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HOW LIKE A WOMAN: ANTIGONE'S 'INCONSISTENCY'

The problem of the genuineness of Antigone's lines *Ant.* 904–20 has never been satisfactorily resolved.[1] The passage has been vehemently impugned for more than a century and a half; yet the majority of editors print it without brackets, and probably the majority of scholars accept it.[2] This stalemate is aggravated by the manner in which the argument has traditionally been conducted.

On the one hand, those who impugn the lines have employed an illegitimately two-pronged attack. Having first determined that the lines are undesirable because of their sentiment, they have then and only then brought to bear a series of philologically-based charges, as if to place the matter on an apparently scientific footing; but these philological arguments would probably never have been mustered if the lines had not been regarded first as suspect on other grounds, and in any case are without decisive force, as the retention of the lines in modern editions suggests.[3]

On the other hand, there has been a general failure on the part of the defenders of the lines to put forward a strong positive case for their genuineness. Traditional defences have had rather a desperate quality, accepting the lines *faute de mieux* and on external grounds (because they are in the manuscripts and known to Aristotle, for example) and then trying to account for their embarrassing presence;[4] even defences which claim not to be doing this, as we shall see, tacitly accept the key charge of the attackers, that the sentiment of the lines is troublesome. It is the object of the present paper, by revising our understanding of their context, to replace the traditional means of defence by a demonstration that the lines are in fact necessary and desirable as they stand.[5]

[1] This paper had its genesis as a talk first delivered at Swarthmore College, in November 1984, and since delivered, in various forms, at a meeting of the California Classical Association in Los Angeles, at Hobart College, at the University of Iowa, and at Cornell University; and I am grateful for questions and criticisms from many people, too numerous to mention individually, on these various occasions. I am particularly indebted to the encouragement and careful criticism of Professors Gordon M. Kirkwood and Phillip Mitsis, without whose help I should never have dared to submit it in written form to the sphere of larger scholarly debate; the usual disclaimer is in order, that the final form and details of argumentation are entirely my own responsibility.

[2] The standard bibliography, tallying the votes of every scholar who has treated the question, is D. A. Hester, 'Sophocles the Unphilosophical', *Mnem.* 24 (1971), 11–59; see Sheila Murnaghan, '*Antigone* 904–920 and the Institution of Marriage', *AJP* 107 (1986), 192–207, for additional citations (since 1971). The most recent condemnation of the lines known to me is Andrew Brown's commentary on the play (Warminster, 1987). R. D. Dawe, in his new Teubner edition (1979), prints the lines without brackets, and I am informed by the editors of *CQ* that Hugh Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson will do likewise in the forthcoming OCT. It is interesting that, whereas it has been many decades since a standard edition has dared to bracket the lines, commentators (who can back up their printed text with lengthy verbal justification) have had no such hesitation.

[3] The traditional points of philological argumentation pro and con are catalogued, and their respective values weighed, by T. A. Szlezák, 'Bemerkungen zur Diskussion um Sophokles, *Antigone* 904–920', *RhM* 124 (1981), 108–42.

[4] As Gerhard Müller puts it, the lines are regarded as 'schlecht, aber echt' (*Sophokles: Antigone* [Heidelberg, 1987], p. 200).

[5] See Roland Barthes, 'Criticism as Language' (*TLS* [27 Sept. 1963], 739f.). As Barthes says, the job of criticism is to evolve the linguistic tools for rendering a systematic and coherent account of the language of the author under consideration; criticism's aim is one of

The kernel of the issue is still contained in the famous remark which Goethe made to Eckermann in the decade which saw the beginning of the controversy: the passage in question reflects 'a motive which is quite unworthy of [Antigone], and which almost borders on the comic'.[6] Enchanted by the tragic-heroic character of an Antigone constructed from a reading of her two earlier blocks of utterance (1–99 and 441–560),[7] readers have regretted and disliked 904–20 as being inconsistent with that character. In Antigone's first block of lines we have utterances such as 71ff.; in her second, we have 450ff. and 465ff. These lines consist of assertions that although Creon's temporal laws stand in opposition to the divine regulations, the latter must take precedence: the gods say, and the dead demand, that we should pay the honour of burying, or at least attempting to bury, our family dead; worldly considerations, including explicitly Creon's edict, even though it enjoins a penalty of death, are of no account beside this imperative. This view is then attributed by readers to Antigone as a positive and immutable part of her character.

Antigone's third block of lines begins at 806, when she reappears for the lyric scene, in which she laments her fate; then, following Creon's order that she be taken away to her imprisonment in the cave, Antigone utters the rhesis 891–928 – her last words, except for two brief following speeches, in which she continues to bemoan her coming death and calls upon the gods and the citizens to witness how she is wronged. The rhesis deserves quotation in full:[8]

ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς
οἴκησις αἰείφρουρος, οἵ πορεύομαι
πρὸς τοὺς ἐμαυτῆς, ὧν ἀριθμὸν ἐν νεκροῖς
πλεῖστον δέδεκται Φερσέφασσ' ὀλωλότων·
ὧν λοισθία 'γὼ καὶ κάκιστα δὴ μακρῷ 895
κάτειμι, πρίν μοι μοῖραν ἐξῆκειν βίου.
ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι κάρτ' ἐν ἐλπίσιν τρέφω

'reconstituting the rules and compulsions which governed the elaboration' of the work under consideration – to reconstitute, that is, (not its message but) its system. As will emerge, it is just this that I feel that previous defences of the lines in question have generally failed to do. The same Barthian approach shows why, theoretically, it might be possible, despite the long history of discussion of the lines, to make a substantially new contribution to the question at all. Criticism 'is the ordering of that which is intelligible in our own time'; this is why criticism remains viable at all. I will argue that both those who have excised and those who have defended the lines have found them unintelligible because of a flawed representation of the poet's dramatic system; whereas in recent decades we have been provided with new tools for systematising Sophocles' methods so as to find the lines intelligible.

[6] Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* (Leipzig, 1836–48); conversation of 28 March 1827. Observe that Goethe then goes on to say, 'I would give a great deal for an apt philologist to prove that it is spurious and interpolated', already revealing the subordination of the philological prong of the attack to the prior belief that the lines are contextually unacceptable. For the cultural context of Goethe's remark, as well the original attack upon 905–13 of August Jacob, *Sophocleae Quaestiones* (Warsaw, 1821), and the defence of August Boeckh, 'Über die *Antigone* des Sophokles', Königlich-preussiche Ak. Wiss., Hist.-Phil. Kl. (1824), 41–88, 225–37, along with other nineteenth-century readings of the play, both scholarly and literary, see now George Steiner, *Antigones* (Oxford, 1984), Chapter 1.

[7] I assume largely on grounds of scene-structure (though the point is not crucial to this paper) that the MSS. are right and 572 is spoken by Ismene. The scene is dramatically more effective and Sophoclean if it is constructed in blocks of paired speakers: first Creon and the guard, then Creon and Antigone, then Antigone and Ismene, then Ismene and Creon, and finally Creon and the Chorus. In this way the scene winds down with first Antigone at 560, then Ismene at 572, uttering a final significant line, then falling silent. Cf. most recently M. Davies, 'Who Speaks at Sophocles *Antigone* 572?', *Prometheus* 12 (1986), 19–24.

[8] The Greek text is that of the old OCT of Pearson; it is meant to be non-controversial, and does not differ significantly, for example, from the text printed by Dawe in his new Teubner edition.

φίλη μὲν ἦξειν πατρί, προσφιλὴς δὲ σοί,
μῆτερ, φίλη δὲ σοί, κασίγνητον κάρα·
ἐπεὶ θανόντας αὐτόχειρ ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ
ἔλουσα κἀκόσμησα κἀπιτυμβίους
χοὰς ἔδωκα· νῦν δέ, Πολύνεικες, τὸ σὸν
δέμας περιστέλλουσα τοιάδ' ἄρνυμαι.

καίτοι σ' ἐγὼ 'τίμησα τοῖς φρονοῦσιν εὖ.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἂν εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν,
οὔτ' εἰ πόσις μοι κατθανὼν ἐτήκετο,
βίᾳ πολιτῶν τόνδ' ἂν ἠρόμην πόνον.
τίνος νόμου δὴ ταῦτα πρὸς χάριν λέγω;
πόσις μὲν ἄν μοι κατθανόντος ἄλλος ἦν,
καὶ παῖς ἀπ' ἄλλου φωτός, εἰ τοῦδ' ἤμπλακον·
μητρὸς δ' ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιν
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἂν βλάστοι ποτέ.

τοιῶδε μέντοι σ' ἐκπροτιμήσασ' ἐγὼ
νόμῳ, Κρέοντι ταῦτ' ἔδοξ' ἁμαρτάνειν
καὶ δεινὰ τολμᾶν, ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα.
καὶ νῦν ἄγει με διὰ χερῶν οὕτω λαβὼν
ἄλεκτρον, ἀνυμέναιον, οὔτε του γάμου
μέρος λαχοῦσαν οὔτε παιδείου τροφῆς,
ἀλλ' ὧδ' ἐρῆμος πρὸς φίλων ἡ δύσμορος
ζῶσ' εἰς θανόντων ἔρχομαι κατασκαφάς·
ποίαν παρεξελθοῦσα δαιμόνων δίκην;
τί χρή με τὴν δύστηνον ἐς θεοὺς ἔτι
βλέπειν; τίν' αὐδᾶν ξυμμάχων; ἐπεί γε δὴ
τὴν δυσσέβειαν εὐσεβοῦσ' ἐκτησάμην.

ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν οὖν τάδ' ἐστὶν ἐν θεοῖς καλά,
παθόντες ἄν ξυγγνοίμεν ἡμαρτηκότες·
εἰ δ' οἵδ' ἁμαρτάνουσι, μὴ πλείω κακὰ
πάθοιεν ἢ καὶ δρῶσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμέ.

The key charge against 904–20 (more particularly 904–12) is that they are inconsistent with what Antigone has said earlier about the nature of her deed and her reasons for performing it. The charge seems to be separable into four aspects (not necessarily without some degree of interdependence), as follows:

(1) *Restriction of the Object.* Antigone apparently says that the divine imperative of duty to the dead, which previously took absolute precedence over temporal law, takes such precedence only if the dead person (the object of burial) meets certain additional criteria: in particular, the dead person must be irreplaceable.

