

Iphigenia and her Mother at Aulis:

A Study in the Revival of a Euripidean Classic*

They will sing that here was a hero who was ready to shoulder his responsibilities, ready to set his private feelings aside for the sake of his country. They will call him the conqueror of Troy, They will call him the founder of Greater Mycenae. They will celebrate his return from the war, Agamemnon, Sacker of Cities, loaded with slaves and plunder, a five-star general, clasped in the welcoming arms of his queen Clytemnestra.

[Barry Unsworth, *The Songs of the Kings* (2002), p. 100]

1. From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century

Since the late 1990s, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* has enjoyed a sudden revival in the cultural arena; this essay asks what the reasons for this rediscovery might be. Its particular focus is on some recent Irish productions and versions by Irish writers. The argument proposes that what they have in common is less a shared stance on Ireland, religion, gender, or even theatrical aesthetics, than a conviction that mendacious political rhetoric has in recent years become more effective, and that the rise of spin-doctoring has only been made possible by the epistemological and metaphysical vacuum situated at the centre of the western collective psyche. The essay also suggests that thinking about the reasons for the recent stage rediscovery of this particular play can illuminate some of the special qualities it displayed in its original performance context in Athens in 405 BC, especially the instability of its characters and the unparalleled bleakness of its evocation of religious and moral *aporia*. But some more recent historical context is required in order to appreciate the significance of the play's revival.

One of Euripides' last and most sombre plays, *Iphigenia in Aulis* exerted a

profound influence on Greek and Roman antiquity, since it was the canonical dramatisation of what became a favourite theme in painting and narrative poetry.¹ The Euripidean version of the sacrifice at Aulis was also replayed consistently in the performance arts, from the Hellenistic tragic stage and concert hall to the Roman balletic dance medium of chorally accompanied pantomime.² Yet, since the Renaissance, the career of *Iphigenia in Aulis* has been extremely uneven: popularity in the 16th to 18th centuries was followed by a spectacular fall from favour which lasted from the French revolution until nearly the end of the twentieth century.

In comparison with most other Greek tragedies, the play certainly made a major impact on Renaissance Europe after it was first printed, in the Aldine edition of all seventeen Euripidean plays, at Venice in 1503. It was almost immediately translated by Erasmus into Latin (1506), along with *Hecuba*, with the result that for the whole of the 16th century these two tragedies were the most read and adapted of all Euripides' works.³ *Iphigenia in Aulis* was Italianised by Ludovico Dolce (1543-47);⁴ it also became the earliest Greek tragedy to receive a translation into English, Lady Jane Lumley's *The Tragedie of Iphigeneia*, a version on which this young aristocrat worked during the restoration of Catholicism under Mary Tudor; Lady Jane then presented it, apparently without irony, to her father (1553-8).⁵ Subsequently, the Greek play's political potential was realised in a Dutch satire composed by Samuel Coster (1617).⁶ Once Racine's *Iphigénie* had achieved its immediate success in 1674, *Iphigenia in Aulis* became one of the most popular theatrical archetypes of the late 17th and 18th centuries.⁷ The marriageable maiden's graceful obedience to her father, the wielding of his absolute patriarchal authority, the motif of the sacramental human sacrifice -- all these were more than congenial to the Christian, indeed dominantly Catholic culture and unequal gender ideals of pre-revolutionary Europe; it is revealing to note how starkly the popularity of the story in Catholic Italy and France contrasts with the absence of revivals or new dramatic versions to emerge from Whiggish, Anglican, anti-Catholic mainland Britain, at least after the French Huguenot exile Abel Boyer's English-language *Achilles* (1700), an unsatisfactory attempt to render the myth palatable to Protestant

taste and ideology.⁸

Yet the Aulis Iphigeneia of the Renaissance, Early Modern and Neoclassical periods was big business on the European Continent. Between Erasmus' Latin version of 1506 and the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the theme inspired at least thirty-seven paintings (mostly by Italians), two tapestries, and a ceramic plaque.⁹ There were several Spanish plays about Iphigenia's sacrifice, many French, a few in German, and a satirical burlesque in Greek by Petros Katsaitis (1720). Half a dozen *Iphigenia in Aulis* ballets of this period are attested, and from the time of Aurelio Aureli's 1707 *L'Ifigenia*, probably first performed in Venice, no fewer than thirty-nine operas.¹⁰ These were dominantly Italian, and included compositions by such great names as Scarlatti, Porpora, Traetta, Cherubini and Simone Mayr in addition to the most famous *Iphigenia in Aulis* opera of them all, the lyrical French-language masterpiece by Christoph Willibald Gluck. In 1757, eight years before the première of Gluck's opera, Diderot even argued, during the course of a discussion of his own play *Le Fils Naturel*, that the sacrifice of Iphigenia was the *ideal* subject for opera.¹¹

In contrast with this longstanding and consistent high status, the almost total disappearance of *Iphigenia in Aulis* from the 19th-century stage, at least after 1820, is distinctly noticeable. With the exception of fairly steady revivals of Gluck's exquisite version in the opera house, this tragedy went almost completely Absent Without Leave for many decades. This period produced hardly any new translations intended for performance, or even staged theatrical productions other than occasional revivals of Racine's *Iphigénie*. There was one peculiar exception, which took place in Ireland in 1846. It is worth dwelling on not only because of the importance of Ireland in the subsequent, twentieth-century revival of Greek theatre,¹² but also because it demonstrates the reasons why *Iphigenia in Aulis* was not in tune with the mid-19th-century Zeitgeist. 1846 was the year after John Calcraft, the manager of Dublin's Theatre Royal, had persuaded the lovely English tragedienne Helen Faucit to travel to Ireland and perform 'Mendelssohn's *Antigone*' (a version offered in English ultimately deriving, via German, from Sophocles, with music composed by Mendelssohn to

accompany the choruses and a few of the actor's speeches). This had been performed on a raised Greek stage, complete with Ionic pillars, 'authentic' tripods, and a set containing no fewer than five doors.¹³ The inflated tone of the reviews indicate that Faucit's performance as Antigone was a triumph.¹⁴ She excited all who watched her by managing to convey both a cool, abstract sense of the apprehension of a mournful destiny, and a tactile, loving intimacy. The consistent theme in the ecstatic Dublin press is her reconciliation of the formal, classical and ideal with warm humanity and emotion. Faucit's 'Grecian' poses and gestures, her elegant limbs framed in flowing drapery, were captured in the portrait created by Sir Frederick Burton, the Director of the National Gallery in Dublin, and impressed every commentator.¹⁵ She seems to have been an acceptable object of male sexual desire.¹⁶

It is scarcely surprising that Faucit and Calcraft attempted, in November 1846, to build on this lucrative triumph by staging a second Greek tragedy featuring a persecuted virgin, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*. This time the play was proudly (although inaccurately) billed as offering the first *original* production of a Greek tragedy in Ireland.¹⁷ Calcraft composed an English translation by synthesising several different versions, and cast himself as Agamemnon. Faucit successfully extracted the maximum pathos out of Iphigenia's predicament, without succumbing to sentimentality, when (as *The Freeman's Journal* for Monday November 30th put it) she appeared 'a suppliant at her father's feet, shuddering with horror at that gloom and dark uncertainty that awaited her'. The symphony orchestra and oratorio-style chorus performed an original score (unusually not an adaptation of Gluck), composed by the theatre's musical director, Richard Levey. Like many directors before and since, Calcraft ameliorated the psychological harshness of the play by using the more comfortable (and almost certainly post-Euripidean) alternative denouement in which Iphigenia is replaced by a deer and whisked off to safety by the goddess Artemis, thus exonerating her father from his crime.¹⁸ Calcraft offered his audience what *The Freeman's Journal* described as 'a magnificent tableau', involving Agamemnon's departing galley and 'the Grecian fleet wafted by a favouring gale from the winding bay of Aulis'. But despite all Calcraft's

efforts the audiences were not as enthusiastic as they had been the previous year, and plans to take the play to Edinburgh never materialised.

Calcraft had failed to see that while both Antigone and Iphigenia conform to strict models of ideal womanhood, Antigone displays moral strength as she stands up to male authority in order to defend her family's interests, while Iphigenia *accedes* to a male assault on her family's interests. In the ideological climate following the Infant British Custody Act of 1839, which had begun, at least, to undermine the almost total power 19th-century British men had previously wielded over their wives and families, the simple obedience to male authority displayed by Iphigenia was no longer the unquestioned ideal it once had been. The fate of the Dublin *Iphigenia in Aulis* thus heralded this tragedy's inability to strike resonant social and emotional chords throughout the entire Victorian period. Neither the supernatural, fantastic ending chosen by Calcraft, nor the (at that time still intolerable) horror of the text if performed without the miraculous substitution, was remotely congenial to the rational but sentimental subjectivity of that era. Neither Iphigenia's warlike rhetoric, nor Clytemnestra's veiled threats to Agamemnon (on which see further below), conformed to the contemporary idealisation of responsible maidenhood, gentle wifehood, and sanctified maternity.

