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THE SACRIFICE AND REVENGE OF WOMEN:

TWO MAJOR THEMES IN THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the importance of the themes of woman's sacrifice and woman's revenge to the extant tragedies of Euripides; that is, the ways in which the dramatist uses these two motifs to present the choice which women face at moments of extreme personal crisis.

In several of the tragedies Euripides' heroines exist in a male-dominated world in which they must face the option either of being sacrificed to uphold the values of that world, or of taking revenge for wrongs done to them within the limits of that world. Throughout the extant plays Euripides depicts his heroines as having powers and qualities far beyond what their male counterparts expect of them. The bond which keeps men and women in the uneasy and unequal co-existence of their daily lives is philia, the spirit of unity, which creates a balance, an equality of expectations, between unequal partners. When that bond is threatened by an outside force the woman will sacrifice herself in order to preserve it. When, however, philia is betrayed by one who should uphold it, by one who is philos, the woman's revenge on the traitor will be single-minded and terrible. It is ironic that a woman's sacrifice is a voluntary act or is accepted voluntarily and so is lauded by her society, winning her fame as a great example to her gender; revenge, however, which in a modern sense is usually seen as an assertion of will, is in the world of the plays seen as a self-destructive reaction which negates all that the woman stood for previously - revenge, in other words, and not sacrifice, is the supreme act of self-abnegation, in the light of Euripides' world.

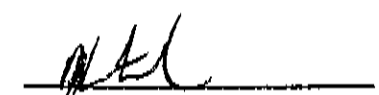
A study of the relevant plays, with references to the social and intellectual ferment of the time in which they were

written, as well as a survey of relevant secondary literature, are the means by which the arguments stated above are investigated. The study, in other words, is primarily literary; it is interested more in Euripides' use of themes in producing plays than in his use of plays to put across consistent ideas. Euripides' plays, however, are rich in philosophical, sociological, psychological and socio-anthropological material and so the study will be necessarily eclectic in investigating the ways in which he uses this material to create the world within which his characters operate.

The dissertation consists of two parts: the first is a general discussion of the themes of the sacrifice and the revenge of women, with reference to all the extant plays; the second comprises detailed analyses, in the light of the findings of Part One, of the Alcestis, the Medea, and the Hippolytus. These three plays are singled out because they are written close together (within a short period of time, 438 to 428); they all deal with women facing a terrible crisis in their marriage; and they provide rich illustrations of the variations possible in Euripides' treatment of the sacrifice and the revenge of women.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University.



19th day of December, 1985.

To my Mother and Father

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PREFACE

In the past few decades more interest has been shown in the plays of Euripides than has at any other time since he wrote them. The attraction lies both in the form and content of his work, in the complexity of his structures and in the richness of his themes. With the current debates on literary theory raging, and with the interest which philosophers are showing in language and literature, Euripides (being influenced by the sophist philosophers as he is) will continue to provide a rich source of material on structural techniques and philosophical games. On the other hand, there is much interest in the question of Euripides' attitude to women and the confusion which has arisen as to whether he is "for" or "against" them in his plays.

My contention in this dissertation is that Euripides is neither "for" nor "against" women (or rather, he is both), but that his plays reflect a social tension between men and women of his time which interested him sufficiently to make him create his most successful plays out of this tension. (Success here, of course, is measured in terms of survival). In the plays in which women feature prominently, then, it is interesting to note that the crises which they face entail either their facing death as a sacrifice to an ideal or to an enemy, or their planning and executing an act of revenge against an enemy. In investigating what it was that Euripides presented as being at the core of women's lives and which led to the choice which they face at some time or other - sacrifice or revenge - I came to realize the importance of the concept of philia (the spirit of union, of closeness) in the plays: a woman will die to protect that bond, and she will kill to avenge the breaking of it. My approach to the subject, therefore, has consisted of an attempt to establish what the system of philia which governs the action of women in the plays is (in terms of philosophical, historical, and social background), and then to see where and how it is at work in the plays. The method of analysis which I

use is no one in particular: I look at the plays with regard both to structure and to content, in other words I attempt to interpret the plays (the Alcestis, the Medea, and the Hippolytus in particular) with regard to Euridides' method and meaning. I have not taken a specific literary theory as my method of analysis for fear lest my enthusiasm in applying the theory to something lead to my applying the plays to the theory, and not vice versa.

The Alcestis, the Medea, and the Hippolytus have been singled out for individual analysis both for their similarities and their differences: they were written within a short period of time of each other before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War and show that Euripides' interest in women precedes the trials of war; also, the completely different directions which each of the three heroines takes in her life provide an interesting area in which to see if there is anything common to them in their lives and in their motives, (to see how the bonds of philia apply to each).

I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Mary Scott, for her help, her encouragement, her patience and her gentle counselling throughout the period of this study.

The text of Euripides from which quotes are taken, unless otherwise indicated, is that of the Oxford Classical Texts edition, ed. by Gilbert Murray (Vol. I and III) and J. Diggle (Vol. II). 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902 and 1981.

N. Constandaras
Johannesburg
December 1985

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

These abbreviations are used in parentheses in notes referring to verses in Euripides' plays when the discussion involves several plays; when it is understood that one particular play is being discussed the verse number alone appears in the brackets.

Alc.	Alcestis
Med.	Medea
Hcld.	Heracleidae
Hip.	Hippolytus
Andr.	Andromache
Hec.	Hecuba
Sup.	The Suppliant Women
Her.	Heracles
El.	Electra
Tro.	The Trojan Women
I.T.	Iphigeneia among the Taurians
Hel.	Helen
Ion	Ion
Ph.	The Phoenician Women
Or.	Orestes
Bac.	Bacchae
I.A.	Iphigeneia in Aulis

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

EURIPIDES AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF HIS TIME

The world depicted in Euripides' plays is a world of human fallibility. His heroes and heroines are uncertain as to what course of action to pursue in a world that is forever ambiguous, in which they are forever changing their minds, [1] and in which the gods cannot be trusted to act in a manner consistent with human expectations of them. He portrays a world out of balance, in which his protagonists lose their balance either in a psychological sense or with regard to their social standing, and in which they, no wiser or more capable than any one member of the audience, struggle to restore that balance somehow; those who are not aware of any such imbalance stride innocently towards their destruction. If, as Bennett Simon states, "Harmony and balance are key terms in any discussion of Greek tragedy", and "Imbalance is typical of the tragic protagonists," [2] then Euripides is most certainly the "most tragic of the poets"; [3] not so much because the destruction of his protagonists is any more complete than that of Aeschylus' or Sophocles', but because the failings of his protagonists, their imbalances, are the marks of human fallibility. Euripides has brought realism and reality to the tragedy of myth. As T.B.L. Webster has remarked, Euripides "has achieved the representation of the ordinary person performing the ordinary deed, and the realism which was formerly used for the caricature has become a naturalism which extends over considerable portions of the plays". [4] That this realism has led to a confusion of interpretation of the plays and of the playwright's dramatic intentions is a reflection on the symbiotic relationship between life and art.

Euripides lived and wrote at a time of great intellectual and social excitement. [5] He witnessed the wealth and glory of imperial Athens, he consorted with philosophers who came to Athens from every corner of the Greek world and who developed what we now term rational sophistic philosophy, and he descended with Athens to the depths of the plague and the terrible involvement in the Peloponnesian War. The great social changes which he witnessed, combined with the intellectual weaponry which he acquired from the philosophers of the time, provided Euripides both with the material and the methods for his plays. Since we have only nineteen complete plays before us of an estimated ninety-two [6] it would be unwise to treat Euripides as a philosopher in his own right with a consistent theory of human nature and behaviour. It is, however, important to investigate the ideas and arguments of the time and to see how Euripides makes use of them to create his themes and to produce his plays.

In The Justice of Zeus Hugh Lloyd-Jones provides a warning for those intent on reconstructing the philosophical background to the plays of Euripides and to the history of Thucydides: "Euripides and Thucydides lived in a world conditioned by the methods and the opinions of the great sophists, and many have supposed that they themselves shared and wished to propagate many of those opinions. The influence upon them of sophistic methods may be thought to be confirmed, but how far such opinions actually formed part of the background against which these authors see the world remains a complicated question". [7] There is, however, sufficient evidence in the plays to see Euripides participating in the arguments of the time in a way which implies that his audience too was in touch with the debates of the sophists. What is more important, though, is the change in method and atmosphere of tragedy with Euripides. As Jaeger states, "The characters of Euripidean tragedy are

compelled by an irresistible instinct to indulge in constant analysis and argument".[8] It is this persistent uneasiness, both in the playwright and his characters, which is the mark of the sophists' profound influence on Euripides.

In his history of the Athenian Empire Russell Meiggs catalogues the arrival of influential philosophers in fifth century Athens: "So far as we know (Anaxagoras) had pupils but no rivals in the seventies and sixties; it was not till near the middle of the century that Athens began to attract philosophers from other centres. We then hear of a visit by Parmenides and Zeno".[9] However, "The Athenian public was considerably more influenced by the travelling teachers who began to come to Athens in the forties".[10] Meiggs then lists these Sophists, all of whom were active in Athens during Euripides' life-time: Protagoras of Abdera, Prodicus of Ceos (with his views on νόμος / φύσις), Gorgias of Leontini (with his δίσσοι λόγοι of argument), Hippias of Elis, Euenus of Paros, and Thrasymachus of Chalcedon.[11] On the influence of Protagoras on both Euripides and Thucydides Meiggs writes that "a fascination for the rival claims of self-interest and right, τὸ συμφέρον and τὸ δίκαιον , and the contrast between νόμος and φύσις , law, convention, or custom and what is natural, pervades both authors. Thucydides and Euripides reproduced the same ideas because they were both profoundly influenced by Protagoras and the sophists who followed him".[12] More will be said of Protagoras later. Of the other sophists mentioned it suffices to note that they were concerned with the semantics of language, with the teaching of rhetoric, and thereby of success in public life, and with the intricacies of justice and power. These philosophies and rational methods of investigation had a profound effect when they were used to judge war and its effects. As the historian N.G.L. Hammond notes, "The evacuation of Attica, the terrors of

the plague, and the disaster at Syracuse loosened the standards of religious belief, and the rigours of war and defeat made some men question the right of the state to make such demands. Philosophy too, having defined its cosmogony and disposed of any deity, turned to man as the microcosm and studied his personal psychology. The shift of interest from the group to the individual upset the traditional relation between the state and the citizen". [13] This questioning of the nature of man and the state, of the bonds between the individual and his society is so evident in the work of Euripides that Jaeger goes so far as to call Euripides "The first psychologist"; [14] that is to say that Euripides' portrayal of characters in conflict with themselves or with their social environment coincides with our modern view of psychology as a discipline of observation. The writer of On the Sublime[15] is more precise when he states that,

> ἔστι μὲν οὖν φιλοπονώτατος ὁ Εὐριπίδης δύο ταυτὶ πάθη, μανίας τε καὶ ἔρωτας, ἐκτραγῳδῆσαι, κἀν τούτοις ὡς οὐκ οἶδ' εἴ τισιν ἑτέροις ἐπιτυχέστατος, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπιτίθεσθαι φαντασίαις οὐκ ἀτολμος.

The playwright, as a keen observer of human behaviour, seems to have shown a preference for these two passions both as causes and as results of great personal crises. It is the aim of this study to investigate Euripides' use of these two passions in creating his plays and to notice especially how they are used in the tragedies in which women whose actions are dictated by madness and love are the protagonists.

It is worth considering here how the crises which women face, play such an important part in the extant work of Euripides. John Jones makes a pertinent point both on Euripides' dramatic use of women characters and on later interpretations of that use when he writes, "The much-canvassed question whether Euripides was for or against women (of course he was both)

scratches the surface of the Medea and the Alcestis and the Hippolytus, all three of which gain formidable impetus from the ability of their women to unsettle perceived antitheses; bravery and cowardice, selflessness and rapacity, stir as though threatening to change places, and wisdom and folly are on the move too; and sex violently eludes domestication by the defining masculine intelligence."[16] Euripides himself, albeit in a fragment of a play, makes a similar statement on what may be his attitude towards women: it is a mistake to blame all women alike, a character says, "for as there are many women, so will one find many a one bad, but also many good".[17] As Jones implies, it is safer to assume that Euripides' main intention was to write plays and not to "cast his radical message into an acceptable tragic mould".[18] His pre-occupation with women, however (or rather his success in portraying them, which resulted in the survival of so many of the plays to which their trials are central), must have been the result both of contemporary intellectual arguments and of his interest in their social position and behaviour. The teaching of Protagoras provides a clue in this direction.

In his Greek Tragedy Lesky remarks that when Protagoras introduced a new approach in philosophy in the second half of the fifth century with his famous dictum[19],

πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστίν ἄνθρωπος,
τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ
ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν,

his words implied "a complete break with tradition in all spheres of life. They meant a revolutionary demand that anything which concerned human existence, religion as well as the State and justice, should become the subject of rational debate".[20] This need to observe reality rationally and in new ways led to things being observed from different angles, no one angle being more correct than the other. In the

Hippolytus, [21] it is clear that Euripides used this doctrine of subjectivity to produce a play in which his four human protagonists, each for his own reasons, are continually differing in their interpretations of the meaning of events and the nature of reality. Euripides' characters, in other words, are found in a world which is similar to that which Lesky describes as being the sophists': "The sophist finds himself outside the protective security of tradition in a world of antinomies"[22]. Lesky suggests that Protagoras was the originator of this system of perception, or, rather, of the awareness of such perception. "It reveals", he writes", a programmatic intention when a work by Protagoras has the title Ἀντιλογίαι ('Contradictions'), and what Diogenes Laertius (9.51) says about its author confirms this: "He was the first to propose the thesis that on every subject there can be two conflicting opinions". [23] We do not need to take literally the biographical tradition, which states that Euripides was a pupil of Protagoras, [24] to acknowledge the influence of this doctrine on Euripides, especially as it is used to create the tragedy of Hippolytus. This idea is complementary to Heraclitus' famous statement on the nature of the Oracle at Delphi: οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.[25] This implies the ambiguity of phenomena themselves, which leads to Protagoras' idea of the ambiguity of perception. In dealing with this outlook that nothing is fixed, that therefore no human relationship can be taken for granted, it is not difficult to see Euripides' interest in applying it to the area of human relationships which was at once the most intimate and about which the most preconceived ideas were held: the relationship between men and women. In dealing with such material Euripides was able to use the contrast between the reality of human nature and the custom of social expectations to portray the reasons and the results of this conflict. [26]

The intimacy between man and woman, and the imbalance between them, afforded him the best material with which to investigate different responses to a given situation by people who had different characters, different perceptions, and different expectations of one another. This investigation of a relationship of which contradictory interpretations exist is the cornerstone of Protagorean thinking. Mario Untersteiner writes of Protagoras' approach to contradictory experiences: "This possibility, through which, with a change in the particular conditions, the emergence of different grades or intelligibility of each thing is stimulated by placing them in a value-relation, is the work of reasoning Man, who thus becomes the true master of experiences, including those which are contradictory; all of these he can subject to his judgement, because he is the master, as of every other intellectual element, so also of this antithetical relationship consisting of a λόγος from which is derived a ἥττων λόγος and a κρείττων λόγος, both concerning a single experience".[27] Euripides then, it may be said, uses the contradictions inherent in the relationships between men and women (places them in a "value-relation") to recreate on stage a single experience which consists of a conflict between a ἥττων λόγος and a κρείττων λόγος. Onto this bold intellectual framework, however, Euripides places his objective observations of extreme human passions, madness and love, which are either the causes or the results of conflict. This union in the structure of his plays, then, of intellectual framework with passionate human conflict arises from a clash of characters who have different expectations of each other. This goes beyond the reasoning of Protagoras, beyond the νόμος/φύσις debate expounded by Prodicus, and beyond the ethical δίσσοι λόγοι of Gorgias' arguments for its force.[28] It arises from a "psychological" source, from an observation of the bonds between people: bonds which preserve stability when they are successful but which,

when they fail, can be the cause of great conflict and destruction. It is important therefore to consider the relevance of the strongest of these bonds, philia, both to the plays of Euripides and to the social conditions in Athens at the time, as will be done in Chapter 2.

In each of the seventeen Euripidean tragedies still existing women play a central role.[29] In nine plays women die, and of these deaths seven are sacrifices: namely, in the Alcestis Alcestis dies in order to save her husband; in the Hippolytus Phaedra kills herself in order to save her reputation and as a victim of Aphrodite's revenge on Hippolytus; in Hecuba Polyxena is sacrificed to appease the ghost of Achilles; in the Heracleidae Macaria gives her life to save her kin; in The Suppliant Women Evadne dies on her husband's pyre rather than face life without him; in the Heracles Megara's life is threatened by Lycus but she dies at the hands of her frenzied husband Heracles, in what he later calls a terrible breach of their philia; in the Electra Electra lives what she believes to be a living death, and Clytaimnestra is killed for her betrayal of her husband and children; in the Iphigeneia in Aulis the young princess is sacrificed so that the army may succeed in its venture against Troy; in the Phoenician Women Jocasta kills herself because she could not keep her sons from killing each other; in the Ion Creusa almost loses her life as a result of Apollo's duplicity when, not knowing that Ion is her son, she attempts to murder him; and in the Andromache and the Trojan Women Andromache exemplifies the desperate situation which a woman deprived of male protection, of philia, faces - in the Andromache she nearly loses her life and her child, in the Trojan Women she loses both her freedom and her child. The majority of women's deaths in the extant work of Euripides, then, may be said to be sacrifices; for their deaths form part of a larger, social, design which demands their deaths when it

is not in any absolute sense necessary for them to die. In other words, it is a matter of will, a decision, for those women who, like Alcestis and Macaria, offer to die for an ideal. They would not have chosen to die if death were not expected of them, and, in dying, they expect great honour to be bestowed upon them. This acquiescence in their own destruction is seen more vividly in the deaths of women whose deaths are demanded literally as sacrifices by factors or people for whom they would never willingly choose to die. Polyxena in the Hecuba and the Iphigeneia of Iphigeneia in Aulis, for example, come to terms with, and accept, their deaths even though the one dies at the will of a bloodthirsty conqueror, and the other for the success of a venture in which she had no reason to be involved. It is dangerous to argue ex silentio but it is remarkable that all the women of whom sacrifice is expected either volunteer to die or accept the demand that they die.[30] Sacrifice, in other words, is a consciously accepted decision of women in Euripides.

In seven of the extant plays, on the other hand, women are responsible for murder, and in another three plays women either attempt to kill or threaten to do so.[31] Of the seven murders carried out only Agave's in the Bacchae is unintentional,[32] the other six are all motivated by a passion for revenge. In the Medea Medea kills her children and her husband's new wife to avenge his breach of philia; in the Hippolytus Phaedra destroys Hippolytus for his treatment of her and for his part in her destruction; in the Hecuba the old queen kills Polymestor for his murder of her son Polydorus who had been entrusted to him; in the Heracleidae Alcmene demands the death of Eurystheus for his relentless persecution of her son and her family; and Electra is the driving force behind Orestes in the Electra when he kills Clytaimnestra for her breach of philia in her killing their father, her husband.

Murder, then, when carried out by women in Euripides' plays appears to be predominantly a reaction to wrongs which have been done against them. It is the extreme opposite of the spirit of sacrifice which other women accept. The aim of this study is to investigate what causes one woman to sacrifice herself but another to wreak havoc on those who have wronged her. By examining the way in which the world of women is depicted in the plays, and by examining the intimate bond of philia between men and women, it will become evident that within the "Protagorean" framework of the plays, and within Euripides' psychological portraits, a woman's choice of either accepting sacrifice or demanding revenge is not so much a matter of differing characters as it is a movement either preserving a threatened state of philia or reacting to another's destruction of that bond between them.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ATHENS

Euripides' interest in female protagonists has been noted as resulting in part from the philosophical debates of fifth century Athens; but just as important is the questioning of woman's place in Athenian society which resulted from the three centuries of economic and social change in Athens prior to the fifth century. Between 800 and 500 B.C. the nature of Greek society underwent a fundamental change, moving from what some call the Dark Ages, through the Archaic Age and into the Classical Age. The Greeks changed from being members of rural self-sufficient villages to being inhabitants of complex commercial and industrial cities.

At the opening stages of this great movement the most notable social differentiation took place, still in the rural communities, which was to have a lasting influence on Greek urban society. The historian Chester Starr describes this development: "Interwoven with the expansion of industry and commerce, and with the appearance of cities and coinage, were major social and economic alterations in the agricultural world. Lesser farmers often sank into the position of peasants; the rich and powerful evolved an aristocratic code of life. This latter aspect, which is the more visible of the two, had extensive consequences for all aspects of Greek life".[1] Starr then notes that later, within the cities, the values of those with the aristocratic code were imitated by people of lower birth, the so-called kakoi whom we meet in Homer, who had gained wealth and standing. A broader group of people, therefore, now upheld a distinct social code.[2] The transference of these values from a smaller

upper-class group to a wider acceptance was the result both of the idealization of behaviour which developed among the nobles and the success with which these ideals were projected as being the best values by which to live. Starr describes this process of transference: "Nobles, consciously guided into the proper paths in childhood, as adults were subject to constant scrutiny by their peers, at times in communal meals, and also by their inferiors in the agora; an aristocrat must exemplify the virtues of his class. Glory and repute were derived from the judgement of one's fellowmen, which was expressed in such adjectives as agathos or such nouns as time and kleos. The poets of the archaic period, the statues in the shrines, and a variety of other sources celebrated and helped to spread aristocratic standards".[3] Euripides shows his awareness of this process in the Hippolytus when Phaedra, frightened of losing her eukleia, refers to the example which the upper classes set by their behaviour: she knows, she says, that once those of good birth commit base deeds (such as adultery) those of lower birth, the kakoi, will be quick to follow.[4] The example of the nobility, in other words, was followed, for better or for worse, by those aspiring towards status; and nowhere is this more evident than in male attitudes towards women in the city.

One of the cornerstones of the aristocratic code, Starr notes,[5] is the stress on masculine dominance: "In the age of expansion male domination was a marked characteristic of the consolidation of Greek aristocracy. The ultimate task of membership in this class was derivation from a 'well-born' family, and in ancient physiological thought the seed of the father was the only root of the offspring".[6] This cult of masculinity is reflected in the custom, in the upper classes, of marrying foreign wives in order to forge alliances in other states. As Starr, once again, says, "Guest - friendships

continued to be as important as they had been in the Homeric poems; aristocrats never knew when they might be forced into exile or otherwise need friends in other states. A fragment from Solon describes a happy man as one who has' dear children, whole-hooved steeds, hunting hounds, and a friend in foreign parts'."[7]

The citizenship law of Pericles passed in 451-50 B.C. made it necessary that the mother as well as the father be an Athenian citizen in order for her children to qualify for Athenian citizenship, thus indicating that enough Athenian men followed the example of the aristocrats of the past to create the threat of an overabundance of Athenian citizens. Sarah Pomeroy writes that," The influence of powerful fathers-in-law was desirable from the standpoint of the ruling classes, but not so in terms of Athenian notions of democracy."[8] She notes of Pericles' law that it "was prompted by the realization that the number of citizens was too greatly increased. This same law was later relaxed, at a point in Athenian history when the population had dwindled and it was necessary to increase the number of citizens."[9] The evidence, therefore, is that there must have been a significant number of women in Athens who had married far from their homelands and families. It is noteworthy, too, that Euripides deals with women married in a foreign state in the first three of his plays which can be dated with certainty: the Alcestis of 438, the Medea of 431, and the Hippolytus of 428. As will be noted in our discussion of these plays this estrangement from her fatherland makes the woman's dependence on her husband even greater that it would otherwise have been.

The modern feminist Kate Millett could be discussing the period leading up to and including Euripides' time when she states that "Whatever the class of her birth and education, the female has fewer permanent class associations than does the male. Economic dependency renders her affiliations with any class a

tangential, vicarious and temporary matter."[10] This, however, applies more specifically to a woman in a situation such as Medea's - a woman who is completely dependent on her husband's support, being cast off from her family and having no means of support such as the law in classical Athens provided.[11] Millett's point, however, is intended primarily to indicate women's lack of power, their inability to determine their own lives within a patriarchal society. This does seem to have been the case in fifth century Athens as the men of the democracy inherited the aristocratic code of behaviour which developed in the archaic age, and which was attended by the wariness of, or even antipathy towards, women expressed by the archaic poets.[12] Starr attributes this male exclusivity in large part to "an increased social unity within the polis."[13] Men spent most of their time together in groups based on friendship and kinship, the hetairiae and the phratries; handsome young men were held up as the model of beauty and men spent their leisure hours and recreation time in symposia and the gymnasia without their wives.[14] In general it appears that in the development from a simple, rural life-style to the life of the city, women lost whatever power and influence they might have had with their husbands to the cult of masculinity which both kept men involved with each other to the exclusion of women and which prescribed certain new ideals of proper behaviour. For instance, Lacey quotes a speaker in Lysias on the proper behaviour of his sister and nieces in the women's quarters in his house, who lived "with so much concern for their modesty that they were embarrassed even to be seen by their male relatives."[15] This would have been difficult to imagine in the old rural life-style, even if only on account of the more open architecture of rural houses. In the great changes in the age of expansion, then, women found themselves confined both physically and by the aristocratic code of an exclusive masculinity which prescribed great restrictions on behaviour.

Pericles' famous statement on the ideal behaviour of women,[16]

> εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.

is the result of male protection of feminine modesty taken to the extreme; it is an attitude in which complete passivity is preferable to a woman's opening herself to judgement, for judgement may be bad just as easily as it may be good. The woman, in other words, must not participate at all in the aristocratic game in which the males are continuously judging each other and continually competing for praise.[17] The attitude expressed by Pericles, however, has deeper roots than the precepts of social behaviour would imply at first glance. It is connected to a deep-seated ambivalence towards women; a need for them and a fear of them which is expressed both in myth and in the seclusion within society demanded of them by men. J. Gould examines Greek myth and comes to the following conclusion: "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 continuously to overturn its stability or subvert its continuity, to break out of the place assigned to them by their partial incorporation within it. Yet they are essential to it: they are producers and bestowers of wealth and children, the guarantors of due succession, the guardians of the oikos and its hearth. Men are their sons, and are brought up as children, by them and among them. Like the earth and once-wild animals, they must be tamed and cultivated by men, but their 'wildness' will out."[18] Not knowing how to handle the basic "otherness" of woman, man tries to negate it: woman exists either in connection with him, on

his terms, or he deprives her of her humanity altogether. In the first instance we have the ideal of seclusion expressed by Pericles, and the position of women before the law: Gould writes, "Thus the names of women who have a respected place in the community are suppressed and they are referred to by complex periphrases which stress their status-dependence upon male kinsmen. Respect requires that they be treated, almost, as part of the property of father or husband."[19] We see too the overjoyed reaction of male society in Euripides when a woman offers her life to preserve the "oikos and its hearth" and the other valuables which women bestow: wealth and children.[20] When, on the other hand, a woman steps out of the bounds which society, and here of course we mean male-orientated society, has placed on her and so threatens man's position and the provisions which he expects of her, the male reaction is one of utter disbelief and of a rush to deprive that woman of any human attribute: in Euripides, especially, women who have horrified men with their unfeminine actions are seen as inhuman or bestial.[21] According to Gould, on his observations on the language of (male) metaphor as it relates to women, sex and marriage, this is an ingrained attitude towards women and not only in moments of extreme duress: "the traditional formula is part of a network of imagery and metaphor which associates women and their role in sex and marriage with animals, especially the taming, yoking and breaking in of animals, and with agriculture."[22] From this brief discussion, then, of the fears found in myths and of their expression in the order of society, it is clear that in general there was tension between men and women in a society that was designed completely by men for themselves and for their peace of mind. We note this tension in the myths, in the misogyny of the archaic poets, and, finally, in the work of Euripides.

In looking at the tension between men and women in Athens, the anthropologist S.C. Humphreys remarks on the importance of the issue, both to tragedy and to the state as a whole: "Tragedy in Athens reflected both the tension felt between norms of public interaction and the demands of private life, and the internal conflicts generated by intra-sex and intergenerational struggles for dominance and economic resources within the family. If the oikos was problematic as a component of the city, it was also problematic in itself."[23] She sees much of the difference between earlier and later Greek society reflected in the changing role of the oikos. In Homer society is structured around the noble oikos, with the head of the family striking up alliances with other, far-off, oikoi on a system of guest-friendships and marriage alliances; but with the change to the city life-style the oikos system was outdated and nothing reflects this more than the fall in status which the woman of the household faced: "The focus of political life was moving from the noble household to council and assembly place; displays and distributions of wealth also were less oikos-centered, more often channeled into public contexts: funeral cortèges and marriage processions, sacrifices, religious festivals. The poet, too, composed his choral songs for public contexts. In the oikos, the dividing line between the men's and women's quarters hardened as the male members of the household became more concerned with public institutions."[24]

The oikos, and the women in it, it appears, had ceased to function as a practical unit and was now only a reference point to be examined for signs of correct or incorrect social behaviour. Humphreys then notes that this state of affairs led to a questioning of the system; a questioning in which Euripides took part, for Athens "was a society that did all its thinking out loud."[25] Euripides, she writes," is reacting to

changes in the structure of Athenian society. Increased spatial and social mobility in any society tends to weaken status-based obligations, such as those attached to particular positions in a kinship system, and replace them with more flexible ties based on similarity of interests and compatibility of personality ... Such a change will evidently lead to increased interest in the personal content of relationships, encourage the idea that marriage should be based on personal selection, and give friendship a new importance as the model of a personal relationship founded entirely on choice."[26]

The great economic and social changes, therefore, which preceded and included Euripides' time combined with the methods and contents of contemporary philosophy to draw Euripides into an investigation of the bonds between men and women. Once again it must be stressed that Euripides' interest in female protagonists probably stemmed more from the fertility of themes and conflict which the relationships between men and women provided than from any desire to make an impassioned plea on the behalf of the oppressed half of the population.[27] This is indicated in part by the lack of consensus which has existed since Euripides' time on what his attitude to women was. Aristophanes' attacks on Euripides' alleged misogyny are one example.[28] Sarah Pomeroy quotes two very interesting and contradictory anecdotes which indicate how the biographical tradition, too, tried to correlate Euripides' plays with his own life.[29] It is important also to note that Euripides' heroines are creations for the theatre and are derived from legendary figures of an earlier time. His women do not necessarily behave the way the majority of Athenian citizens' wives of his time would. Indeed, it is difficult to know how many women had to live by the precepts of moral behaviour discussed above: there must have been, for example, many

free-born Athenian wives whose husbands' economic standing would have made it necessary for them to enter the economic field, if only to help their husbands, thus making their seclusion impossible.[30] In Demosthenes' Against Eubulides there is evidence that this happened but also that it led to suspicions that the woman was not a free-born Athenian.[31] In the speech Euxitheus is appealing against the decision to strike him off the register of citizens on the grounds that his mother was an alien because, towards the end of the Peloponnesian war, she worked as a petty trader and as a wet-nurse:

> 35 Ἐπεὶ κἀκεῖνο περὶ τῆς μητρὸς εἴρηκεν, ὅτι ἐτίτθευσεν. ἡμεῖς δ', ὅθ' ἡ πόλις ἠτύχει καὶ πάντες κακῶς ἔπραττον, οὐκ ἀρνούμεθα τοῦτο γενέσθαι· ὃν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ὧν εἵνεκ' ἐτίτθευσεν, ἐγὼ σαφῶς ὑμῖν ἐπιδείξω. μηδεὶς δ' ὑμῶν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, δυσχερῶς ὑπολάβῃ· καὶ γὰρ νῦν ἀστὰς γυναῖκας πολλὰς εὑρήσετε τιτθευούσας, ἃς ὑμῖν καὶ κατ' ὄνομ' ἐὰν βούλησθ' ἐροῦμεν. εἰ δέ γε πλούσιοι ἦμεν, οὔτ' ἂν τὰς ταινίας ἐπωλοῦμεν, οὔτ' ἄν ὅλως ἦμεν ἄποροι. ἀλλὰ τί ταῦτα κοινωνεῖ τῷ γένει;
> 36 ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδὲν οἶμαι.

