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Keith M. Aldrich

The *Andromache*
of Euripides

new series no. 25

University of Nebraska Studies

april 1961

THE *ANDROMACHE* OF EURIPIDES

Keith M. Aldrich

THE *ANDROMACHE*
OF EURIPIDES

university of nebraska studies : new series no. 25

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Preface

Relatively few editions or commentaries to the *Andromache* have appeared in the twentieth century, and most of those have been part of complete Euripidean *fabulae*, e.g. Prinz and Wecklein, Murray, Méridier. Norwood, and before him Hyslop, brought out school commentaries in English during the first decade. Ammendola (1916) and Bassi (1934) did the same in Italian. In recent years Kamerbeek (1944) in a Dutch school edition and Garzya (1953) in Italian reinvestigated the play, but, although they both brought imaginative minds to bear on the problems, neither succeeded in rescuing this drama from the quagmire of adverse criticism which has held it captive for centuries. The customary supply of textual emendations and suggestions is to be found scattered through the classical periodicals and miscellanea of scholars. The earlier editions are still useful and valuable, particularly those of Kirchhoff (1855) and Paley (1874), but on the whole no text of the *Andromache* can rank with that in Murray's Oxford Euripides (1902) for wisdom of selection and a resolutely honest *apparatus criticus*. With a few exceptions this essay is based on Murray's reading. For the benefit of those who are interested in the text, the departures are as follows:

Line 25: retain the mss. reading instead of Brunck's in Murray (cf. E. *Medea* 970, *Iph. Aul.* 1455, Denniston, *Greek Particles*, p. 139); 52: mss. instead of Reiske (cf. Paley *ad loc.*); 122-125: Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, pp. 28ff. ("They have involved you and Hermione in an odious quarrel, causing dispute, about the son of Achilles, who shares promiscuously in two beds."); 133-4: remove the τι with Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 30 (*q.v.*); 181: mss. instead of Dobree (well supported by Allen and Italie); 203: end the line with a comma; 204: end the line with a question mark (cf. the scholiast: ὁ πᾶς λόγος ἐν εἰρωνείᾳ ἐστίν); 266: mss. instead of Bruhn; 271: mss. instead of Dobree (cf. Kühner-Gerth I.56); 289-291: δολίους . . . πόλει should

be obelized: it is as it stands “ungrammatical folly,” to use Jackson’s words (for his drastic conjecture see *Marg. Scaen.* pp. 75ff. Murray’s correction of 289 at least helps the metrical conformity, but the greater problems remain unsolved); 311: mss. instead of Dobree; 334: δὴ σῆ *Reiske* (cf. Denniston, *Greek Particles*, p. 583); 393: end the line with a period; 397-8: remove the brackets (Murray follows Hartung in secluding these lines, and Page, *Actors’ Interpolations*, p. 65, calls them late and melodramatic. But they are explained by lines 399-404, which Bruhn bracketed, and are answered by 406-10); 427: ἔχω σ’ with Jackson, *Class. Qu.* 1941.37ff. and *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 179f., followed by Garzya; 490: Hermann (cf. Kamerbeek, ed. p. XXI); 551: ἔοικ’, ἐμοί with Garzya (*q.v.*) after Wilamowitz; 625: end the line with a semi-colon; 626: end the line with a question mark (this and the preceding punctuation with Kamerbeek and Garzya); 655-6: bracket (they were deleted by Nauck who was followed by Verrall, *Class. Rev.* 1906.241-7, and Jachmann, *Nachr. Ges. Gött.* 1936.206ff.); 672: mss. instead of Dobree; 706: ἐγὼ γέ σοι with Wilamowitz, *Hermes* 1925.284ff. (an emendation removing the negative, for the offensive presence of which see Denniston at E. *Electra* 383); 757: end the line with a question mark (cf. Kühner-Gerth I.177, Garzya *ad loc.*); 790: Κενταύροις with most mss. and editors (cf. E. *Ion* 296); 814: mss. instead of Nauck (cf. 240, 420, 836, 980 twice); 962: εἶτε πτοηθεῖσ’ with Palmer, *Hermath.* 1888.225ff.; also mss. instead of Lenting; 980: συμφορὰς ἴν’ εἰχόμεν with Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 215 (cf. Dodds at E. *Bacchae* 791); 1014: mss. and scholia instead of Murray; 1030-1: divide the periods before the first θεοῦ; 1032: νῦν (cf. E. *Electra* 408, *Helen* 1237, *Ion* 970, *Iph. Aul.* 654, *Iph. Taur.* 1203, *Medea* 1365) or νῦν, the choice of many earlier critics, e.g. Canter, Scaliger, Duport, Brunck, Musgrave (the problem of quantity is unfortunately obfuscated by the corruption in the corresponding line 1042 of the antistrophe, where Musurus’ correction is read with many reservations); 1097: mss. read by Garzya (*q.v.*) and Kamerbeek, instead of Verrall; 1114: τῷ δὲ ξιφῆρης λόχος ὑφειστήκειν ἄρα with Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 44f., who applies “Porson’s maxim *Tutissima corrigendi ratio est vocularum, si opus est, transpositio*,” and clears up the difficulty; 1231: mss., the *lectio difficilior*, instead of Platt (cf. Kühner-Gerth I.461). (See also the Appendix.)

Although the translations from the Greek are uniformly dull (or to use the kinder term, “utilitarian”), they are not uniformly literal. I have tried, rather, to meet the particular needs of each occurrence. Thus some passages are as close to the original as I

could render them, whereas others verge on paraphrase. The majority fall somewhere between these two extremes. Any translation is in the long run a personal interpretation, and as such is liable to the charge of persuasion. With that in mind I have provided the cautious reader with many line references, both in the text and in the notes.

The *Andromache* cannot be dated. There have been numerous attempts to give it an approximate date on the basis of "allusions" in the play to contemporary events (see, for example, Chapter II, note 44). I find most such allusions ambiguous or nonexistent, and all of them highly untrustworthy as testimony to the year of the play's writing or production. It is one thing to note a parallel between Menelaus' desertion of Hermione and Sparta's treatment of Corinth, Megara, and Boeotia in the Peace of Nicias, but quite another to place the play after 421 B.C. on the strength of that parallel. It could be argued as easily that Sparta "deserted" Corinth and Megara as early as 426, when she transferred her main attention in the war from the Gulf of Corinth and northwest Greece to the Aegean Islands and the Thraceward regions. Our best evidence, a scholiast to line 445, says that the play was written at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, i.e., closer to 431 than 421. But even he could not "absolutely" place it, and so the date must remain a mystery.

For help in the development of this study I am indebted to Professors W. C. Helmbold and E. L. Bundy of the University of California. Their sobering advice was more than balanced by their enthusiasm. To my friend and colleague, Professor S. K. Eddy, my sincere thanks for his careful reading of the manuscript and for his many corrections and suggestions. An especial note of gratitude is also due Professor J. B. McDiarmid of the University of Washington who many years ago introduced me to Greek tragedy.

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Introduction

There seems now to be widespread agreement in the otherwise disputatious world of letters that literary criticism is one of the most difficult and one of the least generally successful of all undertakings.¹ As a science it is (and has always been) constantly frustrated by the absence of principles and applicable theories. As a service it has been regularly ignored. As an art it has usually found recognition only in disguise. The reasons underlying this undistinguished record are many: ignorance, shortsightedness, bigotry—all such imperfections on the part of the critics have contributed their share; they, with the passage of time and the emergence of new ideas, have often, while rebuking the criticism of the past, choked out life from any new development by mutual bickering and incompatibility. Critics who praise are frequently too flamboyant to be taken seriously; those who condemn are seldom constructive; the critics who guard against either extreme are apt to end up with essays of great caution and little substance. Such pitfalls are apparent, more quickly apparent to the critic himself, if he is at all sensitive, than to the reader, and they are but a sampling. The basic difficulty of literary or artistic criticism can never be overcome: it must try to express in rational terms appreciation or explanation of creativity the full explanation or appreciation of which, to judge from the evidence, cannot be rationally stated. That is to say, the most exhaustive analysis of the content, form, and style of a Theocritean idyll does not begin to explain its “immortality.” Even after one adds to this analysis a study of the emotional impact of single words and phrases, plus an evaluation of the psychology involved in the poet’s motivation, still the endearing quality of the poem is left untouched. The great mass of learned literature ultimately comes no closer to the heart of the idyll than do a few lines of simple and personal poetry which with innocent freedom of critical acumen reflect how the poet sang

*Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young.*

It may be argued that Theocritus, Sappho, and all such poets are especially difficult for critics because they appeal almost exclusively to the emotions. It is not, however, the emotional interference in a work of art alone that makes us inarticulate. It is the culmination of all the powers within the work which cast their influence upon every receptive area of our minds and bodies, hitting us in memory, in conscience, in intellect, as well as in any or all of the emotions which underlie our make-up. Rare and wonderful would be that critic who could detect in detail the manner in which a piece of writing affected him. His summary would stand as a masterpiece of criticism, even though he made no effort to rank, challenge, or praise the work in question. Unfortunately a blend of shyness, shame, and lack of understanding stifles most men when they are confronted by art which greatly moves them, so that the "masterpiece" is seldom attempted and then only imperfectly in memoirs and confessions. But these same men who cannot express their reaction in words still know most keenly when they have been affected, and proceed to relate to each other and to the world, if only by incoherent mumblings, that they have struck upon something great, something important—in a word, art. Thus literature is perpetuated in spite of the critics: it lives to influence, to overpower, to be understood and misunderstood by each new generation.

For to speak of the trials and failures of literary criticism is not to wish it out of existence. On the contrary it is a natural and necessary tendency and those who indulge in it, whether for humanitarian or selfish reasons, should not be discouraged from their work so long as they are not fools or insidious captivators of public taste. The critic accomplishes much that is beneficial even if he falls short of the goal of his self-appointed task. In the first place he is sharply aware of the mistakes of other—especially previous—critics, and is able to sweep the table clean, so to speak, for his own generation. Second, he can lay the groundwork more rapidly than the non-critic and in most cases can start the critical consideration on a reasonably intelligent level. Third, and perhaps most important, he is usually a relentless seeker of Truth. Occasionally a critic believes that he has found the Truth; this is a pity, for it closes his mind to further search. But in the main today's critics continue to seek with no

real expectation of finding. Here is criticism's greatest contribution to the intellectual world, for, aside from literature itself, almost all the contributions to thought are made incidentally by these devoted Truth-seekers as they pursue their futile goals. This is more than a sufficient excuse for their work. As for the critics themselves, no one is in a better position than they to see the hopelessness of perfect criticism. If they are still of a mind to try, the responsibility should be their own. The world can only benefit by their sacrifice.

The criticism of drama is possibly the most difficult of all, or, to put it another way, the dramatic critic seems to be faced with more discouraging problems than are critics of other literary genres. He has more things to consider and less accessibility to them. Unless he limits himself to one or another area of drama he must take into account the written play, the acting, the staging, and the direction. If he is a journalistic critic, he must form an opinion without benefit of contemplation and without examination of text. If he is a critic of bygone plays he must rely *entirely* on contemplation and examination and be deprived of the theatrical aspects of his subject.² Frequently, as in the case of ancient plays, he has the added problems of difficult foreign languages and an imposing array of customs, rituals, conventions, devices, and theatrical nuances which the passing of centuries has made unfamiliar and mysterious. Even today, drama and poetry are closely linked: in ancient days (as in fifth century Athens) they were the same, so that the critic has all the problems of the critic of poetry. As if this were not enough to test his mettle, the entire perplexing situation is almost always aggravated beyond belief by the state of repair in which the play is handed to the critic. Not only it is imperfectly preserved, it has been rearranged, mended, torn apart, and generally misused by generation after generation of subsequent scribes and scholars.

Thus the critic of Greek tragedy well deserves a sigh of satisfaction if he ever succeeds in putting a worthwhile sentence on paper. But his problem has still not been stated in full. In addition to his manhandled play he is further provided with up to twenty-four centuries' worth of writing *about* the play, most of which he will in the end rightly ignore but all of which he is expected in his role of critic to know. He is also usually plagued by the possession of preconceived critical values of his own regarding the theatre and drama. Where they come from he is perhaps not quite sure: studies in Shakespeare; reading Aristotle, Voltaire, Bergson, Croce; his own experiences in the theatre as a contributor or as part of the audience. Every rigidity which he has learned seems to creep into his

thinking in spite of his own loud denunciations of it and in spite of his desire to keep his mind free to see the ancient play steadily and whole. Finally, as he begins to gain insight into his author and to penetrate to the marrow of his study, this critic discovers that all the problems heretofore encountered have been trivial compared to the tragedian himself and his tragedies. Now the true and lasting frustrations begin, for the writer turns out to be unapproachable as a person, oblique as a philosopher, inconsistent as a playwright, inscrutable as a poet, and highly enigmatic as all four. The critic suddenly has renewed respect for his predecessors: for all their errancy they at least had nerve enough to carry through an enormous and formidable undertaking, and so must he either screw his courage or give up at the outset.

Some do give up. There are those who, in the case of Sophocles and Euripides, resist the enormity of literary criticism. They often find good reasons, in which they undoubtedly put their trust, for doing so, but the reasons more often than not conceal a critical defeat. They may hide in the shadow of Aristotle, whose critical prowess can well be questioned, taking comfort in the thought that he who is closest is best informed. They may pounce upon allegory and symbolism, which method seems to smoothe out the troublesome wrinkles of literature and is therefore a great solace. Most frequently they may find in the artist some motivation which dictates all his work. Thus we have Euripides the Pamphleteer, Euripides the Misogynist, Euripides the Rationalist, and all the rest. Or, as a reaction against this compartmental approach, they may decry all motives, often end up almost decrying Euripides himself. The most which these second extremists will allow is Euripides the Playwright. They would much prefer Euripides the author of *Medea*, or best of all: *Medea* (author unimportant).

One can quickly agree that literary criticism in the case of Euripides would be much simpler if we could ignore the man and concentrate on the plays, or on a single play. Most of the questions could then be discarded as absolutely unanswerable. Once the major premise was established, that the author was a reasonably competent dramatist (even Aristophanes admits that much), there should apparently be no further problems, or rather, all further problems should be limited to those affecting or affected by the major premise. Unfortunately the difficulties in Euripides are seldom those of good theatre, and to get at them one must expand the area of study, expand it indeed as far as possible. There is no room in classical scholarship—and surely in all scholarship—for a

deliberately limited point of view. To adopt one, under whatever guise, is implicitly to admit defeat. Euripides, no less than all great authors, needs the widest viewpoint which can be cast on him. All the plays, facts, and theories (if they are thoughtfully arrived at) must be utilized before we are to learn anything or solve any riddles.

Lest the above be misunderstood, however, let it be added that the critic must always be cautious, aware of his own and others' foibles and able to distinguish fantasy from fact, theory from wishful thinking. But he cannot hope to apply with any success the modern, precious notions of exclusive criticism to ancient tragedy. Much more is demanded, a sturdier approach to the material. The play is the thing, true, but the ancient play is long since something more than pure entertainment; it is a thing to study, begin to understand, and then to enjoy. To study it is to face its problems, which are always large in number. Facing them, in turn, requires the wide prospect.

Socrates, in the *Apology*,³ discussing creative intellect, says that the mind of a creator is not necessarily able to criticize his creations, that it can actually be unaware of the wisdom planted in its own flourishes. Such a dictum, if it is acceptable, places restrictions upon one's use of an author as evidence in the direction of literary criticism. If he has commented upon his own work as some writers have, we can turn to the comment, not as a lucid guide to the literature, but only as an independent essay, advantageously close to the source but still separate. If the writer is a poet, we can assume that the poetry is an honest expression of his feelings and thus profit by any information, internal or external, which we may acquire about the writer himself. But if he is a novelist or dramatist who does not speak directly to us by means of a comic parabasis or a Victorian chapter beginning "Gentle reader," the distance between us and him may be immeasurably great. He need never reveal his true identity, and, if it is revealed, we have no sure way of recognizing either it or him. It might therefore seem not only a waste of time but even dangerous to try to include the author in a study of drama, especially early drama whose authors are almost totally eclipsed. Think of the hazards facing us when we try to pinpoint Euripides with the small fraction of his output at our disposal. If we had access to every one of his plays and a contemporary biography besides, we would still be unable to fill the gaps in our understanding of him. To attempt such an understanding with the material at hand would be a foolish presumption of psychic talent.

What then is one looking for when he includes such a remote

personality as Euripides in his search? The answer is discouragingly blunt: for whatever he can find to help him. Mannerisms, possible hints of likes and dislikes, revealing references, certainly nothing definite. To say that Euripides was an atheist, or even to suggest it, is of no more value than to say or suggest that he was *not* an atheist. The *hints* imply that he was not; the facts tell nothing, for they do not exist. To garner them from the lines of the extant plays is to violate a sound and basic principle of biography. We find not facts but clues, and clues are valuable tools. Their value increases when they are all there is to work with. The critic of Euripides must search for clues to his man, and the only good source of clues is the collection of plays.

On the other hand, the Euripidean corpus cannot be studied collectively for any purpose other than to gain some insight into the author. The most cursory reading of the eighteen or nineteen plays reveals that, aside from certain structural conformities, they are distinctive entities. With few exceptions no mythical personage remains the same from one play to another. The elements of legendary plots are altered with no consistency. The choruses, the actors, and all the tragic intensities fluctuate from play to play without strategy (unless, of course, the pattern is lost to us). In this small cross-section of Euripides, there is an exception to almost every trend, and usually the exception is of the most remarkable sort.⁴ Even the structure, the most fixed and predictable area of the ancient tragedies, is capable of variation. The prologue, the parodos, the exodus, the length of scenes, all such business, if it does not vary drastically from play to play, at least changes often enough to demand separate consideration.

Dramatic unity too, that sometimes intangible element which normally dictates the ultimate criticism of a play, is far from a consistently observable feature of Euripidean drama. Here begin the complications, however, of criticism. Most of the contention on the part of critics is due either to their demands for dramatic unity which the plays do not provide or to a disinclination to recognize the unity which does underlie a particular play. The fault is pardonable in many instances, for the dramatic unity (which must exist in a drama) can frequently be exasperating in its evasiveness. In the case of Euripides matters are made worse by the totally satisfactory degree of unity found in the seven extant plays of Aeschylus and the almost as happy situation in the seven of Sophocles.⁵ Euripides, who is represented by almost three times as many tragedies as either of the other two, displays in this heavier

sampling a broader use of form and plot. Who can say what we would find if we had twelve more plays each of Sophocles and Aeschylus? Or what would be our impression of Euripides if only the following seven of his plays were extant: the *Bacchae*, *Medea*, *Ion*, *Electra*, *Orestes*, *Hippolytus*, and *Phoenissae*? The first question is purely rhetorical; the answer to the second is that we should bring up the question of dramatic unity much less than we do.

What, one is bound to ask, is dramatic unity? It is first of all an overworked term, a cliché from a critical vocabulary which is no longer fashionable, the use of which often seems to embarrass a writer.⁶ It has been (and perhaps in some circles still is) confused with the unities of action, place, or time. This would contribute to its lack of popularity as a critical term, for these "unities" are of no prescriptive value but serve merely to describe controls which appear from time to time in self-conscious schools of dramatic writing or in isolated plays. Dramatic unity, as it will be used in these pages, is a term expressing a criterion for the critic. It seems as economical a term as any. The first half is self-explanatory. The word *unity* implies the form which is required of a work of art: without unity or "form" the creation is either incomplete (that is, unfinished) or a failure (finished, but badly). Dramatic unity is the result of all the parts of a drama which make it a work of art. Structure, plot, action, characters, mood, and theme can by their relevance contribute either severally or separately to the over-all dramatic unity, by their irrelevance detract from it. The critic always tests his play against this criterion, no matter what name he gives it. The test may be severe and demanding, or it may be relaxed (as in certain types of comic dramas where irrelevance is permissible and even desirable). In tragedy it is stringent. A fair proportion of Euripides' tragedies have been thought not to meet the test.

Because drama, like music and unlike architecture, is an art form in a time continuum which must progress and grow in full view of its audience and which can only reveal a fraction of its entirety at any given moment, the development of plot and the sequence of ideas or actions tend to become the primary points of departure in the quest for dramatic unity. If these are not the areas by means of which the unity is most quickly spotted, the search grows harder. The *Ion* of Euripides is a fine example of unity which is immediately apparent. The central character is established, the plot built around him, and all the action which derives from the plot is patently relevant and continues in agreeable sequence from beginning to end. The play is always in focus. Although the *Ion*

has its problems, they are not the problems of dramatic unity. The same is true of the *Medea*. It is not, however, true of the *Hippolytus*: there the unifying character is not initially apparent, and, although the plot is again built around him and the action again is relevant and in sequence, more than one critic has been diverted by the early predominance of a subordinate character and has scolded the play for lack of unity because it ends with Hippolytus but begins with Phaedra. Similar complaints have been leveled against the *Alcestis*.

In all these plays there exists a single plot pivoting around one character. In other plays of Euripides the structure takes a different form. The unity may lie in a conflict between two or more equally prominent characters, as in the *Electra*, or it may be found (with increasing trouble) outside the characters completely, as in the *Suppliants*. With each step away from the obvious unity of the *Ion* the complaints of the critics grow louder and more persistent, until in the case of certain plays where the dramatic unity (if, granted, it is there at all) is so subtle as to be almost invisible, the claims of disunity have gained the upper ground in the battle of criticism.

One such play is the *Andromache*, the tragedy about to be considered. The consideration, as these preliminary remarks have undoubtedly suggested, will be threefold: first a review of the play's criticism, then a fresh examination of the play itself, and finally an interpretative essay based on the preceding chapters. I am frank to admit at the outset that I intend to defend the *Andromache*. Its critics have not succeeded in justifying the play as a competent dramatic work or in condemning it as a failure. Most of its many subtle elements have been singled out by one or another critic as the dominant factor (whether unifying or not), whereas I should like to insist that each element be allowed to retain its proper proportion in the drama's totality. It is only then that the dramatic unity can be accounted for as present or absent, forceful or negligent.

With this idea of proportion in mind, I shall try (despite all unintentional indiscretions) to conduct the examination with no initial emphasis in mind and with the single prior supposition (held in reserve) that Euripides, if only on the strength of his "greater" works, was in control of his medium and that a dramatic unity is to be sought in this play. Intrinsic defects may well make the task difficult, but it ought to be rewarding to try to determine where the *Andromache's* shortcomings leave off and those of its critics take up. It is also my hope that, if the unity is found, recognition of it will

give us some insight into Euripides' dramatic purpose, some clues to his intellectual complexion.

Critical interpretations that oppose the strong tide of tradition and opinion have trouble finding friends, and perhaps rightly. If the reactions of a few are favorably conditioned by the removal of unfair criticism about the *Andromache* or by the introduction of fresh suggestions, this effort will have been worth-while. Far too few Greek tragedies remain to permit us to undervalue any one of them.

I / Critics and the *Andromache*

AT THE time of the fall of Troy Andromache, Hector's widow, was given by the conquering Greeks to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. As his concubine he took her to his royal home in Thessalian Phthia, where she bore him a son. Since then Neoptolemus has married Menelaus' daughter Hermione, but he still keeps Andromache and her child in his house. Hermione, seemingly incapable of pregnancy, has developed a raging jealousy of Andromache and accuses the Trojan slave of effecting her barrenness by witchcraft. In fear for her own and her son's life, Andromache has hidden the boy and sought sanctuary for herself in the shrine of Thetis near the palace. Neoptolemus is in Delphi where he hopes to beg successful pardon of Apollo, whom he earlier offended by rash demands of satisfaction for Achilles' murder at Troy. At this point the play begins.

Andromache sends a fellow slave to find and ask the help of Peleus, Achilles' father and Neoptolemus' grandfather, against the treachery of Hermione and her father Menelaus. The latter has just arrived to help resolve his daughter's marital problems.¹ Hermione enters, a young woman of irrational disposition and bad temper. She tries to force Andromache out of the sanctuary; upon failing she retires with vicious threats. Menelaus then appears with Andromache's son whom he has sought out and captured. He tricks Andromache from the shrine by telling her that either she or the boy must die. As soon as she has surrendered, however, he announces that, while *he* plans to kill *her*, he will leave her son's fate up to his daughter. Andromache is shocked by this deception into a bitter diatribe against Menelaus and Spartans in general. The captives, with their captor, retire during the stasimon, returning thereafter on their way to death at the ruthless hands of Menelaus. Just in time Peleus rushes in and rescues them. He and Menelaus battle with words, nearly with fists, and Peleus also finds occasion for a number

of pungent remarks about Spartan immorality. Defeated, Menelaus withdraws awkwardly from the scene, while Peleus leads Andromache and the boy to safety.

After a choral ode in praise of noble Peleus, Hermione's nurse enters to report excitedly that the young wife is trying to kill herself, both because her father has abandoned her cause and because she dreads the wrath of Neoptolemus when he hears ultimately of her earlier plot against Andromache. Hermione herself then rushes in. As the motherly nurse is attempting to soothe her, a stranger enters who turns out to be her cousin Orestes. He glibly tells the chorus that he was on his way to Dodona and thought that he would stop by to see how Cousin Hermione was enjoying married life. Tearfully the girl explains matters to him and begs him to escort her safely back to her father's home before Neoptolemus returns. Orestes reveals that he has come just for that purpose, to take her away, for she was originally promised to him; further, that Neoptolemus will never leave Delphi alive, thanks to a combination of Orestes' plotting and Apollo's wrath.

They go off, and, after the next choral stasimon, Peleus returns to verify the news of Hermione's departure. A messenger arrives to tell in detail the heroic and pathetic death of Neoptolemus at the hands of the Delphians. The corpse is brought in and Peleus, broken by this development, begins a lamentation. He is stopped, however, by the appearance of Thetis, his former wife. She promises him immortality and for Andromache security as the wife of Molossian Helenus. The body of Neoptolemus is to be returned to Delphi and interred there. Peleus thanks Thetis and dries his tears.

