

CREATIVE RHETORIC IN EURIPIDES' *TROADES*: SOME NOTES ON HECUBA'S SPEECH

Euripides' *Troades* was a work not much studied until the end of World War II. Since then the play, and in particular the part played by Helen and the debate concerning her accountability for her elopement and its consequences, have not ceased to attract scholarly attention.¹ The recent interest in the rhetoric of this *agon* has thrown additional light on the entire scene, the third and last episode of the play.² The debate is occasioned by Menelaus' announcement (873–5) that the men who captured his runaway wife handed her over to him for execution—or, should he so choose, to take her back home. In the first speech (914–65) Helen tries to persuade Menelaus that she cannot justly be punished with death for having served as the tool of a most powerful goddess. Hecuba, in her answering speech (969–1032), strives to discredit Helen in order to prevent her reinstatement and oblige Menelaus to carry out the death sentence. In this paper I would like to draw further attention to some of Hecuba's arguments. Assuming general acquaintance with current readings of the *agon*,³ I shall start with a section-by-section discussion of the old queen's speech and its immediate effect, with an emphasis on significant motifs. Certain further implications will be pointed out at the end of the paper.

969–82. Depending on the reading of the text, Hecuba denies that the beauty contest between the goddesses took place,⁴ or that victory in the contest meant so much to Hera and Athena that they tried to win over the judge by the offers mentioned by Helen in 925–31a.⁵ Either way Helen is lying.

Aristotle (*Rh.* 1418b12–22 = 3.17.15) uses the beginning of this speech as an example of a second speaker successfully undoing the impression left by his opponent, by combating at the very outset the weakest, and most easily refuted, of the latter's pleas. Whether or not we accept Aristotle's evaluation of Helen's arguments, Hecuba accomplishes a rhetorical *tour de force* when, counting upon her audience's piety,⁶ she

¹ See the relevant sections in the (growing number of) commentaries on the play, G. Schiassi, *Le Troiane* (Firenze, 1953); K. H. Lee, *Euripides Troades* (Basingstoke, 1976); Shirley A. Barlow, *Euripides Trojan Women* (Warminster, 1986); W. Biehl, *Euripides Troades* (Heidelberg, 1989); special papers since D. Ebener's 'Die Helenaszene der Troerinnen', *WZ Halle* 3 (1954), 691–722, and numerous studies on related subjects such as A. Lesky, 'Psychologie bei Euripides', in *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, VI: Euripide* (Vandoeuvres and Genève, 1960), 125–68; T. C. W. Stinton, *Euripides and the Judgement of Paris* (London, 1965); J. Duchemin, *L'AGON dans la tragédie grecque*² (Paris, 1968), to mention only a few of a long list.

² See especially M. Lloyd, 'The Helen scene in Euripides' *Troades*', *CQ* 34 (1984), 303–13; M. Lloyd, *The Agon in Euripides* (Oxford, 1992), 99–112; and the relevant sections in N. T. Croally, *Euripidean Polemic* (Cambridge, 1994).

³ For recent readings see, besides those mentioned in the previous note, the commentaries of Lee and Biehl, and the notes and translation of Barlow (all n. 1). The scene has been treated so often that it is not possible to name the author of every interpretation accepted or challenged here. I am indebted to all.

⁴ Reading (with Hartung) οὐ for the MSS's αἰ in 975, e.g. Lloyd (n. 2, 1992), 106.

⁵ So e.g. Stinton (n. 1), 38.

⁶ See D. B. King, 'The appeal to religion in Greek rhetoric', *CJ* 50 (1955), 363–71, at 363, 366, 367, 371, for the extensive use made by Greek rhetoricians of appeals to religion as means of persuasion, and Arist. *Rh.* 1356a1–13 (= 1.2.3–4) for the importance of the pleader's moral character in winning his hearers' trust.

singles out this specific plea as her starting point and introduces the argument with the declaration (969–70) that first—rather than complying with the chorus's immediately preceding request (966–8) that she defend her children and her country against the effects of Helen's dangerous rhetoric—she will take up the goddesses' cause and prove Helen a liar.⁷ This announcement fulfils the requirements of a formal proem by a second speaker:⁸ (i) the old queen states which of the former speaker's arguments will be answered (Helen's version of the 'Judgement of Paris'); and (ii) she secures the goodwill of her audience (seemingly Menelaus, in fact the spectators as well) by arousing their esteem for herself (Hecuba selflessly volunteering to serve as the goddesses' champion) and provoking their anger against her opponent (Helen has maligned immortals for her personal benefit). Moreover, since Hecuba begins her speech with an attack on Helen's third argument, she ignores the earlier statements of her opponent. She then answers Helen's remaining arguments *prima facie* point by point⁹ and gives the impression of providing a complete rebuttal. Consequently Helen's first two points stay unanswered and the fact that they are not refuted is hardly noticed. Both points (919–20a, 920b–22) concern Troy's predestined fall at the hands of Hecuba's son Paris, prefigured by his pregnant mother's dream that she gave birth to a firebrand which burned Troy to the ground. This detail is also found in lyric treatments of the fall of Troy that have come down to us¹⁰ and probably was well known generally. The audience of *Troades* was specifically reminded of this dream in a tragedy produced by Euripides on the same occasion,¹¹ so that everybody present could understand the full meaning of Helen's statements. These, though curtly presented, deserved serious attention in the world of Greek tragedy where dreams are introduced on the assumption that they are god-sent. Usually the event foreshown in a dream emerges as fact before the play is over, thus proving the divine origin of the vision.¹² In *Troades* this proof has already been provided: the prophetic dream alluded to by Helen was realized before the beginning of the play, and this fact is brought home by the god of the prologue when he draws attention to the smouldering city, destroyed by the Greeks (8–9a). Hecuba's choice of starting point allows her to disregard the prediction of Troy's fall; instead she is free to argue in the spirit of enlightened fifth-century myth criticism.¹³ She is also blind to the allusion to this myth

⁷ With 970 *μη λέγουσαν ἔνδικα* cf. S. O.T. 1158 *μη λέγων γε τοῦνδικον* paraphrased by Σ as *μη λέγων τὸ ἀληθές*.

⁸ See [Arist.] *Rh. Al.* 1440a5–7, 1436a33–8, 1442a7–14.

⁹ [Arist.] *Rh. Al.* 1440a8–10: 'After the introduction the best plan is to put forward one at a time each of the statements made in the previous speech, and prove that they are not just' (Rackham's *LCL* translation is used for [Arist.] *Rh. Al.*). However, Hecuba does not really 'put forward' even the statements she does refute: she chooses a significant detail and introduces it by 'you said' or the like so as to impress the hearers that what she is refuting is what Helen said. In fact she restates or interprets Helen's statement or its context rather freely, or otherwise evades answering it or a significant part of it, to serve her own purpose; compare 971–82 with 924–37, 983–97 with 938–50, 998–1009 with 962, 1010–22a with 951–8 (960).

