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THE POETICS OF LISTENING IN SOPHOCLES

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

As a beginning graduate student, whenever I picked up an academic book, I started reading straight from the chapter that seemed most relevant to my current project, hoping to cut to the chase as quickly as possible. I now always start by reading the acknowledgments, trying to gauge who this author is—literally, where she is coming from—and hoping to get those most genuine glimpses of her first-person voice. On an early draft of a chapter from this dissertation, one reader commented that my guts are showing. While I hope to have covered myself up decently enough in the chapters to come, I can happily leave more of myself exposed in these first couple of pages, where it is my honor to thank the people who have helped bring this project into fruition.

My deepest gratitude goes to Sarah Nooter. Role-model and advisor *extraordinaire*, tireless reader and re-reader of my work, she has offered incisive comments on every page. Since arriving in Chicago, I have been her *student* in the original sense of the term. Her intelligence and the generosity with which she shares her wisdom are a source of inspiration. Sarah has also offered me emotional support and practical advice on more instances than I wish to remember, and I am simply incredibly lucky to have had such a wonderful person on my team.

I wish to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Glenn Most, Mark Payne, and David Wray, who have, each in his own way, pushed me to define what it is, precisely, that I hope to contribute in this dissertation. Glenn's exacting eye has forced me to an even greater attention to detail. Mark continuously challenges me to think outside my comfort zone. David, who has been a supporter of this project since its inception, has helped me see what was worth insisting on at crucial crossroads along the way.

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Working on this dissertation, which was at first supposed to be "just" about choral lyrics in Sophocles, gradually became a constant thought-experiment about what it means to *be with* someone who is suffering. At its (or my) darker moments, the dissertation offered an unremitting reminder that all too often, we cannot truly be with someone else in their suffering, for we cannot truly understand it.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my sister, Na'amah Akavia. The inaccessibility of your suffering will remain my greatest regret. Luckily, the joy and brilliance you left us shines on.

1. Listening and the Sophoclean Chorus

1.1 The Tragic Chorus

Can one person truly listen to another's grief and suffering? Is there a sound of listening? This dissertation explores these questions through the sung dialogues of Sophocles. These songs, I argue, dramatize situations in which the active listening of the characters to each other is the main action. The sonic and in particular the metrical features of the songs allow us to hear how listening transpires. In this sense the sung dialogues offer us a poetics of listening.

Broadly put, listening is here understood as an active mode of communication, an embodiment of empathic responsiveness, reflected through vocalization and especially through the poetic qualities of the singing voice. The notions of listening and empathy I use stem from readings in the fields of psychotherapy and phenomenology, and are explained in chapter 2. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, I explore the interaction between the characters, choruses included, of *Electra*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*. The dissertation focuses on lyric dialogues, or *amoibaia*, as scenes of shared song in which listening and responding make up the dramatic action.[1] It is precisely through their mutual musical engagement with one another, I will argue, that the chorus and the protagonist significantly interact.

My approach to these texts involves reading the chorus first as a character and second as a group whose listening is a significant action in the play. Throughout, I use the grammatical plural but the term *character* (or *participant*) in the singular to refer to the chorus. The plural is meant to stress their identity as a group. To the extent that we may consider them a character, they are, generally speaking, a unified one, but we should always keep in mind that it is made up

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[1] I use the term *lyric dialogue* or the Greek *amoibaion* (for which see section 1.3) to refer to any scene where two or more characters interact and where at least one has a singing role. Tragic choral *lyrics* is technically a "misnomer," for tragedy was accompanied by the *aulos* rather than the lyre. See Wilson 1999.76. For more on the *aulos* player, see Wilson 2002 and Wiles 1997.91.

of many members.[2] The dramatic function of the chorus is tied to their lyric role; in particular, I focus on the way the sonic and metrical aspects of their voice as a singing entity on stage constitute their dramatic involvement. I propose that their participation in the drama as a character is most important, and most fully in view, when they perform dialogic songs with other characters.[3]

Scholarship on tragic choruses for the most part stresses the way they are distinct from the other characters, whether the focus is on the civic, ritual or aesthetic aspects of the choral entity. The divide between characters and chorus, and the way it is assumed as an interpretive premise, is apparent in comments such as this: "no member of the audience would ever confuse the choral ensemble and the cast of characters."[4] For the most part, little attention is paid to those moments in tragedy where the space between chorus and characters is bridged, figuratively and, in some cases, also literally, through the mode and content of the interaction. Such are the moments of lyric dialogue in tragic drama. One of the main ways in which I propose to identify the chorus' practical and ethical involvement with the characters is through the metrical structure of the *amoibaia*, which often creates metrical harmony between the singers. I take such vocal harmony as a basic index of empathy. This sonic effect, we shall see, is often at play even in situations where there is an emotional or moral gap between the singers.

I use *harmony* here literally in the sense of a fitting-together of voices; the added figurative sense, of a rapport among the singers, is also operative and will become clearer below (see further in chapter 2). The term harmony does not denote here the "combination of

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[2] Choral odes were delivered by the entire group, though the distribution of voices between members of the group in lyric dialogue is essentially unknown. See pp. 17-18 below.

[3] Burton 1980 comments that in *Electra*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*, "both [chorus and actor]…contribute an equal share, in the heightened tones of song, to moments of crisis in action and emotion" (250).

[4] Gagné and Hopman 2013.5-6.

(simultaneous) notes so as to form chords" (OED *s.v.* 5), as it does in common musical parlance today.[5] It should be noted in addition that, when I speak of the musicality of tragic song, I essentially refer to the special significance of the words' sonority and, especially, the rhythm inscribed in the metrical pattern.[6] I will not discuss the melody of the songs, which is all but lost to us, and will refer only briefly to the instrumental accompaniment. Yet we should keep in mind that the melodic effect could have supported, or, just as conceivably, countered the metrical in ways on which we may only speculate. My readings often point to different levels of meaning offered by the semantic and sonorous aspects of the text. In the original context of performance, the audience's sensibilities would have been even further expanded, since the dramatic–poetic utterances involved an additional layer of meaning—that afforded by melody.

To get back to the discussion of the chorus as character, I do agree with the above quoted statement about the fundamental difference between "the choral ensemble and the cast of characters." While I focus on the dramatic function and, hence, on the fictional status of the chorus, there is no question of taking them as if they were simply another character. The present chapter delineates the way in which our understanding of the chorus' dramatic part must be limited and informed by considering their performance of song–dance, a cultural practice of multilayered significance in the ancient Greek world. In this chapter, I present scholars on tragic choruses and on Sophocles' plays chronologically for the most part, concentrating on those works that have been most influential to my reading of Sophocles. I do this in the present section as well as in 1.3. Overall, this introduction intends to explain the present study's commitment to

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[5] The ancient Greeks, it seems, did not use tonal harmony, or contrapuntal melodies. When two or more voices sang simultaneously, they always sang the exact same thing (West 1992.41; Anderson 1994.23, 39). See, however, the examination of polyphonic instrumental accompaniment in Barker 1995.

[6] Scholars agree that the metrical complexity of tragic song (and Greek lyric poetry in general) inscribed the rhythm of the melodic accompaniment. See Dale 1968.204-5; West 1992.130; Anderson 1994.95-6.

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the idea of the chorus as a character who sings. The focus on lyric dialogues, I hope to show, is a productive avenue for an approach that wishes both to foreground the chorus' lyric role and to consider them a group with a significant dramatic role. Specifically, the chapter aims to exemplify the value of interpreting the poetry of the choral voice through the lens of sonic responsiveness. In other words, choral songs can be taken as responses to characters and events in which sound and meter are significant registers of meaning. I demonstrate this also through a consideration of a choral song that is not dialogic.

In this chapter, I use *Oedipus Tyrannus* (hereafter *OT*) as a case study of the premises and consequences of my approach. Like this play at large, which has become representative of its genre, the chorus of *OT* can be considered typical: a group of respected, elder male citizens of Thebes, they are honored for their sagacity and experience, yet dependent on their king Oedipus, whom they treat with great reverence and to whose judgment they defer.[7] Thus they typify both the special status of tragic choruses as purveyors of traditional wisdom and their inferiority to the Sophoclean hero. Sophocles' protagonists are men and women of extraordinary virtues and moral character; the choruses are inevitably not as remarkable, and their participation in the action is undeniably limited. It is often considered dull or trite, and, on the level of the spoken dialogue, their dramatic role may rightly seem uninteresting.[8] The choral odes, on the other hand, are great lyric performances, replete with mythological exempla, gnomic truths, and traditional mores, expressed through striking imagery and elaborate metrical-musical patterns. A comparison of the chorus' sung and spoken roles inevitably brings out the uninspiring quality of the latter; it also

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[7] On the essential tragic dichotomy between the monarchic protagonist and the chorus see Most 2017. In contrast to the choruses in Sophocles' Theban plays, whose political status is officially recognized, Gould 1996 stresses the social marginality of many other tragic choruses. Goldhill 1998 and Foley 2003 importantly revise this notion of marginality.

[8] See e.g. Kirkwood 1958.189 and the counter arguments in Gardiner 1987.21.

points to a duality in their ways of participation in the drama that complicates our understanding of their dramatic function. This duality maps on to the additional idiosyncrasy of the chorus to which I have been referring—namely, that they are a group.[9] The chorus is made up of a plurality of individuals who, for the most part, sing in unison, but they can also sing in sequence or represent more than one point of view.[10] The spoken parts are delivered by only one member of the group, the chorus-leader, who acts as their representative.[11]

That the chorus can nonetheless be viewed as a dramatic character was first spelled out by Aristotle. He suggested that the chorus should be considered one of the actors, and that they are integrated into the plot especially well in Sophocles.[12] It has been argued that Aristotle's equation of the chorus with the characters is part of his overall argument which "deflates rather than emphasises the importance of the dramatic chorus."[13] However, Aristotle singles out Sophoclean choruses for *taking part in the action* (συναγωνίζεσθαι); these are choruses whose lyric voice is in no way insignificant or perfunctory. In any case, Aristotle's statement can be seen as a reaction precisely to the intuitively obvious fact that choruses are not like the other

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[9] Cf. Burton 1980.4.

[10] In *Ajax* 866-78, the chorus breaks up into two semi-choruses as they search for Ajax. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, it is possible to read the chorus splitting up into individual speakers at several points, most obviously at 1348-71, but the interpretation remains difficult. See Scott 1984. On the question of individual voices among the chorus members see below, n. 34 and ch. 3, n. 54.

[11] See Kaimio 1970.23 and 155; in general his study indicates a deep awareness to the difference between singularity and pluarilty that the chorus represent. I return to the question of the individual chorus members below.

[12] *Poetics* 1456a25: καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόριον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ ("the chorus too should be considered one of the actors, and a part of the whole, and taking part in the action not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles").

[13] Gagné and Hopman 2013.21; see also 19. Podlecki 1972 examines the choruses in the extant tragedies of Aeschylus and argues for the significance of their dramatic involvement, particularly through their lyric performance and thus especially in plays that have been considered early or "less dramatic" examples of the genre. His treatment explicitly calls for a reconsideration of the received Aristotelean notion of a development of tragedy from a cultic, non-mimetic, choral performance to a dramatic one involving actors. We should take Aristotle's claim on the characterization of Sophoclean choruses with a grain of salt as well.

actors and were not necessarily felt to be closely integrated in the drama, not least because of their dual participation in both spoken and sung modes.[14]

Classic treatments of Sophocles have focused on the difference, to the point of irreconcilability, between the protagonist and the choral group within the context of the dramatic action, and the ways in which the chorus act as a foil to the individual. The group highlights the protagonist's unique responsibility and determination, but they are essentially removed from his or her moral dilemma. Two studies from the middle half of the twentieth century were very influential in expressing this view. In his existential reading of Sophocles' humanism, Cedric Whitman emphasizes the greatness of his protagonists, so much so that he virtually writes off the chorus as an agent to be taken seriously. He claims that they voice the "confused morality of the bourgeoisie."[15] Bernard Knox focuses on the protagonist, stressing the unyielding temper, "even to the point of self-destruction," of the Sophoclean hero. Like Whitman, Knox focuses on the moral singularity of Sophocles' protagonists and shows that they radically depart from the norms the choruses represent. However, Knox is less dismissive of the moral standpoint of the chorus, for their plea for moderation is implicitly presented as a reasonable position, with which the audience can identify.[16] That the chorus express a conventional moral middle ground has been a commonplace in criticism of Sophocles. Interestingly, this view accounts for both the received insignificance of the chorus as a dramatic character and the notion that choral odes provide us with the definitive, authorial interpretation of their respective tragedies.[17] Thus, locating the importance of the choral persona in the way it reaches beyond the confines of the dramatic plot,

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[14] On the lyric and spoken as separate "modes of representation," see Gould 1978.43 and further below.

[15] Whitman 1951.135.

[16] Knox 1964.16-18, with quote from 5.

[17] Cf. Gardiner 1987.4-5.

especially beyond the characters' limited knowledge, may diminish their significance as a dramatic agent within the plot.[18]

The last thirty years or so have seen a shift away from this literary approach to tragic drama and toward an appreciation of tragedies as scripts for performances.[19] In this context, tragedy has been reassessed as an essentially choral genre. This shift has also turned the focus away from questions of how or whether choruses are dramatically integrated in the plot. Rather, the choral group becomes the locus for an understanding of tragedy as an event with cultic, political, and aesthetic significance, and which 'works' simultaneously on these multiple levels, of which the mimetic or fictive level is only one.[20] An important vein of scholarship has focused on tragic performance as ritual and on the tragic chorus as part of the civic institution of the cult of Dionysus in fifth-century Athens. On this view, the tragic chorus are representative of the theater audience, or, more specifically, the Athenian democratic community.[21] For example, Albert Henrichs has collected instances of what he calls "choral self-referentiality" in Sophocles, moments where choruses refer to their own performance of ritual song–dance. He posits a distance between the orchestra as the space of real ritual (and the literal location at which the chorus performs) and the fictive or "imaginary space of the drama." Instances of choral self-

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[18] Segal 1996, for example, stresses that the chorus in *OT* "introduce a perspective that reaches beyond the immediate context of the ode[s] and even beyond what the chorus, as a human participant and character, can fully know" (20).

[19] See Bierl 2005 on what he calls the 'performative turn'; he writes, "The ritual embedding can also be interpreted under this performative aspect" (292).

[20] Gagné and Hopman 2013 use the term *choral mediation* to evoke "the special communicative power of the tragic ode … to freely link and combine, to serve as a direct intermediary between various levels of reference, and incorporate all strands into the rest of the choral narrative and the whole of the play" (2 and *passim*).

[21] In an essay that became central to historicist approaches to tragedy, Jean-Pierre Vernant defined the chorus as "an official college of citizens" reflective of "the spectators who make up the civic community" (Vernant 1988.33-4). Simon Goldhill has written on the ways participation in the tragic festival reflects and constitutes civic democratic engagement. See for instance Goldhill 2006 and chapter 2 in Goldhill 2012, "The Audience on Stage". Cf. Most 2017, who suggests that an inherent conflict of Greek tragedy is the one between monarchic values, usually represented by the protagonist, and democratic values "that are concentrated largely… in the chorus" (68). Budelmann 2000, ch. 5, focuses on the "communal response" of the chorus and the "group perspective" it offers.

referentiality are understood to reduce this distance. In other words, moments when the chorus sing of their choral activity are like invitations to the audience to participate in the Dionysian ritual of which the dramatic choral performance is a fundamental part. At the same time, by pointing to the chorus' identity as Athenian performers of Dionysiac ritual, instances of choral self-referentiality are, for Henrichs, invariably ironic; they bring out the ineffectuality of ritual remedies in tragedy, and are thus more broadly related to the inherent ambivalence of Dionysus as god of tragedy, both empowering and destructive. In Henrichs' view, then, choral performance offers a key for understanding tragedy, even though he is not particularly interested in the function of choruses as characters with fictive traits.

Similarly, Claude Calame considers the choral odes of tragedy as "cultic speech acts" that point to the Dionysiac context of the performance and that reflect "the relations of the actors as well as the spectators with the gods."[22] The audience of tragedy, whose education and civic identity is bound up with their participation in choral activity, "delegate part of their choral competence and authority" to the chorus on stage, so that "the effect of the performative side of the choral voice is to confer a reality upon the dramatic fiction."[23] Calame, too, takes the chorus to be central to the tragic experience. He stresses their role as an agent of cultic (and to that extent, at least, political) influence. Yet, as the last quote in particular shows, his reading emphasizes the choral function in the reality of performance conditions over and above their role as a fictive character in the dramatic representation. In essence, both Henrichs and Calame

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[22] Calame 1999.130 and 137. Calame 2017.14 defines his approach as "ethnopoétique historique et anthropologie culturelle interposées", and also stresses the similarity between tragic performance and ritual (see, e.g., 53).

[23] Calame 1999.149.

devalue the chorus as a dramatic agent by making it the conveyor of a broadly defined tragic sensibility.[24]

As I stressed above, I am particularly interested in the chorus as a character in the drama. Nonetheless this view must be framed within the undeniably cultic context of the tragic performances. A step in this direction is taken by John Gould. His 1996 article concerns "the dramatic role of the chorus within the fictional world created by the performances themselves and with our response to that world." He claims general agreement with Henrichs' approach but significantly reformulates it: "there is a kind of transparency to the fictive world of Greek tragedy which allows us […] to perceive the ritual function of the choral dance–song through its boundary walls, while remaining wholly within what we awkwardly call the 'dramatic illusion'."[25] This cautious wording acknowledges the twofold status of choral performance in tragedy—both fictive and in some sense operative in the real world—as well as the inadequacy of the terms we use to designate this duality, which imply a clear-cut distinction between reality and fiction in the theater.[26]

This fluidity in the fictional dimension of the tragic chorus is highlighted by interpretations that read choral song–dance as an aesthetic experience rather than a primarily ritual one and that stress how choral songs in tragedy evoke choral performances as an established medium beyond,

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[24] Kitzinger 2008 categorically maintains the distinction between the actors and the chorus, and analyzes the chorus' "separate consciousness" in terms of their song–dance: see 74-76 and *passim*. She is explicitly opposed to psychological readings of the chorus; she firmly connects the chorus to the dramatic context through their theological outlook, which for her stems from "their nature as a collective body that expresses itself largely through song and dance" (76).

[25] Gould 1996.218.

[26] In his analysis of *OC*, Travis 1999 makes a claim about the dramatic function of the chorus that can be generalized for tragedy at large, namely, "their ability to relate simultaneously to the characters … and to the audience" (2). Further, he writes, "The chorus serve as a metaphor *both* of myth *and* of spectation itself" (42). More broadly, Zeitlin 1985 points out that theatrical fiction, or mimesis, at once offers an adequate representation of reality and focuses attention on theater-making as illusion. "There is a serious and wonderful paradox here," she writes (79). Her influential article concerns the way Greek tragic theater uses the feminine to imagine "a fuller model for the masculine self" (80). Hall 2006 explores the dialectic relation between social reality and Athenian dramatic fiction.

and independent of, the theater. Members of the Athenian audience had opportunities to participate in choral performances themselves, and, more generally, were experienced consumers of poetic performances of all kinds. They lived in a world imbued with *mousikê*, a term far broader than its common modern cognates such as *music*. It implies the special quality of poetry as a verbal art involving word, song, dance, and instrumental music, and has been suggested as an ancient Greek equivalent of our term *culture*.[27] John Herington's important study of Greek song–culture underlines the continuity between choral songs in tragedy and other genres of choral lyric. The former are taken to be late developments and often sophisticated reflections or reformulations of the latter. More recently, Laura Swift has argued that tragedy, in its choral odes, mobilizes the poetic and ritual associations of conventional lyric genres to particular dramatic effect.[28] Such readings stress that the fictionality of the mimetic event onstage is part and parcel of its cultic reverberations.

Indeed, one of Herington's most radical arguments pertains to the dramatic quality of pre-tragic lyrics. For example, Alcman's girl-choruses are treated as "dramatizations" representing their own "performance and even the rehearsal of lyrics."[29] If they are to be considered precursors of drama, it is intriguing how choral self-referentiality is already inscribed in this early form. Writing of "choral identity," Helene Foley also highlights the continuity between tragedy and its choral predecessors, suggesting that certain mimetic conventions were already being developed by pre-tragic choruses for the representation of different social groups. In other

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[27] On *mousikê* as a multimedia art form see Nagy 2010.370-1. Cf. Taplin 2005.235, where *music* is used "as a shorthand for a complex, dynamic, and volatile interaction of melody, metric, pace, rhythm, and tone." Murray and Wilson 2004.1 write that *mousikê* "is indeed a contender for the closest term in Greek to our (polymorphous) 'culture'." On the chorus as a group who dances, see Wiles 1997, esp. ch. 4. For an analysis of the chorus emphasizing that it is a "song-and-dance ensemble," see Nagy 1994-5.

[28] Herington 1985; Swift 2010.

[29] Herington 1985.21. Calame 1977 is the seminal study of archaic choral performance in Sparta and Lesbos. On what she calls "Alcman's Lyric Drama" see Peponi 2004.

words, role-playing was an integral part of *mousikê* and of ancient Greek choral performance.[30]

This multivalence of the mimetic *and* ritual status of choral song–dance is, arguably, inherent in

the audience's experience of *mousikê* in different genres as well, not just drama.[31]

Thus it is perhaps unsurprising that utterances of the chorus in the spoken dialogue of

tragedy seem dull and uninspiring, for that is hardly the medium through which their complexity

as a performing entity can come through. Indeed, the scholarly approaches just presented treat

the chorus almost exclusively through their song–dance, not through their limited spoken role.

Nonetheless, their participation in the drama through spoken dialogue affects our understanding

of their function as character. It has been claimed that the "existence and use of… different

modes of presentation" in tragedy, namely "the lyric and the spoken," condition our experience

of "both the action and the stage figures… as fragmented and discontinuous."[32] This seems to be

particularly relevant to our conception of the chorus, since there is often such variance of scope

and tone between their spoken and sung roles. As a group, the tragic chorus is fragmented even

further, for it may sing with the multiple voices of its members or the the single voice of the

chorus-leader. The lines delivered by the chorus in the midst of spoken iambic dialogue in all of

Greek tragedy were spoken by the chorus-leader alone. Except for a few cases, it is generally

agreed that the whole choral group sang and danced their odes.[33] Even when the single chorus-

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[30] See Foley 2003, esp. 9 and 24: "From the perspective of performance … choral identity was probably far more noticeable on the level of voice, costume, gesture, dance, and musical mode." On the terms *identity* and *voice* used to highlight the "instability of the choral part" and the way the chorus "oscillates between two identities, an intra-dramatic… and an extra-dramatic identity" see Gagné and Hopman 2013.27.

[31] Wiles 1997 considers the conditions of tragic performance in relation to the chorus' civic and ritual role as well and its dramatic functions. His chapter 4, "The mimetic action of the chorus," is an especially instructive discussion of the way choral dance, originally perhaps intimately tied to the chorus' cultic function, fulfills a dramatic role through mimetic representation. Kowalzig 2007 studies the interaction of myth and ritual in the performance of dithyramb (thus officially a non-dramatic genre); these are nonetheless "theatrical" in that stories are heard and seen in performance (2-3). On the civic choruses described in Plato's *Laws* see Jackson 2016 with further references.

[32] Gould 1978, quotes from 43 and 50.

[33] Kaimio 1970, esp. 227-23. For the exceptions see n. 10 of this chapter.

leader is speaking, we may consider him or her an individual representative of the choral collectivity.[34] The sense that the chorus represents a community, often one which is at odds with the protagonist's emotional needs and ethical concerns, will be important in the readings of *Electra*, *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus* presented in the following chapters. At this point, it is crucial to bear in mind that the chorus are a multiplicity of bodies and voices, and this multiplicity must define (and limit) any attempt to read the chorus as a realistically portrayed character.[35]

Below, I return to the broader question of how to read Sophocles' characters, and to the fundamental limitations in our ability to do the same with the chorus. Yet it can already be firmly suggested that to consider the chorus a character may be possible by reflecting on their participation in and mobilization of *mousikê*. In the following paragraphs, I briefly show how a consideration of the choral songs of *OT* shed light on their dramatic function, focusing on the play's *parodos* (section 1.2). This leads to some further considerations regarding characterization in tragedy, through engagement with scholars who emphasize the performed nature of Sophocles' texts (1.3). I then take a closer look at the sung dialogue between Oedipus and the chorus from the end of the play (1.4). This lyric dialogue demonstrates the mutual musical engagement between the chorus' and the protagonist's voices and thus exemplifies the importance of the chorus' dramatic involvement through their song.

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[34] On the chorus-leader as representative of the group, see Burton 1980.4; Budelmann 2000.195. Most 2017.66 stresses the anonymity of the chorus members and their leader. There is considerably less certainty in determining the attribution of lyric dialogue to the voice of a single chorus member or the entire chorus. See n. 51; ch. 3 n. 54.

[35] Travis 1999 writes: "The chorus are plural, the protagonist is singular; any consideration of character runs the risk from the start of failing to take into account the radical importance of this most basic difference" (44). Taking the chorus as dramatically engaged and as a character whose reactions can be interpreted with a certain measure of (psychological) realism, as I do, should not be taken to entail a group of separately identifiable individuals. Rather, in Sophocles we can usually consider the chorus an internally consistent group and disregard the realistic demand for variety within its members.

1.2 Choral Song in *Oedipus Tyrannus*

The *parodos* of *OT* underscores the chorus' multivalent performative force. As a mimetic event, this entry-song has layered significance. A clear and emotionally compelling exposition of the dramatic situation at the start of the play, it plants the seeds for what will become repeated and increasingly momentous motifs. It also resonates with cultic overtones. The *parodos* is a hymn to Apollo asking him to deliver Thebes from the devastating plague; at first guise, it seems like a traditional paean. The formal cultic aspects of this song have long been established, as has its relevance to the dramatic situation.[36] Two important ritual features of the song, characteristic of the paean, are the predominantly dactylic meter of the ode and the cry ἰήιε Δάλιε Παιάν (154).[37] Though most scholars consider this song as an example of an actual paean, Swift reads it merely as a clear allusion to the genre. She is careful to distinguish between paean-like songs in tragedy on the one hand, and the performative, ritual function of an actual paean on the other hand.[38] The latter can be performed in varying contexts, celebratory or apotropaic (as here, to avert evil). Thus, "the genre hovers between triumph and disaster, anxiety and jubilation," but, in any case, it operates under "assumptions about the gods' beneficence and arbitrating involvement in human

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[36] For this song as a cultic specimen see Ax 1932. For him, the traditional prayer form is a means for heightened dramatic effect. Later scholars have elaborated on "the well-wrought combination of its cult-character with its close relevance to the dramatic situation," Kamerbeek 1967, 56. Cf. Erp Taalman Kip 1976, and Furley and Bremmer 2001 I, 307.

[37] For the ritual call to Apollo see Furley and Bremmer 2001 II, 284; Faraone 2011, 207, 227-8 considers only the two first strophes to reflect a paean.

[38] Swift 2010, 60. She writes, "A Greek lyric genre has a purpose to fulfill in the world outside the poem … which purely literary genres do not" (15). Furley and Bremmer 2001 I, 61 raise similar considerations: "Singing hymns is a special case of 'how to do things with words': it is almost always not only a declarative utterance … but also a performative one. This is particularly true of hymns composed with a certain purpose in mind, against a background of distress and need". However, they seem to take this ode as a functioning prayer (59-60), which leads to their striking claim, "Here is religion in action; what Thebes suffered in this myth, Athens had been through repeatedly in the first years of the Archidamian War" (307). Cf. Calame 2017.177.] For the relevance of the Athenian plague to the play, see Knox 1956.

morality." Such a religious worldview implicit in the paean often contrasts "with the harsh nature of tragic religion."[39]

Indeed, the chorus here use imagery that compromises the apotropaic effect of the song. By so doing, they highlight the ambivalence of divine intervention, which will become a thematic problem in the play. Paeans are first mentioned in the play in close connection with mourning, in an inauspicious juxtaposition that undermines the very premise of paeanic language (*[the city is filled] with both paeans and wails*; 5: ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων). Accordingly, the *parodos* reflects not an indisputably pious sentiment, but rather the ambiguous effect to which the cultic form is put from the start. The typical language of paeans is deliberately manipulated here to problematize the notions of divine salvation.[40] The chorus' words, *the paean flashes with an accompanying wailing voice* (παιὼν δὲ λάμπει στονόεσσά τε γῆρυς ὅμαυλος, 186-7) work similarly, so that the "strange mixture" of paean and dirge threatens the effectiveness of the prayer and casts a shadow on its brightness, so to speak.[41]

This particular multivalent image of fire combined with the sounds of grief has a further effect: it points at the chorus' own voice in producing this self-contradictory prayer.[42] The word ὅμαυλος (*accompanying*) suggests an unlikely harmony in the song, and the expression ultimately brings music-making to the fore.[43] The striking aural (or "intersensal"[44]) metaphor of

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[39] Swift 2010.63 and 73.

[40] The same is true for the repeated occurrence of light imagery in the ode, which operates here as a symbol of both divine destruction and protection. Swift 2010.68-9, 75, 77-82; Erp Taalman Kip 1976.

[41] Quote from Swift 2010.80.

[42] Scholars point to the self-referential quality of this comment, as if the choral song is hereby established as one of the paeans performed in plague-stricken Thebes. See e.g. Furley and Bremmer 2001 I.307.

[43] LSJ gives ὅμαυλος two derivations: from αὐλή, thus strictly meaning "living together with," and from αὐλός, "playing or sounding together." While both senses are acceptable here, the literal meaning derived from αὐλός seems to be operative, and especially evocative of the instrumental musical accompaniment to the choral song. Cf. Kamerbeek 1967 ad 187.

[44] Kamerbeek 1967 ad loc.

this phrase highlights the paradoxical effects that the choral song has. It evokes the dire circumstances that call for a paean, but undermines the ritual force of the song. At the same time, it emphasizes the transformative poetic power of the choral performance, with its capacity to create and embody such seemingly incongruous combinations as a paean–lament. Through implicit references to their own voice, the chorus render this song a lyric triumph even as they destabilize the genre of salvation in which they operate.

As this brief example shows, the choral use of their idiosyncratic musical medium has special, and especially foreshadowing, relevance to the impending tragic plot. It typifies the way in which the chorus embed themselves in the dramatic action: their songs are responses to the events and attempts to transform them, thereby enhancing their meaning both symbolically and literally. Another important moment where this Theban chorus respond to the drama is their famous question in the third ode, *why should I dance?* (896: τί δεῖ με χορεύειν;). This question is the quintessential moment of choral self-reflexivity, drawing attention to their performance in the Theater of Dionysus. In terms of the dramatic context, the chorus here express their anxiety over the possibility that Tiresias' prophecy about Oedipus is false. This question represents the deepening moral chasm in their world, as it gradually becomes impossible to reconcile their faith in Oedipus and their notion of a just cosmological order. When the chorus of the *OT* imagine their silenced voice, this possibility is set as a frightening corollary to moral corruption.[45] Thus, the chorus in fact bestow special significance on their song: by rhetorically denying their ability to perform as a chorus, they reinforce their importance. Their song–dance is tied to the

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[45] See Kitto 1958, who writes that justice (*dikê*) "is the core of Sophocles' religious thinking" (49) and prophecy "is the denial of chaos" (55); cf. 60-62. See also Kirkwood 1958.210-12 and Swift 2010.88, 103.

particulars of Oedipus' tragic plot even as they self-reflectively point to their medium of performance within and outside the mimetic event.[46]

Such dramatic involvement through their lyric role is typical of Sophoclean choruses at large. That said, the nature of the chorus–protagonist relationship is not a fixed generic feature: rather, it is fluid, shaped differently in each play by the subject matter and plot development. This relationship has so far been discussed only through the immediate text of *OT*. Likewise, the chorus' significance as a performing entity has been explored through the ancient context of the choral performance. The next section of this chapter returns to the broader terms of the discussion of the choral role, showing in what ways the chorus can be taken as an audience of tragedy: a group of spectators *and* listeners. Even though it implicitly suggests ways in which the ancient chorus may mirror us, the present-day audience(s), the next section still maintains a similar focus on ancient sources and on contemporary interpretations of the text as a self-contained event, without explicitly targeting modern audience reception.

1.3 Choral Listening

Through *OT*, we have seen that the chorus is dramatically significant. Yet this does not entail that we may consider them simply another character on stage. Rather, the extent to which this is possible is significantly limited. As a contemporary critic puts it, the chorus "are less fully in

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[46] On the moral difficulty the chorus expresses here and the relation of the song as a whole to the plot, see Bowra 1944.205-8; Winnington-Ingram 1971.129–34; Carey 1986; Henrichs 1994-5, esp. 65-6. The latter is, as mentioned above, one of the essential treatments of this self-reflexive choral gesture. For a discussion at times crucially critical of Henrichs' view, see Scullion 2002 (esp. 118-19).

character than the actors."[47] In section 1.1, the chorus' intermediate status was discussed: through

their song–dance they inhabit a liminal space between aesthetic fiction and real ritual. Yet, their

participation in the spoken dialogue, through which we gain most of our understanding of the

protagonists' actions and thoughts, is minimal. With the chorus, we certainly do not get the same

"impression of depth, of a solid individual consciousness behind the words" with which

Sophoclean characters are endowed.[48] The chorus' participation in both the lyric and spoken

mode of presentation makes it feel "fragmented" and "discontinuous" as a figure.[49]

My focus in this dissertation is on the *amoibaion*, or lyric dialogue. Technically a subset

of the lyric mode of presentation, it may nonetheless bridge the gap between the seemingly

distinct modes of song and speech, and thus help us gain understanding of the chorus as a

character. In the *amoibaion*, the chorus engage most directly and reciprocally with another

character.[50] Literally meaning "exchange", the *amoibaion* is formally a song, but the interaction

it dramatizes is of a kind we usually find in the spoken parts of tragedy. Unlike the chorus'

participation in spoken iambic dialogue, which is performed by the chorus-leader, we cannot be

sure whether the chorus' sung parts in *amoibaia* were delivered by an individual voice or by the

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[47] Murnaghan 2011.245. Burton 1980.3 also writes of the choral group, "we do not expect [from them] the same consistency or coherence of character as we expect from an individual." For a different view, see Winnington-Ingram 1980.200: "We must always seek—and shall always find—a meaning and a coherence of thought which belong to the Chorus in its own dramatic entity." Gardiner's 1987 book is a thorough attempt to give an account of each chorus in extant Sophocles as a coherent dramatic character. Her introduction provides a useful survey of the relevant scholarship. Cf. Kirkwood 1954. On characterization in Sophocles see Easterling 1977; Seidensticker 1994; Budelmann 2000, chapter 2; in tragedy more broadly, see Gould 1978; Goldhill 1990; and the valuable overview in Thumiger 2007.

[48] Easterling 1977.125.

[49] Gould 1978.50.

[50] Scholars are generally in agreement that the gradually expanding part *amoibaia* take up in Sophoclean drama (relative to *stasima*) is indicative of a stylistic change. Esposito 1996 writes, "As the chorus moved into the arena of the actors, on occasion even seeming to become an actor, the distinction between tragedy's two consistent elements (iambic and lyric, speech and song) began to become blurred, to the detriment of the chorus and probably to the detriment of the genre itself" (108). Kitzinger 2008.72 cautions against applying this schematic "evolutionary model" (n.6) to the works of the three fifth-century tragedians which we have. For a more constructive interpretation of the development of Sophocles' choral style in the later plays, see Taplin 1984; Foley 2003; Dhuga 2005; Easterling 2006.

entire chorus.[51] As the question remains essentially insoluble, I consistently view the chorus as plural throughout. Nonetheless, I suggest that the lyric dialogues may be read like other Sophoclean situations, suffused "with the fullest understanding of what happens to people and what they do and feel in real life."[52] The *amoibaia* seem to be the clearest examples of the tragic chorus in action, and may give us particular insights into the chorus as a believable personality. While dialogue per se in choral songs is not a new or atypical feature, in non-tragic instances, the entire dialogue is delivered in performance by members of the same chorus (recall Alcman's girl-choruses briefly discussed above).[53] The sung dialogues of tragedy, on the other hand, are unique in setting a choral group in conversation with another, entirely separate, singing character. It is this idiosyncrasy of tragic *amoibaia* that give an additional depth to the choral character and allow us to more fully understand these songs as a mode of active participation in the drama and a medium of fictive characterization.

An *amoibaion* usually comes at a moment of intense grief, great calamity, or impending danger. In fact, the lyric dialogue in tragedy has traditionally been called a *kommos*, literally

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[51] In this dissertation, the blanket-term *amoibaia* covers dialogues where at least one character sings. Sometimes one's song is answered by another's speech or chant; with certain meters (such as anapests and iambs) it becomes at times hard to distinguish the mode of delivery with certainty. This would make it especially difficult to determine whether the chorus-leader alone or the entire chorus delivers the role assigned to "chorus." Cf. Gardiner 1987.8-9 and see below ch. 3, n. 54. Moore 2017 suggests the limitation in our terms *sung* and *chanted* (or *recitative*) to describe anapests, since both are on a musical continuum (and see further ch. 5, n. 26).
On responsion of anapests in *amoibaia* (which may suggest they are sung, or more like sung), see Popp 1971.251; on iambic trimeters in response to song, see Dale 1968.208; cf. Cyrino 1998, who analyzes this phenomenon in Euripides.

[52] Easterling 1977.124.

[53] To give another example, in Bacchylides' epinician 18, the poet takes advantage of the formal aspects of dialogue, but we essentially have one voice divided into different personae for rhetorical effect.

"lament", following Aristotle's categorization of the different choral parts of tragedy.[54] Because *amoibaia* form and reflect particularly high emotional points in the drama, and make choral involvement integral to these high points, they invite us to ask how the tragic disaster affects the chorus, not just the protagonist as its more immediate subject. Scholars remarking on the chorus as an important participant in the tragedy have focused on the tragic chorus as a group that bears witness and makes the hero's suffering socially significant.

By and large, the visual paradigm has reigned supreme in assessing the role of the chorus vis à vis the more obviously active characters. In other words, the chorus have been considered, literally, as spectators (viewers) more than audience (hearers). Take, for example, the following remark on the chorus as internal audience: "Audiences are very different from casual passers-by: they are called to *watch*."[55] Such readings are nonetheless very relevant to my approach, for they point to a certain tragic sensibility that is not (or not just) an aesthetic product. It is not only an effect felt by the audience who comes out of the theater edified despite having witnessed catastrophes. Rather, tragic sensibility becomes an effect internal to and coherent with the

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[54] Aristotle distinguishes three types of choral song: *parodos*, *stasimon*, and *kommos*, with the latter defined as θρῆνος κοινὸς χοροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς ("a lament shared between the chorus and the [characters] from the stage", *Poetics* 1452b). The inadequacy of the term *kommos* for all shared songs between the chorus and the actors, for they are not always lamentations, was recognized by Cornford 1913. The term *kommos* has nonetheless been in frequent use by scholars of tragedy to designate lyric dialogues regardless of the content of the song. Throughout this dissertation, I use *amoibaion* to refer to dialogues in tragedy where at least one of the participants sings. In this I follow Cornford and Popp 1971. The latter is a thorough study of *amoibaia* in their many different structural variations. See also Easterling 2006.158 with n. 14. While many instances of sung dialogue in tragedy can in fact be read as shared laments, I prefer to avoid the associations of ritual lament that the term *kommos* projects. The echoing patterns of tragic *amoibaia* I examine do, however, show affinity to the call-and-response structure of ritual lament. The seminal work on ritual lament is Alexiou 1974. Loraux 1999 explores the origins of Greek tragedy in lament and stresses (particularly in chapter 3) the ineffable sounds of grief and its repetitive nature. For an account of the integration of lament specifically as a choral genre (*thrênos*) in tragedy, see Swift 2010, ch. 7.

[55] Easterling 1996.177, emphasis added. She further claims, "there is a sense in which the community is required to take cognizance of what the characters do and suffer." Cf. Gould's claims that the chorus "cannot walk away from tragic experience. It cannot exit", and that the chorus has "impunity": it "remains at the end intact to speak, in the majority of the plays, the final lines: community survives" (Gould 1998, 242 n. 86). See also Murnaghan 2009. Foley 2003, however, discusses the notion of "chorus as survivor" as a cliché that should be revisited (14-15). Cf. Budelmann 2007.230, 270. Goldhill 2012, chapter 2, explores the aural aspect of the internal audience in Sophoclean tragedy. However, his reading focuses not on the chorus but on instances where one character silently listens to others. He has a short comment on the chorus of Electra as "the audience on stage," but points out that they are asked to watch, "and we watch them watching" (100).

dramatic fiction. Rendering meaningful the tragedy of the individual is something that happens within and for the world of the play. The heroic crisis has consequences for the choral group, and the group, in turn, affects the protagonist's tragic experience. Focusing on the chorus as spectators or witnesses highlights this interdependence between the individual and the community.[56] To put it differently, taking the chorus as a group of spectators or listeners assigns them an important measure of ethical responsibility that functions within the fictional world of tragedy, and not merely as a reflection of the theater audience.

The next chapter expounds on the ethical dimension of listening, taken specifically as an action in response to another's suffering. By focusing on listening—and, by implication, vocalizing—this dissertation prioritizes the chorus as auditors rather than spectators. It thus underlines the chorus' deep embeddedness in the tragic crisis, for they have a crucial advantage over the theater audience or a group of mere witnesses: their ability to respond.[57] Their voice is, and is expected to be, part of the drama. While the relationship between the chorus and the protagonist varies widely in the plays studied here, they are all, at certain points in their respective dramas, partners in song. The following section offers a close reading of one *amoibaion* in Sophocles' *OT*. It exemplifies the kind of partnership-in-song forged between protagonist and chorus, and the centrality of voice and listening to the action dramatized in and through the song.

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[56] Gould 1996 takes the chorus to be "the locus of an unresolvable tension between intense emotional involvement in, and exclusion from, tragic action" (221). On the chorus as "both actor and commentator" see Segal 1995.181ff. Budelmann 2007, ch. 5 presents a similar approach to the interaction between individual and the community; his focus on the communal *response* of the chorus is an implicit corrective to the visual discourse of witnessing.

[57] Cf. Travis 43.

<u>1.4 Case Study: *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1297-1368</u>

The final *amoibaion* of *OT* is a prime example of a chorus emotionally involved and ethically enmeshed in the hero's catastrophe, a chorus whose dramatic participation is bound to the empathy they express. In the next few pages I show how the closeness between Oedipus and the chorus is amplified by the sonic aspects of the song, particularly its metrical register. The responsiveness between the singers sets a framework for their mutual participation in the crisis while the chorus' ability to intellectually react to the events diminishes. The voice itself gains thematic significance as a symbol of identity and a medium for recognition. Through all this, the shared song embodies the transformative power of listening.

The dialogue is performed after the plot of the play has essentially been resolved—that is, after Oedipus' identity as the son of Laius and Jocasta is confirmed, and following Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus' self-mutilation. At the end of the messenger's speech reporting these violent acts, the doors to the palace open and Oedipus reveals himself to the chorus, a pitiful *sight* (1295: θέαμα). The song starts with the chorus chanting in anapests, a meter usually used in motion and probably in this case conforming to Oedipus' steps as he slowly makes his way closer to the orchestra. The chorus are terrified and confused at the sight of the blind Oedipus. They address him with questions about his decision to blind himself, and ask to hear more, though the sight is unbearable: *Ayyyy miserable, I cannot look at you, though I wish to ask much, to learn much, to gaze much* (1303-5: φεῦ φεῦ, δύστην' · ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐσιδεῖν / δύναμαί σ', ἐθέλων πόλλ' ἀνερέσθαι, / πολλὰ πυθέσθαι, πολλὰ δ' ἀθρῆσαι). Oedipus is repeatedly referred to as a visual spectacle, and his horrible awesomeness is typified by the double effect it has on his spectators, who wish to avert their eyes and simultaneously look closer.[58] The words

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[58] Seale 1982.248; Nooter 2012.90. Dawe ad 1305, and ad 1229, 1295 comments on ὄψις in the messenger speech.

quoted here suggest the importance of the vocal and communicative component in this horrifying appeal, for the chorus want to *ask* and *learn* (πυθέσθαι implies "to hear") as much as they yearn to *gaze*.[59]

Oedipus then utters what is not strictly a response, for he does not address the chorus and seems to have not registered their presence yet.[60] Yet his words express continuity with the chorus' on several planes: first, he uses anapests. Even though his are probably sung rather than chanted anapests, the similarity to the choral meter is significant.[61] The separation between Oedipus and the chorus based on their different vocal modes is softened by the use of the same meter in lyric and chanted versions (an effect which will recur throughout the song).[62] Second, Oedipus and the chorus express their agony through similar stylistic means, namely exclamations and questions.[63] Oedipus' rhetorical questions are indicative of his gaping loss and despair: *Whither is my voice swept abroad on the wings of the air? Oh, my fate, how far you have sprung!* (1309-10: πᾷ μοι / φθογγὰ διαπωτᾶται φοράδαν; / ἰὼ δαῖμον, ἵν᾽ ἐξήλου). The feeling that his voice has become aimless is a poignant symbolic counterpart to the psychic and physical trauma he has suffered. On the level of the song he is performing, however, his voice hits the mark entirely. Even though Oedipus cannot hear them, the chorus answer his second exclamatory question, completing his words and affirming his sense of incomprehensible grief and injustice, in a collocation that once more juxtaposes terms for sight and sound: *to something awful, that*

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[59] Oedipus' situation is later called *something that cannot be heard or seen* (οὐδ᾽ ἀκουστόν, οὐδ᾽ ἐπόψιμον, 1312).

[60] See Scott 1996.144 with note 117.

[61] Oedipus' anapests are taken to be sung in light of the Doric dialect (see Dawe ad 1297-1311).

[62] Scott 1996.144 argues for the opposite. See Brown 1977.56-7 on this passage. See n. 51 above on the potential similarity between sung and chanted anapests.

[63] On Oedipus echoing the chorus, see Segal 1993.110-1; on the parallel structure of Oedipus' and the chorus' utterances, see Nooter 2012.90-91.

cannot be heard, cannot be seen (1312: ἐς δεινόν, οὐδ᾽ ἀκουστόν, οὐδ᾽ ἐπόψιμον). The choral words are syntactically dependent on Oedipus' and at the same time sustain and amplify his seemingly wandering and aimless voice. In a way, they prove his lyric influence and rhetorical command of the scene. Yet, precisely because they respond to him while he cannot hear them, their response becomes marked as an act of listening. It thus embodies the transformative potential of listening. It also suggests that their presence with Oedipus in his grief facilitates its expression as meaningful. The sonic and metrical harmony of voices, even within what can otherwise seem to be separation between the singers, can thus be read as an index of empathy and a sign of mutual listening. This is a recurring phenomenon in Sophocles' *amoibaia* which features in all of the plays discussed in the following chapters.

Since the chorus' words are in spoken iambs, they metrically signal the end of the anapestic part and serve as a transition to the next part of the song. The following strophic sections of the song progressively deepen the connection between the two singers even as Oedipus becomes less woe-stricken and his outlook more coherent.[64] Oedipus' voice remains agitated and highly emotional throughout the next two strophic systems, however, as his use of the dochmiac meter clearly indicates. His sung verses also contain lyric iambs, so that the chorus' responses, spoken in iambs, are not as incongruous as some have read them to be. Once again, there seems to be a clear signal of harmonizing within the pattern of distinct modes of delivery, namely, Oedipus' song and the chorus' speech. In other words, listening is operative in the song even through what may seem its disjointedness. The content supports this reading of closeness rather than separation between the interlocutors. In the first strophe, for example, Oedipus

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[64] "As Oedipus gradually becomes calmer and more articulate, the gulf between them [him and the chorus] closes," Segal 1993.110.

shouts: *oyyy, oyyy once more* (1316-7: οἴμοι / οἴμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις).[65] In response, the chorus say,

there is no wonder that in such great griefs you cry out twice, you bewail your misery twice

(1319-20: καὶ θαῦμα γ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐν τοσοῖσδε πήμασιν / διπλᾶ σε πενθεῖν καὶ διπλᾶ θροεῖν

κακά), allowing for the appropriateness of Oedipus' preceding exclamations.[66] Relevant to our

understanding of the chorus' spoken intervention here, which is, probably, the first of their

utterances Oedipus hears, is the fact that he replies with an outpouring of gratitude and affection

(1321-6):

> ἰὼ φίλος,
> σὺ μὲν ἐμὸς ἐπίπολος ἔτι μόνιμος· ἔτι γὰρ
> ὑπομένεις με τὸν τυφλὸν κηδεύων.
> φεῦ φεῦ.
> οὐ γάρ με λήθεις, ἀλλὰ γιγνώσκω σαφῶς,
> καίπερ σκοτεινός, τήν γε σὴν αὐδὴν ὅμως.

> Oh my friend,
> You alone are still my steadfast companion.
> For you still bear with me, caring for me, the blind man.
> Ayyyyyy.
> I know it is you, yes, I recognize clearly
> your voice, even though I am clouded in darkness.

What Oedipus receives from this choral utterance is above all the reassuring familiarity of their

voice.[67] As Oedipus sings of his ability to recognize the loved voice, he confirms the significance

of their very responsiveness in this moment of utter suffering, a responsiveness that expresses

empathy. At the same time, this attention to the voice alludes to a radical shift in his interaction

with his surroundings and an expansion of his sonic sensibilities. The shared song between

Oedipus and the chorus is a direct response to his blindness not simply as the climax of his

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[65] Dawe ad 1317, writes "this to us rather curious qualification of an exclamation." See Budelmann 2006.51 on repetitions of exclamations in this passage.

[66] On the emendation θροεῖν and its appropriateness to the repeated exclamation, see Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b ad 1320.

[67] Cf. Erp Taalman Kip 2006.40-41.

misfortunes, that is, not just as the occasion for deep grief. Rather, it bespeaks the inherent transformation in his character: a man who has lost physical sight and gained essential insight to the meaning of his life. The *amoibaion* is thus thematically momentous in the play not only for its use of the language and symbols of sight and sound, but for dramatizing their new-found sense. The lyric dialogue is an embodiment of intersubjective relations crucial to the progression of the play, and the chorus' active part is integral to it.

The first strophic system ends with the chorus posing the same questions they voiced earlier: *How did you dare do such a thing, to put out your eyes? Which* daimon *spurred you?* (1327-8: πῶς ἔτλης τοιαῦτα σὰς / ὄψεις μαρᾶναι; τίς σ' ἐπῆρε δαιμόνων; cf. similar questions in 1299-1302). These questions are no longer exclaimed for rhetorical effect, but are now an opportunity for Oedipus to explain how he understands his life and future. The choral voice is here quite literally a facilitator for Oedipus' thoughts, an instigator for the expression of his point of view. Throughout the second strophic system, Oedipus expounds on his feelings and perceptions. He holds Apollo accountable for the evils that befell him yet firmly takes responsibility for his self-mutilation, declaring himself *the most accursed man* and finally, the one who *received the gravest doom* (1345: τὸν καταρατότατον; 1365-6: εἰ δέ τι πρεσβύτερον ἔτι κακοῦ κακόν, / τοῦτ' ἔλαχ' Οἰδίπους. Literally: *if there is any evil graver than evil, this was the lot of Oedipus*).[68] The metrical register marks a higher lyrical quality to the song: dochmiacs predominate and the iambic sections are dimeters (with syncopation) rather than the trimeters that he sang before. The chorus alternates between spoken and sung iambs, so that their participation in the lyric medium is at times more pronounced, less equivocal than before. Their sung responses underline their closeness to Oedipus and their acceptance of his viewpoint—for

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[68] Budelmann 2006 comments on Oedipus' "repetitive, yet strikingly articulate, attempts to review and understand the events of his life" (51).

example: *it was just as you say* (1336: ἦν τᾶδ' ὅπωσπερ καὶ σύ φῄς. Cf. 1356). This seems to contrast with their spoken utterances, which reflect an inability to share his self-awareness or to grasp his choice to live on despite it: *I do not know how I might say that you made the right choice* (1367: οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως σε φῶ βεβουλεῦσθαι καλῶς). They are, in short, grief-stricken themselves, clinging to the notion of his past life and unable to accept the new, flawed and deeply wounded human being that was once their king. In this too, though, they ultimately serve his voice, allowing him to articulate his perspective more precisely (as he does coherently in the following speech, 1369ff). Their empathic intimacy conditions their role as co-mourners with him, and is also their limitation when Oedipus leaves lamentation aside to articulate his moral choice. Yet, this limitation does not undo the significance of their listening, especially in the first half of the song, for it is they who allowed Oedipus' new perspective to be articulated, through the ruins of a shattered, aimless voice.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

The above case study suggests the kind of interpersonal effects that listening has on the interaction between Sophoclean characters. The present chapter focused on the function of choral song within Sophoclean tragedy and on the ways in which we can understand the chorus as a character whose listening is an important action in the drama. The interpersonal as well as social significance of listening is treated in chapter 2, which is also introductory in nature, and which zeroes in on listening as an intersubjective practice. Examining contemporary discourses, primarily from the fields of psychotherapy and phenomenology, the chapter deepens our understanding of listening as the activity of empathic responsiveness, and lays the theoretical background for the readings taken up in subsequent chapters.

The following two chapters (3 and 4) treat *Electra* and *Philoctetes* respectively. Like Oedipus in both his eponymous plays, Electra and Philoctetes enjoy a vocal authority that commands listening and engenders empathy. All these Sophoclean heroes, we shall see, are also especially skilled listeners themselves, who attempt, by actively listening to others, to move them emotionally. In Electra's case, the play probes the relationship between empathy and moral approval; the chorus, whose emotional support of Electra is a given, find themselves called upon to support her vengeful drive. At a crucial point in the drama, they refrain from empathic listening, a vocal gesture that implicitly critiques the ethics of revenge in which Electra is swept.

Philoctetes, for his part, is faced with a choral group whose empathy is, at best, fleeting; when empathic listening finally occurs, it is on the part of Neoptolemus and not the chorus, and it takes place not through song but through speech. This alternative medium of empathy matches the play's interest in expanding the limits of lyricism beyond the singing voice, and in juxtaposing the moral action of empathy with the spatial action of its protagonists. The final movement offstage, a movement away from suffering, does not entirely solve the collision of empathy and action the play dramatizes. The twists and turns of plot in *Philoctetes* bring to the foreground the necessity of listening as a continuous, unrelenting effort, and show us just how fragile, how difficult to sustain, listening can be.

At the end of this dissertation (chapter 5), I come back to Oedipus' voice, at the very end of his life, in Colonus. In Sophocles' last play, we get another view of Oedipus' tragic life and of the way dialogic interaction in song constitutes and re-articulates the meaning of his tragedy. Oedipus starts out with a remarkable vocal authority and maintains it throughout the play. Yet, while the beginning of the play negotiates and develops empathic listening between the protagonist and the chorus, the end of the play hints at Oedipus' passage into the divine sphere as

a casting aside of listening. Listening is reinforced as a particularly human capacity with especially important social and interpersonal consequences, even while its unsettling lack is suggested. The fragility of listening, which we have already seen in the *amoibaion* of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, resonates throughout the *Oedipus at Colonus*, where the tragic action revolves around the ability to tell one's life-story, choose its meaning, and actively perform it. It is thus again that Oedipus is paradigmatic to the concerns of this dissertation, for both plays dealing with his tragic life embody the act of responsive listening in a basic sense of the word: hearing what the other has to say and accepting it on his terms. The next chapter delves into this basic yet non-intuitive sense of listening.

2. The Voice of Empathy and the Ethics of Listening

<u>2.0 Introduction</u>

The previous chapter explained my view of the chorus as a dramatic character whose listening is a significant action, and situated my approach within the scholarship on tragic choruses in general. The discussion of the chorus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* suggested that the chorus' participation in and influence on the events of the play are inseparable from their musical function and showed that, in the lyric dialogue, the sonic aspects of their song are tightly related to its dramatic import. The present chapter explains in detail how the concept of listening is used in this dissertation. It comprises five sections following this introduction: two sections connecting my use of the term *listening* to the way it is applied in other disciplines (2.1 and 2.3), and the remaining sections demonstrating how the theoretical approaches may be applied to Sophoclean texts. Section 2.1 deals with listening in psychotherapy; section 2.3 treats listening in the context of phenomenology of voice and sound. To put it broadly, these schools of thought both advance an understanding of listening as empathic engagement, though phenomenology offers us a more reciprocal view of listening than psychotherapy, a difference which is important to my formulation of listening in Sophocles. In accordance with these notions, I examine the choruses of Sophocles as listening agents who perform, or fail to perform, empathy. Section 2.2 offers a close reading of the first *amoibaion* of *Antigone*; section 2.4 introduces *Philoctetes* as a paradigm for listening to suffering, and section 2.5 offers a close reading of the *parodos* of *Philoctetes*.

To be clear, the terms with which I formulate the act of listening are derived from discourses far removed from the text and context of Sophocles' tragedies. The attempt to apply concepts developed in twentieth-century critical thought to Attic drama may seem anachronistic.

The modern (and post-modern) discourses presented below are used simply as models with which to think about listening between Sophoclean characters—as conceptual tools for interpreting listening as an embodied act. The case studies included in this chapter hopefully prove that this approach, when coupled with a close textual analysis, can advance our understanding of Sophocles' poetic and dramatic technique. In chapter 1, it was observed that there is a critical tendency to consider Sophoclean characters, and to a lesser extent, the choruses, as if they were real-life people. If there is a measure of verisimilitude in the chorus–protagonist relationship, we may try to understand how they listen to one another in the ways available and familiar to us from our own modes of communication and interaction. In asking how characters listen, I operate under the assumption that there are different forms of listening, and that these are reflected in different kinds of vocal responses of one interlocutor to another. In other words, I am interested in what listening sounds like.[1] The fluidity of the chorus–protagonist relationship, the fact that it is different from one drama to the next, more readily allows us to think about this relationship metaphorically, through the models of listening explored here. Sometimes, chorus and protagonist are like two friends sharing in grief; at other times the chorus listen to the woes of a troubled protagonist more as a therapist listens to a patient. Often, it is a little of both and not exactly either.

A basic premise of my argument is that one's vocal responses are the expressive avenue for the act of listening they embody, the manifest end of an internal, intangible action that is inseparable from it. The readings of Sophocles I offer here stress the sonic dimension of the chorus' presence on stage, as an audience, literally, rather than as spectators. A fundamental tenet of this approach is that purely sonic aspects of the dialogue are as important as the verbal ones in

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[1] Cf. Nancy 2002.17: "Qu'est-ce qui s'y [à l'écoute] joue, qu'est-ce qui y résonne, quel est le ton de l'écoute ou son timbre? L'écoute serait-elle elle-même sonore?". Cf. also Barthes 1982.229: "l'écoute parle."

affording us insights to the permutations of listening. This approach also challenges the idea of listening as a passive, merely receptive, position. Indeed, in English, *hearing* designates simple auditory reception; *listening*, on the other hand, presupposes attention or intentionality.[2] In what follows, the attentiveness entailed in vocal response, this intentional focus on the other at the core of listening, is brought to the fore, so that the discursive, emotional, and ethical significances of our concept of listening are expanded. The discursive sense is rooted in the fact that listening occurs in dialogue. Accordingly, listening is considered an inter-personal phenomenon tangibly manifest through the dialogue's sonic features. In this sense we can ask how it sounds, literally, when one person listens and responds to the words of the other. To an extent, this is the fundamental sense of listening from which the readings presented in the following pages proceed. Yet they are pervaded by a radical understanding of listening as an ethical and emotional standpoint whence one acknowledges the other in their worldview and experiences, most notably in their pain and suffering. Listening, in this understanding, is implicitly operative on the psychological level of the interaction, which precedes and informs any vocalization, that is, any discursive occurrence.

If the term *discursive* covers what happens through words, the emotional and ethical components of listening make up the psychological dimension that is irreducible to the words even while it resonates through them. There are obvious overlaps between these spheres, as, for example, the discursive level contains the tone in which the words are delivered and which betrays a sentiment, a state of mind. It is precisely the overlap between what we say and how we listen—that is, what is outwardly expressed and the subjective interiority responsible for that expression—that I propose to examine in this dissertation. The boundaries between the ethical or

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[2] For the etymology of the English words see Lipari 2014.50 and (for French) Nancy 2002.17-18. Cf. Barthes 1982.217: "Entendre est un phénomène physiologique; écouter est un acte psychologique."

moral and the emotional are less clear-cut than the ostensible distinction between the internal mental process and the external discursive event. But even our basic discursive definition, that listening to another person occurs in dialogue, is only an apparently straightforward fact. More often than we may want to admit, listening is absent from dialogue; dialogue can happen without *real* listening. These statements, intuitively relatable even before we phenomenologically parse listening, expose the foundational importance of the emotional or moral sphere of dialogic interaction—of something that transpires other than, or beyond, mere words. There is an obviously felt but not easily described difference between listening and *really listening*. The present dissertation is an exploration of this difference, an attempt to describe it in and through the sung dialogues of Sophoclean tragedy.

Listening, as an ideal, is a deliberate receptivity to the other's needs and concerns, and it entails an acknowledgement of the other's position and experience. Such a definition brings listening close to empathy. The multivalence of the latter term, which will be unpacked below, can already alert us to the difficulty of separating the emotional from the moral aspects of listening. Empathy is an emotion that stems from a relation to the other (by virtually all definitions of the term; see below) and, as such, already creates or takes part in an ethical system. Considering empathy not as a cognitive or neurological process, but as what we called earlier an intentional focus on the other, entails an ethical consideration of the other. Listening as a position of radical empathic engagement will henceforth be called *deep listening* to distinguish it from less emotionally or morally committed acts of hearing-and-responding. Listening has the potential to be or become deep listening, yet it is certainly not always deep; rather, it is often superficial. To put it differently, listening can be thought of as an ideal of communicative interaction, but the same word can designate steps towards achieving that ideal or unsuccessful

attempts at it. As we shall see, different levels of listening can occur, successively or simultaneously, in a given dialogue; a dialogue is made up of many discursive events, each with its own potential for listening. When listening happens only on the surface of the interaction, it remains non-empathic, or does not effectively sustain empathy. In contrast to the ideal of deep listening, Sophoclean dialogues often showcase such superficial listening.