"Et profecto male composita est fabula," wrote the great Leipzig scholar Hermann of this tragedy, "the play is certainly badly put together." At first glance his distress seems well founded. For, as he continues, "it contains two plots, as do other tragedies of Euripides, and neither of the plots is properly handled. It is first occupied with the plight of Andromache, then with that of Peleus: in neither part is that which is begun carried through to a satisfactory conclusion. Rather the first part is abruptly broken off, while in the second a goddess is brought in to help matters."² But Hermann was far from the first to censure the *Andromache*. Most critics and editors have ranked it among the weakest of Euripides' offerings, from the early writer of the second Argument ("a second-rate drama") to the scholars of the present generation.³ A scholiast at line 32 reports that certain critics of Euripides accuse him of turning tragedies into comedies: "The mutual suspicions of women, their rivalry and

abuse, and the other elements that make up a comedy, every last one of these is included in this play." Elsewhere in the scholia are reported the objections of Didymus, the testy Alexandrian editor of the first century B.C., some of them remarkably narrow, others reflecting the traditional Greek conservatism which seldom failed to be offended by Euripides.⁴ At line 330 (and again at 362) Didymus is reported to have taken the characterization of Andromache to task: her speeches are too haughty for a barbarian slave to utter. The displeasure is not surprising, for even the chorus (lines 135-140) warns Andromache against improper attitudes, and she herself is acutely aware of how poorly she plays the slave. Didymus, however, objected not to the woman but to the play, as elsewhere he found fault with Euripides for making various minor alterations in the legends.

By the nineteenth century Euripides' right to change the lesser details of myth and to portray Andromache as a haughty slave were no longer seriously questioned, but the play as a whole was still under heavy attack. Hermann had pointed out the lack of unity and the anti-Spartan tone. Mahaffey felt that the latter fault was the most serious of all, for it gave the play "the air of a political pamphlet." A. R. H. Hyslop, who edited an English school edition at the end of the century, includes both complaints and adds three of his own in the course of his remarks. On the lack of unity he writes: "The prime essential of a literary work, as formulated in Horace's line, 'Denique sit quidvis, simplex dumtaxat et unum,' has been neglected. . . . The real tragedy of the *Andromache* ends with the rescue of the heroine from her misfortunes by the spirited conduct of Peleus." He finds political allusions everywhere, both domestic and anti-Spartan, although Euripides' "bitterest invective is reserved for Sparta and the Spartans."

Hyslop's own criticisms are equally stern. He condemns "Euripides' love of academic disputation" which he feels has no dramatic potential. "The first scene between Hermione and Andromache degenerates into a discussion on marriage, and in the course of it the latter marshals her arguments as if she were an Athenian lawyer addressing an Athenian jury, and not a mother at bay defending her child." The same contempt is shown for the speeches between Andromache and Menelaus and between Menelaus and Peleus. Second, he criticizes the prologue and the *deus ex machina*: "Both expedients betray a certain want of originality and destroy the natural development which is one of the chief marks of a great play."⁵ Finally, Hyslop writes: "A certain reserve is expected of a

great writer when he deals with delicate subjects; and such reserve is sadly lacking in the *Andromache*, with its frank acknowledgment of the heroine as a concubine, and its open discussion of the relations of the sexes." He admits that Euripides wrote "for an age which knew no reticence in dealing with such topics," but notwithstanding he feels that "the poet has committed a breach of good taste in bringing such matters on to his stage."⁶

So far, nothing has been heard but destructive criticism. Attempts, however have been made, if not in all instances to justify the play, at least to explain it or to suggest the author's intention. The bulk of the "helpful" criticism breaks down into two major categories: (1) of those who feel that the closest thing to unity in the *Andromache* is to be found in the contrast of the characters, and (2) of those whose interest it is to explain the play, whether they find unity or not, in terms of its political allusions.

We may group with the "contrast" theorists those who single out love, jealousy, and the ensuing conflicts as the unifying element, for the contrast is the result of the use of these motifs. Thus Amendola in his Italian school edition introduces his comments by saying: "The fundamental motive of this tragedy is the jealousy of Hermione toward Andromache, a jealousy which, flaring up like a devastating flame, threatens the more savage *vendetta* which an enemy can exercise upon his adversary." From this he proceeds to the contrasts: "There are two women in whom the contrast of the characters shows up strongly and clearly: on the one hand the vain *padrona* [Hermione], proud of her background and of the jewels that adorn her; on the other the slave [Andromache] who remembers with profound grief the happiness that is lost, as she huddles trembling in the temple that protects her." Of the two male characters he writes: "Peleus is the opposite of Menelaus."⁷

Contrast may explain even the break in the plot. So Méridier: "This complicated drama . . . is formed of two different parts which yet respond to and balance each other. Defeated and humiliated in the first part, Hermione takes her revenge in the second; while the old Peleus, who had made his authority triumph over the opposition of Menelaus and his daughter, is in turn cast down by the death of his grandson."⁸

The interpretation of the drama as thesis and antithesis is also defended by Bassi: "It will be useful to note that between the two parts of the drama there are correspondences certainly intentional [*volute*] on the part of the poet. In the first part Andromache, up to the arrival of Peleus, is treated very badly, like the lowliest of

slaves; Hermione, formerly so arrogant and proud, is defeated and humiliated by Peleus' intervention; Peleus makes his own authority triumph over the opposition of Menelaus." (Note the identical thought in the passage from Méridier quoted above.) "In the second part *Andromache* is restored by divine command to her former status; Hermione with Orestes' help takes, so to speak, the return bout; Peleus, on the other hand, is weakened by the blow of the irreparable misfortune of Neoptolemus' death."⁹ The same view is stated more stylishly by Van Johnson: "Human life is poised, as it were, on a delicate balance of almost measureless forces, and none can say which way the scales will tip, what small excess will outweigh that counterpoise of traits and motives, characters and actions, which make life precarious and destiny uncertain. In the *Andromache* Euripides presents, if not with subtlety, at least with certitude this conflict of opposing and imponderable things, a conflict which first sustains and then destroys the equilibrium of human endurance. For this reason, the play is permeated by a rather obvious antithesis, yet so truthful in its application that no honest critic will resist or question the device."¹⁰

The device may not be questioned, but critics have certainly questioned the result, e.g., Max Pohlenz who writes: "Euripides freely devised this idea of contrast and the conflict of the two women, and molded them to a drama of uniform wholeness. It is all the more surprising that he himself destroys this wholeness. For the structure of this tragedy shows not really a two-fold arrangement but rather a state of disunity [*Zwiespältigkeit*]."¹¹ But Johnson feels that "Euripides has somehow patched the canvas of this broken narrative, retouched the fading figures of the myth, accentuated with his own vivid coloring the prominent motif; foreshortening irrelevant details and thus eliciting that harmony of shocking elements which constitutes his tragic theme."¹²

Gilbert Norwood in his edition of the *Andromache* shifts the emphasis slightly to let Hermione become the "foundation of the play," which in turn develops into a study of "contemporary" women, "for the legendary story provides little besides the name." Hermione is typical of the "ill-trained" wives who are allowed free range within the house but who are severely confined therein and given no opportunity to develop themselves by means of a more expanded sphere of interests. "The whole play shows us the dire power possessed by a person with the unbalanced impulsiveness of a child and the audacity and powers of an adult. The first half of the action portrays Hermione's thoughtless cruelty which hurries

her into wickedness, the second half her equally thoughtless and hysterical remorse which leads her into folly no less great."¹³

Most such observations which center around the theory of contrast and conflict are pertinent. They are often particularly perceptive of Euripides' characterization, although Norwood overlooks the obvious when he fails to see that Hermione's character is a blend of both her father's and her mother's. The principal weakness which these theories embody is an inability to provide either structural or any other kind of unity for the play. The objection which Pohlenz raises is well taken: if contrast is to carry the responsibility of unity, the result is, as he puts it, *Zwiespältigkeit*. "Chiasmus" (to switch to Kitto's term) is not a dramatic device, for it lacks the necessary quality of continuation, and if it were ever used it would have to be consistent and complete to be effective. Kitto, answering Méridier (and indirectly Bassi), particularizes: "But in the second part Hermione does not take a revenge, unless it is revenge to clutch at the first man who presents himself, and triumph to elope with an Orestes; nor can we congratulate Euripides if the gallant Peleus is overwhelmed not for some sin but for the sake of an equilibrium."¹⁴

Of those who build their interpretation of the play out of its political attitudes Kitto is representative. For him the *Andromache's* unity "lies in its idea and not in the story." The "orthodox defender," he says, cannot supply answers to the problems of unity because the answer is "that Euripides never concerned himself with them. He was not merely telling a story and making a play, and had no interest in concocting an artificial unity; as always, he is trying to embody an idea." The idea is Sparta, "*Machtpolitik*; in particular . . . three Spartan qualities, arrogance, treachery and criminal ruthlessness." But is this drama? one must ask. Can we on those terms say that Euripides wrote a play? With customary consistency Kitto reserves final judgment: "The dramatist was willing that his play should stand or fall by its intrinsic effect; it is, we might say, a severely functional work of art which disdains pretences. . . . The *Andromache* is animated and explained by one burning idea, which, with its separate aspects, incorporates itself in a plot better suited to a trilogy than to a play; and because the play means so much to Euripides . . . he cannot find the time or inclination to tinker with it and give it a false unity which would in no way assist the idea." Kitto admits that the lack of unity is "obtrusive," that the play is "a tragedy in essence but a melodrama in execution," but he believes that such was Euripides' intention. Re-

versing Mahaffey's description, he suggests that the *Andromache* is "a political pamphlet which has the air of a tragedy." Euripides, he advises, "did not set out to write 'a Greek Tragedy' and then spoil it by crude characterization and untimely political references."¹⁵

Kitto's use of the word "unity" is limited here to unity of action. The dramatic unity, which he cannot ignore even if he does leave it unexpressed, is this "burning idea" that Sparta is to be denounced. The play becomes a series of episodes, or better, a pageant of scenes tied together, not by a continuation of action, but by their common purpose (and effect). It must be such drama which Kitto has in mind when he uses the word "melodrama," for true melodrama—not always an opprobrious term¹⁶—demands as much unity as does true tragedy. To present such a play as Kitto here describes in a Greek theatre would be to exploit that theatre far beyond the endurance of tradition and ritual. It was not in these respects that Euripides departed from tradition. If the *Andromache* is only a political pamphlet, it is a failure, for it was written to be a drama. On these grounds alone one humbly wonders if Kitto was not hasty in assuming that Euripides had no intention of giving his play unity of action. The general complaint is not against a total absence of plot unity but rather against bad defects *within* the plot. The plot is there, as even the summary reveals.

Kitto finds a central figure for the play in the person of Peleus, a symbol of the "misery which Spartan *Machtpolitik* creates." Peleus loses son, grandson, "and nearly loses his great-grandson," all because of Spartans. In noticing these family generations Kitto follows Hartung, although the earlier scholar denied that the play has a central character or depends on one for its unity. "For if one were to find the center of this *Dichtung* in one of the characters, that person could be none other than the totally nonappearing Neoptolemus; after him Hermione would have the first claim. Least of all, however, would be Andromache, from whom, as chance would have it, the drama received its name." Hartung expands the scope of the drama outward from the individuals who oppose each other to the families of which they are members: the descendants of Aeacus and the descendants of Atreus. Atreid Menelaus arrogantly installs himself in Aeacid Neoptolemus' house and, in the owner's absence, attempts to slay the only remaining scion of the Aeacid line, Andromache's son. Neoptolemus too, by marrying Hermione, has brought upon himself the doom-carrying wrath of Atreid Orestes. "Thus it is clear that the dismal result of the union of an

honest and wellborn family with a wicked and rich one constitutes the subject matter of this play, and that it is just for this reason, because the subject matter is such, that it could have no other principal character."

But such a plot, telling of the conflict of legendary families, serves only as a foil for Euripides' political convictions. Hartung assumes that Euripides and Pericles were comrades in Anaxagorean philosophy. Starting their careers simultaneously, they worked in their own separate ways toward a single goal, "that the Greek ideal should enlarge itself to all mankind and that Athens should light the way for the rest of Greece." Thus they, even more than other Athenians, would have hated the Spartans and the structure of their state. "In a body politic of that kind Mechanism takes the place of Organism: nothing is allowed to operate on instinct, rather all things must sacrifice and subordinate themselves to the supreme goal: utility rules in place of inclination, regulation in place of beauty." The men become unfeeling. They give up their own rights in exchange for mastery over the rights of others. The goal is totalitarianism and the natural result is hatred. "The history of Greece from the Persian War to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, as it is read in Thucydides, is a commentary to the story: especially do we find in the speeches of Pericles the appropriate description of Spartan character and disposition, and with these speeches those of Andromache and Peleus in this tragedy are in accord. The only difference is that they give breath to a vigorous hatred whereas the statesman's speeches were more restrained."¹⁷

As for the *Andromache's* anti-Spartan elements, in only a few lines is the hatred explicit and vigorous; we must decide later whether or not it permeates the tragedy by implicit means. Hartung's description of the Spartan state's personality, however, is interesting for the light which it may cast on the characterization of Menelaus, who does at times remind one of a Nazi leader in a World War II film. The German scholar is also helpful in pointing out the family groupings and cross-relationships in the play, although once again, as in the case of Kitto's plotless "melodrama," his deductions are somewhat suspect. If it is not the function, it is certainly the procedure of tragedy by the time of Sophocles and Euripides to concentrate on the conflict of individuals, either singly or in groups. Thus the families to which the principals belong—neither of which, incidentally, the chorus ever mentions—were probably not of primary concern to the poet. But this should not

obturate Hartung's important observation that the play lacks a central figure.

As a digression from the major categories of interpretation, we may turn to the "rationalists," not so much for solutions as for the sharp attention which they give to the drama and the particular questions which they raise.¹⁸ Gilbert Norwood in his *Greek Tragedy* lists the "remarkable difficulties" which the *Andromache* poses and which, as he says, "must be faced." They are three in number: "First is the breakdown of Menelaus in the presence of Peleus. The first half of the play has exhibited his unswerving resolve to destroy Andromache and her child. Every conceivable argument save one has been addressed to him in vain. That one argument is physical compulsion, and Peleus certainly does not offer it."¹⁹ After a storm of mutual abuse the Spartan withdraws from the whole situation, muttering an excuse which is scarcely meant to be taken seriously: he is in a hurry to chastise an unfriendly state. He goes just far enough to embitter his enemies to the utmost and not far enough to redeem his threats; and he retires without a word to his daughter after committing her to a deeply dangerous project. Menelaus has faults, but crass stupidity is not one of them; on the contrary he is reviled as the type of base cunning. Why, then, does he act with such utter futility at a crisis which anyone could have foreseen?"

The first difficulty, then, from Norwood's point of view, is one of characterization. It is not surprising to find that the next is one of plot detail: "In the second place, when was Neoptolemus murdered? Orestes declares that the prince will be slain at Delphi, and at once departs with Hermione. After a choric song Peleus comes back, and almost at once receives the news of his grandson's death. When Orestes utters his prophecy the messenger from Delphi can hardly be more than a mile from the House. Has he already committed the murder as a prelude to an innocent and irrelevant pilgrimage to Dodona? And, if so, why does he reveal, or rather not reveal, the fact? And why has he risked himself in Phthia when the news of his crime may arrive at any moment?" Norwood continues this discussion in a footnote: "It may be answered that here, as elsewhere, the time consumed by the choric ode is conventionally supposed long enough to allow for the alleged synchronous action. But how much time is required? Orestes is to place Hermione in Menelaus' care, journey to Delphi, and arrange his plot; then the slaves are to carry the body home. This certainly means three days; one would expect a week. Thus Peleus only hears of Hermione's departure three days (perhaps a week) after it has occurred. Is this

credible?" As further evidence Norwood calls to mind the conversation between Peleus and the chorus "which implies that the news has reached him within an hour or two."

The third problem is more familiar: "There is a grave difficulty in the structure, independent of Menelaus' conduct and the dating of Orestes' crime. The play seems to fall into two halves with but a slight connexion—the plight of Andromache and the woes of Neoptolemus' house."²⁰ Note that the connecting elements suggested are not those of plot. In point of fact Norwood is not quite accurate in citing the plight of Andromache even as a slight connection, for other than as a member of Neoptolemus' house she disappears from the action before the end of the first "half" and is mentioned again only in the *oratio deae*. In other words, matters are worse even than Norwood allows. For the "woes" of the house also change nature between the two halves, from the bickering of women and the threatened death of a slave and her infant to the actual murder of the master.

Norwood's complaints were not original with him, as he implies by turning to A. W. Verrall's essay on the *Andromache* which hopes to solve, if that is the word, just these problems. Verrall despairs of the play as it stands, and his despair is complete and uncomplicated. "The whole, as a whole, is nothing. The play, as a whole, is worthless." It has, in other words, no dramatic unity. The plot does not even have the Aristotelian fault of episodic action: "Now the fault so defined is noted by Aristotle, not without reason, as 'the worst' which a plot can have. But it is not the worst, it is far from the worst, if we are to include such a 'plot' as is attributed to the *Andromache*, comprising events between which no connexion and no sequence is even alleged, an event A and another event A¹ (we must not call it B, for this at least suggests sequence), which are set down separately, side by side, without so much as a given order in time, and which the reader may arrange or not arrange as he pleases."²¹

Verrall cannot overlook the supposed lack of plot and attempts to prove "that the play does not profess to contain the story entire, but presumes the story, whatever it was, as known beforehand to the spectator or reader." The "proof" of this is far too intricately presented even to summarize here. The evidence is internal except for the statement in the Argument (mentioned above and customarily translated "the drama is one of the second-rate plays") which Verrall believes means that the *Andromache* is the second of *two* plays, a sequel. The story which the two combined plays would tell runs as follows: Orestes and Menelaus have devised a plan by

which to get Hermione away from Neoptolemus and back to Orestes, who originally claimed her. This will be achieved by widowing Hermione and then, in her moment of loneliness, having her accept the approaches of Orestes who shall arrive at the proper time. Menelaus lends strength to this feeling of loneliness by rousing his daughter's hatred and jealousy of Andromache to the point where she threatens the latter's life. He proceeds to help her make herself obnoxious to the Phthians and especially to Peleus. Then suddenly, when his part of the intrigue is finished, Menelaus departs, leaving Hermione alone among enemies and nearly hysterical with fear. Orestes arrives on schedule, having already killed Neoptolemus at Delphi. Part of the two men's plan is somehow to involve Hermione in this murder, evidently as an added means of coaxing her into the second marriage. (Presumably she cannot abide Orestes.) In order to accomplish this Orestes waits until she has left the stage, then in a loud voice prophesies the (already accomplished) death of Neoptolemus. She does not hear this prophecy, but the chorus is to assume that she does.

Verrall has thus rather stronghandedly created a "first" play which explains the *Andromache* and gives it the unity which he feels it lacks. Norwood fortunately makes several objections: there is no trace of such a play in scholia or elsewhere, except for the highly doubtful sentence in the Argument. Also, "Verrall's doctrine depends largely upon the incoherence which is implied in the current view. But Euripides has elsewhere (for example in *Hecuba*) admitted such incoherence."²² This is true: a simpler explanation of any one of the structural defects which Verrall finds in the *Andromache* would, if proven reasonable, explode his entire hypothesis. But there are so many loopholes in his theory and so many jagged ends to it that a detailed examination would be both pointless and unkind.

Finally, G. M. A. Grube comments on both politics and the problem of unity. Of the former he agrees that the anti-Spartan bias is obvious. "There is . . . no reason to suppose that Euripides did not share both his contemporaries' love of their city and dislike of all things Spartan." He follows Hartung's reasoning about the Athenian view of Spartan ideology: "The thinking Athenian may well have felt the Peloponnesian War to be more than a mere war for hegemony between two powerful states; even more than conflict between two forms of government, democracy based on the consent of the governed and oligarchy based on the brute force of the few; to him it was essentially a struggle between two contrary

philosophies of life, the one seeking freedom, the other enslavement." But, Grube warns, "how far such attacks upon Sparta, and the complimentary references to Athens . . . were put in to please the audience, and how far they express the feelings of the poet, we shall never know."²³

Grube is somewhat less optimistic on the subject of unity, although "whatever lack of unity exists is not due to a disjointed plot, for the story is connected enough: the situation between the two women in the household of Neoptolemus has to be settled." This is a refreshing note: lack of plot unity has been a constant companion in the survey of the *Andromache's* criticism. But Grube is an alert critic: he is searching for *dramatic* unity: "Such unity of plot is purely external; we need something more to tie the strands together." He finds two such unifying elements: first, the house of Achilles by which all the virtuous characters of the play, as well as the barren Hermione, are linked; second, the now familiar theme of two wives in one household. "Either of these themes might have provided the necessary unity; but, like the unity of the story, such links remain external unless worked into the play itself in a way that unites the whole." In the *Andromache*, Grube maintains, this has not been sufficiently accomplished. He believes that Euripides grew more interested in the conflict between *Andromache* and *Hermione*, and thus paid too little attention to the other parts of the play. "The result is a certain disunity, though not as complete as is often thought. There are connecting factors, but they are not sufficiently brought out."²⁴

In this roughly chronological review of the criticism, the advance of critical methods has been evident. The peccancies of Didymus are a far cry from the expansive calculations of Verrall, even farther from Grube's careful study. But throughout the span of centuries the thread of dissatisfaction has seldom disappeared from the fabric of criticism, and one is left with the feeling that all cannot possibly be right if so many critics argue not only with the play but just as frequently with each other. The *Andromache* has been assailed from almost every point of view. The characters and the plot have been vigorously castigated and (less often) defended. Unity has been sought in every conceivable quarter: in the plot, the contrast of the first "half" against the second; in the characters: *Hermione*, *Andromache* (and both together), *Peleus*, *Neoptolemus*, in all and in none of these; in the allusions: the anti-Spartan allusions and those

which suggest Athenian patriotism, as well as the domestic (melodramatic) allusions of marital discord; finally, in a combination of several of these elements. The survey is confusing, since in only a few instances can the critic be said to be completely wrong (he is never completely right). He is usually at fault simply because by stopping too quickly he leaves his readers with an unsatisfactory emphasis.

Indeed, emphasis seems to be the first source of trouble. When one or another aspect of the play is brought into sharp focus for the purpose of establishing it as the unifying factor of the whole drama, other parts seem correspondingly to go out of focus. Thus suspicion is born, for the consolidating factor ought certainly to be by definition and demonstration that which brings everything together into focus. Only then could it be called dramatic unity.

II / The *Andromache* 1-801

1. *Prologue* (1-116).

THE opening monologue by Andromache effectively sets a mood for the play, and, as befits its regular function, supplies the necessary background.¹ Andromache addresses her words to her native city, Asiatic Thebes, as a means of tracing briefly her sad history: first, from a proud beginning in the luxuriance of her father's palace, then to the enviable position as Hector's wife at Troy, finally as "spear booty" to the islander Neoptolemus, son of her husband's slayer. She dwells in the grassy fields of Phthia near Pharsalia, a slave in lonely surroundings. (Here Thetis lived with Peleus, apart from men and shunning the crowd.) A barbarian herself in the eyes of her captors, she subtly portrays her uncivilized life among the "cultured." She has lived to witness her husband killed by Greeks, her son Astyanax hurled to his death by Greeks; and she herself, who once lived in the "freest" of homes, was dragged off by Greeks and handed over as a common slave to a Greek soldier.

Yet Andromache is not unduly bitter. She has stored up no great hatred for her new master, for all his people's sins. She seems almost to admire Neoptolemus' thoughtfulness toward his grandfather Peleus. They live where they do (some distance from the town) because Neoptolemus has left the rule of the land to Peleus and "refuses to take the sceptre while the old man is still alive." There she bore Neoptolemus a son. With the advent of the child, although she was still by no means well-treated (line 26), she nevertheless hoped that she might gain some protection from "evil" things. She does not elaborate on the nature of her life with Neoptolemus, but merely indicates that she was in no sense his equal nor even secure in the menial role which she did play. On the other hand, she was able to entertain some hope of better times; this, along with her lack of resentment, suggests that she was treated no worse than any

other slave. For slave she was, as she says many times, slave in fact if not in character.

Her hopes were dashed, however, when Neoptolemus deserted her "slave's bed" and married Hermione the Spartan. One can see now why Andromache has stressed her humble position and inglorious relationship with Neoptolemus. Hermione, it develops, has misunderstood their relationship and has insisted that she and Andromache are rivals for the position of mistress of the house. The latter, as she herself well knows, was never mistress nor ever expected to be. She swears by Zeus that all she did was lie with her master, and that unwillingly.² But Hermione, who so far in her marriage has proven barren, is further convinced that Andromache by means of barbarian diablerie has caused this condition in order to make her loathsome to her husband. It is now her vengeful desire to kill the Trojan slave. Her father Menelaus is at the palace to help her realize this scheme: he made the trip for that purpose. In her terror Andromache has sought sanctuary in a shrine of the Nereid Thetis (the setting for the play) after first hiding her young son with friends. Peleus and his offspring revere this goddess, so that Andromache's choice of sanctuary is highly practical if she hopes to solicit help from the local people. Where Peleus is at present, however, we are not told. Neoptolemus has gone to Delphi and can be of no immediate help. He went there to offer apologies to Apollo for an earlier act of impetuosity, when he demanded satisfaction from the Delphic god for the murder of his father Achilles. He hopes now to restore himself to the god's favor.

Although the opening monologue cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the play's dramatic unity, it is important to notice how much of the drama is at least touched upon in these first fifty-five lines. (In this respect they differ from the rest of the prologue, 56-116, for there, with the exception of Andromache's monody, attention is paid only to the first conflict of the play.) Every principal character is named save Orestes, whose arrival is probably intended by Euripides to be a surprise.³ The preliminary information is provided as it always is in expository prologues. The situation underlying the first conflict, that involving Andromache and Hermione, is carefully detailed. Peleus, we are told, lives some distance away. Neoptolemus is at Delphi; Menelaus is in the palace. The boy is hiding. All seems to point to the scenes which do in fact take place soon hereafter. But later scenes too are hinted at, those which are now remote. Hermione's hysterical moment should come as no shock when we hear that she is already hateful to her husband

(line 33) and that her father has come for no purpose other than to help her murder Andromache. We are prepared for an unpleasant encounter with Menelaus. As for the death of Neoptolemus, although we cannot predict Orestes' part in it, we are told that Achilles' son has offended Apollo and is now trying to patch up relations. This is a clear omen of trouble. And, since the play takes place in front of a shrine of Thetis, the goddess-wife of Peleus, it will come as no surprise that she is the *dea ex machina*. In such respects the first speech is a miniature capitulation of the entire play.