¹⁰ See P. Fr. 52i(A) (= *Pae.* 8a), 16–23, E. *Andr.* 293–303 (both earlier than *Troades*).

¹¹ In *Alexandros*, the first of the group of four plays of which *Troades* constituted the third. The lost play dealt with the royal parents' failure to do away with the ill-fated infant. The hypothesis of the play indicates that Hecuba's dream, the reason for their efforts, was told in the prologue (R. A. Coles, *Hypothesis of Alexandros*, *BICS* Supp. 32 [1974], ll. 4–5 on p. 12).

¹² See A. *Pe.* 181–99 and 518–19, *Cho.* 527–33 and 928–9, S. *El.* 417–23, E. *Hec.* 69–72 (76) and 703–8, *I.T.* 44–55a.

¹³ See W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge, 1971), 228–9 (there was, however, no necessary connection between such criticism and the belief in divination by dreams: the Platonic Socrates unreservedly accepted the latter [*Cri.* 44a6–b4] but would not take immoral legends about the gods at face value [*Euthyph.* 5e6–6c4]).

when Helen refers to Paris as Hecuba's scourge (941a), but she does avail herself of another myth in order to support her own cause (1001b).¹⁴ Her unwillingness to reply in the *agon* to Helen's references to the myth connecting Paris with the fall of Troy is consistent with her earlier silence at the lengthy mention of this very theme by Andromache (or the chorus)¹⁵ at 595–600. Evidently what the queen wishes to ignore is not 'myths' but this particular myth of Troy doomed to destruction by means of her son.

983–997. Aphrodite never accompanied Paris to Menelaus' palace. Helen invented this involvement by the goddess of love when the sight of the beautiful prince in his oriental splendour made her long to leave Greece and her modest circumstances behind and allow her depraved taste to run riot in gold-streaming Troy.

The common reading of 988 ὁ σὸς δ' ἰδὼν νιν νοῦς ἐποιήθη Κύπρις ('your mind on seeing him was made Cypris') takes ἐποιήθη ('was made') to mean 'became' (or the like).¹⁶ This, however, is hardly likely. ἐποιήθη here seems to be the earliest aorist passive of ποιέω in extant Greek non-prose literature. The form is also extremely rare in the survivals of contemporary Attic prose. In both the latter and in Herodotus, the agent of the passive action is either explicitly stated or else easily inferred from the context.¹⁷ According to the present evidence, the agent is omitted only when 'make' means 'construct' and the fact that there is a 'maker' goes without saying.¹⁸ Evidently, when something or somebody ἐποιήθη, somebody ἐποίησε/ἐποίησατο it/him. In line 988 this somebody who makes can only be Helen. Indeed, this is understood by the scholiast who paraphrases 988 as σὺ . . . ἀναπλάσσει Κύπριν ποιοῦσα ('you . . . creatively fabricate Cypris'). This artful accusation recalls 981b-2a μὴ ἀμαθεῖς ποίει θεάς τὸ σὸν κακὸν κοσμοῦσα¹⁹ where Hecuba charges her opponent with attributing conduct to Hera and Athena that turns their conventional and true images into immoral ones: Helen creates, as it were, the goddesses as different characters in the story she has invented to make her own behaviour look good. The fact that these are the only two instances of ποιέω in the play stresses this connection. Furthermore, the accusation in 988 supplements the one in 981–2a: the goddesses of the Judgement are an irreducible group of three, so that Hecuba has three goddesses to defend against what she insists are Helen's fictions (924). So far Hecuba has explicitly fulfilled this undertaking only for Hera and Athena; the argument from probability concerning them (971–81a, answering 925–8) was not applicable to Aphrodite (929–31a). Of course, if two of the three goddesses who allegedly were rivals in the beauty competition either did not participate in such a contest, or did so only for fun (above with nn. 4 and 5) and consequently would not have tried to bribe the judge, then either

¹⁴ <Castor and his twin brother> 'were not yet among the stars' (Barlow's translation).

¹⁵ Murray's attribution of the passage to Andromache is widely accepted; Biehl (Teubner) follows P's attribution to the chorus. Either way, this is a Trojan voice.

¹⁶ Lloyd 'became', Lattimore 'went', Lee 'was turned into', Barlow 'transformed itself into', Lesky 'ward zu', Parmentier 'est devenu'.

¹⁷ E.g. Hdt 1.10.2 τὸ ποιηθέν ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, 3.115.2 τὸ οὖνομα . . . ἔστι Ἑλληνικὸν . . . ὑπὸ ποιητέω . . . ποιηθέν, Lys. 13.76 φησὶν Ἀθηναῖος ποιηθῆναι preceded by Ἀθηναῖον αὐτὸν ὁ δῆμος ἐποίησατο.

¹⁸ E.g. Thuc. 2.56.2 ἐν ναυσὶν ἱππαγωγοῖς ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν νεῶν ποιηθείσαις, Hdt. 2.125 (a pyramid), 2.138.2 (a sanctuary), 2.159 (triremes), 7.37.1 (dykes).

¹⁹ 'Do not try to make (imp. praes.) the goddesses (out to be [Barlow]) irrational while glossing over your own wrong' (for 'glossing over' see Stevens's note on *Andr.* 956).

there was no 'Judgement' or else no bribery. On either view Aphrodite would not have had any rivals and her alleged offer to Paris collapses. Still, Hecuba's initial declaration that she will fight for 'the goddesses' and expose Helen's lies creates expectations that she will explicitly refute the allegations made against each of the three goddesses. The interpretation 'You say that Cypris came to Menelaus' home with my son' (983–4) which the old queen gives to Helen's claim that Paris 'arrived with no insignificant goddess on his side' (940)²⁰ allows her to fulfil this expectation (see n. 9). In both passages ποιέω stands for the power to create an image through words and in both Hecuba accuses Helen of having abused this power—impiously, by implication—in order to escape responsibility for her immoral conduct.

