

# Significant Actions in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*

*Oliver Taplin*

WHAT HAPPENS in a Greek tragedy? The tale is widespread that nothing happens; that all the action takes place off stage, and that on stage people stand still and simply talk or sing. On the contrary, all the significant action takes place on stage: what goes on off stage only matters in so far as it is given a bearing on the play on stage. All the great brute deeds—voyages, battles, crunching of bones and sacking of cities—all these concern the play in as much as they are given attention on stage; while the small stage actions—arrival, departure, embracing, separating, handing over objects—slight deeds like these take on, in their context, greatly magnified significance, and become the embodiments of tragedy. Greek tragedy may be static and uneventful compared with some other kinds of drama, but there is still plenty of action if you look for the right kind of thing.

It is a commonplace these days that Greek tragedy was created to be performed; that the dramatist was his own producer, composer and choreographer, and the reader must therefore try to envisage the play in his mind's eye and to hear it with his inner ear. Yet while nearly all scholars pay lip service to these tenets, very few put them into practice. Translations, let alone commentaries, are very careless with even the minimal stage instructions. It is true that much has been written on the fascinating but ill-documented problems of staging. But my worry here is not so much with the question of how it was done as with what was being done; not with what the audience actually saw in the theatre so much as with what they were supposed to see in the play. And here we are not ensnared by Vitruvius and Pollux, by Aristophanes' tricky parodies and the interplay of illusion and realism; we are concerned with the internal self-sufficient evidence of the tragedies themselves. It is true that many other factors, including staging, have to be taken into account; but the foundation

of the answer to the question "what is happening?" lies in the text—the one part of a Greek tragedy which has survived. I shall try to illustrate these claims from Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. It is, interestingly, in their last plays that Aeschylus and Sophocles, and to some extent Euripides also, make most effective and meaningful use of stage action.

So what happens in *Philoctetes*?<sup>1</sup> In brute terms Philoctetes leaves Lemnos for Troy; that comes at the very end, the last line. Before that nothing much happens: Euripides' *Philoctetes* was comparatively action-packed, to judge from Dio Chrys. *Or.* 52. Sophocles has made a play out of the confrontation of two men—one hardened by suffering, the other young and impressionable; and out of the influence on them of two others—one vicious and mortal, the other heroic and immortal. It is a play of relationships and communication, not of great deeds. Yet *Philoctetes*, although so little happens in it in this superficial sense, is full of event—more so than most Greek tragedies. Philoctetes does not actually leave until the end, but constantly he and the others are about to leave. Everyone is on the verge of going; a decisive departure is always just round the corner. In no other play is there such sustained use of the device of 'delayed exit'.<sup>2</sup> Then there are several surprise turns which send the play off on a new tack, surprise decisions, surprise interventions. Then there is the relationship between Philoctetes and his landscape. A bond is forged between him and the cave and rocky cliffs with their wild life, so that he can address them, seek refuge with them, and finally break from them. And there is the bow.<sup>3</sup> All these things, which are in the words and are accessible to anyone who reads with an eye for them, are in performance given substance. We have to consider the action in performance to be able to appreciate the play as a play. The performance does not only punctuate and underline the meaning, it is complementary to it; it is, so to speak, the very ink in which the play is put down.

<sup>1</sup> So much has been written on *Philoctetes*, particularly in the last ten years, that it would be stifling to catalogue it all. So I single out three works which have particularly helped me with my concerns here (quoted later by name only): Tycho von WILAMOWITZ, *Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles (Philologische Untersuchungen 22, Berlin 1917) 269ff*; Wolf STEIDLE, *Studien zum antiken Drama (Studia et Testimonia Antiqua IV, München 1968) 169ff*; D. B. ROBINSON, "Topics in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*," *CQ* N.S. 19 (1969) 34ff. What I have to say shares many details with these works, and with others; but it would be pointless and distracting to try to disentangle every minute correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> See Steidle 186f. Compare Cassandra at Aesch. *Agam.* 1080, ?1294, 1305, 1314.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Dingel, *Das Requisit in der griechischen Tragödie (Diss. Tübingen 1967) 182ff.*

I shall pick out from *Philoctetes* four sequences of actions (two pairs) with which to illustrate the place and use of action in the play. First to present them in isolation:

## I. 893–96

*NE.* ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλ' ἴστω τε καὐτὸς ἀντέχου.

*ΦΙ.* θάρσει· τό τοι κύνηθεσ ὀρθώσει μ' ἔθος.

*NE.* παπαῖ· τί δῆτ' ἄ<ν><sup>4</sup> δρῶμ' ἐγὼ τούνηένδε γε;

*ΦΙ.* τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ; ποῖ ποτ' ἐξέβησ λόγῳ;

Neoptolemus helps Philoctetes to his feet (see 877–92) and supports him. Once more they are on the point of departure, when Neoptolemus' cry of pain—*παπαῖ*—puts a halt to everything. Paul Mazon's stage instruction is very likely, though not in the last resort demonstrable: “Ils font quelques pas. Mais Néoptolème brusquement s'arrête.”

## II 971–77

*ΦΙ.* οὐκ εἶ κακὸς κύ, πρὸς κακῶν δ' ἀνδρῶν μαθῶν

ἔοικασ ἦκειν αἰσχροῖ· νῦν δ' ἄλλοισι δοῦς

οἷς εἰκόσ,<sup>5</sup> ἔκπλει, τὰμ' ἐμοὶ μεθεῖς ὄπλα.

*NE.* τί δρῶμεν, ἄνδρες; *ΟΔ.* ὦ κάκιςτ' ἀνδρῶν, τί δρᾶς;

οὐκ εἶ μεθεῖς τὰ τόξα ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ πάλιν;

*ΦΙ.* οἴμοι, τίς ἀνήρ; ἄρ' Ὀδυσσέως κλύω;

*ΟΔ.* Ὀδυσσέως, κάφ' ἴσθ', ἐμοῦ γ', ὄν εἰσορᾶς.

