THE END OF THE TRACHINIAE

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The Exodos of Trachiniae (971-1278) is generally agreed to be the most problematic part of a problematic play. Of the many questions that could be asked about it this paper proposes three: I. What sense can we make of the presentation of Heracles? II. What are the implications of the two new motifs introduced in the Exodos -- the pyre on Mt. Oeta and the marriage of Hyllus and Iole? III. Who speaks the last lines and to whom? These are not novel questions, or ones which admit of conclusive answers, but they are worth reconsidering in the light of continuing critical discussion of the play.

I. THE PRESENTATION OF HERACLES

I should like to begin by eliminating one much-debated question: Who is the 'real hero' of this play? Is it Deianira, or Heracles, or both of them, or even Hyllus? I suggest that to Sophocles, the author of Ajax, Antigone, Philoctetes, this would not have been an important or even a particularly meaningful question.¹ (Conceivably, of course, he was much influenced in the writing of a play by considerations of the available talent; it is just possible that he shaped Trachiniae as he did, with the protagonist taking the parts of both Deianira and Heracles, because he had one outstanding star actor. But we have no means of telling.) More significant for our purposes is the sequence of events in the Exodos and the relation of these events to the rest of the play.

The Exodos begins and ends with a procession, of which the focal point is Heracles carried in a litter. This is very different from the kind of procession we were encouraged to expect earlier in the play (e.g. 181-86, 640-46). The triumphal
homecoming is replaced by a silent and solemn entry: ὥς φίλου / προκηδομένα βαρεῖαν / ἄφοσον φέρει βάσιν (965-67). Heracles is either dead already or asleep, exhausted by the agonies of torture he has been suffering in the poisoned robe. At the end of the play the procession is echoed; but this time Heracles is awake, in control, going to his death in a special place and in a specially prescribed ceremony, and displaying heroic endurance. There is both a parallel and a contrast: something has happened in the Exodos to alter the pattern. What happens is a series of revelations. First the nosos of Heracles is manifested to us: we hear his cries of agony (983-1017) and see the ravages of the poison on his body (1076-80); then what Hyllus reveals to Heracles about Deianira and the philtre precipitates Heracles' revelation of the second oracle, which he can at last interpret, in conjunction with the one so often mentioned earlier in the play (1159-73, cf. 76 ff., 157 ff., 821 ff.). From this point onwards the action leads to a new end, which has not been foreshadowed in the preceding events except in the most glancing ways. Linforth acutely saw that the play's logic need not extend beyond the nosos and presumed subsequent death of Heracles; the pyre on Oeta and the marriage of Hyllus and Iole are not necessary for the conclusion of this story, and we have to find a separate explanation for why they are there.

Many readers have been offended, shocked or puzzled by this sequence of events; Denys Page in a famous review called it an 'incomprehensible appendix'. The first question that arises, in any attempt to understand it, is how it relates to the first three-quarters of the play.

An important and fundamental point about the dynamics of Trachiniae has been well made by Oliver Taplin in his recent book on Aeschylus. Like Persae, this is a nostos play: the return of Heracles is the dominant subject all the way through, right from the Prologue, where the issue is raised at 36 ff. For the first 970 lines we are waiting for Heracles to arrive — the same pattern as in Agamemnon or Euripides' Heracles — and as Taplin rightly claims, the scene we are waiting for is 'the focus and conclusion of the tragedy'.

P. E. Easterling

57
Moreover, the absence of contact between Deianira and Heracles, which has often been seen as an embarrassment or dramatic flaw, is better interpreted as a significant part of this overall design, since Sophocles seems to go out of his way to bring on stage people and things through which these characters are linked. *Iole* has shared Heracles' bed; now she is to be taken into Deianira's house; *Lichas* goes between husband and wife as messenger and bearer of gifts; the robe\(^6\) itself is seen on stage in its casket (622), with Deianira's seal (614 f.), and later it reappears -- insofar as it is inseparable from Heracles' body (an idea much stressed at 767 ff., 1050 ff.) -- when he throws back the coverings and displays its ravages (1078 ff.). *Hyllus* is physically close to both parents and will lie with Iole: his father calls to him through the smoke (797 ff.), he touches and raises Heracles as he lies in the litter (1020 ff.), he embraces Deianira's corpse with the ardour of a lover (936 ff.). All these links between husband and wife surely reinforce the dramatic effect of their failure to meet, so that far from being a sign of essentially episodic structure\(^7\) this is given a special tension and significance.

