

CHAPTER SIX

THE STASIMA OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

6.0. Introduction

In this chapter we will test our hypothesis concerning the interconnected character of the *Antigone* by applying it to the choral songs. We hope to show that these songs are of a primarily cosmological nature, that in all of them the six fundamental cosmological categories are represented in their interconnectedness, and that the paradoxical and ambiguous character of the cosmos and man's place in it is exemplified in all the songs.

The analysis of the *stasima* will be of a structural nature: they will be considered as differential repetitions of the same cosmological themes, and their deep structural similarities (on a more or less synchronic axis) will be the focus of our attention.

Because we are convinced that all choral songs belong together in an interconnected whole with cosmological significance, we will offer objections to two essentially separative interpretations of them: the one denying the thematic unity of the *stasima*, the other denying their contextual relevance. The first interpretation maintains that the choral songs do not really belong together, because they lack sequential order (Alexanderson SCA 105) or because as a whole they are cosmologically irrelevant (Schwinge RCA 304-05). The most consistent separative interpretation with respect to the thematic unity of the *stasima* is that of Müller, who maintains that the opinions of the chorus have to be discarded as *Fehlurteile* of the mediocre bourgeoisie (SA 16).¹ This does not condemn the statements of the chorus to insignificance, because Müller separates the surface intentions of the chorus, which are mere appearance, from the secondary meaning of their words in which he believes the true opinions of the poet Sophocles to shine through (SA 7). These separative interpretations have to pay the heavy price of emptying the *stasima* of tragic ambiguity, of what Coleman is referring to when he calls them "a disturbing set of variations on a single theme" (RCA 26) and Kirkwood when he speaks of their "atmosphere of ambiguity" (DRC 14).

Those who deny the contextual relevance of the choral songs are even more rigorously separative. They believe that there are no significant

¹ "Es ist paradox, dass er [der Chor] nun ein Lied auf die Grösse des Menschen anstimmt. Das ist nur dadurch möglich, dass er nicht begreift, wo die wahre Menschengrösse erscheint" (Müller SA 83 on the first *stasimon*).

connections between the *stasima* and the episodes surrounding them. Some maintain that it is a weakness of this tragedy that the choral songs are mere interludes between the episodes (Ronnet SPT 157, Waldock SD 112-14, further examples in Rohdich A 19-20). Those who deny the thematic relevance of the *stasima*, like Müller, also have to denude them of much contextual relevance. Rather than revising their separative preconceptions, these interpretations endorse the *a priori* idea that Sophocles created a tragedy with flaws (Coleman RCA 4).

To clarify the meaning of the choral songs we first have to determine the function of the chorus within the tragedy. Traditionally, a separative dichotomy is maintained: either the chorus is considered the poet's mouthpiece, or it is regarded as a protagonist. In the 19th century Boeckh expressed the first point of view. He maintained that the chorus stands above the actors, and presents us with the poet's general judgment (AS 71; cf. Alexanderson SCA 86). The other point of view goes back as far as Aristotle, who says that the choruses of tragedies, at least those of Sophocles, should be regarded as one of the actors.² The thought behind the dichotomy seems to be: if the chorus represents the view of Sophocles it cannot be an actor; if it is an actor, it is unable to represent the poet, actors being elements in the drama, not reviewers of it. Some scholars, for example Burckhardt, maintain that the chorus vacillates between the two points of view.³

The latter theory is singularly unattractive, because there is no criterion to determine what function the chorus is performing in any specific case. But the other points of view are also doubtful. Is the division according to which the chorus either acts as the poet's mouthpiece or as an actor really adequate? The problem with the dichotomy is its preoccupation with the poet Sophocles' opinions. It is doubtful whether these can or should be distilled from a tragedy. The nature of tragedy is that it is a continuous struggle between truth and falsehood, between justice and injustice, without there being a final truth. We do not believe that the tragedy contains a mouthpiece for the poet—all participants share in the tragedy's ironical interplay of illumination and darkness.

² καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἓνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόνον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ. (The chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors. It should form part of the whole and share in the action, not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles) (Poet 18, 1456a25ff).

³ "Sein [Sophokles'] Chor ist da, wo er sich auf die Handlung selbst einlässt, oft unsicher und selbst verblendet, sobald er sich aber zu einer allgemeinen Betrachtung der Gesetze des Daseins sammelt, erhaben; d.h. Sophokles klebt nicht fest an der Fiktion, dass er nur Greise oder Dienerinnen usw. von da und da singen lasse, sondern behandelt den Chor abwechselnd als wirklichen und als idealen Bestandteil" (Burckhardt GK 2.285).

On the other hand it is just as misleading to call the chorus an actor. Its utterances in the *stasima* are of a specific lyrical nature and it is more reflective than the actors. But the fact that the chorus comments on the actors and on the cosmos does not mean that it is a vehicle for the poet's opinions. The tragedy undermines such separations between true and untrue statements.

6.1. The first *stasimon*

We use the text of Dain/Mazon (DM). All differences with the texts of Jebb (J) and Dawe (D) are accounted for.

335 Πολλά τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀν-
θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·
τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν
πόντου χειμερίῳ νότῳ
χωρεῖ, περιβρυχίοισιν
περῶν ὑπ' οἰδμασιν, θεῶν
τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν
ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν, ἀποτρύεται,
340 ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος,
ἱππεὶ γένοι πολεῦων.

345 Κουφονόων τε φύλον ὀρ-
νίθων ἀμφιβαλὼν ἄγει,
καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη
πόντου τ' εἰναλίαν φύσιν
σπεύρασι δικτυοκλώστοις
περιφραδῆς ἀνὴρ· κρατεῖ
350 δὲ μηχαναῖς ἀγραύλου
θηρὸς ὀρεσιβάτα, λασιαύχενά θ'
ἵππον ὀχμάζεται ἀμφίλοφον ζυγὸν
οὐρειὸν τ' ἀκμηῆτα ταῦρον.

355 Καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν
φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους
ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο, καὶ δυσαύλων
πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ
δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη
360 παντοπόρος· ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται
τὸ μέλλον· Ἄϊδα μόνον
φεῦξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται, νό-
σων δ' ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς
ζυμπέφρασται.

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man; the power that crosses the white sea, driven by the stormy south-wind, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Earth, the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, doth he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses, as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year.

And the light-hearted race of birds, and the tribes of savage beasts, and the sea-brood of the deep, he snares in the meshes of his woven toils, he leads captive, man excellent in wit. And he masters by his arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he puts the yoke upon its neck, he tames the tireless mountain bull.

And speech, and wind-swift thought, and all the moods that mould a state, hath he taught himself; and how to flee the arrows of the frost, when 'tis hard lodging under the clear sky, and the arrows of the rushing rain; yea, he hath resource for all; without resource he meets nothing that must come: only

against Death shall he call for aid in vain; but from baffling maladies he hath devised escapes.

Σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν
365 τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων,
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει,
νόμους παρείρων χθονὸς
θεῶν τ' ἔνορκον δίκαν
370 ὑφίπολις· ἄπολις ὅτῳ τὸ μὴ καλὸν
ξύνεστι τόλμας χάριν·
μήτ' ἐμοὶ παρέστιος γέ-
νοιτο μήτ' ἴσον φρονῶν
375 ὅς τὰδ' ἔρδοι.

Cunning beyond fancy's dream is the fertile skill which brings him, now to evil, now to good. When he honours the laws of the land, and that justice which he hath sworn by the gods to uphold, proudly stands his city: no city hath he who, for his rashness, dwells with sin. Never may he share my hearth, never think my thoughts, who doth these things!

341. πολεῦων. D: πολεῦον 343. ἄγει. D: ἀγρεῖ 351. ὀχμάζεται. We follow J and D. DM gives (ὕπ)άξεται 351. ζυγὸν. J: ζυγῶν; D: ζυγῶι 356. ὑπαίθρεια. We follow D. J and DM give (ἐν)αίθρεια 362. ἐπάξεται. D: ἐπεύζεται 367. παρείρων. J and D: γεραίρων 375. ἔρδοι. J and D: ἔρδει

It is no accident that generations of interpreters have referred to the first choral song as the ode on man. It is certainly part of its multiple significance that man's powers of imposing order on chaos are venerated, and this order is of such a strict nature that a structural approach in pairs of oppositions is singularly apt (Barié VGL, Lardinois/Oudemans NOM), but such separative interpretations of the *stasimon* merely show one side of this inseparable mixture of order and ambiguity. As an example of the separative conception we quote Jebb's interpretation:

Its [= the ode's] theme is man's daring,—his inventiveness, and the result to his happiness. Man is master of sea and land; he subdues all other creatures; he has equipped his life with all resources, except a remedy against death. His skill brings him to prosperity, when he observes divine and human laws, but to ruin when he breaks them.

A 69)

It is clear that the ode is indeed concerned with man's abilities to impose order and separation on the confusing powers which surround him. This civilizing ability is shown to be effective in all cosmological categories.

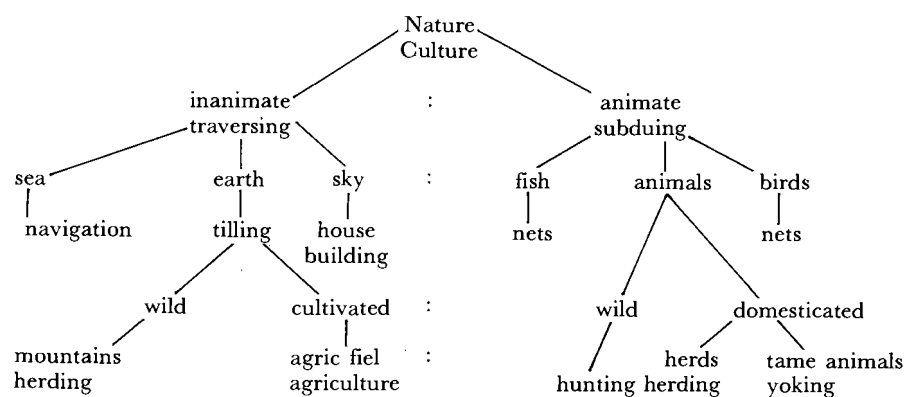
In the first strophe and part of the second man's civilized order is opposed to the three fundamental elements of inanimate nature: the sea, the earth and the sky.⁴ Man tames wild nature by using wind and sea for navigation, by agriculture, and by building houses to protect himself

⁴ Its importance is implied in the threat of the winter gales, and is explicitly mentioned in the arrows (of frost) under the sky.

against the weather. Man's intelligence thus imposes boundaries upon the menacing, wild powers of the elements (Goheen ISA 44).

In the first antistrophe the song turns from inanimate nature to living nature, as it develops in the three fundamental elements. Again man employs his civilizing devices to impose his order upon living nature. He is able to catch the birds which belong to the sky, he subdues the animals which belong to the land, and he is master over the inhabitants of the sea. In all three cases typical instruments of civilization are employed: nets and yokes.

The cultivated land is separated from wild nature which surrounds it. This distinction comes to the fore in Sophocles' separation of two species of animals, wild animals and domesticated ones. The first category is the prey of human hunting, in which order is brought about by artfully woven nets (347). The domesticated animals are not hunted, but herded or employed for agriculture. This further division of the domesticated animals again forms a model of the separation between wild nature and civilized nature. Domesticated animals living in the wild are those which are herded (it is plausible that the adjective ἄγραυλος refers to animals under pastoral care.⁵) The animals which are brought under the yoke, oxen and horses or mules (340), are domesticated and employed in the cultivated fields, e.g. for ploughing. An animal living even closer to the human sphere is the dog. From Ant 257 and 1081-82 it is clear that these domestic animals are distinguished from wild ones, the θῆρες, yet they remain wild, and hence are dangerous polluters. The structure of man's civilizing powers with respect to nature can be rendered in the following diagram:



⁵ Homer often applies ἄγραυλος to cattle: Il 10.155, 17.521, 23.780. The shepherds in Il 18.162 are called ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι. See also Eur Ba 1188 (Van de Wijnperse TJS 63). Because cattle is referred to further on in the *stasimon* some think it plausible that ἄγραύλου θηρὸς ὀρεσσαβάτα in 349-50 refers to herds of goats (Van de Wijnperse TJS 62).

Note that there is a parallelism between animate and inanimate nature, which can be considered a transformation.

It is quite understandable that the orthodox view should consider this choral song an ode on man, because in this cosmological structure the gods are not prominent. That is the most striking difference with other cosmologies, such as that found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus*. There the divine origin of all human civilizing skills is emphasized, but in this *stasimon* man's autonomy is exalted at the cost of the divine sphere. It is as if man has become Promethean himself,⁶ as if he has obtained the power even to separate himself from the divine sphere. The gods are not completely absent from the song, however: in the first strophe terrestrial nature is identified with Ga, the eldest and highest of the gods (338), and later on Hades is mentioned, but apart from their justice (369), the Olympian gods are conspicuous by their absence.

In the second strophe the attention of the *stasimon* turns from the vertical to the horizontal axis. Here we are confronted with a separation between two social relations, which are of major importance to the whole tragedy. On the one hand there is the civilizing temper which founds cities, on the other there is the building of houses in which man can be at home with his family and escape the dangers of the wild places where he cannot be at home (δυσσάυλων - 356).⁷ This implies that the house should be considered as a focus of transformation. On the one hand it protects against the forces of nature, on the other hand it is a home, i.e. the place of specific social relations, of religious reverence, and of a special kind of justice. The opposition between the state and the home returns in the second antistrophe in a measure of separation against those who threaten both the order of the city and of the family: whoever is 'citiless' (ἄπολις - 370) is also barred from the domestic hearth (373)—in Greek eyes the interests of the city and those of the family must be reconciled.

Though Sophocles acknowledges that man's civilizing powers do not enable him to master death, he emphasizes man's ability to defend

⁶ Barié VGL 39-40, Benardete RSA I 189, Segal TC 170, cf. Aes Pr 253, 443, 450, 462, 467, 480, 506.

⁷ The idea that the building of houses is intended gains plausibility in the light of Arist de A 403b: οἰκίας ὁ μὲν λόγος τοιοῦτος, ὅτι σκέπασμα καλυπτικόν φθορᾶς ὑπ' ἀνέμων καὶ ὄμβρων καὶ καυμάτων (The formula of a house is a covering to protect from damage by wind, rain and heat).

himself against that potentially lethal intrusion of nature into culture: disease. Thanks to his intelligence man can escape from seemingly deadly forms of illness.

All these civilizing devices can only be maintained if man makes a double distinction with regard to justice. Though man has all the technical skills, there is always the danger that he will confuse justice with injustice: now he inclines to evil, then again to good (367). Therefore it is of the utmost importance to separate justice from injustice, and the just from the unjust. In the second strophe it has already been implied that the social relation of living together in the polis is impossible without the institution of laws: ἀστυνόμους (355) means "giving law to the city." The importance of this distinction shines through in the double meaning of the words ἄπολις and ὑψίπολις. These words mean 'who is citiless' and 'who is high in the city,' as well as 'whose city is no city' and 'whose city is high' (Pieri OLF 91, Fowler PPS 166). This is understandable: in an interconnected cosmology, whoever fails to separate justice from injustice will be an outcast, but his city itself is then endangered as well, especially if the evildoer should be high in the city, i.e. one of its leaders (compare the Babylonian examples, and Hes Op 219-37). The danger of injustice is felt to be so great that a term is employed for it which in this context, in combination with a negative concept, smacks of pollution: ξύνεστι (371). This 'clinging' of evil to the bad man means that immorality is felt to be an illness (Kamerbeek A 86), thus implying that a separation must be made in order to protect civilization from the danger of injustice. The evildoer is separated, from the community as well as from the family. The expression ἄπολις can be connected with the πρόρρησις, the exclusion of the guilty from the community.⁸ The family is purified in the same way. The barring of a miscreant from the domestic hearth expresses the fear for its contamination by irregular associations (Gernet RPG 414-15). Separation both from the city and from the family is necessary because bad company (κακὴ ὁμιλία) is, through contagion, connected with ἄτη (cf. Aes Sep 599-601, Diod 12.12.3).⁹ This fear is expressed in the hope of the chorus that it may not be thinking in the manner of such an outcast (374-75).

Maintaining justice implies a second separation: the laws of the land

⁸ Gernet RPG 69; cf. Demosth 20.18, Aes Ag 1410, Plato Leg 9.871a.

⁹ This avoidance is explicit in Plato Leg 9.854c: τὰς δὲ τῶν κακῶν συνουσίας φεῦγε ἀμεταστρεπτή. (But the company of evil men shun wholly, and turn not back). Compare Aes Fr 303R, Plato Leg 3.696b, Latte SSR 262.

have to be revered, but also the justice sworn by the gods.¹⁰ One of the many implications of this distinction is that both human and divine law have to be obeyed.

Finally, man's civilizing abilities are intimately connected with his powers of insight. His abilities to employ cunning devices against animals show that he has excellent wits (περιφραδής - 347), and thereby can be distinguished from the birds, which are merely light-thinking (Κουφονόων - 342) (Rohdich A 64). Man's "wind-swift" thinking (ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα) is so autonomous that it is self-taught (ἐδιδάξατο - 355), as is his power to build cities. Hence man is cunning (365), provided that he separates good thinking from evil thinking. Therefore he has to prevent the danger that evildoers should be thinking his thoughts (374)—that would be a dangerous confusion.

It would be an inverted separative error to deny the importance of man's abilities to bring order into chaos, or to minimize it by confining it to the sphere of appearances. Man's civilization is one element of the picture, an aspect that should be taken very seriously. But the other elements should not be forgotten, as separatists like Jebb are prone to do. The fundamental problem, as revealed in this *stasimon* and encountered in other interconnected cosmologies, is that in order to institute civilization man has to employ the selfsame power that he has to subdue. Ordering requires power, and therefore is ambiguous.¹¹ The institution of boundaries requires the power that oversteps boundaries.

In the fourth chapter we outlined to the Greek conception of nature as a clashing of elemental forces which can only be countered by man's civilizing powers, provided that the latter are even more active and versatile. In order to institute order man has to be powerful in movements of ascending, traversing and transcending which in ominous undertones permeate the whole *stasimon*. Through this power of expansion man's excessiveness and proneness to err can eventually be explained. A great many words, including prefixes and prepositions, carry this ominous notion of man's confronting, outflanking, rising above the challenges of the ferocious forces of nature (Benardete RSA I 187 with list).

First of all it is emphasized that nature itself is an awesome power. The winter storm (335) enabling man to traverse the sea's illimitable expanse is itself a formidable power. In this context it has to be remembered that

¹⁰ Note that the word ἔνορκον contains an allusion to boundaries: ἔρκος is related to ὄρκος, implying the recognition of a boundary not to be transgressed (Rohdich A 74).

¹¹ Contra Lesky HG 86 and Weinstock SD 161, who refers to the first *stasimon* as a hymn to man's greatness, a triumphal song of culture.

Hesiod advises against travelling during the winter gales (Op 673-77).¹² Nature's excessive force is also made visible in the waves washing over the ships on all sides (περιβρυχίοισιν - 336), and by the piercing arrows of rain and frost (359). Man can only impose order on the overwhelming elements by separation if he employs even more power of transcending them, a power expressed in a prolonged *figura etymologica* (Kamerbeek A 82); he goes across the sea (πέραν), traversing the waves (περῶν - 337), he moves (πέλει - 333), he strides (χωρεῖ - 336), he travels towards the future (ἐπ' [...] ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον - 360-61).¹³

The institution of order is a clash of forces. Man's blazing trails and scoring marks across the chaotic, undifferentiated sea points to his need of power to extract himself from the grasp of nature's forces.¹⁴ We agree with Müller (SA 87) that in this *stasimon* πόρος and its cognates may have to be understood in the fundamental sense of Alcman, who places Πόρος and Αἴσα, man's possibilities and the power of fate, in opposition to each other.¹⁵ Sophocles' *stasimon* also reflects the fundamental Greek opposition between *Pontos* and *Poros*, expressing the opposition between unbounded nature and culture (Detienne/Vernant RI 134, 153, 211). Because the sea is the illimitable, the ἄπειρος, it takes power to traverse it.¹⁶ The marking of routes and boundaries and the use of transcending power require the adaptable, agile intelligence called μῆτις.

That instituting civilization by imposing order on nature is a dangerous use of power, always on the verge of turning from transcendence to excess, is not explicitly stated in the *stasimon*, but the hints are too numerous to overlook. The word περάω for instance does not only mean 'transcending' but also 'transgressing' (e.g. in OC 153). That seafaring also possesses an aspect of taboo-breaking is hinted at Sophocles' text, but has been made explicit in Horace's description of

¹² Therefore we do not agree with the idea that χειμερίῳ νότῳ is merely a *dativus instrumentalis*. We agree with Müller SA 90 against Jebb A 70 that it is primarily temporal.

¹³ In this context of powerful movement the word πέλει retains its original sense of motion (Benardete RSA I 187), and perhaps in ἐπ'...ἔρχεται the hunting association of leaping upon a prey should be sensed (van de Wijnpersse TJS 30-31). How activist this picture of man is, is clear from the fact that in the ordinary Greek conception it is not man who goes to the future, but the future which comes to man (Rohdich A 66). For example in Pind Ol 10.9: ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλων χρόνος.

¹⁴ Aristophanes Eq 759: ἐκ τῶν ἀμηχανῶν πόρους εὐμήχανος πορίζειν (Versatile in procuring ways out of impossibilities).

¹⁵ Alcman Fr 3.13-14 Calame. Cf. Aes Pr 110-11 where fire is called the device "that hath proved to mortals a teacher in every art and a means to mighty ends (διδάσκαλος τέχνης πάσης βροτοῖς πέφνηε καὶ μέγας πόρος)."

¹⁶ ἄτης δ' ἄβυσσον πέλαγος οὐ μάλ' εὐπορον ("It is a sea of ruin, fathomless and impassable") (Aes Supp 470).

seafaring: "[...]si tamen impiae non tangenda rates transiliunt vada"¹⁷ ("[...]if nevertheless the impious boats skip across the untouchable waves.") Such an ambiguity is also visible in man's tilling of the earth. The earth is a goddess who is indefatigable. Nevertheless the traces which man leaves on its surface in order to make the earth civilized are also dangerous transgressions. Man wears the earth out (ἀποτρύεται - 339), which suggests a violation of the goddess Ga (Barié VGL 28). This ambiguity is most poignant in the lines 360-61. At first glance the line ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον only means: "without resources man confronts nothing in the future," i.e.: man is all-powerful in his civilizing devices. But it is ominous that the words παντοπόρος ἄπορος should be juxtaposed to suggest an oxymoron. This points to a contrary interpretation of the sentence: "resourceless man comes to nothing(ness) that is his future,"¹⁸ which may well express a fundamental tension: through his power man is both all-pervading and without resources, he is able to do anything and nothing. Of course this suggestion needs confirmation.

When we turn our attention to the social separations we are confronted with a similar ambiguity, in the counterpart of παντοπόρος ἄπορος: ὑπίπολις ἄπολις. At first sight it seems as if the king and the scapegoat are nicely separated. But does the oxymoron not suggest that the one who is high in the city and the one without a city might exchange places, or even be one and the same? (Müller SA 86, Segal TC 167). This ominous suggestion is strengthened when we realize that the words ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς are but seemingly an innocent rendering of man's city-founding capacities. The word ὀργή points to man's temperament, his impetus. It is natural power, used more than once in a derogatory sense (for example by Creon in 280). This word points to the fact that founding a city requires the same power it has to expel (like the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*), and that civilization and wildness live in a dangerous confusion within the heart of the city (Rohdich A 65).

The inevitability of power also threatens to undermine the distinction between the just and the unjust. Sophocles does not believe that problems of justice and injustice can be solved by employing cunning devices. Despite his possession of τέχνας man confuses good and evil—this is the fundamental difference with the cosmology of the Sophist Protagoras,

¹⁷ Horace Od 3.23-24; cf. Catull 64.6, Barié VGL 27. A Greek example: Hes Op 682-86.

¹⁸ Segal TC 441; "aliud enim ἐπ' οὐδὲν μέλλον ad nullam rem futuram infinite dictum, quam finite ad eorum, quae futura sunt, nihil. Quorum alterum est: ad nihil, si quid futurum est: alterum: ad nihil, quod est futurum" (G.Herrmann, quoted in Müller SA 95).

Parallels for the idea of man coming to nothingness: Soph El 999f: δαίμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν

who reckons justice among the human τέχνη (Plato Prot 321cff; Jens AI 301, Gundert GGM 31). The impotence of human τέχνη may be connected with the cause of transgressions of justice: man's daring (τόλμας χάριν - 371). The fundamental problem is that here the word τόλμα implies transgression of limits but also refers to the daring necessary to institute order. Thus, when the chorus criticizes man's τόλμα, it essentially criticizes a fundamental aspect of man. But then the distinction between the citizen and the scapegoat seems to get blurred. The prayer: "May the transgressor never think my thoughts" (374) may not only indicate the distance from the enemy of city and hearth, but also the horror which man experiences before himself, as the most awesome of all beings (Rohdich A 76).

This brings us to the second separation regarding justice, the seemingly flawless opposition between νόμους χθονός and θεῶν τ' ἔνορκον δίκαν. This points to the opposition between the laws of the city and divine justice (Coleman RCA 9-10, Alexanderson SCA 89).¹⁹ It would seem that the conflict between Creon's human laws and Antigone's divine law is unequivocally indicated—but this separative conclusion would be rash. First of all it is not impossible that the chorus is equating both aspects of justice. Then it would still accept Creon's identification of state law and divine justice (Hester SU 27). A much more important point is that the word χθών is fundamentally ambiguous, and as such a focus of transformations. It is not merely the soil of the city, but also refers to the highest goddess, Ga (338). Finally, it is the place where the dead belong. If the latter sense is accepted we are confronted with a completely reversed opposition. The laws of the earth, i.e. those of burial, are opposed to the laws which are sworn before the gods, as Creon has done (cf. ὄρκιος - 305). Thus both laws belong to the divine sphere, which does not preclude their belonging to the human sphere as well.²⁰ We suggest that the ambiguity of both readings should be accepted.

The doubts surrounding the separative power of man with respect to justice return when human insight is at stake. In this *stasimon* a certain emphasis is put on the necessity of excessive mobility for human intelligence, which is clear from words like περιφραδής (347), ὁχμάζεται (or

ὕπάζεται) (351), φρόνημα (354), συμπέφρασται (363), Σοφόν τι τὸ μαχανόν τέχνης (364-65). To the Greeks all these words were expressions of *metis*, the changeful, adaptable power of the polyp (Thgn 215-18) and the fox. In its opposition to the powers of chaos man's intelligence was felt to be necessarily polymorphous, equivocal, inverting, tortuous (Detienne/Vernant RI 55). The devices of man's intellect, like nets,²¹ the bit, the rein and the yoke, are therefore powerful, but due to this employment of power also dangerous (RI 178-202).

In an interconnected culture it is also ominous when man is said to be capable of teaching himself to acquire insight (356)—as ominous as the near-absence of the gods. The most ambiguous phrase is employed when Sophocles says that man's intelligent contraptions are ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' (365). This not only means "beyond expectation," but also "beyond hope": it exceeds the limits that could be wished for. The fundamental ambiguity of hope will be abundantly underscored in the other *stasima*. Here Sophocles has confined himself to a dark undertone.