Neoptolemus' dilemma reaches a crisis, as he asks once more “what am I to do?” (cf. 757, 895, 908, 969). Then Odysseus intervenes from his ambush. The implication of what he says in 975 is clear: Neoptolemus had made a move to give back the bow. We cannot say how near the bow came to changing hands; but a move was made (see further n.23 *infra*). Odysseus has been listening from his hiding-place: he nastily echoes Neoptolemus' words in 974, and Philoctetes' in 975. Yet his ambush is a complete surprise. After the prologue we, the audience, may expect to see Odysseus again (though not necessarily);

<sup>4</sup> G. Schaefer's improvement is not absolutely necessary, but it is very slight. Mss. LPGRQ<sup>PO</sup> transmit *τουνθενδελεγε* (om. *λεγε* Q<sup>BO</sup>): the scribe of A made the obvious correction (as so often).

<sup>5</sup> It is hard to make good sense of this phrase without emendation. Dindorf's emendation *οἷ' εἰκόσ* is worth consideration; alternatively . . . *ἔοικασ ἦκειν νῦν δὲ ταῖσρ' ἄλλοισι δοῦς*, | *οἷς εἰκόσ* . . . Also Fraenkel conjectured *εἶκειν* for *ἦκειν*. *τὰμ' ἐμοὶ* is Platt's improvement of the Mss. *τὰμά μοι*.

but we have no reason at all to expect him at this moment.<sup>6</sup> There are other places in Greek tragedy where people step out of hiding, but they are quite different from this in that we have previously seen them go into hiding in order to overhear the following scene.<sup>7</sup> The only intervention which is remotely similar, besides III, which is discussed next, is that of the old servant at Eur. *IA* 855. He has been listening from inside the door, and emerges some lines later at 864. The surprise of Odysseus' ambush is increased by his entry half way through the line. While Sophocles and Euripides use *antilabe* freely in their last plays, an entry is timed in this way only here and at Eur. *IA* 414, where, as Page remarks, it is merely "novel and exciting."<sup>8</sup>

## III 1291–96

*NE.* τοῦργον παρέσται φανερόν· ἀλλὰ δεξιὰν  
πρότεινε χεῖρα, καὶ κράτει τῶν σῶν ὄπλων.

*ΟΔ.* ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ γ', ὡς θεοὶ ξυνίστορες,<sup>9</sup>  
ὑπέρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.

*ΦΙ.* τέκνον, τίνος φώνημα; μῶν Ὀδυσεύως  
ἐπηρθόμην; *ΟΔ.* κάφ' ἴσθι· καὶ πέλας γ' ὄρας.

Neoptolemus is in the act of handing over the bow, when Odysseus intervenes. It is clear that III echoes and mirrors II. This is obvious from the situation alone: the handing over of the bow, the abrupt ambush of Odysseus. It is further reinforced by the words; particularly the sequence "Do I hear Odysseus?" "You certainly do, and you see him" (976f, cf. 980 against 1295f). The general correspondence, and especially the way that Philoctetes hears Odysseus before he sees him, strongly suggests that the two ambushes were staged in an almost identical way. Philoctetes and Neoptolemus would form a group within arm's length of each other. It is unlikely that Odysseus approached them up the εἴσοδος (or πάροδος) in the usual way, because

<sup>6</sup> T. B. L. Webster (*An Introduction to Sophocles*<sup>2</sup> [Oxford 1969] 107) and D. L. Page (*Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* [Oxford 1934] 152) regard the entry as no surprise, because they have failed to consider the play in performance.

<sup>7</sup> The device is illustrated from tragedy and comedy by Ed. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma 1962) 22–26.

<sup>8</sup> Page, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 152. The device is found however in Old Comedy at Ar. *Nub.* 1145, *Lys.* 430 (rather like this place in that Lysistrata, like Odysseus, takes up the wording of the first part of the line). It is common in New Comedy, e.g. Men. *Epir.* 206, 266, *Dysc.* 621, *Misoumenos* 443(?), *Dis Exapaton* 102.

<sup>9</sup> ὡς is probably corrupt. ὦν suggested by Buttman, and favoured by Fraenkel, is perhaps the best emendation.

that would take too long for his ambush to be effective. Painted scenery was probably fitted into the slots along the front of the *σκηνή*, and it may well be that Odysseus could, without having been seen getting into position, come out from behind the scenery, and come up behind Philoctetes.<sup>10</sup> This also implies that Odysseus made his ambush at 1293 from a hiding-place out of sight. When he went off at 1258, with an idle threat to go and tell the whole army, he may have only gone behind the scenery, and not right down the *εἴσοδος*. He could then re-emerge in exactly the same way as before.<sup>11</sup>

For my purposes the details of the staging do not matter so much, as long as it is recognised that the two scenes were staged in a similar way. The conscious and deliberate correspondence is, I suggest, clear; yet hardly anyone has noticed it, and no one, with the exception of Steidle (p.185), has tried to derive any significance from it.

## IV 1402–10

*NE.* εἰ δοκεῖ, στείχωμεν. *ΦΙ.* ὦ γενναῖον εἰρηκῶς ἔπος.

*NE.* ἀντέρειδε νῦν βάσιν σήν. *ΦΙ.* εἰς ὄσον γ' ἐγὼ χθένω.

...

(1408) ... *NE.* στείχε προκύσας χθόνα.

*HP.* μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τῶν ἡμετέρων

ἀίης μύθων . . .

The change of pace to trochaic tetrameters marks the beginning of the physical movement.<sup>12</sup> *ἀντέρειδε* strongly suggests that Philoctetes leans on Neoptolemus for support, as is argued by Robinson (p.42), following L. Campbell. So they are moving off together; then Neoptolemus hesitates and is reassured (1403–07); then they are about to start again—or perhaps they are making their slow way off throughout the lines. But Heracles stops them: he has come to tell Philoctetes

<sup>10</sup> T. B. L. Webster (*Sophocles, Philoctetes* [Cambridge 1970]) on line 974 suggests that the other characters are so involved that they would not notice Odysseus if he approached up the *εἴσοδος*. But the surprise of his entry on an *antilabe* would be spoiled for the audience, if they saw him several lines earlier. If Odysseus approached from behind, then Philoctetes' immobility could explain why he hears Odysseus before he sees him. Odysseus then comes round in front of him.

<sup>11</sup> Webster, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) on 1257, 1293, is not the only scholar who supposes that Odysseus did not go out of sight at 1258. But there is nothing in the words which indicates that he did not. And the repetition of the earlier situation suggests that he did.

