'The Mask of Troy: Metatheatre in the Prologue and Final kommos of Euripides' Troades'

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When it comes to Euripides' *Trojan Women*, metatheatre tends to be confused with metapoetry. The play's structure at first sight seems straightforward, to the point that it has been deemed too linear or undramatic. It does not attract much attention, whereas allusions to the Muse and to new hymns in the first stasimon, as well as other self-reflexive songs and dances, are at the core of an important discussion about the specificity of tragic lament.[1] I will therefore seek to contribute to this volume's debate on metatheatre by focusing on aspects of dramaturgy and performance that imply not only language or reference to poetry but, potentially, also spectacular and complex effects which combine different media and appeal to all the senses.[2] I hope to demonstrate that this play's metatheatricality makes it much more theatrical, in fact, than has been established so far.

The Trojan Women was performed in 415 BC at the Great Dionysia, a few months after the sack of Melos and after several months of debate about the expedition to Sicily. In my reading, which is based on a renewed analysis of its poetics and staging, this play is not only a universal and poignant representation of war's impact on a community,[3] but also a highly topical work addressing contemporary events before an audience composed of the Athenians, their allies and, very probably, seated in the front rows, the Egestan ambassadors who arrived at Athens at the end of the winter.[4] By competing in the *agon* of the Dionysia, Euripides offers

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1 *Tr.* 511–512. See Torrance (2013) 218–245, and before her Segal (1993), Loraux (1999).

2 This paper is a small part of the dramaturgical commentary I am devoting to Euripides' *Trojan Women*, to be published in the *Commentario* collection of the Belles Lettres.

3 See for example Poole (1976); di Benedetto (1992); Loraux (1999); Dué (2006).

4 Thuc. 6.8. A lot has been written on Euripides and Athenian history. Though I often disagree with the systematic historicist approach of Delebecque (1951) and Goossens (1962), I find that their postulate – Euripides stages myths and characters that are related to contemporary events – has been discarded rather than refuted (see for example Zuntz (1972), which has been influential in the debate). I do not agree with the argument that the poet did not have the time to compose his tragedy between the sack of Melos (automn of 416) and the Dionysia (early spring of 415) nor to take into the account the idea of an expedition to Sicily, for 1) Euripides was used to composing at least four plays a year, 2) Thucydides reports that debates about sailing to Sicily had started before winter.

this most elaborate tragedy to Dionysos in order, I believe, to obtain the god's protection for his city, a city prone to impiety and *hubris* in its role as leader of the Delian league. He also appeals to his fellow citizens for purification of the crimes committed in Melos and for caution in the hazardous conquest of Sicily.

To this end, he makes complex use of the Trojan fiction, inviting the Athenians into a double identification. On the one hand, as the descendants of the Theseids who participated in the Trojan war and as sackers of cities, they can easily relate to the Greek victors to whom Ilion's captives are allotted. On the other hand, Euripides assimilates the Athenians to the Trojan women by different means, so that Troy becomes an *exemplum* of the catastrophe that might await them, notwithstanding their present greatness, should they be defeated in the Peloponnesian war.[5] The relationship of the Trojan myth to Athens' recent history is thus comparable to the one created by the actors' masks, which cover Athenian heads with the faces of sometimes Trojan, sometimes Greek characters. My hypothesis is that in this play more than in others, Euripides bars the audience from giving themselves up to the distraction of the performance, or from forgetting the reality beneath the mask. In this he maintains a degree of self-awareness. I will try to demonstrate this by commenting on a few elements of the prologue and the *exodos*, which are the moments when Euripides first places his mask of words upon the Athenian theatre and then finally takes it off to confront his fellow citizens with the spectacle of their own reality. I will thus be focusing, as O. Taplin put it during the conference, on transitions between the diffused performance and the core-performance.

