

SUBJECT TO EMOTION: EXPLORING MADNESS IN *ORESTES*

Madness and emotion could be said to share, to a certain extent, their definition as kinds of human response to influences from their environment. The connection between madness and emotion is stressed in modern psychological observations establishing strong links between the causation of madness and human emotionality.¹ Despite the fact that similar insights were absent from Greek medical theorists, or indeed from other contemporary writers, this would come as no surprise to either Sophokles or Euripides. Both tragedians handled their material in such a way as to demonstrate how the strong pressures of familial or social influences can lead to mental disturbance.² While it is most probably Sophokles who, for the first time, turns to the influence of internal forces in the process of madness,³ the lack of subject matter in his surviving plays allows us little scope for further comparison. On the other hand, Euripides seems to have dedicated more of his portrayals to madness. These portrayals offer an almost unique opportunity to examine the introduction, not only in drama but perhaps in the whole of Greek literature, of the emotions as contributing factors in madness.

The notion of divine intervention which seems to provide the explanation for the causation of madness in Homer⁴ is passed on to tragedy, but its varied treatment by the three tragedians is suggestive of their own views regarding madness. While in Aischylos the obscurity of what madness exactly is can be intriguing, it seems predominantly a kind of contact with the divine world.⁵ Divinity as the determinant element in the causation of madness is also present in Sophokles. The external cause of Aias' madness remains a god, but another explanation is offered, based on the notion that conflict results in madness.⁶ Madness is presented by Sophokles as a

¹ For introductory clinical discussions of the causation of mental illness see F. Fish, *Fish's Outline of Psychiatry for Students and Practitioners* (Bristol, 1978), pp. 2–4; J. Willis, *Lecture Notes on Psychiatry* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 24ff.; and B. Kleinmuntz, *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology* (New York, 1974), pp. 97ff. (esp. 122–3) and 125ff. (esp. 151).

² The potential psychological richness of the poets' original material, and its explorative analysis of human motivation, is suggested by the extensive use of the Greek myths by psychoanalysts, especially of the Freudian school.

³ The limited number of surviving plays, and especially the fact that the two tragedians worked at close quarters and clearly had an influence on each other, as well as problems with dating Sophokles' plays, are all a hindrance in deciding which playwright was the first to introduce a new idea.

⁴ In epic, madness seems, on a first impression, non-existent. This misleading impression is derived from the fact that there is no suggestion, or explicit mention of madness as a serious mental derangement. Another important consideration that would explain this uncertainty that surrounds madness in Homer is language. The Homeric language used to describe mental processes differs significantly from that of tragedy, since no differentiation is made between organs of thinking and organs of feeling and emotion. Nevertheless, the folly in certain acts of the warriors is noted (Homer, *Il.* 19.87ff., 6.232–6), while strange, unusual, or wild activity is frequently remarked upon, and the gods are always thought its agents [*Od.* 23.11–14; cf. 9.410f., 14.178f.].

⁵ See below, on Aischylos' presentation of Orestes' situation in *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*.

⁶ Conflict, perhaps the most prominent root of madness, is a very important, if implicit, element in the Homeric tales. For a discussion of this, see B. Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca and London, 1978), pp. 66ff. In tragedy there seems to be continuity not

disorder of the human mind, which leads the individual into a world that does not exist but in his own affected mind.

This cue is picked up and developed further by Euripides, in two separate plays, into two different kinds of madness. The external trigger in the form of a divinity, the attack of delusion that transports the madman to a world that exists only in his affected mind, the suicidal despair at the recovery: these are all present in *Herakles*, a play whose similarities with *Aias* have been the focus of much more attention than is the case with *Orestes*. There are indeed many and interesting parallels between these last two plays. In his own terms, *Aias*' νόσος (*A.* 581f.) is incurable. Even when his μανία or λύσσα cease, his λύπη, the result of his internal conflict, is unconquerable. This, as I shall discuss presently, is equally true of *Orestes*. Moreover, neither of the two will accept change, in contrast with *Herakles*, whose eventual cure comes from recognition and acceptance of change. Even more interestingly, their madness consists for both essentially in their failure to see things correctly. In *Orestes*, as in *Aias*, the alternative, more metaphorical interpretation of the 'world that exists only in the madman's mind' is presented, while in *Herakles* we have only the literal one. Finally, I would like to point out the suggestion present in *Aias* that the divinity 'is not producing the intention to murder the Achaeans kings; she merely diverts, hinders, checks limits and encourages a force already in motion'.⁷ The same suggestion is also found in *Orestes*, although it is something that Euripides will go on to explore fully with the presence of Dionysos in Pentheus' portrayal in *Bacchai*.⁸

While in Sophokles the concentration is on madness as νόσος,⁹ Euripides plunges even deeper into the exploration of madness to portray it as emotional response, not limiting himself to a single, uniform account. In what follows, using *Orestes* as the comparative model, I shall try to outline Euripides' presentation of the physical and emotional symptomatology of madness as indicative of its kind and cause. I shall then discuss the most distinctive characteristics of his portrayal method and attempt to assess how suggestive they might be of Euripides' overall aims and scheme.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY: THE CHARACTER OF ORESTES' MADNESS

One of the main reasons madness and emotion are not easily defined is because they are not of one kind and never affect two people in the same way. The cause of madness, its symptoms, effects, and treatment/therapy are conditional upon the

only in the development of certain Homeric words into terms denoting madness, but also of this notion lurking in epic that conflict results in madness. Although the chorus in *Aias* believe in the traditional explanation of a divinity causing madness (cf. *Soph. Ai.* 172ff., esp. 185), in Tekmessa's descriptions *Aias*' madness is revealed as his own reaction to his situation, emerging from inside him. Athena is presented merely as the external trigger, while Sophokles' psychological insight into *Aias*' inner world in conflict with his external circumstances points to the real reasons for his insanity.

⁷ B. M. W. Knox, 'The *Ajax* of Sophokles', *HSCP* 65 (1961), 1–39, p. 5.

⁸ For a more thorough discussion of this, see my chapter on the presentation of madness in *Bacchai*: 'A Testcase', in *The Presentation of Emotions in Euripidean Tragedy*, Ph.D thesis (London University, 1991).

