

THE INFLUENCE OF RHETORIC ON FOURTH-CENTURY TRAGEDY

The predominance of the rhetorical spirit in fourth-century tragedy has often been remarked: Aristotle himself explicitly attests the rhetorical character of contemporary dramatic compositions when he says (*Poet.* 6, 1450^b4–8) that the older poets used to present the *dramatis personae* speaking like statesmen¹ whereas the modern poets, οἱ νῦν, present them speaking like rhetoricians: τοῦτο [sc. διάνοια] δέ ἐστιν τὸ λέγειν δύνασθαι τὰ ἐνόντα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα, ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ῥητορικῆς ἔργον ἐστίν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολιτικῶς ἐποιοῦν λέγοντας, οἱ δὲ νῦν ῥητορικῶς.

The antithesis between οἱ ἀρχαῖοι who present their characters talking πολιτικῶς and οἱ νῦν who present them talking ῥητορικῶς points to a fundamental change that actually took place in drama from the last decades of the fifth century onwards: the trend to substitute διάνοια,² namely rationalistic arguments, the intellectual characteristics of the tragic hero, all that can appropriately be said in a given situation (τὰ ἐνόντα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα), for ἥθος, character-sketching. Whereas the 'old' drama of Aeschylus and Sophocles³ revealed primarily ἥθος, Euripides and the fourth-century dramatists, Aristotle says, aimed not so much at full character-drawing as at the expression of διάνοια. Euripides seems to be included in the νῦν: though he had died half a century before the composition of the *Poetics*, the rhetorical features of his drama and its further affinities with fourth-century plays may have rendered him a 'modern'⁴ in the eyes of Aristotle. The distinction, however, between ἥθος and διάνοια must not be taken in an absolute way: the two can coexist and reveal different parts of the tragic hero's personality, namely his moral and intellectual virtues. It cannot therefore be admitted that the Euripidean drama, merely because it excels in

¹ The statement cannot be taken strictly, since it is unthinkable that Sophocles, for instance, represented his characters talking like statesmen. Πολιτικῶς probably implies, as G. F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Leiden, 1957), pp. 265 f., suggests, the combined arts of Ethics and Politics; cf. Lucas's note on 1450^b6.

² Διάνοια, thought, is defined in *Poet.* 6, 1450^a6 f. and 1450^b11 f. as demonstration with arguments, and dealing with generalizations, γινώμαι, on practical questions of ordinary life: cf. the notes by Else (pp. 273 f.) and Lucas ad loc. (1450^b12); in the fuller exposition, 19, 1456^a34–b8, the stirring of emotions is added as a third category of διάνοια. For ἥθος and διάνοια in the *Poetics*, A. M. Dale, *Collected Papers*, (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 139–55. Λέγειν ὡς ἀπὸ διανοίας applies to οἱ νῦν and is contrasted with λέγειν ὡς ἀπὸ προαιρέσεως (i.e. of moral

purpose) in *Rhet.* 3.16, 1417^a24 f. On διάνοια's functions in the *Rhetoric* as compared with those in the *Poetics* see Dale, op. cit., p. 150.

³ For Sophocles' steady development of character-portrayal note the Anon. *V. Soph.* 21 οἶδε δὲ καιρὸν συμμετρήσαι καὶ πράγματα, ὥστ' ἐκ μικροῦ ἡμισιχίου ἢ λέξεως μιᾶς ὄλον ἡσοποιεῖν πρόσωπον.

⁴ Euripides is often classed among the 'moderns' in the *Poetics*: apart from the present case (1450^b8, cf. Bywater and Lucas ad loc., J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1934), 1.114), note also 1450^a25 (with Bywater's note ad loc.); but in 13, 1453^a18 ff. Else, op. cit., p. 390, seems to be right to include Sophocles in οἱ νῦν; and in 14, 1453^b28 Euripides appears to be included in οἱ παλαιοί: cf. J. D. Denniston, *CR* 43 (1929), 60, Else, op. cit., p. 418 n. 29.

the display of *διάνοια*, offers no cases of masterly character-portrayal;¹ or that fourth-century tragedy excluded the delineation of *ἦθος*.²

But what is the reason for this radical change in dramatic poetry? The education of some of the most distinguished fourth-century playwrights, Astydamas,³ Aphareus,⁴ and especially, Theodectes,⁵ in rhetorical schools can partly explain such a shift. Undoubtedly, the high development of the rhetorical art in this age could not but affect tragedy, but the principles of the sophistic-rhetorical movement, as embodied already in the drama of Euripides, seem to have intensified the rhetorical propensities of fourth-century dramatists.

