AUTHORIAL PRESENCE IN SOPHOCLES' *ELECTRA**

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ABSTRACT

Authorial presence in tragedy, where the poet never speaks in his own person and where there is no master voice to guide our reception, is elusive and implicit. Despite tragedy's polyphony the purpose of this study is to analyze some sample passages from Sophocles' *Electra* for textual traces of its author's voice as a response to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Each part of this study is focusing on different aspects of self-reflexive poetics.

KEYWORDS: authorial presence, self-reflexive poetics, metapoetry, metatheatre, metamythology, allusion.

PRESENCIA AUTORIAL EN LA *ELECTRA* DE SÓFOCLES

RESUMEN

La presencia del autor en la tragedia, donde el poeta nunca habla en primera persona y donde no hay una voz autorial que guíe nuestra recepción, es elusiva e implícita. A pesar de la polifonía de la tragedia, el propósito de este estudio es analizar algunos pasajes de *Electra* de Sófocles en busca de rastros textuales de la voz de su autor como respuesta a la *Orestíada* de Esquilo. Cada parte de este estudio se centra en diferentes aspectos de la poética autorreflexiva.

PALABRAS CLAVE: presencia autorial, poética autorreflexiva, metapoesía, metateatro, metamitología, alusión.

Authorial presence in tragedy, where the poet never speaks in his own person and where there is no master voice to guide our reception, is elusive and implicit. Despite tragedy's polyphony the purpose of this study is to analyze some sample passages from Sophocles' *Electra* for textual traces of its author's voice as a response to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Each part of this study is focusing on different aspects of self-reflexive poetics.

1. THE POETICS OF SPACE

By this I refer to the process by which tragic space acquires meaning or a thematic function. For the purposes of this paper our discussion draws on the spatial

categories of theatrical, scenic, extra-scenic, distanced, and dramatic space.[1] In this section I will look at the Paedagogus' prologue in Sophocles' *Electra* (1-22) and at the Herald's first speech in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (503-538) from the angle of the categories of space, since they offer many useful points for comparing the different perspectives of authorial intervention.

Sophocles' *Electra* begins before the palace of the Pelopids at Mycenae. Three travelers enter the stage, Orestes, his friend Pylades, and Orestes' Tutor, the Paedagogus. The Paedagogus, looking southward, points out the chief features of the landscape (ll. 1-14):[2]

<div style="text-align:center">

ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ   1
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν᾽ ἔξεστί σοι
παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ᾽ ἀεί.
<u>τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος</u> οὑπόθεις τόδε,
<u>τῆς οἰστροπλῆγος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης</u>·   5
<u>αὕτη</u> δ᾽, Ὀρέστα, <u>τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ</u>
<u>ἀγορὰ Λύκειος</u>· οὐξ ἀριστερᾶς δ᾽ ὅδε
<u>Ἥρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός</u>· οἷ δ᾽ ἱκάνομεν,
φάσκειν <u>Μυκήνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὁρᾶν</u>
<u>πολύφθορόν τε δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε</u>,   10
ὅθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φόνων ἐγώ ποτε
πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν
ἤνεγκα κἀξέσωσα κἀξεθρεψάμην
τοσόνδ᾽ ἐς ἥβης, πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου.

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What merits attention in *Electra*'s prologue is the number and variety of topographical landmarks (the Argive plain, the grove of the daughter of Inachus, the agora and the temple of Apollo Lyceios, the famous temple of Hera, Mycene, and the murderous palace of the Pelopidae).[3] Without caring whether the topography was minutely accurate, the Paedagogus acting as a guide to Orestes uses the infinitive φάσκειν (l. 9) as a mild imperative aimed as much at the audience as at Orestes, asking the spectators as viewing characters λεύσσειν/ὁρᾶν to «think, imagine» that they see these famous places in one view «passing from what is general and remote to what is nearest to the eye».[4] The space in the prologue can be constructed by the

[1] Much has been written on tragic space, so much that it is difficult to summarize all the issues involved in the modern study of spatial categories in drama. Rehm, 2002: 1-34 provides a useful guidance on various approaches to theatrical space.

[2] All citations of Sophocles' *Electra* are taken from Sophocles' Oxford edition by Lloyd-Jones/Wilson, 1990.

[3] A full discussion of the long and detailed dramatic setting of the opening lines of Sophocles' *Electra* has been provided by Dunn, 2006.

[4] Campbell, 1881: 132.

spectator in two ways: both by elements which remain unseen, i.e. the Argive plain, the grove of the daughter of Inachus, the agora and the temple of Apollo Lyceios, the Heraeon[5] (called in French «hors champ») and situated «hors cadre»,[6] and by elements visualized and necessary to situate the action (the place they have come to is Mycenae and they are now standing in front of the palace).

