[116] Harrison (1991) 136 – 139.

Greek on parts of the set. As we shall see in more detail below, the National Theatre production kept many of the details of the Delphi staging, which however was developed and modified for a substantial run on the British stage. Sophocles' curtain call was removed and the final section of the production lengthened to incorporate more discussion between Silenus and the new generation of satyrs.

Both versions of the script make it clear that neither production lived up to the ancient satyrs' reputations for revelry. It has been suggested that in the original Sophoclean staging, the satyrs would have celebrated the end of the play with a wild and boisterous dance or song, providing hilarity for the audience;[117] Harrison's satyrs, however, tend ultimately to lean towards the depressive rather than the bacchanalian. In the final section of *The Trackers* the atmosphere evoked generally is a melancholy one which conveys a strong sense of bitterness, disappointment, and disillusionment. This is highly prevalent in a number of moments, particularly in the National Theatre version. There is indeed frequently a build-up of anticipation, and increased emotional intensity, implying that a celebratory moment could take place. Yet this hope is invariably dashed, leaving the satyrs looking dejected and disappointed.

The most revealing instance of this process of disillusionment occurs when Apollo performs the first lyre recital. The satyrs gather round him, in awe of this strange, new instrument, and are enraptured by the melody they hear. They all rush forward looking for a chance to play the new device but they are stopped in their tracks by Apollo's booming, yet tantrum-like, 'No, no, no, no, no!'[118] He goes on to demoralize them by explaining that the lyre is:

half-human, half-divine

[117] Lissarrague (1990*b*) 233-6.
[118] Harrison (1991) 130.

and satyrs, half-beasts, must never aspire

to mastering my, and I mean my, lyre.[119]

The satyrs' mood shifts from excitement to devastation continue as they listen to Apollo claim that their lowly status will never change. By belittling the chorus, Apollo asserts that his position, in comparison, is of the highest standing and all that is linked culturally to him belongs exclusively to members of his lofty social class. As he asserts, his music will never henceforward be tainted by the satyrs' unsophisticated reputation:

There'll be in the future an unbridgeable split

Between the spirit of music and mere mention of shit.

No clues should remain I had any connections

With clog-footed satyrs with gruesome erections.[120]

The depressed disposition still remains with the group after Apollo leaves. Even the notion of gifts, which generally tends to evoke a joyful atmosphere, adds further to their dejection when they realize that the bars are actually 'ghetto blasters'. These objects are useless to them since they are completely alien, even though Apollo deems the music they emit to be the only music suitable to the creatures he dismisses as crude, lower-class satyrs.

The recounting of Marsyas' flaying represents the climactic peak of the depressive, pessimistic, yet graphically violent atmosphere in this third phase of the play. The act of human flaying is a horrific method of torture, often reserved for

[119] Harrison (1991) 132.
[120] Harrison (1991) 134.

alleged criminals of whom the punisher wants to make a public example. We are aware of its use in some ancient cultures from various sources that include Herodotus, who claimed that a corrupt Persian judge named Sisamnes was flayed for accepting a bribe.[121] Even for a modern audience this act is disturbing. Harrison draws upon the sadistic story of the punished satyr as not only a warning to the chorus about what happens to those who try to be better than the gods, but also to highlight how the lower classes in social hierarchies are unable to become upwardly mobile as accessibility to culture is severely limited. In fact, the social exclusion of which they are the victims relies, ultimately, on state violence, or the potential for state violence, in order to maintain itself.

Moreover, in addition to this, I believe that Harrison is using the act of flaying to reflect another prominent issue. While the *Ichneutae* plot was discovered on papyri, other play fragments have been discovered on flayed animal skin, otherwise known as parchment. This writing material goes through a gruesome process to reach the desired result; from the skinning of the animal to stretching and tanning of the skin.[122] Violence appears to be constantly inflicted upon the substance. While the creation of papyrus is less aggressive, its very survival, against so many assaults by time and elements, also contains inherent within it a sense of brutality. Papyrus is a fragile material and has suffered at the hands of the natural elements, erosion from dampness and excessive heat. It has been pressurized by the sand and perhaps even nibbled by the creatures that lived nearby. Both writing materials suffer metaphorical pain in their existence. Harrison makes a connection between the flaying of Marsyas' skin and the mutilation of writing materials from which we obtain the fragmented plays. The

[121] Herodotus 5.25.
[122] For more information on flaying, please look at Lawrence S. Thompson's article, 'Tanned Human Skin' (1946).

involvement of the Marsyas' story reflects the splintered physical nature of the papyri on which the *Ichneutae* text has survived.

In the scene preceding the retelling of Marsyas' story, Silenus embarks on a messenger-style monologue when the satyrs have fled in terror, horrified by the late 20th- century musical sounds emitting from the ghetto blasters: these are even described by Harrison as sounding like the terrifying scream of Marsyas. What should have been a celebratory moment for the satyrs, because they have just received gifts, turns into the platform for a gruesome retelling of their companion's flaying. This turn in the plot insinuates a melancholy and downbeat ambience by including disturbing lines such as:

> The last thing Marsyas saw was his own skin
> like a garment at his feet with no one in.[123]

During his monologue, Silenus, unable to cope psychologically with the shocking subject-matter he is discussing, starts to drink from his wine skin, as if to 'blot out the memory of Marsyas'.[124] Once the wineskin is empty, he tries to locate another source of alcohol by any means possible. He scavenges through a rubbish heap trying to find a cider bottle, desperate to drink himself into a stupor. Satyrs and alcohol are closely associated in myth, and they are often depicted taking part in drunken exploits and merry reveling. This time, however, to continue with the depressive atmosphere, the drinking is not linked with celebration, but with the disgusting and macabre.

A different perspective on violence begins to set in as soon as it has been introduced by the gory and graphic account of Marsyas' agonizing punishment. The

[123] Harrison (1991) 138.
[124] Harrison (1991) 139.

chorus returns later on in the scene as 1980s football hooligans, a group stereotypically seen by society, through their violent actions, as embracing the lower forms of culture and unable to comprehend or appreciate what is deemed as superior or refined art. They act in ways that seem to confirm the legitimacy of this stereotype by destroying the papyri from which they have come and attacking Silenus, both verbally and physically. The satyrs are now a new breed, deprived of traditional culture and learning. They are discontent with their position in society and therefore act in an aggressive manner. A poignant moment occurs when the satyrs, turned hooligans, put their usual celebratory dancing instruments, their clogs, to a new use, as weapons of violence:

> Satyr 1: Them hooves that we pranced in that shit play
>
> do very nicely for
>
> Satyr 2: G!
>
> Satyr 3: B!
>
> Satyr 2: H!
>
> Satyr 1, 2 and 3: OK? [125]

By attacking Silenus, the new generation of satyrs are also attacking their traditions and heritage. He represents the old ancestral ways from which they have now broken away. The disillusionment of the satyrs is also prevalent in their interaction with the papyrus onstage during the third part of the production. In both versions they vandalize the papyrus with graffiti as well as, in the Delphi script, using the leftover material as a football, and, in the National adaptation, using the remnants as bedding

[125] Harrison (1991) 143.

when they return to the stage at the end of the production in the persona of the South Bank homeless. In the Delphi version, the working classes are culturally limited to obsessive and nationalistic football fandom; in the National Theatre adaptation, they are too deprived even to find comfort in sport. This is Harrison showcasing what happens to those who are excluded from culture or literacy and are marginalized by society.

The issue of cultural exclusion is really brought to the fore when Silenus asks the audience whether anyone can read aloud the ancient Greek that is displayed on stage. Unfortunately the lack of classical education in mainstream schooling in 1980's Britain meant that very few members of the audience could comprehend the ancient language. On realization that the 'Everyman' constituted by each audience member is unable to understand, Silenus makes reference to the only person who he thinks could:

> Is there a doctor...some don from Queens
> who can tell the rest of us what all this means[126]

Dejected, Silenus confirms his suspicions and what he seems to accept must be his uncultured role in contemporary society, by saying:

> I get it! No one reads Greek. Neither do I
> so it's not much bloody use, the Ichneutae.[127]

Some critics think that Harrison has always sought to make his classical works as accessible to his audience as fifth-century drama was to its spectators. No matter

[126] Harrison (1991)146.
[127] Harrison (1991) 146.

what role you played in society or class you belonged to, even the slaves who 'accidentally' witnessed an ancient play, or saw its stories painted on a vase, you could engage with the production at some level.[128] In contrast, others are quick to point out that his use of classical subject-matter and inclusion of ancient languages are outside the common person's cultural domain, so in using them Harrison actually goes against his supposed aim and as a result alienates his intended audience further.[129] In both stagings of *The Trackers* his audience would have been from a specific demographic sector, and, in particular, the National Theatre production, whilst having a substantial run, would have still been difficult to define as anything other than a part of predominantly elitist culture. Harrison acknowledged this notion in an interview with John Tusa and went on to explain his intentions for the production:

> ....somewhere there's a, a [*sic*] privilege of participation involved, and that there are people outside this privilege participation, who, if I'm not able to bring them into the theatre, I can make those who are participating in the privilege, aware that the theatre has glass walls so they can see those who are not participating.[130]

The idea of the 'glass walls' of the theatre was specifically highlighted in the conclusion of the National Theatre production, which differed significantly to that of the original that was staged at Delphi. The satyrs took on the new persona of the South Bank homeless and turned the stage into their shelter for the night, still contained in the depressive and downbeat atmosphere of the play but also in the physical proximity of the National Theatre and its immediate environment.

[128] For further reading see Hall (2006*b*) 196-8.
[129] Woodcock (2003) 50-66, 57.
[130] Tusa interview took place on Sunday 4 November 2001 and can be heard online: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nc89r (last accessed 27/11/15).

During the 1980's, London's South Bank had a dual residential purpose. It was an area which housed not only the buildings of the elite art world such as The National Theatre and Royal Festival Hall, but also hundreds of London's homeless. The numbers of homeless in Britain had been radically increased as a result of the Conservative government's policies, in particular the closing down of many residential institutions for people with mental health issues. Commonly known as 'Cardboard City' by most Londoners, it was deemed a run-down and depressing area on account of the numerous homeless vagrants who slept under cardboard boxes along the concrete tunnels around Waterloo Station. Many of Harrison's audience would not have had direct contact with this group of people, but on exiting the theatre would have been by necessity made aware of their existence.

Harrison brings the outside environment onto the stage in order to draw his audience's attention uncomfortably to the distinct class divide in this area. He does this by projecting images of the concrete and unfriendly looking buildings of the National Theatre and the Royal Festival Hall while the satyrs scavenge around making shelters out of the crates and the mounds of ripped papyri. Silenus assists in making his companions comfortable and suggests the use of papyri to block out the noise of the world of elite art world that they have broken away from, but which is still continuing a few yards away from them on the South Bank; a world to which they no longer belong.

The stage directions then state that Silenus 'climbs the stairs to the tragic stage' and tries to perform in the tragic style. Silenus has previously made the audience aware of the dangers of attempting to transcend the cultural hierarchy, through the myth of Marsyas by saying:

This is my big chance. But I don't dare.
A lifetime's conditioning makes me refrain,
from attempting, a satyr, the high tragic strain.
A lifetime's conditioning makes me afraid
that to step a rung higher would get meself flayed.[131]

But this does not deter him and he goes on to perform the sentences:

Woe Woe Woe,
Not bad for a satyr for his first go![132]

For a second there is a break in the depressive mood as Silenus looks quite pleased with himself, reveling in the opportunity to break free of his satyr class and the potential to join the high culture signified by tragedy. His pleasure in reclaiming tragedy suggests that the production could end on a happier note. This moment is short-lived, however, as the stage directions indicate that this pleasure is suddenly taken away from the character. His facial expression turns to that of 'a silent scream' when he hears music in the distance and sees the invisible Apollo arriving to punish him violently for stepping over the boundary of his class. Silenus' moment for celebration, quickly turns to anguish and pain, bringing the audience back to the downbeat atmosphere. But this time it is supplemented by a sense of anxiety for the plight of Silenus.

In ancient drama, especially in tragedy, the chorus was seen as symbolically representing the community, or the polis, on stage. They were the 'everyman' type

[131] Harrison (1991) 145.
[132] Harrison (1991) 148.

figures. In *The Trackers*, Harrison reflects this in his satyrs. They are representative of the 1980s class culture, where the majority was frustrated with their status, and the poor were unable to move up in the social hierarchy as they were aggressively suppressed. Like the character of Apollo, who refuses the satyrs access to the lyre, it is those who possess a higher social standing than the everyman, who decide what is of cultural value for themselves and the rest of society.

The Trackers draws upon a variety of elements from classical theatre. Harrison mixes the satyr play with aspects of tragedy which emphasizes the notion that violence and suffering is a constant factor in the experiences undergone by humanity and this should be acknowledged and dealt with by society. Harrison wanted the audience to have a similar theatrical experience to an Athenian audience.

> This ancient theatre, this *theatron*, this place for seeing, was not only where the audience saw actors bringing dark events eis to phos to the light of day as Sophocles himself puts it in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the audience also saw each other, everyone else, so that the bearing of terror was not only shared but seen to be shared and that is very important. As it was seen to be shared so was it culturally endured.[133]

I believe that social disillusionment, and the violence that is associated with this, plays an integral part in *The Trackers*. Harrison, unable to recreate the production in its original format, cleverly manipulates the plot so that it can become a vehicle for his own themes and enquiries into the problems of the late 1980s. Through his engagement with classical drama, Harrison can showcase his opinions on various

[133] Harrison (1991) 441-42.

topics such as social division and exclusion, the longevity of the classics and what is deemed high and low art or culture. By taking characters that are normally so energetic and upbeat in their own world and placing them in a depressive, melancholy and intermittently brutal atmosphere that is alien to them, he emphasizes the points he, as a modern and deeply politically committed playwright, wants to make.

Harrison exposes the scale of the division between what is deemed to be 'high' and 'low' culture and that there is no place for the ancient satyrs in twentieth-century Britain. He also explores the role of culture—especially classical Greek literature—in deciding what is deemed acceptable for the elite. Even though tragedy has had its ups and downs throughout time, many productions and adaptations have been established as an integral part of western culture's canon of literature. The satyr plays' invisibility to modernity, on the other hand, could be the result not only of the lack of interest shown in them by the ancient creators of the classical canon, from teachers of rhetoric to Byzantine monks choosing what to copy out in their Christian *scriptoria*, but also to the embarrassment satyrs could potentially cause on post-Renaissance stages, with their raucous revelry and phallic costumes.

In a model of theatre which owes a good deal to that of Brecht, Harrison's goal is for his audience to experience the play and to be able to associate the subject- matter explored by the production with the world which the audience inhabits. They are not there purely to be entertained, but brought into a discourse concerning modern society and culture. Stephen Edwards, the composer on the production, summed up Harrison's ultimate aim by suggesting that he seeks to "strip away the elitist, esoteric perceptions which dog his art form and embrace and engage a far wider audience.' [134]

[134] Edwards (1991) 469.

5. Conclusions

Essentially, through the fragmented play, Harrison has allowed a multitude of voices to be heard. On even a superficial reading, the play examines how text can transcend the distinction between antiquity and the present, but yet it is much more than that. He acknowledges the role of the playwright, Sophocles, and provides a new platform for a modern audience to experience the ancient dramatist's now incomplete production. Once more Sophocles' script is verbalized and performed. Furthermore, Harrison brings the almost lost genre of the satyr play to the fore; showcasing an art form that is often overlooked and neglected in the recreation of ancient theatre. The playwright provides a voice for those who are supposedly, deemed by elitist classes, lacking the acumen to understand 'high' culture exemplified by classical theatre. The audience are witnesses to the large chasm that exists in society in regards to art.

Finally, Harrison clearly adds violent elements and tonalities to his production that were not evident in the ancient original. He does not use violence purely to shock his audience, but to reiterate the gravity of his themes and the survival story of the *Ichneutae* papyri. I believe that Harrison succeeds in this. He not only brings to life a lost piece of theatre that has been sidelined for thousands of years to a large contemporary audience, but also has them enter a discourse concerning issues in their own time period. Harrison may have violently deprived the satyrs of their original function—to celebrate—but this has not stopped him from celebrating the fragmented play.

Chapter 3

Sophocles' *Tereus*

1. Introduction

In comparison to the rest of the ancient plays in this thesis, the tragic myth of Tereus and his Athenian wife is perhaps the most well-known today. The familiarity of the story results from a vivid version of the plot appearing in the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6.412-74, which appears on the reading list of many young scholars and has been the inspiration for a variety of retellings within the world of art and theatre.[135] However, the first famous version of the myth of which we know was the tragedy of Sophocles, *Tereus*, which must have antedated Aristophanes' *Birds* of 414 BC, because the characters of Tereus the hoopoe and his wife Procne, the nightingale, are parodic versions of those who appeared in Sophocles' play.[136] It has even been suggested that the same costumes were recycled in the comedy to reinforce the audience's memories of the tragedy. The tragedy may have been connected with the stories the Athenians told about the ancestors of the historical king of Thrace, Teres I, who ruled in 460-455 BC, and is almost certainly referred to by Thucydides 2.29, when he tells the story of Tereus but *denies* any connection with the historical figure.[137] The Sophoclean play made an enormous impact in its own time, to judge both from its cultural influence on the ancient poetic tradition and the approval of

[135] For examples please see: 'Barbarian variations: Tereus, Procne and Philomela in Ovid (*Met.* 6.412-674) and Beyond' Ingo Gildenhard et Andrew Zissos, *Dictynna* 4 (2007) 1-25. Also see Reid, Jane Davidson *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1900s.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003 Vol. 2 pp.895-898.
[136] For more on this please see Compton-Engle (2015) 130-8.
[137] For more discussion on this see: Patterson (2010) 54-6 and Hall (1989)184-5.

Aristotle, who particularly admired the recognition scene (*Poetics* 54b18; see further below).

Sophocles' *Tereus* has survived in only exiguous fragments, but they have attracted the interest of significant modern playwrights. In this chapter, I will look at two playwrights who were motivated to write new plays by the fragments of the old: Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Love of the Nightingale* (first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in The Other Place at Stratford in 1989, the year after the Delphi premiere of *The Trackers*) and Joanna Laurens' *The Three Birds* (Gate Theatre, 2000); both women used the fragmentation of the ancient play to highlight a constant dialogue between the ancient and the modern worlds. Instead of trying to recreate the 'authentic' ancient tragedy, for which the textual evidence has been so extensively corrupted, they both composed fresh works that established a dialectical relationship with their contemporary audiences, at the same time providing a platform for the lost text. This chapter will commence by looking at the extant fragments of Sophocles' *Tereus* and what we can learn from them. I will then show how this surviving material informed Wertenbaker's *Love of the Nightingale* and Lauren's *The Three Birds*, as well as how they both manipulated the plot to suit their own interests. Finally, I draw out the main themes within the adaptations and question whether they could have been prevalent within the ancient text.

2. The Extant Evidence for Sophocles' *Tereus*

Of Sophocles' numerous fragmentary tragedies, *Tereus* is one of the more substantial in quantity, with 294 words of the text preserved.[138] It is believed that a papyrus

[138] Sommerstein (2006) xxii. In their introduction, Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy assert that the *Tereus* would have contained between seven and ten thousand words.

hypothesis discovered during excavations at Oxyrhynchus,[139] and published in 1974, is a summary of Sophocles' play. The papyrus is significantly corrupted, yet P.J Parsons asserts that the summary outlines many key points, which correspond with other receptions of the plot, such as the name checking of the main characters and identification of noteworthy events.

Τηρεύς [· ἡ ὑ]π̣όθεσις.[2] [Π]ανδίων ὁ τῶν Ἀθηναίων δυν<άστ>η̣ς̣,[3] [ἔ]χων θυγατέρας Πρόκ<ν>ην καὶ Φιλο[4][μ]ήλαν, τὴν πρεσβυτέραν[5] Πρόκ<ν>ην Τηρεῖ γάμῳ ἔζευξεν [τ]ῷ[6] [τῶ]ν Θρᾳκῶν βασιλεῖ, ὃς ἔσχεν ἐξ[7] [αὐ]τῆς υἱὸν προσαγορεύσας[8] Ἴτυν. χρόνου δὲ διελθόντος καὶ[9] βουλομένης τῆς Πρόκνης θεά[10]σασθαι τὴν ἀδελφήν, ἠξίωσε τὸν[11] Τηρέα πορεύσασθαι εἰς Ἀθήνας[12] ἄξειν. ὁ δὲ παραγενόμενος εἰς[13] Ἀθήνας καὶ ἐπ̣[ιτρε]φθεὶς ὑπὸ[14] τοῦ Πανδίονος [τὴν πα]ρθένον καὶ[15] μεσοπορήσας [ἡράσθ]η τῆς παι[16]δός· ὁ δὲ τὰ πισ[τὰ οὐ φ]υλάξας[17] διεπαρθένευ[σεν, εὐλ.]αβούμε[18]νος δὲ μὴ τῇ ἀ[δελφῃ μηνύσῃ][19] ἐγλωσσοτόμη[σε τὴν παῖδα.][20] παραγενάμενος [δὲ εἰς τὴν][21] Θρᾴκην καὶ τῆς Φ[ιλομήλας οὐ][22] δυναμένης [ἐκλαλεῖν τὴν][23] συμφοράν, δι' ὕφο[υς ἐμήνυσε.][24] ἐπιγνοῦσα δὲ ἡ Πρ[όκνη τὴν ἀλή][25] θειαν ζηλοτυπ[ίᾳ .....][26] οἰστρηθεῖσα καὶ [*ca. 7*][27] νη †υ . ερεινοις† λα[βοῦσα τὸν][28] Ἴτυν ἐσφαγίασε [καὶ καθεψήσα][29]σα παρέθηκε [τῷ Τηρεῖ, ὁ δὲ τὴν][30] βορὰν ἀγνοῶν [ἔφαγεν. αἱ δὲ φυγα][31]δευθεῖσαι ἐγέ[νοντο ἡ μὲν][32] ἀηδών, ἡ δὲ χε[λιδών, ἔποψ][33] δὲ ὁ Τηρεύς.

Hypothesis *POxy* 3013 ed. P.J. Parsons (1974); supplements and corrections are by Parsons unless otherwise noted |

Tereus: [the Hy]pothesis. [P]andion, the ruler of Athens, who [h]ad two daughters, Procne and Philo[m]ela, gave the elder, Procne, to be united in marriage to Tereus, [t]he king of [th]e Thracians, who had a son by [h]er whom he named Itys. After some time had passed, when Procne wanted to see her sister, she asked Tereus to travel to Athens to bring her. He came to Athens, was en[trus]ted with [the ma]iden by Pandion, and midway on his journey he [became enamour]ed of the girl; [not k]eeping his pled[ge], he deflowe[red] her, and as a [pr]ecaution against her [revealing it] to her s[ister] he cu[t] out [the girl's] tongue. When he arrived [in] Thrace, Ph[ilomela was not] able [to speak about her] plight, [but she revealed it] through wea[ving]. Pr[ocne,] learning [the tr]uth was stung by [the utmost(?)] jealous[y] and [madden]ed by a Fury (?) she to[ok] Itys, slaughtered him, [boil]ed him and served him [to Tereus, and he,] not knowing what [the] food was, [ate it. The women] were forced to [flee]

[139] P.J. Parsons (1974) 3013.

> and [one of them] be[came] a nightingale, the other a sw[allow], and Tereus [a hoopoe].[140]

We learn from the hypothesis that the ruler of Athens, King Pandion, gave his eldest daughter, Procne, in marriage to King Tereus of Thrace. After years of living in Thrace, Procne requests her sister's presence and sends Tereus to escort his sister-in-law, Philomela.[141] Overcome with passion for her during the journey, he rapes her and cuts out her tongue. On arriving in Thrace, Philomela is unable to communicate her plight verbally to Procne, and instead weaves a tapestry depicting her story, through which Procne learns about what has happened, probably by 'reading' ekphrastic images on stage.[142] As an act of revenge, Procne murders her son by Tereus, named Itys, and serves the child as a meal to her husband, which he eats. The sisters flee, but during pursuit, the three are changed into birds. Whilst this evidence is highly helpful in establishing key scenes, we cannot rely upon its validity. However plausible its content, one can still only speculate that it was the hypothesis for the Sophoclean play since the text was discovered out of context and the papyrus is notably damaged.

In addition to the hypothesis, a limited number of dialogue lines exist, but ordering these fragments to establish a reconstruction is highly problematic. There is a significant lack of dramatic context attached to the surviving sections, leading the reconstructor to allow knowledge of Sophocles' other productions, and fifth-century tragedy in general, to influence the structure and positioning of the pieces. Only two characters are ever named or referred to: Procne and an unnamed male character. One

[140] Sommerstein (2006) 160-161.
[141] The character of Philomela has had her name spelt a variety of ways. Wertenbaker prefers 'Philomele' and Laurens chose 'Philomela'. When discussing individual plays I will utilise the appropriate spelling for the contemporary play, but in all other circumstances will refer to the character by the spelling 'Philomela'.
[142] See Hall (2006*b*) 115 and especially n. 60.

can only make conjectures in relation to the dramatic circumstances in which the fragmented text was spoken.

A (582)[143]

"Ηλιε, φιλίπποις Θρῃξὶ πρέσβιστον σέλας

A (582) Σ Λ *Iliad* 15.705

O Sun, light most revered by the horse- loving Thracians.[144]

Many academics such as Buchwald,[145] and, in much more recent scholarship, Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy, have suggested that this fragment could have been the opening line of the production. They base these opinions on the format that Sophocles' other surviving tragedies use. The playwright likes to open with one character addressing another and identifying the physical and geographical location of the action. Buchwald attributed this dialogue to Procne as part of an opening speech concerning her predicament and how unhappy she is. However, in their commentary on the fragments, Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy point out that it would have been unlikely that Procne would have called upon gods worshipped by the Thracians, and instead would have invoked a god linked to her Greek and Athenian fatherland.[146]

The idea that Helios is identifiably a 'barbarian' god is in itself controversial. The main evidence is in Aristophanes' *Peace*, where we are told that Helios and Selene are betraying Hellas to the barbarians (406ff) and the reason Trygaeus gives is that 'we sacrifice to the Olympians, but barbarians sacrifice to them'. But there was a

[143] The letters of the fragments are associated with their order in Sommerstein, who adopted the numbers used by S.Radt in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* [4] (1977).
[144] Sommerstein (2006) 162-163.
[145] Buchwald (1939) 36.
[146] Sommerstein (2006) 175-77.

major cult of Helios on Rhodes,[147] perhaps connected with the myth dramatized in Euripides' *Phaethon*, the fragments of which were performed in a musical reconstruction in 2008.[148] Helios was certainly worshipped at Athens by the beginning of the fourth century BC (IG II.^{2} 4962). But the scholars who think Helios must be a barbarian divinity attribute the line to a Thracian herald or servant arriving ahead of Tereus. At the same time, they rule out Tereus as the speaker since it is not common practice for a hero of such status in tragedy to arrive without a herald announcing his arrival — see, for example, the heralds who precede the arrival of Heracles in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Agamemnon in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.[149] Other scholars, including Dobrov,[150] have suggested that the line in fact belongs to the scene where Tereus realizes he has eaten his son. It is actually said by the King as an exclamation or a call to Helios to witness the atrocities that have occurred.

I feel that the context of the line is highly ambiguous. It could have quite easily been attributed to the chorus, who have been overlooked as a candidate by previous scholarship. The Thracian maids could have evoked 'their' god or used an apostrophe to call to him as an exclamation. Again the location of this line is problematic. While Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy place the fragment close to the opening of the production, I believe that Sophocles would have continually reminded his audience that they were in a distant land and reiterated this through the verbal references to the location spread out through the dialogue, thus meaning that the line could have occurred at any point during the production.

[147] For more information on the cult of Helios, please see: Burkert (1987) 175.
[148] It was directed by Nikos Charalambous and premiered in the Library of Celsus at Ephesus on July 3rd 2008 during the İzmir International Festival. Part of this festival is always dedicated to providing a platform for collaboration between Greek and Turkish artists. See further http://www.atrium-media.com/rogueclassicism/Posts/00008191.html (last accessed 27/11/2015).
[149] Sommerstein (2006) 175-193.
[150] Dobrov (1993) 189-243.

B (584)

πολλά σε ζηλῶ βίου,
μάλιστα δ' εἰ γῆς μὴ πεπείρασαι ξένης.

B (584) Stobaeus 3.39.12

I envy your life a lot, but especially if you have not experienced a foreign land.[151]

The general consensus is that this fragment is spoken by Procne, since she is the only speaking foreigner that we are aware of in the production, but the context is much more problematic. Procne has had to immerse herself in an alien culture, an act that most women would have not had the opportunity to do. This would indicate that she is most likely talking to a female or group of women. Yet this would depend on how you view the identity of the chorus. Arguments have been made that the chorus was in fact Thracian men, in order to emphasis Procne's isolation,[152] but these arguments are dismissed by Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy.[153] I believe that it is safe to assume that the chorus were female, since they would have been more likely to have passively witnessed the infanticide and also to provide the most sympathetic reactions, in a similar vein to the chorus in Euripides' *Medea*.

C (585)

ἀλγεινά, Πρόκνη, δῆλον· ἀλλ' ὅμως χρεὼν
τὰ θεῖα θνητοὺς ὄντας εὐπετῶς φέρειν.

C (585) Stobaeus 4.44.58

[151] Sommerstein (2006) 162-163.
[152] Calder (1974) 88.
[153] Sommerstein (2006) 175-193.

Procne, these things clearly are painful; but nonetheless it is

necessary for those who are mortal to bear the things sent by the gods readily.[154]

Fitzpatrick allocates this line to Tereus, arguing that he is trying to console his wife for the supposed death of her sister. His assertion, however, could be contested.[155] Would Tereus, as a strong leader, want to expose a supposedly emotional side to his character in expressing this sentiment? I feel it would be better attributed to a comforting chorus or chorus leader, or indeed to another character—a sympathetic slave?—of whose presence in the play we know nothing otherwise. Other scholars, such as Welcker,[156] have suggested the line is actually said after Procne' learns of her sister's true plight, but I feel that these words would sound inadequate, even redundant, in any attempt to comfort her during that scene.

D (591)

ἓν φῦλον ἀνθρώπων, μί' ἔδειξε πατρὸς
καὶ ματρὸς ἡμᾶς ἁμέρα τοὺς πάντας· οὐδεὶς
ἔξοχος ἄλλος ἔβλαστεν ἄλλου.
βόσκει δὲ τοὺς μὲν μοῖρα δυσαμερίας,
τοὺς δ' ὄλβος ἡμῶν, τοὺς δὲ δουλεί-
ας ζυγὸν ἔσχεν ἀνάγκας.

D (591) Stobaeus 4.29.12

There is one race of human beings, a single day produced us all from a father and mother; no one was born superior to another. But some of us

[154] Sommerstein (2006)162-163.
[155] Fitzpatrick (2001) 101.
[156] Welcker (1839) 31.

are nurtured by a fate of misfortune, others by prosperity, while others again are held in slavery's yoke of compulsion.[157]

This lyric fragment, with its beautiful suggestion that the human condition transcends the different ethnic 'tribes' of men, and perhaps unites Greeks and barbarian Thracians, is thought to have been part of a choral ode rather than a monody as it makes the same kind of generalizations concerning human life that are expressed by other choruses in tragedy, for example in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (994-1031). It gives no insight into where this segment is located within the production.

E (583)

νῦν δ' οὐδέν εἰμι χωρίς. ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
ἔβλεψα ταύτῃ τὴν γυναικείαν φύσιν,
ὡς οὐδέν ἐσμεν. αἳ νέαι μὲν ἐν πατρὸς
ἥδιστον, οἶμαι, ζῶμεν ἀνθρώπων βίον·
τερπνῶς γὰρ ἀεὶ παῖδας ἀνοία τρέφει.
ὅταν δ' ἐς ἥβην ἐξικώμεθ' ἔμφρονες,
ὠθούμεθ' ἔξω καὶ διεμπολώμεθα
θεῶν πατρῴων τῶν τε φυσάντων ἄπο,
αἱ μὲν ξένους πρὸς ἄνδρας, αἱ δὲ βαρβάρους,
αἱ δ' εἰς ἀγηθῆ δώμαθ', αἱ δ' ἐπίρροθα.
καὶ ταῦτ', ἐπειδὰν εὐφρόνη ζεύξῃ μία,
χρεὼν ἐπαινεῖν καὶ δοκεῖν καλῶς ἔχειν.

E (583) Stobaeus 4.22.45

Now, however, I am nothing on my own. But often I have regarded the whole female sex in this way – that we are nothing. As young girls in our fathers' homes, I think, we live the most pleasant life of all mortals; for ignorance always gives children a happy upbringing. But when we

[157] Sommerstein (2006)162-163.

> come to adolescence and awareness, we are pushed out and sold, away from our parents and our family gods, some of us to foreign men, some to barbarians, some into homes empty of joy, some into homes full of abuse. And this, when a single night has yoked us, we have to approve and regard as good.[158]

This segment provides criticism of the social position of women in regards to marriage and what is expected of them. It is often compared to a similar speech that is made by the heroine of Euripides' *Medea* (214-51) to the women of Corinth on her first appearance in the play. Like Procne, Medea is an alien resident in a strange and unfamiliar land. This comparison would lead one to suspect that this monologue is delivered by Procne. Yet, if this is the case, Euripides' Medea and Sophocles' Procne approach the topic from very different viewpoints and contexts. Medea is a barbarian discussing civilized marriage, while Procne is from a civilized society but has married into a barbaric race. Despite the differences, the overall themes of the speeches are that marriage holds similarities to slavery. A wife is completely dependent on their husband. It is a fair assumption that this line is assigned to Procne since she is the only foreign female speaking character on stage that we can be certain appeared in the play (the question of her mutilated sister's appearance is impossible to answer conclusively). Dobrov proposed that this line would have belonged to an expository prologue,[159] but this is contested by Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy who point out that Sophocles does not employ an expository prologue in any of his surviving dramas.[160] I believe that while we cannot be fully certain of the location of this speech,

[158] Sommerstein (2006) 164-165.
[159] Dobrov (1993) 189-243.
[160] Sommerstein (2006) 175-193.

the line suggests that it would have been positioned at some point prior to Procne's discovery of her husband's treachery. The segment tends to evoke a sad but as yet rational state of mind, undisturbed by major trauma, for the character concerned.

F (595)

κερκίδος φωνή

F (595) Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454b36–37

(the) shuttle's voice[161]

The source for this fragment is Aristotle's *Poetics*,[162] where he discusses the importance of the anagnorisis scene with specific reference to Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Tereus*. Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy state that it has become general consensus that this is a direct quote from Sophocles' text used by Aristotle,[163] but this is still pure conjecture. If it is a direct quote, the location and speaker of this line cannot be deduced.

G (588)

θάρσει· λέγων τἀληθὲς οὐ σφαλῇ ποτε.

G (588) Stobaeus 3.13.21

Have no fear! If you speak the truth, you will never come to harm.[164]

[161] Sommerstein (2006) 164-165.
[162] Aristotle *Poetics* 1454b36-37.
[163] Sommerstein (2006)175-193.
[164] Sommerstein (2006)166-167.

This line is also extremely unhelpful in terms of supplying its own dramatic context. It has been asserted that the line belongs to Procne, questioning a male messenger or servant during the recognition scene. The tonality of the line suggests that she is talking to someone inferior, whilst λέγων indicates the gender of the recipient. Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy conclude that this may be the same man that in their view delivers the line in fragment A,[165] but, once again, this is pure speculation.

H (593)

H (593)

ζώοι τις ἀνθρώπων τὸ κατ' ἄμαρ ὅπως
ἥδιστα πορσύνων· τὸ δ' ἐς αὔριον αἰεὶ
τυφλὸς ἕρπει.

H (593) Stobaeus 4.34.40

Let any human being live so as to provide for himself, day by day, the maximum possible pleasure; he is always walking blind into tomorrow.[166]

This fragment has been allocated to the chorus as part of an ode, which I agree is a justified speculation. The lyric metre, generalized subject matter and tone of the line reflect the common style of choral odes in the same way that fragment D does. Its location within the production can only be hypothesized. Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy suggest that this is the chorus reacting to the fate of Philomela.[167]

[165] Sommerstein (2006) 175-193.
[166] Sommerstein (2006) 166-167.
[167] Sommerstein (2006) 175-193.

J (592.4-6)

ΧΟΡΟΣ τὰν γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ζόαν
ποικιλομήτιδες ἄται
πημάτων πάσαις μεταλλάσσουσιν ὥραις.

J (592.4–6) Stobaeus 4.34.39

CHORUS For the life of man is transformed by the cunning wiles of ruinous error that brings calamities at all seasons.[168]

Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy makes the assertion that the above fragment potentially belongs to the same choral ode as fragment H. Both fragments share a notion of foreboding and fragment J seems to elaborate on the uncertainty of human life discussed in fragment H. They also share the same metre (dactylo-epitrite). I accept the possibility of linkage between the two fragments, but it is still only speculative since we know neither the context it was spoken in nor its location within the play.

K (587)

φιλάργυρον μὲν πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον γένος.

K (587) Stobaeus 3.10.25

The entire barbarian race is money-loving.[169]

The ethnic criticism made in this line suggests that the identity of the speaker is a non-Thracian, which thus potentially identifies Procne as the deliverer for she is the only foreign speaker that we can be certain appeared and spoke on stage. Sommerstein,

[168] Sommerstein (2006) 166-167.
[169] Sommerstein (2006)166-167.

Fitzgerald and Talboy suggest that it was said during an agon between Procne and Tereus after he feasts on his son, but I believe it could quite have easily been said by Procne during other scenes in the tragedy.

L (586)

σπεύδουσαν αὐτήν, ἐν δὲ ποικίλῳ φάρει

L (586) Herodian *On Words with Two Quantities* 2.16.3

....as she herself was hurrying, and in a dappled coat...[170]

The fragment above certainly gives the impression that it would have been delivered by someone other than the main characters. Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy suggest that the third person description implies that it would have been part of a messenger speech reporting the activities of Procne or Philomela just before, or just after, the cannibalistic feast. The reference to the 'dappled coat' could indicate a multitude of potential contexts. Scholars such as Welcker[171] and Dobrov[172] feel that a bacchanalian element is introduced within the production, as in the famous Ovidian account (*Metamorphoses* 6, lines 422-674, on which see further below). This would entail the women being dressed in suitably maenadic attire, like Agave in *Bacchae* with her sisters when she kills Pentheus, in order to complete their task of killing and cooking Itys. This is an important question, because if Procne was crazed as Agave is in *Bacchae*, she may not have been aware of the crime she was committing. Was Sophocles' Procne committing a deliberate filicide or an unwitting one? On the other

[170] Sommerstein (2006) 168-169.
[171] Welker (1839) 389.
[172] Dobrov (1993) 206.

hand, Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy assert that Sophocles would have indicated the future transformations, with Philomela wearing a coloured garment that would prefigure her future bird self.[173] I feel that the lack of supporting evidence for this fragment means that all explanations are highly speculative.

M (581)

τοῦτον δ' ἐπόπτην ἔποπα τῶν αὑτου κακῶν
πεποικίλωκε κἀποδηλώσας ἔχει
θρασὺν πετραῖον ὄρνιν ἐν παντευχίᾳ·
ὃς ἦρι μὲν φανέντι διαπαλεῖ πτερὸν
κίρκου λεπάργου· δύο γὰρ οὖν μορφὰς φανεῖ
παιδός τε χαὐτοῦ νηδύος μιᾶς ἄπο·
νέας δ' ὀπώρας ἡνίκ' ἂν ξανθῇ στάχυς,
στικτή νιν αὖθις ἀμφινωμήσει πτέρυξ·
ἀεὶ δὲ μίσει τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγεὶς τόπων
δρυμοὺς ἐρήμους καὶ πάγους ἀποικιεῖ.

M (581) Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 633a18–27

While him, the hoopoe which is a viewer of its own sufferings, he has adorned with varied colours and has revealed as a bold rock-dwelling bird wearing full panoply. When spring appears he will spread the wing of a white-feathered hawk; for he will show two forms from a single womb, his child's and his own. And when the harvest is new and the grain is threshed, again a dappled wing will cover him. But he will always hate these regions and separate himself from them, making his home far away in the lonely woods and mountains.[174]

There is much debate on whether this fragment actually belongs to Sophocles' *Tereus*. Aristotle (*Historia Abimalium* 633a18-27) attributed the quote to an unnamed

[173] Sommerstein (2006) 168-169.
[174] Sommerstein (2006) 168-169.

Aeschylean production, but there is no surviving evidence to support the proposal that either Aeschylus or indeed Euripides wrote a play involving the Tereus myth. It has been assumed that it was in fact misattributed and its origin is the Sophoclean play. The situation is much further confused by allusions to plays on the Tereus myth and the bird transformation in Thucydides (2.29, see above pp.59) and especially of course Aristophanes' *Birds* (see further above and below, pp. 59 and 77-78).

Burnett has objected to this assumption, expressing the view that the text does not reflect the style of Sophocles;[175] Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy however dismiss these claims. The tonality and subject-matter of the speech suggest that it is delivered by someone predicting or at least contemplating the future for Tereus. This signifies that the location of this fragment would be near the end of the production and potentially spoken by a god, for deities tend to foresee the future in their closing moments, especially in Euripides' plays, which often use the theatrical machine, but also, for example, in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, where Heracles appears to deliver instructions to the mortals on Lemnos. Despite having a good indication of the identity of the speaker and the location of the dialogue, the recipient is still unknown for it is difficult to believe that Procne, Philomela and Tereus would have physically reappeared onstage transformed as birds. I would envisage that only the chorus would remain on stage to witness this speech.

[175] Burnett (1998) 22.

N (589)

ἄνους ἐκεῖνος· αἱ δ' ἀνουστέρως ἔτι
ἐκεῖνον ἠμύναντο <πρὸς τὸ> καρτερόν.
ὅστις γὰρ ἐν κακοῖσι θυμωθεὶς βροτῶν
μεῖζον προσάπτει τῆς νόσου τὸ φάρμακον,
ἰατρός ἐστιν οὐκ ἐπιστήμων κακῶν.

N (589) Stobaeus 3.20.32

He was foolish; but they were more foolish still to fight against him with violence. For whoever of mortals is enraged when in distress, and applies a cure which is worse than the illness, is like a doctor who does not understand the disease.[176]

This fragment has been attributed variously to a messenger, the chorus and the unknown deity. I agree with Sommerstein, Fitzgerald and Talboy that there is an authoritative tone to the segment and therefore it is likely to have been part of a god's monologue. The moralistic quality of the lines also gives the impression that they would have been located towards the end of the production. I would guess that the opening line refers to Tereus and the actions that Procne and Philomela committed against him, implying that both women are complicit in the murder of his son. But I am aware that this is only speculation.

[176] Sommerstein (2006) 170-171.

O (590)

ΧΟΡΟΣ θνητὴν δὲ φύσιν χρὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν,
τοῦτο κατειδότας, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν
πλὴν Διὸς οὐδεὶς τῶν μελλόντων
ταμίας ὅ τι χρὴ τετελέσθαι.

O (590) Stobaeus 3.22.22

CHORUS Human nature must think human thoughts, knowing this,
that Zeus and no one else is the dispenser of what is
to be accomplished in the future.[177]

There is a general scholarly consensus that these words were the closing lines of the production.[178] It was common practice for the final word to be delivered by the chorus as they were the community conveying the overriding message of the production. Parallels can be drawn between the language style within this fragment and the other final choral lines in Sophocles' plays such as *Antigone* and *Trachiniae*.

We can summarise our discussion of the surviving fragments by summarizing the conclusions of David Fitzpatrick, who has conducted a notable amount of research and plot analysis in the area of the *Tereus* fragments. His work has included an attempt to order the existing fragments and infer a general reconstruction of the plot, taking into consideration the general generic norms and expectations of fifth-century tragedy and Sophocles' personal preferred dramatic motifs. In his view, the play would have commenced with a prologue performed by a Thracian herald returning to the palace ahead of Tereus. Procne would have entered and then remained on stage for the majority of the play, in keeping with other Sophoclean central protagonists such as

[177] Sommerstein (2006) 170-171.
[178] Sommerstein (2006) 170-171.

Oedipus and Electra. From one of the fragments,[179] we can infer that the chorus are Thracian women who sympathize with Procne's plight. After the opening dialogue, Tereus would enter with the mute Philomela in tow, returning from his trip to Athens. Fitzpatrick explains it is more than likely in his view that Philomela would appear disguised, perhaps as a mute slave girl, and Tereus would claim that his sister-in-law had perished on the journey.[180]

After this scene a choral ode is most likely to have taken place followed by a monologue from Procne. Here Fitzpatrick assumes she delivered the speech containing the fragment concerning the status of women in marriage in response to her own predicament.[181] It is speculated by Fitzpatrick that this would have led into the anagnorisis scene between the two sisters, where Philomela would have revealed her identity and her suffering at the hands of Tereus through weaving or unrolling her tapestry. Her story would have been confirmed by an unknown male character.[182]

The play's structure would have continued with another choral ode and then a dialogue or agon between Procne and Tereus when compared to other tragedies such as *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Whilst there is no fragment to support this, Fitzpatrick assumes that Procne's revenge by killing her son and serving him as a meal, and Tereus' realization of his own cannibalistic act, would have occurred soon after this, resulting in a messenger speech documenting Tereus' pursuit of his wife. He also speculates that a god, such as Apollo, would appear to inform the chorus and audience of the three protagonists' transformation into birds. Conforming to the

[179] Sommerstein (2006) 163.
[180] Fitzpatrick (2007) 41.
[181] Sommerstein (2006) 165.
[182] This is implied by Fr. 588; see Sommerstein (2006) 167.

perceived 'norms' of the structure of fifth-century tragedy, the final words would have been given to the chorus who would comment on the concluding scenario.[183]

Can we receive any help in reconstructing the play from our knowledge of other fifth-century dramas? In their introduction to the *Tereus* fragments, Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick and Talboy acknowledge that there were other versions subsequent to Sophocles' production: a play by Philocles, another fifth-century tragedian who created the *Pandionis* tetralogy,[184] but far too little survives to enable us to compare the two productions.[185] Aristophanes was certainly aware of Sophocles' *Tereus* when creating his comedy, *Birds*,[186] as it includes a hoopoe that is referred to as the tragic character, Tereus and his singing wife, Procne the Nightingale. The Sophoclean connection is affirmed by several passages (15, 201, 665), including the hoopoe's cutting line (100-1), 'Well this is the sort of outrage that Sophokles inflicts on me in those tragic plays of his.'[187] Aristophanes' audience seem to have known the Sophoclean play and plot well enough to make the humorous connection instantaneously, helping them to understand the joke at Sophocles' expense. This indicates the popularity of Sophocles' version of the myth when compared to Thucydides' version in his reference to the story. He states that Tereus lived in Phocis, which had been originally known as Daulis and was inhabited by Thracians. He goes on to mention the murder of Itys, yet, most notably, he claims that the nightingale is referred to as 'the Daulian bird'. Strangely none of these features seem to have been

[183] Fitzpatrick (2007) 41.
[184] As cited in *TrGR IV* (1999) 435-445.
[185] Sommerstein (2006) 146.
[186] Aristophanes' *Birds* was performed in 414 and therefore one can assume that Sophocles' production of *Tereus* took place earlier than this.
[187] Aristophanes *Birds* 100-1. Trans. Halliwell (1999).

present in Sophocles' retelling, which had obviously become the canonical version of the myth. [188]

Other receptions of the myth are found within two Roman fragmentary productions by Livius Andronicus and Accius. There is very limited evidence for both these plays and there is no certain indication that they were directly influenced by the Sophoclean. The most influential reception of the Tereus and Procne myth after Sophocles' production comes from the Roman poet, Ovid. In Book 6.412-74 of his *Metamorphoses*, he outlines his own version of the story, adapting it for his own agendas and providing a greater insight into the characters and the psychology of the action than is generally thought to have characterized the fifth-century stage production. The tale evolves, under Ovid's direction, into a fable concerning the repercussions of passionate lust. He introduces a number of new scenes focusing on Tereus' desire for Philomela prior to their arrival in Thrace. Ovid also includes both the rape and mutilation, scenes that, from what one gathers, had occurred prior to the beginning of Sophocles' play.

Whilst Sophocles seems to favour Procne and Tereus as the main characters, Ovid establishes Philomela as his protagonist. He delves into her psyche, giving her the opportunity to contemplate the scenario that she finds herself in, as she is unable to verbalize her thoughts after the removal of her tongue. The narrative also contains the inclusion of other details such as an in-depth discussion of Procne's act of revenge and Tereus' reaction, two episodes for which knowledge is limited in regards to the Athenian play.[189]

It is clear that this narrative has had an effect on the reception of the myth, since it is the only literary description that exists as complete and not in fragmentary

[188] Thucydides 2.29.3.
[189] For more on Ovid's engagement with Greek tragedy, please see: Curley (2013).

form, but it would be bad scholarship to assume that Ovid's Augustan, epic narrative can shed light on the Sophoclean production. This is rightly acknowledged by Fitzpatrick:

> The Sophoclean tragedy may have been a definitive moment in the development of the myth which provided a general framework that inspired the versions by later writers. The exiguous nature of the fragments has made scholars over-reliant on the Roman material when reconstructing Sophocles' plot and greater sensitivity is needed to the possibility of variations and innovations in later authors. It is wrong to impose every scene from later authors on the Sophoclean tragedy.[190]

He makes the case that the action in the original production would have taken place over one day, whereas Ovid sees the events run over a longer time period. The influence of the later versions of the *Tereus* myth has been detrimental in the interpretation and reconstruction of the Sophoclean fragments when scholars impose their own biased views and anachronistic retrospective interpretations on the material.

3. Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Love of the Nightingale*

If we look at the theatrical reception of the Tereus myth diachronically, we can see how later authors have routinely favoured the Ovidian text, for example in the Shakespearean *Titus Andronicus*, however much of the myth has been adapted and is peopled with altered personnel.[191] But Timberlake Wertenbaker's 1988 production, *The Love of the Nightingale*, which was commissioned and first performed by the

[190] Fitzpatrick (2001) 92.
[191] For more on *Titus Andronicus* please see: Oakley-Brown (2005) 325-347 and Fuller (1901) 1-65.

Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-Upon-Avon, shows that the classical subject-matter does not start and stop with Ovid's offering. She acknowledges Sophocles' production with two fragment quotations printed as epigraphs at the head of the script.[192] While on the one hand she is referencing the original production, on the other the playwright is—unwittingly, at first, perhaps—establishing a key theme within her production; the silenced voice. I will now investigate the various factors that may have influenced Wertenbaker's production and how the playwright came to create her own adaptation.

Wertenbaker's own upbringing explains her preoccupation with the theme of the silenced voice. At an early age she witnessed how native language suppression is often used as a controlling device by colonizing forces. She was raised in the Basque country, a place where French and Spanish cultures and traditions were fused together. The area that was once self-governed, struggled to reclaim its independence and was torn apart by the neighboring countries, France and Spain. Growing up in the Basque country of France, she witnessed the systematic devaluation and suppression of the Basque language by the French authorities and the negative effect this had on her area's cultural identity:

> The threat of the loss of language is one of the greatest threats. I grew up in the Basque country of France where the language was systematically eroded and destroyed so I feel very strongly about language. The French government told parents that speaking Basque was backward and would hold children back in society, while learning French was better for children's futures. As a result the Basque

[192] Wertenbaker (1996) 285.

> language practically does not exist anymore although there are some attempts to revive its use. [193]

She also claims in her introduction to the play that this theme is forever in her mind.

> ...the language [Basque] was systematically silenced, and it is something that always haunts me.[194]

By the late 1980s, Wertenbaker was living and working in Britain, during the same era of social unsettlement which produced Tony Harrison's political use of Sophoclean fragments in *The Trackers.* Wertenbaker, like Harrison, would have seen the suppression of various voices by the Thatcherite government. Just like her contemporary, Caryl Churchill, Timberlake Wertenbaker looked to theatre to provide the marginalized with a mouthpiece. By drawing upon another of her passions the Greeks and their theatrical texts, she found a platform on which she could not only showcase her oblique perspective on both ancient Greek society and the society contemporary with her, but also create a dialectical relationship with her audience.

Many critics and scholars have indicated that the production concerns itself primarily with gender politics, revealing the playwright's feminist bias.[195] Yet Wertenbaker's intention for the production was not so one-dimensional as these commentators make out. She has stated:

[193] Wertenbaker quoted in DiGaetani (1991) 268-9.
[194] Wertenbaker (2006) viii-ix.
[195] Marowitz (1990) and Arnott (1989) comment on this in their articles.

> Although it has been interpreted as being about men and women, I was actually thinking about the violence that erupts in societies when they have been silenced for too long.[196]

She even reiterates this point within the production through the chorus, who say:

> This one, you will say, watching Philomele, watching Tereus, watching Philomele, must be about men and women, yes, you think, a myth for our times, we understand. You will be beside the myth. If you think of anything, think of countries, silence, but we cannot rephrase it for you.[197]

Wertenbaker's adaption of the *Tereus* myth, while drawing upon both the Sophoclean fragmented play and the episode from the *Metamorphoses*, nevertheless supplements the inherited plot-line with additional scenes to establish the protagonists and their relationships. The production starts even earlier in mythical time than in Ovid's account. The play opens in Athens where a long and bloody battle is observed by the chorus, and later by Philomele[198] and Procne. Tereus, a Thracian king is rewarded Procne's hand in marriage for liberating Athens by her father, King Pandion and the married couple return to Thrace. After many unhappy years in an alien environment, Procne requests her sister's presence and asks Tereus to return to Athens in order to escort her sister.

[196] Wertenbaker (2006) viii.
[197] Wertenbaker (2006) 315.
[198] It has not been explained by the playwright why Philomela's name has been changed to Philomele, the French rendering of the name. It is possible that Wertenbaker opts for this spelling due to the influence of her Basque upbringing and that she was originally introduced to the character as 'Philomele' in her first engagements with the story.

Captivated by her beauty and philosophical outlook, Tereus begins to lust after his sister-in-law and the development of his yearning is documented in a number of scenes where Philomele is shown to be ignorant of his advances while making their journey to Thrace. Determined to have her, Tereus concocts the lie that Procne has died in the hope that his propositions will be accepted. When he is unsuccessful in this, he becomes resolved to have the girl at any cost and brutally rapes her. Tereus, after the rape, returns to his palace without Philomele and deceives his wife by claiming her sister died on the journey. Leaving Procne devastated, Tereus revisits Philomele who becomes aware of his deception and bursts into an angry tirade of verbal abuse. The king takes decisive action in retaliation and cuts out her tongue, providing himself, or so he believes, with the ability to exercise complete control over the girl.

Differing from the classical interpretations of the myth, in her play Wertenbaker creates her own unique version of the anagnorisis scene. The audience is informed that five years has passed since Philomele was mutilated and that she now lives in the city, portrayed as 'another mad woman'.[199] The feast of Bacchus takes place, with Procne joining the local women in celebration. Philomele also joins the festivities but has brought three large dolls with her. Rather than producing a tapestry depicting the truth as outlined in the supposed papyrus hypothesis of Sophocles' production, the playwright replaces the prop for a more visual and horrific moment. Philomele begins to enact the atrocities that she has suffered by manipulating the dolls. This visual revelation reunites her with her sister and together they plot the ultimate act of revenge on Tereus; the murder of his only son.

[199] Wertenbaker (2006) 341.

In another manipulation of the myth, Philomele becomes responsible for providing the fatal blow while Procne restrains her young boy. Wertenbaker strangely omits the cannibalism of the child from her adaptation and instead has the body dramatically revealed on stage, drawing upon the conventions and devices used in fifth-century tragedy. Perhaps this scene is inspired by the scene in Euripides' *The Trojan Women* where the corpse of the deceased young child, Astyanax, is brought on stage and mourned by his grandmother Hecuba.[200] The chorus in *Love of the Nightingale* takes on the conventional tragic messenger role by describing Tereus' pursuit and the trio's transformation in birds; Philomele into the nightingale, Procne into the swallow and Tereus into the hoopoe. The production ends with an extra scene involving Itys and the three as birds. Itys innocently discusses with Philomele, now the nightingale, the reason for their transformation. But it is implied however that he will never truly understand.

In Wertenbaker's offering, the audience comes into contact with a number of silenced voices that suddenly are given the freedom to express themselves through a variety of devices. Firstly, there is Sophocles and his lost play. By gesturing to specific fragments at the beginning of the script as well as choosing to work with his plot, Wertenbaker is giving the lost play a chance to be performed again. While it may not be a true recreation of the Sophoclean in story or performance, Wertenbaker gives the production a fresh lease of life by providing answers to the unknown sections between the fragments and establishing the plot for her contemporary audience, as Sophocles would have done for his Athenian audience. She retains key devices that were essential in Greek tragedy such as the anagnorisis scene and a chorus that reflects the community surrounding the protagonists. There are two choruses in *The Love of the*

[200] *Trojan Women* 1118 -1216.

Nightingale: Male and Female. While not explicitly implied, the Male Chorus represents the Athenian community, whilst the Female Chorus is linked to the Thracian sphere. They are both involved in the actions of their respective societies.[201] The Male Chorus is present during the opening scenes and those involving Athenian characters. They follow Philomele on her journey, making quite clear their role in the play:

> …We are only here to observe, journalists of an antique
> world, putting horror into words, unable to stop the
> events we will soon record.[202]

In this piece of dialogue, the group point out that the chorus' role is not to interfere in the action, only to be there as observers that comment on the atrocities that occurs. They remain with Philomele along her journey until just prior to the rape scene.[203] Apart from location changes, this articulation of the 'abandonment' of all responsibility for the action by the Male Chorus gives the impression that once the young girl is violently raped, she loses her status and the links to her homeland. Effectively, she is no longer Athenian. This would also apply to Procne, who, once she is married to Tereus, becomes the property of a barbaric race and relinquishes her allegiance to her fatherland. She therefore performs in a degree of consonance with the Female Chorus.

The scenes set against the backdrop of Thrace feature a female chorus made up of five Thracian maids, in line with the usually assumed identity of the chorus of

[201] The Female Chorus does appear briefly in Athens during the metatheatre scene (see below). They become part of the *Hippolytus* chorus; however this is in a sphere separate from the 'reality' of the production and not particularly noteworthy.
[202] Wertenbaker (1996) 308.
[203] Post Philomele's rape, the Male Chorus does not return to the stage for the rest of the production.

Sophocles' *Tereus*. Unlike the Male Chorus, they are assigned individual names and personas: Hero, Iris, June, Echo and Helen. This group have much more interaction with the protagonists than their male counterparts. But the dialogue between Procne and the women is fairly stilted, with the Thracian females highlighting in their discourse that they find it difficult to express themselves verbally.

> Sometimes I feel I know things but I cannot prove
> that I know them or that what I know is true and when I
> doubt my knowledge it disintegrates into a senseless jumble
> of possibilities, a puzzle that will not be reassembled, the
> spider web in which I lie, immobile, and truth paralysed.[204]

The Female Chorus also focus the audience's attention on the transhistorical themes within *Love of the Nightingale* in a direct manner. Despite being located in an ancient world, they engage with the contemporary through the discussion and questioning of subject-matter that is silence:

> IRIS: We can ask: why did Medea kill her children?
> JUNE: Why do countries make war?
> HELEN: Why are races exterminated?
> HERO: Why do white people cut off the words of blacks?
> IRIS: Why do people disappear? The ultimate silence....[205]

[204] Wertenbaker (1996)316.
[205] Wertenbaker (1996)349.

They go on to note the ways that this questioning is suppressed and suggest that the play they are in provides a graphic example of what happens when silencing takes place:

> HERO: We can ask. Words will grope and probably not
> find. But if you silence the question.
> IRIS: Imprison the mind that asks.
> ECHO: Cut out its tongue.
> HERO: You will have this.[206]

The stilted style in which the Female Chorus deliver their lines, and the relationship that they establish with Procne, enforce an atmosphere of alienation as well as a notion of barbarism clashing with civilization.

Another silenced voice is that of the displaced female. Procne, for years, has been unable to relate to her new environment. She has lost her original Athenian identity but has yet to establish herself as a Thracian queen. She is used to being eloquent in her civilized homeland; however, in the barbaric country of Thrace, she finds it difficult to communicate with the local women:

> The words are the same, but point to different
> things. We aspire to clarity in sound, you like the silences
> in between.[207]

[206] Wertenbaker (1996) 349.
[207] Wertenbaker (1996) 298-299.

The Female Chorus acknowledge that she will never truly belong as she is too different:

> You will always be a guest there, never call it your
> own, never rest in the kindness of history.[208]

At the beginning of the production, Procne tries to cling onto and retain her Athenian heritage by labelling the Thracian's religious practices as 'barbarian' and defiantly asserting her original ethnic identity:

> ...I am an Athenian: I know the
> truth is found by logic and happiness lies in the truth. [209]

However, Procne systematically begins to lose her own cultural identity over the course of the play. In order to accept her new homeland and show that she is becoming a good Thracian wife, she willingly takes part in the feast of Bacchus with the other local women, embracing the religious activities that she once labelled as 'barbarian practices' and abandoning her own beliefs. She completes the transformation when her character loses any notion of a civilized identity through the murder of her son. In taking part in the inhumane activity of infanticide—indeed filicide—Procne, on the one hand, acts out of *pietas* in seeking revenge for a wrong that has happened to one of her kin. But, on the other hand, she performs an atrocity that is purely barbaric and that would be deemed unacceptable in Sophocles' audience's Athenian society.

[208] Wertenbaker (1996) 298.
[209] Wertenbaker (1996) 299.

Philomele's voice also embarks on a journey in this production. She is established at the beginning of the production as a talkative, inquisitive young woman who eloquently speaks her mind. She craves knowledge concerning love, sex and men. It is this intelligent, outspoken quality that Tereus is attracted to and incites his lust. In her naivety she is unaware of any repercussions from her words. Immediately after the physical abuse constituted by being raped, Philomele reprimands Tereus with her vocal talents in a highly articulate manner by claiming:

> ...despite my fear, your violence, when I saw you in your nakedness I couldn't help laughing because you were so shrivelled, so ridiculous and it is not the way it is on the statues[210].

However, after her tongue is cut out, Philomele not only loses her voice but her identity. When asked who she is, Niobe answers for her:

> No one. No name. Nothing. A king's fancy. No more. [211]

By stripping Philomele of her voice, Tereus leaves her no civilized way of communicating her plight. Wertenbaker once stated that silence leads to violence, which is true in this production.