(2) *Restriction of the Subject.* Antigone offers an argument, focusing on her own particular circumstances, for doing the deed in the face of the threat of capital punishment; by implication, she no longer regards any and all consequences to herself (the performer of the burial) as automatically worth choosing because entailed by doing her duty to Polyneices.

(3) *Rejustification.* Antigone proudly left the stage after her second block of lines with her justification for attempting to bury Polyneices having been clearly and consistently enunciated; now she gives a different justification, for which there is no need, and the very fact that she would offer one detracts from her previous purity of motive, as well as from the portrait of her self-certain character.

(4) *Inappropriate Hypotheses.* Antigone does not have a husband or a child, and it is inappropriate and irrelevant to her circumstances for her to raise the hypothesis of having them. Moreover, the claims made in connection with these hypotheses are inappropriate to Antigone's character: not only does she specifically say that she would not have buried a dead husband or son, but she implies that she would not even

have buried Polyneices had he not been her last brother. Neither claim seems believable of the Antigone we have come to know; an Antigone who did not combat Creon's edict to bury *any* relative would not be Antigone.

It is to these charges that a defence of the lines must reply. And these are the *only* charges requiring a serious reply – for purely philological argumentation against the lines will not succeed, since such argumentation depends strictly upon the charge of inconsistency itself. A brief demonstration of this claim follows.

The curious feature of lines 909–13, that they are apparently modelled closely upon verbiage appearing at Herodotus 3.119,[9] is only a means of attacking the lines if it is argued that the borrowing is a poor one – for example, that Intaphernes' wife, who utters the lines in Herodotus, is choosing whose life to *save*, not enunciating a rationale as to whether or not to *bury* a person already dead (thus the use of replaceability as a criterion for making the choice makes sense in the Herodotean context, whereas in the Sophoclean context it does not), and that Intaphernes' wife *has* a husband and a child, and *is* being asked to choose between them and her brother, neither of which is true of Antigone. These points, however, merely beg the question of whether replaceability *is* a relevant consideration for Antigone, in essence just repeating (1), and whether the raising of the husband/child hypothesis is inappropriate in the *Antigone*, just repeating (4). Again, it is sometimes pointed out that Antigone is not only not choosing whom to save, as is the wife of Intaphernes; she isn't even choosing whom to bury – that is, she is not choosing at all, but justifying a *fait accompli*. This argument, however, simply repeats (3); if we ignore the fact that Antigone has previously enunciated a different justification for her act, it makes no difference whether she uses the sentiment beforehand as a basis for deciding whether or not to bury Polyneices, or uses it after the fact as a way of explaining her action, for we have no way of knowing that this was not in fact her reasoning beforehand.

Any other argument that the sentiment is really more appropriate to the Herodotean context than to the Sophoclean must turn on a claim that the lines are *psychologically* more suitable in Herodotus; and even scholars who impugn the Sophoclean lines on psychological grounds have had to admit that the utterance of the argument in the Herodotean context does not carry much psychological verisimilitude either. Waldock, for example,[10] while insisting powerfully that the lines are weird in the *Antigone*, also points out that they are just as sophistic and artificial in Herodotus. The sentiment is *in general* not such as one would normally utter, says Waldock: it is just a shocking bit of epigrammatic sophistry – not lifelike, but

[9] That the borrowing runs this way even if *Ant.* 904–20 are genuine, i.e. that Herodotus did not take the lines from Sophocles (or from a common source), is universally assumed, and not to be contested here; see Szlezák, op. cit. (n. 3). The usual publication date for Herodotus' work is 430–425 or so, whereas the *Antigone* is dated to roughly 440, give or take a couple of years (see, most recently on the question, R. G. Lewis, 'An Alternative Date for Sophocles' *Antigone*', *GRBS* 29 [1988], 35–50); but 'publish' did not mean in the ancient world what it does to us. Herodotus is generally taken to have spent some years before 441 at Athens, to have 'lectured' there, and to have been a member of the Periclean circle and a friend of Sophocles; and it is accepted that there is other Herodotean verbiage in Sophocles. See Henry R. Immerwahr's chapter on Herodotus in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* (Cambridge, 1985), i.426, and, for the definitive discussion of the relationship between Herodotus and Sophocles and the best list of probable borrowings, the article on Herodotus by Felix Jacoby in the 1913 supplement (II) to Pauly-Wissowa. There is thus no objection *a priori* to the notion that Sophocles could have borrowed these lines from Herodotus; it is to be admitted, however, that no other such borrowing is anywhere near as long or as verbally close as this one.

[10] A. J. A. Waldock, *Sophocles the Dramatist* (Cambridge, 1951).

clever – and it is precisely this cleverness which sufficiently impresses Darius in the Herodotean story that he spares not only the brother of the wife of Intaphernes, but one of her sons as well. In other words, the sentiment is not meant to be natural, but memorable: that is the point of uttering it, and is why it has recurred, apparently independently, in various folkloric contexts.[11] Yet if we grant this, we must grant that this very memorableness could equally have impressed Sophocles, making the borrowing *more* probable, not less so – provided, of course, that Sophocles had some *other* reason for wanting to introduce a sentiment of this sort at this point in the play, which we cannot decide independently of a study of the inconsistency arguments.[12]

There is also found a claim that the Sophoclean lines are 'sophistic' or 'rationalistic'; but to the extent that the objection is that the Antigone we know would not talk this way, this is again merely a disguised repetition of the charge of inconsistency. It is true, of course, that the lines are extremely *ordered*; but the Greeks of Sophocles' time, and indeed of all periods, were enamoured of orderedness of thought, which was regarded as a rhetorical virtue, lending impressiveness and power to speech and to poetry, and other instances of careful arrangement in Sophocles are admired for their poetic care, not labelled as sophistic.[13] If the objection is to the fact that Antigone offers an *argument* in support of her actions, it is necessary only to remember that Greek tragic characters very frequently offer lines of reasoning in what would seem to us basically emotional situations, and this too seems to have been regarded as both a rhetorical and a dramatic virtue.[14] Antigone is not trying to secure emotional sympathy (she already believes that she has been abandoned by everyone), but to insist that her actions were *right*, and right from the standpoint of rational thought;[15] what can we expect from her *other* than a reasoned argument?[16]

[11] These are catalogued by Ioannis Th. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (Lund, 1949), Appendix III, and in the sources cited by C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford, 1944), p. 94. The motif is no. 253.3 in Stith Thompson's catalogue, *Motif Index of Folk-literature* (Bloomington, 1932–6), where also see further bibliography.

[12] Müller, op. cit. (n. 4), p. 199, though strongly condemning the Sophoclean lines, is really making the same admission as Waldock when he says of the Herodotean sentiment that 'die Argumentation...macht dem König, wie dem Herodot, Spaß.' If we add 'wie auch dem Sophokles', this ceases to be a reason for impugning the Sophoclean lines. Indeed, a view of the Herodotean context very similar to Waldock's appears in Tycho's discussion of the Sophoclean lines, as a reason for accepting them as *genuine* (see below); Tycho's argument, however, falls short in what I see as an essential regard, for, as we shall see, it gives no *other* reason, apart from their memorability, as to why Sophocles would have wanted to use the lines here. One could also argue that some of Sophocles' other Herodotean borrowings are likewise more memorable than relevant to their contexts: the use at *O.C.* 339, for example, of the Egyptian inversion of Greek sexual roles in the management of the household – apparently a glance at Hdt. 2.35 (the men stay home and weave, while the women go out and do the marketing) – seems little more than a learned *tour de force*.

[13] No one, for example, calls the closing lines of this speech, 925–8, sophistic or inappropriately rational, though they are structured and balanced to the point of high artifice. They consist of two pairs of two lines, the pairs being introduced by εἰ μὲν τάδε and εἰ δὲ οἵδε respectively; line 1 ends with καλά, line 3 with its antithesis κακά; line 2 begins with παθόντες, line 4 with πάθοιεν; even the use of an optative main verb in both lines 2 and 4 is an artifice, since the verb need not have been optative in line 2.

[14] This, after all, is why Aristotle cites the passage with approval: it provides a rationale (not just a motive, but a reasoned argument) for something which otherwise is hard to understand. See also in general Karl Reinhardt, *Sophokles*[4] (Frankfurt, 1976), who argues in essence that the enunciation of such reasoned rules is the very business of Sophoclean tragedy.

[15] This is implied not only by 904 τοῖς φρονοῦσιν εὖ (itself one of the impugned lines), but also by her repeated assertions (903, 921, 924, 942f.) that her punishment is undeserved and improper.

[16] Besides, if the lines are (genuine but) borrowed from Herodotus, then the form of 909–12, and perhaps that of 908 (if it is based on the last clause of the Herodotean passage), are a feature

On the other hand, sometimes the term 'sophistic' is mustered in the service of a claim that Antigone's argument is not a good one: for all that is actually proved in the lines, if they are analysed closely, is that Antigone could never have another brother – whereas the crucial step in the reasoning, which is never made explicit, is that the irreplaceability of her brother implies that it was right for her to bury him. But even if we take this objection seriously,[17] it is clear enough that the lines *imply* that there is a connection between the notion of replaceability and the correctness of Antigone's burying her brother, and to claim that there is in reality no such connection is merely to beg the question of (1). Again it turns out to be Antigone's inconsistency which is really at issue.

In connection with the detailed wording of the lines, it is claimed that in 910 the referent of τοῦδε is obscure: if it is meant to be a dead child, none has been mentioned so as to be referred to (the only child actually mentioned is the new one), and if it is meant to be the husband, who *has* been mentioned, then the two hypotheses as to who has died have been confusingly conflated (on which point, see below). It is also objected that in 909, καταθανόντος, a genitive absolute participle, lacks a nominal subject, and if there *were* a subject it would, judging from the subject of the sentence, have to be πόσεως, a form which never occurs in Attic.[18] Yet these points are so little noticeable as hardly even to call for explanation, and it would be easy to cite dozens of far more difficult genuine Sophoclean lines which the commentators scarcely bother to explain.[19] Headless genitive absolutes are nothing new; here, where the

of the original; and it is then absurd to second-guess Sophocles by insisting that if he wanted to borrow the lines he should (or would) have borrowed them unfaithfully. But this leaves only 905–7 to object to; yet these are merely the minimum required in order to work 909–12 into the speech, especially since 905–7 are needed to render the existence of husband and child, which was real in the Herodotean original, hypothetical in Antigone's case. Thus the charge of 'sophistry' is to some extent just another way of saying that the lines are borrowed from Herodotus, and also repeats (4).