This relative lack of interest in the play was to continue to prevent it finding significant theatrical realisation, at least outside Greece, more or less throughout the first eight decades of the twentieth century. This near-absence from public stages stands in stark contrast to the rediscovery of many other Greek tragedies as performance texts, and the canonisation of their important place in the standard repertoire. The early twentieth century rediscovered such Euripidean heroines as Medea (for example, in Gilbert Murray's famous translation, directed by Harley Granville Barker at the Savoy Theatre, London, in 1907), and such 'anti-war' plays such as *Trojan Women* (first revived by Granville Barker at the Royal Court Theatre in 1905, but consistently revived thereafter).¹⁹ *Iphigenia in Aulis*, on the other hand, almost completely failed to recover a presence in performance (outside the opera house) during almost all of the twentieth century. And this was despite the brilliance of Michael Cacoyannis' film version (1976),

widely regarded as his finest cinematic realisation of Euripides, and brought to the attention of Classicists by Marianne McDonald and Kenneth Mackinnon.²⁰ This presentation of the ancient play, which offers an uncompromising critique of Agamemnon's motivations, presenting them as inextricably bound up with a violently patriarchal ideology, had been hermeneutically and ideologically only made possible by (and appeared bang in the middle of) the feminist revision of patriarchy led intellectually by Kate Millett and Germaine Greer; their respective books *Sexual Politics* and *The Female Eunuch* had both been published in 1970.²¹

2. *Iphigenia in Aulis* Rediscovered

Cacoyannis' film, however original and inspiring, did not immediately unleash a stream of imitations in the theatre in the way that his versions of the Euripidean *Electra* and *Trojan Women* undoubtedly did: this was despite one memorable performance, when *Iphigenia in Aulis* constituted the first of seven abridged Euripidean plays included in Kenneth Cavander's ten-part *The Greeks* (1979), an account of the Trojan War and its aftermath premièred in the UK by the Royal Shakespeare Company.²² The absence of significant freestanding stage productions of *Iphigenia in Aulis* in the late 1970s and 1980s is also striking in comparison with prominent use of other Greek tragedies addressing patriarchal authority, inter-ethnic conflict, or atrocities bred by war. During the years when the anti-nuclear, civil rights and feminist movements were at their most active and culturally engaged, *Medea*, *Antigone*, and *Trojan Women* were never far from the public stage.²³ Moreover, one of the most important reasons why Greek tragedy as a medium had since the 1960s begun to prove so attractive to directors was an increased interest in ritual performance styles, fed by the postcolonial theatrical critique of western naturalism, especially through an engagement with Asiatic and African performance traditions. This (crucially) coincided with enhanced interest in the anthropology of ancient ritual within the discipline of Classics.²⁴ In academic circles this interest was particularly expressed in studies of the relationship between Dionysiac literature (including drama) and ritual. *Iphigenia in Aulis*, it could be argued, really *should* have

attracted more directors given that it is fundamentally structured by two contrasting but isomorphic rituals (marriage and sacrifice), and that it includes both extensive funereal motifs, and choral odes featuring quite different ritual genres, including elements of paean, cultic-aetiological narrative, and propemptikon.²⁵ But there were still hardly any *Aulis Iphigenias*, and none of much cultural significance, in the late 1970s or 1980s.

It is essential to grasp this background in order to make sense of the more recent explosion of interest in the play. For at some point in the 1990s -- and more particularly the early third millennium -- everything changed. Iphigenia's experiences at Aulis have lately been enacted in a huge number of diverse productions. This point can be amply illustrated by a tiny selection of examples: in 2003 the tragedy was produced, in Friedrich von Schiller's 1790 recently rehabilitated verse translation, at the Deutsches Theater in Göttingen, and (in an English translation of Schiller) also in the Bay Area Parks production of the Shotgun Players in Los Angeles.²⁶ In early 2001 *Iphigenia in Aulis* was performed at the Pearl Theatre Company, New York, and the Dutch company Teater Aksident staged *Iphigeneia: Koningskind*, directed by T. Lenaerts, in March of that year.²⁷ Without even considering the new efflorescence of productions of Racine and especially of Gluck, or even the relevant third play of John Barton's 2001 epic cycle *Tantalus*, the Euripidean Iphigenia was in 2002 prepared for sacrifice in quite separate productions in Vicenza in September, at the Teatro Olimpico by the Teatro Stabile di Catania, and both Frankfurt and Basel in November.²⁸ It swiftly became a favourite on the US academic stage, performed at Denver (2001), Yale, Kansas (January 2003), and Colby College, Maine,²⁹ among many other venues. It began to be echoed in contemporary fiction, for example Ann-Marie MacDonald's story of child murder in a mid-twentieth-century military base, *The Way the Crow Flies*.³⁰

There was also an intriguing cluster of performances or performed adaptations of *Iphigenia in Aulis* in the professional theatres of England and Ireland between 1999 and 2004, a cluster complemented by the distinguished northern English novelist Barry Unsworth's novel based on *Iphigenia in Aulis*, entitled *The Songs of the Kings* (2002). Colin Teevan's stage adaptation *Iph...* was first performed at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, on

March 2nd 1999, and has subsequently been twice broadcast on BBC Radio. Three years before her acclaimed 2004 production at London's National Theatre, Katie Mitchell first directed Euripides' own *Iphigenia at Aulis*, in the English translation by Don Taylor, at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, opening on March 28th 2001. A month after Unsworth's novel was published, Marina Carr's *Ariel* premiered at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. And on February 5th 2003, Edna O'Brien's *Iphigenia* opened at the Sheffield Crucible. This cluster of plays (most of which I was fortunate enough to experience in performance myself) represents a noteworthy cultural phenomenon. Taken together, these versions and adaptations offer a promising intellectual context for investigating the reasons why this particular Greek tragedy has suddenly become so attractive to writers and directors, especially those associated with Ireland.

3. Interconnected Revivals

It is clear that all the instances of international interest in the play -- whether in Germany, the USA, Britain, Ireland or elsewhere -- are profoundly inter-connected. Three important strands in the Iphigenia tapestry recently have been constituted by the rediscovery of Schiller's translation of the play in German-speaking theatres, Michel Azama's 1991 *Iphigénie ou le Péché des Dieux*, produced, for example, in Quebec in 2003,³¹ and, in the English-speaking world, the second part of Neil LaBute's *Bash*, entitled *Iphigenia In Orem*, in which a businessman chillingly relates the circumstances surrounding the death of his infant daughter. *Bash* was first staged in 1999 and filmed in 2000; LaBute's interests in *Medea* (the first part of *Bash* is *Medea Redux*) and in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, both plays about male power (underscored by religious authority) over the family, may or may not have anything to do with his commitment (which has since lapsed) to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints. *Bash* is still performed with some regularity, recently in the UK at Oxford University in January 2004, and in 2005 in both Montreal and in Salem, Minneapolis.³² And when it comes to the recent spate of Irish and English theatrical Iphigenias, there is no doubt that they have significant bearings upon each other. Three of the playscripts are by Irish writers from south of the

border (Colin Teevan, Marina Carr, Edna O'Brien); three of them were first performed in Ireland (Teevans' *Iph...* in Belfast, Katie Mitchell's and Marina Carr's both at Dublin's Abbey Theatre); Edna O'Brien has a longstanding relationship with the Abbey Theatre.

In 1999-2000, Katie Mitchell had produced the *Oresteia* at London's Royal National Theatre, in Ted Hughes' translation; in that production Iphigenia had entered into the action, in the form of a tiny actress, who visibly haunted the emotional and domestic landscape of both *Agamemnon* and *Libation-Bearers*. It was only a matter of time, it must have felt to anyone who saw Mitchell's Iphigenia-focussed production of the *Oresteia*, before she attempted *Iphigenia in Aulis* itself. When she did first stage the Euripidean tragedy, she chose to set it in the context of 1930s fascism, which was the logical retrospective extension of her mid-century, indeed clearly World-War-II vision of the *Oresteia*. For Mitchell's Dublin production it was the Irish playwright Marina Carr who wrote a programme essay, and this commission may have stimulated Carr, even though she had already been drawn to the women of Greek tragedy, above all to Medea; it is the Euripidean Medea who lies behind the child-killing Hester Swane of her *By the Bog of Cats*, first produced in October 1998 at the Abbey Theatre.³³ Colin Teevan, on the other hand, was introduced to the *Iphigenia in Aulis* as a sixteen-year-old at school in Dublin, by an octogenarian Jesuit;³⁴ the play is indeed often used for pedagogical purposes. But Teevan has also recently discussed the power of the impact made on him in the early 1990s by Ariane Mnouchkine's production of *Les Atrides*, in which the plays of the *Oresteia* were preceded by Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* (a directorial decision of Mnouchkine's to which this argument will soon return). Edna O'Brien, meanwhile, is an old friend of Peter Hall and has implied that it was the Royal National Theatre *Oresteia*, in Tony Harrison's translation (1981), which suggested this play to her, although Part III of John Barton's *Tantalus* (2000-1) may have provided the more immediate impetus. O'Brien says that she also seems to have considered *Electra* and *Medea* and to have decided that they were overdone in comparison to the little 'foundling', as she has described *Iphigenia in Aulis*.³⁵

4. Shared Aesthetics

But neither the professional theatrical grapevine nor aesthetic fashion can alone explain why any particular ancient play returns with such power into the contemporary consciousness. Nor does the 'ritual' argument work with *Iphigenia in Aulis* as it does with, for example, the several recent productions of *Hecuba* and Katie Mitchell's own RSC *Phoenician Women* (1995), where the opportunity to explore Balkan and Georgian singing traditions and funeral customs has been fundamental to the attractiveness of the texts.³⁶ Not one of these Anglo-Irish *Iphigenias* has been particularly interested in ritual, or musically experimental; indeed, they have been surprisingly conservative in the naturalism of their visual designs, costuming, acting and performance styles. Another 'aesthetic' feature of *Iphigenia in Aulis* which might help to explain its recent appeal might, rather, be its unusually novelistic features; O'Brien treats the play as might be expected of a writer who is primarily a novelist, adding (to my mind) superfluous extra narrators in the form of Agamemnon's concubine, the old witch woman, and Iphigenia's nurse. A particularly 'novelistic' element in the Euripidean play is the device of the letter Agamemnon has sent to invite Iphigenia to Aulis, since the mendacious epistle, as in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and his lost *Palamedes*, always underscores the capacity of language for deceit.³⁷ *Iphigenia in Aulis* does indeed contain considerable explicit epistemological commentary on the nature of truth and fiction, appearance and illusion. But it must be conceded that cognitive issues have not been made prominent in any of the productions (although, as we shall see, they have been very preoccupied with the science of persuasion).

