

Jebb's *Antigone*

By

Janet C. Collins

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I dedicate this thesis to

Ross S. Kilpatrick
Former Head of Department, Classics, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.
Who of us will forget his six-hour Latin exams?
He was a very open-minded prof who encouraged us to think differently,
he never criticized, punned us to death
and was a thoroughly good chap.

And to

R. Drew Griffith

My supervisor, not a punster, but also very open-minded,
encouraged my wayward thinking,
has read everything
and is also a thoroughly good chap.

And to

J. Douglas Stewart, Queen's Art Historian, sadly now passed away,
who was more than happy to have
long conversations with me about any period of history,
but especially about the Greeks and Romans.
He taught me so much.

And to

Mrs. Norgrove and Albert Lee

Abstract

In the introduction, chapter one, I seek to give a brief oversight of the thesis chapter by chapter.

Chapter two is a brief biography of Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb, the still internationally recognized Sophoclean authority, and his much less well-known life as a humanitarian and a compassionate, human rights–committed person.

In chapter three I look at δεινός, one of the most ambiguous words in the ancient Greek language, and especially at its presence and interpretation in the first line of the “Ode to Man”: 332–375 in Sophocles’ *Antigone*, and how it is used elsewhere in Sophocles and in a few other fifth-century writers.

In chapter 4 I examine the “Ode To Man” itself, which has caused considerable academic discussion: Does it belong here? What role does it play in *Antigone*? Is it essential to the play?

In chapter five I seek to discover the character of Antigone as Sophocles has drawn her. She is a fascinating woman, not only in her commitment to burying her brother Polyneices, but also in the subtleties in her that Sophocles has portrayed. When it comes to Sophocles, conclusions are most difficult, but I needs but try.

Finally, the two appendices examine first Eglantyne Jebb, Sir Richard’s

niece who, with her sister Dorothy, founded “Save The Children,” and last of all, the “Apostles,” a secret society of Cambridge University of which Jebb was a member.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb was a distinguished, and very capable, nineteenth-century classical scholar and statesman. His seven-volume translations and commentaries of the extant works of Sophocles' plays are still the foremost works in any study of Sophocles. He was not boastful, but was rather a quiet man, keenly interested in all manner of subjects, not just classical studies. He, his fellow Apostles at Cambridge university and other friends from all walks of life advanced education to all people on all fronts in Victorian England. There were three subjects of enduring interest to Jebb that he never stopped fighting for: for education (for all children, for women, and for working people); for the equality of women and the need for women to sit on education councils; for Sophocles and for research of the Greek language in great detail and classical Greece in all its representations. Until mid-century, little actual research was done. Students translated and might look at such authors as were available in the extant manuscripts, but Jebb really was central to vigorous research, connecting topics and tracking down manuscripts. He was also an idealist. He saw an historical link between Sophocles, Vittorino da Feltre, a renaissance educator and man of faith, and himself. All believed that people could be so much more noble and honourable than they/we presently are. This is perhaps why he was so sure that the translation of δεινός at line 332, the first line of the "Ode to Man" in Sophocles' *Antigone*, is "wonderful" and not "terrible." Hence, having given a mini-biography of Jebb in chapter two, I turn to an examination of the word δεινός in chapter three. Because the word is a mystery, I look at its translation here in the ode, then at how Sophocles uses δεινός throughout his works, then at just a few examples in two or three other authors of his time.

In chapter four I examine in more detail the “Ode to Man” itself. The interpretations of the ode down through the generations are very interesting. They extend from seeing it as a poem dropped into the play to fill an artistic gap to seeing it in the twenty-first century computer age as a representation of man transferring his mental capacity into a computer and so dispensing completely with the body. Quite what Sophocles would think of this particular modern interpretation, or Jebb too, it is impossible even to imagine.

In chapter five I look at the person that Sophocles has portrayed, Antigone. She is a complex, troubled, and ultimately controversial young woman, who sometimes draws compassion, sometimes draws condemnation, but in all instances is a fascinating and irresistible character. She pays the price for moral certitude, and even in her lament and final speech, she does not waver, nor appear pathetic. But, there are four one-liners in the play that ought not to be passed over, because they give us just a brief insight into another side of her personality. I consider Sophocles to be provoking the audience to think.

The conclusion is followed by two appendices. The first is a brief account of Eglantyne Jebb, Jebb’s niece, who confirmed the family tradition of advocating social justice causes by founding the Save The Children Foundation and writing the first “Charter of Rights for the Child.” The family of Jebb, his sister and one surviving brother, were all, in all manner of ways, engaged in working to improve the lot of the human race. Jebb lived in the middle of all this activity, which he saw simply as the right thing to do.

The second appendix is a brief history of the Apostles, a Cambridge club to which he belonged throughout his life. Jebb believed that to be invited to be a member was the most important event of his life, except for marrying his wife Caroline, who was the strongest support

for him. The Apostles were a secret society; only twelve students were members each year, and for the most part, they remained connected for the rest of their lives. The work they accomplished is of great value, though not much touted.

Chapter 2: Jebb

Richard Claverhouse Jebb was born in the village of Claverhouse — hence his name — just outside of Dundee while his parents were visiting his maternal grandmother.¹ He grew up in Ireland, first in Dublin, then about nine miles outside in a house called Desmond in the very small village of Killiney. When he was four years old his sister Eglantyne² was born, which thrilled Jebb. He and his sister remained very close throughout their lives.

Caroline Jebb³ tells us that about five years later the family was completed by the birth of twins:

Mrs. Arthur Jebb remembers well an evening when her father was amusing herself and Dick in the drawing room. He had not long before read portions of the *Comedy of Errors* to Dick, who had been greatly interested and wished to see the play acted. When the door opened to admit an old servant who announced the birth of the twins, Dick gleefully exclaimed, “Now we have the two Dromios.”⁴

Jebb was at this time nine years old. One of the twins had health issues, and this is when the family moved to Killiney. The children were delighted with the move. In the country, there were endless adventures to be had, things to be discovered and places to walk. Here Jebb learned to love solitude and long solitary walks. The children were able to pick and eat wild berries, pick

1. Christopher Stray, *Sophocles' Jebb: A Life in Letters* (Cambridge 2013) p. 9. Caroline Jebb, *Life and Letters of Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb* (Cambridge 1907) p. 1 (henceforth *LL.*).

2. Names in this family are very confusing: his mother's sister was named Eglantyne, his sister too, and one of her daughters was named Eglantyne. His sister Eglantyne, nicknamed “Tye” or “Tiny,” founded the Arts and Crafts Body of Home Arts and Industries Association in 1884; his niece Eglantyne with her sister Dorothy founded the Save the Children Fund in 1919, and Eglantyne wrote the very first Universal Rights of the Child in 1924 (see Appendix A). Stray p. 11 n. 12 and p. 12 n. 17.

3. Caroline Slemmer, who would later become Jebb's wife.

4. *LL.* p. 12.

flowers for their mother and paddle in the stream, where they built dams and fortifications and where Jebb learned to sail the little boats his father made for him. In particular, Caroline says that “with this world of delight outside, with a little printing press and an amateur carpenter-shop with its turning lathe for tasks on wet days, above all with a father who could do such wonderful things, and a sympathetic, devoted, wise mother, no wonder the children remembered their childhood almost as a tale of fairyland” (*LL*. pp. 12–13). From an early age, he was well versed in all things nautical and became a fairly competent carpenter, since he repaired his ships himself when they were damaged (Stray p. 10 n. 9).

When he turned eight, his father began teaching him and giving homework for Jebb to complete while he was at work.⁵ By the time he started school at age twelve he was already competent in Latin and Greek, with some facility in French and German. Indeed, by six he was reading books by Sir Walter Scott, Sandford and Martin and *The Arabian Nights*, and in a letter to his Uncle Richard he said that “in short, dear Uncle, I could never tell you all the books I like” (Stray p. 10). Caroline says of his studies at this time:

The set task was often exceeded. His father, who used to see his work in the evenings after coming from his Chambers, would say, “But you cannot have done all that,” to which the response would be the recitation or translation of the whole. The pleasure of surprising his father by his diligence was a sufficient incentive to industry.⁶

When he was twelve he was sent to St. Columba’s, an Anglican boarding school in Dublin, a place where he was clearly unhappy and was brutally and cruelly bullied by other

5. *LL*. p. 9. His father was a successful lawyer. Caroline, his future wife and biographer, points out in her survey of the family history that the Jebb family can trace their family history back to Elizabeth I and has a number of very distinguished members in the professions of Law, Theology, Medicine, Engineering and Academics (pp. 1–8).

6. *LL*. p. 13. This reveals a very sensitive little boy.

pupils and by some of the masters. Christopher Stray, in his introduction to this first segment of Jebb's letters, says of these letters that "they also reveal, already well developed, the morbid sensitivity to criticism which his friends remarked and his enemies seized on later in his life" (Stray p. 9). But can one legitimately call this sensitivity "morbid"? This would imply an obsessive self-indulgence. Can a twelve-year-old who has been raised in an environment of love and affection, where harsh criticism was not a part of life and certainly not a daily occurrence, do anything other than develop a sensitivity to such attacks that would not only have been completely incomprehensible but have a lasting effect? Caroline does not mention this. Stray, having access to his letters, has printed a number of them to his father relating what he was going through. The bullying started within a month of his arriving at St. Columba's on August 10, 1853, seventeen days before his 12th birthday. On the 21st of September he wrote to his father:

My dear Papa,

I want to ask your advice about a thing that has lately happened — Browne getting into a passion at breakfast this morning, called me a liar twice, saying that I had said quite enough disgusting things, while I was here, without adding more. Everybody at the upper end of the table sided with him, and I was actually borne down with their abuse. I asked Browne on the spot to retract — he refused. After breakfast I asked him again, twice — he refused again . . .

The fact of the matter is, that I have no character in the eyes of the upper fellows here — but may be called a lout, liar and Sneak as often as they like . . .

How I should like to be at a school where one boy could not call another a liar and Sneak without feeling the consequences and where honour and character are a little more respected.

It is difficult to understand how a little boy of twelve who was clearly not used to this kind of confrontational verbal abuse and who had not been away from home before would understand

this and could be so composed in his letters home.

Why were the other boys so hostile to Jebb? After Jebb died, one of his teachers, the Rev. W. Tuckwell, wrote to Lady Jebb giving his first impressions of her husband at St. Columba's:

I had charge of his composition. I remember the delightful contrast between him and other boys. They were good studious fairly clever boys, but looked on their Latin verses as at best a kind of Chinese puzzle: he seemed to *feel* the force of a distinguishing epithet, the charm of a corrected word or phrase; caught up hints and improved them, turned out all his copies with something of artistic pride (*LL. p.16*).

In all probability, his capability, especially in the languages, was resented. We see then that even so young he had a real gift for the languages and an insight and sensitivity to Latin and Greek, as is evidenced years later in his commentaries of Sophocles, his ability to compose verse in both Latin and Greek, his treatment of the vast scope of history and the people and subjects he dealt with throughout his life.

His academic ability was evidenced immediately. In his first term at St. Columba's, he started at the bottom of his class. In the November exams he moved to the top of his class and wrote a very excited letter to his father:

Dearest Papa,

I delayed writing, till the results of the Examination was quite certain. It was made so yesterday afternoon, at School time, by the Warden. I have surprisingly good news for you — I AM HEAD OF THE THIRD FORM!! In viva voce examination I was head with an overplus of marks above anybody else, I had the best Caesar paper, in a paper examination which followed & yesterday the Warden proclaimed me head!! I am now sitting at the desk of the

Head of the 3rd form!⁷

Perhaps this gives us a clue as to why the other boys were so abusive toward him. Did they resent his talents and abilities? It is worth keeping his abilities and Tuckwell's observations in mind in what much later R.Y. Tyrrell would say of Jebb's skills with respect to Jebb's commentaries of Sophocles:

Perhaps no classic — not even Vergil — demands in his exponent such minute faculty for observation, such delicate feeling for expression, and such refined aesthesis, as are required for the complete apprehension and appreciation of the subtle elements so kindly mixed in the genius of Sophocles. These are the very qualities which we have learned to expect from the current editor, and which we never look for in vain. The combination of these good gifts with great literary ability and the most complete mastery over the province of the grammarian is so rare as to give these editions a marked pre-eminence in an age which has been rich in valuable work on Sophocles — an age which has produced the complete edition of the plays and fragments by Prof. Campbell, the “*Studia Sophoclea*” of the late Prof. Kennedy, and the verse-translations of Prof. Campbell, Sir C. Young, Dean Plumtree, and Mr. Whitelaw.⁸

Tyrrell's observations confirm the rare gift that Jebb had for a keen and deep insight into the grammatical structure of the languages, and also a sensitive insight into the poet's use of words to say what he meant. Some scholars just “have it.”

However, the abuse would continue for the whole year Jebb would be at St. Columba's.

7. Stray p. 14. The Founding Warden of St. Columba's was George Williams, a Cambridge man. St. Columba's was founded in 1850, three years before Jebb began to attend.

8. R. Y. Tyrrell, *Essays on Greek Literature* (London 1909) p. 50. A little later, Tyrrell observes that, unlike Jebb, a number of contemporary scholars are very much influenced by German authority, to which he responds, “We are disposed to recommend an adjunct to the Decalogue for the guidance of our rising scholars: Thou shalt not covet the German's knife, nor his readings, nor his metres, nor his sense, nor his taste, nor anything that is his” on the grounds that “the Greek or Latin passage was never regarded as the expression of the thought of a great mind, but as a mere exercise in grammar.”

