

The Reception of Epic *kleos* in Greek Tragedy

Dissertation

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Abstract

In this dissertation I examine how Greek tragedy received the epic concept of *kleos*. Although *kleos* in epic and epinician poetry has a specific social and ideological function, its usage in Attic drama exhibits its incompatibility with the pragmatic environment of a *polis* and reflects the difficulties such a value provokes when measured in circumstances similar to those of fifth century Athens, namely within a democracy where no one is allowed to enjoy a rarefied status and where familial and city law is part of the audience's quotidian court experience. Although the word *kleos* is encountered in the plays of all three great tragedians, I argue that we can observe a different approach between the usages of Aeschylus and Sophocles on the one hand and Euripides on the other. The concept of *kleos* occurs many more times in Euripides' tragic corpus and in the majority it is claimed by female characters. However, since in epic and epinician poetry *kleos* is normally connected with men, namely bravery, warrior prowess, physical abilities and admirable achievements either on the battlefield or at athletic Games, I chose to base my argument on male tragic characters. My first study case is Orestes, who is presented in the *Odyssey* as an *exemplum* of *kleos* and who is connected with a *kleos* discourse in the relevant plays of all three tragedians. The other two characters that I take as my study cases are Ajax and Heracles in the homonymous plays of Sophocles and Euripides, because both of them are extraordinary heroes of the past whose exploits and manliness became exemplary in the literary tradition.

After a close examination of the connection of Orestes with *kleos* in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes* I argue that although Orestes was inherited by the Homeric tradition as a highly positive example and although within the tragic plays it is apparent that his city's community and his sister Electra expect him to take revenge for his father's murder and ensure a similar level of *kleos* as that of Agamemnon, he never reaches any *kleos*; on the contrary he becomes notorious because of committing the matricide. Aeschylus and Sophocles present Orestes' programmatic statements before his deed as interwoven and defined by *kleos*. In the *Choephoroi* his approach to *kleos* is almost political and relates his role as the son of the former royal authority with the Argive *kleos* of Troy. Aeschylus annihilates any glorious reputation that Orestes could have won through his victorious revenge by showing his madness as the immediate consequence of his deed. Sophocles in his *Electra* also proves Orestes' *kleos* as futile by reversing in his narrative the standard prerequisites of epic *kleos*: *Kleos* is connected with Orestes' personal advantage, with Electra's imaginary claim on *andreia*, with the fake *aggelia*, with Electra's constant lament. Euripides advances the approach of his predecessors; he dis-connects Orestes' revenge from *kleos* and presents *kleos* merely as a literary remnant open to new possibilities and conditions of usage. It is a poetic device that allows new innovative developments in the mythical plots. This conclusion is also applied in the case of *Heracles*; although Ajax finds it impossible to compromise his view of himself according to his former *epic kleos* with the new circumstances that his madness created, Heracles is characterized by Euripides in the homonymous play in such a way that his former extraordinary *kleos* finds its way into the democratic Athens.

Dedication

In memory of my father Theodoros and for my mother Eleni

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Language has a unique quality to be reborn and renewed in a highly conservative process; by conservative I do not mean that it remains unchanged but that it strives to resist the change that the network of external forces (artistic, political, cultural, technological, philosophical) imposes. At the end it follows its fate but it acquires at the same time a new depth. The world of words is always connected with the historical and social milieu, the civic discourse but, nevertheless, extends its life a bit longer since, on the one hand, it depends on the historical and social changes but, on the other, it tries to keep the world in the order in which it has been expressed in the past time. The clash between the latter effort and the needs of the new conditions and morals begets linguistic coinages but more often re-evaluates existing systems of diction in the field of semantics.

Kleos and specifically poetic *kleos* participates in this process of constant re-evaluation not only due to the different sociopolitical frames of the Greek world in the passage of time, namely the differences between the archaic and the classical era, but also due to the different genre demands. Many pages have been written on the ancient Greek concept of *kleos* and its connection to poetry. The present dissertation aspires to explore the reception of the concept in the Attic tragedy. Although the *ethos* of democratic Athens denies that anyone can or should have a rarefied status, the characters of Attic tragedy often recall the ideal of acquiring or preserving a specific *kleos* status within their community. This is due partly to their epic and heroic inheritance and partly to the Athenian effort to incorporate past ideals into its

democratic ideology. What I argue, however, is that *kleos*, although present in genres that were cultivated in fifth century Athens such as tragedy, comedy, history and funeral speeches, neither becomes a civic value as scholarship often takes for granted¹ nor does it retain its aristocratic importance and prestige. Aristocracy is not a valid political system in Athens; fighting in a phalanx and sharing a funeral speech along with other fallen citizens does not allow space for personal glory and excellence, namely *kleos*. Athenian democracy subdues excessive wealth and gifted personalities through the institutions of *choregia* and the norms of public rhetoric. *Philotimia* and not personal *timê* is important for the *polis*. Alcibiades' portrait in Thucydides' narrative indicates the Athenian mistrust against individual pre-eminence (6.15). However, the recitation and teaching of Homeric epic poetry, where *kleos* has a prominent position, forms an important part of Athens' cultural life.² What is then the position of the value of *kleos* in the Athenian society? In my opinion, *kleos* is actually connected directly with the poetic world and it is obvious in Attic tragedy that the three great tragedians tackled the concept in a cautious way that sought the compromise between epic and democratic values. Therefore, my approach is primarily literary because I believe that because of the dis-continuity between what *kleos* poetics represent and the Athenian cultural frame propagates the usage of the concept is gradually reduced to allude to a heroic epic past that is incompatible within the pragmatic environment. In the present introduction I examine the usage of the word in the 'canonical *kleos* genres', epic and epinician, and then I turn to characteristic occurrences in "Athenian representative" texts, such as tragedy,

¹ Zeitlin (1995), 189.

² The relationship between *epinicion*, the genre where an athlete's *kleos* is poetry's goal, and Athenian democracy is a matter of controversy. Generally the life-style and the values it celebrates are at odds with democratic *ethos*. Swift (2010) argues, however, that we should be cautious of claiming that *epinicion* was problematic for the democracy and its disappearance from democratic Athens was due more to a change of taste and fashion than to the politicized nature of victory (esp.108-109).

comedy, Thucydides and Plato. I omit to examine *kleos* in other lyric genres outside *epinicion* for the sake of conciseness and I also omit to refer to inscriptions because the term is not prominent in the inscriptions of the classical era.

The modern theoretical discussion of the term begins with Nagy's work on the *Iliad*; Nagy supports that "Poetry confers glory. The conceit of Homeric poetry is that even a Trojan warrior will fight and die in pursuit of *κλέος*...*Ἀχαιῶν* "the *kleos* of the Achaeans" (XI 227). If you perform heroic deeds, you have a chance of getting into Achaean epic. The Achaean singer of tales is in control of the glory that may be yours."³ Scholars have rightly objected to an equation of *kleos* and poetry in the epic tradition. *Kleos* is "what is heard"; it may be a report, a reputation or a rumor that circulates among people in respect to a person. As Ford points out this etymological sense of *kleos* is quite active in epic. The "fames of men" (*Il.*9.524-25) as a source from which Phoenix draws the Meleager story he tells Achilles is not necessarily an epic poem; "*klea* only implies that the stories of heroes have descended through time in an oral tradition: what bards sing is indeed *kleos*, but fame or tradition may also be handed down in other ways."⁴ In Homeric language the word carries either the neutral meaning of "that which is heard" or the marked meaning of "fame, reputation, glory".⁵ Olson observes that what binds the Achaeans together is an "elaborate network of gossip, rumor and reputation". Within the Homeric poems *kleos* does not equate poetic glory but simply means "oral report" about an event, an object or an individual. Many are the candidates to transmit these "oral reports". First, the slaves

³ Nagy (1979), 16-17.

⁴ Ford (1992), 60. Ford explains that there are many people apart from the poets who know about the past: Nestor, who lived through three generations, shares his experience with younger men; Echenous in the *Odyssey* knew many ancient things (*Od.* 7.156-57). We may add that Pindar also hints at non-poetic sources in his "correction" of the Pelops story at *Ol.* 1. 28a-36.

⁵ Pucci (1998), 37. Pucci explains that the etymology of *kleos* connects the voice to *kluô* (to hear), to the Latin *inclutus*, to the Sanskrit *śravas* (glory) and to the Slavic *slovo* (word).

who are a constant presence in the Homeric households and with whom free women in particular are willing to discuss their personal affairs. Travelers and guest friends (*ξείνοι*) are another fundamental source for an individual's reputation. Telemachus himself traveled to find out the rumours that circulate about whether his father is dead or alive and this trip was also a good source of *kleos* for himself (xiii.422-23). Guests export *kleos* away from the boundaries of the local society and transfer it to different societies during their trip. The marketplace (*ἀγορή*) is another place where men are gathered to talk among themselves and to be seen. "The culmination of this process of local gossip growing gradually into widespread, even universally known rumor and reputation is song."⁶ Repetition lies at the center of the reproduction of a story; "as the poet repeats "hearsay" (*kleos*), this hearsay becomes, by repetition, fame (*kleos*)."⁷ Therefore, *kleos* is a product of poetry but poetry is not the only medium for conferring *kleos* in the meaning of fame/reputation. It is, however, the most sophisticated and the most powerful since its validity according to the epic singers is guaranteed by the Muses (*Il.* 484-87).⁸ The initial validity of a report among ordinary people, however, is gained through autopsy as Odysseus the beggar claims before Penelope (*Od.*19.270-72).

Within the Homeric poems, *kleos* is in a way objectified; together with its abstract meaning of fame or report it is also viewed as a semi-concrete object.⁹ When

⁶ Olson (1995), 2-14, with abundant textual references to the Homeric poems.

⁷ Pucci (1980), 163.

⁸ Pucci (1998) in his Derridean analysis of the famous invocation of the poet to the Muses in the second book of the *Iliad* distinguishes between two modes of *kleos*, the one that belongs to the human realm, the many stories the poet hears as rumors which he cannot trust because of his ignorance, and *kleos* as the voice of the Muses who have a clear and trustworthy memory of what has happened, happens and will happen in the world, because their memory (*mnême*) depends on sure knowledge (*ἵσταναι*). The poet according to Pucci by his invocation to the Muses and the conspicuous connotation of *kleos* in it wages "to block the dangerous ambivalence of repetition" similarly as Plato warned people against the function of *mimesis*. (esp. 42, 47-48).

⁹ Olson (1995), n.25.

a hero expresses his desire to acquire *kleos* he is sometimes speaking as if referring to a specific good. Telemachus speaks with Nestor about Agamemnon's fame that Orestes restored in such words: *καὶ οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ οἴσουσι κλέος εὐρὺ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι ἀοιδήν* (Od.3.203-04) as if *κλέος* is something that can be carried. Later in the same book Nestor begs Athena to give him good *κλέος* (*δίδωθι δέ μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν*, 380). When Odysseus is desperate as he leaves Calypso's island and at Poseidon's new attack he wishes he had died at Troy and the Achaeans would carry his fame (*καὶ μὲν κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί*, 5.311). Although the verb that is normally associated with *kleos* is the verb *ἄρνυμαι/ἄρέσθαι* (inf.) in the *Odyssey* the rumor of Zeus *φέρει* (brings) *kleos* among mortals (1.283, 2.217), whereas Orestes *ἔλλαβε* (acquired) *κλέος* by murdering Aegisthus (1.298). Interestingly the usage of verbs that treat *kleos* as a kind of concrete object is found only in the *Odyssey*, probably because of its "remarkable self-consciousness about the social function of heroic poetry".¹⁰

The association of *kleos* with a set of moral ideals that characterize the Homeric and generally the archaic aristocratic society such as honor, manliness, warrior prowess, rhetorical eloquence, wealth as symbol of prestige, athletic capability etc. has loaded the term itself with moral connotations and turned it in a way into a moral value to the degree that it encompasses all the heroic ideals of the

¹⁰ Segal (1996), 201. It is not that the *Iliad* does not have self-referential poetic moments; Achilles himself sings about the *klea andron* at Il. 9.189. The *Iliad* is itself a song about the heroic deeds of men who won immortal glory. As such, though, it treats *kleos* more as an abstract ideal rather than as a semi-concrete reachable object. The heroes within it are in the process of winning *kleos*; for them glory is the ideal they have to obtain. The *Odyssey* is about a hero who has already won his *kleos* which he tries to magnify by his *nostos*. And since the prime field where *klea andron* had been won, the Trojan War and the encounter with the supernatural beings over Odysseus' voyage belong to the past it is more natural for the poet of the *Odyssey* to present the contexts of the bardic tradition. The song of Phemius in book 1, the songs of Demodocus in book 8, and the *apologoi* recited by Odysseus himself show the bardic tradition operating before our eyes and in our ears. We see before our eyes and our ears how *kleos* is transferred, sung and carried.

aristocratic ideology. When a hero's morality is characterized as worthy of *kleos* it means that he personifies the demands of a culture we would rather inadequately call "shame culture". *Kleos* according to Goldhill is "a measure, an identity, formed by *competitive* action in a *hierarchical* society".¹¹ Or to turn the reverse side of the coin, the ethical perspective of the concept of *kleos* is manifest in its ability to motivate the actions and decisions of a hero. Hector in his monologue to himself admits that he exits to fight Achilles because he would feel shame before the Trojan men and women who might accuse him that he destroyed the people out of his boldness; his only alternative is either to kill Achilles or to die gloriously (22.105-10). Achilles can have either *kleos* through death or *nostos* without *kleos*; his heroic worldview dictates the first. Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus (*Il.* 12.310-28) is indicative of the aristocratic ethics in respect to fame and glorious reputation: while fighting like a lion he interrupts and analyses his motivations for fighting in the foremost ranks and risking his life. The reason the Lykians honor them with wealth and with a special domain by the bank of Xanthus and the reason they look upon them as if they were gods (*θεούς ὥς*) is because they expect them to fight in the forefront of battle and to prove themselves glorious (*οὐ...ἀκλέεες*), they expect them to show off their excellent might (*ἵς ἐσθλή*). If they could live forever ageless and immortal, Sarpedon would be willing to avoid fighting in the front, but mortality demands that they take care of their fame, either to give boast (*εὐχος*) to others or others to them (328). Sarpedon's speech elaborates on the imperatives of *kleos*: the opinion people have about an individual is highly important and if this individual is specially honored, as in the case of a king, he should live and die according to the expectations the others have of him in order to

¹¹ Goldhill (1991), 70, his italics.

deserve his reputation. “Sarpedon considers it a duty to prove that he is as good a king as his *kleos* says he is because he is afraid of the criticism or of the mockery that the discrepancy between his portrait and his deeds would allow the Lycians to level at him.”¹² Martial prowess and might, royal or aristocratic descent and wealth entail that an individual should prove that he deserves his reputation and considers *kleos* the measure by which he judges his life. The only way for a mortal to gain immortality is in the words of others, and thus *kleos* confers to a hero a divine trait.¹³

Kleos, however, as the basic principle according to which Homeric heroes act is explored and presented within the epic tradition in contradictory terms. The best of the Achaeans, Achilles, and the best of the Trojans, Hector, both act and think according to the demands of *kleos* but whereas Hector fights to preserve the social life of Troy to which he is tied and in light of which he feels shame Achilles fights alone and for his personal glory without any social obligations or connections.¹⁴ Achilles’ most “glorious” instance in the epic, his fight against all the Trojans and his victory over Hector, the best enemy warrior, is the most savage and bestial battle, especially the treatment of Hector’s body. “Achilles’ commitment to his personal honour, his pursuit of his *kleos*, leads to the ignoring, even transgression, of values and duties highly important to the norms of human social exchange, particularly *philotês*, with its sense of *aidôs* and mutual affiliation and obligation.”¹⁵ Therefore, the superior epic paradigm of *kleos* ethics is problematic in its social perspective. The *kleos* poetics of the *Odyssey* is much different from the Iliadic. Whereas the Iliadic hero relies on his personal achievements for his success or failure in the field of glorious fame, “in the

¹² Pucci (1998), 58.

¹³ Goldhill (1991), 77-80 with n.32 for additional bibliography.

¹⁴ Redfield (1975), 28, Goldhill (1991), 75-76.

¹⁵ Goldhill (1991), 85.

narrative of *nostos*, Odysseus and Penelope require each other's achievements".¹⁶ Agamemnon's encounter with Odysseus in the Underworld ties the trickster hero's fame and reputation to his wife's behavior, whereas the wife of Hector in the *Iliad* tried to keep him back from the battle and cancel his *kleos* perspective; Achilles, moreover, did not need any wife to have a glorious reputation. Segal in his article "kleos and its Ironies in the Odyssey" explains the differences between Odysseus' *kleos* in the *Odyssey* and the Iliadic parallels. Odysseus is not creating his *kleos* by fighting but rather recreating it by the "Ich-Erzählung" in his long, bardic narrative. The hero himself boasts that his *kleos* does not derive from heroic deeds in the forefront battle but from his ruses (Od.9, 19-20). The Iliadic warrior at once announces his name to his antagonist: Odysseus wins his major triumphs circumspectly (and often unheroically) hiding his name.¹⁷

Therefore, in the epic genre *kleos* reflects three sets of meanings: it relates to the oral reports and hearsay that circulate within a society, local or wider, about an individual; it constitutes a moral measure to the degree that it imposes to specific individuals a certain way of acting and deciding; it is equated with the medium of poetry and especially epic poetry in its function of narrating and preserving the glorious fame of the heroes' of the past in the future. The poetic connotations of *kleos* encompass a contradictory structure of both positive terms (compensation, immortality and truth) and negative ones (mere repetition, with its passivity and valuelessness, frailty of the human being, voice, purposes and mere rumor), reflected on the famous invocation of the poet to the Muses in the second book of the *Iliad*.¹⁸ The epic tradition explores and presents different models and practices of achieving

¹⁶ Goldhill (1991), 97.

¹⁷ Segal (1996), 204-209.

¹⁸ Pucci (1998), 229.

kleos dependent to a high degree on the personalities, genealogies and particularities of the mythical tradition that surrounds each heroic character. The poetics of *kleos*, however, are central in the epic narrative and despite its ironies or contradictions *kleos* is the ultimate goal in the society Homer depicts.

Epinician poets are the first to draw an explicit connection between poetry and fame; the epinician poet connects the athletes of the present with the heroes of the past with the usage of mythological exempla and thus draws a direct connection between accomplishment and reputation of his *laudandi* and the heroic reputation of the past generations. Song is the necessary condition for posterity to learn about an individual's reputation:

καὶ ὅταν καλὰ [μὲν] ἔρξαις ἀοιδᾶς ἄτερ,
 Ἀγησίδαμ', εἰς Αἴδα σταθμόν
 ἀνὴρ ἵκηται, κενεὰ πνεύσαις ἔπορε μόχθῳ
 βραχύ τι τερπνόν. τιν δ' ἀδυεπὴς τε λύρα
 γλυκύς τ' αὐλὸς ἀναπάσσει χάριν·
 τρέφοντι δ' εὐρὺ κλέος
 κόραι Πιερίδες Διός (Ol. X 91-96).¹⁹

And, Hagesidamus, when a man with fine achievements but no songs reaches the house of Hades, he has spent his strength and his breath in vain and gained only a short-lived delight with his effort. But on you the soft-singing lyre and the sweet flute scatter grace and the Pierian daughters of Zeus nurture your wide fame.²⁰

Βραχύ τι τερπνόν contrasts with *εὐρὺ κλέος*; the short lived delight that individuals feel because of the acknowledgment they enjoy among their contemporaries is vain unless it is turned into wide *kleos* through the power of poetry. The praise discourse creates a close affiliation in a type of necessary *philia* between the athlete, the poet and the city to which the athlete belongs. Goldhill explains that Pindar offers himself as a paradigmatic figure in his poetry and “as the poem records

¹⁹ cf. Pythian 3.110-115.

²⁰ Translation by Svarlien (1990).

the *kleos* of the victory, the proper performance of that praise (in its widest social, as well as poetic, context) also promises the *kleos* of the poet”.²¹ The greatest *kleos* the poet has, the most successful his poetry is, the most famous the praised athlete and his family become. The athlete who has superior *kleos* is the one that has an inborn talent rather than the one who wins *kleos* through training (*Ol.*9. 100-103). The athlete creates his contemporary *kleos* (κλέος ἔπραξεν, *Isthm.* 5. 8, also *Ol.* 8.10) and the poet’s part is to sing and immortalize that *kleos* (*Pyth.* 5.73, *Nem.* 7.63). Kyriakou is correct to observe that still, κλέος of achievements is nowhere openly said to be or to have been conferred by poetry.²² The athlete creates his own reputation which poetry immortalizes. The poetry as the only medium for the immortalization of *kleos* is what differentiates the epic from the epinician *kleos* poetics.

What we should highlight, however, is that never in the epic nor in the epinician genre does *kleos* become a merely poetic or aesthetic value because of the occasionality and social function of these genres. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the heroes presented still live in the world of heroes and the *klea andron* they sing are the glories of their ancestors.²³ The heroes watch live bardic performances which enact their glories and the songs that circulate in the known world have an active impact on the prestige and portrait of the contemporary *basileis* and aristocrats. Phemius is singing about the *nostoi* of the warriors of Troy while Odysseus is still trying to fulfill his *nostos* (*Od.* 1.325). Demodocus is singing about the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles in front of the present Odysseus, although not yet identified (*Od.* 8.75). Odysseus’ *kleos* functions as an active contributor to his home return since his fame is

²¹ Goldhill (1991), 143.

²² Kyriakou comments on *kleos* in N.7.61-63 contrary to Gutzwiller and Nagy that Pindar’s praise will diffuse and immortalize the laudandus’ *kleos* but his *kleos* exists because fate favored the *laudandus* (N.78-60) Kyriakou (2004), n.10.

²³ Nagy ((1990), 200.

so high among the Phaeacians that they revere and help him as much as possible. Similarly, the *kleos* that an athlete wins from an epinician song promotes his image, social acceptance and political prestige. Kurke in her seminal book on the Pindaric Poetics of Social Economy explains that the victor's ultimate goal in winning *kleos* is to bring it home, to set it in the house as a renewal of past achievements and an inspiration to future glories. The victor's *kleos* won at the Panhellenic games is part of the house's symbolic capital. Moreover, the poet reintegrates the victor into his aristocratic group and civic community through different strategies, one of which is by assimilating the new aristocratic ethos of monetary economy to the old which was opposed to money.²⁴ *Kleos* as part of the ideology of the old aristocratic *ethos* acquires a functional role in the poetry of praise and through the commission of a poet it can be claimed by any victor who can use his wealth to become a conspicuous member of the community to the eternal.

The theme of this dissertation is in a way controversial in itself. The canonical genres connected with the acquisition of *kleos* are epic and epinician poetry. Drama is not at all "poetry that confers glory" let alone a poetic form that has *kleos* as a prominent theme. Athenian Drama was a platform for the ethical debates of *polis* life and a field where the ideological and cultural tensions were compromised through their exposition. It was a training ground to learn how to be a good democratic citizen and not to set oneself up too highly.²⁵ However, several heroes and heroines are obsessed with their *kleos*; they project *kleos* as the motivating power of their decisions and actions, they die or are willing to die in order to secure a future glorious

²⁴ Kurke (1991), esp. 60, 252, 256.

²⁵ Characteristic in this respect is the reaction of the chorus to excessive or ambitious behaviors. They always wish for themselves to be *sophron* and not to engage in unordinary situations (e.g. *Prometheus Bound* 887-907, Aesch. Ag. 471-74, Eur. Med. 627-53, Eur. Andr. 464-85, IA 543-57, 784-90). If the chorus allows the spectators a way into the play, their moderate stance teaches in a way the audience how to react against extreme situations and personalities.

reputation. Before I elaborate on the specific examples I would like to discuss the different perspectives under which tragedy encompasses *kleos* because of its generic particularities. The mythological characters of tragedy are not at all part of the audience as is Odysseus present in the recitation of the songs about him, or as is the victor the immediate audience of the epinician poet's praise. In addition, the mythological characters are not at all immediate ancestors of anyone in the audience. A tragic hero's claim upon *kleos* does not have any tangible social function in Athens such as connecting to a royal or aristocratic family's past or "consecrating" a hero within the broader community of the historical *polis*. Neither does tragic poetry represent any context or occasion where a praise discourse is operative; there is not any drama whose central plot is about how a hero wins *kleos* and glorious fame in his community. There is a drama about how a hero loses his *kleos*, the *Ajax*. The tragic plots are normally connected to internecine crimes within a family, either conscious or unconscious, a thematic field that entails notoriety and not *kleos*. According to Nagy "the factor of personal involvement or noninvolvement decides whether an epic situation calls for *penthos* or *kleos*";²⁶ namely what the audience hears as a narrative of *kleos* describes the *penthos* for those involved in the actions it describes. Hector's glorious death won him *kleos* among the future generations but for Priam, Hecuba and Andromache it entails *penthos*. Cebrian suggests that tragedy occupies the space in between both experiences. He actually says that "because [tragedy] does not have narrative frame, it does not become *kleos*. Yet on the other hand, the *penthos* of a character is presented in such a way that the spectator is involved and is able to purify his passions and turn the character's sorrow into glory".²⁷ However, tragedy does

²⁶ Nagy (1979), 98.

²⁷ Cebrian (2006), 79.

have a narrative frame; it is set in the prologue of each drama. What it does not have is a third person narrator to present himself as the narrator of the deeds and fames, the *klea*, of the tragic heroes. Indeed, the majority of tragic heroes experience a situation that involves a deep *penthos*; this situation, for most cases drawn from the myth, forms their identity and reputation among the spectators. Cebrian then suggests that “the *kleos* does not occur at the level of the characters or narration in the third person but on the level of the spectators.”²⁸ This view, however, tackles the concept of *kleos* not as part of the drama’s world and diction, but as part of the scholarly discourse on genres. Indeed, the tragic heroes seem to have enjoyed a special reputation among the Athenians. When the audience forced Euripides to re-write *Hippolytus* and present Phaedra as more ethically acceptable it shows not just that they expected a certain morality to be respected on the tragic stage but also that Phaedra’s character in their mythical consciousness had a certain reputation which the tragic poet had to respect.²⁹ Still, trying to guess how the spectators identified themselves with the characters and purified themselves of their passions with the result of winning glory is a far-fetched assumption; the audience was a motley crowd, with disparate education, knowledge and experiences. We cannot assume that they would all react in the same way to a play or that each one experienced the Aristotelian *catharsis*. Moreover, speaking about the spectator’s glory or *kleos* is totally different from speaking about the tragic character’s *kleos* or about how the tragic character views his *kleos* and ultimately how

²⁸ Cebrian (2006), 79.

²⁹ Revermann (2006) in his pervasive article on the theatrical competence of the fifth and fourth century audience proves that there was a considerable degree of theatrical competence, shared by a significant portion of the audience members at any competition. Although spectators may have differed in terms of their education and social background, a substantial portion of them would be united through the theatrical experience of having performed in the theater of Dionysus themselves. Moreover, their expertise was also gained by their significant exposure to theatrical performances. The phenomena of “realism” and “New Music” that have been observed at the final quarter of the fifth-century as well as many passages from the Aristophanic comedy, especially in the *parabases*, are witnesses to this point. (esp. 112-115).

the tragic poet reacts to the long tradition of *kleos* poetics. The present dissertation will focus on the occurrences of the concept of *kleos* and related ideas within specific dramas and draw conclusions based on tragic passages and not impose theoretical connotations based on scholarly criticism related to the word.

Thucydides is a helpful author for the contextualization of the term of *kleos* in the fifth century. It is a historical work that narrates the events of the greatest war the ancient world had seen according to the proem of the *Histories*. A term such as *kleos*, with its loaded literary history within the discourse of praise and heroic deeds, could have been rather useful to the historian to extol the achievements of the Athenians or to relate to the glory of the city of Athens. However, the word *kleos* occurs only three times in the *Histories* and not within the narration of the actual events of the Peloponnesian War or by the voice of the historian in direct reference to the achievements of the warriors of this war. The first occurrence is within the Archaeology of the first book and refers to the fame that Sparta had back at the age of the Trojan War (i.10.2). Namely, the present insignificance of the buildings and remains of physical monuments is not telling against the great power of Agamemnon about which the poets sang and the fame prevailed (*οἳ τε ποιηταὶ εἰρήκασι καὶ ὁ λόγος κατέχει*.) Seeing the city of Sparta now being desolate posterity should not be skeptical about their old fame (*κλέος*) that the poets had reported. Therefore, the word *kleos* specifically refers to the fame inherited through the poets and not in an Athenian context. The second occurrence is similar in semantics since in the introduction to the Corcyra episode and while the historian narrates how the dispute between the Corinthians and the Corcyreans arose, he lists among the causes the hybristic boast of the latter about their excellence in naval power; their boast included the Phaeacians who were the ancient inhabitants of the island and who flourished with glory (*κλέος*)

in naval affairs (i.25.4). The word *kleos* refers again to the reputation the Phaeacians had according to the epic tradition and their poetic fame. The word *kleos* occurs for a third time at the end of the famous funeral oration of Pericles at his admonition to the women of the dead to act according to their sex and make sure that they are not going to be talked about (κλέος ἦ) among men for good or evil (ii.45.2).³⁰ *Kleos* at this final example seems to bear its initial meaning of report or hearsay, but since it is used in a rhetorical speech and not to commemorate a man's heroic glory but the reputation women have among men it cannot function as an example of Thucydides using the term to refer to heroic glory. Apparently in Athens it is sometimes used with its root meaning. The word Thucydides uses to refer to the posthumous fame and glorious reputation of the dead of the Peloponnesian War is the word δόξα which bears attributives such as μεγίστην, καλλίστην, ἀείμνηστος, αἰδίων.³¹ Whereas in Aeschylus and Sophocles the word δόξα is mainly used with its root meaning, in Euripides we encounter the word δόξα meaning also fame (*Med.* 540, *Heraclidae* 325, 624, *Hippolytus* 432, 1115, *Andromache* 319, 725, *Hercules* 157, 292, *Helen* 841, *Iph. Aul.* 566, 1066). Both references in *Iphigeneia Auliensis* are really interesting because in the first δόξα is bringing κλέος that never grows old in life (δόξα φέρει κλέος ἀγήρατον βιοτᾶι); therefore the two words are semantically connected. Obviously in this case δόξα is not just the opinion people have about someone but the good reputation an individual has that wins him glorious fame. Δόξα seems to reflect contemporarily and sociologically what *kleos* comes to seal and perpetuate in the future. *Kleos* has a more idealistic and literary perspective than what people in the

³⁰ For an interpretation of the role of women according to this reference cf. Lacey (1964), Schaps (1977) and Hornblower (1991) *ad hoc*.

³¹ cf. Thucydides ii.11.9, ii.43.2, ii.64.6, iv.17.4, iv.87.6, iv.126.5, v.9.5, vi.11.7, vi.16.1. The other meaning of the word δόξα in Thucydides is its root meaning, "opinion, view".

fifth century Athenian society use in everyday life to refer to one's fame. In the second reference δόξα is accompanied by the standard epithet that accompanies *kleos* in epic, it is ἄφθιτος (δόξαν...ἄφθιτον). The two words seem interchangeable in their cognitive but not in their social meaning; the fact that the epithet ἄφθιτος, which is semantically loaded, accompanies δόξα reflects its descriptive connection to *kleos* but the fact that in the former reference δόξα brings κλέος shows that δόξα is the everyday word for reputation whereas *kleos* is part of the poetic *langue*.

The word εὐκλεία as a synonym to δόξα in the meaning of glorious reputation occurs only once in Thucydides' text, again in Pericles' funeral oration (ii.44.4) where he admonishes the parents of the dead warriors who cannot give birth to any more children to alleviate their pain through the glory (εὐκλεία) of these. The word εὐκλεία seems to be used more in poetic contexts and therefore it is frequent in the tragic corpus. McClure discusses the obsession of Phaedra with her reputation in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and observes that "this overvaluation of *eukleia* correlates not to the epic values exemplified by an Achilles, but to a more contemporary concern with protecting one's name in an increasingly litigious political environment where rumor and slander could defame and even disenfranchise the best of citizens."³² According to McClure's approach then *eukleia* is different from epic *kleos* since it reflects the positive opinion of the contemporary society towards a hero and not the eternal glorious commemoration of the hero as part of the traditional songs and narratives of the city. In fact scholars distinguish between the later plays of Euripides which follow

³² McClure (1999), 116.

the *mechanema* plot concentrating on *σωτηρία* and *εὐτυχία* and the plays of Euripides' earlier period which show a great concern for vengeance and *εὐκλεία*.³³

In the surviving Aeschylan tragedies the actual word *kleos* occurs three times, all in *Agamemnon*; in none of these instances is it connected with the special connotation of heroic or epic *kleos*. In the phrase *γυναικογήρυτον...κλέος* (Ag.487) it bears its root meaning "rumor, hearsay", whereas in the next two occurrences it is used in periphrases which denote only the fame of the quality attributed first to the god Apollo (*μαντικόν...κλέος*, 1098) and then to the abstract notion of Delay (*τῆς μελλούσας κλέος*, 1356); its usage, though, could be cognitively replaced by an adjective meaning famous (e.g. *μάντης εὐκλεής*) without any difference in meaning. It does not bear the epic weight of heroism or aristocratic ethics. In Sophocles it is found once in *Ajax* where the messenger quotes a hybriatic past assertion of Ajax that he can alone without any divine help win heroic glory (*κλέος*, 769); both *Electra* and *Antigone*, although women, claim that through their actions they will gain eternal glory in the model of epic heroes (*El.* 985, *Ant.* 502); finally in *Philoctetes* the word occurs twice: at the end of the play under the meaning of eternal heroic fame that Philoctetes will win if he follows Neoptolemus and conquers Troy (1347) and at the beginning in the root meaning of "hearsay" (251).

The majority of occurrences are found in the Euripidean tragic corpus, where with the exception of its appearance one time in the *Ion*, one in the *Bacchae* and one in the *Phoenissae*³⁴ it is always connected with characters that are associated with the

³³ Porter (1994), 83. Euripides' *Orestes* combines both kinds of plots.

³⁴ *Ion*, 1588, *Phoenissae*. 578, *Bacchae* 972. In the *Ion* the meaning is positive, the glorious fame the descendants of Ion will have; in the *Phoenissae* it refers to the negative *kleos* Polyneikes would have if he conquers his own homeland, in the *Bacchae* the word refers to the terrible rumor that Pentheus will

Trojan cycle or the family of the leader of the Trojan War. Characteristically it is found five times in the *Helen* (135, 845, 941, 999, 1603) and five times in the *Iphigeneia Auliensis* (357, 567, 1383, 1504, 1531); one occurrence of the word is found in the *Andromache*, in the *Hecuba*, in the *Electra*, in the *Trojan Women* and in the *Orestes*. The latter word search reveals, statistically at least, two propositions: the first, as observed above, is that *kleos* is more often related to characters that appear in the Homeric epic tradition and by extension to the house of Agamemnon and the second that specifically heroic *kleos* is often related to women, which is totally “unhomeric” or better non-iliadic in its essence. The second proposition is not confirmed only in the aforementioned tragedies that include the actual term *kleos* but also in others where a woman’s behavior is exemplary and projected as a paradigm for winning eternal renown in the model of an epic hero, e.g. Alcestis and Medea in her personal characterization.

In the *Andromache* the lasting honor (*τιμὰ καὶ κλέος*, 774) of the noble birth, of wealth and of ἀρετή is the theme of the third *stasimon* which comes between Andromache’s rescue and Peleus’ grief after he is informed about Neoptolemus’ murder. Stevens³⁵ observes that the ode has no significant relation to the action of the play but marks a pause between the two ordeals, Andromache’s and Peleus’, and sings the praises of the Aeacid house at the moment when the oldest representative saves the youngest. I believe that the chorus addresses praise to Peleus because the latter chooses to save Andromache despite the biases and social stereotypes and by placing the feeling of justice above social titles such as slave, free man, legitimacy and royalty. The ode’s rather general tone, the lack of direct connection to the plot

have under heaven after he is killed by his own mother. In these three instances the word has no poetic or heroic connotations, just the root meanings of rumor and further fame, reputation.

³⁵ Stevens (1977), 186-87.

and the fact that it is reminiscent of many passages of Pindar's epinician odes³⁶ keeps the notion of lasting glory and honor which is its theme separate from the reality of the play. It sings about the praise of the Aeacid house in a general way and prefers to mention Peleus' past exploits as part of the literary tradition but it does not refer to his previous benevolence to Andromache and her son or to the management of his royal authority as successful or respected; it does not praise the character of Peleus we have in front of us but the mythical character we know through the literary tradition. The epode directly addresses Peleus and counts his exploits in terms of heroic language: his involvement in the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs with his illustrious spear (*δορὶ κλεινοτάτῳ*), his participation in the famous journey of the Argonauts (*κλεινὰν ἐπὶ ναυστολίαν*, 796), his share in the high renown of sacking Troy by the side of Heracles (*κοινὰν τὰν εὐκλειαν*, 800). The words that are related to *kleos* in the epode recall the general reference to *kleos* in the strophe, where the notion is explained by two propositions: *οὗτοι λείψανα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀφαιρεῖται χρόνος· ἢ δ' ἀρετὰ καὶ θανοῦσι λάμπει* (what heroes leave behind is not taken away by time; prowess shines even when they are dead, 774-775). These propositions sound like part of an epitaph or epitaphic epigram³⁷ or as part of an epinician praise discourse. They can as well be applied to Peleus, Achilles or any hero of noble birth. However, there is discontinuity between the play's plot and characterization and the high praise of Peleus.

Peleus saves Andromache and her son from Menelaus by despising noble birth since he judges Menelaus by his deeds and not his royal title and he ascertains that

³⁶ Stevens (1977), 187.

³⁷ cf. Simonides on his epitaph on the fallen at the Thermopylae (frg.26 Page).

many bastard kids are much better than the legitimate ones (νόθοι τε πολλοὶ γνησίων ἀμείμονες, 638). Menelaus reproaches Peleus' behavior as a result of his lost mind due to his old age. Although Menelaus is not a sympathetic figure in the play and his arguments are sophistic³⁸ he mentions Peleus' murder of his brother Phocus as a deed which cancels his claims on integrity and morality. Peleus' high praise in the literary tradition is his marriage to Thetis, but this is not mentioned in the ode, neither his great son Achilles, probably because the ode seeks to praise his "male" side of glorious reputation, his martial deeds. Besides, Peleus' high praise in the *stasimon* will be followed by his total destruction through the murder of Neoptolemus, the only grandson he had from Achilles and his only hope to continue his sire. The promise of his deification at the end comes as a result not of his personal great glory but of his marriage to Thetis (ὥς ἄν εἰδῆις τῆς ἐμῆς εὐνῆς χάριν, 1253). Therefore, *kleos* in the *Andromache* is not related to the heroine herself who could claim *kleos* as a wife of Hector and because of her noble tolerance to her miseries but to a man, Peleus, who receives high praise in a general tone that recalls epinician discourse and is not directly related to the play's plot and characterization. The term *kleos* is tackled as an aesthetic value disconnected from the social and ethical milieu of the play.

Nor in *Helen* is heroic *kleos* directly connected to the heroine, although Helen in the homonymous Euripidean play mourns more for the distortion and tarnishing of her reputation than for her fate of being cast into the foreign land of Proteus; the fact that she is considered the cause of the Trojan War and of the lost lives of so many Achaeans is the shameful rumor (ἀσχηρόν...κλέος, 135) that killed her mother as Teucrus informed her and she knows herself that she bears bad reputation in the entire

³⁸ Scholars have noted the anti-Spartan tone of the play. Johnson Van (1955), 9.

Greece (ὄνομα δυσκλεῆς φέρω, 66, οὐκ οὐδ' ἄδικος εἰμι δυσκλεύς, 270, cf. 1046-47). The suffering of her reputation is equated to her husband's suffering in the war (σὺ μὲν λόγοισι, ὁ δὲ δορὸς προθυμῖαι, 716). Menelaus' rhetoric and posture as well as that of his comrades is formed by their Trojan past and glory (τὸ Τρωϊκὸν γὰρ οὐ καταισχυνῶ κλέος, 845, cf. 948-49) and Helen also seems to honestly believe in the glory of that past, although this was the cause of her miseries (παρακάλεισμά δ' ἦν πρυμνήθεν Ἑλένης· Ποῦ τὸ Τρωϊκὸν κλέος; Δείξατε πρὸς ἄνδρας βαρβάρους, 1601-03). Finally, Proteus' *kleos* is the reason why Theonoe decides to help Menelaus and Helen in the play, since the morality of her father's *kleos* imposed honesty and keeping his promise to Hera that he will return Helen to her husband intact (999-1000). Both Helen and Menelaus use this as their main argument to convince the prophetess; the best reputation for a child of a noble father (κλέος...κάλλιστον) is to follow the morals and character of its father (941; also 967). Therefore, Helen does not claim herself a heroic *kleos* but reverences that of her husband and the Achaean warriors as well as that of her protector Proteus. The only moment where she shows a more "manly" anxiety for her future glory is when she asks Menelaus how they can die and win glory at the same time (841) but the word she uses for glory is δόξα. The word *kleos* in this play is more of a direct allusion to the Homeric world and as Meltzer suggests "the *eidolon*...is the catalyst that sets into motion the plays's critique of the status of *kleos*, the martial ethos of the *Iliad*, and the mythopoeic process itself". The truest report of the play is the first servant's realization that they had suffered so many toils for the sake of a cloud (706). The Iliadic *kleos* as well as Helen's *eidolon* at Troy are the subject matter of poetry but do not correspond to the truth, divine or human.

In the famous first *stasimon* of *Medea* the chorus attributes the base reputation that women have to the fact that poetry is an activity dominated by men. A palinode for women is introduced with *adynata*: “the rivers’ flow turn backwards, justice and all in the universe is reversed. Deceitful are the thoughts of men and their faith to the gods is weak. Rumors (*φᾶμαι*) will turn my life to have good repute. Honor (*τιμῶ*) comes upon the female race. No more will ill repute (*δυσκέλαδος φάμα*) conquer women. (410-420).” The women of the chorus, totally compassionate toward Medea’s sufferings at the beginning of the play, accuse the power of songs which are controlled only by men for their bad reputation.³⁹ The same chorus at the end of the play retracts its statement “O women’s toilsome bed, how many evils have you cast upon mortals (1290-92)”. Medea’s deed is impossible for the women to tolerate. Medea has been recognized by scholars as having a heroic masculine side which is revealed as the play progresses whereas she uses her feminine maternal side only to appeal to the chorus and the male characters of the play. Foley writes that Medea “has the stubborn individualism, intransigence, power, near-beastial savagery, and lack of pity of such beleaguered heroes [as Ajax and Achilles]. As hero she wants to do good to her friends and bad to her enemies, quell injustice, win fame (810) and protect her reputation”.⁴⁰ At the end, although the murder of her children brings infamy to her, she is not even punished for her deed; she is divinized and will be totally integrated into a contemporary society as the wife of Aegeus. Medea achieves the *εὐκλέστατος βίος* (810) she wishes for by destroying her enemies (Jason) and finding a new family and social frame to restore her honor. Medea’s case, however, is unique in her

³⁹ A similar statement is made also by the chorus of the *Ion*, 1090-98.

⁴⁰ Foley (1989), 76.

supernatural powers as a pharmakeutria and her otherness as barbarian and as such it is not exemplary of any connection between the notion of *kleos* and women.

Female heroism is normally connected with self-sacrifice; in cases where women in tragedy are led to a self-sacrifice *kleos* and the ideology behind it comes up as part of the justification of their deed. Iphigeneia in *Iphigeneia in Aulis* after realizing that she cannot convince her father to save her proceeds willingly to be sacrificed by projecting herself as the deliverer and benefactor of Greece (1383). However, Iphigeneia's claim upon *kleos* is deceptive and delusive since no barbarian was threatening Greece for her to fight for Greece's freedom. Although in her argumentation for her voluntary death she proposes that her life is inferior to a man's, the myth cancels her rationale since many men will be sacrificed for the sake of a woman's life, Helen. She is actually serving only her father's ambition which again rhetorically is presented by Menelaus under the word *kleos* (357) in order to convince his brother of the mission. The chorus is also deceived in the same logic of heroic ethics as is apparent in their last ode; they salute Iphigeneia as a warrior ready to sack Troy (*τὰν Ἰλίου καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐλέπτολιν*, 1512-13); she is presented as the necessary cause that allows Artemis to offer to Agamemnon memorable glory (*κλέος ἀείμνηστον*, 1531). Kyriakou rightly observes: "The victim and her defender Achilles as well as the women of the chorus are now fully integrated members of a community that both victimizes women and deceives them with the prospect, or harbors fantasies, of their winning heroic *kleos*, through their self-sacrifice for the sake of a supposedly common "good"."⁴¹ Similar are the cases of the unnamed eldest daughter of Heracles in the *Heracleidae* and of Polyxena in *Hecuba*, although they do not use the word *kleos eo ipso*. Heracles' daughter has to be sacrificed in order for the Athenians to win

⁴¹ Kyriakou (2008), 229.

the favor of the gods in the coming war with Eurystheus. The girl offers herself to the city that offered her family protection because she prefers to die with high fame (*ἐνκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον*, 534) being the daughter of such a father (509). Polyxena in *Hecuba* is ordered by the ghost of Achilles to be sacrificed on his tomb. The maiden decides to die as a free woman than to live on as a slave; the discourse she elaborates is that of the heroic aristocratic code (378, 546-552). Mastronarde questions whether women's appeals to the male heroic code would challenge the male viewers but decides that they all act within the system of gender hierarchy and prove no challenge to the male audience. Polyxena offers "the most defiant appropriation of male terms of reference" but still the extremity of her situation does not allow any competitive view on behalf of the male viewers.⁴² I may add one more parameter; if the *kleos* language has been established in the minds of the viewers as part of the epic discourse and the poetic experience and has been disconnected from the everyday social speech and gender reality it is much easier for the male viewers to put up with women cast in roles appropriating the male stereotypes.

The *Trojan Women* is a play where the connection of *kleos* with poetry is in my view so strong that it deserves a closer observation. Hecuba raises her head from the ground and urges herself to rise by addressing herself *dysdaimon*. She is introduced almost as non-existing: there is no Troy and we were kings of Troy (99-100). No name, no pompous introduction of the queen of Troy, no welcome words by the chorus before she appears on the scene. Her royal fame and glory is lost in the fires of Troy. The lines that follow are reproducing well known motifs of laments;⁴³

⁴² Mastronarde (2010), 264-68.

⁴³ Ann Suter claims that, apart from the separate laments that are integrated in the play and reflect the practice of the ritual lament of the 5th century and which have been acknowledged by many scholars, the whole play shares the structure and the elements of a lament, and this explains its lack of unity and plot. She even fits the *agon* between Helen and Hecuba in this schema by saying "it comes when we

how easily the human fate changes (102-104), what is the profit of lamenting (106-111), how can I comfort myself (115-116). The mourning queen finds comfort in music (*μοῦσα*, 120⁴⁴), which she says brings consolation even to the wretched, the fact that they can chant joyless songs of misfortune (121). This is the first instance where Hecuba refers to song and music and it seems an appropriate comment before commencing a dirge. However, as we will see there is an abundance of references to song and poetry within the play. After Hecuba's statement that music comforts even the wretched, she sings in lyric anapaests the story of the invasion of the Greeks in Troy (122-137). Sounds are prominent in the narrative: the Greek ships approach Ilion *αὐλῶν παιᾶνι στυγνῶι συρίγγων τ' εὐφρόγγων φωνᾶι* (126-27). The ships continue to be the subject and seek for the wife of Menelaos, who is also characterized as hated (*στυγνάν*, 131) in the paeon. She is not named but introduced by her bad reputation among the Trojans; she is the dishonor of Castor and the bad fame (*δύσκληια*) for Eurotas. Exclamations add to the lexical sounds (*αἰαῖ*, 129, *ᾠμοι*, 137), as does the lyric meter and the music. The vision of Hecuba's future fate as a slave of the Greeks motivates her to exhort the chorus to sing, while she will begin the song; the technical verb *ἐξάρξω* stages Hecuba as the coryphaeus. The queen compares this position as the one that begins the song to Priam's kingly days, when again she was

would expect a lament for an individual by an individual and partially fulfills this expectation in that it articulates the desire for revenge on the person responsible for their deaths by the person who is closest to them all." Although I find that the article is successful with acknowledging in the play motifs and techniques of lamentation, I wouldn't go that far as identifying the whole tragedy with a lament; even if the *Trojan Women* lament, the prologue with the two gods and the agon are structural parts of a tragedy and have nothing to do with a lament. And in the *agon* Hecuba is not just looking for revenge, she is rationalizing their rights against Helen. Lament has no rational moments in it. Cf. Ann Suter (2003), 1-28. For ritual lament in 5th ce cf. Alexiou Margaret, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Cambridge 1974, Foley, the Politics of lamentation, in: Sommerstein, *Tragedy, comedy and the Polis*, Bari 1993.

⁴⁴ The word *Μοῦσα* as clear metonymy for music is found twice in Aeschylus, four times in Sophocles and 28 in Euripides. Even if we triple the number of tragedies preserved of the first two tragedians, Euripides uses the word abstractly more times.

beginning the dancing: ποδὸς ἀρχεχόρου πλαγαῖς Φρυγίους εὐκόμποις ἐξῆρχον θεούς (151-52). Before the city's sack, Troy seems a place of music and dancing. The same impression is given in the last *stasimon*, where all that the women remember from the peaceful Troy are the religious acts, sacrifices and ritual songs: the sacrifices and the well-tuned songs of the choruses have passed (1071-72). This is due partly to the only experience women had outside the house, their participation in religious festivals, and partly to the meta-poetic references of tragedy to its connection with song and ritual. Another instance that betrays the strong connection in the poem between Troy's past and poetry is Hecuba's rhetorical question when she laments Astyanax τί καί ποτε γράψειεν ἄν σοι μουσοποιὸς ἐν τάφῳ; (1188-89). Hecuba's mourning about the irrational death of her grandson is expressed through a literary reaction and, moreover, through the potential eyes of a Greek epigrammatist: "this child the Argives killed once out of fear; a shameful epigram for Greece" (1190-91). Some lines before, the queen suggested what would be a heroic and glorious death for the child, if he would die for his city after getting married and being a king; then he would be μακάριος (1170). The ideal of a glorious death in battle couldn't be missing from a poem with strong connection with the epic world but, the irony of the conditional clause that ends the motif of a good death leaves no ethical values untouched, among them that of *kleos* for a glorious death as well: if there is something among these (good marriage, kingship, dying for your country) which is blessed and blissful (1170).

All these references to poetry and song culminate in Hecuba's statement in lines 1242-45 that if the god wouldn't turn the world upside down, the Trojans wouldn't be sung by future generations but would remain ἀφανεῖς, invisible. What we

see of Troy is its destruction, and the fame and reputation of the Trojans comes along with their misfortune.⁴⁵ It is as if the Trojans had to choose as another Achilles between a complete peaceful lifespan where they would remain unknown or the ultimate destruction that would bring upon them eternal glory and fame, *kleos*. Hecuba gains her reputation not as a queen but dressed in ragged, mourning clothes. And yet, she always stresses her lost happiness which brought glory upon them. How could this glory be known unless it was lost? The same idea that the Trojans wouldn't become glorious or renowned unless the Greeks would come to sack their city is expressed in reference to Hector: δόξας ἀνὴρ ἄριστος οἴχεται θανάων, καὶ τοῦτ' Ἀχαιῶν ἰζις ἐξεργάζεται· εἰ δ' ἦσαν οἴκοι, χρηστός ὢν ἐλάνθαν' ἄν (395-97). Hector is called the best of the Trojans, ἄριστος, a technical word that connotes the first and best among heroes. Achilles and Odysseus are called best of the Achaeans in their corresponding epics.⁴⁶ Hector in the *Iliad* is called ἄριστος only once (*Il.*21, 279), and surprisingly by Achilles, when the latter prays to Zeus to save him from Scamander's rush. Hector is called best "here" (Ἐκτωρ κτείνειν ὃς ἐνθάδε γ' ἔτραφ' ἄριστος), namely in the land of the Trojans. An Achaean thus calls him "best", as in the *Trojan women* he allegedly seems to have gained this title because of the advent of the Achaeans. Otherwise, he would just remain a good man (χρηστός). The last contrafactual hypothesis, namely if Troy would still exist, Hector would just be a good man but not a glorious one, is followed by another similar condition; if Paris wouldn't have married Helen, the daughter of Zeus, he would have a wife at his house

⁴⁵ For the connection between misfortune and notoriety along with Homeric parallels cf. Lacourse Munteanu (2010-11), 134. Munteanu argues that "The Trojan Women subvert the role of the Muse, invoking her for tragic themes and for the abandonment of epic; their subject matter is the aftermath of the *Iliad* and they immortalize female suffering, not male conquest." (134-35).