The action begins promptly with the arrival on stage of a maid-servant who brings Andromache bad news. Menelaus, she reports, has learned the location of the boy and has gone to retrieve him. The servant also suggests that the messengers whom Andromache had earlier asked to fetch Peleus have failed to do so out of fear of punishment by Hermione. Andromache begs the servant herself to summon him, and she obligingly departs (line 90). This scene of thirty-six lines anticipates two plot elements: the treacherous activities of Menelaus and the tardy arrival of Peleus, who unfortunately may be of no help even when he does appear, for the servant reminds Andromache that he is a feeble old man (line 80). The maid-servant, like Andromache, is originally from Troy and now a slave in Neoptolemus' house. Their first interchange with its pathetic charm again brings to mind Andromache's present humiliation, and the remembered kindness of Hector and Andromache toward the maid-servant in Troy is in glaring contrast with the viciousness now exhibited by Menelaus and Hermione toward Andromache. "My lady," says the maid, "I do not hesitate to call you that, for you were my lady back at Troy." "Oh dearest fellow slave," replies Andromache, "for fellow slave you are with her who was once your queen, but is now in evil straits."⁴

For the remainder of the prologue (91-116) Andromache is once more left alone on the stage. She will send up to the ether air the lamentations and groans which now make up her existence. For it is woman's nature, she thoughtfully explains, to find some pleasure in vocal expressions of grief. There is much to lament: her city in ruins, her husband dead, and herself a slave. "Call no man happy," she reflects, "until, once he is dead, you know how he passed his last day on earth."

"The motif of telling one's sorrows to the sky and air," as Denniston (at *E. Electra* 59) observes, "is common in Greek tragedy." Other examples of the gesture are found in the *Iphigenia Taurica*

and *Medea*, also in Sophocles' *Electra*.⁵ Common too is the reference to the pleasure in voicing one's grief.⁶ Commonest of all is Andromache's third remark, that no man is to be accounted happy until after his last day on earth. This bit of truth might at first seem out of place here. It is usually spoken in reproachful warning to one who thinks himself blest by fortune (e.g. Solon to Croesus in Herodotus' account), or by a speaker with unwitting tragic irony (e.g. by the pompous Agamemnon in the Aeschylus play).⁷ So is the present use of it partially ironical, but the speaker is both the wit and the victim. Andromache, who can by no means be called happy in *advance* of her death and whose last day may well be the most wretched of many, includes the commonplace among her preliminary observations as a grim bit of understatement. But the subtlety transcends mere irony, for Andromache stands now in full realization of the truth of this axiom which throughout her life up to the attack on Troy had no practical meaning. She once was happy but now is not. Who can say whether she ever will be again?

The widow of Hector then sings her lament, a monody of seven elegiac couplets.⁸ "It was no bride⁹ but rather a thing of ruin which Paris led home to high Ilium, bringing Helen to the nuptial rooms. Oh Troy, it was for her that swift Ares of Hellas with his thousand ships came and ravished you with spear and consuming fire, destroying my husband Hector whom the son of the sea-nymph Thetis dragged round the walls with his chariot. I myself was led from my couch to the shore of the sea, my head wrapped down in awful slavery! Many tears ran down my cheeks as I left my city and rooms and my husband in the dust. Oh, such misery is mine! Why must I look upon the light of day as Hermione's slave? Distressed by her, I have come a suppliant to this goddess-image. I throw my two arms around it,¹⁰ melting in tears as spring water oozes from a rock!"

Although nothing new by way of exposition is added by this monody, it does serve to fix Andromache into the scene. Her opening monologue was outside the play proper. It was the actor, more than his part, who spoke, saying in effect: "I play the role of Andromache, and here is the situation in which I find myself." The composed tone of lines 1-56 might have led one to presume that Hector's widow is superbly dispassionate, but she quickly dispels that suspicion with these emotional (though not inordinately lyrical) elegiacs. Starting with the event, hideous in its insignificance, which sparked the Trojan War, she briefly traces again in simple words the circumstances which led her to her present state of wretchedness. She has been weeping since first she left Troy, and is melting in her

tears even now. Hers is a proud character, quick to despise outbursts of hysteria in others, yet she is far from unmoved by the fortunes of her life.

Andromache is not content to mourn the fall of Troy and the slaughter of her family, but goes further back to the causes of the war, to Paris and Helen, thereby illustrating a tendency on the part of Euripides' characters and choruses to sound at times like rhapsodists.¹¹ In this play there is a consistent preoccupation with causes. Andromache here suggests that the war was prompted by the rape of Helen: three other theories will be presented before the end of the play, two by the chorus and the third by Peleus. One cannot assume that Euripides intended these as purely ornamental digressions. Their primary purpose remains for the present unrevealed, but the immediate effect of Andromache's reflections on the war is to push the beginning of the tragedy further back in time.

In review of the prologue, one should note that it ends as it begins, that is, with a statement of Andromache's misfortunes and plight. Yet enough intrusions have separated these two monologues to discourage one from interpreting the entire scene as simply an extended *threnos*. A second (minor) character is introduced, and the plot is actually furthered, if slightly, before Andromache turns to her lamentations.

2. *Parodos* (117-146).

The chorus of Phthian women now enters singing the *parodos* in dactylic rhythm.¹² Euripidean choruses are famously enigmatic, most probably because we tend to think of them collectively (as *the* Euripidean chorus) whereas surely they differ from play to play no less than does the catalogue of Euripidean characters. In the *Andromache*, to look for a retrospective moment at the entire play, they have extremely warm, though hardly exciting, personalities. Through the songs of the chorus we shall hear various emphases placed upon the conflicts, emphases which are not found in the action of the drama itself: for example the chain of disastrous events which devolve from the judgment of Paris (stasima 1 and 4), or the heroic background of Peleus (stasimon 3). By its ability to generalize the chorus tends to bring essentials into focus. Often its remarks sound trite or beside the point; at the same time it conveys some message or some truism, unsophisticated in nature, but of real value at the moment. The chorus may in fact be called the

unconscious spokesman of theme, just as it certainly is in control of the play's emotional levels. It often alters the dramatic tensions in the scenes because it reacts to the different developments in a manner peculiar to itself. In the *Andromache* the chorus is a group of women, not men, and a group of Greek women unbounded in their compassion if occasionally limited in their perspective. Their remarks are their own. This chorus is generally counted among the most inferior of Euripides' performances. "The lyrics are of little interest to a reader," writes Norwood.¹³ Such criticism, if let ride, helps considerably the thesis that even the weakest of Euripides' choruses are not without substance and their lyric endeavors not without motivation.

Their compassion for the outcast is the first quality about the chorus which strikes us as they begin the parodos. They feel sorrow for the captive Andromache and have no patience for Hermione's disagreeable temper. Discreet and cautious (as choruses usually are), they have made no move to help Andromache for fear of repercussions upon themselves, but they have pitied her. They recognize that the war has created great problems for many people, yet their wisdom in this is short-sighted—one might with some risk say "feminine." At this initial stage of the play they do not see clearly Andromache's dangerous position, and they urge her to leave her sanctuary, arguing that she must realize that she is no longer a Trojan queen but only a slave in a Greek household (lines 135-140)—a good, practical outlook, to the realities of which, however, Andromache in her present circumstances need hardly be directed. They totally misunderstand the differences between Andromache and Hermione, for they follow the latter in believing the two to be competing for the affections of Neoptolemus.

It is small wonder that Andromache has no reply to make to the sympathetic but unhelpful Phthian women. Part of what they tell her she knows only too well; in the remainder they are so pathetically mistaken as to deserve her silence. But Andromache is given little opportunity to speak, for, as the chorus nervously suggests (lines 145-146), Hermione is right at their heels.

3. *First Episode (147-273).*

The first episode of the play is the only onstage encounter between Hermione and Andromache, and each speaks a single rhesis. These are followed by a short stichomythia of brilliant invective.

The chorus throughout does its best to temper the tone of the episode. After a brief aside to them, during which Hermione describes her present luxurious life (in obvious and intended contrast to the opening speech of Andromache where the same luxuries were regretfully conjured up in memory of better days), she begins her hateful thesis. Her message has all the subtlety of a snake's bite. Its venom is of the variety that one might expect from a Medea; the inconsistencies of thought alone reduce the speaker to an angry and mentally unimpressive adolescent. Andromache is a slave (she begins) with supernatural powers who has made Hermione barren. But she will not continue to hold such powers, for Hermione is about to put a stop to them. Andromache will die! This is the first charge, which more than implies that Hermione is bent on killing Andromache because of her witchery.

But then the young mistress introduces a new line of thought. As if she had forgotten (or did not mean) her threat of death, she begins to lecture Andromache on proper behavior. Henceforth Andromache must not continue to act like a queen, must learn to conduct herself in a manner befitting a base slave. "Let some man or god be willing to rescue you! Still you must cower in humility for that earlier grandiose pride of yours; you must prostrate yourself at my knee, must sweep my house and sprinkle it with water from my golden vases! And realize where you are! There is no Hector here, no Priam, no Asian pomp! This is Greece!"

Hermione next proceeds to accuse Andromache of sleeping (present tense) with her own husband's murderer (as if the poor woman had been given a choice in the matter), and credits her with a wretched lack of sensibility for so doing.¹⁴ It is a barbarian's practice, Hermione says. Incongruously she groups it with incest and with intra-familial murder, pointing out that among barbarians no law forbids such things. "Well, you'll not introduce them here!" she warns, and finishes with the general observation that a man who wants a happy home should limit himself to one wife. This is a poorly timed generality. Hermione's remark may possibly be suitable to the occasion, but it is inappropriate to her speech. The fault, however, is hers, not the author's. Most of Euripides' characters make liberal use of old saws and general propositions; with particular frequency do they glare as gross ineptitudes in the mouths of the unsavory or stupid.

Aside from the obvious fiction, there is much in Hermione's accusation which might be explained by pure ignorance of the situation. Neoptolemus conceivably might never have instructed

his bride as to the exact position which Andromache held in the household. But one need not build such a difficult hypothesis—unless he is unalterably convinced that no one could behave as poorly and pointlessly as Hermione does here. Her behavior is credible if we assume that she has long since been overcome by jealousy. Euripides knew that reason dies once the mind is poisoned by jealousy. Hermione may have been charming as a bride: the inhumanly cruel situation into which she was placed after her marriage has driven her to a jealous frenzy. It was unforgivable of Neoptolemus not to remove Andromache and her son from his house before Hermione arrived; unforgivable, that is, from the point of view of the new bride's happiness. No matter how poorly treated Andromache was, how slavish her position, with her son as living evidence of her former intimacy with Neoptolemus she would always be in Hermione's eyes the "other" woman. And when Hermione, initially uncomfortable in the house, grew even more insecure as she began to be undermined by the growing fear that she would never become pregnant, it was natural that Andromache should loom increasingly in her eyes as the cause of her troubles. When we first meet her, she is already far along the road to total irrationality. Scarcely one word she hurls at Andromache is true: it is easy to believe that in her rational fibres, wherever they are hidden, she knows this.

The chorus is more innocent. Jealousy, it seems, is natural in women. Jealousy of a husband's mistress is the fiercest of all. They sympathize with Andromache, but their moral attitude accommodates Hermione.

In contrast to Hermione's rhesis, Andromache's is a carefully worded and well-balanced rebuttal, worthy of any debating bench.¹⁵ First an introduction (183-191) wherein she acquiesces to one of drama's most frustrating necessities, the speech made in futility. The combination of her own slavery and Hermione's youth and power predetermine her defeat, for should she merit a victory she would only incur more trouble: "For the high and mighty find it bitter to lose an argument to their inferiors."

Second, she presents her refutation of Hermione's charges in the form of ironic and even sarcastic rhetorical questions (192-204). Why and how would she usurp Hermione's position? Is she richer? Is she free? Is she young or beautiful? Would she want to give birth to a brood of slaves? The idea is so absurd that she leaves the queries unanswered. Third, having eliminated herself as the cause of Hermione's problems, she points to the real source: Hermione's

own disposition (205-221). Beautiful the younger woman may be, but she lacks the talents of a wife. She remains the Spartan daughter of Menelaus whereas she ought now to consider herself the Phthian spouse of Neoptolemus. She is so sexually insatiable, so jealous of her husband's affections, that she cannot tolerate the thought of his ever having had intercourse with another woman, whereas she ought to be content.

Finally, Andromache draws a brief comparison between the two of them (222-231). She herself was always a loving wife, faithful even in her Hector's moments of infidelity when Aphrodite "tripped" him. This is what he loved in her. Hermione, on the other hand, is so apprehensive that she would not allow even one drop of rain to spatter on her husband's face. "Don't seek to surpass your mother's amorousness," warns Andromache. "Sensible daughters avoid the ways of evil mothers."

Since Hermione is in no sense under suspicion of infidelity, it is not in this respect that she resembles her mother. Andromache refers rather to their sexually oriented view of life which, in the case of Helen, caused her to place the responsibilities of marriage second to love at any cost, thus bringing on the war which in turn destroyed Hector and Andromache's marriage. The same orientation (Andromache argues) on the part of Hermione is causing her unwarranted unhappiness and is at the same time creating in her a poor substitute for a wife. There is everything to lose, nothing to gain by dwelling incessantly on this one aspect of her marriage.

As Andromache predicted, her words were but tinder for Hermione's rage, and, despite the chorus' plea, the two join in a spirited and vicious interchange of remarks (234-273).¹⁶ Hermione at length goes out, but only after promising Andromache that she has the bait with which to fetch the latter out of Thetis' shrine, and that the deed will be accomplished before Neoptolemus returns from Delphi. Andromache remains seated in the shrine, regretting briefly the evils which women inflict upon humankind.

At the conclusion of this episode we have still progressed but slightly in the plot action. The glimpse of Hermione, for all its interest, has done little to broaden the scope of the play and can be said, in fact, to have slowed down whatever action may be forthcoming. This delay in activating the plot was surely intentional on Euripides' part. It suggests that the purpose of the *Andromache* is something other than simply to tell a tale of conflict and treachery. The incompatibility of the two women, prompted in part by their situations, in part by their personalities, must be included in the

unity of the play. So far, at least, it *is* the unity, and we can easily see how the unifying factor which *appears* to be controlling the drama at present will seem to disappear if the plot diverts from either Andromache or Hermione. Such was Hermann's criticism which, in terms of the action alone, was not unreasonable.¹⁷

4. *First Stasimon* (274-308).

The chorus now sings its first choral interlude, looking further back for a cause behind the Trojan War than did Andromache in her elegiacs.¹⁸ In the first stasimon the beginning is marked by the judgment of Paris "when the son of Maia and Zeus came to Ida with the trio of fair goddesses, decked out for a fatal beauty contest. They washed their glistening bodies in the waters of mountain brooks, and came to Priam's son, each trying to outdo the others in bitterness of rivalry. Aphrodite won with deceitful words, lovely to listen to but bringing with them the cruelty of the sack of the wretched city of the Phrygians. Had the mother of Cassandra only listened when her daughter bade her 'kill this bane of Troy,' then the women of Troy would not be slaves, and you, Andromache, would be a queen. Greece would have been spared ten years of trouble and sorrow. Wives would not be widowed nor fathers bereaved of sons."

The chorus does not censure Hecuba for failing to heed Cassandra: neither would any of them have exposed an infant son at the promptings of a "mad" prophetess, and they know that Hecuba could not have done so. The villains are the gods: Aphrodite is explicitly named as the goddess who with deceitful words brought on the fall of Troy. The stasimon, as regularly, echoes on a divine level the human concerns of the episode which precedes it. The sexual currents in the embroilment between Hermione and Andromache assume their lyric personification in the awesome form of the goddess of love.

For the second time the play has turned momentarily from its own peculiar conflicts to a consideration of the events which went before it. So far all the characters who have appeared in the action, even the handmaid who has gone to find Peleus, are in some manner connected with the Trojan War, and references to that war and to its causes and tragedies have appeared in the dialogues, monologues, and lyric passages from the first lines wherein Andromache mentions having watched Achilles slay her husband.¹⁹ A continuity of

tone is beginning to make itself heard; the shadow of the past war looms. In this stasimon (as frequently) the chorus dwells on "what might have been." If only Paris had been killed as an infant, if only the Trojan elders had listened to Cassandra when she told them to slay the "bane" of Ilium. Then both Troy and Greece would have been spared the grief and misery which has descended upon them. The attitude is one of hopeless acquiescence to a sad truth. Andromache's circumstances are the result of an unswerving series of regrettable incidents. But never is it suggested that these were fortuitous. Always they stem from some primary act which, although it shifts in nature from scene to scene, seems in each instance incapable of producing as much misery as it did.

5. *Second Episode (309-463).*

The sudden arrival of Menelaus, leading in the supposedly hidden child of Andromache and Neoptolemus, steps up the pace of the action. In this episode Andromache is persuaded to leave the shrine and deliver herself into Menelaus' hands. The Spartan resorts to trickery to achieve his end: he promises not to kill her son if she lets herself be taken. But once she has quitted the shrine, he informs her that the boy's fate will be left to Hermione. The structure of the episode is similar to that of the preceding: lengthier speeches followed by a short stichomythia, but the number of speeches is greater, more lines are given to Andromache than to Menelaus, and the scene ends with Andromache's notorious diatribe against the Spartans.

Only by her own confession and by the pronouncements of Hermione has Andromache thus far in the play been shown to be a slave. In her behavior and wits she has been thoroughly aristocratic. Indeed her noble manner is partly the cause of her troubles. The same remains true throughout this scene which leaves her helplessly trapped by ruthless Menelaus. When he arrives with the boy and presents his ultimatum to her, her reaction is not one of despair and supplication, but of disdain and logical argument. She despises Menelaus and speaks of this first: "Oh esteem, esteem! myriads of worthless men have you honored with great careers!" Is this the man who led the troops of Greece and took Troy from Priam, he who now connives with his little girl and enters contests against slave women? "I hold that you are unworthy of Troy, and Troy unworthy of you!"²⁰

Having with these words eliminated the faintest chance of appealing to the man's good nature, Andromache next presents Menelaus with a list of excellent reasons why she should not die. She can come no closer to a plea. Hermione and Menelaus both will carry the pollution of blood guilt. If the boy is slain, Neoptolemus will avenge his death. Hermione will be flung from the land: she will return home, unwanted, and grow gray with age in her father's house. If Andromache is a witch, she should stand trial as one. "That is my opinion about this matter," she concludes. "But there is one part of your thinking that I fear: it was also because of strife over a woman that you destroyed poor Troy!"

As the chorus tells her, she spoke the truth but has said too much. But Andromache does draw an interesting parallel: Menelaus here as at Troy is puffing about imperiously over a matter which should go unnoticed by an important military dignitary. (Again the shadow of the war.) For all his faults of cruelty, Menelaus' greatest weakness may be a systematic susceptibility to the women of his family. His reply to Andromache (366-383) makes no effort to disguise his mission, but only, in the midst of inept platitudes, to justify it. True, he says, it is a small matter. But it has his attention at the moment, and that makes it more important even than capturing Troy (ignoring Andromache's grouping of the two as "female strifes"). Although Andromache has pointed out that Hermione will lose Neoptolemus should anything happen to her or the child, Menelaus implies the opposite: Andromache must die to *secure* the marriage: "A wife may suffer other, lesser calamities, but if she fails with her husband she fails with her life." Further, even though Andromache is not his own slave, he still has an ethical right to kill her, "for with friends, if they are truly friends, nothing is privately retained. Rather, all possessions are jointly shared."

At any rate (the mother is told) either she or her son must die. The contrast of this speech and its pointless generalities with the economically logical rhesis of Andromache is almost too obvious. With his opening lines Menelaus assures us that he is as evil a character as the stage can tolerate. Now we are led to suspect that he will turn out to be, as well as evil, stupid. (A third trait, cowardice, already hinted at by Andromache, will also reveal itself in time.)

Andromache, in a much more agitated speech,²¹ announces her decision, but not before once more abusing Menelaus ("Oh you who do so much for so little reason!") and demonstrating in her own defense that even Neoptolemus is guiltier than she: "It was by

force that I bedded with my master! But now you will kill me, not him who is responsible for this!" Not that logic would make any difference to Menelaus: "You pass over the causes and devote yourself to the consequences."

What then has she to live for, she who witnessed and was victim of the sack of Troy?²² What does the present or future hold for her? Only this child, her son, remains, the "eye of her life."²³ Therefore she is willing to die to save him.

So Andromache leaves the shrine and in Greek fashion commands her son to remember her sacrifice.²⁴ To herself, as a parting thought, she reflects that children are, after all, one's life. A childless man may be comfortable, but his happiness is childless.²⁵ She soon discovers from Menelaus, however, that both her sacrificial gesture and her final philosophy are in vain. His treachery bothers Menelaus not a bit,²⁶ but the reaction on Andromache's part is violent: "Oh you most hateful of mortals in the minds of all men, you who dwell in Sparta, counsellors of treachery, lords of falsehoods, cunning designers of wickedness, thinkers never of wholesome matters but always with crooked thoughts! It's wrong that you should prosper in Greece!" Of what crimes, murder, greed are they not guilty? Always saying one thing but planning another! She curses them!

Because Andromache here speaks to the "dwellers of Sparta" rather than to Menelaus alone or to Hermione and Menelaus, and because we cannot assume (on a rational basis) that she could distinguish Spartans from the rest of the Greeks or would want to, we must respect the commonly held opinion that Euripides is here using his heroine as a mouthpiece.²⁷ This is by no means a difficult assumption, as those who espouse the political motivation behind the *Andromache* remind us: Euripides was an Athenian writing for Athenian audiences at a time when the city was in bitter contest with Sparta. But did he write the play merely in order to insert these few lines plus a similar few by Peleus in the next scene?²⁸ The notion is hard to accept: a stronger motive for the drama's inspiration must still be sought.

Andromache continues: she cares not about death herself. She died on the day that Troy and great Hector fell, Hector who often with his spear turned Menelaus from an ignoble soldier into a cowardly sailor. Now the same "great warrior" turns upon a woman. Let him kill her! she taunts. No flattery will he receive from her dying tongue. She, after all, was once quite as great as he or Hermione: the reversal which befell her at Troy can happen some-

day to them. With these defiant and ominous words²⁹ Andromache and the boy are led away.

In this episode the frequency of references to the war and related events has increased sharply.³⁰ To Andromache, Menelaus is most clearly a despicable symbol of those wretched days; she can scarcely speak to him without contrasting his action here and his action then. Twice she maintains that her life ended in Troy, and twice she implies that the deaths in either case are based on trivial causes. The continuity of tone remains; the shadow of the war is darker. Clearly the audience is invited now to begin speculation. Is it contrast which the drama is unfolding, or similarity? Or something else, as yet undefined but which will draw more and more upon the spectre of the siege and fall of Ilium to make itself intelligible and meaningful?

6. *Second Stasimon* (464-493).

At this point the chorus could sing again with great effectiveness the first stasimon (274-308), answering Andromache's allusions to the Trojan War with their lyric account of the Judgment of Paris and its dismal aftermath. As the text stands they appear to have ignored not only her allusions but indeed the entire scene, for they return to the problem of two wives under one roof. After remarking that it can lead only to trouble and strife, they expand the idea to two rules in one city (Sparta, presumably), next to two poets (in one contest or at one court?), then two helmsmen at one helm. Finally they return to the original consideration and cite Hermione's actions as an example of the kind of strife to which two wives in one house may lead. (Sympathetic to Andromache, they nevertheless have listened only to Hermione, for it is she who charges Andromache with nuptial coexistence. Andromache has taken every opportunity to deny it. But the chorus heeds those whom it fears.) Hermione plans to kill the Trojan woman and her child—a godless, lawless, graceless thing to do. This ill-timed stasimon is the least attractive lyric passage in the play so far, both in style and in thought, and it is highly questionable whether, as Norwood says, it “markedly sums up the situation and forces home the moral.”³¹ It is true that it sums up the utterly mistaken notion that the chorus holds (or held) about the situation, but the only moral which it can be said to force home is that one head in certain instances is better than two, and possibly that murder is neither sound nor smart. Choruses have done better.

7. *Third Episode* (494-765).

Andromache and her son, trussed with ropes, are led back by Menelaus and his henchmen. The cruelty of the situation has produced a change in the mother, who begins a threnody (501-535) with a tone of despair heretofore not found in her speeches: "Now I travel the road that leads below, my two hands bleeding from the rope that binds them tight." The boy joins her in a glyconic song of fear and misery, interrupted only by the promise of death for both of them by the villainous Menelaus.³² We know that Andromache's spirit is nearly broken, for, although she herself does not beg mercy of the evil king, she commands her son to do so, and points out the depths of her own despair.³³ But Menelaus remains, to his own mind firm as a rock, to us stony-hearted and sadistic. He gives help, as he says, only to his own; he can feel no love for this boy "inasmuch, young man, as I used up a fair portion of my life capturing Troy and your mother." To the list of qualities which this remarkable creature displays must now be added insufferable self-conceit: he takes full credit for the Trojan victory. As Blaiklock observes, "Achilles and Agamemnon, after all, were gone."³⁴

Upon this pathetic group at last storms doughty Peleus, indignant and outraged at the scene which he sees before him, and eager to take charge, to set things right. "Lead me faster!" he cries to his attendant. "I see I've a job to do without delay!"³⁵ He turns, ignoring Menelaus, to Andromache for an account of what has happened.

At the sight of him the woman's bearing returns: she gives preface to her explanation with a reproach for his tardiness. "What am I to say to you?" she asks testily. "Not just once did I put out a pressing call for you. I sent many, many messengers!" In other words, "where in the world have you been?" A small but subtle bit of characterization succeeds where countless lines of less effective description would fail in depicting the royal Andromache, a queen of most gifted control and presence, as sure of her friends as she is contemptuous of her enemies. Who but one of this rank and strength would greet a last-minute rescuer from certain death with mild annoyance? Not that Andromache is ungrateful. In the same speech she takes the humble suppliant's position before Peleus and begs his help in her predicament.

Peleus at once gives a terse order for Andromache's release, but Menelaus, as yet unspoken to, speaks up and rescinds it. The two immediately clash. When Peleus is confronted with Menelaus' rea-

son for interfering—"Are not your grandson's possessions mine and mine his?"⁸⁶—he retorts swiftly with the most glaring exception to this (again) ill-timed aphorism: "Yes, to do well by, not evilly; not to seize and murder!"

Menelaus has no further verbal defense to make. He can only refuse to release Andromache. Peleus in fury threatens to trounce him with his staff, whereupon Menelaus—no doubt stepping back—counters his threat with a double dare.

