Some Observations on the Structure of Euripides' *Troades**

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The structure of Euripides' *Troades* attracts recurrent interest. On the one hand this tragedy has been found to consist (or rather faulted for consisting) "merely of unconnected scenes, depicting the miserable fate of the Trojan captives",[1] and on the other hand the play as a whole has been felt ultimately to create "a sense of completeness which no mere series of episodes ... could possibly evoke".[2] Various factors creating or contributing to this impression of completeness have been pointed out.[3] While no reading of the play can

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1 A.E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (Oxford 1896/New York 1968), 300. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, J. Geffcken, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* I (Heidelberg 1926), 205: "Ein Aufbau ist ... überhaupt kaum vorhanden, das ganze Drama zerfällt ... in lauter Einakter".

2 D.J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto and London 1967), 138. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*[3] (Göttingen 1972), 390: "Nur Pedanten könnten die Einheit dieses ... Werkes bezweifeln".

3 *E.g.* by a constant presence, like that of Hecuba on stage (see L. Parmentier, *Euripide* 4. *Coll. des Univ. de France* [Paris 1925], 10) or that of the predicted vengeance of the gods against the sacrilegious conquerors (see G.M.A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* [London 1941], 282); by repetitive occurrence, like that of the Greek herald's comings and goings (see K. Gilmartin, "Talthybius in the *Trojan Women*", *AJP* 91 [1970], 215) or the confrontation in episode after episode between Hecuba and a young captive on her way to the ship of her Greek master (see W. Steidle,

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entirely ignore this problem, the aim of this paper is rather to try to understand why Euripides chose to construct this tragedy in such a fashion that its unity is questioned and therefore requires an explanation from those who nonetheless perceive unity.[4]

The difficulties in the structure of the *Troades* are obvious. The play's action does not comprise a "sequence of events" that admits "of a change from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad", nor is its plot one "in which the episodes ... succeed one another" with "probable or necessary sequence", nor again is "the structural union of the parts" obviously "such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed", all of which Aristotle considers essential for a good tragedy.[5] When our play begins, the change of fortune has already taken place. We are told in the divine prologue (1-97) that Troy has fallen (8-17) and that the victorious Greeks, eager to return home as soon as the necessary wind rises (19_b-22), are conveying the booty to their ships (18-19_a) and allotting captives (28ff.); and the play ends with the embarkation (1331f.). We are also told in the prologue

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Studien zum antiken Drama [Munich 1968], 52); by foreshadowing, suppression, and other structural devices linking adjacent details and making connections between distant ones (see W.H. Friedrich, *Euripides and Diphilos* [Munich 1953], 61-75; U. Albini, "Linee compositive delle Troiane", *PP* 25 [1970], 312-22; G. Petersmann, "Die Rolle der Polyxena in den *Troerinnen* des Euripides", *RhM* 120 [1977], 146-58); and others. To the long list of preparatory links may be added Hecuba's instruction to the Trojan women to "exchange tears" for Cassandra's wedding songs (351-2). This order is carried out in 511ff., the delay being caused by Cassandra's objection that the event which according to Hecuba calls for songs of tears is really a joyous one (353-4, 458, 460). Line 514 harks back to 351-2, and the unique formal invocation 511-3 balances the formal invocations in Cassandra's monody 314, 331. For another probable preparatory link see n. 6 below.

4 The unusual structure of *Troades* is often explained or excused by the theory that the play was the third in a connected trilogy (R. Lattimore, *Euripides* III [in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, edd. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, New York 1970], 135; Friedrich [above, n. 3], 67; Conacher [above, n. 2], 138f.). This theory is far from proven, but also irrelevant to a paper asking what Euripides wished to express by this specific structure.

5 Arist., *Poetics* 1451_a 11-15 (*cf.* 1452_a 12-22), 1451_b 34-5, 1451_a 32-36. All the translations are Butcher's.

that a god-sent storm at sea will punish the Greeks for their sacrilegious conduct during the conquest — but that will be after the end of the play (69-94). Between the divine prologue and the exodus we hear Hecuba, the old queen of defeated Troy, together with the Trojan women she called upon to lament with her,[6] give voice to their misery and their fears of their future as captives on foreign soil (98-229). We also see the effects of this change of status in three exemplary cases presented in the three episodes: in each, a young woman of the royal house makes her only stage appearance on her way to the ship of her Greek master (the "Cassandra scene" 235-510, the "Andromache scene" 568-798, the "Helen scene" 860-1059). These episodes succeed one another in no probable or necessary sequence — in fact, they do not really succeed one another at all. This structural inconcinnity is thrown into strong relief by the stasima situated between the episodes. In each of these two songs, the part preceding the next episode and introducing it tells of the fall of Troy and its immediate results. These were already described at the beginning of the play, and the two lyrical passages use prominent motifs found in the earlier iambic description: the Trojan Horse and Priam's murder, depicted in detail in 9-12 and 15-7, are recalled in the epode of the triadic first stasimon (560-1 and 562-3), the destruction of Troy by fire and by sword and the wailing of the captive women, mentioned in 8-9 and 28-9, are elaborated in the second pair of strophes of the second stasimon (825 + 838-9 and 827-32).[7] This repeated choral re-statement, with its recurrent echoes of the prologue exposition, has the effect both of freezing time, as it were,[8] and of underscoring the fact that all the episodes develop from the the initial situation independently from one another. As a result the

6 Hecuba's αἰάζωμεν in 145 is mostly taken as intransitive, and the subsequent 153-96 with its frequent cries of woe as its implementation. But this anapaestic kommos is hardly "led" by Hecuba, as promised by her ἐξάρξω in 147 which is further strengthened by the ἐξῆρχον in 152. Also, seeing that αἰάζωμεν follows immediately upon τύφεται Ἴλιον, the verb is more likely to be transitive, with Troy as the implied direct object. Both expectations are satisfied in the final dirge for Troy at 1287ff.