There are other ways in which the action of the *Exodos* relates to that of the rest of the play. This final sequence continues the pattern of finding out which has such importance earlier on: one by one the characters learn, too late, the real truth of the situation: Deianira that the supposed love charm is a poison, Hyllus that he has wrongly accused his mother, Heracles that Nessus is the originator of his suffering and that the oracles are truly being fulfilled. Even Lichas finds out -- fleetingly -- that what he has been carrying is not a gift but a deadly poison: 775 f. emphasizes his ignorance (ὁ δ’ οὐδὲν εἰδὼς δόσμορος τὸ σὸν μόνης / δόρημ’ ἔλεξεν). This movement of progressive revelation, which is strongly marked in the language of the play (ἐκμανθάμεν and ἐκδίδασκ-κειν are key words), has often been noted by critics -- Reinhardt,\(^8\) Whitman,\(^9\) even Pound,\(^10\) who insists on the importance of 1174, ταῦτ’ ὁδ’ ἐπιείκη λαμπρα συμβαίνει, τέκνον, ’"what / splendour, it all coheres"': this is the key phrase for which
the play exists.' One motif which contributes to this theme (and is continued in the Exodos) is that of writing: Deianira describes the old tablet with its inscribed message that Heracles gave her when he left (παλαιόν δέλτον ἡγεγραμμένην / ξυνθήμαθ', 157 f.) and later compares her careful remembrance of the Centaur's inscriptions to the preservation of a written text on a bronze tablet (ἐσφραγισμένη, / χαλκὴς δὲ πως δύσνυμπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφὴν, 682 f.); at 1165 ff. Heracles recalls how he wrote down what the oracular oak told him at Dodona. In each case the implication is that the knowledge exists -- the message is there, available and unchanging -- but it only becomes intelligible in the light of events.11)

As with learning and revealing, so with the other themes given prominence in the Exodos: all have their origins earlier in the play. The sickness of Heracles, which is presented on stage in the Exodos, was first introduced as a metaphor for the passion with which he was seized: ὅστ' εἰς τῷ χώμῷ τ' ἀνδρὶ τῇ δε τῇ νόσῳ / ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι, 445 f. The idea of the νοσος as a wild beast (974 ff., 979 ff., 987, 1026 ff.) and the exploits of Heracles as beast-killer (1058 ff., 1091 ff.) recall the themes of Heracles' fights with Achelous (9 ff., 507 ff.) and Nessus (555 ff.) and of his own beast-like violence (779 ff.).12) His loss of manhood -- weeping like a woman (δοσὶς ὅστε παρθένος / βέβρυχα κλαίων, 1071 f., cf. 1075) -- reminds us of the helpless παρθένοι earlier in the play: Deianira waiting as he fought the river god (21 ff., 527 ff.), Iole and the train of captives (298 ff.), all details which strongly emphasize the power of ἔρως. And the relationship between father and son, pointedly examined in the scene where Heracles makes his demands of Hyllus, has been important from the Prologue onwards, with its stress on the idea of Heracles as son of Zeus (ὁ κλεινὸς ἡλεῖ μηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς, 19, cf. 139 f.). Again, Heracles, the sacrificer on Mt.Cenaeum, is now, it seems, going to be the sacrificial victim on Mt.Oeta.

So much for the formal considerations: it seems clear that in terms of structure and dramatic development the Exodos is very fully integrated with the rest of the play. But in the end this is not the controversial issue. Are we not so morally --
or aesthetically -- affronted by Heracles that the formal coherence becomes meaningless? Critics have often noted that there is a striking difference in the way Sophocles handles Deianira and Heracles. She has the advantage of being on stage much longer than he, she is given a high proportion of the poetry, she is presented throughout as a deeply sympathetic character -- noble, compassionate, modest -- involved, moreover, in a morally interesting situation: she takes a fatal decision and is seen facing its consequences. As Hyllus says of her, ἦμαρτε χρηστά μωμένη (1136), a perfect formula for the tragic heroine. And yet she is dismissed from the end of the play; and Heracles does not take back his wish to punish her when he hears the truth about Nissus. He, by contrast, occupies the stage for only 300 lines, and although he is given some superb rhetoric (particularly in the speech Cicero chose for translation, 1046 ff.; Tusc. Disp. 2.8-10), he has nothing like Deianira's poetic range. He is shown to be egocentric, brutally callous, violent; and this is stressed through the reactions of the sympathetic Hyllus. We are no more encouraged in this play to take it for granted that great men do and should behave like Heracles than we are supposed in O.C. to think that Oedipus ought not to be merciful to Polynices (Antigone's plea on her brother's behalf is precisely that other fathers have had bad sons and yet have forgiven them, 1181 ff.). Finally, Heracles is in no position to take interesting moral decisions, and there is nothing here to compare with the new depth of insight achieved by the Heracles of Euripides' play, though his self-control and endurance at the end demand to be taken very seriously. What sense can be made of this curious contrast?