This almost comic scene, the aged lord using his cane as a threat of thrashing to the great Greek general, reduces Menelaus to the lowest possible level of human indignity. At the same time Peleus' stature is not at all disturbed. He is a brave old man confronting a coward in the most expeditious manner known, and king of cowards is what he crowns Helen's husband in the ensuing speech (590-641). "A coward born of cowards are you! What are you doing in the world of men?" He mentions the worthless Helen, whom Menelaus left unchecked in his home as if she were, like other women, a faithful breed of wife. Here Euripides again finds opportunity to lash out at Athens' enemy. He lets Peleus dwell briefly on Spartan women, made wanton by the state's physical training program. "No wonder," he says, returning to the drama, "that Helen went scampering off with a dashing foreigner." Menelaus' great crime, however, at that moment was that he did not say good riddance to Helen, but rather instigated the Trojan War to claim her back. It is because of Menelaus, therefore, that men are dead and parents are bereaved. Peleus himself lost Achilles at Troy. Menelaus as much as murdered him, this coward who alone returned unscathed, his "elegant armor protected in its fancy petticoats."

Peleus adds that he warned Neoptolemus against marrying Hermione and thus affiliating himself with the house of Menelaus. He goes on to enumerate other sins of the shabby general: manipulating the sacrifice of Iphigenia; worst of all, failing to slay Helen when he finally found her. "Instead, when your eye fell on her bosom, you dropped your sword and kissed and petted the faithless bitch! You wretched weakling, your nature is no match for Aphrodite!" Yet Menelaus would come to Neoptolemus' house and murder an innocent woman! Peleus concludes by commanding him and his daughter to leave the premises. "Better a poor but honest man for friend or in-law than one who is rich and evil. As for you, you are nothing!"⁸⁷

It is difficult to imagine a more insulting or violent speech than this from Peleus to Menelaus. The most phlegmatic personality

would be stirred by it, the dumbest would grasp its message. Menelaus ought to be enraged beyond articulation. That he is not is significant of still another facet of his character, the negative nature of which is almost overpowering: he is an utter snob. Scion of a Greek first family, he cannot believe that Peleus, member of a similar line, would ever side against him with a barbarian slave whom in the name of decency he ought long ago to have chased far from the land and beyond the Nile. Accordingly he remonstrates with Peleus, mildly and with a patronizing tone (645-690). "Let's be reasonable. This woman's children might grow up to become rulers—of Greeks!" The thought should horrify Peleus as it does Menelaus.³⁸ When he sees that it does not he sighs: "Ah, you are old, you are old," and proceeds to set the old man straight on the matter of Helen and the debacle at Troy.

"It was the gods," he explains, "who involved my wife in her 'difficulties,'³⁹ but it did turn out well for the Greeks. They discovered war and companionship in battle, from which, you know, 'men learn all things.' Furthermore, it was self-control which kept me from slaying my wife when I found her, which is more than I can say of you when you killed your brother Phocus."⁴⁰ He ends by pointing out the good nature with which he has replied to Peleus and counsels the older man to follow his lead.

But Peleus has not been chastened. Menelaus' remarks on war ring unpleasantly in his ears.⁴¹ In his next speech (693-726) he gives his own opinions on this great "teacher," opinions which for the third time suggest the intrusion of the playwright.⁴² What is war to the Greeks? The rank and file do the work, the generals get the glory. Menelaus and Agamemnon, swollen with pride after Troy, derived their fame from the toil and misery of thousands of others cleverer than they. The democrat's view of an army is quite in tune with this drama wherein vicious leaders vie with talented slaves. As we look back over the characters we note how virtue increases as status wanes. Peleus, in fact, is the first "free" person to display any commendable qualities at all, and he is here, as earlier at 639-641, a benevolent spokesman for the common folk.

He disdains further conversation with Menelaus. After ordering him once again to depart⁴³ and to take his "barren heifer" of a daughter with him, the old king turns his complete attention to Andromache. Fumbling, and with clucks of disgust, he finally unties the poor woman's ropes, while the chorus notes his irascible pertinacity.

Menelaus has stood by in silent defeat, perhaps thinking out a

plan by which he can make a graceful exit. He has no choice but to leave, yet he cannot admit that he has been bettered. He must state explicitly some reason for going if he is to keep face, a reason, that is, other than the true one, Peleus' palpable victory. "It was to oppose violence that I came to Phthia," he begins, speaking to no one, and adding with marvelous pomposity: "and I shall neither commit nor endure any nonsense!" As he speaks, a good excuse comes to mind: he was planning to leave all along. He is a busy general, after all. Why, right at the present time there is—a city, yes, that's it! a city, near Sparta, once friendly but now hostile. It's imperative that he go reduce it at once!⁴⁴ When matters are once again under control at home, however, he will return and confront Neoptolemus himself on this matter. He takes a final stab at Peleus: "You are but an opposing shadow with a voice, powerless to do anything but chatter." This is not only petty and obviously untrue, but not even original, for it echoes Peleus' own succinct estimate of Menelaus at line 641: "As for you, you are nothing!"

Peleus ignores the Spartan's departure and continues to soothe Andromache and her son. In reply to her apprehension he reminds her that he, after all, is in command at Phthia, nor is he as old and helpless as she thinks. If Menelaus has physique to his credit, Peleus has the courage of good intentions. "What help is a strong body to a coward?" he asks pointedly.⁴⁵

Grube says of this boast that it is "clearly false but rather touching." He believes that Menelaus left only because of Peleus' unquestioned superior position as commander of the local armed forces.⁴⁶ But is this the impression which the scene is supposed to leave? Is Peleus really drawn as a pathetic and effete old man who achieves his end not, as he thinks, because he is brave but only because he happens to have the army on his side? Is this not perhaps a pitfall for those who recall the characterizations of Amphytrion in the *Heracles* and of Iolaus in the *Heracleidae*? There is nothing unduly "touching" about Peleus. He stands in such extreme contrast with those who have preceded him on the stage, and his arrival is so welcome, his attitudes so refreshing, that we may tend to "love" him more than he deserves. His virtues are those of courage, determination, and a resolute feeling for justice. They should win our serious respect before our affection, as they won the respect of the chorus.⁴⁷ The episode opened on a woman and her child about to be murdered by an evil, interfering general. It closed with the general in hasty retreat, the woman and child freed from their predicament. One old man accomplished this turn of events with noth-

ing more than bold words, the conviction of wisdom and justice, and a brandished stick. He accomplished it only because he was courageous and the general was a coward.

In this third episode we continue to find numerous references to the war against Troy. Peleus, in his diatribe on Menelaus, turns to the scandal of Helen and Paris. His own close connection with the war is, of course, the death of his son Achilles, and it is with no difficulty that he credits Menelaus with that death (614-615) as well as with the death of many others. Menelaus is the third perpetrator so far cited in the drama: Andromache first specified the Rape of Helen, the chorus examined the Judgment of Paris and the Deceit of Aphrodite. Peleus adds the Uxoriousness of Menelaus.

Again, in his speech against the injustices of glory and honor in military ranks, Peleus turns to the war as he draws a picture of Menelaus and his brother sitting at Troy, "puffed up by the drudging toils of others." As a final threat to Menelaus he snorts: "I'll teach you myself to believe hereafter that Trojan Paris was a lesser foe than Peleus will be, if, damn you, you don't get out of this house at once!"

Thus virtue momentarily has triumphed. The conflict developed in the first scenes of the play has to some degree been resolved. What will happen next? wonders the audience. Menelaus may go through with his threat to return and see the plan of murder to its fulfillment. Where is Hermione? She may have left with her father as Peleus angrily demanded, or she may still be in the palace hatching new plots in her jealous mind. Neoptolemus too has yet to make an appearance. So much is left undeveloped or untold: the play has by no means ended.

8. *Third Stasimon* (766-801).

Peleus has just spoken in defense of the lowly born who achieve greatness by their actions. The chorus, in this song, adopts the opposite attitude: "I would either be unborn or be born of noble parents and sharer of a house exceeding rich."

Various conjectures have been made as to the allusion contained in this strophe. Whom has the chorus in mind? Paley thought that it was Hermione, Ammendola suggested Andromache (as did the scholiast), Méridier the child of Andromache and Neoptolemus.⁴⁸ While it may seem a wasteful expense of energy always to search for a specific allusion, one is tempted nevertheless to add to the list

(and so exhaust the possibilities) the names of Peleus and Menelaus, since in the antistrophe the chorus clearly has Menelaus in mind and the epode is explicitly dedicated to Peleus. To be perfectly correct, the allusion in the strophe is to Peleus alone. The ode is a pure encomium in the recognizable tradition of both Greek poetry and prose. Peleus had earlier (lines 636ff.) described Menelaus as both evil and rich, a bad combination in a man. The chorus now describes the combination of goodness and power in a hero (strophe), demonstrates its potency in contrast to the earlier combination (antistrophe), and finally particularizes (epode). Their opening words do not necessarily contradict the stand taken by Peleus; they are concerned, rather, with the fact that Peleus *is* noble and wellborn, and that to be so carries a practical advantage. Menelaus' actions, both recent and over the large expanse of his career, are summed up by them in a neat observation: "Better to win no dishonorable victory than to trip up justice with power that incurs hatred. True, it is sweet at first, this power, to mortal men, but in time it goes bad and pulls down disgrace upon the house."

For Peleus, on the other hand, whose life has been nobly spent, the glory is immortal, nor has time obliterated the memory of his deeds against the Centaurs, on the Argo,⁴⁹ or with Heracles at Troy. With this ode the play reaches its most heroic proportions. The chorus cannot look ahead to realize the irony of its words, nor should we.

III / The *Andromache* 802-1288

9. *Fourth Episode (802-1008)*

THE comparative tranquility on stage after the end of the choral ode to Peleus is shattered by the entrance of Hermione's nurse who announces that her mistress has gone berserk. Thus precipitously does the next development in the plot begin. Hermione, fearful of Neoptolemus' wrath when he discovers her attempts against Andromache, is at her wit's end until the fortunate and seemingly fortuitous arrival of Orestes gives her hope of escape. The fourth episode ends with all this accomplished, and adds also the information that Neoptolemus, whom it is revealed that Orestes hates mercilessly, is about to be given his "deserts" at Delphi. This long but lively scene provides further insight into the character of Hermione. But the fourth episode, more than any of those preceding, is laden with perplexities, not the least of which is the incomparable Orestes.

We discover first that Menelaus did not follow Peleus' instructions to the letter, for, although he himself is gone, he neglected to take his daughter with him. This failure to do so underlies Hermione's hysterical change of attitude: she is now bereft of protection against Neoptolemus. Why Menelaus left her in such a predicament one can only surmise. He may have been in too great a rush, or he may have felt that she was not worth the trouble (even though he did make the trip, as Andromache told us in the prologue, for the sole purpose of helping his daughter's cause). To be sure, Hermione was not his to take, but this is an ethical point which Menelaus would be more apt to cite as explanation of his actions rather than one on which he would operate. We cannot, however, forget that he has already had a rather wearying experience as a consequence of the removal of another man's wife.

At any rate, from Hermione's viewpoint her father has thrown up her cause, and she now feels (with good reason) very much alone

in the world. The nurse reports that she can scarcely be kept from hanging or stabbing herself, "so greatly does she suffer as she contemplates the evil she has done." In other words, the departure of Hermione's father has led her to reflect on her own deeds and to suffer a change of heart. Such is nurse's interpretation. The chorus, always (it seems) ready to give Hermione benefit of doubt, supposes the same as it announces her approach: "It looks as if the poor thing is going to show us how much she laments her sins. For here she is, fled from the house and her servants' hands, and anxious for death!"¹

There follows a short, agitated scene in which Hermione reveals her agonizing despair, while the nurse intersperses iambic lines of caution and comfort. Even in her frenzy Hermione is sexually oriented. As she rants about the stage, demanding rope to hang by, cliff to jump from, sword to thrust into her breast, her impulse is to throw off her clothes: "αἰᾶν αἰᾶν! Away from my braids and into the air, you shroud of many threads!" Nurse is properly shocked by this and scolds her: "Cover your breasts, young lady! Pull your gown together!"²

The chorus and the nurse, one fears, were not quite correct in their assumption that Hermione's excitement stems from a moral sense of guilt, for she dwells not so much on the evil which she has done (or tried to do) as on the retribution which she is sure will be hers. When the nurse mentions her remorse for the plotted murder of Andromache, she replies: "Yes, I grieve! I'm overwhelmed with sorrow, for I am accursed in the eyes of men!" She means, of course, in the eyes of Neoptolemus. The departure of her father has led her to reflect not so much on her deeds as on her situation. She suffers no appreciable change of heart but rather a critical reversal of fortune. Although nurse assures her that Neoptolemus will be merciful, Hermione has no such faith, nor should she. Andromache had warned Menelaus that her murder would bring about the end of Hermione's marriage. There is no reason to suppose that an attempted murder, no matter how successfully foiled, would meet with less disapproval. Hermione knows this, and she is all the more offended by her father's heartlessness in deserting her, for only with his presence was she safe. "Oh father, you left me!" she cries, "you left me alone on the strand and stripped of my oars! He will kill me! He will surely kill me! I shall dwell no longer here in my nuptial home!"

Nurse, however, is oblivious to the real problem. "You carry on too much, child. Your husband will not push you out. Remember,

you are an aristocrat's daughter with a rich dowry and from a prosperous city"—she feeds back to Hermione the girl's own earlier words of vanity³—"and your word is better than a barbarian slave's." Once more with disapproving clucks she urges Hermione inside.⁴ The nurse, like the chorus so far, does not understand the ramifications of the events. She insists on seeing people as they ought to be, not as evidence has shown that they in fact are. "Your father," she says complacently, "will not abandon you as you fear, my child, nor let you be driven from your home." It makes no difference to nurse that the father is well out of town.

At this point the chorus announces an approaching stranger, and Orestes makes his entrance. Upon their questioning he reveals his name, his parentage, and tells them that he is on his way to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona. It occurred to him to stop off at Phthia and inquire after his cousin Hermione the Spartan. Is she alive and happy?⁵ Hermione's relief pours forth at the sight of Orestes, and she falls to her knees in supplication.⁶ Orestes can scarcely recognize her (overdoing his act as we are soon to discover), but after proper identification he asks the cause of her distress. "Partly my own," Hermione replies, "partly due to the man who owns me, and partly to some god. In all respects I am ruined!"

If a woman has no children, muses Orestes, her problems can center around only one person, her husband. "How perceptive you are!" the girl remarks. Orestes asks if Neoptolemus loves another instead of her, and when Hermione replies sadly that he does, the son of Agamemnon soberly repeats the now familiar remark: "That's not right, one man to have two women." He then draws out of Hermione her actions in the matter, asking if she plotted against her rival "as a woman would."⁷ Hermione affirms her part of the plot, adding that old Peleus, "honoring the cause of the riffraff," thwarted the plan. If there was any doubt about the nature of Hermione's self-recrimination, these lines dispel it. She resents Andromache's alleged complicity no less now than she did in the first episode. Her own "vice" was not the attempted murder of Andromache but rather the exposure of herself to danger. As she tells Orestes (line 920), it is Neoptolemus whom she fears; she makes no mention of other retributive forces. She acted foolishly, and she knows that she will rue her rashness when her husband returns. In her next lines, as she explains away her folly, she dwells incessantly on this female lack of judiciousness.

Norwood says of Hermione's speech that it "spoils the situation. Like most of Euripides' digressions, it is itself forcible, clear, and

well-written, but is utterly out of character. Hermione speaks as an ordinary Athenian wife of the poet's own day, not as a princess of an earlier age."⁸ The charge of anachronism has been leveled already against the *Andromache*: most famous are the invectives against Sparta. In this case, as Norwood remarks, the actor does seem to step out of character to deliver his lines. Andromache's and Peleus' diatribes derived in both instances from well-provoked outrage resulting from the plot development. Hermione, on the other hand, who—both preceding and following these lines—is only a step away from hysteria, suddenly gains sufficient control over her nerves to deliver a coherent and rather prissy lecture to husbands on the proper way to closet a wife. She was led to her mistake, she explains, by "evil women" who stirred her jealousy with "words of Sirens." She even classifies such women by their motives: some corrupt for personal gain, some for companionship in sinfulness, some simply because they are malicious. "So guard your house doors well with bars and locks. For women who wander in do nothing that is healthy for the house, and much that is evil."

It would be pointless to ask who these wicked women are in the dramatic context, or to note by way of objection that Neoptolemus' home is situated apart from the town and that Hermione would have had few unheralded callers of either sex. Nor can one suppose that the handmaids are reviled here (as they are at *Hippolytus* 645ff.) since the nurse has already shown her disapproval of Hermione's schemes, and one presumably does not lock the doors against the house's own servants. This approach is futile, for the wicked women are extra-dramatic. Hermione's mention of them, however, is not. Ever the personification of feminine behavior at its worst, she acts against the ultimate return of Neoptolemus by rehearsing her excuses. She will plead the traditional weaknesses of women. The chorus who know the tradition perhaps better than Hermione give us the clue. She has loosed her tongue too much, they tell her, against this "nature" of woman. This time she will be forgiven, but she must bear in mind that females rightly disguise ("embellish," "adorn") the shortcomings of their sex.

Hermione's earlier hysteria was at least partly contrived, done for the benefit of Neoptolemus who would be sure to hear of it on his return. Her fears are real enough, but her nature—flighty as it may be—is prone to seek means of rescue. Thus she ties two strings to her bow. On the one hand she works on Orestes, her immediate chance for escape; on the other she plans for an eventual meeting with Neoptolemus. The speech does not "spoil the situation" after

all, but illustrates effectively the intuitive talent for survival which women like Hermione possess, a spontaneous ability to extricate themselves, even if they endanger others, with tongues "more savage than serpent or fire."

Orestes now begins to shed his pretences. "His was good advice," he says, "who taught mortals to eavesdrop on their enemies. For, knowing of the confusion in this house and of the quarrel between you and Hector's widow, I stood guard and waited to see whether you would remain here or, in your fear of the slavewoman, should want to get away."

So it develops that Orestes did not happen by after all, but rather that he has been lurking about the palace, waiting for an opportunity to make an effective appearance. "I am here," he continues, "not because you bade me come,⁹ but with the intention of taking you from this house if you gave me pretext, which you do." The pretext in fact has just been indicated: Hermione has chosen to flee. But Orestes now reveals that her choice was a mere convenience: "You see, you once were promised to me and you have been living with Neoptolemus because your father is a coward. Before he ever left to attack the Trojan borders he gave you to me as a wife, but later he promised you to him who owns you now if he would sack the city of Troy."

This then is the real reason for Orestes' presence: Hermione is his! Her own plans are neither here nor there. Her eagerness to flee makes the abduction an easier matter, but it does not alter the nature of Orestes' mission in Phthia.

The nephew of Menelaus continues with his story: "When Neoptolemus returned home I asked him to relinquish his right to you since you had formerly been promised to me. I brought up the misfortunes of my family and myself, and explained that I might wed a woman of a related family but not very easily one from some *other* family, fleeing as I flee in flight from home.¹⁰ But he with wanton insults taunted me with the murder of my mother and the bloody Erinyes who pursue me. And I, humbled by my misfortunes, suffered—oh did I suffer!—but endured it in my misery, and reluctantly went off without you as my wife. So now that you find your fortunes reversed, and are lost in your present predicament, I shall take you home and put you into your father's hands."

Hermione has no time for such matters as family promises. She sees in Orestes only a means of removal from Neoptolemus' house, and she urges him to hurry lest her husband or Peleus anticipate their departure. Verrall reads into Hermione's reply a loathing to

unite with Orestes; actually she wants to postpone all discussion until the much more pressing business of escape has been accomplished.¹¹ At best her comment is coy: "My marriage will be my father's concern. It's not for me to decide such things."

But Orestes has not finished. His most chilling speech is yet to come. He comforts the girl and tells her to fear neither Peleus nor Neoptolemus. Neoptolemus is about to fall into a trap of death for his insult to Orestes. "I, the matricide Orestes, if my spear-friends at Delphi abide by their oaths, will show that no one marries a woman who is rightfully mine!" Then, shifting abruptly, Orestes states that it is because of Apollo's anger that Neoptolemus will die: "With bitter success will he demand satisfaction of Phoebus Apollo for his father's death! Not even a change of heart shall help him, if now he is offering the god propitiation." Once more Orestes reverts to his own hatred and schemes: "Rather, in consequence of Apollo and of charges spread by me, he shall evilly die and know my enmity!" Finally he returns again to Apollo: "For the god topples the fortunes of his mortal enemies nor tolerates their presumptions!"

The fate of Neoptolemus is to be a combined result of the mortal revenge of Orestes and the divine wrath of Apollo. What, as the chorus soon asks (line 1036), are we to believe? Orestes has obviously concocted a plan by which Neoptolemus will be (or has been) murdered at Delphi. The plan is on a large scale, involving slander and the help of Orestes' "friends of the spear." This is a case of sheer murder which could take place anywhere. Need we ask then why Orestes implicates the god? He is not trying to pass the blame for the slaying, for with every second breath he credits himself with all the machinery of the plot. He believes, quite obviously, that he is fulfilling the god's wish by killing the son of Achilles. He is acting as an agent of Apollo, a self-styled agent who looks upon Neoptolemus' death as a simultaneous double-slaying by god and man.

Those who dismiss the characters of the *Andromache* as either two-dimensional purveyors of Spartan wickedness or their over-innocent victims fail to explain by such treatment this appearance of Orestes.¹² His part is small, true, but his behavior is startling: he leaves the chorus in a state of shocked confusion from which they will not again recover. The motivation behind his words and actions is nothing short of puzzling, both to the chorus and to us.

Orestes comes on stage with a distinctive legendary history. Unless the poet expressly alters the legend of a character (as Euripides

does that of Hermione's mother when he makes use of Stesichorus' palinode in the *Helen*) we may take into account at least the larger areas of the story when we try to define a characterization. Orestes, then, is a young man who some time ago sought out his mother Clytemnestra and killed her along with her lover Aegisthus in revenge for her murder of his father Agamemnon. He has been severely punished ever since by the Erinyes, the pursuing Furies who attend those accursed with blood-guilt. His days have been spent in visitations to oracles to seek means whereby he can be absolved of his guilt and thus rid of the Erinyes (885-886). He is an exile, despised and unwanted by all with whom he comes in contact. His existence, in the mildest of terms, is unpleasant. Moreover, it is relentlessly harried, for the Furies keep their victims restless and constantly on the move (976-978). Orestes has no time for the people and things of the world; he is a haunted outcast totally absorbed in his own misery.

In the *Andromache*, however, Orestes is found with an entirely different if no less besetting preoccupation. We are told that, in the midst of all his troubles and while traipsing over Hellas pursuing and pursued, he suddenly remembered that he had never married, and so set about to find his promised bride. Upon discovering that she had been promised anew to another man, he sought out that man (Furies in tow) to ask him to relinquish her. We are next told that Orestes, already a social outcast and stigmatized by a most dangerous curse, took especial umbrage at the retorts of Neoptolemus to his unreasonable demand, and resolved then and there to see him killed and to take Hermione for himself. In order to effect this, however, instead of killing Neoptolemus on the spot and then boldly abducting his widow, he devised a highly elaborate touch-and-go plan whereby Neoptolemus would be slain by the Delphians while at Delphi as the result of scandalous lies which Orestes would spread about him. Meanwhile Orestes hurried on to Phthia where he waited in hiding near the palace for the proper moment to descend on it and carry off Hermione. All this, instead of (or in addition to) his traditional role as the wandering, half-crazed murderer of his own mother. Can this be the Orestes of legend?

The answer is affirmative, but the curse upon Orestes is here presented in a novel form. This is not the Aeschylean or the Sophoclean pathetic hero: this is a "realist's" Orestes, a matricide pursued by the torments of his own twisted mind. Orestes is neurotically disposed, perhaps even more than that. We need not know Neoptolemus' exact words to him on the day of their encounter:

Orestes' reaction to those words is proof enough of his mental state. His desire for revenge, its complicated execution, his feeling of injury at the hands of Menelaus and Neoptolemus, and his refusal to understand why Hermione cannot be his—all these constitute a syndrome of acute persecution. So do his wandering explanations betray this, and so particularly does his initial shyness in a situation. Just as he crouched behind a rock in the *Electra*, so did he move into this scene with caution and protective falsehoods, keeping open, as it were, a path of escape in case he felt unable to carry out his plan.

Orestes' identification with Apollo is not surprising nor unusual, but again his lack of balance is vividly brought out. To the Greek mind no act (either good or evil) was purely humanly determined. As the evilness of human actions increases in this play, as irrationality grows, the question is raised: what god?¹³ The god, of course, is Apollo. Because of him Neoptolemus is at Delphi and Orestes is in Phthia. Orestes' personal revenge against Neoptolemus is coupled (not only in his mind but in that of the Greek audience) with the divine revenge of Apollo. In this respect the shifts of Orestes back and forth between his own plans and Apollo's anger are perfectly reasonable. His weird state of mind is revealed by his belief in the justice of his cause and in his presumption that the god will be champion of that cause.

Euripides brought the ancient legendary madness up to date. He depicted a man already guilty of two murders for which he suffers now announcing with great enthusiasm the details of his third. Notice how this enthusiasm expresses itself. He gloats that he is about to have his revenge on the man who called him names! "With wanton insults he taunted me with the murder of my mother and the bloody Erinyes who pursue me!" Such in effect is Orestes' courtship speech, his proposal to Hermione. The girl rightly takes little notice of it, but Orestes leads her away all the same. A procession which, had Euripides held control of the legend, would certainly have resulted in one of the most disastrous unions in the mythical world.

10. *Fourth Stasimon* (1009-1046).

The chorus remained all but silent throughout the fourth episode. They had no reply to make to Hermione's outbursts; they neither joined nor rebuked her. Aside from a brief exchange with

Orestes, their function was to stand aside and listen, to watch the scene develop. In this stasimon they show how much more sensitive they have grown to the progression of the action. The drama in the course of their observation has suddenly disintegrated under the threat of imminent chaos. The domestic imbroilments of the earlier scenes, distressing but within their range of comprehension, seem to have become hideously solved by the introduction of forces more inexplicably evil than they ever imagined. Orestes, of all people (from another chapter of the story!), has come to "save" Hermione, while she, with a mercurial about-face, has run away with him as if Neoptolemus were suddenly the last person on her mind. Andromache and her son are somewhere inside, anxiously awaiting the return of Neoptolemus. But Orestes has just said that Apollo has doomed the Phthian prince. The deaths seem fated to go on and on. Once more the chorus' mind moves from the immediate to the general: this must all be part of "Troy." What is it? What has happened?

