

Κακὸς Εὐνάτωρ: Divine Rape on the Tragic Stage

Rachel Herzog, Barnard College

Advisor: Professor Helene Foley, PhD

April 29th, 2015

Acknowledgments

My thanks first goes to Helene Foley, who has been generous beyond measure with her time, energy, support, and guidance throughout the long process of the creation of this thesis, ever since I first told her, in December of 2012, that I was interested in working on the *Ion*. The list of ways she has contributed to this project, and to the production with which it was intertwined, would go on for probably as long as the thesis itself.

Second, I would like to thank the entire cast and crew of the Barnard-Columbia Ancient Drama Group's production of *Ion*, whose enthusiasm, bravery, and talent have taught me so much about the text, and who have shared in the joy and beauty of this play with me.

I would also like to thank Deborah Steiner, who taught me about Pindar, Simonides, and the *Agamemnon*, continuously astounding me in the process, Nancy Worman, who has sharpened my skills as a reader and critic more than I could possibly say, Marcus Folch and Rebecca Deng, who looked at the first iterations of this work, and everyone who has put up with my rambling about these plays for the past several years in one form or another. I am grateful as well for a generous grant from the Garrett Albert Fund for Summer Study in Greek in June 2013 which supported the research which became chapter two of this thesis.

Introduction

Atrocities, however, refuse to be buried... Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites for both the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims. The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner which undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy. When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their healing (Herman 1).

οἴμοι, μέγας θησαυρὸς ὡς ἀνοίγνυται
κακῶν, ἐφ' οἷσι πᾶς ἂν ἐκβάλῃ δάκρυ.
“Oh me, such a great treasury of evils is revealed,
at which all would cast down tears” (*Ion*, 923-4).

Traumatic events shatter the normal course of human life. Where, before a trauma, an individual might live with only the most intellectualized awareness of their mortality or the fragility of their body, trauma throws these realities into radical relief, forcing a survivor to find a way to live with the knowledge of their own fundamental vulnerability. When the agent of that trauma is another human being, the impact on social relationships and functioning can be devastating. Jean Améry describes how his experience of torture destroyed what he calls “trust in the world” (Améry 28), stripping away the “expectation of help” (ibid) which he sees as essential to interaction with other human beings. We are able, according to Améry and Herman’s formulations, to live together only as long as we can hold onto a basic assurance of safety from violence at the hands of those around us. When that surety is violated, a process of healing and restoration is necessary on both the individual and social level in order to allow the survivor reintegration into the human community. But what does it mean when the agent of such a trauma is a god? How does this impact a survivor’s relationship to the divine, and to the cosmos more

generally? What potential can exist for a survivor to heal from such an injury, or for a community to cope with the knowledge of that atrocity?

Euripides' *Ion* dramatizes the process by which such an injury can be brought to light, and the impact that its telling may have on an individual and communal level. Creusa's rape by the god Apollo is an event which not only causes her personal grief and devastation, but also creates ruptures in religious faith, social bonds, and even the process of language and narration itself. When Creusa reveals the story of her rape to the old man who has been her mentor since childhood, he is at first unable to absorb the full narrative content of her words, which he describes as seizing him like a wave and throwing off his accustomed course (927-30). The pious Ion, devoted servant in Apollo's temple, is horrified at the knowledge that his beloved god could commit such a callous act, and envisions the knowledge of this injustice destroying the social structures which underly religious practice, as Poseidon and Zeus "empty temples paying for [their] injustice" (ναοὺς τίνοντες ἀδικίας κενώσετε, 447). Ultimately, Creusa's narrative even disrupts the plot itself, as the sympathetic devotion of the chorus of her attendants turns Apollo's carefully laid plans to peaceably introduce Ion into the royal house of Athens without revealing his parentage (69-75) into a series of near-misses with disaster.

The goal of this project shall be to explore what it means to represent the trauma of divine rape upon the tragic stage, focusing particularly but not exclusively upon the *Ion* as our most complete example of such a representation. The impregnation of mortal women by gods is an essential element of the Greek mythological system, allowing as it does for the birth of the semi-divine heroes on whom the structure of epic narrative depends. In Hesiod's *Theogony* and the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, women who bear divine children form the lynchpins which allow the poet to link divine cosmology to human existence, inextricably entwining the

worlds of gods and mortals together. Women's desired bodies thus act as an essential intersection points between gods and humans, occupying a liminal terrain in which harmony or conflict between mortal and divine can be made visible and enacted. Where pre-tragic forms, however, rarely show any interest in the subjective experience of women who are desired by gods, tragedy centers these figures, using the narration of their stories as a site to explore the injury caused by disruption of human-divine relationships more broadly. The traumatic injury caused to Creusa and her community by her rape at Apollo's hands is thus anything but an unusually daring heresy by the skeptic Euripides; rather, it is a violence which lies in potentiality behind the entire system of classical myth. Creusa's trauma is a danger which may threaten anyone in interaction with the gods, since it constitutes a violation not just of her body, but of the idealized system of reciprocal debt which, at least in imagination, allows for the continued functioning of relations between gods and mortals.

To demonstrate this, we will first begin by situating the *Ion* within the context of previous representations of divine-human sexual relations in lyric poetry, noting how issues of consent, resistance, and trauma are pointedly absent in such texts. We will focus particularly on Pindar's construction of these divine impregnations as peaceable exchanges of *charis*, which facilitate the continuance of heroic genealogy. The first chapter will then examine how the *Ion*, by contrast, represents Creusa's rape by Apollo as a traumatic violation of these relationships of reciprocity, looking particularly at the rhetorical strategies Creusa uses to articulate her own own injury. Next, the second chapter will broaden our focus to compare evidence from some of the fragmentary plays of Euripides to their parallels in the *Ion*, suggesting that we might understand *Ion* as part of a much more extensive re-examination of these tropes by Euripides and potentially other tragic playwrights as well. The third chapter will then explore possibilities for healing and

reconciliation presented in the play, arguing that Euripides' use of the chorus of the *Ion* and of the dramatic device of the recognition allows Creusa's narrative of divine violence to be validated and witnessed, despite the ambivalent responses of the gods in the play. Finally, my epilogue will discuss the parallel yet contrasting mythic figure of Cassandra, who, as represented by Aeschylus and Euripides, embodies a variety of other ways in which sexual desire between gods and mortals can cause ruptures and violations in the relationship between human and divine.

The choice to discuss sexual violence in the ancient world using the language of contemporary trauma theory is not an obvious or uncontroversial one, and it is a methodology which deserves some discussion before we continue. Trauma theory is a development of the post-psychoanalytic age, created by mental health professionals - both building from and reacting against Freud - over the course of the last century. These professionals pragmatically created a framework with which to discuss the experiences they were seeing among their patients, symptoms held in common among those who had survived a variety of atrocities including combat, genocide, and sexual violence. In the past few decades, literary theorists have adopted some of the tenets of trauma theory as a useful lens through which to understand dynamics of injury, memory, and witnessing in a variety of texts.¹ Although any attempt to unilaterally impose this framework upon classical literature will necessarily run of the risk of being profoundly ahistorical, many scholars over the last few decades have noted resonances between descriptions of combat trauma and the language used by Homer and Sophocles to describe the experience of warriors on the battlefield. Noting these resonances, they argue,

¹ See Laub and Felman 1992, one of the earliest and most prominent examples of this rhetorical strategy. Laub, a psychotherapist, and Felman, a literary theorist, collaborated to write a volume which looked at trauma theory both manifesting directly in survivors of the Holocaust, and in the context of literature. Another example would be Cindy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996).

allows us to more richly understand these classical texts as potentially creating a vocabulary to describe experiences of psychological suffering which might have been recognizable to or shared by many members of the ancient audience, while at once providing us with new ways to understand manifestations of trauma even in the modern age. Recent performance projects geared towards veterans have built upon this insight, to substantial public acclaim, and the issue was the subject of a conference at NYU in 2011.²

To apply similar frameworks to sexual violence remains, however, a more delicate and fraught step, which few have taken. Many scholars have argued that rape in the ancient world was pervasively naturalized, and was not understood, at least by the male writers whose works are extant to us, as an inherently damaging or ethically unacceptable act. Froma Zeitlin sees rape in Greek myth as generally associated with nature in contrast to culture, as “the clearest sign of sexuality as a natural, if untamed instinct, is the propensity of the male towards rape” (Zeitlin 1986, 125)³, a conception which would profoundly normalize sexual violence in the Greek imagination. The paucity of available legal remedies for victims of rape in classical Athens has been used as further evidence of this normalization,⁴ as has the lack in the Greek language of a single word which is used to mean ‘rape’ in all contexts a factor which, as Adele Scafuro’s work demonstrates, can make it difficult even to concretely identify instances of rape in Greek literature. Yet I would argue that the lack of public options for legal redress does not necessarily

² See, for example, the work of Jonathan Shay and Peter Meineck, particularly Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam*. The NYU conference may be read about here: <http://ancientgreekmodernlives.org/events/conference/>

³ I am simplifying her article substantially, as it is in fact a good deal more nuanced than this and concerned largely with reception. However, the omission of Creusa, Cassandra, and Philomela, among others, is striking, and reflects the article’s lack of interest in places where rape is portrayed in myth as violent and damaging.

⁴ Rosanna Omitowaju’s *Rape and the Politics of Consent in Classical Athens* provides a useful overview of the available legal evidence; her general conclusion is that, for unmarried women, marriage to an assailant was almost always preferable to public legal action, though limited legal penalties were possible, if difficult to obtain.

indicate a lack of acknowledgement of the damaging personal impact of sexual violence within the private sphere. Furthermore, the vast number of verbal formulations available for describing rape in the literature can provide nuance and flexibility as well as ambiguity. The use of words such as *hubrizein*, which can also describe physical assault, in fact indicates the potential for a continuity between sexual and physical violence in the Greek imagination, suggesting moral judgment rather than normalization, and the addition of the appellation *biai*, “by force”, to words of sexual intercourse, provides one option by which authors could make the nonconsensual nature of a sexual experience extremely clear.⁵ The myth of Demeter and Persephone, which centers around a mother and daughter’s shared experience of loss and violation, provides us one culturally central prototype of understanding female endurance within inescapable situations, suggesting that modes of meaningful recognition of sexual trauma which did not depend upon legal redress may have existed in some contexts. Although Scafuro understands the representation of rape in the *Ion* to be profoundly anomalous, arguing that in this play Euripides “broke a taboo...he did not set a trend” (Scafuro 151), the fact remains that our evidence is far too fragmentary to make such a claim with any certainty; almost all of the plays dealing with similar topics are now lost to us. What we *can* confidently assert is that Euripides figures

⁵ There is a great deal of concern (some of which I have been the firsthand recipient of in the course of directing the *Ion*) that labeling events in Greek literature specifically as rape may be anachronistic, and obscure our understanding of the text within its original historical context. I take this point, and indeed think it valuable to consider the ways in which our modern category of ‘rape’ may itself be culturally mediated. However, when scholars show little or no compunction assuming some level of continuity between our contemporary understanding of other emotional experiences (such as grief, sexual desire, and so forth) and that of the Greeks, I think it long since time that we named sexual trauma within the classical world for what it is, and continue the actual work of analyzing its representation. I think it also very much worth considering how the impulse *not* to label an event as rape may itself be an imposition of contemporary cultural values on an ancient text - when Wilamowitz or Anne Pippin Burnett scrupulously avoid naming Apollo in the *Ion* as a rapist, how much of that is coming from purely contemporary distaste for and alienation from the idea of a deity committing sexual violence? When other scholars avoid discussing the sexual coercion present in Archilochus’ “Cologne Epode,” might some of this be related to the normalization of just that kind of coercion in our own world? Understanding modernity as a space in which rape may be transparently recognized and named is in itself anachronistic.

Creusa's rape in terms of severe injury, and that all the characters on stage react accordingly, with not a single one of them suggesting to her that her emotional reaction to the rape might be inappropriate. For this reason, I feel that the framework of psychological trauma is an appropriate one to use in analyzing Euripides' text, and indeed may be a vital mode through which to understand the devastating impact of divine rape within this plot.⁶

While half-divine heroes are frequent recipients of *kleos* and objects of hero-cults, their mothers are, at least initially, almost universally subject to violence, denigration, or expulsion from their communities. A woman who has been impregnated by a god is frequently disbelieved by her family, and subsequently punished for sexual transgression. Such punishments frequently follow a paradigm of enclosure and exposure, either shutting up the body of the pregnant woman, casting her out of her natal city, or ideally, combining both through imprisonment outside of the city walls, as with Danae, locked in a chest which is then thrown out to sea, or Alope, buried alive outside Eleusis.⁷ The proliferation of such narratives suggests that there is something threatening, even polluting about women who have been intimate with gods, such that their bodies must be removed from contact with the rest of the *polis*. The disbelief which these women meet from fathers and husbands further presents the possibility that there is something about the divine-human union which creates a barrier to its acceptance into communal consciousness. These women, in their new liminal intimacy with the divine, are dangerous. The

⁶ There have been previous readings which have discussed the play in terms of psychological trauma, most notably psychoanalytic readings by Victoria Pedrick and Naomi Weiss. Pedrick and Weiss, however, confine their theoretical framework to the confines of Freud's own work, from which later trauma theory departs markedly and pointedly in several places. In addition they both, like Freud, are primarily interested in the 'primal scene' constituted by the moment of Ion's exposure, rather than in the rape itself. Rudolph Binion briefly discusses the play in his article "Traumatic Reliving in Classical Fiction," but his analysis is relatively generic, and does not engage with the original Greek text.