The essence, surely, of the portrayal of Heracles is its ambiguity. Just as Tamburlaine and Julius Caesar are ambiguous figures in their respective plays, so is Sophocles' Heracles. In the long preparation for his arrival the discreditable stories about his killing of Iphitus and sacking of Oechalia are balanced by the sympathetic voices of Hyllus and the Chorus, for whom, as for Deianira, he is still 'the best of men' (177; 811 f.; 1112 f.). So the audience is invited to be aghast at Hyllus' account of his agony in the poisoned robe and at the
same time horrified by the death of Lichas; in the Exodos Heracles' acutely pitiable sufferings are matched by his alarming rage and cruelty. At the very end, when the name 'Nessus' makes everything fall into place, his words are given a new kind of authority, a sureness which commands respect just as his endurance of the extremes of pain commands awe. But there is no indication that he knows why he must do what he does, and the final response of Hyllus is one of bafflement and outrage.

If this general approach to the presentation of Heracles is accepted we can dispense with views of the play which see it in clear-cut terms, whether as a straightforward moral parable in which the arrogant Heracles is brought low or at the other extreme as some sort of heroic progress towards apotheosis. What, then, can we say about the dramatist's choice of Heracles and the story? Plainly it serves more complex purposes than the opposition and contrast between male and female, which is the basis of many interpretations, particularly those which see Trachiniae as an essentially domestic or social tragedy. Heracles and Deianira are indeed at opposite poles, and the polarity is of the greatest dramatic importance, but they also share the same fate: both are victims of eros, as the play elaborately demonstrates; both act in ignorance for their own destruction. In the end humanity matters more than gender. Another factor that needs to be given weight if we are to take account of everything that the play makes prominent is the special, atypical status of Heracles as son of Zeus and 'best of men'.

Interesting attempts have been made to approach the problem of Heracles by way of the play's unusual myths. Reinhardt, Letters, and more recently Segal have all found a remote, primitive, fairytale quality in these stories -- particularly in the tale of Achelous -- which perhaps can offer a clue to interpretation. The fullest development of these ideas has been made by Segal, who traces the opposition of two sets of values: on the one hand those of the oikos, represented by Deianira, the 'quiet' virtues admired in the fifth century, the ideal of civilised order, on the other the wilds of nature (Cenaeum, Oeta), archaic heroism, the violence of the beast, all repre-
sent by Heracles, who 'never emerges entirely from the remote mythology and from the ancient powers of nature which he vanquishes.'\(^{19}\) The play tells of a 'violent primitive past encroaching upon and destroying a civilized house with which we identify and sympathize.'\(^{20}\) But its movement culminates in the emergence of a new kind of heroism; Deianira's death is just an ending, but that of Heracles holds a sense of the future: he 'traverses the path from an archaic, epic heroism to a heroism that is fully tragic.'\(^{21}\)

No one could deny that the myths of Aechelous, Nessus, and the Hydra are used to very powerful effect to suggest the beast-like power and violence of \textit{eros} at work in human beings -- in Deianira as well as in Heracles -- and the extreme fragility of order and civilisation. But one may be less confident that Heracles was perceived as an archaic figure by Sophocles and his audience and should be so read by us. (Indeed, Ehrenberg, far from seeing Heracles as a hero of the old style, thought he typified a new kind of mentality, 'the spirit of the great individualistic movement of the fifth century.'\(^{22}\)) It is tempting to conclude from our modern vantage point that the Greeks of the fifth century were as interested as we are in the contrast between their values and those of the heroic, particularly the Homeric, world. (Even \textit{Ajax}, which contains some striking contrasts of 'old' and 'new' views of conduct and politics, may not be first and foremost a commentary on the passing of old values.) In fact it is particularly difficult to disentangle contemporary concerns from a poet's imaginative response to the world of myth; and before we can be sure that in \textit{Trachiniae} Sophocles is juxtaposing 'archaic' and 'modern' in the way suggested by Segal we need to examine in greater detail than would be appropriate here the kind of heroic world that his plays project. Meanwhile there is one point on the 'archaism' of the play that can provisionally be made. It is noticeable that the past is given very strong emphasis in this play: Deianira has an 'old' tablet that Heracles left with her (157) and an 'old' gift presented to her by the Centaur long ago (555); Heracles remembers an 'old' oracle of Zeus (1159, 1165). But these are all references to
events within the adult lifetime of the characters. Perhaps this insistence on the passage of time has more to do with the theme of ignorance and knowledge than with ideas about a past era which contrasts with the present. All this time, the implication seems to be, Deianira and Heracles have had the truth available to them, but they have not been able to interpret it. Certainly the past threatens the present -- the dead can kill the living -- but perhaps for Sophocles this is always true.