"Phoebus, you who strengthened with towers the hill of Ilium, and Poseidon, you who drive across the sea with wave-splashed horses, why did you give over to spear-inciting Enyalios the work of your laborers' hands, unrewarded and to be dishonored, and abandon wretched, hapless Troy? Many were the fine horses you yoked to cars on the banks of Simois, and many the fierce contests of men you set—bloody and crownless. Dead and gone far away are the Iliad kings, nor any more does altar fire in Troy glisten for the gods nor send up fragrant smoke."

Are the gods to blame? Did Apollo (with Poseidon) spell out the end of Troy when they became angered over the wages for building the city's walls? And if so, why? In this line of thought the chorus considers Troy. Her games became fatal battles, all her kings are dead, and her altars are cold. The city is without celebration, without leaders, without religion and gods. How could it be more extinct?

But Greece too has suffered. "Atreus' son is also gone, by his wife's hand, and she too exchanged murder for death and was killed by her son. Him the oracular call of the god—yes, the god!—visited when then, coming from Argos, this son of Agamemnon entered among the sanctuary's unapproachable wealth, this murderer of his mother!— Oh god! Oh Phoebus! how am I to believe?" The great leader Agamemnon is dead, killed not by a Trojan but by his own Greek wife. She in turn was slain by her own son at Apollo's bidding. Now this son Orestes has come to Phthia, again

(or so he says) in cooperation with Apollo, bringing more havoc, more death. Can it be true, the chorus asks, that Apollo is the cause of it all, forsaking Troy on the one hand and through his oracle cutting down the family of Agamemnon on the other?

They leave the question unanswered. The chorus does not condemn the god. But between the lines of the last antistrophe we see the direction in which their thoughts turn, a dangerous and blasphemous direction. In their final description of the ruined and ruinous years of the Trojan War they adopt a metaphor not before used in the ode: "And many women in the market places of the Greeks chanted wailing lamentations for their dead sons, and wives left their homes for other bedmates. Not on you alone, nor on those dear to you alone, has this malignant anguish fallen.¹⁴ A disease, a plague did Hellas endure, and its cloud crossed over to Troy, to the fertile Phrygian fields, dripping the gore of death."

Here the background motif of the Trojan legend, which has increased almost like an ominous drum beat throughout the play up through the fourth episode, reaches its fullest expression. A plague gripped Hellas, the chorus sings, and it went as a cloud across to the rich cornlands of the Trojans, dripping (raining) the blood-drops of death. Such a cloud, a mingling of storm, pestilence, and lightning, could have been sent by only one god: the greatest god of all, the weather god, Apollo's thundering father.

The quarrel within the house of Neoptolemus seems now of a sudden to be but a manifestation of the havoc created by the war at Troy. Andromache is a slave because of it, Hermione is Neoptolemus' wife because of it, and Orestes comes seeking her of whom, because of Troy, he was maritally deprived.

11. Fifth Episode (1047-1069).

This is a brief transitional scene which serves to bring Peleus once more on the stage, and during which there is a recapitulation of the events of the fourth episode.¹⁵ Peleus says to the chorus that he has received a report to the effect that Hermione has left, and would they please verify it. They tell him the circumstances by which she left, and add that Orestes plans to arrange the death of Neoptolemus. Peleus, as yet not too disturbed by this news (why should valiant Neoptolemus fear Orestes?), asks: "Does he plan an ambush or will they meet in open combat?" But when the chorus replies that the murder will take place with Delphian help in Apol-

lo's sacred precinct, the old man becomes suddenly alarmed and fearful: "This is dreadful! Hurry and tell our people at Delphi what has happened here, before Achilles' son dies at the hands of enemies!" In the back of everyone's mind is the thought that Neoptolemus will not succeed in appeasing Apollo. Peleus' order cannot be executed, however, for at that moment a messenger arrives from Delphi with the news of the young man's death. Upon his heels comes the corpse itself, brought to Peleus for lamentation.

As was noted in the first chapter, some scholars—particularly the "rationalists"—have pointed out with strong disapproval that the chronology of this section of the play is wrong. In lines 993-1009 Orestes speaks of the murder of Neoptolemus as taking place in the future. Minutes later the messenger arrives and tells of the murder already accomplished, adding that Orestes was one of the slayers (1075 and 1115f.). "Now the play," writes Verrall, "assumes as an essential condition, what Euripides and every one else knew for a fact, that Delphi is far away, a long journey. Neoptolemus there is utterly out of reach. The visitors from Pharsalus, on arriving there, spend three days before approaching their business in indulging their curiosity with a view of the strange place. The journey was in truth about sixty miles, most of it through mountain ranges."¹⁰

Against those who insist on unity of time, or at least a consistent sequence of events, a play like the *Andromache* has no defense. The chronological problem cannot easily be erased by emendation or excision. If we are to avoid the time lapse, we must assume either (1) that Orestes in his words to Hermione uses the future tense for emphatic or other reasons, and has in fact already come from the murder of Neoptolemus; or (2) that the messenger was incorrect in reporting Orestes among the slayers at Delphi. The first choice is not only unsupportable but completely unimaginable. Even conceding that we are dealing with the worst sort of blackguard, there is still no reason why Orestes would not have told Hermione outright that Neoptolemus was dead if in fact he was. To do so would have given the girl still more assurance of her personal safety, and would have added immeasurably to Orestes' vaunts of righteous revenge. Nor was there anything to gain in terms of self-protection by such a shift in the tenses. Peleus would have apprehended Orestes no less speedily for an intended murder as for one already accomplished.

The second possibility, although it is dramatically attractive, is discouraged by the text of the play. The messenger twice refers to

Orestes as present at the scene of the crime. One of these references (line 1075), since it is missing from three manuscripts (including the Marcianus), can be called suspect, but the other (lines 1115f.) is indestructibly sound. Orestes himself (in lines 999-1001) strongly implies that the slaying itself is to be done by his "friends of the spear,"¹⁷ and that his own role in the plot was limited to the scandal-mongering of which he was so proud. Who exactly these friends were is not clear, but there are a number of versions of the story of Neoptolemus' death which exonerate Orestes at least from direct complicity in the slaying.¹⁸ Indeed, Pausanias in one passage states that Pylades, Orestes' close friend and brother-in-law, not only plotted the murder but did so for reasons of his own: to avenge Peleus' slaying of Pylades' own ancestor Phocus.¹⁹ But the messenger's lines remain, and nothing short of deliberate mutilation of the text can remove Orestes from Delphi at the time of the murder as this play narrates it.

Therefore, unless someone is willing to entertain the notion that Euripides put false information in his messenger's mouth, we must assume a time lapse of considerable extent between the departure of Orestes and the present scene. It may be that the play suffers because of this lapse, but to the writer's mind the damage is slight, certainly no greater than that inflicted by the time lapse in the *Bacchae* (lines 977-1023) or by that in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (lines 351-500). Euripides has arranged events on stage in an incontrovertible sequence. It matters little in what sequence the off-stage events take place, for they assume their position in the "reality" of the play only when they are reported on stage. One cannot deny that it would work toward the salubrity of a modern revival of the *Andromache* if after the fourth stasimon a page were to amble across stage with a sign reading "Several Days Later," but such an innovation would have struck Euripides as not only unnecessary but insulting to his audience. As has been written of the similar lapse in the *Agamemnon*, "this lack of realism is to be regarded not as a peculiar fault in the structure of the play, but as an extreme example of an indifference to chronological probability characteristic of Tragedy."²⁰

12. *Exode* (1070-1288).

The remainder of the play gives dramatic reality to the brutal slaying of Neoptolemus and its leveling effect on the stalwart hero Peleus. After Peleus recovers partially from the original shock, the

messenger, a member of the party which accompanied Neoptolemus to Delphi, tells in graphic detail the story of the murder.

When they arrived in Delphi they spent three days sight-seeing, a pastime which drew the attention of the Delphians (line 1088). Meanwhile Orestes went furtively from group to group planting the notion that Neoptolemus was back in Delphi to plunder the temple of Apollo. The city fathers, alarmed by such an idea, took measures to increase the treasury guard. The Phthian party, ignorant of any subterfuge, proceeded in due time to the altar of the temple, taking sheep from Parnassus to sacrifice.

There someone asked Neoptolemus why he approached. To make amends to Apollo, he replied, to rectify the error of his earlier visit. But by that time the scandal which Orestes had spread through the town had taken effect, so that no one believed the hero. As he began to offer the sacrifice, a band of armed men lurking in the laurels leaped out and attacked him. Not seriously wounded, Neoptolemus jumped back and grabbed a weapon hanging on the temple wall. With this in hand he faced his attackers and shouted: "Why do you try to slay me, whose pilgrimage is sacred? What is the charge that dictates my destruction?"

The crowd answered him with showers of stones. He did his best to protect himself, but to no avail, for weapons followed the stones and rained upon him. Neoptolemus danced like a warrior before battle as he jumped about dodging the missiles. Finally, as the others closed in on him he jumped from the altar, leaping the famous Trojan leap, and rushed his opponents who turned and fled literally as doves from a hawk.²¹ Many were killed, either by Neoptolemus or by each other's feet as they tried to squeeze out through the narrow entrance, causing a terrible noise in the usually peaceful precinct.

Then, suddenly, it turned strangely quiet. "As in the lull of a storm," reports the messenger, "my master stood there, glistening in his brilliant armor, till someone from the inner sanctuary uttered a strange and chilling cry. That sound restirred the mob and turned them back to the fray." Achilles' son fell to the ground, stabbed in the side by a Delphian. Lying on the earth he was hit still more, stabbed and mutilated by the crowd until his noble body was unrecognizable. They then threw the corpse from the shrine.

As messengers will, this one moralizes briefly at the end of his account: "Thus the god who grants us prophecy, who decides justice for all men, this god has taken revenge on the son of Achilles. Like some craven mortal he never forgot an ancient grudge. How is this

a wise god?"²² These remarks might annoy us, coming as they do from one who is fully aware that Orestes instigated the murder, were it not for the ominous voice from the inner temple which he mentions in his account. As one who believes in the god and the divine nature of the oracle, the messenger has no reason to doubt the authenticity of that voice, to suspect that it came from anyone but Apollo.²³ The double nature of the slaying is no more incredible to the messenger than it was to Orestes. But Euripides makes the Olympian side of the murder vague and mysterious. The audience is free to think as it pleases. Such is the privilege in well-turned tales of the supernatural.

The chorus now announces the arrival of the litter containing the body of Neoptolemus, borne by his attendants. In a short anapaestic system they express their sorrow and their sympathy for Peleus, and so lead into the *kommos* (1173-1225).

The formal lament, consisting of a double strophic system, is sung by Peleus and the chorus, the latter interpreting or modifying the complaints of the former. Peleus' first thought is for the line of Aeacus. With the death of Neoptolemus as he thinks, the house is extinct. If only the δαίμων had slain the younger man at Troy, by the banks of Simois!

Had Neoptolemus died at Troy the house would be no less extinct, but at least, as the chorus observes, he would have died in honor and Peleus' life would be happier. Peleus then laments the marriage of Neoptolemus and Hermione which has played such a large part in the tragedy of his grandson. Finally he speaks regretfully of the young man's reckless dealings with Apollo. In the second system the same sentiments are largely repeated, with the added comment from the chorus: "The god has decreed this, the god has ordained your plight." Peleus is alone, in misery, mistreated by the god, with nothing left to live for. "Oh my city," he wails, "I am no more! Let the septre be gone from my hand! And you, Nereus' child in your night-dark cave, shall see me fall in utter ruin."

The mention of the *dea* is well timed, for at that moment the chorus announces her approach. "What is that movement? Do I see something divine? It is some god wafted over the white air who comes now to settle on the steed-nurturing plains of Phthia."²⁴ Thetis wastes no time getting to the matters at hand. She first tells Peleus to bear his grief more lightly. His bereavement is not unique: she, a goddess, lost the great Achilles. Next, she gives instructions for the burial of Neoptolemus. He is to be interred at Delphi, "that his tomb may publish his violent murder by the hand of Orestes."

The captive Andromache and her son are to join Helenus in Molossia where she will marry her former brother-in-law and the boy will keep alive the families of both his mother and his father by founding a line of Molossian kings.²⁵ Peleus will become a god and together with Thetis will live for all time in the home of Nereus. He will rise "with dry feet" from the sea to behold their son Achilles dwelling in his home at Leuce in the Euxine.²⁶ "You must carry out those things which are fated," she tells him. "That is the plan of Zeus."²⁷ Death, she concludes, must be endured. The gods order it for all men. Therefore he must cease to mourn Neoptolemus.

Peleus compliments Thetis on her timely appearance, and promises to do her bidding. When she has gone, he comments briefly on the wisdom of good marriages (mindful of his own?) and the contrasting folly, of bad ones even when the dowry is great.

The chorus concludes the play with a familiar clausula: "Many are the forms of the gods, and many strange things do they decide: the expected does not come to pass whereas the god finds a way for that which is unlikely. So has this affair turned out."²⁸

So too, if we are to entrust the resolution of the *Andromache* to the *dea ex machina*, have all the conflicts been tidily disposed of, and we may leave the theatre content that there is no prolonged raveling of the fabric.²⁹ To be sure, Hermione's future with Orestes is not foretold, but for that matter all the "villains" of the *Andromache* are given rather unsettled exits.³⁰ We must trust to legends in their cases, just as Thetis obliges the legends in her disposition of Andromache and the boy. Only one character is thoroughly ill-treated from beginning to end: that is Neoptolemus, who appears on stage only after he has been slain. Thetis accepts his death as final, even though the murder was a crime for which Orestes must take the blame. He seems to be the play's most pitiful victim, but we learned so little about him that we are at a loss to know whether to mourn his death as did Peleus or simply to shake our heads in a sympathy which falls somewhat short of understanding.

IV / The *Andromache* and Dramatic Unity

LOOKING back now to the survey in Chapter I of the fortunes of the *Andromache* at the hands of its critics, one is obliged to charge the first group, those who read into it only anti-Spartan propaganda, with a premature disposal of the play's potentialities. We have seen, first of all, that the outspoken references to Sparta are but two in number: Andromache's angry outburst at Menelaus and Peleus' indignant remarks about the immodesty of Spartan women. Both cases are anachronistic, and both must refer to the time of the Peloponnesian War. It is also true that, of the drama's three "evil" characters, two are Spartan and the third is a blood relative. Menelaus, as so many have pointed out, is the blackest of Euripides' characters. Critics not surprisingly have reasoned that he was chosen for this heinous role because he was Spartan. Equally reasonable, however, is the thought that the anti-Spartan speeches were prompted by the presence of Menelaus; that he, in other words, motivated the propaganda rather than that the propaganda demanded his presence.

But the scope and complexities of the play are far beyond those of a political pamphlet. Except for Menelaus' treatment of Andromache and her son, nothing in the plot lends itself gracefully to such a theme. The most pathetic action of the play, that of the return of the murdered Neoptolemus to Peleus, is the outcome of entirely different motifs: those of Orestes and of Apollo. Nor are the Spartan "villains" punished in this play, and punishment would have been the least which the audience might have expected if the Andromache's purpose was to vilify the enemy. Neither has the chorus anything to say on the subject of Sparta, nor has the prologue nor the *dea ex machina*. The Spartan character delineations themselves embody more than sheer vilification. Hermione, although a jealous person, is not merely wicked, or, if she is, we are not permitted to decide, for she is thrust into predicaments which

would tax the virtues of any woman. Menelaus, to be sure, is given every opportunity to display what good qualities he might possess. That he has none to display indicates an intention to paint him black, but his evil character has so many sides and makes him so fascinating that whenever he appears on stage he nearly steals the scene. Andromache once labels his character typically Spartan; more often both she and Peleus draw analogies between his present mode of action in the *Andromache* and his past action in the Trojan War.¹ Orestes is unstable. His villainy is an outgrowth of his mental condition. This again points not forward in time to fifth century politics but backward to events connected with the early legends.

So in each instance the Spartan element is incidental to the primary interests of the drama. If all the lines mentioning Spartan improbity were excised, it would still be the same basic play. (Admittedly it would read better than it does, except perhaps for Andromache's admirable harangue.) But we cannot remove these references, nor should we want to. If they do not contribute to the play's integrity, they do at least belong to Euripides, whom it is not our object to refashion to our own satisfaction. Since he did not write "contemporary" plays, his contemporary references had to be anachronistic and therefore outside the unity of the drama.

Just as the political overtones cannot be overlooked, neither can the contrasts and balances in which the second critical group sought the structural and thematic unity of the *Andromache*. But once again they have no valid connection with the dramatic unity of the play. They exist, rather, *within* the drama, within the unity (whatever it may be), adding their share to the depth of the plot and characterization. One is invited from the beginning to pair the characters: Andromache and Hermione, Peleus and Menelaus, perhaps even Orestes and Neoptolemus, Thetis and Apollo. In each instance the first member of the pair heightens the personality of the other, while the second reciprocates in the other direction. Andromache is all the more royal and controlled as the slave of the volatile queen Hermione; at the same time Hermione is more reckless and hysterical when compared with the dignified Andromache. Old Peleus perfectly sharpens the image of cowardly Menelaus while the Spartan's bullying swagger effectively illuminates Peleus' admirable courage. Neoptolemus is described as a forthright and courageous young man in contrast to the furtive Orestes. Thetis' purpose is to bring peace to troubled mortals; Apollo seems determined to wreck their lives. Similarly the balancing effect adds dimension to the plot, or at least to the scenes. The episode in which Andromache

is about to be led to a cruel and unjust death at the hands of the temporarily powerful Menelaus is well balanced by the scene in which she is saved by the aged Peleus. The old man risks his safety to protect a barbarian slave, whereas Menelaus at the first sign of danger deserts his own aristocratic daughter just when she needs him most.

But the idea of balance cannot be carried too far. What, for example, has happened earlier in the play to which the murder of Neoptolemus may be called the balancing action? It is not retribution for Peleus, for his only act was to save Andromache, not to offend either Orestes or Apollo. The scene follows other scenes and even "devolves" from previous action, but it does not serve to balance. Both the detractors and the defenders of the *Andromache* frequently refer to the play's "two halves," the former to show the lack of unity, the latter to suggest the two poles of contrast or the two areas which balance each other. For neither purpose do any such halves exist, as the preceding discussion tried to indicate by dividing the play at the end of Chapter II at line 801 where the so-called break is customarily located. Neither in length nor in number of scenes or lines is there any symmetry between the two parts, least of all in the action. Much more to the point is to argue that the plot shifts direction after line 801: that is a critical observation with which we must reckon. But it is futile to divide the play arbitrarily into two parts (after *any* scene) in hope of showing that the two parts complement each other from the viewpoint of either balance or contrast. The contrasts are on a much more minimized scale; the halves do not exist.

The structure of the *Andromache* is of a type which would make such balance difficult. The play is episodic: that is, the scenes do not follow each other with any necessity of time continuity. Because of the stasima all Greek tragedies separate into a series of episodes. But they are not all episodic, or better, they do not all *appear* to be episodic. Some seem simply to stop the action for the choral interlude and then pick up at once where they had left off. Although it is more than probable that a strict observance of a time unity is found nowhere in Greek tragedy—that it was, as has been said, a note of realism to which the tragedians were utterly indifferent—still there are those tragedies which by accident of plot (not to be confused with a structural need for continuity) seem to be unified. This is not the case in the *Andromache*. The scenes here, with one exception, are separate unities between which any reasonable amount of time may be imagined to lapse *so far as the demands of*

any one scene extend over into the scene which follows it. There is no reason, for instance, why Hermione might not have come to the shrine for her scene with Andromache an hour or so after the prologue (or why she might not have come immediately). Menelaus' arrival with the boy could have occurred later in the day. Unless we prefer to believe that Menelaus led Andromache and her son off the stage at the end of the second episode only to turn around and conduct them back on three minutes later, we must assume a time lapse during the second stasimon. Similarly, unless the third stasimon also represents a time lag, Hermione had the better part of four minutes not only to hear of her father's sudden departure but to react to it by means of several different attempts at suicide. The noticeable lapse after the fourth stasimon was discussed in Chapter III. Only between the fifth episode and the exode is there direct continuity: Peleus ends the episode with instructions to warn Neoptolemus at Delphi; the exode begins with the arrival of the messenger who reveals that Peleus' orders were given in vain. There is no choral lyric to break the continuity, and so it is observed.

No attempt should be made to reckon the exact amount of time which transpires during each choral interlude. The play is not based on any such attention to realism. One need only notice that the scenes are not interdependent on the understanding of a time continuity. They are separate episodes, and for that reason the play may be called episodic.

An episodic framework immediately suggests lack of unity, and in that respect it does pose problems for the dramatist. The problems, however, are not insurmountable. The writer can achieve unity (1) by grouping his episodes under a common theme which ties them thus indirectly to each other, or (2) by making the action of one scene motivate that of the next which in turn motivates the third, and so on to the end. Frequently, as in the *Andromache*, both methods are used. The common theme (another term for dramatic unity) is the ultimate goal of this study; for the present the second, or structural, method will be considered.

The structure of the *Andromache* is based on the principle that each scene, starting with the prologue, ends with a conflict which will be either complicated or resolved in the ensuing scene. When it is resolved, a new conflict takes its place. In this manner each scene motivates the next.² The prologue states the initial conflict: Hermione with the help of Menelaus has endangered the life of Andromache and her son to such a degree that Andromache has hidden the boy and for her own protection has sought safety in the shrine

of Thetis, waiting for either Peleus or Neoptolemus to rescue her. She sends a fellow-slave to find Peleus. The conflict is heightened in the first episode by the battle of words between Hermione and Andromache, and is complicated by Hermione's threats as she leaves the stage.³ Much more complication is added by the entrance of Menelaus with Andromache's son in the second episode. Andromache's decision to sacrifice her own life for the boy's safety seems to verge on a resolution which fortunately (as events develop) is checked by the discovery of Menelaus' deception. At the episode's conclusion both mother and son are scheduled for immediate execution. They are saved in the third episode by the heroic acts of Peleus, so that a tentative resolution of the initial conflict is achieved. Andromache's ultimate fate, however, is left in the balance, as is that of Hermione.

For now a new conflict is created: when Menelaus retires from Phthia he leaves his daughter alone in an unfriendly house waiting for her husband to return and punish her for her attempted murder. The fourth episode leaves no doubt that this is a genuine complication, for we are allowed the questionable privilege of watching Hermione in her throes of frenzy. Orestes arrives, fortunately or unfortunately, to solve the problem by taking her away with him. As he leaves he throws out to the audience the next involvement: the plot against Neoptolemus at Delphi. The fifth episode and the exode resolve the problem in the following manner: Peleus is brought back on stage to connect the off-stage events with the on-stage drama. As Neoptolemus' grandfather and co-representative of the line, it will be primarily his loss and to his great sorrow that Neoptolemus is killed. (No mention is made of Andromache's situation, but she has earlier expressed apprehension regarding Peleus' ability to protect her.)⁴ The news of Neoptolemus' death, therefore, is a resolution but an unhappy one, for it not only leaves Peleus bereaved and weakened by the loss of his grandson but is further a gross miscarriage of justice against the only hero of the play. In effect it ends the drama, a raw and desolate finish. Euripides, however, adds still another—a magical—resolution and so introduces Thetis, the *dea ex machina*. This kind goddess settles the remaining problems by sending Andromache to live with Helenus and by taking Peleus with her as her consort-divine. The mortal line of Pelus is to be continued through Neoptolemus' and Andromache's child, who will found a dynasty.⁵

Such are the links between the episodes. They show that the apparent lack of unity is due not to any break in the action but rather

to two abrupt shifts in the plot's direction. From the Andromache-Hermione-Neoptolemus complex the play moves suddenly (and completely) to Hermione, then just as suddenly to Neoptolemus. The Neoptolemus episode is foreshadowed from the very beginning of the play, while Hermione's scene is a natural development of the plot, except for the surprise appearance of Orestes. This player's entrance, although important and exciting, is probably the *Andromache's* most noticeable structural weakness, for just as we have transferred our interest from Andromache to Hermione, Orestes arrives and forces us to even more readjustments of concentration. In other words, the value of the surprise motif is somewhat offset by the confusion which attends it. Orestes undoubtedly is supposed to add confusion, to encourage the audience to realize that they are watching episodes, but the scenes leading up to his entrance have been all in one direction. Had Orestes peeked out from behind the bushes in the first or second episode—even had he added nothing to the plot—the shift in the fourth episode would bother us less.⁶ The surprise element would not have been lessened but merely introduced sooner and at a more propitious time, and the play would have seemed to stray less from its path.

For there is a path which the *Andromache* follows. If it cannot be said to cleave to a straight line from beginning to end, neither can it be charged with aimless meandering. The path, if one pursues it through the speech of Thetis to the end, can be described as circular. A ring-form is noted in the prologue of the play: the theme upon which Andromache starts the scene—the misfortunes which had fallen to her since the siege of Troy—is also the subject of the elegiacs which close the prologue. Between them are the first developments of action and of characterization. The same *Ringkomposition* embraces no less noticeably the entire play, and strengthens its structural unity.⁷ At the beginning we are occupied with the plight of Andromache as well as, to a lesser degree, with that of her son. The plot then moves away from Andromache as each of the other characters has his moment on the stage. At the end, however, Thetis brings us back to Andromache and the boy by prophesying their future. Thus all which takes place between the first and last speeches is framed by the "fortunes" of Andromache, encompassed in a single thematic structure. The cycle, to be sure, is imperfect, but, as Kitto says, drama is not landscape gardening.⁸ The point to be noticed by observing this rough rondo form is that the play has a definite structural integrity. The ending is related, not alien, to the beginning.

To judge from the negative criticism which the *Andromache* has received so regularly, one gathers that the episodic structure, even when it is recognized as such, is not universally accepted as a commendable dramatic form. But it is common enough in most areas of drama, and is the only solution for certain problems of presentation. How, for example, can a playwright put on the stage the story of a man the dramatic situation of which lies in a gradual change of the hero's character or fortunes, a change, say, which takes a longer time than the two hours in which the play must be presented? He has two choices. He can resort to "ritual" scenes wherein the reality of time is momentarily set aside to allow the events of a normally longer period to be compressed into one scene. Thus, in *Othello* the hero changes from a noble, wife-trusting gentleman to a suspicious, jealous, cuckold at the hands of Iago in the relatively few minutes of Act III, Scene 3. In the rest of the tragedy the lapse of time may be accepted as normal. Or the playwright can portray the story of his man in contained episodes, setting before the audience only a few moments from the total span, but choosing those moments which most effectively dramatize the whole life. *Macbeth* is typically episodic, as are two successful modern plays: in *Streetcar Named Desire* several months of the heroine's sorry life are covered, while the episodes in *Death of a Salesman* range over an adult lifetime.