This brings us to the first lines of the *stasimon* confronting us with the key word of the tragedy. Contrary to separative orthodoxy we hold that the word δεινός should be translated in such a way that the ambiguity of power, instituting as well as undermining civilization, is made clear. We disagree with the separatism of Jebb's comment on τὰ δεινὰ: "not 'dread,' nor 'able,' but 'wonderful'" (A 70), a translation separating the positive aspect of the word from the negative. Certainly, the word *deinos* points to man's cleverness, his awe-inspiring abilities, but it should not be forgotten that it also points to his terrible power, which is horrifying, exceeding all limits. Perhaps the translation "awesome" renders this ambiguity satisfactorily. It refers both to what is worthy of respect and reverence, and what causes dread and is appalling. In this respect we follow a long tradition. In 1801 Hölderlin translated *deinos* as "gewaltig," in 1804 he changed it to "ungeheuer," a word which interpreters link up with "unheimlich."²² In the latter sense it points to the ambiguously tragic ground structure of human life (Friedländer PTD 61). As far as we know, the first to point out the ambiguity of *deinos* in an article in English was Knapp in 1916.²³ This ambiguity defies not only the separative point of view but also the harmonizing one, since man re-

εὐτυχεῖ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἡμῖν δ' ἀπορρεῖ κατὰ μηδὲν ἔρχεται - cf. El 1165f., Soph Fr 941 R, Eur Hec 622, Eur Fr 536N2.

¹⁹ We cannot be sure which verb should connect both aspects. Goheen's defence of 368 παρείρων (ISA 141) deserves attention in spite of its forcing of grammar.

²⁰ For the second translation see Ehrenberg 77, Segal TC 170-72, Goheen ISA 55, Lesky HG 88, Müller SA 86. Hölderlin translated νόμους χθονός as "die Gesetze der Erd."

²¹ RI 51. Compare Clytaemnestra's perverted use of a net in Aes Ag 1380ff.

²² Friedländer PTD 58-59, Gundert GGM 24, Müller A 89. Cf. 243, 1046, OT 545, OC 806, Aes Pr 59.

²³ "One of the evidences of man's *deinotes* is the fact that ἀνεμὸν φρόνημα [...] ἐδιδάξατο (353-55). In themselves these words might well involve praise[...] But the other side of the thought, that man's *deinotes* may well be an evil thing[...] comes to the fore again in 365-375" (PIA 303).

mains τὸ δεινόν and will never be able to harmonize order and excessive power. It is well known that in the opening words of this *stasimon* the choral song of Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* (Ch 585ff.) is echoed. In that song δεινὰ means "dreadful," referring to human, particularly feminine, passion. Jebb sees no more than a vague resemblance between the two *stasima* and believes Aeschylus' song is 'limited' to the violence of human passion. But Sophocles' *stasimon* refers to the inevitability of human passion as well, and hence points in equal measure to the dreadfulness of human power.

Our reading is supported by the fact that in these lines man is introduced in the neuter, as if dehumanized, as a portent, a τέρας or *monstrum* (Burton CST 97). Besides, it is only in our reading that the *stasimon*'s emphasis on the limitations of human power, for example death, can be accounted for. The separative translation is forced to confine itself to the first part of the *stasimon*, in which man's greatness is praised (Friedländer PTD 60, Gundert GGM 28). The harmonizing point of view, as exemplified in Rohdich's interpretation, fully accounts for the ambiguity of man's *deinotes*. Rohdich refers to man's inevitable acceptance of political rule and to the individual's desire, no less compelling, to overstep the limits of the polis. Nevertheless he interprets the *stasimon* in a harmonizing sense. In his view the citizens' distress is sublimated in confronting them with the downfall of individualism. Being confronted with the impossibility of boundless individuality, the tragedy presents life with the possibility to save itself, in the realization that it can only be political (A 77). The implication is that Antigone's undermining of the polis in the end is beneficial to the state (A 78). The tragedy has acted as a ritual catharsis of the human desire for the impossible, and hence as an expedient for the maintenance of the city.

Though this control of ambiguity is certainly one aspect of the tragedy, a harmonizing point of view like Rohdich's tends to forget that, despite the destruction of the awesome heroes, political man remains *to deinon*. Rohdich seems to suggest that in Greek cosmology *deinotes* can finally be domesticated by prudence, which would separate man from his fundamentally tragic awesomeness.

Sophocles' idea of man is diametrically opposed to that of the philosophers of his time. Thinkers like Archelaus and Protagoras were confident that reality could be arranged in such a way that separated categories would emerge. Archelaus for example was proud of man's intelligence which had "separated" him from his animal predecessors (διεχρίθησαν – DK 60A 4 par 6). As Friedländer remarks (PTD 62), this separatism does not account for the dark face of *deinotes*. Separative phi-

losophy rejects the connection between *poros* and *techné* on one side and *deinotes* on the other, which is characteristic of tragedies like Aeschylus' *Prometheus*.²⁴

Regarding the contextual meaning of the first *stasimon* we encounter a second variant of separatism. Müller essentially agrees that τὸ δεινόν is an ambiguous word (SA 83), but he keeps making separations in its use. He separates the chorus's conscious meaning from its subconscious meaning, which is supposed to equal the author's intention, and he distinguishes the applicability of the concept to Creon from its applicability to Antigone. Consciously the chorus applies the concept to Antigone and not to Creon, whereas in reality the dangerous aspects of hubris would be applicable to Creon only and not to Antigone, because transgression of limits is a characteristic not fitting Antigone at all (SA 85). According to Müller Antigone is essentially δεινή in an "unambiguously admirable sense" (SA 86).

We doubt the philosophical separation between a primary meaning which is nothing but appearance and a secondary meaning which would show Sophocles' true opinion, a separation which would undermine some of the tragedy's fundamental ambiguities. It also implies that the chorus is the voice of mediocrity. It is paradoxical that these hidebound bourgeois should at the same time articulate the deepest insights into human nature (Heidegger HHI 121). But more importantly, much of the tragic significance of the *Antigone* is lost if the positive and the negative aspects of *deinotes* are separated and distributed over Antigone and Creon respectively. Whoever considers Antigone a guiltless victim, i.e. whoever thinks that the chorus is wrong with respect to her, forces upon himself the conclusion that Antigone does not belong to the essence of man, in so far as it is characterized as awesome (Heidegger HHI 116). The same is true for Creon: if his acts lack positive *deinotes*, he has to be excluded from the tragic realm of human action. We prefer to consider both characters tragically relevant and ominous vehicles of power. It is not accidental that Antigone is greeted by the chorus as a τέρας (376), a dangerous portent, and Creon as using his μητις (158), the dangerous power of intelligence.

²⁴ δεινὸς γὰρ εὐρεῖν καὶ ἀμηχανῶν πόρον (for he is wondrous clever at finding a way even out of desperate straits) (Pr 59).

6.2. The second *stasimon*

Εὐδαίμονες οἷσι κακῶν ἄγευστος αἰὼν·
 οἷς γὰρ ἂν σεισθῇ θεόθεν δόμος, ἄτας
 585 οὐδὲν ἐλλείπει γενεᾶς ἐπὶ πλῆθος ἔρπον·
 ὅμοιον ὥστε ποντίας
 οἶδμα, δυσπνόοις ὅταν
 590 Θρήσσησιν ἔρεβος ὕφαλον ἐπιδράμη πνοαῖς,
 κυλίνδει βυσσόθεν
 κελαινάν θίνα καὶ δυσάνεμοι
 στόνων βρέμουςιν ἀντιπλήγες ἀκταί.

Ἄρχαῖα τὰ Λαβδακιδᾶν οἴκων ὁρῶμαι
 595 πῆματα φθιμένων ἐπὶ πῆμασι πίπτοντ',
 οὐδ' ἀπαλλάσσει γενεᾶν γένος, ἀλλ' ἐρείπει
 θεῶν τις, οὐδ' ἔχει λύσιν.
 Νῦν γὰρ ἐσχάτας ὕπερ
 600 ῥίξας ὃ τέτατο φάος ἐν Οἰδίπου δόμοις,
 κατ' αὖ νιν φοινία
 θεῶν τῶν νερτέρων ἀμᾶ κόνις,
 λόγου τ' ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν Ἑρινύς.

Τεάν, Ζεῦ, δύναμιν τίς ἀν-
 605 δρῶν ὑπερβασία κατάσχοι,
 τὰν οὐθ' ὕπνος αἰρεῖ ποθ' ὃ πάντα κηλῶν,
 οὐτ' ἐτέων ἄκματοι
 μῆνες, ἀγήρω δὲ χρόνῳ δυνάστας
 κατέχεις Ὀλύμπου
 610 μαρμαρόεσσαν αἴγλαν.
 Τό τ' ἔπειτα καὶ τὸ μέλλον
 καὶ τὸ πρὶν ἐπαρκέσει
 νόμος ὅδ'· οὐδὲν ἔρπει
 θνατῶν βίῳ πάμπολύ γ' ἐκτὸς ἄτας.

615 Ἄ γὰρ δὴ πολὺπλαγκτος ἐλ-
 πὶς πολλοῖς μὲν ὄνασις ἀνδρῶν,

Blest are they whose days have
 not tasted of evil. For when a
 house hath once been shaken
 from heaven, there the curse fails
 nevermore, passing from life to
 life of the race; even as, when the
 surge is driven over the darkness
 of the deep by the fierce breath
 of Thracian sea-winds, it rolls up
 the black sand from the depths,
 and there is a sullen roar from
 wind-vexed headlands that front
 the blows of the storm.

I see that from olden time the
 sorrows in the house of the
 Labdacidae are heaped upon the
 sorrows of the dead; and
 generation is not freed by
 generation, but some god strikes
 them down, and the race hath no
 deliverance. For now that
 hope of which the light had been
 spread above the last root of the
 house of Oedipus - that hope, in
 turn, is brought low - by the
 blood-stained dust due to the
 gods infernal, and by folly in
 speech, and frenzy at the heart.

Thy power, O Zeus, what human
 trespass can limit? That power
 which neither Sleep, the all-
 ensnaring, nor the untiring
 months of the *years* can master;
 but thou, a ruler to whom time
 brings not old age, dwellest in
 the dazzling splendour of
 Olympus. And through the
 future, near and far, as through
 the past, shall this law hold good:
 Nothing that is vast enters into
 the life of mortals without a
 curse.

For that hope whose wanderings
 are so wide is to many men a

πολλοῖς δ' ἀπάτα κουφονόων ἐρώτων·
 εἰδότες δ' οὐδὲν ἔρπει,
 620 πρὶν πυρὶ θερμῷ πόδα τις προσάουσι.
 Σοφία γὰρ ἔκ του
 κλεινὸν ἔπος πέφανται·
 τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἐσθλὸν
 τῷδ' ἔμμεν, ὅτῳ φρένας
 θεὸς ἄγει πρὸς ἄταν·
 625 πράσσει δ' ὀλιγοστόν χρόνον ἐκτὸς ἄτας.

comfort, but to many a false lure
 of giddy desires; and the
 disappointment comes on one
 who knoweth nought till he burn
 his foot against the hot fire. For
 with wisdom hath some one given
 forth the famous saying, that evil
 seems good, soon or late, to him
 whose mind the god draws to
 mischief; and but for the briefest
 space doth he fare free of woe.

586: ποντίας: D: ποντίας ἄλλος 588: Θρήσσησιν: J: Θρήσσαισιν 591: δυσάνεμοι: D:
 δυσανέμωι 595: φθιμένων: J: φθιτῶν 600: ὃ τέτατο. We follow J and D. DM:
 ἐτέτατο 602: κόνις: D: κοπίς 604: δύναμιν: J, D: δύνασιν 606: πάντα κηλῶν: J:
 πάντ' ἀγρεύων 607/8: ἐτέων ἄκματοι μῆνες. We follow D. J: θεῶν ἄκματοι μῆνες; DM:
 ἀκάματοι θεῶν μῆνες 616: ὄνασις: D: ὄνησις 625: ὀλιγοστόν. D, J: ὀλίγιστον

The orthodox view can only be maintained in the light of the meaning
 of the second *stasimon* if some extreme separations are carried through.
 First of all it has to separate the second *stasimon* from the first, because
 taken together the second *stasimon* confirms the ominous undertones
 which we have detected in the first *stasimon* where separatists only spoke
 of a song in praise of man. Furthermore—and this is a problem of con-
 textual relevance—the separatists who believe that the tragedy is con-
 cerned with one tragic individual, Antigone in her unimpaired identity,
 have to reject the opinion of the chorus that the polluted and polluting
 power of the whole family of the Labdacids is at stake. Müller, for exam-
 ple, is convinced that this *stasimon* does not reflect the poet's opinion,
 because Antigone is connected with the crimes of the Labdacids in the
 manner of Aeschylus (SA 135). We shall discuss these problems while
 assessing the importance of the six cosmological categories in this second
stasimon.

In the first *stasimon* nature was said to be powerful, but man is glorified
 as being able to subdue nature by employing even more awesome power
 and thus able to establish order. In this *stasimon* the picture undergoes a
 complete reversal—(but this does not detract from the glorification of
 man in the first *stasimon*. It is a separative prejudice that conflicting sides
 of cosmological truth cannot exist together). In the second *stasimon* the
deinotes of nature is revealed in all its awesome power. Again we are con-
 fronted with the three fundamental elements of inanimate nature: the sea
 is moved by the wind and smashes against the land. The sea in particular
 reveals a new and unsuspected character. We are not merely confronted
 with its navigable surface, but have to face the darkness of the deep

(Nethercut VP 62). This ἔρεβος ὕφαλον can be translated as "submarine abyss." This abyss is the centre of a clash of terrible forces: rushing over (ἐπιδράμη - 589), rolling up (κυλίνδει - 590), striking with evil winds (587, 589, 591).²⁵

Apart from the comparison with the Labdacids, this picture of unrestricted movement points out the confusing power of nature. The evil winds from Thrace (in Greek eyes a marginal and dangerous country) confuse the distinction between sea and sky (Detienne/Vernant RI 154-55). The waves of the sea play havoc with cosmic order: the black sand which should be at the bottom of the sea is stirred up,²⁶ just like the sea buffets the capes and the winds have become "un-winds" (δυσάνεμοι - 591). In the first antistrophe a similar perversion takes place; the dust which belongs to the sphere below comes to cover the light which naturally should be in the region above (cf. Segal TC 172-73, 197).²⁷

It is important to emphasize that this transgressing power of nature is not confined to nature *sensu stricto*. The dangerous ἔρεβος ὕφαλον is not only the submarine abyss, it is also cognate with primeval chaos.²⁸ The natural forces of chaotic transgression also spread to the human sphere: they make new sorrows fall on old ones (πίπτοντ' - 595), a god strikes down (ἐρείπει - 596) the race. A further transformation occurs when human hope is revealed as 'roaming wide' (πολύπλαγκτος - 615), a nautical metaphor, comparing hope to a mariner traversing unknown seas.²⁹ But here it is not, as in the first *stasimon*, man who conquers the sea. Man is overwhelmed by hope, the counterpart of man's *deinotes* in the first *stasimon* (cf. Müller SA 139).

At first sight the second *stasimon* seems to make a clear separation between the godless forces of nature in the first strophe and antistrophe, and the restfulness, lightness and loftiness of the divine power of Zeus in the second strophe (cf. Goheen ISA 58), as is Müller's opinion. In his eyes the divine power of Zeus should be opposed to the fierce storms representing the "blasphemous will of man" (SA 137). But this separa-

²⁵ Cf. OC 1240-41: πάντοθεν βόρειος ὥς τις ἀπὸ κυματοπλῆξ χειμερία κλονεῖται (as some cape that fronts the North is lashed on every side by the waves of winter).

²⁶ Kamerbeek A 118: "Ἐρεβος ὕφαλον[...]refers to the dark water of the deep-sea, which stirred up by the storm, swiftly passes over[...]the normal surface of the sea."

²⁷ This sequence of natural perversions forms an inversion of the dust storm as beheld by the guard: here the dust covers the sky, another upheaval of categories - 417ff.

²⁸ Detienne/Vernant RI 155: "Tout ce qui, d'une façon ou d'une autre, unit ou confond des éléments faits pour demeurer disjoints et séparés, s'apparente ainsi à certains égards au chaos primordial."

²⁹ Jebb A 118, Easterling SSA 153. cf. Pind Ol 12.6f.: αἶ γε μὲν ἀνδρῶν πόλλ' ἄνω, τὰ δ' αὖ κάτω φεύδῃ μεταμῶνια τάμνοισαι κυλίνδοντ' ἐλπίδες (At least, the hopes of men are oft tossed up and down, ploughing a sea of vain deceits).

tion between confused humanity and serene divinity contradicts the fact that the elemental forces of nature are as divine as Zeus (cf. Aes Sep 758-61, Easterling SSA 145). Certainly Zeus is a quiet power of eternal order, but at the same time he represents disorder.

There is no doubt that the quiet power of Zeus forms a contrast with the riotousness of nature (Coleman RCA 13), and is contrasted with man's frailty as well. The fact that Zeus never sleeps points to two categorical distinctions. First of all it indicates his super-human insight.³⁰ Secondly, the power to resist sleep indicates immortality.³¹ This distinction returns in the image of the months. Contrary to mortal man, the life of the immortals is not worn away by the months of the year (Jebb A 117, Rohdich A 112). The second *stasimon*'s all-pervasive emphasis on the gods should be considered a more or less ironical comment on the near-absence of the gods in the first *stasimon*. The picture of man's autonomy is not discarded by this reversal, but shown in its divided nature: the oppositions do not cancel each other out.

But Zeus is not the only divine power mentioned in this *stasimon*. By transformation, the opposition between Zeus and nature is also the opposition between Zeus and the nether gods (θεῶν τῶν νερετέρων - 602). It would be a separative error to believe that *ate* and *Erinys* are mere designations of human blindness and ruin. *Ate* is at the same time the divine power which causes unhappiness, the blindness which leads to unhappiness, the crime, its consequences and its punishment (Gernet RPG 321-22). *Erinys* is the evil spirit of revenge, the divine curse of the race³² which has taken possession of Antigone (Rohdich A 110). These powers cannot be confined to the human sphere, as separatism tends to confine them—they are divine confusing powers of the dark (cf. Aes Ag 462, Hom Il 9.571, 19.87ff., Od 15.234).

But in interconnected cosmologies in general, and in Greek cosmology in particular, gods are not individuals representing clear-cut oppositions. Gods may represent divergent and even opposing powers. There is no reason to suppose that Zeus has nothing to do with the confusion of the mortal race, particularly with the downfall of the Labdacids. In the second line of the play Antigone herself ascribes the evils befalling the house of Oedipus to Zeus. It is quite possible that Zeus is the god who is tearing

³⁰ Detienne/Vernant RI 113: "Par la metis qui lui est intérieure, le dieu souverain se maintient en constant état de vigilance, [...]il n'est plus pour lui d'attaque ni de ruse, plus de metis qui puissent le surprendre."

³¹ Hesiod calls sleep the brother of death (Th 212); cf. Rohdich A 112.

³² Cf. Polynices on his banishment from Thebes in OC 1298-99: ὦν ἐγὼ μάλιστα μὲν τὴν σὴν ἐρινὸν αἰτίαν εἶναι λέγω (And of this I deem it most likely that the curse on thy house is the cause). See also OC 1434, Od 11.280, Pind Ol 2.38.

the Labdacids apart (ἐρείπει - 596). And the eternal law laid down in the second strophe, that nothing vast enters the life of mortals without ruin, is proclaimed immediately after the description of Zeus' loftiness. Again we have to guard ourselves against the separative illusion that the *Antigone* is a tragedy of clear-cut oppositions between the human and the divine, disorder and order, lower gods and higher gods. The fact that Zeus occupies the glittering heights of the Olympus does not rule out that he is a terrible power of confusion for mortals at the same time.

The upheaval of nature in this *stasimon* mirrors the fate of one important social relation, that of belonging to a house, to an extended family (δόμος - 584, 600, γένος - 596, γυνεῖς - 585, cf. 596, Λαβδακιδῶν οἴκων - 594). We are confronted with a powerful transformation from nature to the family. The collapse of the house of Oedipus is also a dangerous encounter with nature. For example, the sand washed up from the depths of the sea (591) returns as the dust smothering the Labdacids (603).³³ And the 'metaphor' of the tossed sea represents the upturning of this house (Kamerbeek A 117). The dust offered to protect the dead will eventually cover the last of the Labdacids, while the hopes and desires which bring down the house of the Labdacids are comparable to Thracian gales.³⁴

In this *stasimon* ruin is not confined to one generation, but affects all succeeding generations (Jebb A 112). This underlines the fact that not one individual heroine but the extended family is what the text is about. This can also be inferred from the emphasis laid on the fact that Antigone is the last root of the house of Oedipus, its only hope of continuing the race.³⁵ The implication is that Antigone shares in all the awesome aspects of her family, among which the horrible transgressions and pollutions are most notable. Therefore separatism, wishing the tragedy to centre on one immaculate heroine finds itself forced to separate this *stasimon* from Sophocles' real thought, which is supposed to run contrary to the Aeschylean failures of the chorus (Müller SA 137). The unattractiveness of this point of view, which would undermine the whole tragic meaning of Antigone's being the last of the Labdacids and the sister/daughter of that model of ambiguity, Oedipus, is evident.

³³ Cf. Goheen ISA 61, Benardete RSA II.27.

³⁴ Rohdich A 121: "der Trieb, dessen Urgewalt das Gleichnis vom Thrakersturm vergegenwärtigte, dem Göttlichen nahe- und gleichzukommen, ist dessen Ausdruck in der menschlichen Natur und ebenso göttlich wie die Grenze, die seine Erfüllung verhindert."

³⁵ Jebb A 114: "The ἐσχάτη ῥίζα of the family is the last remaining means of propagating it. A light of hope (φῶς) was 'spread above' this 'last root,'—as sunshine above a plant,—because it was hoped that the sisters would continue the race." For the connection between "root" and "procreation" cf. Pind Ol 2.46: ὅθεν σπέρματος ἔχοντα ῥίζαν.

At first sight it may seem that this *stasimon* represents a clear-cut division between the gods as immortal and human beings as mortal. Of course that opposition is there, but there is more to be said. The main problem is the intermediate position of corpses, between life and death. As we have seen in chapter four, the Greeks considered unburied corpses dangerous sources of pollution. The sprinkling of dust was a ritual endeavouring to exorcize the pollution by separating the body from the civilized sphere and confining it to its proper realm, the earth. In this *stasimon* we are confronted with a breach of this ritual, resulting in even more pollution and danger. Here the dust is not a separative power, but has become an active, lethal force killing the living instead of saving them. This ambiguity shines through in the ambivalent meaning of the adjective φοινία (601) which does not only refer to the drinking of blood by the dust, but also to the dust's active power of shedding blood (Rohdich A 109). The perversion of the ritual of dust sprinkling has the horrible result that Polyneices' corpse does not only retain its polluting power, but extirpates the whole race of the Labdacids. The burier Antigone becomes the victim of the lethal dust.

Another apparently clear-cut division from the first *stasimon* which collapses in the second is the distinction between divine justice and human justice. Whereas in the first *stasimon* we are warned that man will now turn to evil, now to good, depending upon his respecting divine and human justice, here we are confronted with the fact that man tends to confuse good and evil (622). The divine law loses nothing of its divineness, but reveals itself as being humanly unbearable. It is not only human arrogance (ὑπερβασία - 605) which elicits divine wrath—the gods also punish that which is great. The eternal law is, that nothing that is vast enters human life without ruin (613-14). Here the law of talion has not been attenuated by the idea that human transgressions are rightly punished. We are confronted with the raw jealousy of the gods with respect to all that is great in human life (Jebb A 118). Divine justice is at the same time human disorder.

The same holds true for human insight, which in the first *stasimon* seemed to be a guarantee of prosperity and justice. Here another divine law is mentioned, that man is brought to blindness by the gods, and so sooner or later confuses good and evil (622: τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἐσθλόν). The ambiguity which seemed to hover around the expression ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδα in the first *stasimon* is now fully developed. The fundamental problem for man's insight is that it is the expression of an excessive power and therefore tends to undermine its own order. This excessive power is the power of hope.

There is no insight outside hope, but hope is ambiguous, it wanders

wide (615). It brings help, and then brings man to ruin. Hope is connected with desire (ἐρώτων - 617), which means that propitious and harmful elements are inseparable in it.³⁶ It enables man to live, but also makes him forget all boundaries. The hope and desire which are indispensable for maintaining human life are the same forces which, assisted by the gods,³⁷ deceive man and bring him to ruin.³⁸ When Sophocles speaks of man being deceived by "lighthearted desires" (κουφονόων ἐρώτων - 617) he ironically points back to the first *stasimon*, where birds, not man, were called light-hearted (κουφονόων - 342). Man's insight has become like that of the animals he dominated by his insight in the first *stasimon*. The chorus says that man knows nothing before he burns his foot (618-19). The wisdom (Σοφία - 620) which teaches that man confuses evil with good is paradoxical: it is the wisdom that man knows nothing, but can only live by pretending to know the truth.

When we turn to the contextual relevance of the second *stasimon* we must emphasize that for a separatist like Müller, in reality Antigone has nothing to do with the curse of the Labdacids, being as she is an immaculate isolated individual (SA 135). Yet Müller maintains that Creon's blindness is not intentional either, because he is not a protagonist and because his blindness comes out of himself, not from a curse (SA 140). We will argue against this point of view when we discuss the episodes. Here we will confine ourselves to repeating that Müller is forced to separate both Antigone and Creon from the sphere of tragedy. It is true that in this *stasimon* Sophocles is constantly alluding to Aeschylus' *Septem*. The comparison of the downfall of the Labdacids to the marine gales is repeated (Sep 669-71, cf. 758ff), as is the curse from generation to generation (Sep 740-41) and the importance of the Erinyes (Sep 70, 699-700, 623, 791, 886-87, 977, 988). In the *Septem* the chorus also emphasizes that the house of the Labdacids is destroyed root and branch (πρυμνόθεν - Sep 1056) by Polyneices' perverted burial by An-

³⁶ For the connection of hope and desire with ruin, cf. Aes Pers 94-100 (107-14), and the speech of Diodotus in Thyc 3.45.5: ἡ τε ἐλπίς καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐπὶ παντί, ὁ μὲν ἡγούμενος, ἡ δ' ἐφεπομένη, καὶ ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ἐκφροντίζων, ἡ δὲ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τύχης ὑποτιθεῖσα, πλείστα βλάπτουσι, καὶ ὅντα ἀφανῆ χρεῖσσω ἐστὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων δεινῶν. (Hope and desire persist throughout and cause the greatest calamities—one leading and the other following, and the other suggesting that it will be successful—invisible factors, but more powerful than the terrors that are obvious to our eyes).

³⁷ Cf. Theognis 403ff.: ἀνὴρ..., ὅντινα δαίμων πρόφρων ἐς μεγάλην ἀμπακίην παράγει, καὶ οἱ ἔθηκε δοκεῖν, ἃ μὲν ἡ κακά, ταῦτ' ἀγάθ' εἶναι εὐμαρέως, ἃ δ' ἂν ἡ χρήσιμα, ταῦτα κακά. (a man, [...], only to be misled into great wrong-doing by a favouring spirit, which so easily maketh what is evil seem to him good, and what is good seem evil).

