Chapter 5

FROM DEATH BED TO MARRIAGE BED

SOPHOKLES' *TRACHINIAE*

LIKE *Antigone*, *Trachiniae* vividly contrasts the worlds of men and women. An oft-noted feature of the play is the fact that the two principals, Deianeira and her husband Herakles, never meet onstage.[1] However, Sophokles goes to great lengths to introduce people and objects that link the two characters, even using the same actor to play both roles.[2] As a result, the radically different experiences of men and women gradually come together and even merge during the course of the drama. One of the chief means by which this crossover is effected involves the interplay of weddings and funerals, and in its closing scene *Trachiniae* presents the clearest example in tragedy—with the possible exception of Euripides' *Alkestis*—of one rite generating another.

For all its dramatic and poetic ironies, Sophokles' dramaturgy in *Trachiniae* resembles the construction of a composite picture by adding new pieces to the puzzle, which eventually bring the image into focus. We might contrast the workings of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, where a pattern already clear to the audience is only belatedly revealed to the protagonist. In *Trachiniae*, however, the oracle that Herakles will die at the hands of a creature already dead (1159–63) is not introduced to the audience until the hero's death is well in train, and only some one hundred lines before the play ends. Herakles perceives an inevitability in his fate that the spectators have only just learned about. Searching for order behind the additive events in the tragedy, many critics follow Herakles' lead and focus on the late-breaking oracle.[3] However, the play's dramatic coherence may lie elsewhere, at the level of ritual, in particular the pattern of wedding-to-funeral-to-wedding that shapes the overall plot.

In the prologue Deianeira relates her marriage directly to her unhappy life, and twice to her death. She begins with the maxim that one cannot know how life will turn out until death makes it clear, and then she immediately contradicts herself. A troubled courtship taught her early that her life would be hard and ill-fated, "without having to descend to Hades" (4–5) to find out. As a girl she "suffered from marriage" (νυμφείων ὄτλον/ ἄλγιστον ἔσχον 7–8) more than any

other Aetolian maiden. Her first suitor was the monstrous river-god Achelous, whose bestial form led her to pray for death rather than share "such a marriage bed" (τῆσδε κοίτης 17). Deianeira's morbid fear of her wedding introduces the link between marriage and death that is developed through the play, culminating in the final scene when Sophokles presents a mirror-image of Deianeira's situation at the opening: Herakles lies on his death-bed, victim of a bestial intrusion (via Nessus' poison) into his marriage, while he forces his son to undertake what seems to be a monstrous wedding.

Deianeira describes how Herakles saved her from a union with Achelous and took her as his own bride, the first of several instances where a wife is won "by means of combat" (εἰς ἀγῶνα . . . μάχης 20).[4] Herakles' rescue brought her marriage and children but bred "fear upon fear" (28) in her heart. Her long-absent husband visits only rarely, "like a farmer of a distant field who sees it once when he sows and once when he harvests" (31–33). The simile brings to mind the Athenian wedding formula that sanctions "the sowing of legitimate offspring," and we hear a poignant echo in Deianeira's anxiety over Herakles' absence, which she likens to "the bitter pangs of childbirth" (πικρὰς/ ὠδῖνας 41–42). The husband/father stays away from his children, while the wife/mother feels his absence as if enduring again the pain of parturition.[5]

Deianeira resembles a poor bird longing (ποθουμέναι 103) for her absent mate; she is unable to "put her longing [πόθον] to sleep [εὐνάζειν]," nor can she stop her tears, brought about by her "husbandless bed" (εὐναῖς ἀναν-/ δρώτοισι, 106–10). The noun πόθος (*pothos*) often refers to longing for a marriage partner or for the deceased,[6] and its repetition suggests that Deianeira suffers in her marriage like one who mourns the dead. Although the Chorus point out that some god always saves Herakles from the "house of Hades" (120–21), Deianeira's premonitions of her husband's death remain. She even confesses that when Herakles left on his last journey, he told her that if he failed to return after fifteen months she should take back her dowry as if he had died (161–62).

That period has elapsed, and a Messenger arrives to announce that Herakles lives. The Chorus celebrate with a short, lively lyric: "Let the house prepared for marriage raise the shout of triumph with cries from the hearth" (ἀνολολυξάτω δόμος/ ἐφεστίοις ἀλαλαγαῖς/ ὁ μελλόνυμφος 205–7). The "house ready for marriage" welcomes the husband's return to his wedded wife, but another possibility suggests itself. Among the women Herakles has captured is the girl Iole, who will join the *oikos* as the hero's new bride.[7]

The Chorus call on the men to raise a paean to Apollo, and on the

unmarried girls, παρθένοι (*parthenoi* 211), to sing in praise of Artemis, who holds "a torch in each hand" (214) and is accompanied by the Nymphs (215). Praising the music of the *aulos*, the Chorus end their song with reference to a dance for Dionysus (216–20). The details are confusing,[8] but the explanation for the particular immortals who are invoked—Apollo, Artemis, the Nymphs, Dionysus—may lie in their connection to weddings. The Nymphs were associated with nuptial bathing and fertility and received bridal offerings, as did Artemis, who oversaw female rituals involving menarche and was appealed to during pregnancy and childbirth. The goddess frequently is depicted (with a torch in each hand) on black-figure scenes of "heroicized" wedding processions, as is her brother Apollo (often with a lyre), symbolizing the role of music in the wedding ceremony (figure 5). Dionysus also figures on such processional scenes, suggesting the festive nature of the event—or perhaps, as here, an illusory sense of happiness and liberation.[9]

As if cued by these divinities linked to wedding processions, the captured maidens of Oechalia enter down the *eisodos* in their own procession (στόλον 226), led by the herald Lichas.[10] Deianeira immediately sympathizes with these female prisoners-of-war, particularly Iole whom she identifies as unmarried (ἄνανδρος 308). Lichas explains that Iole suffers "from the labor pangs (ὠδίνουσα) of her heavy burden" (325), the same word that Deianeira uses to describe her longing for Herakles (42). Marriage for a Greek woman was intended to lead to childbirth, but Deianeira's labor pains are for her absent husband, Iole's for her absent home.

Deianeira learns that Herakles sacked Oechalia because he wanted the girl "as a secret bed [mate]" (κρύφιον . . . λέχος 360). Iole has been "led here as a wife for Herakles" (δάμαρτ' ἔφασκες Ἡρακλεῖ ταύτην ἄγειν; 428), the phrase parodying Lichas' greeting of Deianeira as "wife of Herakles" (δάμαρτά θ' Ἡρακλέους 406). In fact, Deianeira displays an uncanny likeness to the captive girl who has undermined her marriage: "I felt pity to see her, for her beauty has ruined her life" (464–65). Earlier, Deianeira made the same observation about herself when *she* was the potential bride, fearing that "my own beauty might someday bring me pain" (25).