2.1 Listening and Empathy: The Therapeutic Model

Dialogue is the essential tool of the trade for psychotherapists. In the next few pages I discuss some influential views in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis on the inherent connection between listening and empathy in dialogue. As asserted at the outset of this chapter, listening is understood here as an activity rather than passive receptivity. While for psychotherapists, this may be a fundamental truth, it is not necessarily intuitive in common, even professional, parlance. Before turning to how professional listeners–empathizers—that is, psychotherapists—conceive of this aspect of their work, it is worth looking at an example from the corporate world on the link between listening and empathy. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review, "What Great Listeners Actually Do," aims to debunk some commonplace notions on "good" listening, namely, that to listen well essentially means to listen silently or without interruption, to give the speaker non-verbal signs that you are listening (e.g., nodding, "mmm-hmm"), and to be able to repeat accurately what you have heard. The writers, Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, analyzed data concerning the perceived listening skills of managers who were training to become better coaches, showing that, contrary to what listening conventionally means, good listening "was consistently seen as a two-way dialog, rather than a one-way 'speaker versus hearer'

interaction."[3] Contrary to the common notion "of a good listener being like a sponge that accurately absorbs what the other person is saying", the writers suggest instead that "good listeners are like trampolines… they amplify, energize, and clarify your thinking."[4] Based on this realization, Zenger and Folkman usefully put forward a practical distinction between "different levels of listening" one may aspire to in conversation. In one of the higher levels, "[t]he listener increasingly understands the other person's emotions and feelings about the topic at hand, and identifies and acknowledges them. The listener empathizes with and validates those feelings in a supportive, nonjudgmental way."[5] This description of a high level of listening brings "coaching" closer than the other levels to a therapeutic mode, for here emotional difficulties and needs are addressed. When emotions are concerned, listening and empathy go hand in hand.

Yet the language here is only seemingly intuitive. What does it mean to understand another person's emotions, to acknowledge or validate them? How exactly does one empathize with another's feelings—is that synonymous with validating them in a nonjudgmental way? Of course, we may have a sense that we understand what this means, and we are more than likely to recognize empathic listening when we are offered it, even if we may not always be able to be empathic when we find ourselves on the listening end of a conversation. The injunction to understand, validate, or empathize suffers from the same problem as "listening," broadly construed, from which the writers set out: we think we know how to do it, but we may be

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[3] Zenger and Folkman 2016.3. See Lipari 2014.131: "communication cannot be reduced to an instrumental tennis match where the back-and-forth exchange transports meanings, but is instead an unfolding process that carries its participants through a shared ocean of meaning", and further below. On the responsiveness inherent in listening, see Bakhtin 1986.68-69.

[4] Zenger and Folkman 2016.4. The trampoline metaphor fits well with the instrumentality of listening in this approach. Overall, for these writers, listening is a means for an end, in this case, to better "coach" people to achieve their (or their company's) goals—the higher and bigger, the better. This notion of listening as a step-stool for personal betterment betrays a standpoint that, when pushed to its extreme, is foreign to the ethics of listening which guide the present investigation. Nevertheless, the emphasis on listening as active rather than passive in a field where this seems counter-intuitive is a welcome intervention in and of itself.

[5] Ibid 4-5. Note that I do not use the metaphor of height but rather of depth to discuss different levels of listening.

completely wrong. To give you a sense that your feelings are being acknowledged, should I listen silently and nod? To validate them, should I repeat your concerns in your own words, or would that be too much of a sponge-like reaction?[6] To empathize non-judgmentally, should I affirm your view of things, offer suggestions and interpretations, do both, or do something else entirely?

Over the last decades, psychotherapists have repeatedly tackled these questions, namely what empathy is and how to use it most effectively, working on the assumption that empathy is essential to the therapeutic process. The various proposed answers address and at times uphold the tension between different possible reactions, so that empathy can be conceptualized as silence on the one hand and re-interpretation on the other hand. The way therapists talk of empathy is a way of reflecting on listening, in two senses. First, and more explicitly, empathy is linked to the dialogic medium on which therapy is founded. Second, to describe dialogue therapists use a deep-seated metaphor that links empathic responsiveness with the material attributes of sound, as revealed in idioms like *resonating* or *being on the same wavelength*.

Generally speaking, I use the term *empathy* to denote that which "leads one person to respond with sensitivity and care to the suffering of another," or an "other-oriented emotion felt when another is perceived to be in need."[7] This kind of emotion has historically been called *sympathy*.[8] This concept of sympathy, as a cognitive affective process similar to what we call empathy today, is central in Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. For Smith, sympathy is an imaginative perspective-taking by which we come to experience others'

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[6] Cf. Lipari 2014.176: "'I know exactly what you mean,' says the well-meaning empath who, in fact, 'knows' nothing of the kind."

[7] Batson 2009.3 and 8, this in contrast to empathy as a way to "know what another person is thinking and feeling" (3). Batson 2009 offers a useful description of eight distinct phenomena that have been referred to by the term empathy; cf. Coplan 2014.4.

[8] On David Hume's use of sympathy to denote what philosophers now call low-level empathy, see Coplan and Goldie 2014.x-xi.

emotions.[9] Today, empathy is most often contrasted with sympathy, yet the confusion between them (with different scholars using *sympathy* to label precisely the same state that others label *empathy*) is so persistent that I will refrain from using the term *sympathy* altogether.[10]

Therapists and analysts practice and think about empathy in contexts that *a priori* fall under the definition of one person in need or suffering, and in this sense therapy serves as a fruitful analogy for tragedy. Indeed, the framework in which listening takes place as well as its implicit goals are dependent upon the relationship between the interlocutors: a manager listens to her employee differently than a therapist to her patient. The therapeutic situation is based on the assumption that the therapist can help the patient in a way that would be impossible for an untrained individual, say, beyond commiseration from a close friend. The therapist–patient relation is thus obviously at odds with that of chorus to protagonist, for at times the chorus can offer no more than commiseration to the protagonist's grief. Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, tragic choruses are often deeply enmeshed in the hero's calamity, and the personal becomes a collective tragedy. This participation is not merely a mirroring of the individual in the group; rather, it expands the significance of the individual's suffering, extending the horizons of our appreciation of it. Yet this is precisely something that choral listening and therapeutic listening have in common as well: we can consider them an avenue by which suffering is understood.

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[9] See Smith [1759] 2002.11-12. Coplan 2014 advances a view of empathy as "a complex imaginative process in which an observer simulates another person's situated psychological states while maintaining clear self-other differentiation. To say that empathy is 'complex' is to say that it is simultaneously a cognitive and affective process" (5).

[10] See in particular further references in Batson 2009.8. On the history and current definitions of the terms empathy and sympathy see further Davis 1994, ch. 1. Coplan 2014 stresses that the self-other differentiation is a requirement of empathy (15-17). A lack of differentiation has sometimes been associated with sympathy; see for example Wispé 1991.79: "In empathy the self is the vehicle for understanding, and it never loses its identity. Sympathy, on the other hand, is concerned with communion rather than accuracy, and self-awareness is reduced rather than enhanced."

The purpose of the current excursion into formulations of empathy in psychotherapy is to show how therapeutic listening helps make sense of individual suffering—even more basically, how empathic listening works—keeping in mind that in this respect it is a relevant model for how listening operates in Sophoclean tragedy. Is it worth repeating that the cultural gap between ancient Athens and present-day Western society limits the extent to which we may draw parallels between the two. Rather than claiming that tragedy is like therapy, therapy is used here as a means with which to think about intersubjective relations. Psychotherapy is paradigmatic for dialogue that constitutes activity on the intersubjective field, and which, furthermore, holds potential to understand and transform suffering, and it is in these senses that it can be compared to Sophoclean *amoibaia*.[11] The previous chapter's reading of the lyric dialogue at the end of *OT* offers an example of the therapeutic capacities of the chorus, even in its limitation as an all-too-compassionate participant in the drama. Section 2.2 is a close reading of the first lyric dialogue of *Antigone*, and shows that empathic listening is lacking more than it is present in this dialogue. Our exploration of psychotherapists' formulations of listening and empathy will help us define listening as a process, thus allowing us to discern steps in the development of listening and glimpses of empathy even in the *amoibaion* of *Antigone*.

It is hard to pinpoint where in a dialogue empathy takes place or how it operates. The therapeutic context offers several expressions of tension between opposites that can help us think about empathy, for example: the need to respond to another's suffering and the need to remain separate from it, the expectation to understand and interpret the other's experience and the value of simply being present with it, and the tension between explicit verbal responses and implicit (specifically bodily) manifestations of empathy. We have already seen some of these

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[11] On another, more basic level, my reading of the plays could be termed psychological in that I consider the characters, including the chorus, as persons with an interiority we can access and describe. See 1.1 above.

considerations when discussing the conundrum of good listening in coaching. That the therapist must attentively and actively listen to what the patient is saying (or not saying) and strive to understand what they think and feel is a given. Carl Rogers' seminal work from the 1950s offers a definition of "the state of empathy, or being empathic" which stresses that one "perceive[s] the internal frame of reference of another… as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition."[12] Rogers focused on empathy and "unconditional positive regard" toward the patient as the core ingredients of successful therapy. For him, empathy is not a coolly rational state but must be combined with "warm" or "radical" acceptance.[13] He developed his approach into an "organismic" theory of therapy that puts less stress on the verbal communication than on the emotional relationship between therapist and patient. Empathy is ultimately determined by the patient's perception of this attitude.[14] Later in his career, Rogers believed that empathy was important also for enabling patients "to articulate their own experiences and to see themselves as the agents of that experience."[15] In clinical case-studies of Rogers-inspired therapy, successful empathic interactions have been described that did not primarily depend, or not at all, on the therapist's speech, and progressed rather by means of attentive silence.[16] While therapists' empathy can be practiced and developed, Rogers' approach posits a basic ability and willingness

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[12] Rogers 1959.210 quoted in Bozarth 2009.103.

[13] Bozarth 2009.101; see also Dekeyser et al 2009.118. Rogers and his followers use the term *client* rather than *patient*, but I have used *patient* throughout for the sake of clarity.

[14] Bozarth 2009.101 and 104-5.

[15] Coplan and Goldie 2014.xix.

[16] Bozarth 2009.106-9. Bozarth includes an extreme example of wordless therapy, describing his sessions of "meditative therapy" with Tom (107): "For twelve sessions, Tom came to the session, said "Hi," settled on the mat for an hour, then got up, saying, "Thanks." As the therapist, I focused on Tom and just allowed myself to experience whatever came to me. … A follow-up session with Tom revealed that his marriage had greatly improved; that he decided on a career direction… The only substantial evidence of the therapist's empathic stance in this scenario was the therapist's intent to keep his attention on Tom. As the therapist, my feelings over the sessions moved from active and high-strung to calm and serene as the sessions unfolded. … In the post-therapy interview, [Tom] did express that he was less "high strung" and had reached a calmness that he thought was essential to dealing with his specific concerns."

to be empathic as a tenet of, and precondition to, the therapeutic relationship. As such, it suggests that (the therapist's) empathy shapes the dialogic interaction rather than stems from it. It is important to realize that empathy is sometimes a given, or even a constraint, of the relationship between people and of their characteristics. The chorus of *Electra*, for example, are defined by their compassionate affection and hence their empathy for the heroine (while that of *Antigone*, on the other hand, are not).

Empathy can be thought of as radically dialogic, as the effect of an encounter of two selves. This idea can be found in the work of Austrian-born American psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut, who wrote extensively about empathy. His work evokes empathy as the activity of listening and interpreting. The following late remark about the human condition reflects this notion: empathy, he says, is "the resonance of the self in the self of others, of being understood, of somebody making an effort to understand you."[17] Empathy is again conceptualized through a figurative expansion of the sphere of sound. Present here also is the notion that to understand another entails an effort, an active attention. In terms of his psychoanalytic method, Kohut thought of empathy as an epistemological tool, a tool of data gathering and of understanding the patient.[18] Empathy also figured as a "fundamental mode of relatedness," that is, as a way to respond to the patient, thus tied to the therapist's verbal reactions.[19] In his last lecture, "On Empathy", Kohut demonstrates that this response, though usually verbal, can sometimes be

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[17] Kohut 1980.222.

[18] Empathy, together with introspection, is in Kohut 2011.527 "a definer of the field" of psychoanalysis as a science; see further Coplan and Goldie 2014.xxi; Bacal and Carlton 2010.136-7.

[19] Quoted in Coplan and Goldie 2014.xxi.

appropriately achieved by non-verbal gestures.[20] His following words show that empathy entails active listening: "analysis cures … not by repeating and confirming what the patient feels and says, that's only the first step." A reformulation, not an echo, of the patient's words is needed; "the next step of giving of interpretations is a move from a lower form of empathy to a higher form of empathy."[21]

Empathy can be thought of in more mutual terms, as a chain reaction of responses between therapist and patient. Godfrey Barrett-Lennard's therapeutic model, "Empathy Cycle," makes dialogue a joint effort, through which the patient more accurately expresses her experiences, and an "ever-deepening empathic stance" between therapist and patient is developed.[22] It is here that we find the figurative language of auditory phenomena especially operative, with a repeated use of the attributes of sound waves to describe interpersonal communication. Thus, according to this model, the therapist's "empathic attunement," which refers to the "internal representation of the clients' emotions, intentions, cognitions, and physical states" or to an "effortful engagement in empathic resonance," casts her as a "tuning fork."[23] Rather than a transaction of fixed directionality, with information flowing from patient to therapist and interpretation from therapist to patient, dialogue becomes a reciprocal interaction.

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[20] Extemporaneous remarks made in 1981 and transcribed in Kohut 2011.525-35. This was his last public address and he died a few days later (see editor's note *ibid*). For non-verbal gestures see 532-35. His example of offering his fingers to a severely depressed patient ("Doubtful maneuver", he calls it, 535) is parallel to the example of the "low, … body-close form of empathy" shown by the mother to her son at the playground (533). See Bacal and Carlton 2010 on empathy as *both* response *and* interpretation in Kohut's writings and practice, and on the range of embodiments empathy may take.

[21] Kohut 2011.532.

[22] Barrett-Lennard 1981. Quote from Dekeyser et al 2009.114, who define the Empathy Cycle as "still the most influential theory of professional empathic interaction."

[23] Quotes from Dekeyser et al 2009.114, 116, 117. The term *resonance*, which is, strictly speaking, a metaphor from the field of sound, is used also to refer to the neurological phenomena involving empathy. See Watson and Greenberg 2009, who discuss the resemblance between how empathy is conceptualized by philosophers and psychoanalysts on the one hand and cognitive neuroscientists on the other. See also Eisenberg and Eggum 2009.77 on somatic resonance and affective resonance.

Practitioners of the Empathy Cycle understand empathy as an "imaginative, bodily experience" and develop their attentiveness through metaphors of embodied engagements such as "moving into" or "taking hold" of what is important in the patient's world.[24]

Psychotherapy, then, invites us to think of dialogue as a space of empathy, and of good listening as active, empathic listening. For the therapist there is, arguably, no listening that does not involve empathy. While in the popular image of psychoanalysis the therapist provides univocal interpretations of the patient's mental state and the causes of suffering, the above examples suggest that interpretation should at times be suspended in favor of attentively experiencing the other. They further suggest that this attention is manifested not solely, or necessarily, through speech, but via emotional and physical aspects of the being-together-with. Furthermore, uncovering or creating meaning is a gradual, joint process in which both patient and therapist are involved, with empathy an essential constituent in every step of the process. As in therapy, where empathy is a fact of the relationship between the interlocutors, so is empathy often the base from which sung dialogues in Sophocles spring in the first place. Nonetheless, psychotherapy, with its built-in asymmetry between the participants, has limited applicability as a model for listening. Despite the stress some therapists put on the reciprocity of therapeutic dialogue, there is an inherent hierarchy in this dialogic situation. One side (the therapist) has both the obligation to empathically listen to the other, and professional experience in drawing meaning out of suffering.

In this crucial aspect the therapeutic dialogue is different from many other real-life interactions as well as the Sophoclean dialogues read below. Though the analogy between tragedy and therapy is useful for zeroing in on how one listens to a suffering other, we should not

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[24] Dekeyser et al 2009.117-8. On embodied communication, see Lipari 2014.49-51 and *passim*.

conclude that the chorus are a therapist-like listener, skillfully empathic but fundamentally impartial. Indeed, many times, the chorus shares the protagonist's pain (in a way that would be entirely inappropriate for a therapist), which gives way to a dialogue between two people who suffer. In these situations, we will see, listening is often instigated or deepened by the protagonist, the person whose suffering is front and center. More so than in therapy, the relationship between protagonist and chorus is often explicitly reciprocal, and empathy flows in both directions (as we saw at the end of chapter 1 in the dialogue between Oedipus and the Theban elders).

My brief discussion of the therapeutic dialogue has shown that empathy develops in stages through the participation of both interlocutors, and that its maintenance requires constant re-attunement. Unlike the ideal outcomes of therapy presented above, empathy may ultimately falter. In the scenes studied in this dissertation, the precariousness of empathy mirrors the successes and failures of listening. If a given dialogue can be examined as a sequence of many discursive events, then each discursive moment is a mini-dialogue, where listening may succeed or fail. Generally speaking, some form of listening exists in every discursive moment which is not outright dismissive (a kind we shall also encounter in Sophocles), but it does not necessarily develop beyond its basic form into deep listening. There is a similar progression of empathy. When one character recognizes the suffering of another, a note of empathy is present, but it may fail to develop into meaningful empathic engagement. It is in this sense that we may talk about certain basic features of dialogic interaction as prerequisites for listening—which are tantamount to prerequisites for empathy—even while we may already define them *per se* as manifestations of listening. Whether or not deep listening or empathic engagement develops depends on the entirety of the interaction, on the step-by-step progression of the dialogue, which is at once a

series of vocal events and an event in performance. For this reason, throughout the readings presented in this and the following chapters, listening is analyzed sequentially, in accordance with the flow of the dialogue. Often, some listening is present but deep listening is ultimately frustrated. Listening, or empathy, has to be acted upon again and again, and is not simply attained for good once it is suggested or flagged.

Harmony is the term I most often use for the kind of dialogic attunement which paves the way for empathic listening and which is apparent through metrical or other features of the song. Like *resonance* or *attunement* in the psychotherapeutic discourses presented above, harmony suggests a certain emotional receptivity between the participants in the dialogue and also, especially, a sonic compatibility between their voices. Sound, as a poetic feature of the lyric dialogue and often also a dramatic theme treated in it, is crucial to the dramatization of the process of listening. The case study from *Oedipus Tyrannus* at the end of chapter 1 already exemplified the kind of attention I pay to sound as an index of empathic engagement. In the readings that follow, the metrical structure of the songs is considered a principal source of sonic significance. Metrical harmony between the singers is thus taken as a basic form of listening, as defined above: it is a prerequisite for further listening that may or may not be taken up and deepened. Importantly, dialogic attunement thus manifested is in flux, much as listening, broadly construed, is. It can be superficial, a mere signal that some form of communication is happening —an echo, perhaps hollow or perfunctory, but an echo nonetheless—or a deep, fundamental resonance between interlocutors. Inasmuch as it can foster listening through a medium that is more subtle than straightforward words, metrical harmony forms an ambience of listening: it is a conscious or unconscious vocal attunement of characters to each other, a sonic environment that enables various degrees of listening. Metrical harmony in Sophocles suggests an attempt to hold

on to the possibility or potential of listening. Yet this attempt more often than not ultimately fails. A central interpretive task of this dissertation is to read the metrical in conjunction with other semiotic registers of the dialogue, in order to grasp how listening and empathy come about and are performed. Thus, the step-by-step reading of the progression of the dialogue is complemented by a focus on the simultaneity of different registers of meaning afforded by the verbal and the sonic planes.

2.2 Case Study: *Antigone* 801-82

The first *amoibaion* of *Antigone* (801-82) is the concern of the present section. The song provides a case study for the vocalizations of listening between the protagonist and chorus, and for the ways empathy is expressed, implied, or withheld in dialogue. It also exemplifies how, in order to read the text for signs of listening, we must take into consideration not only the explicit content of the words exchanged between the interlocutors, but other aspects of the vocal medium as well, notably the metrical component of the song. This section thus demonstrates how metrical features are considered here: as a form of vocalization and an avenue for listening. In other words, meter is read as an essential part of the discursive event. This song provides an interesting example of a discursive situation that breaks down somewhat unexpectedly and then, for a short while, is restored. Paying attention to the ways listening and empathy oscillate in the dialogue affords a better understanding of why the chorus seem to Antigone at one moment cruel, at another compassionate, and why, ultimately, the two fall out of dialogue and Antigone ends the song emotionally isolated. The therapeutic model of empathic listening provides an instructive comparison to the interaction between Antigone and the chorus, ultimately more for how the chorus fail to offer empathic listening than for how they succeed. If in therapy empathy allows

patient and therapist to jointly construct a meaningful interpretation of suffering, Antigone's song with the chorus dramatizes a fundamental discord between their interpretations of her plight. The harmony between them, to the (limited) extent that it comes about through metrical features of the dialogue, is not enough to bridge the emotional gap which the inherent lack of empathy creates.

The *amoibaion* in question is performed between Antigone and the chorus as the young woman is led to her death. It takes place after Creon has decreed that Antigone will be interred alive, punishment for violating his interdict and burying her brother. The chorus perform a hymn to Eros and evoke Antigone as a *beautiful bride* (797: εὐλέκτρου νύμφας).[25] At the end of this song Antigone is led onstage by Creon's attendants.[26] Her appearance is announced by the shift to anapests, and the chorus chant: *But now I too am carried beyond bounds at this sight, and I can no longer restrain the stream of tears, when I see Antigone here making her way to the chamber in which all come to lie* (803-5: νῦν δ᾽ ἤδη 'γὼ καὐτὸς θεσμῶν / ἔξω φέρομαι τάδ᾽ ὁρῶν, ἴσχειν δ᾽ / οὐκέτι πηγὰς δύναμαι δακρύων, / τὸν παγκοίτην ὅθ᾽ ὁρῶ θάλαμον / τήνδ᾽ Ἀντιγόνην ἀνύτουσαν).[27] The chorus' words effectively conjure Antigone as a maiden to be wed, casting her as the bride of Hades, and thus stressing her unfulfilled relationship with

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[25] The chorus imply that in the preceding confrontation between Creon and Haemon, the latter was moved by irresistible desire for her: *you [Eros] have aroused this strife among kin; and the desire of the beautiful bride, apparent to the eyes, conquers* (793-7: σὺ καὶ τόδε νεῖκος ἀνδρῶν ξύναιμον ἔχεις ταράξας · νικᾷ δ᾽ ἐναργὴς βλεφάρων ἵμερος εὐλέκτρου νύμφας). This explanation is quite at odds with Haemon's explicit political arguments against his father. The chorus' hymn has thus been read as an apology for Haemon (Jebb ad 781-800) and an interlude from the father-son confrontation (Ditmars 1992.98-9). Kitzinger 2008.44-48 argues, on the contrary, that the ode offers "an alternative way of understanding the the violence of the preceding scene" (48), a vision of "the order paradoxically present in … disorder" that Eros brings (46). Linforth 1961.221 also reads this as a rebuke of Haemon.

[26] Griffith ad 801-5 suggests Antigone is led out into the *orchestra*.

[27] Griffith ad 801-5 comments that the "implicit comparison between the Chorus' feelings of pity and Haimon's passionate love and rage is startling." He takes θεσμῶν ἔξω to refer to "the 'rules' of the city, as defined by Kreon." Kitzinger 2008.50 gives a self-reflexive interpretation, suggesting that the chorus "refers to the tradition of its own song, which cannot in the end adequately address what is happening to Antigone, so that for the moment, their only response is tears."

Haemon.[28] They are affected by her misery and the horror of her experience, feeling pain and being moved to tears at her suffering. Their empathy is, at this point, straightforward.

Antigone responds in song and a lyric dialogue ensues. The beginning of Antigone's song reacts to the chorus' words directly (806-813):

> ὁρᾶτέ μ᾽, ὦ γᾶς παρτίας πολῖται
> τὰν νεάταν ὁδὸν
> στείχουσαν, νεάτον δὲ φέγ-
> γος λεύσσουσαν ἀελίου,
> κοὔποτ᾽ αὖθις· ἀλλά μ᾽ ὁ παγ-
> κοίτας Ἅιδας ζῶσαν ἄγει
> τὰν Ἀχέροντος
> ἀκτάν …

> Look at me, citizens of my fatherland,
> walking on my last
> journey, seeing the last
> light of the sun,
> and never again. No, Hades
> who puts all to bed leads me alive
> to the shore of Acheron.

The verbal repetitions (ὁρῶ/ὁρᾶτέ and παγκοίτην/-ας) show that Antigone has heard and is clearly conversing with the chorus. A basic form of listening is manifest here, wherein the content of one interlocutor's speech is perceived and responded to by the other. But there is a deeper, more active and transformative listening at play. For one, Antigone makes the wedding imagery all the more pertinent to her situation. By affirming that she herself understands her death as a thwarted marriage, we hear that her own interpretation of the situation agrees with that of the chorus. Second, the meter of Antigone's song further deepens the active listening between the singers. Antigone echoes the chorus' voice through her use of aeolo-choriambic patterns, similar to those of the chorus' hymn to Eros (809-811/826-8 are choriambic dimeters as were

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[28] For the centrality of the thematic link of marriage and death see Reinhardt 1976.90; Segal 1981.179-83; Loraux 1987.31-2, 36-8; Seaford 1990; Rehm 1994, esp. 59-65.

781/791 and 785/795).[29] The repetition of these cola suggests a continuity between the songs, allowing them to be heard as one extended lyric episode.[30] Thus, Antigone's song resonates not only with the chorus' anapestic introduction, but with the preceding hymn, even though, strictly speaking, she was not present onstage to hear it. Still, the compatibility between their voices makes dramatic sense and is emotionally compelling. At the base of this dialogic situation is an initial position of emotional openness on the part of both characters, and listening is at play.[31] As in the therapeutic models discussed above, empathy is the foundation from which the dialogue stems.

If Antigone shows that she has listened to the chorus, this act of listening already reflects something more than simply hearing and responding. Antigone's echoing of the chorus brings to the fore the potential harmony between them.[32] Antigone listens and simultaneously signals to them that she has done so, in an attempt to deepen the emotional bond that their expression of empathy suggested. Her response seeks to further implicate them in the relationship of bearing witness to her suffering—and singing with her—as a reciprocal one, as if to say *I am listening to you hearing-and-witnessing me*. Her song invokes a shift from hearing to listening: having heard them, she listens, and demands to be listened to.[33] Thus we can say that listening calls on both interlocutors to act upon it. The chorus' empathy opens up a space for recognition of her

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[29] But see Scott 1996.47-8 who takes the metrical uniformity of the hymn to Eros as a weak poetic device, implicitly contrasted to Antigone's song. Cf. Ditmars 1992.90.

[30] Lloyd-Jones and Wilson mark the choral hymn to Eros as strophe and antistrophe α, and the *amoibaion* as subsequent strophic pairs β and γ.

[31] *Pace* Kitzinger 2008.50 who detects already in the opening words of the chorus "a struggle between the chorus and Antigone to control the use of song."

[32] Griffith ad 806-16 similarly claims Antigone establishes "sympathetic 'contact'" with the chorus.

[33] We may detect a similar shift of intentionality from *seeing* to *looking* in the difference between the way the chorus first uses ὁρῶ and then Antigone the same verb in the imperative ὁρᾶτε.

experience, suggesting at least the potential for deep listening. Antigone, for her part, by listening, also invites further deep listening.

The subsequent sections of the song, however, illustrate the frustration of deep listening and empathic receptivity. While the chorus and Antigone still engage in dialogue and clearly respond to each other's words, each rejects the emotional and symbolic interpretation the other evokes. Like many other *amoibaia* in Sophoclean tragedy, the call for listening is not taken up and empathy is shut off. As the early harmony of the situation gradually gives way to miscommunication, the metrical aspect also changes and no longer presents simple harmonizing echoes. The immediately apparent aspect of the metrical separation between Antigone and the chorus is that the latter keep chanting in anapests while Antigone sings. Correspondingly, the words of the chorus and Antigone reflect cross-purposes and an emotional disconnect.[34] The chorus shift, with surprising ease, from the terror and brutality of Antigone's punishment, which moved them to tears just moments earlier, to a more detached view of her imminent death: *Well, are you not departing to the depths of the dead with glory and praise? … You go down to Hades alive, alone among mortals, by your own independent will* (817-22: οὔκουν κλεινὴ καὶ ἔπαινον ἔχουσ᾽ / ἐς τόδ᾽ ἀπέρχῃ κεῦθος νεκύων; … ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόνομος ζῶσα μόνη δὴ / θνητῶν Ἅιδην καταβήσει).[35] In the view they voice here, Antigone's death is not without positive consequences on the cosmic plane, for she will gain posthumous glory, and in any case it is the

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[34] Scott 1996.49-50; Ditmars 1992.118; Kitzinger 2008.50.

[35] In οὔκουν κλεινὴ κτλ. the chorus is likely referring to the statements made earlier by Antigone (502-4) and Haemon (692-99) that she will gain fame by burying her brother. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson follow Denniston in amending οὔκουν to οὐκοῦν, so the question is phrased negatively. Knox argues for the starkly unsympathetic statement *you are not dying with glory and praise*; see his detailed explanation of the textual and contextual problem 1964.176-7 n.8. For interpretations of the chorus' words as a positive statement, see Kamerbeek 1978 ad 817-822; Winnington-Ingram 1980.139 with n63; Mecdevitt 1982.136 and 143 n.8; Schein ad loc; Kornarou 2010.272 n. 1. On αὐτόνομος see Knox 1964.66 ("a bold figure of speech which contains the essence of the play's conflict"). Kitzinger 2008.51 interprets the word as a pun on both *law* and *melody*, making "brilliantly clear the chorus' refusal to accept either Antigone's unique song or her action as the subject of its own song" (52).

inevitable outcome of her own actions. If this noncommittal comment is meant to encourage her, Antigone does not draw comfort from it.[36]

Instead, she turns to a mythical exemplum to help explain her fate. As we shall see, Antigone tells her story through a certain lens, but the chorus disagree, a disagreement which has devastatingly sharp emotional consequences. The chorus' rejection of the way Antigone chooses to articulate her experience creates a communicative breakup. It is a non-empathic act, as the therapeutic model may help us recognize. For the purposes of this case study, the focus here remains limited to two main issues: the potential applicability of empathic listening as defined in therapeutic contexts to the dramatic activity of the lyric dialogue at hand; and the nuances in our understanding of listening afforded by attention to the metrical plane. Thus, the question of *why* the chorus are non-empathic cannot be pursued in the present context.[37] To get back to the mythical exemplum, Antigone compares her suffering to that of Niobe, daughter of Tantalus, whose petrification she describes as living entombment similar to her own (823-7, 831-3):

> ἤκουσα δὴ λυγροτάταν ὀλέσθαι
> τὰν Φρυγίαν ξέναν
> Ταντάλου Σιπύλῳ πρὸς ἄ-
> κρῳ, τὰν κισσὸς ὡς ἀτενὴς
> πετραία βλάστα δάμασεν …
> τέγγει δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ὀφρύσι παγ-
> κλαύτοις δειράδας · ἅ με δαί-
> μων ὁμοιοτάταν κατευνάζει.

> I have heard she died most hideously,
> our Phrygian guest,
> daughter of Tantalus, on the crest of
> Sipylos—she whom, like stubborn ivy,

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[36] Griffith ad 817-22 comments that the chorus' tone is "hard to gauge". It is possible that Creon remains onstage throughout the song, which may account for the chorus' caution and ambivalence: see Kirkwood 1958.95-6; Griffith ad 801-82; Gardiner 1987, 91 n.15. Schwinge 1971.314 believes that the chorus is entirely on Antigone's side "und nur aus Frucht vor dem Tyrannen seine Ansicht verschweigt." For the interpretation that Creon is not onstage see Scott 1996.276 n 106.

[37] The chorus are politically allied with Creon, at least as far as they can officially voice their view. The differences in age and gender between them and Antigone also doubtless play a part.

a stony growth subdued…
from under ever-weeping
brows she wets her slopes.[38] Most similar
to her the *daimon* lays me down.

Niobe is introduced as a precedent, contrary to the chorus' claim that Antigone is alone in her fate. This precedent reinforces Antigone's particularity, for she and Niobe are seen by her to be similar in the specific details of their deaths. At the same time, it lends her case a paradigmatic, legendary quality, allowing Antigone to transcend the brutal limits of her humanity through the comparison to a semi-divine figure.[39] Scholars have focused on the mythical paradigm and the chorus' reaction to it as a key component in the dialogue.[40] Introducing the mythical narrative, Antigone fulfills a role traditionally performed by the chorus. In *amoibaia*, the chorus often bring up an example from myth to console the heroine; in *stasima*, they use mythical figures to give the protagonist's suffering a symbolic and enduring frame of reference.[41] Antigone's version of the myth emphasizes that Niobe, like her, was confined in rock while still alive. Like her, she is caught in an impossible (*most hideous*, λυγροτάταν) liminal stage between life and death.[42] The death crystallizes both women's unyielding insistence to mourn

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[38] δειράδας, literally *ridges*, is here *slopes* in an attempt to preserve the description of the mountain metaphorically applied to the weeping woman; Jebb translates *bosom*.

[39] Cf. Kitzinger 2008.52.

[40] See e.g. McDevitt 1982.142: the mythic paradigm, a "deliberate misuse of an *epinician* topos", is central in understanding the gulf between Antigone and chorus.

[41] For example, the chorus introduce Amphiaraus in an attempt to console Electra (*Electra*, 837ff); in *Philoctetes* the chorus compare the hero to Ixion (676 ff). See Kornarou 2010, esp. 271-3; on Antigone performing a choral role, see also Ditmars 1992.129 and Kitzinger 2008.51-3. Jones 1962.155 comments on Antigone's awareness of using the ritual form as she performs her own dirge. On choral song offering a broader frame of reference in an attempt to understand "otherwise unintelligible suffering" see Segal 1996 (quote from 20).

[42] Knox 1964.114; Rehm 1994.64; Griffith ad 823-33; Winnington-Ingram 1980.139. Kornarou 2010.266-8 argues that it is especially this aspect of Niobe's transformation that Antigone finds similar to her case, with the important implication that this is a new interpretation of Niobe's myth: "What the phraseology of verse 827 suggests, is that Niobe was gradually entrapped in the growing rock, that she was somehow imprisoned by it rather than being transformed to a rock according to the usual version of the story" (268). Cf. McDevitt 1982.137 and Griffith ad 826-7.

their loved-ones. Niobe, Antigone sings, continued to weep even as she was no longer alive, thus somehow inhabiting a peculiar sphere of perpetual lamentation.[43]

Antigone uses the story of Niobe to express a certain interpretation of her own life and death.[44] The chorus, still chanting in anapests, oppose the parallelism, claiming that the comparison between Antigone, a mortal, and Niobe, a descendent of the gods, is inapt.[45] In terms of the therapeutic models of empathic listening described earlier, the chorus seem unwilling to accept Antigone's version of her experience. They reject a crucial aspect of her self-interpretation, and this disagreement makes their response sound wholly confrontational, and therefore non-empathic. Even though the chorus quickly suggest a way in which the mythical comparison can be a source of consolation, again as a measure of Antigone's posthumous fame,[46] they miss the mark entirely in their comment that Antigone is similar to Niobe *while living and later, after she died* (838: ζῶσαν καὶ ἔπειτα θανοῦσαν).[47] If Antigone is trying to give voice to her own story, the chorus disagree with one of her main premises: that the horror of her situation is, precisely, the lack of clear and socially sanctioned separation between life and death. Antigone reacts violently: *Ayyyy, I am mocked! By the ancestral gods, why do you insult me, not when I am dead and gone, but to my face?* (839-41: οἴμοι γελῶμαι. / τί με, πρὸς θεῶν

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[43] In τέγγει δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ὀφρύσι παγκλαύτοις δειράδας, Niobe's crying is described in terms of the mountain's inanimate features (which are nonetheless evocative of the human form, cf. Jebb ad 831). Electra (in *Electra* 150-52) also uses Niobe as a paradigm of perpetual and unresolved grief. On the social problem of unlimited grief see Seaford 1985. Critics have suggested other parallels created by the mythical exemplum, such as that both Niobe and Antigone suffer on account of their exceptional φιλία (Else 1976.60-1). See further in Griffith ad 823-33, who concludes: "None of these interpretations receives direct support from the text; yet in allusive lyric of this kind, perhaps none can be completely excluded." See Jebb ad 833 for the differences between Antigone and Niobe.

[44] Cf. Kitzinger 2008.48-54; Ditmars 1992.126-131.

[45] Their statement that Niobe is a god, θεός, is "certainly an exaggeration" (Kornarou 2010.273), though she is in fact θεογεννής, as they claim in the same breath. See Jebb 1900 ad 834-838. Brown 1987 ad 834-5 argues that there is no reproach here. Scholars who find reproach here, which seems possible in light of Antigone's reaction are Burton 1980.119; Knox 1964.66; McDevitt 1982.138.

[46] Cf. Griffith ad 834-8.

[47] That this is the phrase is the key to understand Antigone's outrage is argued by Kornarou 2010.274; cf. Kitzinger 2008.52-3.

πατρῴων, / οὐκ οἰχομέναν ὑβρίζεις, / ἀλλ’ ἐπίφαντον;). For Antigone, the chorus’ non-empathic response is so unsupportive that it feels like intentional mockery.[48] None of what the chorus said managed to alleviate her misery or overwhelming isolation. Even if the chorus did not mean to ridicule her, the incongruity between the intent and the effect reinforces the sense of miscommunication, or lack of listening. The chorus prove too rigid an interlocutor to empathically accept Antigone’s tragedy as she understands it.[49]

This failure to address, much less affirm, Antigone’s experience becomes ever more poignant as the lyric dialogue continues. So, Antigone turns away from the chorus, calling on the surrounding elements of the Theban landscape to witness her suffering: how she is going to her *burial-prison* (848: τυμβόχωστον) and *unwept by loved-ones* (847: φίλων ἄκλαυτος). She feels trapped in liminality between the living and the dead: *neither [resident] among the living mortals nor a corps resident among corpses* (850-52: βροτοῖς / οὔτε <νεκρὸς> νεκροῖς / μέτοικος). She addresses, then, her subverted, dysfunctional lament to the inanimate world, stressing the fact that she is unlamented by her human companions.[50] The chorus, in turn, prove her lament apt: *Stepping forward to the edge of insolence, you clashed with your foot against the high altar of Justice, child* (853-5: προβᾶσ’ ἐπ’ ἔσχατον θράσους / ὑψηλὸν ἐς Δίκας βάθρον

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[48] She was perhaps especially offended by the implied suggestion that she and Niobe are comparable not only in mode of death but in their lives as well. Niobe, mother of many children, infamously boasted that she was better than Leto, who only had two (Apollo and Artemis). The chorus’ comparison to her life calls to mind the contrast between Niobe’s fecundity and Antigone’s devastating deprivation of wedlock and motherhood. It might also suggest that her defiance of Creon is as hubristic as Niobe’s boast. Both of these implications of the chorus’ statement are possible instigators of Antigone’s outrage. See further Kitzinger 2008.53-4. I do not agree with Kornarou 2010.268 n. 7 that Niobe’s hubris is not mentioned and thus not operative in the mythical allusion, for it is precisely the nature of the allusion to call to mind an entire narrative through few details. Cf. Griffith’s comment quoted in n. 43.

[49] Cf. McDevitt 1982, e.g. in this comment 135: “the Chorus offer Antigone an encomium of sorts, …[but] it does so in such a way as to reveal its failure to understand and sympathize with the heroine.”

[50] Cf. Rehm 1994.64; Kitzinger 2008.51. Philoctetes’ isolation, we will see below, is also epitomized by his addresses to his inanimate surroundings.

/ προσέπεσες, ὦ τέκνον, ποδί·).[51] Once again, they take a rigid stance on the legal indefensibility of Antigone's act and hence on the inevitability of her punishment. Moreover, their remark on her insolence sounds like a comment not only on her insubordination to Creon, but also on her immediately preceding words—that is, it can be heard as a disapproving response to Antigone's acute expression of desolation. Once more, then, the chorus dismiss Antigone's view of her suffering, and either refuse to be empathic, or show themselves incapable of it.

It is important to note, however, that the chorus here stop chanting and join Antigone in song. From οἴμοι γελῶμαι, Antigone's song is rhythmically varied, combining aeolic with iambic colons. The opening contains both iambic and aeolic elements in a single line (839/857), a metrical complexity which reflects the passionate, tempestuous tone of her words.[52] Whereas in the previous strophic pair, the voices of Antigone and the chorus were clearly demarcated as singing and chanting, respectively, the chorus now abandon their composed chant and echo her iambs (853-6/872-5). Thus, there is a sense in which her mourning song is moving and contagious, pushing the chorus to match her urgency and emotional agitation.[53] Yet the chorus' shift to lyric meters is gradual and seems almost hesitant. To the extent that it creates metrical harmony or signals empathy, it is a very fragile empathy indeed. While many of the cola sung by Antigone have clear features of lyric iambs such as resolution and syncopation (847/866, 848, 850/869, 852/871), in the four lines the chorus sing (853-6/872-5), the first two are in unresolved iambic dimeters, that is, the lyric meter closest to the spoken tragic verse. This is also, not coincidentally, where their words sound particularly accusatory and tone-deaf (*Stepping forward*

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[51] On the violence of the image, see Knox 1964.66.

[52] Griffith 1999 writes of the song's structure, that it "is the most varied and unsettled of the lyrics hitherto, as befits the emotional climax of the play" (264). Ditmars 1992 calls this an "improvisatory" mode, expressing "a freedom from predetermined or predictable from which is more typical of eloquent speech than of song" (118 and *passim*).

[53] Cf. Griffith 1999.264; Scott 1996.50. The *amoibaion* between the chorus and Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is paradigmatic for choral detachment that transitions (at l. 1121) to lyric participation.

to the edge of insolence, you clashed with your foot against the high altar of Justice).[54] Even while beginning to respond in song that explicitly approaches Antigone's lyrics, the chorus still hold back (metrically) and are emotionally reserved. In other words, even when metrical echoing superficially happens, deep listening is nonetheless avoided, and empathy still resisted.

It is not until their last statement, that she is *paying the penalty from an ancestral torment*, that the chorus sing in syncopated iambs (856: πατρῷον δ᾽ ἐκτίνεις τιν᾽ ἆθλον). This line is closely modeled on Antigone's last sung line (both end on a cretic followed by bacchiac). Still focusing on Antigone's transgression, this statement strikes a chord with her, for it shifts the focus back to her familial relationships, which have consistently been her motivating principal.[55] It connects the chorus' understanding of the cosmic chain of events with her view of the particularity of her story and her family's.[56] To the extent that it resonates with Antigone's outlook, this choral pronouncement is empathic, a fact she explicitly appreciates. In a manner markedly different from her previous address to the chorus ("why do you insult me"), Antigone now affirms *you have touched on the most painful care for me* (857-8: ἔψαυσας ἀλγεινοτάτας ἐμοὶ μερίμνας). The chorus' words now resonate with Antigone's point of view, re-creating harmony between them. She explicitly acknowledges that their words facilitated her response, and reciprocates their vocal gesture, demonstrating that she hears it as a signal of empathy. This short moment of empathic back-and-forth exemplifies a joint dialogic stance similar to what we saw described by practitioners of the Empathy Cycle, where an accurate expression of the

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[54] Linforth 1961.223 comments on the "strict judgment of the chorus."

[55] The degree to which familial duties are tied to her notion of religious piety is apparent in her indignant invocation of the "ancestral gods", πρὸς θεῶν πατρῴων, 839, which the chorus' use of πατρῷον echoes. It also recalls their own narrative of the house of Labdacus (594-603). On Antigone's focus on her kin (φίλοι) , specifically in contrast to Creon's political understanding of the categories friend and foe see Blundell 1989.117-24; Rehm 1994.60.

[56] Kitzinger 2008.55 writes that this description "reinforces the idea that song exists in a tradition that forms a continuity with the past" as did the second *stasimon*. Winnington Ingram 1980.141 also relates this moment with the second *stasimon*, both being Aeschylean in tone. See Griffith ad 853-6 / 872-5 on the "Aischylean rhythms of their syncopated iambics" which "match the moralistic content."

experience depends on the participation of both interlocutors. Insofar as the choral response allows for Antigone's version to unfold—indeed, she sings of her family throughout the entire following strophe (857-71)—the chorus' deep listening translates into dialogic action. The metrical register of this exchange enhances the vacillation of listening the song embodies and supports the suggestion that deep listening is approached at the end of the strophe, when the chorus mention Antigone's inherited torment.

Yet this harmony between the chorus and Antigone disintegrates shortly thereafter. Indeed, the comparison to therapeutic dialogue points to the fact that the present dialogue is, ultimately, non-empathic. The choral gesture remains ambiguous as a vocalization of deep listening, for it is tied to the reprehending comments immediately preceding it. The chorus are not committed to accepting or developing Antigone's perspective, and their role in this dialogue has throughout demonstrated their inability to do so. The following choral response is alienating and avoids empathy. The impersonal statements, the mention of the rule of power, and the final accusation pile up the hostilities: *To act piously is a kind of piety; but, to the man whose business is authority, authority is never to be violated—and your self-willed temper ruined you* (872-5: σέβειν μὲν εὐσέβειά τις, / κράτος δ᾽, ὅτῳ κράτος μέλει, / παραβατὸν οὐδαμᾷ πέλει, / σὲ δ᾽αὐτόγνωτος ὤλεσ᾽ ὀργά).[57] Though this section in iambic lyric corresponds to the former, the metrical harmony with Antigone's song cannot mitigate the criticizing words. The chorus remain more reprehending than supportive; metrical compatibility per se is not enough to maintain or deepen listening when the words are divisive and accusatory. Rather, listening is shut off altogether, and the dialogic portion of this song concludes without empathy between the singers.

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[57] Translations modified from McDevitt 1982.141 and Griffith ad 872-4. For αὐτόγνωτος see Knox 1964.67 and Goldhill 2012.111.

The Epode (876-82), a short non-strophic song which Antigone sings on her own, is even more metrically varied than the preceding sections. The rhythmical inconsistency highlights Antigone's vulnerability, as she recounts her utter loneliness.[58] She experiences her condition as abandonment-through-song: *unmourned, friendless… not one of my loved ones laments my un-cried-for fate*, she sings (876-7: ἄκλαυτος, ἄφιλος … τὸν δ᾽ ἐμὸν πότμος ἀδάκρυτον / οὐδεὶς φίλων στενάζει). Her suffering is magnified, indeed constituted, by the fact that no one is vocally sharing her experience, in other words, that she has no lyric companions, precisely the role the chorus should have assumed.[59] That Antigone identifies her pain with a lack of reciprocal vocalization alerts us to the importance of empathy, or deep listening, and to the devastating effects of its absence. As we have seen, listening was present in glimmers in this dialogue, and at certain points the chorus' song was able to convey empathy and facilitate deep listening through the verbal or metrical register. Yet, this shared song also made clear that listening is not easily maintained, and that the same voice that is an avenue for deep listening can also express a reluctance or inability to empathize. The refusal or avoidance of listening may come about through subtle fluctuations of the voice. Its impact is tangible, as much as the supportive and enabling effect of deep listening itself.

In the chapters below, we will see how and when empathic listening is refused by the choruses or protagonists of *Electra*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Indeed, Sophocles' heroes are often the more active listeners in a dialogue, and it is their reactions to the vicissitudes of empathy on the part of their interlocutors that will come into focus. Electra will prove a particularly interesting counterpart to Antigone in the essential similarity and difference of their

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[58] On her isolation here, see Linforth 1961.224; Winnington-Ingram 1980.144; Goldhill 2012.111-2.

[59] Brown 1987.190 comments that Antigone must sing her own dirge, "with little help from a masculine and insensitive Chorus."

dramatic situations: a heroine that demands empathy for a morally problematic claim, Electra is faced with a chorus that is almost unequivocally empathic. In the case of all three characters, Electra, Philoctetes, and Oedipus at Colonus, their own vocal capacities—in which their listening capacities are included—will be at least as central to our readings as their interlocutors'. The following section provides the theoretical framework for understanding listening as a more reciprocal stance than the therapeutic model allows for and deepens our notion of the relation between listening and the singing voice.

2.3 Voice, Listening, and Intersubjectivity

Section 2.1 presented psychotherapeutic practices which posit and actively develop the link between listening and empathy. The dialogic activity of empathic listening, we saw, is a fundamental tenet of the therapeutic process. The analogy between therapy and the lyric dialogues of Sophocles focuses, firstly, on the latter as dramatizations of interpersonal actions— precisely, that is, on the dialogue as action—and, secondly, on suffering as the content of the dialogues, the central problem to be addressed and alleviated. As the case study from *Antigone* showed, suffering can be an insoluble problem, and it will often remain so in the lyric dialogues treated in the following chapters. While listening in Sophocles holds a therapeutic promise for the restoration of human communication and at least partial recovery from emotional or physical misery, the readings offered in the next three chapters pivot rather on the difference between psychotherapy and Sophoclean dialogue. The hierarchy between therapist and patient, with the former's expertise and (to an extent) objectivity in dealing with the other's suffering, is not found in the dialogic situations treated here.[60] On the contrary, my approach to the lyric dialogues

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[60] A moral hierarchy between the hero and the chorus in Sophocles has traditionally been observed. My approach implicitly goes against this conservative reading of Sophocles. See section 1.1.

emphasizes the reciprocity between the interlocutors, the fact they often share in suffering, and the fluidity of the role-boundaries between them. If the therapeutic parallel seems to suggest the chorus is the empathic listener to the suffering protagonist–patient, the following readings reveal Sophocles' heroes as extremely effective listeners themselves, engaged in no less active, and at times even deep, listening. This section deals with philosophical reflections on listening which advance a more egalitarian view of dialogue than the psychoanalytic model affords. Listening is seen as an effect of mutual and cooperative vocalizing, a type of such vocalizing even. Not coincidentally, these approaches share a special concern with the physicality of the body as the sounding and responding medium. The final two sections of this chapter (2.4-5) discuss *Philoctetes*, which serves as a case study for listening to the re-sounding body on stage.

Listening is an experience of physical interconnectedness, not only with other people but with the environment. This notion is a tenet of the philosophy of Don Ihde. Ihde's groundbreaking 1976 study *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* suggested a "turn to the *auditory dimension*." It is a systematic attempt to unsettle the "latent, presupposed, and dominant visualism of our understanding of experience," which Ihde dates back to Heraclitus and Aristotle, and to offer an alternative to it. As Ihde stresses, such a turn to the auditory experience entails "a reevaluation of all the 'senses'" as they have traditionally been understood, carried out through a phenomenological dialectic between experience and language.[61] One of the traditional ideas Ihde aims to undermine is that of sound's purely temporal existence. He argues instead for a spatial conception of sound, and contends that "the auditory dimension from the outset begins to display itself as a pervasive characteristic of bodily experience."[62] This is

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[61] Ihde 1976.3-24. Quotes from 13 (with original emphasis), 6, and 21. The 2007 edition of this work has the subtitle *Phenomenologies of Sound*.

[62] Ihde 1976.44.

apparent, for example, from the remarkable ability of blind persons to orient themselves spatially, which reveals that humans essentially echolocate, like other species (though not to the same extent).[63]

In the same vein, composer Pauline Oliveros has practiced and theorized an expanded notion of "deep listening" that depends on the vast sonic sensitivity of the human "ear, skin, bones, meridians, fluids and other organs and tissues of the body as coupled to the earth and its layers from the core to the magnetic fields. … All cells of the earth and body vibrate." Deep listening, for her, involves "learning to expand the perception of sounds to include the whole space/time continuum of sound—encountering the vastness and complexities as much as possible." Oliveros' deep listening is less about listening to the voice or the body of other people; rather, it is a call to notice the auditory environment and the listener's "habitual and embodied responses to sound."[64] It is thus fundamentally different from the way I use the term *deep listening*, for I am primarily interested in listening to others, in listening as a response to voice. Nonetheless, my choice of term shares in Oliveros' conviction that sound has a profound (in all senses of the word) effect on our bodies and our minds, and that listening, as opposed to simply hearing, acknowledges the depth of the sonic effect.[65] Thus, her notion of depth can be transferred with much relevance to our discussion of interpersonal listening, for it emphasizes that the voice resonates from within one person to deep within the other.

Ihde's phenomenological inquiry into how we listen is particularly useful for my

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[63] Ihde 1976.59; cf 51: "Listening makes the invisible present in a way similar to the presence of the mute in vision." Cf. Lipari 2014, esp. 43 and 51: "listening, for humans, is not solely an auditory process, but a multimodal process that involves (or can involve) all five of our senses". On listening as a relationship with the environment see Neumark 2017.13.

[64] Quoted in Lipari 2014.40 and 56.

[65] Cf. the distinction between hearing and listening in Oliveros 2015: "To hear is the physical means that enables perception. To listen is to give attention to what is perceived both acoustically and psychologically".

purposes since he is predominantly concerned with the voice, even as he probes the interrelation between things, bodies, and selves in the environment. His interest in this interrelation that constitutes our experience of sound comes about in his notion of the *duet*. A duet of voices is heard not only in the encounter between people but between inanimate things as well. In listening to a ball roll on the surface of a billiard table, for example, we hear both the ball and the table—in Idhe's terms, each "gives voice" to the other.[66] The use of this anthropomorphizing metaphor by Ihde stresses the relationality of voice as its essential quality.[67] These notions, of sound as a relation between two things and of the voice as fundamentally human, are, in turn, crucial to Ihde's critique of the philosophical tendency to dissociate reason (*logos*) from the voice. He writes: "Reason, which at times becomes 'voice-less', carries hidden within it a temptation to create a type of disembodiment that becomes a special kind of tyranny forgetful of the human, forgetful of the existential position of humankind." Ihde's "reassertion of the role of voice" is meant to foreground "the essential intersubjectivity of humankind as being-in-language."[68]

The idea that reflection on the voice is key to an understanding of intersubjectivity gains further support from thinkers in the continental tradition. Roland Barthes proposes that the voice serves as a double index of a person: the innermost of one's physical movements as well as a reflection of emotional interiority. He thus contends that listening to the voice is the basis for

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[66] Ihde 1976.67-8. The duet is a simplification of Ihde's essential concept of polyphony, for which see 168-70, 178, and 190.

[67] The animated quality that characterizes our experience of sound makes motion "anthropomorphically understandable" through sound, and renders a scene absent of sound uncannily empty or disembodied (Ihde 1976.82-3, quote from 82).

[68] Ihde 1976.168. See also his comment on philosophy's resistance to recognize polyphony: "auditorily [philosophy's] goal is a sound which does not harbor a relation to the silences which conceal a hidden dimension to every sound" (178). Cf. Lipari 2014.129.

interpersonal relationship.[69] The title of Adriana Cavarero's book, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, highlights the plurality of voices entailed in paying attention to "voice" in general.[70] In writing of the embodied nature of vocal interaction, she stresses the relationality of the voice as it presupposes and prescribes listening: "The voice is always for the *ear*, it is always relational; […] each voice, as it is *for* the ear, demands at the same time an ear that is *for* the voice. […] In the uniqueness that makes itself heard as a voice, there is an embodied existence, or rather, a 'being-there' in its radical finitude."[71] Mladen Dolar has argued that the voice constitutes our notion of the person by simultaneously evoking and surpassing the body.[72] These thinkers share a conviction that listening to the voice forces us to pay attention to the physical vocalizing body. Concomitantly, they all emphasize that such attention to the voice entails a re-evaluation of the ethics (and politics, explicitly in Cavarero and Dolar) of interpersonal relations.

On this last point, it is useful to follow Lisbeth Lipari. In her *Listening, Thinking, Being: Toward an Ethics of Attunement*, she argues that listening is an intersubjective process of attentiveness. Lipari holds that a certain ethics of communication is entailed by what she calls

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[69] Barthes 1982.225: "… le mouvement du corps est avant tout celui d'où s'origine la voix. … L'écoute de la voix inaugure la relation à l'autre: la voix, par laquelle on reconnaît les autres… nous indique leur manière d'être, leur joie ou leur souffrance, leur état ; elle véhicule une image de leur corps et, au-delà, tout une psychologie."

[70] Cavarero 2005, originally published in 2003 under the title *A più voci: Per una filosofia dell' espressione vocale*. Cavarero makes no reference to Ihde, though she shares some of his main concerns. Her following comment on traditional metaphysics is particularly similar to Ihde's critique of philosophy's neglect of the polyphony of experience: "[t]he price for the elimination of the physicality of the voice is thus, first of all, the elimination of the other, or, better, of others" (46). Cf. Bø-Rygg 2015 and Välimäki 2015 on the prevalent visualism of Western thought and on auditory alternatives to it, among which Barthes figures prominently. In Barthes 1982, the listening of the psychoanalyst is exemplary for mutual and "active" listening, which develops in "an intersubjective space, where 'I am listening' also means 'listen to me'" (un espace intersubjectif, où 'j'écoute' veut dire aussi 'écoute-moi' , 217). Yet his remarks on the voice explicitly undermine the hierarchy of voices implicit in the psychoanalytic relationship.

[71] Cavarero 2005.169, 170 and 173, original emphasis. Cf. Gurevitch 1995.102: "Speech, from the beginning, is uttered within the field of the voice that is occasioned by an ear".

[72] Dolar 2006.70-1: "[voice] is like a bodily missile which separates itself from the body and spreads around, but on the other hand it points to a bodily interior, an intimate partition of the body… [The voice] presents … the body at its quintessential … and at the same time it seems to present more than the mere body."

interlistening: "Interlistening describes the ways in which listening is itself a form of speaking because each utterance and action of listening and speaking resonates (i.e., brings into a kind of sympathetic vibration not unlike the vibration of strings) with a background context where an always already existing universe of prior dialogic relations vibrates."[73] In Lipari's work, the embodied nature of vocalizing and listening is stressed through the recurring comparison to the physicality of vibrating musical instruments. Her approach to interlistening as an existential mode-of-being—in her terms, "interlistening *occurs*"—puts forward listening as a kind of "hospitality," "an enactment of responsibility made manifest through a posture of receptivity that can receive the other without assimilation or appropriation."[74] This notion of responsibility inevitably recalls Emmanuel Levinas' influential reformulation of ethics and subjectivity, where "response or responsibility" is "the authentic relationship with the Other."[75]

While Lipari (and certainly Levinas) is less concerned with the materiality and the sonority of the voice per se, her notion of receptive hospitality recalls Cavarero's formulation of the reciprocal ear–voice relation. For Cavarero, the mother–infant relation is the model through

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[73] Lipari 2014.158. On the temporal dimension of listening, cf. Oliveros 2015: "When listening, there is a constant interplay with the perception of the moment compared with remembered experience. … Sometimes what is heard is interpreted anywhere between milliseconds to many years later or never."
On listening as ethics cf. Corradi Fiurama 1985.127: "Quasi che nel dire inascoltante più facilmente si propenda verso meccanismi di scissione ed estinzione, mentre invece si coltiva nell'ascolto un laborioso atteggiamento più consono sia all'integrazione che alla vita."

[74] Quotes from Lipari 2014.173 (original emphasis), 185 and 197; on embodied communication see 162-3, 185-9. Cf. Corradi Fiumara 1985, 150 on the importance of disinterested listening. On listening as an *attempt* to understand cf. Jean-Luc Nancy 2002, 19: "Si 'entendre', c'est comprendre le sens … écouter, c'est être tendu vers un sens possible, et par conséquent non immédiatement accessible." In relation to hospitality, cf. Nancy, 27: "le sonore [serait] tendanciellement méthexique (c'est-à-dire dans l'ordre de la participation, du partage ou de la contagion)."

[75] Levinas 1982.82: "c'est le discours et, plus exactement, la réponse ou la responsabilité, qui est cette relation authentique [avec autrui]." See also: "La responsabilité en effet n'est pas un simple attribut de la subjectivité, comme si celle-ci existait déjà en elle-même, avant la relation éthique. La subjectivité n'est pas un pour soi; elle est… initialement pout un autre" (92-3). Cf. Nancy 2002.25-6, 30.
On Levinas' ethics as they relate to dialogue, see Lipari 2014, esp. 184-6, 188-91. She argues (195, and 236 n. 62) that listening ultimately disappeared from Levinas' thought in favor of his focus on the face ("le visage").

which to understand the reciprocity of vocal expression in its sonic and physical dimensions.[76] The figurative expansion of the maternal model allows Cavarero to consider the importance of pre- and non-linguistic features of vocal communication, thereby undoing the dynamics of authority inherent in a claim to *logos*, or knowledge of a philosophical or psychoanalytic kind. This turn to the non-semantic, purely sonic features of language—to the musicality of language—is again linked to the body, since the "the combinatorial play of tones, sounds, repetitions, and rhythms" makes present the materiality of the vocal apparatus. Cavarero's insights on the voice explicitly connect the sonic effects of poetic language with an understanding of vocal communication as an embodied interaction.[77] In the case study at the end of this chapter, these two foci, on the body as that which vocalizes and listens, and on the musicality of sounds emanating from the body, serve as a particularly productive avenue for understanding Philoctetes as a unique dramatic figure. These same foci will be fundamental to the readings presented in subsequent chapters of this dissertation as well.

There is another point I take from Ihde which will prove helpful in my readings of Sophocles. As mentioned above, Ihde mounts a critique similar to Cavarero's of the tyranny of the logical "voice-less" voice: of the logos which is stripped of embodied features. As an antidote, he too gives special attention to the musicality of the speaking voice. Moreover, in certain kinds of speech, such as drama, ritual, and recited poetry, there occurs what he calls "dramaturgical voice," a voice which "stands between the enchantment of music … and the conversation of ordinary speech." It "amplifies the musical 'effect' of speech," and speaks

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[76] In Cavarero's idea that "the voice manifests the *unique being* of each human being, and his or her spontaneous self-communication according to the rhythms of a sonorous relation", the mother-infant relation figures prominently. (2005.173, original emphasis). See especially her discussion of feminist writers Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous, 131-145. Lipari, for her part, includes an interesting and unexpected maternal turn when she writes: "As an enactment of ethics, listening, like quickening, brings a recognition of an unknown other to whom we are bound and about whom we feel care and concern" (2014.176).