[17] We might, of course, dismiss this objection as an instance of wanting to eat one's cake and have it too: if the lines are clumsy and illogical, then they are *not* sophistic and rationalistic, and insofar as Antigone seems not to have thought out her 'sophism' clearly, but is speaking confusedly, as one does in moments of crisis, Sophocles is rendering the sentiment *less* 'sophistic', and more dramatically believable, just what the attackers of the lines would have him do. Besides, the search for formal validity in Antigone's words is probably anachronistic and misplaced; the notion of a formally valid syllogism, that is, the expectation that all valid inferences can be reduced to recognisable syllogistic form, is purely Aristotelian in origin (see Jonathan Barnes, 'Proof and the Syllogism', in Enrico Berti, ed., *Aristotle on Science* [Padua, 1981], pp. 17–59), and even for Aristotle the irreducibility of a given argument to a valid syllogism, especially an argument in the world of human affairs, does not mean that the argument is not respectable (see Myles F. Burnyeat, 'The Origins of Non-deductive Inference', in Jonathan Barnes *et al.*, edd., *Science and Speculation* [Cambridge, 1982], pp. 193–238).

[18] So Sir Richard Jebb, *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments*, Part III: *The Antigone*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge, 1900), *ad loc.*

[19] Take, as a random example, 897 ἐν ἐλπίσιν τρέφω, just above. Jebb states that this is equivalent to ἐλπίζω, but there is no parallel whatever for this particular expression, nor for any of its features: neither for τρέφω taking indirect discourse (in case ἐν ἐλπίσιν is to be taken adverbially of manner), nor for τρέφω taking ἐν + dat. as an object rather than the simple acc. (in case ἐν ἐλπίσιν is supposed to mean ἐλπίδας or ἐν ἐλπίσιν τοῦτο, the *whole* expression thus taking an infinitive, like *Ajax* 606 ἐλπίδ' ἔχων), nor for τρέφω used intransitively (in case the whole expression is supposed to mean 'I feed upon hopes', or simply 'I am in a state of hope', and again take an infinitive; this must be Jebb's view, since he compares ἐν ἐλπίδι εἰμί). Yet editors have not felt called upon to print anything else, despite Müller's strenuous objections and his perfectly reasonable conjecture στρέφω. Apparently we are supposed to accept the expression as a unique but perfectly possible poeticism. Very well, I accept it, and perhaps it is not really particularly difficult; but I personally find it much harder to understand than τοῦδε and καταθανόντος, which I would expect any third-year student to be able to figure out.

notion of a dead husband is before our eyes from 906, and where the sense is immediately clarified by ἄλλος, there is no difficulty in supplying a subject.[20] As for τοῦδε, even in English the phrase 'I could have another child, if I had lost *that*', is perfectly comprehensible, especially in context, and when ὅδε regularly refers to something close to the speaker in thought (translate, 'the one I had'). In short, neither τοῦδε nor κατθανόντος in any way impedes our understanding of the lines – except to a biased philologist picking slowly over the lines for grammatical infelicities to impugn.

The one really serious philological objection to the lines is that 910 ἄλλου is an illogical contamination of the 'lost child' hypothesis with the 'lost husband' hypothesis from the previous line. The argument is, that at 909–10 Antigone is made to say that she could have, in one case, another husband (by marrying again), and in the other case, a child from *another* husband; but the two hypotheses as presented at 905–6 were separate, with Antigone *either* having lost a husband, *or* having lost a child. This is probably not enough by itself to prove spuriousness, and if the lines were not suspected already, the usual scholarly solution to ἄλλου, if it were regarded as troublesome, would be to emend, or if no emendation offered itself to obelise the single problem word, but not to condemn the entire surrounding passage. However, the problem is compounded by the fact that the original hypotheses were not very clearly presented either: 905 says only, 'if I were the mother of children', which is not the same as 'if I had *lost* a child'; yet the latter seems to be what is called for by 910. Evidently the two difficulties are interconnected. Still, although if εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν is supposed to imply that Antigone has also hypothetically *lost* one of her children, it is admittedly extremely roundabout, nevertheless, since τέκνων immediately follows εἰ, and in the next line πόσις immediately follows εἰ, it is clear that these are the cases to be contrasted, and since the situation of the πόσις is immediately made clear, the fate of the τέκνον is really not so difficult to grasp from the poetic imagery. Perhaps the wording of the line is due to a compromise with some other desire of Sophocles; for example, since later I shall argue that the issue of motherhood is central to this part of the play, perhaps it was more important to Sophocles to work in the word μήτηρ juxtaposed with τέκνων than to be prosaically precise. In any case, perhaps judgement on this one genuine philological difficulty is better suspended pending discussion of the matter of the sentiment in its dramatic context.[21]

[20] A number of prose examples of headless genitive absolutes are listed in Kühner–Gerth, such as Xen. *An.* 5.4.16 οἱ πολέμιοι προσιόντων ἡσυχίαζον, where 'the Greeks' must be understood from the previous sentence. If it comes to that, indeed, 455 θνητὸν ὄντα is 'headless', yet no one objects to it for that reason, even though σέ has to be supplied from τὰ σά, two lines earlier, and after a listener might have assumed that κηρύγματα was the subject of the ὥστε-clause. As for Jebb's argument that the word for that subject, πόσεως, does not exist, one can scarcely keep from laughing; Jebb knew better how language works, than to suppose seriously that a hearer would have been prevented, just because the *specific word* πόσεως was unusual, from being able easily to supply the *concept* of a husband! And besides, if πόσεως was truly an unimaginable form, which I am not convinced it was, all the more reason for the genitive absolute to remain headless! (Also, the 'interpolator' must have operated in the fourth century, as the citation of these lines by Aristotle proves; is he supposed not to have known Attic?)

[21] I say '*if* εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν is supposed to imply that Antigone has also hypothetically lost one of her children', because perhaps in fact we ought to interpret the lines just as they stand. (It turns out, though I did not know it when I conceived this argument, that I am somewhat anticipated here by the remarkable discussion of G. Kaibel, *De Sophoclis Antigona* [Göttingen, 1897]; this defence of the lines, though Kamerbeek calls it the best ever, is too little known.) Lines 905 and 910, which are both impugned, have in common that the faultiness of expression in the one, and of reasoning in the other, have both to do with the hypothesis that Antigone's child had died: neither line states the hypothesis or its implications properly. But

(It should be added that *defences* of the lines on purely philological grounds are likewise without weight. It is true, for example, that Aristotle quotes the lines in question as genuine, at *Rhet.* 1417a32; but this proves only that if the lines are interpolated, the interpolation is early, which (as some have said) might have been concluded *a priori* anyway. It is also true that Euripides may be imitating the lines in question at 282ff. of the *Alcestis*, a play which is only a few years later than the *Antigone*;[22] but this point is of no real weight either, except perhaps insofar as it helps to counter the charges of rationalism and sophistry levelled against the *Antigone* lines (by demonstrating that sentiments of this sort were current in contemporary drama, and hence not *a priori* unlikely), for we cannot be sure that the *Alcestis* lines depend on Sophocles. A more cogent philological defence is that the razor of excision, once applied to the crucial lines of the passage in question, is not very Occam-like: to excise the lines specifically borrowed from Herodotus brings down vast quantities of the surrounding context, like a house of cards. Consider what happens if we begin cutting at the Herodotean 909–12. 909–12 form the answer to 905–8, so that the two groups stand or fall together; but 913 refers to 909–12, and is itself of a piece with 914–15, so that now 913–15 must be excised as well. But now 916 ἄγει has no subject, so 916–20 must go. Yet 916–20 have nothing against them; indeed, they seem poetically beautiful and forceful, and are perfectly in touch with themes and motifs visible elsewhere in the play.[23] If 916–20 are included in the cut, one must suppose that the

then that hypothesis is *nowhere* stated; we are simply assuming it, presumably because of the Herodotus passage. Suppose, then, that Antigone is *not* putting forward two separate hypotheses as to who has died, but only one, a husband, and is discussing this with regard to its implications for her ever having a complete husband–children family unit. Then she might be saying: (905) I wouldn't have buried a dead husband if I were already a mother, nor (906) even if I were not; since (909) in the first case I could have another husband, thus restoring the whole family unit, and (910) if my old husband had died while I was still childless, I could still have children from the new husband. The advantages of this reading are: (i) 905 and 910 are now correctly stated, with no contamination of hypotheses; (ii) 910 τοῦδε now has a referent, namely the dead husband in 909; (iii) the order of discussion is now parallel, with 909 answering 905, and 910 answering 906, rather than chiastic as on the usual reading. But there is also a new disadvantage: we have to suppose that the force of 905f. οὔτε...οὔτε is such as to imply that 906 includes the negation of 905, i.e. that in this case she did *not* have children (a new unstated concept), while 905 also includes the stated part of 906, i.e. her husband is the one who has died in *both* cases; and it isn't clear that οὔτε...οὔτε can do this. All the same, this is perhaps a small obscurity in relation to the obscurities of the usual reading, and the illogicalities of the usual reading are almost completely eliminated: that is, except for the strained οὔτε, every word of the passage now means exactly what it says. For a somewhat differently but just as drastically strained οὔτε, likewise after a sentence-initial negative, cf. *Ant.* 4 (and see the explanation of P. Mazon, 'Notes sur Sophocle', *RPh* 25 [1951], 7–17). Of course one could always try to emend, though (as with line 4) no convincing correction occurs to me.