⁹ The newly found concentration on νόσος extends to cover not only the incident of *Aias*' raving attack (*Soph. Ai.* 59, 66, 271, 274, 452), but also his state after it (*Soph. Ai.* 581f., 609, 625., 635). *Aias* is not raving mad any more, but neither is he seen as cured. Madness, rather than a single incident, is now portrayed as a disease with stages.

individual and his circumstances. Nevertheless, madness, like emotion, has, in psychology as well as in Greek tragedy, certain common patterns of manifestation, from which it can be recognized. In the case of both emotional and insane manifestations, these patterns consist largely of physiological symptoms.¹⁰

In *Herakles*, Euripides' protagonist presents the following physiological symptoms during his madness attack:

1. Silence (ἔστη σιωπῇ (930)).
2. Head thrown back, tossing (τινάσσει κράτα βαλβίδων ἄπο (867)).
3. Rolling of the eyes (διαστρόφους κόρας (868), στροφαῖσιν ὀμμάτων (932)).
4. Heavy, irregular, hot breathing (ἄμπνοας δ' οὐ σωφρονίζει (869)).
5. Bloodshot eyes (ρίζας τ' ἐν ὀσσοῖς αἵματώπας (933)).
6. Foaming (ἀφρόν κατέσταζ' (934)).
7. Making loud animal sounds (μυκάται (870)).
8. Wild, insane laughter (γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ (935)).

Then begin the delusions as the mental symptoms of his abnormal condition. On his recovery Herakles is confused (cf. 1094ff.) and amnesic (1105–8), his breathing still hot and irregular (1092f.).

Most of these symptoms¹¹ are also met with in *Bacchai*, as well as in *Orestes*. Foaming and rolling of the eyes 'are traditional and genuine symptoms of abnormal states' (E. R. Dodds, *Bacchae* 1122f.; G. W. Bond, *Herakles* 868). Both quote Hippokrates (*Sacr. Dis.* vii), but there is also an instance in *Medea* [1173f.], where these are symptoms of poisoning, or merely indication of pain. As Bond concludes, Euripides must be using a 'conventional picture he has created'.¹² Interested in a symptomatology that would, through tradition, be convincing and recognizable to his audience as that of madness, the playwright creates an impressive list of physical manifestations to portray Herakles as mad.

Euripides' intention, however, extended further than the portrayal of madness unqualified. He wished to present his protagonist as specifically suffering from a kind of madness that (a) is caused entirely and purely by external factors, (b) is sudden, totally unexpected, and (c) is a transient phenomenon. In *Orestes*, on the other hand, where 'Euripides ... makes madness an expression and responsibility of the individual ψυχή',¹³ we have an entirely different treatment of the common theme of madness. Whilst still drawing for the physical symptomatology from the same conventionally created list, Euripides manages the portrayal of an altogether different kind of madness. One factor that assists him in achieving this is his selectivity in choosing those symptoms that will enhance the portrayal of the particular kind of madness he wishes to depict. The principal method, however, that he follows in order to achieve the differentiation will, I hope, emerge as we proceed with the analysis of the presentation in *Orestes*.¹⁴

¹⁰ Summarized evidence for this can be found in Willis (op. cit.) and Kleinmuntz (op. cit.) and in my thesis (n. 8), pp. 12–14; 36–42, 53, 61.

¹¹ These physiological symptoms are predominant in the *Hippocratic Writings*. For examples and a brief discussion, see pp. 52–4 of my thesis.

¹² Bond's insistence, however, that 'it is nevertheless made up of genuine epileptic symptoms', as well as the general tendency to argue that Euripides wanted in *Herakles* to draw the portrait of an epileptic, is mistaken. For a discussion of this, see pp. 71–3 of my thesis.

¹³ J. W. Gregory, 'Madness in the Herakles, Orestes and Bacchae: A Study in Euripidean Drama', Ph.D. unpubl. diss. (Harvard, 1974), ch. 2, p. 42.

¹⁴ See below in the concluding section, on literal description of the manifestations of madness and detailed emotional portrayal of the mad characters.

Orestes' madness is not reported to us by a messenger. Its presentation is briefer than Herakles', but it takes place in front of the audience. We can see what triggers it, its development, peak, and dying away. Orestes is lying in bed, melting away by a grave, savage disease. His mother's blood is driving him out of his senses (36f.; cf. *El.* 1252f./*I.T.* 82f.). Elektra informs us that six days have gone by since Klytemnestra's burial, during which Orestes has neither eaten nor washed, keeping himself hidden in his bed, occasionally crying or uncontrollably jumping around when madness seizes him (41–5). He is in a weakened physical condition (228); with foam covering his face (219f.), untidy and unwashed (225f.).

As Elektra indulges in her own hatred of Helen and her mother (250), something seems to go wrong in Orestes' mind. He abruptly admonishes Elektra to be different from these evil women (251f.). Orestes is on the verge of insanity; the look in his eyes betrays this (*ῥόμμα σὸν ταρασσεται* (253). Orestes' eyes are not 'rolling' as Herakles' were. It is not so much their action that is being described but rather their agitation,¹⁵ the disturbance from their usual look. This emphasizes, I believe, the difference between Herakles' externally caused madness, and Orestes' one, which is essentially the result of inner disturbance. The same thing seems to be pointed out by the fact that Orestes, again unlike Herakles, can feel the madness approaching. An illustration of this is his panicked reaction at 255f., where, although still aware of reality, his hallucination is beginning to take control over him.

Orestes' perceptual errors develop into a full-scale hallucination. His recovery begins at 277, marked with the surprised *ἔα*. Out of breath, he is wondering what has happened. Like Herakles, he is confused and amnesic (*Her.* 1091–3/*Or.* 215f.), and feels as if he has been in a storm. His hallucinations have been repeated for some days now. This is obvious in the text (34–45). Elektra has learned to recognize them as they approach (253f.); note also Orestes' *αἰθις αἶ* (279).

Orestes' disease, then, is described, either directly or indirectly, as repeated attacks of madness (*μανία*), which consists of terrifying visual–auditory hallucinations, that reduce him to a weak and vulnerable state (218, 227f.). During the attacks Orestes *πηδᾷ δρομαῖος, πῶλος ὥς ὑπὸ ζυγοῦ* (44), (cf. 263/5: *σχήσω σε πηδᾶν δυστυχῇ πηδήματα*), trembles with fear (258/7), the look in his eyes becomes wild and agitated (253). Foam is mentioned (219f.). After the attacks, whether driven to sleep or not, he suffers from amnesia (215f., 277f.), and in the time in between he refrains from eating and washing, hiding away in his bed (41–4).