[77] Quote from Cavarero 2005.136, and cf. 133, 137.

through a "doubled 'grammar' with its 'inflections,' 'intonation,' 'accent,' and 'stress,' which is the singing of the tongue in its full expressivity." Over against the philosophical suspicion of dramaturgical voice, Ihde advocates a "[c]omprehensive listening … to the dramatic as well as to the quieter forms of discourse." As there is speaking that attends to both the *what* and the *how* of the saying, there is listening "that attends to the 'grammar' of a different dimension of embodied sound in voice." For Ihde, the actor engages in such listening: "His listening as well as his speaking is dramaturgical, and his ear … reflects and amplifies this language of multiple 'grammars'. … His voice fills the stage with amplified sounded signification."[78] In speaking of the actor's capacity to convey and respond to what he calls the doubled grammar of speech, Ihde draws attention to the rich affective dimension of the sonic register of utterances, which is not part of the realm of *logos*.

In drama, dialogue is literally embodied and acted out. If, as Ihde proposes, speech has a doubled grammar, conveying both a *what* and a *how*, drama achieves a heightened awareness of this duality. For in drama, speech already has a dual status in the sense that it operates both in the realm of fiction, between characters on stage, and in the realm of reality, in the theatrical space shared by actors and by actors and audience. In focusing on the voice of the actor, which is at once his own and another's (the character's, that is), Ihde uses the theater as a paradigm for the voice as both an embodied medium and a bodily essence. His analysis of voice in the theater helpfully points out the spatial dimension of dramatic experience: "The actor amplifies the sounding voice, he projects voice into the recesses of the theater. This resonant voice is an auditory aura that im-presses in sound. The auditor is not merely metaphorically im-pressed, but in the perception of the other in voice he experiences the embodiment of the other as one who

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[78] Quotes from Ihde 1976.167-9.

fills the auditorium with his presence."[79] This description of dramatic presence, though it refers to the actor, fits the character of Philoctetes particularly well, as we shall see below. More broadly, Ihde's concerns with the voice as that which resonates, thus making present the body and the space it shares with others, are essential—they recur in the theoretical readings presented so far, and are fundamental to the notion of listening applied to Sophocles in the subsequent chapters. Not only are we dealing with dramatic texts, which, as Ihde's work suggests, are rife with the multivalence of vocal expressivity; specifically, the focus is on dramatizations of active dialogic situations, or embodiments of intersubjective action. Listening to the voice, this section has shown, is essential for grasping these situations as such.

2.4 The Voice of Suffering

So far, we have not treated the issue of listening to suffering, which was the explicit concern of the previous sections. Grief and sorrow, the suffering of an individual as it is presented to the world: this is the central theme in most of the lyric dialogues read below. *Philoctetes* explores head-on the difficulties and the rewards of listening to a person in pain. Of the plays treated in this dissertation, it is the one which most explicitly deals with the protagonist's experience of physical suffering. In this section I wish to tie in the broader concerns of listening and voice broached thus far with the specific problems that *Philoctetes* dramatizes, those of the poetic and linguistic expressivity of pain, and of its various bodily and vocal manifestations.

Philoctetes is the epitome of the physically tormented hero. The difficulty of his physical experience is closely tied to the emotional suffering caused by his social isolation. Philoctetes' injured foot and the consequences of the injury—the gruesome smell of his wound and his

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[79] Ihde 1976.172.

unbearable shouts of pain—were the initial cause for his abandonment on Lemnos. It is the background action and the mythical condition of the play that Philoctetes' body has become too unbearable to keep within a social setting. Furthermore, it is precisely his utter loneliness and concomitant psychological suffering that magnifies the experience of physical pain. He has been deprived of human interlocutors for years, and his experience of pain is inextricably bound with this deprivation.[80] Odysseus, Neoptolemus, and the chorus come as intruders to Philoctetes' world, inhabited by wild beasts and filled with his wild pain.

Critics have long been drawn to *Philoctetes* as an exploration of isolated suffering, the way it is vocalized, and the responses it can elicit. These responses may be potential—for if the suffering is experienced in isolation, it can receive no response—or real, thus breaking the solitude and undermining the impenetrability of the experience. Several influential readings of the play or its eponymous hero are concerned with the paradox inherent in his drama, that of expressing or representing the inexpressible: pain, an entirely private sensation. Lessing's *Laocoon* emphasizes the (successful) aestheticization of violent pain and the dramatization of compassion in the play.[81] Herder's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* takes Philoctetes as the paradigmatic man–beast, exemplifying how the language instinct springs from the need to vocalize intense feelings, "auch ohne das Bewusstsein fremder Sympathie."[82] But, though Sophocles' Philoctetes is, in some respects, emblematic of Herder's point about the primal quality of vocalizing emotion, it also undermines it. On the one hand, the frequency and intensity

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[80] It is significant that in Sophocles' adaptation of the myth Lemnos is a deserted island, whereas in earlier versions it is populated: See Jebb xi; Rose 1976. 56, and Falkner 1998.34. On Philoctetes' savagery as mirrored and exacerbated by his isolation see Knox 1964.130-132; Podlecki 1966.234; Segal 1981.105-6, 213-14, 292-327; Worman 2002.7. On Philoctetes' longing for human communication see Easterling 1973, 29; Montiglio 2000.224-5, 230; De Luna 2004.70-1.

[81] Lessing 1962 [1766]. See Budelmann 2007.454-56.

[82] Herder 2015 [1772]. "Even the finest instrument strings of animal feeling… are directed in their whole play, even without the consciousness of foreign sympathy, at an expression to other creatures" (translated by Forster 2002.65-6).

of tragic interjections with which the Sophoclean version of his story is strewn makes Philoctetes the epitome of the moaning, beast-like hero. These exclamations, various φεῦ-s and παπαῖ-s, culminate in the unprecedented scream of pain, fourteen syllables of παπαῖ-s in iambic trimeter, at the center of the play (discussed below in chapter 4). On the other hand, *Philoctetes* undermines Herder's account, because Sophocles molded his pain into a poetic form. Sophocles' Philoctetes acts and sounds in and through language, almost constantly verbalizing and singing, not least through his metrical παπαῖ-s. It is this particular representation, with its poetic transfiguration of pain, that drew and continues to draw the attention of literary and cultural critics.[83]

Elaine Scarry influentially described pain's "resistance to language," citing *Philoctetes* among those rare fictional representations of bodily pain.[84] While she recognizes that the formalities of tragic exclamations in Sophocles' Greek make it possible to register differences in the felt experience of pain, a possibility that other languages may lack, she stresses, *contra* Herder, that Philoctetes' shouts confront us with the destruction of language before we get to see him reintegrated into language and society.[85] We will return later to Scarry's formulations of how pain does figure in language, which are relevant to Philoctetes' speech concerning his wounded

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[83] Cf. Budelmann 2007.445: "Perhaps the best example of the interdependence of body and language is that most iconic expression of pain, the scream. On the one hand, screaming is at least to a degree a hard-wired, pre-linguistic response to pain (babies are good at it), but on the other hand, Philoctetes and Heracles scream in trimeters and complex meters, using a range of different formalized expressions… Sophocles' pain is a matter not of body *or* language, but body *and* language" (original emphasis). Elaine Scarry's treatment of Philoctetes is an example for what Budelmann 2007 calls the "paradigmatic character of Sophocles' pain" (462).

[84] Quote from Scarry 1985.5 and *passim*; pain is a physical experience that "is monolithically consistent in its assault on language" (13). The rarity of its representation in fiction is in contrast to "how consistently art confers visibility on other forms of distress … there is virtually no piece of literature that is *not* about suffering" (11, original emphasis).

[85] Scarry 1985.6: "To witness the moment when pain causes a reversion to the pre-language of cries and groans is to witness the destruction of language; but conversely, to be present when a person moves up out of that pre-language and projects the facts of sentience into speech is almost to have been permitted to be present at the birth of language itself." On the constant possibility of destruction, the "possibility of pain's occurrence", see Weissberg 1989.554. On the liminality of language in Philoctetes' scream cf. Goetsch 1994: "Words like papapai do not 'mean' anything in a sense that we can translate. They are a transcription of pain, a notation for the sound of emotion."

foot. Not only Philoctetes' sounds, but also his isolation are paradigmatic of the experience of pain. As Scarry notes, in Sophocles, the island of Lemnos is "utterly cut off from homeland and humanity and utterly open to the elements." This depiction combines the experience "of isolation and exposure" that pain brings about: pain "brings with it all the solitude of absolute privacy with none of its safety, all the self-exposure of the utterly public with none of its possibility for camaraderie or shared experience."[86]

The poetic representation of suffering in isolation is a recurring theme, or paradox, in lyric poetry. Susan Stewart has dubbed it "the Philoctetes problem." In the case of Philoctetes, the problem is solved by the repetition inherent in his myth: the howls of pain that led to his abandonment on Lemnos, and with which his life re-sounded ever since, must be heard again in order to, literally, recall him into the world of men.[87] Stewart explicitly takes issue with Herder's view, which "underestimated the human capacity to internalize the recognition of others," essentially arguing that Philoctetes continually experiences the frustration of his unanswered cries, and that this frustration is part of what is voiced therein. It is through poetic repetition and representation, which Philoctetes himself embodies on stage, that his voice gains a response and, thereby, mutual intelligibility is ultimately ensured. In a concluding remark about poetics in general, Stewart claims that "[l]yric expresses… the good faith in intelligibility."[88] In an article responding to Stewart's definition of lyric in these terms, Paul Alpers makes a case that is more directly relevant to Sophocles' drama. He fine-tunes her notion of intelligibility as follows: "Just as the one in pain cries out in a way that calls for recognition, so thinking of that suffering

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[86] Scarry 1985.53.

[87] Stewart 2002. Cf. Levine 2009.27: "Trauma is defined by repetition; … In that sense we could say that trauma is akin to tragedy, defined as the imitation of an action that has already taken place. This does not mean that the traumatic repetition, any more than the dramatic one, is a blind or mechanical reproduction of its prototype. Repetition introduces difference."

[88] Quotes from Stewart 2002.102, 105.

enables other humans to imagine it and give it voice."[89] Alpers is developing a strain latent throughout Stewart's chapter and made explicit at its close, namely, that listening is a form of reciprocity. His words recall Cavarero's formulation that the "voice, as it is for the ear, demands at the same time an ear that is for the voice." Alpers further suggests that this task of cementing intelligibility through a poetic recalling and vocalizing of another's suffering is characteristic of the pastoral mode. His suggestion that the poetics of pastoral is pertinent to the expression of isolated suffering in other modes of poetry is particularly relevant to the *parodos* of *Philoctetes*, my case-study below.

Stewart and Alpers work within a tradition of thinking of Philoctetes inaugurated by Lessing and Herder. Their writings also resonate with the philosophical formulations of sound and voice introduced in the previous section. They remind us that listening and vocalizing should be thought of together, even when—or precisely when—listening is missing. As the voice is an index of one's interiority, so can it reflect the standpoint from which a person listens, and, by definition, responds, to another. Stuart and Alpers connect these notions explicitly to Philoctetes, as a play and a figure, not just to poetic fiction generally. It is not only Philoctetes' suffering but the thematic prominence of others' listening to it (not to mention the audience's) that make the play a powerful exploration of human communication and a paradigm for vocal expressivity in an aesthetic context. The legacy of Lessing and Herder is also present in my analysis of the *Philoctetes* (in the following section as well as in chapter 4), for I explore how the play

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[89] Alpers 2004.11. As we saw above, Adam Smith argued for the centrality of the imagination for the capacity to feel compassion or sympathy (2002, ch. 1 and *passim*). Smith's ideas of sympathy are especially readily translatable to the experience of theater, because he explicitly speaks of the sufferer and his "spectator" (see esp. 26-8).
We should note that Aristotle already connected imagination, the ability to see oneself in another's experience, with pity: ἔστω δὴ ἔλεος λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένῳ κακῷ φθαρτικῷ ἢ λυπηρῷ τοῦ ἀναξίου τυγχάνειν, ὃ κἂν <u>αὐτὸς προσδοκήσειεν ἂν παθεῖν ἢ τῶν αὑτοῦ τινα</u> (*Ars Rhetorica* 1385b14-16).

repeatedly figures the voice in pain as both the condition of communication and a hindrance to it, as a problem of dramatic action and the ultimate dramatic presence.

2.5 Case Study: The *Parodos* of *Philoctetes*

The opening song of the *Philoctetes* is paradigmatic to this project in several respects: first, it deals with the echoing or resounding body and the dynamics of imagination, poetic recreation, and recognition to which it gives rise. In the terms introduced above, the *parodos* shows the chorus engaging in both the lyric and the pastoral mode. Second, the *parodos* offers the foundation for the relationships between the characters and between them and their soundscape. This song presents the chorus as active and engaged, attuned to their surroundings and to their young leader, and empathic to Philoctetes' condition. It also shows how Philoctetes' presence prompts listening and demands to be heard even when he is offstage. Faced merely with the traces of Philoctetes' suffering, the chorus imaginatively expand upon his state in a magnificent lyric performance, which is, arguably, their only great song in the play.[90] Thematically, the *parodos* is an introduction to the centrality and complexity of listening in the play; at the same time, it sets up expectations that will be broken as the characters evolve from the paths traced for them in the opening song. Finally, the *parodos* is an *amoibaion* between Neoptolemus and the chorus, and as such is an example of performed listening and responsiveness through its very structure.

The *parodos* establishes Philoctetes' presence through vocal and physical signs before he appears on stage, demonstrating that Philoctetes' suffering body permeates the sphere of action even in his absence. In other words, the song is concerned with the possibility of reacting to an

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[90] Cf. Burton 1980.249. He also mentions "the marvellous exploitation of verbal music in the sleep scene."

absent body, even as it reinforces Philoctetes' simultaneous on- and off-stage presence. The song thus explores the emotional effect that the suffering body has when only traces of it are present, specifically, traces that can be heard. The second and third strophic pairs treat these issues directly. The opening strophes exemplify the extent and quality of listening between the chorus and Neoptolemus, so they are a good starting point for the discussion.

The chorus come on stage proclaiming their obedience to Neoptolemus. They are ready and eager to do as he says; the address *master* and the imperative *speak to me* set up a discursive situation that implies and actively produces a listening stance on their part (135: δέσποτ(ε); 137: φράζε μοι; cf. *tell me*, 142: μοι ἔννεπε). In the first strophic pair, the chorus emphatically state their curiosity and enthusiasm, showering Neoptolemus with questions and requests for directives, for example: *You speak to me, captain, of a care that I have long had: that my eyes watch out especially for your advantage. And now tell me, in what dwelling does he live?* (150-4: μέλον πάλαι μέλημά μοι λέγεις, ἄναξ, / φρουρεῖν ὄμμ' ἐπὶ σῷ μάλιστα καιρῷ· / νῦν δέ μοι / λέγ', αὐλὰς ποίας ἔνεδρος / ναίει). The repeated first person pronoun in the dative and accusative, μοι and με (150, 152, 154, 156), reinforced by alliteration of labials (μ, π, λ, ν), draw attention to their personal involvement and investment in the action about to unfold. The first two strophes offer an extended and agitated assertion that they are listening, both as a rhetorical stance vis-à-vis Neoptolemus and a practical readiness to be involved in the intrigue.[91]

Relative to the chorus' excited song, Neoptolemus' responses in chanted anapests seem

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[91] "From their first words, the chorus are actively involved in the intrigue against Philoctetes" (Schein 2013.146). On the chorus' relation to Neoptolemus here see also Burton 1980.226-8; Gardiner 1986.19-20; Scott 1996.176. Kitzinger 2008.80 believes that the chorus' opening words raise a question "about the authority and independence of the chorus' own speech." She further comments that the first line in the *parodos* is in iambic trimeters, and considers that it would have been delivered "more like speaking than singing", creating "a very startling and unexpected beginning to choral song … It is as if Sophocles announces metrically, right from the start, that his chorus is in danger of collapsing into the action and of never finding its own voice." This effect is countered as the song progresses, as she also analyses, by "the striking use of lyric characteristics such as repetition, alliteration, assonance, and anaphora" (81). See Schein ad 135-58 (and cf. ad 157) for a detailed list of the lyric and rhetorical effects in this song, including its metrical variety.

particularly composed.[92] Following antistrophe α he offers a seemingly objective account of

Philoctetes' attempts at hunting for food (159-168):

Νε. οἶκον μὲν ὁρᾷς τόνδ᾽ ἀμφίθυρον
     πετρίνης κοίτης.
Χο. ποῦ γὰρ ὁ τλήμων αὐτὸς ἄπεστιν;
Νε. δῆλον ἔμοιγ᾽ ὡς φορβῆς χρείᾳ
     στίβον ὀγμεύει τῇδε πέλας που.
     ταύτην γὰρ ἔχειν βιοτῆς αὐτὸν
     λόγος ἐστὶ φύσιν, θηροβολοῦντα
     πτηνοῖς ἰοῖς στυγερὸν στυγερῶς,
     οὐδέ τιν᾽ αὐτῷ
     παιῶνα κακῶν ἐπινωμᾶν.

Ne. You see his home here, double-
     doored, a rocky resting place.
Ch. Where is the miserable man himself?
Ne. To me it is clear he is dragging his step
     somewhere near, in his need for food.
     For they say that is his way of life,
     trying to slay wild beasts with
     winged arrows, miserable miserably,
     and there is no
     healer for his ills to approach him.

Neoptolemus' description of Philoctetes' condition gradually turns into an evocative imaginary

portrayal. He starts out with the facts at hand (the cave in front of them, οἶκον μὲν ὁρᾷς), and

goes on to state an ostensibly impersonal rumor, λόγος ἐστί.[93] But the next lines suggest that he

is not simply reporting but rhetorically amplifying Philoctetes' misery and the crushing effects of

his loneliness: *trying to slay wild beasts with winged arrows, miserable miserably, and there is*

no healer for his ills to approach him (165-8). The collocation σμυγερὸν σμυγερῶς, for

example, is far from neutral but almost excessively pathetic. The high proportion of spondees in

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[92] Cf. Burton 1980.228. Kitzinger 2008.80 n. 18 supplements this emotional or tonal interpretation of the metrical difference with the consideration that Neoptolemus is "gesturing and walking as he speaks [while the] chorus [is] singing and dancing its response."

[93] On the centrality of λόγος in this play see Podlecki 1966; on language more generally Segal 1981. When Neoptolemus cites what *they say*, he is clearly under the influence of Odysseus, an influence which he seemingly starts to shed already in the next lines.

these anapests, already adding a somber coloring, is further stressed by the long vowels and diphthongs reminiscent of pained moans, πτηοῖς ἰοῖς … αὐτῷ παιῶνα κακῶν ἐπινωμᾶν. Neoptolemus' "logos," then, exposes a certain level of emotional involvement that conjures up Philoctetes as a suffering, pitiable subject.

It is seemingly impossible to tell Philoctetes' story completely objectively, for illusive traces of his voice-in-pain spontaneously contaminate the account. In Ihde's words, rational language is punctured by the polyphony that it seeks to obscure, as Neoptolemus "gives voice" to Philoctetes despite himself. We may also recall the notion that voicing another's suffering is an act of the imagination. Indeed, as if to prove that imagination is the requirement for compassion, the chorus go on to firmly assert their pity in response to Neoptolemus' description: *I, for my part, pity him, to think how…* (169: οἰκτίρω νιν ἔγωγ᾽ ὅπως).[94] This statement marks the beginning of a full-blown lyric account of Philoctetes' survival, spanning both strophe and antistrophe, the longest stretch of song from the chorus' mouth so far. Directly reacting to Neoptolemus' preceding statement, the chorus independently evoke a vision and soundscape of the suffering Philoctetes. Thus, imagining Philoctetes and his sounds engenders fellow-feeling which breeds further elaborations of compassionate imaginations.

The sonic features of the choral song here further convey the depth of their listening and their empathic participation in conjuring Philoctetes' suffering voice. The second strophic pair (169-190) is entirely comprised of aeolic meters, identical or similar to the opening glyconic οἰκτίρω νιν ἔγωγ᾽ ὅπως. The many long syllables in this line, and in particular its repeated *o*-s, also echo the moaning-like sound of Neoptolemus' preceding spondaic anapests with their suggestive hint of Philoctetes' own vocalizations (167-8: οὐδέ τιν᾽ αὐτῷ παιῶνα κακῶν

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[94] Nussbaum 1999.258 also stresses the chorus' imaginative processes at this moment of compassion for Philoctetes.

ἐπινωμᾶν). The transition from one metrical system to the next, then, demonstrates a sonic affinity between the interlocutors' voices. Not only do the chorus echo the sound patterns of Neoptolemus' preceding words, they also develop the evocative potential contained within them. The chorus seem to be attuned to something that is latent in Neoptolemus' voice, and echoing it also reflects their openness towards Philoctetes himself. Their response to Neoptolemus, then, suggests deep listening of the kind discussed above, in reaction not to Neoptolemus' suffering but to his awareness of the suffering of another. It further demonstrates how Philoctetes' suffering reverberates through the voices of others attempting to envision it. Interestingly, the less varied meters used by the chorus suggest a more stable emotionality relative to their opening strophes, even while they allow themselves to be open to Philoctetes and influenced by his sounds.

At the same time, the chorus' expression of compassion comes in response to an absent body, and in that respect belies and undermines the depth of their listening. This song, inasmuch as it dramatizes a willingness and ability to listen empathically to Philoctetes, also brings out the difficulty of doing so. The intensity of his pain casts his body beyond reach, and gives his voice a destabilizing effect on his surroundings and interlocutors. Even as they imaginatively represent it, the chorus' elaborate description of Philoctetes' loneliness embodies, through their own singing voice, the unsettling and disorienting force of his vocal presence. The next strophe (180-7) is a good example. It also marks the chorus' further independence from Neoptolemus in their most inventive moments.[95] While the aeolic strophe started out as a response to the young man's anapests, he does not reply as we might expect at the end of the stanza; rather, the chorus transition directly to the even more expressive antistrophe (183-190):

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[95] This part of the song is "the only part of the parodos for which Neoptolemus is not the explicit audience," Kitzinger 2008.81.

κεῖται μοῦνος ἀπ᾽ ἄλλων,
στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ
θηρῶν, ἔν τ᾽ ὀδύναις ὁμοῦ
λιμῷ τ᾽ οἰκτρός, ἀνήκεστ᾽ ἀμερίμνητά τ᾽ ἔχων βάρη.
ἁ δ᾽ ἀθυρόστομος
Ἀχὼ τηλεφανὴς πικραῖς
οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει.

Alone he lies, apart from others,
among dappled and shaggy
beasts, pitiable in his pain
and hunger alike, with his incurable, uncared-for miseries.
Echo of-the-doorless-mouth,
appearing from afar,
responds to his shrill wails.

In the realm of *dappled and shaggy beasts*, the only answer to Philoctetes' bitter cries comes from *Echo of the doorless mouth*. This striking image of the nymph conjures a personified echo with an excessive mouth, producing constant and indiscriminate blabbering.[96] She is also physically distant (*seen from afar,* τηλεφανὴς). Echo mirrors Philoctetes' own constant and indiscriminate crying and shouting, and his existence in a state of wilderness, entirely devoid of human communication. The verb ὑπακούει (190) suggests the emotional relief reciprocity could have given, but this prospect is bitterly frustrated, for Echo's responses are nothing but inanimate sound. Precisely, her personification points to the fact that Echo is merely a reflection of Philoctetes' loneliness—that there is no consolation from a human response to his cries.[97]

Echo's blabbering is inanimate, for it reflects Philoctetes' own irrational sound. It is the

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[96] See Montiglio 2000.188. The adjective ἀθυρόστομος is attested only here. The scholiast on ἀθυρόστομος stresses the constancy of the sound, both of Philoctetes' cries and the echo: ἀεὶ δὲ ὀδυρομένου αὐτοῦ, ἠχὼ πρὸς τὸν ὀδυρμὸν ἀντιφθέγγεται. See Webster 1970.83 who compares Euripides' use of Echo in the opening of Euripides' *Andromeda*.

[97] Philoctetes' detachment from human community is bound up with being pushed to a savage, barely-sane existence. That his companions are non-human amplify this effect: see Segal 1981.333; Schein 2013 ad 189. Kitzinger 2008.83 comments: "The lack of another's physical and meaningful presence, which Echo metaphorically represents, stands in stark contrast to the chorus members' own echoing of each other in song. … Thus the chorus feels in a particular way the desolation and futility of a disconnected voice that only echoes itself."
For the problems with the mss. reading πικρᾶς οἰμωγᾶς ὑπόκειται and the advantages of πικραῖς οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει see Jebb ad loc; cf. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b ad loc. Willink 2003.84 prefers Musgrave's and Dain-Mazon's reading πικρᾶς οἰμωγᾶς ὑποχεῖται.

sound of Philoctetes' pain thrown back to him from the rocky surroundings, his own sound stripped of any humanly identifiable features. It is, in fact, no longer his voice, or even *a* voice, but senseless, bodiless sound. In the "duet" between Philoctetes' body and the island, his pain is given voice as that which separates from the body and reflects the threat to the body. At the same time, the metaphorical description of the echo puts in play the prevalent tendency to understand natural and inanimate sounds in anthropomorphic, specifically vocal, terms. Thus, the chorus' song formulates the complex relationship between the body and the voice that Philoctetes' pain brings to the fore. Their song also exemplifies the aesthetic possibilities to which listening gives rise. In Stewart's terms, the chorus are embodying the poetic problem of representing Philoctetes' isolated suffering: they show that thinking about it requires an inventive leap into an unknown territory, a conceptual and literal neologism such as ἀθυρόστομος (*of the doorless mouth*). Through their lyric mastery, they re-present precisely the repetitious presence of his voice, thus also solving this problem.

In chapter 4, I show that it is not the chorus but rather Neoptolemus who engages in deep listening to Philoctetes' pain. When faced with Philoctetes' presence, the chorus forego the empathic stance they exhibit in the *parodos* almost entirely. Their active participation in this opening song—an impressive lyric capacity that sounds like responsiveness to Philoctetes' pain —will thus turn out to be in opposition to their later involvement in the plot. The reading of the play advanced in chapter 4 argues that the presence of Philoctetes' body creates an ethical conflict, for listening to him and empathically engaging with his body weakens Neoptolemus' commitment to Odysseus' deceptive plan, thus blocking dramatic action. The choral song in the *parados* anticipates this challenge by suggesting lyric activity as a response to Philoctetes' sonic and vocal traces, yet exposing the gap between hearing his body and responding to its presence.

As the song ends, Philoctetes starts producing actual sounds that can be heard by the characters on stage.[98] The final strophe and antistrophe are emblematic of the power that the sounds of the suffering body can exert upon those who are able or willing to listen to it. For one, these stanzas intensify the lyric–pastoral identity of the chorus, as they at once respond to the pain of another and give it voice. The chorus thus embody a certain modality of deep listening—though one that is not straightforwardly related to action. Furthermore, this part of the song complicates the image of Philoctetes as a figure divorced from the realm of language or rational sound. His suffering body, particularly in its vocal aspects, transgresses the formal limits to which language and dramatic action might constrain it. It sends out reverberations, destabilizing the limits of on- and off-stage action, of human and inanimate sounds, and of song and noise. Even though we have seen how his pain is strong enough to dissociate his body and voice, threatening to destroy the one and de-animate the other, we also get the sense that his body is an extension of his voice in its "dramaturgical" capacities (in Ihde's terms).

In a notable shift to lyric iambs, the chorus open strophe γ by silencing Neoptolemus. The agitation is apparent throughout strophe and antistrophe, which are each comprised of one line with a double antilabe, followed by a single sentence spread over six lines.[99] The chorus point Neoptolemus' attention to a loud noise: *a thud appeared, like a companion to a suffering man* (201-3: προὐφάνη κτύπος, φωτὸς σύντροφος ὡς τειρομένου <του>). The non-specific word κτύπος suggests the noise of Philoctetes' limp. As with the metaphoric description of Echo earlier, the sound is understood in terms of a human presence and action, an indicator of the

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[98] Cf. Seale 1982.31.

[99] On the strophe's structure, see Schein 2013.150 and ad 201-2. Kitzinger 2008.84 comments that, in contrast to the first strophes, the chorus no longer wait for Neoptolemus to interpret the onstage signs for them: they are "both responsive to Neoptolemus' command and expressive of [their] own independent vision."

body.[100] Philoctetes' loneliness is once again envisioned as the companionship only of the sounds his own body produces. While the body and its sounds coexist, the noise becomes paradoxically independent of the body as it is lyrically expanded in striking metaphorical language. This time, however, the chorus is not imagining: they hear a *real sound … and [they] cannot ignore the heavy voice of a worn-out man, from afar. For he clearly laments* (205-9: ἐτύμα φθογγά… οὐδέ με λάθει βαρεῖα τηλόθεν αὐδὰ τρυσάνωρ · διάσημα θρηνεῖ). The last two words in particular suggest the poetic capacities of Philoctetes' cries: they sound clearly like a dirge.[101] As Philoctetes' body draws near, it demands more precise listening from the singing chorus, and also becomes a singing presence itself.

The antistrophe keeps alive the potential for interpreting Philoctetes musically, even while negating this option. The chorus sing (212-18):

> … ἔντοπος ἀνήρ,
> οὐ μολπὰν σύριγγος ἔχων,
> ὡς ποιμὴν ἀγροβάτας,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἤ που παίων ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγ-
> κας βοᾷ τηλωπὸν ἰω-
> άν, ἢ ναὸς ἄξενον αὐ-
> γάζων ὅρμον: προβοᾷ τι γὰρ δεινόν.

> The man is close by,
> not singing the song of the reed
> like a country-dwelling shepherd,
> but like one forced to stumble,
> he cries out from afar *io!*,
> as he discerns the harbor,
> inhospitable to a ship. He shouts out terribly.

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[100] Schein 2013 ad 189 remarks on the synesthetic juxtaposition with προὐφάνη pointing to the non-communicative quality of Philoctetes' noises, or cries (as with τηλεφανής Ἀχώ, 189). References to Philoctetes' faraway body repeat as he nonetheless is heard by the chorus onstage (βαρεῖα <u>τηλόθεν</u> αὐδα, 208-9; βοᾷ <u>τηλωπὸν</u> ἰωάν, 216-7). Drawing synesthetic attention to the onstage action, the chorus stresses the self-reflective quality of this scene, as it directs us "to consider the media of its presentation and the circumstances by which we have it before us" (Falkner 1998.31 and *passim* on metatheater in this play).

[101] On this passage see Nooter 2012.126, who reads even φθογγά as "voice" (and see n. 107 below). It could be argued that the mention of dirge stresses rather the unmusicality of Philoctetes' voice in pain, his howls and keening. Yet, it can also be thought of as a distinct poetic genre with musical features; on the θρῆνος as a genre, see Swift 2010, ch. 7. Cf. also Kitzinger 2008.85: "It is as if [the chorus] is hearing music." θρηνεῖ is an emendation accepted by most editors. See Schein 2013 ad loc for its thematic merits and cf. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b ad loc.

The song ends with Philoctetes' horrible shouts. Yet the chorus have strangely specified that he is not singing a bucolic *song of the reed* (213: μολπὰν σύριγγος), like a rustic shepherd.[102] Rather, his is a cry of grief, ἰωά. As Sarah Nooter argues, Philoctetes is not an inarticulate savage. Rather, his utterances are poetic instances inasmuch as they are stylized expressions of grief (and will later become poetically powerful invocations).[103] By rejecting the bucolic mode of poetry for Philoctetes, the chorus' song nonetheless raises the possibility that he is one who sings with special sensibilities to and reciprocity with nature.

Connecting Philoctetes with the music of the reed or panpipe further blurs the boundary between animate and inanimate sounds. From Aristotle's *De Anima*, we learn that the term *voice* (φωνή) was applied to wind instruments metaphorically.[104] In the Athenian *imaginaire*, the common wind instrument, the *aulos*, had the capacity to substitute and appropriate the human voice. By physically taking over the vocal apparatus and the mouth, wind instruments impede both speech as rational vocalization, and voice more broadly, as a uniquely individual and identifiable human feature. As Cavarero writes, "the flute lets itself, dangerously, represent the [φωνή] in the double sense of the term: voice and sound. Whoever plays it renounces speech and evokes a world in which the acoustic sphere and expressions of corporeality predominate."[105] To

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[102] See Robinson 1969.39 and n.1, with the suggestion (attributed to "Professor Dover") that "even long before Theocritus a shepherd's life and music may have been proverbially idyllic and cheerful". Cf. Rose 1976.60, who argues that the stress Sophocles puts on presenting the horrors of a life of isolation is in contrast to peaceful and idyllic portrayals of his contemporaries, Euripides and Aristophanes. Podlecki 1966 remarks that music without-flute is "a favorite oxymoron," used by Sophocles also in fr. 699 P (234 n. 4).

[103] On Philoctetes' musical voice, see Nooter 2012.126, 127: "Philoctetes' cry is lament itself." Kitzinger 2008.85, on the other hand, claims ἰωά "does not belong to any recognizable social context." Philoctetes first words onstage are ἰὼ ξένοι (219); cf. Kamerbeek 1980.54, who points out that ἰωά is *hapax* in tragedy and has special significance here.

[104] *De Anima* 420b5-9: ἡ δὲ φωνὴ ψόφος τίς ἐστιν ἐμψύχου· τῶν γὰρ ἀψύχων οὐθὲν φωνεῖ, ἀλλὰ καθ' ὁμοιότητα λέγεται φωνεῖν, οἷον αὐλὸς καὶ λύρα καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τῶν ἀψύχων ἀπότασιν ἔχει καὶ μέλος καὶ διάλεκτον. ἔοικε γάρ, ὅτι καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ταῦτ' ἔχει.

[105] Cavarero 2005.69. On the cultural significance of the *aulos*, see Wilson 1999, esp. 82-84 and 90 on its ambivalent φωνή. We should bear in mind that this *parodos* (like virtually all song on the tragic stage) would have been accompanied in performance by an *aulos*, adding another layer of multivalence to this evocative negation of musicality.

get back to the *parodos* at hand, the *song of the reed* here conjures a corporeal sound–voice, poetically stimulating but also dangerous in its potential loss of human identity in and through musical expression. In the song's last strophic pair, terms for voice or sound are used repeatedly: φθογγά (206), αὐδά (208), ἰωά (216). These terms can all be used, like φωνή, more or less metaphorically, to refer to the human voice, to divine speech or divinely-inspired song, and to musical instruments. In this context they conjure cries of distress.[106] The sound-voice ambivalence is thus intrinsic to the situation. The chorus hear and interpret the sounds of the approaching Philoctetes, who comes to epitomize the savagery as well as musicality of the human voice. As the image of the pipe is at once evoked and effaced, so too Philoctetes' voice becomes at once an index of the (suffering) body and that which points beyond corporeality.

In the *parodos*, mention of the shepherd's song is thus loaded with poetic reflexivity. It suggests the generic affinities of the chorus' very song: in giving voice to Philoctetes, the chorus are engaged in the pastoral mode, for they are quite explicitly not singing and making-present their own suffering, but another's. At the same time, Philoctetes' voice is repeatedly recreated as unanswered throughout the song, implicating the chorus in lyric proper: the genre of the suffering *I* addressing the (absent) other. The *parodos* of the *Philoctetes* is a performed meditation on the capacities of the singing voice, embodying at the same time both the pastoral empathic creativity entailed in listening and the lyric longing for listening.[107] This, in turn, is embedded in the uniquely dramatic genre of *amoibaion*, which inherently performs different kinds and degrees of responsiveness between characters–singers.

The poetic presence of the chorus in this song is remarkable; through this presence they

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[106] On the terms for sound and voice see Ford 1992, 173-9. Heracles' voice at the end of the play is called αὐδή (1411).

[107] Note, though, that throughout this dissertation, *lyric* refers not to the genre of poetry in the first person, but to the song parts of tragedy. That this latter use of *lyric* is technically a misnomer is acknowledged above, ch. 1 n.1.

become a pastoral-lyric conduit for Philoctetes' own poetic magnitude. In this unmistakably great poetic moment, their listening functions on multiple and interdependent levels: their role as a singer in dialogue with Neoptolemus is informed by their listening to Philoctetes and by his gradual coming-into-presence as an independent lyric force. Symptomatically, in contrast to the *amoibaia* I deal with in the following chapters, the chorus here are not formally in dialogue with a person in pain. In this *parodos*, listening to the absent person of the suffering Philoctetes is the thematic issue that eclipses the formal considerations of listening between the partners of the *amoibaion*. This song is paradigmatic for the way the body and voice in pain figure in listening, especially within the dramatic context of sung dialogue. The focus of the next three chapters, by contrast, is Sophoclean *amoibaia* which explore listening and responding directly to a suffering individual.

3. Manipulative Listening: Mourning and Revenge in Electra

3.0 Introduction

Sophocles' *Electra* is one of his most controversial tragedies.[1] Many scholars have commented on the uneasy moral picture the play paints, as there is hardly any hesitation on the part of the murderers before the matricide and little remorse after it; as one scholar simply puts it, Orestes and Electra seem "to get away with murder."[2] The present chapter suggests that listening in the play functions in such a way as to raise a subtle internal critique of the matricide. This happens through a change in Electra's mode of listening: at first, her listening is fundamental to the empathy she engenders, but, at the end of the play, this listening is absent.

In the previous two chapters, listening was conceptualized in a way that helped shed light on the chorus' reactions to the protagonist's pain and suffering. Yet, the previous discussions also emphasized that a crucial aspect of empathic engagement was its mutuality. Supporting deep listening through dialogue is a joint effort that entails vocalization by both sides. Concomitantly, empathy depends not only on the way the empathizer (chorus, therapist, consoling friend) listens but also on the way the object of empathy listens. This may seem like an inversion of the dynamics of empathy but in fact underscores its two-sided nature. The present chapter highlights this "other side" of empathy, focusing more on Electra's own listening in her interactions with the chorus and with Orestes. Thus, the way the chorus listen to Electra is only a partial concern here. The chapter studies listening as a power wielded by Electra and the moral and emotional consequences it has in the drama. To the extent that Electra's listening is a tool used to gain

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[1] Schein 1982 calls it "A Sophoclean Problem Play". See e.g. Segal 1966.473-4 and Finglass 2007.8-10 for the controversies the play has generated.

[2] MacLeod 2001.1. For a very useful summary of scholarship on the play see her introduction, pp. 5-20. On Orestes' lack of scruples cf. Linforth 1963.89, 120-21.

support for the revenge she desires, listening here is no longer an act of unquestionably positive ethical value, as discussed in chapter 2.

I identify Electra's listening as a feature of her compelling lyric voice: it operates in song and through meter, and is manifested in particular in the lyric dialogues she shares with the chorus.[3] This chapter claims that Electra has a distinctive capacity to tune into and echo the sound of her interlocutors' song while rejecting its practical and moral sense. Thus, this chapter deals with dialogues where the interaction is closer to the *amoibaion* of *Antigone* than that of *OT* (as discussed in sections 2.2 and 1.4, respectively). Even more than in Antigone's shared song with the chorus, metrical harmony in *Electra* often highlights a sense of miscommunication between the singers. In what follows, I will show that Electra's lyric voice has a central role in the moral drama of the play. Its influence on characters and events changes as the action progresses and the lyric landscape of the play shifts, from mournful anticipation of the matricide to its execution.[4] I further argue that the change in the dramatic and lyric frameworks maps onto a change in the ethical outlook reflected by the action. On the one hand, the shared lamentations in the first part of the play are founded on and promote receptivity through song. That is, they take place in a space that explores the ethics of listening. The murder which transpires in the later part of the play, on the other hand, is an interaction that excludes lyric receptivity and rejects listening as an ethical standpoint.

The chorus of *Electra* have traditionally been seen, like other Sophoclean choruses, to represent conventional morality and restrained emotion, and also as particularly attached to the

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[3] Goldhill 2012 uses the term "lyric voice" to refer, above all, to Sophoclean choruses, but also to Electra's lyrics in two *amoibaia* of the play (96-100).

[4] For the influence Electra's voice has on the drama see especially Nooter 2012.

heroine.[5] Recent scholars, however, have focused on the chorus' involvement in the action, claiming they are consistently supportive of the revenge and even ultimately instrumental in carrying it out.[6] Such an interpretation of the choral participation in the matricide magnifies the disconcerting moral conclusion of the play.[7] Yet the chorus, even while they maintain a caring and tender stance towards Electra throughout the play, do express reservations about her excessive mourning from the very beginning, and also stand apart from her violent vengefulness at the end.[8] The way in which Electra manages to disarm their moral opposition regarding her lamentation, I will show, depends upon her unique mode of listening, that is, her ability to be attentive to her interlocutors.

There is a long tradition of reflection on the inherent moral difficulties that Electra's character presents to her audience. The objections to Electra are twofold: to her excessive mourning, and to her unabashed desire to take revenge on her mother.[9] In ancient practices, mourning and revenge are inextricably linked, since lamentation for a dead relative was a means of inciting his living kin to exact vengeance.[10] Thus for Electra's audience (both within the

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[5] For the chorus as morally conventional, see Burton 1980.192, Whitman 1951.164; as devoted to Electra: Kirkwood 1958.187, 189.

[6] See Gardiner 1987.157-8, 161 and Paulsen 1989.64-67 on the chorus' unequivocal support of the matricide. The particular significance of Electra' interacting with a group has to do with the involvement of the community in her mourning. On the chorus' plurality see ch. 1 above, esp. pp. 5, 12.

[7] Though it aims, in fact, to justify Electra by highlighting the chorus' involvement and moral approval (see below n. 13). Dawe 1973.204-5 found the final transmitted lines of the chorus, which seem to glorify the matricide, intolerable, and excised them. Cf. Kells 1973 and Kamerbeek 1974. Gardiner 1989.159-60 and MacLeod 2001.183-4 argue for the opposite.

[8] Finglass ad 1384-97 (p. 504) claims that the chorus' assessment of the matricide highlights the complicated moral view of the revenge and "the *terrible* justice of the coming action" (emphasis added). Danze 2012.79-90 suggestively analyzes how the chorus refrain from expressing pity towards Electra.

[9] Sommerstein 1997.200-201, however, argues that in the initial stages of the drama, Electra seems plausibly to desire Aegisthus' death only and not Clytemnestra's.

[10] A paradigmatic example is found in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, 354-62, 363-71. On curses in traditional Greek mourning practices see Alexiou 1974.178-9. On the way tragedy treats the relation between lamentation and vendetta see Foley 2001, especially 24-7, 33-6. For a related approach that takes Electra's lamentation as a speech-act see Kitzinger 1991.

dramatic framework and in the Athenian theater) there is an undeniable practical value for her lamentation, and her goal, namely, avenging Agamemnon, is not *a priori* morally objectionable.[11] However, Athenian legislation curtailing manifestations of grief, particularly by women, was meant to suppress the practice of clan-managed retaliation to which female lamentation contributed. The disruptive and dissident nature of Electra's lamentation, then, would not have gone unnoticed by contemporary Athenians.[12] Indeed, the chorus explicitly criticize Electra's prolonged mourning, stressing the practical futility and political inappropriateness of her deeds.

The more urgent and obvious moral difficulty, that the revenge involves matricide, is treated directly by Sophocles (and has been a staple of the traditional handling of the myth since Aeschylus). A central approach in current scholarship of the play focuses on the doubts and questions the tragedy raises about the justice of the vengeance and the moral character of the sibling agents.[13] Two important recent studies argue that Electra is aware of the moral reprehensibility of the revenge she seeks. Leona Macleod's monograph is a coherent account of how the play and, indeed, Electra herself do not simply dismiss the moral difficulty inherent in the matricide, but rather present the complexity of an act that is both just and shameful.[14] In his Cambridge commentary, P. J. Finglass shows how Electra's arguments reflect judgment on her

[11] This in contrast to modern or Christian squeamishness about revenge per se which often taints discussion of the play, as pointed out by Alexanderson 1966.98, Stevens 1978.119, Gardiner 1987.159-60 and MacLeod 2001.16.

[12] Foley 2001.145-171. Even from the point of view that recognizes the social conventions inscribing lamentation and revenge, there is futility in Electra's actions, since she keeps inciting an absent person, namely Orestes, one whom, as we know from the prologue, decided to carry out the revenge before he ever heard her. For this line of thought cf. Swift 2010.350. See Seaford 1985 on the perversions of death rituals in the case of Electra.

[13] Cf. MacLeod 2001.10-11. Earlier scholars with opposite, i.e. affirmative or optimistic, views of the tragedy have claimed, for instance, that Sophocles glosses over the problem of the matricide, Orestes' guilt and his ultimate acquittal (Jebb xl-xlii; Linforth 1963.120-25), or that the criminality of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus is highlighted to make their murder justifiable (Bowra 1944.229, 259). The 'optimistic' reading goes back to Schlegel 1876.131-2. One recent configuration of the affirmative view is found in Gardiner 1987 and Paulsen 1989. Both these critics focus on the character of the chorus and its supportive involvement in the revenge. Gardiner's justificatory assessment of the revenge extends to viewing Electra "as a normal, decent woman" (161).

[14] MacLeod 2001.20, 93-4, 183, 185-7.

supposedly just call for violence. Throughout, however, he stresses that we are made to sympathize with Electra's character, specifically in comparison with Sophocles' heartless Clytemnestra.[15] As another scholar has recently written, in the case of Electra, "we can sympathize with [her] … (as indeed the play expects us to do …) yet still recognize that [her] actions are morally problematic."[16] These scholars, then, bring out how complicated moral approval and empathy are in the case of Electra.

My reading of the play essentially aligns with this approach, since I also claim that Electra's character both gains our compassion and is morally reprehensible. I go further in suggesting that this ambivalence is engrained in Electra's sympathetic qualities and inherent in the way she arouses empathy, namely, through her lyric voice. My approach differs from readings that stress the difficulty of emotionally identifying with Electra by focusing on her so-called insanity or the perversity of her insatiate and protracted mourning.[17] While the chorus raise concerns about the dangerous emotional excess to which she is given, these reservations do not amount to finding her morbid, that is, to an emotional aversion.[18] The premise of this chapter is that empathy with Electra is not only possible, but is also an inherent component of the action.

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[15] Finglass 2007.121, 139-140, 175, 251-3.

[16] Swift 2010.349 n. 109.

[17] Kells 1973 presents an extreme example of seeing Electra as insane and concomitantly disagreeable (see the comments in his introduction (10-11) on her "lack of realistic commonsense", "growing signs of madness" and finally "delirium"). Schein 1982 calls her "twisted" and "monstrous" in her hatred, though he allows that we sympathize with her and are repelled at that same time (71, 74). In his introduction, Kamerbeek 1974.20 writes that Electra's heroism comes at the price of "the harm to her soul"; *ad* 222 he comments on her "destructive element." Burton 1980 speaks of Electra being obsessed (192, 195) and "warped by her sorrows" (194). Friis Johansen's 1964 reading is ultimately sympathetic, though he sees her as a broken woman (32) who sacrifices her identity (31). Segal 1966 also paints a sympathetic picture, though he claims she suffers "an inner disfigurement" (543). Goldhill 2012.97 speaks of "Electra's violent psychopathology."

[18] For the aversion we feel to those whose grief becomes pathological cf. Freud 1917. See MacLeod 2001.16 and her note 39 for an overview of psychologistic (and to her mind, anachronistic) readings of Electra. Cf. also Gardiner 1987.145. On the perversity of Electra's conduct within the framework of ancient mourning practices see Seaford 1985. Swift 2010.350 comes close to bridging the gap between ancient and modern notions of grief: "The connection between grief and vengeance is disturbing, for it contradicts the traditional model whereby mourning is naturally ended after a certain passage of time."

As I will show, the modality of listening which governs empathy and its manipulation in the first half of the play, and the lack of such listening from the final scenes of the play, are essential to our understanding of the moral complexity of the matricide.

In terms of the chorus' relation to Electra, their empathy towards her is a given, and remains constant throughout, even if they do not endorse her perpetual mourning. They consistently show affection and devotion to her, and are concerned for her well-being. From this position, they try to console her and restrain her emotional suffering, but repeatedly fail. At a basic level, then, the play exposes the failure of empathy in relation to grief. The chorus' capacity for active listening is repeatedly proven inadequate, which raises the question whether this kind of suffering (i.e., grief) can be listened to effectively at all. In Electra's case, the failure of listening happens because of a fundamental ethical difference concerning the appropriate reactions to the emotional pain and its causes. The chorus' dialogic action fails to the extent that they attempt, through their empathic engagement with Electra, to influence her perceptions and actions and to dissuade her from seeking revenge. Accordingly, their listening plays a more limited role in the drama relative to Electra's. Concentrating on Electra's listening, in this chapter I argue that she uses her attentiveness to manipulate her hearers. In the lyric dialogues, Electra harmonizes with her partner in song, specifically on the metric level, which signals a certain measure of receptivity. As suggested above, metrical harmony can be thought of as a superficial sign of listening; it is a prerequisite for deep listening and empathic engagement that is not necessarily taken up. In the case of Electra, metrical harmony contrasts with a harsh moral rejection, as when Electra rebuffs the chorus' advice. Her receptivity manifests through the voice but translates, in the sphere of action, to rejection. Her mode of listening is thus disturbing, I suggest, because it confuses and undermines the chorus' radical empathy. In her attempt to gain

moral support for her questionable claim, she co-opts their empathy and even resonates with it. She thereby leaves it one-sided, precisely since she can count on it being present no matter what.

Electra's listening is a feature of her lyric voice, revealed most clearly in her two sung dialogues with the chorus. The first two sections of this chapter closely examine these *amoibaia*: section 3.1 treats the *parodos* (lines 121-250), and section 3.2 the *kommos* (823-70).[19] Both songs are a form of shared lamentation, and revolve around Electra's insistence on lamenting; in both, the chorus attempt to placate Electra's grief and restrain her desire for vengeance. These attempts are categorically rejected by Electra, but she voices her opposition through a profound metrical harmony with the chorus' song. Electra's listening through lyric brings about simultaneous rejection and receptivity, and is therefore manipulative. Even though Electra's attentive listening is based on and strengthens the emotional bond between her and the chorus, she undermines the intended meaning of their words and secures her interpretation of the situation. But, even in the face of Electra's repeated efforts to undercut their voice and reject the practical and moral import of their words, the chorus maintain their empathy towards her despite their reservations. Her moral assertiveness and determination should therefore be considered in light of the possible emotional price it demands from others. Electra's manipulative listening, I believe, provides us with a clue as to why her beautifully articulated pathos not only moves us but also repels us, and thus contributes to our consideration of the moral problematics of the play from its start, even before the unquestionably horrifying matricide takes place.[20]

Listening as receptivity—and even with its moral complexities, listening in the first two *amoibaia* still hinges on receptivity—is almost entirely absent from the last third of the play,

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[19] I use the general term *amoibaion* for sections of lyric dialogue, reserving *kommos* for those which are more explicitly a lamentation. See section 1.3.

[20] See Sommerstein 1997.209 n. 50.

where execution of the murders takes center stage.[21] Consequently, the *amoibaia* become less and less lyrical; that is, the sung dialogues incorporate progressively more spoken parts. The two final sections of this chapter look at the last two *amoibaia* of the play, tracing the change in Electra's lyric voice and its effect on her interlocutors. The lyric dialogue with Orestes following the revelation of his identity (lines 1232-87) is treated in section 3.3. In this *amoibaion*, Orestes steadfastly refuses to participate in Electra's exuberant song despite his empathy towards her. While Orestes has pragmatic reasons to silence Electra, I suggest that his refusal to sing affects our understanding of Electra's lyric voice in the second half of the play, for she is now faced with a character that resists the possibility of deepening and manipulating receptivity through song. Section 3.4 deals with the final *amoibaion* of the play (1398-1441), during which Clytemnestra is killed. In this *amoibaion*, Electra does not sing at all.[22] The chorus, who had previously participated in *her* song, now respond in song to Electra's speech, which may hint that they attempt to dissociate themselves from her at the moment the matricide is carried out.

Thus, I argue that in the last two *amoibaia* of the play Electra's voice no longer wields the cogent lyric force which has come to define her up to that point. Concomitantly, I suggest that the ethical framework of the play shifts so as to preclude receptivity through listening. The shift in the dynamics of listening within the play and the corresponding change in the lyric landscape are necessitated by the drama, since Electra's vocalization of mourning no longer has a place when the revenge is being performed. The play explicitly leaves the territory of shared lamentation that dwells on the pain of grief and only anticipates revenge, so that the primary

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[21] Even Philoctetes, Electra's counterpart in manipulative listening, experiences a radical and transformative moment of listening in spoken dialogue. This shows us that manipulative listening in lyric dialogue with the chorus does not necessarily preclude receptivity in other parts of the drama.

[22] On the unusual dramatic technique Sophocles employs in the last lyric dialogue of the play see Gardiner 1987.157-8, Taplin 1984.118-9.

effect of Electra's lyric voice is displaced. Yet, the fact that when Electra no longer mourns she also no longer sings and listens in her distinct manner suggests that a crucial medium by which she engendered and commanded empathy is lost. The distance that the chorus express through their lyrical and specifically metrical separation from her mirrors the audience's intuitive horror at her bloodthirsty vengefulness. The change in Electra's voice renders emotional identification with her and moral approval of her deeds less readily available to her dramatic counterparts as well as to her audience precisely as the killings are being plotted and performed. This shift in the use of her voice, together with the ethical perspective it offers, seems to be a way in which Electra is criticized internally—that is, within the world of the play.[23] This perspective, in turn, should prompt us to further question the moral legitimacy of the manipulative listening which she earlier employed to effectively disregard the chorus' reservations.

3.1 Lamentation and Electra's Listening

Electra's mourning is the focus of more than half of the play. Up to the revelation of Orestes' identity, Electra sings two laments with the chorus, and many of her dialogues with other characters are also centered around justifying her persistent mourning. Her first utterance, even before she comes onstage, is one of lamentation: *ahhh me, poor me!* (77: ἰώ μοί μοι δύστηνος). The cry pierces through the conversation of Orestes and the pedagogue, who are coolly plotting their moves.[24] An immediate indication of the potent lure of Electra's lamenting voice is seen in

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[23] Cf. Finglass 2007.9: "the final part of the play presents us with a far less sympathetic Electra than in, say, the parodos." This is given as an example of how his approach is a "means of coming to terms with this complicated and multiform drama." Segal 1966.503 is another example of how a subtle assessment of Electra's character is bound to encounter a contrast between her more endearing traits and her disturbing vengefulness: her "more affectionate spirit is reawakened when all her thoughts (and Orestes') bend to the matricide, the deed which cancels the most fundamental bond of *philia*"; and 518: "Electra's deepest hate rises up in the midst of her ecstatic cries of love."

[24] For the contrast between Orestes' logical discourse and Electra's language of lamentation see especially Woodard 1966; Kitzinger 1991; Nooter 2012.103-4 with n. 10. See further below in my discussion of the recognition duet between Electra and Orestes.

Orestes' wish to stay and listen; even though the pedagogue thinks he heard *one of the slaves* (78: προσπόλων τις), Orestes thinks it might be Electra who is crying out. The pedagogue hurries Orestes offstage, presumably recognizing the danger of exposing Orestes to such an emotionally powerful voice.[25] Electra's voice, then, is presented as irresistible and threatening even from offstage, beyond the official spatial limits of the action.[26]

She then enters in a song of lamentation. This is an exceptional monody in the surviving works of Sophocles.[27] As a prologue to the present discussion of Electra's powerful lyricism and her talent for generating and engaging in listening, two aspects of this song are particularly noteworthy. First, Electra's lament sounds like a dialogue even though she has no interlocutors onstage. The song opens with a set of apostrophes, invocations of the cosmic elements as witnesses of her misfortune (86-90), which put her audience in a similar position of hearing and bearing witness.[28] Next, her extraordinary claim that she *will not cease from [her] dirges and miserable lamentations* for as long as she lives sounds especially like a retort (103-6: ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὲν δὴ λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων, ἔστ᾽ ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἄστρων ῥιπάς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ᾽ ἦμαρ).[29] It seems like a response which both recalls and anticipates actual complaints or at least doubts about her incessant mourning. In both cases, Electra explicitly acknowledges that

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[25] Cf. Kitzinger 1991.302: "He [the pedagogue] implies that to wait and listen to her would be to endanger the success of their endeavor. Orestes' mission and Elektra's voice are at cross-purposes from the very start, in their mode if not their aim." Minadeo 1994.107 points out that the pedagogue "rejoins with the strongest negative in the Greek language: *hekista*, 'absolutely not'." The danger of tarrying is, of course, practical, and the cry may signal to them actual danger from within the house with which they are not prepared to deal yet.

[26] See Ringer 1998.142-3 on the powerful (and birdlike) effect of Electra's voice as well as the dramaturgical surprise of having it first heard from offstage.

[27] I will consider this a lyric song following Burton 1980.189 and Esposito 1996.98, who also note the uniqueness of this monody and the dialogic *parodos* immediately following it. Finglass's extensive notes *ad loc*, pp. 117-21 treat the metrical peculiarities of the song, concluding that it is "a system of recitative anapests which at 88-89 and 105-6 *moves towards lyric*" (118, emphasis added). He also argues for the strophic structure of the monody (120), which seems to reinforce its reading as a lyric passage.

[28] Cf. Nooter 2012.105.

[29] On Electra's elaborate phrasing for "as long as I live" see Nooter 2012.106. Cf. Swift 2010.338 on this passage.

her lamentations have been frequent and numerous throughout the years, showing a compelling sense of self-awareness.[30]

The second noteworthy element of this song is Electra's unbearable loneliness. Her hope for the return of Orestes is not framed only as a call for an avenger but also for a companion to her in her pain: *for I have no longer strength to bear alone the burden of grief that weighs me down* (119-20: μούνη γὰρ ἄγειν οὐκέτι σωκῶ λύπης ἀντίρροπον ἄχθος).[31] The final line of the monody, especially the word οὐκέτι (*no longer*), forcefully brings out how weary she is of the continuous emotional stress her lamentation has put on her, not to mention the mistreatment she suffers by the hands of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, her father's murderers.[32] Though the monody contains formal features of a lament, it is missing both the communal response that would normally support it, and its intended addressee, the one who would act upon the call for revenge. Yet, even if the song points to its insufficiency as a social action and an emotional outlet, its lyric effectiveness can hardly be denied, for Electra's voice successfully draws her audience into her solitary experience of misery.[33] Furthermore, we know from her brief cry from offstage that her voice can affect the potential avenger Orestes. Even on an empty stage Electra's voice is marked by its ability to create an emotionally compelling dialogue, and in that sense commands listening.

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[30] The monody and *parodos* present us with "a single instance taken from a lifetime of woe" (Finglass 2007.121). Gould 1978.52 comments on Electra's self-awareness, as does Finglass ad loc. On the continuous nature of Electra's laments see Foley 2001.149 and Swift 2010.337-8. Aegisthus' absence, however, makes this particular interaction unusual. See Nooter 2012.105 n. 14.

[31] This is the translation of Lloyd-Jones 1994.

[32] For Electra's loneliness and misery cf. Whitman 1951.155; Burton 1980.189; MacLeod 2001.40. Scott 1996.154 suggests that the chorus enter while Electra sings, which could significantly change the dynamics of the solo song.

[33] Kitzinger 1991.304 claims that Electra's lament "simultaneously describes and performs its function." However, see Swift 2010.338: Electra's "indefinite repetition of the first stages of mourning is… indicative of her inability to move on from the past, and as such marks her grief out as socially abnormal." She later points out that Electra's mourning is not a "causal factor" in determining Orestes' actions (350). MacLeod 2001.39-40 explains how Electra's lament is ritually anomalous but still effective. Cf. Seaford 1985. Foley 2001.149 and 157 argues that the choral participation in her lament later in the *parodos* is traditional. Cf. Gardiner 1987.146-7.

The way in which Electra herself listens soon becomes clear in the *parodos*. The entry of the chorus, a group of women older than Electra, marks the beginning of a long lyric dialogue between them. As Electra herself did, they mention the excessive quality of her mourning at the very beginning of their song: they ask why she is *always* wasting away in an insatiable lament for her father, murdered *long ago* (122: ἀεί ; 124: πάλαι).[34] Electra's first response expresses her respect for the women through the polite address *race of noble ones* (129: ὦ γενέθλα γενναίων) and her acknowledgement that they have come to comfort her (130: παραμύθιον).[35] She reveals an even more acute awareness of her own situation and the interpersonal one in the emphatic tricolon statement *I know and understand this, and it does not escape me* (131: οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνίημι τάδ', οὔ τί με φυγγάνει). But she then no less emphatically refuses to let go and stop lamenting, and begs the chorus that they let her maintain her distraught emotional state (135: ἀλύειν). The request is modeled precisely on the fact that they are in a relationship of mutual affection: *You who repay kindness in every sort of friendship* (134: ὦ παντοίας φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν).[36] Electra accepts the empathy offered by the chorus but entirely rejects their advice. Her behavior, then, shows a strange mixture of bitter determination with amiability and gratitude. It is clear that she is aware and responsive to the choral empathy, and her own affectionate words enhance the possibility of emotionally identifying with her. Yet the fact that she spurns the chorus by being receptive to their song shows that this is not simply a case of disagreement despite mutual affection; rather, her articulate refusal depends on and reflects their emotional bond, and therein lies what I call her manipulative quality.

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[34] This already sounds like a rebuke. Cf. MacLeod 2001.45 and Paulsen 1989.31 *pace* Gardiner 1987.143.

[35] Budelmann 2000.252-3 comments that the term γενέθλα is connected to the chorus' wider civic perspective.

[36] On the affection between Electra and the chorus see in particular Gardiner 1987.143-5.

The metrical system of the first strophic pair reinforces the ambiguous dynamics of acceptance and rejection, reflecting Electra's ability to listen manipulatively. The chorus' part here is varied, starting with aeolic meters (121-3), moving into dactylic tetrameters (124-5), and ending their song in a cadence of two iambic lines (126-7).[37] Electra's response is predominantly dactylic. After a short sequence of iambs (128-9) she goes on to sing four lines of dactylic tetrameters (130-33) and six additional dactyls (134), ending with two short iambic lines (135-6).