Poseidon is the first speaking character to appear on stage. A woman lies there, whom he will soon designate as Hecuba for the benefit of 'whoever wishes to look' (εἴ τις εἰσορᾶν θέλει, v. 36) – thus establishing a relation of connivance with the other onlookers in the *theatron*. As for him, he is probably easy to recognize thanks to his costume and attributes, thanks also to the fact that he appears on the roof of the *skene*, so the revealing of his name is not delayed (ἥκω λιπὼν Αἰγαῖον ἁλμυρὸν βάθος / πόντου Ποσειδῶν: 'I am Poseidon, and I have come here from the briny depths of the Aegean', vv. 1–2).[6] The speaker then sets out to disguise the space, if I may say so. The location of the drama, designated by a deictic, will be the Trojan land (τήνδε Τρωικὴν χθόνα, v. 4). We cannot be sure that the actor gestured to underline his words, but the simple fact of his standing up on the roof to pronounce them includes at least the lower part

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5 Croally (1994); Brillet-Dubois (2010).

6 I have made free use of D. Kovacs's translation in this paper.

of the *theatron* in the range of the deictic.[7] Then he mentions 'these roofs' (ὑπὸ στέγαις / ταῖσδ(ε), vv. 32–33), which turns the *skene* into one of the tents in the Greek camp where the Trojan captives are held. However, the plural and the emphasis laid on the deictic by the enjambment may imply reference to a larger space, including the other rooftop visible to the audience, i.e. that of the recently built Odeon, which happens to be modelled on the tent of Xerxes.[8] Pericles conceived it as a monument to the defeat of the king of Persia and had it erected at the bottom of the acropolis, which he had sacked. The hypothesis that this other rooftop is implied by Euripides seems all the more likely since not all the Trojan women mentioned by Poseidon vv. 32–35 will enter the stage through the door of the *skene*: the chariot carrying Andromache, her son and her spouse's spoils will arrive from the tent of Neoptolemus using one of the *eisodoi*.[9] If I am right, then it is the complex of buildings facing the audience that is defined as the stage set. Euripides would thus be subtly calling attention to Xerxes, the fallen sacker of Athens, as Poseidon proceeds to denounce the crimes of the Greeks and foretell their punishment.

Enunciation enhances these processes of identification as the god, v. 45, addresses the *polis* and its walls in the second person and bids them farewell. Now *polis*, to an Athenian ear, can designate both a political group of citizens and, much more specifically, Athens' acropolis. The character facing not only this acropolis and its walls but also the crowd of the Athenians might thus seem to be addressing Athens, and from there, it is not only the *orchestra*, the *skene* and the Odeon which constitute the setting of the play, but the whole theatre and the hill behind it.

The way Euripides uses the mythical tradition complements these enunciative phenomena. In accordance with Homeric *epos*, the god reminds the audience that he and Apollo have built Troy's walls (vv. 4–6). In the *Iliad*, though, this episode was the starting point of Poseidon's unquenchable hatred towards the Trojans.[10] Here, on the contrary, the god makes the most surprising statement: since he has completed this labor, he has felt nothing but benevolence towards them (εὔνοι(α), v. 7, is delayed and emphasized by the enjambment). This innovation, which might be ironically and metapoetically signalled by the

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7 On theatrical gestrure, see Capponi's chapter in this volume.

8 Plut. *Per.* 13.9.

9 The examination of entrances and exits in the play allows us to consider that Euripides chose the Western *eisodos* – which in real Athens led to the Piraeus – as the way to reach the off-stage Greek ships. Andromache, who crosses the *orchestra* before leaving Troy to embark, would therefore be coming from the Eastern *eisodos* and the vicinity of the Odeon.

10 *Il.* 21.458–460.

use of the word *kanon* just before the playwright bends the tradition, has never been actually interpreted, even though Euripides' mythical twist is as paradoxical as if in a World War II fiction Hitler appeared to say he had always been a great friend of the Poles! In fact, it turns Poseidon into the defeated opponent of Hera and Athena, as he admits in vv. 24–25, which greatly affects the interpretation of the spectacle. For when Athena appears next to her uncle in the second part of the divine prologue, she forms with him a pair of former enemies who have fought over a city and who now switch alliances to punish its conquerors.