Most of Orestes' symptoms actually differ, or are not present in Herakles. While Herakles' portrayal has more the character of an epileptic seizure, Orestes' resembles a study of a person in delirium. In the *Hippocratic Writings* there are mentions of delirium,¹⁶ and fear is associated with delirium throughout the treatise on *Sacred Disease*. Euripides' description also follows modern definitions of delirium almost perfectly: the mental state in which altered consciousness is combined with psychomotor overactivity, hallucinosis and disorientation; awareness of oneself and surroundings is impaired; the patient becomes alarmingly bright-eyed, gross perceptual errors occur, and visual hallucinations are more than common, while states of panic or terror are standard emotional symptoms.¹⁷

¹⁵ *ταραχή* is often associated with *φρένες* [cf. Pind. *Od.* 7.30/Aisch. *Ch.* 1056].

¹⁶ See, for instance, *Epidemics* iii, case 4.

¹⁷ Definition and description from Willis (op. cit.), pp. 4, 34–5.

PSYCHOLOGY: THE NATURE OF ORESTES' MADNESS

Although he recovers from individual attacks of madness, Orestes never seems to recover fully from the disease itself.¹⁸ The play seems to suggest that his horrendous deed, which results in madness and for which he denies responsibility, is itself the ultimate manifestation of a more permanent psychopathological state. Using the direct evidence from within the play as a source of information, but also, indirectly, any results that can be safely inferred by comparison with other tragic plays of the same theme – be it Aischylos', Sophokles', or Euripides' own – I shall try to assess Euripides' portrayal of the nature of Orestes' madness.

In *Herakles* madness is god-sent, an invasion; it does not come from within, but externally.¹⁹ It is not an illness, nor is it a permanent state or characteristic of the protagonist. On the contrary, in *Orestes νόσος* is central;²⁰ madness has characterological meaning, it is part of Orestes' personality. The two protagonists have nothing in common, not even their madness. Orestes' madness is not god-sent, it comes from inside him. The Erinyes are only one of the symptoms, his persecutory hallucinations which result from his guilty conscience. The horrific deed of Herakles takes place because he has gone mad. Orestes becomes completely insane because of the horrific crime he has committed.

In order to make all the above obvious and stress the importance of Orestes' character in his madness, Euripides provides us with what psychologists would call today Orestes' 'case history'. The powerfully descriptive account is not limited to the scene of his attack, itself not as central to the play as the one in *Herakles*. It covers the way he looks and behaves throughout the play. Orestes' hallucinating scene takes place on stage. It lasts for a considerably shorter length of time, and is not as violent as Herakles'. Orestes' is full of panic, and a desperate need for release, while Herakles' betrays no elements of vulnerability in its triumphant violence and savagery. Orestes can feel the attack coming (*Or.* 255–8), in a way that Herakles never does, because it is emerging from inside himself.

At 285–93 Orestes speaks for the first time about his crime. Although he regrets the terrible consequences of the matricide, there is no mention of guilt whatsoever. He

¹⁸ Orestes' paranoid condition is emphasized by the play's noticeable shifts from health to disease, sanity to madness, reality to delusion. For a more detailed discussion of this, see F. Zeitlin, 'The Closet of Masks: Role-playing and Myth-making in the *Orestes* of Euripides', *Ramus* 9, no. 1 (1980), 51–77. The fact that drama is by its very nature episodic and selective emphasizes even more that Orestes only *episodically reaches a degree of abnormality that amounts to certifiable insanity* – which is one of the characteristics in modern psychological definitions of a paranoid psychopath. Willis (op. cit.), pp. 6, 47; Fish (op. cit.), pp. 69, 71, 138–9.

¹⁹ The unusual and dramatically effective scene with Iris and Lyssa dispels any doubts as to whether it was Hera's revengeful hate that wished and caused it. Hera's hostility is briefly introduced in the prologue (20), and acknowledged by everybody towards the end of the play (*Eur. Her.* 1189, 1253, 1263–8, 1303–10, 1311f., 1393).

²⁰ This very important theme of νόσος is introduced from early on, in the first lines of Elektra's prologue. Although, as Elektra herself is aware, such attitudes and crimes as she is describing are all part of human nature (*ἀνθρώπου φύσις*), this long line of criminal ancestors seems to imply a tendency for repetition of criminal behaviour. C. Fuqua in 'The World of Myth in Euripides' *Orestes*', *Traditio* 34 (1978), 1–28 comments: 'the sickness motif which is to prove so important for evaluating Orestes' conduct for the remainder of the play is introduced in terms of its mythological archetype. It should be noted that at the same time Elektra parallels these various sequences of events from different generations, she also expresses doubts about their propriety, 4–5, 14, 17, 26–7. In this way the ambiguity of the present situation is seen as having its analogues in the past' (p. 9). Also, the chorus refer to Orestes' matricide as νόσος (831–3), and his frantic attempts to justify his crime (*τὸ δ' εὖ κακουργεῖν*) they call *κακοφρόνων ἀνδρῶν παράνοια* (823f.).

blames Apollo (285), and even so the blame as such is not for ordering the crime. C. W. Willink in his commentary (ad loc.) calls Orestes' statements 'significantly self-revealing'. At least when *ἔμφρων*, Orestes experiences no conscious guilt. There is only one point in the play where Orestes proves unable to repudiate his guilt, despite the many justifications he can invent for his deed.²¹

ἐπεὶ τὴν εἶχες, ὦ τάλας, ψυχὴν τότε,
ὅτ' ἐξέβαλλε μαστὸν ἱκετεύουσά σε
μήτηρ;

(526–8)

Tyndareos' emotional lines echo the question with which Orestes was left after killing his mother in *Elektra*, at the sudden realization of the horror of what he had done and the emergence of guilt (*El.* 1206–9, 1214–17). Similar feelings are expressed in *Orestes* by the chorus (819ff.), but nowhere by Orestes (or indeed Elektra) himself.