Among the Sophists, Gorgias, the foremost stylist and one keenly interested in tragic drama,⁶ has a special interest for the student of fourth-century rhetorical development: his highly artificial prose with its far-fetched stylistic effects was transformed by Isocrates, his most distinguished pupil,⁷ into what the latter called a style *ποικίλον, ποιητικόν, εὐρυθμον καὶ μουσικόν*.⁸ Isocrates, as the master of Astydamas and Theodectes,⁹ the main representatives of rhetoric in the tragedy of the age, seems to provide a link between rhetorical development and fourth-century dramatic poetry: his pursuit of a refined, elaborate style with carefully chosen words and well-constructed sentences seems to accord with that of contemporary playwrights.¹⁰

Though the meagre fragmentary preservation of fourth-century tragedy can hardly illustrate the influence of rhetoric in all its extent, some indications of such an influence are given by the fragments themselves or attested by various testimonia.

Despite the shortage of evidence, dramatic debates, *ἀγῶνες λόγων*, either in their ordinary form between two tragic characters or formulated in a dramatic scene of legal procedure, are implied in several fourth-century fragments. The scenes of debate and argument in Euripidean drama, with their sophistic and rhetorical overtones, must have provided an ideal model for this dramatic practice. J. Duchemin surveying the debates in minor plays, notes:¹¹ Chaerephon's

¹ Especially in early plays, like the *Medea*, *Alcestis*, *Hippolytus*. Nevertheless, the rhetorical features of Euripidean tragedy are recognized by ancient authorities: Ar. *Pax* 534, Quintil. 10.1.68, Dio Chrys. *or.* 18.

² 'Αἰθεὶς used (*Poet.* 6, 1450^a 25) for character-portrayal in fourth-century tragedy seems unlikely to mean 'completely characterless'. It most likely implies the indisputable decline in full delineation of character which started from the later plays of Euripides; cf. Lucas on 1450^a 24.

³ Sud. s.v. α4265 (Hsch.) . . . ἀκροασάμενος ἦν Ἰσοκράτους καὶ ἐτράπη ἐπὶ τραγῳδίᾳ.

⁴ Sud. s.v. α4556 (Hsch.); [Plut.] *vit. X orat.* 4.16.838 B, 839 C: A. wrote rhetorical speeches and won an *ἀντίδοσις* (change of fortune) procedure.

⁵ Sud. s.v. θ138 (Hsch.) . . . *ρήτωρ, τραπεὶς δὲ ἐπὶ τραγῳδίας, μαθητὴς Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἰσοκράτους καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους*. Steph. Byz. s.v. *Φασηλῆς*; [Plut.] *op. cit.* 837 C; Phot. *bibl.* 260

p.486 b 40.

⁶ Cf. R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford, 1968), pp.46 f.

⁷ Cf. Aristotle in Quintil. 3.1.13, Cic. *Or.* 176.

⁸ Cf. 5.27, 13.16, 15.47: Isocrates on his own style. For his adaptation and development of the structure and style of Gorgias' speeches see Webster, *Art and Literature in Fourth Century Athens*, pp.12 f.; for his corrections of Gorgias' views, intended as an answer to Plato's criticism against rhetoric, see recently J. Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Harvard, 1975), pp.52 ff.

⁹ See above, notes 3, 5.

¹⁰ Cf. Chaerephon's fragments and some other pleasantly written ones, like Theodect. 6, 8, Astyd. 5, 8, Moschion 4, 6, 7, 9, Carc. 5N². See recently G. Xanthakis-Karamanos, 'Studies in Fourth Century Tragedy' (Ph.D. Thesis, U.C.L., 1976), Chs. V, VI.

¹¹ *L'Agôn dans la tragédie grecque*², pp.105 f.

Achilles Thersitoctonus, Carcinus' *Medea*, Theodectes' *Helen*, the *Thyestes* of Diogenes of Sinope, and Moschion's *Pheraioi*. Some further instances, especially from Theodectes, are to be added here: the *Ajax*, *Alcmeon*, *Orestes*, the *Lynceus*, and the unnamed fr. 10. These are not only instances of debates in the strict sense but also speeches of self-justification and dialogues involving no opponents.

Another expression of the influence of prose on dramatic poetry concerns the language of tragedy itself. Divested of the poetical ornament of Aeschylus and Sophocles, tragic wording became prosaic, resembling ordinary diction, as used in the Assembly or the lawcourts. Moschion's attempt to recall, to some extent, the impetuous grandeur of Aeschylean verse, and Chaeremon's flowery and elaborate style¹ seem to have been exceptional. This lowering of the language of tragedy to the level of prosaic speeches is explicitly attested by Aristotle² while the fourth-century tragedian Cleophon is said to have used a low (*ταπεινή*) diction, made up of common words (*κύρια ὀνόματα*).³ Aristotle also informs us that the simple, natural language which approaches that of prose and common conversation and was first introduced by Euripides—in his later plays in particular—exerted a wide influence.⁴ The specimens of New Comedy clearly show it as well as the most complete importation of colloquial language.

