

PRE-SOCRATIC THOUGHT IN SOPHOCLEAN TRAGEDY

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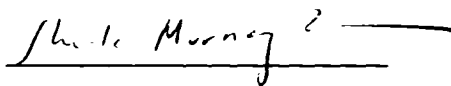
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For my family

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ABSTRACT

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Sheila Murnaghan

This dissertation investigates the relationship between the plays of Sophocles and the philosophy of the pre-Socratics. The question considered is whether or not Sophocles' tragedies were influenced by pre-Socratic thought in distinction from Sophistic thought. Scholars generally have recognized the impact of the Sophists on Sophoclean tragedy and determined it to be evidence of Sophocles' primarily negative dramatic treatment of so-called 'Enlightenment' thought of the 5th century B.C.E. This study determines the presence of pre-Socratic thought in the tragedies of Sophocles and views its influence as a primarily positive instance of 5th century 'Enlightenment' thought in these plays, in contrast to the general depiction of Sophistic thought. Three works of Sophocles' extant plays are examined in separate chapters. A chapter on Sophocles' *Philoctetes* elucidates traces of the philosophy of Heraclitus in this tragedy. Sophocles deploys certain Heraclitean images in the character portrayal of Philoctetes, whose moral outlook contrasts with the Sophistic vision of Odysseus. A second chapter, on the *Trachiniae*, argues that this tragedy recalls the philosophy of Heraclitus, as well as 'Enlightenment' thought of the Ionian scientific tradition in general. This evidence is significant to the construction of the various images, themes, and character portrayals in this tragedy. Lastly, in a third chapter, on the *Antigone*, the pre-Socratic views of Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Anaximander, as well as ideas of the pre-Socratics in general, are

instrumental in defining the character of Antigone, who adheres to a pre-Socratic vision of nature, law, and justice, and conflicts with Creon, who embraces the Sophistic praise of man's conquest of nature and the severance of nature from law, justice, and the gods. Two opposing philosophical systems, pre-Socratic philosophy (which also ultimately defines the views of Haemon and Teiresias) and the ideas of the Sophists, are essential to defining the conflict between the characters in the *Antigone*. This dissertation concludes that pre-Socratic philosophy influences the creation of Sophocles' plays, both thematically and with respect to character portrayal; and that Sophocles' dramatic representation of pre-Socratic thought serves as an example of his positive reception of 'Enlightenment' thought.

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Introduction

My dissertation investigates the influence of the pre-Socratic philosophers on Sophoclean tragedy. While scholars traditionally have acknowledged the presence of Sophistic thought in the plays of Sophocles, they have failed to recognize in these tragedies images and concepts that are drawn from the pre-Socratic thinkers, Anaximander, Xenophanes, and Heraclitus. This investigation will demonstrate that Sophocles was influenced by the philosophy of the pre-Socratics, which shaped the intellectual and philosophical climate of the 5th century B.C.E, as well as by the ideas of the Sophists, thus providing a more complete picture of the intellectual and cultural *milieu* influencing the creation of these plays. This philosophical facet of Sophoclean tragedy, in turn, will offer insight into the nature of Sophocles' relationship to these early Greek thinkers who were the impetus behind the so-called 'Enlightenment' of the 5th century B.C.E. that was further developed by the Sophists. As a result, this dissertation will contribute to the perennial debate concerning Sophocles' dramatic treatment of Sophistic and 'Enlightenment' thought in general. I will show that Sophocles was far more receptive to pre-Socratic thought than has been recognized and, consequently, revise traditional scholarly views of Sophocles' dramatic treatment of Enlightenment thought. Finally, this study will contribute to recent scholarly developments in the field of pre-Socratic philosophy by proving that the legacy of the pre-Socratics extends beyond the sphere of natural philosophy into Greek tragedy.

Ancient and modern scholars have duly acknowledged the vast philosophical legacy of the pre-Socratic philosophers. In the *Phaedo* (96 a ff.) the Platonic Socrates attests to the influence of these early Greek philosophers (particularly, Anaxagoras) on his own early intellectual development; this account provides evidence of the recognition of pre-Socratic

philosophical achievement even in antiquity. In modern times, scholarship has focused on pre-Socratic interest in the origins and material principles of the cosmos and on the intellectual developments of these early Greek thinkers in the realm of natural philosophy. Recently, however, A.A. Long has shifted scholarly attention from the accomplishments of the pre-Socratics in the field of natural philosophy to their achievements and interest in a variety of fields - from ethics to theology, psychology, logic, literary criticism, and even human evolution.¹ Long's study reveals that the pre-Socratics endeavored to provide a universal account of all things, not only of nature itself. I will contribute to his insights by elucidating the pervasive impact of pre-Socratic thought on Sophoclean tragedy.

The legacy and influence of pre-Socratic thought in Greek literature has received little scholarly attention. Only one study, a dissertation by Wolfgang Rösler, has been conducted on the subject of pre-Socratic thought in Greek tragedy.² This work explores the possible influence of the pre-Socratic thinkers on the tragedies of Aeschylus. Rösler finds traces of pre-Socratic influence in two primary areas in the later tragedies of Aeschylus, particularly in the *Suppliants*: first, in the tragedian's new intellectualized conception of divinity, which is stimulated by the ideas of Xenophanes; secondly, in the areas of science and medicine, where Anaxagoras serves as the source of new insights for Aeschylus. Rösler's conclusions challenge the conventional view of Aeschylus sketched by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*. In this play, Aeschylus is depicted as a traditionalist who is resistant to new intellectual ideas. Rösler asserts that Aeschylus reconciles many of the new intellectual trends represented by the pre-Socratics with the traditional conception of divinity in his tragedies and embraces the new

¹ A.A. Long, "The Scope of Greek Philosophy," *Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999).

² W. Rösler, *Reflexe vorsokratischen Denkens bei Aischylos* (Verlag Anton Hain-Meisenheim am Glan, 1970).

intellectual movement. Aeschylus, like Pindar, belonged to the intellectual elite and faced the new rationalistic ideas of the pre-Socratics with unprejudiced openness.

There is no comparable scholarship on the influence of the pre-Socratic philosophers on Sophocles. This study is an attempt to fill that gap. Like the tragedies of Aeschylus, the plays of Sophocles, indeed, were influenced by pre-Socratic philosophy. Like Aeschylus, Sophocles depicts pre-Socratic thought as compatible with traditional religion. In spite of these similarities, however, the frequency of pre-Socratic allusion is much greater and the range of pre-Socratic allusion is much more extensive in Sophocles than in Aeschylus. Additionally, although Sophocles ultimately reconciles pre-Socratic thought with traditional religion, he sometimes portrays pre-Socratic thought as a potential philosophical foil to the gods of traditional religion, as in the *Philoctetes*. Sophocles' depiction of pre-Socratic thought and its relationship to traditional religion is more nuanced and complicated than that of Aeschylus, probably because Sophocles was more interested in challenging traditional religion than Aeschylus. Finally, although pre-Socratic thought impacts the tragedies of both Aeschylus and Sophocles, there are discrepancies between the particular pre-Socratic ideas and the particular pre-Socratic philosophers influencing the creation of their plays. Rösler shows that Xenophanes was the predominant source of influence in the tragedies of Aeschylus. Sophocles, too, was influenced by Xenophanes, as well as by Anaximander, Heraclitus, and 'Enlightenment' thought in general; yet, I will demonstrate that the influence of Heraclitus is the most prominent source of influence on Sophoclean tragedy; and that particular plays of Sophocles, i.e., the *Philoctetes*, the *Trachiniae*, and the *Antigone*, contain more pre-Socratic ideas than other Sophoclean tragedies.

The methodological problem of ‘influence’ and ‘allusion’ is one that we will encounter throughout this study. The problem of determining when a correspondence between two literary texts can be traced back to an intentional borrowing has plagued the field of philology interminably.³ The scale of comparability between two pieces of literature extends from the similarity of a word or phrase to a common Weltanschauung.⁴ Because of their limited range, words or phrases are very difficult to use as evidence for an intentional borrowing; a commonality of words or phrases may be due to the general intellectual climate of the times rather than an intentional borrowing. As a result, the word allusion should not be used too freely. However, if a word allusion occurs in conjunction with several other word allusions and a common Weltanschauung in a single text of tragedy, and if the chronology of the tragedian and the philosopher allow for the possibility of influence, it is reasonable to speak of direct influence of pre-Socratic thought on tragedy.⁵ As we will see, the chronology of the pre-Socratic philosophers and of Sophocles allows for the possibility of influence; further, the spread of pre-Socratic thought would have enabled Sophocles to have come into contact with the ideas of these early Greek philosophers. Consequently, the confluence of a series of word allusions and a commonality of Weltanschauung make it possible and probable to refer to the tragedian’s direct influence by pre-Socratic ideas.

³ W. Rösler, *Reflexe vorsokratischen Denkens bei Aischylos* (Verlag Anton Hain-Meisenheim am Glan, 1970). The issue of allusion has been the subject of much scholarship particularly in the field of Latin Poetry. Cf. S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998); J. Farrell, *Vergil’s Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: the Art of Allusion in Literary History* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴ W. Rösler, *Reflexe vorsokratischen Denkens bei Aischylos* (Verlag Anton Hain-Meisenheim am Glan, 1970).

⁵ Ibid.

Although certain instances of pre-Socratic allusion in Sophocles are direct and explicit, in some cases, such as the use of *λόγος* in the *Trachiniae*, the nature of pre-Socratic influence on Sophoclean tragedy probably is due to a more indirect relationship; that is, certain pre-Socratic ideas occur as more general reflections in Sophoclean tragedy, rather than as direct allusions. Since pre-Socratic thought most certainly played a significant role in the contemporary intellectual and cultural climate in which Sophocles created his plays, these ideas would have been 'in the air' in this time period, and could have affected the creation of Sophocles' plays in a more general manner. My study, therefore, will discuss both direct allusions, which we can imagine an audience would have recognized as such, and more general reflections of pre-Socratic ideas that were 'in the air' at this time.

My general purpose is to provide a more complete picture of this intellectual and cultural background (which hitherto has been viewed as consisting primarily of Sophistic thought) in which Sophocles was writing in order to understand the philosophical context behind these tragedies. I will argue that Sophoclean tragedy has a rich, contemporary intellectual context that is shaped by both Sophistic and pre-Socratic thought; and, as a result, that Sophocles should be seen more overtly as a writer who is concerned with the intellectual developments of 'Enlightenment' thought in general. While Sophocles certainly was not a radical or zealous devotee to Enlightenment thought, he was certainly more receptive to some of the new intellectual developments of the 5th century than has been recognized.

My study arises from a historicist impulse to provide a more complete account of the intellectual and cultural *milieu* impacting the creation of Sophoclean tragedy. This

methodological approach is similar to that of R. Thomas in *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science, and the Art of Persuasion*.⁶ Thomas' study explores the "much neglected contemporary connotations and context of the *Histories*, looking at them as part of the intellectual climate of his time." Thomas views the *Histories* essentially "as a product of the late fifth-century world of the natural scientists, medical writers and the sophists."⁷ Thomas demonstrates that Herodotus' ethnography, geography and accounts of natural wonders, and his methods of argument and persuasion reflect the contemporary intellectual climate influenced by the Enlightenment thinkers of the 5th century B.C.E. As Thomas asserts with respect to Herodotus, I argue that Sophocles' plays were impacted by the contemporary intellectual climate influenced by the Enlightenment thinkers of the 5th century B.C.E., of which the pre-Socratics were an essential part.

The chronology of Anaximander, Xenophanes, and Heraclitus overlaps with that of the tragedians and allows for the possibility of pre-Socratic influence on Sophocles. Anaximander is the oldest of these three early Greek thinkers.⁸ According to the chronographer Apollodorus, Anaximander was sixty-four in 547/6 B.C.E. and died 'soon afterwards' in the next year, in which the capture of Sardis occurred (546/5). Evidence from Diogenes Laertius and Heraclitus suggests that Xenophanes was born *ca.* 570 B.C.E. and lived to *ca.* 475 B.C.E.⁹ The date of Heraclitus is fixed by a synchronism with the reign of Darius, 521 to 487; and his traditional acme is identified as the 69th

⁶ R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2000), p.2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cf. G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 100-101, for discussion of the dating of Anaximander.

⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 163-164 for discussion on the dating of Xenophanes.

Olympiad, 504-501.¹⁰ He would have been a contemporary of Aeschylus (525 B.C.E.-456/55), two generations older than Sophocles (495-405 B.C.E.), and three generations older than Euripides (485/4-406 B.C.E.). Since Anaximander, Xenophanes, and Heraclitus all were elder contemporaries of Sophocles, it is chronologically possible for pre-Socratic thought to have influenced Sophocles.

Is it likely that pre-Socratic thought had an effect on Sophoclean tragedy? The stylistic impact of Heraclitus is well-documented in fifth-century literature. The extant fragments of Democritus contain several echoes of statements made by Heraclitus, as does the Hippocratic treatise, *De Victu*, which also is probably from this period.¹¹ Consequently, it is reasonable to assume the possibility of Heraclitean influence on Attic literature at least by the latter half of the fifth-century. Since Greek tragedy, which was produced and performed for the City Dionysia, was a mainstream literary medium of Athenian civic, political, and religious sentiment, it is likely that this popular genre of literature was impacted by the same intellectual trends influencing contemporary thinkers such as Democritus.

The influence of Ionian philosophy on other 5th century literature, particularly on the *Histories* of Herodotus, who was Sophocles' close friend and contemporary, is generally accepted by scholars as well. K. Raaflaub points out Herodotus' debt to the influence of Ionian philosophy in his contribution to *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*.¹² A. Lloyd suggests that "the *Histories* are Heraclitean, in that the Greeks and barbarians

¹⁰ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1979), p. xv.

¹¹ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 4.

¹² K. Raaflaub, *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden, Boston; Brill, 2002).

are warring opposites attempting to attain equilibrium”;¹³ and in that they are partly about “historical manifestations of the cosmic πόλεμος to maintain order”.¹⁴ Most recently, V. Provençal argues that “among possible Ionian influences [on Herodotus], most critical might be that of Heraclitus, for whom ‘all human laws (*nomoi*) are sustained by one divine law’ (fr. 114)”.¹⁵ Provençal asserts that Herodotus “stands as holding to the original position of Heraclitus in which the plurality of human *nomoi* are grounded in a single universal divine *nomos*...”¹⁶ Scholars therefore generally agree that Ionian philosophy and Heraclitean thought in particular influenced Herodotus’ *Histories* and, consequently, that the Ionian tradition was well-known in 5th century Athens.

When and how did the spread of natural philosophy to Athens occur? The mobile nature of the early Greek thinkers and of Sophocles himself, in all likelihood, facilitated the dissemination of pre-Socratic ideas to Athens. In the *Epidemiai*, Ion of Chios records visits of Athenian generals, including Sophocles, to the island of Chios.¹⁷ Sophocles may have come into direct contact with pre-Socratic ideas in his travels to this Ionian location. Many of the natural philosophers of the later fifth century, who were the heirs of the pre-Socratic tradition, also traveled extensively and visited Athens. Xenophanes, born and brought up in the Ionian colony, Colophon, was compelled to leave Ionia as a young man due to the Medes’ capture of Colophon (546/5 B.C.E.). From this point, he lived a nomadic existence, wandering to Sicily and around Greece, and certainly contributed to

¹³ A. Lloyd, “Herodotus on Egyptians and Libyans,” *Herodote et les peuples non-Grecs*, Fondation Hardt, XXXV (Geneva, 1990), pp. 243-4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁵ V. Provençal, “Heraclitean Influence on Herodotean *Nomos* [abstract].” In: American Philological Association 137th Annual Meeting; 2006 January 5-8; Montreal, Canada.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Athen. 13.603e-604d (=FGrH 392, F6).

the spread of Ionian thought.¹⁸ Anaxagoras (c. 500 B.C.E. - c.428 B.C.E.) came to Athens in 480 B.C.E., and is said by ancient commentators to have been one of Euripides' teachers (along with the Sophists, Prodicus and Protagoras). It is both possible and highly probable that Anaxagoras facilitated the spread of pre-Socratic ideas to Athens.

The Ionian and Eleatic traditions of natural philosophy most likely spread to Athens at least by the time of Gorgias' visit to Athens in 427 B.C.E. Gorgias is said to have been a pupil of the Eleatic philosopher, Empedocles, who was influenced by the Ionian tradition of natural philosophy as well as by the philosophy of Parmenides.¹⁹ The work, Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἢ περὶ φύσεως, *On Not-being, or On Nature*, attests to this bifurcated tradition of influence on Gorgias: the title alludes explicitly to Parmenides, who denies the existence of 'Not-being', and to Empedocles, whose treatise (like the writings of other Ionian and Milesian natural philosophers) is entitled Περὶ Φύσεως. Gorgias' arrival in Athens provides a definitive end date at which point the dissemination of the pre-Socratic tradition to Athens most certainly would have occurred.

Critics generally have acknowledged the influence of the Sophists on the plays of Sophocles. In the 20th century, Nestle establishes the traditional scholarly view of the nature of Sophistic influence on Sophoclean tragedy: he asserts that Sophocles' response to the Sophists was fundamentally hostile.²⁰ E.R. Dodds characterizes Sophocles as "the last great exponent of the Archaic world-view,"²¹ that is shattered by the rise of the

¹⁸ G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 163-164.

¹⁹ Satyrus (A 3).

²⁰ W. Nestle, "Sophocles und die Sophistik," *CP* 5 (1910) 129-157.

²¹ E.R. Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, (Berkeley, 1951), p. 49.

Sophistic movement. Hence scholars of the 20th c. have envisioned Sophocles as a relic of the Archaic age and as an adversary to the Sophistic movement.

P. Rose, however, has paved the way in recent scholarship for acknowledgement of the positive treatment of Sophistic thought in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, specifically with respect to the Sophists' three-stage anthropological scheme.²² He argues that Sophocles follows this scheme in the depiction of Philoctetes' struggle for survival in complete isolation on Lemnos with fire and his bow, in the formation of a social compact through his bonds of φιλία with Neoptolemus, and finally, in the marooned hero's reintegration into society.

Although I agree with Rose's assertion that Sophocles represents certain Sophistic ideas in a positive manner, as evidenced by the three-stage anthropological scheme in the *Philoctetes*, Rose's classification of the early pre-Socratic philosophers along with the Sophists of the middle to late 5th c. B.C.E. obscures and omits the profound influence of the particular pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus, on this tragedy. Furthermore, this identification of the pre-Socratics as 'Sophists' blurs recognition of the impact of pre-Socratic thought - distinctly from Sophistic thought - on Sophocles' other plays in general. This will raise questions concerning Sophocles' treatment of pre-Socratic views in his tragedies: First, what effect does the use of pre-Socratic thought in the tragedies of Sophocles have on the content of these plays? Second, does the treatment of pre-Socratic thought in Sophoclean tragedy differ from the treatment of Sophistic thought? Is the treatment positive or negative? If negative, was Sophocles hostile to the penetration of pre-Socratic views in Athenian society, as he is traditionally said to be towards the

²² P. W. Rose, "Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the Teachings of the Sophists," *HSPH* 1976 LXXX: 49-105.

Sophists? If positive, a view for which I ultimately will argue, why would Sophocles be more receptive to the intellectual ideas of the pre-Socratics as opposed to those of the Sophists? Finally, does Sophocles merely reproduce pre-Socratic ideas or does he put his own mark on these philosophical concepts? Is the representation of pre-Socratic thought in tragedy inherently distinctive from the expression of pre-Socratic ideas in philosophical prose and verse due to the generic constraints of tragedy?

My position on Sophocles' dramatic treatment of Sophistic ideas ultimately is more nuanced than the views of Nestle, Dodds, and Rose on this subject. In dissent from Nestle and Dodds, I will argue that Sophocles' dramatic reception of so-called 'Enlightenment' thought in general is not entirely negative, as his positive dramatic treatment of pre-Socratic thought makes evident. Although Sophocles does treat the Sophistic anthropological scheme positively, as Rose argues, I will conclude that Sophocles presents the Sophistic views of *λόγος*, *νόμος* and *φύσις*, justice and the gods in a negative light, particularly in the cases of Odysseus and Creon.

In Chapter 1, I will show that the role of fire and the image of the bow in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* recall the philosophy of Heraclitus; the concepts of *δίκη*, *λόγος* and *φύσις* in this tragedy are reminiscent of these notions, which are essential to the philosophy of Heraclitus, as are the themes of flux, exile and the folly of mankind, and the notion of 'cosmic sympathy'. In addition, Sophocles employs the philosophy of Heraclitus to sketch Philoctetes' moral and spiritual framework. Philoctetes, who initially scorns the Olympian gods of traditional religion in his disillusionment, embraces a moral outlook that is reminiscent of the philosophy of Heraclitus. In contrast, Sophocles utilizes the ideas of the Sophists in his depiction of the utilitarian, morally relativist system of Odysseus. Neoptolemus is depicted as struggling

between adhering to the Sophistic λόγος of Odysseus and the Heraclitean λόγος of Philoctetes. Fire and the bow thus have more significance for the character of Philoctetes than their role in his primitive survival, as identified by P. Rose: they symbolize the Heraclitean matrix that enables Philoctetes to survive. Finally, Sophocles reconciles Heraclitean thought with the gods of traditional religion when Philoctetes' faith in these divinities is restored at the end of the play. Consequently, my conclusion will challenge the traditional view of Sophocles as an adversary to Enlightenment thought in general.

In Chapter 2, I will make evident the many images and themes in the *Trachiniae* that are reminiscent of Heraclitean and so-called 'Enlightenment' thought in general. The Sun symbolism, the element of fire, the flux of time and its cyclical nature, the ἀγών, and the tension between opposites recall the philosophy of Heraclitus. The themes of youth and old age, health and sickness, divine and human, are reminiscent of the Heraclitean principle of the unity of opposites. In addition, I will argue that the notions of λόγος, ἱστορία and φύσις, and the intersection of prophecy and the λόγος are suggestive of so-called 'Enlightenment' thought of the Ionian scientific tradition in general. These insights into the intellectual climate influencing the creation of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* provide a conceptual tool for interpreting the plethora of images and themes that have often led scholars to dismiss this play as one of the weakest and most nebulous of Sophocles' plays.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Sophocles employs certain pre-Socratic ideas in general in the depiction of the character Antigone. The multiple references to cognates of φύσις and νόμος and the juxtaposition of the two concepts aid in defining the conflict between Antigone, who figures as an ardent adherent to the pre-Socratic vision of nature, law, and justice, and Creon, who clashes with these views in his acceptance of the Sophistic praise of

man's conquest of nature and the severance of nature from law, justice, and the gods. In addition, other pre-Socratic notions, such as the Anaximanderan notion of retributive Justice and Necessity and the Heraclitean doctrine of the unity of all things, are reflected in the views held primarily by Antigone, as well as by Haemon and Teiresias. As a result, the two contrasting philosophical systems of the pre-Socratics and of the Sophists aid in defining the conflict between the characters in the *Antigone*.

Through this study of the reflection of pre-Socratic thought in Sophoclean tragedy, I will show that the legacy of the pre-Socratic philosophers extends far beyond the field of philosophy to the genre of Greek tragedy. An understanding of pre-Socratic influence on the tragedies of Sophocles will broaden our appreciation of pre-Socratic achievement and make evident a new philosophical aspect of the tragedies themselves. Furthermore, this examination will elucidate a more complete picture of the intellectual and philosophical climate impacting the creation of Sophocles' tragedies. We will see that, in addition to Sophistic thought, the ideas of the pre-Socratics color the philosophical background behind the creation of Sophocles' plays. As a result, this study will contribute to the perennial scholarly debate concerning Sophocles' attitude towards the Sophists and the so-called 'Enlightenment' thinkers, and demonstrate that Sophocles was more receptive to pre-Socratic thought than has been recognized.

Chapter 1: The Influence of Heraclitus on Sophocles' *Philoctetes*

In the *Philoctetes*, Sophocles introduces two major innovations to the traditional myth of Philoctetes' abandonment on the island of Lemnos: first, he portrays the isle of Lemnos as ἄστιπτος οὐδ' οἰκουμένη, "untrodden and uninhabited" (line 2); second, Sophocles casts Neoptolemos as Odysseus' instrument in the attempt to procure the bow of Heracles, which has been revealed by prophesy as necessary for the destruction of Troy along with the person of Philoctetes himself. Peter Rose argues that Sophocles' two mythical innovations "reflect a conscious attempt to juxtapose dramatically the three stages in the sophistic analysis of society."¹ Rose identifies these three stages as consisting of the primitive battle for survival, of the establishment of the social compact, and, thirdly, of the contemporary battle in society in the realm of politics.² Rose views the first stage as dramatized by the presentation of Philoctetes' battle for survival in complete isolation on Lemnos, where he is aided only by his bow and the element of fire. Rose finds the second stage of the social compact demonstrated through the bonds of φιλία established between Philoctetes and Neoptolemos, and the third stage personified by the character of Odysseus and through his educational role with Neoptolemos.³ According to Rose, the three stages of Sophistic anthropology profoundly affect Sophocles' structuring and development of the traditional myth of Philoctetes. The manner in which Sophocles transforms the Sophistic ideas provides his audience with a "passionate and highly personal affirmation of a reformed version of traditional

¹ Peter Rose, "Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists," *HSPH* LXXX (1976): 49-105.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

³ *Ibid.*

aristocratic absolutism.”⁴ Rose offers an interpretation of Sophocles as engaging with Sophistic ideas in a positive manner, thus diverging from the wholly negative interpretation first posited by Nestle and later by Dodds.⁵

While Rose correctly recognizes the positive influence of Sophistic anthropology on the characters of Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, and Odysseus, his application of the term ‘sophist’⁶ both to the pre-Socratic thinkers of the early 5th century and to those of the late 5th century B.C.E. is a generalization that wrongly blends two distinct sources of influence in the *Philoctetes*. Through the classification of Philoctetes’ struggle for survival as the primitive stage in Sophistic anthropology in general, Rose dilutes the particular and profound influence of the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus on Philoctetes’ world vision. Although Sophistic thought indeed permeates the structuring and development of the traditional myth, I will argue that Sophocles affiliates the Sophistic thought of the late 5th century with the figure of Odysseus and the pre-Socratic philosophy of Heraclitus with the character, Philoctetes. The playwright, in turn, interweaves these two philosophical strands into an internal, psychological conflict within the character of Neoptolemus.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Sophocles, in addition to his dramatic innovations with the traditional mythic material, infuses the myth of the *Philoctetes* with two philosophical undercurrents: the philosophy of Heraclitus and the contrasting views of the Sophists. This study, consequently, both will respond to and modify recent

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cf. W. Nestle, “Sophokles und die Sophistik,” *CP* 5 (1910): 129-157; E.R. Dodds, *Greek and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 49.

⁶ Cf. Peter Rose, “Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists,” *HSPH* LXXX (1976): p. 50, Footnote 6, where he states “Hereafter I will use “sophists” to refer to the whole group of relevant pre-Socratic thinkers.”

scholarship on this subject that acknowledges the Sophistic influence on Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, yet fails to discern the profound impact of Heraclitus on this tragedy.

The element of fire is part of the Heraclitean matrix underlying *Philoctetes*' spiritual and moral survival: that is, fire becomes *Philoctetes*' source of divinity and the basis of his morality.⁷ By choosing the element of fire and the symbol of the bow, Sophocles presents *Philoctetes* as espousing a system of ideas that are reminiscent of the philosophy and λόγος of Heraclitus in *Philoctetes*' initial rejection of the traditional Olympian gods who appear to be exploited by the deceitful, Sophistic λόγος of Odysseus. Sophocles thus concentrates the philosophy of Heraclitus within the figure of *Philoctetes* and the views of the late 5th century Sophists in the character of Odysseus in order to contrast their systems of morality. I will further argue that these opposing philosophical visions make evident Sophocles' negative treatment of the Sophistic use of λόγος in argumentation in contrast to the Heraclitean λόγος.⁸ Via the opposing philosophies of *Philoctetes* and Odysseus, Sophocles offers his audience a vision of his own repudiation of the Sophists and an affirmation of Heraclitus. Moreover, I will

⁷ I will suggest that *Philoctetes* upholds a system of morality in which there exists a definite notion of justice and injustice; for, he views his only course of action as one in which just actions are pursued, both as an ends and as a means. This contrasts with Odysseus who endorses the view that the moral value of an action depends upon the outcome, thus being relative to the ends as opposed to the intrinsic value of the means (Cf. *Philoctetes*, lines 79-85).

⁸ My view of Sophocles' response to the Sophists as hostile is partially compatible with those scholars preceding Rose, such as Nestle (cf. W. Nestle, "Sophokles und die Sophistik," *CP* 5 (1910): p. 134). Although I agree that Sophocles' reception and dramatic treatment of Sophistic thought is fundamentally negative, I would argue that this is due to his disparagement of the late 5th century Sophistic deployment of λόγος in the stereotypical manner of making the weaker argument the stronger and *vice versa*, as expressed in Plato's *Apology* and *Gorgias*, and as dramatized in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. However, I concur with Rose's view of Sophocles' positive reception and dramatic treatment of Sophistic anthropological ideas. My stance in the scholarly debate of Sophocles' relationship to Sophistic thought is thus more nuanced than the interpretation of previous scholars; for, I assert that the dramatic treatment of Sophistic anthropological contributions are positive; yet Sophocles' dramatic rendering of the Sophistic use of λόγος, as illustrated by the character of Odysseus in the *Philoctetes*, is negative. In the course of this chapter, we also will see how Odysseus and *Philoctetes* possess differing conceptions of λόγος itself.

demonstrate how Sophocles' use of Heracles as the *deus ex machina* at the end of the play serves to reconcile the traditional religion of the Olympian gods with the pre-Socratic vision of Heraclitus, as Philoctetes undergoes a spiritual transformation from incredulity to trust in the divinities questioned at the beginning of the tragedy. Sophocles therefore accomplishes the remarkable feat of connecting Heraclitean philosophy with the Olympian gods of traditional religion. Once Philoctetes realizes that these divinities are, in fact, concerned with his fate and that they aid in his rescue from Lemnos, his faith in the traditional religion is gradually restored. With the image of fire, the fundamental element in the Heraclitean cosmos, Sophocles thus allies the Heraclitean philosophical tradition with the Olympian gods of traditional religion. Fire is the basis not only of Philoctetes' primal survival but also of his spiritual endurance; it also is the eventual source of Philoctetes' reaffirmation of traditional religion. Finally, after focusing on the element of fire, I will illuminate the overall impact of Heraclitean thought on the tragedy in general with a focus on the plethora of verbal and conceptual strands of Heraclitean thought in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. The concepts of λόγος, δίκη, and φύσις, the presence of the unity of opposites, the themes of cosmic sympathy and the criticism of mankind, and even the image of Philoctetes' bow itself will make evident the profound influence of Heraclitus on this tragedy.

Before turning to the text of the *Philoctetes*, a brief synopsis of the major views and fragments of Heraclitus is necessary for my argument. Ancient biographers and historians of philosophy confirm that Heraclitus wrote one book; Diogenes Laertius

reports that its title was Περὶ Φύσεως, 'On Nature.'⁹ In this book, it is clear that Heraclitus envisions himself as having access to an important truth or λόγος about the constitution of φύσις (D.1):¹⁰

γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι,
πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιουτέων ὁκοίων ἐγὼ
διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔκει.

For although all things happen according to this λόγος, men are like the un-tried, even when they experience such words and deeds as I set forth, distinguishing each thing according to its φύσις and declaring how it is.¹¹

We learn from another fragment that this λόγος is the principle positing a unifying formula or proportionate method underlying all things: οὐκ ἔμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφὸν ἔστιν ἔν πάντα εἶναι, "Listening not to me but to the λόγος, it is wise to agree that all things are one" (Fr. D. 50, Hippolytus *Ref.* IX, 9). The λόγος informs mortals that all things are constituted by a unifying element that, as we know from Fragments 30 and 31, is fire:¹²

κόσμον τόνδε [τόν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων] οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε
ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται·
πῦρ αἰεὶζων, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.

⁹ However, as G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven state, since this title was regularly assigned to works by those authors whom Aristotle and the Peripatetics call natural philosophers, this name cannot be regarded as authentic in every case. But the important issue for our purposes is that Heraclitus is concerned with φύσις, which, as we will see, is an important theme in the *Philoctetes* both with respect to Neoptolemus' genealogy as son of Achilles and with respect to the Heraclitean notion of φύσις that forms part of the character's internal psychological struggle with the Sophistic λόγος of Odysseus. (Cf. Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957))

¹⁰ I will be referring to the fragments of Heraclitus with the Diels and Kranz system of classification.

¹¹ My translations of Heraclitus throughout this dissertation are based on those in C. Kahn's *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge, 1979).

¹² Despite the difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the λόγος, as R.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven note, the λόγος is probably conceived by Heraclitus as an actual constituent of things, and in many respects as co-extensive with the primary cosmic constituent of fire. (Cf. Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957))

This world-order [the same for all] did none of the gods nor men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an ever-living fire, being kindled in measures and in measures going out.¹³

The λόγος not only is accessible to Heraclitus himself, but also is common and shared by all, although most are oblivious of this truth: τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν. “Although the λόγος is common/shared, most men live as though they have a private understanding.”

Heraclitus claims that a balanced reaction between opposites upholds the cosmos as exemplified by the back-stretched harmony of the bow and the lyre: οὐ ξυνιαῖσιν ὄκως διαφερόμενον ἐωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἀρμονίη ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης. “They do not understand how being at variance it agrees with itself: it is a backward-turning harmony, as that of the bow and lyre.”¹⁴

The bow figures in another fragment of Heraclitus in addition to Fragment D. 51. In Fragment D. 48, Heraclitus states: τῷ τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος. “The name of the bow is life; its work is death.” Heraclitus draws on the etymology of the bow and its function in order to illustrate his principle of the unity of opposites. On the superficial level, the fragment presents a paradox between the old name for the bow, βίος, which, in its unaccented form, is identical to the ordinary word for life, βίος, and the function of the instrument in hunting and war.¹⁵ By equating the name of life with the name of the bow, Heraclitus reconciles two opposites, namely, life and an instrument of death, the bow. As Charles Kahn states, “the life-signifying name for the instrument of death points to some reconciliation between the opponents, some fitting together as in the

¹³ Fr. D. 30, Clement *Strom.* V, 104, I. Cf. Fr. D. 31, 90, 64 for other references to fire as the primary constituent in nature.

¹⁴ Fr. D. 51, Hippolytus *Ref.* IX, 9.

¹⁵ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1979), p.201.

unity of Day and Night [in Fragment D. 57].”¹⁶ The bow, therefore, is an important image within the Heraclitean framework of thought, as it illustrates his premise that the world consists of a unity of opposites.

In Fr. D. 60, 61, 88, and 111, Heraclitus provides more examples of the principle of the unity of opposites: νοῦσος ὑγίειν ἐποίησεν ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, λιμὸς κόρον, κάματος ἀνάπαυσιν. “Disease makes health pleasant and good, hunger makes satiety pleasant and good, and weariness, rest.”¹⁷ Heraclitus here employs three pairs of opposites consisting of a negative and positive term - disease and health, hunger and satiety, weariness and rest - in order to illustrate that the pairs of opposites inform one another, and thus comprise a unity of opposites. Since it is disease that makes health ἡδὺ and ἀγαθόν, hunger, satiety, and weariness, rest, it follows that without the apparently negative term, the positive term would lose its value.¹⁸ Thus, the positive quality essentially depends upon the existence of the negative quality.

In Fr. D. 88, Heraclitus again illustrates his doctrine of the unity of opposites, yet, in this instance, with the images of the living and the dead, sleeping and the waking, and the young and old: ταὐτό τ’ ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκός καὶ τὸ ἐρηγορός καὶ τὸ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν. “And as the same thing there exists in us: the living and dead, the waking and sleeping, the young and old.”¹⁹ Here, as above, Heraclitus

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Fr. D. 111, Stobaeus *Anth.* III, I, 177.

¹⁸ Cf. C. Kahn *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978) for his argument that this fragment completes the thought expressed in D. 110, namely, ἀνθρώποις γίνεσθαι ὅκόσα θέλουσιν οὐκ ἄμεινον. “It is not better for human beings to get all they want,” which responds to and refutes the familiar adage of Thales: “The sweetest thing is to obtain what you desire.” Kahn argues that D. 110 and D.111 provide the point of connection between what has been called Heraclitus’ ethics, i.e., his view of human folly and wisdom, and the doctrine of opposites.

¹⁹ Fr. D. 88, *Cons. Ad Apoll.* 10, 106 E

employs three pairs of apparently paradoxical states of human existence in order to reveal their actual constitution of a unified complex.²⁰

To Heraclitus, the cosmos is constituted by the balanced reaction between opposites existing in a constant state of flux. The cosmic fire is constantly engaged in a cyclical process of change in which it is ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα... “kindled in measures, and in measures, going out.”²¹ The doxographical tradition assigns several fragments to Heraclitus in which the doctrine of flux is illustrated by the now famous river image. The only genuinely Heraclitean river fragment is preserved by Arius Didymus: ποταμοῖσι αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ. “As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them.”²² This fragment entails a weaker version of the doctrine of flux than the one posited as Heraclitean by both Plato and Plutarch:

λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει,
καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῆ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν
ποταμὸν οὐκ ἄν ἐμβαίης.

Heraclitus somewhere says that all things are in process and nothing stays still, and likening existing things to the stream of a river, he says that you would not step twice into the same river.²³

The genuine quotation implies a constancy of the form of the river in spite of the constant flux of the substance, the ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα. The Platonic quote and that of Plutarch imply the constancy of change, both with respect to the form and substance of the river, thus entailing a stronger statement of the doctrine of flux in which everything

²⁰ It is important to note that by ταυτό τ', Heraclitus does not identify the two opposing qualities as the same, as Aristotle incorrectly accuses Heraclitus of doing; rather, Heraclitus implicitly asserts their co-dependence and constitution of the same complex in a unity of opposites.

²¹ D. 30, Clement, *Stromateis* V. 103.6

²² Cf. C. Kahn *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 166-168.

²³ Plato, *Cratylus* 402 A.

universally is in a constant state of change. Regardless of this debate concerning the extent of Heraclitus' doctrine of flux, the aspect of this doctrine that is important to this chapter is that the general notion of flux itself is central to Heraclitus' system of thought.