Another aesthetic dimension which needs considering is the play's pronounced 'intertextuality'; within the Classics academy, at any rate, late twentieth-century literary taste increasingly appreciated Euripides' allusive, inter-mythical playfulness.³⁸ And in *Iphigenia in Aulis* almost all the characters provide narratives from the past or predictions of the future, thus often elaborately alluding to other texts in the mythical and dramatic tradition. Some of the self-conscious literariness which lends *Iphigenia in Aulis* such a distinctively 'modern' (if not 'post-modern') tone engages with the *Iliad*:³⁹

Euripides, for example, dangles before us the possibility of an entirely new, pre-Iliadic, 'wrath of Achilles', by creating a whole new dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon.⁴⁰ But the category of intertextuality leads the argument back ineluctably to the importance of the play's relationship with the *Oresteia*, for Euripides wrote this tragedy (as all his plays about the children of Agamemnon, including *Electra* and *Orestes*) partly in reaction to the Aeschylean trilogic archetype which had caused such a sensation in his youth. It was through the *Oresteia* that theatre audiences of the late fifth century had developed familiarity with the Atridae (knowledge of the trilogy is required by the audience of Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1124, 1128), first produced in 405, the same year as *Iphigenia in Aulis*). They would therefore have been equipped to take pleasure in the specifically proleptic features of *Iphigenia in Aulis* such as the stage presence of the baby Orestes.⁴¹ Similarly, third-millennium audiences, who have become increasingly well acquainted over the last two decades with the *Oresteia*, can now appreciate the dialectical relationship between that mainstay of the repertoire and the neglected 'foundling' *Iphigenia in Aulis*.⁴²

5. Gender Issues

Unlike some other Greek tragedies, above all *Medea* and *Oedipus*, *Iphigenia in Aulis* was rarely associated with the feminist movement or the often frantic discussion of gender inequality that characterised western culture in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴³ Yet any performance or adaptation of a play in which a father authorises the killing of his daughter, in the face of desperate protests from his wife (and her mother), will inevitably find itself implicated in contemporary debates about patriarchy and its residues. There is a whole set of interlocking ways in which *Iphigenia in Aulis* could be used to explore the contemporary patriarchal status quo -- above all in Eire, where the experiences of women, attitudes to female sexuality, and controversies over family legislation have taken forms different from those experienced in much of Northern Europe and the USA, mainly because of the country's overwhelmingly Catholic inheritance. The *patria potestas* which the established Catholic Church has for centuries

exerted over its congregation in Ireland -- especially through its continuing opposition to family planning, abortion and divorce -- could with little difficulty be symbolised by the paternal power Agamemnon exerts over his family. Agamemnon can make arbitrary choices about when and whom his daughter is to marry; he can also take arbitrary decisions over when and why she is to die. The young woman's body is not her own, whether in sex or in death.

In Ireland the policing of women's bodies, their sexuality, and their reproductive capacity has been particularly controversial: some rural areas have been slow to modernise their attitudes towards women, and even slower to acknowledge just how terrible the plight has been of those judged immoral by their communities.⁴⁴ Witness the outraged reaction to Peter Mullan's devastating recent film *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002), which portrayed the mid-twentieth century incarceration in laundries, sometimes for life, of girls who showed any signs of sexual independence. Yet it is difficult to read any of the recent productions of *Iphigenia in Aulis* as an attack on Catholicism. Even O'Brien's version, which contained some distinctively Catholic vocabulary, such as 'ripe for beatitude', was more interested in the similarities between pagan superstition and some features of Catholic worship than in making any serious theological arguments against the Catholic Church's positions on women, sex, and the family.⁴⁵ Indeed, the rights of neither the Church nor individual fathers to control women have been particularly emphasised in any of these recent productions, despite the controversy surrounding the domination of women by their children's fathers as well as by the Church in Ireland. The 1988 Adoption Act sparked a vitriolic debate about father's rights even over non-marital and non-biological children.⁴⁶ The notion of parental struggle over children, and the exposition of the competing claims of the father and the mother, are indeed apparent in Marina Carr's *Ariel*, but this is generally in the later sections, drawing on the *Oresteia* and Sophocles' *Electra* rather than in the earlier, *Iphigenia in Aulis*-derived portion. Moreover, even the parental conflict is in *Ariel* overshadowed by Carr's interest in the mother-daughter relationship (Carr lost her own mother in her teens), and the true emotional climax is the heartrending final confrontation between Frances /

Clytemnestra and Elaine / Electra.

There was, however, a suggestion in Edna O'Brien's version that Agamemnon was sexually attracted to Iphigenia (underscored by the introduction of the idea that he had committed adultery with a very young woman long before even leaving for Troy); child abuse, physical and sexual, is of course a red-hot issue in Ireland, where allegations of endemic pederasty have rocked the Catholic church to its foundations. In 1992, on a notorious episode of *Saturday Night Live*, Sinéad O'Connor tore up a picture of the Pope and denounced the prevalence of sexual abuse of children in Ireland, routinely covered up, she alleged, by Catholic authorities. She was dressed in white robes, with head shorn, sitting beside a table of candles, looking for all the world (as a reporter in the *Los Angeles Times* of October 6th put it) like 'a sacrificial virgin'. Yet, besides the O'Brien version, none of the productions of *Iphigenia in Aulis* under discussion here has emphasised this potentially explosive dimension of the play.

What is more pertinent is the interest in *wife* abuse. The scale of the problem of marital violence against women in Ireland, especially in rural areas, is rarely admitted.⁴⁷ And the mistreatment of Clytemnestra by Agamemnon seems to have caught the attention of all three Irish adaptors -- Teevan, Carr, and O'Brien. More particularly, they all focus on the dimension of *Iphigenia in Aulis* which functions as offering a crucial aetiology for the vengeful Clytemnestra of the *Oresteia*. This is certainly the case in Marina Carr's *Ariel*, the most radically adapted of the versions. Frances has numerous grievances against her husband Fermoy, including her belief that he was responsible for the death of the son born to her in a previous marriage (a detail Carr has adopted from Clytemnestra's memory of Agamemnon's slaughter of her son by Tantalus at *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1151-2). But it is only when Frances overhears the information that the man responsible for the death of her daughter was none other than Fermoy that she is precipitated into attacking him lethally.⁴⁸ All the other variable motives which the theatrical tradition from Seneca to Eugene O'Neill has attributed to Clytemnestra -- sexual passion for Aegisthus, desire for political power, fear for her own life, retaliation for Agamemnon's adultery -- are almost completely effaced in *Ariel*.⁴⁹

This element of psychological aetiology for the Aeschylean murderess is undoubtedly already present in the Euripidean text. There is emotional horror in the revelation that Agamemnon killed her first baby by smashing his head on the ground, and there is subtle menace in the way that the desperate mother, trying to dissuade her husband from the sacrifice, implicitly threatens him with the plot of the *Agamemnon*.⁵⁰

Think about it. If you go off to war, leaving me behind at home during your long absence over there, how do you think I will feel every time I catch sight in our house of one of the chairs she used to sit in, now standing empty, and the girls' quarters empty, while I sit alone with nothing to do but weep, forever singing this dirge for her: "The father who created you has destroyed you, my child. He killed you himself..." It will require only the slightest of excuses before the other girls you have left behind and I receive you back as it is fitting that you should be received [IA 1171-82; my translation]

What is striking about the recent modern versions is that they uniformly see this passage as of central importance to the impact of the play as a whole. Teevan and O'Brien's plays, which are much more lightly adapted versions than the first act of Carr's highly original *Ariel*, both extract the Euripidean passage, expand it significantly, add material actually taken directly from the Aeschylean *Agamemnon*, and place it in a significant position at the end of the play. Both thus negotiate the 'problem' of the Euripidean conclusion by reassuring their audiences that Iphigenia will not long remain unavenged, for the action dramatised in the first play of the *Oresteia* is imminent.