Both visually and thematically, this tableau resembles the imagery of the conflict over Attica. I believe we can even go further and see here a visual allusion to one specific image, that of the recently finished pediment of the Parthenon. In order to explain my reasoning, I need to go back a few lines. When Poseidon explains how Troy was taken and mentions the wooden horse, he adds two strange lines which refer to the present of the audience (ὅθεν πρὸς ἀνδρῶν ὑστέρων κεκλήσεται / δούρειος ἵππος, κρυπτὸν ἀμπισχὼν δόρυ: 'whence among later men, it will be called the *doureios* horse, for it held in its flanks a hidden spear (*doru*)', vv. 13–14).[11] The *doureios hippos* is known, thanks to Aristophanes, Pausanias and archeology, to be a colossal bronze statue of the Trojan horse erected on the platform of the Acropolis some time just before 415.[12] It represented the Athenian heroes hidden inside the wooden device, just visible through little windows. Ἀνδρῶν ὑστέρων, then, refers to none other than the Athenians, whom Euripides invites to gather imaginarily on the Acropolis for a brief moment as the present intrudes into the mythical past. This short but brutal journey prepares the audience to identify the scene formed by Poseidon and Athena, standing above the door of the *skene* where a pediment would be if the facade had one: it is a replica of the Parthenon's West pediment, the one that faces whoever enters the Acropolis and who thus walks past the *doureios hippos* towards the great building.

As we can see, the prologue's communicative situation, its mythical and visual effects concur so that the Athenian audience is associated with an ambiguous victory over Troy, both glorious and excessive, as well as with the great fallen city. The whole play explores this reversal of victory and defeat, this exchange of

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11 I agree with Parmentier (1923) that there is no philological reason to reject these lines. Yet they have been suppressed by most editors since Burges, in accordance with the scholiast's judgement, on the ground that the etymological figure seems a weak one and that tragedy, unlike comedy, should never breach dramatic illusion.

12 Ar. *Birds* 1128 and schol. *ad v.;* Paus. 1.23.8; *IG* I³ 895, voir Raubitschek (1949) n° 176.208–209.

roles between conquerors and conquered.[13] At the same time, the poet incorporates within his tragic fiction a set of references to recent realities, events, objects, buildings, which makes the process of dramatic illusion more complex. He thereby keeps at least some of the spectators aware of the time and place of the performance, just as the specificities of an actor's voice or figure might prevent the audience from forgetting his presence under the mask.

There are many other poetic and visual ways in which Euripides suggests in the course of the tragedy that his Trojan drama is also or actually an Athenian and Melian one, but they exceed the limits of this article, so I will skip straight to the second part of the *exodos*, which in the circular construction of the play echoes the prologue in many ways. Once Astyanax has been mourned and taken away for burial, only Hecuba and the women of the chorus have yet to be led away. Talthybios the herald warns them that they must leave for the Greek ships when the trumpet rings (vv. 1266–1267) and that the queen must follow Odysseus' men (vv. 1269–1271). But before that, he orders his soldiers to set Troy's acropolis on fire for the last time (vv. 1260–1264).

It is not easy to determine where those fires are located in the theatre – in the event that they are in fact to be seen and not merely imagined. The chorus calls attention to them and Hecuba tries to throw herself into the flames and so die with her city. So either they are lit in the back of the audience, at the top of the *theatron*, and the assimilation between Athens' and Troy's sacred hills is made even more obvious than before, or we must assume that the stage set changes and that the function of the *skene* switches to represent Troy instead of the Greek tents.[14] However bold and original, this latter option is not to be excluded. The change would occur at verse 1256 between two sets of choral anapests and the fires would be lit either inside or on the roof of the building. The reversal from Agamemnon's tent to the Trojan acropolis would be consistent with the reflexive relation between victory and defeat constantly suggested in the rest of the play. As for Hecuba's attempt to enter the building lit by flames, it would be a neat reminder of Cassandra's exit in the first episode, for the torches she waved had Talthybios worrying that the Trojan slaves might try to commit suicide (vv. 298–303). With this choice of staging, the audience facing Troy would have to adopt Poseidon's perspective in the prologue. This is, as will soon become clear, the reason why I have a slight preference for this hypothesis.