<sup>12</sup> See V. di Benedetto (Florence 1965) on Eur. *Or.* 1506ff, 1525ff; T. Drew-Bear, "The Trochaic Tetrameter in Greek Tragedy," *AJP* 89 (1968) 385ff, esp. 395. Cf. also marginal scholia on Eur. *IA* 317, 855.

of Zeus' will, and *κατερητύκων θ' ὁδὸν ἦν κτέλλη* (1416). The god who appears at the end of the play—*θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς* as he was known in the fourth century—usually prevents a course of action by his intervention, sometimes an exit.<sup>13</sup>

Passage IV does not reflect I so unmistakably as III does II. But it is not common in Greek tragedy for one man to support another physically, and visually the re-enactment would be far more striking. There is perhaps a slight verbal echo of *ἀντέχου* (893) in *ἀντέρειδε* (1402). But even if the audience would not have noticed any correspondence between these two scenes, this would not seriously affect what I have to say about their scenic significance.

It can hardly be complained that my detection of these 'mirror' scenes is too subtle or too ingenious. Much of the literary criticism of drama is based on the detection of verbal iteration, usually of single words, many of which would be too slight and too fast moving for any audience to register consciously; and which need a lifeless *index verborum* to be realised.

Before attempting to interpret the function of these four sequences of action within the play, let me consider three other places in Sophocles by way of an approach. First *Trach.* 332–40. At line 335 the old man intervenes to stop Deianeira from going indoors. This is a dramatic moment, a turning point in the play. The old man has not spoken nor had any attention paid to him since line 199. It could be argued that all this time we are meant to have noticed his disquieting presence, ominous in the background. But this is not the way Greek tragedy works; if something is significant, attention is drawn to it. At 199 his part is played apparently, and no more notice is taken of him; for the audience he might as well have gone. At 329ff Deianeira tells Lichas and his silent prisoners to go inside. Whether she meant to lead them or follow them is not clear, but it is clear from the words (335, 339, 340) that she began to move towards the door. At this point the old man steps out of nowhere to stop her. Deianeira stops and turns (339). The significance of this action is made explicit by the words of the old man in 335ff: *αὐτοῦ γε πρῶτον βαιὸν ἀμμείνας', ὅπως | μάθης ἄνευ τῶνδ' οὔστινάς τ' ἄγεις ἔσω | ὦν τ' οὐδὲν εἰρήκουσας ἐκμάθης ἂ δει.* Deianeira must turn her back on ignorance and deceit, and face knowledge. The action is an embodiment of the

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Eur. *Ion* 1553, *IT* 1435. I suspect that this recurrent situation underlies the paratragedy at Ar. *Plut.* 415ff.

meaning. One might compare again the intervention of the old man at Eur. *IA* 855. At 851–54 Clytemnestra and Achilles are about to go their separate ways in puzzlement and ignorance. The old man stops them (*μείνον* 855); and they turn back (*ἔσταμεν* 861). They likewise must face the disagreeable truth.<sup>14</sup> Unusual and striking visual moments like these, which stand out in performance, are not scattered at random. They embody key moments in the play as a whole.

Secondly, consider *OC* 831–90 and 1456–1504. In the first of these two complex sequences Creon has Antigone abducted, and is about to do the same to Oedipus himself, when Theseus comes to the rescue. It takes the form of a pair of dochmiac strophic stanzas (833–43= 876–86) divided by a spoken dialogue (844–75). As soon as Oedipus realises what is happening, he cries (831) *ὦ γῆς ἀνακτες*. This is the traditional *βοή* of the wronged man to the citizens, who should witness the injustice and bring aid (*βοηθεῖν*, *βοηδρομεῖν*).<sup>15</sup> Oedipus continues it with the first words of the strophe (833), and this is taken up by the chorus in the closing phrases (841–43). But Antigone is not saved. In the responding lines of the antistrophe (884–86) the *βοή* is raised again on behalf of Oedipus: *ὠ πάς λεώς, ὠ γὰς πρόμοι, | μόλετε σὺν τάχει, μόλετε. . . .* Theseus then enters: *τίς ποθ' ἡ βοή;* (887). The later scene takes the form of what has come to be known as an epirrhematic structure: that is to say that brief strophic choral stanzas are interspersed with short symmetrical snatches of actors' speech (in this case two lines by Oedipus, one by Antigone, and two again by Oedipus). During the first strophe thunder is heard; immediately Oedipus asks that Theseus be sent for (1457ff). With more thunder Oedipus' requests become more and more urgent (1472ff, 1486ff), and in the second antistrophe the call is taken up by the chorus. Their language is reminiscent of that of a *βοή*: *ὠ ἰώ, παῖ, βᾶθι βᾶθι . . . ἰκοῦ . . . αἴεε' ὄναξ* (1491–99). Then Theseus enters, and his first five lines supply the final part of the epirrhematic structure. The agitation of Oedipus, his calls, those of the chorus in support, and the abrupt intervention of Theseus immediately at the end of the dochmiac lyric would, I suggest, establish visual and aural correspondences with the earlier

<sup>14</sup> This effective and unusual scenic technique became well used in Menander. Compare, for example, *Epitr.* 538, *Dysc.* 269, *Sic.* 169, *Sam.* 295.

<sup>15</sup> The basic discussion of this social and legal procedure is still that of W. Schulze, "Beiträge zur Wort- und Sittengeschichte II," *SBBerl.* 1918, 481ff—*Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen 1934) 160ff, esp. 179ff.

scene, which would be clear in performance. In any case Theseus himself draws attention to them. His first words are (1500) *τίς αὖ παρ' ὑμῶν κοινὸς ἠχέϊται κτύπος . . .*; and again in 1507 *τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ παῖ Λαίου, νέορτον αὖ;* Why then does Sophocles so construct the play as to produce this correspondence? Clearly the reminiscence is there in order to bring out the differences. The pair of sequences embodies the vital change that has come about. In the first scene Oedipus is in the depths of blind helplessness; he cannot save his daughter, he cannot save even himself. He is entirely dependent on his benefactor Theseus. Theseus as soon as he arrives takes complete control of the situation. In the second scene the initiative has passed to Oedipus; he is the benefactor now. This time Oedipus takes control; and Theseus is now the passive recipient of instructions. The scene rapidly moves to the crowning action at 1555, when the blind Oedipus leads those who have sight from the stage.