7 Note the pathetic fallacy in both 28-9 and 827-32.

8 *Cf.*, M. Griffith, *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1983), 298-306 n.: "P. repeats several phrases from the previous episodes ... The effect is ... static: P. is restating a position which has not changed".

order in which the episodes are arranged, as well as the choice of the individual fates presented in them, may seem arbitrary;[9] likewise their number, depending as it does on the accidental blowing of a wind.[10] Not only are we told at the beginning of the play that the Greeks await the wind which will allow them to put to sea and return home, but we are also reminded twice in the course of the play, at nearly equal intervals, that this situation has not yet changed (456, 882_b-3).

The wind finally rises after the third and last episode. This must be inferred from the beginning of the following scene, when the herald relates that Achilles' son Neoptolemus has already set sail (1123-6), and then gives urgent instructions to complete all preparations for the general sailing (1149 + 1153-5); we know that without the crucial wind neither Neoptolemus' departure nor that of the fleet would have been possible. It seems noteworthy that no specific reference is made to the repeatedly mentioned, long-awaited arrival of the wind. A comparison with the *Hecuba* may be instructive. In that play, the Greek fleet's enforced immobility allows Agamemnon to grant Hecuba's request to punish the murderer of her last son (*Hec.* 898-901), before the renewed blowing of the wind, which is explicitly reported, finally enables the Greeks to set sail (1289_bff.). Thus the change of wind follows the completion of Hecuba's undertaking and of the action of the play. In the *Troades* the episodes do not develop from one another so that nothing has been brought to obvious completion by the end of the third episode: of the four surviving captives who were specifically mentioned early in the play (34ff. with 246ff.) we have already watched three — all but Hecuba, the only one on stage from the beginning — face their fate in separate stage appearances, but this hardly produces an equivalent impression of fulfillment. Instead of explicitly mentioning the rising of the wind after the third episode, which would have exposed the

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9 Since the episodes, each featuring a heroine appearing nowhere else, do not develop from one another, the significance of Euripides' choices and the order of their introduction are stressed by commentators. See the different explanations offered, *e.g.*, by Friedrich, Albini and Petersmann (above, n. 3).

10 Nowhere in the play is the temporary failure of the crucial wind attributed to a supernatural cause.

free hand of the playwright, Euripides has the chorus in the second half of the third stasimon imagine themselves Greece-bound on their captors' ships (1081ff.). As a result, the audience already visualizes the Greek fleet on the high sea when the herald arrives with his tidings and is thus less likely to notice that, had Euripides wished to include more episodes than these three — or fewer — he might have made the sea navigable earlier or later in the play; in fact, had the wind begun to blow at the end of the prologue, there would not have been much *Troades*.[11]

And yet, while it is thus clear that the structure of the *Troades* can be faulted and its unity doubted, the play's ultimate impact militates against this view. In fact, the three episodes belong simultaneously to two different chronological contexts. On the one hand, each episode comprises an incident "chosen from a great many that could have been, to illustrate the sufferings of the vanquished",[12] and stems directly from the capture of Troy with no connection to the other episodes.[13] But from the point of view of Hecuba, who is on stage all the time, the choice of these specific young women and the order in which they appear is all-important.[14] We know from the beginning of the play that Hecuba is ignorant of the fact that one of

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11 *Cf.* Soph. *OC*. When Oedipus (who, like our Hecuba, is on stage from the beginning to the exodus) learns in the prologue that he is at the seat of the dread goddesses in the outskirts of Athens, he declares that he has come to the end of his journey and his life, and that he now awaits only a sign from heaven (87-95). Between this statement and that sign (1456) there are over 1300 verses including episodes *prima facie* quite independent of one another, which could have stood in a different order or been replaced by others; as in the *Troades*, the number of the episodes and the very existence of the play may seem to depend on the timing of the awaited event. But unlike the *Troades* , in the *OC* the dependence on a sign from heaven excludes *a priori* the impression of arbitrariness and conceals the poet's discretion.

12 Grube (above, n. 3), 80.

13 The only reference to an earlier episode found in a later one is 616-7, where Hecuba tells Andromache of Cassandra's recent departure. Apart from her reply at 618-9 this information has no effect on Andromache.

14 *Cf.* J. de Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca, NY 1968), 9, n. 8: "... the *Trojan Women* ... is made of several different actions ... But ... these actions all are made to bear on one single emotion — Hecuba's — which is followed in its continuity".

her two unmarried daughters who survived the conquest, Polyxena, has in the meantime been sacrificed on Achilles' tomb (39-40). Hecuba's ignorance is demonstrated at the beginning of the first episode (260-71). At the end of the same episode, when the second daughter, Cassandra, faces her fate and proceeds to Agamemnon's ship, Hecuba is evidently unaware of having lost her last surviving child (500-4, 624-5). At the beginning of the second episode, Hecuba's daughter-in-law Andromache, Hector's widow, informs her of Polyxena's death (622-3) and propounds the view that the latter's lot is preferable to her life as captive (641-4, 679-80). Hecuba, who was consumed with self-pity when still mindful of the succour due to her from her children (502-4), now focuses on Hector's heretofore ignored infant son Astyanax in Andromache's lap: the boy's upbringing will be his mother's aim in life and he may still promise a future for Troy (702-5). She has barely expressed this hope when the Greek herald appears with the purpose of taking the child to his death (709-25). The third episode opens with Menelaus' speech, from which Hecuba learns that the victorious Greek army has handed over to him his faithless wife, the cause of the war, either for execution — providing him with the legal sanction for what would otherwise be private revenge — or, if he prefers, for restoration as his consort (873-5; note ἄγεσθαι). She now makes every possible effort to convince the king to carry out the death-sentence (969-1032 [esp. 1030-2], 1044-5, 1049), which she considers divine justice (887-8) and retribution for the destruction that she has just now realized to be final and utter. Thus there is a steady development in Hecuba's relation to the events presented on stage: she is affected both by the choice of the characters and by the order in which she perceives them.