Time and knowledge bring me at last to my own view of Heracles in this play. I find it illuminating to go back to a traditional Greek way of using myth, familiar already in Homer, the argument a fortiori: the most famous example is Achilles citing Niobe to Priam as a paradigm of one who has suffered even worse bereavement than he. The relevant 'text' for Trachiniae is Iliad 18.117-19:

{oùtê γάρ οοūtê βίη Ἡραμής φύε ηήρα,}
{διςερ φίλτατος ἔσει Διὶ Κρονίωνὶ ἀνακτῶ,}
{άλλα ε μοὴρ' ἐδάμασε καὶ ἄργαλεος χόλος Ἡρῆς.}

Even Heracles had to die... the greatest of men; and so Achilles himself to accept his own fate. Man facing his mortality is itself a great tragic theme, but in Trachiniae it is complicated by two fundamental human factors: ignorance (man never knows enough to make right judgements and avoid harming himself) and passion (he does things that will harm him and his philoi under the influence of irrational forces like eros). At the opposite extreme to Heracles is Deianira, trying to be sophron. We may not all have the capacity for greatness, but we can be good, or try to be. Even so, her lack of knowledge, complicated by eros, is enough to make her fail disastrously and suffer like Heracles. This is the pattern of a consolatio (though one of a very unsentimental kind). If even these people destroyed themselves and one another we should not be surprised if life is full of illusion and deception for us, too. And the tragedy is deepened if the 'greatest' in human endeavour is also disturbingly near the beast -- a reminder of the precarious nature of all civilisation.
Does this story have any significance beyond its power to convey a sense of human dignity in endurance and of pity for human limitations? Is the mysterious will of Zeus in Trachiniae essentially different from the caprices of say, Aphrodite and Artemis in Hippolytus? The play gives us few definite clues. But the Chorus' question about the concern of Zeus for his children in the Parodos (139 f.) is in part answered by the action of the play. The causation of everything that happens is clearly traced: Heracles' present suffering is shown to be the product of his eros for Iole and Deianira's eros for him. Deianira has the means (unwittingly) to destroy him because of the Centaur's trick, which relied on the fact that Heracles in shooting him had used an arrow dipped in the poison of the Hydra, another of his monstrous victims. Actions have their consequences. Hyllus' closing denunciation of the gods' agnomosyne (1266) is thus set in an ironic context: we know more than Hyllus about these events. Moreover, there is the end: the pyre and the marriage with Iole, which are surely ambivalent, not just tokens of the suffering and brutatily of Heracles and the distress of Hyllus.

II. THE PYRE AND THE MARRIAGE OF HYLLUS AND IOLE

At 1174 ff. Heracles solemnly binds Hyllus on oath to do as he asks. Hyllus and his helpers are instructed to carry Heracles up to Mt. Oeta, cut wood -- oak and wild olive -- for a pyre, and set it alight with pine torches. There is to be no ritual of mourning -- no lamentation or tears. This is a very strange prescription, which Hyllus finds horrifying since it threatens to involve him in pollution; and at 1211 ff. Heracles modifies his instructions so that Hyllus may remain ritually pure: someone else may actually light the pyre. No explanation is offered for these directions; but Heracles speaks with confident authority, and it is natural to assume that he is recalling the commands of Zeus (cf. 1149 f., ὡς τελευταίαν ἐμοῦ / φήμην πάντοθε θεσφάτων δο' οἷος ἐγώ, whether this means 'the final pronouncement of the oracles that I know' or, less likely, 'the pronouncement of the oracles that I know concerning my death').
Sophocles did not invent the story of the pyre on Mt. Oeta: there was already a myth that Heracles met his death there, and we know of a cult established long before Sophocles' time in which bonfires were lighted on the top of the mountain and offerings made to Heracles. Excavations have yielded figurines and inscriptions which confirm the literary tradition.\(^{23}\) It is therefore very likely indeed that for an Athenian audience the direction to build and light the pyre on Oeta would relate to an institution and a story which were perfectly familiar to them, just as the cults at Troezen and Corinth mentioned by Euripides at the end of *Hippolytus* and *Medea* respectively belonged to real contemporary life and formed a link between the world of the drama and the world of the audience. So it would be surprising if the episode of the pyre in *Trachiniae* was designed purely to suggest the capricious perversity of Heracles, and the audience might be expected to understand more than Hyllus about the significance of Heracles' commands (at least to the extent of feeling that they had some significance). It is also very likely, as Lloyd-Jones\(^ {24}\) has pointed out, that lines 1211-14, in which Heracles gives permission for someone else to light the pyre, refer to the story that Poeas, or his son Philoctetes, was the person responsible (cf. *Phil.* 801-03). However, we simply do not know whether the story of the pyre was necessarily associated with the widespread and popular story of Heracles' apotheosis at the time when the play was written.