The main anagnorisis scene, a theatrical device favoured by the fifth-century tragedians and discussed at length by Aristotle in *Poetics*, plays an important role within *Love of the Nightingale*. One of the devices favoured by Aristotle in establishing a recognition scene was through the usage of an inanimate object such as

[210] Wertenbaker (1996) 336.
[211] Wertenbaker (1996) 342.

a letter. He specifically cites the *Tereus* as an example of this by stating that it is the 'shuttle's voice' (1454b18), a reference to the tapestry or weaving that Philomela creates to communicate her plight. It has been suggested by scholars including Hall and Fitzpatrick that the Sophoclean recognition scene, in line with the papyrus hypothesis, would have used a tapestry perhaps containing words or imagery conveying her silent message.[212] Wertenbaker's recognition moment differs slightly from the way Sophocles seems to have dramatized it in order to emphasize how silence cannot suppress communication.

With the aim of conveying the pain and suffering that she has experienced at the hands of Tereus, Philomele makes three large effigies to represent the three protagonists: herself, Tereus and Procne. In *Love of the Nightingale* the character of Philomele adopts a performative stance. Despite her muteness, she communicates her story through the manipulation of three giant dolls, each representing a main character. It is clearly indicated through the costume of the effigies whom they are meant to be, for example, Tereus, dressed in male clothing and wears a crown.

In her stage directions, Wertenbaker describes the complex revelation scene, which could prove challenging to stage in actual performance. The background of this episode is a Thracian festival in honour of Bacchus. The women have gathered to celebrate together and Philomele rushes into the centre carrying one effigy, whilst her maid, Niobe, carrying another, tries to restrain her. The struggle between the two gives the impression that the dolls are grappling. Philomele then begins to re-enact the rape scene, maneuvering the two dolls around the space and climaxing in the re-telling of her mutilation where she cuts out the female doll's tongue and symbolically places red cloth on the floor.

[212] Hall (2006b) 115; Fitzpatrick (2001) 97-98.

While this scene appears to quite comical, since the crowd on stage find the events occurring in front of them humorous, it does also have a hint of the grotesque. The whole episode is reminiscent of child victims of violent or sexual crimes. The usage of dolls is a method widely used by psychologists to ascertain the events or actions that occurred to a child, often because the victim is unable to formulate the words to describe the atrocities that have happened to them.[213] To a contemporary audience this would add to the horror provided in the earlier scenes witnessing the emotional impact the events have had on the character.

Philomele breaks her silence by using these homemade dolls as a communication method. Then she exploits the murder of Itys by configuring it as another way of reclaiming her voice in expressing her desire for revenge. This act, committed jointly by the two sisters, merely makes possible a cycle of violence and revenge that would result in Tereus killing them if it were not for the metamorphosis of the protagonists into birds. Here, Philomele regains her voice through the transformation into a nightingale. Not only can she articulate her thoughts and feelings again, but she is given the sweetest voice; the song of the nightingale. Perhaps this is Wertenbaker's attempt at offering hope to those who are verbally suppressed by violence and oppressive forces within society.

I believe that Timberlake Wertenbaker also has another silent message in her adaptation. *Love of the Nightingale* has a didactic quality, similar to the morality plays from the medieval era and possibly a strong theme that resided in the Sophoclean production (after all, the Athenians did sometimes say that the tragic poets were their 'teachers'—see e.g. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1009-10). Honesty is the virtue discussed, as the playwright couples violent episodes and theatrical devices to highlight the

[213] Fulero (2009) 186-188.

underlying argument: ultimately the truth will be revealed and those who hinder it will be punished.

Wertenbaker establishes two motifs within her protagonists. Each character is either motivated by a need to deceive or a passion to uncover the truth. Tereus' role within the production is as a deceiver. He spends the majority of the production lying to those he supposedly loves. He is unable to control his lust for Philomele; sexual incontinence is his fatal flaw. Philomele is unaware that she constitutes temptation; a forbidden fruit that fuels his desire. Tereus creates two main lies within the play.

In the first deception, Tereus tells Philomele that her sister has died, to aid in his wooing of the girl; yet when she reacts in the opposite way to the one he anticipates, he takes her by force and violently rapes her. The second lie is concocted to conceal what he has done and to explain the disappearance of his sister-in-law to his wife, Procne. Here, he claims that Philomele died along the journey.

Alongside these acts of duplicity, Tereus commits horrific violent acts to prove that he still has control as a leader and as a man. In the dialogue prior to the rape of Philomele, Tereus starts to discuss his true feelings, referring back to the 'embedded' production of *Hippolytus* in Athens which he views earlier on in the production. For Wertenbaker has employed the metatheatrical device of a play within a play early in the production to establish the principle that the truth *will* be uncovered and to give the opportunity to discuss the moral issues which will underpin the plot as it subsequently evolves. In this scene, Tereus has returned to Athens to escort Philomele to Thrace. He is invited to watch a production of *Hippolytus*. The plot is described to Tereus, the outsider, by King Pandion and the Queen, whilst noteworthy lines are interjected by the cast of performers. A discussion ensues over the morality of the characters within *Hippolytus*. Tereus, paradoxically, claims that Phaedra is wrong for adulterously

loving her stepson, a member of her family—which is exactly the position he finds himself in later in the play. The embedded play within a play device provides the audience with a reflective viewpoint and a foreboding of what is to come.

King Pandion speaks as an unwitting prophet in this scene by outlining the dilemmas within *Hippolytus*, in comments which foreshadow the forthcoming events involving his daughters. In response to his wife's fretting over the prologue, King Pandion states that the production is 'going to end badly, but we already know that. It's a tragedy'.[214] He also replies to Tereus' disgust at the portrayal of Phaedra's incestuous love by saying, 'That's what makes it a tragedy. When you love the right person it's a comedy.[215] Philomele also has a prefigurative moment when she announces to her father, 'I'm not Hippolytus. You haven't cursed me. And Tereus isn't Phaedra, look'.[216] Sara Soncini sees this device as 'an exploration of the politics of performance and spectatorship [that] allows Wertenbaker's theatre to fulfill its maieutic function for contemporary audiences, which are made aware of their own individual responsibility as witnesses to the tragic story'.[217] I, however, believe that this device goes one step further and that the *Hippolytus* production is used to showcase a multilateral view of Wertenbaker's chosen diachronic themes. She thus acknowledges their presence in the enacting of the *Hippolytus* tragedy, within the Tereus myth, her own production and indeed in contemporary society.

Wertenbaker's play keeps our attention focused on her principle themes—duplicity and truth, violence, speech and silence—through referring to the *Hippolytus* plot in the later scene. In *Hippolytus*, Phaedra never embarks on a sexual relationship with her stepson and tries to contain her passion. But Tereus in *Love of The*

[214] Wertenbaker (1996) 302.
[215] Wertenbaker (1996) 302.
[216] Wertenbaker (1996) 306.
[217] Soncini (1999) 71.

Nightingale submits to his infatuation and has to resort to sexual violence to fulfil his desire. In the build-up to Philomele's rape, Tereus claims that he is Phaedra in their situation and that he loves her like Phaedra loves Hippolytus.[218] Having already broken the news of her sister's supposed demise; Tereus tries to persuade Philomele that it is the gods' will. Meeting resistance still, the Thracian exerts his strength as a man, seizing the girl in a restraining embrace and suggests he will have her forcibly, despite her protests that the act should be consensual. Though the rape is not seen on stage, as directed by Wertenbaker in her stage directions, the audience is aware of the horrific event, cemented by Tereus' line before he drags Philomele off stage, 'I will have you in your fear. Trembling limbs to my fire'.[219] While the script suggests that this violent scene is shown off-stage, it is however open to directorial interpretation. In a staging by Putney Arts Centre in 2010, the director made the decision to heighten the horror of this scene by visibly staging the rape. The actors enacted the scene behind a semi-opaque screen towards the back of the set. The audience members were forced to witness the act through the movement of shadows and the audible grunts and groans of Tereus alongside Philomele's screams and protests.[220] While on the one hand it achieved the highly uncomfortable viewing that the director sought, on the other it detracted from the next scene where the audience deals with the aftermath of the rape through the eyes of the young girl.

The sexual violation of Philomele prompts the character to take on the role of truth seeker. She passionately wants to reveal the lies that Tereus has told and establishes, in a confrontation with Tereus, that her sister is still alive. Her awareness of the deception empowers Philomele, who threatens to reveal the truth to all. Tereus

[218] Wertenbaker (1996) 328.
[219] Wertenbaker (1996) 330.
[220] *The Love of the Nightingale* (2010). By Timberlake Wertenbaker. Dir. Emily Jenkins. Putney Arts Centre, London. 26 Feb. 2010.

realizes here that the girl needs to be silenced and as a consequence cuts out her tongue. This demonstrates Tereus' desire for self-preservation. He uses mutilation as a form of torture, but instead of inflicting pain on his prisoner to discover truths, he uses it as a preventative measure, which in turn, only makes the eventual revelation of the truth more inevitable and the consequences of all Tereus' deceptions more severe.

The main repercussion and punishment for the dishonesty and horrific actions performed by Tereus, is the death of Itys, Tereus and Procne's son. This violent event is firstly recounted to us in a messenger style of dialogue between two soldiers surreptitiously witnessing the women's festivities from a window. They report to the audience what the audience cannot see. Itys enters and talks to the men, who encourage him to witness the events too; on seeing that the women have his sword, he goes off to confront them. The movements of Itys after this are described in a humorous way until the soldier narrating the event realizes what he is watching and what is about to happen. Then there is silence. The audience is left to their own imaginations, in a manner similar to the Athenian audience of Sophocles' day listening to a 'messenger speech'. They are allowed a few moments to contemplate the possibilities of what has happened behind the wall.

Yet, instead of leaving the action here, Wertenbaker decides to amend the traditional model of narrating violence in Greek tragedy, by actually showing what the audience thought it would not see. Itys enters the festival to confront his mother and (unknown to him) his aunt, with a violent outburst or tantrum, reminiscent of his father's behavior. It appears that the males in this family favor violent mutilation when he shouts, 'Give me my sword, slave or I'll kick you. Kill you all. Cut off your heads.

Pick out your eyes'.[221] Itys is then restrained by his mother whilst his aunt uses the boy's sword to kill him.

Wertenbaker's stage directions outline how she envisages this second revelation scene to be played out. The body is concealed by the chorus when Tereus enters. Procne confronts Tereus, revealing a bloodied Philomele and the exposure of his deceptions. Before unveiling the body of her son, she justifies her reasons for committing this form of infanticide. Procne says this retribution is valid, because she obeyed all the rules whereas Tereus broke them. She has therefore performed this act in order to help him come to terms with what he has done. Both women have acted out of pietas in seeking the ultimate revenge.

4. Joanna Laurens' *The Three Birds*

Wertenbaker is not the only playwright to have found Sophocles' *Tereus* intriguing. Twelve years after *Love of the Nightingale* was first performed, *The Three Birds* was produced at the Gate Theatre, London, premiering on 19th Ocotber 2000, after being composed by a young playwright, Joanna Laurens, over a six-week period during her undergraduate degree. The play won her the Critics' Circle Theatre Award for 'Most Promising Playwright'. But after a handful of her plays being produced in the early 2000s, she opted for a career change, and now works in the field of counselling and psychotherapy, returning to the Channel Islands where she grew up. Laurens rarely gave in-depth interviews during her time as a playwright, and no-one has written extensively on the play, so most of the information I present in this chapter comes from the script,[222] a handful of reviews and short interviews. I have supplemented these with some material from a recent email exchange with her, where I posed

[221] Wertenbaker (1996) 349.
[222] The script was published by Oberon books in 2000, but with a limited circulation.

questions and she answered them; I am very grateful to her for taking the time to do this. In this part of the chapter, I discuss how Laurens engaged with the classical material and what influence it had on her version of the Tereus story. I will also highlight the differences and similarities between her offering and Wertenbaker's *Love of the Nightingale*.

Interestingly, Laurens claims that she has no classical background and that she 'was not particularly interested in the myths or stories previously'. But she came into contact with the tale of *Tereus* after watching Tim Supple's stage adaptation of Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid*:[223] 'the Tereus bit caught my eye and I thought to myself that it could be a whole play, in itself. I did a bit of research and found out that it once had been a complete stand-alone play'.[224] With her interest piqued, she went on to look at what was left of Sophocles' offering and contemplated using the surviving fragments in her adaptation. Laurens' thoughts prior to engaging with the surviving material were that re-writing the lost production may be a case of 'creatively "joining the dots" between the existing fragments', but she soon discovered that the fragments were so few in number and lacked positioning and context, which meant she would have to write the play in her own way.[225] She still wanted to include the extant snippets of dialogue but claims that she felt they would have stood out too much in her production due to the style in which she was writing.[226] Only one fragment has managed to be included in the dialogue – 'Sun, greatest glory of the horse-loving Thracians'.[227] But she continues to acknowledge Sophocles' original by including

[223] Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid* was performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Swan Theatre in 1999. Based on the work of Hughes, a handful of the stories were adapted for the stage by Tim Supple and Simon Reade, and was subsequently published by Faber plays in 2000. For more information on this see: Supple (2000).
[224] This interview can be found as Appendix A.
[225] Interview in Appendix A.
[226] Interview in Appendix A.
[227] Fragment A (582) this line is repeated a number of times at the end of the production.

'After Sophocles', under the title of *The Three Birds* script and outlines the impact the lost production has on her work in the Introduction. Laurens' sums up the lost voice of the play thus: 'Sophocles' words themselves can thus be seen as those of a silenced voice, gagged by time.'[228]

The playwright openly acknowledges in the introduction to the script that the tale of Tereus as featured in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* influenced her production, for it is the most detailed existing account. But at the same time, she claimed in an interview with Caridad Svich that she wanted to remain faithful on one sense to the original Greek play, 'to see if the same heightened sense of blood/lust/earthy desire could work now, for a contemporary audience, confronted directly with that, unable to escape from their seats'.[229] Laurens also noted that there were a number of main differences between her play and what may have occurred in Sophocles; she changed certain elements to suit her writing or manipulated characterisation to contribute to the atmosphere of the piece.

First, Laurens wanted to move away from the traditional view that Tereus was a tyrant figure, raping Philomela because he was fuelled by uncontrollable physical lust. Instead, the playwright saw more interest for an audience if the dynamics changed and Tereus acted out of love for the young woman, potentially evoking empathy from the audience. She summed up her thoughts on her lead male character thus:

> No one can empathise with a rapist. We can all empathise with a frustrated lover. To empathise with him and want him to 'get the girl',

[228] Laurens (2000) 5-6.
[229] Svich (2003) 128.

> we then become complicit when he does 'get the girl' - in a forceful way. Our feelings about him - and us - are then more complex.[230]

Secondly, in a similar decision to Wertenbaker, Laurens opted to remove the divine elements from her production. This must have been an important decision for her as a playwright, and she highlights her reasoning in the introduction to the script:

> I felt a contemporary audience would find such a literal deus ex machina conclusion intolerably clumsy, and yet, I found the transformations into birds beautiful, and wanted to include it, resulting in the version found here.[231]

In what she considers to be her final major decision (once again not dissimilar to Wertenbaker's strategy), Laurens chose to manipulate the role of the chorus to suit the action on stage. While she claims in her written interview with me not to have much in the way of knowledge on the ancient theatre or to have looked at other ancient tragedies for inspiration, she did, however, acknowledge in her introduction to the script that she was aware that the identity of the chorus in Sophocles' *Tereus* was unknown; she therefore decided to create a chorus as a 'pliable dramatic material, adapting to the needs of the different scenes'.[232] She must have done some research on the choruses of Sophocles, since she goes on to say that she still wanted to still utilise the chorus in a similar manner to Sophocles:

[230] Interview found in Appendix A.
[231] Laurens (2000) 5.
[232] Laurens (2000) 6.

> In keeping with the Sophoclean choruses which have survived, there is a moment of recognition for the choral character itself, which leads the chorus to the truth about Tereus and thus to a greater insight and a deeper understanding of their situation.[233]

The Three Birds commences with the Chorus delivering the prologue which Laurens instructs should be spoken in complete darkness. Unlike the prologue in an ancient production, this text does not set up the production ahead in terms of outlining events that have already happened, or the background of the characters. Instead, in a highly abstract manner, the chorus state that they will tell a tale and make reference to the sense of silencing that is a theme that continues throughout the play:

> They will not steal the redrich of our voices;
> Mixed rough we fly their twisted insides.[234]

As the chorus exits, the action begins immediately with a discussion between Pandion and Tereus. Just as in Wertenbaker's version, they talk of how they won the battle and Pandion offers Tereus a reward for his assistance. Pandion briefly departs, allowing the solitary Tereus to soliloquise on the topic of his love for Pandion's daughter, Philomela. His monologue reveals no lust, but a loving infatuation with the girl. When Pandion re-enters, the two play a game which prompts Pandion to proclaim that Tereus' prize for winning is his daughter's hand in marriage. Tereus can't believe his luck and gratefully accepts, believing that Philomele is the daughter to whom Pandion refers.

[233] Laurens (2000) 6.
[234] Laurens (2000) 9.

Laurens' script is difficult to access, which is one reason for my offering an extended 'thick description' of its contents and impact in performance. But the language Laurens uses is so distinctive—a strange, demotic, often rough-hewn, coarse, jerky and supremely modern idiolect—that only substantial quotation, from passages written for different actors' voices, can illustrate her method. The next scene features Philomela and Procne playing hide and seek. Laurens points out that their actions are not childish, which is unlike the opening scene with Philomela and Procne in Wertenbaker's adaptation, where the girls' discussions can appear childlike (depending on how it is staged). The girls discuss Tereus as a suitor for Procne and role play a meeting between Procne and Tereus, which descends into giggles and an exchange in French about shutting one's mouth. It is clear the two girls have their own unique style of language and understand each other on a level that the audience may not, strengthening their sisterly bond. Pandion enters to announce that Procne will marry Tereus and live with her husband in Thrace. The girls digest this new information with a sense of fear and apprehension, but Procne consoles her sister and implies that they will always be close. Tereus enters to greet the sisters but is taken back when Procne approaches and states that she is looking forward to their union the next day.

When he is left alone on stage, Tereus openly talks about his frustration at not being betrothed to Philomela and how she is much superior to Procne, although there is nothing that can be done.

> Procne. Your name limps.
>
> And I to it.[235]

[235] Laurens (2000) 21.

The next scene indicates that the wedding has taken place and Tereus has finally accepted, albeit reluctantly, that Procne is now his wife. The action then swiftly moves ahead one year with Procne giving birth to their son. The chorus appear on stage to announce the arrival of the child, but there is no show of emotion from Tereus apart from announcing that the child's name is Itys. A choral episode is then inserted to suggest the passing of time; it ends as Itys enters the stage, a five year old child, with his now visibly older looking mother.

Procne tries to discuss with the chorus her marital issues with Tereus and how he no longer pays her attention, but, in a very similar way to Wertenbaker's version of the isolated Procne, she struggles to articulate exactly what she means and is, at times, ignored by the chorus. Her struggle is notable in her style of speaking and in the language she uses, which is idiosyncratic in comparison to the voice of the chorus. Procne tries to express her feelings of loneliness and desire to see her sister to Tereus when he enters, but he clearly does not want anything to do with her. It becomes apparent, when he is left alone on stage that he is still in love with Philomela. Time passing has done nothing to quell his feelings towards her. On Procne's return, he announces he will return to Athens to ask for Philomela to visit her sister.

In Athens, Tereus negotiates with Pandion to allow Philomela to visit Procne in Thrace. The father is reluctant at first, but when Philomela enters to describe her desire to see her sibling, he relents. The scene then shifts to Tereus and Philomela's journey to Thrace. Tereus is unable to contain his feelings for the girl and starts to vocalise his love:

TEREUS: You are a fly

drinking at my eye

and I love you.[236]

Philomela starts to copy Tereus' words in a manner, according to Laurens, as if she is trying to learn a new language. This spurs him on.[237] He continues to say the words 'I love you', which she echoes back to him. One could infer that Tereus starts to believe that Philomela is not just repeating him, but instead, that she is reciprocating his feelings. He takes this as an act of consent. Laurens outlines in her stage directions that Tereus proceeds to rape Philomela on stage, who does not show any sign of resisting. However, it is after the act when she voices her anger:

PHILOMELA: You wrong my house.

You wrong my name.

You do me wrong.

You do my sister wrong.

You wrong my beforeafters.

You wrong my father;

you wrong the lord of my house.

All will know.

I will tell the whole fucking world what a cunt you are.[238]

Philomela then mocks Tereus, laughing at and mimicking him, while the chorus delivers the line, 'The king's child was good', in five different languages: the Norman–French patios of Jersey, Anglo-Saxon, Proto-Indo-European, Irish and

[236] Laurens (2000) 36.
[237] Laurens (2000) 36-7.
[238] Laurens (2000) 39.

Welsh. Laurens shares with Wertenbaker a sensitivity towards the disappearance of languages and cultures, and includes these to keep them alive. The chorus continues to recite the line, building to a climax rhythmically. Laurens outlines in the stage directions exactly how she envisages the mutilation scene:

> TEREUS produces a knife. Immediate silence from CHORUS. He cuts out PHILOMELA's tongue mid-phrase ('I lo-'). She mouths '-ve you and I'll view an all of you, I love' etc. in complete silence repeatedly; bewildered – look at the empty air where her words should be.

This horrific act signals the end of Act One, leaving the audience to ponder what they have just witnessed. Act Two opens with Procne trying to comprehend her sister's death while Tereus deceives her, claiming that Philomela was attacked and eaten by wolves. At first he shows no signs of compassion and moans about Procne's incessant questioning, but eventually he breaks down in Procne's arms, sorrowfully apologising to her about Philomela's death. She consoles him, saying that it was not his fault, unaware of what he has actually done.

Laurens then brings the action back to Philomela, who is exploring what her life is now like as Tereus' captive and unable to communicate verbally. The playwright importantly describes the opening of the new scene in a highly detailed manner to reinforce the horror of Philomela's plight:

> Enter PHILOMELA with a jug of red wine and a clear glass; she puts both down. She gives a silent uncovered yawn without armstretching. She crosses to another part of the stage and busies herself with some

> activity there for several minutes. She moves elsewhere and does the same. Suddenly she takes a large, audibly airy inbreath; she is about to sneeze. We wait to hear this sneeze, but it is soundless. We should crave intentional noise/speech by this stage. She pours herself a glass of wine, and the glass clincknocks the jug. Pause would it do that again? She clincknocks again, tentatively. She smiles at the noise she makes. She does this twice more, with increasing confidence and enjoyment each time, looking closely at the precise point where two objects make contact and the sound is formed. She then throws her head back and laughs silently at the noise; her body rocks with the trapped laugh and her smile slides from her face, turning into a sobbing which is as silent and as violent as the laughter. She stops sobbing. Pause. Quickly she downs the glass of wine. She throws both glass and jug violently across the stage. She furiously yet silently mouths the following; she mouths quickly and gesticulates as appropriate – desperately trying to communicate… She reaches inside her mouth with her fingers, and feels around, exploring. She takes her fingers out and looks at them, smells them, wipes them on the groin area of her clothes.[239]

This intense scene of painful silence and anguish prepares for Tereus' return to Philomela, who behaves like a scared animal in his presence. He tries to coax her round by apologizing for his behaviour but she gestures for him to kill her, thus prompting another emotional outpouring from Tereus:

[239] Laurens (2000) 43-44.

And no, I can't kill you.

Because it's just, like, well

I love you on a loop……

I'm sorry that I love you.

He leaves Philomela, who starts to work on a tapestry. Unlike Wertenbaker's dolls, Laurens returns to the original device of the truth being revealed through textile handiwork. The mute girl communicates her situation to the chorus by showing it to them, which leads them to sadly recongise what has occurred. They deliver the tapestry to Procne, who attempts to interpret the depictions. In this version of the revelation scene, unlike in Wertenbaker's, Philomela is not physically present. But she has included within the tapestry details of how she can be freed from her imprisonment:

PROCNE: ProcneTereus marry

Sail away.

Thrace.

Itys birthed.

Procne lonely.

Procne beg Tereus for Philomela.

Tereus sail away to Pandion.

Pandion agree.

TereusPhilomela sail away.

Tereus

Tereus

Tereus rapes Philomela.

Tereus cuts out Philomela's tongue.

Tereus imprisons Philomela at Aulis.

Philomela weaves a tapestry.

Philomela send it to Procne.

Procne reads it.

(*Wonderingly*.) I read it.

Procne frees Philomela.

Procne and Philomela return to Thrace.

The depictions finish here and Procne frustratingly searches for the end, asking what happens next. She is interrupted by the commencement of the festival of Bacchus, and uses this as an opportunity to disappear. When Procne discovers Philomela, she tells her sister that she now knows the atrocities that have happened and that Tereus must die in retribution. The sisters re-join the festivities in disguise, while Tereus appears looking for his wife. The chorus distract him, claiming that Procne is at home waiting for him to return:

CHORUS MEMBER: She said she's cooking kinky chicken in her underwear.[240]

This line intrigues Tereus and he immediately leaves with Itys, which gives Procne a final opportunity to plan with her sister, in a passage which well illustrates Laurens' style as well as the private language the sisters share:

[240] Laurens (2000) 53.

Procne: Ah, we had him spoonfed there,

But revenge is a family affair

so good my people quickgo

and let me talk to my Philly….

Arm yourself with plosives.

We'll frag him.

We'll shred him.

We'll blow him away.

We'll rail him.

We'll scrap him.

We'll pop him today.[241]

In Lauren's adaptation, Procne stresses the loving relationship that a child has with his mother, to heighten the shock of what she does to him. Itys recognises her even though she is in disguise. He runs to her and clings to her affectionately, kissing and stroking her. Procne tries to push him away, but he persists, which frustrates her as she continues to plot her husband's demise. Slowly she becomes aware of what would be the greatest act of revenge, while the chorus chant in various languages variations on the theme of infanticide. Eventually the lines mutate into the line: 'Kill him so we are one', which is repeated for effect:

FIRST CHORUS: Tuez-lé, libéthéz-nous.[242]

[241] Laurens (2000) 53-54.

Tuez-lem, libwythez-ous.

Twee-hem, lobwytha une.

Kwell hem, so wy tha une.

Kill him so we are one.

SECOND CHORUS: Alysað hine, his blōd lædað ūs.[243]

Alysath hime, sis blod lareth us.

Asal hime, sis wareth un.

Zill him, sos wathare un.

Kill him so we are one.

THIRD CHORUS: im gwhen-ghe! Salwos so.[244]

im gwehem! sawas sone.

ill hem, saw a sa sone.

Ill hem sa we sa one.

Kill him so we are one.

FOURTH CHORUS: Scaoil soar é! Labhraíonn sibh trína chuislí.[245]

Scaoil see! Labhraí sibh trí chuinlí.

Caoil sem, hray ibh ree un.

Call hem, hro ebrah un.

Kill him so we are one.

FIFTH CHORUS: Lladd fe, rhyddha'r lleisiau bychain![246]

Lladd fem, rhyddha'r lleisiau bychun!

Llal fem, rhyddo lleisar yun.

Ill hem, yddo wei ar yun.

---

[242] Jersey Norman – French: 'Kill him, set us free'.
[243] Anglo-Saxon: 'Free him, his blood will lead us'.
[244] Proto Indo – European: 'Kill him, he is tainted/dirty'.
[245] Irish: 'Free him! You talk through his veins'.
[246] Welsh: Kill him, free the little voices'.

Kill him so we are one.[247]

The chorus' chanting climaxes with the group handing the women a knife each. Procne stabs Itys in the heart while Philomela slits his throat. Both are complicit in the act of murder. The chorus actively encourage the crazed violence, in a manner quite distinct from the Attic tragic choruses, who were less involved in the action occurring on stage. Their role becomes even more chilling when they urge the women to feed the child to his father:

CHORUS: Feed him to Tereus.
With shovelfuls of hard bread,
with scrushed tartaric grapejuice,
spurs to the palate,
give the son back to his father.
Return him disremembered.

Unlike Wertenbaker, who only has Itys' body revealed on stage to Tereus, Laurens opts to the suffering of Tereus and creates a more gruesome ending. Unaware that his child has been murdered, Tereus sits at a long table awaiting his supper. Procne enters and places a large plate of cooked meat in front of him while they exchange flirtatious glances. As he eats, Tereus asks where his son is. Procne deflects these questions until he has completed his meal. Then a bloody Philomela enters with a box. She places it in front of Tereus, who opens it in horror. The fate of Itys is revealed and Tereus retches. Tereus' voice starts to replicate an infant's speech; much to his horror, he repeats lines

[247] Laurens (2000) 56-57.

that Itys delivered earlier on in the play, and realises that his son is speaking from within him. The conclusion of the scene has the chorus, Procne and Philomela all recite the fragment from the Sophoclean play: 'Sun, greatest glory of the horse-loving Thracians'. They repeat this as they start to advance on Tereus, building up to a climax where, on reaching the terrified father, he joins in with one final repetition of the line.

The play concludes with an epilogue, delivered by Pandion. Here, Laurens utilises the possibility that the ancient production would have concluded with the transformation of Procne, Philomela and Tereus, into birds. Rather than the characters retell their transformation and appear on stage as birds, however, which occurs in Wertenbaker's version, Laurens makes Pandion describe what happened when he arrived at the scene:

> PANDION: Gone. Gone. Gone.
> Three birds flew away when I got here,
> pulled to air like jetwindow rain.
> A questioning crested hoopoe.
> A nightingale at mourning.
> A sparrow.[248]

After revealing his awareness that his family has been somehow destroyed, he ends the play on a mysterious line, observing, 'I found a mixed flock worrying the stars'.[249]

I have pointed out within my account of *The Three Birds* the several plot differences between the two recent theatrical retellings of Sophocles' *Tereus*. They have a similar overall narrative; while Laurens could have been influenced by

[248] Laurens (2000) 64.
[249] Laurens (2000) 64.

Wertenbaker's play, which predates her own, she claims that she has never seen or read *Love of the Nightingale*.[250] Both playwrights make sure that they include certain important moments which seem from the extand evidence to have been used by Sophocles: Procne marries Tereus and moves to Thrace; Procne requests her sister to visit; Tereus escorts Philomela but rapes her and cuts out her tongue; Philomela reveals her situation to Procne; Procne and Philomela kill Itys in revenge. However, each playwright decides to fill out this basic plotline to suit her objectives. While both plays emphasise the violence of the story, it is clear that Laurens has chosen to make the violence more explicit in order to provoke a reaction in her audience.[251]

There are three moments of violence within the basic plot: the rape, the mutilation and the murder of Itys. In regards to the rape of Philomela, Wertenbaker builds up to the moment with protests from the victim, but has the act take place off stage, leaving the extremity of the deed to the audience's imagination. In contrast, Laurens portrays Philomela reacting passively, although the rape occurs in front of the audience, allowing the action to be as graphic as the director chooses. When it comes to the mutilation, the tongue is cut out in full view of the audience in both productions while Philomela/Philomele is mid-sentence. Again, Laurens amps up the horror by having the character finish her sentence in bewildered muteness after her tongue is removed. The violent murder of a child will always be traumatic, but the death of Itys at the hands of his mother and aunt is particularly disturbing. Wertenbaker keeps this moment brief. In the build up to his demise, Itys comes across obnoxious and rude, threatening to pick out the eyes of Philomele who is holding his sword. His mother holds him as Philomele brings the sword down on him, but Wertenbaker indicates that

[250] Interview found in Appendix A.
[251] See the comment of Laurens which I quoted earlier (p. 98), 'to see if the same heightened sense of blood/lust/earthy desire could work now, for a contemporary audience, confronted directly with that, unable to escape from their seats'. See Svich (2003) 128.

nothing is seen: the female chorus encloses the figures, and the corpse is hidden until it is revealed to Tereus. This moment in *The Three Birds* could be seen as more chilling and gut-wrenching, for Laurens has Itys arrive on stage in a very innocent manner, looking for the loving attention of his mother. The audience are forced to witness the child asking for hugs for a prolonged time until the idea occurs to Procne and Philomela of the ultimate act of revenge and they carry it out in an almost ritualistic manner. Laurens further heightens the gruesomeness by including the scene where Tereus unknowingly eats his son, as suggested by the extant hypothesis discussed earlier.

Both playwrights use more explicit violence than we would expect in Sophocles' play from the evidence of the conventions in our extant Greek tragedies. The tragic effect, to be sure, will have been extreme, since the tragedy emanates from a dysfunctional family. *Tereus* was one of two known Attic plays that featured sisters who jointly conspire and commit murder, the other, interestingly, being another lost play which has attracted a recent 'reconstruction', Aeschylus' *Danaids*.[252] Both Procne and Philomela are driven by the need for revenge and crave punishment for the insult that Tereus has committed against their family. He has broken the trust of Pandion and has shamed both his daughters by dishonouring his marriage to Procne and sexually abusing Philomela.[253] Procne's desire to punish her male partner is paralleled in Euripides' *Medea*, where the protagonist seeks revenge for the dishonour Jason had committed against her for taking a new wife and abandoning her. In both cases, Procne and Medea come to the understanding that the only way to seek ultimate revenge would be the death of their children—they sacrifice what is most important to both man and woman.

[252] See below, Chapter 4.
[253] Discussed in Burnett (1998) 177- 91.

Maternal filicide seems to have been viewed as particularly shocking, as it is today, and this may explain the rarity with which it was dramatized. However, if the hypothesis of *Tereus* is correct, Procne's behaviour was far more extreme than Medea's, since she ensured that the dead child was ingested by the father. While Medea worked alone, Procne has an accomplice: the surviving evidence indicates that both sisters were complicit in the killing of Itys. Coo discusses at length the uniqueness of the two sisters being equally involved in the murder and claims that 'the bond between two sisters is shown to override that between a mother and her child.'[254] This is made significant by both Wertenbaker and Laurens, who highlight the closeness of the two sisters in the opening scenes, which set the tone for the remainder. Laurens even goes as far as pointing out the strong relationship that the women have through their style of language, which resembles fragmented gobbledygook, yet the two women understand each other perfectly. As the plays progress, Wertenbaker shows that there is already a sisterly pact between the two girls when Philomela states, 'I promised Procne I would go if she ever asked for me'.[255] In Laurens, Philomele stresses to Tereus that he has *dishonoured* her sister by raping her:

> PHILOMELA: You wrong my house.
>
> You wrong my name.
>
> You do me wrong.
>
> You do my sister wrong.

The character of Philomela certainly comes across as dedicated to her sister in both plays. When the recognition of Tereus' deception and actions occurs in *Love of the*

[254] Coo (2013) 361.
[255] Wertenbaker (1996) 303.

Nightingale and *The Three Birds*, Procne takes on the speaking role for both women now that Philomela/Philomele is mute. While her sister's silence can actually speak volumes in relation to the horror she has dealt with, it is Procne's words that the audience hears. Wertenbaker's Procne says little but becomes determined:

> To do this. He would do this.
>
> *Pause.*
>
> Justice. Philomele, the justice we learned as children, do you remember?
>
> Where is it? Come, come with me.[256]

In comparison, as we have observed, Laurens' Procne is much more vocal about arranging a violent punishment for Tereus. In her first exchange with Philomela, who only responds with gestures, Procne repeats the phrase: 'He must die' three times before plotting in a manner that suggests the sisters are working symbiotically:

> What? Yes, yes; we'll glottalstop him.
>
> *PHILOMELA moves more urgently.*
>
> Yes softsister, I hear you.
>
> Are we hatching something or what?
>
> Sometimes when alone at night
>
> I been slung to the world, stapled
>
> sweetly there like a fly to jam.
>
> And then I think of you and I map
>
> you and I want you and I rise to

[256] Wertenbaker (1996) 343.

bash myself on the pain of him.[257]

When it comes to the murder of Itys, both plays show the women working together. While we cannot be sure whether in the Sophoclean production one of the women did the deed or both were involved at the same time, Wertenbaker opts for Procne to be holding Itys, while Philomele strikes him with the sword; the mother holds her child, in a disturbing parody of a maternal posture; while she does not deliver the fatal blow, she encourages the action. Rather than holding her child to protect him, Procne is holding him to be sacrificed to cause ultimate pain.

Laurens prefers that both women be involved. In my view, the chorus in Laurens' scene represents the inner voice of the women as they decide upon revenge; the choral voice suggests to the minds of the sisters that Itys should be killed, and the chorus hand them the weapons. To drive home the horror, Itys cries out 'Mum!' as they move in to attack the boy.[258] Procne stabs Itys in the heart as Philomela slits his throat. I view these decisions as quite symbolic. By aiming for his heart, Procne is destroying the child she loves, whereas Philomela opts, in a way, to replicate her situation by silencing the child as she draws the knife across his throat. Laurens continues this collaboration between the siblings in the final scenes. Procne encourages her husband to eat the meat that unbeknownst to him is his son, while Philomela has clearly been the chef, for Laurens describes her final appearance as 'her hands are bloody and her clothes are stained.'[259] It would appear that both playwrights have taken the stance, which Coo asserts occurred in the Sophoclean play, that the main reason the women commit the acts is not due to their family dishonour but rather

[257] Laurens (2000) 51.
[258] Laurens (2000) 58.
[259] Laurens (2000) 60.

out of sisterly love.[260] This strength of the bond between the sisters is what spurs the retaliation and the abandonment of any sense of marital or maternal commitment.

Other themes that both recent adaptations address are the motifs of the silenced voice and the marginalised within society. To return to a quote by Laurens that I mentioned earlier in this chapter: 'Sophocles' words themselves can thus be seen as those of a silenced voice, gagged by time'.[261] Both playwrights' preoccupation with the silenced voice is expressed on two levels. First, they use their stages to allow Sophocles' 'silenced' play to live again. While their plays are in one sense new works, which have adapted and heavily modified the spartse fragmentary material, they both allow the story to 'regain a voice' by being retold in the context of theatre after many centuries of neglect. Secondly, both Wertenbaker and Laurens draw upon the notion of being unable to communicate and what happens to those who have their voices silenced. Laurens acknowledges in her introduction to the script that the two pivotal moments in the play are linked to silencing voices: when Philomela is prevented from telling the truth of her situation through the gory removal of her tongue and the revenge act of killing Itys, although she allows Itys to regain a bizarre, ventriloquized voice, once he has been consumed, emanating from inside his father. Laurens, it appears, was preoccupied with similar thoughts to those of Wertenbaker when writing her version:

> In society each individual, each of us, experiences life from the perspective of the 'outsider' in relation to some aspect of ourselves. Living is often a conflict between individual experience and a desire to feel at one with others; the minority voice is frequently not a specific sector of society but a thread passed through each individual within

[260] Coo (2013) 380.
[261] Laurens (2000) 5-6.

> society. This fluid concept of the marginalised seems particularly relevant to the modern world, and yet is so simply reflected in this ancient story through Itys' 'metamorphosis' inside his father – where individual boundaries literally break down.[262]

5. Conclusions

From analyzing these scenes and themes, a number of conclusions can be drawn. While *The Love of the Nightingale* and *The Three Birds* are not true recreations of Sophocles' *Tereus*, there is a clear diachronic message in both. Wertenbaker has described her production as portraying the 'violence that erupts in societies when they have been silenced for too long' and giving the marginalized a voice. [263] I believe that both productions certainly communicate the notion that violence and dispossession inflicted by society on marginalized groups occurs both in antiquity and today. Both playwrights' personal experiences have helped them engage with finding lost voices, Wertenbaker with her experiences of the Basque country and Laurens' despair at languages becoming lost as a result of the predominance of English.[264]

There appears to be a second thematic constellation within both modern plays, which may subconsciously have been inferred by Wertenbaker and Laurens from what remains of Sophocles' tragedy. The notion of retribution is brought to the fore in both dramas, accentuated by violent acts. Lies, deception and violence can motivate normal people to behave in ways they would never usually do, and the repercussions of these events can remain with those who commit them for a lifetime. It is also clear that there is a constant pattern in both plays entailing destruction caused by deceit. The

[262] Laurens (2000) 6.
[263] Wertenbaker (1996) viii.
[264] In the interview with me, she commented 'Many languages are dying out these days... obliterated by English'. See Appendix A.

initial lie is covered up by violence or a brutal act in order to suppress its revelation, but once the truth is uncovered, the result is usually even more extreme violence as a punishment. Given the extreme violence committed both against and by women, in both these plays by modern women, it becomes even more frustrating that we do not know whether such violence dominated the Sophoclean production, or whether it is the process of supplementing fragments that has allowed feminist playwrights a licence to shock? I certainly feel that violence is inherent in the story, as a reflection of society. Yet violence can be portrayed in myriad ways. Ultimately, what I think is most authentically Sophoclean in the modern plays is their focus on the use of language and the silenced voice. It is with this focus that Wertenbaker and Laurens make the audience aware of the importance of communication, a theme I feel that the fragments of the Sophoclean play certainly adumbrate. In their destroyed state, these fragments are still trying to communicate with the modern world. But it is only through contemporary playwrights that they recover their voice, even if it speaks from a biased and anachronistic angle.

Chapter 4

Aeschylus' *Danaid* Trilogy

1. Introduction

Unlike the other plays that are investigated in this thesis, part of this chapter addresses a fairly complete one, Aeschylus' tragedy, *Suppliants*, known to be one of the earliest surviving plays from ancient Greece, since it was almost certainly first performed in 463 BC. But it is the fragmented tetralogy that it belongs to, *Danaids*, that has caught the imagination of international playwrights in the mid-1990s and early 2000s. *Suppliants*, plus the extant fragments from the tetralogy to which it belongs, has inspired adaptations that try to offer a complete version of the action. In 1996, the Romanian playwright/director, Silviu Purcărete, drew upon the plot to create a staging that was epic in scale, whereas a couple of years later, American playwright Charles Mee also found inspiration in the tale and wrote a contemporary adaptation that has now been performed numerous times around the world since its debut. But what is the appeal of this fragmented collection of plays? What is it about *Suppliants* that makes playwrights want to finish the story? And what evidence exists to assist in their completion? In order to understand the modern performative reception, however, we first need to examine the extant evidence for the lost plays of the trilogy, and for its contents and meaning as a whole. There are two reasons for this. First, Purcărete and Mee will have investigated the ancient evidence themselves. Secondly, it helps us appreciate their receptions better by seeing where the dramatist has made their choices.

In the first half of this chapter, therefore, I examine the actual surviving evidence. My discussion first looks at the date of the original production and the order in which the plays of the trilogy were performed. Then I will look at the external textual and iconographic evidence for the Danaids' myth, before turning to the texts of

the fragmentary plays and the extant *Suppliants* themselves. I will review the most important and plausible reconstructions, of which Purcărete and Mee would have been aware, and clarify my own thinking on the most likely contents of the original trilogy, before turning in the second half of the chapter to the modern adaptations.

2. What do We Really Know about Aeschyus' Tetralogy on the Danaids?

Unlike Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, where the three tragedies have survived in their entirety, in The *Danaids* tetralogy only *Suppliants* has survived.[265] For the rest of the plays, we are aided by a small number of fragments and references to enable tentative reconstruction. But even pinpointing the date of performance has been difficult. For many years, scholars had favored the thought that this tetralogy was from the early part of Aeschylus' career, as asserted by G. Müller in his 1908 publication, *De Aeschyli Supplicum tempore atque indole.* Their evidence for this was based on the surviving *Suppliants*. The style and structure of this tragedy, in comparison to the other extant plays of Aeschylus, appeared to such scholars to show that it must have belonged to an early part of his development as a playwright. Structurally, there are many similarities between *Suppliants* and *Persians*, the latter documented as Aeschylus' earliest surviving play, performed in 472. Both contain a high proportion of choral lyric, and open with the parodos of the chorus, which is rarely found replicated in other surviving tragedies. A. F. Garvie rejected this idea, since out of the seven Aeschylean plays that are in existence, the other six, which are firmly dated, cover only a duration of fourteen years and date to 472, 467 and 458; a linear analysis

[265] The new Aris and Phillips Series edition of *Supplicants* by Bowen (2013), which uses highly tendentious arguments about chronology and the order of the plays, was published too late for me to address in detail here. However, his suggestions do not substantially affect the conclusions to which I have come in this chapter concerning the nature of Aeschylus' tetralogy and its 20th –century theatrical receptions.

of the playwright's development is therefore based on completely inadequate evidence.

In order to claim that this tetralogy was a part of Aeschylus' early work, many scholars looked to the political background to the play. The treatment of Argos in the text may indicate a time period where Athens was on friendly terms with them as the king of Argos is portrayed in a favorable light in charge of a fairly democratic city. Diamantopoulos supported the idea that the play was presented in the early part of Aeschylus' career—circa the 490s—since many recent events would have influenced this treatment of Argos. This included the ramifications of the battle of Sepeia and the establishment of the democratic Argive constitution.[266] However, this is all speculative as there is no obvious reference within the text of *Suppliants* to support the proposal. With *Suppliants* as the only reference point, many scholars had rigidly formulated their opinions on what was available to them. However, in 1952, the discovery of a fragmented papyrus caused a rethinking within the academic world of when the first performance of this tetralogy would have taken place, causing Earp in near-despair to remark: 'Scholars have hitherto regarded the *Supplices* as the earliest extant play of Aeschylus; if we now consent to put it late it makes all attempts to study literature futile'.[267]

The publication of P.Oxy. 2256 fr.3, a hypothesis or notice of production, caused this shift in opinion because it indicated that in fact the plays were performed at a later date in the 460s.

[266] Diamantopoulos (1957) 220-9.
[267] Earp (1953)119.

Oxyrhynchus Papyri xx (1952) 2256, fr. 3.

Text

ἐπὶ ἀρ̣[
ἐνίκα [Αἰ]σχύλο[ς
Δ αν[αῖ]σι Ἀμυ[μώνηι
δ εύτ[ε]ρ[ο]ς Σοφοκλῆ[ς
μέσατος [[Ν[
[[Βάκχαις Κωφοῖ[ς
Ποι]μέσιν Κύκ[
σατυ(ρικῶι).

Although highly corrupt, scholars have worked on restoring the details of the fragment by inserting supplements, through assessing other hypotheses and drawing upon their knowledge of other productions from around that time period. By filling in the gaps, A.F Garvie proposed this possible supplemented version of the fragment which I have translated below:

ἐπὶ Ἀρχεδημίδου ὀλυμπιάδος οθ' ἔτει α'
ἐνίκα Αἰσχύλος Ἱκέτισι Αἰγυπτίοις
Δαναΐσι Ἀμυμώνηι σατυρικῆι
δεύτερος Σοφοκλῆς· τρίτος
Μέσατος (Ν....
(Βάκχαις Κωφοῖς σατύροις
Ποιμέσιν Κύκ....
σατ[υ] [268]

Upon Archedemides' 79 year Olympiad

Aeschylus conquered with Suppliants Egyptians

Danaids and satyr-play Amymone.

Second Sophocles. Third

Mesatus

In a more complete form, this hypothesis potentially provides us with a number of details concerning the tetralogy. We can more or less establish that the opening

[268] Garvie (2008) 10.

sentence refers to the archon in charge during the Olympiad. Garvie infers that the 'ἀρ' is the beginning of ᾽Αρχεδημίδου (Archedemides), who was in power during 464 - 463, as the only other archon who held office in that decade with a similar name was Apsephion, who presided the year that Sophocles clinched victory from Aeschylus. The fragment continues to indicate that Aeschylus was victorious with *Egyptians*, *Suppliants* (which may have been listed in the corrupt section as suggested by Garvie in the reconstruction of the fragment above), *Danaids* and the satyr-play, *Amymone*. Sophocles took second place, with the lost playwright, Mesatus, taking third.

It is thought that this hypothesis was written around the late second or early third century A.D., which means, therefore, that it could be highly misleading. It is possible, for example, that it refers to a second or posthumous presentation of the tetralogy. We know that some tragedies and groups of tragedies premiered after the death of playwrights, such as Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and *Bacchae*, staged after his death by one of his sons, also named Euripides.[269] Various testimonia to the performance of Aeschylean plays after his death survive, probably produced by his actor son Euphorion, including the scholion on Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 10 and *Suda* e3800, although we can't be sure that Euphorion or anyone else produced the *Danaid* plays posthumously.

Despite the ambiguous nature of the hypothesis, it is now generally accepted. Garvie and Sommerstein argue that it confirms the approximate date of the premiere of the tetralogy (464-463 BC) and the point in Aeschylus' career that the plays took place.[270] Taplin acknowledges the confusion caused by the redating of *Suppliants* when comparing the hypothesis and the play's style, stating that 'were it not for the

[269] See Aristophanes, *Frogs* 67 and the discussion in Hall (2015*c*) 11-28, especially 16-18.
[270] Sommerstein (2002) 90.

papyrus didaskalia a sober man might well put the play in the 470s rather than the 490s, but he could not in all fairness be expected to plump for the 460s'.[271]

The papyrus also confirms that the single tragedy *Danaids* and the satyr-play, *Amymone*, belong together, and presumably also with *Egyptians* and *Suppliants*. In fact, one of the two surviving fragments of *Amymone* echoes themes present in the foregoing tragedies.[272]

σοὶ μὲν γαμεῖσθαι μόρσιμον, γαμεῖν δ' ἐμοί

It is your fate to be wedded, and mine to wed.[273]

Since the grammar (active and middle voice of the verb *gamein*) shows that this is a male addressing a female, it is plausibly suggested that it was said to Amymone, the Danaid on whom the satyr-play focused; it may have been spoken by the leader of the satyrs, Silenus, or by the god, Poseidon, as suggested by Sommerstein.[274] In my view, it would be unlikely for Aeschylus to have written another tetralogy that involved such closely related plots, yet some scholars maintain that this happened.[275] Taplin outlines arguments for and against *Amymone* belonging to the *Danaid* tetralogy in *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus*. He explains that some satyr plays appear to be closely linked to their trilogy of tragedies, using the satyr play *The Sphinx* that was linked to

[271] Taplin (1977) 195.
[272] While the satyr-play has been lost, the plot has survived in some form through the pseudo - Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* (2.1.4) and Hyginus' *Fabulae* (169a). Both collections of myths tell a rough outline of how Amymone, one of the famous daughters of Danaus, was sent by her father into the countryside to retrieve water. While alone, she was viewed by a satyr who, in amorous desire, attempted to rape her. Amymone called on Poseidon for assistance, who appeared at once and drove off the satyr. The god then seduced and lay with her. Afterwards, it is said, Poseidon created the spring of Lerna by striking the ground with his trident. From Amymone's encounter, she gave birth to Nauplius. While we do not know the exact plot of the satyr-play, this gives us a good understanding of what may have taken place and its relevance to the tetralogy.
[273] TgrF 13 / Sommerstein (2008) 10 -11.
[274] Sommerstein (2008) 10 -11.
[275] According to Garvie (2008) 14.

Aeschylus' Theban trilogy as an example. However, there is also evidence to suggest that satyr plays could also be only loosely linked, such as the *Proteus,*[276] which concluded the *Oresteia* but seems to have focused on Agamemnon's brother Menelaus and his visit to Egypt, as related in *Odyssey* IV, rather than on Orestes or Argos. But Taplin nevertheless concludes that in the current state of the evidence it is best to assume that *Amymone* was the satyr play in the *Danaid* teatralogy.[277]

3. The Plays' Order of Performance

The order of the plays in the *Danaid* tetralogy is also debatable. Placing *Amymone* is easy, for it was common practice for the satyr play to be showcased after the three tragedies. But the order of the tragedies has been contested. Many scholars have suggested that Aeschylus used a 'formula' which could help us in ordering the plays. Gruppe believed that there was a method to the development of an Aeschylean trilogy based on our knowledge of the only other trilogy to exist, the *Oresteia*. His theory was that the first play would set up the events to come and provide a motive that would continue throughout the three tragedies. The second would be where the major deed would take place and in the third and final instalment, the judgment or reconciliation would occur, 'wrapping up' the tragedy part and making way for the satyr-play.[278] Stoessl also based his theory on the evidence from the *Oresteia* and asserted that the first two plays of a trilogy would be similar in scene and structure, with the third play being a lot freer. The aim of the final play would be to reconcile the first two and

[276] Only two lines survive of this fragmented satyr play, but in October 2002, Theatre Kingston, Ontario, staged their own interpretation after performing the *Oresteia*. Their play, which drew upon the knowledge of the story from Homer's *Odyssey* IV, was written by Craig Walker (http://www.queensu.ca/drama/About-Us/People/Faculty-And-Staff/Craig-Walker/).
[277] Taplin (1977) 195.
[278] Gruppe (1834) 72-74.

soothe the spectator.[279] However, employing these concepts when addressing the *Danaid* trilogy could create more confusion. One cannot assume that all Aeschylus' trilogies had a happy and neat ending. While *The Oresteia* is the only trilogy we have, it may not be representative. It is only a small sample of his work.

4. The External Mythical Tradition: Textual and Iconographic Materials

It may be more beneficial to look at other versions of the story, for the myth in Aeschylus' *Danaid* tetralogy has been retold by many classical authors and poets. To start, let us look at its presence in another Greek tragedy. The play *Prometheus Bound*, attributed in antiquity to Aeschylus but more likely to have been written by an unknown playwright,[280] features a speech where an outline of the Danaids' fate is provided in a prophecy to Io, their ancestress, by the demigod, Prometheus:

> And fifty girls, the seed of his fifth generation,
> will come back to Argos, not of their own free will,
> fleeing the kindred wedlock
> of their cousins,who, with hearts driven by passion,
> hawks not far behind the fugitive doves,
> will come hunting marriages they should not be hunting;
> but a god will begrudge them their cousins' bodies,
> and the Pelasgian land will be moistened with blood

[280] The question of the 'authenticity' of this play, although fascinating, is not discussed here for it is not directly relevant to my argument. For different views, see Herington (1970) and Griffith (1977).

> shed by female slayers, when they are audaciously laid low of a wakeful night;
>
> for each woman will rob her husband of life,
>
> dipping a two-edged sword in his blood. ...
>
> But one of the girls will be charmed by desire so as not
>
> to slay her bedfellow; her purpose will be blunted,
>
> and of the two alternatives she will choose
>
> to be called a coward rather than an unclean murderer.[281]

This prophecy tells us that amongst Io's descendants will be fifty girls who will flee to Argos in an attempt to escape marrying their cousins, but will be forcibly married. All of them but one will then kill their husbands. Other notable versions of this plot are provided by Apollodorus and Hyginus. The Greek mythographer, Apollodorus,[282] describes the tale of the Danaids in greater detail and includes the reasoning for the murders:

> Belos remained in Egypt, was king of that country, and married Nile's daughter Anchinoe. He had twin sons, Aigyptos and Danaos, and according to Euripides he also had Cepheus and Phineus. Belos sent Danaos off to colonize Libya and Aigyptos to Arabia, but the latter also subdued the land of the Melampodes and called it Egypt after himself. With several different women Aigyptos had fifty sons and Danaos had fifty daughters. When they later were at odds over the kingdom, Danaos

[281] Sommerstein (2010) 100, the Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound* (850 – 870).
[282] Also known as pseudo – Apollodorus. *Bibliotheca* was traditionally attributed to Apollodorus, but scholarship now questions if it was wrongly attributed. As my research is only concerned with the product and not exact authorship, I will refer to the author as Apollodorus throughout the rest of my thesis. The translations of Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* that I provide are by R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma (2007).

became afraid of Aigyptos' sons and, at the direction of Athena, he was the first to build a ship. He put his daughters aboard and fled. Landing at Rhodes, he set up the statue of Lindian Athena. From there he came to Argos. The king at that time, Gelanor, surrendered his kingdom to Danaos... Now the land was without water because Poseidon, angry at Inachos for testifying that the country belonged to Hera, had dried up even the springs. So Danaos sent his daughters to fetch water. Searching for water, one of them, Amymone, threw a javelin at a deer and hit a sleeping satyr. He, startled awake, desired to have sex with her. The satyr fled when Poseidon showed up, and Amymone slept with Poseidon, who showed her the springs in Lerna.

The sons of Aigyptos came to Argos and called upon Danaos to put aside his hatred and asked to marry his daughters. Danaos both disbelieved their assurances and bore a grudge about his exile, but he agreed to the marriages and apportioned out his daughters. They chose the oldest, Hypermnestra, for Lynceus and Gorgophone for Proteus, for these two were Aigyptus' sons by his wife, Queen Argyphia. As for the rest, Bousiris, Encelados, Lycos and Diaphron chose lots and got Danaos' daughters by Europe, namely Automate, Amymone, Agaue, and Scaia. Those four had been born to Danaos by a queen, but Gorgophone and Hypermnestra were his daughters by Elephantis. Istros got Hippodameia. Chalcodon got Rhodia. Agenor got Cleopatra. Chaitos got Asteria. Diocorystes got Hippothoe. Alces got Glauce. Alcmenor got Hippomedousa. Hippothoos got Gorge. Euchenor got Iphimedousa. Hippolytos got Rhode. These last ten were Aigyptos'

sons by an Arabian woman, and the girls were Danaos' daughters by Hamadryad nymphs, some by Atalanteia, some by Phoibe. Agatolemos got Peirene. Cercetes got Dorion. Eurydamas got Phartis. Aigios got Mnestra. Argios got Euippe. Archelaos got Anaxibia. Menemachos got Nelo. These seven were Aigyptos' sons by a Phoenician woman, and the girls were Danaos' daughters by an Ethiopian woman.

Aigyptos' sons by Tyria got Danaos' daughters by Memphis. They did not draw lots, but the matches were made because they had similar names. Cleitos got Cleite. Sthenelos got Stenele. Chrysippos got Chrysippe. Aigyptos' twelve sons by the Naiad nymph Caliadne drew lots for Danaos' daughters by the Naiad nymph Polyxo. So Eurylochos, Phantes, Peristhenes, Hermos, Dryas, Potamon, Cisseus, Lixos, Imbros, Bromios, Polyctor, and Chthonios got Autonoe, Theano, Electra, Cleopatra, Eurydice, Glaucippe, Antheleia, Cleodora, Euippe, Erato, Stygne, and Bryce. Aigyptos' sons by Gorgo drew lots for Danos' daughters by Pieria. Periphas got Actaia. Oineus got Podarce. Aigyptos got Dioxippe. Menalces got Adite. Lampos got Ocypete. Idmon got Pylarge. The following are the youngest of the sons. Idas got Hippodice, Diaphron got Adiante (herse was the mother of these last two girls), Pandion got Callidice, Arbelos got Oime, Hyperbios got Celaino, and Hippocorystes got Hyperippe. These were the sons of Aigyptos by Hephaistine and the daughters of Danos by Crino.

When they had gotten their assigned marriages, Danaos threw a feast and gave daggers to his daughters. They killed their grooms while they slept, all except Hypermnestra, who spare Lynceus because he had not

taken her virginity. On this account Danaos locked her up and set a guard over her. The rest of Danaos' daughters buried the heads of their grooms in Lerna and buried their bodies in front of the city. At Zeus' command Athena and Hermes purified the daughters. Later, Danaos reunited Hypermenstra with Lynceus and gave the rest of his daughters to the victors in athletics games.[283]

The Roman author, Hyginus, also provides a similar but shorter outline of what supposedly occurs in the myth.

168 Danaus

Danaus the son of Belus had fifty daughters by several wives. His brother Aegyptus had just as many sons, and he wanted to kill his brother Danaus and his daughters so that he alone would possess his father's kingdom. He demanded that his brother provide wives for his sons. When Danaus realised what was going on, he fled from Africa to Argos with the help of Minerva, who, they say, built the first two-prowed ship so that Danaus could escape. When Aegyptus found out Danaus had escaped, he sent his sons to pursue his brother and ordered them either to kill him or not to return home. After they reached Argos, they began a siege against their uncle. When Danaus saw he could not hold them off, he promised them his daughters as wives if they ceased their attack. They took the cousins they asked for as wives, but the women following their father's orders killed them after they got

[283] Apollodorus 2.1.4 – 5.

married. Hypermestra was the only one to save her husband, Lynceus. They say that the rest of them, because of their crime, pour water into a pot full of holes in the underworld. A shrine was built for Hypermestra and Lynceus.[284]

The mythographer also focused on the story of Amymone and provides a list detailing which daughter killed which husband, although the text is corrupt in places and provides different partnerships to those in Apollodorus.

169 Amymone

While Amymone daughter of Danaus was intensely tracking her prey in the forest, she hit a Satyr with her spear. The Satyr wanted to rape her. She prayed to Neptune for help. When Neptune arrived, he drove the Satyr away and slept with Amymone himself. From the union Nauplius was born. At the spot where all of this took place, it is said that Neptune struck the earth with is trident and water flowed out from there. The spring is called Lernaean, and the river Amymonian.

169a Amymone

Amymone daughter of Danaus was sent by her father to find some water that he needed to perform a sacrifice. While she was looking for some, she fell asleep out of exhaustion. A Satyr wanted to rape her; she prayed to Neptune for help. When Neptune threw his trident at the Satyr, it planted itself in a rock, and he drove the Satyr off. When he asked the girl what she was doing all by herself in the middle of

[284] Hyginus 168. The translations of Hyginus' *Fabulae* that I provide are by R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma (2007).

nowhere, she said that her father had sent her out to look for some water. Neptune slept with her, and in return for this he helped her out. He told her to remove the trident from the rock, and when she did, three waterspouts followed. This spring is called the Amymonious after her name, and from their union Nauplius was born. This spring was later called Lernean.

170 Which Daughter of Danaus Killed Which Husband

Midea killed Antimachus. Philomela killed Panthius. Scylla killed Proteus. Amphicomone killed Plexippus. Evippe killed Agenor. Demodice killed Chrysippus. Hyale killed Perius. Trite killed Enceladus. Damone killed Amyntor. Hippothoe killed Obrimus. Myrmidone killed Mineus. Eurydice killed Canthus. Cleo killed Asterius. Arcadia killed Xanthus. Cleopatra killed Metacles. Phila killed Philinus. Hipparete killed Protheon. Chrysothemis killed Asterides. Pyrante killed Athamas. <unintelligible> killed <unintelligible>. Glaucippe killed Niavius. Demophile killed Pamphilus. Autodice killed Clytus. Polyxena killed Aegyptus. Hecabe killed Dryas. Achamantis killed Ecnominus. Arsalte exiled Ephialtes. Monuste killed Eurysthenes. Amymone killed Midamus. Helice killed Evideas. Oeme killed Polydector. Polybe killed Iltonomus. Helicta killed Cassus. Electra killed Hyperantus. Eubule killed Demarchus. Daplidice killed Pugnon. Hero killed Andromachus. Europome killed Athletes. Pyrantis killed Plexippus. Critomedia killed Antipapus. Pirene killed Dolichus. Eupheme killed Hyperbius. Themistagora killed

> Podasimus. Celaeno killed Aristonos. Itea killed Antiochus. Erato killed Eudaemon.
>
> Hypermestra saved Lynceus. When Danaus died, Abas was the first one to inform Lynceus of this. As Lynceus looked around the temple to see where there was something he could give to Abas as a reward, he happened to catch sight of the shield that Danaus had carried in his youth and later dedicated it to Juno. He took it off the peg and gave it to Abas, and he established the games called the Shield in Argos, which are held every four years. At these games, runners are not given a crown but a shield instead. As for Danaus' daughters, after their father's death they married Argive men; those born from them are called Danaans.[285]

The myth was also retold within poetry from the Greco-Roman world. The Greek lyric poet, Pindar chose to provide a version of the Danaids story as the focus of one of his *Pythian Odes*. Within this 125-line poem poem he mentions the women but not the deeds that they committed.