Despite repeated demonstratives such as ὅδε[7] the spatial informations provided by the Tutor are not shown within scene but communicated verbally and not visually (diegetic space). The Paedagogus, speaking with the privileged and omniscient perspective of the poet himself, is exploring the range of urban spatialities, that is, historic space (l. 4 the ancient Argos τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος), public space (l. 7 the Lycean marketplace ἀγορὰ Λύκειος), architectural space (ll. 7 & 8 ἀγορὰ Λύκειος, Ἥρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός: the temple of Apollo and the Heraeum were the two most important temples within the plain of Argos), mythic space (l. 5 the sacred ground of Inachus' gadfly-stung daughter τῆς οἰστροπλῆγος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης) not merely as performance locations but as memory space. By introducing the useful idea of a heterotopia,[8] these places freed from the normal constraints of geography are defined as sites which are embedded in stages of Orestes' life, i.e. sites that his soul has desired so long, sites of his yearning (ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ᾽ ἀεί, οὑπόθεις), sites often referred to and presented from Orestes' point of view during the past (ἐκεῖνα). The identity of Orestes' fatherland, unkown in the past (ἐκεῖνος), is revealed at the moment of the Tutor's utterance (ὅδε). Thus, the use of ὅδε is justified considering the attention given to actions belonging to the present time and playing a major role in the actual situation.

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[5] Dunn, 2006: 193-194 observes that the temple of Hera was destroyed in an infamous blaze in 423, and the new temple was probably still under construction at the time of the play. Thus his implicit meaning, «please imagine, dear spectators—and you, Orestes—the temple of Hera», would be given an added twist by the fact that the spectators would most likely be thinking of a new and splendid but unfinished building.

[6] By and large, spectators will not check the diegetic space in all its details for its degree of contingency and some contradictions of this space will accordingly remain unnoticed. Finglass, 2007: 92 ad 2-10 rightly observes that the poetic value of these lines is not accompanied by a concern for the realities of Argive topography.

[7] The speaker is personally involved (ll. 11 &13 ὅθεν … ἤνεγκα κἀξέσωσα κἀξεθρεψάμην «whence I carried you away…and saved you, and reared you up to manhood, to be the avenger of your murdered sire», Jebb, 1894: 9 ad 13f. notes that the middle form of the verb ἐκτρέφειν differs semantically from the active, since it marks the interest felt by the τροφός) with the place to which he is referring, and his subjective involvement is a relevant factor in the selection of the demonstrative ὅδε which, in its normal deictic use, indicates proximity. In this case, the poet draws attention to what we will call empathetic deixis.

[8] The concept of heterotopia, introduced by Foucault, 1986 in a short essay entitled «Of Other spaces» («Des Espaces Autres»), suggests that a given space might escape the spatial assumptions that seem preordained by geography.

The Paedagogus, then, turns at last from features of the setting imagined offstage to the physical space before the eyes of the spectators, that is the scene onstage: Mycene defined as «this place to which we have come»,[9] and the palace, that has a scenic counterpart in the *skene*-building. The verb of motion ἱκάνομεν (l. 8) retaining a deictic sense it marks movement toward the physical space before the audience, that is the center of the tragic plot. Paradoxically, these places chosen as the dramatic setting are supposed to be verbally formed (φάσκειν) and not visually. In order to answer that question, I suggest that through φάσκειν ὁρᾶν spectators are asked to recognize the theatrical site and time conventions of the tragic genre as part of its own fiction. It is worth noting that the Tutor is also verbally informing the audience of the action's time frame[10] (ll. 17-19 ὡς ἡμὶν ἤδη λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας / ἑῷα κινεῖ φθέγματ᾽ ὀρνίθων σαφῆ / μέλαινά τ᾽ ἄστρων ἐκλέλοιπεν εὐφρόνη «for already the sun's bright ray is awaking the birdsong of morning into clearness, and the black night of stars has failed»)[11] by identifying the point in the story at which the plot and the performance begin under a cover of naturalness and verisimilitude.[12] On the other hand, the tragic frame requires that Orestes' performance must align itself with the site-specific stage conventions, that is the actor in his role-playing is asked by recognizing (φάσκειν ὁρᾶν) the chosen site (the palace) as instrumental in the development of the tragic plot to become transformed on the stage into the character he is portraying.

I will end the analysis of the prologue by discussing the intertextual framework of space. Sophocles by relocating the action away from the tomb-vicinity context of his predecessor Aeschylus is responding to the setting of the equivalent play.[13]

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[9] Dunn, 2006: 194 remarks that with οἷ δ᾽ ἱκάνομεν the spectators learn that Sophocles has chosen for his immediate venue the town of Mycene.