For the purposes of my argument, it is also necessary to remark upon Heraclitus' view of divinity. In Fragment D. 67, Heraclitus asserts a relationship between god and a number of pairs of opposites:

ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη,
κόρος λιμός ...ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πυρ> ὅπότεν
συμμιγῆ θυώμασιν ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου.

God is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger;
he undergoes alteration in the way that <fire>, when it is mixed with
spices, is named according to the scent of each of them.

Since god is the primary constituent of every opposite, divinity assumes a similar role to the primary constituent of nature, fire. God is the unity of opposites, the complex that unites day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger. Like fire, god alternates between pairs of opposites, such that the only constancy is the property of change itself that unifies opposites underlying the constitution of nature and the cosmos. Now we must examine the morality and code of ethics intrinsic to Heraclitus' philosophy. In Fr. D. 112, Heraclitus defines the greatest virtue and wisdom, ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη, as σωφρονεῖν, thinking-well, which, in turn, is identified as "acting and speaking what is true," ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν, perceiving things according to their nature": σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη, ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας. "Thinking well is the greatest virtue and wisdom: acting and speaking what is true, perceiving things according to their nature." Heraclitus here

conjoins λέγειν with ἀληθέα and thus associates ἀληθέα with the λόγος. Heraclitus also identifies ἀληθέα λέγειν as ἀρετή μεγίστη καὶ σοφίη, and again correlates the λόγος with his system of morality and ethics. Conversely, those not “acting and speaking what is true” are depicted as violating Heraclitus’ code of ethics. Hence those who lie and perjure, i.e., those not acting and speaking in accordance with what is true, do not possess ἀρετή μεγίστη καὶ σοφίη, and thus violate Heraclitus’ system of morality, which is conjoined with ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν. Δίκη serves as the enforcer of this system of morality in hunting out both the liars and perjurers among men in the human sphere, and violations of μέτρα in the natural sphere (Fr. D. 94): “Ἡλιος οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν. “The Sun will not transgress his measures. If he does, the Furies, ministers of Justice, will find him out.”

Δίκη appears in a third fragment, Fr. D. 80, in an untraditional way: εἶδε[ναι] χρῆ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνὸν καὶ δίκην ἔριν καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα. “It is necessary to realize that war is shared and Conflict is Justice, and that all things come to pass in accord with Strife and Necessity.” Here, Heraclitus implicitly criticizes and radically adapts the only extant fragment of Anaximander.²⁴ In Anaximander, the encroachment of opposites is described in justice (τῆς ἀδικίας), thus entailing that the punishment for this act is justice. Heraclitus reverses this sentiment in his radical statement that δίκην ἔριν, “strife is justice.” To Heraclitus, the entire

²⁴ Simplicius preserves the only direct quotation of Anaximander that survives in *Phys.* 24, 17: ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὐσι, καὶ ἦν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι ‘κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάχιν,’...“And the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens,] ‘according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time.’”

process of crime and punishment is viewed as Justice, which contrasts with Anaximander's notion of Justice, which consists only of the punishment, not the crime. Heraclitus also universalizes the sentiment of Anaximander's warring opposites in the final clause of Fr. 8, "all things happen according to Strife and Necessity." And, since Strife is Justice, it follows that all things happen according to Justice in the Heraclitean matrix. Δίκη thus holds a prominent position as the enforcer of morality in both the human and natural spheres: Δίκη polices a system of morality in which human beings pay the penalty for lying and perjuring and in which even nature itself must pay the penalty for transgressions of its μέτρα.

Now, let us examine Sophocles' *Philoctetes* with the philosophy of Heraclitus in mind. Rose argues that Sophocles' presentation of Philoctetes' battle for survival in utter isolation from other human beings "primarily offer[s] an image of the human condition which derives ultimately from the sophists' speculations about the conditions of human life in the primitive, pre-social conditions."²⁵ This image of humanity reduced to the primitive condition of survival is made evident by the prolific references in the play to beasts, cave dwelling, rocks, harsh weather, the difficulties of obtaining food, and the pathos of isolation.²⁶ Among these many natural images, Rose points to fire as the essential element in Philoctetes' survival in the primitive stage of anthropological existence. However, the over-generalization involved in identifying fire as "ultimately" derived from the Sophists' conception of the pre-social stage of man both adumbrates the important role of fire and its various instantiations in the *Philoctetes* and also conceals the influence of Heraclitus.

²⁵ P. W. Rose, "Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists," *HSPH* LXXX (1976): p. 58.

²⁶ Cf. Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, lines 16-21, 182, 184-5, 227-228.

Although Sophocles deploys many images from nature, including the beasts, caves, rocks, birds, earth, sea, and wind in the *Philoctetes*, he allots the most prominent role to the image of fire and its manifold instantiations. In the opening of the tragedy in lines 17-19, the element of fire, in its forms as the sun and heat, plays an important role in establishing the setting of Philoctetes' home in the rocky cliffs of Lemnos. Odysseus describes the cave-dwelling of Philoctetes as containing a διπλῆ...ἐνθάκησις, "a double seat," whose purpose is derived entirely from Philoctetes' dependence on fire in his survival on the island during the extremities of the seasons (line 2): ἴν' ἐν ψύχει μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ/ πάρεστιν ἐνθάκησις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὕπνον/ Δι' ἀμφιτρῆτος αὐλίου πέμπει πνοή. "Where there is a double seat in the sun in the wintertime, and in the heat [of summer], the wind sends sleep through the tunneled wing."²⁷ Sophocles thus opens the tragedy emphasizing that Philoctetes' home is established around the necessity of fire for his survival through the harsh winters and also around the exigency of relief from this element during the heat of the summer. These two necessities make evident the paradoxical nature of fire: the sun, the element essential to providing warmth in the winter, can also be destructive during the summer. The sun is portrayed, therefore, as an instance in nature in which opposites are unified.

In line 36, fire again appears. Here, Neoptolemus describes to Odysseus the contents of Philoctetes' cave-dwelling, among which are καὶ πυρεῖ' ὄμοῦ τάδε, "also these things for fire," i.e., kindling. Fire is presented as invaluable to Philoctetes because it provides warmth and also heat, presumably for cooking. In line 38, Neoptolemus again refers to fire, but here emphasizes the importance of the sun in drying Philoctetes' rags,

²⁷ My translations of Sophocles throughout this dissertation are based on those by D. Grene and R. Lattimore (*Sophocles I and II* (Chicago and London, 1957)).

which are full of a foul discharge: καὶ ταῦτα γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται/ ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα, “and these other things drying in the sun, rags full of foul discharge”; the element of fire is ascribed a third vital function derived from its cathartic property of purging the νόσος from Philoctetes’ clothes. Therefore, in the first 40 lines of the tragedy, the two external observers, Odysseus and Neoptolemus, identify fire as essential to Philoctetes’ survival on the uninhabited island of Lemnos primarily with respect to his primitive and basic needs; fire and its instantiations in the forms of the sun, seasons, and the flame are the determining factors in the establishment of Philoctetes’ home and essential to the fulfillment of his needs for food, warmth, and hygiene. Consequently, insofar as fire is presented as essential to Philoctetes’ basic, primitive survival, Peter Rose’s classification of Philoctetes as reflecting the Sophistic conception of pre-social man is valid. However, Rose’s classification of the role of fire and of Philoctetes himself is derived solely from the perspective of the external observers, Odysseus and Neoptolemus, who also view fire as essential to Philoctetes’ primitive survival. Nevertheless, if we examine the image of fire as presented from Philoctetes’ perspective, fire, in addition to its vital role in the survival on the primitive level, serves as Philoctetes’ spiritual salvation.

In lines 254-311, Philoctetes first provides an account of his awakening to the harrowing reality of his abandonment on Lemnos by the Atreidae and Odysseus. He then proceeds to recount his discovery of the barest necessities of survival by means of his bow. In this account, he describes his ingenuity in survival with respect to his shelter, food, and water, and then, climatically ends with his achievement of producing fire (lines 295-299):

...εἶτα πῦρ ἄν οὐ παρῆν,
ἀλλ' ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις,
ἔφην' ἄφαντον φῶς, ὃ καὶ σῶζει μ' αἰεί.
οἴκουμένη γὰρ οὖν στέγη πυρὸς μέτα
πάντ' ἐκπορίζει πλὴν τὸ μὴ νοσεῖν ἐμέ.

Next there would be no fire at hand.
but striking stone on stones, at long last,
I'd make shine forth the hidden flame, which saves me always.
Truly, an inhabited chamber with fire
provides me with everything - except escape from my disease.

As Peter Rose states, “the emphatic play on ἔφην' ἄφαντον φῶς, the suggestive inclusiveness of the phrase ὃ καὶ σῶζει μ' αἰεί, the literal sense of which is explained further in πυρὸς μέτα πάντ' ἐκπορίζει, rhetorically allot fire the role in Philoctetes' survival which may appear disproportionate to its warmth-giving function or even its function in cooking, to which no direct allusion is made.”²⁸ Rose explains this “disproportionate” role attributed to fire only as an “inevitable climax” in the “context of Sophocles' anthropologically based metaphor of the pre-social struggle for survival.”²⁹

This reading of the important role of fire fails to account for the religious and sacred role with which Philoctetes endows fire in this passage. The use of σῶζει elevates the role of fire to the level of the divine, as it echoes the phrase Odysseus uses in his prayer to the Olympian divinities in lines 133-134: Ἑρμῆς δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἠγήσαιο νῶν/ Νίκη τ' Αθάνα Πολιάς, ἧ σῶζει μ' αἰεί. “May Hermes, God of Craft, the Guide, be guide to us indeed, and Victory and Athena, the City goddess, who always preserves me.” Philoctetes ascribes the same power of salvation to fire as Odysseus does to the Olympian gods. This verbal echo suggests that Philoctetes transfers

²⁸ P. W. Rose, “Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists,” *HSPH* LXXX (1976): p. 61.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

a power ascribed to the traditional Olympian divinities to fire, thus elevating fire to the level of the divine in a manner contrasting with Odysseus' vision of divinity.

There is an important implication to Philoctetes' deification of fire at the beginning of this speech to Neoptolemus in line 297. In line 254, Philoctetes begins his speech by describing himself as *πικρὸς θεοῖς*, "hateful to the gods," and thus to the traditional Olympian divinities. In light of his view of fire as divine at the end of this speech in lines 295-299, Philoctetes rejects the gods of the traditional Olympian religion in favor of the element fire, his new source of salvation. Yet, his rejection of the traditional gods is caused by his belief that these divinities display no concern for him; for, according to Philoctetes, they never allow a word of his abandonment on Lemnos to reach his home: *πικρὸς θεοῖς,/ οὐ μὴδὲ κληδῶν ὧδ' ἔχοντος οἴκαδε/ μὴδ' Ἑλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῖ διῆλθέ που*(lines 255-6). Philoctetes' rejection of the traditional gods also results from his disgust that the gods allowed men, *οἱ...ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἔμε*, "casting [him] out in an unholy manner," to mock him by being silent (*γελῶσι σῖγ' ἔχοντες*) (line 257). In other words, Philoctetes rejects the gods of the traditional religion who allow the Atreidae and Odysseus, acting irreverently (*ἀνοσίως*), to abandon him on the island of Lemnos. And this rejection of the traditional gods of Olympus is derived from Philoctetes' reaction to their sanction of the "unholy" Atreidae and Odysseus. The gods of traditional religion thus stand in sharp contrast to Philoctetes' description of his apotheosized 'new' form of divinity, fire, at the end of this passage.

Before we move on, it is important to bring to light another passage in which Philoctetes' rejection of the traditional gods of Olympus is expressed in similar terms as the passage that we have just discussed. In lines 450-1, Philoctetes exclaims: *ποῦ χρῆ*

τίθεσθαι ταῦτα, ποῦ δ' αἰνεῖν, ὅταν τὰ θεῶν ἐπαινῶν τοὺς θεοὺς εὕρω
κακοῦς; “How should I understand these divine things, how should I praise them, when
I, praising the divine things, discover that the gods are evil?” Philoctetes’ belief that the
traditional gods of Olympus are κακοῦς is derived from his disillusionment in realizing
that the best men, such as Ajax and Antilochus, are dead, while the evil men, such as
Odysseus, are still alive (lines 446-450):

ἐπεὶ οὐδέν πω κακόν γ' ἀπώλετο,
ἀλλ' εὔ περιστέλλουσιν αὐτὰ δαίμονες,
καὶ πως τὰ μὲν πανοῦργα καὶ παλιντριβῆ
χαίρουσ' ἀναστρέφοντες ἐξ' Αἴδου, τὰ δὲ
δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστ' ἀποστέλλουσ' αἰεὶ.

Since nothing evil is ever destroyed,
but the spirits take good care of them,
and the [spirits] delight in turning back knaves and tricksters
from Hades, and always take away the just and the good.

Just as in lines 255-6, in this passage, Philoctetes’ use of “κακόν,” “πανοῦργα καὶ
παλιντριβῆ” and “τὰ δὲ δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστα,” reveals that his rejection of the
traditional gods stems from his disillusionment with the gods for preserving the morally
evil and for destroying the morally good. This rejection of the Olympian gods of
traditional religion is paralleled by his acceptance of a new form of divinity: fire.

Philoctetes’ deification of fire is further manifest in his relationship with
Neoptolemus. After Neoptolemus agrees to take Philoctetes home to Oeta, Neoptolemus
asks if it is θέμις, “right,” for him to touch τὰ κλεινὰ τόξα, “the famous bow” (lines
661, 654). This bow, as we have seen earlier, represents Philoctetes’ sole instrument for
hunting food and thus the means of his survival. Since Neoptolemus has formed a social
compact with Philoctetes, whom Neoptolemus agrees to take home and vows “to look at
Troy and the Atridae both from very far off” (lines 455-6) Philoctetes does not hesitate to

allow Neoptolemus to grasp his bow. In his address to Neoptolemus, Philoctetes uses the imagery of fire and its instantiations to describe Neoptolemus' promise (lines 662-666):

ὄσιά τε φωνεῖς ἔστι τ', ὦ τέκνον, θέμις,
ὅς γ' ἡλίου τόδ' εἰσορᾶν ἐμοὶ φάος
μόνος δέδωκας, ὅς χθόν' Οἰταίαν ἰδεῖν,
ὅς πατέρα πρέσβυν, ὅς φίλους, ὅς τῶν ἐμῶν
ἐχθρῶν μ' ἔνερθεν ὄντ' ἀνέστησάς πέρα.

Child, you speak holy things and it is right.
You, who alone gave me to see this light of the sun,
who bestowed upon me to see the Oetan land,
my old father, my loved ones, and who have placed me,
being beneath, above my enemy.

In this passage, Philoctetes refers to Neoptolemus as the one who has given him the φάος, and thus as associated with the source of the very element that earlier, in line 257, he identifies as ὁ καὶ σώζει μ' αἰεί, "what saves [him] always." Just as σώζει elevates the φάος to a divine level through the verbal echo of Odysseus' prayer to the gods, Philoctetes' reference to Neoptolemus as the provider of his φάος links φάος to salvation and associates both φάος and salvation with Neoptolemus.

Rose argues that since Neoptolemus offers to reunite Philoctetes with his family, home, and friends, Neoptolemus becomes Philoctetes' salvation on the social level, i.e., the second stage in the Sophistic anthropological scheme. Thus, Rose claims that Neoptolemus holds a role on the social level similar to the function of fire on the primitive Sophistic level.³⁰ Although I agree that Neoptolemus does indeed offer the hope of salvation to Philoctetes on a social level, the religious language of ὄσιά and θέμις imputes a divine connotation to this 'social salvation.' Since Neoptolemus expresses his desire to touch Philoctetes' bow ὥσπερ θεόν, "as if it were a god" (line

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

657), this additional divine language signals to the reader that fire, which holds a similar role in his survival as the bow, is working not only on the primitive and social levels within the Sophistic anthropological scheme, but also on a religious and divine level.

I also would argue that Neoptolemus' promise to bring Philoctetes back to his home in Oeta functions not only to fulfill Philoctetes' social salvation, i.e., the second stage of the Sophistic anthropological scheme, but also to reunite Philoctetes with the land that symbolizes the original source of the element of fire. Oeta is the place where Philoctetes has burned Heracles on the funeral pyre, and the site where Philoctetes received Heracles' famous bow, which is Philoctetes' means of survival, in return for this service. Neoptolemus thus serves as the instrument of Philoctetes' salvation by offering to reunite him with the land that is the site of Philoctetes' procurement of an instrument that is ὡσπερ θεόν, and thus the primary source of his divinity. Moreover, since Philoctetes describes the procurement of the bow from Heracles as the result of εὐεργετῶν, "doing good deeds," Oeta, the land where he receives the bow, is interconnected with Philoctetes' moral framework: εὐεργετῶν γὰρ καὐτός αὐτ' ἐκτησάμην, "Indeed, doing good deeds, I myself came to possess this [bow]" line 670. Neoptolemus' promise of reuniting Philoctetes with Oeta symbolizes, therefore, not only Philoctetes' hope of social salvation, but also his divine and moral salvation.

Immediately after this passage, the chorus further emphasizes the connection of Oeta with the element fire in lines 726-728. The chorus describes Oeta as the place ἴν' ὁ χάλκασπις ἀνήρ θεοῖς/ πλάθει θεός θείῳ πυρὶ παυφαίης,/ Οἴτας ὑπὲρ ὄχθων, "where the hero of the bronze shield ascended to all the gods, he, appearing in divine fire above the ridges of Oeta." Here, Sophocles again presents the image of fire as θείῳ

πυρὶ, “divine fire.” In addition, the chorus further stresses Oeta’s connection with Heracles, ὁ χάλκασπις ἀνὴρ, and the divine flame, and thus emphasizes the fact that Philoctetes’ reunion with his homeland will be more than a social reunion with his family and loved ones. Indeed, he will be reunited with the land symbolizing the source of his divinity: fire. Since Neoptolemus is the one who will reunite Philoctetes with fire, Philoctetes’ association of Neoptolemus with φάος is perfectly appropriate.

Philoctetes alludes to fire and its instantiations several more times in his address to Neoptolemus, and thus sustains his association of Neoptolemus with fire and his spiritual salvation. After Philoctetes, suffering from the pain of his νόσος, is overcome with sleep, he awakens and exclaims (lines 867-871):

ὦ φέγγος ὕπνου διάδοχον, τὸ τ’ ἐλπίδων
 ἄπιστον οἰκούρημα τῶνδε τῶν ξένων.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ὦ παῖ, τοῦτ’ ἂν ἐξηύχης ἐγώ,
 τλῆναί σ’ ἐλείνωσ ὥδε τάμα πῆματα
 μεῖναι παρόντα καὶ ξυνωφελοῦντά μοι,

Blessed the light, successor of sleep, and blessed the watch of these
 strangers, for which I never would have hoped.
 Nor would I have boasted these things loudly before,
 that you, child, would endure my pains with pity and remain,
 being present and helping me.

Here, Philoctetes’ vocative, ὦ φέγγος, again invokes an instantiation of the element fire. Since Philoctetes addresses Neoptolemus in the very next sentence as ὦ παῖ, he associates Neoptolemus with the imagery of the instantiation of fire, the light of the sun. In line 530, he invokes, ὦ φίλτατον μὲν ἡμᾶρ, “o most beloved day,” immediately preceding his plea to Neoptolemus to take him off the island of Lemnos to his home, and so, employs the imagery of an instantiation of fire in association with Neoptolemus. And finally, in line 927, he declares: ὦ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δεῖμα καὶ πανουγρίας/ δεινῆς

τέχνημ' ἔχθιστον, οἶά μ' εἰγράσω,/ οἶ' ἠπάτηκας·“O, you fire and every monster and most hated device of dreadful villainy, what did you do to me, what have you deceived”(lines 927-9). Here Philoctetes identifies Neoptolemus with fire itself, πῦρ σὺ. However, the imagery has a negative connotation in the context of these various insults. This latter vocative in which Philoctetes addresses Neoptolemus as πῦρ, emphasizes the destructive characteristic of fire; for, this occurs immediately after Philoctetes' realization that Neoptolemus has taken Philoctetes' bow in an act of deception. Philoctetes perceives Neoptolemus as having performed an action that is destructive in nature by taking away the instrument of Philoctetes' survival. Just as the fire of the sun is necessary for Philoctetes' survival in the harsh winter, but dangerous in its extreme form during the summer, so too, Neoptolemus, the provider of Philoctetes' divine flame, is both Philoctetes' savior and his potential destroyer. Therefore, just like fire in Heraclitus' Fr. D. 30, Philoctetes' fire possesses the paradoxical properties of creation and destruction.

In lines 986-988, when Odysseus intervenes after Neoptolemus has taken Philoctetes' bow by deception, Philoctetes addresses fire with an exclamatory vocative: ὦ Λημνία χθὼν καὶ τὸ παγκρατὲς σέλας/ Ἥφαιστότευκτον, ταῦτα δῆτ' ἀνασχετά,/ εἴ μ' οὔτος ἐκ τῶν σῶν ἀπάξεται βία; “o Lemnian land and all-powerful brightness made by Hephaestus, must these things be suffered if this man will take me away from you by force?” Immediately after this invocation of Philoctetes, Odysseus himself responds with a statement questioning Philoctetes' vision of divinity: Ζεὺς ἐσθ', ἴν' εἰδῆς, Ζεὺς, ὁ τῆσδε γῆς κρατῶν,/ Ζεὺς ᾧ δέδοκται

ταῦθ' ὑπηρετῶ δ' ἐγώ. “It is Zeus, so that you may know, Zeus, who is powerful over this land, Zeus, by whom this is decreed. I serve him” (lines 989-990). The triple repetition of Zeus’ name emphasizes that Philoctetes’ vision of divinity has deviated from the vision of the traditional religion that holds Zeus as παγκρατὲς, not fire. However, Philoctetes reacts vehemently against Odysseus’ claim to be serving the traditional Olympian gods as he states: ὦ μῖσος, οἷα κάξανευρίσκεις λέγειν/ θεοὺς προτείνων τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθης. “o hateful one, what a story you invent. Making the gods liars by giving them as your reason” (lines 991-2).³¹ Once again, as we saw in lines 446-450, Philoctetes questions the Olympian gods of traditional religion because of their alliance with such evil men as Odysseus.

In lines 1037-1039, Philoctetes again expresses his skepticism towards the gods of traditional religion: ...ὀλεῖσθε δ' ἡδίκηκότες/ τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε, θεοῖσιν εἰ δίκης μέλει. “You, being unjust to this man [Philoctetes], will be destroyed, if justice is a concern to the gods.” Yet, in spite of this skepticism, the subsequent lines reveal that Philoctetes’ view of divinity is ambivalent: ἔξοιδα δ' ὡς μέλει γ' ἔπει οὐποτ' ἂν στόλον/ ἐπλεύσατ' ἂν τόνδ' οὐνεκ' ἀνδρὸς ἀθλίου,/ εἰ μή τι κέντρον θεῖον ἦγ' ὑμᾶς ἐμοῦ. “I know that [justice] is a concern [to the gods], since you never would have sailed on this expedition because of this wretched man, if some divine spur had not led you.” Philoctetes’ reference to the τι κέντρον θεῖον indicates that his faith in traditional religion is beginning to be restored. The impetus of this restoration is Philoctetes’ realization that τι κέντρον θεῖον has impelled Odysseus and his men to Lemnos potentially in order to rescue Philoctetes from his isolation. The complete

³¹ We will soon see how Philoctetes own notion of λόγος reflects that of Heraclitus, thus standing in contrast to the deceitful, sophistic λόγος of Odysseus.

restoration of his faith in the gods of traditional religion, however, does not occur until Heracles appears as a *deus ex machina* at the end of the play and compels Philoctetes to go to Troy in fulfillment of the divine fate. At this point (lines 1467-8), Philoctetes refers to the δαίμων as πανδαμάτωρ, “all-conquering” instead of ascribing this adjective to the element of fire, thus marking a shift from his prior description of fire as παγκρατῆς in lines 986-88. Yet, his complete reconciliation with the gods of traditional religion occurs only when his most trusted friend, Heracles, reveals to him that the divine plan harmonizes with Philoctetes’ own notion of divinity and morality as represented by fire.

The importance of fire in the *Philoctetes* thus extends beyond a primitive role, via its warmth-giving and culinary functions, to the realm of the divine. Fire is not merely important to Philoctetes’ survival in the primitive, pre-social stage of the Sophistic conception of the development of man. Nor is Philoctetes’ association of Neoptolemus with πῦρ, φάος, ἥμαρ, and φέγγος, derived solely from his proleptic gratitude to Neoptolemus for restoring Philoctetes to his home, father, and friends in Oeta, and, consequently, from his anticipatory joy of re-entering the social stage of the Sophistic anthropological scheme. The image of fire is Philoctetes’ spiritual salvation, which initially substitutes for his belief in the traditional gods of the Olympus, and then is reconciled with these gods through the intervention of Heracles.

The cardinal role of fire in the *Philoctetes* is reminiscent of Heraclitus’ assertion that fire is the primary constituent underlying everything in nature in Fr. D. 31. Fire has a primary influence on Philoctetes’ decision to establish his home in the cave dwelling (lines 17-18), to provide warmth and the means for cooking (line 36), and to dry his clothes in the sun (line 38). Sophocles also underscores the dualistic and paradoxical

nature of fire in a manner reminiscent of the creative and destructive properties of fire in Heraclitus' philosophy. In lines 17-18, Philoctetes establishes his home in the cliffs with consideration of his dependence on the sun for warmth in the winter and the necessity of avoiding its potentially destructive property in the extreme heat of summer, thus emphasizing the life-sustaining property of fire and its lethal capabilities (lines 17-19). In line 1081, fire is depicted again as possessing the paradoxical properties of creation and destruction: ὦ κοίλας πέτρας γύαλον/ θερμὸν καὶ παγετῶδες. Here, θερμὸν καὶ παγετῶδες "hot and icy-cold" are coupled. In line 927, the destructive quality of fire is depicted also in Philoctetes' vocative, ὦ πῦρ σὺ, through his string of insults against Neoptolemus. Finally, Sophocles portrays Philoctetes' conception of fire as divine in a manner similar to that of Heraclitus in Fr. D. 67. In the *Philoctetes*, Philoctetes' notion of divinity also is identified with fire in lines 290-300, 530, and 663-6. The depiction of fire as essential for survival, as comprising the contrasting properties of creation and destruction, and as a source of divinity in the *Philoctetes* reflects this very function and role of fire in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

The role of the bow in the *Philoctetes* evokes Heraclitus' use of this image to illustrate his view of the cosmos as consisting of a unity of opposites: οὐ ξυνιαῖσιν ὄκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἀρμονίη ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης (Fr. D. 51). In line 933, Philoctetes states to Neoptolemus: ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον τὰ τόξ' ἐλών, "you, taking the bow, stole my life." This use of τὸν βίον juxtaposed with τὰ τόξ[α] creates the verbal pun of βίος with βίον, thus recalling Fr. D. 51, in which Heraclitus uses the image of the bow in a simile illustrating how life itself is a unity upheld by opposites, and Fr. D. 48, in which Heraclitus identifies the bow with

life.³² In line 1282, Sophocles presents Philoctetes as equating his very life with the bow; as a result, he further conflates the semantics of the two words: ὅστις γ' εμοῦ δόλοισι τὸν βίον λαβὼν, “[you] who, taking my life with deceits.” This line also echoes Fr. D. 48 in which Heraclitus directly links βίος with the bow itself, thus reconciling the unity of opposites through the pun of βίος and βιός: τῷ τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος. “The name of the bow is life; its work is death.”

In line 1426, Sophocles again plays with the verbal puns of βίος and τόξοισι in a manner recalling the language of Heraclitus. The bow is depicted as both Philoctetes’ means of procuring a εὐκλεᾶ...βίον, “glorious life,” and the instrument that will effect the destruction of the βίος of Paris. The bow, therefore, exemplifies the entire complex of life and death, creation and destruction, and reflects the unity of opposites fundamental to the philosophy of Heraclitus.

Further traces of Heraclitus’ philosophy can be found in Sophocles’ portrayal of Philoctetes as associated with the images of opposing pairs employed by Heraclitus in exemplification of his doctrine of the unity of opposites in Fr. D. 88. In line 847, the chorus describes Philoctetes, ὕπνος ἄπνους, “asleep without sleep”; in line 1018, Philoctetes describes himself as ἐν ζῶσιν νεκρόν, “a corpse among the living”; and in line 1030, Philoctetes paradoxically speaks of himself, though obviously alive, as dead: ὅς οὐδὲν εἰμι καὶ τέθνηχ’ ὑμῖν πάλαι. “I, who no longer exist and have been dead for a long time on account of you.” All three pairs of opposites recall the images of the living and the dead, the sleeping and the waking, used to illustrate the Heraclitean

³² Webster and Jebb argue that since the accent and therefore the pitch distinguishes the two, no pun is intended or heard. However, I would argue that the pun is intended in line 1282, as Philoctetes uses the word βίος, life, as a symbol for his τὸν βιόν, bow, thus using the two terms interchangeably.

doctrine of the unity of opposites in Fr. D. 88. Moreover, as we saw in Fr. D. 60, Heraclitus provides examples of the essential unity of opposites with the imagery of the opposites, disease and health: νοῦσος ὑγίειν ἐποίησεν ἡδὺ. This imagery of disease as paradoxically having a good quality is mirrored in the *Philoctetes*. Philoctetes' disease arising from his snake-bitten foot and his subsequent suffering are depicted as being θεῖα, "a divine work"(line 192); Heracles depicts Philoctetes' suffering with the disease as necessary for his final achievement of a blessed life at the end of the play; as a result, the negative quality of disease is necessary for the positive quality of a blessed life, just as in Heraclitus' Fr. D. 111: ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ' εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον. "Out of these sufferings [it is necessary] to make your life glorious" (line 1422). Finally, Sophocles presents Philoctetes' home itself as ἄοικον εἰς οἴκησιν, "a house-less house," thus again unifying two opposites in a manner harmonious with the Heraclitean philosophical vision of the unity of opposites (line 532).

Philoctetes' system of morality reflects the code of ethics and morality intrinsic to the philosophy of Heraclitus. Philoctetes adheres to a λόγος, and conceives of δίκη recalling that of Heraclitus in Fr. D. 28, 94, and 112. In contrast, Odysseus espouses an opposing system of morality and λόγος which recalls Sophistic thought. Philoctetes' initial rejection of the gods of traditional religion stems from his disillusionment with the Olympian gods for their support of evil men such as Odysseus and the Atreidae, the gods' preservation of πανούργα καὶ παλιντριβῆ, "knaves and tricksters," (line 449), and the fact that δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστ' ἀποστέλλουσ' ἀεὶ, "they always take away the just and good to Hades" (line 450). Philoctetes makes evident his belief that the δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστα should be rewarded and the πανούργα καὶ παλιντριβῆ, punished. The

concepts of justice and honesty espoused by Philoctetes mirror the system of morality intrinsic to Heraclitean philosophy, in which δίκη punishes the liars and perjurers among men, and in which λέγειν ἀληθέα is ἀρετή μεγίστη καὶ σοφίη.

Odysseus, in contrast to Philoctetes, espouses a utilitarian philosophy in which the moral value of the means is discounted, so long as the end is good (lines 80-81). This view is abhorrent to Philoctetes, who describes himself as having τόδ ἔμπεδον, “this fixed [moral] purpose,” in contrast to Odysseus who θεοὺς προτείνων τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθης, “mak[es] the gods liars by giving them as [his] reason” (lines 991-2). Odysseus also espouses a notion of λόγος that contrasts both with Philoctetes’ vision of morality and with that of Heraclitus; in lines 55-56, Odysseus states: τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεῖ/ ψυχὴν ὅπως λόγοισιν ἐκκλέψεις λέγων, “It is necessary for you, speaking, to deceive the soul of Philoctetes with words.” Odysseus, therefore, couples λόγοισιν and λέγων with ἐκκλέψεις, and thus the concept of deception. In line 99, Odysseus, exhorting Neoptolemus to ensnare Philoctetes and his bow ψευδῆ λέγειν, “[by] speaking lies” (line 100), says: τὴν γλῶσσαν, οὐχὶ τάργα, πάνθ’ ἠγουμένην. “it is the tongue that rules and not deeds.” Further, Odysseus persuades Neoptolemus to deceive Philoctetes by claiming that Neoptolemus, in spite of using deception as a means of procuring Philoctetes and the bow, ultimately will be deemed wise and good for achieving these ends: σοφός τ’ ἂν αὐτὸς κάγαθὸς κεκλήῃ ἅμα, “You yourself would be called wise and good” (line 119). Odysseus thus reverses the Heraclitean notion of truth in word and deed as the most excellent virtue in his description of the deceptive λόγος as the means necessary for the attainment of wisdom and goodness. In line 409, Philoctetes explicitly associates Odysseus with λόγου κακοῦ, thus further contrasting

Odysseus both with Philoctetes' notion of morality and λόγος, and consequently, with that of Heraclitus: ἔξοιδα γάρ νιν παντὸς ἄν λόγου κακοῦ/ γλώσση θιγόντα καὶ πανουργίας, ἀφ' ἧς/ μηδὲν δίκαιον ἐς τέλος μέλλοι ποεῖν. "I know that Odysseus would employ his tongue on every ill tale, every rascality, from which he might do nothing just in the end." Only when Philoctetes witnesses the concern of the Olympian gods for the just and good that is displayed with Heracles' arrival at the end of the play, does Philoctetes re-accept the gods of traditional religion whom he sees, in the end, as ultimately harmonizing with his Heraclitean view of the world.

The depiction of δίκη in the *Philoctetes* reflects another aspect of Heraclitus' concept of δίκη. In addition to associating δίκη with a truthful λόγος, Sophocles renders δίκη as connected with strife and as consisting of the entire process of crime and punishment, as in fragment D. 80 of Heraclitus. In line 317 Philoctetes prays: ...οἷς Ὀλύμπιοι θεοῖ/ δοῖέν ποτ' αὐτοῖς ἀντίποιν' ἔμου παθεῖν. "May the Olympian gods grant to [the Atreidae] recompense for my suffering." Philoctetes, imploring that the Atreidae pay tit-for-tat for his own suffering, appeals to a notion of justice recalling that of Anaximander, according to whom the recompense alone constitutes justice. In lines 1035-36 Philoctetes exclaims, ὀλεῖσθε δ' ἡδίκηκότες/ τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε, θεοῖσιν εἰ δίκης μέλει. "You, being unjust to this man, will be destroyed, if justice is a concern to the gods," and again appeals to a notion of justice echoing the sentiment of Anaximander. However, at the end of the play, the concept of justice determining the outcome of the events in the play inverts the Anaximandrian notion of justice. Sophocles portrays a Heraclitean sense of justice as the prevailing force and will of Zeus. In lines 1418-32, Heracles, leaving behind οὐρανίας ἔδρας...τὰ Διός τε φράσων βουλεύματά σοι,

“the seats of heaven and making evident the plans of Zeus to [Philoctetes],” grants Philoctetes’ previous request for divine intervention to enforce justice on his behalf. However, instead of promising that the punishment of Odysseus will be fulfilled (and thus a notion of Anaximandrian justice), Heracles reveals that the will of the gods require Philoctetes to go to Troy where he will both find the cure for his cruel disease (νόσου παύση λυγρᾶς) (line 1424), and be judged ἀρετῆ...πρωτός, “first in virtue” among generals for Πάριν...τόξοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι νοσφιεῖς βίου, “removing Paris from life with [his] bow that was [Heracles’]” (lines 1426-27). Zeus’s will is depicted as enforcing a notion of justice in which suffering (παθεῖν) (line 1421) and labors (πόνους) (line 1419) are necessary both for Heracles’ immortal virtue (ἀθάνατον ἀρετήν) and for Philoctetes’ achievement of a τῶνδ’ εὐκλεᾶ...βίον. In other words, the entire process of crime and punishment is portrayed as constituting justice in so far as Philoctetes is compensated for Odysseus’ offense with εὐκλεᾶ...βίον that can only be achieved through suffering and labor: ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ’ εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον, “From these labors [you will] make your life glorious.” And, since Philoctetes’ labors entail going to war and killing Paris with his bow, justice is portrayed as conjoined with war and strife; Philoctetes must go to war in order for justice to be served. Sophocles represents justice as associated both with strife and with the entire process of violation and recompense, thus reflecting the notion of Justice intrinsic to Heraclitus’ philosophy, as expressed in Fr. D. 80.³³

³³ As demonstrated above, Sophocles alludes to Heraclitus in this passage with the verbal puns of βίος and τόξοισι in line 1426. This reference to Heraclitus further supports that this pre-Socratic philosopher influenced Sophocles’ dramatic depiction of the prevailing notion of Justice at the conclusion of the *Philoctetes*.

Scholars often have discussed the thematic contrast between φύσις and νόμος that recurs throughout the *Philoctetes*, particularly, in reference to Neoptolemus.³⁴ Neoptolemus is depicted as struggling between following the φύσις inherited from his heroic father, Achilles, and the Sophistic νόμος, the teachings of Odysseus, which exhort him to employ deception with words in order to appropriate Philoctetes' bow. Much scholarly attention has focused on the Sophistic resonance of this debate. However, as we have seen throughout this chapter, this emphasis has obscured another strand of influence, namely, that of Heraclitus, on this thematic contrast between φύσις and νόμος that is centralized in the character of Neoptolemus. Just as Sophocles depicts the two different conceptions of λόγος as defining the opposing world-visions of Odysseus and Philoctetes, the tragedian also portrays Odysseus as holding a Sophistic notion of νόμος; in contrast, Philoctetes is characterized as possessing a Heraclitean vision of φύσις. In turn, Sophocles casts Neoptolemos as struggling psychologically between two visions of Odysseus and Philoctetes.³⁵

In Fr. D. 1, in which Heraclitus identifies his primary mission as κατὰ φύσιν διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔκει, “distinguishing each thing according to its φύσις and declaring how it is,” he closely conjoins the concepts of φύσις and λόγος

³⁴ Cf. W. Nestle. “Sophokles und die Sophistik,” *CP* 5 (1910): 129-157; F. Heinemann, *Nomos und Physis* (Basel, 1945); M. Ryzman, “Neoptolemus' psychological crisis and the development of *physis* in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*,” *Eranos* (1991) LXXXIX: 35-41; P. Rose, “Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists,” *HSPH* LXXX (1976): 49-105.