I should maintain that mirror scenes and echo scenes are a stock-in-trade of the Greek tragedian, and that his audience was keenly alive to the technique. Nearly every surviving play has at least one example; and in nearly every case, as in *Oedipus Coloneus*, the similarity is there to point out the difference. But occasionally the reflection or the echo is there rather to bring out the similarity of the two scenes. It is widely recognised, for example, that there is a visual correspondence between the murders in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroe*.<sup>16</sup> A second time the murderer stands by the corpses, a man and a woman. In *Agamemnon* the audience could see the cloth in which Agamemnon was caught (Ag. 1492= 1516, 1580): in *Choephoroe* Orestes holds it up to view: *ἴδεσθε δ' αὖτε . . .* (980). The mirror reflection embodies the repetitiveness of the blood vendetta.

And so to return to *Philoctetes*. In an attempt to fit the four sequences of action which I have picked out into their dramatic context, I shall give a brief and selective view of the play. This does not pretend to amount to a complete interpretation; much that is of great importance, but which does not directly touch on my immediate concerns, is neglected. I shall concentrate on the relationship and communication between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus, as brought out by stage actions and silences. For it seems to me that the significance of

<sup>16</sup> There are some very fine observations on Aeschylus' use of performance in the *Oresteia* by K. Reinhardt, *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe (Überlieferung u. Auftrag 6, Bern 1949)*.



these four actions lies mainly in their place in the structure of this relationship.<sup>17</sup>

First Neoptolemus is brought under the influence of Odysseus, and is persuaded that ends must temporarily justify means, and that the means must be trickery and lies. However when he is first faced with Philoctetes in all his pitifulness, his loneliness and his guilelessness, he can hardly bring himself to speak (see 230, 233, 241). But he warms to his undertaking, and lies most effectively. His story-telling is so disingenuous that it includes the moral truth of his own situation (387f). He does so well that he is able to pretend that he is going without Philoctetes (453ff), and then to stay silent, pretending to be in a quandary during the pauses in Philoctetes' plea to be taken as well (before 480, 484, during 486). Their departure is imminent, when the false merchant arrives.

As soon as Philoctetes and Neoptolemus re-emerge from the cave,<sup>18</sup> they are about to go; but they are stopped by the attack of Philoctetes' wound (730ff). This gives Neoptolemus the bow; but Philoctetes' pain is more of a hindrance than a help to the deceit. For faced with the sheer intensity of Philoctetes' physical suffering, Neoptolemus begins to crack. His pity is first unequivocal in the silence at 804–05, which finds words in 806 *ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τὰπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά*. But *τί δῆτα δράσω*; in 757 already hints at Neoptolemus' dilemma.<sup>19</sup> Soon after line 806 Neoptolemus undertakes to stay with Philoctetes, and they clasp hands in confirmation (813 until 818). This is the first time they have touched.<sup>20</sup> Philoctetes falls unconscious; the chorus urge action, but Neoptolemus stays. As a reward he is subjected to the plain but distressingly moving thanks of Philoctetes (867–76). Philoctetes is again keen to go, and insists that Neoptolemus himself should help him on his way. At last Odysseus' plan is on the verge of

<sup>17</sup> Any radically different interpretation should, I suggest, be able to account satisfactorily for the scenic events under consideration here. If the provocative thesis of Calder ("Sophoclean Apologia: *Philoctetes*," forthcoming in *GRBS* 12 [Summer, 1971]) were substantially right, then my view must be substantially wrong. I regard my observations as only a few of many that militate against Calder's "cynical" interpretation.

<sup>18</sup> They re-enter after, not before, the second antistrophe—see T. von Wilamowitz 286f; W. Kranz, *Stasimon* (Berlin 1933) 221.

<sup>19</sup> Neoptolemus' change is traced by Steidle 179–81. Perhaps Sophocles meant the audience's realisation of it to be gradual.

<sup>20</sup> They did not touch, so far as one can tell, at 485, 733, 761ff, 776. It is unclear what is meant to be happening during 814–17; perhaps the staging might have made things clearer, see Robinson 41. It seems to be Neoptolemus' touch that brings on Philoctetes' frenzy.

success. And so we reach the first of the four chosen actions. Neoptolemus cannot go through with it. At 730ff they were stopped by Philoctetes' physical pain; now Neoptolemus' deceit hurts him too much to go on (τοῦτ' ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι 906, 913). And so he tells the truth and hides nothing (915ff). The action at 895 shows Neoptolemus turn his back on Odyssean deceitfulness, however successful it may be; instead he must confront Philoctetes face to face with the truth. The performance shows how Philoctetes puts all his trust in Neoptolemus, as he puts all his weight on him; and how he too must turn, like Deianeira, and face the truth, with the support removed. The movements capture and contain the situation. The turning round in the action is a turning point in the play.

The truth is not all that is required of Neoptolemus. Yet he cannot bring himself to give up the bow as well as the lies: ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶόν τε· τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλύειν | τό τ' ἔνδικόν με καὶ τὸ κυμφέρων ποεῖ (925–926). This brings down on his head one of the greatest Sophoclean speeches (927ff). Neoptolemus' silences (before 931, 933, after 933) now betoken a true dilemma, unlike his histrionic silence earlier. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ' ἔτι | ἀλλ' ὡς μεθήρων μήποθ', ὦδ' ὄρα πάλιν (934–35). Then Philoctetes turns to his landscape as if to raise a βοή:<sup>21</sup> in his isolation he has no one else to turn to, as he says in 938–39. Again he turns to Neoptolemus in line 950; but again he is met with silence—τί φῆς; *σιωπᾶς*;<sup>22</sup> οὐδέν εἰμ' ὁ δύςμορος (951). Now he turns towards his cave, which he will re-enter to die of starvation (952–60). Philoctetes has struck home, and Neoptolemus admits to an οἶκτος δεινός (965f). Philoctetes presses his claim (966f); and now Neoptolemus really wishes he had never left Skyros (969f), something he pretended at the depth of his deceit (459f). So we come to the second selected action.

Philoctetes hits the mark when he says that Neoptolemus is not bad, but under bad influence. Neoptolemus is on the verge of returning the bow.<sup>23</sup> The decision is hardly made, and not yet put into effect, when Odysseus intervenes. He takes immediate control; he is brutal and effective. When at 981 Philoctetes appeals to Neoptolemus once

<sup>21</sup> See Schulze, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.15) 180.