[10] At lines 17-19 the visual dimension is being complemented by the aural one which forms an acoustic environment that includes natural sound. The interest here is in the soundscape which is characterized not by an engagement of the acoustic sensory data alone (the clear voices of the birds heralding the dawn create a sound space), but by their interaction with the visual ones (the sun's bright light, the dark night of stars is spent). This detail implies an intense incursion of sound from the physical environment (the outside space of the theater) into the acoustic space of the orchestra, and the auditorium. Sound by penetrating different spaces has the ability to destroy boundaries and to create an aureal community between the performative area, and the auditorium, between the actors, and the audience. The term soundscape, invented by a Canadian composer named Schafer, is used to define an acoustic environment including both natural and human-made sound on which see Robinson, 2014: 6.

[11] All translations are mine, except where otherwise indicated.

[12] Cf. Rehm, 2002: 37, whose comment is illuminating: «Greek tragedies often refer to sunlight or the dawn near their outset, a dramatically effective means of bringing the myth into the present world of its performance».

[13] On a comparison between the three recognition scenes see Solmsen, 1967. Such a comparison may be justified, since the different treatments are indicative of profounder differences in artistic outlook.

I argue, thus, that Sophocles by moving out of focus Agamemnon's tomb in the extra-scenic space (ll. 51-53 ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβον, ὡς ἐφίετο, / λοιβαῖσι πρῶτον καὶ καρατόμοις χλιδαῖς / στέψαντες, εἶτ' ἄψορρον ἥξομεν πάλιν, «We, meanwhile, will first crown my father's tomb, as the god commanded, with libations and the luxu-riant tribute of severed hair; then come back here again») presents his audience with an invitation to appreciate on the one hand the dramatic challenges of the stage conventions and to reflect on the other on the complex role of this relocation as regards to the recognition sequence.[14]

By alluding to the Aeschylean model Sophocles invites his audience to read the allusion as metapoetic reflection. Sophoclean references to the spatial distinctions between theater/stage/and dramatic space gain a further dimension if the audience thinks of the *Choephori* by adapting Fraenkel's comment on the prologue of Sophocles' *Electra*: «Es ist als wenn Sophokles sagte: "ich habe die *Choephoren* nicht vergessen, aber ich mache es anders"».[15] Besides, the Paedagogus by dismissing Orestes' suggestion to stay and listen to Electra (ll. 80-81 θέλεις /μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ κἀπακούσωμεν γόων; «Shall we stay here, and listen to her laments?», transl. Jebb) with the strongest nega-tive in the Greek language (l.82 ἥκιστα = «absolutely not»)[16] in his role as poet/playwright[17] he also dismisses the scene of the eavesdropping, which leads to Electra's recognition of Orestes in Aeschylus.[18]

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[14] In each of the tragedians, and also in Stesichorus, Orestes dedication of his hair is connected with his recognition, but not in Sophocles. For the role of the lock in Stesichorus' *Oresteia* see Solmsen, 1967: 31.

[15] Fraenkel, 1962: 22 n. 43.

[16] On this see Minadeo, 1967: 114.

[17] Batchelder, 1995: 43 considers him as a literary critic too.

[18] Despite the fact that various motifs and patterns are common in both plays, the most fundamental change occurs with Sophocles' handling of the recognition scene which is much more elaborate than its Aeschylean model and it becomes a central moment of the drama. I think that Sophocles' authorial intention is also encoded at ll. 20-21 (πρὶν οὖν τιν' ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοιπορεῖν στέγης, / ξυνάπτετον λόγοισιν transl. «Before, then, anyone comes forth from the house, take counsel») where it would be tempting to assume that the poet is not going to entrust Pylades' role to a mute. Sophocles, then, with λόγοισιν leads his audience to expect Pylades to have a speaking part much longer than his three-line intervention in the *Choephori*. Since the dialogues in tragedy are mostly confined to pairs from among the three actors the dual ξυνάπτετον with the modal dative λόγοισιν give an indication that in the next scene Pylades will be assigned a speaking activity. Only the entrance (πρὶν οὖν τιν' ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοιπορεῖν στέγης) of a new character from the *skene* dispels this possibility. Ringer, 1998: 143 has noted that Elektra's offstage cry at 77 startles the spectators. One actor, Elektra, is still within the house, not yet outside but already announcing her presence aurally. Though Sophocles establishes a three-actor scene at l. 21 he, then, surprises his audience with the absolute silence of Pylades. In addition, Sophocles' phrase τύπωμα χαλκόπλευρον (l. 54) by recalling the expression λέβητος χαλκέου πλευρώματα (Aesch. *Cho.* 686) involves allusion. As critics have noted, this reminiscence by drawing attention to poetic authority underscores the difference between the version of Aeschylus with that of Sophocles in which the «urn of beaten bronze» will have an important role as a prop. The empty urn is the symbol for the plot's fabrications and the unfamiliar word τύπωμα (anything formed or moulded) alerts

