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Puppet, Death, and the Devil: Presences of Afterlife in Puppet Theatre

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Abstract

Vocative address is a crucial component of human communication: it acknowledges and bestows identity to the addressee and defines his/her relation to the addresser, providing, at the same time, an index to the latter's idea of his/her Self. Ancient Greek addresses relate either to body or social status: gender or age, familial or civic ties, private or public, personal or collective identities. Beginning with a categorization of addresses with reference to *OT*, analysis then focuses on the ferocious collision of father and son at the crossroad, which is conducted in speechless gestures (*OT* 800-13). The neglect/absence of addresses at the crossroad signposts the absence – the *non-anagnorisis* – of identities with clear and hierarchical social positions. Turning to *Antigone*, the essay then explores how vocative addresses reveal the protagonists' sense of their Self, the relation of their social identities to the identity provided by their body, and the conditions of their communication on stage. The use – or the absence – of vocatives is connected to the way that both Antigone and Kreon adopt and exhaust timeless and universal ideas, only to reduce themselves to arguments that derive from their particular bodily identities: Antigone will focus on the identity of one "of the same womb"; against Antigone, Kreon will summon his male identity, and against Haemon his identity as an elder. The play's *exodos* features a spectacular transformation of Kreon: cut off from any human communication, as his vocatives show, and lamenting with a dead body of a beloved young man in his hands, he appears to 'embody' on stage his female adversary: the absolute defeat of the/his Self.

Keywords: Sophocles; *Antigone*; *Oedipus Tyrannus*; dramaturgy; vocatives; body and identity

L'inconscient n'est pas seulement langage:
il est dramaturgie, c'est-à-dire
parole mise en scène, action parlée
(entre les extrêmes de la clameur et du silence).
Starobinski 1967, xix

Introduction: Terms

First, the term "dramaturgy". Emancipated from its text-centred dimension

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to include the performative condition as a whole, dramaturgy in contemporary theatre refers to the "mutation" of the text into performance/spectacle ("la mutation d'un texte en spectacle": Dort 1986, 8) through the fusion of writing and directing. Dramaturgy "asks itself how, and according to what time sequence, the story materials are arranged in the text and on stage" (Pavis 1998, 125) and "it is understood in the context of the performance as a dynamic and durational whole" (Trencsényi 2015, vii).[1] Using/adapting pre-existing mythological and textual material, playwright-director of performances that are realized with specific actors in a specific space and time, and in front of a specific audience, the ancient tragedian is *Dramaturg* par excellence, and his plays can be seen as 'dramaturgies' on tragic themes and narratives – and need to be approached accordingly.

Let us turn now to vocative address. Addressing the other with a vocative is a crucial element in human communication: it acknowledges and bestows identity to the addressee, and at the same time it defines his/her relationship to the addresser.[2] This relationship, obviously, can concern gender and/or age, familial or civic ties, private or public, personal or collective identities. At the same time, through this relationship, the address signposts the addresser's own self-consciousness: for example, addressing somebody as a parent, we recognize ourselves as (their) children; greeting a Prime Minister, we are citizens; greeting a lover, we are lovers; greeting our teachers, we are students. And if in the everyday speech of Antiquity it sufficed, most of the times, to address someone by name or through an identity provided by the body (familial relation, gender, age), in the institutional *logos* of the *polis*, addressing a free man was specified according to three crucial social points of reference: the name of the father and/or civic identity and/or geographical origin. On the tragic stage, vocative addresses are usually 'elevated' but often 'low', poetic as well as realistic – at any rate 'various', even between the same characters. They are a fundamental constituent of dramaturgy, as they define on stage the stance and the voice, the action and the reaction of one character towards the other. In this way, vocatives in performance – or, indeed, their absence – shape and serve the dynamics of communication between them.

[1] Dramaturgy covers a variety of practices: see Romanska 2015. Here, it is adopted in their lowest common denominator.

[2] For a research into the ancient Greek address in everyday speech, see Dickey 1996 (where also a review of the socio-linguistic theory of address, 3-16). Dickey focuses on Aristophanes and Menander and refers *in passim* to a series of publications that deal with address in poetry and tragedy, which I did not manage to consult myself: Wendel 1929 and the doctoral theses of Black 1985, Brunius-Nilsson 1955, Menge 1905, Weise 1965. Judging from Dickey's references, my approach is quite different.

Let us remember some crucial vocatives from *Oedipus Tyrannos*.[3] First, some interpersonal ones:

- Ὦ πάντα νωμῶν Τειρεσία ("O all-knowing Teiresias", 300), *ὦναξ* ("O sovereign/king", 304): Oedipus addresses Teiresias reverentially, acknowledging his mantic as well as civic identity. Insisting on an insulting second person singular, bereft of a vocative, Teiresias does exactly the opposite, and declares his distance from the world of the *polis*: he is slave to Loxias. Against an infuriatingly non-communicative Teiresias, Oedipus bursts: ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε ("O vilest of the vile", 334): the intensity of the vocative is such, that it is quite possible that it was combined with an aggressive – yet suspended – gesture. A gesture of violence against an elderly man: the same as that against a silent elderly king once, the same as that against a 'dyslectic' elderly slave later (1152-3).
- Αἰτεῖς· ἃ δ' αἰτεῖς, τἄμ' ἐὰν θέλῃς ἔπη . . . ἀλκὴν λάβοις ἂν κἀνακούφισιν κακῶν ("You ask/seek; and for those you ask/seek, if you want to hear my words . . . you could receive help and relief from woes", 216-17), Oedipus replies to the Thebans' agony: he does not use a vocative, he simply addresses them anonymously (and in a singular second person, at that). This is an address that does not acknowledge/recognize them under some civic, gender or age identity. Oedipus seems, here, as if he wants to appropriate the voice of the god and lower the eyes of the Thebans onto his own person. A civic deficit marks the function of the Theban community, including its leader: it is not accidental that what manages to motivate these Kadmeians is not the declaration of their king but his curses (276).
- Ἄνδρες πολῖται ("Citizen men", 513), Kreon addresses the Chorus: this is the first – and only – instance in the play that the Thebans are addressed as citizens. However, here, Kreon needs the witnessing of a regimented *polis*, to defend himself against the conspiratorial accusations of Oedipus. When the latter chooses to address the Thebans for the first time with a vocative, it will be in connection to their age at the 'court scene' (πρέσβεις: "old men", 1111), in front of two equally elderly witnesses (γεραιέ: "old man", 990; πρέσβυ: "old man", 1121, 1147): Oedipus solves the 'riddle' of his identity surrounded by (and reconciled with) 'father' figures. In the *exodos*, all independent identities recede, under the weight of a personal relationship: φίλε/φίλοι ("dear friend"/"friends", 1321, 1329, 1339, 1341) is/are the only

[3] Quotations from the ancient text refer to Dain and Mazon 1958 (translations are mine).

collocutors/fellow humans that Oedipus – urgently and desperately – 'recognizes'.