The apotheosis makes its appearance quite early in the literary sources, but in an interestingly suspicious way: it is absent from the *Iliad* (cf. *Il.* 18.117-19, quoted above), and in our text of *Odyssey* 11 it is mentioned rather incongruously in the middle of an account of the Underworld (602-04). According to the scholiast, the lines were believed to be an insertion by the sixth-century Orphic Onomacritus. At the end of the *Theogony* (950-55) there is a brief account of Hebe, the divine wife of Heracles on Olympus, but this occurs in a passage which according to the old scholia had been athetised (άθετος θύμησιν). Again, in the papyrus of fr.25 (Merkelbach and West), which gives an account of Deianira and the robe and the death of Her-
racles, there is a section on Heracles in heaven (20-33), which is marked in the margins with obeli. Evidently the story of the apotheosis was agreed not to be ancient; on the other hand it must have been thoroughly established by Sophocles' time, as we can tell from three passages in Pindar (N. 1.69-72; N. 10.17 f.; I. 4.73-78, lineation as in Snell and Maehler), and from large numbers of Attic vases which show Heracles setting off for Olympus or being welcomed when he gets there. These clearly presuppose apotheosis, but there is no sign of a pyre in their iconography, and Heracles travels on foot or by chariot.25)

No specific link is made between the pyre and the apotheosis in any of our evidence until about the middle of the fifth century, but there is no means of telling whether this is purely accidental. Either the two stories circulated independently for a long period and only merged at a quite late stage, or they had long ago been moulded into a single whole, so that allusion to the apotheosis naturally carried with it thoughts of the pyre, and vice versa.26) The first extant literary reference to apotheosis from the pyre is Heraclidae 910-16: ἐστὶν ἐν οὐρανῷ βεβαίως τὴς γόνος, ὦ γεραίας θεοῖς λόγον ὡς τὸν "ᾼτά δόμον κατέβα, πυρὸς / δεινῆ φλογῆ σώμα δαίσθεις"/ Ἡβας τ' ἐστάτων χρονεί / λέχος χυσέων κατ' αὐλάν. The play is undated, but most scholars believe that it belongs to the period 430-427 B.C.27) Sophocles himself mentions the story in Philoctetes (409 B.C.) at 727-29: ἵν' ὦ ἄρακας ἄνήρ θεοῖς / πάλαι πάσιν.28) Θείω πυρὶ παμφράγις / Οἴνας ὑπὲρ δχθων. Vases showing both the pyre and some indication of divine intervention (nymphs quenching the fire) appear about the middle of the century.29) The motif never becomes popular in art, but this could have been for artistic reasons rather than because the myth was little known.30)

In the present state of our evidence, therefore, we have to admit that we do not precisely know what the first audience at Trachiniae could be expected to take for granted when they heard the reference to Mt. Oeta, though we can be confident that it meant something to them; the problem is of course aggravated by our complete uncertainty about the date of the play. But in
The end the state of the myth at the time of the first production is less important than other considerations. We must not forget that a dramatist was (and is) always free to impose his own reading on a tradition and (an even more fundamental point) any myth and any play that is written about it are essentially different media. Heracles -- or Napoleon or Queen Victoria, for that matter -- has a 'real' mythological (or historical) existence independent of any work of art composed about him, whereas the Heracles of a play, and his deeds as presented in it, have a reality which exists only within the confines of the play's logic. So we can approach *Trachiniae* and (e.g.) *Hercules* on their own terms without having to try to reconcile them, and when we watch or read one dramatist's interpretation of a story we are not expected to keep the detail of other versions in mind unless specifically invited to do so, as in parody or burlesque, or in an allusive drama like Euripides' *Electra*. So it was quite open to Sophocles to leave out of his play whatever he chose of Heracles' story; but he might also, if he wished, select aspects of the myth as the subject of ironic allusion. I have argued that the reference to the pyre on Mt. Oeta is just such an ironic allusion outside the events narrated in the play, and that it relates to something familiar in fifth-century cult and belief, but this is not to suggest that the allusion compels the audience to imagine a sequel in which Heracles is taken up into heaven trailing clouds of glory: Sophocles leaves a gap (just as he does at the end of *Electra*), and the only clues he gives are to be found in the action of the rest of the play, particularly in the Exodos.