Moreover, despite the complete lack of plot development between the episodes themselves, there are important connections between the episodes and the exodus. The spectacle of Odysseus' men leading Hecuba away at the end of the play (1269-71) specifically answers an expectation created in the first episode (277, 421-422$_a$). The relations between the second episode and the sequel are more complex. When Andromache's infant son is taken from her to be hurled to his death from the city wall, she is promised that he will be granted burial if she behaves with restraint toward the Greeks (737-8), which she does. As the child still has to be buried in Troy, we

might expect that, if the last rites for him are to constitute a significant part of the action, they will be performed before departure by sea becomes possible, and that at their completion the hoped-for change of weather will arrive and immediately set into motion the long-awaited embarkation. This is not quite what happens. As we have seen, Euripides divides the departure from Troy into two. We learn of the renewed navigability only from the fact that Neoptolemus has already sailed away. Consequently the funeral must be held *after* setting out to sea has become possible but *before* the general departure from Troy. The herald who reports Neoptolemus' departure at the beginning of the exodus[15] (1123ff.) brings with him the body of Astyanax for burial (1133-44) with the Greeks' active cooperation, after which the fleet can set sail without further delay (1147-55). He thus makes the general embarkation depend on the completion of the interment. After the child is buried (1246-55), the herald makes a second entry (1260), preceded by choral anapaests (1256-9) as was his earlier one (1118-22). Now he orders his men to raze the city to the ground so that the Greeks may at last leave Troy "in gladness" (1260-4). This has been expected since the prologue and is now stressed by ἄσμενοι which was employed also there (21, 1264). He then instructs the Trojan women on stage to proceed to their masters' ships. So far as the first and the third episodes are concerned, the exodus might have started with the herald's second entry: due to the total absence of Astyanax and his fate from those episodes,[16] the first part of the exodus with the child's burial is meaningless for them. Had the last rites for Andromache's child been staged in an episode (which, of course, would not have followed from the opening situation), then the exodus might have begun with the herald's second entry for the second episode as well. As it is, the departure depends also on the burial

15 Or, rather, at the beginning of the scene following upon the third stasimon. This will turn out to be the exodus when no choral ode separates 1118-1255 from 1256-1332.

16 This is especially striking in the third episode, after the child has been taken to his death. Still, not even his grandmother makes any mention of his fate. Her silence demonstrates that all the episodes result from the initial situation, even though in another chronological context Hecuba's emotion "is followed in its continuity"; see above with n. 14.

which was promised in the second episode and is carried out in the first part of the exodus. Thus the end of the play not only returns to its beginning, framing the three episodes, but also develops from the second of the three episodes, and thereby, though in a rather interlaced fashion, from the main body of the play itself.

Moreover, by including the funeral of Astyanax in the exodus, Euripides turns the finale into a bipartite "end of Troy", presented first (with Hecuba speaking)[17] in the funeral rites for the last scion of the royal house (1123ff., esp. 1156-1255) and then in those for the city herself (1256 *ad finem*, esp. 1287ff.), in a kommos where Hecuba leads the Trojan women in a lament for annihilated Troy (above with n. 6). On the other hand, the exclusion of Astyanax's burial from the central episodes of the play throws into stark relief what is indeed unusual in the structure of the *Troades*, namely that all three episodes arise from the initial situation and are developed independently of one another.

The distinction of this group of three scenes is further highlighted by the chronological contrast in the choral songs of the play. While the stasima connecting the episodes refer back to the prologue and the past (above with n. 7), the lyrics framing the episodes point to the future: in the parodos (197-229) the chorus of captive women imagine themselves already in Greece, whereas in the second and last pair of strophes of the third stasimon they picture their voyage there (1081-1117). This last choral song describes, from the Trojan point of view, an earlier stage of the imminent events than does the first one. On the Greek side, the two ἅσμενοι-connected passages pointed out above show a similar disjunction in time: in the exodus it is the homeward departure from Troy that the Greeks will experience "in gladness", while in the prologue it is their meeting with their families back home after the voyage. In both cases the description found later in the play prepares for the immediate future, while the earlier one pictures what will follow upon that. The glimpses of the Greek future in the prologue and the exodus frame the visions of the Trojan future in the parodos and the last stasimon.

All these distinct yet interwoven details show clearly that the Troades is a carefully structured play, however unusual its structure

17 But for the two spondaic cries 1229_b and 1230_b. In 1238 the caesura is followed by a lacuna.

may be. In what follows I shall suggest some of the effects that Euripides may have wished to achieve by this irregular structure.