The desire to stir the audience's emotions seems to have been a common aim of rhetoric and tragedy. Aristotle includes among the categories of *διάνοια* (*Poet.* 19, 1456^a34–b8) the producing of emotions such as pity, fear, anger, and the like. The arousing of emotions appears to have been a prime aim both of fifth-century tragedy and of plays contemporary with Aristotle. As regards the function of *διάνοια* in rhetoric and tragedy, Aristotle's important distinction (*Poet.* 19, 1456^b5–8), that dramatic characters convey the tragic emotions to the audience not like orators by *διδασκαλία*, conscious art, but unconsciously, without explanation, *ἄνευ διδασκαλίας*, may imply an attack against the tendency of modern playwrights, and, at the same time, practising rhetoricians to apply to tragedy the arousing of emotions in the manner in which these are produced by an orator.⁵

It may be relevant to the application of this rhetorical principle in fourth-century tragedy that Theodectes was concerned to define the effect which each part of a rhetorical speech should have on the audience: good will in the prooemium, trust in the narration, conviction in the proof, and either recapitulation for recalling to memory or the emotions of rage or pity in the epilogue.⁶

¹ On the style of Moschion and Chaeremon see G. Xanthakis-Karamanos, op. cit., in the commentaries on the fragments from their plays. For an earlier discussion on Chaeremon cf. C. Collard, *JHS* 90 (1970), 22–34.

² *Rhet.* 3.1, 1404^a28 ff. καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀφέλκασιν [sc. οἱ τὰς τραγωδίας ποιῶντες] ὅσα παρὰ τὴν διάλεκτόν ἐστιν . . .

³ *Poet.* 22, 1458^a18 ff.; ibid. 2, 1448^a11 f. We are told that Cleophon's characters were on the level of everyday people, his work being put under the head of *ψιλομετρία*, verse without music, a kind approaching prose writing (cf. 1, 1447^a29 λόγοι ψιλοί). In *Rhet.* 3.7, 1408^a14 f., his

compositions, lacking the adaptation of language to subject, are said to have had the appearance of mere comedy.

⁴ *Rhet.* 3.2, 1404^b24 f. Cf. also the author of the *On the Sublime*, 40.2, who remarked that Euripides only by the composition of words, using common language, achieves dignity, distinction, and an effect of grandeur. However, Euripides' smooth style is considered to be difficult to imitate: *A.P.* vii 50.1–4. On this drastic change in tragic diction cf. also *Ar. Ran.* 939–41, 959.

⁵ Cf. Else, op. cit., p.566.

⁶ *Arist. fr.* 133 R² (Teubner, Stuttgart, 1966) = Anon. proleg. rhetor. VI. 19W, VII. 33W.

It seems therefore plausible to suggest with T.B.L. Webster¹ that any dramatist of the age with a rhetorical training could regard tragedy as a kind of rhetoric, an organic composition aimed at arousing the appropriate emotions in the audience at every stage.

Theodectes is not a unique case. The origin of the practice of stirring the emotions goes back to fifth-century developments, and for this very reason Euripides is called *τραγικώτατος τῶν ποιητῶν* (*Poet.* 13, 1453^a30).² Gorgias (*Hel.* 9) remarks that poetry is close to speech and describes the extremely powerful emotions which the former arouses in the listeners;³ Thrasy machus of Chalcedon (fl. 430–400 B.C.), said by Plato (*Phdr.* 267 c–d; cf. Hermias ad loc. = 85B6 (II 325, 18 ff.) DK) to be the master in arousing pity in the audience, had written the *Eleoi* (Arist. *Rhet.* 3.1, 1404^a15), a special treatise on arousing the passions of the listeners. Similarly, the greatest thinkers of the fourth century, Plato (in the *Phaedrus*)⁴ and Aristotle (in the *Rhetoric*)⁵ regard the knowledge of the audience's psychology and the stirring of the appropriate emotions as a prerequisite of the function of the orator and his success in each particular case. Accordingly, Theodectes, Plato, and Aristotle, must have been well aware of previous views of the power of speech, and distinctly represents the orientation of tragedy towards rhetoric.

Theodectes, a professional orator himself,⁶ is the main representative of the rhetorical trends in fourth-century tragedy. Aristotle's frequent quotations from his plays, especially in the *Rhetoric*, all illustrating methods of argument, point to the prominently rhetorical character of his drama. Though, as so often in fourth-century tragedy, we have here less evidence than we should like, various traits of rhetoric are conspicuous in almost every preserved fragment of his plays. For this very reason, much of what remains of Theodectes' drama is divided here according to its possession of different rhetorical features: *legal distinctions*, uttered by *dramatis personae*, which differentiate the nature of the deed and the personality of the doer, *dramatic debates*, and, more specifically, *scenes of dramatic trial* provide the criteria for such a division.

Besides the fragments from the plays of Theodectes, rhetorical features are involved in other excerpts from fourth-century tragedy, which will also be discussed here.