We may conclude, therefore, that the ideal of a woman's behaviour often conflicted with the actual economic necessity of the family. That conflict, however, indicates that the majority of Athenians wives spent their lives working within the home;[32] enough of them, at any rate, to constitute the norm in fifth century Athens. It is necessary, therefore, to be careful in deciding where Euripides' portrayal of women intersects with the common experience of women of his time. It is difficult, for example, to imagine the behaviour of the Electra's Clytaimnestra in fifth century Athens; on the other hand it is natural to imagine the sorrow of a wife who has to share her husband's affections with other women, as Andromache expresses it in a selfless gesture of accomodation:

ὦ φίλταθ' Ἕκτορ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν σὴν χάριν
σοὶ καὶ ξυνήρων, εἴ τί σε σφάλλοι Κύπρις,
καὶ μαστὸν ἤδη παλλάκις νόθοισι σοῖς
ἐπέσχον, ἵνα σοι μηδὲν ἐνδοίην πικρόν.

(Andr. v 222-5).

Whether or not it was by design to make his plays "transcendental"[33] Euripides was careful to include enough detail to make the lives of his heroines, so distant in their space and time, pertinent to the conditions of his time; the result is that there are several trials common to the women of his plays, the women of his time, and indeed the women of later times.

In conclusion, then, it may be stated that even if Euripides' personal attitude towards women and their standing in society is not known, his interest in them as a dramatist can be understood. The questioning, rational mode of contemporary philosophy, together with the social pressure caused by having outmoded systems of behaviour in a changing social and intellectual atmosphere led to a re-evaluation of traditional bonds between people; and, especially in the bonds between men and women which were a focus of Euripides' interest.

For marriage (being both the most intimate union and the area in which exists the most prejudice as to what is expected of each partner) is a particularly fertile area for an investigation of personal relationships. It is evident, too, that female behaviour was dictated by social custom which was both outdated in the time of Euripides and bound to cause trouble between men and strong women who would not accept everything in a system that had been devised solely by men. It is in the investigation of philia in his plays that Euripides brings the tension between men and women from an intellectual curiosity to a concrete recreation of behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

PHILIA: THE SPIRIT OF UNION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

It is generally accepted that in the Homeric age, with its emphasis on the necessity for the success of the male head of the household, philia comprised the relationship between oneself and the people or objects on whom one could depend for support.[1] "To maintain oneself in a competitive environment," writes Mary Scott," one must also maintain a permanent state of preparedness, of tension. In this atmosphere, the agathos had one class of people and objects upon which he felt he could normally rely - those that were phila."[2] This implies that in the relationship between a man and a woman, the woman must be all that the man expects her to be in terms of his succeeding as a husband and protector of the household; the husband in turn, is obliged to return the woman's philia by treating her "in a non-hostile manner, feeding, supporting and protecting her."[3] For not only did she need his protection, but he needed to be seen to be protecting her. Despite the changes which Greek society and thought underwent in the the years between 800-500 B.C., Aristotle in the fourth century, writing on philia between men and women, could say of their relationship,[4] ἀνδρὸς δὲ καὶ γυναικὸς ἀριστοκρατικὴ φαίνεται· κατ' ἀξίαν γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἄρχει, καὶ περὶ ταῦτα ἃ δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα· ὅσα δὲ γυναικὶ ἁρμόζει, ἐκείνη ἀποδίδωσιν. Later he adds, καὶ ἀνδρὸς δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα ἡ αὐτὴ φιλία καὶ ἐν ἀριστοκρατίᾳ· κατ' ἀρετὴν γάρ, καὶ τῷ ἀμείνονι πλέον ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἁρμόζον ἑκάστῳ· οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον.

Marriage, in other words, remains a bond between unequal partners who have firm expectations of each other. The woman, though inferior in status, could have certain expectations of her husband's behaviour towards her beyond the necessity of her

being an instrument and symbol of his success in a hostile world. These expectations indicate the reciprocal nature of the relationship in which the balance between the two partners is created by a proportional system in which the man, being regarded as superior, is expected to benefit the most. The context within which philia operated, however, had changed to incorporate the bonds between citizens in the new urban community. Aristotle says of philia in a general context,[6]

> ἔοικε δὲ καὶ τὰς πόλεις συνέχειν ἡ φιλία, καὶ οἱ νομοθέται μᾶλλον περὶ αὐτὴν σπουδάζειν ἢ τὴν δικαιοσύνην· ἡ γὰρ ὁμόνοια ὅμοιόν τι τῇ φιλίᾳ ἔοικεν εἶναι, ταύτης δὲ μάλιστ' ἐφίενται καὶ τὴν στάσιν ἔχθραν οὖσαν μάλιστα ἐξελαύνουσιν·

By the time of Aristotle's writing his ethics, then, it seems that philia continued being a bond between a man and his dependants and his distant allies, but also became a necessary social attribute, of life in the city.

The institution of marriage has remained much the same in the status accorded each partner; the new emphasis, however, on the importance of philia in the broader social context has served to highlight the importance of maintaining that bond between men and women. Women could expect less in marriage than their husbands could; but perhaps they expected what was their due with an even greater intensity, precisely for that reason, as we shall see in the following chapters on individual plays of Euripides.

In his study on the ethics of Euripides Rhys Carpenter examines the Nicomachean Ethics and comes to the conclusion that, "The nature of friendship is already in Euripides in strikingly Aristotelian form."[7] One need not be as specific as to claim that, "The morality came to his hand from the Sophists and the stage,"[8] to be able to suggest that Aristotle's ethics, based

on psychological observations as they are, are the result of the great intellectual questioning of which Euripides was a part. The implication of accepting the importance of the concept of philia to Euripides and his contemporaries would be that one could then perceive Aristotle's observations as conclusions, coming from his unique vantage point.[9] Aristotle, in other words, could act as a guide in an investigation into Euripides' dramatic use of philia where sometimes ideas and attitudes on philia are either merely hinted at, or exist as part of a whole which is not all visible, or even where they are central to a play.

There is evidence that with the urbanization of the population in Greece, and with the resulting tension between people living very close together, often with little in common but their very proximity, the Homeric system of philia was adapted to serve and protect the society and values of the community. Jean-Pierre Vernant sees the importance of philia arising immediately from the fall of the Mycenean system of kingship, which resulted in more people having to co-operate with each other to ensure social stability: "The spirit of conflict and the spirit of union - Eris-Philia: these two divine entities, opposed and complementary, marked the two poles of society in the aristocratic world that followed the ancient kingships," he writes.[10] As we have noted, however, this aristocratic world and its values evolved into the world of the city where the concept of philia had to be adapted once again to cope with new threats to social stability. As Vernant describes the process: "Those who made up the city, however different in origin, rank, and function, appeared somehow to be 'like' one another. This likeness laid the foundation for the unity of the polis, since for the Greeks only those who were alike could be mutually united by philia, joined in the same community. In the framework of the city, the tie that bound one man to another

thus became a reciprocal relationship, replacing the hierarchical relations of submission and dominance. All those who shared in the state were defined as homoioi - men who were alike - and later more abstractly as isoi, or equals."[11] Philia between men, in other words, is regarded as progressing from being a bond between equals often living great distances from each other to a bond between citizens, a bond which made an assumption of some kind of community of interests between them a necessity for survival. Protagoras, in his famous creation Myth, as Plato presents it, states that the bond of philia is a basic necessity for communal survival. He describes man's lack of τὴν πολιτικήν - the skill which would enable him to live in a community (which was vital to his survival) - as threatening the unity of the city and thereby jeopardizing man's chances against the wild beasts. Zeus steps in to solve the problem:[12]

> Ζεὺς
> οὖν δείσας περὶ τῷ γένει ἡμῶν, μὴ ἀπόλοιτο πᾶν, Ἑρμῆν πέμπει ἄγοντα εἰς ἀνθρώπους αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην, ἵν' εἶεν πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγοί.

With αἰδώς, which Untersteiner interprets as "a respectful acknowledgement of any superiority in others",[13] and δίκη, "the sense of justice",[14] Zeus establishes order (κόσμοι) and bonds which will unite people in solidarity (δεσμοί φιλίας συναγωγοί). So philia is represented as a necessary social bond, but the concept of αἰδώς indicates that philia did not imply an equality of persons but rather an equality of purpose.

The necessity for a bond between men which the need for philia indicated became the predominant meaning of philia. Aristotle's quotation of the saying philotés isotés, is strong evidence of the successful and widespread adaptation of this social bond. It is significant, too, that the great Athenian

reformer, Solon, recognised the need for isotés and philia. Vernant, in describing the necessity of moderation and temperance for harmonious social existence, sees philia as the cornerstone of Solon's theories and he is careful to note that isotés is not exactly translated as 'equality' in the modern sense of the word but rather as a kind of balance of reciprocity which aimed at the goal of a unified state: "To understand the social realities that overlay the ideal of sophrosyne, and how the notions of metrion (the mean), pistis (trust), homonoia (unanimity), and eunomia (law and order) were blended to form a whole, it is necessary to consider such constitutional reforms as those of Solon. They made a place for the equality - isotes - that had already appeared as one of the foundations of the new conception of order. Without isotes there would be no city because there would be no philia (friendship). 'The man who is an equal', wrote Solon, 'is incapable of starting a war'. But this was a hierachical equality - or, as the Greeks would say, an equality that was geometrical rather than arithmetical. The essential idea was actually 'proportion'."[15] This is precisely the relationship between husband and wife in marriage as described by Aristotle.[16]

A difference between Homeric philia and that of Euripides' time is that it ceased to be concerned only with one's survival and success as an individual. The closeness which the concept of philia encouraged and represented gave rise to a feeling of mutual responsibility between people, and a sense of moral behaviour which would have seemed very foreign in the world of Homer as we understand it: namely, a world in which the individual is responsible absolutely as the head of his household and in which his worth is measured by the success with which he meets in running that unit. Euripides' great contemporary, Thucydides, writing on the efrects of the

terrible plague of 430 B.C., reveals a new dimension of philia. He writes of those who risked, and gave, their lives to help their friends who had the plague, feeling too great a sense of shame (αἰσχύνη) to ignore the suffering of their friends; even when in some cases the victim's own family's sense of kinship had been defeated by the disease:[17]

> εἴτε προσίοιεν, διεφθείροντο, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἀρετῆς τι μεταποιούμενοι· αἰσχύνῃ γὰρ ἠφείδουν σφῶν αὐτῶν ἐσιόντες παρὰ τοὺς φίλους, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰς ὀλοφύρσεις τῶν ἀπογιγνομένων τελευτῶντες καὶ οἱ οἰκεῖοι ἐξέκαμνον ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ κακοῦ νικώμενοι.

(Thuc 2.51, 5).

Carpenter is right in noting that the Nicomachean Ethics say nothing about self-sacrifice[18] but this quotation shows that Euripides was not alone in portraying situations of philia in which self-sacrifice took place. The passage of Thucydides quoted above serves as a good indication of the relationship between philia and self-sacrifice with which Euripides would involve himself in several of his plays.

The Heracles, dated about 415,[19], is a play in which the concept of philia is central to the action. It affords a dramatization of several of the aspects of philia which have been discusssed above and deals with the bond of philia between two men and between a husband and his wife. Amphitryon the mortal father of Heracles, is the first to mention that the family of his son is in desperate straits due to the absence of any one philos who will dare to help them,

> φίλων δὲ τοὺς μὲν οὐ σαφεῖς ὁρῶ φίλους,
> οἱ δ' ὄντες ὀρθῶς ἀδύνατοι προσωφελεῖν.
> τοιοῦτον ἀνθρώποισιν ἡ δυσπραξία·
> ἧς μήποθ' ὅστις καὶ μέσως εὔνους ἐμοὶ
> τύχοι, φίλων ἔλεγχον ἀψευδέστατον.

(v55-9).

The old man goes so far as to define misfortune as the absence of friends who can help one in need (v.57). The idea of the obligation of friends to support each other is presented as an indignant defence before the dangerous tyrant Lycus by the Chorus of Theban Elders,

> *κἄπειτα πράσσω πόλλ' ἐγὼ φίλους ἐμοὺς*
> *θανόντας εὖ δρῶν, οὓς φίλων μάλιστα δεῖ;*

(v266-7).

Megara gracefully praises the attitude of the old men but feels that it is her responsibility to warn them of the danger which they face in their upright stand (v275-8). In the same speech, however, she indicates that not all friends are so trustworthy when they are needed,

> *ὡς τὰ ξένων πρόσωπα φεύγουσιν φίλοις*
> *ἓν ἦμαρ ἡδὺ βλέμμ' ἔχειν φασὶν μόνον.*

(v305-6).

As if to underline the importance of the theme of friends being ignored when they need help, Amphitryon goes so far as to criticize Zeus, who is both the god of the bonds of friendship and Heracles' divine father, for his abdication of his duty as philos (v339-47). This attack constitutes one of the strongest attacks on the nature of the gods in Euripides' plays,[20] for it denounces Zeus as a hypocrite (v341) and as a traitor (v343) who knows nothing of basic human values. What the old man had expected of Zeus was behaviour similar to Heracles', who on learning that his family has been threatened because his friends have chosen to forget their obligation to him (v558-61), sees revenge on his enemies and faithless friends alike as the resumption of his duties as father, husband, and son; in short, by resuming his duties as a philos he will take revenge on those who repaid his philia with treachery (v568-82). The Chorus (v583-4) and Amphitryon (v 585-6) are quick to praise Heracles' attitude as justified and as correct.

So far it is evident in the play that philia is a reciprocal relationship which should be adhered to even at great personal risk. It entails the protection of one's kin as well as the protection of a friend's family. Heracles' outrage at the betrayal of those who allowed his family to face great danger in his absence is seen by him as a breach of philia which justifies his desire to take revenge on the traitors: the friends who did not show themselves to be friends by returning their obligation to him have become enemies (v568-86).[21] The desire for revenge, then, leads from "the ubiquitous Greek maxim that one should 'do good to one's friends and harm to one's enemies!'"[22] What Euripides then does is to show how fluid the line between friendship and enmity can be. Heracles sets out to harm those who were friends and have now become enemies but in the process Lyssa, the deification of the madness which possesses a warrior in battle,[23] is sent upon him by Hera (v815f.), and in a blind frenzy he slaughters his own family: he himself becomes an enemy to his philoi and his own dependants.

On awakening from his madness and realizing in shame and horror his terrible breach of philia Heracles wishes to destroy himself as an act of revenge against the killer of his sons, his philoi (v1146-52). It takes the persistence of Theseus' friendship to force Heracles back to an acceptance of his load. Theseus sees friendship as a bond of obligation, as an exchange, as he tells Amphitryon,

> τίνων δ' ἀμοιβὰς ὧν ὑπῆρξεν Ἡρακλῆς
> σώσας με νέρθεν ἦλθον, εἴ τι δεῖ, γέρον,
> ἢ χειρὸς ὑμᾶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἢ συμμάχων.

(v1169-71).

This is the bond which Heracles' other friends broke. Theseus dares to come to the aid of his friend even when Heracles is

polluted by the terrible crime which he has committed; for, as Theseus says, friends are immune to pollution when they are acting to honour their friendship,

> *Ηρ.* φεῦγ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀνόσιον μίασμ' ἐμόν.
> *Θη.* οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων.
> *Ηρ.* ἐπῄνεσ'· εὖ δράσας δέ σ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.
> *Θη.* ἐγὼ δὲ πάσχων εὖ τόθ' οἰκτίρω σε νῦν.

(vl233-36).

The imagery of this passage is startling in the way that it is reminiscent of Thucydides' description of the behaviour of friends during the plague. It is quite possible that the concept of reciprocity and of exchange in philia, seen as a necessary social attribute before, began, with the pressures of the war and the plague, to take on moral connotations which would imply the nobility of self-sacrifice for the right reasons. The behaviour of friends, as Thucydides describes it, and Theseus' support of the polluted Heracles, indicate the strength of the bond of philia in the face of great personal danger; we may even say that there is an element of self-sacrifice in the social attribute which once regarded survival as the paramount virtue.

The relationship between Heracles and Megara, too, reflects the element of self-sacrifice which enters into the matter of preserving philia. Megara and Heracles, as a married couple, have entered a union where, as Aristotle puts it, each party receives what is appropriate.[24] When Megara decides to hand herself and her family over to her enemies, and to die with as much dignity as possible, she attributes this decision to her responsibility to behave properly and not shame her hero-husband,

ὀφείλομεν γὰρ πολλὰ δώμασιν καλά·
σὲ μὲν δόκησις ἔλαβεν εὐκλεὴς δορός,
ὥστ' οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν δειλίας θανεῖν σ' ὕπο,
οὐμὸς δ' ἀμαρτύρητος εὐκλεὴς πόσις,
ὃς τούσδε παῖδας οὐκ ἂν ἐκκῶσαι θέλοι
δόξαν κακὴν λαβόντας· οἱ γὰρ εὐγενεῖς
κάμνουσι τοῖς αἰσχροῖσι τῶν τέκνων ὕπερ·
ἐμοί τε μίμημ' ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἀπωστέον.

(v287-94)

Heracles' due, in this marriage, is that his wife and sons behave in a manner fitting of him. As Megara says, she must imitate the glory of her husband (v294). In this case, of course, her showing of philia to her husband entails her own death; and so we meet the common motif in Euripides' work of a woman who is prepared to die to save the bond of philia between herself and her husband. The Alcestis of 438 had dealt almost exclusively with this theme, and it is interesting to note that twenty-one years later a woman's self-sacrifice was still a central notion of Euripides' concept of philia. The Heracles is interesting too in that the Chorus of Theban Elders and Theseus also take great risks in their practice of philia, indicating that not only women risked their lives for the preservation of philia; in all of Euripides' other surviving plays, however, women are seen trying to preserve philia where men are intent on breaking it, and so this play is important in that it indicates Euripides' general interest in the theme of philia and all which that concept entails, rather than his use of it as a means by which to portray particularly the position of women. If we can thus accept that Euripides' approach to the position of women in Athens in his time is not polemical then his depiction of the tension between men and women becomes all the more valuable as an indication of social conditions of the time; consequently, it becomes more interesting to note how he

uses themes connected with women in order to create his plays.

Heracles' part of the bargain in his relationship to Megara is indicated in his sorrow at his murderous betrayal of her devotion to him,

> *σέ τ' οὐχ ὁμοίως, ὦ τάλαιν', ἀπώλεσα*
> *ὥσπερ σὺ τἀμὰ λέκτρ' ἔσωιζες ἀσφαλῶς,*
> *μακρὰς διαντλοῦς' ἐν δόμοις οἰκουρίας.*

(v1371-3).

The implication is that Heracles should have protected and honoured his wife for her loyalty to him and her devotion to the bond between them. As he had indicated earlier, his main priority should have been the protection of his family (v568-82) and, in speaking of the dangers which his children face in his absence, the Chorus implies that his absence is a failure on his part (v442-50). Heracles, in other words, has failed as a philos both in his absence from his family and in his actual, unwitting annihilation of them. It takes only the great friendship of Theseus to save him and redeem him, as he himself implies in his comment on the closeness between himself and Theseus,

> *ζεῦγός γε φίλιον· ἄτερος δὲ δυστυχής.*
> *ὦ πρέσβυ, τοιόνδ' ἄνδρα χρὴ κτᾶσθαι φίλον.*

(v1403-4).

In the wretched state in which he finds himself, Heracles could have no higher commendation for a friend.

In this analysis of the Heracles the play has been dealt with as a test case on the subject of philia. It deals with the betrayal of philia by a protector who is absent, by a man who kills his kin, and by friends who prefer to neglect their duties as philoi rather than face danger. This betrayal of philia is seen by Heracles as just cause for revenge; for

friends who are not true to philia become enemies. On the other hand we have those whose intention is the preservation of philia: Megara is prepared to give herself to death in order to be true to her husband's reputation; the old men of Thebes are prepared to face danger in their support of Heracles' dependents; Theseus has no fear of pollution when he insists on standing by his friend Heracles as an exchange for Heracles' past friendship towards him.

So we have seen, in this play which stands approximately at the chronological centre of Euripides' extant work, the mechanics of philia in his conception of it. The essence of philia, then, is seen to be a bond, an exchange of responsibilities, which one might be prepared to preserve by an action of self-sacrifice or the breaking of which would constitute just grounds for revenge. It remains now to be seen how the concept of philia governs women in their actions, in their acts of sacrifice and in their acts of revenge.

CHAPTER FOUR

SACRIFICE AND REVENGE OF WOMEN

As we have seen in the previous chapter Greek society in the time of Euripides saw a normal relationship between a man and a woman as one in which the woman is completely subordinate to the man and is governed by strict precepts of social behaviour. This situation prevails in Euripides' tragedies, too, and is accepted as normal by the protagonists. The women in the plays, however, find themselves at a period of crisis in their lives, in which normality, of course, has little chance of remaining intact. In looking at the nature of the crises which women face it is unavoidable to note their comments and pictures of normal married life as they express them, whether they be spoken in anger, in sorrow, or in yearning recollection.[1]

The Alcestis of 438, being the first extant play of Euripides',[2] provides the first exposition on a woman's place in the home. Alcestis is dying so that her husband might live, and this situation provides an opportunity for society to heap praise on her as a dutiful wife and for herself to speak of the nature of the life which she is losing. As her servant says, how much more could a woman do to show her husband that she honours him above herself than to die for him? (Alc. v152-5). The Chorus of Old Men describes Alcestis as being ἀρίστη on account of her sacrifice (Alc. v83). The emotion generated by her sacrifice causes the Chorus and the nurse to react thus, but it is evident throughout the play that Alcestis has been a dutiful wife all along. Before she dies, her main concern is the well-being of her children: she commends them to Hestia, the symbolic centre of the house, so that the unity of her

family may be preserved despite her death (Alc. v163-9); for this reason too she demands that Admetos does not take another wife, does not subject their children to a stepmother who would hate them (Alc. v309-10).[3] Alcestis sees her death as resulting from her inability to betray the philia between herself and her husband. In addressing her bed, the symbol of her marriage, she states that,

προδοῦναι γάρ σ' ἀνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν
θνήσκω

(Alc. v180-1).

She realizes, too, that her children stand a better chance of survival if they have their father rather than their mother as their sole parent (Alc. vv287-8, 377)[4] Finally, Alcestis' talent as a housekeeper is brought to our attention by Admetus' sorrowful walking through his now barren house, mourning his wife and the desolation which her death has brought on his house (Alc. v941f.), a house that was previously portrayed as a place of plenty (Alc. vv10,569). So Alcestis is portrayed as a good wife, a good mother, and a good housekeeper, who expressed the depth of her love and her loyalty with the greatest sacrifice. Clytaimnestra in the Iphigeneia in Aulis of 405 B.C. describes the duty of a good wife when she says to Agamemnon,

οὔ σοι καταλλαχθεῖσα περὶ σὲ καὶ δόμους
συμμαρτυρήσειε ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἡ γυνή,
ἥ τ' Ἀφροδίτην σωφρονοῦσα καὶ τὸ σὸν
μέλαθρον αὔξουσ', ὥστε σ' εἰσιόντα τε
χαίρειν θύραζέ τ' ἐξιόντ' εὐδαιμονεῖν.
σπάνιον δὲ θήρευμ' ἀνδρὶ τοιαύτην λαβεῖν
δάμαρτα· φλαύρων δ' οὐ σπάνις γυναῖκ' ἔχειν.

(I.A. v1157-63)

This image of the wife's worth being evaluated as her modesty and blamelessness (ἄμεμπτος ἡ γυνή , v1158), and her share in the increase of her husband's house, is the same as that projected in the Alcestis of more than thirty years earlier.

In the Medea of 431 Medea's great speech on the position of women in their relationship with their husbands is a bitter cry against injustice and is a rich source of information on the tension between man and woman and the unequal relationship between them[5] (Med. v230-51). She describes a situation in which a woman's dependence on a man is complete while her expectations of him are minimal; she is describing, in effect, a completely male-dominated society. She speaks of woman's position as the lowest of all living things (Med. v230-1); of the dowry system in which a woman pays an exorbitant sum only to take a master upon her body - for to be without a husband is even worse (Med. v232-4); of how a woman is stuck with the husband she gets, for she cannot easily escape from her marriage, nor can she reject it, (Med. v235-7); of how hard a woman has to try to adapt to her husband's habits and the customs of his land (Med. v238-40); of how, even after her trying so hard, it depends purely on the husband's nature whether the wife's life will be enviable or worse than death (Med. v241-3). Men, on the other hand, she describes as being independent of their wives in that when they are bored at home they are free to seek entertainment elsewhere, while the women wait for them, secluded in the house (Med. v244-7). Finally, she attacks what must be the ideological foundation of this behaviour of males - the argument that men are entitled to their pleasure at the expense of their wives for they are the ones who risk their lives in war to protect the women. Medea claims that childbirth (on which men's wealth and glory depend) is far more dangerous than fighting a battle behind a shield (Med. v248-51). The Chorus of Corinthian Women do not disagree with Medea, saying that her rage against her husband is justified (Med. v267-8). The implication is that the picture of married life which Medea has presented is accurate, and that she has put up with what she considers to be an unjust situation because that is the norm. It is only when she has

been wronged with regard to her marriage bed, the symbol of her marriage, that she can no longer accept the situation and her thoughts turn to revenge[6] (Med. v263-6). Similarly, Clytaimnestra of the Iphigeneia in Aulis warns Agamemnon that by killing their daughter he will be opening himself to a wicked reaction on her part (I.A. v1180-84). In the Electra of about 417 Clytaimnestra tells Electra that eventually it was not to avenge Iphigeneia that she killed Agamemnon but in reaction to his arriving from Troy with a new bedmate (El. v1030-34). Medea and Clytaimnestra are depicted as strong women who are not prepared to accept injustice beyond what constitutes the norm. Unlike Andromache (Andr. v222-5) they are not prepared to put up with their husband's infidelity for the sake of remaining married to him. Medea and Clytaimnestra have been pushed by their husbands' behaviour into reacting against what they see as an unjust system of double standards; as Clytaimnestra puts it,

> μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·
> ὅταν δ', ὑπάντος τοῦδ', ἁμαρτάνῃ πόσις
> τἄνδον παρώσας λέκτρα, μιμεῖσθαι θέλει
> γυνὴ τὸν ἄνδρα χἀτέρου κτᾶσθαι φίλον.
> κἄπειτ' ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ ψόγος λαμπρύνεται,
> οἱ δ' αἴτιοι τῶνδ' οὐ κλύουσ' ἄνδρες κακῶς

(El. v1035-40)

As things stand in the world a woman's bed, the sexual symbol of her marriage, is all that she can expect to keep inviolate, yet even here she is betrayed. In the Alcestis we see a woman die to save the honour of her λέχος (Alc. v180-1); yet men are quick to betray that very bed while condemning the wives who imitate them (El. v1039). Medea and Clytaimnestra, then, are prepared to put up with their husbands in a relationship which they consider unjust, for philia between man and wife is accepted as being prejudiced in favour of the husband. The moment, however, that the husband breaks the terms of the agreement between them, they are quick to seek retribution.

In the Hippolytus of 428 Phaedra is like Alcestis in that she is prepared to die in order to save the honour of her bed (Hip. v419-23), and like Medea and Clytaimnestra she is well aware of the social prejudice against women, as she indicates when reflecting on her adulterous passion,

> τὸ δ' ἔργον ἤδη τὴν νόσον τε δυσκλεᾶ,
> γυνή τε πρὸς τοῖσδ' οὖσ' ἐγίγνωσκον καλῶς,
> μίσημα πᾶσιν. ὡς ὅλοιτο παγκάκως
> ἥτις πρὸς ἄνδρας ἦρξατ' αἰσχύνειν λέχη
> πρώτη θυραίους

(Hip. v405-9).

Phaedra, in her great struggle with herself, believes that the prejudice against women derives from the disgraceful behaviour of certain of their predecessors; in other words, by admitting the guilt of women she is trying to make her own desire for Hippolytus as unattractive to herself as possible. When her battle is lost, however, and her secret passion has become known to Hippolytus, she is afraid that he will broadcast her infamy to the world and that, being a woman, she will have no defence against the "knot that words have tied" (Hip. v669-71). In order to protect her good name Phaedra is driven to destroy herself and to discredit and destroy Hippolytus (Hip. vv715-18, 720-21, 729-31). Her frantic but vain efforts to protect her good name are the result of her sense of loyalty to Theseus and to her children, she cannot bear to taint them with any base behaviour on her part (Hip. v419-23).

Phaedra's willingness to go to any lengths to preserve the honour of her family is similar to Megara's decision to die in a manner befitting the wife of the great Heracles. The Heracles, dated between 416 and 414,[7] deals in great detail with the concept of philia[8]. Part of Megara's duty as the wife of Heracles is expressed by her decision to face death at the hands of the usurping tyrant Lycus willingly and with dignity now that all hope of salvation appears to be lost,

rather than die by fire, cowering at her sanctuary (Her. v287-94); for, she says, in this as in all things, she must imitate her husband,

ἐμοί τε μίμημ' ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἀπωστέον.

(Her. v294)

In the Andromache the persecuted heroine is prepared to give her own life to save her son Molossos from the deadly jealousy of her master's wife and father-in-law (Andr. v413-14). This, of course, is not the same as dying out of a sense of duty to her husband, but it places her into the pattern of women willing to sacrifice themselves in order to save their kin, often because they cannot bear to live bereaved of their loved ones. Macaria of the Heracleidae (of about 430) gives several reasons for her decision to offer her life to save her brothers: she says that the children of Heracles must stand up and offer something in exchange for the help and protection which the Athenians have offered them (Hcld. v503-7) now that Demeter demands the sacrifice of a noble young woman so that the Athenians can win their battle to save them (Hcld. v405-9); the children of Heracles, she says, must live up to their father's reputation for bravery (Hcld. v507-11); and, finally, she could not live if she were to survive the death of her brothers (Hcld. v520-3) even though she knows that people have been known to betray their philoi in order to save themselves,

—πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη τῇδε προύδοσαν φίλους.—

(Hcld. v522)

To this sense of duty to her kin and to the heavy legacy of their father, Macaria adds her awareness that such a sacrifice as hers is preferable to living life as a coward for it is a death, which, like that of Alcestis, will win her the best reputation,[9]

ἑκοῦσα κοὐκ ἄκουσα· κἀξαγγέλλομαι
θνήσκειν ἀδελφῶν τῶνδε κἀμαυτῆς ὕπερ.
εὕρημα γάρ τοι μὴ φιλοψυχοῦσ' ἐγὼ

κάλλιστον ἡμῖν, εὐκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον.

(Hcld. v531-4).

The Chorus of Old Men of Marathon and Iolaus are quick to give her her due both for her noble action and for being a daughter worthy of her father Heracles (Hcld. v535-41).