The emphasis of the play has been on suffering and death, in the spirit of the passage in *Iliad* 18 (and the authority of Homer was no doubt a kind of anchor for this reading). The Exodos has opened in despair, and the action presented in it has been harrowing -- the rage and pain of Heracles, the horror and bewilderment of Hyllus -- but it ends in an atmosphere of new authority. If I am right about Oeta and the pyre, there is a suggestion that some significance should be attached to the manner of Heracles' end, that it fits into a larger scheme of things in which Zeus' will is mysteriously fulfilled. Whether it leads to a good or a bad end is not made clear, and Heracles
himself shows no sign of understanding it. But his behaviour
as he goes to his death suggests that he has at last grasped
something -- the paradox, perhaps, that the most a human being
can achieve (even the greatest and best, the son of Zeus him-
self) is an acceptance of the great gulf between human and
divine knowledge. And this itself is arrived at only through
extremes of suffering.

It is no doubt true that the silence of the play about what
happened on Mt. Oeta left room for different responses on the
part of the original audience -- depending on the particular
flavour of their piety or their view of life -- just as it has
left modern critics in a state of perpetual disagreement.
But that does not matter, provided that the portrayal of the
pathos of Heracles -- and Deianira -- has been convincing.
The play's ending in mystery and irony could indeed be a way
of stressing the extreme inscrutability of the events that the
dramatist has been asking us to watch. This is very different
from arguing, as T.F. Hoey does in a recent paper, that when
Sophocles 'speaks to us of apotheosis, but as it were over the
heads of the actors' through the references to Mr. Oeta and
the pyre, the effect is 'to leave the question open, as though
the play had weighed both options and felt itself unable to
decide.'32] The important point is surely that a play imposes
its own logic and enjoys its own autonomy, however much the
dramatist may indulge in self-conscious ironies (e.g., remind-
ing the audience that it is watching a play, making links, by
such devices as aetiology, between the past in which the play
is set and the present in which it is performed, alluding to
other versions or treatments of the story, and so on): these
are all in fact gestures of confidence in the particular version
arrived at by this dramatist, and the play is never 'unable
to decide.'

At 1216 ff. Heracles makes his second, 'minor' request of
Hyllus: that he should marry Iole. Once more Hyllus is horrified
and once again his religious scruples are offended, this time
at the thought of associating with someone he regards as an
agent of the deaths of both his parents. Of course this scene
adds further to our sense of Heracles' passionate self-regard
-- all attempts to give his words an altruistic colouring have
been unconvincing -- but at the same time he speaks with the authority of history.\textsuperscript{33} Hyllus and Iole were the ancestors of the famous Heraclidae, who had an undoubted historical reality\textsuperscript{34} for the original audience, and Heracles' command therefore has the same kind of ironic link with the world outside the play as his reference to Oeta (but in this case we do not have the special complication of the apotheosis to cloud the issue). For Hyllus, who does not know the future of the great clan that he is to found, there is nothing but horror in his father's request. But for us there must be a more complex significance, even though our pity for him is not lessened by our knowledge of the future.

Finally, Hyllus' famous line τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλοντι οὐδὲνς ἔφορος (1270)\textsuperscript{35} has often been taken as an allusion to the apotheosis, despite the negative way in which it is formulated. Hoey is right to elucidate it as laying stress on the present suffering: the future cannot be known, but the tragedy of Heracles is not future, it is here before our eyes.\textsuperscript{36} I would simply add that at the very end of a play Sophocles often introduces a glancing reference outside the action, suggesting, as it were, that there is a future... but this would have to be the subject of a different play. So in Philoctetes there is the allusion to possible atrocities at the sack of Troy in Heracles' warning to observe εὐσέβεια (1440-44); in O.C. Antigone's appeal to Theseus to be allowed to return to Thebes and reconcile her quarrelling brothers (1769-72) opens up a perspective which belongs to Antigone; in Electra Aegisthus' enigmatic remark about the coming evils of the Pelopidae (τὰ τ᾽ ὃντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακᾶ, 1498) suggests directions that the play could have chosen to take. The closing scene is a particularly appropriate place for this kind of device which draws attention to the play as a play; Euripides' use of the deus is in some respects analogous.