> How Danaus long ago achieved in Argos
> For eight and forty daughters,
> Before the noon of day, the speediest of marriage.
> For he set all the gathered company
> There at the finish of the race-course, and proclaimed
> That all the heroes who were come

[285] Hyginus 168-171.

To be his daughter's suitors, must decide
By trial of their speed of foot, which maid
For each should be his bride.[286]

This is interesting both because *Pythian* 9 was written for a North African Greek, Telesicrates of Cyrene, and also because its date is 474 BC, now known to have predated Aeschylus' *Danaid* tetralogy.

The Roman poet, Ovid, who was well versed in Greek tragedy, chose in his *Heroides* to use Hypermnestra's voice, in the form of a letter to Lynceus, to retell how the murders occurred and to inform him of her situation.

Hypermnestra sends this letter to the surviving
single son of King Aegyptus's fifty.
All your brothers now lie dead, the bloody victims
of their forty – nine new brides who are my sisters.
I am held in chains in close confinement here
in the palace, where I am punished for being faithful.
My hand refused to drive the dagger into your throat
and for that reason I am adjudged guilty.
Had I dared to do the wicked deed, I would have been praised.
But what kind of choice was that? To please my father
or to be, as I am now, charged with the crime of treason?
I feel no regret at not having shed your blood.
My father may use our wedding torches in order to burn me

[286] Pindar *Pythian* 9.113-118. Trans. by Conway (1998).

for not breaking the oaths we swore to each other.
Or he may cut my throat with the blade I'd been told to use
on yours so that my death can pay him back,
but there is no way in which he can get me to say the words,
"I repent," for that, too, would betray
our oaths. The ones who should feel guilt are my father, Danaus,
and my forty – nine cruel sisters I could not join
in their wicked deeds that still horrify and amaze me
as I remember that night profaned with gore
and the way in which my hand was paralyzed as if
it had been chained as I am fettered now.
The woman you suppose plotted against your life
fears even to write of those murders others
committed but she could not and would not. Still I shall try
to tell you how it was. Twilight had settled
upon the earth as day gave way to the oncoming night.
We daughters of Inachus's line are led
into the house of your forebear Pelasgus, King of Argos,
and your father, King Aegyptus, receives us himself.
All around there are golden torcheres blazing with light
as incense is scattered onto the altar fires.
The courtiers cry, "Hymen, Hymenaeus!" but the god
refuses to listen. Even Juno declines
to appear in her chosen city. After the nuptial feast,
fuddled with wine, your brothers, decked with flowers,

and with cries of congratulation to one another, enter
those bridal chambers that will be their tombs
and lay themselves down on couches that soon will be
their biers.
Heavy with food and wine, they lie in a deep
slumber that has settled upon all Argos, free
from any thought of care. But all around me
I hear the repeated cries of dying men that are muffled
but clear enough in their meaning. What I had feared
was true, and my blood ran cold, and I trembled there on the couch
as grain in the fields trembles when gentle Zephyr
passes over, or poplar leaves in the winter shake
from winds that come howling through them.
You were still fast asleep in the grip of the wine you had drunk
at dinner.
I thought, of course, of my father's violent order
and tried to banish my fear. I got up and clutched the dagger
and –I tell you truly- raised its blade above you
and brought it down to your tender throat three times, but then
each time my love and my fear combined to prevent
the cruel stroke. My hand would not obey my father.
I ripped my nightdress, tore at my hair, and muttered
such words as these: "Your father is cruel. Perform the deed!
Let your husband go to join his brothers.
You are a woman, you ng and gentle. Your soft hands

are ill suited to weapons. But there he is,
and your brave sisters have led the way. They have all killed
their bridegrooms, and you can find it within yourself
to do as they have done. And yet if this hand could murder
it would be stained with the blood of its own mistress.
Assume that Aegyptus' sons have all deserved to die
For trying to seize their Uncle Danaus' lands,
why should that involve me? Why should I bear the guilt?
What has a girl to do with the weapons of war?
These hands are better suited to spinning and weaving."
These were my thoughts upon which followed tears
that fell upon your body. You stirred and reached out to me
from sleep for my embrace. Your groping hand
just missed the blade in my hand. And then I was afraid
for you, and the coming of dawn and my father' guards.
I roused you with these urgent words, "Lynceus, wake!
You are the only brother left alive.
Unless you make haste, this night will last forever for you!"
Fully awake, and you saw that I had a weapon
and asked what it was for and why I had it. My answer
was only that you should flee at once while you could
in the dark of night. "Hurry and I shall remain behind."
First thing that morning my father counted
the bodies of his slain sons- in – law, but the tally
was incomplete because yours wasn't there.

Angry, he complained that too little blood had been shed.
I was seized by the hair and dragged off here
to the dungeon in which I languish, my reward for love and duty…[287]

…But why do I speak of these long –ago events?
I have in my own time a plenitude of laments:
my father and uncle are waging war,
one against the other. We are driven out of our homes
and wander to the ends of the earth as exiles.
Of all those brothers, only one is still alive,
and I weep for the victims and those who did the deed,
for my sisters as well as my late brothers – in –law. And I,
because you are not dead, am kept in a dungeon,
condemned for an act that merits only praise. I am
the relict of a hundred of whom you and I
are all that remain. But Lynceus, if you care at all for me
and are worthy of the gift I gave you , come
and save me – or at the least come when I am dead
and lay my corpse in secret on the pyre.
Then bury my bones moistened with whatever tears
they prompt in you. And let my epitaph be:
"Exiled Hypermnestra paid for her wifely behavior
the unjust price of the death she refused to inflict."
I would write more, but the chains impede my hand,

[287] I have omitted lines 88 – 123 for they only discuss the story of Io and there is no discussion of the Danaids within this section.

And fear takes away what little strength I can muster. [288]

It is a great shame that we cannot use this emotive and vivid narrative to flesh out the details of Aeschylus' lost Danaid plays, because it offers several exciting possibilities.

Horace, another Roman poet, also used the story of the Danaids within one of his odes, but this time to serve as a warning.

11A lesson for Lyde

Mercury (for, thanks to your teaching, Amphion learned how to move blocks of stone by his song), and you, tortoise-shell, who resonate cleverly to seven strings, there was a time when you had no voice and gave no pleasure; now you are welcome at the tables of the rich and the temples of the gods. So come, sing a song to catch Lyde's obstinate ear. Like a three-year-old filly which frisks and prances in the wide meadows, she shies away from being touched, knows nothing about marriage, and is not yet ripe for an ardent mate.

You have the power to lead tigers and forest trees in your train, and to check swift-flowing streams; Cerberus, grim guardian of the vast hall, surrendered to your charms, even though his head, like the Furies', is armed with a hundred snakes, and stinking breath and gore issue from his three muzzles each with its tongue. Why even Ixion and Tityus, in spite of themselves, had smiles on their faces; and their pitchers stood dry for a little while as you soothed the daughters of Danaus with delightful music.

[288] Ovid *Heroides* 14. Trans. by Slavitt (2011).

> Let Lyde hear about the virgins' crime and their well-known punishment: the urn that was never full because the water leaked away right at the bottom, and the fate which, however delayed, lies in wait for sin even in the depths of Orcus. Those unholy ones (yes, unholy, for what more heinous crime could they have committed?) had the heart to murder their bridegrooms with cold steel. The only one of their number worthy of the marriage torch was magnificently deceitful towards her scheming father, a girl who won everlasting fame.
>
> "Get up!" she said to her young husband, "Get up! before you are put to sleep for a long time by one whom you don't suspect. Don't let my father and my wicked sisters catch you; for like lionesses that have pounced on young bull calves, each (how dreadful!) is slaughtering her own victim. I am more soft-hearted than the others; I shall not strike you down or keep you under lock and key. As for me, my father can, if he wants to, load me down with cruel chains for sparing my poor husband out of pity; he can put me on a boat and banish me to the farthest regions of Numidia. Go now wherever your legs and the wind may carry you, while Night and Venus are on your side. Go and good luck to you! And carve on my tomb a sad epitaph in my memory."[289]

Both Roman poets are determined to emphasize the duty of the non-treacherous Danaid, Hypermnestra (the girl referred to in *Prometheus Bound* as the one who chose

[289] Horace *Odes* 3.11. Trans. by Rudd (2004).

'to be called a coward rather than an unclean murderer'),[290] rather than outlining what occurred previously.

All the accounts disagree on a number of details, but my own inferences, which are in line with those of Garvie, concur with the majority in identifying four integral and coherent elements to the plot.[291]

1. The myth originates with two brothers who descendants of Io. One man, Danaus, has fifty daughters and the other, Aegyptus, has fifty sons.[292]
2. The brothers argue over who holds power over their land.
3. The fifty sons are to marry their cousins, the fifty daughters. Danaus commands that the girls kill their husbands on their wedding night.
4. All the daughters obey their father, apart from one, Hypermnestra, who spares her husband, Lynceus.

There is also a strong argument, which can be supported from the various accounts, that the location of the brothers' quarrel is Egypt,[293] and it is from Egypt that Danaus and his daughters take flight to Argos.[294] How the marriage comes about was retold many ways. Hyginus states that Aegyptus intended to kill both his brother and his nieces in order to have sole rule of the kingdom and asked for the girls to marry his sons. Danaus fled but was found by Aegyptus' sons in Argos. Danaus appeared to have a change of heart and offered his daughters in exchange for a cessation in the

[290] *Prometheus Bound* (864-5).
[291] Garvie (2008) 164.
[292] Although Pindar says there were forty-eight girls in his version of the myth. Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 9 (113-118).
[293] As referenced in Apollodorus.
[294] See *Prometheus Bound* (1295-8), Pindar *Pythian Odes 9* (113-114), Hyginus *Fabulae* (168) and Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* (13).

fighting. Apollodorus contradicts this story by saying Aegyptus' sons were the ones who pleaded with Danaus to allow them to marry his daughters on discovering him in Argos. There are also several variants of the reason why Danaus is against his daughters marrying Aegyptus' sons. In classical Athens, unlike contemporary opinion and law today, two cousins marrying each other was not a matter of contention and it is therefore unlikely that this would have been a cause for his objection. Both Apollodorus and Hyginus imply that Danaus knew that his brother was up to no good and that Aegyptus' plan to have the cousins marry would allow him and his sons to gain control of the kingdom. This would be something that Danaus would try to avoid at all costs. According to Garvie, another justification for Danaus' avoidance of the marriage was an oracle which appears in other accounts of the story. Garvie stresses versions of the story that are found in scholiasts' notes, according to which Danaus is told by an oracle that he will be killed by one of Aegyptus' sons or perhaps by a son-in-law.[295] This could also be a reason why he fled from Egypt and why, when he was caught, he plotted for his daughters to murder their husbands.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of accounts agree that one daughter did not murder her husband. Again, various reasons are given. Apollodorus and Horace[296] imply that Hypermnestra disobeyed her father's command because Lynceus was respectful of her on their wedding night and did not remove her virginity or take advantage of her, whereas the prophecy in *Prometheus Bound* suggests that she had grown fond of her husband.[297] Ovid seems to be the only one to suggest that it was because she was too scared and too virtuous to carry out the act, an account expressed

[295] Garvie (2008) 165.
[296] Apollodorus 2.1.4 – 5; Horace *Odes* 3.
[297] Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* (863-4).

in his letter from Hypermnestra to Lynceus, where she asks for his assistance since she spared his life.[298]

The conclusion of the myth again varies. The scholiast to Euripides' *Hecuba* (886) claims that the girls were all killed by Lynceus, who escaped death, after they committed the murders. In Pausanius' *Description of Greece*, there is a reference to Hypermnestra being put on trial by Danaus, but eventually acquitted by the Argives:

> They say of the wooden idols of Aphrodite and Hermes that one of them was carved by Epeios and the other dedicated by Hypermnestra. She was the only daughter of Danaos to ignore his orders: and he brought her to trial for putting him in danger by letting Lynkeus live and by making the disgrace of the crime worse for her sisters and himself as its contriver by not joining in it. When she was tried in Argos and acquitted, she dedicated this Aphrodite of Victory.[299]

Just like Apollodorus, Pausanias also reports a version of the myth in which the Danaids buried the heads of their victims.

> On the left of the road as you go into the acropolis you find yet another memorial of the sons of Aigyptos; the heads are here without the bodies, other remains are in Lerne where the young fellows were murdered; the women chopped off the heads as they lay dead to show their father a proof of the crime. [300]

[298] Ovid *Heroide*s 14 (15-17).
[299] Pausanias.1.2.19.6. Trans. by Levi (1971).
[300] Pausanias 2.24.3; Apollodorus 2.1.22-23.

Pausanias assumes that Danaus then allows Hypermnestra and Lynceus to marry, while the rest of the girls are given to the victors of a contest. Pausanius seems to know a similar version to Pindar,[301] for he says that Danaus realized it would be difficult to obtain suitors for his daughters since they were polluted murderesses, and would therefore give his daughters away as prizes in a running race.

> I imagine Ikarios got the idea of a race from Danaos, who did the same thing for his daughters. No one would marry them because they were criminals, so he announced he would give them away without a bride-price to anyone who thought they were beautiful; some men did turn up though not many, so he held a race for them, and the first home had first choice and the second home had second choice and so on down to the last. The girls left over had to wait for more lovers to arrive and another race.[302]

Hyginus gives two accounts of what took place once the deeds were discovered. First, he states that the girls went on after Danaus' death to marry Argive men. But interestingly, he also insinuates that the girls were eventually punished when they reached the Underworld, by being forced to carry water in leaky jars. This version of the story is supported by Ovid in *The Metamorphoses* where he states that the girls who plotted the destruction of their cousins were doomed incessantly to fetch the water that they had lost.[303]

[301] Pindar *Pythian* 9. 113-18.
[302] Pausanias 2. 3. 12. 2.
[303] Ovid *Metamorphoses* 4. l. 462 - although here they have been referred to as the Belides rather than the Danaids.

The punishment of the Danaids in Hades seems to be the part of the myth that has survived most prominently across time, particularly through visual art. Pausanias described a wall-painting of Hades by Polygnotus which was located at Delphi.[304] Among other well-known characters who inhabited the Underworld, in this painting there appeared two women who were carrying perforated vessels. According to Papadopoulou, this could have been the first visual artwork to have included this version of the conclusion of the Danaid story.[305] This scene also has appeared on a number of pots discovered in Southern Italy from 4th and 3rd century BC. [306]



Fig.1 Red-Figure Hydria in the British Museum. Attributed to The Danaid Painter (340BC - 320BC circa) depicting Danaids filling water jars. [307]

The Romans clearly had a fascination with the Danaids, for representations of them could be viewed in the Temple of Palatine Apollo in the Portico of the Danaids, which was constructed by Octavian between 36 and 28 B.C. Here, it is claimed that there would have been 50 statutes of the girls lining the wall. Although the statues are badly

[304] Pausanias 10.28-31.
[305] Papadopoulou (2011) 32.
[306] LIMC 3.1. s.v. 'Danaides', 338-41.
[307] British Museum catalogue number: 1867,0508.1339. A photograph and details of this image can be viewed online at: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=463450&partId=1&people=97019&peoA=97019-1-7&page=1 (last accessed 03/08/2015).

damaged, it seems, that they were carrying something above their heads, probably the leaky jars or vases that they were destined to use.[308] In addition to this central piece of architecture in Rome, there was a fresco from the late first century BC that was located in a building on the Esquiline. Now housed in the Vatican Museum, it depicts the Underworld of Homer's *Odyssey* and clearly labels the women carrying water as 'Danaids'.[309] Although, as we shall see, this scene has not been prominent in the performative receptions of the story in modernity, it has fascinated visual artists. The interest in this particular moment from Hyginus' version of the myth continued with a resurgence in the early 20th century with the English painter, John William Waterhouse, and the American artist, John Singer Sargent, both choosing to portray a number of Danaids struggling to fill a large leaking pot.[310] While Papadopoulou acknowledges that the references to this image of the Danaids appear long after Aeschylus' staging, she ponders whether in fact these depictions do not represent the same version of the myth as the playwright.[311]

5. The Internal Traditions of the Texts of the Danaid Plays

All these details from the surviving ancient accounts give us a fragmented view of what action may have taken place during the trilogy. But using these versions of the story can be problematic when trying to ascertain the plots of the three tragedies. The accounts we have been considering were composed for new and different audiences and consumers, and therefore may significantly differ from Aeschylus' version. Despite this, there does seem to be a similar structure of events, so educated

[308] Quenemoen (2006) 229 - 250.
[309] Small (2003) 98-100.
[310] Both paintings known under the title *The Danaides*. Waterhouse's painting (1906) is currently located within Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums. Sargent's painting (1922-25) currently resides in The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. For more information on this, please see: Reid (1993) Vol. 1. 323-325.
[311] Papadopoulou (2011) 33.

suggestions could be made. Other evidence that could assist with the ordering and developing the plots of the tragedies comes from the one surviving play from the trilogy, *Suppliants*. Looking at the action that takes place in this play might potentially indicate what may have happened in the lost plays *Egyptians* and *Danaids*. A summary of the action that takes place in the play is necessary at this point to keep my argument clear.

Suppliants opens with the arrival of Danaus' daughters, referred to as the 'Danaids', on the coast of the eastern Peloponnese near Argos, where they encounter a sacred mound which has an altar and images of the city gods.[312] The Danaids are the chorus and they enter with an olive branch each, the emblem of supplication.[313] They pray to the gods of Argos to greet them kindly and to drown Aegyptus' sons who are pursuing them, prayers which echo the action in other versions of the myth. [314] The girls affirm their Argive descent in a choral ode by referencing Io,[315] reflecting the prophecy also told in *Prometheus Bound* (which is however likely to be a later play). In an interesting move, the girls appear to blackmail Zeus. They call upon him to save them from marriage and claim that if he does not assist, they will kill themselves in order to dishonour him, for they are also his descendants.[316] After they sing about their plight, their father, Danaus, enters and claims that he sees someone approaching. He tells the girls to gather near the altar, as a place of sanctuary.[317] The king of Argos, Pelasgus, enters and questions the group.[318] They recount their story, emphasising that they are Argives and descendants of Io, but also describe their proposed marriage to

[312] The Suppliants make reference to their surroundings in line 160.
[313] *Suppliants* 28-30.
[314] *Suppliants* 30-50.
[315] *Suppliants* 50 – 89.
[316] *Suppliants* 172 – 195.
[317] *Suppliants* 202-230.
[318] *Suppliants* 291-366.

Aegyptus' sons as slavery.[319] They plead for his protection. Pelasgus realises that this would cause a war between Argos and Aegyptus but if he does not offer assistance and the Danaids' cause is a just one, he may offend Zeus, the patron of Suppliants.[320] It is a very difficult decision to make. Pelasgus asks whether the girls would be able to argue the case back at home, but they explain that under Egyptian law they would have no rights to refuse the marriage.[321] In a final attempt to persuade the king, the Danaids threaten to kill themselves at the altar, polluting the shrine with death and suicide.[322] Pelasgus, realising there is no way out of this dilemma, suggests that Danaus and address the Assembly, and reveal to the other citizens the group's suppliancy at altars around the city.[323]

While their father and Pelasgus are absent, the girls make more pleas to Zeus and talk again of their ancestress, Io.[324] On his return, Danaus declares that Pelasgus has persuaded the Argives to grant the family protection and asylum as resident aliens so that no one (resident or alien) can attack them. The punishment for anyone who does not help the family will be exile.[325] The Danaids sing a song to bless the Argives, but the celebrations are curtailed as Danaus sees Aegyptus' boys arriving with their fleet.[326]

The next part of the text is slightly corrupt, but we can ascertain that the Danaids are singing of their apprehension, as their father runs off to get help, followed by the entrance of the Egyptians.[327] The barbarians threaten to drag the girls to the ship, but soon Pelasgus enters and warns off the Egyptians by stating that the Danaids

[319] *Suppliants* 367 – 420.
[320] *Suppliants* 452-475.
[321] *Suppliants* 483-495.
[322] *Suppliants* 535-564 & 606-7.
[323] *Suppliants* 610-660.
[324] *Suppliants* 686 -790.
[325] *Suppliants* 815 -839.
[326] *Suppliants* 855-960.
[327] *Suppliants* 1010-1130.

are only able to be taken with their own consent and at the moment they have the protection of Argos.[328] The herald of the Egyptians claims that this act is a declaration of war and leaves. [329] Pelasgus invites the girls to come into the city and identify a residence but they choose to wait for their father, who arrives after Pelasgus leaves. Danaus returns with his own personal guards, who have been appointed to him by the city, which *may* suggest that he is beginning to show the early signs of aspiring to a tyranny.[330] He asks the girls to thank the gods and the city but to be cautious as they enter the city, for he worries what may happen to young girls in a strange land. The Danaids reassure him that they will be careful.[331] On preparing to depart they sing in honour of Argos and its gods, but appear to shun Aphrodite. They exit with another plea to Zeus to assist them with the impending war and protect them from the forced marriage.[332]

It is my thinking that not much action occurs in *Suppliants* when we compare it with other versions of the myth. Müller shared this thought, claiming that there was very little in terms of dramatic interest within the play.[333] The play appears to be explaining why the Danaids find themselves in Argos, although not going into how the marriage proposals came about. It contains a lack of great revelations or surprises. There appears to be no moment of peripeteia or anagnorisis, which one would expect from Aeschylus when bearing his other works, such as the individual tragedies comprising the *Oresteia*, in mind. The arrival of the Egyptians would be considered a surprise if it had not already been outlined at the beginning of the play that the brothers were in pursuit of the girls and their father.

[328] *Suppliants* 1194 – 1245.
[329] *Suppliants* 1254-1256.
[330] See Hall (1989) 123.
[331] *Suppliants* 1363 – 1392.
[332] *Suppliants* 1405 -1422.
[333] Müller, C.O (1835) 14-15.

If we apply Gruppe's theory concerning the structure of Aeschylean trilogies to the information given in *Suppliants*, this play would most likely be the first of the three tragedies. This view is also held by many scholars including Lloyd-Jones, Foley, Johansen and Whittle.[334] No deed takes place, nor does any major judgement or resolution occur that brings the story to a neat end, which on Gruppe's argument would rule *Suppliants* out as the middle or last production. In fact, the end of *Suppliants* appears to prepare the audience for more action, since war is threatened. But this ordering of the plays does not seem to me to fit. Gruppe believed that the first production would set up the events for the following plays, which in some way *Suppliants* does; but another part of Gruppe's theory suggests that the first play needs also to provide a motive. One could say the motive for the forthcoming events would be revenge for their forced marriages which is evident in the girls' pleas for help, but it does raise some difficult questions. For example, why are they so against marrying their cousins? It is also not discussed extensively in the extant text why their father, Danaus, has not stepped in to stop the marriage or why it was originally proposed.

I think that the motive would need to be much more clearly and emphatically stated or explained. In my view, it is only briefly discussed at the beginning of the play, which implies that the audience must have been given prior knowledge of the situation, presumably from the action in a preceding tragedy. I appreciate, of course, that some academics could argue that this myth may have been well known to Aeschylus' intended audience and therefore in-depth discussion and background would not be necessary. But Sommerstein shares my opinion that certain references may have been discussed in a preceding play. He suggests that the mention of

[334] Lloyd- Jones (1990) 262, Foley (2004) 107, Johansen and Whittle (1980) 54-55.

Egyptian law in *Suppliants*[335] indicates that there must have been a prior play, which may have explained why the marriages were able to go ahead.[336] This kind of forced marriage would be alien to an Athenian audience, for in their culture a free woman would not be able to be taken in marriage without her father's consent if he was still alive and of sound mind.[337]

The rest of our knowledge of the trilogy comes from a few fragments. Not much is known concerning one of the lost tragedies in the tetralogy, *Egyptians*, for only a single word exists, 'Ζαγρεύς'.[338] However, the title of the play suggests that *Egyptians* may have been set in Egypt or that the chorus were Egyptians. This would be in the line with other Aeschylean plays such as *Persians*, but remains pure conjecture. In his introduction to Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, Burian is one of those who takes the view that *Egyptians* was placed as the second tragedy. He continues by asserting that *Suppliants* would come first, preparing the way for the second tragedy, which would then deal with the battle of the Egyptians against the Argives or the consequences of the battle. His view is that the end of this play could feature the bridegrooms claiming their brides, which would lead into the final play, *Danaids*.[339] On the other hand, as we have seen, Sommerstein has a different view of the order of the plays in the trilogy and also of the plot of *Egyptians*. As discussed above, he sees indications in *Suppliants* that would suggest a play preceded it and therefore locates *Egyptians* as the first in the trilogy.

By comparing the various versions of the myth and evidence from *Suppliants*, Sommerstein offers this possible plot line, which I paraphrase as follows: Danaus, the father of the Danaids, rules Egypt but is concerned that he has no male heir. He and

[335] *Suppliants* 410-24.
[336] Sommerstein (2008) 103.
[337] Just (1989) 40 – 7.
[338] TgrF 5.
[339] Burian (1991) xi –xxii.

the chorus of Egyptians -perhaps nobles or advisors - are anxious about the future. Aegyptus comes to Danaus with the proposal that their children marry in order to keep the rule of the kingdom within the family. Danaus, however, has been told by an oracle that he would be murdered by the bedfellow of his daughter and, therefore, refuses Aegyptus' offer. Aegyptus invokes the Egyptian law (mentioned in *The Suppliants*), meaning that the girls' closest male relative - himself -has the right to give them away in marriage without their father's consent, but Aegyptus, perhaps still meeting resistance, then declares war on Danaus. [340]

Sommerstein speculates that this declaration of war would be met with enthusiastic approval from the chorus,[341] although I see a lack of basis for this. In my view, if this is an accurate outline of the plot, the chorus would have been present during Danaus' acknowledgement of what the oracle foretold. They would also have seen Aegyptus' desire to gain control of the kingdom. I think it would be made quite clear to the audience and chorus that, if the proposal took place, it would give Aegyptus and his sons control of the kingdom once the marriages had occurred. By invoking the law against his brother, this could have been seen as underhand. For these reasons, I doubt the chorus would be enthusiastic for a war; they would, rather, be apprehensive. The only way I can see for the chorus to be supportive of Aegyptus is if Danaus displayed tyrannical qualities and they, therefore, saw Aegyptus as a saviour figure. On the other hand, it may have been that Aeschylus was trying to create the Egyptian environment and setting in a way which made it seem exotic and alien to the Athenian audience in a similar way to the foreign atmosphere of another of his early dated plays, *Persians*.[342]

[340] Sommerstein (2010)103-104.
[341] Sommerstein (2010) 104.
[342] For more discussion on this please see Hall (1989) 76-100.

Sommerstein's hypothetical plot of *Egyptians*, therefore, places *Suppliants* as the second play in the trilogy. He is supported in this by Del Grande.[343] My opinion is that it provides a stronger reason for why the Danaids and their father have run away from Egypt as well as explaining why Danaus has not been able to stop the marriages from going ahead. The motive for the deed that supposedly will take place later on in the trilogy is also strengthened by the involvement of the oracle section of the story. Sommerstein's version of *Egyptians* also changes how *Suppliants* is perceived. As a stand-alone play, the plot of *Suppliants* would potentially evoke sympathy for the Danaids and their father. They come across as desperate for assistance and clearly upset about an arrangement they may not escape. However, if *Suppliants* is viewed with knowledge of the preceding play, the girls and their father come across as deceptive and manipulative characters. The girls, in my view, reject the proposal of marriage to Aegyptus' sons so vehemently in *Suppliants* that they must be blatantly aware of some specific ramification or outcome. If the daughters know of their father's fate, then out of daughterly duty and love for him, they may have agreed at some point in the previous play to protect him at all costs. Perhaps he has thoroughly deceived his daughters by neglecting to tell them of his fated demise and instead offered a motive so persuasive that, blinded by love for him, they do not question his version of circumstances and, therefore, are convinced that the marriage cannot go ahead.

The reason for their refusal has been greatly debated in the world of scholarship, with many different academics offering rival interpretations. Wilamowitz,[344] for example, speculated that the girls acted out of an innate hostility

[343] Del Grande (1947) 90 – 92.
[344] Wilamowitz (1914) 15.

towards men, to which reference is made in *Suppliants*,[345] whereas Thomson saw their disgust towards marriage as representing the principle of the anthropological category of endogamy over exogamy.[346] Some scholars claim that their reluctance to marry was illustrating an Athenian everyday reality. The Danaids' misgivings on their proposed marriages, according to Seaford and Bakewell, may be comparable to the attitudes of Athenian brides and young women in general.[347] It is highlighting their anxieties concerning separation from their natal home and fear of being subject to violent male sexuality - represented by Aegyptus' sons - but overall appears, with the extremism characteristic of myth, as an exotic scenario in the plays. Seaford asserts that the Danaids and real-life women have much in common.[348]

Of course, we cannot be sure of the motive of the girls and how much knowledge their father has shared with them, but it is certainly worth bearing in mind how this would impact the rest of the action in the trilogy. If we view the trilogy as commencing with either *Egyptians* followed by *Suppliants*, or vice versa, *Danaids* would therefore still have been the final play. This is commonly agreed in scholarship. Again, very little is known concerning what action may have taken place, but two surviving fragments of this tragedy provide us with some crucial clues.[349]

The first fragment attributed to *Danaids* was quoted in the scholion on Pindar, *Pythian* 3.27. Sommerstein and Garvie acknowledge that it must have been corrupted and is therefore misleading,[350] but it does seem to fit with the themes of the trilogy (TgrF 43):

[345] *Suppliants* 414 and 491-496.
[346] Thomson (1941) 298 – 309.
[347] Seaford (1987) 110, Bakewell (2013) 59-60.
[348] Seaford (1987) 110.
[349] There are a number of other fragments that scholars such as Hermann (1827) have suggested that could be attributed to this play, but we cannot be completely convinced of their authenticity.
[350] Sommerstein (2008) 101, Garvie (2006) 228.

κἄπειτα δ' εἶσι λαμπρὸν ἡλίου φάος,
ἐγὼ δ' ἐγείρω πρευμενὴς τοὺς νυμφίους
νόμοισι θέλγων σὺν κόροις τε καὶ κόραις

Scholia to Pindar, *Pythian* 3. [19] 32

> And then will come the brilliant light of the sun, and I will graciously awake the bridal couples, enchanting them with song with a choir of youths and maidens.[351]

Sommerstein places this fragment at the beginning of the tragedy. He asserts that it would have been spoken, perhaps in a prologue, by someone unaware of the plot to murder the sons of Aegyptus. A song would have been sung as the bridal couples awoke. This is in line with a custom, outlined by Theocritus in one of his *Idylls*,[352] where a group would gather outside the bridal chamber the morning after a wedding to wake the couple with a waking song, the *hymenaion*. Although many scholars share Sommerstein's view, there is some opposition. Garvie points out that it could also be attributed to Danaus, who could be making an ironic comment on the action.[353] Wolff and Focke have different views on where in the play the fragment should be placed. Wolff chose, perversely, to believe that a prologue did not take place in *Danaids*, since Aeschylus would have followed an invariable pattern in his plays and the surviving example from this tragic trilogy, *Suppliants*, did not feature one.[354] Johansen and Whittle offer two potential locations. In line with Sommerstein's assertion, the two scholars acknowledge that it is quite possible the fragment is from the opening scene of *Danaids*, however, at the same time, they also claim an argument could be made for

[351] Translations of fragments by Sommerstein (2008) 40 -41.
[352] Theocritus 18.56 -57.
[353] Garvie (2006) 228.
[354] Wolff (1958) 130. Focke (1922)180 also offers a different placement—after Hypermnestra's acquittal as an announcement for the festival held by Hypermnestra and Lynceus—but does not offer proper reasoning for this in my view.

the line to have been delivered by a divinity at the end of the production.[355] I tend to agree with Sommerstein's placement and attribution, since the fragment indicates that the singing has yet to take place. The character is clearly unaware of events that have occurred during the night, and the corpses have yet to be discovered. In the absence of any other evidence to shed more light on the context of this line, it is the most educated suggestion and fits best with the other versions of the story.

The second fragment linked to *Danaids* is viewed by academics as much more substantial in assisting the recovery of the lost play (TgrF 44):

ἐρᾷ μὲν ἁγνὸς οὐρανὸς τρῶσαι χθόνα,
ἔρως δὲ γαῖαν λαμβάνει γάμου τυχεῖν·
ὄμβρος δ' ἀπ' εὐνάεντος οὐρανοῦ πεσὼν
ἔκυσε γαῖαν, ἡ δὲ τίκτεται βροτοῖς
μήλων τε βοσκὰς καὶ βίον Δημήτριον
δένδρων τ' ὀπώραν· ἐκ νοτίζοντος γάμου
τέλειός ἐστι· τῶν δ' ἐγὼ παραίτιος.

Athenaeus 13.600b;

APHRODITE
The holy Heaven passionately desires to penetrate the Earth, and passionate desire takes hold of Earth for union with Heaven. Rain falls from the brimming fountains of Heaven and makes Earth conceive, and she brings forth for mortals grazing for their flocks, cereals to sustain their life, and the fruit of trees: by the wedlock of the rain she comes to her fulfilment. Of this, I am in part the cause.

This fragment, quoted in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* 13.600b, attributes the speech to Aphrodite who, it could be inferred, must have been one of the characters in the fragmentary play. But Athenaeus does not specify where the dialogue is placed in the

[355] Johansen and Whittle (1980) 41.

action. If it is indeed the goddess who speaks this line, it appears to re-affirm her power after the Danaids neglect to praise her in one of the previous plays, *Suppliants*. Garvie argues that the meaning of Aphrodite's dialogue is very apparent: she is emphasising the link between love and the rejuvenation of nature.[356] In a similar vein, Sommerstein sees it as 'affirmation by the goddess herself of the universality of her power, which the Danaids had sought to reject'.[357] But where in the play is this fragment located? Many scholars, such as Burian, Johansen and Whittle,[358] believe that there would have been a key moment where a trial would have taken place in this final instalment of the trilogy, rather than an action following the reception of the myth made popular by Ovid and Horace, a reception which favoured the eternal punishment of the girls. This would echo the legalistic action in the third tragedy, *Eumenides,* of the only extant trilogy of Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*.

Rehm emphasised the closeness of the link between the tragic trilogies, the *Oresteia* and *Danaids*. He views the *Oresteia* as Aeschylus' opportunity to develop and further the themes and ideas that were dealt with in the tragic story of the Danaids, performed approximately five years earlier.[359] When we put both trilogies next to one and another, a number of similarities do emerge. Both showcase females killing their husbands and the aftermath - in the case of the *Oresteia,* focusing on Clytemnestra's plot and execution of the murder of Agamemnon. Aeschylus balances this with highlighting the repercussions of male violent behaviour and the human desire for vengeance. He also stages the recommendation that the polis should be prepared to be accountable for its decisions when it comes to providing foreigners with asylum or hospitality. Rehm argues, on the analogy of *Eumenides,* that a trial would have taken

[356] Garvie (2006) 205.
[357] Sommerstein (2008) 101.
[358] Burian (1991) xiii, Johansen and Whittle (1980) 42.
[359] Rehm (2002) 111- 118.

place to bring the *Danaids* trilogy to a dramatic close.[360] *Eumenides* features the trial of Orestes for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra. In this scene, we see the intervention of two gods. Athena calls for the trial to take place; Apollo acts as counsel for Orestes. Apollo emotively speaks on behalf of Orestes, resulting in a tied vote and in due course, after Athena's intervention, his acquittal. If Aeschylus sometimes repeated a similar formula in his trilogies this would mean a similar scene would take place during the *Danaids*. Perhaps Aphrodite spoke in defence of Hypermnestra, the Danaid who, in other versions of the story, is said to have spared her husband. It is likely that Hypermnestra appeared in Aeschylus' version, since she is a common factor in the retellings, but scholarship differs on her role and what took place in this scene.

Sommerstein suggests that the speech was evidence that 'the action of the Danaids (and their father, if as is almost certain he was involved in plotting it) was condemned, and Hypermnestra vindicated'.[361] He goes on to suggest that her crime would have meant disobeying an order from her father and that the Argives may have supported his case—perhaps not knowing all the details. Therefore, Hypermnestra would have required the intervention of a goddess such as Aphrodite to achieve an acquittal. The versions of the Danaid story by Apollodorus and Ovid indicate that an outraged Danaus would have tried to punish his daughter for her betrayal. Hermann and Schmitt saw that there were potentially two trials,[362] one for Hypermnestra and one for the rest of the girls. Yet a large number of scholars including Welcker,[363] Gruppe,[364] Ridgeway, Diamantopoulos, Murray and Steinweig believed only one took place. Ridgeway, Diamantopoulos and Steinweig all assert that Aphrodite defended

[360] Rehm (2002) 111- 118.
[361] Sommerstein (2010) 101.
[362] Hermann (1827) 321; Schmidt (1839) 12.
[363] Welcker (1824) 404.
[364] Gruppe(1834) 79.

Hypermnestra, while Murray took the stance that Aphrodite merely presided and did not act as counsel for the defence. [365]

An alternative view of the trial scene is offered by Robertson, who suggests that in fact the trial was of the other forty-nine Danaids and that Aphrodite undertook the role of prosecutor.[366] Surely they should not escape judgement after the acts they have committed and nor should their father? Paley and Stoessl also agreed that the trial would have been of both Danaus and his daughters.[367] Page was unable to decide who actually stood trial, though he insisted one took place.[368] Despite all the discussion of a putative trial, however, we have no formal evidence for any taking place, and it is important to bear in mind that all the scholarship about a 'trial' is pure conjecture. Some scholars appeal to the tradition of such a trial taking place in Argos, since Pausanias makes reference to one,[369] but this does *not* prove that the tradition had been used by Aeschylus in this trilogy. Lesky is undecided on whether a trial did take place and suggests that the fragment does not indicate that it was from part of a trial. He believed that it implies that Danaus marries off his daughters to suitors who have competed for their hands in marriage in a running race, in line with Pindar's version of events. The daughters gain absolution for their deeds and this therefore furnishes a conciliatory end to the trilogy.[370]

Without more surviving segments of the play, if we are to reconstruct the action, it may again be helpful to look towards the other retellings of this story. As mentioned before, they all seem to share four common elements. The audience is already made aware of the first two. It is established in *Suppliants* (and potentially in

[365] Ridgeway (1910) 203; Diamantopoulos (1957) 222; Murray (1952) 12; Steinweg (1924) 15.
[366] Robertson, (1924) 51-3.
[367] Paley (1879) 3; Stoessl (1937) 105.
[368] Denniston (1957) xviii.
[369] Pausanias 2.19.6.
[370] Lesky (1983) 69 -70.

the supposed opening play, *Egyptians*) that Danaus and Aegyptus are related, descendants of Io, with the former having fifty daughters and the latter, fifty sons. We are not told in detail in *Suppliants* why the marriages are being encouraged by Aegyptus but the reason could have been outlined in *Egyptians*, through the argument between the two brothers over who should be rule the kingdom. This leaves two common plot moments that could be potentially played out or addressed in the final tragedy of the three.

All the accounts refer to the marriage actually taking place, with the fifty daughters marrying the fifty sons. Hyginus claims that it was at their father's command that they killed their husbands on their wedding night. Apollodorus goes even further to suggest that Danaus gave the girls daggers with which to do the deed. Despite these versions, it is possible that Aeschylus may have put the onus on the daughters for the deaths and sidelined Danaus' character. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence means we can never be truly sure. If we are to believe that fr. 43 was spoken by a servant and was part of the prologue, we would assume that between the end of *Suppliants* and the beginning of *Danaids*—if ordering the tragedies with *Egyptians* first—a fair amount of action has taken place. The war between the Egyptians and Argives (the one which the Egyptian herald indicates is on the cards when Pelasgus refuses to hand over the Danaids)[371] must have already occurred. The details of battle are unknown but it has resulted in the marriages going ahead, and the wedding celebrations coming to pass before the opening of *Danaids*. The deaths of the bridegrooms are most likely to have taken place before the start of the play as well, if we follow the assumption that there was a prologue. The opening of *Danaids* may have commenced with the prologue fragment just prior to the revelation of the

[371] *Suppliants* 1243 – 1255.

murders. This is an intuitively plausible conclusion since the discovery is mentioned in various adaptations and leads to the final coherent staple element of the Danaids' story. One daughter, universally acknowledged to be Hypermnestra, refuses to take part in the massacre by sparing her husband-to-be, Lynceus, and is frequently referred to in retellings. It would be, therefore, a reasonable proposal to suggest that she did play a part in the final trilogy. Once the bodies of the murdered husbands have been revealed, Hypermnestra's betrayal of orders—whether her father's or her sisters'—would be discovered, prompting anger within the group. She would be held accountable for her actions and perhaps this is where fr. 44 would have appeared. The rest of the plot remains purely speculative.

If we are to follow the plot of *Egyptians* proposed by Sommerstein, and assume that the trilogy commenced with a prophecy from the oracle, in similar vein to the *Oresteia*, there should be some resolution or fulfilment in the final play. This might suggest that Danaus would die at the hands of Lynceus, who takes revenge for the murders of his brothers and perhaps, after Pelasgus' death, liberates the Argives from Danaus' despotic rule. Alternatively, a god or goddess may have appeared and intervened or, in a dramatic twist, the Argives could have seized control of the situation and gone on to punish Danaus and the Danaids. Several scholars have speculated on the ending of the trilogy. Saïd proposed that *Danaids* begins with the discovery of the corpses, followed by the trial of Hypermnestra for disobeying her father. Aphrodite, according to Saïd, intervenes and vindicates the girl and then goes on to encourage the eventual reconciliation of the rest of the Danaids to marriage.[372] In Froma Zeitlin's reconstruction of the trilogy,[373] she manipulates the existing information we have to create an exploration of women and the polis' attitudes

[372] Saïd (1998) 275 -95.
[373] Zeitlin (1992) 236.

towards the concept of marriage. Her version would create a trilogy in which, after the girls kill their cousins/husbands, the Danaids become reconciled with the idea of marriage and go on to import the Thesmophoria festival from Egypt (a cult aetiology which is suggested in Herodotus).[374]

There are too many discrepancies in Zeitlin's proposed version, from my perspective. The Thesmophoria was more linked to fertility than the civic ideology of marriage and focused on the relationship between mother and daughter, rather than the strong link between the girls and their father evident in this case. I like the idea of the introduction of the Thesmophoria and nod to Herodotus, but feel that if it were mentioned at some point in the trilogy, it would most probably have been in the form of a prophecy by Aphrodite in the closing scene. Sommerstein has offered an in-depth reconstruction of what may have taken place during the final play of the Danaid trilogy, based on the fragmentary evidence and drawing upon details from other versions of the story. He suggests that the play opens with Lynceus in disguise, who fills the audience in on the events that have recently occurred, including the war, the death of Pelasgus, Danaus taking control and offering his daughters as a peace offering to Aegyptus' sons, the marriage and, finally, the nocturnal massacre which he has escaped. Lynceus narrates how his wife, Hypermnestra, has smuggled him out of the house; he plans to hide and wait for an opportunity to take revenge on Danaus, the mastermind of the murders. As Lynceus exits, another character enters. This is might be a servant of Danaus who is unaware of the plot, describes the festivities, and plans to start wakening the couples, as mentioned in fragment 43. The Danaids, according to Sommerstein's scheme, enter as the chorus, carrying the daggers that they used to commit the murders. Danaus then enters escorting his defiant daughter, Hypermnestra.

[374] Zeitlin (1992) 235; Herodotus 2.171.2-3.

He announces her betrayal and sends her to prison. Danaus departs to hold a meeting with the Argive council to find out where Lynceus is. Sommerstein makes a point of stating that Danaus would have done this in a threatening manner retold to the audience via a messenger.

The same messenger also reports to the audience that, in front of the assembly, a young man claims that he knows where Lynceus is and asks for the assistance of armed men and the permission to act. Danaus gives him this and the young man reveals himself as Lynceus. He announces that Danaus is a murderer, has him arrested and sentenced to execution. Lynceus now claims the title of king of Argos. An agitated choral ode would have followed this, before Lynceus and Hypermnestra enter as Argive King and Queen. Lynceus orders the arrest of the Danaids but Aphrodite appears. She explains that the Danaids were innocent, for they did not know about the fate of Danaus as foretold by the oracle. Sommerstein suggests that Aphrodite claims that the girls did not know 'the true guilt and motive of Danaus, who had sought to negate and frustrate her universal power', which would explain the location of fragment 44. Aphrodite persuades Lynceus to let the girls live and purify them from the pollution of the murders. The Danaids respond to this by dropping their daggers and accept their destined roles - which could be marriages to some young male Argives. Sommerstein sees the play ending with a similar procession to that which finished *Suppliants*, but instead of communicating a sense of foreboding, it would be a joyous wedding procession, including Aphrodite, Lynceus and Hypermnestra.[375]

There are several elements in Sommerstein's proposed reconstruction with which I agree. The inclusion of the oracle is a device that appears in some of the later versions of the story and would provide Danaus with a pertinent reason for not

[375] Sommerstein (2010) 105-6.

allowing the marriages to take place. However, it is not mentioned in *Suppliants*, so all references to the oracle must have taken place in the lost play, *Egyptians*. Sommerstein emphasises the role of Lynceus within his reconstruction, perhaps due to the reference that Aristotle makes in *Poetics* to a tragedy entitled *Lynceus*.[376] Aristotle does not mention who the author was, yet it must have dramatized an episode from the same myth; Papadopoulou suggests that the plot of the lost tragedy *Lynceus* would involve Danaus attempting to kill Lynceus, but would conclude with Lynceus instead killing Danaus.[377] Sommerstein, similarly, opts to develop Danaus' character. In the reconstruction of *Lynceus*, Danaus, according to Sommerstein, would have appeared central to the action and highly devious. But where is the evidence for this suggested character trait? In *Suppliants*, to me, he appears unassuming until the very end of the play—far from tyrannical. This is a view that Papadopoulou also shares. She acknowledges that, from the reception of the myth prior to Aeschylus' version and after it, Danaus appears to play a central role. But from the evidence provided in the surviving play, *Suppliants*, Aeschylus appears to reduce his role, preferring to focus on the daughters.[378] Hugh Lloyd-Jones also points out that in *Suppliants*, Danaus does not have a lead role and in fact only has two sections of dialogue on stage. This may prove that he was not to be seen as a tyrant or dominating character. On the other hand, Bakewell claims that Danaus is a considerable threat to Argos.[379] In the sections of dialogue he does have, he comes across more polished than his daughters in conversation, especially when you take into consideration Sandin's assertion that the Danaids' peculiar style of speech parallels their exotic appearance.[380] Danaus appears

[376] Aristotle *Poetics* 1425a 26-8.
[377] Papadopoulou (2011)103.
[378] Papadopoulou (2011) 38.
[379] Bakewell (2013) 40.
[380] Par Sandin (2003) 60.

to coach his daughters to be received well by Pelasgus.[381] He tailors the girls' speech to reflect their status as suppliants, and in this 'rehearsal scene' comes over as calculating. This could be Aeschylus insinuating that Danaus was like a clever puppet-master and did not want to be seen to be directly involved, knowing that people would be more open to his daughters, as scared young women. The playwright seems to reinforce that the character of Danaus is a stereotype of a foreign man, cunning and manipulative, alien to his Athenian audience.[382]

6. Receptions Prior to 1995

The idea of Danaus portrayed as a tyrant, and generally downright deceptive, has been the focus of many receptions of the story. This characterisation certainly seemed to fit within with the world of opera, inspiring Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*, which debuted at the Paris Opera in April 1784. The librettists, Leblanc du Roullet and Baron Tschudi, drew upon the fragmented Aeschylean trilogy of tragedies, as well as other versions of the myth, to create a five-act opera.[383] Rather than focusing on the daughters' rejection of the marriages and the Argive civic response to the maidens as it appears in the extant play, *Suppliants*, the plot of the opera stressed what happens to a tyrannical figure when he is blinded by his own selfish needs and desires. The scenes at Argos are cut from the plot, as well as the daughters' intense refusal of the proposed marriages. Instead the opera opens with Danaus agreeing to reconciliation with

[381] *Suppliants* 229-290.
[382] For more information on the stereotyping of foreigners on the Athenian stage, please see Hall (1989) 102-13.
[383] The original libretto has been published as a reprint within the *Chefs-d'oeuvre classiques de l'opéra français*. vol.39 (New York, 1971) and can be viewed here: http://imslp.org/wiki/Les_Dana%C3%AFdes_%28Salieri%2C_Antonio%29 (last accesed 30/11/15) . A new studio recording of the opera was released in 2015 by record label, Ediciones Singulares, and was performed by Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles and Les Talens Lyriques. This recording can be heard: http://www.prestoclassical.co.uk/r/Ediciones%2BSingulares/ES1019 (last accessed on 23/11/15).

Aegyptus, who has now taken leadership of Egypt after their dispute, and an agreement is made that their children should marry. Danaus then manipulates his daughters to solemnly swear that they will seek vengeance for his violated honour by murdering their husbands on their wedding night. The audience are made aware that an oracle has predicted his downfall by one of Aegyptus's sons, but Danaus mentions this only briefly. Instead, he instils a heightened lust for revenge within his daughters, who are unable to decipher his compulsively irrational manipulation.

As in the versions of the myth that we have explored before, Hypermestre [384] is the only one who exercises her free will and refuses the order, drawing her father into a lengthy debate in Act. In the opera, the character of Hypermestre is explored further than in any other retelling, revealing her 'cognitive dissonance' in relation to love for her father, the affection she has for her affianced husband and her own ethical beliefs. In the opera, there is much more of an emphasis on the psychological involvement in the motives and decisions than we assume were in Aeschylus' version. The oracle device may have been employed here, but these characters are individuals and make their own destiny rather than accept the involvement and responsibility of the divine.[385] The oracle becomes more of an excuse for irrational behaviour and emotional blackmail. Danaus tries to use this to convince Hypermestre to carry out his desire for vengeance, but to no avail. She assists Lyncée[386] to escape as the rest of the brothers are being murdered by the bloodthirsty Danaïdes, fueled by the lines fed by their father. Danaus discovers that Lyncée has escaped and flies into a furious rage, commanding that the girls kill the surviving son of Aegyptus. Lyncée, in the meantime, has called upon an army to avenge the loss of his brothers. They arrive at

[384] The French spelling of Hypermnestra.
[385] The scene where the girls are instructed to kill their husbands takes place in a hidden space dedicated to the goddess, Némésis, but there is no intervention from the divine here unlike other classical-myth inspired operas that precede *Les Danaïdes*, such as Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Alceste.*
[386] The French translation of Lynceus.

the palace and slaughter the murderesses. Danaus turns on Hypermestre and prepares to kill her, but is stopped as the palace burns in the background. The librettists decide to avoid the known conclusions of the Danaid story, opting to show Danaus punished in the Underworld, chained to a rock while a vulture consumes his entrails. His daughters are also there—minus the water jars that they are often depicted with—but again the focus is on the payback for the power-crazed father, who will endure eternal torture for his deeds.

Salieri's offering, like the Venetian opera by Josef Mysliveček, *L'Ipermestra,*[387] has a more deceptive and openly tyrannical version of the Danaus character than the one that appears in *Suppliants* and presumably in the rest of the trilogy. Whereas in Aeschylus, the audience may be slightly indifferent to Danaus due to his lack of involvement, in the opera, *Les Danaïdes*, he clearly is the despised character. The audience loses any sense of compassion and sympathy towards him and his plight, particularly when he appears to be happy to kill his own daughter in order to quench his desire for revenge. It is interesting for us to see this development within the reception of the story and how it may have impacted Purcărete's and Mee's adaptations. In my view, interest in the Danaid myth only flourished in the worlds of opera and fine art until it re-entered the theatre, triumphantly, when director, Silviu Purcărete turned his attention to it.

7. Contemporary Adaptations

The sections on the extant material, academic engagement and the reception of the lost play preceding 1995 were important to include in order to showcase the extent of the

[387] Libretto by Metastasio was produced in 1744, therefore pre-dating the Salieri's production. In this version of the story, Danaus requests that Hypermnestra murder her husband but rather than allowing the atrocity coming to pass, she manages to reconcile all parties. See reference to this in Selfridge – Field (2007) 490.

material that the contemporary playwrights I have chosen to focus on may have had access to or been influenced by. In this final section of the chapter I will discuss how the playwrights, Silviu Purcărete and Charles Mee, created their interpretations, how they engaged with the fragmented play and what decisions they made to fill in the gaps. I will also discuss the themes that the playwrights chose to develop and how these impacted the overall reading of the productions. The evidence from the scripts and external discussions on the plays are supported by interviews with the playwrights themselves. While I was unable to interview Mee directly, he has documented his love of Greek drama in an extensive interview with his daughter, Erin Mee. In regards to Purcărete, who has not discussed his production of the *Danaids* at length since the staging, I was able to secure an interview on 16 May 2014, in which he provided many insights into his creation that had not been formally documented before. The full transcript of this interview can be found as Appendix B.

8. Silviu Purcărete–*Les Danaïdes*

In December 1995, Silviu Purcărete's spectacular production *Les Danaïdes*, based on the extant *Suppliants* and the rest of Aeschylus' fragmented tetralogy, was previewed in Craiova, Romania and then embarked on a European tour including performances at the Avignon Festival in France, Dublin's National Basketball Arena and, in the UK, Birmingham's National Indoor Arena. The popularity of the performance saw it even travel to America, where it was given its U.S premiere at the Lincoln Center Festival in 1997. It was viewed as an impressive production,[388] in part for the artistic choice of hosting a cast of over one hundred on stage. In order to understand the reasoning behind Purcărete's decision to engage with the fragmented play and the choices he

[388] Review of Les Danaïdes http://variety.com/1997/legit/reviews/les-danaides-1117329654/ (Last accessed 01/08/2015).

made for staging the tetralogy, we must first look at his background as a director which clearly influenced his approaches.

Born in Bucharest in 1950, Purcărete honed his directorial skills at the Theatre Academy of Bucharest, where he was a student during the 1970s. In his chapter from *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, Aleksandar Sasa Dundjerovic explains that Purcărete's approach to staging text is influenced heavily by the European tradition of 'directors' theatre'. The way he creates a scene is by using the text as inspiration to devise 'a highly subjective performance'.[389] This was standard practice in Romanian theatre, particularly amongst the new generation of directors that emerged in the 1960s; it was a style of theatre that developed in response to state censorship under the oppressive Communist regime. They wanted to challenge the political landscape in a non-overt manner. Directors such as Lucian Pintilie worked with material from a classical canon of plays that were deemed suitable for public consumption in pre-democratic Romania. However, these texts provided an arena where directors, through performance, could provide a space for the kinds of discussion that were frowned upon and forbidden by the State. The director would become the author of the performance, but the actual subject-matter was safely far removed from the historical situation in which Romanians found themselves. While Purcărete does not assign himself to any particular theatre style, there are certainly similarities between his work and these directors who went before him. Dundjerovic claims that for Purcărete, theatre is a personal art. These productions are a 'coded subjective experience collectively shared with the audience'.[390] He uses the stage as a canvas, while his performers are puppets for his response to these texts, in which the audience can see their own experiences reflected back at them. Purcărete does not

[389] Dundjerovic (2010) 87 – 100.
[390] Dundjerovic (2010) 87 – 100.

have an overarching message in his productions. He sees that art can be used for different purposes, but it should never be used in a direct attempt to change someone's point of view. Ultimately the audience should draw their own conclusions.

Like his Romanian predecessors, Purcărete has a history of working with classical plays. As he claimed in an interview with Aleksandar Sasa Dundjerovic, 'I have always been attracted to old texts, classic texts. I was never inspired by new and freshly written plays'.[391] This is clear from the productions he has worked on. Purcărete's past offerings have included adaptations of Shakespeare, Molière and Chekhov, for which he has become internationally known. He has also done his fair share of ancient Greek theatre adaptations. In 1993, he drew upon Euripides' *Hippolytus*[392] for his production *Phaedra*, and, five years later, he staged what is known as *A Romanian Oresteia* at The Barbican, London.[393] Dundjerovic states that it was the rich aesthetic and ideological significance of Aeschylus which attracted Purcărete.[394] He sees both the scope that these texts have for theatrical experimentation and, at the same time, a thematic, timeless relevance to humanity:

> The basic discovery is that through history, human beings never change. Their problems are exactly the same. The lessons you learn is that what happens to us is what happened to our ancestors years ago. The difference is in the experience that's why I like to go into the classical texts because it's comforting to believe that thousands of generations

[391] Dundjerovic (2010) 99.
[392] Also influenced by Seneca's *Phaedra.*
[393] Discussion of his *Phaedra* can be found in Wiles (2000) 9 and Hardwick (2005) 208-9.
[394] Dundjerovic (2010) 89.

> lived exactly the same way without computers and without media, but absolutely the same way.[395]

In 1995, Purcărete started work on an epic version of the whole Danaid tetralogy. Looking back on the process of creating this piece, Purcărete acknowledges that he was aware of the surviving play, *Suppliants*, and had conducted research into the remains of the rest of tetralogy. For him, working on the adaptation was like working on a puzzle:

> So it was like a play, like a game – like a child's game – to try to invent that tetralogy on stage. So this was my purpose. It was not scientific, of course, because it is not possible, because it was like a joke… Yes, it was just a theatrical invention.[396]

While Purcărete saw the creation of the script as a game, he still wanted to keep Aeschylus' voice within the piece and developed his unique approach to dialogue:

> So I tried to invent the plot because I needed phrases and words. I decided again to use phrases, sentences from the other plays of Aeschylus. So all the words actually belong to Aeschylus....You see, I took one sentence from this play and another half a sentence from another play. You see? I just made a puzzle.[397]

Rather than transform the language into a contemporary idiom familiar to a modern audience in a method that is favoured by many playwrights today, including some

[395] Dundjerovic (2010) 100
[396] Interview with Purcărete on 16th May 2014. See Appendix B for interview transcript.
[397] Interview with Purcărete. See Appendix B.

discussed in this thesis, Purcărete kept what he believes is the dramatic tone of Greek tragedy. He condensed the three tragedies and the satyr play, *Amymone*, into a single production. The main section of the Purcărete's production features lines from the surviving play, *Suppliants*, but the rest of the action is scripted by Purcărete and includes lines from Aeschylus' other plays.

Purcărete's plot aligns itself with the view of scholars who believe that *Suppliants* was the first in the tragic trilogy, followed by *Egyptians* and concluding with what everyone agrees is the final play, *Danaids*. For ease of comprehension, I here paraphrase the main lines of Purcărete's plot (but see Appendix C for full text and translation). The play opens with a scene introducing the audience to a council of gods who remain on stage for the duration of the production in clear sight of the audience. They are described as being at a beach near Argos, invisible to those in the play, drinking glasses of nectar. This group includes Hermès, Zeus, Héra, Poséidon, Apollon and Artémis. They set the ominous tone for the play by discussing the tragedy of humanity. This conversation continues throughout the play and is interspersed between the dialogues of the action that is taking place in the centre of the stage. The audience are then introduced to the fifty girls in a similar fashion to what takes place in *Suppliants*. They arrive on the beach, lamenting. Each carries a suitcase but they are missing their father. He arrives at their call, emerging from a large luggage trunk. On the instruction of their father, the girls supplicate Pelasgus and are successful in gaining his assistance, which they celebrate by singing about Io, their ancestor. (In the version shown on Romanian television,[398] this scene had a heavily pregnant Io—

[398] The production was recorded for Romanian television as a programme entitled *Seara de teatru Danaidele* Part 1: http://www.trilulilu.ro/video-film/seara-de-teatru-danaidele-partea-intai#ref=cauta Part2: http://www.trilulilu.ro/video-film/seara-de-teatru-danaidele-partea-a-doua#ref=cauta (last accessed 5 August 2015).

dressed as a cow—brought out on a medical examination table, while the gods seemed to attend to her in a sinister manner).

Danaus returns to announce that the people of Argos will protect them but quickly sees that the Egyptians are approaching. The fifty men encircle the girls and demand they return to Egypt with them. A showdown occurs when Pelasgus arrives to confront the Egyptians and announces that the girls are under the protection of Argos. The men depart but threaten war. The Danaids prepare for bedtime but they lack water. The character explicitly said to be Amymone goes off to look for water, while the audience witness the gods discussing the deeds the girls will soon commit and how fate makes it hard to avoid a different outcome. The group go to sleep but Danaus wakes up from a foreboding bad dream. Pelasgus enters to announce that the war is starting. The Egyptians return to the stage to attack the group and ultimately kill Pegasus. In their victory, the men encircle the girls again and start to seize their wives as the gods sing a hymn for Aphrodite in which similar lines to the extant fragment 44 are used to emphasis the link between nature and marriage. This view is vulgarly opposed in the next lines by the Egyptian men who seem more interested in the wedding night and male and female unity in the bedroom.

Preparations for the wedding night begin. The Egyptians host celebrations with their soon-to-be father-in-law while the girls arrange themselves. They adorn themselves with white wedding dresses that become tents once the Egyptians arrive carrying lanterns and trumpets. Each couple enters their own tent, all apart from Hypermnestra who is awaiting Lynceus' arrival. She questions the forthcoming deeds of her sisters and queries her involvement. On Lynceus' arrival, Hypermnestra is so worried about carrying out the murder that she is unable to look at him. They talk and become fond of each other. Slowly the lanterns in each tent goes out, one by one. The

Danaids exit their tents, revealing the bodies of their slain husbands to the audience and Lynceus. Realizing that he has escaped his fate due to Hypermnestra, the forty-nine other Danaids chase him. When he confronts them about the murders, the Danaids are resolved and proud of their actions. The gods then take control of the scene and drive the girls crazy in a dance of torture. They are repeatedly punished while Hypermnestra, who is spared, witnesses their ordeal.

Danaus is unable to comprehend what is happening. The gods discuss him and decide that he too is to be punished.[399] Soon afterwards, the Danaids are destroyed. Purcărete now introduces the satyr play element into his production. Hypermnestra transforms into Amymone searching for water. She finds herself trapped by a group of satyrs who start to make suggestive advances on the girl. Poseidon intervenes and the satyrs scatter. They talk, suggesting that Poseidon takes Amymone for himself. The play ends by returning to the council of the gods while the ghosts of the Danaids haunt the stage. The gods close the play commenting on the fate of man.