The Chorus also link Deianeira to Iole, singing of the ineluctable power of Aphrodite, who always "carries off the victory" (497).[11] Under the influence of the goddess, Herakles has "carried off" Iole as his war-bride, just as years before, compelled by the same erotic force, he won Deianeira from Achelous. In that victory, Herakles tore Deianeira away "like a calf from her mother" (529–30). On one level she is simply a "prize heifer" who goes to the winner, but we also recognize the trope that compares the bride to a young animal weaned from her mother, perhaps taken away to be slaughtered.[12] The simile is apt, for in *Trachiniae* marriage involves the forceful removal of women from the security they have known: "uprooted" (39, 240), pulled from their home soil (144–50), and plucked like a flower when young, only to be discarded when old (547–49).[13] For both Iole and Deianeira, marriage is the disruption of the natural world, inextricably linked—as the battles with Achelous and the sack of Oechalia suggest—with death.

Although drawn to the captive Iole, Deianeira fears she will be displaced by the young woman who obtrudes onto her marriage. She wonders if Iole is still a "maiden" (κόρην) or if she has been "yoked" (ἐζευγμένην 536), and then imagines herself sharing the marriage bed with a new bride (539–40). Deianeira asks whether any wife could "have in common with another woman the same lovemaking?" (κοινωνοῦσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων 546), admitting her fears that Herakles will come to be called Iole's "husband" (πόσις 550) rather than her own.[14]

In her distress, Deianeira divulges a second battle fought over her, when the Centaur Nessus attempted rape while ferrying her across the river on the journey home with Herakles. In that struggle, the wedding ritual itself also was under attack. Deianeira was still "a young girl" (557) when, "sent by my father, I first followed Herakles as his bride" (562–63). Given away by her *kurios* (the *ekdosis* of the wedding ceremony), Deianeira is sexually assaulted during the *eisagōgē*, the physical transferal to her husband's home.[15] Both the attempted rape and Nessus' subsequent death occur "in the middle of the crossing" (μέσωι πόρωι 564), suggesting an interruption in the rite of passage from maiden to wife.

The prominence of the Centaur in this near-violation of the bride repays examination.[16] The background myth is the famous battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs at the wedding of the Lapith leader Perithöos (see Chapter 2 pp. 38–39). Invited as guests, the Centaurs attempt to abduct the bride Hippodameia and her bridesmaids, but they are defeated by the Lapiths and driven out of Thessaly. The earliest surviving version occurs in the *Odyssey*, where the suitor Antinöos relates the story to Odysseus (disguised as a beggar, *Od.* 21.289–311). Graphic scenes of the battle were depicted in the (lost) murals by Polygnotos in Athens (ca. 470), and the story was popular in architectural sculpture. It appeared on the south metopes of the Parthenon (compositions that influenced the centauromachy in red-figure vase-painting), on the sandals of Pheidias' cult statue of Athena Parthenos, on the shield of his bronze Athena Promachos, on the west

pediment and frieze above the *opisthodomos* of the Theseion, and on the metopes of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion.[17] The centauromachy also was sculpted on two famous temples in the Peloponnese, the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (by 458/57) and the interior frieze of the temple at Bassae. A particularly dramatic episode from the Bassae frieze shows a Lapith woman clinging to an idol of Artemis, while a Centaur lasciviously pulls off her garment, a horrific parody of the *anakaluptēria* at which the bride "exposes herself" to her husband.[18]

The violent rupture of the Lapith wedding by the Centaurs is mirrored in the assault by Nessus in *Trachiniae*. Moreover, just as Herakles kills the bull-man Achelous in the contest for Deianeira's hand, so he must slay the horse-man Nessus who threatens to violate his bride as he brings her to her new home. In the former case, the fatal aspects of the wedding operate only in Deianeira's and the Chorus's memory (1–27, 503–30). In the latter case, however, they remain physically present in the poisoned blood that the dying Centaur maliciously offers Deianeira, convincing her of its efficacy as a love potion. She has kept it in a "well-hidden place in the house" (578–79) and decides now to use it to regain Herakles' affections.

By applying the Hydra poison/Centaur blood to the robe she sends Herakles, Deianeira resurrects the violent history of her own wedding. As a result, wife, husband, and their go-between Lichas die. The process is well in train when Hyllus returns to the stage to report the horrific *pathos* of Herakles in the poisoned robe. He tells his mother how Herakles killed Lichas, the bearer of the gift, and then "cursed the ill-mated bed and the marriage he shared with you, for they destroyed his life" (791–93). Marriage is fatal not only to Herakles but also to Deianeira, who has decided that if harm comes to her husband "then carried on by the same impetus I will die with him" (συνθανεῖν 720).

With his son's assistance, Herakles is ferried (πόρθμευσον 802) back to the mainland, his body placed "in the middle of the boat" (ἐν μέσωι σκάφει 803). The details recall Nessus' ferrying of Deianeira ('πόρευε 560) and his attempted rape "in the middle of the crossing" (μέσωι πόρωι 564). The middle-point is also where Aphrodite stood (ἐν μέσωι 515) to umpire the battle between Achelous and Herakles, and "the middle of the marriage bed" (ἐν μέσοισιν εὐνατηρίοις 918) marks the spot of Deianeira's eventual suicide. We noted in Chapter 4 the play of betwixt and between in *Antigone*, where Kreon denies Antigone a place among the living, depriving her of a husband and the transition from maiden to wife, and wife to mother. The various midpoints in *Trachiniae* also suggest this liminal zone where opposites interpenetrate and even replace each other. Nessus' ferrying Deianeira across the stream during the *eisagōgē* of her wedding leads to near-rape, poison, and death. Years later those past events press themselves on the present, and they lead in turn to the ferrying of the fatally poisoned Herakles back to the mainland. With a hint of Charon transporting the dead across the river Styx, Herakles' passage initiates the funeral rites that close the play.

The suicide of Deianeira accelerates the shift in focus from saving a marriage to preparing for a funeral. The Nurse reports her death in a *kommos* with the Chorus, and the catechistic form of their exchange (863–95) may reflect an early pattern of Greek funeral lament.[19] The Chorus conclude that "this bride without a wedding has given birth, has borne a great curse [lit. "Fury"] on the house" (ἔτεκ' ἔτεκε μεγάλαν/ ἀνέορτος ἅδε νύμφα/ δόμοισι τοῖσδ' 'Ερινύν 893–95). The offspring of the union of Iole and Herakles is none other than the suicide of Deianeira and the death of her estranged husband.[20]

In the messenger speech that follows, the Nurse exposes the intimate connection between Deianeira's marriage and her death. Deianeira sees her son Hyllus in the courtyard preparing a "hollow bed" (901–2)—that is, a litter and funeral bier—for his father. As if inspired by his act, Deianeira rushes to the marriage chamber (*thalamon* 913) and makes Herakles' bed, an activity traditionally linked to a wife preparing to have sex with her husband.[21] She then sits "in the middle of the bed" (918) and bids farewell to it and to her bridal chamber, forsaking them for another place of rest (920–22). Tearing off the "golden pin" that holds her *peplos*, she "undresses" and stabs herself with a sword (923–26). As with the blinding in *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the death of Haimon in *Antigone*, the sexual overtones of Deianeira's suicide are unmistakable.[22] Hyllus enters and mourns over her body, "covering it with kisses, and/ groaning as he lay side by side with her" (938–39). The marriage chamber becomes the site of bloodshed, Deianeira's suicide takes on aspects of her wedding night, and, "orphaned of both father and mother" (942), Hyllus bemoans his loss like an impassioned lover.