It is interesting to note that in approaching the men in order to volunteer her life, Macaria is very careful to apologize for her brazenness in venturing out of the house, which is her rightful place (Hcld. v474-7). This strict code of behaviour is reflected in Electra's husband's shock on seeing her talking to strangers outside the house (El. v341-4). The culmination of this strict code of feminine behaviour comes with Polyxena's sacrifice in the Hecuba. Faced with the sacrificial knife she shows such a sense of patriotic pride that she moves the enemy army to cry for her release (Hec. v545-53), yet she insists on dying, and, as she falls dying to the ground, she is careful to keep hiding "what should be hidden from male eyes" (Hec. v568-70), so moving once again the Greek army to wonder at her courage (Hec. v577-80). Polyxena, in other words, is one of Euripides' heroines who pluck glory from their destruction by emphasizing their compliance with accepted principles of feminine behaviour. In the Hippolytus Phaedra's tragedy is that no matter how much she yearns to achieve the same kind of success (Hip. vv329, 331) it is denied her. The theme, however, of women and girls who are sacrificed to their own greater glory leads to the extreme situation where women are referred to as being inferior in value to men and therefore expendable. Iphigeneia says as much in Iphigeneia among the Taurians

οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐκ δομων
θανὼν ποθεινός, τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ.

(I.T. v1005-6)

The same character, this time in the Iphigeneia in Aulis, makes the same comment, but on a larger scale,

εἷς γ' ἀνὴρ κρείσσων γυναικῶν μυρίων ὁρᾶν φάος.

(I.A. v1394)

Iphigeneia, of course, is the epitomy of a sacrificial victim and it is only natural that she should be so oppressed as to take on completely the values of her oppressors.[10]

Evadne's death in The Suppliant Women comes not out of any sense of duty, but out of the love which she feels for her dead husband Capaneus; she refers to her suicide as her wish to lie with her husband, continuing in death their philia. She calls her death the sweetest death,

ἥδιστος γάρ τοι θάνατος
συνθνήισκειν θνήισκουσι φίλοις,

(Sup. v1006-7)

In v.1020 she speaks of her flesh mingling with that of her τόσει φίλωι, and, finally, as she falls into her husband's pyre she tells her father that she is renouncing the philia between herself and him in order to be with her husband,

ὅμοιον· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κίχηις μ' ἑλὼν χερί.
καὶ δὴ παρεῖται σῶμα, σοὶ μὲν οὐ φίλον,
ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῶι συμπυρουμένωι πόσει.

(Sup. v1069-71)

Evadne's vision of philia then is one of love and closeness, it is a purely emotional bond unlike the conception of it in most of the other plays as a bond which holds women to a specific code of behaviour. In The Phoenician Women Jocasta kills herself in despair over her failure to keep her sons from killing each other (Ph. vv1280-82, 1455-59). Jocasta dies with her arms around both her dead sons, bringing them together in death, if not in life,

ἐν δὲ τοῖσι φιλτάτοις
θανοῦσα κεῖται περιβαλοῦσ' ἀμφοῖν χέρας.

(Ph. v1458-59)

Jocasta's love for her sons, which the Phoenician Women

attribute to the mother's pain in childbirth, had made her try to end the struggle between them which Polyneices had defined as a terrible breach of philia (Ph v374) and which Jocasta, in the Prologue, attributed to Eteocles' breaking of the agreement between the two brothers to alternate their rule over Thebes annually (Ph. v71-76). Both Evadne's and Jocasta's suicides, then, are the results of their wish to extend philia beyond death. They do not die out of any sense of duty nor do they express any wish for acknowledgement of their sacrifice, for death is not expected of them; it does not serve any purpose or benefit anyone else.

We do not need to take into account bursts of male misogyny[11] to see that the women's lot, as it is presented in Euripides' plays is hardly enviable. Indeed, two of the women who die for the sakes of their husbands, Alcestis and Phaedra, are both mourned by their husbands in very loving and very similar terms, even though the one is well aware of the reasons for his wife's death while the other is not.[12] Even under the best of circumstances it is evident that women live a life of discretion and seclusion,[13] their whole being focussed on providing for their husbands, making their houses wealthy,[14] giving them children,[15] protecting their honour and that of their house,[16] tolerating double standards of behaviour,[17] and dying, either out of loyalty or love (or both), for their husbands or their kin.[18]

In the plays discussed above, then, it appears that the sacrifice of women occurs both in domestic circumstances and in times of war when their men are killed and when they become victims of the enemy or their own grief.[19] When women decide to die for the sake of their husband - either to save his life, or to protect his honour, or out of love for him after he has died (or when a girl such as Megara dies to save her kin) -

their reason is that they die in order to preserve the bond of philia between themselves and those who are their philoi: their close ones, their loved ones, the ones with whom they are interdependant. Whether a woman offers her life, as Alcestis does, or it is demanded of her, as is Polyxena's in the Hecuba, she goes to her death with remarkable courage and emphasizes her femininity with her death: Alcestis makes sure that Admetus is well aware of the value of her sacrifice for him; Polyxena shows such courage and propriety that she shocks the Greek army into admiration of her. In these cases, the willing sacrifice of women elicits admiration for them and expressions that they are truly valuable women and wives.[20] Except for the instances of Polyxena and Iphigeneia, who have no choice but to die, the women who are sacrificed in the plays of Euripides are willing to die in order to preserve a bond of philia which is threatened by an outside force. Evadne and Jocasta are too late to save that bond in life and so they reconstruct it with their philoi in death. Sacrifice is either chosen by women, or, when it is demanded of them, accepted with noble resignation. In other words, they choose to act in this self-destructive manner, finding in it their highest praise and the highest expression of their womanhood. It is, paradoxically, within the world in which they are presented, the highest form of self-expression. The reason for their willingness to die for their kin is philia, for the lives of women are described as being so limited in variety and so dependent on men that, in comparison to men who are rooted to their land and their habits, they can best be described as being in perpetual exile. When a woman is involved in a relationship in which she gets the amount of philia due to her in the accepted equality of proportion then philia is her harbour in the exile of her life, and as such is worth dying for. On the nature of the union between husband and wife, and of the unit which they form, Homer offers the finest

description,[21] taking into account both the social aspect of marriage and the intimate bond of love between husband and wife:

οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον,
ἢ ὅθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχητον
ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή· πάλλ' ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι,
χάρματα δ' εὐμενέτῃσι· μάλιστα δέ τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοί.

When, however, the bond, or balance of philia is broken by one who is philos, then the thoughts of the women turn to revenge as a reaction against an unforgivable crime. Our discussion of philia and of the Heracles[22] has shown that in the plays of Euripides philia is a reciprocal bond which needs careful nurturing in order to survive, and that when that bond is broken those that were held by it become enemies. We have noted above that Medea and Clytaimnestra put up with what they deem to be an unjust balance in their relationships with their husbands, until their husbands' violating of the sanctuary of their beds.[23] When Jason betrays Medea the nurse refers to her as δύστηνος ἠτιμασμένη (Med. vv20, 33) and Medea refers to Jason's behaviour as an insult against her (ὑβρίζομαι , Med. v255). Clytaimnestra, too, refers to her husband's behaviour as wrong, while acknowledging that women are fools for love in placing so much emphasis on their husband's fidelity (El. v1032-35). As this is the area in marriage in which men are most often at fault they, in turn, are quick to criticize women's single-minded preoccupation with their sex-lives, as Jason indicates (Med. vv569-73, 1338, 1367) and as Clytaimnestra implies with the defensive,

μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·

(El. v1035)

Medea and Clytaimnestra, then, are driven to take their revenge by what we might term feelings of sexual jealousy but which for them are feelings of outrage at the breach of philia which

results in their public shame. As Dodds puts it, in terms of men in the same culture, "anything which exposes a man to the contempt or ridicule of his fellows, which causes him 'to lose face', is felt as unbearable."[24] It is the pride of Medea and Clytaimnestra which inspires them to react with such violence to the insults which their husbands deal them and to take such brutal revenge: the one by killing her children to spite her husband, the other by taking a lover and killing her husband. In both instances these women act in defiance of the opinion of a society which they have always considered to be unjust towards them.

Hermione's wish in the Andromache to have her husband's concubine killed is based on a much simpler form of sexual jealousy, as Andromache indicates in the Prologue (Andr. v29-35), for she does not see Andromache as the unwilling victim of her husband but rather as a dangerous rival for her husband's love. Hermione is afraid that by being childless she will be ousted easily from her marriage.[25] Instead of rebelling against such an unjust system of dependence on her husband she turns on Andromache, who is more of a victim than herself. Creusa's rage against Ion and Xuthus, too, depends on her fear of childlessness,

> οὐ πόσις ἡμῶν προδότης γέγονεν;
> στέρομαι δ' οἴκων, στέρομαι παίδων,
> φροῦδαι δ' ἐλπίδες,

(Ion v864-66).

She does not know that what she considers to be her husband's betrayal, his adoption of Ion, will result not in a breach of their philia but in her finding her son, a discovery which Ion refers to as a rebirth, or rather a literal and figurative escape from death:

> ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη μοι μῆτερ, ἐν χεροῖν σέθεν
> ὁ κατθανών τε κοὐ θανὼν φαντάζομαι.

(Ion v1443-44).

While she considered Ion to be her enemy, however, Creusa was well aware that she was conforming to the stereotype of the barren stepmother who is an enemy to her husband's children (Ion v1024-25), and Ion himself gives a good exposition on the reasons for a stepmother's hatred (Ion v607-20) and once again this is based on her childlessness (Ion vv613, 619). Finally, as the Priestess tells Ion, a stepmother always hates her stepchildren (Ion v1329). This is what Alcestis wishes to spare her children when she demands of Admetus that he never remarry (Alc. v309-10). The nurse in the Hippolytus touches on the aspect of the rivalry between a stepmother when she is not barren, and a stepchild, in her need to secure the future of her children lest they be at a disadvantage to the elder child of their father (Hip. v305-10). Phaedra, of course, holds no such enmity towards Hippolytus, but when she dies she plans that her death be the means of her revenge on him (Hip. v728-31). Her motives against Hippolytus are governed by his extra-ordinary attack on her when the Nurse, without Phaedra's knowledge, tells him of his stepmother's secret passion for him (Hip. v670-75); and Hippolytus' outrage at the Nurse's suggestion pierces Phaedra to the core, for she herself is as disgusted by her passion for him as he is and she finds it completely unfair to be so condemned of lasciviousness by a young man who talks continually of σωφροσύνη but who has no inkling of the meaning of moderation and self-restraint. The moment of total rejection of the family bond between Hippolytus and Phaedra comes when he rejects the Nurse's attempt to silence him with an appeal to his sense of philia:

> Τρ. ὦ παῖ, τί δράσεις; σοὺς φίλους διεργάσῃ;
> Ιπ. ἀπέπτυσ'· οὐδεὶς ἄδικός ἐστί μοι φίλος.

(Hip. v613-14).

This is probably the moment when Phaedra becomes his implacable enemy; for we see in the play her concern with behaving properly within the bounds of philia and so such an accusation

must wound her deeply (especially in the light of her earlier reference to Hippolytus as philos, v319).

Finally, there are the two instances of women, Alcmene and Hecuba, who take revenge on people outside their immediate family for crimes committed against their family rather than against themselves as women. In the first instance, Alcmene's revenge on Eurystheus in the Heracleidae is a case of revenge taken on an implacable enemy who has been defeated. What is interesting is her statement that revenge is an unfeminine notion,

> τοῦτον δ', ἐπείπερ χεῖρας ἦλθεν εἰς ἐμάς,
> οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται.
> πρὸς ταῦτα τὴν θρασεῖαν ὅστις ἂν θέλῃ
> καὶ τὴν φρονοῦσαν μεῖζον ἢ γυναῖκα χρὴ
> λέξει· τὸ δ' ἔργον τοῦτ' ἐμοὶ πεπράξεται.

(Hcld. 976-80)

Alcemene is able to say this for she is not gripped by an emotional wish for revenge while in a moment of great crisis. For her the battle has been won and now she will take her revenge. The other women in Euripides' plays, however, see their revenge as the battle itself and, though they have no time to think it, their language implies that revenge is a masculine undertaking (Med. v1242); their preparation for it, too, implies that revenge is not for women - for example, Electra's chosen self-deprivation (El. v190-212) implies that she needs to keep her hatred alive in order to be ready to take her revenge. Hecuba's revenge on the guest-murdering Polymestor in the Hecuba results in the loss of her very humanity, but, as Medea states after her revenge, the price is of no account when the revenge has been complete (Med. v1361-62; Hec. v1274). Medea and Hecuba are similar also in the emphatic way in which they state that when women are pushed too far they are well capable of taking their revenge (Med.

v265-66; Hec. v.885-88). Medea's killing of her children and Hecuba's killing of Polymestor's children and her blinding of him to avenge his murder of her son who was his guest, result in these women being depicted as losing their humanity. Their contention, however, has been that their enemies drove them to such murderous lengths. Their enemies drove them to behave in this unfeminine manner.

Revenge in the plays of Euripides, then, when carried out by women seems to be a reaction against what they perceive as terrible wrongs, and is usually self-destructive and a negation of themselves as women. The implication is that when these women are pushed too far they go beyond the limits of accepted social behaviour and feel no qualms at attempting to lower their enemies to their level. In effect, they operate in a world in which no social bonds apply - bonds such as philia - for those bonds have been broken by others; a world where friends become enemies, where women can behave like men. Revenge, then, is portrayed as being a reaction against the breaking of bonds while sacrifice, as we have discussed above, is a wilfully accepted act which is performed in order to preserve a bond of philia and which is acclaimed as a feminine form of behaviour. In the plays of Euripides these are the two situations - crises - in which women most often find themselves.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ALCESTIS

The first time we meet the theme of a woman's sacrifice in the work of Euripides is in the Alcestis of 438, his earliest extant play. In it Euripides uses the story of a woman's self-sacrifice for the sake of her husband as the basis for an investigation into personal responsibility before death. As this play occupied the position within a tetralogy normally reserved for a satyr play, and because it contains certain features which might be seen as satyric, modern scholars have been most divided in their interpretations of it. On the one hand Albin Lesky may say, "Isolated burlesque features in the appearance of Thanatos or the drunken Herakles have been immeasurably exaggerated to support...a (comic) view. The Alcestis is a genuine tragedy, at least in the ancient sense of the word."[1] Another critic, however, might have an objection that, "We find, in disturbing proximity, the grave and the gay, or what is worse the grave and the flippant."[2] Both viewpoints are acceptable: the play is a sequence of movements from light to dark to light, of moods which mingle and part, until the final resolution which is joy tinged with sombre relief. In her introduction to the standard edition[3] of the Alcestis A.M. Dale points out that Heracles and Death are portrayed as stock satyric figures, "Here we have the figure of Heracles presented in a manner discreetly reminiscent of the traditional burlesque Heracles, the coarse glutton and drunkard who rouses himself to perform prodigious feats of strength against the local monster or bully" and, "Death...is not the majestic king throned in the underworld but the ogreish creature of popular fancy, a monster like so many adversaries of the hero." She also notes of the wrestling bout of the two,

perhaps the most burlesque feature of the play, that "the episode is passed over very lightly."[4] We know that Phrynichus dealt with the story of Alcestis and Admetus in an earlier play, but we do not know if he dealt with it as a satyr play[5], and we know of nowhere else where the material may have been dealt with in comic terms.

Clearly, then, there are no grounds for consensus on this play if one seeks absolutes, if one sees it in terms of either tragedy or comedy; both views are correct yet they are insufficient for a description of the play. Nor is it a tragi-comedy, a term proposed by H.D.F. Kitto with regard to the Alcestis, the Iphigeneia among the Taurians, the Ion, and the Helen[6]. Whereas one may describe scenes in drama as tragi-comic, as combining serious motives for pain with laughter, it is impractical to describe a play in such an ambiguous way: it is a descriptive rather than a qualitative term, it describes the alternation of light and dark scenes in the play rather than dealing with the themes of the play and with the final impression which it leaves on the audience. Calling the Alcestis a tragi-comedy would be as inappropriate as calling Hamlet by that name on the strength of the gravedigger scene - a scene which in itself might be termed tragi-comic.

We now place ourselves in the position of claiming that there can be no objective interpretation of the Alcestis and so of necessity we must argue from a subjective point of view. In this case we shall attempt the subjective point of view in terms of the audience. Audiences may be described in the broadest and in the most specific terms in order to arrive at some assumption of their view. For our purpose in dealing with the Alcestis it suffices that the audience be mortal, the broadest possible category. This may appear as a somewhat

obvious point to make, yet it must not be ignored in any way for it is through the emotions of his audience that Euripides created the depth of this play.

The play is a tragedy with comic elements. The essential comedy of the play, however, is not, as most critics claim, so much in the portrayals of Thanatos and Heracles. The"lightness" of the play is that the absolute nature of death is brought into question. In witnessing the encounter between Apollo and Thanatos at the beginning of the play (v 28-76) the audience might gain the impression that death, the δίκη of which the two speak,[7] may not be the fearsome absolute which they know it to be. The bold god of light, armed with his bow and arrows, and the trembling ogre Thanatos point to a time and a place in which human mortality was not certain, in which only recently Asclepius had been killed by Zeus for daring to revolt against the concept of death (v 4); and at the end of the play the audience will see a mortal cheat death. The audience, however, knows that death is inescapable and absolute, that the debate which they are witnessing (and the whole play is a debate on the subject of death) is obviously unreal - it is a hypothetical, somewhat pre-lapsarian situation in which the results of human behaviour are different to what they are in the real world. This might imply that the play is simply a comedy, a fantasy, in which the laws of nature have not yet been fixed, in which there is hope of redemption from death; but despite this the lasting impression is one of tragedy. The audience knows that what it is witnessing is a fantasy, it knows that death is certain and terrifying, that Alcestis' resolution and fear are real and noble, that Admetus' grief is real and unabating, that Pheres' cowardice is unashamedly human. The play may end happily for Alcestis and Admetus, but the members of the audience know that for them death has been cheated, not defeated.

This is the world in which Alcestis acts. She intrudes on the world of a fairy-tale with the reality of her suffering and her sacrifice.

From Apollo's Prologue we learn that Alcestis is to die this very day so that Admetus may live; the sacrifice is thus set within strictly domestic limits. Alcestis dies neither for the good of the state[8] nor at the bidding of any god[9]. She dies out of a feeling of duty towards her husband, or out of love for him; or both, as we shall see in our discussion. This reason for dying has struck many modern scholars as trivial and unjust, and they have sought for irony behind the great social approval granted Alcestis as an explanation for her sacrifice. This they do by seeing Admetus either as laughable or as stupidly shameful.[10] To see Admetus as a stock and unsympathetic figure, however, would detract much from the nobility of Alcestis' character and from the tragic feeling of the play: we need Admetus' waking to mourning (ἄρτι μανθάνω, v 940) in order to realize the full value of Alcestis' sacrifice. Euripides needs two real people to face a terrifying situation, to partake of tragedy, for this is what gives a tragic dimension to the myth; a myth which is a combination of two fairy-tales - one of sacrifice for the sake of love and one of a wrestling bout with death.[11] The tragedy works on several levels: firstly, it is tragic that in making a correct choice Alcestis is forced to lose her life, and, secondly, that in making a wrong choice Admetus loses the quality of the life which he sought to save. Tragedy, it would seem, is a matter both of inevitability and of choice. But this is an intellectual view of tragedy and its argument would be cancelled by Heracles' rescue of Alcestis' life and Admetus' honour: in tragedy there are no second chances. The matter of the play, however, is the intensity of emotions in Alcestis's frightened resignation at her impending death, in the

inconsolate sorrow of Admetus, in the grief of the servants, and in the bitterly violent quarrel between Admetus and Pheres. It is this intensity which creates the feeling of tragedy beyond the rescue and the happy ending. Alcestis disappears early from the scene (v 391) but has been portrayed so vividly and has been so described by others that her absence and Admetus' sorrow make her presence felt throughout the play. Admetus' ensuing growth towards a better understanding of life and of himself may be interpreted as the benevolent result of Alcestis' self-sacrifice. It is the benefit done to Admetus which makes her sacrifice meaningful, and it is meaningful only if Admetus is worthy of such a gift. Alcestis' sacrifice will be of value to her too if it is seen to be an act of self-affirmation, an act calculated to succeed, to achieve an aim which she desires. By looking in this direction we may ask the question, "What can move a human being to a freely chosen act that is in the interest of another but against his own?"[12] By investigating the motives for Alcestis' actions we may judge her failure or her success rather than be seduced by an analysis which sees the play simply as the victimisation of a woman by a male-dominated society.

Apollo describes Admetus as an ὅσιος ἀνήρ (v 10) and then tells of how he himself tricked the Moirae into prolonging Admetus' life on condition that he find a substitute to die in his stead (v 10-14). Admetus found only his wife willing to die for him, after both his parents had refused his plea (v 16-18). Apollo does not indicate when this search took place, when Alcestis agreed to die. Lesky claims that "we may ascribe to Euripides the detail that his heroine must sacrifice herself not on her wedding day, but only after a full life as wife and mother."[13] The consequences of this innovation are important on two counts: any baseness which might be construed in

Admetus' plea for a saviour is lost in the past; and we know that Alcestis goes to her death not as a young bride making a promise on the spur of the moment but as a mature woman, a wife and mother who knows her worth and is prepared to make terms in exchange for what she is offering. Plato's Symposium[14] offers a fascinating exposition of this distinction. Phaedrus first brings up the topic (179c),

> Καὶ μὴν ὑπεραποθνήσκειν γε μόνοι ἐθέλουσιν οἱ ἐρῶντες, οὐ μόνον ὅτι ἄνδρες, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες. τούτου δὲ καὶ ἡ Πελίου θυγάτηρ Ἄλκηστις ἱκανὴν μαρτυρίαν παρέχεται ὑπὲρ τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἐθελήσασα μόνη ὑπὲρ τοῦ αὐτῆς ἀνδρὸς ἀποθανεῖν, ὄντων αὐτῷ πατρός τε καὶ μητρός· οὕς ἐκείνη τοσοῦτον ὑπερεβάλετο τῇ φιλίᾳ διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα, ὥστε ἀποδεῖξαι αὐτοὺς ἀλλοτρίους ὄντας τῷ υἱεῖ καὶ ὀνόματι μόνον προσήκοντας· καὶ τοῦτ' ἐργασαμένη τὸ ἔργον οὕτω καλὸν ἔδοξεν ἐργάσασθαι οὐ μόνον ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ καὶ θεοῖς, ὥστε πολλῶν πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἐργασαμένων εὐαριθμήτοις δή τισιν ἔδοσαν τοῦτο γέρας οἱ θεοί, ἐξ Ἅιδου ἀνεῖναι πάλιν τὴν ψυχήν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐκείνης ἀνεῖσαν ἀγασθέντες τῷ ἔργῳ· οὕτω καὶ θεοὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα σπουδήν τε καὶ ἀρετὴν μάλιστα τιμῶσιν.

There is nothing wrong with Phaedrus' opinion, indeed the point that Alcestis' love was stronger than the ties of blood between Admetus and his parents is an important aspect of the play. Socrates' somewhat more cynical reply, however, strikes us as more perceptive, for he sees Alcestis' act as a combination of an idealistic promise made in the past and a precondition for something else - an act performed by an older and wiser woman than the one who made the promise originally. Socrates' comment[15] is also worth quoting at length:

> ... ἐνθυμηθεὶς
> ὡς δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι
> "καὶ κλέος εἰς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι," καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου κινδύνους τε κινδυνεύειν
> ἕτοιμοί εἰσι πάντας ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων,
> καὶ χρήματ' ἀναλίσκειν καὶ πόνους πονεῖν οὐστινασοῦν καὶ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν. ἐπεὶ οἴει σύ, ἔφη,
> Ἄλκηστιν ὑπὲρ Ἀδμήτου ἀποθανεῖν ἄν, ἢ Ἀχιλλέα Πατρόκλῳ ἐπαποθανεῖν, ἢ προαποθανεῖν τὸν
> ὑμέτερον Κόδρον ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν παίδων,
> μὴ οἰομένους "ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς πέρι"
> ἑαυτῶν ἔσεσθαι, ἣν νῦν ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν;

The Symposium, however, is a discussion on the nature of love and not an investigation into the particulars of Alcestis' case. Phaedrus and Socrates see her sacrifice as an act that could have been carried out either by a man or a woman; only their views on motives differ, and again their views do not take gender into consideration..

Why does Alcestis choose to die? The first words which she speaks in the play are reported by the Servant, the only other woman in the play. She quotes Alcestis addressing the goddess Hestia,

> Δέσποιν', ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔρχομαι κατὰ χθονός,
> πανύστατόν σε προσπίτνουσ' αἰτήσομαι,
> τέκν' ὀρφανεῦσαι τἀμά· καὶ τῷ μὲν φίλην
> σύζευξον ἄλοχον, τῇ δὲ γενναῖον πόσιν.
> μηδ' ὥσπερ αὐτῶν ἡ τεκοῦσ' ἀπόλλυμαι
> θανεῖν ἀώρους παῖδας, ἀλλ' εὐδαίμονας
> ἐν γῇ πατρῴᾳ τερπνὸν ἐκπλῆσαι βίον.

(v 163-9).

Alcestis is here commending her children to Hestia, the divinity who plays a central role in the household, symbolically and in everyday life. As M.P. Nilsson notes on the concept of Hestia, "The central point of the household and of its cult was the fixed hearth in the midst of the large room where the family lived, the ἑστία. The cult was not one of any image but of the hearth itself and of the fire burning on it. Consequently Hestia has often been only incompletely

anthropomorphized; the original conception shows clearly through. The new-born child was received into the bosom of the family by being carried around the hearth. Every meal began and ended with a libation to Hestia, that is to say, upon the hearth... The sense of the proverbial expression 'to sacrifice to Hestia' (Ἑστίᾳ θύειν) shows that no part of the offering upon the hearth was taken away or given to others."[16] Knowing that she is dying Alcestis is here concerned mainly with the well-being of her children. Hestia is the symbol of peaceful domesticity, and is all the more powerful as such a symbol by not being anthropomorphized to any large extent; for Alcestis is thus able to reveal herself in a very personal way, being able to express herself more freely perhaps than she would have had Hestia possessed a definite persona. We see Alcestis' concern with the unity of the family; she beseeches Hestia to replace her as mother (τέκν' ὀρφανεῦσαι τἀμά, v 165), to enlarge on the duty as protector hinted at symbolically in the ritual of carrying the new-born child around the hearth. Alcestis is concerned with the marriages of her son and daughter: let her son find a φίλην wife and her daughter a γενναῖον husband, she says (v 166); and the conclusion of the supplication (v 167-9), that they must not suffer a fate such as hers, might be taken to imply that what she wishes for her children is in antithesis to what she herself has found in marriage. Her mention of herself being destroyed (ἀπόλλυμαι) might betray a sense of bitterness and of resignation, and γῇ πατρῴᾳ seems to complete the antithesis of what she has and what she wishes for her children; for we know that she is a wife in a land not of her birth,[17] a reference to an insecurity inherent in female life. Her wish that her children live a life of happiness in their own country is a wish for a life of comfort and security for them. In this way, then, we might also understand her wish that her daughter find a γενναῖον πόσιν to imply covert criticism of her

husband. The contrary is true, for the word γενναῖος draws attention to itself throughout the play in that it is used liberally to describe both Admetus and Alcestis' act.[18] Indeed, Heracles states that he will save Alcestis and deliver her to Admetus precisely because Admetus' behaviour towards him has been governed by his being γενναῖος (v 853-57). In the same way that Admetus is described predominantly as γενναῖος, Alcestis is defined as φίλην,[19] and this status is exemplified in Admetus' undertaking to accept their children into his care with,

δέχομαι, φίλον γε δῶρον ἐκ φίλης χερός. (v 376).

It is clear, then, that in defining happy marriage for her children Alcestis is not only not criticising her own marriage, but she is holding it up as the model for a good marriage; and nowhere is it implied that Alcestis and Admetus are insincere in relating to each other as γενναῖος and φίλην. In other words, in addressing Hestia Alcestis refers to her death as occurring despite her marriage not because of it. It is noteworthy, too, that in standing before the altar of Hestia, with its associations of symbolic domestic sacrifice, Alcestis is bathed and wearing white (v 159-60), as if she were about to make a ceremonial sacrifice.[20]

The Servant then tells of how Alcestis went from altar to altar in the house, decorating each with myrtle,[21] keeping her composure until she reached her bedroom, whereupon she collapsed on the bed and spoke her heart:

Ὦ λέκτρον, ἔνθα παρθένει' ἔλυσ' ἐγὼ
κορεύματ' ἐκ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, οὗ θνῄσκω πέρι,
χαῖρ'· οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ'· ἀπώλεσας δ' ἐμὲ
μόνην· προδοῦναι γάρ σ' ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν
θνῄσκω. σὲ δ' ἄλλη τις γυνὴ κεκτήσεται,
σώφρων μὲν οὐκ ἂν μᾶλλον, εὐτυχὴς δ' ἴσως.

(v 177-82).

Here, before an object as personal as her marriage-bed, the symbol of marriage just as Hestia is the symbol of the home and family, Alcestis drops all pretence at formality and constraint. She is explicit: the marriage bed, in other words her marriage, has destroyed her (ἀπώλεσας δ' ἐμέ), because she did not wish to betray it (προδοῦναι.. ὀκνοῦσα). There is no escaping the fact that Alcestis is dying because she is married to Admetus, for she baulks at betraying her marriage and her husband. She does not blame her marriage[22], however, for it is evident that she chose to die to protect her honour, to behave correctly; in other words, her death is her interpretation of loyalty.

So far we have seen an Alcestis who conforms to Phaedrus' image of a woman in love. The conclusion of her statement (v 181-2), however, hints at the development which her sacrifice will illustrate, which will conform more to Socrates' interpretation of her act. Here she states that she realizes her expendability, she assumes that another mistress may lie on this marriage-bed (v 181), but she consoles herself with, and takes pride in, the idea that no-one could be more σώφρων (in this case 'dutiful' must be the most appropriate translation) than herself. She believes that hers will be a vain martyrdom if her memory fades from Admetus' mind as all flesh and memory do fade in the course of time and nature (for it would not be remarkable if Admetus were to remarry eventually)[23]; and it is this realization which brings her to exact the promise from Admetus that he will never remarry (v 328ff).

In her farewell speech (v 280ff) Alcestis makes two very important points which explain why she chose to sacrifice herself. Firstly, she could not live parted from Admetus, and secondly, she could not bear to have her children fatherless in the world,

> *οὐκ ἠθέλησα ζῆν ἀποσπασθεῖσά σου*
> *σὺν παισὶν ὀρφανοῖσιν,*
>
> (v 287-8).