³⁵ This Sophistic debate between *Nomos* and *Physis* has its origins in Fr. D. 48 (C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 201-202.

through the verbal resonance of *κατὰ φύσιν* with *κατὰ τὸν λόγον*. In Fr. D. 112, Heraclitus again associates the two concepts of *φύσις* and *λόγος*: *σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη, ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας*. “Thinking well is the greatest virtue and wisdom: acting and speaking the truth, perceiving things according to their nature.” Heraclitus here conjoins *λέγειν* with *κατὰ φύσιν*; *ἀληθέα λέγειν*, “speaking the truth,” is associated with *φύσις*, hence linking *φύσις* to Heraclitus’ system of morality. Heraclitus also identifies both *ἀληθέα λέγειν* and *κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας* with *ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη*, further strengthening the correlation of both *λόγος* and *φύσις* with his system of morality and ethics.

In the *Philoctetes*, Sophocles also depicts Neoptolemus’ genealogical *φύσις* as closely correlated with *λόγος* and a system of morality aimed at truthful *λογοί*. In 79-80, Odysseus says to Neoptolemus, *ἔχοιδα, παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα/ τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσθαι κακά*: “I know, child, that it is not your nature to speak these things nor to craft evils,” thus urging Neoptolemus to steal Philoctetes’ bow through deceptive speech. With the statement, *φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα/ τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν*, Odysseus depicts Neoptolemus’ true *φύσις* as associated with speaking the truth, thus recalling the fragment of Heraclitus in which *ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας* is the *ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη*.

In lines 86-89, the *φύσις* of Neoptolemus again is depicted in a manner reflecting the *φύσις* of Heraclitus:

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖς ἄν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων,
Λαερτίου παῖ, τούσδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ.
ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς
οὔτ’ αὐτὸς οὔθ’ , ὥς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ.

Whatever of these words I hear, I feel distressed,

child of Laertes, and I hate to do such things.
Indeed, it is not my nature to do anything of an evil craft.
Nor, as they say, was it his nature, he who begot me.

Here, Neoptolemus feels pain (ἀλγῶν) at the words (τῶν λόγων) of Odysseus urging him to deceive (ἐκκλέψεις) the soul of Philoctetes by speaking with λόγοισιν (lines 54-55). Further, Neoptolemus states that ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆ, thus indicating that his nature, his φύσις, is opposed to doing such things (i.e., deceiving Philoctetes with words), which he classifies as engendered ἐκ τέχνης...κακῆς, from evil craft. In addition, Neoptolemus states οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔθ', ὡς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ; accordingly, he presents the φύσις of his father Achilles as also opposed to employment of deceptive speech. Neoptolemus hence represents his φύσις and that of Achilles as opposed to the employment of deceptive speech, thus mirroring this concept in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

In lines 865-902, Neoptolemus and Philoctetes refer to the φύσις of Neoptolemus twice more. In this scene, Neoptolemus has promised to rescue the marooned hero from his isolation on Lemnos and to bring him safely to his home on Neoptolemus' ship. In response, Philoctetes exclaims in line 874: ἀλλ' εὐγενῆς γὰρ ἡ φύσις καὶ εὐγενῶν, "your nature is indeed noble and from noble parents"; Philoctetes refers to Neoptolemus' father, Achilles, and imputes the nobility of Neoptolemus' φύσις to Achilles. This association of Neoptolemus' φύσις with Achilles echoes the sentiment expressed by Neoptolemus himself to Odysseus earlier in the passage in lines 86-89. However, in lines 902-3, Neoptolemus rejoins: ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν/ ὅταν λιπῶν τις δρῶ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα, "Everything is difficult when someone, abandoning his own nature, does something not befitting." He implies that he has abandoned his own φύσις

through his use of the deceptive λόγος taught to him by Odysseus in Neoptolemus' ensnarement of Philoctetes. Neoptolemus struggles between adhering to his own φύσις and the deceptive λόγος of Odysseus.

The dichotomy of the φύσις of Neoptolemus and the deceptive tactics of Odysseus occurs in another poignant example. In lines 1014-1015, Philoctetes addresses Odysseus: ἀλλ' ἡ κακὴ σὴ...ψυχὴ νιν ἀφυῆ τ' ὄντα κού φέλονθ' ὄμως/ εὖ προυδίδαξεν ἐν κακοῖς ἔναι σοφον., "Your evil soul taught him, being unsuited and not willing by nature, to be clever in evils." Philoctetes refers to Neoptolemus' φύσις as having been corrupted unwillingly by Odysseus' deceptive λόγος to such an extent that his nature literally becomes ἐν κακοῖς...σόφον, wise in evils, an adjective that most certainly refers to the verbal tactics of the Sophists.

The theme of flux occurs throughout *Philoctetes* in a manner mirroring the doctrine of flux of Heraclitus.³⁶ The psychological attitudes of the characters in general are depicted as subject to constant change. As discussed above with respect to φύσις, Neoptolemus vacillates between his φύσις, which compels him towards acting and speaking in accord with the Heraclitean λόγος, and the Sophistic, deceptive λόγος of Odysseus. In the course of the tragedy, Neoptolemus changes his mindset and course of action three times. First, in lines 88-89, Neoptolemus, in resistance to Odysseus' pleas to use a deceptive λόγος in order to appropriate the bow from Philoctetes, states: ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς. He thus makes evident his resolve to be faithful to his φύσις in the Heraclitean sense. However, after Odysseus has promised that

³⁶ Cf. also Chapter 2 and the Appendix for the theme of flux in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, *Ajax*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Neoptolemus will become *σόφος* and *ἀγαθός* through deceptive speech (line 119), Neoptolemus changes his mind: ...*ποήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς*, “I will do it, casting away all shame” (line 120). In lines 961-2, Neoptolemus, incited by compassion (*οἶκτος δεινός...τις*) (line 965), reverts back to his true nature. He reveals to Philoctetes the truth about his use of a deceptive *λόγος* in order to capture Philoctetes and to procure his bow. Philoctetes rejoins: *ἄλλοιο μὴ πω, πρὶν μάθοιμ’ εἰ καὶ πάλιν/ γνώμην μετοίσεις*, “May you not die before I learn if you will change your judgement again.” He thus indicates his awareness of Neoptolemus’ psychological oscillation. In line 1310, Neoptolemus wavers back to his original position when he returns the bow to Philoctetes. Philoctetes, in turn, states: ...*τὴν φύσιν δ’ ἔδειξας*, “you have shown your nature.” Neoptolemus thus is characterized by his psychological oscillation between his *φύσις* and the Sophistic *λόγος*.

The psychological mindset of Philoctetes also is marked by change, both regarding his view of traditional divinities and his perspective on his natural environment. In Philoctetes’ final soliloquy, he addresses the cave that has provided his shelter, the isle of Lemnos, the meadows, and streams in a manner indicative of his psychological transformation. The isle of Lemnos is depicted as populated by benevolent Nymphs (*Νύμφαι*) (line 1454); In lines 1461-63, Philoctetes exclaims: *λείπομεν ὑμᾶς, λείπομεν ἤδη,/ δόξης οὐ ποτε τῆσδ’ ἐπιβάντες*, “we leave you, we leave you, never having had this desire before.” He thus makes evident his new desire to remain on the island from which he beseeched Neoptolemus to rescue him. This bucolic characterization of nature contradicts Philoctetes’ earlier depiction of his natural environment as a force of destruction (lines 1085-1092), and hence reveals his own

psychological change. Furthermore, in lines 1466-68, Philoctetes exclaims that ἡ μεγάλη Μοῖρα, “great Fate,” and πανδαμάτωρ δαίμων, “the all-conquering Spirit,” compel him to Troy. He therefore makes evident both his re-acceptance of the will of Zeus and of the traditional Olympian divinities, as well as his own psychological metamorphosis.³⁷

This passage at the end of the *Philoctetes* reflects another aspect of the philosophy of Heraclitus. The notion of what I will call ‘cosmic sympathy’, in which the forces of nature are in sympathy with those of mankind, a notion that the Stoics later developed from Heraclitus’ principle that all things are one and bound in a harmony of opposites, is a doctrine central to the philosophy of Heraclitus. In Fr. D. 50, Heraclitus states, οὐκ ἔμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι. “Listening not to me but to the λόγος it is wise to agree that all things are one.” Here Heraclitus identifies the λόγος with the assertion that all things are one, and thus with the principle of the unity of all things. Heraclitus illustrates this principle in Fr. D. 57 with his criticism of Hesiod who ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν ἔστι γὰρ ἓν. “did not recognize the day and night: they are one;” he thus exemplifies the principle of the unity of all things in cosmic terms with the identification of the day and night as ἓν. In Fr. D. 2, Heraclitus states that although the λόγος is ξυνοῦ most men live as though their thinking were a private possession. The λόγος thus is described as common or shared by all men. Since the λόγος is identified with the principle of the unity of all things in Fr. D. 50, the unity of all things also applies to men, and is described in relation to the human experience in Fr. D. 2. As a result, the principle of the unity of all

³⁷ As a result, Sophocles does not entirely isolate the philosophy of Heraclitus in the character of Philoctetes himself, but tinges the background of the play in general with the Heraclitean concept of change.

things applies both to the cosmos and to mankind, and is described in such a way in the fragments of Heraclitus.

At the end of the *Philoctetes*, the eponymous hero depicts the natural world as interconnected with his own human experience. Philoctetes directly addresses the natural phenomena on Lemnos in his farewell speech and depicts the mountain of Hermes as responding to his cries of sorrow by sending forth its echo (line 1460); the cave where Philoctetes lives is portrayed as having shared his watches (line 1452). Even the sea sends forth a refreshing spray to wet Philoctetes' head in his niche within the rock, presumably in order to cool him during the hot summer months. Philoctetes thus depicts the forces of nature as unified with his own experience on the island of Lemnos, and as working in concert with the world of man.

Heraclitus' influence on Sophocles' *Philoctetes* extends to another area as well: traces of Heraclitus' criticism of the imprudence of mankind are present in this tragedy. In Fr. D. 121 Heraclitus cites the exile of Hermodorus as an example of the folly of *hoi polloi*:

ἄξιον Ἐφεσίοις ἠβηδὸν ἀπάγξασθαι πᾶσι
καὶ τοῖς τὴν πόλιν καταλιπεῖν,
οἵτινες Ἑρμόδωρον ἄνδρα ἑωυτῶν ὀνήιστον ἐξέβαλον φάντες·
ἡμέων μὴδὲ εἰς ὀνήιστος ἔστω· εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλη τε καὶ μετ' ἄλλων.

Every Ephesian deserves to be hanged, and to leave the city to the youth, since they drove out their best man, Hermodorus, saying 'May no one of us be the best. If he is, let him be so elsewhere and among others.'

The *Philoctetes* also is concerned with a man who, exiled by his own society, must be reincorporated into that society for it to be victorious. Sophocles, like Heraclitus, treats the theme of the folly of mankind: he dramatizes the imprudence of man as the force both

determining the tragic fate of Philoctetes and impeding the victory of the Greeks against the Trojans. Due to the folly of the Greeks in abandoning Philoctetes on Lemnos, Odysseus and his men must return to Lemnos to procure both Philoctetes and his bow in order to invalidate their previous actions and to defeat the Trojans in the Trojan War.³⁸

In conclusion, the importance of fire, its association with divinity, the presence of unities of opposites, the role of the bow, Philoctetes' concepts of λόγος, δίκη and φύσις, the notions of flux and cosmic sympathy, and the theme of exile and the folly of mankind offer striking evidence of the profound influence of Heraclitus on Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. The parallels between the *Philoctetes* and the fragments of Heraclitus strongly indicate that Sophocles was influenced by Heraclitus as he was shaping the perspective of Philoctetes. By viewing the importance of fire in this play, we are able to see how fire, in addition to its role in Philoctetes' basic survival, is essential to his moral

³⁸ It is also tempting to discern striking similarities between the character of Philoctetes and the biographical information about Heraclitus that is recorded by Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes states, "καὶ τέλος μισανθρωπήσας καὶ ἐκπατήσας ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι διητᾶτο, πόας σιτούμενος καὶ βοτάνας. Καὶ μέντοι καὶ διὰ τοῦτι περιτραπεῖς εἰς ὕδρον κατῆλθεν εἰς ἄστν..." "In the end, he became a misanthrope, withdrew from the world, and lived in the mountains feeding on grasses and plants. However, having fallen in this way into a dropsy, he came down to town" (DK 22 A I). This depiction of Heraclitus as living in isolation from humanity (albeit willingly), feeding upon grasses and plants to survive, and ultimately becoming sick with a disease are qualities that generally characterize the figure of Philoctetes in Sophocles' play. Philoctetes, like Heraclitus, lives in isolation from mankind (albeit unwillingly at first, but, willingly, when he initially refuses to go with Odysseus to Troy), survives on the prey of his bow, and suffers from the disease of his snake-bitten foot. Thus, the life of Heraclitus, in addition to this philosophy, appears to resemble the character of Philoctetes in Sophocles' tragedy. However, this view should not be given too much weight, as this type of biographical fiction about the early Greek philosophers was common. In addition, one could not be certain whether Sophocles even would have been aware of this type of biographical information. As Kirk and Raven demonstrate, the fragment of Diogenes is based on well-known extant fragments of Heraclitus (Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 183.). Kirk and Raven demonstrate that the extreme misanthropy attributed to Heraclitus is based on his widespread criticisms of *hoi polloi*, as in Fr. D. 1-2. His vegetarianism is deduced from his critique of blood-pollution in D. Fr. 5. His fatal dropsy is deduced from D. Fr. 117-118. And the reference to his burial in a cow-stall interpreted by his statement that corpses should be thrown out quicker than dung. In light of this evidence, although we cannot state with certainty that the *Philoctetes* is based on the biographical tradition, we can conclude that both Sophocles' play and the biographical account are based on Heraclitus' philosophy and that both envisioned similar embodiments of Heraclitean thought.

and spiritual survival, as he struggles with his disillusionment with the Olympian gods of traditional religion and with the Sophistic ethical code of Odysseus: fire is Philoctetes' divinity and the key to understanding the system of morality that enables him to survive. Just as fire is essential to providing Philoctetes with warmth, so too fire ignites his interior spiritual world and enables him to endure εὐκάρδιος (line 535). In the end, Sophocles aligns the philosophy of Heraclitus with the Olympian gods of traditional religion, thus accomplishing the reconciliation of two starkly different traditions.

Chapter 2: Heraclitean and 'Enlightenment' Thought In Sophocles' *Trachiniae*

Beginning in the twentieth century and continuing today, scholars have attempted to reverse the scathing criticism heaped upon Sophocles' *Trachiniae* by critics in the nineteenth century, whose interpretations of this play even made some scholars doubt its Sophoclean authorship.¹ Charles Segal attributes the negative views of nineteenth century critics to a clash between the view of Sophocles as "an embodiment of the classic ideal of harmony and serenity," and a play that "places us at the intersection of opposed worlds, at the frontier between man and beast, between civilization and primitive animal drives."²

Scholars recently have begun to shift focus from dismissing the *Trachiniae* as one of the weakest of the extant plays³ and as "very poor and insipid, gloomy, dark, puzzling, odd, nebulous, curious, bitter, and difficult,"⁴ to unveiling the significance of this perplexing play with attention to the images from the world of mythology and nature.⁵ In addition to Charles Segal's illuminating analysis of the mythic material of the *Trachiniae*, which sets the world of civilization in conflict with the world of the beasts, other critics have concentrated on the

¹ H. Patin, *Etudes sur les tragiques grecs. Sophocle* (Paris, 1904), p.58; S. M. Adams, *Sophocles The Playwright*, *Phoenix* Supplement 3 (Toronto, 1957), p. 124; August von Schlegel describes the *Trachiniae* as "below Sophocles' usual elevation," and assigns the play to Iophon (quoted in W. Schmid and Otto Stahlin, *Die Griechisch Literatur*, vol. I., pt. 2 (Munich, 1934), p. 374).

² C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995), p. 27.

³ Cf. H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy*, (Garden City, New York, 1955), p. 313 who finds the *Trachiniae* as lacking in "far-reaching generalizations" and as stemming from "no universal apprehension about life."

⁴ E.g., Jebb, *The Trachiniae*, x; F. J. H. Letters, *The Life and Work of Sophocles*, (London and New York, 1953), 176; M. McCall, "The *Trachiniae*: Structure, Focus, and Heracles," *AJP* 93 (1972), p. 162; P. Masqueray, ed., *Sophocle*, *Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres,"* vol. 2 (Paris, 1957), 4; W. Schmid, in W. Schmid and Otto Stahlin, *Die Griechisch Literatur*, vol I, pt. 2 (Munich, 1934), p. 318; A. J. A. Waldock, *Sophocles the Dramatist* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 80; C. H. Whitman, *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), p. 103. For a complete history of negative scholarship on this play, see C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995), pp. 26-29.

⁵ Cf. C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts), pp. 26-29, for a summary of this approach in recent scholarship on this play.

imagery of the tragedy in order to gain insight into the overall themes of this complex work. In particular, Thomas Hoey focuses on the sun symbolism in the parodos of the *Trachiniae* in connection with the hero Heracles.⁶ Hoey perceptively identifies the sun imagery as symbolic of the tension between absolute and cyclical states of being in the *Trachiniae*, which pertains specifically to Heracles.⁷ However, although intimating the significance of fire and cyclicity, Hoey consciously stops short of finding a central image that fuses the play's meaning together.⁸ Hoey applauds Herbert Musurillo for attempting to identify a central image; yet Hoey criticizes Musurillo for identifying nine different images, and failing to make clear which, if any, matters the most.⁹ Musurillo pinpoints the sea of trouble, the turning wheel of fortune, the wrestling contest, the tender blossom, the disease of Heracles, the blood of Nessus, the tunic, and Deianeira, the forlorn heifer and lonesome bird, as the central images of the play.¹⁰ Musurillo then suggests that these multiple images share the common thematic link of the tension between youth and old age, health and disease, and the divine and human.¹¹ However, Musurillo fails to explain how, if at all, these many themes are interconnected. According to this account, we therefore are provided with a series of themes - in addition to multiple images - from the *Trachiniae* which seem, on the surface, unrelated; as a result, we are left with an interpretation casting this tragedy in as nebulous a light as the criticism of the nineteenth century scholars.¹²

⁶ T. Hoey, "Sun symbolism in the parodos of the *Trachiniae*," *Arethusa* Vol. 5 (1972): pp. 133-154.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

¹⁰ H. Musurillo, *The Light and the Darkness* (Leiden, 1967), pp. 64-65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹² Methodologically, Musurillo's study draws on new critical discussions of literature. My study will follow a 'historicist' approach to the study of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, thus arguing that this play has a contemporary context that clarifies the philosophical background of this play. I will attempt to unveil the intellectual and cultural *milieu* influencing Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. My methodological approach mirrors

In this chapter, I will argue that a coherent philosophy underlies the multiple images of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. As Hoey suggests, no one image is the key to the meaning of this play. Nor are the numerous themes evoked by the images discerned by Musurillo irreconcilable and unable to be unified. In fact, the many images in the *Trachiniae* reflect the philosophy of the pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus. The Sun symbolism, the element of fire, the flux of time and its cyclicity, the ἀγών, and the tension between opposites, recall the philosophy of Heraclitus. Indeed, even the themes pinpointed by Musurillo, youth and old age, health and sickness, divine and human, echo the Heraclitean principle of the unity of opposites.

After demonstrating the presence of Heraclitean thought within Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, I will raise and answer questions concerning the impact of this pre-Socratic thought within the context of the play itself. For example, what is the effect of the presentation of fire and its instantiation, the Sun, as comprised of the qualities of creation and destruction, and, thus, as reflective of the Heraclitean unity of opposites, on the context and structure of the *Trachiniae*? If the Sun and, in turn, fire reflect the hero Heracles, as Hoey argues, what is the significance of the depiction of Heracles in a manner reflecting Heraclitean thought? Likewise, I will examine the idea of λόγος in this play and the oscillation of the characters Deianeira, Lichas, the messenger, and Heracles, between misunderstanding and belated comprehension of this concept. Building on Segal's argument, I will suggest that this tension reflects the characters' struggle between their primitive, irrational desires as

that of R. Thomas in her illuminating study of Herodotus' *Histories* in which she argues that Herodotus' *Histories* reflect the intellectual and cultural *milieu* of the mid to late 5th century and that Herodotus should be seen more overtly as part of the world of Ionian and east Greek 'science' of the latter part of the 5th century (R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science, and the Art of Persuasion*, (Cambridge, 2000).

symbolized by the archaic mythical monsters of the play and the rationality of the so-called 5th century enlightenment as reflected by the concept of λόγος. Sophocles' depiction of this concept symbolizes the contemporary intellectual movement away from the μῦθος of the epic poets Homer and Hesiod to the age of reason ushered forth by the so-called Enlightenment thinkers, including the historiographers and the pre-Socratics. I will demonstrate, therefore, the profound impact of Heraclitus and Enlightenment thought on Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, make evident the significance of this influence on the context of this play, and, finally, determine Sophocles' own position among the larger intellectual movement of the 5th century B.C.E.

Fire holds a prominent position in the philosophy of Heraclitus. In Fr. D. 50, Heraclitus identifies the cosmos itself as constituted by πῦρ αἰείζων, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα, “an ever living fire, kindled in measures and in measures going out.” This notion of fire as αἰείζων, yet constantly involved in a cyclical state of being kindled and subsequently extinguished, places the element in an unending cycle of creation and destruction. This idea of a cycle of creation and destruction is further illustrated by the role of the sun in fragments of Heraclitus preserved by Plato and Aristotle. Plato states, “the sun of Heraclitus is extinguished in old age...but rekindled again.” And in the *Meteorologica* II.2 355a13, Aristotle records Heraclitus as saying that the sun is new every day: ὁ ἥλιος ... καθάπερ ὁ Ἡράκλειτός φησι, νέος ἐφ' ἡμέρη ἐστίν. Both Plato and Aristotle preserve the description of the sun of Heraclitus in personified terms of old age and youth, death and rebirth, thus placing the sun in a cycle of destruction and creation. In addition to the cosmic fire, which is entrapped in a cycle of being kindled and extinguished, the Heraclitean sun also is secured to a cyclical system of growing old and being born νέος each day. Therefore, both

the cosmic fire and the sun of Heraclitus endure an inexorable process of creation and destruction.

Heraclitus envisions night and day as constituting a unity. In Fr. D. 57, he criticizes Hesiod ὅστις ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν ἔστιν γὰρ ἓν. “who did not recognize day and night: they are one.” In another fragment (D. 99), Plutarch relates that Ἡράκλειτος μὲν οὖν εἰ μὴ ἥλιος φησὶν ἦν, εὐφρόνη ἂν ἦν. “Heraclitus says that if there were no sun, it would be night.” Heraclitus asserts the dependence of daylight on the sun, which, most likely, was intended to refer to the union of day and night.¹³

In the parodos of the *Trachiniae*, the portrayal of the cosmos recalls the philosophy of Heraclitus:

ὄν αἰόλα νύξ ἐναριζομένα
τίκτει, κατευνάζει τε φλογιζόμενον
“Ἄλιον” Ἄλιον αἰτῶ
τοῦτο, καρῦξαι τὸν Ἀλκμή-
νας· πόθι μοι πόθι μοι
ναίει ποτ’, ὦ λαμπρᾷ στεροπᾷ φλεγέθων;
ἢ Ποντίας αὐλῶνας, ἢ
δισσαῖν ἀπείροις κλιθείς;
εἴπ’, ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ’ ὄμμα.

Helios, Helios, you whom shimmering Night begets being slaughtered
and whom she lulls to sleep as you blaze with fire.
This, I beg, that you declare a search for the son of Alcmene.
Where, where does he abide, you who glow with brilliant light?
In the channels of the Black Sea or reclining on two continents?
Speak, most supreme eye in vision!

Night is depicted as giving birth (τίκτει) to the Sun whose own birth is the death (ἐναριζομένα) of Night. Thus, Sun and Night are portrayed as being entrapped in a cycle of creation and destruction, which itself is described in the personified terms of birth and death as

¹³ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 165.

in the fragments of Heraclitus. Since the “death” of night is followed by the “birth” of day, night and day are rendered as comprising a unified system of opposites as in Fr. D. 57 and 99 of Heraclitus. In addition to begetting the Sun, Night is described as lulling the sun, which is φλογιζόμενον, to sleep (κατευνάζει); the very force responsible for its birth, Night, also brings about its death, thus reflecting the idea of fire as existing in a constant state of kindling and extinction as in Fr. D. 50. This depiction of Night in κατευνάζει invokes the language of sleep as a metaphor for destruction; night and day are portrayed as constituting a unity of opposites subjected to creation and destruction in the personified language of sleep, recalling Fr. D. 88 where life and death, waking and the sleeping are identified as unities of opposites: ταυτό τ' ἐνὶ ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκός καὶ τὸ ἐρηγορός καὶ τὸ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι κάκεινα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα. “Living and being dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and the young and old, are the same thing. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these.”¹⁴ In this fragment, Heraclitus illustrates the reversibility of the process of death by analogy with the alternation of sleeping and waking; he thus generalizes the notion of death or destruction to include “any change of state in which something old gives way before something radically new”;¹⁵ the change from the state of living to the state of being dead involves the destruction of life, as the change from being awake to sleeping involves the end of the state of being awake. Likewise, day and night in the parodos constitute a unity of opposites oscillating between the states of life and death, being awake and asleep, in which the transposition

¹⁴ It is also interesting to note that the adjective, νέον, in Fr. D. 88 resonates with Fr. D. 6 of Heraclitus preserved by Aristotle, in which the sun is described as new every day. Thus, to Heraclitus, the human experience of being young and old is parallel with the cosmic experience of the sun. In the parodos of the *Trachiniae*, as in the philosophy of Heraclitus, the cosmic cycle of the sun is also described with metaphors correlating to the human experience of youth and old age.

¹⁵ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 221.

between opposites involves the general processes of creation and destruction; as the birth of Day involves the death of Night, the death of Day involves both its transposition to the state of sleeping, and implicitly, the end of its being awake. Indeed, day and night in the parodos even reflect the unity of youth and old age in Fr. D. 88. Since Night begets the sun, the sun is νέον each morning, thus alternating between the unified opposites of youth and old age.

The notion of ‘cosmic sympathy’, in which the forces of nature are in sympathy with those of mankind, i.e., the doctrine of the unity of all things, is also depicted in the parodos of Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*, as in the *Philoctetes*.¹⁶ As T. Hoey astutely recognizes, Heracles is described as “κλιθείς,” an adjective which normally is used to describe the setting of the sun.¹⁷ Hoey interprets the attribution of this “cosmic” adjective to Heracles as a means both of “ennobling” the hero and of conjoining his life with the cycle of creation and destruction in which the sun and night are inextricably bound.¹⁸ However, Hoey stops here. The attribution of this cosmic adjective normally ascribed to the sun is only half of the picture. The sun and night are described with the personified adjectives of birth and death, sleeping and, implicitly, awakening, and thus, in human terms: the cosmos is humanized and the hero cosmologized. At the end of the parodos, the human experience is further cosmologized: ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ πῆμα καὶ χαρὰν/ πᾶσι κυκλοῦσιν οἱ ἄρ-/ κτου στροφάδες κέλευθοι, “But as it were, the revolving paths of the Bear bring to all suffering and joy in turn.” Here the human experience of pain and joy is explicitly likened to the cyclical processes of the constellations.

The ascription of the human to the cosmic and the cosmic to the human in the parodos of Sophocles further mirrors Heraclitus’ principle of the unity of all things. Heracles, like the

¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 1 for discussion of the theme of cosmic sympathy in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*.

¹⁷ Cf. T. Hoey “Sun symbolism in the parodos of *Trachiniae*,” *Arethusa* 5 (1972): p. 137.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137-138.

constellations, is entrapped in a cycle of pain and joy, which itself applies $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\iota$, to all, like the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ that binds all things together in the philosophy of Heraclitus. Unlike Hesiod, the chorus in the parodos indeed does understand the workings of the cosmos, namely, that the day and night are unified in an inexorable process of creation and destruction, and thus are one ($\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$). Finally, the depiction of the human experience of pain and joy as comprising a single cycle in the parodos reflects Fr. D.110 in which Heraclitus exemplifies the unity of opposites with examples drawn from human experience: $\nu\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}\sigma\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\upsilon}\gamma\iota\acute{\epsilon}\iota\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \eta\delta\acute{\upsilon}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{\omicron}\nu$, $\lambda\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\rho\omicron\nu$, $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$. “It is disease that makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.” Just as disease and health are unified in the same complex of human experience, so, too, are the pain and joy of Heracles in the *Trachiniae*. The cosmic and human language of the parodos not only ennobles the hero Heracles and places him in a cycle of pain and joy, but also positions the cosmos and the world of man within a Heraclitean matrix where all things are one.¹⁹ We will see that part of the tragedy of the hero in this play arises from his initial failure to understand the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ determining the cyclical nature of the cosmos and the cycle of his own fortune as he displays a ‘mythical’ mindset in which monsters and primitive desires seemingly determine the course of his life.

Immediately following the parodos in lines 144-149, Deianeira nostalgically reflects upon her youth in a manner that also echoes the Heraclitean sentiment of the parallelism between the cycles of the cosmos and those of mankind:

τὸ γὰρ νεάζον ἐν τοιοῖσδε βόσκειται
 χώροιςιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ νιν οὐ θάλπος θεοῦ,
 οὐδ’ ὄμβρος οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ

¹⁹ Cf. also lines 786-788 where the unity of the cosmos and man also is illustrated when all of nature echoes in sympathy the groans of the diseased Heracles.

ἀλλ', ἡδοναῖς ἄμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον
ἔς τοῦθ', ἕως τις ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνή
κληθῆ, λάβη τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος
ἦτοι πρὸς ἄνδρος ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη.

For such are the places of its own where youth is nourished
and no heat of the sun god, nor rain, nor anything of winds
agitates it, but uplifts its life in pleasures, untroubled,
until some time when one is called a woman rather than
maiden, and gets a share of worrying in the night, fearing for
her husband or children.

Charles Segal interprets θάλπος θεου primarily as symbolizing the “power of sex and especially male desire.”²⁰ This reading, while correct on one level, ignores the remainder of the clause in which Deianeira refers to the cyclicity of nature alternating between forces of creation and destruction. This depiction recalls the descriptions of the cosmos in the parodos and in the philosophy of Heraclitus, which depict the cosmos as oscillating between creation and destruction, youth and old age, life and death. The remainder of the clause, οὐδ' ὄμβρος, οὐδέ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ, portrays youth as a shelter from the destructive qualities of the elements in nature. In her youth, the potentially destructive qualities of the elements of nature - the heat of the sun, rain/water, wind/air - are ineffectual against Deianeira. The destructive side of nature, from which Deianeira's youth is protected, parallels her cloistered existence away from cycles of human pain and joy (ἀλλ' ἡδοναῖς ἄμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον/ ἔς τοῦθ', ἕως τις ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνή κληθῆ). In her youth, she enjoys only life's pleasures. Just as the maiden is sheltered from the destructive side of nature, so, too, she enjoys the pleasures of human existence and is sheltered from the fears (φοβουμένη) of womanhood. Yet, implicitly, when Deianeira enters womanhood and λάβη τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος/ ἦτοι πρὸς ἄνδρος ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη, she also will be affected

²⁰ C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995), p. 33.

by the destructive qualities of the elements of nature; then, presumably, the heat of the sun, rain/water, wind/air, will prove destructive to her as she cycles from the pleasures of youth to the pain of adulthood. Deianeira thus reflects upon her own existence in terms of cycling between youth and aging, pleasure and pain, in a manner also mirroring the cyclical nature of the cosmos oscillating between the opposing qualities of creation and destruction. As in the philosophy of Heraclitus, human existence is depicted as enduring the same cyclical pattern as the cosmos.

Deianeira's existence is also depicted as bound to the unending process of alternation between the cosmic phenomena, day and night. In line 149, she refers to womanhood (γυνή) as the time when λάβη τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος ἦτοι πρὸς ἄνδρος ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη. Womanhood thus is portrayed as associated with Night (ἐν νυκτὶ) while youth, uplifted with pleasures, is shielded from the destructive quality of the sun, and hence aligned with the positive quality associated with this cosmic phenomenon. Deianeira's life is portrayed as oscillating between affinity towards the sunlight of youth and the Night of womanhood. Hence her own existence is portrayed as entrapped within a unity of opposites composed of day and night, thus resulting in the overlap of the human and cosmic.²¹

Throughout the *Trachiniae*, fire and its various instantiations are depicted as constituting a cycle alternating between forces of creation and destruction in a manner reflecting the Heraclitean cosmos. Indeed, even the structure of the play itself mirrors the cyclical nature of fire alternating between being kindled and quenched; it is rendered as a force

²¹ One might ask why Sophocles/Deianeira depicts womanhood as the opposite of youth; for, whereas day and night cannot exist simultaneously, women clearly can be young too. However, the depiction of womanhood as the opposite of youth serves to stress the difference in the former's less potent relation to child-bearing in contrast to maidenhood in which a woman is in her prime child-bearing years; thus, the duality of maidenhood and womanhood mirrors the dualities of creation and destruction, life and death, youth and old age, which are prevalent throughout the play, as in the parodos and in Deianeira's reflection of her youth.

of destruction associated with monsters and lustful desires in the beginning of the play and subsequently aligned with the forces of salvation and rebirth at the end of the play.²²

In Deianeira's opening monologue, the heroine bemoans her present state of misery which is δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρύν, "unfortunate and heavy" (line 5). She then proceeds to recount the traumatizing ἀγών between Heracles and the monstrous river-god, Achelous, who is described in the following manner:

ὅς μ' ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν ἐξήτει πατρός,
φοιτῶν ἐναργῆς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ' αἰόλος
δράκων ἐλικτός, ἄλλοτ' ἀνδρείῳ κύτει
βούπρωρος · ἐκ δὲ δασκίου γενειάδος
κρουνοὶ διερραίνοντο κρηναίου ποτοῦ (lines 10-14).

[Achelous] who came in three forms asking my father for me,
first clearly as a bull, and then as a shimmering, darting serpent,
then with a man's body, but a bull's face, and from clump of beard
whole torrents of water splashed like a fountain.

In line 12, the adjective αἰόλος, shimmering, is ascribed to the tri-formed Achelous, thus linking light and fire with the monstrous suitor who is a great source of anxiety for Deianeira: αἰὲ κατθανεῖν ἐπηυχόμενῃ/ πρὶν τῆσδε κοίτης ἐμπελασθῆναί ποτε, "[she] was always praying to die instead of going to his marriage bed." As I have demonstrated, in the *parodos* αἰόλος occurs again, yet in description of the Night: ὄν αἰόλα νύξ ἐναριζομένα/ τίκτει κατευνάζει τε φλογιζόμενον/ "Ἄλιον" Ἄλιον αἰτῶ. Αἰόλος qualifies Night, and thus paradoxically unifies two opposites, fire, a quality of the Sun and of Light, and Night. Since Night is responsible both for the birth and the lulling to sleep, i.e., the death, of the Sun, the properties of both creation and destruction are attributed to αἰόλος and Night. Similarly,

²² C. Segal identifies the diptych presentation of fire in the play as associated with destruction in the first half and salvation and rebirth in the second half. However, he fails to incorporate this perceptive observation into the broader theme of cycles of unities of opposites in the play in general and, in turn, its reflection of the philosophy of Heraclitus. Cf. C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995), p. 33.

since the birth of the Sun, which is described as φλογιζόμενον, blazing with fire, is the death (ἐναριζομένα) of the Night, fire is further associated with destruction. Αιόλος and φλογιζόμενον link the quality of destruction to fire and its various forms.

A third instance of this adjective αιόλος occurs in line 834 in the description of the Hydra, who is described in terms echoing the description of Achelous as “αιόλος δράκων.” Since the blood of the Hydra constitutes the poison that ultimately destroys Heracles and, indirectly, Deianeira, the adjective αιόλος, and thus fire again is associated with the force of destruction. Therefore, as Charles Segal asserts, the association of “αιόλος” with the Hydra, Achelous, Nessus, and Night, conjoins these creatures in a complex symbolizing destructive violence.²³ However, in extension, since the monstrous beings are all associated with the destructive power of fire through their characterization as αιόλος, these figures are positioned within the bipolarity of creation and destruction, in which they are aligned with the particular quality of destruction.²⁴ Therefore, like Heracles (in the parodos) and Deianeira (in lines 144-153), Achelous, the Hydra, and the centaur also are bound to a cycle of creation and destruction in which they represent the force of destruction.²⁵

Later fire is again portrayed as associated with the powers of destruction. The poisonous love philter of Deianeira, bequeathed to her by the centaur Nessus and composed of

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Cf. C. Segal, *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995), n. 35, pp. 31, 33, where he demonstrates that this adjective is primarily used of fire in earlier and contemporary Greek literature due to its etymological link with the Sun, ἥλιος.

²⁵ Here I am asserting that the monstrous figures in the *Trachiniae* symbolize one side of the Heraclitean principle of opposition in which they represent the force of destruction. In this respect, the treatment of these figures is different from the depiction of Heracles and Deianeira as caught in their respective cosmic systems of both creation and destruction. However, in both cases (i.e., the monstrous figures and the particular characters, Heracles and Deianeira), the play is concerned with Heraclitean opposites in general. The monsters represent one side of the opposition with which both characters, Heracles and Deianeira, must contend. We will see how fire's association with rebirth and salvation comprises the other side of the opposition created by its association with the monstrous figures, Achelous, the Hydra, and the centaur.

the blood of the Hydra, receives its deleterious powers from fire. In lines 604-609, Deianeira tells Lichas to exhort Heracles lest the robe touch any other man's skin before his own:

διδούς δὲ τόνδε φράζ' ὅπως μηδεὶς βροτῶν
κείνου πάροιθεν ἀμφιδύσεται χροῖ,
μηδ' ὄψεται νιν μήτ' φέγγος ἡλίου
μήθ' ἔρκος ἱερὸν μήτ' ἐφέστιον σέλας,
πρὶν κείνος αὐτὸν φανερὸς ἐμφανῶς σταθεὶς
δείξει θεοῖσιν ἡμέρα ταυροσφάγῳ.

When you give this to him, take care that no other person but he puts it on his skin, and that neither the light of the sun nor the sacred precinct, nor the blaze at the altar light upon it until he, standing there visible to all, will show it to the gods on the day when the oxen will be slaughtered.