⁴⁶ Nagy (1979), p. 26-41.

who would be *σιγώμενον*, a wife that no one talked about, a wife with no *kleos* or fame. In both these cases, fame and renown is the result of an anomalous situation that reverses the expected reality but confers *kleos* as a reward. This reward, however, is only part of literature and poetic narratives because there is no community to appreciate the fame of Hector or Troy's women any more. Foreign societies will learn about their sacrifice through song.

The case studies I examined above show in my opinion that Euripidean drama presents *kleos* not as a value with social or ethical perspectives but in association with poetry and literary experience, as an aesthetic value that allows its characters to proceed to extreme choices under the pretext of epic heroism; however, the frame poem in the majority of cases undermines the projection of *kleos* as a discourse functional in a "real" society.⁴⁷ One final parameter confirms this conclusion. In epic *κῦδος* in the majority of times is the precursor of *kleos*; Kyriakou defines *kydos* as the following: "kydos designates mainly the power granted by a god to a man and/or group in order to enable him and/or them to vanquish their adversaries".⁴⁸ It is thus a special power bestowed to a hero by a god for a specific period and for as long as the god decides; *kydos* is granted either to the Achaeans or the Trojans, whomever Zeus chooses (*Il*.5.33), to Patroclus before his *aristeia* (16.84), to Hector by Apollo

⁴⁷ Kyriakou (2008), 246, who specifically studies female *kleos* also highlights the reversals of Greek beliefs and norms that female *kleos* presupposes and suggests that Euripides presents especially female *kleos* "as fragile, compromised not only by the often dubious and precarious circumstances of its production but also by its association with the promise of future song. This promise is hardly ever accurate or realized without qualifications, as is obvious in the case of e.g. *Alcestitis*, *Medea*, *Supplices* and *Troades*."

⁴⁸ Kyriakou (2007) criticizes scholars who connected the Epinician *kydos* with the Oceanic concept of *mana* viewing both as a talismanic power that was brought back to the city by the victor and radiated a magical potency (127-128). She concludes that "*kydos* may be said to be shared by, or reflected on, the victor's community, but it cannot be literally 'brought back' to the city or anywhere else as a talisman, and it can by no means be used to win a future military (or even athletic) contest (139). I believe that *kydos* is closer to what orthodox church calls *charis*; it is the special power of the soul that the God bestows to a martyr before his ordeal or to a "pure soul" in order to deal with his/her personal sufferings. cf. Paul "ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται" (*Corinthians* 2.12.9).

(16.730). The result for a hero who has *kydos* on his side is glory and fame (*kleos*). The meaning of the concept of *kydos* has changed little from Homer down to the classical age.⁴⁹ In the surviving tragedies the concept is never used in connection with *kleos*; on the contrary, the gods turn or are *a priori* against those who seek for *kleos*. Ajax tries to preserve his *kleos* by killing his enemies but Athena ridicules him; Iphigeneia's or Polyxena's blood is demanded by a divine or underworld power. Orestes' attempt to restore his personal and his father's *kleos* results in his pursuit by the Erinyes. The word *eo ipso* occurs only twice in the tragic corpus, both in Aeschylus. In the *Persae* the messenger trying to justify the victory of the Greeks at Salamis assumes that there should be a god of the ships who bestowed *κῦδος Ἑλλησι μάχης* (455). Its epic meaning is active in tragedy but it is not connected to *kleos*.

The dissociation of *kleos* from its ethical and strictly martial or heroic connotations is also apparent in comedy; in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* for instance the poet presents himself in terms of heroic rhetoric. Responding to those who accuse him that he mocks his city and ridicules democracy (631) he ascertains that he is a great benefactor to his city (*πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος ὑμῖν ὁ ποιητής*, 633 and 641) and he calls himself *ἄριστον* (644) in the mode of an epic hero. He alleges that the reputation of his boldness has reached so far that his opinion counted as the most important for the Great King (*ὄντως δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς τόλμης ἤδη πόρρω κλέος ἦκει*, 646); in fact he received praise from the Great King himself that the Athenians would win the war and become better if they trust his counsel (650-51). Not their martial prowess but the poet's wise counsel is important for their victory. The reason why the Lacedaimonians offer peace to the Athenians if they cede Aegina is not the island

⁴⁹ Kyriakou (2007), 138-9.

itself but the poet, whom they are going to rob (653-54).⁵⁰ Therefore, the term *kleos* means fame but with the perspective of good reputation and it is used to present the poet in heroic and epic terms in order to give him the prestige he claims among his co-citizens. It is clearly dissociated from its initial martial and agonistic connotations.

Although we might expect the word *kleos* to be found in Plato's corpus in dialogues that deal with martial prowess and manliness such as the *Laches* or in the funeral speech in *Menexenus*, the word occurs twice actually in the *Symposium* and four times in the *Laws*. Characteristic for the argument of the present study are the references in the *Symposium*: they are both found in Diotima's speech as narrated by Socrates and in both occurrences *kleos* is directly associated with poets. In the discussion for the connection between *Eros* and immortality Diotima relates the desire for eternal glory with an individual's *φιλοτιμία* (pursuit for distinction, ambition); men are eager to risk their lives, to suffer and waste money and labor in order to gain eternal memory for their virtue (*ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς*, 208d12). Their direct object of desire is immortal virtue and glorious reputation (*ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τοιαύτης δόξης εὐκλεοῦς*, 208d15) and not the physical target of their labor, namely Admetus for Alcestis, Patroclus for Achilles and Codrus' children for Codrus (208d). However, the word *kleos* is used only as a direct quotation from an unknown poet (*καὶ κλέος ἐς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι*, 208c3-4) and, additionally, it is used in an ironic style as a sample of a sophist's loaded speech.⁵¹ Similarly, Diotima uses the word *kleos* for the glorious reputation of Homer and Hesiod and other great poets since their creations supplied them with immortal fame and memory

⁵⁰ Olson (2002), *ad hoc* explains that the point that the poet will go along with the island is just a flight of comic, but the basis of the argument is a) one branch of Aristophanes' family was of Aeginitan origin, b) his father got land in Aegina in 431 or c) Aristophanes resided there for some other reason.

⁵¹ Sykoytris (2003 19th edition), 166.

(ἀθάνατον κλέος και μνήμην, 209d5). Therefore, we observe that in the *Symposium* the word is associated with the words or the good fame of the poets whereas when Diotima in her narration refers to glorious reputation or similar notions of non-poets she uses the words δόξα, ἀρετή, μνήμη.

The first three chapters of this dissertation form one unit since in all three I examine Orestes' personal *kleos* in connection with his Odyssean background. The first chapter observes the difficulty the *Choephoroi* presents in compromising Orestes' epic *kleos* with his deed of matricide, also in connection with the rest of the trilogy. It is not only Apollo's oracle that advises Orestes to avenge his father's death; the Argive community and Electra have for a long time the expectation that Orestes will come back to punish Clytemnestra. This fame, social within the plot of the play, literary because of the Odyssean tradition, haunts Orestes before the matricide as much as the Erinyes will haunt him afterwards. Aeschylus demonstrates the inadequacy and disfunctionality of the concept of *kleos* within the frame of a *polis* community ruled by the laws and values of fifth century Athens. *Kleos* becomes part of Orestes' political rhetoric aiming at the imaginary level of the Argive community but since it opposes familial justice it is not a valid motive to claim. Orestes' character expresses the dynamic of controversial forces that rule his decisions.

The second chapter examines the function of *kleos* in Sophocles' *Electra*; Orestes tackles the concept at the prologue connecting it with his personal *kerdos*. He is a much more compromising and frivolous Orestes than the Aeschylean, partly because he is a secondary character and partly because the way he was raised allowed him to approach the old heroic code and the ethics of *kleos* in a more practical way. His stance and character is coupled and complemented by the character of the

Paedagogus. Electra's claim on *kleos* approximates more the male heroic ethical code; however, its presence within an imaginary speech uttered by Electra who within the play is the paradigm of excessive emotional femininity, its lack of practical frame, the critical stance of Chrysothemis and of the chorus against Electra as well as Orestes' imminent arrival which will cancel all of Electra's schemes mark the incompatibility between Electra and masculine *kleos*. *Kleos* both as part of Orestes' idealistic worldview, impractical in reality, and of Electra's imaginary world, incompatible with the community around her, depicts the concept as alien to the present society and connected with the distant heroic era.

Euripides' *Orestes* does not even claim any *kleos* or commemorate his father's glory to justify the deed of matricide because of which he is about either to be stoned or to become an exile. *Kleos*, as I show in the third chapter, arises in Pylades' proposed scheme as a means of saving Orestes' life, as a starting point for a conspiracy plan and as the result of the murder of a woman. It is stripped of its epic prerequisites and it is connected with Panhellenic rhetoric and nobility discourse. It is just an aesthetic choice, not a life committing moral value.

The fourth chapter approaches the *kleos* of two great epic heroes, Ajax and Hercules, in the homonymous Sophoclean and Euripidean plays correspondingly and examines how each one deals with the reversal of their glorious reputation due to a goddess' wrath. In *Ajax* I trace a deep tension between the current rumors that circulate about the characters of Ajax and Odysseus, the *phatis* among their contemporaries, and their former epic *kleos*. Ajax finds it impossible to compromise with the reality of his new fate and fame and considers suicide as the only noble solution to his plight; he does not relent to his family's entreaties but remains intransigent till the end. In *Hercules* there is a gap between the image that the choral

odes and the other characters construct about Heracles, a poetic approach to fame, and his appearance on stage. Although in the words and songs of the others his former fame and reputation are always the most important element that forms their expectations and relations to him, his character is presented in the play closer to that of an ordinary man who is willing to renounce his past glory due to his present sufferings. His conciliatory stance against his past along with Theseus' presence as the embodiment of the Athenian ideals of friendship and gratitude allow him to reject suicide and accept the totality of his legend, both his heroic exploits and the murder of his family, as part of his life's *kleos*.

Chapter 2: Orestes and the burden of making *kleos*.

The story of Orestes' *kleos*, namely the story of Orestes' return to his homeland in order to avenge his father's death and to reestablish his position in his father's *oikos*, is narrated at its different chronological levels by all three great tragedians. The problem with Orestes' *kleos* story is intertwined with the Aeschylean trilogy's major question about justice; Orestes is trapped between two kinds of justice, the *talio* and the family justice. The first would win him glory; the second would leave him forever the reputation of a matricide. Orestes has to avenge for the name of his father under the condition that he kills his mother. In the *Odyssey* he emerges as the paradigmatic son but in tragedy the tensions and anxieties that his myth raises are explored and stretched to the edge of their consequences. In the following chapter I am going to explore the way the three tragedians tackled Orestes' story in respect to his claim on *kleos* and how they were morally, socially and generically differentiated from Homer's influential version but also from each other. Moreover, I will analyze how the concept of *kleos* itself is either re-valued or de-valued in the process of being accommodated within the society of the *polis* and specifically of the fifth century Athens. Although it is not a central ethical issue any more, since it accompanies heroes like Orestes from the "mythical age" when it was the main focus, it cannot be omitted due to the burden of its literary poetic history. In my opinion the concept of *kleos* enters the sphere of the idealistic and the imaginary and it is alienated from the social reality of the plays, even for heroes that in the epic would be practically and

programmatically characterized by it, such as Ajax and Heracles as we are going to see in another chapter. The distancing from the pragmatic reality is the necessary condition that allows the term to be attached gradually with a new literary and rhetorical depth.

The story of Orestes' *kleos* as a true effort to gain his personal glory by restoring his father's and his ancestral *oikos*' glory is actually only narrated by Aeschylus. The older tragedian is the only one among the three who presents a genuine anxiety on behalf of Orestes to approach his duty by means of a heroic value system established on the honor-glorious fame axis. Aeschylus, of course, is not presenting *kleos* as an unconditioned and unconquerable Homeric value. He explores its limitations and the problems it raises when tackled at the background of fifth-century Athenian ideology and its surrounding society, especially with respect to the justice of the matricide. However, his presentation of Orestes' dilemmas and moral difficulties puts *kleos* and Orestes' concern about his reputation on equal terms with other moral forces.

This attitude is not true about the other two tragedians. Sophocles' *Electra* plays upon the long idealistic poetic tradition that the term carries and disconnects it from the direct experiential reality of Electra and Argos. *Kleos*, as I am going to show, stands as part of a *didaxis*, as a lie and deception, as a vision dissociated from the real circumstances and needs but never as the real endeavor and target. It is not a central issue in Sophocles' play. The same is true about Euripides, who stages, in a way, the disjunction and diachronic miscommunication between archaic *kleos* and the late fifth century disinterest in this 'old world' value. Euripides presents the pursuit and the power of *kleos* in a highly ironical manner. The term *kleos* marks among the tragedians a lifespan from being a dynamic of controversial forces to being a title of

obsolete norms which, because they are obsolete, they can be easily ruled out and parodied.

The life of the concept of *kleos* in respect to the name of Orestes is tightly connected with exemplification, another field of seeming but deceptive conservatism of thought. Orestes becomes a signifier for a heroic *exemplum* because of Homer's intervention in his literary life; apparently, his Homeric self sparked tragedy's disagreement about his presentation as exemplary. The first book of the *Odyssey* begins with the council of the gods, which is initiated by Zeus' complaints about mortals. The father of mortals and immortals has Aegisthus in mind, whose murder is apparently recent; the latter was warned in advance by Hermes of the consequences that his marriage with Clytemnestra would have: when Orestes grows old, he will take revenge for his father's death. Yet, the famous adulterer proceeded to his deed and invoked his own destruction. Before Zeus begins his speech, the poet explains that Aegisthus was killed by Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, who bears the standard epithet *τηλέκλυτος*, far famed (*Od.* 1, 30).⁵² Athena in her hurry to turn the conversation to Odysseus comments that Aegisthus had a suitable death (*ἐοικότι... ὀλέθρῳ*, *Od.* 1, 46). Odysseus on the other hand has an unsuitable fate, since he cannot complete his return home. Thus, Athena persuades Zeus to take immediate care of Odysseus' return. She then flies to Ithaca to inform Telemachus about his father. Disguised as Mentis, Athena uses the fame (*kleos*, *Od.* 1, 298-300) that Orestes had gained among all mortals (*πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους*) for having killed Aegisthus, the murderer of his father, to motivate Telemachus to search for his own father and gain glory through his father's reputation. Orestes in the first book of the *Odyssey* serves as

⁵² The only other occurrence of the epithet is again in Homer, *Iliad* 19, 400, for Achilles' "far famed" horses.

a highly positive *exemplum* of a glorious son that both avenged for his father's death, guaranteed his father's posthumous glory and created a name of his own as well.⁵³

However, the *Odyssey* does not mention Clytemnestra's participation in Agamemnon's death nor Orestes' matricide. Garvie suggests that different versions of Orestes' story were already current in Homer's day and he selected the one that was more appropriate to the requirements of his story.⁵⁴ Olson suggests that Clytemnestra is left out of the picture in this brief summary of the Mycenaean saga because "this will be a tale of men and of conflict between men, set in a man's world".⁵⁵ Agamemnon's public image and not Clytemnestra's private problems are important for epic. Tragedy, of course, has a different interest. We may add another factor; Dodds⁵⁶ explains that *ἄτη* and fate (*μοῖρα*) in Homer are morally neutral and *Ερινύα* as the one that guarantees the fulfillment of *μοῖρα* in reality guarantees the fulfillment of the community's social demands in respect to traditional values and laws. However, in tragedy *μοῖρα* acquires also a moral essence; in Aeschylus it is morally charged. Analogically, Orestes' revenge as mentioned in the *Odyssey* is absolutely

⁵³ Goldhill (1984, 183-195) compares the story of Odysseus-Penelope-Telemachus to the story of Agamemnon-Clytemnestra—Orestes and observes that although generally the latter stands as an example to the former, specifically "the model of Orestes for Telemachus signifies in its differences than in its exemplary similarities". Whereas *Odyssey*'s narrative ensures the generational continuity and authority is always in the sphere of the male, therefore, Orestes stands as an example of a son who saved his *oikos* from a male usurper, in the *Oresteia* the polarities between male and female insert in the narrative the motif of matriarchy and Clytemnestra by marrying Aegisthus "breaks" the normal continuity between father and son. Goldhill concludes that "the intertextuality of the *Odyssey* and the *Oresteia*, which is so often ignored, is constitutive of the "dynamics of misogyny" in the *Oresteia*.

⁵⁴ Garvie (1986) cites Vermeule, Davies, Schefold, *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art* (tr. London 1966) as the most useful source for discussions of the pre-Aeschylean evidence from art. On a clay pinax from Gortyn in Crete (second quarter of seventh ce.) there is a scene where Clytemnestra is about to stab Agamemnon accompanied by Aegisthus. There is also an earlier representation of the scene on a disk seal from Central Crete (late eighth or early seventh ce.). On a bronze *mitra* also from Crete Orestes threatens his mother. Finally from a Boeotian relief pithos may portray the murder of Aegisthus on the throne. A woman who is shown behind Orestes could be either Electra or Clytemnestra.cf. Garvie (1986), p.xii-xiii. The first time that Orestes is said to kill Clytemnestra in the literary sources is in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* frg. 23a v. 28-30.

⁵⁵ Olson (1995), p. 26. Similar view Goldhill (2004), *Aeschylus' Oresteia: a student Guide*. McHardy in similar argumentation enhances this view by adding that the murder of Aegisthus in the plays is straightforward as it is in Homer for nothing is morally and religiously at stake with him.

⁵⁶ Dodds (1951), 27.

harmonious with Homer's world of acting to prove one's excellence and defending one's honor, whereas Orestes' matricide is a morally wrong action, belonging to tragedy and not of interest in epic.

When Deleuze examines Kierkegaard's stance toward representation and ancient theatre he notes that "we are no longer in the element of reflection. We find here a thinker who lives the problem of masks, who experiences the inner emptiness of masks and seeks to fill it, to complete it..."⁵⁷ In this perspective Orestes is a mask, whose traits have been bequeathed from Homer as a positive *exemplum* of a glorious son who has restored his father's honor by avenging his death. Orestes is the example of the ideal son, whom Telemachus must imitate. However, when the tragedians in their turn are called to fill this mask, Orestes is not represented at all as an exemplary figure. He might seem the ideal son of his father but his memory is tarnished by the act of matricide. The moral law of *talio*, of avenging one death by another, is overturned and annulled. Deleuze again points out: "There are two known ways to overturn a moral law. One is by ascending towards the principles: challenging the law as secondary, derived, borrowed or 'general'; denouncing it as involving a second hand principle which diverts an original force or usurps an original power. The other way, by contrast is to overturn the law by descending towards the consequences, to which one submits with a too-perfect attention to detail...the first way is ironic...the second is humour."⁵⁸ If we are allowed to categorize the treatment of the *talio* justice by the three tragedians, I would propose that Aeschylus and Sophocles incline toward the first way while Euripides toward the second. Aeschylus and Sophocles challenge the exemplarity of Orestes' act by denouncing its force since it involves a principle

⁵⁷ Deleuze (1994), 8.

⁵⁸ Deleuze (1994), 5.

that is secondary and second-hand for the fifth-century, the one of acting according to the impositions of *kleos*; the expected mythical act that the heroic ideology imposes on Orestes is a generalization without attention to ethical particulars of such an act. The ironies between the “real” results of the act and its intentional force lead to an intentional fallacy on behalf of the hero and the community involved. Euripides in the *Orestes* on the other hand overturns the *talio* law by descending towards its consequence: the attention of Orestes and Pylades to the commands of a practical *kleos* leads to their ridicule since they wage an act of total absurdity.

The fissures and problems in respect to Orestes’ story are not disclosed only in drama. The highly positive quality that is rendered to Orestes’ fame in the *Telemacheia* is undermined in its particulars already in the Homeric epics if we examine Orestes in comparison to his father’s *kleos*; such an examination is dictated by two essential aspects of the concept of *kleos* in antiquity: the first is the dependence of a child’s reputation on his parents’ fame according to the Homeric and Hesiodic epic tradition and the second, as a consequence of the first, is the patriarchal society of Epic itself which names a hero after his father. His father’s name casts its shadow over the acts and choices of a hero’s whole life. In this view we should stress that Agamemnon’s fame does not emerge from the epic faultless and blameless. On the one hand, he is the king of the Achaeans, the leader of the Trojan expedition and the sacker of Troy. He is the μέγ’ ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν, *Il.* 2.82, he inherited his scepter through his father and grandfather from Zeus himself (*Il.* 2, 102-108). The Trojan expedition supplied to him such a great glory (μέγα κλέος, *Il.* 11, 21) that when Cinyras, king of Cyprus, was informed of the mission he donated to him a splendid breastplate as a guest gift (ξεινήιον, *Il.* 11, 20). Odysseus when he first addresses Polyphemus introduces himself and his companions as followers of the great

“Agamemnon, whose fame now is the greatest thing under heaven, such a city was that he sacked and he destroyed so many people (9.264-65)”. On the other hand, Agamemnon could not ultimately sack Troy without Achilles’ and Odysseus’ help during the war and Philoctetes and Neoptolemus’ catalytic help for the end of the war. In the whole epic he acts in the shadow of Achilles’ decisions and of Zeus’ effort to satisfy Thetis’ demand for revenge for her son’s honored name. For the *Iliad*’s audience he is the least favorite among the best of the Achaeans because he gives priority to his personal interest according to the Chryseis episode. His ἀπιστεία (*Il.* 11) is unmatched in its savagery and brutality (*Il.* 15-283)⁵⁹ These negative elements are not only part of the *Iliad*’s narrative but of the whole epic tradition. We should keep in mind that even though according to myth at the end of the Trojan War Agamemnon is the great victor and his name is glorified everywhere in the ancient world, the sack of Troy itself was accompanied by terrible crimes for which the gods punished the Greeks with difficult or unfulfilled *nostoi*.

The *Odyssey* follows the *nostoi* epic tradition and its real narrative time develops after Agamemnon’s murder by Aegisthus. In this poem we encounter a different Agamemnon, more “philosophical” and with less self-centered motives, in part of course because he is dead (!) but also consistent with the atmosphere of the new epic. Characteristic are his long speeches in the last book of the *Odyssey*,⁶⁰ in the

⁵⁹ Peradotto (1969), n.72: “his shield bears the dreadful face of the Gorgon (36); in killing his opponents he is compared to a lion crunching in his teeth the νήπια τέκνα of a deer (101-119); again compared to a lion, he slaughters the suppliant sons of Antimachus (122-142), recalling by contrast the mercy of Menelaus in 6.51ff., which occasioned the expression of Agamemnon’s blood-thirstiness); a third time he is compared to a lion, now as it slaughters a cow and laps the blood and guts (172-176)...”. Within the *Oresteia* the references to the nature of the lion are always negative (*Ag.* 141, 717ff, 827, 1224, *Ch.* 938, *Eum.* 193. The only time that a lion acquires a positive attribute is at 1259, where the negative quality is transferred to the adulteress lioness).

⁶⁰ In my opinion, this statement is not undermined by the view that books 11 and 24 belong to a later stratum of the poem because it is generally accepted that the *Odyssey* has a different atmosphere from the *Iliad* and by its actual theme, it is not a martial epos. The devotion of Odysseus to his homecoming and to his wife and home and the devotion of Penelope to her husband as well as the placing of

underworld he welcomes the souls of the murdered suitors and he defines for us what the real *kleos* is by two praise speeches. The first glorifies the death of Achilles ((*Od.* 24, 35-97): he died on Troy's battlefield away from home and whatever problems his home return would arise, the best of the Achaeans fought a whole day to save his corpse from the Trojans, he had a splendid funeral in which even the gods participated because of his goddess mother and which lasted for seventeen days. His bones were placed in an amphora made by Hephaestus and his great tomb was built in the slope of Hellespont in order to function as manifest evidence of his glory to future generations. Games were also organized around his tomb as happens with a hero's cult.⁶¹ Agamemnon's *enkomion* ends with the antithesis between Achilles' eternal glory which was guaranteed by his death and funeral and his own shameful death which blotted out his prior reputation:

ὥς σὺ μὲν οὐδὲ θανὼν ὄνομ' ὤλεσας, ἀλλὰ τοι αἰεὶ
 πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους κλέος ἔσσεται ἐσθλόν, Ἀχιλλεῦ·
 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ τί τόδ' ἦδος, ἐπεὶ πόλεμον τολύπευσα;
 ἐν νόστῳ γάρ μοι Ζεὺς μῆσατο λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον
 Αἰγίσθου ὑπὸ χερσὶ καὶ οὐλομένης ἀλόχοιο.”

Thus even after death you did not lose your name,
 but your glory will always be great among men, Achilles;
 however, what delight is this to me, that I have accomplished to win the war?
 At my homecoming Zeus planned a terrible death for me
 by the hands of Aegisthus and my accursed wife.⁶²

The determination of one's posthumous glory by the way he dies was a common concept in antiquity; Herodotus for example stated a similar ascertainment: *Οὐ γάρ τι*

immortality in a secondary place in comparison with family and human joys reflect a different worldview than that of the *Iliad*.

⁶¹ Cult as a pattern of ritual behavior would include prayer, sacrifice, votive offerings, competitions, processions and construction of monuments. Greek athletic contests are said to originate in funeral games for heroes, although the cult at the Pelopeion at Olympia for example is not dated before the Archaic Age and generally such cults at Panhellenic sanctuaries seem to be absent from the Iron Age. Antonaccio (1994), 398-99. Nagy (1979), 117.

⁶² All translations of the Greek are mine, unless indicating a different translation.

ὁ μέγα πλούσιος μᾶλλον τοῦ ἐπ' ἡμέρην ἔχοντος ὀλβιώτερός ἐστι, εἰ μὴ οἱ τύχη ἐπίσποιτο πάντα καλὰ ἔχοντα εὖ τελευτῆσαι τὸν βίον (*Herodotus* 1, 32, 24-26). A man's fame, thus, utterly depends not only on his great deeds or name during life but on the way he ends his life. A little later in the last book of *Odyssey* we read Agamemnon's praise for Odysseus' trustful and virtuous wife Penelope who is the antithesis to the deceitful and murderous Clytemnestra. Therefore, a man's fame and reputation also depends enormously on his wife's virtue. It is not that male *kleos* cannot be achieved without a wife. Achilles did fine without a wife. But once a man has a wife she also participates in the formation of his *kleos*, not as the main but as a determinant factor.⁶³ Since women in antiquity were considered dangerous and a threat to the stability and the continuity of the male ordered world,⁶⁴ a man's *kleos*, his reputation due to his blameless and authentic children, who will guarantee his succession, and his wealthy and well guarded *oikos*, was always under threat because of his wife. Penelope chooses not to be glorious without her husband by totally subordinating herself to Odysseus (*Od.* 19-124-28).⁶⁵ Clytemnestra on the contrary not only usurps her husband's royal *kleos* by governing like a man while he is absent (*Ag.* 259-60) but she fully takes his position by murdering him on his return. Odysseus' κλέος (*Od.* 24, 196) will never perish because of Penelope's virtue; the gods will make a song to remind the future generations of his glory-obviously this is the

⁶³ Of course, there is a chance that a man has a wife who is considered the best but his reputation is not analogous. For example Peleus who was married to a goddess but he is not remembered as a glorious hero; on the contrary in his youth he killed twice, first his brother Phocus out of jealousy because he and Telamon could not excel him; then accidentally he killed his father-in-law Eurytion; he was married to Thetis although she did not want him (*Il.* 18.434, *Pi. Nem.* III.35-36), because of Hera's jealousy; his end is miserable since he is thrown out of his kingdom and dies alone in Icus (*Callim.* frg. 178, 23 ff.). Actually Peleus' main source of glory is his marriage and he is greatly surpassed in glorious fame by his son.

⁶⁴ Gould (2001), 153.

⁶⁵ cf. "with Odysseus' absence, Penelope has the ability to become Helen, betraying her husband and striving for her own *kleos*. However, her refusal to step above her role and strive for personal power distinguishes her from Homer's immoral Helen." Braff (2008), 8.

song we currently listen to-, whereas the song about Clytemnestra will be hateful among men (*στυγερή δέ τ' αἰοιδή*, *Od.*24, 200).⁶⁶ Agamemnon refers only to the song about Clytemnestra and omits to mention that this will be a disgraceful song about him as well. His own fame is tarnished in future songs because of his shameful death. The reputation his wife leaves to womankind is a terrible one (*χαλεπήν δέ τε φῆμιν*, *Od.*24, 201), as it is probably suggested by her name, that she was notorious both for her marriage to Agamemnon and to Aegisthus (*κλυτή + μνηστρα*). Actually, the reputation of her marriage because of its end becomes in the mythical tradition the definition of a bad marriage. Orestes is not mentioned at this point as an avenger of his father's honor, as happens in the first book of *Odyssey*. Therefore, the last words we hear in epic from Agamemnon's mouth foreshadow the ambivalence around his fame which is a basic motif in tragedy.

Orestes, thus, inherits an ambivalent epic reputation of his father's name; even more ambivalent though is his father's reputation as the title character of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Orestes is the son of the great and famous king Agamemnon, conqueror of Troy who, however, committed terrible crimes at Troy and was murdered by his wife. His son is obliged to take revenge for his dishonor, but the problem is that the vengeance should be turned against his own mother. For centuries scholars have studied the conflicting ethical concepts that make space for the tragic genre and whether real *katharsis* was ever achieved. My approach to the character of Orestes

⁶⁶ Since as we mentioned in n.3 there is pre-Aeschylean evidence about Clytemnestra participating in the murder of Agamemnon and since as Garvie points out several passages in the *Odyssey* show that Homer knew the version that Clytemnestra participated actively in Agamemnon's murder (*Od.* 11.453, 24.200 but also in books that are not debated as belonging to later strata of the poem: 3.324, 3.310 where Clytemnestra is described as *στυγερή*ς (Garvie(1986), x-xi), Homer seems to have chosen not to make the *Odyssey* a song that would propagate Clytemnestra's notorious deed because this was out of his topic or even contrary to his topic, since he needs Orestes to be a pure and functioning model for Telemachus; but he had certainly heard a *στυγερήν αἰοιδήν* about Clytemnestra.

will participate in this discussion only to the degree that is necessary to explore his striving for *kleos*: whether *kleos* is honestly a motive for his action or not, how seriously does he take it and how burdened he is by his father's fame. Before proceeding to see Orestes as a character in the relevant plays I am going to examine three important moral rules in Greek thought that recur as basic themes in the Orestes plays.

The first is inherited guilt; no child can escape a doomed fate since a curse recycles from generation to generation; Orestes belongs to such a doomed family, the house of Atreus. Second, a son in antiquity was expected to look like his father in appearance in order to be the legal descendant,⁶⁷ but he should also resemble and surpass his father in glorious and virtuous deeds. He should guarantee his father's posthumous honor and reputation not only by his personal life but also by avenging crimes and slander against his father. Orestes bears such a burden: although a positive exemplum in epic, he has a problematic descent. He may be a pure young man when he enters the stage, but the social and ethical expectations will not allow him to remain pure and pious. Garvie puts it very aptly: "Orestes' tragedy is that, for all his purity of spirit, he becomes as guilty as his father".⁶⁸ Garvie disagrees with other scholars and insists that *Choephoroi* is parallel to *Agamemnon* and no progress toward healing is being made.⁶⁹ This parallel structure mirrors the parallelism the poet wants

⁶⁷ Hesiod *Works and Days*, 182.

⁶⁸ Garvie (1986), xxxiv.

⁶⁹ Lebeck (1967), 182 notices the parallel structure and stresses that the situation of the second play reverses that of the first, the woman who welcomes him tricks the man who returns, the man who returns tricks the woman who welcomes him." Garvie (1986, xxxiv-vi) accepts this view against Kitto (1956), Jones (1962, on Aristotle and Greek Tragedy), Zeitlin (1965), Rabinowitz (1981). The parallel structure is already apparent in the similar structure of the prologue; in both plays a man returns home to be welcomed by Clytemnestra, Agamemnon to be murdered by her, Orestes to be her murderer. Orestes appears beside the two corpses he has just murdered sword in hand, a mirror image of Clytemnestra, also probably sword in hand, before the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra. "Orestes is in a similar position to his mother". The visual parallels are reinforced by the intricate system of interrelated recurring themes and images. In the same interpretative line Cohen (1986, esp. p.134-136)

us to draw between father and son as characters. Agamemnon's *kleos* also reflects upon his son, namely he is the son of a great king who, however, has an ambivalent *kleos* especially because of his disgraceful death, but this same value is part of Orestes' murder motives and social expectations. A third important difference to our culture is that in the ancient Greek world the act is important by itself whereas the motives and intentions make little or no difference to the evaluation of the guilt.⁷⁰ The gap between the rational and emotional exploration of motives *and* the brutality of murderous acts inherited from the mythical tradition is what makes space for the development of tragedy.

2a: *Choephoroi*: *kleos* at the showcase of the community.

In the *Oresteia* the idea of inherited $\tilde{\eta}\theta o\varsigma$ is of major importance. Peradotto in an illuminating analysis of the symbolisms behind the omen of the eagles in *Agamemnon* proves that Agamemnon is fully responsible for the sacrifice of his daughter; he suffers no external coercion in his decision to slaughter Iphigeneia and pursue the war for Helen. On the contrary, his decision to kill his daughter and his decision to walk on the purple carpet coincide totally with his savage and boastful $\tilde{\eta}\theta o\varsigma$. According to the Aeschylean emphasis what Artemis chiefly hates is this $\tilde{\eta}\theta o\varsigma$, responsible for the slaughter of so many innocent Greeks and Trojans.⁷¹ Agamemnon

examines the justice of Zeus in the *Oresteia* and stresses that the *Choephoori* do not exhibit any change in the laws of justice in respect to the *Agamemnon*, but continue in the same thought line: the plunderer is plundered, the slayer must be slain, even if innocent people have to suffer in order others to learn. If a change from the dark world of *Agamemnon* is to be found, it is not to *Choephoroi*, but to *Eumenides* that we must turn.

⁷⁰ Garvie (1986), xxxiv.

⁷¹ Peradotto (1969), insists that Aeschylus tries to connect Artemis' wrath against Agamemnon with the Trojan war, whereas the explanations of previous mythological traditions (namely that Agamemnon shot a deer in her sacred grove and boasted about his action or that he had neglected to sacrifice a golden lamb to her) are deliberately neglected by the poet as prior and wholly unrelated to the war. The omen of the eagles and the hare has no resemblance to them but recalls elements from the cult of Brauronian Artemis who is the protector of the innocent youth, fertility but also of wild life. Iphigeneia and the victims of the war bear these elements, which Agamemnon's *ethos* destroyed. Contrary to Fraenkel (1950), Page (1957), Whallon (1961) and Lloyd-Jones' (1962) line of interpretation who

inherited his predatory and teknophonous ἥθος from his father Atreus, the way Aegisthus inherited his father's adulterous behavior to achieve power. Orestes similarly should have inherited his father's ἥθος. According, however, to Peradotto, "his meticulous and agonizing struggle to justify his act and his final hesitance show a moral delicacy not evident in Agamemnon's abrupt decision and brutal execution. In contrast to Agamemnon's tenuous rationalization (Ag. 214-217), Orestes insists that his strongest incentive was the god's assurance that he would be free of guilt (*Cho.* 1030ff.)"; Peradotto suggests that Orestes' act is no heroic quest for ζῆλος and as a proof cites the hero's own words:

ἀλγῶ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένος τε πᾶν,
ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδ' ἔχων μιάσματα (*Cho.* 1016-1017).

I am in pain for the deeds and the sufferings of my family and for my whole race, bearing the pollution of this victory of which no one is jealous.

Moreover, according to Peradotto, Orestes exhibits even less kinship with his Tyndarid ancestry, since he does not imitate his mother's thirst for power. Peradotto explains the divergence from the Atreid and Tyndarid ἥθη through the Aeschylean emphasis on τροφή: the fact that Orestes was raised by step-parents prevented the fostering and strengthening of his inherited ethos.⁷² Although Peradotto is right to a certain degree, Orestes is not as bloodthirsty for glory and power as his parents are presented in the *Agamemnon*, however, I believe that the Orestes we find in the play is not as pure and innocent as presented above. He may not have the heroic quest of his father but still he claims personal ambition to warlike glory. His interest in taking

suggest that Agamemnon is obliged to act so because of Zeus Xenios' command, Peradotto along with Hammond (1965) and Lesky (1966) insist rightly in my opinion that the play itself does not support such an interpretation. Agamemnon had accepted no epiphany of Zeus ordering him to pursue the war but his personal ambition and παρακοπή (madness, according to the chorus) incited such an undertaking. esp. Hammond (1965), 255-57.

⁷² Peradotto (1969), 259-60.

over the authority of the palace is a recurrent motif and connects him to his mother. The resemblance to his mother is supported by the design and the imagery of the play. The god's command is not his one and only motive and his actions do not depend absolutely on exterior factors.

The lines of *Cho.* 1016-17 that Peradotto cited above as proof of Orestes' pureness in respect to his ambitions are uttered towards the very end of the play at the point when Orestes begins to become mad. Two lines earlier he admits, “*νῦν αὐτόν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμώζω παρών, πατροκτόνον θ' ὕφασμα προσφωνῶν τόδε*”, which may be rendered “now I praise myself [on my deed], now present I lament addressing this robe that killed my father”.⁷³ Behind the apparent lament for his father Orestes laments his own fate and the *πάθος* that awaits him and is going to come to fruition according to the chorus' warning (1009). The *θ'* connects *παρών* and *προσφωνῶν*; *παρών* may bear the meaning of *ζῶν*, he laments for his father as he addresses the bloodstained robe and at the same time he laments for himself although still alive. The Orestes we watched through the play is going to become a different man due to his madness. The first *νῦν* will develop a little later in lines 1026-1033 which describe his mental situation until now (*ἔως δ' ἔτ' ἐμφρων εἰμί*, 1026) whereas the second *νῦν* is elaborated in 1034ff where he describes his current and future condition (*καὶ νῦν*

⁷³ This is a difficult passage. I preferred M's *θ* instead of Page's *γ'* and along with Hermann and others I consider *αὐτόν* to mean *αὐτόν* because I believe there is more meaning in this reading than in what Page's text allows. Garvie translates Page's text as “I praise himself in addressing the robe in which my father was killed”: “himself” refers to Agamemnon since “Orestes feels that he is virtually in the presence of his father himself, and can now at least offer him the *ἐπιτύμβιος αἶνος*”. However, I believe that at this point Orestes cares about himself and has no praise for Agamemnon in mind. The chorus has just mourned Clytemnestra's hateful death (1007) and Orestes' feeling of guilt makes him obliged to defend himself. Since in this view the lines 1010-1017 constitute Orestes' apology to the chorus for his deed, the anaphora of *νῦν* separates the lines 1010-1013 that contain his ascertainment that he did well- this is the reason he praises himself, because his mother should be punished as a doer of an evil action (*ἔδρασεν ἢ οὐκ ἔδρασεν;*)-, from the 1016-17 that show a kind or repent.

ὀρᾶτε μ', 1034). The *παρών* is reflected in line 1043, *ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκῶς τάσδε κληδόνας λιπών*. Orestes' last concern is the reputation he leaves behind now that he becomes a wanderer and stranger to his own country (1044) and he asks all the citizens of Argos to function as witnesses to his plight. However, this repentant and wretched Orestes is not how Aeschylus presented him during the play, despite Peradotto's suggestion. Whereas *now* that madness is about to overwhelm him he ascertains that Apollo offered him these *φίλτρα τόλμης* (promptings to dare such an action, 1029), as if he was bewitched by the god himself, *until now* as *ἔμφρων* he considered his deed to respond to justice (*κτανεῖν τε φημι μητέρ' οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης*, 1027). As I am about to show at the time of his conscious and mentally healthy condition he is not at all the "innocent" victim of the god's command or of fate's harshness. He determines to undertake the matricide along with all the consequences it would entail and two of these would be personal reputation as the son who avenged his father and resumption of his father's wealth and authority. Since we are in the world of tragedy many values seem to be competing with each other, and fame and personal glory are champions among them.

Orestes is a character in tragedy dragged here and there by really controversial motives. In none of the plays in which he appears does he seem to be a strong and determined character but in a way begs for another's advice or needs another person to consult and motivate him. Winnington-Ingram aptly explains that "'character" is derivative from motive; and motive is bound up with social values. It is not an individual as such, but an individual in society that is characterized".⁷⁴ Society namely pressures individuals to act in one way or another; this pressure in

⁷⁴ Winnington-Ingram (1983), 96.

combination with one's personal elements leads to an action. In the case of mythical tragic characters the personal elements depend on the myth and the actions that derive from the tradition, whereas the social pressure is reflected on the hesitations and ethical issues raised by the chorus or other characters that reflect the common opinion within the *polis*. Contemporary politics and social issues are imposed in the mythical time. In the *Choephoroi* Orestes' character embodies this polarity, his mythical duty against the moral issues it raises, quite well.⁷⁵

Orestes' character as the son of a father that belongs to the heroic era relies a lot upon aristocratic norms and is highly motivated by the factors of fame and reputation, which in the case of tragedy are spread and rumored within the *polis*. He is always expected to be the one to avenge for the honor and *kleos* of his father and in this light he always bears the burden of the need to make his own *kleos* by restoring the one of his father. His reputation is in a way scheduled by the city; to Orestes, the stories that circulate in Argos and create expectations in respect to his potential deeds are part of his personal *kleos*. In the frame of the "shame-culture" and a culture that judges according to results and not intentions Agamemnon's status and prestige should be restored at all costs through the hands of Orestes.⁷⁶ This is why he comes to Argos according to Apollo's command. Aeschylus uses this story-frame in order to expose the ethical problems it raises.

⁷⁵ In this perspective Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are more one-dimensional characters in the *Oresteia*. Agamemnon is never presented within the *Oresteia* as fighting between his duty and ambition as a leader and his love for his child as he does in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis* (85ff) since his case is pre-history for the plot of Aeschylus' trilogy. Clytemnestra is never in doubt about the crime she is going to commit in the *Agamemnon* because again her hatred and murderous intentions have been deepened during all the years of Agamemnon's absence; namely the roots of her moral behavior are also pre-history for the *Oresteia*. Orestes is the "newly appeared" character in the mythical plot and this is why the tension between the ethics of the mythical era and the present morality is presented through him.

⁷⁶ Winnington-Ingram (1983), 97.

In the opening of the *Choephoroi* Orestes appears at Agamemnon's tomb making propitiatory offerings; the first line of his prayer to Hermes of the nether world connects the son to his father's royal authority (πατρῶι' ἐποπτεύων κράτη)⁷⁷; the scene at Agamemnon's tomb plotwise elides the time that has passed between the ending of *Agamemnon* and Orestes' advent but thematically, for Orestes, it is "a rite *de marge* in which he moves from the status of the inheritor to that of the leader of the family".⁷⁸ In the following lines that are corrupted he explains the goal of his advent:

ἦκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι

....

τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθωι τῶιδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ
κλύειν, ἀκοῦσαι

...

≤ ≥ πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον,
τὸν δεύτερον δὲ τόνδε πενθητήριον

...

οὐ γὰρ παρὼν ὤιμωξα σόν, πάτερ, μόρον
οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφορᾷ νεκροῦ

I arrive in this country and I come back....at the edge of this tomb I cry out at my father to hear, to pay attention.....a curl of my hair (I offer) to Inachus for having nurtured me and this second one (I offer) as a sign of mourning....for I was not present to lament your death, father, and I did not raised my hand at your funeral...

We do not know whether he explains whether Apollo had sent him; the main reason for his return is to supply the long owed burial offerings to his dead father and to

⁷⁷ I accept Garvie's explanation that πατρῶια refers to the father of Orestes and not to Zeus since κράτος in the trilogy regularly describes the royal authority and it reflects the end of *Agamemnon* which closed with the new authority of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. cf. Garvie (1986), on. 1. Goldhill (1984), suggests that the ambiguity is significant since the connection of Agamemnon's power to Zeus' represents generally the paternal authority in opposition to what Bachoffen calls "das Mutterrecht"

⁷⁸ Vickers (1973), 398. Zeitlin (1978) points to the inversion in Orestes' case of the motifs of puberty initiations; instead of leaving his mother as an ephebe in order to serve out his military term on the wild frontiers, where he is temporarily situated in a savage state, he leaves his mother as a child and *returns* at puberty to commit a crime in his own home, which has been made savage and undomesticated by his mother's savage act. Separation from his mother is for Orestes not the result of going away from the safety of his house, but of actually killing her. "Orestes true initiatory experience begins only after his second expulsion from the palace in Argos and is terminated when, reincorporated into society in the third stage of the *rite de passage*, he returns to Argos now as a lawful ruler and successor to his father (160-61).

connect back with his descent. When he realizes the chorus' entrance he hides in order to understand who it is without being seen. In the *parodos* the chorus' words show that Agamemnon's royal authority was never in doubt and people respected it without any disagreement whereas the new rulers do not enjoy the same feelings. The usage of adjectives with absolute meaning is indicative: *σέβας δ' ἄμαχον ἀδάματον ἀπόλεμον τὸ πρὶν δι' ὧτων φρενός τε δαμίας περαῖνον νῦν ἀφίσταται* (Respect for the majesty which was formerly unconquered, irresistible in battle and in war, now stands aside, the respect which penetrated the ears and heart of the people).⁷⁹

Therefore, Agamemnon's authority as a king seems not to have been blemished in the ears and hearts of his people because of his daughter's sacrifice and a war avenging a woman's abduction. Because his wrongdoing against his daughter and the reason he waged the expedition to Troy are private matters; the city, however, has won great fame because of his actions and this is the reason he is still held in high respect among his citizens.

Orestes still hidden listens to his sister's helplessness as to what prayer to make at her father's tomb. Finally, following the chorus' advice the nucleus of Electra's prayer is that the avenger of Agamemnon's murder should appear. "Remember Orestes, even if he is absent" (115) the chorus advises Electra either due to its compliance with the traditional *talio* justice or because as representative of a group opinion the chorus also feels hatred and repulsion against the tyrants. The coryphaeus is the first who dares to specify the indefinite way of revenge: to Electra's question whether she should pray for a judge or a bringer of retribution (*δικαστήν ἢ*

⁷⁹ Aeschylus. *Choeph.* v. 55-57, Garvie's translation (1986), on 55-58.

δικησφόρον)⁸⁰ the coryphaeus replies “ask for somebody who will kill back” (121). Electra overpasses her initial hesitations as to whether a prayer against her mother is pious and makes Orestes’ return and their revenge against the murderers of their father the axis of her malevolent prayer (τῆς καλῆς ἀρᾶς, 145). Her hesitations prefigure those of Orestes at the killing of Clytemnestra but they both overpass them through advice and encouragement from companions. Her brother is mentioned at the beginning of the three periods of her prayer, first positioned next to her in sufferings (131) and asking for pity, then his return appears as the main point of her desire (first the verb ἐλθεῖν then Ὀρέστην in line 138) and finally she asks her father to present a *πμάορος*,⁸¹ a clear reference to Orestes. At the end of her prayer she asks from the chorus that they sing the paean of Agamemnon (genitive of possession), a rather surprising demand since a paean is usually a joyful song performed in the cases of a victory in battle, or to wish a victorious battle or with the libations after a banquet; this seemingly oxymoronic performance seems to look ahead to the victory Electra hopes to win on behalf of her dead father. Besides, it is a standard motif of the trilogy according to Garvie that a hoped-for victory turns out to be a matter for lamentation.⁸² Lines 152-159 reflect the *κωκυτοῖς* (150) that Electra also suggested as proper accompanying of the libations, whereas the paean consists of the last four lines (160-163):

ἴτω τις δορυσθενῆς ἀνὴρ (160)
 ἀναλυτὴρ δόμων †Σκυθιτὰ τ’ ἐν χεροῖν
 παλίντον’ ἐν ἔργω† βέλη’ πιπάλλων Ἄρης
 σχέδιά τ’ αὐτόκωπα νωμῶν ξίφη.

⁸⁰ For a discussion over the difference between these two terms and its implications cf. Goldhill (1986), 43.

⁸¹ cf. Ag. 1280, 1324 where Cassandra used the word prophetically of Orestes.

⁸² Garvie (1986), on 151.

May a man mighty with the spear come,
deliverer of the palace, an *Ares* brandishing in his hands during his task Scythian
weapons, double curved arrows, handling swords that demand fighting in close
quarters and held by the hilt itself.⁸³

No matter how corrupted the text is, the meaning is clear: the chorus enumerates the three possible types of weapons in the hands of either a man or a god⁸⁴, the man or the god that will come to take revenge for the king's murder. Although the meters used in the two parts of this lyric composition are the same, iambics and dochmiacs, in the four last lines the dochmiacs prevail, a meter for the expression of strong feelings.⁸⁵ Therefore, the chorus' wish is strong and intense: its meaning carries an epic atmosphere, may this man mighty in weapons, whom we understood until now to be Orestes but he is again conflated to an anticipated god⁸⁶, may this avenger come and set the palace and the name of his king free of disgrace and dishonor. These lines anticipate a powerful warrior, a godlike and overconfident man who will guarantee and reestablish the glory of the previous royal authority. But as they sound weird during the course of a lamentation and in the mouths of a female chorus of enslaved foreign women, so unlike the created expectations is the man who appears to have come for this purpose, and who is currently hiding behind a bush, the man Electra recognizes as her brother. His potential fame sounds much more glorious and epic than the character that actually appears on stage.

Orestes reappears in the recognition scene. Although until this point both at the end of the *Agamemnon* and the beginning of the *Choephoroi* he is the most anticipated person, the avenger of his father's death and the one expected to purify the miasma of the Pelopids' *oikos*, the reactions against his real advent and his live

⁸³ I attempted a translation counting on Garvie's comments (n.152-163) but the text is highly corrupted.

⁸⁴ cf. v. 119: ἐλθεῖν τιν' αὐτοῖς δαίμον' ἢ βροτῶν τινα

⁸⁵ Lypourlis (1975), 91.

⁸⁶ Garvie suggests that at *Cho.*1073 the chorus thinks Orestes' coming reminiscent of the coming of a god.

presence are always escorted by suspicion and hesitation. The chorus who was anticipating him a mighty man, at line 179 does not consider him brave enough (*καὶ πῶς ἐκεῖνος δεῦρ' ἐτόλμησεν μολεῖν*;) to have actually come back to the city from which he is exiled, leading Electra to assume that he might have sent the lock of hair on her father's tomb. This suspicion is going to become a standard motif in tragic recognitions; however, it betrays at the same time that the character of Orestes has not proven his bravery yet, he has not created an undisputed heroic reputation yet. He is a hero in name because of his aristocratic origin and the desire to restore his father's honor *but* in action he is still a hero to be made. This gap between the signifier of his name, the weight that his name bears in the trilogy up to now, and the unknown (or better unfulfilled) signified, namely the heroic identity that is expected to be formed by him, is reflected in the hesitations and shifting words and moods of the recognition scene. Goldhill argues that the arbitrariness of Electra's signs of recognition according to reason suggests her symbolic linking to her brother that gives a coverage of "objectivity" to schemes of thought and perception.⁸⁷ Orestes' recognition is actually a misrecognition since it trespasses the limits of rationale. Orestes himself notes against Electra's mistrust when she actually sees him that "now you fail to recognize me that you see me whereas when you looked at my lock of hair and my footprint you recognized me" (225-230). Actually Electra did not recognize him by those signs but compared them to her own and noticed the analogy; thus she hoped that Orestes had made the offerings (*σαίνομαι δ' ὅφ' ἐλπίδος*, 193). She wished the lock of hair to have a voice so that she wouldn't remain anxious in suspense (*δίφροντις οὐσα μὴ κινυσσόμεν*, 196). Electra recognizes her need of Orestes, her father's need for

⁸⁷ Goldhill (1984), 127-28 citing Bourdieu.

vengeance, her desire and hope for restoration of the paternal authority but fails to identify the present Orestes with her hope; Orestes stands in the trilogy until now as a vision. When actually viewed he is a signifier without a signified or rather a long waited signified which should be reached by a striving signifier. The stories and expectations of him have been growing in name all these years; he is dynamically but not actually a *kleos* bearer.