³⁸ Rohdich A 118: "der Trieb, der ihn ins Unheil stürzt, ist derselbe, der ihm Nutzen bedeutet. Im Gang des menschlichen Lebens gibt es also einen Punkt, an dem der Charakter des Strebens, das immer das Edle will, sich ins Gegenteil verkehrt."

tigone. But far from indicating "Aeschyleische Fehltritte," these resemblances strengthen our conviction that Sophocles' conception of the extended family does not differ at all from that of Aeschylus (Lloyd-Jones JZ 111ff.). Müller's position becomes untenable once one realizes that Antigone herself agrees with the chorus in her emphasis on being a member of the cursed Labdacids (cf. e.g. 856).³⁹

In the harmonizing view as it is represented by Rohdich, the ambiguous status of families which are both too high and too low is excellently accounted for. Rohdich emphasizes the tragic nature of hope and desire as well, but we are again confronted with the problem we met in Rohdich's interpretation of the first *stasimon*: he separates the choral song from total tragic ambiguity. Though he is convinced that reckless desires are humanly inevitably, he maintains that they are channelled by the tragic performance. The effect of the tragedy would then be that the necessity of submission to political power and the inevitability of being prudent in a political way would become acceptable to the audience because it has been confronted with the horrible fate of prominent families which did not submit to political power.⁴⁰

The implication of Rohdich's harmonizing conception is that the tragedy leads to the *Bejahung* of the sacrifice of those who represent excessive hope and desire, such as Antigone and Creon. Indeed one aspect of the multiple tragic truth is that the chorus exhorts us to prudence, to reconciling the familial with the political. In that sense it is psychagogic indeed. But Rohdich maintains that according to the chorus this approximation to *eudaemonia* is humanly possible, which means that he separates certain aspects of tragic ambiguity from the utterances of the chorus, which besides the necessity of prudence emphasizes the inevitability of excess. What the chorus maintains is that despite the need to be prudent it is humanly impossible not to be imprudent. The chorus itself is unable to separate itself as the representative of prudence from man's hopeful and desiring nature. Therefore the audience is unable merely to welcome the sacrifice of excessive heroism. It knows that such excesses are part of themselves—just as the sacrificed heroes are part of themselves.

³⁹ Contra Müller's point of view Lloyd-Jones JZ 113ff. and Else MA 18 and *passim*, who speak of the importance in the play of the curse inherited from Oedipus.

⁴⁰ "Das Drama spricht durch die Exposition gefährdeter Grösse in raffinierter Mittelbarkeit das demokratische Lebensgefühl derer an, die sein Auditorium bilden. Die Eudaimonie des Heroischen erfährt ihre bürgerlich-politische Revision, die statt der Annäherung an den Glanz des Göttlichen die Beschränkung empfiehlt, in der das Risiko von Schuld und Leiden so gering wie möglich bleibt. Die psychagogische Kraft des Liedes stimuliert heimlich die Lebensform des 'kleinen Mannes', seine politisch egalisierte Existenz, seine gesellschaftlich geforderte Sophrosyne" (Rohdich A 121).

6.3. The third *stasimon*

"Ερωσ ἀνίκατε μάχαν,
 "Ερωσ, ὃς ἐν κτήμασι πίπ-
 τεις, ὃς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρει-
 αῖς νεάνιδος ἐννυχεύεις,
 785 φοιτᾷς δ' ὑπερπόντιος ἐν τ'
 ἀγρονόμοις αὐλαῖς·
 καὶ σ' οὔτ' ἀθανάτων
 φύξιμος οὐδεὶς οὔθ'
 ἀμερίων σέ γ' ἀνθρώ-
 790 πων, ὁ δ' ἔχων μέμνηεν.

Σὺ καὶ δικαίων ἀδίκους
 φρένας παρασπᾷς ἐπὶ λώ-
 βα· σὺ καὶ τόδε νεῖκος ἀν-
 δρῶν ζύναιμον ἔχεις ταραξας·
 795 νικᾷ δ' ἐναργῆς βλεφάρων
 ἥμερος εὐλέκτρον
 νύμφας, τῶν μεγάλων
 πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς θεσ-
 μῶν· ἄμαχος γὰρ ἐμπαί-
 800 ζει θεὸς Ἀφροδίτα

Love, unconquered in the fight,
 Love, who maketh havoc of
 wealth, who keepest thy vigil on
 the soft cheek of a maiden; thou
 roamest over the sea, and among
 the homes of dwellers in the
 wilds; no immortal can escape
 thee, nor any among men whose
 life is for a day; and he to whom
 thou hast come is mad.

The just themselves have their
 minds warped by thee to wrong,
 for their ruin: 'tis thou that hast
 stirred up this present strife of
 kinsmen; victorious is the love-
 kindling light from the eyes
 of the fair bride; it is a power
 enthroned in sway beside the
 eternal laws; for there the
 goddess Aphrodite is working her
 unconquerable will.

789: σέ γ'. We follow J and D. DM: ἐπ' 799/800: ἐμπαίζει. D: ἐμπαίει

It is quite clear that both the separative and the harmonizing points of view have to isolate the *Antigone* from important aspects of tragic ambiguity in their various interpretations of the third *stasimon* on Eros. First of all there are separatists who make a division within the power of Eros. In the words of Jebb, they believe that the poet is merely saying how boundless is the range of love (Jebb A 146, cf. Burton CST 115). Thus Eros is separated from much of its ambiguous power which cannot be confined to the range of love. Another separation is made by Müller, who is convinced that in this *stasimon* a struggle between gods is rendered, but that such strife in the divine sphere is not Sophoclean. Therefore he argues that the real meaning of the song—the unity of divinity—should be separated from the surface errors of the chorus (SA 172). The real meaning, according to Müller, is the opposition between real human and divine justice on the one hand and mere human ruling on the other. In his view the power of Eros is no real divine power.⁴¹

⁴¹ "Aber freilich, die Macht des Eros wird von Sophokles durchaus nicht als eine jenseitige mit derjenigen des Hades auf eine Stufe gestellt. Der Hinweis auf die für

Though he acknowledges the full range of Eros, Müller nevertheless has to exorcize this elemental divine power from his interpretation in order to retain its orthodox character. And although Rohdich reduces Eros to erotic desire (A 142), he does account for the struggle between the order of polis and cosmos on the one hand and the power of Eros on the other. But his interpretation harmonizes this opposition again. In his view the laws of the city prove their superiority, despite the destruction of individuals, because they show the citiless position of those who are possessed by Eros. Rohdich's conclusion is that the chorus is praising *euboulia* and *sophrosyne* as measures against the disorder and dissent of Eros (A 143).

A single glance at the third *stasimon* is enough to show that once again we are confronted with an ironical reversal of the first choral song. As Kamerbeek remarks, in this song the power of Eros is first of all glorified by means of three pairs of cosmological contrasts (A 143). Eros reigns over beast and man,⁴² on sea and land, over mortals and immortals. Here it is not human power over nature which is emphasized but the dependence of nature, man and the gods on a source of power which makes havoc of all differentiation. The second *stasimon* proves a prelude to the third. It pointed to man's wide wandering hope, which is connected with the deceit of lighthearted desires (*ἐρώτων* - 617). In the third *stasimon* the theme of Eros is expanded to that of a universal force of desire, confusion and destruction. Therefore the confinement of Eros to erotic love is a separation which cannot account for the principal themes of the *stasimon*. Certainly Eros is connected with love: he spends the night on the soft cheeks of a girl⁴³ and shines from the eyes of the girl who is good in bed (*εὐλέκτρον* - 795). But if Eros is merely looked at from this aspect, it is enigmatic what he has to do with war (781, 799), and what he is doing in animate and inanimate nature.

The interconnected nature of Eros only becomes clear when we consider him first of all as a force which, besides erotic love, also involves the love for one's country and family (Benardete RSA II 46) and, secondly, as an even more fundamental power. Eros is typically a power which both underlies and undermines order. In this *stasimon* Eros has to be seen as an analogous to the Sumerian goddess Inanna and the Acca-

menschliche Moral zerstörende Wirkung des Eros erscheint nur im Fehlurteil des Chors" (Müller SA 172).

⁴² Because of this systematic point of view the translation of *κτήμασι* as cattle (e.g. Kamerbeek A 143) has to be preferred to the translation "possessions" (e.g. Jebb A 145, 256-57); cf. Chantraine SEK *passim*.

⁴³ For Eros as shining on cheeks cf. Phrynichus Fr 13Sn: *λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυραῖς παρῆσι φῶς ἔρωτος*.

dian goddess Ishtar, an interpretation supported by the fact that in Fragment 941 R Sophocles describes Cypris as just this primeval force: "Cypris is not Cypris alone, but is called by many names, it is Hades, it is immortal Violence, it is raging Frenzy, it is vehement Desire, it is Lamentation: in her is all activity, all restfulness, all that prompts to violence" (cf. Radt SF 215-16).

It is clear that in this fragment Sophocles considers Cypris to be more than just love. She is many-named like Dionysus in the fifth *stasimon*. She comprises all aspects of the power of desire and destruction.⁴⁴ As Euripides maintains, such forces are ineluctable for maintaining life and civic order (compare the city-building temperament of the first *stasimon*).⁴⁵ But at the same time they undermine it through their excessive nature.

This is what is emphasized in this *stasimon*. As a counterpart to man's mobility in the first *stasimon* here it is Eros who is exceedingly mobile. He fights, he falls on cattle (πίπτεις - 782), he roams over sea and land, as did man in the first *stasimon*, and he pursues mortals and immortals who have no escape (φύξιμος - 788), in sharp contrast to man's boast in the first song that he could escape all difficulties. Eros' undermining mobility is so all-pervasive that it effaces the distinctions of cosmological order. He is a force of fusion in breaking down the barriers between animals, men and gods, who are all dominated by him. This confusion of categories (ταράξας - 794) inevitably leads to ruin (792: λῶβας—a word which is akin to *ate*⁴⁶ and to *erinyes*.⁴⁷)

In the first *stasimon* the gods remain in the background, while the second *stasimon* praises Olympian Zeus, though the powers of confusion were not forgotten. In the third *stasimon* the position of the gods is revolutionized once more. Instead of Olympian Zeus on his glittering heights, now bewildering Eros occupies an unchallengeable position. Not only mortals are unable to escape him, even the immortals are impotent in the face of this power (786). Eros and Aphrodite are unconquerable (799), implying that a separative point of view with respect to the gods, as held

⁴⁴ Cf. Hymn Aphr 5. 2-5 and Soph Fr 941 R on Cypris: εἰσέρχεται μὲν ἰχθύων πλωτῶ γένει, ἔνεστι δ' ἐν χέρσῳ ἐν τετρασκελεῖ γονῇ, νωμᾷ δ' ἐν οἰωνοῖσι τοῦκείνης τερόν, ἐν θηρσίῳ, ἐν βροτοῖσιν, ἐν θεοῖς ἄνω.

"[Love] enters into the tribe of fish that swim the sea, and dwells in the four-footed creatures of the land; it is Love's pinion that is the guiding power among birds, among beasts, among men, among the gods above."

⁴⁵ Eur Medea 842-43, where the Erotai are described as: τᾷ σοφίᾳ παρέδρους..., παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς (partners of wisdom working together to create every type of excellence).

⁴⁶ Examples in Sophocles: El 864: λωβητός, Phil 1103, Tr 538. λῶβη as a divine power: Tr 1031.

⁴⁷ In Ant 1074 the Erinyes are called λωβητῆρες.

by Müller, can only be maintained by denying Eros divine status and rejecting the opinions of the chorus.

Both separative points of view, the one confining Eros to love and the other denying his importance, collapse when we realize that all through the tragedy Eros is taken seriously in a non-sexual sense. In line 90 Ismene reproaches Antigone: "you are in love with the impossible" (ἀμηχάνων ἐρᾷς), and in line 220 the chorus maintains that nobody is mad enough to desire (ἐρᾷ) death. In the second *stasimon* we hear about general desires but not about specific ones: ἐρώτων (617). And finally in line 1336 Creon utters a great desire (ἐρῶ) which has nothing to do with love and is taken seriously by all participants in the tragedy.

The primeval nature of the power of Eros reveals itself in all its variety when we realize that he does not only confound nature, man and the gods, but also plays havoc with some major social ties. Eros haunts the houses (αὐλαῖς - 786) which in the first *stasimon* still promised protection to the mortals. Now it turns out that homes and families offer no refuge: Eros destroys the ties of blood (793-94) by that prototype of confusion, strife between kinsmen. Naturally Eros also presides over the fetters of love (783-84), the pleasures of the bed (795-97). And finally he is unconquerable in that major function of the city: making war (781). Again the problem is that desire is indispensable, but is a threat to civic order at the same time. This is also seen when we realize that Eros annuls the difference between mortals (ἀμερίων - 789)⁴⁸ and immortals (ἀθανάτων - 787) in the melting pot of desire.

In the categories of justice and insight it becomes evident that a harmonizing view of Eros is untenable. Eros is enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws (799-800), i.e. law and order thrive on his power, which nevertheless undermines them. On the one hand Eros upholds eternal justice, but on the other hand he pulls the righteous out of their tracks (παρασπᾶς - 792), a metaphor from horse racing, alluding to a charioteer jerking his horses out of their course (Jebb A 146). The oxymoron δικαίων ἀδίκους (791) points out the impossibility of separating the righteous from the unrighteous in the light of the power of desire. The same ambivalence surrounds Eros' place in the category of knowledge. On the one hand he makes himself clear (ἐναργῆς - 795), on the other he brings madness (μέμνηεν - 790) to the minds of men (792). The conclusion must be that Eros exists as a tension between fusion and fission: his is the power which brings order and disorder at the same time. It is an inalienable part of the cosmos, which therefore is inwardly conflicting and unmanageable (Goheen ISA 136).

⁴⁸ The adjective ἀμερίος, cognate to ἐφήμερος, points to man's temporal and volatile nature. Cf. Aj 399.

That man can never set Eros aside as non-divine (Müller) or as tamed by civic order (Rohdich) becomes clear when we note Sophocles' remark in the *Trachiniae*: "Whoever offers resistance to Eros like the fist fighter with his hands is insane" (Trach 441-42). Man's tragic position is seen from the fact that not only neglecting Eros is insane, but that revering his power may lead to insanity as well.

If this interpretation of Eros is accepted the scope of the third stasimon's contextual relevance is wider than usually supposed. According to current interpretations, in this *stasimon* the chorus criticizes Haemon's excessive love for Antigone, resulting in his transgression of various boundaries, such as those between old and young, father and son, citizen and leader, marriage and kinship, life and death (cf. Rohdich A 139). If we consider Eros a primitive force, not merely sexual, the song may be pertinent to Antigone and Creon as well. Antigone's tragic position with respect to Eros is a double one. On the one hand she is excessively possessed by Eros in the non-sexual sense: by her love for her dead family and her love of death. On the other hand, due to these very desires she neglects Eros in the sexual sense (cf. Steiner As 258). Because Antigone is in love with the impossible she has to neglect her feminine *ergon* of procreation, and hence her familial duty of continuing the line of the Labdacids. In this respect she is Haemon's counterpart. Contrary to the girl in the *stasimon*, Antigone will only be embraced in death. The bed she will share with Haemon is her death bed.⁴⁹

Creon is also possessed by excessive non-sexual desires, and he shares Antigone's contempt for procreation, thereby trampling sexual Eros underfoot in favour of other desires. It is not until Eros is taken in this cosmological sense that the full ambiguity of the phrase *νεῖκος ἀνδρῶν ξύναιμον* (strife between men of the same blood) comes to the surface. In the first place it applies to the collision between Creon and Haemon. But it does not merely point to their erotic excesses—it refers to the inordinateness of all their passions. Because the pun on Haemon's name is accompanied by a pun on the name of Polyneices, it is reasonable to suppose that the role of Eros in the strife between kinsmen should be applied to the intrafamilial war between Polyneices and Eteocles as well (Segal TC 165, 190). Eros has fused the houses of the Labdacids and of Creon, not in procreation, but in a common fate of destruction. Aphrodite has played her unconquerable game.

⁴⁹ Vernant MTG 35: "Antigone n'a pas su[...]accueillir Eros". MTG 90: "elle méconnaît tout ce qui, dans l'univers, déborde ces domaines (de la *philia* et de la mort), en particulier ce qui relève de la vie et de l'amour. Les deux divinités qui sont invoquées par le cœur, Dionysus et Eros, ne condamnent pas seulement Créon[...]ils se retournent contre la jeune fille parce qu'ils expriment, jusque dans leurs liens avec la mort, les puissances de vie et de renouvellement."

6.4. The fourth *stasimon*

945 Ἦετλα καὶ Δανάας οὐράνιον φῶς
ἀλλάξει δέμας ἐν χαλκοδέτοις αὐλαῖς·
κρυπτομένα δ' ἐν
950 τυμβήρει θαλάμῳ κατεζεύχθη·
καίτοι (καὶ) γενεᾷ τίμιος, ὦ παῖ, παῖ,
καὶ Ζητὸς ταμειεύσκει γονὰς χρυσορύτους.
'Ἄλλ' ἂ μοιριδία τις δύναισι δεινὰ·
οὔτ' ἄν νιν ὄλβος οὔτ' Ἄρης,
οὐ πύργος, οὐχ ἀλίκτυποι
κελαιναὶ νᾶες ἐκφύγοιεν.

Even thus endured Danaë in her beauty to change the light of day for brass-bound walls; and in that chamber, secret as the grave, she was held close prisoner; yet was she of a proud lineage, O my daughter, and charged with the keeping of the seed of Zeus, that fell in the golden rain. But dreadful is the mysterious power of fate; there is no deliverance from it by wealth or by war, by fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten ships.

955 Ζεύχθη δ' ὀξύχολος παῖς ὁ Δρύαντος,
Ἥδωνῶν βασιλεύς, κερτομίῳ ὀργαῖς,
ἐκ Διονύσου
πετρώδει κατάφαρκτος ἐν δεσμῷ.
960 Οὕτω τὰς μανίας δεινὸν ἀποστάζει
ἀνθηρόν τε μένος. Κεῖνος ἐπέγνω μανίαις
ψαύων τὸν θεὸν ἐν κερτομίῳ γλώσσῃς.
Πάυεσκε μὲν γὰρ ἐνθέους
965 γυναῖκας εὐίον τε πῦρ,
φιλαύλους τ' ἠρέθιζε Μούσας.

And bonds tamed the son of Dryas, swift to wrath, that king of the Edonians; so paid he for his frenzied taunts, when, by the will of Dionysus, he was pent in a rocky prison. There the fierce exuberance of his madness slowly passed away. That man learned to know the god, whom in his frenzy he had provoked with mockeries; for he had sought to quell the god-possessed women, and the Bacchanalian fire; and he angered the Muses that love the flute.

970 Παρὰ δὲ Κυανέων πελάγει διδύμας ἁλὸς
ἄκται Βοσπόρῃαι ἰδ' ὁ Θρηκῶν (ἡϊῶν)
Σαλμυδησσός, ἔν' ἀρχίπολις Ἄρης
δισσοῖσι Φινεΐδαις
εἶδεν ἀρατὸν ἔλκος
τυφλωθέν ἐξ ἀγρίας δάμαρτος
975 ἀλαδὸν ἀλαστόροισιν ὀμμάτων κύκλοις
ἄτερθ' ἐγγέων, ὕφ' αἵματρηαῖς
χείρεσσι καὶ κερκίδων ἀχμαῖσιν.

And by the waters of the Dark Rocks, the waters of the twofold sea, are the shores of Bosphorus, and Thracian Salmydessus; where Ares, neighbour to the city, saw the accursed, blinding wound dealt to the two sons of Phineus by his fierce wife, - the wound that brought darkness to those vengeance-craving orbs, smitten, *without swords*, with her bloody hands, smitten with her shuttle for a dagger.

980 Κατὰ δὲ ταχόμενοι μέλεοι μελέαν πάθαν
κλαῖον, ματρὸς ἔχοντες ἀνύμφευτον γονάν·

Pining in their misery, they bewailed their cruel doom, those

ἀ δὲ σπέρμα μὲν ἀρχαιογόνων
 ἄντας Ἑρεχθιδᾶν,
 τηλεπόρους δ' ἐν ἄντροις
 τράφη θυέλλησιν ἐν πατρώαις
 Βορεᾶς ἄμιππος ὀρθόποδος ὑπὲρ πάγου
 θεῶν παῖς· ἀλλὰ κάπ' ἐκείνη
 Μοῖραι μακραίωνες ἔσχον, ὦ παῖ.

sons of a mother hapless in her
 marriage; but she traced her
 descent from the ancient line of
 the Erechtheidae; and in far-
 distant caves she was nursed
 amid her father's storms, that
 child of Boreas, swift as a steed
 over the steep hills, a daughter of
 gods; yet upon her also the grey
 Fates bore hard, my daughter.

968: Κυανέων. J: Κυανεῶν 968: πελάγει. D: Πελαγέων (πετρῶν) 969: ἰδ'. J: ἡδ'; D:
 ἡδ' 969: ἡῶν, omitted by J and D. 975: ἄτερθ' ἐγγέων. J: ἀραχθέντων, D: ἀραχθέν
 ἐγγέων 984: θυέλλησιν, J, D: θυελλασιν

The fourth *stasimon* has made interpreters despair because of its density, the discouraging variety of its stories, and the opacity of its contextual meaning. It is difficult to see what the three myths alluded to have in common. Danae was shut up in a dungeon by her father Acrisius because of an oracle which predicted that he would be killed by his daughter's son, but Zeus made her pregnant in the guise of a shower of gold. The main character in the second myth is the Thracian king Lycurgus who contested the religion of Dionysus, whereupon the god struck him with insanity and incarcerated him in an underground prison. The third story concerns Cleopatra, daughter of Boreas and Oreithyia, who married Phineus from Salmydessus and bore him two sons. But Phineus married another woman and locked Cleopatra up. The stepmother blinded the two boys and locked them up too.

Regarding the thematic meaning of the *stasimon* Jebb holds that the only similarity between the three examples cited is noble birth and cruel imprisonment (Jebb A 169). Linforth agrees with him, adding that amidst these principal themes snatches of subordinate melodies appear but remain undeveloped (Linforth AC 231-33). The *stasimon* is found to contain much more thematic relevance if it is approached in a structural way. Such an approach shows that the multiple significances of the song lie at a 'deeper' level than that of a comparison between the events in the three stories. The thematic relevance is to be found at the level of the mythemes, the systematically recurring elements from which the stories are built up. This approach shows that Segal is right when he maintains that the fourth *stasimon*, like the second and the third, is a parody of man's civilizing achievements in the first ode (TC 199).

The *stasimon*'s thematic relevance has also remained obscure because interpreters tend to compare the stories from the point of view of

separative cosmology, especially where the category of justice is concerned. To them it is incomprehensible that guiltless victims (Danae, Cleopatra and her sons) are thrown together with malefactors like Lycurgus. This separative point of view is inadequate, because it omits the interconnected nature of all these stories. The problem dealt with is not primarily one of justice and injustice, but one of transgression of cosmological boundaries. Whether these transgressions bring the transgressor too high or too low is less relevant. In all these stories confusion and transgression are paramount, justice and injustice secondary.

In all three stories we are confronted with a violation of man's relation to nature. The helplessness of man's civilizing abilities is emphasized where the force of fate is concerned—neither wealth nor war, nor bulwarks of ships avail (953-55). But a more important point is that Danae's position is highly equivocal. On the one hand her human status is violated by her being barred from procreation, on the other hand she trespasses against her human nature by being fertilized by a god. Her problematic state is heightened further when we realize that this god comes in the guise of a natural phenomenon. In short, Danae's position regarding nature and the gods is highly ambiguous—she exceeds humanity both in the natural and the divine direction. If we take the phrase "but dreadful is the mysterious power of fate" (951) to refer to Danae, we must assume that it is an allusion to the next episode in her life: in a repetition of her incarceration, she is locked up in a chest by her father and thrown into the sea. Again her position with respect to nature and culture is one of confusion (cf. Müller 215). It is reasonable to suggest that her father Acrisius shares this pattern of confusion of nature and culture. When the *stasimon* says that Danae was yoked by him (κατεζεύχθη - 948), ironically enough this terminology is a perversion of the normal yoking of maidens under their husbands' sway, and in an ominous way the yoking of animals from the first *stasimon* is repeated—but this time as a relationship between human beings; another intrusion of nature into civilization.

A similar mixture of nature and culture can be found in the place where Lycurgus reigned. He was king of the Edonians, a people in Thrace. The Thracian storms from the second *stasimon* were an earlier allusion to the marginal position of this country, close to nature in the northern wilds. According to tradition Thrace had become barren in horror at Lycurgus' crimes: he had struck his son Dryas dead and had mangled the corpse (Goheen ISA 70, Guépin TP 98). The transgressions characteristic of Lycurgus in this *stasimon* also verge on the natural. He is swift to wrath (ὀξύχολος - 955), he is ruled by his temperament (ὀργαῖς - 956; compare the same word in the first *stasimon*—another irony), he

is possessed by the awesomeness of madness (τᾶς μανίας δεινὸν - 959, another allusion to the ode on man), his wrath is "blooming" (ἀνθηρόν - 960). Just like his counterpart Danae, the king's confused position is eventually embodied in his being locked up in a marginal place, a prison, specifically described as natural (958: πετρώδει - rocky). The impression that the second story is a variation on the first is confirmed when we realize that the image of the yoke returns. Now it is applied by the god Dionysus to the wild animal (i.e. subhuman) and king (i.e. superhuman) Lycurgus (Ζεύχθη - 955).

By now it should come as no surprise that the third story is another repetition of a confusion of nature and culture. Like her counterparts, Cleopatra combines subhuman aspects with divine ones. She was reared in natural caves at a great distance from Athenian civilization (983). Her father Boreas is a god, but as such he is a natural phenomenon as well: he is one of the winds. Cleopatra herself is a child of the gods (θεῶν παῖς - 986) and is like a horse (ἄμιππος - 985). Just as Danae's position between nature and the divine, and Lycurgus' position, both royal and animal, Cleopatra's marginality invites trouble. Her sons were blinded, again—and not accidentally so—in Thrace, by the waters of the dark rocks and Salmydessus. Salmydessus was ill-famed for the shipwrecks caused by its shallows, and the murderous tendency to robbery of its inhabitants (Kamerbeek A 169). It is no accident that the wild god Ares is connected with this country (Coleman RCA 21). The wildness of Thrace is reflected in the wild stepmother (ἄγρία - 973) of Cleopatra's sons.

Another episode of the myth, not alluded to by Sophocles, makes the repetition in the three stories complete. According to some versions Cleopatra's sons were half-buried in the earth by Phineus after they had been blinded (Goheen ISA 71, Winnington-Ingram SA 98), and according to the same sources Cleopatra was locked up by Phineus as well (cf. Müller SA 217).

The natural confusions by transformation in these stories are repeated in the confusing gods which preside over them, and again the three stories are mirrors of each other. This repetitive character of the *stasimon* has been stated quite well by Winnington-Ingram (SI 108): "Aphrodite is not mentioned in the Danae-stanza, but after the Third Stasimon her agency can perhaps be taken for granted; [She is the irresponsible power behind the god's sexual adventures with mortals]. Dionysus controls the action against Lycurgus quite specifically; [in the third myth] Ares stands in the forefront." All three deities are intimately connected in Greek mythology: Aphrodite is Dionysus' companion in joy and madness, Ares is Aphrodite's lover, Dionysus and Ares are rival or brother gods in

Thrace (Winnington-Ingram SI 109). Like Eros in the third *stasimon*, all deities are dispensers of desire and disorder and as such preside over each of the stories.