[22] See H. J. Blumenthal, 'Euripides, *Alcestis* 282ff., and the Authenticity of *Antigone* 905ff.', *CR* 24 (1974), 174–5. Alcestis uses reasoning which runs, in effect: 'I choose to die for Admetus, even though had he died I might have had another husband; indeed, his parents should have died for him, since he being an only son and they being no longer able to have children, they could not have had another son.'

[23] Highly Sophoclean are 916 διὰ χερῶν λαβών (see Jebb *ad loc.*, and A. C. Moorhouse, *The Syntax of Sophocles* [Leiden, 1982], Ch. 7, §6); 917 ἄλεκτρον, ἀνυμέναιον, cf. 876; 917f., cf. 813f.; 919 ἐρῆμος πρὸς φίλων, see Moorhouse §16; 920 κατασκαφάς, cf. 891 (as well as for the lamentation over the loss of marriage), and, for the sentiment ('I am dead among the living'), cf. 308f., 559f., 567, and esp. 821ff., 852. This sort of repetition of phrase and theme is a mark of Sophocles' style, and indeed the list could be greatly extended; it is clear why Jacob was at pains not to involve 916–20 in the excision (and perhaps they might never have been condemned had not Dindorf opted to sweep away the entire end of the speech, all the way to 928, compared to which Lehrs' cut 905–20 seems gentle). For a splendid argument insisting that 905–20 are demanded by the *sense* (and not merely the syntax) of 921–8, see Kaibel, op. cit. (n. 21).

interpolator changed from being obtuse and clumsy (as those who condemn 905–12 claim he is) to being insightful and careful, and capable of deliberately building upon genuine contextual material in a manner quite inconsistent with someone who would put into Antigone's mouth words 'inappropriate' to her character and to the rest of the play.[24] Still, if 905–15 are interpolated, then the text has been tampered with, and lines including a subject for 916 might have been replaced; so that the genuineness of 905–15 is still by no means proven.)[25]

It has been shown that only the inconsistency arguments need to be refuted to prove the passage genuine. But why has this not been decisively done? Traditional attempts to defend the lines against the charge of inconsistency have generally concentrated, by way of excuse, on the fact that Antigone is about to die: this is a new and final situation, as she faces in imminent form the death which she has hitherto belittled, and so, *in extremis*, she adjusts her stance; the defences vary only insofar as they variously specify the nature of this adjustment. They have been well categorised by Müller, who at the same time incisively shows how unable they are to stand up against the inconsistency criticism.[26]

There are two chief variants of defence. One is to grant that the content of the lines does contradict Antigone's previous assertions, but to assert in apology that this is because she has been affected, perhaps to the point of mental breakdown, by the strain of these last moments of life. A famous example of this approach comes from Kitto:

> As the end draws near, her defences fail one by one, until...she abandons everything except the fact that she did it and had to do it.... Nothing is left to her but her deep instinct that she had to do it, and it is neither surprising nor undramatic that she should now find what reason she can.[27]

To this Müller replies, in essence, that it is not supported by the text: Antigone shows no signs of insecurity, of being in doubt, or of searching for explanations. And this is surely right. She nowhere shows any explicit awareness that her previous explanations of her deed might be somehow threatened or inadequate, nor does she show doubt or tentativeness as she puts forward this new one. Her appeals to the gods and to the citizens as she is taken away make it perfectly clear that she still insists

[24] As Kaibel puts it, 'callidum adgnosces interpolatorem, qui sui operis fines vaferrima arte effecit ut nemo certa ratione terminare possit'!

[25] I say nothing about the *a priori* arguments based on the overall length of 883–928, which are indecisive (see Szlezák, op. cit. [n. 3]): it is true that the speech, if nothing is cut, is twice as long as any other continuous rhesis of Antigone's, but then, if the speech *is* cut, it seems far too short under the dramatic circumstances.

[26] Gerhard Müller, op. cit. (n. 4); another very fine catalogue of defences, with powerful refutations, is that of Waldock, op. cit. (n. 10).

[27] H. D. F. Kitto, *Form and Meaning in Drama* (London, 1964), p. 171. Elsewhere (*Greek Tragedy*[2] [London, 1952], p. 127) he calls the lines 'the finest borrowing in literature'; but few could see this, especially on his own explanation of them, as anything but rhetorical hyperbole. Müller includes in this category the arguments of Boeckh, who appeals to Antigone's use of a 'sophistic of doubt', as she tries to make sense of her current situation, in order to explain not only her inconsistency but the rationalistic nature of her words; W. Schadewaldt, 'Sophokles und Aias', *Neue Wege zur Antike*, iv (Leipzig, 1929), 59–117, for whom the lines are an appeal to special human circumstances to explain her opposition to the state, because she now doubts her 'absolute' correctness; and G. M. Kirkwood, *A Study of Sophoclean Drama* (Ithaca, 1958), who characterises the lines as 'a momentary loss of certainty about the wisdom of what she has done'. Here, too, one should probably class G. H. Gellie, *Sophocles: A Reading* (Melbourne, 1972), pp. 47f.: 'She has been robbed of the security of [her earlier] moral and emotional imperatives.... She is driven back to a rationalization.'

upon the contrast between the piety of her acts (which is to say, their conformity with divine law, just as she claimed earlier) and the impiety of Creon's.[28]

The other chief variant is to claim that, conversely, the lines contain no contradiction of Antigone's previous justification, but do re-express her motivations for performing the deed, perhaps by examining a different region of the complex human psyche. Antigone is now providing, for example, a rationally oriented justification for a deed originally motivated by a feeling;[29] or perhaps it is the other way around, and, as Adams says, the lines reveal that, after all, 'the only *nomos* she knows is the *nomos* of *eros*'.[30] A particularly elaborate and rhetorical version comes from Bernard Knox:

> This is the moment when in the face of death nothing matters but the truth. She is not trying to justify her action to others, she is trying to understand it herself. In the loneliness of her last moments in the sunlight, all that was secondary in her motives, all that was public rather than private...dissolves before her eyes, now made keen-sighted by the imminence of death.... She has abandoned her claim to be the champion of the nether gods.... In her moment of truth she is moved by nothing but her love for her dead family.... The source of her heroic spirit is revealed, in the last analysis, as purely personal.[31]

But, as Müller would reply, neither 450–70 nor 905ff. describe a feeling, but are rational; and it is not clear to what this talk of love corresponds in the play. Besides, her discussion at 904ff. is not personal: she calls her reasoning a νόμος, and uses it as an appeal to τοῖς φρονοῦσιν for support.[32]

What we have here is a crisis of methodology. What the traditional justifications try to justify is the strangeness of the lines. But this is to accept the claim of the attackers, that the lines *are* in fact strange; the only question such defenders can ask is, what could Sophocles have had in mind, doing this strange thing in his play? But the right question would have been, why does it look strange *to us*? The answer is clear: it is because it makes us feel that Antigone is inconsistent, and we do not like inconsistency. But the belief 'Antigone is inconsistent' depends upon a number of other beliefs: that people have a unified psychological inner life, and further, that Sophocles holds this belief, and further, that he regards it as an important, not to say a primary, component in the construction of good drama.[33] As the lines are attacked,

[28] Certainly Antigone shows signs of feeling that her field of opponents has been enlarged from consisting of Creon merely to including also the citizens in general (so e.g. the 2nd strophe of the lyric scene, as well as 907 βίᾳ πολιτῶν), and perhaps, in their neglect of her, even the gods (so 922f.); but then her insistence upon the injustice and impiety of her punishment (e.g. 924), in the face of such opposition, is a sign, if anything, of even greater conviction than before.

[29] Under this heading Müller lists the approaches of M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie*[2] (Göttingen, 1954), and A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*[2] (Göttingen, 1964).

[30] S. M. Adams, *Sophocles the Playwright* (Toronto, 1957), p. 54.

[31] B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley, 1964), pp. 106f. Add now under this category of defence Malcolm Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (London, 1987), p. 74, n. 63: 'In the former passage she explains...what justified her act; in the latter passage (a more personal context, full of pathos: note especially the framing apostrophe) she speaks of the pressures which impelled her to do it.'

[32] Müller also speaks of a third class of defence, involving subordination of the details to a larger conception of the play. Here he includes H. Diller, *Göttliches und menschliches Wissen bei Sophokles* (Kiel, 1950), and also Reinhardt, on whose view, he says, the sister vs. wife/mother opposition is part of, not opposed to, the divine command: nor is it a dictum she can accept or decline, but something that operates on her feelings directly. This, as Müller rightly says, is neither what the lines say nor all they say; but it will be seen that I, too, believe that only an altered larger conception of the play will encompass the lines.

[33] The impugners of the lines, indeed, must suppose that maintaining the image of this 'unified psychological life' overrides all other considerations in Sophocles' construction of drama, so as to entitle us to conclude, if any lines fail to maintain it, that they are suspect. As Hugh Lloyd-

so they can only be justified, on such assumptions, by constructing an assumed psychological scenario for Antigone throughout the play; and this is just what has been done. Knox, for example, does not help us see the play as we have it any more clearly in the excerpts quoted above: rather, he constructs a second play, a little story for what is going on in Antigone's head as the first play progresses. This story is not in the play we have; if it were, there would be no need to construct it, nor would the lines be attacked as inconsistent in the first place. The methodological problem is also highlighted by the fact that there seem to be almost as many such psychological constructs as there are readers; the defenders agree that in the face of death Antigone makes some sort of psychological adjustment, but they cannot agree on the details of that adjustment.

But do we really know that our notion of psychological consistency corresponds to something with which Sophocles was primarily concerned? The 'interior monologue' (for this is what the psychological story really is) may not be an ancient dramatic development at all. We are speaking of a time and a culture far removed from our own, whose literary genres had their own conventions and expectations; why should we assume that this is one of them? The most natural conclusion, indeed, would be just the other way: since defences of the lines in question tend to fail, and since the reason for this failure is that these defences fail to construct an adequate explanatory vision of the drama as a whole, and since these explanatory visions are all based on an assumption of psychological consistency, one ought to wonder whether it is not this very assumption of psychological consistency which is inappropriate to the drama. What we want is an analysis of Sophoclean character which renders the behaviour of the people in his plays *intelligible* – just what the psychological mode of analysis fails to do. Even if psychological analysis in our own terms can *sometimes* prove helpful as a tool for explicating and appreciating Sophoclean drama, it need not therefore be a primary feature of Sophoclean technique.[34] And should it be the case that interior psychological consistency is *not* the consistency from which Sophoclean character is built, then the very charges of inconsistency will fall, along with the defences against them which we have been examining.