I shall turn now to the second passage from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.[19] The Watchman with the local dative στέγαις (that is upon the palace roof)[20] sets the scene for the audience and establishes the palace of Atreus as the setting of the play while also making clear that this play requires a stage-building in contrast to Aeschylus' tragedies prior to the *Oresteia*.[21] Afterwards, as the play moves forward topography, landscape and spatial details feature prominently in the Herald's opening speech (503-537),[22] since Aeschylus' intention is to make consummate use of the palace's façade and its entrance,[23] which Clytemnestra controls.

In form the salutation of the Herald spoken on arrival (l. 504 ἀφικόμην) in the beloved earth of Argos would, at first sight, have to be classified as a prologue.

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the spectators to the poetic contrivance of the play as a whole. According to Dunn, 1998 the urn contradictory allusions to deception and Homeric values suggest the moral contradictions involved in Sophocles' *Electra*.

[19] All citations of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* are taken from Aeschylus' Oxford edition by Page, 1972.

[20] The Watchman's prologue already puts the audience in a firm relation with the royal palace and its dark secrets.

[21] The *Oresteia* is the earliest witness to significant innovation in the use of the theatre space, as the scene building is integrated into the scenic space. Taplin, 1977: 452–59 believes that no *skene* existed in the theater of Dionysus before Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in 458, a view that now dominates the field. Marshall, 2017: 21 rightly observes: «The year of the *Oresteia* was a time of extensive theatrical innovation, with Aeschylus using the theatre's physical resources as best he was able in order to communicate the play's themes».

[22] As an opening to the story of Agamemnon's nostos (ἥκει) the Herald begins with an exposition that establishes a strong focus on palace (ll. 518-519 <u>ἰὼ μέλαθρα βασιλέων, φίλαι στέγαι,</u> / σεμνοί τε θᾶκοι δαίμονές τ᾿ ἀντήλιοι), and on the principal character (ll.521-523 & 530-531 δέξασθε κόσμῳ <u>βασιλέα</u> πολλῷ χρόνῳ·/ ἥκει γὰρ ὑμῖν φῶς ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φέρων / καὶ τοῖσδ᾿ ἅπασι κοινὸν <u>Ἀγαμέμνων</u> <u>ἄναξ… ἄναξ Ἀτρείδης</u> πρέσβυς εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ / <u>ἥκει</u>). The principal character Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and the central message of his arrival (ἥκει) are emphasized by the powerful placement of the words in strong positions (at the beginning and end of the verse).

[23] A localizing touch is implied in the greeting of the gods (ll. 513-514 τούς τ᾿ ἀγωνίους θεοὺς / πάντας προσαυδῶ) who are enthroned as protectors around the market-place in front of the palace of the ἄνακτες. In the context of the Herald's prayer since πάντας approximates more closely to the common formula of completion in prayers the invocations of the market-gods are not related to anything actually visible unlike the address to μέλαθρα, στέγαι, θᾶκοι, δαίμονες ἀντήλιοι (ll. 518-520 ἰὼ μέλαθρα βασιλέων, φίλαι στέγαι, / σεμνοί τε θᾶκοι δαίμονές τ᾿ ἀντήλιοι, / εἴ που πάλαι, φαιδροῖσι τοισίδ᾿ ὄμμασι) evoking what the Herald sees in front of him, that is the architectural givens of theater space. From the structure of the Herald's speech it becomes obvious that only from 518 onwards is any notice taken of the locality, which was represented onstage. The deictic τοισίδ᾿ in 520 (φαιδροῖσι τοισίδ᾿ ὄμμασι) suggests that these cult statues were present onstage close to palace. In this way the tragedian defined the dramatic locale as a central civic space before the palace. My analysis here is based on Fraenkel, 1950: 260-265 *ad loc.*

The Herald as a prologue speaker[24] referring to past events opposes the dramatic locale to the «story-space» beyond, that is Troy (ll. 511, 525-526 & 529-530 παρὰ <u>Σκάμανδρον, Τροίαν</u> κατασκάψαντα τοῦ δικηφόρου / Διὸς μακέλλῃ, τοιόνδε <u>Τροίᾳ</u> περιβαλὼν ζευκτήριον / ἄναξ Ἀτρείδης «by Scamander's banks», «he has uprooted Troy with Zeus the justice-bringer's mattock», «such is the yoke which our lord, the son of Atreus, threw over Troy») which dominates the opening of the trilogy.[25] In line 527 where the Herald boasts of the impious action of destroying the altars and the seats of the gods (βωμοὶ δ᾽ ἄιστοι καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματα) in Troy it is clear from the expression βωμοὶ δ᾽ ἄιστοι that the audience is encouraged to draw a fundamental distinction between two spatial entities, space onstage and extra-scenic or distanced space lying beyond the view of the audience.[26] Besides, the meaning of ἄιστος is «invisible» since the word derives from privative affix α- and the root ϝιδ- ιδειν («see»). Collard's rendering of line 527 as «and the gods' altars and shrines made invisible» keeps the literal meaning of ἄιστος and draws attention to Troy as vanished and thus becoming beyond the visual field of anyone, including the theatrical audience.[27]