ὦ γενέθλα γενναίων,		ia ∧ia∧
ἥκετ᾽ ἐμῶν καμάτων παραμύθιον.	130	4da
οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνίημι τάδ᾽, οὔ τί με		4da
φυγγάνει, οὐδ᾽ ἐθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,		4da
μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχειν πατέρ᾽ ἄθλιον.		4da
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ παντοίας φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν,		6da
ἐᾶτέ μ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἀλύειν,	135	ia ia∧
αἰαῖ, ἱκνοῦμαι.		∧ia∧ ∧ia

Like the chorus, Electra uses dactyls and rounds them off with iambic cadences. This is a typical example of metrical echoing of the chorus by Electra. In this sense, her response sounds harmonious with the choral song and reflects attentive listening. Yet, the extended run of repeated dactyls perhaps communicates her assertiveness and persistence more than her responsiveness to the chorus' song. That the dactylic tetrameters are non-spondaic contributes to the insistent effect of the lines, for it produces a sequence of sixteen identical rhythmic units with a regular throbbing ictus.[38] Even while she maintains her sympathetic features, namely her ability to harmonize with the choral song, Electra's dactyls are a rhythmic element which helps

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[37] On the iambs as clausulae, or cadences, to the dactyls in the *parodos* as a whole see Finglass 2007.136.

[38] Dale 1969.208 comments that Sophocles uses dactylic runs in contexts of "vehement rejection". Finglass 2007.136 mentions "the rapid sweep of the largely uncontracted [i.e. non-spondaic] dactyls" in this song.
The sequence of dactyls could be considered a πνῖγος (literally *breathlessness*), which West 1982.198 defines as "a very long period in uniform rhythm." Yet πνῖγος usually implies "unbroken synapheia" (ibid 93), or "word-overlap" between cola (1968.12). Dale, however, also uses the term for sequences without overlap (12 and 35). The cola of the present passage emphatically coincide with word-endings, so are perhaps not as "breathless" as other such dactylic passages, e.g. *OC* 229ff. What all these dactylic passages have in common is the emotional and dialogic context. Cf. below on *Philoctetes* 1197-1202 and *OC* 228-36 (pp. 178-9 and 215 respectively). A similar passage of dactylic hexameters in synapheia can be found in the parodos of *OT* (151-67), on which see Dawe 1982.250-1. This song, however, is not dialogic.

to hammer home her point. This effect seems to be aided by the spondaic opening of the last dactylic line (ἀλλ’ ὦ παντοίας φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν, 134), which adds weight to the personal appeal in the vocative before it is propelled into one last rushing push in non-spondaic dactyls.

Thus the relentless rhythm of Electra’s response, especially considering the content of her words, registers as a rejection of the chorus’ affectionately worded advice. The iambic cadence of the last lines of this passage (135-6), a significant feature of her metrical echoing, may soften the effect of the insistent dactyls.[39] Thematically, though, it expresses Electra’s determination to go on lamenting no less forcefully, because here she asks to be left to her devices. Furthermore, in this short section she actually acts out the lamentation, primarily by allowing her voice to break out in an interjection of grief, αἰαῖ. From ἐᾶτέ onwards, her words are made up mostly of vowels and diphthongs, so that there is a sonic continuity leading to and extending from the non-verbal exclamation (especially the sequence ειν αἰαῖ ἱκνοῦμαι). That is to say, the entire cadence is suggestive of the sounds of grief-struck wailing, as represented by the interjection.[40]

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[39] Scott 1996.155 also speaks of Electra “echoing” the meters used by the chorus, but for him this only “reflects the basic agreement” between them.

[40] Implicit in this claim is the notion that tragic interjections are a conventional stylized version of inarticulate emotive sounds, and that on the spectrum of utterances between the entirely inarticulate to the reflective and referential produced by the human voice, tragic interjections are somewhere in between. We can thus allow for a certain resemblance rather than a decisive boundary between referential language and (tragic) interjections, and point to the emotive, interjectory quality of the sound of certain statements—not their content, which can obviously have an emotive function as well. This idea is further explored in the discussion of *Philoctetes* below (ch. 3). On the emotive and referential functions of language see Ogden and Richards 1923.13; see also Jakobson 1960.
The antiphonal lament at the end of Aeschylus’ *Persians* offers a wide variety of woeful interjections made up entirely of vowels, including, among others: οἰοῖ (931) and οἰοιοῖ (955, 967), ἰὼ ἰώ and ἰὴ ἰή ἰὼ ἰώ (974, 1004), ἐέ ἐέ (977) and αἰαῖ αἰαῖ (1039). This lament may be further compared to our passage from *Electra* in that the environment of mournful interjections seems to spill over to the referential language surrounding it, or, to look at it differently, is reinforced by clusters of words that are made up of similar vowels and diphthongs. So, to cite but two examples, the line containing οἰοῖ (931): ὅδ’ ἐγώ, **οἰοῖ, αἰακτὸς** with its corresponding line **ἵετ’ αἰανῆ καὶ** πάνδυρτον (941); ἰὴ ἰή ἰὼ ἰώ (1004) with its corresponding line **νέα νέα δύα δύα** (1010). A similar effect may be traced in non-corresponding lines as well, but the sense that the non-referential language of grief infects the entire discourse is arguably more forceful where response also points to the structural similarity between two utterances, one interjectory and the other not. The first example here (931) further shows that the distinction between non-verbal interjections and referential words is inherently blurred, since Greek can derive substantives and verbs from interjections, here αἰακτός, a form of αἰάζω derived from the exclamation αἰαῖ. This is a feature of the language that tragic discourse puts into great effect. See Lateiner 2014.

Electra, then, is vocalizing her insistent lamentation both in her argument and through the sound of her utterance. The first strophe of the *parodos* illustrates how Electra manipulates the sound of her interlocutor's song: she uses similar metrical elements to convey an opposite, irreconcilable sense, while also adding a layer of meaning through the sonic dimension of her lament-like cadence.

The corresponding antistrophe features the same metrical distribution of dactyls and iambs, so that a similar dynamic of listening is again sonically brought to the fore, wherein Electra's voice at once echoes the chorus metrically and exhibits her insistence and refusal to compromise. The antistrophe also marks a shift towards explicit moral argumentation from the chorus against Electra's lamentation. They sing of the function of lament in terms that seem wholly alien to her considerations, worrying about its practical futility and explicitly characterizing her mourning as *unmeasured* (140: ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων).[41] Electra's response to the choral arguments now lacks the reverence of her earlier address to them, and rather bluntly describes their advice as foolish (145: νήπιος).[42] The chorus' consolation is as traditional as ever when they express the notion that mortals must accept death, as they do at the opening of the second strophe, in response to Electra's glorification of Philomela and Niobe, mythical figures emblematic of relentless lamentation for loved ones.[43] The metrical harmony of the shared song, and hence the responsiveness between Electra and the chorus, now stands in greater contrast to their moral discrepancies. Yet Electra's consistent metrical echoing reveals her effort to maintain

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[41] On the "futility of words" the chorus address see Minadeo 1994.114; see Schauer 2002.221 on the motif of "vergebliche Klage."

[42] Cf. Scott 1996.155; MacLeod 2001.45-6.

[43] On the opposing views of Electra and the chorus here see Gould 1978.52: "To Electra's sense of the ordered naturalness of her unceasing grief, the chorus opposes a different but equally coherent sense of natural order, one to which loss is native, in which time will bring restoral and to which Electra's grief is a senseless, even sacrilegious, challenge." Philomela and Niobe can be considered examples of an anti-social absorption in grief; see Kornarou 2010.270.

communication and to uphold her amiable features, so that the chorus can keep being well-disposed to her, despite her categorical opposition to their opinion. Additionally, it is significant that each strophe (and corresponding antistrophe) of the song is divided between the singers so that Electra always sings after the chorus.[44] Consequently, she occupies the position of respondent, and the metrical echoing is actively hers rather than coming from the chorus. Listening here is not reciprocal, for Electra constantly has a chance to listen to the choral song and then echo it. In response to the chorus' limited, but consistent, empathy, she repeatedly affirms her position through manipulative listening.

Metrically, the second strophic pair shows an even more subtle echoing on Electra's part. The chorus' song is almost entirely iambic, with only two dactylic lines (157, 162 ~ 177, 182). The first in each of these pairs (157, 177) is stressed both metrically, for it consists of six mostly spondaic dactyls, and thematically, since a potentially forceful argument is used. But each nonetheless fails to convince Electra. In the strophe, the chorus use her two sisters as models for acceptable moderate behavior (157: οἵα Χρυσόθεμις ζώει καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα); in the antistrophe, they urge Electra not to bring about the wrath of her enemies through her excessive behavior (177: μήθ' οἷς ἐχθαίρεις ὑπεράχθεο μήτ' ἐπιλάθου).[45] Both arguments, then, are rebukes against Electra's uncompromising conduct. It is possible that with these statements, the chorus are picking up on Electra's firm use of spondaic dactyls from the preceding strophic pair and thus reflecting an attentive listening of their own. In other words, they try to persuade Electra by the same metrical means with which she rejected them earlier. Electra's response in each strophe, however, while bookended by lyric iambs, features the same non-spondaic dactylic tetrameters

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[44] Burton 1980.190-1, Gardiner 1987.145 and Scott 1996.156 have commented on this feature of the song.

[45] On the chorus' concern here as practical rather than ethical see Gardiner 1987.144; MacLeod 2001.47-8 and cf. Finglass 2007 ad 213-20.

as before. Again, her resistance to the chorus' arguments is voiced in an insistent sequence of sixteen regularly recurring beats in a row, a rhythmic tenacity that mirrors her emotional adamance and refusal to compromise or to be consoled.

Indeed, the arguments she raises refer precisely to her fixed and sterile state: *childless* and *unwed*, she waits tirelessly for Orestes (164-5: ὅν γ᾽ ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ᾽, ἄτεκνος, / τάλαιν᾽, ἀνύμφευτος αἰὲν οἰχνῶ). Her use of dactyls, perhaps, is a rhythmic way of responding specifically to the arguments which the chorus pronounced in the same meter in order to repudiate them. More forcefully, however, the repetition of the dactylic pattern with which she first expressed her resolve in the preceding strophic pair flags it as a metrical motif, highlighting her rigidity as characteristic. At the same time, it still signals her receptivity to the choral song, so that her ability to echo her interlocutors while disregarding their advice becomes a typical feature again. Even if the chorus are trying to do the same—to repeat a metrical pattern used by Electra in order to recommend an ethical perspective opposed to her own—in this dialogue she dominates the dactyls as a tool for manipulative listening. That is to say, she establishes her talent in using her interlocutor's meter to oppose their arguments, echoing the (rhythmic) sound of their song to undermine its sense.

Electra's reaction to the chorus' suggestion that the return of Orestes is imminent reveals a different manifestation of her manipulative listening and another way in which it affects the dialogue. The chorus consistently separate the hope for Orestes' return as an avenger from Electra's overindulgence in lamentation. This hope is offered as an alternative to exasperating her enemies with constant mourning (180ff). They mention Orestes together with the two sisters living within the palace, as if his return is a certainty (159ff). Electra, however, links together Orestes' absence with the need for lamentation. Indeed, his absence magnifies other aspects of

her mistreatment and becomes paradigmatic of her loneliness (164ff, 185ff). In both strophe and antistrophe, she responds to the chorus' mention of Orestes by expanding upon her misery. In the exchange of speakers at the middle of the strophe, this kind of response is voiced in another instance of metrical echoing (163-4):

> Χο.: βήματι μολόντα τάνδε γᾶν Ὀρέσταν.
> Ἠλ.: ὅν γ᾽ ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ᾽, ἄτεκνος,
>
> ‒‿‿‒ ‿‒‿‒ ‿‒‒ 2iamb, sync iamb
> ‒‿‿‿‿ ‿‒‿‒ ‿‿‒
>
> *Cho.*: Orestes, coming to this land with the aid [of Zeus]
> *El.*: Yes, he whom I untiringly await, childless…

Electra echoes the chorus' meter almost exactly (all but for the added resolution). Her words are also grammatically dependent on the chorus' words, with the relative pronoun ὅν referring back to Orestes, their last word. At the mention of Orestes, whom the chorus bring up as consolation, Electra turns to detailing her sorrows and privations, so that, effectively, the intent of the choral song has been reversed. Indeed, Orestes' neglect is conceived as the crowning act of her ongoing mistreatment. Though responsive to and harmonious with the chorus' song in terms of both the meter and the words (as the grammatical subordination shows), Electra's voice steers the conversation away from the consolation the chorus offered, and back to what she is interested in, stressing the devastation of her own situation. We can see here again her skill in employing the sound of the choral song to undermine or disregard it.

In trying to console Electra, the chorus raise plenty of moral objections to her behavior, but they remain tender and affectionate throughout. Their deeply caring and personally motivated stance can be heard in the frequent terms of endearment, and especially in *endure, my child, endure* (173-4: θάρσει μοι, θάρσει, τέκνον). This is an unusually stressed and at the same time

intimate form of the exclamatory imperative.[46] Their consistent empathy despite their disapproval paints them as truly friendly. The warmth of their responses also shows how emotionally effective Electra is in her insistent dismissal of their arguments, that is, how her rejection of them, because it stresses her devastation, does not lessen their emotional commitment to her. The epode opens with the chorus' final attempt to appease her, at once a succinct avowal of their heartfelt goodwill and an appeal to change her ways: *well, it is with good-will, at least, like a trusty mother, that I tell you, do not breed misery in addition to miseries* (233-5: ἀλλ' οὖν εὐνοίᾳ γ' αὐδῶ, μάτηρ ὡσεί τις πιστά, μὴ τίκτειν σ' ἄταν ἄταις). A heavy run of entirely spondaic anapests, it is all the more touching for its solemn brevity. Given Electra's feelings for Clytemnestra, the tenderness with which the chorus compare themselves to a mother is heartbreaking, but perhaps accounts for the utter failure to influence her.[47]

This short remark is the last the choral voice is heard in this *amoibaion*, and the rest of the epode is sung by Electra (236-50):

καὶ τί μέτρον κακότατος ἔφυ; φέρε,		4da
πῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς φθιμένοις ἀμελεῖν καλόν;		4da
ἐν τίνι τοῦτ' ἔβλαστ' ἀνθρώπων;		4da
μήτ' εἴην ἔντιμος τούτοις		2an
μήτ', εἴ τῳ πρόσκειμαι χρηστῷ,	240	2an
ξυνναίοιμ' εὔκηλος, γονέων		2an
ἐκτίμους ἴσχουσα πτέρυγας		2an
ὀξυτόνων γόων.		doch
εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανὼν γᾶ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὢν	245	2doch
κείσεται τάλας,		hdoch
οἱ δὲ μὴ πάλιν		hdoch
δώσουσ' ἀντιφόνους δίκας,		glyc
ἔρροι τ' ἂν αἰδὼς		doch
ἁπάντων τ' εὐσέβεια θνατῶν.	250	ia⌃ ⌃ia ia⌃

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[46] This imperative does not appear coupled with μοι elsewhere, nor repeated. My translation attempts a tone between the traditionally used interjection "courage!" and a more consolatory "there, there".

[47] See Segal 1966.490; Finglass 2007 ad 234. Gardiner 1987.145 mentions rather the compatibility between the chorus' likening themselves to a mother and Electra's subsequent statement that neglecting one's parents is wrong.

> But what measure of evil is there? Come,
> How can it be right to neglect the dead?
> In what man was such a thing born?
> May I never have honor among such,
> Never, if I have any good thing,
> may I live contently, if I dishonor
> my father, restraining the wings
> of shrill wailing.
> For if the dead man lies wretched
> as earth and nothingness,
> But they in turn
> Do not pay the penalty, blood for blood,
> Then reverence and piety
> of all men would perish!

Her final, impassioned refusal to compromise is marked by rhetorical devices such as successive interrogatives and anaphora (μήτ᾽ εἴ…). It opens with her characteristic sequence of non-spondaic dactyls (236-7), which shifts to spondees midway (238) and then continues with three lines of mostly spondaic anapests (239-41). The flow of repeated dactyls can by now be seen as an established meter for Electra's intransigence that exemplifies her repeated practice to listen manipulatively. The heavy regularity of the spondees in juxtaposition to the dactyls sounds no less stubborn. Indeed, it lends force to her scorn against the choral advice, which she considers ignominious.[48] Her unyielding position sounds all the more insistent in light of the contrast with the chorus' spondees at the start of the epode. Electra's use of spondees, the final metrical echo in this song, is emblematic of her listening. Her song ends with dochmiacs, a sign of her great distress but also a significant divergence from the meters used by the chorus and herself in the *amoibaion* thus far. It can be heard, then, as a final departure from the harmoniousness of the shared song and a confirmation that she separates herself from the chorus.[49]

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[48] See Macleod 2001.53-4; Finglass 2007 ad 240-1.

[49] Cf. Scott 1996.156.

Despite Electra's consistent rejection of the chorus' standpoint and her gradual transition to a more confrontational position, the chorus do not shift from their empathic stance. Their spoken words immediately after the epode affirm that, ultimately, their moral and emotional support are one: *I have come, child, in your interest and also in my own. But if I speak wrongly, have it your way: because we shall follow you* (251-3: ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ τὸ σὸν σπεύδουσ' ἅμα καὶ τοὐμὸν αὐτῆς ἦλθον· εἰ δὲ μὴ καλῶς λέγω, σὺ νίκα· σοὶ γὰρ ἑψόμεσθ' ἅμα). Their intention was originally, and remains, to align their concerns with hers, which now entails a practical decision, namely to "follow her." The suggestion that this decision is reached despite their better judgment reveals the undeniable effectivity of her voice but also, perhaps, casts a shadow on its moral effects.[50] That is to say, the chorus must forgo their moral objections in order to remain on her side emotionally.

Electra seems to take advantage of the chorus' empathy in order to disarm their moral opposition, relying on their kindness and affection even as she silences their song and dismisses their advice. At the same time—because she does listen—she manages to cement a sense of harmony between them and deepen the chorus' emotional commitment to her. The end of the *amoibaion* finds them in a state of exhaustion, as their admission of failure and their attempt to avoid further confrontation suggest.[51] Her manipulative listening takes its toll, forcing a sympathetic group of listeners to silence (in that their lyric part is over) and to dramatic collaboration despite themselves. Thus we may hear Electra's undeniably inspiring and lyrically magnificent voice as compelling, in all senses of the term. This is not to say necessarily that she

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[50] Kitzinger 1991.306 also speaks of Electra's "victory" over the chorus. Burton 1980.195 mentions that the use of ἀλλ' οὖν… γε at the beginning of the epode already denotes resignation, and considers the *parodos* a "contest" between Electra and the chorus. For a similar view of the *parodos* as *agon* cf. Esposito 1996.96, Macleod 2001.41.

[51] Swift 2010.343 remarks that this is not a "sincere capitulation by the Chorus to Electra's viewpoint". Cf. Finglass 2007 ad 253.

is threatening or calculating, but that dealing with her, even from a standpoint that is entirely empathic to her grief, entails a frustration of this empathy, since in the process it is hijacked. Furthermore, the outcome Electra wishes to bring about, namely matricide, cannot be justified but through the same manipulation of the emotional bond between her and her interlocutors. This frustration of empathy through manipulative listening will turn into something more disturbing ethically. As the first confrontation of the play, the *parodos* subtly shows the problems in Electra's moral outlook through its metrical patterns even while it presents her as a passionately moving and lyrically engaging character. The next section explores whether and how Electra's manipulative listening reflects on her ethical standpoint in her second *amoibaion* with the chorus.

3.2 Listening to Electra's Lamentation: *Kommos*

The next lyric dialogue of the play follows the false report of Orestes' death, so is properly a *kommos*, a song of lamentation shared by Electra and the chorus. This is an incredibly poignant moment where Electra, the perpetual mourner, finally sings a lament that would be appropriate, if not for the fact that she mourns a man who lives. That the lament is based on a lie may lead us to question Electra's emotional outburst and consider the effectivity of her voice deeply compromised. Yet, the lament for Orestes shows that Electra's voice is as strong as ever.[52] That she is devastated and inconsolable is more understandable than earlier, but, as before, this resistance to consolation is expressed through her distinctive form of listening. If anything, listening in this *amoibaion*, at least in the first half of the song, is more reciprocal and

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[52] A particularly strong view of Electra's voice as compromised by the Pedagogue's false report is found in Kitzinger 1991.320-3. For an opposite view see Nooter 2012.102 (with n. 4) and 112-5. Cf. also MacLeod 2001.133 on the importance of Electra's lament as "the impetus to undertake a physical action."

harmonizing than in the *parodos*. Even so, Electra once again spurns the chorus, participating in their metrical scheme in order to render their voice ineffective.

What is immediately apparent in this *amoibaion* is that the separation between the two voices, so distinct throughout the strophic pairs of the *parodos*, is much less rigid. At times, the singers permeate one another's song, interrupting and completing each other's words, their voices mutually constituting the metrical structure. This section is focused on these moments, and especially on those where a metrical unit or foot is divided between the two singers—a phenomenon which I call *metrical sharing*. The metrical harmony between Electra and the chorus in this song is apparent through metrical sharing as well as a pattern of metrical echoes. While many readers stress the rising tension between Electra and the chorus, I believe the instances of metrical sharing are indicative of a strong will and intention to listen and maintain reciprocal communication on the part of both singers.[53] They signal harmony in the basic sense of the word, a fitting together of the two voices, as well as the figurative sense, a sympathetic rapport between the two singers. Metrical sharing reveals Electra's ability to listen deeply, though the effect of her listening is manipulative as before. In this song, I suggest, the effort to maintain harmony is in place throughout the first strophic pair, though listening is ultimately unsuccessful in the dialogue as a whole.

The first instance of metrical sharing comes shortly after the choriamb-based song starts, in a moment that, on the surface, may sound emblematic of the miscommunication between the chorus and Electra (826-30):

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[53] See Finglass 2007 ad 823-70, who calls it a "staccato exchange." Scott 1996.160, who gives an ionic metrical interpretation, comments on the "disagreement in language and meter" between singers and the "disintegrating structure" of the song. I follow the choriambic interpretation, which has the advantage of fitting the word division more neatly, as Finglass 2007.354 notes.

ʼΗλ.   ἒ ἔ, αἰαῖ.
Χο.   ὦ παῖ, τί δακρύεις;
ʼΗλ.   φεῦ. Χο. μηδὲν μέγ᾽ ἀύσῃς. ʼΗλ. ἀπολεῖς. Χο.πῶς;   830

El.   Ahhhh, ayyyy!
Ch.   Child, why are you crying?
El.   Ahh. Ch. Don't shout a terrible shout. El. You will kill me. Ch. How so?

Formally, line 830 (and its corresponding 845) contains what has been called "lyrical *antilabe*."[54] This terminology refers to the change of singers within the verse (or colon); for our purposes, it is even more evocative to note the division of the metrical unit between the two singers. In this case, the second choriamb in the line is begun by the chorus and completed by Electra:

ʼΗλ. φεῦ.   Χο. μηδὲν μέγ᾽ ἀύσῃς.   ʼΗλ. ἀπολεῖς. Χο.πῶς;   (830)

ʼΗλ. φεῦ.   Χο. φεῦ δῆτ᾽· ὀλοὰ δ᾽οὖν— ʼΗλ. ἐδάμη.   Χο. ναί.(845)

‾ | ‾ ‾ ˘ ˘ ‾ ‾ | ˘ ˘ ‾ | ‾   (The symbol | marks change of speaker)

Metrical considerations aside, the miscommunication in the first strophe is seemingly apparent in the reactions of the chorus to Electra's exclamations of grief, which are typically read as unfeeling and completely tactless. Taken literally, the question *why are you crying?* could not feel more inappropriate, since the reason for Electra's tears is obvious. This reading contributes to a certain received view of tragic choruses as entities of dramatic insignificance whose utterances are dull. Yet, as some commentators have pointed out, this rhetorical question is not a request for information, but an attempt to comfort Electra. Knowing how caring they have been so far, and especially with the term of endearment that opens the question, it sounds rather like a very tender, motherly way of saying *don't cry*, not dissimilar from Thetis' question to Achilles in

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[54] Burton 1980.206, Esposito 1996.99, Scott 1996.304 n. 153 all take it to be the first such instance in Sophocles. Jebb ad 823-870 says the change of person within a verse indicates that only the coryphaeus sings; Kamerbeek 1974 ad loc holds the same view. Burton *ibid* is more cautious about assigning the whole *kommos* to the chorus-leader alone, but states "it seems a reasonable assumption that utterances of one or two words were confined to individual singers." I am in agreement with Finglass ad 830, who concludes that the matter is undeterminable.

Il. 1.362: τέκνον τί κλαίεις;.[55] I suspect we could transfer this sentiment over to the rest of what the chorus say in 830, so that both the plea *don't shout a terrible shout* and the question *how so?* say more than they mean literally—they are intended to calm Electra down in this moment of unbearable sorrow, to shield her from the depths of despair she is prone to fall into.

In this the chorus are utterly unsuccessful. That Electra sounds much less friendly to the chorus here than in the *parodos* is generally accepted, due to the obvious lack of respectful addresses or explicit mentions of the intimacy of their relationship. However, it seems probable that there is less need at this point in the drama for Electra to restate the terms of their friendship and that, in a sense, the metrical sharing brings it to the fore without recourse to words. Precisely at the instant that Electra sounds most scornful towards the chorus, with ἀπολεῖς, she also completes their song entirely seamlessly. Even though Electra refuses as before to be appeased and the brevity of her responses could signal impatience, the overriding metrical structure creates harmony and reflects a commitment to listening. If indeed this section of the dialogue is an attempt to console Electra, the metrical sharing highlights the urgency and the emotional investment of both interlocutors in the situation.

All the same, the chorus are unsuccessful in their consolation and Electra in fact sees it as insulting. That she reacts as she does is completely in character, and does not necessarily reflect the insensitivity of the chorus; it does suggest, however, that the chorus' capacity to listen to Electra in a way that would be meaningful for her is limited—perhaps, that there is no way to listen to this depth of despair if the attempt, however well-intentioned and motherly, is to restrain it. As before, Electra voices her irreconcilability by using the meter previously used by the

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[55] Paulsen 1989.47 calls it "die dümmste aller in diesem Moment mögliche Fragen"; Jebb ad 828 already recognized that the chorus are not asking Electra for the cause of her grief. For rhetorical questions, see Mastronarde 1979.12 and *passim*; Davies 1991.210; Finglass 2007 ad 827 (who also offers the Homeric parallel).

chorus and repeating it in an insistent run: *if you suggest a hope based on those who have obviously gone to Hades, you will trample even harder on me, melting in misery* (εἰ τῶν φανερῶς οἰχομένων / εἰς Ἀΐδαν ἐλπίδ᾽ ὑποίσεις, κατ᾽ ἐμοῦ τακομένας / μᾶλλον ἐπεμβάσει 831-36). The dragged choriambs of these verses echo the choral meter of the first lines of the strophe, and that of the line where the metrical sharing takes place as well. The sequence of six choriambic elements gives Electra's indignant response significant momentum, especially since most of the choriambs coincide with one or two short words, so that the repeated rhythm is stressed and mirrors her determination. Whereas the earlier choriambs of the strophe were used by both the chorus and Electra when trying to offer and maintain empathy, her voice now turns them into an instrument stressing her rejection of the chorus and separation from them. A sequence of choriambs arguably has a different sonic flavor than one of dactyls, but the way Electra echoes the meter here recalls her use of dactyls in the *parodos*: again, it reflects her manipulative listening. It shows her unique tendency to pick up on a metrical element used in the dialogue, primarily by her interlocutor, so as to transform its meaning. Doing so is a feature of, and adds to, the compelling force of her voice.

The chorus do not give up yet. In the antistrophe they offer consolation through a mythical exemplum, the story of Amphiaraus who was killed through the treachery of his wife and then avenged by his son. To one who believes Orestes is dead, as both Electra and the chorus do at this point, the parallel to Agamemnon is fundamentally inapt, as Electra points out.[56] In the second instance of metrical sharing in this song (845, corresponding to 830), the chorus realize

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[56] On the irony of this mythical parallel, which in fact fits the dramatic situation, see Kamerbeek 1974 ad 837-48 and Kitzinger 1991.320, who takes it as another example of Electra's compromised voice in the second half of the play: it "forces us to see her feelings as increasingly extraneous to the real action of the play."

the sense of what they had said through their joint song with Electra, and the inadequacy of the myth is expressed by the two in concert (845):

Ἠλ. φεῦ.   Χο. φεῦ δῆτ'· ὀλοὰ δ᾿οὖν— Ἠλ. ἐδάμη. Χο. ναί.

El. Ahh!   Ch. Ahh…yes. The murderess really—El. was killed. Ch. Indeed!

In contrast to the strophe, this line reflects what can more readily be heard as harmony and deep listening, because the interdependence between them is not only of meter but of syntax and content as well.[57] Electra's subsequent choriambic run spells out why the example of Amphiaraus is antithetical to her situation, rendering the offered consolation entirely ineffective: *For an avenger appeared for the one in mourning. But for me there is no-one, since he who once was is gone, snatched away.* (ἐφάνη γὰρ μελέτωρ ἀμφὶ τὸν ἐν πένθει· ἐμοὶ δ᾿ οὔτις ἔτ᾿ ἔσθ᾿· ὃς γὰρ ἔτ᾿ ἦν, φροῦδος ἀναρπασθείς. 846-9). This section thus conveys an insistent rejection of the chorus in a fashion similar to the corresponding sequence in the strophe. This time, however, Electra's opposition sounds less harsh, since it is in accordance with what she and the chorus just sung jointly. The sequence of choriambs, then, echoes the instance of metrical sharing in a way that maintains the mutual commitment to listening even while it drives home her inconsolability.

An additional feature of the lyric language in the first antistrophe, namely its ability to generate meaning on the referential and the emotive planes simultaneously, highlights the consonance of the two singing voices. Electra's οἶδ᾿ οἶδ᾿ (846: *I know, I know*) echoes the chorus' οἶδα (837), with which they introduced the mythical paradigm. From Electra's mouth, however, the repeated word sounds almost like a wailing exclamation. The lyricism of her voice is magnified by the transformation of real words, so to speak, into interjections.[58] That this comes

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[57] See Finglass 2007 ad 845, who suggests Electra is completing the chorus' words rather than substituting her own for them.

[58] See note 40 above.

about in a moment of literal and metrical echoing is emblematic of the interaction between her and the chorus in the antistrophe. Thus, Electra's tragic exclamation φεῦ is repeated by the chorus (845), who have so far avoided such utterances of grief.[59] The contagious quality of Electra's grief begins to be felt on the level of song itself. Their φεῦ is embedded in the syntax and the metrical structure of the line, again making the word at once a lyric interjection, a lexical unit, and part of a rhythmic structure.[60] Further in the same dense line, the choral ναί seems to operate more like an interjection, similarly to Electra's repeated οἶδ' immediately after it. Both suggest a colloquial tone of dialogue, even at this heightened moment of lyric and emotional affinity.[61] Indeed, the malleability of language they signal—the simultaneous and effective communication of information and emotion—contributes to the emotional tension and the lyric power of this song. These prosaic monosyllabic words are precisely the ones that reflect both a sense of complete mutual understanding and the chorus' submission to Electra. She has acutely perceived the shortcomings of their attempted consolation, and, as ever, has the rhetorical upper hand. But the choral voice is also instrumental in increasing the effectivity of lyric language in this shared song. This comes about through their own use of language and the interplay of metrical sharing and metrical echoing which Electra masterfully employs.

The second strophic pair shows much less mutual understanding and hardly any metrical echoes. After Electra's effective dismissal of the chorus' consolation in the previous strophe, their remarks here are much meeker, and are dismissed even more forcefully. Electra's rebuffs sound angry and impatient, particularly to their feeble statement *unimaginable is the catastrophe*

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[59] Finglass 2007.356; see also Nooter 2012.114.

[60] This could possibly be seen in contrast to Electra's exclamations of 826 and 840, which are, relative to the rest of metrical system of the strophe, almost *extra metrum*.

[61] οἶδ' οἶδ(α), a relatively rare collocation, is found four times in Aristophanes (*Eccl*. 998, *Ran*. 580 and 584, *Plut*. 1080); ναί in Sophoclean lyric is found only once, *OC* 1747, in a late (and possibly spurious) *amoibaion*.

(864: ἄσκοπος ἁ λώβα), which is not at all appropriate to the horror of Orestes' reported death.[62] The single occurrences of varied metrical elements in the second strophic pair give a sense that the ability to communicate at large, and to listen intentionally, is slowly slipping away.[63] The two instances of metrical sharing in 855 and 866 are both moments where the chorus interject (their utterance completing a lecythion with Electra's). First, the question *what are you saying?* (855: τί φής;) recalls the rhetorical question *why are you crying* (τί δακρύεις;) of the first strophe. It similarly sounds like an attempt to restrain Electra from expressing her utter desperation, already obvious at the start of the strophe and gaining momentum in *no, lead me no longer astray…* (854-5: μή μέ νυν μηκέτι παραγάγῃς).[64] But the monosyllables τί φής, especially if read like an urgent plea, also have the same quality as detected earlier in οἶδ' οἶδ' and ναί, that of stretching referential language to its emotional exclamatory capacities.[65] In contrast to Electra's use of the words in the first antistrophe, however, the effect of this choral quasi-exclamation is fruitless both rhetorically and emotionally, for Electra simply keeps singing her despair uninterrupted.

In the second, corresponding moment of metrical sharing, the chorus interject with a true tragic exclamation, παπαῖ (866). Once more, their interruption does not deflect Electra's voice in the least. It shows how the choral voice is infected, so to speak, with Electra's emotional register, but devoid of its rhetorical strength. Their final utterance in the lyric dialogue, this παπαῖ expresses their resigned turn to lamentation themselves, and their defeat by Electra.[66] To the

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[62] Cf. Burton 1980.205-6.

[63] Cf. Scott 1996.160.

[64] See Jebb ad 856.

[65] See Mastronarde 1979.12 on exclamatory rhetorical questions.

[66] On the chorus' tragic exclamation here see Gardiner 1987.153; Nooter 2012.114.

extent that the chorus listen in order to comfort Electra, their listening falls flat; all that is left is their rather faint echo of lamentation. In other words, though their tragic exclamation is emblematic of their antiphonal participation in the lament, it also reveals the limited effectiveness of such an echoing of pain, and a radical impotence of listening in the space of grief. Their attempts to restrain her grief, affectionate as they may be, cannot but fail, for Electra's misery is too acute to be suppressed. The second antistrophe demonstrates that the gulf between the two singers deepens as the choral voice becomes less responsive, even while it features such prima facie harmonious echoing. Electra's disregard for the choral interruptions shows how unsuccessful listening has become on both their parts.

In this situation, the metrical sharing becomes a sign of the tenuousness of the once harmonious relationship between the two, indicating the inherent but ultimately powerless empathy of the chorus. Such a paradoxical effect of metrical harmony is something we will see recurring in Sophoclean *amoibaia*. Despite the formal cohesion and euphony, which nonetheless reflect an attempt to maintain communication, metrical harmony in Sophocles more often than not reveals an impossibility to remain in empathic contact. In this case, since Electra is not an active participant in this metrical sharing but, rather, is indifferent to it, it highlights the autonomy of her voice and her separation from the chorus.

As in her first exchange with the chorus, this *amoibaion* reflects Electra's invincible lyric potency and her ability to disarm any moral reservations about her passionate mourning. As before, she similarly co-opts the chorus' metrical pattern, transforming it from a medium which facilitates and sustains empathy to one which rejects that same empathy and proves it inadequate. The manipulative listening she thereby exhibits is as powerful as ever. Yet, her lament for Orestes, whom she has every reason to believe dead, is less ethically problematic than was her

111

insistent mourning of Agamemnon. It is impossible not to be moved by her genuine devastation, but the choral efforts to curb it expose the difficulty of sharing it.

If Electra's manipulative listening in the *parodos* seemed ethically questionable, in the *kommos* it reveals her loneliness and the inconsolability of her pain. Her turn away from listening in the second half of the *kommos* marks the chorus' own listening as entirely insufficient. Both *amoibaia* consequently suggest the moral impotence of empathy. In the *parodos*, the first lyric dialogue of the play, Electra manages to divorce empathy from moral misgivings, proving her capacity for listening much greater than the chorus'. This also brings about the ethical ambivalence of such attentive receptivity. The chorus' moral acceptance of the heroine, dramatically crucial though it is, is a consequence rather of *her* manipulative listening. In the *kommos*, empathic listening is too limited to have an emotional or practical effect on Electra in her grief. In both cases, Electra's voice (and her listening) silences the chorus.

3.3 Revenge and the Limits of Listening

Electra's lamenting days are soon over. Once Orestes is revealed as alive and present, there is no more need for mourning, and the dramatic focus shifts to preparing and performing the murders. The recognition *amoibaion* between Electra and Orestes is a transitional moment between these two stages of the action, from lamentation in anticipation of the revenge to actual execution of the revenge. Finally, the scene is one of joy rather than sorrow. Electra insists on emotionally lingering over the newly found happiness of being united with her brother and responding to it lyrically, rather than immediately turning to the act of vengeance. While she ultimately gets free rein in this song, the dialogue also shows Orestes resolutely resisting her voice. Throughout the play, Orestes' employment of speech has been rational and calculated, concerned with the

practical execution of the plot to the exclusion of expressions of emotion.[67] In this *amoibaion* he maintains the same trend, repeatedly bringing up arguments meant to restrain Electra's singing for fear of jeopardizing his actions, and doing his utmost to avoid song himself.

This lyric dialogue, to the extent that it may be called one, demonstrates that Electra now has to reckon with a fundamentally different dramatic presence than the chorus, one which refuses to participate in her emotional lyrics—Orestes, in other words, is not a lyric presence.[68] Electra's close connection to the chorus has manifested itself in their lyric dialogues and conditioned the receptivity between them precisely as singers. It is the possibility of lyric receptivity that we will find missing between the two siblings. Orestes' non-participation in the lyric mode underlines his status as an outsider to the community of women shared by Electra and the chorus. His capacity for empathic listening with Electra is brought about in the spoken dialogue between them, but is hence limited to the spoken medium. In their *amoibaion*, Electra can no longer employ her characteristic mode of listening, since it was based on a lyrical reciprocity she enjoyed with the chorus. While not altogether absent from their *amoibaion*, listening between Orestes and Electra functions in a fundamentally different way than it has so far between Electra and the chorus. Faced with a character who does not sing, the effectivity of Electra's own song is challenged. Though Electra is possessed of a similar emotional expressivity as before, the influence of her lyric voice is compromised, and she no longer manages the same manipulation of empathy. The dynamics of listening in this song are indicative

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[67] Cf. MacLeod 2001.38-9. For the contrast between Orestes' rational speech and Electra's lyrical modes of vocalizing see Woodard 1966.142 and Kitzinger 1991. Woodard 128 highlights that in its relation to *ergon*, the *logos* of Orestes and the Pedagogue could be either true or false; he also distinguishes between logic and imaginative *logos* (131) and identifies "the incalculable power of lyric and liturgy" that Electra's *logoi* possess (132). In this sense, though he claims that her lamentation as a mode of action is "not effectively instrumental" (130), he ultimately comes close to viewing it as a speech act, like Kitzinger.

[68] Cf. Woodard 1966.139: "The seeming duet [Woodard later uses *duet* in scare quotes] between Electra and Orestes… actually shows no harmonizing at all. For Orestes does not join in; he has no lyric lines, only the rational iambics of discourse." See below on Orestes' questionable lyric participation in the song.

of how the shift in the action—from mournful, hopeless expectation of the matricide to a joyful anticipation of its imminent practicality—affects Electra's voice and renders it less compelling. This *amoibaion* thus points forward to the further change in her voice displayed in the last lyric dialogue of the play, where she is the one that does not sing.

The encounter between the siblings happens as Orestes returns to the stage with the urn purportedly carrying his ashes, after the false report of his death. This report adds to Electra's devastation (cruelly and unnecessarily, some have argued).[69] Her subsequent display of grief is dramatically essential in that it leads to Orestes' recognition of her identity, and the fact that Orestes at first withholds his compassion is instrumental to this process. While the recognition concludes with an intensely reciprocal dialogue, Orestes' rhetorical trick mars his interaction with Electra throughout the scene, even to its joyous ending. Electra's lament over the urn manifests not only the depths of her sorrow, but also her capacity to move and engage her audience by non-lyric means. It sets in motion the recognition between the two; upon hearing Electra's lament, Orestes realizes who she is and the effect his deceit has had on her (1174-7), and subsequently begins the gradual revelation of his identity.[70] The radical moment of *mutual* recognition is in Orestes' declaration of pity towards Electra: *Oh wretched, I have long pitied you, from the moment I saw you* (ὦ δύσποτμ', ὡς ὁρῶν σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι, 1199). On the one hand, Orestes gives voice to his acknowledgement of Electra as one who deserves and has aroused his compassion. On the other hand, it signals to Electra the singularity of the person

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[69] On Orestes "callous cruelty" see Schein 1982 (quote from 77) and cf. Kitzinger 1991. For opposite views see Segal 1966.513-4; Finglass 2007.456 and ad 1179. Kamerbeek 1974 ad 1177 claims that Orestes did not recognize her yet and so "had not thought of the disastrous effect" on her.

[70] On the effect on Orestes of Electra's lamentation and the delayed recognition see Segal 1966.514-6, Finglass 2007.455-7 (and see also Finglass' comment ad 1126-70: "[Sophocles] here reminds his audience of the emotional potential of a lament in plain iambic trimeters.") The first instance of recognition is one-sided—Orestes realizing that Electra is before him—and this lack of mutuality is mirrored in the absence of listening. Budelmann 2000.83 comments on the emphasis on Electra's emotions in this scene: "By giving much room to what she feels, Electra points to herself as an ultimately inaccessible person."

before her. Electra now finds that she is dealing with a unique person, the only one who ever pitied her (1200: μόνος βροτῶν νυν ἴσθ᾽ ἐποικτίρας ποτέ). Orestes admits that he has *long* felt this fellow-feeling (πάλαι), an admission which possibly harks back even to his initial response to Electra's very first (offstage) cry of woe.[71]

In this moment, which is a revelation for each of them about the identity of the other, Orestes' capacity to be receptive to Electra is disclosed. In echoing the word μόνος, emphatically repeated in the first place of both sentences, Orestes confirms his singularity and articulates his relatedness to her: *I alone am here feeling pain for your suffering* (1201: μόνος γὰρ ἥκω τοῖσι σοῖς ἀλγῶν κακοῖς).[72] Electra immediately translates this empathic relatedness into terms of kinship (1202: ξυγγενὴς). Orestes' repetition of μόνος stresses his status as a solitary individual, the sole member of her family to show her compassion. It is also in opposition to the continuous emotional support and recognition Electra has been receiving from the group of female companions who make up the chorus. The separation between Orestes and the community of women gains prominence in his initial resistance to reveal his identity before the chorus, and the consequent need for Electra's reassurance that they are well-disposed and trustworthy (1203-4).

While the kind of communal receptivity in song Electra enjoyed with the chorus is missing from her interaction with Orestes, the following spoken exchange forges a different form of listening and receptivity between brother and sister. Yet the dialogue keeps recalling Orestes' rhetorical guile, that is, his coolly ambitious, dishonest, and squarely non-empathic use of language. As the foundation for reciprocity of feeling between the two is laid down through the

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[71] Segal 1996.515 claims that Orestes' reaction to the offstage cry prepares the way for his "emotional commitment to Electra" and marks his "compassionate potential". Cf. Neoptolemus' avowal of compassion in *Philoctetes* 806.

[72] The less literal translation of Carson 2001 is particularly evocative: "No one else has ever been part of your grief."

spoken medium, the stagecraft, specifically the constant physical presence of the urn, highlights the trick that Orestes played on Electra. The protracted affair of getting Electra to simultaneously let go of the urn and recognize her brother in the living man before her requires Orestes to retract the false, yet extremely compelling, report of his death.[73] The irony of his statement *nothing of what I say is a lie* (1220: ψεῦδος οὐδὲν ὧν λέγω) would thus seem particularly acute—as he attempts to be entirely honest, his offer of genuine empathy is tainted by his previous dishonesty.

This statement comes at the beginning of a sequence of spoken lines shared by Electra and her brother, lines of *antilabe* that mark the excitement of both speakers (as *antilabe* customarily does in drama) and the culmination of the recognition scene. The reciprocity of the overwhelming emotion comes out clearly in Orestes' replies, which echo Electra's utterances (1220-26):[74]

Ἠλ. πῶς εἶπας, ὦ παῖ; Ὀρ. ψεῦδος οὐδὲν ὧν λέγω.   1220
Ἠλ. ἦ ζῇ γὰρ ἀνήρ; Ὀρ. εἴπερ ἔμψυχός γ' ἐγώ.
Ἠλ. ἦ γὰρ σὺ κεῖνος; Ὀρ. τήνδε προσβλέψασά μου
       σφραγῖδα πατρὸς ἔκμαθ' εἰ σαφῆ λέγω.
Ἠλ. ὦ φίλτατον φῶς. Ὀρ. φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.
Ἠλ. ὦ φθέγμ', ἀφίκου; Ὀρ. μηκέτ' ἄλλοθεν πύθῃ.   1225
Ἠλ. ἔχω σε χερσίν; Ὀρ. ὡς τὰ λοίπ' ἔχοις ἀεί.

El.   What did you say, young man? Or. Nothing of what I say is a lie.
El.   So the man lives?   Or. If indeed I am living.
El.   So are you he?   Or. Look closely at this signet ring
      of my father, see if I speak clearly.
El.   Oh dearest light!   Or. Dearest! I attest.
El.   Oh voice, have you come?   Or. Hear it no longer from any other.
El.   Do I hold you in my arms?   Or. So you may hold me always from now on.

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[73] Finglass 2007 suggests that "Electra's abandonment of the object will represent the abandonment of her belief in Orestes' death" (456) and that the time Orestes takes to negotiate the urn out of Electra's hands is a sign of his "consideration and precaution" (457).

[74] Concerning the long stichomythia preceding the *antilabe*, Finglass 2007.456 remarks that "Electra's feelings of closeness to her brother are not unreciprocated." Nooter 2012.114 calls the *antilabe* sequence an "antiphonal exchange," and see her analysis at 118. Cf. also Ringer 1998.192.

Orestes' retorts in 1221 and in 1225-6 gain their full meaning only as a completion of Electra's questions. As the scene reaches its climax and the siblings finally embrace, Orestes' words resonate not just syntactically with Electra's but also phonetically. He echoes her φίλτατον and picks up on her recurring labial sounds to create striking alliteration throughout their shared lines, precisely as she speaks of his beloved voice.[75] The highly poetic features of this portion of the spoken dialogue exhibit a type of listening that is almost lyrical in its intensity. However we take Orestes' choice to prolong the revelation, in this moment at least he seems wholeheartedly involved in the joyous outburst, responding to Electra's emotional vocalizations in kind. He shares in her stretching of the speaking voice to its lyrical limits, reinforcing Electra's vocal capacities and their emotional impact. At the same time, he exhibits a similar vocal capacity and, for a short moment, receptive listening in speech.[76]

All the more striking, then, are Orestes' attempts to suppress Electra's following song and his refusal to sing with her. Orestes' replies to her now are radically different from the ending of their spoken exchange in the type of listening they reflect, and signal a shift in his behavior. Electra's exhilarated song is made up mostly of lyric iambs and dochmiacs, a meter characteristic of moments of great excitement in tragedy, but Orestes responds in spoken iambs almost throughout.[77] In this sense, he is consistent with the mode in which he interacted with her a short

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[75] As Segal 1966.503 alliteratively puts it, "a flutter of *philtatai* follow."

[76] Noteworthy also are the poetic exclamations and apostrophes Orestes uses in 1179, 1181, 1183. Referring to or addressing his sister's misfortune (συμφορά), her body (σῶμα) and her way of life (τροφή), Orestes periphrastically addresses Electra herself. See Nooter 14-22 and *passim* on the lyricism of such personified apostrophes. Thus I do not agree with Finglass ad 1179 that Orestes does not address Electra in these words, though he is right to point out that Orestes' emotion is marked by his self absorption. The latter is evident in that Orestes does not respond to Electra's punctuating questions. So, his lyricism in speech is, at this earlier point, still divorced from dialogic capacities, or from the ability to listen to Electra.

[77] This feature of the *amoibaion*, that the female character sings in dochmiacs and her male partner responds in spoken iambs, is found in several recognition duets in Euripides. For a general overview of the similarities and differences between this and the Euripidean duets following scenes of recognition, see Finglass 2007 ad 1232-87 with references to analyses of individual Euripidean scenes. Cyrino 1998 examines all *amoibaia* in Euripides where one character (almost always female) sings and the other speaks.

moment before. However, because of the marked metrical disparity, the effect of his spoken

replies is now the opposite of participation in her joy. His speech becomes a sign of restraint,

meant to keep Electra's lyrical vigor at bay, and a clear refusal to engage in lyric reciprocity. This

is magnified by the content of his words, which explicitly advise silence and vigilance. The

metrical separation thus highlights the power struggle between the siblings, as Orestes displays

his emotional resistance and practical misgivings in the face of Electra's determination to

vocalize.[78] Orestes opposes the intensity of Electra's voice primarily as a hindrance to the

execution of the revenge (1236-8):

> Ὀρ.   πάρεσμεν· ἀλλὰ σῖγ' ἔχουσα πρόσμενε.
> Ἠλ.   τί δ' ἔστιν;
> Ὀρ.   σιγᾶν ἄμεινον, μή τις ἔνδοθεν κλύῃ.
>
> Or.   I am here. But wait and keep quiet!
> El.   What is it?
> Or.   It is better to be quiet, so no-one within hears.

Indeed, almost all of Orestes' utterances are comments about or attempts to silence Electra—

whether she is expressing exuberant happiness or recalling the abuse she has been suffering—

proving just how powerfully threatening they are to him (1236, 1238, 1251-2, 1259).[79] At the

same time, his replies to her frequently have a note of confirmation: rather than dismissing the

legitimacy of her experience, he upholds it but proposes that it should move her to caution.[80] In

the strophe, for example, Electra brushes off his admonition, claiming she will never deem it

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[78] The notion of power struggle is inspired by Cyrino 1998, who emphasizes the vulnerability of the female character and her subordination to the male counterpart (82 and *passim*). Yet Electra's impassioned song is far from a mark of her subordination to Orestes; see below with n. 97.
On the conflict between Orestes' practical and Electra's emotional concerns as reflected in their spoken vs. sung meters see Woodard 1966. 139; Winnington-Ingram 1980.229-30; Schein 1982.77-8. Gardiner 1987.155-6 offers an opposite view, followed by MacLeod 2001.162, who speaks of the "emotional alliance" (163) ultimately formed between the siblings in this song. Goldhill 2012.97-99 makes perceptive connections between the thematics of the play and the formal combination of speech and song in the *amoibaion*.

[79] See Nooter 2012.118-9 with n. 57.

[80] While I do not agree with Macleod 2001.162 that critics have "made too much" of the metrical disparity between Orestes and Electra, I agree with her suggestion that his cautious behavior is practical and appropriate and not wholesale dismissive of her concerns (163).

worthy to fear the *vain burden of women living inside* (1241-2: περισσὸν ἄχθος ἔνδον

γυναικῶν ὃ ναίει). In referring to the women of the house as περισσὸν ἄχθος (1241), Electra

uses the same adjective that was earlier applied by the chorus to her excessive behavior (155).

This underscores the disturbing, indeed tragic, affinity between the women of the house of

Agamemnon.[81] Orestes immediately retorts that she should be on her guard, precisely because

she *knows from experience* the violence women are capable of (1243-4: ὅρα γε μὲν δὴ κἀν

γυναιξὶν ὡς Ἄρης / ἔνεστιν· εὖ δ' ἔξοισθα πειραθεῖσά που). Both of them refer generally to

women: Electra's striking collocation expresses her contempt for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus,

(perhaps even Chrysothemis), and Orestes' warning seems to refer to the first two as well.[82]

While Electra is flaunting her supposed separation from the royal house, Orestes reminds her that

she is bound to her kin through the abuse they have perpetrated on her, as well as through the

revenge she is plotting against them. His statement thus ironically betrays her own latent

violence.

In this way, then, Orestes at once affirms and attempts to reconfigure Electra's

understanding of the events and relationships within the house. Therefore, his reply here can in

fact be taken as indicative of very intent listening, since he offers not merely an echo of her

words but seeks to transform her experience from within. Indeed, in contrast to the previous two

amoibaia, where Electra was virtually always in the position of respondent to the chorus, in the

case of this dialogue the task of listening is often given to Orestes as the one responding to

Electra's song. Yet because of his fundamental opposition to Electra's preferred mode of

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[81] For the similarity of character between Electra and Clytemnestra see Kiztinger 1991.313; Goldhill 2012.97. Cf. Segal 1996.484: "[Sophoclean heroes] are never so independent of their world as they strive to be, and this is what makes them tragic." In this regard see also Woodard 1966.126: "[Electra's] form of heroic action seems incommensurable with the men's activities"; and cf. Van Nortwick 2015.21.

[82] See Kamerbeek 1974 ad 1240-42 for the suggestion that Electra includes Aegisthus among the γυναικῶν.

vocalization—the lyric mode—and his rejection of the very appropriateness of vocalizing at all, Orestes' listening cannot be effective as such, for it crucially lacks in receptivity. His attempt to transform Electra's experience radically disregards the importance and power of her lyric voice. For her, silence cannot be a suitable course of action or an affirmation of her suffering; rather, lyric vocalization has always been her foremost means of denouncing her oppressors' wrongs and, more importantly, commanding the empathy of her audience.[83]

Electra responds to Orestes' mention of her trials with an outburst of pain, which is also a deliberate refusal to keep silent about them. It is an utterance of remarkable lyricism—first, the drawn-out mournful exclamation, and then the poetically dense description of her suffering (1245-50):[84]

> ὀττοτοῖ <ὀττοτοῖ>,
> ἀνέφελον ἐνέβαλες οὔποτε καταλύσιμον,
> οὐδέ ποτε λησόμενον ἀμέτερον
> οἷον ἔφυ κακόν.

> Ohhhh! Ohhhh!
> You have mentioned my unveiled
> sorrow, how by its nature it is never to
> be undone, never to forget!

To the extent that she develops the theme of her own experience introduced by Orestes, the conversation between them can be said to facilitate her response. Using what he said as an opportunity to express her point of view, we can detect a measure of her characteristically manipulative manner of listening. But what was so subtle about her manipulation in her sung dialogues with the chorus—what let her vocalizations be a mark of receptivity and simultaneous rejection—was precisely the manipulation of the lyric medium, the use of metrical sharing and

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[83] See Jones 1962.154: "Electra refuses to cease from formal lamentation because it is her only offensive weapon."

[84] Cf. Nooter 2012.118. Most editors prolong or repeat the exclamation for the sake of responsion, but its lyric effectivity remains even if there is a single cry. See Jebb 1924 ad 1246 ff. for an illumination of this dense passage. Kamerbeek 1974 ad loc is especially useful for the sense of οὐδέ ποτε λησόμενον.

the echoing of metrical patterns. Here, the consistent juxtaposition of Orestes' speech and Electra's singing renders impossible this kind of manipulation, and so, effectively, makes her listening mute. Electra's transformation of Orestes' admonition is a radical rejection of his words, just as his very admonition reflected a misunderstanding of the inevitability of her song. In order to sustain her lyric voice, then, Electra must categorically disregard Orestes' voice, and so, fundamentally, not listen to him. Both brother and sister, while obviously hearing and responding to the other's words, cannot truly listen to each other, that is, cannot be receptive to the other's point of view. Their adherence to different vocal modes, the spoken and the sung, reflects their essential rejection and dismissal of their interlocutor's position.

Even when Orestes finally ceases his attempts to rein in Electra's expression of joy, he is still critical of her vocal medium. His assent to her song is negatively formed as a reluctance to restrain her, and is couched in disapproval of her unbridled pleasure in the situation (1271-2):

> τὰ μέν σ' ὀκνῶ χαίρουσαν εἰργαθεῖν, τὰ δὲ
> δέδοικα λίαν ἡδονῇ νικωμένην.

> I hesitate to restrain your joy, but I fear
> you are given over excessively to pleasure.

This contradictory concession reflects his unchanged anxiety at the insistent potency of Electra's singing voice. Electra, for her part, is even less receptive to Orestes' words, as she responds in the opening line of the epode with renewed force of expressivity.[85] The transition from antistrophe to epode, then, is typical of the interaction throughout the *amoibaion*. Electra's lyrics and Orestes' spoken words present competing points of view which are almost impossible to reconcile. For the most part, the *amoibaion* reveals that listening as receptivity does not operate

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[85] Heard especially in the tragic exclamation and the poetically evocative transfer of the adjective *loved one* to the road (φιλτάταν ὁδόν, 1273).

between Orestes and Electra. The empathy glimpsed earlier in the recognition scene does not find a lyrical medium to support it.

We should recall that the previous two *amoibaia*, and the *parodos* in particular, show Electra's ability to uphold dialogic affinity with the chorus, so that their empathy was maintained despite her rejection of the their suggestions and admonitions. In both songs, her lyric potency was based on her close relationship with the chorus, and the long-term familiarity and affection between them. Even Electra's ultimate departure from the dialogic mode of the *parodos* to her independent song at its epode did not undo the chorus' emotional commitment to her. Rather, we have seen how their words following Electra's song expressed their reinforced dedication, which was further translated into a moral obligation. Orestes, on the other hand, she has not seen since childhood. He is a man with whom she has never had opportunity to sing or speak. This difference in the inter-personal circumstances are brought to the fore in the way the dialogue develops. The present *amoibaion* with Orestes is marked by the almost complete absence of reciprocity between the interlocutors, and by the significant curtailing of Electra's capacity to command empathy through her lyric receptivity. Its epode ends with a final lyric outburst of unbridled joy on Electra's part, to which, as shown before, Orestes only grudgingly assents. His spoken words immediately following it reaffirm his rejection of *superfluous words* (1288: τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες), and express his reservations and distance from his sister's song. At the end of the epode, Electra sings on her own in a repeated run of trochees (1283-7). Her propensity to use one meter insistently has been manifested throughout both previous *amoibaia*. In contrast to the repeated dactyls or choriambs she used previously, it is significant for the lack of listening between brother and sister that in this case the repeated meter does not echo any part of the shared song with Orestes. Rather, it expresses a metrical divergence from it.

Even still, there is an obvious physical intimacy between the two, evidenced by Electra's words *but now I hold you* (1285: νῦν δ᾽ ἔχω σε, recalling 1226: ἔχω σε χερσίν). But their physical proximity is at odds with the metrical dynamics that indicate separation, and disconcertingly so. The adherence to the spoken versus lyric modes reflects an overriding detachment between them, and it continues to be felt even as Orestes no longer tries to restrain his sister and they embrace. This disjunction recalls how Orestes' deceptive words contaminated his genuine offer of empathy in the preceding scene. When receptive listening did transpire, his supportive presence was nonetheless marred by his deceit. His insistence to refrain from emotional participation in Electra's happiness now perhaps similarly overrides the pleasure of his tangible presence.

There are two short instances in the *amoibaion* where Orestes possibly gives voice to a lyric utterance. First, he interrupts Electra's negative command to ask *what should I refrain from doing?* (1276: τί μὴ ποήσω;). Second, in response to Electra's question *Do you agree?* he responds *Of course!* (literally, *how not?* 1280: ξυναινεῖς; —τί μὴν οὔ;). These lyric iambs are, to my mind, so limited as to highlight the differences in the siblings' respective vocal modes rather than a congruence (metrical or emotional) between them. Critics have variously interpreted the level of lyricism expressed in the two questions Orestes addresses to Electra.[86] With regards to the first one, at least, it seems probable that the line begins with Orestes speaking, and is then transformed into song by Electra. That is to say, he does not deliver the syncopated (or lyric) iambs but begins a spoken line of iambic trimeters, and it is only Electra's

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[86] Kamerbeek 1974.162 and Finglass 2007.471 ad 1232-87 argue that Orestes is infected with Electra's lyricism, and see Finglass' metrical analysis p. 469. Cf. Segal 1966.514: "[Orestes] joins sympathetically in her cries despite himself." For an opposite view see Winnington-Ingram 1980.229 with n. 43: "I take it that Orestes declaimed rather than sang his trimeters." Goldhill 2012 explicitly leaves in question the meaning of Orestes' "briefest of slips into emotional symmetry", and wonders whether "Orestes lets slip his self-control[.] Is this a moment when Electra's lyric outpourings finally persuade him to make an emotional connection with her?" (99, 100).

continuation of the line that completes it lyrically.[87] The second utterance, while symmetrically echoing Electra's bacchiac, is remarkable for how terse it is, especially if meant to convey a degree of lyric emotionality.[88] Despite these short lyric utterances, the opposition between the siblings' different modes of expression—speech versus song—is consistent, and suggests that Orestes' rejection of Electra's lyrics is a matter of principle.[89] This rejection, then, invites us to reflect on the effectiveness of Electra's lyric voice both in this *amoibaia* and in previous ones. It prompts us to ask, first, why she cannot influence Orestes to participate in her song, and then how his refusal compares to the empathic participation of the chorus.

I would argue that the disparate vocal modes Electra and Orestes use throughout the song signal a radical departure from the lyric receptivity of previous songs. Listening in this song has become crucially divorced from the potency, indeed irrepressibility, of Electra's lyric voice. At the same time, the lack of listening creates a moral vacuum in anticipation of the murder. While the two siblings are bent upon the same action, their separation in this song reveals their failure to engage morally. In the earlier interaction with the chorus, Electra's manipulative listening allowed us to consider the moral ambiguity of the choral support she enjoyed and compelled. Her interaction with Orestes deepens the moral unease at her obsessive vengefulness. The lack of her distinctive manipulative (or almost any) listening should raise questions about her moral righteousness as revenge becomes a realistic option. If, as I suggest, such moral support was gained by ambivalent means in the first place, the failure to recreate it now, despite the dramatic focus on revenge, could imply that it is in fact even harder to justify. The shared song with

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[87] Cf. Goldhill 2012.99: "it is almost as if she completes the metrical expectation of his half line—but goes beyond it."

[88] ibid: "the strong man of revenge slips into a more emotional *if laconic* utterance" (emphasis added).

[89] Cf. ibid 97: "The recognition scene's juxtaposition of Electra's emotional lyrics and Orestes' iambic restraint thus emblematizes [the] thematic nexus [of the play]."

Orestes exhibits a disturbing lack of vocal reciprocity, which mirrors the adamance of each of its participants, both of which ultimately have the same cause in mind, namely, matricide. As the revenge Electra has hoped for and sung about draws near, the dialogue as such becomes mute.