Between 1995 and 1997, *Les Danaïdes* went on a European and transatlantic tour to large and often outdoor spaces. The large scale was necessary. Purcărete often stages his productions in spaces that are like a blank canvas. As described in *Silviu Purcărete, Esquisse De Portrait*,[400] Georges Banu claims that Purcărete avoids heavy technological involvement in his set. He opts instead for spaces with limited resources, so that the physical backdrop does not evoke any memories, nor align the play with any particular time period. He imagines the representation of action in the space, however different it may be from other venues in which he has performed the work; the action transcends such differences, which is clearly consonant with his belief that

[399] The script, which can be seen in Appendix C, makes reference to a supernatural object that engulfs Danaus. In the production shown on Romanian television, this appears to be a large white piece of fabric that sweeps him away.
[400] Banu (1996): an essay on the playwright/director that is included at the end of the script.

the classical plays have a universal relevance and are timeless. But another reason for the need for vast performance spaces, in this case, was simply the epic size of the cast. Scholars disagree on the number of chorus members who would have appeared in the trilogy on the ancient stage. Hugh Lloyd-Jones questions whether there were fifty 'girls' on stage rather than the usual twelve or fifteen in the chorus in his collection *Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy: The Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd Jones.*[401] But choruses of fifty were far from unknown at Athens—indeed, this was the standard size of the dithyrambic chorus, and Purcărete chose to host all fifty Danaids, and their fifty Egyptian husbands,[402] in the performance space at the same time. In addition to this, there was a supporting cast of at least nine other characters, including the constant stage presence of six gods: Hermes, Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Apollo and Artemis.

Purcărete has always taken an interesting view of the gods' role in his adaptations of Greek tragedy. In his production, *Phaedra*, Artemis paced restlessly about the stage wrapped up in bandages with no eyes visible. She appeared as an undefined creature who came from no particular place or time. Wiles describes this character as 'barely human with a menace that suggested the power of a totalitarian regime'.[403] In the version of *Les Danaïdes* shown on Romanian Television, the gods were a constant presence on stage. Dressed in white, stately costumes and illuminated by a blue light, these versions of the Olympian gods were enjoying themselves while the tragedy took place behind them. They sat at two white tables at the front of the stage, regularly drinking from their goblets while laughing and commenting on the action. The implication was that the dramatic events unfolding provided them with entertainment and pleasure. This idea was amplified by depicting Zeus as playing with

[401] Lloyd-Jones (1990) 270.
[402] The fifty gentlemen doubled up as the satyrs towards the end of the production.
[403] Wiles (2000) 9.

dominoes throughout the production, a device highlighted in the recorded television production. The shapes the god creates with dominoes reflected the choreographic formations into which the Danaids moved. When questioned about the involvement of the gods in his productions, when other playwrights sometimes avoid the involvement of divine figures, Purcărete responded, '…in all those stories, tragedies, they are main characters. So why not bring them on stage? Also, they are manipulating the human destiny…'.[404] Purcărete's view of how important the gods are to the plot is explicitly shown in final scenes of *Les Danaïdes*. Zeus' control over the Danaids and humanity in general is emphasized when he knocks over the dominoes he has arranged on his bar table, just as the Danaids fall to the floor in the same pattern on stage. Zeus' position as the master manipulator is confirmed.

If the gods are ultimately in charge of the fate of all who are on stage in Purcărete's adaptation, how did this affect the role of Danaus? Interestingly, he was less tyrannical in my view than could have been implied. He seemed almost emasculated, which may have purely been down to the directorial choices. Purcărete had cast the actress Coca Bloos as Danaus, who appeared on stage wearing only a pair of trousers. Her top half was completely bare, except for a length of rope which went between her breasts and tied around her neck. Like the Egyptian male chorus members, the actress was bald but had a long greying beard attached to her chin that had been manipulated into a curved point at the bottom. It made for a confusing sight. It was completely apparent from her bare breasts that this was a female actress playing a male character, but she had a distinctly masculine style in regards to physical movements and voice. When questioned about the choices he made for Danaus, Purcărete explained his interpretation as follows: 'I can't remember the exact reason

[404] See Appendix B.

but I just wanted Danaus to be an androgynous figure, because he is also the father and the mother of the girls'.[405]

Purcărete's version of Danaus was therefore not the sinister, controlling ruler he had been made out to be in Roman and later receptions. He spent a large chunk of the play hidden away in a luggage trunk, particularly during the scenes with Pelasgus. He would unfold himself slowly from the trunk each time he re-joined the action. He would certainly instruct the girls in their behavior in a dominating manner, but it was not aggressive nor intimidating character. Yet his daughters still hung on his every word and acted in the ways he prescribed. This would certainly explain Purcărete's view that Danaus functions as both parents to the girls. His character offers a confused balance between the persona of a father and the maternal qualities of a mother. Purcărete explained that the original story tells us that Danaus is meant to manipulate the girls and tell them to murder their husbands. But when it comes to whether Danaus was ultimately to blame for the girls' deeds or where they responsible for their own actions, Purcărete simply says, 'it's up to you. Just look at the play and decide what is right'.[406]

In the script for *Les Danaïdes*, Purcărete does not have Danaus explicitly tell the girls to kill their husbands. Before the war, he suggests that they should protect themselves at all costs, which prompts his daughters, in an echo of the Hippolytus/Phaedra myth, to swear an oath to Artemis and reject Aphrodite. When they are finally captured by the Egyptians, the girls announce their intent and need of vengeance. When the corpses are eventually revealed, the Danaids initially appear to vomit in response to their realization, but their repugnance quickly changes to pride and they want to show off their deeds. In the recorded production for Romanian

[405] See Appendix B.
[406] See Appendix B.

television, the girls displayed child-like behaviour. They squealed with delight as they dragged the bodies off stage and cleared up the evidence of the murder. There was no remorse and one could even describe them as brainwashed. This reinforces the sense that the girls are ultimately not in control of their actions.

To me, this production offers its audience no overarching theme apart from the notion that humanity is powerless in the face of fate and manipulation. Purcărete does not believe in giving 'messages' to an audience. He claims, 'It is a play. Any piece of art is an enigma, in fact…it is actually a question, it is never an answer. That is why we make art: because to ask questions, never giving answers.'[407] It is good to linger for a moment on Purcărete's view that 'the most respective way of treating a text is just to dive into it, to try to dig inside it, discover new things....you open them up and consider them to be alive'.[408] This becomes even more resonant when we consider that it is the view the next playwright we are to discuss also holds when approaching ancient Greek theatre and in particular, the Danaid plot.

9. *Big Love* – Charles Mee

Charles Mee's adaptation of the Danaid trilogy, *Big Love*, premiered at the Actor's Theatre of Louisville, U.S.A in 2000, under the direction of Les Waters and, perhaps due to the script's availability,[409] it has been restaged a number of times since. Like Purcărete, American author, playwright and now academic, Charles Mee has been fascinated with the classical texts for most of his life. He spent a large part of his life being schooled in Shakespeare and Brecht but considered discovering the theatre of the ancient Greeks as a vital influence on his work, claiming, 'I have been inspired a

[407] See Appendix B.
[408] Dundjerovic (2010) 94-5.
[409] Charles Mee has made this play and a number of others free to download online: http://www.charlesmee.org/plays.shtml (last accessed 23/11/15).

lot by the Greeks. I love the Greeks.'[410] His daughter, theatre professor and director Erin Mee, outlines the impact that these plays have had on her father's work, and how he constructs of scripts, in the introduction to *Shattered and Fucked Up and Full of Wreckage: The Words and Works of Charles L. Mee*:

> When my father writes a play, he often starts with a familiar story; usually, but not always, a Greek myth—*The Oresteia*, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*, *The Trojan Women*, *The Suppliant Women*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*—and then he elaborates on it.[411]

Mee's love of the Greeks is clearly evident if we look at the past productions he has worked on and how often in interviews he makes reference to this particular style of theatre. He explains the reasoning behind his passionate engagement with the tragedies. He is attracted by the scale of the problems addressed and their ramifications, for example,

> because their plays so often begin with matricide and fratricide, with a man murdering his nephews and serving the boys to their father for dinner. That is to say, the Greeks take no easy problems, no little misunderstanding that is going to be resolved before the final commercial break at the top of the hour, no tragedy that will be resolved with good will, acceptance of a childhood hurt, and a little bit of healing. They take great anguish and hatred and disability and rage and

[410] Mee, E (2002) 94.
[411] Mee, E (2002) 83.

> homicidal mania and confusion and aspiration and a longing for the purest beauty and they say: here is not an easy problem; take all of this and make a civilization of it.[412]

To Mee, the dramatic moments and issues that come out of these texts are universal in some sense, and he views the texts as 'historical documents—as evidence of who and how we are and what we do.'[413] The characters that appear in the plays are comparable to people today, dealing with issues and themes that still resonate with the modern world. These types of problems are nothing new. For many of his productions, Mee takes a number of core ideas from ancient Greek theatre. One is that he often constructs a group of plays that share a common theme in a similar way to the Greek tragedians' trilogies. So it is interesting to see that, instead of recreating the fragmented Danaid story as a trilogy or tetralogy, like Purcărete he instead opted to create one single production staging the myth.

As part of his *'The (re)making project,'*[414] Charles Mee took inspiration from Aeschylus' extant play, *Suppliants*, and created his own interpretation of the Danaid plot. According to Helene Kvale's director notes on her production, she claims that Mee has seen a production of *The Supplicant* [*sic*] at the Avignon Theatre Festival, which one assumed was Purcărete's *Les Danaïdes*. She goes on to quote Mee on why he created his adaptation:

> I wanted to go back to what some people thought was one of the earliest plays of the Western World…and see how that would look today. See if

[412] Mee, E (2002) 95.
[413] Mee, E (2002) 85.
[414] For more information on this, please go to his website: http://www.charlesmee.org/ (last accessed 5 August 2015).

> it still spoke to the moment, and of course it does. It's all about refugees and gender wars and men and women trying to find what will get them through the rubble of dysfunctional relationships, and anger and rage and heartache.[415]

While Purcărete's drama seemed to follow the action that many scholars have hypothesized for Aeschylus' trilogy, Mee changes names and locations and deletes characters. The script largely ignores what may have taken place in *Egyptians* (for example, no war takes place) and jumps to the action that takes part in the final text of the trilogy with the murders and repercussions. In order to illustrate the differences, I will now outline the plot of *Big Love*.[416]

The play opens on a woman undoing her wedding dress, entering a bath tub and attempting to relax. She is interrupted by a man who questions her presence there. We soon learn that this woman, named Lydia, has fled from Greece to Italy with her fifty sisters in order to escape an arranged marriage with their first cousins who are of Greek - American heritage. She asks for asylum from the man who suggests that his uncle, the owner of the house, may be able to help. The audience is then introduced to Olympia and Thyona, two of the fifty sisters.[417] The girls start to make themselves at home and converse with Bella, the old Italian woman who is mother to Piero, the owner of the house. The girls negotiate refugee status with Piero once he enters and he eventually agrees to take them in. The three start to discuss men and their behaviour when a helicopter arrives with three of the male cousins: Nikos, Constantine and Oed.

[415] This quote from Mee features in the Director's notes for a production done by the Connecticut Repertory Theatre on 3-13 October 2013. These notes can be found on the director's website: http://www.helenekvale.com/portfolio/biglove/ (last accessed 5 August 2015).

[416] Due to the availability of the script in an online format, there are no page or line numbers to use for reference. Please see: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml

[417] They say that the rest of the fifty are on the ship by the shore waiting.

They arrive to claim their brides but the girls refuse to leave. Piero intervenes and suggests that he discuss the situation with the brothers and see if they can come to some agreement. Alone, the girls vent their frustration at the situation and at men in general, which builds them up into a frenzy of movement and aggression. The frenzy is dispelled when Piero's family members and house guests enter the scene to discuss the marriage. Nikos enters and apologises to Lydia for his brothers' behaviour. They find themselves alone and Nikos admits that he is in love with Lydia. They start to become comfortable in each other's company, and begin dancing. The couple begin to kiss one another, but this unnerves Lydia and she runs off.

Constantine and Oed enter. The three men share a similar moment to the women's frenzy, but with a heightened sense of violence, in which they deliver masculine verbal attacks on women and their lives. The men exit just as a wedding cake is brought on. The girls and the audience learn that Piero has failed in his negotiations with the men and that the weddings will still take place. He admits that he was afraid of putting his family and home at risk and, therefore, will not be able to assist the girls. Distraught, the girls look at their options. Thyona states that they should take control of the situation themselves and kill their husbands on their wedding night. The rest of the girls are unsure but Thyona is very convincing and asks them to make a pact.

Thyona and Olympia prepare for their wedding while Lydia starts to worry about the upcoming deed. Nikos, Constantine and Oed enter and the wedding takes place which swiftly moves on to the evening celebration. Here, the audience witnesses a number of playful, almost loving acts that one would expect from a wedding celebration; however this soon descends into aggressive behavior and violent outbursts from both sides of the wedding party. Thyona stabs Constantine with a knife, which

prompts the start of the slaughter. While the bloody murders take place, Lydia and Nikos are unaware as they have separated from the group and are making love at the side of the stage. Piero and the rest of the family return to the stage to discover the bodies of the men.

The murderesses soon discover that Lydia has not killed Nikos, which prompts Thyona to call for a trial. She believes her sister has committed the ultimate betrayal of breaking her sisterly oath. Bella offers to play the role of the judge in this trial, taking on the supposed role of Aphrodite. Thyona and Lydia both make speeches concerning love, reason and justice. Bella comes to a verdict that Lydia cannot be condemned because 'love is the highest law'; this expresses the idea behind fragment 44 of the surviving material for the Aeschylean play, which as discussed earlier, is often attributed to Aphrodite. Bella announces that her family is also to blame for failing to protect the girls. No one will be punished, but instead, the girls will live with Bella as her own daughters. The play ends on the celebration of Lydia and Nikos' marriage.

There are a number of differences in Mee's version of the story, when viewed alongside the surviving elements of Aeschylus' trilogy and Purcărete's *Les Danaïdes*. Mee relocates the main action from Argos to Italy. The group of women no longer arrive at the beach seeking refuge at a sanctuary. Instead, on reaching land, they walk into a house without permission and make themselves at home. The girls' nationality is no longer Egyptian, but Greek; and while Aegyptus' sons still share the same heritage, they are now American Greek. These changes of nationalities, in particular for the men, serve as a device for Mee to criticize American attitudes. The girls still need to prove their common ancestry with their Italian hosts and, therefore in this adaptation, suggest that they are a part of the same family due to Greek migration to Italy many years before.

Big Love is similar to Salieri's opera, *Les Danaïdes*, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter, as it investigates the human psychology behind what takes place and provides a forum for the characters to discuss in-depth their responses to the themes of the play. Differing from Purcărete s interpretation of hosting all fifty brides and grooms on stage, Mee opts to focus on only three of each. The three women and three men each represent a gender stereotype and are coupled up. Lydia and her betrothed, Nikos, are seen as thoughtful, grounded people. They are aware of the severity of the situation and want to work towards a resolution. Out of the characters in *Big Love*, these two are the closest to the proposed versions of Hypermnestra and Lynceus that may have appeared in Aeschylus and have been discussed in other accounts of the myth. Lydia and Nikos provide greater insight into the type of relationship that their ancient counterparts, Hypermnestra and Lynceus, may have had, if given the chance to develop before the murders. In Purcărete and other receptions of the story, it seems to indicate that Hypermnestra has a moral dilemma in regards to the murders, or that she shows mercy on Lynceus because of his respect for her. Here the reasoning behind her sparing him is because of their love for one another. We witness this romance develop throughout the production. Nikos declares his love for her, having admired her from a far, and chooses to woo Lydia rather than force her into the marriage.

Olympia and Oed are another partnership. They come across as the less educated couple. Olympia is easily swayed by others' opinions and rarely sticks to her own thoughts. She is incredibly vain, influenced by commercialism and prioritizes beauty products over her safety:

you hope at the end of the journey that you might find

some, like,

Oil of Olay Moisturizing Body Wash

or like

John Freda Sheer Blond Shampoo and Conditioner for Highlighted Blonds…

….I know this is not a hotel, so you wouldn't have everything,

but maybe some Estee Lauder 24 Karat Color Golden Body Creme with Sunbloc,

or Fetish Go Glitter Body Art in Soiree…[418]

Her partner, Oed, is not as eloquent as his brothers. His behavior is highly primitive and unruly and is prone to thuggish outbursts.

The final coupling is the feminist, Thyona, and her arrogant and insistent fiancé, Constantine. Thyona is the most aggressive of the sisters, who thinks very little of men in general and fiercely resents the arranged marriage. Her belligerence is matched in Constantine, who is very insistent about his entitlement to the girls – what he is owed. He views marriage as a legal contract and enforces the arrangement, even if it means that the women are taken by force. His character is very reminiscent of the Herald from *The Suppliants*. He wants to achieve his aim at any cost.

Mee inserts scenes into his adaptation which give the characters opportunities to speak what is on their mind and their own personal opinions. Differing from what we can imagine takes place in the Aeschylean play, as well as in Purcărete's adaptation, in *Big Love* the focus is on both the characters as individuals as well as within their respective collectives. The audience is given the chance to see how

[418] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

differently each girl reacts within their own family, acknowledging that, in reality, not everyone shares the same ideology.

Emotion plays an important part in Mee's production. In comparison to Purcărete and Aeschylus' versions of the characters, we are given more insight into the psyche of these characters. While Purcărete, and we imagine Aeschylus, showcased heightened emotions within their productions, and portrayed these reactions in extreme ways: their characters suddenly flip from moments of jubilation to terror and devastation. Mee's characters' emotions are not so monochrome. Mee subscribes to Joseph Chaikin's theory of random emotion in regards to actor training,[419] and this may be an indication why Mee's characters appear more rounded and closer to current human behaviour than their ancient counterparts. In Charles Mee's interview with his daughter, he paraphrased the theory that Chaikin had once described to him:

> I think there are things that everyone feels at least once very fifteen minutes: embarrassment, for example, or humiliation, from nowhere, without apparent cause; sudden grief, anxiety, dread, distraction - as though as spirit or monster of some kind passed overhead; regret, impatience, hatred, and unreasoning rage. It's not the same for everyone. Some people I know feel none of those things, but instead, every fifteen minutes they feel vengeful, jealous - they are immobilized by envy, a longing to possess something or someone, greed, lust, a wish to put something in their mouths….
>
> Joe got a group of people together—a few directors, some actors, a few writers—for a laboratory of pure research. And Chaikin made the

[419] For further information on Chaikin's theories see: Chaikin (1972).

> remark above, and then we got a couple of actors on their feet, and set a situation for them to improvise with. And every once in a while someone would call out "envy" or "vengefulness" and one of the actors would let that random emotion go through their performance. In this way, their performances—and the scene itself—were occasionally hit with random emotion-laden crosswinds. [420]

Mee goes on to explain that by hosting a number of random emotions in a performance, it makes the piece seem more like real life:

> And we all saw that these random emotions, far from making the scene seem weird, made it seem more like the lives we all live, where we are always in a situation of having a cup of tea with a friend when, suddenly, for no reason at all, unattached anger wells up in us, or a sense of having been slighted, something that doesn't come from the present moment at all but from some other relationship or past history. And, in this way, I think I was impressed, again, by the randomness of life; and how most theatrical conventions rule that out, and so sterilize human interactions and human life—make it artificial, unreal, and a little dead.[421]

We can see how Mee implements this, not only via the stage directions in his script but through the dialogue. While Thyona is portrayed as a tough, aggressive character the majority of the time, she has moments where she appears consumed by her

[420] Mee, E (2002) 91.
[421] Mee, E (2002) 91.

conflicting emotions. After a sisterly discussion with Olympia, she breaks down, unmasking her vulnerability, and flees the stage:

> Do you think I like feeling this way....
> Do you think I wouldn't rather just be a nice, happy
> Well-adjusted seeming person
> you can just take as it comes and like it?
> Do you think that makes me happy?
> To spend my whole life on earth
> the only life I'm going to have feeling angry?[422]

Charles Mee's daughter Erin Mee, who has directed a number of her father's plays,[423] describes his characters as highly fragmented people that are hard to decipher, but once they are put into perspective, alongside the other characters, they become easier to understand.

> The characters in your plays are like smashed pots: if you pick up any one shard of pottery, it doesn't look like it has anything to do with the other shards lying around, but if you were to glue all the pieces back together; they would make a (more or less) coherent pot. And each of those shards is a different motivating force.[424]

[422] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[423] *Big Love* (2006), *First Love* (2001), *The Imperialists at the Club Cave Canem* (2001), *Linda Ronstadt Called* (1987).
[424] Erin, E (2002) 89.

This force of this image is clear in *Big Love*. It not only explains the fragmented nature of the original text and how the story has been put together, but, individually, why the characters' behaviours and personas are difficult to understand at times. They are splintered and incomplete, but, over the duration of the production, the audience is given opportunities to witness the characters alone, as well as part of their collective. Mee's multifaceted cast comes across realistic, illustrating the multitude of elements that define us as people. Erin Mee sums this up as:

> At another level, each shard is a piece of text that has come from a different source. Character, then - who a person is- is an assemblage of bits of history, pop culture, philosophy, etc. (And in that sense your characters are also like archaeological finds: they say something - both literally and figuratively - about the culture). [425]

It is clear in Mee's case that he likes to focus on characterization rather than the stage dressing. He outlines in the stage directions that the play that the set should not come across as real or naturalistic in its setting. This is a feature that Mee and Purcărete share. As playwrights and directors, they like to look at the whole spectacle of the production but not allow the set to influence the audience's perceptions. Mee suggests that it should be 'more an installation than set',[426] which would focus attention on the action and characters.

One cast member who has historically appeared in retellings of the plot, but is notably absent in this reception, is the father of the Danaids. In *Big Love*, Mee rejects the character of Danaus, which I find strange. The surviving information of

[425] Erin, E (2002) 89.
[426] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

Aeschylus' trilogy, the academic arguments that have been discussed earlier in this chapter and the diachronic receptions of the plot, all indicate, as I argue, that he is a significant figure. Yet while Danaus is absent as a *dramatis persona* from Mee's play, some facets of his character and reactions are absorbed into the girls' personalities, in particular, Thyona. In fact, through Thyona, Danaus' paternal voice and reasoning are filtered and manifest themselves as a strong feminist stance, reflecting the desire that Danaus holds in other productions that the girls should not marry their cousins. Thyona is also the one who suggests that their only escape is through the murder of their potential husbands and actively encourages the girls to follow through with the act. As discussed previously in this chapter, it is often suggested that Danaus was the instigator of this idea and that he does so for his own survival, perhaps deceiving the girls. In *Big Love*, there is no deception or fatherly input, but a woman's reaction to being cornered and desperate to escape.

The name 'Danaus' is not used on stage, but there is a reference to the girls' father being the one responsible for the intended marriage. Lydia explains that he had made a wedding contract to give them away to their American - Greek cousins and that it cannot be contested in their country. This keeps in line with the reasoning that takes place in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* for reasons why the girls are unable to escape the marriage in their own homeland. Once Constantine enters, he provides us with an insight into the situation by claiming that they are all betrothed; the deal which took place a long time ago, but there is no mention of a war or oracle. In fact, the girls in Mee's adaptation are presented as if they are having a childish tantrum rather than vehemently objecting to the marriage out of a sense of foreboding, as they do in Purcărete's *Les Danaïdes* and did in Aeschylus' trilogy (from what we can infer from *Suppliants*):

Lydia: We were to be married to our cousins, and

well, we didn't want to, but

we had to, so

when the wedding day came

we just got on our boat and left

so

here we are.[427]

Metaphysics and divine intervention play no part in *Big Love*—the gods are completely omitted from this adaptation of the plot. While Purcărete chose to involve an increased divine element to suggest that either fate, or the hand of a god, is part of the reasoning behind why the murders take place, Mee implies that the onus was on humanity by eliminating references to deities. In fact, the trial scene in which scholars believe Aphrodite appeared, now involves the old woman, Bella, thus highlighting the individual and the community's responsibility for the outcomes.

Whereas in most versions of the plot, it is the community of Argos who rally to the aid of the Danaids and supposedly fight for them, in *Big Love*, the Italians—who take on the role of the Argives—fail to fully defend the girls. The Pelgasus character is played by Piero, the Italian homeowner. While the group he represents is much smaller than Argos, Piero faces the same dilemma as in Aeschylus' original - does he give the girls shelter without knowing the full situation and be responsible for the consequences that come with his decision? Rather than be persuaded by the imperative to respect suppliants and by fear of repercussions from the gods, it is the girls'

[427] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

insistence that makes him open his home to them. Mee opts to retain the girls will kill themselves if they are unable to be protected, which appears in *Suppliants* (607-610), although Thyona goes one step further by aggressively threatening that it will be a very visible display of suicide:

> If you don't take us in,
> my sisters and I will hang ourselves here on your terrace:
> fifty dead women hanging in front of your house.[428]

In *Suppliants*, the Pelgasus character gains the support of the Argive people so that all Argives are bound to protect the Danaids and (depending on what reconsctruction of the trilogy you opt for) may have been to supposed to lay their lives down to defend the immigrants. But instead, in *Big Love*, Piero is in sole control. When the brothers arrive, he tries to negotiate with the men, on behalf of the girls, but fails to work out a compromise. Mee's decision to deviate from Aeschylus' surviving plot line here is interesting. In most receptions of this story, Pelgasus goes into battle for the Danaids, but is killed, with the result that Aegyptus' sons can have their brides. But in Mee's play, the Pelasgus figure does not attempt to fight the men in order to protect the girls and instead chooses to hold a meeting to arrange a settlement. He is unable to convince Constantine to change his mind or opt for an alternative arrangement. Feebly, Piero, and the community he represents, fail to provide support for the girls.

Many themes apparent in Aeschylus's extant *Suppliants*, and probably the rest of his trilogy, reappear in their contemporary dramatic receptions. It is clear that ethnicity, the rights of those seeking asylum and what grounds should asylum be

[428] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

given, all play a key part in Aeschylus' play. Bakewell sees *Suppliants* as a tragedy explicitly addressing ancient immigration and asylum, for it resembles the socio-political landscape in Athens at the time. In his book, *Supplicant Women: The Tragedy of Immigration*, Bakewell claims that fifth-century Athenians were becoming increasingly conscious of their collective identity, self-definition and the exclusion of others, most likely because there had been a large-scale influx of immigrants into their city-state.[429] This would imply that Aeschylus may have used his trilogy to comment on this contemporary and topical situation. The play allows the opportunity to explore the advantages and disadvantages of assisting foreigners and also poses what has become a diachronic, indeed eternal question: should we intervene?

It is of course not only the ancient Greeks who have dealt with this moral dilemma. Immigration is an issue which the majority of civilizations have had to address and certainly resonates with audiences today, in 2016 even more painfully than at the time Purcărete and Mee were writing.While Purcărete did not consciously intend to create a production about assistance to foreigners, in some way his work did provide an arena for a discussion about immigration, a constant preoccupation of any French audience in the mid-1990s.[430] The government had made legislative changes in terms of who could migrate to France and what defines an asylum seeker, which meant there were a large number of illegal immigrants within the country who were unable to obtain residence permits. *Les Danaïdes* inspires a debate about providing assistance to foreigners, and their social integration, in a similar vein to Aeschylus' play. This was particularly noticeable in the costumes of the various ethnic groups.

Purcărete's Danaids appeared alien and unusual at the beginning of the production. They were covered from head to toe in a dark blue dress, with a Muslim

[429] Bakewell (2013) 17 -22.
[430] For more information on this see Bailey (2008) 77-9.

'burka' style of head covering, and their faces concealed by masks. As the production progressed, they disrobed; they removed their masks when the protection of the Argive people was announced by Pelasgus. The girls subsequently revealed white and light tan-colored loose clothing and their visible faces lent them a humane aspect, making it easier for them to be absorbed into the Argive community. They started to demonstrate their foreignness again, through costume, once they were captured by the Egyptians. The girls prepared themselves for the wedding night by donning large white dresses over their slips. While these dresses, being white, should symbolically have indicated purity, they in fact made the Danaids appear ghostly, like 'brides of death'. Just prior to the arrival of Aegyptus' sons, they veiled themselves again; this created a ghoulish and horror-filled atmosphere, increased by their wails and groaning, in the audience who knew what crime they intended to commit.[431]

The sons of Aegyptus certainly come across as alien in comparison to the Argives. Pelasgus is our only Argive representative and dresses in a civilized way, with a black overcoat and crutches. The Egyptians appear formidable and primitive in contrast. Their chests are bare, and even hairless in most cases, matching their bald scalps and beardless faces. Their lower halves are dressed in cream trousers covered by a long, voluminous, skirt that is a vivid orange. As mentioned above, the character of Danaus is quite similar in appearance to the Egyptians. He too has a bald head and a bare chest but, perhaps to signify age, he is bearded and wears no colourful skirt, just plain, neutral-toned voluminous trousers. It is quite evident from costume alone from the point of view of the Argives and the audience the Egyptians foreigners, who have arrived in a civilized society. Their appearance stands out, and alongside the action, shows the struggle between two conflicting cultures. I believe that this would resonate

[431] Costume choices from stage and Romanian televised version.

with most audience members no matter which country they are from or in which country they view the play. Steve Wilmer claimed of the Dublin performance, "Their costumes, which looked Islamic, immediately evoked parallels with Islamic refugees in Bosnia during the recent war",[432] and for a French audience in 1996, the parallels would certainly have resounded.

In *Big Love*, however, Mee is much more overt with his discussion of immigration and asylum. Mee often admits that he has written politically charged plays,[433] and this one is no exception. In his adaptation, Mee seems to discuss the American attitude to offering assistance to those in need and takes a critical view of American 'involvement' in foreign affairs. It is not just through costumes that we see the difference between the collectives on stage. The opening scene in *Big Love* sets the tone for the rest of the production, with a disheveled Lydia undoing her wedding dress, discarding everything underneath and slipping into a bath - clearly after enduring a traumatic experience. She is behaving like a woman released from constraints. She is cleansed and, at the same time, unchained by disrobing. She finds comfort in her new surroundings rather than fear. Much later on in the play, when the brothers enter, they are dressed in American military uniforms as if armed for a battle. Yet, underneath, they already have their tuxedos on, insinuating that they were ready to claim the spoils of war and that their marriage was a part of the booty. Mee describes the charaters' clothing in the script, and I feel that it is highly significant.[434] The design invokes the idea of forced marriages and war brides, with women being objectified and taken

[432] Steve Wilmer (1996) *Improving Aeschylus: a review of Les Danaïdes.* http://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol3no3/wilmer.html. (last accessed 23/11/15)
[433] Mee, E. (2002) 89.
[434] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

without their consent. The character, Olympia even makes reference to the girls being like spoils of war.[435]

As the play progresses, the girls meet with Piero, the Pelasgus figure, and try to convince him to let them stay. The dialogue in this scene is manipulated by Mee to give the impression that the characters are not only discussing their claim of asylum but also airing the thoughts and opinions of many Americans on foreign aid. In response to the girls' claim of asylum, Piero states, 'I can't take in every refugee who comes into my garden....I would have a refugee camp here in my home.' Piero adds that he is unable to open his doors to the whole world; Lydia points out that those who do grant asylum are generous. Mee is conducting a debate on immigration and asylum through this dialogue. Piero's situation represents the dilemma that many affluent countries face and raises a number of questions. How much support can be given without being detrimental to your own community's resources? Do we abandon those who need our assistance, and ask for it, out of fear for our own preservation? Is it easier just to ignore pleas for aid? There are many suggestions within the script that Mee is criticizing the American approach to these issues and this would certainly have had an impact on his original audience, causing them to reflect on their own views on the topic.

Mee is also highly critical of stereotypical male ideals of masculinity. His critique is embodied in his characterization of Aegyptus' sons, in particular, Constantine and Oed. Their behaviour and dialogue, while at times so exaggerated that it is comical, is disturbing in the way it expresses American arrogance and compacency. Mee outlines what he sees as quintessential American boldness and sense of entitlement in the language of Constantine:

[435] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

I am an American now, Olympia.

I am not afraid of your uncle

Do you watch television?

Do you see what happens when Americans want something?[436]

These lines evoke memories of the many wars in which Americans have intervened. Just prior to the premiere of *Big Love*, the Kosovo war had finally been 'resolved'. Large waves of Kosovar refugees looking for asylum had flooded Balkan countries in their own neighbourhood, and had also arrived in nations much further afield, including France, Switzerland, and Great Britain. The consensual view of the international community which sent military support was that their participation in the war was on moral grounds. The unrest, and the claim that ethnic cleansing was taking place in the region,[437] precipitated what was seen as a humanitarian crisis. The rest of the United Nations membership states had to make the decision whether to step in or sit back and not get involved. On this occasion the United States did intervene, despite having refused to help in a number of horrific situations that were occurring around the same time, especially in Africa. I believe this questioning of who deserves intervention, and on what grounds, would have been at the forefront of Mee's mind and that of the audience. The issue would have been reinforced by the plethora of lines within the production that explicitly mention war, violence and mistreatment not just in the sphere of the play but around the world. As Constantine trenchantly puts it,

[436] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[437] It was ruled by a United Nations court in 2001 that Serbian troops were not committing genocide but instead were trying to forcibly remove the Albanian ethnic group from Kosovo. For more on this: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1530781.stm (last accessed 23/11/15).

'You say you do not want to be taken against your will. People are taken against their will every day.....Time itself is an act of rape. Life is rape'.[438]

10. Conclusions

Les Danaïdes and *Big Love* are, both visually and audibly, graphically violent plays. In Greek tragedy, the convention was for the most violent and horrifying acts to take place off stage and be reported back to the audience via a messenger or witness, or occasionally (as in the case of Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*) by the perpetrator. The closest an ancient audience would have got physically to the acts of violence was when the results of those acts were revealed, for example when Polymestor crawls onto the stage, blinded, in Euripides' *Hecuba*, or when corpses are brought in on the *eccyclema*. Aeschylus' final Danaid tragedy, if we follow the reconstructions suggested by the scholars we reviewed at the beginning of this chapter, would presumbably have needed to reveal the corpses fairly early on in the production, perhaps on the *eccyclema* or carried on in a cortege. However, in the recent adaptations, the playwrights have chosen to show the horror live on stage and also progressively to build up to these deeds with the insertion of other violent moments.

Both plays make it clear that the girls are using violence only in response to violence. They are reacting to the male aggression that takes place first and are using murder as a final resort. In *Les Danaïdes*, the entrance of the girls shows how frightened they are. All fifty move as one, using their suitcases as barricades and huddled together. They are scared of the violence that will arrive with the entrance of the sons of Aegyptus. In comparison, the movements of the Egyptians are menacing and sinister. Their speed is erratic, as if trying to capture animals. The girls and

[438] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

audience are shown how aggressive the male cousins which is revealed in the battle with Pelasgus. In a cold-hearted fashion, they dump the body of Pelasgus in glee and as a warning. When they finally capture the girls, each Egyptian throws their chosen Danaid aggressively over his shoulder like a prize. The violence escalates when the girls are physically threatened by the men. Each man grabs their Danaid by the back of their heads and aggressively tells her that she is now his. This scene is very reminiscent of men dominating women in domestic violence cases. The girls are made to feel like worthless objects and are physically abused. Rather than portraying the girls as calculated killers, the impression from this scene is that the girls would be ultimately driven to commit violence in reaction to their treatment, with or without their father's input. Indeed, they explicitly announce that they will seek vengeance for this barbaric conduct.

Big Love also stages an acceleration of violence. There are three naturally aggressive characters within the collectives of cousins: Thyona, Constantine and Oed. Thyona is a naturally hostile character with a violent streak. She is prone to aggressive outbursts, even prior to the murders. While the other two girls settle into their new surroundings, she hurls plates that were wedding gifts against the wall in frustration at their situation. She holds quite extreme views on men, scathingly claiming:

> The male
>
> The male is a biological accident
>
> an incomplete female
>
> the product of a damaged gene.[439]

[439] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

Her opinion of men is devastatingly low. Shockingly, she would rather carry out a violent act out on a male newborn in order to prevent any future violence from any man, claiming that 'boy babies should be flushed down the toilet at birth'. Thyona explicitly announces that since the girls have been abandoned by everyone they have turned to for help, they are now on their own. This is a turning-point in the play because they become autonomous and are a law unto themselves. They are no longer bound by the rules or social norms of either their own country or the country they find themselves in. Thyona outlines a new code to live by:

> these men who force themselves upon us,
> we will meet force with force
> and we will kill them one by one.[440]

In comparison with Purcărete's adaptation, this play portrays male violence as much more problematic than female. This is manifested in a number of ways. On the one hand, there are Constantine's vicious threats. The character spends much of the play verbally abusing the girls and discussing, at great lengths, the violent acts that he could commit:

> What is it that you women want
> you want to be strung up with hoods and gags and blindfolds
> stretched out on a board with weights on your chest
> you want me to sew your legs to the bed

[440] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

and pour gasoline on you

and light you on fire...[441]

As I have previously mentioned, the character of Constantine reveals an air of entitlement and arrogance. He exerts his dominance through aggressively inciting fear of what he may do. On the other hand, Oed is not as articulate as his brothers and takes primitive pleasure in violently throwing saw blades and displaying a generally destructive attitude. Mee describes his behavior in the stage directions:

> Oed rips off his shirt and throws it to the floor, picks up circular saw blades, one after another, from a pile of saw blades, and hurls them across the stage so they stick in the side of another building that has been wheeled into place, yelling, for no good reason other than that he has gotten himself worked up; he is hopping mad, throwing a saw blade, then jumping into the air and stomping back down on the ground and yelling.[442]

Mee's characterization seems to imply that violence is completely ingrained within society and that we are unable to escape it. It is suppressed until it is called upon, whether it is needed for self-defence or for combat. But once the violent impulses are released, it is hard to subdue them again. This is typical of the pyschological experiences of many soldiers post- deployment.[443] It must be an important issue to

[441] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[442] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[443] For more information read: On PTSD see McCarroll (2003) 3-9. The connection between the psychological disturbances of soldiers and ancient Greek literature was first explored by psychoanalyst Jonathan Shay after using the *Iliad* to treat sufferers from PTSD: Shay (1994).

Mee since it is discussed in a speech made by Constantine about the dealing with the violence of warfare and what happens to soldiers when they return home:

> …when push comes to shove
> and people need defending
> then no one wants a good guy any more
> then they want a man who can fuck someone up
> who can go to his target like a bullet…
> …and then when it's over
> suddenly
> when this impulse isn't called for any longer
> a man is expected to put it away
> carry on with life
> as though he didn't have such impulses
> or to know that, if he does
> he is a despicable person
> and so it may be that when a man turns this violence on a
> woman
> in her bedroom
> or in the midst of war
> slamming her down, hitting her,
> he should be esteemed for this
> for informing her
> about what it is that civilization really contains…[444]

[444] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

The threat of male violence over women, and their fear of men, is prominent in both plays; the difference is that Purcărete implies this more through movement, while Mee uses aggressive dialogue and moments where the characters 'speechify' violent ideas.[445] It encourages the audience to feel sympathy for the Danaids, until they in turn become agents of violence in the final scenes.

Both Purcărete and Mee decided to insert an additional scene which shows the Danaids preparing themselves for their new husbands. Purcărete's Danaids, after ritualistically washing themselves, adorn themselves with simple, spectral dresses; Mee's girls beautify themselves by apply their makeup as if putting on war paint, an analogy suggested by the stage directions, "the girls dress to kill".[446] In both productions, the murder weapons are household objects: forks and kitchen knives.[447] However, each director suggests a different interpretation of the murders. Purcărete, perhaps in a small nod to Greek theatre, has the murders take place on stage but hidden from view. The Danaids' wedding dresses become tents to house each couple, which allows there to be a revelation scene, for the audience, once the murders have taken place. The bodies are revealed from underneath the dresses; each dead man is positioned sitting up straight, wrapped up in white cloth with the fork stuck in his mouth. The bizarre murder weapon and this grotesque tableau render the scene disgustingly horrific. During the wedding scene in *Big Love*, what initially could be seen as playful actions of couples in love soon start to take on a sinister element.

[445] Erin Mee claims her father's characters tend to monologue rather than dialogue. She uses the verb 'speechify' to describe the moment when one of her father's characters is allowed time to explore an idea or emotion.
[446] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[447] In the televised production of *Les Danaides*, the forks appear a number of times. The girls often take the pieces of cutlery out of their suitcases and position them like tokens on top of their suitcases.

Thyona and Constantine become quite forceful with one another and the violence between the couple becomes highly sexualized, as described in this stage direction:

> He takes off his jacket
>
> as though to start a real fight with her.
>
> She pulls up her wedding dress
>
> to show her bare butt to him
>
> and to do a seductive-hostile butt dance
>
> while she faces upstage.[448]

As this progresses, the other couples (with the exception of Lydia and Nikos) begin to adopt similar violence. Mee certainly intended that the violence of this scene be built up cumulatively and unrelentingly, since he makes the following suggestion in the script for the visual communication of the bridegrooms' enjoyment of extreme savagery:

> one groom lying across two chairs—his head on one, his feet on the other,
>
> dropping bowling balls on his stomach and letting them roll onto the floor
>
> one groom on his back on the ground,
>
> a board filled with nails resting on his naked chest;
>
> another groom putting an anvil on the board,
>
> and then hammering the anvil with a sledgehammer

[448] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

> one groom with his feet locked into moon boots nailed to the ground
> and he is rocking violently back and forth[449]

Instead of Purcărete's forks as the murder weapons, Mee selects kitchen knives, with Thyona taking first blood and stabbing Constantine. Mee makes it clear that he wants the scene to be bloody and horrific for the audience. The shocking nature of this scene is provided with a contrast by Lydia and Nikos, who give in to their love of each other and lie in an embrace to the side of the stage, oblivious to what is taking place.

It is challenging for a modern audience to understand the Danaids in these adaptations and make sense of the murders. Both Purcărete and Mee provide information showing that the women are genuinely fearful, understanding what fate befalls them and the violence that they may be subject to if the men are left to their own devices. It is reasonable to expect that these women have been driven to commit these atrocious acts out of frustration and fear. But there is a disorienting lack of remorse in both productions. Purcărete's girls become almost demonic, laughing and reveling in their deeds, while Mee's Thyona is unrepentant and Olympia seems confused.

The debate on punishment is then brought into the productions. In *Les Danaïdes*, the Danaids and Danaus are punished by the gods for their atrocities. No trial takes place for Hypermnestra but she is spared from the hell that the other girls are put through. This is in contrast to *Big Love,* which includes a trial scene in a nod to one of the many hypothesized versions of the play. Mee shifts the focus in his version onto the role of humanity in these situations. Punishment is not in the control of the gods but is mankind's responsibility. Thyona protests that Lydia is in the wrong and

[449] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

insists that justice needs to be served. Once again, she assumes the role which we can imagine Danaus adopted towards Hypermnestra, claiming *Lydia* is the one who should be tried:

> You go behind our backs.
>
> You break your promise.
>
> You betray your sisters,
>
> and you're sorry?
>
> In any civilized society
>
> you would be put on trial.
>
> And hanged probably.
>
> Or electrocuted.[450]

Mee's Thyona here ignores that, if they were 'in any civilized society', she and Olympia would be on trial for homicide; perhaps this is his way of showing Thyona's deluded and violent attitude again. Bella declares that Lydia must be acquitted because "love trumps all. Love is the highest law,"[451] but this sounds trite and scarcely supported by the same authority and gravitas that a judge such as Aphrodite could have lent the sentiment. By turning the focus at the end of the play onto the lack of assistance from the community and their failure to protect the girls in the first place, Mee brings the audience back to the discussion of asylum, but now adds the question, what defines justice?

[450] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.
[451] From Mee's script at: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml.

11. Back to Aeschylus

In conclusion, how can our analysis of these two modern adaptations of Aeschylus' trilogy help us when we turn back to the highly problematic original Greek text and fragments? The extant play, *Suppliants*, is frustratingly inexplicit about the contents of the other plays in the tetralogy, but is also bewildering as a 'standalone' tragedy. As Burian points out in the introduction to his translation of *Suppliants,* the play fails to follow even some of the most familiar conventions of Greek tragedy. There is no one hero or lead individual in the work; instead it deals with a number of collectives.[452] Garvie and Sommerstein both argue that the play appears so unusual because Aeschylus was consciously experimenting.[453] Tragedy usually focuses on individuals but instead here the chorus are the lead character. There also appears to be no tragic mistake (*hamartia*), no epic downfall or dramatic denouement to the piece. The fact that there seems to be no singular dominant theme within *The Suppliants,* apart from supplication, makes it difficult to imagine what took place in the rest of the trilogy. The production can easily come across as a 'filler' piece that does not give us much information about what precedes it and what occurs afterwards. Our minds are probably too closed to the sheer diversity of early Greek theatre when we attempt to reconstruct it using patterns we have inferred from the tiny quantity of extant plays. This in turn leaves us with a number of questions concerning the trilogy.

What is the trilogy ultimately all about? Is it a story about a group of women and their own beliefs on marriage, or is it a tale of petty conflict between brothers (Danaus and Aegyptus) where their children are collateral damage? If we following the widely accepted plot suggestions for the final play in the trilogy, are the girls committing the acts out of piety to their father, are they brainwashed, or is there some

[452] Burian (1991) 193-4.
[453] Sommerstein (2010) 111, Garvie (2008) 86-7.

other explanation or reasoning behind it all? If Hypermnestra was a character in Aeschylus' play, should the audience see her as a brave individual standing up for what she believes is right, like Antigone, or as a disobedient daughter/sister? Ultimately, what did Aeschylus wanted his audience to walk away with? Surely he wouldn't have agreed with the murder of the bridegrooms, so does he want to prove that behaviour such as this will be punished? If so, what form would that take? Torture in the underworld? Or perhaps, for women so determined not to marry, being forced into a new arrangement with local Argives may have been punishment enough?

In my view, *Suppliants* offers the start of a debate about whether it is right to get involved in other people's situations and the ramifications of such involvement. The character of Pelasgus is clearly torn between protecting his city from starting a war or coming to the aid of those who potentially share the same ancestry. As a leader, do you risk offending the gods by looking after your dependents or assist unknowns that may lead to dangerous consequences? If *Suppliants* was the first play in the trilogy, I could imagine that the repercussions of this decision would continue on throughout the next two plays. But my interpretation, of the tragic trilogy and satyr play, like that of other academics, is pure (if educated) conjecture.

The modern playwrights discussed in this chapter are *not* doing philological puzzles, but trying to see how the limited remains of the ancient scripts can be turned into compelling contemporary theatre (an aim of which I am sure Aeschylus would have approved). Both have a love of Greek drama and of working with the ideas of the playwrights, a passion summed up thus by Charles Mee:

> Unlike Western theatre since Ibsen, which has been essentially a theatre of staged texts, the Greeks employed spectacle, music, and dance or

> physical movement, into which text was placed as one of the elements of theatre. The complexity and richness of form reflected a complexity and richness of understand of human character and human history.[454]

They took very different approaches to the material available. Purcărete stitched the pieces of the trilogy into a new dramatic fabric, allowing Aeschylus' voice to emerge more clearly by adding in lines from his other plays. Mee preferred to modernize his adaptation and develop ideas that were probably not realized on Aeschylus' stage. The two playwrights, either consciously or subconsciously, both seem to acknowledge in their productions the fragmented nature of the trilogy's existential status: Purcărete's group dialogues were often broken up by the interruption of the gods, and the speeches of the Danaids in particular comes across as unnatural and jarring. In *Big Love*, the characters are constantly talking over each other, going off topic and often leaving sentences unfinished. While they may not be seen as the dominant themes in the trilogy by scholars, these adapted plays investigate the consequences of women fleeing from their impending forced marriages and their treatment in the land in which they seek shelter. They gain and then lose asylum in their new country, face death from their own people if they refuse to return, and must constantly fight to have their voices heard, producing their belief that violence must be met with violence. These are universal themes that lay dormant in the fragmented trilogy but now have been given a new voice through the work of Sivilu Purcărete and Charles Mee. They restore a narrative with which many patriarchal cultures have had to deal, and will continue to do. These productions leave a modern audience questioning what has changed since Aeschylus' time and what are our ethical values when faced with a group claiming

[454] Mee, E (2002) 96.

political asylum. Do we jeopardize our own security to assist others? How far should we go to defend others against the injustices of their culture? Is violence ever the answer? Ultimately the plot, whether in Aeschylus, Purcărete or Mee, puts the audience into the shoes of Pelasgus, and asks "what would *you* do now?"

Chapter 5
Euripides' *Hypsipyle*

1. Introduction

With Euripides' *Hypsipyle* we are in a similar position as we are in relation to Sophocles' satyr play *Ichneutae*, since a sufficiently substantial proportion of the tragedy has survived on papyrus for us to have clear insights into its plot and tone. We know more about *Hypsipyle* than about almost all of Euripides fragmentary plays. The bulk of surviving text, in a similar fashion to *Ichneutae*, was discovered on papyri by Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt.[455] The extant pieces are fairly mutilated but they certainly provide us with segments from a number of different scenes, which can be put back together by a process of academic detective work or by experimental playwrights.

In this chapter, I will discuss the allure of the partially preserved text of a tragedy by examining, first, the evidence for Euripides' play and other notable versions of the *Hypsipyle* myth. I will also examine the ordering, allocation and context of the fragments. Exploration of this information is important to our understanding of the theatre works by Tasos Roussos and David Wiles, which are discussed in the second part of the chapter, because both men had conducted substantial scholarly enquiries. I intend to show that even with a large amount of surviving textual material, contemporary playwrights can take quite different approaches in their productions. In the case of Roussos and Wiles, the major difference is that while one attempts to create a seamless version, the other pays homage to the fragmented nature of the plot.

[455] Discussed in the chapter on the *Ichneutae*; see above, pp. 31-32.

2. The Evidence for Euripides' *Hypsipyle* and Prior Scholarly Engagement

The date of Euripides' premiere of *Hypsipyle* has been much debated. The play is named alongside the lost *Antiope* and the surviving *Phoenician Women* by a scholiast on Aristophanes' *Frogs* 53, which makes it highly likely that they were performed in a group at the same competition. Although they are not explicitly said to have been part of a trilogy or tetralogy, scholars including Vellacott, Lesky and Morwood,[456] for example, prefer to assume that the plays were interconnected. The same scholion indicates that these plays were produced shortly before Aristophanes' *Frogs* (almost certainly dated to 405 BC[457]) and after *Andromeda* (almost certainly 412 and certainly before *Thesmophoriazusae*). We can therefore be fairly sure of the approximate date of the production of *Hypsipyle*, *Antiope* and *Phoenician Women*, i.e. late in Euripides' career, between 410 and 406.

Within this time frame, certain years have been excluded by some scholars. Wilamowitz, for example, strongly believed that it was impossible that the plays was performed in 407 BC since Euripides was said in some ancient sources to have been in Macedonia during that period;[458] Collard, Cropp and Gibert exclude 408 BC, since if all three tragedies had been produced together, this would have clashed with the known 408 premiere of *Orestes*.[459] Webster therefore asserts that *Hypsipyle* was performed between 411 BC and 409 BC, concluding that it was most likely to have been 410 BC;[460] interestingly, the two writers of the modern interpretations of

[456] Lesky (1972) 444, Vellacott (1975) 98 and Morwood (2002) 3 claim that the production would have taken place in 409.
[457] See Hall (2015*c*).
[458] Wilamowitz (1875) 148.
[459] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 183.
[460] Webster (1967) 257.

Hypsipyle discussed later on in this chapter both favour 407/8 BC.[461] While chronology, if certain, can be very helpful, I must admit to some skepticism about how much it actually matters when and in what company any ancient tragedy was performed, especially since scholars often forget that there were venues alternative to the City Dionysia (for example the Lenaea), especially towards the latter end of the 5th century when we know that plays were also staged in rural Attic deme theatres.[462] Moreover, the scholia could be highly misleading. Yet when the surviving material from the plot is compared with other complete plays certainly dated to this period of Euripides' career, we can see some similarities which makes the decision to allocate the time period of 411-406 more than plausible.

In 1889, Nauck's *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* only presented the nineteen short book fragments that were available,[463] but it was with the archaeological discovery of P.Oxy. 852,[464] again by Grenfell and Hunt, which gives us the majority of text for the lost play. The finds were published in 1908 and showed the discovery of a significant amount of material that could be attributed to the beginning, middle and end of the production. Despite corruption of the papyrus, a reconstruction can be made from various indicators including consistency in the layout of the text, notations that are found in the margin and, as pointed out by Collard, Cropp and Gibert, the content of the document on the back of which the play had been written.[465] In addition, the discovery of the highly corrupt papyrus hypothesis P.Oxy. 2455—with

[461] Wiles (2005) 191 and Anagnostopoulos (2009) the introduction claims that it was performed around 408BC.
[462] For more on this please see Hall (2007*c*).
[463] Nauck (1889).
[464] Documentation of the Hypsipyle papyri as found by Grenfell and Hunt can be seen in Part VI of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (1908)19-106.
[465] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004)170.

supplementary information from P.Oxy. 3652—has assisted the detective work of ascertaining the outlines of the action and dialogue of *Hypsipyle*.[466]

T iiia (– N) Hypothesis P. Oxy. 2455 (with P. Oxy. 3652)

fr. 14 (col. xiii) Ὑ[ψι]πύλη ἧς ἀρχή,
ιΔιμόνυσιος ὃς θιύρσοισιιν καὶ νεμβριῶν
δοραῖς, [ ] ἡ δ' ὑπ[όθεσις·

a dozen lines largely lost: P. Oxy. 3652 col. i supplies line-ends of a few letters each, P. Oxy. 2455 fr. 15 (if it belongs here) two successive line-beginnings:

Ἀμ]φιαρα[. . . π]αραγε[ν . . .

fr. 14 (col. xiv) *traces of one line*

γ[ ]θεισατο [
κρήνην ἔδ⟨ε⟩ιξ[ε δρά-
κ[ο]ντος διεσπ[ ]αδε [
τ[ό]πους οἱ γεγονότες [ ] παῖδες παρ[ῆσ]αν
ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς μητρὸς ζήτησιν καὶ κατα-
λύσαντες παρὰ τῆ⟨ι⟩ τοῦ Λυκούργου γυναικὶ
τὸν ἐπιτάφιον τοῦ παιδὸς ἠθέλησαν ἀ-
γωνίσασθαι· ἡ δ[ὲ] τοὺς π[ρ]οειρημέν[ο]υ[ς
ξενοδοχήσασα τούτους μὲν ἐπη⟨ί⟩νεσ[ε]ν,
τὴν μητέρα δ' αὐτῶν ἀποκτείνειν [ἠμελ-
λεν [ὡ]ς ἑκουσίω[ς ἀπ]ολωλεκυ[ί]ας α[ὐ-
τῆ[ς τὸ] τέκνον· Ἀ[μφια]ράου δὲ [
σαμ[ ] τουτω[ ] χ[ά]ριν ἔδω[κε

> Hypsipyle, which begins, 'Dionysus, who with thyrsuses and fawnskins', and the plot (is as follows):
> (a dozen lines largely lost)
> ...Amphiaraus.....arriving...
> ...putting the?..... showed the spring...of/by a
> serpent... ... the sons who had been born(or had come)
> ...had arrived <in the> vicinity in search of their mother, and having lodged with Lycurgus' wife they were keen to compete in the funeral games for the boy. And she having accepted the aforesaid youths as guests approved them but planned to kill their mother as having killed <the> child on purpose. But when Amphiaraus..... <she?> thanked him...[467]

Hypsipyle seems *prima facie* to fit in well with Euripides' later plays, since it incorporates epic themes and expands on the conventional scope of tragic plays. The

[466] Grenfell (1908)19-106.
[467] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 185.

play is rooted deeply within traditional classical myth, being connected to the story of Jason and the Argo, as well as the war waged by the Seven against Thebes. But it also constituted a 'rescue drama' or 'escape plot' with elements akin to Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*. Prior to the discovery of the papyri fragments the only surviving elements were testimonia and the later writings of mythographers. Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* outlines the story of Hypsipyle's life in Lemnos in the discussion of Jason and the Golden Fleece. It claims that the women of Lemnos refused to honor Aphrodite and therefore, as punishment, she cursed them all with an unpleasant smell that caused their husbands to reject their wives and instead start sexual relationships with captive women from Thrace. In their fury, the women of Lemnos murdered their husbands and fathers. Hypsipyle, refused to kill her father, Thoas and, instead, hid him. When Jason landed on Lemnos, Hypsipyle had become queen. They embarked on a brief relationship before Jason continued on his journey. Apollodorus tells us that from this relationship, Hypsipyle bore two sons.[468]

> With Jason as captain, these men put to sea and landed on the island of Lemnos. It happened that Lemnos at that time was empty of men and ruled by Hypsipyle daughter of Thoas for the following reason. The Lemnian women did not honor Aphrodite, so she afflicted them with an awful smell. For this reason their husbands took female captives from nearby Thrace and brought them into their beds. Because they were dishonored, the Lemnian women killed their fathers and husbands. Hypsipyle alone hid her father Thoas and saved him. Having landed on

[468] Hypsipyle's relationship with Jason appears in Ovid's *Heroides 6*, where she writes to Jason accusing him of betrayal with Medea and abandoning her. While it briefly mentions that she has children with him and how she saved her father from death, it does not mention her later life and therefore does not assist us with Euripides' fragmented play.

> Lemnos at that time when it was ruled by women, the Argonauts slept with the women. Hypsipyle took Jason into her bed and had sons, Euneus and Nebrophonos.[469]

In his *Fabulae*, Hyginus, elaborates on story by stating that Hypsipyle put her father on a ship in order for him to escape the massacre. The mythographer goes on to say that after the Argonauts departed, the women of Lemnos discovered that Hypsipyle spared her father and attempted to kill her as punishment. She escaped the island but was captured by pirates and sold as a slave to King Lycurgus.

> The women on the island of Lemnos had not made a sacrifice to Venus for some years, and she grew in her anger made their husbands scorn them and take Thracian women as new wives. The Lemnian women, also goaded on by Venus, conspired and killed every last male on the island. Only Hypsipyle did not take part and secretly put her father, Thoas, on a ship; he was driven by a storm to the Taurian peninsula.
>
> Meanwhile the Argonauts were sailing along and eventually came to Lemnos. The gatekeeper, Iphinoe, saw them and announced their arrival to Queen Hypsipyle. Her aged advisor, Polyxo, recommended that she bind them to their hearth and home. Hypsipyle and Jason had sons, Euneus and Deipylus. There they dallied at some length until Hercules berated them and they left.
>
> As for the Lemnian women, after they learned that Hypsipyle had saved her father, they tried to kill her, but she fled. She was picked up by pirates and taken to Thebes, where she was sold into the service of King

[469] Apollodorus 1.9.17 trans. Smith and Trzaskoma (2007).

> Lycurgus. All the Lemnian women who became pregnant by an Argonaut named their children after the father[470].

Later on in *Fabulae*, Hyginus retells how Hypsipyle was found in Nemea by the seven chieftains who were on their way to attack Thebes. There, she was the nursemaid to Opheltes, King Lycurgus' son. Hyginus claims that King Lycurgus knew of an oracle that had warned his son should not be put on the ground until he was able to walk. The mythographer implies that Hypsipyle may have known about this warning, for when she needs to the put the child down to show the chieftains the spring, she rests the boy on a thick patch of parsley. While she is showing the men the water, a serpent that was guarding the spring attacks the infant. The seven men kill the serpent but the boy is already devoured. They appealed to Lycurgus on Hypsipyle's behalf; Hyginus, however, does not tell us whether she is spared. Hyginus then claims that funeral games were established, in honor of Opheltes, which in Hyginus' time were still being performed every four years with the victors receiving crowns of parsley (the historical 'Nemean Games').

> The seven generals were on their way to attack Thebes when they came to Nemea, where Hypsipyle, Thoas' daughter, was enslaved to King Lycurgus, whose son Archemorus (or Ophites) she was nursing. She had received an oracle that warned her not to put the boy down on the earth before he could walk. So the seven generals who were going to Thebes came to Hypsipyle in search of water and asked her to show them where they could find some. Afraid to put the boy down on the earth, she placed him instead in a deep patch of parsley that sat next to

[470] Hyginus 15 trans. Smith and Trzaskoma (2007).

> the spring. While she was drawing water for them, the serpent that was guarding the spring devoured the boy. Adrastus and the others killed the serpent, appealed to Lycurgus on Hypsipyle's behalf, and established funeral games in the boy's honor. These games still occur every fourth year, and the winners receive a crown of parsley.[471]

Apollodorus also continues Hypsipyle's story later on in his accounts. He has a similar version of events to Hyginus but embellishes it with additional details. He suggests that on the discovery of Hypsipyle's betrayal, the Lemnian women put her father to death; instead of fleeing and being captured by pirates, she was sold into slavery by her countrywomen. We learn the details that Opheltes' mother is Eurydice and that Amphiaraus sees the death as a sign foreboding the future and decreees, therefore, that the boy should be renamed Archemorus. Apollorous goes on to describe the first Nemean Games,[472] and the sports they included—a horse race, a foot race, boxing, a leaping match, javelin-throwing, wrestling and archery.

> When they arrived in Nemea, where Lycourgos was king, they went looking for water. Hypsipyle showed them the way to a spring, leaving behind Opheltes, an infant that she was nursing, the son of Eurydice and Lycourgos. She was doing so because when the Lemnian women had found out later that she had saved Thoas, they killed him and sold Hypsipyle into slavery. So she was brought and served in the home of Lycourgos. While she was showing them the spring, the child she left behind was killed by a serpent. Adrastos and his men then showed up,

[471] Hyginus 74.
[472] The title given to the funeral games that Hyginus acknowledges in his account.

> killed the serpent, and buried the boy. But Amphiaraos told them that it was a sign that foretold the future, and they called the boy Archemoros ["Beginner of Doom"]. They held in his honor the first Nemean Games. Adrastos was the victor in the horse race, Eteoclos in the running, Tydeus in boxing, Amphiaraos in jumping and discus, Laodocos in the javelin, Polynieces in wrestling, and Parthenopaios in archery.[473]

The character of Hypsipyle also appears in Statius's epic poem, *Thebaid*, which was based on The Seven against Thebes myth. The Argive forces meet Hypsipyle and, in a similar fashion to Hyginus and Apollordorus' accounts, the death of the child occurs. What is notable about Statius is that he acknowledges that Hypsipyle had twin boys with Jason before becoming a slave. He reports how by chance they discover her in Nemea and their reconciliation prior to the Argives' departure.

> Which of the High Ones solaced her calamity, balancing her tears with an answer to her great prayer, and brought back unlooked-for joy to sad Hypsipyle? You it was, Euhan, founder of the family, who had brought the two youths from Lemnos' shore to Nemea, preparing a wondrous destiny. Their mother was the reason for their journey and the hospitable dwelling of Lycurgus had given them entry, when the report reached the king of his offspring piteously killed. So they are there as his companions and (oh chance and men's minds blind to the future!) support the king. But as soon as Lemnos and Thoas' name come to their ears, they rush through weapons and hands and, both weeping, tear their mother apart with greedy embraces, taking her to their bosoms in turn.