¹ *Hermes* 82 (1954), 308; cf. *Art and Literature in Fourth Century Athens*², pp. 67 f.

² Cf. also Quintil. 10.1.68, Dio Chrys. or. 18.

³ On the systematic study of emotions by Gorgias and other masters of rhetoric as well as on the assimilation of rhetoric to poetry and their reciprocal influence see Romilly, op. cit., pp. 5 ff.

⁴ 260 a, 260 c; *ψυχαγωγία* in 261 a and 271 c denotes the method of influencing mens minds. On this term and its application in magic, tragedy, and rhetoric see Romilly, op. cit., pp. 15, 74.

⁵ In 2.1, 1377^b 23 f. the phrase *καὶ*

αὐτὸν ποῖόν τινα καὶ τὸν κριτὴν κατασκευάζειν means 'to establish (i.e. the orator) a certain character in and by the speech, and a certain feeling in the minds of the judges' (Cope ad loc.). The various emotional situations (*πάθη*) created in the souls of the listeners are analysed (1–11); among them, fear (2.5, 1382^a 21 ff.) and pity (2.8, 1385^b 13 ff., 1386^a 5 ff.). In the third book (13–19) there are enumerated the basic feelings which each part of a rhetorical speech should arouse.

⁶ Cicero (*Or.* 172) praises Theodectes as an orator.

A. LEGAL DISTINCTIONS

The *Alcmeon* and *Orestes* of Theodectes

In the *Rhetoric* (2.23, 1397^b ff.; cf. *Comm. in Aristot. Gr.* XXI 2, 134, 17 ff.), in discussing the argument drawn from mutual relations of notions, ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα, Aristotle uses some lines of stichomythia from Theodectes' *Alcmeon* to illustrate the distinction required between the act and the identity of the actor. The speakers are Alcmeon and his wife Alpheisiboea (fr. 2N²/Sn).

ΑΛΦ. μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν οὐτις ἐστύγει βροτῶν;

ΑΛΚ. ×-ὀ ἀλλὰ διαλαβόντα χρή σκοπεῖν.

ΑΛΦ. πῶς . . . ;

ΑΛΚ. τὴν μὲν θανεῖν ἔκριναν, ἐμὶ δὲ μὴ κτανεῖν.

Aristotle in the statement which he has made earlier, namely that if the sufferer's misfortune is admitted to be fair and just, the doer's act must accordingly have been fair and just (1397^a27 ff.), identifies a fallacy: such general considerations omit a separate investigation of the particular circumstances, not only whether the sufferer deserves to suffer but also whether the doer has the right (ἄξιος) to commit the act. In Alcmeon's case the close blood-ties which bind the sufferer and the doer deny the latter the right to inflict the deserved punishment. Thus, to Alpheisiboea's attempt to justify the crime on the grounds that Eriphyle was probably a hateful person, Alcmeon reacts by expressing the discrimination required: one must first distinguish (διαλαβόντα) and then consider the case.

Such a distinction between the nature of the deed and the character of the doer, appropriate rather to a forensic statement¹ than to dramatic language, is also well illustrated by an instance drawn from the *Orestes*. The act of matricide in both stories was appropriate for such differentiations. The short specimen from this play illustrates a fallacy of division (*Rhet.* 2.24, 1401^a35 ff.): ἡ τὸ ἐν τῷ Ὁρέστῃ τῷ Θεοδόκτῳ· ἐκ διαιρέσεως γὰρ ἐστὼν·

δίκαιόν ἐστὼν, ἥτις ἂν κτείνῃ πόσῳ (fr. 5N²/Sn.),

ἀποθνήσκειν ταύτην, καὶ τῷ πατρὶ γε τιμωρεῖν τὸν υἱόν.² οὐκοῦν καὶ ταῦτα ἃ πέπρακται· συντεθέντα γὰρ ἴσως οὐκέτι δίκαιον. εἴη δ' ἂν καὶ παρὰ τὴν ἑλλειψιν· ἀφαιρεῖται γὰρ τὸ ὑπὸ τίνος.

A stronger case of the same argument, in very similar language, is uttered by Hecuba in *E. Tr.* 1031 f.: νόμον δὲ τόνδε . . . θὲς/γυναιξὶ θνήσκειν ἥτις ἂν προδῶ πόσῳ. The general sentiment in both passages distinctly points to the concept of male supremacy.³

In our fragment, as Aristotle remarks, if the two statements (δίκαιον . . . ταύτην, καὶ τῷ πατρὶ . . . τὸν υἱόν) are combined, the syllogism is no longer right: Orestes, as the son of his father's murderess, was no longer the right person to

¹ E. M. Cope, n. ad loc.

² Snell, *TGF*, quoting the fragment (p.232), has assumed from the context as a second line <ταύτην θανεῖν, υἱὸν τε τιμωρεῖν πατρὶ>.