Lines 991–992 are *prima facie* a restatement in plain speech of 988 and are connected back to 'my son' in 987 by the relative ὅν, following the explanatory parenthesis 989–90. In fact, Hecuba slips in an unexpected motive for Helen's behaviour at the sight of Paris, namely a craving for riches and a life of luxury.²¹ This prejudicial accusation, an obvious instance of blackening the character of one's opponent,²² seems intended to deprive Helen of the sympathy of those inclined to condone irrational conduct if it is caused by overwhelming passion for a lover.²³ At the same time Hecuba insinuates that Helen's reaction was a calculated one and thus refutes her claim that she must have been coerced by Aphrodite—or irresistible desire—when she deserted her home and country, for obviously there was no rational motive for such a move (946–8): Hecuba now supplies her with precisely such a motive. This motive was already hinted at by the 'seeing mind' in 988 which recalls Epicharmus' famous 'The mind sees and the mind hears; the rest is deaf and blind.'²⁴ Far from having been smitten by an overpowering infatuation for Paris—for which Euripides uses a different vocabulary²⁵—Helen, seeing the beautiful prince in his sumptuous splendour, grasped the potential of the situation and made up the story about Aphrodite. To lend credibility to the allegation that Helen eloped to the gold of Troy, Hecuba describes her as 'having little' in her Greek husband's home (993) where she restlessly wanders to and fro (ἀνεστρέφου),²⁶ ready, it seems, to avail herself of any opportunity for change. This portrayal puts Helen in stark contrast to the ideal wife Andromache of the previous scene who explicitly included Hector's wealth among the traits of her husband that answered all her expectations (673b–4) and seems specifically intended to

²⁰ Both quotations are from Barlow's translation.

²¹ This seems to be the earliest reference to Helen's love of riches (see L. B. Ghali-Kahil, *Les enlèvements et le retour d'Hélène* [Paris, 1955], n. 5 on p. 30; Fr. Jouan, *Euripide et les légendes des chants cypriens* [Paris, 1966], 173) which was to become her special trademark.

²² Arist. *Rh.* 1416b9–11 = 3.15.10: 'Since the same thing may have been done from several motives, the accuser must disparage it by taking it in the worst sense' (Freese's *LCL* translation is used for Arist. *Rh.*).

²³ See J. de Romilly, 'L'excuse de l'invincible amour dans la tragédie grecque', *Miscellanea Tragica in honorem J. C. Kamerbeek* (Amsterdam, 1976), 309–21.

²⁴ D-K 23 B 12 νοὺς ὀρῇ καὶ νοὺς ἀκούει, τὰλλα κωφὰ καὶ τυφλά. Cf. *Hel.* 122 αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁσσοῖς εἰδόμεν· καὶ νοὺς ὀραῖ ('These eyes saw her. When the eyes see, the brain sees too', Lattimore's translation).

²⁵ Note the absence of νοὺς from the usual Euripidean expressions for overwhelming desire: *Med.* 8 ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγείσ' Ἰάσονος (and similarly *ibid.* 639 and *Hi.* 38), *IA* 585–6 ἔρωτι . . . ἐπρόήθη (and similarly *Cycl.* 185), *Hi.* 27–8a ἰδοῦσα . . . καρδίαν κατέσχετο ἔρωτι δεινῶι, *Hi.* 765–6 δεινῶι φρένας Ἀφροδίτας νόσωι κατεκλάσθη (with which compare *Tro.* 992 ἐξεμαργώθη φρένας where the overwhelming factor is Paris' golden splendour).

²⁶ Cf. *An.* 1221, the only other use of this middle in extant Euripides, where it describes old Peleus, now bereft of his grandson as well, wandering in his empty palace.

taint Menelaus' memories of his life with Helen and undermine *a priori* any trust he might be inclined to place in her in the future.²⁷

This Helen is obviously very different from the Helen of Greek tradition who not only married the wealthiest of her princely suitors²⁸ but, seeing that Paris removed a great many possessions from Menelaus' palace together with the wife of his host,²⁹ eloped with, rather than to, riches; indeed, it was for 'Helen and the possessions together with her' that the Trojan War was waged.³⁰ But this is a Helen who can be believed to have thrown herself at the gold-glittering prince. Such conduct allots her the blame for her elopement and, consequently, the responsibility for its disastrous outcome as well. This is a point of utmost importance to the mother of the man who caused the destruction of Troy and the death of her men by betraying his host. The fall of the city may have been due to the gods' decision and Paris may have been doomed to be instrumental in the implementation of that decision—he was nonetheless morally responsible if he fulfilled his role in an immoral way, and the old queen does her utmost to prove that this was not the case. Since Helen did not mention the 'possessions' in her speech—nor the duel between her two husbands broken off by Paris' disappearance, nor again the truce solemnly concluded between the Greeks and the Trojans and violated by the latter,³¹ all connected with the 'possessions' and each of which she could have put to good use—Hecuba need not refer to them either. This allows her to fashion the Helen of modest means who serves her purpose.

998–1001. The image of Helen eager to reach golden Troy is in the audience's mind when Hecuba now questions her opponent and asks which Spartan heard her cry for help when, as she claims, Paris abducted her by force. The rules of the *agon* genre debar Helen from answering Hecuba and reminding the audience that she never made any such claim. Thus Hecuba's insinuation that Helen eloped for the sake of Trojan wealth gains support from her allegedly not having called her famous hero brothers to her rescue, while according to Helen herself (946–8a) she followed Paris because of her overpowering love for him, so that the very idea of an appeal for help is absurd. Hecuba's introduction of the Dioscuri also exonerates Menelaus from Helen's reproach (942–4) that he went abroad after Paris' arrival and left her defenceless with the stranger. With such brothers she would have been well protected had she only so desired. Obviously Hecuba prefers enlightening her audience about her opponent's character rather than refuting her arguments. The unusual order of

²⁷ [Arist.] *Rh. Al.* 1445a13–18 'we shall discredit our adversaries . . . by showing that our hearers themselves . . . have been or are being or are going to be wrongfully ill-treated by them'.

²⁸ Hes. *Fr.* 198.5b–6, 200, 204.41–2a, 204.85b–7a. *Od.* 4 should not be quoted to prove Menelaus' wealth at the relevant time; the riches described there are explicitly stated to have been acquired *after* the Trojan war (*Od.* 4.81–90).

²⁹ *Il.* 7.389–90, 13.620–7, 22.114–16.

³⁰ 'Ελένην καὶ κτήμαθ' ἅμ' αὐτῇ (and the like) *Il.* 3 *passim*, 7.350–64, 389–93, 400–1, 22.114, *Cypria* (*Homeri Opera* V, Allen, p. 105). The 'possessions' seem to be especially connected with the Greeks' demand and the Trojans' refusal to return what was unlawfully taken as, for example, in Herodotus' report of the Egyptian version of the story of Helen's abduction (2.113–19), *Ov. Met.* 13.200 (*praedamque Helenamque reposco*), *Lib. Decl.* 3.12, and Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeridos Belli Troiani Libri*² (ed. W. Eisenhut [Teubner, 1973]), which purport to be the report of a Greek eye-witness to the war. The possessions tend to be absent from pro-Trojan reports of Helen's abduction, e.g. Herodotus' account of the Persian version thereof (1.1–4) and the relevant part of Dictys' Trojan counterpart, Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae Historia* (ed. F. Meister [Teubner, 1873]).