Orestes' guilt is something he can block, control when he is *ἔμφρων*. It surfaces only when he loses control during his madness attacks. It is important, however, to clarify what exactly is meant by *ἔμφρων*. Elektra uses it (44) as the state that Orestes is in *ὅταν μὲν σῶμα κουφισθῇ νόσου*, as opposed to the one he is in when he is raving. *ἔμφρων* does not seem to mean in his *right* mind. Orestes is not completely sane at any point in the play. He is *ἔμφρων*, *ὅταν ἀνῆ νόσος μανίας* (227f.), when he is not hallucinating, but this is not the same as saying he is in his right mind.²²

Orestes would become sane only if he were to admit consciously his guilt and face his shame – which he never does. So all his repressed feelings find their only outlet in attacks of madness. Immediately after the attack, when Orestes is still in an extremely vulnerable state, they surface and prevail. A similar thing happens to Pentheus in *Bacchai*.²³ It is important to note that neither Orestes nor Pentheus are ever in a *healthy* state of mind. The word *νόσος*, recurrent in *Orestes* (34, 211f., 227, 232, 282, 314, 395, 407, 791, 800, 831) is also used in *Bacchai* by Teiresias (311, 327) to describe Pentheus' state. The word seems to imply a permanence in the disturbance of their *φρένες*.

The sequence of Orestes' answers to Menelaos' question regarding the nature of his *νόσος* (395–400) reveals how Orestes' awareness of the horrific nature of his deed is

²¹ C. W. Willink in his commentary (ad loc.) believes that 'It is more important to appreciate the paradoxical use of language and interplay of themes than to ask whether Or. is "truly remorseful" in the sense "repentant".' While appreciating the splendid use of language and the ingenious interplay of themes is undoubtedly important, it seems to me equally so that we address the question of whether Orestes is experiencing guilt or not. In fact, it seems to me that this very ingenuity and complexity of language are there for a purpose. When Euripides, as Willink says, 'indulges in sophisticated word-play (*σύνεσις*... *σύννοια*, implying *συνείδησις*)', he must be, indeed, counting on the 'echo of the sophisticated view that *συνείδησις* may be *πολέμιον τῷ συνειδότη* (Antiph. 5.93)'. I believe that Euripides intended the question of the presence of guilt in Orestes to be asked, and in fact he gives us several clues as to the answer. Willink himself goes on to remark: 'he does not use the *vb* *μεταγινώσκειν* or related words (cf. S. *Phil.* 1270); and even in his "saner" moments (as 280–300) we feel that he would do the same thing again, given the appropriate *ἐλπίς*. His apologia to Tyndareus is notably "unrepentant".'

²² The same is true of Aias in Sophokles' play. In both plays the suggestion that the protagonists are mad even when not in the midst of a mad attack, that they have no way out of madness, is very strong. Aias' delusion has a recovery (305–11). But the doubt expressed by the chorus (337f.) introduces the idea that Aias is not back to health and complete sanity (344 *ἀνὴρ φρονεῖν ἔοικεν*). He is *ἔμφρων* (306, cf. 259), but this does not necessarily mean he is in his right mind. His attack is of specified duration and dies down, but the same cannot be said for his disease in general.

²³ There, the repressed feelings will be set free when Dionysos drives Pentheus out of his *φρονεῖν* (cf. Eur. *Ba.* 853, and *ἐκστησον φρενῶν* (850)). As he is at 851 (*φρονῶν εὖ*), Pentheus will never accept his repressed emotions and admit his repressed fantasies. Once in *ἐλαφρόν λύσσαν* he loses the defensive control. For further discussion of this see my thesis, pp. 118–20.

causing him *λύπη*;²⁴ that is why he appears as someone from the underworld (385). According to Menelaos, *λύπη* is *δεινή* but *ἰάσιμος* (398f.). Orestes, however, is incapable of curing it. It has led to *μανίαι*, which are *μητρὸς αἵματος τιμωρίαι*. The linking chain is thus explained by Orestes himself. He has reached his present state because he is aware of the horrendous nature of his deed: *ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύννοιδα δεῖν' εἰργασμένος* (396). *Λύπη* and *μανίαι* are the results of *σύνεσις*. The Erinyes, the persecutory hallucinations, are only one of the manifestations of *μανία*, the result of *σύνεσις*, awareness. So his madness comes from inside him.²⁵ What matters to him more is the consequences of his deed, rather than outward appearances (388, 390). The triple answer shows that his distress has its roots both in 'thought' (awareness) and feeling. There is a confused blending in him of emotion and reason driving him to madness. His remorse is not intellectual, mental; it is emotionally experienced, even if subconsciously.²⁶ The emotional suffering is unbearable. Although probably not entirely conscious of it, what Orestes seems to be saying here is that his grief might have been *ἰάσιμος* if he were able to bring his emotions to the surface, admit and accept them. His mania consists exactly of the refusal of his self to do this, while the other aspect of *σύνεσις*,²⁷ the mental awareness, cannot be controlled, blocked or ignored. That is why he went mad.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE CAUSE OF ORESTES' MADNESS

What Orestes also admits, even if indirectly, at 396, is that he is aware of his personal responsibility for committing the matricide. Orestes' situation was based on a choice. He had the freedom to choose. There was no absolute 'necessity' (i.e. there was an alternative) in what he did. The dilemma of whether or not to kill his mother was placed upon him by his relationships with, particularly, other members of his family, and more generally, the world around him, including the gods. Would it be best not to kill her and be pursued by his father's Erinyes (580–4)? What would be his position in society if he did not avenge his father? The pressure from the social environment is obvious (917–30, 932–42, 538f., 546f., 552ff.). Nevertheless, despite these constraints

²⁴ 'A good medical term for the emotional upset that can bring on disease.' W. D. Smith, 'Disease in the Orestes', *Hermes* 95 (1967), 291–307, p. 297.

²⁵ V. A. Rodgers comments: 'It is I think this internal awareness expressed in the word *synesis*, rather than the strange use of the word itself, which puzzles Menelaos. Or.'s affliction has been attributed earlier in the play both by others and by himself to the *θεάς*, 37–8.... But in reply to Men.'s question he refers not primarily to these externalised agents of madness, but to *synesis*, an inner consciousness. This concept Men. fails to grasp since, as his question to Or. implies, he understands his plight in terms of something external destroying him. This is why he is much happier when Or. talks of *λύπη*... since this can be understood as a form of *nosos* which, because it is caused from without, can be cured....' 'Σύνεσις and the Expression of Conscience', *GRBS* 10 (1969), 241–54, p. 254.