⁷ Ioanna Karamanou has detailed variants on the Danae and Alope myths in her studies of these two figures. See Karamanou 2006 and Karamanou 2003, respectively.

reintegration of them into their communities often may only occur once their divine child is grown and can advocate on their behalf, as is the case with Antiope, Melanippe, and Danae. In these narratives, the extraordinary deeds of their sons function as embodied proof of the divine union through which they were engendered. Even those women who are killed before they can be proven to speak truly, such as Semele, are often vindicated after their death (Dionysus indeed goes to extreme measures to do so in Euripides' *Bacchae*). Richard Seaford understands this exposure-enclosure paradigm as an economical consolidation of two conventional cultural practices - the seclusion of unmarried girls and the exposure of unwanted infants (Seaford 81). The tendency for narratives to unite these practices further points towards the confusion of categories created by women bearing divine children, as they can no longer easily occupy the roles of either *parthenos* or *gune*, maiden or wife. Despite their vital position in upholding the mythic and religious system, these women themselves hold an uneasy status.⁸

There is a little space for narration of the inner experience of such characters in pre-tragic poetry. The single extant exception, Simonides' fragment 543, draws us dramatically into the space of Danae's enclosure within the chest itself, narrating the tumultuous experience of her confinement and the latent heroic potentiality of her infant, Perseus. At least in what we have of the poem now, Simonides seems to show no interest in the moment of Perseus' conception, emphasizing Danae's suffering at human rather than divine hands. *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* investigates the question of divine-human sexual relations through the story of Aphrodite and Anchises, and the question of human consent to sexual intercourse with a god is in

⁸ One intriguing but undeveloped potential character type through which we might understand some of these characters is offered by a much later typology of characters in New Comedy constructed by an author named Pollux, who listed various types of masks used and the characters they belonged to. Pollux describes the *pseudokore*, literally 'false maiden'. This category, into which the raped heroines of a number of Menander plays would likely fall, is described with a mask paler than a typical *kore*, with "hair bound around the front of the head; resembles a young married woman" (Ruffell 154).

this poem delicately obscured. Anchises initiates relations with Aphrodite when believing her to be a mortal princess, and reacts with terror to the revelation of her true identity (*Hymn to Aphrodite* 185-190). Although the seduction is accomplished through deception and allure rather than force, the emphasis upon the irresistibility of Aphrodite's self-presentation combined with Anchises' fear of physical disability or impotence upon learning her true identity raises the question of whether we can understand Anchises' consent to Aphrodite, and by extension that of any mortal to a god, as a meaningful possibility at all. The poem emphasizes the coercion involved in the seduction at every point, even specifying that Aphrodite herself is being forced into her union with Anchises as a form of humiliation engineered by Zeus to punish her for creating desire in him and the other gods (45-53). Later, when Aphrodite endeavors to comfort Anchises following her revelation of her own identity, the mythological narratives which she offers as prototypes, including that of the abduction of Ganymede, all focus in some way upon coercion and force. Anchises' consent in the moment of sexual consummation itself is immaterial; there are much larger forces at work in bringing the two of them together, and the powerful differential is such that resistance on Anchises' part would have been a virtual impossibility.⁹

Pindar's victory odes represent the potential *correct* functioning of sexual relations between gods and humans as a source of a glory and a medium for the reciprocal exchange of *charis* between the mortal and divine realms. *Pythian 9*, our clearest example of this, involves a cautious Apollo seeking advice from the centaur Chiron about how best to woo the nymph

⁹ I am grateful to Kay Gabriel for discussing the *Hymn to Aphrodite* with me, and most particularly for her thoughts on the gendering of the seduction, which are explored at greater length in her own master's thesis.

Cyrene (*Pythian 9*, 28 and following) before whisking her away to make her a queen.¹⁰ This depiction is anomalous for the absence of any even threatened punishment to Cyrene at any point; although the moment of consummation itself is, as usual, elided, and Cyrene is given no chance to consent to or reject Apollo's advances, the narrative shows a marked investment in portraying her fate as glorious.¹¹ *Olympian 6*, in which the plot turns around two different stories of divine birth, invokes the enclosure-exposure paradigm only to prevent it in a narrative which, with a few wrong turns, could easily have turned into that of the *Ion*. After Evadne has been impregnated by Apollo - in a sex act which, unusually, we can be pretty sure *wasn't* rape; she "with Apollo first touched the sweetness of Aphrodite" (*Olympian 6*, 35-36) - her guardian, Aepytyos, reacts first with rage and disbelief. However, he "pressed down the rage in his heart with sharp care" (38-9), and instead goes to consult the Pythia at Delphi, turning directly to Apollo for answers about his ward's intimacy with him and putting the oracle, an established channel for interaction between human and divine, to the use for which it is intended. Evadne, still afraid, goes alone to give birth in wilderness, as Creusa will do, but, unlike with Creusa, who is repeatedly shown as alone and abandoned in the moment of Ion's birth, Apollo calls on

¹⁰ Cyrene is herself interestingly represented as a conscious violator of cultural strictures around appropriate behavior for young women from the moment we first see her in the poem as a successful lone huntress. It is unclear to me whether Cyrene's exceptional status singles her out as a fit consort for the god, or whether her already marginal status leaves her in some way vulnerable to victimization.

¹¹ The nature of the sexual relations between Apollo and Cyrene has been debated. Kearns reads the interaction as a formal, consensual marriage, which would have continued as a stable union (Kearns 59), though her argument is undermined by the fact the very vocabulary which she argues from (particularly γάμος) is later used to describe the rape of Creusa, which is very specifically *not* in the context of a stable or ongoing relationship. Zacharia assumes without much justification that Apollo's union with Cyrene was a rape, and says that "Pindar gives voice to the seducer (not the seduced) thus extenuating the violence" (Zacharia 141). I find the issue inconclusive; the verb ἀπαύξω (6) with which the abduction is described is used in *The Hymn to Demeter* of Hades and Persephone, where it clearly describes both a rape and a marriage.

Eleithuia and the Moirai to ease Evadne's labor pains (42)¹². Evadne then exposes the infant, who is watched over by friendly snakes (Creusa will set golden snakes in the basket with the infant Ion in hopes that they might serve the same purpose), but Aepyros' return with Delphic confirmation of the child's parentage allows his and Evadne's swift and peaceful reintegration into the community. This poem seems to dangle before the audience all the possible ways in which a divine birth may go wrong, only to allow them to be averted at the last minute through human piety and the god's care for his partner's well-being.

The objects of divine lust in Pindar are themselves possessed of special privileges due to their intimacy with the divine, and have the authority to exact boons from gods due to the debt of *charis* they are owed for providing a god with sexual pleasure. We have already see that Cyrene receives a kingdom in exchange for her liaison with Apollo; Protogenia in *Olympian 9* is provided by Zeus with a husband. In *Olympian 1* Pelops calls upon his abductor Poseidon to give him the magical horses which he needs to win the hand of the princess Hippodameia, reminding Poseidon that he owes Pelops *charis* for having received from him "the dear gifts of Cyprus" (φίλια δώρα/Κυπρίας, 75-7). In Simonides 543, Danae calls to Zeus for rescue, reminding him of his role as the father of her child (24) and authoritatively commanding the sea to quiet and her evil fate to reverse itself (22). Although Danae, conscious of the dubious position of her speech as an unmarried girl, qualifies her prayer with concerns about its "boldness" (25), she nonetheless acknowledges an obligation owed to her by the god who fathered her child. While it is customary in a kletic hymn to remind the god one invokes of votive acts which one has performed for that god in the past, this rhetoric of a mutual obligation of *charis* between a god and a mortal is striking and anomalous. Sexual intimacy is one of the only sites in which

¹² Athena's speech at the end of the play suggests that Apollo does keep some sort of watch over Creusa's pregnancy and labor, but, as I will discuss further below (see chapter three), the alleviation of pain is not specified.

such a debt may be formed, and thus is an essential site for the forging of mutually beneficial bonds between gods and human communities. Such bonds prove vital to Pindar's own project of glorifying human achievement in peaceable relation to the divine.¹³

With the shift into tragedy, we see a new focus on the figure of the woman who is desired by a god, and in her representation as a speaker who can articulate her own experience. Several generic features of the form leave it uniquely poised to represent such narration. Most simply, tragedy's alternation between singular and collective choral voices makes any contention between an individual and their community, such as those which lead to the expulsion of Danae, Melanippe, and Alope, into rich dramatic territory. Tragedy creates space to dramatize the act of personal testimony and witnessing, turning its focus to the speaking of a subjective narrative and its collective reception. The stage space and generic conventions of tragedy in themselves also leave the form particularly suited to the representation of conflicts around gender and femininity, as Zeitlin and Seaford have shown us.¹⁴ Seaford has even argued that the paradigm of enclosure and exposure, which we earlier identified as a frequent trope in the punishment of sexually transgressive women, is itself at the heart of an understanding of the tragic stage space, since "tragic action is located between the hidden inside of the σκῆνη (house, or sometimes cave) and the equally invisible outside of the city state or wild" (Seaford 89-90), creating an intrinsic generic tension between center and periphery, containment and expulsion.

Tragedy also involves a persistent interest in the difficulties involved in human relations with the gods, and the violence which can occur when those relations are disrupted. The ritual context of the performance in combination with the enactment of mythic narrative and,

¹³ I thank Rebecca Deng for this particular formulation of Pindar's intent.

¹⁴ See Zeitlin 1996, 353 and following.

frequently, of religious ritual internal to that narrative,¹⁵ makes the question of human relations to divinity intrinsic to the act of performance itself. Euripides in particular shows a repeated focus on the complexity of relating to the gods at once as objects of worship and as individually motivated characters, particularly in such plays as the *Hippolytus* and *Bacchae*.¹⁶ Women who have been the objects of sexual desire, and who thus have embodied experience of the gods as actors, are ideal vehicles for exploring such questions, just as their suffering is an ideal vehicle for representing the fraught ethical territory of the gods' just and unjust behavior. In the *Prometheus Bound*, Io's suffering functions as a metonym for Zeus' broader injustice as a ruler, while in the *Agamemnon*, Cassandra's agonized and conflicted relationship with Apollo, who she both worshipped and denied, brings all the larger perversions of ritual and faith in *The Oresteia* into sharp focus. While *Ion* is our only fully extant play in which such a character is a central protagonist, fragments as well as attestations of lost plays show that there were likely over a dozen plays about characters in similar situations to Creusa, by all the tragedians.¹⁷ For this reason, I believe it is vital for us to understand how Euripides represents the unique trauma of divine rape, and the possibilities he presents for its witnessing and healing. While one of the immense excitements of the *Ion* is its anomalous nature, and differences from other tragedies, we also must understand Creusa's story as part of a broader attention to women desired or victimized by gods as appropriate and rich subjects for tragic narrative.

¹⁵ See Eva Stehle's "Choral Prayer in Greek Tragedy: Euphemia or Aischrologia?" for an interesting discussion of what it may have meant to represent ritual speech and action upon the tragedy stage.

¹⁶ See Sheila Murnaghan's "The Daughters of Cadmus: Chorus and Characters in Euripides' *Bacchae* and *Ion*" for an exploration of the narrative resonances between these two plays.

¹⁷ See Karamanou 2006 for a good summary of these.

Chapter One: Articulating Creusa's Injury

The violence of Creusa's rape by the god Apollo and its traumatic aftermath run insistently through Euripides' *Ion*. The play refuses to allow audiences to forget the impact of Apollo's actions, as the details of the rape and exposure repeat throughout the text with an urgency and persistence not unlike the common intrusion of traumatic memories into individual consciousness. The fact of the violence is laid out immediately in the prologue, without euphemism or prevarication, as Hermes recounts that "By force Apollo yoked the child of Erectheus, Creusa, in marriage" (οὐ παῖδ' Ἐρεχθέως Φοῖβος ἔζευξεν γάμοις/βίᾳ Κρέουσαν, 10-11). The tension of the drama then becomes not the issue of the rape itself, but of its disclosure; when shall the story be revealed, and to whom? How shall it be received? The play invites us to trace the effects created by the story itself, first as a secret which brings shame, grief, and isolation to Creusa, and later as a narrative which resonates throughout the world of the play. The revelation and witnessing of divine rape, Euripides suggests, are necessary but double-edged - at once the devastating cause of crisis and rupture within both the social and religious spheres, and also a means of bringing relief, healing, and joyous reunion. The following chapter will examine the ways in which the *Ion* articulates Creusa's traumatic injury as a source of both inner pain and isolating disconnection from her social and religious community. Euripides represents Creusa's trauma as consisting of the two distinct but intertwined wounds of the rape itself, and her subsequent pregnancy and exposure of her child, each of which is given equal weight and seriousness within the text. However, this chapter will focus primarily upon the

rape itself, whose status as a trauma has received less attention within current criticism.¹⁸ We will explore the elements of Creusa's suffering which are recognizable within cross-cultural depictions of trauma and particularly sexual violence, as well as those which are specific to the role played by divine rape within the religious context of classical Greece.

The *Ion* is a play focused consistently on the process of identifying and appropriately enacting ritual speech and practice. Immediately after the prologue, we are presented with Ion's monody, which takes on many of the formal elements of a paean to Apollo¹⁹ and shows Ion engaged in the process of cleaning the temple of Delphi as well as providing instructions about how his attendants ought to purify themselves and engage only in *euphemia* while within the sacred space (96-101). Later, in the parodos and the first episode, Ion will provide further instruction to the chorus and Xuthus about how they should and should not behave when approaching the god (218-31 and 414-6). The messenger speech dramatizes how Ion's life is saved due to his piety and adherence to religious convention, when he throws out his poisoned wine in response to the *blasphemian* uttered by one of his companions (1187-95). Characters other than Ion are also shown as deeply and fervently engaged in religious practice, as the chorus prays to Athena, patron goddess of their city, for Creusa's success in gaining children (451-71), and calls upon the memory of the rites of Eleusis to sustain them after Creusa's disclosure and the dangerous poisoning of Ion (1073-88; see also chapter three below). Creusa turns to female goddesses such as Leto (410), Athena (871-3, 1528-30) and Persephone (1453) for guidance, comfort and authority. The world of the play is one in which religious faith is an object of meaningful concern, and in which relationships with the gods are shown as nuanced and multi-

¹⁸ Pedrick's *Euripides, Freud, and the Romance of Belonging* presents a solid trauma-inflected reading of the impact of the exposure on both Creusa and Ion.