³¹ *Il.* 3 *passim* and 4.1–157.

speeches in this *agon* where the defence precedes the accusation has often been commented upon.³² Whatever else Euripides had in mind, by choosing this order he gave free rein to Hecuba to be as creative in her pleading as suited her purpose, without anyone being able to protest against her *ποίησις*.

1002–1022a. Up to this point Hecuba has presented her version of the behaviour of Menelaus' wife in Greece (described as if by an eyewitness although obviously she was never there); she now carries out her original intention (907b–9a) to disclose to him Helen's conduct in Troy. In her argument (which is not corroborated by witnesses) Hecuba further develops her earlier picture. The fickle young woman who repeatedly changes her declared sentiments towards her two husbands according to the changing fortunes of the war (1002–9) is an extension of the calculating opportunist of 988–97. This portrayal introduces Hecuba's reply (1010–22a) to Helen's claim (951–60 [or 951–8; see n. 38]) that she stayed in Troy against her will. Still, Hecuba does not really answer this argument (see n. 9): Helen spoke explicitly of the short period, close to the end of the war, after the 'god-arranged union' (953) had come to an end with the death of Paris, and according to her line of defence it was only then that she was responsible for what she did. The old queen is referring to the long years of the war (1020 assumes Paris alive). She begins (1010–11) with what appears to be a formal refutation of Helen's statement (953–8; compare esp. 1010 with 958) that she repeatedly tried to escape to the Greek lines after Paris' death but was intercepted by the watchmen on the ramparts. However, instead of continuing as might be expected and disproving Helen's statement, Hecuba takes her to task (1012–14) for not having committed suicide as a noble-minded woman in her circumstances should (she gave no such advice in the first episode to Apollo's virgin priestess Cassandra on her way to become the concubine of the conqueror of her country, nor in the second to Hector's widow Andromache whom the son of the man who killed her husband chose as his prize). The queen then parries Helen's story with a narrative of her own (1015–19), and her word has to be taken against that of a woman who is not noble-minded (1013), who refused to act in accordance with integrity (*τάρπειη* 1009), and who already stands accused of lying (970 with n. 7): far from having tried to escape from Troy, Helen persistently rejected Hecuba's offers to conduct her secretly to the Greek side (1017 echoing 954) and put an end to the war. This suggestion is incompatible with the presence of the 'possessions' in Troy and with their constituting, together with Helen, the object for which both sides were fighting. As there are no possessions, Helen's insistence upon staying in Troy despite Hecuba's entreaties can be attributed to a base motive. Clearly the young woman refused because she would have had to give up her wanton lifestyle (*ἄβριζες* 1020) in Paris' rich palace and the godlike adoration (1021) she enjoyed as a member of the Trojan royal family.³³ Hecuba's argument here recalls her contention (996b–7) that Helen left Greece for Troy because Menelaus' palace did not satisfy her wanton tastes (*ἐγκαθυβρίζειν* 997). Helen's determined rejection of Hecuba's repeated proposals

³² See e.g. Lloyd (n. 2, 1992), 304; Croally (n. 2), 137–8. Biehl (n. 1) in notes on 895–918 and 906 compares Attic court procedure in cases of *δίκη ἀνάδικος* due to condemnation *in absentia*: Helen is now given the opportunity 'ihren Rechtsanspruch nachträglich geltend zu machen'. However, such cases were retried in the normal order (A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens* [Oxford, 1971], vol. II, 191–2 and 197–9) as were cases decided by an umpire (J. H. Lipsius, *Das Attische Recht und Rechtsverfahren* [Leipzig, 1915], vol. III, 229, n. 39).

³³ For the Greek attitude to the oriental fashion of prostrating oneself before mortal superiors see Hdt. 7.136, Xen. *An.* 3.2.13, Isoc. *Paneg.* 151.

also reveals a woman utterly indifferent to the price the Greeks and the Trojans were paying for her life of pleasure. This aspect, however, is not stressed. When the old queen speaks (1002–3) of the deadly struggle that ensued with the arrival of the Greeks in Helen's wake, she does so not in order to blame her adversary for the loss of life that resulted from her elopement, but to impress on her audience Helen's deficiency as a wife and expose her lack of loyalty to (and love for) either husband. At the same time the Trojan queen's endeavours to rid Troy of Helen's destructive presence prevent the audience from calling to mind the Trojans' traditional refusal to return the woman (and the possessions) they were holding unlawfully and thereby avoid the mutual bloodshed.

1022b–1032. The old queen began her speech as the self-appointed champion of the goddesses; she concludes it as defender of Menelaus' interests. Switching in mid-line to the here and now (1022b–8) and vehemently upbraiding Helen for her brazen (and by implication unrepentant) demeanour in front of the husband she has betrayed, she expertly uses the peroration to ingratiate herself further with the judge and husband and to rouse his emotions against her adversary³⁴ so as to make him adopt the verdict she is going to propose. This she does when she now at long last addresses Menelaus for the first time in her speech and exhorts him to punish Helen with death. Here the old queen of Troy presents her heart's desire as an honourable act for the greater glory of Greece (1029–32) and challenges the Greek king to prove himself worthy of his status and do his duty by his country.³⁵

Hecuba's introduction of Greek interests counters Helen's claim (925–37) that her union with Paris saved Greece from barbarian conquest and expulsion (926) or domination (928), for which she ought to have been publicly honoured (937). Seeing that from her first articulation on stage the old queen regards Helen as personally the perpetrator of every atrocity, injury, or other ill that her family suffered in the wake of the war,³⁶ her wanting Helen's blood (890) did not come as a surprise when the unexpected possibility of her execution by Menelaus arose at the beginning of the scene (873–4a), and her demand that Helen be executed was predictable since she urged Menelaus to hold the *agon* explicitly for this purpose (906–10). Helen's punishment by death would also be the most striking proof of her guilt and, consequently, of Paris' non-guilt, and for this reason too Helen must die. Indeed, this prospect made Hecuba who, since her prophetic dream has come true, knows only too well that the gods will not help her (469),³⁷ suddenly believe in divine justice (888), which she obviously equates with revenge on the woman whom she blames for her plight. Incidentally Hecuba's argument fulfils the chorus's *prima facie* unheeded request that she defend

³⁴ For these functions of the peroration see Arist. *Rh.* 1419b24–6 = 3.19.3 in combination with 1377b30–78a3 = 2.1.4; see also 1408a16–24 = 3.7.3–4 for the persuasiveness of style expressing emotion. For a captive ruler's *prima facie* disinterested advice to the conqueror, see Hdt. 1.88.2–89.

³⁵ When the Trojan War and its effects are at issue, 'Menelaus' country' is not his specific kingdom but 'Greece', cf. 926, 933, 935, 1030, 1034 as against 944, 994 (999).