The arrival of Herakles moves Deianeira's suicide to the background, even as it strengthens the link between marriage and death. The Chorus compare the lamentations of Herakles' escort to the cries of "the sharp-sounding nightingale" (963), alluding to the story of Procne, Philomela, and Itys (Chapter 3 p. 46). Although the parallels are hardly exact, Philomela's betrayed marriage and its fatal results fit the pattern of Sophokles' play, especially Herakles' rape of Iole and the subsequent, if unintentional, punishment executed by his wife. Earlier Deianeira realized that Iole would dwell in the house with her

(ξυνοικεῖν, *xunoikein* 545), and now Herakles uses the same word to characterize the garment fixed to his body, a robe that "dwells with" him (*xunoikoun* 1055). Commonly applied to married couples who establish their *oikos* together (Chapter 1 p. 18), the word links estranged husband and wife by suggesting the mutual catastrophe that their wedded union has become.

Crying out to be left "to my final sleep" (ὕστατον εὐνᾶσθαι 1005),[23] Herakles begs Hades to provide him "a bed on which to lie forever" (εὕνασον, εὕνασον μ' 1042). Unaware that Deianeira meant no harm and has killed herself as a result of her error, Herakles unleashes a savage verbal attack on his wife (1036–38). As one who battled the giants, Centaurs, and wild beasts, Herakles bewails the ignominy of dying at the hands of a woman (1058–63). A mere female who fought "without a sword" (φασγάνου δίχα 1063), Deianeira has accomplished what none of Herakles' other opponents ever achieved.

The ironies are remarkable, for those in the audience are well aware that Deianeira herself has taken up the "two-edged sword" (ἀμφιπλῆγι φασγάνωι 930) to end her *own* life. By using a weapon of male combat, she introduces the bloodshed of the battlefield into the marriage chamber. Just the reverse happens to Herakles, for the mixture of Centaur blood and Hydra venom has made its way from the "secret recess" in the house (578–79, 686–89) to find the hero in the field. There the love potion destroys Herakles as if from within, offering no chance for him to fight back. The polarities between the male and female worlds noted at the start of the play begin to reverse themselves and to merge, as it were, from opposite directions.

Herakles' arrival on stage differs radically from what we would expect of the triumphant hero lauded earlier in the play. Carried in on his deathbed and longing for the sleep of Hades (1004–5 and 1040–43), Herakles begins to resemble Deianeira who has converted her marriage bed into her bed of death by the act of suicide.[24] He bemoans his unheroic end, "torn to shreds," κατερρακωμένος (*katerrakōmenos* 1103). The participle occurs nowhere else in Greek literature, but the root noun *rakos* means a "ragged or torn bit of cloth," a domestic image seemingly not fit for the death of a hero. In the same vein, Herakles describes himself as "sacked" (ἐκπεπόρθημαι 1104) like a city. Although the simile is drawn from male combat, it is now the warrior who has been plundered and destroyed, transforming Herakles into a victim like Iole, whom Herakles himself seized as a war-bride when he captured Oechalia.[25]

In his suffering Herakles behaves in ways he finds horrifyingly similar to those of a woman:

> I groan and weep
> like a girl (*parthenos*). No one could ever say
> they saw me act this way before.
> I always followed my evil fate without mourning it.
> Such a man once, now I am found to be a woman.[26] (1071–75)

Lying on his death bed/funeral bier, this "womanized" Herakles uncovers his wracked body: "I will show you my affliction by lifting the veil./ Look! all of you, gaze at my wretched body" (δείξω γὰρ τάδ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων./ ἰδού, θεᾶσθε πάντες ἄθλιον δέμας 1078–79). The unveiling of a girl (*parthenos* 1071) brings to mind the ritual *anakaluptēria* of the marriage ceremony.[27] Herakles relieves his anguish by sharing it, revealing his tortured body like a bride exposing herself to her husband on their wedding night.

The *anakaluptēria* serves as an important symbol for the revelations of Kassandra in *Agamemnon* and figures in the hanging of the heroine in *Antigone*. In *Trachiniae*, Herakles' unveiling on his death bed recalls Deianeira weeping and groaning in her bridal chamber, "undressing" on her marriage bed before she runs herself through with a sword. Just as violence and death infect the courtship and wedding of Herakles and Deianeira (via Achelous and Nessus), so husband and wife reenact aspects of the wedding ritual as they prepare to die.

Although Herakles feels humiliated at his womanly suffering, the dramatic rendering of his *pathos* valorizes rather than discredits his response. Sophokles achieves this result in no small part by his sympathetic and poignant treatment of Deianeira. Up to this point, the character of this "most appealing of Sophoclean women" differs fundamentally from that of Herakles, generally perceived to be "one of the most unpleasant characters in Greek tragedy."[28] Although the transformation is hardly complete, the change in Herakles from an aggressive and brutish male to a more sensitive and (relatively) passive sufferer increases the audience's sympathy for him.[29] In the process, the apparently rigid distinctions in the drama between men and women, between husband and wife, begin to blur.

It is a critical commonplace that Herakles' behavior changes once he understands that the oracle governing his life has come true. Herakles realizes that he has been "slain by the dead" (as the oracle predicted) through the poisoned blood of Nessus. The old prophecy that his toils would cease only meant that he would die, because death signals the end of suffering for all (1159–72). In spite of critical attention focused on the revelation of divine principle,[30] the oracle

(revealed only now to the audience) functions dramatically in a more immediate way. It serves as the catalyst to final *actions*, actions that are of key importance to understanding what has gone before.

Herakles ceases to wish for death (as he has done at 1000–1002, 1015–16, 1031–33, 1085–88) once he knows that death is imminent. Instead, he extracts a formal vow from his son to obey his last wishes (1174–90), including the fulfillment of his funeral rites. In some sense the entire scene constitutes the *prothesis*, for Herakles sees himself as already dead ("the light is no longer with me" 1144), and his body has been laid out, covered, and then uncovered for all to see. The trip to Mt. Oeta is the *ekphora*—Hyllus speaks of "bearing," φορᾶς (*phoras* 1212) the body—and once on the mountain the still-living Herakles will be cremated on a great pyre. He orders that the last rites be accompanied by "no tears or sounds of grief" (ἀστένακτος κἀδάκρυτος 1200), a prohibition that may reflect the fact that Herakles once prided himself on "not making sounds of grief" (ἀστένακτος 1074). As he is carried off, Herakles' last words are a self-exhortation to hold back cries of physical pain (1259–63). It is as if the hero already has mourned his death, in the manner of a woman who traditionally sings the funeral lament and whom he fears he now resembles.