Here, as instructed by the centaur Nessus, Deianeira emphasizes the necessity of shielding the robe from all sources of fire, φέγγος ἡλίου...ἐφέστιον σέλας, the light of the sun and the blaze of the altar, until Heracles himself dons the garment at the moment of his sacrifice. Fire thus is associated with unleashing the powers of the love philter, which, as we learn later, is the source of Heracles' destruction.

In lines 695-704, Deianeira describes the effects of the sun's exposure on a piece of wool smeared in the supposed love philter: τὸ γὰρ κάταγμα τυγχάνω ρίψασά πως/ ἀκτῖν' ἐς ἡλιῶτιν' ὡς δ' ἐθάλπεται, / ῥεῖ πᾶν ἄδηλον καὶ κατέψηκται χθονι, "I happened to have thrown the piece of sheep's wool into the ray of the sun, when it was warmed, all of it flowed into invisibility and crumbled into the ground." Here, the ἀκτῖν' ἐς ἡλιῶτιν', the ray of the sun is portrayed as the cause of the disintegration of the sheep's wool, and thus its destruction.

In lines 765-766, fire again is depicted as the stimulus of destruction. Hyllus describes the onset of the poison's consumptive invasion of Heracles as associated with fire:

ὅπως δὲ σεμνῶν ὀργίων ἔδαιετο
φλόξ αἵματηρὰ κάπὸ πείρας δρυός
ἰδρῶς ἀνήει χρωτί, καὶ προσπτύσσεται
πλευραῖσιν ἀρτίκολλος... ἦλθε δ' ὀστέων
ὀδαγμός ἀντίσπαστος· ἔϊτα φοίνιος
ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης ἰὸς ὡς ἔδαινυτο.

But as the bloody flame from the sacred offerings
and the resinous pine blazed high,
the sweat broke out on his skin,
And the thing clung closely to his sides...
Spasms of pain bit into his bones.
Then like the vicious, murderous viper's poison,
it began to consume him.

Here, φλόξ αἵματηρὰ, the bloody flame of the altar fire, ignites the power of the poisonous robe and unleashes the destructive disease on Heracles. The association of the φλόξ αἵματηρὰ with the ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης conjoins fire with the Hydra, and resonates with the description of Achelous as a serpent, thus aligning the element with the destructive forces of these monsters. Fire again is depicted as a source of destruction.²⁶

In the first half of the play, fire and its various forms also are employed to symbolize the destructive powers of lust. In lines 145, Deianeira reflects upon her maidenhood in which

²⁶ One could suggest that the significance of fire extends only to its traditional association with the mythical figure of Heracles, and that many of these references to fire and heat allude to the myth of his apotheosis. On this reading, fire need not have anything to do with Heraclitus. My interpretation does not discount the possibility of this mythological reading; rather, it is offered in order to unveil another layer of meaning beneath the mythical significance of fire in its association with Heracles. In fact, the mythical figure of Heracles was singled out by the philosophical heirs of Heraclitus, the Stoics, as exemplifying many of their philosophical doctrines; the myth of Heracles thus serves as an example of the compatibility of myth and philosophy. Sophocles, perhaps, paved the way towards recognition of the many similarities between the philosophy of Heraclitus and the myth of Heracles. Given the confluence of images and concepts drawn from the philosophy of Heraclitus - from the doctrine of the unity of opposites, to the unity of all things, the cyclicity of the cosmos alternating between creation and destruction - it is very likely that the references to fire (which holds a prominent role in the philosophy of Heraclitus) and heat in this play also have philosophical significance in addition to mythic meaning. To ignore another possible layer of meaning might preclude our ability as scholars to gain a more complete understanding of this tragedy.

she is shielded from θάλλπος θεοῦ, the “sun-god’s heat,” which Segal suggests is “a metaphor for the power of sex and especially male desire.”²⁷ In line 368, Heracles is described as ἐντεθέμανται πόθῳ “inflamed by desire,” for the maiden Iole, and thus with language of fire that is symbolic of his lust.²⁸ The language of inflamed desire proves destructive as it compels Heracles to invade Oechalia and capture Iole, which, in turn, provokes Deianeira to use the supposed love philter on Heracles, thus resulting in his death and her own suicide. Therefore, the imagery of fire as a symbol of lust also triggers the powers of destruction.

Towards the end of the play, fire and its various forms are depicted as a source of salvation and rebirth. These representations differ sharply from the association of fire with destruction in the first part of the play. In lines 1013-14, Heracles exclaims, καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ τῷδε νοσοῦντι/ οὐ πῦρ, οὐκ ἔγχος τις ὀνήσιμον οὐ ποτε τρέψει; “Now when I am sick, will no one bring fire or a weapon that can help me?” As Segal maintains, the Oetan fires, unlike the fires of the altar at Cenaeum, are far from causing the disease and somehow will cure it.²⁹ In lines 1208-1210, after ordering Hyllus to throw his body upon the wood of the pyre and then to ignite it, Heracles describes this act as one that will distinguish Hyllus as παιώνιον/ καὶ μοῦνον ἰατῆρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν, “a healer and the only curer of my misfortunes.” And Hyllus rejoins, καὶ πῶς ὑπαίθων σῶμ’ ἄν ἰώμην τὸ σόν; “and how could I heal your body if I set light to it?”, thus questioning the paradoxical notion of fire as a source of salvation. Heracles therefore depicts the act of setting fire to his body as one qualifying Hyllus with the appellations of παιώνιον and ἰατῆρα, hence associating fire with the act of salvation itself.

²⁷ C. Segal, (1995) p.33.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.* for more examples of the images of the “heat of desire.”

²⁹ C. Segal (1995), pp. 55-56.

In addition to its quality of salvation, the Oetan fire presumably will be the source from which Heracles is apotheosized, and in this sense, reborn as a god.³⁰ Moreover, when Heracles learns from Hyllus that Deianeira has poisoned the robe with the love charm of the centaur Nessus, he states, φέγγος οὐκέτ' ἔστι, "my light no longer exists"(1144). As Segal asserts, the fire of Cenaeum, associated with destructive bestiality, is extinguished.³¹ Now a new type of light is rekindled, namely a light commanded by the gods (λάμπαδος σελάς). In line 1174, Heracles states ταῦτ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει, τεκνον, "since now these things come together in clarity," which, as Segal asserts, illustrates Heracles' new vision of light, one connected with λάμπαδος σελάς and his comprehension of the will of the gods and his own fate to be reborn as a god. As we will soon see, this new type of light is connected with his new recognition of the λόγος in which he sees the entire cycle of life and death and his own fate to be reborn as a god. The images of fire and light are rendered as forces different from earlier occurrences in the play as forces of destruction. Now, fire and light are rekindled with the symbolism of rebirth and salvation, and thus associated with the other half of the cycle of opposites, creation.

The image of fire cycles between the forces of creation and destruction in a way mirroring the description of the cosmos in the parodos as alternating between a cycle of creation and destruction to which the sun and Night are bound inexorably. The depiction of fire as cycling between creative and destructive forces is reminiscent of the philosophy of Heraclitus in which the cosmos is constituted by an ever-living fire engaged in the endless cycle of creation and destruction. Therefore, the philosophy of Heraclitus underlies the

³⁰ I agree with C. Segal's assertion that there is a subtle reference, albeit not explicit, to the apotheosis of Heracles in lines 1206-10. Cf. C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981), pp. 99-100.

³¹ C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981), pp. 101-102.

seemingly paradoxical and diptych presentation of fire as essentially a force of both creation and destruction in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*.³²

Even this differentiation itself between the destructive and creative qualities of fire in the *Trachiniae* reflects an aspect of the philosophy of Heraclitus. In Fr. D. 43 Heraclitus admonishes, ὕβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν, "it is necessary to quench hubris quicker than a blazing fire." Heraclitus acknowledges the negative quality of fire through its capacity for destruction. As Charles Kahn asserts, this fragment reflects Heraclitus' implicit qualification of his principle of war and conflict when it appears as "wanton violence."³³ Heraclitus hence identifies the destructive quality of fire as negative if it is senseless, and, presumably, not aligned with the λόγος and reason. In Fr. D. 118, Heraclitus emphasizes a positive quality associated with a form of fire: αὐγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχῆ, σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη, "The wisest and best soul is a dry, gleam of light." The description of αὐγὴ ξηρὴ as σοφωτάτη implies an association of wisdom with a particular instantiation of fire, a gleam of light. This contrasts with the πυρκαϊήν of Fr. D. 43 which is senseless and seems to lack wisdom. Therefore, in the philosophy of Heraclitus, we can distinguish two aspects of fire: the destructive violence of a blazing fire and the gleam of light, in which the latter is associated with wisdom and the former is not.

I have demonstrated in the *Trachiniae* how Sophocles depicts fire and its various forms as symbolic of destruction in the first half of the play and as emblematic of creation at the end of the play. We have seen how Heracles' flame, which reflects the primitive,

³² My interpretation extends the purely mythological/psychological accounts (such as those offered by Segal) of the imagery from this play to include a philosophical account of this tragedy; this historicist reading of the play illuminates the intellectual and cultural *milieu* behind the creation of the *Trachiniae* which has been ignored by most scholars. Additionally, this reading enables us to recognize the unique project with which Sophocles was engaged - the application of philosophy to tragedy and myth - and his involvement in the intellectual climate of the 5th century B.C.E...

³³ Cf. C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (1978), p. 241.

destructive forces associated with the mythical monsters, is extinguished in line 1145 and supplanted by new light, the light of knowledge, that is associated with the will of the gods. This new light is thus aligned with reason and wisdom in a manner reflective of the dry gleam of Heraclitean light. Similarly, his former vision of light reflects the senseless, wanton violence of the Heraclitean πυρκαϊήν. Therefore, as the cycle of fire reflects the philosophy of Heraclitus, so too, the representation of two aspects of fire in the *Trachiniae* reflects this depiction of fire in Heraclitus.

In addition to fire which constitutes a cycle of creation and destruction in the *Trachiniae*, many more instances of unified opposites occur in this tragedy in a manner exemplifying this principle that is central to the philosophy of Heraclitus. To Heraclitus, opposites - the living and the dead, the waking and the sleeping, and the young and old - constitute a unity in which each pair is engaged in a process of transposition: ταῦτό τ' ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκός καὶ τὸ ἐγρηγορός καὶ τὸ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνὰ ἐστὶ κάκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα. "The same: the living and the dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and the young and old. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these," (Fr. D. 88). Contrary to Aristotle's interpretation of this Heraclitean doctrine, each one of the opposites is not identical to its opposite, thus violating the law of contradiction, but rather constitutes a single, unified complex in which each one of the pair is engaged in a process of transposition with its opposite.³⁴ Each thing ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει, agrees with itself while being διαφερόμενον, at

³⁴ Cf. G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 187, for a discussion of Aristotle's criticism of Heraclitus on the grounds of the denial of the law of contradiction.

variance with itself: οὐ ξυνιαῖσιν ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· “They do not comprehend how a thing agrees with itself being at variance with itself...” (Fr. D. 51).

Unities of opposites recur in the *Trachiniae* in a manner recalling this doctrine of Heraclitus. In particular, the dichotomies of young and old, health and sickness, the living and the dead, the very examples employed by Heraclitus in Fr. D. 88, pervade this play and constitute single, unified complexes in which each individual in the pair is bound inexorably to a process of transposition with its opposite.

The characters of Iole and Deianeira are portrayed as embodying the qualities of youth and old age which constitute a single, unified system; this unity itself is subject to the relentless process of transposition, thus reflecting the unity of the opposites νέον καὶ γηραιόν exemplified in Fr. D. 88 of Heraclitus. As we have seen in our discussion of the parodos in lines 142-152, Deianeira contrasts the opposing qualities, youth and old age, whereas the former καὶ νιν οὐ θάλλπος θεου/ οὐδ’ ὄμβρος, οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ, ἀλλ’ ἡδοναῖς ἀμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον, “is neither afflicted by the sun of god’s heat, nor by rain, nor by any winds, but uplifts its life, untroubled, in pleasures,” while womanhood (γυνή) entails τ’ ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος/ ἦτοι πρὸς ἄνδρος ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη, “a share in worrying in the night, fearing for one’s husband or children.” Deianeira (who is depicted in the opening monologue as anxiously worrying in the night about her husband Heracles) thus is depicted as suffering from the anxieties of womanhood in contrast to maidenhood. And in lines 547-549, Deianeira declares, ὄρω γὰρ ἦβην τὴν μὲν ἔρπουσαν πρόσω/ τὴν δὲ φθίνουσαν ὧν ἀφαρπάζειν φιλεῖ/ ὀφθαλμὸς ἄνθος, τῶνδ’ ὑπεκτρέπει πόδα. “For I see her youth creeping forth, and mine withering; and the desiring eye turns away from those whose bloom it snatched.” Deianeira hence portrays her

own youth as withering in contrast to the youth (ἥβην) of Iole which is blooming at present. Moreover, since both of Deianeira's reflections on maidenhood and womanhood follow her reminiscences upon youth as the catalyst for the contest between Heracles and Achelous (the first of which occurs in Deianeira' monologue, and the second of which occurs in the choral passage in lines 497-530), Deianeira is depicted as constituting a cycle alternating between youth and womanhood in which her youth has been transfigured by age. She, like Iole, was once young and inflamed the passion of Heracles. However, her youth has withered (τὴν δὲ φθίνουσιν), while that of Iole blooms. Hence, Iole and Deianeira constitute a unity of opposites in which the qualities of youth and old age are engaged in a process of alternation. Therefore, just as in Heraclitus' Fr. D. 88, the two females comprise a system of opposites in which the qualities of youth and old age constitute a system of alternating opposites. And this complex of opposites mirrors the larger, cosmic unity of opposites as exemplified by Night and Day in the parodos, further reflecting the Heraclitean doctrine of the unity of all things.

In lines 1259-1263, the notion of the dependence of the positive quality of health upon the negative quality of disease in ἐποίησεν ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, recalls the sentiment of Heraclitus expressed in Fr. D. 111: ἀνθρώποις γίνεσθαι ὀκόσα θέλουσιν οὐκ ἄμεινον, νοῦσος ὑγίειν ἐποίησεν ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, λιμὸς κόρον, κάματος ἀνάπαυσιν. "It is not better for human beings to obtain all that they want; it is disease that makes health sweet and pleasant, hunger satiety, weariness rest." Immediately before Hyllus sets Heracles on the funeral pyre, Heracles declares:

ἄγε νυν, πρὶν τήνδ' ἀνακινήσαι
νόσον, ὃ ψυχὴ σκληρὰ, χάλυβος
λιθοκόλλητον στόμιον παρέχουσ',
ἀνάπαυε βοήν, ὡς ἐπίχαρτον
τελεοῦσ' ἀεκούσιον ἔργον.

Come now, before you stir up the disease,
stubborn soul, apply a bit inlaid with stones,
and let no cry escape from me,
accomplishing this unwelcome task,
as though it were a pleasure.

Here, Heracles describes the act of being burned alive on the funeral pyre as an ἀεκούσιον ἔργον that should be done as though ἐπίχαρτον, since the fire will heal and cure his disease, thus making Hyllus his παιώνιον καὶ μοῦνον ἰατῆρα (lines 1208-1209). Heracles draws a connection between his salvation and health and the painful and unwelcome task of inciting his νόσος. Therefore, just as in Fr. D. 111, the unity of opposites, consisting of the positive and negative qualities of health and disease, is presented with the negative quality of disease as necessary for the actualization of the positive quality of health achieved through salvation. Thus only when Heracles is consumed alive both by his νόσος and the fire of the pyre does he believe that he will achieve the positive qualities of health and salvation.

The paradoxical states of life and death also recur in the *Trachiniae* in a manner reflecting this unity of opposites central to Heraclitus' philosophy. In addition to Heraclitus' assertion of the reversibility of life and death in Fr. D. 88 (ταυτό τ' ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκός...τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνὰ ἐστὶ κάκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.), Heraclitus claims a sort of equivalence between mortals and immortals through the transposition of life and death in Fr. D. 62: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. "Immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal, living the others' death, dead in the others' life."

In the *Trachiniae*, the destiny of Heracles is intertwined in a unity of life and death in which these states of existence are bound to the same process of reversibility. The λόγος of

the oracles concerning the fate of Heracles and the λόγος of the centaur Nessus about the effects of the love philter both indicate outcomes determining Heracles' death.³⁵ However, both λόγοι are interpreted as implying outcomes affecting Heracles' life. In the case of the oracle, Heracles' end of labors is misunderstood as meaning the achievement of a life of happiness (εἰς τό γ' ὕστερον τὸν λοιπὸν ἤδη βίον εὐαίων' ἔχειν) instead of its true meaning: the achievement of this end only in death (lines 80-81). Life and death are reversed in the interpretation of this oracle. Additionally, life and death are interchanged in Deianeira's misinterpretation of the λόγος of the centaur Nessus, who says that the administration of the love philter to Heracles will result in his never again loving any woman other than herself as meaning an outcome affecting his present life. Rather, the λόγος, in fact, implies that this fidelity will be brought about due to Heracles' meeting the end of his life in death. As in Heraclitus' philosophy, the concepts of life and death subsist in a unity in which these concepts are reversed in the comprehension of the λόγος.

In the *Trachiniae* mortality and immortality are also presented as interchangeable. After Heracles finally achieves comprehension of the true meaning of the λόγος of the oracles as he learns from Hyllus that the poison of the centaur Nessus is the cause of his νόσος, and thus, his death, he states, ὄδ' οὖν ὁ θῆρ Κένταυρος, ὡς τὸ θεῖον ἦν/ πρόφαντον, οὕτω ζῶντά μ' ἔκτεινεν θανών. "So this beast the Centaur, as the divine prophecy had foretold, has killed me, I being alive, and he dead." Hence Heracles who is mortal (or at least semi-mortal) is living, and Nessus, who is immortal, is dead, having been killed by Heracles. Heracles is living the death of Nessus while Nessus is dead in the life of Heracles. And, since Heracles states that his death on the funeral pyre will be his cure and salvation, thus implying

³⁵ See below discussion of λόγος.

his own achievement of immortality,³⁶ Heracles, a mortal will become an immortal, thus interchanging the two states of existence. Heracles will achieve life in death, again reversing the states of life and death. Heracles and the centaur Nessus are therefore depicted as comprising a unified state of life and death, mortality and immortality, two opposites that are engaged in a process of transposition in a manner reflecting the sentiment of Heraclitus in Fr. D. 62. Heracles, like the Heraclitean fire, thus constitutes a cycle engaged in the process of creation and destruction in which the flame of the funeral pyre is the agent both of his death as a mortal and for his rebirth as an immortal.³⁷

Change in the *Trachiniae*

The concept of change is inherent to the doctrine of the unity of opposites in which each pair is subject to transposition. As discussed in Chapter 1, the doctrine of flux is fundamental to the philosophy of Heraclitus as exemplified by the famous river fragments preserved by Arius Didymus in Fr. D. 12, by Plutarch in Fr. D. 91, by Plato and Aristotle. Regardless of the debate concerning the degree of change, i.e., whether the substance and form are subject to change or merely the substance, change affects both the cosmos, which is an ever-living fire being kindled in measures and in measures going out (Fr. D. 30), and the human experience.³⁸

³⁶ Cf. C. Segal (1995) for the debate concerning Heracles' apotheosis at the end of this play. As Segal argues, I support the view that there is an implicit reference to Heracles' apotheosis in lines 1208-1210 in the association of Hyllus' setting fire to his body on the funeral pyre with his healing, cure, and salvation.

³⁷ Additionally, the depiction of the cosmos in the parodos of the *Trachiniae* as engaged in the continual process of creation and destruction resonates with this particular sentiment of Heraclitus in which life and death are unified. In the parodos, the death of Night is the birth of the Sun (i.e. Day) and vice versa. In such a way, the unity of day and night is depicted in terms of life and death and thus as bound inexorably in the process of transposition between the two states of life and death just as in the philosophy of Heraclitus as expressed in Fr. D. 62 and Fr. D. 111.

³⁸ Cf. Heraclitus, Fr. D. 12 and Fr. D.91.

The theme of change defines the cosmos and the world of man in the *Trachiniae* in a manner reflecting Heraclitus' doctrine of flux. The opening monologue of Deianeira places us within a Heraclitean *milieu* on the banks of the river where the heroine witnesses the momentous ἀγών between Heracles and Achelous that results in her own transformation from maidenhood to womanhood.³⁹ The river is depicted as the site of change, both demarcating her entry into womanhood from maidenhood, as well as personifying change itself.⁴⁰ In lines 9-13, Sophocles describes the river god Achelous with particularly transformative imagery as wooing her ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν... φοιτῶν ἐναργῆς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ' αἰόλος/ δράκων ἐλικτός, ἄλλοτ' ἀνδρείω κῦτει/ βούπρωρος: "in three shapes, at some times manifest as a bull, at others as a shimmering, coiling serpent, and again at others with a man's trunk and a bull's head." Achelous metamorphoses between forms and is described as αἰόλος, and (as we have seen in our discussion of the parodos) thus conjoins the mythical beast with the cosmic forces of day and night, which also are engaged in a continual process of change between creation and destruction. Achelous thus is depicted as both transformative in his person as well as with respect to the force exerted upon Deianeira in ushering her into womanhood. The *Trachiniae* opens with the forces of transformation and change, defining their setting with the particularly Heraclitean motif of the river imagery.

As mentioned above, like Deianeira and Achelous, the cosmos also is depicted as engaged in a continual cycle of change. Night is described as αἰόλα, thus resonating with Achelous' description as αἰόλος, shimmering. Night is rendered as changing both between

³⁹ I am not arguing that all rivers in literature place us in a Heraclitean *milieu*. This particular riverbank setting in the opening of the *Trachiniae* is suggestive of Heraclitean thought given the accumulation of Heraclitean concepts and images that follow - from the relationship of cosmic sympathy constituting the world of nature and man, to the unities of opposites engaged in an inexorable process of change, and the prevalence of the theme of Strife, i.e. the *agon*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Kirk Ormand, *Marriage in Sophoclean Tragedy: Exchange and the Maiden* (Austin, 1999), Ch. 2, for a discussion of the dynamics and implications of marriage in the *Trachiniae*.

the states of birth and death and between being asleep and awake in the unity of opposites comprised of itself and the Sun, i.e. day. The cosmos, therefore, mirrors the continual change to which the ever living fire constituting the Heraclitean cosmos is subjected in Fr. D. 30.

Heracles also is portrayed as engaged in a continual state of flux and as subject to the forces of change. He alternates between a state of health and that of disease, the state of erotic passion and reasoned comprehension of the λόγος, and even between life and death, mortality and immortality. As a result, like the cosmos itself in the parodos, Heracles is bound to an inexorable cycle of change revolving between opposites. And the very opposites also reflect the particular pairs of opposites - health and disease, life and death, mortality and immortality, misunderstanding and understanding of the λόγος- that exemplify the doctrine of the unity of opposites central to the philosophy of Heraclitus.

The Agon

In the *Trachiniae*, the dominant impetus effecting change is the force of strife which is symbolized by the ἄγών, Aphrodite, and Eros. In Heraclitus' philosophy, strife and war also figure as the primary motive powers behind change. In Fr. D. 80 Heraclitus asserts: εἰδέ[ναι] χρῆ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνὸν καὶ δίκην ἔριν καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [?]. "It is necessary to know that war is shared and strife is justice and that all things come to pass in accordance with Strife and [Necessity]." Like λόγος in Fr. D. 2, war is described as ξυνὸν, and, like λόγος in Fr. D. 1, ἔρις is the concept according to which γινόμενα πάντα "all things come to pass." War and Strife are thus ascribed with concepts associated with the λόγος and used interchangeably with the λόγος. In Fr. D. 53, πόλεμος is assigned the role of the Olympian god, Zeus:

πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς,
καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους
ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

War is the father of all, and the king of all;
some he has revealed as gods and others men;
some he has made slaves, others free.

Since a Homeric formula describing Zeus πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, Heraclitus, in defining πόλεμος as such, depicts πόλεμος as holding an identical role to that of Zeus.⁴¹ Heraclitus equates War with the god who is traditionally held as the universal father responsible for birth, life, and creation.⁴² As Charles Kahn demonstrates, Heraclitus, then, restates his doctrine of opposition in this fragment with the equation of War, a force typically responsible for death and destruction, with the god responsible for birth and life.⁴³ Heraclitus bestows War and Strife with the same power assigned to the λόγος and to Zeus himself; War and Strife are thus identified both with the principle according to which all things come to pass and with the supreme divine power orchestrating both creation and destruction.

In the *Trachiniae*, War and Strife possess similar roles: they are the underlying principles according to which all things come to pass and the forces aligned with Zeus, Aphrodite, and Eros. However, Sophocles both echoes and re-mythologises Heraclitus' abstractions of war and strife; for Sophocles portrays these concepts with the divine figures associated with them. The opening monologue of Deianeira thrusts the audience into the midst of an ἄγων rife with strife and conflict (lines 18-21):

⁴¹ Cf. C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 207f..

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

χρόνῳ δ' ἐν ὑστέρω μὲν, ἀσμένῃ δέ μοι,
ὁ κλεινὸς ἦλθε Ζητὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς·
ὄς εἰς ἀγῶνα τῷδε συμπεσὼν μάχης
ἐκλύεται με.

But at the last moment, and to my relief,
the famous son of Zeus and Alcmene came,
who contended with him in battle and released me.

The ἀγών between Heracles and Achelous determines the transition of Deianeira from maidenhood to womanhood, which becomes the defining preoccupation for the heroine throughout the play.

The ἀγών is depicted as associated with Zeus. In line 26, Deianeira states, τέλος δ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀγώνιος καλῶς, “but Zeus, the god of battles, concluded [the contest between Heracles and Achelous] favorably.” By ascribing the epithet ἀγώνιος to Zeus, “the father and king of all” is associated with the ἀγών, and thus with conflict and battle. Therefore, as in Fr. D 53 of Heraclitus, conflict is associated with Zeus, which ascribes a destructive quality to the god responsible for creation. Since Heracles is described both as the son of Zeus (and thus as the son of the god of the ἀγών) and as enduring many battles himself in line 156, Heracles, who wins the ἀγών with Achelous for Deianeira’s hand in marriage, is associated both with the ἀγών and with marriage, and thus with the forces of creation and destruction.

The ἀγών between Heracles and Achelous over Deianeira resurfaces in the first stasimon in the *Trachiniae* in a manner again conjoining both creation and destruction. In lines 497-530, chorus relates the actual events of the ἀγών, which Deianeira omits in the prologue due to her fear of witnessing the battle. Here, however, the ἀγών is placed in the context of an ode praising the μέγα...σθένος of the Cyprian Aphrodite, the goddess of love (line 497). Aphrodite is described as the one ἐκφέρεται νίκας ἄει, who always carries off victories (line 497) and as the one presiding over the ἀγών (lines 515-16), who has power

even over Zeus himself, Hades, and Poseidon (lines 500-502). Hence the goddess traditionally associated with love and creation is associated with the *ἀγών*, and thus conflict. Yet, given that the *ἀγών* determines Deianeira's hand in marriage, Aphrodite is also connected with her traditional role as goddess of love. Aphrodite thus is portrayed as presiding over the opposing forces of creation and destruction.⁴⁴

Conflict and strife again serve as the principle underlying the course of events concerning the destiny of Iole and Heracles. These forces are portrayed as comprising a single, unified system constituted by the opposites, creation and destruction, that itself is personified by the god of erotic love, Eros. In lines 351-374, the messenger identifies the true cause of war against Oechalia as Eros: *Ἔρως δέ νιν/ μόνος θεῶν θέλξειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε*, "It was Eros alone among the gods that bewitched him into waging war"(lines 354-55). The battle that Heracles wages against Oechalia resulting in Iole's abduction is presented as caused by Eros, the god of love. The battle is thus connected with both forces of creation and destruction. Furthermore, this conflict sets into motion the transition of Iole from maidenhood to womanhood that mirrors this cycle as endured by Deianeira. In lines 441-443, Eros is again depicted as associated with conflict: he is depicted as a boxer, who rules even the gods according to his caprices. The god of love, therefore, is portrayed as connected with strife and as the supreme ruling force governing the world.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Although the concept of Strife, the *agon*, and conflict are features of Greek culture and thought since at least the time of Hesiod, the portrayal of these concepts as composed of unities of opposites - creation and destruction, Love and Strife, birth and death - which are engaged in a constant cycle of transposition reflects the role of Strife and conflict in the fragments of Heraclitus.

⁴⁵ The depiction of Eros as personifying the unity of opposites of creation and destruction and Aphrodite as also representing the unity of opposites of creation and destruction differs from the fragments of Empedocles in which the divinities, Aphrodite and Nestis, represent the forces of Love and Strife respectively; in Empedocles, Aphrodite and Nestis together symbolize the motive forces of Love and Strife in contrast to Sophocles' portrayal of Eros as reflecting both Love and Strife, and, accordingly, the complete complex of creation and destruction in this unity of opposites. Sophocles' representations of

Strife serves as the underlying ruling principle in the *Trachiniae* also with respect to the hero Heracles. Heracles' engagement in a battle with the centaur Nessus indirectly causes his own destruction. In retaliation for Heracles' defeat of Nessus in this battle, the centaur persuades Deianeira that the love philter will charm the mind of Heracles into loving no woman other than herself. In actuality, this love philter results in the death of the hero. Consequently, the battle with the centaur results in Heracles' own destruction, thus serving as the principle underlying the tragedy.

Therefore, battle and conflict are the governing principles behind all of the major events of the *Trachiniae* in a manner reflecting the primary role of War and Strife in the philosophy of Heraclitus. The ἀγών, battle, and conflict are depicted as constituting a unity of opposites composed of the forces of Love and Strife, creation and destruction, birth and death, through associations with Zeus, Aphrodite, and Eros. As in Fr. D. 53 of Heraclitus, everything happens in accordance with Strife, which itself is "the father and king of all" in the *Trachiniae*. Just as Zeus is identified with War and Strife by Heraclitus, so too, Hyllus sinisterly identifies Zeus as the cause of the tragic deaths and suffering endured by the characters in the final words of the play (lines 1275-1278):

Λείπου μηδὲ σύ, παρθέν', ἐπ' οἴκων,
μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοῦσα νέους θανάτους,
πολλὰ δὲ πῆματα <καὶ> καινοπαθῆ,
κούδεν τούτων ὅ τι μὴ Ζεύς.

Do not be left behind in the house, maiden,
you have seen recent and terrible deaths,

Eros, Aphrodite, and Zeus as each individually constituting the entire complex of the unity of opposites, creation and destruction, recalls the fragments of Heraclitus in which war and strife are identified with Zeus, the supreme divine power orchestrating both creation and destruction; thus, in Heraclitus, Zeus is portrayed as constituting the opposing qualities of creation and destruction. Sophocles, however, extends Heraclitus' identification of this unity of opposites with Zeus to Aphrodite and Eros, thus re-mythologizing the philosophy of Heraclitus.

and many sufferings unprecedented,
and none of these things is not Zeus.

Λόγος in the *Trachiniae*

So far, I have focused solely on the influence of the philosophy of Heraclitus on Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Specifically, I have demonstrated how the image of fire, the cyclicity of the cosmos, the unity of opposites, the concept of change, and the notion of Strife directly invoke the ideas of Heraclitus. Now, I would like to focus on how the notion of λόγος in the *Trachiniae* reflects this concept, which was an important catchword of the contemporary intellectual movements of historiography, natural philosophy, and the Ionian scientific tradition in general. In this case, I will argue that Sophocles' depiction of this concept does not reflect the usage of the λόγος by one particular enlightenment thinker alone; rather, that Sophocles' depiction of λόγος blends together several traditions, as it reflects this term's usage in the contemporary intellectual movements of the historiographers - including his close friend Herodotus - and the natural philosopher, Heraclitus, and thus the Ionian scientific tradition.

In the *Trachiniae*, the concept of λόγος prominently recurs throughout the play. Scholars have long noted the importance of speech in the *Trachiniae*. In *Tragedy and Civilization*, Charles Segal discusses how the emphasis of speech “ironically foreshadows the play's massive perversion of language.”⁴⁶ Indeed, the very significance of λόγος is stressed by its primary position in the tragedy itself and by the plethora of occurrences of cognates of

⁴⁶ C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization*, (1981, Oklahoma), pp. 66.

λόγος throughout the play.⁴⁷ However, scholars have failed to identify that Sophocles' dramatic treatment of this concept reflects the contemporary intellectual climate of 'Enlightenment' thought, as it is reminiscent of its usage by the historiographers and by the natural philosopher, Heraclitus. Indeed, the theme of the perversion of language echoes Heraclitus' criticism of mankind's failure to understand the λόγος in spite of its accessibility to all. The alignment of λόγος with oracles, rationality, and the notion of ἱστορία also demonstrates the influence of 'Enlightenment' thought in general on Sophocles' dramatic treatment of this concept. In the course of my argument, I will demonstrate that the references to λόγος in the *Trachiniae* which, in certain cases, generally have been acknowledged as references to Herodotus also recall Heraclitus. The interpretation of these particular instances (as in the case of Deianeira) as a double allusion to Herodotus and Heraclitus more accurately accounts for Deianeira's concerns with epistemic certainty about the cyclical nature of life alternating between the pleasures of maidenhood and the pains induced by womanhood and about the cyclical nature of the cosmos. To interpret these allusions as purely Herodotean excludes an important layer of philosophical influence on this tragedy and leaves us with the question as to why Deianeira would recall a Herodotean adage only to modify it to some degree.

Λόγος occurs in line 1 of the *Trachiniae*:

Λόγος μὲν ἔστ' ἀρχαῖος ἀνθρώπων φανείς
 ὡς οὐκ ἂν αἰῶν' ἐκμάθοις βροτῶν, πρὶν ἂν
 θάνῃ τις, οὔτ' εἰ χρηστὸς οὔτ' εἴ τῳ κακός·
 ἔγω δὲ τὸν ἔμὸν, καὶ πρὶν εἰς Ἄιδου μολεῖν,
 ἔξοιδ' ἔχουσα δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρυν,

⁴⁷ Cf. lines 1, 9, 23, 60, 63, 79, 184, 230, 250, 289, 345, 385, 425-427, 431, 470, 472, 620, 679, 825, 1165, 1230.

There is an ancient saying, once revealed to mankind,
that you cannot understand the life of a mortal before someone is dead,
so as to know whether he has a good or bad life.
But I know well, even before going into Hades,
that I have an unfortunate and sorrowful one.

Here λόγος is the first word in the tragedy and signifies a ‘saying’ that is commonly accepted by mankind. Yet this term has another layer of significance: the λόγος...ἀρχαῖος alludes to the ancient saying of Solon recorded by Herodotus in Book 1 of the *Histories*. In addition, this term also resonates with the literary tradition of the early Greek prose writers, the Ionian historiographers, such as Hecataeus of Miletus and Ion of Chios, both of whom served as models for the historian Herodotus.⁴⁸ The preambles of Hecataeus’ and Ion of Chios’ works begin with references to a λόγος.⁴⁹ However, Deianeira modifies the λόγος in her claim to understand that her life is miserable in her present state, and thus, that she need not wait until the end of her life in order to gain this knowledge. In this sense, Deianeira recalls the adage of Herodotus and a catchword of the historiographical tradition, yet adapts her view of the epistemic certainty of this λόγος.

The assertion that knowledge and comprehension of this λόγος are possible before the end of one’s life is reminiscent of Heraclitus’ own use of λόγος in Fr. D. 1 and 2. In these fragments, Heraclitus attempts to awaken mankind from its epistemological sleep to the realization of the comprehensibility of a λόγος, a principle underlying all things and according to which all things come to pass. Furthermore, the λόγος is common and shared by all (τοῦ λόγου δ’έοντος ξυνου) (Fr. D. 2). In spite of the commonality of the λόγος,

⁴⁸ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 97.

⁴⁹ Hecataeus of Miletus says, “I write these things as they seem to me to be true. For the λόγοι of the Greeks are, in my judgement, many and ridiculous.”⁴⁹ Ion of Chios begins, “the starting point of my λόγος: all things are three, and nothing more or less than these three,” thus referring to his own discourse as a λόγος (DK 36.B.1).

Heraclitus criticizes mankind for living as though their thinking were a private possession: τοῦ λόγου δ' ἔοντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν. “Although the λόγος is common, the many live as though their thinking were a private possession.” (Fr. D. 2).

As Charles Kahn points out, Heraclitus' use of λόγος has an additional layer of meaning that is quite different from that of the historiographers.⁵⁰ To Heraclitus, λόγος is the principle of rationality underlying all things and according to which all things come to pass (Fr. D. 1). Heraclitus' use of λόγος both allies his philosophy with the early Ionian scientific tradition and ushers in a new tradition.

Similarly, Deianeira opens her monologue with reference to a λόγος that alludes to the Ionian historiographical tradition, particularly to its heir Herodotus. However, while accepting the truth of the λόγος, she then claims that she indeed does know (ἔξοιδ') the worth of her own life, which is δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρυν, before death. Like Heraclitus, Deianeira claims that she has access to a λόγος. This principle, maintaining the comprehensibility of the value of her own fate in her lifetime, is thus aligned with the concept of rationality. Furthermore, since her notion of the λόγος differs from the common view of the λόγος, Deianeira, like Heraclitus, comprehends that the λόγος holds true in her present state of existence. Although she has enjoyed a life filled with joys and pleasures in maidenhood, she understands that the λόγος has determined that her life must cycle and, in fact, has cycled towards a life that is δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρυν in womanhood. That is, Deianeira taps into the meaning of the λόγος: the rational principle orchestrating the cyclical nature of her existence, alternating between pleasure and pain, youth and old age. However,

⁵⁰ C. Kahn (Cambridge, 1979), p. 97.

like Heraclitus, she does not claim that she possesses this ability alone. Rather, since the λόγος...ἀρχαῖος was once revealed to mankind (ἀνθρώπων φανείς) (line 1), it is both accessible to and able to be comprehended by all of mankind.

Deianira blends the scientific traditions of historiography, as represented by the allusion to Herodotus, and of natural philosophy, as represented by Heraclitus. She upholds the truth of the Herodotean λόγος, but asserts that this λόγος can be applied before she dies. Furthermore, like the Heraclitean λόγος, this λόγος orchestrates the very course of the life of all, both man and the cosmos, cycling between opposites - pain and pleasure, youth and old age, creation and destruction. Unlike the Herodotean λόγος...ἀρχαῖος purporting that man cannot achieve knowledge (ὡς οὐκ...ἐκμάθοις) concerning the fate of any man until he reaches the end of his life, Deianeira asserts a present state of knowledge (ἔξοιδ') concerning the unfortunate state of her life beginning with the advent of her womanhood engendered by the ἀγών between Heracles and Achelous over her hand.