¹⁹ See the first chapter of Laura Swift's *The Hidden Chorus* for a full discussion of the generic features of the paean.

faceted, providing joy, nourishment, and validation to worshippers. Ritual speech is not only directly represented, in a variety of contexts, but is also openly discussed, and the issue of how it is and is not appropriate for humans to interact with gods is repeatedly brought before us. Ion and the chorus in particular treat personal faith and external ritual practice as things which must be reverently safeguarded, as Ion prevents the defilement of Apollo's temple by both birds and ignorant tourists, and the chorus positions themselves as protectors of the sanctity of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Thrown into this context, the traumatic impact of Creusa's narrative is like an explosion. However Ion and the chorus may work to control the manner in which they treat the gods, no human can ultimately have control over how the gods treat them, and the violence visited upon Creusa is shattering to all the ideas about ritual reciprocity upon which human interactions with the divine rest. As we have already seen, Ion reacts to the telling of Creusa's story (in the first episode, where she frames her narrative as that of a friend) with horror and confusion, questioning the very foundations of his devotion to Apollo. Though his initial reaction of disbelief (339-43) is brief, his impulse is immediately to silence the story, which he sees as having the potential to wreck havoc upon the orderly system of Delphi. Moved to empathy by the pathos of Creusa's story and the likeness he sees between it and his own exposure (359), even pious Ion cannot help but admit the injustice of Apollo's actions, telling Creusa that "the god did wrong" (ἀδικεῖ νιν ὁ θεός, 355). Yet despite, and perhaps even because of the emotional impact of the story, Ion tells Creusa that she cannot be permitted to speak it publicly within the sanctuary, as asking the god to confirm his own misdeed would create an unreconcilable paradox which could undermine the authority of the oracle itself (369 and following). Ion admonishes

Creusa not to “convict” Apollo (367), representing her knowledge of the secret of the rape as synonymous with possession of a power to challenge and perhaps harm the god himself.

Ion’s reaction to the narrative is to work to suppress the knowledge of atrocity in the same way that psychiatrist Judith Herman has described witnesses to violence doing throughout history. Herman has characterized the history of trauma as one of “episodic amnesia” (Herman 7), as atrocities are repeatedly brought to light by survivors and advocates and then silenced again to protect the interests of powerful perpetrators. Herman argues that public recognition of trauma is a uniquely difficult task because believing and hearing victims comes with a moral imperative towards “action, engagement, and remembering” (Herman 7-8), while “all the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing” (ibid). It is this conflict between his own piety and the moral imperative towards action that Creusa’s narrative presents which Ion grapples with in his soliloquy in the first episode, where he addresses Apollo directly, confronting him about his unjust actions and imploring him to cease. Despite his sympathy for Creusa (or for the hypothetical ‘friend’ she purports to speak for), Ion recognizes the rupture her narrative could create within his world, and participates in silencing it. The most serious attempts to silence Creusa come, however, from Apollo himself, who, as we learn in the prologue, orchestrates events both during Creusa’s pregnancy (14 and following) and afterwards to prevent knowledge of the rape from reaching public consciousness. The entire plot of the play can be seen as Apollo’s attempt to contain the destructive power of the story, as he first presents Xuthus with a misleading prophecy rather than openly identifying Ion as Creusa’s son, and later sends Athena as a *deus ex machina* to prevent Ion from asking directly about his parentage within the sanctuary (exactly as Creusa hoped to do earlier in the play) and to ensure that the story is concealed from Xuthus and the Athenian populace. We can thus understand Athena’s

intervention at the ending of the play as just such an instance of silencing and amnesia, preventing the knowledge of atrocity, recently resurfaced in the form of Creusa's disclosure, from spreading widely enough to cause ruptures in the broader social and religious world.²⁰

Yet the play, as a rare example of divine plans going awry, shows that such attempts at silencing cannot be wholly successful. Creusa's possession of the knowledge of Apollo's injustice endows her with a unique power to disrupt even divine intention. Ion acknowledges this with his fear that she might "convict" (ἔξελεγχέ, 367) Apollo, a formulation which places her in a position of legal authority, as a figure whose words have a performative effect, with the potential to directly impact reality. Creusa herself not only understands the potential for her story to disrupt religious life, but actually rhetorically emphasizes it, using her monody to subvert ritual language at every turn. Jene LaRue has done an impressive job tracing how Creusa reverses "the hymnal style from the usual praise of the god to an utter condemnation of him" (LaRue 128), comparing Creusa's bitter use of traditional devices such as hypomnesis to their lyric precedents. Creusa rings her depiction of the assault with representations of Apollo in his traditional role as musician, turning what conventionally would function as epithets of his beauty and glory into examples of his apathy in the face of her pain, as he plays paeans on his cithara (σὺ δὲ κιθάρα κλάζεις/παιᾶνας μέλπων, 905-6) while their son dies. By the end of her audacious accusation, Creusa has gone so far as to assert that "Delphi and the sprouting laurel hate you" (μυσεῖ σ' ἅ Δᾶλος καὶ δάφνας/ἔρνεα, 919-20), turning some of the god's most recognizable attributes against him and reminding the audience of the status of those attributes as

²⁰ See chapter three below for further discussion of Athena's speech.

the spoils of conquest and force.²¹ If Ion’s monody has left us listening for the dangerous potential of *blasphemia*, then here we have it.

Yet, the play at no point condemns Creusa for her denunciation of Apollo, but rather seems to present it as justified at every turn. From her first entrance on stage, Creusa has been represented as caught in and tormented by the memory of the rape:

ἐγὼ δ’ ἰδοῦσα τοῦσδ’ Ἀπόλλωνος δόμους
μνήμην παλαιὰν ἀνεμετροησάμην τινά·
εἶκει δὲ τὸν νοῦν ἔσχον ἐνθάδ’ οὐσά που.
ὦ τλήμονες γυναῖκες· ὦ τολμήματα
θεῶν. τί δῆτα; ποῖ δίκην ἀνοίσομεν,
εἰ τῶν κρατούντων ἀδικίαις ὀλούμεθα;
“I, seeing this house of Apollo,
retraced the steps of an old memory,
held in some other place, though being here.
O unfortunate women; o reckless deeds
of the gods! What then? From whom should we seek justice,
if we are destroyed by the injustices of the strong?” (249-54)

The sight of the temple of Apollo, which for most visitors is an object of delight and wonder (245), for Creusa evokes the unhappy memory of her violation. The impact of this memory is perceived as physical in nature, with a coercively spatial dimension, as it holds her (ἔσχον), and forces her to retrace her steps (ἀνεμετροησάμην) into a distant spatial and temporal location. This is a common rhetoric used by survivors of trauma, who often “relive the event as though it were continually occurring in the present...small, seemingly insignificant reminders can evoke these memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event” (Herman 37). Many trauma survivors describe these intrusions in terms of spatial movement and a confinement within the space of the memory, elements which also lead to a

²¹ This is particularly true of the laurel, metonym for the body of Daphne, who was sexually victimized in a similar fashion as Creusa herself. The chthonic heritage of Delphi is little discussed in the play, though some scholars have made analogies between that and Creusa’s association with autochthony and snake imagery.

feeling of dissociation from the present reality. Creusa is isolated from the chorus, who function as her community, by her inability to perceive the temple, which caused the chorus so much joy and excitement that they felt compelled to sing an ekphrastic parodos about it (184-217), as anything but a disturbing reminder of her rape. These lines' pointed juxtaposition of the space of her memory (εἶκει) and the space of the present moment (ἐνθάδ') emphasizes Creusa's awareness of her own disconnection and isolation. Caught up alone in her secret, Creusa cannot wholly be present.

This dissociation is further demonstrated in the stichomythia which follow her entrance, as Creusa responds to Ion's repeated attempts to engage her in conversation about her family history with references back to the wretchedness of the rape and exposure. Even while answering Ion's questions, Creusa cannot help dismissing them as essentially irrelevant to her inner experience, as "my family line does not help me" (τὸ δὲ γένος μ' οὐκ ὠφελεί, 268). Supposedly neutral conversation topics, such as the geography of her city, plunge Creusa into further distress as she is reminded of the location of her assault (283-8). We can also see this dissociation operating in Creusa's initial choice to tell her story as the narrative of a friend, a choice which allows herself to speak about her experience while also keeping herself safely distanced from the potential consequences of disclosure. She articulates this herself in her address to Apollo, where she defines herself, by virtue of her deceptive telling of the story, as at once present and absent: ὦ Φοῖβε, κάκει κἀνθάδ' οὐ δίκαιος εἶ/ ἐς τὴν ἀποῦσαν, ἧς πάρεσιν οἱ λόγοι ("O Phoebus, even if the one to whom you have done injustice is absent, her words are present," 384-5). While these lines may function simply as a caveat appended to her prayer which allows her to maintain her fictitious identity in front of the Ion and the chorus, we can also see them as more fundamentally expressing Creusa's liminal position as at once living

in the present, as an adult and queen, and being caught up repeatedly and inescapably in the past moment of her victimization. This division of self allows her to safely take the first steps towards disclosing her story without risking her reputation or social position, and perhaps has permitted to keep her secret for the many years leading up to the play. Such divisions of self are extremely common among trauma survivors, who describe a wide range of dissociative experiences, from feeling ‘out of their bodies’ in moments of fear to feeling and acting like a different person within different contexts in order to remain functional within society despite the devastation of their injury. We have seen earlier that women violated by gods are seen as dangerously disruptive to the gendered social order, as they could not fit simply into the social categories of either *parthenos* or *gune*. By the start of the play, Creusa has spent many years concealing her rape and subsequent pregnancy from her community because those experiences by definition violate the very narratives she was required to inhabit in order to fulfill her social role as Erectheus’ daughter and Xuthus’ wife. By separating out the self who experienced Apollo’s rape from the public self who we see at the beginning of the play, Creusa effectively safeguards her role within this social system, and protects herself from the kinds of punishments we have seen visited on women like Danae, Alope, or Melanippe.

For this reason, it is only when she understands herself to have lost all connection to her social roles as wife and potential mother that Creusa is able to make a full disclosure and narrate her story in the first-person. Although *aidos*, shame, has previously prevented her from speaking openly about her experience (336, 861),²² as soon as these socially-conditioned impediments (*ἐμπόδιον*, 862) are removed, being heard and witnessed becomes her first priority. She

²² Adele Scafuro provides us with a wonderful analysis of the discourse of shame in the *Ion* as well as in other ancient accounts of sexual violence, concluding that “the significance of shame - and its loss - for Kreousa’s revelation of memory cannot be underestimated” (Scafuro 145). Creusa understands the shame of the rape as properly belonging not just to her, but to Apollo as well.

represents this disclosure as an essential step in healing the injury of the rape, declaring in the first section of her monody, “No longer will I hide that bed, but, as if lifting a weight from my chest, I will ease myself” (οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος, ὡς στέρονων/ἀπονησαμένη ῥάων ἔσομαι, 874-5). The medicalized language of these lines presents the rape and exposure as sources of continuous, long-lasting pain, which require specific intervention to be healed or ‘eased.’ Creusa earlier described the rape as an illness (320), and asserted its continuing negative impact in opposition to Ion’s attempts at silencing, declaring to Ion that “by [Apollo’s] act, the suffering one is still in pain” (ἀλγύνεται δέ γ’ ἡ παθοῦσα τῇ τύχῃ, 368). In combination with her consistent use of the rhetoric of *dike*, this language represents the injurious quality of Apollo’s actions as both internally and externally visible, an external crime worthy of legal condemnation and an internal illness in need of healing. The opposition she draws within the monody between silence/concealment and disclosure/healing shows a faith in the intrinsic recuperative properties of speech,²³ in a fashion akin to Dori Laub’s analysis of the essential role which testimony plays in the healing of trauma survivors. Laub argues that a traumatic memory is given form and meaning only when it can be appropriately heard and witnessed, with the listener as “the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time” (Laub 57). Within the monody, we see Creusa taking control over the assault in which her own control was taken away from her, and appropriating the language of hymnic address in order represent her own pain and rage to be witnessed and understood by the chorus and the old man.

For all the empowering, authoritative qualities of Creusa’s speech, her controlled narrative comes close to breaking down as her monody approaches the moment of the rape itself. While both the earlier and later sections are exquisitely controlled, deliberative reconfigurings of

²³ By way of comparison, see *Medea* 473-4.

hymnic form, the narration of the assault itself is imagistic and vivid yet scattered, with individual sensory details replacing chronological storytelling. Scafuro describes Creusa's memory as "dramatically alive...she pours it out, out of control, she herself is possessed by it" (Scafuro 148). So as not to obscure the unique syntax of the piece, I do not include a translation.