But the episodic type of structure is even more essential when the playwright is concentrating on more than one character. Here he is almost forced to use episodes, often well-defined episodes, in order to avoid bedlam on the stage. Double or multiple plots, for instance, such as are found in Roman and late Greek comedy and in Shakespeare (e.g. *Midsummer Night's Dream*) must be cast into episodes, as must "montage" plots (such as *Street Scene* and *Detective Story* in the modern repertoire) where the effect lies in the totality of all the component activity. All these types of plays have their critics, for they are not so compact nor so obviously unified as is a play which starts and ends with a single thought and one chief character. They are not *simplex*, but they are dramas. The *Andromache* is no less dramatic for being complex. Nor is it less unified structurally for being episodic. Euripides saw to that by adding the *dea ex machina*.

Before proceeding to the other unifying factors of the play, we must come to terms with the use of this *dea*. As has been observed, the appearance of Thetis, and, more important, the references in her speech contribute to the structural integrity of the *Andromache*

by resolving the final conflict,⁹ by happily disposing of the sympathetic characters, and by shaping the plot into more or less a circular form. In addition to these functions of shaping and extricating, the *dea* serves to fit the events of the play back into the various myths from which they may be said to have temporarily strayed. Euripides' freedom as a mythographer was somewhat limited. He could add details to a legend only to the extent that they did not interfere with an already well-established story. Neoptolemus, for example, was known to be buried at Delphi. Yet at the end of the play his body lies in state at Phthia. The playwright cannot go against the story by having him remain there to be buried. He must be returned to the established location.¹⁰ Andromache in the legend married the brother of Hector after the fall of Troy. In the present play such a transition of fortune seems unlikely. Yet Euripides does not want to leave her stranded in Phthia. Thetis solves these problems—mechanically. The author has taken people from the myths, has manipulated them to suit his purposes, then has set them back into their legendary niches with the help of the *dea ex machina*. For the few minutes in which they have been in his hands he has added to the stories, but the additions are not in direct contradiction to the myths nor do they merely lend color; rather they have been added to assist the immediate plot. We are frequently unable to detect the inventions, for we have only a limited knowledge of the variants and versions of any given myth. From our evidence, however, we may at least suppose that Euripides created the conflict between Andromache and Hermione. If he did, it was probably for this one occurrence. In the *Orestes* a different myth is indicated.¹¹

Thetis then has three tasks, all of them solutions to the author's problems. For what purpose beyond this does she exist? She adds no real dimensions to the play; she throws no light on its psychology. Although, as she says, she is the mother of Achilles, she does not belong to the group which we have been watching. Her solution to the problems is as abrupt as her appearance. She is not a natural consequence of the events which lead up to her entrance; rather she is a mechanical, arbitrary intervention at the moment when the drama has reached its depressing but logical conclusion. The momentum of the action diminishes until, like a spun coin, it stops altogether—then, magically, it spins once again as Thetis appears. She caps the story, but she does not touch the drama. For she is a convention. Here the *dea* is Thetis; in other plays are other gods. They appear at the end and change the whole course of the plot. Human events follow certain patterns but the *deus* alters these

patterns as he chooses. The chorus points this out in its final clausula: "Many are the forms of the gods, and many strange things do they decide: the expected does not come to pass whereas the god finds a way for that which is unlikely."

But drama is the province of human beings. The whole of the *Andromache* has to do with the conflicts, incompatibilities, judgments, emotions and mental limitations of mortals. If the goddess intervenes, she must do so after the play has ended. The curtain descends on the human drama, so to speak, in the midst of Peleus' lamentations over the corpse of his grandson.

Still, are we privileged to take Euripides to task, to criticize the use of the *deus*, as Hyslop did, on the grounds that it betrays "a certain want of originality" and destroys "the natural development which is one of the chief marks of a great play"? We must not do so for two reasons. First, the originality and natural development exist independent of the device. The play as a creative art form has its own structure, its own motivation, and runs its own course. The *deus* is appended. Second, it is pointless to criticize the conventions of another age when those conventions have not even a residual connection with the present. The *deus* as a functional device disappeared from the theatre; nothing comparable has existed for centuries, except perhaps the contrived and disappointing "happy" ending which is occasionally found in a modern play. Even this must be somehow integrated into the plot, whereas the *deus* was independent. We may as well criticize the chorus as the *deus*: actually we should accept both for what they are, traditions of the Attic theatre.

If we think of the *Andromache* as ending after the *oratio deae*, the resolution is happy. Short of that the conclusion is so gloomy as to be without redemption. The final scene is a bitter lament: the life of the drama's most worthy character is utterly leveled around him. Of the two variations the second is in keeping with the tone of the play as it moves through its episodes and choruses. The *Andromache* has no light moments. It is marked by a conspicuous lack of humor. Menelaus is not a comic character: he boasts and acts with pompousness but his threats are real. We cannot laugh at him as he proceeds to carry out his plan of senseless murder. Nor is Peleus amusing. This is an angry, gallant old man, by no means a "shadow with a voice, powerless to do anything but chatter," who brandishes his sceptre at the cowardly general. Peleus is a serious character, serious enough to bring real meaning to the final scenes of the play. The choral odes, too, and all the changes of plot point

not to some eventual surcease of trouble but to impending doom. The odes increase in sombreness, until the fourth stasimon sounds almost like a dirge. In each episode the action moves further from that of decent people, becomes more tainted with deceit and treachery. Even the respite of the third episode is all too brief and unsettled. Andromache feels far from secure, and Menelaus leaves the stage with threats of a speedy return. The play, in other words, is directed throughout toward its cheerless rather than toward its happy conclusion. Within this framework the real dramatic unity must be sought. The goddess has served her function; she may be set aside.

We move now to a consideration of unity beyond that of mere structural cohesion. Although the pattern manages to hold the play together in spite of its tendency to divide into separate parts, we may still hope to find a factor common to all the parts which will integrate them more firmly. If the two elements of unification are distinctive, as they are in the *Andromache*, the second may be called the "comprehensive" unity of plot, as opposed to the structural "plot-action" element already discussed. It is this unity which critics have in mind when they say that the play deals with Hermione, or with the house of Aeacus. The unifying factor is not in itself dramatic; rather it provides the idea, the *mise-en-scène*, as it were, within which the dramatic action takes place. It need not represent the broadest view of the play's moral (although it occasionally does), but it must be a concept wide enough to encompass all the action.

Such unity in the *Andromache* is obscured by two defects, one proceeding from Euripides, the other from his critics. The situation underlying the entire play is the unfortunate marriage of Neoptolemus and Hermione. Critics have neglected to observe that the marriage itself, rather than Hermione or her jealousy, motivates the action. Euripides, on the other hand, by keeping Neoptolemus off stage throughout most of the drama, did not emphasize the marriage, and, as a corollary, overemphasized the role of Hermione, as well as that of Andromache. He also gave the prologue to Andromache so that she was able to sew herself firmly into the plot's fabric at the outset and to give the drama its name. This must be counted as a weakness in the play. As such, it helps to explain why so many critics have been misled into believing that the action centers on the conflict between Andromache and Hermione. Similarly the treatment of Neoptolemus lacks something, although here the critical hindsight is less sharp. One senses throughout the play Euripides' determination to keep the image of Neoptolemus in the minds of

the audience. How he might have accomplished this more effectively without actually bringing the young warrior on stage is difficult to suggest. Neoptolemus would not have fitted gracefully into the prologue without a drastic change in the plot. The chorus might possibly have made him more vivid *in absentia*, but they had other duties. One can only say that Euripides failed to project successfully the marriage of Neoptolemus and Hermione. At the crucial point of the play—between the third and fourth episodes—the failure cost him the unqualified approval of his critics.

The marriage, then, binds all the characters and all the action of the play. The component parts are identified at the beginning by Andromache, and the moral is drawn by Peleus at the conclusion: "Will not the man who counsels well marry himself and his children to families of noble breed, holding no desire for a bad wife even though she brings his house a dowry of untold wealth?"¹² If we look at the sequence of scenes from the point of view of the marriage, we see that the play does not break into two or more parts: rather it shifts its attention from one to another of the *victims* of the marriage, moving indeed in quite a balanced manner from one indirectly affected by the marriage to the two participating members and back to another outside the marriage, i.e. Andromache, Hermione, Neoptolemus, and Peleus in that order. We first see Andromache victimized by the female participant in the marriage. Next, Hermione draws peril on herself by misuse of the role. She is saved by Orestes who pivots the emphasis to Neoptolemus, the third victim. Finally Peleus receives the corpse of his grandson, and becomes the final victim. In the first two parts of the story Hermione represents the marriage on stage; in the second two Neoptolemus is the representative, first by report and subsequently by the presence of his corpse.

This unity, coupled with the structural unity, raises the *Andromache* in stature to the level at least of a competent melodrama. Is there anything to add? At least two questions must be raised: (1) why did Euripides choose these particular characters for this drama, and (2) how does this "melodramatic" unity explain the constant undertone of war which has been seen to follow the action through all the scenes? If the play is nothing more than a domestic drama, a study of the grim and ruinous aspects of an ill-fated marriage, then the characters are simply borrowed from legend and the situation is used only because it provides Euripides with a legendary illustration of his idea. The references to the war are little other than ornaments, morbid accoutrements. But, as has been noted in

the preceding chapters, they occur too frequently and with too much intensity to be so easily dismissed.

The choice of cast and the spectre of Troy are the clues to the broader dramatic unity, the "philosophic" unity which, more than binding the play together, gives it its *raison d'être*. Grube had an inkling of this when he wrote that "it should be noted that the frequent references to the Trojan War, not only in a choral ode, but elsewhere also, especially in connexion with Menelaus, bring the crisis in the house of Neoptolemus in perspective in a longer time-sequence, which includes the past and future of the family."¹³ Grube left the matter unexplored. The Trojan War, in its most unheroic respects, brings every moment of the *Andromache* into the longer time-span. The play stretches back in its perspective (but not forward: the future is in the hands of the gods, or rather here the goddess). As was noted, the very first lines and especially Andromache's elegiacs which close the prologue invite us to think of the action on stage as part of a series of events which began as far back as the judgment of Paris—or farther.

For it is not the war itself, in its battles and heroes, which the *Andromache* chooses for emphasis, but rather the causes and the effects of the war. The participants, to be sure, are recalled—one of them even appears in the drama—but the nature and the ἀρετή of their participation are left (or kept) out of the picture. Euripides seems preoccupied with two thoughts about the war: how did it start, and what did it lead to? The aftermath is shown on the stage; the causes are learned from the reflections of the characters. The *Andromache* presents us, not with the great war of the epic legends complete with tales of battlefield derring-do and the *aristeia* of Homeric heroes, but rather with a senseless drawn-out melee, demeaned by the nature of its inception, sordid in its execution, and infamous in the ramifications of its results. The author seems to be saying, as he puts his wretched creatures through their paces, that mankind has perpetuated a legend which it wants to think is heroic but which is actually just the opposite. The war had its heroes; they are dead. Those who lived on were scoundrels. The Trojan episode killed the real heroes of Greece, and even killed their sons. It left a trail of human wreckage from which no greatness could rise. Nobility was a thing of the past. Instead of heroes only pathetic beings roamed the landscape of Hellas, bringing to their meetings with one another the evidence of distorted fortunes, values, and minds. The world had become illogical, unjust, unharmonious. A pallid god had settled upon it, making everything ugly. And for

what reason? Was this disabling of human life a necessary evil, the unfortunate consequence of a war that had to be? The characters and the chorus answer: no, it was a war founded on caprice. A beauty contest set it off (274-308). A wife-stealer started it (103-116). It began with a husband's misplaced jealousy (607-615). Choose any cause you will: the beginnings were as unworthy as the end was tragic. Time and again in the play the lament is heard: if only that first offending triviality had not occurred, "then wives would not be widowed nor old fathers left childless."

Such is the dismal cloud which hangs oppressively over the *Andromache*. Gloom is ever present, disaster always imminent. This imminence, more than the conflicts of the plot, sets the tone of the play; the action is made starker by the general feeling of doom. The chorus in the fourth stasimon well describes the mood: "A disease, a plague did Hellas endure, and its cloud crossed over to Troy, to the fertile Phrygian fields, dripping the gore of death."¹⁴

Each of the characters, as he fulfills his duty to the plot, helps to illustrate either the type of human baseness which caused the war or the devastating effect of the war upon those who survived it. First, Andromache, a pathetic victim. Here was a woman, born to royalty, wed to a prince, happily married, and then not only abducted from her happiness but forced to watch the murder of her husband and their son. She suffered a complete, almost exactly balanced change of fortune. Even as a slave she lives in a world of danger. Too much the queen to assume her new position, she places herself in peril by arguing *par paribus* with superiors and by resisting their efforts to treat her as the lowly person which she now is. Her manners and her sense of dignity are ante-bellum, but she has survived to live in the aftermath. She, like Peleus, is a residuum of the war. It is not Andromache but her fortunes which have changed. For this reason there is total incompatibility between her and Hermione who knows nothing of the noble age before the burning of Ilium. Andromache speaks of her slavery but only to herself. She shows not a trace of servility in her relations with Hermione. And the girl, as we have seen, is torn between a desire to murder this presumptuous slave and a much less craven, much more practical desire simply to force upon her some degree of proper behavior: "You must cower in humility, you must prostrate yourself at my knee, you must sweep my house and sprinkle it with water from my golden vases! And realize where you are!"¹⁵

Andromache courts disaster with her attitude. She stirs the meanest instincts of her masters. She is an unwitting agent of

wickedness, but more than that she is a victim of every possible vagary of fate. Life has become so meaningless to her that she is willing to sacrifice herself in order to save the life of a slave-child whose chances of happiness are no better than her own (404-420). Hemmed in on every side by peril, she epitomizes the pathetic women whom the war left weeping in its wake. She is widowed, orphaned, bereaved, and enslaved.

On the other side of the scales is Menelaus. In no sense is he a victim, rather he is as materially wealthy as he was before the war, and in addition has the glory of his battle service. At least he believes in his own heroism and thus is all the more fatuously content with himself. He returned unscathed from Troy, brought his wife back with him, married his daughter to a prince, and now rules in the Peloponnese. But his offenses are many. Peleus openly charges him with starting the war, and lays upon him the responsibility for the death of his son: "I behold you, like some polluting fiend, the murderer of Achilles!"¹⁶

We cannot think of Menelaus as the shrewd master of villainy. His accomplishments on stage reveal no artistry of cunning; he achieves whatever success he gains only by clumsy brute force; as soon as the opposition shows the slightest sign of outwitting or overpowering him, he withdraws in haste. There is no cleverness to be found in his method of drawing Andromache from the shrine of Thetis: he merely deceives her. Similarly his defense of his own actions has no subtlety; it is based on no double-edged sophistries. He seems, in fact, to be acting in ignorance of his own egregious wickedness. Just as Andromache suffered from a true inability to see her situation practically, so does Menelaus display such a weakness. He cannot discern the difference between matters fit for a general's attention and those too paltry to merit his notice. He lumps the subjection of cities together with the slaying of slave-women as if they were of equal importance. It is this defect in his intelligence which helped to cause the Trojan War. Menelaus assembled the armies of Greece, took them to Troy where they fought and bled for a decade—only to win back a woman who was not worth the smallest fraction of the trouble. But he is not embarrassed when this is pointed out to him. He dips into his bag of aphorisms and pulls out "explanations," seemingly unaware that the familiar old rules do not work when he tries to use them: "It did turn out well for the Greeks. They discovered war and companionship in battle, from which, you know, 'men learn all things.'"¹⁷

In another sense Menelaus is a product as well as a cause of the

war. The success of that undertaking made him overbold, gave him assurance that his was the right mode of action. Thus he comes on the scene of the *Andromache* with absolute confidence in himself and in his ethics, with his ears closed to argument. Had he suffered more at Troy, the early scenes of this play might have been averted, for his cowardice would have taken hold of him sooner than it did. But the war was kind to Menelaus: he is now its major living hero. In his mind it was a great war; to others it was a nightmare. In his mind, therefore, he is a great general; to others he is a monster. Menelaus is personified irony. The injustice of the war is no less reflected in him than in Andromache. That the gods would allow this perpetrator of the original evil to live on through the war so that he could further jeopardize the safety of one whose fortunes had already been reversed by his earlier actions—"Oh god! how am I to believe?"—we must expect the unexpected.

Menelaus' daughter is a balance between the Spartan king and Andromache; she is both victimizer and victim. Hermione, "hautaine et impérieuse, féroce, jalouse, qui, par peur du châtiement, abandonne son mari pour suivre l'homme qui le fera périr bientôt," brings with herself onto the stage the dramatic *eidolon* of her mother Helen.¹⁸ When the action centers about her it seems to reproduce the war in its infancy: the marshaling of animal strength to settle the problems of a boudoir, and the destruction of all normal intercourse and all customary values in the course of the upheaval which follows. As if to insure that the comparison between the two women will be drawn, the daughter too runs off with another man. But the comparison is less remarkable than the contrast. Helen's elopement or abduction was prompted by love. Aphrodite was behind all the deceit. Her story has a romantic Mediterranean flavor, whereas Hermione's is stark, stripped of any charm. She does not fly away in the arms of her lover, she escapes her doom with the help of a man she barely knows.

In one respect the Hermione of the *Andromache* must be called despicable: she accelerates the latent evil of the play with her jealous temper. Otherwise she is much more pitiful than sinister. Her imperfections, as irremediable as those of Andromache and Menelaus, lead her into trouble; her cowardly father leaves her there. Andromache prepares a long list of faults, proof that Hermione is basically unequipped for marriage.¹⁹ Her youth, her ancestral pride, her love of luxury have all made her life in remote Phthia far from ideal. The presence of another woman in the house makes it untenable. Because of her volatile temper she incurs dis-

pleasure with her complaints. Finally, unable for one or another reason to bear her husband a child, she fears that she will lose his respect and thus be totally desolate. Little by little the seeds of her impending crime are planted by her situation, until they burst forth in the form of a vicious plan of murder. Hermione's is a story of desperation, always pathetic to behold. We see her extremely agitated and irrational, a disagreeable person with no visible redeeming qualities. Yet her extremes are not unprovoked. The weird reversals of fortunes which have reduced Andromache could also ruin Hermione's life, as she indicates when she expresses her fears of punishment to Orestes: "My husband will kill me for the most disgraceful reasons; either that or I, who was once her mistress, shall become his concubine's slave!"²⁰

Her hatred for Andromache is excessive and ill-founded, but Andromache does nothing to assuage it. Her fear, after the third episode's reprieve, is violent, but the occasion merits acute apprehension. We may deny her the right to plot against Andromache, but, once she has decided to do so, can we further object to her soliciting the help of her father? The responsibility lay with Menelaus to mind his own business. Instead he came readily to give her support in her designs. But then, when he had succeeded in spoiling the plan and had irrevocably endangered his daughter's position in the household (by giving her license to kill Neoptolemus' child), he withdrew, leaving Hermione helpless and unbefriended except for a nurse with no real understanding of her mistress' predicament. She is victimized thus by her lineage: by the sexual temperament of her mother (cf. lines 229-231); by her father Menelaus, the on-stage symbol of the war in execution who used his daughter as a bribe in the past and deserts her now; as well as by the postwar world of pettiness and corruption in which her own weaknesses are allowed to nurture and do harm to others. As a victim Hermione deserves perhaps to be rescued from her troubles. It fits the distorted life of the *Andromache* that the rescuer who carries her off is not a dashing hero but a kidnapper.

Orestes too belongs to the legend of the war, although he was not old enough to fight at Troy. His mental condition is a link in the chain of events which may be said to have started with the slaying of Iphigenia by Agamemnon.²¹ But Orestes appears in the *Andromache* not so much a victim of the Trojan War as an example of the sort of human behavior which typifies its aftermath. When the pressure of realistic interpretation is applied to this part of the Trojan legend, we find not only that the heroes are dead but that

their places have been usurped by men who fall so short of heroic proportions that one may call them bereft of dignity. The play on three occasions places courage against baseness in order to stress this point: Hermione is in control of Andromache; Menelaus opposes Peleus; and Orestes is pitted against Neoptolemus. We are allowed to watch Orestes on stage, to hear his method of attack from his own lips, and later we are allowed to compare his manner with that of Neoptolemus at Delphi. Orestes is devoted to the devious. He is, when one sums up the extent of the harm which he creates, a far more repulsive person than Menelaus. The significant thing is that Orestes goes about his evil ways uninhibited either by the reproaches of his own conscience or by the interference of others of nobler character than his. Possibly it is to heighten the contrast between the heroic and the non-heroic elements of this story that Euripides defines the character of Orestes with remarkably less sensitivity and sympathy in the *Andromache* than he does elsewhere. At any rate Orestes is mercilessly portrayed and gains quarter from no one, although, as a sick young man, he ought to be pitied as well as despised.

Menelaus, Hermione, and Orestes all illustrate a most important feature of the play. Each serves the plot in his or her individual capacity, but all are alike in their imperviousness to reason. Andromache attempts to dissuade both Hermione and Menelaus from their acts of violence by logical argument. Her reasoning is valid, and expected (although the chorus observes that she speaks out of place and too long),²² but she is not heard—or at least not heeded. Hermione is obsessed by jealousy; she is outside the area of reason. Menelaus is possessor of his own dim logic, a distorted code of ethics made up from the misinterpretations of familiar rules of thumb. Orestes is beyond the pale. He is ruled by neither logic nor ethics, but by the Erinyes. Euripides does not even bother to place verbal opposition in his path. The chorus might have said something to him, but they were shocked into silence. This inability to communicate must have been to the Greek audience a sure sign of an atmosphere of moral deterioration, observed at its worst when Orestes announces his disposition of Neoptolemus without a murmur of protest from Hermione.²³

Although Neoptolemus does not appear live on the stage, he is very much a figure in the plot, and the appearance of his body is in itself significant. Like Hector and Achilles Neoptolemus belongs to the heroic side of the Trojan War, which, though not a noble undertaking, did produce its heroes. (For this reason it is more

dramatic that he does not appear live on the stage. Menelaus remains the on-stage representative of the war's commanders. Both Achilles and Hector were killed in the war. It was Neoptolemus' misfortune to live on and be killed in the aftermath. Glory attended those who died in the war, for their efforts were noble no matter why they fought. This is the idea behind Peleus' lament over the body of his grandson: "Oh beloved lips, and cheek, and hands! Would that the god had slain you at Ilium, by the banks of Simois!"²⁴ The chorus agrees and explains: "Yes, he would have been honored had he died there, old man, and yours would be a happier lot."²⁵

We are given no chance to judge for ourselves the extent of Neoptolemus' virtues, for his character is reported rather than portrayed. We learn, however, that he is a young man fair in his dealing with others and sturdy of courage. His slave Andromache puts her trust in his return.²⁶ Hermione fears his wrath as well she might; Peleus laments him as one most dear. His only outspoken enemy, Orestes, charges him with a cruel tongue. How true this was we do not know, for Orestes' real grudge was transferred to Neoptolemus from Menelaus who promised his daughter to more husbands than either she or he could accommodate. We do know that Neoptolemus was victimized by an impetuous temper which led him into trouble with the Delphic circle. On the other hand he was able to rectify his mistakes and wanted to make amends. He was, in his last moments as well as at Troy, a fine fighter, almost invincible even when greatly outnumbered.²⁷ He seems quite compatible with the Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, and in both plays he resembles in many respects the epic picture of his father. But there is one outstanding difference. Neoptolemus dies because of senseless wickedness. He dies a pathetic rather than a heroic figure. His corpse is borne on stage for lamentation, for his death marks the end both of a distinguished family and of an era of great men. The least he deserved was an honorable death. But the *Andromache* was not written to illustrate men's nobility. Rather it dwells on the opposite: those without honor drag down the remaining few who have greatness within them. So Orestes kills Neoptolemus, and bestows upon Peleus the bitter gift of old age and death without kin.

Peleus is heavily treated; he is perhaps the most pathetic of all the victims. Filled to overflowing with the virtues that accumulate through a life well-spent and with the same sort of courage which brought fame to his son, he is subjected nevertheless to the most inhuman outrage of the play, the death of his descendant. His life is

suddenly and intensely barren, and for no reason at all. A murder founded on a ferine desire for revenge and executed by slander provides the play's only surviving hero with his reward. Even Neoptolemus fared better by dying: Peleus must live out his days in loneliness and grief. The twisted values of the *Andromache* are nowhere so patent as they are in the case of Peleus. We may also observe most clearly how the Trojan myths are isolated for observation in this play. Peleus serves as a contrast. He rightly belongs outside the legends. His mythological province, as the chorus indicates, includes the story of the Argo, the battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs, the legends of Heracles.²⁸ He is part of another generation, a heroic time when battles afforded men greatness without leaving great and ugly scars upon the land and its people. In those days a hero's ἀρετή was the combination of his strength and his wisdom. Peleus, whose heroism had made him famous, enters this play prepared to display the same fine rules of conduct. At first it appears that the hero is still the stronger man. Peleus trounces Menelaus; the old man with right on his side is victor over the forces of evil. The chorus rejoices: it is still the age of nobility: "The deeds of great men are not erased by time. Excellence shines forth even upon the dead."²⁹

But the chorus is wrong, as they soon discover. Times have changed. "Hellas endured a disease, a plague!" The Trojan War has come and gone, leaving its cloud on the earth. The heroics of Peleus are of small moment in this postwar world. Evil now will have its way, and even Peleus will be punished for presuming to resist it. The old man's eyes are partially opened as he confronts Menelaus for the first time and fully realizes for how mean a cause Achilles fought and died. But he does not see the full extent of the war's influence. He is quick to place the blame on Menelaus, but once he has overpowered him he rests, sure that the source of trouble has been removed: "One old man stout of heart is better than a band of youths. For what help is a strong body if one's a coward?"³⁰ He discovers his mistake only when the proof is carried before him on a bier.