As well as settling his "last rites" (τελευτὴ . . . ὑστάτη 1256), Herakles arranges for the wedding of his son Hyllus and his war-bride Iole.[31] Critics advance two different reasons why Sophokles insists on this marriage—to satisfy the demands of legend, or to reveal further Herakles' character of "passionate self-regard."[32] Given the importance of marriage and funeral motifs in the play, might not the purpose of this death-bed wedding arrangement have more to do with the rites themselves than with the demands of an obscure myth or the need to reassert Herakles' brutishness? Let us consider the scene through the lens of ritual and see if the encounter between father and son comes into clearer focus.

If the scene were designed to show Herakles at his monstrous worst, why does he spend so much time (1176–90) securing Hyllus' oath to obey his last wishes? Concern for an oath is rather refined behavior for a man who hurled his guest Iphitus from the towers of Tiryns (270–73, 357), sacked Oechalia out of lust for a girl (351–55, 359–74, 431–33, 476–83), and dashed the brains of his loyal messenger Lichas without waiting to learn his innocence (772–82). Although Herakles threatens to curse his son in the underworld (1201–2) and to disown him in this one (1204–5), the hero centers his appeal on the oath: "After I have died, if you want to act/ with proper piety, remember the oath you have sworn your father/ and take this woman as your wife" (1222–24).[33] By reason of that oath, should Hyllus renege, "the

curse of the gods/ will await you" (1239–40). Finally, Herakles calls on the gods to witness that his wish for his son's marriage is "not impious, since you will bring pleasure to my heart" (1246). The idea that this pain-wracked human could find even metaphorical pleasure lends Herakles a sympathetic quality he lacks elsewhere in the play, and Hyllus acquiesces to his father's wish.

Through the pain and threats and remonstrances, the original audience would have seen Herakles acting as *kurios* of both his son and Iole, arranging a marriage to ensure the survival of the *oikos*.[34] This fact helps to account for an apparent digression earlier in the scene, when Herakles asks that his mother Alkmene ("the in-vain bride of Zeus" 1148–49) and his other children come from the house. As the eldest son Hyllus explains, the family is scattered (1151–56), and there is no one else to witness the hero's dying words. Hyllus is all that remains in Trachis of Herakles' family, to whom we can add Iole as Herakles' new "bride." The *oikos* is fragile, and the *kurios* is on his death bed. A funeral and a wedding are in order.

It would be wrong to suggest that Herakles arranges this wedding out of compassion, understanding, or love, either for Iole or Hyllus.[35] On the other hand, Sophokles emphasizes throughout the play the inability of Herakles and Deianeira to see the outcome of their actions (in this regard, they remind us of Oedipus and Jokasta in *Oedipus Tyrannus*). In a world of blind decisions and tragic results, the survival of the *oikos*—the irreducible unit of Greek social identity—may represent the best that human striving can hope to achieve.

The final scene of *Trachiniae* mirrors the close of other Sophoklean plays in its concern for the *oikos*, measured by prospects of future weddings and funerals. At the end of *Antigone*, for example, the devastation of the *oikos* is total, with no possible marriage for the future. Kreon must bury his wife Eurydike and son Haimon, the child who could have maintained the *oikos* had he married Antigone as planned. In *Oedipus Tyrannus* the wife (mother) Jokasta lies dead within the palace, and the blind husband (son) Oedipus embraces his incestuous daughters, in anguish over their prospects for marriage (1489–1502), fearing they will "waste away, barren and unwedded" (1502). In *Ajax* the world of the *oikos* is more distant, but the play still shows Ajax's wife Tekmessa and small son Eurysakes tending his corpse (1168–70). In the closing sequence, Eurysakes, Teukros (Ajax's brother), and friends exit together to perform the funeral ritual for the hero—bathing and laying out the body, preparing a funeral pyre, bearing the corpse, and digging the grave (1402–17).[36] The *oikos* survives, insofar as the family's obligations to its dead *kurios* are fulfilled in a

ritually appropriate way. At the end of *Oedipus at Kolonus*, the survival of the *oikos* does not seem likely (the future strife between Polyneikes and Eteokles looms large), but the familial responsibility for burial is observed as fully as possible given the circumstances of Oedipus' death. Antigone and Ismene accompany their living father to "the marble tomb," they bathe him in preparation for his death, they clothe him in burial attire, and they wail for him as if over a corpse (1595–1609, 1620–22).[37]

At the end of *Trachiniae*, both funeral and wedding rituals are set in motion, a fact that mitigates some of the bleakness that modern critics ascribe to the drama.[38] When critics do find the negativity "balanced," they tend to hear intimations of Herakles' apotheosis on the funeral pyre, intimations more argued over than agreed upon.[39] Instead of slipping into despair, or searching beyond the text for its opposite, or settling for the trendy conclusion that Sophokles celebrates "the predicament of continual uncertainty" and actively pursues "interpretive scattering,"[40] we might do better to reconsider the interconnection between marriage and death that informs the action. Perhaps here we can find a clue to the tone at the end of the play.

Marriage in *Trachiniae* is a particularly brutal affair, springing from combat and leading to death. A bride is like a young animal pulled from her mother, a tender plant uprooted from protective soil, or—as in the case of Iole—a war-prize seized at the razing of a city. To cap that brutality, the play ends with a wife lying dead in her marriage chamber and her physically tortured husband preparing to be burned alive on his funeral bier. Their deaths reveal the terrible effectiveness of the hidden poison of the Centaur, and the even greater destruction generated by erotic desire. Deianeira hears how *eros* compelled Herakles to wreak havoc on Oechalia (354–68, 431–33), and she admits the force of that passion in driving her to use Nessus' potion (630–32, seconded by the Chorus at 860–61).[41] Against this background of fatal passion and violence, Herakles' deathbed demand that Hyllus wed Iole seems far less harsh. Young and innocent, the couple bear no responsibility for the destruction that has brought them so improbably together. The proposed union is markedly *without* eros; given the play we have just seen, such a marriage appears in a not unfavorable light.

The final exit enacts the *ekphora* of Herakles' "living corpse" as he is borne off for cremation and burial. The procession includes "foreign men" (964) from Euboea, the Old Man, the Chorus of Trachinian women, Hyllus, and possibly even Iole.[42] The act of escorting Herakles out of the theater integrates male and female worlds, consolidating a community in the face of disaster. The co-operative nature

of the funeral rites and the promise of a new wedding give the play a sense of ritual closure. In fact, the arrangements for the marriage of Hyllus and Iole may remind us of the opening scene of the play, the prologue delivered by Deianeira, reminiscing about her wedding to Herakles. If the arguments in this chapter have merit, then by that imaginative return Sophokles inscribes more of an upward spiral than the proverbial full circle.

orchestra. Buxton 1984, 10 and 25; Kamerbeek 1978 on *Ant.* 1258; and Müller 1967, 265–66 agree that Kreon carries Haimon's body onstage. Seale 1982, 105 cannot decide between this possibility and the consensus that the corpse was carried in by (undesignated) attendants, the latter view urged by Knox 1968, 755, and Jebb 1900 (stage directions at 1256) and repeated by most translators.