³⁶ 134–7 'The slaughterer of Priam'; cf. 498–9, 1213b–15. Note that Helen was of old considered the guilty cause of the war waged for and because of her (*Od.* 438b, *Alc.* 42.2–3, 42.15–16, 283.12–14, *Semon.* 7.117–18) and the instrument or the perpetrator of the havoc wrought in its course. In *Od.* 14.68–77 it is Helen who 'loosened the knees of many warriors' although the Greek heroes went to Troy 'to win recompense for Agamemnon' (Murray's *Loeb* translation), for which she was also cursed (*Od.* 14.68–9) but does not seem to have been deemed indictable.

³⁷ Similarly after the *agon*-scene at 1240–2a and 1280–1.

her children and her country (966–8) against Helen's dangerous rhetoric (p. 17 above). 'Children' in this context stands for Paris³⁸ to whom Helen has assigned the responsibility for her own conduct because of his fateful choice in the 'judgement' (924ff.). Now that Paris is dead and Troy captured, all Hecuba can defend is their good name. If Paris is guilty, Troy fell due to the misconduct of a member of the Trojan royal family, and Troy herself is to blame for her fate. If Paris is not guilty, neither is Troy (for the absence from the *agon* of the Trojans' guilt, see above with n. 31).

And yet, Helen is innocent of any offence against Hecuba and Troy.³⁹ The only one she has wronged (ἡδίκηεις 902) is the husband whom she left, and Hecuba now appeals to him to carry out her revenge. One would, however, expect it to be the loss of life and the suffering following from her elopement (873–4a and 877b–9) for which she would demand Helen's death; that it is for her marital infidelity does not seem appropriate from a pleader who has just identified with specifically Greek values (above with n. 33). The Greeks did not inflict death on an adulteress,⁴⁰ and Hecuba makes it clear that she is aware of this fact when she suggests that the proposed death sentence should henceforth obtain in Greece as the punishment for every woman who betrays her husband. Why she nevertheless chooses this line of argument can be gathered from Menelaus' long monologue at the beginning of the episode (860–79). The deferred contact between the new arrival and those on stage⁴¹ allows the king to express himself freely, to the open air as it were, while Hecuba listens attentively. She hears him say that his men wanted him to execute Helen (873–4a), but would not stand in his way if he preferred to reinstate her (874b–5) and that he has decided to convey her to Greece and let her pay there with her life for those who fell in Troy (876–79).⁴² Had this been all that Menelaus said, Hecuba, intent that the king carry out this decision,

³⁸ Deleting 959–60 with Wilamowitz (and others, including the editor of *OCT* 1981); for the generalizing plural 'children' referring to a single person see Barrett's note on *Hi.* 49. With 959–60, Deiphobus, too, is included in 'children', and Hecuba also denies that the latter married Helen against her will.

³⁹ See R. Meridor, 'Hecuba's revenge', *AJP* 99 (1978), 28–9 for the absence of *τυμωρός* and its derivatives from *Troades*, and note that in the *Iliad* (3.39–51, 7.374) the Trojan authorities expressly acknowledge Paris' exclusive responsibility and guilt.

⁴⁰ An adulterous wife had to be divorced by her husband, was debarred from religious ceremonies, and was not allowed to appear in public adorned (A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens* [Oxford, 1968], vol. I, 35–6); she was not otherwise punished.

⁴¹ D. J. Mastronarde, *Contact and Discontinuity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1979), 25 'Menelaus . . . has no need to address the captives; his speech . . . is overheard by Hekabe, so that it is not an isolated parodos-rhesis', i.e. Euripides, in order to let Hecuba overhear Menelaus' speech without his taking notice of her presence, created a situation in which the king had no need to address the captives. (It is noteworthy that those on stage do not remark on the entrance of [i.e. do not introduce to the audience] the newcomer, who is well known to them; contrast e.g. *Or.* 356ff., preceded by the chorus' 348–55, and *Ba.* 215ff., preceded by Tiresias' 210–14. The silence in *Troades* may be intended to allow Menelaus to introduce himself boastfully at the beginning of his speech—a consideration to be added to the debate on 862–3).

⁴² The proposed punishment by bereaved relatives and friends may be derived from Stesichorus, who has those about to stone Helen drop the stones at the sight of her beauty (*PMG* 201). If the same text also underlies *Or.* 56b–60a (where Menelaus brings Helen back to Greece under the cover of night in order to save her from such an act of vengeance), Euripides may, in *Troades*, have changed a spontaneous (failed) lynching into an official (never to be carried out) punishment, the very concept of which seems incompatible with the basic assumptions of the Trojan war: the Greeks set out to recover Menelaus' queen, not to return without her. It does, however, suit the rhetoric of the *agon*, seeing that 'It was common for the prosecutor in any serious indictment to demand the death penalty for his adversary' (K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle* [Oxford, 1974], 289–90).

would in all likelihood have concluded her speech by insisting that Helen's execution was the king's peremptory duty to those who died for him and to their bereft families. (She will avail herself of this argument [1044–5] in the altercation following upon the verdict, when she fights to counteract Helen's entreaties for pardon [1042–3]. That will be after the king in his decision [1039b–41] reintroduces the topic which was absent from the contestants' speeches.) But even before Menelaus makes his programmatic announcement, he declares that the sun is shining more brightly now that he is to subjugate his wife (860–1) and, despite what people think, it is not for Helen's sake that he has come to Troy (864–5a); moreover, her very name is anathema to him (869–70). The king doth protest too much. Evidently he is still in love with Helen and his decision to convey her to Greece (876–9) is aimed not so much at having her put to death there in the future as at saving her from being killed in Troy in the present. But he also fears being held in contempt as an unmanly weakling dominated by the woman who has played him false, so much so that he will not even own to himself that he intends to take her back.⁴³

In the light of this reading of Menelaus, Hecuba's best (and probably only) chance to make him execute Helen is to use the runaway wife's punishment as a means to restore the deserted husband's tarnished reputation. What could be a better demonstration that there are no grounds for Menelaus' ill fame and that he did not fight against Troy for his wife's sake than his sentencing her to death? Hecuba's final demand to turn this novel punishment of the particular sinner Helen into a generally binding law (1031b–2 'lay down this law for all the other women: death for whoever betrays her husband') both adapts an un-Greek penalty to Greek legal principles of formulating general laws⁴⁴ and serves as a warning to the king against reinstating his faithless queen by intimating the likely corrupting influence of her example on other married women. Moreover, Menelaus' compliance with both these demands will transform him from a selfish ruler, who embroiled the whole Greek world in a long and bloody war in order to recover his unworthy wife, into a high-principled sovereign, who gives first priority to morality and the sanctity of marriage as the basis for Greek family life. This is an attractive prospect for a king concerned with his public image.