13 Croally (1994).

14 For a discussion, see Lee, K. (1976); Biehl (1989); Kovacs (2018) *ad v*.

Be that as it may, the combination of the fire and of the dispersal of the women indicates the end of Troy (vv. 1277–1280), and more specifically the disappearance of its name (τὸ κλεινὸν ὄνομ' ἀφαιρήσῃ τάχα: 'you will soon be deprived of your illustrious name!', v. 1278). As Hecuba sees it, once the captives are scattered and the city burned to the ground, there will be no Trojan community left, and no recognizable location that might still bear the name of Troy. Yet the use of ἀφαιρέω, 'to take off or away', allows the spectators to hear also something else: these two actions prepare the moment when the stage will lose its fictitious and temporary name and the mask of Troy will be taken off.

At this point starts the final *kommos*, which is a poignant song of farewell. Hecuba, who has been prevented by the Greek soldiers from committing suicide, implores Zeus, asking whether he sees Troy's sufferings. Then she kneels down to call upon the Earth and the dead, and the women of the chorus join her. Finally, she addresses the temples of the gods and the city, echoing Poseidon in the prologue (vv. 45–47), before being set in motion by a noise.

The song presents certain metrical and enunciative peculiarities which have been considered anomalous and thus have been corrected by all modern editors, starting with Seidler and Kirchhoff in the 19th century. The composition is a complex one indeed. At first sight, the song comprises first a non-strophic section[15] which is nevertheless divided in two, as is underlined by the duplication of ὀττοτοτοτοτοῖ (1287; 1294), then a pair of strophes which, if one considers the text of the manuscripts, do not strictly abide by the rules of the *responsio*. There are a few metrical flaws, some of which are likely to be errors, but the most remarkable thing is that cues are not distributed evenly between the strophe and the antistrophe. As Enrico Medda justly points out, in this type of matter, manuscripts are not to be blindly trusted, as the habit of indicating changes of speakers is a late one, yet he also stresses the fact that editors' decisions are guided by the idea they have of what is occurring on stage.[16] In this case, according to a normative conception of the *responsio* and of the place of the chorus in the *exodos*, Seidler and Kirchhoff, followed by all subsequent editors, assumed against the unanimous tradition that the manuscripts omitted character names in places, even though they do signal them elsewhere. They redistributed the cues in order to obtain the same pattern in both strophes and to have the chorus say the last verses of the tragedy, which is the general habit, at least in the remaining plays as we know them.[17] But apart from the fact that the final *kommos* does not go by what

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15 Biehl (1989) largely rewrites the text to create a strophic structure.

16 Medda (2013) 287.

17 Among the plays whose final verses present no textual nor cue-related issues, only *Prom. B.* and *Ag.* have characters other than the chorus speak last.

we have come to define as the conventions of the genre, there is nothing inconsistent in the text as it is transmitted by the manuscripts.[18] So the actual question here is that of the poet's liberty to create significant effects by disturbing the *responsio* and the audience's expectations. What if modern editors were here more inclined than medieval copyists to normalize rather than to interpret the unordinary? What if the *lectio difficilior* was preferable?

As a matter of fact, Seidler's and Kirchhoff's corrections conflict with another principle of composition: the ring composition of verses 1285 to 1332. A close look at the text of manuscript P, considered by many editors as our best source, reveals that the cues, regardless of their length, are distributed in a symmetrical fashion. Talthybios's initial injunctions are repeated in the imperative form in the last verses, the difference being that Hecuba regains some dignity by commanding her own limbs to carry her, whereas the herald ordered the guards to escort her. Then each of the queen's and the chorus's cues is echoed in reverse order after v. 1310. Themes and wordings are also repeated: a question to an audience (1290; 1325), the disappearance of Troy (οὐδ' ἔτ' ἐστι Τροία: 1292; 1323–1324), blazing Ilion turning into an invisible name (Λέλαμπεν Ἴλιος: 1295; Ὄνομα δὲ γᾶς ἀφανὲς εἶσιν: 1322), smoke flying up in the air (1298; 1320), fire and spear (1300–1301; 1318), a call to the dead children mirrored by a call to the dead husband (1302–1304; 1312–1316), a double injunction from Hecuba to her companions (κλύετε, μάθετε: 1303; Ἀγόμεθα, φερόμεθ(α): 1310). At the heart of the structure are verses 1305–1309, in which the women of the chorus say that they are kneeling down to imitate their old queen and are invoking the Earth. The disturbing thing is that this ring composition does not coincide with the strophic system, nor even with the limits of the song, as it comprises verses 1284–1286 spoken by Talthybios. The *kommos* is, in effect, slightly off-center. My interpretation of this anomaly is that it allows and enhances an extraordinary metatheatrical effect.[19]