²⁶ Rodgers (op. cit.) also seems to agree that Orestes experiences no conscious feeling of guilt. 'Orestes is in obvious distress, and describes his condition as *λύπη*. But can one, even so, talk justifiably, in Orestes' case, of a guilty conscience in any sense? The adjective he uses to describe his deed is *δεινός*, a word which appears to bear no moral connotations at all, being used of things which are extraordinary or monstrous. What he is conscious of is the full horror of the deed, a feeling which need have nothing to do with awareness of culpability or with moral guilt' (p. 250).

²⁷ Smith (op. cit.) believes that what is meant by *σύνεσις* is 'the conscious knowledge of evil action, which may destroy moral sensibility rather than bring healing remorse'. He also points out that *σύνεσις-νόσος* is an oxymoron. 'The terms are opposed in medical writings as in common speech, and *synesis* is what delirium destroys' (p. 297).

and pressures, his choice was still free. Its 'freedom' lies in the fact that, independently of them, for or against people's or gods' wish, will, or command, he is the one who makes the choice; nobody else makes it for him.

The question of Orestes' responsibility and divine justification is introduced by Elektra at 28ff.: *πείθει δ' Ὀρέστην .../...οὐκ ἀπειθήσας θεῶ.* At 285–7 the blame on Apollo is not for ordering the crime, but for not helping afterwards (*τοῖς μὲν λόγοις ἡὔφρανε, τοῖς δ' ἔργοισιν οὐ*). The use of *ἡὔφρανε* is important, as it shows Orestes' eagerness to commit the murder.²⁸

At 572, despite all attempts at divine justification, Euripides makes Orestes unwittingly admit the paramount reason for which he killed his mother:

μισῶν μητὲρ' ἐνδίκως ἀπώλεσα

The exposition of Orestes' emotional motivation is one of Euripides' ingenious juxtapositions of traditional and innovative explanations for strange, unexpected, inexplicable, or incomprehensible action. In short, for any act that would in ancient times be explained away, or referred to by the Greeks as a case of divine intervention. Juxtaposing this readily and traditionally available explanation with the real motivation behind an act seems a favourite technique of Euripides,²⁹ used with the particular aim of highlighting action as the result of emotional motivation.³⁰ The ingenuity of the technique lies in the fact that it stresses both differences as well as similarities in the two modes of explanation. God-provoked or not, the nature of the act remains the same; its undesired consequences still victimize the doer. Attributing to divinity the overpowering feeling of emotional motivation had been for Euripides' contemporaries the traditional way not only of accounting for the compulsiveness of an act, but also of justifying why they should not be held accountable/responsible for the consequences of such loss of control.³¹

While divine justification is used in *Orestes* only as the ostensible excuse, in Sophokles' *Elektra* there are no attempts at divine justification. In that play Orestes and Elektra remain for always the *μητροκτόνοι*. Their powerful hatred is the only reason given there for the matricide; and it is as solid and conscious a reason for the crime as the horror they are left with as its consequence. Both brother and sister have been throughout aware of what their act would entail, as well as of its motives. Therefore there is no desperate quest for salvation afterwards, no question of responsibility, no guilt, no madness.

In Aischylos, divine justification seems to be the only one presented. In *Choephoroi* Orestes sees the Erinyes at 1048ff. Their sight is horrific enough to drive him out of his

²⁸ Willink's commentary (ad loc.): 'it throws a revealing light on Orestes' readiness to commit crimes of violence, given the appropriate *ἐλπίς*...'

²⁹ A notable example is Euripides' presentation of *ἔρως* in *Hippolytos* and *Medea*, where traditional notions relating to the external nature of eros are juxtaposed with the characters' own interpretation for their situation, for which they assume personal responsibility. For quotes and discussion, see p. 143 of my thesis.

³⁰ For an illustration of this, see pp. 143–4 of my thesis.

³¹ The split, after Homer, of emotion from intellect (see below, n. 46), creates a threat of vulnerability to the intellectual self aspiring at *αὐτάρκεια*. A detached and negative attitude towards emotions results from this and perseveres to modern day. It does not consist, however, only of resentment and contempt for this obstacle to self-control and possession. Its strongest characteristic is fear. The self-conscious observation of the emotional process results in a growing awareness that the responsibility for emotions lies with the individual, and not an external agency. While the person always feels the victim of whatever it is that happens to him, the observation of his experience gradually makes him realize that the 'to' is no longer indicative of something coming from outside, caused externally. Emotion is now *πάθος*, still expressive of the passivity but not a god's *ἄτη* or the work of a daimon.

mind (cf. 1054, 1058). The chorus is not unduly worried about Orestes' situation, for they believe there is a way out (1059). What Orestes is experiencing is for them the temporary result of the recent murder. Orestes points out to the chorus that while they cannot see these horrifying creatures, he can. What he is experiencing is, undoubtedly, an inner disturbance. This disturbance, however, is not, according to him, a hallucination. It has a real external stimulus. He explains his situation clearly at 1021–5. This is a point where his comments can be relied upon, as he makes it clear that he is still *ἔμφρων* (1026). The image of a charioteer driven off course, by circumstances out of his control, suggests he is experiencing forces that are beginning to take control of him. While, however, his words here imply that these forces are within him (cf. 1023f.: *φέρουσι γὰρ νικώμενον/φρένες δύσαρκτοι*), he himself, as 'madness' takes control, seems to believe that it is the Erinyes, as Klytemnestra's agents, who bring about terror in his mind; not his own mind initiating hallucinations (1048ff., especially 1054).

The discrepancy between Orestes' two interpretations of what is happening, as well as between these and that of the chorus, highlights the extreme ambiguity with which the play ends. The chorus never mention the Erinyes. They ask what these visions are that cause Orestes such fear. The word they use is *δόξαι* (1051f.). In Euripides' *Orestes*, Elektra, like the chorus here, does not see the Erinyes. What Orestes sees, she says, is only in his mind:

ὄρᾱς γὰρ οὐδὲν ὦν δοκεῖς σάφ' εἶδέναι. (259)

Nevertheless, she believes in them as the cause of her brother's madness and refers to the terrifying fear they are causing him (38). In *Choephoroi* it is never made clear whether Orestes' state is caused by the Erinyes, visible only to him, or whether it is simply an inner – temporary (cf. 1059) – disturbance resulting from the murder (*παραγμός ἐς φρένας* (1055f.)).