ἦλθές μοι χρυσῶ χαίταν
μαρμαίρων, εὐτ' ἐς κόλπους
κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον,
ἀνθίζειν χρυσανταυγῆ·
λευκοῖς δ' ἐμφὺς καρποῖσιν
χειρῶν εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας
κραυγὰν ὦ μάτερ μ' αὐδῶσαν
θεὸς ὀμευέτας
ἄγες ἀναιδεῖα
Κύπριδι χάριν πράσσω. (886-896)

Creusa's narration fixes on several individual details - Apollo's shining hair;²⁴ the flowers she plucks, his hands upon her wrists, her scream - and allows them to stand in for the entire event of the assault.²⁵ These elements of the scene are enmeshed with one another in the verse, chiasmically overlaid, so that it is easy for a reader or listener to confuse the gleam of Apollo's hair with the yellow of the crocuses, or Apollo's hands with Creusa's. Even the stately anapestic meter disintegrates at this point; while previously the monody has proceeded steadily, with an abundance of long syllables, as Creusa describes her flower petals this meter dissolves in

²⁴ Naomi Weiss, following Freud, makes the provocative claim that Creusa's description of Apollo's physical beauty is indicative of a repressed sexual desire which puts the credibility of her narration into question (Weiss 43). I would respond that the use of modern conceptual frameworks should not be taken as a license to impose our most pernicious contemporary prejudices on an ancient culture which may not have shared them. I agree with LaRue and Kearns that this reference to χρυσῶ χαίταν/μαρμαίρων would better be taken as a further evocation of the hymnic form which deliberately contrasts with the violence of Apollo's actions, and add that these descriptors also create an impression of the overwhelming quality of Apollo's divinity, adding to the sensory intensity of Creusa's experience.

²⁵ Anne Pippin Burnett has argued that the supposed absence of overt violence in these lines means that they should not be understood as representing a rape, asserting that the words used to describe Apollo's touch are "as gentle as any in the language" (Burnett 86). I hate to think what *would* count as sufficient evidence of a rape to Burnett, if a girl screaming for her mother is not enough.

resolution, leaving us with line 888 composed almost entirely of short syllables. A similar effect occurs again at 900, when Creusa refers back to the wretchedness of the rape (ἵνα με λέχῃσι μελέαν μελέοις). The choice of imagery adds to this confusion, as the description of Apollo's hands as "implanted on [her] white wrists" (λευκοῖς δ' ἐμφύς καρποῖσιν, 891) plays on both the ambiguity of καρποῖσιν, which can refer either to fruit or wrists, and the multiple meanings of ἐμφύς to make the scene appear built into and inextricable from its natural setting. Creusa's "plucking" (ἔδρεπον, 888) of the flower petals also ominously resonates with the use of that word to describe the 'deflowering' of maidens. Like Persephone seduced by a flower, at the moment of her assault Creusa perceives the whole natural world as conspiring to ensnare her, and Apollo's inextricability from the landscape, in combination with his overwhelming shining (μαρμαίρων, 887) reminds her listeners of the particular trauma and terror of divine rape, which comes from the perpetrator's omnipotence. While victims of human assaults must often contend in the aftermath with the knowledge that the social community has colluded to deny them Améry's "expectation of help" (Améry 28), Creusa must live with the knowledge that the entire cosmos stood against her.

This narrative ultimately functions as an attestation to both the power and failure of language as a tool for representing and healing from trauma. The imagery we have examined above is represented as spiraling almost out of Creusa's control, yet it serves effectively to demonstrate the confusion and terror of her experience. When she comes to describing the moment of violation itself, words fail her, and the cry to her mother which she uttered at that moment in the past intrudes into the verse, its sounding bursting apart the object and verb of the

line (κραυγὰν ᾧ μᾶτέρ μ' αὐδῶσαν, 893).²⁶ Yet we can also understand this failure of language as an avoidance of the voyeuristic or objectifying gaze which might attend more specific descriptions of the act of rape. Creusa's cry to her mother is the only example of reported speech within the piece, as Creusa refuses to quote any words that might have been spoken by Apollo over the course of the assault, even as she continually represents him as creating sound with his voice and lyre.²⁷ In contrast to earlier narratives of divine-mortal sexual intercourse, such as Pythian 9, discussed above, Creusa specifically denies her listeners access to her perpetrator's gaze or perspective on the assault. We receive no physical descriptions of Creusa herself, but only of Apollo, who we see as through through Creusa's eyes, as she narrates only the elements of the scene which would have been accessible to her. By the end of the monody, Creusa is able to gain control again of her dissolving meter, and return to her authoritative denunciation of the god, and in fact is so certain in the rightness of her claim that she can reclaim elements of the natural world as her allies, declaring Apollo hated by Delos, his birthplace, and by the laurel which is his emblem (919-20).

Creusa's claim against Apollo relies on the assertion that he has violated the same discourse of *charis* that we previously saw in its appropriate functioning in Pindar. While Creusa describes the rape itself as an object of personal terror and pain, the injustice she identifies on Apollo's part is not so much that he has used violence against her, but that, in the process and aftermath, he has failed to repay the reciprocal debt of *charis* he thus owes. Creusa explicitly articulates to the old man her expectation, after Ion's birth, that Apollo would take responsibility

²⁶ Herman notes how "In situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection. Wounded soldiers and raped women cry out for their mothers, or for God. When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered. Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life" (Herman 52).

²⁷ My thanks to Elizabeth Heintges for this insight.

for his son's protection (965), and the failure of this expectation²⁸ gives her justification to lay the traumatic impact of the exposure, as well as the rape itself, at Apollo's feet. Her repeated descriptions of the exposure emphasize her own isolation (949), the violence of the infant Ion's imagined death by beasts (902-4), and the visceral pain of having to physically part from the child reaching out his arms to her (961). The location of the birth and exposure within the cave where Apollo raped her further heightens the linking of these events to Apollo's initial act of violence. Creusa represents the exposure as unavoidably following from, and in part functioning as a reenactment of, the rape itself. In failing to prevent this act of desperation, Apollo has failed in his obligations to her and to her son.

When she first arrives at Delphi, Creusa though, as we have seen, caught up in the pain of her memories, still maintains hope that Apollo might repay this debt, calling on him to provide her a child (384-91). It is only after she learns that Apollo has provided a child to Xuthus alone that she gives up hope that he will repay his debt to her, and thus feels herself justified in publicly condemning him. The stated intention of her monody is to reveal "the graceless betrayers of [her] bed" (ἀποδείξω/λέκτρων προδότας ἀχαρίστους, 879-80). Although Creusa understands divine violence as an unavoidable part of the mythic system which she inhabits, without some guarantee of reciprocity the system itself becomes intolerable. In two other places in the monody Creusa again chides Apollo for his misdirection of *charis*, both when she reminds him that he owed no grace to her husband, Xuthus (913-5), and when she describes him as "shamelessly accomplishing grace for Cypris" (Κύπριδι χάριν πράσων, 896) in the moment of the rape itself. Even following her denunciation, Creusa still turns to Apollo for rescue in the final scene of the play, as she seeks refuge as a suppliant on his altar. Creusa demonstrates

²⁸ And the belief that, even if Apollo has saved the child in secret, he has still, as she explains to Ion, done her wrong by "delighting alone in a common joy" (τὰ κοινὰ χαίρων οὐ δίκαια δοῦνός, 358).

awareness of the irony of seeking salvation from her rapist as she informs Ion that “I give my body to the god to hold as sacred” (ἱερὸν τὸ σῶμα τῷ θεῷ δίδωμ’ ἔχειν, 1285), and, after his further inquiry, explains that in dying in the temple she would harm the one who has harmed her (λυπήσομέν τιν’, ὧν λελυπήμεσθ’ ὑπο, 1311). Creusa understands her protection - and perhaps most specifically the protection of her body, to which he has caused harm and which he has taken pleasure from - as Apollo’s responsibility. Creusa denounces Apollo’s injustice openly and publicly, revealing her injury to the world and calling upon the god to repay his debt in response. Scarfuo, as we have seen, considers Creusa’s denunciation of her rapist a daring move which sets the *Ion* apart from other tragedies. The question of how unusual *Ion* in fact was shall be the concern of our next chapter.

Chapter Two: Evidence from the Fragments

Although *Ion* is recognized to be anomalous in the Greek canon for its focus on Creusa's first-person narrative of sexual assault, we have also seen that the genre of tragedy placed a marked focus upon mortal women facing sexual threat from the gods, and that Euripides in particular repeatedly made the constellation of narrative elements we have seen in *Ion* the subject of his plays. While none of these related plays remain extant in their entirety, we nonetheless possess enough fragments to trace several themes common to many of them, and to explore the shared language of injury and suffering which Euripides employed to describe the experience of the central characters. In the following I intend to look, with varying degrees of focus, upon fragments from Euripides' *Alcmene*, *Alope*, *Antiope*, *Auge*, *Danae*, *Melanippe Sophe*, and *Melanippe Desmotis*.

Each of these plays, like *Ion*, concerns the moment in which the secret of the union between god and mortal, long-concealed, is opened up and made visible to the community. In *Ion* we have seen already the tension that the characters articulate between Apollo's desire to keep the rape hidden, unknown to Creusa's family and the broader community, and Creusa's need to receive validation for her experience by confronting the god in his sanctuary and hearing him proclaim the truth publicly from the holy tripod (366). We have also noted this conflict operating within Creusa's own consciousness, as she combats her own shame in the process of narrating her experience for the first time. In the final scene, this tension between covering over and opening up is made physical, as Ion debates with himself about whether to open the basket which will reveal his parentage, and eventually decides that "it must be opened, it must be

dared” (ἀνοικτέον τὰδ’ ἐστὶ καὶ τολμητέον, 1387). Each of the plays in some way dramatizes this moment of opening up, of bringing to light. The tension at stake is the delineation between public and private, between the secret, *aidos*-inducing moment of sexual consummation and the need to have that union recognized and judged by a broader community. These plots repeatedly foreground the unverifiability of these women’s internal experiences, and fix upon their children as evidence of either the truth of their story of violation, or the fact of their punishable sexual transgression. Characters show a desire to somehow read back to the moment of intercourse, using these children as signifiers of the intangible.

The plays we are examining fall into two broad categories of plot types, differentiated by the temporal point at which the child is revealed and the sexual union is made public. The first category, into which *Alope*, *Auge*, *Danae*, and *Melanippe Sophe* fall, involves the discovery of the infant child immediately after exposure, and the confrontation of the women by protective male relatives, most often fathers. The second, occupied by *Ion*, *Antiope*, and *Melanippe Desmotis*, takes us many years from moment of the conception and birth, and instead dramatizes the long-delayed reunion between mother and son (or sons), and the process by which they come to recognize one another and verify their identities. *Alcmene* is the single exception to this scheme, as it concerns an offended husband rather than father, and our surviving fragments leave it unclear how soon after her intercourse with Zeus Alcmene is confronted by Amphytrion. Both of these plot types rely upon the use of some sort of contested physical signifiers make the sexual union public - in the first, it is the body of the child itself, whose origin must be determined, and in the second the grown child generally becomes an active partner in the process of investigation, with the symbolic function displaced onto physical recognition tokens. In many of these, as we shall see, the rhetorical power of the female protagonist becomes a persuasive tool which stands

in contrast to the the evidence proffered by these physical signs, whether she attempts to contest them (as in *Melanippe Sophe*) or is validated by them (as in *Ion*). While the plots of these plays share the commonalities above, they also display significant differences, which will be vital for understanding the varying roles which divine-human sexual relations occupy in the plots.

Although the fragmentary nature of these texts and the unreliability of testimonia make any plot summary difficult, I shall attempt to give some sort of brief taxonomy before we continue, in order that we might be able to better appreciate the content of the fragments themselves.

The women in these plays are, without exception, high-status, generally the daughters of kings, though *Antiope* and *Melanippe Desmotis* both begin with their protagonists enslaved in punishment for their sexual transgressions (the enslavement of formerly high status women was a favorite topic of Euripides' - see also *Andromache* and *Hypsipyle*). Their violations by gods, as we shall see more below, occur either through explicit force or coercion, or without the conscious knowledge of the victims. In *Danae*, *Antiope*, and *Alcmene*, the perpetrator of these assaults is Zeus, famously the most lecherous of the gods, while in *Alope* and both of the *Melanippes*, the perpetrator is Poseidon.²⁹ Auge's perpetrator is, unusually, Herakles, who is only a demigod at the time of her assault, though gifted with superhuman strength. Alope, Antiope, Auge, and Melanippe all expose their children, and in all but Antiope's case they appear to have been nurtured by animals, a fact which tends to unsettle those who discover them. The discovery of the children and their parentage leads to harsh punishments for the women - Antiope and Melanippe are both sold into slavery, while Danae and Auge are locked into chests which are then thrown into the ocean, and Alope is buried alive. Only Alcmene appears to escape this kind of punishment of violent enclosure, possibly because she manages to convince her husband that

²⁹ Ion will identify Apollo, Zeus, and Poseidon as the main perpetrators of assaults against women in his speech (434-7).

she was not in fact unfaithful to him. The resolution of these conflicts is at times unclear. *Antiope*, for which we have a substantial portion of the play's ending, clearly involved a recognition between Antiope and her sons, Amphion and Zethus, which was later confirmed in a *deus ex machina* by Hermes who, as Athena does in the *Ion*, goes on to outline the steps the young men must take in order to achieve their foretold futures, which involve some degree of glory and fame. By contrast, some plays, such as *Alope*, could potentially have left the female protagonist to die, or, as in *Danae*, *Melanippe Sophe*, and potentially *Auge*, only gestured towards her future validation and reintegration into the community after the dramatized punishment. Many further variations in plot development and denouement are difficult for us to ascertain from our surviving fragments and testimonia; although the specificity and nuance with which the plot and characterization of the *Ion* are unfolded suggest that each of these plays likely included a similar level of complexity, our scant evidence allows us to create a taxonomy of only the broadest strokes.