1033–1035. The chorus of Trojan women who earlier (966–8) urged their queen to stand up against Helen now support her appeal and tell Menelaus that by sentencing Helen to death he will regain his good name.

The 'enemies' of 1035 should not be taken as a reference to the Trojan women themselves, as if the chorus is exhorting Menelaus to act in a way that will make him appear noble even in its eyes.⁴⁵ Such an interpretation seems to be contrary to Greek usage. According to Ammonius (*Diff.* 64) ἐχθρός is a person who was formerly one

⁴³ Note the active forms of ἄγω (= lead [a captive] away) in 871 and 877 as against the middle (= lead [one's bride/wife] to one's home) in 875 in their respective contexts.

⁴⁴ 'It is not permitted that any law be passed with reference to an individual, if the same law does not apply to all Athenians', Andoc. 1.87 (M. Edwards' translation in *Greek Orators*, vol. IV [Aris and Phillips, 1995]); similarly Dem. 23.86, 24.59, 46.12. For Euripides using stage action compatible with fifth-century Athenian concepts of justice and legal procedure, see R. Meridor (n. 39), 30–1 with n. 12.

⁴⁵ W. R. Paton, *REG* 27 (1914), 37 'en te montrant généreux pour nous, les femmes Troyennes, tes ennemies'; Lee (n. 1) 'noble even in the eyes of your enemies'; Biehl (n. 1) 'indem du dich gleichzeitig deinen Gegnern als ein Mann von untadliger Wesensart zeigst'.

'near and dear'⁴⁶ (ὁ πρότερος φίλος)—which obviously does not apply to the Trojan captives. Besides, ἐχθρός—perhaps due to disappointment with the former φίλος—is an emotionally charged concept, especially associated with the requital of injury by injury. Speakers on the tragic stage only very rarely refer to themselves, or to the group to which they belong, as someone else's ἐχθρός, and those who do, do so in circumstances where Ammonius' definition and the principle of retribution are relevant.⁴⁷ Elsewhere πολέμιος is the term normally used.⁴⁸ This is indeed how the old queen defines herself in *Hecuba* 741 in relation to Agamemnon, as does the Helen of *Troades* at 915 in relation to Menelaus when she strives to make him forgive and forget her desertion.⁴⁹ It is reasonable to assume that πολέμιος is what the members of the chorus would have said had they been referring to themselves. But they say ἐχθροῖς, and the only one in this context who answers Ammonius' definition of ἐχθρός is Helen.⁵⁰ The code of requital also makes excellent sense in relation to her. On this reading of ἐχθροῖς, the participial clause 1035b 'proving of-good-lineage-toward-your-enemies'⁵¹ repeats and generalizes the chorus' preceding request 1033–4a, 'avenge yourself on your wife in a manner worthy of your forefathers and your house', and specifies the means by which Menelaus is to rid himself (ἀφελού . . . φανείς) of the Greeks' reproach of 'womanishness'.⁵² This is the end of the *agon* and the final Trojan attempt to affect its outcome. The queen has appealed to Menelaus *qua* king; the women of the chorus bring to the fore the individual man and his duty to his family. The generalizing plural ἐχθροῖς also presents Helen as a representative of the type ἐχθρός and thus invites Menelaus to get even with all his ἐχθροί by executing this one evil woman.

1036–1117. As shown above, the old queen ignores or freely interprets inconvenient facts and invents incidents that support her arguments. Thus she acts as any skilled pleader in an Athenian lawcourt intent on winning his case.⁵³ And win her case Hecuba does, as is evident from Menelaus' decision (1036–41): not only does the king

⁴⁶ For this translation of φίλος see Dale on *Hel.* 92.

⁴⁷ A. *Se.* 675, *Ag.* 1637; S. *Aj.* 1377; E. *Med.* 507, 875, *Hr.* 944, *Andr.* 707, 724, *Hec.* 849 (where ἐχθρ. expresses Hecuba's new attitude toward Polymestor), *Pho.* 1593.

⁴⁸ Ammonius (*ibid.*) differentiates between ἐχθρός, πολέμιος, and δυσμενής; the last is irrelevant to this discussion.

⁴⁹ Cf. also A. *Pe.* 243, *Ag.* 608; S. *Phil.* 1323; E. *Hec.* 848 (where πολέμ. refers to the Hecuba–Agamemnon relationship), *HF* 1263.

⁵⁰ For the generalizing masculine plural referring to a single female person as the representative of a type see Barrett's nn. on E. *Hi.* 49 and 287.

⁵¹ For εὐγενής = 'behaving in the way which becomes one of noble blood' see Barrett's note on *Hi.* 26. For φαίνομαι with personal subject and predicate adjective, giving the reason for the subject's taking, or not taking, a certain line of conduct by stressing its effect on his reputation, see e. g. *Cy.* 532 ἔχων . . . τιμιώτερος φανῆι, *Hec.* 1233 εἰ τῷδ' ἀρκέσεις, κακὸς φανῆι and cf. *Med.* 600, *Hi.* 90, 332, *Hec.* 348, *Hel.* 1001, *Pho.* 1005, 1623. For the same construction amplified by a dative modifying the whole sentence-nucleus (K–G I, 405, 414–15) cf. *Tro.* 66(1)–3 κακῇ φανοῦμαι τῷ θανόντι ('If I . . .) I shall prove base toward my dead husband'. In all these examples the unspecified object of φαίνομαι (to whom?) are those whose opinion determines the reputation of the subject. For the Greek king these are the Greeks; they are also to be inferred from 'Greece' in 1034.

⁵² 'Womanishness' here does double service for 'being "a woman" in relation to his wife' (*Or.* 742 with Willink's note) and 'not taking vengeance when wronged' (*E. Fr.* 1092 ἐχθρόν κακῶς δρᾶν ἀνδρὸς ἡγοῦμαι μέρος).

⁵³ See Stephen Todd, 'The use and abuse of the Attic orators', *G&R* 37 (1990), 159–78, esp. 172.

endorse Hecuba's argument and declare that Helen left Greece for Troy willingly (ἐκουσίως) and that her tale of Aphrodite was an empty boast (1036–9a),⁵⁴ he is so agitated that he hurls the death sentence (1039b–41) at Helen in mid-line and without indicating that he is now addressing his wife (the 'you' of 1036ff. was Hecuba); moreover, the phrasing 'go up to those who stone' (1039b) seems to imply 'here and now' and to convey that Menelaus is reneging on his earlier decision to put off the execution until after the return to Greece (876ff.). If he then presents Helen's death as owed for the Greeks' sufferings in Troy (1040–1a), as he did before the *agon* (878b–9), his concluding outburst 'so that you will know not to dishonour me' (1041b) betrays that he is motivated not by the Greeks' plight but by Helen's offence against himself; this vindicates the old queen's line of pleading. So too the Greeks who fell in Troy are absent from Menelaus' concluding declaration (1055–9) that Helen's execution will serve as a deterrent to the whole female population. Evidently, as far as the *agon* goes Hecuba's rhetoric emerges triumphant.