[473] Apollodorus 3.6.4 trans. Smith, Trzaskoma (2007) 53.

> She stays fixed like a stony rock, her eyes unmoving, not daring to trust the gods she has experienced. But when she sees their faces and the signs of Argo on the swords Jason had left behind and Jason's name inwoven on their shoulders, her sorrows left her, and overcome by so great a boon she collapsed, her eyes bedewed with other tears. Signs too were manifest in heaven, cries of tumultuous. joy and the drums and cymbals of the god crashed through the resonant air.[474]

Later receptions of the story seemed to follow a similar pattern to those that were told before. The 'Second Vatican Mythographer' described Hypsipyle's early days and her arrival in Nemea. She served Lycurgus who was the king of the region and not a priest as mentioned in other receptions. After the death of his son, the king, in his anger, wanted to exercise his ownership over Hypsipyle and threatened to sacrifice her in honour of his son's death. The mythographer outlines how the Greeks intervened on Hypsipyle's behalf as she had shown them to the spring. They had also received a message from the Oracle indicating that they would not reach Thebes if they did not placate the shades of Archemorus. They established funeral games in the child's honour. It was during the games that the two men who won the running races were announced as the sons of Jason and Hypsipyle. On hearing their names she recognized them and they persuaded the king that they should be able to take her back to Lemnos.[475]

We cannot fully rely on these mythographic accounts of Hypsipyle's story when reconstructing a lost play. They are much later sources, could be misleading in nature and no doubt were written with specific agendas in mind. But, alongside the

[474] Statius 5. 710-731 trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (2004).
[475] Pepin (2008) 166-167.

hypothesis, we can ascertain that there were a number of fixed elements in all the retellings of the story. The most notable characters drawn from the myth, besides Hypsipyle, were a seer called Amphiaraus (who is a significant figure in the Seven against Thebes myth), and the parents of the murdered child, Lycurgus and Eurydice. The sons of Hypsipyle also play a part, but the sources do not agree on the names of the boys. It seems that there was a common consensus that at least of one was named Euneus, for both the Apollodorus and Hyginus mention him in their work. The second son's name changes with each retelling. Apollodorus claims that he was called Nebrophonus, while Hyginus bestows the name Deipylus upon him. However, from the opening scenes preserved in the surviving papyri of the text, we can ascertain that Euripides has named the second son Thoas.

To turn now to Euripides, indeed, the surviving shreds of P.Oxy. 852, discovered in Egypt by Grenfell and Hunt and published in 1908, seem to indicate a similar life story for Hypsipyle as outlined by the later mythographic receptions I have discussed. By combining the book fragments that were documented in Nauck with the papyri evidence, several scholars have tried to put them in order and create a basic structure for Euripides' tragedy, most notably Bond and Collard, Cropp and Gibert. It is from P.Oxy. 852 fragment F759a,[476] which is often allocated a position towards the end of the production, that we can see the similarities between the mythographer accounts and Euripides' approach. In this scene it appears that Hypsipyle has been reunited with her sons. In lines 1593 - 1628, she confirms the details about her 'back story' that may have been also mentioned at the opening of the play to set the scene, but we cannot be sure of this since most of that part of the play is highly corrupt or

[476] The numbering of fragments and translation found in Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004). If the fragments can be found in TFrG, their TFrG numbering will appear in brackets.

lost. Hypsipyle tells her son Euneos that on Lemnos she was ordered to kill her father, Thoas;[477] she refused and escaped by sea:

Ὑψ. αἰαῖ, φυγὰς ἐμέθεν ἃς ἔφυγον,
ὦ τέκνον, εἰ μάθοις, Λήμνου ποντίας,
πολιὸν ὅτι πατέρος οὐκ ἔτεμον κάρα.

Εὐν. ἦ γάρ σ' ἔταξαν πατέρα σὸν κατακτανεῖν;

Ὑψ. φόβος ἔχει με τῶν τότε κακῶν· ἰὼ
τέκνον, οἷά τε Γοργάδες ἐν λέκτροις
ἔκανον εὐνέτας.

Εὐν. σὺ δ' ἐξέκλεψας πῶς πόδ' ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν;

Ὑψ. ἀκτὰς βαρυβρόμους ἱκόμαν
ἐπί τ' οἶδμα θαλάσσιον, ὀρνίθων
ἔρημον κοίταν.

Hyps. Alas, the flight I had to flee, my son, if you only knew it, from sea-girt Lemnos, because I did not sever my father's grey head!

Eun. They really ordered you to kill your own father?

Hyps. I feel the terror of that time's evils - O, my son, like the Gorgons they were, slaying their partners in their beds!

Eun. And you, how did you steal away and escape death?

Hyps. I made my way to the deep-resounding shore and the swelling sea, the lonely resting-place of birds.

We learn that she was sold into slavery by seafarers. Later on in this exchange, we also hear that she had once had a relationship with Jason, that their sons had been taken when very small to Colchis on the Argo, and that Jason had subsequently died:

[477] His name is confirmed in line 1626.

Εὐν. Ἀργώ με καὶ τόνδ' ἤγαγ' εἰς Κόλχων πόλιν.

Ὑψ. ἀπομαστίδιόν γ' ἐμῶν στέρνων.

Εὐν. ἐπεὶ δ' Ἰάσων ἔθαν' ἐμός, μῆτερ, πατήρ —

Eun. Argo took me and him to the Colchian's city.

Hyps. Yes, you were just lately weaned from my breast!

Eun. And when, mother, my father Jason died –

This fragment suggests that there were well-known elements of the myth and Euripides did not divert significantly from the stories surrounding the character of Hypsipyle. This makes possible both positioning the fragments and creating an almost certain reconstruction.

Some scholars assume that the opening part of the play, before the first choral song, fell into three parts. This structure was already outlined by Grenfell and Hunt[478] but was supported by a number of scholars such as Collard, Cropp and Gibert, Wecklein and Morel.[479] They assume it would have commenced with a lengthy 'programmatic' prologue speech from Hypsipyle, an assumption based on other extant Euripidean plays such as *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, as well as from the details contained in the extant fragments. Her dialogue might have opened with these lines:

F752 (TfrG 752)

Διόνυσος, ὃς θύρσοισι καὶ νεβρῶν δοραῖς
καθαπτὸς ἐν πεύκαισι Παρνασσὸν κάτα
πηδᾶι χορεύων παρθένοις σὺν Δελφίσιν

Dionysus, who girt with thyruses and fawnskins
leaps in the torch-lit dance across Parnassus with the
Delphic maidens....

[478] Grenfell and Hunt (1908) 19 – 106.
[479] Grenfell (1908) 23, Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 171, Wecklein (1909) 16-20, Morel (1921) 1-10.

This fragment is quoted by Aristophanes in his comedy *Frogs*;[480] it is very similar to the beginning of the hypothesis POxy. 2455 which claims that *Hypsipyle* commenced with 'Dionysus, who with thyrsuses and fawnskins'. In *Frogs*, it is Euripides himself who quotes the lines during his contest with fellow playwright, Aeschylus. This could indicate that *Hypsipyle* was a well-known production and the verses were already imprinted on audience's consciousness.

In Hypsipyle's monologue, she presumably outlined her life story prior to her arrival in Nemea. Papyri fragments F752a and F752b, although highly corrupt, contain the words 'Lemnos' and 'exiled'. This implies that she provided details about her earlier life in her homeland and why she was forced to leave. Collard, Cropp and Gibert also propose that she will have expressed her despair at her life in Nemea, her isolation from her children and her lack of knowledge about her father's current situation. In addition, they suggest that she will have announced her affection for the child she is now looking after,[481] although in my view there is very little evidence to support this last assertion.

If we are to infer a pattern from Euripides' extant late plays, we can suggest that Hypsipyle would have then entered the house, while her two sons arrived on stage. Collard, Cropp and Gibert imply that this is supported by the following fragment which they attribute to her son Thoas:

752c (TfrG 764)

ἰδού, πρὸς αἰθέρ' ἐξαμίλλησαι κόρας,
γραπτούς <τ' ἐν αἰετ>οῖσι πρόσβλεψον τύπους.

Look - run your eyes up towards the sky, and take a look at the painted reliefs on the pediment.

[480] Line 1211 - 13 and is attributed to Euripides' *Hypsipyle* by scholia.
[481] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 171.

While this is similar to a line describing the Taurians' temple in in Euripides' extant rescue play *Iphigenia in Tauris,* [482] in my view we cannot be fully certain that this was spoken by Thoas. But it is plausible enough that her sons took part in a dialogue with Hypsipyle when she re-entered the stage to question the unknown men who have knocked at the door of the house.

Even though the production was a tragedy, we are able to see that Euripides' customary humour shining through the fragments. One of the extant papyri fragments from the interaction between Hypsipyle and her sons also shows the playwright's familiar love of dramatic irony. His contemporary audience would have known who the men were when they entered the stage, and therefore their true relationship with Hypsipyle. This adds a humorous element to the play when she says these lines:

752d 3-5

ὑμεῖς ἐκρούσατ', ὦ νεανία[ι, πύλα]ς;
ὦ μακαρία σφῶιν ἡ τεκο[ῦσ', ἥ]τις ποτ' ἦν·

Was it you, young gentlemen, who knocked at the door? (Noticing their looks) O blessed she who bore you, whoever she was!

We learn later on in this fragment that the gentlemen sought hospitality at the home of Lycurgus; from the corrupt passage at the end of this papyrus piece we can roughly deduce that Hypsipyle claims that there are no men in charge of the household at that moment. At this point, we lose a coherent flow of dialogue, but one can assume that the men go into the house, in accordance with the hypothesis which states that the men lodge with Lycurgus' wife.

[482] When Orestes and Pylades describe the temple on their arrival in Tauris, lines 67 -92.

The papyri fragments next pick up with Hypsipyle on stage so we assume that she did not leave. This brings us to the final part of the opening scene. Like many Euripidean heroines, she is given a lyric monody.[483] She is singing a song, perhaps a lullaby, to the baby which concludes with these lyric lines:

F52f 10-15

οὐ τάδε πήνας, οὐ τάδε κερκίδος
ἱστοτόνου παραμύθια Λήμνια
Μοῦσα θέλει με κρέκειν, ὅτι δ' εἰς ὕπνον
ἢ χάριν ἢ θεραπεύματα πρόσφορα
π]αιδὶ πρέπει νεαρῶι
τάδε μελωιδὸς αὐδῶ.

These are not Lemnian songs for relieving
the labour of weft – thread and web-stretching
shuttle that the muse wants me to voice, but what serves
for a tender young boy, to lull him or charm him
or tend to his needs - this do I tunefully sing.

The surviving text then continues with the entrance of a new character. The lines are unassigned on the P.Oxy 852 papyrus but it has been assumed by many scholars that it is the introduction of the chorus, who are a group of local women.[484] They announce that they have seen the approaching Argive army, and specify the name of Adrastus, one of the famous seven leaders who marched on Thebes. This indicates the start of the parodos. Corruption of the text prevents us from knowing everything that was discussed; however, towards the end, we have two pieces of dialogue between Hypsipyle and the Chorus. The former laments her situation and her longing for her homeland, while the interlocutor, presumably the chorus, reassures her by mentioning other women who have been successful overseas:

[483] For more on this, see Beverley (1997) and Hall (1999).
[484] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 172; Bond (1963) 112-116.

F752g 14-27

τ[ά]δε μοι τάδε θυμὸς ἰδεῖν ἵεται,
Δαναῶν δὲ πόνους
ἕτερος ἀναβοάτω.

Χο. παρὰ σοφῶν ἔκλυον λόγο[υ]ς
πρότερον ὡς ἐπὶ κυμάτων
πόλιν καὶ πατρίους δόμου[ς
Φοίνικος Τυρία παῖς
Εὐρώπα λιποῦσ' ἐπέβα
Διοτρόφον Κρήταν ἱερὰν
Κουρήτων τροφὸν ἀνδ̣ρ̣ῶ̣ν,
ἃ τέκνων ἀρότοισ[ι]ν
τρισσοῖς ἔλιπεν κρά[τος
χώρας τ' ὄλβιον ἀρχάν.

Hyp: ...These things, yes these, does my
spirit yearn to see; but as for the Danaans' labours,
let someone else acclaim them.

Cho: From learned tellers I have heard the story, how in
the past, leaving her city and her ancestral home,
Phoenix's daughter from Tyre Europa went upon the
waves to Crete where Zeus was raised, the sacred
nurse of the Kourêtes, and to her threefold harvest of
children left power and prosperous government
of the land.

The start of the first episode is marked by the Chorus hailing a new character who has entered the stage in F752h. [485] This newcomer is Amphiaraus, one of the seven leaders marching to Thebes, and is described by the Chorus as being 'distinctively dressed in Dorian clothing'. Bond remarks that it is odd for the chorus to talk about his Dorian dress. But this could be because Amphiaraus was well known within myth for being just and acting in moderation, in comparison to the other six

[485]This line has been attributed to the chorus by a number of scholars, as the dialogue is unassigned on the papyrus.

men who took part in the attack against Thebes; Spartan clothing was associated with an austere, even ascetic lifestyle.[486] Bond suggests that that Amphiaraus' costume could be representative of his moral stance, as well as closer to the Athenian dress that Euripides' contemporary would have worn than the elaborate tragic costumes that were the norm in plays such as this.[487]

On his arrival, Amphiaraus questions Hypsipyle about who owns the dwelling and whether there is running water nearby. It is then Hypsipyle's turn to question the gentleman. He divulges that he is an Argive traveling with an army. Again the papyrus becomes fragmented and is missing a number of words. We can ascertain that Hypsipyle draws the conclusion that they are heading towards Thebes, since she makes reference to 'Cadmus' gates'. It would appear from the sporadic extant words in the next section of papyrus that Amphiaraus confirms this is his destination as well as disclosing his name. [488] The rest of this conversation has been damaged or lost with only a few words or lines surviving. Collard, Cropp and Gibert, as well as Bond, have made various suggestions about on what is said in this section of dialogue. [489] From a smattering of words, they are led to believe that Amphiaraus tells Hypsipyle that he has been told of his death at Thebes and needs her help to gather fresh spring water in order to make a sacrifice to the gods. This is perhaps confirmed by this extant line, which is commonly assigned to Hypsipyle:

(Ὑψ.) τί δῆτα θύειν ἰδεῖ σε κατθανούμενον;

Then why do you need to sacrifice if you're going to your death? [490]

[486] See e.g. Demosthenes 54.34, with Hall (2006*b*) 379-80.
[487] Bond (1963) 112-116.
[488] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 172 suggest that one of the lines mentions the exiled Polynices and restoring him to his homeland which would be in reference to the Seven against Thebes story that would have been well known to Euripides' audience.
[489] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 172; Bond (1963) 112-116.
[490] The line is unassigned on the surviving papyrus.

Following what we are led to believe is Amphiaraus' response, which involves him stating that it would be better to make the sacrifice because it is not hard work to worship the gods, the remainder of the scene has not been fully recovered. Collard, Cropp and Gibert suggest during their ordering of the fragments that Hypsipyle would agree to show Amphiaraus the spring, in line with the hypothesis, and that the chorus would try to dissuade her. [491] Fragment 753 appears to confirm that Hypsipyle agrees willingly to show Amphiaraus and his men the stream for it states, 'I will show the Argives Achelous' stream', but again, the name of the character to whom the line is assigned has not survived and the placement of the fragment is uncertain. Despite this, the dialogue does seem congruent with what we would expect Hypsipyle to say for the play to progress. We assume the conclusion of this scene would involve Hypsipyle, while carrying the baby, leading Amphiaraus off stage in search of the spring.

While most of the next part of the play, the first stasimon, has not survived, and what survives is in a highly fragmented state, Collard, Cropp and Gibert feel that there is enough information available to claim that the chorus would have described the story of the Seven against Thebes and the background to Amphiaraus' arrival. A number of extant words have assisted them to come to the conclusion that they indicate that the chorus were discussing the arrival of Polynices and Tydeus at the home of King Adrastus, whose name is mentioned in the fragment (F753c. 18-20). I am inclined to agree with this assertion as it would have been helpful to remind the audience of the background to the events occurring on stage.

What follows the stasimon has been highly debated. Cockle suggests that there may have been an arrival of a messenger who would bring news of the child's death.

[491] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004)172.

This is also believed by Bond, who proposes that when Amphiaraus arrives back on stage later, he has not seen Hypsipyle since the child's death, and so she may have not been present when it occurred. [492] Collard, Cropp and Gibert hold a differing opinion, believing that they can ascertain from the material available that Hypsipyle arrives back on stage to deliver news of the tragedy herself and sings a lyrical dialogue with the chorus. The line is not assigned, therefore it could easily be a messenger's, however, Collard, Cropp and Gibert assert it is Hypsipyle[493] who describes the boy as happily picking flowers (F754) before outlining the moment the child was killed by the serpent:

F754a

κρήνη [σ]κιαζ[
δράκων πάροικ[ος
γοργωπὰ λεύσσω[ν
πήληκα σείων, οὗ φοβ[
ποιμένες ἐπεισιγ' εν[ ] [
παν[ ]μα δρᾶσαι καὶ ῥυ [

...a spring...is shadowed (or shadows).....
a serpent living by it ..... fiercely staring...
...shaking its helm, in fear? of which .....
shepherds.....when silently? ...to do...
...and...

From the lines that are in existence, we can see that Hypsipyle then goes on to discuss her situation with the Chorus. She is fearful of the repercussions from the child's death and contemplates fleeing:

[492] Bond (1963)14.
[493] Again this is an assumption as the character's name is not assigned to the lines.

Ὑψ. δέδο[ι]κα θ[α]ν̣άτωι παιδὸς οἷα πείσομ[αι.
Χο. οὔκουν ἄπειρός γ', ὦ τάλαινα, σ̣[υμφορῶν.
(Ὑψ.) ἔγνωκα κἀγὼ̣ τοῦτο καὶ φυλάξ[ομαι.
Χο. τί δῆτά̣ γ' ἐξεύρηκας εἰς ἀλκ[ὴν κακῶν;
Ὑψ. φεύγειν σ̣τ̣ [̣]ων των[̣]δρ[
(Χο.) ποῖ δῆτα τρέψῃ; τ̣ίς σε δ[έ]ξεται πό̣[λ]ι̣ς;
Ὑψ. πόδε̣ς κριν̣[ο]ῦσι τοῦτο κα[ὶ π]ροθυμία.

Hyps. I fear what I shall suffer for the child's death.
Cho. Well, you are not inexperienced in misfortunes, poor woman.
(Hyps.) I am aware of that myself, and shall guard against it.
Cho. What then have you discovered for a protection <from harm>?
Hyps. To flee.....
(Cho). Where then will you turn? What community will accept you?
Hyps. My feet and my eagerness will determine this.

The women are interrupted by a new figure who enters the stage a few lines later. It is assumed for no good reason by many scholars that it is Eurydice, the mother of the child. Again the text is fragmented, but we can ascertain that the speaker is thinking about the baby Opheltes from the following lines:

(Εὐρ.?) π]έ̣λας θυρῶν ᾆ[ρ'] ὕπνον ἐκτελεῖ γλυκ[ύν,
ἢ π]α̣[ι]δὸς εἴ̣ργε̣[ι] δάκρυ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἀγκάλ̣[αις;

(Eur.?) Is he finishing a pleasant sleep by the doorway, or
is she holding the boy in her arms to stop his tears?

There is a large gap between these lines and the next major coherent section. Between the two are a number of words that in my view are inconclusive in providing an adequate outline of what action is occurring. Words such as 'libation' and 'kill' feature in fragment F755a, which could indicate that Eurydice and Hypsipyle are discussing the death of the child. Collard, Cropp and Gibert suggest that these and fragments

F756, F756a, as well as the beginning of F757, are the continuation of a discussion between the two involving speeches where a grief-stricken Eurydice would react to the news of her son's death. They also claim that the mother would accuse Hypsipyle of plotting against her and her family, to which referenced is made later on in F757 when Hypsipyle is retelling Eurydice's claims against her to Amphiaraus.[494] In Chong-Gossard's summary of *Hypsipyle*, he suggests that, on discovering the death of her son, Eurydice would tie up Hypsipyle and plan to kill her as punishment for Opheltes' death, but Amphiaraus' arrival would stop this from occurring.[495] I assume this suggestion is based on the line in the hypothesis which states '... but planned to kill their mother as having killed <the> child on purpose',[496] but I see no other evidence to support this assertion.

The entrance of Amphiaraus in F757 indicates that we are within the trial scene, or a quasi-trial debate scene—a device that Euripides employed regularly.[497] Luckily we are able to obtain a significant amount of coherent material from this fragment. Hypsipyle makes an emotional plea to her mistress, who she is convinced intends to kill her as punishment for her negligence. It seems that she loses all hope of being spared until the seer Amphiaraus enters. He tries to convince Eurydice to be lenient and claims he witnessed the incident. Amphiaraus goes on to explain the circumstances surrounding the death, although this section becomes more and more fragmented as the speech continues. It seems to confirm that the serpent coiled around the child and on seeing this happening, Amphiaraus shot at the monster. He claims that the death is an omen for the Argives. His explanation is fragmented, although one could assume that he details that it forebodes the deaths of the Argive leaders at

[494] F757.866.
[495] Chong-Gossard (2008) 52.
[496] P.Oxy.2455 trans. Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 185.
[497] For more on this please see: Lloyd (1992).

Thebes. From the surviving words at the end of this fragment, we can conclude that he consoles and placates Eurydice by suggesting that the Argives bury the child. The next couple of fragmented lines seem to indicate that Amphiaraus announces that he will host a contest in the boy's honour. We can assume that this is the creation of the Nemean games to which Apollodorus refers in his narration of the myth.

The rest of the plot is hard to decipher due to the extensive corruption of the evidence that has survived, although many scholars feel that they are able to ascertain a rough outline of what takes place. As mentioned earlier, all the source materials they draw on should be used with extreme caution when attempting a scholarly reconstruction, for they may not be based on the Euripidean plot and perhaps are written in a manner reflecting the writer's own aims and objectives. Over a hundred lines are lost between F757 and F758a in which, we can imagine, the second episode would have finished and the chorus' second stasimon commenced. Collard, Cropp and Gibert point out that Euripides' later plays often contain longer second episodes, as in the case of *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*. They suggest that Amphiaraus, Eurydice and Hypsipyle may have continued discussing the funeral arrangements for the child and the games in honour of him. They even go as far as suggesting that there may be some groundwork laid for the participation of Hypsipyle's sons and their eventual reunion with their mother, but this is all pure conjecture.[498] F758a and F758b indicate that the chorus is performing their second stasimon. These sections are badly damaged but one can make out references to Dionysus and words that are linked to him such as 'grape-bunch' and 'from the vine'. Collard, Cropp and Gibert believe that this stasimon would be celebrating Dionysus, retelling the story of his birth and what gifts he has passed on to man. They suggest that this would have stressed Hypsipyle's

[498] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004)173.

genealogical descent from Dionysus' and that the god is assisting in her liberation and future reunion with her children.[499] This is a pleasant and plausible scenario, but of course pure speculation.

The next available fragment (F758c) is believed to be located nearly 300 lines later. It appears to indicate that someone other than the chorus is speaking. This has been allocated to Hypsipyle by Collard, Cropp and Gibert who claim that she is discussing her concerns about being emancipation, although to me there is not enough evidence to confirm that she is the speaker. [500] In my view, the contexts of this and the following fragment (F758d) are so ambiguous that it is impossible to be sure who is speaking or where in the production the segments are from. Scholars have wrangled over this unanswerable conundrum: Bond, for example, deduces that F758c would have been placed immediately after the 'trial scene' and F758d was actually part of the prologue.[501]

After another large gap where dialogue is missing from the play, we find ourselves within the recognition scene. It would appear that during the lost section, the identities of the young men would have been revealed, prompting a reconciliation between Hypsipyle and her sons. Luckily for us, F759a provides a fairly substantial chunk of surviving dialogue. It is generally assumed that Hypsipyle is rejoicing at the news from the opening part of the fragment, which leads into Amphiaraus taking his leave:

[499] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004)173.
[500] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004)173.
[501] Bond (1963)17.

(Ὑψ.) τέκνα τ' ἀνὰ μίαν ὁδὸν
ἀνάπ[α]λιν ἐτρόχασεν
ἐπὶ φόβον ἐπὶ χάριν
ἐλίξας, χρόνωι
δ' ἐξέλαμψεν εὐάμερος.

Ἀμφ. τὴν μὲν παρ' ἡ[μ]ῶν, ὦ γύναι, φέρηι χάριν·
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐμοὶ πρόθυμος ἦσθ' ὅτ' ἠντόμην,
ἀπέδωκα κἀγὼ σοὶ πρόθυμ' ἐς παῖδε σώ.
σώιζου δὲ δὴ σύ, σφὼ δὲ τήνδε μητέρα,

καὶ χαίρεθ'· ἡμε[ῖ]ς δ', ὥσπερ ὡρμήμεσθα δή,
στράτευμ' ἄγοντες ἥξομεν Θήβας ἔπι.

(Hyps.) ... has driven <me> and my sons along a single path, this way and that, swerving us first towards fear, then towards gladness, but with time's passing has shone out bright and fair.

Amph. Lady, you have received the service that I owed you. You were generous to me when I requested your help, and I have repaid you generously with regard to your sons. Take care of yourself, now; and you two take care of your mother. And now farewell to you all; and we, as we set out to do, will lead our army on and come to Thebes.

From Amphiaraus' lines, one can assume that he had a hand in bringing the reunion to pass. This would have been fully explained in the lost dialogue prior to F759a. If we are to believe that P. Oxy. 2455 offers a true summary of what took place in the play, I would propose that that Amphiaraus would have left the stage with Euneus and Thoas to participate in the funeral games, leaving Hypsipyle alone with the chorus.[502] A messenger would arrive to announce that Amphiaraus had discovered the true identities of the young men during the games and return to Hypsipyle in a triumphant

[502] Eurydice may have left the stage to witness the games or returned into the house to grieve alone. Cropp, Collard and Gibert (2004)175 believe that Eurydice would not have reappeared once the 'trial scene' was over.

manner to oversee the reunion and suggest it was a way of repaying Hypsipyle for her assistance earlier in the play. For Hypsipyle to remain on stage and have the events off stage reported back to her would be a similar arrangement to action that takes place in a number of Euripides' other extant plays. In *Ion*, Creusa also remains on stage so that the audience can witness her reactions to the news that is delivered (lines 1260-1545). Webster is in concordance with this proposal, since he suggests that the second stasimon would have been followed by the messenger speech and then a third stasimon which would link into the scene containing F759a.[503]

F759a continues with a similar celebration scene to many of Euripides' other surviving rescue plays that feature an important recognition scene between siblings, spouses or a mother and son prominently in their plot. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen* and *Ion* all feature the female protagonist expressing her elation at the revelation in a duet with the male, where she sings and his response is spoken in iambic verses. Chong-Gossard outlines in his monograph, *Gender and Communication in Euripides' Plays*, how the duet is a crucial scene within the structure of these plays. He explains that the duet is a vital device by which women are able to communicate important information within Euripides' plays. Their songs signify a change in the plot and atmosphere, marking the moment when their characters will be able to escape from their misfortune and take control of their lives:

> By singing and refusing to be interrupted from singing, these women individualize themselves for their stage audience and theater audience. Women in recognition scenes reveal vital information to an avid male

[503] Webster (1967) 94.

> listener….In all these cases, song becomes the voice of the woman's body and its misuse in the past.[504]

Chong-Gossard argues that the woman's lyrics are necessary to such plots because they offer an endorsement of truth. They inform male listeners of the woman's past and constitute the pivotal moment where the rescue plan can be developed and instigated. Although the conclusion of *Hypsipyle* is lost, we do have part of the recognition scene which survives through F759a.

As this is the first time that Hypsipyle has seen her sons since they were infants, she informs them, as well as the audience, of the events that led to her flee Lemnos and how she came to live in Nemea.[505] Chong-Gossard describes this moment as 'an aural focalizer that invites the audience to see through the singer's eyes'.[506] The lyrics help the other characters on stage, as well as the audience, identify with the singer's woeful situation. For Hypsipyle, it is her opportunity to retell the horror of being captured by the seafarers and the humiliation of being sent into servitude; however, in my view, the duet does start to become more of an interrogation once Hypsipyle has told her side of the story. She demands to know more about her sons and their life with Jason. This is important information and highly emotive for Hypsipyle, as a mother, who has missed out on so much time with her children.

The last part of F759a has Euneus explaining how he and his brother had grown up with Orpheus, where he had learnt the lyre and his brother, Thoas, trained as a fighter. Hypsipyle, and the audience, learn that her father has survived and has had a hand in assisting the brothers' search for their mother. This dialogue then becomes

[504] Chong-Gossard (2008) 112.
[505] We are unsure whether this information had been given previously in the play and therefore was just being repeated for her sons' benefit or for the audience's also.
[506] Chong-Gossard (2008) 111.

intelligible on the papyrus, marking the end of what coherently survives of the play. The conclusion of the play is almost entirely lost. Scholars have speculated on what would have taken place at the end. Chong-Gossard proposes that Euneus might have gone on to explain in the missing lines how he and his brother managed to return to Lemnos, where they were reunited with Thoas, their missing grandfather. Perhaps it would also be announced that Dionysus, Thoas' father, would have had a hand in saving the old man after Hypsipyle organised his escape from the massacre. Chong-Gossard also suggests that Euneus may have explained what had happened since they arrived in Nemea and what has occurred prior to this scene.[507]

Collard, Cropp and Gibert hold the view that if the recognition duet followed the pattern that occurs in Euripides' other escape/rescue plays such as *Iphigenia in Tauris, Helen* and *Ion*, then the duet would conclude with the two characters discussing the future they face with the knowledge of each other's identity.[508] We can also assume that Dionysus appeared in the final scene since as we can decipher a speaker notation in the final corrupted parts of the papyri indicating the god had some dialogue towards the end of the play. Due to the blood connection he has with Hypsipyle and her family, it would be easy to suggest that Euripides decided that Dionysus should proclaim that she should be freed from slavery and returned to her family. Perhaps she will also be reunited with her father Thoas in Lemnos as mentioned in other versions of the myth. Grenfell and Hunt[509] suggested that Dionysus would have arrived *ex machina*, and from there he would tell Euneus to go on to Athens and establish a family of musicians, for it is believed that the Euneidae clan, a hereditary caste of priestly musicians at Athens, claimed that they could trace their

[507] Chong-Gossard (2008) 54.
[508] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 254.
[509] Grenfell and Hunt (1908) 28-30.

heritage to Euneus.[510] This announcement would have flattered the Athenian audience and made the story relate to their own mythical past. By having Dionysus give this decree, in addition to the previous discussion between Hypsipyle and Euneus concerning his musical training, Euripides could have intended to honour the Euneidae family. It would associate the group with a divine lineage as well as giving Athens a link to the island of Lemnos, which they had a special interest in controlling because of its prime strategic location near the entrance to the Hellespont.

A small number of unplaced fragments are linked to Euripides' *Hypsipyle*. They are often short sentences that do not provide us with enough information to assign location, context or speaker, but it is tempting to speculate. I would assume from the words in F765a that it is highly probable that this line was said by Hypsipyle to her sons. The fragment's location could be in the missing section where it is hypothesized that Amphiaraus reveals that the young men are Hypsipyle's sons. But I believe Hypsipyle may be still slightly suspicious or trying to contain her emotions during this scene. I think it is more likely that F765a would appear near the recognition duet when Hypsipyle would announce to Euneus:

> περίβαλλ', ὦ τέκνον, ὠλένας.
> Throw your arms around me, my child!

This would be an emotive dramatic device to enforce the importance of the reunion between the mother and her children, which can also be seen in a number of other Euripidean plays,[511] but this is pure conjecture on my behalf. The sentence could equally be said by Hypsipyle to Opheltes, prior to their trip to the spring or,

[510] For further information on this, please see W. Burkert (1994) 44-49.
[511] It is seen at the end of the recognition duet in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen*, *Ion* and *Orestes*.

alternatively, it could have been said in desperation by Eurydice, if the dead child's body was brought on stage, when she was trying to comprehend his death.

Amongst the three classical Athenian tragedians, it is Euripides who has left the largest number of surviving plays. This is still only a small proportion of what he produced, but it does mean we can identify some plot devices and structures he used on several occasions. This helps when trying to piece together a reconstruction of one of his lost plays. *Hypsipyle* contains evidence for elements we know he enjoyed using elsewhere—vivid and emotive messenger speech, use of small children to evoke pity and fear, a sympathetic female lead, exploration of the pain of slavery, a debate scene, mistaken identity and *anagnorisis*, monody and and *deus ex machina*. With just the fragments we have, the quintessentially Euripidean tone and plotline of *Hypsipyle* are quite plain to see. Perhaps this is why playwrights have been drawn to attempt completion of the play. I will now look at two contemporary versions of *Hypsipyle* that have been inspired by the evidence discussed above, but are very different in terms of style and structure.

3. Tasos Roussos' *Hypsipyle*

In 1997, poet and playwright, Tasos Roussos published his version of *Hypsipyle* in Modern Greek. He was already an avid translator and adaptor of Euripides and tackled the fragmented production by drawing upon his own knowledge of the ancient playwright, ancient sources, scholars' opinions and what survives of the text. Roussos was quoted by an online news article as claiming, 'The reconstruction follows, or tried to follow, the spirit of Euripides...Of course, it is not exactly how Euripides wrote it. I

made a suggestion, an interesting one, I think'.[512] The official premiere of his script occurred at Epidaurus in 2002, but an English translation of Tasos Roussos' script was created by Athan Anagnostopoulos and was performed the year before in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. While I quote Anagnostopoulous' translation in the following paragraphs, it is Roussos' approach to the play's structure and style that I intend to demonstrate.

Roussos opened the play with Hypsipyle delivering the prologue, and obviously used the papyrus hypothesis, for her first lines are these:

> Dionysos, who among Parnassos' pines
> leaps and dances with the women of Delphi
> dressed in deerskin and holding
> a thyrsus, it is he who
> has sowed my race. [513]

The speech goes on to recount Hypsipyle's heritage, in line with the views of the scholars mentioned earlier. She retells the tale of the Lemnian women and how she had spared her father's life when they had agreed to kill the men in their sleep. After smuggling her father out of Lemnos, she governed the area and embarked on a relationship with Jason, from which she gave birth to Thoas and Euneos. Jason took the baby boys when he left for Colchis and the women turned on her when her prior deception was uncovered. Hypsipyle informs the audience that she was captured by pirates when she fled via the sea, and was sold into slavery to King Lykourgos in Nemea. The rest of the prologue has Hypsipyle discussing her anguish at the lack of knowledge of her sons, the love and fondness she has for the child she looks after for

[512] The Age *'Lost Ancient Play Makes Modern Debut'* http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/08/27/1030053055026.html (2002) (last accessed 26/11/15).
[513] Roussos (2009) 2.

King Lykourgos and the longing hope that someone will come to save her from this life, be it Jason or her sons.

In line with the fragment allocation above, Roussos has the young men enter to marvel at the palace's exterior. He assigns Euneos the lines that are similar to those that appear in F752c:

> Thoas, look! Look up high and see
> the painted pictures on the frieze.
> They tell of the deeds of gods
> And the passions in myth.[514]

In the gap between fragments, Roussos has the siblings exchange dialogue on admiration for the building and reaffirming their goal of finding their mother. Hypsipyle greets the men, unaware of their identities. Roussos again looks towards the fragments for dialogue inspiration and includes the ironic moment when Hypsipyle blesses the mother of the young men at her door. The playwright increases this humorous scenario with the gentlemen refusing to give Hypsipyle their names when asking for hospitality. In brief sentences they explain that they are looking for a relative, whom they have no way of recognizing. But they do not want to divulge too many details to a stranger. Hypsipyle tries to comfort the boys, but again refers to herself without realizing it when she says:

> I pray that everything turns out well for you.
> find what you yearn for
> and return to your mother happily.

[514] Roussos (2009) 4.

Roussos returns to the fragments once the young men have entered the palace, with Hypsipyle's lullaby to Opheltes. He fills in the gaps that are present in the papyrus and rephrases some of the lines. As outlined in the extant fragments, the chorus then enter with the parodos. This section was fairly intact when discovered on the papyrus so Roussos retains the same topics, but offers different versions of delivery.

The playwright follows the surviving dialogue until well into the first episode. He retains the style of stichomythia between Hypsipyle and Amphiaraos that features in the papyri fragments, but, where the sentences are incomplete, he attempts to insert words that keep the context of this scene.[515] Roussos' 'complete' version of this scene has Hypsipyle revealing her identity to Amphiaraos and the two characters discussing the reason behind why the Argives are heading towards Thebes to fight. Amphiaraos convinces Hypsipyle to show him the way to the spring, claiming that she would be assisting in a 'pious act'. [516]

The chorus' stasimon takes place after Amphiaraos and Hypsipyle leave for the spring. The papyrus is fairly mutilated and only the odd word or a small part of a sentence can be made out. This does not assist us greatly in the reconstruction of the choral song, although Roussos offers a version in line with scholarly view of what would occur within the play,[517] by making the chorus discuss the background to the Seven against Thebes myth and what brings the group to Nemea. Hypsipyle returns at the end of the stasimon, claiming she has lost Opheltes after putting him down in the field. This goes against Collard, Cropp and Gilbert's assertion that Hypsipyle would have delivered the news of the child's death herself. The chorus reassure her that the child will be found, while Hypsipyle considers fleeing the situation. Roussos then

[515] According to Anagnostopoulos' translation of Roussos (2009), the spellings of some character names have changed. Amphiarius becomes Amphiaraos and Eurydice becomes Eurydike.
[516] Roussos (2009) 21.
[517] Scholarly opinion on what took place in this stasimon is discussed earlier in this chapter.

introduces a messenger to deliver the news of the baby's demise to Queen Eurydike. The messenger, described as one of Amphiaraos' attendants in the script's cast list, retells a graphic version of events where, on pouring their libations, they disturbed a snake that saw the young boy in the field and attacked him. The Argives tried to stop the reptile but it had already poisonously bitten the child. The casket containing the boy is brought on to stage and placed in front of Eurydike, who mourns his death. The final lines that the messenger delivers places the blame of the death at Hypsipyle's feet for her negligence.

The next gap in the surviving text is filled by Roussos with Eurydike and the chorus lamenting the death of Opheltes. Sadness eventually turns to anger as the mother verbally lashes out at Hypsipyle, who protests that she is equally mourning the death of the boy. Eurydike states that her punishment should be death and has the slave bound in line with Chong-Gossard's view.[518] This brings us to F757 where Hypsipyle desperately defends herself in a speech. Amphiaraos enters and she implores him to assist her case by speaking as a witness to her piety.

The rest of the dialogue between Amphiaraos, Hypsipyle and Eurydike is very similar to what survives. In the extant text, Amphiaraos' defense speech starts to break off; but Roussos takes the small pieces that still exist and creates an address that suggests Eurydike should take comfort in that Opheltes' death was an omen for the Argives heading to Thebes. He makes the suggestion of the funeral games which placates Eurydike, who agrees to wait until her husband returns so that he can decide Hypsipyle's fate. Hypsipyle is then left alone on stage with the chorus to discuss her continuing fear and desire to reunite with her sons. The chorus then performs their second stasimon in honour of Dionysus which takes inspiration from and features

[518] Chong-Gossard (2008) 110-112.

F758a and F758b. In a lengthy scene inserted by Roussos, he has Eurydike return to the stage to prepare for the funeral games where she discusses the fate of her son with Thoas and Euneus, who have been staying in the house still unaware that Hypsipyle is their mother. The young men volunteer to take part in the games and ask for her permission. Again, Roussos brings the irony of the identity situation into the plot when Eurydike claims that no one knows Thoas and Euneos, but that their parents must be proud of them:

> THOAS
> We come from a royal root.
> Dionysos, our protector and ancestor,
> O Queen, is my witness to this truth.
>
> EURYDIKE
> Noble is your lineage, as your
> faces and stature show.
> I believe you; and above all,
> I accept your wish to honor
> my ill-fated child by taking part in the games.
> You're noble, and the parents
> who bore you and raised you so gallantly
> must be very happy.[519]

Little does Eurydike know that she is complimenting the very woman she wanted to kill. Roussos mentions in the script that Hypsipyle witnesses this conversation, still unaware of her link to the young men, which adds a light-hearted moment to contrast with the previous dark scenes. The playwright then has the chorus perform their third

[519]Roussos (2009) 23.

stasimon which discusses the tragedy of bereaved mothers and compares the separate situations of Hypsipyle and Eurydike.

The stasimon is interrupted by the arrival of a second messenger wanting to speak with Hypsipyle.[520] He announces that she is no longer a slave because Queen Eurydike has freed her and her children are on their way. The man goes on to explain the circumstances in which the pardon came about. He retells the start of the games and how they honored Opheltes. When it came to announcing the participants in the footrace, Amphiaraos questioned the young men, who saidthat they were the children of Hypsipyle and Jason. They were allowed to participate and came first jointly. Amphiaraos calls upon Eurydike to reward Thoas and Euneus by reuniting them with Hypsipyle and freeing her from slavery as she is of noble birth. Hypsipyle and the chorus celebrate the news, which leads to Amphiaraos entering with the two young men, in line with my suggested staging of the scene mentioned earlier in this chapter.[521] Roussos involves F759a in this exchange of dialogue and has Amphiaraos bid farewell before the recognition duet begins.

The conversation between Hypsipyle and Euneos continues along the lines of the surviving material until Roussos is required to insert his own dialogue to replace what is missing. Interestingly, the playwright ties up the recognition scene by introducing a device to remove the men from the stage. This involves Hypsipyle requesting to see the token they have brought with them - a piece from the Golden Fleece with her name written on the back- from Jason. Soon after the young men exit to collect this item, Roussos introduces the new character of Lykourgos, husband of

[520] The second messenger is described as an Argive soldier in the cast notes at the beginning of the script.
[521] See above p. 237

Eurydike, who enters angrily searching for Hypsipyle. In a newly created scene, the playwright makes the king threaten to kill her for her involvement in his son's death:

> LYKOURGOS
> Gods to not assist murderers.
> You killed my son! You'll die
> yourself, ungrateful woman, by my own hand,
> and no fate can save you now.[522]

This threat causes the god, Dionysus, to intervene and command that Lykourgos stops as she is of the god's lineage. Roussos now inserts knowledge of the oracle that appears in later versions of the myth, as discussed earlier, and has Dionysus scold Lykourgos for not heeding the oracle which told him not to put the child down until he is able to walk. He goes on to explain that Opheltes' death will bring honor to Nemea where they will host games every three years. Dionysus goes on to explain that Amphiaraos should be spared bad feeling also and explains that he will not survive the battle at Thebes. The god commands that Hypsipyle is to return to Lemnos with her son Thoas, but Euneos will travel to Athens where his lineage will be renowned for the lyre. Roussos provides a final thought at the end of Dionysus' speech which would resonate with most audiences:

> Your actions only - past and
> present - determine your lives.[523]

[522] Roussos (2009) 71.
[523] Roussos (2009) 74.

On the whole, Roussos' production tries to stay close to the style of Euripides but there are elements that have been inserted to appeal to a modern audience. Roussos' production heightens the humorous moments that have survived in the fragments. For example, emphasis is placed on the buildup of the recognition between Hypsipyle and her sons. The reunion could have been all resolved if, in the first encounter with each other, Hypsipyle introduced herself or the young men explained exactly who they were looking for, but the plot device of shielded information and not revealing identities encourages the action to move forward. Whether Euripides' production contained so much dramatic irony is something that we will never know.

It appears to me that Roussos' intention was to create a complete, fluid play by patching the fragments together with new dialogue and thus hiding from the audience the play's disjointed state and openly acknowledging the sections that have survived. In complete contrast to this, the second production I intend to discuss in this chapter celebrates the fragmented nature of the text and does not try to disguise its lacunae or give the impression that it is performable in the state it which it has been discovered.

4. David Wiles' *Hy]ψ[ipyle: A Fragment*

The nature the fragments and ritual dimensions of Greek theatre were the aspects explored in David Wiles' version of *Hypsipyle*, entitled *Hy]ψ[ipyle: A Fragment.* The brackets and the use of the single Greek letter *psi* of course consciously drew attention to the type of scholarly material—supplemented Greek fragments—with which the modern author had been working. Wiles, who teaches Drama and Theatre, created the production for the annual conference of the Classical Association that was held at Royal Holloway, University of London on 12 September 1997.[524] Professor Wiles has spent many years researching ancient Greek theatre and has published a number of monographs on the theatrical space, performance and masks in ancient Greece. One particular book entitled *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*, highlighted his academic preoccupation with the spectacle of the ancient production and what elements can assist a modern approach to these plays. In the introduction to Wiles' script, which is included in the edited volume, *Lost Dramas of Ancient Athens*, Wiles references Tony Harrison's *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* as inspiration for his production for he 'demonstrated that fragments have their own aesthetic'.[525]

> There is great potential in the classical lacuna, because the fragmentary text forces the spectator to imagine what might have been. While most productions offer a single reductive view of what Greek theatre was, the

[524] Video footage is available of this production in APGRD archives: Hypsipyle (stage production dir. by David Wiles; Royal Holloway, University of London, England; ID 1031), accessed at http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/sources/509 <17 March 2015>.
[525] Wiles (2005)189.

> lacunose production is at a great advantage, because every spectator has their own version of what is missing.[526]

Wiles outlined his aims and methods in creating the production. They involved trying to keep Euripides' style as evidenced in his extant plays. While he focused on what he described as the 'movement between speech, recitative and song' that the playwright regularly employs, Wiles admitted that he gave preference to the aesthetic form over philological or linguistic authenticity or accuracy.[527] Ultimately, he wanted the production to be performable but retain the audience's interest of the existential as well as material status of the fragment.

Wiles drew upon the collections of *Hypsipyl*e fragments that were published by Page (1950) and Bond (1965) for his own translation. While Roussos preferred to provide a coherent version of the play made from the fragments and additional material, Wiles utilized a unique style of presenting the fragmented play which seemed to be celebrating the fragment rather than hiding it away within a completed text. Wiles decided the surviving material should live within the spectacle that was the theatre of the Athenians by framing it as a performance at the Dionysia. He therefore evoked the rituals that took place before and after the dramatic performances.[528] In his role as Edidaske,[529] Wiles had the audience arrive in a torchlight procession to the theatre during which a number of rituals were performed, including the pouring of libations. On arrival, an actor welcomed the crowd to the 'Dionysiac space' and, prior to the commencement of the play, the ritual of presenting crowns to two audience members for their services to the demos was fulfilled. Dionysus was not a votive

[526] Wiles (2005)189.
[527] Wiles (2005)190.
[528] For more information, please see: Pickard – Cambridge (1968) 59 -63.
[529] This is the name that Wiles allocated himself in the cast list. Wiles (2005) 192.

statue here but instead an actor who sat in the front row of audience to oversee the performance and ensure that it was executed in his honour.

Wiles opted to include live music, which supplemented the spectacle in a similar way to what it is assumed the music and dancing in Euripidean theatre did originally. He utilized a percussionist and clarinet-player who improvised around the actors and the scenes in a manner that enhanced and supplemented the action rather than detracting from it. Wiles saw this improvised music as operating in a similar way to the interventions of the aulos-player during the ancient staging.[530] It was clearly a key device in this production as the clarinet is often mentioned within the script as a link to the next scene or to indicate an important decision, as well as accompanying lines from Hypsipyle and the chorus.

As Hypsipyle entered for the first time it was used almost as a fanfare to indicate the start of the play and contributed to the grandeur of the moment. Wiles had Hypsipyle direct the opening of her prologue toward Dionysus, as if worshipping the god with her words. The script invoked the lines, that academic consensus suggests opened the play, from fragment F752, but where it cuts off Wiles then inserted additional material, just like Roussos.[531] Interestingly, he has the protagonist, Hypsipyle, openly acknowledge the fragmentary nature of the play in the prologue:

> Unenviable...my…heart...youth...dead...luckless...harshslavery...endless talk...stopped...freedom...you child...to thank your nurse....Fragments. All that remains of my prologue. In which Euripides must have recounted my myth. Allusively, for you knew it already.[532]

[530] Wiles (2005)191.
[531] The additional dialogue that Wiles has inserted to complete lines are provided in italics.
[532] Wiles (2005)193.

Wiles' *Hypsipyle* also brings to the modern audience's attention the fact that the plot would have been well known amongst the Athenians and therefore only a brief overview of what had happened prior to the commencement of the play would have been needed. Wiles had the lead protagonist skim over her backstory in a concise fashion, including details of her life in Lemnos and relationship with Jason.[533] Interestingly, in this version additional details are added. For example, Hypsipyle seems to be aware of her father's whereabouts (which from the fragment F759A one could deduce that she did not know in Euripides' tragedy until it was revealed by Euneus). She also says that she was forced to become a slave when the women of Lemnos discovered that her father had now become King of the Taurians (in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* the king of the Taurians of the western Crimea is also called Thoas, and the link was occasionally suggested in antiquity).[534] As a result, in their fury, the Lemnian women sold her into slavery. Roussos' version of the prologue was much longer than Wiles', perhaps with the view to establishing a detailed background to the play for an unknowing modern audience.

In Wiles' offering, there is minimal extra input to the surviving dialogue, which in turn makes the performance fast-paced and punchy. Scenes that may have been much longer and slightly more complex in Euripides' tragedy are now shortened and resolved quickly. This is shown during the entrance of Thoas and Euneus, where scholarly analysis suggests it was expected that Hypsipyle would conduct a fairly lengthy cross-examination of the strangers on their arrival. But in Wiles' play, instead,

[533] Wiles (2005) 190 -191 claims in his introduction to the script that one of the advantages of performing to an audience of classicists was that he did not have to explain the story, but it meant that the non-classicist actors felt the pressure of making sure their pronunciation was correct.

[534] Wiles identifies Hypsipyle' father, Thoas, with the *Iphigenia in Tauris* character of the same name. It is not clear whether they were the same man according to Euripides, for it is not mentioned in either that tragedy (where he is definitely a barbarian, although we would expect a Lemnian to be Greek) or the surviving sections of *Hypsipyle*. Roman mythographers such as Hyginus mention that Thoas arrived in the land of the Taurians but do not explicitly say that he was the same Thoas that became King of Tauris.

after a brief exchange, the men request shelter, and without much additional dialogue she shows them inside. The production continued with the entrance of the chorus and the surviving parts of F752f, F752g and the start of F752h, which was performed with a mixture of chanting from the chorus and Hypsipyle singing her part. With Amphiaraus' entrance, Wiles drew upon the stichomythic dialogue from F 752h and inserted words and lines to replace those that are missing. Before departing for the spring, Hypsipyle says:

> It is forbidden. [TO CHORUS] Shall I show the Argives the source of the river Achelous? [PAUSE - CLARINET] I will take you.[535]

This is Wiles' own unique take on how Hypsipyle would have decided to show Amphiaraus the spring. While Roussos had Hypsipyle discuss with the chorus whether she should go to the spring and awaits their response, Wiles, again, keeps the action moving quickly by deciding against adding in extra dialogue. The line prior to this has Amphiaraus command that Hypsipyle show him the spring. In the quote above she claims that it is forbidden, but it is not made fully clear what she is forbidden from doing and why. It could just be that she is not allowed to leave the house, but I like to believe that this is a nod to the alternative versions of the myth that suggest Lycurgus was aware of the warning concerning his son and being placed on the ground. Perhaps Hypsipyle had been warned not to leave the child unattended but it was not explained to her why: we cannot be fully sure.

No matter what she is referring to, the line helps create a sense of foreboding for the rest of the production. After the remnants of the second choral ode and the allocation of F754a to the chorus, a servant of Amphiaraus brings the body of the boy

[535] Wiles (2005)198.

onto stage. Wiles follows other scholarly plot lines by having Hypsipyle enter distraught, already aware of the child's demise, and discuss with the chorus her fears of punishment and the need to escape. This scene gives a modern audience insight in the role of the chorus within ancient Greek tragedy. They are a collective unable to intervene in the action and instead only allowed to witness and comment on the events that take place on stage. This is evident in the response to Hypsipyle's plea for help:

> HYPSIPYLE: I need a guide to show me how to get out.
> CHORUS [ALL]: Too dangerous to help a runaway slave.[536]

Interestingly, rather than continuing to fill in lines and gaps in the text, the play now breaks out from any sense of continuous performance into which it may have enticed the audience, and really embraces the idea of that play is highly fragmented. The audience members are reminded by Wiles, as seen in the stage directions, that these are actors performing a script and the source of the play's script is incomplete:

> [SILENCE. THE ACTORS DROP THEIR ROLES AND EXPLAIN THAT ANOTHER HUNDRED LINES ARE MISSING COVERING THE ARRIVAL OF EURYDICE AND ARREST OF HYPSIPYLE. DIONYSUS RISES UP IN PROTEST....][537]

In an unexpected move, Dionysus starts to addresses the performers from the audience, where he has been sitting statue-like for the duration of the production. He voices his frustration at the incompleteness of the performance:

[536] Wiles (2005) 200-201.
[537] Wiles (2005) 201.

> This tattered fragment cannot be called a play. In presenting such a work, you do a dishonour to the god. When Dionysus is slighted, his anger is no slight thing.[538]

Dionysus then commands that the actors perform a full play - a coherent work of art. The god suggests that an *agon* is a real play and the actors suggest creating a competition within the production. Their intention is that the same *agon* is performed in three different manners: psychological, ritualistic and persuasive.[539] Therefore, the second half of *Hy]ψ[ipyle: A Fragment* opens with Hypsipyle bound and Eurydice grieving in front of her son's dead body. The *agon* follows the dialogue outline proposed by most academics, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and what can be ascertained from the surviving material. Hypsipyle tries to plead her case to Eurydice, who is fully prepared to exact retribution from her slave. Amphiaraus steps in and tries to placate the grieving mother. It is after his long speech that details the funeral games he will throw in the child's memory that the chorus breaks the coherency of the piece again to address to the audience:

> CHORUS 1: The content of the next six hundred lines is a mystery. Was Eurydice persuaded or was she not?[540]

Again, the audience is reminded of the fragmented nature of the production and the lack of confirmed details of the plot. Wiles then has his chorus very briefly summarize what he believes to have happened in those missing lines:

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[538] Wiles (2005) 201.
[539] Wiles (2005) 202. It is described by a chorus member as being performed in the manner that the sophists taught. The script would remain the same but the actors would adapt their performances so that they were delivered in the styles mentioned above. Wiles suggests that another future version of this production might change the genres that are performed.
[540] Wiles (2005) 204.

CHORUS 3: We may guess that Hypsipyle's two sons competed in the Nemean games, founded in the memory of Archemoros. When the names of the victors were announced, Hypsipyle recognized her two sons.[541]

This leads us into the reunion between Hypsipyle and her sons. Hypsipyle sings the end of a joyful song about her loss of, and now reunion with, her sons (from F759a):

HYPSIPYLE [SINGS-VOCAL BACKING FROM CHORUS]
The fate which splits us once apart
My sons and myself
Wheels us down a single road
Together once more
Off we spun on the side of fear
Then spun towards joy
A second dawn has lit our sky
A sky with no cloud[542]

The rest of the scene follows the fragment until the lines become less coherent. Hypsipyle speaks to her sons with musical backing, which is explicitly mentioned in the script, to signify the importance of this scene.[543] Confusingly, despite his Hypsipyle appearing to know of her father's situation in the prologue at the beginning of the play and passing this knowledge on to the audience, Wiles still retains here the lines in which Hypsipyle discovers where her sons have been and seems thankful for the knowledge that her father is alive and well. The prologue was an important device

[541] Wiles (2005) 204.
[542] Wiles (2005) 204-205.
[543] The importance of the duet scene was discussed earlier in this chapter, above pp. 239 -240. Wiles follows scholarly thought on performance style.

to remind the audience of the plot and set the scene for the play, of course, but it appears that Wiles used this opening speech to give his modern audience an additional boost of information not needed by Euripides' myth-literate audience. Perhaps the figure of Hypsipyle who features in Wiles' prologue was a different version of the character that appears in the rest of the production, or alternatively, the actor came out of character to explain the background in order to bring the modern audience up to the same standard of knowledge as an ancient one. Either way, it is not very clear.

Wiles chooses the line 'Thanks to the cleverness of Dionysus', which marks the end of the coherent section of F759a, to complete the reunion scene rather trying to create new lines from what remains.[544] I believe that this is a good decision as it keeps the production using as little additional material as possible and leads smoothly into the appearance of Dionysus. Wiles agrees with common academic thought and the surviving evidence from the papyrus that Dionysus was the god who appeared at the end of the production to deliver the epilogue. But he has the character of Dionysus claim that there is a single fragment that survives from his speech:

> DIONYSUS: From my epilogue ex machina, a single gnomic fragment survives. Think about it carefully... There is a fatal error to which mortals are prone. They are foolish enough to attribute things to chance, and not to the gods. If it's chance, that means gods are not to blame. But gods do exert their power, so don't blame chance.[545]

This is making reference to a fragment that appears in Bond's collection of fragments and is attributed as being discovered by Wilamowitz from lines preserved by John the Lydian (6th-century Byzantine author), *de Mensibus* 4.7:

[544] Wiles (2005) 206.
[545] Wiles (2005) 206.

ὦ θνητὰ παραφρονήματ' ἀνθρώπων, μάτην
οἵ φαcιν εἶναι τὴν τύκην ἀλλ' οὐ θεούc.
εἰ γὰρ τύκη μὲν ἔcτιν, οὐδὲν δεῖ θεοῦ,
εἰ δ' οἱ θεοὶ cθένουcιν, οὐδὲν ἡ τύκη.[546]

This fragment was omitted from my discussion of the surviving fragments of Hypsipyle earlier in this chapter since we cannot be sure whether, in fact, it is linked to the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides. Bond acknowledges the doubt in his commentary, whereas Collard, Cropp and Gilbert completely omit the lines from their collection of fragments.[547] This fragment was also included in part during the final speech made by Dionysus in Roussos' *Hypsipyle*; it is clear, therefore, that both Roussos and Wiles had read Bond's collection in order to include this in their scripts. While Dionysus' final speech marks the end of the play, the performance still continues in Wiles' play through the illusion that the audience are still participating in a festival of Greek theatre. The competition that the chorus instigates during the *agon* is addressed. A vote takes place and crowns are bestowed on the winners by Dionysus, signifying the completion of the production, in a nod to the ritual that would have taken place at the end of the Dionysia.

5. Conclusions

So what can we infer from these new interpretations that could give insight into this lost work of Euripides? What is *Hypsipyle* all about? The fragments themselves, while substantial in number, make it difficult to pinpoint the main 'message' of Euripidean play. In my view, the two modern playwrights have different perspectives on what was

[546] Bond (1963) 48.
[547] Bond (1963)136-7.

the prevalent theme of the fragmented play. Roussos strove for a complete drama and therefore inserted additional material that encouraged the audience to adopt his own interpretation of the plot. I believe that he focusses on the relationship between parent and child and the impact of loss. There are number of moments between characters where this theme is established. Not only are the maternal relationships between Hypsipyle and her sons, and Eurydike and the unfortunate Opheltes, both highlighted in the surviving fragments, but in addition to this, Roussos has emphasized Hypsipyle's relationship as surrogate mother to Opheltes and created additional scenes which bring a paternal grief to the fore with the introduction of Lykourgos. This theme of parental mourning is established early on when the audience witness Hypsipyle lamenting for her sons in the prologue through new lines inserted by Roussos:

> Are they alive? Are they dead? Who knows!
> Yet, in my distress one hope alone
> touches my heart - that some day
> they will appear here and free me,
> unlucky me! Live like a slave,
> in sad suffering. My boys! Oh, my children,
> come to your mother, I sigh, with eyes
> filled with tears! I'll never stop
> praying for you to come as my saviours.[548]

The idea of the mother-and-son relationship is reinforced in the next couple of lines, where Hypsipyle acknowledges that the boy in her charge, Opheltes, serves as a reminder of her own children. This builds knowledge of the character's love for the little one in her care:

[548] Roussos (2009) 4.

This gift, little baby, you offer
to me, your nurse; you remind me,
as you look at me smiling,
of the faces of my own children.
who were taken cruelly from my arms,
and for whom I mourn endlessly[549].

In comparison to the sporadic words and lines that have survived in the fragments, Roussos provides more insight into Eurydike's grief for the loss of her son. The playwright chooses to embellish the surviving material with a series of outpourings of grief from the mother as she tries to comprehend what has happened:

My child, my child,
my little boy,
you've gone down to Hades
and left me alone,
lamenting my misery.
What treacherous fate,
what evil demon stole the light from your eyes
and made my arms orphans.[550]

The audience witnesses a quick descent from shock and initial acceptance into the kind of rage that any mother would find themselves in if they had suddenly discovered that their child had died. This anger is manifested in an aggressive threat to Hypsipyle:

Alien, purchased slave woman,
whose tears flow easily at every need,
you'll pay for my son's loss
with your own death.

[549] Roussos (2009) 4.
[550] Roussos (2009) 33-34.

Mark this:
You won't escape justice.[551]

Interspersed through Eurydike's tirade, we start to hear of Hypsipyle's love for the child that was not her own. While some interpretations may see Hypsipyle as trying to do anything to escape being punished, I think that the way Roussos has handled the scene and formulated the dialogue highlights how a woman can feel like a mother and share in the anguish of loss without being related by blood:

I sigh not because I'll die,
although you wrongly think
that I could kill your child
whom I've raised in my arms,
loved dearly, fed and
though I didn't give birth to him,
cared for as if he were my own, a true
joy to me![552]

We see more about Hypsipyle's grief for the young boy where the chorus questions why she still appears to be upset, though she has heard her life has been spared by Eurydike. Hypsipyle replies that she still grieves for the child.[553]

Roussos decides to retain the same tone of the reunion scene as it appears within the surviving material and documents Hypsipyle going through a rollercoaster of emotions opposite to the one that Eurydike has been through a few scenes before. She starts off believing that her sons are still lost, yet she discovers that they are in fact alive and present. Hypsipyle's reunion with her children is jubilant in stark contrast to Eurydikes' reunion with Opheltes, when his casket is brought onto stage. If Roussos

[551] Roussos (2009) 37.
[552] Roussos (2009) 44.
[553] Roussos (2009) 46-47.

had finished his production here, the focus would have been on the relationship between mothers and their children; however, he inserts an additional scene featuring a vengeful Lykourgos' return. Again, we see the emotions that a parent goes through dealing with the loss of their child, but from a male perspective. Lykourgos is intent on punishing Hypsipyle, even though he knows she has been spared by his wife:

> Gods do not assist murderers.
> You killed my son! You'll die
> yourself, ungrateful woman, by my own hand,
> and no fate can save you now.[554]

It is clear that this man cannot be persuaded by words and reasoning, which is how Amphiaraos convinced Eurydike to spare Hypsipyle originally. Instead, the only way this can be resolved is with the intervention of a god, in this case, Dionysos. The way the production ends shows that this intervention does finally placate the grieving father. While I feel Roussos' play only seemed to draw out one major theme, Wiles' play offers us much more scope for considering what might have been the themes explored in Euripides' original *Hypsipyle*.