<sup>22</sup> *σιωπᾶς* should probably be a question, and not a statement as in all the texts; cf. Soph. *Phil.* 805, *OC* 1271, Eur. *Hipp.* 911, *Ion* 582, *Hyps.* fr.60 line 7 (p.40 Bond). I discuss this and similar turns of phrase in an article forthcoming in *HSCP* 76 (1972).

<sup>23</sup> Compare Steidle 183. In 183 n.57 Steidle supposes that at line 974 Neoptolemus made no move with the bow, because of his indecision. But πάλιν in 975 shows that he had moved. The point is that his indecision is momentarily broken through.

more, as he had in his great *rhesis*, Odysseus replies for him: *τοῦτο μὲν, | οὐδ' ἦν θέλῃ, δράσει ποτέ*. Evidently he is right, for Neoptolemus does nothing and says nothing. At line 974 Neoptolemus was on the point of abandoning the whole project—the Achaean army, the sack of Troy, and everything it might have meant for him—and all for the sake of one suffering man. But he was not sure enough; the ‘realistic’ attitude he expressed in 925f was not altogether quashed; nor were the arguments of Odysseus in justification of ends over means. All this is put into visible, sensible terms by the performance at the second when Odysseus intervenes. When he is faced with Odysseus, so decisive and plausible, he tamely gives way—morally and literally. Neoptolemus remains silent and dominated for the rest of the scene. Philoctetes makes a final appeal to him (1066f); but Odysseus answers for him again: *χώρει σύ· μὴ πρόσλευσσε, γειναῖός περ ὦν, | ἡμῶν ὅπως μὴ τῆν τύχην διαφθερεῖς*.

The desertion and helplessness of Philoctetes must be taken seriously.<sup>24</sup> We, the audience, must believe that he is faced with the choice of going to Troy, or of starving to death; for we know of no alternative. In the strophic part of the lyric dialogue (1081–1168) Philoctetes turns again, as at 952ff, to his landscape and its wild inhabitants, and to the irony that those he has fed on will soon feed on him. At the start of the astrophic part (1169ff) he turns to the chorus in reproof and tells them to go (1077). But when they take him at his word, he desperately begs them to return (1178–95). But they have nothing to offer him, except to repeat the advice that he should come with them to Troy (1196). At this Philoctetes turns to despair and suicide. Finally at line 1217 he goes into his cave, presumably to waste and shrivel there and to be gnawed clean to the bone, as he foresaw (952ff, 1081ff, 1101ff, 1146ff). His last words are *ἐτ' οὐδέν εἶμι* 1217 (*cf.* 951).

At this point the play comes to a full stop.<sup>25</sup> Critics sometimes speak of a “false ending” later in the play at 1408; but here Sophocles explores even more fully the physical and emotional possibilities of an ending which he then rejects. It is partly, I suggest, in order to make this “false end” credible that Sophocles has so far left it so

<sup>24</sup> As Robinson (44f) has stressed; also T. von Wilamowitz 304–07. It is hard to believe that the audience were meant to take Odysseus’ course of action as a bluff, seeing that they are given no explicit indication that it should be taken in that way. The question does not arise for Neoptolemus: he is completely under Odysseus’ control, and follows him.

<sup>25</sup> I discuss the technique of this transition in an appendix at the end. I also discuss there lines 1218–21, which, in my judgement, are not the work of Sophocles.

uncertain whether Philoctetes is required at Troy as well as the bow. The play reaches at 1217 a real, though morbid, end. Odysseus is victorious; he has power over the bow, and will use it at Troy. Neoptolemus' brief glimpse of the demands of personal sympathy and honesty are overridden by the pragmatic requirements of his career. Philoctetes, the victim of the cynical ambition of others and of his own stubbornness, is left to blend for ever with his rocks. A modern tragedian might well prefer this ending; it has much to do with the way of the world today.

But having brought the play to a momentary stop Sophocles sets it in motion again. And it is not the myth nor the oracle that provides the momentum: it is the personal moral sense of Neoptolemus. Neoptolemus has made the vital moral decision off stage. It is this unexpected and unusual touch that makes it possible for the play to stop and start again. We do not see or hear the decision; all that matters is the fact of the decision. When Neoptolemus returns at 1222 he is already determined to return the bow. All the plausible arguments and threats of Odysseus have no power over him any longer. The threat of force is quickly abandoned in the face of resistance (1253–57). The dialogue 1222ff is, in effect, a reversal and refutation of the prologue. Then Neoptolemus calls Philoctetes outside again (1261ff), in order to reverse and undo what was said and done in their first confrontation. He briefly tries words on him, but soon discovers they are useless and turns to deeds. The bow itself holds any trust there may be between them. It first changed hands as an object of trust (654ff, 762ff); but Neoptolemus broke his trust, although he almost restored it at line 974. So we come to the third chosen action.

This time the bow does change hands. Neoptolemus' compassion for Philoctetes and his moral rejection of lies are now transmuted into action, and Zeus is witness (1289). Against this, Odysseus, for all his oaths and protestations, is powerless. He intervenes exactly as before: but, as with Theseus and Oedipus in *Oedipus Coloneus*, the balance of power has been reversed. Odysseus again says that he acts *ἐάν τ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς ἐάν τε μὴ θέλῃ* (1298 against 981f): but this time he is wrong, as before he was right. It is all that Neoptolemus can do to save him from Philoctetes' arrow. To show how things have changed, Sophocles has constructed a scene sufficiently similar to the earlier one to draw attention to the vital differences.

Those who think that there is something to be said for Odysseus in

this play should pay closer attention to his last appearance, as it is presented in action. He enters at 1293; Philoctetes draws his bow during 1299; Odysseus is out of range, and hence surely out of sight, by the time Philoctetes says *φειῦ* in 1302.<sup>26</sup> So Odysseus is on stage less than ten lines, and rushes off in silence. Characters in Greek tragedy do not run off stage under threat of force; though in Old Comedy it is common. Odysseus' only companion in this indignity is the Phrygian slave at *Eur. Or.* 1526, a figure of ridicule. Consider also the brevity of Odysseus' last appearance. The only shorter appearance in surviving tragedy is Agamemnon's five lines at the end of *IA* (1621–26, surely not Euripides). The only remotely similar context is Odysseus' capture and escape at *Rhes.* 674–90. But the differences are more to the point than the similarities.<sup>27</sup> The place where short appearances are an everyday occurrence is, of course, Old (and New) Comedy: compare for example the whole series of small part characters who are ignominiously driven off by Peisthetairos during Aristophanes' *Aves* 859–1057. Odysseus' brief appearance and hurried departure are not without a message: they show in action the refutation and humiliation of him and all he stands for. This action is the embodied demonstration of the moral that Philoctetes draws (1305–07): *τοὺς πρώτους στρατοῦ, | τοὺς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ψευδοκήρυκας, κακοὺς | ὄντας πρὸς αἰχμὴν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς*. This prudent cowardice has already been seen, though not by Philoctetes, at 1254ff. The other moral that Philoctetes concludes (1310–13) is that Neoptolemus has shown his true *φύσις* as a son of Achilles; and Odysseus his as a son of Sisyphus. This too we have witnessed.