In all three cases transgressions of the boundaries between men and gods are at stake. That Danae held the seed of Zeus in trust may be considered exceeding the bounds of humanity (as Müller notes, the word ἔτλα in 944 not only points to her fortitude, but may also refer to daring - SA 216). Like the fate of Cleopatra's sons, her imprisonment can be considered a case of divine talion, which also operates in the case of Lycurgus, though here more emphasis is laid upon his reckless behaviour. He is punished because he hampered the "god-possessed women," and in doing so "touched" frenzy (ψάων—an expression which suggests polluting profanation, touching the untouchable) (Jebb A 172).

The repeated confusion of categories in the three stories is also seen in two important social ties, that of high birth and that of abnormal marriage. All three stories are about figures who are of high descent as well as in high positions in the polis, and who are subsequently destroyed, as models of the law of talion. Danae was 'of proud lineage' (949), but she fell a victim to fate. Lycurgus was a king who ended up yoked like an animal. Cleopatra was a child of the gods, but she was caught by the Moirae (986-87). In the story of Danae the role of her father Acrisius, king of Argos, should not be forgotten. It is the limits of his power (and not primarily Danae's) that are pointed out (Winnington-Ingram SI 101). Again a highly placed person in city and family is worsted by fate. The example of Lycurgus is that of a typical transgressing substitute for the polis who is thought to have brought barrenness on his country and who has to be killed as a scapegoat in order to purify the city (Apollod 3.5.1., Parker M 260).

In all cases the human function of procreation is hampered. Danae was barred from her feminine *ergon* by her father, Lycurgus killed his son, and Cleopatra and her sons are described in the terminology of ill-omened marriage (ἀνύμφευτον γονάν - 980, σπέρμα - 981, ἀρχαιογόνων - 981, ἀντασ - 982). The sons were doomed because of the paradoxical 'unmarried seed of their mother' (ἀνύμφευτον γονάν)—a living paradox.⁵⁰ The final result is that Cleopatra proves unable to continue her old lineage (cf. Rohdich A 192).

Although death is not explicitly mentioned in the fourth *stasimon*, its shadow nevertheless hovers over all three myths. The confusion of death

⁵⁰ Ad 980 first scholium: κακόνυμφον γονήν ὅτι ἐπὶ κακῷ νυμφευθεῖσα δυστυχεῖς αὐτοὺς ἔτεκεν.

and procreation in the case of Danae is rendered in the contradiction in adjecto: *τυμβήρει θαλάμῳ* (947)—a tomb-like marriage chamber. From the tradition we know that Lycurgus' rocky prison was merely a preliminary to his violent death: he was torn asunder by wild horses (Apollod 3.5.1.), or wild panthers (Hyginus Fab 132). Finally, death appears in the 'withering away' of Cleopatra's sons; the word *κατὰ...ταχόμενοι* is preceded by the similar description of Niobe's stony fate (828). In all three cases there is a strong link between the themes of imprisonment and abnormal death and burial (Kirkwood SSD 221).

It would be a separative error to confine the working of the law of talion to the case of Lycurgus. As we have seen in the second *stasimon*, the gods do not only destroy what is unjust, they mow down all that is too great, and thereby touches on the untouchable, divine power. As in the second *stasimon*, cosmic law is not primarily just on a human level, it is awesome: *'Ἄλλ' ἄ μοιριδία τις δύναισις δεινὰ* (951). Fate is the awesome power presiding over all three myths.

Only in the case of Lycurgus the function of insight is explicitly mentioned: he started with taunting words and ended with recognition (*ἐπέγνω* - 960—as usual without the implication of any improvement). But in all cases the terminology of light and darkness is conspicuous. Danae changed the celestial light (*οὐράνιον φῶς* - 944) for being hidden in a tomb (*κρυπτομένα* - 946). Lycurgus tried to quell the Bacchanalian fire (*πῦρ*), for which he was punished with the darkness of prison. And finally their stepmother's weaving shuttle brought darkness to the eyes of Cleopatra's sons.⁵¹

The transgressions of Danae and those of Antigone have many parallels: both are in an abnormal position with respect to nature and the gods and are subsequently sent into wild nature. Both are near to the gods, both are barred from procreation by their relatives and both are imprisoned in a bridal chamber which is a room of death. The one tragic difference is that, contrary to Antigone, Danae was finally made pregnant and continued her lineage, whereas Haemon and Antigone are only united in the barrenness of death (Segal TC 182, Müller SA 216). But both women also show resemblances to Creon. He is in an abnormal position with respect to nature and the gods as well; at the end, he is expelled from the city and deprived of his offspring. He does not share Antigone's and Danae's fate in the rocky bridal chamber, but in some respects his fate is analogous to Acrisius': both sought to obstruct the

⁵¹ According to a tradition which is not mentioned by Sophocles, Phineus was in his turn blinded by the gods - cf. Goheen ISA 71-72.

power of passion (Winnington-Ingram SI 100-01, 103), both relied in vain on the paraphernalia of power like the fortress of the city (Goheen ISA 69, Rohdich A 196). The phrase *'Ἄλλ' ἄ μοιριδία τις δύναισις δεινὰ* (951) can be applied to Danae and to Acrisius, to Antigone and to Creon. In its allusion to the undifferentiated power of awesomeness, it might serve as a motto for the whole tragedy.

The parallels between the case of Lycurgus and that of Creon are evident: both vaunt their power in the city and their independence from certain gods. Both are eventually destroyed by the gods in an *anagnorisis*. But the parallels to Antigone should not be overlooked. Like Antigone Lycurgus is yoked, like Antigone he is locked up in a stony prison, and like Antigone he is moved by madness and a quick temper. In so far as Antigone is unfeminine, Lycurgus' hampering of the godlike women may represent her nature as well as Creon's.

In the third myth Cleopatra's fate parallels that of Antigone in many respects. Far-away caves, contact with the divine sphere, marriage which is no marriage, high birth that ends miserably. But the parallels to Creon should not be overlooked. His marriage also turns out to be a non-marriage. Both his sons end miserably as well. When we hear of Phineus' two sons, we may be reminded of Eteocles and Polyneices as well as of Megareus and Haemon.

The idea that there is no contextual unity in the fourth *stasimon* (Waldock SD 116-19) turns out to be untenable, just as is the opinion that the only common feature between Antigone and the examples is noble birth and imprisonment. It is of the greatest importance to point out the non-ethical nature of the transgressions which are involved in the fourth *stasimon*: it is immaterial whether they are 'just' or 'unjust' or both. In interconnected cosmology it is the awesomeness of the transgression that counts. And this insight should be the framework for the interpretation of Antigone and Creon as tragic protagonists.

6.5. The *parode* and the last *stasimon*

Parode

- 100 Ἀκτις αἰλίου, τὸ κάλ-
λιστον ἑπταπύλῳ φανὲν
Θήβα τῶν πρότερον φάος,
ἐφάνθης ποτ', ὦ χρυσέας
ἀμέρας βλέφαρον, Διρκαί-
ων ὑπὲρ ῥέεθρων μολοῦσα,
105 τὸν λεύκασπιν Ἀργόθεν
φῶτα, βάντα πανσαγίᾳ

Parode

Beam of the sun, fairest light that
ever dawned on Thebè of the
seven gates, thou hast shone forth
at last, eye of golden day, arisen
aboven Dircè's streams! The
warrior of the white shield, who
came from Argos in his panoply,
hath been stirred by thee to

φυγάδα πρόδρομον, ὁζυτέρω
κινήσασα χαλινῶ.
110 "Ὀν ἐφ' ἡμετέρῃ γῇ Πολυνείκης
ἀρθεὶς νεικέων ἐξ ἀμφιλόγων
.....ὁξέα κλάζων
αἰετὸς εἰς γῆν ὥς ὑπερέπτῃ,
λευκῆς χιόνης πτέρυγι στεγανός,
115 πολλῶν μεθ' ὅπλων
ζὺν θ' ἵπποκόμοις κορύθεσιν.

Στὰς δ' ὑπὲρ μελάρων φονώ-
σαισιν ἀμφιχανῶν κύκλῳ
λόγχαις ἐπτάπυλον στόμα,
120 ἔβα πρὶν ποθ' ἀμετέρων
αἱμάτων γένυσιν πλησθῆ-
ναί (τε) καὶ στεφάνωμα πύργων
πευκάενθ' Ἥφαιστον ἐλεῖν.
Τοῖος ἀμφὶ νῶτ' ἐτάθη
125 πάταγος Ἄρεος, ἀντιπάλου
δυσχείρωμα δράκοντος.

Ζεὺς γὰρ μεγάλης γλώσσης κόμπους
ὑπερεχθαίρει, καὶ σφας ἐσιδὼν
πολλῶ ρεύματι προσνισσομένους,
130 χρυσοῦ καναχῆς ὑπεροπλίαις,
παλτῶ ρίπτει πυρὶ βαλβίδων
ἐπ' ἄκρων ἦδη
νίκην ὀρμῶντ' ἀλαλάξαι.

Ἀντιτύπα δ' ἐπὶ γὰ πέσε τανταλῳθεις
135 πυρφόρος ὃς τότε μαينوμένα ζὺν ὀρμῇ
βακχεύων ἐπέπνει
ῥιπαῖς ἐχθίστων ἀνέμων.
Εἶχε δ' ἄλλα τὰ μὲν,
ἄλλα δ' ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐπενώμα στυφελί-
140 ζων μέγας Ἄρης δεξιόσειρος.

Ἑπτὰ λοχαγοὶ γὰρ ἐφ' ἑπτὰ πύλαις
ταχθέντες ἴσοι πρὸς ἴσους ἔλιπον
Ζηνὶ Τροπαίῳ πάγχαλκα τέλη,
πλὴν τοῖν στυγεροῖν, ὃ πατὴρ ἐνὸς
145 μητρός τε μιᾶς φύντε καθ' αὐτοῖν
δικρατεῖς λόγχας στήσαντ' ἔχετον
κοινοῦ θανάτου μέρος ἄμφω.

headlong flight, in swifter career;
whom *Polynices* set forth against
our land by reason of vexed
claims; and, like shrill-screaming
eagle, he flew over into our land,
in snow-white pinion sheathed,
with an armèd throng, and with
plumage of helms.

He paused above our dwellings;
he ravened around our sevenfold
portals with spears athirst for
blood; but he went hence, or ever
his jaws were glutted with our
gore, or the Fire-god's pine-fed
flame had seized our crown of
towers. So fierce was the noise of
battle raised behind him, a thing
too hard for him to conquer, as
he wrestled with his dragon foe.

For Zeus utterly abhors the
boasts of a proud tongue; and
when he beheld them coming on
in a great stream, in the haughty
pride of clanging gold, he smote
with brandished fire one who was
now hasting to shout victory at
his goal upon our ramparts.

Swung down, he fell on the earth
with a crash, torch in hand, he
who so lately, in the frenzy of the
mad onset, was raging against us
with the blasts of his tempestuous
hate. But those threats fared not
as he hoped; and to other foes
the mighty War-god dispensed
their several dooms, dealing
havoc around, a mighty helper at
our need.

For seven captains at seven gates,
matched against seven, left the
tribute of their panoplies to Zeus
who turns the battle; save those
two of cruel fate, who, born of
one sire and one mother, set
against each other their twain

conquering spears, and are
sharers in a common death.

Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ὁ μεγάλωνυμος ἦλθε Νίκα
τῇ πολυαρμάτῳ ἀντιχαρεῖσα Θήβα,
150 ἔκ μὲν δὴ πολέμων
τῶν νῦν θέσθαι λησμοσύναν·
θεῶν δὲ ναοὺς χοροῖς
παννυχίοις πάντας ἐπέλωμεν, ὁ Θή-
βας δ' ἐλελίχθων Βάκχιος ἄρχοι.

102: πρότερον. J, D: προτέρων 106: Ἀργόθεν. We follow J and D. DM:
'Απιόθεν 107: φῶτα, βάντα. J: ἐκβάντα φῶτα 108: ὁζυτέρω. D: ὁζυτόρω 110: J:
ὃς ἐφ' ἡμετέρῃ γῇ Πολυνείκους, D: ὃν ἐφ' ἀμετέροι γῇ Πολυνείκης 116: κορύθεσιν. J:
κορύθεσι 125: ἀντιπάλου. J, D: ἀντιπάλῳ 138/39: D: ἄλλα τὰ δ' ἄλλα τὰ δ' ἐπ'
ἄλλοις

Fifth stasimon

1115 Πολυώνυμε, Καδμείας νύμφας ἄγαλμα
καὶ Διὸς βαρυβρεμέτα
γένος, κλυτὰν ὃς ἀμφέπεις
Ἰταλίαν, μέδεις δὲ
1120 παγκοίνοις Ἐλευσινίας
Δηοῦς ἐν κόλποις, ὦ Βακχεῦ,
Βακχᾶν ματρόπολιν Θήβαν
ναιετῶν παρ' ὑγρόν (τ')
'Ισμηνοῦ ῥέεθρον, ἀγρίου τ'
1125 ἐπὶ σπορᾷ δράκοντος·

σὲ δ' ὑπὲρ διλόφου πέτρᾳς στέροφ ὅπως
λιγνύς, ἐνθα Κωρύκται
νύμφαι σίχουσι Βακχιῖδες
1130 Κασταλίας τε νᾶμα.
Καὶ σε Νυσαίων ὀρέων
κισσῆρεις ὄχθαι χλωρά τ' ἀκ-
τὰ πολυστάφυλος πέμπει,
ἀμβρότων ἐπέων
1135 εὐαζόντων, Θηβαίας
ἐπισκοποῦντ' ἀγυιάς·

Fifth stasimon

O thou of many names, glory of
the Cadmeian bride, offspring of
loud-thundering Zeus! thou who
watchest over famed Italia, and
reignest, where all guests are
welcomed, in the sheltered plain
of Eleusinian Deô! O Bacchus,
dweller in Thebè, mother-city of
Bacchants, by the softly-gliding
stream of Ismenus, on the soil
where the fierce dragon's teeth
were sown!

Thou hast been seen where torch-
flames glare through smoke,
above the crests of the twin
peaks, where move the Corycian
nymphs, thy votaries, hard by
Castalia's stream. Thou comest
from the ivy-mantled slopes of
Nysa's hills, and from the shore
green with many-clustered vines,
while thy name is lifted up on
strains of more than mortal

τὰν ἐκ πασῶν τιμῶν
 ὑπερτάταν πόλεων
 ματρὶ σὺν κεραυνίᾳ·
 1140 καὶ νῦν, ὥς βιαίας ἔχεται
 πάνδαμος πόλις ἐπὶ νόσου,
 μολεῖν καθαρσίῳ ποδὶ Παρνασίου
 1145 ὑπὲρ κλιτύν, ἧ στονόεντα πορθμόν.

Ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων
 χοράγ' ἄστρον, νυχίων
 φθεγμάτων ἐπίσκοπε,
 παῖ, Διὸς γένεθλον, προφάνηθ',
 1150 ὦναξ, σαῖς ἅμα περιπόλοις
 Θυίαισιν, αἱ σε μαινόμεναι πάννουχοι
 χορεύουσι τὸν ταμίαν Ἰαχχον.

1115: νόμφας ἄγαλμα. D: ἄγαλμα νόμφας 1119: Ἰταλίαν. D: Οἰχαλίαν 1121: Δημοῦς
 J, D: Δημοῦς; J. omits ὦ 1124: ῥέθρον. J: ῥεῖθρον (τ') 1129: J, D: στείχουσι Νύμφαι
 Βακχιδῆς 1134: ἐπέων. D: ἐπεῶν 1145: κλιτύν. D: κλειτύν 1146: πνεόντων.
 J, D: πνειόντων 1149: Διὸς. We follow J. DM: Δῖον. D: Ζηνός

The *parode* and the fifth *stasimon* will be considered together, because they may be conceived of as the side panels of the picture which has emerged from the central *stasima*. As such they are structurally cognate. They form a repetition of a peak in the hope of deliverance, shown in an imagery of light, which is subsequently dashed to the ground, in a repeated game of Dionysus (cf. Rosivach TWA 25).

In these stanzas we have to pay special attention to the harmonizing point of view. According to Rohdich both songs concern the final victory of the polis over the claims of family and individual. He believes that the *parode* impregnates us with the salvation and continuation of the menaced polis and its moderate ideal of life as the final aim of Zeus (A 49). Even the Bacchic oblivion to which the chorus exhorts is an affirmation of the polis (A 51). He holds the same point of view regarding the fifth *stasimon*: it restores the order of the polis—though according to Rohdich the whole tragedy therefore forms an illusion. It disguises the division of political reality by means of the aesthetic appearance of a solution, exemplified in the purely civic Dionysus represented in the fifth *stasimon*.⁵²

⁵² "Dionysos, der Gott der Tragödie, erscheint als Bewahrer der Polis, in der sich das Leben gegen die Gefahr, die es für sich selber ist, die entwickeltste Möglichkeit seiner

power, as thou visitest the ways of Thebè:

Thebè, of all cities, thou holdest first in honour, thou, and thy mother whom the lightning smote; and now, when all our people is captive to a violent plague, come thou with healing feet over the Parnassian height, or over the moaning strait!

O thou with whom the stars rejoice as they move, the stars whose breath is fire; O master of the voices of the night; son begotten of Zeus; appear, O king, with thine attendant Thyiads, who in night-long frenzy dance before thee, the giver of good gifts, Iacchus!

Certainly, in the *parode* and the fifth *stasimon* order is an aspect of tragic Dionysus, yet in the course of events it collapses completely. Both stanzas are typical examples of tragic ambiguity. It would be an error to conceive of Polyneices' attack on Thebes in the *parode* as plain baseness. It is not a struggle between the bad guy and the good guy which is depicted, but a struggle of powers which both confound wildness and celestial loftiness. The Argivian army's reckless attack is phrased in striking animal metaphors. Polyneices is compared to a shrill-screaming eagle (ὄξεα κλάζων – 112). This description may point to the sequence of bird-images which is to follow in the episodes. In all cases a confusion of nature and culture is indicated. In this instance Polyneices' brutish behaviour reaches its peak in his attempt to drink human blood (120-22). This pollution, which of course has its background in a series of previous pollutions characteristic of the Labdacids, is the starting point of a sequence of contagions typical of interconnected cosmology. In order to avoid this pollution and use it for his own benefit, Creon leaves the body unburied; to avoid the same pollution from an opposite angle Antigone tries to bury it. Both attempts at control of ambiguity fail and become the cause of even more terrible contaminations which are not entirely subdued at the end of the tragedy.

That the struggle between Polyneices and the city of Thebes is not painted in black and white becomes evident when we realize that not only the attackers are described as animal-like, but the attacked as well. The Thebans are a dragon which it is hard to conquer. In this image we are reminded of the ambiguous origin of the Thebans: they sprang from wild dragon teeth, which were cultivated up to a point by being sown (cf. fifth *stasimon* 1124-25). We are dealing with a battle of the celestial eagle and the chthonic dragon (cf. Il 12.200ff.). Here it seems as if the dragon carries away the palm of victory—but soon enough this victory turns into defeat—ironically precisely because the head of the dragon, Creon, disregards the chthonic aspects of life (Segal TC 195). Rohdich quite correctly describes this general upheaval of categories in the following way: the human world is interpreted theriomorphically, the animal world anthropomorphically (A 45).

This confusion is repeated in the relationship of the contestants to the gods. At first sight, order seems to reign supreme. According to the law of talion, Zeus destroys whoever boasts with a proud tongue (127). But

Erhaltung geschaffen hat. Nach der Konzeption des Chorlieds mit Apollon geradezu verschmolzen, repräsentiert er nicht die unreflektiert-chaotische Kraft einfacher Natur, sondern die Kraft der zur Weltordnung vermittelten Natur, die ihr regulatives Prinzip in sich trägt, durch das sie sich selber bändigt und der Wucherungen entledigt, die ihren Kosmos gefährden" (Rohdich A 214).

it is doubtful whether the order of Zeus has incorporated the disorder of Ares, as Rohdich maintains. Zeus and Ares are closely akin—there is a Zeus Areios, indicating the aspects of disorder which Zeus represents as well. Zeus is *tropaïos* in a general sense: he changes fortunes. In one reading of *δυσχείρωμα* (126 – Kamerbeek A 56-57) it is not the power of the dragon alone which is hard to overcome, but the power of Ares in general. When Ares is called *δεξιόσειρος* (140), the right-hand horse, he may be depicted not as the helper of Olympian order, but as the indispensable power which underlies order but also undermines it. Ares is not only the right-hand horse, he is also disconcerting (*στυφελίζων* – 139). His disconcerting actions are complemented by those of Dionysus.

That Polyneices and his men occupy a dangerous intermediate position between nature and the divine becomes clear when we study their place with respect to the sun and the earth. The light of the sun shines in complete clarity, it is the eye of the golden day and hence the light of salvation (Burton CST 93-94). In their endeavour to transcend human nature, Polyneices and his men are compared to this divine power. They flew over the boundaries (in more than one sense) into the land, occupying an airy position, pausing above the city (117). Like the sun they stood above the earth, with garments white as snow (114). They were in the possession of fire, they clang with gold (130, cf. 103 for the connection of the sun with gold). One of the seven, Capaneus, is called *πυρφόρος* (135), a reminiscence of the 'hybrid' Titan Prometheus who stole the divine fire on behalf of mortals (cf. OC 55)—another indication that we are not confronted with mere baseness.

The attackers have risen to the top, shouting victory, when we realize that this human identification with the sun is at the same time a manic drive (*μαινομένα ξὺν ὄρμῃ* – 135), prompted by the most evil winds (a first indication of the persistently returning power of the wind throughout the play). That this human identification with the sun was hubris becomes clear when we realize that it is the sun itself who restores order by driving the enemies out (*κινήσασα* – 109). Those who equate themselves with the sun and look down upon the gods are in their turn looked down upon, from the real top, by Zeus (*εἰσίδων* – 128). Their human fire turns out to be weak when it is compared to Zeus' celestial fire (131, cf. Müller SA 53). The result is that the sun-like enemy is confronted with his chthonic nature—he falls down to earth (134). In this combining of high and low he is like tragic Tantalus (*πανταλωθεὶς* – 134, for the connection see Jäkel EAS 49).

The nucleus of the final bloody act in which the Labdacids are wiped off the earth may be found in the ingenious word play in 144ff.: "Save the two hateful people, who, born of one father and one mother, set

against each other their doubly conquering spears, and both partake in a common death." Here we are confronted with a pun on 'one' and 'two' alluding to the tragically ambiguous position of the Labdacids, who are persistently one where they should have been two (transgressive fusion), and who are two where they should have been one (transgressive fission). Polyneices and Eteocles are born of one father and one mother. Of course these were not normal parents: Oedipus and Iocaste were one where they should have been two. As is said in line 53 about Iocaste: "Mother and wife, two names in one"—she fused the functions of wife and mother. Earlier, Oedipus had killed his father—a fission, where the family should have preserved its unity. This contagious play of fusion and fission is continued in the struggle between the brothers. While they should have been one, they are two, because of their conflicting quarrels (*νεικέων...ἀμφιλόγων* – 111, note the pun on the name Polyneices). The irony is that two enemy brothers cannot really become two. When they use their spears against each other they are also directing them against themselves. Equally ironically, the result of their duality is oneness: they share a common death (147). Even then the play of irony has not ended. Though Polyneices and Eteocles share a common death, their bodies are treated in opposite ways. This renewed fission brings about all subsequent excessive fusions and fissions which constitute the *Antigone*.

It is only in the category of insight that the complete irony of the *parode* is unfolded. The extensive greeting of the light of the sun expresses the chorus' confidence that the danger for Thebes is over, that the polis has been saved. Because we know from the prologue that the chorus is erring in a terrible way we can easily recognize the irony of its statements, but this irony is present in the stanza itself. First of all it is ominous that the chorus should pretend to share in the light of the sun, but at the same time exhort itself to be forgetful: "let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars" (150). It wants to dance and sing through the night (in contrast to the daylight which has brought the victory). Secondly, it is just as ominous that the chorus should place itself under the leadership of Dionysus in its mad joy after the war. Here the chorus lives in the hope which is a helpmate; but which is treacherous as well. The chorus hopes for Dionysus as the healer, the institutor of order, but forgets his dangerous transgressing power. Ominously the god is called the shaker of Thebes (*ὁ Θήβας δ' ἐλελίχθων Βάκχιος* – 153-54). What the chorus does not realize, but what the audience may suspect, is that Thebes has been shaken but that its real upheaval is still to come. What the chorus does not seem to realize either is that it has enrolled itself under the banner of Dionysus, while a few lines before it had condemned Capaneus as *βακχεύων*, as being Bacchic (Rohdich A 50, cf. Jebb A 35, Müller SA

54—contra Davidson PA 48, who sees no anomaly). We might say that the frenzy of the attackers has spread to the citizens themselves, whose giddy hopes and mad desires will soon fall to the ground as well.

The most striking resemblance between the fifth *stasimon* and the *parode* is that again an ecstatic hope of harmony is shattered and that again Dionysus presides over the ironic revelries. Dionysus is the central deity in the fifth *stasimon* and the chorus persistently sees him as a healer, as a bringer of order and harmony, even on a cosmic scale. One of the names of Dionysus is central: that of Iacchus (1153). By this name he is connected not only with frenzy and punishment, but also with the Eleusinian mysteries. Thus there emerges a vision of harmony on a cosmic scale. Dionysus lives in wild nature, on the ivy-covered hills of Nysa and the shore green with vines, but at the same time he is supposed to be the saviour of the Theban civilization. It is as if the forces of wild nature have lost their awesome aspect. Dionysus seems to cross land and sea without trouble. He leads the chorus of the stars, but he is also master over the city (ἐπισκοποῦντ' - 1136). Because of his conciliatory power Dionysus is asked to heal the violent intrusion of nature into the city. He is said to come with healing foot against its illness (1142-43). The exaltation of the thiasus is considered a purification by control of ambiguity (Vicaire PFD 363-64).

Dionysus is also presented as the mediator in the conflict between Olympian deities and chthonic ones. He is connected with wild nature, but he is also the son of Zeus (1149). If παγχοίνοις...κόλποις may, with Müller, also be read as 'the region of death' (SA 249), then a reconciliation of life and death may be concerned as well. This supposition is strengthened by the allusion to the Eleusinian mysteries, which promised eternal life to their participants. A similar mediating function may be ascribed to Dionysus' birth from a mortal mother and an immortal father. This harmony is set in tones of insight and light. Dionysus is summoned to appear (προφάνηθ' - 1149) as supervisor of Thebes, thus bringing together the opposites which constantly have been in friction between Olympian deities and chthonic ones, between city and nature, between mortality and immortality, between light and darkness, between the wildness of raging maenads and the distant order of the night sky (Segal TC 202).

But this victory of order over disorder is not final, the Dionysus of order has not been separated from wild Dionysus. As in the *parode*, the ominous undertones cannot be neglected. Dionysus is not only Iacchus the reconciler, he has many names (1115), and remains violent and maddening. This wildness can still be felt in the 'moaning strait' (1145)—the dangerous aspect of nature is not altogether absent. Dangerous aspects lurk in the fire breathing stars as well: the epithet may imply the bestial

destructiveness of a monster like the Chimaera (Müller SA 247, Segal TC 204). The torches and nocturnal choruses should warn us if we compare them with their dark counterparts in the *parode*. That Dionysus' mortal mother is referred to does not only point to reconciliation: her fate was terrible (Steiner As 260). And despite the longing for harmony Thebes remains the city originating from a wild dragon (1134-35). In short, Dionysus' epithet ταμίας, 'he who allots shares,' may have a positive sense (giver of good gifts), but a negative one as well. The gifts of power may stand for malignity (Vicaire PFD 363, 367, 369). Müller is right when he maintains that this god of the source of life is also terrible and lethal (SA 248).