The experimental style and setup of Wiles' production gave the opportunity for various interpretations to be aired, thus prompting alternative views of the action to be taken—alternatives similar to those the Euripidean fragments themselves can offer. A number of questions arise from Wiles' play, which he described as 'more open questions'.[555] The most important one, it seems to me, is a question relating to the characters' behaviour and to human nature, which was brought out by Wiles' approach to the *agon*. How he designed the contest allowed these questions to come to the fore

[554] Roussos (2009) 71.
[555] Wiles (2005)190.

through the directorial choices rather than via the language used. By showing the same scene three times in different styles, he enabled the characters to become more rounded, with the audience having to decide whether Eurydice was a victim or a villain. Was she a decent woman who, consumed with grief for her child, was lashing out? Or was she always a mean-spirited lady of the house, who was only swayed into releasing Hypsipyle by the flattery and the attentions of such a gentleman as Amphiaraus? The *agon* also gave the audience the opportunity to view Amphiaraus' character in different ways. He is often referred to in the surviving papyrus text as being a moral and disciplined man and, in fact, he mentions his reputation when trying to gain Eurydice's trust (this was used in both contemporary productions).[556] But is he really trustworthy? Since he is the one who convinced Hypsipyle to show him the spring, is he trying to cover up his own mistakes by manipulating the situation with Eurydice? Is Amphiaraus to blame for the child's death, or was it Hypsipyle who was at fault despite her good intentions to assist him in the sacrifice?

Although it is less prominent in Roussos' version, he does signify the moral ambiguity after a fashion. His Hypsipyle engages in a discussion with Eurydike, in which she claims she did not deliberately kill the child and instead places the blame on fate: 'I didn't lose him, fate snatched him away from me'.[557] Roussos's Amphiaraus announces that Hypsipyle was acting out of piety in assisting him and describes it as accidental,[558] but Wiles offers what the surviving fragments tell us and only adds new dialogue to make the speech flow. In his version, Amphiaraus does not acknowledge it to have been an accident but briefly states the facts of the situation and then chooses to focus instead on the fateful mission that he and his men are conducting:

[556] Wiles (2005) 203; Roussos (2009) 43-44.
[557] Roussos (2009) 39.
[558] Roussos (2009) 44.

> She laid the child upon the ground amidst a bed of parsley and parted the undergrowth to reveal the source. As we turned our backs a snake slid forward and bit him with its fangs. At the scream we ran, but too late. It coiled itself about him and crushed the life from his body. I shot the snake with my bow. And this will be the start of many evils. I have given your child a new name Archemoros, 'the beginning of doom'. The loss will not be yours alone. This is an omen for every citizen in the land. Many will march, but few will return.[559]

At the end of his persuasive speech, Wiles has Amphiaraus claim that Hypsipyle is innocent and brings glory to Eurydice's family, but in my view, this line, as well as the whole scene, could be portrayed in different ways.[560] Directorial choice or development of a subtext could have Amphiaraus' whole speech lead up to and emphasise this final line in order to convince Eurydice that Hypsipyle was not to blame. But another way the scene could be played is with Amphiaraus trying to avoid being implicated in the child's death himself, and in his desperation using a large amount of flattery to change Eurydice's mind. Wiles is right that the style of performance can completely change the interpretation of the character and can leave the audience questioning the character's motives. While both plays touch upon the question of who was to blame for the child's death, it is my view that neither productions explore this fully. We do not know whether it was Euripides' intention to

[559] Wiles (2005) 204.
[560] Wiles (2005) 204.

focus on this. Perhaps it is only in the contemporary world where one expects negligence to be punished in some way that brings this theme out in the text.[561]

In my view, to judge from what survives of Euripides' text and the manner in which the two adaptations have been created, the play in all its manifestations provides an important message: good deeds will be repaid even in the darkest times. This is summed up by Amphiaraus' line prior to the recognition duet where he reassures Hypsipyle; this appears in the fragments as well as in both modern plays:

> Lady, you have received the service that I owed you.
> You were generous to me when I requested your
> help, and I have repaid you generously with regard
> to your sons.[562]

While her assistance to Amphiaraus meant that she was negligent of her duties to the child, and ultimately caused his death, she selflessly, and for no gain, fulfilled the leader's request. Despite the tragic backdrop to the play, with both the death of a child and the involvement of a group of men who are knowingly marching to their deaths, Euripides leaves the audience with a positive outcome. Hypsipyle's tumultuous story comes full circle. Although this is tragic drama, it is one of Euripides' several tragedies with a happy ending. To me it feels as if the playwright was telling his audience that even when it seems like there is nothing positive occurring in life and

[561] Negligence is at the fore in a *Hypsipyle* inspired monologue written by Colin Teevan, which appears in a collection, entitled *The Seven Pomegranate Seeds*, published by Oberon Books in 2014. It is written from the point of view of Hypsipyle, although in this version, she is a younger woman working as a nanny in America. While she is distracted by a telephone conversation with a friend, the child in her care dies. The latter part of the monologue takes the form of a cross-examination where she explains what happened as if debating her involvement in the death and her level of negligence. The plot brings the memory of the Louise Woodward case to mind, a British Au Pair who was convicted in 1997 of involuntary manslaughter when the baby boy in her care died from injuries that were characteristics of shaken - baby syndrome.

[562] Collard, Cropp and Gibert (2004) 219 F759a 1583 -1586, Roussos (2009) 64, Wiles (2005) 205.

the world has become a dark place, there should always be hope. This is certainly a message to which diachronic audiences can relate.

Despite the significant yield of papyrus fragments that inform us about the plot of *Hypsipyle*, there are still a multitude of questions yet to be answered concerning this wonderful tragedy. Again, like the other plays discussed in this thesis, we can speculate about Euripides' thought and vision from the surviving dialogue but creating a true representation of what would have taken place is impossible. As seen in this chapter, Roussos has tried to do this by attempting to fill in the gaps with new material inspired by the ancient playwright and provide a potential answer to what is missing but it is still conjecture. In contrast to this, Wiles has taken a very academic, experimental approach which openly acknowledges that the fragmented play is unable to be fully retrieved. It does not pretend to be a complete version of Euripides' lost play and instead, through the fragmented performance, offers an opportunity to explore a multitude of versions and potential themes that even Euripides may not have even considered.

Chapter 6

Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*

1. Introduction

While we only have sparse evidence when it comes to the details about any of the fragmentary ancient plays featured in this thesis, we know almost nothing for certain about Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. There has been no discovery of a significant amount of coherent dialogue, nor has it been discussed at length by extant ancient sources which could give us ideas for scenes or even a firm plot outline. In fact, most of the existing details could be highly misleading, for there are two lost productions that feature the character of Alcmaeon in the title: *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, thus making quotation fragments fiendishly difficult to allocate. Despite this, Colin Teevan attempted to bring *Alcmaeon in Corinth* back to the stage in 2004. So what drew this contemporary playwright to this ancient lost play and inspired his version of Euripides' tragedy? In this chapter I will firstly investigate the sparse materials evidencing the ancient play which we know serves as a source of information for the creation of Teevan's script. I will then go on to discuss how Teevan's interest in Greek drama assisted in the development of his new interpretation and question whether an original interpretation can tells us anything important about a forgotten story.

2. Extant Evidence for Euripides' *Alcmaeon* Plays and Their Reception

Unlike Euripides' *Hypsipyle*, which survives with a hypothesis and a substantial amount of papyrus dialogue, or the story of Tereus which was well documented in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth* could have been easily forgotten. Discussion of the play has been relegated by academics to passing mentions

when they are writing encyclopedia articles on Euripidean drama. And yet, the story of Alcmaeon must have been held in high regard by Euripides' contemporaries, for it is praised by Aristotle in *Poetics* as featuring one of the heroes best suited to tragic representation alongside the extremely popular figures of Oedipus and Orestes:

> Though the poets began by accepting any tragic story that came to hand, in these days the finest tragedies are always on the story of some few houses, on that of Alcmaeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, or any other that may have been involved, as either agents or sufferers, in some deed of horror. The theoretically best tragedy, then, has a plot of this description.[563]

Frustratingly, we cannot be sure whether Aristotle is making reference here to *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, the other play by Euripides that shares the same lead character, known as *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, or in fact both.[564] This can cause much confusion, especially when the plays have failed to be preserved. If an ancient author says 'x occurred in *Alcmaeon*' we do not know which play is meant. So, like a detective, one must analyze a range of material to find clues that can assist in piecing together a possible outline of both stories before being able to focus on one in particular.

We know from the hypothesis to the extant *Alcestis* that *Alcmaeon in Psophis* was first produced in 438 BC, apparently in second place in the group of four plays *Cretan Women*, *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, *Telephus*, and *Alcestis*.[565] This would have been in the early or middle period of Euripides' career as a playwright. Interestingly, our

[563] Aristotle's'*Poetics* 1453a 18-22. Trans. Barnes (2014).
[564] There were also plays by other tragedians featuring Alcmaeon and his family. It is thought that the story of Alcmaeon featured in Sophocles' own version entitled *Alcmaeon* and the tragedy, *Epigoni,* however both failed to survive.
[565] See Collard and Cropp (2008*a*) 81; Webster (1967) 31.

evidence suggests that he did not revisit the Alcmaeon story for at least thirty years subsequently, for *Alcmaeon in Corinth* was not performed until it appeared as part of his final group of plays. It graced the stage in a posthumous performance in 405BC as part of a trilogy with the surviving tragedies, *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[566] No substantial hypothesis remains of either Euripidean Alcmaeon play, and so in order to gain some insight into what may have taken place in them, we must look, cautiously, at the representation of Alcmaeon's character and his actions in myth and other texts. Collard and Cropp point to the epic *Alcmaeonis* which must have centred on the hero's exploits, which are also likely to have been mentioned in the Theban epics *Thebais* and *Epigoni*. But this does not get us very far since all three epics have failed to survive.[567] Alcmaeon does appear in a number of mythographers' works but usually as peripheral embellishment to a main storyline. This is true in the case of Hyginius' *Fabulae* where he is only mentioned briefly in relation to the story of his father and mother:

> The augur Amphiaraus, the son of Oecles and Hypermnestra daughter of Thestyus, knew that if he went to attack Thebes, he would not return. He therefore went into hiding. Only his wife, Eriphyle, Talaus' daughter, knew where he was. In order to smoke him out, however, Adrastus made a golden necklace studded with gems and gave it to his sister Eriphyle as a bribe. She wanted the gift, so she betrayed her husband. Amphiaraus gave instructions to his son Alcmaeon that after his death he was to exact punishment from his mother. After Amphiaraus was swallowed whole by the earth at Thebes, Alcmaeon

[566] This date is according to the Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs* 66-7. See further Hall (2015a).
[567] West (2003) 42-64.

> followed his father's orders and killed his mother, Eriphyle. He was later tormented by the Furies.[568]

The longest surviving discussion of the myth features in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*. We learn from the mythographer that Alcmaeon's father indeed was the Amphiaraus of Argos who took part in the ill-fated expedition retold in Aeschylus' tragedy *Seven against Thebes* and that also appears in Euripides' tragedy, *Hypsipyle*, discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis. The mythographer provides more background information relating to Amphiaraus' participation in the campaign and what effect it had on his son. Apollodorus claims that Amphiaraus was persuaded to participate by his wife, Eriphyle, who was bribed by Polynices with the legendary necklace of Harmonia. But since he knew that he would meet his demise on the trip, Amphiaraus ordered his sons to kill their mother and attempt a second attack on Thebes.

> Now, Amphiaraos had forbidden Eriphyle to accept any gifts from Polyneices, but Polyneices gave her the necklace and asked her to persuade Amphiaraos to undertake the campaign. It was in her power, for Amphiaraos had once quarreled with Adrastos, and after settling it swore to let Eriphyle settle any further dispute he might have with Adrastos. So when it came to march against Thebes and Adrastos encouraged it and Amphiaraos discouraged it, Eriphyle took the necklace and persuaded him to campaign with Adrastos. Amphiaraos

[568] Hyginus 73 trans. Smith and Trzaskoma (2007).

> was compelled to go to war, but he gave his sons instructions to kill their mother and go to war against Thebes when they grew up.[569]

A decade after his father's failure at Thebes, Alcmaeon led a group of men called the Epigoni ('descendants') against the city. They were victorious, but afterwards Alcmaeon discovered his mother had betrayed him. She again had accepted bribes—this time in the form of a robe—to encourage her male family members to take part in the campaign. As punishment for her treachery, Alcmaeon killed her.

> Ten years later the dead men's sons, known as the Epigonoi, proposed to march on Thebes, desiring to avenge the deaths of their fathers. When they sought oracles, the god prophesied victory, provided Alcmaion was their leader. Alcmaion did not want to lead the army until he punished his mother, but he went on the campaign anyway, for Eriphyle got the dress from Thersandros son of Polyneices and helped him convince her sons to go on the campaign also. The Epigonoi chose Alcmaion leader and made war on Thebes.... After the capture of Thebes Alcmaion grew angrier when he learned that his mother Eriphyle in return for gifts had sold him out too, and when Apollo told him to do so in an oracle, he killed her. Some say he killed Eriphyle with his brother Amphilochos' help, but others say that he did it by himself.[570]

[569] Apollodorus 3.6.61-63 trans. Smith and Trzaskoma (2007).
[570] Apollodorus 3.7.80 – 87.

The mythographer goes on to explain that as a punishment for committing the crime of matricide, Alcmaeon was pursued by the furies and driven to madness in a similar manner to Orestes in the *Oresteia*. To try and find release from his madness, he sought purification from Phegeus, King of Psophis, and went on to marry Phegeus' daughter.

> An Erinys from his mother's murder vengefully pursued Alcmaion; crazed, he first went to Oicles' home in Arcadia, and from there he went to Phegeus' in Psophis. Purified by him, he married his daughter Arsinoe and gave her the necklace and dress.[571]

At this point Apollodorus and the travel writer and antiquarian Pausianas both claim that Alcmaeon presented his wife with Harmonia's necklace and the robe, but his presence, since he was still polluted with matricide, caused the land to become baron.[572]

> He fled to Delphi where he asked the Pythian priestess for guidance on absolute purification. Alcmaeon was directed to the lands of the river god, Achelous.
>
> Later, the land became barren on account of him, and the god commanded him in an oracle to go off to Acheloos....First, he went to Oineus in Calydon and was taken in as a guest by him, then he came to the Thesprotians but was driven out of their land. Finally, he reached the springs of Acheloos and was purified by him and married his

[571] Apollodorus 3.7.80 -87.

[572] There is some discrepancy between the two mythographers on the name of Phegeus' daughter. Apollodorus names her Arsinoe, while Pausanias gives her the name, Alphesiboea (8.24.8).

> daughter Callirhoe. He established his new home in the place that Acheloos built up silt. [573]

There he met Callirhoe, the daughter of the god, and married her. His new wife desired the necklace and robe, and forced Alcmaeon to return to Psophis to recover them. Apollodorus states that Alcmaeon went to Phegeus, claiming that the only way in which his madness could be cured would be if he took the necklace and robe to Delphi to dedicate them there. A servant became aware of his deceit and informed the king, who commanded his sons to kill Alcmaeon.

> Later, Callirhoe wanted to have the necklace and dress and said that she would not stay married to him unless she got them, so Alcmaion went to Psophis and told Phegeus that he had received a prophecy that he would only find an end to his madness when he had brought the necklace and the dress to Delphi and dedicated them. Phegeus believed him and gave them to him. A servant revealed that now that he had them, he was taking them to Callirhoe, so on Phegeus' orders Alcmaion was ambushed and killed by Phegeus' sons. The sons of Phegeus put Arsinoe into a chest when she condemned their actions and took her to Tegea and gave her as slave to Agapenor, falsely alleging that she had murdered Alcmaion.[574]

Pausanias does not provide details on the lies that Alcmaeon supposedly told to Phegeus as outlined by Apollodorus, but instead claims that, on returning to Psophis,

[573] Apollodorus 3.7. 87 – 88.
[574] Apollodorus 3.7. 89-91.

that the sons of Phegeus killed him.[575] It could be this deception that was the focus of the earlier Euripidean Alcmaeon play, *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. Collard and Cropp claim that the play would have documented Alcmaeon's adventures between murdering his mother and his death. It would have been set at the palace in Psophis and they assert that the play would have commenced with Alcmaeon's second arrival in Psophis to obtain the necklace.[576] Although this is all purely conjectural, I feel that the story would make a good play and might have attracted Euripides, since it includes several dramatic scenarios and crises that would appeal to a playwright who enjoyed powerful emotional effects.

It is also possible that the rest of Apollodorus' text may give us some insight into what may have occurred in *Alcmaeon in Corinth.* The mythographer continues describing the Alcmaeon story and vitally acknowledges that Euripides had some involvement with the myth by claiming that the playwright says that Alcmaeon had two children that went to Corinth:

> Euripides says that Alcmaion had two children by Manto daughter of Teiresias during the period of his madness - Amphilochos and a daughter, Tisiphone - and he brought the infants to Corinth and gave them to Creon, the king of the Corinthians, to raise. Tisiphone, he says, because she was extraordinarily beautiful, was sold as a slave by Creon's wife, since she was afraid that Creon would make her his wife. Alcmaion bought her and kept her as a servant, not realizing she was his daughter, and when he came to Corinth to get his children back, he also

[575] Pausanias 8.24.10.
[576] Collard and Cropp (2008a) 80-81.

> recovered his son. Following Apollo's oracles, Amphilochos settled Amphilochian Argos.[577]

Unfortunately we cannot be absolutely certain that he is discussing Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, but it is by far the most plausible suggestion we have available. It is implied that much of the action relating to this part of Alcmaeon's story would have taken place in Corinth, which makes it very tempting to associate it with the play by Euripides with the name of that city in its title.

In addition to the material from Apollodorus, some scholars have speculated about a connection between the plot of *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and some plot episodes in the putative ancient Greek novel about Apollonius of Tyre. This novel did not itself survive, but the story is mentioned in the 6th century AD by the Latin hymn-writer Venantius Fortunatus (*Carmina* 6.8.5-6) and is told in many Medieval Latin manuscripts, some of which date to as early as the 9th and 10th centuries.[578] It became very important when translated into modern languages in the Middle Ages, and is one of the sources of Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Comedy of Errors*.[579] An authoritative Teubner edition of the Latin text was published in 1871.[580] In 1924 Krappe first suggested in *Classical Quarterly* that this ancient storyline had something to do with Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, which, given the instrumental role Euripidean escape tragedies such as *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* played in the genesis of the plots of the ancient Greek novels,[581] was not an unreasonable suggestion.[582]

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[577] Apollodorus 3.7. 94.
[578] See further Archibald (1991) 46.
[579] For more information see: Archibald (1991) and Gillespie (2001) 204.
[580] Riese (1871).
[581] Please see: Trenker (1958) and Hall (2013) 111-158.
[582] The novella is also referred to as the *Apollonius Romance*.

The episode in which Krappe was interested begins in chapter 28.[583] It involves the refugee Tyrian hero Apollonius, who believes he is a widower, entrusting his baby daughter, Tarsia, to a friendly couple in Tarsus, Stranguillio and Dionysias. Apollonius then sails off to Egypt. Dionysias grows jealous of the girl as she blossoms into a beautiful woman and, therefore, has her taken to the beach to be killed. Taarsia is rescued by pirates who sail off with her. When Apollonius returns, Dionysias informs him that his daughter has died. Believing that he is now childless, Apollonius journeys to Mytilene, where he becomes acquainted with the local Prince Athenagoras. Athenagoras, in an attempt to cheer Apollonius up, introduces him to a female musician who had previously worked (while managing to keep her virginity) in a brothel, suggesting that Apollonius could enjoy a sexual encounter with the young woman. He hires Tarsia for thirty days in order to play music and talk to Apollonius, who is in deep despair. It is eventually discovered that the girl is Tarsia and the father and daughter are emotionally reunited; Tarsia marries Athenagoras.

Krappe saw that, despite the several differences (the involvement of pirates, the venue in Lesbos rather than Corinth—although both places had 'sexy' reputations—and discussion of the daughter's stint at a brothel), there were overwhelming similarities with the plotline that appears in Apollodorus. This is his summary of his argument:

> To conclude, there can be no reasonable doubt that the episode or group of episodes under discussion is a literary borrowing, and that the author of the romance drew on the *Alcmaeon* of Euripides for this part of his work, adding to the more simple plot of the tragic poet and

[583] I am using the text and translation in Archibald (2001). The relevant episode of the Latin novella, chapters 28-48, are on pp. 143-73.

> complicating the action by new adventures which suited the taste of a late Greek public.[584]

These links have also been acknowledged by several other scholars, including Panayotakis in his commentary on the text and Anderson in his discussion of folklore in Graeo-Roman fiction.[585] Unlike the author of the Latin novella and presumably its ancient Greek archetype, Apollodorus does not actually mention explicitly the motif of averted incest, although given the licence permitted to ancient slave-owners to demand sexual favours of their slaves we might feel that this was implicit in the mythographer's sentence 'Alcmaeon bought her and kept her as a servant, not realizing she was his daughter.'[586]

It the literary ancestors of Apollonius and Tarsia are indeed the characters Alcmaeon and Tisiphone from *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, then averted father/daughter incest may have played a part in Euripides' play. Hall considers this possibility, and even proposes it might have been one of the reasons why the ancient play has not survived:

> The pagan schoolteachers and Christian monks who copied out ancient texts, thus transmitting them to posterity, preferred certain kinds of plays to others: not one of Euripides' plays centering on incest survived the selection process. One of these was his *Oedipus*; another was his scandalous *Aeolus*…Yet it was (averted) incest between father and

[584] Krappe (1924) 57-58.
[585] Panayotakis (2012) 386, Anderson (2007) 246 -7.
[586] Apollodorus 3.7. 94.

> daughter that seems to have featured in Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*.[587]

However, again, we cannot be fully sure that the incest motif featured in this particular Euripidean tragedy since the evidence is indirect and late. Perhaps one day the presumed Greek novel will come to light on papyrus, in which case a new source for a putative reconstruction of *Alcmaeon in Corinth* would be available.

Since the characters and probable plot are more overtly discussed in Apollodorus, and Euripides is mentioned by the mythographer, it is this version of Alcmaeon's story which is normally used by academics to hypothesize what may have actually happened in the lost *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. The play is believed to have focused on the lead character's adventures prior to the *Alcmaeon in Psophis* play. To summarize, the details that we learn from Apollodorus are that Manto, the daughter of the famous seer, Tiresias, had two children with Alcmaeon: a son named Amphilochus and a daughter known as Tisiphone. When this relationship and the subsequent birth of the two children occurred is unclear but it is suggested by Collard and Cropp that it was not that long after Alcmaeon's victory at Thebes. The children were given to the king of Corinth, Creon, to be looked after. From the mythographer, we are led to believe that Creon's wife grew jealous of Tisiphone and sold her into slavery. Alcmaeon then unknowingly purchased his daughter while searching for his children. Collard and Cropp believe that, in line with other Euripidean plotlines, a recognition scene would take place and the family would be reunited.

Zieliński proposed an outline of the plot which also featured Alcmaeon arriving in Corinth and his daughter, her true identity unknown, as his slave. Finding out he was in the area, Creon announced that Alcmaeon was to be prosecuted on the

[587] Hall can be found in the introduction to Teevan (2004) 9.

charge of matricide. Alcmaeon's son Amphilochus located Alcmaeon and, knowing that the people of Corinth would be hostile to him as a matricide, suggested that Alcmaeon take refuge at an altar.[588] Webster developed this version of the plot by suggesting that a key moment of the play would be Alcmaeon's madness scene, prompted by Amphilochus' interrogation of the stranger. Webster bases this suggestion on knowledge of the Roman poet and dramatist Ennius who often imitated Euripidean models,[589] and who composed a play entitled *Alcmaeon*.[590] Again, only fragments remain of this ancient text, but lines which have survived were delivered by Ennius' Alcmaeon as he discussed and underwent spasms of madness. This may have been a feature of either or both of the lost Euripidean *Alcmaeon* dramas. The first fragmentary speech is quoted by Cicero in *de Oratore* 3.217:

> multis sum modis corcumuentus, morbo exilio atque inopia,
> tum pauor sapientiam omnem exanimato expectorat
> alter (mater?) terribilem minatur uitae cruciatum et necem
> quare nemo est tam firmo ingenio et tanta confidentia
> quin refugiat timido sanguen atque exalbescat metu.

> I am surrounded and entrapped in many ways by illness, exile, and poverty.
> Dread then expels all intellectual power from my as I panic.
> The other one/my mother threatens death after terrible torture while I live:
> nobody is so steadfast in mind and so self-possessed that such threats

[588] Zieliński (1922) 305.
[589] Nervegna (2014) 177.
[590] Webster (1967) 267.

don't make his blood drain from him in fear and he grows pale with terror.[591]

Cicero seems to have been particularly fond of this speech of Ennius' Alcmaeon,[592] because he also quotes or refers to it at *de Oratore* 3.154, *de Finibus* 4.62 and 5.31, and *Tusculan Disputations* 4.19. In it Alcmaeon speaks, and is still sane, describing his plight. Other lines and phrases which probably come from the same speech is quoted by him at *Academica* 2.52 and 2.88-9: 'sed mihi neutiquam cor consentit cum oculorum aspectu' ('but my heart is not in agreement with what I see with my eyes'), 'unde haec flamma oritur' ('where has this flame arisen from?'), and 'incede, incede…adsunt, me expetunt' ('come, come…they are here and assaulting me').[593]

Cicero continues here to quote the second fragmentary passage comes from Alcmaeon's sung monody when actually in the throes of an attack of madness, and has a hallucination in which he seems to see the Furies, Apollo and Artemis:

fer mi auxilium, pestem abige a me,
flammiferam hanc uim quae me excruciat,
circumstant cum ardentibus taedis…
intendit crinitus Apollo
arcum auratum luna innixus,
Diana facem iacit a laeua.

Help me, rid me of this pestilence,
this flame-bearing force which tortures me,
they come against me, blueish and girdled with fire,
surrounding me with blazing torches…
Apollo of the long locks strains his gilded bow,

[591] Fragment XIV = 16-20 in Jocelyn (1967), translated by Edith Hall.
[592] For a detailed discussion of Cicero's close engagement with the Ennian *Alcmaeon*, and his several allusions to it, see Fantham (2011) 22-3.
[593] Fragment XIV = 21, 22 and 23 in Jocelyn (1967), translated by Edith Hall.

leaning on its crescent
and Diana tosses a brand from the left…[594]

Webster suggests that this mad-scene would be similar to the famous opening scene of Euripides' *Orestes*; rather than focusing on the familial intimacy between brother and sister, it would have shown the loving concern and care of Tisiphone and Amphilochus for the dishevelled Alcmaeon; they might be still unaware that this stranger is their biological father and that they, the two youngsters, are related.[595]

Webster proposes that Creon then discovers Alcmaeon and the two conduct an aggressive debate, leading to an altercation which includes Creon's threat to put Alcmaeon to death in retribution for matricide. Both Webster and Zieliński agree that a double recognition scene would take place, which would solve the problem of Alcmaeon's identity, and resolve the tragic impasse, but they cannot offer any concrete suggestions about how this might come to fruition.[596] Webster implies that it may have been the wife of Creon who assisted in proving that they were the children of Alcmaeon. With this knowledge, the newly reunited family plan vengeance on Creon and the play enters the final scene with their intention being thwarted by the entrance of a god.[597]

Collard and Cropp also provide a brief account of what they believe to be the plot of the play, which would have commenced with Alcmaeon returning to Corinth to claim his children, with the as yet unidentified Tisiphone already in his company. They suggest that Apollo would have performed the prologue, describing the series of events leading up to Alcmaeon leaving his children in Corinth with Creon and the sale

[594] 24-7 and 28-30 = fragment XV in Jocelyn (1967), translated by Edith Hall.
[595] Webster (1967) 267.
[596] Webster (1967) 267 Zieliński (1922) 305.
[597] Webster (1967) 268.

of Tisiphone into slavery. The chorus would have been made up of Corinthians, who would have been unable to recognize Alcmaeon; the children would not be aware of their own parentage, indeed Amphilochus may have believed that he was instead Creon's son and heir. When the recognition scene occured which revealed the true familial bonds, it would prompt an embarrassed Creon to flee, since his plan to appoint Amphilochus his successor would have been thwarted. Collard and Cropp propose that it would have been Apollo would delivered the epilogue, in which he would have rewarded the children.[598]

These two editors base their reconstruction on the narrative provided by Apollodorus in combination with their knowledge of the socio-political climate in which Euripides was writing. The play could have served flattering propagandist ends for the Athenians if it stressed that Amphilochus was in fact of Argive descent rather than Corinthian, thus depriving the Corinthians of a famous ancestral line, since the hostility between Athens and Corinth during the Peloponnesian War was intense.[599] Collard and Cropp also incorporate a number of surviving fragments that could have come from either Alcmaeon play. These fragments come from a variety of different sources and are usually made up of only a couple of lines. They often are not allocated to a character or a scene and barely any context is provided. This makes it very difficult to distinguish from which Alcmaeon production they came from and so one must play detective by looking for any clue that could confirm which production that they belong.

Collard and Cropp have compiled a selection of fragments that they have assigned to *Alcmaeon in Corinth,* even though they could be assigned to either Alcmaeon production. I supply these below, with the published translations, while

[598] Collard and Cropp (2008*a*) 87-88.
[599] This is an assertion also made by F. Jouan (1990) 155-66.

investigating Collard and Cropp's views on the speakers and locations.[600] This is necessary since Colin Teevan, the author of the modern play 'after' Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, worked from a translation of almost exactly the same fragments as Collard and Cropp selected, but provided by Edith Hall.[601]

F73a

<ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ>
κἀγὼ μὲν ἄτεκνος ἐγενόμην κείνης ἄπο,
Ἀλκμέωνι δ' ἔτεκε δίδυμα τέκνα παρθένος.

P. Oxy. 1611 fr. 1 col. iv.90–3 (a literary commentary)

And I myself was childless by her;
but the unmarried girl bore Alcmeon two children.

This fragment is assigned to Apollo by Collard and Cropp, as it was by Webster, but we cannot be certain as no name is provided alongside the dialogue.[602] The line refers to 'the unmarried girl' who gave birth to Alcmaeon's children. If we take the information provided in the *Bibliotheca* to be correct, this would indicate that Manto is the girl to whom it refers. If the line does belong to Apollo, one could suspect that it was delivered during the prologue of *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, for it would set the background to the production prior to the main action commencing.

[600] Nauck (379-389) compiled a larger amount of fragments that could have been included in both Alcmaeon plays, a total of forty lines. Collard and Cropp have narrowed this selection significantly; disregarding fragments that they felt were falsely allocated to the plays. They go further to divide the fragments that they have chosen from Euripides' plays into three groups: those that they believe to be from *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, fragments from *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and quotations that appeared in one of the two tragedies but could not be justifiably allocated to either one.
[601] See further below, pp. 320.
[602] Webster (1967) 265. He also suggests that another god would have such as Hermes or Athena may have told Amphilochus about the oracle.

F74

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φίλαι φίλαι,
πρόβατε, μόλε<τε>· τίς ὅδε, ποδαπὸς ὁ ξένος
Κορινθίοις ἔμολεν ἀγχιάλοις;

Tzetzes, *On Tragedy*, in *Anecdota Parisiana* I.19–20

CHORUS
Friends, friends, come forward, do come! Who is this stranger here, from what country has he come to Corinth by the sea.

I agree with Collard and Cropp's assertion that this fragment belongs to *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, for it makes reference to the city and the arrival of an alien gentleman. It is highly likely that this line was delivered when Alcmaeon arrived in Corinth, as suggested by the scholars.

F75

ὦ παῖ Κρέοντος, ὡς ἀληθὲς ἦν ἄρα,
ἐσθλῶν ἀπ' ἀνδρῶν ἐσθλὰ γίγνεσθαι τέκνα,
κακῶν δ' ὅμοια τῇ φύσει τῇ τοῦ πατρός.

Stobaeus 4.30.2

Son of Creon, how true then it has proved, that from noble fathers noble children are born, and from base ones children resembling their father's nature.

This fragment has not been allocated to a specific character and it is quite ambiguous in its nature. But it names Creon and therefore must be a part of the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* play. Perhaps it was spoken by the chorus since it could not be by Creon himself or indeed a member of his family. There may be a slim chance that the speaker is Alcmaeon, who may be addressing Amphilochus, not knowing that the young man

is actually his son. Collard and Cropp believed that these lines may deal with Amphilochus' belief that Creon is his father rather than Alcmaeon.

F76

ὁρᾶτε τὸν τύραννον ὡς ἄπαις γέρων
φεύγει· φρονεῖν δὲ θνητὸν ὄντ' οὐ χρὴ μέγα.

Stobaeus 3.22.13

See how the king is fleeing into exile, childless in old age;
one who is mortal should not think proudly.

This fragment is attributed in Stobaeus' text to Euripides' *Alcmaeon*. It does not clarify whether it belongs to a specific location such as Corinth or Psophis, but it is plausible that it belongs to *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and is making reference to Creon. It could not be in reference to the king in *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, who is believed to be Phegeus, but he has had children and was not in exile. One would assume that this fragment would have been spoken at the end of the play when it was revealed who actually was the father of Tisiphone and Amphilochus.

The scholars Collard and Cropp have also collected a number of fragments that they believe belong to one of Euripides' *Alcmaeon* productions but are unable to attribute them to a specific one. It is worth looking at these unallocated fragments for they may shed some light on moments that may have occurred in *Alcmaeon in Corinth*.

F78

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>
γυναῖκα καὶ ὠφελίαν
καὶ νόσον ἀνδρὶ φέρειν
μεγίσταν †ἐδίδαξα τ' ἐμῷ λόγῳ†

Stobaeus 4.22.74

That a wife brings both the greatest help and

the greatest harm, †I have (both?) taught though
my words†...

Stobaeus attributed this to the chorus but did not indicate from which *Alcmaeon* play it came from. I believe it could feature in either production. One interpretation could be that the dialogue is making reference to Creon's wife, in line with the plotline narrated by Apollodorus. I believe, however, that it is more likely to belong to *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. From what we can hypothesis based on the mythographers' versions, I would expect this line to be a comment on the need for Alcmaeon to retrieve the necklace on the request of his wife, with the relationship between husband and wife being a prevalent theme in this play.

F78a

‹—›
ὡς ἄπεπλον, ὦ δύστηνε, σῶμ' ἔχεις σέθεν.
‹ΑΛΚΜΕΩΝ›
ἐν τοῖσδ' ἄησιν καὶ θέρος διέρχομαι.

Photius, *Lexicon* α 448 Theodoridis

<_>
How poorly dressed your body is, you poor man!
<ALCMEON>
I go through winter and summer in these things.

The first line of this fragment is unattributed but one could suggest that it may be the chorus reacting to the physical appearance of Alcmaeon. I would suggest that the context of this exchange of dialogue was the moment of Alcmaeon's arrival either in Corinth or Psophis. The exclamation made by the first speaker would suggest that Alcmaeon is in a period of struggle in his life, perhaps suggesting he has been chased

by the Erinyes. His appearance could be a deception to deceive Phegeus into giving the necklace back, which would indicate that this is from *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, but this is pure conjecture on my behalf. It could equally a section of dialogue from his arrival in Corinth and thus belongs to *Alcmaeon in Corinth*.

F79

βροτοῖς τὰ μείζω τῶν μέσων τίκτει νόσους·
θεῶν δὲ θνητοὺς κόσμον οὐ πρέπει φέρειν.

Stobaeus 3.22.8

Anything beyond the middling creates trouble for men;
mortals should not wear the trappings of gods.

Again, no context is provided for this segment of dialogue, but I would like to think that there is a strong possibility that this could be a reference to Harmonia's necklace, and therefore it could be allocated to *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. On the other hand, it could be making reference to a situation within *Alcmaeon in Corinth* of which we are unaware. The line gives the impression that it could be a warning, perhaps given by the chorus.

F80

φεῦ ‹φεῦ›, τὰ μεγάλα μεγάλα καὶ πάσχει κακά.

Stobaeus 4.8.6

Alas, greatness also suffers great disaster!

This line is ambiguous in nature and could potentially be assigned to either tragedy. While I am unable to allocate this fragment to a particular play, I do believe this would be the kind of exclamation that the chorus would have made in reaction to a situation unfolding on stage.

F81

ταπεινὰ γὰρ χρὴ τοὺς κακῶς πεπραγότας
λέγειν, ἐς ὄγκον δ' οὐκ ἄνω βλέπειν τύχης.

Stobaeus 3.22.24

Those who have fared badly should speak humbly, and not look back to their fortune in its pomp.

The content of these lines seems to be a character responding to someone speaking or behaving arrogantly, which would lead me to think that it may have been from the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* production. If we are to follow the narrative offered by Apollodorus, the fragment could be referring to one of several characters. Alcmaeon or his daughter could have been regretting their fall from previous status. On the other hand, Creon could be viewed as someone who had fared badly for pretending the two children were his own, or it could be making reference to Creon's wife, who was said to have grown jealous of Tisiphone. Or perhaps the lines concern both Creon and his wife, viewed as a couple who have fallen from grace. Unfortunately, we can never be fully positive about the context of this line.

F82

τὰ τῶν τεκόντων ὡς μετέρχεται θεὸς
μιάσματ(α).

Stobaeus 4.25.15

...that god pursues for punishment foul sins committed against fathers.

The theme of fatherhood could well have been prominent in *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, as it has been suggested that Alcmaeon returns to obtain his children who are under the impression that their father is Creon. This quotation could fit in well into a plot of

mistaken paternity but could equally be linked to *Alcmaeon in Psophis* in regards to Alcmaeon's deception of the father-figure Phegeus.

F83

εἰ τοῦ τεκόντος οὐδὲν ἐντρέπῃ πατρός

Priscian, *Grammar* 3.311.14

....if you pay no heed to the father who got you.

Just like F82, this fragment makes reference to fathers. I would propose that this quotation would be best placed in the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* since it seems relevant to the story outline provided by Apollodorus, which suggests the sustained focus on mistaken paternity. If the line was complete, I can imagine it would have been a good example of the irony that occurs often in Euripides' dialogue. While we do not have the character allocation for this quotation, I suspect that it would have been said to Amphilochus about his father. The speaker would have been referring to Creon but, in fact, the audience would know that Amphilochus' biological father was actually Alcmaeon. To heighten the sense of irony, it may have been Alcmaeon speaking this line, not realizing that he was talking to his own son. However, without context and extra information, this is all conjecture and we could on equal grounds allocate it to the *Alcmaeon in Psophis*.

F84

ἦ τί πλέον εἶναι παῖδας ἀνθρώποις, πάτερ,
εἰ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς δεινοῖσιν ὠφελήσομεν;

Stobaeus 4.25.23

...or what advantages are children for men, father, if we are
not going to help in their predicaments?

Here we have yet another fragment that can be linked to the theme of fatherhood, but this time it explicitly involves the paternal relationship with children. Again, like the previous two fragments, I think there is a strong case for this belonging to *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. It appears that it is a son talking to his father, which would suggest that the boy is Amphilochus. The identity of the father is more difficult to be sure about. This piece of dialogue could happen prior to or after the recognition scene and therefore could be directed at Creon or Alcmaeon. To continue the air of irony and theme of mistaken identities, I would lean towards this line being directed at Creon, with both the audience and Creon knowing that he is not the biological father of Amphilochus. But this is guesswork on my behalf and the fragment could easily belong to *Alcmaeon in Psophis*.

F85

μέτεστι τοῖς δούλοισι δεσποτῶν νόσου.

Stobaeus 4.19.23

Slaves have a share in their masters' affliction.

This line is very ambiguous in nature. It could be discussing something happening on stage or expressing a warning to a particular character. We lack clarity on context, speaker and source play for this fragment and there are no major indicators that can assist even in making educated suggestions.

F86

ἀλλ' ἔρπ' ἐς οἴκ[ους
μητου[.]εμη[
ὑμῖν τ' ἀπαυδ[ῶ
εἴ τις λακοῦσα τ[
μή μ' αἰτιᾶσθ[αι
ὅστις δὲ δούλῳ φωτὶ πιστεύει βροτῶν,
πολλὴν παρ' ἡμῖν μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνει.

But go into the house…and I forbid you…if
any (woman) crying out…to blame me….Whoever
among men puts trust in a slave, incurs great folly in my eyes.

Only a handful of words survive from the next part of this fragment.

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>
beginnings of 13 more lines, with some part-words preserved:
8 γλυκεια[, 9 μαινομ[, 10 ὑπὸ γαία[, 11 τέκνοισ.[,
16 κυλινδ[, 20 λατρ...αλλαβιου[
Stobaeus 4.19.25.

<CHORUS>
…sweet…madly(?)…under the earth… (to?)children…
roll…(be a?) lackey but (?) live…

This line is quite fragmented in nature and lacks context and character allocation. Collard and Cropp have asserted that the second part of the dialogue would come from the chorus, but this is pure conjecture of their behalf. If their assertion is true, I would suspect that the first part of the dialogue would most likely come from a male protagonist due to the strong instruction that appears in the first line which indicates someone with authority. The line, 'Whoever among men puts trust in a slave, incurs great folly in my eyes', is the most coherent part of this fragment and echoes the similar warning of being foolhardy in F81 and the involvement of slaves and masters

that appears in F85. The question of which of the two *Alcmaeon* plays was the source has been greatly contested, with Collard and Cropp acknowledging that several academics have believed it was linked to *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. I am unsure of where it would fit in either production, yet the reference to children within the words allocated to the chorus and the main speaker claiming that it is reckless to believe the words of slaves, one could plausibly argue that it could be from *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. If, unbeknownst to Alcmaeon, his daughter accompanied him as a slave to Corinth, this could have come from the start of their recognition scene. Alcmaeon may have discovered that his slave is actually his daughter and, in this line, is requesting that Creon allow him to speak to his son, who resides at Creon's house. The first part of the fragment above would belong to Creon, who would be defensive in response to Alcmaeon's cross-examination and desire to uncover the truth. However, this speculation on my behalf and cannot be proved as a correct reading of this segment.

F87

γυναῖκες, ὁρμήθητε μηδ' ἀθυμία
σχέθῃ τις ὑμᾶς· ταῦτα γὰρ σκεθρῶς ὁρᾶν
ἡμᾶς ἀνάγκη τοὺς νομίζοντας τέχνην.

Erotian σ 46

Women, go quickly and let no despondency hold you back;
for we who practice this skill must look accurately at these things.

This fragment is included by Collard and Cropp in their selection of fragments that could be from either *Alcmaeon in Corinth* or *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. The line comes from a Greek lexicon that preserved a number of dramatic quotations, yet many of these appear in a corrupted form. In regards to this piece of dialogue, we cannot be sure to which play it would belong, nor who is speaking. I would assume that the collective of women whom the line addresses isthe chorus, for it would be out of

character for a tragedy to have another large group on stage alongside the choral performers.[603] The skill to which the speaker refers, one would assume, is a sort of divination or reading. The speaker also identifies with the women when saying 'for we who practise this skill…' which would seem to suggest that the speaker could be female or that both parties practise the art of divination. These guesses do not assist in putting the quotation into the known context of any specific play and therefore offers us little additional material for recreating the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* or *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, but if the quotation is correct, it might imply that divination was a part of one of the Alcmaeon plays, unsurprising given that Alcmaeon's children were born to Manto, a daughter of Teiresias.

All that has been discussed concerning the surviving evidence in the opening part of this chapter can assist us, when used with caution, in gaining a partial insight into what may have taken place in *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. I would hypothesize, in line with other scholarly views, that the play would have commenced with a prologue by Apollo, followed by an unkempt Alcmaeon arriving in Corinth with his unbeknownst daughter, Tisiphone, in tow as a slave. The audience would then hear how Alcmaeon is looking for his children and how he has come to Corinth. At some point, Alcmaeon will have interaction with Amphilochus, perhaps in the form of an interrogation as suggested by Webster.[604] This would prompt some humorous moments while discussing the relationships between families and in particular, fathers and sons, without the interlocutors realising they are related, in a similar way to what takes place in *Hypsipyle* (see above, pp. 221-222). At some point, Creon will enter the stage to interact with Alcmaeon, but what takes place in this scene and how the recognition

[603] It may have occurred within Aeschylus' *Danaids* in order to host both the Danaids and the sons of Aegyptus on stage, although we cannot be sure.
[604] Webster (1967) 267.

between the family members comes about is highly difficult to judge. In order to heighten the tragedy, the suggested insertion of the madness scene and a life being threatened, perhaps Alcmaeon's, would be naturally engaging for an audience, although I am unsure of whether it would have occurred. In line with Apollodorus' account, I suspect that once the family are reunited and Creon's deception is uncovered, the king would then attempt to escape punishment, but the intervention of a god would bring the play to its conclusion. I would love there to have been a threat of incest between father and daughter, in line with the discussion of connections between *Alcmaeon in Corinth* and *Apollonius of Tyre*, but I am unsure, based on the surviving fragments, whether this was Euripides' true intention. Perhaps, if Tisiphone is enslaved to Alcmaeon, there is an expectation that at some point a sexual relationship will take place in the future and this is alluded to by the characters, even though their identities are revealed before anything occurs. But the difficulty in achieving any certainty in reconstructing this particular play is undeniable, and may have been one of the reasons why playwright Colin Teevan preferred to use the scanty surviving information as inspiration for a wholly original play.

3. Colin Teevan's *Alcmaeon in Corinth*

Teevan's script, *Alcmaeon in Corinth: After a Fragment of Euripides*, was first performed at Live Theatre, Newcastle on 15th September 2004.[605] It was the result and product of months of research and discussions, as well as workshops with postgraduate students from the Northumbria Live Academy. Teevan had been commissioned to devise a new contemporary piece for the students at the academy by Martin Wylde, who would go on to direct the first staging, but Teevan held an interest

[605] It was originally performed under the title *Cock o' the North*.

in reimagining the ancient world on stage and desired to complete the Euripidean trilogy he had been adapting over the years.

It was through Euripides that Teevan claims he came to drama, and immersion in Euripidean texts which helped him in developing his craft. As a schoolboy growing up in Ireland he learnt both ancient Greek and Latin, and has memories of being forced to translate *Iphigenia in Aulis* line by line, as instructed by his elderly Jesuit teacher. He believes that it was through the translation exercises that he learnt the fundamentals of theatre and became aware of 'the dramatic line, action contained within the line, the scene, the characters; characteristics and trajectory, and the plot structure which were encrypted into the play text'.[606] His interaction with *Iphigenia in Aulis* as a student clearly had an impact on him, for one of his first plays to be staged was an adaptation of the tragedy entitled *Iph...* in 1999. Three years later, Teevan undertook the other surviving play from Euripides' posthumous group, when translating *Bacchae* for the National Theatre. He became intrigued with the idea of gaps in ancient theatre texts when he encountered the approximately 50 lines that are missing towards the end of *Bacchae*.[607] Most translations attempt to cover the missing dialogue but Teevan claims that instead of using what he refers to as the 'the traditional bandaid', he decided to insert material, original text composed by himself, to make the production flow better in his eyes.[608] This provided a good training ground for Teevan's subsequent attempt, after being introduced to the notion that there was a third tragedy performed alongside *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Bacchae* by Edith Hall, to complete the tragic 'trilogy' by recreating the highly fragmented *Alcmaeon in Corinth*.

[606] Teevan (2014) 6.
[607] This missing section occurs during the scene where it is revealed that Agave has killed her own son between lines 1329 and 1330. For a full discussion of the history of this textual crux, scholars' responses to it, and attempts to restore it from the Byzantine tragedy *Christus Patiens* attributed (wrongly) to Gregory Nazianzus, see now the study by Friesen (2015) 252-60.
[608] Discussed in interview, please see Appendix D.

The idea to work on the lost play stemmed from a conversation with Hall in 2002, when Teevan's translation of *Bacchae* was directed in the Olivier at the National Theatre by Peter Hall (no relation of Edith).[609] All three met during a Radio 3 discussion at that time; Edith Hall was subsequently rehearsal consultant, wrote the programme essay, and appeared on a National Theatre platform with Teevan on 20th May 2002. Teevan and Edith Hall began a dialogue on the relationship between the three Euripidean plays performed in 405 BC, and in particular the question of the three actors who would have been selected to appear in the trilogy, and which roles each would have taken respectively in the extant *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Bacchae*. From there, they started to ask which characters those actors would have portrayed in *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. This piqued Teevan's interest and he started to work on a script with assistance from Professor Hall.

She pointed him in the direction of the surviving evidence (the fragments of Euripides and Ennius, the mythographers and the Latin *Apollonius of Tyre* novella). Since Collard and Cropp (2008) was not yet available, she also provided the playwright and the director, Martin Wylde, with her own translations of her selection of fragments, many of which had not be translated into English before. Teevan used these ancient snippets of dialogue as building blocks to assist in creating his production, despite the words lacking context and character allocation. Unfortunately, just as the ancient play was lost due to lack of preservation, so the translations of the fragments by Hall, written out in longhand on a few pages of exercise book, have failed to survive, although she recalls that the collection was similar to if slightly larger than that later published by Collard and Cropp. She also translated the Greek as faithfully as possible, viewing the task of creative adaptation as belonging to the

[609] See further Croall (2007).

playwright Teevan rather than the academic: her responsibility was to represent what Euripides wrote as closely as possible in modern English.

At the time, this is what she wrote in the Introduction which she provided for the published script:

> Approximately 23 fragments – perhaps forty lines – have been incorporated into *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. In the absence of any previous English translations of the fragments, I provided some. [610]

Hall also acknowledges in her footnotes to the introduction that there were a number of fragments used by Teevan that may have come from the other Alcmaeon play, *Alcmaeon in Psophis*.[611] As discussed earlier in this chapter, it can be impossible to determine to which play some of the surviving pieces of dialogue belong, but it did offer Teevan more material to work with. In regards to how he used these fragments, he described it to me as the following:

> I played fast and loose with them - in the end it became a game of what I could fit in. Though I think the play is based around one of them. Amphilochus line - why should we have children, father ... I think we more or less made that what the play is all about. This also links in with the other two plays about parents' relationships with children.[612]

[610] Teevan (2004) 11.
[611] Teevan (2004) 11.
[612] See interview in Appendix D.

Teevan used Apollodorus' plot outline as a guide for his own play, but would often would deviate from and embellish the story, for example incorporating the motif of averted incest which occurs in *Apollonius of Tyre*.

It is worth looking at Teevan's new plot in detail to see where all these elements fit and what he has altered or developed in a different manner to further his aims. The opening scene reminds the audience that this is a play that is well and truly fragmented. In an interview with me, Teevan stated that he enjoyed investigating the 'post-modern' attitude to fragments, while celebrates the attention they make the reader or viewer pay to *form*.[613] He likes to ask how fragmentation can assist us in the process of interpretation; is there room for us to re-contextualize fragments, and look at them in different ways? What different stories could the fragments be made to tell by being juxtaposed in different ways?[614] This approach is set up in the prologue. Rather than using character of Apollo, who some scholars have argued may have opened *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, the play commences with Hera standing on the stage, sifting through fragments of papyrus and paper, occasionally reading out from one. Teevan told Edith Hall that he had consciously modelled the character, who was portrayed as a slightly scatty, eccentric but humorous middle-aged woman, on her, because she had provided the translations from which he worked and had introduced him to the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* in the first place. The association was stressed by the actress who played Hera in the original production, because she conspicuously mimicked Hall's verbal and gesticulatory style: [615]

[613] For discussions of postmodernism's fascination with fragments and their reconstitution see e.g. Faigley (1992), Turkle (1997), Gall (2014) and especially Elias (2004).
[614] See interview in Appendix D.
[615] Hall has reported this to me in private conversation. Although she was present at some of the early rehearsals, she did not know of the plan to model Hera upon her until she saw the first full performance on the night of the premiere.

'The Gods avenge the pollution

Caused by the murder of a parent'

'Why should people have children, father,

If they don't help them in adversity'

'Aren't you aware, young women,

What's going on in town?'

The character then breaks away from her perusal of the snippets to address the audience directly about the state of the fragmented play:

Fragments, snatches of sentences on dusty leaves

Torn from old book rolls,

Frish-frash fished from the silt of the river

Of two millennia or more of words.

Hera then returns to read more of the fragments aloud:

'He destroyed Oedipus

And Oedipus destroyed me,

All because of the golden necklace-'

'In speech I explained that woman is the greatest benefit

And the worst ill for a man to bear.'

'Argaina - becoming white.'

'O child of Creon, how true it is,

That noble children are born of noble men

And children of ignoble men

Resemble their fathers in nature'

Again, Hera breaks away from the fragments to explain to the audience that these snippets will help to create the production that they are about to see, before concluding her introduction with one last fragment which leads into the chorus' entrance:

So let us weave these words,

The last stray and fraying threads,

Let us weave them into a fine peplos,

A dress fit for a Goddess. Begin then.

'Friends, young women of Corinth, come see,

A stranger is arriving on the quay.

What sea-girt island is he from?

And why to Corinth has he come?'

Hera thus uses a variation on fragment 74 to bring the chorus of Corinthian women on to the stage.

Since we have no idea of the identity of the chorus in Euripides' tragedy, Teevan was free to make the decision himself. But just as most scholars assume that they would have been a group of Corinthian women, as in *Medea*, since Euripides preferred female choruses and the play was set in Corinth, so Teevan followed suit. But he told me in interview that while he wrote *Alcmaeon in Corinth* he was very aware that it was one play out of three, and therefore chose a female chorus as a nod to the *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (in both plays the chorus are made up of women, although in *Bacchae* they are not from the local vicinity).[616] Another factor was the variety of locations in which Teevan sets his action; the presence of the chorus needed to be plausible in all of them. Unlike authentic Greek tragedy, which usually does not feature changes in location (*Eumenides* is a notable exception), Teevan's play jumps between a number of Corinthian spaces including the palace, the quay and temple of Aphrodite, at all of which a female collective presence is plausible. A female chorus also created an interesting performance dynamic in interaction with the character of Alcmaeon, a man with a reputation for womanizing, even if he was now attempting to reform.

The chorus announce that they see Alcmaeon approaching and provide the audience with a summary of his situation so far which differs slightly from the mythographers' versions described earlier in this chapter. The chorus claim that he fought alongside his father at Thebes, and on learning that his mother had been bribed with the necklace to betray them to the enemy, Alcmaeon swore revenge on all women over his father's dying body. Teevan inserts the notion that it was an oracle that

[616] See interview in Appendix D.

commanded that he should kill his mother. As he went about the deed, the chorus claim that his mother cursed him by calling out,

> 'O, Gods avenge the pollution
> Caused by this matricide.
> Deny my son shelter, deny him rest,
> Let him not find peace on any woman's breast.
> Erinyes, avenge my death.' [617]

The chorus concludes this section by claiming that he is still pursued by the Erinyes and that he has ran from bed to bed in accordance with his mother's curse.

But before Alcmaeon actually arrives in person, Tisiphone enters the stage and introduces herself to the chorus. While the interaction lasts only a couple of lines, the audience learns that she is the daughter of King Creon and Queen Creusa and her life in the palace has made her very naive and inquisitive. This goes against most suggested reconstructions of the ancient play, which tend to present Tisiphone as having been sold into slavery and arriving in Corinth in the possession of Alcmaeon. The exchange between the chorus and Tisiphone is quickly interrupted with the entrance of Alcmaeon. The chorus flirtatiously start to enquire into his reason for returning to the city, famous for its sex trade, which reinforces his reputation as a womanizer. Alcmaeon divulges that he is happily married and now lives in Achelous, which ties in with details mentioned in Apollodorus' version of the myth. He does not give the true reasoning behind his return, although we discover later in the play that he needs to retrieve his family's necklace in order to free himself from the madness of desire and the pursuit of Erinyes.[618] This incorporates the proposed plot of *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, which would have seen Alcmaeon attempting to retrieve the necklace from

[617] Teevan (2004) 20.
[618] Teevan (2004) 26.

King Phegeus, but Teevan involves the characters of *Alcmaeon in Corinth* in the necklace subplot instead.[619]

The chorus force Alcmaeon to take one of the women as an escort to where he is staying and, taken back by her shyness, he chooses Tisiphone, remarking that that she is 'not the same as them...'[620] Alcmaeon flirtatiously asks her name, but Tisiphone refuses in a manner very similar to unrecognised family members in other Euripidean plays. If she had revealed her identity, Alcmaeon may have realized who she was and thus thwarted the rest of the tragedy, but her refusal contributes to the plot progression and the eventual recognition scene: similar moments can be seen in *Hypsipyle* when she unknowingly meets her sons during the opening scenes (see above, pp. 221-222). Teevan decides to heighten the dark humor for which Euripides is known when Tisiphone and Alcmaeon part ways. In an embarrassed schoolgirl manner, she points in the direction that he must travel and immediately disappears before Alcmaeon is able to thank her. On her departure he exclaims that she is the most 'beguiling' of all women he has ever been with and yet so familiar at the same time.[621] If this appeared in the ancient play, the audience would have been aware of the plot, and that Alcmaeon is discussing having lustful thoughts about his daughter; since he is unaware of who she is, this would have created a darkly humorous and potentially disturbing *frisson* and atmosphere. But of course this did not have the same effect on a modern audience in Newcastle, at least those who did not already know the story.

The action then shifts to inside the palace where Creon laments to a servant that he feels sexual desire for the girl he supposes is his daughter, Tisiphone. It transpires that Creon does not know that Tisiphone is not his daughter but, in fact, the

[619] Apollodorus 89-91.
[620] Teevan (2004)25.
[621] Teevan (2004) 26.

biological child of Alcmaeon; Teevan here goes against the suggestions of the mythographer Apollodorus and some of the scholars whose views I have discussed earlier. Teevan's scene is very reminiscent of another Euripidean play, *Hippolytus*, where Phaedra agonizes over her feelings for her step-son to her nurse, but while that scene is tragic and holds a sense of foreboding, Creon's lamenting is fairly comical.[622] The king drunkenly debates whether it is natural to be attracted to his daughter but tries to persuade himself to stay civilized and suppress the longing, despite the way thinking about her flusters him. Creon hurriedly has to pull himself together and snap out of his lustful moment as his wife, Creusa, enters looking for their daughter. In the bickering exchange between husband and wife, we learn that Creon is under the impression that since Creusa was barren, they were only blessed with their children following an intervention by the god, Apollo. He goes on to talk unfavorably about their son, Amphilochus, and claims:

> He is sullen, surly, sulking and spoiled,
> He is feckless, faithless and effeminate,
> He's not fit to run my bath, let alone the state. [623]

Creon, drunkenly, moves on to discuss Tisiphone and attempts to justify his own feelings towards the girl, by negatively stating:

> All she cares about is catching glances,
> And conferring coy looks, and secret smiles.....
> Should stay at home and weave,
> Instead of gallivanting around the town,
> Men eyeing her - I know how their minds work.
> Their filthy, filthy minds - [624]

[622] *Hippolytus* 172-370. This scene setup is also reminiscent of the Shakespearean play, *Twelfth Night*, where the duke, Orsino, laments his unrequited love for Olivia to his servant, Curio (Act 1, Scene 1).
[623] Teevan (2004)30.

Creon exits in a fluster, while Creusa requests that Nikarete, Priestess of Aphrodite, is brought to her. Creusa is then left alone to vocalize her worries about losing her status as queen. She confirms that the children are not blood related to either her or Creon but that she has raised them as her own. She also acknowledges that Tisiphone is becoming more captivating on a daily basis, but in a non-motherly way announces:

> Yet I cannot help but see her youth mocks me,
> Her soft white skin scorns the tattered sacking of my face,
> Her lightness of touch and tread and humor
> Make me feel mean, shrivelled, old and sunken.[625]

Creusa goes on to tell the audience that Apollo prophesied that the first man Tisiphone would lie beside would be her father. She made Tisiphone aware of the prophecy and, as a result, the girl has now sworn herself to chastity. The audience are led to believe that Creon does not know the reasoning behind Tisiphone's decision and which has fuelled his desire even more. Creusa then goes on to confirm in her monologue the true identity of her twins. She admits that they were the product of Alcmaeon and Manto, with Alcmaeon giving the children to her to raise as he wanted no more to do with them. This goes against Apollodorus' assertion that Creon was given the children by Alcmaeon, who was aware of their parentage. Creusa fears that the twin's paternity will soon be revealed as she has been notified of Alcmaeon's arrival in Corinth. The queen's main issue about the uncovering of her deception is that if her husband discovers he is not related to Tisiphone, nothing would stop him from having her. The

[624] Teevan (2004)30.
[625] Teevan (2004) 31-32.

audience also learn that Creusa was once in love with Alcmaeon and would happily do anything for him.

The queen schemes to keep Alcmaeon apart from his children in order to stop her secret from being uncovered, but Tisiphone enters, interrupting Creusa's thoughts and forcing her to adopt a motherly but authorative stance. On Creusa's cross-examining of Tisiphone about her prior whereabouts, Teevan has the girl admit that there was a sense of familiarity with the stranger, just as Alcmaeon had only a few scenes before:

> And I did feel somewhat disarmed,
> As if I knew him from some place else.
> But there was no harm in it, mother,
> He does not even know my name.[626]

Again, the audience start to learn more about the innocence of Tisiphone as she goes on to confirm that she has sworn herself to chastity, although longs for a time when she could be like the other girls in the city. Creusa deceives Tisiphone by telling her that she plans on not allowing this oracle to ruin her life and has made arrangements for the priestess of Aphrodite and her brother, Amphilochus, to escort her to Delphi to gain clarification on the prophecy.

Tisiphone exits to look for her brother and explain the news, while Creusa welcomes Nikarete, priestess of Aphrodite. The queen asks for the priestess' help and weaves a lie to her, claiming that she has a set of twin slaves, a boy and girl, who were brought into the household as children by her husband. She claims that while they were well looked after, the twins have grown up being resentful, unfaithful and lazy

[626] Teevan (2004) 33.

and she would like to find them roles away from the palace but to keep this a secret from Creon. Nikarete agrees to assist the queen and to remove them from the palace under the pretence that they are going on a trip to Delphi, not realizing that the twins she is talking about are the supposed children of Creusa and Creon. Amphilochus then enters to ask Creusa about the journey, since Tisiphone has told him about the plan. Nikarete takes his familiarity with Creusa, whom he addresses as 'mother', as over-bold behaviour for a slave and reprimands him, leaving Amphilochus very confused.