Why would Sophocles refer both to Herodotus and Heraclitus in the opening monologue of the *Trachiniae*? Why should we accept this claim of a double allusion to Herodotus and Heraclitus in line 1 of the *Trachiniae*? If we were to view this merely as an instance of Sophocles' remembering the work of his friend Herodotus, we would be left with the issue raised by Deianeira's modification of a famous adage drawn from the work of Herodotus.⁵¹ That is, why would Sophocles recall the adage of Solon presented by Herodotus, only to alter an aspect of it through the mouthpiece of Deianeira? If we view this as a double allusion to Herodotus and to Heraclitus, then we are able to make

⁵¹ Herodotus' close connection with Sophocles is indicated by the ode that Sophocles wrote at the age of fifty-five to Herodotus (D. *Anth. Lyr.* Fasc. I).

sense of Deianeira's modification of the Herodotean allusion. Deianeira's modification of the Herodotean λόγος...ἀρχαῖος signifies her present understanding of the λόγος, which is the rational principle determining the alternation of life between unities of opposites in a manner mirroring the λόγος of Heraclitus. Heraclitus' λόγος is the rational principle asserting that the constitution of the cosmos consists of unities of opposites - pleasures and pain, youth and old age, life and death, creation and destruction - in which each entity in the pair of opposites is inexorably engaged in a cycle of transposition into its opposite. Deianeira, like Heraclitus, comprehends her present misfortune and pains endured in womanhood that contrast with the pleasures of her youth; that is, she understands the cyclical nature of her life vacillating between maidenhood and womanhood, pleasure and pain; and as we have seen in lines 144-149, she understands that the cyclical nature of her own life reflects the larger cosmic reality in which nature itself alternates between the forces of creation and destruction. Therefore, the heroine's comprehension of the rational principle orchestrating the universe, defined by unities of opposites and the unity of all things, mirrors the Heraclitean λόγος asserting these very principles. Her blending of the Herodotean tradition with that of Heraclitus is significant; to ignore this double allusion obscures the complex connotations of Sophocles' use of λόγος and leaves the reader with the unsatisfying question as to why Sophocles would adapt this concept from the work of Herodotus. If we understand the layered and complete intellectual context behind this allusion referring to both Herodotus and Heraclitus, thus, to the general Ionian scientific tradition, we then can understand its greater significance and relevance to the themes throughout the play in general. We then can appreciate how this allusion resonates with

the diverse themes throughout the play, from the cyclicity of nature and the world of man, to the unities of opposites, and the interconnectedness of all things.

In the *Trachiniae*, λόγος is associated with both the Heraclitean and the Ionian scientific method of inquiry, or, ἱστορία. The type of investigation known as ἱστορία engendered the first major works of prose literature, the *Histories* of Herodotus and Thucydides. R. Thomas has persuasively demonstrated that Herodotus' own identification of his work as *historie* is influenced by the 'scientific' activity of early Hippocratic writers and natural philosophers.⁵² That is, Herodotus identifies his work as *historie* in the attempt to align his work with the rational enquiries of the early natural philosophers and the world of scientific inquiry.⁵³ This term occurs in Fr. D. 35 of Heraclitus: χρῆ εὖ μάλα πολλῶν ἱστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας ἔναι, "It is necessary for men who are lovers of wisdom to be good inquirers into many things indeed." His use of ἱστορας, like his use of prose and λόγος, aligns him with the Ionian scientific tradition, in which thinkers employed the use of systematic inquiry into a variety of subjects.⁵⁴

This catchword occurs four times in the episode between Lichas, the messenger, and Deianeira, including line 404.⁵⁵ The messenger threatens Lichas, τόλμησον εἰπεῖν, εἰ φρονεῖς, ὃ σ' ἱστορῶ, "If you have a mind, take courage to say what I inquire of you." The messenger here couples together the concepts of speaking, presumably the truth, rationality

⁵² R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 163- 167.

⁵⁴ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 96.

⁵⁵ Cf. lines 382, 415, and 418 for other references to ἱστορία.

(φρονεῖς), and inquiry (ἵστορω), all three of which are emphasized in the fragments of Heraclitus.⁵⁶

The other references to ἵστορία are employed in a manner further strengthening the contrast between Lichas and Heracles, on the one hand, and the messenger, on the other. Lichas and Heracles are depicted as resistant to the method of inquiry while the messenger is portrayed as exercising this method of ἵστορία. In lines 375-382, Deianeira asks Lichas about the origin of the captive maiden, who is described as ἡ κάρτα λαμπρὰ καὶ κατ' ὄμμα καὶ φύσιν, “she who is radiant both with respect to her looks and in her nature.” Lichas responds that Heracles has said nothing about her γένεσιν, her origin, since οὐδὲν ἵστορῶν, he had not inquired (lines 380, 382). Heracles thus is presented as not utilizing ἵστορία.⁵⁷ In line 415, the messenger denies Lichas’ request to leave their presence by saying, οὐ, πρὶν γ’ ἂν εἴπῃς ἱστορούμενος βραχύ. “No, not before you answer one inquiring about a brief [question].” Lichas, in attempting to evade the messenger’s brief inquiry, resists this method of inquiry. And in line 418, in response to the messenger’s persistence in questioning Lichas about the maiden, Lichas responds, φημί· πρὸς τί δ’ ἱστορεῖς; “I say so! Why do you ask this?” The messenger does not elaborate on his knowledge about the maiden, but merely deflects the question by interrogating the messenger about his incessant inquiries (ἱστορεῖς).

⁵⁶ Heraclitus associates λόγος “not only with language, but with rational discussion, calculation, and choice: rationality as expressed in speech, thought, and in action.” C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 96. In Fr. D. 2, Heraclitus implies the connection of the λόγος with φρονήσις in his criticism of most men who live as though their φρονήσις were ἰδίᾳ. For, since Heraclitus criticizes men for assuming the λόγος to be ἰδιαν...φρόνησιν when the λόγος is ξύνοσ, it follows that the λόγος is in fact ξύνοσ φρονήσις.

⁵⁷ The juxtaposition of two catchwords of Ionian philosophy, φύσις and ἵστορία is striking; it is further evidence that this concept reflects the intellectual tradition of Ionian science and philosophy of such thinkers as Heraclitus.

In contrast, the messenger is portrayed as utilizing the method of ἱστορία. He figures as persistently probing Lichas, and even convinces Deianeira to investigate further into Lichas' knowledge concerning Heracles' abduction of Iole. In lines 404, 415, and 418, the messenger both describes his own ἱστορία and is described by Lichas as engaging in this manner of inquiry. The messenger, therefore, stands in contrast to Lichas and Heracles with respect to his practice of ἱστορία as well as his own notion of λόγος.⁵⁸

Λόγος is depicted throughout the *Trachiniae* as what mankind fails to understand in spite of its signification by language, oracles, and the will of the gods. In fact, Deianeira's opening modification of the ἀρχαῖος λόγος and implicit criticism of mankind for failing to understand their present ability to access and comprehend this λόγος foreshadow the prominence of this theme throughout the play. Indeed, in the *Trachiniae*, instances in which mankind misinterprets and/or misunderstands the λόγος abound; this, in turn, results in the tragic downfall of the characters in this play. Hence the characters in the tragedy cycle between moments of miscomprehension of the λόγος and moments of enlightenment, thus reflecting Heraclitus' criticism of mankind for its failure to understand the λόγος expressed in Fr. D. 1 and Fr. D. 2. Finally, a connection between the λόγος and the oracles of the traditional gods is evident in the *Trachiniae* in a manner also mirroring that same correlation in Heraclitus' Fr. D. 93.⁵⁹ Much of the tragic coloring of the play is created when the mortal

⁵⁸ I will discuss the significance of the dichotomy that is created between Lichas and the messenger by the respective rejection and espousal of the concept of *historie* in the section below on the significance of λόγος in the *Trachiniae*.

⁵⁹ In Fr. D. 93, the concept of λόγος is associated with something that the god of Delphi, Apollo, signifies through his oracles: ὁ ἀναξ οὐδὲ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει. "The lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but gives a sign." Here, Apollo is described as neither revealing the λόγος nor concealing it from mankind, but rather, signifying the λόγος through his oracles. Heraclitus suggests that the god Apollo has access to the λόγος and provides

characters belatedly achieve understanding of the λόγος, which they learn (only too late) is aligned with the oracles and the will of the gods. Consequently, just as the Heraclitean λόγος, which is signified by the oracles of Apollo, is misunderstood by mankind, so too, the λόγος in the *Trachiniae*, is misunderstood or understood belatedly, in spite of its indication by the oracles.

The cycle of miscomprehension of the λόγος is exemplified by Heracles' initial misinterpretation of the oracle received at Dodona and the hero's subsequent enlightenment at the end of the tragedy. In lines 77-78, Deianeira informs Hyllus that Heracles ἔλειπέ μου μαντεῖα πιστὰ τῆσδε τῆς χρείας πέρι, "left [her] trustworthy prophecies for this hour of need," to which Hyllus responds, τὰ ποῖα, μήτηρ; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ., "what [ones], mother? I am ignorant of the λόγος." Hence Hyllus refers to the λόγος in conjunction with the prophecies concerning Heracles' fate which leads to the first misinterpretation of a λόγος. Deianeira relates Heracles' interpretation of this λόγος that the hero would achieve release from his toil as meaning that he would τὸν λοιπὸν ἤδη βίστον εὐαίων ἔχειν, "have a

hints into its meaning through his oracles that signify the λόγος. As a result, to Heraclitus, there is a connection between the oracles of Apollo and the true meaning of the λόγος. And, perhaps, an exhortation to mankind and/ or another criticism thereof for its failure to interpret the true meaning behind the signs of the oracles is latent in this fragment. Cf. C. Kahn, (1978), pp. 123 -124 for an examination of this fragment. C. Kahn points out that Apollo's mode of utterance is described as neither direct statement nor concealment, but rather, signification; 'Giving a sign,' means uttering one thing that in turn signifies another: *hyponoia*, a 'hint' or 'allegory.' The Delphic god's mode of utterance presents a complexity of meaning; thus, reflection is necessary for the proper interpretation to be discovered. Kahn further examines two interpretations of this fragment: first, the Delphic mode is supposed to be a paradigm for Heraclitus' own riddling style; second, the complexity of meaning is to be located in the nature of things, in the structure of appearance understood as *logos*, a kind of meaningful language (C. Kahn (1978), p. 123). Kahn argues that we need not choose between these two views; the Delphic elements in Heraclitus' own style are obvious; but, throughout the fragments of Heraclitus, mankind is characterized as failing to understand the *logos* and listening without comprehension because reality itself, the nature of things, requires close investigation ("Nature loves to hide") and expectation to discover the unexpected (D. 18). In this fragment, Apollo does not give the λόγος, but provides a sign that requires interpretation and close investigation in order for the λόγος to be understood.

happy remainder of his life” (line 81). In line 1172, Heracles learns that he has misinterpreted this prophecy which, in truth, means οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ, “nothing other than [his] death.” Upon learning that the robe is imbued with the Centaur’s lethal poison, Heracles realizes the true meaning of another τὸ θεῖον...πρόφαντον, “divine prophecy,” οὕτω ζῶντά μ’ ἔκεινεν θανών, “that one being dead would kill [him] being alive” (line 1163). After Heracles’ realizes the truth of these prophecies, Hyllus again refers to the λόγος in line 1179; he thus emphasizes the connection between this concept and the prophecies: ἀλλ’, ὦ πάτερ, ταρβῶ μὲν ἐς λόγου στάσιν/ τοιάνδ’ ἐπελθών, πείσομαι δ’ ἅ σοι δοκεῖ. “But father, arriving at this point in the λόγος, I am afraid and will obey whatever you think.” Hyllus deems Heracles’ comprehension of the true meaning of the prophecies as his arrival (ἐπελθών) at achieving true understanding of the λόγος. Heracles’ true understanding of the λόγος is made conspicuous at the end of the play by his repeated references to this concept and his insistence that Hyllus’ follow his λόγος: ...ἀλλὰ τοι θεῶν ἀρά/ μενεῖ σ’ ἀπιστήσαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις, “It remains that you will be cursed by the gods if you disobey my words.”⁶⁰ Heracles thus cycles between an initial misunderstanding of the λόγος and comprehension thereof. The hero’s comprehension of the λόγος tragically leads to his understanding that the end of his toils truly indicates the end of his life.

Λόγος is again depicted as comprising a tragic cycle of misinterpretation and belated comprehension in its connection with Deianeira’s interpretation of the instructions of the centaur Nessus. In line 679, Deianeira invokes the concept of λόγος while relating to the chorus the entire story behind the instructions given to her by the centaur Nessus. She says, μείζον’ ἐκτενῶ λόγον, “I shall extend the story to a greater length,” thus alluding to this

⁶⁰ Cf. also lines 1179 and 1230 where Heracles again refers to the λόγος.

episode in which she receives the instructions from Nessus as a λόγος. In line 683, Deianeira again refers to the instructions with the metaphor of writing, ἀλλ' ἔσφζόμην/ χαλκῆς ὅπως δύσνιπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφήν: "but I observed [the instructions] like writing that is difficult to erase from a bronze tablet." By likening the instructions to δύσνιπτον...γραφήν, Deianeira diminishes her probability of error in comprehending the instructions just as the reference to the χαλκῆς δέλτου stresses the apparently indelible and concrete impression upon her mind. Although Deianeira does not err in her ability to comprehend and execute the instructions of the centaur Nessus, she does, in fact, misinterpret the meaning of the centaur's words concerning the philter's effects on Heracles. Deianeira interprets Nessus' words that the philter shall charm the mind of Heracles so that he will never love another woman other than Deianeira as meaning that the charm will rekindle Heracles' love for Deianeira. In fact, the centaur's λόγος truly signifies that Heracles will meet his death and thus never again love another woman. The realization of Deianeira's misinterpretation and subsequent comprehension of the true meaning of the words of the centaur Nessus leads not only to Heracles' death, but also, indirectly, to her own suicide. Language is depicted, therefore, as comprising a cycle of misunderstanding and comprehension resulting in the tragic end both of Deianeira and Heracles.

The λόγος of the oracles and the centaur Nessus thus both point to Heracles' end in death. The λόγος of the centaur and the words of the oracles have the same meaning, and thus are ξύνος like the Heraclitean λόγος. The events of the play accord with the words of the oracles and those of the centaur, thus mirroring the Heraclitean sentiment that everything happens in accordance with the λόγος. Just as Heraclitus criticizes mankind for failing to

understand the λόγος, both before hearing it and once they have heard, the characters in the *Trachiniae* perpetually fail to interpret the λόγος correctly, which results in their fatal ends.

One final aspect of Sophocles' rendering of λόγος resonates with the philosophy of Heraclitus. In lines 61-63 of the *Trachiniae*, Deianeira draws a distinction between μῦθοι and λόγος that mirrors a similar dichotomy in the thought of Heraclitus. While urging Deianeira to send Hyllus in search of his father, the nurse states, in a speech that cautiously acknowledges her status as a slave, νῦν δ', εἰ δίκαιον τοὺς ἐλευθέρους φρενοῦν/ γνώμαισι δούλαις, κάμῃ χρῆ φράσαι τὸ σόν: "But now, if it is just for slaves to instruct free persons with their opinions, it is necessary that I indicate what you should do." The nurse then urges her mistress to send Hyllus in search of his father to learn if he is alive. This advice is referred to as τοῖς τ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις in line 60. In lines 61-63, Deianeira responds in the following manner:

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, καὶ ἀγεννήτων ἄρα
μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν· ἦδε γὰρ γυνή
δούλη μὲν, εἶρηκεν δ' ἐλεύθερον λόγον.

My son, my child, so even the words from those of lowly birth
can fall out well; this woman is a slave, but the word she has
spoken is that of a free person.

Here two contrasts are depicted: first, the social status of slaves (ἀγεννήτων and δούλη) versus that of the free (ἐλεύθερον); second, the contrast between the μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν and ἐλεύθερον λόγον. Regarding the issue of social class, Deianeira remarks upon the ability of a δούλη to speak an ἐλεύθερον λόγον. Thus, the faculty of speaking a λόγος leads Deianeira to classify the nurse as speaking like a free person and as a result, to view the nurse as transcending a social boundary. Furthermore, Deianeira draws a distinction

between the ability of the lowly born, i.e., slaves, to speak *μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν*, words that fall out well, i.e., words that merely chance upon the truth, and the nurse who speaks the *ἐλεύθερον λόγον* which necessity (*χρῆ* (line 54)) compels her to speak; accordingly, the *μῦθοι* are associated with words that can chance upon both truth and falsehood, while *λόγος* necessarily is a truth. In addition, Deianeira's realization that a *δούλη μὲν, εἴρηκεν δ' ἐλεύθερον λόγον* reflects the notion that all mankind, not only the free, have access to comprehension of the *λόγος*. Since the nurse refers to her advice as *γνώμαισι δούλαις*, judgments of slaves, the *λόγος* is also depicted as a concept associated with *γνώμη*, judgment. Conversely, since *μῦθοι* can *καλῶς πίπτουσιν* and thus resemble the *ἐλεύθερον λόγος*, *μῦθοι* are not derived from reasoned judgment, but if they "fall out well," can reflect a *λόγος* which is reached through judgment. A distinction is drawn between *μῦθοι* and the *λόγος*, in which the latter is a concept derived from reasoned judgment and necessity, and also is accessible and shared by all mankind, including both slaves and free persons.

Heraclitus fulminates against the epic poets, Homer and Hesiod, who, in contrast to the Ionian scientific tradition, held *μῦθος* as their subject. In Fr. D. 57, Heraclitus criticizes Hesiod for not knowing that the day and night *ἔστι γὰρ ἓν*, are one. And in Fr. D. 42, he proclaims that Homer (and Archilochus) should be expelled from poetic competitions. Heraclitus incites the so-called "ancient quarrel between literature and philosophy" (to use Plato's coinage), or in other words, between his own *λόγος* and the *μῦθοι* of his epic predecessors. Since the *λόγος* of Heraclitus is *ξύνος*, common/shared by all, in contrast to the view of *οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν*, the many who live as though they possess their own private understanding," the *λόγος* is not merely accessible to the free, but to all mankind. Even social status itself is subject to the cosmic power of Strife whose

instantiation as πόλεμος τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους has made some slaves and others free, thus revealing the power as haphazard in determining social status, and implicitly, the insignificance of social class in man's ability to comprehend the λόγος.

Just as λόγος is ξύνος, so too, is thinking: ξυνόν ἐστι πᾶσι τὸ φρονέειν.” “Thinking is common to all.” Implicitly, this property of τὸ φρονέειν, is common to all, including slaves and free persons, and even, things. The λόγος of Heraclitus thus constitutes a universe of panpsychism,⁶¹ in which everything possesses rationality, regardless of ontological status as material, human, or divine. Just as in the statement of Deianeira in lines 61-63 of the *Trachiniae*, there is a tension between μῦθος and λόγος in the philosophy of Heraclitus, whereas the λόγος is both the underlying principle of a world replete with τὸ φρονέειν, and a concept that is ξύνος to all things and people, regardless of social status. In contrast to μῦθοι judgement and reason comprise the λόγος of Heraclitus. And, since judgment or τὸ φρονέειν belong to all, all of mankind (including both slaves and free-persons) has access to the λόγος of Heraclitus like the nurse in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Sophocles' play thus inherits the Heraclitean views of rationality, yet the playwright imprints these ideas by blending them within a mythological play; the tragedian therefore does not merely reproduce the ideas of Heraclitus, but re-mythologizes them through his application of these philosophical views to the genre of tragedy.

What is the general significance of the λόγος in the *Trachiniae*? I assert that the presentation of the λόγος as symbolic of the Ionian scientific tradition constitutes one extreme in a bipolarity constituted by reason and the forces of irrationality. At the other extreme,

⁶¹ Cf. C. Kahn, *Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 119.

Heracles' passion for Iole, Deianeira's jealousy of Iole (who is an object of Heracles' irrational lust of Iole), and the monstrous figures of Achelous, Nessus, and the Hydra serve as emblems of the forces of irrationality. Heracles and Deianeira cycle between the forces of irrationality and reason. This cycle is symbolized by their failure initially to interpret the true meaning of the λόγος and by their belated comprehension of this concept. The allusion to the λόγος establishes a cycle between irrationality and reason within the inner world of the characters: they inevitably alternate between the forces of life and death, creation and destruction. Consequently, like the depiction of the cosmos in the parodos as alternating between periods of creation and destruction in a manner mirroring the Heraclitean cosmos, Sophocles presents the λόγος as constituting a cycle in which mankind alternates between periods of misunderstanding and true comprehension of the λόγος, and, as a result, between the forces of irrationality and rationality. Hence the λόγος in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* orchestrates all things, both human and divine. However, just as in Fr. D. 43 of Heraclitus, when the destructive fire and the destructive forces of irrationality overtake the cosmos and world of man in the *Trachiniae*, tragedy occurs.

The contrast created between the rejection and espousal of the concept of ἵστορία, respectively by Lichas and the messenger, also contributes to the tension between forces of rationality and irrationality with which the characters struggle in the *Trachiniae*. Just as Heracles' alternation between misunderstanding and comprehension of the λόγος mirrors his oscillation between irrationality and rationality, so too the hero's failure to employ the device of ἵστορία to discover the lineage of Iole reflects Heracles' initial domination by the force of irrationality derived from his lust of Iole. Likewise, Lichas' rejection of ἵστορία serves to suppress that rational probing of the messenger into the true reason of Heracles' sack of

Oechalia and captivity of Iole; thus, the rejection of ἵστορία functions to veil the irrational motivation of his master. In contrast, the messenger, who sides with Deianeira, utilizes ἵστορία in order to disclose Heracles' motivation. Ironically, this very method of inquiry, which is associated with rationality, uncovers the truth: that Heracles' irrational passion and lust of Iole leads him to the sack of Oechalia and the maiden's captivity. This truth unleashes the irrational force of jealousy within Deianeira. And this, in turn, compels her to use the fatal love charm of the centaur Nessus on her husband, thus bringing about both the death of her husband and indirectly, her own. Therefore, in addition to the λόγος, the concept of ἵστορία is instrumental to the creation of the tension between irrationality and rationality, the bipolarity between which the characters oscillate throughout the play.

In conclusion, our examination of the multiple images and themes permeating Sophocles' *Trachiniae* has elucidated the philosophical and intellectual context of this play. The thought of Heraclitus underlies the apparently disparate images and themes of this play. The sun symbolism, the element fire, the cycles of the cosmos and the world of mankind, the unity of opposites, the doctrine of flux, the ἀγών resonate with the philosophy of Heraclitus in a manner bringing to light the seemingly puzzling and nebulous character of a play classified as such by critics of the 19th century. In addition, Sophocles' depictions of the concepts of λόγος and ἵστορία reflect a blending of the intellectual traditions of both Herodotus and Heraclitus, and, thus, of the Ionian scientific tradition.

As a result of this investigation, we are now able to see how meaningful the sun symbolism (which is first pointed out by Hoey) truly is, when viewed in light of the philosophy of Heraclitus. The images of fire exemplify the cyclicity of the cosmos alternating between the opposing processes of creation and destruction; and this cyclicity is reflected in

the characters of Heracles and Deianeira, both of whom are inexorably bound to the same processes of creation and destruction, pleasure and pain, youth and old age: the unity of opposites that constitute all things. Furthermore, this study enables us to see how the images and themes – youth and old age, health and sickness, divine and human – that are demarcated by Musurillo as key to understanding the complex meaning behind the *Trachiniae* are conjoined by the unity of opposites mirroring this doctrine fundamental to the philosophy of Heraclitus.

In addition to the establishment of the influence of Heraclitus on Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, we have discussed the multiple layers of meaning and significance that this philosophy has within the context of the play itself. Charles Segal indeed is correct in his statement that "the play places us at the intersection of opposed worlds."⁶² However, our study has brought into focus the plethora of unified complexes of opposites: from the rationality of the *λόγος* and the world of irrationality, as symbolized by Heracles' lust for Iole, Deianeira's lethal jealousy of Heracles' passion for Iole, and the mythical archaic monsters, to the opposing qualities of creation and destruction, comprising the cycles of Night and Day, the element of fire, and the fate of the characters, oscillating between pleasure and pain, youth and old age, health and sickness, the living and dead/ mortality and immortality. Finally, my examination has demonstrated how the philosophy of Heraclitus underlies these variegated worlds of opposition. We therefore can glean from this study a greater appreciation of this pre-Socratic philosopher's legacy beyond the field of philosophy itself; and we have unveiled an ancient theoretical model for a dualistic reading of the *Trachiniae* enabling us to penetrate the significance of the various themes and images recurrent in this play. It only seems fitting

⁶² C. Segal (1995), p. 26.

that a play dismissed by 19th century critics as nebulous and complex should recall the ideas of a philosopher who is characterized as σκοτεινός, “obscure”, and as the αἰνικτής, “riddler,” by the ancients themselves.⁶³

The influence of Heraclitus on Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* raises two questions concerning Sophocles’ dramatic treatment of ideas drawn from Heraclitus. How does Sophocles render these images and concepts in the *Trachiniae*? Does Sophocles merely reproduce them, or does he put his own slant on them?

Sophocles faithfully adheres to the philosophy of Heraclitus in the dramatic rendering of images and ideas drawn from this pre-Socratic philosopher in the *Trachiniae*. He accurately depicts the doctrine of the unity of opposites that is central to the philosophy of Heraclitus as orchestrating the events of the *Trachiniae*. All things are one in this play: the cosmos and the world of man cycle between unities of opposites, day and night, creation and destruction, youth and old age, pleasure and pain, health and sickness, rationality and irrationality. And the rational principle orchestrating the inexorable interchange between the unities of opposites is the λόγος. It is the comprehension of this principle that enables Deianeira to comprehend that her life presently is δυστυχή τε καὶ βαρὺν, “unfortunate and grave”; she understands that life alternates between pleasure and pain, maidenhood and womanhood. She sees that, in her case, these two pairs of opposites themselves are interconnected. She no longer enjoys the pleasures of maidenhood that are interrupted by the ἄγών between Heracles and Achelous defining her entry into womanhood. In womanhood, her life is δυστυχή τε καὶ βαρὺν, and this continues to prove true until her tragic death. In

⁶³ Timon of Phlius, the third century B.C.E. satirist, called Heraclitus αἰνικτής (Diog. L. ix, 6). Later criticism of his style led to the description of Heraclitus as σκοτεινός/ *obscurus* (Cicero *de finibus* II, 5, 15).

contrast, Heracles does not comprehend the *λόγος*, the ruling principle of the cosmos and the world of man. He is dominated by the force of irrationality – his lust of Iole and his association with the *ἄγών* – until the end of the play when he achieves the true understanding of the meaning of the *λόγος* of the oracles intimating his end in death. Sophocles, throughout the play, accurately depicts these tenets that are fundamental to the philosophy of Heraclitus.

Yet, Sophocles merely does not reproduce Heraclitus' own images and ideas: he puts his own imprint on these images and ideas both through his application of this philosophy to the traditional myth of Heracles and Deianeira and through the implications of this philosophical and mythic combination that are played out dramatically at the end of the play. Although Sophocles depicts the cosmos and the world of man as comprised of the seemingly bleak Heraclitean unity of opposites bound to a relentless process of creation and destruction, the dramatist concludes with a glimmer of optimism at the end of the play. Heracles, having learned the true meaning of the *λόγος* of the oracles determining his own destruction and thus the cyclical nature of the cosmos, exhorts Hyllus to marry Iole. Hyllus initially resists this command, probably due to the horrific notion of marrying a woman who indirectly is the source of his family's demise and with whom his father has had intimate relations. However, Heracles understands the cyclical nature of the cosmos and of the world of man: creation will necessarily follow his own destruction; hence, the marriage between Hyllus and Iole will exemplify this cosmic principle. Iole's act of giving birth to a vengeful and destructive Fury (line 895) through her union with Heracles will be followed by her union with Hyllus, thus continuing the Heracleian lineage. Therefore, creation will follow destruction. Sophocles portrays the positive side of the Heraclitean doctrine of the unity of opposites at the end of the play. The dramatist thus chooses to provide a glimmer of optimism behind the seemingly

bleak destruction of the characters in the play through his emphasis on the positive end of the spectrum of opposing opposites.

Likewise, Sophocles puts his own imprint on the philosophy of Heraclitus by emphasizing the positive quality of the cosmic fire at the end of the play. In contrast to the image of fire and its instantiations in the beginning of the play, fire is depicted as a source of creation at the play's conclusion. The Oetan fire is depicted both as the potential source of Heracles' cure from the disease inflicted by the poisonous robe and, presumably, as the source from which Heracles will be apotheosized. Sophocles chooses to conclude with the depiction of the creative quality of fire instead of its destructive aspect, thus providing another flicker of optimism behind the seemingly bleak and tragic destruction of Heracles and behind the merciless process of creation and destruction itself.

Finally, Sophocles adds his own contribution to Heraclitean ideas through the presentation of Heracles and Deianeira as 'cosmologized' heroes. The depiction of the cosmos and of the world of man in the *Trachiniae* as subject to the same processes of interchange between opposites, all of which are determined by the will of the gods as signified by the *λόγος* of oracles, intimately connects these disparate realms. We view the oscillations of Heracles and Deianeira between opposites as a matter of necessity that reflects the cosmic alternation between Day and Night. Hence the destruction of Heracles, the unfortunate quality of Deianeira's life and her own tragic suicide, are depicted as tragic events that must unfold. And in this sense, Sophocles depicts tragedy as a necessary outcome of the principle underlying this doctrine of the unity of opposites, according to which all things – human, cosmic, and divine – must come to pass. Yet, Sophocles portrays an inkling of optimism beneath these tragic events guaranteed by this very principle: creation follows destruction, just

as Day follows Night. Sophocles therefore achieves the remarkable feat of applying the Heraclitean precepts to the characters and to the dramatic events in his play, thus blending the ideas of the pre-Socratic philosopher with elements from traditional mythology.⁶⁴

In the extant fragments of Heraclitus, no evidence exists of the application of Heraclitean ideas to such traditional myths as the story of Heracles and Deianeira. The gods of traditional religion do appear (Fr. D. 93, D. 15, D. 32), but Heraclitus recognizes these gods only in so far as they exemplify his doctrine of the unity of opposites and the *λόγος* (e.g., Dionysos represents the unity of life and death in the phallic procession). Sophocles, too, reconciles the Heraclitean ideas reflected in this tragedy with the gods of traditional religion (e.g., the *λόγος* enforces the will of gods manifest through oracles). However, Sophocles goes a step further in his application of these ideas to the mythological hero and heroine, Heracles and Deianeira, and in the dramatization of the philosophy of Heraclitus.

In conclusion, Sophocles' treatment of the ideas of the pre-Socratic thinker Heraclitus and of the Ionian scientific tradition in general in the *Trachiniae* reveals that Sophocles was receptive to some of the ideas of the so-called 'Enlightenment'. Sophocles portrays Deianeira as blending the Herodotean *λόγος* with the concept of *ἱστορία*, the catchword of the Ionian scientific tradition and Heraclitean thought, in the *Trachiniae*. This strongly indicates Sophocles' favorable reception of the rationality of the Ionian scientific tradition and pre-Socratic thought in which Heraclitus certainly

⁶⁴ This raises the following generic question: Is it possible for a dramatist to reproduce philosophical ideas without transforming them? My work indicates that the generic constraints of tragedy itself restricts the possibility of the pure, unadulterated reproduction of philosophical ideas to tragedy; the application of philosophical ideas to a mythological context and within the artificial constraints, such as plot and meter, of drama inevitably tinge these philosophical concepts to which the playwright alludes.

played an important role. Sophocles' dramatic treatments of the forces of irrationality and the concept of μῦθος, which the tragedian contrasts with the forces of rationality and inquiry reflective of the Ionian tradition, further attests to Sophocles' favorable reception of 'Enlightenment' thought. Yet, like Heraclitus, Sophocles does not reject the mythical elements of his predecessor entirely; he reconciles myth and the gods of traditional religion with the new tradition of rationality introduced by the pre-Socratics. Hence, at the end of the play, the λόγος of the centaur Nessus, the oracles of Zeus at Dodona, and Deianeira's own view of λόγος, as associated with epistemic certainty and rationality, turn out to be ξύνοχος: the same and shared by all, i.e., by nature, the world of man, and the gods themselves. Sophocles thus re-mythologizes 'Enlightenment' views of rationality through the traditional mythological tale of Heracles, presenting a tragedy that reflects the intellectual and social *milieu* of the 5th century B.C.E.

Chapter 3: Pre-Socratic Thought In Sophocles' *Antigone*

Since the early 20th century, scholars have recognized and discussed the effect of Sophistic ideas on Sophocles' *Antigone*.¹ Most recently, in "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*," Charles Segal suggests that the first stasimon (lines 332-375) mirrors the "optimistic rationalism of Sophocles' time: the Sophistic view of man's ability to work creatively upon his environment and the probably Protagorean concept that the state, the *polis*, along with law and justice, is a human creation and perhaps the most important stage in man's assertion of himself over a hostile or indifferent world."² Segal argues that Sophocles' reflection of these Sophistic ideas in the *Antigone* is not an avowal of these views, but a "qualification of the rational optimism of the fifth-century 'enlightenment,'" in so far as human reason and technical control are a "potential source of human bondage and limitation" not simply a source of human freedom and progress.³ The Sophistic notion of man's conquest of nature is thrown into the dramatic action of the play and, as Segal states, is "weighed in the balance of the tragic outcome."⁴

Although he adroitly points out the interplay of the Sophistic notion of man's control over nature with the dramatic events of the tragedy and its ultimately negative treatment by

¹ W. Schmid argues that the character of Creon symbolizes an ironic criticism of Sophistic rationality and moral relativity then gaining influence (W. Schmid, "Probleme aus der Sophokleischen Antigone," *Philologus*, 62 (1903): pp. 1-34); cf. also P. J. B. Egger, *Das Antigone-Problem* (Solothurn, 1906), pp. 67ff; W. Nestle, "Sophokles und die Sophistic," *Classical Philology*, 5 (1910): pp. 136-43; Untersteiner, *Sofocle*, 2, p. 45 n. 21; R. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language and Structure* (Princeton, N.J., 1951); C. Segal, "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*," *Arion*, III, No. 2 (1964): pp. 71ff.

² C. Segal, "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*," *Arion*, III, No. 2 (1964): pp. 71-72.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 84. Segal, thus, arrives at the same conclusion reached by Goheen's new critical approach: mankind's faculty of reason is capable of both wondrous and dangerous feats; human intelligence "involves great dangers for the individual and the state unless mankind 'weave[s] together the laws of the land and the justice of the gods' (lines 368-9) (R. Goheen (1951), p.90).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Sophocles, Segal fails to identify the philosophical antithesis to the Sophistic thought with which it is “weighed.”⁵ That is, like Goheen, Segal sees a causal relationship between the Sophistic ideas espoused by Creon (who symbolizes the dangers of Sophistic rationality in his severance of the laws of the land, i.e., the νομοί, from φύσις, justice and the gods) and the tragic outcome of events in the play; yet, both scholars fail to recognize that these events are caused by a conflict between two philosophical systems: the ideas of the early Sophists and the philosophical views of the pre-Socratics.

Throughout the play, the Sophistic idea of man’s control over nature clashes with the pre-Socratic view of nature as interconnected with mankind, its laws, justice, and the divine. The discordance of these ideas is fixed to the terms of φύσις and νόμος and their cognates; the interworking of φύσις and νόμος in the *Antigone* thus reflects the tension between the Sophistic praise of man’s conquest of nature and the separation of nature from law and the justice of the gods and the pre-Socratic vision of the interdependence of these concepts. The pre-Socratic conceptions of φύσις and νόμος, along with other pre-Socratic notions, such as Anaximander’s notion of retributive Justice and Necessity and Heraclitus’ doctrine of the unity of all things, are reflected in the views held primarily by Antigone, but also by Haemon and Teiresias. In contrast, Creon, and at times Ismene and the sentry, are portrayed as espousing a Sophistic view of the world. Antigone thus figures as an ardent follower of the pre-Socratic vision of nature while Creon reflects the early Protagorean notion of the necessity of conquering and controlling nature by means of νόμος. The conflict between these two visions of nature brings about the tragic course of events of the play. Finally, I will argue that Sophocles portrays the pre-Socratic world view as harmonious with the divinities of

⁵ Ibid.

traditional religion. In contrast, the playwright depicts the Sophistic vision of nature as contrasting with justice and divinity. As a result, two contrasting philosophical visions reflective of the intellectual and philosophical *milieu* of the 5th century B.C.E. define the conflict between Antigone and Haemon. Since Creon's adherence to the Sophistic view results in the deaths of Antigone and Haemon, the playwright portrays the Sophistic view of nature as the impetus behind the tragic events of the plays.⁶ Hence Sophocles represents rationalism and human intelligence as capable of τὰ δεινὰ, "wondrous feats," when aligned with the pre-Socratic vision of nature that is interconnected with νόμος, justice, and the divine; yet this same faculty produces τὰ δεινὰ, "dangerous feats," when coupled with the Sophistic view endorsing man's conquest of nature and its separation from νόμος and the justice of the gods.

The term φύσις scarcely appears in early Greek literature.⁷ Φύσις does not occur in Hesiod and only once in Homer, when Hermes shows Odysseus the φύσις of the moly plant, i.e., its physical form.⁸ In contrast, φύσις becomes a catchword for the early pre-Socratic thinkers. Since most of the fragments of the early Milesians do not survive, it is difficult to ascertain when the word is first used with the technical philosophical meaning that would become universal to the early Greek philosophers in general. However, by the time of Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Xenophanes, φύσις has become a technical philosophical term

⁶ My claim that Creon's endorsement of Sophistic thought ultimately leads to the tragic demise of Antigone and Haemon certainly is not the only possible interpretation of this play. Some scholars would argue that Antigone and Haemon cause their own deaths.