III. 1275-1278

λείπου μηδὲ σὺ, παρθέν', ἀπ' οἷς, μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοὺς νέους θανάτους, πολλὰ δὲ πήματα (καὶ) καινοπαθῆ· κοῦδὲν τούτων ὃ τι μὴ ζεῦς.
1. Who is the speaker? Clearly there was uncertainty in antiquity over the attribution of these lines: most of the MSS give them to 'either Chorus or Hyllus.' Many editors have preferred to assign them to the Chorus, because Choruses usually do end plays (there are no examples in extant Sophocles and Euripides where they do not, but that may not be significant, and in any case some endings are probably spurious), or because a need has been felt for some sort of corrective to Hyllus' denunciation of the gods, or (more respectably, perhaps) because these lines have a 'chorus-sound.' In fact the interpretation of the play remains much the same either way. If the Chorus speak these words they offer a comment which is perfectly neutral in itself, on the lines of Ζεύς τά τε καὶ τά νέμει, / Ζεύς δ' πάντων κύριος in Pindar (I. 5.52 f.) or ίώ ήη, διαι Δίως / παναιτίου πανεργέτας / τί γάρ βρωτοῖς άνευ Δίως τελείται; in Aeschylus (Ag. 1485-87); this is not presented as a contradiction of Hyllus' blasphemy, though it is bound to have the effect of modifying the final tone. If Hyllus is the speaker then the denunciation of Zeus continues to the end, but for the audience it is qualified by the element of irony in the preceding scenes: they know more than Hyllus, because they have seen the full causation of the events and have been reminded of the future of the Heraclidae. My own preference is for the Chorus, but I do not think the case can be proved.

2. Who is the παρόδευς? There are three possible candidates: Iole, the Chorus, and the girls of the household who were mentioned at 202 (φωνήσατ', ὧ γυναῖκες, κτλ.). Tournier, quoting Dübner, suggested that Iole was most likely, because Sophocles wanted the daughter of Eurytus to be present at the expiation of the murder of her father and brothers; but this is not a view that has found much favour. Even so, there has been some support for the idea that Iole is intended; then the singular παρόδευς presents no problem, and it has been argued that her reappearance at the end would emphasize all the horror she has unwittingly caused. The most extravagant suggestion on these lines has been made by K.P. Slater, who would have the play end with the palace doors opening for the presentation of an ekkuklema, with Deianira on her bed and Iole standing contemplating it. But there are several major objections to the re-
appearance of Iole. The immediately preceding scene is plainly played without her (1219 f.: 'Do you know Eurytus' daughter?' 'You mean Iole, I think'...). As Hourmouziades points out, it would be very odd for her to make a silent entrance while Heracles and Hyllus are talking, and moreover Sophocles is quite in the habit of allowing characters to disappear from the action: one might compare Ismene in Antigone and Chrysothemis in Electra. In any case, many critics have felt that Iole is simply not wanted at the end of the play (Winnington-Ingram calls it 'virtually unthinkable'), and this aesthetic feeling is supported by the argument that she is not the right person to be described as the witness of what has been happening: μεγάλους μὲν ἵδοὺς νέους σαντάους, / πολλά δὲ πήματα <καὶ> καινοναδῆ. She was not mentioned in the Nurse's account of Deianira's death, and she has not been on stage earlier in the Exodos to see the suffering of Heracles. The Chorus are par excellence the witnesses, and they are therefore dramatically much more important here.

If we dismiss Iole we are left with only the Chorus as a serious candidate. The 'women of the house' are altogether too shadowy to be considered (despite Campbell's advocacy). There is nothing wrong with the Chorus at all apart from the oddity of the singular self-address παρόθενε. (The second person plural is of course common: cf. ὦ παῖδες at 821). The problem is discussed by M. Vuorenjuuri in the context of such parallels as there are, but she points out that it is bedevilled by our ignorance of the distribution of parts within lyrics, so that passages which look parallel may in fact be addressed to a single chorus member, e.g. Ion 193 φίλα, πρόσωπ' δοσοίς. But even if this is an exceptional instance it is not out of the question, since plural choruses often use the first person singular of themselves. At least the dramatic considerations are strongly in favour of taking παρόθενε as the Chorus here and these lead us to the next question.