As Nikarete leaves, Amphilochus questions his mother as to why they should go to Delphi and discusses the prophecy. Amphilochus is of the opinion that fate is fate and fears that his mother has an ulterior motive:

> It wouldn't be our fate if we could change it!
> Is it really the prophecy you fear?
> Or the simple fact of our being here? [627]

Amphilochus states that he has seen how his sister has blossomed into a beautiful woman and that Creusa is jealous of this. The queen protests this angrily and turns on her son by announcing that she agrees with Creon that he has been spoilt and it is a good thing that he will be leaving. She bids him goodbye and departs, leaving a wary Amphilochus who vows to protect his sister at all costs, fearing that Creusa has arranged something.

Teevan now inserts a choral ode that describes the backstory to the necklace of Harmonia, weaving knowledge of all elements of the Alcmaeon myth into his play and informing a contemporary audience. The chorus recount how Hephaestus discovered his wife, Aphrodite, was having a relationship with Ares, and trapped them in a net he

[627] Teevan (2004) 37.

made to catch them in the act. He was inspired to create a necklace of gold at the same time, which although not overtly named, is implied to be the same necklace that Harmonia was given as a wedding gift, as outlined in Homer's *Odyssey*.[628] The chorus conclude their ode thus:

> Let us look but not touch,
> Let us desire and be desired,
> But not too much. [629]

The chorus use the story of Hephaestus as an example which demonstrates the desirability of moderation, self-discipline and self-control of desires, which ethically ties into the current action on stage, as well as providing more background information on the object which will feature later in the next scene.

The play continues with Alcmaeon meeting Creusa. It is clear from their interaction that they have a past romantic history that has never fully been resolved. Creusa remains hostile towards him, while Alcmaeon tries to make amends and flatter her into assisting him. The audience learn that Alcmaeon is now married to Callirhoe, who has requested that he provide her with the necklace of Harmonia as it is his family heirloom. He also mentions that when he gave the twins to Creusa he left the piece of jewellery with them and he has been told that the necklace will play an important part in finding piece of mind away from the pursuit of the Erinyes. Alcmaeon asks whether this one time he could speak to his children and try to obtain the object, but Creusa concocts another web of lies, this time claiming that the children have died, in part to

[628] Homer *Odyssey* 8. 267.
[629] Teevan (2004) 39.

protect her secrets and position with Creon. She still seems aggrieved at having been jilted by Alcmaeon when she was his lover all those years ago.

Taken aback to hear that both his children have passed away, Alcmaeon quizzes Creusa about their bodies' whereabouts, but Creusa accuses him of only being interested in getting the necklace back and not really caring about the children themselves. She mentions that she will look into recovering the necklace. But now they are interrupted by a drunken Creon who alleviates the tense atmosphere between Alcmaeon and Creusa with a humorous reunion scene. The king tries to get his old friend, Alcmaeon, to view his daughter, Tisiphone, because Creon claims that his friend is a connoisseur of women and would like his opinion. Creusa tries to shut down the conversation by informing her husband that their children have gone to Delphi, but Creon in drunken lust continues to discuss Tisiphone and even suggests that Alcmaeon marries her. Alcmaeon declines but mentions that he had intended meeting his own daughter recently, only to hear that she had met her demise, unaware that they are discussing the same girl. Creusa is much relieved when Creon suggests that the two men go out for the evening to catch up, which provides her with an opportunity, aided by a servant, to find the necklace for Alcmaeon.

As the action now moves from the palace to the temple of Aphrodite, the chorus perform an ode discussing the temple and the business that is conducted there. They explain that rather than the temple being a place of love and devotion, the establishment's primary focus is offering sex:

> Young girls sing songs to Aphrodite,
> They see not the reality
> Of her child Eros who does not care

Whom he crosses, whom he infects,

Whom he reduces to despair

With his fatal shafts, with sex.

It is he who makes the good man crave

And the man who then makes the woman slave.

The weft is woven through the warp,

I push the shuttle back and forth,

My life stretched upon the loom,

This house of love shall be my tomb.[630]

This ode sets up the next scene where Nikarete brings Tisiphone into the temple. A confused Tisiphone queries why they are not going to Delphi, and it is explained to her that there was a change of plan and instead she will now learn the ways of the goddess' slaves. The audience discovers that the siblings have now been separated and Amphilochus has been sold to the High Priest of Apollo. As Tisiphone is introduced to the rest of the women at the temple, she protests that she is there by mistake, suggesting that her necklace would be proof that she is the daughter of a king. Nikarete takes the necklace, believing Tisiphone stole it from the palace, and suggests she will sell it. During the rest of the interaction, Tisiphone learns that her supposed mother is responsible for putting the siblings into slavery. Nikarete soon realizes that Tisiphone does not have any desirable skills and, therefore, she tasks the rest of the temple girls to train her in the amorous arts and find her unique selling point. This gives the chorus an opportunity to perform an ode full of metaphors to teach Tisiphone the way to pleasure a man:

[630] Teevan (2004) 52.

Making love is like drinking wine,

Some have leisure to take their time,

And swill it round about their mouth,

And pretend they know what they're talking about.

But we haven't got all day,

Our clients pay by the hour,

So here's what you do and what you say.

Dip his finger in the glass

Put it between your lips

And taking care to catch all the drips,

Suck it until it is bone dry.[631]

Interestingly, this choral ode breaks down just after halfway through, with some ladies of the temple humorously suggesting that Tisiphone should pretend to be a beast or bird to entice her man. The conclusion of the choral segment has them explaining that the art of seduction is key to gaining a man's attention.

Nikarete welcomes Creon and Alcmaeon to the temple and offers the services of the ladies. Tisiphone disguises herself with a veil when she recognizes her supposed father, Creon, and the stranger from the quay, Alcmaeon. Alcmaeon claims that he will not partake as he is happily married now, but Creon and Nikarete encourage him. Creon becomes intrigued by the disguised Tisiphone, especially as Nikarete describes her as 'a foal as yet unridden by a man'.[632] When Creon tries to unveil her, the girl

[631] Teevan (2004)58.
[632] Teevan (2004)63.

tries to escape his advances, but to defuse the situation allows Alcmaeon to view her, unknowing that she is revealing herself to her biological father and inadvertently putting herself in a situation that she has been trying to avoid. Alcmaeon recognizes Tisiphone from the quay and asks for her name. Here, Teevan interestingly incorporates one of the surviving fragments often linked with *Alcmaeon in Psophis* into the play, having Tisiphone claim her name is 'Argaina. Becoming white.'[633] Alcmaeon remains intrigued by Tisiphone and she woos him further in a bid to avoid being with her 'father':

> I'll transform into a bird for you,
> A nightingale blown by the winds
> Across the sand and sea from Africa.
> Though my voice is weak, I'll sing for you,
> And you shall hold me to your breast and stroke me,
> And there I shall turn into a woman. [634]

Alcmaeon chooses Tisiphone over the other girls, while Creon, in a manner which could be potentially uncomfortable for a modern audience, comments on how the feelings for this unknown, virginal girl are similar to those that he has for his Tisiphone, being unaware that in fact he is referring to the same person:

> I understand my friend,
> The attraction of the unwalked way.
> Sometimes I find, you know, with my own daughter,

[633] F73 is a short fragment stating only ἀργαίνειν and is featured in *Nauck's Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta*, but Collard and Cropp's collection of fragments (2008a) 81 refers only to it in their notes as belonging to *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. They translate it as 'to whiten'. It is featured in Teevan's production on page 64.
[634] Teevan (2004) 65.

Sometimes, in her company, I find that I

Can barely breathe. I come here for relief

But it lasts no longer than my journey home.

Better you have her, don't want to fan the flames.[635]

As the group disperses, Creusa's servant enters to inquire whether Nikarete has the necklace in her possession and obtain it. The action moves to a bed chamber within the temple where Amphilochus has arrived. The audience learns that he has managed to escape from the high priest to Apollo and is here to keep his vow and protect his sister. He plans to hide behind the bed and cut off the man's head when he forces himself upon Tisiphone.

Unaware that Amphilochus is present, Alcmaeon and Tisiphone enter the room and awkwardly realize that they are now alone. Alcmaeon tries to create a relaxing mood by offering Tisiphone a glass of wine, who gulps it down. She attempts seductively to show Alcmaeon how to appreciate a glass of wine, clumsily replicating what the chorus had shown her earlier, but spills it on herself. Alcmaeon assists her out of her damp clothes, with Teevan specifically suggesting in the stage directions that he does so in the manner of a father than a lover. Perhaps this is a way of highlighting that Alcmaeon feels he has missed the opportunity to be a father, not knowing that he still is one, subverting Cresua's earlier assertion that he is not interested in his own children. Without revealing too much, Tisiphone explains that she is a daughter of a king, which prompts a protective outburst from Alcmaeon:

I meant that a father should have more care

Where his children are and what they do.

[635] Teevan (2004)65-66.

What right has he to call himself a king,

If he can't take care of the very thing

That is closest and most precious to him? [636]

He goes on to ask Tisiphone who her father is so that he can remind him of his fatherly duties, unaware of the irony that in part he is talking about himself. When the girl tries to change the subject, Alcmaeon reveals that he has lost two children and he breaks down. While Tisiphone comforts him, he exclaims that the Erinyes are within his head, tormenting him. This scene could be a nod by Teevan to the madness scene that was suggested by the Roman playwright, Ennius (see above pp. 275-6), but rather than Amphilochus being the catalyst as suggested by Webster,[637] the playwright chooses the other child.

In Alcmaeon's madness he is reminded of his mother whom he murdered:

Alcmaeon

Don't look at me like that.

Tisiphone

Like what?

Alcmaeon

Like her! Like her!

The same dark hair, the same blue eyes.

I must be mad when every girl I meet

[636] Teevan (2004) 71.
[637] Webster (1967) 266.

Begins to resemble my own mother. [638]

Again, this is Teevan taking a dark moment and alleviating the tension with humour. If Tisiphone was not his daughter, it would be a very tragic moment involving a man tormented by the image of the mother he murdered, but the audience is fully aware that what he is probably seeing is the familial traits that his daughter—still unknown to him—has genetically received. Tisiphone tries to comfort him by offering to relax him through sex and wine, but instead becomes overcome by the amount of alcohol she has consumed and has to lie down. Still in his madness, Alcmaeon calls out to the Erinyes asking them what they want:

The Gods are amateurs compared to these,
This the punishment for the pollution
Of the patricide and the matricide.
And now they wake again
At the mention of my dead children?
What? Did I kill them too?
All around me dies.
It is the price of my celebrity. [639]

Teevan plays with irony to lighten the mood again by having Alcmaeon questioning whether the young woman's father is being punished in the same way he is himself, again unaware that he is making reference to the same person:

[638] Teevan (2004) 73.
[639] Teevan (2004) 74.

Look at this girl here;

Abandoned, sold into slavery.

Do you torment her father as you do me?[640]

Alcmaeon's outpourings lead into the next choral ode, where the chorus perform as the Erinyes, explaining who they are and how they torment, providing a modern audience some insight into why they have returned to plague Alcmaeon:

We are the Erinyes,

The forgotten of the world

Inside all your hearts

We lie curled and waiting.

We are the memories of grief

You thought were buried,

You thought dead.[641]

The action returns to Alcmaeon, whose fit of madness has now passed. He discovers that Tisiphone has fallen asleep. As he gazes at her, he realizes that he cannot act upon his sexual impulses for some reason, perhaps suggesting that his sense of parental responsibility is innate and unknowingly preventing him:

I can't. I am unable. Something in me shouts stop.

is it over? Is this why the oracle

Had me come home? So I may learn restraint,

Responsibility and self- control

[640] Teevan (2004) 74.
[641] Teevan (2004) 75-76.

In the bed of a Corinthian whore?[642]

Alcmaeon's musings are interrupted by Amphilochus, who jumps out of his hiding place and puts a knife to the stranger's throat; both men are still unaware of each other's identity. As the brother tries to defend his sister's honour, Alcmaeon starts to unravel the truth. Amphilochus explains that they are the twin children of the king and queen and that Creusa has attempted to get rid of them due to her envy of Creon's lust for Tisiphone. On discovering their ages, Alcmaeon starts to search Tisiphone for the necklace and seems relieved not to find what he is looking for. He describes the necklace to Amphilochus, who confirms that Tisiphone should have the piece of jewelry in her possession. This prompts Alcmaeon's recognition of the twins and he reveals himself to Amphilochus.

Here, Teevan incorporated another quote from the surviving fragments (F 84) into the dialogue and has Amphilochus speak these lines:

Your son?
Tell me then, why do people have children, father,
If they won't care for them in adversity?
You were dead to me before,
Why should I not kill you now?[643]

This tense recognition scene between the father and son highlights how easily the outcome could have been very different; Alcmaeon committing incest with his daughter and then being murdered by his son. Amphilochus spares his father's life in order to stop the cyclic nature of the curse and to expose Creusa's deception. The

[642] Teevan (2004) 76.
[643] Teevan (2004) 80.

dramatic intensity of this scene is lightened by Teevan in the concluding line of the exchange between the father and son when a clueless Alcmaeon asks for Amphilochus' name.[644]

In the final scenes of the play, the action returns to the palace where Creusa now has the necklace in her possession and is inquiring about Tisiphone's new occupation. She revels in her success, claiming she has now sought revenge on Manto and Alcmaeon's relationship, and her husband's lustful eye. She prepares herself for Alcmaeon's arrival, believing that she could woo him one last time. Teevan again slips in a version of one of the extant fragments (F79) by having the servant, Isthmias, speak the wise words: 'Excess is inversely proportional to success, Mortals should not dress themselves as Gods.' [645] A blind Alcmaeon arrives on stage, led by a slave who is actually Amphilochus in disguise. Not aware that he is unable to see, Creusa tries to seduce her old partner by wearing the necklace that she has located, but is soon stopped in her tracks when she realizes his blindness. Alcmaeon reveals that he had read the oracle incorrectly and acquiring the necklace was only part of what needed to happen. He describes how the pursuit of the necklace lead him to the bed of a young woman who averted his insatiable lust and instead prompted him to fall into a dreamlike state. There he discovered that his children were still alive and, in fact, the girl lying next to him was his daughter. On awaking he knew the truth. Narrowly he had averted committing incest and on seeing the girl's eyes staring back at him, he fell blind.

Creusa dismisses his story by claiming that he is foolish and should be ashamed to tell such a tale in front of a slave. Another surviving fragment - F85 - is introduced into the dialogue, with Alcmaeon responding:

[644] Teevan (2004) 81.
[645] Teevan (2004) 82.

A slave must share his master's sufferings,

And this slave has borne more suffering than most. [646]

Amphilochus is revealed as the slave, prompting Creusa to realise that the truth has now been unveiled. She pleads for mercy from Alcmaeon, claiming that she did it out of love for him, but when she discovers that Creon now knows the truth, she runs off stage to her room implying that she must run away. Amphilochus pursues her offstage, leaving the chorus to repeat some foreboding lines from the ode they had sung at the temple earlier in the play:

The weft is woven through the warp,

I push the shuttle back and forth,

My life lies stretched upon this loom,

This house of love shall be my tomb. [647]

Creon angrily enters looking for Creusa, but is stopped by Isthmias who reports that the queen has taken her life. Like a messenger from other Euripidean tragedies, the character reports the action that has just taken place off stage but also embellishes it with the story of how Creusa came to have the two children in her possession and how they had only lived because of her intervention. It is reported that she stabbed the pin of her broach into her heart and died in Amphilochus' arms. Isthmias and the chorus exit to attend Creusa's body, leaving Creon, Alcmaeon and Tisiphone alone on stage.

[646] Teevan (2004) 85.
[647] Teevan (2004) 88.

Creon discusses the revelation that Tisiphone is not his daughter and concludes that his feelings for her were natural. Alcmaeon offers Creon to arrange a marriage with Tisiphone but she fiercely objects to this. Creon refuses to take her rejection and calls upon the gods to assist him. After a comic pause for the entrance of a god, Alcmaeon announces that the gods have abandoned them, which prompts the entrance of Hera, claiming that the gods have just got older and if she is late to arrive then it is because she has other things to do. The goddess launches into a monologue which summarizes the play's action and ties up all the loose ends. She tells the blind Alcmaeon to return to his wife, Callirhoe, with the necklace, but foretells his fate in line with Apollodorus' version of Alcmaeon's death. Hera also commands that Creon and Tisiphone should marry to fulfil in some way the oracle's prophecy, which stated she would lie with her father, but this could now be re-interpreted as meaning her '*pseudo*-father'.

Teevan also includes references to the story of another Greek tragedy while telling the future for Tisiphone. Hera claims that Tisiphone's daughter, Glauke, will die at the hand of Medea on her wedding day, alongside Creon – a scene which is reported in Euripides' *Medea*. Amphilochus, although not on stage to hear, is said to found the town of the Amphilochean Argos. Hera concludes her monologue by retelling a story about an ant which highlights the ephemerality of life and civilization:

> Briefly, under the heat of the benevolent sun
> An ant crawled from the crack or hole,
> Where he cowered all winter long.
> And he looked up towards the heavens,
> And, thinking himself blessed, busied himself

Building on earth the shapes he had seen in the sky.
And when he'd done, he looked at what he'd built.
And he thought it most mighty and most marvellous.
And called it a city, and he thought himself a God
For the making of this trifling thing.
And he ruled over it with a rod of iron.
But when the sun's light grew more harsh and slanted,
The wind picked up and unplucked the threads
From which his world was woven,
Till nothing but a few fragments remained,
Snatches of sentences on dusty leaves
Torn from old book rolls…
And he went back down the crack or hole
And curled up, and waited for the sun to shine again.

As shown in the speech above, Teevan brings in the idea of the fragmented and broken into the conclusion of his production to mirror the opening scene, but also to provide the final thought of the production as stated by Hera:

Enjoy the brief light of the sun,
It is all, then the darkness comes.

There are, therefore, some major differences between Teevan's offering and the contents of Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth* according to the extant materials. The progonal probably led its audience to believe that Tisiphone was Alcmaeon's slave prior to the play, but Teevan allows the audience to get to know the young woman

prior to enslavement and she is not brought to Corinth by Alcmaeon, although the playwright nods to this by putting Tisiphone in a situation where she is 'brought' for sexual company. While from some accounts it is implied that Creon was the deceiver in the original production and thus fled when his deception was revealed, however Creusa is the master manipulator within this new version of the story. She tries to hide the past deeds that she has committed by telling more lies and does everything for her own personal gain. She is superficial character who is driven by power and lust. Amphilochus certainly shares this view on the revelation of the truth, by claiming as follows:

> ....who would shelter
> A woman who has sold her son and daughter?
> A woman who has deceived her husband,
> Not only as to who his children were,
> But who she secretly desired and planned
> To lure into her viper's bed? [648]

However, Alcmaeon invokes sympathy for Creusa by implying that if Amphilochus was a little older and wiser he would potentially understand why she did these acts and to have compassion for her. This, alongside the retelling of Creusa's death, is Teevan stating that in these situations moral issues are not all black and white. Sometimes, parents commit out-of-character actions in order to protect their children, and equally children can fail to understand their parents' reasoning.

[648] Teevan (2004) 87.

In her introduction to the play, Hall suggests that the 'trilogy' to which *Alcmaeon in Corinth* belonged was about parenthood and its discontents, for the extant plays feature a father sacrificing his daughter and a mother slaughtering her son; Teevan, howeve, believes that three plays' collective concern could be equally seen as childhood and its discontent with parents.[649] He claimed that each production within the trilogy that featured Alcmaeon used the parent/child relationship to look at the relationship between society and its subjects:

> Interesting what the nature of the trilogy can give you. You can look at things and then turn it on its head. Euripides' was obsessed...well maybe all Greek playwrights...or all theatre is about the family. Even Godot was about family. I think the Greeks saw every relationship as a struggle. The parent and child is a struggle, man and woman is a struggle, the person and the state is a struggle, but maybe it was the clear, linear way that they saw drama. I think in all their representations [Greek tragedy] that it is all about the struggle.[650]

I would agree with this statement. Teevan certainly highlights this within the relationships of the characters in his production.

In my view, Teevan's play is much heavier on detail in regards to its characters' backgrounds, and hosts more complicated actions, than what may have occurred in the original. The play between a number of different locations which rarely would happen in Greek tragedy, and which did not happen in *Alcmaeon in Corinth* as far as we know. It is also evident that Teevan's relationship with ancient

[649] Teevan (2004) 9.
[650] See interview in Appendix D.

Greek literature is complicated. On one level there are clear links to classical drama; the play is still set in an ancient setting and Teevan follows a basic structure familiar from Euripidean tragedy.[651] Whereas many playwrights shy away from the on-stage gods of Athenian theatre, Teevan physically incorporates divinity, as well as referring to religious practices such as divination and prophecy, and also incorporates other fundamental parts of ancient tragic theatre such as the chorus and scenes featuring a messenger. The playwright also makes nods to various Greek tragic plots within his production. These include *Oedipus Rex*, which also featured a blinding scene and the theme of incest. In *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, it is not the act but rather the potential for incest to have occurred that prompts the paternal blindness, and unlike Oedipus's blinding, it does not occur in a violent or graphic manner but in a more mystical way.

Teevan described this scene as staging the trope that when Alcmaeon realises who he really is, he is then struck blind. The character finally sees the truth but then loses the ability to see. Teevan wanted to pay homage to this type of curse by making connections between Oedipus and Alcmaeon:

> The blinding came from something more than just *Oedipus*. They [the family of Alcmaeon] are a part of the house of Oedipus and that the curse that Oedipus had is all linked with future generations.[652]

Teevan's production also draws upon his knowledge of other Greek dramas. There is a whole choral ode where the chorus undertake the role of the Erinyes and sing of their

[651] Choral odes are interspersed by action bookended by a prologue and the appearance of a god to bring the play to its conclusion.

[652] See interview in Appendix D. A fragment survives (F70), that has been allocated to A*lcmaeon in Psophis* by Collard and Cropp (2008a) 85, which outlines the linkage of Alcmaeon's fate to the curse of Oedipus: ὅς Οιδίπουν ἀπώλεσ', Οιδίπους δ' ἐμέ, χρυσοῦν ἐνεγκὼν ὅρμον εἰς Ἄργους πόλιν.…('who destroyed Oedipus, as Oedipus destroyed me, By bringing the golden necklace to the city of Argos.').

persecution of Alcmaeon, no doubt inspired by Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. The audience watches Creon lustfully pine after his supposed daughter which comically echoes Phaedra's desire for her step-son in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. However, the playwright claims that he also drew upon the opening of John Ford's Jacobean tragedy, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (c. 1623). Teevan claims in my interview with him, that writers, like himself, like to argue for what is taboo in society. In order to highlight how Creon is desperate to seek an opportunity where it would be allowed to bed his supposed daughter, the playwright drew upon the scene in Ford's play where the brother, Giovanni, presents arguments to the priest in support of his sexual relationship with his sister Annabella.[653] It is interesting that (although Teevan did not know this), the ultimate source of Ford's story was another lost Euripidean tragedy, *Aeolus*, in which Macareus argued that it was only social convention which prevented him from sleeping with his full sister Canace (fr 19 *TgrF*): the intermediary texts here were Ovid's *Heroides* 11 and an Italian tragedy, *Canace* (1588), by Sperone Speroni.[654]

Another notable reference to ancient Greek tragic plots is Teevan's usage of a messenger to narrate the death of Creusa. This one is similar to the messenger speech in Sophocles' *Trachinian Women.*[655] However, the playwright also drew upon other inspirations to flesh out his recreation of the fragmented. The main choral parts were inspired not by ancient tragedy, but by epigrams in honour of successful prostitutes by Nossis, a female poet from Hellenistic Italy.[656] Teevan was given this material by Hall,

[653] Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* Act1 Scene1.
[654] *Aeolus* was parodied in Aristophanes' *Peace* (114-119), and lost *Aiolosicon* and is referred to in *Clouds* (1371-2). On its reception in the Renaissance via Ovid, see further Hall (2006) 74-5.
[655] Isthmias retells how Creusa has committed suicide in a similar way to the servant who announces the death of Heracles' wife Deianeira in the Sophoclean play (871 - 948).
[656] See Hall's comments in her introduction to the play, Teevan (2004) 12-13.

in the translation of Josephine Balmer,[657] during their discussions of the play and he described how it underpinned not only the chorus but the storytelling:

> …it's very beautiful, it just worked really well - so this idea about desire and the destructiveness of desire which sort of goes against the golden mean. But also the need for desire, that sort of, there's this lovely balance in Greek - the person without desire is equally as corrupted as the one with too much desire.[658]

Another particularly important influence on Teevan's play was Shakespeare. Teevan tried to emulate the Euripidean tragic model of only three main actors portraying all of the individual speaking parts. But, as Teevan acknowledged, it would have been insane for his version to only feature three main actors, since he wrote it for students to practice their acting skills.[659] He therefore took a flexible approach, with a bigger cast of actors, but borrowing from Shakespeare the idea that one actor could play two characters in the case of Tisiphone and her twin brother, Amphilochus.[660] In addition, the tone of his play is similar to that of a Shakespearean tragicomedy, rather than a straightforward tragedy. This is not in itself unEuripidean: especially in his later plays, Euripides often plays with the generic expectations of tragedy and creates scenes which are sometimes undeniably comic in effect. As we have seen, this tone is sometimes evident even in the fragments of the *Alcmaeon* plays.

[657] Included in Balmer (1996).
[658] For interview please see Appendix D.
[659] For interview please see Appendix D.
[660] This features notably in the productions of *King Lear,* where the actor that would have played the Fool could also play Cordelia, and in *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, Theseus and Hippolyta could undertake Oberon and Titania, for the two couples never meet on stage.

One fragment that was included in the list of surviving fragments of the *Alcmaeon* plays by Nauck, but not by Collard and Cropp, was translated by Hall for Teevan (she remembers them discussing and laughing over it). It was consequently picked out by Hall in her introduction to the play as an excellent example of possible hidden comedy within the tragic play.[661]

F68

<A.>μητέρα χατέχταν τὴν ἐμήν, βραχύς λόγος.
<Φ> ἐχὼν ἐχοῦσαν ἢ <οὐ> θέλουσαν οὐχ ἐχών;

Hall translates this as:

<A> killed his mother, to put it in a nutshell.
<?> Was this a consensual act, or were you both reluctant?

This line takes a light-hearted view of the matricide that Alcmaeon has committed. He seems to admit to the deed in the first line, while the unknown respondent replying with a slightly dimwitted answer. The response would not be out of place in a television sitcom today and perhaps it is lines like this that prompted Teevan to make his drama funny. He even states that he is not attempting to make this production in any way 'an academic reconstruction'; his intention was to create 'a good, fun play'.[662]

The playwright's strategy, tone and style were also informed by the other two tragedies with which it was performed. The structure of the three plays played an important part in planninghis *Alcmaeon*. He views the play as light relief between the two other tragedies, while also reflecting some aspects of both plays:

[661] Nauck (1856) 381.
[662] For interview please see Appendix D.

> And I think the tone of that is quite telling, as it's possibly funnier than some of Euripides' tragedies might be. But again we thought of the structure …and that the Alcmaeon comes in the middle, so it's kind of a light relief and a reflection on both…[663]

There is an array of types of humour included in Teevan's interpretation that includes such unconventional venues as a temple that houses a brothel (although he was aware that some ancient temples of Aphrodite, including possibly that at Corinth, employed 'heirodules' or sacred slaves who may in some cults related to eros have offered sexual services). Much humour is extracted from misconstrued or unknown identity. This comically lightens the potentially dark moments within the play. We are of course never going to know how an ancient Athenian audience would have reacted to Teevan's play, but even for a modern audience it could have been quite disturbing to watch a young girl such as Tisiphone forced into prostitution by her supposed mother, only to nearly embark on a sexual relationship with her own biological father. However, Teevan embellishes these moments with comedic flourishes, almost reminiscent of Aristophanes, the Greek comic playwright. It is a very sexually charged play at times and is evocative of the sex war comedy, *Lysistrata* (in fact there is a reference to the infamous 'lioness and the cheese grater' position mentioned in the oath scene near the beginning of *Lysistrata* while Teevan's chorus discuss sexual exploits which Tisiphone might instigate).[664]

In Teevan's tragicomedy interpretation, all the adults on some level are motivated by sex. Creon lusts after his supposed daughter and therefore has to attend the temple in order to be sated for a while. Creusa wants to retain her status by

[663] For interview please see Appendix D.
[664] *Lysistrata* (231-232) and Teevan makes a nod to this during the scene where Tisiphone is being educated in the ways of seduction and sex by the other women in the temple: Teevan (2004)59

preventing any idea of a sexual union between Creon and Tisiphone, as well as dealing with her own lustful feelings for someone other than her husband. Her interactions with Alcmaeon are filled with seductive innuendos; she only offers to assist him in the vain hope that he may repay her in a sexual manner.[665] Alcmaeon tries not to be driven by sex despite his previous reputation; he is intrigued by Tisiphone, however, initially mistaking a fascination born of a familial blood tie for sensual desire.[666] In contrast, the children, Tisiphone and Amphilochus are viewed as sex objects. This mainly affects Tisiphone, who is the object of both her fathers' desire. Amphilochus, although it is not seen on stage, also finds himself desired as if he were a sexual commodity by the high priest of Apollo, but manages to escape the priest's advances, as he describes to the audience.[667] While early in the play, Tisiphone expresses a yearning to be like the other girls in the village and be able to interact with men, neither she nor her brother is particularly motivated to partake in sexual activity at all. Tisiphone, to avoid the prophecy being fulfilled, denies herself any sexual interaction until it is forced upon her. So Teevan has chosen to involve a very sexually charged plot in his *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, one which certainly cannot be sure would have been so prominent in Euripides' original. One could suggest that the playwright is trying to make some kind of point here, but Teevan claims that he does not write drama to send specific 'messages' to his audience but rather to focus on shared emotions and experiences of humanity which would include sexual desire:

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[665] Teevan (2004) 64-65.

[666] A modern audience may be aware of the modern theory of Genetic Sexual Attraction, which suggests that sexual attraction can occur in separated relatives when they first meet as adults and are unaware of the familial connection. It is believed that the individual would be attracted to those who hold similar physical and mental traits. Encounters such as this have been discussed in the public domain with articles written on the subject for *The Guardian* website: Alix Kirsta, 'Genetic sexual attraction' 17 May 2003 http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2003/may/17/weekend7.weekend2 Last accessed 26 April 2015. In regards to fathers, this was the focus of the research conducted by Williams and Finklehor which examined the relationships between fathers and daughters: Williams (1995) 101-13.

[667] Teevan (2004) 67.

> I write drama to discover what I think about the difficult things, the contradictory things, the intractable things; war, love, desire, death and how these things manifest themselves in the world around us.[668]

4. Conclusions

Overall, Teevan has created a new version of the lost play which, just like ancient drama, can be interpreted in a number of ways by different audiences. Teevan reports that two significant re-stagings of his *Alcmaeon in Corinth* (although only one managed to be fully performed in front of an audience) have occurred in recent years. In my interview with the playwright, he discussed how each chose to focus on the play in a different way. In May 2012, Angellier's Actors' Studio based at the University of Lille performed *Alcmaeon in Corinth* in English. According to Teevan, they had a preoccupation with the final speech by Hera that discusses the life of an ant:

> …to them it was all about the ant. They were the ants. They focused on that speech. That is the big speech and what it tells you about the play. It's about civilizations, it's about the Greek civilization itself but it's also about performance and life as an ephemeral performance.[669]

The National Theatre of Macedonia also commissioned a stage version of Teevan's production, but unfortunately, the sponsorship disappeared at the last minute, after Teevan had actually arrived in Skopje in Poranešna Jugoslovenska Republika Makedonija (the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia or FYROM, which

[668] Teevan (2014) 7.
[669] For interview please see Appendix D.

declared itself independent in 1991). The project never came to fruition. It did, however, inspire the playwright's radio play, *Massistonia*, broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in 2011.[670] Teevan was under the impression that the National Theatre of Macedonia had wanted to stage the production because they saw the play in nationalist terms, as somehow representative of their own culture. They wanted an opportunity to reclaim Euripides as their own since as the ancient tragedian had died in Macedon (although whether or not they are justified in seeing the Macedonian haunts of Euripides and other Athenian visitors as equivalent to the territory covered by FYROM is of course a matter of bitter dispute).[671] They also were fixated on the closing speech about ants and the transience of civilization since, they believed, it reflected the development of Macedonia:

> They saw it as the ants and civilization and that civilization waxes and wanes. Crumbles into fragments and there you have a society that is very radical. In England, there is a continuous story of civilization and development, whereas in somewhere like the Balkans you have somewhere which is very fragmented and ruptured and very disputed. There is no single narrative. Maybe the story changes by location rather than context. For some plays, every society has a different take on what happens. That is how a good myth works. Something every society can read themselves into.[672]

[670] The radio play documented the struggle a theatre director and his creative team faced when trying to stage an international touring production of *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. Teevan wrote the play as a loose response to and record of his own experiences of travelling to Macedonia, only to discover that they were unable to stage *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. While the script is not in public circulation, a recording of the radio play had been available at the following website for purchase: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/products/29401 (last accessed 26/11/15).
[671] For interview please see Appendix D.
[672] For interview please see Appendix D.

In conclusion, while what has survived of Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth* cannot be used to produce a reconstruction of the play, Teevan has managed to create a version of Euripides' lost play which can appeal to a modern audience but still gives a strong nod to its ancient roots. By supplementing the sparsr fragments with his own additional material, influenced by his prior knowledge of Euripides and theatre in general, the playwright has given *Alcmaeon* a new lease of life and has offered possible solutions to the problem of what has been lost. The fragmentariness of the play gives the playwright more opportunity to adapt or tinker with the original story, but the relationships and situations that are present in the new creation are often found embedded somewhere deep within the evidence for the original. Most importantly, however, Teevan's work has proved that even a fragmented ancient play can still touch a contemporary audience, for tragic drama deals with the fundamental issues of humanity which transcends time and can speak to ordinary people from any time period or location.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This thesis has so far showcased individual ancient Greek plays with missing parts, and asked how modern playwrights have responded to them in the creation of new plays partially recreating the ancient source play. By looking at all the ancient works under discussion in depth and detail, I hope I have fulfilled my three first objectives: I have made a contribution towards broadening our understanding of the fragmented play, demonstrated in each case the materials to which the modern playwright would have access, and, in some cases, I have offered new interpretations of the surviving evidence. But placing the ancient play next to the contemporary version has allowed me to fulfil my main interpretative goal, which is to contribute also to our understanding of the modern works by questioning the decisions made by the modern playwright and their interaction with the fragmented story.

While I have analysed and discussed the contemporary adaptations in the context of their original ancient plays for the majority of this thesis, I believe, as a collection, these productions offer even more insights. Due to their engagement with the fragment, each piece of theatrical work could be commended as a new and unique approach to classical theatre. The playwrights/directors differ in their intentions, as documented in earlier chapters, with many claiming that they have not created their fresh versions of the fragmented play with any particular message or aim in mind, however, it is clear when analysed together, that these plays do hold a number of shared ideas, and certainly point to an overarching thought: they all seek to revise the classical canon. As stated in my introduction, these plays have been consciously or

subconsciously influenced by the time period they were written in: the 1980s and beyond. The playwrights/directors are working in a post-modern era that has been shaped by the shifts in cultural attitudes on a myriad of topics, as well as within the field of classical study. These productions contribute to this cultural trend by attempting to push the boundaries further. Collectively, this group of artists have questioned what is the 'normal', breaking away from the classical canon of theatre. The revolution of attitudes within society, and academic world of classics and classical theatre, has prompted the playwrights/directors mentioned in this thesis to search for alternatives, thus encouraging the rise of interest within ancient Greek fragmentary theatre. They have been drawn to these fragmens in order to subvert the classical and cultural milieu, creating their own new approach to classics. No longer do they want to pursue the ancient playwrights as they have been known for hundreds of years, but instead view them with a new lens, providing an alternative version that engages their lost works with the contemporary world. They see the fragment as an object of infinite possibility for exploring a number of themes.

By way of conclusion, I want to collectively compare the results of my enquiries into the individual modern works and their source fragmens. By this means I hope to highlight the common features that they share and what enrichment they can together, as a distinct body of dramatic pieces, bestow on Classical Performance Reception and indeed of the whole tradition of ancient drama in performance from antiquity to the present day. In the course of the comparative analysis, I will also draw conclusions on what motivates modern playwrights to engage with the texts. The discussion first addresses the approaches to the fragments taken by the modern playwrights in their creative approaches and dramaturgical strategies, and then the themes which seem to have attracted all of them, before closing with some final

observations on our continuing fascination with the fragment and on evidence that more plays inspired by ancient Greek theatrical *apospasmata* are continuing, and will continue, to be written.

Approaches

From looking at the contemporary productions that I have investigated in this thesis, I have noticed that playwrights take three distinct approaches to dealing with a fragmented production and developing a recreation:

1. Embellishment

This is an approach that has been taken by playwrights when there is a substantial amount of material on which to base the production. Usually there are a number of surviving fragments that, alongside detailed accounts of the story recorded in ancient sources, can provide some dialogue and a fairly coherent scene structure. In order to develop a fluid production the playwright may feel the need to simply to embellish lines so that they are complete, and, where there are gaps in scenes to insert dialogue that would be in keeping with the production and the style of the ancient playwright. This is seen in Tasos Roussos' version of *Hypsipyle*, where he has utilised the extant papyri fragments of dialogue as the main body of his production but has inserted scenes and additional lines in order to complete the production and make the action flow. As discussed in the chapter on *Hypsipyle* earlier in this thesis, it would appear that Roussos also drew inspiration with regards to the story both from the mythographers and the work of classical scholars to create a complete version.

2. Self-Conscious Attention to Fragmentary Status

Some of the contemporary productions examined in this dissertation have made explicit references to the fragmentary nature of the ancient play, but two playwrights in particular have not only mentioned the disjointed state of the extant material but have significantly and resoundingly highlighted it within their stagings. This occurs mainly when dealing with papyrus finds where large and fairly complete scenes have been discovered and made available. The playwright decides to address the problem of reconstruction overtly and builds it into the production. This was notably used by Harrison and Wiles, whose plays revel in the fragmentariness of the underlying texts in a profoundly metatheatrical manner. Their characters can step in and out of the action, speak lines from both within the papyrus text and outside it, commenting on what they are witnessing. This strategy allows their productions to retain a sense of incompleteness.

Fragments remain fragments, or morph into an action with a different chronological and topographical setting, rather than assimilating additional material set in the mythical time of Greek tragedy, based on ancient accounts, to make the work coherent. *The Trackers of Oxyrhychus*, the first and greatest of all the plays I have discussed, was fundamentally transformed into a performable production by Harrison by adding in the archaeological scene when the papyrus was discovered early in the 20th century at the beginning, and the complex scenes featuring the satyrs, Silenus, the story of Marsyas and then contemporary reality either in Greece or London after the main body of surviving dialogue. The fragmented state of the play is discussed in both

new episodes. The papyrus is physically represented on stage (the satyrs famously leapt through it for their *parodos*), the audience are encouraged to read words on it aloud, and during the National Theatre production they tore it into shreds to use as bedding and even toilet paper.[673]

Wiles, who was deeply influenced by *Trackers*, employed this idea when he undertook a production involving the fragments of Euripides' *Hypsipyle*. As discussed earlier in this thesis, instead of trying to fill in the gaps to make the play seem coherent, he opted for drawing attention to how fragmented and severed the extant material is. Quite often, within his production, there were moments where lines were left incomplete and acknowledgement by the characters that the embedded play could not continue due to lack of continuous dialogue. In both Harrison's and Wiles' plays, therefore, the fragmented status of the ancient text was celebrated in a manner that reminds us of the physical state of the lost play, but also so handled that it drew attention to the question of in what 'completeness' or incompleteness, in any theatrical performance, actually consists. Teevan also drew metatextual and metathreatical attention to the fragment issue in the opening scene of his *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, by having the character of Hera sift through fragments on stage and reading snippets aloud, but once the main action on the human level began, the self-consciousness about the fragmentation disappeared. Overall, his version would fit into the next category.

3. <u>New creations</u>

The final style of recreation that I have identified in my research occurs when the playwright has very little to work from the original play and therefore decides to create

[673] See Hall (2007*a*) 111-37.

almost from scratch a wholly new production with the fragments as inspiration. I believe this has been utilised the most in the productions featured in this thesis, in particular, by those engaging with Sophocles' *Tereus*, Aeschylus' *Danaid* tetralogy and Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. The playwrights working with Sophocles' *Tereus*, Wertenbaker and Laurens, had a number of fragments available to them that would have been able to guide them, but not a significant enough yield that could provide much substantial dialogue or even dramatic context for the lost play. Laurens even acknowledged that completing the play constituted far more than just an exercise in filling in the missing gaps. Additional material, such as the narration of the tale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and accounts from the mythographers, was essential to both women developing new plays inspired by Sophocles' *Tereus*. Similarly, neither Purcărete nor Mee had much ancient evidence to play with when attempting to stage a version of the whole group of plays by Aeschylus on the Danaid theme. The surviving play from the tetralogy, *The Suppliants*, could assist the playwrights to an extent but there was not hardly any surviving evidence from the rest of the tetralogy to build upon and therefore they had to rely upon other ancient accounts to inspire their original and creative responses to the story. Teevan also took this approach when dealing with *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, although he did deliberately include a number of extant fragments in homage to the original play. Despite this, Edith Hall is correct in describing his play as 'wholly original'.[674]

To conclude this sub-section, I would like to make some comments on the 'academic' component in contemporary plays based to ancient dramatic fragments. The academic componenets fall into three categories. Some playwrights took an approach involving serious and substantial academic research, while some were not

[674] Introduction to Teevan (2004) 9.

overly concerned with philological minutiae and much more focussed on creating good modern theatre. The third group attempted to combine the two. Wiles is our main example of a dramatist who took the academic route. He makes it very clear in his introduction to the script and within the play itself that there is an experimental element to his version of *Hypsipyle*.[675] But the attempt to achieve some kind of 'authenticity' arguably contributed to a rather stagnant and clinical effect.[676] The desire to the keep the 'true' voice of the ancient play alive, whilst being commendable, means that the production lacks performability and becomes an exercise in reconstruction.

It is through the eyes of the second group of playwrights, who are inspired by the extant material, that we can hope to see the plays 'live' again. Mee, Purcărete, Roussos, Laurens and Wertenbaker allow more scope for story development in their versions and do not obsess over the minor details of what would have occurred in the original. They are not bound by the question of what piece of dialogue belongs to which character and make their own decisions on whether to agree with academic consensus in regards to what action occurred. If it does not work dramatically, they are happy to disregard scholarly controversies altogether. Most of these plays are seeing numerous revivals because they are entertaining and performable, even if their staging conventions depart widely from those of ancient Greek drama in their original performance contexts. I feel, however, that by making great theatre they are fundamentally being true to the spirit of the ancient playwrights, who were creative artists rather than scholars.

[675] Wiles (2005) 189 -190.
[676] On the vexed question of 'authenticity' in modern stagings of ancient theatre works, see the discussion of Gamel (2010).

The final group of playwrights are those who combine the academic research with their own ideas on the plot. Harrison and Teevan pay homage to the lost play by overtly including as much fragmentary material as they think is feasible and engage with academic discussion surrounding the work. However, they do not seek to just display the extant material but incorporate their own ideas and produce original material alongside the ancient. By allowing the material to breathe within a new theatrical frame, their works may be further away from what would have occurred on the Athenian stage but allow the voice of the play to continue to live on.

Themes

1. Family

Colin Teevan was fairly accurate when he stated that all Greek drama was about the family.[677] With the exception of Harrison's *Trackers*, where the satyr family was less a domestic unit than representative of the 'brotherhood of man', or rather the 'brotherhood' of the oppressed and working-class throughout history, each of the other new plays in this thesis, which were responses to tragedies rather than satyr plays, have had the family and in particular marital couples and children at their core. This reaffirms our previous understanding that familial relationships were a recurring theme within Athenian tragedy. The knowledge we have gained from the complete plays that have survived—even the early and unusual 'history play' *Persians*—shows that, in tragedy, struggles within families were paramount. The reconstructed plays that have been considered in this thesis reinforce certain views we already hold on typical plot patterns in tragedy, but also introduce us to a couple of scenarios which we might not otherwise have realised were acceptable on the ancient stage.

[677] For interview please see Appendix D.

In the case of the 'rescue' plot of *Hypsipyle* and the 'happy ending' of *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, we do have a good deal of precedent in Euripides' lighter-hearted extant works, especially *Andromache* (which features a captive slave woman in trouble with her mistress), *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*.[678] Both Euripides' fragmentary plays discussed here, *Hypsipyle* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, deal with the discovery of separated parents and children. In *Hypsipyle*, it is a mother separated from her sons and forced into slavery, but reunited with her children after a series of intense events leading to a recognition scene. This scenario is inverted in *Alcmaeon in Corinth* where it is the father who is unintentionally reunited with his children. The failure to recognise one's own child is a trope that is played out in both productions. The two parents in their respective plays come into contact with their lost children unaware of their true identities but, while they are unable to identify their familial link, I believe that Euripides would have made it clear to the audience that the bond between parent and child would still be prevalent so that a subconscious recognition would take place between the characters. In *Hypsipyle*, the extant fragments tell us that the mother takes a maternal stance with the young men on their initial meeting. It is a comical engagement as she does not realise that when she praises them and their mother, she is talking about herself.

This may have also occurred in *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, although we cannot be fully sure due to the lack of evidence and what survives often has little context. As I outlined in the chapter on the play, a number of surviving fragments could have been said by Alcmaeon to Amphilochus without either man realising that they were related. But, as we have seen, it is plausible that Alcmaeon only just avoided committing incest with his daughter, especially if we accept Krappe's hypothesis about the

[678] As discussed in Trenkner (1958), Wright (2002), Hall (2013).

relationship between the Euripidean Alcmaeon and the hero of *Apollonius, Prince of Tyre*. This would be unparalleled in any tragedy currently extant. While there may not be substantial evidence to support the view, in the contemporary adaptation, Teevan brings this to the fore by inserting comments that suggest that Alcmaeon is able to see a family resemblance in the girl and has the character announce that Tisiphone looks like his deceased mother.[679]

The family is just as central to the fragmented tragedies by Aeschylus and Sophocles that I have featured in this thesis. The surviving evidence for Aeschylus' *Danaids* tetralogy places emphasis upon the relationship between a father and his daughters. It is thought that the women would have been loyal to their father and without question would carry out the horrific actions he commanded. The idea that one should be so devoted to their father and immediate family seems to be a prevalent theme which was questioned in the lost parts of trilogy and is addressed in Purcărete's adaptation in a way which makes Hypermnestra's disobedience more dramatic. The father-daughter relationship is abandoned in Mee's version. He instead chooses to focus on the bond between sisters (as of course Aeschylus may have done in the lost plays). The allegiance to sisterhood is further stressed in *Big Love* by eliminating the role of the father, although, as suggested in my discussion, the role of the patriarch is partially absorbed by one of the sisters.[680]

The interest in devotion between female siblings was clearly also a feature of Sophocles' *Tereus*. Indeed, the revenge killing of Procne's son and her hostility to Tereus must have implied that the connection between sisters could prevail over women's loyalty to either husbands or children. The contemporary adaptations continue to stress this familial bond, with Wertenbaker and Laurens creating new

[679] See *Alcmaeon in Corinth* chapter, pp. 315-317.
[680] See Danaid chapter, pp. 192-193.

scenes in which the audience can see how connected the women are. Both new plays also refer to the wrong-doing that Tereus has committed against Procne and Philomela's father by treating his kin in such a humiliating and painful way, but this crime is downplayed in comparison with the devastating impact that Tereus' behaviour has had on the sisters. It is interesting that warm bonds of sisterhood appears in two of the ancient texts I have examined, for it is not a theme which appears often in extant tragedy, where sisters, indeed, often bicker (Antigone and Ismene; Electra and Chrysothemis). Our extant plays portray the brother-sister bond as a much stronger affective tie, perhaps reflecting the patriarchal tastes of the men who were responsible for creating and copying out the tragic canon.

2. Violence

The ancient plays discussed in this thesis often connect the theme of family with the motif of savage violence, just as we would expect from exant tragedies such as those of the *Oresteia*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Hippolytus*. The type of violence can range from the murder of a kinsman to the suicide of a character. In the plays discussed within this thesis, it is most notable in the fragmented tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, with both *Danaids* and *Tereus* featuring highly graphic murders. While we have no substantial fragments that prove that the *Danaid* trilogy was particularly violent, the plot outlines that have been provided by various ancient accounts imply that, at some point during the action, mass murder would take place. In what I consider the final play within the trilogy,[681] it is supposed that the young women, minus one who is unable to, would murder their husbands on their wedding night on the instructions of their father. While we are unsure of how this act would have been reported in the

[681] See chapter 4 on *The Danaids* for details on the trilogy order and play outlines.

ancient play, I would assume that the horrific scene would have been described by a character who narrated all the gory details of how the men met their violent ends. In my view, violence is embedded in the ancient *Danaids* production, and this is recognised by the contemporary playwrights who chose the play as inspiration. Both Purcărete and Mee host this violent scene on stage, rather than providing a graphic narration. They both stress the family connection to enforce the visual horror of the violence.

In both Purcărete's *Les Danaïdes* and Mee's *Big Love*, the audience witness how a common bond between sisters can exacerbate a desire for revenge and individuals' willingness to participate in murder. In Purcărete's play, the women move as one, and prepare to commit murder 'in sync' with each other, afterwards stepping back to admire their violent work. More violence at the hand of the women is threatened, but not acted upon, when they discover that Hypermnestra, their sister, has not joined in the crime; her sisters' violent reaction signifies the importance that the women place on the concept of sisterhood and family honour.

Mee's production goes further to expose the sisters' savagery by suggesting that the murder almost develops into a torture scene for their husbands. Each couple stylistically enacts different torture methods, such as having a bed of nails being pushed into one groom's chest, before committing the savage murders with kitchen knives. Mee also plays up the sisters' sense of unity and the need to punish the sibling who refused to participate. While Purcărete's women are collectively menacing in attempting to punish their non-murderous sister, Mee has one woman, Thyona, aggressively vocalise her anger at the betrayal of the sisterhood and choosing the love of a man over her fellow siblings.[682] From both contemporary productions of

[682] See Mee's script: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml

Suppliants and remnants of the tetralogy, the impression is given that these women view sisterhood as a bond that should be respected and one which overrides any other relationship, apart from their bond with their father, of course.

These are the only Athenian tragedies, as far as we know, to feature sisters who jointly conspire and commit murder. However, I believe that there is a common thread that runs through both the fragmented plays of the *Danaids* and *Tereus*, which potentially motivates the violent acts that take place. In each ancient play and their contemporary realisations, there is a character - or characters - who display an overwhelming sense of desperation, passionately looking for a way out of their predicament. In *Tereus*, this occurs in all the lead characters. Tereus needs to keep his secret involving the rape of Philomela and therefore out of fear performs the gruesome violent act of cutting out the young woman's tongue. This deed goes on to ignite a sense of desperation within Philomela to communicate her plight, through the alternative vocalising device of the tapestry (or in the case of Wertenbaker's production, through the usage of dolls) and find salvation with her sister. On discovering the extent of her husband's deception and the lengths he has gone to in order to keep it hidden, Procne develops an overwhelming desperation for justice, which manifests in an anger that encourages her not to think twice about taking the life of her son as Tereus' punishment for his treachery. The women's desperation is heightened by the isolation that they face. They are in a foreign land with no male relative around to assist in obtaining retribution, thus prompting them to perform the violent acts. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, the Danaids had their father with them, although he was unable to protect his daughters in the foreign land they find themselves in and against the force of Aegyptus' sons. It is due to the desperate need to avoid marriage to their cousins, that they believe the only way to avoid the ordeal is

by committing a violent crime. Mee places emphasis on this in his adaptation by having the girls claim it is the only way to escape on a number of occasions. In fact, Mee's Danaids see violence as the only answer: Thyona even threatens early on in the play that in the absence of any help, they will commit violence against themselves and stage a mass hanging.[683]

The theme of desperation and violence can also be seen to a lesser extent in the fragmented Euripidean plays analysed in this thesis. Mastronarde claimed that 'tragic women who seek violent revenge are often acting directly because they have no male kin surviving or present to act upon their behalf of their family'.[684] This can be seen in Eurydice's aggressive outbursts in *Hypsipyle*. From the fragmentary material, we can see that she threatens Hypsipyle after the accidental death of her son, in lieu of having her husband present. In her grief she sees no rational explanation and is desperate to get vengeance for the loss of her child. Perhaps she would have committed some violent act if she was not stopped by the arrival of Amphiarius. Roussos certainly heightens this violent and desperate atmosphere by having Hypispyle tied up and restrained.[685] He also adds a scene towards the end of the play which showcases Eurydice's husband returning and flying into a violent range against the captive woman, convinced that she should die for her supposed negligence.[686]

We do not know enough about Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth* to speculate on the prominence of despair, but if my hypothesis about the plot is correct, Creon would have been desperate to keep his secret concerning the real paternity of his son. This would drive him irrationally to violently threaten the life of Alcmaeon. But Teevan

[683] See Mee's script: http://www.charlesmee.org/big-love.shtml
[684] Mastronarde (2010) 258-259.
[685] Roussos (2009) 39-40.
[686] Roussos (2009) 68-71.

chooses to give the despairing role to Creusa because he wants to compose a female suicide messenger speech.

In a rather surprising move, the incomplete satyr-play, *Ichnetuae*, develops from what an ancient audience would expect to be a comical production into something more like a violent tragedy. From what we can ascertain from the papyrus evidence, there is no indication that there was any violence in the play other than boisterous satyr carousing and perhaps knockabout or slapstick. However, Harrison incorporates a sense of violence to highlight the plight of the play text across time, which is in turn symbolic of the plight of the oppressed throughout history and the violence done to them by the rich and powerful. The playwright takes the bacchanal satyrs and, in his final scenes, develops them into a group of disillusioned outsiders. The speech on Marsyas warns them to not hold any aspirations above their station, and describes the kind of persecution and agony to which they will become subject if they disobey. In the Delphi production, the satyrs then descended into football rioting, and in London they began to abuse one of their own, Silenus, physically and verbally. Their desperation incites aggressive behaviour and their footwear—which used to be clogs performing joyous dances—turns into violent weapons with which they can commit Grievous Bodily Harm.[687] While no character within the production suffers the violence of death, apart from Marsyas in the retelling of his flaying, Harrison retains an air of violence within his final scenes to highlight some of the contemporary issues with which his play engages.

[687] Harrison (1991) 143.

3. Contemporary Socio-political Issues

Harrison's version of Sophocles' *Ichneutae* demonstrated how easily Greek drama can be manipulated to discuss issues that are of importance to the playwright or adapter. A number of themes were drawn out in the contemporary realisations of the fragmented plays researched for this thesis. These new productions became platforms for discussion. *The Trackers of Oxyrhychus* not only gave Harrison the opportunity to bring the fragmented play to life, but also to comment overtly on 1980s class culture. The final section of his play, which is made up of completely new material, sees the satyrs find themselves in an alien world, 1980s Britain. No longer can they reside in the fragmented play as it is indecipherable. Silenus guides the audience through this new space explaining why the satyrs have now embraced a sense of disillusionment and have become representative of the 1980s Everyman; frustrated with their social position. Harrison reflects the idea that it is those who possess a higher social standing than the Everyman who decide what is of cultural value for themselves and the rest of society within his character of Apollo, who refuses the satyrs access to the lyre and social mobility. I also believe that Harrison was attempting to show that a large divide between what is deemed as high and low culture exists and that there was no place for the ancient satyrs, with their low-brow humour, in 20th-Century Britain. The playwright wanted to ensure the survival of this art form. He also employed other devices to bring attention to the social issues that Thatcherite Britain seemed to be avoiding, by drawing comparisons between the satyrs and the Southbank homeless, indicating that both groups had been forgotten about.

Mee also incorporated thoughts on contemporary society and culture into his interpretation of a fragmented play. He is the only playwright amongst those studied in this thesis who positions his whole 'fragmented Greek play' production within a

contemporary setting and includes a plethora of contemporary references to which the audience could instantly relate. In my view, Mee includes the character of Olympia, one of the Danaids, to reflect the vacuity of modern society. She seems highly influenced by consumerism, desiring specific brands of creature comforts, rather than taking any interest in the events that are unfolding around her. In fact, a number of Mee's main characters in *Big Love* are representative of various stereotypes within modern society: the arrogant male with an overwhelming sense of entitlement, the angry feminist and the aggressive, gormless follower. It is through these characters that Mee poses and explores a number of questions about society. Fundamentally, the playwright is asking his predominately American audience whether one should get involved with the issues of others and what defines justice, thoughts that may have been at the forefront of the intended audiences' minds when the production premiered in 2000. Purcărete' version of the *Danaids* also posed questions about assisting others, drawing upon immigration issues that were occurring in France in the mid-1990s. These references were not as overt as Harrison's or Mee's, but could be seen subtly in the costume design, which evoked Bosnian refugees. [688]

The two playwrights who were inspired by Sophocles' *Tereus* drew upon similar themes in their productions, despite a gap of twelve years between their compositions. The idea of survival was at the fore, but not just in the roles of the two leading female characters. Just as Harrison was preoccupied with helping the satyr drama as a genre survive, so Wertenbaker wanted to draw attention, if less overtly, to the theme of the loss of cultural identity and ancestral language. She explored what occurs when the marginalised lose their voice, which can prompt violence to erupt within society. By exploring this nexus of ideas within the context of the *Tereus* play,

[688] For more on this discussion see Danaid chapter, pp.192-193.

she made the point that we should strive to assist in the survival of people's identities and give a voice to those who are not heard in society. Laurens attempted a more overt way of displaying this need for language to survive in her adaptation, *The Three Birds*, by incorporating languages that were declining in usage into her dialogue.[689]

In the case of the Euripidean fragmented plays, my view is that Roussos and Wiles did not aim to highlight contemporary themes within their adaptations, although Wiles was keen to point out that the play can change meaning for a modern audience depending on the performance style in which it is performed.[690] Some people have, however, seen in Teevan's version of *Alcmaeon in Corinth* an engagement with the theme of civilisation, especially in France and FYROM, despite his insistence that he just likes to investigate universal themes with no specific message in mind.[691]

Forever Fragmented

Fragmentary ancient plays can in one sense never be completed, any more than any live theatre performance can ever be repeated in an absolutely identical manner. Theatre is ephemeral: to think about fragments of texts written for performances centuries ago is in one sense no different from thinking about whole plays written for performance centuries ago: this is the transitory nature of theatre and indeed of the wider study of the past. What happened long ago, inside or outside theatres, can be documented via physical and textual evidence, but once the moment of an event or play has passed, all information relating to it becomes by definition incomplete. Even the information which we do possess pertaining to ancient theatrical performances, and even the surviving texts, may have been tampered with on a larger scale than we

[689] It is interesting to note that Harrison also does this in *The Trackers of Oxyrhynch*us with Ancient Greek. Occasionally Silenus slips into ancient Greek but becomes aware that no one understands what he is saying.
[690] Wiles (2005) 190.
[691] See interview with Teevan in Appendix D.

like to admit during the whole process of transmission, as Taplin reminds us.[692] Just like a tattered papyrus, our knowledge of Greek theatre production is full of holes and parts that we just cannot comprehend. The text is a merely a small part of the play as a whole, which is a *Gesamtkunstwerk.* We rarely know much, even when we have a text, about the aesthetics of the original performance, since it was the actors and chorusmen who brought the play to life. If we think about extant tragedies in this way, the procedures involved in staging fragmentary plays look less radically hypothetical and more similar to 'regular' modern productions of ancient drama.

The popularity of fragmented plays and their involvement in contemporary theatre continue to grow. Wertenbaker's *Love of the Nightingale* has been undertaken by a number of production companies including stagings at the Oxford Playhouse (2009) and Putney Arts Centre (2010). It has even inspired an opera, with music by Richard Mills, which premiered at Sydney Opera House in 2011. Laurens' *The Three Birds* has seen a number of revivals since it was first staged, and most recently at Ryerson University, Canada in 2008. As discussed in the chapter on *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, Teevan's play was restaged in France.

The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus has been revived more than once; it was staged at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds in 1998 and by Omniprop Productions in Melbourne, Australia during August 2009, twenty years after it made its debut at Delphi. It is also performed by university students, for example by the Classics Department at Durham in the late 1990s. *Les Danaides*, on the other hand, although undertaking an extensive original tour, has not seen a revival in recent years, potentially due to the obscurity of the script and epic staging that would be needed. Wiles' production of *Hypsipyle* was clearly designed as a one-off, and focussed on the

[692] Taplin (1977) 229.

idea that the production is an event that can not be exactly replicated, just like the fragmented play.

Interestingly, since I embarked on my research, a new project has been announced which will see the academic sphere collaborate with the world of modern theatre to investigate the idea of fragmentation in the modern world. The theatre company Potential Difference and Dr Laura Swift, Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University, will collaborate to produce a piece of theatre inspired by the lost fragments, and will investigate themes such as memory, communication and how people today relate to the past. Their current work seems to focus on the fragmented plays of Euripides, but if the interest in this field grows, perhaps we will be able to celebrate all the fragmented plays of the ancient playwrights.

As scholars interested in ancient Greek drama, we should perhaps look more intently at both these fragments and their modern recreations to broaden our minds about what may have occurred on the Athenian stage. While these fragmented plays do not give a well-rounded view of what may have taken place in their performance, what they do give us are additional voices from the ancient world and thus they enlarge the evidence for this academic field. In regards to the modern productions, all theatre is a transient state and will ultimately always be fragmented. By embellishing and staging these broken plays, we can discover new themes and ideas that were once hidden within the writing. In classical scholarship there will always be pitfalls when dealing with fragmentary materials, as Garvie acknowledges in his discussion of *Danaids*. He states that scholarly discussion on the lost play will always include uncertainties and potential possibilities as it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to

draw definite conclusions. ‘All theories on such extant materials could be very well made redundant but a single papyrus find’.[693]

This can equally apply to Greek drama as a whole. The allure of the fragment for scholars is that we see these incomplete pieces as providing us with a truly significant and potentially game-changing utterance, delivered in the voice of someone from speaking in the theatre of Dionysus in the classical period. I hope that my thesis has proved that these utterances have undoubtedly enriched not only our experience as theatregoers ever since Harrison’s *Trackers*, but also our understanding of the classical Greek theatre and of the wider ancient thought-world.

[693] Garvie (2006) 233.

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Appendix A

Interview transcript with Joanna Laurens, *The Three Birds* playwright.

Conducted via email on 6 April 2014.