The most ironic ambiguity surrounds the chorus' pretensions to insight into Dionysus' healing qualities. As in the *parode*, this insight is also a form of mania (μαϊνόμεναι - 1151), connected with the night and not with daylight. Neither the *parode* nor the fifth *stasimon* is reconciliatory, because they are typically Sophoclean *hyporchemata*, songs of gladness which are counterpoints to the ensuing disaster (Jebb A 198). The tragic ambiguity here is complicated. In a sense, what the chorus expects does not happen: the city is not saved by the burial of Polyneices and the attempted rescue of Antigone. Yet in another sense, ironically Dionysus is indeed the saviour of the city; the chorus is partly right. The pollution is removed from the city, but in an unexpected way and contrary to what the chorus believed: by Antigone's death and Creon's destruction. As Rohdich says, the city has been purified—but this should not blind us to the tragic ambiguity which continues to reign. There is no reason to suppose that the chorus is now able to separate Dionysus' beneficial aspects from his maleficent ones. The chorus's false hopes are no accident—they are the false hopes on which man lives, and through which he is destroyed at the same time. As Steiner says: "The fundamental division, exactly reflecting the chorus's false hopes of imminent delivery from death and from hatred in the city, is that between Dionysus the protector and Dionysus the elemental agent of inhuman logic" (As 101). This tragic division appears as follows: the city can only continue its existence by sacrificing those who are its most respected representatives, and there is no end to this persistent self-sacrifice.

In conclusion we may say that the *Antigone's* choral songs are penetrated by a sense of the fragility of human civilization. This fragility is due to man's nearness to nature in combination with his nearness to the divine, which is deceitful and dangerous. Man's active, hopeful, desiring nature brings him to greatness and to baseness in an inevitable fusion (cf. Steiner As 261-62). The *stasima* offer no reason to suspect that this conflicting and ambiguous human nature applies to Antigone more than to Creon.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EPISODES OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

7.1. Creon's speech

In lines 162-210 Creon presents us with his cosmology, the structural counterpart to Antigone's speech in 450-70. Contrary to its interpretation by separative orthodoxy, Creon's speech is not that of a base and merely human character, but the utterance of a person who is extremely high in the city and whose position is tragically conflicting, since his high position compels him to take an absolute stand where his principles are concerned. He is forced to transcend his human limitations, both in having to suppress opposing principles, resulting in one-sidedness, and in having to be convinced of the absolute value of his view of the existing cosmology, resulting in an ironical reversal of his intentions.

Creon is determined to deserve his high position in the city in all relevant cosmological categories. First of all he points out that the ship of state was threatened by a sea of troubles (162-63). He is obviously alluding to the events in the *parode*, but his reference to the danger of the wild sea is no mere metaphor here. It expresses a fear of a real intrusion of nature into the confines of civilization as a consequence of Oedipus' contagious pollution, which had caused the mutual slaying of Polyneices and Eteocles. As the new substitute of Thebes, Creon considers himself the warder of civilized order against the undermining powers of nature. He cedes the honour of having saved the ship of civilization to the gods (162), showing himself the pious opposite of an autocratic tyrant in his confidence that only the gods have saved Thebes, that he should rely on Zeus (184-85), and in his indignation with Polyneices who "sought to consume utterly with fire" "the shrines of his fatherland's gods" (θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς - 199) (cf. Knox HT 101, SP 15).

In Creon's cosmology there are unbreakable ties between the divine sphere, the polis and its king. The welfare of the city was considered to be dependent upon divine assistance (Creon piously invokes Zeus - 184), but the city was also believed to be directly connected with its king. Creon reflects this interconnected cosmology, when he refers twice to the "power" of the throne (κράτη - 166, 173), and when he adds that by his separations of friends and foes (182-83) and of ruin and safety for the city (ἄτην, σωτηρίας - 185-86) he is able to make the city prosper (τήνδ' αὖξω πόλιν - 191). It is a consequence of this interconnectedness of city, divine

sphere and king, that the king's words are not merely law—they are divinely sanctioned.

Although the divine interests of the city are foremost in Creon's speech, he does acknowledge the equally divine importance of family ties. He admits that his authority is founded on his kinship with the house of Oedipus (γένους κατ' ἀγχιστεῖα - 174) (Jebb A 42; for the meaning of ἀγχιστεῖα cf. Ch. 4.). Regarding his claim to possess insight, Creon is as prudent as is feasible for a king who is the city's representative. He is determined to listen to good counsel (179), he acknowledges that a man's words should be corroborated by his deeds (175-77), and he is fully cognizant of the frailty of human knowledge when it is compared to that of Zeus, "who sees all things always" (ὁ πάνθ' ὁρῶν αἰεὶ - 184).

Creon's most fundamental cosmological convictions can be found in the categories of life and death and of justice. He claims that in general his authority is legitimate and that in particular justice is on his side in his decree that the body of Polyneices should not be interred. In order to assess the meaning of Creon's words it is essential to take into account that they are spoken in the context of interconnected cosmology. In that cosmology the identification of the king with his city is unquestioned. Whoever resists Creon resists the city as a whole and is a traitor. Therefore Creon's threat to ban whoever would try to obstruct his ordinances would be seen as an example of sound leadership (182-83: "if any makes a friend (φίλον) of more account than his fatherland (πάτρας), that man I declare to be nowhere (οὐδαμοῦ).") That Creon's speech was highly valued in Antiquity (in contrast to modern separative prejudice) is confirmed by Demosthenes' favourable citation (19.247, cf. Knox HT 86N). Demosthenes emphasizes that being high in the city, as Creon now is, implies high duties. A king has to forfeit his allegiance to his family in favour of the polis—otherwise he may be accused of nepotism (cf. Pericles in Thyc 2.60, Jebb A 45). That is the background to Creon's forceful separation between those who support the city and those who do not: "Never would I deem the country's foe (ἄνδρα δυσμενῇ χθονός) a *philos* [friend or kinsman] to myself" (187-88). Whoever resists the polis, be he friend or family member, will be treated equally by Creon. We have to conclude that Creon's speech reflects Athenian constitutional proceedings.¹ The idea that Creon's law is a mere human edict is not in accordance with its interconnected nature (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 8 contra Jebb A xxii).

¹ Cf. Goheen ISA 46-47, Kamerbeek A 61, Knox HT 86. For the expression "I shall make the polis great" (αὖξω πόλιν - 191) compare Xen Mem 3.7.2., Lycurg. c. Leocrat. 76-77.

The same may be said of Creon's specific decree to prevent the burial of Polyneices. In order to estimate its justification in interconnected cosmology we first have to determine Polyneices' position. Creon's decree would have been unjust if Polyneices had been a mere enemy: it was a holy custom in Greece to accord burial rites to one's fallen foes. But Polyneices was not an enemy—he was a representative of a much more dangerous class of men: those who undermine their own city. He was a traitor and consequently a transgressor of all relevant boundaries.² Because traitors were considered abominable defilements of the city, it was common to leave their bodies unburied to serve as abhorrent examples.³ In this context we have to take issue with those interpreters who acknowledge that Creon was justified in not burying Polyneices but maintain that he committed an outrage by not throwing the body over the borders of Thebes to be buried elsewhere, and leaving it within its confines (e.g. Linforth AC 191, Eberlein DKT 25). The reply to this sophistry is that this is not an issue in the play at all (Hester SU 20, Cerri IAS 123). Nobody tells Creon he should have had Polyneices buried elsewhere, not even Tiresias. Furthermore, throwing a body over the frontiers did not necessarily imply burial. Finally, these interpreters cannot explain why in the end Polyneices is buried in his native earth (1203).

Creon's decree that Polyneices should be left unburied is no baseness; it has to be understood in the light of interconnected cosmology with its emphasis on ritual control of pollution and ambiguity. Creon emphasizes the polluting power of Polyneices' corpse. It is barred from its proper place, the realm of the dead, and it is not allowed to receive the due rites of passage from its living kin to its dead kin either. Nobody is allowed to bury or lament it (203-04). It is left to the forces of nature (Segal TC 157), as food for wild and marginal animals (birds and dogs – 205-06). The citizens are summoned to look at the pollution: the body is mangled for all to see (αἰχισθέν τ' ἰδεῖν – 206). It is plausible that Creon is moved by the hope that the pollution may be used in a purificatory way by demarcating a clear ritual context. This ritually ambiguous procedure with respect to Polyneices compels Creon to make a separation between the two brothers: Eteocles' corpse is purified in the ordinary way (ἀφαργίσαι – 196). From the state's point of view this difference is ineluctable. Eteocles was the opposite of a traitor: he fell fighting for the city (194-95, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 11). The ritual separation between

² Nature (112-13), the gods (199, 286), the polis (113, 199, 287), family and death (the killing of his brother which was also a suicide – 56-57, 144-47, 171-72), justice (287), insight (212). In line 870 Antigone adds marriage.

³ Cf. Höppener BSA 74, Mette AS 131, Cerri IAS 121, all contra Jebb A xxii.

the two brothers exemplifies the city's separation of good men and evil ones in general: "never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honour before the just; but whoso hath good will to Thebes, he shall be honoured of me, in his life and in his death" (208-10). The citizens, as represented by the chorus, show confidence in Creon's ritual ambiguity towards Polyneices. Their reaction is not unfavourable (Müller SA 61, Alexanderson SCA 88). They consider the death-penalty a normal punishment for transgressing Creon's decree (220, cf. Müller SA 62).

In so far as Creon's speech reflects the divine character of the polis and its substitute, the king, it is impossible to consider him a merely human usurper, but his position is not invulnerable. In Sophocles' interconnected cosmology it is an extremely dangerous thing to be high in the city, this royal position verging on being an outcast, because of the excessiveness accompanying princehood. This danger of touching on supra-human power, which all too soon destroys human loftiness, rumbles below the surface of Creon's speech again in all six fundamental categories.⁴

Though Creon emphasizes that the gods have set the ship of state on a right course, as Thebes' royal substitute he must at the same time underline the identification of his own high position with the welfare of the city. This brings him into dangerous proximity to the gods, as is apparent in his statement that *he* is the one who steers the ship of state (178), adding that he is the one who will make the city great (191). Because of his lofty substitutive position Creon comes near to self-deification (Else MA 96), something which, by the law of talion and the jealousy of the gods, only too soon turns into a renewed intrusion of wild nature into the confines of civilization. The awkwardness of Creon's relationship with the gods also becomes clear from the fact that he can only be consistent in his endeavours to support the gods of the city of Thebes by disregarding the conflicting claims of the nether gods representing the family and its dead members (Knox HT 101-02). That Creon is compelled to be one-sided is also shown in his words: when he says that Polyneices wanted to set fire to the θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς (199), he has to restrict the meaning of these words to "the gods of the city," whereas they also mean "the gods of the family." Creon is unable to take the latter meaning into account without losing his own position as leader of the city, but this means that he himself is unwittingly doing what he reproaches Polyneices with. And it is just as uncertain that the gods of the polis will support Creon when his lofty position forces him into their proximity.

⁴ "The whole of Creon's first speech is shot through with hints and ambiguities which qualify the surface impression of political wisdom" (Winnington-Ingram SI 124).

The same problem of one-sidedness and potential undermining of his own principles relates to Creon's social ties—and is again seen in his use of words in a single, restricted sense. As the head of the polis he is intrinsically unable to appreciate the whole gamut of meanings of the word φίλος, which means "beloved," "friend" and "kinsman," and therefore combines the fundamental ties of marriage, comradeship in the city, and family membership (Knox HT 80). Being the king, Creon has to "make" his φίλοι (187-88, 190), i.e. he has to confine the meaning of the word to comradeship in the polis, at the expense of its other, cosmologically equally important aspects. Creon's tragic problem is that as the representative of Thebes he has to suppress the claims of family, leading to ironical one-sidedness and to the undermining of his own position. In his championship of the city he must forget that he is a fuser of roles. Creon himself has pointed out that he owes his power to a specific family, the Labdacids (Else MA 40, Rosivach TWA 22), but as a king he has to do the opposite of what is his duty as a member of that family: take care of the corpse of one of its members (Linforth AC 191, Patzer HHS 8). This tragic paradox turns out to be truly ambiguous when we realize that the family in question is dangerously ambiguous (Benardete RSA I 172-73). Creon legitimizes his royal position by his family ties with Oedipus, who, in Creon's words, had righted the city (167), just as Creon himself intends to do (190)—an awkward argument, for in his description of Oedipus he has to suppress the other Oedipus, the outcast, scapegoat, the polluted Oedipus who undermined the city. Moreover, Creon is appealing to his ties of blood with a family, two members of which are dangerously polluted according to his own words (172). Through his connection with the Labdacids Creon might become infected with this contamination as well.

Creon's tragic predicament is harshly revealed when we consider the stand he has to take on life and death. As the king of Thebes he has to promote the life of his city. At the same time as its representative he is unable to recognize the claims of the dead in so far as these claims run counter to the interest of the state. As Thebes' substitute Creon has immense power. His decisions on life and death are almost divine, a fact the chorus is referring to when it says that it is his prerogative to decide "both for the dead, and for all of us who live" (καὶ τῶν θανόντων χῶπόσοι ζῶμεν περὶ - 214). It is questionable whether a mortal, even a royal mortal, is able consistently to bear this power over life and death. As the city's representative Creon's decisions with respect to life and death must inevitably be one-sided for the benefit of the city: "whoso is of good will towards the city, he shall be honoured in death and life alike" (209-10).

The same dangers surround Creon's relationship to the category of

justice. He is forced to claim that his royal position enables him to make a clear separation between the wicked and the just (208)—but that separation is problematic. Creon is confronted with the problems of fusion and fission characteristic of the Labdacids. He recognizes these problems when he says of Polyneices and Eteocles: "they have fallen by a twofold doom (πρὸς διπλῆς μοίρας) on one and the same day (μία καὶ ἡμέραν)," "by their own hands," and "both slaying and being slain" (170-72). Creon brings himself into their orbit when, as the representative of the city, he has to make a fission in the final fusion of the two brothers. Though both brothers are polluted by their own hands (αὐτόχειρι σὺν μιάσματι - 172) he is compelled, for political reasons, to bury Eteocles as one of the best and to leave Polyneices unburied, but this politically motivated decision disregards the similarity of the brothers, who both polluted themselves and each other (Jebb A 47, Else MA 41, Benardete RSA I 175). Creon's tragic problem is that both he and Polyneices are fusers of opposite roles. Creon is the king, but he has to suppress the fact that he is also a kinsman to Polyneices. Polyneices is a traitor, but Creon has to leave out of his consideration that he is also the former king's son and a relative. Creon's attempt to control ambiguity in leaving Polyneices unburied is extremely dangerous: it is uncertain whether the gods will accept the separations he has to make. If the ritual employment of pollution should fail, an outbreak of uncontrollable pollution, exuding from the body, spreading to Creon's own family and to the Labdacids, and finally to the whole city, is to be feared.

The irony of Creon's position may be summarized in the category of insight. He piously concedes that Zeus sees (ὄρων - 184) everything, but one line afterwards he states that he will not be silent if *he* sees (ὄρων - 185) ruin coming to the city. As the king, Creon has to be on the outlook for the welfare of the city. But this Zeus-like position might turn on him, because Zeus accepts no competition. He might ensure that this mortal in his semi-immortal position will finally turn out to be blind to the interests of the city, not because he is base or mediocre, but because the playful divine powers have led him into a divided and ambiguous position in which the bestial and the divine merge. The separatists who deny Creon his tragic position have to separate this royal tragedy from the play.

7.2. Antigone's speech

Despite the fact that Antigone's speech occurs some 300 lines after Creon's, from a synchronic point of view the expositions are structurally analogous through opposition. It is not true that Antigone's cosmology

is divine contrasted with Creon's secular pronouncements (e.g. Lesky GL 321)⁵, but her principles are as divine as Creon's, as divided and as tragically ambiguous.⁶

The atmosphere in which Antigone's speech should be understood is indicated by the chorus's reaction to this atmosphere when it calls her the raw offspring of a raw father (γέννημ' ὠμόν ἐξ ὠμοῦ πατρός - 471). The adjective 'raw,' taken from the culinary code, points to the dangerous, wild character of the Labdacids, a character of which Antigone, her semi-divine character notwithstanding, gives ample proof in her speech. Antigone's character is shown in the uncompromising power with which she defends her cosmology. This power makes her lofty but also unable to yield, even in bad circumstances (472).

Few interpreters will deny that Antigone defends a divine principle when she claims that Polyneices should be buried. Small wonder that she should appeal to the gods in general (454, 459), but also to Zeus (450) and the nether gods (451) in particular. Antigone shows her piety by making a clear distinction between the merely human sphere to which Creon's ideas belong (ἄνδρως...φρόνημα - 458-59) and the divine sphere. Many adherents of separative cosmology find a justification here for their sanctification of Antigone in contrast to Creon's mere humanity.

But then they have to suppress Creon's claims to divine support as well as the ominous undertones which are audible in Antigone's words no less than in Creon's. While Creon only appealed to the gods of the city, especially to Zeus as the representative of Thebes, Antigone does the opposite: she also appeals to Zeus—but she is only able to appeal to this many-sided god as the protector of the family or the dead (Knox HT 99). Like Creon, Antigone has to repress Zeus' other sides in order to uphold her own. What is self-evident in separative eyes—Antigone's claim that the state cannot boast divine support—was anything but self-evident to the interconnected cosmology of the Greeks. When Antigone denies that Creon's decree is divine law (453-54), she is in fact challenging the whole interconnected order. Her reckless defence of one divine power to the detriment of others would be felt to be extremely dangerous.

As in Creon's case, the wording of the text makes it questionable whether Antigone will really turn out to be a trustworthy representative of her own divine hemisphere. Antigone is quite convinced that her ideas have divine support, especially from Zeus, but it is extremely dangerous for a mortal to claim to be certain of the actions of the divine sphere,

⁵ Against this view because of its anachronism: Knox HT 91, Calder III SPT 404, Ferguson PMF 45, Hester LPA 7, Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 8.

⁶ For Antigone's one-sidedness, see Knox HT, esp 94, 99; for ambiguities in Antigone's speech, see esp. Benardete RSA II 11-13.

especially in this case. Both Antigone herself (2-3) and the chorus (605) explicitly connect her family's ruin with the same Zeus who is supposed to support her cause. The same irony surrounds Antigone's appeal to the nether gods (451), in contrast to Creon's Olympian gods: in the end it is the nether gods who will mow her down as the last representative of the Labdacids (601 - Else MA 45).

Of course, Antigone's enforced one-sidedness with respect to the divine sphere propagates itself in one-sidedness towards the polis, in favour of the family. But she has to forget that—just like Creon, she occupies a position of role fusion. She has to suppress the fact that after the death of Oedipus and his sons, Creon is not only her king, but plays an important familial role as well: he is her guardian (cf. 486f., 533, 658-60; Pomeroy GWW 102). In defending her family, Antigone is forced to undermine her most important family tie—she disobeys her guardian. What Antigone also has to repress, is that, like Creon, she belongs to a contaminated family possessed by a hereditary curse which makes them fusers of what should remain separate and separators of what should stay connected. It is not only the chorus which points to the inherited curse of the Labdacids (by calling Antigone a raw offshoot of a raw father - 471, cf. 379-80, Müller SA 102). Unwittingly Antigone does the same when she calls Polyneices τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς θάνοντ' (466-67). This phrase does not only mean that Polyneices is her mother's dead son, but may also indicate that he has been killed *by* that mother through the pollution of the latter's incestuous marriage (Benardete RSA II 11). As is shown in the course of the tragedy, Antigone is unable to avoid this pollution. It may already be sensed that by contamination the enmity between Polyneices and Eteocles has spread to the repetitive enmity between Antigone and Creon (Rohdich A 123-24).

Before admiring Antigone as the lonesome heroine doing her duty in an evil world we should remember that from the point of view of the family her burial of Polyneices was not just the fulfilment of an obligation. Admittedly it was the prerogative of the family to bury its dead, but that did not imply that an unmarried girl was entitled to implement this office on her own. Normally it was the men, not the women, who were in charge of the funeral ceremony, the women playing a secondary role (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 15). Therefore in Greek eyes, contrary to those of separative romanticism, Antigone's deed was an example of reckless daring and as such extremely dangerous. By behaving like a man, she exceeded her feminine nature and the pattern of family roles (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 4-5).

Similar cautions apply to Antigone's attitude concerning her own death. We separatists are accustomed to admiring saints sacrificing their

mortal lives by separating it from their eternal principles, but such was not the ordinary Greek conception of life and death. According to Greek cosmology, man is a mortal who should amalgamate the realization of death and finiteness with the acceptance of life. In her lofty devotion to her brother Antigone is compelled not just to forgo life, but even to disdain it. She soars to immortal heights when she says that dying "before her time" (τοῦ χρόνου πρόσθεν - 461-62) is a "gain." Just as Creon was supposed to be master of life and death from the point of view of life, Antigone believes she controls life and death from the point of view of a person who is already dead. In the word "gain" (κέρδος - 462, 464) the opposition between the two protagonists' mirroring one-sidedness is revealed. As in the case of the word *philos*, which Antigone employs exclusively for her kinsmen, both are intrinsically unable to appreciate the whole ambiguous variety of meanings of the word. Creon constantly speaks of gain as financial profit in life (222, 294, 310, 312, 326), whereas Antigone has to stick to the other pole of the word. She considers death as the only gain that matters (Goheen ISA 17). That Antigone's boast that she already belongs to the sphere of death was not ordinarily acclaimed as the prudent attitude in ancient Greece may be inferred from the words of the chorus when it says that only a fool desires to die (μῶρος ὃς θανεῖν ἐρᾷ - 220).

The preceding remarks should cast doubts on the purity of the principles Antigone appeals to in order to justify her behaviour. The unwritten customs she is referring to are the duties connected with the burial of dead kinsmen (Knox HT 96).⁷ Certainly these unwritten customs (ἄγραπτα...νόμιμα - 454-55) are divine duties, but they cannot be opposed to the laws of the city as overriding divine principles. Again we are confronted with the compulsory blindness of the mortal who advocates absolute principles. Antigone has to confine justice to the realm of the nether gods. She speaks of "justice who dwells with the gods below" (ἡ ξύνουικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη - 451), implying that she is forced to repress the fact that *dike* reigns over the whole cosmos. There is also a *dike* of the Olympians, sitting high on its throne. That lofty, Olympian justice is the city's divine support that Antigone is opposed to (Winnington-Ingram SI 142). It should cause no surprise that each protagonist reproaches the other with being a transgressor (ὑπερδραμεῖν - 455; ὑπερβαίνειν - 449).

Antigone's tragic position—just like Creon's—is that in order to carry through her lofty principles she has to claim that she knows the nature

⁷ "La pièce maîtresse de la religion familiale, c'est le culte des morts; on lui applique par excellence l'expression de νόμιμα" (Gernet/Boulanger GGR 244). Cf. Soph El 1096, Eur Hel 1270, Suppl 19, 311.

of justice, that she knows that she is vouchsafed to death, that she knows where her profit lies. Such claims to knowledge are dangerous for a mortal—they threaten to violate the prerogatives of the gods. It is ominous that at the conclusion of her speech Antigone should connect both Creon and herself with the realm of mania: "and if it seems to you that I act like a fool (μῶρα), it is more or less by a fool (μῶρῳ) that I am convicted of folly (μωρία)" (469-70). The conclusion must be that in all relevant cosmological categories Antigone's principles are the reverberating echoes of Creon's principles: both are examples of man's awesomeness.

7.3. Antigone and Ismene

Antigone's twofold encounter with her sister, in the prologue (1-99) and in the second episode (526-81), is a good example of structural repetition. In both discussions the same cosmological statements are repeated, with a slight but important variation. The opposition between Ismene and Antigone, reiterated in the opposition between the guard and Creon, is of the utmost importance. The cosmological picture of the *Antigone* is not complete until not only the opposition between Creon and Antigone is taken into account—'hybrid' characters mirroring each other—but the opposition between the two 'hybrid' characters and the two prudent ones as well.

Most interpreters agree on Ismene's character. As Goethe said, she is "ein schönes Mass des Gewöhnlichen" (in Goth SA 32), an average woman (Jebb A xviii, Müller SA 26), who is a defender of prudence, in opposition to Antigone's passionate nature.⁸ Whereas like Creon, Antigone in her haughtiness has to make harsh separations, Ismene tries to reconcile conflicting demands (Jens AI 297). The problem for the separative and the harmonizing points of view is not Ismene's character, but the question of how the structural relationship between the two sisters must be understood: the separative and harmonizing points of view are forced to disregard some aspects of this structural opposition.

For separatists, the difficulty is that if Antigone is to be considered an example of pure justice, Ismene, who remains opposed to her, is to be considered unjust, which is not in accordance with her alleged prudence.

⁸ Adams AS 48, Else MA 29, Goth SA 31-32, Jäkel EAS 40-43, Jens AI 296, Kirkwood SSD 120, Rohdich A 31, Wiersma WS 42. A parallel has been drawn with the opposition between Electra and her sister Chrysothemis in the *Electra* (Wiersma WS 31, Winnington-Ingram SW 243).

Either Ismene's prudence is acknowledged, but Antigone's purity is undermined, or Antigone's purity is defended, but Ismene's prudence has to be played down. The latter strategy has been applied by certain outstanding separatists, who have banned her from the tragic realm by denouncing her as "all too human" (Kamerbeek A 9), or as unimportant and untragic (Jens AI 297).

The harmonizing point of view considers Antigone and Creon as one-sided representatives of aspects of justice which should finally be reconciled in a higher unity, but Ismene already embodies an attempt at prudent reconciliation. How is her tragic position in the structure of oppositions to be understood in the harmonizing conception? Does she represent the desired reconciliation? Then the ensuing tragic conflict between Creon and Antigone is totally unnecessary: they should have listened to the voice of circumspection. Does Ismene represent something other than the desired reconciliation? Then we cannot understand why the chorus should conclude with an appeal to prudence, why it should exhort the audience to be Ismenian. It should come as no surprise that in many harmonizing accounts of the tragedy Ismene is suppressed as being unimportant, or is even left out of the interpretation—a questionable separation.

A reverse position is taken by Rohdich. He considers the *Antigone* as a successful summons to prudence. He is convinced that Ismene represents the human ability to yield, to save oneself by accepting conflicting reality as it is (A 31). This conception leaves open the question whether the tragedy really claims that it is humanly possible to be as prudent as Ismene seems to be. Could Antigone have been like Ismene? In this conception the behaviour of Antigone and Creon is an avoidable aberration which might have been prevented by behaving like Ismene. This boils down to a separation of Antigone and Creon from the tragic realm.

The *Antigone* can only be fully appreciated if we realize that the conflict between Ismene and Antigone, repeated in the conflict between the guard and Creon, is a humanly inevitable conflict between the need to accept order as it is and the equally unavoidable necessity to transcend order in the veneration of the combined frenzy and sublimity of power. Both are inevitable, irreconcilable, and vain. Just as Antigone's power finally brings ruin and disaster, Ismene's order disappears into oblivion (Jens AI 297). Life's tragedy is that man is both Ismene and Antigone and cannot be either of them.