On the first point Lesky notes that Alcestis' love is genuine, and he takes the opportunity of absolving Admetus of any culpability in her death. "Only the most arbitrary interpretation could make the line refer to the children alone," he says. "Further, it is important to point out that not once in the whole scene does the poet bring up the question how Admetus might have avoided the situation. An irrevocable, divinely ordained destiny bears down on the couple (247, 297; cf 523)".[24] On the second point it is worth noting that in Euripides' world children without a father were far more helpless (more 'orphaned') than children without a mother.[25] When Alcestis makes the very revealing plea to Admetus,

σὺ νῦν γενοῦ τοῖσδ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ μήτηρ τέκνοις (v 377)

we recognize the logic of her sacrifice: in the world in which the play is set, a man has the power to be both mother and father to his children, but a mother is powerless and cannot be a father to her children, thus leaving the orphaned children exposed and stigmatized in the society. This point is best expressed by Andromache in the Iliad when she mourns the fact that her fatherless, orphaned son, Astyanax, will live in miserable deprivation now that he and she have lost their protector (Book XXII, v 490ff). This fear, which Andromache encounters three times in her life,[26] is the same fear which governs Medea's actions towards her children.[27] For this very reason Alcestis demands that no new wife replace her in her husband's bed (v 300ff). She states with certainty that it is natural for a stepmother to hate the children of the first wife,

ἐχθρὰ γὰρ ἡ 'πιοῦσα μητρυιὰ τέκνοις
τοῖς πρόσθ', ἐχίδνης οὐδὲν ἠπιωτέρα.

(v 309-10).

Ion makes a similar statement when discussing his stepmother Creusa, not knowing that she is his true mother (Ion v 607-17). The reasoning implicit in this antipathy between a woman and her step-children is the mark of a male-dominated

society; a society, in other words, in which circumstances depend on the pleasure of the male members of a relationship. A new wife will have to displace the children of the house in order for her own children to prosper under their father's undivided attention, (cf Medea 514-6), a second wife will hate her husband's children,[28] for her wellbeing depends on pleasing her husband and also on obtaining the best deal for her children so that they might look after her were she one day to find herself without a husband and alone in the world. The wicked stepmother is a stock motif in literature, as Stith Thompson notes in his study of the folktale: "Of cruel relatives in folktales the stepmother appears more often than any other."[29] In Euripides' world we realize that a stepmother's cruelty may be the product of dependence. It is in the light of this hard world that Alcestis makes her choice to die, and her decision is based on a sense of duty to her husband, on her love for him, and on a logical, rational desire to safeguard the future of her children. Phillip Vellacott adds a pertinent point here, "The children, and the house to which they are heirs, can prosper without Alcestis, but not without Admetus. This is society as men have made it. If Alcestis as a widow had married again, she would have bought her own prosperity at the cost of her childrens'; this she will not do".[30] He implies that there would be a danger of a stepfather being just as cruel as a stepmother.[31]

In choosing to die for Admetus Alcestis wins great glory, both for herself and for her husband. As the comments of the Citizens of Pherae indicate throughout the play, the nobility of her action reflects well on Admetus.[32] Their very first praise of Alcestis is strictly in terms of her husband,[33]

> Ἄλκηστις, ἐμοὶ πᾶσί τ' ἀρίστη
> δόξασα γυνὴ
> πόσιν εἰς αὐτῆς γεγενῆσθαι.
>
> (v 83-85).

Her self-sacrifice, in other words, is seen as an act of self-affirmation, for she dies for the right reasons (her husband and her children) and so wins the glory which would have been denied her had she chosen to live.[34] Once Admetus has made the proposal to her there is no way she could refuse to die for him[35] without earning the abuse which is reserved for the expedient old Pheres (v 629ff). The difference between the actions of the old man and of his daughter-in-law are essentially the difference of personal attitudes towards society: Alcestis' act of self-denial is an affirmation of her role as wife and of her devotion; the old man's wish to live is seen by his society as a negation of all that is correct and noble. Alcestis conforms to the role demanded by her society for she realizes that her choosing to die will bring results (respect and honour for her success as wife and mother) which her choosing to live would deny her; moreover, living would bring disrespect and public revulsion upon her. Clearly she understands the lesson which Admetus is to learn: life is not worth living when one tries to avoid the necessity of death by letting another die in one's place, when one tries to avoid responsibility for one's life - for is not Alcestis' decision to die an undertaking of responsibility with regard to her role as a woman? Pheres does not care for posthumous glory;

κακῶς ἀκούειν οὐ μέλει θανόντι μοι (v 726),

he states shortly before leaving the stage, having been denied by his son all the sweetness of life (for which he might perhaps have chosen to live). In denying Admetus' request Pheres has denied the life for which he would not die. His sense of honour is not as finely honed as is Alcestis', perhaps because his survival does not depend solely on his good name.[36]

Alcestis' awareness of the value of her sacrifice is explicit in the deal which she makes with Admetus,

εἶεν· σὺ νῦν μοι τῶνδ' ἀπόμνησαι χάριν·
αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ'—ἀξίαν μὲν οὔποτε·
ψυχῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι τιμιώτερον—
δίκαια δ', ὡς φήσεις σύ·

(v 299-302).

Thus she sets the scene for the demands which she will make. Nothing can equal the gift which she is making to him (ἀξίαν....οὔποτε), and so she will use this gift as a guarantee that her absence will not jeopardize her responsibility and her functioning as mother of her children (v 303); he must not subject them to a stepmother (v 305); and he must know that he was married to an ἀρίστηνwife (v 324). She had already hinted at his having to live the rest of his life in loneliness without a mother for his children (v 296-7) before coming to this request. Admetus in his grief and in acknowledgment of the incredible magnitude of her gift to him accedes to her requests with passion,

ἔσται τάδ' ἔσται, μὴ τρέσῃς· ἐπεὶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ ζῶσαν εἶχον καὶ θανοῦσ' ἐμὴ γυνὴ
μόνη κεκλήσῃ, κοὔτις ἀντὶ σοῦ ποτε
τόνδ' ἄνδρα νύμφη Θεσσαλὶς προσφθέγξεται.

(v 328-31).

He completes the terms of the agreement by stating how he will cherish their children as his exchange for her,

ἄλις δὲ παίδων· τῶνδ' ὄνησιν εὔχομαι
θεοῖς γενέσθαι· σοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ὠνήμεθα.

(v 334-5).

It is apparent now that Alcestis has very consciously brought attention to herself not as a lover dying out of love alone, but as a woman well aware of her worth; one who is capable of illustrating that worth to her husband and to her society by ensuring that she will not be replaced. Admetus will feel the full weight of her sacrifice, and, as has already been noted, he seems to be worthy of carrying that weight.

Alcestis then dies (v 391), secure in the knowledge that she has gained the success and glory which attend most surely upon those who have made themselves indispensable.

In the agon which takes place between Admetus and Pheres beside the corpse of Alcestis Pheres shows himself to be a clumsy hypocrite, and the play moves from the painful enlightenment of Alcestis' death scene to the ignoble reality of Admetus' everyday existence. Pheres enters praising Alcestis for the great service she has done to his house and himself, and once again Alcestis is referred to in terms of her husband and his house (v 614-27); yet in the argument with Admetus the old man shows his true character, saying condescendingly of Alcestis,

ἥδ' οὐκ ἀναιδὴς· τήνδ' ἐφηῦρες ἄφρονα. (v 728).

Pheres, it seems, has the good sense to refuse self-sacrifice; no matter that this brings him a life of infamy. He is not ruled by philia, unlike Admetus who respects this familial bond in Alcestis (v 279), and as Burnett says, "self-sacrifice is inconceivable to a man who stands outside society, recognizing nothing but material goods. Such a man could easily allow his own kin to be protected by one who was not of their blood, though he thus betrayed his house as well as his son."[37] In the counter-accusations which he makes against his son, however, Pheres makes several important points. He may be Admetus' father, he says, but that does not oblige him to lay down his life for him (v 682), for Admetus' life and death is his own concern (v 685-6); he has done his duty as a father by leaving all his riches to his son, not depriving him of anything (v 687-9); his own life is sweet and worth living no less than is his son's (v 691); and he concludes his speech by heaping abuse on Admetus for being so cowardly as to go to such lengths to avoid his death (v 694-6) and for getting his wife to die in his stead (v 696-705).[38] This speech is an impressive bit of sophistry but also serves to introduce the element of Admetus' shame which now enters the play and becomes predominant. Pheres' speech might be ironic and work against him, but it shows up Admetus just the same. Admetus has accused Pheres of acting despicably by not having offered up

his life which was drawing to a close of its own accord (v 634ff) and Pheres answers him by concentrating on the sweetness and importance of every life to the individual. This is an argument which sticks to Admetus, but he, unlike his father, has the potential to learn for himself the magnitude of his error in trying to deny his own death. At this point he does not accept Pheres' accusations, yet the fear of infamy and of facing a now meaningless life, a fear which he voices on returning from the burial (v 861ff), reflects on the abuse which he himself has hurled at his father:

> *ἐρεῖ δέ μ' ὅστις ἐχθρὸς ὢν κυρεῖ τάδε·*
> *'Ἰδοῦ τὸν αἰσχρῶς ζῶνθ', ὃς οὐκ ἔτλη θανεῖν,*
> *ἀλλ' ἦν ἔγημεν ἀντιδοὺς ἀψυχίᾳ*
> *πέφευγεν Ἅιδην· εἶτ' ἀνὴρ εἶναι δοκεῖ;*
> *στυγεῖ δὲ τοὺς τεκόντας, αὐτὸς οὐ θέλων*
> *θανεῖν. τοιάνδε πρὸς κακοῖσι κληδόνα*
> *ἔξω. τί μοι ζῆν δῆτα κέρδιον, φίλοι,*
> *κακῶς κλύοντι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότι;*
>
> (v 954-61).

Admetus has realized that like his father he is guilty of the same denial of death and ought to be judged, or will be judged, in the same light. This denial of death is illustrated as being a denial of life. For Alcestis, dead, has managed to secure a place in her husband's life stronger even than if she had been alive, while his life has become intolerable. As Burnett comments, "Alcestis remains alive and he is dead."[39]

Writing in a very general context Elias Canetti nevertheless makes the following point in his discussion of the survivor as hero, a point which is very interesting when applied to Admetus' sense of shame and social failure. "The enemy succumbs, but the hero comes through the fighting unhurt and, filled with the consciousness of this prodigious fact, plunges into the next fight. No harm came to him, and no harm will, for each victory, each enemy killed makes him feel more secure; his invulnerability armours him more and more completely.

"There is no other way in which this feeling can be won. The man who hides from danger, or who banishes it, simply postpones the moment of decision. The man who faces it, and truly survives it; who then faces the next one; who piles up the moments of survival - he is the man who attains the feeling of invulnerability. Only when he has attained it does he actually become a hero, able to take any risk, for by then there is nothing that he fears. We might perhaps admire him more if he acted in spite of fear, but that is the point of view of a spectator, of someone who stands outside events. The people want their hero invulnerable."[40] This might be a pen portrait of our hero Heracles but when applied to Admetus we see the opposite side of the coin. Admetus has survived his wife, but in a manner completely unnatural and ignoble, a manner unfitting for a hero, and, in this case a γενναῖος.

Early on in the play the Chorus had sympathized with Admetus,

ὦ τλῆμον, οἵας οἷος ὢν ἁμαρτάνεις. (v 144)

and the Servant Woman had answered,

οὔπω τόδ' οἶδε δεσπότης, πρὶν ἂν πάθῃ. (v 145).

This is the lesson which Admetus will learn from Alcestis' self-sacrifice: he will realize the noble spirit and true value of his wife only after he has lost her. It seems that Admetus must originally have accepted Alcestis' offer to die with some relief,[41] but at the moment of her death, with great irony, he begins to realize what he is losing in this woman who shows herself to be his greatest asset in her "abandoning" (v 275) of him:

οἴμοι· τόδ' ἔπος λυπρὸν ἀκούω
καὶ παντὸς ἐμοὶ θανάτου μεῖζον.
μὴ πρός ⟨σε⟩ θεῶν τλῇς με προδοῦναι,
μὴ πρὸς παίδων οὓς ὀρφανιεῖς,
ἀλλ' ἄνα, τόλμα·
σοῦ γὰρ φθιμένης οὐκέτ' ἂν εἴην·
ἐν σοὶ δ' ἐσμὲν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μή·
σὴν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα.

(v 273-79)

He thus sets the scene for Alcestis' request of v 299ff, and prepares us for his view of life as a living death after she has died (v 278; cf v 939-40). In the speech which he makes on returning from the burial[42] and on facing his empty home and his empty life (v 861ff), Admetus wishes that he had died in Alcestis' stead and secured his reputation whilst releasing himself from the emptiness of his life and his having to keep his promise to her by rejecting all the petty lusts and trials of every day (v 950-53). He has lost his loving wife, the mother of his children, his faultless housekeeper, and his own good reputation. Clearly, the life in which Admetus now finds himself is hardly the one he wished to save when Apollo presented him with his bargain with death. His life is now like death, indeed worse than death,

> *ἐγὼ δ', ὃν οὐ χρῆν ζῆν, παρεὶς τὸ μόρσιμον*
> *λυπρὸν διάξω βίοτον· ἄρτι μανθάνω*

(v 939-40).

Admetus has finally acknowledged the death which every individual owes personally in his life. He has grown in wisdom far beyond the point of being the simply genial and hospitable king of whom Apollo and Heracles tells us, and whom the Chorus praises in the central House of Admetus Ode (v 569-605)[43]. It is this open spirit which is Admetus' most praiseworthy characteristic in his society. It is this spirit which rests upon taking his wife's housekeeping for granted: we hear of Admetus' hospitality and his bountiful home (vv 10, 569) yet on losing Alcestis he laments the future state of his uncared for house (v 941ff).[44] It is in learning not to take everything for granted that Admetus fulfills the Servant Woman's prediction of v 145. The irony of Admetus' acceptance of Alcestis' sacrifice is subtly touched upon in his reference to Orpheus (v 357ff) when he wishes that he too could rescue his wife: not only is he not Orpheus, but he has turned the

Orpheus myth on its head by sending his wife to Hades in his place. Too late he has realized the wrong he did in requesting Alcestis to die for him, an offer which once made could not be refused nobly.[45] He has realized too what Alcestis has managed to gain by dying and what he has lost by living. It is this grief at his own naivety which makes Heracles take pity on his secretly grieving host; and thus, by completing the fairy-tale with his wresting Alcestis from Death, Heracles brings the moral tale of Alcestis and Admetus to a happy end. This happy end, however, would appear gratuitous were it not preceded by another important fairy-tale feature: Heracles' testing of Admetus' promised chastity to his wife, and of the nobility of his spirit in accepting Heracles' strange woman into his house - thus undertaking to do Heracles a favour which will be at the cost of his own greater grief (v 1097ff). So Admetus proves that he has learnt his lesson and so won his wife from death; he has won his own life back.

Alcestis' self-sacrifice, then, ends in an atmosphere of relief with a sombre note added by the still silent woman just back from the dead. The dark shadows of the play - of death, of grief, of bitterness - have hung heavy over the play and so the fairy-tale ending is a gesture of hope, of great love achieved by its protagonists. In witnessing Alcestis' sacrifice Admetus has realized that there are times when an affirmation of one's personal integrity means a denial of one's life, and vice versa. Alcestis has shown great resourcefulness in extracting as much success as possible for her memory in exchange for her life, and incidentally she has illuminated several aspects of a woman's life, duty, and expectations within the world of the play. Several of these aspects will be used by Euripides in his following plays. On a more personal level, Admetus has learned to love, recognizing that a life of grief, a life divorced from one's love, is often worse than no life at all. In her sacrifice Alcestis has truly saved his life.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MEDEA

In the Medea of 431 sacrifice is the essence of revenge. Unlike Alcestis, Medea does not perform a sacrifice in order to benefit her husband; she performs an act of sacrifice, she kills her children, in order to destroy her husband. This terrible act, which is as much sacrifice as it is vengeance, is her tragedy. By performing the deed of infanticide Medea breaks out of the bounds of normal human society and shocks that society with the horrible novelty of a mother who kills her children. In this chapter it will be argued that within the society presented by Euripides, within the terms of Jason's betrayal of philia, and in the light of her own proud and capable nature, Medea finds herself unable to avoid killing her children if she is to achieve revenge in terms of the justice in which she believes. Her sense of justice dictates that not only must Jason suffer as she has suffered, but that he must face the responsibility of breaking his bond of philia - which he did by abandoning Medea and his sons : Medea will show him exactly what it means to be responsible for losing his wife and sons. Eilhard Schlesinger has written that, "The death of Medea's children is inevitable because it is a necessary act of her vengeance on Jason, which is also inevitable because Medea must revenge herself."[1] This is so, but it does not express the complexity of psychological motive and structural ingenuity in the play which makes it so necessary for Medea to sacrifice her children, her motherhood, so that she may feel that her revenge of Jason is complete. The broad framework of the play is a battle between a man and a woman, a husband and wife who have fallen out, and the wife's revenge on the husband. The antithesis between the worlds of men and women, as they are

depicted in the Medea, are both the context of the play and the means whereby Medea succeeds as avenger: by continually pleading her case as a disadvantaged woman she takes advantage of her situation, creating an opportunity for a successful act of vengeance, whereupon her actions are so ruthless as to go far beyond what anyone in the play could expect of a woman. Indeed, Medea's departure in the winged chariot at the end of the play indicates the essential inhumanity of her act. It is echoed in the later Hecuba where the avenging heroine is presented as metamorphozed into a bitch, on account of the rabid nature of her revenge.[2] Also, by taking upon herself such drastic action, by taking such a strong stand against her husband, Medea becomes what one might term one of Euripides' masculine women. Sarah Pomeroy notes of these women, "When I compare Euripidean to Sophoclean heroines, I prefer Euripides' Medea and Hecuba, for they are successful."[3] The desire for revenge is unfeminine[4] but these women succeed. That their revenge is self-destructive[5] is the price that they, as women, have to pay: their great deeds of revenge are always in reaction to terrible provocation, a situation in which it is immaterial whether their actions will be self-destructive or not - as long as they can achieve something against their enemies. Apart from Medea, Clytaimnestra of the Electra is the only other heroine of Euripides, of whom we know, to refuse to accept her husband's behaviour when she deems it inexcusable, and she goes against the maxim of the Chorus[6] Clytaimnestra, however, is taking charge of her life rather than just reacting to the destruction of it, as Medea must.

The Prologue begins with the Nurse's wish that the Argo had never sailed to Colchis (v1-6) immediately introducing one of the central motifs of the play - the impossible wish that the story of Medea and Jason had never come to this, had never begun. The Nurse introduces us to Medea's regret at having

fallen madly in love with Jason (v8), her sense of having been shamed by his betrayal (ἠτιμασμένη , v20), her helplessness and remorse at having cut herself off from her family so thoroughly for the sake of a man who has now brought shame upon her (v30 - 35); her rage against Jason is directed at his breaking of oaths, as if Medea needs to condemn him on an objective, legal point - not simply for his betrayal of her. This reaction of Medea, as described by the Nurse, is completely in keeping with that of a woman who has sacrificed all for her lover only to find herself betrayed and abandoned at the end; and, indeed, these motifs are evident throughout the play.

The Nurse, however, has added two very important observations to her portrait of Medea. The first is,

νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα.

(v16).

τὰ φίλτατα in this instance refers to the people closest to Medea, namely her husband and her sons. Jason, however, has broken the bond of philia and so the unifying bond of intimacy has given way to that of hostility. Jason, and all that connects him to Medea, is now most hateful to her. It has been observed in our discussion of the Alcestis that when Pheres and his wife break the bonds of philia between Admetus and themselves a state of war arises between parents and son, so too when his wife dies Admetus feels that his once loved house is now a hostile, empty presence.[7] We see, too, in the Hippolytus the young man rejecting any notion of philia between himself and Phaedra[8]; for he believes that anyone capable of making such an improper proposition to him, as the Nurse makes ostensibly on Phaedra's behalf, can lay no claim to any spirit of philia between herself and him. Medea, then, is depicted as being in a state of rejecting all that connects her to Jason; this is the first hint of what direction her revenge may take.

This direction becomes clearer with the Nurse's close juxtaposition of Medea's enmity towards the children with her own fear that Medea might put some terrible thought into her mind:

> *στυγεῖ δὲ παῖδας οὐδ' ὁρῶσ' εὐφραίνεται.*
> *δέδοικα δ' αὐτὴν μή τι βουλεύσῃ νέον·*

(v36-7).

And again, as the scene with the Tutor ends, the Nurse warns the children not to go near Medea, and then she wonders what the raging woman will do (v89-110), expressing the very thought-provoking hope that Medea act against her enemies, and not against those close to her (v95). The Nurse's other important note is that Medea is <u>capable</u> of planning and executing a terrible act of vengeance,

> *δεινὴ γάρ· οὗτοι ῥᾳδίως γε συμβαλὼν*
> *ἔχθραν τις αὐτῇ καλλίνικον οἴσεται.*

(v44-5).

And so, having laid the blame for the destruction of <u>philia</u> unequivocably on the shoulders of Jason (v17-19), the Nurse has informed the audience of Medea's capacity for vengeance and of the direction which it might take. What cannot be known with any certainty is whether the audience knew that they were being prepared for infanticide or whether this was an invention of Euripides' soon to horrify the spectators. Either way, the Nurse has provided the tension necessary for tragedy: in the first instance the audience may be expecting the horrifying deed which will end the play, and so be tense from the start; in the second instance the Nurse will have prepared the audience for something terrible and they will be in continuous expectation of it, so that when they realize what Medea is planning to do, it will shock them as much as it does the Chorus. Lesky[9] and Page,[10] in their separate discourses on versions of the myth prior to Euripides conclude that, "Based on our present knowledge we cannot determine whether Euripides

was the first to make revenge the motive for Medea's killing her sons."[11] In previous versions of the myth, however, it is known that Medea's children died for one of several reasons: either by trying to make them immortal Medea killed them unwittingly,[12] much as she had tricked the daughters of Pelias into doing with their father; or, "The women of Corinth, impatient of obeying a foreign sorceress, rose against Medea and killed her seven sons and seven daughters in the temple of Hera Akraia ";[13] or, finally, that after killing Creon, Medea fled Corinth leaving her children, who were too young to accompany her, in the temple of Hera Akraia where they were murdered.[14] This last version also has the Corinthians spreading a rumour that Medea killed the children herself. It is not difficult to see Euripides taking the rumour as being the truth and at the same time shifting the blame for the murder from Medea to Jason, as Medea argues at the end of the play (v1364)[15] In such a way he would endow the story of Medea and Jason with a great new dimension, enabling himself to probe the themes of betrayal, of revenge, and of sacrifice - of how responsible Jason may be for the death of his sons, and of how sacrifice can be an integral part of revenge, especially within the intimate relationship of marriage.

Before appearing on the stage Medea is heard lamenting her condition off-stage. Her thoughts are exactly as the Nurse has described them:[16] her first three utterances (vv97, 111-114, 144-7) are wishes for self-destruction. This feeling of self-annihilation, however, embraces not only herself but all her family,

> *αἰαῖ,*
> *ἔπαθον τλάμων ἔπαθον μεγάλων*
> *ἄξι' ὀδυρμῶν· ὦ κατάρατοι*
> *παῖδες ὄλοισθε στυγερᾶς ματρὸς*
> *σὺν πατρί, καὶ πᾶς δόμος ἔρροι.*

(v111-114).

She has been made to suffer and so her husband, children and the house must be destroyed. This vengeful self-destruction is the exact negative of the sacrifice in the Alcestis which was an attempt to save husband, children, and, of course, the all-important house. And this is the essential difference between the sacrifice of Alcestis and the revenge of Medea: Alcestis acts to save those around her, enforcing the bond of philia, of co-operation, and by destroying herself raises her reputation and status as a woman; Medea, having been betrayed and finding the philia which binds her to Jason destroyed, acts to destroy exactly that which Alcestis saves, and by asserting herself with her vengeance she loses not only her "good name" as a woman but her very humanity. Such a parallel, however, is dangerous in that it compares two women and judges them even though they act under very different circumstances. Alcestis is seen only to sacrifice herself and Medea only to take revenge. As we saw in the Alcestis though, the terms of the bargain which Alcestis makes with Admetus can be seen as a very subtle triumph, as an act of revenge on a husband who does not yet know the price or honour of philia. Medea's ostensible act of revenge, too, contains a great element of sacrifice: first, there were all the sacrifices which she made for the sake of Jason's love, and then, in her revenge, she takes the killing of her sons to be a sacrifice necessary for justice to be done, for the balance between Jason and herself to be restored.[17] Medea, one might argue, is an Alcestis who after all her sacrifices and after all her conforming to her role as a wife and mother finds herself betrayed. This would then imply that Euripides sees the two characters in terms of their environment and their historical situation rather than only in their character,[18] and this attitude, then, would make Medea's infanticide understandable though hardly excusable to an objective observer.

Besides her wish for self-destruction, Medea expresses her rage against her accursed husband (καταράτου πόσιν) for his breaking his oaths, and she calls on Themis and Artemis to witness her sufferings (v160-3); she proclaims her wish for revenge against those who have dared to wrong her (v163-5); and she expresses her remorse at being without family or homeland (v166-7), something for which she, of course, is totally responsible but which she did for the sake of Jason. Hearing her inside the house the Chorus is just as afraid as the Nurse is that Medea might harm those within the house, and so they send the Nurse to call out Medea (v180-3).

When Medea appears the impression she gives is very different to that of the wild woman heard raging within the house. Her speech is measured and calm, forsaking the emotional lyric for the more rational iambic meter (v214 f). Her thoughts, in this first of her long monologues, are rational, reasonable, and calculated to have the greatest effect on her audience - in this case the Chorus of Corinthian women. We see immediately the skill of which the Nurse is in awe (δεινὴ γάρ, v44) as Medea manipulates the Chorus into compliance with her plans. She begins by saying that she came out of the house so as not to offend the Chorus (v214-18), implying that even though a stranger to this land she is well-versed in the necessary niceties of her society (v219-22). Then she speaks of her own present circumstances: love has passed; she has been betrayed (v225-229), and her husband has shown himself to be the basest of men (κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν, v229). Having thus introduced the Chorus to her own situation, she then delivers a powerful exposition on the disadvantages of women in a male-dominated society such as theirs is (v230-51). She speaks of the low position of women (v230-1); of the system of dowry and the complete submission of wives to husbands (v234 -6); of a woman's predicament in its being impossible for her to repel a

man, and in divorce for a woman being disrespectable (v236-7);[19] of how a woman from another land needs the skill of a seer in order to learn local customs and how best to treat her husband (v238-40), and how, despite her having toiled at this, again it depends on her husband whether the wife's life is to be enviable or worse than death (v241-3); of how a man, tired of his wife, can seek company outdoors, while the wife must depend only on him for company (v244-7); and finally, Medea ends with her famous statement that it is a lie that men face greater dangers in life than do women - she states that there is greater danger in childbirth than there is in battle[20] (v248-51).

Here Medea has addressed most eloquently the problems of women of their time. Her speech has to be true and balanced in order not to alienate the good women of Corinth with any extremist statement. The life which she has described is one devoid of any balance between the sexes, where pleasure is the male's prerogative and where toil and effort and social deprivation are the woman's lot. Having thus stated conditions, Medea then attacks the root of male complacency, the reasoning that men are due more pleasures for they face greater dangers. She is attacking the imbalance between the sexes by claiming that its foundation is unjust and arbitrary. It is clear that Jason's betrayal of Medea has led to her rejection of all that she could tolerate while she was with him; her rage against Jason, in other words, goes beyond him, encompassing all that he represents, his society included. Although this speech is primarily intended to win the women of Corinth into Medea's camp for whatever acts of vengeance she will finally decide upon, it serves too to illustrate that Medea has cast off from the society which she describes: in whatever she does, the view of a society which she rejects will be completely irrevelant. She has given herself free rein to do whatever may

best succeed in achieving her revenge on Jason. So, having spoken of the ills of women in general, Medea returns to her own situation (v252-8), she is alone in the world while the women of Corinth are not, for they have family and friends and this is their own country, while she disingenuously speaks of herself as plunder (λελησμένη , v256).[21] She then asks the Chorus to be silent if she finds some way of taking revenge on Jason (v259-63). This is what she has been leading up to with her speech, which has presented her case in a manner intended to elicit as much sympathy as possible, and a sense of comradeship, from the women. Medea then concludes with a statement that might just as well be Euripides' synopsis of the play:

> *γυνὴ γὰρ τἄλλα μὲν φόβου πλέα*
> *κακή τ' ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν·*
> *ὅταν δ' ἐς εὐνὴν ἠδικημένη κυρῇ,*
> *οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρὴν μιαιφονωτέρα.*

(v263-6).

Medea has been pushed into needing to take revenge on Jason; for, even though she could put up with all the wrongs which she has listed, she has now been wronged with regard to her bed, her marriage itself, her sexual being. Just as Alcestis addresses her bed as being the symbol of her intimate married life (Alc. v177ff) so too does Medea see her marriage destroyed when her bed has been violated; when, in other words, her husband has taken another woman. Her situation is different to that of the Corinthian women for she has no family on whom she can count to punishing her unfaithful husband, and so, like a lioness with cubs (v186-8), with her back to the wall, Medea is pushed into acting on her own. She knows, too, that as a woman, now that she has been pushed this far, she can be more courageous and more murderous than any other creature (v266). She has reached this stage of decison on account of the self-pity which she engendered in her outbursts of

self-destructive wishes. As Pietro Pucci puts it: "By seeing herself as the innocent victim of outside, arbitrary, and continuous violence, Medea pities herself and is able to give voice to her legitimate sudden desire to take revenge. The powerless female finds in her pain the force that she did not possess when the master abused her. Medea's self-pity manipulates her situation in such a way that she discovers her might and her power."[22]

Medea's readiness, her desire for action, has no direction until Creon's entrance (v271). He wastes no time: he has come to banish Medea and her two sons, immediately (v271-6). Medea is evidently surprised by this new turn (v277), she had not expected more misfortune to befall her.[23] Creon explains that he is expelling her out of fear - lest she do anything to his daughter (v283); for she is well-skilled in numerous harmful arts (v285); she has been deprived of her husband's bed (v286); and he has been informed that she threatens to take revenge on Jason, on his bride, and on himself, the father of the bride (v287-9). Having recovered from her initial shock Medea makes a very reasonable response to the king's determined effort to be unyielding and unsympathetic. First, she protests against Creon judging her by her reputation alone (v292f.), for this is continually happening to her, she says (πολλάκις,v292). Her protest reveals her to be an independent character, well aware of her own powers, who can count herself among the more intelligent of people yet know that she must appear neither too stupid nor too intelligent, so as not to attract the hostility of others. In her dialogue with Creon, this is precisely the course of servility and moderation which she pursues. She claims that she has no power to harm a king (v307-8, 315), and that her quarrel, in the first place, is not with him but with her husband (v310-11). Creon, however, is not impressed by Medea's gentle words; indeed he now feels greater fear at what

plot she may be preparing behind her compliant mask (v316-323). Medea then begs him to reconsider, crying for pity first by invoking Creon's daughter (v324) and next by mentioning the fact that she is far from her own country (v328). This latter remark elicits from Creon the response which gives her an opening to his heart: After my children, he says, I too love my country (v329). Medea is thus able to make her successful plea, using all the information which she has picked up in the agon in order to impress Creon. She begs him to allow her just one day to prepare for banishment (v340-1), to make provision for her sons, seeing that their father prefers not to do anything for them (342-3). She calls on Creon to take pity on her children, for it would be natural for him to look kindly upon them (himself being a father) (v344-5). She then adds that banishment does not worry her, she is just concerned about the children (v346-7). She has thus seized on Creon's sensitivity to children and the idea of a homeland which she does not have as the basis for a plea, trying to cloud Creon's fear of herself. Her plea is successful for, much against his better judgment, Creon allows her one more day in Corinth (v348). His attitude is harsh and threatening but Medea has achieved precisely what she needed: the threat of banishment and the one day's grace which she has been granted offer her both the impetus and the opportunity for revenge. Medea has only to decide what form her revenge will take.