Teevan's play actually concludes with a 'flash forward', introduced by the stage direction '*Ten years later. Night. The roof of the palace at Mycenae, the evening of AGAMEMNON's return from Troy*'. The Euripidean Old Man appears, suggesting the Aeschylean watchman, while Klytaimnestra attacks Agamemnon backstage. His death cries are heard, and Klytaimnestra enters, to conclude the play by reporting that 'All the dead, they whisper revenge'.⁵¹ Euripides' moral bleakness, in leaving Agamemnon

unpunished (except by a subtle implication that something unpleasant will befall him far in the future) is thus replaced by a straightforward reciprocal killing. The doer suffers. More importantly, he is *seen* (and heard) to suffer *now*, rather than at some remote point in the future. This fundamentally transforms the ethics, and the gender alignment, of the Euripidean play. Although presenting her closing scene as the enactment of a prophecy, O'Brien, similarly, makes her Clytemnestra stand in twin pools of light and blood, and chillingly deliver lines from the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's triumphant speech over the corpse of her dead husband.⁵²

These new finales reveal that one of the most important reasons for the revival of *Iphigenia in Aulis* as a freestanding drama is its crucial relationship, via Clytemnestra, to the *Oresteia*, the revival of which, since the landmark productions of Koun, Stein, Serban, Harrison-Hall and Mnouchkine, was one of the most remarkable features of the resurgent Greek drama of the 1980s and 1990s.⁵³ The presence of *Iphigeneia in Aulis* in recent productions of the *Oresteia* has been well described by Michelakis.⁵⁴ The argument inevitably returns to the legendary Théâtre du Soleil's production *Les Atrides*, directed by Ariane Mnouchkine (1990), the first great female director of the *Oresteia* in theatre history, who famously preceded the trilogy with a performance of *Iphigenia in Aulis*.⁵⁵ This 'prologue' arrangement has had a huge impact on the way that people think about the *Oresteia*, for it solves some of the problem of the trilogy's notorious misogyny (a problem which emerged in the row about the 'sexist' use of all-male casts in Tony Harrison's version of the *Oresteia* in Peter Hall's direction in the early 1980s). If a production offers reasons why Clytemnestra, an abused wife and bereaved mother, turned into a vitriolic murderess, then it inevitably alters and modifies the impact of her violent characterisation in *Agamemnon*, and of the triumph of patriarchy in *Eumenides*. *Iphigenia in Aulis* functions like a speech delivered by a counsel for the defence of Clytemnestra: the text relates what she went through at her husband's hands, how terrible and longstanding had been his abuse of her and her children, and what the emotional circumstances had been under which he departed for Troy. The post-feminist Western liberal consensus can cope with the terrifying Clytemnestra of Aeschylus better

if it is simultaneously offered the more sympathetic Clytemnestra of *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

The reverse, I would like to suggest, holds as true. The portrayal of male power over wife and daughter in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the apparent glorification of a young female role model who agrees to die with fervour just because her father tells her to (a role model felt problematic to western sensibility as early as the mid-19th century, let alone by the late 20th century), are both made palatable to post-feminist audiences by the perceived implementation of the punishment of Agamemnon. What seems to be troublesome to the contemporary world is the idea that *both* Iphigenia and Clytemnestra suffer passively, without assuming moral agency or putting up any appreciable resistance. By extracting the murder of Agamemnon from Aeschylus, and fusing it with the Euripidean version, Clytemnestra is rescued from victimhood, and transformed into a responsive moral subject and autonomous agent. Thus can *Iphigenia in Aulis* finally be recuperated for the modern stage.

6. Politics

Katie Mitchell's productions were both set against identifiably Fascist backgrounds,⁵⁶ but the Irish provenance of the versions under discussion might be expected to lend local resonances to the play. Does *Iphigenia in Aulis* address with special force the history of twentieth-century Irish politics? I confess that I originally expected adaptations of this particular drama, if written by Irish authors, to reverberate with the theme of the blood sacrifice to the goddess Eire (Danu), a theme formulated by the Irish Republican martyr and mystic Patrick (Padraic) Pearse, whose own execution after the 1916 uprising became a potent sacrificial symbol. Drawing on the gospels' presentation of the crucifixion, as well the ancient Irish *Táin's* narrative of the death of the warrior Cú Chulainn, Pearse's fusion of Catholicism with Nationalism and Gaelic revivalism produced the heady conception of the redemptive sacrifice of youthful Irish blood: as he said in 'The Coming Revolution' (Nov. 1913): 'bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing, and a nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood.'⁵⁷ MacDara, the self-immolating nationalist hero of Pearse's 1915 play *The Singer*, celebrates the

'feminine' destiny of suffering: 'to be a woman and to serve and suffer as women do is the highest thing'. Both the language of sacrifice for the national ideal, and the pointedly gendered categories of thought, are startlingly similar to the overblown idiom adopted by some of Euripides' characters in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Pearse's own rhetoric swiftly penetrated to the core of the romanticised picture of Irish revolutionary endeavour, especially his aestheticised presentation of the heroic corpse: as MacDara's lover Sighle puts it in *The Singer*, 'they will lie very still on the hillside -- so still and white, with no red in their cheeks, but maybe a red wound in their white breasts, or on their white foreheads.'⁵⁸ Above all, Pearse's own poetry put centre-stage the figure of the lamenting Irish universal Mother, whose children must be sacrificed on the altar of the Nation's freedom: in the poem he is said to have written on the actual eve of his execution, entitled *The Mother*, the narrator comforts herself with the knowledge that although she has lost her children, 'In bloody protest for a glorious thing, / They shall be spoken of among their people'.⁵⁹

In recent years, at least, Pearse's rhetoric has been increasingly criticised not only as evidence of a narcissistic psychopathology, but also as fanning the flames of fanaticism and violence in Ireland's youth for nearly a century. It was, therefore, a legitimate expectation that any contemporary Irish treatments of *Iphigenia in Aulis* would explore the dangers inherent in the glorification of the idea of blood sacrifice motivated by enthusiasm for a patriotic war. Yet this was not the case. Not one of the versions made any noticeable attempt to evoke the mythology and rhetoric of Irish republicanism. Although *Ariel* satirises the role played by corruption in parliamentary career-building within Eire, the one version with any noticeable 'topicalisation' in terms of religious factionalism, paramilitary violence, or the conflict between Ulster loyalists and republicans is also the only one to have premiered north of the Irish border.⁶⁰ In Teevan's *Iph...* the poetry speaks -- occasionally -- of the 'ghetto', the 'Grandmaster', and 'ghettomen'.⁶¹ Teevan, indeed, has pointed out that *Iph...* was developed at the time of the worst post-war loss of Irish civilian life in the Omagh bombing of August 1998, and that the play transplants to contemporary Ireland the barbarous story of the

politically motivated killing of an innocent youngster.⁶² The Irish connection of *Iph...* has also been stressed in a production by *Tir Ná Nóg*, an Irish Theatre group formed in Denver, Colorado in 1998 and specialising in plays by Irish playwrights including Frank McGuinness, Samuel Beckett, and J.M. Synge. The Denver group actually advertised *Iph...* as a 'modern-day variation of the classic Euripidean morality story.... updated to reflect the situation in present-day Northern Ireland'.⁶³

Yet the reason why readings of *Iphigenia in Aulis* are being performed so often has less to do with Ireland than with the new global (dis)order. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 may now feel like a long time ago, but it was the 1990s that saw the replacement of a Cold War waged by the West against the Soviet Union, a superpower actually led by white Europeans, with ongoing actual war with Islam, an enemy perceived very differently.⁶⁴ The transformation reached a climax during the first presidential election of George W. Bush, which precipitated the return of the American hard right to US foreign policy. This macro-political background is surely connected with the renaissance of staged productions of *Iphigenia in Aulis*. For, of all Greek tragedies, it is the one which at greatest extension and with the greatest clarity casts doubt on the legitimacy of an international (as opposed to civil) war, declared by the West on a 'barbarous' eastern foe. The question the play really asks is how the heroine can find a way 'to die nobly for an ignoble cause'.⁶⁵ The best 'cause' anyone in the play can produce is that laying siege to Troy will stop barbarians 'raping' Greek women (1379-82) – a crime the play is not even clear has actually been committed, since Helen's departure is earlier portrayed as a seduction and elopement (71-9). The one other ancient Greek play which undermines the justification for the Trojan War to a comparable degree is *Helen*, where the dramaturgical ruse of the chimerical Helen-*eidōlon* exposes the reason for which Greece had gone to war as a fabrication. But *Helen* does not involve anything like same degree of suffering as *IA*, where the impact of Clytemnestra and Iphigenia's pain is emotionally overwhelming. So is the tragedy's surgical exposure of the mindsets that can make people go to war. These include not only machismo 'posturing' by the men, but the way that women collude in such

machismo by eroticising it, as the swooning chorus do in their admiration of the handsome soldiers assembling at Aulis (164-302).

It is no mere chance that the recent revival of *Iphigenia in Aulis* coincided with George Bush's 2000 election campaign and arrival in the White House; the relevance of the situation in Aulis to the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war was trenchantly expressed by the president of Colby College in Maine, himself a Vietnam veteran.⁶⁶ The Pearl Theatre Company in New York produced their transparently political version in 2001, several months before 9/11, in the slightly stilted 1978 translation by Merwin and Dimock.⁶⁷ Edna O'Brien's *Iphigenia* opened in February 2003, in the last tense weeks before the outbreak of war as it grew increasingly inevitable; no spectator could help feeling the topical reverberations, which are prominent in virtually all the reviews.⁶⁸ O'Brien has denied that she *deliberately* set out to provide a commentary on the increasing likelihood of US-Iraq conflict. But when dealing with apparently unplanned, spontaneous and arbitrary 'topical relevance' in performance history, it is important to remember that contemporary concerns can act on a writer's psyche in the absence of either intention or self-consciousness. An old play can seem newly apposite at a purely intuitive level.