Charlotte Parkyn (CP): Could you tell me a little about your background and what your engagement with the classical world is like? For example: did you study it at school or were you interested in the myths and stories?

Joanna Laurens (JL): I have no classical background and no previous engagement with the classical world. I did not study it at school, and was not particularly interested in the myths or stories previously. I have no knowledge of Ancient Greek or Latin.

CP: How did you come into contact with the story of Tereus?

JL: I saw Tim Supple's production in Stratford of 'Tales from Ovid', which was obviously all the tales and not just the Tereus myth. But the Tereus bit caught my eye and I thought to myself that it could be a whole play, in itself. I did a bit of research and found out that it once had been a complete stand-alone play.

CP: When you started to write The Three Birds, were you aware of Timberlake Wertenbaker's Love of the Nightingale? Had you read/seen it? Or any other versions of the story?

JL: No, I knew nothing of Timberlake Wertenbaker's play - and still haven't read it or seen it, actually. No other versions of the story.

CP: Did you have any other influences apart from Ovid? Did you look at other tragedies for inspiration? Did you ask or receive any academic input in creating your play?

JL: Writers always have more influences than they are consciously aware of. I didn't look at other tragedies, no. I didn't receive any academic input - since academics are not necessarily also good writers! The only external input I had, was when I approached a few academics to ask them to translate the few lines I needed into other languages. The play was written in 6weeks, 3weeks in Belfast at the end of term time when I was doing my undergrad degree, whilst also writing essays, and 3weeks in Jersey (where I'm from) where I was on Easter break.

CP: What did you find interesting about the Tereus' myth? Where there themes that stood out for you that you wanted to explore?

JL: I thought the idea of eating someone you love and not knowing you have eaten them was especially striking! The difference between a star-struck pining lover, and a rapist, could be mostly whether the man can contain his desire and accept disappointment. And of course the idea of minority voices being silenced and not being heard.

CP: What was the process for creating your version of the ancient play?

JL: I just sat down and started to write. I actually began writing at Act 1, Scene 1 - which you'll see is more naturalistic in the language, than some other parts of the play. I went back and wrote the Prologue later. I thought to myself that the language was probably silly and no one would like it, but that I shouldn't censor myself but should just write it all and then think about things like that. The play came out in the order it came out in, and didn't require major editing. I did work with a great dramaturg - Katherine Mendelsohn - who was the resident dramaturg at the Gate, where the play was first produced. I really valued that experience and

think dramaturgs should be part of the process always! I worked with her on all my subsequent plays too, as a result.

CP: I've noticed that you have included at least one of the surviving fragments in The Three Birds ('Sun, greatest glory of the horse-loving Thracians' - at the end of the play). Why? Did you consider using any others?

JL: As a nod to, and acknowledgement of, the previous play. I did consider using other fragments, but the language was not the same as the language that I was using, and they would have stood out too much. I was able to get that one in though. I had been originally hoping there would be more fragments, and writing the play would be more like creatively 'joining the dots' between the existing fragments - when I realised there were so few, so partial, and no one knew in what order they came, I realised I was going to have to put that idea aside.

CP: A lot of modern interpretations of this myth tend to focus on the plight of the girls rather than the love confusion that Tereus suffers with? Could you explain your thoughts behind this?

JL: I think the best account I have for why I focussed on Tereus as a frustrated lover is really in the Introduction I wrote for the text itself. No one can empathise with a rapist. We can all empathise with a frustrated lover. To empathise with him and want him to 'get the girl', we then become complicit when he does 'get the girl' - in a forceful way. Our feelings about him - and us - are then more complex.

CP: Who do you think has the most interesting relationship in the play?

JL: No idea - not sure my opinion on that is any more interesting than anyone else's!

CP: What is your favourite scene in the play and why?

JL: I don't think I have a favourite scene, there are too many I like, and they are all dependent on each other.

CP: You used a number of different languages in your play, some of which are identifiable and others that you have created yourself (for example the language that Procne and Philomela use). Could you explain a little why you employed these?

JL: Again, this is explained in the Introduction to the text - regarding minority voices being silenced. Many languages are dying out these days... obliterated by English.

CP: The play like most Greek tragedies deals with a lot of violent subject matter, but most of the acts are performed off-stage. From the stage directions, you opted for the violent acts to take place in front of the audience. Could you discuss this choice for me?

JL: I find a lot of classical theatre to be extremely tedious in the long accounts of things which have happened off stage. It's not very dramatic and doesn't make for good theatre, I think! It probably originated in the idea of poetry being an oral account of something - and theatre originally being spoken poetry - the idea of 'acting', as we know it today, wasn't fully fledged initially.

CP: Why do you think Greek tragedy is still performed today?

JL: Hopefully the themes and issues of Greek tragedy are still relevant to us today, because they concern what it is to be human and the basic human emotions which we all have a lived experience of.

CP: What message or thoughts did you want your audience to walk away with after seeing the play?

JL: I just wanted to move them; I didn't want to leave people with any specific message or thoughts.

Appendix B

Interview transcript with Silviu Purcărete, *Les Danaïdes* playwright/ director

Conducted via telephone on 14 May 2014

Charlotte Parkyn (CP): You have done a number of productions involving Greek Theatre. Why do you like Greek Theatre?

Silviu Purcărete (SP): Why do you work on this thing? It is because it is very alive and it is very important for today's humanity. So it is its nature that interests scholars and artists. So for me, it is one of the most interesting dramatic literature, the Greek tragedy and Greek theatre in general.

CP: And how did you find the Danaids tragedies?

SP: Do you know it actually doesn't exist? It doesn't exist. It was only one play. One of the seven plays that has been found of Aeschylus. It was the *Supplicants*. And it looks like, I mean there are documents that say, this tragedy was part of a tetralogy. So a whole day performance text. It was, as it often happens in Greek theatre, three tragedies which have the same subject in fact and then a comedy, a satiric drama at the end. So all that was for a tetralogy. So it was like a play, like a game – like a child's game – to try to invent that tetralogy on stage. So this was my purpose. It was not scientific, of course, because it is not possible because it was like a joke.

CP: A puzzle?

SP: Yes, it was just a theatrical invention. I tried to imagine how could that be all the story.

CP: We have two fragments of dialogue for the final play. Did you look at those?

SP: I don't remember very well, but I think, yes, indeed, that besides the Supplicants, there were some notes somewhere about the subjects of the lost plays. I mean, even though the plays were lost, there were some memories about the content of it…some on the subject were known. So I tried to invent the plot and because I needed phrases and words I decided again to use phrases, sentences from the other plays of Aeschylus. So all the words actually belong to Aeschylus. But I made some kind of play, like a puzzle. You see, I took one sentence from this play and another half a sentence from another play. You see? I just made a puzzle.

CP: That is fascinating. I did not know that.

SP: Absolutely, because there is none left of the text of these tragedies. If I remember, there is one sentence or one verse that belonged, or they say belonged to one of these plays. But for the rest, there is nothing. So all the text, all the lines are made from the other plays of Aeschylus.

CP: You chose a woman to play Danaus. Did you write for her in mind? Or did you want a woman to play the character?

SP: Well, I thought this was an androgynous character. It was not only a woman because she had also a barb.[694] I now see that it is quite in fashion.[695] Yes, I don't remember what was the reason when I did that…I don't remember why…what the original of this decision but I just wanted Danaus to be androgynous character because he is also the father and the mother of the girls.

CP: Yes, he plays both roles. Do you think he was manipulative? He made the girls do things?

SP: The play, the story, says somehow, yes, because in the story he is the one who suggests to the girls, his daughters, he suggests to them to murder their husbands.

[694] A beard
[695] Reference to the 2014 winner of Eurovision, Conchita Wurst, an Austrian drag act who became known for wearing evening gowns while also sporting a beard.

CP: And is he to blame or are the girls responsible?

SP: I don't know. It is up to you. Just look at the play and decide.

CP: And you used the gods in a very important role. Lots of modern plays do not use the gods anymore. Why did you use the gods?

SP: In general, in the Greek tragedies, the gods may appear. In Aeschylus, in the *Oresteia*, we have Apollo and Athena and then in the Greek tragedies it is quite common to have the gods. Anyway, in all those stories, tragedies, they are main characters. So why not bring them on stage? Also they are manipulating the human destiny.

CP: And for this play, what do you think the important themes were? What do you want the audience to know/think at the end?

SP: I don't remember that. In fact, I don't think that I ever have such ideas. I don't have a purpose to make the audience to think something or not. I'm just presenting a play and everybody will think in his own mind. I don't have ideas that I have to expose on purpose, to impose them at the very end. It is a play. Any piece of art is an enigma, in fact. And it is enigmatic. It is actually a question, it is never an answer. That is why we make art: because to ask questions, never giving answers.

CP: Would you ever think about doing anymore Greek tragedy?

SP: Well, in fact, less than one week ago I did a performance of *Oedipus*, Sophocles' *Oedipus*. So, indeed, this is the first time after the Danaids…no I am lying…I did the *Bacchae*…and also the *Oresteia*...but the last one was the *Bacchae* in 2000. This is the first time in fourteen years.

PERSONNAGES

Les dieux :
Hermès
Zeus
Io
Héra
Poséidon
Apollon
Artémis

Les Danaïdes :
Danaos, père des Danaïdes
Hypermnestre
Amymone

Les Egyptiens
Lynkeus
Le Coryphée
Pélasgos, roi d'Argos
Les Satyres

Une plage déserte près d'Argos. Arrivent les dieux invisibles des humains avec leurs verres de nectar.

—— Conseil des dieux ——

HERMÈS. Europa !…

ZEUS. La tragédie est l'imitation d'une action noble… C'est une imitation faite par des personnages en action, et qui, par l'entremise de la pitié et de la crainte, accomplit la purgation des émotions de ce genre.

HÉRA. Le plaisir de la tragédie procède de ce que nous savons bien que c'est une fiction.

POSÉIDON. Si nous arrivons à croire, un moment, les meurtres et les trahisons réels, ils cesseraient à l'instant de nous causer du plaisir.
La tragédie emprunte ses sujets, comme la comédie, à la vie des hommes.

HÉRA. La pitié d'un malheur où nous voyons tomber nos semblables nous porte à la crainte d'un pareil pour nous.

APOLLON. Parmi les événements, voyons donc lesquels provoquent l'effroi, lesquels appellent la pitié.

POSÉIDON. Les cas où l'événement pathétique survient au sein d'une alliance, par exemple, l'assassinat… entrepris par un frère contre son frère, par un fils contre son père, par une mère contre son fils, ou par un fils contre sa mère, ce sont des cas qu'il faut rechercher.

ZEUS. C'est un grand avantage, pour exciter la commisération, que la proximité du sang et des liaisons d'amour ou d'amitié entre le persécutant et le persécuté, le poursuivant et le poursuivi, celui qui fait souffrir et celui qui souffre.

HERMÈS. La grandeur s'exalte et atteint son maximum dans la lutte avec la mort et le néant.

HÉRA. Le véritable thème de la tragédie primitive est le divin.

HERMÈS. Le péché même de la vie…

APOLLON. Une manifestation de la justice éternelle…

POSÉIDON. Une horreur salvatrice…

APOLLON. Là, dans la tragédie, tout respire l'inquiétude, la peur, les menaces, l'exil…

LES DIEUX. … Et la mort !

—— Les Danaïdes descendent sur le rivage ——

Le navire dépose les cinquante Danaïdes. Elles portent des valises qui contiennent tous leurs biens. Dans une valise se trouve la momie de leur père androgyne, Danaos.

LES DANAÏDES. M'entends-tu bien, ô terre, malgré mon accent barbare ?
(Un temps.)
Nous errons en bannies. Pleines d'une horreur innée de l'homme, nous détestons l'hymen des enfants d'Egyptos et leur sacrilège démence.
(Un temps.)
Puisse ce pays, ce sol, ses eaux limpides, puissent les dieux du ciel et les dieux souterrains, agréer cette troupe de femmes comme leurs suppliantes.
(Un temps.)
Le désir de Zeus n'est point aisé à saisir. Mais, quoi qu'il arrive, il flamboie soudain, parfois en pleines ténèbres, escorté d'un noir châtiment, aux yeux des hommes éphémères. Les voies de la pensée divine vont à leur but par des fourrés et des ombres épaisses que nul regard ne saurait pénétrer.
(Un temps.)
Zeus précipite les mortels du haut de leurs espoirs superbes dans le néant.

ZEUS. Les choses sont ce qu'elles devaient être.

LES DANAÏDES. Père, qui voit tout, accorde-moi, en ta bonté, le dénouement que j'espère !
Que les enfants d'une auguste mère échappent aux embrassements des mâles, libres de l'incestueux hymen, libres de joug ! Danaos ! Père !

DANAOS. Elle est âpre, la bourrasque d'où va sortir l'ouragan !

LES DANAÏDES. Danaos !… Père !…

DANAOS. Mes enfants, aux nombreuses leçons de modestie inscrites en vous par votre père, vous ajouterez celle-ci : une troupe inconnue ne se fait apprécier qu'avec le temps ; quand il s'agit d'un étranger, chacun tient prêts des mots méchants, et rien ne vient plus vite aux lèvres qu'un propos salissant.
Ne subissons pas un pareil destin !
Songez bien aux leçons paternelles ; mettez la modestie plus haut que la vie.
Mes filles, la prudence doit être notre loi…
Encore mieux qu'un rempart, un autel est un infrangible bouclier.

APOLLON. Ah ! Triste sort des hommes ! Leur bonheur est pareil à un croquis léger, vient le malheur, trois coups d'éponge humide, ç'en est fait du dessin !

ZEUS. C'est cela qui m'emplit de pitié.

DANAOS. Asseyez-vous dans le sanctuaire, tel un vol de colombes fuyant des éperviers – leurs frères pourtant ! Frères changés en ennemis.

ARTÉMIS. L'oiseau qui mange chair d'oiseau reste-t-il pur ?
Comment donc serait pur celui qui veut prendre une femme malgré elle, malgré son père ?

LES DANAÏDES. Seigneur des Seigneurs,
Bienheureux entre les bienheureux,
Puissance souveraine entre les puissances…

DANAOS. Ô, Zeus, prends pitié de nos peines.

LES DANAÏDES. … Remède à tout mal,
Dieu des souffles propices, Zeus !
Eloigne de ta race la démesure mâle,
Et dans la sombre mer plonge
Le navire du Malheur aux flancs noirs.

DANAOS. Je vois là un trident, attribut d'un dieu.
Ainsi qu'il nous a conduits, qu'il daigne ici nous accueillir !

POSÉIDON. Du succès, les mortels ne se rassasient jamais. Nul n'y renonce et, le doigt levé pour l'écarter de sa demeure, ne lui dit : "N'entre plus."

HÉRA. Qui donc, qui donc, parmi les hommes, pourra, en l'apprenant, se flatter désormais d'être né pour un sort qui l'exempte de maux ?

LE CORYPHÉE. L'oiseau qui mange chair d'oiseau reste-t-il pur ?

LES DANAÏDES. Comment donc serait pur celui qui veut prendre une femme malgré elle, malgré son père ?

—— Arrivée de Pélasgos, roi d'Argos ——

DANAOS. Je vois une poussière, messagère muette d'une armée.

LES DANAÏDES. Des moyeux crient, qu'entraînent leurs essieux.

DANAOS. Allons, hâtez-vous ! Tenez pieusement sur le bras gauche, vos rameaux aux blanches guirlandes.
Répondez aux étrangers en termes suppliants, gémissants et éplorés, ainsi qu'il convient à des arrivants.
Les gens d'ici sont irritables. Sachez céder : vous êtes des étrangères !

PÉLASGOS. D'où vient donc cette troupe à l'accoutrement si peu grec, parée de robes et de bandeaux barbares ? Ce n'est point là, le vêtement des femmes de Grèce !
Je suis Pélasgos, chef suprême de ce pays. Je suis maître de tout… Jusqu'au point où les eaux des mers viennent former ma frontière : tout m'appartient. Déclare-moi ta race, dis-moi tout.

LES DANAÏDES. Nous nous honorons d'être de race argienne et de descendre d'une génisse féconde.

PÉLASGOS. Vous semblez en effet avoir d'antiques liens avec notre pays. Et votre père ? Révélez-moi le nom donné à sa sagesse.

LES DANAÏDES. Danaos… Et il a un frère, père de cinquante fils : Egyptos.

PÉLASGOS. Mais comment avez-vous osé quitter le palais paternel ? Quel destin s'est abattu sur vous ?

LES DANAÏDES. Roi des Pélasges, les malheurs humains ont des teintes multiples. Jamais les douleurs ne portent les mêmes ailes : qui eût imaginé notre exil par horreur du lit conjugal ?

HÉRA. Voilà bien les pensées, le langage qu'on peut ouïr des déments.

ZEUS. Vous êtes averties : ce n'est point brusquement, à l'improviste, que vous vous trouverez prises au filet sans issue du Malheur, victimes de votre sottise.

LES DANAÏDES. S'ils nous réclament, ne nous livre pas aux fils d'Egyptos !

PÉLASGOS. Mots terribles ! Ils vont soulever une guerre incertaine !
Je frémis à voir nos autels ombragés de ces rameaux.

LE CORYPHÉE. Il est terrible, le courroux de Zeus Suppliant !

PÉLASGOS. Je ne saurais te faire de promesse, avant d'avoir communiqué les faits à tous les Argiens.

LES DANAÏDES. C'est toi la cité ! Chef sans contrôle, tu es le maître ! Il n'est point d'autres suffrages que les signes de ton front.

PÉLASGOS. Vous secourir, je ne le puis sans dommage. L'angoisse prend mon cœur. Si les fils d'Egyptos ont pouvoir sur vous, de par la loi de leur pays, qui pourrait s'opposer à eux ?
Quel que soit mon pouvoir, je ne saurais rien faire sans le peuple. Et me garde le Ciel, ouïr Argos me dire un jour, si pareil malheur arrivait : "Pour honorer des étrangers, tu as perdu ta cité !"

LES DANAÏDES. Ah ! Que jamais je ne tombe au pouvoir des mâles vainqueurs !
Fuir, sans d'autres guides que les étoiles, plutôt qu'un hymen odieux !
Va, fais alliance avec la justice !

PÉLASGOS. J'ai besoin d'une pensée profonde afin qu'Argos échappe aux atteintes d'une guerre de représailles ; et afin que moi-même je n'aille pas, en vous livrant ainsi agenouillées aux autels de nos dieux, m'attacher – pour rude compagnon – le dieu de ruine, le génie vengeur qui, même dans l'Hadès, ne lâche point le mort.

LES DANAÏDES. Ne consens pas à voir la suppliante, en dépit de la justice, entraînée loin de l'autel, par ses bandeaux, comme une cavale !
Sache-le, quoi que tu fasses, tes enfants et ta maison en devront un jour payer à Arès, la stricte récompense.

PÉLASGOS. Oui, de tous côtés d'invincibles soucis ! Une masse de maux vient sur moi comme un fleuve, et me voici au large d'une mer de douleurs, mer sans fond, dure à franchir – et point de havre ouvert à ma détresse !
Oui, j'ai besoin d'une pensée profonde qui nous sauve, et que, tel un plongeur, descende dans l'abîme un clair regard, où le vin n'ait pas mis son trouble !
Mes réflexions sont faites : ma barque a touché et sur cet écueil, la voilà clouée – ou contre ceux-ci ou contre ceux-là soulever une rude guerre, c'est à quoi je suis contraint. Point d'issue exempte de douleur !
Ainsi donc, vieillard, père de ces vierges, vite, prends ces rameaux et va les déposer sur d'autres autels de nos dieux nationaux, afin que tous les citoyens voient cet insigne suppliant et ne rejettent pas les propositions qui leur viendront de moi. La foule aime à chercher des raisons à ses maîtres !

N'aie crainte : je n'entends point te livrer aux oiseaux de proie. Moi, je vais convoquer les gens de ce pays, pour disposer en ta faveur l'opinion populaire ; puis à ton père j'enseignerai le langage qu'il doit tenir.

Pélasgos sort, accompagné de Danaos.

LES DANAÏDES. Daigne Zeus des Suppliants
jeter un regard favorable
sur cette troupe vagabonde,
dont la nef est partie des bouches
au sable fin du Nil.

—— Rêve des Danaïdes ——

Restées seules, les Danaïdes invoquent la mémoire de leur mère mythique, Io, qui leur apparaît en rêve.

LES DANAÏDES *(en déclamant).* Zeus, renouvelle la légende de ta bonté. Souviens-toi, toi dont la main toucha Io !…
Une trace ancienne me ramène aujourd'hui aux lieux où sous l'œil d'un gardien jadis paissait ma mère…
C'est là, la prairie qui nourrit les génisses, d'où, pourchassée par le taon, Io un jour s'enfuit.

POSÉIDON. Et voici que les mortels qui lors habitaient ces contrées, soudain ont senti leurs cœurs bondir d'épouvante pâle devant un spectacle inconnu.

HÉRA. A leurs yeux s'offrait, repoussante, une bête mêlée d'être humain, partie génisse, partie femme.

POSÉIDON. Et devant ce prodige, ils demeuraient stupides.

IO. Quel est ce pays ? cette race ?… En quel point du monde, malheureuse, m'ont portée mes erreurs ?…
Le Taon de nouveau me taraude, infortunée !… Il sort des enfers pour donner la chasse à l'infortunée, pour la faire errer, affamée, sur le sable qui borde les mers !… Hélas ! Où m'entraînent de si lointaines erreurs ?

POSÉIDON. Sachons d'abord ce qu'est son mal : qu'elle nous dise elle-même ses misères vagabondes.

HÉRA. Prêtez l'oreille aux accents de la vierge à cornes de vache !

IO. Sans répit, des visions nocturnes visitaient ma chambre virginale et, en mots caressants, me conseillaient ainsi : "O, fortunée jeune fille, pourquoi si longtemps rester vierge, quand tu pourrais avoir le plus grand des époux ? Zeus a été par toi brûlé du désir, il veut avec toi jouir des dons de Cypris : garde-toi, enfant, de repousser l'hymen de Zeus ; mais, pars, dirige-toi vers Lerne et sa prairie herbeuse, vers les parcs à moutons et à bœufs de ton père, afin que l'œil de Zeus soit délivré de son désir !" Voilà les rêves qui toutes les nuits me pressaient, malheureuse ! Jusqu'au jour où j'osai révéler à mon père quels songes hantaient mon sommeil. Mon père me bannit et me jette hors de la maison, hors du pays, bête vouée aux dieux, libre d'errer jusqu'aux derniers confins du monde. Et aussitôt ma forme et ma raison s'altèrent à la fois ; des cornes me viennent, ainsi que vous voyez, et, taraudée par un moustique à la morsure aiguë, je m'élance d'un bond affolé vers l'eau si douce de Lerne. Piquée du taon, je cours toujours sous l'aiguillon divin, chassée de pays en pays.

HERMÈS. Il est une ville, Canope, à l'extrémité du pays en triangle, là, où le Nil déverse ses eaux saintes et salutaires. C'est là que Zeus te rendra la raison en t'imposant sa main calmante, d'un simple contact. Et, pour rappeler comment Zeus l'a mis au monde, celui que tu enfanteras sera le noir "Epaphos", qui cultivera tout le pays qu'arrose le large cours du Nil.
Cinq générations après lui, cinquante vierges, sa descendance, reviendront malgré elles à Argos, pour échapper à un hymen avec des proches, leurs propres cousins.

IO. Ah ! Encore ! Un spasme soudain, un accès délirant me brûlent. Le dard du taon me taraude, tel un fer rougi. Mes pensées confuses se heurtent en désordre au flot montant d'un mal hideux !

HÉRA. Qui a forcé la chambre d'une vierge n'a plus de remède au mal qu'il a fait ; pour purifier l'homme aux mains sanglantes, tous les fleuves ensemble, confondant leurs routes, tenteraient en vain de laver sa souillure.

LE CORYPHÉE. Mais alors, quel magicien vint donc guérir l'errante et misérable Io, tournoyante au vol du taon ?

LES DANAÏDES. Celui dont le règne remplit l'éternité !
Sous sa force aux douceurs puissantes, sous son souffle de miracle, ses maux sont finis ; et lentement, coulent les larmes de sa pudeur douloureuse.
Mais du germe déposé par Zeus, elle enfante un fils parfait.
L'œuvre est de Zeus !
(En déclamant.)
Remède à tout mal,
dieu des souffles propices,
Zeus !…

—— Bonnes nouvelles ——

De retour, Danaos annonce l'obtention du droit d'asile en Argos.

DANAOS. Rassurez-vous, mes filles ; le peuple a rendu un décret décisif. Nous aurons la résidence en ce pays, libres et protégés contre toute reprise par un droit d'asile reconnu ; nul habitant ni étranger ne pourra nous saisir. Use-t-on de violence, tout bourgeois d'Argos qui ne nous prête aide est frappé d'athymie, exilé par sentence du peuple !!!

LES DANAÏDES. Ils ont eu pitié de nous, ils ont rendu un vote de bonté.
Ils n'ont pas, par dédain de la cause des femmes, voté en faveur des mâles.
Que la peste jamais ne vide d'hommes leur cité !
Que l'étranger ne teigne pas leur sol du sang de leurs fils immolés !

—— Mauvaises nouvelles ——

Danaos observe la mer.

DANAOS. Mes filles, ne vous effrayez pas si votre père vous annonce à l'improviste du nouveau.

Je vois le vaisseau et toute l'armée égyptienne ! Ne vous effrayez pas !

LES DANAÏDES. Père, j'ai peur. Les nefs au vol rapide sont déjà là : il n'est plus de délai.

DANAOS. Les Argiens ont émis un vote sans appel, ma fille ; aie confiance, ils combattront pour toi, j'en suis bien sûr, va.

LES DANAÏDES. Ne me laisse pas seule, je t'en supplie, père !
Seule, qu'est une femme ? Arès n'habite pas en elle.
Ah ! Ah ! Le ravisseur est là !…
Voici donc le prélude des violences qui m'attendent !
La terreur triomphe !…
Seigneur de ce pays, protège-nous !

Elles se précipitent vers l'autel.

—— Message des mâles ——

Le navire égyptien dépose les cinquante fils d'Egyptos. Ils encerclent les Danaïdes.

LES ÉGYPTIENS. En route ! En route vers la galiote, de toute la vitesse de vos jambes !

LES DANAÏDES. Non, je ne veux plus revoir les eaux fécondantes qui, chez les hommes, font naître et se multiplier un sang porteur de vie.

LES ÉGYPTIENS. En route ! Ou alors on verra des cheveux arrachés, oui, arrachés, des corps marqués au fer, des têtes coupées, d'où gicle à flots le sang du massacre. En route, en route !…

LES DANAÏDES. Ah ! Ah ! Puisses-tu donc périr d'une mort brutale, englouti dans les eaux saintes de la mer !

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Crie, hurle, appelle les dieux : une fois dans la galiote égyptienne, tu n'en sauteras pas les plats-bords !

LES DANAÏDES. Que le puissant Nil qui te voit arrête ta démesure inouïe !

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Je t'invite à gagner la galère aux flancs courbes, et vite ! Nul retard ! Quand on traîne une rebelle, on n'épargne pas ses cheveux.

LES DANAÏDES. Hélas ! père, le secours des autels serait donc ma perte ? Mais oui, il m'entraîne comme une araignée, pas à pas, le fantôme, le noir fantôme !
Hélas ! Terre Mère, écarte de moi l'effrayant hurleur !
Il bondit vers moi, le serpent à deux pieds. La vipère… .
Nous sommes perdues. Seigneur ! Nous nous effondrons devant la force !

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Des seigneurs, vous en aurez bientôt – en nombre : les fils d'Egyptos ! N'ayez crainte, vous ne vous plaindrez pas de manquer de maîtres.

—— Confrontation ——

Entre soudain le roi Pélasgos.

PÉLASGOS. Hé là-bas, que fais-tu ? Quelle superbe t'induit à mépriser ainsi la terre des Pélasges ? Crois-tu donc débarquer dans un pays de femmes ? Avec tes balbutiements barbares, tu montres avec les Grecs un peu trop d'insolence ! C'est commettre bien des fautes et user de bien peu de sens.

LES ÉGYPTIENS. J'entends là des mots peu hospitaliers.
Quelle faute ai-je commise ici contre le Droit ?
Je retrouve ce que j'avais perdu.

PÉLASGOS. Ces femmes, tu les emmèneras si elles y consentent de bon cœur, quand tu auras, pour les convaincre, trouvé de pieuses raisons. Par un vote unanime, le peuple argien l'a proclamé sans appel : jamais il n'abandonnera à la violence une troupe de femmes. Allons, vite, hors de ma vue !

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Sache dès lors que tu soulèves là une guerre incertaine.

ZEUS. Il faut d'abord que des guerriers tombent par centaines et rejettent la vie dans les convulsions.

LES ÉGYPTIENS. La victoire et la conquête puissent-elles être pour les mâles !

PÉLASGOS. Des mâles, vous en trouverez aussi dans ce pays, et qui ne boivent pas un vin fait avec l'orge !

Les Egyptiens se retirent.

DANAOS. Mes filles, il faut qu'aux Argiens vous offriez prières, sacrifices et libations, comme à des dieux d'Olympe ; car, sans se partager, tous ont été nos sauveurs.

PÉLASGOS. Pour vous, reprenez confiance.
L'Etat possède de nombreuses demeures ; des logis sont là tout prêts pour vous. Choisissez – vous êtes libres – ce qui vous paraîtra le plus agréable.

Le Roi sort.

—— Nuit de conseils et d'inquiétude ——

Les Danaïdes se préparent pour la nuit. Elles mangent un dernier morceau de pain mais l'eau manque.

ZEUS. Dans le champ de l'Erreur se moissonne la Mort.

DANAOS. Mes filles, je vous invite donc à ne pas me couvrir de honte, puisque vous possédez cette jeunesse qui attire les yeux des hommes. Le tendre fruit mûr n'est point aisé à protéger : les bêtes s'y attaquent tout comme les hommes.
Ne subissons pas un pareil destin !
Songez bien aux leçons paternelles ; mettez la modestie plus haut que la vie.

LES DANAÏDES. Que la chaste Artémis jette sur cette troupe un regard de pitié, afin que nul hymen ne nous vienne ployer sous le joug de Cypris !
Chaste fille de Zeus, Artémis, clémente à qui implore ta clémence, laisse tomber sur moi de ton visage austère un regard assurant mon salut !

Que les enfants d'une auguste mère échappent aux embrassements des mâles, libres d'hymen, libres de joug !

Une des Danaïdes, Amymone, part à la recherche de l'eau.

ZEUS. Vous êtes averties : ce n'est point brusquement, à l'improviste, que vous vous trouverez prises au filet sans issue du Malheur, victimes de votre sottise.

ARTÉMIS ET HÉRA. Après des milliers de femmes avant toi, l'hymen sera bien ton lot final.

HÉRA. Pour les fugitives je redoute des vents contraires : cruelles douleurs et guerres sanglantes.

ARTÉMIS. Pourquoi les poursuivants ont-ils eu du Ciel des brises favorables à leur poursuite ?

HÉRA. Ce qu'a fixé le Destin risque fort de s'accomplir.

ARTÉMIS. On ne pense pas au-delà de la pensée de Zeus, auguste et insondable !

HERMÈS. Un dieu fut grand jadis… Il a ouvert aux hommes les voies de la prudence, en leur donnant pour loi : "Souffrir pour comprendre."
Quand en plein sommeil, sous le regard du cœur, suinte le douloureux remords, la sagesse en eux, malgré eux pénètre. Et c'est bien là, je crois, violence bienfaisante des dieux assis à la barre céleste !

LES DANAÏDES. Puis-je prétendre contempler la pensée de Zeus, plonger ma vue dans l'abîme ?

ARTÉMIS ET HÉRA. Après des milliers de femmes avant toi, l'hymen sera bien ton lot final.

LES DANAÏDES. Que le seigneur Zeus m'épargne un hymen cruel avec un époux abhorré !
Qu'il donne la victoire aux femmes !

ARTÉMIS ET HÉRA. Va, tu ne sais pas l'avenir.

—— La guerre ——

Les Danaïdes sont endormies. Danaos fait un mauvais rêve.

DANAOS. Voilà d'abord mes visions de la nuit…
En ses yeux luit le regard bleu sombre du dragon sanglant…
Las ! Hélas ! Tu me fais voir les cadavres des miens roulés et submergés par les flots de la mer, corps sans vie emportés dans leurs larges saies errantes !

ZEUS. Le destin que les dieux ont de tout temps fait aux mâles leur impose de poursuivre les guerres où croulent les remparts, les mêlées où se vont heurtant les cavaliers, les renversements de cités.

Entre Pélasgos équipé pour la guerre.

PÉLASGOS. Vous devez tous, à cette heure, porter secours à la cité, aux autels des dieux du pays – afin que leur culte ne soit pas à jamais effacé.
C'est qu'une immense attaque égyptienne tout à l'heure se décidait dans la nuit et va sournoisement assaillir notre ville.
Donc, aux créneaux ! Aux portes des remparts ! Tous debout ! Courez armés de pied en cap ! Garnissez les parapets, occupez les terrasses des tours et attendez avec confiance : les dieux sont avec nous.
Obéissez aux ordres de votre Roi, car, en cas de succès, aux dieux tout le mérite ! Si, au contraire, un malheur arrive : "Pélasgos" – un seul nom dans des milliers de bouches – sera célébré par des hymnes grondants et des lamentations.

LES DANAÏDES. Horribles, horribles souffrances, imprévues et déchirantes ! Hélas ! pleurez donc, Danaïdes, à l'annonce de telle douleur.

DANAOS. Dieux et déesses, éloignez le fléau qui fond sur nous !

ZEUS. C'est le vin d'Arès que le sang des hommes !

Les Egyptiens attaquent.

PÉLASGOS. Leurs cœurs de fer fument, bouillant de vaillance : on eût dit des lions aux yeux pleins d'Arès. Ils vont, et la poussière monte, et nos champs sont souillés de l'écume blanche que bavent leurs coursiers haletants.
Les Egyptiens, ayant cuirassé leurs poitrines d'airain, sautaient hors des vaisseaux et enveloppaient la ville entière, de façon à ce que le Grec ne sût plus où se tourner. Et, d'abord, des milliers de pierres parties de leurs mains l'accablaient, tandis que, jaillis de la corde de l'arc, des traits portaient la mort dans ses rangs. Enfin bondissant d'un même élan, ils frappent, ils taillent en pièces les corps de ces malheureux !
Zeus, Terre, dieux de ma patrie, et toi Malédiction, épargnez ma cité : n'arrachez pas du sol avec ses racines, entièrement détruite, proie à l'ennemi, une ville qui parle le vrai parler de Grèce !

Pélasgos est tué.

LES DANAÏDES. Voici donc, d'un seul coup, anéanti un immense bonheur, abattue et détruite la fleur de Grèce !

DANAOS. Clame sur notre misère une plainte désolée, lugubre. Les dieux ont tout fait pour que tous les maux s'abattent sur nous. Hélas ! sur l'armée grecque anéantie !
Ah ! trop claire vision de mes songes nocturnes, certes, tu avais été vraie en me montrant ces maux…

ZEUS. Il faut pourtant que les mortels supportent les tristesses que leur envoient les dieux.

POSÉIDON. Des maux humains peuvent toujours atteindre des mortels. Les malheurs par milliers sortent de la mer, par milliers sortent de la terre, pour ceux dont la vie prolonge son cours dans le temps.

—— Les Egyptiens victorieux ——

Les fils d'Egyptos encerclent les Danaïdes.

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Quand une cité succombe, hélas ! innombrables sont ses maux. Tel vainqueur fait des prisonniers, tel autre tue ; ailleurs, on incendie. La fumée souille la ville entière.
Arès souffle en furieux, domptant les hommes, violant tout ce qu'on révère.

Et voici des bruits sourds par toute la ville. Le guerrier s'affaisse sous la lance du guerrier. Les vagissements sanglants des nourrissons élèvent leur plainte enfantine.
Partout le rapt, frère de la poursuite. Un pillard aux mains pleines croise un pillard aux mains pleines ; un pillard aux mains vides appelle un pillard aux mains vides, pour se procurer un complice. Ce qui s'ensuit, l'esprit suffit à l'imaginer.
Et les captives, encore novices à la souffrance, sanglotent en songeant au lit du soldat à qui le hasard les donne : elles n'ont plus d'autre sort à attendre que de servir aux nuits d'un ennemi vainqueur, pour renforcer des douleurs dignes de toutes leurs larmes.

—— Hymne pour Aphrodite ——

Cependant que les dieux chantent, les Egyptiens s'emparent chacun d'une épouse.

LES DIEUX. "Le Ciel sacré, Ouranos, sent le désir
De pénétrer la Terre,
Un désir prend la Terre de jouir de l'hymen :
La pluie, du Ciel époux,
Descend comme un baiser sur la Terre,
Et la voilà qui enfante aux mortels
Les troupeaux qui vont paissant
Et le fruit de vie de Déméter,
Cependant que la frondaison printanière
S'achève sous la rosée d'hymen –
Et, dans tout cela,
J'ai mon rôle, moi."

LES ÉGYPTIENS. Ah ! tu réduis à rien un pacte dont les garants sont Zeus et Héra, déesse de l'hymen. Et Cypris, tu la rejettes avec dédain, elle à qui les mortels doivent leurs plus douces joies ! La couche nuptiale où le Destin unit l'homme et la femme est sous la sauvegarde d'un droit plus puissant que celui du serment.

Les Egyptiens s'en vont pour préparer les noces.

LES DANAÏDES. Une mer de maux vers nous pousse ses lames. Si l'une s'écroule, elle en soulève une autre, trois fois plus puissante, qui gronde et bouillonne autour de la poupe.
Soit ! L'infortunée qu'on humilie fera sentir à cette terre ce que pèse son courroux. Mon venin, mon venin, cruellement, me vengera.

—— Préparations ——

Les Danaïdes se préparent pour la nuit de noces. Elles font leur toilette pendant que Danaos fait la fête avec ses futurs gendres.

HÉRA. Et, sous leur front, une fois ployé au joug du destin, un revirement se fait, impur, impie, sacrilège : elles sont prêtes à tout oser, leur résolution désormais est prise.

ARTÉMIS. A la source de tous les maux, la funeste démence est là, pour souffler l'audace aux mortels.

ZEUS. Les malheurs par milliers sortent de la mer, par milliers sortent de la terre, pour ceux dont la vie prolonge son cours dans le temps.

APOLLON. La Ruine se révèle fille des audaces interdites.

HERMÈS. C'est dans la nuit qu'en vagues cruelles, le malheur se lève !

LES DANAÏDES. Puissant messager des vivants et des morts, entends-moi, Hermès Infernal, et charge-toi de mon message…

DANAOS. Le reste, une pensée que le sommeil ne dompte pas le réglera comme il convient, avec l'aide des dieux, dans le sens voulu du Destin.

HÉRA. Et maintenant, puisque ta volonté s'est levée pour agir, à l'œuvre ! Fais l'épreuve du Destin !

ZEUS. Dans le champ de l'Erreur se moissonne la Mort.

—— Nuit de noces et de meurtre ——

Les Danaïdes en robes de mariées. Les Egyptiens avec des trompettes et des lampions. Ils entrent dans les tentes. Seul Hypermnestre attend encore Lynkeus, l'Egyptien qui est en retard.

HYPERMNESTRE. Quand ils seront morts, tous tués, tous massacrés par leurs fiancées, quand la poussière du sol aura bu le sang noir et figé du meurtre, qui en saurait offrir des purifications ? Qui les en pourrait laver ? Ah ! souffrances neuves qui viennent se mêler aux douleurs d'autrefois !
(Entre Lynkeus.)
Je ne veux plus songer qu'à recevoir du mieux qu'il m'est possible l'époux respecté qui entre en sa demeure. Quel soleil luit plus doux à une femme que la joie d'ouvrir les portes toutes grandes au mari ? Qu'il vienne trouver dans sa maison une épouse fidèle, chienne de garde à lui dévouée, farouche à ses ennemis…

LYNKEUS. Hâte-toi, car le char ténébreux de la nuit se hâte aussi, et l'heure est venue pour le voyageur de laisser tomber l'ancre dans les logis ouverts à l'étranger…

HÉRA. Il ne sait pas ce que l'odieuse chienne lui prépare pour son malheur ! Femelle tueuse du mâle ! De quel monstre odieux devrai-je emprunter le nom pour le lui donner ?

HYPERMNESTRE. Je n'ose te regarder ; je n'ose te parler en face : l'effroi de jadis me tient devant toi.

LYNKEUS. Eh bien ! si la crainte ancienne possède encore ton âme et te retient ainsi, toi, compagne de ma couche, noble épouse, à toi d'arrêter tes pleurs, tes sanglots, et de me dire la vérité.

HYPERMNESTRE. Le sang une fois à terre, il n'est pas si aisé de le rappeler, hélas ! Ce qui a, fluide, coulé sur le sol, est perdu pour jamais.

Dans les tentes les lumières s'éteignent une à une.

HERMÈS. On dirait les vapeurs qui sortent d'un tombeau.

ARTÉMIS. Un parfum qui n'a rien de l'encens !

ZEUS. Eloignons-nous : l'entreprise s'achève. Ne paraissons pas complices du meurtre !!!

APOLLON. Le crime est accompli !

Les Danaïdes sortent des tentes en révélant les cadavres de leurs maris immolés. Seule Hypermnestre a épargné Lynkeus.

LYNKEUS. Hélas ! De quel cœur cruel le Destin s'est abattu sur ma race !
(Les quarante-neuf Danaïdes chassent Lynkeus.)
Non, ce ne sont pas des fantômes qui font ici mon tourment. Ah ! les voilà, les chiennes irritées ! Les voilà qui fourmillent !
Votre place est aux lieux où l'on abat des têtes et arrache des yeux, où l'on ouvre des gorges, où l'on mutile, où on lapide, et où gronde la longue plainte des hommes plantés sur le pal. Voilà, entendez-vous, monstres !
C'est dans l'antre d'un lion buveur de sang qu'il vous convient de vivre ! Celle qui imagina telle horreur contre un homme que te semble-t-elle ? Murène ou serpent ?

LES DANAÏDES *(regardant les cadavres des Egyptiens).* Celui-ci est mon époux ; ma main en a fait un cadavre, et l'ouvrage est de bonne ouvrière. Voilà.

—— La valse des dieux ——

Les dieux entraînent les Danaïdes folles dans la danse des supplices.

HÉRA. Allons, nouons la chaîne dansante : nous voulons clamer notre chant d'horreur, et dire comment notre troupe distribue leurs lots aux mortels.

ARTÉMIS. Pour notre victime, voici le chant délire, vertige où se perd la raison, voici l'hymne des Erinyes, enchaîneur d'âmes, chant sans lyre, qui sèche les mortels d'effroi.

POSÉIDON. Allons ! que la tresse de feu à double pointe soit donc lâchée ! Que l'éther soit ébranlé par la foudre et la fureur

convulsive des vents sauvages ; que leur souffle, secouant la terre, l'arrache avec ses racines à ses fondements ; que la houle des mers, d'un flux hurlant et rude, aille effacer au firmament les routes où croisent les astres !

HERMÈS. Mais le sang noir d'un être humain une fois répandu à terre, nul enchanteur ne le rappellerait dans les veines dont il sortit.

ZEUS. Le châtiment viendra, inéluctable reste le dénouement.

Premier tourbillon : les Danaïdes sont poursuivies par Lynkeus. Par la volonté des dieux elles seront immolées à plusieurs reprises.

APOLLON. La terre vacille ; dans ses profondeurs mugit la voix du tonnerre ; en zigzags embrasés la foudre jaillit éclatante ; un cyclone fait tourbillonner la poussière ; la guerre est déclarée entre les vents, et l'éther déjà se confond avec les mers. Voilà donc, la rafale qui vient au nom de Zeus.

HÉRA. Tu as donné à ton œuvre un suprême, inoubliable couronnement, en répandant un sang impossible à laver.

ARTÉMIS. Ah ! Elle a bu, pour se donner plus d'audace, elle a bu du sang humain, la bande joyeuse !

HERMÈS. Le sang est encore tout frais sur tes mains : de là le trouble qui s'abat sur ton âme.

APOLLON. Ah ! race furieuse, si durement haïe des dieux ! Race digne de toutes les larmes ! Voici accomplies aujourd'hui les malédictions…

ZEUS. Le châtiment viendra, inéluctable reste le dénouement.
Il faut pourtant que les mortels supportent les tristesses que leur envoient les dieux.

HYPERMNESTRE. Ah ! Horrible à dire, horrible à voir de ses yeux le spectacle qui me rejette hors de moi-même, si horrible que me voici là, impuissante, incapable de me tenir droite.
Qui l'ensevelira ? Qui chantera son thrène ? L'oseras-tu, toi ? Oseras-tu, après avoir tué ton époux, l'accompagner de tes lamentations ?
Une angoisse me prend, où ma raison succombe. Un froid cruel enveloppe mon cœur.

HÉRA. Il est des cas où l'Effroi est utile et, vigilant gardien des cœurs, y doit siéger en permanence.

POSÉIDON. Il est bon d'apprendre à être sage à l'école de la douleur.

HYPERMNESTRE. Un dieu sans doute avait touché leurs esprits. Terrible dieu, pour les avoir à ce point aveuglées !

ZEUS. Le châtiment viendra, inéluctable reste le dénouement.

Deuxième tourbillon : le cauchemar des Danaïdes continue.

APOLLON. Que tout mot de haine soit payé d'un mot de haine. Et qu'un coup meurtrier soit puni d'un coup meurtrier !

HERMÈS. Gémis, si tu me veux plaire.

APOLLON. Fais éclater tes sanglots !

HÉRA. Et des coups lugubres, gémissants, accompagneront ta plainte.

ARTÉMIS. Pousse une clameur aiguë !

HERMÈS. Arrache aussi tes cheveux !

HÉRA. Tu tuas ton époux, meurs sous le fer !
Frappé, tu as frappé.

ARTÉMIS. Et toi tu es morte après avoir tué.

APOLLON. Tu as créé des douleurs.
Tu as subi des douleurs.

HERMÈS. Qui a tué, paye sa dette.

HÉRA. A cette peine-là n'espère point de terme. Debout !!!

ZEUS. "Au coupable, le châtiment." C'est dans l'ordre divin.

DANAOS. Je ne sais où j'en suis ; tout conseil sûr échappe à mon angoisse : où me tourner quand croule ma maison ? Je tremble au bruissement de l'averse sanglante sous laquelle tout s'effondre. Déjà c'est un déluge !

HÉRA. Et toi, vieillard, adieu ! Même au milieu des maux, accorde à ton âme la joie que chaque jour t'offre : chez les morts, la richesse ne sert plus à rien.

APOLLON. Il n'est rien que le temps n'enseigne, en vieillissant.

DANAOS. Et, qu'est-ce qu'un très vieil homme, quand son feuillage se flétrit ? Il erre, tel un songe apparu en plein jour.

ZEUS. Le châtiment viendra, inéluctable reste le dénouement.

Danaos est englouti par le navire-fantôme, dans un dernier tourbillon.

APOLLON. Tu périras, délaissée de tous, l'âme à jamais désertée par la joie.

HÉRA. Ombre vidée de sang, victime engraissée pour mes sacrifices !

APOLLON. Toute vivante, tu me fourniras mon festin.

Les Danaïdes sont anéanties.

—— Rêve d'Hypermnestre ——

Hypermnestre enceinte. Dans son rêve, elle devient Amymone, partie à la recherche de l'eau.

LES DIEUX. Il est, dans les parages, une île étroite dont seul, Pan, le dieu des chœurs, hante le rivage marin…

Amymone est entourée par les satyres.

AMYMONE. Quel bruissement d'oiseaux j'entends près de moi ?
Toute approche m'emplit de crainte !
Qui donc êtes-vous ?

LES SATYRES. Ne crains rien : c'est une troupe amie…
Si tu acceptes mes leçons, tu cesseras de regimber contre l'aiguillon.
Tu cries, tu meugles : que feras-tu lorsque tu apprendras le reste.
Mais tu n'es pas une novice et tu n'as pas besoin de mes leçons.
Elle s'évade, disparaît comme un faon, et d'un bond léger, la voilà hors du filet !
Elle est ici, tapie quelque part…
Attrape ! attrape ! attrape ! attrape ! Gare !

Les Satyres entraînent Amymone dans les tourbillons des eaux. Le dieu Poséidon apaise les eaux.

AMYMONE. Ah ! ah ! quel bruit, quel parfum invisible a volé jusqu'à moi ? Vient-il d'un dieu ? d'un homme ?
Je t'appelle tout en pleurs.
Entends-moi : viens à la lumière, prête-moi ton secours contre mes ennemis.

POSÉIDON. Quel est ce délire, enfant ? Ne laisse pas l'égarement emplir ton cœur et t'emporter.
Ton destin est d'être libérée, et mon destin est de te libérer.

LES SATYRES. Tu es dieu, et tu nous veux dérober la proie !
… Tu n'es qu'un larron !
Moi, je poursuivrai cette femme comme un chien à la piste.

POSÉIDON. Et moi, je sauverai celle qui m'implora.

LES SATYRES. Adieu donc !

Les Satyres disparaissent.

AMYMONE. Quelle grâce vient donc de m'accorder le Ciel ?

POSÉIDON. Te voilà devant celui que réclamaient tes vœux !
C'est moi : ne cherche pas un mortel.

AMYMONE. Alors, pourquoi tarder à tout m'apprendre ?

POSÉIDON. Ne te préoccupe pas… cela me sera doux.

AMYMONE. Si tu le veux ainsi…

POSÉIDON. La peur ne doit pas abattre ton âme.

AMYMONE. La joie pénètre en moi et me tire des larmes.

POSÉIDON. Tu te hâtes trop de gémir et de te laisser envahir par l'effroi.

AMYMONE. Je suis heureuse, au dieu j'abandonne ma vie.

POSÉIDON. Alors, tombe à genoux… je saurai trouver le moyen de te délivrer à jamais de tes peines.
(Poséidon bénit Amymone et verse de l'eau sur son corps.)
La misère est passée – bien passée.

AMYMONE. Daignent ces eaux bénir mon entrée au saint lieu.
Que toutes les brises qui se lèvent de la terre, de l'onde marine

ou du ciel, viennent, aux rayons d'un soleil propice, souffler sur ce pays ! Que la riche fécondité du sol et des troupeaux jamais ne se lasse de rendre ce pays prospère ! Que la semence humaine y soit protégée !
Je vois enfin la lumière.

—— Epilogue ——

Les fantômes des Danaïdes subissent des supplices sans fin.

APOLLON. Aussi, criminelles, elles subissent des peines égales à leurs crimes – et d'autres les attendent.

ARTÉMIS. L'édifice de leurs malheurs n'en est pas même à son soubassement et va grandir encore.

HÉRA. Et des monceaux de morts, en un muet language, diront aux regards des hommes que nul ne doit nourrir de pensées au-dessus de sa condition mortelle.

HERMÈS. La démesure en mûrissant produit l'épi de l'erreur, et la moisson qu'on enlève n'est faite que de larmes.
Gardez ce châtiment sans cesse dans les yeux !…
Zeus est le vengeur désigné des pensées trop superbes et s'en fait rendre de terribles comptes.

ZEUS. Le temps est vieux déjà.
Allez, descendez donc, sous la terre…

Fin.

Appendix D

Interview transcript Colin Teevan, *Alcmaeon in Corinth* playwright

Interview conducted in person on 27 March 2014

Charlotte Parkyn (CP): You do a lot of Greek theatre. What fascinates you about Greek theatre, why do you use it; why do you take inspiration from Greek theatre?

Colin Teevan (CT): That's a tough one. I'll probably answer that at length in my inaugral, which is going to be a performance of *The Seven Pomegranate Seeds*. What do I…. I think probably, Greek theatre was the first way I came by theatre. Because I studied Greek at school and we had to laboriously translate *Iphigenia* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* almost line by line. It meant that I think I learnt an awful lot more about theatre and how playwrighting worked from having to do that than actually studied Shakespeare in English where you looked at it in a very literary way themes and socio-historicism and all that kind of thing, so, I really think I learned dramaturgy from the Greeks. I love the scale of it. I think also the classics of Irish theatre, of the Gaelic revival, were built on, in a very conscious attempt to bypass the British social realist theatre and that tradition were built on, classical Greek models and there being some interesting staging. But you know in the past 20 years that they have staged them much more like Greek, like *The Well of the Saint*, as actually a sort of Greek impoverished Greek peasant tragedy….. So I think it was there in the culture and it was definitely there in my background as a writer. And then I was asked to translate… well i think it was discovered I could translate from the ancient Greek after I'd written my first few plays, so thats when I translated the *Iphigenia in Aulis* which itself has an interesting fragmentary history. So I became interested in that and since then I have done the *Bacchae* which obviously has one major gap in it. I chose to fill with original material rather than to use the usual band aid and then *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. Interestingly, I've done a lot of Greek sort of adaptations since then, but not, based on

Greek but actually original works. And I have translated *Lysistrata* which has not been done yet but actually apart from that, I've really focused on Euripides' last trilogy.

CP: They often say that Euripides is a lot more like modern theatre style and is a bit more accessible for a contemporary audience. Would you say Euripides is like that?

CT: I think Euripides is the most Irish of the Greek tragedians because the way… someone like Euripides…use tragi-comedy…which I don't think one could accuse Sophocles or Aeschylus of tragi-comedy, whereas Euripides uses really black humour. I mean he takes for instance in the *Bacchae* a comic scene of cross-dressing right before his vicious coup d'etat. And, you know, in the sense that the Jacobeans are more baroque than Shakespeare in their use of violence rather that outrageous comedy, or that Tarrantino is more outrageous than the generation before, Euripides is the baroque to the more stayed Sophocles and Aeschylus…I really respond to the humour, and the fact that he mixes registers…and he mixes actual verse forms, where he'll switch from traditional forms which can be very pastiche verse forms to very modern ones. I really respond to those kind of almost, you know, post-modern aspects of Euripides which can be very pertinent to our age.

CP: And so when you approached the *Alcmaeon*, how did you manage that process? Obviously with other plays you had the majority of the text there but with Alcmaeon it is completely fragmented - its just little bits - and you don't know where they've come from and in exactly what context they are meant to be - you don't have a list of characters etc.

CT: Well, we have a few ideas of characters because of the didaskalia which had kinda of descriptions of the plays but there are several *Alcmaeon* plays. l or 2 or 3 are mentioned in it. So we took that and it sort of came from a conversation I had with Edith Hall, which came after the *Bacchae*. I had sort of insisted with Peter Hall with doing the *Bacchae* with just 3 actors playing the protagonists and Edith reflected that it was a very interesting thing to do. So

over a coffee or a drink we were going "so who were those 3 actors?". Obviously one of those actors was really good at playing the tragic female, who would have played Clytemnestra in the *Iphigenia*. One would have been very good at playing the male general, and the other plays the sort of lesser comic parts. And what we did was we worked out who those actors, those imaginary 3 actors would have been in the *Iphigenia*. Then we reconstructed the parts that they would play in a reconstruction of the *Alcmaeon*. So taking that with the idea that in the *Bacchae*, father kills son; in *Iphigenia*, father kills daughter; so we had both of those plots going in the *Alcmaeon*. Ultimately, I don't think you could do the version of *Alcmaeon* I did with just 3 actors playing the protagonists - I think it would be insane.

CP: That was going to be one of my questions - why did you go for more than three actors?

CT: Well that was possibly more of a Shakespearean structure. There's a lot of conscious doubling up - so, the twins are played by one actor - everything has a mirror in it…the various locations…and I used that to create the 3 act structure. I know that kinda goes away - moving location- from the usual thing in Greek tragedy, but on the otherhand it doesn't attempt to be an academic reconstruction. It attempts to be a good fun play and I think it reflects that. But it can't help but be a post-modern new play. And I think the tone of that is quite telling, as it is possibly funnier than some of Euripides' tragedies might have been. But again we thought of the structure, where those 3 plays might be. But again we thought of the structure…and that the *Alcmaeon* comes in the middle, so it is kind of light relief and a reflection on both [plays]. And even the timeshift within it, which goes from afternoon to evening, even works in the daylight used in the plays. So we put a lot of thought into it. Now the fragments…I played fast and loose with them – in the end it became a game of what I could fit in. Though I think the play is really based around one of them. Amphilochus' line which is "why should we have children, father, if they won't care for them in adversity?" I think we more or less made that what the play is all about. This also links in with the two other plays about parents'

relationships with children. And obviously there's huge nods to other plays – there are characters taken from *Ion*. And Edith supplied me with all sorts of brilliant things - so the main chorus which weaves its way throughout, is my translation of a tiny little poem she gave me by a prostitute which I think she refers to in the introduction [to the script]. And I did this translation and Edith really loved it. I've heard several productions of it now and it is set to different airs…it's very beautiful, it just worked really well. So this idea about desire, and the destructiveness of desire which sort of goes against the golden mean. But also the need for desire…there is this lovely balance in Greek- the person without desire is equally as corrupted as the one with too much desire.

CP: In regards to the desire element, for example where Creon lust after his supposed daughter, it reminded me of Phaedra from *Hippolytus*; how she doesn't want the feelings but has them anyway. But you have much more of a comic spin on the subject of desire.

CT: Well that's interesting because Edith showed me something after I'd written it- something else she'd found –an almost rhetorical exercise where artists and writers argue for the taboo. Actually, I think of the opening to *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*, where the brother, I can't remember the name - Giovanni or something - argues with the priest as to why he shouldn't be able to sleep with his sister. It is interesting that Edith was able to point out the whole lineage of this argument. So this is where I sort of kept feeling that it was a strange negotiation between the Shakespearean and the ancient Greek. And I think by having a double plot…it is a bit of a nod to every Greek play ever written. There are nods to *Oedipus* all over it.

CP: Yes, of course. Was that a conscious decision to insert the blinding of Alcmaeon?

CT: Yeah…you realise the moment he realises who he is, he is struck blind. The blinding came from something more than than just *Oedipus.* They [the family of Alcmaeon] are a part

of the House of Oedipus and that the curse that Oedipus had is all linked with future generations.

CP: What was your opinion of fragments before you started working with them and has it changed since you've used them?

CT: No - I mean I had an interest in *Iphigenia*, I'm interested in the post-modern potential of fragments. You know I'm interested in what we interpret into fragments. It provides room for us to recontextualise them and look at them in different ways - you can send them up, or send them down, or just perform fragments and see what stories they tell by being juxtaposed next to each other. So that's what I enjoy, and it's probably quite a post-modern enjoyment of it. But then you know Victorians - the romantics loved ruins didn't they?

CP: They loved fragments in the physical form.

CT: Because there's also a sense of natural erosion - to a certain extent one could argue that, or one would imagine that if the same erosion happened on our culture that it would probably be Shakespeare, or a lot of Shakespeare, that would survive. Probably just his most popular works and I can't imagine a world where every copy of *Cymbeline* survives but *King Lear* is wiped out.

CP: If you could speculate - why didn't the Alcmaeon survive? Any particular reason?

CT: It is interesting that the two plays either side of it survived. I would say lack of popularity, so lack of diffusion.

CP: You don't think there were any themes in it that assisted?

CT: It might have been less clear, you know certainly the way it came out. You know Orestes kills a relative and there's this very grand form of torment. Whereas Alcmaeon just shags around for like 20 years.

CP: And kind of gets away with it for a bit?

CT: Well you know its kinda of like the shagging around is his curse.

CP: Do you ever write for any particular actors, or would you write with a particular type of character in mind, taking influences from modern day and the like?

CT: Well I certainly take influences from modern day - *The Seven Pomegranate Seeds*, was written for Claire Higgins originally. It is involves monologues about modern day events concerning missing children, but every one of them was a Euripides scenario.

CP: There is a very modern tone to the play - was that for the audience or is that just how you like writing?

CT: It is the way it came out I have to say. I didn't mean to… Tone is a tough thing. Stories often find their own tone. This wasn't a contemporary naturalistic world I was dealing with, so to a certain extent it was a case of how do we try to write a po faced Greek tragedy, which would probably have been much funnier than the original *Alcmaeon*. So I suppose it is quite ironic. But that's almost encrypted in the prologue – 'this is a reconstruction'. I mean the other reason I like fragments is in my theatre work I was very interested to explore ephemerality and the ephemeral nature of the theatrical experience, and the emphemerality of desire and the emphemerality of I suppose life and those kind of human relations. But of all, civilisation. It's

interesting – there was a french production in the University of Lille. They did it in English but to them it was all about the ants. They were the ants. That was their whole concept, that they were the ants. And to me that is the big speech, that is THE speech. I mean Michael Billington [the theatre critic] always needs a play explained to him at a certain point. That speech is the one where they tell you what it is all about. They tell you that it is about civilisation, and it is about Greek civilisation. But it is also about performance, and life as an ephemeral performance. Civilisation as an emphemeral thing, and the waxing and waning of it. but that's in the fragmentary nature of it.

CP: Edith Hall states at the beginning of her introduction to the script that the trilogy is almost all about parenthood and its discontents. Would you agree with that comment?

CT: Well you could say childhood and its discontents with parents. I think in each of the plays in the trilogy they use the parent-child relationship in one form or another to look at the relationship between society and its subjects, or people and society, or the personal and the private. And I think that it is really interesting what the nature of the trilogy can give you. You can look at things and then turn it on its head. Euripides was obsessed with it, well maybe all Greek playwrights…or all theatre is about the family. Even *Godot* is about family. I think the Greeks saw every relationship as a struggle. The parent and child one is a struggle, man and woman is a struggle, the person and the state is a struggle, but maybe it was the clear linear way that they saw drama. I think in all their representations [Greek tragedy] that it is all about the struggle.

CP: And now looking back on the play. A number of years have passed since you wrote it. What would you say now are the themes that are coming out of the play? Have they changed?

CT: I think that's one for critics. I don't know, I've not read it for a long time. I don't usually read stuff. I would see different productions. I think it was 2 years ago the last time I saw it. I mean it is interesting. We nearly did a production for the National Theatre in Macedonia and there they saw it very much about their culture. They wanted to reclaim Euripides as he had died there. They also saw it as idea of the ants and civilisation, that civilisation waxes and wanes, and crumbles into fragments and there in a society where you have very radical…That's the thing in a society like England - there's a continuous story of civilisation and development of society. Whereas in somewhere like the Balkans, you have a very ruptured, fragmentary, and very disrupted story, so you have no single narrative. Maybe it changes more with location than context…it's how a good myth works - its something everyone can read themselves or their society into.

CP: Very much like the Persians, for example - people see it from different points of view.

CT: Yeah. It is interesting with this one, I suppose. I've only seen 3 different productions of it. Who one sympathises with? I don't know. The choruses are perhaps more radically different from the Greek originals than anything else. I suppose it is the children really in this one we feel are the victims.