⁷ C. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1960), p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

that was central to the cosmic systems of Heraclitus and Parmenides and implied by the use of the verb φύειν in Xenophanes.⁹

Φύσις has an extensive range of meanings: it denotes the physical form of a thing (as in Homer), its process of natural development or growth, its essential character, and nature in the sense of external reality.¹⁰ In the first fragment of his work, Heraclitus vows to “distinguish each thing according to its φύσις and tell how it is,” (κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει, D I). In Fr. D. 123, he states φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, “Nature loves to hide.” And in Fr. D. 112, Heraclitus again invokes the notion σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη, ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαΐοντας, “Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom: acting and speaking what is true, perceiving things according to their nature.” As Charles Kahn demonstrates, φύσις thus is used by Heraclitus to denote the essential character of a thing, as well as the process by which it arose.¹¹ And this sense of φύσις denoting ‘form, nature, character’ (of a given thing) prevails in the later history of the word.¹²

In Fr. D. 10 Parmenides also employs the concept of φύσις:

You will know the φύσις of the Sky, and all the Signs within it, and the burning deeds of the pure lamp of the brilliant Sun, and whence they came to be, and you will learn of the wandering deeds of the Cyclops moon, and its φύσις, and you will know of the Heaven which holds them round about, whence it arose and how Necessity led and bound it to hold the limits of the Stars.¹³

⁹ Cf. Heracl. B I, B 106, B 112, B 123; Parm. B 10.5 and B 16.3; Xenoph. B 32; (C. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1960), p. 4.

¹⁰ C. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1960).

¹¹ C. Kahn (1960), p. 201.

¹² Cf. D. Holwerda, *Commentatio de vocis quae est φύσις vi atque usu* (Groningen, 1955). D. Holwerda illustrates that the usual sense of φύσις in Greek literature becomes ‘form, character, nature’ (of a given thing), rather than ‘growth.’ Also, cf. C. Kahn (196), p. 201, n. 2.

¹³ This translation is from C. Kahn (1960).

Here φύσις is used to refer to a process of natural development or growth.¹⁴ However, since Parmenides will reveal the true nature of things by accounting for their origin or development, this usage of φύσις also denotes the sense of ‘true character or essential nature’ (of a given thing) found in the fragments of Heraclitus.¹⁵ The example from Parmenides typifies how the pre-Socratics altered the Homeric meaning of φύσις, indicating simply the physical form at maturity, to signify both ‘origin, development’ and the ‘form, character, nature’ of a given thing. This technical meaning of φύσις is generally accepted by the early Greek thinkers, and thus is an idea that unifies the pre-Socratics, which, in turn, leads Aristotle to categorize these early Greek thinkers as φυσικοί due to the standard title, Περὶ Φύσεως, assigned to the works of the pre-Socratics.¹⁶ This sense of φύσις becomes standard until Aristotle abandons an approach to natural philosophy that attempts to unveil the true ‘nature’ of a thing by discovering its origin and development.¹⁷

The Sophists inherit concerns about φύσις from the Ionian and Eleatic physicists.¹⁸ Φύσις retains its same sense of meaning ‘origin, development,’ and ‘form, character, nature,’ with the Sophists. However, the Sophists introduce an opposition between φύσις and νόμος

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Cf. C. Kahn (1960), p. 201, n. 1 where he argues that it is misleading to draw any absolute distinction between the sense of φύσις as ‘origin, development,’ and the more common one of ‘true character or nature’ on the grounds of the convergence of these two meanings. He astutely points out that these two senses overlap given that the pre-Socratic philosophers endeavored to understand the ‘true nature’ of a thing by discovering from what source, i.e., its origin, and in what way, i.e., its development, it has come to be what it is (p. 202). Cf. also F. Heinimann’s discussion of this fragment of Parmenides (F. Heinimann, *Nomos und Physis* (Basel, 1945), pp. 90f.).

¹⁶ Cf. G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 101-102.

¹⁷ Cf. C. Kahn (1960), p. 202 who points out that this “ancient principle” combining “nature and origin” in the same concept of φύσις is evident in Plato’s use of the creation motif in the *Timaeus*. In Aristotle, the order of the universe is viewed as eternal and ungenerated; the traditional attempt to construct the cosmos from a starting point (ἀρχή) is rejected in favor of new ἀρχαί into which cosmic change and movement are to be understood (C. Kahn (1960), p. 203). Φύσις thus gains a more static sense with Aristotle.

¹⁸ I have relied upon W. K. C. Guthrie’s *The Sophists* (Cambridge, 1971) for this background on the Sophistic distinction of φύσις vs. νόμος as well as F. Heinimann’s *Nomos und Physis* (Basel, 1965).

(custom, convention, law) that is not recognized by the pre-Socratics.¹⁹ Unfortunately, most of the record of the figures from the Sophistic movement comes from over a half century later in the dialogues of Plato. However, in Fragment B 3 of Protagoras, a glimpse of the distinction between νόμος and φύσις can be seen. Here Protagoras states that learning requires both φύσις and ἄσκησις, “training.” Protagoras does not reject φύσις, but equally emphasizes the importance of education, thus implying that φύσις without ἄσκησις is essentially insufficient for the development of man, presumably, to overcome what Hippias later refers to as the ‘tyranny of νόμος.’²⁰

According to Plato in the dialogue bearing Protagoras’ name, Protagoras asserts the doctrine of *homo mensura omnium*, which Plato interprets as a principle of determined relativism. This doctrine implies that Protagoras’ notion of ἄσκησις and νόμος would be relative to each individual person and city state, such that the particular type of training and custom employed to develop φύσις would vary from culture to culture.

¹⁹ Cf. C. Kahn, *Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 15 for his comparison of Heraclitus’ view of φύσις and νόμος with that of the Sophists. He states that to Heraclitus, “there is no split in principle between *nomos* and nature. As an institution, law is neither man-made nor conventional: it is the expression in social terms of the cosmic order for which another name is Justice” (Kahn (1978) p. 15). Kahn stresses how this contrasts with the Sophists who oppose φύσις to νόμος. Cf. W. Jaeger, “Praise of Law; the Origin of Legal Philosophy and the Greeks,” in *Interpretations of Modern Legal Philosophies*, ed. by P. Sayre (New York, 1947), pp. 352-75 for the historical development of the idea of law (νόμος) in Greek thought. Also, cf. G. R. Morrow, “Plato and the Law of Nature,” in *Essays in Political Theory*, ed. by Knovitz and Murphy (Ithaca, 1948), pp. 17-44 for a specific treatment of the philosophical conflict of νόμος and φύσις in the 5th century.

²⁰ In Plato’s *Protagoras*, Hippias addresses the company as fellow-citizens, by nature (φύσει) rather than by law and custom (νόμῳ). Later, he states that nature binds like and like together, while *nomos* is a tyrant (337 C). The later Sophists, specifically, Antiphon, further develop the distinction between νόμος and φύσις whereas the law of convention is condemned as a restraint on nature. In turn, this antithesis between conventional and natural law is brought to its radical extreme by such figures as Callicles and Thrasymachus portrayed respectively by Plato in the *Gorgias* and *Republic* who advocate the natural right of the strong. Nature thus becomes supreme to the later Sophists as in the pre-Socratic vision of the cosmos. However, unlike the early pre-Socratics, the later Sophists’ notion of nature is not connected to the larger cosmos and divinity. Man’s individual nature and will is held as supreme. For further discussion of the νόμος vs. φύσις distinction cf. W. K. C. Guthrie’s *The Sophists* (Cambridge, 1971) and F. Heinemann’s *Nomos und Physis* (Basel, 1965).

Protagoras also is concerned with nature (in the external sense of the term) in relationship to the origin of the state. Although his treatise Περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ καταστάσεως, “On the Original Condition of Mankind,” does not survive, we can rely upon a section of Plato’s *Protagoras* to obtain a sense of Protagoras’ view through which he conveys a theory of the origin of civilization. This three-stage anthropological scheme progresses from an initial primitive condition of life, to the formation of social compacts with the concepts of morality and justice (αἰδώς and δίκη), and, finally, culminates with the political and cultural development made manifest in the *polis*. In this μῦθος, the innate sense of morality and justice provided by φύσις is insufficient in the development of man. Again, education, in which the νόμος (law) of the state is instrumental, is necessary for the development of these qualities.

The φύσις vs. νόμος antithesis surfaces in the literature of the 5th century B.C.E. R. Thomas persuasively demonstrates that Herodotus’ ethnography is informed by the ideas and speculations about the φύσις vs. νόμος antithesis present in the writings of the medical writers and Sophists of the mid-late 5th century.²¹ Herodotus, Thomas argues, pairs the two terms suggestively in such a way as to imply that “*nomos* and *physis* are not simply complementary but in some way antithetical.”²² For example, in the Demaratus exchange, Xerxes initially states that fear makes people better than their φύσις. Demaratus replies that δεσπότης νόμος, “tyrant *nomos*” is what is crucial (VII 103.4; 104.4). In II. 45.2, Herodotus remarks that the Greeks do not understand at all either the φύσις or νομοί of the Egyptians. Thomas concludes that Herodotus draws an antithesis between these two terms in a manner

²¹ R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

indicating his belief that νόμος/νόμοι are the crucial determining factors in ethnic character, to Herodotus, “*nomos* is king” over φύσις. As Thomas asserts, this statement reflects the views expressed by Sophists such as Hippias, who, in Plato’s *Protagoras*, says that νόμος is a tyrant (337d1-e2), and, in the first sentence of the Hippocratic *Gen./Nat. Child*, says Νόμος μὲν πάντα κρατύνει. “*Nomos* governs all.”²³

Thomas argues that Herodotus’ ethnographical observations, in addition to the φύσις vs. νόμος antithesis, are shaped to a degree by the idea of φύσις held by the *physiologoi*.²⁴ In his treatment of the Scythians and Lybians, Herodotus depicts the differences between these two peoples as part of a larger picture “in which it is the climate, the sun, the heat, which are having this effect on these particular groups, and the plants as well as humans.”²⁵ Herodotus sees the differences through the great variations or alterations of nature: heat, climate and geographical accidents. Accordingly, Herodotus exhibits an awareness of the view that nature, in the external sense, accounts for differences among peoples. The line of reasoning behind this theory is aligned with ideas about φύσις held by the pre-Socratics and medical writers: Herodotus’ exposition on the differences among peoples is “ethnography in the service of the study of nature; the exposition of differences among the Scythians and Lybians is instrumental in revealing some fundamental characteristics of φύσις.”²⁶

The concepts of φύσις and νόμος and the relationship between these terms are thus present in the works of Herodotus, who was a contemporary and friend of Sophocles.²⁷ As R.

²³ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²⁴ Ibid., Ch. 2 and Ch. 5.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Herodotus’ close connection with Sophocles is indicated by the ode that Sophocles wrote to Herodotus (D. *Anth. Lyr.* Fasc. I).

Thomas has made evident, the treatment of these concepts reflects the views of the pre-Socratics, the Sophists, and the medical writers of the mid-late 5th century B.C.E.

The legacy of φύσις and its cognates in Greek tragedy is also significant to this study.²⁸ In his examination of the occurrences of φύσις and its cognates in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, C.E. Hajistephanou demonstrates that occurrences of φύσις and its cognates are much rarer in Aeschylus than in the other two tragedians.²⁹ Φύσις appears only five times altogether in the plays of Aeschylus, in contrast to its thirty-six occurrences in the plays and fragments of Sophocles and its sixty-four occurrences in those of Euripides.³⁰ In Aeschylus, φύσις and its cognates, φύω, σύμφυτος and φυτουργός, which occur only in about a dozen instances, simply mean 'birth' or 'to be born.'³¹ In Sophocles, however, φύσις and its cognates are used more frequently and with a greater variety of meanings; they not only include the meanings of φύσις and φύω found in Aeschylus, i.e. 'birth' and its cognates, but also are used to suggest stages of growth and kinds of growth. For example, Sophocles refers to the young and old, man and woman, slave and free, noble and low-born, in terms of φύσις.³² In addition, he applies this term and its cognates in the sense of 'character' or 'nature' either to denote 'noble nature' or to bring out characteristics which have no relation to the conception of nobility.³³ Finally, in Euripides, Hajistephanou demonstrates that φύσις and its cognates occur with even more frequency and variety of meaning than in Sophocles.

²⁸ Cf. the following discussions of the history of φύσις and its various meanings in the three tragedians: J. W. Beardslee, *The use of ΦΥΣΙΣ in fifth-century Greek literature* (diss.), Chicago (Illinois) 1918; T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Sophocles* (Oxford, 1936); J. L. Myres, *The Political Ideas of the Greeks* (London, 1927).

²⁹ C.E. Hajistephanou, *The Use of ΦΥΣΙΣ and its Cognates in Greek Tragedy with Special Reference to Character Drawing* (Nicosia-Cyprus, 1975).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

We find almost all shades of meaning with which φύσις is used by Sophocles, i.e. 'birth', 'growth,' 'character' or 'nature', but also particular references to lower nature or passion.³⁴ In this sense, φύσις is contrasted to human reason or convention.³⁵

The dramatic treatment of the relationship between φύσις and its cognates and νόμος also has an interesting history in Greek tragedy. In Aeschylus, this aspect of the antithesis between φύσις and νόμος is not present at all. In Sophocles, this contrast is present, but not "in the straightforward terms as in Euripides."³⁶ In Euripides, it is expressed "in straightforward terms and with clear dramatic emphasis, in certain cases."³⁷ Of the two sides of the antithesis, φύσις is portrayed as the more important element, while νόμος, δόκημα-δοκεῖν, ὄνομα, represent the "less valid side of the ideas contrasted."³⁸ Hajistephanou concludes that Euripides portrays this antithesis in order to "illustrate certain philosophical problems and ideas with which he seems to have been seriously preoccupied."³⁹

Hajistephanou's study traces all occurrences and meanings of φύσις and its cognates in Greek tragedy. His work proves that Sophocles' use of φύσις and its cognates is much more frequent than that of Aeschylus and more variable. I would add that these differences in occurrence and meaning reflect the influence of so-called 'Enlightenment' thought on Sophocles. The extension of meanings of φύσις and its cognates, from 'birth' to 'growth/development' to 'character/nature' of a given thing, mirrors the development of meanings that this term and its cognates share in early Greek philosophy. Further, Sophocles' interest in the φύσις and νόμος antithesis is reminiscent of the contemporary debate initiated

³⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.; Cf. e.g., *Aj.* 548 f.; *O.T.* 865 ff.; *O.C.* 337 f.; *Ant.* 905 ff.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., abstract.

by the Sophists. We can detect, in certain cases, particularly in the *Antigone*, Sophocles' use of this antithesis in sketching the characters of a play. Although Sophocles does not present the contrast between these two terms in as nearly a straightforward way as Euripides does, this antithesis is suggested by Sophocles' frequency of reference to these terms and their cognates and through their juxtaposition throughout this play.

How did the ideas of the pre-Socratics enter into the tragedies of Sophocles? As discussed in the introduction, a variety of possibilities exist, given the fluid nature of intellectual influence. First, since Sophocles himself is documented as having visited Ionia when he served as a general, he could have been directly exposed to the philosophical ideas of the pre-Socratics during this time period.⁴⁰ Secondly, he could have been exposed to these ideas filtered through the work of his friend Herodotus. Finally, since νόμος and φύσις certainly were the philosophical buzz words at this period, Sophocles' dramatic treatment of these concepts could reflect the popularization of these concepts in the intellectual and social climate of this time period. Although this issue is difficult to ascertain, I would argue that the first possibility of influence is most likely. Sophocles' selection of certain pre-Socratic concepts, including the φύσις and νόμος issue, and dramatic treatment thereof reflects his own direct awareness of pre-Socratic and Sophistic thought. He does not represent the concepts of νόμος and φύσις as colored by the ethnographical concerns of Herodotus; rather, Sophocles' treatment of these issues reflects a unique marriage of the technical purity of pre-Socratic concepts to myth and traditional religion, as well as the contrast of Sophistic views of these concepts with that of the pre-Socratics. Sophocles thus is engaged in a process of re-mythologizing pre-Socratic thought in its fusion with myth and traditional religion. With the

⁴⁰ Cf. Ion of Chios, *Epidemiai* Athen. 13.603e-604d (=FGRH 392, F6), which records the visits of Athenian generals, including Sophocles, to Chios and other sites in Ionia.

precedent of Herodotus in mind, let us turn to Sophocles' *Antigone*, which dramatically treats the ideas of the *physiologoi* and those of the Sophists.

R. Goheen persuasively argues that elements of the νόμος vs. φύσις debate are played out dramatically in Sophocles' *Antigone*. He claims that Sophocles offers in the *Antigone* "one of the first known attempts to probe and focus this issue in the specific telling terms of 'nature' and 'law.'" ⁴¹ Goheen determines this issue to be reflective of the tension between nature and law that was just beginning to become a subject of critical debate among the early Sophists at this time. ⁴² Goheen goes further to identify many other Sophistic traces, which he isolates in the character of Creon in keeping with traditional view of previous scholars. ⁴³ However, Goheen, like Segal, fails to recognize the opposing philosophical strain – the pre-Socratic vision of νόμος and φύσις – against which Creon's Sophistic view of nature and law clashes.

In the *Antigone*, Sophocles channels the contrasting notions of the relationship between φύσις and νόμος held by the pre-Socratic philosophers and the early Sophists into the characters of the tragedy. Antigone is portrayed as a zealous adherent to a pre-Socratic view on φύσις that is interconnected with both νόμος and the justice of the gods. In contrast, Creon is depicted as upholding the early Protagorean view praising the conquest and control of nature by means of νόμος. Within this general conflict between Antigone and Creon, Haemon and Teiresias are characterized as aligning with Antigone's pre-Socratic vision, while the sentry and Ismene share the Sophistic perspective of Creon.

⁴¹ R. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language and Structure* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 90.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

In the opening scene, Antigone and Ismene are depicted as upholding differing notions of the connection between νόμος and φύσις.⁴⁴ In lines 37-38, after informing Ismene of Creon's proclamation forbidding burial of their brother Polynices while allowing for the burial of Eteocles, Antigone challenges Ismene: οὕτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτα, καὶ δείξεις τάχα/ εἴτ' εὐγενῆς πέφυκας εἴτ' ἐσθλῶν κακῆ· "These things are thus to you, and you will soon reveal whether you are noble by nature or you are the evil descendent of noble ancestors." Antigone uses πέφυκας to indicate Ismene's true character or nature, as well as her origin from noble ancestry.⁴⁵ Antigone differentiates between a person who is evil by nature, although of noble ancestry, and a person who is by nature noble in character and ancestry. As a result, Antigone emphasizes the importance of action and deeds in determining the character of an individual, regardless of one's nobility derived from ancestry. Antigone thus implicitly associates the concept of φύσις with the 'character, nature' and 'origin, development' of Ismene.⁴⁶ Additionally, since Antigone warns her sister that her true nature will be revealed by her decision to aid or not to aid Antigone in the burial of Polyneices, Antigone implicitly makes evident her own interest and concern in whether the φύσις of a given thing is hidden or revealed. Like Heraclitus, who endeavors to distinguish each thing "according to its φύσις" and to tell how it truly is in Fr. D. 1, Antigone desires to reveal the true nature of Ismene (δείξεις...πέφυκας). Therefore, Antigone's use of the notion of φύσις mirrors the pre-Socratic use of this concept with respect to its sense of true 'character' and 'origin' of

⁴⁴ I have relied on Mark Griffith's edition with commentary of Sophocles' *Antigone*. (M. Griffith, *Sophocles Antigone* (Cambridge, 1999))

⁴⁵ One might argue that I am over-reading πέφυκας in my claim that this verb invokes the concept of φύσις. However, given the juxtaposition of this verb form with Ismene's own use of ἔφουμεν a few lines later in line 62, which Ismene explicitly contrasts with νόμος, the text supports my claim that πέφυκας invokes the concept of φύσις, thus demonstrating Sophocles' interest in portraying both Antigone's view of this term and its relationship with νόμος and Ismene's contrasting notion of φύσις and the φύσις-νόμος relationship.

⁴⁶ See note 31 above.

Ismene as well as Antigone's interest in the revelation of the φύσις of her sister. Finally, Antigone's use of this concept reveals no interest in the differentiation of φύσις from culture and law (i.e., νόμος), which also reflects the unity of these notions in the philosophy of Heraclitus and contrasts with the Sophistic view severing the connection between νόμος and φύσις.

In contrast, Ismene perceives φύσις as subordinate to and defined by νόμος. In lines 58-62, Ismene, resisting her sister's exhortation to aid in the burial of Polynices, declares:

νῦν δ' αὖ μόνα δὴ νῶ λειμμένα σκόπει
ὄσφ κάκιστ' ὀλούμεθ', εἰ νόμου βία
ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν.
ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ' ὅτι
ἔφυμεν, ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχουμένα·
ἔπειτα δ' οὐνεκ' ἀρχόμεσθ' ἐκ κρεισσόνων
καὶ ταῦτ' ἀκούειν κᾶτι τῶνδ' ἀλγίονα.

Now there are only the two of us remaining,
and see how we will be destroyed very miserably,
if, in spite of law, we will transgress against the ruler's decree and power.
But you must know that we are women by nature,
that we are not meant to fight against men, and that we are ruled
by those who are stronger and must obey in this and in other things even
more painful.

As R. Goheen demonstrates, Ismene here juxtaposes the terms of νόμος, φύσις, and “supposed common sense” (that is implied by ἐννοεῖν (line 61)).⁴⁷ Hence, the poet “has exploited the terms to open to us more penetrating questions: What is human nature, what is law, in what sense is law natural and nature lawful, what is the place of human intelligence in defining law and in respect to nature at large?”⁴⁸ Goheen proceeds to recognize that Ismene here identifies law (νόμος) as “what the ruler sets and that obedience to it is the role of human

⁴⁷ R. Goheen (Princeton, N.J., 1951), pp. 86-87.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

nature, especially feminine nature,” and correctly labels this as the view developed by Creon.⁴⁹ Yet, Goheen claims that this juxtaposition of terms recalls no precise philosophical definition because “we are not entitled to expect a thoroughly logical solution to the many facets of the *nomos-physis* issue, which by all evidence was just beginning to become one of the critical jousting grounds of professional philosophers at this time.”⁵⁰ However, given that Ismene’s speech invoking the terms of φύσις, νόμος, and common sense, immediately follows Antigone’s statement in lines 37-38, in which Antigone uses the verb πέφυκας invoking the pre-Socratic vision of φύσις, I would argue that Ismene’s juxtaposition of these terms responds to and offers a perspective on the relationship of *nomos-physis* that contrasts with Antigone’s concept of φύσις and refers to the Sophistic vision of this relationship.

Ismene, unlike Antigone, is interested in the difference between nature (φύσις) and culture and law (νόμος). To Ismene, nature is defined primarily by her feminine gender (γυναιχ’ ὅτι ἔφουμεν), and νόμος is what is determined by the ruler’s decree and power (εἰ νόμου βία/ ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν). Ismene states that their nature as women both necessitates (χρῆ) their submission (οὐ μαχουμένα) to the rule of men who are more powerful (κραισσόνων) by nature and threatens their cruel destruction (ὄσφ κάκιστ’ ὀλούμεθ’) if they do not submit to the νόμος of their ruler (εἰ νόμου βία/ ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν). This notion of the necessary submission of φύσις to νόμος recalls the Protagorean view advocating mankind’s control of nature by νόμος.⁵¹ And this differentiation between the two terms contrasts with Antigone’s vision of φύσις, suggested by πέφυκας, which does not reveal an interest in the difference between φύσις

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ismene’s view of her φύσις as defined by her female gender squares with Creon’s own perception of the φύσις of Antigone and Ismene (cf. lines 480-490).

and νόμος, but serves to emphasize her concern with the revelation of the true nature and/or origin of Ismene.

Unlike Antigone, Ismene defines the term φύσις by gender (line 61). Although Ismene uses the term to denote the true character of a person, as Antigone does in lines 37-38, she isolates the attribute of gender as the defining characteristic of a person's φύσις, which differs from Antigone's vision of this concept that suggests the more general sense of 'true nature, character,' and 'origin'. To Ismene, her φύσις (and that of Antigone) is her femininity. And, Ismene's selection of feminine gender as the defining characteristic of φύσις makes evident her choice of an attribute that is most easily dominated and controlled by the culture and law (i.e., νόμος) of men physically stronger (κραισσόνων). Unlike Antigone's general pre-Socratic sense of φύσις, suggested by πέφυκας, as meaning true 'character' and 'origin', Ismene defines φύσις as femininity, which is a quality most easily dominated by νόμος. Thus, her identification of feminine gender as the defining characteristic of φύσις reflects the general Sophistic view of the relationship between nature and law in which νόμος subordinates φύσις.

In lines 78-79, Ismene again refers to a cognate of φύσις in a manner reflecting her view of this term. After Antigone tells her that her refusal to bury her brother will dishonor what is honorable to the gods, Ismene responds, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἄτιμα ποιοῦμαι, τὸ δὲ/ βία πολιτῶν δρᾶν ἔφυν ἀμήχανος., "I am not doing dishonor, but I am by nature unable to go against the will of the citizens." Ismene's use of ἔφυν suggests that she perceives her φύσις as subordinate to the will of the citizens of the

polis.⁵² Ismene upholds a vision of φύσις according to which φύσις must be controlled and shaped by the laws of the *polis*, thus mirroring the Protagorean vision of the origin and development of man. Although Ismene does not refer to νόμος explicitly in this passage, this concept is associated with the *polis* and its citizens; the citizens are threatened by Creon with death by stoning, if they do not uphold his proclamation and νόμος (lines 31-36). To Ismene, then, the citizens of the state must endorse the νόμος of Creon. Ismene thus views defiance of the citizens as equivalent to defiance of the νόμος of Creon. Ismene's statement that "it is not in her nature to go against the will of the citizens" thus reflects her general view that her φύσις must be subordinate to the νόμος of Creon.

In contrast to Ismene, Antigone views φύσις as connected both with the φίλια associated with the blood-relations of family and the νομοί stemming from this natural fact and maintained by Zeus and the goddess Δίκη. In line 522, she states, οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν. "It is my nature not to join in hating, but it is my nature to join in loving." The verb form ἔφυν echoes Ismene's use of this form in line 79, which, as demonstrated above, also resonates with Ismene's explicit contrast of the concept of φύσις and νόμος through her references to ἔφουμεν in line 62 and to νόμου in line 59. Antigone's use of the verb, ἔφυν, thus recalls her previous debate with Ismene over the concept of φύσις and its relationship with νόμος that emerges earlier in the play. Here, in line 522, Antigone's use of ἔφυν suggests that she views her own φύσις as inextricably connected to φίλια; and,

⁵² One might argue that this use of ἔφυν does not suggest the concept of φύσις. However, I would argue that Ismene's use of this verb succeeding her previous explicit contrast of φύσις and νόμος, achieved through her use of the verbal form ἔφουμεν in line 62 and reference to νόμου in line 59, resonates with this passage in lines 59-62, and thus implicitly suggests Ismene's view of φύσις and its relationship with νόμος.

thus, that φύσις signifies the general pre-Socratic meaning of true ‘character,’ ‘origin’, in contrast to Ismene who defines this term by femininity. Further, Antigone perceives the νομοί as stemming from the natural fact of her blood-relations with her family (lines 908 and 914).⁵³ These νομοί themselves are the valid principles not only in her own nature, but also in the “unwritten laws” maintained by Zeus, Δίκη and Hades (lines 450–460, 519).⁵⁴ That is, the burial of her brother Polyneices is mandated by her own φύσις and the νομοί issued by this natural fact of φίλια, as well as the by νομοί of the gods. Antigone thus views νόμος as rooted within φύσις and overseen by the gods themselves.⁵⁵ As in the fragments of Heraclitus, φύσις, νόμος, the divine, and justice overlap in the perspective of Antigone. In contrast, Ismene perceives φύσις as an object that must yield to νόμος, which, in the case of Creon’s νόμος, is severed from justice and the divine.⁵⁶

The scene of the sentry’s report also reflects the tension between φύσις and νόμος. Here we see this tension played out by nature (in the larger, external sense of the word) at odds with the proclamation issued by the νόμος of Creon. In lines 406–440, the sentry describes the events leading up to Antigone’s second burial of her brother and the subsequent apprehension of the heroine for this act. Immediately after the guards brush the dust from Polynices’ corpse, the elemental forces of nature respond:

⁵³ Cf. R. Goheen (Princeton, N.J., 1951) pp.88-89.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ We will later see how Antigone later enlarges her definition of φύσις as characterized by her blood-relation with her family (line 523), to include nature in the larger, external sense, as she calls upon the springs and groves of Thebes to witness by what sort of νόμοι she is being condemned (842-56; cf. 905-914; 937-43).

⁵⁶ We will later demonstrate how Creon also embraces a view of the relationship between φύσις and νόμος that is similar to that of Ismene; in his case, the relationship of these two terms, in which the latter dominates the former, is depicted as severed from the justice of the gods, thus further proving how the relationship between these terms is figured through an opposition between Sophistic and pre-Socratic views.

χρόνον τὰδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι
μέσῳ κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος
καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε· καὶ τότε ἔξαίφνης χθονὸς
τυφῶς ἀγείρας σκηπτὸν, οὐράνιον ἄχος,
πίμπλησι πεδίων, πᾶσαν ἀκίζων φόβνη
ὕλης πεδιάδος, ἐν δ' ἔμεστώθη μέγας
ἀϊθήρ· μύσαντες δ' εἴχομεν θεῖαν νόσον.

This lasted until the bright circle of the sun stood still
in the midst of the sky, and the midday heat was burning.
And then a whirlwind on the ground raised up a storm of dust,
a trouble in the sky, and filled the plain, tormenting all the foliage
of the woods that covered the ground there; and the great empty
air was filled with it. We shut our eyes, enduring the god-sent
disease.

The sentry here portrays the air (αἰθέρι), the fire of the sun (ἡλίου), the sky (οὐράνιον) the earth (χθονὸς), as sending a οὐράνιον ἄχος, which he describes as θεῖαν νόσον, in punishment for the unearthing of Polynices' body. The elemental forces of nature thus work in harmony with the divine against the guards, who are the ministers of Creon and the state and act as enforcers of his νόμος. The guard proceeds to describe Antigone as a bird, bereft of her young, and thus as a creature of nature in sympathy with nature's repugnance to the guards' act. The elements of nature, the divine, and Antigone are portrayed as forces that constitute a unity opposed to those connected to the νόμος of Creon forbidding burial of Polynices. Furthermore, although the νόσος is described as θεῖα, nature, too, has agency in this plague: the the air (αἰθέρι), the fire of the sun (ἡλίου), the sky (οὐράνιον), and the earth (χθονὸς) are portrayed as causing the οὐράνιον ἄχος, and thus as collaborative agents working with the divine.

In lines 335-440, the tension between nature and the νόμος issued by Creon is further heightened by the guard's ambivalent depiction of his own feelings about the apprehension of

Antigone.⁵⁷ The guard says that Antigone’s confession of her agency in the burial of Polynices is ἄμ’ ἠδέως ἔμοιγε κάλγεινῶς ἅμα, “both [his] joy and [his] pain as well” (line 436), since it is most pleasant to have escaped his own trouble, but ἐς κακὸν δὲ τοὺς φίλους ἄγειν/ ἄλγεινόν “to lead loved ones into evil is painful” (lines 438-439). Antigone is described as τοὺς φίλους and as one with whom he sympathizes. Yet, the sentry then posits a claim about his own φύσις (nature in the sense of ‘true character, nature’ and/ ‘origin, development’): ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦθ’ ἦσσω λαβεῖν/ ἔμοι πέφυκε τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας. “But it is my nature to take all of this less than my own safety” (lines 439-440). His use of the verb, πέφυκε, suggests that he views his own φύσις as desiring self-protection (τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας), which, in this case, results in the yielding of his φύσις to the νόμος of Creon.

The guard’s portrayal of nature reflects the tension between the pre-Socratic vision of nature and that of the early Sophists. His initial account of the elemental forces, the divine, and even Antigone as creatures of nature unified and responding in cosmic sympathy in resistance to Creon’s decree reflects the pre-Socratic notion of the cosmos in Heraclitus’ doctrine that all things are one: οὐκ ἐμου ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφὸν ἔστιν ἐν πάντα εἶναι. “Listening not to me but to the λόγος, it is wise to agree that all things are one” (Fr. D. 50). Furthermore, the idea that nature, the divine, and mankind are affected by the violation of a divine law by a human law reflects the notion of the interconnectedness of both human and divine law as expressed by Heraclitus in Fr. D. 114:

ξὺν νόῳ λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ ξυνῶ πάντων,

⁵⁷ It is important to note (as we will discuss in greater detail later) that it is only Creon himself who considers his own κήρυγμα, “proclamation,” as νόμος. The guard does not truly believe that the one-man edict is a νόμος, but, due to his fear of Creon’s threats against his own safety, the guard conforms to the mandates of Creon’s νόμος, despite the guard’s “pain” in “leading loved ones (i.e., Antigone) into misfortune” (lines 438-439).

ὄκωσπερ νόμῳ πόλις καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως·
τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ·
κρατεῖ γὰρ τουσοῦτον ὀκόσον ἐθέλει καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσι καὶ περιγίνεται.

Speaking with understanding, they must hold fast to what is shared by all, as a city holds to it νόμος, and even more tightly. For all human laws are nourished by a divine one. It prevails as it will and suffices for all and is more than enough.

Here, in his statement, τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, Heraclitus reveals his view of the intimate connection between the laws of man and the divine. In Fr. D. 33, Heraclitus defines νόμος itself as obeying the counsel of the divine one: νόμος καὶ βουλῇ πείθεσθαι ἑνός. “It is law to obey the counsel of the one.”⁵⁸ He thus again emphasizes the close association between the human and divine. In the episode reported by the sentry, nature and the divine send a plague (θείαν νόσον) when human law disregards the divine law in a manner reflecting the pre-Socratic notion of the interconnectedness of the two types of law.

In contrast, the guard’s ultimate espousal of a view of nature prioritizing safety as its ultimate aim (ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦθ’ ἤσσω λαβεῖν/ ἐμοὶ πέφυκε τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας.), which suggests his view that his φύσις must yield to the νόμος of Creon, broadly reflects the Protagorean anthropological scheme in which man’s vulnerability in the primitive stage of life leads to the formation of societies and subjection to laws. His view of φύσις, implied by πέφυκε, as ultimately yielding to the νόμος of Creon due to his concern for his safety recalls the general Sophistic idea championing the concession of φύσις to νόμος. Echoing Ismene’s

⁵⁸ Since ἑνός echoes ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in Fr. D. 114, Heraclitus here presumably identifies law itself as obeying the divine law. Cf. C. Kahn, *Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 117-118 for a discussion of this issue.

vision of the relationship between these two concepts, the sentry ultimately conforms to the view in which φύσις yields to νόμος.

The sentry's speech, reflecting pre-Socratic and Sophistic ideas, foreshadows the conflict between Creon and Antigone immediately following in lines 450-577. This strain is created through a dispute over the concepts of νόμος and φύσις (as suggested by references to their cognate forms) and the relationship of these terms to the gods and Δίκη. In line 449, upon learning of Antigone's defiance of his proclamation forbidding burial of Polynices in spite of her knowledge of this νόμος, Creon questions Antigone: καὶ δῆτ' ἐτόλμας τούσδ' ὑπερβαίνειν νόμους. "And did you dare to disobey those laws?" Antigone responds in this manner in lines 450-457:

οὐ γάρ τί μοι Ζεὺς ἦν ὁ κηρύξας τάδε,
οὐδ' ἡ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη
τοιούσδ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ὥρισεν νόμους·
οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον φόμην τὰ σὰ
κηρύγμαθ' ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κάσφαλῃ θεῶν
νόμισμα δύνασθαι θνητά γ' ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν.
οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κάχθές ἀλλ' αεὶ ποτε
ζῆ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου φάνη.

For it was not Zeus who made that proclamation,
nor was it Justice who lives with the gods below
that established such laws among men.
Nor do I think that your proclamation is strong enough to have power
for a mortal to override the divine laws, which are unwritten and
unfailing. They are not of today and yesterday, but always live forever;
no one knows when they first were revealed.

Creon's use of νόμους in line 449 thus incites a debate over the meaning of this concept. To Creon, his proclamation is νόμος. Antigone's disobedience of this proclamation by burying her brother constitutes the overriding of a νόμος. As R. Goheen persuasively demonstrates, Creon's identification of νόμος with his own proclamation reflects a development from his

original position subordinating the considerations of friendship and kinship to the welfare of the state (lines 175-5, 192-3) to the less objective grounds beneath Creon's νομοί, upon which rests the claim that it is in his power (as the Chorus relates) to use any sort of νομοί that please him (211-214).⁵⁹ In contrast, Antigone rejects Creon's identification of νόμος with his proclamation. She counters that only Zeus and the goddess Δίκη define νόμοι in such matters. Since neither Zeus nor Δίκη established τοιούσδ' ...νόμους among men, she would not pay the penalty (lines 459-460) for her action among the gods ἀνδρὸς οὐδενὸς φρόνημα δείσασθ' "for fear of any man's temper" (lines 458-459). Consequently, Antigone attributes the creation and ultimate authority of νόμος to both Zeus and Δίκη, and thus to the divine and Justice, which is ἡ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν. Furthermore, in Antigone's perspective, the νόμοι are οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κάχθές ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ποτε/ ζῆ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὄτου' φάνη and thus timeless and neither created nor destroyed, in contrast to Creon's νόμοι, which are created by himself ἀρτίως "as of late" (line 7).⁶⁰

Antigone's classification of νόμοι as ultimately created and controlled by the divine and Δίκη mirrors the view held by the early pre-Socratic philosophers. The intimate relationship between νόμος and the divine again reflects Heraclitus' belief that human laws are nourished by the divine (Fr. D. 114) and that human laws ultimately are identical to the divine laws (Fr. D. 33). Furthermore, the close identification of Δίκη as the enforcer of laws also reflects the pre-Socratic emphasis on Justice in both the cosmos and the world of man. Δίκη plays a fundamental role in the surviving fragments of Heraclitus as upholding the

⁵⁹ R. Goheen (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 87.

⁶⁰ It is important to note that very few thinkers, Sophistic or otherwise, would have viewed an edict by a single man, opposed by convention and by the mass of the citizens, as the norm for νόμος. Sophocles, in the dramatic presentation of Creon's edict as reflective of Sophistic ideas, yet, slanted in the identification of the one-man edict of Creon as νόμος, appears to be deliberately provocative.