We repeatedly see the female protagonists in these fragments called upon to defend themselves before hostile male listeners, attempting to prove their own virtue or the divine parentage of their child. Several of the plays show a marked emphasis upon the rhetorical skill of these women, who appear in some cases to be arguing their case in a courtroom-like setting, and often make appeals which expand from their own specific injury of divine violation to the broader sufferings and denigration of women in Greek society more generally.³⁰ This is clearest in the case of *Melanippe Sophe*, where the protagonist's wisdom is the defining feature which is used for the title of the play itself. Her arguments, in which she attempts to convince her father not to murder her exposed children while still keeping secret from him the fact that these

³⁰ For the use of similar rhetoric by the choruses of these plays, see chapter three below.

children are her own (see frg. 485), were later quoted by Dionysus of Halicarnassus in his *Art of Rhetoric* as paradigmatic examples of “coming very close to revealing a disguise while still maintaining it” (Collard and Cropp 575) within an argument. Melanippe also provides (perhaps in the context of her debate with her father, perhaps elsewhere; the fragment does not make this clear) an unusual cosmology in which the sky and the earth were once a single form, a narrative which she says she has received from her mother, the prophetess Hippo (frg. 484). The wisdom by which Melanippe saves the lives of her sons is defined as particularly female in nature, derived from a matrilineal line of descent. In the play’s sequel, *Melanippe Desmotis*, Melanippe will argue not only for herself but for the reputation of womankind as a whole, explaining women’s unique merits and vital roles within the domestic and religious spheres (frg. 493 and 494), roles which in fact leave them naturally closer to the divine than men. The fact that this speech, about both women’s virtue and women’s intimacy with the divine, has been put in the mouth of a woman who has born half-divine children suggests that the role played by Melanippe, Creusa, and the rest of these protagonists, exemplifies the positive potential which women may have within the mythic system, and also grants them a particular and unique authority as speakers. As victims of rape who have born children out of wedlock, these characters do not seem as obvious models for feminine virtue as virtuous wives like Penelope or Andromache, but yet they are continually called upon to defend their entire gender.

The protagonists of the other plays may not speak with quite so much self-assurance as Melanippe, nor do they necessarily come from lines of powerful and wise female religious leaders, but they still speak in their own defense when called upon to do so. Fragment 88a likely shows Alcmena tentatively beginning an argument in her own defense with the qualification that her “mouth is in confusion” (στόμ’ εἰς ἔκπληξιν, frg. 88a line 3) on account of her fear, but

resolving that she will speak anyway in order to save her own life. We see Auge in what appears to be the middle of such a defense in fragment 266, as she furiously confronts a man (likely her father) about his hypocrisy surrounding her pregnancy:

σκῦλα μὲν βροφθόρα
χαίρεις ὄρωσα καὶ νεκρῶν ἐρείπια,
κοῦ μαρά σοι ταῦτ' ἐστίν - εἰ δ' ἐγὼ ἴτεκον,
δεινόν τόδ' ἠγή;

At the spoils of slain men
you delight to look, and the wreckage of corpses;
from these there is no pollution for you - yet at once, if I have given birth,
you think that a horror?

This defense closely juxtaposes the paradigmatically male experience of battle with the female experience of pregnancy and reproduction, both situations of physical suffering and trial which, when completed successfully, end with reward and honor. Auge radically argues that her state of unwed motherhood should not be a cause for horror (δεινόν), and that in fact childbirth, which does not result in carnage and death, is a more appropriate object for delight than battle. Her argument echoes Medea's famous declaration that she would "rather three times stand with a shield than once give birth" (250-51), in which Euripides similarly reconfigured childbearing as an object of heroism in contrast to misogynistic tradition. Auge's focus on the delight of the spectator, however, also resonates with the earlier literary prototype of Sappho 16. In this famous priamel, Sappho proffers and rejects various types of military scenes as the "most beautiful" things (κάλλιστον) to look upon, offering instead a vision of *eros* as the determiner of the beautiful which centers around the transgressive sexual desire of Helen of Troy. Auge's replacement of the spoils of war with her own fertile body as an object of wonder and delight

thus identifies her within a literary tradition of authoritative and potentially transgressive female speakers.

We have seen, in the repeated punishment of these women for their sexual transgressions and the necessity of their rhetorical self-defense, the extent to which the bodies of women impregnated by gods are problematized and made abject. These bodies, however, are not just the object of their punishment at mortal hands, but the site of their intimacy with and injury by their divine perpetrators. In all the surviving fragments of these plays which refer directly to the sexual consummation between the god and the mortal woman, we see that this sexual intercourse is defined as a source of suffering rather than pleasure, and that these sexual interactions offer no space for the consent of the mortal woman. Although Adele Scafuro is correct in her assertion that none of the fragments show as clear a description of physical force as Creusa does in her monody (Scafuro 149), the sexual unions are nonetheless accomplished by means of coercion and nonconsent.

In several cases, this coercion appears to take the form of deception, with the god deliberately making the woman unaware of either the fact of the intercourse or of his own identity, and thus removing her opportunity to either consciously consent to or resist his advances. This is clearly the case for Alcmena, who sleeps with Zeus believing him to be her husband Amphytrion, and thus believes herself to be behaving according to her own personal values of fidelity even while technically committing adultery. In *Alope*, Poseidon appears to go even further in his deception, impregnating Alope without showing himself to her in any form: “filling her womb, he did not reveal himself to his dear one even as a dream” (πλήσας δὲ νηδύν οὐδ’ ὄναρ κατ’ εὐφρόνην/φίλοις ἔδειξεν ‘αυτόν, frg. 107). This carefully engineered ignorance about the nature of the sexual consummation can be positioned as an act of mercy, in

which the god denies the mortal a traumatizing experience of violent sexuality. This is most clearly articulated in the fate of Io as described in the *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliant Women* of Aeschylus, where, after her long and arduous journey, she is granted an experience of impregnation which does not require sexual contact, but we can also see it in the fate of Danae, whose intimacy with Zeus in the form of a shower of gold is consistently described in terms of glorious beauty, and a potentially rhapsodic experience of the divine.³¹ But, even if we do understand this unconsciousness as an act of mercy on the gods' parts, this does not make the impregnation itself consensual. For characters like Alope and Danae, who are later physically confined and rejected by their communities, such contrivances simply displace the inevitable maltreatment of their bodies, and place them in the unenviable position of being punished for a transgression which they cannot understand, remember, or account for. Survivors of drug-facilitated sexual assault, who frequently have difficulty remembering their rapes, report substantial anxiety and trauma surrounding these gaps in their memory, and the lack of control which comes from never having a reliable, verifiable account of what has been done to their own bodies. Alope and Danae have perhaps been spared Creusa's violent memories, but the form of their assaults may leave them with other difficulties.

In the *Auge*, we see what appears to be a rare acknowledgment from a perpetrator of his own wrongdoing (if a conditional and self-justificatory one), as Herakles explains that his actions were caused by his own drunkenness: "I concede/allow that I did injustice to you, but this injustice was not intentional" (ὁμολογῶ δέ σε ἀδικεῖν, τὸ δ' ἀδίκημ' ἐγένετ' οὐχ ἐκούσιον, frg. 272b). This admission stands in stark contrast to Apollo's repeated avoidance of guilt in the *Ion*, in which he evades the possibility of even entering onto the stage as a *deus ex machina* for

³¹ See, for example, the third stasimon of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

fear that “blame will come on him” (1558), and sends Athena to make the adamant assertion that he “has managed all things well” (1595). Without more fragments from the *Auge*, it is unclear in what context exactly this confrontation between victim and perpetrator occurred, and why Herakles was willing to make such a confession; I hypothesize that it might be related to the reduced power differential between these two characters, in contrast to the relationships we see in these other plays.³² Herakles, as a demigod, can be held to human standards of behavior more readily than Zeus, Apollo, or Poseidon, while Auge, as virgin priestess of Athena Alea, is a sacred person in her own right, and her violation may constitute a serious blasphemy worthy of punishment. We can see a similar rhetoric of religious transgression as the paradigm under which a rape might be punished in the handling of Cassandra’s rape by Locrian Ajax in the Euripides’ *Troades*, where the offense was doubly blasphemous, both violating a virgin priestess and taking place on a suppliant within Athena’s temple. Women who are assaulted by gods rather than demigods have fewer places to turn for justice, even when, like Melanippe or Creusa, they have associations with religious authority which predate their sexual intimacy with the god.

One of the explicit descriptions of the impregnation in *Antiope* comes from the mouth of Antiope’s son, Amphion, who doubts her story:

οὐδὲ γὰρ λάθρα δοκῶ
 θηρός κακούργου σήματ’ ἐκμιμούμενον
 σοὶ Ζῆν’ ἐς εὐνήν ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπον μολεῖν
 For I do not believe that in secret,
 imitating the form of a wicked beast,
 Zeus came into your bed as though a man (frg. 210)

³² The *Auge*’s closer resemblance to a narrative of sexual violence between humans seems to have also made it the object of imitation and emulation by New Comic authors, who frequently took narratives of rape and secret pregnancy as their topics. Menander’s *Epitrepontes*, for example, includes a specific quotation from and reference to the *Auge* (Zagagi 55). The ways in which Euripides’ rhetoric of sexual violence is twisted and redeployed within the context of New Comedy is a topic worthy of much further exploration than has been done so far.

While this description does not identify the use of force specifically, it is difficult to imagine that Amphion here refers to a consensual scenario. As in the first episode of the *Ion*, to which this moment appears to be a direct parallel, Amphion's focus is not so much upon Antiope's subjective experience of the intercourse as upon the dangerous blasphemy of imagining the god in such an undignified and degraded position. Although Amphion doubts the veracity of Antiope's story, he shows no doubt in the idea that, *if* her identification of her perpetrator were accurate, Zeus' actions would have been immoral (hence the emphatic *κακούργου*; the use of *λάθρα* also echoes its repeated employment in the *Ion*, where it underlies the underhanded deceptiveness of Apollo's crime). As in the *Ion*, the issue appears to be not so much whether Antiope was wronged, but who it was that wronged her.³³ Antiope's own account of her experience survives only within a sentence fragment in fragment 207, where she explains that "at the point when I was led back, being pregnant I gave birth" (*ἤνικ' ἠγόμην πάλιν/κύουσα τίκτω*, frg. 207), likely referring to her captivity and failed attempt at escape from her father's wrath. Antiope does, however, explicitly identify the gods as having done wrong to her and to her sons through "neglect" (*ἡμελήθην*, frg. 208), using the same language which, as we have seen, Creusa uses to describe Apollo's violation of his debt of *charis*. Antiope, also like Creusa, has constructed an personal image of herself as a wronged sufferer, philosophically locating her suffering within her own recognition and comprehension of her situation in fragment 205.³⁴ The

³³ This distinction appears to be difficult for some modern critics to make. There is in fact only one place in the *Ion* where anyone suggests that Apollo's assault could have been consensual, and that is the pious Ion's initial reaction to the story, in which he is confused at the idea that anyone could be distressed at intimacy with his beloved god (343). Critics, however, have repeatedly interrogated the question of whether or not Creusa might be misrepresenting the rape in order to obscure her own culpability, a line of inquiry which says more about them than about the play itself.

³⁴ The distinction made in this fragment between 'ignorance' (*ἀγνωσία*) and 'recognition' (*φρονῶ*) of suffering may in fact have less to do with the rape than with the play's anti-slavery rhetoric, and Antiope's unique understanding of the degradation of her captivity due to her previous free, high-status position.

beginning of fragment 223, in which we have pieces from the conclusion of the play, shows Amphion calling in this debt himself with the assertion that “If Zeus is our father, he will save us” (ἔλπῃο γάρ ἡμᾶς Ζεὺς ἐγέννησεν πατήρ, / σώσει μεθ’ ἡμῶν, 2-3). The intervention of Hermes in the ending, in which the god confirms Amphion and Zethus’ divine parentage (fragment 223, 71-4), further suggests that this play may have, at least in part, been concerned with some of the same questions of divine responsibility as the *Ion*, though mingled with additional concerns around the ethics of slavery.

Despite the necessary tenuousness of any conclusions which we might draw from these fragments, it is nonetheless clear that the Euripidean corpus included a substantial segment of texts focused closely upon the aftermath of divine rape, and the problem of how to integrate the victim and her child or children back into her natal community. The use of rhetoric of injury and neglect to describe the gods’ sexual relations with mortal women and their subsequent abandonment of them further suggests that, like the *Ion*, many if not all of these plays were concerned with the ethical problems created by divine-mortal sexual violence, and with the traumatic impact of such violence on its victims. However, the frequency of plots which, unlike the *Ion*, centered around a direct confrontation between the female protagonist and a doubtful male relative, or the imprisonment and abjection of the protagonist after the discovery of her pregnancy, provides us with a rich context in which to understand what may have been specific innovations in the *Ion*, with its focus on secrecy and concealment contrasted with healing public disclosure. Creusa has the luxury of making the choice to reveal her story, and of telling it upon her own terms, and within lyric modes artfully constructed to emphasize her own trauma and perpetrator’s injustice. Characters like Melanippe, Alcmena, or Auge appear to have had their stories revealed against their will, by the inescapably revealing signifiers of their pregnant body

or their discovered child (or children). Yet, like Creusa, we have seen that many of these women authoritatively deploy rhetorical strategies to defend, not only themselves, but the entirety of womankind in the process. Like Creusa, who cannot tell the story of the rape as a first-person narrative until she believes herself to have entirely lost her social role as wife and mother, these women may in fact gain the authority to speak publicly on behalf of their gender precisely *because* of the fact of their injury.