This is not to say, however, that the play must be read from the standpoint of strict 'Tychoism' either. I refer here to the famous doctoral dissertation of Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, whose thesis was, that since we cannot make sense of the plays by treating the characters as real people and filling in the psychological or off-stage blanks – a process which, as we have seen, merely generates mutually contradictory and untenable explanations – it must be the case that such matters as consistency of character (and even of fact) are disregarded by Sophocles, in favour of the dramatic effectiveness of the moment. I certainly appeal to Tycho for demonstration that psychologising interpretation fails to make sense, not only of *Ant.* 904–20, but of Sophocles as a whole; but I cannot see his resulting explanation of the passage in question as satisfying. The very illogicality of the lines, Tycho says, shows that Sophocles could *not* have intended them to provide an actual explanation of Antigone's motives; he must merely have been enchanted by the Herodotean lines as

Jones puts it ('Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf on the Dramatic Technique of Sophocles', *CQ* 22 [1972], 214–28), the traditional approach has been 'to look upon character portrayal as one of the main elements, if not the main element, in dramatic art; and by character portrayal [critics] usually meant a minute psychological analysis'.

[34] The methodological error involved is like the one neatly parodied by Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (New York, 1967), p. 17: 'One might as well tell a team of land surveyors that for the purpose of mapping a limited area they could treat the earth as flat – and then subtly instil the dogma that the whole earth *is* flat.'

an argument for over-valuing the brother, and so he put them into the play though a real Antigone would never have said such a thing. The trouble with this explanation – and this, perhaps, is why Tychoism generally has failed to make its deserved mark upon scholarly methodology – is that it is too negative: it permits Sophocles' characters to say anything they like at any time, without reference to *any* dramatic vision of character or consistency. Thus Tycho fails to explain, *except* with regard to a notion of dramatic effectiveness which does not satisfy the modern critic, just *why* Sophocles felt that such an argument for valuing the brother (over the husband and child) was needed at this point in the play.[35]

Where, then, in Sophoclean drama *may* we expect that thing to reside, to which our notion of individual character corresponds? An important point to bear in mind in this connection is that, as anthropological study is increasingly confirming, Greek society as a whole views the being of individuals as intimately bound up with their *social* being, certainly until considerably after Sophocles' time. It is worth quoting the penetrating study of S. C. Humphreys on this point.[36] First, on how the development is evidenced in the nature of the predominant social structure:

> There is an observable trend from concentration on the noble *oikos* as the most significant unit of social structure in Homer, through preoccupation with contrasted social categories (human/divine, male/female, old/young, rich/poor, etc.) in the archaic and classical periods, to a new focus on the individual's personal network of kin and friends from the late fourth century onwards.

And, in more general terms:

> Much of what has been taken for emergent individualism in archaic Greek poetry should rather be classed as efforts to define the role of the poet or experiment in the depiction of types. It is doubtful whether it is legitimate to speak of the emergence of the individual before the development in the late fourth century of the conception of society as a set of ego-centred networks.

Even those who find this statement too strong, or not directly applicable to tragedy, may be willing to concede that, as we are reminded by Professor Sorum, to the extent that the plays do deal with emergent individualism, this may be only to criticise or remark upon it as a new and strange thing – and not necessarily because the playwright is working from the point of view of individual psychology.[37]

[35] Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles* (Berlin, 1917), *Phil. Unters.*, vol. 22. As Lloyd-Jones says, op. cit. (n. 33), Tycho 'ruthlessly flings out the accumulated rubbish of over-subtle psychologising interpretation'. But he evidently has not flung it out decisively enough, for just such interpretation is what is called upon in both attacks upon and defences of the lines in question. For a standard criticism of Tycho, see P. E. Easterling, 'Character in Sophocles', *G & R* 24 [1977], 121–9. A recent revival of strong Tychoism (applied to Aeschylus) is R. D. Dawe, 'Inconsistency of Plot and Character in Aeschylus', *PCPhS* 9 (1963), 21–62; see also Heath, op. cit. (n. 31). Karl Reinhardt is often classified as a moderate Tychoist (so for example by Lloyd-Jones, op. cit. [n. 33]); but his explanation of 905–20 is actually psychological, and similar to that of Knox. According to Reinhardt (op. cit. [n. 14]), Antigone is actually describing a feeling (the feeling that one's closest relation is one's brother), but promoting it into a rationalised generation (a νόμος) because Sophoclean tragedy is concerned with such νόμοι, not with psychological feelings. He then uses this reasoning to shield Antigone's argument from the charge that replaceability is irrelevant, by asserting that it is only this νόμος, not Antigone's particular action, which is based on the irreplaceability notion. But then Antigone feels one thing but says another; since what she does say is incomprehensible without a knowledge of what she is feeling, Reinhardt is just supplying us with a psychological story for Antigone, no differently from Kitto or Knox. Besides, if irreplaceability is *not* relevant to Antigone's actions, why does she adduce a νόμος based upon it?

[36] S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London, 1978), pp. 203f.

[37] Christina Elliot Sorum, 'The Family in Sophocles' *Antigone and Electra*', *CW* 75 (1982),

Suppose, then, that we consider characters in tragedy, not simply as individuals with a psychology, but also as the loci of social stances and relationships, brought into relief (and this is what makes them characters, not just members of the chorus) by the socially problematic nature of their situations. Such a view of tragic character enables us to take what may be called a structural approach to drama: and such an approach will prove its value by its explanatory power; if it is a good approach, it will render Antigone's behaviour *intelligible*, and in that intelligibility we will find the consistency we seek.

I claim that if we examine the play, not for individual psychology, but for its thematic concerns with the problematic social situations of the characters, then we will be able to see why they utter the words they do; for an important component of the poet's conception of character is to have the characters give expression, not to their inner psychological story, but to the social conflicts and pressures upon them which are being treated at that point in the play. Indeed, the characters are not even so much giving expression to these conflicts as embodying them. A component of the Sophoclean conception of character *is* the development of theme; the 'inner life' of the characters *includes* the thematic life of the play; the development of the characters that takes place *is* in part the development of the play's themes. Just as the play need not be treating identical themes, or the same aspects of those themes, at every moment, so the characters need not be giving utterance to the same themes at every moment. But this by no means prevents the making of a well-constructed play – well-constructed, that is, based on this particular aesthetic, not upon that of individual psychology. The notion of 'consistency' will depend upon the structural exposition of the play's themes; a character, to be 'consistent', will have to be in tune with those themes, not merely with the dictates of an inner psychological story.

A question arose in our examination of Tycho's discussion, as to why Sophocles would need to put into Antigone's mouth at this point in the play lines arguing for a valuation of the brother over the husband and child. The question will be answered, in the light of this view of character as bound up with the structure of the play's themes, if we can find in this part of the play a theme whose enunciation involves contrasting brother with husband and child. And such a theme will not be far to seek, for a major concern during the whole of Antigone's third and final block of lines, quite outside of the lines attacked as 'inconsistent', is the fact that she is to die unmarried: both in the lyric scene (e.g. 813ff.) and at the start of our rhesis (891) Antigone has bemoaned the fact that death will, in her case, replace marriage. But to be married is to have a husband and children, to have a second family – the marriage-family. The only family Antigone will ever have is her original, first family: her blood-family. The play would appear to be concentrating here upon the contrast between these two families; the contrast is especially well brought out by Antigone's shift from bemoaning her death before any chance of a marriage (891, 'tomb, bridal chamber'), to affirming, immediately after, the ties to her blood-family which that death serves (893, 'my own folk'; 898f., 'mother', 'father', 'brother'). The reason why Antigone will never get to have a marriage-family is that she is going to die for

201–11. An alternative but related view, represented, for example, by Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1986), is that individuality such as Antigone's is regarded by the playwright as an *old* and strange thing, that is, as a throwback to a Homeric value system which is at odds with contemporary civic values; for the Athenian moral crisis in the large described in these terms, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*^{2} (Notre Dame, 1984), esp. Chapters 10 and 11.

the sake of her blood-family: her two roles in the world, daughter and sister on the one hand, wife and mother on the other, have come into apparently irreconcilable conflict. Antigone's words in this part of the play arise from the structural theme with which the drama invests her at this moment – the theme of the opposition between the marriage-tie and the blood-tie.[38]

Could such an opposition be considered a tragic 'theme'? Once again, anthropological considerations will serve as a support: for it is being increasingly recognised that such matters as the contemporary difficulties in the articulation of conflicting social roles *are* the very stuff of Greek tragedy. It will be useful to quote Humphreys again:[39]

> Attic drama represents a special case in the problems of handling the source material for this study both because kinship and the family play an exceptionally important part in it...and because the plays exhibit a highly systematic and consistent pattern of family relationships.... The pattern of tensions, conflicts, avoidance and solidarity in the relationships of the nuclear family is constant throughout the work of the three tragedians.... Tragedy reflected both the tension felt between norms of public interaction and the demands of private life, and the internal conflicts generated by intra-sex and intergenerational struggles for dominance and economic resources within the family. If the *oikos* was problematic as a component of the city, it was also problematic in itself....