In her description of Antigone in the prologue, Ismene more than once preludes on remarks of the chorus. Just like the chorus calls Antigone raw, Ismene connects her with darkness and trouble, like the sea before

the storm (καλχαίνουσ' – 20).⁹ This is understandable in the light of the two sisters' divergent opinions with respect to their own nature: whereas Ismene prudently points out their feminine nature (γυναῖχ'...ἔφυμεν – 61-62), Antigone boasts of the noble nature of the Labdacids (εὐγενὴς πέφυκας – 38)—a statement suppressing the wild aspects of this awesome race (Benardete RSA I 154). This difference between a civilized prudent character and Antigone's untamed power is prominent in all categories. As a model of untamed autonomy, Antigone generally claims that she is able to make clear separations. In contrast to her own piety she pretends to know that Ismene dishonours the gods (77), whereas Ismene is merely trying to reconcile the divine claims of the dead with those of the city (65-66).

Antigone has to boast that she is able to distinguish her enemies, being evil, from her *philoī*—again employing *philoī* exclusively for her family members and ignoring the claims of the polis (Knox HT 80, Winnington-Ingram SI 129). Again she is opposed to the conciliatory Ismene, who combines respect for her family with awe for the polis (44, 47, 79)(Goth SA 31-32), and who is aware of the dangerously equivocal position of the Labdacids. Ismene shows up Antigone's onesidedness with respect to their family by pointing to the Labdacids' awesome tendency towards autocracy and autonomy in a series of compounds with αὐτός (51, 52, 56), to their father's ignoble deeds and fate (ἀμπλακημάτων – 51),¹⁰ and to the fact that their mother had polluted her life (λωβᾶται βίον – 54). She is afraid that this pollution may spread to Antigone, together with their brothers' dangerous fission (55-57) (note Ismene's juxtaposition of 'two' and 'one' in line 55: δύο μίαν). Ismene deplores Antigone's acts as violence against the city (βίᾳ πολιτῶν – 79), but she is also afraid of the consequences for their family. She points out that Antigone and she are the last of the Labdacids (58). This does not mean that in her reconciliatory prudence Ismene cannot acknowledge Antigone's loyalty to their family. She calls her a true *philos* for her *philoī* (99).¹¹ Again the contrast to Antigone's attitude is palpable. Though in the beginning Antigone emphasizes her community with Ismene (1), in the course of the prologue she violently separates herself both from her sister and from her uncle, lumping them together as enemies (10, 86, 93-94,

⁹ Jebb A 12, Goheen ISA 45N, Segal TC 163; perhaps the tiding (ἔπος – 20) darkening Antigone is not Creon's decree but her own plan to bury Polyneices (Verdenius SA 392, contra Jebb A 12).

¹⁰ The word ἀμπλάκημα comprises the same meaning as the verb ἀμαρτανεῖν (Gernet RPG 39).

¹¹ We follow Knox (HT 81) and Kamerbeek (A 53), amongst others, who take φίλη in an active sense, contra Jebb (A 27) who translates "to thy dear ones truly dear," but a deliberate ambiguity cannot be excluded.

cf. Winnington-Ingram SI 129, 135N). Through the contrast to Ismene, Antigone's predicament develops further. In her extreme loyalty to her brother Polyneices she also has to undermine her loyalty to her other family members. She isolates herself dangerously by denying her ties with her guardian/uncle and sister. This fission bears a certain resemblance to Oedipus' patricide, to Creon's refusal to bury Polyneices, and to the lethal fission between the two ill-starred brothers.

The excessive fission between Oedipus and his father, and between Eteocles and Polyneices is not only repeated in the fission between Antigone and Ismene. It is also repeated in an inverted way in the excessive fusion of Antigone and Polyneices. Antigone's love for Polyneices is not just the care of a loving sister for a deceased brother: it is a dangerous fusion of what should remain separate. Ismene's emphasis on their womanhood is not without ground. By her excessive loyalty to Polyneices Antigone has to transgress against her feminine nature—she has to renounce her female *ergon* of leaving her family and joining that of her husband. Thereby she jeopardizes her chances of fulfilling her nature as a woman who marries and has children. The extreme loyalty to her brother even threatens to become a dangerous confusion of the ties of kinship and love. Her attitude to Polyneices verges on the incestuous (another repetition of her father's behaviour) when she remarks: "I shall lie, a loved one, with whom I have loved" (Φίλη μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι, φίλου μέτα - 73). In this context *philos* might mean "lover" (Winnington-Ingram SI 129), especially because *κείμαι* is a common euphemism for sexual intercourse (Winnington-Ingram SI 130, Benardete RSA I 159, Steiner As 158).

In the realm of death Antigone and Ismene are again opposed as hubris to prudence. Whereas Antigone is certain that she will die nobly, like a patriotic soldier (καλόν, καλῶς - 72, 97) (Benardete RSA I 158), Ismene is afraid that they will die in the most dreadful way (χάκιστ' ὀλόυμεθ' - 59). Furthermore, Antigone claims that she is able to make a clear distinction between her living relatives and the dead. She claims the right to neglect the former on behalf of the latter, with the argument that she will have to stay with the dead for a longer time (74-76). Ismene, on the contrary, knows that mortals have to move between life and death. She tries to stay alive (58-59) and to appease their dead relatives (65-66) at the same time. From this position she reproaches Antigone that she has a warm heart for icy things (Θερμὴν ἐπὶ ψυχροῖσι καρδίαν ἔχεις - 88).

The same opposition is shown regarding justice. While Antigone is only interested in justice where burial is at stake (23, 94), Ismene deplores her sister's violent and violating tendencies against the law of the city (νόμου βίη - 59). The perspicacity of Ismene's point of view may be inferred from Antigone's own words: "Knowest thou what ill there

is from Oedipus that Zeus fulfils (τελεῖ) not for us twain while we live" (2-3). Here Antigone explicitly acknowledges the curse of the Labdacids, in which bad circumstances and bad deeds are inextricably interconnected. Antigone's tragedy is that she is unable to live up to this insight. She has to be firm in her belief that the Labdacids are noble and just (Else MA 33). If τελεῖ in line 2 is taken as a future tense instead of a present tense, Antigone's words are ominously predictive: they point to the contagious pollution which will overtake her.

Time and again Ismene admonishes her sister to be prudent (42, 49, 61, 68). She deplores her reckless temperament, and calls her "over-bold" (σχετλία - 47), referring to her deed as a "bold venture" (κινδύνευμα - 42) which is "extravagant" (περισσὰ - 68). Finally she even reproaches Antigone with being senseless (ἄνους - 99). What is striking—and devastating to the orthodox view in so far as it considers Antigone a blameless heroine—is that there are a few occasions in which she herself alludes to her awesome recklessness. In line 74 she says of herself that she acts "in holy over-boldness" (ῥσια πανουργήσας). Orthodox interpreters have been compelled to develop several separative strategies to prevent Antigone from admitting that her position is tragically divided, that she is a holy criminal. Jebb for example maintains that she believes she has only broken a human law, while she claims to have observed the divine law (A 23)—a violent separation. Kamerbeek argues that Antigone is not serious when she calls herself πανουργήσας. According to Kamerbeek the word "is scornful and the phrase is provocative but in no way whatsoever implies a consciousness of guilt" (A 49). It is tempting to consider these exorcizing statements a result of the fact that our separative cosmology cannot accept real duality.

Similar separative moves have been made regarding Antigone's lines 95-96: "But leave me, and the folly (δυσβουλίαν) that is mine alone, to suffer this awesomeness (τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο)." Jebb thinks that the word δεινόν is here used ironically (A 27), while Müller maintains the same of the word δυσβουλίαν (SA 40). Again they exorcize Antigone's tragic ambiguity—that she belongs to the sphere of the δεινόν from the first *stasimon*, the sphere of immense power which is unbearable to man and therefore makes him end in divine folly (Benardete RSA I 165). This divine madness is not applauded as romantic heroism or as leading to a new harmony; it is considered inevitable and as futile as Ismene's sense of order.

As regards the second dialogue between the sisters, there is no need to point out all the parallels with the prologue: it is a complete reiteration in all categories.¹² We shall confine ourselves to a few remarks.¹³

¹² Antigone and Ismene (in Creon's eyes Antigone's accomplice) are compared to ad-

The assigning of line 572 is a fine example of the separating strategies of the orthodox, here revealing themselves prepared to disregard all philological arguments if their heroic picture of Antigone is put in jeopardy. The full weight of all evidence inclines to allotting the line to Ismene (Winnington-Ingram SI 93N). It is Ismene who says: "Dearest Haemon, how thy father wrongs thee." All manuscripts as well as the scholium (Hester SU 30N) assign the verse to her. It is part of a long stichomythy between Creon and Ismene (from line 563 onwards). In Sophocles' extant work, such a stichomythy is never interrupted by a third character. The reason for separatism's obsessive wish to attribute the line to Antigone despite this overwhelming evidence (Jebb A 110, Müller SA 111, Kamerbeek A 115) is obvious: it would be the only verse in the whole tragedy in which Antigone gives vent to her love for Haemon.¹⁴ That would make her a complete romantic heroine (Rohdich A 105N). But if we accept the philological evidence, it is of the greatest significance that Antigone never shows any affection for Haemon. The tragic reason, suppressed by the orthodox, is that Antigone has been obliged to sacrifice her femininity to her dead brother.

Then there is the matter of that one conspicuous change in Ismene's attitude between the prologue and the second episode. In the prologue she wants Antigone to share life with her; in the second episode she longs to share Antigone's death (545). But this does not mean that Ismene has now become as heroic a death-wisher as Antigone (cf. 555, 559-60). The reason behind her proposed self-sacrifice does not differ essentially from her attitude in the prologue: without Antigone her *life* would have lost its meaning (548, 566). It is Ismene's tragedy that it is impossible for her to share Antigone's fate; despite her attempted prudence she is unable to prevent their final separation. One important reason for this fission is adduced by Antigone when she points out that Ismene has not touched (ἥγγε - 546) what Antigone has touched, i.e. the body of Polyneices. By contact with the polluted body, Antigone has come into the orbit of its contaminated power. Ismene cannot share in this power—and that is her side of the tragic division. While Antigone's hubris ends in destruction, Ismene is saved (cf. 553), but this does not mean that in this tragedy

ders (ἔχιδν' - 531). Again Antigone only appeals to Hades ("Αἰδης 542). Creon points out the destructive aspect of this one-sidedness (575) and refers to Antigone's approaching reversal (580-81). Social relations are referred to in 531, 533, 543, 549, Winnington-Ingram SI 134, justice in 538, and insight in 557, 562, 563-64. For life/death see *infra*.

¹³ Of course it is absurd to maintain that Ismene changes her position here: she does not wish to be heroic now and she does not approve of Antigone either (Winnington-Ingram SI 133 and Rohdich A 95 contra Adams AS 55).

¹⁴ Why it should be 'perverse' to attribute the words not to the fiancée but to a prospective sister-in-law, as Dawe maintains (STS 107), remains totally unclear.

Ismenian prudence is finally cherished. After Antigone's death, Ismene is cut off from her contact with power. Her well-ordered life becomes totally insignificant: "To live, in the paradoxical logic of the play, means to die, to be nothing, to be a living cipher. That is the death that Ismene lives: not to exist, so far as the play is concerned, after line 771" (Else MA 35). Antigone's words turn out to be true: Ismene is only a kinswoman in words (543).

That Ismene herself realizes that her prudence is as one-sided as Antigone's hubris may be inferred from her words in 554, when she says: "and do I miss the mark of your fate?" (κάμπλακω τοῦ σοῦ μόρου). Like ἀμαρτάνω, the word ἀμπλάκω means 'to fail, to miss the mark.' Because her prudence has not enabled her to share Antigone's fate, Ismene also misses something. She is separated from an indispensable part of herself—of Antigone as a source of power. Without power, prudent order just withers away. If this interpretation is convincing, a secondary significance may be allotted to Ismene's words in 558: "Howbeit, the offence is the same for both of us" (Καὶ μὴν ἴση νῶν ἐστὶν ἡ ἑαμαρτία). Besides the primary meaning that Ismene wishes to share Antigone's faults, this might mean that both sisters were compelled to live in tragic erring, the one because she had to forfeit prudence in order to be in touch with power, the other because she had to suppress awesomeness in her prudent longing for order and safety. Man's tragic position is that he has to combine Ismene's prudence with Antigone's power (cf. Molinari SA 113-14), and is intrinsically unable to accomplish such a feat. That is the reason why Ismene and Antigone cannot be separated from each other but cannot be harmonized either.

7.4. Creon and the guard

After his entrance speech, Creon is confronted by one of the guards he appointed to watch over the corpse of Polyneices (223-331). Their debate continues after the break of the first *stasimon* (384-440), now in the presence of Antigone who has been captured during her second attempt at burial. The structural opposition between Antigone and Ismene is reiterated in the opposition between Creon and the guard:¹⁵ Ismene and the guard are structurally analogous characters, who should not be disregarded as unimportant people merely trying to save their skins (Müller SA 62), but should be considered as the indispensable counterparts to human hubris. In that capacity the guard is as essential to the understanding of the human condition as awesome man is (Benardete

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that Ismene and the guard have been played by the same actor (Kamerbeek A 15).

RSA I 187). Just as without Antigone Ismene falls into insignificance, as the representative of prudence the guard is saved, but without contact with power he is merely a jester.¹⁶

The story of the prudent guard reflects the ambiguous combination of wildness and divinity in the behaviour of both Antigone and Creon. In this ambiguity the meaning of the repeated burial has to be sought. For years a discussion, as tedious as it is endless, has been dragging along on the question of why Antigone tried to bury Polyneices not once but twice (for a review of the positions cf. Johansen S 186; most recently Scodel DPB). Those who call it a weakness in the play or a theatrical inevitability are as far from the tragic meaning of repetition as those who believe that the doubling merely points to Antigone's perseverance (Kamerbeek A 29). Structuralism warns us that repetition is seldom without cosmological significance. In this case it is striking that the guard's story of the first attempt at burial should differ diametrically from his description of the second attempt. The first attempt is rendered in a terminology pointing exclusively to the divine sphere, excluding nature, whereas the second is described from a natural point of view. In both cases human action is denied. By means of the repetition, the guard is enabled to indicate the ambiguous nature, both divine and untamed, of Antigone's deeds.

With respect to the first burial the guard specifically excluded the relevance of all civilized instruments like pick-axes, mattocks and cart-wheels (249-50), but he stated that there were no traces of wild animals or dogs either (257). The chorus draws the obvious conclusion: it must be the work of a god (θεήλατον - 278).

The second burial is in sharp contrast to the first. Like the second *stasimon*, it paints a scene of upheaval of the natural order. A whirlwind fills the air with sand, the sand belonging on the earth now covering the sky. The foliage of the woods is also marred. That we are confronted with a serious confusion of categories is clear from the terminology of pollution employed. The typhoon is called a "heavenly distress" (οὐράνιον ἄχος - 418), and its action on the foliage is called "outrageous" (αἰχίζων - 419). The pollution of nature proves contagious: it strikes the guards with a "divine illness" (θεῖαν νόσον - 421).

We may expect that this polluted confusion of the cosmos has something to do with the exposed body of Polyneices. The guard explicitly refers to its dank odour (μυδῶν - 410; ὀσμὴν - 412). The pollution

¹⁶ Cf. λάλημα - 320; κόμψευε - 324. Several interpreters compare him to a Shakespearian fool (e.g. Bultmann PHA 320, Müller SA 62). On the comic effects of the guard cf. Goth SA 49-52.

emanating from the body is not only connected with Creon's refusal to bury it, but also with Antigone's abortive attempt to accord it the funeral rites. The outraging (αἰχίζων - 419) of the foliage may be considered a transformed repetition of the outrage of seeing the exposed body (αἰχισθέν τ' ἰδεῖν - 206), as ordered by Creon (Segal TC 160). But it should be kept in mind that the dust storm confusing cosmic order does not occur when Creon leaves the body exposed but at the moment that Antigone is about to sprinkle it with dust for the second time. Primarily the cosmic upheaval is connected to her deed. Just as Creon tried to bring about a purification, Antigone tries to bury Polyneices in order to escape contamination (ἄχος φεύγοντος - 256). But Antigone's attempt at purification is as abortive as Creon's. The dust she sprinkles on the body mirrors the dust storm which darkens the sky and will, according to the second *stasimon*, finally be the dust which smothers the Labdacids. While Antigone tries to control the pollution by sprinkling dust, the actual effect of her ritual is the transformation of the dust into a lethal force, not only destroying the Labdacids but their collateral branch as well; the medium through which this polluted power is propagated may be the evil curses (ἄρας κακὰς - 427) Antigone utters while performing her funeral activities. Both Creon's and Antigone's efforts to purify Polyneices have failed—no other sense can be made of Tiresias' words: "a corpse unburied, unhonoured, all unhallowed" (ἄμοιρον, ἀπτερίστον, ἀνόσιον νέκυν - 1071)—and the corpse has become a source of confusion, an intrusion of nature into civilization, a self-propagating power of destruction.

Small wonder that the guard should explicitly compare both Creon and Antigone to natural phenomena. He says that Creon raged like a winter storm (ἐχειμάσθην - 391—a repetition of the winter storm in the first *stasimon*), and he calls Antigone a bird crying aloud with a sharp wail (ὄξυν φθόγγον - 424). In this description her going together with Polyneices is emphasized once more: in the *parode* the latter was compared to a sharply screaming eagle (ὄξεα κλάζων - 112). Like the birds in the first *stasimon*, Antigone will be captured. According to the guard her position now is like that of a mother bird which in her empty nest (εὐνῆς) sees her bed (λέχος) bereft of children (νεοσσῶν ὄρφανόν) (425). The fact that Antigone's bed will stay empty and she will remain a perverted, childless mother, makes Antigone like an untamed bird unable to utter civilized language.¹⁷

But Creon's position with respect to the animal world is equally equivocal. Contrary to the prudent guard, who takes care to remain

¹⁷ In the course of the play Antigone is compared to other mothers who lose their progeny: explicitly to Niobe (823f.), implicitly to Intaphernes' wife (909f.).

within the limits of humanity, he complains that his citizens do not keep their necks under his yoke (ζυγῶ - 291). This remark is ominous. Creon is not a human being who yokes cattle (351), nor a god who yokes men (Dionysus in 955). He is a man who yokes men. His royal position has led him into confounding the natural and the divine (Goheen ISA 27).

In contrast to the moderate guard, time and again Creon demonstrates the dangerous position of the king who soars too high for human forbearance. Creon is sure of what the gods want with Polyneices (288-89). He exclusively defends the interests of Zeus of the city (287, 304), at the expense of Hades, who to him is anything but awe-inspiring, being merely a helpmeet for the polis (308 - cf. Bultmann PHA 316, Knox HT 100, Winnington-Ingram SI 127). As Creon's prudent counterpart, the guard accepts the variability of the gods, expecting that everything will happen according to the ordinances of fate (236, 328). It depends on the gods and not on man whether mortals will be saved or doomed (331). The guard is far from claiming that he knows the nature of justice (240), as Creon does (292).

Most spectacular is the opposition between Creon and the guard in the category of insight. Just like in the opposition between Antigone and Ismene, the boasting words of the 'hybrid' protagonist more than once contain ironical indications of an overturning of his intentions. The guard, on the other hand, emphasizes that he knows nothing (Οὐκ οἶδ' - 249; cf. 263, 316). He easily changes his mind, as is clear from his return after having sworn never to set eyes on Creon again (394). Contrary to the rectilinear protagonists, the guard, as a model of cautiousness, moves in circles: "For I had many halts caused by thoughts (φροντίδων), wheeling round (κυκλῶν) in my path to return" (225-26). Creon detects the cunning of this circling. He thinks the guard is fencing off his deed by a circle (κύκλω - 241). As in the case of Ismene, this circling prudence leads to safety in the maelstrom of destruction (331, 440).

Creon's thoughts are characterized by the consistency and rigidity of the haughty spirit which will not and cannot yield. Creon is convinced that he knows well (ἐξεπίσταμαι καλῶς - 293). This brings him into the orbit of man's awesomeness as described in the first *stasimon*. It is no more than natural that the guard should apply the word δεινόν to Creon twice, once just before the first *stasimon* (323) and once just after it (408), nor should it cause surprise that he describes Antigone's behaviour with the same word δεινόν (243). Because of his awesome nature, Creon justly fears the arousing of his temper (ὄργῃς - 280)—ironically the same *orge* that is called indispensable for the founding of cities in the first *stasimon* (355). The result of Creon's awesome claiming of knowledge is that these claims often come ironically true by unexpectedly returning on his own

head. This happens when, unable to appreciate that this applies to his own expectation of gain, he says that gain has often destroyed man by means of hope (221-22). The same irony occurs when Creon asserts that the chorus will be found to be both senseless and old (281)—a neat prediction of his own future (Markantonatos TIA 494)—and when he teaches the guard that through wicked desires (αἰσχροῶν λημμάτων) more men come to ruin than are saved (312-14). In the end it is the guard who is saved (440) and Creon who is ruined - through his awesome consistency.

7.5. Creon and Antigone

The direct confrontation between the protagonists in 473-525 is a transformative repetition of their antitheses in all relevant categories (Fowler PPS 152), but there is an important difference with the preceding scenes as well. Both Creon and Antigone now show how they have become increasingly isolated. Both are on the verge of being transformed from *hypsipolis* to *apolis*. Creon compares Antigone to natural phenomena applicable to himself as well. A belief in civilization's ability to check wild power is clear in his comparison of Antigone to raging horses (θυμουμένους ἵππους) which are broken to the rein (477). This is not only applicable to Antigone, but, ironically, to Creon himself as well. In both protagonists unbridled power predominates, until they are brought to heel outside the confines of civilization.

As will be expected by now, this untamedness spreads to the fundamental cosmological categories. Both protagonists reveal their one-sidedness with respect to the divine sphere (487, 519), both exclusively defend either the polis or the family (cf. Knox HT 102), and they remain one-sided regarding death and burial (524-25) and the concomitant justice (514-18). In their discussion a considerable role is played by the upheaval of the social ties between men and women. Antigone occupies the marginal position of unmarried girls (cf. νυμφεῖα - 568, νύμφας - 797, 633), often compared to wild horses not yet tamed (Kamerbeek A 100, cf. Calame CF I 412). Creon fears this power where his masculinity is concerned: "I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her" (484-85, cf. 525). This fear of an upheaval of the order of the sexes is explicitly connected by Creon with fear of Antigone's power (κράτη - 485)—the same power he has as the leader of the city (κράτη - 60, 173). Finally, Creon's remarks about Antigone's insight are again applicable to himself. He maintains that she thinks proud thoughts (φρονεῖν μέγ' - 479), and boasts (ὑβρίζειν - 480.)

The increased isolation of the two protagonists is revealed in their common claim that the other has separated himself or herself from the

citizens' approval. Creon is convinced that Antigone defends her cause as the only Cadmean (μούνη τῶνδε Καδμείων - 508, cf. 510) whereas Antigone believes that the chorus is on her side and merely feigns to support Creon: they are dogs with their tails between their legs (ὑπὸ λουσι - 509). Ironically, this bestialization of the chorus brings Antigone nearer to Creon and separates her from the representatives of civilization (Segal TC 163).

Antigone's isolation is sardonically confirmed in her statement in line 523: "it is my nature (ἔφυν) not to join in hating (συνέχθαι), but in loving (συμφιλεῖν)." Of course interpretations maintaining that a gap of centuries is bridged here and that Matthew's higher ethics are being announced (Flacelière LG 286) may be discarded as *curiosa*. Usually it is stressed that Antigone here confines her affection to her family members, at the expense of the polis,¹⁸ but there is more to be said. Her expression is so ironic that it means the opposite of what she intended: not only has Antigone forsaken sexual love, and thereby husband and children, she has also proved herself a perfect hater of her family in the persons of Creon and Ismene (Winnington-Ingram SI 135). The only tie left to her is that with her deceased family members—and that tie will soon be severed as well. If it is Antigone's nature to join in love, she has transgressed her nature in almost every possible way. Both Creon and Antigone have now become maniacs, living in their idiosyncratic worlds. Their isolation is a preparation for their final sacrifice on behalf of the city.

7.6. Haemon, Creon and Antigone

With the appearance of Haemon in the third episode a new element is emphasized in the reiteration of structural oppositions between Antigone and Creon. The significance of this element may be assessed by following Haemon's transformations throughout the third episode (631-780) and from the messenger's account of the three characters' final meeting in the crypt (1206-43). The most important aspect of Haemon's appearance is that he represents a third cosmological category apart from the family and the city. He is a model of the power of Eros (Kitto SDP 36, Winnington-Ingram SI 92). As we know from the third *stasimon*, Eros is not only a category, he is also the power undermining all categorical order. This power is shown in Haemon's development from an extremely prudent son and citizen to a raving lunatic committing suicide in Antigone's crypt after an abortive attempt at patricide. Haemon's course il-

lustrates the awesome power of Eros, not only in his own life, but also in the lives of Creon and Antigone. They are possessed by Eros as well, but by an Eros opposite to that of Haemon.

The crypt into which Antigone is brought, to which Creon returns, and in which Haemon commits suicide, is a veritable living contradiction. On the one hand it is a natural place: it is made of stone (774, 1204) and is situated in a region "where the path is empty of mortals" (773). On the other hand it is the scene of perverted life, of a purificatory execution, of a funeral train which is also a wedding procession, and of a ritual consummation of marriage which is also a double suicide. The rocky vault illustrates the contradictory combination of wildness and order which all three participants in the scene represent, and which is characteristic of civilized life in general.

Haemon expostulates with his father on his natural wildness, by comparing him to nature, lifeless as well as living: "You can see, beside the wintry torrent's course (ῥέιθροισι χειμάρροισι) how the trees that yield to it (ὑπείκει) save (ἐκσώζεται) every twig, while the stiff-necked (τὰ δ' ἀντιτείνοντ') perish root and branch. Even thus he who keeps the sheet of his sail taut and never slackens it (ὑπείκει μηδέν), turns his boat upside down and finishes his voyage with his keel uppermost" (712-17). Here we are confronted with Creon's untamed power as a Sophoclean hero. This power prevents him from yielding, it makes him consistent in his deeds, but it is precisely this consistence that leads him outside civilized control.¹⁹

The irony of the events is that, despite his prudent remarks, Haemon himself will undergo a similar intrusion of untamed nature into his orbit (Segal TC 159, 165). When Creon approaches the crypt he hears Haemon's voice greeting him like a dog (σαίνει - 1214), and he sees him staring with wild eyes (ἀγρίοις ὄσσοισι - 1231) (Goheen ISA 34). Haemon has become infected with Antigone's rawness and his father's temper. All three characters show their wildness in their relationships with the gods. Antigone is only able to worship Hades (777). In a culmination of hubris, Creon calls this labour lost (πόνος περισσός - 780). Creon has to neglect the Zeus of kinship (Δία Εὐναιμον - 658-59; note the ironical pun on Haemon's name). Haemon reproaches his father with trampling on the gods' honours (πατῶν - 745). Of course Haemon's disapprobation concerns the nether gods (cf. 749), but Eros is hidden in his words as well (Rohdich A 132). Through his opposition to Haemon's love, it becomes clear that Creon does not only have to deny the claims of the Penates, but those of Eros as well. In this respect he is Antigone's double.