More importantly, we can observe that in the above examined passages both tragedians put the basic compositional elements of the prologue to use in ways that reflect the genre spatial conventions. Both passages can be read as metatheatrical reflections on the scenic constraints and conventions with regard to the differentiation between onstage and offstage space.

2. METATHEATER,[28] METAMYTHOLOGY, AND THEATRICAL MIMESIS

In the second part of my paper I will focus on the metatheatrical use of ἄραρεν φρένας (Soph. *El.* 147-149).[29]

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[24] The Herald as a prologue speaker like the Watchman is well informed but not centrally involved in the tragedy's ensuing conflicts and actions. As a prologue-speaker the Herald is preparing the audience for the following action, that is, Agamemnon's arrival, supplying in a concentrated fashion the background-past events. His speech also contains details such as identification of self and of place, and a description of the scenery.

[25] Sommerstein, 1994: 288-289 observes that the capture and the sack of Troy are the main subject of the prologue, of Clytemnestra's first scene (258-354), of half the Herald scene (503-586), and of Agamemnon's entry-scene (783-828), not to mention the most powerful scenes of the play, in which the Trojan Cassandra is in command of the stage.

[26] On this see Gasti, 2007-2008: 193.

[27] Collard, 2002.

[28] For a survey of scholarly definitions of «metatheatre» see Thumiger, 2009: 9-11.

[29] For a fuller discussion of the passage see Gasti, 2016.

In Sophocles' *Electra* the heroine by comparing herself to a «child-destroying nightingale» (τεκνολέτειρ' ὥς τις ἀηδών, 107) calls forth all of the nightingale's thematic associations with the murderous and destructive aspect of her vengeful lamentation.[30] The comparison of the mourner with the nightingale recurs in the first kommos of the play, at lines 145-152 where Electra pairs Procne with Niobe, a symbol of perpetual mourning: νήπιος ὃς τῶν οἰκτρῶς / οἰχομένων γονέων ἐπιλά- / θεται. / ἀλλ' ἐμέ γ' ἁ στονόεσσ' ἄραρεν φρένας, / ἃ Ἴτυν αἰὲν Ἴτυν ὀλοφύρεται, / ὄρνις ἀτυζομένα, Διὸς ἄγγελος. / ἰὼ παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ' ἔγωγε νέμω θεόν, / ἅτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραίῳ, / αἰαῖ, δακρύεις. («Only a fool could forget / Parents who died pitifully. / No. It is that mournful bird that / Suits my mood,[31] the bird who / Laments Itys, always Itys,[32] that / Bird distraught by grief, the messenger of Zeus. / Oh, you too, all-suffering Niobe, / I count you a goddess, you who / In a rocky grave, alas,[33] weep»).[34]

My first point relates to the unconventional use of the two mythological *exempla* contained in this passage: The peculiar construction of ἄραρεν φρένας (intransitive aorist of ἀραρίσκω with accusative),[35] which deviates from normal usage, suggests the troubling parallelism between Procne and Electra (i.e. casting Electra as Procne, the murderous figure of the myth transformed into a nightingale seems

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[30] Billing, 2007: 49-51 considers the relationship between female lament and acts of vengeance in fifth-century Athenian society and its theatre (with emphasis on the *Hekabe* of Euripides). Nooter, 2011 argues that Electra uses lamentation and song to direct the course of vengeance at the end of the play.

[31] Cf. the translation of this verse by March, 2001: 43: «No, she who laments is more congenial to my mind». Loraux, 2002: 36 rightly observes that Electra evokes the nightingale associated with endless mourning because it suits her frame of mind. For Electra's comparison with the nightingale see also lines 107, 1076-1077.

[32] The theme of lament is combined with its endless iteration (cf. the repetition of Itys). On this see Barker, 2004: 191 and Gasti, 2003: 76-78.