Whichever case might be true, Orestes' state in Aischylos would not be the result of insanity, but an understandable response to his situation. There is, in fact, in the play no explicit mention of madness as such. This seems to present us with two alternatives: Either Aischylos was relying on his audience's mythical knowledge of Orestes' madness, in which case he wished to portray it as punishment, or else he did not wish to portray him as mad at all.

In *Orestes*, however, Orestes' *σύνεσις* (396), and not the Erinyes, is ultimately revealed as the cause of his state. The emphasis is on the effect of the crime on the mind and emotions. As in Aischylos, the Erinyes are present here only in Orestes' mind. By the use of the same traditional mode of description, Euripides introduces the ambiguity of *Choephoroi* as to whether the goddesses are actually there but visible only to Orestes, or whether they are the creation of his disturbed imagination. The ambiguity of 255ff.,³² as to whether Orestes is actually seeing the Erinyes, is intended to serve two purposes:

- (i) Stressing the question of whether Orestes' madness actually consists of seeing the Erinyes because they **are** there causing his madness, or whether he **thinks** he sees them, when they are in fact a product of his mad imagination.

³² I am following Willink here in his suggestion that: '257–9 would be better in the sequence 258–9–7: 255–6 have left it open whether Or. is "seeing" or merely "fearing to see" the Furies; El. attempts to calm him by denying his visions, and Or. counters with "Yes (I do see them) for (...) here they come galloping near me".' The suggestion that lines '260–7 would be better in the sequence 260–1–4–5–2–3–6–7' is also highly plausible.

- (ii) Conveying the idea that he **feels** the attack of his madness approaching, first by just feeling the Erinyes, and, as the next stage, beginning to see them.

While Euripides combines traditional with innovative modes of description to enhance and expand the ambiguity which he leaves largely unresolved even at the end of his play, Aischylos uses the concluding play of his trilogy to answer the questions raised by *Choephoroi* and dissolve its ambiguities. In *Eumenides* the Erinyes are brought on stage for everyone to see. Orestes' fear, mentioned in *Choephoroi* both by him (1024) as rising towards his heart, internally, and by the chorus (1052) as the result of his *δόξαι*, is here verified by Apollo as a response to the Erinyes, whose horrific presence is acknowledged both by him (67–73) and Pythia (46ff.).³³ *Eumenides* could perhaps be seen as suggestive of Aischylos' overall traditional view of madness as contact with the divine in general, while in Orestes' case this contact is his punishment.

In *Orestes*, the characters in the play do not doubt for a moment that his madness is the result of the Erinyes. The play as a whole, however, questions this. Choosing the matricide and its effects as his starting-point, Euripides' presentation explores Orestes' madness in all its ambiguity. Even if the Erinyes exist, it is ambiguous as to what they represent. Are they the avengers of Klytemnestra, or Orestes' guilty conscience? Or are they one sign of his madness, itself the result of his guilty conscience? Is indeed his madness the result of guilty conscience, or is it the final stage of a more permanent psychological disturbance? These are all questions that the play presents. They all remain unanswered; some more, others less investigated, but all probable and possible within the play's context. Although brilliantly described, Orestes' madness is unspecified, highly ambiguous.

Throughout the play Orestes' character is portrayed as weak and easily influenced.³⁴ Along with Elektra, Pylades is actually the brains behind practically every violent act that is to be committed in the play. The stichomythia between the two friends (1100–31) illustrates how easily Orestes can be led into committing a murder. Pylades' suggestions receive an enthusiastic response from Orestes. The language of Pylades is that of persuasion. The verb *πιθοῦ* (1101) echoes 29, 31, 593, 594, which speak of Apollo's persuasion. Orestes allows himself to be persuaded with such enthusiasm and naïvety, that it is as easy for Pylades to guide and convince him as it is to lead a child: *μανθάνω τὸ σύμβολον* (1130f.), seems a brilliant illustration of this.

From the point where the conspiracy against Helen begins (1098ff.), Apollo is not mentioned anywhere. It is Zeus, not Apollo, who is called upon in the prayer (1240–5). The god is not sanctioning this killing; the protagonists are prepared to commit another murder without the excuse they had for the first one. The strange absence of Apollo's influence in this play, where the role of Pylades is most prominent, seems very suggestive. Pylades is put to silence, resuming his traditional role as a mute actor, when the god is about to appear in order to restore the traditional events.

At the final scene, Menelaos turns to ask:

ἦ καὶ σύ, Πυλάδῃ, τοῦδε κοινωνεῖς φόνου; (1591)

³³ There is indeed a possibility that it was Aischylos who developed the Erinyes into the very goddesses of madness. See A. O'Brien-Moore, *Madness in Ancient Literature* (Weimar, 1924), pp. 75–82.

³⁴ Orestes is influenced by both his sister (Eur. *Or.* 211–315, 1018–50; also 615–21) as well as Pylades (*Or.* 1069–1224).

The arrogant and assured way in which Orestes answers (*φήσιν σιωπῶν· ἀρκέσω δ' ἐγὼ λέγων* (1592)), is suggestive of the process that takes place after the deeds have been accomplished. Pylades, like another Apollo, was the brain behind this other murder which Orestes is all too willing to commit. After the completion, Apollo/Pylades step back, and it is Orestes, as the doer, who, instead of winning credit as he would hope, is presented with a responsibility he cannot handle. Perhaps it would not be too far-fetched to suggest that the god (or indeed Pylades) can be seen as a parallel to the way Orestes' emotions operate. Governed by external influence and/or emotional motives, Orestes acts, without, however, a true understanding of what his acts entail. Once the deed is done and the motivating emotions, satisfied, begin to subside, Orestes also expects his rewards and satisfaction. Nevertheless, the emotional experience of his acts, although not fully conscious because of this lack of deeper, inner understanding, still presents him with their responsibility. Since, however, this experience remains subconscious, it cannot be faced or reckoned with.³⁵

The question, of course, is whether there is actually meant to be a parallel between Pylades and the god. The complete contrast in this play (where Pylades has a major speaking part, influences the action, almost directs the plot of the second part), with his traditional silence (mute in both Sophokles' and Euripides' *Elektra*), must be of a certain purpose. In all the plays that handle the legend of Orestes traditionally, Pylades has only three, very important lines in *Choephoroi* (900–2), where he becomes the mouthpiece of Apollo and convinces Orestes to go ahead with the deed of matricide. Obviously his words, coming after a long silence and followed by another, assume a gravity that perfectly suits their importance as words expressing the god's will, as well as for the way they influence the future action. In the same way, his words will change the course of action in *Orestes*.