- ὦ ταλαίπωροι ("O you miserables", 634): Iokaste addresses her quarrelling *philoi* with an emotional identification, as if they were kids caught at a fight. Faced with the agitated Oedipus, she will choose the immediacy of a vocative by name only twice ("Oedipus": 646, 739), preferring to support her *philos* with the status of an institutional address (ὦναξ: "O king", 697, 746, 770, 852). Γύναι ("woman"): with reference to her bodily identity Oedipus addresses, repeatedly, Iokaste in the scene of their tender, as well as shattering, confession to each other (700, 726, 755, 767, 800; cf. the bodily emphasis at ὦ φίλτατον γυναικὸς Ἰοκάστης κάρα, "Oh dearest head of Iokaste, my wife", 950). And at the same time: "I respect you much more than these ones", pointing at the Thebans (700, cf. 772-3). Oedipus and Iokaste speak as if none can hear them, cut off from mortals and gods. In their closed 'symbiotic' world, it is a relief that gods prove to be liars.

There are, also, vocative addresses that do not expect an answer: apostrophes to gods and other supernatural powers, those to the dead, and, finally, those to abstract concepts.

- Ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνη τέχνης / ὑπερφέρουσα ("O wealth and power and skill / surpassing skill", 380-1), Oedipus raves in a famous apostrophe in front of Teiresias, trying to find political scenarios and attribute, thus, civic identities – to Self and Other.
- Ὦ κρατύνων, εἴπερ ὄρθ' ἀκούεις, / Ζεῦ ("O sovereign – if you rightly hear to this address– / Zeus", 903-4) the Thebans address – somewhat uncertain of their vocative – Zeus, having just witnessed in silence the 'symbiotic' dialogue between Oedipus and Iokaste. The Thebans take their distance from the until then κρατύνοντα ("sovereign", 14) Oedipus and address the god as citizens: Τὸ καλῶς δ' ἔχον / πόλει πάλαισμα μήποτε λῦ-/ σαι θεὸν αἰτοῦμαι ("I pray to the god to never put an end to the struggle that is upright to the city", 878-80). The Thebans appear to reorder themselves politically, as they emancipate themselves from their leader. Iokaste κάλει[4] τὸν ἤδη Λάϊον πάλαι νεκρόν ("she was calling the long dead Laius", 1245) before killing herself. Ὦ θεῶν ἁγνὸν σέβας ("O pure and honourable gods", 830), and ἰὼ δαῖμον ("Oh demon", 1311), Oedipus addresses the divine world, the first time terrified by the prospect of his polluted self, the second time devastated by his confirmed pollution.

[4] So printed by Dain and Mazon following manuscripts. Other editors opt to correct the verb to καλεῖ (e.g. Finglass).

Lastly, there are three more crucial categories of vocative addresses, which, however, signpost an individual's painful isolation and a deep rupture in human communication: apostrophes to landscapes of nature or city; apostrophes to one's self, which usually occur at the crucial moments that the dramatic character laments his/her – in one way or another – tragic self; apostrophes, finally, in the death cries: vocatives that demand a response urgently (but in vain).

- Ἰὼ Κιθαιρών ("Oh Kithairon", 1391), ὦ τρεῖς κέλευθοι καὶ κεκρυμμένη νάπη ("O three roads and hidden valley", 1398), the mutilated Oedipus addresses the crucial *loci* of his life. Δύστανος ἐγώ ("miserable me", 1308), he can only address himself, adopting Iokaste's last vocative to him (δύστηνε: "miserable", 1071) – otherwise, merely a cry to himself: Οἴμοι, / οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις ("Oh/alas me, oh/alas me again", 1316-17). [In absence of death cries in *OT*, let us refer to Klytaimnestra's Αἴγισθε, ποῦ ποτ' ὢν κυρείς; and ὦ τέκνον, τέκνον ("Aegisthus, where are you?" and "O child, child") in Sophocles' *Electra* (1408, 1410)].

If, therefore, vocatives mark human communication and self-consciousness, exploring their dramaturgy means to explore the terms and ways in which the tragic subject constructs him/herself and performs his/her (dramatic and theatrical) coexistence/communication with the Others – or, as is more often the case, the ways in which the tragic subject problematizes and, eventually, cancels off this coexistence/communication.

My examples so far come from the vocative addresses of the dramatic characters in *OT*, while in the main section of my paper I will focus on *Antigone*. Could we see in the dramaturgy of vocatives a particularly 'Theban' condition? "[A] place that makes problematic every inclusion and exclusion, every conjunction and disjunction, every relation between near and far, high and low, inside and outside, stranger and kin" (Zeitlin 1992, 134), Thebes is the city of a god who is addressed with many names, of which most prominent is "Bacchus", a name that fuses the identity of the god with that of his mortal worshipper: Πολυώνυμε . . . ὦ Βακχεῦ ("O Bacchus . . . of many names"), the Thebans address him in *Antigone* (1116-21).[5] In Thebes, addressing the other is never obvious: as a *topos* of problematic associations, Thebes distributes identities while confusing them. In Thebes it is difficult to discern foreigner from native, friend from enemy – and, of course: father from brother and son from lover. It is no accident that, in the Sophoclean Thebes, vocative addresses appear, in my opinion, problematic: delivered through a striking dynamic between *logos* and body, text and performance, words and spectacle, vocatives on the Theban stage conform to a particular – their own – dramaturgy.

[5] Passages from the text appear according to Griffith 1999 (translations are mine).

Exploring the dramaturgy of vocatives in *Antigone*, as I will try to show, could provide us with new insights into the themes of the play and, more particularly, into the ways that the characters understand, embody, and perform the rupture between Self and Other – or the opposite: the utter collapse of the distance between them. Such a dynamic, however, is crucially connected to the episode that lies at the heart of the Labdacids' myth, where the motif of the vocative address, or rather, its absence/lack (it is the same) is paramount: the meeting of Oedipus and Laius at the crossroad, a meeting which is conducted in silence. This silence differentiates the Sophoclean confrontation from its Euripidean version, where the Herald addresses Oedipus as a *xenos*, demanding his yielding priority to the King (Oedipus, however, remains stubbornly mute, as he continues marching on, (re)traumatizing thus his feet: *Phoe.* 39-43). In a brief comment on the 'mise en scène' of the Sophoclean confrontation, Segal sees in the Herald's silence "the absence of a civilized greeting or address" and in Oedipus' silence his failure to "utter the humanizing word that might have saved Laius and himself" (Segal 1999, 222 and 243 respectively). Indeed, at Sophocles' crossroad, communication between two strangers, between an elder and a younger man, between a king and a common wayfarer, is spectacularly absent. If the strangers had addressed each other, they should have bestowed identities and relations, and, thus, inevitably, 'recognize' each other and position themselves in terms of a hierarchy. However, nothing similar occurs. Instead of vocatives, we have a clash of silent bodies.

Oedipus strikes δι' ὀργῆς (*OT* 807): *orgē* includes but does not exhaust itself in "anger/rage", as it denotes all sorts of impulsive behaviour and, at the same time, instinct and personal idiosyncrasy. The psychoanalytic "drive" (Fr. *pulsion* / Germ. *Trieb*), a force/motive that is deeply rooted in the body, lying before and beyond *logos*, would correspond better to the meaning of the word. Such an *orgē* defines also Iokaste's emotional state as she walks towards her suicide (*OT* 1241). In *Antigone*, the word is used to denote a variety of drives: Kreon's rage (280), Antigone's disastrous idiosyncrasy (875), but also the deep urge of the humans to co-exist in cities (355-6).