The way the play “approaches” him on stage is indicative of the ambiguities that accompany his advent. His lock of hair is by itself a joyful and honorable object on his father’s tomb (ἄγαλμα τύμβου τοῦδε καὶ τιμὴν πατρός. 200). Three words of the roots *āglā-*, *āgal-* and *ἐκπλαγλ-*⁸⁸, which sound similarly and recall the notions of splendiddness and admiration, are connected with Orestes’ presence: Orestes’ lock is an *ἀγλαίσμα* (193) by itself, then it is an *ἄγαλμα* (200) of his father’s tomb and when Electra actually has Orestes before her eyes she looks at him with amazement and admiration (*ἐκπαγλουμένην*, 217). With *ἀγλαίσμα* Electra utters her brother’s name for the first time in the recognition scene whereas Orestes introduces himself by name for the first time while reacting to Electra who is *ἐκπαγλουμένην*. Orestes still at this point of the trilogy looks like an adornment, a static object to admire, like a statue, which should be the result of having earned *kleos* rather than a precursor to it. When this static portrait will be put in motion his fame and expectation of making a glorious name begins to collapse. Orestes uses again the verb *ἐκπλαγῆις* to measure Electra’s expression of joy: do not be struck with excessive joy, for I know that the dearest friends may become bitter enemies (233-34). Reflecting the prior occurrence of the verb, not only Electra’s present joy but also the excessive admiration the inner

⁸⁸ From *ἐκπλήσσω* with metathesis. cf. LSJ n. *ἐκπαγλέομαι*.

audience of the tragedy feels for Orestes should be measured. This line except for the apparent meaning may also forebode how all those who expect and support the siblings in their task to take revenge for their father will finally turn against their deed. Even Electra and Orestes who between them are *φίλτατοι* will become bitter because of the consequences of their action.

The last part of the episode before the *kommos* is the most important in respect to the motives of the two siblings; interestingly enough the warlike glory embraces the three monologues that follow after the recognition scene, the first from Electra (235-245), the other two of Orestes (246-263, 269-305), separated only by a small intervention of the chorus. Electra expresses her joy and hope for the turn of their fate and fame now that Orestes is here; her expectation is summarized in one sentence with future indicative rather than hortative subjunctive or optative: ἀλκῇ πεποιθὼς δῶμ' ἀνακτήσῃ πατρός, 237, counting on your warlike strength⁸⁹ you will restore our father's house. Goldhill again suggests that ἀλκῇ πεποιθὼς recalls Andromache's invocation to her husband at *Il.*6.42 (Hector is characterized as ἀλκί πεποιθὼς at *Il.*18.158) who is asked to make Trojans retire from the battle for consideration of his family. On the contrary, Electra wants to send Orestes to battle and unlike Hector not to a fair fight but to a battle aspiring to be won through a trick.⁹⁰ At the end of Orestes' monologue in the mode of a ring composition Agamemnon's and the Achaeans' *kleos* is the last motive presented before they proceed to the actual deed:

πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰς ἐν συμπίτνουσιν ἱμεροί,
θεοῦ τ' ἐφετμαὶ καὶ πατρὸς πένθος μέγα,
καὶ πρὸς πιέζει χρημάτων ἀχηνία,
τὸ μὴ πολίτας εὐκλεεστάτους βροτῶν,

⁸⁹ ἀλκή does mean only warlike strength and not strength or power in all senses, cf. Garvie (1986), on *Cho.*237, Fraenkel on *Ag.* 106.

⁹⁰ Goldhill (1984), 133.

*Τροίας ἀναστατῆρας εὐδόξωι φρενί,
δυοῖν γυναικοῖν ᾧδ' ὑπηκόους πέλειν·
θήλεια γὰρ φρήν· εἰ δὲ μή, τάχ' εἴσεται*

Many desires concur in one thing,
both the god's orders and the great suffering for⁹¹ my father,
and, moreover, the need of property,
namely not to allow citizens who have the best repute among men, sackers of
Troy with glorious heart,
to be subjects to two women;
for his [Aegisthus'] heart is a female one. If not, he will quickly understand it.

It is apparent in the above text that the desire to restore the glory of Troy is still strong among citizens. However, many questions remain. Both the monologues of Orestes are religiously centered; the first is a prayer to Zeus and bears all the motifs of a prayer for help: Zeus should look upon their plight, how they are deprived of their father's heritage and they live as exiles⁹². Then follows the appeal to Zeus' self-interest: the god should save them from their current situation if he wants them to honor him the way their father did, and how can they honor him sumptuously without their wealth and how can Zeus send his prophecies to men without the proper royal authority?⁹³

The second monologue in the most part refers to Apollo's oracle about Orestes' task and what disasters will find the hero if he will not obey the god. In this context and under the powerful justification of the future act according to Apollo's commands, why does Orestes claim the taking back of his father's household as the last and by position strong motive, as if the religious one was not enough? Moreover, why does Electra claim that Orestes will count on his warlike power and not on the power of ethical and religious justice to achieve his aim?

⁹¹ suffering for and not "of" my father cf. Garvie on 299-304.

⁹² Orestes literally, Electra metaphorically. Garvie (1986), on 254.

⁹³ Kapsomenos (1971).

The answers may be found in Orestes' helpless and hesitant way of elaborating on Apollo's commands. A more sentimentally detached description would present I believe a serene god explaining to Orestes the religious reasons why he should take revenge for his father; as a god he probably knows how his father suffers in the Underworld because of disgrace and this argument would justify well enough his impending crime; the account of the consequences of a possible denial from the part of Orestes would naturally follow as a closure. However, in this description Apollo seems to speak as having a personal interest that Orestes takes revenge, he speaks loudly to the hero (*καὶ ξορθιάζων*) and throws out menaces as to what will happen to Orestes if he refuses to do the deed. It seems that the hero distanced from his own words tries to convince both himself and the audience by enlisting the god's threats climactically. Orestes' account consists of two parts: the first refers to Apollo's oracle that he should revenge by killing back in the same way as the murderers. The second enumerates the god's menaces both to Orestes and to the humans in general (*βροτοῖς*, 279) who fail to avenge their kin.⁹⁴ The torment that awaits such a person is multiple and the description of every level of the torment is really vivid: it is corporeal since his body will become sick with incurable illnesses (279-282); the description amounts in details and explanatory phrases the way illnesses amount upon the flesh, such as *λειχήνας* (281) and *λεύκας* (282). It is psychological: *λύσσα* and *μάταιος ... φόβος* (288) lead the sufferer outside the city with three verbs in the same line, the first two in asyndeton (*κινεῖ ταρασσει και διωκάθει πόλεως*, 289). The last action is related to the religious and social torment

⁹⁴ For the distinction between the part for Orestes and the general threats to humans cf. Garvie (1986), 111. Garvie disagrees with de Romilly (Dioniso, 45ff) that the solemn and oracular style of the oracle contrasts with the weakness of Orestes' human motives.

with abundance of negative infinitives: such a person cannot participate in libations and feasts, neither can he sacrifice on the tomb of his father, nobody accepts to lodge with him but he remains *ἄτιμος*, *ἄφιλος* and dies gradually dried up of life (291-296). The lines are intense and make the punishment more than vivid to the audience; at the same time they betray Orestes' crawling fear of such a punishment. Apparently despite Electra's opinion he acts more out of fear and does not so much count on his warlike power. After this horrible description comes Orestes' distanced question which betrays his mistrust against the oracle (297-98):

*τοιιοῖσδε χρησμοῖς ἄρα χρή πεποιθέναι;
κεῖ μὴ πέποιθα, τοῦργόν ἐστ' ἐργαστέον*

To these oracles am I obliged to have confidence?
Even if I do not, the deed must be done.

The god's commands concern mainly himself and his personal punishment if he fails to take revenge. The city is not affected. The hero seems to be looking for more humane and reasonable reasons to proceed with his task in order to be able to convince the citizens later when apologizing for his deed. His last argument about the Trojan glory sounds like a rhetorical invocation to the citizens' feeling. He is helpless as to what stance the city will keep against him if he obeys Apollo, and he finds refuge in the imaginary level of their pride. However, his rhetoric concerns only the civic sphere; the killing of Clytemnestra is a crisis of such proportion that traditional religious and ethical platitudes prove incapable of generating a resolution. His present speech will have practically no results or power after the matricide.

Orestes' speech becomes political. Lebeck⁹⁵ notes that Orestes "raises personal feeling to the level of impersonal necessity. He does not say, "Oracle or no oracle I myself desire to act" but "oracle or no oracle this act must be performed

⁹⁵ Lebeck (1971), 111.

because of the following desires”. Orestes is presented not only as an avenger of his father for personal reasons but as a *soter* of the whole city which participates in its former king’s glory since its men also fought at Troy. Orestes by fighting to preserve the glory of the previous generation of his city takes part and becomes glorious in the same terms, as if being himself a warrior of the Trojan war as well. He is not proceeding to his deed only out of fear for Apollo’s commands or only for personal benefit but also for the common benefit. The argument that he fights also to gain back his property (301) sounds a little materialistic “to modern taste”, but for Greeks Orestes’ status is bound up with his inheritance.⁹⁶ The latter is apparent in the way the following lines explain this “materialistic motive”. Recovering his father’s property means recovering his father’s royal authority and connecting to the Trojan line of his past. Similarly, Aegisthus in *Agamemnon* appoints himself a king under the single condition of controlling Agamemnon’s wealth (ἐκ τῶν δὲ τοῦδε χρημάτων πειράσομαι ἄρχειν πολιτῶν, 1638). Orestes claims public recognition and a political role by becoming the leader of revenge of the whole nation of the Achaean warriors.

McHardy reads Orestes’ story as a “saga of violence between elite rulers over power” and suggests that the theme of return to power is a prominent motive for Orestes and should not be seen as less important motive than blood revenge for him.⁹⁷ Although I find it an exaggeration to suggest that the story of Orestes mainly concerns the dispute over the Argive throne, because we are still talking about matricide and not a simple case of overturning a tyrant, however, it is more than obvious in the text that Orestes’ motive and aim is not only the double murder to avenge his father’s

⁹⁶ Garvie (1986) on. 299-304.

⁹⁷ McHardy (2008), 111-12.

blood but also the control and re-establishing of the prince in his paternal household; and in epic terms this is the proper, Zeus-ordained order. Already in the first line of the text Orestes acknowledges and names the city of Argos as *πατρῶι(α) ...κράτη* (1), and Electra connects her own and her brother's plight to their deprivation of Agamemnon's wealth (135-37). After the recognition scene she ascertains that Orestes will take over their father's household (237) and in his prayer to Zeus Orestes draws attention to their poverty (*τοὺς δ' ἀπωρφανισμένους νῆστις πιέζει λιμός· οὐ γὰρ ἐντελεῖς θήραν πατρῶιαν προσφέρειν σκηνήμασιν*, 249-51). After he recounts Apollo's oracle comes the motive list where he mentions as last and thus climatic by position the "need of things", namely that the conquerors of Troy cannot be reigned by two women (301-304). We may notice an inconsistency in the last lines: the word *χρημάτων* is mainly used for material goods, property; the other possible meaning as "situation, affairs"⁹⁸ is ruled out here since it functions as an objective genitive to *ἀχηνία*. This materialistic motive is followed by an epexegetis on the level of ideology, namely, the deliverance of the glorious people of Argos. Garvie explains the conceptual gap: "The usurpation is one way of describing the loss of Orestes' inheritance, which by delivering his people, he now hopes to recover." Orestes in Argos has a public role; he is the son of the previous king, a role he tries to restore first in the level of rhetoric as we mentioned. McHardy suggests another explanation; she stresses that men are likely to put forward publicly acceptable motives for action. While honor and revenge may be the stated reason for an attack, more material and self-interested motives are often in the background. McHardy also cites Herman who notes that in ancient Greece in most cases the desire for revenge

⁹⁸ cf. LS on *χρήμα*.

coincides admirably with calculations of expediency.⁹⁹ Can we then suggest that Orestes, after mentioning the *χρημάτων ἀχηνία*, realizes his limited scope and puts forward a more idealistic explanation in order not to sound as acting out of self-interest? I believe that this is a modern psychological explanation and that Orestes exhibits no such sensitivity. His emphasis on their poverty in his second prayer to Zeus proves this point. In the thought of the ancient hero something more is at stake: it is not only his father's honorable fame that he has to restore and preserve but also his own fame, which was lost in his exile years. Although he was not dead, it was as if he were dead to his community since an exile cannot offer assistance to his family and defend its rights in the community.¹⁰⁰ Besides during his childhood he could not claim his political position within the city. When he comes back he is expected to assume his role as a fully empowered adult male. Having no name and fame of his own; his fatherland is the field to achieve a glorious fame and is closely tied in with regaining of his inheritance; part of his inheritance is not only the material wealth of his father but also the glorious name of his people as sackers of Troy. He claims their glory as part of his own inherited glory for which he strives.

The chorus of *Agamemnon*, the old men of Argos, are angry enough against Aegisthus that in their final dispute with him they use as a threat, first, their personal and the citizens' curses against him which will be accompanied with stoning (*δημορριφεῖς...λευσίμους ἀράς*, 1616). and, second, the advent of Orestes himself (1646-48 and 1666) who is expected as the ultimate avenger for his father's honor and for the city's pureness, since according to the same chorus Clytemnestra polluted the

⁹⁹ For the general suggestion of this idea McHardy cites Ferguson (1995), *Yonmani Warfare*, Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research Press. Also Herman G. (1987), *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁰ For the honor-lacking status of an exile cf. McHardy (2008), 16.

city and the country gods with her crime (*γυνή χώρας μίασμα καὶ θεῶν ἐγγχωρίων*, 1644-46). Therefore, the final scene of the *Agamemnon* proves the public expectation and approval of Orestes' task. However, why does Orestes need to convince this city's internal audience for his deed by supplying other reasons for the matricide than the religious ones, the command of Apollo and the purification of the *miasma*? Isn't it a given that they all share the values of a common justice, driven by religious factors? At this point the text reveals a fissure between the traditional law of ethical and religious justice which supposedly forms the common opinion from generation to generation and the way people use and manipulate this common opinion about justice. Fame and reputation depend on the fulfillment of traditionally inherited values but "people" are not always honest in the preservation of these values. Therefore, the factors that create fame in tragedy are not as stable as in the case of epic because characters and action depend a lot on the stances of the city's society within the play, since tragedy as a genre allows reflections and statements of non-elite discourse as well.¹⁰¹ This is apparent in Orestes' case; the chorus has already warned him about the mob's eagerness to betray his plan to the new tyrants only for the sake of talking, (*γλώσσης χάριν*, 266). This last piece of advice reflects a risk inherent in any public action and informs us that, first, the people of the city were not that sentimentally involved in the current situation so as to be polemical against Aegisthus and Clytemnestra and supportive at any cost of the old royal authority and, second, they could be potential enemies of Orestes and Electra to the degree that individuals are inclined to spread rumors, only because of the dangerous habit of gossiping and involving oneself in other people's affair, without any sense of responsibility for the

¹⁰¹ Tragedy is a more urban genre than epic; In the *Iliad* Thersites is the only one to the opinion of the common soldiers to come to surface and he almost ruined the *Iliadic* narrative.

outcome of such rumors. Moreover, *Agamemnon*'s chorus had aptly described the behavior of the people who are not involved sentimentally with a situation, what we could call the city's audience within the play.

πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι
προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες·
τῶι δυσπραγοῦντι δ' ἐπιστενάχειν
πᾶς τις ἐτοιμός, δῆγμα δὲ λύπης
οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται.
καὶ ξυγχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς
ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι

Many people prefer to pretend in situations although they break justice. Everybody is eager to pretend that he laments along with a person in distress, although no bite of sadness reaches his heart, and others pretend they share one's joy by adopting similar face expressions to his but in reality they press faces that are not smiling at all.

People, therefore, easily pretend in respect to their feelings only for the sake of flattering but they do not honestly care. Many times, as the *Agamemnon* chorus eagerly admits, people change their minds according to the outcome. For example when Agamemnon left for Troy the chorus representing the common opinion at Argos thought their king was not a wise leader (οὐδ' εὖ πραπίδων οἶακα νέμων, 802) and in their hearts he was unfavorably painted (ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος, 801) leading men to die for the sake of an adulterous woman. However, now that everything turned out well he seems εὐφρων (806) to them. Therefore, Agamemnon had initially the faultless reputation as the great king of Argos which was then blurred among his citizen's minds because of his decision to lead the expedition to Troy for the sake of a woman who left on her own will. After his great achievement, the sack of Troy, his reputation and fame reached the highest level but his imminent murder will destroy his fame again. There is repetitiveness in the oscillation between good and bad fame which seems to be bequeathed also to the next generations. Agamemnon has a past of

good and then a past of bad reputation and Orestes is going to follow a similar course of reputation but he never reaches his father's climax of good-repute: Orestes has a bad reputation because of his father's murder, he tries to restore it to become good but it becomes worse because of the matricide.

Public opinion then oscillates according to attendant circumstances and not to a character's standard *ethos*. Agamemnon is not always respected as glorious only by the fact that he is the king or the leader, as happens in the *Iliad*. Orestes tries to keep this public opinion by his side: in the motive-list cited above he is presented as the avenger of all Trojan warriors and at the end of the play before he leaves he calls all the Argives as witnesses to his unfair sufferings (τάδ' ἐν χρόνῳ μοι πάντα Ἀργείους λέγω, 1040). Of course this invocation to the city's *benevolentia* corresponds to democracy's rhetoric and foreshadows Orestes' acquittal by the Areopagus but it also reflects a more concrete and limited form of reputation that extends mostly to the limits of the city than the epic concept of *kleos*. Achilles' *kleos* depended on his warlike glory and his semi-divine descent and even when he retired from battle the judgment of the people around him never influenced strongly his decision or affected his fame; although one could question his *ethos* of letting Greeks die in his absence, that very absence proved his worth all the more. Similarly, neither Achilles' anger nor the presumable disappointment of the common soldiers who lost the protective benefit of Achilles' manliness influenced the position Agamemnon had as the leader of the mission. In tragedy since the inner audience are specifically the people of a certain city although they could never openly question Agamemnon's authority since kingship was inherited¹⁰², however, it seems that they could judge him as wise or not and the reputation he gained among them affected the pragmatic reality: their

¹⁰² cf. *Cho.* 55-57

tolerance for the new rulers or their interest in the vengeance for his murder. On the one hand, “the king’s death is pitiful and fearful because it represents the inversion or destruction of so many social values”¹⁰³ but, on the other hand, Agamemnon was “unfavorably painted” in their minds because of his decision to lead a war for an adulterous woman. Had he not conquered Troy, it sounds plausible that these people might have accepted the new rulers without expecting revenge, since the new royal authority could be a better leader. The sack of Troy acts for Agamemnon’s fame as a catalyst and this is why the city is viewed by the chorus as favorable (πόλει τάδ’ εὖ, 824) in listening the “famous strain for the deliverance of the house” (819-820).

2b: Lamenting the necessity of *kleos*.

The *kommos* follows directly after Orestes’ reference to Apollo’s oracle and the list of his motivations. It begins with the chorus’ and Orestes’ and Electra’s contrary emphasis in their lament; the chorus exhorts the siblings to take action: Justice should prevail and the murderous wound should be repaid by a murderous wound (313-14), δράσαντα παθεῖν, τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ, 314-315. The proverbial phrase reflects the common and traditional opinion, the ancient Greek moral concept that an action demands a reciprocal action. Orestes seems unable to act at once and retires in words; he searches for a way that his prayer reach Agamemnon efficiently¹⁰⁴ and characterizes his song as a γόος εὐκλεής (321), a lament that brings glory; according to men’s sayings such a song is a source of gratification (χάριτες) to

¹⁰³ Macleod (1982), 142.

¹⁰⁴ This is a standard motif in laments, noticing namely the difficulty of making contact with the dead cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 633ff., *E.Or.* 1231, 1241, *S.El.* 356, *Ar. Frogs* 1175ff. Garvie (1986), on. 315-318. Lebeck (1971, p.103) emphasizes that in the *Choephori* this traditional motif takes on new meaning since “it cannot be separated from another question: can it be right to utter such words at all? Lament for a murdered man automatically involves prayer that his murder be avenged; but on the lips of Electra and Orestes the traditional piety of this prayer is sacrilege”.

the Atreidae in front of their house (*προσθοδόμοις*¹⁰⁵). The adjective *εὐκλής* has a causative force and renders the song itself a power for glory. Similarly Bacchylides (5,196) presents his song as actively telling forth Hieron's fame (*εὐκλέα γλῶσσαν*). However, Bacchylides' goal is the song itself whereas the tragic hero has to take revenge for his father. His insistence on presently honoring his father only by song betrays his numbness against his future task; he tries to please his father with a lamenting song that produces glory by itself; in fact, Orestes invokes the power of people's similar sayings (*κέκληνται*, 321), who call such a song a delight, *χάριτες*, a word also applying to the effectiveness of artistic creations. However, the chorus contrasts with Orestes' imaginative speculation that Agamemnon delighted in his lament the picture of the flame devouring his father's spirit because of his anger. The dead man needs action, not songs. The chorus insists that the legitimate lament (*γός* *ἔνδικος*, 330) seeks for punishment (*ποινάν*, 331), if Orestes wants his presence to please the dead at all. The repetition of the word *γός* with the accompaniment of a different adjective seems to contrast on a literary level the world of the epic and epinician glory with the world of tragedy. The song that confers glory uttered either within the Homeric epic or by a poet's mouth is not enough to guarantee the tragic hero's glory. Aeschylean tragedy demands acting according to the laws of justice, this is the only way to gain glory.

Electra in her turn characterizes their song as a *θρήνος* and breaks the appeal to her father with three rhetorical questions which show her utter despair: is it possible to conquer doom?(339). Despite the expected negative answer the chorus tries to

¹⁰⁵ This is not clear; Dodds changes it to *προσθοδρόμοις*, precursors. Radermacher explains it "those who are buried in front of the house". Such an interpretation does agree with the scholars' modern view that the scenery was not that realistic and the tomb of Agamemnon for reasons of theatrical economy was probably placed in front of the palace, unlike ancient real practice. cf. Garvie (1986), intro xlii.

encourage the siblings that there is a way out, the dirge can be replaced by a paean (343) and the god can inspire cheerful songs if he wishes (340-341). However, musical symbolism marks in the *Oresteia* “the passage of triumph into despair”.¹⁰⁶ Orestes is not moved at all by the chorus’ optimism. He takes recourse in unreal wishes and recalls Agamemnon’s own wishes in *Odyssey*:

εἰ γὰρ ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳι
 πρὸς τινος Λυκίων, πάτερ,
 δορίτμητος κατηναρίσθης·
 λιπὼν ἄν εὐκλειαν ἐν δόμοισιν
 τέκνων τ’ ἐν κελεύθοις
 ἐπιστρεπτὸν αἰῶ
 κτίσας πολύχωστον ἄν εἶχες
 τάφον διαποντίου γᾶς
 δώμασιν εὐφόρητον.

I wish you were killed, father, at Troy by the spear of a Lycian; Leaving behind a glorious reputation to your house and establishing your children’s life that men should turn around to look at it (with admiration) in the streets you would have a high tomb belonging to a land across the sea which the house could readily borne.¹⁰⁷

Orestes is haunted then by the idea of his father’s glory and honor; the word *εὐκλειαν* is almost at the center of the stanza. The setting of his unreal wishes is again an epic one, the glory of Troy is brought at the center of his attention and, since his father could not have an honorable tomb at home, it would be better if he had one at the Trojan field. The image of people turning to Agamemnon’s children in admiration is a strong one disclosing Orestes’ real fear: the public outcry if he fails to take revenge for his father. Similarly Agamemnon in his dilemma whether he should sacrifice Iphigeneia or not shows an analogous fear before the public opinion: *πῶς λιπόνανς γένωμαι ξυμμαχίας ἁμαρτόν;*, *Ag.* 212-213. The latter rhetorical question demands a

¹⁰⁶ Haldane (1965), 37 Haldane notes (p. 37-38) that although every victory is marked by the raising of the *ὀλολυγή* or the paean, in all ...instances “the victory celebrated contains within itself the seeds of disaster”

¹⁰⁷ The translation is mine based on Garvie’s comments.

negative answer, he cannot desert their alliance. Therefore, the alternative of killing his daughter sounds more feasible.¹⁰⁸ The parallel with Orestes is so powerful that the latter is actually replaying the situation; doing violence to a female in the family is the only way forward but this time the decision is easier since Clytemnestra is not innocent as was Iphigeneia.

Orestes would prefer it if his father had kept his own *kleos* in which his son would have a share rather than being obliged to carry the burden of restoring it. Detached from the world where the hero was honestly striving to gain glory, the concept of *kleos* is for Orestes a burden and a source of anguish. The chorus succumbs to Orestes' unreal wish and continues his line of thought by imagining Agamemnon as a king in the underworld as well and a minister of the underworld gods. Electra brings the chorus back to its initial line of advising: she wishes her father not to have been killed in Troy but his killers to have been killed before he had even come back (363-71). Orestes feels the necessity of revenge imposed by others, Electra feels revenge as necessity. The chorus replies sarcastically to Electra; it is easy to talk about these things, "she *can* do that" (*δύνασαι γάρ*, 374), commenting again upon Orestes' and Electra's inertia.

At the fourth stanza (380-385) Orestes decides to proceed with his deed moved by the chorus' encouragement but twenty lines after that he steps backward in a state of total despair; on the one hand he draws the attention of the chthonic powers to his own and his sister's pitiful state (*ἴδεσθ' Ἀτρειδᾶν τὰ λοιπ' ἀμηχάνως ἔχοντα καὶ δωμάτων ἄτιμα· πᾶν τις τράποιτ' ἄν, ὦ Ζεῦ*;; 407-09), but "he fails altogether to direct

¹⁰⁸ Hammond ((1965), suggests that "the order in which Agamemnon puts the alternatives shows his own preference". The fact that Agamemnon because of his passion for war and out of fear of the public opinion characterizes his choice to sacrifice Iphigeneia *θέμις* is for Hammond a blasphemous usage (47).

his mind to the necessity for matricide as a solution”.¹⁰⁹ It is after the description of Agamemnon’s funeral by the chorus and Electra that Orestes resolves absolutely to undertake the matricide. Electra stresses the disgraceful funeral where her mother did not allow any citizens or lamentations to take part (ἄνευ πολιτᾶν...ἄνευ δὲ πενθημάτων ...ἀνοίμωκτον ἄνδρα θάψαι, 431-33). Hame demonstrates how Clytemnestra by denying Agamemnon a “normal” funeral alienates him from his *oikos* which she takes under her control. The prohibition of Electra on public mourning denies her any public acknowledgement of her relationship to her father and her status in his *oikos*.¹¹⁰ Clytemnestra annihilates Agamemnon’s *oikos* and establishes a new one, her own, a fact that in turn weakens the social bond between her and her son. The absence of the city in Agamemnon’s funeral connects the city’s interest to the restoration of the prior royal authority; the new rulers deny the people’s participation in the palace’s affairs, since their authority is not legitimate.

Orestes is sentimentally charged and angrily stresses in his first line after the description the dishonor, ἀτίμως (434), unfolding in ἀτίμωςιν of the next line. The dishonoring of the dead man entails the dishonoring of the city and the house.

¹⁰⁹ Garvie (1986), on.405-9, p. 151. Garvie also notes that the dochmiacs of 406 reflect Orestes’ agitation. The function of the *kommos* in relation to Orestes’ resolve for matricide has been a matter of dispute among scholars. Schadewalt (1932) suggests that the decision of Orestes stays constant throughout the play, except for that one moment’s hesitation in front of Clytemnestra (899) and the development of the play lies in an unwavering resolve which grows clearer and more believable with the addition of each new detail. Thus, the *kommos* is dramatically static. On the other hand, Lesky (1943) views the *kommos* as dramatic and dynamic and suggests that in the *kommos* Orestes takes upon himself the responsibility and the guilt for a deed which until the *kommos* has been merely commanded by Apollo. Lebeck (1971), following Lesky’s line, argues that the decision of Orestes is “not static and unchanging. It grows in depth, takes a new dimension, as he faces the fact of the matricide and explores the dilemma of right action which is wrong.” I believe that it is a wrong approach to try to find exactly the line where Orestes decides or repents for the matricide and I totally agree with Garvie that “Orestes reaches his decision, not so much at different and consecutive times, as paratactically, in different but parallel ways.(Garvie on 306-478, The *kommos*, p. 124). The perpetuation of his father’s fame and the restoration of his sister’s honor is one of the ways that lead to his decision.

¹¹⁰ Hame (2004), 526-528. Hame on the other hand stresses that Orestes and Electra’s post-burial rites are rightful and not perverted as Clytemnestra’s. Orestes’ customary offerings and Electra’s sincere *thrēnos* reunite father and children and mark Orestes as the legal and rightful heir to Agamemnon’s *oikos*. Agamemnon’s *oikos* can now threaten the false *oikos* of Clytemnestra.

Macleod stresses that “the notion that the house and the city are enslaved and degraded by the usurpers pervades the whole play”.¹¹¹ Once again Orestes’ “epic”-self takes over and decides to correct his father’s dishonor and deliver his people. The help of the gods in the course of his task has been apparent since he has already mentioned Apollo’s command. What is new is the ascertainment that the action will also be his own (ἐκατὶ δ’ ἄμᾶν χερῶν, 437). Even if until now Orestes’ dilemma was part of his *μοίρα*, part of his heredity and the feeling was that Orestes had little choice, the latter phrase along with his argument at 299 that many desires coincide in proceeding with the deed, prove that his deed is not just imperative by the universe but *his* personal responsibility as well. In order to enhance Orestes’ decision the chorus refers to Clytemnestra’s mutilation of Agamemnon’s body (439); she did everything to make his father’s death intolerable for him to live with (441-42). Electra at this point stresses again her own dishonor so that Orestes feels he takes revenge for his sister as well. Before the final strophic pair the roles of Orestes and the chorus have been altered: Orestes is now determined for the matricide whereas the chorus expresses his fear for the future. Orestes’ hatred against his mother lies in his personal sphere of responsibility and does not depend on Apollo’s commands.¹¹² This conclusion stands against Peradotto’s reading of Orestes’ character as innocent and pure.

¹¹¹ Macleod (1982), n.77.

¹¹² Hammond (1965) has an apt analysis of the concept of *Moirai* explaining that the proper translation is not “fate” but “apportionment”, everything is part of a whole. People’s relationships are part of this whole as well, and any breach of their orderly way causes *ἀδικία*. Orestes abused such a relationship, that between a mother and a son, namely he did not respect the limitations imposed upon men by their “*moira*” and thus he had to pay for it. According to the mythical tradition he may be paying the original guilt inherited by Atreus but this is not how Aeschylus presents it. In Aeschylus heredity coincides with his own will, so he is fully responsible at the same time with the god’s commands.

2c: The destruction of *kleos* through the long awaited action.

In the second part of the play the action is accelerated; one final stop at the beginning of the first episode presents Orestes and Electra still praying to their father for help. The motifs of the dishonored dead and of the fair battle are present. Orestes asks to gain back his father's property which entails the power of Argos as well (*δὸς κράτος τῶν σῶν δόμων*, 480) since only thus would the dead Agamemnon meet the proper offerings and not remain dishonored (*ἄτιμος*, 485) during the banquets offered to the dead. The vocabulary becomes once again epic and there is lack of reference to the matricide. In this episode Orestes and Electra focus upon Aegisthus and the glory of warlike battle embraces the scene. Orestes characterizes his imminent task as *μάχην* while Electra praying to Persephone requests for victory in that battle, for “a comely victory or mastery (*εὐμορφον κράτος*)”.¹¹³ Garvie cites Willamowitz who assumes that at Ag. 454 the *εὐμορφοί* are the heroes, ‘dead in the prime of their beauty’ and takes this line to mean “let him return to us not as a *σκιά*, but as a glorified, transfigured hero”; Garvie believes that this is the correct view here and suggests that we should translate as “grant us his power in all the beauty of his form”, since Agamemnon never lost his *κράτος* in the underworld.¹¹⁴ I find Willamowitz’ interpretation a bit awkward since nowhere in the long prayer to their father do the children or the chorus ask him to appear to them as in an *epiphany*, as happened in the case of Darius’ ghost appearing in the *Persians*, they just asked for his help. I would suggest that we could render *εὐμορφον* not to Agamemnon but to the two siblings: for *εὐμορφον* and beauty of *φύη* is normally an attribute of young people. In *Iliad* 22 all

¹¹³ Garvie’s suggested translation n. 490. He compares to P.Ol.6.76, “where *Χάρις* sheds on the victors in the Games *εὐκλέα μορφάν*...as Gildersleeve remarks “victory transfigures”.

¹¹⁴ Garvie (1986), on. 490.

the Achaeans ran to view Hector's *φύην καὶ εἶδος ἀγητόν* (369-371), among Aeschylus' Fragments Niobe refers to her children's *εὖμορφον φύην* (Radt 154a, 8), which is now gone and only the shadow remains¹¹⁵, in Pindar's passage that we mentioned above, the victors to whom *Χάρις* casts a beautiful form are young, at *Agamemnon* 454 the dead heroes of Troy although beautiful in the prime of their beauty¹¹⁶ were buried in a strange land. Since *δῶς* governs an understood *ήμῶν*, namely Orestes and Electra, the epithet *εὖμορφον* may with a syntactical alternation (hypallage) refer to the siblings and function as a proleptic attributive; "Grant victory to us in order to be beautiful (*εὖμόρφοις*) again", since until now Orestes and Electra were presented in gloomy colors: they wander as sold servants (*πεπραμένοι γὰρ νῦν γε ἄλῳμεθα* (132), *κάγῳ μὲν ἀντίδουλος, ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων φεύγων Ὀρέστης* (135-36), *ίκέτας* (336), *φυγάδας* (337), *τὰ λοιπ' ἀμηχάνως ἔχοντα καὶ δωμάτων ἄτιμα*, 407-8); or even plain attributive, "to us who are beautiful" in opposition to the ugly souls that now hold your power.¹¹⁷ For Agamemnon's children are the saviors of their father's reputation (*κληδόνοσ*, 505), and while Aegisthus and Clytemnestra trapped him in a fishing net and killed him (*μέμνησο δ' ἀμφίβληστρον*, 492), Orestes and Electra would be as corks who draw up the net, preserving the flaxen linen that comes from the depths, 506-507.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Pickard-Cambridge (1936) assumes that the phrase *εὖμορφον φύην* is governed by an aorist ind. if the speaker is Niobe and assumes this verb to be *ἔκλαυσα*; the beauty might be her own, which had caused her calamity, or that of her children, of which she may have boasted in her self-exaltation against Leto. (112) I find the second proposition more probable since she is lamenting on their grave.

¹¹⁶ cf. Denniston-Page, Fraenkel, Χατζηανέστης (2000), 137.

¹¹⁷ Similarly Goldhill (1984) notes "*εὖμορφον*" in opposition to the present *κράτος* of Clytemnestra (154).

¹¹⁸ For the image cf. Pi *Pyth.*2, 80-81.

After their extended offerings and prayer to Agamemnon Orestes and Electra move away from the tomb and Orestes listens to the reason that his sister and the chorus were sent to make these offerings: Clytemnestra sent them in order to appease the dead king out of fear for a horrible dream she saw, namely that she nursed a snake; Orestes, who interprets the dream as an answer of his father, views himself as the snake and characterizes himself as *ἐκπαγλον τέρας* (548), recalling and transforming Electra's expressions of admiration that we observed in the recognition scene to a negative vision, as he will be from now on, since he is not only becoming bestial in Clytemnestra's dream (*ἐκδρακοντωθείς*, 549)¹¹⁹ but also in the play: this is the point where the "innocent" Orestes is presented as a person full of hate for his mother and is capable of committing the matricide. Instantly, Apollo's command is totally forgotten, and the motive seems to be only his personal hatred with the surface of the fair battle; Apollo is mentioned again as a prophet (*μάντις*) and not as the commanding god whose order Orestes cannot disobey. When he contrives the plan and explains to Electra and Pylades how they will proceed with the murder he invokes Apollo's instruction to kill with deceit (*δόλω*, 557); he and Pylades will ask to be accommodated at the palace as guest friends with a Phocian accent. Orestes will kill unarmed Aegisthus before he even learns their true identity. This is not a very warlike battle to gain back a glorious reputation, but just a murderous scheme. However, Orestes insists on his more "glorious" terminology by assuring that probably Hermes

¹¹⁹ O'Neil (1998, esp. p. 221-223) examines the serpent motif in the *Choephoroi* and accurately notes that "As Orestes vacillates between his maternal and paternal heritage, he is alternately a snake and the prey of a snake". Orestes is assimilated to his mother's snake nature in order to gain her ability to kill. Similarly Goldhill (1984, p. 156) claims that *ἐκδρακοντωθείς* suggests not only an identification of Orestes with the animal but also Orestes as the object of Clytemnestra's rearing. However, in the play he was supposedly raised by the nurse and then by Strophios. Clytemnestra is cancelled as his *τροφεύς*.

whose statue is at the palace door¹²⁰ will superintend him in accomplishing in his *ξιοφηόρους ἀγῶνας*, 584, by setting him upright (*ὀρθώσαντί μοι*, 584). The verb *ὀρθόω* especially in Pindar has the connotations of exalting, honoring, making famous¹²¹, an interpretation easily related to the context of these lines, in which Orestes seeks to gain back the lost glory of his father with contests of sword. Such as an athlete could gain glory at the athletic contests thus Orestes claims glory in a sword-bearing contest: but he alone would bear a sword, since he is not engaging in battle as a sword would suggest. Besides, Hermes was also a symbol of the *palaistra* and this coincides with his presence at Orestes' fight.

The usage of vocabulary and imagery from athletic contests is a recurrent theme in the *Choephoroi*. Already in the *parodos* Electra prays to Hermes and Agamemnon to send to them a victory-bearing justice (*δίκη νικηφόρω*¹²², 148) and to sing a paean (151) for the dead, a song more suitable in the case of a victory than of post burial offerings. We noted the usage of *μάχην* and *ἀγῶνας* at the beginning and at the end of the first episode. At the second *stasimon* the chorus compares Orestes to a young horse that, deprived of his charioteer and yoked to a chariot of disasters (*ἐν ἄρμασιν πημάτων*, 795-96), tries to finish the course.¹²³ Garvie notes: "If Roux is right that when the comparison is applied to a man it indicates not youthful vigor but weakness, Orestes is engaged in an *ἀγών* which is perhaps too great for his strength".

¹²⁰ cf. Garvie (1986), on 583-4, who finds *τούτω* to refer to Hermes as the most satisfactory interpretation since Hermes bears the title *ἐναγώνιος* and in 728 he is the one invoked to inspect in *ξιοδογήτησιν ἀγῶσι*.

¹²¹ cf. Pindar *N.1.15*, *I. 6.65*, *P 4.60*.

¹²² Goldhill (1984) suggests that in the whole play there is an interplay between *νίκη* and *δίκη* (178).

¹²³ *ἀνδρός φίλον* may be either possessive with *πῶλον* or genitive of separation with *εὖνιν*. I prefer the latter option because it finds a parallel in 247 where Orestes is *γένναν εὖνιν αἰετοῦ πατρός* and because thus explains the difficulty the horse has to reach the end of the course, because it has no help. I render *ἄνδρός* as charioteer because I believe it completes the image of the metaphor.

In any case, the metaphor of the victory in the games that Orestes and Electra used until now is distorted, since Orestes as a young horse is represented as yoked and doomed to finish the course in the greatest difficulty without desiring it or expecting a reward. At 480 his victory is related to the power of Agamemnon's palace and *that* battle would offer to him an *εὐμορφὸν κράτος* (490); on the contrary, the race of lines 794-799 presents his fight as demanding a coercive victory without anything to expect. The moment before Orestes kills Aegisthus the chorus sings the first song of joy, already wished at 386 (*ἐφ' ὅσῳ γένοιτό μοι πευκάεντα ὀλολυγμόν*) and which would be appropriate for a victory (*...κλυτὸν δωμάτων λυτήριον θῆλυν οὐριοστάταν ὀξύκρεκτον βοητὸν νόμον*, 819-824). At the end of the song Orestes' fight is called *πάλην*, wrestling¹²⁴, in which he participates alone against two (*δισσοῖς*, 867), without a competitor in reserve to take over the fight if needed (*μόνος ὧν ἔφεδρος*, 866)¹²⁵ and he is called *θεῖος*, a standard Homeric epithet that in Homer accompanies heroes such as Achilles, Ajax or Odysseus and whose usage is an honor for Orestes who at this point reaches the highest level of his glory. However, even now the lines can bear a second interpretation as well. Aeschylus uses this epithet only once again for a single human, namely for the dead Agamemnon, at a context where the chorus may allude to Orestes: *τίς δ' ἐπιτύμβιος αἶνον ἐπ' ἀνδρί θείῳ σὺν δακρύοις ἰάπτων ἀληθείαι φρενῶν πονήσει;*, *Ag. 1548-50*). Orestes, then, at the peak of his glory has the same fame as his dead father, a blurred one, and bears the same

¹²⁴ Wrestling metaphors are also to be found in 339, 498, 692.

¹²⁵ LSJ renders *ἔφεδρός* in a game context as the third competitor in contests who sits by to fight the conqueror. Poliakoff (1980), p.258 suggests that "the technical term *ἔφεδρός* stresses the cyclical nature of the violence of the house of Atreus: Orestes' action will be another round, as it were, in a tournament of destruction". For a general description of the rules and ideals of wrestling cf. Gardiner (1905).

epithet (*θεῖος*) as his dead father. The fact that he has no one to stand by him in the game may reflect the loneliness he is about to experience on behalf of the community because of the “victory” he is about to accomplish.¹²⁶ Electra has already informed us at the *kommos* of the *Choephoroi* that Agamemnon was buried without people and public laments as it would be appropriate for a king. Orestes’ advent and presence is the only condition that allows such an open lament (*γόνον*) for Agamemnon, and as such functions on one level the *kommos*. Orestes’ vengeance would also allow a public participation in the mourning of the king. The syntax of the verb *πονήσει* with a concrete thing, here *αἶνον*, is a rare one; in epinician poetry *πόνος* is connected to the toil of the athlete¹²⁷ as in Homer with the toil in the battlefield.¹²⁸ Orestes should fight in order that Agamemnon might be mourned.

The chorus wishes that he may win the contest (*εἴη ἐπὶ νίκῃ*, 868), a wish that fits with the contest frame but which also entails a matricide. When Orestes actually kills Aegisthus, who is not even given a last word except from exclamations of pain¹²⁹, the chorus changes from complete approval of Orestes deed to dissociating themselves from the affair in order not to be thought guilty (*ὅπως δοκῶμεν ἀναίτιαι κακῶν εἶναι*, 873). Orestes’ murder is again characterized as a battle ‘whose end has been now decided (876)’, a line that also marks the end of the legitimate vengeance. The murder of Clytemnestra that follows, although expected also by the choruses both of *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi*, exceeds the limits. Clytemnestra and Orestes

¹²⁶ cf. Garvie (1986), on 871-74: “Aeschylus, as with *μόνος* at 866, begins to prepare the audience for the isolation of Orestes at the end of the play.

¹²⁷ cf. Bacchylides *παγκρατίου πόνον* (*Ep.* 12.23 Jebb), in Pindar: *ἀκμαί τ’ ἰσχύος θρασύπονοι* (*Ol.* 1.96), *συν πόνῳ τις εὔ πράσσοι* (*Ol.* 11.4), *λάθαν πόνων* (*Nem.* 10-24). *πόνος* is also connected with the poet’s labor cf. *Isthm.* 8.8.

¹²⁸ cf. *μάχης πόνος* *Il.* 16.568.

¹²⁹ His death is less important than Clytemnestra’s for the plot. His death is easy in terms of ethics, he is just the accomplice and of course not a parent or brother. For dramatic efficiency the play quickly passes his part since he means nothing for Orestes’ dilemma. The target is Clytemnestra.

continue with the contest vocabulary. When Clytemnestra realizes that Orestes is about to kill her, she asks for a man-slaying axe to see whether she wins or be defeated (*εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν ἢ νικώμεθα*, 890), as if by undertaking a male-self Clytemnestra is ready to fight with Orestes. Her female-maternal side¹³⁰ utters the ultimate appeal to Orestes which juxtaposes her breast to the previous reference to the axe (*ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσαι μαστόν*, 896-7). Orestes insists on his initial decision, especially after Pylades' intervention, and chooses the axe over his mother's breast. He is characterized *τλήμων* by the chorus, which is another double meaning epithet. Garvie¹³¹ suggests that here it should be translated "patient, steadfast" since the emphasis is on Orestes' success, however, later the phrase becomes almost formulaic bearing the negative sense, namely "miserable Orestes", a meaning that the epithet has at 386 and 596. Again at a point where Orestes' reputation could become glorious because he fulfills his father's, his sister's and the community's expectation for vengeance, however, the poetic language foreshadows his personal destruction.

The lyric song that follows is a song of victory during which, in respect to stagecraft, Clytemnestra is murdered in the palace. The chorus compares Orestes to a

¹³⁰ Clytemnestra's male characteristics and assumptions of male identity is a main motif of the trilogy. cf. McClure (1999), Foley (2001) Ch. III.4. Zeitlin (1965) examines why Iphigeneia's sacrifice is not mentioned at all in the *Choephoroi* and finds the answer in Clytemnestra's character, which is further corrupted in the second play of the trilogy: "With the passage of time and the intensification of the liaison between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the original, the justifiable motive, has withdrawn into a dim memory.....In the *Agamemnon* she destroys the bond of marriage...primarily as a self-righteous mother [to avenge for her sacrificed daughter]. But here [in the *Choephoroi*], by denying her two remaining children, she has denied her role as a mother." In similar terms Whallon (1958), reads Clytemnestra's appeal to Orestes by showing him her breast as a cold invention comparing it to Hecuba's similar appeal to Hector in the *Iliad* (*Il.*22.82-3). Whallon concludes: "Thus the dream appears a false omen: Orestes cannot be thought the serpent in swaddling clothes to which Clytemnestra offered her breast, if she did not fill for him as a child this most tender office of a mother....Orestes is freed from Clytemnestra and reprieved: she is neither nurse, nor parent." Moreover, Kyriakou (2011, 151) connects the uncomfortable emphasis on the infant's gums while nursing to the jaws of the snake in Clytemnestra's dream. Kyriakou (150, esp.n.14) suggests that the character of Orestes whom the audience have become familiar with so far would not have been swayed by appeals to the sacrifice of his sister, and since he could not dismiss in a few lines his father's guilt that Clytemnestra would invoke, he would run the risk of being presented as a callous brother and an incompetent debated.

¹³¹ Garvie (1986), n. 932-34.

lion and to Ares, recalling their expectation of a man or a god (162) to avenge their king. The verb that describes his return is ἔλασε (939), picking up the idea of a chariot-race; Orestes as a charioteer removed the bridle of the house (specifically the curb-chain of the bridle, ψάλιον οἰκῶν, 962) and raised the house from the ground (964). Orestes is hymned like a true victor and no hint foreshadows the imminent disaster. Orestes' entrance apparently followed by mute extras, who carry the bodies of the murdered¹³², loud with the boastful ἴδεσθε and the long but negatively loaded epithets attributed to Aegisthus and Clytemnestra (πατροκτόνους τε δωμάτων πορθήτορας) is presented as a glorious victory over the city's tyrants who are called "sackers" of the city, connecting the family's individual fate with the community's. Orestes justifies his deed in a monologue condemning the two victims but the chorus' reaction shifts the victorious atmosphere: Clytemnestra was killed with a hateful death and against him that remains the disaster blossoms (1007, 1009). Orestes cannot defend himself any more. He suffers for his mother's death, his family's fate and his personal deed bearing the pollution that provokes no jealousy for such a victory (ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδε ἔχων μιάσματα, 1017). The charioteer is driven off course by the advent of his madness (ὥσπερ ζὺν ἵπποις ἡνιοστροφῶ δρόμον ἐξωτέρω, 1022-23). The chorus' last glorious song for Orestes' victory is totally overturned and the hero characterizes himself νικώμενον by his paranoia.

¹³² Taplin (1977) convincingly argues that the *ekkyklema*, the wheeled platform was probably not in use here as it was not also at the end of *Agamemnon*. In later tragedy when this machine was used, some kind of "notice" was given, whereas here, where such a signal would be expected since "the skene was still new and the conventional machinery still a curious novelty" no notice is given. Moreover, in the present scene of the *Choephoroi* Orestes is calling on the sun as witness, so that by then the scene was thought of as outside (325-326, 357).

The latter is a standard case where an image or symbol interwoven as a motif through the whole play ends up in a concretization at an actual scene of the play.¹³³ Orestes the warrior, the wrestler or the charioteer who aspired only for a victory against the injustice to his father is now fighting in front of the audience with his mind and the Erinyes that came to haunt him; he runs to win the race against them. He leaves again as an exile and suppliant to Apollo's Delphic shrine, returning back to his point of departure, and the only thing he gained in his attempt to fulfill the community's and his father's expectation was ill-repute. In vain the chorus tries to encourage him (1044-47):

*ἀλλ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξας, μηδ' ἐπιζευχθῆις στόμα
φήμηι πονηρᾷ μηδ' ἐπιγλωσσῶ κακά·
ἤλευθέρωσας πᾶσαν Ἀργείων πόλιν
δυοῖν δρακόντοιν εὐπετῶς τεμῶν κάρα.*

But you did well, do not be yoked in your mouth under injurious repute, do not utter abuse against yourself, you delivered the whole city of Argos from the two serpents by easily cutting their heads.

The women of the chorus are afraid to listen to utterances of ill omen, because since Orestes accepted in words that his deed is a crime with disastrous consequences, namely that he will become an exile with the worst reputation of matricide, is enough to make his fears a reality. The motif of the power of words that defines the facts of reality is inherent in ancient Greek thought and present in our play: the chorus intervened in the scene with Orestes' nurse and advised her to distort Clytemnestra's order and invite Aegisthus to come and listen to the news of the supposed death of Orestes alone, not accompanied by his soldiers. The justification "For the success of a distorted message depends upon the messenger" (773) connects with the previous announcement of the chorus that they are going to show Orestes the power of words

¹³³ cf. Zeitlin (1965), 488-489, who cites Lattimore and Lebeck for the development of this theory.

(στομάτων...ἰσχὺν, 720-21) where they called on personified *Peitho* as their helper. Aegisthus ironically comes because he does not trust the rumors of women (845-46). Since the chorus consists of women Orestes' last praise in the play as the savior of the people of Argos may be read as a *γυναικογήρυτον κλέος*,¹³⁴ having no power at all.

Another element which could *a priori* subvert Orestes' *kleos* in respect to the values of the warriors of Troy, to whom he has tried to be connected, is the fact that his scheme depends on *δόλος* in order to succeed. In the *Iliad* the warriors confront each other on the battlefield on equal terms and the best wins. No ruses to reproach anyone, no tricks unpredicted by the rules of the polemic art.¹³⁵ Although Due and Ebbot prove that ambush was not considered as an 'unheroic' kind of warfare but in fact '*polemos* and *lokhos*' are complementary in the cyclic epic tradition, however, the list they offer where the word *dolos* as part of the thematic vocabulary of an ambush appears, consists mostly of references to the *Odyssey*, the epic where Odysseus wins *kleos* through his manifestations of deceptions and ambushes, and not to the *Iliad*. In fact, the scholars admit that although present, the *metis* and ambush themes are suppressed in the *Iliad* and that although the epic tradition knew Achilles also as a successful ambusher, in our *Iliad* he is clearly a *promakhos aner*.¹³⁶ Not only on

¹³⁴ cf. Ag.486-87: ἀλλ' ταχύμορον γυναικογήρυτον ὀλλυται κλέος.

¹³⁵ In *Iliad* the word *δόλος* is in the majority of occurrences used for Hera, who bears the standard participle *δολοφρονέουσα* (cf. *Il.*14.197, 300, 19. 97, 106, 112 also 15.14), for Odysseus *Il.*3.202, 23, 725, for Menestheus, son of Peteos, whom Agamemnon reprimands as *κακοῖσι δόλοισι κεκασμένε* 4.339, for the tricks that Proitus' father-in-law schemes against Bellerophontes in order to kill him (6.187). *Δόλος* has never a positive connotation and is never connected with a warrior like Achilles, Hector, Diomedes, Ajax etc.