It is generally held that the *Troades* is an anti-war play.[18] This impression is hardly surprising, seeing that this tragedy presents the miserable lot of the womenfolk of the losing side who cannot even console themselves with a national gain at the cost of their personal happiness. However, a clearer idea may be gained by comparing our play with the two earlier plays of Euripides, the *Hecuba* (ca. 424) and the *Supplices* (ca. 422), in which, as in the *Troades*, the chorus (and in the *Hecuba* also some of the *dramatis personae*, including the protagonist) are women whose city or whose army has been defeated. In the two earlier tragedies the utter helplessness of these women has been taken advantage of and a terrible wrong has been added to the suffering inevitably caused by their condition: the murder of Hecuba's son by his host in the former, the refusal of burial for the sons of the suppliant mothers in the latter. The plays deal with the outcome of these wrongs, namely, revenge in the *Hecuba* and redress in the *Supplices*. The *Troades* on the other hand portrays the "normal" consequences of defeat for the women of a city taken by siege, and to this end the results of the sack are simplified. As in the description used in the *Iliad* to warn a hero of the consequences of defeat (*Il.* 9.592-4), there are no male survivors — no Helenus (*Andr.* 1245, *Hec.* 87), Antenor (Sophocles, *Antenoridae*) or Aeneas (Sophocles, *Laocoon* and a Parthenon metope)[19] — and the surviving women and children are brought under bondage.[20] This model still reflected fifth-century Greek practice if a besieged population did not surrender on agreed terms but held out to the bitter end: the children and the women were sold into slavery, however the men fared.[21] This kind of defeat meant the instant annihilation of

18 This is certainly the play's immediate and overwhelming impression, whether or not the extreme misery of the women involved in the Iliupersis ultimately presents human suffering "in seiner ganzen Schwere und paradoxalen Unbegreiflichkeit" (W. Steidle [above, n. 3], 55).

19 See *LIMC* I 1, "Aineias" 156.

20 For the execution of Astyanax, see above, pp. 6-7.

21 Thuc. 3.36.2, 68.2; 4.48.4; 5.3.4, 32.1. The enslavement of women is specified only when their treatment differs from that of the men, contrast 2.68.7. All these are cases where Greeks enslaved and sold other Greeks.

the family and spelt for these physically weaker elements of society the loss of the framework that gave them their importance and consequent protection, besides separating them immediately from their dearest — children, spouses, parents, siblings. Euripides, always sensitive to women and their problems, had already explored, in the *Andromache* and the *Hecuba*, some aspects of the lot of women enslaved when their city is conquered.[22] In the *Troades* he portrays the most basic effects of the condition of female war captivity.

The story of the fall of Troy and its aftermath put at our poet's disposal a number of more or less well-defined female characters, and his choice is significant. The *Troades* presents the entire female population in its three stages of παρθένος ἄζυξ, νέα (γυνὴ) and παλαιά,[23] with each character serving double-duty as both representative of her age-group and an individual with her particular traditional fate. The episodic structure emphasizes the scope as well as the fullness of the panorama. The "old woman" is Hecuba. For the "maid" Euripides chose Cassandra rather than her sister Polyxena, not because he had already brought Polyxena on stage in the Hecuba (he might have presented her differently), but because the norm was concubinage,[24] not human sacrifice, and the *Troades* shows what normally happens to these most protected members of society. For the "married woman of child-bearing age" he chose two representatives, the ideal wife Andromache, and her opposite Helen. The inclusion of the selfish, superficial, wealth-and-luxury craving, opportunistic and callous Spartan (as Euripides portrays Helen in the *Troades)* in the company of Trojan sufferers constitutes a disturbing incongruity; she is also the only one who is not bereft. Her distance from the others can be perceived visually as well, as Helen consis-

For wholesale enslavement of non-Greeks by Greeks see, *e.g.*, 1.98.1, 2; 6.62.3.

22 The *Andromache* is probably a little earlier than the *Hecuba* (P.T. Stevens, *Euripides, Andromache* [Oxford 1971], 15-9); on the *Hecuba* see above.

23 *Cf. Ba.* 694 *post* 35-6a

24 *I.e.* sexual exploitation. Greek myth provides no adequate examples for the lot of very young girls (and boys) taken captive and sold into prostitution in 5th-century Greece. Still, Euripides brings also this age-group to the mind and the imagination of the audience, 1091ff. The girl here in all likelihood pathetically represents all the surviving children of her age.

tently avoids speaking with Hecuba, while Cassandra and Andromache each addresses the old queen time and again so that the lengthy exchange of speeches between mother and daughter, or daughter-in-law, comprises a considerable and significant part of the two earlier episodes. The fact that all these women belong to one family, which is crucial for Hecuba's emotional involvement in the younger women's fates,[25] also contributes to one of the specific effects of the episodic structure: while the scenes individually illustrate that each survivor of the defeated polis has henceforth to face her fate alone, these particular survivors are related to one another and thus also represent the dissolution of the *oikos*.

The disturbing incongruity or dissonance created by the Helen episode is not the only one found in the play. From a different point of view, Hecuba as the sole old woman stands apart from the three younger heroines. Though one is a maiden and the other two are married women — all are objects of sexual desire. This is in sharp contrast to their former importance as mothers of the future generation of the family and the state; yet it still gives them a function after the catastrophe. Hecuba's difference in this respect is explicitly stated: the three young women are personally chosen by or for their masters (33-5; 249, 414-5; 274, 659), while the possession of Hecuba is decided by lot (277, 1271). This difference is also emphasized visually by Hecuba's permanent presence on stage, while each of the three others enters at (or close to) the beginning of her individual episode and exits at its end. The chorus, too, consists of women of the same age-group as the younger heroines, as is evident from their assumption that they will be forced to share the bed of their Greek masters (203-4, 684-5) and from the fact that those who were married (143-4) lost husbands (1081ff., 1307-9) and are separated from their still small children (1089ff.); Hecuba is the only