But in fact the situation after the *agon* remains exactly as it was prior to the debate. Menelaus' agitation does not outlast the announcement of his judgement. As soon as Helen appeals to him for pardon (1042–3), he reaffirms his earlier plan of first conveying her to Greece (1047–8 and 1055–6a). The one significant and foreshadowing detail in this context is 1051, Hecuba's last line⁵⁵ in the scene. The old queen already knows that the execution will not take place in Troy and she tries desperately to prevent the king from taking Helen on board (1049) lest the execution not take place at all. Her warning 'once a lover, always a lover'⁵⁶ intimates that the postponement of Helen's execution spells her reinstatement as Menelaus' queen. The chorus' despair (1060–80) at the beginning of the immediately following *stasimon*, although the king has decided in Hecuba's favour, suggests that they understood the message of 1051. The last strophe of this choral song (1100–17), where the Trojan women envisage Helen on board Menelaus' ship despite his explicit promise to the contrary (1053b–4a), shows their comprehension. Helen's portrayal here with golden mirrors and her presentation as Zeus' daughter (1107–9) prefigure her rehabilitation, and the chorus' subsequent impassioned wish that Menelaus never reach Sparta and his ancestral home and temples together with Helen (1110–17) heralds the return of the reconciled royal couple to their former position. The reason for this wish, Menelaus 'having won the shame of a faithless wife for great Greece',⁵⁷ highlights

⁵⁴ This is in accord with Attic law: offences committed intentionally or voluntarily (ἐκουσίως, ἐκούσια) and unintentionally or involuntarily (ἄκουσίως, ἀκούσια) were treated differently, and only the latter were excusable (e.g. Dem. 21.43, 24.49, Ant. 5.92). It is also consistent with Attic forensic rhetoric: responsibility for an action could not be evaded on the ground that it had been prompted by a supernatural force (M. Vielberg, 'Die religiösen Vorstellungen des Redners Lykurg', *RhM* 134 [1991], 49–68, esp. 54–5). See n. 44 above, end.

⁵⁵ Attributing 1052 (with Diggle's 1981 *OCT* text and others) to Menelaus; see the app. crit. and cf. 1051–2 with *Med.* 330–1.

⁵⁶ Barlow's translation of 1051. Note that this is Aristotle's example for maxims that 'no sooner are they uttered than they are clear to those who consider them' (*Rh.* 1394b14–16 = 2.21.5).

⁵⁷ 1114–15 δύσγαμον αἴσχος ἐλὼν Ἑλλάδι τῇ μεγάλῃ. Note that ἐλὼν is the last and resounding action-word in the *stasimon*. The combination αἴσχος ἐλὼν is heavily charged: a man of honour is expected to thrust shame away from himself (Sol. 3.2 αἴσχος ἀπωσόμενοι) and to spare no effort until he wins (ἐλεῖν) glory (*Il.* 17.321) or the noble object of his prayer (Tyr. 12.36, cf. Pi. *P.* 5.21), or victory (Pi. *O.* 8.66) or the like. With δύσγαμον αἴσχος cf. Hes. *Fr.* 176.7 Ἑλένη ἡσχυνε λέχος . . . Μενελάου. For 'great Greece' at 1115 as against Menelaus' Sparta of 1110–13, see n. 35.

the king's reversal of his undertaking to comply with the Trojan captives' appeal (1029–35) to crown Greece with glory and rehabilitate his good name by killing the woman who betrayed him.⁵⁸ If Hecuba's warning maxim in the aftermath of the *agon* counteracts the triumph of her rhetoric before the scene is over, the chorus's lyrics establish Helen's traditional reinstatement before the *exodos* begins. When Astyanax's body is brought on stage at 1118, the audience knows that the Trojan women know that Helen will survive unscathed.⁵⁹

With the traditional myth there was, of course, no way to bring about Helen's execution. In fact, the masterly speeches constituting the *agon* fulfil more than one function: they serve the two contestants in their fight for the palm of victory to be awarded by Menelaus, their 'judge of things past' (n. 60) in a quasi-judicial debate held in a play by Euripides staged in the theatre of Dionysus in the course of the City Dionysia of 415 B.C.E. They also serve the playwright to impress the spectators, his 'judges of ability',⁶⁰ intellectually and involve them emotionally and, incidentally, to score points with the genuine judges of the tragic *agon* in which he was participating and probably win invitations for performances elsewhere⁶¹ as well (for their contribution to the play as a whole, see below). The unusual order of the speeches and the obvious advantages this order confers on the second speaker indicate that Helen's speech is meant to pave the way for that of Hecuba, and that the two taken together constitute one harmonized piece. It seems therefore all the more noteworthy that the line of argument Euripides chose for Hecuba is neither the heart-rending denunciation of the slayer of sons, husbands, and fathers invited by Menelaus' 878b–9, nor the patriotic tirade against the traitress to her country suggested by Helen's 'betraying my fatherland' at 947, but a righteous attack on Menelaus' 'bad wife' who left her husband and her homeland not because she fell in love with another man (Hecuba's silence concerning Helen's desertion of her daughter [*Il.* 3.175] may be due to this desertion being used traditionally to demonstrate the overwhelming power of Helen's love for Paris [*Alc.* 283.7, *Sapph.* 16.10] which is here denied to her), but because she coveted the enjoyment of that other man's wealth. However Hecuba's choice of attack is explained, it is hardly irrelevant that Gorgias' list of likely causes

⁵⁸ Contrast *δύσγαμον αἰσχος ἑλὼν Ἑλλάδι* (1114–15) with both *στεφάνωσον Ἑλλάδ' . . . τήνδε κτανὼν* 1030 and *τεῖσαι δάμαρτα κάφελου πρὸς Ἑλλάδος ψόγον* (1034–5).

⁵⁹ A producer who cannot trust his audience to grasp the connection between the concluding strophe of the choral ode (1100–17) and Hecuba's last two lines (1049 and 1051) in the preceding scene could arrange for Helen and the men ordered to lead her to the ships (1047–8) to be still in sight at 1059 (the text includes no hint at when they leave), and have Menelaus join her before 1060 for the exit, staging as it were the *ἑλὼν* of 1114 in advance. The production by La Mama Theatre Company of New York in which Helen was actually stoned (Barlow, note on 1039) was not true to Euripides.