Moreover, the emphasis given to Pylades' silencing³⁶ might have been intended to draw attention to the fact that the actor who had so far played Pylades is now needed for another role. Interestingly enough, Apollo is soon to appear as the third speaking person in the final scene. If, indeed, the assumption that the same actor who played Pylades takes over the role of Apollo were right, the implications would strengthen the possibility of Pylades' presentation as a parallel to the god, with Euripides placing a pointer of his intention for the audience.

EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING: THE CASE FOR THERAPY

At the end of the play Orestes reveals that he feared Apollo was nothing more than a part of his hallucinations (1667–70).³⁷ The god absolves Orestes and assures him of his external safety and prosperity (1644–65). But as with all his other orders, he leaves very ambiguous the aspect of Orestes' relief from his inner suffering. Will madness set Orestes free if the Erinyes abandon him? What about his *σύνεσις*? The question is not whether what he did was right or wrong, or whether what he suffers is just or unjust. The question is about his *νόσος*; and it remains unresolved, like the rest of the ambiguities in the play. Orestes' future is outlined by the god, but it is hardly credible

³⁵ This is an excellent illustration of the results of the reluctance/incapability to face up to responsibility for one's own emotions and emotional motivation. See n. 31 above.

³⁶ 'The silence of a mute actor, is worth drawing attention to if the dramatic reason for it overshadows the technical one. But unless something previously unnoticed is happening at *Or.* 1591–2, the opposite situation obtains: there is only a technical reason for Pylades' silence, all the more reason, one would think, for letting it pass unnoticed.' F. J. Nisetich, 'The Silencing of Pylades', *AJP* 107 (1986), 46–54, p. 49 n. 14.

³⁷ *δόξαμυ* stresses the ironical ambiguity. See Zeitlin (op. cit.), esp. pp. 51ff. and 70ff.

that Orestes' situation will be resolved the way the epilogue outlines. As B. Simon suggests, Orestes' fate is comparable to that of Philokleon in *Wasps*: 'One form of madness has been traded for another. The old man has been turned about but has not mastered his impulses or achieved any true inner understanding.'³⁸

Such an understanding is achieved by the protagonist at the ending of *Herakles* with the help of his friend Theseus. The violence and the suffering are here transformed into security and comfort. As S. A. Barlow comments,³⁹ the theme of friendship and dependence is stressed in *Herakles* above all other values. Presented as a healthy, rewarding, useful and needed relationship, the influence of *φιλία* on madness is appeasing and rehabilitating. Theseus' attitude calms down Herakles and his suggestions to adapt, accept himself and his situation bring about the change of Herakles' resolution. Emotion provides the therapy for Herakles' despair and madness: the final recognition and acceptance of his mortality occurs when he comes to terms with his emotions,⁴⁰ not as a sign of weakness but as an essential, undeniable part of his nature.

On the contrary, Pylades' suggestions indulge Orestes' desperate attempts to hold on to his own beliefs and attitude, and therefore excite his madness.⁴¹ Whatever the effects of his friendship on Orestes, however, it remains true that Pylades' *φιλία* is genuine and, although he does not have to, he is prepared to die for it (1070, 1072, 1091). The theme of *φιλία* is introduced as early as 138f., with an irony which will not be revealed until later:

φιλία γὰρ ἡ σὴ πρευμαμένης μέν, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ
τόνδ' ἐξεγείραι συμφορά γενήσεται.

This is precisely what will happen later on, when Pylades, through his valuable friendship with Orestes, exerts his influence to inflame Orestes' mind with new plans for revenge. The attitude that true friends should adopt is also stated quite early on (296–300):

ὅταν δὲ τᾶμ' ἀθυμήσαντ' ἴδῃς,
σύ μου τὸ δεινὸν καὶ διαφθαρέν φρενῶν
ἰσχναινε παραμυθοῦ θ'. ὅταν δὲ σὺ στένης,
ἡμᾶς παρόντας χρὴ σε νουθετεῖν φίλα·
ἐπικουραὶ γὰρ αἶδε τοῖς φίλοις καλαί.

It is clearly not the one Pylades will follow. Rather than calming Orestes' passion, he will enhance his madness with suggestion and encouragement.

Although *φιλία* in this play is again seen as a value transcending all others, Euripides contrasts the emotional relationship that unites Orestes and Pylades with Menelaos' cold and self-interested attitude, thus throwing doubt on the value of both. Ambiguity is once more used to enhance Euripides' constant questioning of attitudes, values, and beliefs. *Φιλία*, which in *Herakles* provides comfort for despair and madness, is praised by Orestes as it takes the form of conspiracy (cf. 805, 1155–62), and its ambivalent influence is highlighted throughout in Pylades' and Orestes' relationship.

³⁸ Simon (op. cit.), p. 124.

³⁹ S. A. Barlow, 'Sophokles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Herakles*', Ramus 10 no. 2 (1981), 112–28, p. 119.

⁴⁰ Note the acceptance of his tears (*Her.* 1353–7).

⁴¹ Theseus (*Her.* 1240ff., cf. especially 1249: *νουθετεῖς*), asks his friend to have patience and acceptance and not yield to *θυμός* (*Her.* 1246). What is also remarkable is the difference of attitudes regarding pollution in the two plays. While Pylades is indeed prepared to ignore it for the sake of his friendship with Orestes (cf. *Or.* 793f.), Theseus himself believes that *φιλία* itself is capable of overpowering the transmission of such pollution: οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων (*Her.* 1234).

Before I go on to discuss the function that Euripides seems to assign to ambiguity, let me sum up the main results from this comparative analysis of Euripides' presentation of madness. In *Herakles*, where the protagonist's madness is established purely by the use of physiological symptoms and his delusion, the physical aspect of the presentation is stronger and more prominent. In *Orestes* madness is again established by the use of some of the same conventional physical symptoms and the depiction of Orestes' hallucination. Here, however, we notice the first difference. Orestes' hallucination is a self-created vision, while Herakles' delusion consists of a confused, erroneous perception of his nevertheless present children. Madness retains in the play its horrifying nature, but as the description extends to Orestes' appearance independent of the madness attack we have a strong clue of its internalized nature. Orestes is the victim of a madness attack but it is in moments of 'sanity' that he turns murderous.