Vocative address as an instrument (or failure) of the relation between Self and Other, between body and consciousness, *orgē* and *logos*: these are the motifs I shall explore in *Antigone*. But first, we need to see in detail how such motifs are developed in Sophocles' silent, full of *orgē*, confrontation at the crossroad. Our discussion will deviate, for a while, from the theory and practice of dramaturgy, and resort to sociological, anthropological and psychoanalytical methodologies in order to explore an episode of the myth, which, moreover, is not enacted on stage, but only narrated. However, such an analysis, in my view, can shed an interesting light on the broader dynamics of communication in Sophoclean Thebes, which shall be useful to our interpretation of *Antigone*.

1. Ὦ τρεῖς κέλευθοι

The crossroad is thematized repeatedly in *OT* (τριπλαῖς ἀμαξιτοῖς, 730· σχιστὴ δ' ὁδὸς, 733· τριπλῆς κελεύθου, 800-801), in order to climax personified as a monstrous creature (Segal 1999, 222) or as an Erinys (Halliwell 1986, 190), in the most poignant apostrophe of the mutilated Oedipus: Ὦ τρεῖς κέλευθοι . . . καὶ στενωπὸς ἐν τριπλαῖς ὁδοῖς, / αἳ τοὐμὸν αἷμα τῶν ἐμῶν χειρῶν ἄπο / ἐπίετε πατρός ("O three roads . . . and narrow passage in the crossroad, you who drank from my own hands the blood that was mine and my father's" 1398-401).

Let us confront this painfully addressed crossroad. The absence of interpersonal vocatives is crucially linked to Oedipus' 'complex' relation to Self and Other – and we shall need to explore this non-communicative 'complex' thoroughly and from a variety of points of view.

First, its topography: Oedipus is advancing on foot (ὁδοιπορῶν, 801), leaving behind him the road towards which Laius on his chariot and his escorts are heading (see Rusten 1996). Coming from the opposite end, the King and his escorts attempt to "deviate" (806) Oedipus from his course πρὸς βίαν ("against his will" and/or "using force", 805): we should imagine the chariot not slowing down in front of the walking man, nor changing its course, but moving right against him. Oedipus does not withdraw (he could have done so moving slightly towards the third road), on the contrary, he lunges against the charioteer and stabs him (with his cane: the sceptre of a wayfarer, the sceptre of a crippled man), approaching the chariot instead of moving away from it – so that he positions himself at a throw's distance from the elderly king, who points at him with his goad. Παίω δι' ὀργῆς ("I strike impulsively/impetuously", 807), he will later remember, not without some pride and, at any rate, without the slightest qualm, κτείνω δὲ τοὺς ξύμπαντας ("and I kill them all to the last", 813). A violence – in many ways – 'asymmetrical': Οὐ μὴν ἴσην γ' ἔτεισεν ("he did not pay off equivalently", 810).

The crossroad in the Labdacids' myth and its impulsive clash has been approached in sociological, anthropological, and psychoanalytical terms.

The sociological approach reminds us that the meeting of two men on a road, according to ancient thought and etiquette, was socially charged and did not need any verbal negotiation: the inferior always steps aside, the superior always has priority. The attribution of priority signified the acceptance of social inferiority (Gregory 1995, 145). And if in democratic Athens the difference was not always clear, in the world of tragedy the age of a father figure, in conjunction with the institutional status of a king, should have been enough for the 'right of way' to be acknowledged and yielded to

him.[6] What could have thwarted this recognition/hierarchy in the Sophoclean crossroad? What is the force that ignites Oedipus' *orgē*?

It has been argued, rightly, that his being "addressed as an illegitimate child" by the drunken Corinthian (μ[ε] . . . καλεῖ . . . πλαστὸς ὡς εἴην πατρί, 780) has formed in Oedipus' soul a lingering/unconscious anxiety about his social status – a sort of a class complex.[7] This complex is further incited by the fact that the elderly king attempts to hit Oedipus with a goad: a gesture suitable to an animal and, potentially, to a slave, but not to a free man. According to the Athenian etiquette, for the latter to safeguard his status, he had to protect his bodily integrity: he was (he had to be) untouchable by the Other.[8] One can, therefore, see Oedipus' impulsive reaction as a reaction with socio-psychological 'depth'.

But there is more to it. If, according to ancient etiquette, road priority concerned two walking men, on the tragic crossroad we have a confrontation between a wayfarer and a chariot. The roads are specified as ἁμαξιτοί (730): this means that they were lined with furrows, for the vehicles to be wheeled upon (Pikoulas 2003). And this, in turn, means that Laius' chariot could not have changed its course – it could only stop. Coming from the opposite end (ξυνηντίαζον, 804), the walking Oedipus seems, therefore, to demand (no less than) the chariot to stop for him to pass on. All these make his *orgē* even more irrational. And we should seek deeper 'complexes' to explain his irrationality. Let us turn to anthropology and then to psychoanalysis.

From an anthropological point of view, the crossroad, as a space which is liminal par excellence (a 'not here, nor there' point of intersection between streets of different directions), as a "chaotic" space, lies beyond the organized

[6] According to Gregory (*ibid.*) Oedipus had not realized that the elderly man was a king, otherwise he wouldn't ask Iokaste if his escorts were many, as would befit an ἄνδρα ἀρχηγέτην ("monarch", 751). However, the question proves more easily the opposite: that Oedipus checks the picture he has already seen. Vellacott 1971, 116 and 119, more correctly, in my opinion, argues that the identity of the king would have been signposted by his escorts and the presence of the herald (as well as his clothes, I would add). These conditions suffice to make the spectator imagine the scene as a confrontation between king and wayfarer.

[7] According to Gregory 1995, 142-3, it is to this doubt/fear that we should attribute Oedipus' agitated line towards Teiresias Ποίοισι; μεῖνον· τίς δέ μ' ἐκφύει βροτῶν; ("Which/of what sort? Stay; who of all people is my begetter?", 437), but also the fact that Oedipus felt βαρυνθείς ("distressed", 781) by the words of the drunken man and ἄτιμος ("bereft of honour", 789) by the words of Apollo. Oedipus' social 'complex', Gregory continues, also seems to feed his impetuous quest to find out his identity at the end of the second episode (τοὐμὸν δ' ἐγώ, / κεἰ σμικρόν ἐστι, σπέρμ' ἰδεῖν βουλήσομαι: "even if it is totally unimportant/base, I want to see my origin", 1076-7). Kostas Valakas points out to me that the scarred body suits a slave, not a free man.