Now that Odysseus and his influence are finally cast off, Neoptolemus tries to persuade Philoctetes to come to Troy of his own free will. Now for the first time we hear the oracle of Helenus openly and fully, and under oath of truth (1324f). I have hardly mentioned the oracle yet, although it has been the central concern of nearly every recent treatment of the play. This is because up to this point it has

<sup>26</sup> So the stage instruction should go by 1302, as, e.g., in the translation by U. von Wilamowitz (Berlin 1923): not, as Jebb, by 1304; still less, as Mazon, by 1307. Incidentally, Philoctetes drew his bow on Odysseus in Euripides' play (*Dio Chrys. Or.* 59.7), and perhaps in an epic version (see Quint.Smyrn. 9.398ff), but in very different circumstances.

<sup>27</sup> There is a masterly sequence of short appearances in Aesch. *Cho.* 838ff: Aegisthus (17 lines), Servant (?14), Clytemnestra (49), and Orestes (42). The brief appearances of Orestes at Soph. *El.* 1422–36 (plus lacuna, see p.41 *infra*), 1466–1507, and at *Eur. Or.* 1506–36, and of Hermione at *Or.* 1321–45 are, in my view, under the influence of the Aeschylean scenes.

been the instrument of various complex dramatic purposes; and the authoritative version which is now revealed cannot be presupposed before it has been revealed—that is in the nature of the play, as a work performed in sequence.<sup>28</sup> The oracle says that Philoctetes must come *ἐκὼν αὐτὸς* (1332); a version of this was also given by the false merchant (*πείσαντες λόγῳ* 612). Yet so far only the chorus have tried honest persuasion, in the lyric dialogue 1081ff; and they failed. But now Neoptolemus also follows this clause, and tries to persuade Philoctetes. He uses every argument at his command, particularly the promised cure. But Philoctetes rejects every point. When all is said, he would rather live with his wound than see Troy (1392). Neoptolemus is reduced to confusion: *τί δῆτ' ἂν ἡμεῖς δρῶμεν, εἰ cé γ' ἐν λόγοις | πείσειν δυνησόμεθα μηδὲν ὦν λέγω;* (1393f). Now Philoctetes presses his counter-claim home *ἂ δ' ἤνεκάς μοι δεξιᾶς ἐμῆς θιγῶν, | πέμπειν πρὸς οἴκουσ, ταῦτά μοι πράξον, τέκνον* (1398f). And so we come to the fourth selected action. Neoptolemus agrees to go home. Since he has come to value the demands of personal sympathy and trust over political expedience and military success, he is bound to make this decision. It is a genuine decision, and, in the context, it demands our approval.

The transition from the projected journey to Troy to one back to Greece may seem rather abrupt, particularly to a reader. What, for instance, is this promise which Neoptolemus cannot deny? Philoctetes has spoken of it before at 941 and 1367f; but here he adds a clear reference to the sequence of action at 813–18. Turning the pages back (as an audience cannot) we find that all that Neoptolemus promised there was to *stay* with Philoctetes (810, 812, 813); neither there nor anywhere else, neither deceitfully nor sincerely, did he promise or swear to take Philoctetes home. Yet Sophocles makes us feel that morally Neoptolemus is committed to this undertaking after everything that has gone before. It is a sign of Sophocles' masterful technique that modern critics, always on the lookout for inconsistency, have scarcely noticed this shift from obligation to promise. In performance the transition is even easier. First we are reminded of the crucial physical contact earlier, and then we see it once again. Last time we saw Neoptolemus support Philoctetes on the first few steps to his home, Neoptolemus was still deceiving; and it was this that stopped their journey. This time there is no personal hindrance be-

<sup>28</sup> Good on this is T. von Wilamowitz 304ff; also see O. Zwierlein's learned and perceptive critique of Steidle (GGA 222 [1970] 196ff) 206–12.

tween the two men; real trust has been established, and Neoptolemus could be asked for no more demanding way to demonstrate it. The power that stops them this time is from outside. So the situations are similar in that there is something which must turn them back from their movement; the change lies in the hindrance. Heracles is the visible and audible proof that Philoctetes has not gone through all his suffering only to do a favour to the leaders of the Achaeans. Philoctetes can see for himself that Heracles has come through his *πόννοι* to *ἀθάνατον ἀρετήν*. And he is assured that he will come through his own to *εὐκλεᾶ βίον* (1418–22). Heracles has authority and trust with Philoctetes that no living man can have, not even Neoptolemus. There is no question of argument or refusal. And now, after so many false starts, Philoctetes takes his leave of the place (1452–68); and as he slowly moves off, we see and hear how much this departure means.

Sophocles is handling intangibles: intangibles like piety, trust, endurance, isolation, right-thinking, respect. Yet in all seven plays, and especially in the last two, he succeeds in putting his concepts into substantial terms. They are visible and audible, as well as comprehensible. The reading critic tends to be exclusively concerned with this last intellectual aspect. But the play as a whole incorporates all three—sight, sound and thought. The critic should try to ask what happens in a Greek tragedy, if he wants to see what it communicates.

## APPENDIX

### *The Transition at 1217-22*

I have considered earlier the way that the play comes to a kind of full stop at this juncture, thus exploring a pessimistic ending which is then rejected. The handling of this transition, which has received little or no attention from scholars, is worth further attention as an outstanding piece of late fifth century dramatic technique.