3. What is the addressee being told to do? Attempts have been made (by Mazon and Kamerbeek) to take λείπου... ἀπ' οἴκων as 'stay away from your homes,' but Dawe has rightly dismissed this interpretation of λείπου... ἀπό: the two relevant Homeric examples (Il. 9.437 and 444) carry the overtone 'be
left alone, away from,' which is not what is wanted here. In any case, we are surely not interested in the Chorus' homes: ὀίκων must refer to the house that has been so important all the way through the play. With the ancient variant ἐπ' the sense becomes much clearer: 'do not you be left behind in the house, either.' The Chorus are to leave the orchestra, in the processional movement sometimes implied at the end of a play, cf. Aj. 1413 f. ἀλλ' ἀγε πᾶς... σοῦσθω, βάτω; Phil. 1469 χω- ρῶμεν ἔτι (or νυν) πάντες ἀναλεῖς; and in Euripides, Tro. 1329-32; Her. 1427; Suppl. 1232; Hea. 1293. Where should the Chorus be going? Home, or up to Oeta with the rest of the people of Trachis? This is surely where they belong, in the procession of witnesses. Dawe proposes ἐτ' οἴκων (already suggested by Vauvilliers, according to Tournier): 'do not you, either, my dear, refrain from tears any longer.' But this is hardly the right thing for the Chorus to be telling itself, as it were introducing a threnos that is to take place after the close of the play, when Heracles has given firm instructions to Hyllus that he must do everything ἀστένακτος καθάρωτος (1200) there is a sense of ritual prescription here which makes Heracles' words seems to extend to everyone present on this solemn occasion. Dawe's reason for reading ἐτ' οἴκων is that with ἐπ' οἴκων there is no link between ἴδονα and the imperative: 'don't you be left behind either at the house, having seen a terrible death recently.' But if the Chorus are telling themselves to join the funeral procession it is more 'acceptable and natural' than Dawe allows. 'You have witnessed the pathos, now join the procession to its final phase.' Dawe also favours Subkoff's μελέους, but μεγάλους must be kept: 1276 μεγάλους μὲν ἴδονα νέους δανάτους (the death of Deianira) is precisely matched by 1277 πολλά δὲ πήματα <καὶ> καινοπαθῆ (what has been happening to Heracles): μεγάλους is balanced by πολλά and νέους by καινοπαθῆ.45

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NOTES

4) _The stagecraft of Aeschylus_, 1977, 124.
5) _Stagecraft_, 84.
6) Cf. C.P. Segal, 'The Hydra's nursling,' _A.C._ 44 (1975) 615: 'Heracles and Deianira meet, in fact, only through the poisoned robe.'
7) I deliberately avoid the term 'diptych,' which in my view has done more harm than good in Sophoclean criticism.
11) Hippolytus is another play in which writing is an important motif.
14) An extravagant version of this view is put forward by A.M. Etman, _Τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς ἀποθεώσεως τοῦ Ἰππολύτου_, Diss. Athens, 1974.
15) E.g., C.M. Bowra, _Sophoclean Tragedy_, 1944, 144; D. Wender, 'The will of the beast,' _Ramus_ 3 (1974) 2-4.
16) _Sophokles_, 45 f. (= 37 f. in the English translation).
19) _Y.C.S._ 25 (1977) 100. 20) _Ib._, 106. 21) _Ib._, 157.
24) H. Lloyd-Jones, _The justice of Zeus_, 1971, 128 and n.150.


28) πανίνι is Triclinius' makeshift emendation of the corrupt πανίνι, but the reference to apotheosis is unambiguous despite uncertainty over this word.


30) Miss L.M. Burn, to whom I am indebted for advice on the artistic evidence, suggests that the pyre may not have been a subject which would appeal to most fifth-century vase painters: pyres are not easy to show successfully on vases, and in any case many painters avoid introducing details of furniture, landscape or 'props'.

31) This is not of course a novel view; cf., e.g., A.J.A. Waldock, *Sophocles the dramatist*, 1951, 88-90; G.M. Kirkwood, *A study of Sophoclean drama*, 1958, 278.


33) Segal, *Y.C.S.* 25 (1977) 151-55, has a good discussion of this scene.


35) There is no need to change ἐφορᾶ, despite ἐφορῶσι at 1269. For close repetition with a slight shift in sense cf. 965-67 (βάσις).


40) 'Some suggestions for staging the *Trachiniae*,* Arion n.s. 3 (1976) 65.

41) N.C. Hourmouziades, 'Μορφής σιωπής καὶ προβλήματα λόγου,' *Hellenika* 21 (1968) 281.

42) *Sophocles*, 74, n.4.

43) 'Vocative singular addressing the chorus in Greek drama,' *Aretos* n.s. 6 (1969-1970) 147-60.


45) An earlier version of this paper was read to the Oxford Philological Society in June 1979; I am grateful for their comments and criticisms, and in particular to Mr. T.C.W. Stinton, who continued the debate by correspondence.