[8] Winkler 1990, 179, discussed in Gregory 1995, 145.

world of the humans and in crucial opposition to it (Johnston 1991, 217-18). Under the aegis of the chthonic Hekate, the goddess of the 'uncanny', crossroads were, simultaneously, spaces of magic, locations of pollution and cleansing, and meeting points of ghosts.[9] In her identity as a goddess-guide, Hekate supervises crossroads as *loci* of various forms of passages, symbolic and real. She shares their supervision with that paradigmatic god-guide, Hermes, the guide of travellers and souls; the god of initiation, persuasion, deceit; and – which is crucial to us – the god of the silence that occurs between men, coincidental but also 'hermetic'. Thus, as a *locus* of liminal and, as such, vague/obscure identities, the crossroad marks the quasi-ritual 'passage' of Oedipus to adulthood. But it also marks the perversion of this 'passage', due both to Laius' forbidding the movement of the "passerby" (παραστείχοντα, 808), and to Oedipus' stubborn claim of priority – movements that, instead of the mutual yielding of ages lead to the miasmatic parricide (Turner 1969 discussed in Rusten 1996, 108). However, if a successful rite of passage is, on the one hand, obligatory and, on the other, capable to produce safe identities, a perverted passage leads inevitably to a failed identity: it is precisely in this failed and perverted identity, that we should seek the anthropologically disturbed root of Oedipus' drive (and Self).[10]

In psychoanalytic terms, on the other hand, the crossroad has been seen as a metonymy for the sexual epicentre of the female body, and the clash upon it as a 'complex' clash between a father and a son for the possession of the mother.[11] In Starobinski's vocabulary, this is a clash that lies beyond the "spoken action of the unconscious": instead of a *mise-en-scène* of words, we have here a *mise-en-scène* of silence.

Reconciling anthropology and psychoanalysis, Segal sees in the confrontation on the crossroad "a truly primal scene: father attacking son with the instrument used on beasts, son slaying father with the token of the hurt that the father caused to his libs" (Segal 1999, 222). And if the foot stands, in the

[9] Johnston 1991 offers a comprehensive anthropology of the crossroad, with a review of the related bibliography. Johnston notes that crossroads have a special relation to parricide, as they are locations for the punishment of the polluting bodies of parricides: after their execution, as Plato instructs the officers of his city, the dead bodies of the parricides had to be transported to a crossroad and, there, their sculls had to be stoned, in order to cleanse the community, before the exposure of the corpses outside the borders of the city, according to custom (*Laws* 873b-c) (cf. also Halliwell 1986). If the audience were indeed familiar with all these, then the use of the crossroad motif in the play serves the most tragic of ironies.

[10] For the idea that perverted rites of passage, especially those of adulthood, produce 'selves' of psychonalytical complexity, see Papazoglou 2014, 377-402; 2020 and 2021.

[11] Abraham 2018 (1923), 83-5, cited in Rusten 1996, 108, who elaborates further on the idea.

ancient vocabulary, as a metonymy for the phallus (Henderson 1991, 129-30), then the solution to the equation becomes even more obviously psychoanalytical. And the same goes, of course, for Oedipus' *orgē*.

To resume, on the crossroad we are in 'wild' nature, outside 'civilized' civic spaces (*astea*), outside the (literal as well as metaphorical) space that organizes and secures the concordant coexistence of human beings in *oikoi* and *poleis* – the space that organizes and secures their safe identities and their equally safe communication. The neglect/absence of vocative addresses on the crossroad signposts the absence – the non-*anagnorisis* – of identities with clear and hierarchical social positions/statuses, related to age and city, bodies and institutions. However, if the liminal *locus* of the crossroad tolerates (if not brings about) this absence, what happens when the Thebans, substituting the *orgē*/drive of violence with the *orgē*/drive of human communication (cf. ἀστυνόμους ὀργάς, *Ant.* 355-6), inhabit *oikoi* and *poleis*? When they are not (nor do they appear to be) *xenoi* between them? And at the same time: how do they address each other when they become – thanks to the theatre – spectacle? In other words: how does the dramaturgy of vocatives function in tragic Thebes?

We have reached the stage of *Antigone*.

2. Vocatives and Bodies in *Antigone*

If Ismene is 'correct' in terms of gender and politics, a strong indicator of her 'normality' is the dynamic variety, fullness and correctness of her vocative addresses: Ἀντιγόνη (11) she addresses her sister by name, not yet realizing what she is going to do, and then ὦ ταλαῖφρον ("O wretched", 39), σχετλία ("miserable", 47) and κασιγνήτη ("sister", 49, 544). Ἄναξ ("O King", 563), she addresses Kreon. Apostrophizing, finally, Haemon as ὦ φίλταθ' Αἷμον, ὡς σ' ἀτιμάζει πατήρ ("O dearest Haemon, how your father dishonours you", 572) she defines, in spectacular contrast to Antigone herself, her own *philia* with her sister's fiancé but, also, the latter's *philia* with his father.[12] However, Ismene is not exactly 'tragic'. Protagonists in the crucial, as well as problematic, addresses, dyslectic and dystopic in terms of communication, are Antigone and Kreon. Their vocatives (or their lack thereof) sustain, as we shall see, indexes of perverted communication and, at the same time, indexes of perverted identities.

[12] For the attribution of the line, see Oudemans and Lardinois 1987, 174, with bibliography.

2.1. Antigone

Opening play, action and dialogue, Antigone addresses her sister with the famous Ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα (1), an untranslatable phrase of a strikingly strained and 'asphyxiating' syntax, which denotes an equally 'asphyxiating' relation and relationship. Antigone recognizes Ismene on the basis of sameness – and she does so with a pleonastic vocative focused on the latter's body: "O you who have in common with me the womb that gave birth to both of us, Ismene's head/my dearest Ismene/my own Ismene". It has been claimed that this address indicates that Antigone embraces and kisses her sister's head (Dunn 2006): if indeed this was the way that Sophocles directed the scene, then the bodily gesture would signify – in performative terms too – their 'strangulating' identification and 'symbiotic' relation, as Antigone understands it and as it is attested in her vocative.

Antigone's vocative opens a brief *rhesis* which focuses on the poignant particularity of the two girls and their "wretched", "disastrous", "vile" and "dishonoured" family (3-5) but also the particularity of the misfortunes of their *philoi*: "Do you know our woes?" (2); "What is now this . . . declaration? Have you heard something or are you in total ignorance that misfortunes that befit enemies have fallen upon dear ones?" (7-10). Antigone's short and sharp *rhesis* is articulated in consecutive questions instead of statements, as would have been, perhaps, more expected – in terms of language and communication – in speeches that aim at informing the other. The linguistic agitation, which in performance must have been served by a vocal one too, 'incarnates' on stage the psychic turmoil of Antigone.[13] But it is, perhaps, more important to see that these are rhetorical questions of a Self that, in essence, expects no reply from the Other, a Self that feels no distance from the Other – that does not seek communication because it takes communion for granted: a superlative *philia*, typical of the Labdacids.[14]

The ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα is Antigone's first vocative address to her sister – and the last one. From the moment that she understands that Ismene does not share her decision to bury their brother, from the moment that she understands the distance between them, she ceases to use any sort of vocative. Her reluctance to exercise the slightest persuasion on Ismene shows the same thing: Ἀλλ' ἴσθ' ὁποία σοι δοκεῖ ("But be whoever you decide/be as you think fit", 71). Antigone is *phile* to the dead (with an – almost incestuous – emphasis on the body: φίλη μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι,

[13] Winnington-Ingram 1980, 128 and n. 41, speaks of a "torrent of negatives", which offer a "supreme example of characterization through style".