When Creon leaves the stage Medea explains to the Chorus the expedience of her fawning on the king (v368-375). She has played to the utmost the fawning stereotype, both of an oriental and of a woman, only to enable herself to kill Creon, his daughter, and her husband. This is Medea's talent: by claiming disadvantage she is able to turn things to her advantage. She does not know yet how she is to kill her enemies and is concerned only with the success of any scheme

which she might choose, for her failure would entail an intolerable triumph for her enemies (v381-3). This, of course, would make her suffering even worse, for, as she has already indicated (either by herself or through the Nurse) the greatest pain inflicted on her by Jason's betrayal is that of having been shamed (ἠτιμασμένη, v20,33; ὑβρίζομαι , v255). Medea is resolved, therefore, to murder by stealth (v384-5). She also needs to plan her escape, and so decides to wait a while in case any hope of refuge turns up. Evidently, her earlier yearning for self-destruction has been channelled into a desire for revenge and survival: she has not yet realized that her revenge can be more devastating if it combines both survival and self-destruction. It depends on Aegeus to enter as fortuitously as he does, to promise Medea sanctuary in Athens, and to point out once again how important children can be to a man (v663ff), for Medea to begin including her children's deaths as part of her revenge on Jason. Even without a promise of sanctuary, however, Medea is here still quite prepared to die in the process of murdering her enemies (v392-4), for nothing can keep her from avenging herself, as she swears by her mistress Hecate,

> *οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν ἣν ἐγὼ σέβω*
> *μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ξυνεργὸν εἰλόμην,*
> *Ἑκάτην, μυχοῖς ναίουσαν ἑστίας ἐμῆς,*
> *χαίρων τις αὐτῶν τοὐμὸν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαρ.*

(v395-8).

Medea has chosen Hecate as the goddess of her hearth; Hecate, the mistress of magic and whose shrine usually stood in the street just outside the house.[24] The goddess who will help Medea carry out her plans has replaced Hestia as the central point of the household. The comparison with the status of Hestia in the Alcestis is startling.[25] There the hearth was the symbol of unity and continuity in the household; Hestia was the goddess who would take care of Alcestis' orphaned

children, carrying on the duties of the mother and still serving as the centre of the family. In the Medea, however, Jason's betrayal, his breach of philia, has destroyed that centre of the family, leaving, in effect, a vacuum which Medea now fills with her invocation to Hecate, a force not of unity but of destruction.[26] Jason's house has already disintegrated, and, whereas in the Alcestis the goddess of the hearth was to protect the children, in the Medea the imported, avenging goddess of the hearth will be a part of a plot which will see the children of the household dead.

At this point of the play Medea is prepared to do anything. She has "armed" herself with her invocation of Hecate; she has obtained the collusion of the Chorus; she has won time for herself; her hatred for Jason and her other enemies is intense; and, finally, she does not care if she herself is destroyed, even though her mood has moved away from that of the simple self-destruction which was expressed in her first utterances. In thus preparing Medea (and the audience for that matter) for the horrible crime which she will commit, Euripides, "the first psychologist",[27] has created a fascinating psychological portrait of a jilted woman driven to murder precisely because of the depth of her emotions and her yearning for self-destruction. In his book Human Aggression the psychiatrist Anthony Storr points out how depression is related to aggression, how rejection in love can lead to feelings of self hatred, and how, in turn, those feelings can lead to the perpetration of murder. He writes, "The hurt and misery of the rejected cloaks violent feelings of hate towards the person who has cast him off; and the despair and self-denigration which may end in suicide are but a turning against the self of destructive anger which would normally be directed towards the rejecting person.

"It is just because love is so important a source of self-esteem that a failure in a love-relation is felt as an attack upon the self. The extreme hatred which is mobilized by rejection is actually self-preservative: an attempt by the rejected person to assert himself in spite of the injury to his pride. And the more dependent a person is upon the love of another to sustain him the more will he feel threatened and therefore hostile if this love is withdrawn."[28] Medea, with all that she gave up for her love of Jason, in her dependence on him in his homeland, and in her rage that her λέχος and her φιλία have been violated, falls into this pattern of depression followed by aggression. Then, referring to a study by D.J. West, Murder Followed by Suicide,[29] Dr. Storr writes, "Of every three murders committed in this country (England), one is followed by the suicide of the murderer. There could be no clearer demonstration of the truth of Freud's hypothesis that aggression against others and aggression against the self are reciprocally related and to some extent interchangeable. As the author says: "The intimate connection between self-destructive and aggressive tendencies emerged clearly from the many incidents in which the offender's intentions wavered uncertainly between murder and suicide".[30] This is precisely the reasoning which leads to Medea killing her children, but it is only the psychological perspective of her reasoning. We must still investigate the logic of her revenge in terms of her belief in justice and in the culpability of Jason in the death of his children.

D.L. Page, in the introduction to his edition of the Medea, writes, "We may disapprove Jason's behaviour; but obviously his punishment is out of all proportion to his offence. At the end of the play we feel much sympathy for Jason, almost as for an innocent man overcome by dreadful calamity. Medea's vengeance is so much more criminal than the crime which it was

visiting. We are watching the conquest of evil not by virtue or divine justice but by greater evil".[31] This moral outrage at Medea's act is quite irrelevant in terms of the world of the play. The murder of the children is horrifying and unnatural, as the Chorus indicates,[32] but a discussion of Medea's revenge in terms of "evil" and "virtue" indicates a post-classical evaluation which is at odds with the way values are reckoned in the play, and which intrudes on the play's structure and the playwright's logic. The Medea is a specific creation by a great playwright in a specific time. The incidents in the play have to be judged in the light offered by the author. Medea's murder, in other words, must not be judged, it must be investigated in order to achieve a deeper insight into the character of the playwright's heroine and also into his manipulation of that character towards the achievement of a state of affairs in which the infanticide may appear as a necessary conclusion to a great tragedy rather than as a gratuitous and sensation-seeking deed of horror. This implies that in an amoral reading of the play Jason's punishment should not be "out of all proportion to his offence". We must therefore seek to understand both the punishment and the offence as part of the structural edifice which creates the tragedy.

As we shall see in the Hippolytus Euripides is very self-conscious in his structuring of tragedy; of how characters play off one another and how that opposition shapes them and how they in turn influence the action and are influenced by it. The Hippolytus is overtly structured around the concept of σωφροσύνη and it is the imbalance between the σωφροσύνη of Hippolytus and Phaedra, both of whom claim to be σώφρων , that creates the tragedy where each destroys the other. In the Medea, too, imbalance is the trigger of disaster. Jason's betrayal of Medea is the betrayal of

philia. Medea and he are no longer committed to each other in a relationship in which the wife, to be σώφρων ,had to personify "obedience and dutifulness"[33]. As we saw in Medea's great speech on marriage, she put up with what she regarded as unjust in the relationship between man and wife in marriage while she was still with Jason out of duty and custom, and out of dependence and love for him. This is the woman's part in the bargain of philia, which creates a kind of equality, isotés, without which there could be no marriage. This is the inverse of Solon's theory, as Jean-Pierre Vernant describes it: "Without isotes there would be no city because there would be no philia (friendship). "The man who is an equal", wrote Solon," is incapable of starting a war,"[34] So Medea has been deprived of philia and thereby of isotes and is thus capable of starting a war. The isotes of marriage, of course, is not one of equal status but rather one in which each partner knows what to expect of the other. Jason's oaths were a part of the isotes of his relationship with Medea, and Medea's children were her part of the bargain.[35] He therefore had no good reason for leaving her. Bennett Simon writes of the importance of balance in Greek tragedy, "The characters themselves, especially the Chorus, plead the necessity of harmony and balance, neither too much or too little - not too much reverence for one god at the expense of another. Imbalance is typical of the tragic protagonists."[36] In the Medea, however, the imbalance is that which destroys a bond, a community. As Vernant writes in terms of a larger community, "Those who made up the city, however different in origin, rank and function, appeared somehow to be 'like' one another. This likeness laid the foundation for the unity of the polis, since for the Greeks only those who were alike could be initially united by philia, joined in the same community".[37] George Pilitsis states that "Medea represents a different class of wives, those who did not enjoy the full rights of Athenian

citizenship. Moreover, Medea's marriage to Jason was based on free cohabitation and on verbal agreement between a Greek and a foreigner. Their union therefore was without legal sanctions".[38] This may be so but there is nothing to indicate that the "verbal agreement" of Jason and Medea in the form of their oaths was any less binding than the marriage of two Athenians, Athenian marriage laws being as casual as they were.[39] Medea's children, too, are nowhere referred to or treated as illegitimate. The marriage, in other words, is as strong or as weak as any other in the Greek world, and so Medea can be "alike" enough to Jason to be united with him by philia. When Medea has been deprived of that bond and the balance of her life and marriage has been broken, she is free to address that wrong, to work against philia and so to try restore a new, different balance. The Choral Ode of v410ff indicates the direction of action and morality which the play will take. The Chorus is responding to Medea's speech in which she resolves to act against her enemies and to the statement which ends her speech, the statement of a woman possessed, of a woman who has decided to reject all the good things[40] which a woman may attempt to accomplish,

> *ἐπίστασαι δέ· πρὸς δὲ καὶ πεφύκαμεν*
> *γυναῖκες, ἐς μὲν ἔσθλ' ἀμηχανώταται,*
> *κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται.*

(v407-9).

She is here proclaiming that she is becoming an "alastor, the demon created by unatoned bloodguilt"[41] which Jason at the end of the play calls her in his attempt to understand how she could have done what she did (v1333). By speaking of the reversal of the flow of rivers the Chorus is remarking on the unnatural reversal of the time: it is responding to Medea's "unsexing" of herself[42], and remarking on Jason's breaking of trust (v412-3). The women of Corinth, however, see only the abused and victimized Medea, and see this state as offering

redemption from the common conception that women are forever unfaithful (v412-2); they believe that Jason's low behaviour in the face of Medea's sacrifices for him will absolve women from their unjust reputation (v420-445). They have misunderstood Medea completely; they have not realized that Medea's suffering not only reverses the usual order of betrayal as poets sing of it, but that it will also lead to another reversal - a reversal of nature in which a mother will kill her children.

Jason, when he appears for the first time presents no different an image from that with which the audience has been supplied by the comments of the Nurse, the Tutor, Medea, and the Chorus, all of whom condemn him roundly (vv17-19,20,33,77,82-4,165,229, 412-3). He attacks Medea, blaming her for bringing exile upon herself with her angry talk of revenge (v446ff.). Yet, he has come, he says, to provide for Medea and the children in their exile for he does not desert those close to him,

> ὅμως δὲ κἀκ τῶνδ' οὐκ ἀπειρηκὼς φίλοις
> ἥκω,
>
> (v459-60).

The irony of this statement is evident, and Medea is quick to seize upon Jason's shamelessness (v465f). She answers his approach as philos with ἦλθες ἔχθιστος γεγώς (v467). She lists all that she did for him: she saved his life (v476); she betrayed her father and her home (v483); and she caused the death of Pelias and so freed Jason from fear (v486). She neglects to mention here the gruesome death to which she subjected her brother in order to ensure Jason's escape with her from Colchis.[43] She then speaks of the betrayal with which Jason repaid her love and sacrifice; he forsook her and took another wife, even though she had given him children (v489-91); and he broke the oaths which he had sworn before the gods (v492-4). At v499 she shows how far from being her husband he is: she will share her thoughts with him as if he were philos,

ἄγ' ὡς φίλῳ γὰρ ὄντι σοι κοινώσομαι

(v499).

She then describes how his betrayal of her has left her with nothing and with nowhere to go, because for his sake she has lost everything, she has sacrificed her home and family ties (v495ff). She is here exemplifying the lot of women, their absolute dependence on men for wealth and safety, and, in this instance, for a homeland too. The Chorus once again underlines the destruction of the bond between man and wife,

δεινή τις ὀργὴ καὶ δυσίατος πέλει,
ὅταν φίλοι φίλοισι συμβάλωσ' ἔριν

(v520-1).

Jason's reply to Medea shows just how difficult it will be to heal this trouble. He negates Medea's contribution to his success in his venture for the golden fleece, saying that Aphrodite compelled her to behave as she did (v526f) and he suggests that she should instead be grateful for all that he gave her by bringing her to civilized Greece and so making her exploits famous; otherwise she would have remained unsung and anonymous in her native land[44] (v540-1). Jason tries also to excuse his new wedding as an expedient act performed for the good of his own position and, consequently, for Medea herself and their children, claiming that he did it to protect them, for they are his near and dear ones,

ἐν τῷδε δείξω πρῶτα μὲν σοφὸς γεγώς,
ἔπειτα σώφρων, εἶτα σοὶ μέγας φίλος
καὶ παισὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν—ἀλλ' ἔχ' ἡσυχος

(v548-50).

Sensing the hopelessness of his arguments he ends with another attack on Medea, this time one more perceptive than he himself is aware. He says that for women, if their sex-life is adequate they believe that they have everything, but if matters there go wrong then they are at war with what is best and most beautiful (v569-73). This is ironic in the light of our

discussion above[45] as to the importance of the λέχος to a woman who has nothing else in her life to represent any equality in the relationship of marriage; Jason sees it as the most trivial aspect of life. Finally, he concludes with the stock misogynistic and utopian wish that there were some other way for men to acquire children, some way which would avoid the necessity of women (v573-5). This rather sterile line of attack will find its fullest expression in the adolescent raving of Hippolytus three years later. There, as here, such a statement, or speech, serves only to distract the speaker from the issue at hand. Here Jason is consistently making a great noise in order to avoid much serious discussion. Medea, however, blows his whole speech apart with one sentence: if he were not a coward he would have discussed his new marriage with her, persuaded her, and not gone into it without informing those close to him (ἀλλὰ μὴ σιγῇ φίλων , v587). Their encounter ends with Jason and Medea further apart than where they had begun: she blaming him for his betrayal of her and their sons (v607) and he blaming her for her impending exile (v605). Medea does, however, make two threats to Jason; one, that she will become a curse to his house (v608); and, another, that he will make a marriage that he will disown (regret) (v626). She thus keeps alive the underlying threat to the children as well as her more conscious desire to kill Jason with his bride and father-in-law. In rejecting Jason's offer for help she says,

> οὔτ' ἂν ξένοισι τοῖσι σοῖς χρησαίμεθ' ἄν,
> οὔτ' ἄν τι δεξαίμεσθα, μηδ' ἡμῖν δίδου·
> κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ' ὄνησιν οὐκ ἔχει.

(v616-8).

This is an important clue to her perception of revenge, to her sense of justice. Jason has broken the communion between them and shown himself to be a bad bargaining partner. He is, in other words, a cheat from whom Medea will not accept anything,

nor will she give him anything, for there is nothing to be gained from a base man's gifts. It is very significant that in this talk of commerce she does not exclude the possibility of depriving Jason of something.

The fortuitous entry of Aegeus (v663) gives the final impetus to Medea's plans. It is also the scene in which her plot takes its final form in her mind. The King of Athens presents Medea with his great problem and sorrow: he wants to know how children might be born to him (v669). Medea is inquisitive and sympathetic to his plight (v688), and so is he of hers. Once again, their discussion of Jason's behaviour is centred round the concept of philia:

> Αι. *οὔ που τετόλμηκ' ἔργον αἴσχιστον τόδε;*
> Μη. *σάφ' ἴσθ'· ἄτιμοι δ' ἐσμὲν οἱ πρὸ τοῦ φίλοι.*
> Αι. *πότερον ἐρασθεὶς ἢ σὸν ἐχθαίρων λέχος;*
> Μη. *μέγαν γ' ἔρωτα πιστὸς οὐκ ἔφυ φίλοις.*
> Αι. *ἴτω νυν, εἴπερ, ὡς λέγεις, ἐστὶν κακός.*

(v695-9).

Aegeus is outraged by the news of Medea's banishment (vv705, 707). The result is that, in a very economical and very effective scene, Medea has obtained asylum for herself for when her act of revenge has been carried out, and Aegeus has obtained her promise to help him acquire children (v709-724). Medea binds him with a great oath (v749-53), just as she had Jason, and there is a sinister reference to this in her asking Aegeus what will happen to him if he breaks his oath: Aegeus answers,

> *ἃ τοῖσι δυσσεβοῦσι γίγνεται βροτῶν.*

(v755).

This is exactly the justification which Medea already has for punishing Jason. Aegeus, in other words, has offered Medea both refuge and moral support - without his knowing exactly what form of vengeance she intends to take on Jason.

Medea is appropriately exultant after her meeting with Aegeus; now she is sure of success, she says (v765-7). In this speech, (v764-810) she describes her final plans for revenge, plans which must have taken shape during her discussion with the childless king. She will kill the princess with presents which she will send with her children - a finely woven dress and a diadem of gold, both poisoned so that the girl and anyone who touches her will die (v784-789). This is what we may call the "conventional" part of her revenge, for Medea has been preparing for this from the start of the play: she has invoked Hecate (v395-8) and continuously referred to Jason, his wife and Creon as her enemies; the sorceress Medea, with the help of the goddess of poisons, will destroy her enemies - for it may be assumed that the girl and Jason or Creon, who will wish to help her, will die. Now, however, her revenge takes on a terrible new dimension: all the undercurrents of the play spring to the surface as she reveals to the Chorus that she will kill her own children,

> *τέκνα γὰρ κατακτενῶ*
> *τἄμ'· οὔτις ἔστω ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται·*
> *δόμων τε πάντα συγχέασ' Ἰάσονος*
> *ἔξειμι γαίας, φιλτάτων παίδων φόνον*
> *φεύγουσα καὶ τλᾶσ' ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον.*
> *οὐ γὰρ γελᾶσθαι τλητὸν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι.*
> *ἴτω· τί μοι ζῆν κέρδος; οὔτε μοι πατρὶς*
> *οὔτ' οἶκος ἔστιν οὔτ' ἀποστροφὴ κακῶν.*

(v792-9).

The emphasis placed on τἄμ' follows the repeated "my" of v780, and v782, and culminates in the possessiveness of v1240-1,

> *πάντως σφ' ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή,*
> *ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν, οἵπερ ἐξεφύσαμεν.*

Medea is asserting her control over her children's lives for two reasons: they are born of her and so are undoubtedly hers,

and, for the same reason, they are all in the world over which she has control. Her need to proclaim her possession of her children will culminate in her murder of them. In v793 Medea raises a point that will play an important part in her later debate with her heart on whether to kill her children or not (v1021ff): no-one can give them safety, she says. This reinforces her argument as to the necessity of killing her children herself. It is interesting to note that in her deal with Aegeus Medea did not mention her children. Later, she wishes to destroy them the one moment, relents and wants to take them into exile with her the next, then changes her mind once again (v1044-50). This is before she learns of the success of her poisons; after which her immediate concern is to kill her children before a hand "more hostile" does the killing (v1239). She states also the other reasons for which she will kill her sons: so that the whole of Jason's house might be destroyed (v794), and so that she might not be laughed at by her enemies (v797). In other words, she sees her killing of the children as a necessary and integral part of her revenge, which, if not carried out, will result in her failure and thereby the laughter of her enemies. Once again she connects her mad wish for revenge with her self-destructive feelings and her hopeless situation (v798-9).

Having stated that the death of the children is integral to her revenge on her enemies, Medea then explains her reasoning, her concept of justice. She says of Jason's betrayal of her and her punishment of him,

> *ἡμάρτανον τόθ' ἡνίκ' ἐξελίμπανον*
> *δόμους πατρῴους, ἀνδρὸς Ἕλληνος λόγοις*
> *πεισθεῖσ', ὃς ἡμῖν σὺν θεῷ τείσει δίκην.*
> *οὔτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γὰρ παῖδας ὄψεταί ποτε*
> *ζῶντας τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτε τῆς νεοζύγου*
> *νύμφης τεκνώσει παῖδ', ἐπεὶ κακῶς κακὴν*
> *θανεῖν σφ' ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐμοῖσι φαρμάκοις.*
> *μηδείς με φαύλην κἀσθενῆ νομιζέτω*
> *μηδ' ἡσυχαίαν, ἀλλὰ θατέρου τρόπου,*
> *βαρεῖαν ἐχθροῖς καὶ φίλοισιν εὐμενῆ·*
> *τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων εὐκλεέστατος βίος.* (v800-810).

Medea believes that divine justice is on her side (v802) for, as she will keep pointing out, Jason is totally responsible for the destruction of their marriage, and, in effect, for the death of the children (vv1074, 1364, 1372, 1401-2). By destroying the bond of marriage Jason has deprived Medea of husband and sanctuary; to take revenge of him, who now has another wife and still has his children by her, Medea must deprive him of his new wife. But this is not enough, for it is simply an equalizing action. She knows how important children are to a man[46] and by killing Jason's bride Medea ensures that he will get no children from her (v804-5). He does, however, still have his sons from her. His sons should have been a guarantee of his marriage to Medea, as she herself noted in despair (v489-912), but he abandoned them nevertheless.[47] Medea will now make him realize what it is to lose one's marriage partner and to lose one's children. She has no other option but to deprive him of their children. This is how she will restore the balance between them. This is her vengeance and this is her sacrifice; it is obvious how much the children mean to Medea (v1242-50), but it is necessary that Jason be taught that all that Medea has given can be taken away, in the same way that he took away their marriage.[48] At her own great personal cost, then, Medea will destroy every link between herself and Jason, and punish him in a way that will tear him to the soul just as she has been torn. She indicates this in answering the Chorus' horrified reaction to her plan (v816-19) and in her final, bitter exchange with Jason at the end of the play (v1397-1401). Her justification throughout has been that Jason broke the bond of philia; so she feels able to proclaim as her own the masculine standard of moral excellence which consists of hatred to one's enemies and benefit towards one's philoi (v897-819). This is in sharp contrast to the acknowledged limits of a woman's σωφροσύνη[49] as personified by Alcestis and towards which Phaedra strives.[50] It

is an expression of ability and domination (first hinted at by the Nurse in v44-5) usually attributed to the Greek male hero;[51] but in moving beyond the accustomed place of a woman in Greek society, by becoming an avenging demon, Medea has appropriated this standard for herself; her glory will be measured by her success (v810). As we will see in our study of the Hippolytus, it is this very thought which leads to Phaedra destroying Hippolytus when he rejects her with such great hostility as to turn her into his enemy. These women, then, driven by a desire for revenge rebel against the very mention of their being women. Medea turns into an inhuman apparition at the end of the play, while Phaedra destroys herself. In both instances they horrify the other characters and Chorus on the stage, as well as their audience. A woman such as Alcestis, however, who has not been pushed beyond the bounds of accepted feminine behaviour is highly praised in her society and is even given a second life as an estimation of her worth. Medea has no interest in continuing as a woman in her society: she has been deprived of her role as wife and is ready to relinquish the role of mother.

As we noted earlier[52] part of Medea's skill as an avenger is her ability to deceive people as to her real intentions with a show of feminine helplessness. By pretending reconciliation and by fawning on Jason (v866ff) she succeeds in killing both the princess and Creon (as we hear in the Messenger's speech, v1121ff). She thus implicates both the children and Jason in the murder of the king and the princess. Her exultation at the success of this part of her plan is tempered by her agony at being forced to kill her children, an agony which is expressed by her continually changing her mind in her great monologue (v1021ff). This monologue has been called, "the most famous inner debate in tragedy",[53] for the number of times which Medea changes her mind before she finally decides to kill her children while knowing that is is wrong to do so,[54]

καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά,
θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,
ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς.

(v1078-80).

The speech begins with Medea describing her exile and the children's life in Corinth if she were to relent and let them live. She describes the hopes which she had had to see them married and to have them take care of her in her old age (v1024-1035). She then proclaims, most ambiguously, that they will go to another mode of living (v1038) which we soon realize means death, not merely separation from their mother, when Medea mentions "the last smile of all" (v1041). Then she cannot bear the thought of killing them (v1044) but once again spurs herself on with her fear of being ridiculed as a failure (v1049-1052); and here it is evident, as Alan Elliott states in his note on v1049, that "Moral principle plays no part in her revenge".[55] Her inner turmoil is illustrated by,

ἃ ἃ.
μὴ δῆτα, θυμέ, μὴ σύ γ' ἐργάσῃ τάδε·
ἔασον αὐτούς, ὦ τάλαν, φεῖσαι τέκνων·
ἐκεῖ μεθ' ἡμῶν ζῶντες εὐφρανοῦσί σε.
μὰ τοὺς παρ' Ἅιδῃ νερτέρους ἀλάστορας,
οὔτοι ποτ' ἔσται τοῦθ' ὅπως ἐχθροῖς ἐγὼ
παῖδας παρήσω τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι.

(v1056-1061).

Hugh Lloyd-Jones calls Medea's θυμός of v1056 and v1079, before which all her deliberations (βουλεύματα) are powerless, "the pride which will not allow her to risk being laughed at by her enemies"[56]. This explains her feeling that she cannot risk allowing the children to be used against her in whatever way by her enemies; as she says in v1241, she, their mother, shall kill them, not anyone else. We can see now how Euripides has prepared Medea for this murder: she has to kill her children in order to take her revenge on Jason; to keep them from her enemies; to be able to express her self-destructive feelings while remaining alive to gloat over Jason; and, finally, to salvage her pride by wreaking such unheard of

destruction, as an alastor on Jason and his house. When Medea prepares to go into the house to kill her children (v1236-1250) we know what it is costing her as a mother but we know too that it is impossible for her to back down because she will see that as an intolerable loss of pride. The dilemma and resolve is best expressed by ἀλλ' εἶ' ὁπλίζου, καρδία (v1242). Medea is fighting her heart, her maternal feelings, with an image which conjures up the male world. Once again, just as when she appropriates the male standard of behaviour (v807-10), she is "unsexing" herself and taking on the world of males on its own terms. Eilhard Schlesinger points out Jason's view of society: "For him marriage and children, indeed, all human ties, are only a means to an end. The value of life depends on social status and its perpetuation in years to come. That is why children are important for him".[57] This is precisely the attitude to which Medea reacts by acting like a male to whom "all human ties are only a means to an end"; and the end here is her pride and her revenge. Just as Jason's pride stems from his children and the perpetuation of his house, so does Medea's pride depend on depriving him of his children and his house. This is exactly the opposite of her devotion and sacrifice in helping Jason as his wife before he betrayed their philia.

The success of Medea's revenge is evident from Jason's distress on learning of the death of his children: he states that Medea has destroyed him (v1310). He entered looking for his children in order to protect them from the Corinthians' revenge which was provoked by Medea's poisoning of the king and his daughter (v1301-5). Medea, however, has deprived him of his role as father and protector. In terms of the male-standard of v807-10 she has deprived him of his role as a male; she has, in effect, castrated him. Jason's thoughts turn to avenging himself on her (v1314-6) but here too Medea has beaten him: she is inaccessible to him, high up in a chariot drawn by dragons, and has the dead bodies of the children with her (v1317ff). Jason accuses her of being inherently evil; he

sees her sacrifice of her family and homeland for his sake as having been acts of treason just as this act is (vl329-32). He mentions the brother whom Medea slew so that she and Jason might make good their escape from Colchis. This is a point which Medea had avoided making in her frequent mention of her sacrifices for Jason, mentioning it only once, when raving to herself inside the house (vl66-7). That Medea had shown herself to be capable of committing terrible crimes neither absolves nor relieves Jason. His speech of condemnation against her ends with a cry of woe that echoes Medea's sentiments at the start of the play and indicates how successful her revenge has been in bringing him to the level of her desolation and sorrow: his marriage is over (vl348); he has lost his children (vl349-50); and he feels that his life is over (vl350). His accusations that she murdered her children for the sake of her sex-life, her λέχος (vvl338, 1367) echo his earlier, smug sentiments of v569-73. Medea's answer, once again, is that he has underestimated a woman's pain at the betrayal of her bed[58] (vl368). It is this underestimation which led to Jason's betrayal of Medea and the children and this is the reason for the chain of events which leads to the death of the children. Medea, in other words, has destroyed all that Jason ever possessed: his wife, his children and his manhood. She herself has lost her husband, her children, and, as her elevated position in the chariot of the Sun suggests, her humanity. This is not necessarily a measure of divine approval or human (Euripides') disapproval of her act: it is of the utmost importance in dramatic terms that Medea is inaccessible to Jason and unrepentant of her act. It is the fact that she survives the murder of her children which makes Medea's sacrifice the act of vengeance which horrifies.[59] Pity, and her own self-pity, were her motivation for revenge, but at the end of the play the audience's pity is on Jason's side. By abandoning any claim to pity, Medea has moved from passive victim to active avenger, and by so doing has lost all

sympathy in the play and beyond. She has, in other words, moved beyond the accepted limits of behaviour of her society.

In the Medea, then, Euripides has presented a union, a marriage, in which the bond of philia has been broken. The earlier Alcestis was based on the sacrifice of a woman for the sake of that bond and resulted in that woman's eternal fame. Medea, however, is driven by Jason and by her own pride and passionate nature to destroy all traces of a philia that has been betrayed by her husband. Her action has been one of revenge, of revenge so great that it destroys all that is near to her and results in her eternal infamy. Euripides, though he has not tried to excuse her behaviour, has been most careful to make her motivation believable and to make the murder inevitable. In his next play which we will study he deals with a similar theme but from a different angle: Phaedra of the Hippolytus is also a woman in distress and in love, but here, despite its not being her fault, she is the one responsible for the break of philia in a relationship. Unlike Medea she is inordinately concerned with behaving as befits a lady, but the result will be that whereas Medea performs a sacrifice in taking her revenge, Phaedra performs an act of vengeance when taking her own life. Medea, then, like Alcestis, has been asked to choose between supporting or defying her husband. She has chosen to defy him and to destroy him; all the while working within and without the limits of being a woman in her society. By asserting herself much as a man would be expected to (by destroying her maternal image), she destroys her place in that society and exiles herself. By taking revenge on Jason she completes the destruction which he began and so salvages her pride. To have submitted quietly to the sacrifice demanded of her by Jason would have been a humiliation intolerable to Medea, for, as Euripides has been careful to point out, she has justice on her side.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HIPPOLYTUS

The Hippolytus, produced in 428, combined in one play (indeed in one act) the twin themes of a woman's sacrifice and of a woman's revenge. There are few acts in tragedy as crucial and as pregnant as is Phaedra's suicide; as crucial in structural importance and as pregnant in meaning and symbolism. Yet, for precisely this reason the play has been misunderstood and criticized for falling apart after Phaedra's departure from the stage.[1] Even a critic sympathetic to the structure of the play, Phillip Vellacott, sees Phaedra's suicide as a divisive act, "In the first half of the play we see the self-contained world of women - Phaedra, the Nurse, and the Chorus: in the second half the self-contained world of men - and between the two worlds there is no communication".[2] Such claims, however, are based upon an interpretation of the play as a tragedy in terms of character as opposed to a tragedy of interactions of characters. To interpret the play as a tragedy of character leads to one acknowledging the power of Phaedra's suicide while denying its significance, and hence the problem with the structure. This play is tragic not because of what happens to its four main characters but because of the relationship between all four and because of the different way in which each is tragic. And here Aristotle's comment on plot is most illuminating,[3] ἡ γὰρ τραγῳδία μίμησίς ἐστιν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεως καὶ βίου καὶ εὐδαιμονίας * * καὶ ἡ κακοδαιμονία ἐν πράξει ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ τέλος πρᾶξίς τις ἐστίν, οὐ ποιότης· εἰσὶν δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὰ ἤθη ποιοί τινες, κατὰ δὲ τὰς πράξεις εὐδαίμονες ἢ τοὐναντίον.