¹³⁶ Due and Ebbot (2010) read the Doloneia (*Iliad* X) not as Odyssean and non Iliadic because of its individual author and its late date but as part of an existing epic tradition that viewed ambush not as inferior but as alternative warfare. Ambush is preferred when the force used in the *polemos* does not. Achilles himself seemed to have killed Troilus and Lykaon in an ambush and to suggest ambush warfare to the Achaeans in order to hold back Hector (9.421-26). The latter option, however, is preferred in my opinion because nobody *can* confront Hector in an open battle, so he himself would not need ambush to fight the Greeks. Moreover, the scholars conclude that the modern notion of 'heroic behavior' have colored our approaches to Homeric epic and the *lokhos* warfare of *Iliad* 10 does not seem so anomalous when we consider the Archaic epic tradition as a whole. Especially, however, with

Homeric battlefield but also in the archaic and classical era *δόλος* entails the denial of the values of the hoplite warrior as Vernant notes.¹³⁷ Orestes, although Electra trusts in his *ἀλκῇ* (*Cho.*236) to avenge his father and although his boast is to win with *ξίφηφόρους ἀγῶνας* (*Cho.* 584), however, he is going to use *δόλον* in his revenge as Apollo himself suggested in his oracle (ὥς ἂν δόλῳ κτείναντες ἄνδρα τίμιον δόλῳ γε καὶ ληφθῶσιν, ἐν ταῦτῳ βρόχῳ θανόντες, ἥ καὶ Λοξίας ἐφήμισεν, 556-57). Using trickery would, of course, be the only solution; he could not challenge his mother to a duel nor could he bring an army or a number of helper warriors with him. The main reason the play projects is that Orestes is going to use *dolos* in symmetry to his father's death. In his initial reference to the oracle he mentioned that the god ordered him to kill the murderers of his father in the same way (*τρόπον τὸν αὐτόν*, 274)¹³⁸, apparently with a “net” if he wanted to be precise. Moreover, the specific reference to the “net” at 557 along with *ληφθῶσιν* may make the audience expect that Orestes will again use a net or the same net in his revenge.¹³⁹ The trick Orestes uses eventually is nothing connected to a net, but a disguise, he pretends to be

the word *dolos* the passages they refer to as connecting *dolos* to ambush are the following: *dolos* used to describe the ambush of the Greeks with the Trojan Horse (*Od.*8.494), the ambush of Bellerophon (*Iliad* 6.188), the ambush of Proteus by Menelaus (*Od.*4.437, 453), the ambush on the shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18.526), the death of Agamemnon (*Od.*3.325, 4. 92, 11.433), the suitors attempted ambush of Telemachus (*Od.*2.360), and the death of the suitors at the hands of Telemachus (*Od.*1.296) and Odysseus (*Od.*11.120). We notice that the references to *Iliad* are only two, the first with Bellerophontes in negative terms as explained in n.84 above and the second in the description of the shield, again in negative terms since it portrays the intrusion of violence in a peaceful bucolic landscape and a cattle raid that ended up in an open war. Besides, in the epic tradition there is a highly respected hierarchy of who is the best warrior, Achilles and then Ajax; Odysseus is the best in other terms. Finally, Orestes in our play, if he felt *dolos* to be the same as an open battle he probably did not need to render his choice to Apollo's oracle and the same is true about Sophoclean Orestes. Our perception of “heroic” is not so modern.

¹³⁷ Detienne-Vernant (1978).

¹³⁸ I agree with Garvie to take the phrase with *ἀνταποκτείνειν* that follows because with “Page's punctuation the meaning is weaker”. Garvie (1986), n. 274.

¹³⁹ cf. Garvie n. 195, who says that with *θανόντες* the noose might be thought metaphorical but the position of *ληφθῶσιν* rules this out.

a guest-friend from Phocaea and in his speech he presents himself in his true identity as dead. (τεθνεῶτ' Ὀρέστην εἰπέ, 682). Therefore, either Orestes in part obeys Apollo's command, he kills with ruse but not using the exact trick with the net, or the dramatist changes Orestes' kind of ruse in order to remind the audience of the great epic trickster, Odysseus and, thus, supply Orestes' fame with a positive kind of trick. The net would connect him to Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' ruses whereas the disguise in order to return home and kill the usurpers of his royal authority connects him to Odysseus¹⁴⁰ and adds *kleos* to his potentials through a different perspective; Odysseus connects his *kleos* with his ruses (εἰμ' Ὀδυσσευς Λαερτιάδης, ὅς πασι δόλοισιν ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μεν κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει, 19-20). Charles Segal studies the ironies and reversals that accompany Odysseus' *kleos* in the *Odyssey* and comments: "Viewing Odysseus nostalgically from the needy perspective of Ithaca, Penelope endows him [Odysseus] with the traditional heroic *aretai* and the traditional wide-spreading *kleos*. Odysseus himself, fighting his way out of the strange fairyland of his sea travels, sojourning among the unwarlike Phaeacians, has come to experience and value a very different aspect of himself....Here he needs a larger, more universal, more convertible form of *kleos*. He must also exercise skills that have an ambiguous value among the warriors of Troy."¹⁴¹ Segal connects the contradictions in Odysseus' "heroism" with the time the *Odyssey* is composed, when the heroic ideal is itself undergoing change and redefinition and the hero is refashioned in new ways. However, Aristotle connects tragedy's style with the *Iliad* and comedy's with the *Odyssey*. Orestes' heroism cannot gain by allusions to Odysseus because Aeschylean

¹⁴⁰ cf. McHardy (2008, 108): "Simultaneously, both Orestes and Odysseus aim to re-establish themselves and their offspring in a position of power and to secure for themselves the other advantages of their paternal households".

¹⁴¹ Segal (1996), 206-07.

and Sophoclean tragedy does not allow an acceptance of a new kind of hero equally likely to win *kleos* alongside the Iliadic warriors and because tragedy's atmosphere has nothing to do with the *Odyssey*'s. Orestes' *dólos* resembles more his mother's, who at the end of the play draws the parallel of her style with her son by announcing that "we are going to be killed with tricks the way we ourselves killed" (*δόλοισι δόλούμεθ' ὥσπερ οὖν ἐκτείναμεν*, 888). We would expect Orestes to be as successful as Odysseus with his trick, but the difference in atmosphere between Aeschylean tragedy and the *Odyssey* does not allow this. Probably the net was never intended as a specific means of death but as a "web" of trickery, imposed by literary and practical reasons, only to collapse as a means of winning *kleos* in the case of Orestes' frame of action.

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Moreover, tragedy's possibilities are different from those of an epic narrative. The epic world stands as the ideal traditional background against which new styles, practices and relationships are developed. Odysseus succeeds as a trickster hero; disguised as a beggar, he manages with a trick that also needed extreme skill, the arrow test, to kill all the suitors and he regained his palace and thus perpetuated his *kleos*. However, at 23.137 he advises Telemachus to create a situation of a feast in the palace so that the rumor of the murder of the suitors not go abroad in the city (137-38) and put them in danger. At the end Athena herself prevented the civil war at Ithaca. Orestes follows the same order at his return home (disguise, murder of the usurpers of

¹⁴² Pontani (2007) also connects Orestes' *trugrede* with Odysseus' disguise from a different angle. He enlists the returns of both heroes under the motif of "homecomer's lying tales" which is a traditional element of popular songs and epics and serves the purpose of testing (*πειρα*) the relative's loyalty. Pontani argues that for "both of them [Odysseus and Orestes] disguise and lies represent the only means available to complete their *nostoi* and avoid Agamemnon's fate. Odysseus succeeds in testing his relatives and restoring his alliances and recognitions whereas Orestes has a different purpose: he tries his mother in order to understand her feelings but her reaction would never change his decision to kill her; "this dialogue with Clytemnestra marks Orestes' last step towards full knowledge of, and separation from, family ties". (esp. 213, 219-220)

the royal authority, restoration of his father's *kleos*) but in the world of tragedy the gods are not so eager to help with such a crime and the community is not distant from the sphere of the heroes but topographically present and reflected in the reactions of the chorus. In tragedy the *polis* is among the main characters, whatever happens on stage reached its ears immediately and directly. The very topography of the ancient Greek theater suggests such an interpretation: in the *Odyssey* we watch the heroes in the palace with the doors shut; the outside of the palace, namely the city of Ithaca, can only listen to them, not view them and, thus, it is possible for them to “stage” a feast in the palace so that the city listens only to music and songs and not to the real situation (ὥς κέν τις φαίη γάμον ἔμμεναι ἐκτὸς ἀκούων, ἢ ἀν’ ὁδὸν στείχων ἢ οἱ περιναϊετάουσι, 23.135-36). Besides, the poem’s focus is Odysseus and his family. In tragedy the audience views the action directly and listens to whatever happens in the palace; at the end the dead bodies come out following Orestes with his hands painted in blood holding the sword. Even though the rules of the tragic genre do not allow a murder to be presented on stage, the next moment of the crime nothing remains hidden and the performed scene is much stronger and more appalling in effect than a narrative, since the narrative depends on the act. Odysseus could gain time in the *Odyssey* by his simulated feast; Orestes had to come immediately out red-handed and the audience would listen to the chorus’ vehement reaction, representative of the common feeling of right and wrong. In tragedy the interaction between deed and judgment is immediate and the focus always more “democratic”. Therefore, Orestes cannot earn time to escape and can never escape unless within the city’s laws, as happens at the Areopagus in the *Eumenides*.

Scholars have noticed as we mentioned above the connection between Clytemnestra and Orestes through structural and imagery parallels in both the

Agamemnon and the *Choephoroi*.¹⁴³ Orestes is presented as a foil to Clytemnestra, becoming a snake himself the way she is a viper, he kills and at the end he is presented before the bodies of his mother and Aegisthus holding a sword, a similar image to the end of *Agamemnon*. Her abhorrent deed parallels his abhorrent matricide. It is, nevertheless, apparent that Orestes is morally superior to his parents since as Vickers highlights “whereas Agamemnon and Clytemnestra claimed, falsely, to have had the right on their side in killing their own flesh and blood, Orestes does have the right acting with him, in the form of Apollo’s order to revenge”. Moreover, Clytemnestra kills in ambush, while Orestes depends on a less unjust intrigue. Although Vickers is wrong to paint Orestes’ action in such a positive color,¹⁴⁴ still both mother and son undertake the same role: Orestes becomes his father’s *Erinyes* whereas Clytemnestra earns this title almost in the middle of the play, at the end of the first *stasimon* where she is called *κλυτά βυσσόφρων Ερινύς* (650-51). She is famous for her abhorrent deed, the murder of her husband, for which the chorus searched for a mythological parallel and the closest they could find was the Lemnian account, about how the women of Lemnos killed their husbands: this act *γοᾶται δημόθεν κατάπτυστον* (it is bewailed as abominable by the people¹⁴⁵, 218) and their

¹⁴³ cf. above n.10.

¹⁴⁴ Orestes comprehends his action not necessarily as rightful but as justifiable and necessary, but he realizes at the same time that it is reprehensible and vile. cf. Vickers (1973), 393. Dodds (1973) is more to the point when he sees Orestes’ case as still guilty but more self-conscious in respect to his parents. Comparing Orestes to his parents by exploring the notion of progress in the concept of *πάθει μαθός* Dodds suggests that “we seem to have a fairly logical progression, from Agamemnon, the blind instrument of justice, who never learns, through Clytemnestra, the half-blind instrument, who learns too late and incompletely, to Orestes, the conscious instrument, whose insight comes before the deed and achieves contact with the divine will. As a fourth term in this progression Dodds lists the wise Athenians at the *Eumenides*. (61-62).

¹⁴⁵ transl. by Garvie on 631-4. Stinton (1979), following Preuss and others, suggests that the order of the third strophe and antistrophe should be reversed, namely the Lemnian example should come before the allusion to Clytemnestra since the rhetoric follows a kind of a *priamel* of mythological examples the climax of which should be Clytemnestra’s deed. Then the question “*τί τῶνδ’ οὐκ ἐνδίκως ἀγείρω;*” has a meaning. Page does not follow this order in his text. Our interpretation is not affected by the one

race perished in dishonor. Thus, Clytemnestra's reputation is the worst among the citizens of Argos. Besides, the culmination of the *priamel* at the beginning of the *stasimon* was that the most terrible things on the earth are male pride (*ὑπερτολμον ἀνδρός φρόνημα*, 594-95) and female passion (*παντόλμους ἔρωτας*, 597). The *τόλμη* words are usually connected with Clytemnestra. The latter usage of the epithet *πάντολμος* recalls Electra's invocation of Clytemnestra as *πάντολμε μάτερ* (430) over the *kommos*, again in a political context since Clytemnestra at that place is overbold because she buried Agamemnon without allowing the participation of the citizens. Such a woman the chorus disapproves of whereas it honors the woman's *ἄτολμον αἶχμην* (630), a woman who does not dare to use a spear, again an allusion to the male characteristics of Clytemnestra's character who according to Orestes acted out of boldness and injustice (*τόλμης ἑκατι κακδίκου φρονήματος*, 996). Goldhill marks *τόλμα/φρόνημα* as the vocabulary that causes her destruction: "the willfulness to transgress the dictates and the norms of society."¹⁴⁶ Therefore, Clytemnestra's reputation is a negative one because she acts in *τόλμη*, which is inappropriate for a woman.

An interesting feature is that although the majority of the words in the play that are relevant to *τόλμη* refer to Clytemnestra, a motif current also in *Agamemnon*,¹⁴⁷ the first and last time such a word is used in the *Choephoroi* refers to Orestes. At the beginning Electra doubted whether he dared to come (*ἐτόλμησε μολεῖν*, 179) and towards the end Orestes claims he considers Apollo the one who induced him to such

order or the other, Clytemnestra's ill repute is stressed only by the comparison to the Lemnian story, whether it follows it or is put before it.

¹⁴⁶ Goldhill (1984), 199.

¹⁴⁷ cf. Ag.1231: *τοιαῦτα τολμᾷ· θῆλυς ἄρσενος φονεὺς*, 1237: *ἡ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μάχῃς τροπῇ*.

a boldness, namely to kill his mother (καὶ φίλτρα τόλμης πλειστηρίζομαι τὸν πυθόμαντιν Λοξίαν, 1029-30), where again τόλμη has a negative meaning.¹⁴⁸ Their τόλμη for something morally inappropriate is another connection between mother and son. The chorus wishes at the second *stasimon* that the victory over the κλυτά Erinys will allow him to utter a κλυτόν...νόμον (a famous...strain, 819-824) which will be welcome in the city (πόλει τάδ'εὔ, 824). This song comes at 935 but directly before that the chorus characterizes Orestes as τλήμων Ὀρέστης (932). The positive meaning the phrase has at this point, “steadfast and patient”, is undermined by the word’s “τλήμων” sinister connotations and although the chorus characterizes Orestes as the eye of the house (ὀφθαλμόν οἴκων, 934) and suggests that the city’s interest is Orestes not to fall “αἰρούμεθαμὴ πεσεῖν” as if Orestes guarantees the perpetuation of the city’s life,¹⁴⁹ his ambivalent τόλμη likens him to his mother¹⁵⁰ and the distorted τόλμη that offered *her* the royal power. Orestes ἐτόλμησεν ἐλθεῖν, but the quality of his courage never made him a glorious hero. His τόλμη brought about his misery.

What is Orestes’ “name” and reputation at the end of the *Choephoroi*? What are the people of Argos going to discuss about the events in their city when Orestes will be gone to Delphi and then his trial at Athens? In *Agamemnon* the chorus likens the implications of Helen’s advent and accommodation at the palace of Priam to a lion cub, which somebody took into his house when it was still at the age of nursing and

¹⁴⁸ “in Aeschylus τόλμα, τόλμᾶω are almost invariable accompanied by feelings of disapproval”, except *Ch.*179” cf. Garvie on 1029.

¹⁴⁹ cf. Garvie: the chorus “may well identify their own interest, or that of the royal house, with that of Argos”.

¹⁵⁰ According to Lebeck (1967) the themes of the three mythological examples of the current *stasimon* relate to the themes of the trilogy: mother killing son like Agamemnon killing Iphigeneia, daughter killing father like Orestes killing Clytemnestra, and wives killing husbands as Clytemnestra Agamemnon. Stinton (1979, 256) who uses her arguments to elaborate his theory notes that “the treacherous female passion of Scylla is mirrored by Orestes’ vengeful male τόλμα”, namely implying that Orestes’ τόλμα has also at this comparison female connotations. .

asked for its mother's teats (*ἀγάλακτον, φιλόμαστον*, 718, 719). At the beginning it was tame and cute and the children of the house were delighting playing with it. When it grew up, however, it showed its real nature which coincided with that of its race (*ἀπέδειξεν ἦθος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων*, 726-727) since it killed and ate the sheep of its owners and polluted the house with blood. Helen by analogy was a delight when she first came to Troy but utterly she brought its destruction. The scene of the encounter between Orestes and Clytemnestra in *Choephoroi* recalls the vehicle of the lion cub metaphor,¹⁵¹ in a trilogy where, as many scholars have noticed, themes, words and images recur and insist at many instances in order to create a tense web of interplays, parallelisms and purposeful ambiguities in meaning. In the famous scene when Clytemnestra realizes that Orestes is about to kill her she shows her breast so that his decision would be swayed. The nurse, however, has informed us that she was his *τροφεύς* (760) when he was an infant (*ἐν παργάνοις*, 754). The first issue raised here is whether Clytemnestra is honest about whether she nursed Orestes or not: as we mentioned above, many scholars have shown that until this point of the text she has dismissed her role as a mother: Electra early in the play calls her *μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπόνυμον* (189) and the dramatist presents the nurse as the real person who grieves maternally about Orestes and not Clytemnestra who before the breast episode searches for an axe to kill her son in order to save herself.¹⁵² However, no matter whether Orestes was deprived of his mother's breast from his birth or not or whether

¹⁵¹ Knox (1952) in his excellent analysis of the parable points out that the parable is thematically independent, a fact marked by the use of the formal device of reappearance in its end of its opening words. It is thus marked as a self-contained digression. Therefore, he associates the vehicle of the metaphor, the lioncub, not only with Helen, which is the local application within the text, but also with Menelaus, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and ultimately Orestes by interpreting the parable as presenting the process of the reappearance of evil from generation to generation. (esp. 17-18, 22-23).

¹⁵² cf. also note 71.

he was properly raised by the nurse and then by Strophios, still he is biologically the son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. The second and most important issue that the connection of the metaphor of the lion cub and Orestes raises is that at the end, for the end is what matters in respect to one's reputation, Orestes proves himself similar to his parents' nature. He presents himself as having undertaken a snake nature like his mother whom he himself calls first a viper (249) and at the end either an eel or a viper (996). Orestes, moreover, interprets himself as the snake in Clytemnestra's dream (554) and his mother characterizes her son a snake (*ὄφιν*, 928) by pointing to him (deictic *τοῦδ'*, 928). The snake nature woman interpellates her son as similar to her.¹⁵³ Moreover, the chorus in the third *stasimon* characterizes Orestes and Pylades¹⁵⁴ as two lions, an image that recalls the lion cub of the metaphor in *Agamemnon* but also the presentation of Agamemnon as a lion in his *aristeia* in the *Iliad*. The lion as an animal recalls savagery and Orestes seems to have inherited his father's savage nature as well.¹⁵⁵ As his father killed his own daughter so Orestes killed his own mother. The chorus searches in vain to restore his reputation by re-applying the snake image to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (*δυοῖν δρακόντων*, 1047). Besides, this chorus apparently has a limited perception: Orestes explains that he sees Clytemnestra's avengers

¹⁵³ Heath (1999) in an illuminating article shows how "the human/beast conflation is one of the primary images in the *Oresteia*, from which most of the other famous polarities ultimately derive". He sees a progress of the image in the trilogy: the *Agamemnon* creates a world where species are conflated; the *Choephoroi* shows more distinctly what happens in this kind of world, whereas the *Eumenides* resolve the entanglement by making the difficult but necessary isolation between human, bestial and divine. The fact that Athena won over the Erinyes through language is based on the Greek axiom that language is the main feature distinguishing humans from animals (esp. 18, 30, 32, 42).

¹⁵⁴ Garvie (1986) on 935-38 explains that the two lions are Orestes and Pylades and not Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.

¹⁵⁵ cf. Heath (1999): "the lack of boundaries between human and animal, so thoroughly embedded in the father and now passed to the next generation, will inevitable lead to more chaos". (31)

(ἐγκοτοι κόνεες, 1054) but the chorus cannot (1061).¹⁵⁶ In the final account of the crimes in the Pelopids' house, the chorus mentions first the feast of his own children offered by Thyestes to Atreus but omits to mention Tantalus. Then it mentions Agamemnon's murder but omits Iphigeneia's sacrifice.¹⁵⁷ This chorus always omits a factor; in respect to Orestes' *kleos* it mentions that he saved the city from the tyrants but omits the reference to the matricide. The play has shown clearly, however, that his reputation proved the nature of his parents.

We may add a final thought on the omission of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in Clytemnestra's final plea to her son.¹⁵⁸ Iphigeneia in *Agamemnon* is called δόμων ἄγαλμα (208), the same phrase that was used for Orestes by Electra. She is the child that her father kills, whereas Orestes is the son that his mother wanted to kill in order to save herself. Orestes may be a substitute for Iphigeneia in the *Choephoroi*, the one loses her life, the other loses his reputation which is the only way to live for a man of Orestes' origin. Because of these rumors (1043) he is at the same time alive and dead. According to one version of the myth Iphigeneia was saved by Artemis and lives as her priestess away from her country. Orestes will be saved by Apollo and Athena again in a different country than his own. In a way Iphigeneia's life is parallel to Orestes' fame: they are both doomed as children of such parents. And they are also doomed even though they fit their gender roles better than do their parents: Agamemnon in the homonymous play was feminized by being killed by a manly woman. But Iphigeneia was properly passive, Orestes properly active and they both still suffer.

¹⁵⁶ Much attention has been paid whether in respect of stagecraft the *Erinyes* actually appear or not. I accept Taplin (1977, 361) who notes that "here, of course, the *Erinyes* are invisible to all but Orestes; but in the next play we too see them".

¹⁵⁷ Goldhill (1984), 205.

¹⁵⁸ cf. n. 71 above for the further reasons that scholars suggested as explanatory of this omission.

The people of Argos, namely the present community of the play, will remember him as a killer of his mother and as a mad man who left for exile chased by his dark visions. This is the point where the character's reputation becomes part of a group's memory and where theatricality extinguishes the boundaries between reality and myth. Of course, the Argive community which is presented in the play will cease to exist at the end of the play. But in the memory of the spectators of the fifth century Athens Orestes has been marked by the end of the *Choephoroi* as the matricidal hero and not as the exemplary son that the *Odyssey* has presented him. Namely the heroes of the myth were becoming part of the collective memory of the historical community through the performed poetry. This conflation is apparent in the *Eumenides*, the play where myth and supposed "historical" tradition merge. Zeitlin reads *Oresteia* as Aeschylus' making of a new myth, which presents in the mode of a social charter the reason why society should be run by males. "The havoc caused by the female in the first play of the *Oresteia* requires two further sequels to alleviate it, and the shock waves ripple out first out to the city of Argos and then to the universe at large".¹⁵⁹ The *Eumenides* bears the larger amount of the new mythical data, resolving Orestes' drama by integrating it into a coherent system of new values, which are presented aetiologically in their foundation day but in reality they recapitulate what was for a long time becoming part of the Athenian ideology; the city where justice and democracy prevails, justice founded upon light and rationality and not unreason and chaos.

Orestes enters the city defiled in the eyes of the gods (*θεομυσῆ*, 40), a violator of the gods' law (*ἄθεον*, 151), a matricide (*μητραλοΐαν*, 153, 210), victim of the attack of the Erinyes who know how to bring low even the most powerful and proud man

¹⁵⁹ Zeitlin (1978), 156.

(358ff.), a murderer of his own blood (*ὁμαίμος αὐθέντης φόνος*, 212). His miserable appearance and his disgraceful and detested reputation he transfers to many “temples and/or palaces and/or private houses” when, however, he had been totally purified by more than one performance of a purification rite (451-2).¹⁶⁰ The proof about this is that no one of those he had met was contaminated or suffered any harm (285). Purified in the eyes of the “new gods”, the Erinyes as goddesses of the old time are still angry, still chase him and allege that even if he runs away underneath the earth he will never be freed (175). The appalling chorus reaches him in Athens urged on by Clytemnestra’s ghost, which discloses to her defenders that she suffers disgrace among the dead because of those whom she had killed (96). Apparently Agamemnon and Cassandra spread the ill fame of her deed among the inhabitants of Hades.¹⁶¹ Orestes has been accepted and purified by many men upon the earth; his deed is accepted and applauded by the dead below the earth but he is still not restored in his position as the son of the great Agamemnon. His personal reputation is not yet restored. Athens is the place where he will find true salvation.

Athena arrives in response to his call (*κλήδονος βοήν*, 397) from the Asian territory.¹⁶² She establishes the court of Areopagus but actually due to her own vote Orestes is freed. The accused is saved and his rights as a citizen of Argos are restored. His farewell speech makes no reference to *kleos* in order to point back to his programmatic speech that he will restore the glory of the Argives and, of course, his father’s, nor a public argument about how the old city of Argos liberated will be run justly, gloriously and powerfully again. It is an imaginary speech about his *personal*

¹⁶⁰ Sommerstein (1989), ad hoc.

¹⁶¹ Sommerstein (1989), on 96. cf. *Od.* 11.409-56, 24. 96-97.

¹⁶² This is another place where aetiology merges mythical with historical tradition: Athens is presented to “rule” by alliance the territory of Sigeum about which they were actually in controversy with Mytilene since the sixth century. The play attributes it to Athens because it was supposedly given to the city’s protector goddess since the Trojan War. cf. Sommerstein on 399-402.

reputation, how Greeks will talk about him in the future, how his name will be mentioned not as an exile but as the legitimate heir of his father's royal authority. It is a private speech, nothing like his programmatic monologues in the *Choephoroi*. Moreover, he is not viewing himself as simply the leader of the Argives but as having the supernatural powers of a *ἥρωας*:¹⁶³ after his death he will have the capacity to define the politics of his country by sending omens and influencing the spirits of the future Argives (770). As a token of gratitude to Athena and Athens he will stop any proposed invasion to the Attic border (765-66). His posthumous powers connect him also to the way he and Electra prayed for help at the tomb of their father in the *Choephoroi*.¹⁶⁴ At *Ch.* 356-359 Agamemnon was presented as remaining a mighty king among the dead; his son may imitate his posthumous fate.

Therefore, at the end of the trilogy Orestes' ambition about his future image and reputation does not entails viewing himself as having the *kleos* of a successful warrior or a restorer of justice but as having the status of a hero and supposedly leaving his own hero-cult at Argos. To the fifth century mind hero-cult was the result of a glorious life; the reference to "*kleos*" disappears but the glory of one's life lives through cult. The *polis* frame as reflected on drama is the place where *kleos* will take its route as a literary term and be replaced by other values and practices within the community.

¹⁶³ Sommerstein on 767-771 where he also explains that Orestes' posthumous prevention of any attack to Athens will be stopped before the Attic territory since he had no tomb in Athens, which would function as the source of his power.

¹⁶⁴ *Ch.* 4-5, 129-148, 315-331, 479-509.

Chapter 3: Sophocles' *Electra*: *kleos* at the realm of the unreal.

3a) Orestes' prologue *kleos*.

The prologue of the play sets the scene of the drama at Argos. Orestes finds himself at his fatherland for the first time after Electra had sent him to Phocis when he was a small child. He is accompanied by his Paedagogus to whom Electra entrusted her little brother, and who alleges that he raised him to this age in order to become the avenger of his father's death (*πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου*, 14). The Paedagogus must have been an inspiring instructor since when he is presenting the sights of Argos to Orestes he stresses that Orestes was always eager and had a great desire to see them (4-5); he could not have remembered them from his infancy but apparently his protector's instructions and constant commemoration made them dear to him. After the sightseeing tour he wastes no more time but suggests to Orestes and the silent Pylades that they should take action and perform their duty. Apparently, the Paedagogus' teachings to Orestes all these years were based mainly on three ideological axes: that he is the son of the great Agamemnon (2)¹⁶⁵, the king of the glorious Mycenae, that his father's death was a crime that demands to be avenged (11, 14) and that a real man proves himself in actions and wastes no time for fruitless conversations (22); Orestes must fulfill his duty as soon as possible (*ἐν τάχει*, 16). The Paedagogus' precepts show that he raised Orestes according to the archaic heroic values and that he tried to keep his former king's memory alive and glorious.

¹⁶⁵ I omit to take into consideration line 1 because I find Haslam's argumentation for deleting it convincing. cf. Finglass (2007) on 1.

However, this type of ideology sounds so standardized that it morally collapses. This is apparent in Orestes' opening monologue. The young man was obviously an effective student of his instructor's *didaxis*: he follows the demands of the duty that he was raised to fulfill and presents himself as going to the oracle of Delphi in order to be instructed by Phoebus how he should accomplish his mission, how he should punish the murderers of his father (*δίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα*, 34). He talks affectionately about his Paedagogus¹⁶⁶ and he incites him to correct his opinion (*δόξαντα*, 29) if he does not speak appropriately to the occasion. Orestes is portrayed at this point as totally dependent on the instruction he has received; he shows that what he follows originates from the way he is raised and the ideological frame his tutor has created for him¹⁶⁷ and that he is a complete stranger to the circumstances and atmosphere of his fatherland. He has learnt how to use the language of epic and heroic values but only as dry knowledge to which anyone could have access. He is not emotionally committed to the heroic value system and this gap between rhetoric and emotional commitment causes his ideological collapse.

Obviously his tutor had suggested that he should consult the oracle of Delphi in order to learn how he should avenge his father's death. The essence of his heroic mission is spoilt by the god's order, namely that he should alone commit, unfurnished of shields and army steal (*κλέψαι*) the just murder through deceit (*δόλοισιν*, 37). Neoptolemus, at a similar age and at a parallel theatrical scene as Orestes, questions dynamically Odysseus' suggestion that he should acquire Philoctetes' arrows through deceit: *τί δ' ἐν δόλῳ δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ πείσαντ' ἄγειν*; (Do I have to take him by deceit or

¹⁶⁶ Finglass (2007) *ad hoc* notices that "The Paedagogus stands apart from most old men in tragedy, who are usually portrayed as weak and ineffective".

¹⁶⁷ Similarly Kitzinger (1991) writes: Orestes' world then has been one of instruction, of received opinion dutifully learned; his words originate in others' speech and are not born out of his own feeling. (304).

rather convince him to come?, 102), since a few lines before he had declared that he is committed by his noble descent to take Philoctetes with him violently (*πρὸς βίαν*) and not by fraud (*δόλοισιν*) (*Phil.*90-91). Neoptolemus expresses a sincere anxiety about Odysseus' instructions because, apparently, his upbringing coincided with the heroic code that his father embodied. Moreover, to say that Neoptolemus was the son of the blameless Achilles whereas Orestes is the son of Agamemnon, who is not always blameless, is an unfair judgment, since both Achilles and Agamemnon 'share' literary and traditionally the same aristocratic ideology. It seems to me that their difference lies in their upbringing. We see and listen to Orestes' instructor, who did not leave Orestes any time to listen to what should be the real motive of his revenge, the suffering of his sister and the plight of what was once his father's royal authority. The Paedagogus' hurry (21-22, 82-85) reflects a practicality consisting in responding to situations according to general rules, such as the criterion of glory would be, and not an authentic worldview originating from esoteric experience and commitment to these rules. Neoptolemus seems to be committed to such a worldview and is deeply troubled by his engagement with a character such as the Sophoclean Odysseus. Besides, Odysseus is not his teacher, but only his adviser for a specific mission.

The Paedagogus, however, is Orestes' *life-praeceptor*; he belongs to his father's generation and speaks in the language of old-world heroes. He functions as Orestes' father figure who taught him to run after his personal profit and interest under any conditions. There is a pointed generational conflict between the old man and the young hero and the application of the former's principles could be highly problematic for the new generation. However, the Sophoclean Orestes is presented as entirely aligned in thought with his father's generation but using also the flexibility that the end of heroic age, when he lives, offers: he does not seem especially puzzled

by the inconsistency between the heroic past of his father and the heroic ideology that such a past imposes *and* by the precept of the oracle to produce what he chases through fraud and deceit. The secondary causative clause *ὅτ' οὖν τοιόνδε χρησμὸν εἰσηκούσαμεν* (38) betrays probably a surprise on behalf of Orestes when he heard a god suggesting to acquire justice by means of deceit but the surprise is highly measured since it lasts only for one line and it is inserted with *ὅτε* and indicative which introduces a causation that is taken for granted. In his turn, he gives his own instructions to the Paedagogus which are harmonious in spirit with the way he was taught to think: the old man will deliver a deceitful story in order to approach the palace by deleting any suspicion that Orestes has returned. The aforementioned story does reflect a heroic background since it presents a glorious Orestes participating at the Pythian Games and finding a death common to great athletes; the false tale about Orestes' speech indicates that he has learnt to manipulate language to accomplish success and glory.¹⁶⁸ This first message will open the path to a second, which will be delivered by Orestes himself: the urn in which Orestes' body is supposedly cremated, which he believes will be pleasurable news for its receivers (*ὅπως λόγῳ κλέπτοντες ἡδεῖαν φάτιν*, 56). Orestes seems to linger for a second time on the oracle's suggestion, something seems to him wrong in approaching justice through fraud but he replies to himself with a positive rhetorical question:

*τί γάρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ', ὅταν λόγῳ θανάων
ἔργοισι σωθῶ καὶ ξενέγκωμαι κλέος;*

Why then am I distraught, when I die only in words
but in deeds I am saved and I gain *kleos*?

¹⁶⁸ Kitzinger (1991), 304.

This is the first time in the play that we encounter the word *kleos* but its position is emphatic not only rhetorically, because it is found at the end of the line, but mainly in respect to the structure of the play, since it belongs to Orestes' programmatic statements and at the point where he reveals his not well planned scheme to fulfill the oracle through deceit but his reaction and sentiment towards his mission. *Kleos* is part of the ideological *langue* by which he was raised but not an *Erlebnis*, not even an *Erlebnis* of his instructor who does not have an aristocratic or glorious descent himself. Even if we read both Neoptolemus' and Orestes' missions retrospectively as their *rite de passage* to manhood, still we should pardon Orestes because Neoptolemus apparently had a superior "heroic background". Orestes was raised away from his fatherland which could inspire him by itself with reverence for his glorious descent and his instructor was a "commoner", a former domestic servant.

Scholars have characterized Sophocles' Orestes as untragic and "stripped by tragic weight";¹⁶⁹ cool, devious and "not a heroic figure in the Iliadic mould";¹⁷⁰ 'given to military language, committed to an intrigue about which he feels except in one particular no scruple'.¹⁷¹ MacLeod gives his stance some justice by noticing that to expect Orestes "to question his duty would demand a moral sensitivity that alters the ethical frame of the play. That Orestes asks 'how' rather than 'if' is simply a reflection of his awareness of his obligation to his father".¹⁷² Kyriakou in the same spirit argues that the lack of sympathy on behalf of the modern audience towards Orestes stems from the fact that he does not seem tortured enough by the prospect of his terrible act nor from his actual behavior and words. But this is explained by the fact that Orestes is only a minor character, Electra is the central figure and if the

¹⁶⁹ Reinhardt (1979), 137,

¹⁷⁰ Blundell (1989), 173.

¹⁷¹ Winnington-Ingram (1980), 229.

¹⁷² Mac Leod (2001), 29.

playwright would desire to win the sympathy of an audience, Orestes would need to say much more than his presentation in *Electra* allows.¹⁷³ Moreover, Kyriakou stresses that Orestes “heroically enough” is preoccupied with victory and glory and the clash between the heroic Orestes that is presented in the messenger’s false tale and the unheroic figure of the prologue is only superficial since it presents “the two sides of a man who straddles the worlds of both Homeric epics”.¹⁷⁴ Scholars view Orestes as a hero but in the Odyssean model.¹⁷⁵

However, I believe that comparing Sophocles’ Orestes to Odysseus does not cover the scope of Orestes’ reaction and stance in this play. Indeed, Odysseus is a hero who acquired glorious fame because of his tricks, but he was an equally capable warrior. Against the suitors it is his skill with the bow and not his disguise that wins the final battle. He uses frauds and ruses to survive in environments which are disconnected from civilized communities or inhabited by non human creatures; in civilized communities he still uses disguise but, most significantly, Odysseus never expresses any hesitation or second thoughts when using a false tale or a trick. On the contrary, he boasts that he is known before all men for the study of crafty designs and thus his *kleos* goes up to the heavens (*Od.* 9.19-20). He interacts with the likes of Achilles and Agamemnon, but he is a different hero from the start as his own family connection stretches back to Autolycus and Hermes. Segal notes that “the Iliadic warrior at once announces his name to his antagonist: Odysseus wins his major

¹⁷³ Kyriakou (2011), 356-57.

¹⁷⁴ Kyriakou (2011), 355.

¹⁷⁵ Barrett (2002) holds the opinion that Sophocles’ Orestes “appears as the practitioner of the very strategies and talents that distinguish Odysseus” (143); he actually states that “...Sophocles’ text...stages the assimilation of Orestes to Odysseus, it is able to show the son abandoning his paternal bequest in becoming “Odyssean”, as it invokes the Agamemnon of the Odyssey and reveals the son to be in step with the father as he now is: in the underworld.” (147); although of course Orestes’ character owes much to the epic Odysseus, as I am going to show, I do not agree with such an unconditional positive comparison between Orestes and Odysseus,

triumphs by retrospectively (and often unheroically) hiding his name”.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, Orestes in Sophocles’ play is much different from Odysseus: he expresses his hesitation about how he can accomplish justice by deceit twice in his monologue, although not showing a deep anxiety and he comes from a much more traditional family in respect to heroic ethics. The problem is that *kleos* instead of being considered an obstacle to proceeding with the unheroic trick arises as a motivating force, since it is connected with personal interest and profit: *κλέος* is only a *ῥῆμα* (word) for Orestes who adds one more sentence to his *δόξαντα*: *δοκῶ μιν, οὐδὲν ῥῆμα σὺν κέρδει κακόν* (I believe that no word that brings with it profit is a bad thing, 61). The word *kerdos*, however, is incompatible with the epic and epinician *kleos* discourse. Apparently Orestes was either not taught the meaning of the concept well or purposefully compromised his interest with old heroism.

Although *Philoctetes* was staged later than *Electra*¹⁷⁷, it would be useful to compare Orestes to the Sophoclean Odysseus. As I mentioned above, the approach of Orestes as an Odyssean figure, despite its grounding on the concept of deceit, is not unproblematic, since the epic Odysseus used his tricks not under a god’s command¹⁷⁸ but because of the abnormal situations in which he was found and, moreover, he never hesitated to act through fraud but on the contrary he boasted that his *kleos* depended on his use of ruses. Sophoclean Odysseus would be a more appropriate parallel to Orestes’ portrayal since he is also a secondary character whose criterion of acting is also *kerdos* (*ὅταν τι δρᾶς ἐς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει*, *Phil.* 111) and since he is presented as the adviser of Neoptolemus on how to use fraud to take away Philoctetes

¹⁷⁶ Segal (1996), 209.

¹⁷⁷ *Philoctetes* is dated at 409 whereas *Electra* sometime between 422-416. cf. Lesky (2001 8th ed.), 395 and Finglass (2007), 2.

¹⁷⁸ At least during his journey, because in Ithaca he certainly plans his disguise and tricky scheme jointly with Athena.

(λέγω σ' ἐγὼ δόλω Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν, 101). The obvious difference between this Odysseus and Orestes is that Odysseus as a traditional figure is identified with the usage of tricks and he himself is not the one who seeks for *kleos* but his reputation is taken for granted. Neoptolemus would get *kleos* by this expedition and his actions are, indeed, carefully measured with his perception of heroic ideology. Moreover, Odysseus seems to imply that when he was young he gained glory as a result of his military deeds whereas at the old age that he is now, achieving one's aims through language is easier (96-99). As a proof of Odysseus' manipulation of language is his careful connection of *kerdos* with an idealistic target: when Neoptolemus seeks for clarification of what his profit would be by carrying Philoctetes to Troy, Odysseus connects *kerdos* with the success of the Trojan expedition. He does not fall in the trap of projecting his personal ambition, to win the man for whose suffering he is also responsible and in this view he is an enemy of his, but speaks Neoptolemus' language of heroic deeds, even if at the end of the play Neoptolemus attaches to Philoctetes' view of heroic behavior.

Even though Orestes seeks to cover his ambition about *kleos* by his reference to *kerdos*, he still feels uneasy with his justification since it practically tries to resolve the inconsistent bi-polar *dike-dolos* by another inconsistent and oxymoron bi-polar *kleos- kerdos*. *Kleos* is a personal and antagonistic value also in Epic and in a chronological perspective it guarantees personal profit; the difference is that *kerdos* refers mainly to material profit or a practical advantage for the person that gains it, whereas the Homeric hero would view his personal profit idealistically, gaining eternal glory. Achilles would never speak of *kleos* as *kerdos* but as a life aim.¹⁷⁹ The

¹⁷⁹ The actual word *κέρδος* is used in the epics a few times and only in the context of strategic consultation in respect to the next move. In *Odyssey* it is used once in a context close to a *kleos* word

connection of eternal glory as personal profit might be linked with the materialistic expediency which was also invoked by the Aeschylean Orestes as a motive at the *Choephoroi*: the restoration of his father's honor and his personal glory depended on acquiring back his father's former royal authority and wealth. Besides, this wealth is the proof of Agamemnon's victorious expedition to Troy. Therefore, in the *Choephoroi* Orestes connected the *χρημάτων ἀχηνία* (301) with the glory of the people of Argos. Sophocles' Orestes, however, never connects his material *kerdos* to his father's past glory or exposes the dependence of his personal glory on his father's royal authority and wealth. The usage of *kerdos* in his mouth sounds more as if used in the context of a rhetorical speech in court or at the agora. Kyriakou rightly stresses the short memory of the play in respect to the remoter past of the house of Agamemnon and proves that "Orestes is not associated with his father's glorious achievements, which receive little emphasis in the play, or with his father's royal office in any prominent or sustained manner".¹⁸⁰ This statement is true also in the case of Orestes' use of exemplification: at the passage where he tries to justify the morality of gaining *kleos* by acting with fraud, instead of bringing Agamemnon as his model, since the father's image stands as the antagonistic exemplum to a son, he refers vaguely to some "wise" people of the past who died in words, as is his plan too, and when they returned home, they gained greater honor (*ἐκτετίμηνται πλεόν*, 64). Similarly, he hopes that because of the reputation the present situation will bring to him (*τῇσδε τῆς φήμης ἄπο*, 65)

(although with the distance of three lines and in fact belonging to different periods) but there *kleos* means just the rumor of the suitors' assassination and *kerdos* means a kind of advantage expected by Zeus in the difficult situation that Odysseus and his family are found. Therefore, the connection of *kerdos-kleos* is encountered for the first time in our play. cf. *Odyssey* 23.136-140.

¹⁸⁰ Kyriakou (2011), 348 and 351: "What differentiates Sophocles' play from other treatments of the same myth is the virtually exclusive concentration of Agamemnon's children, and of people sympathetic to them such as the tutor and the chorus, on the king's murder. This crime virtually obliterates everything else..."

he will shine as a star against his enemies (δεδορκότ' ἐχθροῖς ἄστρον ὥς λάμψειν ἔτι, 66).

Scholars have entertained many speculations about who these wise men are.¹⁸¹ However, the important thing is not who these people are but, first, the fact that it is not his father that sets the exemplum for Orestes; Agamemnon became glorious through the sack of Troy, he is still the great and acknowledged Iliadic hero, even if as I mentioned he is not the favorite hero in the *Iliad*. His literary past does not allow him to be used as a trickster.¹⁸² Moreover, Orestes could have mentioned the sack of Troy by the Trojan Horse as a trick that brought about great glory; but he does not, since his father's past is permanently absent from our play.

Second, it is significant that the exemplum he uses is rather vague; a heroic exemplum is canonically a specific exemplum, a name or a generation of heroic names that motivates the hero to act according to the heroic code. The exposition of a “concrete universal” as an example to follow is rather characteristic of a comic persona, who tries to justify absurd and irrational actions. A tragic hero should find the proper exemplum in order to succeed in his duty and mission; the comic persona succeeds in any case because his paradigms can be as sophistic as needed. Orestes has no specific example in mind, but refers generally to the profit of using deceit and cunning which was not “snubbed” even from men that next generations considered wise. The generalization of reference allows the inaccuracy of exemplarity. It is easier

¹⁸¹ Dodds assumed that Orestes refers to a shaman's story. Such stories were circulating about Aristeas, Salmoxis, Epimenides of Crete, Hermotimus of Clazomenae, and Pythagoras (sustained by Burkert (1962). However, none of them fabricated a story about their disappearance or death. They just mysteriously disappeared. Other scholars see references to heroic figures such as Heracles, Theseus and Odysseus. The heroic element gives an advantage to these figures, especially Odysseus who can be described as σοφός. But none attempts to spread a false account of his death. The same reason cancels Sisyphus as a candidate. cf. Finglass (2007) on 62-66.

¹⁸² Even in *Odyssey* as we saw he praises Achilles' death and his relationship to Clytemnestra is the one that deprives him of his *kleos*, he does not praise Odysseus for his ruses but for Penelope's faithfulness.

to track down misrepresentation of a specific case than to control the information of different elements accumulated from different examples and put under the same rubric. The latter method results in the intensification of the argument. Even the most adequate spectator is misled by the generalization and might believe that some case slipped his mind. The vagueness of the reference to the “wise” is doubled by his vision of himself as a star that will shine upon his enemies (66), a simile that recalls Homeric star similes involving warriors like Hector and Achilles on the battlefield.¹⁸³ Hector and Achilles are not the heroes that would be labeled as “wise” men but rather as great epic warriors. Orestes’ accumulation of different exemplary cases within his *kleos* discourse proves the semantic extension of the concept of *kleos* in comparison to the *Iliad*. However, the ambiguity in its usage measures its idealism, which seems a result of the different political and social conditions.

Orestes’ prayer to the gods and his father’s home distinguishes rhetorically between the god’s will and his personal ambition: the gods send him as a purifier according to justice (*δίκη καθαρής*, 70) and his personal will is not to leave without honor and without achieving his aims (*ἄτιμον*, 71) but to become the wealthiest and the second founder of his family’s possessions ¹⁸⁴(*ἀρχέπλουτον καὶ καταστάτην δόμων*, 72). Macleod correctly observes that “Orestes may claim to be returning with justice on his side (69-70), but at this stage he betrays a concern more for individual *kleos* and *time* than *dike*.”¹⁸⁵ Unlike Aeschylus’ Orestes, this one does not connect his fortune with his father’s past and keeps the perception of his glory and reputation in a practical level, disconnected from history and the responsibility of royal authority.

¹⁸³ Davidson (1988), 60: *Il.*11.62ff., 22.26ff., 22.317ff.

¹⁸⁴ For the interpretation cf. Finglass (2007) on 72.

¹⁸⁵ MacLeod (2001), 37.

There is no connection to the community's fortune¹⁸⁶ and his father's *oikos* is identified with its material side, which is not presented as the necessary condition for Orestes to take over a political role. Even if he is a secondary character and he is not given much space to defend himself, he could have at least one line to connect with his father's and the city's glorious past or to reiterate himself as a *τιμωρόν*¹⁸⁷; but he does not. Orestes' speech ends in analogy to the end of his tutor's prologue, with a reference to the need for deeds instead of words. His behavior is highly influenced by his Paedagogus' orders. This is confirmed when the old man discourages him from listening to Electra's mourning. They should follow Apollo's commands and begin with libations to Agamemnon's tomb because these will bring victory and success in their deeds (*νίκην τέ φημι καὶ κράτος δρωμένων*, 85). The motif of victory as the necessary condition for success and glory is an obsession for Orestes according to the directions of the Paedagogus¹⁸⁸. But it is not sentimentally a serious pursuit.

3b) Electra and *kleos*

It has been stated that *Electra* is theatrical rather than poetic tragedy.¹⁸⁹ It is the theatrical effect of the exits and the entrances, of the presences and absences, of the scenery and appearances; more than any other tragic drama it is the impression that Electra's constant mourning leaves that formulate the meaning of the play rather than the meaning of the words themselves. Kitzinger analyzes the play using Austin's

¹⁸⁶ MacLeod (2001) sees the community's role as prominent in the meaning and the actions of Electra and Orestes; she stresses that Sophocles' choice of a chorus of free-born citizen women highlights them as representatives of the perspective of the *polis* (43) and regards the ethical values of the play mainly as social values which defended by the two siblings notify the restoration of freedom to family and community alike. Kyriakou (2011) rightly opposes to such political readings of the play on the ground that they turn "the paucity of references to the community into a means of laying emphasis on the community". (321)

¹⁸⁷ The word *καθαρτής* is very general and does not reflect the sense of revenge.

¹⁸⁸ cf. Reinhardt (1979) commenting on the messenger speech: 'And yet even this false Orestes whose death is announced, an Orestes surrounded by an aura of fame, victory and sport, must resemble the real Orestes to some extent, for both the real and the fictitious Orestes are really remote from Electra's suffering, and unmoved by the distress of their sister, think only of fame and of victory' (152).

¹⁸⁹ Reinhardt (1979), 161

linguistic theory and convincingly observes that Electra's song simultaneously describes and performs its function, the mourning of the dead Agamemnon. For Electra uttering words is an act.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, Electra is a woman of words, the opposite of her brother's and his tutor's insistence to be a man of deeds who wastes no time for words.

However, although Orestes does not show any strong feeling of connection between his quest for *kleos* and his father's glorious reputation, since he expresses his personal ambition to win glory probably due to the constant brainstorming he experienced during his upbringing and not to a sincere commitment to his father's memory and honor, Electra embodies with her continuous dirge a constant commemoration of her father's dishonor and seeks revenge for his defamation through the repetition of her mourning. Actually, her words have been active and acting all these years against her father's murderers to such a degree that Clytemnestra, when she sees Electra outside the palace, informs the audience that Aegisthus keeps her enclosed because she ruins the reputation of her "friends" (*ἀλσχύνειν φίλους*, 518), she openly and repeatedly accuses her mother of holding the royal authority unjustly and insolently and of vexing her daughter (520-522). Clytemnestra presents herself as constantly and unfairly slandered by Electra (523-24) although it is she who began her speech with abuse against her daughter (516-18).¹⁹¹ Winnington-Ingram states that the punishment of Clytemnestra did not await the sword of Orestes. "For all her bravado she lived in Fear".¹⁹² Besides, Electra herself projects her lament as a substitute for revenge (*λνπῶ δὲ τούτους, ὥστε τῷ τεθνηκότι*

¹⁹⁰ Kitzinger (1991), 304-305.

¹⁹¹ Finglass (2007) on 516-633: "In our play anything that could mollify our view of her [Clytemnestra's] character is carefully avoided....Here the repulsiveness of Clytemnestra's ἥθος strongly disposes the audience against her."

¹⁹² Winnington-Ingram (1980), 233.

τιμάς προσάπτειν, 355-56). When later Clytemnestra listens to the news of Orestes' death she breaks out and reveals the insecurity and the fear that tortured her all these years: she could never sleep quietly but always lived as dead (*αἰὲν ὡς θανουμένην*, 781); on the one hand Orestes' existence and on the other hand Electra's presence within the palace functioned as a menace and destruction for her (780-787).¹⁹³ The emphasis on the constant and repetitive nature of her torture by the projection of *αἰὲν* and the obliteration of timelines through the conjunctions *οὔτε νυκτὸς ὕπνον οὔτ' ἐξ ἡμέρας* (780) recalls the nature of Electra's mourning: she reassures in her entrance song in the *parodos* that she will never cease her dirge as long as she is alive (*ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν δὴ λήξω θρήνων στυγεράων τε γόων, ἔστ' ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἄστρον ῥιπᾶς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ' ἡμαρ*, 102-105); she compares herself to Procne¹⁹⁴ who perpetually lamented her dead son (107) and, unlike her sister, she retained her voice, as Electra did; they are both willing to kill family members as a result of previous family trauma. Electra lays emphasis on the eternal repetition of her models, Procne and Niobe:

ἅ' Ἰτυν αἰὲν Ἰτυν ὀλοφύρεται,
 ὄρνις ἀτυζομένα, Διὸς ἄγγελος.
 ἰὼ παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ' ἔγωγε νέμω θεόν,
 ἅτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραίῳ,
 αἰαῖ, δακρύεις.

Who mourns Itys, always Itys, the depressed bird, the messenger of Zeus.
 Oh all-suffering Niobe, I myself consider you a god, you who lament, alas, in
 your stone tomb.