[25] Aristotle in chapter 14 of the *Poetics* has an entirely different kind of tragedy in mind when he states that "the circumstances which strike us as terrible or pitiful are" when "the tragic incident occurs between those who are near or dear to one another" (Arist., *Poetics* 1453_b 11-20). Still, his observation is relevant to the *Troades:* while the sight of any young noblewoman taken to the bed of a man responsible for the destruction of her country and kin would not have left Hecuba indifferent, the fact that this noblewoman is her daughter or daugher-in-law makes her involvement much more evocative of terror and pity.

one who buried adult sons during the course of the war (479-80, 1302f.). So, too, the chorus face their future as unpaid labourers (205-6) while Hecuba is typically portrayed as a feeble wreck useless also in this respect (190-5, 1275, 1327-8). Obviously the conquest of the city turns the venerated old females of civilized society into superfluous nonentities. Actually old men probably suffered the same fate,[26] but in the *Troades* there are no male survivors. When Hecuba stresses her age and infirmity and the humiliating hardships that will henceforth be her lot, she seems to represent her age-group no less than her sex at her age. Be that as it may, the difference between Hecuba and the chorus is brought into view when Hecuba is separated from the others at the common final exit (1265-71, a stage direction for 1327ff.): unlike them, she has neither a function nor a future (427-30$_a$).

Striking visual incongruities, auxiliary to the text, are found in a series of five tableaux staged at, or close to, the beginning of each of the major non-lyrical sections. (1) In the prologue, the old queen of Troy lies all alone on the ground.[27] Her position demonstrates her extreme grief, like that of others presented on the Euripidean stage;[28]

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26 In Thucydides, when all do not share the same fate, the defeated population is divided into "men of military age" and "children and women" (3.36.2; 5.3.4 with Gomme's note on ἑπτακοσίους, 5.32.1; 5.116.4; *cf.* Hdt. 6.19.3-20); what happened to the old men is left in the dark; as non-combatants they may have been treated like the women. But of the women too, the old and feeble, as well as invalids of both sexes, would have been a burden rather than an asset to their enslavers, unless they had ransom value; *cf. Il.* 6.425-7. In fact it seems that — at least when the defeated were non-Greeks — the victorious army would move on with their booty and leave the old (and probably others equally worthless to them) in their pillaged and devastated abodes to look after themselves as best they could (Xen., *Ages.* 1.22 — I owe this reference to Dr. D. Gera).

27 See 34-5, 98-9, 112-14; 143ff., 153-5.

28 Iolaus in *Heracl.* 602-4, 633; Peleus in *Andr.* 1076-8; Hecuba in *Hec.* 438, 486-7, 501-2; Adrastus in *Su.* 21-2$_a$. See J. de Romilly, *L'évolution du pathétique d'Eschyle à Euripide* (Paris 1980), 80-3. According to Steidle (above, n. 3), 50-2, Hecuba's lying on the ground indicates her submission to her fate. This may, perhaps, be the cumulative effect of her returning to this position time and again in the course of the play, but it is not necessarily the impact of her first appearance. Adrastus, for instance, who, like

in addition, the absence of attendants is most unusual for a Euripidean queen, or even ex-queen.[29] The two taken together tell the spectator most impressively "how the mighty are fallen" even before Hecuba says so (99_b-100 and *passim*). (2) In the first episode Cassandra, Agamemnon's war prize, rushes on stage brandishing wedding torches (298, 306-10), in stark contrast to custom and rite (315ff., *cf.* 348)[30]: wedding torches are normally carried by the mother of the bride — as indeed Cassandra will soon state (315 -25) — and at proper weddings, as will be intimated by her mother (343-7). (3) The second episode opens with Andromache being brought on stage by a vehicle (568ff.). While such entrances of royal ladies in other tragedies bear witness to their social standing, their affluence and their luxuriousness (Xerxes' mother in A. *Pe.*, Clytemnestra in E. *El.* and, later, in the *IA*), Andromache comes with her infant son pressed to her bosom on a cart which the conquerors use to carry the spoils from Hector's palace to Neoptolemus' ships. Obvicusly she and the child are the spoils, as indeed she will soon point out (614-5). The fact that she herself carries the child rather than a nurse as in the *Iliad* (6.389, 399-400, 467; 22.503; *cf. Il. parv.* 19.3) also signals the change in her position. (4) Shortly after the beginning of the third episode, the brazen adulteress Helen faces her cuckolded husband and judge in all her finery (1022-3). This is contrary not only to conventional decency, .which would have called for the demonstration of shame and remorse by self-debasement (1025-8), but also to Athenian law, which explicitly forbade women caught in adultery to adorn themselves and ordered whoever found a woman contravening this law to tear off her garments and strip her of her ornaments (Aeschin. 1.183). Hecuba may be reminding Menelaus and the audience of these standards when she insists that ruined robes (1025) and hair

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our Hecuba, lies on the ground when the *Supplices* begins, is far from submissive.

29 D.P. Stanley-Porter, "Mute Actors in the Plays of Euripides", *BICS* 20 (1973), 68-93, esp. 70 with n. 19, 73 with n. 43, 75 with n. 95 (later Hecuba, still considered their queen by the Trojan women [*e.g.* 342, 966], will be attended [*e.g.* 351, 462ff., 505ff.]).

