overshadowed by Iphigenia's. M. discusses how the nexus of body, name, and identity functions in the tragedy, and in an illuminating excursus relates this theme to *Helen*, another late Euripidean play. M. neither ignores the play's textual difficulties nor allows himself to get bogged down by them; rather, he turns them to advantage by discussing certain interpolated passages as 'attempts at interpretation, intervention, modification, subversion, and rewriting of the ancient character of Achilles and of the plot by ancient readers' (p. 129).

M.'s final chapter swiftly but valuably surveys other tragedies that present Achilles either as a potent influence from the past (Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Philoctetes*, and *Scyrians,* Euripides' *Andromache* and *Electra*, *Rhesus*) or as a child and youth (Sophocles' satyric *Lovers of Achilles* and possibly satyric *Those Who Dine Together*, Euripides' *Telephus*).

M.'s innovative methodology has one unintended consequence. As his discussion progresses the Iliadic Achilles becomes the elephant in the room: the less he is acknowledged, the larger he looms. Thus it is difficult not to think, in connection with the brooding, immobile Achilles of *Myrmidons*, of the Homeric Achilles' description of himself as 'sit[ting] here beside my ships, a useless burden upon the land' (*Il.* 18.104). The conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles' ghost in *Hecuba* over the disposition of Polyxena bears obvious parallels to the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in the *Iliad* over the disposition of Briseis. And surely the motif of Achilles' anger that figures in so many of the plays discussed by M. is is not 'another theme of the mythological tradition around Achilles' (pp. 92–3), but the fundamental, central theme. But if Michelakis cannot entirely succeed in displacing the Homeric Achilles from his traditional preeminence, he has nonetheless produced a deft, insightful, rigorous, and rewarding study which encourages readers to undertake their own reappraisal of what tragedy does and does not owe to Homer.

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ANCIENT VS. MODERN IN SOPHOCLES

M. ALTMEYER: *Unzeitgemäßes Denken bei Sophokles.* (*Hermes* Einzelschriften 85.) Pp. 330. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001. Paper, €70. ISBN: 3-515-07963-7.

The thesis of this book (a revised version of A.'s Ph.D. dissertation) is that Sophocles shows old-fashioned heroes who are unwilling to disregard, in favour of success, values which are opposed to contemporary political discourse and that he endorses their position. 'Contemporary' includes attitudes such as over-confidence in one's own competence, devaluation of traditional moral values, religion and family, elevation of the *polis*, willingness to use rhetoric in a manner distanced from ethics, pragmatism and opportunism. These are treated not only as sophistic but as widely accepted ideas. This broad approach is not unproblematic since practically any character displaying morals seems to be old-fashioned and it is not entirely clear against exactly which standards the heroes' attitudes are measured. A. mentions Thucydidean passages particularly often, but there is no discussion as to how generalizable they are in referring to contemporary Athenian society.

A. cleverly combines 'pietist' and 'hero-worshipper' views in his interpretation: although Sophocles' heroes uphold morals, they still may act in questionable ways. Each chapter treats one of the extant tragedies in chronological order, either following

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the plot of the play or exploring topics, whichever approach best fits the relevant chapter.

The chapter on *Ajax* examines the issue of human greatness in relationship to religion and politics. Ajax insists on his moral values; his greatness is founded on the heroic code. Odysseus, in contrast, is depicted as much more pragmatic and diplomatic. But despite Odysseus' capability in conflict-solving, Sophocles criticizes his opportunism and lack of greatness. He prefers Ajax' consistency in moral decisions while at the same time he warns against disregarding the gods, in Ajax' case Athena.

Trachiniae stresses family-values: Heracles perishes because he disregards them, which implies a critique of a modern imbalance between private and public spheres. Sophocles indicates through Heracles that one should accept religion and myth against the contemporary trend to rationalize them.

In *Antigone* Sophocles once more defends the institution of family. Morals and religion ensure the well-being of the state. Creon and Antigone display, respectively, a newer, *polis*-focused versus an older, family- and religion-focused conception of φιλία.

O.T. contrasts religion with modern law in terms of the question of whether or not a serious crime committed guiltlessly should be punished. The poet supports Oedipus' promotion of religion, yet he distances himself to a certain extent from it by showing that Oedipus' self-condemnation tends towards fundamentalism.