¹⁹³ Winnington-Ingram (1980) suggests that Electra is presented as an Erinys because she is characterized as βλάβη and portrayed as sucking her mother's blood (p.233). Finglass (2007), however, opposes this thesis by explaining that both the term βλάβη and the blood-sucking are common means of abuse and that an association of Electra with a snake, which could confirm Winnington-Ingram's syllogism, is absent. (Finglass on 785).

¹⁹⁴ Procne is analogous to Electra not only because of her constant lamentation but also because she killed a member of her family, her son. Procne, like Electra, is both a victim of a crime and a perpetrator of further wrong doing. "Casting Electra as Procne is therefore troubling for it undermines her self-representation as pitiful victim and instead portrays her as a murderous figure, foreshadowing the killing of Clytemnestra". Swift (2010), 338-9.

Procne always laments for Itys, Niobe constantly cries with the emphatic present *δακρύεις* accompanied by the *aiai* which according to Loraux bears with *aei* contextual and sonorous contiguity. The chorus confirms the heroine's appropriation to her models by asking her why she does always cry out an insatiable lament (*τίν' ἀεὶ λάσκεις ὧδ' ἀκόρεστον οἰμωγάν*, 122-23) about the story of her father's death (124-126). Electra's answer expresses her self-consciousness about her behavior: she knows well that she seems exaggerating with her constant mourning but it is her choice to continue (131-136). This insistence and perpetual repetition of the lament, the emphasis on the *aei* adverb and the strength it carries, should be associated with the concept of eternal *kleos*. Andromache in her lament for Hector at the 22nd book of *Iliad* connects the creative work of women with men's *kleos*:¹⁹⁵

...ἀτὰρ τοι εἴματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κέονται
λεπτὰ τε καὶ χαρίεντα, τετυγμένα χερσὶ γυναικῶν.
ἀλλ' ἤτοι τάδε πάντα καταφλέξω πυρὶ κελέω,
οὐδὲν σοί γ' ὄφελος, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐγκείσεται αὐτοῖς,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς Τρώων καὶ Τρωϊάδων κλέος εἶναι.

However, garments lie in your palace,
Fine and gracious, woven by women hands,
Nevertheless, all these I am going to burn with destroying fire,
no profit to you, since you are not going to be wrapped in these,
but in order that you gain glory among the Trojan men and women.

The women's handicrafts are no profit for Hector's body; Achilles holds his body and he cannot be buried properly wrapped in fine garments. However, these fabrics can function as a substitute for his body and by burning them Andromache offers her husband a symbolic burial.¹⁹⁶ Women's creative works, by which women gain glory and reputation, become also a source for male *kleos* in a subversive way: they should

¹⁹⁵ cf. Easterling (1991), p. 148-9.

¹⁹⁶ Richardson (1993) ad hoc.

be destroyed in order Hector to win *kleos*. The cause of this association is in a way triple: first, Andromache offers Hector *kleos* by burning famous property of the Trojan palace for his sake, second, her action functions as a symbolic burial that guarantees glory for the Trojan hero; and third, her action functions as an actual proof of mourning and accompanied by the dirge that we listen at this moment of the poem also guarantees Hector's *kleos*, since his wife's way of mourning will be commemorated by the future generations. Easterling links the women as mourners, who "function as potential commentators on events and thus create an opportunity for them to articulate some of the great issues of the poem" with "the role of women as artistic creators", namely their activity as weavers and constructors of stories.¹⁹⁷ Andromache's words and deed of mourning create the circumstances for the realization of Hector's own desire and glory ideal: to fight first among the Trojans and win *kleos* for himself and for his father out of shame against the Trojan men and women (*Iliad* 6, 442-446, 22, 105). The woman's lamentation guarantees the man's glory since her *γῶος* sings his glorious deeds and keeps his memory alive.

Loraux also stresses that Electra is constantly associated with *aei* because mourning for her takes the form of fury.¹⁹⁸ In Greece lamenters who did not control their mourning became associated with madness and descriptions of lamenting women are not markedly different from descriptions of madmen.¹⁹⁹ Clytemnestra's invocation to Electra as *ἀνειμένη* (516) is indicative of this point. However, in the

¹⁹⁷ Easterling (1991), 147.

¹⁹⁸ Loraux (2002), 36. She also notes that the adverb *aei* is used at least fifteen times in the play in connection with Electra (32).

¹⁹⁹ Cebrian (2006, 97) citing Holst-Warhaft (1992, 27-29). According to Cebrian's recent theory on the evolution of epic, heroic epic came about as the result of the dissociation of lament from its original ritual context which had as a consequence the loss of performativity and the contextualization in a longer linguistic environment so that the locution still has meaning. Recreating the laments, once removed from their original context, allowed for an expansion of the narrative part. Cebrian stresses the importance of repetition, which implies a separation from the original performance and ceases the force of the song as a speech act.

case of Electra obsessive repetition is different than in the cases of Procne and Niobe; Electra's mourning has a potential end, Orestes' return and revenge. Meanwhile it functions as a substitute for Orestes' role, namely, Electra's mourning vexes her enemies and honors her father's memory. Recent scholarship stresses the significant role of women in the preservation of men's "unwithering fame". The hero's heroic immortality if he survives the battlefield depends on his returning home, namely to the woman's territory and "on his establishing a primary place in women's cyclical songs of mourning and praise".²⁰⁰ Agamemnon's return was marked by his deceptive relationship with his wife and thus, instead of being integrated into his home by her acceptance and her commemoration of her husband's deeds, he is murdered; the one that undertakes to mourn and honor him is his daughter Electra. Electra was not hierarchically expected to be the immediate mourner and *kleos* preserver of Agamemnon but she fills her mother's gap due to the troubling situation of the Atreid house. Therefore, Electra's lamentation substitute's both her brother's and her mother's duty towards the dead king.

In Epic, the experience of *penthos* and *kleos* was alternative and exclusive; Nagy points out that the *kleos* heard by its audiences may be *penthos* for those involved in the actions it describes.²⁰¹ The criterion of involvement or noninvolvement defines whether a story about a hero may raise *kleos* or *penthos* to its audience. Cebrian explains that tragedy occupies the space in between both experiences. "Because it [tragedy] does not have a narrative frame, it does not become *kleos*. Yet, on the other hand, the *penthos* of the character is presented in such a way that the spectator is involved and is able to purify his own passions and turn the

²⁰⁰ Sultan (1999), 55.

²⁰¹ Nagy (1979), 101.

character's sorrow into glory."²⁰² What I understand when Cebrian says that tragedy does not have a narrative frame is that it does not have a third person poetic persona commenting on the events. Therefore, Cebrian's observation is true in respect to the exterior tragic environment; indeed the tragic heroes gain eternal glory in the minds and hearts of the theater audience by its identification and psychological participation in the concrete representation of their deeds and sufferings. However, this is a meta-generic way of applying the observations of one genre to the other, helpful but a second level proposition. On a primary level, we have the narrative frame of the play's plot; I believe that the relationship of *penthos* and *kleos* within our play has a stronger dynamic since the main character of Electra is identified with her *penthos*²⁰³ and since both she and Orestes claim verbally a form of *kleos*. It is important to stress again that neither Orestes nor Electra connect their potential glory to their father's glorious achievements or kingship. In fact, Electra's *penthos* is presented equally as the result of both her father's death and her own misery because of the reversal of roles within the palace.

Two and a half of the stanzas that Electra sings in the *parodos*, where the chorus tries to offer her traditional *consolatio*, commemorate her own sufferings, whereas one and a half detail Agamemnon's death as her source of sorrow. Except from her initial and final stanza where she expresses her absolute self-consciousness²⁰⁴ that her lamentation moves above what is normally and socially

²⁰² Cebrian (2006), 79.

²⁰³ Electra presents her mother asking her sarcastically whenever she sees her within the palace “ἄλλος δ' οὐ τις ἐν πένθει βροτῶν;” 290.

²⁰⁴ cf. Finglass (2007) on 121-250: Achilles is conscious of his *χόλος*, just as Electra is conscious of her *ὀργή*, and this self-reflective aspect to their character is something that sets them apart. Yet Achilles is at least aptly swayed by the pleas of his companions, while Electra never retreats from her position.

approved (131-136, 222-232)²⁰⁵ Electra laments her father's death as the beginning of her own sufferings. She emphatically stresses her deprivation of what was considered basic in a woman's life: ἄτεκνος (164), ἀνύμφευτος (165), ἀνέλπιστον (186), ἄνευ τεκέων (187), ἃς φίλος οὕτις ἀνὴρ ὑπερίσταται (188), ἀπερεί τις ἔποικος ἀναξία (189), ἀεικεῖ σὺν στολᾷ (191), κεναῖς δ'ἀμφίσταμαι τράπεζαις (192). Electra begins each one of her parts in the *kommos* with an emphatic personal pronoun (ἐμῶν καμάτων 130, ἀλλ' ἐμέ 146, ὃν γ' ἐγὼ 166, ἀλλ' ἐμέ 185) and although the chorus already at the beginning of the song targets Agamemnon as the object of her lament and briefly mentions his disgraceful death by Clytemnestra, Electra does not continue the story as expected nor does she devote more than one line to mention of him (133) and never with his name.²⁰⁶ The chorus tries again to connect her with her siblings, the other connection with her father; they mention Chrysothemis, Iphianassa and make an extended reference to Orestes who is presented in bright colors; he is characterized as ὀλβιος (160), and it is stressed that he lived his youth away from sufferings (κρυπτᾷ ἀχέων, 159), and that he is expected by the famous land of Mycenae (κλεινὰ γὰρ ...Μυκηναίων, 160-61) to arrive as it deserves to a nobleman (εὐπατρίδαν, 162), and a person favorable to Zeus (Διὸς εὐφροني βήματι, 162-63). Orestes in a way bears the atmosphere of the Mycenae of the past and the air of the son of the great Agamemnon; the description recalls the Orestes of the prologue with the reference to the topography and the hero's high expectations and ambitions.

²⁰⁵ cf. Homer 24.524 and Niobe as a negative example, Archilochus frg.13 where he associates excessive lamentation with women, Plato 387ff., esp.388a, Th. 2.46.

²⁰⁶ An objection to this could be that by mentioning his name she would be in greater pain, but considering the excess of her sorrow this is impossible.

Electra annihilates the spark of hope that the chorus projected by juxtaposing her own misery to an almost indifferent Orestes, who forgets what he suffered and what he was taught (ἐδάη, 169) and who always desires to come but never appears (171-72). Electra by using ἐδάη emphatically in the middle of the line and before the caesura and by using the strong ποθεῖ only in order to erase it by the sarcastic οὐκ ἄξιοι (173) expresses her disappointment since her eternal mourning responds to Orestes' eternal absence.²⁰⁷ Her accusation of Orestes is picked up by the chorus who again defends the son of Agamemnon (παῖς Ἀγαμεμνονίδας) as ἀπερίτροπος (heedless) and in its next part explores the cause of the crime and its picture (193-200). Electra ignores the specifics of her lament and sings only about her miserable position in the house (185-192) and how her father's death affected herself (207-909). In fact her usage of πρόδοτον (208) to characterize her life as betrayed picks up the chorus' characterization of Agamemnon as πρόδοτον (126); her father's honor that was betrayed is equated to her life that was betrayed. The chorus restrains her curse against the murderers because of its concern that her behavior will lead her into trouble with the authorities.²⁰⁸ Electra, however, does not stop; she believes that no one who has a proper judgment could find any words to comfort her, because her sufferings will be called permanently unresolved, with a future perfect that marks future as a dead end (ἄλυστα κεκλήσεται 230). And her mourning goes on (231-32).

We should make three observations in respect to Electra's stance in the *kommos*: a) her *penthos* is presented as insoluble (ἄλυστα), and even if Orestes comes, as he will, at this point of the play she feels that her life has already passed, it is

²⁰⁷ The same disappointment is also expressed later at 319 (he says he is coming, but although he says he never does it).

²⁰⁸ McLeod (2001), p. 47-48.

already too late for her (185-86), so his revenge will be only for their father's death, not for her own sufferings. Moreover, her *penthos* is so deeply rooted in her heart (ἐᾶτε μ' ὥδ' ἀλύειν, 135) that no glorious action by her brother can counterbalance it with *kleos*, for it *κεκλήσεται* (230) by itself. b) If there were one *locus* where she could sing and praise her father's glorious achievements or connect her own to her family's sufferings, this was the *parodos*, since it is the entrance song, that characterizes Electra as eternal mourner in front of the audience, and it is a song that can in respect to the play's structure be taken as a ritual *threnos/goos*²⁰⁹; but the poet chooses to focus on Electra, obliterates Agamemnon's *kleos* and shows that only Orestes who actually was not involved in his *oikos'* *penthos* has *kleos* as his personal immediate target. The *kommos* juxtaposes Electra's gloomy condition with Orestes' bright colors. The difference is that Electra's presence within the *oikos* of the murdered and with the murderers marks her as suffering whereas Orestes' absence allows him the narrative distance he needs to view his duty as a potential source of *kleos*. c) The proper performance of a lament takes place at the funeral and within the burial and post burial rites, and needs to come to a definitive end in order for the community to move on from grief. It has been years since Agamemnon's death; therefore, Electra's lament is out of context; its repetition is not only a speech act that vexes the murderers but has been deepening and developing all these years in Electra's mind and the community's hearts. The chorus notices that Electra αἰεὶ gives birth in her heart to new fights (πολέμους, 219). The accumulation of hatred in her heart has been

²⁰⁹ In the archaic Greek world there was a border between *thrēnos* and *goos*; *goos* was associated with the uncontrollable way that women mourn whereas *threnos* seems to have been the first attempt at rationalizing the emotions produced by death. "Whereas the poetry by women is called *goos*, the male singers at Hector's burial are said to sing a *threnos* (*Il.* 24.719-122). However, at Homer's time and on the geometrical vases men cried and pulled their hair as much as women did. Classical art offers a clear separation of men's and women's roles in funeral. In our play the two nouns are used without distinction (cf. ἀήξω θρήνων στυγεράων τε γόων 104). cf. Cebrian (2006), 96ff.

changing the essence of her lament; at the beginning it could have been more of an expression of sorrow about Agamemnon as the phrase ἔκπαγλα πάθη which stands in apposition to the night of the murder shows (203-04); now Electra mourns equally or more about her own condition and sorrow have been transformed to ὀργά (222) and χόλον (176).

3c) Electra's claim to heroic *kleos*.

Anger as a result of grief demands vengeance; this succession of sentiments recalls the great hero Achilles, who, moreover, would win eternal and undying *kleos* by avenging for his friend Patroclus. Probably such paradigms incite Electra to lay claim on a masculine *kleos* herself, when she believes that Orestes is dead. When she meets with Chrysothemis for the second time Electra suggests that the only way to lighten their despair (τῆς νῦν παρούσης πημονῆς λύσεις βάρος, 939) was to avenge the death of their father themselves by killing Aegisthus (955-57); at this point the matricide is silenced.²¹⁰ Since their only hope, their brother, is dead, they should not remain inert (ῥάθυμος, 958) because their inaction would never leave them to be married and perform the social role of a woman (ἄλεκτρα γηράσκουσιν ἀνυμέναιά τε, 962). However, in order to be allowed to lead a normal woman's life they should undertake a male expedition, kill a man, since Aegisthus would never allow them to bear an offspring that would menace his own sire (965).

²¹⁰ The commonest view about this is that Electra avoids mentioning the matricide to increase her chances of winning over her sister. To confront Chrysothemis with the prospect of killing her sister would remove any hope of her participation. But Finglass correctly objects that it is difficult to see how an audience could be expected to arrive at this interpretation. Taking into consideration the word of Clytemnestra that she cannot control Electra without Aegisthus, Finglass assumes that, although matricide is an especially grim kind of homicide, the killing of the male would be the more alarming prospect from a practical point of view and this is why Electra mentions only this. It also serves the dramatist's purpose: restricting the focus to Aegisthus, whose death is ethically less problematic, makes the ensuing conflict between the sisters more interesting. Finglass (2007) on 957.

Electra projects three reasons why they should proceed with Aegisthus' murder; the first, is that they will win Agamemnon's and Orestes' praise for piety (*εὐσέβειαν*, 968); then they are going to be called free (*ἐλευθέρα καλῇ*, 970-71)²¹¹ and they will achieve a worthwhile marriage (971). The third reason is that they will enjoy *λόγων εὐκλειαν* (973); in fact Electra envisions their speech of fame when she imagines how people would look upon them from then on if they accomplish such an achievement. The speech is a standard *τις*-speech that finds parallels in Homer²¹² and is part of Electra's strategy to persuade Chrysothemis about the benefit of such a "brave" deed: whoever of the citizens or the visitors sees them will accept them with praiseful words. He would admire how these two women saved the house of their father, how they avenged his death without thinking of their own life; they will be considered worthy to be cherished (*φιλεῖν*), revered (*σέβειν*) and honored in all the city's festivals because of their bravery (*ἀνδρεία*) (977-983). Electra closes the imaginary praise speech with the second reference of the play to *kleos*: such words are going to be said by every single individual (*πᾶς τις βροτῶν*, 984), and therefore whether alive or dead their glory will not perish (*ζῶσαιν θανούσαιν θ' ὥστε μὴ*

²¹¹ MacLeod is correct to explain that the definition of freedom was different between the two sisters, as was shown in their previous debate: For Electra, "*eleutheria* is the freedom to uphold the traditional beliefs of the community and the freedom to fulfill their social and biological role within the *oikos* and *polis*". Chrysothemis' way of life is a negation of both, for she has enslaved herself to the will of another".

²¹² e.g. Hector's imaginary speech when he calls an Achaean for duel; he suggests that if he is the winner future generations will commemorate his *kleos* when seeing his opponent's tomb (*Il.* 7.87-91). Also Sarpedon's call to Glaucus to fight at the front in order any Lycian who sees them to praise his kings as non *ἄκλεές* (12.318-21) cf. Wilson (1979)[ICS 4, 1-15], de Jong, *Eranos* 85: 69-84, MacLeod (2001), 144. Finglass (2007) on 973-85 points out that the reference to eternal fame is paralleled in a *scolium* celebrating the pair of Harmodius and Aristogeiton the tyrannicides ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 58.1), who were celebrated in a public cult just as Electra and Chrysothemis receive emphatically public acclaim. Juffras (1991) argues that the fact that Electra imagines not song, but honors offered in the context of cult celebrated by the polis evokes the image of a public statue commemorating Electra and Chrysothemis on a parallel with the paired statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton that stood in the agora from the fifth century on.

κλίπειν κλέος, 985). The word *kleos* rings back with *εὐκλειαν* and will come about as the result of their bravery.

Scholars have noticed the problems that Electra's usage of such argumentation raises. The immediate audience of Electra's speech is Chrysothemis who is supposed to be persuaded to act with her sister. However, as Finglass²¹³ explains, such a speech was not likely to persuade Chrysothemis, who has not shown any "heroic" courage or disposition in their first meeting. Moreover, Finglass is right to observe that Electra omits making any suggestion about how the plan would be put into practice, a fatal omission in a speech whose aim is persuasion. Besides, Electra's reaction has been until this point "passive", namely she acted through her words and lamentation and did not express any interest in actively taking revenge. As Kyriakou points out, although she aspires to be her father's glorious avenger and her brother's substitute, she does not turn into a matricide-to-be; she has never crossed the ultimate boundary to kill the murderers of her father.²¹⁴ Foley, who interprets the whole play in terms of the ethics of vendetta, suggests that Electra functions according to the traditional role of a surviving daughter in the absence of all supporting male relatives and the possibility of future ones: she undertakes the obligation to act as a man.²¹⁵ However, if this were the case, both Chrysothemis and the chorus should have at least understood Electra's intention, even if they would find that dangerous and unrealistic. Yet the chorus' immediate reaction is a critical one (990-91)²¹⁶ and Chrysothemis accuses her sister that this time she has transgressed the boundary of discretion (*εὐλάβειαν*, 994); Chrysothemis wonders where Electra finds such courage (*θράσος*,

²¹³ Finglass (2007) on 947-989.

²¹⁴ Kyriakou (2011), 365.

²¹⁵ Foley (2001), esp. 161-163.

²¹⁶ Possibly reflective of their role as inner (Athenian) audience as opposed to their role as members of the community portrayed.

995)²¹⁷ and admonishes her to realize that they are women and it is impossible for them to fight against such a man (τοιουῦτον ἄνδρα, 1001) and escape disaster (ἄτης) without sorrow (ἄλυπος, 1002).²¹⁸ The lack of a foundation to establish the success of such an intention (ποῖ βλέψασα, 995) tells against an invocation of the ethics of vendetta, for otherwise Chrysothemis should have known better. In fact, Chrysothemis' insistence on their female nature that counters Electra's "scheme" is consistent with Electra's previous accusation of Aegisthus as ἄναλκις (301) who wages wars against women (302).

Gould through an examination of Greek myth suggests that "male attitudes to women, and to themselves in relation to women are marked by tension, anxiety and fear. Women are not part of, do not belong easily in, the male ordered world of the "civilized: community; they have to be accounted for in other terms, and they threaten continually to overturn its stability or subvert its continuity...".²¹⁹ Therefore, Electra's discourse of *kleos* is problematic both in comparison to the play's structure and to the circumstances of its utterance. It draws upon the lexicon of manly heroism (ἀνδρεία²²⁰, κλέος) although uttered by a woman who until this point propagated self-consciously an excessive emotional and sentimental femininity. Its inner audience is polemical against its essence and the play's exterior audience would also be suspicious of such a gender subversive proposition. Besides, Electra is presented as

²¹⁷ The word *θάρσος* is used many times in the play, mostly connected with Electra and once (*θρασεῖα*, 521) with Clytemnestra.

²¹⁸ Finglass (2007) on 992-1014 notices the similarity in the argumentation between Chrysothemis and Ismene in *Antigone* but observes that the tone of Chrysothemis' speech is colder than Ismene's; yet Finglass is correct to note that "neither sympathetic nor contemptible, she [Chrysothemis] sets out a sensible case which few could either dispute or admire."

²¹⁹ Gould (2001), 153.

²²⁰ Finglass (2007) on 983 stresses that *ἀνδρεία* is a paradoxical quality to ascribe to women and by examining its usage in Greek literature he observes that it was always conceived in terms of traditional gender roles.

the archetypal defender of the patriarchal order and as such her characterization as totally masculinized is utterly problematic.²²¹ Moreover, the play's audience knows that her claim to *kleos* will remain imaginary since it is founded upon a lie: Orestes is alive and he can do the man's work. Chrysothemis was also in the world of truth in respect to whether their brother were alive but Electra dragged her in the sphere of deception. However, she could not draw her further; Chrysothemis' practicality and rationality, although not "heroic" (1005-06), preserves the main task that they as women had: the possibility to continue their family (1010). She even chooses to consider Electra's words about the glorious scheme as never spoken and of course unrealized (ἄρρητα' ἐγὼ σοι κατέλῃ, 1012). If Electra's word were until now acting, her words about gaining *kleos* and eternal fame will be considered as not even acted or performed. Electra herself acts as if she had never spoken the *κλέος* speech: when she learns the truth that Orestes is alive she retires from claiming *kleos* into her more "feminine" role again. Actually, in Sophocles' *Electra* *kleos* is not only an attribute or a desire of Orestes but it theatrically depends on him: it appears in a word when Orestes is on stage in the prologue; then it disappears with him as a word and reappears verbally only when Electra believes that her brother is dead according to the false messenger speech. Orestes' death pushes Electra to the edge and makes her envision herself as the embodiment of *kleos*: but in this play eternal fame earned through a deed of murder as revenge belongs to the male sphere and is incompatible with a woman's role.

²²¹ Wheeler (2003), 383 analyzes Electra's problematic gender-definition: "she is pugnacious yet motherly, emotional yet rational; she transgresses- but in defense of patriarchy and patriliney, despising Aegisthus; effeminacy and finally deciding to carry out the revenge after Orestes' death has been reported".

A final observation in respect with the incompatibility between masculine *kleos* and Electra; the citizens whose praiseful words she imagines winning, are the least already familiar with her nature. She is characterized within the Argos community by her insatiable lament (*ἀκόρεστον οἰμωγαν*, 123), she perceives a general discomfort (*δυσφορεῖν ὑμῖν ἄγαν*, 255) due to her behavior and she must have been viewed as typical and predictable if we consider the chorus' verb *λάσκεις* (123) along with Chrysothemis' emphatic *αὖ* (328) about her crying out of the same apparently report (*τῇνδε...φωνεῖς φάτιν*, 328-9), this time at a different spot, outside the palace (328, 516). Clytemnestra also highlights Electra's constant invective against her (524) and prays silently in order Electra that not to spread around the city vain rumors due to her envy (*φθόνῳ*) and many-tongued and oft repeated cry (*πολυγλώσσῳ βοῇ*, 641). Electra's *πολύγλωσσοι βοή* is for Clytemnestra as vexing as Orestes' life (798). Electra admits that she feels shame (*αἰσχύνην*, 616) about her attitude toward her mother, and although at this point she gains the audiences' favor since she bravely acknowledges the truth in her adversary's accusations and shows that she knows the social and ethical limits in her behavior, nevertheless, at the same time she openly admits that in the face of the community there is something in her behavior that is shameful.²²² How then is it possible to be glorified and praised by these same people that seem tired by her excessive behavior? The citizens that Electra imagines as preserving her *kleos* should forget her excess in lamentation that contradicts their perception of measure and praise her for a masculine heroic deed.

²²² cf. Cairns (1993) notes: "...it is important that she recognizes something of the ambivalence of her conduct; her *aischunē* indicates that she is not behaving as a noblewoman should in normal circumstances, yet she justifies her conduct in terms of her own nobility (*eugeneia*). The "compulsion:" which makes her act in this way is compelling only in terms of her own values and outlook, and it is part of her tragedy that she is compelled to act in ways which she perceives, with more or less clarity, to be discreditable" (248).

The contradictory emotions that the people of Argos are assumed to feel are connected with the controversial nature of Electra as heroine; as Gardiner puts it “Electra’s character is caught in the middle between heroism and brutality....We respect her and sympathize with her, but we do not like her”.²²³ Besides, it is also her appearance which would have made a disappointing impression to the audience; she has been presented in the *parodos* as unwed, meanly clothed and ill fed (189-192); such an appearance coincides with her abuse against Clytemnestra, but makes her *kleos* discourse sound to the civilians and to the theatre audience utterly incongruent if not that of a mad woman.

MacLeod observes that, as in the case of Orestes, killing their enemies should not be conceived as a heroic action worthy of *kleos* and *time*, “as this ignores the terrible breach of blood-ties involved”.²²⁴ However, Electra was cautious enough in her second meeting with Chrysothemis not to refer to the matricide but limited their revenge in the killing of Aegishus; the second murder could allow the legitimate avenger *kleos* and honor. Moreover, Electra constantly stresses that her behavior is avenging for her father (ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρί πάντα τιμωρουμένης, 349, πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι, 399, τῷ τεθνηκότι τιμὰς προσάπτειν, 356) and the result of her thinking only about her father is projected also as the reason of her social concern: she wants to be called and characterized as the child of their honorable father (πατρός πάντων ἀρίστου παῖδα κεκληῖσθαι, 365-66); this choice she contradistinguishes with Chrysothemis’ whom she accuses as showing *δειλίαν* (351), as following their mother’s instructions (κείνης διδακτά, 344) and as choosing to be called (καλοῦ, 366) the child of their mother. *Καλοῦ* and *κεκληῖσθαι* has the same root with *kleos* and

²²³ Gardiner (1987), 140.

²²⁴ MacLeod (2001), 145. Similar is the case of Euripides’ Medea.

imply the way Electra views their social recognition and reputation; she expresses a deep concern not to be characterized within the community of Argos by their mother's behavior, although scholars have noticed a similarity in nature between the two.²²⁵ Electra claims her father's glorious name and suggests that the majority (*πλείστοις*, 366) will perceive Chrysothemis as *κακή* because she betrayed her *φίλους* after her father's death. However, these same *πλείστοι* spurn Electra for not showing any respect to her mother (614-15). Finglass traces in the *πλείστοι* an implied universal contempt for Chrysothemis as later Electra envisages a universal acclaim.²²⁶ Namely Electra's concern of public opinion is not limited in the boundaries of her contemporary community but targets traditional beliefs and universal values; these beliefs and values are apparently accepted by the present *polis* as well but on the one hand they were not free to express and follow them and on the other Electra's contradictory character and attire undermine their high heroic expectations of Electra. As Chrysothemis notices free in this city are those who submit to the tyrants (339-40). The frame of a city under tyranny, as the play portrays the city of Argos, does not allow Electra's praise to be spread around the city, even if people praise her in their minds. But her image might even discourage them from praising her in their minds. Of course, traditional beliefs and values such as *kleos* demand a free environment in order to be practiced. Electra upholds a glory that addresses a community under normal conditions and not the special case of Argos under the authority of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. The fact that *kleos* is part of Orestes' taught ideal worldview and Electra's imaginary world shows that in the mind of the fifth-century Athenian *kleos*

²²⁵ Segal (1966), 499; Winnington-Ingram (1980), 246; Blundell (1989), 160-172; Cairns (1993), 245-46.

²²⁶ Finglass (2001), on 367.

is a detached and idealistic concept, almost mystified and connected with the nostalgic heroic era.

A good measure of the discomfort that Electra's *kleos* speech provokes is the chorus' reaction. The chorus admittedly is highly favorable to Electra, despite their moments of critical stance against her. Early enough they have declared that they leave her to win in argumentation and that they follow her (252-53). However, at this point the chorus's support for *προμηθία* constitutes a criticism of Electra's scheme.²²⁷ The women of the chorus admonish that in such conditions prudent foresight should be shown, an ally to both the speaker and the listener (990-91); the listener is Chrysothemis and it seems that they entrust her with the mission of convincing Electra about the irrationality of her scheme. Chrysothemis addresses the chorus directly afterwards as the only one on stage who can understand her point of view and Electra's transgression. Chrysothemis tries to persuade her sister to inaction and projects to Electra the opposite of the heroic ideal: *λύει γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἐπωφελεῖ βᾶξιν καλὴν λαβόντε δυσκλεῶς θανεῖν* (1005-06). The chorus shares Chrysothemis' opinion and advises Electra to obey for there is no better profit to humans than foresight (*προνοίας*) and wise mind (*νοῦ σοφού*). Apparently the chorus judges Electra as not sensible and incautious at this point. Electra ignores the chorus completely and defies her sister. The atmosphere between the chorus and Electra is now reversed; "with Chrysothemis' exit, the scene ends in discord instead of the former conspiratorial harmony".²²⁸ We should draw an important distinction: the chorus in the whole play is by Electra's side, sympathizes with her sufferings and totally shares her demand for revenge and honor. They behave thus, however, under

²²⁷ Finglass (2007) on 990-91, who rightly finds Burton's claim, that the chorus is not rebuking Electra, far-fetched.

²²⁸ Gardiner (1987), 153.

one condition: that she remains within the female sphere and asks for things to be fulfilled in their proper order. When Electra suggests that the two daughters should undertake their brother's role and be themselves the killers, the chorus becomes instantly detached from their beloved heroine.

The chorus' reaction to Electra's *kleos* speech is not the only moment where the chorus projects the more traditional path of revenge and justice as a solution for Electra's sufferings. Already in the *parodos* they were highlighting as a consolation that Electra's siblings shared her misery and that Orestes will come as *ἐνπατρίδης*²²⁹ to his fatherland. The women of the chorus see Orestes as the only solution to the miseries of Agamemnon's house and constantly ask about him (317-18) and refute Electra's disappointment about his postponed advent by literally or figuratively referring to Orestes (320-21, 489-91). After the false story about his death they participate in the *kommos* in Electra's lamentation. This time the chorus has no hope to offer except for the unsuccessful paradigm of Amphiaraos (836ff) who still had a son to avenge for him. The chorus' confirmation "*δειλαία δειλαίων κυρεῖς*" (849) confirms the impasse in respect to revenge according to the traditional beliefs and values.

After Chrysothemis' second exit follows a *stasimon* where the chorus praises Electra's behavior. I am not convinced that the chorus in this *stasimon*, which follows Electra's *kleos* speech, confirms wholeheartedly "the moral validity of Electra's values as against those of Chrysothemis".²³⁰ It is certain that the ode praises Electra for her courage and that it criticizes the behavior of Chrysothemis (1074). However, it

²²⁹ Budelmann (2000) sees the word *eu-patrides* as an instant of what Easterling calls "heroic vagueness" and notes that it both describes Orestes as a partisan of his father and since *oi Eupatrides* can refer to the aristocrats of early Athens, puts him in a political context (253).

²³⁰ Gardiner (1987), 155. Finglass (2007) on 1058-97.

leaves room for an opposite focalization. In my opinion the emphasis is not laid so much on her courage to kill the two murderers (1080), as on her praiseful behavior before the *τις*-speech; her fulsome support of her father (1065) and her life of lamentation (1075-77). There are some elements that seem subversive of the main topic of the *stasimon*, the praise of Electra's specific heroic choice. First, the initial paradigm to which she is compared is taken from the "uncivilized" world of the birds and not from a practice within a human community (1058-1062). Of course, the birds' association with their caring for their parents was prevalent in antiquity²³¹ but it also shows that the chorus could not find an example of a woman who revenged alone for her father's honor alone. Second, the special case of Electra's behavior is introduced with the topic of *ἄχόρευτα δνείδη*, the dishonor of the house as Jebb interprets it. This title is explained in the second stanza by the discord between the sisters (1069-70) and the chorus reprimands Chrysothemis for leaving Electra alone (*πρόδοτος*). Nevertheless, this was Electra's case also before her second meeting with Chrysothemis and at that time too she also mourned alone (*μόνα*). Third, emphasis is laid in the fact that Electra does not fear death (1078-79) and the previous accusation of not being *προμηθής* becomes praise, but only not *προμηθής* of death, not of the impracticality of her deed that Chrysothemis stressed. The fearless attitude toward death, a common element of praise for both men and women, is stressed in a second synonymous line (1079), while the actual reference to the murder follows vaguely in a participial phrase (1080); in fact, the participle is hypothetical, if she manages to quell the two Furies of the House, leaving room for the practical difficulty. The final rhetorical question (*τίς ἄν εὐπατρὶς ὧδε βλάστοι*, 1081) recalls the title *εὐπατρίδης* which the chorus had given to Orestes as a predicate in an affirmative clause, not in a

²³¹ Finglass (2007) ad hoc.

vague rhetorical question. The answer here could also be Orestes by the audience, since the audience knows that Orestes is alive.

The next stanza (1082-1089) demands closer examination:²³²

οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀγαθῶν <ἄν>
ζῶν κακῶς εὐκλειαν αἰσχυῖναι θέλοι
νώνυμος, ὦ παῖ παῖ·
ὥς καὶ σὺ πάγκλαυτον αἰ-
ῶνα κλεινὸν εἴλου,
ἄκος καλὸν καθοπλίσα-
σα δύο φέρειν <έν> ἐνὶ λόγῳ,
σοφά τ' ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκληῖσθαι

No noble soul would like to disgrace his glorious reputation by living basely and dying anonymously, my child. Thus you have also chosen a lamenting glorious life; arming yourself with a gentle remedy so that you win a twofold praise, to be called a wise and noble daughter.

Electra is not alone any more; she becomes part of the race of nobles; however, one admits that she has lived basely and because of her misery one forgives that she aspires to honor her noble birth and the reputation of her family. But then the chorus talks about Electra's life (*αἰῶνα*) not her imminent glorious revenge, and this is the certain part of the line. This life is praised certainly as a life of lamentation, even if *κλεινόν* is to be obelised. She is also armed with something that is corrupt. If we accept *ἄκος* and translate a gentle remedy, a cure or remedy could never denote matricide; lamenting like a nightingale, however, could be viewed as remedy. Finglass, however, rejects the solution of *ἄκος* and admits that "our chances to recover the original text without fresh evidence are therefore slight." What he suggests that we look for is a word denoting Electra's plan or her state of mind conceiving that plan. But how a word denoting Electra's plan would predicate her in

²³² I follow Lloyd-Jones and Wilson's text. Finglass ad hoc suggests that *κοινόν* (instead of *κλεινόν*) *εἴλου* should be obelised and he also rejects *ἄκος* and retains *τὸ μὴ* instead, again obelised.

the next line as σοφά, when Electra herself has found no wisdom in her plan when she admitted to Crhysothemis ‘I am jealous of your mind, your cowardice I hate’ (1027). In addition, the same chorus objected to Electra’s scheme as not congruent with a wise mind (1016). I believe that the chorus accepts as wise Electra’s devotion to the ideals of honor, respect for family and devotion to justice, but not the actual action on her side and that the word we are looking for still refers to her feminine way of reacting and not to a male heroic deed. The final stanza is again a praise of her piety towards the gods which was associated with piety towards the parents²³³ and makes a general wish about her life to prosper above her foes, vague enough not to define whether her enemies will be alive or dead (1090-92). Once again the emphasis is laid on her life and not on her “heroic scheme”. Orestes’ advent guarantees the traditional avenger that the chorus was seeking and resolves the discomfort of the women whether Electra should be praised for undertaking such a role.

Budelmann stresses that Sophocles’ choruses show a flexibility that allows not only ancients but also modern spectators to use the chorus as one of their ways into the play; he argues that Sophoclean choruses offer the spectators the perspective of what he calls the large group “which is, at least in some ways, first the perspective of a group under threat and then of a group that is safe”. Especially in *Electra* Budelmann observes that the Chorus makes Electra’s perspective to some degree the perspective of a group, which is not opposed to a male group and allows continuity between this Chorus and the community of Mycenae.²³⁴ This continuity moves the

²³³ Finglass (2007) on 1097.

²³⁴ cf. Gardiner (1987), expresses a similar opinion but in a more expansive and unconditional way to which we should be cautious if my perception of the chorus’ instant distances from Electra is true. cf. “it is the function of these Mycenaean women to display, as representatives of the people of the land, the emotional response of those people: the conviction that Electra’s actions are right and just, approved by society and the gods”. (163), and “for Electra is an object of sympathy and admiration to those outside the palace, represented in the members of the chorus” (163).

Chorus, women though they are, closer to the Athenian citizen body and thus ancient and modern spectators may eagerly adopt the chorus' perspective which shows desire for change and retribution²³⁵. My former observations about the chorus' adherence to traditional beliefs and detachment of Electra's claim on male heroic ideals is, in this view, indicative of the reaction of the city's community and of the theatre's audience and once again gives us the following perspective on *kleos*: although in Sophoclean²³⁶ drama it is used for women, it is used in deeds that allowed glory to women whereas the area of male deeds is insulated and suspicious when approached by women. Another parallel of this rule is Antigone: she performs her brother's burial despite Creon's prohibition and claims "*κλέος ...εὐκλεέστερον* (502)" as the result of her deed. However, her deed did not strictly belong to the male sphere; in fact, women are primarily concerned and connected with duties around the burial. Antigone expects everybody to applaud her action (*πᾶσιν ἀνδάνειν*, 504). Haemon confirms her expectation when he indicates to Creon that the city mourns how Antigone dies as the basest due to her glorious deeds (*ἀπ' ἔργων εὐκλεεστάτων*, 695). Antigone's *kleos* discourse is kept within the boundaries of traditional beliefs and ideas and is not threatening to the community; on the contrary, it is to be praised. Electra, on the other hand, can only touch upon the concept of *kleos* in an imaginary speech which raises criticism and is going to be considered by her sister as never spoken, because its source was a deed of *ἀνδρεία*.²³⁷

²³⁵ Budelmann (2000), esp. 201, 203, 253-54.

²³⁶ I specify "Sophoclean" because I believe that in Euripides this rule is not applicable as I am going to show later.

²³⁷ Bassi (2003) argues that Electra's claim to *andreia* signifies "the absence of masculinity in its traditional or normative form and the emergence of a manliness that is no longer *anēr* specific"(42). Goldhill criticizes correctly, in my view, this position as lacking in depth and suggests that Electra's claim to *andreia* complies with her transgressive self-representation as wild and dangerous. Goldhill (2004), "Masculinity" in *CR*, 54 (2), 439.

3d) Real *kleos* within the fake tale and fake *kleos* within the real play.

The disconnection of the concept of *kleos* from the practical reality which the tragic community reflects as a product of the *polis*-practice, unlike its epic and epinician life, can be further argued by the projection of Orestes' representation as a heroic figure in the famous messenger speech of *Electra*. Orestes is not choosing to give just a convincing account of his death; he has the Paedagogus present him²³⁸ as a glorious athlete who died at the Delphian games, at the most favorite sport of the ancient audience, the chariot racing. The whole narration has epic and epinician overtones although it is also much different from its poetic predecessors.²³⁹ My focus will be on the glorious presentation of Orestes and its implications in respect to the hero's connection with *kleos*.

In the *Paedagogus' angelia* we hear how Orestes would like to view himself; how he would stage his own personality and what kind of death he would find appropriate for himself as the son of Agamemnon. Although the *Paedagogus* is the narrator, we can certainly see Orestes' reflection and choices in his narrative since as it became apparent in the prologue the old man's *didaxis* and worldview are totally assimilated by Orestes who acts according to what he has been idealized as heroic during his previous life. Orestes would have made the same narrative if he would have been the messenger himself. The narrative presents Orestes in heroic terms. Therefore, the emphatic *κείνο*ς (681) places Orestes in the center of the athletic and

²³⁸ Already in the prologue, when he gives instructions to the Paedagogus what to announce about him as part of their deception scheme, he suggests that he should say that Orestes died at the Pythian Games during a horse race (48-51). Batchelder (1995) argues that Sophocles presents Orestes as a poet figure, accepting at first the guidance and control of the earlier poet, and then controlling and using what he has learned from the older poet to achieve his own artistic ends (21). I find her interpretation of the play quite far-fetched.

²³⁹ For the differences from Homer's description at *Il.* 23 and from the epinician genre cf. Finglass (2007), on 680-763.

narrative space; the Delphian court is pre-announced as the famous ornament²⁴⁰ of Greece (*κλεινόν Ἑλλάδος πρόσχημα*, 680-81). In the foot race he came in splendid (*λαμπρός*, 685) and became the object of veneration among everyone (*σέβας*, 685) and finally the winner of the race. The narrator magnifies his achievements by presenting Orestes' case as almost unique (689) and denoting that he won all the prizes (*τὰ πινίκια*, 692). Orestes in his moment of utter happiness (*ὠλβίζετο*) is announced at the Panhellenic athletic contest by his father's name and his city name, as any winner would be proclaimed. But Agamemnon's glory seems to have been alive among the Greeks since he is predicated as the one who once led the famous army of Greece (693-95). Orestes had gained until that moment his own *kleos* by his success at the games but also by his father's glorious non-athletic achievements. This is how Orestes was taught to view and viewed himself: as the son of the great Agamemnon and as capable of glorious deeds, due to his descent.

Afterwards follows the narration of his accident and death at the Games. The narrator, having made sure that he presented Agamemnon's son gloriously enough in order not to disgrace the achievements of his father, is free to supply the false tale of his death with as many details as he can to make it vivid and convincing. The tragedy is the result of the god's will, not of Orestes' incapability (696-97). The Aenian man's horses overthrow their chariot and then the Delphian hippodrome fills of wreckages (729-30). Orestes, like Nestor's son Antilochus in the *Iliad*²⁴¹, had inferior horses (734); he sees that the only one left in the race is the Athenian charioteer and himself. These last two were fighting side by side but Orestes crashes at the turning post,

²⁴⁰ *πρόσχημα* normally means anything "put forward" to be noticed by others; it usually bears the negative meaning of "pretence, pretext" but here the usage is positively qualified. cf. LSJ ad hoc and Finglass on 682.

²⁴¹ *Il.* 23. 310.

unlike the Iliadic Antilochus who was especially warned by his father about the danger at this point; Agamemnon's son was entangled in the reins and died. The reaction of the crowd in the narrative again presents a positive stance of the Greeks towards Orestes: people broke into wailing about the young man who was dragged by his chariot on the ground so that his body lost its form (750-56). The crowd is presented as lamenting how a man who achieved previously such great deeds finds himself in such a misery. The sentiment concerns, of course, the change of the human fortune and rings back with the messenger's sentiment that what a god wills, not even a powerful man can oppose (697-98). We should observe that the people compared Orestes' sufferings to his previous glory at the games and not to his descent from a glorious father. They, in a way, commented on the *kleos* Orestes won by himself and not the one he inherited from his father.

Scholars have compared and elaborated on the dependence of this messenger speech on the Iliadic games at the funeral of Patroclus and specifically on the chariot race of the 23rd book of *Iliad*. Finglass stresses that while in Homer the race acts as a relief from the play's main action and sometimes as a parody of it, in Sophocles' *Electra* the description of the race causes the heroine not relief but a new anguish. In the Homeric passage Nestor advises Antilochus before the game how to win the race by *mētis* (312, 313, 315, 316, 318) instead of *biē* (315) since his horses are inferior to the others and suggests that the successful charioteer is the one who knows *κέρδεα* (322). Antilochus should definitely avoid touching the turning post, harming his horses and wrecking the chariot for this would leave joy (*χάρμα*) for the others but blame (*ἐλεγχείη*) for him (342). Antilochus finally beats Menelaus through shrewdness (*κέρδεσιν, οὗ τι τάχει γε*, 515) and this is why Menelaus becomes angry at

him after the end of the race (566-585). Comparing the advice of Nestor to the Sophoclean Orestes of the prologue, Barrett expands on the approach of others that the false narrative indicates the true nature of Orestes' character in Sophocles' play²⁴² and argues that "the false narrative's interest in the *Iliad* passage points to the role of *mētis* in Orestes' successful return home". The word *mētis* does not occur in Sophocles' play but the *dolos* that Apollo suggests Orestes should use to achieve his target can be understood as the effective practice of *mētis*²⁴³. Although Nestor's advice has similarities with the Orestes of the prologue I believe that the Orestes of the messenger speech is a different one, a more "Iliadic" in nature meaning that he does not use ruses or tricks in order to win the race but he tries to achieve success through his capabilities and this is the main trait that the hippodrome audience appreciates. Namely he never takes into consideration "Nestor's advice"; in fact he dies by the way Nestor suggested that would be a blame for Antilochus, he touches the turning post. Why then does Orestes choose to die by the most common way of dying at a chariot race and move the hippodrome audience's pity?

The obvious answer is that only by the fact that he participated at the Panhellenic Games, the field where young classical era noblemen acquired prestige and reputation, and his physical abilities were appreciated by such a great audience was enough to depict him in the bright colors of glory; his death, common for great athletes because of the true danger of the race could also be considered a glorious one. He was fighting for a glorious prize and he thus sacrificed himself. His story would sound convincing both to Electra and the chorus, who, as we mentioned, had the highest expectations of Orestes and also to Clytemnestra, who feared him to the

²⁴² Seale (1982), 66; Kamerbeek (1974) on 735.

²⁴³ Barrett (2002), 142-42 and n. 23.

degree of frenzy (294). A less glorious death, by an accident or disease, would not befit the heroic and menacing reputation he carried among the Argives, which was cultivated all these years due to Electra's rumors and Clytemnestra's fearful behavior.²⁴⁴

The Iliadic model suggests, I believe, one more element in respect to the quality of the glory that a hero wins. Achilles did not participate in the games because his horses lost their charioteer (κλέος ἐσθλόν ...ήνιόχοιο), Patroclus, and they are utterly distressed (*Il.*23.280ff.). The competitors who finally participate are only five, unlike Sophocles' account where they are ten, but they are all famous Iliadic warriors: Diomedes, who finally wins, Menealaus, Antilochus, son of Nestor and friend of Achilles, Eumelus, Admetus's son and Meriones from Crete. At the end of the race three quarrels take place; one between Idomeneus and Ajax the Lesser (448-498), the second between Antilochus and "Achilles' judgment" to give anyway the second prize to Eumelus (*Il.*23.543ff.), and the third between Antilochus and Menelaus, because Antilochus won the latter through deceit (*Il.*23.570ff.). Scholars of the Neoanalytic school have read these quarrels as mirror texts of the two main topics of the *Iliad*, the anger and the honor of Achilles. Ironically enough Achilles is the one who resolves the first two quarrels: he reprimands Ajax and Idomeneus that their quarrel is inappropriate for heroes since they themselves would condemn such behavior in others (494). In the second case Achilles smiles at Antilochus' complaint and recedes from his suggestion. Critics have seen in Achilles' reaction the

²⁴⁴ Barrett aptly observes that the Paedagogus' false tale follows Odysseus' poetics who according to the Homeric narrator knew how to tell many lies like truth (*Od.* 19-203) and reads the messenger speech as a double metatheater scene: 'Not only does the Paedagogus create within the fictional world of the play a false report about Orestes that is indistinguishable from a true one; he also creates within the world of the theatre a "false" *angelia* that is indistinguishable from a "true" one. In this sense the metatheater is double, inasmuch as it stages a specifically tragic form of theater as the play-within-the-play". Barrett (2002), 157-58.

recognition of himself in Antilochus' behavior: at the first book of the *Iliad* Achilles carried the dispute to the edges; at this occasion he is sentimentally detached from the fight and knows how to resolve the dispute.²⁴⁵ I see one more element in Achilles' smile: the scene of the Funeral Games functions as a relief from the battle but also as a secondary field of winning *kleos*. Epinician poetry defines victory at the athletic games as a source of *kleos*, mostly conferred by the song in honor of the athlete at his return home; moreover, according to Nestor's advice, as we have seen, the winner wins joy whereas the loser blame. The humorous and non intense tone of the Homeric race passage as well as the total inversion of Achilles' character in respect to his reaction to anger and his ironic smile against Antilochus are in my opinion signs of an evaluation of *kleos*. Martial glory and reputation won at the battlefield is the primary quality of *kleos* whereas the athletic games offer glory again but of a secondary quality; this is the reason why Achilles laughs at Antilochus' childish complaint that considers the prize at the games so important as to be willing to fight with his hands for it. It is indicative that except for the reference to Patroclus, nowhere in book 23 does *kleos* appear as a quality that the heroes' win through the games; they acquire *ἀεθλα* (Il.23.259, 262, 273, 314, 413), *χάρμα* (342), Athena bestows *κῦδος* (400) upon Diomedes in order to win, but *κλέος* is not a quality they win at these games. Unwithering glory is earned at the battlefield within the frame of the Homeric epic, and if these games would confer *kleos* similar to the martial one, Achilles might have participated himself with another charioteer, although this is also hindered by the need of Patroclus' wealth to be redistributed and not just taken again

²⁴⁵ Regakos (2006), 29-30. Regakos sees in Achilles a mirror of the poet himself; Just as Achilles smiles upon Antilochus, because he knows that it is only a game which as long as it lasts keeps the war reality at a distance, similarly the poet, by embedded or para- narratives within the main narrative smiles at the reader in order to show that his storytelling has the character of a game.

by Achilles. Besides, before announcing that he is not participating, he is assuring that if he would take part, he would win (274-76). His title in the battle as the best of the Achaeans guarantees his athletic superiority. The vice versa would not be taken for granted.

Is the humorous and lighter tone of the *Iliadic* model totally absent from Sophocles' messenger speech as Finglass observes? I believe that it is not. The messenger speech sounds serious and causes anguish only to Electra and the chorus, but the theatre audience, which has seen Orestes alive at the prologue, cannot participate at Electra's emotional devastation; the spectators know that it is deceptive and false. The Paedagogus' surprise (769) at Clytemnestra's sorrow at the end of his speech lightens the atmosphere and his pretentious disappointment (772) gives a humorous tone at the incident. He is a messenger of terrible news who expects the primary receptor of his news to be happy about them. The fact that Clytemnestra was finally convinced satisfied both the Paedagogus and the theatre audience because it ensured the success of Orestes' revenge; Electra's mourning was a necessary loss.