32. Brown 1987, 223 points out the similarity between Kreon's mourning and Athenian funeral rites. For the forms of tragic lamentation and their close relationship to fifth-century practice, see Hutchinson 1985 on *Th.* 822–1004; Brown 1977, 48–50, 54–55, 58, 61–75; Lawler 1964, 44–45; Pickard-Cambridge 1962, 107; Broadhead 1960, 310–17; and Ch. 2 n.62. For a reading of *Ant.* that uses the *patrios nomos* and "the discourse of funeral oratory" as the interpretive paradigm, see Tyrrell and Brown 1991, 204–15.

33. The word μνῆμα is used for a tomb or a memorial for the dead at *Il.* 23.619, Hdt. 7.167, and frequently in tragedy; it signifies a coffin at Eur. *Or* 1053. The adjective ἐπίσημον—from σῆμα, a common word for grave, tomb, burial mound—can mean literally "bearing an inscription." See Vermeule 1979, 45.

34. There Megareus has the name Menoikeus; see Bayfield and Jebb on *Ant.* 1303, and A. C. Pearson, *Euripides, Phoenissae* (Cambridge 1909), xxiii. For the sacrifice of Menoikeus in Eur. *Ph.*, see Foley 1985, 106–12, 132–46.

35. The change is so striking that Méautis 1957, 226–27 labels Eurydike's accusation against her husband "manifestement faux." Steiner 1984, 245–47 stresses that Eurydike views her husband as "Kreon παιδοκτόνος" (1305), "Kreon the child-killer." Haimon lives to have a son (Maion) in Homer (*Il.* 4.394); in Euripides' lost *Antigone*, Maion is the offspring of Haimon *and* Antigone (Webster 1967, 181–84). By diverging from these versions, Sophokles deepens the disaster of Kreon's family and highlights his role in its destruction.

36. See Struck 1953, 333 and A. T. von S. Bradshaw, "The Watchman Scenes in the *Antigone*," *CQ* 12 (1962), 208.

37. Kreon probably leaves during the choral *exodos* (1347–53). Seale 1982, 107 claims that "there is not [*sic*] exit, no final procession, just the final comment of the Chorus that we have witnessed a lesson in late learning." More dramatically fitting is to have Kreon enter the *oikos* he has destroyed, while the Chorus exit out the *parodoi* as they speak their final lines.

38. As there was applause in the ancient theater, we may assume some form of curtain call during which performers could move as actors and not as dramatic characters. This would allow the "removal" of the corpses at the end of A. *Ag.* and *Ch.*, when the *ekkuklēma* may not have been available and the use of supernumeraries to remove the bodies would have been awkward.

39. These aspects of *Antigone* continue to inspire writers with a political conscience. E. Anne Mackay, "Fugard's *The Island* and Sophocles' *Antigone*," in *Literature and Revolution*, ed. D. Bevan (Amsterdam 1989), 160, observes that "any society in which Antigone surfaces should look long and hard at the conflicts which give rise to her resuscitation. She has become the ominous hallmark of an oppressive and dehumanized regime."

40. Finley 1966, 2–4 compares *Antigone* and the *Oresteia* on the possibility for civic conciliation and inclusion. See also M. A. Santirocco, "Justice in Sophocles' *Antigone*," *Philosophy and Literature* 4 (1980), 180–81.

41. As Steiner 1984, 193 observes, "Creon is left in hideous solitude. There is around him . . . nothing but familial devastation." See also Gellie 1972, 30 and Goheen 1951, 90.

42. Reinhardt 1947, 93.

43. See *Hegel on Tragedy*, ed. A. and H. Paolucci (New York 1962), 62–74 (from *The Philosophy of Fine Art*); also Steiner 1984, 1–106; Segal 1964, 46–51; M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. R. Mannheim (New Haven 1959), 146–65, 171; Reinhardt 1947, 64–66; and the extensive bibliography compiled by D. A. Hester, "Sophocles the Unphilosophical: A Study in the *Antigone*," *Mnemosyne* 24 (1971), 11–59. For the limitations of Hegel's reading, see Stern and Silk 1981, 318–23.

44. See above, n.5 and Cox 1992. The failure to entertain this possibility hobbles the interpretation of Sourvinou-Inwood 1989, which purports to remove modern perceptual filters from our reading of the play.

45. My analysis owes much to Neuberg 1990, esp. 74–75.

CHAPTER 5

1. Gellie 1972, 53–54, 73, and 78 finds the pair "so close to their respective temperamental extremes that any dialogue between them must have been a travesty of communication." See also Poole 1987, 71–72; Silk 1985, 3; Sorum 1978, 64; and Segal 1977, 119–23. T. F. Hoey, "*Trachiniae* and Unity of Hero," *Arethusa* 3 (1970), 18, reads the play as "the *tragedy of a house* whose two essential components never meet."

2. On the ties between the two, see Easterling 1981, 58 and Segal 1977, 155–58. For the single actor, see Jouan 1983, 72–73; Fuqua 1980, 76–77n.186; and McCall 1972, 142, 162.

3. Easterling 1981, 58–59 quotes Pound's translation (line 1174), "what/ SPLENDOUR,/ IT ALL COHERES" and approves his judgment that "this is the key phrase, for which the play exists." See E. Pound, *Sophokles, Women of Trachis* (New York 1957), 50n.1. My view is closer to that of Mason 1985, 17 and 93–96, and Kraus 1991, 94–95, who stress the lack of such coherence. As for audience expectation, March 1987, 65–77 shows how Sophokles *altered* key elements in the myth: Nessus' death, the love charm, Deianeira's character and motivation, and the manner and meaning of Herakles' demise.

4. The Chorus call Deianeira "fought over" (ἀμφινεικῆ 104) and later refer to the "fought-over (ἀμφινείκητον) eyes of the bride" (527), who watches Achelous and Herakles battle for her. As well as Deianeira and Iole, Tekmessa in S. *Aj.* is a bride won by combat; for other such Sophoklean brides, see the fragmentary *Aechmalotides* (*The Captive Women*), *Amphitryon*, *Andromeda*, *Chryses*, *Hermione* (obliquely—see Fr. 185), *Iobates*, *Lemniae* (*The Women of Lemnos*), *Mysoi* (*The Mysians*), and *Oenomaus*.

5. Deianeira's "life-giving and life-sustaining functions as the keeper of the house are heavily underscored in her language" (Segal 1977, 126), and

images of birth and child-rearing recur throughout. As well as her "labor pains" for Herakles, Deianeira "nurses" (τρέφω 28) fears for him. The Chorus sing that "the Sun slays and despoils the gleaming/ Night who gave it birth, and Night/ in turn puts the blazing sun to its [death] bed" (94–96), suggesting "a murderous sexual cycle" (Wender 1974, 6) in the alternation of night and day. Nessus mixes his blood with "the offspring [or "nursling," θρέμμα 574] of the Hydra"; see A. A. Long, "Poisonous 'Growths' in *Trachiniae*," *GRBS* 8 (1967), 275–78. After Deianeira's suicide, the Chorus sing that Iole "gave birth, gave birth/ to a dreadful Fury in the house" (893–95).