Electra contrasts modern secularization of politics with εὐσέβεια, a concept which here is strongly connected to φιλία. Thus, once again family ties are shown as politically relevant. Electra stands for these values and refuses to compromise on them. Although she generally appears in a positive light, Sophocles shows her as too emotional, hinting that a rationally thinking agent like Orestes is valuable, too. On the other hand, Orestes, who is modern in his unscrupulous striving for success but unable to perceive all the consequences of his actions, is only able to find his identity through realizing Electra's suffering. Both are not just driven by blind revenge but are obeying old religious law. The elaboration on the contrast between Orestes and Electra is one of the strongest parts of A.'s book.

Philoctetes presents a hero who is old-fashioned in his refusal to cooperate with the *polis*. The oracle, however, asks both sides for reconciliation. Thus, on the one hand the poet emphasizes that politics need to incorporate sympathy with the weak and avoid deception, while on the other he argues that one should not completely distance oneself from politics and the community. The play is a reaction against a modern φύσις concept. Old-fashioned φύσις is not opposed to νόμος and is even more important than education in determining human behaviour, as can be seen in Neoptolemus' case.

Oedipus in *O.C.* embodies old religion by persecuting those who damage family ties and thus harm the *polis*. It is he, the outsider, who fulfills the divine will and finally benefits the city. Theseus is modern in his diplomatic and pragmatic outlook, but he supports Oedipus and thus greatly contributes to providing conditions which enable the incorporation of Oedipus into Athens.

According to A., modernity is generally shown in a negative light by Sophocles. However, he hints at several exceptions where the poet does see positive aspects in modern characters, e.g. Odysseus' diplomacy in *Ajax*, Orestes' pragmatism in *Electra*, and Theseus' clemency in *O.C.* Old-fashioned characters often display negative sides, e.g. Ajax disregards a goddess, Oedipus in *O.T.* becomes too fundamental in his views, Electra is too strongly led by emotions, and Philoctetes at first refuses reconciliation with the community. This two-edgedness could be underlined much more strongly by A. as the issue appears to be more complex than he presents it: Sophocles seems to play

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with the ambiguity between modern and old-fashioned rather than clearly taking one side. Had A. made more of this complexity, his analysis would be even more enlightening.

This book strictly looks at the plays at such, avoiding theories. However, considerations at least regarding e.g. stagecraft might have been illuminating. Each chapter gives a great wealth of detail. More of a summary at the end of the chapters on *Ajax*, *Electra*, *Philoctetes*, and *O.C.* would be helpful. Proper summaries for these plays only appear in the concluding chapter. The summaries of the remaining chapters tend to be extremely close to those in the conclusion, frequently even employing the same formulations. A. tends to summarize rather than quote, but sometimes giving Greek passages, not just individual expressions, would help.

All in all, this book is clear, lively and full of interesting interpretations and details. It will be very useful to anyone who studies Sophocles, whether using the book as a whole or only single chapters on individual plays.

The George Washington University BABETTE PÜTZ

SOPHOCLEAN NARRATOLOGY

A. Markantonatos: *Tragic Narrative. A Narratological Study of Sophocles'* Oedipus at Colonus. (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 63.) Pp. xiv + 296. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002. Cased, €88. ISBN: 3-11-017401-4.

There have been several recent studies of narrative elements in ancient drama, but this is the first to mount a narratological analysis of a single play. The book offers a number of stimulating insights into the *Oedipus at Colonus*, but I was not always convinced that they were produced by the narratological approach.

The first introductory chapter tackles the problems generated by applying to drama methods designed to elucidate narrative. M. indicates the points of contact between the two apparently disparate genres, and suggests that the differences may be mediated by the study of film, which has a dramatic dimension but which may be productively studied from a narratological point of view. The main tactic for getting out of any difficulty, however, is to propose that 'an external narrator is another narrative device among many others, the employment of which is completely in the power of the author or the playwright' (p. 4). If this device is absent, 'a particular issue arises with regard to the precise delineation of the commanding intelligence which brings the narrative to life' (p. 5). This 'governing consciousness' (p. 5), it turns out, 'we choose to identify with the playwright or the director' (p. 5). I found this problematic, for several reasons. Narratology, after all, often investigates texts that have no identifiable 'playwright or director', like folktales; it studies narrative and narrative voice rather than historically situated narrators. Even film theory, which certainly can privilege the 'auteur', also knows that a film is the end product of various processes that do not always add up to a 'commanding intelligence'. Finally, in the case of tragedy, many recent advances have been made by jettisoning the playwright's determining presence and investigating instead the other interacting forces that contribute to the genre—often, it may be, without the playwright's conscious knowledge. I shall return to this subsequently.

The introduction then offers an overview of narrative structure in drama in terms of

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