The characters of the play are ensnared in a world in which the morality of the gods and of men is in question; in which the line between appearance and reality is invisible if not completely absent;[4] in which the innocent is punished just as severely as the guilty and in which innocence or guilt depends solely on one's point of view. The unity of the play, then, lies in the thread of deception which runs through it, and around which all the action revolves. Phaedra's suicide is the knot in that thread of deception. It is the place where divine predestination and the illusion of human will converge, where Phaedra chooses to destroy herself and Hippolytus, making a choice which is based on absolute lack of choice. It is the result of deception and the reason for further deception. It is crucial to all four protagonists, all of whom have their own reasons for being deceived. By analysing the play in terms of the course of events influencing the character of its protagonists, and vice versa, it is possible to show how Phaedra's death forms the nucleus of the play, how it unites the two separate worlds of men and women, and how it is an act both of sacrifice and of revenge.

In the Prologue Aphrodite makes it clear that she is the moving force behind the drama (vv6, 22), and that Phaedra is to be her agent, her tool, in the destruction of Hippolytus (v47-50). What she does not reveal, however, is that on a purely human level Phaedra and Hippolytus have the ability to destroy each other. Nor does Aphrodite reveal the precise details of the plot which is to follow: she tells the audience only what they already know of the well-known myth;[5] that Phaedra will be destroyed in the process of Aphrodite's revenge on Hippolytus (v47-50), and that Aphrodite will "reveal all to Theseus" (v42, δείξω... κἀκφανήσεται). With regard to the matter of revealing all to Theseus, though, Aphrodite is making what we later realize to be a duplicitous statement. She does

not reveal the truth to Theseus; he is tricked into believing that Hippolytus is in love with Phaedra, and not the reverse. Barrett,[6] in his note on v42, says of this, "the truth is simply that Euripides is not being straightforward. He is not concerned here to give an exact synopsis of the plot, but rather...to mislead and mystify without outright misstatement". In other words, Euripides is doing to the audience what Aphrodite does to Theseus; he is blurring the line between appearance and reality, while allowing the audience to enter the play with all their preconceptions of a familiar story. He is playing a game, laying down a challenge, in which it is up to each member of the audience to make what he will of the new and subtle treatment of the myth. As this play was produced at the time when the moral relativism of Protagoras was providing a new direction for philosophy away from Parmenides' dead-end - away from a reality which could not be perceived by the senses - would it not be reasonable to assume that Euripides might play with the ideas of these two philosophers? He might structure a play on the interaction of four characters, all with differing concepts of behaviour and interpretations of reality, living in a reality which continually deceives them. In this combination of two intellectual systems, then, Euripides would be producing a play at the junction of philosophy, combining the end of material philosophy with the beginning of moral philosophy. Although such a thesis may not be proved conclusively the influence of the two philosophers is evident in parts of the play. And the popularity of the theme of relativity and ambivalence is attested to by a very important quote of Heraclitus'. Speaking of the nature of the Delphic Oracle he states:

> ὁ ἄναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς
> οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.
>
> (Diels fr. 93).

Frank Capuzzi[7] interprets this as, "The lord neither reveals

nor conceals. He does both". So does Euripides, with the ambiguity of Aphrodite's revelation, challenge the audience to interpret the signs of the play, in much the same way his characters have to.

The first blatantly puzzling statement which Aphrodite makes, however, is that,

> ἡ δ' εὐκλεὴς μέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀπόλλυται,
> Φαίδρα·

(v47-8).

Two important questions are raised here. Firstly, the audience has always known that Phaedra is a trollop who through her wantonness destroys Hippolytus,[8] how is it that now she will destroy him while retaining her good name? Secondly, if she is so virtuous as to keep her good name (εὔκλεια) then surely it is grossly unjust that she be destroyed? The goddess immediately makes the point that no human life, however virtuous, shall stand in the way of her avenging herself of an enemy (v48-50), so adding to the intrigue of the second point raised above. At the same time Aphrodite provides a cynical answer in anticipation of the Therapon's imprecation that she heed not young Hippolytus' haughtiness and be more forgiving, for

> σοφωτέρους γὰρ χρὴ βροτῶν εἶναι θεούς.

(v120)

It is evident from the start that this goddess is not all a human might want her to be: she is neither just nor forgiving in the way a human might be; she does not mind if she destroys the innocent with the guilty. Aphrodite's statement (v47) has placed an extraordinary new emphasis on the character of Phaedra: how will Phaedra retain her εὔκλεια while destroying Hippolytus and being destroyed herself?

To a greater or lesser degree all four of the human

protagonists of the Hippolytus are aware of the ambiguities of human perceptions, of the implicit difference, and of the difficulty of differentiation between appearance and reality. Hippolytus is the first to draw our attention to the theme and he does it in a way which indicates the attitude which will lead him into so much trouble later in the play. In offering a garland to Artemis he claims that only those as right-minded as he (σώφρων) have the right to pluck the flowers where he did:

> ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδέν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
> τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάνθ' ὁμῶς,
> τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ' οὐ θέμις.
>
> (v79-81).

Hippolytus' attitude implies that whereas there is a good and a bad, an apparent reality as opposed to a hidden truth, he has no difficulty in placing himself squarely in the camp of the just, of the self-righteous. This is a feeling of smugness, of exclusivity, which "betrays the tautness of repression, a contempt for the frailty of men, and a pride in his virtue which are not the marks of natural strength and serenity of spirit".[9] In short, this attitude betrays a lack of the very σωφροσύνη which Hippolytus is expounding continually in the play and which he claims as his more dominant characteristic.[10] Lesky here makes a very pertinent note, "we can recognize a basic motive of nobility (familiar from Pindar) when Hippolytus counts himself not among those whose knowledge is gained by instruction, but rather among those, the essence of whose being is determined instead by their nature (φύσις)".[11] One might therefore speculate that Hippolytus has positioned himself thus in the scheme of things in a self-conscious reaction to his own feelings of inferiority on account of being a bastard, feelings which he reveals in the agon with Theseus,

> ὦ δυστάλαινα μῆτερ, ὦ πικραὶ γοναί·
> μηδείς ποτ' εἴη τῶν ἐμῶν φίλων νόθος. (1082-3).

This concern of Hippolytus' is not mere over-sensitivity on his part. From the Nurse's earlier and somewhat scathing reference to him as a νόθον φρονοῦντα γνησίως (v309), and Theseus's later attack on him (v962-3), Euripides indicates that Hippolytus' illegitimacy is to be taken into account in an analysis of the play. When we place this concern in juxtaposition with Phaedra's awareness of her high birth,

οὐ γάρ ποτ' αἰσχυνῶ γε Κρησίους δόμους, (v719)

and her fear of a fall similar to that of her mother's and sister's (337-41), we see the mirror movement of the play. Phaedra, the high born, moves through the tragedy and appears at the end as one who, as Hippolytus says,

ἐσωφρόνησεν οὐκ ἔχουσα σωφρονεῖν, (v1034)

while Hippolytus, the bastard, is proclaimed a semi-divinity by Artemis (v1424f), and is able to say to his father with his dying breath

τοιῶνδε παίδων γνησίων εὔχου τυχεῖν.

(v 1455)

This is perhaps Hippolytus' great triumph: he has won nobility by his actions and his nature not by his birth and name, and this has come about at a terrible price. And, ironically, as it is a vindication of his nature it is a blow to the aristocratic code which he had so passionately adopted.

When Phaedra appears for the first time on the stage we hear from the Nurse that in her fevered state Phaedra does not like the present, preferring what is absent,

οὐδέ σ' ἀρέσκει τὸ παρόν, τὸ δ' ἀπὸν
φίλτερον ἡγῇ. (v184-5)

Metaphorically, then, in her illness Phaedra is portrayed as vacillating between what is and what is not: she feels that she cannot attain what she yearns for, and therefore what is absent will always be more attractive. This may be the inconsistency of a fevered mind but it places Phaedra's predicament and character clearly before the audience, who know

the reason for her fever. Throughout this scene, then, Euripides focuses the irony of the situation on the comments of the Nurse who is unaware of Phaedra's plight. Phaedra's ravings (v198-231), her desire to hunt, to run with the hounds (v215-8), to clutch the pointed spear (v219-222), to lie in the shaggy meadow under the poplars (v210-11), to drink deep from the stream of clear water (v208-9), to break Venetian colts (v228-31), are all self-explanatory to the audience. Phaedra is expressing the desire for τὸ δ' ἄτου in a manner which leaves the Nurse quite unenlightened: she is using the language of sexual desire, and she is identifying herself with the actions of her absent, and forever unattainable, object of desire, the hunter Hippolytus. When Phaedra emerges from this fit she is horrified to realize what she has been saying, and believes that her hidden desires have been revealed to the world: she wonders where her pure mind has been side-tracked to (v240), and she asks the Nurse to hide her, for she is ashamed of what she has said (αἰδούμεθα), and because she has looked upon shame (v243-6). Phaedra makes a poignant comment on the nature of madness, seeing madness and sanity here as the two opposites of oblivion and painful awareness, and, being all too aware of the pain of her reality, she wishes that she could die unaware of everything (v247-9). To die while mad would be her escape from her sense of shame. The Nurse, however, who is trying so hard to discover what ails Phaedra (v226-87), is completely unaware of her mistress's trouble and Phaedra's shame is as yet quite meaningless to her.

Despite the Nurse's eagerness to discover the root of Phaedra's illness she has no clue as to what it might be. She even asks Phaedra if she has some mysterious or common women's ailment (v293-5). She is exasperated by Phaedra's silence, she wants anything but silence from her in times of trouble (v297), she demands some response. This is echoed later by Hippolytus'

demands to hear from Theseus the cause of his distress,

σιγᾷς· σιωπῆς δ' οὐδὲν ἔργον ἐν κακοῖς· (v911)

In both cases the search for truth will be rewarded with a horrifying revelation, as Phaedra warns the Nurse in v327,

κάκ', ὦ τάλαινα, σοὶ τάδ', εἰ πεύσῃ, κακά. , and in v329. After all her trying to pry Phaedra's secret from her, though, the Nurse stumbles on it by accident, by mentioning the name of Hippolytus (v310). She elicits a cry of woe from Phaedra and immediately asks, *θιγγάνει σέθεν τόδε;* (v310). Phaedra is affected, but not in the way which the Nurse expects. Her primary concern is not with the future of her sons under "the bastard who thinks grandly" (v309) but with her stepson, whom the Nurse sees as their enemy. Up till now, however, for days the Nurse has had no response to her questions. Now that the first chink has appeared in Phaedra's armour of silence, the Nurse will not let up until she learns her secret. Phaedra immediately tries to cover up with silence, Hippolytus's name must not be spoken again (v312). This is a vain attempt at escape from what has been revealed by speech, and indeed it is not certain how much of a secret Phaedra wants to keep her uncontrollable passion: for, since the Nurse still believes that Phaedra's cry of woe is in connection with the future of her sons, Phaedra herself hints that the truth is something else, saying that it is something else that troubles her (v315). The Nurse, however, misses the connection between ἄλλη ... τύχη and Phaedra's involuntary response to the name of Hippolytus. She asks Phaedra if she is perhaps stained by murder (v316). Again Phaedra leads her closer to her true emotional state:

χεῖρες μὲν ἁγναί, φρὴν δ' ἔχει μίασμά τι. (v317)

In deed she is pure, but in design, in thought, she is stained: this, for Phaedra, is enough to constitute disgrace. From this it is evident that Phaedra is not content to appear

to be pure, she needs to feel pure in her nature. This attitude allies her with Hippolytus, as we saw earlier (v79-81), but in a much more mature way: she does not divorce herself from what she sees as an equivocal world, and this is the cause of her troubles. If she were as smug in her ideals as Hippolytus she would have no fear of erring either in thought or in deed: if she were as smug in her total lack of idealism as is the Nurse, she would dismiss any thoughts of the purity of her morals with the Nurses's statement:-

ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ
τάδ' ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά. (v465-6).

Phaedra, of course, is different to both Hippolytus and the Nurse, and is a combination of both, as she reveals in this stichomythia. When the Nurse asks her if an enemy has cursed her she provides another clue, saying that one who is close to her (φίλος) destroys her, and that neither he nor she wills it (319). This is an acknowledgement that human beings are not totally in control of their lives, if philoi may destroy each other unwillingly: it is a view of life as tragedy. This line is also important in contrasting with the contemptuous way in which Hippolytus deals with the concept of philia when the Nurse later accosts him with it (v614). These lines, then, show the distance between Phaedra and Hippolytus. Phaedra stands somewhere between the Nurse's awareness (and indeed conviction) of human frailty and Hippolytus' exclusive pursuit of a perfect form of behaviour. Standing between the two Phaedra is well aware that neither can be exclusive of the other - that one must be aware that neither can be exclusive of the other - that one must be aware that by trying to live by ideals there is the danger of failing. She knows too that despite all this there is a need for her behaviour to appear ideal. When the Nurse asks her if she grieves for some wrong done her by Theseus she replies with,

μὴ δρῶσ' ἐγωγ' ἐκεῖνον ὀφθείην κακῶς. (v321).

The important word here is ὀφθείην , for it reveals Phaedra's fear of base behaviour by focusing on her fear of exposure, a fear which she expresses regularly in the play and on which her status as a good wife and mother depends.

We gain another insight into Phaedra's mind when she warns the Nurse that, despite her nagging the revelation of the truth might be to her detriment (ὀλῇ), and she then adds,

> *Φα. ὀλῇ. τὸ μέντοι πρᾶγμ' ἐμοὶ τιμὴν φέρει.*
> *Τρ. κἄπειτα κρύπτεις, χρῆσθ' ἰκνουμένης ἐμοῦ;*
> *Φα. ἐκ τῶν γὰρ αἰσχρῶν ἐσθλὰ μηχανώμεθα.*
> *Τρ. οὔκουν λέγουσα τιμιωτέρα φανῇ;*

(v329-32)

Throughout the scene Phaedra has been providing the Nurse with clues as to the nature of her secret passion, wanting to reveal it while at the same time knowing that destruction lies in speech (vv311,327,393-7). As if in explanation of this paradox she now raises the question of honour, τιμή . She is trying to devise honour from this calamity which has befallen her, she says (v 331), but she does not elaborate at all on this statement. The Nurse, not knowing of Phaedra's calamity, makes the obvious point, that to speak of her predicament, then, would make Phaedra's honour all the greater: implying that secrecy provides no opportunity for honour, for honour is a tribute granted by society and therefore hardly bestowed for secrecy. Due to the Nurse's ignorance of the situation her comments seem to be ironic; for the audience, being aware of Phaedra's secret, knows that its revelation would secure anything but honour for her. What the audience does not yet know is that Phaedra's attitude is similar to the Nurse's,[12] as she reveals with,

> *ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ*
> *μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.*

(v403-4)

What Phaedra does not reveal until v401, however, is that she

has decided to die in order to escape her passion rather than to live and to submit to it or to shame. The puzzlement of the audience and the irony of the Nurse's comments (in v329-32), are therefore satisfactorily answered when Phaedra reveals what it would be that might win her honour. In these four lines, then, and until Phaedra explains the course of her thoughts after love struck her (v373ff), Euripides plays with the audience's sense of irony: for, however sympathetically she may have come across so far, there is nothing to differentiate between her behaviour and that of Euripides' previous version of Phaedra. It is only with her long monologue (v373f) that Phaedra appears to the audience as something other than the whore whom they expected to encounter.[13] Phaedra's desire for honour is not ironic. The honour for which she strives is based on giving her life to save her name (v419-21). As has been stated of Phaedra in a recent essay, "Phaedra has lived and died by the standards appropriate to an agathos. In the crisis of her life, when the struggle to secure her honour and her good name became most intense, she did not flinch but paid for them with her dearest coin, her own life."[14] This response is exactly what Phaedra desires when she says that she does not want her good deeds to go hidden, nor her base deeds to be witnessed (v403-4), but it misses completely the irony of Phaedra's wish. At the time in which this play was produced only a man would have been titled agathos for desiring his fair share of honour; in desiring acknowledgement for her sacrifice Phaedra is going against the view prevalent at the time, the view expressed by Pericles in the Funeral Oration of Thucydides when he says of women

> *τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως*
> *μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ'*
> *ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.*
>
> (Thuc. 2,45).

Phaedra, therefore, would not be called agathén for her

behaviour in her society, for she is stepping beyond the bounds which that society has set for her. The final irony is that not only is her honour not proclaimed to the world at the end of the play, but the opposite occurs: her base deeds become known, as Artemis states to Hippolytus at the conclusion,

κοὐκ ἀνώνυμος πεσὼν
ἔρως ὁ Φαίδρας ἐς σὲ σιγηθήσεται (v1429-30).

Although innocent, in that she cannot be held responsible for her passion nor for her failure to keep it secret, Phaedra has been utterly destroyed, she has been exposed. Her desire to win some honour (vv331, 403-4, 716-8) was misguided, she stood no chance, she deceived herself.

The encounter, then, between Phaedra and the Nurse until the point of the revelation (v352), serves to indicate several things to the audience. The Nurse has shown her resilience and skill in wearing away at Phaedra's defences. Phaedra has shown herself to be painfully aware of her predicament. She knows that she cannot escape her fate (v341), she feels trapped in a reality which will destroy her whether her secret becomes known or not (v317), and all that she asks is that she be able to salvage some honour from the situation (vv329,331). Although she realizes that her illicit passion is a curse which she cannot escape, and that human life consists of what is visible and what is invisible (the duality evident in a statement such as "my hands are clean but my mind is stained", v317) and knows that for her it is not good enough that she simply appear virtuous, she does indulge in the wishful thinking indicated by her desire to hide the truth. After her initial raving she wishes to hide her face (v243), even though that cannot diminish her shame; she does not want to hear Hippolytus' name (v312): she speaks of not being seen (ὀφθείην) performing any base deed at Theseus's expense (v321). All in all, Phaedra's concept of honour is more dependant on εὐκλεια

than on τιμή: it is not sufficient that she be of honourable behaviour, she must be seen to be honourable. The Nurse, however, feels no need to appear honourable, while Hippolytus has no doubt that he can never be anything but honourable and so has no need to be seen to be honourable.

When the Nurse learns Phaedra's secret her horror surpises even her. When she did not know the truth she could not imagine it to be of such enormous import; whereas earlier she had claimed that nothing could be worse than watching Phaedra die in silence (v328), she now acknowledges that Phaedra may have been right in trying to protect herself, for this revelation is truly destructive (v353-7). Here a conviction of the Nurse's is proven to be wrong, yet her mistaken assumption that Phaedra's secret could not be as terrible as Phaedra's determination to keep it secret would imply, has forced this revelation from the troubled queen, and so moved the action closer to tragedy. She rationalizes her shock with the thought that even the σώφρονες may love badly, unwillingly (v358-9), and that Aphrodite must be something greater than a god, if such a thing is possible (v359-60). Nothing is certain in this world: just as love might be the sweetest or the most painful thing (v348), so might one who is σώφρων act totally without virtue and so too might the nature of the gods be open to human uncertainty and bewilderment.

When Phaedra begins her monologue (v373ff) to the Chorus of Troezenian Women the play has reached a point where the audience and all the characters on the stage share the same knowledge: that Phaedra, against her will, is in love with Hippolytus. Phaedra now goes on to inform them of the nature of her passion and of the extent of her pain. This is new to her audience. Phaedra shows herself to be a thoughtful and intelligent woman who understands her predicament, has faced it

rationally and has come to the only decision possible for her: she has to die in order to save her reputation and so protect her husband and her sons (v419-23). She first tried to endure her supernatural passion in secret, knowing what danger speech might bear for her (v393-7). Next, she tried to conquer her disease with σωφροσύνη (v398-9). Finally, realizing that she was up against Aphrodite herself and that it would be impossible to escape her otherwise, she resolved to die (v400-2). D. Kovacs explains the necessity for Phaedra's death most succinctly: "Like any member of the nobility in a shame culture, she sees essential continuity rather than discontinuity between an individual's internal moral qualities and his reputation, though she can make this distinction if necessary (cf.413-14). She operates with the notion of to Kalon in an uncomplicated way, with the untroubled assurance that both adultery and bad reputation are to be avoided and that avoiding either or both is a goal worth giving her life for".[15] Phaedra's chain of thought, then, and her resolution, are noble and in keeping with the conventions of honour of her society: what could be more honourable than "death before dishonour"? However, the wish to have her actions recognized as honourable, which she immediately states, (v403-4), is not in keeping with her position as a woman, and indeed goes against her very own dictum that silence is the safest policy (v395-7). In choosing not to die with her passion secret she attempts to die with honour, but as we see so often in this play every concept has two sides: she runs the risk of dying with dishonour. As a modern semiotician states, "a thema comes with its anti-thema .... and this one-in-the-other structure which is the structure of dialogue, namely of two minds being one mind, is truly the fugitive structure of the sign".[16] In reaching beyond the safety of silence Phaedra is reaching for something, for honour, but she may be mistaken in what she reaches for (it may cause her

destruction rather than her salvation) and in doing so she bares herself as a sign for others to interpret. As Heraclitus states, signs are there to be interpreted, and, as we know, interpretation is fallible. By yearning for εὔκλεια Phaedra is pitting herself against a reality which she knows is cruelly ambivalent and deceptive. Her discussion of αἰδώς indicates her awareness of ambivalence in general, and specifically of the ambivalence of speech, of words. In speaking of the two kinds of αἰδώς, one good and one bad, she says,

εἰ δ' ὁ καιρὸς ἦν σαφής,
οὐκ ἂν δύ' ἦστην ταὐτ' ἔχοντε γράμματα. (v386-7)

Barrett, in his note on these lines, elucidates, "if we could be sure of the καιρός (the appropriate one), could be certain when αἰδώς was in or out of place, we could make a sharp distinction and call it by one name in the one case by another in the other; but we cannot be certain, the distinction is blurred and the two shade into one another and so perforce we must use the same name for both."[17] E.R. Dodds illustrates Phaedra's dilemma most sharply, "at v244 αἰδώς saves Phaedra; at v335 it destroys her".[18] In the former instance αἰδώς guided her towards secrecy; in the latter it leads to her revelation to the suppliant Nurse.

In her speech to the women Phaedra shows herself to be fully aware of the equivocalness of speech and behaviour; and her concern with αἰδώς does not imply that she is weak and overly concerned with the opinions of others. She does not count her concern with αἰδώς a weakness in herself, rather as a weakness in the concept of αἰδώς. We may perhaps judge Phaedra for giving in to the Nurse at v335 but to do so is to impose our values on her respect for the Nurse's supplications, and, as Mary Scott states on the relativity of such judgement, "criticism and censure are based on the values of the critic, and these are, in most cases, going to be those of the society

in which he lives. It is to be expected, therefore, that most of the usages of aidos will be consistent with the dominant values of society."[19] If Phaedra's capitulation, then, is seen as being inescapable and a necessary mark of respect for the Nurse[20] we see that it is Phaedra's concept of αἰδώς itself that is at fault: in one instance its fruit is good and in another bad; the fault is not the person's who acts according to αἰδώς. From the philosophy of the time it is evident that αἰδώς was a very important concept in the theory of behaviour; ranging from Protagoras' Myth in which αἰδώς is the restraining influence crucial to a social contract, and culminating in Democritus' ethics.[21] Hugh Lloyd-Jones states of Democritus, "He explicitly denies that the just man will act differently whether he is observed or not; the just man, he says, will feel Aidos before himself, which will restrain him from wrong action whether he is observed or not."[22] In the world of the Hippolytus it is obvious that Phaedra's concept of αἰδώς, which is closer to Protagoras' view of it as a necessary social attribute, is far more viable than Democritus' is. Democritus' theory in some way looks both to earlier and later concepts: it looks back to the aristocratic code of behaviour expounded by Hippolytus, in which the aristocrat is secure in his innate goodness (i.e. proper behaviour) and at the same time it looks forward to the Socratic or Platonic Absolute in which one cannot perform a bad deed knowingly.[23] Such a theory would soon run aground in the equivocal world of this play, as Phaedra says,

> *καί μοι δοκοῦσιν οὐ κατὰ γνώμης φύσιν*
> *πράσσειν κάκιον·*
>
> (v377-8)

In this play good intentions are continually going awry. In realizing this Phaedra shows herself to be more aware than both Hippolytus and the Nurse.

After proclaiming to the women of Troezen that she desires

acknowledgement for her coming sacrifice (v403-4) Phaedra displays her bitterness against the social prejudice which forces her to die,

> *τὸ δ' ἔργον ἤδη τὴν νόσον τε δυσκλεᾶ,*
> *γυνή τε πρὸς τοῖσδ' οὖσ' ἐγίγνωσκον καλῶς,*
> *μίσημα πᾶσιν.*
>
> (405-7)

She knows well, she tells the Chorus, that she is a woman, an object of hate to all (μίσημα ττᾶσιν); and immediately thereafter she curses the woman "who first began this shame, who let a stranger into her husband's bed" (v407-9). The implications of μίσημα ττᾶσιν , therefore, are that a woman's position and reputation are prejudiced by her sex, by a social generalization rather than by a judgement based on individual behaviour. This idea is familiar from Homer's Odyssey, from the dead Agamemnon's reference to Clytaimnestra as being the cause of an irremediable stain on all future women,

> *"... ἡ δ' ἔξοχα λυγρὰ ἰδυῖα*
> *οἵ τε κατ' αἶσχος ἔχευε καὶ ἐσσομένῃσιν ὀπίσσω*
> *θηλυτέρῃσι γυναιξί, καὶ ἥ κ' εὐεργὸς ἔῃσιν."*
>
> (Od, XI, v432-4)

The attitude, that the morals and behaviour of a gender may be tainted by the behaviour of one or a few of its members, indicates an extreme imbalance in social prejudice against the gender in question. That we never encounter such general curses cast on the male sex indicates the degree to which the society of the time (at least in the time between Homer and Euripides) was male-dominated. This is the society within which Phaedra is terrified of even contemplating a deed which may shame her.

All of Phaedra's fears of social prejudice will be proved correct most convincingly by Hippolytus when he discovers her secret. How he gets to learn of her passion is the result of yet more self-deception and duplicity. In the time it takes for Phaedra to address the women of Troezen the Nurse has

recovered from her shock; as she says,

νῦν δ' ἐννοοῦμαι φαῦλος οὖσα· κἀν βροτοῖς
αἱ δεύτεραί πως φροντίδες σοφώτεραι. (v435-6)

She is ashamed of her silence, a silence which had abandoned Phaedra her fate. She will overcome her horror now that she has had time to think over the situation and realized that, "In human life, second thoughts are sometimes best" (v436). She will attempt to save Phaedra's life. Bernard Knox makes the following statement on the Nurse's assumption of responsibility at this point, "Phaedra's silence was judgement; her speech was at first passion. But in the Nurse's case the relationships are reversed. Her passion, despair, drove her to silence, and her speech now is the product of judgement. It is speech (logos) in both senses of the Greek word, speech and reason; the Nurse here represents the application of human reason to a human problem."[24] In the speech the Nurse uses several of the sophist's oratorical techniques in order to break down Phaedra's defences and lead her towards the physical consummation of her love; she does this by trying to minimize the horror of the situation, by trying to trivialize Phaedra's predicament;

ἐρᾷς· τί τοῦτο θαῦμα; σὺν πολλοῖς βροτῶν. (v439)

She says this, neglecting to mention the adulterous nature of that love. For twenty lines she extols the power of love, the place of Aphrodite in the scheme of nature (v441-461), again trying to distract Phaedra from the moral issue at hand. She then brings her argument to the human level; she attempts to persuade Phaedra that her behaviour is not "normal" (v459-64), for it does not conform to common mortal wisdom, which is expressed as

ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ
τάδ' ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά. (v465-6)

This, together with τόλμα δ' ἐρῶσα (v476), is the heart of her argument. "Be bold in your loving", she says, implying

that, if that love remains secret, no harm has been done - indeed Phaedra will have complied with the goddess's wish (v476). This idea, that there is no dishonour if there is no exposure, is foreign to Phaedra's concern with τιμή (as has been discussed above in relation to vv317 and 373f). She cannot contemplate carrying out such a deed if the thought alone horrifies her. Her attitude is closer to Hippolytus' later

πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴην κακός,
ὃς οὐδ' ἀκούσας τοιάδ' ἀγνεύειν δοκῶ;

(v654-5).

Yet, the Nurse has based her argument on Phaedra's seminal

ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ
μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν. (v403-4).

She has interpreted this as meaning that Phaedra is not above performing a shameful deed if it is to succeed in secrecy. Whether or not this is what Phaedra means cannot be proved with any certainty; it is perhaps more probable that it is a statement of commitment to honourable principles (which is concerned with not giving any reasons for exposure rather than simply wishing to escape exposure), for only in her delirious entry onto the stage has she expressed any desire for Hippolytus - otherwise she would not allow herself even to hear his name (as in v312). It would not, at any rate, mean what the Nurse takes it to mean, for the Nurse does not take into account at any point Hippolytus' reacting with rejection to the news of Phaedra's love and what that might do to the cover of secrecy on which the Nurse's theory rests. Phaedra has shown herself to be far too cautious to risk such exposure (vv321, 420), and has also expressed her deep resentment of hypocrisy (v415-8). It is evident, then, that Phaedra and the Nurse approach Phaedra's problem from two very different angles.

The Chorus responds to the Nurse's speech by acknowledging the power of her reasoning but at the same time it distances itself

from the lack of moral considerations which she expresses (482-5). Phaedra herself is far more direct,

> *τοῦτ' ἔσθ' ὃ θνητῶν εὖ πόλεις οἰκουμένας*
> *δόμους τ' ἀπόλλυσ', οἱ καλοὶ λίαν λόγοι.*
> *οὐ γὰρ τὰ τοῖσιν ὧσὶ τερπνὰ χρὴ λέγειν,*
> *ἀλλ' ἐξ ὅτου τις εὐκλεὴς γενήσεται*

(v486-9).

She makes a similar point in v503, —*εὖ λέγεις γάρ, αἰσχρὰ δέ*— . She contrasts words that are "too fine", that pander to a moral failing, with words that lead to a good reputation (v489). This is the standard accusation levelled at the Sophists at the time of the play. Aristophanes (Clouds v112ff, v656-7) for instance, interpreted Protagoras' τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν "in the sense of making the morally worse cause to prevail."[25] Phaedra knows that her only salvation is to die with her love still secret and so save herself from disgrace before her husband and her sons (v419-21); but she reveals too that what the Nurse says is tempting, her words do please her ears (v488). The Nurse cuts through the argument and gets to the essence of Phaedra's predicament, what she needs is not words but the man (490-1). She follows this up with an attack on Phaedra's scruples,

> *αἴσχρ', ἀλλ' ἀμείνω τῶν καλῶν τάδ' ἐστί σοι.*
> *κρεῖσσον δὲ τοὔργον, εἴπερ ἐκσώσει γέ σε,*
> *ἢ τοὔνομ', ᾧ σὺ καθανῇ γαυρουμένη*

(v500-2)

This is the aggressive rationalism which we encounter in Jason of the Medea and in Pheres of the Alcestis. It is an attack on a character with noble aspirations by one who has neither the ability nor the inclination to understand, or to strive for, such behaviour. The excessive rationalism more often than not serves selfish motives and leads only to elevate the heroic status of those being attacked by such characters. Bruno Snell expresses the relationship between Phaedra and the Nurse most aptly: "The Nurse, a versatile woman who wears her morality lightly, and is thus a pronounced antagonist of Phaedra,

attempts to help her mistress in her own way."[26] The Nurse means well, but she does not consider fully tne implications of her involvement, that her actions may not be to the benefit of her mistress; finally, she will cause Phaedra's and Hippolytus' destruction. By undertaking to mediate between the two, on a topic wholly beyond her understanding, she triggers off a catastrophe involving two very similar people (similar to each other, not to ner), who die "for no other reason than that both of them are extremely sensitive to the prescripts of moral behaviour."[27] This is the Nurse's self-deception: her meddling in affairs beyond her grasp; her failure to understand tnat human behaviour is not always as simple and as predictable as she might believe it to be - she really cannot understand Phaedra's principles nor can she anticipate Hippolytus' rage.