[14] On identification, see Loraux 1986, 172. On the "rhetoric of questions" on the tragic stage (without reference to this speech), see Mastronarde 1979, 6-18.

φίλου μέτα, "beloved I will lay by his side, joined to a beloved", 73; cf. Winnington-Ingram 1980, 130; Johnson 1997, 392) – and, with equal emphasis, "hating" (cf. ἐχθαρῆι, 93) to the living. Antigone does not know how or does not want to communicate.[15]

This is precisely what is attested in her total lack of vocatives to Kreon. Her addressing is colloquial and 'low', devoid of any recognition of the characters' relation to each other: she uses a 'plain' (and insulting) second person singular, refusing to recognize in him some institutional, civic, or familial, identity. If, however, a vocative does not only acknowledge the identity of the Other, but also defines the consciousness of the Self, what does the absence of vocative addresses signify for the way that Antigone constructs and understands her own identity? The question betrays the answer: fluidly, contradictorily, and very vulnerably.

Confronted with Kreon, Antigone starts suspending herself between the general and the specific, the universal and the idiosyncratic, the timeless and the topical, and the concomitant identities that these define. At first, she supports her act according to the timeless laws of the gods about the burial of the mortals: she summons values and arguments which do not refer to herself, but to everybody – in other words, she understands and shows herself as typical to the human condition. Equally typical – yet this time of the familial condition – is the way she understands herself when she replies, summoning a *gnomē* (which emphasizes again a bodily relation): Οὐδὲν γὰρ αἰσχρὸν τοὺς ὁμοσπλάγχνους σέβειν ("There is nothing vile in showing respect for those of the same womb", 511). However, Kreon's pressure in this heated debate will force Antigone to various rhetorical corners: the dead Eteocles feels no animosity towards his brother, she contends; it was not a slave who died, but a brother, she answers back; in Hades, friends and foes are equated, she tries to evade.

And finally: Οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν (523). The line, famously difficult to translate, could be rendered as: "because of my biological origin, of the identity that my birth gives me, the identity of a sister, I am tied to them with bonds of love/familial relation and not hate". Antigone's final argument does not concern some divine, timeless, and universal mandate, but the particularity of her own situation; not some *nomos*, but the identity that derives from her γονήν: a biological identity. It is crucial to see that the ultimate line of defence of the/her Self is the/her body.

[15] Pointing out that Antigone avoids using the first-person plural, Goldhill notes that "her general unwillingness to align herself linguistically with her sister – or anyone else – as a pair or as a group plays a role in the increasing isolation of Antigone through the play, and in the expression of her extreme commitment to self" (Goldhill 2012: 32). In the *kommos* with the Thebans, Antigone will show some signs of a willingness to communicate, which, nevertheless, will be quickly aborted (see below).

After her opening address to Ismene, the next vocative address of Antigone towards an Other comes up only with her last scene: ὦ γᾶς πατρίας πολῖται ("O citizens of [my] fatherland", 806). By addressing the Thebans of the Chorus, Antigone appears for the first time to open up (and to want to open up) her communicative horizon. However, as the vocatives used will show, this communication too will fail.

Let us follow closely her dialogue with the Chorus (806-943). This is an exchange with especially dynamic addresses, indexes of crucial communicative tensions.

The "sight" of Antigone (*τάδ' ὁρῶν*: "seeing these", 802; ὁρῶ . . . τήνδ' Ἀντιγόνην: "I see . . . Antigone", 804-5) drives the Thebans to tears. Taking her cue from their 'sight', and as if aiming at making them identity with her and share the lament for herself (Griffith on 806), Antigone stretches herself out to address, for the first time in the play, the male community of the *polis*: Ὁρᾶτ' ἔμ', ὦ γᾶς πατρίας πολῖται ("See me, O citizens of [my] fatherland", 806). Antigone can now see the Others and, at the same time, she asks to be "seen" by them: an 'Antigone-*spectacle*'.[16]

However, this 'meeting' will prove impossible. Confronted with the critical distance that the Chorus adopt when they stress her absolute difference from all humans, her absolute particularity (ἀλλ' αὐτόνομος ζῶσα μόνη δὴ / θνητῶν: "but by your own law, you are the only among mortals who goes to death while living", 821-2), Antigone turns inwards to an 'aside' reference to Niobe (823-33) – driving the Thebans to resort to a rather pointed consolation, not devoid of some praise: "But she was a god and was born of gods . . . it is a great thing to be heard/spoken of as someone who happened to share the lot of gods" (834-7). Incapable (now as always) to deal with the slightest distance from the Other, Antigone over-reacts, perceiving the distance as "scorn" (839) and *hybris* (840), before closing the circle of her communicative attempt with a vocative, which, however, functions as an exclamation which breaks bridges rather than as an address which tries to build them: Ὦ πόλις, ὦ πόλεως / πολυκτήμονες ἄνδρες ("O city, O affluent men of the city", 842-3). Instead, Antigone turns to the Theban nature to find her collocutors: ἰὼ Διρκαῖαι κρῆναι Θήβας τ' εὐ-/αρμάτου ἄλσος, ἔμπας / ξυμμάρτυρας ὔμμ' ἐπικτῶμαι ("Oh springs of Dirke and sacred grove of Thebes, city of beautiful chariots, it is you that I call as witnesses", 844-6). Antigone expected (or attempted) to make the Thebans identify with her in the lament over the Self – but, as her vocative addresses show, she fails: she ends up totally *aphilos*, outside any communication and community, dweller of no world, neither of

[16] I stress here the communicative dimension of Antigone's request to be seen. Jouanna reads her as offering herself "en spectacle devant la cité entière pour protester contre le scandale ou pour faire scandale" (Jouanna 2007, 394).

the living nor of the dead (850-2).[17]

The Theban elders decide, now, to approach her with fatherly tenderness, pointing out her θράσος ("audacity", 853) but, at the same time, absolving her from guilt: ὦ τέκνον . . . / πατρῶον δ' ἐκτίνεις τιν' ἄθλον ("O child . . . you are paying for some ordeal of your father", 855-6). Antigone responds to this tender vocative taking (as she did also in her earlier "See me") communicative courage from the Chorus' vocative and stance. She now remembers that she is a child of the cursed Labdacids. And she apostrophizes, not without some complaint, the miasmatic intercourse from which she was born (Ἰὼ ἆται . . . κοιμήματά τ' αὐτ-/τογέννητ' . . . οἵων ἐγώ . . . ἔφυν: "Oh disasters . . . and self-incestuous sexual unions . . . such of which . . . I was born", 863-6) and the brother who destroys her (Ἰὼ δυσπότμων / κασίγνητε γάμων κυρήσας, / θανὼν ἔτ' οὖσαν κατήναρές με: "Oh brother, you who won a disastrous marriage / and with your death you kill me still alive", 869-71). However, once again, the Chorus correct her: σὲ δ' αὐτόγνωτος ὤλεσ' ὀργά (875). This too is a line difficult to translate (possibly obscure by nature): "your self-conceived *orgē* destroys you". The verdict of the elders throws Antigone outside any attempt to or sense of communication: ἄκλαυτος, ἄφιλος, ἀνυμέναι-/ος ἁ ταλαίφρων ἄγομαι ("without being lamented, without friends, without a wedding song I am carried on, me the wretched one", 876-7). Antigone does not receive the *kommos* that she expected and claimed – nor the communication that such a *kommos* could signify.