The dead Neoptolemus, borne home from Delphi, summons the image of Apollo. Especially does he lurk behind those scenes in which Orestes, Peleus, and his grandson are prominent. As the god of suppliants he is always just off-stage whenever Orestes is about. As the oracular god it is he whom Neoptolemus must attempt to appease at Delphi. He further figures strongly in the Trojan legends. One cannot deny that Euripides by his treatment of Apollo was as

usual inviting the audience to question the god's integrity—and credibility. Neoptolemus was clearly in the wrong, from a religious point of view, to threaten Apollo. Yet it is Peleus, the innocent victim, whom we watch being punished, not the dead offender. Furthermore, the murder as divine revenge is eclipsed by the self-professed designs of Orestes. No mention at all of Apollo in the *Andromache* would indeed have been remarkable, but the references which are found have no untoward significance in the dramatic scheme of things, as most of the critics have agreed. This is not, as a story involving Neoptolemus might have been, a play about man against God. As the plot is constructed Apollo is made subordinate to the mortal cast around which it revolves, and Delphi serves mainly as an off-stage backdrop for Orestes' skulduggery against Neoptolemus.³¹

Thus the characters of the *Andromache* illustrate the author's sad comment on the Trojan legend. But characters must have a plot; they cannot exist in a vacuum. Drama is more than pictorial form: it must move meaningfully and constantly. It is not enough to say that the Trojan War provides the cast for the play. It must also motivate the action if it is to be called the *Andromache's* "dramatic" unity. This it can be shown to do. All the characters are originally brought on the scene directly or indirectly as a result of the war. (Peleus and Neoptolemus may be excused since the scene is set in their home, nor should it be necessary to add that their home was formerly the home of Achilles, "the foremost Greek" at Troy.) Andromache is a "spear prize, selected for Neoptolemus from the spoils of Troy." Hermione was promised to Neoptolemus by Menelaus if he should destroy Ilium. Orestes arrives because this promise pre-empted an earlier promise made to him. Menelaus is brought in because of the resulting conflict between Neoptolemus' two female acquisitions, and, more to the point, because he concerns himself with "womanish strife." This concern helped start the great war. Neoptolemus is *away* from the scene because of circumstances connected with the war: it was his father's death which first led him to cavil at Apollo.

Once the characters are assembled it is true that they enact their own story. The war is over. It is not their function to retell it, but rather to portray its consequences. We are given a day, so to speak, in the lives of some whom the war left behind. This seems to have been Euripides' purpose: if the Trojan stories are to be believed or preserved, then witness all that we must preserve with them! The epic poets saw greatness in the war, but the realist's eye

rests more thoughtfully on the misery of its aftermath. Subjected to this scrutiny the legends cannot withstand the test. The heroics become insignificant; the crucial considerations are now cause and consequence. They combine in the *Andromache* where forces vie with each other, in a setting provided by the war, fighting over a cause which is unworthy of the attention of either side, and is further—in this world of petty things—untrue. Andromache has no part in the failure of Hermione's marriage, except unwittingly by her reluctant presence.

One cannot tell the degree of conscious planning which went into the *Andromache* in all its levels of unity, but that the Trojan legend and its less attractive aspects were a preoccupation of Euripides is proven by two of the other extant tragedies, the *Hecuba* and the *Troades*.³² In the *Hecuba* we are taken somewhat closer to the time of the fall of Ilium, before the death of Agamemnon, and are allowed to watch both the victors and the defeated ride the first wake of the disaster. The play centers upon the widow of Priam, who with her daughter and a chorus of Trojan women, is being held captive in Agamemnon's camp on the coast of Thrace, pending departure on ships for Greece. Unlike the *Andromache* there is not the slightest element in the plot which does not derive directly from the war. All the characters and all the motivating factors are united for one purpose: to describe the miseries of the captured Trojans.

The *Troades* (*Trojan Women*) takes us even closer to the war, to the very epicenter of the destruction.³³ This drama is all unity and no plot, if such can be called a drama. No conflicts present themselves for solution; rather the actions follow one after another in paratactic fashion, creating the effect of an awful tableau. The play is one long lament, passed back and forth from the chorus of Trojan women captives to the players, the royal victims of the house of Priam. Once again we meet Hecuba, her daughters Polyxena and Cassandra, again Andromache, and we share with them the last hours of Troy, the first minutes of their slavery. From the opening lines (by Poseidon) describing the city just before its burning to the great incension at the end, the play builds a single theme. A *threnos* of suffering and slavery begins with Hecuba (98-153) and continues to the last lines as Troy is sent up in flames and the women are herded to the ships. Hecuba is left to bury Astyanax as Andromache is hustled away to join the slaves of Neoptolemus. A certain grandeur of effect is achieved in the *Troades* by the relentless tone of sorrow and the parading of hapless but eloquent victims across the stage. In this respect (as well as in many others) it differs

from the *Andromache*. The background of Troy, even at its most pathetic moment, lends an aura of epic finery to the scenes. In the *Andromache* the legend has already been stripped of any heroic embellishments. Andromache speaks of the elegance of her life at Troy, but the interval of years has dimmed the vividness of the great city, whereas in the *Troades* the luxury lies smoldering all about the players.

How far in his own mind Euripides drew a comparison between the Trojan War and war in general, or the Peloponnesian War in particular, cannot be more than guessed. One sensitive Euripidean scholar has written that "the Athenian democracy as conceived by Pericles, Euripides or Protagoras was a free people, highly civilized and pursuing 'wisdom,' free from superstition and oppression themselves and helping always to emancipate others."³⁴ So long as we look upon Euripides as a political idealist this statement rings true and explains his abhorrence of all war as an evil which made man less civilized and more oppressed. But to what degree is the *Andromache* the result of idealism? Can it not be just as readily interpreted as the end product of the cold, shrewd eye of a realist, an almost cynical eye focused not so much on war as on legend?

The matter can be neither proven or disproven, but one observation remains to balance our opinion. The legends are patent, boldly presented for our acceptance or rejection. The contemporary allusions, on the other hand, ordinarily lie concealed behind unexplained passages or vague references. Each one reflects the ingenuity of a scholar or editor, but are any of them true? Is there any reason why Euripides should have left Argos unspecified if that is the city to which Menelaus refers in lines 733f.? It is not enough to rejoin that all such allusions to contemporary matters were subtly treated, for what is more contemporary or more blatant than the attacks on Sparta at lines 445ff. and 595ff.? The "specific" allusions (to Argos here, Tharyps there, elsewhere to other fifth century persons and places) are indeed subtle, if they exist at all. To say that they lurk between the lines, as scholars for centuries have maintained, is to credit the Athenian tragedians with attitudes toward their art which are inconsistent with the true evidence, the plays themselves. The subtleties which make it difficult for us to understand the dramas of Euripides are not those of punning, allegory, verbal trickery and the like. These were popular later, when the early scholia were written. Euripides is not so far removed from

Aeschylus that he resembles the Alexandrians more than he does the older poet. Euripides is difficult because he brought to the traditional tragic form a highly complex and original mind. As yet we do not fully understand either, and thus cannot always detect where tradition is altered to meet the needs of the mind. Only the most apparent components of the formal pattern of a tragedy are known, matters such as the number of actors and the arrangement of scenes (nor is our knowledge on even these necessarily exact). Much more of the pattern lies beyond our grasp. We must never fail to be mindful of its controlling presence.

Dramatic unity, a broad term, is a universal requirement, but the manner in which it is achieved is capable of wide variation. We can (and must) demand it, but we ought not to be too hasty in assuming its absence in plays whose form we only partially recognize. Furthermore, until we do know the degree to which Euripides was controlled by tradition, we can determine neither the exact nature nor the extent of his own originality. We see that he explores constantly the areas of man's experience where logic tends to be displaced by superstition and ritual, that is, the institutions and articles of faith. We see too that he looks for the key to man's behavior in man himself, that he turns whenever he can to a psychological explanation of the phenomenon of human intercourse, and that he mistrusts attempts to explain men's actions in terms of the will of the gods. He is indisputably a rationalist, but what direction his philosophy takes within that definition cannot be judged. Euripides' dramas may be the expression of a mind which has reached a philosophy: they are not themselves philosophical lessons. They are probably not even the result of a consistent view of life, for Euripides seems much more disposed to ask questions than to answer them (except formally, as with a *deus*), to leave most issues *sub iudice*. The Trojan plays do not themselves tell us that Euripides shared Pericles' view of the role of Athens in fifth century Greece, nor do they dramatize such a view. To assert that they do is to chase shadows. The most that can be said about them is that they paint an agonizing picture of that legendary war between Troy and Hellas, that they show in dramatic form the effects of that mythical cloud of disease which dripped its pollution on both lands. Anything more is inference.

Notes

[N.B. Except for the three tragedians (A = Aeschylus, E = Euripides, S = Sophocles), the abbreviations are fuller than those normally found in writings on classical topics. Line references to tragedies where an editor is not specified are to Murray (Oxford) for Aeschylus and Euripides, to Pearson (Oxford) for Sophocles. Pindaric references are to Turyn. Full titles to articles and books will be found in the Bibliography.]

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

¹ "It is strange to be reminded that one of the groans of Henry James was that there was a scarcity of critics in his day. It was an absurd misjudgment. The great artists of the world have had to get along with next to none at all. The criticism that met Homer must have been very crude stuff, and we know the sort of prejudiced pedantry that Shakespeare and Bach were treated to" (Christopher Sykes in a critical review of *The Energies of Art* by literary critic Jacques Barzun, *New Republic*, Jan. 7, 1957, p. 17). The theme of Mr. Barzun's book is described as "the inadequacy and futility of criticism when confronted by great invention."

² A revival can give him some help, but, even when authenticity of production is the proud aim, a revival is no more than an echo of the original presentation. This is not to suggest that a good play should not revive successfully. It often does not, however, and when this is true it is the critic's uningratiating task to show that the fault lies not in the play but in the production. Thus he has no presentation with which to strengthen his claim—or his hunch.

³ 22a-b.

⁴ For a list (by no means complete) of mythical alterations in Euripides, see Grube, *The Drama of Euripides*, pp. 31f. Grube's attitude throughout Part I of his book is healthy in that it despairs of any collective interpretation of the plays. But he too, as must all critics of good intent, searches for clues. Cf. p. 35: "Euripides omits nothing: he gives a full and individual picture of the characters involved in the dramatic situation, and these characters almost inevitably become fifth-century. Nor did he seek to avoid it. His aim was rather to depict men and women as he knew them, facing the legendary situations." What Euripides sought and what his aim was are speculations. The "aims" here suggested are really only clues to aims.

⁵ The *Ajax* is still occasionally attacked for a lack of unity, although by now the unity has been more than sufficiently defended and the critic is apt to be assailed with greater vehemence than he deserves. Cf. H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Greek Literature*, p. 164: "Those who cannot see the beauty and the force of the great concluding scenes are advised to have no more to do with Greek thought, for their minds are barbarian in the worst sense."

⁶ A. W. Verrall, *Essays on Four Plays of Euripides*, pp. 7f., says of the *Androm-*

ache that it is commonly held to be “(to use the very inadequate term usually applied to the case) ‘wanting in unity.’ The use of so mild a term is unfortunate, and though prompted doubtless by respect for Euripides, tends really to do him a monstrous injustice, by concealing the enormity, and therefore the improbability, of the charge thereby alleged against him. . . . What hypothesis could be less probable than that so insane a method of composition was practised and accepted by the rival and the audience of Sophocles?”

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹ Hermione's mother, one remembers, is famous Helen, no help at all in such matters.

² Ed. 1838, Praefatio, p. VIII. (See the Bibliography for editions.)

³ For example, cf. Albin Lesky in 1958 (*Griechischen Literatur*, p. 353): “Unbefangenen Urteil wird die *Andromache* nicht als Meisterwerk gelten können.”

⁴ Cf. at 330, 362, 885, 1077, 1240.

⁵ The dramatic necessities of exposition and resolution seem universally to be the prey of critics. What in our modern theatre is despised more than the opening telephone conversation or the revealing banter exchanged by the butler and the maid? And the success of a play, *ceteris paribus*, invariably hinges on its final curtain.

⁶ Pref., pp. xiii-xix.

⁷ Ed. 1916, introd., pp. VI-VII.

⁸ Ed. Budé II, pp. 98f.

⁹ Ed. 1934, introd., p. 10. Cf. also Kamerbeek (ed. 1944, Inleiding, p. XVII): “Er is een zeer nauwe samenhang door de kunstige contrastering en het parallelisme in lotgevallen van Andromache en Hermione;” also his more detailed article on the *Andromache* in *Mnem.* 1943.54: “Euripide a construit son drame en grand partie sur l'antithèse Andromaque—Hermione.”

¹⁰ *Class. Wkly.* 1955.11.

¹¹ *Die Griechische Tragödie*, p. 301.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹³ Introd., pp. lx-lxii. He is followed by Garzya, *Dioniso* 1951.132ff.: “Ma se per varie vie si potrà giungere all' comprensione di questo o quell' aspetto del dramma in particolare, il centro genetico di esso si può cogliere solo se si ammetta che risieda nel problema erotico-sessuale di Ermione.” Cf. also Wilamowitz, *Hermes* 1925.287.

¹⁴ *Greek Tragedy*?, p. 241.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-247.

¹⁶ Fowler (*Modern English Usage*, p. 347) implies that the term describes the audience more than it does the drama, and so “is generally used with some contempt.” The task of the melodramatist, he says, “is to get his characters labelled good & wicked in his audience's minds, & to provide striking situations that shall provoke & relieve anxieties on behalf of poetic justice. Whether a play is or is not to be called a melodrama is therefore often a doubtful question, upon which different critics will hold different opinions.”

¹⁷ Ed. 1848, vol. 16, Einleitung, pp. 5-8.

¹⁸ I follow Dodds in the inclusion of the “ingenious fancies” of Verrall (and Norwood). See his introduction to the *Bacchae*, pp. xlv-xlvii.

¹⁹ A footnote to this sentence reads: “Mention of such a conflict naturally

occurs (vv. 588sq.) in the heat of their quarrel, but it comes to nothing. That the old king has no military following seems certain from the silence of both parties." He mentions it, not to Menelaus, but to Andromache at lines 759-60.

²⁰ Pp. 221-2.

²¹ *Essays on Four Plays of Euripides*, "A Greek Borgia," pp. 1-42. Norwood, however, must have known the play well himself for he published an edition of it early in his career. But he admired Verrall exceedingly and his *Greek Tragedy* is full of the older scholar's thoughts and ideas. "Apparently," he writes in the preface, "I was the last of the Verrallians."

²² *Greek Tragedy*, p. 223.

²³ *Euripides*, p. 39-40.

²⁴ Pp. 81-2.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ On the distinction between *prologos* and monologue cf. Grube, *Euripides*, p. 63.

² The words which Andromache uses to describe her relationship with Neoptolemus imply that his only interest in her was sexual.

³ It may be argued that a surprise to the characters in the story is not necessarily a surprise to the audience. But the omission of Orestes from the prologue as well as from any of the choral lyrics, in fact the total lack of foreshadowing given either him or his impending scene, points to a deliberate plan of surprise. As far as our information about the legend goes, Orestes comes directly to Phthia only in this play. If so, the audience would not automatically be expecting him.

⁴ Patin (*Études sur les tragiques grecs, Euripide I*, pp. 273-4) compares E. *Hecuba* 60. "Il y a là un contraste qui frappe d'autant plus, que le poète, avec le discrétion particulière aux Grecs, s'est moins donné de peine pour le faire ressortir. Il a peint également avec simplicité, avec naturel, sans aucun faste d'héroïsme, le dévouement de cette pauvre Troyenne, qui ne perd rien de son prix, pour être mêlé d'un peu de frayeur, de quelque hésitation."

⁵ E. *Iph. Taur.* 42, *Medea* 56-8 (imitated by Philemon, fr. 79.1-2), S. *Electra* 86ff., 424-5. Cf. also A. *Prom.* 88ff.

⁶ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 23.10-11, E. *Electra* 126, *Troades* 608. Cf. also Méridier at E. *Medea* 1221.

⁷ Herod. 1.32, A. *Ag.* 928-9. The occurrences in tragedy are collected by L. Rademacher in *Gnomon* 1938.296.

⁸ Lines 103-116. This elegiac *threnos* is unique in extant tragedy. The hexameters are almost pure dactyls. The passage is discussed by D. L. Page ("The Elegiacs in Euripides' Andromache" in *Greek Poetry and Life*, pp. 206-30) who connects it with Doric elegy, and from there proceeds to demonstrate that the play was produced not in Athens but in Argos. (See below, note 44.) Page's discussion of the structure, style, and metre is perceptive if brief.

⁹ For the rhetorical device cf. E. *Helen* 1133-4, and see W. Headlam, *Journ. Phil.* 1898.233ff., whose interpretation of the formula, however, is liberal.

¹⁰ The Greek dual form (*χεῖρε*) in this line (115) and the phrase in which it is found reminded Hasse of Hom. *Od.* 11.211, and Fraenkel (A. *Ag.* 1559) agrees that it is clearly a reminiscence. The unusual dual occurs nowhere else in Euripides, unless one follows Nauck at *Bacchae* 615 and so reads it with Page at *Medea* 973.

¹¹ Cf. *Iph. Aul.* 1279ff., *Hecuba* 629ff., *Orestes* 316ff.

¹² Further explanation for the elegiacs is given by Garzya (ed. 1953, introd., p. 10) who suggests that they have "la funzione di segnare il passaggio ritmico dal prologo alla parodo."

¹³ *Greek Tragedy*, p. 227.

¹⁴ Line 170: ἀμαθία. Cf. Denniston at E. *Electra* 294-6: "α σοφός has αἰδώς [reverence, humility], an ἀμαθής none. ἀμαθία means a lack of finer feeling." The irony of the word must have rested very heavily on the more sensitive ears in the audience.

¹⁵ It has in fact been criticized on these grounds. Cf. Hyslop, *supra*, Chapter I.

¹⁶ Cf. line 26; as Platnauer (E. *Iph. Taur.* 525) says, μῖσος personified.

¹⁷ Cf. *supra*, Chapter I.

¹⁸ This stasimon, though quite at home here, could be interchanged with the next (464-93). The reversal would in fact give the second stasimon more appropriate meaning than it has in its present location. See the Appendix, 464-93.

¹⁹ The passages thus far relating to the war or its causes are 8-15, 103-16, 229-30, 247-8, and many isolated words which in context remind us of past events, e.g. 155 "spear-booty" (of Andromache). Anything relating to Andromache's slavish position is an implicit reminder.

²⁰ Lines 328-9. Not just a clever retort. "A victor who demeans himself demeans also the vanquished, who are regarded henceforward as having yielded to an unworthy foe" (Denniston at E. *Electra* 184-9).

²¹ Cf. 387-90.

²² Line 404. Cf. E. *Medea* 798, *Alc.* 960, A. *Prom.* 747.

²³ Cf. Garzya *ad loc.* (406): "ὀφθαλμός—in alternanze con ὄμμα—è spesso usato o con particolare intento affettivo o per adombrare l'idea di 'grandezza, potenza'." He cites E. *Phoen.* 802, A. *Pers.* 169, *Choe.* 934, S. *Oed. Tyr.* 987, Pind. *Ol.* 6.26. Add Pind. *Ol.* 2.10, *Pyth.* 5.18, and cf. Dodds at E. *Bacchae* 1308: "The heir of a family is often thought of as its eye."

²⁴ Cf. E. *Alc.* 299ff.

²⁵ Line 420. The Greek involves a play on words. Cf. E. *Ion* 307. For the sentiment, less definitely maintained, cf. *Medea* 1090ff.

²⁶ Paley (at 309) writes: "This was one of the miserable compromises between cruelty and superstition which the Greeks (and not the Greeks only) could persuade themselves was no violation of religion. To slay a suppliant at the altar was the deepest sacrilege; but to starve him, burn him out, let him die of cold or of his wounds, or to entice him away by fraud or cruelty to his feelings, was a right and regular proceeding." Even so, Euripides must have thought that his audience would react negatively to Menelaus' trickery, for it is upon the discovery of this that Andromache delivers her speech against Sparta.

²⁷ "Thus," writes Flickinger (*Greek Theatre*, p. 219), "in effect the mythological heroes were dragged upon the stage before the Athenian populace and forced to affirm: 'Your friends shall be my friends and your enemies my enemies'."

²⁸ Lines 595ff. Méridier (ed. Budé, II, p. 99) is not correct in saying that "toute la première partie du drame respire une violente hostilité contra Sparte, ses mœurs et sa politique." These two references are all, except for the implicit anti-Spartan characterizations of Menelaus and Hermione which, incidentally, in the case of Menelaus is generally consistent in all five of his appearances in Euripides.

²⁹ Hissing with sigmatism, as Grube (*Euripides*, p. 205 n. 1) points out.

³⁰ Cf. 324-9, 341, 361-3, 369, 399-403, 454-7, 462.

³¹ *Greek Tragedy*, p. 227.

³² Dale at E. *Alc.* 393-415: "Childishness on the stage, in anything approaching a realistic sense, would be unthinkable within the Greek tragic convention. The child sings the sentiments its elders feel for it. Macduff cries 'all my pretty chickens,' but Alcestis' child calls himself 'I, your chick,' and Andromache's says to her ἐγὼ δὲ σὲ πτέρυγι συγκαταβαίνω."

³³ Lines 532-4.

³⁴ *Male Characters*, p. 76.

³⁵ Lines 551-2. This arrival puts four speaking actors on stage for the first time. Since, however, the boy says nothing after the entrance of Peleus, it is possible, as Hermann suggested, that the same actor spoke both parts, calling the boy's lines from off-stage before his entrance. Flickinger, who follows Rees in believing that the convention allowed the occasional use of a fourth actor, points to E. *Hyps.* 1271ff. where all four actors are called upon to speak (*Greek Theatre*, p. 179).

³⁶ Line 585. The same is expressed earlier at 374-7.

³⁷ Line 641: οὐ δ' οὐδὲν εἶ, a brutal insult of contempt. Cf. E. *Iph. Aul.* 351 (Menelaus to Agamemnon) and 968 (Achilles of himself).

³⁸ The sentiment, however, is not limited to Euripides' evil Spartans. Cf. Iphigenia (*Iph. Aul.* 1400-1): "Mother, it is proper for Greeks to rule foreigners, but not for foreigners to rule Greeks."

³⁹ Line 680. Dindorf *ad loc.*: "Honesto vocabulo rem turpem velat Menelaus, et pro adulterio uxoris aerumnas ejus commemorat, ut Helen 716."

⁴⁰ Lines 680-7. Menelaus with malicious memory recalls a scandal from Peleus' youth. Legend tells that Phocus was killed by one or both of his half-brothers, Peleus and Telamon, because of his athletic superiority. Cf. Apollodorus 3.12.6 Pausanias 2.29.9.

⁴¹ This is conceivably Athenian propaganda's representation of Spartan dogma, heightened here by exaggeration for a satirical effect. That war is a teacher, however, is regrettably true in the minds of both those who approve and those who despair.

⁴² Van Johnson (*Class. Wkly* 1955.9) finds Peleus "old-fashioned." Yet in these speeches he is the progressive modern, whereas it is Menelaus who plays the reactionary.

⁴³ Lines 708ff.: εἰ μὴ φθερῶ! On the verb cf. Denniston at E. *Electra* 234: "It dismisses as well as execrates: 'To Hell with you!' Clearly . . . one of Euripides' colloquialisms" (overlooked by Stevens, *Class. Qu.* 1937.182ff.). See also Fraenkel, A. *Ag.* 1267. Peleus uses it again to henchmen at 715.

⁴⁴ Norwood (*Greek Tragedy*, p. 221 n. 3) notes the "stammering repetition of τις." It is followed by a series of (nervous?) repetitions: a word is used twice in lines 738, 739, 741, 742, 743, and the same compound verb ends both line 741 and 743.

Attempts have been made to read a contemporary allusion into lines 733-4 and to identify the city which Menelaus mentions, thence to fix a date for the play. The most popular conjecture is Argos, first put forward by Hermann. Cf. Hyslop (ed. 1900, p. xviii): "The city . . . is clearly Argos . . . a thinly veiled allusion. . . . Her hostility was shown by the alliances of 421 and 420 and the expedition was that which ended in the battle of Mantinea and the reduction of Argos. . . . It is clear then that the years 421-418 fulfil the conditions required

by the present play. They were years in which the tension between Athens and Sparta was great, and the neutrality previously adopted by Argos toward the militant states was exchanged for a policy of active hostility to Sparta." Cf. also D. L. Page, *Greek Poetry and Life*, pp. 224ff.; Méridier, ed. Budé, II, pp. 100f.; T. Bergk, *Hermes* 1883.487ff.

In spite of these detailed hypotheses, always based on a questionable *a priori* assumption, it seems unnecessary and indeed impossible to specify the allusion if one does exist. Further, it is much more likely, since the play has been from time to time attacking Spartan methods and mores, that the allusion is simply to the Peloponnesian city's unpopular habit of reducing groups which turn hostile or withdraw from alliances (a habit in which Athens too indulged). But even this implies an allusion, whereas the lines are perfectly satisfactory without one. Page (*ibid.*) writes: "the political allusion is wholly irrelevant to the story of the play; in the second place it is detailed and explicit." The relevance, I would argue, is not to the story but to the characterization of Menelaus, the Spartan *miles gloriosus* (as Grube dubs him). The great general, foiled in his attempts to put to death a defenseless slave woman, announces that the next thing on his agenda is the reduction of a hostile city! Could anything be more hideously ludicrous? Nor is the reference "detailed and explicit." Rather, it is vague and stuttering: "There's a certain—not far from Sparta—a certain city. . . ." If that is an allusion, the lines remain excellent long after the loss of their original (and extreme) subtlety.

Flickinger (*Greek Theatre*, p. 176) offers a bluntly practical reason for Menelaus' contrived departure: "Orestes is presently to make his appearance (vs. 881) and Menelaus' actor is required for his role." The playwright often tried "to conceal or gloss over his yielding" to such arbitrary exits.

⁴⁵ Line 765. Cf. E. *Electra* 388-9.

⁴⁶ *Euripides*, p. 207.

⁴⁷ Cf. the third stasimon, 766-801.

⁴⁸ Ed. Budé, II, p. 141 n. 1: "Le sang illustre dont il est sorti l'a sauvé à l'heure du péril."

⁴⁹ References to the voyage of the Argo are found elsewhere in the play (cf. 863-5). This legend's significance will be discussed in Chapter IV.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ Lines 822-4. The lack of choral action in the plots of ancient drama has been a source of irritation for some critics. Obviously participation was unfeasible, even though the playwrights seem at times to have wanted to incorporate the chorus. The present is a good example of extrication: the Phthian women have no opportunity to show that they cannot take part, for, just as they are on the verge of entering the palace to help calm Hermione, she comes rushing out.

² For a discussion of various types of gestures of despair in tragedy see Denniston at E. *Electra* 146-9.

³ Cf. lines 147-54.