Stray uses several letters written by young Jebb to reveal how extensive the bullying was and how many students and staff it involved, but there are two letters worth quoting more extensively. Jebb had asked his father to get him two books, J.R. Major's *Hecuba* and Charles Anthon's *Horace*, because they had extensive notes in English. He did not know that texts with English notes were forbidden. School commentaries, at this time, were usually written in Latin. At some point not long after the books arrived he had made a comment to one boy that another boy had swotted a very great deal for an examination. Clearly the boy to whom he spoke passed his comments on to others. Later in class the boy about whom he had made the comment spoke up in the *Horace* class, commenting:

It's all very well for the fellows that have English notes; they can prepare their lesson. Mr. Bradshaw of course asked who had; and Knox replied, Roche and Jebb. Mr. Bradshaw asked us to show him our Books (sic), and being struck with mine, took it up to class to examine it while hearing us. This is exactly what Knox wanted. He smiled at me triumphantly; sneered at my Book, and nudged his next neighbours, till he made me the laughing stock of the whole class . . . Immediately after tea, Knox went to the Warden and complained of me. Of course the Warden called me in directly after Chapel, and gave me such a "Jaw" as I suppose I never got before. He said he was extremely displeased at this "business": saying that I had committed a serious offence against him, and the discipline of the school: and that if such conduct went on, he must allow thrashing among the boys to go on.⁹

Possibly, if not probably, what would have hurt Jebb the most would be the Warden giving him such a dressing-down, given that just a few months before the Warden had, apparently with great

9. Stray p. 18. Letter dated 17 May 1854. In a letter to Lady Jebb in 1906 following Jebb's death, the Rev. W. Tuckwell, Latin teacher, pointed out that Jebb "responded gratefully to kindness and attention" and that Warden Williams "was much hurt by his removal after a year or two." He left at Christmas 1853.

pleasure, declared him head of his form. Keeping in mind that Jebb was just twelve years old, he must have felt terribly betrayed. From his letters to his father it is clear that his father discussed with him what they should do rather than his father taking arbitrary action. His father wrote to him by return post and Jebb replied immediately:

I believe you intend me to go at some time or other, to Cambridge: And I know that Mathematics are of the greatest importance: and it is impossible to get on at mathematics here. Mr. De Quetteville, our mathematical master is most completely unfitted for teaching . . . But this is not the only reason I have for thinking it better to leave. I did not wish to tell you before, until I knew whether you wished me to stay here or not. The Boy next above me in the school, O'Brien minimus, is the very worst fellow I ever met with. He is utterly void of all sense of honour, or gentlemanly feelings: and most spiteful, unforgiving fellow I ever saw or heard of. But worse than this, he is the most deceitful boy you can imagine: and has humbugged the Warden and masters into believing him a perfect saint. He had a deadly spite against me, ever since I got into the form: chiefly because I, though his junior, almost always did more and better verses and exercises than he: Now I do not say this to boast, for anybody could do the same by industry, but merely that you may know the real state of the case. Well, he for the last three months led me such a life as I never thought any fellow could lead another: . . . [*then he lists all the things O'Brien has done*]. Now this is a specimen of what I suffer from this fellow every day: . . . To cut a long story short, this beastly fellow has given me a very bad character, and nothing is harder to bear, especially when a person is entirely innocent. These are my reasons for wishing to go: I wish the holidays were nearer for O'Brien minimus leads me a wretched life of it.¹⁰

Jebb would stay at St. Columba's until Christmas, and the bullying would continue. In

10. As Stray pp. 19–20 points out, “it was only in 1857 that Cambridge undergraduates could proceed to the Classical Tripos without first passing the Mathematical Tripos or (in the case of noblemen) gaining a first-class pass degree.”

one of the last letters from St. Columba's Jebb writes, "Oh how I wish I was reading a novel on a sofa with a good fire and lots of grub! But my time is coming" (Stray p. 24). Despite the bullying, Jebb demonstrated that he was gifted. He started in the third form and by the time he left after one year and one term had risen to the sixth form. He left with a number of prizes. He wrote to his mother that he was first in History, second to O'Brien in Geography, but was afforded the prize anyway. He did have one champion at St. Columba's, Tuckwell, who saw both his academic capability and his sensitivity and clearly was a support for him.¹¹ Jebb left St. Columba's at Christmas 1854 and started at Charterhouse in London in January 1855.¹²

There is little information available on his time at Charterhouse, though Caroline gives us some interesting information about her future husband, both as a man and as a scholar. His transfer to Charterhouse from St. Columba's quickly brought positive results. He moved there in the winter term and in February he wrote, "I like Charterhouse very well — it is pleasant for a school" (*LL*. p. 16), although, as she points out, at this time he still missed home and the positive environment there. Later, in a letter home at the end of his time there, she says, he wrote home saying:

He soon began to feel more at home in Charterhouse, becoming greatly attached to Mr. Elwyn, the second master, who became Headmaster in 1858, on the death of Dr. Elder. He quickly made friends among the boys, besides meeting family friends in the sons of the Rev. Charles Forster, the close friend and able biographer of his great-uncle Bishop Jebb; he liked examinations and

11. *LL*. p. 16. As stated in note 10 above, he wrote a very warm and complimentary letter to Lady Jebb, in 1906, after her husband's death.

12. Charterhouse was originally The Hospital of King James and Thomas Sutton and was built on the grounds of the old Carthusian Monastery. It was founded by Thomas Sutton. The school has a long and fascinating history. It takes students aged 13–18. Charterhouse was situated in London during Jebb's time; now it is in Suffolk. Charterhouse is one of the original seven public schools in England along with Eton, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Westminster and Winchester. www.charterhouse.org.uk.

competitions and of these there was a sufficiency; above all, he liked feeling his own powers which were rapidly growing and shaping. . . . His brother Heneage describes him rushing up the steps and into the drawing-room, on his return for the holidays, dropping down on his knees before “darling Mammy” and throwing with both hands his prizes into her lap. They were her chief treasures until she gave them to his wife after his marriage. His letters to his sister at this time are written in a tone of cheerfulness, which shows life was satisfactory.¹³

His letter to his mother on his last day at Charterhouse is equally important in giving us a fuller insight into Jebb:

I did feel the greatest regret at leaving the old place and all the associations. We attended Chapel as usual at the end of the quarter, at 9.30 a.m. yesterday. The distribution of prizes commenced immediately afterwards at 10.15. Mr. Elwyn and the four other masters of the school presided. When the turn of the Sixth Form came, we went up before the awful dais and the order was read out. I stood first and received the prize: but what I value ten times more, was the way in which Mr. Elwyn spoke of me to the school on behalf of the Examiners and Masters. I shall never forget his words as long as I live: but they are not words to be written down at length, and you shall have them some other time. The preacher then adjudged the prizes for the Theological Essays: subject, “National Judgements and National Mercies as exhibited in Bible History.” He awarded to first prize to me, and was good enough to say that my essay was the best that had ever been shown up for his prize. He then spoke of me in terms as gratifying and kind as which Elwyn had used. Then came the mathematical list. I was surprised that I stood second and received the second Walford prize in six volumes.¹⁴ Lastly I received two Classical Medals for Latin prose and Greek

13. *LL*. pp. 16–17. This demonstrates the importance to him both of his academic success and his personal success with his non-judgemental fellows when he is in a friendly and positive environment, though the effects of the brutal treatment of the environment of St. Columba’s would never leave him entirely.

14. The Walford Prize: Every Year Specialist (year 1) was expected to produce a written submission on one of

verse.

His old school said its last word to him on December 13, 1905, when it sent a beautiful wreath with this message:

*Fratri Praeclarissimo
Valedicunt
Carthusiani*

The Carthusian brothers bid farewell
to one who is most distinguished.¹⁵

Stray has published just one letter from Jebb's time at Charterhouse, one written in February 1858 to his father when he is just about to leave, in which he discusses whether he should go up to Cambridge that October or wait a year. He is of the opinion that he should go up the coming October, because if he waits a year he may find lethargy taking over and he will slip behind. He realizes that he will need to work on his mathematics, but feels confident about his ability to master the subject (Stray pp. 24–25). The tone of this letter gives a strong impression of happiness, self-confidence, focus and balance.

Having just turned seventeen, he left Charterhouse and in October 1858 went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, to read Classics. At Cambridge the character of Jebb emerged almost as a butterfly does from a chrysalis. At St. Columba's and Charterhouse he had been, as Caroline noted, "almost exclusively devoted to study."¹⁶ On arriving at Cambridge, he quite clearly felt a mature adult, and Caroline notes too that he "was carried away for a time by the

the set topics. These were to be between six and ten pages long. In addition, each pupil was to give a ten-minute presentation explaining the key ideas of the topic. More than this I was unable to discover.

15. *LL.* pp. 16–18. This is a most important letter because it really gives a strong impression of Jebb coming into manhood. It also shows us how important the approval, especially of those who were his superiors, was to him.

16. *LL.* p. 22.

amusements and fresh interests that opened out before him. At school the only recreations he had cared for were long solitary walks in the gardens of Sydenham, dreaming dreams and seeing visions; and music which he loved with intensity” (*LL*. p. 22). Soon after he arrived, he was greeted by a second-year student (F. Warre Cornish) whose evaluation of Jebb is very insightful and delightful:

It was in October 1858 that I went to Bishop’s Hostel, being then in my second year, to call on the famous freshman. There is always a famous freshman: the year before it was Trevelyan,¹⁷ from Harrow; that year it was Jebb, from Charterhouse. The impression then received has only deepened in the years that have followed; an impression of force and refinement, shyness and courtesy, pungency and kindness, readiness and reserve, composing a character the attraction of which was heightened by a sense of enigma in an appearance of elaborateness without affectation. Here was a person whom you were not likely know at once, nor beyond your own limitations ever; but how well worth knowing, so far as he would grant it! We were told, and we easily believed, that he came up to Cambridge at seventeen, because he had learnt what Charterhouse could teach him. He appeared here with a kind of nimbus of distinction, and it never left him. I imagine him entering Cambridge with a blaze of light following him, and his gaze full of inquiry, set upon knowing the world that opened before him and all that it contained. He was radiant with life, wit, and all that the word scholarship denotes; which I take to be a bright and cheery word, the very contrary of pedantry. He never did anything by halves; and in his first year he tried the taste of everything, and became the epitome of university life. He joined the A.D.C.,¹⁸ the Beefsteak Club, the Whist Club, and I almost think the Athenaeum; he steered a First Trinity Boat, held a

17. Sir George Otto Trevelyan (20 July 1838–17 August 1928), 2nd Baronet, fellow Apostle with Jebb; author, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, Trevelyan’s maternal uncle; was politician, Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary for Scotland, twice, and he achieved many other offices and accomplishments.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_George_Otto_Trevelyan_2nd_Baronet

18. Amateur Dramatic Club.

commission in the Volunteers, and was an officer of the Union and the Musical Society. We used to smile at his versatility, thinking it superficial, not knowing that Jebb did well whatever he did, and that these were only phases of an almost universal capacity. His clear and melodious voice expressed him, as did his beautiful handwriting; his somewhat hesitating manner came not from uncertain judgement, but from a courteous wish to show his own point of view, always individual and original, without too much enforcing it. He could be not only brilliant in talk, but cogent and severe in argument; what he loved best, like Henry Sidgwick,¹⁹ though with a different method, was to find points of agreement in diverging views.²⁰

This is a very interesting descriptive account of the first impression of Jebb. Jebb was elected to the Apostles in his first year.²¹ It would prove to be the most important group to which he ever belonged. Caroline would say that it was “a distinction which he always valued” (*LL*. p. 22). His father became somewhat alarmed at his socializing and was concerned that his son might be being led astray by the “idle and fast set” (*LL*. p. 22). His father’s concern upset Jebb, and he wrote back:

I prize such honours too much and have worked for them too hard to do anything so foolish. Can you mention an instance of my missing or losing anything from overweening confidence in my own powers, and consequent idleness? Allow me then to choose my own set and trust me that I will choose in the way best for my own interests. I *will* read but not very hard; because I know better than you or any one can tell me, how much reading is good for the

19. Henry Sidgwick (31 May 1838–28 August 1900), fellow Apostle with Jebb, dear and lifelong friend of Jebb, founder of the Society for Psychical Research, vigorous proponent of higher education of women, Utilitarian philosopher, Ethical Hedonist, devoted his life to the study of religion and philosophy.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/henry_sidgwick.

20. F. Warre Cornish, *Cambridge Review* in *LL*. pp. 20-21. Francis Warre Cornish would also remain a lifelong and close friend of Jebb; also an Apostle, scholar, writer, Vice-Provost of Eton.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Warre_WarreCornish.

21. For the Apostles, see Appendix B.

development of my own powers at the present time, and will conduce to my success next year and afterwards; and I will *not* identify myself with what are called in Cambridge “the reading set,” i.e., men who read circ. twelve hours a day and never do anything; (1) because I should lose ten per cent of reputation (which at University is no bubble but real living useful capital); (2) because the reading set, with few exceptions, are utterly uncongenial to me. My set is a set that *reads*, but does not only read; that accomplishes one great end of University (sic) life by mixing in cheerful and intellectual society, and learning the ways of the world which its members are soon to enter; and which, without the pedantry and cant of the “reading man,” turns out good Christians, better scholars, better men of the world, and better gentlemen, than those mere plodders with whom a man is inevitably associated if he identifies himself with the reading set.²²

Even though his socializing was busy, nevertheless he excelled in all his examinations.²³ It must be noted too that his social life consisted to a very large extent in getting together with friends and colleagues for discussions that covered a multitude of topics. Caroline says that “it was a period when much entertaining was the fashion, of which he took his full share. One wonders how he found time to read at all, so full is his diary of almost hourly social engagements” (*LL*. p. 22). As a young man and independent now, he clearly set out to build for himself a life and environment that was quite opposite to St. Columba’s.

In April 1859 he visited a cousin, Mrs. Miles, at Firbeck Hall, Yorkshire, where he met another cousin, Susan, from Boston. He began a correspondence with her, which is remarkable for its degree of intimacy, in which he reveals a lot about himself. He shared with her the state of

22. *LL*. pp. 23–24: a logical and reasoned response.

23. In his second term at Cambridge, Jebb won the Porson Scholarship (April 1859). In his second year he won the Craven. In the letter to his father he tells him that he had been told that the “examiners were entirely unanimous . . . [and] that I was far ahead of the rest,” though until the results were announced he had been convinced that he was not successful. *LL*. p. 31. He also won the Porson Prize (*Stray* p. 29 n. 2).

dining conditions in Trinity:

Have you ever seen our hall at Trinity during feeding time? If you have not, I will assist your imagination. Fancy a vast hall, traversed lengthwise by narrow tables. Fancy these tables crowded to excess with British youths in every stage of starvation or repletion: some, with the stony look of despairing hunger; some, in whose faces despair has not yet frozen boiling indignation; some, whose countenances express ungrateful content and the peace that is engendered by unctuous pudding. Between these tables, where haggard misery is the neighbour of stolid fatness, fancy a dense tide of slovenly men and dirty old women pushing, wrangling, struggling for hacked and gory joints, upsetting gravy, dropping dishes, always in a hurry, never attending to one, but always going to everybody. If, in addition to these efforts of imagination, you can further portray to your fancy the personal appearance of a leg of mutton, which has been carved in succession by three or four men, who have distinct and antagonistic theories on that subject, you will have a faint, a very faint and dim conception of Trinity, its Hall. So, last Monday, a meeting was held of some Trinity men (I was one of them), at which a Petition was approved for presentation to Whewell²⁴ and the Senior Fellows, praying earnestly for a total Reform.²⁵

They were successful in getting the reforms requested, two sittings for meals, all people who worked with the food being bathed and dressed in clean clothes, and exemption from paying for a meal if three day's notice of intended absence were given.

In 1860 he visited Boston and stayed with Susan. While in Boston he met a young

24. William Whewell (24 May 1794–96 March 1866), Master of Trinity College. A very gifted man, he was first a scientist who coined a number of scientific terms we take for granted today, i.e., “cathode,” “Eocene,” “Miocene,” “physicist” and “scientist.” He wrote poetry, and his papers covered many subjects in science, architecture, poetry and religion. <http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Printonly/Whewell.html>.

25. *LL*. pp. 28–29; Roger D. Dawe, “R.C. Jebb” in *Classical Scholarship. A Biographical Encyclopedia*, eds. Ward W. Briggs and William M. Calder III (New York and London 1990) pp. 239–47.

woman, a friend of Susan's, with whom he fell in love. Caroline puts it:

All his plans and hopes began to centre in her — how to arrange to meet her, what messages to send her through Susan, in what way to interest her. Susan *must* arrange to bring her to Cambridge for the boat-race week; and when this was settled, dinners, picnics, balls, boating parties in a programme so that her every moment might be pleasantly occupied, Letters were sent almost daily to the much-enduring Susan . . . and then she did not come.²⁶

In a letter to Susan in early 1861, in which he finally accepts that his love is not to be, he declares:

For years everything conspired to make me think that Greek and Latin were the end of existence. This miserable illusion disappeared when I came up here, and yet I know that my pretensions to any ability whatever rest solely on proficiency in these wretched Classics, which I now almost detest. What I yearn for is a start in the serious business of life, and emancipation from these utterly barren studies — barren at least in respect of all that is practically useful. Then I have learned to hate competition — to long for some station in life with definite duties in the performance of which I might find rest and peace . . . Forgive me, dearest Susan, for the selfishness of writing in this strain. I am so utterly unhappy at times that I scarcely know what I am saying. It is ungrateful to write to a friend like you such dismal letters, but you are the only one to whom I can pour out my feelings and it is such a relief when one feels very miserable . . .²⁷

26. *LL*. pp. 34-35.