Elsewhere in tragedy, we see that *parthenoi* often enter as speakers on the stage only when deep violence and unrest has already occurred within their families, sometimes leaving them *epikleroi* who must bear the entire responsibility for carrying on the family line alone.³⁵ For these characters, who no longer belong clearly within the category of *parthenoi*, the unrest and violence which prompts them into public speech is not the collective province of their natal home, but the private experience of their own bodies, whose narrative can only be accessed by their male guardians and their communities in general through the medium of their words and physicality. Unlike other young women in tragedy, whose primary conflicts tend to be with or about members of their immediate family, these characters have been sectioned off from their *oikos* by the doubly inaccessible nature of their experiences of sexual violence and birth, from which their communities are distanced both by the inherently private quality of sexual violence, which can only truly be known by the victim and perpetrator, and by its status as an unusually intimate contact with the divine, which cannot be fully imagined or understood by most mortals. As we have seen already, this grants them a peculiarly liminal status, at once abject and empowered. They are forced into situations where they must speak publicly on pain of death or

³⁵ Iphigenia, Polyxena, Antigone, and Electra all fit this paradigm to varying extents in various plays. Creusa is, of course, an *epikleros* in her own right. Cassandra (who we never *quite* see as a *parthenos* in extant tragedy) is a more complicated case.

imprisonment, but also possess specific rhetorical and religious authority which enables them to speak persuasively, audaciously, and, in some cases (the fragments make it difficult to discern quite how many), effectively. Thus, telling their stories and arguing for the life of their children, their own virtue and that of all womankind becomes, in these plays, at once an urgent question of survival, and a source of marked and visible power.

Chapter Three: Paths to Healing and Reconciliation

We have spent the previous sections of this thesis examining the ways in which divine-human sexual interactions function as a source of injury and trauma within *Ion* and a selection of Euripides' fragmentary plays, and the methods that the protagonists of these plays use to articulate those experiences and gain sympathy or justice from their audiences. However, all of these plays are concerned not simply with articulating trauma, but with demonstrating the process by which the victims of divine rape might be reintegrated into the larger human community. Many of these plays, including the *Ion*, conclude in scenes of recognition and reconciliation, showing not only the reception of stories of divine rape by a sympathetic audience, but also the potential for women to move past these experiences into new social roles and familial relationships. In this section, we shall look at the ways in which Euripides demonstrates this potential for reconciliation and reintegration, giving particular attention to the function of the chorus and to recognition scenes between mother and child, such as the one with which the *Ion* concludes. I shall argue that Euripides' use of these two generic features of tragedy allows him to move past the narrative trope of the impregnated woman's ostracism into a new image of communal witnessing and healing, though not one without its discomforts and ambiguities.

The *Ion* is a play which establishes injury and injustice and then offers (conditional) resolution to that injustice; Creusa's neglected child is restored to her, and Apollo's debt of *charis*, which we have seen her call upon during both the monody and the first episode of the play, is thus repaid at least in part. This is, however, a famously unsatisfying method of

repayment. The unseen Apollo of the play pointedly refuses to fulfill his obligation to Creusa directly, sending a series of intercessors (the doves, the prophetess, Athena) to effect the reunion between mother and son on his behalf. Athena, in her concluding speech, even explicitly acknowledges the strangeness of Apollo's absence, informing Ion and Creusa that he avoided appearing to them himself "lest some blame should come on him for the previous things" (μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόλη, 1558). Athena's appearance has a dual purpose: to provide the prophecies of future glory for Ion and his descendants which perform the recuperative function of establishing a place for the mother and son within Athenian society, and to rewrite the narrative of the rape and its aftermath so as to preserve Apollo's reputation and thus the sanctity and dignity of Olympus as a whole. Athena's assertion that "Apollo has managed all things well" (καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε, 1595) relies on a retelling of Creusa's narrative which, while it does contribute additional information about aspects of events which the human characters could not have ascertained on their own (such as Hermes' involvement in ensuring Ion's survival), also skews the emphasis drastically away from the agonized experiential dimension of Creusa's rape and pregnancy, as well as from the loneliness which Ion experienced during his childhood in Apollo's temple (1369-90). Athena uses as evidence of Apollo's successful management of the situation the fact that he ensured that Creusa "give birth without sickness" (ἄνοσον λοχεύει σ', 1596), so that she might survive the solitary labor without her parents' knowledge. Yet this identification of the labor as ἄνοσον at once jars uncomfortably with previous references to the rape earlier in the play, such as Creusa's description of herself as "sick" (νοσοῦσ', 320) in the first episode and the old man's identification of her pregnancy as a "secret illness" (νόσον κρυφαίαν, 944), and gives us a glimpse into a divine value system which privileges physical survival over emotional suffering

or even physical pain to the point of entirely obscuring Creusa's suffering during the pregnancy, labor, and exposure. Athena's glib comment also ignores the fact that the secrecy of the birth, while seen as necessary by Creusa for practical reasons (the specifics of which should be clear in the context of the punishments which we have seen afflicted on most women impregnated by gods), was in fact the cause of great emotional suffering and loneliness, as she tells us in her monody.

Following this speech, Creusa publicly relinquishes her anger towards Apollo, declaring that "I do not hate Phoebus, as before I did, for he did not neglect our child, and has returned him to me" (1609-10). Even the temple, itself initially the trigger into her painful memories (249) now has become a beloved object to her (1611-3). Yet the play suggests that this change in viewpoint (a θεὸν μεταβαλοῦσ', as Athena calls it at 1614) was in fact already in place during the recognition scene, where Creusa explains to Ion the ways in which she sees Apollo having successfully arranged events to their mutual benefit (1534-45). The return of her living child to her functions for Creusa as the only demonstration of Apollo's beneficence which could possibly be meaningful; Athena's intervention is, within Creusa's emotional world, largely superfluous. However, in order for her reintegration into the human community to be successful, Creusa not only needs the repayment of Apollo's debt, but also the witnessing and acceptance of her story within the human community. Creusa's disclosure of the narrative of the rape and exposure to the old man and the chorus ultimately functions as the trigger which forces Apollo's hand into publicly reuniting mother and son, showing how testimony and witnessing may have tangible effects on the future as well as allowing for the recuperation and remembering of the past. Creusa's repeated retelling of the story cannot perform its healing (ῥῆσιν, 875) function in isolation; rather, meaning is created through these tellings' enmeshment within the social world,

and the potential these tellings offer for Creusa to find validation and support within the human community, even while she has been neglected by the divine one.

Both *Ion* and a number of the other fragmentary plays in our study show a marked solidarity between the protagonist and her female chorus which creates an opening for this kind of witnessing to occur. This solidarity is frequently accompanied by a generalization from the specific suffering of an individual character victimized by a god to the broader plight of womankind as a whole. Despite the elevated, mythological register on which we understand divine-human relations functioning, the plays' choruses of women see themselves as having some sort of ownership over these narratives of rape and unwanted pregnancy, sometimes framing them as a representative example of the wrongs women must continually endure within Greek society. The third stasimon of the *Ion* concludes with an example of just this kind of generalization from Creusa's specific suffering to the wrongs done to women more broadly. In an authoritative palinode which resembles the famous first stasimon of the *Medea*³⁶ the chorus creates a continuity between Creusa's sexualized injury at the hands of both Apollo and Xuthus and the sexual immoderation and injustice (γάμους/Κύπριδος ἀθέμιας ἀνοσίους, 1091-2) which they declare to be the province of men rather than women. The chorus employs a number of terms from Creusa's own language of injury in this argument, utilizing the anti-hymnic language of disharmonious music which characterized the monody (see ἀμέτερα λέχεια at 1091 and δυσκέλαδος ἀμφὶ λέκτρων at 1097), as well as the image of the strong ruling through injustice (ὄσον/εὐσεβία κρατούμεν/ἄδικον, 1092-4) which Creusa used to describe the impossibility of her situation both at her first entrance in episode one, and following the monody (253-4 and 973). This echoing of Creusa's language creates a continuity between her and the

³⁶ See *Medea* 410-45. For further discussion on the intertextual qualities of this stasimon, see Rynearson 2014.

chorus, suggesting that as women they possess a shared understanding of her suffering. In fact, even before knowing the narrative of rape and exposure to be specifically Creusa's, the chorus is able to understand it as a part of a recognizable and sympathetic narrative type to which they have a form of pointedly gendered access. In the epode of the first stasimon, in which the chorus reflects upon the story which Creusa has presented as that of a friend, the chorus describes the story as piteous and horrifying, but familiar as part of a category of tales which they have heard at the loom (ἐπὶ κερκίσιον οὔτε λόγοις/ φάτιν ἄιον, 506-7). This image of weaving as a site for transmission of narratives about divine rape suggests a shared feminine ownership over, and consequent sympathy for, the stories of women in Creusa's position.

It is presumably an example of this kind of personalized solidarity which prompts a character in *Alope* to posit that "woman has been born an ally to woman" (γυνή γυναικί σύμμαχος πέφυκέ πως, frg. 108), defining the risks like that which Creusa's chorus takes for her as natural, and perhaps inborn or predetermined. Danae's chorus takes on their function of bearing witness to their protagonist's suffering both authoritatively and legalistically, asserting, "I bear witness to you" (συμματυρῶ σοι, frg. 319). The verb συμμαρτυρεῖν is both unusual and emphatic, suggesting a strong proximity to the events discussed, such as would give them the legal authority to speak as witnesses, in combination with the closeness implied by the prefix. Following this, they go on to assert women's subordinate status, being kept "always apart from men" (αἰσένων ἀεί δίχα). This shared experience of subjugation is a point for shared understanding and kinship, even apart from the specific discrimination these protagonists face for presumed sexual transgression.

These choruses' sympathy for and solidarity with women who have experienced divine rape puts them in the difficult position of coming to terms with the ruptures in divine and human

authority created by these narratives. For the chorus of the *Ion*, this solidarity with Creusa places them in a situation of real physical danger, as they make the decision to defy Xuthus' command and inform Creusa of his betrayal even on pain of death. The entire second stasimon of the play is concerned with their process of negotiating this ethical conundrum, a rare example of choral lyric which shows a chorus in the process of making a decision to intervene in the plot of a tragedy.³⁷ Later, they repeatedly assert their willingness to die on Creusa's behalf in pursuit of justice, using language which might be more familiar in the mouth of a hero or heroine than a chorus (see 857-8 and 1120-1). The old man, too, who joins the chorus in bearing witness to Creusa's monody, is willing to defy both divine and secular authority in her defense, even going so far as to volunteer to burn down Apollo's sanctuary itself (πίμπρη τὰ σεμνὰ Λοξίου χρηστήρια, 974). Their extended exchange of stichomythia after the monody shows the old man gradually coming to terms with the reality of the experiences Creusa has narrated, and their ethical implications. Questions such as "Was Apollo an evil man, not defending [his son]?" (Ἀπόλλων δ' ὁ κακὸς οὐδὲν ἤρκεσεν, 952), along with the old man's eventual assertion that Creusa "[has] dared horrors, but the god more than you" (τλήμων σὺ τόλμης, ὁ δὲ θεὸς μᾶλλον σέθεν, 960) demonstrate the ways in which Creusa's supporters must navigate for themselves what it means to exist in a world where divine authority may be so callous and corrupt, and how far they each are willing to go to combat that corruption.

Yet the chorus' sympathy for Creusa does not lead them to reject religious faith entirely, and in fact the play shows the recuperation of religious faith and practice as a site for healing and affirmation as essential to Creusa's integration into the human community. The third stasimon of

³⁷ A point of comparison might be the argument between the chorus of elders in the *Agamemnon* following their master's death cries (1346-71). Yet that chorus' debate ends in a stalemate of indecision which paralyzes them from taking action, while *Ion*'s chorus decisively makes the choice to intervene.

the play, which immediately follows the scene of the monody, shows the chorus attempting to construct new paradigms for understanding divinity in the wake of the shattering effect of Creusa's disclosure. The chorus turns to the female divine figures of Demeter, Persephone, and Hecate and to the memory of their rites of Eleusis to create an image of a cosmic system ruled by goddesses and inhabited by harmonious female choruses. This reframing of the cosmos stands in contrast to Creusa's representation in the monody of the natural world as a space of violent disharmony and masculine threat.

The chorus begins the stasimon by calling upon the "Lady of the Roads, daughter of Demeter" (Εἰνοδία θύγατερ Δάματρος, 1047), epithets which may refer ambiguously to either Hecate, Persephone or both of them. They entreat this goddess to ensure the success of Creusa's plan to poison Ion, defining this plan as a vital offensive attack necessary to ensure the safety of the house of Erectheus and of Athens in general. This invocation of a chthonic goddess associated with night (1048) stands in contrast to the play's previous representation of religious worship centered around sunlight and the golden halls of Olympus (see, for example, 82-90 and 456-65). The chorus does not choose to reject religious worship entirely in the wake of Creusa's denunciation of the Olympian Apollo, but turns their focus to alternative avenues and settings for faith and ritual. After further elaboration of the murderous plan and of the disastrous consequences which might befall Creusa if she should fail, the chorus enters into an elaborated description of the rites at Eleusis which takes up the entirety of strophe beta, imagining these rites as threatened by Ion's potential future presence as a "witness" (θεωρῶς, 1074) violating the sanctity of the sacred space. As in the invocation of chthonic Hecate/Persephone at the start of the stasimon, the focus on Dionysus (the "many-hymned god," πολύυμνον θεόν, at 1073-4) and on the mother-daughter pair of Demeter and Persephone (the "golden-crowned maiden and her

revered mother,” τὰν χρυσοστέφανον κόραν/καὶ ματέρα σεμνάν at 1084-5) emphasizes deities who reside on or within the earth and provide, direct, physicalized benefit to humanity.

Froma Zeitlin has demonstrated how the figures of Demeter and Persephone function as a dual mythic prototype for Creusa’s own experience as both a victimized maiden and a grieving mother (Zeitlin 1996, 304-5). By evoking the rites at Eleusis, in which a broad Panhellenic community came together in reverence to these goddesses and in the hope of a life beyond death, the chorus performs a recuperative function in response to Creusa’s perversion of ritual speech and denial of the potential for reciprocity between gods and mortals. The chorus insists on the reality of alternative modes of religious practice which center explicitly on female experience and, in their depiction of the sky, stars, and ocean as harmoniously dancing female choruses (1077-85), represent the entire cosmos as a benevolent mirror of their own group, not as the assemblage of malevolent and ensnaring forces which Creusa described in her monody. The chorus’ nighttime, collective rites (1076) also stand in contrast to Ion’s solitary voice singing his paean at dawn, further differentiating this mode of religious practice from those associated with Apollo. The work done by the third stasimon to create a vision of divinity which can welcome Creusa in the totality of her experience, and their affirmation of a new mode of a feminine poetic discourse which can stand against the injustice and lack of *charis* displayed by men does at least as much to create space for Creusa within the human and divine communities as do Apollo’s intercessions in the final scene.