⁶⁰ See Arist. *Rh.* 1358a36–b13 = 1.3.1–3 on the different kinds of rhetoric appropriate for the different kinds of listeners addressed. The audience watching the play may be compared with Aristotle's 'mere spectator' who is 'a judge of the ability' of the rhetorician at a public declamation. The traditional subject of such (= epideictic) speeches was either praise or blame, and the unusual amount of defamation in Hecuba's quasi-forensic speech addressed to Menelaus (practically the whole, except for the claim at 969–88 that Aphrodite had no share in Helen's following Paris, is character-assassination)—for her 'a judge of things past' like an Aristotelian dicast—may be due to the fact that for the spectators the same speech also serves as a kind of 'blame of Helen'. See below with n. 62.

⁶¹ P. E. Easterling, 'Euripides outside Athens. A speculative note', *JCS* 19 (1994), 73–80. The City Dionysia may have provided a convenient meeting place for foreign dignitaries and entrepreneurs on the one side, and the plays and their authors and producers on the other.

for Helen's elopement—a list that seems aimed at exonerating her from every imaginable accusation—includes no passion for riches and luxury. Hecuba's speech may have been composed with Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* in mind.⁶²

There is no overall agreement as to Euripides' intent in *Troades*,⁶³ but there is little doubt that this tragedy most movingly presents the suffering caused by war. The *agon* was not necessary to achieving this effect—giving voice to the plight of the women of the defeated⁶⁴ would have amply sufficed. Obviously this showpiece of rhetoric adds exciting variation, but this is not its only contribution to the play. Placed after the short-lived hope for a future for Troy (702–5) is annihilated when the last scion of the royal house is taken to his death at the end of the second *epeisodion* (782–98), it provides the survivors of the vanquished city with an outlet for their frustration. Helen is a living person unredeemed by a tragic fault who may pay with her life for their misery. The emotional involvement in the *agon* and the expectations from its outcome put the simultaneous off-stage execution of Astyanax out of mind throughout the third *epeisodion*, but when his body is brought on stage at the beginning of the *exodos* (1118–22) these women already understand that their high hopes were unfounded (above with nn. 55–8). At the same time they learn also that the moment of their embarkation has arrived (1123–6a,⁶⁵ 1147–8, 1154–5) and with it the onset of the enslavement which they have been dreading since they came onto the stage (Hecuba 140, chorus 153–67, and *passim*; see n. 64). Hecuba affirms again that they have nothing to hope for from the gods (above with n. 37) and the Trojan sufferers take final leave of their past and exit to their future. Not once do they mention their thwarted desire for retribution.

Nevertheless, the effect of this disappointment does not seem to be impaired by their silence. Hecuba with her emotive speech insisting on moral choice and responsibility—a basic concept in Athenian law and court-pleading (above with n. 54), but absent from her adversary's argument—probably carried the audience before her. The suffering of the defeated presented on stage, in combination with Hecuba's unrelenting character assassination of her adversary, is likely to have persuaded them that Helen should be executed. The omission of the Trojans' own responsibility for their fate (above with n. 31) makes it easier for the spectators to take such a view.⁶⁶ This view is also prepared: the Greeks traditionally laid the blame for the Trojan war and its consequences at Helen's door (n. 36) and in the play the Trojan sufferers do so repeatedly and insistently (Andromache 766–73, chorus 780–1; for Hecuba see above

⁶² Gorg. *Hel.* 20: 'Whether she did what she did because she was enamoured <by sight> or persuaded by speech or seized by force or compelled by divine necessity, in every case she escapes the accusation' (MacDowell's translation). The above suggestion seems to be supported by the fact that no passion for riches is found in the list of female traits commonly criticized in the writings of fifth- and fourth-century Athens (R. Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* [London and New York, 1989], 166; cf. Dover [n. 42], 98–101). The problem whether Euripides' *Troades* or Gorgias' *Helen* is the earlier is usually—unlike here—treated by comparing the arguments of the Euripidean Helen with those of Gorgias.

⁶³ For the main trends of interpretation see now J. Roisman, 'Contemporary allusions in Euripides' *Troades*', *SIFC* 15 (1997), 38–47 at 38–9.

⁶⁴ For the cruel lot of the defeated in historical Greece see W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, vol. 5 (Berkeley, 1991), 203ff. The dread of slavery is very much present in *Troades*.

⁶⁵ As Neoptolemus has already sailed away, it is clear that the wind of departure, awaited since the beginning of the play (19b–22; so still in the *agon*-scene, 882b–3), has finally risen.

⁶⁶ The fate of the womenfolk of the defeated would have been as lamentable also if their side was to blame. Euripides seems to have preferred a simple picture with stark outlines; note the omission of all Trojan male survivors (such as Helenus, Aeneas, the Antenoridae) from *Troades*.

with n. 36). Furthermore, in the first *epeisodion* Cassandra claimed that the Trojans fought in order to prevent the Greeks robbing them of their fatherland (375–6a)⁶⁷ and that they died for the sake of their country (386–7a). In that context nobody corrected her and reminded the audience that the Trojans fought and died because they refused to surrender a woman (and possessions) arbitrarily removed from the Greeks. The Greek herald generally refuses to take ‘mentally unhinged’ Cassandra seriously (417–19a) and her insinuation that the Trojans were the victims of expansionist aggression is unaffected by the Greeks’ preparations to sail home as soon as the necessary wind rises (already 18–22 and repeatedly). This presentation of the conflict throughout the play in combination with the order of the scenes seems aimed at leaving the audience under the final impression that Helen’s non-execution adds insult to injury and cheats the Trojan women of their rightful revenge.

There is, of course, no way of knowing how Euripides’ original audience reacted to Hecuba’s speech. A not insignificant number of its members were familiar with court and assembly oratory and public declamation; quite a few were trained in rhetoric. While such spectators are likely to have followed the *agon* with special interest and to have admired the persuasive expertise of Hecuba and her speech-writer, they, or some of them, may also have seen through her argumentation. That the above interpretation is nevertheless a reasonable guess seems to be supported by the impact Hecuba’s speech still has on audiences and readers alike, including scholars trained to be sceptical about speakers’ defamation of their adversaries; so much so that Hecuba’s stance is often adopted unreservedly. This makes one wonder not so much whether ‘the Greeks regarded revenge as morally unproblematic’,⁶⁸ as how far audiences can be manipulated by clever rhetoric. Fortunately Helen’s life was saved by the traditional story.⁶⁹

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⁶⁷ This follows from what Cassandra says about the Greeks who, unlike the Trojans, died in this war ‘though they were not being robbed of their own boundaries, nor of their high-towered fatherland’ (Barlow’s translation).

⁶⁸ W. V. Harris, *CQ* 47 (1997), 363.

⁶⁹ I wish to thank the editor and the reader of *CQ* for their very helpful comments and suggestions, and my friends and colleagues Dr D. Gera and Professor M. Finkelberg for their encouragement and advice.