3.4. Non-Listening: Matricide Duet

The last *amoibaion* of the play, the scene of Clytemnestra's murder, deepens these implications and raises further questions about Electra's moral claims. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there is virtual scholarly consensus that Electra's behavior during the murder is disturbing, to say the least. That she is less sympathetic here than in earlier scenes seems obvious as well. Nonetheless, much recent work has been done to counter readings of the play that latch on to subtle clues in the text in order to show that Sophocles condemns the sibling matricides wholesale.[90] I agree that a wholly negative interpretation of the vengeance cannot be supported by the text, and I do not mean that my own reading, which is fairly limited in scope and method, be taken to suggest such an interpretation. My focus on the *amoibaia* excludes sections (from non-lyric scenes) where the killings are presented favorably, as right and justified. The suggestion that listening functions differently once the drama turns to the execution of the vengeance is intended to aid our understanding of Electra's sympathetic qualities and of the change they undergo, and to deepen the question of how empathy and moral assessment may be related. That listening in the play is intimately related to Electra's lyric mode has, I hope, been sufficiently demonstrated by now. Therefore, a significant curtailing of her lyric voice should

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[90] Dark or ironic readings of the play include Friis Johansen 1964, Gellie 1972; Kells 1973; Minadeo 1994; Winnington-Ingram 1980. For counter arguments see especially Gardiner 1987.171-2; MacLeod 2001.15-7, 109, 169; Finglass 2007 *passim*, e.g. ad 785 explicitly *contra* Winnington-Ingram.

alert us to a radical shift in the dynamics of listening and consequently in the possibility of responding to her emotionally and morally.

The validity of this approach does not, hopefully, depend on a concomitant claim that listening-in-lyrics is the only means by which moral approval of the matricide may be gained in the play, nor do I pretend to make that claim. In fact, in the short ode immediately preceding the last *amoibaion*, the chorus express no scruples about the impending killings, and invoke Hermes to aid the murderers in their pursuit. Most of their following utterances in the lyric dialogue itself commend the murder of Clytemnestra—though in terms that do not mask the bleakness of the situation—or urge and facilitate the next one, that of Aegisthus. Among the latter utterances, which express indisputable practical support for the execution of the deed, are instructions to Orestes and the Pedagogue to re-enter the house before Aegisthus arrives (1433-4) or to Electra to stall him with sweet-talk (1437-1441).[91] I believe that the sung passages delivered by the chorus in the strophe of the *amoibaion* highlight the grim nature of the act and their unease at its consequences, not least because these are virtually the only lyric utterances here.

The fact that Electra delivers only spoken lines is one of the many striking features of this *amoibaion*, a scene of incredible lyric and dramatic intensity.[92] What she says reflects, more chillingly than any previous scene, her utter hatred and contempt for Clytemnestra and her bloodthirsty zeal for vengeance.[93] The chorus' reactions in song are consistently juxtaposed with Electra's speech, reminding us of the very different interaction between them in previous

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[91] Cf. Gardiner 1987; Paulsen 1989.

[92] Woodard 1966.141 mentions Electra's lack of singing as a "surprise." See Finglass ad loc for the unusual structure of this song, where exact responsion of speakers cannot be maintained due to the elimination of one of the participants (namely, Clytemnestra being killed) in the strophe. Other difficulties of responsion in the transmitted text are also discussed there. Cf. Burton 1980.218-9; Esposito 1996.99.

[93] Cf. Goldhill 2012.98: "The restrains of iambics in Electra's case [during the matricide] is not a sign of … "self-control and piety", but a sign of dangerous passion differently manifested."

amoibaia. Thus, when Clytemnestra is heard crying out offstage, Electra sarcastically says, twice, that *someone is shouting* (1406: βοᾷ τις and 1410: θροεῖ τις).[94] Clytemnestra's cry recalls Electra's first offstage lament, underlining the inversion of their positions and the different reactions the characters onstage have to the voice from within the house in both cases. The choral response expresses their distress and terror at the sound: *woe, I heard something unbearable to hear, that made me shudder!* (1407: ἤκουσ᾽ ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὥστε φρῖξαι). Apart from the dochmiac of 1404, Clytemnestra's first offstage cry, this is the first sung line in the scene.[95] In light of Electra's sarcasm in βοᾷ τις, her question *do you not hear, friends?* (1406: οὐκ ἀκούετ᾽, ὦ φίλαι;) is arguably also for rhetorical effect and not a genuine request for confirmation of the auditory event. While it is a direct reply to this rhetorical question, the choral utterance uses figurative language of its own, a stock oxymoronic expression of horror (ἤκουσ᾽ ἀνήκουστα), to create quite a different effect.[96] Their transition to lyric iambs, while still in proximity with Electra's spoken iambs and responsive to them, signals an emotional shift from her callousness. Electra does not reciprocate this responsiveness emotionally or metrically. She does not move to song nor does she budge from her cool stance towards the violence taking place in the house.

On the contrary, upon hearing again Clytemnestra's voice from within she repeats the sardonic comment (*someone is shouting*), and then engages in a striking pseudo-dialogue with her mother. Offstage, Clytemnestra is begging her son for mercy, recalling her maternal tie to

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[94] On Electra's tone here see Kamerbeek 1974 ad 1406; Ringer 1998.200; Finglass 2007 ad 1398-1441 and ad 1406.

[95] In attempts to restore exact responsion between the two halves of the *amoibaion*, a lacuna is conjectured after 1427, wherein one dochmiac is given to Electra. This would be her only lyric utterance in the dialogue. Kamerbeek 1974.181 writes of the importance of the lost lines for our "ultimate judgment of Electra as intended by Sophocles. … [b]y an adverse whim of the transmission, we are left without the daughter's and the son's last comments on Clytaemestra and her death."

[96] Cf. Kells 1973 ad loc and Finglass 2007 ad loc.

him, but we only hear Electra's response, reminding her mother of her own mercilessness towards Agamemnon. Again, these utterances are iambic, not lyric (1410-12):

<div align="center">
Κλ. ὦ τέκνον τέκνον,
οἴκτιρε τὴν τεκοῦσαν.   Ἠλ. ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐκ σέθεν
ᾠκτίρεθ’ οὗτος οὐδ’ ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ.
</div>

<div align="center">
Cl. Oh my child, my child,
pity your mother!   El. But from *you*
he received no pity, nor did his father.
</div>

The fact that Orestes seems to remain silent at this point shows the potency of Electra's voice and her command of the stage at this moment. Her use of iambs recalls how he used language throughout the play, and she seems to take over his role as the rational and practical sibling.[97] The dramatic effectiveness of Electra's voice is no longer a question of her ability to engage with and influence her interlocutors. Rather, her speech is a one-sided vocal action that displaces the vocal reciprocity we have seen in previous lyric dialogues. The two participants of the dialogue, if we could use those terms for Electra and Clytemnestra, are not onstage together, so they do not share any physical space. Listening here becomes divorced from receptivity of any kind and from the shared physical presence that enabled it throughout preceding *amoibaia*. Instead, it is now a marker of violence. Orestes' unnerving silence signals the same thing, for his failure to respond to his mother's plea shows his unflinching resolve in the face of matricide.[98]

The previous *amoibaion* between the two siblings already revealed their distinct modes of vocalization, which suggested the moral reprehensibility of their intention to commit matricide. Electra's lyric exuberance and Orestes' spoken restraint were counterparts to an irreconcilable

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[97] Nooter 2012.121-2 describes Electra's linguistic command of the scene; Ringer 1998.201 suggests Electra "becomes a surrogate for her offstage brother" and that she is in "conversation with a character who in actuality cannot hear her." Machin 1981.425 thinks Orestes is passive until he hears Electra and that he becomes "l'instrument de sa volonté" while she is "l'inspiratrice des gestes qu'accomplit Oreste hors de la vue des spectateurs."

[98] Goldhill 2012.98 is particularly evocative here: "Sophocles displays the silent detachment of extremist violence as the uncanny double of the screams of extremist fervour."

determination to commit violence. Their shared scene further unsettled the relationship between vocal interaction and physical presence. Orestes' empathic listening and presence was, at first, marred by his previous deceitful vocalizations. Later, it was radically destabilized, for his participation in Electra's song severed the link between the physicality of being-there (a fact of their reunion) and receptivity in listening (a disturbing lack in their shared song). The present scene develops the disconcerting dynamics between Orestes and Electra precisely as Clytemnestra is being murdered. Orestes' absence in both body and voice is highlighted, and, concomitantly, Electra no longer vocalizes in the lyric mode. The gulf in their vocal modes is pushed away from lyric altogether, and is now manifested in the difference between his silence and her spoken iambs. Electra departs from the sphere of reciprocity and listening in order to participate in the revenge—a chilling, if only vocal, participation.

Electra's next words are, arguably, her most disturbing in the entire play, and deepen her paradoxical involvement in the offstage drama through listening that does not generate dialogue (1415-6):

> Κλ.   ὤμοι πέπληγμαι.   Ἠλ. παῖσον, εἰ σθένεις, διπλῆν.
> Κλ.   ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις.   Ἠλ. εἰ γὰρ Αἰγίσθῳ θ᾽ ὁμοῦ.

> Cly.   Oh! I've been struck!   El. Strike harder, if you can.[99]
> Cly.   Ohhh! again…   El. I wish it were for Aegisthus too.

In response to Clytemnestra's scream of pain, Electra urges Orestes to repeat the blow, and another scream is immediately heard. The effect is as if Orestes hears his sister's grisly instructions and reacts accordingly, a possibility which the staging evokes quite apart from its practical plausibility.[100] Electra's spoken utterances respond to and reflect the action within but

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[99] See Finglass ad loc for this sense of διπλῆν.

[100] Woodard's suggestion of "imaginative logos" (1966.131) in Electra's language is again pertinent.

are, once again, a non-dialogue, and do not even address the voice of Clytemnestra as they did earlier.

The only other character on stage, which would naturally be Electra's interlocutor in this scene, are the chorus. Their lyric reactions to her words, the only sung parts here, highlight the perversion of listening in the *amoibaion* and its limited dialogic nature. Electra has not explicitly addressed them since the rhetorical question of 1406. They respond, however, to both moments where she addresses the offstage characters. In 1413-4, they significantly divert the focus from Electra's bitterly expressed personal and familial interests, framing the murder in political terms: *Oh city, oh wretched race, now your daily lot is dying, dying* (ὦ πόλις, ὦ γενεὰ τάλαινα, νῦν σοι μοῖρα καθαμερία φθίνει φθίνει). Whether this interjection is taken as celebratory or condemnatory, the obvious departure from Electra's mode of vocalizing casts a shadow on her rhetorical and emotional standpoint.[101] The chorus' song marks their excitement in contrast to Electra's cool iambs. This time they sing in dactylo-epitrites, a meter less closely resembling the spoken iambs of the preceding disconcerting dialogue. They are clearly standing apart from Electra's mode of participating in the *amoibaion* and in the execution of the murder, one and the same in this dramatically climactic song. Furthermore, it is as if their song is intended to steer Electra (and her voice) away from the chilling control of speech and back to her province of lyrics. But Electra, for once, remains steadfast in the spoken iambs of her pseudo-dialogue with the offstage characters. The final choral reaction in the strophe concludes the first stage of the revenge (1417-21):

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[101] The address to the *polis* makes the words sound like a justification of the murder as tyrannicide while the address to the *wretched race* recalls the family curse and the unending cycle of violence. See Kells 1973 ad loc; MacLeod 2001.171 (and 162 on the related address to the chorus as πολίτιδες, *female citizens* in 1227); Gardiner 1989.157. Budelmann 2000.260 comments on the disconcerting effect of these lines which "separat[e] the consequences [of the murder] for the house, the race, and the *polis*."

τελοῦσ' ἀραί· ζῶσιν οἱ γᾶς ὑπαὶ κείμενοι.
παλίρρυτον γὰρ αἷμ' ὑπεξαιροῦσι τῶν
κτανόντων οἱ πάλαι θανόντες.

The curses are at work. Alive are those who lie
beneath the ground. For those dead long ago
drain the blood of the killers, flowing back in turn.

Again the chorus sings, maintaining the separation between Electra's speech and their own mode of responding to the events in the house. Their return to lyric iambs suggests less of a rejection of Electra than did their previous sung parts; all the same, their words imply as before that the execution of the revenge is, at the very least, disturbing (if not morally ambivalent), and do not express a straightforward, wholesale endorsement of the matricide.[102]

This is not the last word of the *amoibaion* (let alone the play), and the moral, emotional, and metrical dynamics of the antistrophe are different in important ways. Furthermore, as many critics have noted, Sophocles shifts the focus away from the matricide and its inescapable hideousness by concluding the play with the murder of Aegisthus.[103] Yet the significance of the total absence of Electra's singing voice from the final lyric dialogue of the play has not, it seems to me, been given its due as an aspect that magnifies the moral controversy of the matricide. The strophe of the last *amoibaion* shows how radically different Electra's voice has become relative to her previous exchanges with the chorus. While still incredibly compelling, her uncharacteristic adherence to spoken verse marks her isolation from the only other character onstage, the chorus. They, in turn, do not share her fervent moral conviction. The concomitant lack of listening here magnifies Electra's inability, indeed her reluctance, to create emotional identification. It also reminds us how disconcerting the power of her lyric voice was from the start.

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[102] In this I follow Finglass' interpretation ad 1417-21. For a different view see Gardiner 1989.157. She also points out that 1420 is an iambic trimer and suggests (n. 29) that the chorus' comment "was probably meant to be delivered in a less lyric, therefore less emotional, mode than fully lyric lines."

[103] See Kirkwood 1942; Burton 1980.220-2; Winnington-Ingram 1980; MacLeod 2001.

This chapter has shown that Electra's lyricism is tied to her unique ability to listen, and that this ability is related to two seemingly contradictory aspects of Electra's character: on the one hand, it is a crucial part of her sympathetic nature, as her listening signals her attentiveness to and willingness to harmonize with others; on the other hand, the manipulative quality of her listening raises questions about the moral validity of her claims and, precisely, of her ability to affect others emotionally. In the last lyric dialogue of the play, she is divested of one of the most potent tools by which she managed, in earlier scenes, to undermine moral reservations and still remain sympathetic. Yet, this potency was inherent to her pathos and to the deep, gripping emotional bond between her and her interlocutors. The moral ambivalence she aroused stems from the radical simultaneity of empathy and aversion her manipulative listening generated. Electra's final failure to employ her distinctive listening leaves her character in a moral void. Such is the scene of matricide, a theatrical space where lyric receptivity has been cast aside.

4. Empathy and Action in Philoctetes

4.0 Introduction

Philoctetes is paradigmatic to many of the concerns of this dissertation. As discussed in chapter 2, the play has been repeatedly understood, more or less explicitly, as an exploration of the human capacity to listen to the suffering of another. The present chapter builds on the earlier discussion, with the focus now on how empathic engagement with Philoctetes creates an ethical dilemma and stalls the conclusion of the play. If the notion of listening advanced in chapter 2 suggested that listening is, in and of itself, an action which embodies an ethical engagement with the other, *Philoctetes* stages a conflict between competing ethical commitments, thus exposing the shortcomings of listening as an action. While empathic listening in *Philoctetes* becomes a moral obligation, it does not offer a solution to suffering as the therapeutic discourse suggests it does; moreover, it repeatedly fails to constitute ethical action as the phenomenological tradition suggests it should. Rather, listening creates a rift between responsivity to Philoctetes' pain and a practical solution to the drama. Listening to Philoctetes, then, challenges the model set up as an ideal in the preceding theoretical discussions.

The previous chapter has shown how listening in *Electra* also deviates from the ideal of empathic listening. In that case, it is because of the morally objectionable claim for revenge which Electra's suffering raises. Concomitantly, Electra's grief is inconsolable, except to the extent that she hopes for retaliation against her father's murderers. The ineffectiveness of the chorus' attempt to comfort her is another way in which the limitations of empathic listening are suggested in *Electra*. (We shall return to this ineffectiveness of empathy in the face of grief in chapter 5.) Metrical harmony in *Electra*, we saw, revealed the difficulty of sustaining empathic engagement with a grieving person; in *Philoctetes* the limitations of the lyric medium as an

essentially harmonic one are further explored, as the possibility of emotionally and ethically reacting to Philoctetes through song, specifically through choral song, is curtailed. *Philoctetes* thus also deepens the challenge to the ideal lyric model of listening—implied to be an alignment between sonic harmony and emotional harmony—though we have already seen how the poetics of listening in Sophocles complicates this model.

In *Philoctetes*, empathy and its vicissitudes depend on the body and the voice more clearly than in the Sophoclean situations studied thus far; accordingly, the physical and vocal aspects of listening are a central concern of this chapter. As I suggest below, it is because of Philoctetes' unique circumstances, namely, his condition of extreme physical pain and social isolation, that listening must demonstrate receptivity to both the body and the voice, including the non-singing capacities of the voice. These very same circumstances could explain why the ideal models of listening are less applicable to Philoctetes, or, to put it differently, why listening to Philoctetes is so difficult.

As we saw in chapter 2, the *parodos* of Philoctetes already showcases the ubiquitousness of the human voice and its relevance to our concerns here. On the one hand, the voice is heard as speech, song, and inarticulate sound, and in all these manifestations it serves as an index of the body in pain. On the other hand, the *parodos* highlights the ways the singing voice can be a means for empathic engagement with Philoctetes' suffering. The opening song is a lyric tour de force, throughout which the chorus are willing and able to show compassion to Philoctetes. The *parodos* thereby exemplifies a possible response to the outcast man, with his uninhibited voice and his wounded body. Yet the imagined scenarios the chorus evoke, as well as the different reactions Neoptolemus and the chorus have to Philoctetes' vocal traces, anticipate the emotional challenge of listening to him. The chorus' empathic engagement of the *parodos* takes place while

Philoctetes' body is still offstage. When they are actually confronted with him, the chorus for the most part resist empathy to Philoctetes.[1] The *parodos* suggests that the chorus' empathic listening, while it is undeniably a performative act, has limited scope as a dramatic action, for it responds to imagined pain or the pain of one that is not present.

Once Philoctetes appears, the drama revolves around getting him offstage, away from his current prison on Lemnos—either to Troy, as Odysseus plans and the audience expects, or back to his home in Malis, as Philoctetes comes to hope. Throughout the play, the difficulty of listening to Philoctetes highlights the tension between being present with his body in pain and effecting the movement of this body off Lemnos. Inasmuch as empathy is concerned with, indeed stems from, the most corporeal aspects of the drama, it also becomes a factor in the spatial dynamics of the plot. The spatial-physical question of removing Philoctetes' body from its current place is tied to the moral question of how he may be treated as a man among men.[2] Listening to his voice and body is a first and fundamental step in his social reintegration, but it repeatedly stalls or blocks the spatial action. As such, the moral force of empathic listening within the scope of the drama is fundamentally curtailed even though its vital importance is recognized. As the voice in pain in this play becomes both the condition of communication and a hindrance to it, both an all-pervasive dramatic presence and a sign that destabilizes conventions of signification, so is empathic listening dramatized as both the ultimate moral action and that which blocks action.

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[1] Cf. Nooter 2102.138 and n. 21 below.

[2] Cf. Schein 2013.14: "Philoktetes is trapped on the island, unless he is willing to rejoin and help those who marooned him there in the first place." Making Lemnos an uninhabited island is Sophocles' innovation: Jebb vii-ix; Reinhardt 1976.172; Schein 2013.7-8; Rose 1976.56-7; Mitchell-Boyask 2008.154-6. Taplin 1987.72-3 argues that Sophocles means to suggest only that Philoctetes is marooned on an inaccessible part of the island. His article offers an evocative analysis of the play's repeated allusions to offstage geographical locations. On the thematic significance of the non-civilized setting mirroring Philoctetes' wild disease and his healing as part of social reintegration see esp. Segal 1981. On the centrality of the location of Philoctetes' body throughout the play, see Van Nortwick 2015, ch. 3.

Importantly, the chorus are not those who perform deep listening here. To be sure, we have already encountered choruses whose listening is antithetical to what the therapeutic and philosophical analogies may lead us to believe it should be. The chorus in *Antigone*, for example, react in a harshly non-empathic way. In the dynamics between Electra and her chorus, I have focused on the heroine's listening (rather than the chorus') as the dramatic driving force; a similar dynamic between Philoctetes and the present chorus is examined in section 4.3 below. What is unusual in this play relative to the texts studied so far is that the most significant act of listening happens not in song but in speech. It takes place between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus, not between the hero and the chorus, in a way that suggests an alternative lyric field to the play. The boundaries of lyric are expanded in and through the spoken parts, and at the same time, the effectivity of listening through more traditional lyric parts, that is, choral song, is called into question. Indeed, the lyric role of this chorus, who throughout the play perform only one short independent *stasimon* (676-729), is diminished in comparison to other Sophoclean choruses, and in comparison to Philoctetes himself.[3] Now, *amoibaia* have been taken in this dissertation as examples of choral listening in action; but, we should keep in mind, they represented a move away from the traditional sung roles of the tragic chorus and can be thought of as more experimental than *stasima*.[4] In these terms, *Philoctetes* is another step in Sophocles' (not necessarily linear) investigation of the dramatic functions of the lyric dialogue; it gives us a different mode of engagement through shared song and suggests another modality of listening through speech.

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[3] Schein 2013.18 points out that the chorus here are "intimately tied to the dramatic action", and provide less of an "intellectual or religious framework" for the events than most Sophoclean choruses. Müller 1967 and Gardiner 1987, on the other hand, see the chorus of Philoctetes as typical for Sophocles precisely in their dramatic involvement. Cf. Paulsen 1989 and Burton 1980.226ff; see also Goldhill 2012.119-31. On the two short "lyric outbursts" in 391-402 and the corresponding 507-18 see Schein 2013.18. On Philoctetes' lyric voice see Nooter 2012.124-46.

[4] This is a bit of a simplification: see section 1.3 above.

Neoptolemus' complex engagement with Philoctetes contrasts with the chorus' limited one. The effects of Philoctetes' voice and body in pain are most poignant and most dramatically significant when it comes to the young man and his choices. For at least the first half of the play, the consequences of resisting or following the pull of empathic listening operate within the relationship between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus, as the latter's allegiance to Odysseus' deceitful plan is repeatedly challenged, only to be reaffirmed. In the wilderness of Lemnos, Neoptolemus finds himself faced with two competing models of behavior. His choice between them is played out through what comes to be a very intimate meeting with Philoctetes, even as the fate of the entire Greek expedition to Troy is on the line. Thus, in contrast to *Electra* (and *Oedipus at Colonus* examined below) the issue here is less about the individual faced with the community as represented by the chorus. Rather, it is about the confrontation of two modes of societal behavior as they are embodied in the characters, including the chorus.[5] To the extent that the chorus of *Philoctetes* are dramatically active, they are vocally aligned with the needs of the Greek army and constantly promote Odysseus' plan to fulfill them. They are thus another figure who, like Odysseus and Philoctetes, try to exert their influence on Neoptolemus, even though he is their military commander.[6] As Neoptolemus matures ethically through the interaction with Philoctetes, he comes to reject whatever authority the chorus might have over him. Dramatically, it is the relationship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes that takes center stage.

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[5] On Neoptolemus as a young man and his moral development between the alternatives posed by Philoctetes and Odysseus, see Reinhardt 1976.176 ("Der Junge, zwischen den beiden alten,… hat den Kampf der Gegner in sich auszukämpfen"); Knox 1964.121-2; Whitby 1996; Fulkerson 2006. On Philoctetes and Odysseus as two possible father figures for him, see Avery 1965; Erbse 1966; Roisman 1997. On the competing social norms represented by Odysseus and the Greeks on the one hand, and Philoctetes on the other, see especially Rose 1976, who discusses the play in terms of Sophistic ideas of social progression.

[6] For Odysseus' service to the common good and the chorus' alignment with this position see Nussbaum 1976. Most scholars do not consider the chorus in terms of the competing ethical models presented to Neoptolemus, as this discussion of the young man's choices centers on questions of paternal influence and heroic behavior, hence on the three principal characters as models of individualistic conduct. See Rose 1976.71 n. 51 on "Sophocles' sharp sense of a class difference between the perceptions and emotions of the chorus and those of the son of Achilles". Gardiner 1987.46 also comments that the chorus are "not noble or honorable."

The first section of this chapter (4.1) examines how Neoptolemus' empathic listening to Philoctetes develops through an expansion of the lyric potential of speech. The characters find themselves on a desert island, from which they must depart. This condition of being outside civilization may be the cause of the chorus' ineffective communal presence, as well as the unusual lyric activity between the individuals in speech. It is also an imposition which renders empathic listening to the body in pain at once necessary and dramatically limiting. Thus, this chapter suggests that the spatial landscape and the concomitant action it demands is reflected in the lyric and moral "landscapes" the play constructs.

The next two sections of the chapter examine the chorus' refusal or failure to perform deep listening through their lyric capacity, first in their *amoibaion* with Neoptolemus (in 4.2) and then with Philoctetes (4.3). Both sung dialogues showcase manipulative listening. So, again in contrast to ideal empathic listeners, the chorus here are actively engaged in non-empathic behavior toward both Neoptolemus and Philoctetes. In both cases, the metrical structure shows that, despite attempts to sustain communication, deep listening fails. In the first *amoibaion*, the chorus express a theological standpoint which is the basis of their opposition to Neoptolemus precisely at the moment when his own moral stance is stated clearly. The second *amoibaion* reveals Philoctetes as a manipulative listener of even more acute capacities than the chorus. Like the lamenting Electra, Philoctetes' utter misery brings about an inconsolability that becomes a defining feature of his compelling lyric presence. Unlike her, he is faced with an overall much less empathic chorus than Electra's counterpart. Through his attentive listening to the chorus he dismisses their inconsistent emotional position and exposes their ethical limitations. Thus, when listening returns to the lyric framework, it negates empathy and brings the characters to an impasse. Moreover, as I will argue below, this negation happens through manipulation of the

very medium of lyric responsivity. The lyric dialogues, as scenes of dramatic action, undermine the chorus' ethical involvement, even as the *amoibaion* resurfaces as the site for potential (if frustrated) empathic engagement. Lyric activity where we do expect to find it (in song, that is) turns out to be of limited moral import. Concomitantly, a satisfactory spatial progression and practical conclusion of the play remains unattainable. In the final section of this chapter (4.4), I treat the last scene of the play, in which Heracles' epiphany and Philoctetes' reaction to it solve the problem which the drama of listening creates. This perplexing ending becomes less so when we consider its reverberations with Philoctetes' lyricism and the poetics of listening put forth in the preceding scenes.

4.1 The lyricism of iambic dialogue

The present section focuses on Philoctetes' attack of pain at the center of the play (730-826). This paroxysm epitomizes the effects of severe pain on the voice. As Philoctetes' vocalizations become more acute and more frequent, Neoptolemus' empathic listening is critically put to the test. This section examines closely how referential statements and emotive interjections are used in this scene, and suggests that the crisis created by pain brings these two forms of language uncannily close. By blurring the boundaries between referential and emotive language, a lyric potential is revealed in speech, through which Neoptolemus' deep listening to Philoctetes' pain can develop and make itself heard. As we shall see, this process is thorny and difficult, and in no way linear. First, listening comes about despite attempts to suppress it, but when it does transpire, it allows for a more direct engagement with physical suffering. This in turn causes a renewed crisis of communication as listening disintegrates and must be developed again. The

fragility of empathy in the face of extreme anguish becomes a visceral experience for both Philoctetes and Neoptolemus.

Before looking at how non-referential language highlights the presence of the sick body and contains the kernel of deep listening between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, it is worth examining one moment from earlier in the play where the use of a tragic interjection points to a fundamental problem of communication with the body in pain.[7] As discussed in chapter 2, Philoctetes' body permeates the sphere of action even in his absence. An early example of Philoctetes' pervasive presence comes when Neoptolemus, sent by Odysseus to seek indicators of Philoctetes' survival on the island (33-7), points at objects that symbolically replace his body. What is most clearly a metonymic stand-in for Philoctetes are his rags, soaked with the discharge from his wound (*rags, heavy with the grievous sore;* 39: ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα). These are a physical extension of Philoctetes' ailing, fetid, poison-stricken foot.[8] A distinct sign of his ongoing, gruesome suffering, they also suggest the Greeks' cruelty in abandoning him. The sight of the rags makes Neoptolemus shout out in surprise and distress: ἰοὺ ἰού (38). When suddenly confronted with the severity of Philoctetes' illness and the savagery of his state, Neoptolemus' speech is spontaneously broken down into an interjection, a vocal, emotive reaction. This reaction comes when the suffering body is imaginatively evoked but no direct contact with it is possible. The first interjection of the play, then, anticipates Philoctetes' seizure of pain (with its extravagant interjections) in two important respects: first, it points to the limited

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[7] On the problem of communication and social integration Philoctetes' body poses, see Podlecki 1966; Segal 1981, ch. 10 and 1995.10 and *passim*. Worman 2002 writes that, in Odysseus' portrait of the wounded Philoctetes, the latter becomes "the purveyor of some kind of linguistic infection, a type of speech that threatens proper social functioning" (9).

[8] On the sense of νοσηλεία here see Kamerbeek ad 38-9. On the thematic importance of the wound as a marker of Philoctetes' bestial suffering, but also his relation with divinity, see Wilson 1941; Kamerbeek 1948; Segal 1977. Cf. Rose 1976.100: "Philoctetes is clearly the best human being left alive, and the bow of Heracles is not the cause of his superiority but the clearest external symbol of it. Similarly, Philoctetes' wound is the clearest symbol of his need for society, of the intolerable pain of isolation from the positive virtues of communal life."

expressivity of referential language. Even while emotive exclamations are conventionally formalized, and especially so in tragic diction, they inherently function on the margins of verbal language, where sound more radically makes (the) sense.[9] In the face of suffering, a more intuitive, extra-verbal reaction takes place. Second, the crisis of verbal communication parallels an obstruction of direct contact with the body. The emotional vocal response comes when responding to the body itself is impossible—in this case, because Philoctetes is absent. Later, it is because touch proves unbearable (to Philoctetes) and the pain makes him unapproachable (to Neoptolemus).

We can now turn to examine Philoctetes' breakdown, and the physical and vocal context of his exclamations (730-52):[10]

> N.   ἕρπ', εἰ θέλεις. τί δή ποθ' ὧδ' ἐξ οὐδενὸς
>   λόγου σιωπᾷς κἀπόπληκτος ὧδ' ἔχει;
> Φ.   ἆ ἆ ἆ ἆ.
> N.   τί δ' ἔστιν;   Φ. οὐδὲν δεινόν· ἀλλ' ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον.
> N.   μῶν ἄλγος ἴσχεις τῆς παρεστώσης νόσου;
> Φ.   οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἄρτι κουφίζειν δοκῶ.
>   ὦ θεοί.   N. τί τοὺς θεοὺς ὧδ' ἀναστένων καλεῖς;
> Φ.   σωτῆρας αὐτοὺς ἠπίους θ' ἡμῖν μολεῖν.
>   ἆ ἆ ἆ ἆ.
> N.   τί ποτε πέπονθας; οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἀλλ' ὧδ' ἔσῃ
>   σιγηλός; ἐν κακῷ δέ τῳ φαίνῃ κυρῶν.
> Φ.   ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοὐ δυνήσομαι κακὸν
>   κρύψαι παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀτταταῖ· διέρχεται
>   διέρχεται. δύστηνος, ὢ τάλας ἐγώ.
>   ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον· βρύκομαι, τέκνον· παπαῖ,
>   ἀπαππαπαῖ, παπᾶ παπᾶ παπᾶ παπαῖ.
>   πρὸς θεῶν, πρόχειρον εἴ τί σοι, τέκνον, πάρα
>   ξίφος χεροῖν, πάταξον εἰς ἄκρον πόδα·

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[9] Cf. Walton 2006.79-80: "non-words … are sound indicators […they are] noises, outbursts of sound when words will no longer serve and, as often happens, when chorus as well as characters move into lyric mode." Cf. Schein ad 730-826 p 236. See my discussion above of αἰαῖ ἱκνοῦμαι in ch.3, pp. 95-6 with n. 40.

[10] As the episode opens, Neoptolemus and Philoctetes emerge from the cave with the purported intention, agreed upon in the previous scene, to leave Lemnos together. The audience, however, may assume that Neoptolemus is carrying out the deceptive plan, and that he means to install Philoctetes on a ship sailing for Troy. Neoptolemus' great skill at lying (cf. Avery 1965.286; Roisman 1997.151) has so far given no indication that he intends to back out of Odysseus' ploy.

ἀπάμησον ὡς τάχιστα· μὴ φείσῃ βίου.
ἴθ', ὦ παῖ.

N.　τί δ' ἔστιν οὕτω νεοχμὸν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτου
τοσήνδ' ἰυγὴν καὶ στόνον σαυτοῦ ποεῖ;

N.　Please, go on. But why in the world are you
　　not saying a word, silent like this, struck dumb like this?
Ph.　Aahhhhhh, aahhhhhh.
N.　What is it?　　Ph. Nothing serious. No, come, child.
N.　You're not in pain, are you? Is your disease here?
Ph.　Me? No, no. I think it's already better.
　　Oh, gods.　　N. Why do you groan and call on the gods like this?
　　Ph. To come to us as gentle saviors.
　　Aahhhhhh, aahhhhhh.
N.　What ever is the matter with you? Speak, don't keep
　　quiet like this. You are obviously not doing well.
Ph.　I am done for, child, I won't be able to hide
　　this evil from you, aaaaahhhh. It goes through,
　　goes through me. Miserable, I am wretched.
　　I am done for, child, I'm being eaten, child.
　　aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhh!
　　By gods, if you have a sword at hand and ready,
　　child, strike at the edge of my foot.
　　Hurry, cut it off. Don't spare my life.
　　Come on, boy!
N.　What is this new sudden thing that you
　　moan so much about and groan for yourself?

In this scene, the onset of pain disrupts communication between the two men first through silence, and then, as the pain intensifies, through exclamations. Silence comes at important junctures in this dialogue, when pain or empathy disrupt action; it is indicative here of Philoctetes' increasing pain and his attempt to suppress its vocalization (730-1). Philoctetes' involuntary shouts (beginning with ἆ ἆ ἆ ἆ, 732) bespeak his pain, though he denies having any trouble. This is a recurring pattern in the beginning of the scene: Neoptolemus utters almost only questions, perplexed and impotent at Philoctetes' obviously mounting suffering. The latter refuses to explain, while his statements are punctuated by abrupt shouts of increasing length.[11] To

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[11] Mastronarde 1979 writes that this scene is an "intricate case [of discontinuity], typical of the suppleness of late Sophoklean dialogue" (39).

use Elaine Scarry's terms, the dialogic frustration between them shows pain's "resistance to language"—pain is unsharable because it marks certainty for the one who experiences it, but doubt for the one hearing about it.[12] From the beginning, the attack of pain presents Neoptolemus with a particular challenge of listening. In order to be receptive to Philoctetes' suffering, Neoptolemus must try to make sense of its non-verbal manifestations, to listen to the voice at its emotive extreme. Initially, Neoptolemus seems unfit for the task, insisting on speech where Philoctetes prefers silence or slips into inarticulate sounds: *What in the world has happened to you? Don't be quiet like this, speak!* (740-1: τί ποτε πέπονθας; οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἔσει σιγηλός;). The difference between the two men's modes of expression is at first insurmountable.

As the scene goes on, the gap between the two men is gradually bridged. This happens, I suggest, because of the indeterminate space that Philoctetes' vocalizations inhabit between referential verbalizations and inarticulate interjections. Philoctetes' fit of pain intensifies and reaches a famous climax in a scream of *papai*-s spanning more than a whole trimeter (745-6). This is followed by Philoctetes' frantic request to cut off his heel, even at the expense of his life.[13] The exhortation ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ (750: *come on, boy!*) functions like the long παπαῖ shout in epitomizing the vocal extreme to which Philoctetes' suffering has brought him and in blurring the distinction between referential and emotive language. This blurring of boundaries advances rather than diminishes the intelligibility of Philoctetes' voice. Thus, voice in this scene is a vehicle of poetic (or lyric) language, where sound is a fundamental register of meaning. When

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[12] Scarry 1985.4.

[13] Philoctetes speaks the language of pain as described by Scarry 1985.15-16, where pain is an agent: "because it [the agent] either exists… or can be pictured as existing… at the external boundary of the body, it begins to externalize, objectify, and make sharable what is originally an interior and unsharable experience." Thus, Philoctetes' disease pierces through and devours him (διέρχεται, βρύκομαι: 743-5; cf. προσέρπει, προσέρχεται 787-8; τρέφοιτε 795). Speaking of the foot separately from the rest of the body is an extension of this language of agency, wherein the feeling of pain is described in terms of the body acting on the subject; on Philoctetes' desire to self mutilate see Scarry's comment (53): "In physical pain…suicide and murder converge, for one feels acted upon, annihilated, by inside and outside alike." Mitchell-Boyask 2008.175 suggests that the heel is to Philoctetes' body as he is to the Greek army.

grounded in the vocal and bodily aspects of intersubjective action, sound, the formally nonsensical aspect of words, makes sense. Listening to this voice is, accordingly, a vocal and physical challenge.[14]

The statement ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ is not, properly, an exclamation. Yet, the exclamatory quality of the expression as a whole is manifest through several features. First, the hortatory sense arises when the three words are taken together as an indivisible sequence or quasi-formula.[15] Each of these monosyllabic words (an imperative, an exclamation, and a vocative) is aimed at getting the interlocutor's attention, so the emotional urgency of the entire appeal is sharpened. To use different terms, the words ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ combine the emotive and the conative functions of language, expressing an orientation towards the addressee while focusing on the addresser's emotional state.[16] Second, the words ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ are uttered *extra metrum*, outside the iambic line, in a position regularly reserved for tragic exclamations.[17] As with the expanded παπαῖ, the conventions of metered speech are emphasized as they are manipulated for emotional effect.

The fourteen syllable long παπαῖ resonates with the vocative παῖ (*boy*), a term of endearment with which Philoctetes has repeatedly addressed Neoptolemus since their first encounter. Upon meeting the young man, Philoctetes almost immediately accepts his role as a

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[14] Cf. Worman 2000.10, who considers the shout as a "whole-body reaction to Philoctetes' physical deformity… [effecting] a kind of synesthesia around the experience of the wound, intermingling sound with sight and touch."

[15] My translation *come on* attempts an idiomatic English equivalent. Cf. Van Nortwick's "Do it, boy!" (2015.60).

[16] Cf. Segal 1981.334-5; for the terms emotive and conative see Jakobson 1960.354-5.

[17] On τί φής as an exclamation see Mastronarde 1979.12; specifically as *extra metrum* Allan 2008.227 (ad 704-7). Cf. West 1982.78 on *OT* 1468 ἴθ᾽ ὦναξ.

father figure for Neoptolemus.[18] The apparent joy and effortlessness with which Philoctetes offers his affection contributes to his characterization as a candid and amiable man, all the more so because he behaves this way despite years of misery in isolated wilderness. At the same time, this willingness to show affection is a measure of his vulnerability. Philoctetes is not only a model for emulation and moral instruction to Neoptolemus; he is also counting on the young man to help him in his need, as an aged father expects of a dutiful son. The phonic component of the scream, then, underlines the close and reciprocal relationship between the two men, charging it with meaning beyond the purely exclamatory. The long παπαῖ is thus an emotive explosion and also gains intelligibility by thematically resonating with the referential language used in the scene and throughout the play. Through it, Philoctetes already begins to implicate Neoptolemus in a relationship of empathic listening. Not even deep listening, but merely hearing the sound of Philoctetes' voice is enough to recall the bond between them as an older man to a younger one and the moral commitment it entails.

The intimacy of the dialogue here, inasmuch as it reflects the lyric capacities of the voice in pain, excludes the chorus not only as a lyric presence but also as a communal one. What is more, it recalls Odysseus' statement that Philoctetes was abandoned on Lemnos because his shouts made sacrificing to the gods impossible (9-11). Philoctetes' uncontrollable voice-in-pain disrupted communal life, and the present scene stages the response to this voice as an

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[18] See n. 5 in this chapter. Avery 1965.288, Greengard 1987.46 and Roisman 1997.148 suggest the scream also sounds like the childish paternal term πάππα (*papa*). Both connotations (παῖ and πάππα) highlight Philoctetes' own child-like dependency at this moment. It seems more straightforward to note the resemblance to παῖ, so often repeated in the scene and in the play ("like a refrain", Avery 1965.285), and the stress this puts on Neoptolemus' filial position towards Philoctetes. This holds even if we consider the inversion of dependency between son and father, as if Philoctetes' disease hastened his old age. Avery 1965.288 suggests an argument similar to mine on the importance of the sound of Philoctetes' screams in light of the repetition of παῖ in the play. Payne 2010.90 refers to Philoctetes' tragic exclamations as a "pun"; thus, each is "a sequence of sounds that functions as a signal of affect in a particular cultural discourse," but they also have another meaning.

emphatically non-collective action.[19] ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ is another occasion for Philoctetes' voice to be articulate despite formal signs of slippage into a less logical register of dialogue—articulate beyond speech, that is. Heard after the extraordinary παπαῖ screams, and within the exclamation-like exhortation, the literal and emotive meanings of παῖ resonate clearly. The endearing term of address becomes bound with the eruption of suffering.[20] The lyricism of this moment, a lyricism in speech, thus seems conditioned by the intimacy within which it is expressed. The pseudo-familial setting offers an alternative to the collectivity of the chorus, whose empathy, when it was unequivocally expressed, was voiced in song, and in response to Philoctetes' imagined, or just approaching, sounds.[21]

This is not to say that empathy immediately finds an avenue of expression here. For, even in the face of Philoctetes' anguish, Neoptolemus resists understanding and empathy; that is, he resists deep listening for as long as possible. He responds to ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ with another question, wondering at the *sudden new* thing that befell Philoctetes, the incomprehensible cause for *such howling and groaning* (751-2: τί δ᾽ ἔστιν οὕτω νεοχμὸν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτου / τοσήνδ᾽ ἰυγὴν καὶ στόνον σαυτοῦ ποῇ;). Philoctetes' emotive-lyric and Neoptolemus' logical inquisitive mode are

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[19] Rose 1976.72 comments on the dramatic irony in this inversion of reactions to Philoctetes' screams; cf. Segal 1981.334.

[20] In contrast, τέκνον, semantically identical to παῖ (and so far used interchangeably), is repeatedly used here in utterances that, for the most part, show Philoctetes' remarkable effort to maintain articulate communication even as his pain increases (733, 742, twice in 745, 747). Most of the occurrences of τέκνον come before (twice immediately before) the desperate explosion of παπαῖ-s in 745-6. τέκνον, furthermore, is not used *extra metrum*. Thus ἀλλ᾽ ἴθ᾽, ὦ τέκνον of 733 is somewhat different from how I take ἴθ᾽, ὦ παῖ because of the connective ἀλλ(ά) and the way the phrase is embedded within the trimeter line (see also Schein ad 750 for the difference). On the uses of τέκνον and παῖ in 753 see n. 24 below.

[21] The question of the chorus' compassion in the songs I don't treat here is fraught. The single traditional (i.e. non-dialogic) *stasimon* the chorus perform in the play (676-729) is similar to the *parodos* in that the chorus expresses compassion when Philoctetes is absent and, especially, imagines the lack of human response to his pain (687-717). Ultimately, the song combines "weak pity and strong self-interest" (Winnington-Ingram 1980.294 n.44; cf. Schein ad 676-729). Blundell 1989.195 writes that the chorus' pity is sincere but ineffective; Burton 1980.248 claims that the chorus sustain compassion "until Neoptolemus' pity is aroused." That there is a certain gap between the chorus' empathy and their dramatic involvement comes through, for example, when they exhort Neoptolemus to pity Philoctetes (οἴκτιρ᾽ ἄναξ, 507), just before echoing his lies about his feud with the Atreidae (510ff). To Philoctetes' face, then, they advocate compassion that seems insincere and utilitarian. Cf. Schmidt 1973.52-4, 118-20; Rose 1976.69; Prauscello 2010; Danze 2012.30-42. Kitzinger 2008 sees the chorus' pity as consistent; moreover, for her it is typical of their theological standpoint and dramatic function.

then put in direct confrontation with each other. The tight juxtaposition of the two vocal modes brings Neoptolemus closer to Philoctetes despite himself, finally forcing him into a level of listening that develops into empathy (753-6):

> Φ. οἶσθ᾽, ὦ τέκνον;   Ν. τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;   Φ. οἶσθ᾽, ὦ παῖ.   Ν. τί σοί;
> οὐκ οἶδα.   Φ. πῶς οὐκ οἶσθα; παππαπαππαπαῖ.
> Ν. δεινόν γε τοὐπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος.
> Φ. δεινὸν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητόν· ἀλλ᾽ οἴκτιρέ με.

> Ph. Do you know, child…? N. What is it? Ph. You know, son. N. What's
> with you? I don't know.   Ph. How can you not know? Ahhhhhhhhh.
> N.   Terrible is the burden of the [your] sickness.
> Ph. Terrible indeed, and unspeakable. But pity me.

The dialogue exhibits features of lyric in speech. For example, three times in a single iambic trimeter (753) the speaker changes, an uncommon plurality of *antilabe* that indicates the intensity of the exchange.[22] More than half of the words are monosyllabic or have become so by elision, turning the speech as before into broken-up sound and sharpening the emotive effect of the sequence. Neoptolemus' and Philoctetes' utterances together make up a trimeter line whose metrical structure is highlighted as it is manipulated, a flexibility in the tragic form that has so far been a feature of Philoctetes' voice only. Neoptolemus' voice, then, becomes infected with the lyric quality of Philoctetes'. The tight vocal interdependence between the interlocutors reveals an effort to be communicative even while the literal sense of the words expresses mutual incomprehensibility.[23] The unusual form of line 753 reveals the vulnerability of the dialogue and the difficulty of maintaining responsivity under pain.[24]

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[22] This iambic section recalls moments of lyric *antilabe*, or metrical sharing as I have called it, in the *amoibaia* of *Electra* and *OT*; in *Electra*, we also saw questions functioning as exclamations, as here.

[23] In Jakobson's terms (1975.355-6), this part of the dialogue exhibits the *phatic* function of language.

[24] Mastronarde 1979.65 argues that Philoctetes' utterances are interrupted questions; this is how Lloyd-Jones and Wilson print both utterances in 753. I follow Schein 2013 in punctuating only the first as a question, which heightens the pathos and sense of a frustrated dialogue. In this interpretation, τέκνον might again be viewed as part of a more coherent utterance relative to παῖ.

Philoctetes does not give the reason for his communicative impasse, but simply expresses inability, or refusal, to communicate. In response, the interrogatives to which Neoptolemus still adheres lose some of their referential specificity in comparison to his earlier questions. τί σοι, for example, can be considered an exclamatory remark, a rhetorical question more than an actual one. A clear expression of agitation, τί σοι also resonates alliteratively with the repeated οἶσθ' of Philoctetes' broken-up speech. Semantically, the utterance τί σοι contradicts οἶσθ(α): it denies the knowledge that Philoctetes hopes for (or implies already exists) in his interlocutor. Yet the sonic resemblance of the utterances suggests an affinity between the two speakers. The sonic aspects of Neoptolemus' vocalizations seem to take over, precisely as he asks for a rational explanation and resists any intuitive knowledge. The sounds of the words in this part of the dialogue show that Neoptolemus is listening to Philoctetes' voice and, in a sense, even deeply listening; his speech, like Philoctetes', is stretched to the limits of logical sense and pushed into emotive territory. Neoptolemus' voice echoes precisely with the transfer of meaning from the words to their sound which Philoctetes' suffering inflicts on his own voice; Neoptolemus' voice thus enables this avenue of expression. The broadening of the intelligible sphere to include the emotive and the conative through the purely sonic draws the two men nearer to each other in this vocal and dramatic climax of the dialogue.

While τί σοι and οἶσθα imply an intimacy through the voice and a focus on communication, the semantic contradiction between οἶσθ(α) and οὐκ οἶδα sounds loud and clear, clearer than the sonic compatibility. In this case, simple negation trumps the aural harmony, and the words emphasize the difficulty of listening and responding to one another. This part of the dialogue exemplifies how fleeting deep listening can be, since at every moment of dialogue several different semiotic registers operate simultaneously and may undo listening if

they do not maintain or deepen it. So, Neoptolemus' *I don't know* lands as a blunt rejection. But Philoctetes throws back at him the sound of his refusal to know, οὐκ οἶδα, without adding a verbal explanation. The exasperated question *how can you not know?* followed by another long παπαῖ cry (754: πῶς οὐκ οἶσθα; παππαπαππαπαῖ.) forces Neoptolemus to recognize the pain as it is: beyond words' reach.

Neoptolemus finally acknowledges Philoctetes' state, and, in response, Philoctetes immediately affirms that it is inexpressible and worthy of compassion as such: *N. Terrible is the burden of the [your] sickness. —Ph. Terrible indeed, and unspeakable. But pity me.* (755-6: δεινόν γε τοὐπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος. / δεινὸν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητόν· ἀλλ' οἴκτιρέ με). Neoptolemus' recognition of Philoctetes' suffering is an act of deep listening: his listening indicates empathy and invites more of it. It also brings Philoctetes' voice back from the lyric limits of speech to a squarely conventional iambic trimeter. This becomes a moment of mutual recognition inasmuch as it pushes Philoctetes back to more standard, indeed eloquent, speech.[25] The paradoxical verbalization of the inexpressibility of his anguish is the proper ground for Philoctetes' appeal for pity. The two men momentarily solve through speech, expanded to its lyrical edges, *the* poetic problem of expressing inexpressible pain, the "Philoctetes problem" as discussed in chapter 2. Through their respective vocalizations, and especially through sharing in the broadening of speech into lyric, the two men come a long way towards mutual intelligibility.

And yet, the ethical stance Neoptolemus adopts through deep listening clashes with the Odyssean plan he committed himself to in the first place and in which he is still engaged. In other words, he realizes that his empathy requires an ethical commitment to Philoctetes which he

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[25] γάρ in this sentence (756) marks the return to rhetorical and logical order. Since emerging from the cave and up to this point, Philoctetes has used a particle only in 735 (οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἄρτι κουφίζειν δοκῶ.), which is a forced attempt to remain calm and conceal his pain as it grows worse.

already finds difficult to uphold. At this point Neoptolemus voices the quintessentially tragic question *what shall I do?* (757: τί δῆτα δϱάσω;), marking this moment as an ethical crux in the drama.[26] He then voices another empathic second-person account of Philoctetes' misery: *Ohhh, miserable you, truly miserable from these many sufferings* (759-60: ἰὼ ἰὼ δύστηνε σύ, / δύστηνε δῆτα διὰ πόνων πάντων φανείς). These spoken words are, again, about as lyrical as the iambic discourse allows, containing *antilabe*, interjections, double anaphora (ἰὼ ἰὼ δύστηνε σύ, δύστηνε), and alliteration (of *d* and then *p* sounds).[27] What we see and hear is Neoptolemus learning to listen to Philoctetes: learning to vocalize empathy.

If listening to Philoctetes' voice was the first hurdle to empathy, Philoctetes' body is now the site of the struggle between empathic engagement with him and practical action for the Greek cause. Neoptolemus attempts to react directly to Philoctetes' body: *should I hold you or touch you somehow?* (762: βούλῃ λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου;). Philoctetes emphatically refuses, a reaction which has been read as an effort to preserve male propriety and to avoid an admission of "feminized weakness."[28] Instead, Philoctetes performs a gesture of trust the significance of which cannot be overstated, namely, handing over Heracles' divine weapon: *No, anything but that* [i.e., *touch*]. *But here, take this weapon* (763: μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ'· ἀλλά μοι τὰ τόξ' ἑλὼν / τάδ[ε]). By calling attention to the bow at this moment of pain, the prop becomes more emphatically an extension of Philoctetes, a surrogate for his body.[29] It is thus also a symbol of heroic maleness that *can* be handled and negotiated. That empathy becomes a dramatic problem,

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[26] See Martin 1993.133 on the repetition of this question, which "echoes in the absence of moral direction." Cf. also Rose 1976.74 and 78 n. 64.

[27] Cf. Segal 1981.335.

[28] Kosak 1999.124. Cf. Winkler 1990.48.

[29] Cf. Kaimio 1988.23. On the change in the physical scene this transaction effects see Taplin 1971.28-9. On the symbolic significance of the bow see n. 8.

specifically as an action between two men, is marked by the bow's displacement of the body, with which direct contact remains impossible. On the other hand, once the bow's safety is guaranteed, Philoctetes lets himself freely express (and, arguably, even experience more freely) his agony (776-98). The increasing pain makes Philoctetes' vocalizations ever more lyrical, as the many exclamations, invocations and "metrically unstable" lines reflect.[30] It culminates in an appeal to ultimately undo his suffering by burning him at the stake. Care for the body and the bow still prove interdependent, for Philoctetes' request to be burned implies that Neoptolemus will hold on to the divine weapon.[31] But the bow can be saved at the expense of the body: the former not only stands in for the latter but can supersede it.

Thus, Neoptolemus' commitment to guard the bow intensifies his implication in Philoctetes' anguish. It entails witnessing the extremity of his pain and responding to it by caring for his body in a most visceral way. These actions, it turns out, are part and parcel of the heroic system in which Neoptolemus is given a chance to participate, by walking in the footsteps of Heracles and Philoctetes, as his surrogate son. Neoptolemus surely did not realize at the outset what kind of physical challenge adopting such a father might entail. It is certainly not a matter of physical force, which, he thought at the beginning, could offer a perfectly good solution to the situation at hand.[32] Small wonder, then, that Philoctetes' demand to be burned leads to another crisis of communication, which again starts in silence. This time it is Neoptolemus who is quiet,

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[30] Quote from Schein 2013.236, and see Nooter 2012.134-5 on this passage.

[31] Indeed, the implication is that Neoptolemus inherit the bow as Philoctetes did after preparing Heracles' pyre. Yet this will be an action among φίλοι: see Kosak 1999. This scene clearly recalls Heracles' interaction with his son Hyllus in *Trachiniae*; on the resemblance of the two plays see Reinhardt 1976.186-9; Budelmann 2007.

[32] *I am ready to take the man by force* (90: εἴμ᾽ ἑτοῖμος πρὸς βίαν τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἄγειν), and see Heath 1999.145 for his inherent violence. Neoptolemus is later confused by the pain-struck hallucinating Philoctetes (813ff, on which see Mastronarde 1979.66; Goldhill 2012.70). Clearly he is out of his depths, not least in terms of how to physically comport himself. The question of what Neoptolemus is allowed to or should do with his body can be developed more as a question of performance of manhood, on which I have only lightly touched (see Kosak 2006). In this regard it is interesting to note that the disease is personified as female throughout the play, e.g., 758-9. See Schein 2013, 28 with n. 81. Echo is another feminine entity (see below).

to which Philoctetes responds with a series of exclamatory questions: τί φής, παῖ; τί φής; τί σιγᾷς; ποῦ ποτ' ὤν, τέκνον, κυρεῖς; (804-5: *What do you say, son, what do you say? Why are you silent? Where in the world are you, child?*).[33] The appeal to Neoptolemus as a son is as emphatic as it can get, and παῖ rings ever clearer as an emotive–sonic motif. The questions themselves are, as we saw before, exclamatory. In particular, the series of monosyllabic words τί φής, παῖ; τί φής and ποῦ ποτ(ε) and the gasping repetition of *p* sounds recall earlier moments in the dialogue where the voice pulled language towards its emotive sphere. These words are a passionate appeal for communication, demanding practical action by calling attention to the intersubjective circumstances of the dialogue.[34] It is an appeal both for vocalizing and for going beyond the action of the voice.

Neoptolemus' subsequent expression of compassion reflects empathic receptivity to Philoctetes' pain, but, at the same time, suggests the ethical limitations of such a stance. Neoptolemus says: *I have long been groaning in pain for your suffering* (806: ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τἀπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά).[35] Neoptolemus' recognition of the other in front of him is an apex of deep listening, yet the slippage into his own personal anguish (ἀλγῶ, *I am in pain*) raises the question of whether or not he will be able to act upon this recognition. Philoctetes himself responds to this confession of shared pain as if it were an impasse to action: *but come, child, be*

[33] On Neoptolemus' silence Reinhardt writes that it "nicht eine Schwächung, sondern Steigerung seiner Präzens bedeutet" (1976.194). See Gurevitch 1995.106 on silence as an active "ability-not-to-speak" rather than inability to speak. See further Corradi Fiumara 1985.127ff on the importance of silence in dialogue.

[34] In Jakobsonian terms, the words combine the emotive, conative and phatic functions (Jakobson 1960). Nooter 2012.137 comments on Philoctetes' "Du-Stil."

[35] Grene 1967.145 writes: "it is surely remarkable how very sharply Sophocles has chosen to mark the limits of Neoptolemos' decency… He takes a very long time to come to himself, to realize that he cannot win his objective at such a price of torturing another human being". Neoptolemus' empathy is at once a hindrance to the deceit and, inasmuch as it generates Philoctetes' trust, an instrument that furthers the plot. Cf. the more neutral description of the difficulty to gauge Neoptolemus' and the chorus' sincerity in Rose 1976.64; see his 71-2 with n 52 on the possibly ironic interpretation of πάλαι. Goldhill 2012.69 writes that the word πάλαι "provokes a question for the audience of when they think [his] transformation has started." On the chorus' similarly ambivalent compassion see n. 21 above. On πάλαι with emotions cf. *OT* 1477, though text and interpretation there are uncertain. Kamerbeek ad loc gives ancient reference to the indeterminateness of πάλαι as referring to distant or near past.

brave, pushing Neoptolemus back to the practical realm with the plea *don't leave me alone* (807: ἀλλ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ θάρσος ἴσχε… 809: ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιάζω, μή με καταλίπῃς μόνον). Despite Neoptolemus' empathic listening and clearer moral commitments, action remains a problem. In answer to Philoctetes' supplication, Neoptolemus promises to stay by his side and shakes his hand as a pledge (810, 813).[36] Philoctetes then experiences another intensification of pain, as happened after he gave Neoptolemus the bow. Consequently, communication breaks down again (814-17), which renews and intensifies the difficulty of responding to the body in pain.[37] Physical suffering and its vocal manifestations keep challenging the level of listening the two have reached and ultimately block physical contact.

This climactic episode has brought Neoptolemus and Philoctetes crucially close. The latter's pain engenders empathic listening but is also an impediment to it. The scene ends with Neoptolemus standing over the collapsed Philoctetes, witnessing his hemorrhaging foot and proclaiming again his intention to stay by his side. Philoctetes' utter lack of bodily control, though, prevents Neoptolemus from taking action altogether. The next step must be taken, literally, by the two men together, in mutual dependence and respective control of their bodies. The lyric dialogue that separates these episodes is crucial for Neoptolemus' formulation of his ethical commitment, and I examine it in detail in the next section.

But the actual moment of physical interdependence between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus occurs in non-lyric mode and directly echoes and complements the interaction examined in this section, and so can be considered now. When Philoctetes emerges from his unconscious state, the two men prepare to leave the island. The audience's confusion as to where

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[36] Schein ad 814-18: "Physical contact between the two, except for the handshake at 813, is avoided at least until 894 and possibly until 1403." Cf. Avery 1965.281 with n.1; Taplin 1971.33; Seale 1982.38; Goldhill 2012.69-73.

[37] See Mastronarde 1979.66.

they (and the plot) are going is mirrored by Neoptolemus' own embarrassment, as he is forced to face the conflicting allegiances to which he has committed himself. After bearing witness to Philoctetes' suffering and promising to help him, he finds it intolerable to keep up the deception. In what will be the last instant of trust between them for a long while, Philoctetes agrees to lean on the young man and be helped to his feet (893-4). As Neoptolemus supports Philoctetes' body, the physical effort makes the weight of his moral impasse more palpably felt, and he exclaims: παπαῖ (895). This cry clearly echoes Philoctetes' previous screams and, as we have seen, has further thematic significance in expanding the sense of the purely emotive register. Neoptolemus vocalizes his emotional suffering in a way that links his pain with Philoctetes and stresses his filial relationship to him.[38] This is the ultimate empathic listening: expressed through the voice, resonant with the body in pain, and charged with ethical consequences.

At the same time, it is radically *sym-pathy*: a suffering-with, a passion that stumps action.[39] Neoptolemus' cry is a sonic expression of his position as a son, precisely as he realizes that he cannot act upon this filial commitment. This echoing of Philoctetes' pain, while it brings deep listening to its acme, parallels the limited practical effect of listening-as-echoing, or of listening that is merely vocal. As such, it recalls the personified Echo of the *parodos*. That disembodied (feminine) sound was a feature of Philoctetes' isolation in wilderness inasmuch as it epitomized the wildness of his pain. The pseudo-familial relationship he has now achieved with Neoptolemus, even with its lyricism, is not a viable alternative to his uncivilized state but somehow perpetuates it—a filial relationship that cannot be sustained beyond the intimacy of the

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[38] Avery 1965 stresses Philoctetes' paternal attitude to Neoptolemus, but rejects the latter's filial regard to him; see his comment "Neoptolemus… seems to consider Philoctetes his friend, and no more" (285).

[39] See ch. 2 n. 10 for this distinction.

face-to-face (almost private) encounter.[40] It cannot work within the available frame of Greek society. Neoptolemus' deep listening has brought him to an understanding of his moral grounds but cannot solve the ethical deadlock he has reached. The ensuing scenes show clearly that maintaining this empathic listening remains exceedingly difficult because of the kind of unequivocal action Philoctetes demands from his listeners and the way his body is tied to the wild Lemnos, for he prefers to remain in place than to be reintegrated into "Odyssean" society.