Philoctetes must exit with the words *ἔτ' οὐδέν εἶμι* in line 1217. This tragic phrase is found in contexts of death or fainting.<sup>29</sup> It is final, and shows that Philoctetes goes quite independently of the approach of

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Eur. *Alc.* 390, *Andr.* 1077; paratragic at Ar. *Ach.* 1185, *Vesp.* 997. See further A. C. Moorhouse, *CQ* n.s. 15 (1965) 31ff.

Odysseus and Neoptolemus.<sup>30</sup> This would be sufficient proof by itself; but it is confirmed by Philoctetes' re-entry at 1263–66, where he expects to find only the chorus, and is surprised and distressed to see Neoptolemus. So the exit of Philoctetes is completely independent of the return of Odysseus and Neoptolemus: likewise their return is separate from his departure. This is made particularly clear by the technique of their re-entry: not only do they re-enter to a *stichomythia*, a device quite rare in tragedy,<sup>31</sup> but the *stichomythia* is so phrased as to suggest that the conversation began off stage. Odysseus' opening words imply that he has already been asking Neoptolemus questions. Two other places in tragedy are comparable: at Eur. *Hipp.* 601ff we know that the *stichomythia* follows on a conversation indoors, though it is context and not syntax which tells us; and at *IA* 303ff Menelaus and the old man enter already quarrelling over possession of the letter. The device is also rare in Old Comedy—*Aves* 801, *Ranae* 830;<sup>32</sup> in New Comedy however it is common enough that *sermo sic prodit, ut post scaenam incohatus esse noscatur*.<sup>33</sup> Even if *Phil.* 1222ff is not quite a true example of the device, it is still clear that the opening words of the dialogue direct attention onto what has happened to Odysseus and Neoptolemus off stage; and hence away from Philoctetes.

Also consider the transition from the point of view of structural technique. In terms of the traditional analysis, based on [Aristotle] *Poetics* ch.12 (1452b14–27),<sup>34</sup> the third episode runs from 865 to 1080, the fourth and last (exodos) from 1218 to the end. Lines 1081 to 1217 are then a *kommos* or lyric dialogue, standing between episodes in place of a *stasimon*—a phenomenon found in late Sophocles and Euripides. On any analysis a new episode or act begins at 1218; but if we look at the construction of the play, rather than at the terminology, we see that the break at 1080 is not very heavy compared with

<sup>30</sup> L. Campbell says (on 1221): "On being told of their approach, Philoctetes withdraws into the cave." But this must be wrong.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. *Phil.* 730, Eur. *IT* 67 (and *Rhes.* 565, based on *IT*), *Alexandros* fr.23 Snell. Cf. without *stichomythia*, Aesch. *Eum.* 64 (?).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. without *stichomythia*, *Nub.* 1214; and, in monologue, *Lys.* 1 (see Fraenkel, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.8] 103f).

<sup>33</sup> Donat. on Ter. *Eum.* 391. Some examples from Menander are *Dysc.* 50, 611, *Sic.* 150, *Georg.* 22, *Aspis* 250, fr.161 K.

<sup>34</sup> I hope to demonstrate at length elsewhere how this chapter, which we should be reluctant to attribute to Aristotle, is altogether inadequate for a meaningful structural analysis of fifth century tragedy; and to offer an alternative.



that at 1217–22, and that 1080ff functions not as a stasimon, but, in effect, as a separate scene or as a kind of coda to the preceding scene.<sup>35</sup> This becomes clear if another unusual technique here is examined. Philoctetes goes off at the end of the lyric dialogue, which is supposed to be in place of a stasimon. Characters normally go off before such a lyric, and enter at the end of it; how often does one exit at the *end*? So far as I can see, only one place is comparable.<sup>36</sup> In Sophocles' *Electra* before the arrival of Aegisthus (1442), there is a strophic lyric structure including many iambic lines, which is unfortunately lacunose. It is however clear that Orestes and Pylades re-emerge from the palace at 1424, and, because Aegisthus is seen approaching, go back in at 1436, just before the *end* of the antistrophe. A result of this curious technique is that we have the excitement of Orestes' going back into the palace only seconds before the victim arrives.<sup>37</sup> This is also managed in *Philoctetes*: Philoctetes goes off just before the other two return. But in *Electra* Orestes goes because Aegisthus is approaching, and Electra stays on as a link: in *Philoctetes* the break is complete. It is, in fact, rare for a Greek tragedian to have one character enter shortly after another one has gone; apparently it is normal for the sequence of exit and entry to be separated by a stasimon or act-dividing song. Most examples occur therefore in prologues, before the chorus has entered, or when the chorus has gone off in the middle of a play. In all other instances some positive connection, more or less close, is made between the preceding exit and the following entry. The exception is *Phil.* 1217–22.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> A scholion on 1218 says ἐντεῦθεν διπλοῦν ἐστὶ τὸ ἐπεισόδιον. This is always taken to refer to the simultaneous entry of Odysseus and Neoptolemus (thus also K. Aichele, *Die Epeisodien der griechischen Tragödie* [Diss. Tübingen 1966] 9f). But simultaneous entries are so common as hardly to call for comment. If ἐπεισόδιον was meant in the structural sense, this might be the relic of an observation of the kind I am making.

<sup>36</sup> Helen leaves the stage after her lyric at Eur. *Hel.* 385; but there the chorus goes also. Euripides' scenic intentions around *IA* 1509 are irrevocably obscured by later alterations. Page, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 192, is confused on this point: he seems to suppose that performance is somehow wilfully independent of authorship.

<sup>37</sup> The same effect is achieved at Eur. *El.* 986ff. It seems clear, though I have not seen it pointed out, that one *Electra* influenced the other in the use of this device in this context. In Sophocles the structural technique is much bolder, which may suggest it is later.

<sup>38</sup> Editors since H. Schaal (*De Euripidis Antiope* [Diss. Berlin 1914]) have introduced another instance in the papyrus fragment of Eur. *Antiope*, most accessible in D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri* I (Cambridge [Mass.] 1941) no.10, lines 16–19 (pp. 62, 64). But the interpretation of the action is, in my view, vulnerable. For the connection between closely consecutive exit and entry, consider the way a character may go off because someone he

So Sophocles only achieves the abrupt hiatus and transition by means of some bold, unusual and distinctly late twists of structural technique. But in our texts of *Philoctetes* there are four lines from the chorus (1218–21) which do serve to make some sort of connection across the gap. They read:

ἐγὼ μὲν ἤδη καὶ πάλαι νεὼς ὁμοῦ  
 στείχων ἄν ἦ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς, εἰ μὴ πέλας  
 Ὀδυσσεΐα στείχοντα τόν τ' Ἀχιλλέως  
 γόνον πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρ' ἴοντ' ἐλεύσσομεν.