[33] Electra's interjection αἰαῖ translated as «alas» is an indicator of the tragic genre «condensing in itself the entire register of expressions of sorrow». On this see Loraux, 2002: 37-38. According to Jebb, 1894: 28 ad 152 «αἰεὶ is the best reading, since the point is that Niobe's grief is perpetual». In fact, αἰαῖ summons up αἰεί through their sonorous contiguity. On this see Loraux, 2002: 36. On Niobe as an example of perpetual lament and on Electra's statement here that sounds more paradoxical with αἰαῖ see Hutchinson, 1999: 53 n. 11. On Niobe see Hopman, 2004. Kornarou, 2010 offers a detailed analysis of the mythological *exemplum* of Niobe in Sophocles' *Antigone*.

[34] Roisman, 2008: 24-25 (translation modified).

[35] On this peculiar construction of ἄραρεν see Jebb, 1894: 28 ad 147; Kamerbeek, 1974: 38 ad 147-148; Kells, 1973: 91 ad 147. Cf. also Finglass, 2007: 147 ad 147. Significantly, Electra's grieving experience is described with the verb ἄραρεν + accusative of the person (ἐμέ) and of the part (φρένας), which in Hom. *Od*.4.777 (πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἤραρεν ἡμῖν) takes the dative. But the regular senses «join, fit, furnish» are all inappropriate. The sense of ἀραρίσκειν here as «please» or «gratify» is an unexpected and unexampled sense for the verb despite the fact that the ancient scholiast comments that ἄραρεν is used instead of ἤρεσέ μου ταῖς φρεσίν, i.e. «it pleased my mind». The alternative interpretation συνήρμοσταί μου ταῖς φρεσὶ cited by the ancient scholiast is just what we need here: συνήρμοσταί μου ταῖς φρεσὶ means that lament «suits my mind and it is congenial to me».

to undermine her self-presentation as a pitiful victim). Nevertheless, Procne as the prototypical figure of lament is «fixed» in Electra's mind and «she provides the perfect parallel for her perpetual remembrance of her father».[36]

It is again the faithfulness of the ever-grieving Niobe that leads Electra to count her a god. Electra's use of Niobe to justify her right not to abandon her grief would resonate oddly with Sophocles' audience, who were familiar with her story being used in *Il.* 24.601-619 to support the opposite moral, that grief cannot last forever (Achilles persuades Priam to eat by using Niobe's *exemplum*).[37] In my opinion, Sophocles' deviation from the traditional use of Niobe's and Procne's stories suggests Electra's individual perception (ἔγωγε) of these mythological *exempla*. Similarly, the emphatic ἔγωγε is an indirect metamythical authorial comment on the unconventional use of Niobe's *exemplum*.[38] This type of discourse defined as «metamythology» (the term is coined by Wright)[39] arises because myth is otherwise presented, in a deliberate and self-conscious manner.

My second point concerns the metatheatrical frame extending to impersonation and acting style. Within the choral-lyric context of Sophocles' *Electra*, ἄραρεν φρένας is closely modeled on the self-conscious authorial use of συναραρίσκω in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 163-164 (φαίη δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος / φθέγγεσθ᾽· οὕτω σφιν καλὴ <u>συνάρηρεν</u> ἀοιδή). In the *Hymn to Apollo* the poet describes the festival of the Ionians on the island of Delos in honor of Apollo, and praises the choir of the Delian girls who are his attendants. Those Deliades are said to know how to imitate the voices of all men and they are praised for their mimetic performance. In the broader context of this passage which contains «the most positive representation of mimetic ability in Greek poetry»[40] the verb συνάρηρεν is used in a «parabatic way», since the poet would like to project his own voice onto that of the Chorus of the Delian Maidens performing the hymn. This kind of mimesis demands the poet's mastery of different styles of language or idiolects and the verb συναραρίσκω suggests that the poet is speaking through his characters in this process of re-enactment.

The peculiar construction of ἄραρεν φρένας signals to the audience Sophocles' ability to construct female-appropriate language which demands a «convincing dramatic imitation of the speech of women».[41] Thus, the genre women actually practiced (such as lament) is properly performed by the female voice of Electra and

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[36] On this see Finglass, 2007: 148 ad 147 and 146 ad 145-152.

[37] See Gould, 1999: 112; Swift, 2010: 342.

[38] Kamerbeek, 1974: 38 ad 149-152. Finglass, 2007: 149 ad 150, observes that «the *emphatic* <u>ἔγωγε</u> emphasizes that Electra's judgment is unconventional».

[39] Wright, 2005: 156.

[40] The citation is from Martin, 2001: 56. In this context of choral performance, the Delian Maidens in the *Homeric Hymn* to Apollo are described as masters of mimesis or «re-enactment» (verb *mimeîsthai* at verse 163).