27. *LL*. pp. 35-36. This is not an inconsequential letter. Much has been made of his statement that he hated Classics, but he is not even nineteen and is very much in love. At this age most of us tend to experience our emotions to the extreme one way or the other. It also tells us how close he felt to Susan and how comfortable he felt sharing such intimate emotional feelings with her (as, indeed, he says), especially if we keep in mind the comment made by Warre Cornish to Caroline in his letter to her after Jebb died, namely that "here was a person whom you were not likely to know at once, nor beyond your own limitations ever; but how well worth knowing, so far as he would grant it" (p. 21). The only other person with whom he would feel this safe with is his future wife Caroline.

But in truth, what he really wanted was simply to quit university, get a job with a salary that would allow him to get married and support a family, but nothing he might have considered provided an option: for the Church he did not feel called, and he shrank from pledging himself to its service, unless impelled by the highest motives (*LL.* pp. 36–37); The Law would require years of waiting for success; and never had anyone existed to whom waiting was so irksome (*LL.* p. 37). A third alternative was Engineering, for which profession he had no enthusiasm. One gets the impression that he was feeling lost at this point, which is understandable. The melancholy seemed to stay with him.

On March 15, 1860, he wrote to his father to let him know that he had won the Craven.²⁸ He also told his father that the Little Go²⁹ would start on the following Monday, but that he would “far rather go in for the most elaborate classical examination, than for the jumble of Paley’s Evidences, Arithmetic, Euclid, Statics, and Greek Testament which is before us.”³⁰

In April he wrote to Susan, and his melancholy, if not despair, is very present:

It is so very hard to feel the faintest interest in such an utterly useless thing as this Classical Tripos. Since I have been up, I have not opened a classical book. Think what frightful odds those men have whose illusions in that direction are intact, & who have been reading with all the steadfastness of an ambition which to them is still real. For my part, I shall have to bend myself to the task with exactly the same sort of interest, as if the object was to learn the art of

28. John Craven, born 1605, was the second son of William Craven 1548–1618, Lord Mayor of London 1610 (about whom it is speculated that the story of Dick Whittington is based.). Little is known of John Craven except that he was created a Baron by Charles I, he died without issue, and created the Craven scholarships at Cambridge and Oxford. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Craven_\(Lord_Mayor_of_London\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Craven_(Lord_Mayor_of_London)).

29. The Little Go, also known as the Previous Exam taken the year before, in preparation for the BA examination.

30. William Paley (1743–1805), Christian Apologist and Utilitarian, wrote *Natural Theology or Evidences and Attributes of the Existence of the Deity* in which he used the watchmaker analogy. The *Evidences* were a mandatory part of the Little Go and were a three-hour exam. The Apostles and others worked hard to have the *Evidences* removed from the Little Go, but this was not achieved until 1920. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/william_paley.

building houses with cards before the 10th of February next.³¹

In September of 1861 he wrote to Henry Jackson, who would succeed him as Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge in 1906, and thanked him for putting his name down for the Classical Tripos. Jebb had forgotten to put his name down, and Jackson had noticed this literally at the eleventh hour and, having discovered it would not be illegal for him to do so, added Jebb's name to the list. He also reveals in this letter that he has been reading intensively (Stray pp. 36–37). In the autumn of 1861 he received permission to go home to study for his BA exams, which were held in January 1862. He wrote to Susan that he was quite sure he had “utterly failed in the Examination” (*LL*. p. 54; Stray p. 38). On the contrary, he was Senior Classic (i.e., the one who came first in the examination; Stray p. 38 n. 38). Caroline says, “But for an unlucky mistake in translating some verses in a different metre from the one prescribed, his total would have been so high, one of the examiners told him, that a line would have been drawn under his name.” She further notes that once his exams were finished, “he went on a round of visits, visiting some of the most important people in his life at this time, Firbeck Hall, Wickersley, and Boston” (*LL*. p. 55).

Under normal circumstances Jebb would have been elected to a Trinity Fellowship, but he was not. Stray says that it was not unusual for the electors to elect older men whose third and final chance this was. Of those elected, four were graduates from 1860.³² That summer he taught at Harrow. The headmaster was a dear friend, Henry Montague Butler. In October he came back to Trinity. The Tutors of Trinity organized to have him appointed to the position of a Scholar to a

31. Stray p. 36.

32. Stray p. 39, n. 40. Caroline says that “he was very angry, with the anger of hurt affection: he loved his College and she had snubbed him.” George Otto Trevelyan was also not elected and did not stand again. He left for India that autumn (*LL*. p. 57).

picked class with a salary of an Assistant Tutor (*LL*. p. 57). He decided at this time to keep a journal, and to prevent it being a complete bore he included his letters to Susan. Over that Christmas he wrote her a letter beginning “Dear Madam” — she had not replied to his letters for a while — which is quite humorous. While in London he had attended, with friends,

. . . the Westminster Play. Which, as you probably know is always a Latin Play, from Terence or Plautus. The thing I most admired was the admirable provision for applause, which is supplied by a standing army of “gods.” The gods are town boys. They stand on a plank at the top of a tier of seats. They are under the command of the god-keeper, who has a cane; and when they are to signify their unbiased approbation, the god-keeper waves the cane; and if the gods are not immediately with the dramatic merits of what is going on, they know why next morning. By that system of double government which is so fruitful of tyranny but so admirable of its results, the god-keeper is himself responsible for the acuteness of artistic feeling shewn by the gods: and is not infrequently thrashed within an inch of his life, if the deities are obtuse.³³

He goes on to say that he had dined with the Thackerays (William Makepeace and family), and that after dinner they had all moved to the library where the men smoked cigars, turned the lights down low and told ghost stories. On October 9, 1863, Jebb was, at last, elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College (*LL*. p. 64).

He then met with three of his colleagues with whom he was going to Egypt. He describes in wonderful detail in letters to Susan and his mother, both the itinerary they planned to follow and the fulfillment of same. His most arresting description of his whole trip he makes in a letter to his mother on first seeing the Pyramids:

33. *LL*. pp. 59–60. What is pleasing about Caroline’s biography of her husband is that she includes a few letters such as this one, which gives us a view of the man that is very warm and affectionate and very human, which others do not. She also intersperses the letters chosen with observations and comments that make the man accessible to us.

I shall never forget the moment when the presence of the oldest monument in the world broke upon us. You do not see it from the shore, but on the second morning of our stay on board our boat, I was taking a listless survey of the town and harbour, when, suddenly, as my eyes rested on the western bank, *there* was the form so long familiar standing up in awful reality against the speckless sky, the same to my eye as when Abraham looked upon it four thousand years ago. It is worth coming 3,000 miles to experience the sensation of awe, perhaps momentary, which for that moment at least allows one to conceive the inconceivable, as one stands face to face with some unchanged witness of the primeval world.³⁴

He was also impressed greatly by Philae and the “colossal size of the figures graven on the walls, exterior and interior . . . And, once for all, I must state — for I cannot explain — the quite peculiar sensation which falls upon me from the awful *SILENCE* of these huge gods and kings” (*LL*. pp. 68–69). On their return to Cairo, Jebb became ill with gastric fever and jaundice and had to cut short his trip and return home.

In the period covering 1864–1870, Stray includes almost exclusively letters to his mother whom Jebb almost always addressed as “My darling Mother.” Most letters contain everyday things, with the odd exception. On October 31, 1865, he wrote to tell her that he had worked out a deal with *The Saturday Review*. Two reviews he had submitted had not yet been published, and he wondered why. He thought perhaps they had been rejected, but this was not the case; it was simply a matter of delay (Stray p. 42 n. 55; p. 43 n. 56). In another letter to his mother he had been for a walk with his friend Frederick Myers and they had stopped in at the Botanical Gardens. He describes in detail a plant they had seen:

34. *LL*. p. 67. This is a familiar experience to anyone who has seen the Pyramids.

Have you heard of “*Tropaeolum tricolorum*”? It is covered with small bell-shaped pods of a rich crimson: the leaves are a very pale & delicate green: the whole structure of the plant is wonderfully airy & dainty. When the crimson flowers are poured in a cascade down the delicate trellised leaves, the contrast of colour is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.³⁵

In a letter to his brother Heneage, who was a student at Winchester public school, he praises his brother’s art of expression in an essay he had just read:

You have a singular advantage over every boy of your age whose work I have seen. You express yourself in English, not merely with fluency (which is common enough), but easily & naturally. You can scarcely understand how rare this power of expression, in this sense, is . . . The simple natural eloquence of your English style is very rare — rarest of all at your age.

In February his old friend Oscar Browning invited him to meet George Eliot for breakfast the next morning. Jebb was very excited at the prospect, because he greatly admired her writings (Stray p. 50). In a letter to Caroline in 1873 he speaks again of meeting Eliot, but now acquaintance has moved into friendship. He says:

I was saying (*à propos* of Pater’s essays on the Renaissance) that the “precious” school seemed to be destroying everything — their finesses and small affectations blinding people’s eyes to the great lineaments of the great creative works — blinding them to the mind which speaks from these faces: the creators, if they could revive, would never know their own thoughts under this veil of finikin yet thoroughly opaque ingenuities. Her face lit up in a moment, and she said, “It is such a comfort and a strength to hear you say that” — and then she said why, so eloquently. I asked her how Sophocles had influenced her (we had been talking about him, and she had said that she had first come to

35. Stray p. 45, n. 65. To quote directly: “The plant is native to Chile, the descendant of the specimen Jebb admired is alive and well in the University Botanical Garden.” (My thanks to Anne Kenney for information.)

know about him through a small book of mine) and her answer certainly startled me . . . Long ago I had put down . . . some things that had been passing through my mind about Sophocles, and this among the rest, that George Eliot was the modern dramatist (in the large sense) most like him, and that he had told upon her work probably *in the outlining of the first emotions*. Her answer to my question was “in the delineation of the great primitive emotions.”³⁶

He and some colleagues had been working on a reform of the Classical Tripos, and in April 1869 he tells his mother that their proposal, “somewhat modified, had been accepted . . . but so far as it goes it is good” (Stray p. 52).

In a little aside, Caroline makes note of Jebb’s appreciation of nature: “All through the diary the weather never fails to be recorded, the beauty of the trees, the clouds, the colouring of the seasons, almost every sunbeam noted” (*LL*. p. 72). She then follows this observation in a letter to his mother where he gives an account of a solitary walk:

I have just come in from a solitary walk . . . There is something that I enjoy very much in the frosty twilight of a December afternoon. To-day everything was still and clear. And the sunlight, with the afternoon shadows, was beautiful. . . . I suppose that the susceptibility to the quieter beauties of nature is sometimes the compensation for suppressed ardour and ambition in vivid temperaments. . . . Perhaps half the charm of these calm winter scenes is their nameless “regret” — the “divine despair” that touches nearly all impressionable people now and then, but which has no place in the mind of a child. I never experienced this vague sensation half as strongly as in the Egyptian sunsets. Do you know, that under the strange spell that they threw over me, I more than once caught a glimpse of some incident in my early childhood, that had left no former vestige in my memory? When I said that I do

36. Stray . 47. *LL*. pp. 155–56.

not associate the sensation itself with my earliest recollections, I did not mean that the sensation does not often help me to recall old times. It is of later growth itself; but it is often the window through which I catch a glimpse of bygone years.³⁷

This is a fascinating letter in number of ways. It shows us the freedom he felt in sharing such intimate and unusual thoughts and observations with his mother. He reveals the depth and complexity of his interpretations and thoughts, and again we note his sensitivity and acute awareness of his surroundings and how they affect his thinking. The scope of these powers of observation gives us a sense of the breadth and depth of his perception of history and all it involves that is simply not available to us elsewhere.

In 1866, he went on a tour of France with a colleague and writes to his mother from Tours:

The famous old cathedral of St. Martin's was destroyed at the Revolution, after twelve centuries of renown, and nothing remains of it but a pair of insignificant towers in an obscure street. Wherever one goes in France, one has reason to deplore the senseless and irreparable havoc committed in the name of civil liberty. At Orleans, for example, the democrats melted down, to make cannons, a statue of Jeanne d'Arc . . . When one considers the incalculable treasures of art throughout France which the Revolution swept away, one sees that it was one of the most tremendous blows ever dealt at the continuity of human records. It quite deserves to rank, in this point of view, with the burning of the Alexandrian Library by Omar.³⁸

And then just after his return to Cambridge he tells his mother of a most generous act by one of

37. *LL*. pp. 155–56.

38. *LL*. p. 88. Had Jebb lived, the First World War would undoubtedly have destroyed his soul. *LL*. p. 89.

his colleagues:

A Trinity man was engaged to be married, but neither he nor the lady had any money, and a long engagement was before them. When lo, a College friend of the Lothario's — an undergraduate at Magdalene with £6,000 a year — comes forward and presents him with £10,000; on the strength of this the young couple have been married.

Jebb is so aware of his surroundings on all levels and so sensitive that it makes his awareness and sensitivity to the subtleties of languages much more understandable.

In 1867 his commentary of the *Electra* of Sophocles was published. The *Ajax* came next, both in the school edition *Catena Classicorum*.³⁹ Following this, he tells his mother that “I am revolving more than one project for a book in a rather higher sense; and I am resolved that as soon as possible I shall settle down to some serious literary labour” (*LL*. p. 92). By this it is reasonable to assume that he has in mind his commentaries of the complete works of Sophocles, though he would publish other works before he committed himself to that task. He makes an interesting comment in a letter to his mother in early 1867. Friends of his who had been living in Cambridge had moved out into the country and he says, “I miss Lady Francis Osborne terribly; it makes a great difference not having a friend to whom one may talk as I could to her. I think I never enjoyed a friendship more. She is very charming and really beautiful, but it is her gift of sympathy that makes her adorable” (*LL*. p. 95).

In 1869, when he was twenty-eight, he was elected Public Orator. He wrote to his mother:

This official is the spokesman for the Senate on public occasions; e.g., he

39. J. D. Duff, a Fellow of Trinity, says of these two volumes that they were “a revelation to the boys whose good fortune it was to read them” (*LL*. p. 93).

presents candidates for honorary degrees to the Vice-Chancellor with a Latin Speech; accompanies deputations from the University to the Chancellor or the King⁴⁰ and acts as secretary in the public correspondence of the Senate. His stipend is small — £150, I believe, but he has the very important privilege of retaining his Fellowship and other college emoluments upon marriage.⁴¹

The turnout in support of him was quite considerable. He tells his uncle that the Trinity men called on Fellows from around the country to come and vote for him, and that “about 200 barristers and clergymen were brought down (from London) by a special train to the evening poll” (Stray p. 52). The final count demonstrates the commitment of Trinity Fellows to their college and their confidence in Jebb. The final vote was Jebb 526, Rev. Arthur Holmes (Clare College) 383 (Stray p. 52). A week after he was elected, he presented the Bishop of Bathurst for an honorary degree. Three months later he had to present the Greek Archbishop and three members of his entourage for honorary degrees, but he had to learn how to pronounce modern Greek both for the presentation and for conversation afterward. Caroline believes this to be the beginning of his interest in modern Greek. She quotes from a letter written much later by J. D. Duff:

Jebb spoke modern Greek with ease and fluency. I remember being taken by the late H. A. J. Munro to dine at the Oxford and Cambridge Club; I was then an undergraduate, and I believe it was in the summer of 1880. The next table to ours in the strangers’ dining room was occupied by Jebb and a friend. They talked continuously in a language even Munro, who knew many languages, at first failed to recognize. However, as they were close beside us and not talking low, Munro soon pronounced that the language was modern Greek.⁴²

40. As Stray points out, at the time England had a Queen and had had for thirty years (p. 52 n. 85).

41. Stray p. 52.

42. *LL*. p. 101. For J. D. Duff’s evaluation of Jebb’s writings and life. J. D. Duff’s full name was James Duff Duff. He is sometimes referred to as James Duff Duff, sometimes James D. Duff, sometimes J. D. Duff.