30 R. Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", *JHS* 107 (1987), 106-130, n. 228 on p. 128: "So far as I know the bride never carries a torch in vase-painting".

cropped like a slave's (1026)[31] are proper for Helen in the present circumstances. (5) Finally, at the beginning of the exodus, the shattered body of Hector's infant son is brought in on his father's shield for burial (1118_bff.; 1133_b-42_a; 1156-9). This is the very shield which protected Hector in countless victories (1221-2) and which should have ensured that his son reach princely manhood, when he would have used it to carry on his father's wars.[32] Now that Astynax has been killed for being his father's son (723, 742-4), this same shield, his sole inheritance, serves as his bier and will serve as his coffin (1136-42, 1192-3).[33]

Each of these tableaux presents the distortion of what in ordinary circumstances constitutes a fundamental social norm. Each by itself, but most significantly all together in their episodic combination, emphatically portray by visual means the disruption of civilized life and its basic values wrought by defeat. By the persistent repetition of the same theme in different versions, these tableaux also present the major parts of the play as variations, and the play itself as a series of variations on this same theme.

The fact that the war captives of our play are the survivors of the sack of Troy has a most important corollary which seems not to have received due attention. In the Trojan War the Greeks have justice on their side. Prince Paris of Troy stole the wife of his host — a most grievous offence against Zeus Xenios. Moreover, the Trojans refused to give her back. Significantly it is not for their sack of Troy but for their sacrilegious conduct during the conquest that the Greeks will be punished by a storm on their way back home (66ff., esp. 69, 75, 85-6, 95-7). The plight of the Trojan women was, then, caused by the guilt of their own country. Nonetheless these women are presented in such a way that they evoke boundless and unconditional pity. Euripides seems to have wished to communicate

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31 *Cf.* Ar., *Av.* 911 and *Thesm.* 838 in its context.

32 *Cf. Il.* 17.196-7. I owe this reference to Prof. S.G. Daitz.

33 If the famous ἢ τὰν ἢ ἐπὶ τᾶς refers to a custom prevailing already in our period (the earliest known evidence is in Dioscorides 30 G-P [= *AP* 7.229]), the little body on the big shield may also have forcefully brought home the distance between the execution of this helpless infant and a warrior's heroic death.

that questions of right and wrong are irrelevant to irreversible and irreparable human suffering. More light is shed on this question by a comparison with the *Supplices*. In that play Euripides touched on a related problem when he defended the right of burial for warriors who fell in an impious war. Unlike our play, what is at issue there is the redress of a wrong against the dead, and it is this wrong that causes the suffering of the bereaved mothers. Nonetheless, it seems important for the *Troades* that the man responsible for the military expedition in the *Supplices* admits that his was a mission not sanctioned by the gods and ought never to have been undertaken *(Su.* 157-60); if he still insists on the honour due to the dead and the compassion due to their mothers, it is in spite of this error (*Su.* 168-75, *cf.* 253-5). Yet nothing that the Trojan captives say in the *Troades* contains even the slightest acknowledgement of the guilt of Troy. All of them, with differences arising from their individual characters, generally blame Helen and *her* γάμος — as if there existed a γάμος without a partner (for the rare mentions of Paris see nn. 34 and 35) — for the fate of Troy and for their own plight;[34] and on the divine level they state disappointedly and without searching for reasons that the gods forsook Troy.[35] Specific accusations

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34 Hecuba: 131-7, 498-9. — Andromache: 766-73. — Chorus: 780-1. Cassandra considers Helen the cause of the war (368-9) but is precluded from blaming her for it since she claims that the Trojans fared better than the Greeks (365-6) and Hector even benefitted by the war (394-7). This stance — for which see below with n. 37 — obliges her to find a blessing also in Paris' fatal union. The statement that he married "the daughter of Zeus" (398-9) invests him with the exalted status of son-in-law to the father of men and gods (*Od.* 4.569 [Menelaus], Isoc., *Hel.* 43 [Paris]). See following note, end.

35 Hecuba: 469, 612-3. — Andromache: 775-6$_a$. — Chorus: 858-9. — The statement in 597ff., attributed variously to Andromache (Diggle) and the chorus (P), that Troy fell "by the ill will of the gods when your son escaped Hades, <the son> who destroyed the citadel of Troy for the sake of a hateful marriage bed" etc., should not be taken as an accusation of Paris, but as another assertion that the gods turned against Troy; Paris served merely as their tool. The gods were not ill-disposed toward Troy *because* the exposed infant escaped death, but their ill will became manifest *when* he escaped death, *i.e.*, by his parents' failure to cause his death without bloodshed and save the city from her doom. It is Paris' escape from death that

against Helen abound in the *agon* (914-1032) between her and Hecuba in the third episode, where the latter, although *stricto sensu* the accuser, is given the rebuttal speech with its longer lasting impact.[36] These accusations tend to be taken at face value because of the powerful effect produced by their constant repetition alongside and in combination with the successive scenes representing the piteous woes of the plaintiffs. A good example is the assertion in Cassandra's showpiece of consolation rhetoric (353-405)[37] that,

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proves Hecuba's dream to have been god-sent. Greek prophecies and dreams concerning future events are not warnings intended to be discarded if their recipients improve their ways, but disclosures of what *must* happen. *Cf.* the stories of Oedipus, Telephus and Perseus. — All these statements are found before the Helen-scene. For the relevant statements after the third episode see below.

36 According to W. Biehl, *Euripides Troades* (Heidelberg 1989), 906 n. and p. 339, the inversion of the normal order suits the situation: as Helen has already been convicted by the army *in absentia*, the re-opening of her case would be in the spirit of contemporary legal concepts, seeing that not all the relevant evidence had been presented to the court. Be that as it may, the main issue in the *agon* is Helen's guilt against Menelaus, so that the argument is not strictly relevant to our discussion. Still, it is of interest that, as Helen's main line of defence is that she is not responsible, and consequently not liable for what she did when constrained by a most powerful god, Hecuba does not reply that men are liable also for such actions (*e.g.*, *Il.* 19.137-8), an argument that would have implicated her son as well; Hecuba did not deny 597-8, for which see previous note. Consequently the old queen does her best to refute Helen's contention of having acted under divine compulsion. This line of argument falls in with her accusing Helen, but not Paris, for the γάμος and its consequences.