Ultimately, the full reintegration of both Creusa and Ion into their social roles and the recognition and healing of Creusa’s suffering cannot be effected until the recognition scene at the end of the play. Recognition scenes are an extremely recognizable generic feature of tragedy, and Euripides was particularly fond of using them to great emotional effect, as in *Iphigenia at Tauris*,

Helen, and *Hypsipyle*, in addition to the *Ion*. It is clear that several of the other fragmentary plays involving divine rape also included extended recognition scenes between mother and child, particularly of those which, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, involved a similar narrative pattern as that of the *Ion*. We have, for example, some fragments indicating the presence of such a scene in the *Antiope*, and can ascertain its place within the plot of *Melanippe Desmotis*. In the *Ion* as well as in these plays, the recognition scene is a place where the characters' narratives of trauma and isolation can be retold, witnessed and recuperated into a shared collective history. Victoria Pedrick sees the process of naming and identifying the recognition tokens which Creusa left with the infant Ion as an essential reenactment of the original exposure (Pedrick 52 and following) in which their familial bond between mother and son can be reforged and the injury of the original exposure healed. The naming of the objects provides the opportunity for Creusa to narrate to Ion pieces of his own history to which he did not previously have access, and for the two of them to redefine the exposure as a shared experience which can be grieved collectively.

For Creusa, the moment of the recognition also acts, structurally and narratively, as a counter to the chorus' revelation of her eternal childlessness in episode three, which prompted her to her initial disclosure of the narrative of the rape. As in episode three, Creusa's high emotion sends her out of speech and into song, employing rhapsodic images of the heavens (1445), as if in answer to her previous fantasy of escaping her sufferings through flight over the ocean (797-9).³⁸ While Creusa's fantasies of escape may have been impossible on a literal level, her reunion with her son has granted her an experience of power, liberation, and joyful

³⁸ Creusa's fantasies of escape use what is in other tragedy primarily choral imagery, and in fact the chorus picks up on her imagery when they too imagine escape following the messenger's speech at 1237-42; this echoing imagery further links Creusa and the chorus together.

movement which stands against the confinement and restraint of her initial trauma. While the rape and Ion's exposure took place within a rocky cave, now Creusa delights in the sun and sky; while previously her grief and loss were embodied in the absence of a child in her arms or against her breast (760-1), now she is able to experience longed-for physical closeness with Ion, "breathing beside [his] cheeks" (νῦν δὲ γενειάσιν παρὰ σέθεν πνέω, 1460). Her narration within this scene, in contrast to the monody, emphasizes not the moment of the rape itself (which she in fact never explicitly defines as such to Ion, though he seems to assume that his mother's union with Apollo was nonconsensual without her needing to articulate this), but rather on the exposure, the traumatic experience shared between the two of them. Throughout the recognition, there is an emphasis on the shared feeling between mother and son, with Ion going so far as to telling Creusa that she speaks for him as well (τοῦμόν λέγουσα καὶ τὸ σὸν κοινῶς λέγεις, 1462), in a moment which calls back to Ion's identification, in the first episode, of the unknown woman's story as sounding "in harmony to [his] own suffering" (προσφδὸς ἡ τύχη τῶμῳ πάθει, 359). Creusa's experience of trauma and its aftermath has previously been characterized by isolation and disharmony, by the devastating necessity of keeping her sufferings secret from all those most dear to her. The recognition scene allows her not only to be heard, witnessed, and believed, but also to feel *with* her son, to create community and shared memory despite the disruptive force of trauma, which has previously led to each of them nearly causing the other's death.

In the course of the recognition scene, Creusa also manages to weave her rhapsody and retelling of the exposure into a larger tapestry of mythic narrative, creating a context for her experience which further reduces the isolation intrinsic to her trauma. As if in direct response to the chorus' evocation of the Eleusinian Mysteries as a cite for female-centered religious practice,

Creusa repeatedly invokes Persephone as the caretaker of her child and the one who has allowed her reunion with him. Having previously told the old man that her son was “raised in the house of Hades” (953), Creusa now defines her exposure of Ion as giving him “to reside beneath the earth beside Persephone” (ὄν κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέρωον/χθόνιον μετὰ Περσεφόνας τ’ ἐδόκουν ναίειν, 1441-2), reframing this potentially cruel act as a maternal gesture of entrusting her child to the care of a goddess.³⁹ Given the explicit resonances between Persephone’s story and Creusa’s own (including their prototypical experience of picking flowers at the moment of their assaults), this reframing allows Creusa to position Persephone as a substitute mother to her child, affirming her own likeness to the goddess. Later, Creusa calls directly upon Persephone to ask how it was that the goddess returned her child to her (1453-5), creating an image of Ion’s survival entirely dependent on the agency of benevolent female figures, rather than on that of Apollo and Hermes, as in the narrative that the Olympians present to us. Earlier in the play, Creusa has repeatedly invoked Apollo’s mother, Leto, as a potential recipient of her prayers for reunion with her son (410-3), even going so far as to identify the god in some moments purely with his matrilineal descent (884, 907) when she wishes to remind him of his injustice towards her, and calling up the image of Leto’s own labor within Zeus’ orchards as a counterpoint to her desolate one (921-2). When affirming the truth of her story of Ion’s parentage in this scene, Creusa twice again calls upon her city’s patron goddess Athena to bear witness (1478 and 1528-31), as she did during her monody (870-3), linking her own authority as speaker to a powerful religious precedent and identifying her joy at being reunited with her son as a matter of

³⁹ Zeitlin also argues that we can understand this moment as an affirmation of the Eleusinian doctrine of rebirth which links that mode of faith together with Athenian autochthony (Zeitlin 1996, 305). I am ambivalent about this argument, but am also interested in the potential for linkages between this moment and the myth of Adonis, who also grows up “within the house of Hades.”

civic, not only personal celebration (1463-7).⁴⁰ In this moment she also invokes the image of the nightingale as a metonym for the site of her rape (παρ' ἀηδόσιον πέτρων, 1482), tying her own story of sexual violence to a tradition of representing female victimization which includes Cassandra and Philomela.⁴¹ Not only is Creusa able to experience collective emotion and healing around the experience of the exposure with Ion at this moment, but she is also able to understand and represent her experience of rape within the context of a larger mythic system which grants her authority and comfort as well as pain.

The reunion of the play's ending thus becomes not simply the proof that Apollo does indeed repay his debts, however late, but a triumph of motherhood and female-centric religious practice. The play affirms that injustice *can* be committed by gods, and that the resulting harm is lasting and devastating, but does not conclude that for this reason all religious practice is inherently without meaning. Rather, processes of witnessing and testimony are necessary to heal the individual and communal harm done by these injustices, and to allow the victims of divine lust to fully participate in social and religious life. Creusa and the chorus are able to jointly affirm the potential for religious faith to act as a site for strength and validation, affirming the vital place of female power within the divine system, and asserting the presence, within the Greek pantheon, of not only perpetrators but also victims of sexual violence. Even while recognition and justice may not be open to Creusa through official channels, as Athena's carefully political speech demonstrates, the play still asserts that support and healing are real, tangible possibilities, and that the ruptures caused by divine rape are not beyond repair.

⁴⁰ For further discussion on the political dimensions of the recognition, see Zacharia (chapter two) and Mueller 2010.

⁴¹ We can potentially also include Hesiod in this tradition, given the peculiarly gendered and sexualized elements of his allegory of the hawk and nightingale in *Works and Days*, 203-12.

The *Ion* is a play of multiplicity and contradiction, and this can make it challenging to interpret. Scholars for centuries have fretted at the question of how a single play can encompass both Ion and Creusa's monodies, equally vivid and persuasive in their poetic power but presenting exactly opposite visions of Apollo. There has been a trend in the critical tradition to label either Ion or Creusa 'wrong', to provide a simple answer to the play's unresolved questions and myriad competing accounts. Yet no such answer is possible. The play confronts its audience with the inherently contradictory and troubling nature of divinity in the ancient world, and leaves us with the issue of what it means to exist in a world where the gods one worships are also the perpetrators of profoundly damaging violence, and where that violence in fact forms a central part of the larger mythic system. Euripides forces us to look directly at the women whose bodies link together the heroic genealogy of myth, and to see the suffering imposed on them by the requirements of the mythic system. Yet it is also a text that is deeply optimistic about the potential for reunion, reconciliation, and healing. Creusa ends the play with a family and a community, witnessed and believed. We cannot ascertain for certain how many of the women in Euripides' fragmentary plays shared her good fortune, but I do not believe she was alone.

Epilogue: Cassandra's Rejection

“As a wrestler he came to me,” Cassandra says to the chorus of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, describing Apollo’s sexual advances to her, “powerfully breathing *charis*.” (ἀλλ’ ἦν παλαιστῆς κάρτ’ ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν, 1206). Although verbose and sensorily evocative in the rest of the scene, fluidly pouring out descriptions of her horrifying visions, on the topic of her relations with the god Cassandra remains circumspect, and this is the only moment when we can even glimpse the physical dimensions of the moment which led to her curse. Apollo, who elsewhere in the play is the unseen, ever-present recipient of Cassandra’s lamentation (1072 and following), here is intensely embodied. He appears to Cassandra in a form characterized by athletic prowess, appropriate, as she sees, for agonistic physical contest. Like a mortal, Apollo breathes, but the substance of his breath is grace itself, the reward owed, as we have seen before, to mortals who experience sexual intimacy with the divine. Cassandra understands the potential grace that is due to her if she satisfies Apollo’s desire, but she also sees the ways in which satisfying that desire requires her own physical subjugation within the *agon* that he has come prepared for, the fact that, in order to receive the *charis* Apollo offers she also must be close enough that he can breathe upon her. Cassandra is unlike the women with whom our previous chapters have been concerned in many ways, the most obvious being that she appears, at least according to some interpretations, to avoid divine rape. Yet the ambiguity of this single line in the *Agamemnon* has been the topic of sharp debate. How could a mortal woman ever manage to evade a god’s assault, especially when so many others within the tradition fail to do so? Why would Apollo come to

Cassandra prepared for a physical conflict and then retreat to curse her instead? What makes Cassandra different?

David Kovacs argues that these lines of Aeschylus' do in fact imply that Apollo's desire was consummated, and that only the shame to which Cassandra previously refers (Ag. 1203) prevents her from identifying the sexual act more explicitly (Kovacs 328); indeed, the chorus seems to interpret her speech as such, asking her immediately whether she bore children to the god (Ag. 1207).⁴² Rush Rehm, taking up Kovacs' argument, suggests that Cassandra's betrayal of Apollo may in fact be located after the rape, in a refusal to bear his children which implies either abortion or the infanticide which hovers in potentiality around Creusa and the heroines of all our previously discussed fragmentary plays (Rehm 354). Raeburn and Thomas, among others, reject Kovacs' reading, interpreting 1206 as an attempted, but not completed rape. While this question of Cassandra's successful or unsuccessful resistance to Apollo is significant, I do not consider it the central one in understanding her representation by both Aeschylus and Euripides in relation to the narratives of divine rape we have previously examined. Although she would be one of the few mortals to successfully resist a divine rape without being turned into a plant or animal, she would not be the only one, as the figure of Marpessa should show us.⁴³ Cassandra is clearly the victim of Apollo's violent exercise of sexual desire; she is offered *charis* for satisfying him, but in refusing is cursed. How far the assault went, or where her refusal exactly occurred, is not at the center of the narrative.

⁴² Kovacs' argument is not entirely persuasive to my mind; he essentially establishes 1206 as showing a physical sexual advance, and argues that it is unbelievable that the god would have stopped midway. He also interprets "breathing *charis*" as a reference to sexual gratification in general, and perhaps specifically to orgasm, which I do find provocative, considering Creusa's description of Apollo giving *charis* to Aphrodite which, as we have seen, she uses as a stand-in for the moment of her rape.

⁴³ Marpessa, who was desired by Apollo but chose her mortal lover Idas over him, is briefly mentioned at *Iliad* 9.557, and her story later receives more extrapolation in sources including Propertius 1.2 and Apollodorus' *Library*.

But where Aeschylus does put focus is on the act of refusal itself, however and whenever it occurs. Cassandra's characterization of this moment is careful and precise: "In consenting to Loxias," she explains, "I lied" (ξυναιέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην, *Ag.* 1208). She does not say that she made a promise and then reneged on it, nor that she refused the god outright, but rather that, somehow, the moment of her consent also contained the fact of her deception.⁴⁴ She does not, as we have seen, elaborate on the nature of her betrayal, nor how it was possible for her to deceive the god of prophecy (who she here specifically identifies according to his prophetic epithet). By leaving the specifics of Cassandra's situation ambiguous, Aeschylus puts the focus of his audience on the question of what it could possibly mean to consent to, or eventually refuse a god. Unlike Creusa or Auge or Antiope, Cassandra is *trying* to give her consent to Apollo and receive his grace. But there is something which makes this impossible for her. And this inability to receive the god's desire throws her relations to the divine sphere into tumult.