Entering her speech, Antigone once again contracts herself and ceases to address the living – instead, she addresses the space of her death: Ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς / οἴκησις αἰείφρουρος ("O tomb, O wedding chamber, O cave / [that you shall be my] dwelling forever", 891-92). This apostrophe to a 'dead' nature, empty of people, introduces an 'aside' *rhesis*,[18] a speech that does not seek to communicate but is delivered as a long pause in the developing rhythm of the performance ("the action freezes": Seale 1982, 24-9). She addresses her brother echoing her earlier address to Ismene: ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα ("O my brother's head/my dearest brother", 915). In between, she famously defends her action: "I would never have gone against the city, if it were for my husband or child. Because, if they died, I could beget others; but now, with my parents both dead, I cannot beget another brother". The *nomos* ("law", 908) Antigone now invokes is not of the gods,

[17] Cf. Goldhill 2021, 32: "She is expressing the egô, who can form a 'we' neither with her family on earth nor with her family in Hades".

[18] See Knox 1964, 106: "she struggles with her own emotions in a self-absorbed passion which totally ignores the presence of those around her". That Antigone's rhetoric is well structured does not prove that her speech is addressed to the citizens, as Cropp 1997, among others, argues.

nor of the humans:[19] it is the mandate given to her by her biological origin – that is, by her body. The same as in her earlier "by my biological origin I am tied to them with bonds of love not hate".

And we reach Antigone's final vocatives, just before she leaves stage (and life). They denote radically different addresses. At first: Ὦ γῆς Θήβης ἄστυ πατρῷον / καὶ θεοὶ προγενεῖς ("O fatherly city of the Theban land / and fatherly gods", 937-8). Here we have an 'extrovert'/political but at the same time pronouncedly 'introvert'/familial vocative: Antigone addresses the "fatherly city of the Theban land" (ἄστυ, as well as *γῆ*, refer to the geography/topography of the *polis*, not to its human community) and her "fatherly" gods (or simply ancestors: Griffith on 938). But, eventually, her communicative horizon opens up once again: Λεύσσετε, Θήβης οἱ κοιρανίδαι, / τὴν βασιλειδῶν μούνην λοιπήν, / οἷα πρὸς οἵων ἀνδρῶν πάσχω, / τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα ("Look, you affluent men of Thebes, / the only one of the royal family who is left, / what sort [of misfortunes] I suffer because of what sort of men", 940-3). "Look, you affluent men": Antigone's address now does not concern all Thebans, only the affluent aristocrats of the Chorus, the nobles that are faithful to the dynasty (Winnington-Ingram 1980, 138). And it is precisely as a member of the dynasty that she bids farewell to them, seeking to communicate with them – once again in vain. Her last address echoes the "See me, o citizens of [my] fatherly earth", with which she began her exchange with the Thebans: Antigone entered the stage as a spectacle, and as a spectacle she leaves it.

And it is important to see that she defines her offenders and opponents with reference to their gender: πρὸς οἵων ἀνδρῶν πάσχω ("by what sort of men I suffer", 942) – thus, with reference to their bodies.

Ἄνδρες ("Men", 162) is the first vocative address of Kreon to the Theban elders. As with Oedipus, it will take him the whole play before addressing them again, in the *exodos*.

2.2. Kreon

Having already proclaimed his decision to the citizens of Thebes, Kreon comes on stage to confront, as noted above, a particular and specific group of Thebans: a group of elderly counsellors who have always stayed faithful to the Labdacids, despite miasmatic crimes (165-9). The vocative "Men" is not strange to the ancient etiquette, but it is important, in my opinion, that

[19] By strictly personalizing the concept of *nomos*, here, Antigone can be seen to rhetorically abuse the invocation of *nomoi* as normally applied (and as it has been applied so far in the play) in what Battezzato categorizes as "la retorica dei superlativi" (Battezzato 2008, 72-6).

Kreon does not recognize the social/civic status of his audience. A reference to a civic, geographical, or ancestral origin (for example, Θήβας πολῖται; ἄνδρες πόλεως; Θήβης ἄνακτες, cf. *Ant.* 988; ἄνδρες ἀστοί, cf. ὦ πάντες ἀστοί, *Ant.* 1183; ἄνδρες πολῖται, *OT* 513; Κάδμου πολῖται, *A. Sept.* 1) would have made this vocative address more political and institutional. Instead, Kreon chooses an identity which refers to the gender of his audience: this is a bodily identity which makes him the same with them, levelling their difference, related to age or other. Kreon speaks as man to men. In a sense, he is equally problematic to Antigone: he seeks communication with the 'same' – as she did.

Instead of the short, sharp, and breathless rhetorical questions of Antigone, however, Kreon appears to enjoy the spacious *peitho* of gnomic statements. And if she spoke in the name of a particular and specific family, he turns to the experiences of a timeless and universal city. "There is no way to understand someone's soul and spirit, if you don't see them behave in the political scene"; "the leader who is afraid to speak is wretched"; "he who puts friend above country is nothing"; "only on board of the ship of the fatherland, one can save himself and make *philoi*" (175-90). Kreon ascended to power thanks to his familial identity (ἀγχιστεῖα, 174) – despite of this (or rather because of this), he desires to uphold a political identity: to appear as the leader of all Thebans, a *philos* of Thebes not of the Labdacids. In his eyes, one feels, the decision to leave Polyneices unburied is politically – and familially – brave.

Through his gnomic plethora, Kreon seeks to de-personalize his decision and make it appear as politically 'correct', objectively 'obvious', devoid of idiosyncratic perspective: I think and act, he seems to claim, the way any correct leader would think and act.[20] However, the elders of the Chorus – politically defused – remain apathetic: παῖ Μενοικέως ("child of Menoikeus", 211), you are the king, you can legislate according to your desires (all the rest is words, they seem to insinuate). Choosing a vocative which focuses on Kreon's familial origin, the elders seem to refuse his distance from the *oikos*, and as such refuse to acknowledge his institutional identity – undermining, thus, also, the status he sought to find in timeless and universal human experience.

The Guard announces the burial of Polyneices, and the Chorus leader speculates about divine intervention, provoking the *orgē* (280) of Kreon, who

[20] For a socio-linguistic approach of paroimiology, see Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Varga 2014. On tragic paroimiology see van Emde Boas 2017, 41-7 with bibliography. On the paroimiology of Kreon and Antigone, more specifically, see Foley 1996, and Trapp's response to her (Trapp 1996). See also Budelmann 2000, 74-80. For a discussion of tragic paroimiology with reference to *Ajax*, see Lardinois 2006. Cuny 2007, in my opinion, merely collects and categorizes the data, but without interpreting them.

chooses to land the act onto the political landscape of the mortals and the civic identities that it provides. He has taken notice of "the men of the city" that are seeking to overthrow him seduced by bribes (289-90): "there is no worse human convention than money, this is what can destroy the cities, this is what can annihilate the families, corrupt the virtuous and lead to wickedness and impiety" (295-301). Resorting, once again, to *gnomai*, Kreon tries to save the timeless and universal civic prestige of his person and of his act. However, it is obvious that the words of the Guard have "bitten" not only his ears but his soul too (Ἐν τοῖσιν ὠσὶν ἢ ‹πὶ τῇ ψυχῇ δάκνῃ; "Is it on your ears that you feel bitten, or on your soul?", 317) – or better: his soul is "bitten" as if it were a body.