The similarity in tone between Sophocles' messenger speech and the *Iliadic* model suggests one more telling allusion in respect to the narrator's choice: Orestes is not presented in the messenger speech as an "Odyssean figure"; the allusion to the *Iliad* and his distancing from Nestor's "Odyssean" advice about *metis* and *kerdea* suggests that the focalization of the *Paedagogus* and Orestes in this story was to present him as a true *Iliadic* hero who did not use *dolos*, a choice that resulted in his death. The "real" Sophoclean Orestes, however, declared in the prologue that he is going to use *dolos* according to Apollo's advice and because he is thinking of his personal profit; therefore he expects his main source of winning *kleos*, the revenge of his father, to have the opposite result of the fake race. Besides, Games would not

confer to him the glory that he can win through the murder of his father's killers; if he would even be the winner at the Pythian horse race, but he failed to avenge for his father's death, he would not have fulfilled the expectations of the Argive community in respect to him and his reputation as well as that of his father would never be restored. As Achilles showed with his smile, these were only games. In the reality of the shame and honor culture,²⁴⁶ however, he would be considered glorious only if he achieved revenge. Orestes the manipulator of language had the Paedagogus present him as the ideal athlete, who won the rest of the prizes until his supposed death at the horse race, not through deception but through his capabilities and admirable deeds. He fulfilled the *Iliadic* heroic ideal. In the deceptive speech not only does he lie about his death, but he also lies about his identity. His true identity has caught Nestor's advice well, but he is not going to use it at the Games where his *kleos* would not be of the greatest quality; he is going to use it at the real field of his life aim, to restore his father's honor and achieve personal glory and royal authority. *Dolos* and deceit would win him the prize as they did for Antilochus. In addition, as a dead Panhellenic athlete he is the perfect balance for Clytemnestra's ears, who wants him to be great, but not too great by killing him.

3e) *Kleos*-less end.

Finally, Orestes sees Electra. At the end of the prologue the Paedagogus deterred him in order not to waste time from their plan. As long as Orestes has not seen his sister everything runs according to his plan. When he comes in to bring the empty urn and faces her true emotional reaction he expresses total puzzlement (*ἀμνηχανῶν*, 1174). His constant cautiousness to control time and coordinate his

²⁴⁶ I use the terms cautiously following Cairns' (1993) precautions in respect to whether a "true" shame culture exists, namely a culture with no internalization of values but which functions only under exterior sanctions. (esp. 42-47).

movements according to the initial schedule collapses out of the profound emotion he experiences at the sight of Electra²⁴⁷. Her appearance causes his involvement in the true sufferings of his *oikos*; his participation in her *penthos* gradually annihilates his *kleos* ambition. Orestes asks whether what he sees is Electra's famous beauty (*κλεινὸν εἶδος*, 1177).²⁴⁸ Along with his disappointment of Electra's dishonored appearance collapses his impression of the *kleos* of his father's *oikos*; *κλεινὸν εἶδος* makes a ring composition with the beginning of the play and the usage of the same epithet for the famous temple of Hera at the Mycenae (*κλεινὸς ναός*, 8) and the Mycenaean land (*κλεινὰ...γά...Μυκηναίων*, 160-61). At that point Orestes was eager to see everything about which he was learning for all the years of his absence, due to the education he received about the old heroic glory of his fatherland; now he is appalled by Electra's appearance and in a way he enters into the real world where his quest and ambition for heroic *kleos* has no place. His recognition of Electra's body as worn-out (*ἐφθαρμένον*, 1181) reflects his disappointment at the application of the heroic ideal at the present circumstances: Electra is utterly different from what he was expecting and listening to her sufferings makes him participate in her misery. His involvement transforms his eminent revenge from a source of *kleos* and acquisition of power and wealth to a means of resolving his sister's hatred and humiliation. In its Homeric version revenge as a means of retaliation and restoration of honor was identical; Achilles avenging for Patroclus was guaranteeing his *kleos* because of the epic context and the battlefield frame. Orestes' revenge, however, can be paralleled to Electra's present state: if it would take place immediately after Agamemnon's death it

²⁴⁷ Finglass (2007) on 1171-1231.

²⁴⁸ Electra's beauty must have been famous in antiquity according to [Hes.] fr.23a.16 M-W. cf. Finglass (2007) on 1177.

might have offered him renowned and glorious reputation. Time, however, *and* the tragic genre had worked against him; as Electra's appearance and the consequences of her chronic mourning cannot be erased by her face and the community's memory, thus Orestes' revenge cannot restore the house's old reputation, because the chronological gap between the dishonor and the vengeance has annihilated the premises upon which heroic *kleos* could be found.²⁴⁹

The end of the play guarantees the success of revenge again due to Orestes' presence. But no *kleos* or even mourning, which preserved in Electra's mind Agamemnon's honor, is commemorated after the recognition scene. Sophocles evaluated Orestes' desire for glory and proved it futile in the present conditions. The play also makes a strong impression and found its meaning in Electra's lament which could function as a revenge and *τιμή* for the dead Agamemnon. This lament, however, famous in literature and in the audience's ears, neither commemorated nor reported anything about Agamemnon's glorious past; only about his home miseries. It was a "notorious *kleos*" for Electra, who remained a liminal lamenter and through her behavior annulled the dignity that a princess could acquire.

The atmosphere of the play changes after their mutual recognition. Orestes returns to the application of his scheme and twice reproaches Electra for wasting valuable time (1259, 1292). For her his presence ensures her freedom (1256), for him nothing has finished until he makes their enemies stop laughing (1295), namely accomplishing his goal. It is as if Orestes' presence is the end of Electra's drama and the final murder scene is part of Agamemnon's death drama. Electra's character yields to Orestes' practicality (1301) and accepts to simulate her feelings so that her

²⁴⁹ cf. Segal (1981), 249: "a vengeance that has gone sour in an unheroic, embittered world".

brother's *dolos* succeeds (1309-10)²⁵⁰. But nothing in her character actually changes; she still insists on showing her willingness for self-sacrifice and love for her family lavishly even if the consequences are distressful for her own life (1304-05), opposing her brother's quest for personal profit and glory. Apparently, her brother's presence cannot erase her feeling of loneliness in respect to saving herself and her father's honor, which she experienced until now. She makes it clear that she is grateful for his advent but she still considers it a miracle and proposes that even if her father would appear alive she would believe it (1316-17). Electra's extreme joy and optimism supplies her with the self-confidence to support again the plan she proposed at her imaginary speech, that even if she would be alone, she would still either gloriously save herself or gloriously die (1319-21). The antithesis between success and failure is marked by the repetition of the adverb *καλῶς* in each colon and Heubner is correct to stress that the weight of the sentence falls upon the prospect of glory and not upon success or failure²⁵¹. She uses *καλῶς* and not *εὐκλεῶς* but the former bears also the meaning of rightly for a noble and thus gloriously.²⁵² What is significant here is that, although Orestes is next to her and although she on her own expressed total submission to his plan (1319), she still envisions herself as alone (*μόνη*) and defends her behavior and nature as noble and prospectively glorious; namely, she on her own felt capable to guarantee her personal reputation and glory, even at the cost of death.

However, until Orestes' advent, except for the imaginary speech which did not show any practicality and was expressed many years after Agamemnon's death and

²⁵⁰ The motif of "affect masking", in which one attempts to "conceal one's feelings by assuming an opposite facial expression" Finglass (2007) ad hoc.

²⁵¹ Heubner (1963), 379-180. Heubner stresses the effort of the poet to present Electra as the center of the play: ...Electra selbst dort, wo der Handlungsablauf es unmöglich zu machen schien, im Brennpunkt des Werkes festzuhalten und sie bis zuletzt als die Dramatische Mitte, von der alles ausstrahlt und auf die alles hingeeordnet ist...

²⁵² cf. Eur.*Or.* 1151-2, *Aj.* 479-80.

under the impression that Orestes is dead, she had never showed any intention to proceed to the deed herself. Is it that her brother's false death made her more self-confident and strong or that at this point when she feels living a miracle that she feels strong enough to claim capability to win glory anyway? I believe both. Her return, though, to an idealistic concept of heroic glory, without any realistic premise contrasts with Orestes' following advise to speak quieter (1322) and the Paedagogus' reproach of the siblings as idiotic and non thinking (1326) to waste so much time without acting; it reflects the antithesis between Electra's appreciation of *kleos* and glory as part of a noble and fearless nature and Orestes' and his tutor's practical approach to *kleos* and honor as something that demands discipline and plan to achieve in life and gain through it personal profit. The former views *kleos* in its epic dimensions and this is what Segal means by saying that "what is truly heroic in the play, then, rests with Electra. She, rather than Orestes, has been able to win her way, in a debased world, to a living sense of the past greatness"²⁵³; the latter sees *kleos* in its practical results and seeks after it in only one dimension, success and personal profit. The antithesis again between Electra's warm reaction to the Paedagogus' recognition and his cold and realistic stance is indicative: she invokes him as the savior of Agamemnon's house (1354-55) and tells him that she views him as her father (1361) but he sticks to his initial plan. Even in her utter joy Electra stands alone. Orestes' behavior, although moved at the beginning by the sight of his sister, is dominated by his tutor's presence and the necessity of his duty.

²⁵³ Segal (1966), 511. cf. also Said (1978): "Car il est clair que pour Electre, qui est parfaitement consciente de l'incompatibilité qui existe parfois entre le juste et l'utile et n'hésite pas à l'occasion à dénoncer elle-même sa déraison, l'honneur et la piété continuent absolument sur les considérations d'intérêt;" (459).

Probably this is why the poet saves no comment for the matricide. As scholarship has long ago noticed Sophocles silences the immorality of the matricide and presents it as an uncomplicated act of justice, although as Finglass observes Sophocles gives Clytemnestra five separate cries which express the horror in the deed and Clytemnestra's negative portrayal during the whole play facilitates silence.²⁵⁴ Still, there is no stress in the ferocity and inappropriateness of the deed as in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* or Euripides' *Electra*. Kyriakou finds the answer in the play's shortsightedness in respect to the family's past: "the murder was not committed as punishment for past crimes and the matricide would not engender future troubles and would not perpetuate the cycle of blood". The play has done enough to present it only as a result of retaliatory justice and wickedness and its end closes a deliberately small cycle, which began with Agamemnon's death.²⁵⁵ Still a matricide cannot go unnoticed by the audience, which cannot be indifferent to Electra's cruelty against her mother even if Homer also glosses over the internecine crime. In my opinion Sophocles' end can be considered as open; he uses the power of theatrical impression. He presents Orestes doing his long awaited duty and Electra avenging for her long grown hatred and leaves the spectators to give their own answers whether resolution has been offered and what kind of reputation the siblings won.

The play has showed us three kinds of "*kleos*" performed: the Iliadic kind within Electra's imaginary speech and the messenger's *angelia*, the Odyssean kind, but not quite as I believe I have showed, at Orestes' programmatic *kleos* discourse, and a tragic one, performed by Electra's constant mourning and poor appearance. The first two kinds were proved inadequate since the Iliadic kind was subverted by the

²⁵⁴ Finglass (2007), ad 1398-1411.

²⁵⁵ Kyriakou (2011), 369-70.

frame of the text and the Odyssean achieved a matricide. The tragic one seemed the most effective, but it ensured Electra *kleos* as a tragic heroine, who was from then on commemorated by her wild and abusive lament. It was a “reputation” that traced back the initial meaning of the word, what was heard by Electra within the city and the theatre and what was heard about Electra and the poet who asked for a prize at the Dionysian games; the tragic kind of “*kleos*” that we trace in this play does not bear the epic color of a glory pertained to light, eternal admiration, commemoration by future generations often in song and even deification or heroization. Finally, since Electra’s character was subsumed by the “epic” end of the story the two siblings won their main reputation as being matricides because of the development of the morality and ethical code of the fifth century in respect to the “mythical era”. Electra’s drama and the audience’s sympathy towards her end with her brother’s advent.

Chapter 4: Euripides' Orestes: what is *kleos* doing here?

nullum memorabile nomen feminea in poena est. (V. Aen.2.583).

From the discussion of both Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* and Sophocles' *Electra* it is clear that *kleos* as a value was projected as part of Orestes' programmatic statements about his return to his homeland and as the motive power for the vengeance of his father's death, no matter how questionable, insufficient and "anachronistic"²⁵⁶ as a value it has emerged from the closer examination of the plays. Both playwrights inherited the concept of *kleos* as a constitutive element of the narrative of Orestes' myth and exposed its inadequacy in the new moral and social milieu to a different degree and in diversive modes. Therefore, Aeschylus and Sophocles before Euripides tackled *kleos* within the context of the causation of Orestes' return and revenge; in the *Orestes* we encounter a reversal of its essence as part of the Orestes myth: it is absent from the first part of the play where Orestes' condition is connected to the past; he never refers to his crime as the result of abiding by the traditional heroic code that demanded the restoration of his father's honor and the need to acquire personal glory but only as the demand of Apollo. On the contrary, in the second part of the play *kleos* is violently claimed not only on the level of rhetoric but also as a strong moral value and motive power for the formation of the

²⁵⁶ For the legitimacy to use the term anachronistic in tragedy cf. Easterling (1985), who despite the general assumption that it is not a useful term in tragedy since anachronisms in Greek drama are not the exceptions but the rule examines the devices that tragedians use in order to suit heroic age in their contemporary purposes and acknowledges a self-conscious effort on behalf of the playwrights to compromise the cultural incompatibilities mainly by the careful usage of the vocabulary.

heroes' future. Whereas, in the dramatic tradition Orestes' "future" after the matricide has no room for personal glory, in the *Orestes* a murder of another blood related woman²⁵⁷ aspires to confer *kleos* upon him.

In the *Orestes* the term *kleos suo ipso* is encountered in the second part of the play (1098ff.)²⁵⁸ in Pylades' innovative proposal to kill Helen which signals the turn of the plot (1151). However, in the first part (1-1097) of the play references to Helen's or Orestes' reputation appear as a leitmotiv preparing for the final *agon*. In this chapter I am going to examine the function of the concept of *kleos* in the first part in connection with the themes of madness and the mythical past of Orestes' story and in the second in connection with the theme of *philia* and the Panhellenic perspective, a motif also found in *Iphigeneia in Aulid*.

The nature of the *Orestes* as a play has been a matter of great scrutiny among scholars and poses *a priori* a problem while examining the concept of epic/heroic *kleos* within it. *Orestes* had been criticized in antiquity and until almost the twentieth century as lacking in tragic decorum; its characters have been characterized as unworthy of tragedy and its final scenes as resembling comic plots. The majority of scholars in the nineteenth century dismiss *Orestes* as a melodramatic piece. Only in the early twentieth century has there been an effort by scholars to redeem the play.²⁵⁹ Early enough critics interpreted the play as a parody of heroism, and until relatively recently recognized it as an "ironic and deeply unheroic commentary on the story of

²⁵⁷ Greenberg (1962) interprets the play as an ironic recast of Orestes' story; he sees Helen as a doublet for Clytemnestra and argues that the central irony of the play lies in that the same killers who claim that the fault for the matricide is solely Apollo's can bring themselves to commit a most similar murder without that excuse (162).

²⁵⁸ I follow Reinhardt's comprehensible separation of the play although it does not follow the scenic structure: the first part covers 1-1097 where according to Reinhardt the play could end with Pylades' delirium of devotion to his friend and the second part extends from 1098-the end of the text, where we have the proposal of the new scheme and its application. cf. Reinhardt (1960), 251.

²⁵⁹ For a very informative exploration of Orestes' critical history cf. Porter (1994), ch.1. Porter sees the effort to approach the play in more traditional lines and tackle it as a tragedy in Perrotta's (1928) and Krieg's (1934) works.

Orestes”²⁶⁰. Reinhardt’s study was very influential; he reads the play as a mirror of the intellectual and spiritual crisis—*Sinneskrise*—of the period of the Greek Enlightenment and as reflecting tensions characteristic in the works of the sophists such as the tension between heroic splendor and quotidian realism, inherited myth and philosophical rationality. He opposes Euripidean theatre to 19th century psychological drama and highlights that Euripides is not concerned with the psychology of the individual but “zeigt das Heroische, wie es im Lichte der neuen Erkenntnis in Splitter bricht”. He characterizes Euripides as a nihilist who does not share the optimism of Socrates or the sophists.²⁶¹ In this approach to the Euripidean theatre Reinhardt rejects the opinion that Orestes is a parody of Aeschylus *Choephoroi* and summarizes the approach of the play as “die ad absurdum geführte Entartung des heroischen und religiösen Erbes”.²⁶²

Porter rightly pin-points the problem of earlier criticism in the fact that scholars tended to place $\eta\theta o\varsigma$ before $\mu\tilde{\nu}\theta o\varsigma$ ²⁶³; namely the focus on Orestes’ characterization shifts the real weight of the play which is the implications of the innovative narrative of Orestes’ story. “Rather than a study of criminal psychology or of heroism gone sour, Orestes is a study of betrayal, frustration and outrage and as a portrayal of the extremes to which individuals can be driven when faced with the injustice of a corrupt and seemingly malevolent world.” Although Porter’s book is excellent in its careful approach of the text and its close readings, it falls in the same “fallacy” of over-characterization of which he accuses earlier criticism. Bain is correct to say in his review that Porter in essence offers an apologia

²⁶⁰ Rawson (1972), who dismisses this label. .

²⁶¹ Reinhardt (1960), esp. 231, 232, 237-9.

²⁶² Reinhardt (1960), 253.

²⁶³ Porter (1994), 50.

for the character of Orestes and tries to defend Euripides against his critics by showing that what seems problematical in the play can be explained in terms of rhetorical and formal conventions of the Euripidean theatre.²⁶⁴ Willink offers an explanation which puts less emphasis on defending the nature of the play; he views Euripides mainly as a *μυθοποιός* whose main concern is theatrical effect. The *Orestes* according to Willink should be approached rather as “a many-faceted, highly sophisticated *tour de force* of audacious myth-invention and poetic art, instinct with the spirit of its age; ...strictly as a *τραγωδία*...but in our terms as a kind of tragicomedy or *drame noir* looking at once backward beyond Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and forward to the New Comedy of Menander.”²⁶⁵ I believe Willink’s approach catches the spirit of the play since by the phrase “instinct with the spirit of its age” we understand also the reflections of tensions and motivations that Porter and Reinhardt observed. Burnett goes so far as to read the whole play as a parody of tragedy. She defines parody as demanding “an audience of collaborators and tipping them off by posturing and pinning of labels; it treats the assumptions and mannerisms that define the parent genre to disrespectful emphasis and over-marked delineation”.²⁶⁶ Although her close readings of the final scenes of the play are vivid, what she examines are the incongruities of the scene in respect to the tragic frame; she does not evoke a specific play as the model of ridicule, which would allow us to render the label of parody to the play in my view. Parody targets and ridicules a specific model-play and alludes systematically to it by reversals (e.g. the *Batrachomyomachia*). It is not enough to allude now to *Choephoroi*, then to the Sophoclean *Electra* or to patterned tragic plots in order to have a parody. Comedy for

²⁶⁴ Bain (1998), 171-172.

²⁶⁵ Willink (1986), xxii.

²⁶⁶ Burnett (1998) ch. 10. esp. 248.

example also demands in its paratragic moments the “collaboration of the audience” and overemphasizes its ridicule of tragic “assumptions and mannerisms”. Moreover, parody’s aim is ridicule and laughter and it is not seeking for innovations and impressive theatrical effects. For instance, the Phrygian messenger’s speech that Burnett finds as “annihilating subversion of the genre” should be appreciated as unique and innovative and it has no parallel model which to ridicule.²⁶⁷ I would prefer if we stick to the abundant presence of comic elements in the play than call it a parody or allege that it “apes tragedy”.²⁶⁸

When setting off to examine the role of *kleos* in *Orestes* we should keep in mind that the frame in which *kleos* finds a privileged position as a word and concept is a play with many comic elements and reversals of the mythical tradition. We do not need, though, to characterize the *Orestes* as a melodrama or a tragicomedy or a *drame noir* in order to satisfy modern taste; if we want to approach a play on its own terms and not from the perspective of its future influence in literature, the plain question that we should always ask when reading a play is what impression would it make to the audience in order to vote for it in the tragic contests. Any play should thus be theatrically effective and as the genre developed so the audience’s expectations were raised. A comic poet aimed at making the audience laugh, his plays meant to be funny-except for his serious sermonizing in the *parabasis*. A tragic poet, no matter how many comic elements or ironic reversals he might insert into his play, would customarily connect his audience to its mythical past –except for the few historical tragedies-which he used as a medium to touch upon contemporary cords and lead

²⁶⁷ Burnett (1998), 261. Burnett acknowledges the uniqueness of the speech when she says that “no other messenger leaves the act he tells of neither done nor undone”. Porter (1994) praises Euripides’ boldness and inventiveness to transform a messenger speech into a lengthy monody and observes that the speech’s impression of frenzied incoherence is harmonious with the spirit of the play (177, 212).

²⁶⁸ Burnett (1998), 250.

them through pity and fear to *katharsis*. If a bit of imagination is pardoned, I believe that the audience when viewing the *Orestes* would feel pity and sympathize with the hero's despair in the first part of the play; since no traditional moral code can work for the salvation of Orestes and the play sentimentally is led to an impasse. The *κάθαρσις* would come in the second part through the lightening of the atmosphere in a carnivalistic way of feeling. Some spectators might be irritated by the radical mythical innovations, others less concerned with the "decorum" or less sophisticated would begin to laugh and even shout aloud out of puzzlement at this alien Orestes standing at the roof about to kill Hermione and ordering to burn the palace. Ignoring the modern studies about how poets transgress generic boundaries, which is, of course, of great importance to the modern scholar, the Athenians of March 408 BC must have been sure that they were watching tragedy and this is why Apollo's appearance is necessary at the end to put the mythical elements and reputations back together, no matter how absurd a finale this was viewed by modern scholars. At the first part of the play the audience experiences pity and fear, at the end they feel *katharsis* in this chaotic universe because Apollo exists; but before Apollo, the way Euripides structures his play, exists poetry with its power to emotionally load the atmosphere and then to offer a relieving even comic denouement; poetry with its power over myth and reality. *Kleos* as I am going to show becomes in this play part of the poetic experience and not of Orestes' traditional myth.

Interestingly we are aware of the opinion of two readers closer to Euripides' time, Aristotle and Aristophanes of Byzantium, who might have experienced not only a reading but also a reproduction of the play since it was very popular in antiquity. Aristotle in his *Poetics* criticizes the portrayal of Menelaus in the play as a character whose baseness is not required for the story (1454a), while Aristophanes of

Byzantium in the play's hypothesis concludes that all the play's characters are base (*φᾶῦλοι*) except for Pylades. Scholars generally try to defend Euripides against this criticism while the plausible question is what is the problem if Menelaus is presented as base and why is Pylades not *φᾶῦλος* since he also participates in Helen's "murder" and Hermione's abduction and in fact, he is the instigator of the whole *mechanema* scheme. In the case of Pylades Willink suggests that "even a highly educated Greek could admire without qualification a viciously vengeful 'noble friend'" although the same scholar observes that Pylades' loyal comradeship would have been more conspicuous in the Athens of 409/8 than it was for an Alexandrian scholar because of the suspicion against the loyal bonds between members of *ἐταιρίαι*.²⁶⁹ Pylades, however, in our play not only embodies the ideal *φίλος* but he is the one who suggested the murder of Helen as a glorious deed that will confer Orestes' *kleos* and Panhellenic reputation. He is the first to use the concept of *kleos* in the *Orestes*. Namely the Hellenistic writer of the hypothesis might have felt that Pylades is the only character in the play that is thinking according to the traditional heroic code and has "pure" intentions at the beginning of a catastrophic scheme. Moreover, Aristotle's uneasiness with Menelaus' base portrayal is also indicative of how ancient readers and spectators-at least the more educated ones- would object, not to specific innovations in respect to the mythic plot, but to the radical alteration of a mythical character's "reputation". Menelaus, though not the best of the Achaeans, is still glorious as a Homeric hero and warrior; his epic posture is incompatible with his

²⁶⁹ Willink (1986), xlviii. For the role of *hetairia* at this time cf. Rawson (1972), 160-61. *Hetairiai* were responsible according to Thucydides for the oligarchic revolution of 411 and it is clear in Aristophanes that there had been fear of these groups of *συνωμόται* or *συνιστάμενοι*. In 410 there was probably an attempt to make their oaths unavailing but the clubs survived. Burnett (1998) observes that nowhere else has Euripides used the word *hetaireia*, but it appears twice in the scene in which the Orestes conspiracy is made (1072, 1079), so that one is almost forced to hear a contemporary reference (257).

present submissive and effeminate persona, which Euripides had already foreshadowed in his *Helen*. With Odysseus being presented in tragedy as a villain (e.g. *Philoctetes*), “baseness” would be more compatible with his neoteric kind of heroism. But with strong Iliadic figures it is harder to reverse radically their heroic essence. Orestes the matricide was easier to be presented in morally inferior terms than Menelaus with his Iliadic *kleos*. Apparently in antique poetry heroic *kleos* functioned as a barometer of a character’s popularity and positive characterization.

4a) No past, only mad *kleos* for Orestes.

Orestes is presented over the prologue of the play asleep on his sick-bed; next to him sits Electra who in the prologue relates the past miseries of their family. In her narrative we observe a decrease in the emphasis on human guilt in respect to the perpetrator’s responsibility. Tantalus was fully responsible for his deed because he had an unbridled tongue (*ἀκόλαστον γλῶσσαν*, 10), a trait she views as shameful disease (*αἰσχίστην νόσον*, 10). Pelops was Tantalus’ son but his own crimes, Oenomaus’ deception and Myrtilus’ murder, are not mentioned at the prologue. Atreus and Thyestes are presented as being destined to fight between them because such a fate the goddess *Eris* spun (12). This time Electra makes clear that she intentionally omits Atreus’ story (16) and reaches the time of Agamemnon whose memory could be presented as glorious probably because of his achievement, which is not, however, enunciated; on the contrary, his daughter questions his glorious reputation: *ὁ κλεινός, εἰ δὴ κλεινός, Ἀγαμέμνων* (17). Agamemnon marries Clytemnestra and their wedding is sarcastically characterized as *ἐπίσημος* (21), glorious in the eyes of the Greeks. His brother Menelaus marries Helen who is

characterized as hated by the gods.²⁷⁰ However, Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's marriage became notorious because of the latter's crime, whereas Menelaus and Helen arrive in Argos as *μακάριοι* according to Electra's forthcoming address to Helen (86). Orestes' name appears on the list of Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's children and is structurally separated from the crime of matricide, the whole responsibility of which is rendered to Apollo. Electra mentions Agamemnon's murder with a net by Clytemnestra whom she accuses as *ἀνοσιωτάτη* (24). She leaves the details of the crime obscure because she says such a narrative is not proper for a maiden; however, this is exactly the element that her Aeschylean and Sophoclean predecessors have stressed, how shameful and dishonorable was Clytemnestra's crime in order to justify her brother's crime as necessary for the restoration of the honor of the family's male line. Her condition as a maiden is anyway undermined by their present plight and the fact that she may not even live any more according to the decision of the Argive people, let alone get married in the future. Besides, the years have passed as Helen notices (72), not sarcastically but ascertaining a reality.²⁷¹ Therefore, the poet intentionally lays no emphasis on the details of Agamemnon's horrible murder. Her passage to Clytemnestra's punishment by Orestes focuses dogmatically on Pheobus' order:

*πείθει δ' Ὀρέστην μητέρ' ἢ σφ' ἐγείνατο
 κτεῖναι, πρὸς οὐχ ἅπαντας εὐκλειαν φέρον·
 ὁμῶς δ' ἀπέκτειν' οὐκ ἀπειθήσας θεῶι,
 καὶ γὰρ μετέσχον οἷα δὴ γυνὴ φόνου*

²⁷⁰ Willink (1989) *ad hoc* explains that the phrase had almost lost its literal meaning and it is just a damnatory expression.

²⁷¹ Willink (1989) on 71-2: "the emphasis on the length of time'...may suggest a certain tactlessness; but there is no reason to suppose, with Σ, that Helen speaks *ὕβριζονσα*. Willink (on 71-125) rightfully observes that the presentation of Helen is a positive one, she is amiable and characterized by *αἰδώς* and *φιλία* as in *Iliad*.

He persuades Orestes to kill the mother that gave him birth, a deed not applauded by everyone, however, he killed her so as not to disobey the god, and I participated in the murder myself although a woman.

Apollo is fully responsible for Orestes' crime; the latter is presented as compelled to proceed with the crime. Later Electra will say that Phoebus sacrificed them (190). The result is that Orestes is now sick (*νοσεῖ*, 36). Tantalus was himself responsible for his *νόσον*, Orestes suffers of madness (*μανίαισιν*, 37) not because of his own decision. Although the matricide was Apollo's command and it should have been considered by common sense as the proper reaction to the king's murder, however, those who applaud Orestes' killing are at best the minority.²⁷² Orestes' reputation is tarnished among men. He is punished for his crime by a mental disease which does not accompany him all the time; he has moments of clarity of mind during which he cries (*ἐμφρων δακρύει*, 44).

Orestes can be added to the list of male heroes who are portrayed as suffering from mental disturbance, either a severe form (*Ajax*, *Heracles*) or of aberrant behavior as the result of extreme suffering (*Heracles* in *Trachiniae*, *Philoctetes*).²⁷³ What is a common feature of these mythical figures is that they are all great epic heroes who are really concerned with the preservation of their past heroic *kleos* in the homonymous plays. The male Homeric characters that we encounter in the tragic plays we have in our possession are Agamemnon, Menelaus, Odysseus, Achilles and Ajax. Except for Ajax and Achilles, Agamemnon, Menelaus and Odysseus are not presented as extremely preoccupied with their reputation and they are never the protagonists; we

²⁷² cf. v.923-30 and Willink (1986) on 30.

²⁷³ There was an interest shared by all three tragedians in the depiction of the mad on stage. Porter completes the list with Pentheus who is possessed by Dionysus and cases of women who are also presented either in emotional distress (*Phaedra* in *Hippolytus*) or divine possession (*Alcestis*, *Cassandra* in *Troades* and *Agave* in *Bacchae*). cf. Padel (1992): "Madness is central to tragedy. "Tragedy" is painted as a maenad in Dionysus' train. Lyssa, "Madness", is the fifth-century personification of madness, especially in tragedy and in vase-paintings of tragedy." (163).

can argue that neither in the *Oresteia* is Agamemnon a protagonist because his fame is shared if not snapped away by Clytemnestra's character and the same can be said for Menelaus in *Helen*. Odysseus' *kleos* is different than that of an Iliadic warrior because of his literary past, Menelaus' reputation is that of the man who was betrayed by his wife and motivated the whole Greek army to restore his dishonor, even though in the *Iliad* he is presented as having an *ἀριστεία*; Agamemnon's glory is mentioned almost in any reference to him but since he is never the protagonist it is never a central theme.²⁷⁴ On the other hand, Achilles' fame and glorious reputation in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* becomes the bait for the success of Agamemnon's deceptive plan to bring his daughter to the site of the sacrifice. The hero's name although of great importance is highly jeopardized by the sensitive feelings of this Achilles.²⁷⁵ To put it the other way round, Ajax, Heracles and Philoctetes are characterized by their concern for heroic glory whereas Odysseus, Menelaus and Agamemnon have different traits as their 'identity' marks on the tragic stage: Odysseus his ruses and rhetoric, Menelaus his wife and Agamemnon the crimes around his *oikos*. Achilles retains the glory of his name which he actually never efficiently defends.

²⁷⁴ Only in the *Iphigeneia in Aulis* we may say that his fear of becoming shameful among the other kings made him to kill his daughter but Euripides does not present such an easy way for him in the play.

²⁷⁵ Achilles is highly insulted by Agamemnon's lie and associates his name with Iphigeneia's life (τοῦνομα γὰρ, εἰ καὶ μὴ σίδηρον ἤρατο, τοῦμόν φονεύσει παῖδα σήν, IA 938-39). Iphigeneia's sacrifice entails in Achilles mind that he will become the worst among the Achaeans (944) and promises to Clytemnestra to protect her daughter as if he were a god (973). Instead of being eager to go to Troy where he will win his imperishable *kleos* according to the mythical tradition of which the Athenian audience is aware, he ascertains that he has only one fight in front of him (εἰς ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἐστ' ἄγων) to deliver Clytemnestra and her daughter from their miseries and he takes the oath that if he is lying, he may die. (1004-07). Later on, however, the traditionally invincible Achilles is overwhelmed by the opinion of the majority (ἀλλ' ἐνικώμην κεκραγμοῦ, 1357); even his own soldiers, the Myrmidons threaten to stone him to death, unlike his singular power in the *Iliad* (1350-52). His promise is altered: if Iphigeneia is finally sacrificed, he would not agree (1360). Right after Achilleus' admittance of fear of the majority and weakness to help effectively comes Iphigeneia's illusory *kleos* speech, which I am going to discuss later in this chapter.

Orestes is part of Agamemnon's *oikos* and continues the list of his family's crimes. However, in the *Orestes* his condition reminds us of the situations of the famous mad or heavily suffering heroes. He is asleep over the prologue as is Philoctetes; Heracles' is also asleep in the interval between his madness and sanity. In fact the chorus in the *Orestes* enters the stage tiptoe in order not to wake up the sick hero, as Amphitryon calls the chorus to keep silence and not awake the unfortunate Heracles. Similarly Philoctetes falls in a redeeming sleep after an attack of his disease.²⁷⁶ Both Ajax' and Heracles' mental disease is the result of divine intervention, as happens in Orestes' case as well. In the former two plays we hear the goddesses themselves, Athena and Iris correspondingly, appearing in front of the audience and explaining why they sent madness (*μανία* or *λύσσα*) to the heroes; in the *Orestes* Electra's narrative distributes the divine origin of Orestes' disease between Apollo, who is the instigator of the act, and the Eumenides, who cause the actual disturbance. The reference *τλήμων Ὀρέστης* (35) which has become the formula of referring to Orestes adds the tone of extended suffering to the hero's condition although Electra informs us that he has been only for six days like this and makes his case analogous to Philoctetes' long time suffering. Similar also is their external appalling appearance (*Phil.* 226, *Or.* 220-226) and the fact that their only way to survive through the pain at the time of the disease, is their bow which has for both divine origin; Heracles gave it to Philoctetes before his disease whereas Orestes uses a probably an invisible 'Apollo-given' bow to defend himself against the Erinyes (*Or.* 268ff.).²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ *Her.* 1042ff., *Phil.* 820ff. For further allusions between the two plays Garner R. (1990), 149ff.

²⁷⁷ Willink (1987) on 268-74 explains that Apollo's promise of a protective bow had been a feature of Stesichorus' *Oresteia*; but Orestes shooting with an invisible bow against the phantasmagoric Furies "is to be recognized as one of the finest dramatic strokes of E.'s most spectacular play, brilliantly combining tradition and the high poetic style with audacious and histrionically effective innovation".

Fuqua points out the situational parallels between the two plays and sees Euripides' *Orestes* as a reaction to Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. His remarks are supported by the physical proximity between the two plays-*Philoctetes* was staged a year before *Orestes* and the element of free invention in the part of the poets in both plays. Moreover, the same scholar suggests that Euripides in the *Orestes* examined Telemachus as the model for the Sophoclean Neoptolemus of the year before since Orestes is traditionally Telemachus' model in the *Odyssey*.²⁷⁸ What Euripides dramatizes according to Fuqua is the socially and individually destructive potential of the traditional heroic code.²⁷⁹ Whereas Sophocles stresses the isolation of the epic hero and rejects the social context as a legitimate parameter for heroic conduct, Euripides exhibits that heroic ideals cannot exist in a vacuum, in the land of ideas and ideals, but should be measured against 'modern' society.

The plays that accommodate Ajax, Philoctetes and Heracles as protagonists, although written by two different playwrights, are most preoccupied with the past glory and reputation of these men. Ajax suffers because of the enormous gap between his past glory and warlike *kleos* and his present not just failure to harm his enemies but, moreover, repudiation by them. "His emotions and actions are largely determined by the past, his own and his father's. He devotes his life to an attempt to perpetuate or recreate it, by performing specific actions, and taking measures to retaliate for, or otherwise eliminate, stains that might obscure its brilliance."²⁸⁰ Ajax is the most "Iliadic" hero in the corpus of tragedy and his life is a combat for winning and

Zeitlin (1980) notes that Apollo's bow as an echo of Stesichorus "signals the more primitive Apollo who predates Delphic Apollo and emphasizes the ironic inadequacy of the god's device in a world that has already experienced the Oresteia at a double anachronistic remove from the new atmosphere of the play." (54-55).

²⁷⁸ Fuqua (1976), 66.

²⁷⁹ Fuqua (1976), 69.

²⁸⁰ Kyriakou (2011), 227.

preserving heroic *kleos*. Philoctetes is also part of the *kleos* stories that circulate among the Greeks; he is introduced by the element that confers glory to him, Heracles' bow (ὁδ' εἴμ' ἐγὼ σοι κείνος, ὃν κλύεις ἴσως τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὀπλων, 261-62) and he is utterly disappointed that the κλέος (251) of his miseries has not reached the Greece mainland. According to the aristocratic heroic code he accepts, single-mindedly as he has been accused, that noble descent determines a man's nature and conduct. His image of the great and glorious Achilles forms *a priori* the expectations he has of Neoptolemus and connects the son's warlike *kleos* and virtue to his father's (874-76, 904-05, 1310-13 and 940 as a reversal of his expectation). As with Ajax, he clings steadfastly to the past and his hatred for his enemies deters him from future glorious actions.²⁸¹ When Neoptolemus, having abandoned Odysseus' deception plan, calls him to be glorified again by the sack of Troy through his bow, he does not compromise, but uses the power Helenus' oracle and Heracles' weapons give him to harm his enemies. The Past in both cases of Ajax and Philoctetes cancels any perspective of acting as warriors in the future. In the *Heracles* Euripides also marks the hero's glorious reputation and greatness with repeated references to Heracles' past, the main motif of the play against which he juxtaposes the plot of madness and disgrace. Besides, the second stasimon is a hymn to the hero's exploits.

Kleos has been a constitutive part of Orestes' myth and literary history since Homer; Euripides in the *Orestes* situationally and plotwise connects his hero to the great heroes for whom *kleos* and heroic values form their tragic and literary identity; the play of *Orestes*, despite its atmosphere of contemporarity, has many references to

²⁸¹ Kyriakou (2011) is correct to observe that even though Odysseus' methods are dubious or ambivalent, he pursues no personal or base profit, at least nothing more controversial than *kleos*, and works for the common good; whereas the honorable Philoctetes, not only uses dubious means of pressuring Neoptolemus, but also has a skewed idea of his own past, which probelmetizes the version of *kleos* he suggests to Neoptolemus (268).

the family's past, a trait that might have allowed many references also to the family's past *kleos*. However, the character of Orestes that Euripides depicts is never portrayed or cast in terms of *kleos*, until Pylades' intervention. Electra already in the prologue disputes the very root of Orestes' possible glory, their father's reputation (17).²⁸² Orestes, instead of having the figure of Agamemnon in his mind as firmly supporting his deed as necessary for the restoration of the family's honor, imagines that if he consulted his father face to face (*κατ' ὀμματα*) on what to do, he would have prevented him from committing the matricide (289-293). This is a total reversal both of Agamemnon's unresting soul in the *Choephoroi* and the *Electra* and of the expectations Greek society normally had of a son of a glorious father. Agamemnon's imagined answer reflects Orestes' demand in the whole play not for justice and glorious reputation but for salvation; the suggestion that there is no point in committing the crime since Agamemnon is not going to come back to life (292) stands against the heroic code. It is not only that Orestes is presented in unheroic terms, but the image he has of his father is also an unheroic one. It is not enough as scholars often remark to allege that there is a gap between the heroic past and contemporary society, or that heroic values put in the context of the society of Argos in decline are annihilated or even ridiculed. Myth and mythical past themselves are also declined in respect to their awe and greatness to find a place in this play.

Upon entering Menelaus informs us that he knows both about Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's murder; the first he heard from Glaucus the prophetic sea-god (364), the second from an unknown mariner (373). The main reason for the different sources of the news is, of course, that when Agamemnon was killed Menelaus was

²⁸² Euben (1986) observes that "these doubts...here deprive her and us of any sense of secure interpretative context, and break the continuity of past and present".

still on his voyage back to Greece and thus in the middle of the sea only some creature like Glaucus could supply the information. Now that Clytemnestra is murdered he has reached the mainland Greece where news spreads easily. However, we may observe that in a way the murder of Agamemnon is important in respect to the divine laws and the gods who took care to inform Menelaus supernaturally but the story which circulates among men and is obviously more recent is about Orestes the matricide, who apparently became highly notorious if we pay attention to Menelaus' presentation of the news he received; he heard about the *ἀνόσιον φόνον* (374) and seeks for the son of Agamemnon who committed horrible deeds (*τὰ δειν' ἔτλη κακά*, 376). Although his nephew supposedly restored his brother's honor he does not seem to recognize any justice in the deed. Besides, Orestes' appearance does not fit the son of Agamemnon; Menelaus is appalled by his unsightly apparition (*ἀμορφία*, 391) and Orestes himself admits that his body is gone, only his name has not deserted him (390). The word *ὄνομα* is interesting here, for it bears both the meanings of the proper name and the predicates that accompany one's identity. This view is characteristic of how reputation works: the name which a person makes for himself through his words and deeds, namely the story with which he associates his proper name, will not be forgotten, even if he becomes physically weak or if he dies. Euripides plays with the ambivalence of the word: the hero he presents to the audience still preserves the name Orestes that he inherited from the mythological tradition but the disfigured mask he wears and the conduct he adopts in this play are foreign to the audience. Orestes himself attributes to the word *ὄνομα* the predicate of his social and mythological identity: *‘ὃδ’ εἰμί, μητρός τῆς τάλαιπώρου φονεῦς’* (392). The conclusiveness and absolute nature of this phrase is enunciated at the time of the story when the matricide

experiences the maturity of the consequences of his deed and speaks in a mental state of *σύνεσις* (396), cognition and recognition of his horrible act²⁸³. Orestes, the local society and the future spectators and readers know that this is Orestes' *kleos*, the matricide and not the avenger of his father. However, when he tries to defend himself against Tyndareus he uses the same word for the different story that could be said of him: "I am impious (*ἀνόσιος*) because I killed my mother, holy (*ὅσιος*) though by another designation (*ὄνομα*, 547), because I avenged for my father (*τιμωρῶν πατρί*, 547)".²⁸⁴

Menelaus who is presented within the play as the advocate of *σοφία* (397), a "type of human reasoning that operates according to externals and the apparent (*τὸ σαφές*)",²⁸⁵ poses a highly practical and rationalistic question to Orestes: "Have you seen any benefit from the "father-avenging?"(425). Orestes replies "not yet" and Willink correctly observes that this means "not at all"²⁸⁶ since for Orestes apparently acting in the future is like non action (426), namely that he judges by his present miserable plight and cannot be comforted by a possible future help about which he is not certain at all. Menelaus does not care at all about his brother's honor and the family's reputation but only calculates the political advantage. Orestes' fame actually is ruined to such a degree that, unlike the *Eumenides* where he has been cleansed by many, he is so unpopular in Argos that no one accepts him in his house.

²⁸³ Rodgers (1969) examines the term in the whole corpus of ancient Greek literature and concludes that despite the fact that *σύνεσις* and similar terms indicate a growing awareness of the inner self, they could never justifiably be rendered by "conscience" in any of its senses. None of the contexts justifies any reference to 'moral guilt' or a 'moral sense of right and wrong'; what they denote is awareness or consciousness or anxious reflection about's one's actions (252, 254).

²⁸⁴ Meltzer (1994) makes a similar comment about Euripides' *Helen*; the character of Helen in that drama repeatedly differentiates between the *kleos*, report and fame, that accompanies her name and her body which is free of shame. She refers to her body as the true guarantor of her identity and *kleos*, in opposition to her name, which she complains was stolen by the gods and given to barbarians. (243-244)

²⁸⁵ Greenberg (1962), 168. Greenberg generally opposes Menelaus' acting according to this kind of *sophia* to Orestes acting according to *philia*.

²⁸⁶ Willink (1987) *ad hoc*.

Agamemnon's Trojan past instead of supplying glory to his successor destroys him: Oeax, the brother of Palamedes, accuses Agamemnon of his brother's murder and applies his hatred to Orestes whom he wants to drive out of the country (432-33). Orestes, however, still invests his hopes in his father's past, namely the latter's favor to Menelaus to avenge Helen's flight. The great expedition to Troy is reduced to be just "*χάριτας*" (453) to Menelaus; the oath of all the perspective suitors of Helen to Tyndareus and the glorious result of the grandest mission where all Greeks were united are debased. Only in his defense against Tyndareus and clearly for rhetorical reasons is Agamemnon mentioned by Orestes as the great commander of the entire Greece (*πάσης ὑπὲρ γῆς Ἑλλάδος στρατηλάτην*, 574).

In his second appeal to Menelaus he elaborates on the concept of the favor owed, which is part of the supplication pattern that the scene follows. If Menelaus does not help Orestes, Agamemnon led the Trojan expedition in vain; again the only objective of the Trojan past was Menelaus' satisfaction to have Helen back (654). Iphigeneia's sacrifice is reduced to a favor or a gift that was given to Menelaus which Orestes with pretentious generosity reclaims as the heir of his family's past and leaves it to Menelaus as if the latter could return it. However, Menelaus denies the essence of his brother's expedition, the warrior *ἀλκή* (711) and believes that *σοφία* is Orestes' only hope, namely an intelligent and convincing speech at the assembly. The chorus in its turn at the second choral ode denies the recently gained glory of Agamemnon's expedition to Troy by projecting it backwards to the more distant past of the family; Agamemnon's glory is reversed, the great glory of Troy succumbs to the inglorious end, the *συμφορά δόμων* (811). The stories that surround the house of the Atreids are stories of *eris*: discord between the sons of Tantalus, discord between Atreus and

Thyestes, discord presently in this play between Menelaus and Orestes or even more abstractly between Menelaus' present *σοφία* and Agamemnon's past *ἀρετή*, martial prowess (807). The chorus elaborates on the play's perspective in respect to the traditional *talio* justice and honor morality; "what seems rightful is actually not rightful, to kill the parent's flesh with a violent hand (819-21)". Clytemnestra's last invocation to Orestes as presented by the chorus summarizes Orestes' future reputation:

τὸ δ' εὖ κακουργεῖν ἀσέβεια ποικίλα
κακοφρόνων τ' ἀνδρῶν παράνοι-
α. θανάτου γὰρ ἀμφὶ φόβῳ
Τυνδαρίς ἰάχησε τάλαι-
να· Τέκνον, οὐ τολμαῖς ὅσια
κτείνων σὰν ματέρα· μὴ πατρώι-
αν τιμῶν χάριν ἐξανά-
ψηι δύσκληιαν ἐς αἰεὶ.(827-30)

The noble wrongdoing is impious, sophistic and madness of ill-reasoning men; the wretched daughter of Tyndareus cried aloud out of fear of death: my child, you are daring unholy deeds by killing your mother. Do not attach eternal ill-reputation to yourself because of homage due to your father.

Clytemnestra by the time of her death prophecies about Orestes' future fame and her way of thinking is aligned to Agamemnon's imagined answer to Orestes; nothing changes the past, only Orestes' future will be destroyed. Clytemnestra points to Orestes' fame as the major problem that will arise through the matricide. At the center of the ode stands the element that is constitutive of Orestes' myth, his future *kleos*, whereas her final emotional appeal to him by the exposing of her breast stands at the end of the ode, as part of the story's literary past.

The final extended reference to the family's past which forms its current reputation and future fame is to be found at the lament taken up by both Electra and

the chorus for the extinction of the Royal House of the Atreidae.²⁸⁷ Once upon a time the family of Pelops was an object of emulous desire (ζῆλος, 973) among men; but divine envy (φθόνος...θεόθεν, 974) along with the murderous decision of the Argives destroyed them (974-75). Electra attributes the extinction of their *oikos* to divine envy while the chorus insists on the traditional subject of the instability of human happiness. Only miseries has Electra to recount to her ancestor Tantalus; she mentions Pelops' murder of Myrtilus and the throwing of the latter's body into the Aegean Sea which incurred the primal Curse, a reference she had omitted in the prologue. Then follows the reference to the dispute between Atreus and Thyestes highlighting the adultery of Cretan Aerope and the horrible Banquet ((1007-10); finally Electra mentions the miserable fate of herself and her brother as predestined.²⁸⁸ The actual adultery of Clytemnestra and her father's shameful death are omitted in her last lament before she supposedly dies. Interestingly enough then the references of the play concern mainly the distant past of the family whereas the recent expedition to Troy which won for Agamemnon great glory is either omitted, undermined or mentioned only as an element of complete reversal.

4b) Pylades, the bringer of *kleos*.

Pylades enters and asks about Orestes' and Electra's condition. He informs them that his father banished him away from his homeland because he participated in Clytemnestra's murder (765-66); he is bound to Electra's and Orestes' fate. His initial

²⁸⁷ Diggle's edition gives v.960-981 to the chorus and 982-1012 to Electra. Willink (1986) objects that it is intolerable that "El. should be silent throughout the ritual part of the lament...in order to enter with the exotic wish *μόλοιμι*... at 982. The opening *κατάρχομαι στεναγμόν*...here is the utterance at once of the celebrant of a ritual and of the *ἐξαρχος* of a dirge; both that and the metrical pattern strongly favour antiphony" (p. 240). Therefore the ode is distributed as following <El.>960-64, <Ch.>965-970, <El.>971-75, <Ch.>976-81, <El.>982-1012. I follow Willink's antiphonal arrangement.

²⁸⁸ The line is highly corrupted. the term *γενετάν ἐμόν* makes no sense; as Willink (1987) observes *ad hoc* "the death of Agamemnon is anything than *πανύστατον* and the context absolutely requires "me and my brother"

reaction to the danger the siblings are running is that they should flee (759). Orestes projects the practical reason why this is impossible; they are suffocatingly guarded (760-62). The dialogue that follows between Orestes and Pylades is a caricature of compromise and reversal. Orestes begins with an aristocratic view that the majority in a democracy is to be feared when they have base advisers (772). Pylades proposes the other side of the argument (773)²⁸⁹, namely that when they have good counselors, they decide well. This view puts to Orestes' mind the idea to go and speak to the assembly. Pylades at the beginning finds it a bad idea (776), but since dying in silence would be cowardice (*δειλόν*, 777) and since there is no other hope to be expected (778), he suggests that Orestes should go. In fact he adds one parameter which does not seem to have passed so far from Orestes' mind: if you have to die, at least die gloriously (*θανῶν γούν ὧδε κάλλιον θανῆμι*, 781). Orestes agrees with his friend but is afraid that no one will sympathize with him. Pylades suggests that his noble descent (*ηγένεια*, 783) has great power but Orestes unconvinced projects repeatedly as above (776) his father's murder. Pylades ostensibly by-passes the latter argument as weak and encloses everything under the rubric that "all are in view" (*πάντα ταῦτ' ἐν ὀμμασιν*, 784-85). Orestes' final decision to go and defend himself in front of the assembly is totally incongruous with the context. He decides to go because it would be unmanly to die ingloriously (*ἄνανδρον ἀκλεῶς καταθεῖν*, 786). Orestes would attempt anything in order to save his life; and only when any possibility of being saved is excluded does he care at least to die honorably. There is no past example where *kleos* would be gained because somebody tried to save his life and did not die in silence. In fact, Sophoclean Ajax finds it more noble and honorable to die in silence

²⁸⁹ Willink (1986) obelizes 772-73.

than to deceive any audience about his intention, let alone defend himself for his action. Euripides' Heracles showed death as the only solution as well. Willink observes that Orestes' posture is extremely 'unheroic' in the central value placed upon the saving of his own life (644-5, 678-9); his ethic of pursuing "σωτηρία" (as opposed to ἀρετή, e.t.c.) is like that of a common soldier in *S. Ant.* 439-40.²⁹⁰ It is not only that he is "unheroic"; he is undecided and hesitant and relies entirely on Pylades' advice, as he will physically support him later on his way to the assembly. Orestes finds refuge to the concepts of manliness and reputation in the mode of a literary cliché having no real meaning in this play and stage. The decision is taken in terms of saving his life and the term ἀκλεῶς sounds like a literary borrowing from previous choices of "beautiful deaths". Actually, he chooses the word that marks the antithesis of kleos, ἀκλεῶς, because his choice is to avoid the absence of kleos and not to pursue it actively as a real hero. Pylades' counsel that opinion is what counts (τοῦ δοκεῖν ἔχου μόνον, 782) is limited to the rhetorical level of its application, namely convincing of the assembly, and has no idealistic weight that the opinion or the reputation spread among people about a person is what characterizes him in the future. *Kleos* then in this scene is part of Orestes' rhetoric and not a valid moralistic perspective.