While Cassandra does not experience precisely the same kinds of punishment by family members and community that we have seen in previous narratives of divine rape, her story following her rejection of Apollo is filled with exclusion, imprisonment, and abjection. In both *Agamemnon* and *Troades* we see her characterized as a victim of human violence as well as divine, imprisoned both by those who love her (as Hecuba seeks to keep her shut up safely within the tent at the start of *Troades*) and by her enemies. The Cassandra of *Troades* has recently suffered an intensely blasphemous rape by Locrian Ajax, which will motivate Athena's intervention against the Greeks (*Tr.* 69-75), and is about to be made Agamemnon's concubine, while in the *Agamemnon* Cassandra has already spent a long sea-journey enslaved, and is greeted

⁴⁴ To me it seems that the combination of aorist participle and verb in this line implies a simultaneity of action, and that ξυναιέσασα would have been in the perfect if we were meant to imagine a specific betrayal occurring after her agreement. I am also curious about the middle voice of ἐψευσάμην, which perhaps suggests that Cassandra was deceiving herself in believing that she could successfully agree to what the god was asking of her.

by her new mistress, Clytemnestra, with promises of being taught “to bear the bridle” (χαλινὸν δ’ οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν, *Ag.*1066). Even before the fall of Troy, which makes Cassandra victim to direct physical and sexual violence, she has already experienced exclusion and alienation from the human community, as the nature of her curse by Apollo is to make her incomprehensible, and thus interpreted by others as insane. We have seen already how women who bear divine children are frequently disbelieved by other mortals when they seek to tell their story; although Apollo leaves her with no child whose parentage can be disputed, his punishment to Cassandra is that she be disbelieved in the primary site of her own intimacy with him, which is through her prophecy.⁴⁵ Even while Apollo is not definitively pictured as a direct perpetrator of physical violence in Cassandra’s narrative as he is in Creusa’s, her alienation from the human community is shown to be a specific, intended result of his punishment, as it is not with many of the women we have previously discussed. While Athena identifies the “secrecy” of Creusa’s assault, which prevented any sort of public shaming or punishment for her unmarried pregnancy, as an example of Apollo’s grace on her behalf, and others of these women are, even after a punishment of exclusion, eventually validated by the divine prowess of their sons, Cassandra receives no such mercy, only an ignominious death as Agamemnon’s concubine. This, perhaps, is one result of her rejection of Apollo’s *charis*; she gives up the chance for divine validation.

Cassandra, like Auge, Melanippe, and Io, is a priestess, occupying a privileged role of religious authority and sanctity, which she retains even after Apollo’s assault. In Euripides’ *Troades*, Hecuba understands Cassandra’s impending victimization as the concubine of

⁴⁵ The question of how the experience of prophecy, which is in some ways about being filled up and inhabited by a god, may have been understood within the Greek world as akin to sexual consummation is a deeply interesting one, but unfortunately somewhat outside the limited scope of this project.

Agamemnon as a special violation, as she has been granted an “unbedded life” as the *parthenos* of Apollo (*Troades*, 253-8). Later in the *Troades*, it is Cassandra who, in what the other women identify as her “madness”, urges her mother and companions to continue their traditional marriage rites to Hymenaeus and Hecate even within their situation of constraint (325 and following). And, of course, throughout her scenes in the *Agamemnon* and *Troades*, Cassandra speaks with the unique authority of prophecy, confidently narrating her captors’ impending doom with either triumph (as in *Troades*, 353 and following) or horror (as in *Agamemnon*). Yet Cassandra’s religious authority does not derive from female goddesses or matrilineal genealogies of wisdom which, as we have seen in chapter three above, can potentially function as sites of resistance in the face of the threatening male divinity, but from Apollo himself. As if the contradictions we noted previously between Ion and Creusa’s visions of Apollo were combined into one character, for Cassandra the god functions as both an object of meaningful and rewarding worship, and also the agent of vicious and unrelenting punishment. The Cassandra of the *Troades* refers to herself as a *latris*, a servant of Apollo (*Tr.* 450), echoing Ion’s description of himself as the god’s servant or slave.⁴⁶ In both the *Agamemnon* and the *Troades* Cassandra specifically enters on stage ornamented in garlands which mark her privileged devotion and obligation to Apollo, as Ion himself does, but where Ion fears that Xuthus, in the enthused passion which Ion understands as sexual, may rip the garlands and thus defile his sacred physical purity (μη ψαύσας τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ στέμματα ῥήξις χειρί, *I.* 522), Cassandra tears the garlands from her body herself, ritually enacting the separation from her god which has been forced on her by both divine and human violence. In both plays, Cassandra openly articulates this act of

⁴⁶ See *I.* 130-135 and 1372-3, among other references. A number of different words are used throughout the play to describe Ion’s servitude to Apollo, but the prophetess specifically refers to him as a *latris* (ὁ θεός σ’ ἐβούλετ’ ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν λάτριον, 1343).

destruction as an unwilling repudiation, not of the god who she serves, but of her own religious role in relation to him, from which she has been torn away.

In the *Troades*, Cassandra names Apollo as her “dearest” (φιλότατου μοι, 451) at the very moment of tearing away her wreaths, and identifies her religious intimacy with him, and her participation in his festivals, as sources of joy (*Tr.* 451-2) which now are barred to her because of her sexual violation. In the *Agamemnon*, she understands her wreath and prophet’s staff, the markers of her religious role, as transformed into sources of ridicule within the context of her curse and her enslavement (*Ag.* 1264 and following). In both plays, she addresses Apollo directly, as we have seen both Ion and Creusa do, with uncommon intimacy, as though she experiences his constant presence in every part of her life. Although these direct addresses continue throughout their scenes (as when, in the *Agamemnon*, Cassandra interrogates Apollo about his purpose in bringing her to Agamemnon’s doomed house at 1087, or in the *Troades*, she invites him to lead her to her twisted ‘wedding’ with Agamemnon at 329-30), they become particularly marked at the moment of the stripping away of the garlands, as Cassandra either attempts to give them to him (*Tr.* 454-5), or represents the god himself as the agent of their destruction (*Ag.* 1267-8). Variants on the verb φθείρειν are used in both cases, implying a kind of utter, irreversible ruination.⁴⁷ As with the other victims of divine rape we have looked at, Cassandra has a kind of unique closeness with the god which sets her apart from the rest of humanity, yet her exposure to both divine and human sexual violence has also severely disrupted her relation to the divine, making it impossible for her to successfully occupy the liminal role of intermediary between mortal and divine which her position as prophetess requires of her. Yet, while Cassandra, like Creusa, understands Apollo as her “destroyer” (*Ag.* 1081), she also locates

⁴⁷ φθείρειν is also used as a euphemism for women’s victimization by rape or involvement in sexual transgression.

the source of the rift between human and divine with her own refusal, her own inability to accept what the god requires of her. She pulls the wreaths away from her own body, reenacting others' violence towards her but also her own original act of rejection.

The worlds of the *Agamemnon* and *Troades* are, in their own ways, spaces in which the relations between the human and divine have been thrown into chaos, and Cassandra's inability to successfully communicate her prophecies to those around her is reflective, not just of her own fraught relationship with the god, but of the impiety, confusion, and willful oblivion which variously characterize the other figures in these plays. The trajectory of the larger *Oresteia*, in fact, involves continuous attempts to more clearly hear Apollo's voice and intention, from Cassandra's unheeded prophecies in the *Agamemnon* to Orestes' agonized decision to obey Apollo's command in the *Choephoroi*, to the god's final appearance in person towards the end of the *Eumenides*. Yet we can also understand Cassandra as another one in this long line of women who are placed into positions of unusual intimacy with gods and must struggle to navigate those new roles within both the social and divine spheres. Her combination of closeness to Apollo through both his sexual desire for her and his gift-curse of prophetic power is a rich encapsulation of two ways in which women could be understood as granted privileged access to the divine, and the broader violent repercussions which that intimacy could entail. Cassandra and Creusa and Auge and Melanippe and Antiope and all the other characters with whose narratives this thesis has been concerned show us that, while divine sexual desire for mortals can take many forms and lead to a variety of results, it is not possible, within the space of tragedy, for a woman to emerge from it entirely unscathed.

Yet these plays present us with a single, conditional counter-example, in the form of the prophetess, who enters briefly onto the stage at the conclusion of the *Ion*. The prophetess is in

many ways a mirror to Creusa; she has taken up the child who Creusa exposed, rescuing the infant Ion, who Creusa exposed in darkness (*I.* 955) under the light of the sun (41-5), and acting as his mother in Creusa's place. The prophetess' care for Ion is publicly known while Creusa's is required to be secret, and her careful, conditional expressions of affection (the name mother, she tells Ion, "is not bitter to me," ἡ φάτις δ' οὐ μοι πικρά, 1325) contrast with Creusa's overwhelming rhapsody during the recognition scene. As the Delphic Pythia, the prophetess' entire life has been structured around transmitting the words of Apollo and embodying his commands and intentions. At several points within her brief scene with Ion she notes how her actions have been entirely shaped by the god's will (1343 and 1347), as well as her own limited knowledge about his broader plans and intent (1359-60). Yet she expresses no bitterness or rage. Told to send away the child she has raised from infancy, she "takes leave of [him] like one who bore him" (ἴσον γάρ σ' ὡς τεκοῦσ' ἀσπάζομαι, 1363), but does not weep or lament as Creusa tells us she did at the moment of Ion's exposure (959). Her closeness to Apollo has been limited within the prescribed bounds of established ritual, and her expressions of emotion in response to his actions are thus similarly contained. We may read between the lines of her terse, formal interactions with her adopted son and see there grief at their sudden parting, but, if this is what the prophetess does in fact feel, she never says so. Her controlled, restrained speech stands in direct opposition to Creusa's bitter outpouring of anti-hymnic censure, Cassandra's twisted laments and wedding songs, Melanippe's spirited use of rhetoric, or Auge's courageous confrontation of male hypocrisy. It is not incidental, I think, that the prophetess also embodies a religious institution which was both current and much respected in these tragedians' time. Only this kind of controlled, institutionalized experience of divine habitation could, perhaps, neutralize the devastatingly violent potential of a woman's intimacy with a god.

Works Cited

- Améry, Jean. *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*. Indiana University Press, 1980.
- Barlow, Shirley A, ed. *Euripides' Trojan Women*. Aris and Philips Classical Texts, 2011.
- Benner, Allen Rogers, ed. *Selections from Homer's Iliad*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.
- Binion, Rudolph. "Traumatic Reliving in Classical Fiction." *Respectus Philologicus*, 13, 2008, pg. 10-19.
- Bowra, C. M, ed. *Pindari Carmina Cum Fragmentis*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Burnett, Anne Pippin, ed. *Ion: Greek Drama Series*. Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Campbell, David A, ed. *Greek Lyric Poetry*. Bristol Classical Press, 2003.
- Collard, Christopher and Martin Cropp, ed. *Euripides Fragments: Aegeus-Meleager*. Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery*. Perseus Books, 1997.
- Kearns, Emily. "Pindar and Euripides on Sex with Apollo." *Classical Quarterly* 63, 2013, pg. 57-67.
- Karamanou, Ioanna. "The Myth of Alope in Greek Tragedy." *L'antiquité classique*, 72, 2003, pg. 25-40.
- Karamanou, Ioanna. *Euripides' Danae and Dictys: Introduction, Text and Commentary*. K. G. Saur, 2006.
- Kovacs, David. "The Way of a God with a Maid in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*" in *Classical Philology*, Vol. 82, No. 4, 1987, pg. 326-334.
- LaRue, Jene. "Creusa's Monody: *Ion* 859-922," *TAPA* 94, 1963, pg. 126-36.
- Laub, Dori and Shoshana Felman. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Routledge, 1992.
- Mastronarde, Donald J, ed. *Euripides: Medea*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Mueller, Melissa. "Athens in a Basket: Naming, Objects, and Identity in Euripides' *Ion*." in *Arethusa* 43, 2010, pg 365-402.

- Murnaghan, Sheila. "The Daughters of Cadmus: Chorus and Characters in Euripides' *Bacchae* and *Ion*" in *Bulletin for the Institute of Classical Studies*, 49, 2006, pg. 99-112.
- Omotiwoju, Rosanna. *Rape and the Politics of Consent in Classical Athens*. Cambridge Classical Studies, 2009.
- Owen, A. S., ed. *Euripides: Ion*. Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Pedrick, Victoria. *Euripides, Freud, and the Romance of Belonging*. John Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Raeburn, David and Oliver Thomas, eds. *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus: A Commentary for Students*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Rehm, Rush. "Cassandra: The Prophet Unveiled" in *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to AD 2004*, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Richardson, Nicholas, ed. *Three Homeric Hymns: To Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Ruffell, Ian. "Character types" in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Rynearson, Nicholas. "Creusa's Palinode: Gender, Genealogy, and Intertextuality" in *Arethusa* 47, 2014, pg. 39-69.
- Scafuro, Adele. "Discourses of Sexual Violation in Mythic Accounts and Dramatic Versions of 'The Girl's Tragedy'" in *Differences*, Vol. 2, 1990.
- Seaford, Richard. "The Imprisonment of Women in Greek Tragedy" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 110, 1990, pg. 76-90.
- Stehle, Eva. "Choral Prayer in Greek Tragedy: Euphemia or Aischrologia?" in *Music and the Muses: The Culture of 'Mousike' in the Classical Athenian City*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Swift, Laura. *The Hidden Chorus*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Weiss, Naomi. "A Psychoanalytical Reading of Euripides' *Ion*: Repetition, Development and Identity" in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 51, 2008, pg. 39-50.
- Zacharia, Katharina. *Converging Truths: Ion and the Athenian Quest for Self-Definition*. Leiden, 2003.
- Zagagi, Netta. *The Comedy of Menander: Convention, Variation & Originality*. London:

Duckworth & Co Ltd, 1994.

Zeitlin, Froma. "Configurations of Rape in Greek Myth" in *Rape*, Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter eds. Basil Blackwell, 1986, pg. 122-51.

Zeitlin, Froma "Mysteries of Identity and Designs of the Self in Euripides' *Ion*," in, *Playing the Other*, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pg. 285-338.