6. See Vermeule 1979, 154 and V. Ehrenberg, "Polypragmosyne," *JHS* 67 (1947), 66. *Pothos* as longing for bride, wife, or husband also occurs at *Tr.* 368 and 431 (Herakles for Iole), 631 (Deianeira for Herakles), 632 (*pothoumetha*) and 1142 (Herakles' possible longing for Deianeira); elsewhere at A. *Ag.* 414 (Menelaus for Helen) and *Pr.* 654 (Zeus for Io); Eur. *Alk.* 1087 (Admetus for a new wife), *Med.* 623 (Jason for his new wife), *Herakl.* 299 (if genuine, a man's passion to marry someone beneath him), *Tro.* 891 (Menelaus for Helen), *IA* 555 (Chorus of women for a reasonable match) and 1410 (Achilles for Iphigenia). *Pothos* as longing for the dead occurs at A. *Pers.* 62, 133, 136 (wives longing for their husbands, presumably dead), and Eur. *Hel.* 1306 (Demeter for Persephone) and *Tro.* (Andromache and Hecuba for Hektor). The word is used for Oedipus' longing for *death* at Eur. *Ph.* 330. Aristophanes combines erotic and morbid meanings in Dionysus' "longing" for the dead Euripides (*Ran.* 53–69).

7. Later the Chorus specify Deianeira's fear of "the harm/ rushing toward her home/ because of the new marriage" (841–43).

8. Are they singing a song for a sacrifice (ἀνολολυξάτω 205), a paean (210–212, 221), or a dithyramb (references to Dionysus, ivy, and the aulos, 216–20)? See Easterling 1982 on *Tr.* 205–24.

9. Regarding the Nymphs, the word νύμφη means both "bride" and "nymph," a divinity associated with springs and fresh water. Lloyd-Jones 1971, 569 (on A. *Semele*) notes that "the nymphs are patroness of marriage and childbirth. . . . This is why brides and women who had just given birth performed a ceremonial ablution in the water of a particular spring consecrated by their city to this purpose" (see also Ch. 1 n.12). For combinations of Apollo, Artemis, and Dionysus on scenes of the wedding procession, see *LIMC* s.v. "Apollon" #840–53, "Artemis" #1245–57 and 1281–85, and "Dionysos" #515–16. Add *ABV* 335.5; *MMA* 98.8.9; *ABV* 330.1, *Add*² 89; Bérard 1984, fig. 135; *CVA* Fiesole 1, 20.4; D. M. Buitron, *Attic Vase Painting in New England Collections* (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard 1972), 24; the hydria in J. Mertens, *Attic White Ground* (New York 1977), pl. 5.3,4. On mythologizing versions of the wedding procession (App. A n.4), Artemis often holds a torch in each hand where she "joue le rôle de la *nympheutria*," ("plays the role of the bride-helper") as Kahil puts it (*LIMC*, s.v. "Artemis," p. 744). For Artemis and marriage, see also Ch. 1 p. 14, Ch. 3 p. 51, and Lissarrague 1992, 150. Why Apollo carries his bow (*Tr.* 208–9) rather than his nuptially appropriate lyre may be explained by the later reference to Herakles' bow (265), a gift from Apollo.

10. Deianeira later refers to the "abundant train" (πολλωῖ στόλωι 496) of captive women; see Kamerbeek 1963 on *Tr.* 225–26 and 495–96. She also uses στόλος for the journey she herself made when sent by her father to be Herakles' bride, 562–63.

11. In the ode Aphrodite "acts as umpire" (ῥαβδονόμει 516), giving an uneasy sense that the game in which she is always victorious has been fixed from the start.

12. See Seaford 1986, 52–54, 58.

13. Seaford 1986, 50–53 and 1987, 111–12 and nn.62–65 lists passages that compare a newly wedded bride to a tender plant that is plucked or felled; add *h.Cer.* 66, where Demeter describes Persephone (abducted by Hades) as a "sweet shoot." Danforth and Tsiaras 1982, 96–99 and Alexiou 1974, 32–42, 159, and 195–201 quote later Greek laments that compare the dead (often unwedded girls) to plants, flowers, and trees. Nagy 1979, 174–93 discusses the trope in terms of archaic lamentation and hero cult.

14. Winnington-Ingram 1980, 75 stresses the erotic basis of Deianeira's fears ("this is a tragedy of sex"), but there is something particularly *marital* about her concerns. The language used by and about Deianeira highlights the potential anguish of a bride and wife (above n.5). In this regard, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1923, 357 is right—"Deianeira ist eine Athenerin." ("Deianeira is an Athenian [woman]").

15. Ch. 1 p. 14. See D. Armstrong, "Two Notes on Greek Tragedy," *BICS* 33 (1986), 101–2.

16. According to Detienne 1972, 166–67, Ixion and the race of Centaurs for which he was responsible represent the negation of marriage. DuBois 1979, 35 highlights stories that demonstrate the Centaurs' "hostility to legal marriage." See also G. S. Kirk, *Myth* (Cambridge 1970), 152–62. For visual representations of Nessus' death and their relation to *Tr.*, see C. Dugas, "La Mort du centaure Nessos," *REA* 45 (1943), 18–26. Pindar (*P.* 9.30–66) tells of the "good" Centaur Cheiron who reverses the pattern of his fellow horsemen. With wise counsel he stops Apollo from raping the virgin-huntress Kyrene and persuades the god to marry her instead. See E. Robbins, "Cyrene and Cheiron," *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 91–104, and Kurke 1991, 127–34. Cheiron features prominently on an Attic red-figure amphora (NY, Levy Collection) that contrasts a proper marriage ritual with one disrupted by Centaurs. The main field shows the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, featuring a decorous procession on foot to the marriage chamber. The Centaur Cheiron holds a torch in each hand to guide the newlyweds, pointing to his later role as educator of Achilles, the offspring of this famous marriage. In marked contrast to this civilized wedding, the shoulder of the amphora depicts the Centauromachy at the marriage feast of Perithoös and Hippodameia. See D. von Bothmer, *Glories of the Past: Ancient Art from Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection* (NY 1990), 168–71, no. 121.