¹⁸ E.g. Reinhardt S 88, Kirkwood SSD 126, Knox HT 81-82 (contrary to Knox HT 116).

¹⁹ The reading of manuscript A, ἐγχατῆς, is also favoured by Kamerbeek A 135 (contra Jebb A 132 and Dawe D 71).

The implication is that the web of differences between kinship, marriage and citizenship is now utterly confused. Creon has to defend the interests of the city, implying that he has to condemn Haemon's devotion to love and a woman: "do not thou, my son, at pleasure's beck, dethrone thy reason (τὰς φρένας) for a woman's sake" (648). Creon's predicament is that in his royal position he cannot make himself out a liar to his people (657-58) by letting Antigone go free for Haemon's sake. The awesome consequence of his consistency is that he has to break his son's engagement, which is the more ironic because this robs Creon of any possibility of continuing his own race, Haemon being its last offshoot (νέατον γέννημ' - 627). It is not abominable rudeness when Creon utters his expectation that there will be other fields for Haemon to plough (569). This was a common metaphor, which cannot conceal Creon's tragic position however: Antigone is alive while he has to thwart her procreative power.

When Creon maintains that his powers should be worshipped (τὰς ἐμάς ἀρχὰς σέβων - 744), again he is not abusing his royal position, but pointing out his prerogatives, yet his identification with the city is dangerous. The same is true of his remark that a ruler should be obeyed in small things, in just things, and in their opposites (667). This remark is not a sign of baseness (Bultmann PHA 319) but a reference to Solon (Fr 27W) which is common in classical sources (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 16). Small wonder that the chorus should still approve of Creon (681-82)(Alexanderson SCA 95), and that even Haemon has to admit that his father is right (685-86, cf. Jebb A 129). But Creon's power contains the danger of isolation. The irony is that the king's total identification with the city ends in his complete isolation from its citizens. This isolation becomes clear in Creon's question whether the city is not held to be the ruler's (κρατοῦντος - 738; note the emphasis on power). By this statement, Creon shows himself to be totally alone (μόνος). He has become the ruler of a desert (ἐρήμης - 739), just as Antigone is totally deserted (μόνη - 508, μόνην - 656, ἔρημος - 919, cf. 773). Substitutes for the city which have become isolated as a consequence of their lofty position are excellent candidates to substitute for the negative aspects of the city, i.e. to act as its scapegoats.

But what of Haemon's relationship to Antigone? In his remarks about his fiancée, separatism has found occasion to justify its claim that Antigone defends an essentially just cause (Jebb A xxiii/iv). Creon had not hidden his contempt for her deed. He remarked that Antigone was the only one in the city who rebelled, transgressing (ὑπερβὰς - 663), violating the laws (νόμους βιάζεται - 663), dictating to those in power (ἐπιτάσσειν is usually applied to a master ordering his slave - Jebb A 126). Now Haemon presents us with a surprising revelation. According to him the

citizens hold that Antigone deserves golden honour (699) for her most glorious deeds (ἔργων εὐκλεεστάτων - 695). But praising Antigone does not necessarily imply disagreement with Creon's law, let alone agreement with its violation (Bieler AS 11, Benardete RSA II 37). The citizens only admire Antigone because she cared about her brother (696-98). A prudent citizen would have accepted Creon's authority at the same time—and that is what the chorus does (725), just like Ismene and the guard. A second point is that Haemon is speaking from his specific one-sidedness. We may expect the citizens' admiration for Antigone to be mingled with horror at the awesomeness of her deed—an aspect which Haemon naturally suppresses, but which the chorus continues to expound until Antigone's death. Then it calls her both god-like and an example of self-willed untamed temper (837, 875). Antigone is as awesome a transgressor of all social boundaries as are her structural counterparts Haemon and Creon.

Through Haemon's love for Antigone all three opponents become infected with the undermining force of Eros who sides with the great ordinances (798-99) as indiscriminate power (Musurillo LD 53). In the beginning of his discussion with his father Haemon tries to be prudent by combining his endeavour to save Antigone with respect for his father (Πάτερ, σός εἰμι - 635) and the city. But soon he becomes gripped by the dangerous temper the chorus ascribed to him (ὀργῆς - 766). In order to press his suit he has to be exclusive, just like Antigone and Creon were. He is forced to suppress the other aspects of the web of social ties. For the sake of a woman he is compelled to undermine his father's and his king's authority. The culmination of his temperamental transgressing is the spitting scene. Creon has asked his son to spit out his fiancée as a purification on behalf of the polis (πύσας - 653). But in the end Haemon spits on his father and his king (πύσας - 1232) in an outbreak of destructive Eros (Kitto GT 128, Rohdich A 218).

What Antigone and Creon discover to their detriment is experienced by Haemon as well, i.e. that one-sidedness in favour of one category soon ends in the destruction of one's adherence to that same category. The scene in the crypt turns out to be a perverted marriage rite in which Haemon undermines his own love, at the same time revealing Antigone's one-sided love of death, and Creon's disregard for sexual passion. The perverted wedding has been prepared carefully. Unwittingly, Creon had pointed to it in several remarks, for example when he said to Haemon: "it will be a cold embrace (ψυχρὸν παραγκάλισμα) when she shares your bed in your house" (650 - compare Ismene's reference to Antigone's warm heart for cold things in 88). The same dramatic irony permeates his remark to Antigone that she should find a groom in the house of

Hades (654), and when he warns Haemon: "you shall never marry her while she is still alive" (750).

The consummation of the macabre wedding is an inverse nuptial rite (τὰ νυμφικά τέλη - 1240-41). The house they are marrying in is not a house but a natural abode which is also the house of Hades (1241). The bed they lie in is a bed of stone (1204-05). Haemon's embrace of Antigone is unnatural. He lies with her (κεῖται—with the sexual connotation which also characterized Antigone's remark that she would always lie with Polyneices - 73), but the sexual contact is the touch of death—it is "corpse enfolding corpse" (1240). Instead of making Antigone pregnant with his fertile semen, Haemon sends forth from his mouth a swift stream of deadly drops (1238-39) (Segal TC 181, 189). The result of the inverse nuptials is not a fusion of the houses of Oedipus and Creon in a descendant, but a lethal fusion of the last roots of both houses in a self-destructive embrace.

Does this blood-stained wedding imply that Creon is totally wrong about the categories of death and justice when he orders that Antigone should be buried alive? Not so. As the city's representative, Creon had to take action against the disorder resulting from Antigone's deed. Repeatedly he points out the disorder she has caused (ἄκοσμος - 660, ἄκοσμοῦντας - 730), and the order he has to reinstate (τοῖς κοσμουμένοις - 677). The gravity of the disorder is clear from the pollutions which have now become ubiquitous.

Because of the cosmic upheaval in all relevant categories resulting from her deed, Creon calls Antigone an ulcer (ἔλκος - 652), an illness (νόσος - 732) and a hateful object (μῖσος - 760). This pollution is primarily the consequence of her contact with Polyneices. Creon distinguishes Antigone from Ismene who is released because she has not touched the body (μὴ θιγοῦσαν - 771—the same argument that Antigone employed against Ismene [μὴ 'θιγες - 546]). Because of his close contact with Antigone the pollution has spread to Haemon as well, who is described by his father as a "contaminated character" (μιαρὸν ἦθος - 746). That Creon's fear of this pollution is no idle whim is amply confirmed by the following events. Haemon becomes totally infected with the wild ways of the Labdacids. His attempt to kill his father may be considered a reflection of Oedipus' patricide (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 5), and his death by his own hand (αὐτόχειρ - 1175) reminds us of the series of Labdacid suicides (Iocaste, Polyneices, Eteocles, Antigone). The pollution spreads even further, as can be inferred from Haemon's words about Antigone: "in death she will destroy another" (751). This may be a dark warning of his impending attempt at patricide, but may also point to his suicide. Finally it refers to the fate of Creon, who through the contagious power of Antigone's

death and of his son's oath will finally become a living corpse (1167).

It is in this climate of terror of pollution that we have to understand Antigone's execution. That Creon should not fulfil his threat to have the perpetrator stoned to death (36), but buries Antigone alive, is not a needless act of cruelty, as separatists maintain (Müller SA 162), or an act prompted by fear of the citizens' disobedience (e.g. Knox HT 72, Rosivach TWA 23). That is idle psychological speculation (Patzner HHS 57, Benardete RSA II 44). Creon fears for the safety of Thebes (776). His attempt to control ambiguity by the ritual exposure of Polyneices has been thwarted by Antigone, and this deed has infected the whole cosmos, including the city. There is only one course open to Creon: he has to institute an even more dangerous ritual of controlled ambiguity in order to redress the cosmic balance. Now he reverses his previous ritual: whereas formerly he kept a dead body above the earth, now he buries a living body in the earth: "I will hide her living in a rocky vault" (774). This act constitutes a total confusion of life and death, of above and below, of Olympus and Hades, of marriage and burial, of procreation and extinction. But Creon tries to use this power for his own benefit by separating its detrimental effects from its beneficial effects. He tries to stop the polluting aspect of power by not touching Antigone as she had touched Polyneices: she is buried alive. Two further ritual measures of separation are added: Creon offers Antigone some food and takes her outside the bounds of civilization.

Before we condemn Creon, we should realize that a normal execution of Antigone (for example by stoning, as was announced earlier) was out of the question: it would have resulted in an uncontrollable pollution. First of all, Antigone is a member of the royal house and as such part of Thebes itself (Calder III SPT 400N); second, she has been dangerously polluted by her contact with Polyneices (Benardete RSA II 44); and finally, she is Creon's kinswoman. For the Greek family, burial alive was a possibility to execute one of its members without fear of further contamination.

That Creon institutes a ritual of controlled ambiguity is evident from his employment of the word ἄγος in 775. Normally this word means 'pollution,' but here it points to a ritual employment of pollution. As such, it has the reversed meaning of expiation here (Kamerbeek A 143, Jebb A 144). Creon is convinced that as a consequence of this ritual the whole city will be cleansed of the pollution (μῖασμα - 776). How near this ritual is to a ritual of scapegoat selection may be seen from Creon's remark that by taking Antigone far away from the city he and his citizens will stay unsullied by her contamination ('Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἄγνοι τοῦτι τήνδε τὴν κόρην - 889); note the religious tone of ἄγνοι: it means 'ritually pure,

holy'. Creon's acts with respect to the categories of life/death and justice are not the wanton outbursts of a base tyrant, but constitute a desperate attempt at controlling pollution in a totally anomalous universe.

From the foregoing discussion it will have become evident that all three major characters share in excessive temper (ὄργῃς - 766: chorus about Haemon; θρασὺς - 752: Creon about Haemon; δεινὸν - 690: Haemon to Creon; ἀβουλίαν - 1242: messenger about Haemon). Creon's reaction to Haemon's anger: "Let him do and think more than is appropriate to man" (φρονεῖτω μεῖζον ἢ κατ' ἄνδρ' ἰών - 768), applies to all these characters. By then, Haemon has paid the price for his haughtiness. The downfall of the man who said he would have better knowledge than seers have (Creon in 631) cannot be far away. The same may be said of the woman who goes on acting in what she herself calls thoughtlessness. The chorus's prudent advice to acknowledge that both sides (Creon and Haemon) are right, that truth is double-natured (διπλᾶ), and that both sides should learn from each other (μαθεῖν - 725) is as commendable as it is unrealistic.

7.7. Antigone's reversal

The problem that the fourth episode, Antigone's lament, poses for the separatists is that it would be unacceptable if the immaculate heroine should undergo a reversal, while at the same time it has to be acknowledged that somehow Antigone does change,²⁰ a problem they try to solve by minimizing the importance of the reversal. Antigone's doubts and complaints are considered the obvious reactions of a young girl facing execution, but according to separatism this vacillation does not really affect her firm principles (e.g. Linforth AC 251, Müller SA 183). This conception has its mirror-image as well: some interpreters maintain that Antigone's real character and motivation are only revealed in the *kommos* (e.g. Knox HT 106-07). Both forms of separatism share the ideal of an unbroken Antigone. The price they have to pay is that one part of Antigone has to be exorcized as mere appearance. Either the *kommos* or the early episodes are believed to reveal the true Antigone, one at the expense of the other.²¹

Another separation which has to be carried out by the orthodox is expunging (part of) the verses 904-20. Acceptance of these verses would compel the separatists to revise their conception of Antigone as a representative of unstained justice. That is why they have to reject lines,

²⁰ E.g. Knox HT 103, Müller SA 183, Rohdich A 11, Winnington-Ingram SI 138-39.

²¹ For an excellent discussion of the problems inherent in these interpretations see Rohdich A 11-19.

despite Aristotle's quoting them (Rhet 1417a 28-32), despite their Sophoclean style (Szlezák BDS 110-11), and despite their echoing other words in the tragedy (Kirkwood SSD 239-40, Segal TC 153); or if they do not reject them, separatists are at the least obliged to minimize their importance.

The harmonizing conception does not need these separations. It acknowledges Antigone's reversal, and has no problems with the verses 904-20. The Hegelians recognize Antigone's reversal because to them it is essential that in the end she should accept the necessity of transcending both her own one-sidedness and Creon's in a higher harmony. This is quite clear in Rohdich's variant of the Hegelian conception. According to Rohdich, Antigone previously only accepted death and her family, whereas in the *kommos* she utters a hymn to life which is an affirmation of the polis as well (though not of Creon) (A 178). Rohdich takes one step in the direction of tragic ambiguity when he maintains that, despite her *anagnorisis* Antigone retains something of her stubborn wildness, but he becomes harmonizing again when he says that this implies that, according to the cosmology of the tragedy, Antigone is therefore unable to acknowledge the true meaning of the events. The true meaning would be that Antigone's destruction means the restoration of cosmic order (A 184).²²

In Rohdich's interpretation, Antigone continues to live an illusion in so far as she is unable to see the truth that the order of being can be accepted (note that this is Rohdich's conception of the cosmology of the tragedy and does not coincide with his own ideas on cosmology). This brings him close to the second harmonizing strategy, that of acceptance, consisting of the idea that Antigone does not transcend her one-sidedness, but simply accepts the cosmological state of affairs as it is. According to Else, for example, in her *kommos* Antigone is "ready to accept reality whatever it may be; in this life or the next" (Else MA 66). In the same vein Jens maintains that Antigone returns into the order of existence (AI 308).

But, separatism notwithstanding, it is undeniable that Antigone undergoes a reversal in all six cosmological categories and that lines 904-20 are indispensable to the understanding of her position.

²² Das Unvermögen, in dem der Text sie hielt, die Erkenntnis ihres Unrechts klar zu vollziehen, ihren Untergang als notwendige Restauration der Weltordnung zu durchschauen und sich so an deren dialektisches Wesen leidend zwar, aber einsichtig zu akkomodieren, weist auf die auch im Angesicht des Todes unverlorene Haltung, die sophokleische Helden auszuzeichnen pflegt: den vom Leben diktierten Bedingungen nicht weichen zu können [...]

Throughout the first part of the tragedy Antigone consistently refuses to recognize the legitimacy of remarks by characters like Ismene, Creon and the chorus, or to recognize that through her being a Labdacid as well as through her own deed she shares in uncivilized power. She continues to speak of the famous Labdacids, ignoring their wild side. But in the *kommos* the situation is dramatically changed. Her ambiguous status on the verge of nature and culture is now seen in her imprisonment in the rocky bridal chamber. This genuine proximity to nature is accompanied by a reversal in her attitude. Antigone now vainly regrets that her only witnesses are natural: the sources of the river Dirce (842) and the Theban soil (843) (Knox HT 34). She suffers in her confused position between nature and culture. This is apparent in her comparison of herself to Niobe. This daughter of Tantalus was punished for her hubristic boasting by being overgrown by a rocky outcropping (827). She is a complete marginal between nature and civilization. Contrary to man in the first *stasimon*, she is exposed to rain (ὄμβρω - 828) and snow (χιών - 830) (Segal TC 168). It is not Niobe who subdues nature, but nature that domesticates her (δάμασεν - 827), the word δάμασεν alluding to Niobe's being married to nature. Niobe's position is especially horrible because she is not completely reduced to a natural state: the rain bedews her bosom as tears from her weeping brows, the words ὄφρυς (brow, crag) and δειράς (breast, ridge) being applicable to both mountains and women. Despite her recognition of the similarity of her position to Niobe's, Antigone does not accept her situation. She continues to bewail both her own fate and Niobe's.

Previously, Antigone had consistently neglected the gods of the city. She was also convinced that the nether gods were unreservedly on her side. This picture now undergoes a true metamorphosis. Antigone acknowledges the divinity of the gods of the polis (θεῶν πατρώων - 839-40) and of the Theban race (938) (Rohdich A 151), nor does she contest the chorus's conclusion that her pious deed (Σέβειν) was only a particular, one-sided form of piety (εὐσέβειά τις - 872), because transgression against the powers that be (whether Creon or Zeus - McDevitt KSA 142) is intolerable. It is also obvious in the *kommos* that Antigone has become embittered against the nether gods. It is against her wishes that she has to marry the god Acheron (Ἀχέρωντι νυμφεύσω - 816). The fact that she is now married to a rock and to a god (cf. 833), and has thereby in a sense obtained what she had always longed for, is now unacceptable to her. She fiercely rejects the chorus's equating her with a goddess, and believes that in this way the chorus is scorning her (839-41). The reason is that in her last hour Antigone wishes to return to the human measure she left behind in her semi-divinity and semi-bestiality.

This recognition of her former exclusiveness and ambiguity brings Antigone no solace at all. She is totally divided. To what god should she, wretched one, turn? (cf. 922-23). The position of holy evil-doer that she accepted in an effervescent mood (79) is now an unbearable doom: "By practising piety I have earned impiety" (τὴν δυσσέβειαν εὐσεβοῦς ἐκτησάμην - 924). Jebb translates: "by piety I have earned the name of impious" (accepted by Müller SA 197). In this view, Antigone's tragic predicament is soothed by exorcizing her impiety into mere appearance (Rohdich A 181N). However, the realization of her impiety does not bring harmony to this vexed soul. Despite her insight into the divine world and her own ambiguous position in it, she is unable to recede from her haughty position. She proudly adds that nevertheless she worshipped piety (τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα - 943). It is not tragic to believe that we must choose between Antigone's piety and impiety (Knox HT 106). Tragedy means the realization of man's impiety in the whole of the cosmos, together with the equally indispensable claim to the holy nature of his own principles.

Antigone's reversal consists of recognizing that she has been one-sided, and that her own side was internally conflicting and ambiguous, but that despite these recognitions she is at the same time unable to renounce her previous principles. Despite her tragic insight in the combined horror and divinity of her deeds, she is intrinsically unable to recede from her position. Therefore her tragic insight does not imply acceptance. Antigone is unable to bear the reality of the divided cosmos. Her inability to accept the cosmos is not an illusion: Antigone's insight is the true insight that, though holy, the cosmos is unbearable to human beings, who are nevertheless bound to it. Tragic insight is the insight that the cosmos is divine order, yet unacceptable.

During her conflict with Creon, Antigone persistently neglected the interests of the polis, of her living kinsmen, and of her intended marriage for the sake of her deceased brother. She was convinced that caring for Polyneices was no more than her pure duty, and she accepted the complete isolation ensuing. This consistent attitude is reversed in the *kommos*. Antigone now acknowledges her one-sidedness with respect to all the ties that she formerly rejected. Twice she appeals to the polis (ᾧ πόλις - 842; ᾧ γῆς Θήβης ἄστυ πατρώων - 937), and for the first time she recognizes the members of the chorus as representatives of the city (806, cf. 841, 940) (Patzner HHS 50, Winnington-Ingram SI 141). She also admits that she acted violently against the citizens (βίᾳ πολιτῶν - 907—a first reiteration of words spoken by Ismene) (Rohdich A 171). For the first time Antigone also mourns the absence of living relatives (847, 882). Whereas in the past she was only in love with death (88, 220), she now accepts the

importance of marriage. Repeatedly she complains of the fact that she has to die unmarried, without husband or children (813-14, 867, 876, 917-18)(Mc Devitt KSA 136), also implying a belated recognition of her feminine nature (Pomeroy GWW 101). During the *kommos*, Antigone's isolation loses its splendour as well. She complains that she is forlorn of *philoï* in all meanings (ἔρημος πρὸς φίλων - 919, cf. ἄφίλος - 876). Her complaint of total isolation is expressed in her description of herself as a metic (μέτοικος - 852, 868). Contrary to Jebb (A 156), who translates the concept as "dweller," Knox (HT 114) rightly argues that the connection with the marginality of metics should not be disregarded (Creon applies the word μετοικίας to Antigone - 890).

The crowning irony is the fact that her attitude towards Polyneices should have undergone a marked change as well. Whereas previously Antigone emphasized her fusion with her brother, now she memorizes his ill-starred marriage (870). She reproaches him bitterly for being the person who will kill her: "in thy death thou hast undone my life" (θανὼν ἔτ' οὐσαν κατήναρές με - 871). Antigone now even doubts whether she has really served the interests of her family. For the first time she echoes Ismene's remark (58-59) that she would die an evil death, being the last of her lineage (895-96). As she realizes too late, her refusal to marry and to procreate has led to the extinction of her family. Unmarried (ἄγαμος) and accursed (ἄραϊος) she joins her dead relatives as a metic (867-68).

Again Antigone's recognition is no sign of resignation. She is unable to abandon the hope that Polyneices and the rest of her family will receive her favourably (898-903). Despite her new insight Antigone continues to be a human being, prompted by the hope which is sometimes an advantage, and sometimes a force of destruction.

Before, Antigone rejected life in favour of an absolute preference for death (72, 97). She considered it a gain to die before her time and boasted that she was dead already. Now her wishes have been ironically fulfilled in the crypt. She is the only mortal to go down to Hades alive (821-22, cf. Segal TC 168, Rohdich A 145). Her wish to please the inhabitants of Hades and to lie there forever is fulfilled as well (Jost AE 135), but now it is unbearable to Antigone to be a living corpse. Her former statement that it was a gain to die before her time is almost literally reversed when she complains that the most miserable aspect of her death is that she should die "before the term of my life is spent" (πρίν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου - 896)(Jens AI 302, Hester LPA 7). Niobe's position between life and death (cf. McDevitt KSA 138, Rohdich A 147), which Antigone had previously claimed, she now refers to as a most dreadful way of dying (λυγροτάταν ὀλέσθαι - 823).

That Antigone remains unable to accept either life or death is shown

in her last act—her suicide. When the chorus unwittingly predicts her death by maintaining that she is descending into Hades "self-governing" (αὐτόνομος) and "living" (ζῶσα) (821-22) it is not, in a romantic-separative way, praising Antigone's autonomy (Knox SP 32-33 contra Jebb A 151). The compound with αὐτός points forward to Antigone's suicide as a last spasm of the awesome self-will of the Labdacids. Like her mother Iocaste, whose suicide Ismene referred to as a pollution of life (λωβᾶται βίον - 54), Antigone commits a last polluting act. But this final pollution will turn out to guarantee the life of the polis, because it is the last of the Labdacids who has here eradicated their contaminating power by an ultimate self-pollution.

In the category of justice Antigone's position is as tragically complicated as it is in the other categories. She is unable to deny the chorus's conclusion: "Rushing forward to the utmost verge of daring (Προβᾶσ' ἐπ' ἔσχατον θράσους) you have fallen hard [or far], my child (προσέπεσες, ὦ τέκνον, πολύ), against the throne where justice sits on high (ὑψηλὸν ἐς Δίκας βάθρον)" (853-55). It is a distortion to maintain, as Lesky does, that here the chorus is praising Antigone as a suppliant who has thrown herself at the feet of justice (ZSI 92-95).²³ This interpretation makes it incomprehensible that the chorus should point out Antigone's daring (θράσους - 853; Else MA 77, Rohdich A 153). In the light of this daring the verbal form προσέπεσες should be understood as expressing a transgression (cf. OC 157). Antigone's transgressions are recalled by opposing the loftiness of Dike to the Dike of the nether world to which Antigone previously appealed (Winnington-Ingram SI 142), and by opposing this same loftiness to the futility of mortal ideas on justice (Rohdich A 154). Antigone does not contest this conclusion—she recognizes that she violated the citizens' principles (βία πολιτῶν - 907).

And she has become cognizant of the workings of the law of talion as well. The chorus links her transgression against justice up with the penalty she has to pay for her father's deeds (856). Antigone now recognizes her accursedness (ἄραϊος - 867; Kamerbeek A 155), especially in its connection with the incest of Oedipus and Iocaste (864-66). As she states, this made her wretched by nature (ταλαίφρων ἔφυν - 866— another echo of Ismene's warnings [39]; Benardete RSA I 154-55, Else MA 65). When she describes her fate as *κάκιστα* (895), she is not only referring to her unhappiness, but to her hereditary evil nature as well. Therefore her bitterest thought is the thrice-ploughed doom of the famous Labdacids (857-61).

²³ Kamerbeek A 152-53, Rohdich A 152N, Winnington-Ingram SI 141N.

Nevertheless Antigone remains unable to accept the inexorable workings of talion. Despite her recognition of its divine nature, she perseveres in her conviction that the wise would say that she justly honoured her brother (904). Again she shows her totally divided position. Though their one-sidedness is revealed, Antigone is unable to renounce her principles.

Those who reject lines 904-20, because in them Antigone would distort her own divine principles (Jebb A 259), are wrong. From the beginning Antigone's principle was specific; in this respect she did not change. The *kommos* only reveals her principle's awful one-sidedness. It was not unbearable to Antigone to leave humans in general unburied: she specifically stated that she could not leave her brother unburied (466-67: τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς θανόντ') (Kitto GT 127, Winnington-Ingram SI 131). In the *kommos* Antigone merely sketches the consequences of her former position: neither as mother nor as spouse would she have acted as she did (905-06)—only her brother is irreplaceable to her. This choice is as remarkable as is that of the queen in the passage of Herodotus from which Antigone's statement is borrowed (Hdt 3.119; cf. Szlezák BDS 113, Jebb A 260, Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 5-6). Her devotion to her brother prompted her to forsake her feminine *ergon* of procreation.

Antigone's predicament is that for Polyneices' sake she is unable to forsake this principle, while she also has to accept the workings of divine law. This leads her to the desperate question: ποῖαν παρεξέλθοῦσα δαιμόνων δίκην; (921). Contrary to what Jebb supposes in his translation: "And what law of heaven have I transgressed?" this is not necessarily a declaration of innocence. The interrogative pronoun ποῖος does not always mean the same as τίς. Another translation is: "What kind of law is this law of the gods which I have transgressed?" (Rohdich A 181), in which Antigone does not necessarily deny the justice of the gods. She acknowledges that she has transgressed divine law, but is unable to agree with this law, because she is unable to abandon Polyneices. Her position is an inextricable interweaving of respect and disrespect for divine order.

Antigone's tragic position is most poignantly developed in the category of insight. Her comparison of herself to Niobe also brings her into the orbit of Niobe's hubris. By way of this comparison she admits her excessiveness (Coleman CSA 17). This is confirmed by Antigone herself: "if these things are pleasing (καλά) to the gods, through suffering (παθόντες) I may confess (ξυγγοῖμεν) that I have erred (ἡμαρτηχότες)" (925-26). Of course there is no reason why the events should not be pleasing to the gods. Antigone points out that a god leads her to her rest (811, 832-33). Here she confesses her faith in the law of talion: the fact that she is suffering is sufficient proof of the fact that she has sinned.