Let us now focus on the chorus's last words as they appear in P. Verses 1318–1324 end with the sentence οὐδέ τ' ἔστιν / ἀ τάλαινα Τροία, which echoes, as we have just seen, v. 1292 in the ring composition. Preceded by ὄνομα δὲ γᾶς ἀφανὲς εἶσιν· ἄλλα δ' / ἄλλο φροῦδον ('The name of our land will be invisible; it's all gone, / scattered!'), it has a conclusive and final tenor. The shift from the future to the present tense stresses the completion of the name's gradual disappearance, which started v. 1278.[20] Ashes and smoke have hidden Ilion and prevented its identification.[21] It is now an invisible, secret name. This being the

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18 See the appendix showing the text of P.

19 On the metatheatrality of meter and music, see Di Virgilio in this volume.

20 On closure words and completion, see in this volume Taplin, pp. 24–25 and n. 10–11.

21 See Wohl (2018).

case, v. 1324 is the last time Troy's name is pronounced in the play. The manuscripts have the reading οὐδέ τ(ε) ἔστιν, 'and wretched Troy doesn't even exist', which was later corrected to οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔστιν 'and wretched Troy does not exist anymore'. To be sure, there is little chance that the spectator would draw a firm distinction between the two phrases while the song is being performed. The audience might perceive a sentence concluding the tragedy of Troy's annihilation, a peak of tragic *pathos*, as well as a metatheatrical statement about the non-existence of the mythical city enhancing awareness that the tragedy was fictitious. Thus, as V. Wohl notices, language conveys the same kind of mixture of materiality and immateriality, absence and presence as smoke and ashes, which are and are not Troy,[22] and the audience stands at this point in an intermediary zone between fiction and reality.

The play could end on this ambiguous verse, if it were not for the strophic structure that implies that the tragedy is not over yet. Hecuba's questions follow (ἐμάθετ', ἐκλύετε; 'Do you understand? Do you hear?', v. 1325), which correspond in the ring composition to her address to Zeus (Κρόνιε (. . .) /τάδ' οἷα πάσχομεν δέδορκας; 'Son of Cronos, (. . .) do you see the things we suffer?', vv. 1288–1290). At first, a reader may get the impression that the queen is asking about the chorus's last words, but she goes on by giving the two verbs an object, and it becomes clear that the performance implied the hearing of a thunderous noise: περγάμων κτύπων, 'These are the sounds of Pergamon', κτύπων being emphasized, if we accept the manuscripts' text, by a syncope, or maybe preceded by γε as Seidler suggested. Then the word ἔνοσις narrows down the nature and meaning of this noise without, however, resolving its ambiguity: we do not know whether Hecuba refers to the crash of the crumbling fortress or to an earthquake shaking the city and expressing Poseidon's anger – for he is traditionally called ἐνοσίχθων – or to the shaking produced by the captives' feet as they leave – for κτύπος can be said of the trampling of feet[23] and ὠθέω, from which ἔνοσις derives, means 'to push someone forward'. What we do know is what the noise corresponds to in the ring composition, for when Hecuba asked Zeus, the divine onlooker: δέδορκας; 'Do you see?' – in itself a metatheatrical effect –, the Trojan women replied bitterly: Δέδορκεν. 'He sees alright', and went on lamenting the fact that Troy was nevertheless being destroyed. It would therefore be logical to find just before the mirroring questions 'Do you understand, do you hear?' something that might at the same time confirm the presence of a divine audience and express the city's final annihilation.