μέτρα of the Sun (Fr. D. 120), as punishing the liars among mankind (D.28B), and thus as the personified force that polices both the cosmos and the world of man. In the sole surviving fragment of Anaximander, the concept of justice serves as cosmic reparation between opposing powers that pay the penalty according to the assessment of Time.⁶¹ In this manner, Antigone's portrayal of laws as associated with Justice, the divine, and 'paying the penalty' mirrors the pre-Socratic vision of the cosmos and the world of man as 'nourished by divine laws' upheld by Justice, the violation of which would result in "paying the penalty" for the transgression of such μέτρα.

The conflict between Antigone and Creon is also figured in terms of an opposition between pre-Socratic and Sophistic views about the natural world in general. Creon upholds a perspective on the natural world as an object to be controlled and subdued by man.⁶² He likens Antigone to a spirited horse that should be controlled by a bridle (lines 477-478). And in lines 531-532, Creon depicts Ismene (whom he views as an accomplice of Antigone) as a viper secretly drawing blood from his household. In contrast, Antigone herself is portrayed as having merged with the phenomena of nature.⁶³ In line 426, the guard likens her reaction to the guards' unearthing of her burial of Polyneices to that of "an embittered bird" bereaved of its nestlings. And in lines 823-833, Antigone compares her own fate of being shut up in an isolated, rocky cavern to the "saddest death" of Niobe, whom ...τὰν κισσοῦ ὡς ἀτενῆς/ πετραία βλάστα δάμασεν," "the growth of rock, like clinging ivy, subdued," and rain and

⁶¹ Cf. C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 161, for a discussion of Justice in Heraclitus and Anaximander. In a later discussion of the scene between Creon and Teiresias, I will demonstrate in greater detail the impact of Anaximander's notion of retributive Justice and Necessity on the play in general.

⁶² Cf. C. Segal, "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*," *Arion*, III, No. 2 (1964), and R. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language and Structure* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), pp. 14-16.

⁶³ Cf. C. Segal, "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*," *Arion*, III, No. 2 (1964), for a discussion of Antigone's fusion with natural phenomena and her comparison to Niobe.

snow never abandon (οὐδαμὰ λείπει). Antigone depicts her exile as inducing her metamorphosis into the elements of nature. Her imagined physical transformation into the rocky cave that is exposed to the forces of nature on account of upholding the “unwritten and secure” νόμοι mandating the burial of her brother mirrors her ideological espousal of the interconnectness of φύσις and νόμος.

In the third episode, the conflict between Creon and Haemon is also created by their differing visions of both the definitions of φύσις and νόμος and the relationship between these two concepts, thus again reflecting the opposition between pre-Socratic and Sophistic views. In line 642, Creon uses a form of the verb φύω in a manner suggesting his perspective on φύσις. After Haemon declares his allegiance to his father γνώμας ἔχων χρηστὰς, “having good judgements” (line 635), Creon, missing the subtlety of Haemon’s words in the description of γνώμας as χρηστὰς (the implication being that Haemon prioritizes his father’s judgments and guidance only when good), states that a son’s priority of a father’s judgment is τούτου γὰρ οὐνεκ’ ἄνδρες εὐχονται γονὰς/κατηκόους φύσαντες ἐν δόμοις ἔκειν, “the reason why men pray that they may beget and hold in their house obedient offspring” (line 642), thus confirming his view that γνώμη πατρῶας πάντ’ ὀπισθεν ἐστάναι, “all things should stand second to a father’s judgment”(line 640). In order to insure Haemon’s loyalty to his father over ἡδονῆς γυναικὸς, “pleasure in a woman” (lines 649-650), Creon employs φύσαντες and thus implies his view of φύσις as signifying one’s genetic descent. Furthermore, Creon’s use of φύσαντες suggests his belief that the purpose of man’s φύσις is to beget γονὰς...κατηκόους, “obedient children,” and thus implies that the φύσις of offspring is obedience and submission to father’s judgment (γνώμη πατρῶας). Consequently, Creon’s use of φύσαντες makes evident his view of φύσις as

denoting physical generation with its value measured by the quality of obedience exhibited by the descendants. Φύσις thus is defined by an attribute suggesting that it is susceptible to power and control.⁶⁴

In line 647, Creon again implicitly invokes the concept of φύσις in his expression that one who produces ἀνωφέλητα...τέκνα, “an unhelpful son” (i.e., one who does not punish a father’s enemy with evil and honor his friend equally as he would himself (lines 643-645)) ἄλλο πλὴν αὐτῷ πόνους/ φῦσαι, πολὺν δὲ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων, “begets nothing other than trouble for himself, and much laughter to his enemies.” Creon’s use of the verbal form φῦσαι again suggests that φύσις signifies physical generation deriving its value from Haemon’s obedience to his father. For, Creon threatens Haemon with the assertion that sons who are not κατηκόους to a father’s judgment create hardships for their fathers. He again makes evident his view of obedience as the φύσις of a son (i.e., an object to be controlled by his father), and that trouble and πολὺν δὲ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων are the result of a son who is not submissive to his father’s judgment.

Creon refers to a cognate of φύω again in his speech to Haemon. In lines 659-660, after revealing his intention of executing Antigone for disobeying his proclamation in spite of the fact that she is related to him (lines 655-658), Creon, in defense of this act, states εἰ γὰρ δὴ τά γ’ ἐγγενῆ φύσει/ ἄκοσμα θρέψω, κάρτα τοὺς ἔξω γένους. “If I raise those of my race to be rebellious by nature, I certainly will do so with those outside it.” Here, his use of φύσει suggests that someone, regardless of their relation, should be killed if they possess a

⁶⁴ One might argue that I am over-reading Creon’s use of φύσαντες in my claim that this cognate of φύω makes evident Creon’s view of the concept of φύσις. However, since Creon employs derivatives of the verb φύω three more times in his speech to Haemon and in conjunction with his view of νόμος, I assert that Creon’s usage of verbal forms of φύω reflects his concern with the concept of φύσις and its relationship to νόμος.

φύσις that is ἄκοσμος, “rebellious” or “in a state of disorder.” And since we learn in lines 670-680 that Creon associates πειθαρχία, “obedience,” (the opposite of ἀναρχίας in line 672) with τοῖς κοσμουμένοις, his notion of κόσμος connotes the sense of submission to power and control. Hence, Creon suggests his belief that φύσις should be controlled by his νόμος.⁶⁵ Furthermore, as R. Goheen demonstrates, Creon here denies the relevance of blood relationship (τά γ’ ἐγγενῆ φύσει), which is “of course to Antigone...a natural fact of the greatest moral weight.”⁶⁶ Creon, as a result, denies Antigone’s very definition of φύσις.

The concept of φύσις occurs explicitly in the discourse between Haemon and Creon in a manner again revealing Creon’s view of this concept. In lines 726-727, he sarcastically questions Haemon, οἱ τηλικοῖδε καὶ διδασκόμεσθα δὴ/ φρονεῖν πρὸς ἀνδρὸς τηλικοῦδε τὴν φύσιν; “So men of my age are to be taught sense by a man of your age by nature?” Creon defines nature through the natural distinction of youth and age and, as a result, selects qualities in the definition of φύσις mandating Haemon’s submission to Creon’s power and control.⁶⁷ As in the case of Ismene, who defines φύσις by the quality of femininity, Creon uses the distinctions of youth and old age to define φύσις and to require Haemon’s submission to his own power. Creon thus again asserts his view of nature as an object to be controlled and ruled by his own power. And this perspective tragically leads him to execute Antigone in the attempt to control her φύσις, which he views as ἄκοσμος.

⁶⁵ One also might conclude that Creon suggests that νόμος always must respond accurately to φύσις. For example, those with rebellious natures must be punished by good laws. I would argue that in this case, φύσις still remains subject to νόμος; the creation of νόμος to punish φύσις ultimately would result in the submission of φύσις to nomos.

⁶⁶ R. Goheen, (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 88.

⁶⁷ Here, the reading of τὴν φύσιν as reflective of Creon’s own notion of this concept and its relationship to νόμος is confirmed by its resonance with Creon’s reference to cognates of φύω four times in his speech to Haemon. Furthermore, Creon, in lines 663-667, explicitly refers to the concept of νόμος, which further confirms that Creon is concerned with the concept of φύσις and its relationship to νόμος in this speech to Haemon.

One might argue that Creon understands his power as established and justified by natural hierarchies; he thus does not rule nature, but rules on the basis of natural distinctions. I agree that Creon views his power as justified by natural hierarchies of youth and old age, male and female. However, I am suggesting that he deliberately selects and defines the character or nature of Haemon by these hierarchies in order to force nature to yield to his νόμος. Unlike Antigone, who defines φύσις in the general, pre-Socratic sense of true 'character/origin' and finds no distinction between φύσις and νόμος, but views these terms as interconnected, Creon finds a distinction between these two terms and purposefully defines φύσις in a narrow sense as constituted by hierarchical qualities in order to justify his domination of φύσις by his νόμος.

In lines 663-7, Creon provides a picture of his view of the relationship between φύσις and νόμος. He states:

ὅστις δ' ὑπερβάς ἢ νόμους βιάζεται,
ἢ τούπιτάσσειν τοῖς κρατύνουσιν νοεῖ,
οὐκ ἔστ' ἐπαίνου τοῦτον ἐξ ἐμοῦ τυχεῖν.
ἀλλ' ὄν πόλις στήσειε, τοῦδε χρὴ κλύειν
καὶ σμικρὰ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τάναντία.

But whoever transgresses and does violence to the laws,
or intends to dictate to those in power, that man will
never receive praise from me.
But one must obey the man whom the city sets up in power
in small things and in just things and in its opposite.

After suggesting his view that the φύσις of Haemon is required to yield to his power, Creon explicitly links this view to νόμος. He warns against transgressing or violating νόμους (lines 663-4) and again makes evident his view of the necessary submission of φύσις to νόμος.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ One might argue that Creon here warns against the transgression of either νόμος or φύσις, not only against νόμος. Creon explicitly admonishes lest one might transgress the νόμους in line 663. Implicitly, he

Furthermore, to Creon, this submission is a matter of necessity (χρῆ) (line 666), when it comes to obedience of the ruler καὶ σμικρὰ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τάναντία. Consequently, Creon reveals his belief that φύσις must necessarily yield to νόμος both in matters of justice and in matters opposite to justice. Creon thus possesses a view of the distinctive and subordinate role of φύσις to νόμος, as well as the notion that the latter concept is merely a function of power, irrespective of justice and the gods.⁶⁹ Hence, Creon's view of the relationship between φύσις and νόμος is diametrically opposed to the pre-Socratic view held by Antigone in which these two terms are not only interconnected, but maintained and overseen by Zeus and the goddess Δίκη.

Haemon is portrayed as possessing a view of φύσις and its relationship to νόμος, justice, and the gods that contrasts with Creon's beliefs. In line 683, Haemon, in response to his father's tirade suggesting that φύσις signifies the necessary obedience of a son to his father's judgment, rejoins:

πάτερ, θεοὶ φύουσιν ἀνθρώποις φρένας,
πάντων ὅς ἐστὶ κτημάτων ὑπέρτατον,
ἐγὼ δ' ὅπως σὺ μὴ λέγεις ὀρθῶς τάδε,
οὔτ' ἂν δυναίμην μῆτ' ἐπισταίμην λέγειν·
γένοιτο μέντ' ἄν χάτεροι καλῶς ἔχον.
σοῦ δ' οὖν πέφυκα πάντα προσκοπεῖν ὅσα
λέγει τις ἢ πράσσει τις ἢ ψέγειν ἔχει.

expresses caution against the transgression of the parameters of nature that would result in the transgression of νόμος. That is, Creon, who purposefully limits his view of nature as defined by the hierarchical qualities, youth and old age, male and female, warns lest anyone should overstep the narrow parameters of nature, i.e., youth and femininity, which would lead to the violation of his laws. He appeals to these hierarchical qualities to define nature in order to justify the assertion of his νόμος. In this manner, Creon warns against the transgression of νόμος and φύσις in so far as both reflect his general view of the necessity of the submission of φύσις to νόμος.

⁶⁹ Since Antigone already has identified Zeus and Justice as the forces behind the creation and establishment of the "unwritten and secure" νομοί maintaining the natural right of blood-relations in lines 450-451, Creon's ethically relativist claim asserting that νομοί are merely a function of power irrespective of justice, implies his view of the irrelevancy of the gods in the foundation and establishment of these laws as well. It is important to note that this is true by association in the context of this play.

Father, the gods breed intelligence among men,
which is the best of all possessions. I certainly can not say
and may I never know how to say, that you do not speak
these things correctly. But a different view might be correct.
But it is not possible for you to see what someone says
or does or holds in censure.

Here, Haemon emends Creon's statement that *ἄνδρες εὐχονται γονὰς/κατηκόους φύσαντες ἐν δόμοις ἔκειν*. Haemon claims that the gods (θεοὶ), not men (ἄνδρες), are the agents of φύσις. Furthermore, Haemon offers an alternative view to Creon's equation of good sense as obedience (lines 647-648) with his view of sense (φρένας) as a 'natural' possession (φύουσιν ἀνθρώποις φρένας/πάντων ὅς ἐστὶ κτημάτων ὑπέρτατον).⁷⁰ To Haemon, the gods breed intelligence (φρένας), not obedience, in men by nature. Consequently, Haemon revises his father's definition of nature to connote a connection with intelligence, φρένας, and the divine.

Haemon uses a cognate of φύω again in his speech in line 721 in a manner further suggesting his view of the concept of φύσις. After encouraging his father to retreat from his anger and to change his opinion (*ἀλλ' εἶκε θυμοῦ καὶ μετάστασιν δίδου*), Haemon declares:

πρόσεστι, φήμ' ἔγωγε πρεσβεύειν πολὺ
φῦναι τὸν ἄνδρα πάντ' ἐπιστήμης πλέων·
εἰ δ' οὖν, φιλεῖ γὰρ τοῦτο μὴ ταύτη ῥέπειν,
καὶ τῶν λεγόντων εὖ καλὸν τὸ μανθάνειν.

I say that it is best for a man to be by nature entirely full of knowledge;
but that since things are not accustomed to go that way, it is also
good to learn from those who speak very well.

⁷⁰ Cf. Mark Griffith, *Sophocles Antigone* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 240-1.

Haemon here expresses the view that it is best if a man possesses a φύσις (φῦναι τὸν ἄνδρα) that is entirely full of knowledge (πάντ' ἐπιστήμης πλέων). However, since man's possession of complete knowledge naturally does not often happen (φιλεῖ γὰρ τοῦτο μὴ ταύτη ῥέπειν,), he concedes that it is καὶ τῶν λεγόντων εὖ καλὸν τὸ μανθάνειν. And this is the very ability that Creon lacks in his nature (lines 688-690)) and the one which Haemon possesses (lines 692-695). In this manner, Haemon sketches a picture of φύσις connected to complete knowledge as its aim, but φρένες as the general outcome among mankind.

Haemon's view of complete knowledge as the best φύσις of man, but φρένες as a more likely outcome reflects the cryptic nature of φύσις in Heraclitus' fragments, as well as the general pre-Socratic awareness of man's difficulty in achieving true understanding. In spite of the accessibility of the λόγος to all (Fr. D. 2), Heraclitus acknowledges that recognition of the truth or nature of things (φύσις) is difficult and requires rational inquiry (Fr. D. 35): χρὴ εὖ μάλα πολλῶν ἱστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας εἶναι καθ' Ἡράκλειτον. "It is necessary for men who are lovers of wisdom to be good inquirers into many things according to Heraclitus." For φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, "Nature loves to hide." Accordingly, the discovery of φύσις requires rational inquiry and also expectation (ἔλπηται).⁷¹ In this manner, Haemon's idea that man's natural possession of complete knowledge does not often occur since φιλεῖ γὰρ τοῦτο μὴ ταύτη ῥέπειν echoes the Heraclitean sentiment, φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ.⁷² Furthermore, Haemon's consolatory encouragement, despite the rarity of man's complete knowledge in nature, καὶ τῶν

⁷¹ Cf. C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 30-31, 105 for a discussion of these fragments.

⁷² Cf. also Antigone's expression οὗτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν.(line 523).

λεγόντων εὖ καλὸν τὸ μανθάνειν, “to learn from one speaking well” also reflects the Heraclitean admonition to listen to the λόγος (οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας...) (Fr. D. 50).

Haemon’s vision of the cryptic nature of φύσις and man’s natural difficulty of achieving complete knowledge also reflects the sentiment enunciated by the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes. In Fr. D. 18, Xenophanes says that οὗτοι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖσ’ ὑπέδειξαν, ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον. “Truly the gods have not revealed to mortals all things from the beginning; but mortals by long seeking discover what is better.” And in Fr. D. 34, Xenophanes asserts:

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

As for certain truth, no man has seen it, nor will there ever be a man who knows about the gods and about all the things I mention. For if he succeeds to the full in saying what is completely true, he himself is nevertheless unaware of it; and opinion upon all things is fixed.

Xenophanes thus acknowledges the inability of man to have knowledge about truth.

Haemon’s view of his inability to evaluate the truth of Creon’s words (ἐγὼ δ’ ὅπως σὺ μὴ λέγεις ὀρθῶς τάδε/ οὔτ’ ἂν δυναίμην μήτ’ ἐπισταίμην λέγειν) and his view that complete knowledge among men rarely occurs in nature reflect a similar skepticism concerning man’s ability to have true knowledge.

In lines 710-723, Haemon draws upon images from the natural world in a manner portraying a vision of nature (in the larger, external sense of the word) that again contrasts with Creon’s perspective. He alludes to the phenomenon of trees preserving their branches on the banks of a river by yielding to the flood (ὄρᾱς παρὰ ρεῖθροισι χειμάρροισι ὄσα/

δένδρων ὑπείκει, κλῶνας ὡς ἐκσφύζεται), while those that resist, perish utterly (lines 712-714). Secondly, he recounts an image of a captain of a ship at sea who capsizes his boat in a storm due to his failure to slacken the sail (lines 715-717). Haemon consequently sketches a view of nature exhorting man to yield to nature rather than forcing nature to yield to man as Creon's Sophistic views advocate. Therefore, Haemon, like Antigone, presents a view of nature endorsing the unity of nature and the world of man in a manner reflecting Heraclitus' fundamental doctrine of the unity of all things.⁷³

In addition to their dispute over the concept of φύσις, Haemon and Creon argue about the relation of νόμος to the ruler and the citizens of a πόλις and the justice of the gods. In lines 733-49, as R. Goheen states, Creon and Haemon “split openly on whether the city is to get its rights and directions from one man or whether it belongs to the many and must include religiously ordained principles of justice.”⁷⁴ However, Goheen fails to recognize that this dispute is figured in terms reflecting the pre-Socratic and Sophistic opposition of the relationship between these terms. In lines 737-740, Creon and Haemon exchange the following words:

K: ἄλλω γὰρ ἢ 'μοι χρή με τῆσδ' ἄρχειν χθονός;

H: πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔστ' ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ' ἑνός.

K: οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἢ πόλις νομίζεται;

H: καλῶς ἐρήμης γ' ἂν σὺ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος.

C: Is it necessary for me to rule this land for another and not myself?

H: It is not a city if it belongs to one man.

C: Is not the city considered to belong to the ruler?

H: You would rule well by yourself over a deserted land.

⁷³ Cf. above discussion on Antigone's depiction as unified with nature in the larger, external sense.

⁷⁴ R. Goheen, (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 88.

In this passage, Creon claims that the city is considered to belong to the ruler (line 739). As Goheen demonstrates, Creon's use of νομίζεται, a cognate of νομίζομαι, which is related to νόμος, in line 739 also implies that the city is to receive its νομοί only from him, i.e., the ruler (οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἢ πόλις νομίζεται).⁷⁵ Haemon suggests his own contrasting belief that the city should receive its νομοί, not from one man, but from the many with his response: καλῶς ἐρήμης γ' ἄν σὺ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος. Haemon also criticizes Creon's vision according to which the νομοί of the city are disconnected from both justice and the gods in lines 743 and 745: οὐ γὰρ δίκαιά σ' ἔξαμαρτάνονθ' ὀρῶ...οὐ γὰρ σέβεις, τιμάς γε τὰς θεῶν πατῶν. "Because I see that you are offending against justice...you, trampling on the honors of the gods, show no reverence for them." Haemon implies that the city should receive its νομοί from the many among the citizens, rather than from one man alone; and that these laws should be connected to both justice and the gods.

In contrast to Creon's Sophistic views, Haemon's perspective on the relationship of these concepts mirrors the views of Heraclitus expressed in Fr. D. 114 and D. 2. Like Heraclitus, Haemon recognizes that the city should receive its νομοί from the many, who, presumably, view these laws as ξύνα. Moreover, Haemon also acknowledges that these human laws share an intimate connection to justice and the gods; thus this view mirrors the Heraclitean sentiment that "all human laws are nourished by a divine one." Finally, Haemon scornfully reproaches Creon for listening only to himself, and so again fails to recognize a Heraclitean precept. In Fr. D. 2, Heraclitus criticizes οἱ πολλοὶ who "live as though their thinking (φρόνησιν) were a private possession (ἰδίαν)," in spite of the fact that τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ. Haemon says that Creon's very φύσις lacks the ability to listen to the

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

λόγος of others: σὺ δ' οὐ πέφυκας πάντα προσκοπεῖν ὅσα λέγει τις ἢ πράσσει τις ἢ ψέγειν ἔχει (lines 689-690).⁷⁶ And in line 739, Haemon declares that Creon would be “a fine ruler over a deserted city” due to his refusal to listen to the people of Thebes (line 733). As a result, Haemon views Creon as guilty of listening to his own private φρόνησις rather than to the ξύνος λόγος of the city of Thebes.

This pre-Socratic sentiment resurfaces at another poignant moment in the play. In line 510, Creon accuses Antigone herself of showing regard for her own private φρόνησις: “Are you not ashamed at thinking differently from [the people of Thebes].” Antigone replies that ὀρῶσι χούτοι· σοὶ δ' ὑπίλλουσι στόμα “these men see it; but they curb their tongues because of you” (line 510). She thus makes evident the universality of her view.

Furthermore, Antigone identifies her regard for the burial of τοὺς ὁμοσπλάγχνους, “those of own stock” as a law demanded by the divine: ὅμως ὃ γ' Ἄιδης τοὺς νόμους τούτους ποθεῖ. “But nonetheless, Hades desires these laws.” Consequently, Antigone displays a view of the commonality of her own private φρόνησις with that of the people of Thebes and even the gods below. She recognizes the intimate correlation between her private understanding and the νόμοι that she upholds.

The conclusion of the scene between Creon and Haemon contains another pre-Socratic allusion that further defines the two characters' differing perspectives and thus

⁷⁶ Haemon's criticism of Creon is based on Haemon's own perspective on φύσις as connoting the pre-Socratic meaning of true 'character/origin', as also held by Antigone. In stating that Creon's very φύσις lacks the ability to listen to the λόγος of others, Haemon applies his own pre-Socratic language of φύσις as connoting character/origin in description of Creon's φύσις and depicts Creon as, in fact, yielding to his φύσις (a pre-Socratic tenet) in refusing to listen to the λόγος of others. However, Creon's nature which thwarts his ability to listen to the λόγος of others is anti-pre-Socratic in its outcome. Through the employment of pre-Socratic language and vision of φύσις, Haemon thus portrays Creon as ultimately anti-pre-Socratic.

extends their conflict beyond the contrasting views of φύσις and νόμος. In lines 747-749, Creon and Haemon exchange acerbic words:

K: ὁ γοῦν λόγος σοι παῖς ὑπὲρ κείνης ὄδε.

H: καὶ σοῦ γε κάμοῦ, καὶ θεῶν τῶν νερτέρων.

C: Your argument is all for her at least.

H: Yes, and for you and me and the gods below.

Here, Creon refers to Haemon's entire argument as a λόγος posited on behalf of Antigone. In contrast, Haemon retorts that this λόγος applies to not only Antigone, but also Creon himself, and even the divine. Haemon portrays his argument as a λόγος that is shared and common, while Creon depicts this λόγος as applying only to the individual Antigone. Haemon's view of the λόγος thus recalls the Heraclitean depiction of the λόγος as ξύνος; Creon's perspective is reminiscent of Heraclitus' criticism of οἱ πολλοὶ who live ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν "as though their thinking were a private possession" (Fr. D. 2). As a result, in addition to his pre-Socratic vision of φύσις, Haemon is portrayed as an advocate of a λόγος that possesses the particularly Heraclitean property of being ξύνος. Just as Creon's perspective on nature differs from that of Haemon, so too, Creon's understanding of Haemon's λόγος conflicts with Haemon's comprehension of this concept.

The contrasting perspectives on φύσις and νόμος culminate in the conflict between Creon and Teiresias in lines 999-1090. Teiresias is portrayed as embracing a vision of nature endorsed by both Antigone and Haemon. In contrast, Creon espouses a view reflective of the Sophistic ideal in the subjugation of φύσις. In line 999, Teiresias is depicted as practicing the art (τέχνης... τῆς ἐμῆς) of interpreting omens and signs from the natural world, all of which occur in a diseased and 'unnatural' manner. He observes that the birds are shrieking in a state

of frenzy and tearing each other apart with bloody claws (lines 1000-1004); and that the sacrifice will not kindle, a sign interpreted as the god of fire's refusal to receive this offering (lines 1005-1007); and also, that the gall bladder and thigh bones of the sacrificed animal are diseased (lines 1010-1012). All of these natural signs are indicative of the diseased state of nature that Teiresias attributes to Creon's own judgment: καὶ ταῦτα τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις. "And the city is diseased in such a way because of your judgment." Teiresias' use of φρενὸς echoes Haemon's view of nature as conjoined with good sense (φρένας) in line 683. However, in lines 1050-1053, Teiresias portrays both Creon's mind and his nature as diseased:

T: ὅσω κράτιστον κτημάτων εὐβουλία;
 K: ὅσπερ, οἶμαι, μὴ φρονεῖν πλείστη βλάβη.
 T: ταύτης σὺ μέντοι τῆς νόσου πλήρης ἔφους.

T: How much the best of all possessions is good counsel!
 C: Just as much, I think, as foolishness is the greatest plague.
 T: Your nature suffers with such a disease.

Here Teiresias juxtaposes the use of ἔφους with the depiction of nature in the larger, external sense and, as a result, emphasizes the casual link between the diseased state of nature (in the larger, external sense) and Creon's diseased nature (in the sense of character). The verbal form of ἔφους thus evokes the concept of φύσις and, as a result, sketches a picture of Teiresias' view of Creon's nature. Teiresias suggests that Creon's very nature (ἔφους) suffers from a disease (τῆς νόσου) due to bad judgment (μὴ φρονεῖν), and that it lacks κράτιστον κτημάτων, which Teiresias defines as εὐβουλία, thus extending Haemon's identification of the best possession bestowed upon man in nature by the gods as φρένες.⁷⁷ In this manner,

⁷⁷ One might argue that I am over-translating the common verb φύω here. However, since Sophocles juxtaposes this verbal use of the concept of φύσις in the same passage as the depiction of nature in its

Teiresias pinpoints Creon's diseased vision of nature as the source of the disease plaguing the city.

Teiresias suggests that Creon's φύσις is "diseased" due to his hubristic attitude towards the gods, which is evident in lines 1039-1041. Creon declares to Teiresias that he will not bury the body of Polyneices, οὐδ' εἰ θέλουσ' οἱ Ζηνὸς αἰετοὶ βορὰν/ φέρειν νιν ἀρπάζοντες ἐς Διὸς φρόνους, "even if Zeus' eagles should wish to snatch the body and bear it to the throne of Zeus." Further, he announces that he shall not fear μίαισμα, since he believes that θεοὺς μαιίνειν οὐτις ἀνθρώπων σθένει. "no one among mankind has the strength to pollute the gods." Creon, as a result, spurns the gods on account of his view of nature in which mankind's actions have no influence on the world of nature and the divine. Therefore, Creon denies the pre-Socratic view of the interconnectedness of man, the cosmos, and the divine. His very nature is "diseased" from the perspective of Teiresias.

In contrast, Teiresias stands in a relationship of sympathy with both nature and the divine. He is attuned to signs in nature: he views the frenzied state of the birds as indicative of the diseased state of nature; he interprets the refusal of his offering by the "god of fire" as evidence of the displeasure of the gods in general (lines 1007-1008). Furthermore, his interpretation of the unhealthy state of both nature and the πόλις and of the gods' displeasure as derived from Creon's mind (τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς) also reflects the pre-Socratic view that asserts a relationship of cosmic sympathy between man, nature, and the divine. Finally, Teiresias's claim that good counsel is the greatest possession and his connection of good

larger, external sense of the word in order to stress the causal link between the diseased state of nature (in the external sense) and Creon's diseased nature (in the sense of character), the verbal form ἔφυς has greater significance than its hackneyed usage; it invokes the concept of φύσις and its denotations of 'true character, nature' and 'origin, development' in each given thing and in the larger, external sense. And the intimate connection that Creon's own personal 'nature' shares with 'nature' in the larger, general sense mirrors the role of nature in the cosmos of Heraclitus in which the λόγος is ζῦνος and, accordingly, applies to both the world of man and the cosmos.

judgment and nature reflect the particularly Heraclitean view expressed in Fr. D. 112: σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη καὶ σοφίη, ἀληθῆα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας. “Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom: acting and speaking, perceiving things according to their nature.” Heraclitus, like Teiresias, identifies the greatest trait among men as thinking well, which requires perceiving things κατὰ φύσιν. Creon, in contrast, lacks the best possession of thinking well (μὴ φρονεῖν): he fails to perceive the signs in external nature and, as a result, pollutes his own personal nature (ταύτης σὺ μέντοι τῆς νόσου πλήρης ἔφυς).⁷⁸

In lines 1066-1071, Teiresias portrays Creon’s penalty for both denying the burial of Polyneices and commanding Antigone to be buried alive as connected to the cycle of the cosmos:

ἀλλ’ εὖ γέ τοι κάτισθι μὴ πολλοὺς ἔτι
 τρόχους ἀμιλλητῆρας ἡλίου τελῶν,
 ἐν οἷσι τῶν σῶν αὐτὸς σπλάγχνων ἕνα
 νέκυν νεκρῶν ἀμοιβὸν ἀντιδοὺς ἔση,
 ἀνθ’ ὧν ἔχεις μὲν τῶν ἄνω βαλῶν κάτω,
 ...ἔχεις δὲ τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ’ αὐθῶν
 ἀμοιβρον, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον νέκυν.

But know well that you will not accomplish
 many racing courses of the sun before
 you will give in exchange for corpses
 the corpse of one from your own loins,
 in return for having thrown below one of those who belongs above,
 and you have kept here something belonging to the gods, a corpse deprived,
 unburied, unholy.

⁷⁸ The phenomena of nature are portrayed as closely connected to the affairs of man and the divine throughout the *Antigone* in general in a manner reflecting the pre-Socratic vision of the cosmos. In the choral passage (lines 100-161) in which the chorus rejoices for their salvation from Polyneices, the sun (ἄκτις ἀελίου) is depicted as responsible for the retreat of the Argive soldiers (lines 105-109) in the foreground; the sun also works in alliance both with Zeus, who “hates the boasts of a great tongue” and strikes down Polyneices with fire (lines 127-130), and with the war-god Ares (lines 139-140). In lines 411-424, the guard describes the sun, the earth, and the sky as the cause of the dust storm, which is sent in retaliation for unearthing the inhumed body of Polyneices, and thus in cosmic sympathy with the will of the gods (θεῖαν νόσον) and that of Antigone.

In this passage, Teiresias describes Creon's punishment in cosmic terms likening Creon's penalty to the cycles of the sun (πολλοὺς ἔτι/ τροχούς ἀμιλλητήρας ἡλίου τελῶν). Just as the sun composes the cycle of day and night, Creon's act of burying Antigone alive in the cave will be followed by ἀμοιβὸν ἀντιδοῦς with the corpse of his son Haemon. Creon's action is depicted as constituting a system in which an act of injustice, i.e., burying Antigone alive, requires an act of retribution and the payment of a penalty, as the coming-to-be of day will be followed by night due to the τροχούς...ἡλίου, "courses of the sun." The injustice or dishonor (ἀτίμως) (line 1069) of the act is derived from lodging a ψυχὴν, "living person," ἐν τάφῳ, "in a tomb," and retaining "above" something that belongs to the gods "below" (...ἔχεις δὲ τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ' αὐθραῶν). Creon thus is accused of inverting the cycle of life and death by burying a living person in the earth while keeping a dead corpse above earth. Creon prevents the elements of Polyneices' corpse from returning to the earth, while forcing the living being, Antigone, to be buried in the earth. Creon thus has interrupted and inverted the cycle of life and death, as if he were reversing the course of the sun, and thus day and night itself. And the inversion or interruption of either cycle constitutes an injustice among mankind.

In the sole surviving fragment of Anaximander, Simplicius records that he said the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction too happens, 'κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν' "according to necessity; for they pay the penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time."⁷⁹ This concept of opposites

⁷⁹ Simplicius, *Phys.* 24, 17.

composing a system of coming-to-be and passing away first appears in Anaximander, who describes the constant interchange between opposed substances with a legal metaphor derived from human society (διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην... τῆς ἀδικίας... κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν). Teiresias, like Anaximander, renders Creon's actions in legal language: the language of ἀμοιβὸν ἀντιδοῦς recalls the concepts of paying the penalty and retribution necessitated by the interchange between opposites, which, Anaximander describes as injustice (τῆς ἀδικίας). Teiresias also depicts Creon's act of burying Antigone and denial of Polyneices' burial rites as acts that will invoke the Furies, who are the divine ministers of Justice (lines 1074-1077); and, he depicts the sun (day and night), life and death, as composing a system of opposites engaged in a constant state of interchange, thus reflecting this concept in Anaximander. Creon, in his denial of burial for Polyneices and burial of Antigone while alive, inverts the cycle of life and death, an act for which he must pay the penalty with the death of Haemon. Finally, as in Anaximander, the concept of Necessity is depicted as the powerful force working behind the events of the play. After Teiresias' speech, Creon concedes that he must give up what his heart would have him do because ἀνάγκη δ' οὐχὶ δυσμαχητέον, "one cannot fight against necessity" (line 1106). Creon belatedly identifies ἀνάγκη as the underlying force behind all things.

The idea that Creon's injustice is constituted by his inversion of the natural cycle of life and death due to both his burial of one alive and his refusal to return the body of one who is dead to the earth reflects a notion implicit in the fragments of Heraclitus. In Fr. D. 96, Heraclitus provocatively asserts that νέκυες κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι "corpses should be thrown out quicker than dung." In his discussion of this fragment, Charles Kahn remarks on how this statement expressing contempt for the burial of the dead would be offensive to the

“normal religious sensitivities of an ancient Greek, as every reader of the *Antigone* will recognize.”⁸⁰ Kahn goes on to state that “some allusion to the return of the dead body to the earth and its contribution, by way of its own decay, to the renewal of life from the soil” perhaps lies behind the provocative character of this fragment.⁸¹ To Heraclitus, then, the burial of a dead body is necessary because of its role in the natural cycle of life and death, above and beyond the significance given to it by the conventions of traditional religion. In Heraclitean terms, the prevention of the recycling of the elements of a dead body in the earth would disrupt this unity of opposites of life and death and perhaps transgress the μέτρον, which the Furies, the ministers of Justice, would punish (Fr. D. 94). The injustice of Creon, resulting from the retention of a dead person “above” earth while lodging a living person “below,” is constituted, therefore, not only by his offense against the gods, but also by his interruption of the elemental cycle in general, thus reflecting this notion implicit to fragment D. 96 of Heraclitus.

Although Teiresias implicitly connects Creon’s penalty for denying the burial of Polyneices to the concept of Justice through a reference to the gods’ ministers of Justice, the Furies, in lines 1074-1077, Antigone explicitly invokes the concepts of Justice and injustice with reference to Creon’s actions. In lines 22-23, Antigone describes Creon’s act of providing burial to Eteocles as an instance where Ἐτεοκλέα μὲν, ὡς λέγουσι, σὺν δίκης χρήσει δικαίᾳ καὶ νόμῳ, [Creon] handles Eteocles with justice, as they say, and with just custom.” Antigone classifies Creon’s burial of Eteocles as in accord with νόμος and Justice and implies that the denial of Polyneices’ burial rites is a decree that clashes with this Justice. In line 450, Antigone justifies her defiance of Creon’s proclamation through her statement that

⁸⁰ C. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 212-213.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 213.

neither Zeus nor Δίκη created this decree and thus again portrays Creon's νόμος as being at odds with the concept of Justice. Furthermore, in lines 921 and 928, the heroine bemoans her death sentence questioning what justice of the gods she has transgressed (ποιάν...δαιμόνων δίκην) and invoking equal evils to befall upon those wrongdoers who acted unjustly (ἐκδίκως) against her. She therefore implies through her rhetorical question in line 921 that she has acted in accordance with Justice in contrast to Creon who has acted unjustly (ἐκδίκως) against her and thus in dissension with this concept. Finally, Antigone's entreaty that Creon may suffer equal evils (μὴ πλείω κακὰ) as those inflicted upon her unjustly (ἐκδίκως) reflects the legal language employed by Teiresias describing the penalty that Creon will pay with the life of his son Haemon for the injustices committed by Creon against Antigone and Polyneices. Creon's actions are portrayed as conflicting with the concept of Justice and, in turn, as necessitating his atonement for his injustices with the life of Haemon. And it is the death of Haemon, his own flesh and blood, that finally enables Creon truly to comprehend the meaning of δίκη and the repercussions resulting from transgressions thereof: οἴμ' ὡς ἔοικας ὀψὲ τὴν δίκην ἰδεῖν. "Alas, you seem to have seen justice only late!" (line 1270).

The role of δίκη in general in the *Antigone* reflects the treatment of this concept by the pre-Socratic philosophers. Antigone's call for the infliction of equal evils (μὴ πλείω κακὰ) upon Creon for the injustices (ἐκδίκως) done to her and the subsequent fulfillment of this wish through the death of Haemon, which instructs Creon of the true concept of justice, reflects the Anaximandran cosmic system in which the encroachment of one opposing substance upon its opposite is held as an injustice, necessitating the opposite sequence of infringement to occur. The chorus portrays Haemon's death as the moment when Creon sees

δίκη (1270); justice is the punishment of Creon's injustice of burying Antigone alive and of denying burial to Polyneices through the equal injustice of Haemon's death. For Haemon, like Antigone, has done nothing other than act in accord with justice with his support of one who has upheld the laws of Zeus and Justice itself. Yet, his unjust death, coupled with the unjust death of Antigone, is portrayed as constituting justice itself, thus reflecting the world of Anaximander, in which justice is established by the recompense of an opposed substance for the encroachment of its opposite upon itself, both of which are described as injustices.