4.2 Listening in Action: Neoptolemus and the Chorus

The preceding section dealt with the lyric capacities of the voice in spoken dialogue as the germ of deep listening to Philoctetes' pain. The present section and the next one focus on the dynamics of listening in song through an examination of the two remaining *amoibaia* of the play (the lyric dialogues that come after the *parodos*). These songs reveal the chorus' non-empathic listening, first to Neoptolemus' ethical difficulty in the face of Philoctetes' suffering, and then to Philoctetes' suffering itself. In both cases, a level of listening and responsiveness between the singers is implied by the metrical harmony of the song. I extend the term *metrical harmony* here to include not only metrical echoes and metrical sharing, but also the basic formal feature of tragic song, namely, metrical responsion. Responsiveness through these metrical features is manipulated so that deep listening is shunned and the opposite of receptivity is effected. Thus, the songs examined in this chapter reveal listening that is responsive but non-empathic; the partners-in-song engage with one another in an attempt to influence or reject the other's view with keen accuracy.[41] In Neoptolemus' *amoibaion* with the chorus, the latter do most of the

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[40] Nooter 2012, 144-5 argues that Philoctetes' farewell-address to Lemnos reverses the "echo imagery" previously used to emphasize his isolation, and ultimately points to his presence in a land of response and companionship. On the re-appearance of female elements in these last lines, see Segal 1981.354.

[41] There is, however, a sense of empathy which fits precisely this kind of understanding of the other; see ch. 2, n. 7.

manipulation of the dialogic medium, with responses that undermine Neoptolemus' position and offer alternative measures radically opposing his intent. In the exchange with Philoctetes, his mode of listening essentially shuts the chorus off, dismissing their viewpoint and definitively blocking their interaction with him.

In both cases, then, manipulative listening takes place. This is a more stripped-down version of manipulative listening than we saw in *Electra*, where listening as the condition of empathy was (ab)used to maintain or engender empathy for a morally repulsive claim. In the *amoibaia* of *Philoctetes*, the conditions of harmonious responsiveness inscribed in the mode of lyric dialogue become the tools for expressing discord. Listening as an avenue for mutual understanding morphs into its opposite, an instrument for rejection and exclusion. It is in this sense that the notion of manipulation, that is, use for the opposite of what is intended or expected, is common to both plays. In *Electra*, the moral consequences of such listening have direct emotional bearing on the heroine's audience, both internal and external to the play, so that the term manipulative carries unpleasant overtones. Philoctetes' manipulative listening does not imply the same kind of emotional manipulation. Our ability to identify with the hero's agony and morally applaud him are not at odds; indeed, it is the way the emotional and moral aspects of empathy align that is dramatically explored as it complicates the intended plot against Philoctetes. Furthermore, neither the chorus in their lyric dialogue with Neoptolemus nor, later on, Philoctetes with the chorus actually succeed in manipulating their interlocutor into a position they have not already chosen with their eyes open. Yet, the sense that discord prevails despite a harmonious affinity, and, hence, that communication has gone awry, is a fundamental feature of the *amoibaia* of this play.[42] To explain this, I suggest we consider that the lyric medium itself is

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[42] On the play as a crisis of communication, where language is constantly abused through lies and deceit, see n. 7.

being manipulated, a manipulation which comes about through listening. Listening is manipulative in *Philoctetes* in the sense that it uses the basic harmony of the lyric medium to deepen division and hostility.

In juxtaposing the two *amoibaia*, a striking similarity comes up in the patterns of manipulative listening, as if Philoctetes and the chorus employ a shared technique of listening. The comparability between the chorus and Philoctetes as lyric participants who attempt to impact their respective interlocutors through song reminds us of the significance of the chorus as a dramatic character. Their dramatic import comes about through their lyric voice, specifically in a song that demonstrates a certain religious worldview and stresses their cultic function. In the *amoibaion* with Neoptolemus, the failure of listening and the ethical struggle it represents is played out through dactylic tetrameters and hexameters, which come to stand for two opposite moral viewpoints. Philoctetes' subsequent rejection of the chorus is voiced in a vehement run of dactylic tetrameters. The interaction between the interlocutors in this later *amoibaion* recalls the *parodos* of *Electra*, in its metrical as well as emotional aspects. I argue that the juxtaposition of the two *amoibaia* of *Philoctetes* brings to the surface the thematic significance of dactyls in this play.[43] Based on the similarities between the lyric dialogues of *Electra* and *Philoctetes*, one can already point to a mode of communication which is typical of intransigent Sophoclean heroes, and in which the dactylic tetrameter is used as a medium for the workings and the expression of manipulative listening. Furthermore, the particular contextual web in which dactylic tetrameters and hexameters feature in *Philoctetes* allows them to be heard not only as a medium of heroic determination but also as a lyric instrument of dramatic conflict, and a site where the ethical multivalence of listening, as an action of receptivity and rejection, is played out.

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[43] That is to say, a significance beyond authorial preference: West 1982, 129 calls the dactylic tetrameter Sophocles' "favourite colon." On the passage in *Electra* (lines 130-34) see ch. 3 pp. 94-5 with n. 38.

We may now turn to the first case (827-864). While Philoctetes lies asleep after his attack of pain, the chorus start singing a hymn to Sleep. The song could be seen as an independent *stasimon*, if not for Neoptolemus' intervention between strophe and antistrophe. This makes the chorus' subsequent parts more dialogic in nature, manifested in their repeated addresses and uses of the second person (843ff). The chorus try to persuade Neoptolemus to act as they see fit, even though he is their military commander and ultimately in charge of their actions. Exerting their influence on him as his seniors, they call him *child* three times (τέκνον in 843, 845, and 855), which seems like a deliberate reaction to Neoptolemus' growing filial commitment to Philoctetes.[44] To the extent that the song is a dialogue, however, it manifests the communicative failure and the moral chasm between the chorus and the young man. While most of the following analysis focuses on the back and forth between Neoptolemus and the chorus, we should not let the fact of Philoctetes' presence throughout the song be overlooked. This song revolves around his body, in all senses of the word—it enacts an ethical and practical deliberation about how to respond to his physical impotence, and is performed as he lies there, unconscious in his sleep.[45] The closing paragraphs of this section are concerned with the link between the poetics of listening in this lyric dialogue and the condition of Philoctetes' immobile body as a dramatic presence and problem.

The chorus' song over the helpless Philoctetes is a paean. Besides the invocation Παίων in 832, the dactylic meter of the opening line is another formal feature of this ritual song (827,

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[44] For the chorus' use of τέκνον, see Avery 1965.286. Gardiner 1987.20 also comments on the chorus' stress on Neoptolemus' youth. Segal 1977.146 writes that their song "becomes but another voice against which Neoptolemus must defend himself."

[45] Cf. Seale 1982.39.

and the corresponding 843).[46] The chorus' invocation of Sleep at first sounds like a call for a

divine healer to deliver Philoctetes from pain. However, it soon becomes clear from their use of

καιρός (837: *critical moment*) and παρὰ πόδα (838: *promptly*) that they consider Philoctetes'

temporary incapacitation timely.[47] For them, it is an opportunity to take advantage of his

unconscious state and leave with his bow. They urge Neoptolemus to act quickly: *why do we*

delay from acting? (836: πρὸς τί μένομεν πράσσειν;). In response to the implicit suggestion to

further the intrigue, Neoptolemus utters four lines of chanted dactylic hexameter (839-42):

> ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν κλύει οὐδέν, ἐγὼ δ' ὁρῶ οὕνεκα θήραν
> τήνδ' ἁλίως ἔχομεν τόξων, δίχα τοῦδε πλέοντες.
> τοῦδε γὰρ ὁ στέφανος, τοῦτον θεὸς εἶπε κομίζειν.
> κομπεῖν δ' ἔστ' ἀτελῆ σὺν ψεύδεσιν αἰσχρὸν ὄνειδος.
>
> Why, he can hear nothing, but I see that we capture
> the bow in vain if we sail without him.
> The garland is his, he it is whom the god told us to bring:
> and to boast with falsehoods of actions unaccomplished is a shameful disgrace.

Neoptolemus opposes the chorus' course of action, which he sees as a contradiction of the

prophecy concerning Philoctetes and his role in the sack of Troy. Even though the oracle has

been left notoriously vague so far, Neoptolemus here voices a remarkably clear understanding of

it (841: τοῦτον <u>θεὸς εἶπε</u> κομίζειν).[48] This is a pivotal moment, for Neoptolemus articulates his

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[46] On this song as a paean see esp. Haldane 1963, who also mentions the typical dactylic meter (55). Cf. Fairbanks 1900.46-7. Sophocles uses a long uninterrupted sequence of dactylic tetrameters in the context of a paean also in *OT* 151-67, for which see section 1.2 above. The metrical scheme of this song is difficult and some of the transmitted text has been suspected as interpolation, especially 858-9; see Schein ad 855-61; Dale 1968.117-8, *contra* Pohlsander 1964.120. Cole 1988.108 gives the entire passage a dochmiac interpretation, and see his 105-107 for the possible modulation of dochmiacs into dactylo-anapestic. See also Gentili and Lomiento 2008.229-30, 234.

[47] Rose 1976.72 n. 54 comments on the ambiguity of sleep, both bringing relief from pain and rendering one helpless. See also Jones 1949.83-4.

[48] From Odysseus' actions later in the play it remains inconclusive whether or not, according to the prophecy, Philoctetes himself is needed at Troy. At 199 Neoptolemus has recognized the necessity of Philoctetes' bow at Troy in order to conquer the city. See Schein ad 191-200 and ad 199 for Neoptolemus' implicit familiarity with the prophecy here. Robinson 1969.49-50 stresses that the exact words of the oracle are at no point quoted *verbatim* or made available to the audience uninterpreted, and concludes that it is "certain that Sophocles did not expect his audience to think that capturing the bow without its owner was an impossible response to the oracle of Helenus" (45). See also Pucci 1994.32-3, 39 on characters' misunderstanding of the prophecy. For him, Sophocles' innovation is that the oracle utters a condition: that Philoctetes return to Troy willingly (nn. 32, 35). Yet Heracles' intervention shows that "the oracle does not prove its truth and inevitability by itself" (43).

realization of the moral baseness and practical futility (840: ἁλίως) of the deceit.[49] Furthermore, this realization is bound to a theological understanding, which he affirms in opposition to the chorus.

The meter with which Neoptolemus expresses all this, dactylic hexameters, is associated with oracular pronouncements, so that his voice is invested with god-like authority.[50] Neoptolemus' utterance sounds like an epiphany, both in content and in its trance-like separation from the choral song. It is not only in words that he disagrees with the chorus, for the meter also highlights the differences in their theological standpoints. Neoptolemus' dactylic intervention is of limited lyricism: it was probably chanted, not sung.[51] The epic connotations and the clear oracular overtones, as well as the simplicity of the repetitive metrical pattern, mark this utterance as much less lyrically complex than the choral song. Nonetheless, I suggest that his chanted hexameters respond to the choral lyric tetrameters and invite further engagement between the interlocutors. Neoptolemus' dactylic chant, together with the choral dactyls in the strophe and the corresponding ones in the antistrophe, form a series of repeated metrical patterns. Though the metrical repetition is not strict, the dactyls of both singers echo and counter one another.[52] The chorus' dactylic tetrameters and Neoptolemus' hexameters allude to traditional cultic-literary contexts which resonate with different moral-theological meanings. That is to say, the conflict

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[49] Cf. Campbell 1972.81. Whitman 1951.176 regards this as Neoptolemus' "first moment of conscious moral action."

[50] See Newman 1991.309 n. 13 on the thematic significance of the oracular and epic overtones of these lines.

[51] On Neoptolemus' dactyls as a chant see Popp 1971.232, who compares Hyllos' non-lyric role in *Trach*. 1020-22. Schein 2013.248-9 similarly claims that *Phil*. 839-42 are chanted between the strophe and antistrophe rather than within the strophic system. On the other hand, Willink 2003.92 considers these lines a "mesode" and "surely lyric."

[52] To the ears of Sophocles' audience, hexameters undoubtedly sounded different from tetrameters; we may also safely assume that the choral dactyls were marked by a unique melodic component missing from Neoptolemus' chant, even if the latter were accompanied by melody (which, in turn, might have highlighted their resonance with the performance of Homeric epic, the genre of dactylic hexameters *par excellence*). Nonetheless, the juxtaposition between different types of dactylic patterns seems deliberate and significant.

between Neoptolemus and the chorus on how to react to Philoctetes' vulnerability maps onto the distinct uses of their respective voices, and onto the separate theological standpoints they embody as dramatic participants.[53]

Whereas the chorus voice their dependence on divine intervention and leave the required necessary action implicit and vague, Neoptolemus assumes responsibility for carrying out the divine will.[54] His opening words make this clear with the emphatic use of the first person pronoun and verbs: ἐγώ δ' ὁρῶ; ἔχομεν… πλέοντες. Yet, Neoptolemus gradually moves away from his personal involvement towards a generalizing view of the situation. The gnomic statement denouncing deceitful arrogance—that is, the conduct in which the plot against Philoctetes has implicated him—colors as impersonal what would otherwise sound like Neoptolemus' decision to change his own course of action. Ultimately, Neoptolemus points to the wrongness of the current plan without offering an alternative. He is thus getting closer to the tragic crux of the matter: the impossibility of his current action leads to an insoluble situation.[55]

The choral song in the antistrophe and the following epode responds to and expounds on the impasse to which Neoptolemus' revelation leads. They start by countering his statements, as another opening ἀλλά makes clear: *but the god will see to that, son* (843; cf. 839). By "that" they likely mean bringing Philoctetes to Troy.[56] This dactylic tetrameter ἀλλά, τέκνον, τάδε μὲν θεὸς ὄψεται formally corresponds to their opening line (823), recalling its paeanic connotations.

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[53] Kitzinger 2008 argues for an essential separateness in Sophocles of the chorus and characters in their ethical and theological views.

[54] Schein ad 839-42 and ad 639-40 stresses Neoptolemus' practical rather than moral reasons for action. I believe the juxtaposition with the formal aspects of the choral song highlights the content of Neoptolemus' dactyls as a moral realization.

[55] Cf. Robinson 1969.48, who claims that Neoptolemus' chant is " 'oracular' not merely because he speaks in hexameters but also because he does not produce arguments for his interpretation", and, I would add, is not ultimately prescriptive.

[56] On the referent of this statement as the fulfillment of the oracle, i.e. bringing Philoctetes to Troy, see notes ad loc in Jebb, Kamerbeek, and Schein.

Yet, its sonic reverberations are different from its counterpart in the strophe in light of Neoptolemus' immediately preceding dactylic hexameters. In other words, when heard as an instance of metrical echoing in response to Neoptolemus, it has thematic significance particular to the dialogic situation, beyond the paeanic sense and not simply as a feature of responsion in the antistrophe. Since this is a repetition of their paeanic dactyls from the strophe, it can be heard as an attempt to further collapse the difference implied by their song and Neoptolemus' oracular dactylic chant, and a subversion of the relation between human and divine which Neoptolemus' dactyls expressed. For him, the god's oracular injunction is the occasion to speak up; it obliges him to act. For the chorus, divine involvement in human affairs proves their limited influence on reality and allows them to renounce responsibility over Philoctetes.

It is through dactyls that the chorus perform manipulative listening on Neoptolemus in a way that befits their dramatic function and worldview, as well as their more elaborate lyric voice. Heard this way, the chorus' receptivity to Neoptolemus is superficial, at best; to the extent that their response echoes Neoptolemus' chant, it reflects a subversive form of listening. Though they respond to the fact of an ethical–theological difficulty, the chorus reject the moral content of Neoptolemus' recognition, his realization of the kind of pious action demanded of him.[57] The rest of the antistrophe furthers the agenda of deceit explicitly (850: λαθραίως). The chorus end by underlining the aporia to which Neoptolemus' moral commitment leads: *if you have the same opinion concerning this man, then indeed, for shrewd men there are insoluble sufferings in store* (853-4: εἰ ταύταν τούτῳ γνώμαν ἴσχεις μάλα τοι ἄπορα πυκινοῖς ἐνιδεῖν [literally *to see in*

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[57] On Neoptolemus' and the chorus' different reactions to the oracle and different interpretations of pious behavior see Hinds 1967.175; Robinson 1969.46-8; Segal 1977; Martin 1993 (esp. 134-7). Of these, both Robinson and Martin write suggestively about the play's juxtaposition of piety and human compassion.

this] πάθη).[58] In other words, the chorus caution Neoptolemus of the hardships to come if he refuses to act deceitfully. This statement is, to an extent, in harmony with Neoptolemus' oracular recognition, for it echoes his realization of an ethical impasse.[59] Yet it is fundamentally at odds with Neoptolemus' understanding of the deceit as a deeply flawed, indeed impossible, option.

In response, Neoptolemus is silent. The absence of a corresponding antistrophe in dactylic hexameters marks a jarring break from the strophic structure.[60] If one considers Neoptolemus' dactylic lines an epiphany, the lack of antistrophe in hexameters could seem to preserve the uniqueness of the first response as a singular expression, a momentous realization that needs no repetition. On this view, Neoptolemus' recognition is decisive, so that his refusal to respond to the chorus is indicative of a strength of will. It nonetheless seems odd that he does not respond to the chorus' urging to act in secret, which is directly at odds with what sounded like a professed resolution on his part to give up lying (842). His unexpected reluctance or inability to do so might suggest the chorus' rhetoric control over him. Either way, Neoptolemus' silence highlights the unrequited nature of this dialogue and recalls his previous silences in reaction to Philoctetes' pain.[61] To the extent that the chorus listened to Neoptolemus, their listening did not reflect an acknowledgement of his experience of ethical clarity. It is thus unsurprising that it does

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[58] Most editors including Jebb, Kamerbeek, and Pucci print ταύταν. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson print ταὐτά. See Pucci ad loc for the equivalence in sense between ταὐτά and ταύταν. Nussbaum 1976.45-6 remarks on the chorus' repetition of words for *sight* in this passage.

[59] The chorus, however, have no problem practically solving this conundrum by sailing away without Philoctetes. I do not agree with Scott 1996.185-7 that this practical solution is motivated by the chorus' concern for Philoctetes and their recognition of his vulnerability. However, his concomitant understanding of πόνος ὁ μὴ φοβῶν (l. 864) as the course of action that "will cause [Philoctetes] the least fear" (310 n. 213) offers an elegant interpretation of this expression. In this regard see Kitzinger 2008.77: "it is the very form of choral expression, along with the pity it expresses, that is continually hollowed out and made illusory; in the end it is completely silenced." Cf. n. 21 above on the problems of interpreting the chorus' expressions of compassion.

[60] Kitzinger 2008 and Scott 1996 see non-responsion as an indication of moral difficulty or disjuncture, and, accordingly, read epodes as songs that destabilize the moral order, or understanding thereof, in Sophocles.

[61] On Neoptolemus' silence later (l. 951) De Luna 2004.75 writes, "La caratteristica fondamentale di un atto comunicativo è, infatti, la reciprocità, che la scelta del silenzio esclude." I have stressed Neoptolemus' silence in reaction to Philoctetes' pain as a progression towards empathy and a communicative act as such (see n. 33 above), yet in both cases silence marks empathy as the cause for a dramatic conflict.

not foster reciprocality but rather stifles the dialogic back-and-forth that might have been expected at this point.

The choral epode now explicitly advises the opposite of what Neoptolemus voiced earlier. It is a song that reflects disjunction not only formally, due to the lack of antistrophe, but also by calling attention to the dramatic and ethical gap between the characters. As such, the song is in keeping with what came before it both thematically and metrically. Thematically, the chorus still push for immediate action, taking Philoctetes' vulnerability as justification for abandoning (rather than helping) him. Significantly, most of this description is sung in a dactylic sequence (858-61), highlighting the theological and ethical conflict which dactylic patterns helped constitute.[62] Towards the end of their song, the chorus dismiss Neoptolemus' last words: *look, see whether you speak to the point* (862-3: ὅρα, βλέπ' εἰ καίρια φθέγγῃ). Their use of καίρια recalls their earlier use of καιρός (837): they speak in the same vein as they did just before Neoptolemus stated his understanding of the oracle, as if they had not heard him at all. Whether it is their eagerness to take advantage of the moment that blocks any possible response from Neoptolemus, or his own understanding that they are deaf to the import of his words, the epode confirms what the antistrophe left ambiguous. The chorus are, in a deep sense, not listening: they are unable or unwilling to recognize the depth of the ethical crisis Neoptolemus faces and of the commitment he has already formulated. When a reaction finally comes from Neoptolemus to their uninterrupted song in the epode, it is a demand for silence (*be quiet, I say*; 865: σιγᾶν κελεύω) signaling the end of communication between them.

The use of dactyls by both singers, and by the chorus both in the strophic sections and in the non-strophic epode, reveals a fundamental multivalence in the harmoniousness of the lyric

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[62] See Schein ad 855-61 for the dactylic context.

164

medium, which is at once a multivalence of listening. As we have seen repeatedly, the metrical harmony of the lyric form, which can be manifest in varying degrees but is always a given, prescribes a certain note of listening between the partners-in-song. Yet metrical harmony does not necessarily facilitate the development of deep listening. Here as well, metrical harmony reveals shallow listening, in fact signaling the frustration of deep listening and empathy. Inherent features of the lyric song, precisely because they connect its parts (whether separate strophes or separate voices within a strophe) into a harmonious whole, serve to underline the dissonance between the parts, which may be explicitly or implicitly expressed by other means. While the metrical responsion, or symmetry, between strophe and antistrophe is usually taken for granted, this fundamental compatibility of the parts is more conspicuous here, not least because it is only partial (recall the absence of a response from Neoptolemus). Responsion is not merely incidental to the medium, but a deliberate effect to which attention is drawn as it is undermined, manipulated, or juxtaposed with other effects that come about through the specific dialogic situation. That this song is an *amoibaion*, a lyric dialogue, calls on us to interpret what makes it "lyric" in light of what makes it a "dialogue," an act of embodied interpersonal communication. Thus, the fact of responsion itself is highlighted and injected with discursive meaning, marking the discord between the singers. Furthermore, the transition to a non-strophic song is already marked as a transgression of the symmetrical norm, and forces us to reconsider the harmony of the strophic parts as a multivalent sign.

Listening operates here on a superficial level: the chorus seem aware of Neoptolemus' moral difficulty, only to overturn his position. What can be taken as an index of receptivity in fact exposes the lack of reciprocal understanding. Let us recall what is at stake, dramatically: the chorus are trying to convince Neoptolemus to leave the unconscious Philoctetes and steal his

bow, in the face of the young man's realization that Philoctetes must be brought to Troy. Granted, the decision to act remains in Neoptolemus' hands, while the chorus may only respond to the events on stage. They are not free to act independently, but rather take their cue from Neoptolemus. Indeed, throughout the play their loyalty and obedience to Neoptolemus is obvious, and their comings and goings are dictated by him.[63] It remains his prerogative not to listen to them. Yet, they nonetheless are in a position to offer moral guidance, which Neoptolemus rejects. His choice is a firm self-assertion in the face of yet another father-like figure.

This reading of the lyric exchange between the two suggests that it is not simply the chorus' secondary role in the events that makes them unable to grasp Neoptolemus' ethical difficulty. It is not even their theological standpoint by itself that prescribes their disagreement with him, though it plays a significant part in their moral deafness, so to speak. Rather, the reading offered here considers the chorus a listening agent, and it is their deliberate involvement in the dialogue that exposes the weight and difficulty of Neoptolemus' moral commitment. Even if their listening is of limited moral capacity, it is coherent, and as such counteracts Neoptolemus. Their distinctive lyric role and the way the lyric medium is manipulated, specifically through the use of its features that allow and promote responsiveness, is their unique way of trying to influence the events.[64] This reading, then, contributes to an understanding of the chorus as an active participant in the dramatic dilemma through their song; it also demonstrates that listening is an essential part of the action, which transpires in and through lyric dialogues.

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[63] See Kirkwood 1958.187 and 192; cf. Gardiner 1987.46, though she stresses "their devotion to the stratagem [rather] than to Neoptolemus."

[64] Cf. the dramatic significance of the chorus' unusual use of their lyric medium in their invocation of Earth, 391-492: Reinhardt 1976.180; Bers 1981.504 calls their song "an instrument of cruelty," for it is a lie which promotes the act of stealing the bow. Schein ad 391-492 writes that the choral song is "manipulated and manipulative." Cf. Kitzinger's analysis of this *stasimon*, which she calls "The Song of Lies", 2008.87-96.

Nonetheless, the chorus' manipulative listening is ultimately unsuccessful as such, for it does not change the course of events Neoptolemus' epiphany signals. The *amoibaion* consists in an ethical confrontation, a dramatic action in and of itself; it is also a debate about their next steps. The ultimate goal of the play is to get Philoctetes' body offstage, whether to Malis, as the interaction with Neoptolemus leads him to hope, or to Troy, as the audience and all characters apart from Philoctetes expect throughout. Yet, this movement is repeatedly stalled.[65] In light of this, we can understand listening as a crucial action. It foregrounds the body in pain as that which is not in motion but simply, arrestingly, present. Thus, listening becomes both the highest moral action and a hindrance to practical action. The radical dramatic significance of listening in this song comes about through the way it maps onto the spatial and physical aspects of the plot. Manipulative listening exposes the differences between Neoptolemus and the chorus in relation to the crux of the drama, namely, what to do with Philoctetes' body. As we shall see below, the perplexing double ending of the play may be elucidated through a similar convergence between the dramatic import of listening on the one hand, and the spatial and physical aspects of the drama on the other. At this point, the young man has come to realize that his own trajectory is bound to Philoctetes'; the chorus still uphold that it is possible, indeed necessary, to consider the two separately. The chorus' eagerness to leave is clearly voiced in a lyric episode where one would expect to be reminded of their enduring presence on stage. The chorus' atypical behavior here in terms of their spatial orientation—their hope to move away from the stage rather than their irrevocable presence onstage—draws attention to Philoctetes' immovable body and Neoptolemus' moral conviction in relation to that body.

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[65] See Taplin 1971; Seale 1982.34-5; Kitzinger 2008.74 n. 10.

4.3 Manipulative Listening: Philoctetes and the Chorus

The next lyric dialogue of the play is a direct confrontation between Philoctetes and the chorus. This song once more demonstrates the inadequacy of listening when the need for empathic presence collides with the need for action. Like the previous *amoibaion*, deep listening between the interlocutors is frustrated despite the formal harmony of their shared song. Furthermore, the repetition of metrical patterns, particularly dactylic tetrameters, again underscores the ethical struggle between the singers and the chorus' inability to empathize with Philoctetes. While metrical harmony comes about through gestures that reflect a longing to maintain communication, these ultimately do not enable mutual understanding between the two. The overall metrical structure as well as the content of the shared song point to the irreconcilable differences between Philoctetes and the chorus. Philoctetes' need for an empathic recognition of his pain bitterly comes up against the chorus' resistance to providing such recognition. They are, instead, bent on convincing him to yield and facilitating his movement towards Troy. The song pits against each other a character who cannot move because of his physical limitation but also, more importantly, refuses to move in principal, and a chorus whose preference it is to shun Philoctetes' presence and move offstage as quickly as possible.

This song takes place late in the play. Neoptolemus has unsuccessfully tried to convince Philoctetes to join him and go to Troy. Odysseus has (for the second time) ambushed the two men, threatened to steal the bow, and effectively made Neoptolemus do so himself, as the latter departs from the island, bow in hand. This chain of events leaves Philoctetes enraged, depleted, and devastated, alone with a chorus who have throughout been, at best, equivocal in their concern towards him. Without the bow he seems sentenced to die on Lemnos, and so begins to

sing a mournful song, essentially a dirge for himself.[66] The first two pairs of strophes (1081-1162) are notable for the lack of communication between Philoctetes and the chorus. Philoctetes consistently disregards the chorus' statements and does not address them at all. This is all the more remarkable given that he opens his song with an appeal to the cave and the wind, and later addresses the birds and beasts he can no longer prey on. The chorus round off each of his strophes with a few lines of their own but do not share any semantic, grammatical, or metrical unit with him.[67] Formally, the two voices are kept separate, even while some of the various meters in which Philoctetes sings are used by the chorus as well, especially the choriambic dimeter. To the extent that the overall metrical pattern of the song sustains harmony, particularly in the strophic sections, the emotional dissonance between the two singing voices and the startlingly unsympathetic reactions of the chorus are superimposed on the fundamental harmony of the lyric medium. In what follows, I focus on the epode, where the superficially harmonious communication between the interlocutors cannot bridge the deepening emotional and ethical gap between them. As in previous *amoibaia*, the structure of the song highlights its features of responsiveness, precisely as their validity as a medium of empathic listening is questioned.[68]

To resume: listening between Philoctetes and the chorus barely happens at all up to the end of the second antistrophe, where a significant shift occurs and the hope arises for successful

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[66] Cf. Nooter 2012.136. See Suter 2008.164 for examples of male tragic characters performing self-laments (though she focuses on these as confessional statements). Robinson 1969.45 convincingly argues that the dramatic effect of Philoctetes' pathetic devastation and apparently final disappearance into his cave at the end of the song depends on the audience believing that his abandonment on Lemnos is possible, despite his eventual presence at the sack of Troy, prescribed by mythical tradition.

[67] On the separation between the two interlocutors see Schein ad loc; Scott 1996.191. For Philoctetes' apostrophes here see Nooter 2012.136-7. On his apostrophes earlier in the play (lines 936-40) she writes: "As his language reaches outward to supposedly invest the inanimate and animal world with sympathy, it draws his onstage listeners still closer, the ones conspicuously not addressed" (136).

[68] Burton 1980.244 comments that this is the first instance in extant Sophocles of a long astrophic song where chorus and character sing in dialogue.

reciprocal listening.[69] Philoctetes here sings of his imminent death by starvation, and imagines the beasts he used to hunt consuming his flesh (e.g. *now it is fine to glut your mouth to your content, taking blood for blood, on my discolored flesh*; 1115-7: νῦν καλὸν ἀντίφονον κορέσαι στόμα πρὸς χάριν ἐμᾶς σαρκὸς αἰόλας). The chorus' more fervent response suggests that they are shaken by his misery. Though they still hold him accountable for choosing to prolong his suffering, they describe his disease in terms that deeply resonate with Philoctetes and so, finally, prompt a direct response from him. The chorus' song at the end of the antistrophe is as follows (1163-8):

> πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι σέβει ξένον, πέλασσον
> εὐνοίᾳ πάσᾳ πελάταν·
> ἀλλὰ γνῶθ᾽, εὖ γνῶθ᾽ ἐπὶ σοὶ
> κῆρα τάνδ᾽ ἀποφεύγειν.
> οἰκτρὰ γὰρ βόσκειν, ἀδαὴς δ᾽
> ἔχειν μυρίον ἄχθος, ὃ ξυνοικεῖ.

> By the gods, if you respect a stranger at all, approach[70]
> with good-will him who approaches you entirely so.
> But consider, consider well, that it is up to you
> to flee this death-doom.
> For it is pitiable to feed, and it cannot be taught to
> bear the infinite woes with which it dwells.

In their words, Philoctetes' doom (κήρ) figures first as self-made, an index for his responsibility and control over his life. It then morphs into an anthropomorphized entity, at once Philoctetes' devouring cohabiter and indistinguishable from his body. In this densely poetic formulation of the daemonic disease, the chorus strike a chord with Philoctetes' visceral experience of the workings of the gods in and through his body; they speak his "language of

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[69] Schein 2013 ad 1169-1217 writes that "genuine interaction and dialogue" now begins.

[70] The appeal to the gods bespeaks the intensity of their plea to Philoctetes to approach them as benevolent. Jebb translates ξένον as "a friend who draws near" and comments "a friendly stranger." Schein ad 1163-4 comments on the thematic importance of approach and withdrawal and its relation to the notion of friendship.

pain."[71] Their words recall Philoctetes' anthropomorphic descriptions of his disease, as well as his extended apostrophes to the bow earlier in this song. Thus, they reflect an empathic acknowledgement of what Philoctetes undergoes and how he sings about it. Re-sounding his experience of extreme pain and inseparability from his physical affliction, the chorus is vocalizing a deep listening to Philoctetes, enmeshed as it is with another accusatory remark.

It is thus not surprising that Philoctetes now responds to the chorus, for the first time since he began singing. He explicitly reacts to their last words in a mournful outburst that also acknowledges the chorus' concern: *again, again you mentioned my old pain, you who are better than those who were here before* (1169-71: πάλιν πάλιν παλαιὸν ἄλγημ᾽ ὑπέμνασας, ὦ λῷστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων). This initial reaction to the chorus is the beginning of an emotionally turbulent epode, a non-strophic song, in which Philoctetes swings between bitter rejection of the chorus and a yearning to be comforted by their presence. Their mention of the disease puts him, at least momentarily, in a safely familiar territory, for it prompts him to lyrically vocalize his suffering to a chorus that does the same. For a brief moment, the relationship is back to where it was at the beginning of the play. Not only is the chorus a group of well-meaning bystanders (as they define themselves in 1163-4: ξένον; εὐνοίᾳ), but, precisely in virtue of their compassionate lyricism, Philoctetes now declares they are *better than those who were here before* (1171: λῷστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων). To the extent that this passage harks back to previous encounters with Philoctetes' suffering, I would suggest also that the repeated *pa* sounds in his opening line of the epode, πάλιν πάλιν παλαιόν, have particular emotional thrust in light of the significance of

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[71] On the shift in the sense of κῆρ whereby, in the second clause of the final sentence, it merges with the suffering person, see Jebb ad loc and Schein ad loc. The amalgamation of divine and human forces the term δαίμων properly entails is physically manifest in Philoctetes' pain. In this regard see Martin 1993.134: "the wound and the bow… represent the human condition as *necessarily* being in direct and meaningful communication with divine forces" (original emphasis). Cf. *OT* 1302: τίς ὁ πηδήσας μείζονα δαίμων τῶν μηκίστων πρὸς σῇ δυσδαίμονι μοίρᾳ. Dawe ad loc remarks on "the tendency to speak of a man and his destiny as half-separate, half-identical things."

similar sounds when Philoctetes was in extreme pain—namely, παπαῖ and παῖ. It seems that this is the sound with which Philoctetes tries to bring his interlocutors closer to his suffering.

Philoctetes' vocalization here is at once a reenactment of his experience of pain, an attempt to engage with the chorus as empathic listeners, and a mild accusation against them. The immediately following questions and the dialogue that ensues exemplify the fraught relationship between the interlocutors and their difficulty to communicate, even as they are metrically harmonious (1172-80):

Φ.	τί μ᾽ ὤλεσας; τί μ᾽ εἴργασαι;	1172
Χ.	τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας; Φ. εἰ σὺ τὰν [ἐμοὶ]	
	στυγερὰν Τρῳάδα γᾶν μ᾽ ἤλπισας ἄξειν.	1175
Χ.	τόδε γὰρ νοῶ κράτιστον.	
Φ.	ἀπό νύν με λείπετ᾽ ἤδη.	
Χ.	φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρήγγει-	
	λας ἑκόντι τε πράσσειν.	1179a
	ἴωμεν ἴωμεν	1179b
	ναὸς ἵν᾽ ἡμῖν τέτακται.	1180

Ph.	Why did you ruin me? What have you done to me?
Ch.	Why do you say this? Ph. …if you hope to lead me
	to the abominable land of Troy.[72]
Ch.	Yes, I think that is best.
Ph.	Get away from me, right now!
Ch.	Dear to me, dear it is
	what you bid me do willingly.
	Let's go, let's go
	to where the ship is ready for us.

Despite Philoctetes' lament for the stolen bow and the imminent death he believes this loss entails for him, the chorus still advocate what is anathema to him. It is as if they simply do not

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[72] We have repeatedly seen the emotive and rhetorical force of questions. Thus, it is possible the chorus' question here τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας; functions in this way, as an attempt to defuse Philoctetes' bitter fatalism. And yet Philoctetes seems to take the question at face value, explaining that it means death to him *if you hope to lead me to abominable Troy* (1174-5: εἰ σὺ τὰν [ἐμοὶ] στυγερὰν Τρῳάδα γᾶν μ᾽ ἤλπισας ἄξειν). The chorus confirms their support for this course of action, proving that they truly misunderstand the severity of its implications for Philoctetes, and so, that their question *why do you say this?* was genuine and not simply rhetorical. See Mastronarde 1979.16 on "true" questions that look formally like "rhetorical" ones. On the formal harmony of this section cf. Scott 1996.192-3.

register his consistent refusal to help the Greek commanders, even in the face of more suffering or death by starvation.[73]

The chorus' uncomprehending question combines the effects of metrical echoes with metrical sharing. τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξᾰς; (1173) opens an iambic foot, which echoes the iambic dimeters of the immediately preceding line and the opening line of the epode, both sung by Philoctetes (1169: πάλιν πάλιν παλαιὸν ἄλ- / 1172: τί μ᾽ ὤλεσας; τί μ᾽ εἴργασαι;). The chorus, then, is repeating the rhythmic pattern Philoctetes used to express his devastation. The second iambic foot of 1173 ($\times\!-\!\cup\!\cup$) is only completed as such by Philoctetes' words εἰ σὺ τᾶν to create an iambic dimeter.[74] The metrical harmony reveals that, at least on a certain level, the interlocutors are making an effort to maintain communication. By echoing his meter, the chorus vocalize their listening, even while their words betray that they do not understand what they have heard; by completing an iambic foot, Philoctetes makes a gesture of responsivity even as he is confronted with, and is close to being exasperated by, the chorus' lack of receptivity towards him.

Further along in the song, Philoctetes' echo of the chorus' meter reflects the strong moral and emotional divide between them. A forceful example comes just after Philoctetes declares how abhorrent to him is the chorus' hope to carry him off to Troy. Referring to this action, the chorus affirm, *I think this is best* (1176: τόδε γὰρ νοῶ κράτιστον). The meter is anacreontic ($\cup\cup\!-\!\cup\!-\!\cup\!-\!\cup$ with *brevis in longo*). Philoctetes replies, using the same meter, *Leave me now, right away* (1177: ἀπό νύν με λείπετ᾽ ἤδη). The correspondence, in both cases, of an entire sentence

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[73] Rose 1976.78: Philoctetes is not "simply motivated by bitterness for past crimes; it is the strong probability… of equally unjust treatment in the future which seems to preclude social ties and joint action with such men". Cf. Heath 1999.157.

[74] 1174 with deletion of ἐμοι; cf. the metrical analysis in Schein 2013, 288. This passage is discussed as an example of "polymetry" in West 1982.135-6. He comments on the transition to ionics "mid-sentence" in 1175; his analysis of the passage implicitly does not include a hypodochmius, a type of what he calls "abnormal dochmiacs" (110). A hypodochmius is assumed if ἐμοι is retained, for which see Stinton 1965.145 and Scott 1996.188. This interpretation makes of Philoctetes' and the chorus' utterance two separate cola: pentasyllabic iambic (τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας;) and hypodochmius (εἰ σὺ τὰν ἐμοὶ).

to a single metrical unit stresses the exactly parallel structure of the statement. This in turn highlights how utterly, violently even, Philoctetes is rejecting what he just heard. Using the chorus' meter, he responds to their incomprehension almost mockingly, as if to reformulate it in terms they might be able to recognize. It is a metrical–rhetorical gesture that throws back at them the superficiality of their alleged friendship and the inadequacy of their listening. It vocalizes *I hear you are not listening to me*. In using an echoing response to reject his lyric partner, Philoctetes behaves (metrically and emotionally) in a way which recalls Electra; unlike her, he is faced with a chorus whose empathy wavers between fleeting and nonexistent.

Their reaction now is a case in point: the chorus happily embrace the suggestion to leave. Their statement *dear to me, dear it is what you bid me do willingly* exposes how flimsy they consider their responsibility towards Philoctetes in his suffering (1178-9: φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρήγγειλας ἑκόντι τε πράσσειν). The insistent repetition of φίλα becomes an ironic reminder of their assertion of friendship, effectively overturning it.[75] Furthermore, in this utterance they echo the ionic trimeter with which Philoctetes just described their plan as despicable to him (1175). The two statements are metrically similar but not identical. The chorus use syncopated ionics, so that the beginning of the line is similar, but overall their utterance reflects their eagerness, as if in their hurry they are skipping a few beats. The rhetorical substitution of φίλα μοι for στύγεραν, metrically equivalent segments of the two lines, creates an inevitable parallel between Philoctetes' disgust and their enthusiasm. The variation from his meter could be heard as an attempt to mitigate his unequivocal interpretation of going to Troy, or, less charitably, as a dismissal of this interpretation. The chorus appear to listen to and withstand Philoctetes' vehemence, vocalizing their disagreement with his words even as they echo his meter. To the

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[75] Cf. Rose 1976.75.

extent that the metrical echo here reflects the chorus' listening to Philoctetes, the echo fails to vocalize empathy—this is listening that does not develop into deep listening. The fundamental ethical discrepancy in their respective views of the situation is obvious, despite the superficial congruence of their voices.

What is striking here is the chorus' wish to part ways with Philoctetes. This is at once an emotional stance and a practical goal. The chorus are focused on the one concrete action they are able to imagine, in accordance with the instructions Neoptolemus gave them just before the shared song commenced: to wait until the ship is ready for the voyage home, at which time Philoctetes might change his mind (1075ff). Neoptolemus' order to the chorus prescribes that they stay; it blocks their exit offstage as an impossibility, at least temporarily. In other words, they do not have the authority or dramatic agency to really leave Philoctetes. As in the previous *amoibaion* with Neoptolemus, the chorus' lyric performance does not amplify their presence on stage as an unconditional fact, but stresses their future move away from it. It is as if they are trapped in song with Philoctetes, who wants nothing more—and nothing less—than their empathic, receptive presence.

The metrical harmony reinforces the sense that Philoctetes and the chorus are forced to remain in dialogue. The formal cohesion between them expresses the emotional intimacy they have reached by virtue of Philoctetes' vulnerability and, at the same time, their gaping miscommunication. The subsequent instances of metrical echoes and metrical sharing contribute to the same effect of an excruciatingly close, frustrating dialogue (1181-5):

> ἴωμεν ἴωμεν
> ναὸς ἵν' ἡμῖν τέτακται.   1180   ch dim[76]

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[76] The syncopated ionics (1179) transition smoothly into choriambs (1180): see Cole 1988 on this type of *epiploke*.

Φ.   μή, πρὸς ἀραίου Διός, ἔλ-   ch dim
      θῃς, ἱκετεύω.   Χ. μετρίαζ᾽. Φ. ὦ ξένοι,   1182-3 ch dim +cretic
      μείνατε, πρὸς θεῶν. Χ. τί θροεῖς;   1184-5 ch dim

      Let's go, let's go
      to where the ship is ready for us.
Ph.   By Zeus of the oaths, don't go,
      I beg you.   Ch. Calm down.   Ph. Friends,[77]
      stay, by the gods.   Ch. Why are you shouting?

In the face of the chorus' cold-hearted threat to leave, Philoctetes breaks out in a plea, begging

them to stay. This surprising reversal from his dismissal of a few seconds ago (*leave me now*,

1177: ἀπό νύν με λείπετ᾽ ἤδη) brings out his desperation and dire need for companionship. His

words sound like a hysterical, last-ditch effort to fend off their departure, but his echo of the

chorus' metrical pattern (a choriambic dimeter) gives a subtly self-possessed undercurrent to his

utterance, which reinforces the attempt to sustain communication with them.

The chorus' reactions to this awkward communicative situation are correspondingly

multivalent. On the one hand, they seem confused and frustrated at Philoctetes' agitation, and

insensitively urge him to restrain himself: *calm down … why are you shouting?* (μετρίαζε … τί

θροεῖς;). They still find his pain unjustified and remain unreceptive to it.[78] On the other hand,

their responses complete Philoctetes' utterances to form more choriambic dimeters. Twice, the

second choriamb of the colon is shared by the two voices (1182-3, 1184-5), and the quick

sequence of the two cases makes the metrical sharing all the more intense. By maintaining the

choriambic pattern, the same meter they introduced to the song and Philoctetes then repeated, the

two voices remain close. The lyric medium keeps them singing together, containing Philoctetes'

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[77] I translate ξένοι here as *friends* following Jebb, though Philoctetes emphatically does not address the chorus with φίλοι. See n. 70 above (see also below, ch. 5 n. 14). The ambiguity in ξένοι is even stronger in the address at 1203.

[78] I read these questions as insensitive, thus differently from the prima facie similar questions as exclamations discussed so far. One of the differences is the lexical level: μετριάζω and θροέω are much less common and are marked as particularly harsh: they are not stock expressions like τί φής, which can more easily be understood to function as exclamations.

exasperation within the dialogue and not allowing the exchange to be undone. Philoctetes' distressed cries are part of the metrical big picture, so to speak, so that the song coheres. Metrical harmony here stresses that the chorus are still Philoctetes' lyric counterpart. To an extent, they enable his song, even if their presence is frustrating. In the previous *amoibaion*, the very features that facilitated responsiveness (namely, responsion) stressed the ethical differences between the interlocutors. Here, the mutual metrical participation binds Philoctetes and the chorus together even though the content of the song reflects discord.

The cumulative effect of the chorus' insensitivity is significant. Though they have, for a short while, kept Philoctetes singing with them when the dialogue threatened to veer into utter mutual incomprehension, he reverts to singing past them (1186-9). He re-engages in the dialogue soon enough, asking the chorus to return: *friends, come back again* (1190: ὦ ξένοι, ἔλθετ᾽ ἐπήλυδες αὖθις).[79] Philoctetes recovers the dialogic situation by means of a dactylic tetrameter, a metrical pattern whose significance previous scenes have prompted us to note. The chorus are still confused by Philoctetes' contrasting requests, and ask him to state his desires more clearly (1191-2). A bit later, they respond in a dactylic tetrameter of their own, with yet another attempt to convince Philoctetes to join them: *come now, you poor man, as we ask you* (1196: βᾶθί νυν, ὦ τάλαν, ὥς σε κελεύομεν). Bracketing the aeolic section (1191-5), this sounds like a direct response to Philoctetes' request that they return: to his *come back* they answer *come with us*. The chorus sing essentially the same tune as before, perhaps somewhat softened by the sympathetic address ὦ τάλαν. As with all instances of metrical echoing discussed above, this one too exhibits at least a modicum of receptivity. Yet what comes to the fore is the chorus' rigidity. Their response shows them essentially unaffected by Philoctetes' turmoil or his effort to surmount it.

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[79] It seems very probable that the chorus are making a move to leave here: see Schein ad 1181.

Accordingly, Philoctetes resumes, with renewed ardor, his refusal to be reconciled. In the remainder of the song, the metrical harmony of the two voices signals Philoctetes' unyielding stance; he echoes the chorus' meter insistently, expressing utter scorn for their attempt to appease him. To the chorus' single dactylic tetrameter (1196: βᾶθί νυν, ὦ τάλαν, ὥς σε κελεύομεν), Philoctetes responds in seven lines of dactyls (1197-1202):

> οὐδέποτ' οὐδέποτ', ἴσθι τόδ' ἔμπεδον,
> οὐδ' εἰ πυρφόρος ἀστεροπητὴς
> βροντᾶς αὐγαῖς μ' εἶσι φλογίζων.
> ἐρρέτω Ἴλιον οἵ θ' ὑπ' ἐκείνῳ   1200
> πάντες ὅσοι τόδ' ἔτλασαν ἐμοῦ ποδὸς
> ἄρθρον ἀπῶσαι.
> ὦ ξένοι, ἕν γέ μοι εὖχος ὀρέξατε.

> Never, never, know this in certainty,
> not even if the fire-bearing lightener
> will come burning me up with rays of thunder!
> May Ilium perish, and those besieging it,
> all those who dared to cast away this limb of my foot.
> Friends, grant me one prayer.

Philoctetes' refusal to join the army is as firm as ever, and his curse of Troy and the Greeks who had abandoned him is a return to character with his passionate contempt for the collective cause.[80] In what begins as another instance of metrical echoing, similar to ones we have seen before, Philoctetes gradually takes complete control of this meter. He listens in order to categorically reject the chorus' position and show them to be non-receptive, no matter how benevolent they might think they are. He uses his ability to be responsive, as well as the chorus' alleged goodwill, to shut off further dialogue. The longer the repetition of dactyls carries on, the more Philoctetes seems to hijack this meter, spinning it around to express what he wants. His lyric and rhetoric command of the dactylic medium is impressive, as his statements have

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[80] These words sound even harsher in comparison to the glimpse of self-awareness and temperance Philoctetes shows in 1193-5: οὔτοι νεμεσητὸν ἀλύοντα χειμερίῳ λύπᾳ καὶ παρὰ νοῦν θροεῖν, with its explicit echo of the chorus' τί θροεῖς; (1185). Winnington-Ingram 1980.294 writes that νεμεσητόν is "a very social word."

increasingly more, and then less, spondees, to match first the graveness of his refusal (1197-9) and then the zeal of his curse (1200-2). Quelling the chorus' words and leaving no room for their intention, the dactylic tetrameter becomes the meter of Philoctetes' intransigence.

Philoctetes' use of dactyls here recalls a similar interaction between Electra and her chorus (236ff). Electra's listening was manipulative, because she managed to sustain and deepen her interlocutors' empathy despite their moral reservations and her utter rejection of their advice. Philoctetes' shared song with the chorus exposes the increasingly unsurmountable chasm between them. As they did in *Electra*, the sweeping dactyls here express the protagonist's irreconcilability. While Philoctetes does not manage to affect his interlocutors emotionally, he still manipulates the metrical congruence of the song. In his dactylic run we see how the fundamental harmony of the two voices in sung dialogue can be used as a tool for conflict. Metrical echoing, coupled as it is with a categorical expression of rejection, is revealed not as a foundation for deep listening, but an ever clearer manifestation of the interlocutors' incompatibility. Furthermore, this part of the dialogue also evokes the ethical multivalence dactyls conveyed in the previous *amoibaion*. Dactyls can now be heard as a musical leitmotif which signals ethical differences even as it reinforces the formal harmony between the interlocutors. Indeed, dactyls point precisely to the simultaneity of these effects: on the one hand, the dramatic discord which the shared song expresses and, on the other hand, the formal lyric cohesion through which it is expressed.

Philoctetes is, literally, standing his ground. The end of this song shows that he would rather end his life alone on Lemnos than leave for Troy with those who cannot offer him empathy. The sweep of one-sided (or one-voiced) dactyls stops, and there is a short exchange between the singers that continues the pattern of dactylic tetrameters. Philoctetes addresses the

chorus with what sounds like another appeal to their supportive presence, only to ask for a weapon with which to kill himself. The chorus' questions, while metrically compatible with his song, express their incomprehension, and more fundamentally, betray the hollowness of metrical harmony as a basis for empathic interaction (1204-8). If this mutual participation in song gives us a glimmer of empathic concern, it is too little too late. Philoctetes has given up on the chorus, and, after stating his desire to die, leaves off singing in dactyls for the remainder of the ode. To the extent that the dactylic tetrameters did serve to maintain dialogue between himself and the chorus—even if the harmony of voices was exposed as superficial—his resignation from them reflects the ultimate communicative failure of this song. For the short remainder of the ode, the chorus does not participate except for two brief questions, where again the colon is shared by both voices (1210, 1211). These questions once more show their misunderstanding of Philoctetes' suffering. The song ends on Philoctetes' final notes of despair and doom. The effect of metrical sharing is clouded by the variety of meters at the end of the song. The song feels less coordinated, and its fluid structure mirrors the loneliness and unbalanced emotional state of its principal singer.[81] Philoctetes is no longer seeking to echo, communicate with, or respond to the chorus. As his final words state, he exists no longer. The chorus' lack of empathy has condemned him to remain alone on Lemnos, making his death an imminent reality.

The action that Philoctetes hopes for, and which Neoptolemus will eventually begin to perform (before being cut off by Heracles), is one that the chorus could not have taken upon themselves even if they were more empathic to Philoctetes. Thus, they embody in another way the very tension between recognition of his suffering and action relating to it. Their physical presence by Philoctetes' side is prescribed by other characters as much as by theatrical

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[81] Cf. Scott 1996.193: "the form of this musical scene disintegrates from the organized harmony of the preceding two strophic pairs."

convention, and they cannot leave him. Yet, their sharing of the space does not translate into empathic action. Their dialogic song calls attention to this physical co-presence between the singers as well as the chorus' desire to move away from Philoctetes. Similarly to the previous *amoibaion*, the lyric interaction stresses the onstage dilemma in all its corporeal difficulty while projecting an offstage space towards which the chorus long to move. Philoctetes, for his part, has an entirely constraining ethical commitment to remain in place, and is arresting in his physical and emotional immobility. The end of this lyric dialogue brings the action to another impasse, as the clash remains unresolved between offering Philoctetes empathic presence on the one hand, and, on the other hand, getting him and the other characters off Lemnos.

4.4 Listening to Heracles

The conclusion of the play must finally effect movement to achieve dramatic resolution. Yet the play has, effectively, two endings, which set the characters in motion twice to two different destinations.[82] In the so-called first ending (1402-8), we witness Neoptolemus and Philoctetes starting off together towards the latter's homeland Malis, where he hopes to reunite with his father. Neoptolemus' last attempt to convince the hero to join the Greek army at Troy has failed, and he then abides by his promise to take Philoctetes home. The actual motion of the two men, which is again a moment of physical intimacy as Philoctetes must lean on Neoptolemus to walk, is marked by a metrical shift.[83] The two are now speaking in a pattern of catalectic trochaic tetrameters, a meter which is often found in moments of tense and swift action, and, to

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[82] See Hoppin 1990. Her article, in particular its metrical analysis of the ending of the play, has been valuable in formulating the view I present here.

[83] Cf. Taplin 1971.29.

Sophocles' audience, probably suggested closure at this point in the drama.[84] The movement onstage validates the uncompromising viewpoint Philoctetes has been voicing all along: an utter refusal to be reconciled with those who have mistreated and disgraced him, even at the price of bearing the burden of his disease forever. As the two men set off, we get the sense that Philoctetes' experience of extreme suffering in loneliness is finally recognized in full, and his moral choice vindicated. On the personal level—that is, as a conclusion to the emotionally wavering and at times extremely intimate interaction between the two men—it is a satisfying solution to the dramatic impasse the play puts forth. Indeed, it is perhaps the only conceivable action which would not contradict the deep empathy Neoptolemus has come to feel for Philoctetes, nor the latter's iron-willed determination.[85]

Though the trochaic is a stychic (i.e., spoken) meter, its use here highlights the break from the regular plane of dramatic and emotional interaction carried out in iambs. As it is Neoptolemus who initiates the change of meter, the trochees emphasize his practical decision and its ethical significance.[86] This calls to mind his earlier *amoibaion* with the chorus, where his ethical awareness was clearly voiced by the separateness of his hexameter chant. The metrical aspect of the exchange here is further underlined by the frequent *antilabe* in the trochaic section. The combination of these effects recalls the elaborate manipulation of meter and language which occurred in previous interactions between the two men, where lyricism emerged from spoken dialogue. The voices of Neoptolemus and Philoctetes were stretched to the limits of lyric in situations of great intimacy, where empathy as moral action collided with the need to move the

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[84] See Nooter 2012.140-41.

[85] Hoppin 1990.143-4 comments on what seems like a surprising departure from the mythical tradition; cf. Robinson 1969.45. Roisman 1997.160 suggests that even here, we cannot be sure that Neoptolemus will keep his promise and take Philoctetes home, since he has broken his word twice before. For a contrary view, see Taplin 1987.74.

[86] Cf. Schein ad 1402-8.

suffering body, or move away from it. Here, empathic presence corresponds to the motion in which both bodies are engaged together, with the metrical plane stressing this fact and at once recalling its previous impossibility. Finally, moral action excludes neither empathy nor a movement to push the drama forward to its conclusion.

Yet on the broader level of social interaction, this ending represents a deep chasm, an irreparable break from the community of the Greeks represented by Odysseus.[87] While this ending has been prepared for dramatically, it represents an ultimate abandonment of the collective goal and an irrevocable overturning of social mores. This, the play lets us know explicitly, is extremely precarious, for it will unleash on Neoptolemus the vengeful rage of the entire Greek army. Thus the audience's attention is drawn to the practical futility of this ending, even if it is emotionally gratifying. Ultimately, the active motion that corresponds to the empathic listening offered to Philoctetes, namely, his and Neoptolemus' joint movement to Malis, solves the interaction between the two men, but leaves unresolved the ethical difficulty pertaining to the Greeks as a society. Philoctetes' promise to defend Neoptolemus shows that his hope to simply disengage from those who have wronged him is untenable. Rather, a confrontation with them is inevitable.

Nonetheless, the dramatic persuasiveness of this ending is reinforced by the way listening takes place, for Philoctetes' responses to Neoptolemus here can be heard as vocalizations of deep listening. His initial completion of the trochaic line (1402) expresses the sense of togetherness between the two men, both in their ethical commitment to each other and in their spatial relation (especially to the extent that the choice of meter reflects their movement). Throughout the trochaic section, where each line is split between the two interlocutors' voices, Philoctetes

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[87] Rose 1976.79-81; cf. Segal 1981.331 on Odyssean society and 348-52 on the alternative which Heracles and Philoctetes offer.

remains the second to speak.[88] Neoptolemus supports Philoctetes physically, while Philoctetes vows to defend him against the Greeks. This sense of reciprocity is reinforced by the continued run of trochees, maintained jointly by the two speakers, line after line. Neoptolemus' confidence wavers at the thought of having to face the vengeance of the Greeks, and his unease is reflected through a metrical peculiarity, as subtle as the trochaic tetrameter catalectic can afford: resolution. Twice, in asking Philoctetes how they shall deal with the inevitable wrath of the army, the initial trochee of the line is resolved (changed into three successive shorts): τί γάρ, ἐὰν πορθῶσι χώραν τὴν ἐμήν; and τίνα προσωφέλησιν ἔρξεις; (1404 and 1405: *And what if they ravage my land?; What assistance will you give?*). Philoctetes' answer echoes the resolution: βέλεσι τοῖς Ἡρακλέους (1405: *with the bow of Heracles*). He deviates from the regularity of the meter in a way that is harmonious with Neoptolemus' voice. His words respond to Neoptolemus' fear with empathy and try to offer a practical solution to the problem he raises.[89] Through his empathic listening, Philoctetes transforms anxiety into conviction. Neoptolemus' distress at being hostilely rejected from the collective is set aside as Philoctetes' words affirm the companionship between them, specifically as a continuation of his relationship with Heracles.

Almost in direct response to the mention of his name, Heracles suddenly appears on the scene, the only appearance of a *deus ex machina* in extant Sophocles.[90] His speech (1409-44) sets in motion the second and final ending of the play. It successfully rectifies the social disturbance in the conduct of Philoctetes and Neoptolemus and sets them back on track towards Troy. Yet it also frustratingly reverses the outcome of the personal interaction between the two

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[88] With the probable exception of the double *antilabe* (change of speaker twice) in 1407.

[89] Newman 1991 has drawn my attention to the pattern of resolutions in this passage. While my view here resonates with the interpretation he offers of Philoctetes' echo as a step towards proto-society, the perversity of this 'societal' move—a return to friendship by violent negation of social ties—should nonetheless be noted, and not without some unease.

[90] Cf. Nooter 2012.141-2. On appearances on the *skene* roof in Greek tragedy, see Mastronarde 1990.

men and undoes the painstakingly gained validation of Philoctetes' suffering, finally achieved as they stand together in opposition to the Greek cause.[91] The tension between Philoctetes' need for empathic engagement and the need for a practical collective action is, I believe, meant to be left unresolved, and the audience is called to reflect upon the apparent contradiction between them.

The metrical dynamics of these two endings, I suggest, shed light on their contradictory effects. Heracles' epiphany contradicts the movement that has been undertaken by Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, with the goal of sailing to Malis. Heracles interrupts their trochees with a chant in anapests; his words cut short the movement which is set forth by Neoptolemus' trochees, and undo the powerful sense of closure which they effect. Heracles' chanted anapests are another metrical sign of onstage motion, common in entrances and exits of dramatic characters, and fittingly used here as he appears on the *mechane*. The metrical change underscores the break from one movement, with its particular emotional and ethical significance, to another. The trochees do not reappear in the short remainder of the play, clearly signaling that the motion initiated through them is irrevocably abandoned. Even though Heracles' appearance is "call[ed] forth" by the trochaic section, his appearance is a surprise, and the change of meter abrupt.[92] Coming immediately after the trochees, the anapests of Heracles' entrance are more emphatically marked as a dramatic, emotional, and spatial alternative. To put it differently, while anapests could be expected as a signal of a character's entrance, our attention is drawn to their metrical exceptionality by their juxtaposition with the preceding section. The rhythmic shift of the

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[91] See Pucci 1994, esp. 42: "Heracles' injunction produces an order and a meaning that are not coherent with the tragic premises." For a contrary view, see Schein: "Herakles enables Philoktetes to *choose*, rather than be forced, to go to Troy" (2013.27, original emphasis). Roisman 1997.163-5 suggests that Heracles reinforces Odysseus' ethos of guile, but ultimately reconciles the contradictory models offered by Philoctetes and Odysseus.

[92] Quote from Schein ad 1402-8. See Nooter 2012.141 on "Heracles' sudden and startling presence [which…] is nevertheless not completely without signposting."

epiphany thus highlights the ethical problem at the close of the play, and recalls the way meter has been used to this effect throughout.[93]

The anapestic section of Heracles' speech is as follows (1409-17):

> μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τῶν ἡμετέρων
> ἀίης μύθων, παῖ Ποίαντος·   1410
> φάσκειν δ' αὐδὴν τὴν Ἡρακλέους
> ἀκοῇ τε κλύειν λεύσσειν τ' ὄψιν.
> τὴν σὴν δ' ἥκω χάριν οὐρανίας
> ἕδρας προλιπών,
> τὰ Διός τε φράσων βουλεύματά σοι   1415
> κατερητύσων θ' ὁδὸν ἣν στέλλει·
> σὺ δ' ἐμῶν μύθων ἐπάκουσον.
>
> Not yet, not until you hear my
> words, son of Poias.
> Know that you hear the voice of
> Heracles and see his face.
> I have come for your sake,
> leaving my heavenly seat
> to show you Zeus' plan, and to keep you
> from the journey on which you embark.
> And you, listen to my words.

Heracles opens and closes this direct appeal to Philoctetes with a command to hear and obey his words, his μῦθοι. This term points to the special status of his utterance. Heracles' words function on a register separate from the λόγοι which have been exchanged and contested throughout the play.[94] His μῦθοι, rather, are of an indisputable authority, a quality reinforced by the description of his own apparition. It is a comprehensively illuminating phenomenon—both auditory and visual—the result of his purposeful journey from the divine to the human sphere in order to reach Philoctetes.

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[93] Segal 1981.356 writes: "By resorting to the *deus ex machina* Sophocles shows his recognition of this moral dillema. But the device does not necessarily mean that the "true" meaning of the myth is Philoctetes' refusal."