³ The concept is archaic tracing its origin from Athena's birth from Zeus (*A. Eum.*

664 ff., 736 ff.); it provides a common dramatic motif (note esp. the justification of Orestes' act in *A. Eum.* 625 ff., 602, 606, 658 ff., *E. Or.* 552-4, 562-3), and is also reflected in fourth-century rhetorical texts (Is. iii.64, x.19; Dem. *Neair.* (lxi) 122).

avenge the murder. Apart from division, the fallacious argument here is also due to omission since the doer, τὸ ὑπὸ τίνος, is omitted. Highly significant for the dramatic situation involved in this fragment is the clever—indeed sophistic—argument, probably propounded by Orestes himself in his defence, when on trial for his mother's murder. Similar differentiations between the act, i.e. the infliction of the punishment, and the actor, namely the son who inflicts it to his own mother, seem to appeal to Euripides: in the *Electra* Castor addressing Orestes admits Clytemestra's homicide but denies her son's claim to avenge it (1244): δίκαια μὲν νυν ἦδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾶς [sc. δίκαια]. In the *Orestes* also, the rightness of the deed and the wrongness of the doer are given emphasis. Tyndareus, though acknowledging that his daughter deserved death, remarks that it was not right that she should have been put to death by her son (538–9).

The parallel phraseology in these plays of the late fifth and fourth centuries seems to point to a kind of moral sensitivity which must have started in the late fifth century.¹ The distinction between the particular act and the particular actor, besides its legal character, conveys a moral regard for each separate case, while the indiscriminate acceptance of a simple reciprocity between right suffering and right acting, apart from the logical mistakes it involves, would be in conflict with morality and justice.

B. DRAMATIC DEBATES

The *Alcmeon* and *Ajax* of Theodectes; the *Pheraioi* of Moschion

The fragment from the *Alcmeon*, discussed above, seems to come from a debate in stichomythia² between Alcmeon and Alpheisiboea. We have to remember here that a rhetorical conflict in tragedy is not necessarily imposed by feelings of hostile opposition.³

Alpheisiboea's presence in this passage provides a certain clue for the action: having slain his mother Eriphyle, and being driven mad by the Erinyes, Alcmeon flees Argos and comes at last to Psophis in Arcadia where he is purified by King Phegeus—the distinction involved in the last phrase of the fragment suggests a sane person—and marries the king's daughter Alpheisiboea or Arsinoe. This stage of the story was the theme of E. *Alcmeon through Psophis*, S. *Alcmeon*, the original of Accius *Alcimeo*,⁴ and the *Alpheisiboea* plays of Achaëus, Chaeremon, Timotheus,⁵ and Accius (71–82R³).

We know enough about the *Ajax* to say that Theodectes liked rhetorical debates in which the characters could show, like sophists at school, how very clever they were. The rhetorical overtones of this play are illustrated by two explicit quotations again in the *Rhetoric*, and probably by another implicit in the same work. In the first (2.23, 1399^b29 ff.), cases from this *Ajax* and Antiphon's *Meleager* are used as examples of the different interpretation of a

¹ The same sensitivity seems to be reflected also in other fourth-century plays which involve remarkable deviations from fifth-century dramatic treatments: see below p.74 and n.4.

² On this form of debate, which is frequent in Sophocles and Euripides, see Duchemin, op. cit., pp.217 ff.

³ Note the ἀγών in E. *Hel.* 865–1029: Duchemin, op. cit., p.75 and n.2,

C. Collard, *GR* 22 (1975), 69. On the question in general see also Dale, op. cit., p.151.

⁴ E. *Alcmeon* according to F. Leo, *Gesch. röm. Lit.* (1967), p.396.

⁵ Snell, *TGF*, pp.119, 216 (on the plays by Achaëus and Chaeremon), A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *New Chapters* III.75 (on Timotheus' *Alpheisiboea*).

fact according to the interests of two opposite sides: καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Αἴαντος τοῦ Θεοδέκτου, ὅτι ὁ Διομήδης προεἰλετο Ὀδυσσέα οὐ τιμῶν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἤττων ᾦ ὁ ἀκολουθῶν· ἐνδέχεται γὰρ τούτου ἕνεκα ποιῆσαι . . . (cf. Anon. ad *Comm. in Aristot. Gr.* XXI 2, 141, 27 ff.). The passage expresses the core of the opposite arguments of the two competitors, Ajax and Odysseus. These two attribute to the fact ὁ Διομήδης προεἰλετο Ὀδυσσέα entirely opposite intentions: Odysseus must have referred to the high esteem (τιμῶν) implied by Diomedes when he chose him from all the Greeks to be his companion in the hazardous expedition to Troy by night (Hom. *Il.* 10.242 ff., Ov. *Met.* 13.241). Ajax seems to have retorted that the real motive for Diomedes' choice was a desire that his attendant might be inferior to himself.