⁴ Lines 876-8. Flickinger (*Greek Theatre*, p. 281) calls the nurse's reaction an "unconscious sense of outraged propriety." As a contrast to Hermione, cf. the modest Macaria of the *Heraclidae* (474ff.) "Sirs, do not think it's boldness that brings me forth; that much I ask of you first. For prudent silence is woman's most becoming behavior; she should remain quietly in the house."

⁸ Line 888. "Does she have children?" is the implied question in the Greek. Cf. line 420 and *supra*, Chapter II, note 25.

⁹ Lines 891-5. He comes, she says, as a haven for the storm-tossed mariner. There is almost always at least one character in a tragedy who is fond of metaphors from the sea. In this play both Peleus and Hermione are so inclined. For Peleus cf. 554-5, 748-9; Hermione 854-5, 891.

⁷ Line 911. Orestes unwittingly echoes Andromache's sentiments about her own sex at 269ff. Cf. E. *Medea* 263-6, and *Iph. Taur.* 1032 (Orestes to Iphigenia): "You women are brilliant at dreaming up schemes!"

⁸ Ed. 1906 *ad loc.* Grube (*Euripides*, p. 209 n. 1) is more tolerant of the passage: "It is a trifle long, but we should remember that Hermione must blame somebody, and that the daughter of Helen would naturally blame her own sex." Not at all: the daughter of Helen would find no cause for blaming anyone. She would only feel, as Hermione has felt up to this point, that her luck had been bad. The daughter of *Menelaus*, on the other hand, might be quick to blame someone else.

⁹ So one must read line 964, as if $\sigma\alpha\varsigma = \sigma\upsilon\upsilon$. Cf. the scholiast: "'not receiving letters from you.'" Some editors puzzle over "these unexplained letters."

¹⁰ Line 976. The translation tries to imitate the verbal repetition of the Greek.

¹¹ Verrall, *Four Plays*, p. 7.

¹² Cf. Blaklock (*Male Characters*, pp. 179-80): "They are wartime cartoons produced to feed public anger at some crisis in the Peloponnesian war, in some hour perhaps of Spartan mischief in the north. Orestes who appears as a minor character in this play is a . . . liar, schemer, murderer. No attempt is made at realistic characterization."

¹³ Cf. the fourth stasimon.

¹⁴ Because the chorus does not specifically name the antecedent of $\sigma\upsilon\iota$ in line 1041, a surprising amount of speculation has taken place as to who is meant. No less than four editors (Dindorf, Kirchhoff, Pflugk-Klotz, and Ammendola) have chosen Hermione. Bothe decided that the members of the chorus were talking to themselves, and this idea was more or less adopted by Burges who emended the text to read $\epsilon\mu\upsilon\iota$. A scholiast reasoned that Troy was being addressed: "'Not you alone,' [the chorus] says, 'fell from the gods' favor, not even your kinsmen alone.'" The scholiast is right: Troy is meant. "Nor on those dear to you (alone)" can only suggest "but also on those *not* dear to you," i.e. the Greeks, which is of course what the next line (with adversative asyndeton) says. The "disease" echoes the "malignant anguish." The ode begins with the Trojans, moves to the Greeks, and then back to the Trojans, in the style of a rondo. Andromache is the representative of Troy in the play and in a sense the lines refer to her—surely more to her than to Hermione. The ode so far has traced the chain of misfortunes which have befallen those connected with the Trojan War, for the most part in general but with one specific example, that of the family of Agamemnon (not Menelaus). After this—one might say—digression, the chorus returns to the fuller scene of wretchedness, depicting the Greek women mourning their sons, the Trojan women sold into slavery. Andromache, not Hermione, belongs in this picture. In the prologue (lines 8-15) she herself tells of her sorrows, her "malignant anguish": watching her husband killed, her son brutally hurled from a tower, finding herself handed over to a conquering prince, a "prize of the spear." Compared to Andromache in this play, Hermione's plight

is of small moment. A childless marriage and a feckless father are hardly the problems which could stir the chorus as it sings the aftermath of Troy.

¹⁵ Garzya at 1047-69: "Quinto episodio che serve, nella sua esiguità; come di raccordo tra la prima parte del dramma, con la quale si può considerar concluso lo svolgimento dell'azione, e il resto che serve a chiarire alcuni sviluppi secondari dell'insieme e che si può sostanzialmente considerar, dal punto di vista estetico, *extra tragoediam*, questa avendo già esaurito la sua unità."

¹⁶ *Four Plays*, p. 6.

¹⁷ δοῦξενος may refer to Pylades (as it does in Aeschylus). But see Fraenkel at A. *Ag.* 880; Garzya, *Rev. Belge* 1951.1149.

¹⁸ Cf. Pind. *Nem.* 7.42; schol. to E. *Orestes* 1655, *Andr.* 53; Strabo 9.3.9; Apollodorus *Epit.* 6.14; Paus. 1.13.9, 10.24.4.

¹⁹ Paus. 2.29.9. Cf. above, Chapter II, note 40.

²⁰ Denniston and Page, A. *Ag.* 488-9. They refer the reader to further comment by Fraenkel *ad loc.* Cf. also Lesky, *Griech. Literatur*, p. 354.

²¹ Lines 1139-41. Neoptolemus inherited the "Trojan" leap from his father. Cf. the scholiast at *Andr.* 1139.

²² Lines 1161-65. For other moralizing messengers cf. E. *Helen* 1617-8, *Supp.* 726-30, *Bacchae* 1150-2.

²³ Criticism of Apollo is common enough. Cf. lines 1203, 1211ff., *Electra* 971, 1301ff., etc.; also Ch. IV note 31.

²⁴ Lines 1226-30. "When gods appear at the end of a tragedy, their divinity is always recognized at once by chorus or actor, their identity never. This they themselves reveal in their opening lines" (Denniston at E. *Electra* 1233-7).

²⁵ Lines 1243-48. The goddess, in referring to Andromache as "spear-booty" (1243) employs a term used elsewhere only by her adversaries: Menelaus (583), Hermione (908, 932), Orestes (962), and Hermione's nurse (871).

²⁶ A traditional dwelling for the shade of Achilles, reputedly originating with Arctinus. Cf. E. *Iph. Taur.* 435 and the schol. to Pind. *Nem.* 4.79.

²⁷ Lines 1268-9. Thetis relies on Zeus' will, almost as would a mortal. The universal law binds Zeus no less than man. Cf. E. *Herc. Fur.* 21, and *Iph. Taur.* 1486: "Necessity rules both you and the gods."

²⁸ Lines 1284-8 (end). Cf. the *Alcestis*, *Bacchae*, *Helen*, and (slightly altered) *Medea*.

²⁹ Our minds, for instance, are eased about Peleus, who otherwise, as Johnson says (*Class. Wkly* 1955.13), is "unsaved through the very success of salvation." (The role of the *dea* will be discussed in Chapter IV).

³⁰ If Hermione does (as legend tells) become Orestes' wife, her earlier rebuke to Andromache (170-3) is splendidly ironic, for there she calls it a great lack of sensibility to mate with the slayer of one's husband.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ Cf. lines 361ff., 455ff., 601ff.

² The conflicts need not "grow" out of the preceding scenes (cf. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy*², p. 241). Hermione's predicament is a direct result of Peleus' interference in the preceding episode, but Orestes' plot against Neoptolemus is an independent action running parallel to the conflict between Andromache and Hermione. It is introduced into the plot when needed and motivated by dictating the scenes which follow it.

³ Lines 261ff.

⁴ Lines 750-6.

⁵ The mention of Molossia in Thetis' prophecy (1244, 1248) has led most editors to append the name Molossus to the son of Andromache and Neoptolemus, although the ancient manuscripts (except for a correcting hand in the Laurentian) leave the child nameless. Murray wisely follows them. Evidence that the son of Andromache and Neoptolemus was named Molossus is limited to scholia, to Pausanias (1.11.1) who also names two other children (ignored by or unknown to Euripides), and to Apollodorus (*Epit.* 6.12) who, if the text can be trusted at that spot, follows the schol. to Hom. *Od.* 3.188. D. S. Robertson (*Class. Rev.* 1923.58-60) has constructed an elaborate theory on the basis of the Molossian references, to the effect that the *Andromache* was written "for" Tharyps, the young Molossian king at the time of the Peloponnesian War, and was perhaps even acted by Tharyps when he was a student in Athens!

⁶ It would still bother some, no doubt. The appearance of the ghost of Polydorus at the beginning of the *Hecuba* is not sufficient to prepare some critics (e.g. Norwood) for the discovery of his corpse later in the play.

⁷ Cf. W. A. A. van Otterlo (*Untersuch. über Begriff der griech. Ringkomposition*) who approaches the device from a stricter point of view than is used here, as his definition indicates: "das an den Anfang gestellte Thema eines bestimmten Abschnitts wird nach einer längeren oder kürzeren sich darauf beziehenden Ausführung am Schluss wiederholt, so dass der ganze Abschnitt durch Sätze gleichen Inhalts und mehr oder weniger ähnlichen Wortlauts umrahmt und zu einen einheitlichen, sich klar vom Kontext abhebenden Gebilde geschlossen wird." The principle, however, remains the same when expanded over an entire poem or drama, although such refinements as similar wording may not be present.

⁸ *Greek Tragedy*², p. 241.

⁹ This is the *nodus* of Horace's admonition (*Ars Poet.* 191-2): "nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus / inciderit."

¹⁰ I do not mean to suggest by these remarks that Greek myth was rigid or consistent. The mythical innovations in this one play give a hint of its remarkable plasticity. As Joseph Fontenrose (*Python*, Introduction, p. 4) says, "Greek writers were not composing ritual texts; they used mythical materials for their own literary purposes: changing, adding, subtracting, fusing, as they wished." But myth was not fable, as we understand the second word. Certain "facts" obviously could not be ignored or argued with, and it is this collection of "facts" that gives the myths what little consistency we find in them. In the present instance, to judge from the evidence, it was a mythical fact (in Euripides' time) that Neoptolemus lay buried at Delphi. To this degree Euripides was limited.

¹¹ Cf. *Orestes* 1653-6 (Apollo): "Orestes, that girl Hermione (at whose throat you're holding your sword) is destined to be your wife. He who thinks he'll marry her, Neoptolemus, will not. He is fated to die by the Delphic sword."

¹² Lines 1279-82.

¹³ *Euripides*, p. 207.

¹⁴ Lines 1044-6.

¹⁵ Lines 164-8.

¹⁶ Lines 614-5. *LSJ* submits that αὐθέντης ("murderer") is here used "more loosely" to mean "one of a murderer's family." This seems unnecessarily cautious.

¹⁷ Lines 680-4.

¹⁸ Decharme, *Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre*, p. 190.

¹⁹ Lines 183-231.

²⁰ Lines 927-8. Cf. Andromache's warning to Menelaus, lines 462-3.

²¹ The Tantalid curse extends far back before the Trojan War, but Orestes' murder of Clytemnestra with the resulting blood-guilt belongs to both legends.

²² Lines 364-5.

²³ She is thought by some (e.g. Verrall) to have left the stage before Orestes makes his final speech (993-1008), but such convenient superimpositions of stage directions must be viewed with suspicion. Orestes begins the speech by addressing Hermione; there is no reason to believe that the remainder of his speech is an elaborate aside to the chorus and audience.

²⁴ Lines 1181-3.

²⁵ Lines 1184-5.

²⁶ Euripides makes no use of the legend in which Neoptolemus is the murderer of Andromache's son Astyanax.

²⁷ Cf. lines 1136-45.

²⁸ Third stasimon.

²⁹ Lines 774-6.

³⁰ Lines 764-5.

³¹ Fifth century Athenians expected attacks on Delphian Apollo. Cf. G. Murray (*Euripides and his age*, p. 80): "We should remember that an attack on the god of Delphi was not particularly objectionable in Athens. For that god, by the mouth of his official prophets, at the beginning of the war, had assured the Spartans that if they fought well they would conquer and that He, the God, would be fighting for them. The best that a pious Athenian could do for such a god as that was to suppose that the official prophets were liars."

³² For that matter, the story of the Trojan War, its causes, its results, and its cast, forms singly the most popular mythical theme in Greek literature. This is not surprising. The story, as myth preserved it, is one of innumerable chapters and phases, digressing into almost every type of human and divine action and encompassing every extremity of the Greek world. The people involved constitute an excellent catalogue of psychological types. In this respect the tragedians found the myth complex of Troy a rich storehouse of *dramatis personae* from which they could draw the arrogant, the humble, the proud, the cowardly, the mis-used, or the cruel, and, leaving them pretty much within the framework of the complex, could test and study their capabilities and mutual weaknesses. Five other extant plays of Euripides (*Electra*, *Helen*, *Iph. Aul.*, *Iph. Taur.*, and *Orestes*) are based on the war's legends, and we have evidence of or fragments from at least five more (*Alexander*, *Epeius*, *Palamedes*, *Telephus*, and *Phoenix*.)

³³ The *Troades* is said by Aelian (*Var. Hist.* 2.8 Hercher) to be the third play of a trilogy of which the first two were the *Alexander* and the *Palamedes*. (The *Sisyphus* was the satyr play.) If that is true, Euripides wrote one play concerned entirely with cause, one entirely with effect. The *Palamedes* presumably dealt with Greek treachery in the course of the war.

³⁴ G. Murray, *Euripides and his age*, p. 74.

Appendix Critica

The departures from Murray's text are listed in the Preface. The following includes a few expansions on these departures, brief discussions of some textual cruces in the *Andromache*, as well as references to other discussions or emendations, made in the interest of a fuller apparatus.

Line 7. Properly bracketed by editors since Hermann who adopted Lascaris' reading of line 6. The substitution of οὐτις for εἰ τις (= *ut qui maxime*) undoubtedly led to the substitution of the comparative for the superlative, and thus to the added line. Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 64) suggests: The actors either misread their copies or were pleased to improve them: they wrote δὴ τις for δ' εἰ τις and added a new line to complete the sentence. (Perhaps an error of transliteration.)" But see Kühner-Gerth I.22.

25. Cf. the Preface. Lines 24-5 are simply expository, not studies in subtlety. The connective neither "in logicam peccat" nor lacks effectiveness. "Here in this house I lay with Achilles' son, my master, and gave birth to a boy." See also Radermacher, *Rhein. Mus.* 1893.622-3.

52. Cf. the Preface. For a parallel use of the accusative relative in this line, cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249d.5 (Burnet).

59. See Denniston, *Greek Particles*, p. 325, for a defense of Badham's δ' ἐκεῖ.

86. The *lectio difficilior* (Kirchhoff) is read, but see Kamerbeek *ad loc.*

122-5. Cf. the Preface. Jackson's correction (οἱ κτλ. / τλάμον ἀμφικλέκτω / διδύμων ἐπίκοινον εὐνᾶν / ἀμφὶ παῖδ' Ἀχιλλέως) grew out of a gentle laugh at Paley's "faithful" rendering of the text as he read it: "They have involved you in an odious quarrel about a double bed, having to share it with another, in respect of the son of Achilles." See also Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

147. Because of Hermione's abrupt entrance, and because she seems in line 154 to respond to a remark put to her by the chorus, Musgrave was the first of a series of editors to mark a lacuna of undetermined size before 147. Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, pp. 68-9) "inclines" to the theory that actors of the fourth or third century "cut away the formal opening of the scene for the sake of novelty and rapidity, new ideas and new methods." (E. *Supp.* 381 is another example.) Those who argue for the authenticity of Hermione's entrance cite Menelaus' unannounced arrival at line 309 (cf. Garzya *ad loc.*). But there he announces himself and begins by speaking directly to Andromache. In the present speech, although Hermione does not exactly thrust her speech *in medias res*, she does appear to be making a defensive reply in her first seven lines, and the eighth line explicitly says so. Matthiae supposed that she came on stage talking with her attendants. Page feels that this too would be a post-Euripidean actors' con-

vention. It is almost certain that her retort is addressed to the chorus. It is far less certain but certainly possible that they ushered her on stage with a few lines such as: "Speaking of the mistress, here she comes now, not dressed as you, Andromache, in slave's and suppliant's garb, but in a manner befitting the royal wife of Neoptolemus." To this Hermione could aptly reply: "This is not my husband's finery, but my own from my father's house. I am a woman of independent wealth and free tongue. Bear that in mind, ladies!" A splendid introduction to her acidulous, defensive personality.

220-1. Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 65) is somewhat suspicious of these lines. He cites Paley's translation: "we feel this weakness (giving away to love) worse than the male sex; only we make a stand against it (i.e. bar its approach) successfully." Cf. Norwood's "we stand in front of it," i.e. "we disguise it." Hirzel deletes, perhaps judiciously.

231. Jackson, *Class. Qu.* 1941.165, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 46.

248. Denniston, *Greek Particles*, p. 163.

273. Wilamowitz (*Anal. Eur.*, p. 208: "ignoravit scholiasta") deletes, followed by Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 65).

293-4. See Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, pp. 102-3, also Garzya *ad loc.* (None of the attempted solutions to this vexed passage is very promising.)

306. Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

330-3. Listed by Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 65) as "more doubtful." 330-1 (not 330-2 as Kirchhoff, Wecklein, Murray, Garzya, and others state) are cited by Stobaeus (104.14) as Menandrian. Jachmann (*Nachr. Ges. Gött.* 1936. 140ff.) believes that a diaskeuast was reminded of the Menandrian lines by *Andr.* 323, and thus added it to Andromache's speech, making the verbal change found in Stobaeus. Wilamowitz (*Hermes* 1925.290) deletes 333, followed by Jachmann on grounds of rhythm, location, and the line's use of fillers.

346. To add to the long history of scholarship on this line's last word, cf. Palmer's *πύσεται* (*Hermath.* 1888.225ff.): "he will find out a very different story to be the true one."

348. Kuiper, *Mnem.* 1887.329-30.

361-3. Didymus doubted these lines, and Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 65) places them in the "risky" class. But they are vital to the play, for Andromache draws a necessary comparison between Menelaus' concern in the war and his purpose on stage.

397-8. Cf. the Preface. For emendations of single words, see Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.; Harry, *Woch. f. Klass. Phil.* 1912.28; Ellis, *Journ. Phil.* 1891.182.

448. Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

464-93. This is the second of four stasima. To look ahead for a moment, one notes that the third and fourth stasima are based in thought quite loosely on the episodes which they follow (as was, to a somewhat lesser degree, the first stasimon). This is the expected relationship between episode and stasimon. In the third episode Peleus arrives to rescue Andromache and drive away Menelaus. The third stasimon (766-801) is an ode in praise of Peleus, citing past exploits of this brave old man. At the end of the fourth episode Orestes predicts Neoptolemus' death at the hands of himself and Apollo's Delphic servants. The chorus thereupon incorporates into the fourth stasimon (1009-46) both Apollo's actions at Troy and the matricide of Orestes.

In contrast to these two antiphonal odes the second stasimon is almost incongruous in its position following the second episode. After Menelaus tricks

Andromache away from the shrine into his own clutches where her child already is being held, the chorus seems awkwardly out of step when it backtracks to dwell once more upon the problems of two wives in one man's house. Surely the moment for such comment has passed: Andromache and her son (who never were guilty) are now helpless victims about to be led off to an unjust and totally uncivilized death at the hands of Menelaus. Even on this point the chorus has lost touch with the episode, for they say: "The Spartan daughter of General Menelaus has turned her fire upon the other mistress, and in malignant rivalry slays [or "will slay": cf. below, 489] the luckless woman from Troy and her son"—whereas Menelaus has made it clear (it is in fact the basis of his trick) that Andromache is his prey alone, the boy Hermione's.

A résumé of the second stasimon and its notable lack of harmony is found in the text (Ch. II, 5). It is important to add, I think, that these lyrics, though they are by no means breathtaking under any circumstances, are primarily a disappointment because of their location in the play rather than because of intrinsic weaknesses. To illustrate this, one need only read them at the conclusion of the *first* episode (i.e. in place of the present first stasimon). Their improvement is remarkable. It is in the first episode that Hermione and Andromache "discuss" the domestic problem of too many wives, and it is here where the "fire" of Hermione is dramatically revealed. The chorus' observation of the young bride's furious intent would be exactly right, for she has just said several times that *she* plans to kill Andromache. The ode generally would make sense where it now does not. The mention of Menelaus at 487 would soften his abrupt arrival. Most fortunate of all would be the shortening of the distance between Hermione's primly delivered observation at 177-80 ("[We Greeks maintain] it isn't proper for one man to hold the reins of two wives, but rather that he who wants to live in honor shall gaze with content upon one love alone on his couch") and the chorus' echo of it (468-9): "I say, let a husband be content with one bed, unshared with other wives."

One is tempted to complete this felicitous, though hypothetical, re-arrangement by trying to place the dislodged first stasimon into the vacancy left by the second. Again, despite its satisfactory position following the first episode, it seems to improve in aptness in this later location. The Judgment of Paris is fittingly recounted after a scene in which Andromache dwells almost exclusively on the events in Troy. Her contempt of Menelaus as a weakling easily plied by the whims of women is given striking contrast by the story of Paris and the three goddesses. Paris' relationship to Menelaus is implicitly present, for it is because of Menelaus' wife that Paris became a "bane to Priam's city." The reference to Cassandra's urging of the infant's murder is a sharp reminder of the imminent senseless slaying of the innocent son of Andromache. But the most imposing argument is that the tone of the stasimon, its emotional intensity, is more in keeping with this later stage of the drama, just as the (present) second stasimon sounds better in the earlier, less crucial position. As Andromache, being led off to death, looks back to her "real" death at Troy, so would the chorus upon reflection look back to the first causes of this pathetic situation. And, as she maintains that she is being slaughtered for the most trivial of reasons, so would they with dismay discover the "first cause" to be a pastoral beauty contest!

But, when one considers the resistance that meets the suggested transposition of even two lines in a tragedy, he can understand my reluctance to propose or argue for the interchange of two complete stasima. It would be as easy to pro-

pose that the Parthenon originally sat on the Pnyx. Nevertheless, the thought lingers that Euripides ought not to have deliberately rendered one of his lyric odes ineffectual and pointless when such a simple solution would have rendered two of them valid and pertinent.

467. Schroeder, *Eur. cantica* (1928), p. 215; Wilamowitz, *Verskunst*, p. 427 n. 1.

489. Nauck's emendation is more than attractive, but the mss. defy its acceptance, and, since the corruption would logically have occurred the other way around, we must bow to the older authority.

510. Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 87 n. 1.

538. Radermacher, *Rhein. Mus.* 1893.622-3.

553. Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

557. Wilamowitz (*Hermes* 1898.516) reads Hartung's emendation without giving him credit. The mss. reading is acceptable to many editors. Cf. Kamerbeek: "wederom een van de vele treffende diermetaphoren, waaraan dit stuk zo rijk is 'Als een schaap met jon.'"

586. If $\nu\alpha\iota$ is to be deleted (with Lascaris), Lenting's limitative particle should be added. Cf. E. *Herc. Fur.* 615, *Ion* 278, 295.

591. Wilamowitz (*Hermes* 1879.178-9): "dittographia est genuini versus 590."

602. Platt, *Class. Rev.* 1896.382.

646-8. All of 646, the last four words of 647, and the first two words of 648 were bracketed by Jachmann (*Nachr. Ges. Gött.* 1936.206ff.) as interpolations. For 646 cf. 322-3: "So entstand der V. 646, welchen unabhängig von diesen Überlegungen als unecht durchschaut zu haben dem kritischen Sinn Hartungs alle Ehre macht." 647 is a "colorless addition" in this context. 648 is taken from 620.

679. Wecklein, *Bayer. Gymn.* 1925.255.

711. The word $\sigma\tau\epsilon\sigma\sigma\acute{o}\varsigma$, the reading of MBO, may mean here not "barren" (which is a rare use otherwise limited to the technical writings of Aristotle and Manetho [see (B) in *LSJ*]) but rather "stubborn," or better "cruel," as at line 98. Cf. E. *Hecuba* 1295, *Medea* 1031, A. *Prom.* 1052. The next line (712) may have led an early commentator to substitute the more learned for the regular meaning, which substitution in turn would have led to the variant reading $\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\phi\acute{o}\varsigma$.

747. Palmer, *Hermath.* 1888.225ff.

784. Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

844. *Ibid.*

848. Usener's (*Rhein. Mus.* 1900.293ff.) emendation is appealing, especially if we read with Seidler at 862 (as do Allen and Italie).

929. Rademacher, *Rhein. Mus.* 1893.622.

990. Palmer, *Hermath.* 1888.225ff.: μ' $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\acute{o}\nu$, "the true reading."

991. Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 86.

1039. Murray's reading was first published by Burges.

1042. Musurus' correction of the errant mss. has one drawback: $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\pi\acute{\iota}\pi\tau\omega$ has no occurrences in tragedy and is generally found only in prose (but cf. Pind. *Paean* 2.50). His reading, however, supplies the sense, although in point of fact the line does well without any verb at all: "Not upon you alone these sorrows."

1065. Palmer, *Hermath.* 1888.225ff.

1145. Platt, *Class. Rev.* 1896.382.

1151-2. Jachmann (*Nachr. Ges. Gött.* 1936.136ff.) marks as an interpolation the last three words of 1151 and the first three of 1152, arguing that the "Textredaktor" would say that the Delphian, "welcher Neoptolemus tötete, dabei Mithelfer

hatte, weil deren schnödes Benehmen ja alsbald (1153ff.) zu eingehender Schilderung gelangt."

1180. Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 35: τερωόμενος βάλλω. Another instance of *facile transpositio*.

1222. Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 79 (*q.v.*) reads οὐκέτ εἰ<μ', οἱ>μοι, πόλις [πόλις] κτέ., explaining "I should prefer to assume the quite common union of rudimentary haplography and rudimentary dittography." (Jackson can be brutally candid about the problems of text. Note his postscript to this line on p. 80: "The passage, needless to say, has neither interest nor importance, and there are many of its kind. They are not worthy of the distinction of an obelus: the editor therefore supplies a syllable or two, and all is well enough.")

1254. For new ideas on this bramble, see Jackson, *Marg. Scaen.*, p. 51: "No man—poet, interpolator—would excogitate such a verse to be displayed in such a place." This in indirect reply to Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 66) who sees it as a probable "expansive interpolation." Jackson replaces the line after 1235.

1272. Herwerden, *Mnem.* 1903.261ff.

1283. Page (*Actors' Interpolations*, p. 66), who calls the line a probable interpolation, is incorrect in adding that it was ignored by the scholiast. It is in fact paraphrased quite closely. Although quoted by Stobaeus (72.3) as coming from Euripides' **Antiope*, it is not the sort of line, as Paley points out *ad loc.*, that can occur only once. It is read by both Kamerbeek and Garzya.

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