[94] On the special status of Heracles' words see Rose 1976.100-1; Segal 1981.339; Pucci 1994.36 ; Nooter 2012.142.

Thus, the two endings put forward opposing courses of action and itineraries. They are both distinctly voiced and marked as a departure from the regular iambic speech of tragic dialogue. Even if they do not extend the medium to its lyric capacities, certainly not fully, both endings showcase the spectrum of lyricism in Philoctetes' voice and are like vignettes of the different ways in which he listens. Heracles goes on to speak in iambs, detailing what awaits Philoctetes and Neoptolemus at Troy and beyond, but Philoctetes' answer at the end of Heracles' speech is in anapests. It not only metrically echoes the anapestic opening of Heracles' entrance but responds to it thematically as well—so directly, that it makes the details of Heracles' iambic speech seem almost immaterial.[95] Philoctetes addresses the *beloved voice* of Heracles (1445: ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν), revealing that for him the apparition is first and foremost an auditory experience, and thereby recalling the centrality of vocal communication throughout the play.[96] He then avows *I will not disobey your words* (1447: οὐκ ἀπιθήσω τοῖς σοῖς μύθοις). It seems that the presence of Heracles' voice is what moves Philoctetes, more than what it actually says. Furthermore, for all its terseness and apparent straightforwardness, Philoctetes' statement of obedience nonetheless bespeaks the difficulty of yielding. The double negation οὐκ ἀπιθήσω (*not disobey*) stresses the contradiction between Heracles' injunction and the intentions clearly set out earlier.[97]

Philoctetes is not necessarily convinced, nor, indeed, does Heracles' intervention leave room for negotiation. Rather, Philoctetes simply obeys.[98] His return to anapests marks the

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[95] However, Heracles' words importantly foreshadow Neoptolemus' impiety at the sack of Troy: see Rose 1976.102-3.

[96] See Nooter 2012.143, who compares ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν (1445) to Philoctetes' first apostrophe of the play, ὦ φίλτατον φώνημα (234).

[97] For a different view see Schein 2013.27, who stresses the epic connotations of οὐκ ἀπιθήσω and thus of Philoctetes' heroic stature.

[98] Cf. Pucci 1994.43.

movement he now begins again, the definitive exit from the stage. Yet it also unmistakably recalls the first auditory impression of Heracles' apparition. Philoctetes thus ties in his answer with the particular metrical medium through which his divine friend is introduced. He responds to the unassailable nature of the μῦθοι Heracles presented to him in the only possible way, as if to say by his metrical echo and choice of words: *I have listened and am left no other choice.* Philoctetes' return to anapests from iambs can be heard as a self-conscious gesture towards Heracles' anapests, precisely as a rupture from the trochaic section. That is, Philoctetes amplifies the sonic aspect of Heracles' appearance, as the event which puts an end to the movement he began with Neoptolemus and rejects the emotional solution offered therein. It is thus a particularly potent moment of metrical echoing, for Philoctetes' listening vocalizes both assent and the conflict inherent in this assent, both the moral imperative of Heracles' words and their ethical shortcomings. By reading Philoctetes' response here in terms of listening and as part of the complex dynamics of echoes and metrical harmony in the play, we can see that the contradiction inherent in the double ending of the play is left unresolved, a problem for the audience (and characters) to ponder. In this respect, Philoctetes has the last word, for it is through his voice that the different meanings of the play's endings, and, consequently, the possible interpretations of the entire action, are heard.

Philoctetes' farewell to the island of Lemnos continues the anapests with which he responds to Heracles. He takes this as another opportunity to command the stage with the beauty of his song.[99] Finally, Philoctetes' motion offstage and the emotional power of his voice, magnificently lyric even in a non-lyric medium, come together. As he finds (or rediscovers) the empathic presence of the non-human elements that surround him, he is empowered to move. As

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[99] See Nooter 2012.143-6 on this passage.

we get a final hint that the interaction on the human and divine planes has not been entirely satisfying, Philoctetes' ethical choice is ratified and, simultaneously, he can begin making his way off the uninhabited island.

There is something conventionally reassuring about the ending of the play. Characters go offstage in anapests, calamity is averted. Yet to get to this moment of relief the audience must endure a veritable roller coaster of a drama, an increasingly surprising succession of complicated inter-personal situations and their unexpected resolutions. The dramatic climaxes I have focused on in this chapter are all marked by a lyric use of the voice, whether in sung (i.e., properly lyric), spoken, or chanted dialogue. Philoctetes' voice is an overpowering presence from the very beginning, even before his body appears onstage; it manifestly expands the boundaries of the spoken register into the realm of lyric and has the same effect on Neoptolemus' voice. In dialogue that departs from the squarely spoken towards the sung or the chanted, Philoctetes exhibits a remarkable ability to listen to his interlocutors, even as his moral intransigence shines through. Up until the very end of the play, listening, inasmuch as it signals empathy, impedes the spatial action of the play, and manipulative non-empathic listening amplifies the spatial crisis onstage. Despite its formal conventionality, the anapestic ending resonates with the lyric magnitude of Philoctetes' voice and with the great ethical question this voice has aroused, how to listen to the body and voice in pain. It also represents a way out of, though not necessarily a solution to, the underlying conundrum at the heart of the play, the collision of empathy and action.

5. Farewell to Listening: Song and Mourning in *Oedipus at Colonus*

5.0 Introduction

This chapter returns to Oedipus, the quintessential tragic hero, now at the last day of his life. Near the end of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, we saw in chapter 1, empathic listening between Oedipus and the chorus of Theban elders was part of the process by which he articulated his newfound understanding of the course of his life and his choice to blind himself. In Sophocles' earlier play about Oedipus, listening between the protagonist and the chorus facilitates the expression of suffering while the pain, both mental and physical, is still fresh and raw. The final stage of the hero's life, dramatized in Sophocles' last tragedy *Oedipus at Colonus* (hereafter *OC*), shows him gaining a definitive understanding of his fate and of the meaning of his life after years of wandering in exile with Antigone. Empathic listening between Oedipus and the chorus, I argue in this chapter, is inherent to Oedipus' process of re-evaluating the past and coming to terms with it. Admitting Oedipus into the civic community of Athens is set off and, to an important extent, completed through the dialogic action between himself and the chorus of the elders of Colonus. This happens in the first two songs of the play, both *amoibaia*, where Oedipus gets two different opportunities to narrate and redefine his transgressions. The two songs exemplify different kinds of listening as responsivity vocalized and embodied in dialogue, and both concern the possibility of accurately relating a past experience of profound suffering. That the first two songs are lyric dialogues highlights the chorus' participation in the initial action of the play. This action, namely, accepting Oedipus into Colonus, amounts to listening to the story of his past and accepting it on his terms. In these senses—first, the possibility of communicating and making sense of suffering, and second, the active role of the chorus—*OC* is paradigmatic of listening as it has been defined here.

As we shall see, listening to Oedipus is closely tied to the idiosyncrasies of his voice as it emanates from his body, at once pointing to his physical presence and beyond it. Oedipus' voice is crucial to the man's gradual transformation from a figure cursed by the gods to one who himself has the power to curse or bless others. *OC* dramatizes the successful reintegration of the outcast into society, and in this sense it resembles *Philoctetes*.[1] But, in contrast to it, the political conclusion of *OC* feels in no way at odds with what the protagonist planned and hoped for from the start. The personal transformation is a manifestly political triumph, whereby Oedipus is accepted into Athens as a symbol of protection and benediction.[2] While the drama suggests an aetiology for the worship of Oedipus through local hero cult, the play has also been read in less ritualistic terms as the ultimate celebration of the individual: Oedipus, shedding his sorrows, overcomes his mortal fate and finds divinity within.[3]

The ecstatic deification of the tragic hero is nonetheless fraught by Oedipus' treatment of his offspring throughout the play and the future he bequeaths to them at its close. Most flagrantly, Oedipus curses his sons, unleashing on them a fury worthy of the archetypal model for King Lear.[4] Oedipus thereby becomes an enabling factor in the bloody conclusion of the family curse, dooming his sons to die at each other's hands and propelling Antigone into her own death following her brothers' fatal violence. The play consistently emphasizes the opposition between

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[1] On the similarity of *OC* and *Philoctetes* see Segal 1981; Seale 1982.113.

[2] See esp. Slatkin 1986.

[3] On the play as hero cult aetiology see Jebb 2004 [1900] xxviii-xxxvi; Calame 1998. Humanistic readings of the play are those of Whitman 1951; Knox 1964; Segal 1981. These two types of readings are different in focus and methodology but are not fundamentally at odds, for both stress the protagonist's extraordinary status and his worth to the *polis*. On the different strands of interpretation with regards to *OC*, see Markantonatos 2007.26; with regards to Sophocles in general: Winnington-Ingram 1980.5-10 and 14; Friis Johansen 1962.152-162. Linforth 1951 argues against the importance of religious elements in the play, but most scholars disagree with his view; see, e.g., Winnington-Ingram 1954. Other important readings of the play include Rosenmeyer 1952; Easterling 1967; Burian 1974; Edmunds 1996; Wilson 2004.

[4] See also Scott 1996, who writes that Oedipus "summons the power to curse his son[s] with a vigor that would be the envy of Old Testament prophets" (239).

Oedipus' sons and daughters, highlighting the former's neglect of and the latter's devotion to their father. Correspondingly, Oedipus' dependence on his daughters, particularly Antigone, and his deep affection for them, are at the heart of the drama. Pat Easterling has argued that Oedipus' love for his daughters mitigates the effect of his ruthlessness towards his sons, and that the way the play structures the contrast between Oedipus' male and female offspring renders his curses "appalling but not vindictive."[5] However, the play's conclusion inevitably points to Antigone's continued suffering. For the play's audience, Antigone's devastation follows Oedipus' curses almost as directly as does his sons'.[6] Yet Oedipus remains entirely unaware of the consequences his actions have on his daughters' future, despite his remarkable prescience concerning other matters.[7] This lingering blindspot is a disturbing overtone in the exalting representation of Oedipus' transformation.

The difference in how listening functions at the beginning and end of the play can help us hear this disturbing overtone more clearly. *OC* ends with a lyric dialogue, a lament performed by Antigone and Ismene with the chorus. But the closing *amoibaion* is markedly different from the first two. Deep listening, I will show, is almost entirely absent from the last song of the play. Indeed, once Oedipus is officially accepted by the Colonians, he no longer needs empathic listening, and he actively rejects it in his determination to curse his sons and bring a blessing to Athens. As Oedipus' impact on the future grows clearer through his transformation into a god-like figure, listening ceases to demonstrate or sustain empathy. The lack of empathic responsivity from the closing song helps constitute the act of mourning as socially illegitimate, but also

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[5] Easterling 1967, with quote from 13. Cf. Segal 1981.387.

[6] See Rehm 2004.51; Kirkwood 1986.114; Roberts 1988.

[7] Winnington-Ingram 1954 writes that Oedipus administers a "blind and passionate justice based on the principle of retaliation and involving the innocent with the guilty" (24). Wilson 2004 claims that "Oedipus [has] failed miserably as a father," yet as a hero his status is not compromised, for "[h]eroes are invariably blind to the havoc they leave in their wake" (176).

stresses the emotional necessity of lamentation. The forceful silencing of the daughters' dirge solidifies the collective meaning of Oedipus' transformation even as it alerts us to the devastating emotional toll on his immediately surviving, and much beloved, relatives. Considering how important empathic listening is to the beginning of Oedipus' transformation at Colonus, its absence from the very end may offer another way to explain Oedipus' not unproblematic denouement.

The last lyric dialogue is thematically different from the first two: it is, properly, a *kommos*, and the suffering vocalized in it is specifically the pain of grief. This song of mourning lacks deep listening and, accordingly, presents no potential for acceptance or transformation of suffering through empathy. *OC* thus ends with a radical statement on the inconsolability of grief; yet it may typify our understanding of listening and empathy in general. This last *amoibaion* in extant Sophocles harks back to those earlier ones analyzed here, Antigone's and Electra's *kommoi*. All three show the conflict between accurately resonating with another's grief in an emotionally satisfying way and acting in a socially acceptable way.

This chapter deals explicitly with Oedipus' body and voice. In this too, it is similar to the previous one dealing with *Philoctetes*. In chapter 4, we saw how Philoctetes' voice expands the limits of lyric and engenders a similar effect in Neoptolemus' voice. This vocal reciprocity which is crucial for the development of empathy between them. Yet the focus on vocal expressivity, we should recall, is fundamental to my approach to listening throughout, for listening is, first of all, conceived as vocalization, and second, understood to be conditioned and demanded by the voice. In chapter 2, again in relation to *Philoctetes*, we saw that the representation of bodily suffering is a literary and poetic problem. The possibility of expressing pain through the voice, and, by implication, listening to it, is explored in that play and in critical reactions to it. More generally,

it has been claimed that tragedy effects "the displacement of the body by speech… even though the form of drama involves the literal presentation of human bodies." Thus, tragedy is implicated "in culture's constant project of protecting, covering, disguising, concealing, and ignoring the body—and, especially, replacing the body's adventures with forms of speech."[8] *Philoctetes* is rare in its straightforward depiction of the body in pain; at the same time, that play typifies the translation of pain through sound, both in the way the protagonist's "language of pain" (to borrow Scarry's term) externalizes and objectifies his body, and in the way the voice must ultimately participate in the civilizing sublimation of pain. In comparison, *OC* arguably does not represent physical suffering. The play "succeeds, as perhaps no [… other Greek tragedy] does, in foregrounding the body and resisting the body's subordination to speech without turning its action into the exposure of bodily pain." Yet the voice is nonetheless inherent to this "unparalleled stress … on the embodiment of the living man."[9] The voice in *OC* is more than ever a dual index of the body: Oedipus' voice makes his body irrepressibly present onstage, but also suggests his growing numinous capacities and, ultimately, his immortal afterlife.

This duality of the voice is closely related to the multivalence of Oedipus' blindness. On the one hand, his blindness is, paradoxically, a symbol for his extraordinary insight into the meaning of his life, a life which typifies human limitations but ultimately defies mortality. On the other hand, the fact that he is blind conditions his physical dependence on others, specifically Antigone. It makes the voice fulfill a more central role in his perceptions and interactions with other people around him, thus highlighting the constant physical business of being with or near Oedipus. Moreover, Oedipus' blindness inevitably bespeaks the circumstances through which he

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[8] Murnaghan 1988.29 and 23.

[9] Murnaghan 1988.36 and 40.

became blind: his process of self-recognition and its culmination in the choice to self-mutilate.[10]

It is a horrifying scar that cannot be ignored, and, as such, it is a constant reminder of pain. That his blindness and voice are so central to the drama—indeed, central to "the embodiment of the living man"—is like a premise of pain at the foundation of the drama. The play's acceptance of Oedipus' "body as the register of his entire history," nonetheless foregrounds the body as a site of constant, ever-present, suffering.[11]

Oedipus' integration into the collective society of Colonus and Athens is the culmination of a process that entails expressing empathy toward Oedipus' suffering body and listening to the way he relates his and its "adventures." While it is true that this play offers nothing like *Philoctetes*' explicit and vocal representation of bodily pain, *OC* operates within a similar framework of referring to and accessing the body's suffering through the voice. Here too, as we have seen throughout, the singing voice is the primary means for empathic engagement with the body. The play's ending is, officially, an attempt to suppress the lyric voice, but it in fact amplifies it. The play thus ultimately perpetuates vocal expressivity of suffering as that which supersedes the body. That the expectation of empathic listening in the closing lament is frustrated is part of why Antigone's suffering looms over Oedipus' benediction. As Oedipus becomes a god-like figure, he leaves behind a sort of vacuum of listening. The tragedy ends, I propose, with a reaffirmation of listening as a uniquely human need.

The following two sections of this chapter (5.1-2) explore the vicissitudes of empathic listening in the first third of the play, with particular focus on the *parodos*. These sections show that listening is a fundamental part of the negotiation of Oedipus' presence at Colonus. In this

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[10] On Oedipus' blindness see Shields 1961; Buxton 1980; Seale 1982.

[11] Quote from Murnaghan 1988.39.

play, empathy as a means for social reintegration is more palpably successful than in the other plays studied here, and the prime place that lyric dialogue holds in this drama reflects this. Deep listening, as a mode of communication with transformative potential, is, arguably, *the* action dramatized in the first two songs of the play, which are both lyric dialogues. It is also a defining aspect of Oedipus' relationship with the other singing characters onstage, not just with the chorus but, crucially, with Antigone as well.

Section 5.1 opens with a brief reading of the play's prologue, which introduces us to Oedipus' extraordinary voice and his relationship with Antigone. The section deals mostly with the dynamics of listening in the *parodos* and offers a detailed reading of its metrical structure. This song reflects Oedipus' special vocal authority, with all its multivalent reverberations as to the status of his body. Oedipus' body and voice, and, crucially, Antigone's as well, all work together in an appeal for empathy. The second *amoibaion* between Oedipus and the chorus, treated in section 5.2, is read here as offering a solution, through empathic listening, to the problem of Oedipus' presence at Colonus. The rejection of listening is as fundamental an action in the last part of the play as the development of empathic listening is in the first, and is treated in the last two sections of the chapter. Section 5.3 looks briefly at the dialogue with Polyneices and underlines Oedipus' active denial of empathy through listening. Lastly, section 5.4 focuses on the frustration of listening in the last *amoibaion*, suggesting that Antigone's lament is not answered by deep listening and thus points to an unresolved problem left in Oedipus' wake. That Sophocles' last tragedy opens and closes with a lyric dialogue invites us to reflect on the difference between the two songs and on the central role communal responses to the singing voice have in the drama.

<u>5.1 Voice and Body: Listening in the *Parodos*</u>

The discrepancy between Oedipus' affliction and his vocal authority is the central tension

dramatized in the *parodos*. Before this encounter between Oedipus, Antigone, and the Colonian

chorus, the prologue of the play introduces us to the physical and spatial problem of Oedipus'

presence at Colonus.[12] It reveals the contradictions the blind Oedipus embodies, which inform

the way others react and listen to him. On the one hand, he is physically dependent on

Antigone.[13] On the other hand, Oedipus expresses remarkable spatial confidence early on in the

play, which defies his impairment. Once he learns from the Local that he is at the grove of the

Eumenides, Oedipus instantly sheds his physical dependence: *Then, may they receive their*

suppliant graciously. For I will never again leave my seat on this land (44-5: ἀλλ᾽ ἵλεῳ μὲν τὸν

ἱκέτην δεξαίατο: ὡς οὐχ ἕδρας γῆς τῆσδ᾽ ἂν ἐξέλθοιμ᾽ ἔτι). Oedipus becomes both a

suppliant and an authoritative presence declaring spatial confidence.[14] To the Local, surprised at

the blind old man's promise to be of service to the city, Oedipus replies, *In all that I say there*

shall be sight (74: ὅσ᾽ ἂν λέγωμεν πάνθ᾽ ὁρῶντα λέξομεν). Oedipus' voice thus signals his

extraordinary self-assurance. At the same time, his voice is a constant reminder of the

disturbance of spatial relations his blindness effects: a disturbance where voice and sight, hearing

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[12] On the prologue see Segal 1992; on its emphasis on space see Dunn 1992; Travis 1999.195-7; Markantonatos 2007.72-77. Kirkwood 1986 analyzes the way the language of the play points to the apolitical and "unurban" (106) world of Colonus rather than to Athens itself. On the prologue's exposition of the grove see Nooter 2012.148-152.

[13] Oedipus' dependence on Antigone is more than physical; on its intersubjective significance, Segal 1981 writes: Antigone "is the extension of that part of himself which can reach out to others" (362).

[14] Cf. Markantonatos 2007.77-8. Bushnell 1988.91 comments that at this point Oedipus recognizes his predicted place of rest but does not yet understand how the prophecy concerning his end may be fulfilled. See also Rosenmeyer 1952.95-6 on Oedipus' fellowship with Apollo and comparability to Tiresias. On Oedipus as a suppliant, see Burian 1974; Cairns 1999.221ff. Wilson 2004 challenges this view of the play as a "suppliant drama" suggesting instead that the central theme is ξενία. Cf. also Seale 1982.115 who comments on the ironic inversion between residents and strangers, and vice versa. Indeed, the list of *dramatis personae* gives Ξένος, but I refer to him as the Local following Meineck's translation in Meineck and Woodruff 2003. See also *Philoctetes* 1163, 1183. On the possible convergence of supplication with ξενία see Herman 1987.56-8.

and seeing, interact and interchange.[15] The prologue introduces us to Oedipus as a figure whose voice and body register his awesomeness—both his frailty and his authority.[16] These aspects make others listen to him despite themselves, that is, despite the fact that his very presence is a violation of their local customs.

The *parodos* expands this basic interaction of the prologue. Just before the chorus come onstage, we are reminded of Oedipus' unique physical relationship with Antigone. When Antigone hears the chorus approaching, Oedipus asks her to *hide me out of the way inside the grove* (113-4: σύ μ᾽ ἐξ ὁδοῦ πόδα κρύψον κατ᾽ ἄλσος), once more stressing his physical dependence on her.[17] This unusual expression implies putting oneself at a distance "from trouble or grief."[18] The double accusative of the object (με and πόδα) brings to the fore Oedipus' disability and frailty, creating a metonymic equivalence between himself and his feet.[19] His blindness requires and perpetuates the intimacy with Antigone, whose body also serves as a metonymic replacement to his, here through her eyesight and strength. In the *parodos* the voice becomes an important marker of Oedipus' extraordinary physical-mental condition and of the spatial destabilization his blindness effects. Concomitantly, Antigone's voice, not only her eyes, is added to the network of metonymic relations of bodies and body-parts making up Oedipus'

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[15] On Oedipus' striking expression of "inner vision" see evocatively Seale 1982.116; and cf. Segal 1981.372-3. On Oedipus' affinity with the Eumenides, predicated among other things on the negation of sight, see Wallace 1979.41; Nooter 2012.158-9.

[16] See Nooter 2012.159 for this paradoxical quality of Oedipus as a poetic figure.

[17] Pickard-Cambridge 1946.51: "in the grove" would have been behind the stage scenery; cf. Arnott 1962.99; Seale 1982.113-5. On hiding Oedipus as an act of blinding the chorus see Travis 1999.46.

[18] Renehan 1992.373. σύ μ᾽ ἐξ ὁδοῦ πόδα κρύψον is literally closer to *guide my foot into hiding out of the way*. This line has been suspected, with some editors (including Jebb; Lloyd-Jones and Wilson) offering emendations. Kamerbeek follows Wilamowitz in defending the mss., as does Renehan 1992, who cites examples for κρύπτω with adverbs of motion, especially with an adverb or preposition cognate with ἐκ (372-3).

[19] See Griffith 1998, who discusses "the three prerequisites for the semiotic use of the body [in Ancient Greek theater], namely, an ability to objectify it, a capacity to resolve it mentally into its constituent organs, and a willingness to speak of them" (231), all of which apply here.

presence. This happens as Antigone comes to fill an increasingly important role in the development of listening onstage.

The first song of the play, the *parodos* is a lyric dialogue between Oedipus and the chorus, in which Antigone also takes part.[20] In this song, meter becomes a tool through which both sides of the dialogue attempt to sustain responsivity in the face of the mounting threat to listening—indeed, to any form of communication—that Oedipus' identity poses. In the process, empathy is suggested and approached, but then violently rejected as soon as Oedipus' identity is revealed. The end of the song is Antigone's solo, in which she raises a demand for empathy by weaving together metrical patterns previously used by Oedipus and the chorus, thus creating harmony with both.

The song starts when the elders of Colonus energetically enter, intent on finding the trespasser to their sacred land. Though the chorus members are old, like Oedipus, their independence and mobility, as revealed in their repeated questions and hortative cries, are the opposite of his impairment and helplessness.[21] This opening sets the tone for the following interaction between the chorus and Oedipus, which is marked by their authority and his vulnerability.[22] The metrical-musical scheme of the song reinforces the spatial and mental distance between the chorus and Oedipus, while also adding important nuances that mitigate the conflict. Metrically, the chorus open with varied patterns consisting of mostly aeolic, with

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[20] The *parodos* has been called "un des plus riches, de plus libres et des plus adroits du théâtre grec" (Dain in Dain, Mazon 1960.72). Cf. Scott 1996.250 on the extraordinary musical design of the play.

[21] On the similarity drawn between the old age of Oedipus and the chorus see evocatively Travis 1999.45-7.

[22] The determination they show here also anticipates their involvement in the entire play; see Dhuga 2005 for the unusual authority and active involvement of this chorus. Kamerbeek ad 117 comments on the "excitement and vehement emotions" of the chorus; cf. Burton 1980.256. Seale 1982.119 and Scott 1996.224 suggest that the chorus members disperse throughout the orchestra in their search for Oedipus. In the antistrophe, the description of their devout handling of the grove and its surroundings may also have been expressed with appropriate gesture and dance.

glyconic cola predominating.[23] Towards the end of the strophe, there is a shift to anapests, an unusual combination of metrical patterns:[24]

> τὰ δὲ νῦν τιν' ἥκειν
> λόγος οὐδὲν ἄζονθ',
> ὃν ἐγὼ λεύσσων περὶ πᾶν οὔπω   (135)
> δύναμαι τέμενος
> γνῶναι ποῦ μοί ποτε ναίει.

> But now the rumor is that one has come
> who does not revere [the Eumenides] at all
> and, though I look all around
> the precinct, I cannot
> yet see where he may be.

The switch to anapests signals a change in the chorus' motion and comportment: the initial excitement of their entrance is somewhat calmed as they admit they cannot find the stranger. While the first strophe of the *parodos* anticipates the dramatic and lyric flourish of this chorus, it ends on a more subdued note by virtue of the metrical shift, making the transition to Oedipus' chanted anapests smoother. The obvious differences between the chorus and Oedipus stand out from the very start, and the lyric words, meter, and movement of the energetic choral song highlight this juxtaposition. Yet the anapests seem to clear a neutral, less confrontational ground for their first meeting. The more leveled words and rhythm of the elders of Colonus (and presumably also their correspondingly measured movements) allow Oedipus, invite him, in fact, to come forward. They thus perform a gesture of potential responsivity. We could suppose that, in performance, the chorus' lyric anapests would be accompanied by a movement that gradually

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[23] On the unusual glyconic patterns see Willink 2003.95-6.

[24] The anapests starts at 135. See Cole 1988.184-5 with n.239 on the metrical peculiarities of this passage. He notes that the rhythmical ambiguity of 133-5 are presumably "designed to created a transition to the succeeding anapest." Pohlsander 1964.170 considers this a metrical shift occurring at period end.

slows to a halt, making way for Oedipus to come forward even as his pained, difficult motion is highlighted by the marching rhythm of his anapests.[25]

Oedipus, then, reveals himself, answering the chorus in chanted anapests, and an anapestic dialogue ensues. The formal distinction between the chorus' song and Oedipus' chant could, on the surface, imply the separation between them, a distance at once spatial, ethical, and emotional. Yet I would rather point to the rhythmic and even melic similarity between their roles in the dialogue.[26] If the chorus' metrical gesture eases the transition to Oedipus' revelation, Oedipus' anapestic chant can similarly be understood as a deliberate attempt to bridge the gap between himself and the chorus. His response in anapests is precisely that: an act of responding. It is not merely a reactive stance but a reciprocating action. In echoing their anapests he is not only influenced by the chorus; rather, by listening to them, he also influences them in turn. He picks up on a note of empathy that they offered by slowing their song and shifting to anapests, and then prompts their subsequent harmonizing response in chanted anapests, implicating them further in the dialogue with him.

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[25] The special thematic importance of anapests is amplified even more by a sort of ironic use of the chanted anapests. These are typically used by characters in motion (most regularly so in an entry-song), but here, in contrast to the choral exuberance, the anapestic interludes underline Oedipus' limited and reluctant movement. In the second set of anapests shared by Oedipus and Antigone (starting at l. 170), it is easy to imagine the two not moving at all even as they deliberate their next steps and prepare to move forward.

[26] There is a certain accepted formal distinction between lyric, or sung anapests, and the so-called chanted or "recitative" anapests (see Brown 1977, esp. 49 n. 3; West 1982.121-2). Anapests can be used in a lyric context, accompanied by dance and the music of the *aulos*, and definitely sung. This seems to be the case in the last lines of the choral strophe here. But the mode of performance of what we call chanted anapests is not entirely clear: they were delivered παρακαταλογή, *alongside the music* of the *aulos*, and possibly recited in some special way. While on the one hand certain stylistic features keep these two types of anapests distinct, on the other hand it seems fair to say that both types are, to a varying degree, sung, especially due to the musicality of both pitch and rhythm inherent in the Greek. (This insight comes from Moore 2017.) In other words, even if the overall sonic environment of the two anapestic sections was not identical, the rhythmic affinity was, arguably, significant enough to be perceived. (This argument recalls the affinities between sung dactyls (tetrameters) and chanted dactyls (hexameter) pointed out in the analysis of *Philoctetes*.) I will keep using the terms chanted and lyric for anapests, since they are readily available to mark the distinction that nonetheless exists between them, but we should be conscious that our modern terms might overstate the difference. As mentioned, the transition to anapests in the choral song is rhythmically atypical. That it is immediately followed by chanted anapests may alert us to the indeterminate boundary between the different modes of tragic delivery, i.e., song and chant.

Oedipus' anapests are a sonic factor that creates continuity with the chorus' preceding words, an attempt to be familiar rather than alien, to soothe rather than disturb. They thus signal listening and promote it. Yet we should not disregard the fact that these anapests are heard precisely when Oedipus exposes his disruptive presence at the holy grove.[27] This disruptive quality has to do not only with the simple fact of his presence, but with the relationship between the audible and visible aspects of Oedipus' identity which his words expose. His voice is heard clearly as that which originates from his body and is tied to his physical features, and at the same time as that which exceeds the body's limitation, namely, his blindness. This duality of the voice conditions both Oedipus' incongruity and his demand for empathic listening.

Presumably with the aid of Antigone, Oedipus comes out from his hiding place and begins to speak (138-143):

> Οἰ.   ὅδ' ἐκεῖνος ἐγώ · φωνῇ γὰρ ὁρῶ,
>   τὸ φατιζόμενον.
> Χο.   ἰὼ ἰώ,
>   δεινὸς μὲν ὁρᾶν, δεινὸς δὲ κλύειν.
> Οἰ.   μή μ', ἱκετεύω, προσίδητ' ἄνομον.
> Χο.   Ζεῦ ἀλεξῆτορ, τίς ποθ' ὁ πρέσβυς;

> Oed.   I am the man. For I see through voice,
>   as the saying goes.
> Cho.   Oyyyyyyy!
>   He is awful to see and awful to hear.
> Oed.   Do not, I beg you, look at me as lawless.
> Cho.   Zeus Defender, who in the world is the old man?

Oedipus' coming into view is shocking to the chorus, not only since they see him occupying a forbidden place (a fact they already knew). They also become aware, for the first time, of his blindness and his scars. This "announcement of his blindness," *I see through voice* (φωνῇ ὁρῶ),

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[27] Cf. Travis 1999.189: the grove "is the place of simultaneous pollution and holiness, reception and rejection."

also announces his command of the environment despite his blindness.[28] Oedipus describes his affliction as a transfer of sensory perception from sound to vision, a synesthetic awareness of sorts. The chorus' response reinforces the interchangeability and fluidity between the visible and the audible in their experience of Oedipus: *awful to see and awful to hear* (141: δεινὸς μὲν ὁρᾶν, δεινὸς δὲ κλύειν).[29] Oedipus' first encounter with the chorus, then, destabilizes the modes of perception the latter take for granted.[30] His body and voice seem to confuse and collapse the boundaries of sight and sound both for himself and for those seeing and hearing him. It is this unsettling of spatial and interpersonal perception that makes Oedipus' appearance and statements particularly shocking.[31] The sound of Oedipus is thus multivalent: in terms of what his voice exposes about the relationship between himself (his body, in particular) and his surroundings it is frightening and subversive; yet the metrical form in which his voice is molded is conciliatory and promotes further dialogue.[32]

Indeed, the chorus respond in chanted anapests. Though they do not yet address Oedipus directly in either of their utterances, Oedipus' metrical gesture can be considered effective, for metrical harmony is created between the singers. Even though the song dramatizes a tense encounter where both sides feel threatened, the metrical harmony signals a mutual readiness to

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[28] The quote is from Jebb ad 138. Erp Taalman Kip 2006.43 assumes "that the words φωνῇ γὰρ ὁρῶ are inspired by his conviction that the chorus will know that he is blind, as soon as they see him, and that their reaction (δεινὸς μὲν ὁρᾶν) is elicited by his scars." Seale 1982.114 also suggests that Oedipus' mask bears the signs of self-mutilation. Travis 1999.205 writes that the chorus could be reacting either to Oedipus' blindness or to his position. He also argues that τὸ φατιζόμενον can be the object of ὁρῶ (*I see what is said*), though this interpretation is rejected by most commentators. See also Murnaghan 1988.40 on the connection between speech and the body which φωνῇ ὁρῶ stresses.

[29] See Seale 1982.119-120. On the sense of δεινός here see Van Nortwick 2015.86. Cf. also *OT* 1312: οὐδ᾽ ἀκουστόν, οὐδ᾽ ἐπόψιμον.

[30] Cf. his words to the Local cited above, ὅσ᾽ ἂν λέγωμεν πάνθ᾽ ὁρῶντα λέξομεν (74).

[31] Travis 1999.45ff analyzes the interaction in terms of *opsis*, the chorus' function of spectatorship; he points out (50) the contrast between the chorus' ability to learn by *opsis* with Oedipus' learning by πάθη (in line 7). See also Edmunds 1996.45-50.

[32] Cf. Scott 1996.225-6; Dhuga 2005.346.

listen and engage with one another. In this song (and the entire play), the need to create a mutually acceptable space in which listening can take place is explicit, and treated as a challenge to both sides of the dialogue. The interaction at the beginning of the *parodos* already reveals a note of receptivity between Oedipus and the chorus through the metrical harmony of their voices.

The three characters onstage, Oedipus, Antigone and the chorus, continue to redefine their shared space in a process that promotes listening. So, for example, Oedipus begs the chorus not to harm him: *Locals, let me not be wronged after I trusted you* (174-5: ὦ ξεῖνοι, μὴ δῆτ᾽ ἀδικηθῶ / σοὶ πιστεύσας).[33] They respectfully assure him that he is safe: *never shall anyone remove you, old man, from your seat here against your will* (176-7: οὔ τοι μήποτέ σ᾽ ἐκ τῶνδ᾽ ἑδράνων, ὦ γέρον, ἄκοντά τις ἄξει). Their response reflects listening, for it is a commitment to receptiveness, both in what they say and in their meter of choice: lyric anapests, a sung meter matching his chant, as before.[34] They continue to direct Oedipus' movement out of the grove with the help of Antigone. This spatial negotiation is set in motion as the metrical harmony between Oedipus and the chorus deepens. They sing in concert, their voices twice completing a colon together (178-183):[35]

> Οἰ. ἔτ᾽ οὖν;   Χο. ἔτι βαῖνε πόρσω.
> Οἰ. ἔτι;   Χο. προβίβαζε, κούρα,
>   πόρσω · σὺ γὰρ ἀΐεις.
> Ἀν. ἔπεο μάν, ἔπε᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἀμαυρῷ
>   κώλῳ, πάτερ, ᾷ σ᾽ ἄγω.

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[33] As above, I translate ξεῖνος/οι as *local(s)* when it is used in reference to men of Colonus, since the address stresses that Oedipus and Antigone are strangers in *their* land (cf. n. 14).

[34] See Kamerbeek ad loc for the two alternative scansions of these lines: either anapestic (dimeter + dimeter catalectic) or ionic. That there is a different possible metrical interpretation of the first colon of the second strophe does not necessarily detract from my argument: once more, even if the meters used by Oedipus and the chorus are not identical, which they cannot be since the chorus sing whereas Oedipus chants, there exists a rhythmical affinity between them.

[35] The repeated colon in question (˘ ‾ ˘ ˘ ‾ ˘ ‾ ‾, lines 178-80) is called "enoplian" by Scott 1996.221 and "choriambic-enoplian" by McDevitt 1981.21. On this disputed metrical category see Itsumi 1991-3.

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

Oed.   Further then?   Ch. Come further forward.

Oed.   Further?   Ch. Lead him forward,
       maiden, for you can understand.

Ant.   Follow, follow me this way with your
       unseeing steps, father, to where I lead you.

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This instance of metrical sharing creates more than formal harmony: it reflects a mental attunement among the singers. We have seen repeatedly that metrical sharing in the lyric dialogues of Sophocles signals an attempt to sustain listening in a moment of crisis. Here, on the contrary, the harmony is reinforced emotionally and physically by the fact that Oedipus and Antigone are mutually dependent on the instructions of the chorus.[36] The concentration on the physical motion onstage both reflects and fosters an intimacy of bodies and voices, deepening the listening between the three characters. This part of the song is an interaction of great tenderness and vulnerability, wherein Oedipus, Antigone, and the elders of Colonus all sing together and focus on the same movement. In this sense, it is an unusual example of metrical sharing in Sophoclean *amoibaia*, for it dramatizes mounting intimacy instead of its disintegration. That listening here is performed through the body recalls the centrality of the physical dimension for ethical or emotional attunement (discussed in chapter 2).

As in earlier moments when listening hinges on a relationship to Oedipus' body, the movement now highlights his dependence on Antigone. The chorus' explicit transference of the abilities of spatial perception and orientation from Oedipus to Antigone prompts her to join the sung dialogue, though still in her assigned role as guide and not as a direct interlocutor with the chorus. Yet it is hardly a coincidence that the chorus' address to her, inasmuch as it gave her spatial agency, also triggered the use of her voice, as if giving her permission to join the song. Thus, Antigone's song is directly linked to her function as a substitute for and extension of

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[36] On the chorus giving "stage directions" here, see Markantonatos 2007.82.

Oedipus. Antigone's double role as both lyric counterpart to and physical prop for her father will be magnified at the end of the *parodos*.

Oedipus' motion out of the grove was defined as a spatial condition for listening between himself and the chorus—he must move to a place *where it is allowed for all to talk* (168-9: ἵνα πᾶσι νόμος φώνει [literally: *use voice*]). Yet the communicative rift between them looms large, and it is in fact prepared by the chorus' words. Oedipus' movement is framed by two statements from the chorus: first, the one mentioned earlier, *never shall anyone remove you from your seat here against your will*; second, *Foreigner in a foreign land, poor man, bring yourself to detest what the city has long held hateful* (ἄφιλον), *and revere what it holds dear* (184-7: τόλμα ξεῖνος ἐπὶ ξένας, / ὦ τλάμων, ὅ τι καὶ πόλις / τέτροφεν ἄφιλον ἀποστυγεῖν / καὶ τὸ φίλον σέβεσθαι). These are affirmations of the local ethics of mutuality. On the one hand, the chorus vow to treat Oedipus with respect, responding to his incontestable nobility and no less obvious suffering—in other words, they act on what may seem to us a fundamental empathic instinct.[37]

On the other hand, the chorus lay down the rules for their collective existence, defined by their hate or love, respectively, for (τὸ) ἄφιλον and τὸ φίλον. The extension of the interpersonal principles to a broader social setting dictates that certain things must be despised, that not everything and everyone can be treated as a friend.[38] The mention of ἄφιλον seems to fracture the ostensibly receptive engagement between the Colonians and Oedipus. It is an ironic reminder that Oedipus, as parricide, who bore children from his mother, is, precisely, an extreme specimen of ἄφιλος. This term, I suggest, works like a shorthand for a man to whom care, receptivity, and

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[37] Jebb xxvi: the chorus "represent the conflict of two feelings which the situation might be supposed to arouse in the minds of ordinary Athenians,—fear of the gods, and compassion for human suffering". Cf. Markantonatos 2007.81.

[38] Wallace 1979.41 writes in relation to these lines: "The separateness of Oedipus is underscored; he is an exile, outside of any community."

empathy cannot be extended, a man to whom the community cannot listen.[39] We cannot lose sight of the fact that Oedipus brings physical defilement to a holy place—he disrupts the ethics of the place and the ethics of being-in-place.

In the chanted anapests that follow, Oedipus asks Antigone to take him to where he *may both speak and listen* (189-190: ἵν' ἂν … τὸ μὲν εἴποιμεν, τὸ δ' ἀκούσαιμεν), still projecting onto the imminent dialogue a notion of mutual receptivity. The chorus' demand to adhere to their social customs is implicitly answered in Oedipus' continued movement away from the sacred grove and his stated wish to act piously. Yet by asking for Antigone's help as he did earlier, he focuses attention again on his physical vulnerability. He addresses her as παῖς,[40] highlighting the intimacy between himself and his daughter. This deflection from the chorus' broader social concerns and towards the personal sphere seems an intentional gesture, meant to keep the chorus' empathy alive, just as the mention of ἄφιλον begins to make such empathic listening impossible. The tormenting reality that Oedipus is, in fact, a most horrifying ἄφιλον, is soon revealed, a revelation which shifts the dynamics of listening considerably.

The fast approaching end of the chorus' empathy, I would argue, gives rise to Oedipus' agonized exclamations (197-202):

> Ἀν. πάτερ, ἐμὸν τόδ'· ἐν ἡσυχαίᾳ
> Οἰ. ἰώ μοί μοι.
> Ἀν. βάσει βάσιν ἅρμοσαι,
>   γεραὸν ἐς χέρα σῶμα σὸν
>   προκλίνας φιλίαν ἐμάν.
> Οἰ. ὤμοι δύσφρονος ἄτας.

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[39] Travis 1999 similarly suggests an irony in the chorus' use of φυτάλμιος in 151, for φυτάλμιος carries the sense of growth and begetting, and "the relation of the child [to] the bodies of its parents. … Oedipus is indeed [φυτάλμιος], but the unhappiness of his begetting is not the blindness to which the chorus refer; rather it is his very substance as a tragic character" (48).

[40] On παῖς instead of the vocative παῖ to avoid hiatus see Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b.223.

> Ant.   Father, this is for me to do. To quiet step,
> Oed.   Oyyyy!
> Ant.   … join step,
>   leaning your aged body
>   upon my loving arm.
> Oed.   Ohhh… woeful doom.

Oedipus' cries of pain punctuate Antigone's words and expose more than the tremendous physical difficulty that his repositioning in space entails. After all, his movement hitherto was not accompanied by any such expressions. Rather, the exclamations reflect a sense of impending doom, as he realizes the preceding display of receptivity to his being in the space cannot possibly go on to include receptivity to what he is about to say.[41] These pained interjections interrupt Antigone's careful instructions as she tenderly manipulates his body, once again drawing attention to his physical state. Through the exclamatory use of his voice, Oedipus maintains the focus on his spatial existence and simultaneously on Antigone's unwavering empathy, and particularly on how empathy, as an emotional stance and ethical activity, is conditioned by his body.[42]

As we saw at the beginning of the *parodos*, particularly through the statement *I see through voice*, Oedipus' frailty and blindness create a disturbance of spatial perception which increases, rather than lessens, the sense that he is in control of his surroundings. Furthermore, this earlier statement came in the midst of the anapestic dialogue, typifying Oedipus' ability to harmonize and engender listening despite, even through, his incongruity. Here, his vulnerability

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[41] In Mastronarde 1969.61 this passage is an example of dialogue where one side (Oedipus) utters "a self-directed exclamation or lament not intended to affect the dialogue-partner". My reading suggests a less self-absorbed stance.

[42] There are no corresponding lines to 199-202 in the strophe. This has driven many editors since Hermann (in Erfurdt) to assume a lacuna and to rearrange the order of the lines in the antistrophe. If utterances from the strophe are missing, they may well have been exclamatory: we cannot be sure no cries of pain were heard before those of the antistrophe. However, Kamerbeek 1984.39 suggests that the strophe makes good sense as it stands, and that we may speak, instead of strict response between the strophe and antistrophe, of "two parts that have much in common." He also defends, against considerations of response, the position of ἰώ μοί μοι after ἡσυχίᾳ, to retain the striking clash between Antigone's soothing remark and Oedipus' outburst. The transmitted text would thus offer an unusual but extremely effective use of Oedipus' voice. This supports my suggestion that Oedipus responds to the change in the chorus' attitude anticipated by their mention of ἄφιλον.

in conjunction with his compelling voice is an attempt to do the same. Oedipus' exclamations have an immediate emotional effect on his interlocutors, for the chorus call him ὦ τλάμων (203, cf. 185). But the compassion this term of address reveals will not extend to putting off their interrogation any longer.[43] The concerted effort to move Oedipus' body, dramatically important as it is, has distracted them only temporarily from the goal of learning his identity. They finally address to him, in the second person, the same questions they have uttered repeatedly in the third person since their first entrance onstage: *who are you? what is your name? where are you from?* (204-6: τίς ἔφυς βροτῶν; / τίς ὁ πολύπονος ἄγῃ; τίν' ἂν / σοῦ πατρίδ' ἐκπυθοίμαν;).[44]

This series of questions ends the strophic system. The following epode dramatizes the devastating exposure of Oedipus and the immediately subsequent breakdown of communication with the chorus. This upheaval, it has been argued, is reflected in the shift to a non-strophic pattern, which cuts against the metrical predictability of the song.[45] At the same time, while the first few lines of the epode are metrically erratic, its remainder presents important instances of metrical harmony between the interlocutors.[46] The non-strophic structure signals and highlights the chaotic interaction between the characters; the metrical uniformity of voices in the beginning of the epode ultimately does the same, conveying how listening sounds when it is under stress. In Antigone's solo, the closing section of the epode, metrical harmony works differently: it reflects her deep listening and thereby calls for empathy.

At the beginning of the epode, metrical sharing between Oedipus and the chorus occurs

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[43] Customs of ξενία (hospitality), which are prescribing the interaction (see n. 14 above), prohibit the host, the Colonians here, from questioning the guest.

[44] The second question here is, literally, *in what name are you led on your weary way?* Cf. the earlier τίς ἄρ' ἦν; (118), τις ὁ πρέσβυς; (124) and the almost identical τίς ποθ' ὁ πρέσβυς; (143).

[45] Scott 1996.226 writes that "the structure of the strophic lyric with corresponding statements fails."

[46] This too has been commented upon (see n. 32), usually as a sign of Oedipus' and Antigone's willingness to adjust to the demands of the chorus.

precisely when communication between them threatens to disintegrate. It is thus a departure from the vocal and physical intimacy this metrical effect represented earlier in the song, when the chorus guided Oedipus out of the grove. Even beforehand, the dialogue already reflects, through the intense closeness of voices, the difficulty of listening. Oedipus cries out: *Locals, I am an exile* (208: ὦ ξένοι, ἀπόπτολις). This utterance offers a vague answer to the chorus' third question (*where are you from*?), in a way that makes the factual assertion sound like a pained interjection.[47] He then starts with an interdiction that is immediately interrupted by the chorus: *But don't—What is it you forbid, old man?* (208-9: Οε. ἀλλὰ μὴ— / Χ. τί τόδ᾽ ἀπεννέπεις, γέρον;).[48] Oedipus' refusal to answer is projected onto the chorus, as a demand that they relent from inquiring. This is not *I will not speak*, but *please don't ask me to speak*, which, even while it attempts to block part of the communication, still functions within a system of back-and-forth and retains the dialogic potential between the two.[49] His frantic utterance emphatically accumulates not only the negative particle μή (some manuscripts have it not twice but thrice) but also synonyms for *ask* (210-11: ἀνέρῃ, ἐξετάσῃς, ματεύων).[50] These are matched by the chorus' repeated demands that he *speak* (212: αὔδα, and later on 215: φώνει, 217: λέγε).[51] The expectation for mutuality (a dialogue *where we may both speak and listen*, 190: τὸ μὲν εἴποιμεν, τὸ δ᾽ ἀκούσαιμεν) is fulfilled in a frustrating way, so that their togetherness feels forced and

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[47] On Oedipus' vague answer and the exclamatory effect of the omission of εἰμί see Kamerbeek ad 207-8; cf. Jebb ad loc.

[48] Mastronarde 1979.56 takes this as an example for a high level of contact but a low degree of cooperation between the partners in dialogue. Yet he reads the chorus' words as providing encouragement for Oedipus to finish what he has to say. To me, their interruption seems rather to express impatience.

[49] In Jakobson's terms (1960.355), Oedipus' use of the second person reflects the "conative" function of language through an "[o]rientation towards the addressee".

[50] See Kamerbeek ad loc.

[51] Meridor 1972 convincingly assigns, on dramatic considerations, 217 to the chorus, resulting in Antigone's silence in this part of the song. The present aspect in αὔδα "insists on further elucidation" (Kamerbeek ad 212-3), in comparison to the aorist of αὔδασον (l. 204).

causes Oedipus agony. The closeness between the speakers now has the opposite effect than the hoped for, unquestioning hospitality.

The metrical sharing exposes the tenuousness of listening—we hear how listening sounds when it is superficial, divorced from the ethical commitment of empathy. Immediately upon Oedipus' vehement request that they stop inquiring, the chorus address him with an exclamatory question. At this point, the two voices complete an ionic dimeter together, each supplying parts of the two ionic feet (⏑⏑−− ⏑⏑−−): Χο. τί δέ; Οι. δεινὰ φύσις. Χο. αὔδα (212: *What then?* *—[My] awful birth. —Speak!*). The chorus' and Oedipus' voices are formally and sonically in concert, while the words reveal the chorus' impatience at Oedipus' last attempt to evade their questions. The contrast to the earlier moment of harmony through metrical sharing is marked, since formal harmony in the first instance underlined the shared effort to secure a space for listening.

Oedipus repeats the ionic dimeter, a metrical echo that furthers the harmony of voices, in a helpless and frustrated address to Antigone: τέκνον, ὤμοι, τί γεγώνω; (213: *Oh, my child,* *what shall I say?*). Antigone's non-participation stresses Oedipus' isolation, despite the tight conjunction of voices. The chorus and Oedipus seem trapped in a shared song, the subject of which both sides would do anything to avoid. To the extent that metrical harmony is a precondition for listening, this part of the *amoibaion* exemplifies how such harmony may in fact be dissociated from genuine receptive engagement, that is, from deep listening and from a nonjudgmental commitment to the other. The superficial prerequisites of listening do not extend to empathy in the face of the shattering truth this communication must treat, a truth profoundly traumatic for Oedipus and radically defiling to whomever he contacts.

At the very last moments before Oedipus' truth is uncovered, and then when it finally is, a

similar emotional incongruity persists. Indeed, an even more intense dialogue takes place, wherein metrical harmony and vocal intimacy function as signs of superficial listening that fails to develop into deep listening. Oedipus' last, unanswered call to Antigone changes the meter once more, to dactyls (216). The final few words of stalling are exchanged in two couplets which reflect the singers' emotional divide: they sing in separate meters, Oedipus in a dactylic sequence (216, 218) and the chorus in an anapestic dimeter catalectic (217, 219).[52] He then has no choice but to reveal his identity, and makes it immediately clear by the patronymic genitive Λαΐου.[53] Even when making the fundamental first-person statement in answer to the question *who are you?*, Oedipus chooses to frame his response in the second person, desperately holding on to the dialogic structure: *Do you know one, son of Laius, and scion of the Labdacids?* (which would be, if not for the chorus' interruption, Λαΐου ἴστε τινα τό τε Λαβδακιδᾶν γένος; 220-21).[54]

When Oedipus finally says his father's name, the chorus shout out in grief and revulsion (220):

Ο. Λαΐου ἴστε τιν'—   Χ. ὤ · ἰοὺ ἰού.

This echo reveals the hollowness of their listening, a listening bereft of receptivity. The chorus' voice reverberates with part of the name, itself the interjection ἰού. In dialogue with the chorus, Oedipus' identity is not only cause for lamentation, it *is* ineffable lamentation. With the chorus

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[52] Oedipus' lines 216, 218 and further the lines shared by both singers 220, 222 have the form −◡◡− ◡◡−◡◡ −. This can be interpreted as two dactyls and a resolved iamb −◡◡ −◡◡ | −◡◡◡ − or an hemiepes with a resolved cretic −◡◡− ◡◡− | ◡◡◡ −. Scott 1996 has both interpretations in different lines, according to word break (and see Dale 1968.138 n. 3 for yet another terminology). A hemiepes is a half of a dactylic hexameter; in both analyses, the line begins with at least two dactyls. For simplification, I call this a dactylic sequence even though it is not purely dactylic but made up of other feet as well. On the difficulties in interpreting this 'dactylic' sequence see Stinton 1965.144. He connects the dactylic context of 216ff with 252, a connection which supports my argument (see below) that there is a metrical echo between the chorus' dactylic tetrameters and the dactylic sequences used earlier by Oedipus.

[53] The use of the patronym not only conforms with Greek custom but also with Oedipus' peculiar tendency to conflate categories within the nuclear family, which is in essence the identity he is exposing.

[54] Once more, we may recall Jakobson's "conative" function of language: see n. 49 above. See Mastronarde 1979.61-2 for an interpretation of Oedipus' words as a single question punctuated by the chorus' exclamations.

interrupting Oedipus, their horrified exclamations cut through and at the same time constitute his name and identity.[55] The chorus' exclamations and the way they relate to Oedipus' framing utterance are paradigmatic of the entire interaction of this song. The dialogic song keeps the characters in a position of vocal intimacy, specifically through metrical harmony; yet it also allows us to hear how the singing, metrically harmonic voice fails to perform empathy. This part of the song is similar to the interaction between Philoctetes and his chorus (1169ff), where I have suggested that the lyric medium is itself manipulated to expose the limitations of listening.[56]

In the present interaction between Oedipus and the chorus, the extraordinary metrical malleability of the *amoibaion* is also masterfully employed. Precisely as words fail the chorus and the possibility for a comprehensible dialogue seems lost, the interlocutors' voices become inextricably connected in a pattern of metrical harmony that spans not just the colon but several lines. The chorus' exclamation in the midst of Oedipus' dactylic sequence completes it precisely in accordance with the preceding iterations of this colon, both sung by Oedipus alone. This mid-line shift undoes the clear demarcation of voices and meters from a few moments ago (Oedipus' dactylic and the chorus' anapestic lines, respectively). Both singers now participate in both metrical sequences, and both are equally responsible for maintaining the same structure as before, alternating between dactylic and anapestic cola. And yet, even though the formal preconditions for and manifestations of listening are set, the choral exclamation is not a vocalization of empathy. Sonically, the receptivity is entirely on the surface, a surface which can

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[55] This line has, unsurprisingly, been subject to editorial emendations since antiquity. Despite its problems, it seems safe to say that at least one ἰού is given to the chorus. The text I use here is that of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson. They argue 1990b (as does Kamerbeek ad loc) for the deletion of ἀπόγονον, which, if ὤ is left with the chorus, creates the striking effect of interruption.

[56] See pp. 176-7 above.

barely contain the horror within. Aptly, what we hear is nothing more than a literal echo, the vocal version of traumatic repetition.

The echo, as we have seen in *Philoctetes*, is precisely that non-empathic, disembodied repetition of pain that deepens the dissociation of the voice from the body. That play concerns listening to suffering as it is expressed by both body and voice, and sets the emotional frustration that echo epitomizes in contrast to gestures of receptive listening. When Neoptolemus exclaims *papai* (895), he comes close to such a gesture, even though the cry's status as a literal echo underscores the ethical impasse to which Neoptolemus has been driven through his deep listening. The echo as an absence of listening is a manifestation of what Oedipus of *OT* fears in his deepest moment of crisis: that his voice is being carried aimlessly on the wind (*Whither is my voice swept abroad on the wings of the air?* 1309: πᾷ μοι / φθογγὰ διαπωτᾶται φοράδαν;).

If the younger Oedipus was answered by an empathic chorus that steered his voice back on track, in our present context the chorus' shock and temporary loss of words are signs of the communicative failure Oedipus' revelation engenders. This, in turn, anticipates the chorus' imminent act of open hostility toward him. His request that they do not fear him cannot be fulfilled; rather, the chorus respond with terror. Their refusal to reciprocate is vocalized with another repetitive echo which conflates metrical harmony and lack of emotional engagement (223-4):

> O.   δέος ἴσχετε μηδὲν ὅσ' αὐδῶ.
> X.   ἰὼ ὢ ὤ.   O. δύσμορος.   X. ὢ ὤ.

> Oed. Do not fear all that I say.
> Ch.   Ohhhhh…   Oed. Wretched. Ch. Ohhh…

Instead of responding to his request, the chorus act out precisely the fear Oedipus mentions. Their exclamations pick up on the woeful sounds of his words: the repeated ὤ resonate with the

o-s of δέ<u>ος</u>, <u>ὅσ</u>’ αὐδ<u>ῶ</u> and δύσμ<u>ορ</u>ος. The choral echoing here, I suggest, deepens the chasm at the core of Oedipus’ being by throwing back at him a horrifying vocal version of his tragic self. Precisely as a repetitive echo, their reaction repeats the pain of realizing what it is to be Oedipus. At the moment of echoing, the chorus’ potential for listening is limited to their presence by Oedipus as he suffers. It is painfully deprecating, a far cry from a compassionate *presence with* his suffering. Ultimately, they only amplify it and intensify the tragic sense of reiteration, precisely the thing from which Oedipus seeks a resting place. Once the chorus recover from their shock and regain command of language, anapests are now the means through which they demand that Oedipus leave: *Out! Get away from this land!* (226: ἔξω πόρσω βαίνετε χώρας). An empathic response to Oedipus is unequivocally denied.

This lyric dialogue reveals something essential about Oedipus: his influential voice, the inescapable intimacy he engenders, and his capacity to arouse listening. But it also shows us intimacy going wrong. In this case, harmony creates not empathy but revulsion. Furthermore, this song allows us to recognize that Oedipus is faced with a formidable lyric counterpart. The chorus now get to perform a string of dactylic tetrameters to express their vehement rejection (228-36), a metrical-emotional effect which we have seen in use by the recalcitrant Electra and Philoctetes in *amoibaia* with their respective choruses.[57] In response to Oedipus’ reminder that they had promised not to hurt him, the chorus gain complete control of the dialogic situation, breathlessly presenting the moral case against him and shooing him out. The repeated dactylic tetrameters give a rhythmic regularity to their steadfast determination. Dactyls now become an even more charged signal of the ambivalence of metrical harmony, an index of superficial listening in this scene. The dactylic sequence represents a shift in the musical style and emotional

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[57] *Electra* 130-34 and Philoctetes 1197-1202 (see p. 94-5 and p. 178-9 above). The passage here is more formally a πνῖγος, a sequence of the same metron repeated in *synapheia* (word-overlap between cola). See ch. 3 n. 38.

content of the shared song, precisely because much of the dialogic aspect of the song is suddenly upended. The intricate vocal interdependency between Oedipus and the chorus is replaced by a single-voiced, undeniably aggressive song.

Yet, while the unswerving metrical flow of the choral dactyls significantly breaks from the preceding intimate dialogue, the dactylic element is not new to this song.[58] As indicated above, Oedipus was the one to introduce dactylic sequences to the song (in 216); the dactylic element gradually passed from Oedipus to the chorus' voice through the metrical interdependence between them. Coming from the chorus, the assertive and impatient series of dactylic tetrameters is an incontestable sonic change, but it still reverberates with the preceding interaction. The choral dactylic rejection of Oedipus is twofold, and can be heard not only as a rejection of the character and body of Oedipus, but also of his meter and the implications of vocal intimacy his metrical patterns prompted. The chorus' reaction is an unsettling, dissonant failure of empathic listening.[59] Formal harmony here resonates with, and sounds like, discord.

This act of vocal violence effectively silences Oedipus, and he retreats from the sung dialogue. Still, the chorus do not have the last word, or note. Antigone, who has removed herself from the intense shared song between her father and the chorus, makes herself heard again, pleading on his behalf and her own.[60] Her song is suffused with empathy—it emanates her empathy for Oedipus and seeks to arouse it in the chorus. Fittingly, it is predominantly dactylic. As such, it is a paragon of listening, for it reflects her own harmony with the preceding dialogue

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[58] This point has not been commented upon those who have analyzed the metrical dynamics of this song, namely Scott 1996 and Dhuga 2005.

[59] I have called this *manipulative listening* in the cases of Electra and Philoctetes, stressing their attempt to co-opt a gesture that could be read as empathic. Here, the metrical echoing seems to me even more violent than the term manipulative suggests, an act of sheer rejection that attempts to block communication more forcefully than those of Electra and Philoctetes.

[60] The authenticity of this part, suspected since antiquity, is duly defended by Jebb ad 237 and by most recent scholars. De Poli 242 writes: "[Antigone's] song is an extraordinary *coup de théâtre*. Her plea mitigates the hostility of the Old men towards Oedipus, allowing him to try to change their attitude to him."

and with the choral voice in particular, as well as the stance she uses to engender (not to say demand) compassion (237-253):

> ὦ ξένοι αἰδόφρονες,
> ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ γεραὸν πατέρα
> τόνδ' ἐμὸν οὐκ ἀνέτλατ' ἔργων
> ἀκόντων ἀΐοντες αὐδάν,
> ἀλλ' ἐμὲ τὰν μελέαν, ἱκετεύομεν,
> ὦ ξένοι, οἰκτίραθ', ἃ
> πατρὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ τλάμονος ἄντομαι
> ἄντομαι οὐκ ἀλαοῖς προσορωμένα
> ὄμμα σὸν ὄμμασιν, ὥς τις ἀφ' αἵματος
> ὑμετέρου προφανεῖσα, τὸν ἄθλιον
> αἰδοῦς κῦρσαι· ἐν ὑμῖν ὡς θεῷ
> κείμεθα τλάμονες. ἀλλ' ἴτε, νεύσατε
> τὰν ἀδόκητον χάριν·
> πρός σ' ὅ τι σοι φίλον οἴκοθεν ἄντομαι,
> ἢ τέκνον ἢ λέχος ἢ χρέος ἢ θεός·
> οὐ γὰρ ἴδοις ἂν ἀθρῶν βροτὸν ὅστις ἄν,
> εἰ θεὸς ἄγοι,
> ἐκφυγεῖν δύναιτο.

> Locals, compassionate men,
> since my aged father here
> you did not endure,
> to hear the tale of his unwilling deeds,[61]
> at least to me, local men, I beg you,
> show pity to me in my misery, I who
> entreat you for my wretched father's sake,
> I entreat you, looking at your eyes
> with eyes that are not blind, as one who came
> from your own blood, that the suffering man
> may meet with compassion. As on a god we,
> wretched, depend on you. Come, grant
> the unhoped-for mercy.
> I entreat you by what you hold dear at home:
> child, or wife, or treasure, or god.
> For, even if you search well, you would not see
> the man who could escape,
> if a god leads him.