When the Nurse hits on the idea of the love potion she finally does tempt her mistress beyond the breaking point which Phaedra fears (v505-6), for she offers her the hope of a cure with no danger and no side-effects, a love charm,[28]

> *ἃ σ' οὔτ' ἐπ' αἰσχροῖς οὔτ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ φρενῶν*
> *παύσει νόσου τῆσδ', ἣν σὺ μὴ γένῃ κακή.*

(v511-2).

In her weakened state Phaedra gives in to this vain hope by asking about the nature of the potion. On this crucial moment Lesky comments, "The ambiguity of the scene is masterfully executed. Love charms can either dissipate one's own passion or arouse it in the desired partner. When the Nurse speaks of the things that are needed from Hippolytus (v514), tne later affect seems more likely, and in fact it is mentioned specifically in v515. However, when Phaedra immediately afterwards speaks of a salve or a potion, such methods seem rather intended to cure her own desire. Everything is deliberately left unclear".[29] In such an ambiguous way, then, Phaedra surrenders herself to the Nurse. It is

definitely clear, however, that she does not expect the Nurse to reveal her secret to Hippolytus, and she voices her fear lest the Nurse should do precisely this (v518-20). That Phaedra's surrender is not total indicates that she will be the victim of the Nurse's duplicity (who, incidentally, does not deny that she may speak to Hippolytus, v521), and the Nurse, in turn, acts with the best of intentions, deceiving herself that she is capable of saving the situation (v521-4).

Hippolytus's loud reaction to her scheming soon shows how mistaken the Nurse has been. Phaedra immediately reckons that all is lost, her secret has been revealed, (v596-7), and that immediate suicide is the only solution to this problem (v599-600). This had always been her resolve (v401), but by allowing the Nurse to side-track her she has worsened her position considerably; she cannot save her name simply by committing suicide, for now her shameful desire has become public knowledge (v687-8). The sharp interchange between Hippolytus and the Nurse shows the young man quite beside himself with outrage and horror (v601ff). His sense of moral outrage at what he has heard is similar to what Phaedra feels for her own desires (compare v602 with v317). He tears apart the Nurse's equation of "no dishonour with no exposure" by overturning it when the Nurse pleads with him to be silent,[30]

τί δ', εἴπερ, ὡς φῄς, μηδὲν εἴρηκας κακόν; (v608).

Why should he be silent if what he is revealing is not bad, as the Nurse alleges? At the same time, what he has heard is too terrible for him to be silent about it (v604). This reaction mirrors Phaedra's attempt to keep her terrible desire secret. The Nurse is caught in the middle: she forced Phaedra to speak, now she cannot force Hippolytus to be silent. Unlike Phaedra earlier (v335) he rejects the Nurse's supplications with contempt (v606) and, most uncharacteristically, he states that he will go back on his oath of secrecy, claiming that,

ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος. (v612).

The notoriety which this phrase attracted to itself[31] shows how great a slip from Hippolytus' avowed σωφροσύνη this statement is. It is reminiscent of the duality expressed in vv317 and 503, it is a slip into the world of common people where something may appear true on the surface but not be true in fact (in this case an oath which is not held); but it is actually a slip beyond a simple acknowledgement of such things happening, it is a slip into baseness. No-one may trifle with an oath. In fact Hippolytus' statement is a mark of his present agitation, and indeed he will keep his oath even though this costs him his life. But this temporary slip from εὐσέβεια and σωφροσύνη is enough to frighten Phaedra into believing that Hippolytus will not keep silent. Ironically, it is this one moment of not professing idealistic thoughts which triggers Hippolytus' death - for Aphrodite has planned his destruction because of his excessive idealism.[32]

Hippolytus's denunciation of women, delivered in the invisible presence of Phaedra, is most revealing of his lack of true σωφροσύνη. He begins with

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ κίβδηλον ἀνθρώποις κακὸν
γυναῖκας ἐς φῶς ἡλίου κατῴκισας;

(v616-7)

The word κίβδηλον has a powerful effect here, with its implications of something adulterated, false, and counterfeit.[33] Euripides uses it in only two other instances.[34] In the Medea, performed just three years before the Hippolytus, Medea ends a speech of denunciation of Jason with,

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ χρυσοῦ μὲν ὃς κίβδηλος ἦ
τεκμήρι' ἀνθρώποισιν ὥπασας σαφῆ,
ἀνδρῶν δ' ὅτῳ χρὴ τὸν κακὸν διειδέναι,
οὐδεὶς χαρακτὴρ ἐμπέφυκε σώματι;

(Med.v516-9)

The difference in the way the two characters use the word, and

the very concept of κίβδηλος , underlines Hippolytus' irrational condemnation of women. Medea states that whereas one may tell gold from counterfeit, where men are concerned one cannot tell good from false. Hippolytus, however, can tell good from false: the counterfeit, the adulterated, of people are women; and, one assumes, he means all women. Medea's point is rational and poignant, one cannot easily tell the difference between friend and traitor, nor can one tell when a friend becomes a traitor. Hippolytus's point is alienating; he has cut himself off from common experience - where people labour to differentiate between true and false - he has decided that all women are false, and, one realizes, this is a decision based on personal motives, not an observation based on experience. Again, Hippolytus has revealed his own greatest weakness, his self-righteous condemnation of all that is foreign to him, of all that he has chosen to keep his distance from. His elaborate, utopian views of a society without women, too, indicate his divorce from real life (v618ff). He unwittingly identifies himself with Phaedra by asking,

πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴην κακός.
ὃς οὐδ' ἀκούσας τοιάδ' ἀγνεύειν δοκῶ;

(v654-5).

This disgust is similar to that which Phaedra feels for herself (v317). Hippolytus, however, is unable to conceive of the idea that Phaedra too may be troubled in such a way. In this he may be excused, for he has had no direct dealings with Phaedra herself; he is reacting to the solicitations of the somewhat alienating Nurse. His self-righteous outrage, however, strikes straight at Phaedra's heart. He claims that he will keep his oath of silence out of εὐσέβεια (v656-8), and that he will gloat as he looks upon Phaedra and the Nurse when they face Theseus on his return and put on their front of virtue (v660-3). This, coming after Phaedra's own expression of abhorrence at hypocrisy (v415-7), is a telling blow, and another sign of how little he knows of his step-mother (who, of

course, has had every reason to keep her distance from him). Hippolytus concludes with a curse on Phaedra and the Nurse, and an expression of hatred towards women in general (v664-8). He reveals that in the past he has been accused of being single-minded in his hatred of them but he feels that now he has proved his point, ἀεὶ γὰρ οὖν τῶς εἰσι κἀκεῖναι κακαί(v666). His prejudiced mind, in other words, has been satisfied.

Phaedra's worst fears have been confirmed, and her little lament illustrates her despair,

> τάλανες ὦ κακοτυχεῖς
> γυναικῶν πότμοι.
> τίνα νῦν ἢ τέχναν ἔχομεν ἢ (τίνας)
> σφαλεῖσαι κάθαμμα λύειν λόγους;

(v669-71).

As Barrett comments, "she laments not only her own tragedy but the tragedy of the whole sex that is exemplified in her own, the tragedy of the μίσημα πᾶσιν (v407) whose good name is gone beyond recall at the first breath of suspicion."[35] This is a desperate cry, for Phaedra has been exposed to the worst possible shame, for a woman of her moral sensibilities, but in it the seeds of Hippolytus's own destruction are sown. The image of the knot (κάθαμμα) is astoundingly powerful - for not only does it prefigure Phaedra's death by hanging but it is a metaphor for prejudice; and this knot of prejudice is what Hippolytus in turn will have to face when he is confronted by his father, and he will voice his despair with his vain plea that the house might speak in his defence (v1074-5). For the moment, though, the neatness of such an act of revenge has not yet occurred to Phaedra. She has to make new plans now that death with honour has been denied her by her secret's being exposed (v687-8). She does not believe that Hippolytus will keep his oath (v689-92). The Nurse, before finally being sent on her way, once again reveals how little she understands her

mistress, trying to defend herself with,

> *τῆς νόσου δέ σοι*
> *ζητοῦσα φάρμαχ' ηὗρον οὐχ ἁβουλόμην.*
> *εἰ δ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξα, κάρτ' ἂν ἐν σοφοῖσιν ἦ·*
> *πρὸς τὰς τύχας γὰρ τὰς φρένας κεκτήμεθα.*
>
> (v696-701).

Our wisdom is measured by our success, she says. For her, in other words, behaviour is a series of risks taken in pursuit of success, but, as she says, the medicine she found was not the one she wanted (v698-9). This attitude is completely foreign to Phaedra and Hippolytus: Phaedra knows that one slip is enough to spell disaster for a woman's reputation; Hippolytus has dedicated himself to an ideal and moral behaviour. The Nurse's surprise at her failure, despite her present rationalizing, indicates how little of the world she understands - she thought that finding a remedy for Phaedra's illness would be simple, but the cure she found was not the one she wanted. This is the metaphor for reality in this play: people rely on (and act upon) their perceptions in making decisions, choices, and interpretations, but because their senses depend on their character they are unable to perceive fully a reality which, as Heraclitus states, "neither conceals nor reveals but only presents a sign."[36] Perception of reality, in other words, varies, from person to person: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, says Protagoras.[37] The Nurse, for instance, fails to realize that her perception of reality is flawed for she relies solely on rationalism and expedience. Hippolytus, who relies only on prejuduced idealism, also fails to perceive that his view of the world is flawed. Phaedra is aware of the complications of existence and behaviour but is trapped in a terrible situation in which she misreads certain signs and, grasping for honour, brings shame upon herself. Theseus is deceived by the trap which Phaedra sets for Hippolytus and, believing that he is unprejudiced, he fights prejudice with prejudice and kills his

son who is, however, innocent (in regard to that of which he stands accused). The Nurse, then, having overreached herself and having brought unparalleled destruction on the house, leaves the scene, cursed and reviled (vv683-4, 708-9). This is the real reward for failure, not the rationalizing of v700-1.

The play now has reached a point where Phaedra has lost all hope of dying with any degree of honour. Since the start of the play she has been determined to give her life in order to save her good name, but that name depended on no-one's knowing of her overwhelming passion for Hippolytus. Now Hippolytus has been informed of it by the vile solicitations of the the Nurse, and in his eyes Phaedra has been equated with the Nurse. She fears exposure (vv321, 403-4, 420, 671); she believes that Hippolytus will not keep his oath of silence (v688-90); she feels bitter rage at the social prejudice which forces her to die in order to save her name, and which has been expressed so forcefully by Hippolytus. Facing total failure and knowing that she has to die in any case, Phaedra decides to destroy the man who is the cause of her destruction. She has nothing to lose, and by destroying Hippolytus she may gain his silence and take her revenge. She is no longer a passive victim, simply ready to sacrifice herself for the sake of her εὔκλεια. She will destroy another to ensure εὔκλεια for her sons, and she will try to gain whatever she can from the circumstances (v717-8). Her final words show the resolution which has followed despair and horror. When the Chorus asks her what she is going to do she replies,

θανεῖν· ὅπως δέ, τοῦτ' ἐγὼ βουλεύσομαι (v723).

This is a turning point for Phaedra: she is no longer only a victim, she is an agent. By saying that the way she will die is hers to choose, she takes responsibility for her action upon herself; in other words, her sacrifice to Aphrodite's plot now become a self-sacrifice, and her pain and anger at Hippolytus

fuel her desire for revenge on him. Phaedra does not use the language of sacrifice but her actions and her reasons indicate her spirit of sacrifice. If she must die, accused of lack of σωφροσύνη, then so must another, she says,[38]

> ἀτὰρ κακόν γε χἀτέρῳ γενήσομαι
> θανοῦσ', ἵν' εἰδῇ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς
> ὑψηλὸς εἶναι· τῆς νόσου δὲ τῆσδέ μοι
> κοινῇ μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.
>
> (v728-31).

She chooses to die in a manner in which Hippolytus will share in her destruction; he will learn of her pain (her νόσος), he will share in it, and he will truly learn of σωφροσύνη . This is Phaedra's act of revenge on Hippolytus. Aphrodite in the Prologue did not intimate that this was how Hippolytus would be destroyed, nor how passionately Phaedra would need to destroy him. That she had no choice from the start but to destroy Hippolytus is beside the point; Phaedra has reached this point on her own. As Hugh Lloyd-Jones points out, "mortals cannot evade responsibility for an action on the ground that it has been prompted by a god."[39]

Phaedra's act of revenge is a masterful stroke for it destroys Hippolytus precisely as she hoped it might. Theseus is horrified to find his wife dead and for no apparent reason, and in his grief he is easily convinced of Hippolytus' guilt by the lying letter which he finds on Phaedra's corpse,

> Ἱππόλυτος εὐνῆς τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν
> βίᾳ, τὸ σεμνὸν Ζηνὸς ὄμμ' ἀτιμάσας. (v885-6).

This is all Theseus needs to know, now Hippolytus stands no chance of proving his innocence: for Theseus is just as prejudiced against him as he himself was against Phaedra and all women. Hippolytus' amazement on entering (v902ff) and his sincere desire to learn the cause of Phaedra's death are extremely ironic in the face of Theseus' revulsion at what he believes to be his son's sophistry and lies (eg. v955-7), for he

cannot know, of course, that he is being deceived and that Hippolytus is innocent. As Artemis says in criticism of him at the end of the play, he rushes to judge and curse his son (v1320-4) without taking the time to investigate his guilt. Theseus has been tricked by a sign - he cannot believe that one who is about to die could produce a lie, such as his wife has, and so he has no doubt as to the authenticity of Phaedra's letter; it is, therefore, a very deceptive sign. His wife is dead, only something terrible can have driven her to suicide. A thorough interrogation of all members of the household would no doubt have lead to a gradual discovery of the truth and the cause for her death, and her death would have been interpreted for what it is: a desperate act of escape from dishonour (v419-23).

The letter, however, exploits the incomparable power of speech, of words, to short-circuit the investigation into her motives. Theseus readily accepts the evidence offered to him by the note: Hippolytus is guilty. Speech has deceived him and so it is all the more ironic that in the agon with Hippolytus he attacks what he believes to be his son's innately base nature, his lies,

> *ὦ πόλλ' ἁμαρτάνοντες ἄνθρωποι μάτην,*
> *τί δῆ τέχνας μὲν μυρίας διδάσκετε*
> *καὶ πάντα μηχανᾶσθε κἀξευρίσκετε,*
> *ἓν δ' οὐκ ἐπίστασθ' οὐδ' ἐθηράσασθέ πω,*
> *φρονεῖν διδάσκειν οἷσιν οὐκ ἔνεστι νοῦς;*
>
> (v916-20).

These words are calculated to sting Hippolytus: it is pointless, says Theseus, to teach and to discover knowledge and yet be unable to teach the one thing that truly matters, "to import a right mind to those who have no sense."[40] He plays on the concept of σωφροσύνη , which is so important to Hippolytus, implying that no "right mind" has been taught him. This contrasts sharply with Hippolytus' earlier claims to be σώφρων by nature (v79-81)[41] for he is now accused of not

being σώφρων , neither by nature nor by instruction. Theseus chooses the image of hunting (ἐθηράσασθε) with the purpose of ridiculing Hippolytus the hunter. He picks up on this image with the even more direct,

> *τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους ἐγὼ*
> *φεύγειν προφωνῶ πᾶσι· θηρεύουσι γὰρ*
> *σεμνοῖς λόγοισιν, αἰσχρὰ μηχανώμενοι.*

(v955-7).

Hippolytus is here being accused of hunting his quarry with solemn, fine, words while his intentions are vile. In this passage, then, Theseus has picked up Phaedra's attitude to the equivocal nature of reality, that fine words may mask evil devices (v488-9, 503, etc.). But the irony of the situation, apart from Theseus' accusations being an echo of Phaedra's accusations against the Nurse, is that Hippolytus is innocent. This serves to point out the opposite concept: evil words (perjury, in this case) may mask fine behaviour (Hippolytus'). Added to this is an example of the power of words when used to insult and to condemn. Hippolytus has no witness who will support him, he himself cannot tell the truth, being under oath, and so, in desperation, he wishes that the house itself could speak for him (v1074-5). In the face of extreme prejudice he has found himself defenceless. This, finally, is what brings him closer to Phaedra than to any other character in the play. For Phaedra too has had to confront great prejudice against herself and found herself defenceless (vv406-7, 669-671). Where Phaedra had found herself tangled in the knot that words had tied, Hippolytus finds himself ensnared by silence, facing prejudice with all his witnesses silenced (himself and the Chorus, that is).

The theme of the ambivalent nature of reality is central to Theseus' attack on Hippolytus and his statements are reminiscent of Phaedra's comments on αἰδώς and of Hippolytus' use of κίβδηλος . He wishes that people spoke in a different

voice when telling the truth to the one they used for falsehood (v929)[42] so that those listening might be able to distinguish between true and false (v930-1),

> *φεῦ, χρῆν βροτοῖσι τῶν φίλων τεκμήριον*
> *σαφές τι κεῖσθαι καὶ διάγνωσιν φρενῶν,*
> *ὅστις τ' ἀληθὴς ἐστιν ὅς τε μὴ φίλος,*
> *δισσὰς τε φωνὰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν,*
> *τὴν μὲν δικαίαν, τὴν δ' ὅπως ἐτύγχανεν,*
> *ὡς ἡ φρονοῦσα τἄδικ' ἐξηλέγχετο*
> *πρὸς τῆς δικαίας, κοὐκ ἂν ἠπατώμεθα.*

(v925-31).

Ironically though, Hippolytus has here been speaking the truth, but by its own limitations, by its ambivalence, speech has not the power to sway a prejudiced mind, a mind prejudiced in this case by Phaedra's lying letter and her speechless corpse (v971-2). There are no signs, τεκμήρια , for what is true and what appears to be true: the signs, the experiences, which appear to one in life neither reveal nor conceal, they await human, fallible interpretation. Speech is not as simple, as positive, as Aristotle would have us believe,[43] ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστι τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερόν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῷα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον, τὸ μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἴσθησιν ἔχειν· ἡ δὲ τούτων κοινωνία ποιεῖ οἰκίαν καὶ πόλιν.

Nor is it as negative as Hippolytus claims when he too describes speech as the difference between man and the animals,

> *χρῆν δ' ἐν γυναῖκα πρόσπολον μὲν οὐ περᾶν,*
> *ἄφθογγα δ' αὐταῖς συγκατοικίζειν δάκη*
> *θηρῶν, ἵν' εἶχον μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα*
> *μήτ' ἐξ ἐκείνων φθέγμα δέξασθαι πάλιν.*

(v645-8).

In this instance he sees speech as being a tool for evil when it is used by women, implying the generalization that speech can only be used to evil ends by women. This statement is one of those which express his extreme misogyny and which served to bring destruction upon him.

In the way in which the Nurse's concern with the love-charm provided a metaphor for the search for a cure, which then rebounded, in the first half of the play, Theseus' constant doubting of the validity of the curses granted him by Poseidon (vv887-90, 895-8, 973-5) and his final terrible proof (vl169-72), provides the metaphor of the characters seeking some clear sign by which to interpret reality and eventually realizing that what they find is not what they want. Both the Nurse and Theseus unleashed a power beyond their comprehension, and which turned out to be anything but what they wanted. This is their failing; they rushed in to judgment and action and failed to distinguish between appearance and reality, and in so doing helped implicate Phaedra and Hippolytus in destruction.

As Phaedra's death leads to Hippolytus' dishonour, death, and final exoneration and deification (vl423-30) we see how the two have been locked together in the tragedy, how the fate of the one has depended on the actions of the other. The movement of the tragedy is the precipitation of Phaedra from silence to speech, from security in her good reputation to the fall, through speech into social dishonour. Phaedra's τιμή , or good name, is external honour, honour which is granted by society, for, as Phaedra claims and as Hippolytus illustrates, a woman in this society cannot be credited with innate goodness - her gender has been tainted. Hippolytus' perception of honour, however, depends on his own personal standards. He sets his standards above those of society (as we see in his protestation of innocence, vl100-1) and face acute embarrassment, dishonour, and death in his insistence on being true to his private ideal (his εὐσέβεια , for instance, prevents him from doing the rational thing and defending himself by breaking an oath which cloaks only dishonour). The danger here, though, as we see, is that Hippolytus is inflexible, and the moment that his personal code of honour comes into conflict

with that of society, he does not know how to function. It must be noted here that being young and being an avid hunter Hippolytus is presented as having had very little exposure to real human society and thus he had formed his opinions amongst his aristocratic young friends. Phaedra, on the other hand, knows the ways of society too well (vv405-7, 669-72). She knows that her good name, which is essential to her as a wife and mother (v419-25), depends solely on the judgment of society, and is therefore a flimsy thing which needs constant attention or order to survive, because it is not based on the recognition of any innate goodness. Phaedra is not so concerned with εὐκλεια (vv47, 405, 423, 489) out of any vanity, she knows that her life depends on it. Her revenge on Hippolytus is not so much that she destroys him, but that she strips away his defences. Hippolytus, before his father, relies on his innocence of character; Phaedra has penetrated this defence by prejudicing the light in which his character is seen; she has made him feel what it is like to fight against prejudice; she has made him feel her enmity the way she has felt his; the man whom she loved she destroys as an enemy.

It is evident, then, how important Phaedra's suicide is to the unity of the play. It is the culmination of the first half and it initiates the second half: she has to die so that Aphrodite's plan may succeed, and that is her sacrifice; in dying she has to destroy Hippolytus so that Aphrodite's plan may succeed, and that is her revenge. The panic which Phaedra feels when her passion for Hippolytus first strikes her, and which leads to her desire to die, is the panic of a woman who is well aware of her need to conform to the norms of correct feminine behaviour: she wishes to kill herself in order to protect her status as a good wife and a good mother, in much the same way as Alcestis gives her life in order to win greater renown as a good woman. When, however, she feels that her

great battle has been lost, that Hippolytus' rage against her is typical of the prejudice against women (against which she has fought vainly) her thoughts turn to revenge; like Medea, feeling that she has lost everything for which she has struggled, she feels the need to lower her enemy to her own level - in this case unwarranted humiliation and death. The Hippolytus, then, is seen to contain both the motifs at a woman's sacrifice and of a woman's revenge in a single act, incorporating in one play the central themes of Euripides' two earlier domestic tragedies.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Notes on Chapter One

1. See B. Knox, "Second Thoughts in Greek Tragedy", Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies Vol 7, 1966 (p. 213-32.)

2. Simon, B. Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece: The Classical Roots of Modern Psychiatry. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978 (p.91)

3. Aristotle Poetics 13.1453a 29-30. Aristotle, however, says this with regard to Euripides' characters' fall from happiness to catastrophe. His comment, though, is relevant in terms of Simon's view of tragedy, too.

4. Webster, T.B.L. Greek Art and Literature, 700 - 530 B.C. London: Methuen, 1959 (p.143-4)

5. We accept that his birth and death dates are approximately 485-406 B.C.

6. According to the Suda; mentioned in the Oxford Classical Dictionary entry on Euripides: OCD ed. by Hammond, N.G.L. and Scullard, H.H., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, (2nd Edition).

7. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, The Justice of Zeus, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983 (2nd Edition) (p.129).

8. Jaeger, W., Paideia Vol 1 (2nd Edition), trans(1) by Gilbert Highet, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965. (p349)

9. Meiggs, R., The Athenian Empire, Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1972. (p.284)

10. ibid., p.285.

11. ibid., p.286.

12. ibid., p.390.

13. Hammond, N.G.L. A History of Greece to 322 B.C. (2nd Edition), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967 (p.422).

14. Jaeger, op.cit. in n.8, p.353.

15. Longinus On the Sublime 15.3 ed. by D.A. Russell, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

16. Jones, J., On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy, London: Chatto and Windus, 1962 (P.268-9).

17. Nauck, A. (Ed.) Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, new ed. by B. Snell, Hildesheim, 1964 (fr. 566)

18. Jones, op.cit. in n.16, p.268

19. Protagoras fr., Diels, H. and Kranz, W. Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker Berlin, 1934-37.

20. Lesky, A. Greek Tragedy, trans(l) by H.A. Frankfort, London: Ernest Benn, 1978. (p134)

21. See the discussion of this play,p96 ff.

22. Lesky, op.cit. in n.20, p.134.

23. loc.cit.

24. See Lesky, A. Greek Tragic Poetry trans(l). by M. Dillon, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1983. (p.198).

25. The full sentence is ὁ ἄναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖον ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.
(fr.1) Diels, H and Kranz, W. op.cit. in n.19. See p.98 f. for a discussion of this statement with regard to the construction of the Hippolytus. See also p.125 ff.

26. This point will be argued more specifically in relation to the plays which will be discussed in the dissertation.

27. Untersteiner, M. The Sophists., trans(l) by K. Freeman. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954 (p.53).

28. All of these can have their influence traced in the extant plays of Euripides. An investigation of these theories, however, falls outside the scope of this study; they are touched upon where they are relevant to the discussion of individual plays in the study. For Prodicus on νόμος/φύσις see Untersteiner, op.cit. in n.27, p.209 ff.; for Gorgias on δίσσοι λόγοι , ibid., p.176ff.

29. If the satyrical Cyclops and the Rhesus, over which such doubt still stands, are excluded from the total of nineteen.

30. That is, apart from Megara of the Heracles and Clytaimnestra of the Electra, who were murdered. In the Andromache, Andromache is quite prepared to die so that her son Molossus may live:

> *ὦ τέκνον, ἡ τεκοῦσά σ', ὡς σὺ μὴ θάνῃς,*
> *στείχω πρὸς Ἅιδην·*
>
> (Andr. v.413-14).

31. Clytaimnestra in Iphigeneia in Aulis warns Agamemnon of some as yet unformulated retribution if he goes ahead with the sacrifice of their daughter:

> μή δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν μήτ' ἀναγκάσῃς ἐμὲ
> κακὴν γενέσθαι περὶ σέ, μήτ' αὐτὸς γένῃ. (I.A. v.1183-4).

In the Andromache Hermione wishes to kill Andromache out of jealousy and in the Ion Creusa tries to kill Ion out of a sense of outrage that her husband Xuthus has taken him as a son while she has been deprived of a child on account of Apollo's despicable behaviour towards her.

32. She is simply a frenzied agent of Dionysus' revenge on Pentheus when she kills him, her own son (see Bacchae, v 1289f).

Notes on Chapter Two

1. Starr, C.G., The Economic And Social Growth of Early Greece 800-500 B.C. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977 (p.119).

2. ibid. p.128. For Homer's attitude towards a κακος see his portrait of Thersites (Iliad 2, v.211 ff.). The man, of low birth, is described as base, ugly, and ultimately irrelevant.

3. ibid. p.129

4. Hippolytus, v.409-12:

> ἐκ δὲ γενναίων δόμων
> τόδ' ἦρξε θηλείαισι γίγνεσθαι κακόν.
> ὅταν γὰρ αἰσχρὰ τοῖσιν ἐσθλοῖσιν δοκῇ,
> ἢ κάρτα δόξει τοῖς κακοῖς γ' εἶναι καλά.

5. Starr, op.cit. in n.1, p.130.

6. ibid. p.131. See also Aeschylus' Eumenides, v658-61, in which Apollo, in defence of Orestes' murder of his mother, makes the same point:

> οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἡ κεκλημένου τέκνου
> τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου.
> τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώσκων, ἡ δ' ἅπερ ξένῳ ξένη
> ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάψῃ θεός.

7. Starr, op cit. in n.1, p.129. (The fragment of Solon quoted is fr. 23 as it appears in Elegy and Iambus (Vol. I) ed. by J.M. Edmonds (Loeb Classical Library) London: Heinemann, 1931).

8. Pomeroy, Sarah B. Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity New York: Schocken Books, 1975. (p.66).

9. loc. cit. Pomeroy cites Aristotle's Constitution of Athens 264 as her source on the population of Athens being greatly increased and so giving rise to Pericles' Law.

10. Quoted in Barrett, M. Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis London: Verso, 1980 (p.11).

11. Lacey, W.K. The Family in Classical Greece, London: Thames and Hudson, 1968. p 174: " In law, too, the Athenian married woman had an economic security not enjoyed even by the modern married woman; her property was securely settled on her, and if she left her matrimonial home, as she could do if she wanted, her husband had to return her property or pay interest on it; if she did not leave her home, her husband had to support her."

12. Starr, op.cit. in n.1., refers to Hesiod Works and Days, 373-75, 702-4; Theogony 591ff.; Semonides fr. 7; cf. Phocylides fr. 2. (note 31, on p.236).

13. ibid., p.131.

14. loc. cit. The homosexuality associated with these habits, and the female courtesans, also served to keep men away from their wives.

15. Lacey, op.cit. in n.11, p.159. Lysias III, 6.

16. Thucydides Historiae II 44 ed. by H.S. Jones, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942.

17. Starr, op.cit in n1, p.129.

18. Gould, J. "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens." in Journal of Hellenic Studies 100, 1980. (pp. 38-59) p.57

19. ibid. p.45.

20. eg. Alcestis, vv 83-5, 150, 151, 152-5, 201; Heracleidae, v597-9.

21. See Medea, v1323-8; Hecuba, v1173; Ion, v1261-5.

22. Gould, op.cit. in n.18, p.53.

23. Humphreys, S.C. Anthropology and the Greeks London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, p.203.

24. ibid. p.219.

25. ibid. p.240.

26. ibid. p.234.

27. In a recent essay, however, it is argued that Aristophanes' criticism of Euripides for his misogyny result from the comic poet's need to distort and attack Euripides' particularly subversive brand of feminism.
(Jacqueline Assael "Misogynie et féminisme chez Aristophane et chez Euripide" in Pallas: Revue d' Etudes Antiques XXXII, 1985. pp.99-103).

28. eg. Aristophanes, Thesmophoriazusae, v 383-413.

29. Pomeroy, op.cit. in n.8, p.105, quotes Aulus Gellius of the mid 2nd Century A.D.:
"Euripides is said to have had a strong antipathy toward nearly all women, either shunning their society due to his natural inclination, or because he had two wives simultaneously - since this was legal according to an Athenian decree - and they had made marriage abominable to him." (15-20).

Pomeroy also quotes Athenaeus from the end of the 2nd Century A.D.:
"The poet Euripides was fond of women, Hieronymus, at any rate, in Historical Commentaries, says, 'When someone said to Sophocles that Euripides was a woman-nater in his tragedies, Sophocles said, "When he is in bed, certainly he is a woman-lover"'" (Ath. 13. 557e).