7. Spin Game

Gender relations, mediated through the modern audiences' knowledge of the *Oresteia*, and their awareness of the international political situation leading up to the 2003 Iraq war, are thus both factors in the recent spate of *Iphigenias in Aulis*. But for a play to attract directors like Mnouchkine and Mitchell, let alone novelists of the calibre of Unsworth and O'Brien, there must be something more cerebral, more intellectual, and more specific going on here. A clue lies in the penetrating insight formulated by the classical scholar Karl Reinhardt in his famous article 'Die Sinneskreise bei Euripides' (1957), in language that shows him responding to a Existentialist tradition traced explicitly through Kafka and Sartre, and which reveals the profound influence of Samuel Beckett's dramatic universe. The term 'absurd' is prominent: Euripides' Medea is no longer the 'uncanny Undine' of earlier legend, but has 'dwindled into absurdity';

Iphigenia in Aulis teeters on the brink of 'the sheerest absurdity'. Reinhardt argued that Euripides is less a poet of direct protest than a nihilist, an Existentialist practitioner of the theatre of the absurd, dedicated to revealing the hollowness of the intellectual and linguistic strategies by which humans struggle to comprehend their situation; by the last years of the Peloponnesian War, moreover, Reinhardt saw Euripides as reacting to a sense of loss and meaning in the world, which he thought must have felt similar to the catastrophic context of 1944, when Sartre wrote his Existentialist theatrical masterpiece *Huis Clos* (the origin of the famous phrase 'Hell is other people').⁶⁹

The politics of the revival of *Iphigenia in Aulis* are related to this tradition of Euripidean interpretation. The third-millennial spectator's experience of the recent productions confirms that some of the most powerful moments (measured unscientifically in terms of apprehended audience tension and reaction) were not at times when problematic masculinity or militarism were the central focus. They were at those times when characters on stage, unable to extricate themselves from absurd situations, were resorting to transparently hollow justifications, 'spinning' an argument, or attempting to make sense of their circumstances by conspicuously employing (in ancient terminology) the science of rhetoric. One example was Iphigenia's volte-face speech in O'Brien's adaptation (when, after electing to go to her death voluntarily, she enumerates the 'advantages' of her decision); another was the posturing of Agamemnon (brilliantly acted by Ben Daniels) to the chorus during his encounter with Menelaus in Katie Mitchell's 2004 RNT production. Daniels conveyed a sense of thinking up lies at incredible speed under the pressure of public scrutiny. The most revealing example is Fermoy Fitzgerald's television interview scene in Carr's *Ariel*, which begins humorously but becomes more sinister as the scene is retrospectively 'edited' at its conclusion: Fermoy is advised to play his daughter's death as his 'trump card'. What people want, he is told, are the details of his personal life. He must, at all costs, not admit that he enjoys power, but work instead on his image as bereaved father.⁷⁰

What is encouraging about this aspect of the revivals being considered here is that it shows Greek drama being treated as an intellectual art-form. Over the last three

decades, Greek tragedy has all too often been seen as a primitive and unsophisticated medium, whose undeniable polemical power is fundamentally a naïve one, connected with its archaic ritual origins. Yet Aristotle rightly argued in his *Poetics* that 'the representation of intellect' (*dianoia*) through speechmaking is the third most important constituent element of tragedy, overshadowed only by plot and character (1450b). The use in several of the productions of the contemporary technologies by which ruling groups communicate through the modern equivalents of ancient oratory with their public -- Carr's television cameras and Mitchell's loudspeaker systems -- reveals one of the most sophisticated up-to-date resonances now being heard in the ancient play.

In an article the poet and Classicist Anne Carson wrote in the persona of Euripides, the discussion centred on the self-deluding Phaedra rather than the self-deluding Iphigenia. But Carson argued that the talent for 'veiling' a truth in a truth could be described as feminine, 'As if truths were skins of one another and the ability to move, hunt, negotiate among them was a way of finessing the terms of the world in which we find ourselves. Skin game, so to speak.'⁷¹ In the case of *Iphigenia in Aulis* the finessing of the truth is by no means a female monopoly, and the game enacted in that tragedy relates not to 'skin' but to 'spin'. Barry Unsworth has certainly seen the awful actions represented in *Iphigenia in Aulis* as a tragedy created by 'spin'. His novel presents Iphigenia's death as necessitated solely by the activities of spin doctors (especially Odysseus) encamped at Aulis, manipulating the psyche of Agamemnon as much as that of the assembled forces in order to serve their own sinister purposes.⁷² The 'songs' of their kings are the epic lays created as part of a process of archaic Public Relations; the song of Iphigenia's death, Odysseus suggests to Agamemnon, will only ever be sung to his glory (see the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter). In *Ariel*, similarly, Fermoy kills Iphigenia in order to achieve his political ambitions, and he is seen using 'negative' PR to destroy his political rival's reputation and career even as he uses the 'pity' card after the apparently tragic loss of his eldest daughter in order to advance his own.⁷³ These two powerful realisations of the myth, which both appeared in late 2002, show two different authors, in disparate genres, sensing that it is in the power and dangers of

spin-doctoring that lies the vivid contemporary immediacy of Euripides' play; it is, after all, a dramatic explanation of how a father persuaded himself to do something as absurd as kill his own daughter, and how she argued herself into applauding his decision.

To put a 'spin' on an argument, as one puts a spin on a baseball, is to attempt to inflect information in such a way as to exert complete control over other people's reactions to it. The verbal idiom entered public discourse in the USA in the 1980s, but only became truly part of popular currency, along with the terms 'spin-doctor', and 'spin-machine', in the following decade.⁷⁴ In Britain 'spin' is intimately associated with the strategies of the Labour Party, the leadership of Tony Blair, and the brilliant Public Relations exercises conducted by his two latterday clones of Odysseus, the Labour lieutenants Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, before, during and subsequent to the general election of May 1st 1997. More recently it became even more closely associated with the propaganda battle over the justifications for going to war with Iraq, and with the death of the Civil Servant Dr David Kelly, who apparently committed suicide under pressure of orchestrated rumours in the media: one newspaper headline alleged that he had been 'spun to death'.⁷⁵

The general public's sensitivity to the activities of 'spin doctors' provides a revealing answer to the sudden and intense resonance of the *Iphigenia in Aulis* since the late 1990s. Of all Greek tragedies it is the one most clearly about Big Lie theory, about politicians' ability to spin into existence the justification for a war, almost from nothing, but also about humans' completely tragic inability to use their own vast intellectual potential in order to protect themselves from doing inexcusable things to each other. The Hawks in Britain and America could teach the Sicilian sophist Gorgias a thing or two about defending the indefensible. Although *Iphigenia in Aulis* is not the Euripidean tragedy that most explicitly criticises the science of rhetoric taught by the sophists (that is probably another tragedy involving a virgin sacrifice, *Hecuba*),⁷⁶ it is the one that most clearly shows *in practice* the potential of rhetoric to persuade individuals to do things even quite contrary to their own best interests and in defiance of their strongest affective ties. It offers the type of examples of rhetoric in practice that led an ancient

'spin-doctor', Quintilian, to proclaim Euripides of much more use to the trainee orator than Sophocles (*Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.67). This point is brought over shockingly in Teevan's *Iph...*, where the sweet-voiced Iphigenia, in her death-wish speech, starts regurgitating aggressive slogans such as 'Smash Troy and all those stinking Trojans', bellicose phrases created in foul mouths quite other than her own.⁷⁷

The role of spin/rhetoric within *Iphigenia in Aulis* is underscored by the manner in which almost everyone changes his or her mind, under rhetorical pressure, about the issue of the sacrifice. Euripides was fascinated by the factors which condition moral choices, and his tragedies repeatedly explored the dangers attendant upon precipitate decision-making. In *Hippolytus*, for example, the hero's death is caused by his father's over-hasty decision to curse and exile him. Athenian history provides numerous examples of similar decisions, especially in time of war: one notorious incident was the Athenian assembly's angry vote summarily to execute all the men of Mytilene (427 BC), a decision they revoked the very next day after a 'sudden change of heart' (Thucydides 3.36). This resulted in a desperate race against time as one trireme chased another across the Aegean sea. In 406, the year before the first production of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the Athenians had precipitately executed no fewer than six of their generals, after an unconstitutional trial, as punishment for the great loss of life at the battle of Arginusae; by 405 many must have regretted the whole tragic sequence of events.

Iphigenia in Aulis uses its myth to explore peremptory life-and-death decisions by showing how, during a military crisis, several members of the same family took and rescinded decisions about the life of an innocent girl. Agamemnon has summoned her to be sacrificed, changes his mind, but is incapable of sticking to the better moral course out of fear for his own army. Menelaus changes his mind, emotionally rejecting his earlier 'logical' justifications of the atrocity when he sees his brother's distress. Even Achilles allows himself to be persuaded that Iphigenia really wants to die. Indeed, the morally unstable universe of the play seems to have encouraged ancient actors to edit the roles they played more than usual, thus making even more changes to the text of *Iphigenia in Aulis* than were suffered by most Euripidean tragedies: not only were there

alternative prologues and conclusions, but the individual speeches were extensively trimmed and elaborated.⁷⁸ The lines delivered by and about Achilles seem often to have been remodelled in ancient performances. The condition of the text suggests two discrete ancient readings of his character locked in textual combat.⁷⁹ And Iphigenia herself, far from being the inconsistent character Aristotle alleged,⁸⁰ or driven virtually into psychosis as has more recently been claimed,⁸¹ proves herself a typical, well acculturated Argive: she has internalised her community's behavioural patterns, becoming as morally unstable and vacillating in the face of well tricked-out arguments as the strongest men in the Greek army, her father and uncle included.