Faced by Antigone, Kreon resorts to an anonymous and insulting second person singular: σὲ δή ("You, then", 441). Faced with Kreon, as noted above, Antigone does not take the pain of the slightest vocative address, civic or familial. In the debate that follows, the two characters move around different positions, at times gnomic, at others personal, suspended between the two, remaining, however, each time one opposite the other: one pushes the other to achieve the 'final word'; one forces the other to rhetorical 'corners' – and, finally, to strained arguments.

It is now the turn of Antigone to use *gnomai*, depersonalizing her act: the unwritten laws of the gods. But, at the same time, she cannot but personalize this act painfully: "to one who, like me, lives in misfortune, death is a gain" (463-4). Kreon responds with, once again, a gnomic plethora: human stubbornness is punished, "it breaks like iron, when melted by fire and then cooled down"; "it breaks like a horse under yoke, like a slave to his master" (473-9). However, his political confidence, his ideological belief in his decision, seems to have disappeared: Ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνήρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνήρ ("Now, indeed, I am no longer man, *she* is man", 484). This man, who claimed a civic identity with such an insistence, is reduced to the identity that his gender gives him – which means: the identity that his body provides him with.

As the intensified language of the confrontation leads the two characters to the stichomythia, Kreon seems to regain somewhat his rhetorical powers while Antigone loses them. The former begins with rhetorical questions (commensurate to Antigone's questions in her opening speech): "Are you not ashamed to go against the Kadmeians?", "Wasn't Eteocles your brother?", "How is it possible to honour him when you don't respect him?", but he ends up with statements, renewing the point of view and the rhetoric of his own opening speech: "the one sieged the city, the other defended it"; "the good cannot be equalled to the evil"; "the enemy cannot become friend, even in death" (512-22).

On the other side, Antigone, as we saw earlier, contracts into strained claims, to end up with: "by my biological origin, I am tied to them with

bonds of love not hate" (523). Kreon seems to respond to the bodily aspect of the argument, choosing to climax his rhetoric, reduced, once again, to the status of his gender: ἐμοῦ δὲ ζῶντος οὐκ ἄρξει γυνή ("while I am alive, a woman will not rule", 525). As with Antigone, so with Kreon, the ultimate line of defence for the/his Self is the/his body. However, Haemon will deprive him of this certainty too.

In his debate with his son and under the pressure of his arguments, Kreon will "open" and "unfold" to reveal himself as internally "empty" (note the physicality of οὗτοι διαπτυχθέντες ὤφθησαν κενοί, 709), bereft of the slightest conviction, while being pushed to civic, gender and age positions which are authoritarian. Ὦ παῖ ("O child", 639, 648): confusing familial and civic identities, Kreon demands from his son political discipline. The latter, respectfully addressing him as πάτερ ("father", 635, 683, 701), asks from Kreon political wisdom. Now, it is the turn of the young man to use *gnomai*: Ἀλλ' ἄνδρα . . . τὸ μανθάνειν αἰσχρὸν οὐδέν ("But to a man . . . there is nothing shameful to learn [from others]", 710-11), the trees back down to the currents in order not to break, the sailor who does not adjust to the weather is destroyed.

Incapable to counter Haemon's arguments, Kreon invokes once again the status that his body could give him – this time his age: Οἱ τηλικοίδε ("those of this/mine age") will obey the admonitions of ἀνδρὸς τηλικοῦδε; ("a man of this/his age?") (726-7). Kreon resorts to questions which he believes to be rhetorical – but they are not. "Look at my actions, not my age" (728-9), Haemon exhorts him: listen to me, he seems to say, despite my bodily identity; and then: the citizens have the same opinion too (733). "The city will define what I will do?" (734), Kreon retorts tyrannically. "You see that you now speak as a child?" (735), Haemon answers back, not without cheek, undermining his father's confidence on age/body. "Doesn't the city belong to its leader?" (738), Kreon resorts again to *gnomai*, under Haemon's pressure. "It is meaningless to govern an empty city" (739), Haemon replies gnomically too. And finally, Kreon: "This guy seems to be the ally of a woman" (740). "Yes, if you are a woman" (741), Haemon climaxes his cheekiness. With his gender identity undermined, Kreon bursts: Ὦ παγκάκιστε ("O wickest/vilest", 742), to regain some control the next moment: Ὦ μιαρὸν ἦθος καὶ γυναικὸς ὕστερον ("O vile temper, lesser than a woman!", 746), and again: γυναικὸς ὢν δούλευμα ("woman's lackey", 756).[21] Once again with this char-

[21] Goldhill notes that, until 742, Kreon avoids addressing Haemon directly, and opts to "objectify" him through general remarks "as if he is talking to [him] through the chorus". Haemon's "growing sarcasm" at 741, however, goads Kreon's fury to a vehement personal insult: "no more theory" (Goldhill 2012, 61-2). The *agon* between Kreon and Haemon is typical of Sophoclean debates, which are characterized not only by their formalistic structure but, also, by their exhibiting "une crise à l'intérieur d'un

acter, once again in this play, the Self's ultimate line of defence is the body.

Ὦ γεραιὲ Τειρεσία ("O elderly Teiresias", 991, 1045): addressing him with reference to his age and not his institutional role as a Seer, Kreon chooses, as he did in his address to the Chorus, to address Teiresias in terms of biology, not politics or theology. This comes at a cost: *τέκνον* ("child", 1023), the Seer addresses him, depriving Kreon of any civic identity. The later breaks: Ὦ πρέσβυ, ὥστε τοξόται σκοποῦ / τοξεύετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε ("O old man, like archers you target this man and shoot him with arrows", 1033-4) – reduced to a traumatized body.

In the *exodos*, the themes that we pointed out so far dominate the stage registering interesting climaxes and spectacular transformations. The only identity that Kreon is left with is a desperately guilty 'I'. His vocatives are cries that do not expect any answer – that do not aim at communication. Apostrophes to deadly landscapes: Ἰὼ ἰὼ δυσκάθαρτος Ἅιδου λιμήν ("Oh oh, harbour of Hades, impossible to cleanse", 1284); to deadly actions: Ἰὼ φρενῶν δυσφρόνων ἁμαρτήματα ("Oh, blunders of erroneous minds", 1261); to the dead: *Ἰὼ παῖ* ("Oh, child", 1266, 1289, 1340), Φεῦ φεῦ μᾶτερ ἀθλία, φεῦ τέκνον ("Alas, you wretched mother, alas, you my child", 1300); and, above all, apostrophes to the Self: δείλαιος ἐγώ ("miserable me", 1310), ὦ μέλεος ("O wretched me", 1319-20) – cries to the Self: Οἴμοι ("Oh/Alas me!", 1271, 1275, 1294, 1317). Kreon, indeed, like Antigone, is destroyed by an αὐτόγνωτος ὀργή ("self-conceived drive", 875).