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22 Wohl (2018) 25–33.
23 *Od.* 16.6. See also the κτυπέω, AR.

From the material point of view, I see three elements that might produce the sound. The most obvious one is the *bronteion*, this metallic instrument which makes a thunderous noise and which, according to Pollux, is sometimes used to indicate a divine intervention.[24] Pessimistic spectators attuned to the despair expressed by the Trojan women can consider that what they are hearing is nothing but the fall of the mortal city and thus can presume that the gods are indifferent. Or, remembering the prologue, they can attribute the noise to Poseidon, conclude that Hecuba's prayers are about to be answered (if not by Zeus, then by another son of Cronos), and hope that the Greeks are about to be punished for their crimes. But Bacchylides also dubs as κτύπος the sound of the trumpet.[25] Now Talthybios has announced that the *salpinx* would ring to signal departure (v. 1267), and it makes great sense that it should resonate now, forbidding the chorus to say another word and forcing them to exit, maybe with trampling feet. That the manuscripts hereafter attribute the last lines to the herald and not, as expected, to the women could be a neat manifestation of their change of condition from freedom to slavery (v. 1330) and of the abnormal power that the Greeks exert over the stage, just as Clytemnestra silences the chorus's voice at the very end of *Agamemnon* in a symbolic act of illegitimate *kratos*.

It is not at all unlikely that both the *salpinx* and the *bronteion* should be used at this point, each instrument having its signification within the fiction; their combination would associate mortal and potentially divine actions. Yet I believe we should also take into consideration a third possibility. Assuming that the *kommos* is off-center, that its beginning is non-strophic and the *responsio* in the strophic part irregular, it might cause some of the spectators, when they hear the conclusive line of the chorus, to think that the tragedy is over, especially if it is followed by a musical suspension of some sort and the women start leaving the stage at the sound of the trumpet. Just as it happens today that in classical or jazz concerts people applaud before a piece is over, between the movements of a symphony, or when the band slows down almost to a stop, I believe it is possible that Euripides gives the audience the time and opportunity to mistakenly stomp their feet or clap as if the tragedy had ended. The *ktupos* heard by Hecuba would thus come also from the *theatron* and merge with the mortal and divine characters' actions.

Now, if we contemplate this hypothesis and the possible overlap between core-performance and diffused performance – to use O. Taplin's words –,[26]

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24 Poll. 4.127.
25 *Paian* F1.75 Irigoin.
26 See Taplin in this volume, pp. 21–28.

the queen's questions take on a new ring. They are not only spoken to the chorus, who is leaving, nor to Talthybios or the gods, but also to the spectactors who are drawn into the action and whose position now equals that of the internal audience. 'Do you understand', she is asking the Athenians, 'that Troy does not exist and that it is your story we are telling? Do you hear that you have a part to play in the barely disguised drama we are performing for you?'. The name of Troy has vanished, but once the chorus has revealed its emptiness, it gives way to the noun Pergamon (v. 1325), which is both a proper name for the Trojan acropolis and a common term designating any fortress, then to πόλις (v. 1326) which, as we have seen, can designate any city but in Athens names specifically the sacred hill now shaken by the noise coming from the *theatron*. Troy thus gradually becomes Athens, until ἀ τάλαινα Τροία (v. 1324) is replaced in Talthybios's words with ἰὼ τάλαινα πόλις (v. 1331).

This revelation of the reality hidden by the fiction is enhanced by a reminder of vv. 8–9 and vv. 13–14, concerning the enemies' weapons and the *doureios hippos*. For, just as the horse was called *doureios* because it held a hidden spear, *doru*, the temples and the Trojan city hold another spear (v. 1318, ἔχετε . . . δορός τε λόγχαν). I think Euripides here reveals the cryptic and allusive nature of his tragedy, suggesting that Athenians were hiding in his stage set as they are in the Acropolis statue. He thus brings his audience back to the present of the performance and out of the fiction.