Spin works best in a world with few external moral reference points, and insecurity about the nature or requirements of divinity. One strand in the play's reception since ancient times has been the view that it shows the evil effects of religious zealotry or superstition. This interpretation has an aetiology extending back to Lucretius, the ancient Epicurean polemicist, who after narrating the sacrifice at Aulis famously pronounced, 'so much evil can religion bring about' (*de Rerum Natura* 1.80-101). The increasing religious fanaticism, whether Islamic or Christian, at the heart of the third-millennial international crisis, might lead one to expect *Iphigenia in Aulis* to be used to condemn religious ardour. Yet none of the productions under discussion suggests that Iphigenia was being sacrificed primarily for a reason of faith (although religion is a secondary motivation in the case of Marina Carr's Fermoy Fitzgerald, who has a pagan and decidedly Nietzschean set of metaphysical convictions, unaligned with any identifiable species of modern monotheism).

The world depicted in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, relative even to the confused and disturbing metaphysical environments of most Greek tragedy, is in fact astoundingly *irreligious*, as well as remarkable for its lack of consensual ethical standards. Very little happens except that an oracular demand for human sacrifice, which was received, accepted, and put into motion before the beginning of the play, is actually carried out after the two key agents – the sacrificing father and the sacrificed daughter – talk themselves into it. The crucial transformations do not take place on the level of action,

or weather, or even Iphigenia's body, but exclusively in the minds of the leading characters. *Peithō* of a particularly sinister kind – Spin – is seen to take effect. There is little emphasis on the oracle delivered by Calchas (indeed it is only summarised in *oratio oblique* at 89-91), no discussion of it, no further omen, no angry bird, no inspection of entrails. There is no guidance from any priestly figure, no divination of the will of heaven. There is no new communication from the gods during the course of the entire play (a point well brought out in Foley's analysis⁸²). Agamemnon even criticises all seers as frauds, while failing to contest Calchas' faintly recalled pronouncement. This presentation of the myth implies that the suffering Iphigenia must undergo is not only *entirely avoidable*, but that it remains so until the eleventh hour.

8. A Tragedy for the Third Millennium

In Terry Eagleton's new study of tragedy, *Iphigenia in Aulis* is presented as a play of intellectual significance. Eagleton argues that it tantalises the audience with the possibility that the disaster can be averted, and in possessing this quality it must be grouped with *Othello* and two of Ibsen's late plays: *The Wild Duck* (1884), and *When We Dead Awaken* (1899).⁸³ The play is used to support Eagleton's repudiation of the claim made by some respected theorists of tragedy, that the genre always and generically must claim that suffering is *ineluctable*.⁸⁴ The characters in *Iphigenia in Aulis* may be stranded in an ethical and metaphysical vacuum, with no way of discerning any meaning in their universe, but this does not mean that they need to *choose* to perform and suffer an inhumane atrocity. This is a play which will always speak loudest to an audience themselves characterised by intense, secularised moral *aporia*. No character can find a moral framework to help them identify and then adhere to their instinctive ethical reactions to what is happening -- even Clytemnestra is ultimately persuaded out of her proposal to take a defiant last stand against Iphigenia's sacrifice (1459-60).⁸⁵ The one exception is the old slave, an impressive individual who does seem to be capable of independent ethical intuition and steady resolve. It is very nearly true that in the world portrayed in *Iphigenia in Aulis* nobody does wrong with any great willingness (in ancient

philosophical terms, half-heartedly demonstrating the truth of the Socratic principle that *oudeis hekōn hamartanei*), since, after reflection, both Agamemnon and Menelaus do think better of the sacrifice scheme.⁸⁶ But they do not possess the moral vertebrae which would enable them to jeopardise their generalships in order to prevent it.

The environment inhabited by the characters in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, according to Eagleton's definition, is tragic precisely *because* it is morally fragile and metaphysically unknowable. This apprehension is expressed in Michael Billington's response to Carr's *Ariel*: 'it emerges as more than a modernised Greek myth...it confirms Carr's status as a writer who, in an age of ironic detachment, believes in the enduring possibility of tragedy.'⁸⁷ In the course of his new definition of the 'tragic', Eagleton proposes that this ancient and troublesome art-form has the potential to offer a significant living presence in the theatres of the third millennium, but only if it combines three essential elements: representation of hardcore suffering, open-ended metaphysics, and aesthetic beauty. It is difficult to think of any tragedy -- ancient, Renaissance, Early Modern or more recent - that more brilliantly exemplifies these three characteristics.

No other play has metaphysics so open-ended that, on top of a psychic environment that is presented as virtually devoid of either gods or moral certainties, any aspiring director can choose between two different endings: arbitrary, random, and unexplained salvation by suddenly intrusive divine intervention, or unmitigated misery centred entirely in the human domain. Eagleton himself sees *extreme* qualities in the play: Iphigenia is one of the three characters he identifies (along with Shakespeare's Desdemona and Ibsen's Hedwig Ekdal) as being deprived by their authors of any freewill, any control whatsoever over their fates.⁸⁸ *Iphigenia in Aulis* also qualifies as a third-millennial tragedy on Eagleton's criterion of unmitigated suffering, since it is impossible to think of psychological pain worse than Iphigenia's, or bereavement more agonising than that undergone by Clytemnestra (movingly portrayed by Susan Brown in Edna O'Brien's production, as well as by Ingrid Craigie's Frances in the première of Carr's *Ariel*). And in terms of aesthetic beauty, *IA* not only contains some of Euripides' loveliest lyrics, especially in the chorus's proleptic account of the fall of Troy and in Iphigenia's

thrēnos (751-800, 1475-531), but one of his greatest poetic monologues: this is Iphigenia's appeal to Agamemnon (1211-52), 'If I had the voice of Orpheus....', which well deserves its place as a hardy perennial in anthologies of Greek verse. The most beautiful poetry in the play is reserved for a rare moment of authentic emotion and moral conviction. Here Iphigenia for once fails to 'finesse the truth' at all.

9. A Posthumous Rebellion

Iphigenia is no rebel woman: she is perhaps the most tractable of Greek tragic heroines. She willingly accepts -- indeed, embraces -- the fate of victim of male authority, the *patria potestas*. And yet her play has re-emerged lately as important in the performance repertoire partly because it lends her mother's descent into the rebellion and murderous rage of the *Oresteia* not only credibility, but a kind of legitimacy. The very performance text of Iphigenia's play has thus rebelled against the manner in which its ancient form silences the pain of the childlike victim and her mother. This recent rebellion is demonstrated in the way the text has been consistently altered to reveal the future legacy left by Agamemnon's war crime at Aulis, and especially Clytemnestra's revenge. The play has also re-emerged because it speaks to a world where innocent victims of international war -- many still children and teenagers -- have no power even to protest against their fates; they are at the mercy of international wars justified by the sophisticated orchestration of public opinion in both domestic politics and global news enterprises. Iphigenia has suddenly become important because, like so many victims of conflict in the modern global village, she could not rebel and was, almost literally, 'spun to death'. This obedient Greek tragic woman persuaded herself into dying in order to acquire immortal *kleos*: by a strange paradox, she has indeed won fame in recent years by serving rebellious purposes posthumously.

- * This essay began life as a paper delivered at the Archive of Performance of Greek & Roman Drama in Oxford as one of a seminar series arranged by Avery Willis

and Kathleen Riley. It was subsequently delivered at a conference in May 2004 at the University of Bristol, organised by Pantelis Michelakis, and in December of the same year association with the University of San Diego, CA, at the home of Professor Marianne McDonald. I am extremely grateful to all my hosts for their comments and criticism, as well as to Fiona Macintosh, Christopher Rowe, Colin Teevan, Barry Unsworth, and the editors of this volume.

- 1 See e.g. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454a 32; Lucretius, *de Rerum Natura* 1.84-103; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.1-38; 13. 182-95. The most famous visual image is the first-century AD Roman copy, discovered at Pompeii, of a lost 4th-century BC painting of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Timanthes. It is now in the Naples Archaeological Museum.
- 2 An *Iphigenia* by Euripides (probably the Aulis play) was revived at the Athenian Dionysia in 341 BC (*Inscriptiones Graecae* II² 2320, translated in Eric Csapo and William J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 229). It was also imitated by other dramatic poets: see Bruno Snell and Richard Kannicht (eds.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* vol. ii (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), fr. 663. A lively performance tradition is confirmed by a papyrus (Leiden inv. 510) on which are preserved small portions (lines 784-92 and 1499-1502) of lyrics from *Iphigenia in Aulis*, with musical annotation, transcribed in M.L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 286-7. The papyrus seems to constitute a libretto for a professional tragic singer, from which he could learn excerpted lyrical highlights from the play to perform at a recital: see Edith Hall 'The singing actors of antiquity', in P. Easterling and E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 3-38, p. 13. The story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra provided themes for pantomime dancing at the time of Lucian (*On Dancing* 43).
- 3 *Euripidis tragici poet[a]e nobilissimi Hecuba et Iphigenia: Latin[a]e fact[a]e*