Orestes' symptoms are given a far more extensive and finer-detailed description than Herakles'. The directness of the presentation allows the audience to see for themselves, rather than have reported, all the stimuli that trigger the attack of madness. This enables a juxtaposition with the traditional explanation of Orestes' madness offered within the play. His external symptoms are the result of an internal disturbance which is hinted by his panic at the approach of the attack. His madness does not have the transient nature of Herakles' and this is emphasized by the stress on *vóσos*.

Clearly there is more than physical description in the play. Orestes' madness is more complicated in its semi-permanent persistent nature than Herakles'. Orestes' madness is portrayed with physical symptoms only in *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, where, not being central to the play, Orestes' affliction is not of a complicated nature. This seems to allow the assumption that there might be some form of hierarchy in Euripides' presentation of madness, in which physical description portrays a 'lower form' of mental affliction, whereas a different process is used to describe psychopathology. The distinction itself in the nature of the characters' mental disturbance is achieved not through literal description of the manifestation of madness itself, but through detailed emotional portrayal of the characters. While in *Herakles* madness is portrayed by its physical symptoms, in *Orestes* the portrayal relies on a combination of these, with, more importantly, emotional/psychological information. Further evidence to support this assumption can in fact be found in *Bacchai*. The portrayal of Pentheus' permanent psychopathology is built solely by emotional description, with a noticeable lack of physical symptoms in the description of his madness.

The intense use of emotional description is an excellent illustration of Euripides' introduction of the emotions as contributing factors in the portrayal of madness. Feeling itself is portrayed through emotional activity rather than literal statements. Action emerges as emotional response and this is psychologically consistent, since emotion translates itself into activity. The ingenuity of the portrayal lies, I believe, in the fact that by adopting this method Euripides manages at the same time to portray the inexpressibility of the feeling. The result of unexpressed emotions, madness itself remains inexpressible.⁴²

The strong psychological realism of Euripides' emotional portrayal owes a lot to his choice of method, which is indeed similar to the one psychologists use today to detect emotion.⁴³ A combination of physiology, characters' introspections and emotional activity is used to reveal the feeling, but Euripides also juxtaposes one

⁴² For a discussion of Euripides' presentation of inexpressibility, see pp. 126–7 and esp. 257–60 of my thesis. ⁴³ Summarized evidence in the introduction to my thesis, pp. 8–11.

against the other to measure each element's truth and realism. Ambiguity seems to be the result Euripides is aiming at with his technique of juxtaposition, and it is a major weapon in his attempt to question established attitudes and traditional beliefs. His re-evaluation of madness as emotional response is but one instance of this.⁴⁴ The same re-evaluation process is present in his portrayal of attitude to emotions, as well as of emotional relationships and family bonds.⁴⁵ Indeed, Euripides' attempt at re-evaluation seems to reach, on its ultimate level, the entire world of feeling, and affects tragedy's traditional value-systems. In his exploration of madness as νόσος, Euripides challenges traditional notions and exposes the powerful links of its causation with human emotionality. His presentation of madness is in fact parallel to his presentation of action in general as a reaction to emotional motivation.

The causal relationship highlighted by Euripides between emotion-motivation-action has undertones of a pre-tragic, Homeric 'unity' of the self,⁴⁶ enriched by the realization that the self is none other than the emotional self. One is what one feels, and the recognition of this effects the acceptance of responsibility for both the feeling and its control. The playwright uses the presence of divinity to exploit the ambiguity entailed in this.⁴⁷ Do the gods stand for the reluctance to accept emotional responsibility, or do they illustrate the lack of awareness of it? More ambiguously still, is the role of the gods suggestive not of the human evasion of responsibility but rather of the inability to deal with it?⁴⁸ The answer is left, like everything else in Euripides, open.

The re-evaluation of the negativism regarding emotions, evident throughout Euripides' work, can be experienced in *Herakles*, where emotional concern and support is the one thing that characterizes humanity's superiority over petty, capricious divinity. Acceptance of emotions brings relief, while accepting their responsibility and control is, perhaps, the sole guarantee of sanity, unobtainable, as we have seen, to Orestes. The tragic quality that emerges from the presentation of conflict/madness as inevitable in the lack of this realization, and from the impossibility of resolution without conscious experience of suffering, (i.e. without 'emotional understanding'), seems to be intended to act as the catalyst effecting such realization and understanding.

⁴⁴ Another example of Euripides' re-evaluation of madness is the case of Kassandra in *Troiaides*, discussed in my thesis, pp. 58-61.

⁴⁵ Obvious, for instance, in: *Herakles*, in the hero's acceptance of emotion as an essential part of his nature and its portrayal as a kind of therapy for his madness; in *Alkestis*, in the presentation of the heroine's emotional motivation and admirable composure, which strips away any negativism against emotion as uncontrollable and disastrous; also, in the same play, Euripides' presentation of love (φιλία) as a mutual rewarding and constructive feeling. His portrayals of perversions of emotional relationships are also detectable instances of re-evaluation. For examples and discussion, see p. 246 of my thesis.

⁴⁶ In Homer there is no separate mental and emotional functioning. Thought is one with feeling, which is accompanied with the urge to act (cf. *Il.* 24.197ff.). On the contrary, for us, as well as for the classical Athenian, emotion remains motivating, but intellect and emotion are separated. Understanding an emotion is seen as a function independent from the actual experience of the feeling.

⁴⁷ Examples other than in *Orestes* could include the presentation of Phaidra's passion in *Hippolytos*; *Bacchai*, where the downfall of Pentheus is either through his own ἀμαρτία or through the will of Dionysos; or even *Medea*, where several layers of motivation produce different nuances for both Jason's and Medea's actions.

⁴⁸ Classical Greek's realization of emotion as internal πάθος offers no help towards understanding the inexplicability or managing the uncontrollability of emotions. Man's fear of his emotions emerges as he becomes increasingly aware of his responsibility for something he can barely control.

The 'tragic knowledge' Euripides' audience seems to be meant to experience is an understanding of what it is to be human: recognition and acceptance of the emotional self, achieved through suffering, or, more correctly, **πάθος**, *the undergoing of the experience*. Giving new depths to the Aischylean τὸ πάθει μάθος, Euripides' work also opens new paths for novel interpretations to the misunderstood notion of κάθαρσις: a merging of ἔλεος (compassion through knowledge, understanding) and φόβος (of emotions, their control and responsibility) to an eventual acceptance, reconciliation, and atonement with feeling.

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