The second passage (1400^a27 ff.) seems to be part of Odysseus' argument: καὶ οἶον ἐν τῷ Αἴαντι τῷ Θεοδέκτου Ὀδυσσεὺς λέγει πρὸς τὸν Αἴαντα διότι ἀνδρείωτερος ὢν τοῦ Αἴαντος οὐ δοκεῖ. The topic concerns the explanation of the cause of a mistaken notion. Odysseus states to Ajax the reason why, though braver than Ajax, he is not thought to be so. Unfortunately, the actual cause of the mistaken opinion (the paradox) is not mentioned.

The same dramatic incident is probably implied later on in the *Rhetoric* (3.15, 1416^b12 ff.), though this time Theodectes' play is not named: οἶον ὅτι Διομήδης τὸν Ὀδυσσέα προεἰλετο, τῷ μὲν ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἄριστον ὑπολαμβάνειν τὸν Ὀδυσσέα, τῷ δ' ὅτι οὐ, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μόνον μὴ ἀνταγωνιστεῖν ὡς φαῦλον. As in the first quotation from the *Rhetoric* discussed above, two quite opposite explanations are applied to the motive behind Diomedes' choosing Odysseus. Προεἰλετο—referring to this fact—significantly occurs in both passages; Odysseus' argument is again based on his superior merit among the Greeks, ἄριστος—cf. τιμῶν in 1399^b30. For Ajax, however, the choice was due to Odysseus' worthlessness, since he was the only one of the heroes whose rivalry Diomedes did not fear: φαῦλος here is much stronger than ἤττων in 1399^b30.

On the basis of this evidence it seems safe to suggest that this play contained an ἀγὼν between Odysseus and Ajax for the arms of Achilles, the traditional ὁπλῶν κρίσις.¹ The theme, derived from the Μικρὰ Ἰλιάς (cf. *Poet.* 23, 1459^b5), was first treated by Aeschylus (frr. 174–78N², Mette, pp.102 ff.), and in the fourth century, possibly also by Carcinus (fr. 1a Snell, *TGF*, p.211): the dialogue-form of the preserved fragment, naming Odysseus and Ajax, supports this suggestion.

What is known from Moschion's *Pheraioi* is as follows: one fragment (3N²/Sn. ap. Stob. 4.57.3), explicitly said to belong to Moschion's historical play,

κενὸν θανόντος ἀνδρὸς αἰκίζεω σκιάν·
ζῶντας κολάζειν, οὐ θανόντας εὐσεβές

the following unnamed passage (fr. 7N²/Sn. ap. Stob. 4.57.14)

τί κέρδος οὐκέτ' ὄντας αἰκίζεω νεκρούς;
τί τὴν ἀναυδον γαῖαν ὑβρίζεω πλέον;
ἐπὶ γὰρ ἡ κρίνουσα καὶ θῆδiona
καὶ τὰνιὰρὰ φροῦδος αἰσθησις φθαρῇ,
τὸ σῶμα κωφῶ τάξω εἵληφεν πέτρον

¹ For the competition between these heroes in a purely rhetorical form cf. the fictitious orations Αἶας and Ὀδυσσεὺς by

Antisthenes the Sophist in *Art. Script.* B XIX II.12 Raderm.; see Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.37 and n.2.

and the long account of human progress (fr. 6N²/Sn. *ap.* Stob. 1.8.38), especially its last four verses (30–3)

κακ τοῦδε τοὺς θανόντας ὥρισεν νόμος
τύμβοις καλύπτειν κἀπιμοιρᾶθαι κόνιν
νεκροῖς ἀθάπτοις, μηδ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔαν
τῆς πρόσθε θούης μνημόνευμα δυσσεβοῦς.

The last two passages develop the same idea of the respect for the dead as the certain fragment from the *Pheraioi*, and are with strong probability assigned to this play.¹ As regards especially the third excerpt, so well defined a theme at the end of a rationalistic account of cultural advance points to a dramatic situation concerned with a vigorous opposition to a refusal of obsequies. These fragments, as they stand, seem to be parts of a dialogue in the form of an ἀγών λόγων: the first of the interlocutors must have refused someone obsequies and the second one in his reply, to which these fragments seem to belong, stressed the impiety and vanity involved in such a decision. The theme, however, of the play is not certainly known. It has been assumed either that Alexander, the tyrant of Pherae, refused the obsequies of Polyphron,² whom he had slain and succeeded to the throne (X. *H.G.* 6.4.34.5) or—this is the assumption of the majority of scholars—that the successor of Alexander denied the dead tyrant his due honour.³

C. SCENES OF DRAMATIC TRIAL

The *Orestes*, *Lynceus*, and *Helen* of Theodectes; the *Medea* of Carcinus

The fragments of Theodectes seem to contain a further form of rhetorical contest in which forensic display is expressed in a type of lawcourt procedure. In general, the dramatic conflict between two characters in a play is very strongly outlined in a dialectical controversy between the dramatic prosecutor and the dramatic defendant usually pleading before a third person who judges them. Litigiousness was one of the most prominent traits of the Greek, and especially the Athenian, character, and the Athenians found in such dramatic situations a reflection of their everyday practice.