17. On the Polygnotos paintings, see R. B. Kebric, *The Paintings in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi* (Leiden 1983), 33–35 and n.117, and Robertson 1975, 240–42, 256. The Theseion mural innovatively set the centauromachy at the wedding feast itself, discussed by J. P. Barron, "New Light on Old

Walls," *JHS* 92 (1972), 20–33, 44–45, and S. Woodford, "More Light on Old Walls," *JHS* 94 (1974), 158–65. On the Parthenon metopes, see Robertson 1975, 297–98 and F. Brommer, *Die Metopen des Parthenon* (Mainz 1967), pl. 146–239. For their influence on comparable scenes in vase-painting, see K. A. Schwab, "A Parthenonian Centaur," in *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* Vol. 2 (Malibu 1985), 89–94. Robertson 1975, 312 discusses the centauromachy on the Athena Parthenos sandals and the Athena Promachos shield, and Fuqua 1980, 23–26 deals with the Theseion sculpture. For the Poseidon temple at Sounion, see L. Burn, "The Art of the State in Late Fifth-Century Athens," in *Images of Authority*, ed. M. M. Mackenzie and C. Roueché, *PCPhS* Supp. Vol. 16 (Cambridge 1989), 73.

18. For Olympia, see Robertson 1975, 280–84, and B. Ashmole and N. Yalouris, *Olympia: The Sculptures of the Temple of Zeus* (London 1967), pl. 62–142; for the Bassae frieze, see Robertson 1975, 357–58. C. Hofkes-Brukker, *Der Bassai-Fries* (Munich 1975), 54–55 reproduces the scene of the disrobed Lapith woman.

19. Easterling 1982 on *Tr.* 863–95. Alexiou 1974, 131–51 (followed by Brown 1977, 61–64) discusses the relationship of antiphonal structure to antithetical thought in Greek lament (referring to *Tr.* 874–80 and 881–95 at p. 137). See also Willink 1986 on *Or.* 960–1012, and his "The Parodos of Euripides' *Helen* (164–90)," *CQ* 40 (1990), 77–78, where he imagines the Chorus entering silently during Helen's strophe, fitting their steps to the rhythm of her lament, and then providing in the antistrophe the proper "antiphonal" element to her dirge. A call-and-response pattern also "seems to be a constant in Greek wedding-songs," as K. J. Dover notes in *The Greeks and Their Legacy* (Oxford 1988), 220; see also Huddleston 1980, 30–35, 78–80.

20. Well treated by Easterling 1982 on *Tr.* 893–95.

21. See Kamerbeek 1963 on *Tr.* 896–946 and Easterling 1982 on *Tr.* 915–16. Deianeira's suicide is notably bed-ridden: δεμνίοις 915, εὐνατηρίοις 918, λέχη 920, ἐν κοίταισι ταῖσδ' εὐνάτριαν 922.

22. See Ch. 4 p. 65. As Winnington-Ingram 1980, 81n.28 reminds us, "for a woman to strip herself half-naked on the marriage-bed—as she had often stripped herself for Heracles—and stab herself in the belly is very suggestive indeed." Parry 1986, 109 calls her suicide "a gruesome erotic parody." For other tragic deaths in the *thalamos*, see Loraux 1987, 22–24.

23. Printed by Erfurdt, Schaefer, Wunder, Hermann, and Jebb.

24. For other beds becoming biers, see Seaford 1984, 251.

25. The active form of the verb πέρθω (the collateral form of πορθέω) is used for Herakles' sack of Oechalia at 244, 364–65, 433, 467, and 750. See Segal 1977, 117.

26. Easterling 1981, 59 points out that Herakles' description "reminds us of the helpless *parthenos* earlier in the play." The word is used of Deianeira at 148, of Iole at 1219, and of the Chorus of women at 211 and 1275. Loraux comments on aspects of the feminized hero in "Heracles: The Super-Male and the Feminine" (in Halperin et al. 1990, 28–29, 38–39); in 1981a, 61–64, she suggests that the image of Herakles suffering on a bed is meant to evoke a

woman in labor (an unlikely *parthenos*!). However, ancient birthing tended to be in the sitting position, using a birthing stool or other means, noted by Garland 1990, 70–74. Loraux's assumption that parturition in the supine position is—or was—"natural" reflects the prejudices (and convenience) of the modern medical profession rather than the wishes of women giving birth.

27. See Seaford 1986, 56–57; καλύμματα is used for bridal veils at A. *Ag.* 1178 and Eur. *IT* 372. Silk 1985, 9 observes that "Heracles fights monsters and takes on their monstrousness; faced with woman [Deianeira and her robe], he becomes a woman."

28. Winnington-Ingram 1980, 74 and 83, speaking for many critics of the play.

29. "To find H. repellent does not mean that we should withhold from him the pity he demands. The pathos of 1089ff. is indeed extraordinary" (Winnington-Ingram 1980, 83n.32). This is underlined by Hyllus' graphic description of the robe's effect (767–71, 777–78, 786–90) and by Herakles' physical presence from line 971. Carne-Ross 1979, 81 notes the similarity in Deianeira's and Herakles' language as each faces death.

30. Kitto 1959, 194, for example, sees in the oracle the workings of "the eternal law of the universe."

31. The play is full of τέλος (*telos*) words (see Ch. 3 p. 43), suggesting the fulfillment the play ultimately achieves, the deaths of Deianeira and Herakles, and the wedding rites of Hyllus and Iole: lines 26, 36, 79 (twice), 155, 167, 170, 174, 286, 742, 824, 825, 917, 1149, 1171, 1187, 1252, 1256, 1257, and 1263.

32. Easterling 1982, 10–11. Jebb 1892 on *Tr.* 1224 argues the importance of the legendary union, but literary references to the wedding of Hyllus and Iole are rare and, in any case, not binding on either playwright or audience. That the wedding demonstrates once and for all the "negative Herakles" is claimed (albeit for different reasons) by H. F. Johansen, "Heracles in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*," *C&M* 37 (1986), 53–54; Easterling (above); Foley 1981, 158–59; Galinsky 1972, 49–51; Ronnet 1969, 97–99; Kitto 1966, 170–72; Whitman 1951, 119; and Murray 1946a, 121–23. Winnington-Ingram 1980, 85 believes that the scene reveals Herakles' "erotic passion for Iole, still alive in him, which could not bear to think of any other male body in contact with hers . . . except that of his other self, his son." Hoey 1977, 286 discovers the Oedipus complex in reverse, "since it is enjoined by the father that his son possess his bride," an idea followed by Carne-Ross 1979, 87.

33. The last phrase quoted—προσθοῦ δάμαρτα (1224)—means "to take *as wife*." See Segal 1977, 135; Fuqua 1980, 60; and De Wet 1983, 219–26. δάμαρτα also is used for Herakles' wife Deianeira at 406, and of Iole at 428 and 429. J. K. MacKinnon, "Heracles' Intention in his Second Request to Hyllus," *CQ* 21 (1971), 33–41, champions the counter-view that Herakles intends only concubinage, followed by McCall 1972, 161n.20 and Stinton 1986, 98n.105. MacKinnon's case is far too legalistic, and his claim that the slave Iole is unworthy of becoming Hyllus' wife overlooks the fact that she *is* the princess of Oechalia, daughter of King Eurytos. Schol. *Tr.* 354 (= *FGrH* 3 F 82a) attests an earlier version by Pherekydes in which Herakles captures Iole

to provide a bride for his son in the first place. Note also Achilles' intended marriage to his "warbride" Briseis (*Il.* 9.336, 19.291–99); see also above, n.4.