- Erasmus Roterodamo interpreter* (Paris: J. Badius, 1506).
- 4 *Ifigenia, tragedia* (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1551)
- 5 This version has been published conveniently in Diane Purkiss (ed.), *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women* (London: Penguin, 1998).
- 6 *Samuel Costers Iphigenia. Treur-spel* (Amsterdam: Nicolaas Biestkins, 1617).
- 7 On Racine's play see Martin Mueller, *Children of Oedipus and Other Essays on the Imitation of Greek Tragedy 1550-1800* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press: (1980), pp. 39-45). More generally, see the fascinating and (fairly) comprehensive study by Jean-Michel Gliksohn, *Iphigénie de la Grèce antique à L'Europe des Lumières* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1985).
- 8 See E. Hall and F. Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), ch. 2.
- 9 See Jane Davidson Reid (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), vol. i, pp. 599-605.
- 10 *ibid.* On the wider influence of *Iphigenia in Aulis* on operas see Marianne McDonald, *Sing Sorrow: Classics, History, and Heroines in Opera* (Wesport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 69. The Katsaitis play has been republished in a modern edition of his works by Emmanuel Kriaras (Athens: Institut français d'Athènes, 1950).
- 11 Denis Diderot, *Entretiens sur "le Fils naturel"*, published with his *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, with an introduction by Raymond Laubreaux (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967).
- 12 See Fiona Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Irish Tragic Drama* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (eds.), *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 2002). Des O'Rawe, '(Mis)translating tragedy: Irish poets and Greek plays', in Lorna Hardwick, Pat Easterling, Stanley Ireland, Nick Lowe, and Fiona Macintosh (eds.), *Theatre: Ancient and Modern* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2000) 109-24; Oliver Taplin, 'Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Seamus Heaney's, and some other

- recent half-rhymes', in E. Hall, F. Macintosh, and A. Wrigley (eds.), *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 145-67.
- 13 For a full discussion of this remarkable production of *Antigone*, which had begun in Prussia and taken Covent Garden, London, by storm in the late winter of 1845, see Hall and Macintosh (note 8 above), ch. 12.
- 14 See Carol Jones Carlisle, *Helen Faucit : Fire and Ice on the Victorian Stage* (London : The Society for Theatre Research, 2000), pp. 144-7.
- 15 See Hall and Macintosh (note 8 above), ch. 12 with fig. 12.4.
- 16 See e.g. Thomas de Quincey, 'The *Antigone* of Sophocles as represented on the Edinburgh stage', in *The Art of Conversation and Other Papers* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1863), vol. xiii, pp. 199-233.
- 17 In the 1720s there had been productions of Greek tragedies, including *Hippolytus* and *Philoctetes*, at the school run in Capel Street, Dublin by Thomas Sheridan (Richard Brinsley Sheridan's grandfather). See Hall and Macintosh (note 8 above), ch. 9.
- 18 See John William Calcraft, *Iphigenia in Aulis: A Tragedy, From the Greek of Euripides, as Presented in the Theatre of Bacchus, at Athens, circa B. C. 430. Adapted to the Modern Stage*, 3rd edition (Dublin: 1847). Many thanks to Norma Macmanaway and Charles Benson, Keeper of Early Printed Books at TCD, for help with researching this production.
- 19 See Hall and Macintosh (note 8 above), ch. 17.
- 20 Marianne McDonald, *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made Visible* (Philadelphia: Centrum Philadelphia, for the Greek Institute, 1983), 128-91; Kenneth MacKinnon, *Greek tragedy into Film* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).
- 21 See two essays in Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley (note 12 above): Edith Hall, 'Introduction: why Greek tragedy in the late twentieth century?', 1-46, pp. 9-18, 38-39; Helene Foley, 'Bad women: gender politics in late twentieth-century performance and revision of Greek tragedy', 77-111.

- 22 John Barton and Kenneth Cavander, *The Greeks: Ten Plays Given as a Trilogy* (Heinemann: London, 1981). *The Greeks* recently received its first full production in New York, by the Imua Theatre Company at the Manhattan Ensemble Theater: see Charlotte Stoudt, 'Wartime myths', *The Village Voice*, July 20th (2004).
- 23 See Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (note 12 above), especially chs. 1, 3, 8, 11, and the chronological listing in ch. 15.
- 24 See Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Thinking about the origins of theatre in the 1970s', in Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (note 12 above), 329-60.
- 25 See Helene Foley, 'Marriage and sacrifice in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*', *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 159-80, revised version in Helene Foley, *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 65-105; Rush Rehm, *Marriage to Death: the Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially p. 102.
- 26 See the extensive review by Joe Mader, 'Iffy "Iphigenia"', in the *San Francisco Examiner*, June 2nd (2003).
- 27 There are several photographs of the latter production archived at <http://www.aksiedent.be/producties/iphigeneia/iphigen.htm>.
- 28 Schiller's translation was directed by Wolfgang Spielvogel at the Theater Prima Donna / Schwerzer Held, opening 14th November 2002; the Basel production constituted Part I of *Krieg am Troja* at the Theater Basel.
- 29 More recently, productions of *Iphigenia in Aulis* with explicit intentions of protesting against the continuing US aggression in Iraq have been staged by e.g. Voices of Women at San Diego University's Institute for Peace and Justice (June, 2004), and by The Thousand Things Theater Company (with puppets) in Minneapolis (February, 2005).
- 30 Published in London by Fourth Estate (2003); see the review by Aida Edemarian in *The Guardian*, 11th October (2003).
- 31 The production was at the Théâtre Niveau Parking, 23rd September to 18th

- October 2003. The play is available as Michel Azama, *Iphigénie ou le péché des dieux* (Paris : Ed. Theatrales, 1991).
- 32 At the Théâtre-Ste-Catherine in Montreal, and the Minneapolis CalibanCo. The play is published in Neil LaBute, *Bash: Latterday Plays* (New York: Overlook Press, 1999).
- 33 Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats* (Loughcrew, Oldcastle, County Meath: Gallery Press, 1998). *By the Bog of Cats* is discussed in depth by Melissa Sihra, this volume. The 2004-5 London production at the Wyndhams Theatre won it a nomination for the Olivier Award for best new play.
- 34 See Colin Teevan, *Iph... After Euripides' "Iphigeneia in Aulis"* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1999), 'Introduction', p. xiii.
- 35 Veronica Lee, 'The anger of heaven is nothing to the anger of men', *The Independent on Sunday, Life* section, 9th February (2003), p. 8. In the USA, where *Tantalus* premiered, there had been two composite performances including part or all of *Iphigenia in Aulis* that attracted attention in the 1990s: Ellen McLaughlin's *Iphigenia and Other Daughters* (1995), and *The Iphigenia Cycle* directed by JoAnne Akalaitis (1997). *Iphigenia in Aulis*, however, remained virtually unperformed as a freestanding piece in its own right. Barry Unsworth, like O'Brien, remembers the impression made upon him by the 1981 RNT *Oresteia*.
- 36 One the earliest performances to explore the Balkan style of *a capella* lamentation was Laurence's Boswell's production of *Hecuba* at the Gate in Notting Hill (1992), for which the music was composed by Mick Sands. These two are collaborating again on Tony Harrison's new translation of the play, starring Vanessa Redgrave (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2005).
- 37 See Dale Chant, 'Role inversion and its function in the Iphigenia at Aulis', *Ramus* 15 (1986), 83-92.
- 38 See e.g. Froma Zeitlin, 'The closet of masks: role-playing and mythmaking in the *Orestes* of Euripides', *Ramus* 9 (1980), 51-77, conveniently republished in Judith

- Mossman (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Euripides* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 309-41; Robert Eisner, 'Euripides' use of myth', *Arethusa* 12 (1979), 153-74 at pp. 157-8; A.N. Michelini, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison and London 1987), 3-51.
- 39 See especially Pantelis Michelakis (2002), *Achilles in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 84-143.
- 40 Wesley D. Smith, 'Iphigenia in love', in Glen W. Bowersock, Walter Burkert, Michael C. J. Putnam (eds.), *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M.W. Knox* (Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1979), 173-80, at p. 177.
- 41 See Karl Luschnig, 'Time and memory in Euripides' Iphigenia at Aulis', *Ramus* 11 (1982), 99-104.
- 42 See John Chioles, 'The *Oresteia* and the avante-garde: three decades of discourse', *Performing Arts Journal* 45 (1993), 1-28; F. Macintosh, P. Michelakis, E. Hall & O. Taplin (eds.), *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to 2004 AD* (Oxford: OUP, 2005).
- 43 See note 21 above.
- 44 For further discussion see e.g. the essays in Anthony Bradley and Maryann Giulianella Valiulis (eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
- 45 See Edna O'Brien, *Iphigenia: Euripides, adapted with an Introduction* (London: Methuen, 2003), p. 36; Edith Hall, 'Barbarism with beatitude', *TLS*, February 21st (2003), p. 19.
- 46 See e.g. William Duncan & Paula Scully, *Marriage Breakdown in Ireland: Law and Practice* (Dublin: Butterworths, 1990); Geoffrey Shannon, *Divorce: The Changing Landscape of Divorce in Ireland* (Dublin: Round Hall, 2001)
- 47 E. Mahon, 'Women's rights and Catholicism in Ireland', *New Left Review* 166 (November - December 1986).
- 48 Marina Carr, *Ariel* (Loughcrew, Oldcastle, County Meath: Gallery Press, 2002), pp. 56-60.
- 49 See further E. Hall, 'Aeschylus' Clytemnestra versus her Senecan tradition', in