The messenger speech provides a sociological aspect of the power of the heroic code and of *talio* justice as part of it among the Argive people. There are two lines of reaction to Orestes' deeds, those who want to punish Orestes and Electra by death and those who want to save his life, proposing either another punishment or his freedom. The messenger makes it clear from the beginning that he supports Orestes' argument because he owed a favor to his father (868-70). Therefore, he presents as

²⁹⁰ Willink (1986), on 640-79. Later Orestes applauds the Phrygian's φιλοψυχία as a form of σύνεσις.

more than sympathetic Orestes' advocates and as corrupted the opposite camp. The religious authority of the city, Talthybious, who participated in Agamemnon's great mission, had his eye upon Aegisthus' friends; he was apparently corrupted and thus spoke double (*διχόμυθα*,²⁹¹ 890): on the one hand, he admired Agamemnon (890), but did not praise (*οὐκ ἐπαινῶν*, 891) Orestes for he establishes improper laws against the parents; his opinion reminds us of Tyndareus. The latter supports and applauds the opinion of a nameless man, who is characterized *ἄθυρόγλωσσος* ("doorless mouth", 903); he is apparently the mob-orator who suggests that Orestes should be stoned to death. He convinces the crowd (908), it is men like him that influence the assembly. The mob-orator's voice has more power than the voice of the traditional epic hero, Diomedes, who in the literary tradition embodies the heroic ideal of the best warrior and orator; he suggests what Tyndareus suggested before he got angry with Orestes, that the matricide should be exiled from the city but not put to death. However, his opinion is not supported by many. Apparently, Diomedes as the representative of traditional heroic and aristocratic justice is not a convincing figure in this corrupted city. Aristocratic values have already been debased. Finally, the man that totally supported Orestes is only a working farmer who is highly praised by the messenger: his appearance was not attractive, but he was a manly man (*ἀνδρεῖος ἀνὴρ*, 918), a working man, not wasting his time at the marketplace; prudent, leading an irreproachable life of integrity (921-22). This class of working men adhering to traditional values finds great sympathy in Euripides.²⁹² He suggests in a highly patriarchal tone that not only shouldn't they punish Orestes, but they should crown

²⁹¹ an *hapax* in tragedy.

²⁹² Similarly in Eur. *Electra* the *αὐτοργγός* is the only sympathetic figure in the play, a motif that will flourish in Hellenistic poetry and Menander's theater.

him (σπερανοῦν, 924) as a public benefactor; not only did he avenge his father's murder but he also killed a treacherous and impious woman who would function as a negative precedent for the women that were left behind when their men were absent during a war.²⁹³ It is interesting that traditional ideas corresponding to patriarchal justice are shared by an aristocratic and exemplary heroic figure as is Diomedes and a simple working farmer, who, however, represents the Athenian class of the hoplites, those Athenians who abandoned their homes and fields during the campaigning period. Therefore, both of them in the eyes of the audience shared the main feature of martial prowess which won them martial *kleos*. Talthylus and the mob-orator were just manipulators of language; however, language is apparently the powerful tool in this society where the traditional dogmas of heroism and noble nature have collapsed.²⁹⁴ Orestes returns to the scene as a “wretched vision and a miserable sight (πικρὸν θέαμα καὶ πρόσσοψις ἀθλία, 952); if he had not gone to the assembly, he would at least not offer himself as a pitiful vision to the Argives; he would die discreetly and leave behind the impression of his past posture and appearance.

The messenger comments that neither Apollo nor Orestes' noble descent (ἡγύενηια, 954), as Pylades had suggested, were at all helpful in saving the hero's life. Despite the failure of Pylades' first advice, the helpless Orestes will follow his advice once more. Orestes has decided to die by the sword, because this way of killing oneself would be brave and worthy of his descent from Agamemnon (1060-63). Pylades stops him: *πιθοῦ νυν, ἀνάμεινον δὲ φασγάνου τομάς* (1101). He has a brilliant idea which he immediately exposes to Orestes: *Ἑλένην κτάνωμεν*,

²⁹³ Willink (1986) on 926-9 comments that this is a topically emotive argument.

²⁹⁴ I omit commenting Orestes' speech because I find Willink's opinion that the whole is an interpolation convincing.

Μενέλεωι λύπην πικράν (1105). If they kill Helen, Menelaus will be deeply grieved. Such would be their revenge against Menelaus. However, there is no heroic code which suggests that you can harm an enemy by killing his wife; killing him or his male son could be a solution. But a woman's death has no place in a man's world. Even during a war women were enslaved, not killed. Pylades understands the issue and projects his contradiction; it is not any other woman, it is Helen:

ἔγνων· ἄκουσον δ' ὥς καλῶς βουλευόμαι.
εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐς γυναῖκα σωφρονεστέραν
ξίφος μεθεῖμεν, δυσκλεῆς ἂν ᾦν φόνος·
νῦν δ' ὑπὲρ ἀπάσης Ἑλλάδος δώσει δίκην,
ὧν πατέρας ἔκτειν', ὧν δ' ἀπώλεσεν τέκνα,
νύμφας τ' ἔθηκεν ὀρφανὰς ξυναόρων.
ὀλολυγμὸς ἔσται, πῦρ τ' ἀνάψουσιν θεοῖς,
σοὶ πολλὰ κάμοι κέδν' ἀρώμενοι τυχεῖν,
κακῆς γυναικὸς οὔνεχ' αἶμ' ἐπράξαμεν.
ὁ μητροφόντης δ' οὐ καλῇ ταύτην κτανών,
ἀλλ' ἀπολιπὼν τοῦτ' ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον πεσῇ,
Ἑλένης λεγόμενος τῆς πολυκτόνου φονεύς.
οὐ δεῖ ποτ', οὐ δεῖ Μενέλεων μὲν εὐτυχεῖν,
τὸν σὸν δὲ πατέρα καὶ σὲ καδελφὴν θανεῖν,
μητέρα τ' ... ἐῷ τοῦτ'· οὐ γὰρ εὐπρεπὲς λέγειν
δόμους δ' ἔχειν σοὺς δι' Ἀγαμέμνονος δόρυ
λαβόντα νύμφην· μὴ γὰρ οὖν ζώειν ἔτι,
εἰ μὴ 'π' ἐκείνῃ φάσγανον σπάσω μέλαν.
ἦν δ' οὖν τὸν Ἑλένης μὴ κατάσχωμεν φόνον,
πρήσαντες οἴκους τούσδε κατθανούμεθα
ἐνὸς γὰρ οὐ σφαλέντες ἔξομεν κλέος,
καλῶς θανόντες ἢ καλῶς σεσωμένοι.

You have it; now hear how sound my scheme is. If we drew the sword upon a woman of greater chastity, the murder would be infamous; but, as it is, she will be punished for the sake of all Hellas, whose fathers she slew, whose children she destroyed, and made widows out of brides. There will be shouts of joy, and they will kindle the altars of the gods, invoking on our heads many blessings, because we shed a wicked woman's blood. After killing her, you will not be called “the matricide,” but, resigning that title, you will succeed to a better, and be called the slayer of Helen the murderess. It can never, never be right that Menelaus should prosper, and your father, your sister and you should die, and your mother—but I pass that by, for it is not seemly to mention it—and for him to possess your home, though it was by Agamemnon's prowess that he got his bride. May I die, if we do not draw our swords upon her! But

if we do not accomplish Helen's death, we will set fire to the house and die. For we will not fail to achieve one distinction, an honorable death or an honorable escape.²⁹⁵

Pylades' accusations against Helen are traditional and well known to the audience. Helen herself in the homonymous Euripidean play knows that her name is dishonored in the entire Greece (Eur. *Hel.* 66: *καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ὄνομα δυσκλέες φέρω*). Pylades envisions that he and Orestes will be highly honored by all Greece; cries of exultation, sacrificial fires to the gods, blessings and gratitude to the perpetrators for their revengeful deed. Most importantly Orestes will not be designated any more as a matricide but with a better title, the slayer of Helen the murderess. Menelaus should not prosper while all of Orestes' family is dead. And if they do not succeed in Helen's murder, they will burn the palace and die in the flames they will kindle, because in any way, either by a beautiful death or a glorious saving of their life, they will win *kleos*, glorious fame and reputation.

Pylades' plan is not as good a counsel as he advertised it to be (1131). As Burnett observes "his [Pylades'] counsels urge a deliberate choice of all that is anti-Apolline; they create a riot of unreason, confusion, excess and violence."²⁹⁶ First, there is no parallel in antiquity that a man would win glory and make an honorable name out of the death of a woman, any woman, even the wicked, since such a killing is by a physically superior person to an inferior and needs no martial prowess or strength. Then Agamemnon and the Greek mission to Troy won their *kleos* *because* they saved Helen and brought her back to Greece; Orestes' action would reverse his father's success and inherent glory.²⁹⁷ The word *φονεύς* that Pylades chooses as

²⁹⁵ translation by E.P. Coleridge, New York. Random House. 1938.

²⁹⁶ Burnett (1971), 214. Burnett also observes that the character of Pylades is not necessary to the plot, since until this point Electra fulfilled the function of counselor. A series of alterations in his usual history and behavior prove that Euripides has a new purpose in mind (213). The fact that he is so talkative, although his Aeschylean predecessor is famous as a silent character reinforces his new role.

²⁹⁷ Seidensticker (1982) comments Pylades' scheme as "Parodie auf den trojanischen Krieg" (107).

Orestes' new title is not actually honorable or much dissimilar to *μητροφόντης*; a designation like *τιμωρῶν Ἑλλήσιν ἅπασιν* would sound more convincing. In the list of Orestes' dead family members Clytemnestra is also mentioned in a comic if not sarcastic tone: Orestes, his father and his sister belong as dead to the same verse and are presented with the same construction (*τὸν σὸν δὲ πατέρα καὶ σὲ καὶ ἀδελφὴν θανεῖν*, 1144), whereas Clytemnestra is mentioned in the second line with a simple *τ'* and her condition is not defined by a verb but by a silence and the irony "I leave this issue" (*ἐὼ τοῦτο· οὐ γὰρ εὐπρεπὲς λέγειν*, 1145); the verb might have been *φονευθῆναι* but since the title Orestes has to discard is *μητροφόντης*, this line would be an anadiplosis of his previous condition and a reversal of the suggested plan. Therefore, Pylades shouldn't have brought it up in the first place. The persons shift from first plural (*μεθεῖμεν, ἐπράξαμεν*) to second singular, since actually this should be Orestes' revenge (*πес̃ηι*), and towards the end to the first singular as if it is Pylades' personal case (*ζώην, σπάσω*). Pylades weaves his personal fate and fame with Orestes'; together they will win *kleos*, either dead or saved.

Epic experience, however, cries out that *kleos* is a personal good; a hero earns for himself his own *kleos*. Even in the case of the best friends in the extant Greek literary tradition, Achilles and Patroclus, each one won his personal *kleos*. Achilles in fact warned Patroclus that when he pushes the Trojans away from the Achaean ships he should retire and not fight away from him, even if Zeus confers more *κῦδος* to him; otherwise he will prove Achilles less honorable (*ἄτιμότερον*, Il. 16.90). The hoplites in the fifth-century Athens would win their martial fame all together but this was the result of their new way of fighting. Pylades and Orestes are eponymous

heroes who live supposedly in the heroic age and Orestes' noble birth calls for success in the competitive field of values. Moreover, *kleos* normally demands the sacrifice or the suffering of the hero; as Goldhill observes "in Homer *kleos* is to be gained in exchange for the stake of the hero's life and suffering".²⁹⁸ The primary concern of the two *philoï* to save their lives is foreign to the concept of *kleos* as a competitive Homeric value. Moreover, there is a qualitative and chronological gap between the two propositions *καλῶς θανόντες ἢ καλῶς σεσωμένοι*; if they die they will gain *kleos* immediately about what? If they have not killed Helen nor have followed discreetly and patiently the assembly's decision, they will actually commit suicide and die along with the palace, the tangible symbol of Agamemnon's royal authority and of Orestes' family's prior power. Not only will they destroy themselves since their deaths will not take place on the battlefield or in any noble enterprise in order to be glorious but they will extinguish the family's past in the city of Argos. There is nothing worthy of *kleos* in this death. If, on the other hand, they kill Helen and are saved, their *kleos* will follow after a period of time, when all the Greeks learn about their deed and approve it. However, some of the women and children whose husbands and fathers participated in the Trojan War could have been consoled by the glorious fame their relatives won over the Panhellenic mission. For simple working people, as the farmer that spoke at the assembly, who honor traditional values and do not belong to the sophisticated circles of Athens who scrutinize about the meaning of the tradition, killing Helen, the live symbol of the Greek victory, could be a great disappointment. Their relative fought in a great war, Orestes just killed a woman; how can the two be compared? The chorus' observation depicts the accommodation of Pylades' scheme: The daughter of Tyndareus, apparently Helen, should be hated by every woman for

²⁹⁸ Goldhill (1991), 71.

she disgraced their race (1153-54). Namely Orestes' and Pylades' deed will be judged as glorious in the world and the opinion of women. Helen's death does not constitute a heroic glorious revenge but it would satisfy women's hatred for her who disgraced their nature. It would be more fitting to a woman than to avenge for her race than to two male heroes, who should be judged in the world of male values.

Before Pylades' suggestion to kill Helen as a means of winning *kleos*, Orestes and Electra were desperate. The introduction of the concept of heroic *kleos* into our play is signaling a new perspective of hope, joy and relief. Orestes praises his friend because he offered him a reason for action; he will avenge his enemies for leaving him wretched (*ἄθλιον*, 1166). The option of *kleos* makes him feel free: he decides not to succumb to a servile death but he wants to leave his spirit as a free man by avenging Menelaus' behavior, since his father was the elected *strategos* of free men and his power was similar to that of a god (1167-1171). The reference to Agamemnon is not ordinary, he is not praised as the king of the Achaeans whose royal authority was bestowed by the gods but as a military leader of free men, whose power is similar to a god's.²⁹⁹ In a way Agamemnon's mythical role is reduced to that of a successful military commander. The reference to freedom is also problematic: according to the messenger speech what Orestes was given at the assembly was the opportunity to kill himself in any way he prefers and not to be stoned to death by others. This way of death could be regarded as befitting a free man; it does not entail any revenge scheme but it cannot be characterized as a shameful death which handles a man as *δοῦλον* (1170). What Orestes seems to have seen as servile in his previous status was the impasse of his situation; Pylades' *kleos* proposal is a key to handle the situation differently since Orestes' ultimate ideal- and he admits it without inhibitions- is to

²⁹⁹ Similar designations recall praises of the military leaders during the Persian Wars.

save his life while avenging his wretchedness. Orestes' sentiments are again alien to epic parallels: great epic heroes as Achilles and Hector feel compelled under the yoke of winning *kleos*. Hector's shame before the Trojan people leads him to his lethal duel with Achilles; he knows that his end approaches but his past martial *kleos* and his boldness to keep the Trojans outside the walls although Achilles returned to battle compel him to death; to fight is his only option, either to kill Achilles or to fall gloriously in front of the city walls (ὀλέσθαι ἐϋκλειῶς πρὸ πόλῃος, *Il.* 22.110), although he flirted for some moments with the idea of surrender (*Il.* 22.111-121). Achilles when he decides to return to the battle after Patroclus' death contemplates the submission of human nature to fate; even great heroes like Heracles could not avoid death, he is also fated to die; his only means of resistance against his fate is his desire to win *kleos* (*Il.* 18.119-21). However, at the embassy rhapsody (*Il.* 9.411-20) he suggested that he was eager to give up his future glory to win a long lifespan,³⁰⁰ since in Thetis' prophecy death was the necessary condition for winning *kleos*.

Contrary to the example of these epic heroes Orestes feels joy with the “*kleos* story” that Pylades fabricated, because in this case *kleos* is not incompatible with life, it does not demand any further actual sacrifice. Pylades' *kleos* proposal generates joyful wishes in Orestes' heart; he himself characterizes his wishes as sweet so as to delight his mind with winged stories without any cost (ἡδὺν καὶ διὰ στόμα πτηνοῖσι μύθοις ἀδαπάνως τέρψαι φρένα, 1175-76). The vocabulary of Orestes' reference to his wish stories is indicative: sweetness and delight to the heart, winged stories that have no expense at the pragmatic world, all these expressions have poetical and aesthetic associations. There is a pleasure in voicing when it costs nothing to do so. Therefore,

³⁰⁰ Whether he really meant this or it was just a rhetorical trick or an expression of wrath is an open discussion.

Pylades' *kleos* proposal is actually an aesthetic choice and this is how Orestes perceives it; it bears no moral or social weight. The governing morality in this play is the importance of saving a man's life; *kleos* in Euripides' *Orestes* has no moral or epic prerequisites, demands no difficult choices and needs no sacrifices. It is a staged metaphor for a metapoetic experience: Pylades' and Orestes' scheme claims *kleos*, glorious reputation, but since it dismisses any connection to epic definitions, its only power is the essence of the word, their innovative and absurd scheme will certainly be heard around Greece or in a limited way succeed in its performance. There is no expense for Orestes in thinking and contriving this kind of winged stories.

One more element in Pylades' presentation of his *kleos* plan strikes me as indicative of the more aesthetic connotations of the term: the constant association of the term with Panhellenic sentiments in contrast with the high degree of topicality that characterizes the play. In the first part of the play Helen's Panhellenic notorious reputation functions as a leitmotiv which could be regarded as preparing the murder of the second part. At the beginning she has been secretly kept in the palace in case any one whose child has died at Troy tries to kill her. After their encounter Electra wishes that the gods may hate Helen who destroyed her and her brother as well as all Greece (ὥς μ' ἀπώλεσας καὶ τόνδε πᾶσάν θ' Ἑλλάδα', 130-31). When Electra shares with Orestes the news of Menelaus' arrival he observes that if he has come alone, he is to be jealous; but if he brought his wife with him, he brings along a great evil (247-48). This observation allows Electra to comment that the daughters of Tyndareus have an ill-repute over all of Greece (γένος θυγατέρων δυσκλέες τ' ἀν' Ἑλλάδα, 250). Both Tyndareus' and Orestes' justifications of their positions invoke the Panhellenic laws: Tyndareus judges Orestes' act as not complying with the law that is common among

the Greeks (*οὐδ' ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν κοινὸν Ἑλλήνων νόμον*, 495), while Orestes defends his deed as beneficial for the entirety of Greece (*ἄκουσον ὡς ἅπασαν Ἑλλάδ' ὠφελῶ*, 565).³⁰¹ At his appeal to Menelaus Orestes observes that the former has the reputation among all the Greeks of loving his wife (*φιλεῖν δάμαρτα πᾶσιν Ἑλλήσιν δοκεῖς*, 669). Later in the first conversation between Orestes and Pylades the latter asks “where is the one woman who destroyed so many Achaeans?” (743). The aforementioned recurrences of the motif of Helen’s Panhellenic notoriety prepares Pylades’ foundation of his *kleos* plan. They will win *kleos* throughout Greece because they are going to punish Helen on behalf of all Greeks (*νῦν δ' ὑπὲρ ἀπάσης Ἑλλάδος δώσει δίκην*, 1134), of all the fathers whose sons she had killed, of all the women whom she left widowed (1135-36). The chorus, who supports the conspirators’ deeds throughout the play, seals Pylades’ ascertainments; when they are under the impression that Helen’s murder has been fulfilled and before the Phrygian enters they sing: she [Helen] filled the entire Greece (*Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν*) with tears because of the wicked, wicked Idean Paris, who led Greece to Ilium (1364-66).

Therefore, the *kleos* that Orestes, Pylades and Electra claim is of Panhellenic importance and range; however, at the topical level of Argos the *kleos* of the three has already been cancelled. At the local assembly the opinion of the working farmer reflects an air of generalization about Clytemnestra’s case functioning as a negative example for the women whose husbands are away to the war is not voted by the majority. Orestes and Electra have already been convicted to death for the murder of their mother and Pylades has been evicted by his own father, according to Panhellenic laws which prohibit murders between relatives. Helen is also a relative for Orestes

³⁰¹ Orestes’ present shameless and bold defence is in contrast with his initial reaction of ‘shame’ when he saw Tyndareus approaching. cf. Willink (1986) on 459-69.

and Electra and as Apollo makes clear at the end of the play she is also the daughter of Zeus (1634). How can her murder win *kleos*? Obviously not on a moral or mythical level but merely on a rhetorical plane. Panhellenist sentiments seem to have intensified during the last decade of the fifth century and the theme of Panhellenic expedition against Persia seems to have been the main topic of a speech Gorgias delivered the same year that *Orestes* was produced (408B.C.) at the Olympic Games. Apparently there was a growing desire in the Greek world for a cessation of warfare between Athens and Sparta and a transfer of hostilities to barbarian Asia.³⁰² But this was a case and an issue not of pragmatic politics but of idealistic and visionary opinions, a kind of rhetorical refuge. Iphigeneia's final speech in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, written one year after the *Orestes*, reflects a similar perspective of Panhellenic *kleos*: when she sees that there is no way she can change her father's mind, in an almost delusional speech she presents herself as the hope of the entire Greece to rule over the barbarians (εἰς ἔμ' Ἑλλάς ἡ μέγιστη πᾶσα νῦν ἀποβλέπει, 1378). She envisions that she will win *kleos* as the deliverer of Greece (καὶ μου κλέος Ἑλλάδ' ὥς ἡλευθέρωσα, μακάριον γενήσεται, 1384). Her life belongs to all the Greeks and not to her mother alone (πᾶσι γάρ μ' Ἑλλήσι κοινὸν ἔτεκες, οὐχὶ σοὶ μόνῃ, 1386). Of course, Iphigeneia's sacrifice is in vain, since her proposal that the life of one man counts as the lives of thousands of women is totally perverted: the lives of thousands of men will be sacrificed at the Trojan field for the life of one woman, Helen. Paris abducted Helen not against her will, according to Aphrodite's promise to him (*IA* 181); therefore, Helen's flight to Troy cannot be perceived as a wrongdoing only on the barbarian side, as Iphigeneia presents it (1379-82). Nor did the supposed barbarian

³⁰² Fowler (2000), 89-93.

Trojans threaten the freedom of the Greeks at any point in the mythical time; her final argument is highly anachronistic (1400-01). As Zeitlin points out “the play acts out on stage a dramatic process of *kleos* in the making....that in the present tense of the action is reviewed against the historical backdrop of Panhellenic slogans about the unity of Greece confronting barbarian enemies in the last which came into currency after the Persian Wars. But it acquires a further and novel dramatic twist at the end in the miracle that transports Iphigeneia to the realm of the gods and earns her instant acclaim from those who saw her achieve a divinely bestowed *kleos* before their eyes.”³⁰³ However, the novel and dramatic twist of Iphigeneia’s fame that Zeitlin observes is not rendered at the end by the word *kleos* but by the word *δόξα* (*δόξαν ἔσχεν ἄφθιτον καθ’ Ἑλλάδα*, 1606). *Δόξα* is used more for the posthumous glory of civilians in historical and rhetorical texts of the fifth century than the word *kleos*.³⁰⁴ And Iphigeneia’s future fame is finally not the result of her self-sacrifice but of the gods’ decision to save her in a miraculous way. I do not, therefore, see a connection between her claims on epic *kleos* although a woman and in a desperate position and the final “glory” the play confers upon her as a decision of the gods. The premises of the *kleos* Iphigeneia claims are unreal. *Kleos*, therefore, functions as a rhetorical and aesthetic device that convinces a character in despair to proceed to an irrational deed or sacrifice but which has actually no real premises or possible positive results. The power that the word has gained within the poetic and literary corpus has turned it to a point of reference by itself without any pragmatic prerequisites. Its poetic career has encompassed it with an aesthetic value powerful enough to persuade characters like

³⁰³ Zeitlin (1995), 189.

³⁰⁴ In fact I disagree with Zeitlin that archaic *kleos* has been translated into the praise of civic virtue for those citizen soldiers who had died in battle. This is not apparent for instance in Thucydides, who uses *kleos* only in respect to poetry or merely as hearsay but the word he uses for the posthumous glory of the civilians is *δόξα*.

Orestes or as Iphigeneia to act in a certain way according to assumed heroic or epic *exempla*, none of which, however, actually works for them.

4c) The “Uncrowned” *kleos*.

Although from the view of stagecraft Orestes has not changed his mask during the whole play, the change of his disposition and emotions is obvious in his words and activity. A modern director would advise his actor to smile and be more brisk at the final scenes. It is interesting how kindred is Orestes’ attitude after Pylades’ *kleos* proposal to how Emerson describes the Bakhtinian carnival: “For Bakhtin, carnival is a “moment of transfer” from one mood to the next, an organ, as it were, for the production of one’s own freedom of response”.³⁰⁵ *Kleos* in epic is a strict heroic ideal but in our play this ideal is uncrowned and filled with other perspectives and possibilities which have one common denominator: the comic elements that raise laughter. Orestes’ character is free to proceed to a total reversal and collapsing of mythical data and traditional values only until the end of the play, only until Apollo’s presence. Through his absurd but to himself convincing scheme he can release his pressure and overcome his madness by a homeopathic reaction, driving mad the necessities of myth that made him mad. Zeitlin acutely observes that “both the myth and the city imprison Orestes in this play, and if the invention of a new plot is the necessary response to the claustrophobic conditions of culture, it can neither effect Orestes’ liberation on the literal level of the action nor can itself attain its own liberation by moving away from myth and mythic pattern into the mode of fiction.”³⁰⁶ The audience, however, in my opinion is invited to experience an emotion of *catharsis* during the lighter and laughable atmosphere of these final scenes. Yes, the

³⁰⁵ Emerson (2002), 12.

³⁰⁶ Zeitlin (1980), 52.

play is chaotic and frustrating, traditional models and values collapse, public opinion is subdued to language manipulators and social necessity leaves no room for personal action; but poetry knows how to tame all these agonies, how to encompass them in one play and ridicule them by its unlimited possibilities of creativity. It knows how to produce laughter as a product of self-knowledge about the hero's condition. Orestes' and the Phrygian's *σύνεσις* (396, 1524) reflect the audience's awareness of its plight after so many years of war. The Athenians of the fifth century, tired of battles and deaths, might have come to appreciate how important life and peace is in contrast to the heavy rhetorical promises of glory and power. Orestes can fabricate in his heart winged stories that delight him and escape from his harsh reality. Seidensticker is correct to note that there are many funny and laughable elements in this play, however none is exactly comic.³⁰⁷ Because laughter in the end of this play is the result of the deep knowledge on the part of the heroes- and of the audience- that they can achieve nothing more than a woman's murder and an abduction of an innocent girl; their father's glorious past is gone forever along with the reputation they could inherit, because ages have changed and those kind of ideals are not appreciated any more. What they appreciate is their life, a commodity important for every Athenian at the audience at this point of the war.

The *mechanema* scene of the play is a totally innovative and unexpected option. Emerson again explains that "the type of laughter that Bakhtin appears to have

³⁰⁷ Seidensticker (1982), 114: "Lächerlich ist manches im 'Orestes'. Richtig komisch ist nichts". Vellacott (1975) in similar spirit observes: "This ode [807ff] ...confirms that the play is not merely a 'febrile melodrama' but a tragedy in the full sense; and its tragic quality arises directly from its identification of Orestes and the House of Tantalus with the citizens forming the audience and with the body politic which they represent. It is their tragedy that is being enacted; their belligerent insanity which is leading rapidly to their self-destruction" (69). I find Vellacott's reading of the play as symbolic of the situation of the Athenians at the end of the war far-fetched and violating the limits that poetry itself draws between reality and its selected position in the world. However, I agree with him that there is a deep tragic quality in the play despite its comic façade.

valued most is not verbal (that is, not satire, wit, wordplay, or the genius of Aristophanes,³⁰⁸ who goes almost unnoticed in Bakhtin's world). It does not manifest itself in fixed structures of narratives. It will not tell you what is good and what is evil. It is an attitude, a flexibility of the spirit....wherever we find ourselves, our duty is to add options to the terrain, not to subtract them".³⁰⁹ This is what Orestes and Pylades do: they add new options to the terrain of *kleos*; as long as they remain alive they can still try new things. What Hector and Achilles wished for a moment in their heart, to stay alive, Orestes' new type of *kleos* can supply. It is only an aesthetic form which they can manipulate as they wish during the certain period of time until Apollo appears at the end of the play to restore the established authorities. Or maybe he does not. In the following pages I am going to analyze the carnivalesque elements that are found in the play as the result of the "uncrowning" of *kleos* as heroic reputation or glorious fame and its appropriation as an aesthetic value.

Standard and traditional identity features are reversed: the limits between sexes and social structures collapse. Orestes when he returned from the assembly accuses Electra of making him cry and investing him with unmanliness (*ἀνανδρίαν*, 1031); a little later he embraces her by announcing "why am I hesitant any more?" (*τί γὰρ ἔτ' αἰδοῦμαι τάλας;*, 1048). *ἔτι* introduces a new time period when Orestes begins to feel freer and more sentimental with his choices, behaving more emotionally as a woman would. He is lamenting about himself along with Electra; Pylades is the one to direct him to a new more active direction. At Electra's suggestion to abduct

³⁰⁸ Edwards in the same volume (2002) explains why Bakhtin did not appreciate Old comedy and Aristophanes as deeply carnivalistic: because despite its style, Old comedy is not attacking or uncrowning in essence the political powers and traditions (38). And moreover, it invested unpopular positions with the conventions of the popular grotesque which is against Bakhtin's view that "laughter could never become an instrument to oppress or blind people". In this view I believe that the Euripidean tragedies that scholars characterize as tragicomedies are closer to the Bakhtinian definition of carnivalism, because they produce laughter against established mythical or traditional authorities.

³⁰⁹ Emerson (2002), 19.

Hermione as a means of pressure against Menelaus he praises his sister as having the mind of a man (*ὦ τὰς φρένας μὲν ἄρσενας κεκτημένη*, 1205). Zeitlin notices that Orestes is cross-sexually identified in the play with Erinys, Gorgon, Clytemnestra, Medea and even Hecuba. Moreover, the Phrygian eunuch is Orestes' alter ego, a symbol of merging polar sexual distinctions who speaks directly to the issue of the collapse of male values in this society.³¹⁰ Scholars have rightly characterized the Phrygian slave as Orestes' mirror-image.³¹¹ He mirrors Orestes' self-knowledge and release of inhibitions. The Phrygian in his narrative renders to Orestes and Pylades the designations and heroic appropriations they would want to be compared to. He characterizes them as lions (1402); he introduces Orestes as the son of Agamemnon and Pylades, the son of Strophios, as resembling in ruses and tricks to Odysseus (1404-6) and later resembling to Hector or Ajax; the disjunctive connection also to be found in the text (1481) signaling the Phrygian's easiness of manipulating myth. This slave knows a lot, he was an eyewitness of the Trojan War and Troy's sack; in fact he is more experienced of war than Orestes and Pylades, and knows how to reiterate all the Greek clichés about heroism and fighting prowess (1484-85). He knows how to flatter with his narrative the traditions of Greek heroism.³¹² If Orestes is trying to look to Troy and its epic symbolism as a model of heroic action³¹³, apparently his safest guide is this Phrygian slave who comes directly from the world of the Trojan War. Stereotypes of messenger speeches are undermined: he is not narrating, he is singing, not in clear language but in confusing Greek. His narrative uncrowns heroic and

³¹⁰ Zeitlin (1980), 63.

³¹¹ Conacher (1967), 223, Seidensticker (1982), 112 with n.54.

³¹² Wolff (1983) notes: "An incidental figure, a foreign slave, expresses feeling usually reserved for aristocratic Greek heroes. (348).

³¹³ Zeitlin (1980) reads the final scenes as Orestes' effort to create a situation where his myth is operative again. (60-61).

symbolic exempla. The heroes' deceptive plan was so feeble that even the Phrygian slaves suspected it was a *dolos* (1420). Although the slaves were pretty preoccupied to save their lives than to help Helen, they were actually the competitors of Orestes and Pylades in this fight. Orestes comes out of the palace still chasing the Phrygian. Princes are allowed at this time to chase slaves. The dialogue between them is the climax of anti-heroism in this play; in Greek traditional thought bold statements of *φιλοψυχία* like these do not have a place in tragedy:³¹⁴

Φρ. πανταχοῦ ζῆν ἢ δὴ μᾶλλον ἢ θανεῖν τοῖς σώφροσιν.
 Ορ. οὔτι πον κραυγὴν ἔθηκας, Μενέλεων βοηδρομεῖν;
 Φρ. σοὶ μὲν οὖν ἔγωγ' ἀμύνειν· ἀξιώτερος γὰρ εἶ.
 Ορ. ἐνδίκως ἢ Τυνδάρειος ἄρα παῖς διώλλυτο;
 Φρ. ἐνδικώτατ', εἴ γε λαιμοῦς εἶχε τριπτύχους θενεῖν.
 Ορ. δειλῖαι γλώσσηι χαρίζηι, τᾶνδον οὐχ οὕτω φρονῶν

Ορ. δοῦλος ὦν φοβῆμι τὸν Αἰδην, ὅς σ' ἀπαλλάξει κακῶν;
 Φρ. πᾶς ἀνὴρ, κἂν δοῦλος ᾗ τις, ἥδεται τὸ φῶς ὀρώων.
 Ορ. εὖ λέγεις σώζεις σε σύνεσις. ἀλλὰ βαῖν' ἔσω δόμων

Phr. Everywhere, the wise find life sweeter than death. **Or.** I suppose that shouting of yours was not for Menelaus to come to the rescue? **Phr.** Oh no! It was to help you I called out, for you are more deserving. **Or.** Did the daughter of Tyndareus die justly, then? **Phr.** Most justly, even if she had three throats to die with. **Or.** Your cowardice makes you glib; this is not what you really think.

Or. A slave, and yet you fear death, which will release you from trouble? **Phr.** Slave or free, every one is glad to gaze upon the light. **Or.** Well said! Your shrewdness saves you; go inside.³¹⁵

The Phrygian slave certainly “eine gute Antwort weiss und immer mehr die Oberhand gewinnt”.³¹⁶ He has the same wish as the one Orestes reiterates in the whole play, to save his life. He flatters Orestes, who is suspicious that the slave is speaking like that out of cowardice, but in his mind he has a different opinion. This ascertainment may

³¹⁴ Though they are common in comedy; cf. also Archilochus frg. 5.

³¹⁵ Translation by Coleridge (1938).

³¹⁶ Seidensticker (1982), 109, who traces in the scene with the Phrygian slave the ironic, comic or parodic moments.

reflect Orestes' self-knowledge that the justification of claiming a glorious death is only a pretext, whereas his actions are triggered by baser motives. Orestes has certainly read many "beautiful deaths" or revenges in prior literature but none took such an absurd route as his.³¹⁷ He spares the slave's life because of his *σύνεσις*: his knowledge that life is the highest Good. However, Orestes' sincerity flies away when he realizes that no matter how self-conscious this Phrygian is, he is a slave; thus he threatens that he is going to change his mind when the slave began smiling and chattering (1525-26). Orestes supposedly reveals why he, the son of Agamemnon, went after a slave. He is afraid that his shouts will spread the rumor of his deeds and rouse Argos (*Ἄργος ἐξεγείρεται*, 1530). Otherwise he did not consider the Phrygian worthy of dying by his sword.

However, the *kleos* he and Pylades would win according to their scheme would be the result of the murder of Helen. They needed the news to be spread around. The real reason why Orestes went after the Phrygian is that Helen apparently disappeared and they were chasing whomever they could. Their plan was ridiculed. Laughter out of self-knowledge would be the only mature reaction on Orestes' part and this Phrygian would make him laugh unless he wouldn't restrain himself. The appreciation of the slave's sincerity enjoys for a moment Orestes' preoccupations. The audience on its part had certainly laughed at the exposition of the vanity of mythical and traditional ideals.

The chorus hesitates whether to spread the news around the city or not (1539-40). The moment they decide that it is safer to keep silence, the conspirators' deeds speak by themselves: they light up torches to burn the palace (1541-42). Menelaus,

³¹⁷ Zeitlin (1980) observes that the play's most striking feature is its literariness and its bookish characters. Her analysis of the play is an excellent reading of such a kind.

despite the chorus' hesitation to spread the news has apparently heard what has happened and rushes onto the stage. Now it is his turn to doubt Orestes' manliness (1555). The latter's picture does not help him at all: he is standing at the roof of the palace threatening an innocent girl with his sword and advertising himself as the slayer of wicked women (1584, 1590, 1607), contesting in misery with Helen who is believed by Menelaus to be dead (1613). No pride, no dignity, any kind of past glory is sacrificed to save his life. The dialogue between Orestes and Menelaus is quick and comic, as if two political opponents were fighting for the future of the throne. Menelaus had not heard Orestes' prior plea to speak for him in the Assembly and now the story is repeated not as a plea but as a threat. Orestes knows no other way out of his plight and Menelaus does not know how to lose his authoritative status or compromise his ambitions by shouting even at the end "Stop, I will do as you wish!". Orestes demands that Menelaus convinces the assembly not only to save his life but also to be the king of Argos (*καὶ κρατεῖν γε γῆς*, 1600). Menelaus as a type of a comic persona pretends he did not understand and suggests that Orestes is polluted and he cannot rule (1602-03). But the discussion is irrelevant anyway because Menelaus is supposedly the king of Sparta and has no jurisdiction in Argos. Orestes' life is in danger, Menelaus has lost his wife and is about to lose his daughter but none of them compromises. The palace they both claim is put in fire, citizens enter in support³¹⁸, and they are publicly ridiculed. The stage is cluttered with people, shouts, different levels of scenes and colors, a chaotic atmosphere where nothing is resolved but relieves the audience's tensions by leaving them free to laugh, "a mode of laughing self-awareness that insists on seeing the world as chaos", chaos not in negative terms

³¹⁸ Willink (1986) on 1621-24.

but as a field that can always “accept one *more variable* and not be violated by it.”³¹⁹ This last one variable that is added on this stage is Apollo’s intervention.

The god’s epiphany would normally stop the period of chaos, disorder, freedom of expression and release of emotions; it resolves the human impasse and restores the traditional genealogical tradition. A god’s presence inspires awe and demands the traditional hierarchies be in order. Mastronarde suggests that although we often observe some dissonance between the epilogue god’s point of view and that of the human characters or the audience, nevertheless, the audience “ought not to react to the *deus* with disbelief or a feeling that the epilogue does not fit the world of the play”. The same scholar adds though that “the *deus ex machina* scene of Orestes, however, goes far beyond any other example...the god’s presence fails to assert comforting order and to undo the social and ethical decay portrayed in the moral world of the play”.³²⁰ The god saved Helen because she was actually only an organ in the hands of the gods to unburden the earth from the excessive number of mortals (1641). Therefore, the supposed hatred of the Argives against Helen and the foundation of Pylades’ and Orestes’ scheme, the *kleos* they would win by killing Helen the slayer of men, were actually in vain since they resulted from the limited human intelligibility of the world and the god’s will. “Returning to the myth is a further negation of human actions”.³²¹ Human reputation and glorious fame, the most important criterion for the actions of traditional aristocratic heroes, is cancelled. It counts nothing in the world of the gods who have a different perspective. It is easy for them not only to guarantee the saving of a matricide’s life, but they can ensure for him an *εὐδαιμονία* he could not imagine (1659). Orestes will be acquitted in Athens

³¹⁹ Emerson (2002), 10, italics are his.

³²⁰ Mastronarde (2010), 194-195.

³²¹ Wolff (1983), 246.

and the Areopagus as the Aeschylean tradition dictates and he will marry Hermione (1646-1657); Pylades will take Electra as a bride (1658). Not only will Orestes live happily the rest of his life but the Alpheus plain (*Παρράσιον...δάπεδον*, 1645) will be named after him (*κεκλήσεται δὲ σῆς φυγῆς ἐπώνυμον*, 1646). His name will dominate in the area for ever, not *δυσκλεῶς* as Clytemnestra had prophesied (830). He distributes the kingdoms properly, Argos to Orestes, Sparta to Menelaus (1660). The main obstacle and problem against Orestes' saving of life and reputation, the city of Argos, Apollo mentions only at the last minute when he takes full responsibility for the matricide: I will arrange well things with the city, because I made you kill your mother (1664-65). The reason why Orestes was driven to an extreme behavior is "no problem" for the god. The immorality of the three heroes' deeds presents also "no problem" for their future happiness. While Orestes nobility never counted during the play, Menelaus now recognizes him worthy to marry his daughter due to his nobility (1676-77).

Apollo resolves nothing that is questioned or perplexed in the play. He just puts things in order so that mythical tradition is settled for future playwrights and poets. Therefore in this play it is not the god's appearance that restores the reversed hierarchies or the moral collapses; it is the power of the dramatic poetry that inspires the audience with an awareness of self-examination and releases the pressure of the historical and political environment through laughter. The carnivalesque disposition of the play and the audience stops of course when it ends. *Kleos*, however, as a value remains "uncrowned"; the play has shown that it can be transformed to an aesthetic value; it is traditional to the degree that is expected to be found in poetry and used by mythical heroes, but its potentials and dynamics are not steadfastly adhered to an

obsolete aristocratic tradition. It can be interpreted and driven to different and divertive directions. Besides, no matter how hard a hero tries to win a glorious fame, gods know better his position in the mythical agenda.

Chapter 5: Ajax and Heracles: poetic *kleos* against divine wrath.

Heracles and Ajax share the specific traits of an epic³²² heroic identity: they are great heroes of the past, magnificent in valor and size, and at least Ajax is acknowledged in the consciousness of the fifth century audience as exemplary of what the epic poetry of the past would sing as *klea andron*. Heracles, although surprisingly peripheral to the epic genre, is also qualified with the prerequisites of an epic hero. The heroes of Sophocles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Heracles* also share common motifs: both heroes, respected in the wider community for their past toils, are attacked by a wrathful goddess with madness; when their sanity returns, their initial reaction to their previous shameful deed is to commit suicide. The similarities, however, stop here: Ajax' shameful deed concerns the Argive community whereas Heracles' concerns his own family. Ajax's deed did not threaten human lives; despite his initial intention divine madness tricked him to kill sheep whereas Heracles killed his own wife and children. Ajax actually commits suicide whereas Heracles considers such act cowardice (1384) and decides to endure his miseries (1351). Besides, as Sophocles' audience is informed from the goddess Athena herself, Ajax has committed *hybris* against Athena because of his excessive pride and trust in his won powers whereas Euripides makes it clear through Iriss' intervention that Heracles' madness was due only to Hera's jealousy against him. The present chapter examines how the former *kleos* of the heroes is presented and highlighted in the relevant plays and what its

³²² Heracles may not be a main Homeric character but Panyassis had written an *Heraclea*, an epic on his heroic career. Steisichorus' had also handled the theme of his madness according to Pausanias, whereas Pherecydes treated Heracles' career at length in his *Histories*. cf. Papadopoulou (2005), 72-73.

power is against the tragic themes of divine wrath and instability of human fate. Sophocles' Ajax remains until the end an intransigent and solitary hero, unable to compromise his glorious epic reputation with his present plight; he recognizes no other *kleos* than the epic. In high contrast, Euripides' Heracles treats his *kleos* of glorious exploits as one part of his life and accepts his shameful deed and his new reputation as complementary to his legend. Athenian tolerance and acceptance offer the hero the proper place to compromise his excessive past with his present misery; Euripides' characterization of the hero as more humane and modest allows such a development unlike the Sophoclean parallel.

5a) Ajax: *Phatis* against *kleos*.

Although the hero himself does not know it, Sophocles' play informs us that Ajax's misery and Athena's wrath began because of his distorted and hybriatic approach to *kleos*. Ajax was careless of his father's warning about how a hero wins proper *kleos*: Telamon advised him that he should always keep his spear with the help of the god, but he claimed that he could alone, without any divine help, win his personal *kleos* (ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ δίχα κείνων πέποιθα τοῦτ' ἐπισπάσειν κλέος, 765-769). Not only did he say so, but he actually pushed Athena away when she was standing by him in the battlefield by suggesting that where he is stationed the battle will never break in (770-775). Ajax seeks *kleos* as does every other Homeric hero, but Calchas' oracular interpretation shows that the premises upon which he bases his pursuit are impious. The sad issue is that Ajax's plot never allows the hero to understand why Athena sent madness to him; in the play there is a dis-communication between human *kleos* as erected by the epic tradition and the reality as governed by the gods. The limits of human knowledge about the degree to which an individual is capable of

controlling his personal fame prevent the value of *kleos* from having any strong foundations in Ajax's actual life.

After he carelessly defied Telamon's advice Ajax went to Troy, where he actually won great heroic *kleos*. In the Homeric hierarchy of heroes he is the second after Achilles (*Il.* 17.279-80) or the best in Achilles' absence (*Il.* 2.768-9). In the *Odyssey*, however, he only appears as a silent angry shadow (11.541-65) because he was disgraced in the judgment of Achilles' arms. Ajax's controversial fame seems to have been an ongoing *topos* in Greek literature; Pindar at *Isthm.* 4.35-39 highlights how the power of Homer's poetry surpassed the blame (*μωμῶν*) that Ajax had acquired within the Greek army because of his suicide and established his honor and reputation of *arête* over the whole world. As to the fact that Odysseus and not Ajax won Achilles' arms Pindar at *Nem.* 7. 20-30 again accuses Homer's poetry which enhanced Odysseus' reputation and allowed such a development. Therefore, Ajax's epic fame in Pindar is presented in post-literary terms: he is as great as we know him because of Homer's poetry but since he was never the protagonist in the Homeric epic as Odysseus was, his reputation is lower than that of the trickster hero. Poetry has the power to manipulate a hero's fame and *kleos*. Sophocles in *Ajax* focuses on the conflict between the hero's past glorious reputation and present miserable condition as well as its implications. In the play Ajax's greatness and major heroic reputation contradicts the current rumor of his shameful deed. *Ajax* counterbalances the power of epic *kleos* against divine punishment and human rumor, or better the bad repute that results from divine wrath either because of *phthonos* or in Ajax's case because of excessive human pride. The common tragic theme of the instability of human fate is specified in the instability of human fame; the play examines whether the power of past poetry is capable of restoring a hero's honor. It pictures in a way how a creeping

rumor pierces the pedestal where Ajax's former image stands. Structurally the poet chooses to describe first the shameful rumor and then to begin the rehabilitation of the hero. Ajax's heroic valor and greatness are a *de facto datum* both for the internal and the external audiences. What Sophocles depicts in his play is how such a hero handles a situation of shame that is beyond human control: is his former epic *kleos* powerful enough to establish him as noble and happy forever or are human rumor and malice stronger than Ajax's former heroic deeds? Solon in Herodotus suggests that a man's way of ending his life determines whether he has been happy or not.³²³ Does Ajax's heroic *kleos*, hard won in the battlefield, count for nothing because of the shame he faced before ending his life?

Scholarship on *Ajax* has traced divisions, dichotomies and polarizations in the play at different critical levels, such as structure, characterization, the approach to moral values, the dialogue with the literary tradition. Structurally it has been called a "diptych", grouped with the *Trachiniae* and the *Antigone*, because it falls in two parts, before and after Ajax's suicide.³²⁴ The characters of the play are divided between those who unconditionally support Ajax alive or dead and his alleged enemies, with the exception of Odysseus who in a way compromises both camps and allows at the end the resolution of the play. Highly important has been the distinction between Ajax's *philoï* and *ekthroi*, although, as Goldhill has showed, the rigidity of opposition between these terms is highly complex when it is measured within the frame of other moral qualities.³²⁵ The characters are also divided according to their approach to moral values such as what constitutes nobility: Tecmessa defines a noble man by his

³²³ Herodotus I.30ff.

³²⁴ The clear division of the play in two parts has raised negative criticism against Sophocles' art of tragedy form but recent criticism has correctly attacked these approaches and views the final part of the play as "an indispensable development of the drama as a whole". Garvie (1998), 9-11.

³²⁵ Goldhill (1986), 85-88.

responsiveness to kindness and affection (520-24), whereas Ajax's approach to *εὐγενὴς ἀνὴρ* is a more competitive one, to live or die nobly (479).³²⁶ Specifically the character of Ajax embodies conflicting conditions; he is presented in a state of total madness and then of complete sanity, he is approached as a "husband"³²⁷ and a father but at the same time as a great warrior and a leader of the men of the chorus; he appears on stage alive and then as a bloody corpse- and the play does not even hide the moment of his transition from life to death. Gill reads his deception speech not as a soliloquy but as an internal dialogue which both expresses and rejects the claims of Tecmessa and the chorus "in favor of those of his exemplary gesture".³²⁸

Finally, Ajax as a major Homeric character is divided between his literary present in Sophocles' play and his previous poetic past. O'Higgins has interestingly shown that in the *Iliad* there is an apparent contradiction between Ajax's epithets and his actual accomplishments; although he is the best of the Achaeans in the absence of Achilles he does not manage to ward off the Trojans nor to defeat Hector; and if this is due to the demands of the plot, he could at least win one competition at the funeral games of Patroclus but this is not allowed to him either.³²⁹ The same scholar reads Sophocles' play as a "reconstruction" of the *Iliad* from the perspective of Ajax. It is true that in the *Ajax* there is also a divided representation between Ajax's past greatness and present disgrace, between his former epithets and his actual deeds. But to allege that this line of thinking derives directly from the *Iliad* is in my opinion

³²⁶ Zanker (1992), 23-24, who, however, notices that the theme of *χάρις* is not exhausted in the play in Tecmessa's words but is often raised in respect to the ingratitude of the Atreidae and of the Greek army towards Ajax' former deeds, an approach that picks up the complaint of the Iliadic Achilles to the embassy at *Iliad* 9.

³²⁷ I use quotation marks because Tecmessa is not his legitimate wife but his *λέχος δουριάλωτον* (211). For an extensive discussion of Tecmessa's status and her relationship to Ajax cf. Ormand (1999), 104-123.

³²⁸ Gill (1996), 214 contrary to Knox (1979), Winnington-Ingram (1980).

³²⁹ O'Higgins (1989), 47.

risky; it results from the entire literary tradition³³⁰ around Ajax which concentrates on these two events: on the one hand he is the second best in the Greek army and his greatness in size and valor protected the Achaeans and on the other hand he was disgraced in the judgment for the Achillean arms and committed suicide.³³¹ Sophocles builds on this enormous tension. Moreover, I have the impression that the epithets and the traditional labels in an epic narrative are in the majority of cases more important than the deeds, if we consider the *Iliad* and judge by the case of “the best of the Achaeans”, Achilles, who was always angry and at his revenge bestial, and by the leader of the Achaeans, Agamemnon, who acted according to his inferior passions. Tragedy, however, because of its privilege to embody the present of a hero by an actor with flesh and blood against a past sung only in words and narratives renders epithets and labels many times powerless compared to the strength of the image. The important thing is that Ajax’s *kleos* was not unanimous as was Achilles’ or Hector’s. The present chapter is going to explore one more dichotomy, the one between the potency of rumor against poetic *kleos*.

Odysseus is the figure that shows how rumor leads people to creep in one’s private space and find out whether hearsay and the words that circulate have a real basis. This is actually a positive aspect of rumor: when it is confirmed with secure knowledge. There are, however, also those other people that circulate hearsay about someone or even aggravate it without making sure whether it is true or not. Ajax’s former reputation and heroic status apparently inspires reverence even among his enemies, such as Odysseus, so that they at least wish to become certain about the nocturnal rumor before judging him as a perpetrator of shameful deeds. Athena

³³⁰ Besides our Homeric text are late instantiations of a tradition that long preceded the versions of these poems. Homer’s original audience already knew that he was going to fall short, probably this is why he is denied any significant achievements.

³³¹ These events we learn from Proclus’ summary that they were narrated in the *Aethiopis*.

describes Odysseus as hunting and measuring Ajax's new tracks (5-6); the tracks are new not only because they are recent but because they are connected to Ajax's new modes, namely new fame. Odysseus declares that he is perplexed and has no sure knowledge about what Ajax has done (*ἴσμεν γὰρ οὐδὲν τρανές, ἀλλ' ἀλώμεθα*, 23). There was an eye-witness when Ajax killed the flocks and their overseers (29-31); everyone (*πᾶς τις*, 28) blames Ajax. Odysseus, however, is still confused (*ἐκπέπληγμαι*, 33), partly because as he says he cannot find Ajax's steps and partly, obviously, because he cannot believe that a hero such as Ajax could commit such a ridiculous deed. Athena is the one who informs Odysseus that Ajax's actual target were the trickster hero and the Argives who judged that Odysseus should have the Achillean arms (43-44). In fact Athena humiliates Ajax even more by showing a performance of his madness to Odysseus³³² with the instruction that he go and narrate it to all the Argives (*δείξω δὲ καὶ σοὶ τήνδε περιφανῆ νόσον, ὥς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοισιν εἰσιδὼν θροῆς*, 66-67). Athena at this point is not an omniscient goddess in respect to human emotions: she cannot understand Odysseus' request to leave Ajax in his tent and not to call him outside since she has reassured him that he will not be visible by his enemy. But Odysseus, as his stance in the play shows (121-126), seems to act not just out of fear, but also out of respect for Ajax' problematic position in which any human disfavored by the gods can find himself.