It is interesting to note in a letter to his mother a little later that he had been dining in Hall and there happened to be a Greek woman there, Miss Ionides, who was translating Sophocles into German, and he makes the following comment, “It is odd, but I have always felt more at home with the few Greeks I have met than with any other people — perhaps it is my sympathy with their language & its ideas — but I think I could recognize a Greek mind anywhere even without seeing its owner” (*LL*. p. 57).

In 1870 his volume *The Characters of Theophrastus* was published.

In 1871 Jebb met his future wife Caroline Reynolds Slemmer.⁴³ She was from Boston and was staying with a cousin in Cambridge. They met at a social event. Most of the letters written by Caroline Slemmer that Mary Reed Bobbitt includes in her collection, come from the time before and when she met Jebb, and, to a large extent, deal with social activities and people met, but she does include quite a few from after she and Jebb were married. They tell us a lot about Victorian society. One letter included, written in October 1870, reveals something of Caroline’s intellectual abilities:

Meanwhile the society is very pleasant, and Jeanette and I are planning to attend Prof. Sedgwick’s (not to be confused with Prof. Sidgwick) lectures on Zoology, and Prof. Fawcett’s on Moral Philosophy, and if I can, I want to gain admittance to Vernon Harcourt’s course on International Law. Then every

43. Caroline, whom Jebb would come to call “Cara,” was a widow. She had been married to General Adam Jacoby Slemmer (1829–1868) when she was 16. They had one child, Albert (Bertie), dates of birth and death unknown, whom she absolutely adored. Sadly, when he was five years old he caught diphtheria and died. Caroline was devastated and it is questionable as to whether she ever quite got over it. Just a few years later, in 1868, Slemmer, a hero of the Civil War, died in his bed of a heart attack at 39 years of age. Mary Reed Bobbitt, *With Dearest Love to All* (Chicago 1960) pp. 18, 29, 47, 54–55 (hereafter *DLA*). Mary Reed Bobbitt was the great-niece of Caroline Jebb. She says she was aware that her mother was diligent in keeping several shoe boxes that her great-aunt had written to Bobbitt’s grandmother over her lifetime. Likewise, Lady Jebb’s great-nephew Herbert Spencer had also inherited and kept safe another large file of her letters and a number of papers from other correspondents, and especially a number of Lady Jebb’s journals. Stray tells us Sir Richard wrote in excess of 3,000 letters. It would be fascinating if it was possible to publish all the letters of both.

Friday we are to go to Mr. Hudson's German readings; that is, we all meet together in his rooms to read Schiller, each taking our turn . . . ⁴⁴

Caroline tells her cousin that "he fell in love with me the first moment he saw me, and that it was all over with him then" (*DLA*. p. 76). At this time Caroline had been in Cambridge several months and was due to return to Boston in August. She had met a number of young men, all of whom proposed to her. She had met one man, Arnold Morley, with whom she had fallen in love and who wished to marry her. Ever since the death of Slemmer she had been pursued by men young and old, but she says again and again that she did not wish to remarry, yet about this one man she says that "it is rather hard lines for me, to have to give up the only man I ever loved in my life . . . but when I told him about my health, and how anyone who married me would have to be content with only me, and no children, he finally came to see the thing as I did, and agreed that it was better to part" (*DLA*. p. 66). This was six months before she met Jebb. Jebb wrote a note to her cousin Jeanette asking her if she thought he had a chance with Caroline; he said he just wanted to know (*DLA*. p. 76). He also wrote a note to Caroline at the same time to which she responded in "an encouraging manner," even though she said earlier that 'I don't blame myself for Mr. Jebb, because I have always disliked him from the first' (*DLA*. p. 76). But she kept his letter, and agreed to correspond with him on her return. She had asked him not to talk of love ". . . because I *cannot* write about love" (*DLA*. p. 77).

Their correspondence began immediately and with very serious subject matter. They must have at least started a discussion on religion and faith before she left for home in that within a month Jebb responds thus:

44. *DLA*. p. 63.

September 16th, 1871

Nothing in your letter interested me so deeply as your account of the meaning which you attach to religion. Between the spirit of your view and the spirit of mine there is an essential analogy. It is this — that for me, just as for you, religion almost excludes reasoning. I hold my Christianity very much as you hold your belief in God. That is, the Christian morality and the Christian hope appear to me to be divinely adapted to the human heart; . . . I do not pretend or attempt to analyze those details of Christianity which the theological subtlety of centuries has formulated into dogmas of which the very language is unintelligible, without research, to minds of the present day. It is clear to me that the original, the authentic Christianity — the Christianity of the Apostles — was something a great deal simpler and plainer than the Christianity of any modern Church . . .⁴⁵

In another letter he writes:

September 22nd, 1871

I believe in both the being of God and in Christianity — with those doctrines attached to it which I understand its *first* apostles to have held — because my inner consciousness assures me that God exists and that Christianity is true . . . I rely throughout on the witness of the inward need. With him, as with you, I agree in the main principle that reason is no arbiter of religion . . . To me, as to him, it appears that, from an intellectual point of view, no doctrine is surrounded with so much difficulty as the Being of God. . . . I never talk about these things; and I have never in my life written about them to anyone but you. No one can feel more than I do how unfitting it would be for me to preach to other people. . . . The ancients gave no place in their imaginations to what Ruskin calls the Pathetic Fallacy — that is, to the conception of a sympathy between external nature and the passing moods of the human spirit . . . for instance, Homer and Vergil would not have entered into the innermost meaning

45. *LL*. p. 104.

of Wordsworth's Ode on *Intimations of Immortality*; where after saying that, for him, nothing can bring back

‘the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.’

he goes on to affirm his faith in a “primal sympathy, which having been must ever be” — and ends triumphantly:

And, O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might.

For in these from childhood to old age, he had found an unbroken companionship . . . I have often thought that the contrast between this tone and the tone of the old world is well brought out in a beautiful and touching scene of the *Iliad*. Helen is standing on the walls of Troy, looking out on the Greek warriors whose forms rush and dart through the battle on the plain before the walls; . . . but she looks in vain her own twin brothers, the glorious Dioscuri. She does not know that, since she left home, they have died.

But now in far Lacedaemon
Earth, Earth, *giver of life*, had taken the Kings to her arms.

So, at the very moment when she entombs, Earth is still, for Homer, only the “*giver of life*” — only the passive mother of trees and plants.⁴⁶

As noted above, Jebb was a man of faith, not of religion. In his book *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry* he examines the crippling effects of rigid dogmas in the ancient Egyptian religion. He notes:

46. *LL*. pp. 106–107. “And, O ye fountains etc.” is from Wordsworth’s “*Ode On Intimations of Immortality*” (186–89) and the *Iliad* lines are 3.244–45. It is perhaps only the second or third letter to Caroline, yet it is a long, detailed, and a very intimate letter. He is sharing with her right away his most intimate thoughts and interpretations of the experience of a theological point of faith as he sees it represented in both modern and ancient literature. He had been reading Newman’s *Apologia*.

The Egyptian state rested upon two closely connected foundations; first, a hierarchy of officials at its head . . . Pharaoh, the descendant of the god Ra, . . . secondly, a religion that dominated every part of life, and in which the central point was the care for the dead . . . the minutest details of ritual had been formulated in writing. A canonical book regulated the daily occupations of the king. Geometry, medicine, astronomy-indeed, Egyptian knowledge-had been digested into sacred treatises . . . Thus the shadow of superstition fell upon the entire existence of the Egyptian. His constant anxiety was to do that which was of good omen, and to avoid the contrary . . . The mental stamina of the people had been enfeebled by the despotism of an all-engrossing ritual . . . The age which saw the birth of Homeric epos found Egypt with her material civilization highly developed, but stricken with intellectual barrenness, and without any vigorous pulse of national existence. The life of the state and of the individual had been crushed by the weight of sacerdotal tradition. . . . Where men are penetrated by the conviction, not only that there is an unending life after death, but that the strict observance of certain precepts can alone secure their happiness in that life, they will yield unlimited obedience to the expounders of such rules. Hence the power of the Egyptian priesthood. . . but the religion of Babylonia and Assyria did not conceive the life after death with any approach to Egyptian clearness and minuteness. There was a gloomy Hades, a place of torment. . . . The Phoenicians showed a spirit of free enterprise unlike any that had yet appeared in the world. But its distinctive character is commercial. It was primarily associated with the pursuit of gain. . . It does not appear that the Phoenicians developed any intellectual activities beyond those . . . The Hellenic gods and goddesses are glorified men and women, human in love, hate, and guile, superhuman in power and in beauty; they speak the same language as the human, noble, yet simple and direct . . . there is no dark symbolism, no occult ritual; there are no animal forms, no hybrid monsters, representative of dread agencies hostile to man; the hundred-headed Typhon has been vanquished by Zeus, and is prisoner beneath the earth; Cerberus is merely the watchdog of

Hades. . . . Religion has now its central seat, not in the authoritative lore of a priesthood, not in a close corporation which jealously guards its secrets, but in the free consciousness of the people.⁴⁷

Later, in a very long letter to Caroline, he responds to a discussion they had had concerning literature and philosophy. She had raised some points on Hippolyte Taine's *Notes on England*⁴⁸ in a previous letter. Jebb responds that he had read another book by Taine titled *English Positivism*. Caroline had attended a lecture Taine had given at Oxford, during which he declared that England "has *savants* but you have no thinkers." He believed that the authority of orthodox religion takes the place in England of a desire for research into principles. "Your God embarrasses you. *He* is the supreme Cause; through respect to Him, you shrink from reasoning upon causes." Then follows a Socratic dialogue, in which Taine drives his friend to admitting that the one original thinker of England is John Stuart Mill (*LL*. pp. 122–23). Jebb then continues through a look at Mill and philosophical thought in Germany, England, and France. Then he mentions the Ad Eundem Club, which was made up of ten men from Oxford and ten men from Cambridge, most graduates, four of whom were MPs. The question they had addressed at this latest meeting had been whether "intoxicating liquors ought to be restrained by legislative interference."⁴⁹

Stray says of Caroline that she was no scholar (Stray p. 2); however, she spoke and read

47. Richard Claverhouse Jebb, *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry* (Boston 1893) pp. 2–15. This essay is a very interesting account of the evolution of religion in the human community as historical evolution moved East to West.

48. Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England* (London 1872).

49. The Ad Eundem ("of the same rank") Club was one of a number of clubs to which Jebb belonged. They met once a term. It "was founded to encourage university reform." W.C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles* (Cambridge 1998) pp. 228–30. It was another project of the Apostles and Henry Sidgwick. They also met to dine and discuss as did most of the clubs of the day. The last half of the eighteenth century had been a disaster of cheap gin production and consumption, especially by the poor, leading to family disintegration, child abandonment and violence. Jessica Warner, in her book *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason* (New York 2002), covers this period, not without a little amusement.

French and German, and as noted above, when given the opportunity, she attended lectures or courses on such subjects as International Law and Zoology. Over a number of letters she and Jebb discussed Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Taine, Mill, Shakespeare, and much, much more. She was not, as would have been said back then, a “forward woman,” but it is quite clear as the years passed that she and Jebb fell more and more in love, which suggests that he more than likely discussed most of his writings with her. She was very self-confident and secure and did not need to boast. His letters to her are full of deeply thought and felt literary, religious, and philosophical discussions, and are clearly in response to very insightful and provocative thoughts from Caroline. It is clear from all that is contained in these letters that she was an intellectual. She was also a supporter of women’s rights, as was Jebb, and both supported the suffragist movement. Women who were householders and over the age of thirty got the vote in 1918. Men over twenty-one got the vote in 1918, but women over twenty-one did not get the vote until 1928. Clearly Cara and Jebb were well ahead of their time.

What was it that so endeared Sophocles to Jebb? It would be really wonderful if we could discover that what influenced Jebb in his support for the suffragist movement was Antigone. The first thing to note is the choice Caroline made from her husband’s papers to include in the volume *Essays and Addresses*.⁵⁰ Her selection, from what must be hundreds, given that he wrote every speech before he gave it,⁵¹ and that included his parliamentary speeches, is very insightful and revealing. The first three are *The Genius of Sophocles*, *Pindar* and *The Age of Pericles*.

The Genius of Sophocles really gives us a glowing picture of how Jebb saw Sophocles, Thucydides — a trustworthy witness for the leading thoughts if not

50. Richard Jebb, *Essays and Addresses*, ed. Caroline Jebb (Cambridge 1907) (henceforth *E&A*).

51. Throughout her book, Cara (as he called Caroline throughout his life) speaks of him writing the address he was currently scheduled to give.

the words of Pericles — makes him dwell on the way in which two contrasted elements had come to be tempered in the life of Athens. After describing the intellectual tolerance, the flexibility and gladness of Athenian social life, Pericles goes on: “Thus genial in our private intercourse, in public things we are kept from lawlessness mainly by fear, obedient to magistrates of the time and to the laws — especially those laws which are set for the help of the wronged, *and to those unwritten laws of which the sanction is a tacit shame*.”⁵² It is by this twofold characteristic — on the one hand, sympathy with progressive culture, on the other hand, reverence for immemorial, unwritten law — that Sophocles is the poet of the Sophoclean age.

And later:

Aeschylus is a democratic conservative; Euripides the critic of a democracy which he found good in theory but practically vicious; Sophocles sets upon his work no properly political stamp, but rather the mark of a time of political rest and of manifold intellectual activity; an activity which took its special character from the idea of an elastic development reconciled with a restraining moral tradition.⁵³

Her choice of his letters in the volume also published in 1907⁵⁴ gives us a wonderful view into his insights, his enthusiasms, and in particular, the vast scope of the interests with which he was engaged. Central for him were Sophocles, education, women and humanism, which was an integral part of all three. For Jebb, humanism was the equal opportunity of everyone and free education for all children, something he fought for all his life, and especially when he was elected to parliament.⁵⁵ But perhaps the overriding focus was opening the mind of children. As he

52. Italics are Jebb's.

53. *E&A* p. 26. Jebb goes on to say that there are two passages in Sophocles which “are expressive of these two feelings”: “The Ode to Man” in *Antigone* 332–75, and on the need for purity in *Oedipus Tyrannus* 863–910 and p. 29.

54. *LL*. 1907.

55. Of Jebb's 52 Parliamentary speeches, 30 were on education.

saw in everything he read of Greek literature, especially fifth-century literature,⁵⁶ it was a society that collectively was wide open, free, and, as he saw it, non-judgmental; that made its laws and decisions at all levels as a civilization; and that collectively discussed the choices and came to at least a majority decision.

As noted earlier, both he and Caroline were supportive of the suffragist movement. He had been committed to the equality of women all his life. Soon after he became a fellow and a tutor at Cambridge, he began teaching a class for women. He and fellow friends and Apostles Henry and Arthur Sidgwick worked relentlessly to get women accepted to university and to become a normal part of the university community. Henry Sidgwick and his wife were founders of Newnham College for women at Cambridge and they were an essential part of the founding of Girton College. But first of all these issues to which Jebb was committed was Sophocles. It is clear that Sophocles, second only to Caroline, perhaps, embraced his soul.