Antigone's connection of justice with νόμος, the divine, and nature mirrors the unity of these concepts in the philosophy of Heraclitus. In Fr. D. 114, Heraclitus exhorts mankind: "Speaking with understanding (ξὺν νόῳ λέγοντας), they must hold fast to what is shared by all (τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων), as a city holds to its law (ὄκωσπερ νόμῳ πόλις), and even more firmly, since all human laws (οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι) are nourished by a divine one (ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θείου). The referent of τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων is ambiguous, yet its meaning becomes clearer in consideration of other fragments in which ξύνος is applied to λόγος and δίκη (Fr. D. 80, D. 2). Heraclitus thus urges mankind to cling to such universals as λόγος and δίκη; and he likens the necessity of mankind's adherence to the universals, λόγος and δίκη, to a city's adherence to its νομοί. Heraclitus connects the concepts of λόγος, δίκη, νόμος through the common application of the adjective ξύνος to each. Heraclitus further links these concepts to the divine through the assertion that all human laws (οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι) are nourished by a divine one (ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θείου). Heraclitus therefore conceives of an

intimate relationship between the universals of λόγος, δίκη, and human νομοί, which, in turn, are nourished by one divine law.⁸²

Antigone also perceives a close relationship between δίκη, νόμος, and the divine. She views Creon's burial of Eteocles as according with Justice (σὺν δίκης) and in agreement δικάια καὶ νόμῳ "with a justice and with custom." As a result, she implies that Creon's decree denying burial for Polyneices defies Justice and thus constitutes an unjust νόμος (or no νόμος at all); to Antigone, the νόμοι of mankind should be connected with Justice. Furthermore, she appeals to the fact that neither Zeus nor Justice have crafted Creon's decree in justification of her defiance thereof, and makes evident her view that mankind's laws should be created and thus 'nourished' by the divine and Justice itself.

The ideas of Anaximander and Heraclitus again are manifest in the scene of Antigone's exile in the rocky cave. In lines 846-48, she describes οἷσις νόμοις/ πρὸς ἔρμα τυμβόχωστον ἔρ-/χομαι τάφου ποταινίου, "under what laws [she] comes to the heaped-up mound of [her] strange tomb." She, therefore, identifies the laws (νόμοις) of Creon as effecting her exile and ultimately, death. These laws also condemn her, in the meantime, to endure an existence in which βροτοῖς/ οὔτε <νεκρὸς> νεκροῖσιν/ μέτοικος, οὐ ζῶσιν, οὐ θανοῦσιν. "[she] is living neither among mortals nor as a corpse among corpses, neither with the living nor with the dead." As a result, Creon's νομοί again are depicted as interrupting Antigone's participation in the cycle of life and death. In contrast, Antigone depicts her own vision of νόμος as rooted within φύσις (ἔφυν) (line 905), "a law pegged in

⁸² Cf. C. Kahn, (Cambridge, 1978) , p. 15, for his discussion of the novelty of Heraclitus' restatement of the traditional view of Justice as applying only to mankind (cf. Hesiod, Works and Days 275 ff.) with respect to his generalization of Justice's application to every manifestation of the cosmic order. Additionally, Kahn emphasizes the novelty of his conception of human law "as the unifying principle of the political community, and as grounded in the rational order of nature which unifies the cosmos."

the nature of things as they are for her.”⁸³ This νόμος in φύσις dictates that she overthrow the pseudo-νομοί of Creon preventing the burial of her brother: if she lost a child or husband, she could always have more children or marry another husband; but as a woman with deceased parents, she could never have another brother, τοῦδ’ ἐκπροτιμήσασ’ ἐγὼ/ νόμῳ, “such was the law for whose sake [she] did special honor [to Polyneices].

This argument presented by Antigone in justification for her disobedience of the νόμοι of Creon often has been dismissed by scholars as “naive or crudely sophistic”⁸⁴ and even, in some cases, inauthentic.⁸⁵ I would argue that the content of this argument reflects the idea of Anaximander in which opposing substances “pay the penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time.” Antigone asserts that she would not have disobeyed the citizens (line 907) if her child or husband had been mouldering there (lines 905-906); for, implicitly, their deaths would be replacable with the generation of new life. That is, their destruction would be recompensated through the regeneration of new children or remarriage to a new husband; but, since her own parents are in Hades (911), she could never have another brother (lines 912), i.e., the destruction of her brother can not be recompensated by the creation of another. And this law (νόμου) (lines 908, 914) that is rooted in nature (line 905) motivates Antigone to pay special honor to her brother (line 913) by burying him, thus defying the νομοί of Creon. In other words, Antigone defies the pseudo-νόμοι of Creon because the νόμος of nature, in which the opposing forces of

⁸³ R. Goheen (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 89.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ This passage has stimulated much debate among scholars. Some commentators have deleted the passage all together (A. Jacob (1821)); others excise up to line 920 (e.g., Lehrs, Jebb, Brown); other scholars claim that these objections may be easily satisfied. My interpretation of this passage will contribute to the latter camp of scholarly opinions. Cf. M. Griffith’s detailed commentary on this passage pp. 277-279 (M. Griffith, (1999)) and cf. Kamerbeek, Murnaghan 1986, Neuburg 1990: 54-76, Cropp 1997 for helpful discussion of this passage in general.

creation and destruction must pay recompense to each other for their injustice (i.e., encroachment upon one another), has been stymied, as the destruction of her brother has not been recompensated by the force of creation. Antigone's burial of her brother can not regenerate her brother; but it will effect the elemental recycling of his body in the earth, which will engender creation in the cosmos in some form or another.

Antigone's view that Creon's νόμοι interrupt her own participation in the cycle of life and death (lines 851-852) also reflects pre-Socratic thought. Both Anaximander and Heraclitus assert that the cosmos consists of pairs of opposed substances that cycle between each other.⁸⁶ Antigone, unlike Creon, acknowledges the cyclicity of the cosmos as constituted by opposing forces such as life and death, creation and destruction. She views his νόμοι as thwarting this process in her own life, just as Teiresias understands that Creon's νόμοι invert the cyclicity of life and death preventing the burial of Polyneices.

Φύσις, Νόμος, and Human Reason in the *Antigone*

Throughout the *Antigone*, as R. Goheen astutely points out, φύσις (origin, nature, generation) and νόμος (custom, law, convention) are juxtaposed with the treatment of "reason", revealing an active concern with justice, law, human intelligence, and their relation to reality.⁸⁷ Although I wholly agree with Goheen on this point, I would argue that the juxtaposition of these concepts and the characters' differing perspectives on the relations between these concepts also reflects the tension between the pre-Socratic vision of Antigone and the Sophistic vision of rationality embraced by Creon. In Fr. D. 114, Heraclitus specifies

⁸⁶ However, they differ on whether the encroachment of one pair of opposite upon another constitutes either injustice (in the case of Anaximander) or justice (in Heraclitus).

⁸⁷ R. Goheen (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 86.

ξὺν νόφ λέγοντας as a prerequisite for upholding what is τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων, i.e., the λόγος, all of which he likens to the city's adherence to νόμοι. Heraclitus thus draws an intimate connection between the rational faculty of νόος, the λόγος, and νόμος. Further, since he goes on to claim that the νόμοι of man are nourished by a divine one, Heraclitus integrates the rational faculty of νόος within the divine scheme of the cosmos as well. He thus grounds human law, which is the unifying principle of the πόλις, in the rational order of nature that also unifies the cosmos.⁸⁸

Creon initially appears to espouse a view in which the rational faculties of νόος, understanding, good sense, φρένες, and judgment, γνώμη, lie at the foundation of the νόμοι created by the πόλις; he seems to embrace a pre-Socratic vision in which νόος and νόμος are intimately intertwined. In lines 173-175, Creon himself states that it is impossible (ἀμήχανον) to understand (ἐκμαθεῖν) a man's ψυχὴν τε καὶ φρόνεμα καὶ γνώμην, "spirit, thought, and judgment," until he reveals himself as tested ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ νόμοισιν, "in government and in the laws." Hence Creon expresses the view that a ruler's νόμος reveals a man's mental acuity or lack thereof.

In contrast, Antigone is depicted by Creon and Ismene as lacking a sense of judgment, νόος, and good sense due to her disobedience of the νόμοι of Creon. In line 68, after appealing to her 'weaker' nature as a woman and to the necessity of yielding to the 'stronger' in authority in justification for refusing to aid Antigone (lines 61-64), Ismene sententiously concludes, τὸ γὰρ/ περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα, "for there is no sense in excessive actions." Ismene thus depicts Antigone's mental state as excessive and as lacking judgment itself (οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν). In line 98, Ismene describes Antigone as ἄνους and again

⁸⁸ Cf. C. Kahn (Cambridge, 1978), p. 15.

as lacking the mental faculty of νόος: ...τουτο δ' ἴσθ', ὅτι ἄνους μὲν ἔρχη, τοῖς φίλοις δ' ὀρθῶς φίλη· “Know this much, that you proceed without judgment, but are truly dear to your friends.” Creon, like Ismene, perceives Antigone as ἄνους. However, he also categorizes Ismene in this way. In lines 561-562, Creon says, τὸ παῖδέ φημι τώδε τὴν μὲν ἀρτίως/ ἄνουν πεφάνθαι, τὴν δ' ἀφ' οὗ τὰ πρῶν ἔφυ.” “one of these girls has recently been revealed as having lost her mind, but the other has been so from birth.” And in line 281, Creon indignantly classifies the chorus as ἄνους for saying δαίμονας...πρόνοιαν ἴσχειν τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ πέρι. “that the gods took forethought for this corpse.” Creon accuses those characters, Antigone, Ismene, and the chorus, of lacking the mental faculty of νόος when they appear to disobey or question his νόμος.

However, at the conclusion of the play, Creon ultimately turns out to be the character lacking good judgment. Teiresias reveals that Creon’s φρήν is the cause of disease plaguing the city (καὶ ταῦτα τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις) (line 1015) due both to his νόμος forbidding the burial of Polyneices and to his command to bury Antigone alive. In lines 1262-1263, Creon himself acknowledges that his errors are caused by his mistaken mind: φρεῶν δυσφρόνων ἀμαρτήματα/ στερεὰ θανατόεντ’ “alas for the errors of my mistaken mind, obstinate and death-laden.” The chorus identifies Creon’s realization of his mistaken judgment as the comprehension of justice itself: οἴμ’ ὡς ἔοικας ὀψὲ τὴν δίκην ἰδεῖν. “Alas, you seem to have learned justice only too late!”(line 1270). This lesson is summarized by the chorus again at the conclusion of the play:

πολλῶ τὸ φρονεῖν εὐδαιμονίας
 πρῶτον ὑπάρχει· χρὴ δὲ τὰ γ' ἐς θεοὺς
 μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν· μεγάλοι δὲ λόγοι
 μεγάλας πληγὰς τῶν ὑπεραύχων
 ἀποτείσαντες

γῆρα τὸ φρονεῖν ἐδίδαξαν.

Good sense is by far the chief part of happiness;
and it is necessary not to be impious to the gods.
The great words of boasters always pay the price with great blows,
and teach them to have good sense in old age.

Creon's misery thus is portrayed as arising from his lack of τὸ φρονεῖν. When tested in rule and law, Creon fails at his own test. He, not Antigone, lacks the judgment and good sense necessary to craft just laws. Consequently, Creon's division of reason from νόμοι and νόμοι from the divine leads to a fate befalling a ruler who fails to perceive the intimate connection that exists between rationality, the laws of man, and the divine as espoused by Heraclitus.

The concluding words of the chorus also echo the sentiment expressed by Heraclitus in Fr. D. 112. As we have seen, Heraclitus heralds σωφρονεῖν as the greatest ἀρετή and σοφίη, all of which are intimately connected with perceiving the true φύσις of all things. Similarly, the chorus pinpoints τὸ φρονεῖν as a praiseworthy faculty that is intimately connected with the state of human happiness. However, Creon fails to follow both the chorus' recipe for happiness as well as Heraclitus' definition of ἀρετή and σοφίη. He not only lacks τὸ φρονεῖν, but also fails to perceive the true φύσις of things. As a result, the faculty of rationality is portrayed in the *Antigone* as intertwined in the tension between νόμος and φύσις and the philosophy of the pre-Socratics.

Sophocles' *Antigone* and the Heraclitean Ratio: God/Man = Man/Beast

In the *Antigone*, another vein of pre-Socratic influence is present. R. Goheen persuasively argues that an image pattern drawn from animals and their control in the *Antigone* "introduce into the total structure a basic relationship between the animal, the

human, and the suprahuman and show it to be part of the moral order of the tragic universe".⁸⁹ This relation, he says, can be diagrammed onto the following ratio: "as men are to brutes so are the gods to men".⁹⁰ Goheen correctly claims that the play makes clear "not only the superiority of gods to men but also...the inaccuracy of that kind of human arithmetic which transfers the terms within the ratio and leads a man to set himself up as mentally and morally superior to his fellow men".⁹¹ And, to Goheen, Creon is guilty of breaking the ratio and ultimately is broken by it.⁹²

Although I agree with this line of reasoning, Goheen fails to identify this thought pattern in the *Antigone* as a reflection of pre-Socratic thought. This ratio of God/man = man/beast is present in the extant fragments of Heraclitus. In fact, as H. Frankel has proven, the general ratio of $A/B = B/C$ is a thought pattern ubiquitous to the philosophy of Heraclitus.⁹³ In Fr. D. 79, Heraclitus states: ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος ὄκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός. "A man is found infantile by a god, just as a child by man. Hence a ratio of God/man = man/boy, or $A/B = B/C$, is evident. As Frankel argues, there are three planes in this ratio: the levels of God, man, and child (A, B, and C). The "degree of perfection decreases, and the degree of imperfection increases, in equal measure in the transitions from A to B and from B to C ($A/B = B/C$)".⁹⁴ Man may be wise in comparison to a boy, and infantile in comparison to God; hence, man embodies both qualities and exemplifies the Heraclitean unity of opposites. The ratio is applied explicitly to God/man =

⁸⁹ R. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language and Structure* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 26.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ H. Frankel, "A Thought Pattern in Heraclitus," *American Journal of Philology*, 59 (1938), 309-37. Selection is reprinted in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, pp. 214-28.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 214.

man/beast in Fr. D. 82 and 83. In *Hippias Major* 289 A-B, Plato attributes to Heraclitus the saying:

ὡς ἄρα πιθήκων ὁ κάλλιστος αἰσχροῦς ἀνθρώπων γένει
συμβάλλειν... ὅτι ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πίθηκος
φανεῖται...

The most beautiful of apes is ugly in comparison to the race of man;
the wisest of men appears as an ape to a god...

In the *Antigone*, as Goheen makes evident, Creon employs animal imagery in a manner revealing his own defiant attitude towards the ratio, God/man = man/beasts. In lines 289-92, Creon applies an image drawn from draft-animal-yoking to the citizens. He thus indicates his view of his fellow men as beasts and of his own superiority to them. When Antigone confronts Creon and expresses no intention of yielding to his decrees, Creon states: "I have seen spirited horses broken just by a small bridle. No, there is no room for pride when one is one's neighbor's slave." Creon's animal imagery again reveals his view of his fellow men, especially those who oppose him, as "brutishly and slavishly his inferiors."⁹⁵ To Creon, Polyneices ἠθέλησε δ' αἵματος/ κοινοῦ πάσασθαι, "wished to feed on kindred blood" (201-2), and he speaks of Polyneices' body as animal carrion (lines 205-206):

ἐᾶν δ' ἄθαρτον καὶ πρὸς οἰωνῶν δέμας
καὶ πρὸς κυνῶν ἐδεστὸν αἰκισθέν τ' ἰδεῖν.

A corpse for birds and dogs to eat and [leave] mangled
for all to see.

Hence Creon employs animal imagery to reduce the body of Polyneices to the level of a beast in order to assert his own superiority to his fellow man. In lines 1040-1045, Creon's reference to Polyneices' body as animal carrion is juxtaposed with his expression of hubris towards the

⁹⁵ R. Goheen, (1951), p. 28; cf. R. Goheen (1951), pp. 26-35 for a complete discussion of Creon's use of animal imagery to assert his own superiority over his fellow men.

gods; he thus reveals his own belief in his superiority, not only to his fellow man (whom he reduces to the level of a beast) but also to Zeus himself: “but this dead man you shall not hide in a grave, not though the eagles of Zeus should bear the carrion, snatching it to the throne of Zeus itself...I am certain no human has the power to pollute the gods.” Creon breaks the ratio of god/man = man/beast by elevating himself above the level of the gods and reducing his fellow men to the level of beasts. Creon therefore defies the Heraclitean ratio asserting the tripartite relationship between the gods, man, and the creatures of nature.

The choral odes are instrumental in setting up the ratio of God/man = man/beast. The odes make evident the proper relation between these three terms, and, in turn, clearly show the fundamental error of Creon’s defiance of this ratio through his reduction of fellow humans to the level of beasts and slaves and his self-elevation above the gods.⁹⁶ The odes, therefore, reflect the Heraclitean universe in which the three planes – those of god, man, and beast – constitute a ratio in which the three terms stand in varying degrees of superiority and inferiority/ perfection and imperfection with one another; and, accordingly, identical terms, i.e., two men, have identical levels of superiority and inferiority to each other.

The first ode (lines 100-54) includes a series of images drawn from charioteering and the racetrack in which the “gods are the drivers”:⁹⁷ Ares is the “trustworthy trace-horse” driver bringing victory to the Thebans (139-40); the Argive host, having nearly raced victoriously to the “finish wire”, is struck down by Zeus (131-3); and the sun “drives in head-long flight...the white-shielded hero from Argos” (106-109). The ode presents the gods as the drivers, and, thus, as superior to both man and the beasts. And, as Goheen states, this is the recognition to

⁹⁶ R. Goheen (1951), pp. 30-31.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

which Creon finally comes at the end of the play as he realizes that he is “the driven rather than the driver” (lines 1272-75):⁹⁸

...έν δ' έμῳ κάρῃ
θεός τόντ' ἄρα τότε με μέγα βάρος ἔχων
ἔπαισεν, έν δ' ἔσεισεν ἀγρίαῖς ὁδοῖς,
οἴμοι λακπάτητον ἀντρέπων χαράν.

Now surely some god struck down on my head, constraining me with great weight. He drove me into wild ways, overturning my joy so that it is trampled down.

In the second ode (lines 332-75), the chorus' animal imagery opposes Creon's self-elevation above both man and the divine.⁹⁹ The yoke is mentioned in relation to man's prowess in subduing and utilizing the earth and its creatures.¹⁰⁰ However, the yoke is absent when the ode treats man's control of himself and his fellow men. Instead, the chorus presents καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν/ φρόνημα, “words and wind-swift thought,” as the normative means of man's control over himself and his fellow men: καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν/ φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους/ ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο...“man has taught himself speech and wind-swift thought and the dispositions which regulate cities” (lines 354-6). The chorus thus implies that the use of the yoke to control beasts is normative, but not in the case of man's control of himself and his fellow man.¹⁰¹ Man's use of the yoke to control beasts accords with the proper relationship of man/ beast (B/C) in the A/B = B/C ratio. The use of the yoke to control himself and his fellow men violates the terms, as it reduces mankind to the level of

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ As both Goheen and C. Segal have argued, this ode is not a simple glorification of human accomplishment and control over nature and beasts; the dangerous quality of man's faculties is stated in lines 365-368: “With some sort of cunning, inventive beyond all hope, he arrives sometimes at evil, and sometimes good.” The chorus goes on to state that if he honors both the laws of earth and the justice of the gods, high is his city. Thus, man's acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of the laws of the earth, justice, and the gods is necessary for man to be ὑπίπολις. And this recognition of the interconnectedness of the laws of the earth, justice, and the gods is a principle that also reflects the Heraclitean sentiment expressed in Fr. D. 114.

beasts. In lines 361-364, the chorus states that mankind is all-resourceful (ἄπορος ἐπ’ οὐδὲν ἔρχεται/ τὸ μέλλον) and has no means of escape only from Hades. Mankind is thus inferior only to the gods. Consequently, the ode sets up the ratio of God/man = man/beasts as the structure of the tragic universe: as beasts are inferior to men, so men are inferior to the gods. The transference of an inside and an outside term, as in the case of Creon’s reduction of his fellow man to the level of beasts, results in the violation of this ratio and “faulty intellection.”¹⁰² Yet Creon himself is forced to express recognition of this Heraclitean ratio and the proper relationship between the three planes of existence: at the end of the play, he states his inferiority to the gods in the terms of the imagery of being driven and bridled, which he had erroneously applied to the relation of his fellow men to himself (lines 1272-5).¹⁰³

Teiresias and Antigone understand the Heraclitean ratio orchestrating the universe and the proper relationship between the individual terms comprising this ratio. Antigone expresses her anxiety that the body of Polyneices’ would become animal carrion (lines 29-30), and thus reduced to the level of beasts. And Teiresias also warns that it is not for animals to consecrate the corpses of men (1080-3). Both Antigone and Teiresias thus recognize Creon’s reduction of Polyneices’ corpse to animal fodder as an action that shatters the ratio of man/beast. Furthermore, both characters recognize the superiority of the divine in relation to man: Antigone expresses her belief that a proclamation of a mortal cannot override God’s ordinances, which are unwritten and secure (lines 455-456); Teiresias views Creon’s expression of hubris – that he would not bury Polyneices in a grave, even if the eagles of Zeus should bear the carrion to the throne of Zeus itself – as

¹⁰² Cf. R. Goheen (1951), pp. 33-35 for more analysis of how the odes set up the ratio of God/man = man/beast in the *Antigone*.

¹⁰³ Cf. R. Goheen (1995), p. 33.

derived from a sick mind (line 1052). Antigone and Teiresias therefore recognize the tripartite structure of the universe, the divisions between the world of the gods, man, and beasts. They understand the varying degrees of superiority and inferiority between the three types of existence and fear the effects of the violation of the normative relations between them.

Summary and Conclusion

One final point: In addition to drawing upon the opposing philosophical movements of the pre-Socratics and the Sophists, Sophocles reconciles the pre-Socratic philosophical undercurrent with traditional religion while opposing the Sophistic thought espoused by Creon to the traditional divinities. From the sentry's description of the phenomena of nature working in concert with the divine, to Antigone's attribution of the creation of the νόμοι to Zeus and Justice, and to Teiresias' description of both nature and the divine's disharmony with Creon's νόμοι, pre-Socratic thought in *Antigone* is depicted as concordant with the will of the divinities of traditional religion. In contrast, Creon's philosophical perspective clashes with the gods of traditional religion as exemplified by the hubristic attitude expressed in lines 1039-1042 and by Teiresias' description of the sacrifices that are refused by the gods.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated that a significant influence of pre-Socratic can be detected in Sophocles' *Antigone*, and that these philosophical ideas underlie the eponymous heroine's vision of the unity of φύσις, δίκη, rationality, and the divine. Furthermore, the pre-Socratic vision espoused by Antigone contributes to the conflict between the heroine and Creon, who adheres to a system of Sophistic ideas in which φύσις is an object to be overcome by νόμοι that are severed from justice and the gods. Consequently, I have revealed

that this generally acknowledged strain of Sophistic influence flows against an undercurrent of pre-Socratic philosophy espoused by Antigone. And since Creon's Sophistic ideology ultimately leads to his tragic demise, Sophocles portrays this ideology in a negative light, while the philosophy of the pre-Socratic heroine, although a victim to the Sophistic thought of Creon, is heralded as espousing the ideology ultimately leading to human happiness and piety towards the gods by the chorus at the end of the play. Sophocles presents human intelligence as capable of good (line 367) when unifying the laws of the earth with the justice of the gods (lines 367-369), thus reflecting the Heraclitean precept asserting the intimate relationship between the laws of man, justice and the gods (Fr. D. 114). The playwright represents this same faculty of rationality as capable of evil and dangerous feats when coupled with the Sophistic view endorsing man's conquest of nature and its severance from the laws upheld by Justice and the gods, as in the case of Creon (lines 365-371). Therefore, in contrast to traditional scholarly views of Sophocles as entirely resistant to the intellectual movements of the 5th century, the playwright's depiction of pre-Socratic thought indicates that he might not have been as hostile to all of the so-called 'Enlightenment' thinkers as originally supposed.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the relationship between the tragedies of Sophocles and the philosophy of the pre-Socratics. I have demonstrated the impact of the pre-Socratic thinkers, Anaxagoras, Xenophanes and Heraclitus, and of pre-Socratic thought in general on the tragedies of Sophocles. In doing so, I have shown that the philosophical legacy of the pre-Socratics extends far beyond the field of natural philosophy to the genre of Greek tragedy in the works of Sophocles. In addition, this study has made evident a new philosophical facet of Sophoclean tragedy, which, in contrast to Sophistic influence, has generally not been recognized by scholars.

Pre-Socratic thought in Sophocles serves as an example of the tragedian's positive reception of 'Enlightenment' thought. In the three tragedies examined in this dissertation, Sophocles reconciles pre-Socratic thought with the gods of traditional religion. In the *Philoctetes*, Sophocles portrays the Olympian gods, in the end, as working in concert with Philoctetes' own Heraclitean vision of morality and justice. In the *Trachiniae* the λόγος enforces the will of the gods that is manifest through oracles. The λόγος of the centaur Nessus, the oracles of Zeus at Dodona, and Deianeira's own view of λόγος, as associated with epistemic certainty and rationality, turn out to be ξύνος: the same and shared by all, i.e., nature, the world of man, and the gods themselves. And, in the *Antigone*, the pre-Socratic visions of Antigone and Teiresias are portrayed as harmonizing with the gods of traditional religion: the sentry describes the phenomena of nature as working in concert with the divine and with the will of Antigone in the burial of Polyneices. In all three plays, pre-Socratic thought overlaps with the will of the gods of traditional religion. Pre-Socratic influence, therefore, serves as an example of Sophocles' positive reception of so-called 'Enlightenment'

thought, as well as a foil to the ethical views of the Sophists in the *Antigone* and the *Philoctetes*.

The conclusion of this dissertation challenges the traditional view of scholars such as Dodds and Nestle, who assert that Sophocles was hostile in his dramatic reception of so-called 'Enlightenment' thought in general.¹ Although I do agree with Rose's assertion that Sophocles represents certain Sophistic ideas in a positive manner, as evidenced by the three-stage anthropological scheme that is depicted in the *Philoctetes*, I conclude that Sophocles presents the Sophistic views of λόγος, νόμος and φύσις, justice and the gods in a negative light, as the perspectives of Odysseus and Creon on these concepts demonstrate. I, therefore, propose a nuanced view of Sophocles' relationship to Enlightenment thought, in so far as Sophocles dramatically depicts the ideas of the pre-Socratics generally in a positive manner in contrast to the views of the Sophists, which are held by morally questionable characters such as Odysseus and Creon.

It is only fitting that Sophocles depicts pre-Socratic thought in a favorable light in his tragedies. As Chapter 2 discusses, many elements of pre-Socratic thought are compatible with traditional religion. The gods of traditional religion play a role in the fragments of Heraclitus (Fr. D. 93, D. 15, D. 32), even though Heraclitus recognizes these gods only in so far as they exemplify his doctrine of the unity of opposites and the λόγος (e.g., Dionysos represents the unity of life and death in the phallic procession). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, the fragments of pre-Socratics in general suggest an intimate connection between φύσις, νόμος, justice and the gods. Pre-Socratic thought inherently possesses a divine and mythic quality that fits well with Sophocles'

¹ Cf. W. Nestle (1910), pp. 129-157; E.R. Dodds (1951) p. 49.

project of blending traditional mythic stories involving the gods of traditional religion with ideas of rationality from the 5th century 'Enlightenment'. This also proves that Sophocles, while representing pre-Socratic thought in a positive manner, does not merely reproduce these ideas. As Chapter 2 discusses, he puts his own unique imprint upon 'Enlightenment' thought by blending 'Enlightenment' views of rationality with the traditional mythological tales, such as that of Heracles in the *Trachiniae*. Sophocles thus produces tragedies reflective of the intellectual and social *milieu* of the 5th century B.C.E.

Why has this study focused primarily on the plays, *Philoctetes*, *Trachiniae*, and *Antigone*? Pre-Socratic influence certainly is not limited to these plays. In the appendix, I demonstrate that certain pre-Socratic ideas, such as the Heraclitean notion of flux and the unity of all things, are present in Sophocles' other works, the *Ajax* and the *Oedipus at Colonus*. Further, Sophocles' concern both with φύσις and its cognates and with the antithesis of φύσις and νόμος extends beyond the *Antigone* to the *Ajax*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and the *Electra*.² However, a confluence of pre-Socratic influence inundates the *Philoctetes*, the *Trachiniae*, and the *Antigone*. Pre-Socratic influence is significant to the context of each of these three plays, either in shaping the perspectives of the characters, e. g., Philoctetes and Antigone, or in establishing certain themes central to the plot of the tragedy, e.g., the principle of the unity of opposites that orchestrates the events in the *Trachiniae*. The confluence of pre-Socratic images and concepts in the *Philoctetes*, the *Trachiniae*, and the *Antigone*, therefore, works systematically to contribute to the overall character portrayals and plots of these three tragedies. Yet, although Sophocles does seem to be most interested in pre-

² Cf. e.g., *Aj.* 548 f.; *O.T.* 865 ff.; *O.C.* 337 f.;

Socratic thought in these three tragedies, any attempt to answer the question of why this is the case would result in conjecture.

Why does the philosophy of the particular pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus, appear to be the most pronounced vein of pre-Socratic influence in Sophoclean tragedy? I would suggest that the philosophy of Heraclitus, in which the cosmos consists of unities of opposites engaged in a constant state of change, provides a perfect conceptual paradigm for understanding tragedy generically. A. L. Motto and J. R. Clark astutely argue that the Heraclitean unity of antonyms “applies very cogently to that masterful form of Greek literary expression, ‘tragedy.’”³ Motto and Clark identify Fr. D. 60, ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡυτή, “the way up and down are one and the same,” which is one example of the Heraclitean principle of the unity of opposites, as applying particularly well to the tragic form:

What appears to the tragic protagonist as his ascent in “good fortune” is irrevocably directed toward “reversal,” and the audience comes to understand that his “rise” was indeed a “misfortune,” that in reality, in his headlong “progress,” he steps jauntily over the precipice and into his “fall.” Still more paradoxically, by witnessing this “fall,” the audience is unaccountably exalted and elevated...the Greek tragic hero gains in stature precisely because of his destruction, because of his confrontation with the void. In that sense, his experience has constituted a “fortunate fall,” and, according to Heraclitus, his downward voyage has in fact been an upward one after all (or the reverse).

Throughout his tragedies, Sophocles is concerned with the cyclical nature of a universe consisting of opposites, life and death, youth and old age, night and day, fortune and misfortune, wisdom and ignorance. The Sophoclean heroes are bound to this cycle, traveling both up and down; for the path is one and the same. It is perfectly reasonable that Sophocles would turn to the philosophical paradigm of Heraclitus for philosophical inspiration of his

³ A. L. Motto and J. R. Clark, “Heraclitus and the Ambivalence of Tragic Idealism,” *CB* 64 (1988): pp. 3-5.
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tragic world. Heraclitus, after all, suggests that “behind the mere externalities and surfaces of night and day, of living and dying, of flowing rivers, there dwells a universal Law. And that Law is the one of harmony amidst the seeming configurations and clashes of chaos and deracination and disarray.”⁴

This study also provides points for comparison regarding the nature of pre-Socratic allusion in Aeschylus and Sophocles. Pre-Socratic influence clearly serves as a source of influence for both tragedians. Like Aeschylus, Sophocles ultimately reconciles pre-Socratic thought with the gods of traditional religion. However, unlike Aeschylus, Sophocles, at times, presents pre-Socratic thought at odds with the will of the gods of traditional religion, as in the *Philoctetes*, probably because Sophocles tended to challenge the gods of traditional religion more than Aeschylus. Sophocles’ depiction of pre-Socratic thought, therefore, is more nuanced and complex than his predecessor’s. A discrepancy also exists between the particular pre-Socratic philosophers and the specific pre-Socratic ideas influencing these tragedians. Rösler’s study asserts that Xenophanes and Anaxagoras were the predominant sources of pre-Socratic influence on Aeschylus, particularly, in the tragedian’s new intellectualized conception of divinity and in the areas of science and medicine. In Chapter 3, I argue that Sophocles also was influenced by Xenophanes; yet, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and ‘Enlightenment’ thought in general are additional sources of influence for Sophocles, whereas Heraclitus serves as Sophocles’ greatest source of pre-Socratic influence. Finally, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, pre-Socratic and Sophistic allusions, such as in the case of the φύσις vs. νόμος antithesis, occur more frequently and with greater range of meaning in Sophocles than in Aeschylus.

⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

In Euripides, pre-Socratic and Sophistic allusion to the φύσις and νόμος antinomy becomes even more explicit due to the presence of more direct references to these concepts rather than to their cognate forms. Although close examination of pre-Socratic allusion in Euripides unfortunately exceeds the scope of this dissertation, it certainly would be a fruitful area of scholarship; and one that would provide even more insight into the comparison of pre-Socratic and Sophistic thought in the genre of Greek tragedy.

In conclusion, this dissertation has illuminated manifold instances of pre-Socratic thought in Sophoclean tragedy. We are now able to appreciate the achievements of the pre-Socratics extending beyond the field of natural philosophy to Sophoclean tragedy and to recognize a new philosophical aspect of Sophoclean tragedy. As a result, our study has demonstrated that Sophocles should not be viewed as a relic of the Archaic Age who was hostile to all 'Enlightenment' thought. Rather, Sophocles positively received the ideas of the pre-Socratics, particularly, those of Heraclitus, in his tragedies, and used these ideas to shape the perspectives of his characters and their tragic worlds.

Appendix: Unity of Opposites in Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Oedipus at Colonus*

In the *Ajax*, the pre-Socratic doctrine of the unity of opposites and the unity of all things - cosmic, human, and divine - is rendered dramatically, as in the *Philoctetes*, *Trachiniae*, and the *Antigone*. In his soliloquy in lines 644-646, Ajax says: ἄπανθ' ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος/ φύει τ' ἄδελα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται·

“Strangely the long and countless drift of time brings all things forth from darkness into light, and covers them once more.” Time is depicted as involved in a constant process of change. Change, as in the philosophy of Heraclitus, affects all things and implicates all things in the inexorable process of transposition between darkness and light, thus oscillating between opposites. All things thus constitute a unity of opposites. Ajax's language of φύει τ' ἄδελα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται further strengthens the parallel with Heraclitus as it echoes Fr. D. 47: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ. In line 648, Ajax says, κούκ ἔστ' ἄελπτον οὐδὲν, “nothing is beyond expectation,” thus mirroring the Heraclitean sentiment in fr. D. 18: ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπηται ἀνέλπιστον οὐκ ἐξευρήσει, ἀνεξερευνητον ἐὼν καὶ ἄπορον. “He who does not expect will not find out the unexpected, for it is trackless and unexplored. In lines 648-651, Ajax declares that ἀλλ' ἀλίσκεται/ χῶ δεινὸς ὄρκος χαί περισκελεῖς φρένες. “Strong oath and iron intent come crashing down,” and, consequently, implies that this process of flux in which all things oscillate between opposites will trump any attempt in its resistance. In particular, any man who resists this process will discover that “this strong oath and iron intent [will] come crashing down” due to the force of this process. Ajax thus realizes that he “must give way, as all dread strengths give way in turn and deference” (line 668-669). He cites evidence as evidence images drawn from both the natural world and the world of man:

...τοῦτο μὲν νιφοστιβεῖς
χειμῶνες ἐκχωροῦσιν εὐκάρπῳ θέρει·
ἐξίσταται δὲ νυκτὸς αἰανῆς κύκλος
τῇ λευκοπώλῳ φέγγος ἡμέρα φλέγειν·
δεινῶν δ' ἄημα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμισε
στένοντα πόντον· ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατῆς Ὑπνος
λύει πεδήσας, οὐδ' αἰὲ λαβῶν ἔχει·

Winter's hard-packed snow yields to the fruitful summer;
Night's dread circle at last moves aside for day's white steeds to shine.
The dreadful blast of the gale slackens and lulls to sleep the groaning sea;
And omnipotent Sleep in time releases those whom he has bound,
Nor does he hold them captive forever (lines 669-674).

Like Heraclitus, Ajax depicts the natural and human spheres as constituted by unities of opposites: winter and summer, night and day, sleep and being awake; thus, nature and the world of man are interconnected, both oscillating between opposites. And this is all overseen by heaven and the divine (line 666). As in the philosophy of Heraclitus, the world of man, nature, and the divine is thus unified.

In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* in the dialogue with Theseus (lines 607-628), Oedipus expresses a sentiment also recalling the doctrine of the unity of opposites that is fundamental to the philosophy of Heraclitus. Oedipus declares that μόνοις οὐ γίγνεται θεοῖσι γῆρας οὐδὲ καθθανεῖν ποτε, "for the gods alone there is no old age and no death," but that τὰ δ' ἄλλα συνγχεῖ πάνθ' ὁ παγκρατῆς χρόνος, "omnipotent time submerges all other things (lines 607-609). Like Heraclitus, Oedipus depicts all things - human and cosmic - as engaged in the incessant process of metamorphosis between opposites: friendships are created and destroyed (line 615); loyalty is created and destroyed (line 611); day and night exist in a unity of opposites oscillating between one another (line 616-619):

καὶ ταῖσι Θήβαις εἰ τανῶν εὐημερεῖ
καλῶς τὰ πρὸς σέ, μυρίας ὁ μυρίος

χρόνος τεκνοῦται νύκτας ἡμέρας τ' ἰών,
ἐν αἷς τὰ νῦν ξύμφωνα δεξιώματα
δόρει διασκεδῶσιν ἐκ σμικροῦ λόγου·

If now all is sunny between you and Thebes,
Time, as it passes, brings forth countless nights and days
In which they shall shatter
With the present harmonious pledges for a trivial reason.

Oedipus views the course of nature and man as mirroring one another: both are subject to the continual flux of time; both constitute unities of opposites vacillating between creation and destruction. Nature and the world of man are interconnected. And this relationship itself is overseen by Zeus and Phoebus Apollo (line 623).

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