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[61] I follow here Kamerbeek's interpretation ad 237-40, rather than taking ἀΐοντες αὐδάν to mean *knowing the rumor*, as e.g. Jebb translates. Kamerbeek stresses the resonance with the repeated use of the verb αὐδῶ in the preceding part of epode, which is more operative if taking αὐδή as *tale*. In other words, Antigone puts her appeal specifically in terms relating to the dialogic interaction between the chorus and her father.
Kamerbeek further argues that Antigone's intervention allows Oedipus an "opportunity for expounding the nature of his ἔργα." Slatkin 1986.214, 217 argues, rather, that her appeal is unsuccessful.

Metrically, the beginning of her song is a subtle echo of both interlocutors. She opens with a hemiepes, the dactylic sequence which Oedipus introduced in the epode, followed by a glyconic, a meter used repeatedly by the chorus in the first strophic pair. This is a gesture of deference and humility which acknowledges the respective positions of the chorus and Oedipus, and shows her ability to listen to both. It also reinforces on the metrical level Antigone's role as a mediator between them. The meter, then, operates in a manner analogous to her words, which target the Colonians' compassion and highlight Oedipus' old age.[62] Antigone's song puts in place an intricate relationship between the three characters, wherein she would deserve the chorus' pity separately from Oedipus precisely as his extension and surrogate. This paradoxical existence as individual and dependent is aptly brought out in her plea *but pity me, the miserable one, we beg you*: ἀλλ' ἐμὲ τὰν μελέαν, ἱκετεύομεν. The juxtaposition of the first person singular pronoun and the first person plural verb emphasizes the duality of her position as both *I* and *we*.

This utterance is Antigone's first dactylic tetrameter, which inevitably resonates with the chorus' extended use of this meter a moment before. She echoes their vehement rejection precisely as she voices the ultimate request for pity.[63] In her voice, the dactylic tetrameter is recast as a vehicle for compassion rather than scorn. She attempts to mitigate the chorus' alienation from Oedipus and from his metrical influence, thus, to reverse the effects of the choral dactyls. This attempt is remarkable for its courage no less than its subtlety. Her long sequence of determined dactylic tetrameters is immediately tempered with a different metrical sequence, not

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[62] Cairns 1993, 221 n.18 on *aidophrōn* meaning "of reverent mind, i.e. liable to manifest *aidōs*."

[63] Dhuga 2005, 346 writes: "Antigone apparently seeks to reverse the chorus's dactylic rejection of Oedipus through a dactylic plea for reconsideration." De Poli 2012, however, mentions that the final lines of the chorus, 228-236, can be analyzed as anapests, a choice which "gives more effectiveness to Antigone's dactyls" (242 n. 22). On this last point I am obviously at odds with him. He also compares (243) Antigone's monody here to the monodies sung by Euripides' Antigone in *Phoenissae* (182-192, 1567-1581). In both, the song can be metrically divided into two parts, the second being dactylic.

coincidentally as she addresses the Colonians in the vocative and asks for their pity: ὦ ξένοι, οἰκτίραθ’, ἃ (choriambic; cretic).[64] The subsequent flow of tetrameters is interrupted once more at the words expressing the ultimate goal of her plea: *the unhoped-for mercy* (τὰν ἀδόκητον χάριν).[65] This song enacts an extraordinary reciprocity despite its lack of dialogic multi-vocality. Antigone is Oedipus’ blood-relation; she also acts as his voice and, as Oedipus himself put it at the beginning of the *parodos*, his eyes. In all these capacities, she asks the chorus to imagine her as their own blood-relation, their φίλος, and to grant her *the unhoped-for mercy* on that basis. Furthermore, her demand is marked as inescapable because, as she spells out, she is looking them in the eyes: *I beseech you with eyes not-blind, looking in your eye* (244-5: ἄντομαι οὐκ ἀλαοῖς προσορωμένα ὄμμα σὸν ὄμμασιν).[66]

Even as Antigone stresses her separation from Oedipus, as a being whose own physical status and spatial existence require empathy, it is clear that any compassion granted to her will, by extension, be granted to Oedipus as well. Indeed, at the end of the song the chorus confirm this double-targeted compassion: *be sure, child of Oedipus, that we pity both you and him for your misfortune* (254-5: ἀλλ’ ἴσθι, τέκνον Οἰδίπου, <u>σέ τ</u>’ ἐξ ἴσου οἰκτίρομεν <u>καὶ τόνδε</u> συμφορᾶς χάριν). Granted, the chorus go on to invoke their religious duties and dependency on Theseus, forgoing, for the time being, any further action with regards to Oedipus’ seat. But Antigone’s song has fundamentally changed their tone. She has all but forced compassion on them by echoing their own non-empathic voice. Her use of dactylic tetrameters reflects a

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[64] On the colometry here see De Poli 2012.237-240.

[65] For χάρις as *act of mercy* see Kamerbeek ad 248-51.

[66] De Poli 2012.237 claims that Antigone mentions her eyesight to stress that, in contrast to Oedipus, “she has no guilt and her plea is right.” See also Seale 1982 123, who stresses the literal sense of προφανεῖσα (246) in his translation “brought to light.” It is possible to imagine that this mention of eye-contact would be accompanied by a gesture (even a slight move of the head) to include in this appeal not just the chorus leader but other chorus members as well. On the singular forms in 245 and 250 possibly referring to “every individual member of the Chorus” see Kamerbeek ad 247-8. Being confronted with the other’s face is crucial to an ethical engagement with him: for Levinas’ focus on the face, see my discussion and notes on p. 62.

receptivity to the chorus' rejection, and a crucially transformative receptivity. Precisely by resonating with the preceding dialogue and the difficulties of listening it entailed, her own voice becomes the vehicle for an irrepressible claim for empathy.

5.2 Empathic Reinterpretation: Second *Amoibaion*

Antigone's song at the end of the epode is effective, for it allows the dialogue between Oedipus and the chorus to continue.[67] Indeed, they finally reach that longed-for place where they "may both speak and listen." The next *amoibaion* stages yet another iteration of the revelation of Oedipus' identity. Though it presents almost no new information about Oedipus's life, it is significant that he gets another chance to express his interpretation of the past through song shared with the chorus (even though he explicitly wishes to avoid the matter).[68] This song is an extraordinary example of deep listening; listening here fulfills its therapeutic potential, and so the song offers a powerful corrective to the previous *amoibaion*.

The intervening episode offers a renegotiation of Oedipus' presence in the space he already occupies, through both rhetorical and cultic gestures. Following Antigone's plea, Oedipus gets a chance to expound on his moral blamelessness, essentially claiming that his transgressions were committed unknowingly and that, consequently, he is innocent. Ismene joins her father and sister onstage, with information on the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices. This gives Oedipus a chance to reveal more of the prophecies concerning his family and his extraordinary authority over the future, for example, *may it be in my power to decide for them the outcome of this war* (422-3: ἐν δ' ἐμοὶ τέλος αὐτοῖν γένοιτο τῆσδε τῆς μάχης πέρι). The

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[67] For a different view, see Slatkin 1986.214, 217.

[68] In his attempt to avoid speaking of his past, Oedipus evokes here the custom of ξενία (515-6); cf. nn. 14, 43 above.

chorus thereby hear more arguments that reflect Oedipus' special status in relation to the gods, and a fuller picture of him is painted. He is not just the subject of the abhorrent (and true) rumors about him, but a man who has moved beyond those past transgressions and consequently gained a special prophetic status.

Ismene serves another important function: she becomes the vehicle for Oedipus' purification in relation to Colonus. The chorus lay down the terms for his expiation, a series of cultic actions that Ismene sets out to perform on his behalf. As the prologue and *parodos* show repeatedly in relation to Antigone, we now see again that Oedipus depends also on his second daughter to mediate between him and the space. To make his presence at Colonus acceptable, Ismene must act as Oedipus' surrogate or physical extension, while he remains in place.

The second *amoibaion* between Oedipus and the chorus takes place after Ismene leaves to perform the religious duties they have dictated to her. On the surface, the song repeats much of the interaction of the previous scenes, specifically Oedipus' insistence that he is guiltless. Yet, the way listening works in this lyric dialogue shows that the relationship between Oedipus and the chorus breaks new empathic ground. It seems hardly accidental that, while Ismene is in charge of definitively atoning for his transgression against the place, Oedipus reaches a new level of vocal harmony with the chorus. Both processes represent and complete the ethical shift that allows Oedipus to be accepted into the local community.[69]

The chorus ask to set the record straight in regards to the constant and impersonal rumor concerning Oedipus (517-8); they offer a potential corrective for the endlessly repeating pain of

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[69] Cf. Scott 1996.229. In later stages of the drama, Theseus can be considered a substitution to Antigone in the role of mediator between Oedipus and the space (cf. Budick 2009.76). More precisely, his intervening presence ushers in a different temporal significance for Oedipus' figure. While his daughters mark his relation both to his former transgressive self and to the future catastrophic events of his race, Theseus underlines the civilizing sphere of Colonus and leads Oedipus towards his eternal divine-like existence. See Segal 1981 on Theseus as a son-figure to Oedipus (363) and as a civilizing figure (377). Cf. Walker 1995.16. For Theseus' *katabasis* resonating with Oedipus' association with chthonic deities, see Segal 1981.369; Markantonatos 2007.131-139; Calame 1998.346-352.

discovering and revealing his identity.[70] Crucially, in contrast to their earlier shared song, the chorus' interrogation now has a completely different tone. It is framed as a reciprocal move, since for him to speak would be to return the favor that they showed him: *Yield; for I too yield to you in all that you need* (520: πείθου · κἀγὼ γὰρ [πείθομαι σοί sc.] ὅσον σὺ προσχρῄζεις).[71] Oedipus' participation in the dialogue is effected through persuasion, not instructions; it is not, as in the previous *amoibaion*, something he is forced to do through repeated imperatives (212ff). It is the chorus that now take the place of suppliants: *I beg you* (519: ἱκετεύω, echoing 142 and 241). This is, no doubt, a rhetorical exaggeration, but it is significant emotionally, for they are putting themselves in their interlocutor's shoes. Oedipus continues to express his pain, first at the prospect of speaking (515-6), and then as he actually does speak of his past deeds (529). In the first strophe, his suffering rings clear through the exclamations ὤμοι and φεῦ φεῦ. These recall how exclamations in the *parodos* functioned as vocal interruptions, as attempts to stave off informative communication. Here the act of narrating goes on despite the suffering it causes. The remarkable harmony between the two voices comes through in the way the roles of Oedipus and the chorus are perfect counterparts in the strophe and corresponding antistrophe; that is, in the antistrophe each one sings the other's strophic lines.[72] Consequently, in the places where Oedipus shouted out in pain, the chorus are now those reacting in shock to his narrative, interrupting him as he describes his relationship with his daughters.[73]

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[70] Knox 1964.152 and Burian 1974.414 have read this rather as a measure of prurience on the part of the chorus.

[71] See Jebb ad loc.

[72] Cf. Scott 1996.227-9 on "the cooperative creation of strophic form" (227) here in contrast to the *parodos*. On the consistent division of parts here and the response it maintains see McDevitt 1981.20. Cf. Nooter 2012.163.

[73] In Matronarde 1979.57 n.14, the chorus' interruption in 531 (πῶς φής;) encourages Oedipus to finish his sentence. (He interprets 542-4 similarly.) Kamerbeek ad loc suggests that the chorus did not realize that the daughters they had seen before were the fruit of Oedipus' incestuous relations, hence their horrified shock here.

If this exchange threatens to become a terror-stricken communicative failure similar to the *parodos*, the two interlocutors quickly gain their composure. In the opening of the next strophic pair, the chorus ask Oedipus about his daughters. In other words, they choose to remain in dialogic contact with him even after his most horrible revelation, proving that they can withstand it, even though he thinks *it is death to hear these things* (529: θάνατος τάδ᾽ ἀκούειν). This choice to remain in conversation is radically empathic. Oedipus, in turn, completes their sentence, echoing their iambic dimeter exactly (534-5):

> Χο.   σοί γ᾽ ἆρ᾽ ἀπόγονοί τ᾽ εἰσὶ καὶ—
> Οι.   κοιναί γε πατρὸς ἀδελφεαί.
> Cho. So these are your daughters and also—
> Oed. very sisters of their father.

This act of syntactical harmonizing is extraordinary even in intimate *amoibaia*.[74] The metrical echo reinforces the sense of deep listening at play. Importantly, it is Oedipus' story to tell: to point to the horrible equivalence between his sister–daughters and to name them thus cannot be done through another's voice. Yet the opening sentence from the chorus' mouth can be heard as a prompt, a vocalization that facilitates Oedipus' song. As such it is empathic not only in relation to what came before, but as a catalyst for reciprocity and further engagement. Fulfilling the chorus' wish to understand Oedipus' life not as a rumor, the shared song now gives him an opportunity to lay out his version of the events.

This *amoibaion* can be compared to the kind of empathic dialogue we saw functioning in therapy, particularly in the practice of the "Empathy Cycle" method.[75] The chorus' empathic engagement with Oedipus is instrumental to his renewed sense of agency over his narrative, inasmuch as it is agency through mutual, shared vocalization. Both sides are invested in his sung

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[74] See Nooter 2012.163 for the unusual "communicative intimacy" with n. 49. The echo includes repetition of the resolution in third place (ἀπό = γε πα-). Kamerbeek ad loc explains that κοιναί means sisters of the same mother.

[75] See Barrett-Lennard 1981 and my discussion in ch. 2, pp. 40-41.

narration and take part in it. Further along in the song, listening between Oedipus and the chorus

deepens, again through both syntactical echoes and metrical harmony. The metrical sharing of

the pattern of lyric iambs becomes especially intimate by virtue of the repeated resolutions

increasing the rhythmic tension:

<div style="margin-left:2em;">

⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑ ⏑⏑ | ⏑ ‒ ⏑ ‒   2iam
⏑ ‒ ⏑ ‒ | ⏑ ‒ ⏑ ⏑⏑ | ⏑ ‒ ⏑ ‒   3iam

Χο.   ἔπαθες— Οι. ἔπαθον ἄλαστ᾽ ἔχειν.
Χο.   ἔρεξας— Οι. οὐκ ἔρεξα.   Χο. τί γάρ;   Οι. ἐδεξάμην …   (538-9)

Χο.   ἔκανες— Οι. ἔκανον. ἔχει δέ μοι—
Χο.   τί τοῦτο; Οι. πρὸς δίκας τι. Χο. τί γάρ;   Οι. ἐγὼ φράσω·   (545-6)

Cho.   You have suffered—Oed. I have suffered what is unbearable.
Cho.   You have acted— Oed. I have not acted [willfully]. Ch. What do you
                                           mean? Oed. I received [a gift].

Cho.   You have killed— Oed. I have killed. But I—
Cho.   What is it? Oed….had just cause for it.   Ch. What do you mean?
                                                   Oed. I will explain.

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This part of the dialogue demonstrates the reinterpretation of suffering through mutual listening

and vocalization. Thus, the serial, almost literal repetitions are like invitations, appeals to

Oedipus to tell his story. The version the chorus vocalize in the second person is taken up by him

in the first person. Echoes here are transformative: they generate new meaning. In the *parodos*,

the most poignant moment of echoing was when the chorus repeated part of Oedipus' name in a

horrified exclamation. That act of echoing reflected superficial listening, a surface harmony that

bespoke the chorus' inability to empathically accept Oedipus. The echo became an index of

revulsion and a cause for more suffering.

       The present song recalls the interaction dramatized in the previous *amoibaion*, both in its

pattern of echoes, and by contrast, through the meter. The iambic system of the second strophic

pair has a single dactylic tetrameter (540 ~ 547); dactyls were a prominent rhythmic feature of

the *parodos*.[76] The second lyric dialogue can thus be heard as a contrast to the *parodos* and a completion of the process it set in motion. In the second *amoibaion*, echoes are the medium through which deep listening qua empathy is embodied and intensified. Taken together, the two lyric dialogues demonstrate the central importance Oedipus' past continues to hold for the present, and the transformative potential of retelling it accurately, especially in his voice. The two songs are part of the same movement in the sense that the second *amoibaion* finally puts to rest the two haunting questions, who he is and what he did.[77] Deep listening, as the reading offered here has shown, is crucial for the process of reinterpreting the past and coming to terms with it.

5.3 Oedipus' Speech and the End of Listening

Oedipus' arrival at Colonus and the awareness that the end of his life is near has prompted a communal acknowledgment of his past sufferings. In terms of Oedipus' new-found authority over the meaning of his life, the ability to tell the past and control the future are two sides of the same coin. To understand his past transgressions as unknowing and hence "sufferings" allows his worth to become clear. It thus entails the full expression of his prophetic voice and the final translation of his body. Yet there is a causal and temporal relation between coming to the grove at Colonus and finally leaving it, to the extent that the two actions must be performed in relation to other characters. Only after he is accepted by the Colonians and by Theseus can he confer his

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[76] Cf Scott 1996.228: the "single line of dactylic" is "perhaps a reminder of the unpleasant exchange in the parodos."

[77] Oedipus will still need to deal with Theseus and contend with Creon's accusations, who raises again the question of Oedipus' criminality and pollution. See Slatkin 1986.219: "Theseus does not question; Creon does not listen. The essential dialogue takes place between Oedipus and the chorus. It is their conception of him that he must address and win over, and their collective entity that must make a place for him. By the time Theseus arrives, Oedipus and the chorus have achieved that end."

blessing upon Athens, and only after he curses Polyneices can he let go of his mortal existence.[78]

If the preoccupation with the past that dominates the first third of the play reflects Oedipus' vulnerability and makes him identifiably human, his unique authority over the future is otherworldly in its potency and self-assurance. The present chapter's focus on the beginning and the ending of Oedipus' transformation at Colonus emphasizes this change from human to super-human. To put it in spatial terms, the beginning is the protracted action whereby Oedipus finds a resting place on stage, both literally and figuratively; the end is what remains on stage after Oedipus leaves. The change in how listening between the characters functions after the narration of Oedipus' past is concluded reinforces the sense that there is an identifiable shift in Oedipus' status. In his interaction with his son, Oedipus' voice already forcefully reflects his more-than-human state; accordingly, he has no use for empathic listening and actively rejects it.

This section and the following one concentrate on the aftermath of Oedipus' transformation and the way listening no longer creates empathic engagement with his descendants. The last section offers a close reading of the lyric dialogue that ends the play, arguing that the chorus do not offer deep listening to Antigone and Ismene, and that this frustration of empathy is part and parcel of the frustration of mourning which Oedipus' super-natural disappearance effects. Oedipus' end also disrupts the way space is experienced on stage. Thus, listening is again showed to emanate from and resonate with the physical landscape and the bodies that occupy it. In the *parodos*, we saw that Oedipus' vocal idiosyncrasy was a catalyst for empathy inasmuch as it pointed back to his body and made the spatial environment resonate with it. When the stage is emptied of Oedipus and his voice, the relation of Antigone and Ismene

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[78] Rosenmeyer's interpretation of the play is that there is no other way for Oedipus to remove his "taint" than by projecting in onto others, and concludes that "his pleading is all but monstrously immoral" (1952.98). Burian 1975 offers an interpretation that stresses the synchrony of Oedipus' "double destiny of cursing and blessing" (413); "[his] apotheosis springs directly from the great demonstration of Oedipus' daemonic wrath" (428).

to the space is disrupted, and their confused geographical orientation at the end of the play amplifies the lack of empathy on stage.

The present section briefly studies some important permutations of the voice preceding the closing *amoibaion*. In the scene with Polyneices, Oedipus' voice gains prophetic power through a negation of empathic listening, in fact, through a kind of manipulative listening. By refusing to consider forgiveness, Oedipus shows his own need for empathic engagement has dissipated—he is no longer in a position where he needs to *receive* empathy. The dialogue with Polyneices anticipates the onstage life after Oedipus in that it demonstrates a concern for the future in which empathy does not feature. A few examples from this dialogue will show that Oedipus performs manipulative listening, for he expertly echoes Polyneices' words to prove him unworthy of his own intent. His is listening for the sake of moral and emotional scorn, by which Polyneices' supplication is shown to be perverse. This interaction becomes the ultimate casting aside of listening, as it demonstrates a definitive shift in the characters' lyric activity. After Polyneices leaves, Oedipus refrains from participating in song with the chorus, proving that he has foregone his lyric voice.

Polyneices claims to come in supplication to Oedipus on behalf of himself as well as his allies (1309), those he has gathered for his military campaign against his brother. This argument is paradigmatic of Polyneices' failure: Polyneices the suppliant is at once an aggressor, coming to besiege his own fatherland. Furthermore, as one who was exiled by his closest kin, his brother, Polyneices inevitably reminds Oedipus of how he himself was once cast off from Thebes by Creon and his own sons (and this memory is anything but repressed in this play as it is). Thus what could have created in Oedipus an empathic resonance with Polyneices serves instead to

227

magnify the injustices he himself experiences at his son's hands.[79] Polyneices' further attempt to stress his close relationship with Oedipus, and thereby engender empathy, is similarly rife with conflict and paradox.[80] His own language seems to trip him up, for he cannot even straightforwardly call himself Oedipus' son (1323-25):

> ἐγὼ δὲ σός, κεἰ μὴ σός, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κακοῦ
> πότμου φυτευθείς, σός γέ τοι καλούμενος,
> ἄγω τὸν Ἄργους ἄφοβον ἐς Θήβας στρατόν.

> I—your son, but if not yours, from an evil
> fate born, still called yours—
> lead the fearless host of Argos on Thebes.

The long attributive circumlocution, from σός to καλούμενος, precedes the incriminating predicate, *(I) lead the army against Thebes*. His readiness to declare war against his homeland is an apt counterpart to his wavering filial identity. Even as he asks Oedipus to make amends and reaffirm their kinship, he expresses insecurity about who he is in relation to Oedipus.[81]

This expression anticipates Oedipus' imminent speech-act of disowning Polyneices, which resounds like an inverted echo of Polyneices' alleged affinity between them. As if to answer the uncertainty surrounding Polyneices' sense of filial bond, Oedipus proclaims: *you [Polyneices and Eteocles] are not my sons but another's* (1369: ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἄλλου κοὐκ ἐμοῦ πεφύκατον). In one of his harshest invectives, Oedipus paradoxically maintains the father–son bond as it is negated: *You, begone, hated and without a father in me!* (1383: σὺ δ᾽ ἔρρ᾽

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[79] Cf. Burian 1974.427: "How could Oedipus not curse Polynices? The very suppliant pleas with which son appeals to father are reminders of the dreadful intertwining of their fates; the claims of kinship and of like suffering are claims to a common destiny (τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον᾽ ἐξειληχότες, 1337). Polynices asks his father's blessing on the very action that will fulfill that destiny and the curse upon the house." On this scene see Mastrangelo 2000. Easterling 1967.8 comments that Polyneices words, when pleading in the name of παίδων τῶνδε (*these daughters*), are "unintentionally ironic", for they recall the contrast between Oedipus' love of his daughters and his hatred of his sons.

[80] Cairns 1993 comments on Polyneices' two opposing attitudes to *aidos*, which are parallel to "his failure to accept the universalization of his own arguments" (226-7). Both Polyneices and Oedipus here reveal a priority for their own honor over recognition of another's status.

[81] He is, also, actually in the process of violently severing ties of kinship to his brother and city. See Mastrangelo 2000 51 n.34 on kin-killing as suicide, of which Oedipus is also guilty.

ἀπόπτυστός τε κἀπάτωρ ἐμοῦ). These words create, by juxtaposition, a relation between father and son, with the emphatic use of the personal pronouns σὺ and ἐμοῦ in the first and last position in the lines.[82] The curse thus parallels Polyneices' simultaneous act of betraying his kin and asking for forgiveness in the name of filial duty. Further on, Oedipus reverses the effects of his son's resolute words (and deeds), by invoking his curses as allies. The military imagery Oedipus uses is a clear counterpoint to Polyneices' expedition against Thebes and markedly pronounces its failure: *such curses I brought up against you two before and I now call upon to come to me as allies* (1375-6: τοιάσδ᾽ ἀρὰς σφῷν πρόσθε τ᾽ ἐξανῆκ᾽ ἐγὼ / νῦν τ᾽ ἀνακαλοῦμαι ξυμμάχους ἐλθεῖν ἐμοί); *I call Ares* (1391: καλῶ δ᾽ Ἄρη).

Oedipus' final words in this scene maintain the designation of his sons as such: *go and announce… that Oedipus has given such gifts to his own children* (1393-6: κἀξάγγελλ᾽ ἰὼν … οὕνεκ᾽ Οἰδίπους τοιαῦτ᾽ ἔνειμε παισὶ τοῖς αὑτοῦ γέρα). Moreover, it is a confirmation, and henceforth a constant reminder, that his action has been in speech: that he has determined the course of his personal, familial, and political history through the voice. This voice, as he defined it at the beginning of his speech, is now ὀμφή, an instrument of prophecy.[83] Turning into a semi-divine figure, he is no longer in need of empathy; he does not inspire it nor does he hold it for others. Insofar as his vocalizations reflect listening, it is a manifestly rhetorical tool, a means to manipulate the other's words and gain dialogic authority. Listening here does not promote empathic engagement. It highlights the gulf between the interlocutors, instead of creating harmony between them.

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[82] Mastrangelo 2000, 47 writes: "Oedipus self-consciously uses the father-son issue and its accepted value in society in order to break bonds, and by the finale to become an autonomous and differentiated entity." See Murnaghan's literal translation of 1383: "*go, spat out and unfathered by me*", so that the rejection of Polyneices is conceived "as an expulsion from his body" (1988.43 n 27).

[83] See Nooter 2012.170-2 on Oedipus' prophetic voice and its effects. Bushnell 1988.89 comments that this play undoes "the boundary between human speech and divine silence" through Oedipus' statements about the future. She also compares (98) Oedipus here to Tiresias in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (see n. 14 above).

Oedipus' response to Polyneices is the culmination of what the play dramatizes from the start, his transformation by means of his voice and body. From the beginning, Oedipus has a unique, otherworldly, and destabilizing presence, but, at the play's start, his voice is an index of physical vulnerability and mortality. As Oedipus' body becomes a boon, so too his voice becomes prophetic, and thereby turns into a means for rejecting empathy. The move towards a god-like *speaking* voice happens with, in fact entails, a withdrawal from Oedipus' singing voice, which dominated the stage in the first half of the play. When Creon violently seizes Antigone, an especially tense lyric dialogue develops between Creon, Oedipus, and the chorus (833-43; 876-86). This, it turns out, is the last time Oedipus sings in the play. Up to that point, the chorus had shared two more songs with him (those discussed above), and sung only one traditional *stasimon*, their famous ode to Colonus (668-719). Afterwards, the chorus sing two more *stasima* (1044-1095 and 1211-1248) in which Oedipus does not participate. Mutual empathic listening belongs in the world of shared song; once dialogic song is foregone, Oedipus' listening becomes a means for moral scorn.

Lyric activity at Oedipus' Colonus is thus fundamentally changed as he rejects his son and prepares to leave his life behind. When Polyneices exits, the chorus begin to sing. Oedipus emphatically does not join them; rather, each of their strophes is separated from the next by five iambic trimeters. The contrast between the two modes of delivery, lyric song from the chorus and regular tragic speech from Oedipus and Antigone, could not be more pronounced, and is unlike any lyric moment in this play so far. As clashes of thunder are heard by the characters onstage, the chorus continuously express their fear and bewilderment (1456, 1462-71, 1478-85) while Oedipus knows this is the promised sign for his imminent death (1460-61, 1475-6).[84] In fact, the

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[84] Taplin 1971.31-2 discusses the thematic and structural similarities between Oedipus' last shared song with the chorus (833ff) and the scene where thunder is heard (1456ff).

reactions of the chorus and Oedipus are so separate that they seem to suggest the Colonians cannot hear him. Such a mental disconnect between them, a literal absence of listening, is remarkable, and bodes ill for the future of listening through song after Oedipus.

5.4 Mourning and the Aftermath of Listening

The *amoibaion* that ends the play, a song of lamentation performed by Antigone and Ismene with the chorus, is almost entirely without deep listening, and it reflects the women's isolation and inconsolable grief. The song takes place after Oedipus' miraculous disappearance is narrated by the messenger (1579-1666). Oedipus' supernatural death allows his daughters no proper conduit for lamentation, and accordingly, the lyric dialogue they share with the chorus leaves them emotionally stuck, unable to work through their sorrow and certainly unable to transform it.[85] The most glaring reason for their suffering is that there is no tomb which they can visit, and, effectively, no burial rites for them to perform. Their lamentation is thus thwarted: instead of being part of a broader set of mourning rituals, it disrupts the "extraordinary sense of finality" and the "ultimate obliteration" of Oedipus' body the end of his tragedy effects.[86] It is thus an uncomfortable remnant of Oedipus' humanity that is not absorbed by or within the collective. Accordingly, deep listening is lacking from the scene. Even though the metrical indications of harmony are in place and offer glimmers of commiseration (in a way that has become familiar to us from earlier Sophoclean *amoibaia*), empathy as a transformative healing force does not

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[85] The comparison to Oedipus' transformations and reinterpretation of suffering is marred by a crucial difference: for Antigone and Ismene the pain of losing Oedipus is extremely fresh whereas he has had years to process it. Cf. Mastrangelo 2000.46: the action "takes place in a chronologically-extended aftermath of a disaster… Oedipus has had years to process and reflect on what happened to him and the others involved."

[86] Murnaghan 1988.41.

develop. A comparison to Oedipus' second lyric dialogue with the same chorus makes the lack of empathy, particularly at the end of the song, more flagrant.

The messenger–speech already suggests crucial ways in which lamentation is inverted in relation to Oedipus' end at Colonus, especially as a practice that would alleviate individual grief through communal participation. The messenger mentions several moments when Antigone and Ismene performed actions that are similar to burial rites for their father while he was still alive. First (1598-1603), the daughters poured libations and washed and dressed his body *in the customary way* (1603: ᾗ νομίζετι). This is taken to mean that he is tended to like the dead.[87] Second, after these actions were completed and another peal of thunder was heard, Antigone and Ismene *fell at their father's knees weeping, and did not cease from beating their breasts, and wailed for a long time* (1607-9: ἐς δὲ γούνατα / πατρὸς πεσοῦσαι 'κλαιον οὐδ' ἀνίεσαν / στέρνων ἀραγμοὺς οὐδὲ παμμήκεις γόους). Having cared for the "body," they go through the customary physical and vocal performance of grief as well. The farewell from Oedipus is twice more narrated as a tearful affair: after he declared his love for his daughters, *all [three] sobbed and wept* (1621: λύγδην ἔκλαιον πάντες). They lamented again after he forbad them to follow him. This time, the messenger includes himself in the group of people who joined in on the lamentation: *we all heard him speak thus, and with streaming tears and moans we followed the maidens* (1645-7: τοσαῦτα φωνήσαντος εἰσηκούσαμεν / ξύμπαντες · ἀστακτεὶ δὲ σὺν ταῖς παρθένοις / στένοντες ὡμαρτοῦμεν).[88] This description evokes a funeral procession, though the group of mourners was at this point parting ways from the not-yet-dead man instead of carrying the dressed body to its final destination. These repeated evocations of burial rites show

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[87] See Jebb ad loc; Travis 1999.64: Oedipus gets "all the essential trappings of a funeral", for which see Alexiou 1974.4-7.

[88] Jebb ad loc remarks that ξύμπαντες includes "the attendants of Theseus."

that Oedipus' daughters had an opportunity to engage in communal lamentation, but that the circumstances of their mourning were fundamentally inappropriate (perhaps even inauspicious), for it took place while Oedipus still lived.

Mourning for Oedipus receives another final inversion in the messenger's speech. Oedipus' disappearance was *without wailing*, we are told: *For the man departed without wailing nor ailed with illness, but wondrous, more than a mortal* (1663-5: ἀνὴρ γὰρ οὐ στενακτὸς οὐδὲ σὺν νόσοις / ἀλγεινὸς ἐξεπέμπετ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τις βροτῶν / θαυμαστός). The account of Oedipus' unusual preparation for burial, including lamentation, ends with the assertion that Oedipus was unmourned. Straight at the heels of this narrative, which essentially suggests that lamentation for Oedipus has been completed as it should be,[89] Antigone and Ismene enter in mourning. The *clear sounds of wailing* announce their arrival onstage, with the same word used as for their wailing at their father's knees (1668-9: γόων οὐκ ἀσήμονες φθόγγοι; 1609: γόους). Their voices are marked from the start as prolonging an expressivity that should have ended. The function of the daughters' song is thus called into question.

The song begins as if it will repeat what the messenger has just reported. Antigone declares, *it is time for us to mourn… we will report things that defy reason, after seeing and experiencing them* (1670-6: ἔστι νῷν… στενάζειν… ἀλόγιστα παροίσομεν ἰδόντε καὶ παθούσα). As a repetition of facts that are already known, it could be an opportunity for Antigone and Ismene to share their own version of the events with the chorus (and the audience). The chorus tactfully allow them to do so; in the strophe, they offer Antigone gentle, appropriate

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[89] Meineck's translation is suggestive: "There was no pain, / No suffering, we have no reason to mourn." (Meineck and Woodruff 2003.202). Kamerbeek ad 1663-6 remarks that στενακτὸς is active: *without wailing*, though could also be taken in the passive sense, *not to be wailed*; Jebb suggests both senses are felt. Kamerbeek notes the discrepancy between the passive sense and the subsequent lamentation by Antigone and Ismene.

dialogic prods to narrate her experience (1677-8, see below).[90] Inasmuch as their short questions invite her to say what is on her mind, they are vocalizations of active listening and a willingness to engage empathically.

The metrical harmony between the two voices reinforces the sense that the chorus and Antigone are mutually invested in the song. Antigone opens with lyric iambs and then alternates between dactyls and iambs (1670-5). Her opening section of the song ends with an iambic colon (1676): ἰδόντε καὶ παθοῦσα, ◡–◡– ◡–– (iambic, bacchiac).[91] When the chorus join her, they twice offer the beginning of an iambic metron, which she completes to create a full line of lyric iambs (1677-8):

> Χο.   τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;   Ἀντ. ἔστιν μὲν εἰκάσαι, φίλοι.
> Χο.   βέβηκεν;   Ἀντ. ὡς μάλιστ᾽ ἂν ἐν πόθῳ λάβοις.
> ◡̆–◡ | – –◡– ◡–◡– iam, cretic, iam
> ◡̆–◡ | – ◡–◡– ◡–◡– 3iam

> Ch.   What happened?   Ant. We can only guess, friends.
> Ch.   He's gone?   Ant. In the best way you could hope.

The chorus echo Antigone's meter, but do so only partially, so that opportunities for metrical sharing are created. Antigone takes up these suggestions, making clear the harmony between the two voices. The first part of the song is a joint effort that gives Antigone's sorrow its due place and implies deep listening. In this respect it recalls the second *amoibaion* of the play, where Oedipus gets another chance at recounting his life-story even though the chorus (as here) already know the details.

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[90] See Jebb ad loc.

[91] Scott 1996.241, 247 suggests that lyric iambs signal Oedipus' transition to another stage, as they did in the following sections: 534-41 and 542-8 (discussed in 5.3 above); 1047-57, 1062-72, 1074-84, and 1085-95; 1447ff (choral lyrics, while Oedipus and Antigone deliver spoken iambs). He also points out (247) that a long series of dactyls has not been heard since the *parodos*, where the chorus used them to reject Oedipus. My interpretation of Antigone's use of dactyls in the *parados*, and consequently here, differs from his.

Listening between the chorus and Antigone, then, starts out in a way that suggests a mutual empathic engagement in the vocalization of Antigone's experience. Yet, this deep listening is very brief. Antigone explains that Oedipus died in *the best way you could hope… carried away by a strange fate* (1678, 1682: ὡς μάλιστ᾽ ἂν ἐν πόθῳ λάβοις. … ἐν ἀφανεῖ τινι μόρῳ φερόμενον). Subsequently, Antigone and Ismene spend less time describing the events of Oedipus' departure (to which the chorus are expressly willing to listen) than vocalizing their grief. His passing leaves them feeling hopeless (e.g., 1685-9):

> Ἀντ. πῶς γὰρ ἤ τιν᾽ ἀπίαν
>   γᾶν ἢ πόντιον
>   κλύδων᾽ ἀλώμεναι βίου
>   δύσοιστον ἕξομεν τροφάν;
> Ἰσ.   οὐ κάτοιδα.
>
> Ant.   For how, wandering
>   in a far off land or on the waves
>   of the sea, shall we find
>   our bitter sustenance?
> Is.   I do not know.

Even though we heard from the messenger that Oedipus entrusted his daughters to the care of Theseus, they feel utterly alone and without support. The chorus, it turns out, are less prepared to engage empathically with these emotions. At the end of the strophe, they offer cold comfort: *what comes from the god must be borne nobly; do not be enflamed too much* [*with grief*]. *What happened to you is not at all blameworthy* (1694-6: τὸ θεοῦ καλῶς φέρειν, / μηδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἄγαν φλέγεσθον: οὔ-/τοι κατάμεμπτ᾽ ἔβητον).[92] These words may seem like conventional consolations, yet their point is not simply that Oedipus died as all mortals must, or that excessive mourning should be curbed in the face of the necessary course of life. Rather, the chorus refer precisely to the unconventionality of Oedipus' passing and to the fact that it epitomizes blessing:

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[92] On the textual difficulty in these lines see Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b ad loc.

both the personal blessing of avoiding corporeal death and the one he confers on their community.[93] The choral response essentially undermines the legitimacy of the women's display of grief, for they disagree with Oedipus' daughters about the meaning of his end and the appropriate reaction to it.

A song of lamentation traditionally stems from a sense of shared fate between the mourning individuals and the responding group, and brings about such communality of grief. The chorus of *Electra*, for example, are deeply affected by the sorrow of the heroine, even as they voice what may seem like similar commonplace advice. At the same time, lamentation in tragedy has often been seen to reflect Athenian legal practices curtailing excessive manifestations of grief rather than indulging in it communally. As such, tragedy mirrored the law's civilizing role in keeping emotional outpouring within bounds (and blocking vendetta, again as discussed in relation to *Electra*). In the present context, the preceding messenger scene suggested that Oedipus' daughters had been offered something like communal participation in lamenting their father. Yet, it also showed this lamentation to be, quite literally, displaced. Thus their present onstage song of mourning is an attempt to perform it as it should be, to reassert its place. The chorus' reactions to the lament can be considered a prime example of the civic instinct to defend the community from personal, unmanageable grief. The ending of *OC* makes the communal suppression of grief straightforward, since in Oedipus' experience the body in death, and death itself, is sublimated. It has been claimed that, in this dramatization of Oedipus' end, "[i]t is not, finally, what happens to his corpse that matters."[94] The collective force to transform and, most importantly, contain individual tragedy is asserted by the chorus in the closing words of the play,

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[93] Travis 1999.65 comments that Oedipus sheds his φύσις, thus achieving the condition of μὴ φῦναι which the chorus described as τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον (1124-5).

[94] Slatkin 1986.218.

as well as by Theseus immediately at the end of the song (*but cease, and raise a dirge no more*, 1777-8: ἀλλ᾽ ἀποπαύετε μηδ᾽ ἐπὶ πλείω θρῆνον ἐγείρετε; *cease from your dirge*, 1751: παύετε θρῆνον). The song of lamentation is thus suppressed officially, in two senses of the term: for one, it is blocked by the chorus and Theseus as the voices of the community and the figures of authority within the dramatic setting; second, in terms of the tragic genre, the choral voice resurfaces as the principal lyric voice, the authoritative voice of song on stage.[95]

But the *topos* of tragic lamentation as a medium for the communal sublimation of grief is subverted, and not only through the messenger's account. That Antigone and Ismene do not neatly fit the mold of female mourners curtailed by male authorities—a model for which the same characters at the end of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* serve as a good example[96]—comes through in their unique position vis-à-vis the choral community. The choral presence throughout *OC* has been most explicitly communal. Indeed, the chorus here represent the civic body par excellence—they are a group whose identity is explicitly political.[97] Yet this is a community to which Antigone and Ismene never belonged. Despite Oedipus' wish that they be adopted into it like himself, with which Theseus is entirely willing to comply, the daughters do not remain in Athens. The chorus is not curtailing grief from within their own community; they are faced with grief at what to them is a cause for joy. In respect to Oedipus' end, the viewpoints of the women and the collective with which they are faced are at odds. Oedipus' death is a collective good, and as such its devastating personal implications can barely be grasped. Accordingly, the chorus cannot offer empathy for the women's entirely personal misery. The

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[95] See Travis 1999.37-40. He also argues against the universally accepted re-attribution of 1751ff to Theseus rather than the chorus, which is an "indication of our current misunderstanding of the role of the chorus" (223).

[96] See Foley 2001.42-3.

[97] The messenger addresses them as ἄνδρες πολῖται, for which see Travis 1999.222.

stress on their geographical foreignness and disorientation, at once spatial and emotional, reinforces this effect, as we shall see.

To return to the song itself, let us recall that at its start, deep listening was suggested. But the choral attempt to appease (or rather, undermine) the women's grief is a move away from harmony. This is reflected in the meter. The choral response (1693-6) introduces choriambs to the song, which have not been used so far. The meter only vaguely echoes Ismene's concluding line (1692),[98] and does not echo Antigone at all, who has been singing in trochees and iambs (1680-88). To the extent that Antigone is the principal singer in this song and that her emotional reactions are more fully explored in it (as befits her more central role in the play), it seems remarkable that the choral response bypasses any form of metrical responsiveness to her.[99] In the corresponding antistrophe, we again witness first metrical harmony and then a departure from it. This time, however, the moment that most suggests deep listening frustrates empathy by recalling the chorus' previous empathic engagement with Oedipus (1704-6):

| Χο. | ἔπραξεν— | Ἀντ. ἔπραξεν οἷον ἤθελεν. |
| Χο. | τὸ ποῖον; | Ἀντ. ᾶς ἔχρῃζε γᾶς ἐπὶ ξένας ἔθανε: |

| Ch. | He did… | Ant. He did what he wished. |
| Ch. | How so? | Ant. On the foreign land he wanted, he died. |

These lines contain the same metrical sharing as described for the strophe (1677-8). The literal echo of the word ἔπραξε, voiced first by the chorus and then by Antigone, makes the connection between them very poignant. This exchange recalls the powerful moment of echoing between Oedipus and the chorus in the second lyric dialogue, which was described above as a moment of transformative empathy (ἔπαθες— ἔπαθον ; ἔρεξας— οὐκ ἔρεξα ; ἔκανες— ἔκανον). In that

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[98] Ismene ends on an aristophanean(‿‿ ‿ ‿), which can be considered harmonious with choriambs to the extent that it is a glyconic meter. The chorus close with an aristophanean after their three choriambic dimeter.

[99] Lines 1689-92 are given to Ismene, instead of Antigone as in the mss, by most editors, including Jebb and Lloyd Jones and Wilson 1990a.

moment it was Oedipus' story being retold, its meaning emerging from mutual dialogic activity. Here, however, it is still his story and actions that dominate, as the repeated use of the third person make clear. The song resurrects Oedipus' agency even as it purportedly allows Antigone to narrate her story. The expectation that Antigone, in parallel to him, will get a chance to reformulate her actions or perspectives through deep listening is thwarted.

The way Antigone puts it, Oedipus' manner of death was to his liking, in that he died on foreign ground. This detail, mentioned again at the end of the antistrophe, evokes the protracted journey dramatized in the play, whereby Oedipus was finally accepted spatially into the foreign land of Athens and adopted into its community. At the same time, it focuses the attention on Antigone's position of foreignness both geographically and civically. To the extent that this is Antigone's story, it is her song of loss—her loss of her father and lack of control over the perimeters of that loss. She sings, *ohhh, you wished to die on foreign land, but you died all alone, without me* (1713-4: ὤμοι, γᾶς ἐπὶ ξένας θανεῖν ἔχρῃζες, ἀλλ᾽ ἐρῆμος ἔθανες ὧδέ μοι).[100] The forceful repetition of Oedipus' manner of death, juxtaposed now to her absence from his side, reflects with great pathos Antigone's devastation.[101] She repeats the verb *to die* three times: first ἔθανε (in 1706), and then twice in close succession θανεῖν, ἔθανες (1713, 1714). In contrast to the chorus' euphemistic but ultimately more accurate use of βέβηκεν (1678: *he is gone*) to evoke Oedipus' disappearance, Antigone uses terms that fit with mortal, embodied demise.[102]

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[100] On γῆ ξένη see Di Benedetto 114.

[101] The stress on his death in *a foreign land* away from family recalls lamentations for those who died in a violent manner, contrary to how Antigone first described his passing; e.g., Electra mourning over the urn: νῦν δ᾽ ἐκτὸς οἴκων κἀπὶ γῆς ἄλλης φυγὰς / κακῶς ἀπώλου, σῆς κασιγνήτης δίχα.

[102] The chorus of *Trachiniae* use βέβηκεν for Deianeira's death (l. 874).

Antigone also wishes to mourn Oedipus in the traditional manner, with its (traditional) excess of tears and wails (1708: οὐδὲ πένθος ἔλιπ᾽ ἄκλαυτον). The absence of Oedipus' physical remains, rather than allowing for a sublimating response to his death, is an anomaly that enhances Antigone's misery. This reminds us that Antigone was all along, and still is, an extension of his body. Oedipus' miraculous disembodiment contrasts harshly with the way he spatially and vocally dominated the stage up to this point, and with the physical interdependence between him and his daughter foregrounded throughout the play. Thus, Antigone's bereavement now is a painfully obvious physical fact, corresponding to Oedipus' absence from the stage. The commonplace expression of intimacy that she uses in describing their love is very literal in her case: *I held him in my arms* (1699: τὸν ἐν χεροῖν κατεῖχον).[103] This sense of physical loss translates to what Antigone explicitly describes as inconsolable sorrow: *I don't know how to quench this sorrow for you, so great* (1710-11: οὐδ᾽ ἔχω πῶς με χρὴ <u>τὸ σὸν</u> τάλαιναν ἀφανίσαι <u>τοσόνδ</u>᾽ ἄχος, with its strong sonic repetition). The chorus in response again advise Antigone and Ismene to cease from this *sorrow* (emphatically using the same word, ἄχος), because Oedipus died *happily* (ὀλβίως). Once more, then, the chorus deny the daughters' justification for lamentation.[104] As in the strophe, deep listening fails to develop, and, concomitantly, the dialogic affinity changes to suggest less metrical harmony between the voices. The daughters' pain is not accepted as is, and there is no potential for its transformation.

So, perhaps aptly, the next strophe is a dialogue between the two sisters in which the chorus do not take part. In fact, the women seem trapped in dialogue. Their intense vocal interaction is mirrored by the insolubility of their grief, which is now explicitly expressed in

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[103] On the love between Oedipus and Antigone see Easterling 1967.

[104] To audience members or readers familiar with Sophocles' *Antigone*, this interaction inevitably calls to mind Antigone's *kommos*; in both cases she is faced with a chorus of older men trying to restrain her lamentation.

geographical terms. Antigone asks to visit Oedipus' resting place, *to see [his] earthly seat* (1726: τὰν χθόνιον ἑστίαν ἰδεῖν). Ismene opposes her, explaining that her desire is both unlawful and impossible: *How is that lawful for the two of us?…He was perishing unburied and away from all* (1729, 1732: θέμις δὲ πῶς τάδ᾽ ἐστὶ νῷν; … ἄταφος ἔπιτνε δίχα τε παντός). Antigone still responds, *take me (there), and then slay me* (1733: ἄγε με, καὶ τότ᾽ἐπενάριξον). Antigone can hardly register the fact that there is no tomb they can access, an unprecedented situation indeed.[105] The metrical structure of the strophe, almost entirely a system of iambs and trochees, reflects the growing emotional tension. The trochees are resolved increasingly frequently as the dialogue progresses, a sign of the song's unnerving effect. In addition, cola are repeatedly constituted by both voices together in metrical sharing.[106] Yet, the moments where this happens highlight Antigone's confusion and the mis-communication with her sister, for example: *Don't you see? —Why this rebuke from you?—But also this, that — what more are you saying …* (1730-31: οὐχ ὁρᾷς; —τί τόδ᾽ ἐπέπληξας; / —καὶ τόδ᾽, ὡς— τί τόδε μάλ᾽ αὖθις; cf. 1725, 1727).[107] Metrical sharing here seems to signal the difficulty of vocalizing their "illogical" position, as Antigone called Oedipus' death at the start (1675: ἀλόγιστα), and brings out Antigone's frantic reaction to it.

Metrical harmony here does not hold potential for empathic engagement with grief and cannot facilitate coming to terms with it. We have seen throughout the dissertation that moments of tight formal harmony often bespeak a difficulty in communicating; they dramatize an attempt to maintain listening despite an unsurmountable moral gap or in the face of unbearable emotional

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[105] Jebb ad 1731ff. Cf. Calame 1998.345. Bushnell 1988.105 comments on the atypicality, relative to hero-cults, of the secret location of Oedipus' tomb.

[106] Metrical sharing or lyric *antilabe* is found in about half of the cola making up the strophe. It comprises of thirteen lines or cola, of which both voices participate in five, and a sixth is assumed (in a lacuna between 1733 and 1734) through metrical correspondence with the antistrophe.

[107] On the miscommunication in this part of the dialogue cf. Mastronarde 1979.57.

suffering. Repeatedly, such moments have shown that metrical harmony is a superficial sign of listening, and that empathic engagement needs a less fragmentary sonic foundation from which to develop. In Sophocles, it seem this is often how failed listening sounds. At the same time, we should recall that the beginning of the present play offered an unusual moment where metrical sharing helped deepen a sense of physical intimacy and create an emotional bond between the singers. This happened when the action focused on moving Oedipus' body slowly out of the grove. *OC* thus showcases two extremes of metrical harmony in its relation to listening: on the one hand, metrical harmony in the *parodos* was a signal of empathy and receptivity, at once vocal and physical, and an instrument for deepening empathy; on the other hand, in this closing *amoibaion* metrical harmony shows listening upended precisely by the grief that physical absence creates.

The last part of the song has Antigone singing with the chorus instead of Ismene (1737-50).[108] The fact that Ismene's role is substituted by the chorus gives us the sense that this song is truly Antigone's thwarted lamentation. At the very last line shared by Antigone and the chorus, the dialogue approaches a traditional mourning song, essentially a series of affirmations of the suffering, agreed on by both sides: Ant. *Yes, yes.* —Cho. *I say so too.* (1747: ναὶ ναί. — ξύμφημι καὐτός).[109] The chorus finally vocalize an acknowledgment of Antigone's pain, an understanding that she faces a *sea* of trouble (1746: πέλαγος). Yet, in terms of the song as pure vocalization of suffering, Antigone more or less ends up where she started. For she opened with the exclamations αἰαῖ, φεῦ (1670); the last time she sings in this *amoibaion*, her words are marked by φεῦ φεῦ (1748). Despite the chorus' short and late recognition of her experience,

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[108] These lines are attributed to Antigone instead of Ismene by most editors.

[109] This line is deleted by Dindorf; see Jebb ad loc, who suspects actor's interpolations here. Kamerbeek ad 1731-3 opposes this view.

Antigone's voice itself bears the brunt of an unanswered, unresolved lyric exchange, of suffering to which empathic listening was not offered.

This antistrophe with the chorus, corresponding to the dialogue between Ismene and Antigone in the strophe, creates a similar effect of desolation and miscommunication through the metrical patterns. And, once more, it revolves around geographical space. As Antigone was concerned with the unknowable geographical parameters of Oedipus' burial place, so now she reflects her wish to go back home: *how are we to return home I do not know* (1742-3: ὅπως μολούμεθ᾽ ἐς δόμους οὐκ ἔχω). She acknowledges that only hardship awaits her there (1744: μόγος), yet she will not remain under the protection of Theseus in Athens as Oedipus arranged before passing. In the subsequent short interaction with Theseus, Antigone once more asks to approach Oedipus' tomb (1756-7: τύμβον θέλομεν προσιδεῖν), and when this is denied her, asks to be sent to Thebes. The absence of a burial space thus parallels her refusal or inability to be integrated in Athens.

It has been claimed that, at the end of *OC*, death "is not experienced as the reassertion of a willfully overlooked body."[110] Yet there is a sense in which Antigone's body is precisely that: both willfully overlooked throughout the drama, and finally reasserted at its close. After years of wandering with Oedipus, she is still denied a home in Athens, where she might feel protected. She will return to Thebes, where her living kin are abusing and subverting φιλία, and will go on to defend her idea of kinship to the death. The civic authorities of Athens, both monarchic and collective, both in speech and in song, have failed to absorb the lyrically voiced grief, and Antigone remains trapped in it. What is left of Oedipus' humanity, like a cluster of free radicals,

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[110] Murnaghan 1988.40.

will continue to wreak havoc on Oedipus' line, as any audience member or reader knows.[111] The end of this play inevitably brings to mind Antigone's own eponymous tragedy, and suggests both her unanswered lament as she walks to her own death and the actions that led to it, namely, her insistence on performing burial rites for her brother. It is as if, we may now realize in retrospect, she is atoning also for the painful sentence of being denied burial of her father.

For all the sense of extraordinary finality that Sophocles gives us in his last play, for all the death-defying force of tragic art, there remains at the end an insoluble conflict. If what happens to Oedipus' corpse "doesn't matter," why is the devastation of his daughters at the absence of a corpse given such clear voice? If the official intention is to silence their lamentation, why are Ismene and Antigone brought on stage to perform a lament at all? *OC* ends on a deliberately multivalent note, in which the tension between the family and the community rings clear. In regards to *Philoctetes*, I have suggested that the intimacy of the familial bond between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus is both necessary and at odds with the sense of collective responsibility. In *OC*, a similar dynamic is at play: familial relations are displaced in favor of the community. In essence, this is what *OC* dramatizes from the start, for it shows Oedipus' transformation from a man whose very identity and physical presence depend on his daughter, to one whose physical, vocal, and numinous capacities are entirely independent of his kin. To the extent that listening facilitated this process in which the body is sublimated, listening was nonetheless engendered by a responsivity to the body.

The voice, we have seen, cannot but point to the body, even when it also suggests something beyond physical presence. Thus listening always entails, more or less consciously, an engagement with the body. Antigone's voice, left to resonate on stage after Oedipus' body has

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[111] On intertextuality in Sophocles' Theban plays see Markantonatos 2007.195ff.

disappeared, bespeaks the unavoidable presence of her body, which is now more than ever a suffering body. If this play allows Oedipus both to be constantly embodied and finally translated, the frustration of listening at the end highlights the pain of other bodies, and reminds us that Antigone, like Oedipus' other children–siblings, is, still and always, a part of his body. The voices of Ismene and Antigone must be silenced for Athens' sake, but through the performance of silencing them they are given voice. Listening to them is part and parcel of this performance, even though it is emotionally frustrating. Ultimately, listening resurfaces as the essential reaction to suffering.

Conclusion

My concern here has been with tragedy as a collective art form, as an event performed by and for the collective. By exploring tragic dramatizations of the way one person or a group of people listen to a suffering other, I have aimed to shine a light on, or rather lend an ear to, a way in which tragedy allows us to understand suffering. This dissertation opens and closes with Oedipus. As far as communal listening to suffering is concerned, Sophocles' two plays about Oedipus are indeed exemplary. In both, Oedipus' suffering is experienced, questioned, and reinterpreted in front of the chorus, and to a significant extent with and by them. Through the interactions between chorus and protagonist, I have argued, suffering is rendered meaningful in its communal effects and transformations.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, we see the community quite literally being edified through the process of giving Oedipus' life a new sense. The chorus of this last play is radically Sophoclean: it both brings to its apex the chorus' dramatic and lyric capacities and typifies the way the group is involved in the hero's fortune, for good or bad. The dramatic significance of the chorus of *OC* comes about through their lyric voice. Thus, they are paradigmatic of the dynamics of listening I have put forward here, for listening is an action that happens through the voice, and most poignantly through the singing voice.

More broadly, we may observe that tragedy affords us unique examples of distinct characters singing together in dialogue. In this, it is different from all other genres in Greek poetry, or at least from those that explicitly deal with suffering and grief; I leave comedy out of the discussion. The performance of a dialogue between two or more *separate characters*, who have distinctly delineated roles in the mimetic event, does not happen in other choral genres, where the group is always defined as such, even when the chorus occasionally splits up into its

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constituents. Nor does it happen in epic or lyric poetry, which are performed by a single individual. Thus, I believe the conceptual formulation that guides this dissertation, namely, that listening is a mode of empathic engagement with the other, is particularly relevant to tragedy. I dare say listening is inherent to the lyric medium of tragedy, and not only because the sung parts of tragedy create instances of rich, multilayered responsiveness. Above all else, it is suffering—which is expressed with particular flourish in sung dialogues—that calls for listening. If the chorus is the original singer of tragedy and remains its principal singer even when the protagonists gain progressively more significant singing roles, and if, concomitantly, listening to another's suffering is a collective endeavor, then it is fitting that the choral lyric mode, the song of the collective, would present us with special examples of listening. But the chorus can perform listening only in dialogue. Thus, the *amoibaia* between chorus and protagonist create a special dynamic for the encounter between the singing group and the suffering hero; this dynamic can be illuminated through the concept of listening offered here.

The interaction with the chorus has, in fact, served as my model for the way listening works in general, even in dialogues where the chorus do not participate. By this I mean that I have read the dialogues primarily as pieces for musical performance, even if only a musical potential was present in the text. We have seen, for example, how chanted anapests can be considered similar to, and harmonious with, lyric anapests (in the *parodos* of *OC*). We have also seen how spoken dialogue can suggest harmonizing effects between interlocutors (as between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus) through the use of exclamations and exclamation-like words. Both these cases show how the lyric capacities of the voice are essential to listening. This applies as well to the works of Sophocles I have not discussed here, namely *Ajax* and *Trachiniae*, inasmuch as these plays also feature singing heroes and scenes of lyric dialogue. Yet listening in these

plays seems to be, overall, less effective. Not coincidentally, in both plays the hero's death suggests that the tragic conflict is insoluble. All the same, in *Ajax* and *Trachiniae* a similar kind of harmony between partners in dialogue—whether actually singing or not, whether chorus or characters—can be heard.

Indeed, in accordance with the understanding of listening as mutual and reciprocal vocal activity, an insight drawn from the philosophical and therapeutic discourses presented in chapter 2, I have strived to examine listening from both sides of the dialogue—not just the chorus' but their partner's as well. This same insight, coupled with the focus on the sonic and musical aspects of the dialogue, has brought out the multilayered responsiveness embedded in tragic *amoibaia*. In Sophocles, the sound of the words often promotes harmony while their content effects disjunction. Listening at its best—or deepest—resonates with the other and fosters an empathic engagement between partners in dialogue. But listening is often fleeting, and does not always develop into such empathic resonance; it needs fine-tuning at every step. The metaphorical use of terms such as *resonance*, *attunement*, or *harmony* helps us think of listening as an event which is at once sonic, emotional, and ethical. I have used *harmony* throughout to highlight the musicality of the dialogues read here. Yet their inherent musical harmony repeatedly functions as an effect through which ethically dissonant positions are brought together. At times, the lyric dialogue as a medium of responsivity recalls the problematic emotional import of an echoing response: sonically compatible but ethically hollow.

All this poses a challenge to my interpretation. Metrical harmony in Sophocles often betrays an inability to maintain communication; it is the sound of listening under stress. One may object, then, to the notion that listening is happening at all in such cases. I would suggest that the basic harmony of the lyric medium—namely, the fact that the voices are fitted together, that they

form an aesthetically pleasing and coherent whole—allows us to explore the subtleties of listening. In *amoibaia*, sonic harmony could be taken for granted. Empathic engagement, on the other hand, might be thought of as something we could access from the words alone. But that both these levels of signification constitute a single communicative act—in concert, literally and figuratively—helps us realize that listening is not a trivial achievement, and that failures of listening are integral to communication. Indeed, the very last *amoibaion* of Sophocles at the end of *OC* is one where listening is missing, and where formal harmony highlights the fragmentary nature of the communication as unbearable grief takes over.

Grief is ultimately inherent to this study, perhaps as much as empathy is, for grief often leads to ineffective listening in Sophocles, as in life. Instances of metrical sharing in the *amoibaia* of Sophocles' late plays (*Electra*, *Philoctetes*, and *OC*) have revealed empathy's radical limitation in the face of grief. On the one hand, it is typical of the dynamic between the tragic, larger-than-life heroes and heroines and their more restrained choral counterparts. Hence, we find it in *Philoctetes* as well as in *Antigone*, though in the former it is not grief proper that is at play. On the other hand, as in the case of *Electra*, precisely because the unbearable sorrow is due to the irrevocability of death and because the chorus are unquestionably and consistently empathic, the interaction between Electra and the chorus seems to point to the essential inconsolability of grief, and the particular impotence of the vocal medium in this regard.

The fundamental harmony of voices in *amoibaia* is the means through which Sophocles teaches us about the tenuousness and fragility of empathy. Merely being in communication with another, even straining to maintain the harmony of a relationship vocally, is not necessarily enough to accurately resonate with the other in a way that would be emotionally compelling. As Sophocles' lyric technique developed, the instances of such strain on communication gained

particular dramatic and lyric form: lyric *antilabe*, or what I have called here metrical sharing, which we find in the last three plays. Metrical sharing, the tightest example of harmonious co-vocality, happens at times of extreme suffering. Here the harmony of the medium is pushed to its limits as the emotional expressivity rises and becomes harder to contain. Sophocles' late lyric dialogues seem to purposefully bring together emotions with which it is difficult to harmonize and an exceptionally harmonic form.

At its core, the *amoibaion* in Sophocles calls on us to hear the difficulty of maintaining harmonic communication in the face of suffering. To the extent that tragedy is as much about the individual's experience of suffering as it is about *the group being an audience to* suffering, Sophocles' lyric dialogues seem to be a paragon of tragic interaction. In these moments of embodied poetic brilliance, tragic suffering is transcended even as it is performed in its unresolved dissonance, or—in those rare cases—in the harmony of communal healing.

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