By associating the noisy stomping or clapping of a part of the audience to the sound of the *bronteion* and of the trumpet, the poet gives his spectators and fellow-citizens a choice: will they endorse the part of the crumbling city, or persist in acting as the Greeks, enslaving women, killing innocents and provoking the wrath of their city's divine patrons? Will they look down on the victims of their power as an indifferent Zeus or will they adopt Poseidon's perspective, his benevolence towards the vanquished and severity towards the impious victors? The answer does not belong within the play, but neither do the disastrous return of the Greeks nor the vengeance of the Trojan women foretold by the gods in the prologue and by Cassandra in the first episode.[27] Euripides does not predict what will come out of his unsettling show. Yet, with Hecuba's questions repeating her injunctions of v. 1303, he suggests that his contemporaries imitate the women of the myth as the chorus imitated the old queen when she asked them to 'hear and understand [their] mother's voice' (κλύετε, μάθετε ματρὸς

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27 Eur. *Tr.* 75–94; 425–461.

αὐδάν).[28] Maybe they too should kneel down to implore Gaia and the other gods of the Acropolis, if not in mourning, then as a prayer for forgiveness and purification from their crimes.

In this most elaborate composition and staging, what is at stake is a duality experience very similar to that of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*: it is when they see double that the spectators 'see what [they] must see',[29] or rather when they see both the masks and the faces united in the same reality, a Trojan drama that is also their own. I suggest that Euripides inscribes this reflexivity in the *exodos* by introducing one more structural twist. According to P, just before the *kommos* as Hecuba tries to die in the fire with her homeland (σὺν τῇδε πατρίδι . . . πυρουμένη, v. 1283), the chorus says to her: 'You are possessed, poor woman, with your own misfortunes!' (Ἐνθουσιᾷς, δύστηνε, τοῖς σαυτῆς κακοῖς, v. 1284). V has an interesting variant attributed to Talthybios: 'You are possessed, poor woman, with the same misfortunes!' (Ἐνθουσιᾷς, δύστηνε, τοῖς αὐτοῖς κακοῖς). The sentence is more difficult and seems to link Hecuba's miseries to that of the land and city she has always embodied but is not allowed to perish with.[30] Editors choose to keep P's text while giving the line to Talthybios, who would thus be thwarting Hecuba's insane gesture while expressing his sympathy to her (δύστηνε) and making sure to secure his masters' property, both things that he does again in the final verses of the play. This is enough, I believe, to contemplate that the line might be the first element of the ring composition of the *kommos*. It should then have an equivalent after what is for us the last verse of the play. But the tragedy, in a way, is one sentence short. In its place, there is nothing on stage but silence and emptiness, creating a moment at which the spectators are meant to acknowledge that during the performance, they have been looking at the Athenian theatre, Athenian actors and chorus members, even maybe the smoke of Athenian sacrifices coming from the altar of Dionysos behind the *skene*, and that they themselves have been part of the drama. At the end of a ritual that is supposed to have summoned the god's presence among them, speaking is now up to them. It is the jury's turn to reveal by their vote as to whether or not the lesson that Euripides has been staging has been understood and heard; it is the Athenians' turn to show whether they are positively inspired by the Dionysiac spectacle of 'their own misfortunes', or possessed with suicidal frenzy.

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28 *Tr.* 1303. For this self-reflexiveness of choral performance, see in this volume Bierl p. 107 ff., and its bibliography.

29 *Bacch.* 924.

30 It can also be understood by comparison with the Cassandra scene, for the prophetess was described several times as being in a state of Bacchic trance: *Tr.* 170; 172; 307; 341; 349; 408.