[41] The citation is from Martin, 2001: 55.

it is convincingly constructed by the poet as a gendered utterance cut and fitted around women's stylized poetic speech. Consequently, ἄραρεν φρένας refers to the capacity of a male poet to represent women's idiolect[42] and to the ability of a male actor to impersonate a tearful female character through excessive mimesis of the nightingale's musical performance.[43]

Thus ἄραρεν φρένας is metatheatrical in the sense that the character uttering this phrase is aware of her own theatricality as the male actor impersonating a lamenting heroine, whose vocal, musical, and performative qualities[44] have a particular theatrical effect on the audience.[45]

I will end the analysis of this passage in terms of intertextuality. As lamentation makes up Electra's ethos ἄραρεν φρένας provides an apology by Sophocles that the form of lyric kommos is properly at place.[46] In particular, with this marked self-reflexive term the poet defines and authorizes his pointedly gendered voice in contrast to Aeschylus' *Choephori* where male (Orestes) and females (Electra and the women of Chorus) join in the lyric lamentation. In contrast to Aeschylus' evaluation of revenge shared by Electra, Orestes and the Chorus and expressed in the form of a kommos, Sophocles focuses on issues of gendered opposition between irrational feminine discourse (Electra's mourning is the gender song par excellence) and rational speech (Orestes-Paedagogue).[47] Indeed, the drama's fundamental duality[48] that is reflected in a gendered opposition between Orestes' male value system and Electra's

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[42.] Carson, 2001: 44 stresses that «for her (i.e. Electra), Niobe and Procne represent a victory of female sign language» (she rightly makes a point of an «idiolect»). On Lyric as female language see Chong-Gossard, 2008: 27-32.

[43] In Plutarch's *Apophth. Lac.* 233a the nightingale is represented as a useless animal endowed only with φωνά (φωνὰ τύ τίς ἐσσι καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο). Furthermore in Plutarch's *Apophth. Lac.* 212f the anecdote of an actor named Kallippides evokes the nightingale's associations with excessive imitation. Cf. also Aristotle's *Poetics* 1461b 34-35 where the anecdote concerning Kallippides' acting style seems to refer to excessive mimesis. On this see Csapo, 2002: 127-130. Regardless of the historical accuracy of these anecdotes Duncan, 2006: 19 argues that this anecdotal tradition can be viewed as a kind of popular performance theory. Cf. also Duncan, 2005: 56-58.

[44] Monella, 2006: 147 notes that the recurrence of the parallelism of the lamenting person with the nightingale «può essere correlata all'effettiva performance cantata sulla scena, non senza una sorta di gioco metaletterario».

[45] On the idea of the audience and its role in the Ancient Theater see Roselli, 2011: 19-62, esp. 36-37.

[46] As Woodard, 1964: 180 argues, lamentation and rebuke make up Electra's ethos. McCoskey, 2009: 224 notes that «pledged into perpetuity, Electra's sorrow remains central to her self-definition».

[47] Foley, 2001: 155 notes that in contrast to Sophocles, Aeschylus stresses the similarity between brother and sister, not gender differences. Kitzinger, 1991: 301-305 observes that in Sophocles' *Electra* the heroine's mode of expression presents a marked contrast to that of Orestes'. According to McCoskey, 2009: 224 Orestes «seems manifestly detached from his emotions» in contrast to his sister's «strict adherence to perpetual mourning in highly emotional terms».

[48] Cf. Woodard, 1964: 163.

female view of the act of revenge asks the audience to appreciate the gender differences and the mode of their mimetic re-enactment.

3. TRACKING THE POET'S VOICE
AND STANCE ON THE MATRICIDE

In this final section I will focus on Clytemnestra's murder where there is no hint of the Furies. Clytemnestra's words at 1415-16 (ΚΛ. ὤμοι πέπληγμαι. ΗΛ. παῖσον, εἰ σθένεις, διπλῆν. ΚΛ. ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις, «Oh! I am struck! / Strike, if you have the strength, a second blow! / Oh! Yet again!», transl. March) are exact reiterations of Agamemnon's dying cries at Aesch. *Ag.* 1343 and 1345 (ὤμοι πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω / ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις, δευτέραν πεπληγμένος «O-oh! I have been struck deep, a fatal blow!», «O-oh! Again! Struck a second blow!», transl. Collard). The repetition of the verb πέπληγμαι and of the adverb αὖθις coupled with the διπλῆν and δευτέραν would have been enough for the audience to feel an intertextual connection. In this context the terms αὖθις and διπλῆν, then, are addressed to the audience as indexicals for the allusion (not only a retaliating blow but an allusive one). The allusion encourages the audience to compare the two killings textually as well as morally and to confront the dilemmas inherent in the matricide.