Moreover, it is well known from anthropological, feminist, and historical studies that the legal, religious, and emotional focus of women's life in Athens was marriage, the moment of transition from the blood-family to the marriage-family. One has only to read Burkert's *Greek Religion* to see how rituals, service to the divinities, and initiation ceremonies focused the lives of young girls constantly on preparation for and expectation of marriage, a process that was treated as a crisis and its eventual culmination.[40] Athenian marriage- and divorce-laws are centred upon the question of family alignments; unmarried girls are regarded as potential wives and in particular mothers, that is, bearers of (male) heirs to provide a channel for the inheritance of property.[41]

Particularly revealing are quotations about women, which again and again illustrate the notion that marriage is the crux and meaning of a woman's life. Some of these quotations come from men, but this is not a problem; the issue here is not the reaction, to their societal situation, of women as independent individuals (if such

[38] Cf. Murnaghan, op. cit. (n. 2), p. 195: 'Antigone's adoption of this argument emerges from her preoccupation *at this point* with the subject of marriage....Antigone draws an important distinction between ties of marriage and ties of blood' [my italics]. Murnaghan's approach is still fundamentally psychological: for her, Antigone's understanding changes under pressure of events. Nevertheless, she rightly points out that marriage-ties are essentially artificial, and that this fact is thematically relevant; for, as she says, it was contemporarily the nature of the new *polis* social institutions generally, that they treated people as interchangeable; such institutions are at the heart of the play throughout, and in particular are just the sort of thing to which Antigone is opposed from the start. Thus Murnaghan would say that the 'replaceability' argument is really an extension of the stance that Antigone has taken all along; and this, as we shall see, is surely right.

[39] Humphreys, op. cit. (n. 36), pp. 202f.

[40] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA, 1985), esp. pp. 260–4; see also his *Homo Necans* (Berkeley, 1983). The crisis is well exemplified, and its intimate connection with child-bearing made manifest, by something so simple as the fact that girls at marriage transferred their 'allegiance' from Artemis, patron of virgins, to Hera, the patron of married women – while the same Artemis who threatens virgins with death for violating that virginity and becoming pregnant is nevertheless a goddess of childbirth. This conflict in the nature of Artemis, that is, of the very essence of being female, is the subject of the Callisto myth.

[41] The evidence is well summarised by Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York, 1975), Chapter 4; see also Eva Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters* (Baltimore, 1987), Chapter 3.

a phrase has any meaning in a society where individual being was so dependent upon social relationships and regulations), but how society as a whole characterised women and their lives.[42] The sixth-century epitaph on the tomb of Phrasicleia runs (Kaibel 6): 'I shall be called a maiden always; this is the name the gods gave me in place of "wife".' That she died before she could be married is the main fact considered worth commemorating (and lamenting) on her tomb. Epitaphs written by a woman, Anyte of Tegea (3rd c.), exemplify the same mode of thought.

A.P. 7.492

We leave you, Miletus, dear homeland, because we rejected the lawless insolence of impious Gauls. We were three maidens, your citizens. The violent aggression of the Celts brought us to this fate. We did not wait for unholy union or marriage, but we found ourselves a protector in Death.

A.P. 7.649

Instead of a bridal bed and holy rites of marriage, your mother set here on your marble tomb a maiden, like you in size and beauty, Thersis...

A.P. 7.486

Often here on her daughter's tomb, Cleina in her sorrow cried for her dear child who died too soon, calling back Philaenis' soul. Before she could be married, she crossed the pale stream of Acheron.

In all three poems, it is the death before marriage that is noted; in the first, and to a lesser extent in the third, we have language implying that Hades takes the place of the husband, remarkably similar to *Ant.* 816, 'I who die unallotted of marriage, with no hymeneal hymn..., but I shall be bride to Acheron.' Even the famous quip of sixth century Hipponax deserves quotation in this context (68 West): 'The two best days in a woman's life are: when someone marries her, and when he carries her dead body to the grave.' Marriage and death are coupled, and are made the two characteristic cruces of female life. This coupling is not made in the same way as in the epitaphs, though perhaps an epitaph-like coupling is implied or parodied; in any case, in the epitaphs, and in Antigone's case, the two Hipponactean cruces have been reversed in order – a perversion which, of course, denies the woman marriage altogether. She dies before her marriage can take place, before the meaning of her life can be fulfilled; *Ant.* 896, *κάτειμι πρίν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου*. If something so central to real Greek life cannot be the stuff of tragedy, what can?[43]

Once we understand Antigone's words in connection with this theme, the inconsistency arguments are largely disarmed. The conflict for Antigone in this part of the play is a very real conflict. She is a woman, and the focus of a Greek woman's

[42] These quotations are collected by Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* (Baltimore, 1982), whose translations are used here.

[43] See, for an excellent statement of this point, Sorum (op. cit. [n. 37], p. 202): not only was it true that 'marriage and childbirth defined womanhood', but also this definition was contemporarily in crisis, since by Sophocles' time, 'family structure was incorporated into state institutions, for familial descent determined the valuable rights of citizenship.... Thus the significance of the blood relationship was appropriated by the state...and the worth of strong internal bonds of familial loyalty was called into question.' See also W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca, 1984). For tragedy in general as portraying contemporary moral and social dilemmas, see John J. Winkler, 'The Ephebes' Song: *tragôidia* and *polis*', *Representations* 11 (1985), 26–62.

life is the moment of marriage, a moment difficult enough in itself, as the blood-ties are exchanged for the marriage-ties; but Antigone, as she laments throughout the scene, will never have even this moment. Her valuation of her duty to the blood-tie has meant that she will never have a chance to possess and value the marriage-ties; in doing her duty to the first family, the blood-family, she has forgone all opportunity to reach the second, fulfilling stage of having a marriage-family.

In this context, Antigone's raising the hypothesis of possessing a husband and children is not gratuitous at all, but absolutely germane, and consonant with the surrounding themes; for the suspect lines are part of a larger structural moment focusing on exactly this opposition, this difference, between the blood-family and the marriage-family – and so much for argument (1), since replaceability does indeed characterise for Antigone the difference between the blood-family and the marriage-family.

Moreover, it now becomes absurd to object to the lines 904–20 on the grounds that they raise an irrelevant hypothesis – and so much for argument (4). The only way to continue pressing that argument is to concentrate on hypotheses *other* than the one actually raised by Antigone: that is, to claim that her words permit us to draw conclusions about what Antigone *would* have done under other circumstances that are unbelievable given her 'character'.[44] But this claim is faulty, on two grounds. In the first place, Antigone's 'character' is a construct based on her lines. To the extent that it is meaningful to build such a construct at all, it must be built from *all* her lines; one cannot select some of her lines, build a construct, and then claim that since the lines not used to build the construct do not square with it, they are spurious. In the second place, we are not justified in drawing conclusions about what characters 'would' do outside the play, precisely because they are not merely the expression of psychological inner stories. Antigone, aptly enough, as we shall see, describes what she *has* done; and this is all that matters. She *didn't* fail to bury a dead husband, or a dead brother when she had another brother living, and her parents *are* dead, so it is we who construct irrelevant hypotheses if we worry about this; 'such was my νόμος in burying you' is not the same as 'such would have been my νόμος regardless of the situation'. This raising of irrelevant hypotheses by critics, only to put them into Antigone's mouth or brain and condemn her or her author for raising them, is a desperate move, wrought by already existing prejudices against the lines, which would be laughed at and dismissed if it were done with lines with nothing against them.[45]

[44] So most recently, Brown, op. cit. (n. 2), counters Bowra's argument that Antigone's being cheated of marriage is exactly the issue, by asserting that the lines permit us to conclude that had Antigone's parents been living, she would not have buried Polyneices; the argument is an old one, occurring for example in the edition of Schneidewin and Nauck (Berlin, 1880).

[45] For example, Creon says at a number of points that he will not back down from his condemnation of Antigone, because she is a woman; but this does not justify us in constructing an imaginary play, in which Creon *would* back down if the burier had been a man, inconsistently with the principles of his opening rhesis: the lines speak to *this* situation, in which (as we learned from Ismene, 62) the opposition between the respective stances of Creon and Antigone is reinforced by and intertwined with a sexual opposition. Similarly, as Seth Benardete says ('A Reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*', *Interpretation* 5 [1975], 148–84), no one would take 450 to mean that Antigone seriously considers the possibility that Zeus *might* have told her not to bury her brother! Even the presence of the word 'if' (in the present passage) does not negate this point: as Müller points out, for example, 925 εἰ μέν does not imply that Antigone really thinks there is a possibility she may be wrong; the structure merely expresses the fairness of her wish that Creon should suffer. The intimate connection between this modern raising of irrelevant hypotheses for Antigone and the psychologising misconstrual of Sophoclean character is brilliantly outlined by John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London, 1962), p. 196: 'We [mistakenly] picture an inward debate, perhaps protracted and painful, which is determined in

Moreover, it is absurd to object to 904–20 on the grounds of 'inconsistency', if one does not object likewise to the first strophe of the lyric scene; for it is *there* that we have the shift from Antigone's bold defiance in the face of death, to her lamentation over it, to her regret over a 'worldly' matter: *there* is where the restriction happened, from (not Antigone's, but) the play's concern with the broad meaning of Antigone's defiance of Creon's edict in favour of the divinely sanctioned duty to the dead, to a concern with the more particular implications of Antigone's death, which violates her very being as a woman – a concern which the lines in question aptly and forcefully reflect. And so much for argument (2).

But the discussion is not done. I have shown the thematic relevance of 904–20, that in fact they are *needed*; for they are the very lines that express most explicitly this opposition between marriage-family and blood-family which has devolved upon Antigone. Yet it is possible to go much further. This important theme was, after all, *not* present in the *first* part of the drama, that is, at any point before line 560 – it is this which generates the 'inconsistency' in Antigone's 'character' –, and we may ask ourselves whether the *play as a whole* is not guilty of an inconsistency: is this concern for Antigone's lost marriage itself a sort of poorly integrated after-thought? That is, have I really handled argument (3)? By denying Antigone a 'character' in the traditional, psychological sense, I have been able to claim against argument (3) that it is the themes of the play that have shifted, and that the nature of Antigone's lines has merely shifted with them; but it could still be objected that I am then just re-expressing Antigone's 'inconsistency' by foisting it off on the play as a thematic 'inconsistency'.

Now, it is precisely here that the structural view of the drama shows its true explanatory power, and demolishes the inconsistency arguments decisively. For it can be shown, that whereas a psychological reading of the play cannot make sense of the psychological shift in Antigone, a structural, thematic reading of the play can make perfect sense of the thematic shift in the play as a whole. This will become clear from a sketch of the structural development and implications of some of the play's themes as a whole.