30. Starr, op.cit. in n.1: " In eighteenth-century London marriage has been called 'a business partnership,' on the trading level, for wives were expected to bring with them the capital and also to engage in shopwork. The same was at least in part true in ancient Greek cities, for the wives of traders and artisans could scarcely have been supported solely in household occupations" (p.89). It is interesting to take into account Aristophanes' mocking of Euripides' mother's occupation as a vegetable vendor (Thesmophoriazusae v.387, Acharnians v.478), whether or not this was based on fact, to understand that ideally her place would have been in the home.

31. Demosthenes Against Eubulides 35.

32. On women working in the home see Xenophon Memorabilia 2,7,1 -12.

33. Humphreys, op.cit. in n.23, suggests that Euripides

intended his plays for posterity: "One of the factors influencing the intellectual to adopt a transcendental perspective appears to be the need to make his work comprehensible to an audience widely extended in space and continuing indefinitely into posterity." p.241.

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. A.W.H. Adkins deals with the subject in Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values, Oxford, 1960, and in his article "Friendship and Self-Sufficiency in Homer and Aristotle" in Classical Quarterly 57, p 30ff. His approach to the subject is best described as the lexical method, and the dangers of this approach have been indicated by K.J. Dover in Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle (1974) and in his article "The Portrayal of Moral Evaluation in Greek Poetry" in Journal of Hellenic Studies 103 (1983), pp 35-48. Dover's criticism of Adkins' methods is most valuable in its cautioning against disregarding the day-to-day qualities of the concepts described in literature. Adkins' findings on philia in Homeric times however appear to be generally accepted.

2. Scott, M "Philos, Philotēs and Xenia" in Acta Classica XXV,(1982). pp1-19.(p2).

3. ibid.p16

4. Aristotle The Ethics of Aristotle [θ.x.5; 1160b 33-35] ed.by John Burnet, London: Methuen, 1900.

5. ibid. θ.XI.4; 1161a 22-5

6. ibid. θ.I.4; 1155a 22-6

7. Carpenter, R. The Ethics of Euripides New York: Columbia University Press, 1916. (p45)

8. loc. cit. in n.7.

9. See Aristotle's Ethics (A.IV.4) for his own comment as to how he reaches his conclusions:
ἁπάσας μὲν οὖν ἐξετάζειν τὰς δόξας μᾶταιότερον ἴσως ἐστίν, ἱκανὸν δὲ τὰς μάλιστα ἐπιπολαζούσας ἢ δοκούσας ἔχειν τινὰ λόγον.

10. Vernant, J-P The Origins of Greek Thought London: Methuen, 1982. (p45)

11. ibid. pp60-1.

12. Plato Protagoras XII 322B-C

13. Untersteiner, M. The Sophists trans(1) by K. Freeman, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954. (p60).

14. loc.cit.

15. Vernant, op.cit. in n.9, p92. (Vernant's quotation of Solon seems to be a paraphrase of Solon's theory of order through isotēs rather than an actual quote.) See also Dickinson, G. Lowes The Greek View of Life London, 1932: "The 'equality' which they sought in a well-ordered state was proportional not arithmetical - the attribution to each of his peculiar right, not of equal rights at all." (pp55-6)

16. Above, n.4 and 5.

17. Thucydides Historiae II 51.5 ed by H.S. Jones Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942 (repr. 1980).

18. Carpenter, op.cit. in n.7, p38.

19. G.W. Bond in his edition of the Heracles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) says of the dating of this play that "416 and 414 are both possible" (pXXXI)

20. Cf. also Hippolytus v359-61; Iphigeneia Among the Taurians v380; Orestes v285; Ion v384, 436, 916.

21. This attitude is basically that which is prevalent in Homer. Scott, op.cit. in n.2, writes: "A man's philoi should philousi, treat in a non-hostile manner, only those who are also philoi to him, otherwise, by overstepping the sharp dividing line between philoi and non-philoi, they become echthroi, enemies" (p12).

22. Winnington-Ingram, R.P. Sophocles: An Interpretation Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. (p129).

23. Vernant, op.cit. in n.9, p63, describes lyssa as the warlike frenzy with which the warrior of Homeric times achieved his success and glory. He notes that when men no longer fought in single combat lyssa became a dangerous element: "Martial virtue, then, no longer had anything to do with thymos, but consisted in sophrosyne - a complete mastery of self, a constant striving to submit oneself to a common discipline." It is a tempting notion to see the

tragedy of Heracles, and his breach of philia, as resulting from a maladjusted personality too long in the wars.

24. Above, n.4 and 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. Although the Alcestis, the Medea, and the Hippolytus are referred to in this chapter, please see the individual discussions of them in Part Two of the dissertation for a more detailed analysis on Euripides' use of the themes of sacrifice and revenge.

2. On the dates of the plays I have accepted the dates provided in the Oxford Classical Dictionary entry on Euripides, except where individual editors of plays have suggested otherwise: Alcestis (438), Medea (431), Heracleidae (approx. 430), Hippolytus (428), Andromache (approx. 426), Hecuba (approx. 424), Supplices (approx. 422), Heracles (416 and 414 are possible dates), Electra (approx. 417), Trojan Women (415), Iphigeneia among the Taurians (before 412), Helen (412), Ion (a little later than 412), Phoenician Women (approx. 411-409), Orestes (408), Bacchae and Iphigeneia in Aulis (405). The Rhesus and the Cyclops are not included in the discussion.

3. For more on the subject of a stepmother's hatred see p58-9.

4. See also pp59-61 and note 25 of Ch. Five.

5. If we accept, in the light of the previous chapters, that when Medea "bemoans the unworthy lot of women, this pertains far more to the wife of the Attic citizen than to the Kolchian heroine. A. Lesky Greek Tragic Poetry trans(l) by M. Dillon, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1983. (p387).

6. See pp75, 80, 85-6, 94.

7. See Bond, G.W. Euripides Heracles Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, pXXXI, for a discussion on the date of this play.

8. Above, pp26-32.

9. It is ironic that Macaria here uses the word εὐκλεῶς (Hcld. v534) to describe the desired nature of her death: throughout the Hippolytus the love-stricken Phaedra labours fruitlessly to find a way to die with εὔκλεια (See p106ff).

10. Albin Lesky states, "The motif of voluntarily sacrificing one's life was a favourite of Euripides, especially if the sacrifice was for one's country (as in Hcld., Erechtheus, Phoin. Iph. A., and probably Phrixos)," in Greek Tragic Poetry trans(l) by M. Dillon New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1983. (P217). In this he follows J. Schmitt, "Freiwilliger Opfertod Bei Euripides," (Rel Vers. u. Vorarb. 17 (1921). Iphigeneia's sacrifice in the I.A., however, can hardly be called more voluntary than is Polyxena's in the Hecuba: both show the same resolve to die nobly, though for very different reasons, and Iphigeneia's main concern before it was demanded of her to die was her impending marriage. Macaria in the Hcld. dies to save her kin, and incidentally the state, and Jocasta in the Ph. dies more out of a desire to preserve the bond of philia between herself and her warring sons than for the good of the state. How far the Erechtheus and the Phrixos may be interpreted as being primarily about sacrifice for one's country is a matter of conjecture, but from the nature of the sacrifices in the extant plays of Euripides it appears that he was more concerned with sacrifice for personal reasons or obligations rather than as a patriotic service.

11. Such as Jason's (Med. v573ff) and Hippolytus' (Hip. v616ff).

12. Note the similarity in tone and the emphasis on philia in the laments of Admetus of the Alcestis (especially in v278-79) and Theseus of the Hippolytus (especially in v836-38).

13. Hcld. v474-7; El. v341-4; Hec. 568-70.

14. Alc. v941f; I.A. v1157-64; Med. v14-15.

15. Alc. v375; Andr. v418-19; Med. v488-91; cf Andr. v156-8. The implication here is that childlessness is a good reason for divorce. See also note 35 of Ch. Six.

16. Hip. v419-23; Hcld. v507-11; Her. v294.

17. Med. v230-51; Hip. v.405-9; El. v1035-40; Ion v398ff.

18. Alcestis, Macaria, Evadne, Jocasta, and Andromache who is prepared to die to save her child (Andr. v413-14).

19. Iphigeneia in the I.A. is the exception for although she dies in the context of war she dies at the hands of her friends, not of enemies.

20. eg. Alc. v83-5; Hec. v577-80; Hcld. v597-99.

21. This is Odysseus' statement on marriage. Homer Odyssey VI, 182-85 ed by W.B. Stanford. London: Macmillans, 1959.

22. See above, p26ff.

23. See above, p35-6.

24. Dodds, E.R. The Greeks and the Irrational Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951. (p18).

25. See above note 15, and note 35 of Ch. Six.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

1. Lesky, A. Greek Tragic Poetry trans(l) by M. Dillon. New Haven/London : Yale, 1983. (p209).

2. Kitto, H.D.F. Greek Tragedy. London : Methuen, 1939. (p312).

3. Dale, A.M. Euripides Alcestis. Oxford : Oxford U.P., 1954.

4. Dale, op.cit. in n.3, pXXI.

5. Lesky, op.cit. in n.1, (p209); Dale, op.cit. in n.3, (pXIII).

6. Kitto, op.cit. in n.2, (p311).

7. vv 30, 38, 39, 41.

8. See note 10 of Ch. Four.

9. e.g. Phaedra in the Hippolytus.

10. Blaiklock, E.M. The Male Characters of Euripides. Wellington : New Zealand U.P., 1952. p.2 : "For those few who saw or read the play with insight it was a subtle piece of satire on the ways of man - on the Athenian husband..."

Also, Vellacott, P. Ironic Drama. Cambridge; Cambridge U.P., 1975. p.102 :

"The story shows the social principle of male ascendancy established partly by nature and partly by man's power to organize the world for his own purposes, resulting in man's shame and confusion."

11. Lesky, op.cit. in n.1, p.209.

12. Burnett, A.P. "The Virtues of Admetus" in Segal, E. (ed.) Greek Tragedy : Modern Essays in Criticism. New York : Harper & Row, 1983. p.p. 254 - 271. First appeared in Classical Philology, 60 (1965), 240 - 55 (p259).

13. Lesky, op.cit. in n.1, p209.

14. Plato Symposium ed by W.R.M. Lamb, (Loeb Classical Library)
London: Heinemann, 1925

15. ibid. 208c - d. Socrates is quoting Diotima's answer to his question.

16. Nilsson, M.P. A History of Greek Religion (2nd edn. 1952). trans(1) by F.J. Fielden. New York Norton, 1964 (p124). See also Burnett, op.cit. in n.12, p258, on the "house" as the central image of the play.

17. v 248-9; and the ironic dialogue between Admetus and Heracles in v 538.

18. Indeed, with φίλην , γενναῖος is one of the key words of the play. It occurs in one form or another in vv 166, 624, 742, 857, 860, 993, 1097, 1120,. See Allen, J.T. & Italie, G. A Concordance to Euripides. London : University of California Press & Cambridge U.P., 1954.

19. φίλην and the concept of φιλία occur in vv 15, 23, 79, 165, 201, 212, 218, 231, 264, 279, 335, 339, 340, 351, 369, 376, 432, 473, 530, 562, 599, 630, 688, 701, 722, 809, 876, 895, 930, 935, 960, 991, 1008, 1133, 1011. Allen and Italie, op cit. in n.18.

20. The implication that she is making a sacrifice might not be stated in the Servant's speech but it is possible that the audience made the imaginative leap of seeing Alcestis as handing her children over to Hestia, and as offering herself as a sacrifice.

21. Dale, op.cit. in n3, in her note on v.172, p66, notes that myrtle was ceremonial of the tomb and was also favoured for festive celebration, being sacred to Demeter.

22. v179: οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ'· ; strikes one as a rush to explain, lest she be misunderstood.

23. See v 381,

24. Lesky, op.cit. in n.1, p211. cf. v.1071 where Admetus must "endure the gift of a god"; cf. Theseus' rueful acknowledgement of the gift of Poseidon's curse in Hippolytus, v 1411-12.

25. Pomeroy, S.B. Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves : Women in Classical Antiquity. New York: Schocken Books, 1975. On p.111 she notes, "Mothers whose husbands are dead refer to their children as 'orphans'".

26. Here, in the Andromache as the concubine with her child endangered while her master and protector is absent, and in the Trojan Women as the enslaved widow whose child is taken from her and killed.

27. She cannot take them with her, she cannot abandon them, Medea v 1021ff.

28. cf. Hermione in the Andromache; the Princess in the Medea, v.1144 ff. See also the discussion above on pp44-5.

29. Thompson, S. The Folktale (1946) Berkeley : University of California Press, 1977. (p.116).

30. Vellacott, op.cit. in n.10, p104-5.

31. Aegisthus in the Electra for example, is described as a cruel stepfather (El. vv.16, 22-35).

32. e.g. vv83-5, 144.

33. This is not surprising in a play in which Alcestis and the Servant are the only female characters.

34. Medea's Nurse gives a good indication of the correctness of a woman always standing by her husband,

> ἥπερ μεγίστη γίγνεται σωτηρία,
> ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῇ. (Med. 14-15).

35. P. Vellacott, op.cit. in n.10, goes so far as to negate her character in her subservience to her ideal, pp 101 & 106.

36. Cf. Phaedra in the Hippolytus, p96ff where this theme is central.

37. Burnett, op.cit. in n.12, p264.

38. It is interesting to compare Pheres' attitude to that of Amphitryon in the Heracles, whose only concern, when threatened by his mad son, is that Heracles not pollute himself by killing his father (Her. v1072-7).

39. Burnett, op.cit. in n.12, p265.

40. Canetti, E. Crowds and Power trans(l) by C. Stewart. Harmondsworth ; Penguin, 1973. (p267-7).

41. See Vellacott, op.cit. in n.10, p100 : "Whether Admetus could at any point have declined the bargain is not told us; but when Alcestis offered it was too late, and he must endure the gift of a god (1071)".

42. A fascinating comparison to this grief is the "Epitaph for Allia" quoted in Lefkowitz, M.R. Heroines & Hysterics. London : Duckworth, 1981. (p 28); it indicates that Admetus' emotion here, and that of Theseus in the Hippolytus (v836f), is genuine and not uncommon.

43. See Burnett, op.cit. in n.12 for a full appraisal of this Ode, p. 258f.

44. See Blaicklock, op.cit. in n.9, p2-3, quoted above, in n.9.

45. Vellacott, op.cit. in n.10, p101, says in condemnation of Admetus, "Even if theoretically it was possible for Admetus to decline, yet when his wife made the offer it would naturally seem to him to be above all things right - right in a degree beyond the achievement of most men's wives; to refuse it would seem to flout an order of nature and to annul a gesture of unique beauty."

Vellacott's argument, however, is highly emotive and without substantial evidence. It is not the fact that she is a woman which makes Alcestis' sacrifice correct, it is the fact that she has been asked and so cannot refuse without risking the condemnation which Pheres and his wife bring upon themselves. Her reasons for dying are her own and are far more complex than Vellacott would allow us to believe.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

1. Schlesinger, E. "On Euripides' Medea", in Segal, E. (ed.) Greek Tragedy Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Harper and Row, 1983 pp294-310. (p297).

2. Hec., v1265ff.

3. Pomeroy, S.B. Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity. New York: Schocken Books, 1975. (p109).

4. ibid. See also above, p46.

5. See Lefkowitz, Mary R., Heroines & Hysterics London: Duckworth, 1981.(p5)

6. El. v.1051-4:
cf. Med., v14-15; Alc. vv83-5, 144, 614-6.

7. Alc., v912ff.

8. Hip., v612-3.

9. Lesky, A. Greek Tragic Poetry trans(l) by M. Dillon. New Haven/London: Yale, 1983, (p217f).

10. Page, D.L. Euripides Medea Oxford; Oxford U.P., 1938. (ppXXI-XXX).

11. Lesky, op.cit. in n.9, p218.

12. Page, op.cit. in n.10, p.XXIII.

13. ibid.

14. Page, op.cit. in n.10, pXXIV.

15. Perhaps the strongest argument for the murder of the children by Medea herself being an innovation of Euripides' may be the most inconclusive one: the lowly third prize may have been a sign of public displeasure at radical innovation. Also, infanticide by conscious decision is such a striking theme, or motif, that had it existed as a part of the myth prior to Euripides' treatment of it some traces of it would have survived; indeed, it might already have supplanted the other versions of the myth just as it seems to have done after Euripides.

16. Schlesinger, op.cit., p303, describes the effect of Medea's outbursts offstage: "By repeating in lyric what had already been said in the prologue, Euripides emphasizes the dominant motifs of the drama: Medea's children, her rootlessness and homelessness, as well as the plight of woman in general".

17. As I will argue below, p89f.

18. Here we are touching upon the famous νόμος / φύσις debate of the time. Euripides will deal with it more thoroughly in the character of Hippolytus (see p.100f).

On the topic of νόμος / φύσις , Bruno Snell (The Discovery of the Mind, trans(l) by T.G. Rosenmeyer, New York : Dover, 1982) recognizes Euripides' unique treatment of Medea as a person rather than as a barbarian: "Euripides in his Medea, is the first to portray a human being who

excites pity by the mere fact of being a human being in torment ... ; as a barbarian she has no right, but as a human being she has. This same Medea is also the first person in literature whose thinking and feeling are described in purely human terms, as the products of a human soul and nothing else. She is a barbarian by birth, but in intellectual attainments, in the power of speech, she is superior to all others. No sooner does man declare his independence of the gods, than he acclaims the authority of the free human spirit and the inviolability of human rights" (p250). It is this proclamation of authority, too, which enables Medea to reject her role as suffering wife and take on Jason on his own terms.

19. The Oxford Classical Dictionary, (2nd edn.), Hammond, N.G.L., and Scullard, H.H., (eds.) Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1970 states on Greek divorce: "Greek marriage, being a mere matter of fact, could be dissolved by simply terminating the facts - in the case of the husband by expelling the wife. In principle the wife likewise could simply leave the home, but in order to establish the husband's duty to return the dowry it was usual for her to give written notice of divorce in court". Medea, thus, has pointed out that the difficulty in a woman's deciding to divorce her husband is not so much in the technicalities of the situation as it is in the prejudice which she will have to face in making such a move.

20. Pomeroy, op.cit. in n.3, p.84: "The study of Geometric cemeteries suggest that female deaths increased during the childbearing years...childbirth was difficult".

21. Cf. Alc. vv.730-3; where Pheres warns Admetus that Alcestis' family will avenge her death. Alcestis is a

wife in a strange land but still her family can protect her, if need be. Medea has neither homeland nor family.

22. Pucci, P. The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea Ithaca/London: Cornell U.P., 1980. (p71).

23. Perhaps she expected to stay on in her home and enjoy the benefits which the divorced Athenian woman enjoyed: "Her property was securely settled on her, and if she left her matrimonial home, as she could do if she wanted, her husband had to return her property or pay interest on it; if she did not leave her home, her husband had to support her". (Lacey, W.K. The Family in Classical Greece London: Thames and Hudson, 1968 (p174.)).

24. Rose, H.J. Religion in Greece and Rome New York: Harper & Row, 1959 (p12.)

Karl Kerényi is more expansive on the role of Hecate: "Hecate's whole being expresses something lunar, and for Euripides she is Medea's household Goddess. It is Hecate, along with Themis, whom the abandoned one, in her address to 'Mistress Artemis', call upon to witness her oath. The 'far away' Goddess (this is the meaning of the name"Hecate"), who chose crossroads as her place of wandering and appearing and who circles around wolfishly in the manner of wild dogs, takes the place in Medea's home of Hestia, the hearth Goddess".
Kerényi, K. Goddesses of Sun and Moon trans(1) by Murray Stein, Irving, Texas : Spring Publications, 1979 (p33).
By calling the "far away" goddess to her hearth, Medea has echoed a broader movement of the play: Jason's bringing of her to Greece as a foreigner. This, and the summons to Hecate, are the process of making a ξένος φίλος .

25. See chapter on Alcestis, p54f.

26. Note Alcestis' prominent reference to φίλην wife in chapter on Alcestis, p54 ff.

27. Jaeger, W. Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture Volume one, 2nd edn., with notes. trans(l) by Gilbert Highet. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965 (p353.)

28. Storr, A. Human Aggression Harmondsworth: Pelican 1968, p99.

29. West, D.J. Murder Followed By Suicide London: Heinemann, 1965, (p150.)

30. Storr, op.cit. in n.28, p111-12.

31. Page, op.cit. in n.10, pXVII.

32. e.g. vv 811-13, 816, 818, 846f., 1279-81.

33. North, H. Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature. Ithaca, New York: Cornell U.P., 1966. (Note 105, p76).

34. Vernant, J.P. The Origins of Greek Thougnt London: Methuen, 1982 (p92). See above, p24f.

35. v489-91 corroborates Lacey's statement that, "The high value placed on children also made a fertile wife much valued" (Lacey, op.cit., p169); and Ehrenberg,V. The People of Aristophanes: A Sociology of Old Attic Comedy Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1943. "To bear children was woman's natural function, children were considered part of

a man's wealth (Peace 1320ff.), and childlessness often led to divorce" (p146).

36. Simon, B. Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece: The Classical Roots of Modern Psychiatry. Ithaca/London: Cornell U.P., 1978 (p91.)

37. Vernant, op.cit. in n.34, p60.

38. Pilitsis, G. The Dramas of Euripides: A Study in the Institution of Marriage and a Reconstruction of Marriage Customs in Fifth Century B.C. Athens.
Rutgers University. The State University of New Jersey, PhD. 1981. University Microfilms International, pIV-V.

39. See above, Note 19.

40. In terms of Medea's life, in terms of her marriage, it must be noted that ἔσθλα and κακῶν here carry connotations of the preservation and the destruction of things with regard to the marriage; they can, in other words, convey the feeling of Medea's self-destructive tendencies.

41. Dodds, E.R. The Greeks and the Irrational. Berkeley; University of California Press, 1951 (p186.)

42. As we have noted (on p68) the desire for revenge is unfeminine. Medea, therefore, will 'unsex' herself in order to be able to take action. The fullest expression of this process appears in ἀλλ' εἶ' ὁπλίζου , καρδία (v1242) which she utters as she enters the house to kill her children. In the Electra Electra too prepares herself for action by denying her womanhood all her life long,

devoting herself to the memory of her father and the hope of avenging him, and keeping her marriage unconsummated. The most elaborate expression of this psychological preparation is perhaps uttered by the greatest descendant of Euripides' heroines, Lady Macbeth:

> Come you Spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> and fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse;
> That no compunctious visitings of Nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep pace between
> Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on Nature's mischief!
>
> (Macbeth, Act I, sc v, 40-50)

Shakespeare, Macbeth ed. by Kenneth Muir. London: Methuen, 1964.

43. It is mentioned by her only once when she is off-stage and speaking to herself, as it were (v166-7); and it is mentioned by the shocked Jason at the end of the play (v1334).

44. See Severin, T. "Sailing in Jason's Wake" in National Geographic Magazine September 1985. vol. 168, no. 3 (p406-420). It is ironic, though, in the light of Jason's comment, that to this day Medea is celebrated in Colchis "as a beloved princess, self-exiled to help the man she loved" (p420). The reputation which she subsequently acquired in Greece and beyond, and for which Jason is

responsible, has not made an impression on her reputation in Georgia.

45. See above, p35f.

46. vv 329, 663f Also, Schlesinger, op.cit., p307, points out how important children are to Jason; quoted on p93.

47. See above, Note 35.

48. Kerényi, op.cit. in n.24, p.28 makes a very perceptive statement on the power which Medea gains from her pain: "She who was rejected by her husband and who suffered the violent separation regains, as if by a merciless law of nature, her power and exalted position only through sundering even more and cutting even deeper through that life which was once formed by him, her and the children. The children whose earlier purpose was to constitute that life and to insure its continuance, now have no further meaning
for her than to serve her in regaining power and to be sacrificed for her exaltation. And since Medea possesses the desire for blood-sacrifice, the sacrifice, too, must be bloody".

49. As mentioned above, p82. See Note 33.

50. Phaedra's battle in the Hippolytus is to be able to do what is correct even though something keeps her from behaving the way which she knows to be correct (Hip. vv.359-60, 378-81).

51. In his note on v809-10, Page (op.cit. in n.10) quotes Lessing on this standard: "Moral excellence in ancient Greece consisted no less in unremitting hatred of your foes

than in unalterable love toward your friends". He then refers to Archilochus. fr. 65, Solon 13.5, Theognis 869, Pindar Pythian ii.151, Aeschylus, Cho. 122, Euripides Herakles 585, Ion 1046, fr. 1092 in order to show the wide currency of this attitude.

Snell (op.cit. in n.18), p166, brings this thought to the domestic level: "Odysseus clearly formulates his values when he expresses his good wishes to Nausicaa: happy partners in marriage, he says (Od.6.184), are a great bane to the foe, but a joy to friends'. Hesiod (Erga 353) and Sappho (25.6) repeat this maxim, and Solon prays to the Muses (1.5): Grant me wealth and authority that 'I may thus (!) be pleasant to my friends and bitter to my enemies' (cf. Il. 3.51; Euripides Medea 809f.; Plato Gorgias 492c and passim; Republic 362.B). This principle had a long life".

52. pp68, 77.

53. Simon, op.cit. in n.36, p.93.

54. A similar statement will be uttered by Phaedra in the Hippolytus three years later (v378-81). On the importance of this thought, Snell (op.cit. in n.18), p126, states: "These verses reveal the first emergence into consciousness of a new morality which in days to come was to reign supreme. A morality of psychological and individualistic colouring, it appears in the guise of a purely internal impulse, in the negative form of a moral inhibition or scruple". Medea and Phaedra are absolutely alone in their successes and their failures. Alcestis belongs to another world, one which has not yet been shaken by such ambivalences. Socrates too belongs to another world when

he rejoins "As long as a man knows the good he will do it. All that is necessary is that he has really recognized the nature of the good. Nobody commits a crime voluntarily" (ibid., p182). Perhaps one might say that Euripides' sentiment is more realistic (or rather less idealistic) than is Socrates'.

55. Elliott, A. Euripides Medea London: Oxford U.P., 1969.

56. Lloyd-Jones, H. The Justice of Zeus (2nd edn.) Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, 1983.

57. Schlesinger, op.cit. in n.1, p307.

58. See above, p35f.
The Chorus of Women, however, had shown that it was well aware of the power of love (v635-41), as had Creon (v286).

59. John Jones' uses this scene to castigate Euripides: "His errors lie within the sphere of dramatic calculation, as they also do with Medea's clumsy crane-borne epiphany at the end of her play, where religion is plainly not in issue". Jones, J. On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy London: Chatto & Windus, 1962 (p267). Jones presents neither criteria nor arguments by which to illustrate how he sees Medea's exit as clumsy rather than highly effective and necessary in dramatic terms.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

1. e.g. "not only does the Hippolytus lack any real unity, but its rhythm goes the wrong way." Kitto, H.D.F., Greek Tragedy, London, 1939. (p.203).

2. Vellacott, P. Ironic Drama; Cambridge, 1975. (p.230).

3. Aristotle On the Art of Poetry 6.1450a 16-20 ed by I. Bywater, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

4. "Much of (Euripides') work, particularly his best work, moves between appearance and reality; he sees predicament as the need to distinguish these, and disaster the failure to do so." Jones, J. On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy. London, 1962. (p.253).

5. This play is Euripides' second on this theme. We do not now know when the first Hippolytus was produced, but it may be summed up thus: "In his first play Euripides adopted the traditional legend without modification: Phaedra was a shameless and unprincipled woman who when she fell in love with Hippolytus made a deliberate attempt to seduce him; he rebuffed her, and she, in anger and self-defence (lest he should accuse her to Theseus), accused him instead to Theseus of rape or attempted rape. Theseus cursed him, Poseidon sent the bull, and he was killed. Then, apparently, Phaedra's treachery was exposed; whereupon she killed herself."
Barrett, W.S. Euripides Hippolytus. Oxford, 1964. (p.11). The quotation on p105 (v329-32) is taken from this edition, the others are from Gilbert Murray's.

6. ibid., p.165.

7. Capuzzi, F. "Heraclitus: Fire, Dream, and Oracle," Heraclitean Fragments, Sallis J. and Maly K. (eds.) University of Alabama Press (pp. 135-148).

8. Euripides' first Hippolytus had shocked the Athenian

audience and had met with disfavour. Barrett, op.cit. in n.5, p.12.

9. Blaiklock, E.M. The Male Characters of Euripides. Wellington, 1952. (p.40).

10 See Hippolytus' concern with σωφροσύνη in: vv80, 667, 994-5, 1007, 1013, 1034-5, and finally, as he goes to his death, v1100-1, *ὡς οὔποτ' ἄλλον ἄνδρα σωφρονέστερον*
ὄψεσθε, κεἰ μὴ ταῦτ' ἐμῷ δοκεῖ πατρί.

11. Lesky, A. Greek Tragic Poetry. trans(l) by Dillon, M. New Haven/London, 1983. (p.229).

12. See on v465-6 discussed later in the text, p113f, cf p104f.

13. Vellacott, op.cit. in n.2, makes the rather polemical point (p.235) that anything but a tramp of a Phaedra would be the "unacceptable truth" of the play and would need to be "exposed early in the action". Such extreme prejudice on the part of the audience is surely an exaggeration which cannot be deduced from anywhere with any certainty. It serves merely to confuse the issue.

14. Kovacs, D. "Shame, Pleasure, and Honour in Phaedra's Great Speech (Euripides, Hippolytus 378-87)" American Journal of Philology, Vol 101 No 1, 1980. pp 287-303. (p.302).

15. ibid. p.300.

16. Holton, G. quoted in Baer, E. "A Semiotic History of Symptomatology" in History of Semiotics ed. by Eschbach A. and Trabant J., Amsterdam, 1983. pp41-60

17. Barrett, op.cit. in n.5, p.231.

18. Dodds, E.R. "The ΑΙΔΩΣ of Phaedra and the Meaning of the Hippolytus", Classical Review, Vol 39, 1925. pp102-4.

19. Scott, M. "Aidos and Nemesis in the works of Homer, and their revelance to Social or Co-operative values." Acta Classica, Vol XXIII, 1980. pp13-35. p16.

20. Barrett,op.cit. p.222, calls aidos here an inhibition "from selfish disregard of a suppliant's request".

21. See p24 for the Myth of Protagoras.

22. Lloyd-Jones, H. The Justice of Zeus, Berkeley, 1983 (2nd ed.), p.131-2.

23. e.g. Plato Protagoras, 345D.

24. Knox, B. "The Hippolytus of Euripides", Greek Tragedy, ed. Segal E. New York: Harper and Row 1983. pp311-331, (p.316).

25. Coplestone, F. A History of Philosophy. Vol 1 Part 1. New York, 1962. (p111).

26. Snell, B. The Discovery of the Mind, trans(l) by Rosenmeyer, T. New York, 1982. (p.129).

27. loc. cit.

28. Cf. Polyneices' comment in The Phoenician Women on the need of an unjust cause for supernatural help:

> ἁπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ.
> κοὐ ποικίλων δεῖ τἀνδιχ' ἑρμηνευμάτων·
> ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὰ καιρόν· ὁ δ' ἄδικος λόγος
> νοσῶν ἐν αὐτῷ φαρμάκων δεῖται σοφῶν

(Ph. v469-72).

42. Cf. Eteocles the usurper in The Phoenician Women, v499-500.

εἰ πᾶσι ταὐτὸν καλὸν ἦφυ σοφόν θ' ἅμα,
οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτον ἀνθρώποις ἔρις·

43. Aristotle The Politics, I.2. 11-12, 1253a 14-18 ed by Susemihl, F. and Hicks, R.D. London: Macmillan, 1894.

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