In the preface to the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the first of the seven Sophoclean plays which he edited with commentary, he notes that his involvement began when he produced commentaries on *Electra* in 1867 and *Ajax* in 1868 for the *Catena Classicorum* series for use in schools:

In the course of preparing the commentaries on the *Electra* and the *Ajax*, I had been led to see more clearly the intimate relation which in certain respects exists between Greek tragic dialogue and Greek rhetorical prose, and to feel the desire of studying more closely the whole process by which Greek oratory had been developed . . . the principle of which shall be absolute fidelity to the original; not to the letter of the original at the cost of the spirit, but to the spirit as expressed in the letter . . . [and] fidelity to light touches by which the genius

56. The sheer scope of Jebb's reading and gathering of information is staggering.

and art of the original are most delicately marked.⁵⁷

This spirit grows very significantly throughout the rest of his life. Jebb saw Sophocles and the Periclean era as the first demonstration in the civilized world of democratic humanism.

Sophocles' *Antigone*, a play very dear to him, is a good representation of humanism as Jebb understood it. In the preface to his commentary with English translation he says:

The *Antigone*, one of the earliest of its author's extant plays — the *Ajax* alone having a rival claim in this respect — belongs by time, as by spirit, to the very centre of the age of Pericles. At the probable date of its composition, the Parthenon was slowly rising on the Acropolis, but was still some years from completion; Pheidias,⁵⁸ a few years older than Sophocles, and then about sixty, was in the zenith of his powers . . . The figure of Antigone, as drawn by the poet, bears the genuine impress of this glorious moment in the life of Athens. It is not without reason that moderns have recognized that figure as the noblest, and the most profoundly tender, embodiment of woman's heroism which ancient literature can show.⁵⁹

We see here not only Jebb's deep affection for Antigone, the woman, but also how impressed he was by *Antigone*, the play, and by fifth-century B.C. Athens, its culture, and what he saw as its demonstration of humanism. To focus this a little more, in his essay *The Age of Pericles* he quotes T. H. Green:

When we come to ask ourselves what are the essential forms in which,
however otherwise modified, the will for true good — which is the will *to be*

57. Jebb, *OT*. pp. v–vi.

58. Pheidias was the very gifted artist who created the golden statue of Zeus at Olympia (36 feet high), and the golden statue of Athena (40 feet high) that was placed in the Parthenon. She would be melted down for gold coinage during the Peloponnesian war. Loren J. Samons, *Empire of the Owl: Athenian Imperial Finance* (Stuttgart 2000) p. 282. There is a full-scale replica of the Parthenon and Athena at Memphis, Tennessee, and a scale model of the statue in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Ontario.

59. Jebb 1888 p. v. (The Preface).

good — must appear, our answer follows the outlines of the Greek classification of the virtues. It is the will to *know* what is true; to *make* what is beautiful; to endure pain or fear; to resist allurements of pleasure (i.e., to be brave and temperate — if not, as the Greek would have said, in the service of the state, yet in some form of human society — to take for oneself and to give to others, of those things which admit of being given and taken, not what one is *inclined* to give or take, but what is *due*.⁶⁰

Jebb goes on to say that “accepting this as a concise description of the Hellenic ideal, we find that the period during which it was most fully realized was that which we are accustomed to call the age of Pericles” (p. 104). Bearing all this in mind he is next led to the Renaissance.

It is in the Italian Renaissance that he sees this quality of humanism manifest itself. Two figures impress him the most, Vittorino da Feltre and Desiderius Erasmus. Of Vittorino Jebb says,

Among the greatest teachers of the earlier Renaissance, there is one who has a pre-eminent right to be regarded as the founder of [humanist] education, and of him a few words must be said here; I refer to Vittorino da Feltre.⁶¹

Vittorino is the earlier of the two (1378–1446), and the more practical. Vittorino was born in the community of Feltre, a village in the state of Venice.⁶² He attended Padua University, the Italian centre for all the arts second only to Bologna. It was the Studium of Florence, not then a leading university, that invited Manuel Chrysoloras from Constantinople to come and accept the

60. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics* (Oxford 1884) in Jebb, *The Age of Pericles*, in *Essays and Addresses*, ed. Caroline Jebb (Cambridge 1907) pp. 104–126.

61. Jebb, “Humanism in Education” in *Essays and Addresses*” (Cambridge 1907) p. 517.

62. W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* 1897 (reprint, Toronto 1996). Woodward notes that Francesco di Castiglione “prefixed a short account of Vittorino, whose pupil he was for eight years, to his life of Antonino, Archbishop of Florence, in which he says of Vittorino, *Non ex ignobili genere in Feltrensi civitate natus est*, ‘He was born in the community of Feltre to a not ignoble family,’” p. 1. His family fell on hard times while he was a boy.

chair in Greek. He came and was the first professor to teach Greek in the west. Florence then attracted scholars such as Boccaccio, Salutati and Niccoli, who, Woodward says, “established universities as the more potent influence in the rise of Humanism” (p. 2). Nevertheless, it was in Padua that the presence and the influence of Petrarch, who was the first of the Renaissance humanist teachers who worked hard for educational reform was felt most. After his death in 1379 his vast collection of texts remained in Padua. As Woodward goes on to point out, Padua was close to Venice, where there was a keen interest in things ancient, especially all things Greek (p. 5). Among the student lists there are names from Scotland, England, Germany, France and Hungary. This tells us that the study of all ancient civilizations was beginning to spread. This is the environment Vittorino came into in 1396. A fellow pupil was Guarino, who would later say of the teaching at Florence that “the noble doctrine of ‘utilitas,’ so prominent in the teaching of every humanist, was exemplified there: for in Florence it was set forth in action as in precept that the end of humanist studies was the well-being of the community on its highest side: integrity of administration, purity of justice, patriotic pride, lofty self-respect, and a life which offered a wide-spread well being to the community.” This is the humanism Vittorino practiced, which Jebb so admired and embraced. But it did not stop there.

In 1423, Marquis Gonzaga of Mantua asked Vittorino (who with Guarino had become the most respected teacher of the day) if he would come and teach his children. After much consideration, Vittorino accepted the Marquis’ offer, on one condition: “that he not be asked to do anything unworthy of either of them” (p. 24). Gonzaga agreed. It is interesting to see what was provided for Vittorino and what he did with it. The Marquis had set apart for the use of Vittorino a villa called La Gioiosa, the “Pleasure House,” which Vittorino renamed La Giocosa

— “playful,” which perfectly suited Vittorino’s purpose. It was a luxurious villa with large bright and airy rooms and luxurious furnishings. Vittorino had the luxuries replaced with more basic furnishings, and had frescoes of children at play, a much more appropriate and pleasing environment for children. Jebb gives a lovely analysis of Vittorino’s teaching:

Youths were sent from several of the Italian Courts to be educated with the Mantuan princes. But Vittorino was resolved the school should be open to any boy who was fitted to profit by it, and maintained at his own cost a large number of poor scholars, for whom lodgings were found near the villa. The rules of life and study were the same for all. Vittorino’s aim in education was to develop the whole nature of his pupil, intellectual, moral and physical; and to do this, not with a view to any special calling, but so as to form good citizens, useful members of society, men capable bearing their part with credit in public and private life. . . . But the idea which dominated his whole system was the classical, originally Greek, idea of an education in which mind and body should be harmoniously developed.⁶³

This is a fair description of Jebb’s approach to education in Victorian Great Britain. It is what he and his colleagues worked hard to accomplish.

As noted above, among the first three essays Caroline chose to begin the collection in *Essays and Addresses* is his essay on Pindar. Jebb felt that Pindar would be an author of growing interest and significance, and with the

growth of an interest in archaeology . . . because his “Odes of Victory” are lit up in a new way by a fuller knowledge of the places with which they are concerned, . . . Pindar’s odes are poems of occasion, magnificent expressions of Hellenic life in its most distinctively Hellenic phases . . . At Olympia,

63. Jebb, *Humanism in Education (The Romanes Lecture 1899)* in *Essays and Addresses* (Cambridge 1907) pp. 519–21.

Delphi, Nemea, Corinth, Greeks of all cities were brought into sympathy by rights and beliefs common to all.⁶⁴

In these first three essays, *The Genius of Sophocles*, *Pindar*, and *The Age of Pericles*, we come to see how much Sophocles and the Periclean age influenced Jebb. They give us a picture of Jebb as a man for whom Sophocles, and especially, but not exclusively, classical education kept his soul on fire. It is also worthy of note that the last six essays Caroline chose in *Essays and Addresses* deal with education.⁶⁵

The last speech he gave in parliament, on March 31, 1905, before he left for South Africa as chair of the Education Committee of the British Association, dealt with women's role in education. He endorsed the Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill. The question under consideration was whether women should be allowed to sit on county councils and borough councils. According to Hansard, Jebb said:

So far as his experience went, he could add his testimony to the abundant testimony that was forthcoming from all who had had similar experience that the assistance of women in the discussion of educational questions was of the greatest possible value. In matters relating to public health, the employment of children, the prevention of cruelty to children, industrial schools, and many other matters, the intervention of women in local government was obviously of the greatest value.⁶⁶

His commitment to both women's equality and education never faltered. In fact, when women were finally admitted to examinations at Cambridge, something he and Henry Sidgwick

64. Jebb, "Pindar" in *Essays and Addresses*, pp. 41–42.

65. "Humanism in education" (pp. 506–44). "On present Tendencies in Classical Studies" (pp. 545–59). "The Influence of the Greek Mind on Modern Life" (pp. 560–80). "The Work of the Universities for the Nation, Past and Present" (pp. 581–608). "An Address Delivered at the Mason College. (pp. 609–23). "University Education and National Life" (pp. 624–48).

66. Hansard, March 31, 1905 Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill, second reading.

had worked for for years, he wrote a little poem of congratulation, which he sent to Sidgwick from Glasgow:

The votes by which the ladies won
Were as a leap year's days
A month's brief tale would all but tell
The number of the Nays.
Thus, as the sun in heaven, our cause
Is clear to men of sense:
The adverse tide is little more
Than lunar influence.⁶⁷

While in South Africa, Jebb gave a speech on South African education, which some believed to be so outstanding as to justify the whole meeting. He became ill on his way home and died on December 9, 1905. The London newspaper *The Spectator* said in its obituary:

He was much more than a great classical scholar, a great Hellenist, or a great humanist; he vindicated the claims of Greek culture to be regarded as a formative element in the building up of national character. His "curious felicity" in the composition of Greek prose and verse went hand-in-hand with a consummate mastery of the vernacular, and his achievements as an orator and publicist afforded a standing disproof of the view that a classical education conduces to inefficiency. As Mr. Blakeney reminds us in his interesting letter to Thursday's Times, Tennyson dedicated his "Demeter" to Sir Richard Jebb, and, like Browning, set the highest value on his work as scholar and critic. Sir Richard Jebb, who held the post of Professor of Greek at Glasgow from 1875–1889, and at Cambridge from ever since that year, had represented the latter University in the House of Commons with great distinction since 1891.⁶⁸

67. Stray p. 91.

68. <http://archive.spectator.co.uk>.

Even now, some one hundred and ten years later, the first name that comes to mind when the subject of Sophocles arises is Jebb's.

Chapter 3: ΔΕΙΝΟΣ¹

Gregory Staley has pointed out that δεινός is one of the most ambiguous words in the Greek language.² The word can be translated as either “terrible” or “wonderful” or various shades of meaning in between, such as “clever,” “able,” “powerful.” Nowhere is δεινός more ambiguous than in the first line of Sophocles’s “Ode to Man” in the *Antigone*, regularly translated: πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει, “There are many wonders, none more wonderful than man” (332).³

At the end of his speech in an unpleasant exchange with the chorus, Creon, after issuing his edict, tells the chorus to ensure that no one defies the edict and buries the body of Polyneices. He tells them he has placed a guard over the body, but the chorus, misunderstanding him, believe he has ordered them to stand guard, to which they protest on the grounds that they are too old. We see right away that Creon’s method of communication can be somewhat curt and can lead to opposition. The chorus responds that οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτω μῶρος ὃς θανεῖν ἐρᾷ, “surely no one is so foolish as to desire to die?” (220). Immediately the guard enters to announce that someone has dared to defy the edict and has buried Polyneices. This announcement infuriates Creon, and

1. In his linguistic examination of the origin of δεῖνα, Moorehouse believes that “it seems clear from earlier work that we should not look for the answer outside Greek, nor probably even outside colloquial Attic Greek of the fifth century.” A. C. Moorehouse, “The Origin of O, H, TO ΔΕΙΝΑ,” *CQ* 13 (1963) pp. 19–25. Quoting a conversation with professor Dover (p. 22 n. 4), he says that Dover believed that “with the masculine and feminine article δεινά, so far as I have seen, always refers to a person.” See also Gordon M. Messing, “The Etymology of Greek ὁ ἢ τὸ δεῖνα,” *Language* 6 (1947), 207ff. However, Chantraine points to a distinction between δεινός and δειλός, and finds its roots in δειδῶ found in Homer and Ionic—Attic, meaning, “I am afraid, alarmed, anxious.” This verb gave rise to δειλός, which always means “miserable,” “unhappy,” “wretched,” and also to δεινός, with its original meaning, “terrible,” “redoubtable,” in Homer and Ionic—Attic and its further derived meaning of “strong,” “extraordinary,” and further development in Herodotus to mean “skillful,” “skilled,” “clever,” used side-by-side with σοφός, where it takes on the aspect of eloquent or of effective eloquence.

2. Gregory A. Staley, “The Literary Ancestry of Sophocles’ Ode to Man,” *CW* 89 (1985) 561–70.

3. Richard Claverhouse Jebb, *Sophocles: Plays and Fragments* (Cambridge 1888) 1–2. (All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.)

alarms the chorus. Scared, they wonder if the Gods might have buried him. Ἄναξ, ἐμοί τοι, μή τι καὶ θεήλατον /τοῦργον τόδ', ἡ ξύννοια βουλεύει πάλαι, “My Lord, it has for a long time, occurred to me that perhaps the Gods did this” (278–79). This infuriates Creon even more. How could the Gods possibly bury a traitor? The guard finishes his report and after, more hostile exchanges with Creon, including threats of severe punishment if the guard and his colleagues do not find the culprit and bring him to Creon, the guard leaves the stage, quite sure he does not intend to return. It must be noted here that everyone fully expects the culprit to be a man. It never crosses anyone’s mind that it might be a woman who has buried Polyneices. At this point only the audience know it is Antigone. It must surely be a moment for them to wonder how Sophocles will deal with this fact.

Now the chorus marvel that someone has actually dared to defy Creon and has buried the body. In the first line we encounter this most ambiguous word δεινός. How should we translate it? Jebb is adamant here, not “dread” nor “able”: “wonderful,” no equivocation. Why? Does it fit with Sophocles’ preferred use of the word in the extant plays that we have? What function does it serve here? The Ode is really a bridge between the announcement that the body has been buried, and the guard leading Antigone at the end of the Ode, as the culprit. Between these two crises the chorus sing the Ode. The body of the Ode is evenly divided into two halves. The first half (332–53) praises the historical accomplishments of the human population since the dawn of time to the civilized people they are now. The second half (354–75) speaks of the fact that really the only problem man cannot solve is death, and that the choices man makes are sometimes bad, κακόν (367), and sometimes toward good, ἐσθλόν (367). It is interesting to note two things here: firstly, that Sophocles places first man’s facility at making bad choices, then his ability to make good

choices, and secondly, which highlights the point Sophocles makes here, he begins the second half of the Ode with the word σοφόν (365), which we might automatically think of meaning “wise,” “smart” but which Jebb translates as “cunning,” tapping into the very subtlety and ambiguity of Sophocles and Greek.