Ajax's appearance presents the hero at the zenith of his disgrace; in the blindness of his madness he believes that he took revenge by harming his enemies but

³³² Ringer (1998) reads Ajax as a profoundly metatheatrical work and observes "Ajax is positioned to become the performer in Athena's grotesque play-within-the-play, and Odysseus becomes that play's inner audience (34). Segal (1998) also makes a similar approach and notes: "Behind the *technē* of Athena, therefore, stands the *technē* of Sophocles. The dramatist's illusionistic art enables us to see Athena exercising her illusionistic art on Ajax (19).

the reality is that he gave them the opportunity to laugh more at his expense because of his shameful deed. However, his worst enemy does not laugh at Athena's "play": Odysseus highlights that he could be in the same position since human fate depends totally on the god's will (121-126). Athena herself recognizes Ajax as the man who had showed the greatest prudence and who always did what had to be done (119-120). Ajax's worst divine enemy in the play is the first to utter a praise of the hero. His characterization as *προνούστερος* contradicts though with the excessive pride that Calchas traced in his past (761, 777) and Athena's next lines where she explains that the reason of his fall is his arrogance (127-129). The contradiction has a multiple causation: Ajax's strong epic *kleos* in contrast to his present state, tragedy's interest in the instability of human affairs and the different social morality between Homer's competitive world and fifth-century's human sensitivities. Ajax is viewed by scholars as the man who "refused to accept time and change"³³³ and the whole play reconstructs from different perspectives his epic greatness. This greatness, however, although uttered and recognized in words by all other characters except for the Atreidae needs a sensibility such as that of Odysseus who distinguishes between enmity and the objective evaluation of worth³³⁴ in order for the hero to have a proper burial. The play actually presents two contrasting former epic *klea*, one of Ajax and the other of Odysseus, contrasting with two new "rumors", Ajax's madness and Odysseus' honesty of opinion. Odysseus' is presented as notorious for his deceptions in the words of the chorus and Ajax (379-382, 954-960) but in this play he is the most honest character. Ajax has the reputation of the second best among the Achaeans but

³³³ Segal (1998), 25.

³³⁴ Blundell (1989), 103.

in this play he aspires to be the murderer of the Achaeans. Former *kleos* contrasts with current *phatis*.

The last antithesis I mentioned above is the main motif of the *parodos*. The chorus addresses Ajax by highlighting his descent from glorious Telamon and expresses his total dependence from Ajax's protection. The safety they feel under Ajax's shield is shadowed; it is not only their fate but also their fame that is at risk because of the clamors of rumor that assail them to their discredit (*μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ δυσκλείᾳ*, 142-143). Easily enough they accuse Odysseus as the fabricator (*πλάσσων*, 148) of these rumors since they base their judgment upon his former epic reputation and his current tragic reputation as a manipulator of words and Ajax's worst enemy (148-50, 188-89). Whoever listens to these stories is satisfied and laughs mockingly (151-153) since it is easy to attack great men because they are envied (157). What the chorus analyses here is the way human rumors work and tarnish one's reputation. The chorus observes after Tecmessa's confirmation of the shameful deeds that "the news grows as it spreads" (226). The line of thinking recalls Hesiod's description of what *φήμη* is in the *Works and Days* (760-64):

ᾧδ' ἔρδειν· δεινὴν δὲ βροτῶν ὑπαλεύεο φήμην·
φήμη γάρ τε κακὴ πέλεται κόυφῃ μὲν αἶρῃαι
ῥεῖα μάλ', ἀργαλέῃ δὲ φέρειν, χαλεπὴ δ' ἀποθέσθαι.
φήμη δ' οὐ τις πάμπαν ἀπόλλυται, ἦντινα πολλοὶ
λαοὶ φημίζουσι· θεός νύ τις ἔστι καὶ αὐτή.

Thus you should act. And flee from the fearful rumor of mortals. For rumor is a terrible thing, light as it is it is easy to be raised, painful to bear, difficult to leave it behind. The rumor that is spread by many people is never totally lost. For she is also a goddess.

Similarly the nocturnal rumors against Ajax have insulted his reputation so heavily that ordinary men as the chorus cannot restore it, they need the presence of great Ajax

in order to prove it false (170-171). The rumor, however, is so powerful that the most trusted men of Ajax are quickly and suddenly almost convinced that their leader actually attacked the innocent cattle in a state of madness (172ff) since they search for the god or the goddess who could have imposed such a punishment (172, 179) and they address *phatis* almost as a personification (ὦ μεγάλη φάτις, μάτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς, 173-74). The thought that the rumor might be true is so unbearable for the chorus that they pray to Zeus and Phoebus to avert it and urge Ajax once more to appear and rise against the tongues that mock him (182-200). The plenty of words denoting the sounds of the slanderous tongues (θορύβους, λόγους ψιθύρους, θορυβῆ, παταγοῦσι, κακχαζόντων³³⁵ γλώσσαις) coupled with Ajax's delay to appear not only makes the chorus suspicious against Ajax's innocence but depicts *phatis* at the beginning of the play as the strongest power of all.

Instead of Ajax Tecmessa comes out to confirm the shameful rumor. Another motif connected with the functioning of a rumor within a community is the imaginative reaction of one's enemies to such hearsay. In the case of *kleos* a hero of the epic often imagines how future generations are going to talk about his *arête* and this imaginary speech functions as his main motive to risk his life in the imminent combat;³³⁶ in the case of *phatis* a hero imagines how his enemies are going to laugh against his disgrace and this makes his despair worse. Unless his honor can be restored, the subject has no other choice than death, because of the pressure of his enemies rejoicing.³³⁷ Athena in the prologue establishes the motif by presenting the

³³⁵ Garvie prefers the term κακχαζόντων instead of βακχαζόντων that Lloyd-Jones and Wilson publish because it is better associated with the laughter that the hybris against Ajax raises, an important theme in our play. Garvie (1998), ad hoc.

³³⁶ cf. n 159 of chapter B2.

³³⁷ Yoshitake in her analysis of the reasons why Heracles rejected suicide in Euripides' play based on recent methodological approaches to suicide observes that the proper motives for committing suicide in

image of “laughing enemies” as the expected behavior within popular morality (79). The chorus imagines that Odysseus’ false rumors-as they believe- make whoever listens to them rejoice out of envy (152). The image of Odysseus talking and the Atreids laughing is a recurrent motif in the play (198, 303-304, 382, 957-58, 961). When Ajax realizes the truth he juxtaposes his epic portrait to the laughter that his present deed is going to rise (364-367). Menelaus, one of his main enemies is actually imagined by the chorus to enter the stage laughing (1043). The spreading of the rumor and the power it begot within the Greek army, however, appears to have surpassed the level of mere laughter and mockery. When Teucer arrived at Agamemnon’s tent he was abused by the whole body of the Argives (721-22). Since Teucer stands in the eyes of the Argives as Ajax’s representative their behavior toward him is similar to how they would treat Ajax; the only objection would be that probably the size and valor of Ajax’s presence could have inspired them with awe against him but still the reproach against Teucer shows the degree of the army’s hatred for the great hero. Ajax’s disgrace seems to have been actually irreparable if he would remain alive, it was not only in his mind.

What Ajax considers impossible after his disgrace is to face his father. As Kyriakou notes: “Ajax is, if not nearly obsessed, at least eminently preoccupied with his father’s glory, which is central to his self-conception: similar to his father in valor and apparently temper he entertains no doubts about Telamon’s negative reaction to his return without adequate spoils.”³³⁸ The monologue, which follows after his

the extant Greek literature before the time of Euripides are believed to be disgrace and hopelessness, whereas bereavement or self-reproach are not proper motives for a man to commit suicide. Therefore, “a suicide must be committed opportunely before the problem of one’s honour can be solved, if it is to be committed in the name of honour.” Yoshitake (1994), esp. 139, 143-44, 150/51.

³³⁸ Kyriakou (2011), 199. Gibert (1995) notices that in Ajax’s last two speeches, the deception speech and his monologue before the suicide, he is changed than his first speech; his pace has slowed and shame, especially shame before his father has faded as a motif. The second change is argued by silence

emotional lyric dochmiacs and iambics, constitutes his initial rational reaction to his situation and presents Telamon's Trojan *kleos* as Ajax's main measure of judgment of his situation (433-440, 463-65, 470-72). Teucer after Ajax's suicide expresses the same fear of his father's austerity and strictness; he never smiles, even if he is happy (1011). However, Teucer's main fear of his father's reaction does not concern the fact that he did not hinder Ajax to perpetrate such a disgraceful deed but the fact that he will not bring Ajax back with him (1008-1010). His approach recalls Tecmessa's invocation to Ajax to revere and not abandon his old parents who wait for him (506-509). Of course there is a difference between Tecmessa and Teucer: the former tries to persuade Ajax before his death whereas Teucer mourns his loss. However, the similarity in their approach to Telamon's reaction might have also to do with the fact that they could never win a *kleos* similar to Ajax's. Only his father could understand his anguish because they were of the same temper. Besides Ajax is a father to Eurysakes with similar concerns as Telamon had for him: he expects and instructs the young boy to become equal to him but in luck (550-51).³³⁹ In respect to *kleos* it is stressful for a son to have a father with great glorious reputation because he has to prove himself equal or superior to his father. Comparing Ajax to Achilles we may notice that Achilles was never under the impression that Peleus might object him

according to Gibert. (132-135) I believe that it is not that shame has faded in Ajax's mind but that he actually accomplished a kind of maturity before death. It was a strong belief that individuals at the moment before death had oracular or supernatural abilities. I do not suggest that Ajax gained the ultimate wisdom before dying; but that his new shameful experience coupled with a decision whose implications transcend human experience had made him different towards reality. Shame especially before his father, however, remains his motive of action. Characteristically when he mentions his parents at his final speech it is only his mother that he imagines mourning for his loss. And the reasons for this distinction are not due to gender roles, because his father receives no evaluative attribute except for his age (*γέροντι πατρί*, 849). In his mind his father is still strict and satisfied for his death since Ajax could not bring back his honor.

³³⁹ Brown (1965) compares Ajax's instruction to Eurysakes to Hector's address to his won son; the former wishes he son to be equal to him, the latter better than his father. Brown observes that "the difference speaks volumes of Ajax's unbridled egotism" (120).

returning to Phthia without glory or Briseis.³⁴⁰ The difference in my opinion is twofold: first Peleus was never as glorious in battle and valorous as his son; Achilles' *kleos* and competence in battle were due to his mother's divine origin; second, I believe that the mythological fame of every hero works retrospectively in the post-Homeric literary tradition, but even within the oral epic tradition. Namely, Achilles never entertained the possibility that Peleus might be displeased with him because the mythical oral tradition would never leave an Achilles without *kleos* and he would never go back or die before winning great glory. Ajax's epic past contains both his shame of losing Achilles' arms and of his suicide. Despite his great glory in the battlefield his father's literary record is clearer than his and this is by itself a source of comparison and judgment. Every hero bears a mythological *kleos*, not necessarily Homeric, that allows the tragedians a certain space for innovation.

Ajax commits suicide; what he instantly achieves is that now a new *phatis* circulates about him, not that he killed the cattle while trying to kill the Achaeans, but that he is dead. Before his deed he prays to Zeus to bring the new *κακὴν φάτιν* to Teucer (826), and he imagines his mother's mourning when she listens to this message (850). As he predicts this new message/rumor is spread quickly among the Achaeans since Teucer enters the stage asking if the prevailing rumor about Ajax's death is correct (*ὥσπερ ἡ φάτις κρατεῖ*, 978). This is a terrible rumor for Ajax's friends; Teucer, admits that after his brother's death in Troy he has many enemies and even his few advantages disappeared (1023). Again Teucer's helplessness in the absence of Ajax recalls Tecmessa's anguish about what they are going to be without their protector.³⁴¹ Tecmessa as another Andromache³⁴² reminds Ajax of her own and

³⁴⁰ Kyriakou (2011), 198.

³⁴¹ Similar anguish is expressed by the chorus already at the *parodos* (130-40).

his brother's fate if he dies: the painful talk of his enemies about his family (*βάζειν ἀλγεινὴν*, 494) and how they are going to be slaves in the hands of the Argives. She concludes her first argument again referring to the shameful words that are going to circulate about his family (*σοὶ δ' αἰσχρὰ τᾶπ' ταῦτα καὶ τῷ σῶ γένει*, 505). Tecmessa appeals to the main issue that concerns Ajax, his fame as *agathos*.³⁴³ The play does not extend chronologically longer after Ajax's death in order to show us Tecmessa's and Eurysakes' fate, but we can clearly see Teucer being abused by the Atreids after his brother's death, who also attack Ajax. Menelaus calls Ajax a bad man (1071) because of his disobedience, a charge that would have resonance among the Athenians whose city expected loyalty from them, while Agamemnon characterizes him as having only size and not good counsel (1250-52). Teucer is attacked by Menelaus for being a light armed archer (1120, 1123) and by Agamemnon as being the son of a slave captive woman and not a noble (1228, 1235).³⁴⁴ Of course Teucer answers these reproaches properly but the fact is that with Ajax's former *kleos* nobody could attack his brother like this; the disgrace he suffered at the end allowed such behaviors.

Ajax considered suicide as the suitable means to regain his honor. There is no honor and no place in Hades either, however, for him who has not received a proper burial of his body. Ajax knows this and he prays to Zeus before his death that Teucer comes and collects his body (827-28). Teucer is determined to offer his brother a burial despite the threats of the Atreids but it is Odysseus' stance that achieves a fair

³⁴² Of course Tecmessa's status is not like Andromache who is Hector's legal wife, since the former is a captive slave.

³⁴³ Heath (1987) writes: "Tecmessa is made to appeal to just those points which might sway an Ajax: to his obligation as *agathos* towards his dependents, to his sense of the *aiskhron*, to the *aidos* owed to his parents, to the obligations imposed by the receipt of *charis*".

³⁴⁴ On the issue of the acceptability of personal invective Heath (1987) writes: "Fifth-century tragedy is closer to the heroic than to the Hellenistic ethos; and one does not have to go far into the tragic corpus to see that the acceptability of personal invective as a weapon of debate is taken for granted." (206)

result for Ajax' case. Actually, it is Odysseus acknowledging Ajax's epic greatness and martial *kleos* that convinces Agamemnon not to agree with the burial but to resign from his insistence to hinder Teucer (1370-73). Odysseus discerns that Ajax might have been his greatest enemy after the contest for the Achillean arms but he cannot disgrace a man who proved himself the second best of the Achaeans after Achilles (1338-41).³⁴⁵ Ajax' *arête* wins Odysseus enmity as he admits (1357) and he lists him among the *ἀρίστοις ἀνδράσιν* (1380). Namely at the end of the play Ajax's epic *kleos* seems to have won over the recent disgraceful rumor in respect to his right to burial and proper funeral rites. The question is what would be the opinion of the Greek army about Ajax after his burial; would they accept Odysseus' sensitive stance which is based according to the latter on justice (1335) or will they follow the hatred of the Atreids who remain intransigent till the end? The text does not supply us with such information. Segal observes that although "Ajax gets an honorific funeral and a eulogy, there is a painful clash between what we hear and what we see: the "fame" of this best of heroes and the ugly, still-warm black blood in the mortal body of a man..."³⁴⁶ I believe that Odysseus' stance restores Ajax in the eyes of the theater audience because the opposite opinion, that of the Atreids, is really maliciously presented by the two kings. In addition, the theater audience is aware that Ajax is also a figure of hero-cult.³⁴⁷ The tension between what was staged in the tragedy that

³⁴⁵ Besides, such an acknowledgement would lessen the importance of his victory at the contest for the arms.

³⁴⁶ Segal (1998), 25.

³⁴⁷ In my opinion the play alludes to Ajax's hero-cult by paying so close attention to his dead body and his tomb but I am not convinced that the play dramatizes the process of his heroization. We should think more about it as a *datum* in the conscience of the audience and of the poet and not as Sophocles' conscious effort to dramatize it. Besides, even Henrichs (1993) who reads the chorus' lines after Menelaus' exit as assuming an active ritual role, namely dramatizing Ajax's cult, notes: "The *Aias* barely adumbrates the figure of the cultic hero while saying nothing directly about the performance of the hero cult, which is merely implied in the notion of the heroic tomb and of future commemoration" (176). The same scholar sees *Ajax* as Sophocles' experimental effort of approaching hero-cult before the mature dramatization of heroization of Oedipus at Colonus. (177). Kowalzig (2006) studies the

preceded and the epic *kleos* and cultic heroization of Ajax recalls in a way the similar position of Orestes at the end of the *Eumenides*, where we hear that the man who the audience has watched suffering and mad receives the special promise from goddess Athena that after his death he will have the supernatural powers of a ἥρωες (770). In the frame of the cult and the religious conscience of the people great heroes such as Ajax and Orestes entertain a special divine status despite the stains in their mythological past. In the case of Ajax, epic *kleos* plays an important role for his future cultic heroization. But clearly in the mind of the poet *kleos* is in its essence a poetic value, which can easily collapse when applied in a pragmatic environment.

5b) *Heracles*: Athenian democracy compromises poetic *kleos*.

Euripides' admitted innovation to place the murder of Heracles' children after his labors³⁴⁸ creates a direct reversal of his reputation: whereas apparently in the literary tradition his labors were the zenith of his fame and after those he was established in the consciousness of people as the ultimate hero and benefactor which allowed him a place at the Elysian fields, in this play his fame and reputation are a precedent to his shameful and appalling deed.³⁴⁹ The structure of the play follows in a general way the reversal of the mythological order: Heracles is presented and sung as the greatest hero and benefactor of all mankind; his advent and the murder of Lycus close the first cycle of the play with a happy ending. The second prologue of the goddesses Iris and Lyssa (822ff.) introduce the madness of the hero and the murders

cases of Ajax, Oedipus and Heracles, appropriated by tragic aetiology as Athenian heroes with specific cults in the Attic territory, as proof of the purpose of tragedy to connect the Athenians into the network of Panhellenic myth in the formation of its ideology of empire.

³⁴⁸ Bond (1981), xxviii. The inversion of the events of the murders and the labors by Euripides gives also meaning to Theseus' appearance in the play because otherwise he could not have played any part since his encounter in Hades with Herakles would precede the hero's bad fortune (xxx).

³⁴⁹ Mills (1997) finds that the reversal of the traditional chronology is theatrically most effective. It produces in a play a striking disunity, contradicts the normal causal relationship between desert and reward; and creates a contrast between divine justice and human friendship (133).

of his family which constitute the second part of the play; Theseus and Athenian hospitality and friendship compromise both the two parts of the play and the two sides of the hero, his exceptional status and his domestic self, and they offer a new light in the myth of Heracles. In the following pages I am going to examine the contrast between the fame of Heracles as presented in the choral parts and in the mouths of the other characters of the play and the way Euripides depicts the actual hero in his play in order to make him fit in Theseus' Athens and the Athenian Ideology. Euripides assimilates Heracles' *kleos* to that of Athens and compromises the excessiveness of his character with the Athenian democratic ideals.

What is important in the first part of the play is the anxiety of all characters as well as the chorus to present Heracles' glorious fame and to place him in a position proper to his name. The chorus of *Heracles* shows a high poetic self-awareness. They are not introduced simply as friends or as sympathizing to the plight of the family, they specifically call and identify themselves as singers:

ἡλέμων γέρων ἄοι-
 δὸς ὥστε πολὺς ὄρνις,
 ἔπεα μόνον καὶ δόκημα νυκτερω-
 πὸν ἐννύχων ὀνειρώων,
 τρομερὰ μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως πρόθυμ',

(I set forth) an old singer of dirges like a white swan, I that am only a voice and a night phantom of visions of sleep, trembling but still really eager.

They came purposefully to lament for the fate of Heracles' children and they compare their song with something no less than the swan's song³⁵⁰. The feebleness of their old age is contrasted to their eagerness and ability to sing; the motif that old men are only shadows and dreams because of their physical weakness is undermined by the power

³⁵⁰ Bond (1988) cites Horapollo's saying that a swan sings the sweetest song at his old age (2.39). cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 84e-85a-b.

of their song³⁵¹: they are only ἔπεα but their words are the only proof and presence of Heracles' fame until the hero arrives on stage. The poet's voice is only ἔπεα but words have the power to maintain and propagate one's reputation. In fact, since the image of the hero that is presented in this play highlights more his domestic and familial side,³⁵² their song and Amphitryon's and Megara's memories are the closest we come to Heracles' heroic past. The chorus' intentional self-belittlement because of their old age stands in contrast to their power as singers also at the second choral ode which is a hymn to youth: they praise youth and declare that they prefer it to the wealth and prosperity of an Asian kingship (643-646); they wish the gods would even reward good men with a second young age (660-62). As an antidote to man's inability to change the pace of time stands their capacity with music which separates them from those who lead a life of ἀμουσία (676) and this is the way they may always be crowned (αἰεὶ δ' ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἶην, 677). Their alleged identity as γέρων ἀοιδός (678) is reiterated again in this ode: at 692 they identify themselves again as old singers who sing like a swan. They rank themselves among the Charites, the Muses, specifically the Muses of Delos (687), the companions of Apollo, and declare that the power of the Good is in their hymns (τὸ γὰρ εὖ τοῖς ὕμνοισιν ὑπάρχει, 694-95). The chorus' anxiety to emphasize and extol their singing identity and the power of their art is connected to their role in the play to hymn Heracles. Bond observes that "in an encomium the competence and diligence of the *laudator* are most important,

³⁵¹ However, we cannot trace yet the Hellenistic motif of rejuvenation through poetry (cf. the prologue of Callimachus' *Aetia*); just the power of poetry against the passage of time.

³⁵² Papadopoulou (2005) stresses that "the co-existence of the heroic past and the domestic present in one and the same person becomes deeply problematic, while at the same time the relevance of the violent past to the civilized present is questioned" (80).

for the fame of the *laudandus* depends on them”.³⁵³ At the peak of their praise the chorus builds with their song an ἄγαλμα (358) for Heracles; the outmost glorification of the hero is the enumeration of his labors which civilized the earth.

The chorus’ identification as ἀοιδός marks Heracles’ praise in the play as poetic and his glorious reputation, his *kleos*, is presented through the songs of the old men and established in the audience’s consciousness as literary tradition. Indicative is the way both the characters and the chorus refer to Heracles in a formulaic mode: ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς (12, 1414), τὸν καλλίνικον (180), Ἡρακλῆς ὁ καλλίνικος (581-2), τὸν Ἡρακλέους καλλίνικον ἀγῶνα (788), τὸ καλλίνικον κάρα (1046), εὐκλεῆς πόσις (290).³⁵⁴ Heracles’ heroic fame reflects upon his family; while normally a father’s *kleos* reflects and should be maintained if not surpassed by his children, Amphytrion introduces himself in the prologue in heroic terms because he shares Heracles’ paternity with Zeus. His son’s supposed divine origin is the main reason why

³⁵³ Bond (1988), on 673-86. Swift (2010) correctly stresses that epinician imagery runs throughout *Heracles* and identifies specific motifs of the epinician genre in the play’s choral odes such as the self-conscious ownership of the praise (126), the song as a reward for *arête* (127), the praise of Thebes as Heracles’ homeland though its foundation myth etc. However, I find the observation that “the first *stasimon*...sets up Heracles in the model of an athletic victor (129) far-fetched; in my opinion Swift’s point that *Heracles* and *Trachiniae* “work against the template of the epinician Heracles, and their ironic effects are achieved by guiding the audience to see how the tragic Heracles they see falls short of his glorious epinician persona” is limiting the complexity of the play; the praise of Heracles in the play is not merely epinician, but it generally recalls his poetic past, be it epic, historical, or epinician, which connects him with aristocratic ideals and the older world view about a superhuman individual who civilizes the world. Similar motifs with epinician poetry we find for example in funerary speeches, a genre with which the Athenian audience is more familiar. Kyriakou (1999) totally disagrees with views that connect Euripides’ poetic persona to that of an epinician poet and explains that “the chorus’ praise to Heracles is an act of devotion akin to worship and totally unlikely a commissioned or even spontaneous encomium to a mortal *laudandus*.” (10). Maybe we should be more compromising though; the chorus may not contribute to Heracles’ immortal fame the way an epinician poet would contribute to an athlete’s fame but in my opinion they function in the play as the representatives of the literary tradition in order to lighten the “poetic” side of Heracles’ fame.

³⁵⁴ Swift (2010) observes the following in respect to καλλίνικος which is in accordance with her general interpretation of the play: “Using the epithet highlights the contrast between the ‘cultic’ Heracles the audience knows from myth, as well as from epinikion, and the ‘tragic’ Heracles they are seeing on-stage. Heracles καλλίνικος is a demigod: strong, victorious, and able to protect; the Heracles they are seeing is flawed, vulnerable, and utterly human in his downfall and grief. And while Heracles begins the play as undoubtedly the καλλίνικος Heracles of epinikion, his attempt to live up to this reputation leads to his downfall.” (147).

everybody knows him (1-3). Megara is the one that greets him with a reference to his most personal famous exploit, the avenging of Alcmena's brothers on the Taphians in north-west Greece (60ff.); she uses Amphitryon's heroic reputation also later to persuade him to defend a nobler death for his children (288). Megara with her proposition to prefer a noble voluntary death instead of disgrace at the hands of their enemies has been characterized as a surrogate for the absent Heracles.³⁵⁵ She alleges that she wants to imitate her husband's *εὐγένεια* (292-94); Heracles' *kleos* creates expectations for his family; each member, however, interprets their debt to their glorious relative differently: Megara believes that the only noble choice that remains for them is death. She connects this decision to courage: *τόλμα* she urges Amphitryon at her final appeal to persuade him (307). Amphitryon on the other side declares that it is not cowardice or longing for life that hinders him from dying but his wish to save his child's children (316-18). What is implied here is not just a grandfather's love for his grandchildren but a hero's anxiety that his son's name and glory is going to be continued through his offspring. Peleus at *Andromache* is similarly lamenting for his family's loss of offspring (1177). Heracles' father offers himself voluntarily to death as Megara suggested after he realizes that his hope to save his grandchildren is impossible (318). Besides, Lycus' wish to kill the children of Heracles depends on his fear for revenge for their father's memory. Iris herself refers to Heracles' children as the *καλλίπαιδα στέφανον* (839), Heracles' crown of a fair group of children, showing how important one's offspring are for his reputation.

While at the choral parts the chorus identify themselves mainly as a singer, at the spoken parts but also at the epode of the first choral ode they invoke their personal heroic identity as protectors of Thebes. They present themselves as old veteran

³⁵⁵ Michelini (1987), 275.

hoplites who wish that they were able to take their spear up again but their old age hinders them (268- 272 436-441). Thebes belongs to them as its people, because they fought in the past for its sake (259, 272) and not for the tyrant Lycus (274). They bravely declare that they will protect Heracles' children obviously as their legitimate kings and also because Heracles was a benefactor to their country (265). In this approach Heracles is presented not as the individualistic hero who with his excessive power separates himself from the community but as an integrated hero, who enjoys great acceptance among the people of his *polis*. The word they use to refer to their weapons is *δόρυ* (268, 437) which recalls Amphitryon's and Lycus' debate about what weapon suits the bravest warrior, the *τόξα* (bow) or the *λόγχη* (spear). The chorus' reference to their previous relationship with Heracles as their co-citizen, who helped their country a lot (265), although not directly mentioned, connects Heracles to the hoplite fighting³⁵⁶ and contradicts Lycus' arguments against the hero.

Although many compounds of *kleos* are found in connection to Heracles, the word *eo ipso* never appears in the play. Both Megara and Amphitryon use the word *δόξα* in order to refer to their previous position when Heracles was present at Thebes. Megara laments how much they fell off from the hopeful glory (*δόξης ἐνέλπιδος*, 460) that Heracles planned for his children, namely to bequeath to them the three cities he has been associated with, Argos, Thebes and Oechalia. Amphitryon recalling conventional wisdom mourns about what his fate took away from him and declares that great wealth and glory (*δόξα*, 511) are actually never certain for anyone. The usage of the word *δόξα* depicts Heracles more in contemporary realistic terms than in

³⁵⁶ At 1190-94 Amphitryon describes his son who fought as a warrior with a spear on the side of the gods during the Gigantomachy. The presentation of Heracles as a hoplite contradicts the image of Heracles as an archer. For a discussion of the cultural significance of archers and hoplites at the Athens of fifth-century cf. Papadopoulou (2005), 140ff.

the poetic atmosphere of the choral odes: he is presented as the glorious king of Thebes who shares features of a powerful man of his time but not as the supernatural hero who is disconnected from the more normative ideals of *polis* aristocracy. Therefore, when he addresses Amphitryon's concern whether Lycus' supporters at the *stasis* who are Heracles' alleged enemies have seen him entering the city he answers according to his excessive bravery and boldness that he care not if he has been seen(595); however, in a realistic touch, he reassures his father that he entered stealthily (598). At the third *stasimon* the chorus presents the whole city participating with dances and feasts in the joyful atmosphere that the extinction of the tyrant Lycus by Heracles has provoked. Again Heracles is presented as a benefactor of his city and his deeds give birth to songs (766-67). At the end of the first part of the play the chorus alleges that time has proved glorious Heracles' physical strength (805-06), namely that at the end, as they believe, he was not disgraced by a malicious tyrant. However, this is not the end.

The messenger who relates Heracles' murder of his family ends his speech with the observation that he knows not of a more wretched mortal (1014-15). Generally, the character of Heracles in our play is not characterized by the excessive pride of the Sophoclean Ajax or the Iliadic Achilles. Ajax advises his son to become like him in valor and courage, better only in luck (550ff.). He never renounces his former deeds, on the contrary, because of his high evaluation of his offer at the Trojan War he could not accept that Odysseus obtained the Achillean weapons and after his disgrace he could not tolerate living with a new reputation, he could not assume any other identity than the one he knew. Heracles when he arrives at Thebes to find out the condition of his family easily renounces his glorious exploits and the past about which the chorus has been singing from the beginning of the play and upon which

Megara and Amphitryon have based all their hopes or unhelpful decisions. *Χαιρόντων πόνοι· μάτην γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἦνυσα* (farewell to my labors. I have rather completed them in vain, 575-76). Heracles is actually disavowing his fame.³⁵⁷ He will not be called *καλλίνικος* as before unless he protects his children. He does not hurl threats against Lycus such as “He should have thought against whose children he attacked”, or boast that “I am great Heracles and no one can beat me”. He has no recourse to his former exploits but just explains how he is going to revenge and renounces his fame as not important. Ajax did not yield to his wife’s entreaties; Heracles refuses his former identity because of his absence in his family’s sufferings. After the renunciation of his former fame he continues to explain that his identity is still hidden from his enemies; not only did he enter the city stealthily (598) but Eurystheus does not know that he left the Underworld (617). His delay at Hades made his opponent to forget him, at least presently. The reason why his heroic presence was momentarily faded from the earth and his traces were lost was Theseus: he delayed to save him (619).

When he kills Lycus and performs his rightful revenge, we listen only to the chorus’ celebrations; he never appears on stage, he is not given any space to utter any rejoicing words which would contrast to his later disgrace. Although in literary tradition he is an excessive and boastful personality³⁵⁸, in this play he does what his father and his community expect him to do without personal exposition. When Ajax recovers his sanity the first thing he does is to expose his glorious deeds at the Trojan field and confirm his heroic identity and the injustice with which he was treated by

³⁵⁷ cf. Bond (1988) *ad hoc* who explains that the labors here are not the impositions of Eurystheus but Heracles’ claim to fame.

³⁵⁸ cf. *Il.* 5.403-4, *Od.* 8.223.5; 21.11.41. His excess of behavior was suitable for comedy e.g. *Ar. Birds* 1574-90.

men and gods (*Ajax*, 437-453). Heracles does not lament for his fate and fame, he does not even try to guess who the god that sent his madness was. He directly contemplates the ways he can use to commit suicide so that he saves himself from the ill-repute which stays forever (*δύσκειαν ἣ μένει μ' ἀπόσομαι βίου*, 1152). Before he decides whether death and what kind of death befits his heroic identity, before he even finishes his questions and utters an affirmative proposition, Theseus comes again to help him find what his answer to the new situation should be. Before Theseus enters Heracles hides again his identity by covering his head (1159).

Theseus announces that he came because of the news of Lycus' tyranny (*κληδών*, 1166). When he asks Amphitryon who is the man among the corpses who hides his head the latter introduces Heracles as his son of many toils (*πολύπονος*) who fought at the Phlegraian field (1190-92); Amphitryon namely insists on his son's heroic identity. Heracles talks about himself only as being a *μίασμα* (1233), at the point of his utter humiliation. To his decision to die and just be buried in the earth from where he came Theseus reprimands him as talking like an ordinary man (1247-48). What we still watch is Heracles handling himself as an ordinary individual whereas the rest take pains to remind him repeatedly of his previous heroic name.

Θη. ὁ πολλὰ δὴ τλὰς Ἡρακλῆς λέγει τάδε;
 Ηρ. οὐκ οὖν τοσαῦτά γ'· ἐν μέτρῳ μοχθητέον.
 Θη. εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι καὶ μέγας φίλος;
 Ηρ. οἱ δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦσί μ', ἀλλ' Ἡρα κρατεῖ.
 Θη. οὐκ ἄν <σ> ἀνάσχοιθ' Ἑλλὰς ἀμαθίαι θανεῖν

Th. Is it Heracles the much-enduring who speaks? **Herac.** Not so many things. One should labor in measure. **Th.** The benefactor of the mortals and a great friend? **Herac.** They cannot help me, Hera is in power. **Th.** Greece cannot tolerate that you die out of perversity.

Scholars have observed that Heracles becomes more humble and humane at the end of the play.³⁵⁹ I believe that Heracles is presented as more humane and closer to ordinary mortals in the whole play and the distance between his two selves, his superhuman and his humane, is not apparent in the comparison between the two parts of the play but between the image that the chorus and the other characters construct about him and the image he himself promotes. Despite Theseus' insistence on the titles of much-enduring and benefactor of humanity he insists on more philosophical ideals such as measure in life and the limited power of mortals against the divine; he renounces his labors for a second time (1254) since no one can reward him for those and help him out of his misery. Theseus renders his wish to commit suicide to perversity; the word *ἀμάθεια* does not simply mean folly but lack of knowledge and understanding. Theseus believes that if Heracles realizes the size of his fame and grandeur in the consciousness of *Hellas*, if he realizes the prestige of his heroic identity he will not commit suicide.

Heracles' next monologue introduced by *ἄκουε* is a new *didaxis* about his legend. He is not proud about his mortal origin because his father slew his mother's father (1258-60). Neither his divine origin from Zeus glorifies him because he became a permanent enemy of Hera (1264-65). The murder of his children is added to the list of his labors; thus he denigrates the importance of his glorious deeds. Wherever he may go he will be recognized (*ἐγνωσμένοι*, 1287) and pointed by spiteful gossip (1288). In fact he performs in narrative the imagined gossips that will circulate about him; "isn't it the son of Zeus who slew his children and wife? He should go out of this country" (1289-90). In Heracles' mind not only mortals are not friendly toward him

³⁵⁹ Chalk (1966), Gregory (1977), Foley (1985), cf. Dunn n.13 ch.8.

but they identify him only by his divine origin and his crime; his labors are forgotten. He imagines for him the fate of the greatest sinner Ixion (1298).³⁶⁰ The other common *topos* often encountered in imaginary speeches of disgrace, the image of one's enemy's laughter, is also present in his vision of his future; Hera is imagined dancing and rejoicing (1303-04). Her *phthonos* reversed his reputation. What Heracles consciously changed in his life story is his double origin, with which the play began and about which the chorus sung (353-54). Choosing Amphitryon as his only father (1265) brings Heracles closer to ordinary mortals and erases the first proposition of his enemies' attack against him; he is not the son of Zeus murderer of his children but just a man attacked by a god who murdered his family; the poles of his fame, highest and lowest, come closer.

Theseus in his effort to persuade Heracles to stay alive insists on the latter's divine origin; there is no human who remains unaffected by fate, neither is a god (1313-14) if the words of the poets are correct. His paradigms of immorality concern only divine cases (1314-19). At this point Theseus offers Heracles the unique solution; there is a city that can accept him, although earlier Heracles himself believed there is none. It is Athens, where Heracles can acquire part of Theseus' wealth and shrines. If he dies the Athenians will honor him with sacrifices and statues. If the citizens of Athens help a man of worth they will be crowned with good reputation (*ἐν κλείας τυχεῖν*, 1335). The question is whether Theseus would help Heracles if he was only a friend of him who helped the former at a difficult moment in his life or if Heracles' poetic and heroic fame is important for this decision. The gifts Theseus offers come from his personal property and do not belong to the Athenians in general;

³⁶⁰ There is an interesting contrast between Ixion who tried to violate the bond between Zeus and Hera and Heracles who is the product of Zeus' violation of that bond.

but he promises that all mortals will name specific shrines after Heracles name from then on (1329-30). However, Heracles is not called *ἄριστος* or *καλλίνικος* or *κλεινός*; he is just called *ἐσθλός* (1335). Theseus' presents his help as a *χάριν* (1336) offered to Heracles because he saved his life and not as a reward for his benefactions to humanity.

Heracles decides to live, his decision depends in the first place not on Theseus' promises but on the fact that he considers suicide cowardice;³⁶¹ he decides he must endure and compares suffering in disasters with suffering under an enemy's weapon (1348-50).³⁶² His labors and his warrior identity are equated to his domestic side. In fact, later he undermines again his heroic past by evaluating them as lower to his present plight (1410-11). He proposes that he performed his labors only for the benefit of his children (1368-70). Once again the importance of his labors about which all mortals admire him is reduced to the domestic sphere: as any other father he took care of his children's inheritance. His weapons are the only thing that makes him recall his heroic past:

*ἀλλὰ γυμνωθεὶς ὄπλων
ξὺν οἷς τὰ κάλλιστ' ἐξέπραξ' ἐν Ἑλλάδι
ἐχθροῖς ἐμᾶντὸν ὑποβαλὼν αἰσχυρῶς θάνω;
οὐ λειπτέον τὰδ', ἀθλίως δὲ σωστέον*

However, bereft of the weapons with which I performed the best in Greece, subordinating myself to my enemies die in shame? I must not leave them, but keep them in my wretchedness.

His weapons define his identity; in imagery and in comedy he is identified by his club, the lion skin and his bow. Scholars explain his decision to keep them as an acceptance of his complex and divided self. Micheleni remarks: "Just as Heracles

³⁶¹ Yoshitake (1994) explains that from Homer to Plato a male ought to repress or overcome a wish for death if it was a consequence of grief or self-reproach. (145-46).

³⁶² This recalls Medea's comparison between war and childbirth (*Med.* 250-51).

recognizes the paradoxical coexistence in himself of weakling and hero, so he recognizes the necessity for retaining his heroic office, even though his understanding of its pointlessness makes him inadequate to complete it". Papadopoulou observes that his decision to keep the arms "is the result of his affirmation of his heroic past, but also of the vulnerability and grief he has experienced after murdering his kin". Dunn sees his decision to put on the bow and the arrows as if "he puts on a symbol both of heroic achievement and of the cowardly outsider, a symbol both of tragic suffering and of unending disgrace".³⁶³ By saving his weapons Heracles is not saving his heroic identity but accepts the totality of his legend as Euripides formed it by adding the murder of his children after the labors. Probably his decision to avoid suicide is the newest and greatest of his labors. However, the whole play prepared the audience for a hero who makes such a choice; since he has been presented as more ordinary, domestic and humane it is possible for him also to be conciliatory. A proud and intransigent character as Ajax would never accept Theseus' favor; but Athens symbolized by Theseus' stance could never on its turn accept a man as Ajax. Athenian democracy demanded its citizens acquire a sense of prudence and modesty; extremely ambitious individuals were expelled. Euripides' Heracles combines the grandeur of a hero who glorifies the city in which he lives with the humbleness of the mortal that knows his limits and appreciates the *χάριν* a city as Athens offers.

Heracles in the mythological tradition sets the boundaries of the Greek world and protects human civilization from irrational beasts; he is also considered the founder of Olympic games, he is therefore a great athlete. "He is the model of Greek aristocracy all over Greece". Theseus on the other side is the model of democracy and by rescuing the great civilizer from suicide, Theseus will be upholding Athens'

³⁶³ Michelini (1989), 266, Papadopoulou (2005), 179, Dunn (1996), 125.

reputation as the civilizing city.³⁶⁴ Namely, Heracles poetic *kleos* is integrated and assimilated to the Athenian *kleos* which made every land and sea accessible (Thuc.2.41.4). First, however, the excessiveness, ambition and power that such an epic *kleos* allows to its possessors had to be measured in order to be able to fit in with the power of the citizens. When unmeasured it becomes a caricature in comedy and satyr play.³⁶⁵ Euripides' characterization of Heracles made this possible. Theseus seems astonished:

Θη. ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν.
Ηρ. σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθην ἐν κακοῖσιν ὦν;
Θη. ὥς ἐς τὸ λῆμα παντὸς ἦν ἥσσων ἀνὴρ

Th. In your sickness you are not the glorious Heracles. **Herac.** What kind of hero were you when found in misery in the Underworld? **Th.** in respect to courage I was worse than anyone.

In Euripides' world there are apparently no super heroes who are constantly in line with their glorious epic *kleos*. What certifies glory and power in Athenian democracy are not titles and personal ambitions but the well-being and the friendship of the city. In a time of great misery no one remains *κλεινός*; Athenian kindness, however, knows how to appreciate both at the same time what poets have sung and the fragility of the human nature.

³⁶⁴ Mills (1997), 137-39.

³⁶⁵ Mills (1997), 138 with n.41, Kirkpatrick-Dunn (2002), 40-41.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have argued that the concept of *kleos*, although projected in Greek tragedy as a strong motive behind the actions and choices of certain heroes and heroines, emerges in almost all cases of Greek drama as a poetic and obsolete epic value rather than as reflecting a functionable denominator in the life of fifth century Athens. Epic and epinician poetry are explicitly connected with their power to perpetuate the heroic or athletic *kleos* of certain individuals and this target manifests itself in the social function of these genres: epic poetry in its self-referential moments presents itself as the guarantor of the spreading of *kleos* for the heroes who sacrifice their life in the battlefield so as to ensure a glorious reputation or it presents the acquired *kleos* of great heroes through the lips and the performed songs of their contemporaries; epinician poetry explicitly connects its existence with the *laudandus*' fame and finds the proper way to integrate the athlete and his reputation into his city. Attic tragedy as a genre cancels *a priori* the premises upon which *kleos* is founded: It does not have a hero's *kleos* as its prominent theme, its characters are in the majority of times mythological and not directly connected with the audience through origin or descent, the democratic *ethos* of the fifth century Athens deters any individual from laying claims on enjoying a rarefied status and winning exceptional personal *kleos*. Athenian democracy demands that its citizens behave in such a way as to perpetuate the city's glorious reputation and not their personal memory and name. Therefore, the appearance of the epic value of *kleos* within a tragedy arouses suspicions and necessitates a re-examination.

As my main study case I selected the character of Orestes; first, because in the *Odyssey* he is presented as a highly positive exemplum of *kleos* and the ideal son who avenges his father's honor and thus wins a great glorious reputation for himself. He is projected to Telemachus as the model to follow. Second, since all three great tragedians have dealt in their plays with Orestes' myth, we are offered the opportunity to compare the differences in their stance toward Orestes' inherited epic *kleos*. *Kleos* in Homeric epic constitutes a vital element of Orestes' myth but the focus of tragedy on familial and city law as well as its ability to perform the human crimes and sufferings live through actors with flesh and blood sheds light on the bestial and ferocious side of the human experience which can be easily silenced in an epic narrative. *Kleos* morality is not compatible with the popular morality of the fifth century Athens where citizens need martial *kleos* not for their personal glory but for the safety of their city and where court experience punishes any deed raised against social or political rules.

In the *Choephoroi* Orestes claims personal ambition to a warlike glory and embodies the polarity between his mythical duty to avenge his father's death and the moral issues the matricide raises. The community along with his sister Electra expects him to act as a hero according to his father's glorious reputation and royal authority but the same community accuses him of matricide. The parallel structure between the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi* that Aeschylus chose mirrors the parallel *kleos* of Agamemnon and Orestes; in the Homeric epic tradition Agamemnon was never a sympathetic character. He was characterized by self-pleasing motives, cruelty and excessive boasting. In the *Agamemnon* his *ethos* is proved by his choice to walk on the purple carpet. Orestes shows a similar *ethos*. At the beginning of the play he is a signifier of *kleos* according to the community's expectations but his presence doe

not fulfill this mask with a signified. He is not yet a *kleos* bearer. His hesitation to proceed with the revenge and his delay during the *kommos* where he wishes that his father had died in Troy and ensured their glory proves his inertia towards his task. His song seeks to honor his father but in tragedy a song is not enough to confer glory. The chorus demands deeds. He oscillates between his epic duty and his tragic future of becoming a matricider. At the end of the *kommos* he personally takes the decision of the committing matricide, exceeding the demand of the oracle. When he enlists his motivations *kleos* becomes part of a political agenda which appeals to the imaginary level of pride of the Argives. He tries hard to unite his personal reputation with that of the glorious citizens of Argos, once sackers of Troy, in order to alleviate the consequences of his deed. But his mother's murder is a crime of such proportions that cannot be resolved based on ethical or religious platitudes. Despite his non sympathetic epic characterization and his ambivalent reputation in Aeschylus' homonymus play Agamemnon reached the climax of his *kleos* through the sack of Troy. Orestes never reaches a climax of positive *kleos*; at the moment of his long awaited revenge his reputation changes to the worst because of the blame for the matricide. Aeschylus presents Orestes to have proved his parents' *ethos*; he is not only related to his father's fame but also to his mother's, since he is often characterized with words that relate to *τόλμη* as happens with the case of Clytemnestra and he is depicted as a *δράκων*, similarly to his mother's viper image. At the end of the *Eumenides*, after his purification and moral release, his speech is a private one and *kleos* has disappeared from his demands. Aeschylus counterbalances *kleos* with the pragmatic environment of a *polis* which in many ways reflects the Athenian experience and proves it futile and powerless.

Sophocles in the *Electra* projects *kleos* as a programmatic ambition of Orestes and later as an ideal for Electra, but only in order to set it aside as belonging to the old world and to show its incompatibility with the real human circumstances. Sophocles' Orestes is a less stressed and puzzled character than Aeschylus' Orestes. He never shows great hesitation or fear of performing his duty. He is well educated and trained by his *Paedagogus* in respect to his mission and his study of his father's *kleos* and old world morality is superficial and does not exhibit any deep commitment. *Kleos* is part of the ideological *langue* by which he is raised but not a genuine anxiety. He easily connects *kleos* with personal *kerdos* and eagerly schemes a *dolos* to achieve his goal. Scholars often notice that Orestes recalls Odysseus' persona who acquired great *kleos* through tricks but I showed that this is not accurate since Odysseus boasts that his tricks are the source of his *kleos* whereas Orestes presents himself more as an Iliadic warrior who is hesitant of winning *kleos* through *dolos*. However, he justifies his choice by a vague reference to the wise men of the past, a reference that accumulates different famous cases of extraordinary individuals (legendary heroes, tricksters, shamans) as exemplary of *kleos* and shows that the concept of *kleos* is semantically extended in comparison to the epic heroic perspective. Moreover, he keeps his glory and reputation dis-connected from his father's past and seeks it on a practical level. This *kleos* that I labeled of "Odyssean" kind is rejected by Sophocles' narrative.

An "Iliadic kind" of *kleos* is presented in Electra's claims on heroic *kleos* and in the fake story fabricated within the messenger's *aggelia*. When she believes that her brother is dead she suggests that they will exhibit great *andreia* and win eternal *kleos* among their contemporaries if she and Chrysothemis take revenge for their father. Sophocles' narrative, however, presents this proposition as impossible and as a social transgression in the mouth of a woman. Her sister's and the chorus' critical

stance shows the audience the proper way of responding. The area of male deeds offering *kleos* is insulated and suspicious when approached by women. Electra's appalling appearance and constant lament has tired the community around her, who, although at the beginning shared her devotion to her father's honor, should have found her behavior excessive and annoying. Moreover, Orestes presents himself as losing the fake race because he did not use any *dolos*, as a genuine Iliadic warrior would do. However, he plans to win through *dolos* to achieve a victory at the life race. He, thus, reverses the Iliadic model of Antilochus' participation in Patroclus' funeral Games and fabricates an idealistic narrative about his personality that would elevate his glory in the eyes of his sister and his mother who are the immediate receptors of the messenger's speech. Nevertheless, in his actual life choices his moral ideals are compromised with practicality and personal advantage.

The only *kleos* that arises as more genuine is the one I labeled of "tragic kind", namely Electra's constant lament which was active and acting all the years before Orestes' advent as a substitute for her brother's duty. Through her lament she has been restoring her father's honor but she has also made a name and reputation of herself as the personification of *penthos*. At the end of the play it is her constant lament and gloomy condition that become famous and not her brother's "achievement".

Euripides advances the reflections of his predecessors in respect to *kleos* on a different level; he does not simply present epic *kleos* as obsolete, detached and idealistic for the pragmatic society of the fifth century Athens but he actually deals with it as a merely poetic and aesthetic value, stripped of its epic prerequisites and as a field that can encompass new possibilities. In the *Orestes* Euripides reverses the position of *kleos* in Orestes' myth and instead of presenting it as the main reason for

his revenge against the murderers of his father and the source of his ordeal he presents it as Orestes' new possibility to save his life, as a reason to gain Panhellenic reputation and avoid death. Pylades' proposition of winning *kleos* involves the killing a woman, Helen; *kleos* will be shared by the two friends, it is no longer a strictly personal good. Pylades' proposition offers joy and relief to Orestes and opens a new line in the plot. What Achilles and Hector wished for a moment in the *Iliad*, namely to remain alive while keeping their *kleos*, Orestes and Pylades can make real, since *kleos* emerges just as an aesthetic value which they can manipulate. In Apollo's epiphany it is stated that Helen's abduction was schemed by the gods in order to unburden the earth through the Trojan War from the great number of men. *Kleos* won in that war was considered an ideal only due to the limited human intelligibility of the world and the god's will.

The conclusions of the way the three great tragedians present *kleos* in Orestes' story can be applied to the majority of the tragic plays where the word or the notion is encountered. In this dissertation I have tackled one more case, Sophocles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Heracles* and their connection to epic *kleos*. The two great heroes are presented in the literary tradition in epic proportions; their former great *kleos*, however, is counterbalanced within the corresponding plays by a shameful plight. In his *Ajax* Sophocles presents the contradiction between the hero's great past glorious reputation and the present rumor, *phatis*, that has arisen within the Achaean community because of his recent shameful deed. Athena has tricked Ajax into killing sheep instead of his enemies after his wrath against the Achaeans who do not offer him the Achillean arms. The goddess' wrath arose long ago, when Ajax before setting off for the Trojan War assured his father that he alone could win great heroic *kleos* without any divine help. The hero remains intransigent until the end and is not moved

by his wife's or the chorus' entreaties not to commit suicide. He still behaves as if he alone can save himself from shame. His suicide, however, is not enough to preserve his former epic *kleos*. The posthumous respect against him should be ensured by a proper burial which is achieved only through the advice of his worst enemy, Odysseus. Odysseus alleges that justice and not personal enmity should prevail and gives Ajax a proper funeral. Odysseus, although slandered within the whole play by the chorus and Ajax himself as manipulator of language and deceiver, is the most honest and upright character. Odysseus' former *kleos* is counterbalanced by the present positive rumor that Teucer at the end of the play spreads about him. Ajax's former poetic *kleos* easily collapsed when applied in the pragmatic environment of the Achaean community.

In *Heracles* Euripides juxtaposes the hero's former heroic and extraordinary *kleos* which appears in the choral odes and the words of the other characters of the play to Heracles as an ordinary family man who is presented as more humane and modest. Euripides' characterization allows Heracles' choice at the end of the play to reject suicide and accept Theseus' offer to go and live with him in Athens. Athenian friendship, benevolence and acceptance of the fragility of human fate turn it into a city where the totality of Heracles' past is welcomed, both his glorious labors and the murder to his family. The hero's former great poetic *kleos*, as presented by the chorus' poetic persona, is assimilated to the city's reputation and reknown.

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