1218. ὁμοῦ LA: ἔγγυς Lsl GRQ

1219. ἦ Elmsley: ἦν codd.

Clearly *πάλαι* and *σοι* are meant to refer back, while the rest of the announcement refers forward: and thus a kind of link between the scenes is made. But the ethic dative *σοι* is awkward. For it shows that the announcement is not simply impersonal, but is addressed to Philoctetes. And he, beyond all doubt, is offstage and oblivious to it (as argued earlier). If we have to suppose that these are lines thrown after him in the knowledge that he does not hear them, then this seriously impairs the finality of his exit. Moreover while insults, good wishes and such pertinent parting shots are on occasion cast at departing backs,<sup>39</sup> nowhere else are such irrelevant trivia imparted in this way. *πάλαι* is awkward also; for where else is an entry announcement postponed, so to speak, after the chorus is first supposed to have seen the person approaching? It is true that the chorus began to go at 1177ff, but they turned back, not because they had seen Odysseus and Neoptolemus approaching, but because Philoctetes begged them to do so.

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wishes to avoid is approaching, as at the places discussed in *Soph. El.* and *Eur. El.*; cf. *Eur. Phaethon* 216ff (Diggle), *Cycl.* 193ff, and the rejection of the device at *Hel.* 857ff. (This device is frequent in New Comedy.) Or the subject of a messenger speech may closely follow on the departure of the messenger: *Soph. Ant.* 1256ff, *OT* 1296ff, *OC* 1669f, *Eur. Phoen.* 1479ff (cf. *Andr.* 1165ff). Or a character may stay on who provides a close link between the exit and the entry: e.g. *Soph. Phil.* 1258–63, *Eur. Phoen.* 1263–70, *Rhes.* 148–54, 633–42, 877–85 (apparently a late technique). But still more space would be needed for a complete treatment of this topic.

<sup>39</sup> Insults, e.g., at *Aesch. Supp.* 952f, *Soph. Aj.* 1161f, *Phil.* 1259f, *Eur. Alc.* 734f, *Or.* 630f, 717ff. Good wishes, e.g., *Aesch. Cho.* 1063f, *Soph. OC* 1042f, *Eur. Med.* 759ff. In other contexts consider *Aesch. Agam.* 351ff, *Soph. Ant.* 98f, *Trach.* 813f, *Eur. Andr.* 269, *Bacch.* 971f.

The lines are doggerel. No doubt it is not difficult to defend one by one the repetitiveness of *στείχων . . . στείχοντα . . . ἴοντα*, the stressed singular subject with the plural verb *ἐγὼ . . . ἐλεύσσομεν*, and the pleonasm of *πέλας . . . στείχοντα* and *πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρ' ἴοντα*: but between them they add up to a rambling and ugly sentence. Most entry announcements in later tragedy are, on the contrary, neat and formulaic. Furthermore *νεὼς ὄμοῦ* is dubious Greek. Three other examples of *ὄμοῦ* with the genitive are offered, and the four conspire to support each others' usage. But the first of the three is line 11 of the first column of the Strasbourg Epodes, which used to be read and restored as *κυμάτω[ν ὄ]μοῦ* (thus Archilochus fr.79 D<sup>3</sup>); but it has now been re-read as *κυμαντῶι[.]ι* (thus O. Masson, *REG* 64 [1951] 429, 431, and all editors since). Secondly, the better Mss. at Xen. *Anab.* 4.6.24 read *ὄμοῦ . . . ἀλλήλων*, but the rest read the dative. Thirdly, Menander, fr.760 K., as quoted by the scholion on Ap.Rhod. 2.121, reads *ὄμοῦ δὲ τῶ τίκτειν*, while the garbled version in Harpocration, Photius and the *Suda* (*s.v.* *ὄμοῦ*) reads *τοῦ τίκτειν*. So it is doubtful, to say the least, whether there is another example of *ὄμοῦ* with the genitive in Greek literature, besides *Phil.* 1218.<sup>40</sup> It looks suspiciously as though *νεὼς ὄμοῦ* is a piece of amateur improvisation on the strength of the analogy of the genitive with *ἐγγύς* and *πέλας*.<sup>41</sup>

So I suggest that the lines are an interpolation.<sup>42</sup> Whoever composed them apparently thought that Philoctetes could stay on stage after line 1217, and did not care about a postponed entry announcement. He also seems to have been incapable of spinning out four lines of tragic trimeters. His motive would presumably have been to provide some sort of padding or buffer across this extraordinarily abrupt transition.<sup>43</sup> Some producer or coryphaeus thought he could improve on Sophocles by smoothing over the hiatus—thus missing the point of the dramatic technique.

Whether or not I am right about the interpolation, the structural technique remains. In his last plays Sophocles did not hesitate to use bold and new dramatic techniques to produce striking and significant

<sup>40</sup> See Kühner-Gerth I.353, who call *νεὼς ὄμοῦ* "vereinzelt und zweifelhaft."

<sup>41</sup> The manuscript variant shows scribal discomfort; but *ἐγγύς* is inadmissible. *πέλας* is a possible emendation, but introduces yet another infelicity.

<sup>42</sup> S. Mekler, in his critical notes to Dindorf's Teubner ed. (Lipsiae 1911) page c, comments "1218–21 *si genuini, corrupti*." But he does not elaborate.

<sup>43</sup> It is conceivable that the four lines replaced a brief choral song; but the possibility is very remote.

stage effects. These techniques do not work on the printed page; it is only in performance or in the theatre of the mind's eye that they come to life.<sup>44</sup>

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD  
CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES, WASHINGTON  
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<sup>44</sup> An early version of this paper was written as an offering for Eduard Fraenkel. He liberally covered the script with criticism, references and advice. Those of us who came to know him in his last years found him ever generous with himself as a scholar and as a man. We owe him a great deal. I am especially grateful for help from Professor Hugh Lloyd-Jones and from Colin Macleod. I am also indebted to Professors Bernard Knox, William M. Calder III and Piero Pucci.