The first part of the play may be characterised as involving the key theme of the opposition of the notions φίλος and ἐχθρός, and of two conflicting conceptions of where the bounds between these two notions are to be defined.[46] Antigone's opening

favour of burial and which results in a victory for the divine law being registered at the abiding seat of consciousness. This is our image; and it now requires us, when the question arises as to what Antigone would have done if Polyneices had not been her last brother, to answer that she would have looked within..., would have been true to herself and would have buried him. Our reading of the case is not concerned to note that Antigone was not in fact faced with the burial of anyone other than her last brother.... [T]he omission is crucial in that the presupposition which renders vain the distinction between actual and hypothetical circumstances is entirely unSophoclean – the presupposition of that abiding seat of consciousness.'

[46] Recently, Simon Goldhill, op. cit. (n. 37), has given an admirable description of the first part of the play in these same terms; this is well worth seeing, and I regard it as support for my view. My discussion, however, was conceived and written in complete independence from his; and he does not recognise the importance of the shift away from this theme in the second part of the play (so that his view of the role of Haemon [see below] is incomplete with respect to my own). Nor does my characterisation of the 'key theme' mean to rule out or neglect other characterisations of the same thematic material (though I do think that all such other characterisations ultimately boil down to mine). In particular, Hester's discussion of the role of τιμή in Antigone's behaviour (as well as the entire accompanying polemic against the traditional question of who, Antigone or Creon, is 'right') is extremely salutary: op. cit. (n. 2), and 'Law and Piety in the *Antigone*', *WS* 14 (1980), 5–11. But I cannot agree with Hester's overall

speech sets up the opposition: 'O common αὐτάδελφον Ismene ['coming from the same womb as myself'? 'absolutely a sibling'?]..., do you not notice how the ills of the ἐχθρῶν come upon the φίλους?' The opposition is not an emotional one, of love vs. hate, but concerns the social relationships that define one's being: friend vs. foe, mine vs. thine, family vs. enemy-to-family, 'us' vs. 'others'.[47] And why has Antigone set up this opposition? Because (21ff.): 'of the 2-brothers of us-2 [duals], of a tomb Creon has honoured the one, dishonoured the other.' The very grammar reflects the situation: Creon's edict splits the φίλος-group, treating two closely paired φίλοι, the brothers, as if they fell into separate categories, one a φίλος, one an ἐχθρός. And as the scene develops, the other pair, the sisters, threaten to be split by the same edict: when Ismene refuses to help with the burial, Antigone says (73): 'φίλη I shall lie with him', maintaining the φίλος-tie even in death, but (93) 'if you say [that you won't do the same], ἐχθαρεῖ [you will be ranked as an ἐχθρά] in relation to me, and you will be situationally an ἐχθρά to the dead man.' Antigone, by cleaving to Polyneices, is cut off by Creon's decree from all *living* φίλος-ties; her only φίλοι are now the dead. This has two important implications. In the first place, it means that when Antigone *does* come to die, this simply makes real what was true from the start: she is, as she implies at 920, structurally (whence, for a social creature, literally) dead among living. But, more important for our purposes, it explains why Antigone is made, in this part of the play, to express the notion that to die is no ill. Her defiance of death is not so much an emotion, or even an expression of the categorical nature of the imperative to bury, as a way of letting the play underline her structural status: thanks to Creon, her φίλος-ties make her as good as dead already.[48]

Creon, in his first speech, makes clear that his reasons for the edict depend on a very different, πόλις-oriented view of where the boundaries between φίλος and ἐχθρός lie. To him, the only φίλοι are φίλοι of the πόλις; on this definition, it is only logical that since Polyneices attacked the *city*, so no *citizen* may treat him as a φίλος. Now, this rule, aside from destroying Antigone, also has problematic implications for Creon himself, something at which he himself inadvertently hints; for, the only reason why Creon is able to identify himself so strongly with the πόλις, the very source of his power to issue the edict, the reason in short why he is now ruler, is his γένους ἀγχιστεῖα τῶν ὀλωλότων (174), his close family ties to the dead. Thus Creon is from the outset involved in a self-contradiction: empowered by φίλος-ties under one definition, he immediately adopts a different definition. Of course Creon manages to avoid using the *word* φίλος in such a context, and he uses no vocabulary that would specify the particular family relationships involved ('the dead', not 'my sister's children'); but the ominous hint remains.

psychological reading of the play, and especially of the scene in question: 'Why should she talk of divine laws, when the gods behave this way? Surely in her last moments, when she has nothing to hope for, it is her true feelings we hear....' This view is no improvement over that of Knox, or Kitto.

[47] Well put by Malcolm Heath, op. cit. (n. 31), p. 74: '*philia* is not, at root, a subjective bond of affection and emotional warmth, but the entirely objective bond of reciprocal obligation; one's *philos* is the man one is obliged to help, and on whom one can (or ought to be able to) rely for help when oneself is in need.' This is a real problem for translations, which almost universally mislead the reader into supposing that Antigone and Ismene are talking about a *feeling* (family affection) during this scene. Later in the play, of course, the notion of ἔρως figures prominently; but this has nothing to do with Antigone's conception of her duty and connection to her *blood*-family.

[48] 72f., θανεῖν/φίλη; 461–4 with 466–7 (to die is a κέρδος given what her life now is, it is no grief to minister to τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρός); 524–5 (Creon: so die, since that's where your φίλοι are); 559–60 (Antigone 'already dead'); and the like.

Meanwhile the play continues to sharpen the divide between Antigone's definition of φίλος and Creon's, as they argue in explicit terms (especially in the stichomythia, 511–22) as to who is φίλος and who ἐχθρός; to Antigone, her brothers are blood relations to herself and to one another, whereas to Creon, they are enemies in battle of one another, and one of them attacked, one defended the city. Creon, standing for the πόλις in his analysis of social relationships, has appropriated and corrupted the literal family-tie concept of φίλος and ἐχθρός.[49] Antigone, for maintaining that tie, is relegated by this recategorisation on the part of the state to the dead, both in the sense that the punishment for her act is death, and because the only φίλοι to whom she can still cleave are dead.

Thematically, the play goes nowhere during this scene, but the implications of the situation are drawn more and more fully, as new oppositions of categories are mustered to render the split between Creon's position and Antigone's more all-consuming. In particular, when Antigone utters her famous lines about the 'unwritten precepts' of the gods and dead, it is important to remember that those lines are put into her mouth in the service of a particular set of thematic concerns, that is, to underline the opposition between the two conceptions of φίλος and ἐχθρός. Creon's view is that of the state, which is therefore expressed in a νόμος; but Antigone can counter that her view is also sanctioned by a νόμος, and she musters every possible opposition that can support it as such: divine vs. human, immortal vs. mortal, and so on. She is not describing her 'motivation', she is making an argument, in a particular thematic context; and her argument serves that context splendidly, both as it widens the gap between the views for which she and Creon respectively stand, and as it promotes her own over his. The modern reader, accustomed to imagining a psychological 'story' for each character, will want to bear this in mind in reading 904–20, whose thematic context is different. Antigone does not, in the later lines, surrender or forget or override an earlier set of 'reasons' for burying her brother; she speaks, in the earlier lines, to one set of themes, in the later lines to another.[50]

Now, however, the implications of the theme of opposed definitions of φίλος and ἐχθρός are largely played out, at least as far as the division between Antigone's stance and Creon's is concerned. It is therefore more or less completely dropped. It is not the sole thematic 'point' of the play (although Goethe, and those who regret Antigone's 'changing her mind' at 904–20, wish implicitly that it were); it is only one in a more complex series of thematic gestures and structures. Sophocles, in not atypical fashion, lets us know this by introducing a new theme with astonishing abruptness, and before the scene between Antigone and Creon is completely ended. For, while Antigone is still standing on the stage (though, as I believe, silent), Ismene raises (568) an entirely new issue: will Creon kill his own son's betrothed?[51] It turns out that Creon, who has tried to play a dangerous double game with his own φίλος-ties – those ties have made

[49] Again, as Humphreys has shown, this theme represents a contemporary reality of social roles in crisis (op. cit. [n. 36], p. 201): 'The development of the city meant – especially in democratic Athens – a sharp distinction between public and private life, between the impersonal, egalitarian interaction of the open agora and the enclosed, intimate, hierarchic relationships of the *oikos*. A feeling of conflict between the norms of citizen behaviour and the personal loyalties of the family is obvious in the debate between Antigone and Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*.'

[50] Another nail in the coffin of arguments (1), (2), and (3). Observe that we are *not* simply saying, like Knox, that the later passage is an emotional re-expression of the earlier: it is crucial to my argument that Antigone be seen at 904–20 as speaking to a completely different set of issues from those at 450ff.

[51] This technique of introducing a new theme while the old theme is still, as it were, standing on the stage, reminds me of the common technique now often used in movies, where we are still

him king, yet as king he reinterprets and denies them – has a far nearer φίλος, a son, to whom Antigone is betrothed, binding Creon to her yet more tightly. Surely, we think as we hear this news for the first time, Creon will not be able to behave so equivocally towards his φίλος-ties in *this* regard.

The play immediately moves to develop the ramifications of this new theme. In the first place, the matter of the *replaceability* of spouses is raised right away, as Creon uses it (569) in defence of the fact that he is killing his son's betrothed. Thus when Antigone at 904–20 will use the matter of replaceability as a measure of the difference between husband and child, on the one hand, and brother on the other, she will not be raising an irrelevant point or even a new one, but employing a feature of this second theme which was brought out almost simultaneously with it – indeed, she will in a sense be using Creon's own stance against him.[52] Secondly, in the very next scene Creon and this son of whose existence we have so suddenly been informed are made to face one another. Creon presents Haemon with this choice (632ff.): 'Are you angry at the fate of your intended bride, or am I your φίλος, no matter what I do?' It is a choice between the blood-tie and the marriage-tie, the very choice around which Antigone's lines 904–20 will revolve. Moreover, according to Creon, Haemon should accept the loss of a replaceable spouse and cleave to the decision of his blood-φίλος, his father; thus the entire scene between Creon and Haemon implicitly involves the replaceability of the spouse, for Creon is trying to get Haemon to accept a substitute, and so by the time Antigone utters 904–20, the matter of who is replaceable, and the question of having to choose between one's obligation to a blood-relative and one's ties to a (replaceable) marriage-relative, has long been at issue in the play.[53] Here Haemon dutifully declares, at least in theory, for the blood-tie, despite his opposition to his father's actions; but he is unable to maintain in fact his allegiance to his father in an unproblematic way, and by the end of the scene the two of them are at odds. Creon's position, moreover, though he still does not see it, is becoming more and more obviously untenable; here he is demanding from Haemon an unmitigated blood-tie allegiance which is the very thing he is punishing Antigone for insisting upon. The 'suspect' lines, 904–20, are the very lines in which Antigone makes explicit the unfairness of Creon's proceedings: the choice he would have had his son make, of blood-family over the replaceable marriage-family, is the choice for which, when Antigone makes it, he puts her to death.