Orestes, as has been suggested above,⁴ may have advanced the argument quoted in the *Rhetoric* in his attempt to justify his matricide during the trial for his impious act. Orestes' trial may have been dramatized by Carcinus also: from the sole evidence (fr. 1g Sn., *TGF*, p.213 = Paus. att. k 15 Erbse) for his *Orestes* we are told that the hero was compelled to admit his crime.

The *Lynceus* of Theodectes seems to have dealt with the anger of Danaus at his daughter's disobedience. Hypermestra was the only one of the king's daughters who saved her husband Lynceus, son of Aegyptus, despite her father's order to kill him (Hyg. fab. 168). What is known of the play from the *Poetics*

¹ On the attribution esp. of fr. 7 to the *Pheraioi* cf. Duchemin, *op. cit.*, p.106, and for the ascription of also the passage on progress to this play cf. O. Ribbeck, *RbM* 30 (1875), 159, O. Ravenna, *RSA* 7 (1903), 762 ff.

² Thus A. Meineke, *Monatsber. Berl. Akad. Sitzung der phil. histor. Klasse* (1855),

p.106.

³ Ribbeck, *op. cit.*, pp.155 ff.; F. Schramm, *Tragicorum graecorum hellenisticae quae dicitur aetatis fragmenta* (Diss. Münster, 1929), p.68; C. Del Grande, *TPAΓΩΙΔΙΑ*², pp.188 ff.

⁴ p.71.

suggests that it contained a semblance of a legal procedure. In *Poet.* 11, 1452^a27 ff., where this tragedy is mentioned with Sophocles' *O.T.* as an instance of *περιπέτεια*, ἡ εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τῶν πραττομένων μεταβολή, it is said that the hero Lynceus 'is being led off to die while Danaus [his father-in-law] is following to put him to death; but in consequence of wholly unknown events, the former is saved and the latter killed.' From *Poet.* 18, 1455^b29 ff., where the *Lynceus* is mentioned as an example of *δέσις*, complication, and *λύσις*, resolution, of the plot, we know that in this play the *δέσις* consists of the previous events, while the *λύσις* begins with the accusation of murder, and lasts to the end of the tragedy. On the basis of this evidence the trial scene is clearly shaped: Lynceus must be the defendant since it was he who was being led away to execution when the *περιπέτεια* occurred; Danaus was most probably the accuser because it was he who persecuted Lynceus¹ intending to secure his execution and was finally slain² in Lynceus' stead in the course of the *περιπέτεια*.

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (2.23, 1400^b9 ff.) Carcinus' *Medea* is mentioned to exemplify mistakes which can be made both in accusation and defence: 'Medea is accused of killing her children since they cannot be found anywhere; because she made the mistake of sending them away. In her self-defence she replies that it was not her children, but Jason, that she would have killed; for she would have made a mistake in failing to kill Jason, if she had killed the children.' A trial scene is most likely to have taken place. Creon and Jason may have been the prosecutors while Medea was the defendant, as Aristotle clearly attests: οἱ μὲν κατηγοροῦσιν . . . ἡ δ' ἀπολογεῖται.

Carcinus' deviation from Euripides implies a direct criticism of the Medea-story as handled by the most tragic of the poets. This early fourth-century poet seems to have smoothed away what was felt to be shocking in the Euripidean version and made his heroine less hateful and more humane and sensitive. Aristotle's criticism of the *μυαρόν* involved in Euripides' *Medea*³ may reveal a coincidence of views with Carcinus as regards the fifth-century depiction of this tragic deed. The same sentiment of humanity and moral sensitivity mentioned above⁴ probably induced Carcinus to depict Medea as not only incapable of a deliberate murder of close kin but also concealing her children possibly in order to protect them from murder threatened by other people.⁵

¹ On the other hand, Pausanias, 2.19.6, quotes a version in which Hypermestra, and not Lynceus, was brought to justice by Danaus because of her disobedience.

² A picture on a Lucanian vase of the second quarter of the fourth century B.C. (A. D. Trendall and T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London, 1971), iii.6.3), which shows at the foot of an Ionic column a bearded man in stage costume (Danaus?) about to be slain by a negroid-looking youth with a sword (Lynceus?) while a woman and a boy (Hypermestra, Abas?—the son of the couple) carry off pieces of a throne, may illustrate the dethronement and murder of Danaus. For Danaus' throne in the temple of Apollo Lycius see Paus. 2.19.5, and for his column ibid. 2.19.7.

³ Cf. the associated passage in *Poet.* 14, 1453^b27–39.