Appendix: *Tro.* 1284–1332 The *kommos* According to Ms P

Χο .	ἐνθουσιᾷς, δύστηνε, τοῖς σαυτῆς κακοῖς.		
Τα.	ἀλλ' ἄγετε, μὴ φείδεσθ'· Ὀδυσσέως δὲ χρὴ		(1285)
	ἐς χεῖρα δοῦναι τήνδε καὶ πέμπειν γέρας.		
Εκ.	ὀττοτοτοτοῖ.		
	Κρόνιε, πρύτανι Φρύγιε, γενέτα		
	πάτερ ἀνάξια τῆς Δαρδανίου		
	γονᾶς, τάδ' οἷα πάσχομεν δέδορκας;		(1290)
Χο.	δέδορκεν· ἁ δὲ μεγαλόπολις		
	ἄπολις ὄλωλεν οὐδέ τ' ἔστι Τροία.		
Εκ.	ὀττοτοτοτοῖ.		
	λέλαμπεν Ἴλιος, Περ-		(1295)
	γάμων τε πυρὶ καταίθεται τέραμνα		
	καὶ πόλις ἄκρα τε τειχέων.		
Χο.	πτέρυγι δὲ καπνὸς ὥς τις οὐ-		
	ρίᾳ πεσοῦσα δορὶ καταφθίνει γᾶ.		
	μαλερὰ μέλαθρα πυρὶ κατάδρομα		(1300)
	δαΐῳ τε λόγχαι.		
Εκ.	ἰὼ γᾶ τρόφιμε τῶν ἐμῶν τέκνων. Str.		
Χο.	ἒ ἔ.		
Εκ.	ὦ τέκνα, κλύετε, μάθετε ματρὸς αὐδάν.		
Χο.	ἰαλέμῳ τοὺς θανόντας ἀπύεις		
	γεραιά τ' ἐς πέδον τιθεῖσα μέλεα		(1305)
	καὶ χερσὶ γαῖαν κρύπτουσα δισσαῖς.		
	διάδοχόν σοι γόνυ τίθημι γαίᾳ		
	τοὺς ἐμοὺς καλοῦσα νέρθεν		
	ἀθλίους ἀκοίτας.		
Εκ.	ἀγόμεθα φερόμεθ'	Χο.	ἄλγος ἄλγος βοᾷς.	(1310)
Εκ.	δούλειον ὑπὸ μέλαθρον.	Χο.	ἐκ πάτρας γ' ἐμᾶς.
Εκ.	ἰὼ,		
	Πρίαμε Πρίαμε,		
	σὺ μὲν ὀλόμενος ἄταφος ἄφιλος		
	ἄτας ἐμᾶς ἄιστος εἶ.		
	μέλας γὰρ ὄσσε κατακάλυ-		(1315)
	ψει θάνατος ὅσιος ἀνοσίοις σφαγαῖς.		
	ἰὼ θεῶν μέλαθρα καὶ πόλις φίλα Ant.		
Χο.	ἒ ἔ.		

τὰν φόνιον ἔχετε φλόγα δορός τε λόγχαν.
τάχ’ ἐς φίλαν γᾶν πεσεῖσθ’ ἀνώνυμοι.
κόνις δ’ ἴσα καπνῷ πτέρυγι πρὸς αἰθέρα   (1320)
ἄιστον οἴκων ἐμῶν με θήσει.
ὄνομα δὲ γᾶς ἀφανὲς εἶσιν· ἄλλα δ’
ἄλλο φροῦδον, οὐδέ τ’ ἔστιν
ἁ τάλαινα Τροία.

Εκ.   ἐμάθετ’, ἐκλύετε; περγάμων . . . κτύπων.   (1325)
ἔνοσις ἅπασαν ἔνοσις ἐπικλύσει πόλιν.
ἰὼ
τρομερὰ τρομερὰ μέλεα, φέρετ’ ἐ-
μὸν ἴχνος·
Τα.   ἴτ’ ἐπὶ τάλαιναν
δούλειον ἀμέραν βίου.   (1330)
ἰὼ τάλαινα πόλις. ὅμως
δὲ πρόφερε πόδα σὸν ἐπὶ πλάτας Ἀχαιῶν.

Var. V: 1284   Τα. ἐνθουσιᾷς, δύστηνε, τοῖς αὐτοῖς κακοῖς.
        1289   πάτερ ἄξια τᾶσδε Δαρδανου