Thus Haemon's existence, which is produced like a rabbit from a hat,[54] is a mirror for Creon, who because of it has a blood-tie which he cannot deny, on which in fact he insists, while he will put Antigone to death for insisting upon hers. At the same

watching one scene, but suddenly hear the sound-track of the next scene, a few seconds before the visual changes over to show us that new scene and reveal the meaning of the sounds we are hearing.

[52] It is also at this point that the 'bride of Hades' motif is first raised – by Creon, 575 (and again later at 654) – which will figure so heavily later, when Antigone laments her death before marriage.

[53] Note also 750 and 761, where Creon is explicit about his intention that Antigone's death should 'replace' her marriage to Haemon. We are now steadily pounding away at argument (1).

[54] The suddenness of the revelation of Haemon's existence is also the subject of an investigation by L. J. Jost, 'Antigone's Engagement: a Theme Delayed', *LCM* 8 (1983), 134–6. Jost takes a psychological, not a structural and thematic approach, but rightly points out that the matter of Haemon does not emerge until 'Antigone has done all she can for her brother, and her trial and sentence at Kreon's hands has been accomplished.' I think this is right, but it should be taken structurally: the first part of the play details the nature of the opposition between Creon and Antigone, leading up to Antigone's condemnation to death; once this is enacted, Haemon is introduced, and the rest of the play is material leading to the punishment of Creon.

time, and with typical Sophoclean economy, Haemon functions structurally in another way: he is also a marriage-tie figure.[55] This marriage-tie has two valences: first to Antigone, who, in pursuing her duty to her blood-ties, is robbed of a very real, and not merely theoretical marriage-tie; and secondly to Creon, who in killing Antigone is now, we see, repudiating not only his blood relationship but also his marriage-tie to her, for he is not only her mother's brother, but her intended husband's father. In short, Haemon's existence tips the balance which has up to now weighed equal in the stalemate between Creon and Antigone, showing the untenability of Creon's position, as well as completing the significance of Antigone's.

904–20 thus grow naturally out of the marriage-tie vs. blood-tie theme which was introduced when Haemon was first mentioned; and this theme, we now see, is needed in order to give Antigone's situation and death their full meaning. Yet it is only when we reach the dénouement that the full power and significance of the theme is really revealed; for it both provides the means whereby Creon ultimately suffers and contributes importantly to the significance of that suffering. We have seen that Creon has enforced two sorts of isolation upon Antigone: first, he has isolated her from her living φίλοι, tying her to dead φίλοι; second, he has denied her the marriage-family which completes the female μοῖρα. These isolations are denials of life for an Antigone whose existence is socially defined, and her actual death is their objective correlative. At the same time, Creon has done this only at the expense of the perversion of his own values: he has, as we have seen, inherited the kingship through his blood-ties and then used the kingship to deny them; and he has rendered the blood-ties and marriage-ties mutually exclusive, trying to force his son to choose the former over the latter while killing his son's wife, to whom he is himself tied by marriage as well as blood, for making the same choice. (Nor are these Creon's only value-perversions: for example, he has stood for the πόλις on the one hand, as an excuse for denying Polyneices burial and for killing Antigone, and has then denied the existence of any πόλις but himself on the other;[56] and he has also made the πόλις prior to the φίλος-ties in his first rhesis and then, in his rhesis to Haemon, has tried to render obedience to literal φίλος-ties the touchstone for a good πολίτης.) These perversions all translate into action in a single locus: Antigone dies. For perverting Antigone's life into death through this perversion in his own values, Creon suffers with exquisitely parallel appropriateness and conciseness: and once more, Haemon is the pivot on which the matter turns.[57] Haemon kills himself, thus fulfilling the marriage Antigone thought she had forgone, but only in death (1240f.): in a sense, Antigone's condition is thereby brought back into harmony, for she has joined both her blood-φίλοι and her marriage-family in Hades. At the same time, to Creon, Haemon's death is blood-tie murder – he has in

[55] When I speak of 'typical Sophoclean economy', I am thinking of Sophocles' frequent trick of using one character to fill more than one function. The best example is in the double one in the *OT*, when the messenger who comes from Corinth to inform Oedipus of Polybus' death also happens to be the man who knows that Oedipus is not Polybus' son, who in fact received him from the Theban shepherd, and when that shepherd turns out to be the very man who witnessed the death of Laius, and whom Oedipus has already summoned.

[56] 737–9 brings out this point nicely, as well as rendering it a marvellous mirror of what Creon has done to Antigone: by trying to stand for the πόλις without paying attention to the will of the other πολῖται, Creon is a πόλις unto himself, the ruler of an ἐρήμη γῆ (739), just as he has rendered Antigone ἐρῆμος of all living φίλοι (919). Since Creon has earlier tried to equate φίλοι with (good) πολῖται, this linkage is particularly pointed.

[57] That Creon's fate *will* be somehow appropriate to his deed is foreshadowed by Antigone's 927 ('Let them suffer precisely what they unjustly do to me') and by Teiresias' warning 1076; it is thus all the more important that the equivalency of his deeds and his punishment be clear and precise.

effect killed his son (1173, 1177, 1269, 1305, 1340 etc.). Then Eurydice (who, like Haemon, is kept under wraps until she is needed) kills herself because of this, which to Creon is marriage-tie murder – he has in effect killed his wife (1312, 1341). Thus Creon is punished by having his own most immediate blood- and marriage-ties perverted into death, the very thing he did to Antigone. Creon is reduced to death among the living, as he reduced Antigone; but he suffers the more, for having to live on (1288, 1322). The irony is immense. Creon's φίλοι are dead; he is robbed of his marriage; and the deaths of his son and wife spring from their cleaving to the very ties which Creon has sought to deny Antigone the chance to cleave to – Haemon dies to reassert the marriage-tie (to Antigone) against the blood-tie (his father), Eurydice dies to reassert the blood-tie (to Haemon) against the marriage-tie (her husband).[58]

The theme of blood-tie vs. marriage-tie is thus absolutely crucial to the significance of the dénouement, and it is in this light that 904–20 are seen to be not simply acceptable, but desirable, indeed necessary. We must be specifically shown that Antigone's death has this second meaning, that Creon's decree which puts her to death involves for her not merely an enforced renunciation of all living φίλοι in favour of the dead, as 450ff. let us know, but also an enforced renunciation of the marriage-tie in favour of the blood-tie. Otherwise the significance of her death as trigger for Creon's suffering remains incomplete. The mere regret at dying unmarried which Antigone expresses in the lyric scene and at 891 is not enough: for only 904–20 draws the opposition between the marriage-family and blood-family in terms of choice, of replaceability, of νόμος, the terms which ironically reflect those imposed upon Antigone by Creon himself as the meaning of her burying her brother.[59] The rationale, the 'calculus' which Antigone expresses in 909–12 is not some irrelevant sophistic hypothesising on her part; it expresses grimly the nature of the choice forced upon her by Creon. We already know that Antigone has been rendered dead among the living as the only φίλοι left to her are dead, thanks to Creon's divisive edict; now we must have lines expressing her second living death, that instead of getting to make the already trying transition from blood-family to marriage-family which is the meaning of life for a woman, she is forced to choose the blood-family at the expense

[58] One might say that, in a sense, Creon is punished not for what he has done to Antigone, so much as for what he has done to the universe of social roles and ties around which the play revolves: he has rendered them problematic (or, perhaps, brought their already problematic nature into high relief), and it takes three deaths to bring them back into equilibrium. Creon is left alive, but destroyed, a man whose world has blown up in his face because he tried to play games with it, like a child who misuses a familiar toy and breaks it forever, or, better perhaps, like a man who grabs the tail of a tiger, seeing only the tail, and is then surprised by having the rest of the tiger – the universe, really – turn around and bite him.

[59] In fact, Antigone's two 'reasons' for burying her brother participate, as we can now see, in an interesting structural parallelism. (This point is suggested to me by my reading of Benardete, op. cit. [n. 45].) Earlier, Antigone's point was that death was better than disobeying the divine laws in favour of mere mortal laws; now, her point is that joining her family (her φίλοι) is better than dishonouring her blood-family in favour of the marriage-family. But since her φίλοι are all dead, so that to join her family *is* to die, the two evaluations collapse into one: they are two sides of the same coin, not two inconsistent stances at all. The first structure expresses the notion in terms of life and death: she is willing to die, because the laws that never die are more important than the laws of people who can die. The second structure expresses the notion in terms of family: she will join the only family she now has, because the ties of the blood-family are more important than the ties of the marriage-family. This parallelism also enables us to see that the characterisation of both structures as νόμοι is not problematic: the claims of the world of the dead upon her are called a νόμος, just as the claims of the blood-family upon her are called a νόμος; but this doesn't make the two νόμοι mutually contradictory: each νόμος, each 'reason', enunciates the essence of a different thematic aspect of the play. In short, what 450ff. does for the first part of the play, 904–20 does for the second, and so is equally valid and necessary.

of the marriage-family, ending up in a void between them, which for a woman is also death. And it is, as we have seen, the combination of both these deaths of Antigone which gives the deaths of Haemon and of Eurydice their complex justice and meaning for Creon. No interpolator could have understood the thematic structure and significance of the play so precisely as to introduce lines so crucially supportive of that structure and significance. 904–20 are not inconsistent but exactly consistent with, indeed a key focal point of, the play's overall thematic structure: not gratuitous, but essential; not weak, but powerful; not spurious, but genuine.

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