34. Deianeira is dead, and as Iole's new "husband" Herakles acts as her *kurios* as well. Lawcourt speeches often refer to dying husbands who arrange a future marriage for their wives—D. 20.33, 27.5, 30.22, 36.8, 57.41; Plu. *Per.* 34.5 (see Pomeroy 1975, 64). As Sorum 1978, 67 and 70 notes, Herakles tries to "collect his scattered family" and to "reestablish the two families he has destroyed." Foxhall 1989, 28n.22 stresses that it was the *recreation* of households, not their *continuation*, that was perceived as essential. See also Segal 1977, 152.

35. Bowra 1944, 142–43 is one of few who appreciates the anomaly of the wedding arranged from the death-bed: "Sophocles could have omitted such a detail which is not of fundamental importance to the plot. Since he introduces it, he must have meant it to be significant." Bowra then goes wildly astray—"The great hero still loves Iole, for whom he has done so much and for whom, in a sense, he dies. . . . Hyllus must marry her because he can be trusted to care for her." The play hardly sustains such romanticism, and Bowra's reading has been rejected. Sadly, his intuition that the arranged wedding is crucial has been obscured by the judgment that Herakles is nothing but a human brute.

36. Blundell 1989, 103–4 notes that Ajax's funeral is "characterized as a cooperative endeavour by the repeated use of verbs compounded with *sun-* or *xun-*, which indicated joining or sharing in an activity." See also Easterling 1988, 91–98, who offers a masterful reading of the funeral scene in *Ajax*.

37. Although the "marble tomb" does not refer to Oedipus' grave, the detail reinforces the sense that Oedipus is about to die. Earlier Polyneikes begs his sisters to give him funeral rites if Oedipus' curse should come true (*OC* 1405–13).

38. "Die Trachinierinnen enden dumpf, wie sie begannen" ("The *Trachiniae* ends in gloom, as it began")—Reinhardt 1947, 63. For Whitman 1951, 121, the end is all "doubt and suffering. . . ." R. M. Torrance, "Sophocles: Some Bearings," *HSCP* 69 (1965), 304, sees "the irrationality of human misery" in "the darkest imaginable colors." Hoey 1977, 279 finds "more broken pieces left behind" than anywhere else in Sophokles.

39. On Herakles' purported apotheosis, see Hoey 1977 (bibliography at nn. 5–11). Easterling 1981, 64–74 insists that the apotheosis is evoked; Stinton 1986, 74 and 84–99 offers a careful and persuasive rejoinder. The marriage of Herakles and Hebe ("Youth") after his apotheosis also seems to have no place in the play. For the Herakles-Hebe myth elsewhere, see H. *Od.* 11.601–4, Hes. *Th.* 950–55, Eur. *Herakl.* 849–51 and 910–18, *HF* 637–72 (by implication), and *Or.* 1686–88. In the visual arts, see *LIMC* s.v. "Herakles," #3330–43; R. Vollkommer, *Herakles in the Art of Classical Greece* (Oxford 1988), 37–39; and F. Brommer, "Herakles und Geras," *AA* 1952, 60–73. *If* Herakles' apotheosis and union with Hebe were so "present" as to need no overt reference in the text, then the play's funereal ending points to *two* weddings—Hyllus and Iole in Trachis, and Herakles and Hebe in the heavens.

40. B. Heiden, *Tragic Rhetoric: An Interpretation of Sophocles' Trachiniae* (New York 1989), 151, 161.

41. Winnington-Ingram 1980, 333 observes that "Heracles is in fact betrayed by a lust comparable to that of the centaur he killed." In 1983a, 240 he writes that "the central unifying theme of *Trachiniae* is the power of sex." Other critics who single out *erōs* as the root of the tragedy include I. M. Linforth, "The Pyre on Mount Oeta in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*," *CPCPh* 14 (1951), 260–61, 265–67; C. Segal, "The Hydra's Nursling: Image and Action in the *Trachiniae*," *AC* 44 (1975), 612–17; Fuqua 1980, 39–43 and n.104; and Parry 1986, 108–9. The idea may have been prominent in Sophokles' lost *Phaedra* (*Fr.* 684; see Sutton 1984, 103). Insofar as Herakles is a victim of uncontrollable eros, he represents a kind of male Phaedra, but one free to seize the object of his desire. For Phaedra, there is no such outlet and she must turn in on the *oikos* and, finally, on herself.

42. For the possibility that Iole is present at the end of the play (deemed unlikely by Seale 1982, 208 and Easterling 1982 on *Tr.* 1275), see R.W.B. Buxton, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies* (Oxford 1980), 81–82 and Hoey 1977, 288–89.

CHAPTER 6

1. J.-P. Guépin, *The Tragic Paradox* (Amsterdam 1968), 120–42, traces the Persephone paradigm in *Alk.* and other Euripidean tragedies. See also Foley 1992 and 1985, 86–89, and Lattimore 1964, 52–53 and 70–71.

2. For the idea of cheating death in the play, see Gregory 1991, 19–49; E. M. Bradley, "Admetus and the Triumph of Failure in Euripides' *Alcestis*," *Ramus* 9 (1980), 112–27; Nielsen 1976, 92–102; Dale 1954 on *Alk.* 579; and Jones 1948, 51–52.

3. See also *Alk.* 73, 126, 436–37, 457, 626, 851–52, 867; Vermeule 1979, 35–37; and Roberts 1978, 182–85. Euripides also exploits the confusion between Hades as physical place and as metaphor for death in *HF*, esp. at 296–97, 426–35, 1101–5.

4. *Alk.* 861–63, 911–13, 922–25. See P. Riemer, *Die Alkestis des Euripides*, Athenäum Monografien 159 (Frankfurt/M 1989), 131–38, and Burnett 1965, 243, 251.

5. This is the only evidence for the practice of leaving cut hair at the door of the deceased.

6. Alkestis' Servant later regrets that he could not perform the same ritual salute—"I did not stretch out my right hand, wailing my grief/ for my mistress" (768–69). See Ch. 1 p. 24 and Ch. 7 p. 105.

7. See S. E. Scully, "Some Issues in the Second Episode of Euripides' *Alcestis*," in Cropp et al. 1986, 139–40; J. McCaughey, "Talking About Greek Tragedy," *Ramus* 1 (1972), 30–31, 43–44; and L.H.G. Greenwood, *Aspects of Euripidean Tragedy* (Cambridge 1953), 131–37.

8. See Conacher 1988 on *Alk.* 244–79 and Burnett 1971, 28. Gregory 1991, 31 argues that the shift in modes echoes the "confusion of categories" that arises from the play's central premise, namely that the finality of death can be negotiated.

9. Alkestis' cry, "Someone leads me away" (ἄγει μ' ἄγει τις, ἄγει μέ τις 259)

MARRIAGE TO DEATH

THE CONFLATION OF WEDDING AND FUNERAL RITUALS IN GREEK TRAGEDY

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