The Ode is seen as having as its theme, “Man’s daring, his inventiveness, and the result to his happiness,”⁴ even though, unexpectedly, it is a woman who has performed the burial. But is this unequivocally the case? To view the ode as simply a paean to man makes it difficult to understand how it fits into the context of a play of unrelieved despair and darkness. Could there be a tentative, still only partially formed, statement or exploration of a perspective on man and nature that not only is current and very new and very different, but is also being contemplated in the Athens of the moment?

As I will discuss later, at the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century B.C., Athens was experiencing an explosion in every aspect of human progress: in art, sculpture, poetry, tragedy, history, politics, military strategy, government and especially in philosophy and metaphysical thinking and examination. The end of the sixth century had seen the emergence of the Presocratic philosophers. Their main pursuits were the Nature of the Universe and particularly the Nature of Man and Cosmogony. The pursuit of this knowledge was exciting and a tremendous step forward. As Jebb noted, and as the Apostles also embraced centuries later, no

4. In addition to the standard works on Sophocles, see Charles Segal, “Sophocles’ Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the *Antigone*,” *Arion* 3 (1964) pp. 46–66; and “Sophocles: The House and the Cave,” *R.C.C.M.* 20 (1978) pp. 1171–88, and *Tragedy and Civilization*. (Harvard 1981); R. H. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles* (New Jersey 1951); Seth Benardete, “A Reading in Sophocles’ *Antigone*,” *Interpretation* 4/3 (1975) 148–96; Joan Brien, “Sophocles’ Ode on Man and Paul’s Hymn on Love: A Comparative Study,” *CJ* 71 (1976) 135–51; A. T. Von S Bradshaw, “The Watchman Scenes in the *Antigone*,” *CQ* 12 (1962) 200–01; David H. Porter, *Only Connect: Three Studies in Greek Tragedy* (New York 1987); A. S. McDevitt, “Sophocles’ Praise of Man in the *Antigone*,” *Ramus* 1 (1972) 152–64; Richard W. Minadeo, “Characterization and Theme in the *Antigone*,” *Arethusa* 18/19 (1935/6) 133–54; D. A. Hester, “Sophocles the Unphilosophical: A Study in the *Antigone*,” *Mnemosyne* 24 (1971) 11–59; J. Pinsent, “Sophocles’ *Antigone*,” *LCM* 8 (1983) 2–4; Gerald Else, *The Madness of Antigone* (Heidelberg 1976).

question was off the table. Not only was the field as wide open as one could possibly imagine, there were no intellectual constraints. These philosophers were asking questions that had never been asked before as far as we know. This freedom of the mind and openness was something that Jebb understood and found very exciting, as indeed it is.

One of the most interesting of the Presocratics is Alcmaeon of Croton, a medical doctor who, it is believed, was the first to dissect a human body. It was he who first put significant emphasis on the idea of “mind” as the organ of thought and that mental activity took place in the head and not in the *θυμός*.⁵ Alcmaeon was also the first to place emphasis on the notion of opposites — e.g., hot/cold, sweet/bitter, good/bad, black/white and so on. In this he is in agreement with the Pythagoreans, though Aristotle does not believe that Alcmaeon was himself a Pythagorean.⁶ But Alcmaeon was a physician and believed that “health was a state of equilibrium between opposing humours and that illnesses were because of problems in environment, nutrition and lifestyle.”⁷ It is this philosophical perspective that surely was a part of everyday

5. Traditionally “life” was thought to be the spirit or breath = *θυμός* (Latin *fumus*) which was controlled by the diaphragm; therefore, life existed in one’s chest and was controlled by one’s breathing. This move to the “mind” was a significant revolution.

6. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 986a ff. Aristotle was also not happy that Alcmaeon did not have a definite set of 10 pairs of opposites. Carl Huffman, “Alcmaeon,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 edition) pp.1–10.

7. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 2nd ed. 1983). The dates for Alcmaeon are very uncertain, possibly mid-sixth century, “possibly early fifth century.” Both Alcmaeon and Empedocles, early fifth century (280–84), at least, wrote theses “On Nature.” References to Alcmaeon fall throughout the work and for coverage of any aspect of his work one must refer to the index. It is worth noting, too, that much of the treatment of many of the presocratics is interwoven throughout the work in order to give a more comprehensible perspective of what we term “presocratic philosophy.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/alcmaeon_of_croton. But in trying to understand the importance of Alcmaeon and this move toward the relevance of opposites in understanding ourselves, the world and the universe, Cornford makes some very interesting comments. “It is not for nothing that Aristotle’s illustrations are all taken from the art of medicine. This empirical theory of knowledge had already been mentioned by Plato as having interested Socrates in his young days. Its author, in fact, was none other than the physician Alcmaeon of the early fifth century, who taught that man is distinguished from the animals by possessing understanding as well as sensation; that our sense-perceptions are centered in the brain; and that from them arise *memory*, *judgment* (or belief), and finally *knowledge*. . . . Here, then, in the practical art of medicine, we find the root of empirical epistemology—the idea that the senses are the ultimate source of knowledge, of that understanding which distinguishes man from the animals. There is no earlier trace of this view of knowledge.” F. M. Cornford, “Was Ionian Philosophy Scientific?” *JHS*, Vol. 62 (1942) pp.1–7.

discussion in early fifth-century Athens, and that was possibly a part of Sophocles' thinking, given that a number of his plays deal with the conflict that comes out in life when there is a lack of equilibrium, whether it be internal, as in *Oedipus*, or between characters as here in the *Antigone* or in *Electra*, for example. The lack of balance can also be expressed through a choosing of words as ambiguous as δεινός and a great number of others, whereby Sophocles could express a perspective of significance and weight which would not have been missed by the audience, in a discreet and gentle manner, and to which Greek, being a highly inflected language, lends itself in a most fascinating manner. A most excellent examination of these philosophers is to be found in Geoffrey Kirk and his colleagues.⁸

Certainly the Ode carries a caveat at its close, warning that the skills enumerated above may lead a man “at one time towards evil, at another towards good,” τὸτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ’/ ἐπ’ ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει (366–67), but is this warning weak enough to permit the translation of δεινός in the first line as “wonderful,” without a good deal of hesitation? In the question of how we translate δεινός, Walter Kaufmann makes a very interesting observation of Sophocles: “Reading Sophocles’ tragedies, one certainly does not gain the impression that he found man as such very wonderful. Rather, the poet’s world is governed by merciless powers, and men are strange, even frightening.”⁹ What, I believe, Jebb saw in Sophocles that was for him so inspiring was that Sophocles thought man could aspire to much greater heights than was evidenced day to day.¹⁰

8. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, M. Schofield.

9. Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge 1968) p. 278.

10. Though it is true that the nineteenth century was one that was, to a very large degree, war-free, at least of the size and brutality we have witnessed in the twentieth century, the industrial revolution in England did demonstrate the capacity of man’s brutality toward each other. Jebb was very familiar with authors of Dickens’ character portrayals. He held strongly throughout his life to the values and practices of the Apostles, which he found worthy and dependable. Certainly what he saw and was enchanted by in fifth-century B.C. Athens was the open-mindedness and the freedom of speech.

This is the difficulty then: how do we translate δεινός, especially in this first line of the Ode? Here, perhaps more than anywhere else in Sophocles' works, we can gain something of an idea of Sophocles' thinking. Again, Kaufmann is very perceptive about this first line:

The first line is emphatically ambiguous, and in context there is something profoundly ironical about this hymn.

Much is awesome, but nothing more awesome than man

would come closer to the meaning than do the standard translations, and what Sophocles apparently means to impress on us is the weird contrast between man's stunning cleverness and his appalling lack of wisdom. . . . To be sure, some men and women really command the greatest admiration; and Sophocles confronts us with a few human beings of immense nobility, only to show us how their very virtues lead them to brutal destruction. As the chorus in *Antigone* says elsewhere (613f.), "Never does greatness come to us mortals free from a curse."¹¹

I shall look at δεινός in all of Sophocles. Next I shall look at some of the uses of δεινός in Aeschylus, whom Eduard Fraenkel believes has some influence on Sophocles.¹² I shall then look briefly at some uses of δεινός in Herodotus, a contemporary and friend of Sophocles from whom, it is demonstrated by a number of scholars, Sophocles borrowed on more than one occasion, most notably lines 904–20. Finally, I shall look at modern commentators.

Can one expect consistency in usage in a language no longer current, and which is so far removed in time? Kaufmann believes so. He suggests that "it ought to be established as a primary principle of exegesis and translation that, confronted with some doubt about the meaning of a word, one has to check the other places where the word occurs in the same work, if not in all

11. Kaufmann, p. 278.

12. Eduard Fraenkel, *Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950).

its uses by the poet.”¹³

Sophocles uses δεινός thirteen times in the *Antigone*, in lines 96, 243, 323, 332 (x2), 408, 690, 915, 951, 959, 1046, 1091 and 1096–97 (x2). A very significant use of δεινός occurs a mere nine lines before 332, at line 323. Following the mutual fratricide of Eteocles and Polyneices in battle, Creon, as Jocasta’s brother, has inherited the throne by default. His first act of kingship is to forbid burial to Polyneices on the grounds that a traitor attacking his own city does not deserve to be buried (26–27; 22; 26–30; 198–99). It is the forbidding of any kind of burial of her brother Polyneices that has provoked Antigone’s despair and her commitment to bury him somehow.

Following the Parodos rejoicing at Thebes’ victory (100–61), we have Creon’s speech (162–210), in which he issues his edict to the citizenry of Thebes that Eteocles is to be buried with full honour, and Polyneices is to be left unburied.

Then the watchman comes on the scene with a report that outrages Creon, and scares the chorus. Someone has performed a token ritual burial of the body. The watchman, whom Creon had set over the body to prevent just this, is very hesitant to bring the news of the burial to Creon. It is reasonable to believe that he knows something of the nature of Creon from experience. He is quite justified. Having learned of the burial, Creon immediately accuses the guards of being bribed and of corruption (296ff). Thoroughly affronted, the guard snaps at Creon:

φεῦ/ ἦ δεινόν ᾧ δοκεῖ γε καὶ ψευδῆ δοκεῖν

Alas, it is **terrible**, that one who thinks also things falsely.

323

13. Kaufmann p. 277.

Not only could δεινός here not possibly mean anything other than “terrible,” its close proximity to πολλὰ τὰ δεινά (332) must surely be significant.

The first time δεινός occurs in the *Antigone* is at the end of the prologue. Ismene has refused to help Antigone bury Polyneices. Antigone clearly expected that Ismene would not hesitate to help her, but Ismene says “no.” Antigone, determined to bury her brother, is shocked and will tolerate no arguments to the contrary. In a cry of absolute despair and isolation, and fully aware of the consequences she must pay if she goes ahead with her plan,¹⁴ Antigone tells Ismene:

ἀλλ’ ἔα με καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἑμοῦ δυσβουλίαν/ παθεῖν τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο.

But leave me, and the folly that is mine alone, to suffer this **terrible** thing.

95–96

The prologue ends and Antigone, leaving the stage to the audience’s left, goes to bury Polyneices.¹⁵

The watchman arrives, and it is his unpleasant task to tell Creon that someone has buried the body. He begins by explaining that he was reluctant to come at all and so took his time, and comments:

τὰ δεινὰ γάρ τοι προστίθης ὄκνον πολὺν.

14. Kaufmann, “The vast despair that grows and spreads through *Antigone* — she herself sounds this theme in the first sentence of the tragedy, and soon it engulfs Ismene, Haimon, Eurydice, and finally Creon, too — has been largely ignored, as if it were simply part of the myth, which it is not; most readers have concentrated on the argument between Antigone and Creon. Her last scene (806ff), which is filled entirely by her despair, is widely considered an embarrassment. It is felt that she ought to go to her death undaunted. That would be so much more like Sophocles — more ‘even-balanc’d’ and ‘cheerful’” (p. 254).

15. As noted by many scholars, Jebb too, actors entered/left to the audience left of the stage to go/come from the country, to the right of the audience to go/come from the city, to enter/leave the palace by the door centre/back of stage. At the end of the prologue, when Antigone leaves stage left, clearly she is going to the country to bury Polyneices and takes neither tools nor libations, with her. Ismene exits through the door centre stage and back into the Palace.

Yes indeed, **terrible** things make one hesitate long.

243

When the watchman returns with Antigone (384–85), having discovered her burying the body a second time,¹⁶ there is a measure of relief in his voice. Clearly Creon’s threats had been uppermost in his mind, and he remarks to Creon that “with those **dread** (τὰ δειν’) menaces of yours still with us” (408) the watchmen had cleared off the body, sat upwind to avoid the smell, and chivvied each other to not fail at their task, because the punishment would be so severe. Creon had promised torture and death for the guard if he did not produce the culprit (304–14).

We do not meet the word again until the confrontation between Creon and his son Haemon. In the preamble to his appeal to his father on Antigone’s behalf, Haemon tells his father that he feels it his responsibility “to act as watchdog,” προσκοπεῖν (688) and to pick up on gossip that might be harmful to Creon or indicate dissatisfaction with his rule. The dark aspects of Creon’s character so far revealed or hinted at gain more credibility when Haemon tells him that “your **terrible** eyes,” (σὸν ὄμμα δεινὸν, 690), strike terror in the heart of the citizens.

In what amounts to a soliloquy to Polyneices, Antigone encapsulates the opposing positions she and Creon take on the burial:

τοιῶδε μέντοι σ’ ἐκπροτιμήσασ’ ἐγὼ

16. The two burials of Polyneices have generated a considerable amount of comment and controversy. Please see Marsh McCall, “Divine and Human Action in Sophocles: The two Burials in the *Antigone*,” *YCS* 22 (1972) 103–17; J. E. G. Whitehorne, “The Background of Polyneices’ Disinterment and Reburial,” *G&R* 30 (1983) 129–43; A. O. Houlton, “The Double Burial of the *Antigone*,” *Mnemosyne* 4:16 (1963) 285; George F. Held, “*Antigone*’s Dual Motivation for the Double Burial,” *Hermes* 111 (1983) 190–201; W. H. D. Rouse, “The Two Burials in the *Antigone*,” *CR* 25 (1911) 40–42; J. Pinsent, “The Double Burial in the *Antigone*,” *LCM* 5 (1980) 17; H. A. Siepmann, “Sophocles’ *Antigone*,” *CR* 23 (1909) 212–16; Susan Ford Wiltshire, “*Antigone*’s Disobedience,” *Arethusa* 8/9 (1975–76) 29–36; Vincent J. Rosivach, “Execution by Stoning in Athens,” *CA* 6 (1987) 232–48; A. T. Von S. Bradshaw, “The Watchman Scenes of the *Antigone*,” *CQ* 12 (1962) 200–11; S. M. Adams, “The Burial of Polyneices,” *CR* 45 (1931) 200–11; and all the standards works on Sophocles’ *Antigone*.

νόμῳ Κρέοντι ταῦτ' ἔδοξ' ἀμαρτάνειν
καὶ δεινὰ τολμᾶν, ᾧ κασίγνητον κάρᾳ.

Indeed, dear brother, by this law I have honoured you,
I seem to have sinned in this according to Creon
and to have dared a **terrible** thing.

913–15

Having delivered her final justification to her dead brother, Antigone is taken away to be walled up in a cave. Antigone's departure is followed by a choral ode giving mythological examples of immurement and what the chorus refers to as fate (*moira*):

ἄλλ' ἂ μοιριδία τις δύνασις δεινά

But the power of fate, whatever it is, is **terrible**.