37 "Cassandra must be believed," R. Scodel, *The Trojan Trilogy of Euripides* (Göttingen 1980), 119-20 on p. 120. For the function of praise in consolation rhetoric see. R. Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer*[2] (Leipzig 1885), 358. For the demand to praise those fallen for their country rather than to weep for them see, *e.g.*, Thuc. 2.44.1 + 4. For Hector's death as ἀνὴρ ἄριστος (395) *cf.*, *e.g.*, Hdt. 7.224.1; for the glory the polis derives from such a death (401-2) *cf.* Tyrt. 12.23-4 West and P. A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca* I (Berlin-New York 1983), no. 6(II)2 (on p. 7) and no. 10(III)12 (on p. 9); and see "fine death" and related *topoi* of eulogy in Athenian official funeral orations and on funeral inscriptions, Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* (Cambridge, MA 1986), 98ff. For the transformation of defeat into a paradoxical proof of valour or symbolic vic-

unlike the Greeks who suffered countless casualties for a runaway wife (368-9), the Trojans died on the field of glory fighting for their country (386-7) — although in fact the Trojans sacrificed their city and their people for the same woman and with much less justification.

Still, these statements express the view of only one party to the conflict. But this view resounds throughout the play — a work of unusual emotional intensity unrelieved by distancing "objective" messenger speeches or other emotionally uninvolved characters;[38] a work, moreover, in which the chorus are not only not impartial but are as fatefully entangled in the tragic events as the heroines. Yet the Greek case also gets a hearing. In his speech at the beginning of the third episode, Menelaus declares that his first and foremost aim has been achieved: "the cheater of his host ... has paid the penalty with the help of the gods, both he and his country which fell by the Greek spear" (866-8). The brevity of this single statement may suit the dramatic context, but every word is significant, especially for an audience who could be assumed to remember the story in the *Iliad* of the duel between Helen's two husbands[39] that was to put an end to the war between the Greeks and the Trojans. Such an audience would understand correctly that the gods' aid[40] included the pun-

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tory (esp. 353, 365-6$_a$, 386-7$_a$, 394ff.; see also n. 34 above) in Athenian speeches held at collective state funerals, see Loraux, 138-40.

38 The only "objective" human *dramatis persona* is the herald; he is also the only one who says nothing about responsibility and guilt. As to the gods in the prologue, Poseidon's declaration that Helen is "legitimately classified a captive" (35) need mean no more than that, since she chose to live in Troy as a member of the royal family, she is now rightly treated as such.

39 Note that in this play Euripides relies on the audience's acquaintance with Helen's reinstatement.

40 σὺν θεοῖς (or σὺν θεῶι) may serve as a formula to avoid sounding boastful when speaking of success (Barrett on *Hi.*168-9 on p. 194), but the same expression may also convey its original full meaning, as is obvious especially when divine help is hoped for or counted on for the success of a future enterprise (*Med.* 625, 802; *Pho.* 634-5; *Su.* 1226). Our δέδωκε σὺν θεοῖς δίκην (*Tro.* 867), included by Barrett among the formulaic uses, seems rather to express appreciative satisfaction with divine help that has been granted, a *post factum* counterpart of, *e. g.*, *Med.* 802 ὃς ... σὺν θεῶι τείσει δίκην.

ishment of the Trojans for having broken their most holy oath when Paris disappeared from the duel and Pandarus treacherously wounded Menelaus. Thus while we are not told why Troy was doomed in the first place,[41] when the war was resumed, the Trojans entered it as oath-breakers (see below with n. 46). Still, Euripides does not rely only on his audience's prior knowledge to make them perceive that the punished community suffered for an error of its own and not for its erring member. He prepares them for this view in the prologue when he rejects the well-known story of the Greeks' decision to stone Ajax for his sacrilegious assault of Cassandra in the sanctuary of Athena,[42] whose cooperation had enabled them to take Troy. Instead of the judgement traditionally given against Ajax, not even a rebuke of the sinner is allowed here, and the goddess explicitly states that this is why she will punish them by the storm at sea (70-3).[43] By refashioning this myth our poet creates an apt example of the gods' policy in a relevant case and guides the audience's comprehension.[44]

But no response to Menelaus' statement is made on stage. Whatever else Euripides intended to achieve by giving the king a soliloquy in the presence of the chorus and Hecuba,[45] the lack of contact between him and the women enables the latter both to listen to his *rhesis* and to refrain from comment. The chorus says nothing when Menelaus stops speaking, and Hecuba expresses interest in only one detail of the speech, namely that Helen may pay with her life for the desertion of her husband, and thus be punished also for

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41 See 922 in the context of 919-22. See also 597ff. with n. 35, where it is important to note that Hecuba does not deny 597.

42 *Iliu Persis*, see *Homeri Opera* 5, ed. Allen (Oxford 1946 [1912]), 108. This detail of the story was especially well-known in Athens as the council of the kings dealing with Ajax's offense was painted in the Stoa Poikile (Paus. 1.15.2).

43 Reading κοὐδὲνγ' in 71. See Diggle's *app. crit.* and Th. Stephanopoulos, "Kleinigkeiten zu den Troerinnen", *Hermes* 116 (1988), 488-9.