⁴ p. 71. Further similar deviations in fourth-century tragedy point to this mild sentimentality. In Astydamas' *Alcmeon* the hero killed his mother not consciously, as in fifth-century treatments of the story, but in ignorance of her identity, and recognized the relationship afterwards (*Poet.* 14, 1453^b29–34). In Carcinus' *Alope* Cercyon, Alope's father, instead of killing his daughter for having been seduced, as in Euripides' play, committed suicide (*E.N.* 7.8, 1150^b6 ff., with the scholiasts' notes ad loc.). See also G. Xanthakis-Karamanos, op. cit., Ch. II.

⁵ According to various traditions Medea's children were killed by the Corinthians who either were impatient of obeying a foreign

As regards Theodectes' *Helen*, the form of the short fragment preserved (3N²/Sn.) seems again to imply a dramatic self-defence. Aristotle in the *Politics* uses the following example from the *Helen* (1.6, 1255^a37 ff.), when he admits that, despite the divergence between natural slavery which is recognized by common sense and slavery by right of war, conventional slavery, which is denied by many people, there is a general consensus that superiority in virtue justifies the owning and controlling of slaves.

θείων δ' ἅπ' ἀμφοῖν ἔκγονον ριζωμάτων
τίς ἂν προσειπεῖν ἀξιώσειεν λάτρῳ;

Λάτρῳ, 'slave', (cf. E. Tr. 1106) referring to Helen, as her divine origin suggests, points to the moment when Helen, like the Trojan women, was captured by the Greeks after the fall of Troy. The heroine seems to reject the charge of slavery made against her by invoking her divine descent.¹ This directly points to the *Troades* when Helen, a prisoner of the Greeks, having heard Menelaus speaking of his right to kill her (901–2), slips in an apology in which she shifts all the responsibility for the war onto the gods (914–65). Sophistic rationalism, replacing the motives known from the myth, is reflected in Helen's arguments, which are to be rebutted immediately afterwards by Hecuba (969–1032). Similarly, in Theodectes' play Helen is pleading her own cause after the accusations made against her, possibly by Menelaus.² As to the presence of a third person in the debate, nothing is verifiable from this passage. Another fragment, however, of Theodectes (10N²/Sn. ap. Stob. 3.10.8) seems to be of some help.

ὦ καλλιφεγγῇ λαμπάδ' εἰλίσσων φλογός
Ἥλιε, ποθεὼν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις σέλας,
εἶδές τιν' ἄλλον πώποτ' εἰς οὕτω μέγαν
ἐλθόντ' ἀγῶνα καὶ δυσέκφευκτον κρίσω;
ὅπου κατηγορεῖ μὲν ἐν λόγοισί μου
γυνή, πρὸς δὲ εἶρηκε, τυγχάνει πόσις,
κρατοῦσι δ' οἶπερ καὶ κατηγοροῦσί μου.

Forensic competition is alluded to by such technical terms as ἀγῶνα, κρίσω, κατηγορεῖ, κατηγοροῦσί μου, ἐν λόγοισι (probably meaning 'through speaking debate'), which are remarkably frequent in so few lines. Moreover, the threefold rhetorical contest is distinctly implied by the speaker's naming the two prosecutors: a woman and a man (5–6).

From all the known plays of Theodectes this unnamed passage more likely belongs to the *Helen*.³ The threefold ἀγών of the *Troades*, which may find an echo in the *Helen*-fragment, appears to be clearly shaped here: Helen, the

sorceress or wished to avenge the murder of Creon and Glauke: Σ E. Med. 9, 264; Paus. 2.3.6; Apollod. 1.9.28. Cf. D. L. Page, *Euripides Medea* (Oxford, 1961), pp.xxiii–xxv.

¹ Cf. Duchemin, op. cit., p.106; Snell, *TGF*, ad loc., p.231: 'Helena captiva loqui videtur'.

² Cf. Duchemin, loc. cit.

³ Snell (*TGF*, p.235 n.10) assumed the *Alcmeon*, and C. Del Grande (*Dioniso* (1934), pp.200, 209) the *Orestes*. But neither the mythological sources nor the dramatic treatments of the stories of Alcmeon and Orestes allude to a debate involving three persons and in such a relation as that which is explicitly referred to in our fragment.

defendant, is complaining about the accusations made against her by her own husband, *τυγχάνει πόσις*¹ (6), and a woman, possibly Hecuba, who must have previously accused her to Menelaus, as the *εἴρηκε* implies.

Athens

GEORGIA XANTHAKIS-KARAMANOS

¹ The pronoun *μου* may have been omitted either for metrical reasons or for euphony, since it occurs both in the previous and the next verse. Moreover, often in

tragedy, *πόσις* occurs without *μου*—or any other pronoun—whenever the meaning allows it; cf. *E. Alc.* 36, 233, 464, *Andr.* 8–9, 33, 205, 456, *Tr.* 730, *El.* 61.