951

One of the examples given by the chorus is that of Lycurgus, who opposed the introduction of the Dionysiac cult and its practices into Thrace (Thuc. 2.99). Dionysus, not pleased by opposition from a mere mortal, had Lycurgus walled up in a tomb until his “madness,” *μανίας*, passed and he regained his senses:

οὕτω τᾶς μανίας δεινὸν ἀποστάζει/ ἀνθηρόν τε μένος.

Thus the **terrible** and fierce exuberance of his madness ebbed away.

959–60a

The fifth *epeisodion* (988–1114) deals with Teiresias' denunciation of Creon's refusal to allow the burial of Polyneices, his use of *δεινός* (1046) in an accusatory sense. Teiresias, the seer,

has tried, diplomatically, to warn Creon that if he persists with his hostile approach to anyone who opposes his dictates, or speaks against him, his ἀθαδία, “stubbornness or self will” (1028) will bring him ruin. But Creon does not listen. He accuses Teiresias of being bribed, and ignores the old seer’s warnings for the moment. (I have touched on 1046 briefly and will return to it shortly). Following the confrontation between Creon and Teiresias and the old seer’s departure, the chorus, thoroughly alarmed by Teiresias’ prophesies of impending disaster and ruin, appeal to Creon:

άνηρ ἄναξ βέβηκε δεινὰ θεσπίσας.

My lord, the man has gone having prophesied **terrible** things.

1091

Creon is finally persuaded and reveals to us the internal struggle between his reluctance to yield and his awareness that he must:

ἔγνωκα καὐτὸς καὶ ταράσσομαι φρένας
τό τ’ εἰκαθεῖν γὰρ δεινόν ἀντιστάντα δὲ
ἄτη πατάξαι θυμὸν ἐν δεινῷ πάρα

I know this also and am troubled in my thoughts.
It is a **terrible** thing to yield, but by resistance,
to smite my soul with ruin is a **terrible alternative**.

1095–97

His capitulation comes too late to save the lives of Antigone, Haemon and Eurydice, to prevent his own ruin and, ultimately, to save Thebes from ruin in the future.¹⁷ The cost of Creon’s

17. *Antigone* 1080–83. As Jebb *ad. loc.* points out, “there is no direct allusion to the war of the Epigoni, the expedition which the sons of the fallen Argive chiefs led against Thebes because Creon had forbidden burial to the Argive fallen. The Epigoni destroyed Thebes.” See also Bayfield, D’Ooge, Campbell, *ad. loc.* Kamerbeek disagrees with Jebb, as does Knox, *Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Berkeley 1964) p. 81. Pausanias speaks of

inability to bend is horrendous. This completes the examination of the use of δεινός in the *Antigone*. Nowhere is there any reason to doubt that the translation of δεινός ought to be anything other than “terrible.” What, then, of the other plays of Sophocles?

As Oedipus, in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, continues his search for the murderer of Laius and the cause of the present plague at Thebes, he asks Jocasta to recall for him the details of Laius’ pilgrimage to Delphi. As Jocasta describes Laius’ entourage and the events at the crossroads, it becomes more and more evident to Oedipus that the man he himself met and killed at the crossroads so many years ago was King Laius and that King Laius and his father are one and the same. As this terrible realization dawns on him, he cries out in despair:

οἴμοι τάλας, ἔοικ’ ἐμαυτὸν εἰς ἀράς
δεινὰς προβάλλων ἀρτίως οὐκ εἰδέναι

Oh wretched me. Not knowing it seems until now
I have exposed myself to **terrible** curses.

744–45

In the *Oedipus at Coloneus*, Oedipus, now at the end of his wandering, with his daughter Antigone as his guide, comes to a grove where they stop to take their rest. They do not know that it is a sacred grove. The chorus of old men from Colonus are shocked that they have dared to wander into this sacred grove and exclaim:

ὦ ἰώ,
δεινὸς μὲν ὄρν, δεινὸς δὲ κλύειν

the defeat of Thebes by the Epigoni (born later), and of the *Thabaid*, an epic poem dealing with this tradition (Pausanias: Epigoni. ix.ix §4; xix §2; xxv §7; x.x. §4; xxv. §2; *Thebaid*. viii. xxv. §8; ix. ix. §5; xviii. §6). Also, the chorus of Euripides’ *Supplikes* is made up of the widows and mothers of the dead Argives. They appeal to Theseus, king of Athens, to fetch back their dead.

Alas, alas,

Terrible to see, and **terrible** to hear.

140–41

Deianira, in *The Trachiniae*, has received the news that Heracles is alive and well (185–86; 234–35), still, she has a sense of foreboding, which she expresses to the chorus:

ἔμοι γὰρ οἴκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλοι,

For a **terrible** pity came to me, friends.

298

In *Electra*, δεινός is used a number of times. In the lament between the chorus and Electra, the misfortunes of the house of Agamemnon and the continued absence of Orestes are laid before the audience (122–327). The chorus emphasize the baseness of the crime and the criminal by adding the cognate adverb to the adjective:

Δόλος ἦν ὁ φράσας, ἔρος ὁ κτείνας,

δεινὰν δεινῶς προφυτεύσαντες

μορφάν.

Deceit was the one who contrived, passion the killer,

having created a **terribly terrible** shape.

197–99

Again, Electra, having been cautioned by the chorus to be restrained in her outrage against the murderers of Agamemnon, says she is compelled by internal terror:

δεινοῖς ἠναγκάσθη δεινοῖς.

By **terrors** I have been compelled to **terrors**.

221

and again:

ἀλλ' ἐν γὰρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχήσω/ ταύτας ἄτας.

In these **terrors** I will not hold back these follies.

223–24

Later, when Clytemnestra hears of the “death” of Orestes from the παιδαγωγός, she expresses her own ambiguity to the news, wondering if it is a blessing in disguise or, quite simply, a blessing period:

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί ταῦτα, πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω

ἢ δεινὰ μὲν, κέρδη δέ;

O Zeus, what kind of things shall I say,

whether it is fortunate or **terrible**, but a blessing nonetheless?

766–67

Driven by the demons in her dreams, Clytemnestra observes:

δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν.

It is a **terrible** thing to bear a child.

770

For her, it has been. She has lost one child as a sacrifice to facilitate a war, and two of her remaining three children are alienated by a web of mutual hatred and revenge. This is emphasized a few lines later, when Clytemnestra recalls that Orestes left Argos:

ἐγκαλῶν δέ μοι/ φόνους πατρώους δειν' ἐπηπείλει τελεῖν.

Having accused me of murdering his father, he threatened me with **terrible** things.

778–79

As the web of deception around Philoctetes becomes more constricting, he is torn between retaining his honour, while suffering continual isolation and a suppurating wound, and trying to persuade Neoptolemus quietly to run him home. In the closing lines of his plea to Neoptolemus (*Phil.* 468–506), he reflects that human beings walk a tightrope between good and bad fortune and that if things are going well, beware, misfortune is just around the corner.

Εἰσορῶν/ ὡς πάντα δεινὰ κάπικινδύνως βροτοῖς

κεῖται, παθεῖν μὲν εὖ, παθεῖν δὲ θάτερα.

χρὴ δ' ἐκτὸς ὄντα πημάτων τὰ δειν' ὄρᾶν.

Seeing how many **terrible** and dangerous things lie in store for all men to suffer, some to the good, some evil.

It is necessary, when one is free from suffering, to watch out for evils.

501–04

In none of the instances cited above could one use anything other than “terrible” as the translation for δεινός. The context in which each instance is found is too specific in its tragedy to allow for doubt.

Now I return to the uses of δεινός in the *Antigone* and other plays of Sophocles where something other than “terrible” suits the context more. In *Antigone*, at line 1046, Creon accuses Teiresias of prophesying for gain and suggests:

ὦ γεραιὲ Τειρεσία, βροτῶν
χοὶ πολλὰ δεινοὶ πτώματ' αἴσχυρ' ὅταν λόγους
αἴσχυροὺς καλῶς λέγωσι τοῦ κέρδους χάριν.

Clever men fall a very shameful fall, O aged Teiresias,
when they speak shameful words becomingly
for their own gain.

1045–47

We find an echo of this sentiment in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* when Oedipus accuses Creon of using a slick tongue to overthrow him and gain the throne:

λέγειν σὺ δεινὸς μανθάνειν δ' ἐγὼ κακὸς/ σοῦ.

You are **clever** at speaking, but I am slow to learn from you.

545–46

In the *Oedipus Coloneus*, Oedipus again accuses Creon of being “clever” with his tongue, when Creon tries to persuade him to return to Thebes. Oedipus has not forgotten that a few years earlier Creon had driven him out of Thebes (769–71) and rejects his wheedling:

γλώσση σὺ δεινός, ἄνδρα δ' οὐδέν' οἶδ' ἐγὼ
δίκαιου ὅστις ἐξ ἅπαντος εὖ λέγει.

You are a **clever** man with your tongue, but I never knew a man who spoke well from both sides of his mouth.

806–07

There is yet another echo in the *Philoctetes*, when Neoptolemus is giving Philoctetes the latest

news from Troy. Philoctetes puts a question to Neoptolemus:

γλώσση δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ τι νῦν κυρεῖ.

Now I will ask about a man with a **clever** and wise tongue.

440

This is typical Sophoclean irony, given that Odysseus is at that moment lurking on the beach, in the hope that Neoptolemus can finesse the all-important bow from Philoctetes. With regard to “clever speaking,” when Socrates is speaking in his own defense in the *Apology*, he says that he has he been accused “of being a very clever speaker,” δεινοῦ ὄντος λεγεῖν, and through this ability of his he has seduced the young men of the city to different thinking. Plato believed that any man who knew what was right would always do the right thing. Plato uses δεινός a great many times in opening lines of this dialogue.¹⁸

In the verbal sparring between Teucer and Menelaus in *Ajax*, Teucer insists that he will bury Ajax. Menelaus, with equal force, insists that Ajax must not be buried, since his crime was attempted regicide. Menelaus, with overinflated indignation, demands of Teucer:

δίκαια γὰρ τόνδ’ εὐτυχεῖν κτείναντά με;

Is it right that he should kill me and then prosper?

1126

Teucer exposes the absurdity of Menelaus’s hyperbole:

κτείναντα; δεινόν γ’ εἶπας, εἰ καὶ ζῆς θανόν.

Killed? Indeed you speak a **miracle** if having been killed you live.

18. Plato, *Apology and Crito*, ed. Louis Dyer, revised by Thomas Day Seymour (New York 1984) pp. 1 and 37.

This is the only instance in Sophocles where δεινός can unequivocally be translated as “wonderful,” although clearly it is sarcastic. From this simple examination of Sophocles’ use of δεινός, it is clear that Jebb’s insistence that in this one place (πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ, 332) it should be translated as “wonderful” does legitimately call for justification. But let us still suspend judgement for the moment.

A look at some uses Aeschylus makes of δεινός may cast some light on the issue, given that Fraenkel assures us that Sophocles was influenced by Aeschylus.¹⁹ Aeschylus uses δεινός over twenty times also and, as Kaufmann (277 n. 9) points out, “there is not one in which the meaning intended does not seem to be ‘terrible.’” Significantly, it occurs twelve times in the *Oresteia*, twice in the ode in the *Choephoroi* (585–651), universally recognized to be a literary antecedent to Sophocles’s “Ode on Man.” Aeschylus’ ode also begins in much the same manner:

πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ τρέφει/ δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχη.

The earth nourishes many **terrors**, terrible **terrors**.²⁰

585–86

Here there can be no ambiguity. The piling up of words meaning “**terror**” or “**distress**” (δεινὰ, δειμάτων, ἄχη) leave no doubt. Earlier in the play, Orestes appeals for Zeus to have regard for his

19. See n. 5 above. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (New York 1980) also notes “that *Antigone* is full of Aeschylean echoes has long been recognized” (p. 119). He suggests, for example, that the chorus’s comment that “Zeus hates the boasts of strong tongues” (128) and the fate of Capaneus (134ff), who climbed to the top of a tower in the walls of Thebes in order to shout victory and boasted that he was going to do that, and in defiance of the Gods, but when he climbed to the top of the tower Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt and cast him down to earth, and his death. All this would undoubtedly have called to the minds of the audience the *Redepaare* of Aeschylus’ *Septem*. S. M. Adams, *Sophocles: The Playwright* (Toronto 1957), points out that Creon’s use of the metaphor “ship of state” (162ff; 178) was, as Jebb points out, well known in the Athens of the day; Aesch.
20. Anne Lebeck points out that the ode in the *Choephoroi* stands exactly at the centre point of the trilogy. In this point it is significant in its function as the axis through which the action moves between the two parts of the whole work. Anne Lebeck, “The First Stasimon of Aeschylus’ *Choephoroi*: Myth and Mirror Image,” *CP* 62 (1967) 82–85.

father, Agamemnon, who had died in the coils of a “terrible” or perhaps “deadly serpent” (δεινῆς ἐχίδνης, 249).

In the *Agamemnon*, Cassandra speaks of the “**terrible** pain” (δεινὸς πονός, 1215) of her true prophesying. In the *Eumenides*, δεινός occurs eight times. “**Terrors** to tell” and “**terrors** to see” (ἢ δεινὰ λέξαι, δεινὰ δ’ ὀφθαλμοῖς δρακεῖν, 34),²¹ the Pythia wails at the beginning of the play. The ghost of Clytemnestra says she suffered “**terribly**” (δεινά, 100) from loved ones. And later, as she urges the drowsy Furies to get after Orestes, she warns them that sleep and weariness conspire to sap the strength of the “**deadly** she-dragon” (δεινῆ δρακαίνη, 128). Apollo tells the Furies that the “**terrible** anger” (δεινή . . . μῆνις, 233–34) of the suppliant would be turned towards men and gods if he (Apollo) failed in his promise to protect. The Furies are of the opinion that “**terror**” (δεινόν, 328) can be a good thing. It brings with it suffering through which, according to Aeschylus, wisdom is learned (177). This sentiment is reiterated by Athena when she urges the Athenians not to banish all “**terror**” (τὸ δεινὸν πᾶν, *Eum.* 698) since it exercises a measure of control over the human heart. With the justice system reformed and punishment to be delivered by the state instead of by personal or familial vendetta, the Furies are out of a job. In the speech in which Athena gives them their new assignment (848–69), she says that wars should take place abroad. This will not only put an end to the demoralizing and ultimately debilitating internecine wars, but will also provide the means to satisfy the “**terrible** lust for fame,” δεινὸν εὐκλείας ἔρωσ (865).

It is not necessary to examine all of Aeschylus’ uses of δεινός. These just considered have been chosen specifically because, as already noted, one of the literary antecedents for Sophocles’

21. ἢ δεινὰ λέξαι, δεινὰ δ’ ὀφθαλμοῖς δρακεῖν (34) recalls quite strongly the exclamation of the chorus in *Oedipus Coloneus* (140).

“Ode on Man” is the *Choephoroi*. It remains, then, simply to list the other uses in Aeschylus, making such comments as are called for. In noting this, however, we should not lose sight of the fact that the interpretation of both odes is quite different.

It is interesting to note that δεινός does not occur in the *Suppliant Women*. Whether this is significant in an overall perspective of Aeschylus’ use of the word, however, I cannot say.