If, in the previous scenes, Kreon eagerly employed gnomic statements 'depersonalizing' himself, he now focuses emphatically on his painfully individuated and unique "I" (Ἐγὼ γάρ σ', ἐγώ σ'ἔκανον, ὦ μέλεος, / ἐγώ, φάμ' ἔτυμον, "It is I, I, who killed you, O ill-fortuned me, / I, this is the truth", 1319-20). This "I" is spectacularly cut off from any communication with the living. Only one vocative Kreon can address to the Thebans, and this is bereft of a recognition of social or personal relations: he addresses them simply as *spectators* of his deeds (ὦ κτανόντας τε καὶ / θανόντας βλέποντες ἐμφυλίους: "O beholders of kindred killers and killed ones", 1263-64).[22]

But Kreon's catalytic transformation concerns the mutation of the gender/bodily identity he so strongly defended, upon which he so urgently seized: lamenting gravely, Kreon laments like a woman (Tyrrell and Bennett 1998, 151). And it is important to see this mutation in the context of a broader dynamic which, as Butler puts it, "appears to destabilize gender throughout the play", as Kreon "in being spoken to, he is unmanned" against a "manly" Antigone (Butler 2000, 10). But it is not enough to understand this

monde qui devrait être uni" (Jouanna 2007: 324-5).

[22] The vocative address to the Chorus appears to be addressed to the spectators of the performance too (Loraux 1986, 178).

feminization as a sign of his humiliation and degradation (Griffith 1999, 342); nor should we only *hear* in Kreon an echo of the paroxysmal female lament of Antigone (Honig 2013, 119) or *see* only an image of his *pathos* (Perodaskalakis 2012, 135). It is more important to *see* that, now, lamenting a dead young *philos* in his hands (1258), Kreon 'embodies' Antigone. And this in all levels of communication: like Antigone, he too cannot find another to share his lament, he laments alone; like her, he too addresses his dead – it is only with them that he can share some communion. And, finally, like her, he too calls us to confront him as a *spectacle*. This is a dramaturgical transformation par excellence: a transformation which only the performance can document – behind and beyond text/language.

Kreon ends up 'embodying' his opposing *ēthos*: the absolute defeat of the Self.

3. Instead of an *Epilogos*: Addressing Oedipus

Bereft of any other means of communication capable to arrest the culprit, Oedipus resorts to a curse: a fatal speech act, a magical address which is directed against the perpetrator but also those who address him (προσφωνεῖν, 238, 818). We could ask ourselves: if we wanted to address him (or curse him, it is the same), which is the vocative that Oedipus would respond to? Which vocative could make him turn, for him to see us and for us to see him? To which vocative would he 'answer', confirming his identity?

Before the *anagnorisis*, Oedipus declares with pride that all people address him by name (πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους καλούμενος, 8). *Kleinos* refers to his name "being heard", multiplied in the mouth of the humans. But, in essence, the address to him cannot have a patronymic or a civic or a geographical origin: both have been undermined by the insulting vocative of the drunken Corinthian (780). In other words, Oedipus must be addressed bereft of any relation to the Other.[23] Instead, his name is connected to the/his body, a source of knowledge but also ignorance, pride but also humiliation: he who can solve the riddle of the human feet – but does not know how his own feet were traumatized; he who was named after them – yet is ashamed of them.[24]

[23] Cf. Segal 1999, 212: "his ambiguous naming from chance confuses linguistic, familial, and spatial codes all together".

[24] Revealing/confessing for the first time a 'deep' psychic trauma, Oedipus refers to his wounded feet as an ἀρχαῖον κακόν ("ancient/age old evil/pain", 1033) and a δεινόν γ' ὄνειδος ("terrible disgrace") which has stayed with him since his σπάργανα ("swaddling clothes/infancy", 1035), and he demands to learn, in a deeply agonized and urgent imperative, which of his two parents is responsible for this: Ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, πρὸς μητρὸς ἢ πατρός; φράσον ("O, in the name of gods, by [my] mother or by [my] father?

After the *anagnorisis*, Oedipus ends up nameless, δύστηνος (“Wretched/miserable”), as Iokaste addresses him for the last time (τοῦτο γάρ σ› ἔχω / μόνον προσειπεῖν: “this is the only [word] I have with which to address you”, 1071-2), as the Chorus address him in the *exodos* (1303) and as he addresses himself (1308). At the same time, he is an Oedipus who is more physical than ever: a body that is ‘cut off’ from his own voice (πᾶ μοι / φθογγὰ διαπωτᾶται φοράδην*;* “where is my voice carried away from me?”, 1309-10), this time not only because of the traumatized ἄρθρα (ankles) of his feet, but because of the traumatized ἄρθρα (sockets) of his eyes (1270);[25] a body which cannot rely anymore on the sceptre of a king (or a wayfarer or a cripple) – and seeks to “touch” the body of his girls (ψαύοιμι, 1465; ψαῦσαι, 1467), substituting with touch the void of the vision (χερσί τἂν θιγὼν / δοκοῖμ’ ἔχειν σφᾶς, ὥσπερ ἡνίκ’ ἔβλεπον: “If I could touch them with my hands, I would feel having them as when I was seeing”, 1469-70). On stage, Oedipus ‘embodies’ his name and now ‘sees’ and ‘recognizes’ the others through a contact which is ‘visibly’ bodily.[26] This is an Oedipus-spectacle, a ‘theatrical’ Oedipus par excellence: Ὦ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν πάθος ἀνθρώποις (“O terrible suffering for mortals to see”, 1297).

To conclude, Oedipus “crystallizes in purest form”, Zeitlin writes, “the city of Thebes itself. And by that same logic, Thebes is therefore the only possible place for his birth” (1992, 134). If the vocative address requires and, at the same time, provides the *anagnorisis* of the Self by the Other, sealing the communication between them, in Oedipus’ case his address is inevitably connected to his body, and it is to his body that it is exhausted. In the protagonists of *Antigone*, as I tried to show, a sort of bodily ‘autism’ is cultivated too, in one way or another, as a pivotal condition of *anagnorisis*, personal and political, which forbids communication. A condition which is ‘embodied’ on stage and becomes ‘visible’, thanks to a clear, as much as complex, dramaturgy of vocatives. A ‘Theban’ dramaturgy.[27]

Speak!”, 1037) (see Segal 1999, 211). These lines, from the exchange between the Korinthian and Oedipus, are not necessary to the economy of the dialogue and the advancement of the plot. Their function, therefore, serves to deepen character portrayal, as they interweave the bodily trauma with a psychic one, which concerns the Father and the Mother – a clearly psychoanalytical dynamic.

[25] On the equation of eye and phallus in this scene, see Devereux 1973.

[26] Cf. Valakas 2002, 84: “His plea for exile is more welcome to the Chorus than his asking to be touched by them (1409-18). It is only thanks to Antigone and Ismene, who come in support of Oedipus, embrace him and listen to him without speaking, that his unexpected and repeated wish for physical contact is fulfilled (1462-1523). Oedipus, deprived of his vision, is thus to discover even for a few moments a new bodily identity and stability on stage”.

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To Mary Yossi