44 For foreshadowing by somewhat refashioned paradigmatic myths see M.A. Davies, "Anticipation and foreshadowing: a use of myth", *SIFC* 82 (1989), 7-11.

45 See W. Schadewaldt, *Monolog und Selbstgespräch* (Berlin 1926), 241, and (*contra*) D.J. Mastronarde, *Contact and Discontinuity* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1979), 24-5.

its disastrous results for Troy. The short-lived hope for Helen's death elicits the only Trojan utterance in the play that discerns a pattern of divine justice in the events (884-8 following on 873ff.). On the other hand, the Trojans' silence concerning their country's guilt and the punishment exacted for it leaves Menelaus' statement unrefuted.

Nevertheless Hecuba seems to be unconscious of any connection between the fatal head-wound of her little grandson, "from the shattered bones of whose skull death (φόνος) is laughing out" (1173-7) — where, according to the scholiast φόνος is a euphemism for brain — and the Trojans' imprecation in the *Iliad* that their children's brains be poured to the ground if they break the oath taken before the duel between Paris and Menelaus,[46] and she continues to blame Helen alone for the calamities of Troy (1213-5). Similarly, Menelaus' statement does not affect her and the chorus' feeling of being deserted by the gods and so exceedingly hated by them that even their sacrifices are rejected;[47] and yet the Homeric explanation for this divine attitude toward "Ilios and Priam and the people of Priam" is clearly the perjury of the Trojans.[48] This Trojan inability or

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46 *Il.* 3.299-301: "whichever party breaks this oath, may their and their children's brains be poured to the ground ... and may their wives be possessed by others", following upon the oath in *Il.* 3.276-91.

47 Chorus 1060ff.; Hecuba 1240-2, 1280-1; both 1287-93.

48 See (Pl.), *Alc.* 2 149d. The passage is cited as Homeric but is not found in any manuscript of our *Iliad.* (It was worked into this poem as *IL.* 8.548, 550-2 by J. Barnes [1710-11]). It is now mostly considered to have come from a "cyclic" epic, probably the *Ilias parva* (see U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Die Ilias und Homer* [Berlin 1920], 30, n. 1, and G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* II [Cambridge 1990], *ad loc.*) or from a text of the *Iliad* contaminated with such a poem (see G.M. Bolling, *The External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* [Oxford 1925], 114). It appears as "Homerus" F 18 in M. Davies, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Göttingen 1988) I have not been able to see his "Prolegomena and Paralegomena to a New Edition (with Commentary) of the Fragments of Early Greek Epic", *NAWG* (Göttingen 1986), 2. Euripides' audience is likely to have known the passage (for narrative epics in fifth century Athens see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* [Oxford 1968], 43f., and for indiscriminate quotation from all kinds of epic poems see Ar. *Pax* 1970-

refusal to accept their own responsibility for their predicament is intimated already in the second stasimon. In the first pair of strophes (799-819) the chorus describe Troy's earlier destruction by Telamon and Heracles, explaining it as the retaliation for king Laomedon's deceitful conduct (809-14); yet in the second pair of strophes (820-59), which describe the present destruction, they offer no such explanation. Instead, they reproach the gods for having changed their attitude toward their once-beloved city (*passim*, esp. 858-9).

It is impossible to know with certainty whether the unanimous and consistent stance of the Trojan women is intended to stress that whoever fights for a cause believes, or convinces himself, that he is in the right, and will thus remain deaf to whatever threatens to undermine his position; or whether these women simply succumb to the common human failing of making others responsible for one's own mistakes. Be that as it may, our poet obviously arouses pity for these women in spite of their (or their country's) responsibility for their misery and in spite of their ignoring this responsibility. It is especially noteworthy here that the Trojan women's undeviating adherence to their version is both facilitated and made clear by the episodic structure of the play with its lack of connection and development between the scenes, by the appearance of most of the *dramatis personae* in only one scene, and by the unbalanced representation of the sides to the conflict. All these factors separately and in combination make the Trojan women's voice paramount in the play and at the same time nearly rule out a frontal challenge to them. Moreover, as we have seen, when the opportunity for such a challenge is created by the poet, he allows it to be ignored. This is certainly remarkable. Euripides evidently did not wish to detract from the impact of the Trojan women's suffering by blaming them for either their share in the responsibility or their refusal to acknowledge it. Still, their lack of response to Menelaus' statement serves some purpose. I would suggest that it is intended to demonstrate the Trojan women's total lack of πάθει μάθος and to deprive their suffering of whatever constructive — and thereby consolatory — value it might have for the audience. This is analogous to the prediction of

87). Such knowledge gives the reproaches the Trojans persistently repeat to the Gods for not heeding their invocations, prayers and sacrifices (nn. 36 and 46) their full tragic significance.

the storm at sea (78-94). Not only is it explicitly stated that it is for their offences against the gods that this storm will punish the Greeks (esp. 65-73, 95-7), but the prediction itself is included in the prologue and not, as usual, in an epilogue where the *post hoc* might still be taken as *propter hoc*.[49] Our poet evidently took careful precautions against granting the audience any illusory satisfaction for the human suffering he presented in the play, or any relief from its impact on them.[50]

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49 Note that if the chorus' "let me die with the Philistines" prayer that Menelaus' ship be hit by a thunderbolt (1100-06) is intended to remind the audience of the impending storm, the same prayer (1107-17) also reminds them of Helen's reinstatement as Menelaus' queen and drives home that, so far as the Trojan women are concerned, the prayer will not be answered.

50 I wish to thank my colleague and friend Dr. Debora Gera and the editors for their constructive advice.