In addition, Sophocles encodes into the text his stance on the matricide, since through the phrase οὐδ᾽ ἔχω ψέγειν[49] (Soph. *El.* 1423 «nor can I blame the deed», transl. Jebb, «and I can find no fault», transl. March) the audience is led to believe that it hears the direct voice of the poet. The chorus' approval for the avenger's action is important for shaping the audience's reception of the matricide as an act of retributory justice not to be blamed despite the disturbing atmosphere provoked by the chorus' shuddering at Clytemnestra's cry (1407 ἤκουσ᾽ ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὥστε φρῖξαι «I heard, ah me, sounds dire to hear, and shuddered!», transl. Jebb). There is a marked contrast between the Chorus-leader's words in Sophocles and Aeschylus' reference to the inexorable law of punishment awaiting the offender (it will eventually be Orestes' turn to suffer) in *Cho.* lines 1007-1009 (αἰαῖ αἰαῖ μελέων ἔργων· / στυγερῷ θανάτῳ διεπράχθης. / αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, / μίμνοντι δὲ καὶ πάθος ἀνθεῖ, «Alas, alas for these woeful deeds! / Hateful the death by which you were undone! / Alas, alas! And for him that survives suffering now comes into flower»). This premonition corresponds to the open-ended, aporetic ending of Aeschylus' *Cho.* (1076-77 ποῖ δῆτα

κρανεῖ, ποῖ καταλήξει / μετακοιμισθὲν μένος ἄτης; «Where will it come to comple-tion, where will the power of Ruin (Ate) be put to sleep and cease?»).

Unlike Aeschylus, Sophocles' closural lines (1508-10 ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως, ὡς πολλὰ παθὸν / δι' ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἐξῆλθες / τῇ νῦν ὁρμῇ τελεωθέν, «O seed of Atreus, after so many sufferings you have come forth at last in freedom, made completely prosperous by this day's enterprise!») show absolutely no sign of misgiving and they set a seal on the past by placing emphasis on the finality or authority of what has happened.[50] This divergence is due to the fact that the play of Sophocles is self-contained and not a part of a trilogy. A conclusion with Orestes pursued by Furies would vitiate the tight dramatic construction. The poet thematised the act of closure through a direct reference to termination τελεωθέν, a word which marks the end more self-consciously evoking a sense of finality. Τελεωθέν[51] «made whole» echoing other τέλος-based words throughout the last part of the play signals closure and implies finality by lending formal authority to the ending. [52]

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[50] Jebb, 1894: 203 ad 1510 observes that «This play contains no presage of trouble to come, and fitly ends with the word τελεωθέν. Contrast the closing words of the *Choephori* (1075 f.)».

[51] The word may be applied to Orestes as an ephebes who has attained maturity in body and mind, and it marks the successful rite de passage. On the threshold of adulthood Orestes returns to Argos and the play marks the end of childhood. If initiatory themes and male ephebeia are really the main topics in Sophocles *Electra*, τελεωθέν meaning «perfected», «made completely prosperous» and signaling the completion of the initiation indicates Orestes' final integration into polis through his break from the maternal world. Orestes' maturation is marked by his ability to speak with authority at lines 1505-1507 (χρῆν δ' εὐθὺς εἶναι τήνδε τοῖς πᾶσιν δίκην, / ὅστις πέρα πράσσειν γε τῶν νόμων θέλοι, / κτείνειν· τὸ γὰρ πανοῦργον οὐκ ἂν ἦν πολύ, «And well it were if this judgment came straightway upon all who dealt in lawless deeds, even the judgment of the sword: so should not wickedness abound», transl. Jebb). This moral generalizing lesson should be considered as an authorial intervention as regards to matters of public justice. Kells, 1973: 231 imagines these lines to be spoken as a sort of envoi to the audience.

[52] It is worth noting how modern directors responded to the interpretative problems and complexities of Sophocles' play and especially to the play's ambiguous ending. Our interest revolves around Evangelatos', 1972 and Mavrikios', 1998 staging of Sophocles' *Electra*. Importantly, the analy-sis of these productions should be concerned with narratological, metatheatrical or aesthetic issues of unity and incompleteness by examining how the above mentioned directors try to lend formal authority to the ending and signal closure by means of some external closural gestures. Both direc-tors follow the pessimistic interpretation of the play by taking a much darker view of the matricide. Evangelatos at the end of the play by presenting Electra staying silent at the palace door, while Orestes goes in to set about his task, he attempted to call into question the confident ending. The position in which Electra holds her body is specifically expressing her repentance after the murder of her mother, and should be considered as a presage of trouble to come. Mavrikios by adding the poem of Seferis - ὄνομα δ' Ὀρέστης («The name is Orestes») from *Mythistorema* as a closural trope he opens a window upon the tragic future of Orestes, that is the Furies' pursuit («the sea you cannot find no matter how you run / no matter how you circle past the black, bored Eumenides, / unforgiven», transl. Keeley / Sherrard).

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