Despite this *anagnorisis* Antigone is unable to accept the order as it is—

in her next words she is still maintaining that her adversaries have acted unjustly towards her. She predicts the further course of the tragedy in the hope that they will undergo the same evil fate as she does. This points to the fact that Antigone's self-willed temper (αὐτόγνωτος...ὄργά - 875) has not left her. As the chorus points out, she is still possessed by the same storm-gusts of the soul (ἀνέμων...φυχῆς ῥίπαι - 929-30). Despite her avowal of her error, Antigone is unable to depart from her untamed nature. Until her death she remains divided. There is no trace of harmony. Antigone is unable to accept reality as it is. There are no grounds for expecting a future harmony of a higher order either.

7.8. Creon's reversal

Creon's reversal, which no interpreter denies, is a repetition of Antigone's, although not an exact replica. In their repetition, the reversals are divergent. The first divergence consists of the fact that Antigone's starting point is antipodal to Creon's. Antigone begins with a decision which is approved by nobody but herself, whereas Creon's course starts with a decision which has found universal acclaim. Because the protagonists' starting points are opposed, the emphasis during their downfall is different. In Antigone's case her semi-divinity is discovered as the counterpart to her untamed nature; in Creon's case his tragic error is revealed as the counterpart to his city-saving power. It would be a separative error either to confine Antigone to her semi-divine state or to confine Creon to his erring. The beginning and end of the protagonists' lives cannot be separated, though they cannot be harmonized either.

The second divergence consists in the fact that, contrary to Antigone (who, despite her tragic insight, is unable to yield to necessity), Creon finally tries to give up completely his adherence to his earlier decisions. But his attempt to yield turns out as ineffective as Antigone's tenacity. In both cases, destruction is inevitable. In so far as in their repetitive downfall Creon and Antigone represent aspects of human nature, they show man's predicament, which is that perseverance as well as compliance are impotent in preventing his decline. (The idea that Creon is not a Sophoclean protagonist because he finally yields (Knox HT 68, 72-75, Müller SA 12-13) is untenable—characters like Oedipus (OT 651, 1516) and Philoctetes (Ph 1447) yield no less than Creon—cf. Bremer H 140N, Hogan PA 100N).

In the fifth episode Tiresias confronts Creon with the hideous consequences of his ineffectual rituals. His double confusion of nature and civilization has exceeded its ritual limits and spread to the whole cosmos. Tiresias' augural birds are vehicles of the pollution. They have become

contaminated by tasting the fatness of murderous blood. The lethal power of the pollution is rendered in the word "murderous" (ἀνδροφθόρου - 1022). This does not only refer to the violence of Polyneices' death (Jebb A 183, Kamerbeek A 175), but to an active power of killing as well (cf. ἀνδροφθόρου in Soph Ph 266-67). Through the lethal contagion the birds have become similar to Polyneices as he was described in the *parode*. They are rending each other with murderous talons (1003), they are screaming with rage, their wings are whirring, they have become barbarian (βεβαρβαρωμένω - 1002), like the shrill-screaming eagle Polyneices who winged over Thebes and tried to fill his beak with its blood.

On all sides the perverted birds intrude upon the confines of civilization. They bring the rotting pieces of Polyneices' flesh to the altars and to the city's hearths—an unholy smell (ἀνόσιον ὄσμην - 1083). The result is that the avenging Erinyes break loose, threatening Creon's family and the whole city (1075). This leads Creon to recognize his wildness. He hurriedly proceeds into nature with the implements of civilization (1109), first to the furthest part of the plain (1197) where Polyneices lies, in order to wash and burn him, and then to the rocky marriage-chamber to set Antigone free. His intention is purificatory—and with Polyneices Creon appears to succeed. But with Antigone his purificatory intention again fails. The pollution has already spread to Creon's whole family and to himself. In their turn they have become similar to the polluted birds. Like the birds they utter evil cries (Haemon: φθόγγος - 1214, 1218, Eurydice: φθόγγος οἰκείου κακοῦ - 1187; cf. 1001). Creon himself flies up like a bird in fear (ἀνέπταν φόβω - 1307).

After Haemon's suicide Creon realizes the wildness of his behaviour: a god has hurled him into wild roads (ἀγρίαις ὁδοῖς - 1274). These roads, mirroring the uncivilized road along which Antigone was borne to her crypt, return when Creon in the end demands to be borne out of the way (1321, cf. 1339). When Creon, like a scapegoat, is led into the uncivilized roads leading out of the city, the order of the city is apparently restored.²⁴

The polluting power of the birds and dogs who have touched the remains of Polyneices immediately affects the divine realm. They defile the altars with morsels of the corpse. These pieces of carrion on the altars are like pieces of sacrificial meat (Benardete RSA III 161) and indicate the total collapse of divine order. Animals are offering human flesh to the gods. The consequence is that the gods no longer accept prayers (λιτὰς) or offerings (μηρίων φλόγα - 1019-20). Like the birds, Tiresias' unsuc-

cessful sacrifice reflects Creon's treatment of the Labdacids, the rotting moisture (μυδῶσα χηλὶς) trickling forth from the thigh-bones (1008) reflects Polyneices' rotting corpse. The undue exposure of the thigh-bones echoes the corpse's undue exposure (Burkert OS 20). The rotting mass smokes and sputters (1008-09)—apparently the unholy smell which the birds had brought to the city now rises from the altar to heaven (Segal TC 174). Finally the melting away (ἐτήκετο - 1008) of the sacrificial meat may reflect the melting away of Antigone's double Niobe (τακομέναν) and Cleopatra's offspring (τακόμενοι - 977). The result of the distorted ritual is that, like the incomprehensible cries of Antigone and Polyneices, the birds are no longer understandable (1001f., 1021). Soothsayings from the unfathomable rites become vain (φθίνοντ' ἄσημων ὀργίων μαντεύματα - 1013).

In the beginning Creon shows his mad isolation when he declares that even if Zeus' eagles should carry the carrion to this god, he would not be afraid of pollution (μίασμα - 1042) as a consequence of his refusal to have Polyneices buried. Creon is convinced that no mortal can defile the gods (1040-44). This is ironically perverted piety. Of course it is impossible for a mortal to harm the gods, but what Creon forgets is that this fact does not preclude his liability to pollute himself by confusing his relationship to the divine sphere (cf. Parker M 33, 310-11). And as he realizes afterwards, that is what he has done. He has cast a living soul below which belonged above (τῶν ἄνω βαλὼν κάτω - 1068), and he has done the reverse as well: he has kept a corpse above earth, though it belonged to the nether gods (ἔχεις δὲ τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ' αὖ θεῶν - 1070). The consequence is obvious: pursuit by the Erinyes (1075). Now Creon realizes his one-sidedness—just like Antigone did—and starts invoking Hades (Πλούτωνά - 1200) and Hecate (1199), but this is of no avail. He is not deceived by the gods with respect to Haemon's voice, as he suspects (θεοῖσι κλέπτομαι - 1218). He is deceived by them with respect to the foundations of his life and bereft by them of Haemon and Eurydice. The latter is sacrificed on the altar of Zeus Herkeios, the same god that Creon had previously neglected (487).²⁵ Despite Creon's yielding, his house becomes a true harbour of Hades ("Αἶδου λιμὴν - 1284).

Like Antigone in 922-23, Creon now accepts the authority of divine power, but despite his yielding it gives him no support at all: "I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support"

²⁴ Where Creon goes at the end of the tragedy is a matter of debate. Jebb, who opts for the palace (A 237), himself points to the similarity between l. 1321 and OT 1340 (A 233), which beyond doubt refers to Oedipus' exile.

²⁵ Verse 1301 is hopelessly corrupt, but its meaning is clear: Eurydice commits suicide on an altar. Therefore her death resembles a sacrifice (cf. σφάγιον - 1291; Loraux FT 39). It is generally accepted that it is the altar of Zeus Herkeios which is referred to (e.g. Jebb A 229, Taplin PA 15).

(1341-42). That Creon could not have foreseen this doom is clear from his emphatic statement that it was a god who hurled him into wild ways—a god who wanted to oppress him (μέγα βάρος – 1273), and from his remark that a crushing fate had leapt upon his head (1345-46), implying that the chorus's final observation, that happiness is only attainable for those who do nothing disrespectful to the gods (1349-50), is ironically true. The abstention demanded is impossible as long as man lives. To live means to hope and to be passionate, which inevitably incites the divine game of jealously overthrowing human haughtiness (cf. Rohdich A 222). Like Antigone, Creon trusted the gods and was betrayed by them (Hester SU 39).

Creon's position in his family and the city undergoes a reversal mirroring that of Antigone. Suddenly he is prepared to listen to the chorus again (1099), he acts as a suppliant to Haemon (1230), and he complains about the loss of Eurydice (1290-92). For the first time he is interested in his deceased kin (1300). But his reversal is of no avail. Through his actions the cities have fallen into confusion (συνταράσσονται – 1080): enmity breaks loose (1080) and it is Creon's mind which has brought about the defilement (τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις – 1015). For his one-sided attitude to the family he is punished by its extinction (1066, 1097) (Knox HT 111-12) and he is punished for his lofty position in the city by his banishment. Like Antigone, in the end Creon is completely alone. His lofty position has made him an outlaw (Hester DDS 14). He is less than nothing (τὸν οὐκ ὄντα μᾶλλον ἢ μηδὲνα – 1325). He has fulfilled the hidden prediction of the first *stasimon* awesome man comes to nothingness (ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται), which is his future (τὸ μέλλον) (360-61).

Creon's downfall bears a strong resemblance to a scapegoat ritual. Previously he was the substitute for Thebes. Now that he has become isolated he continues to be its substitute in so far as all the pollutions of his family and of the city are accumulated on his head. In the course of the tragedy we can follow how the pollution first spreads, and then, in the phase of purification, is contracted in one substitute. When Tiresias appears the whole cosmos has become polluted. The upper world and the nether world have been turned upside down (1068-70), the hearths are contaminated (1016), together with the whole city (1015, 1083). In the phase of purification, first the pollution is heaped on the city's substitute, the house of Creon. This house will be filled by the wailing (κωκύματα – 1079) Creon denied to Polyneices' corpse (κωκύσαι – 204), but which is nevertheless raised by Antigone (ἀνακωκύει – 423). Finally Creon becomes the substitute for the house. He accepts the responsibility for the deaths of Haemon (1269) and Eurydice (1320). He is like a voluntary scapegoat: "the guilt can never be fixed on any other mortal," he

declares (1317-18), reflecting Oedipus' parting speech in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and confirming the hypothesis that Creon is another scapegoat (Segal TC 175, Rohdich A 229). Like Megareus, whose bed is called famous (1303) because he saved the city in sacrificial atonement by jumping into the dragon's den at Tiresias' command,²⁶ Creon is sacrificed as the city's polluted substitute.

That Creon should be acceptable as a scapegoat necessarily implies that he must previously have been the city's substitute in a positive sense, something which is confirmed in the words of Tiresias and the messenger. Both emphasize that Creon was the saviour of Thebes (Tiresias: ἔχεις σώσας πόλιν—1058; the messenger: 1162). He steered the ship of state on a proper course (994, 1164). This does not conflict with the fact that afterwards Creon should defile the city; on the contrary, it is its prerequisite.²⁷ Creon can only be a royal scapegoat if he is the person who saved the city as well as the person through which it became polluted. Both functions are incomprehensible to those separatists who believe that Creon is merely an ordinary human being.

Structurally, the final act in the drama of creating a scapegoat may be the incorporation of the royal scapegoat into the city after its death. Oedipus for example becomes *hypsipolis* again after his death: his grave within the confines of the city is a source of beneficial power. This final ritual, in which the beneficial aspects of power are definitely separated from the poisonous ones, can be found in the *Antigone* as well—not with respect to Creon, but to Polyneices. His body is not only washed and burnt as a final purification (cf. Burkert OS 20), he is also buried in native soil (οἰκείας χθονὸς – 1203), something which would have been quite impossible if he had still been considered an ordinary traitor (Szlezák BDS 116). The final incorporation of Polyneices into the city may be symbolized in the high mound erected over him (τύμβον ὀρθόκρανον – 1203): no ordinary mortal would have obtained such an honour.

Of course Creon's double confounding of the upper and the nether world, illustrated by the carrion on the altars, is also a confusion of the realms of life and death (Segal TC 177). Despite his obedience to Tiresias' demand not to kill a dead person again (1030), and to yield to

²⁶ Cf. Eur Phoen 1010-13. We follow the reading of the manuscripts, κλεινὸν λέχος, against Bothe's conjecture, κλεινὸν λάχος, adopted by Dain/Mazon (DM 121) and Jebb (A 231) or Seyffert's κένον λέχος, accepted by Müller (SA 270).

²⁷ Tiresias may even be saying that Creon is still the saviour of the city. Note the periphrastic construction in 1058; τήνδε ναυκληρεῖς (994) should be read as a present tense, in accordance with the mss., and against most editors, the underlying suggestion being that as its scapegoat, Creon will save the city again.

the dead (1029), Creon is compelled to live an unbearable life in the margin. Whereas Antigone was a marginal who was alive as she descended into Hades, Creon has to continue his life as somebody who had died already (ὀλωλότ' ἄνδρ' - 1288): he is a living corpse (ἔμψυχον...νεκρόν - 1167)(Knox HT 116). In the end, Creon shares Antigone's earlier longing for death (Segal TC 199). His only wish is not to look upon another day (1329-30). Just as in the end Antigone was not allowed to live, Creon is not allowed to die (Jens AI 310). What Creon has done, killing the killed, now returns on his own head: "Alas, I was already as dead, and thou hast smitten me anew" (1288). As Antigone did before him, Creon has to experience that the harbour of Hades is hard to purify (δυσκάθατος - 1284).

Despite his yielding Creon is crushed by the law of talion. He has to offer a corpse as compensation for the other corpses (1067).²⁸ The wailing he has forbidden (204) now arises in his own house (1079). Nobody will deny that the chorus is right when it says to Creon that too late he recognized justice (ὀφεί τήν δίκην ἰδεῖν - 1270). Creon himself says that in saving the established cosmic laws (καθεστῶτας νόμους - 1113) one ends one's life in the best possible way.²⁹

But the unanswerable question remains: how is man to know whether he is complying with the cosmic law or not? This tragic question of Creon's has to be exorcized by separatism when it maintains that from the outset Creon's law was merely meanness (Lesky DH 115) and that therefore Antigone's claim that Creon was a base tyrant was essentially justified. But separatism cannot explain why, until the arrival of Tiresias with his stunning revelations, nobody but Antigone and Haemon should have opposed the justness of Creon's decree. Nor does Tiresias claim that traitors should be buried: what he says only applies to this exceptional case of the son of Oedipus (1018), exceptional precisely because of Polyneices' royalty and his being a Labdacid. Tiresias never utters a word of approval of Antigone's deed (Hester SU 39, Rohdich A 205), nor does he maintain that Creon was wrong in punishing Antigone. He is merely opposed to its failing ritual form (Linthorpe AC 256). Nor can separatism explain why it should not only be Creon who points out the unpredictable tragic nature of his erring (note the oxymoron in 1261:

²⁸ The fact that Tiresias calls Antigone a corpse should put an end to the tedious discussion (since Jebb xviii/xix) about whether Creon should or should not have gone to Antigone's crypt first and only afterwards to Polyneices' corpse.

²⁹ Various interpreters are convinced that Creon is here referring to Antigone's burial customs (e.g. Jebb A 198, Kamerbeek A 186, Vernant MTG 102), but it is more likely that he is referring to the established cosmic laws the messenger mentions (τῶν καθεστῶτων - 1160).

φρενῶν δυσφρόνων ἀμαρτήματα), but Tiresias as well. He points out that, though Creon has saved the city, erring is common to all human beings (1024). This remark would be senseless if Creon or anybody else could have foreseen that the gods would disagree with his rituals. Creon's royal reasoning has been overruled rather than refuted (Hester SU 39). The unpredictability of divine justice makes it at once inescapable and unbearable.

The tragedy reaches its apotheosis in the final, inextricable confusions of insight and illusion. Tiresias asks Creon to learn (μανθάνειν) from his well-spoken words (1031-32), that he has to yield (εἶχε - 1029). He points out that this might be a gain (κέρδος - 1032). Creon is intrinsically unable to rate this gain at its proper value, because he has to go on identifying his gain with that of the city. His deluded mind now sees an advantage for the city in suspecting Tiresias' trustworthiness. He is afraid that the seer is counseling for his own gain (1037, 1047, 1061). The irony is that Tiresias' prophecies indeed offer Creon no gain at all (Müller SA 230). His remark that sober-mindedness (εὐβουλία - 1050) is the most powerful possession is ironic as well. Neither Antigone nor Creon could have avoided their rashness and their perverted conceptions of gain.

First Creon is immovable (ἀκίνητος πέλη - 1027), pointing out to Tiresias that awesome (δεινοί) mortals make a shameful fall (Πίπτουσι...πτώματ' αἴσχυρ' - 1045-46). Then he turns to prudence, in vain, when he says that his judgement has taken a turn (ἐπεστράφη - compare the guard - 1111). In the end, his prediction concerning awesome mortals is brought down on his own head (Markantonatos TIA 495). Though Creon accepts that it is no use waging war against necessity (1106), Tiresias' awesome (δεινὰ - 1091) prophecies come true. Creon's tragic predicament is that by obeying he will suffer. He outlines this situation when, echoing the first *stasimon*, he says: "it is awesome to yield (τό τ' εἰκαθεῖν γὰρ δεινόν), but in resistance to smite my own temperament (θυμόν) with ruin (ἄτη) is just as awesome (ἐν δεινῷ πάρα)" (1096-97). Both Antigone's perseverance and Creon's futile yielding show the truth of the messenger's words: "no one is a seer (μάντις) to men concerning those things which are established (τῶν καθεστῶτων)" (1160).

But is not Tiresias the very model of the seer who is familiar with divine truth? He is, but that does not mean that thereby he is exempt from tragic ambiguity. Tiresias' insights reflect divine truth—but the nature of this truth is damaging. The opposition between divine truth and mortal opinion is like the Dogon's opposition between Nommo and the Pale Fox: the power of divine insight is a power of confusion to mortals. Tiresias' insights are divine—but for this loftiness he has to pay the price that in the mortal world he is lower and more ineffective than or-

dinary mortals. The person who sees divine truth is blind in the mortal world. He who guides mankind has to be guided by a child or a slave (1012). The tragic conflict is that the seer knows the truth but is politically ineffective, whereas the king can see and act but is unable to recognize divine truth (Goheen ISA 85, Buxton BLS 25). Therefore Tiresias' truth is destructive. Tiresias knows this. He is extremely reluctant to utter the truth because he knows that through its utterance he accomplishes the fulfilment of his words (ἥνυσας- 1178).³⁰

Creon learns by suffering (1271), as Antigone did, but this does not imply that he has chance of improvement or acceptance. Learning by suffering merely means obtaining insight into man's tragic position, but being unable to do anything about it: it means being brought to heel. In the final song, when the chorus maintains that prudence is essential to happiness, they are right,³¹ but they are well aware of the emptiness of the admonition. They add that it is only in old age (γῆρα - 1353) that prudence is learnt. As long as man is young and lively he has to be imprudent, because he is full of awesome violence (cf. Rohdich A 223). Prudence is only feasible when death is near or when life is without value. Prudence is the virtue of living corpses.

A final question we have to ask is whether the purification of Thebes by the extinction of the Labdacids and its cognate branch has been successful. That is the conviction of one variant of the harmonizing point of view (e.g. Lesky DH 115). This point of view is reflected in Rohdich's remark that the result of the heroine's destruction and of that of her counterpart Creon is not only that the polis should survive unscathed, but that thanks to their sacrifice the polis is justified and acclaimed (A 229). Rohdich considers this mere semblance, but he is convinced that this semblance is the tragedy's final answer to the questions it has raised.

But the *Antigone* reveals more than the fact that order has to be established or re-established. First of all it leaves the conflict between family and state unresolved. It also reveals the residue which cannot be incorporated into order: the ambiguous *deinotes*, which is at the root of order, but which also must be exorcized for order's sake. The sacrifice of Antigone and Creon fails because Thebes is sacrificing part of its own essence. The *Antigone* cannot be reduced to a glorification of prudence, it is not just a *laudatio* of Ismene, since it shows the necessity of prudence

³⁰ A corresponding translation of l.1178 is: "O seer, thou hast fulfilled thy words (ἥνυσας), so that they come right (ὀρθόν)" (Jebb A 209). Through Tiresias the gods and fate accomplish their aims— therefore the seer brings his prediction to pass by his uttering of the words (Kamerbeek A 239, Linforth AC 192).

³¹ We agree with Hester that the chorus's words do not only refer to Creon, but to Antigone as well (SU 40, cf. PWS 10).

as well as its futility when it is bereft of *deinotes*. The price of Thebes' purification is that the city banishes *deinotes*, *orge*, Eros, Dionysus. As Ismene's fate shows, this banishment of holy madness ends in sterility, just as the glorification of power ends in destruction. There is no separative or harmonizing solution for the fact that order and madness are two-in-one.

7.9. Sophocles' cosmology

Sophocles' universe is an interconnected whole in which nature, man and the gods indissolubly belong together. The divine order comprises the movements of the cosmos, the actions of the gods, and the fates of mortals. Sophocles does not, as modern poets do, try to revivify the rationally separated cosmos by means of anthropomorphic metaphor. When he links human fate with natural phenomena like the wind or the waves, he is not transferring human significance to the wind and the sea, it is the other way round. Man is intercalated among the powers of nature, as one of their metamorphoses. It is impossible to say that in the first *stasimon* *deinotes* is transposed from man to nature. *Deinotes* is the primary power of which both natural events and man partake.

Only in the light of the primacy of the cosmos as a divine whole is it possible to appreciate Sophocles' descriptions of the vicissitudes of human life. Reversals of fortune are not primarily human phenomena which are deplored or cheered. Tragic insight shows that, mostly without the actors being aware of the fact, man's actions are part of the cosmic whole. In this context the words of the messenger in the *Antigone* are of interest:

There is no estate of mortal life that I would ever praise or blame as settled (standing - σtάντ'). Fortune (τύχη) sets straight (ὀρθοῖ) and fortune lets down (καταρρέπει) the fortunate and the unfortunate from day to day (αἰεί). And no one is a seer (μάντις) to mortals concerning those things which are established (τῶν καθεστώτων). (1156-60)

The messenger is not uttering pessimistic lamentations on human existence, he is offering a dispassionate description of established cosmic law. This is neither pessimistic nor optimistic: it is not only the lucky who sink, it is also the unlucky who are raised. The messenger is referring to the cosmic movement of generation and destruction.

In other passages in Sophocles' work the cosmic meaning of human fate is further elaborated, for example in this choral song from the *Trachiniae*:

Grief and joy come round (κυκλοῦσιν) to all, as the Bear comes round in his circling paths (στροφάδες). This I say since starry night does not abide with men, nor does calamity nor wealth. (129-33)

Again we are confronted with the cosmic cycle of generation and destruction, which is not confined to the destruction of wealth, but points to the reversal of calamity as well. Man's fortune is inserted into the circling of the stars. There is no anthropomorphic 'wheel of fortune' which is transferred to the movements of the stars. The 'symbolic' pattern of the stars is the primary bearer of significance—a significance which is not transferred to man either, but of which man is a constituent part:

The Bear, by contrast [to the anthropomorphic wheel of fortune] is a deep-toned reality, up there for all to see, a living power as were all stars to the Greeks, active in bringing seasons [...]. The Bear's movement relates prosperity symphonically to adversity, making neighbours of these opposites. (Jones AGT 175)

The movement of the cosmos is one of eternal returning, and human life is part of this movement. A day can bring low all human things, and a day can lift them up again (Aj 131-32, cf. OC 1454-55). In one movement, the eternal returning embraces the earth, life, the human family and the polis (OC 610-15).

When we hear of the movement of eternal returning to which man's life-cycle belongs, the question arises why Sophocles is not a pantheist, why he is not advocating an attitude of acceptance, or even *amor fati* with respect to this divine cosmic movement. Is it not possible for man to move in tune with the cosmic law of generation and destruction? The specificity of tragic cosmology lies in the fact that man belongs to the cosmic order and is at the same time opposed to it. The idea that divine order could be embraced is foreign to this cosmology, which consists of an extended duality. On the one hand man's movements are inevitably in accordance with cosmic law, on the other hand they are as inevitably discordant with it. The fundamental problem is that, as the messenger says, man is unable to know the nature of the established ordinances. Therefore he acts counter to them and is destroyed. Ironically, in his destruction he fulfils the demands of order. Divine order needs the disorder of boundary transgression in order to fulfil itself. Let us read Sophocles once more:

But my fate is always circling (κυκλείται) on the shifting wheel (τρόχῳ) of the god and alters (μεταλλάσσει) its nature; like the face of the moon is never able to stay for two nights in one shape, but first comes issuing from the dim (ἀδηλῶν) - then grows with lovelier face waxing to the full -, and when it appears (φανῇ) at its comeliest (εὐπρεπεστάτῃ), then forthwith it flows away (διαρρεῖ) and comes to nothingness (μὴδὲν). (Fr 871R)

Here we are confronted with Sophocles' duality of perspective. From the divine point of view, there is the eternally circling wheel of generation and destruction—the perfect divine order, but for concrete things like the

moon and man there is no divine order. They have to cope with the unpredictable movements of fortune. They are unable to stay two nights in the same shape. When they are at the peak of their existence they come to nothingness.

In tragedy we are confronted with the simultaneousness of the divine and the mortal points of view, and with the fact that these perspectives are irreconcilable. Only when he stops living is man able to adopt the divine perspective. As long as he lives he is surrounded by the dangers of unpredictable change.

The duality of the divine and the human perspectives is the major subject of the *Antigone*. The first *stasimon* shows how nature and man have their boundaries apportioned to them. But the finite beings are unable to stay within these boundaries. They can only exist if they continue to partake of the power which has engendered them, if they keep sharing in the *deinotes* which has brought them into existence. But then power is doubled: on the one hand it is divine, apportioning power, on the other hand it manifests itself in finite entities. It is this duality that engenders the tragic conflict. The power concentrated in finite entities prevents them from accepting the boundaries set them. They are 'hybrid.' In a cosmic sense, this transgressing of boundaries is in accordance with the established ordinances. As Anaximander also points out, things have to pay for their violations according to cosmic law (DK B 1). But things are different from the perspective of the entities themselves. They have to stay within their boundaries, but they have to transcend them as well. It is both necessary and impossible to avoid transgression. Because entities need strength in order to exist, they are unable to distinguish between the exercise of power inside and that outside their limits. To them, such transgressing is not order, but terrible disorder leading them into unexpected destruction. The endurance of finite beings is so small that they are unable to adopt the divine perspective. For example, it is evident that all things come to their apportioned end, but from their finite perspective this state of affairs is unacceptable. Finite beings can only exist by permanently using their finite power against the dangers of destruction, which nevertheless is inevitable. This is precisely the position of Antigone and Creon at the end of the play. They know that their life and death are in accordance with the divine ordinances, but they lack the fortitude to accept this perspective. In the *Antigone* the cosmic order is revealed in its duality. It is part of this order that finite beings transgress their limits and are destroyed. Divine order is also disorder.