- Macintosh, Michelakis, Hall and Taplin (note 42 above).
- 50 See Smith (note 40 above), p. 178.
- 51 Colin Teevan, *Euripides, Iph...*. Second edition (London: Oberon Books, 2002) p. 75-6.
- 52 O'Brien (note 45 above), pp. 43-4.
- 53 See Anton Bierl, *Die Orestie des Aischylos auf der modernen Bühne* (Stuttgart: M & P Verlag, 1997); Macintosh, Michelakis, Hall, and Taplin (note 42 above).
- 54 In his review of Susanne Aretz, *Die Opferung der Iphigeneia in Aulis. Die Rezeption des Mythos in antiken und modernen Drama*. (Stuttgart / Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1999), which was published in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2002) and is available online at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2002/2002-01-05.html>.
- 55 See Evelyne Ertel (ed.), *La Tragédie grecque : les Atrides au théâtre du Soleil (Théâtre aujourd'hui ; no. 1, Paris: CNDP, 1992)*.
- 56 Mitchell may well have been responding to the comments made by the author of the translation she used, the late Don Taylor, in an introduction he wrote to the play in 1990, printed in his *Iphigenia at Aulis* (London: Methuen, 2004), vii-xviii, at p. xvi: 'we see the young girl transforming herself before our eyes into a fascist poster, or a Nazi statue of German womanhood sacrificed for the greater Reich'.
- 57 Quoted in Vivian Mercier, 'Irish Literary Revival', in W. E. Vaughan (eds.), *A New History of Ireland: Ireland under the Union II, 1870-1921*, Vol. vi (Oxford: OUP 1996), p. 377. On the blood sacrifice theme in Irish nationalist literature and culture more generally, see also Sean Farrell Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption: The Mind of the Easter Rising, 1916* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994); Barbara Brodman, 'The Cult of Death in Irish (and Mexican) Myth and Literature: From Fatalism to Fire of the Mind', in Bruce Stewart (ed.), *That Other World: The Supernatural and Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts* (Gerrard's Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998); Martin Williams, 'Ancient Mythology and Revolutionary Ideology in Ireland, 1878-1916',

- Historical Journal*, vol. 26.2 (1983), 307-28.
- 58 See Patrick Pearse, *Collected Works* (Dublin / London: Phoenix Publishing, 1917), vol. i, p. 109.
- 59 'The Mother' is printed in Patrick Henry Pearse, *Collected Works*, 5th edition (Dublin: Irish National Publishing Company, 1924), p. 333. See also his statement, 'I see my role in part as sacrifice for what my mother's people have suffered, atonement for what my father's people have done.' (*Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta*, ed. Eugene McCabe (Dublin: New Island Press, 1993), p. 9).
- 60 Some people speculated -- inconclusively -- whether there was some point being made in the choice of a northern Irish accent for the actor who played Menelaus in the 2001 Dublin production directed by Katie Mitchell: see e.g. Victor Merriman, 'Greek tragedy loses the plot', *The Sunday Tribune*, 1st April (2001); Emer O'Kelly, 'Tales of Greek inevitability', *Sunday Independent*, 1st April (2001).
- 61 Teevan (note 51 above), pp. 19, 66.
- 62 See E. Hall (note 21 above), p. 21; the comments were made in the interview cited *ibid.* at p. 30 n. 59.
- 63 See www.shamrock.com/Tir%20Na%20Og%20PR5 (last accessed September 2004).
- 64 See Edith Hall, 'Recasting the barbarian', *The Theatrical Cast of Athens* (forthcoming), ch. 6.
- 65 Herbert Siegel, 'Self-delusion and the *volte-face* of Iphigenia in Euripides' 'Iphigenia at Aulis', *Hermes* 108 (1980), 300-21, at p. 301.
- 66 William D. Adams, 'Iphigeneia's truth: revisiting classical themes as war looms', *Colby Magazine*, winter edition (2003). [Slightly altered from his earlier article, 'See the tragedy of March to war', *Baltimore Sun*, January 12th (2003)].
- 67 W.S. Merwin, and George E. Dimock, *Euripides, Iphigeneia at Aulis* [in of the series *The Greek Tragedy in New Translations*] (Oxford / New York: OUP, 1978). In the wake of the 2003 Iraq war and Aeschylus' *The Persians*, in Ellen McLaughlin's adaptation, at the National Actors Theatre in New York City during

- June of that year, the same company produced a 'protest' *Persians* in January 2004. On the very recent efflorescence of productions of *Persians*, see Edith Hall, 'Aeschylus, race, class, and war', in Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (note 12 above), 169-97, and 'The mother of all sea-battles: the reception of Aeschylus' *Persians* from Xerxes to Saddam Hussein', in E. Bridges, E. Hall, and P.J. Rhodes (eds.), *Cultural Responses to the Persian Wars* (Oxford: OUP, forthcoming 2006).
- 68 See e.g. John Peter, 'Making war, not love', in *The Sunday Times, Culture* section, Feb 16th (2003), pp. 18-19; Lee (note 35 above).
- 69 Karl Reinhardt, 'Die Sinneskreise bei Euripides', *Eranos* 26 (1957), 79-317, reproduced in his *Tradition und Geist* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960), 223-56, and included in an English translation by J. Mossman and J.M. Mossman, as 'The intellectual crisis in Euripides', in Mossman (note 38 above), 16-46. The word 'absurdity' occurs with reference to Medea and *IA* on pp. 27 and 29 of this translation respectively. Thereafter the German-speaking tradition of Euripidean scholarship has often continued to see Euripides as an absurdist playwright, a tendency expressed, for example, in the title of Walter Burkert's influential article 'Die Absurdität der Gewalt und das Ende der Tragödie: Euripides' Orestes', *Antike und Abendland* 20 (1974), 97-109. For a fascinating account of the dialectical relationship between Beckett's plays and Greek tragedy, see Katharine Worth, 'Greek notes in Samuel Beckett's Theatre Art', in Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (note 12 above), 265-83.
- 70 Carr (note 48 above), pp. 45-6.
- 71 Anne Carson, 'Euripides to the audience', *London Review of Books*, 5th September (2004), p. 24.
- 72 Barry Unsworth (2002), *The Songs of the Kings* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2002), pp. 90-1 (Palamedes' *curriculum vitae*), 126 (Macris' concern for establishing a reputation), 131 (Achilles' PR), 151 (Croton lauded by the Singer as champion of civil liberties), 155 (Odysseus' free indirect discourse on the pleasures of spinning falsehoods in order to make them look like responsible

- political concepts), 208 (the Blairite 'moral case' that Menelaus makes for launching the invasion of Asia).
- 73 One of the few reviewers to see the importance of political corruption to Carr's realisation of the ancient role of Agamemnon was Jean-Louis Perrier, in 'Le théâtre, apôtre de la diversité culturelle en Irlande', *Le Monde* 14th October (2002).
- 74 Bernard Ingham, *Wages of Spin* (London: John Murray, 2003); George Pitcher, *The Death of Spin* (Chichester: Wiley, 2002); Stuart Ewen, 'Changing rhetorics of persuasion' in his *PR! A Social History of Spin*, Part III (New York: Basic Books, 1996).
- 75 'Spun to death' was the front-page headline of the *Daily Mirror*, 19th July (2003). See also the leader 'Spinning to death', *The Sunday Times*, July 20th 2003, p. 18. At this time it became commonplace to encounter in the press the concept of Spin appearing as an abstract noun, almost a personification, implying an active cosmic principle or even autonomous agent beyond human control: see for example the digest of the foreign press in 'Spin exaggerated WMD danger', *The Guardian*, May 31st (2003), p. 28.
- 76 On the prominence of the discussion of rhetoric in tragedy generally, see the exemplary discussion by R.G.A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982).
- 77 Teevan (note 51 above), p. 70.
- 78 See especially the fundamental study by Denys Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy : Studied with Special Reference to Euripides' Iphigeneia in Aulis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934); the issue is also discussed in Gudrun Mellert-Hoffman, *Untersuchungen zur 'Iphigenie in Aulis' des Euripides* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1969). On the alternative prologues to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, see David Bain, 'The prologues of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*', *CQ* 27 (1977), 10-26.
- 79 This point is well demonstrated by Michelakis (note 39 above), p. 141.
- 80 *Poetics* 1454a26, a view with which A.W. Schlegel, who set the tone for mot 19th-

century criticism of Euripides, heartily concurred in *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, Second edition, translated by John Black, two volumes (London: J. Templeman and J.R. Smith, 1840), vol. i, pp. 176-7.

- 81 See e.g. Siegel (note 65 above), p. 321.
- 82 See Foley (1985, see note 25 above), pp. 66, 96-100.
- 83 Terry Eagleton, *Sweet Violence: An Essay on the Tragic* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 35, 125.
- 84 E.g. Jeanette King, *Tragedy in the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: CUP, 1978), p. 16.
- 85 In my personal view it was one of the few weaknesses of Katie Mitchell's production that Clytemnestra's ultimate acquiescence, as described in the Greek original, was written out in favour of a feisty and more admirable last-ditch struggle against Iphigenia's arrest.
- 86 Michael Billington, 'Ariel', *The Guardian*, October 5th, 2002.
- 87 See the insistence of both Agamemnon (1361) and Iphigenia (1456) that he is authorising the sacrifice unwillingly, with e.g. Plato, *Protagoras* 345d-e, and G. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 136, n.26.
- 88 Eagleton (note 83 above), 125.

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