In the remaining plays, though, we may note the following. In the *Persians*, δεινός is used five times — “fearful to see, **terrible** (δεινοί) in battle with a steadfast spirit”(27), “**skillful** (δεινοί) oarsmen”(40), “under the **dread** (δειναῖς) command of the king”(58), “your words bring **fearful** (δεινά) thoughts”(245), “battered by a **dreadful** (δειναί) sea” (576) — and twice in *Prometheus* — “kinship and comradeship are indeed **strong** (δεινόν) ties” (39), and “for he has a **strange** (δεινός) power of finding a way out of a difficult spot” (59).

Surprisingly, in the *Septem*, where one might expect to find δεινός used frequently given the military subject of the play, it is used only three times: “He hurls **terrible** (δείν’) threats at the walls” (426), “**fear** (δεινός) the man who worships the Gods” (596), and “the shared, **fated** (δεινόν) womb from which we were born” (1031). There is no evidence, then, in Aeschylus to suggest an interpretation of δεινός in anything other than dark and negative terms. One might suggest that in the *Prometheus*, where “strong” (29) and “strange” (59) are the better translations, there is sufficient cause for hesitation. However, in both instances, the word is used by the character Strength, who is hostile toward Prometheus, whom he feels is a traitor, and used in derision, not admiration.

It would be impossible to cite every example of δεινός used in Herodotus, since he uses it over seventy times. In order to demonstrate the consistency of the use of δεινός, I shall choose

one or two examples from each category of use.

a. **keen, sharp, clever.** Megabazus is alarmed when he discovers that Darius has given command of the city of Myrcinus to Histiaeus, a Greek, as a reward for services rendered. Seeing the potential for internal conflict, Megabazus appeals to Darius, pointing out that “he has given this honour to a **keen** and subtle man,” ἀνδρὶ Ἑλληνι δεινῷ τε καὶ σοφῷ δούς ἐγκτίσασθαι (5.23), a potential traitor. Mardonius is not swayed by the Theban’s plea to settle in Boeotia and by bribery institute a policy of “divide and conquer” in Hellas. Herodotus says that Mardonius was driven by a “**strong** desire,” δεινός ἕμερος (9.3) to take Athens.

b. **Hard, harsh, cruel, severe.** Herodotus describes Xerxes’s Viceroy, Artayctes, as “both **harsh** and presumptuous,” δεινός δὲ καὶ ἀτάσθαλος (9.116). Darius was annoyed by the fact that he was not able to use the main gates of Babylon, because Queen Nitocris had had herself buried on top of the gates, and he was not enthusiastic about walking beneath a body. Darius found it “**hard**,” δεινός (1.187), that he could not use the gates and was thus inconvenienced.

c. **Terrible, formidable, dangerous.** After the conquest of Lydia, the Ionians and Aeolians sent representatives to Cyrus appealing for protection and offering fealty. Cyrus, remembering their failure to respond to his call to abandon their support of Croesus and support him instead, responds with the ominous story of the flute player and fish, a story told to the Ionians by Cyrus because the Ionians refused to revolt against Croesus, but now that Cyrus was the victor they would side with him. Unsound decisions can lead to unsound results (1.141). A flute player saw some fish in the sea and played his flute for them. He hoped they might come ashore and dance for him, but they did not. So he caught them in a net and brought them ashore, where they danced immediately. The point of the story Herodotus tells us is that the Ionians refused his

request, and now it was too late. Among all the tribes or clans of the Ionians, only the Milesians were in “no **danger**,” δεινὸν οὐδέεν (1.143), because they had made and kept their treaty with Cyrus. In the face of possible conquest by Xerxes, envoys from Greece came to Syracuse to appeal to Gelon for support and solidarity. They argue that, without a united front, there is reason to “**fear**,” δεινόν (7.157), that all of Greece will fall.

d. Herodotus will use δεινός to express anger or distress: Τὸν δὲ βασιλέα δεινὰ ποιέεν, “the king was **angry**” (2.121.5.), and later, “(even though) all the Egyptians sitting beside him wept and were demonstrating **distress**,” τῶν ἄλλῶν Αἰγυπτίων τῶν περικατημένων αὐτὸν κλαιόντων καὶ δεινὰ ποιευτῶν (3.14).

e. Herodotus also used the adverb δεινῶς, often translated “**vehemently**,” “**earnestly**” or even “**vigilantly**”— i.e., “but they were **diligently** (δεινῶς) on guard” or even “they kept watch with extraordinary **vigilance**” (3.152), which brings out the full potential of δεινῶς. Similarly, the Spartans were “**earnestly** desirous” (δεινῶς, 3.35) of Tisamenus joining them.

This touches on only a few uses of δεινός by Herodotus, but they are enough to convey the fact that the historian did not perceive δεινός to mean “wonderful” in the unqualified sense that Jebb suggests for πολλὰ τὰ δεινά. Herodotus also demonstrates the extraordinary variability and scope of δεινός.

The textual evidence in Sophocles, Aeschylus and Herodotus is overwhelmingly in favour of the translation “terrible” or, perhaps, “strange.” Certainly there is no evidence to suggest that in this one instance, *Ant.* 332, “wonderful” is the optimum choice. Given the stature of Jebb as a scholar, one must ask why he was so adamant? Staley suggests that the climate of

the times plays a significant part in Jebb's decision.²² Undoubtedly to some degree. He was very familiar with both the appalling social conditions of the working people of Victorian England and the privileges of the upper classes, but let us not forget that he and his colleagues, especially the Apostles, worked all of their lives to advance education for all people, for all children in state-run schools, and for education for working adults at night school. When in parliament he spoke most often on this topic, as well as voting in favour of women receiving the vote. He and Cara both supported the Suffragist movement. His perspective was a strange mixture of Solonic and Periclean. In his academic perspective he was an unrestrained enthusiastic lover of all things Sophoclean and fifth-century Greek. When one reads the introductions to all his translations of Sophocles, his *Essays and Addresses*, and *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry*²³ and many other bits and pieces of his work, it is very clear just how much he liked what Sophocles said, and how much he really appreciated and was influenced by the fifth-century Athens, although one must also recognize that he was very idealistic about Homer, Sophocles, Erasmus and Vittorino da Feltre in particular. He just embraced the notion put forward by all these men that we humans could be such finer people, and his belief in education that can quite easily be compared to the Platonic ideal that if we know what the right thing to do is, then we will be moved to do right thing in response. Jebb would not have survived the brutality of WWI. Even so, there is no doubt that Jebb's scholarship and his lasting influence are profound.

22. Staley, *op. cit.* p. 563 n. 3, suggests that Freidlander, who argues with equal conviction for "terrible" and not "wonderful," was much influenced by the climate of 1930s Germany. Paul Friedlander, "πολλὰ τὰ δεινά," *Hermes* 69 (1934) 56–63. This argument is not without its attractions; however, he credits the tendency to focus on the ambiguity of δεινός since WWII gave "rise to the New Criticism with its focus on the multivalence of poetic language." A brief review of the realities of human interactions during and since WWII would surely convince the most idealistic of souls that, technological progress notwithstanding, "terrible" has a lot in its favour and may well influence, to some degree, anyone's thinking and interpretation.

23. *The Essays and Addresses of Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb* (Cambridge 1907), ed. Caroline Jebb. Richard Claverhouse Jebb, *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry* (Cambridge 1893).

Despite the acknowledgment by commentators of the ambiguity of δεινός, especially here, *Ant.* 332, “wonderful” persists as the rendering of choice with a great number of translators and commentators. In support of “wonderful” are Campbell and Abbott (1900),²⁴ Wells (1900)²⁵ and Bayfield (1916),²⁶ who parallels this ode with the speech from *Hamlet*:

What piece of work is man! How noble
in reason! How infinite in faculty!
In form, in moving, how express and admirable!
In action how like an angel!
In apprehension how like a god!
The beauty of the World!
The paragon of animals!

At this point, Bayfield stops, ignoring all the exclamation points and the closing lines of the speech:

And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?
Man delights not me;
no, nor woman neither,
though, by your smiling,
you seem to say so.

Hamlet 2.2.331–33

Given the dark and sinister atmosphere that already pervades *Hamlet*, by the second act and continues throughout, much like *Antigone*, this speech, like the Ode, is more supportive of “terrible” than “wonderful,” and yet Jebb does have a point, if unmade, which I shall follow in

24. *Sophocles' Antigone*, ed. Lewis Campbell and Evelyn Abbott (Oxford 1900).

25. *The Antigone of Sophocles*, ed. G. H. Wells (London 1900).

26. *The Antigone of Sophocles*, ed. M. A. Bayfield (London 1916).

that chapter. Meanwhile, perhaps Kamerbeek (1978), more than any, in his commentary *ad loc.*,²⁷ makes the following observation: “δεινά: in the use of δεινός here the whole gamut of meaning of the word is to be perceived: fearful, awful, dangerous; powerful, skillful; wonderful; strange.” In his introduction to the *Antigone*, Kamerbeek observes the other aspect of δεινός “in which δεινός combines the notions of wonder, awe-inspiring, fearful, powerful, skillful” (p. 13), going on to conclude that “at the level of the poet’s intention with this choral song we may surmise that he wanted to express a sentiment of wonder at a fundamental antimony in the condition of man.”

The issue here is not so much that human beings have a two-sided character, which is self-evident, as all of Sophocles’ work supports a very gloomy view of mankind.²⁸ While in some of Sophocles, especially the *Antigone*, no one wins, so to speak, in *Ajax*, Odysseus and Teucer succeed in achieving a proper burial for Ajax; in *Philoctetes*, Neoptolemus reverses his deceit and all return to Troy, though none will survive the war; in *Oedipus Coloneus*, at least all goals are achieved, Oedipus is apotheosed but Thebes is heading for disaster; in *Electra*, Orestes returns, saves Electra, kills his mother, Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus, but the question of justice and resolution are left unsolved; the *Trachiniae* ends with Deianeira committing suicide, Heracles is thrown on a pyre, at his request and is apotheosed too, and their son is commanded by his father to marry the woman he intended to move into Deianeira’s place in the palace; *Oedipus Tyrannus* is over-analysed perhaps, but a simply wonderful play it is, so perhaps Kaufmann has a point, but then the role of tragedy in any era is to put men and women through

27. *The Plays of Sophocles: The Antigone*, ed. J. C. Kamerbeek (Leiden 1978) p. 20.

28. Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, observes that “reading Sophocles’ Tragedies one certainly does gain the impression that he found man as such very wonderful. Rather, the poet’s world is governed by merciless powers, and men are strange, even frightening” p. 278.

incredible situations and to observe their ability to deal with their troubles. Brown is of the opinion that Sophocles is “echoing Aeschylus’s words but giving δεινός a more favourable sense, in which both ‘marvelous’ and ‘clever’ are included.”²⁹

Hogan (1991) seems to be reverting to the position of Jebb when he acknowledges the connection between this ode and Aeschylus’ *Choephoroi*, 586ff., but translates δεινός as “Many are the **wonders** the earth breeds, the pain of fear . . .” (Ch. 585–86), which, in light of the topic of the ode and the Aeschylean use of δεινός already noted, is interesting. He also observes that δεινός at 243 and 323 “is too common and colloquial for the echo of 243 to be very pointed”³⁰ (*Ant.* 332), but this is exactly the point. Frequency of use gives weight to consistency of translation.

In his examination of the “heroic temper” of Sophoclean heroes, Knox points out that there “is one word applied to them all, to describe their character and their actions; δεινός, ‘strange,’ ‘dreadful,’ ‘terrible.’”³¹ In other words, δεινός is used consistently, in both application and translation, to the central characters in Sophocles. Therefore, it would be inconsistent if Sophocles were to use it differently elsewhere. Albin Lesky takes the same position as Knox on δεινός in Sophocles and sees the ode as expressing the “**dangers** of man’s greatness” and uses “wonders” for δεινός and “strange” for δεινότερον.³² Can we really take this position on Sophocles some 2,500 years later? And given that the Greek language itself is not only so inflected, but also so ambiguous, and given that we only have seven of Sophocles plays of a suspected one hundred and twenty plays, can we be sure of anything in a play so old, especially

29. Andrew Brown, *Sophocles’ Antigone* (Warminster 1987) *Ant.* 332.

30. James C. Hogan, *A Commentary on the Plays of Sophocles* (Carbondale 1991) *Ant.* 332.

31. Bernard, M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Berkeley 1964) p. 23.

32. Albin Lesky, *Greek Tragedy*, tr. H. A. Frankfort (New York 1965) p. 105.

the translation of a single word?

I stated at the outset that the object of this chapter was not to interpret the ode, nor to get lost in a sea of interpretative speculation, but rather to look for consistency in the use of δεινός in Sophocles. I believe that I have adequately shown that I have defeated my own intentions and have, therefore, given just a little support for the possibility that Jebb may be right and may see a Sophoclean emphasis to πολλά τὰ δεινά and draw the contrast of the ode. The consistency of use in Aeschylus is strong support for the negative interpretation, but though Sophocles may have been very influenced by Aeschylus we should not assume that to mean that Sophocles was not of independent thought, because everything in Sophocles demonstrates not only that he was, but also that his thinking was quite unique, as was his philosophy. Even so, translating the first line of the “Ode on Man” remains a challenge. This is part of what makes it so attractive.

Chapter 4: The First Choral Ode: 332–83

στρ. ἄ	Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ ¹ κούδεν ἄνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·	332
	τοῦτο ² καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν πόντου χειμερίῳ νότῳ	
	χωρεῖ, περιβρυχίοισιν	
	περῶν ὑπ' οἴδμασιν·	333
	θεῶν τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν	
	ἄφθιτον, καμάταν ἀποτρύεται	
	ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος	
	ἱπείῳ γένει πολεύων	340

The very first line of this ode immediately presents us with an issue, a question, a long-disputed translation. Why did Sophocles choose τὰ δεινὰ . . . δεινότερον to open this ode, which can be translated as “wonderful” or “terrible,” or anything in between? It draws attention immediately, because the possibilities for interpretation are considerable and demonstrate the wonderful flexibility, colour, depth and ambiguity of many Greek words. Only the context can direct the translator to the appropriate or most probable interpretation, and that in itself may be a

1. δεινός, ἄ, ὄν, an adjective with a neuter article, becomes an abstract noun, hence τὰ δεινὰ, “wonders” a non-specific translation, δεινότερον is the superlative. The LSJ, Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Sir Henry Stuart Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* (first edition 1843) (Oxford 1968) (the Alice of the books created by Lewis Carroll (1865) were based on Alice Liddell, Henry George Liddell’s daughter) gives the following possible interpretations: fearful, terrible, awful, danger, suffering, horror, awe, terror, illegal, arbitrary, take ill, complain of, wondrous, marvellous, strange, clever, skillful, and more, depending on context. The most recent Langenscheidt *Standard Dictionary Greek*, Berlin 1990, ed. George A. Magazis, gives only “fearful,” “terrible,” with none of the positive interpretive possibilities, which really eliminates the value of ambiguity as a tool of freedom of thought or speech. Other possibilities Sophocles might have chose instead of δεινός that convey the idea of “wonderful,” σέβασμα, ατος, τό, “an object of awe,” θαυμάσιος, α,ον, “wonderful,” “marvellous,” κατάπληξις, εως, ἡ, “amazement”, “consternation”, all have either too few or too many syllables for metrical reasons and would demand a considerable re-working of the whole ode, which would destroy its meaning.

2. τοῦτο, *sc.* τὰ δεινὰ, this wondrous power, man. Jebb, *ad. loc.*

source of uncertainty and discussion.

There are many wonders in the world and none more wonderful than man,
This wonderful power, man, crosses to the other side of a stormy sea,
Making his way over seas surging all around,
Earth, the eldest of the gods, immortal, unwearied,
He turns the soil by ploughing with those born of horses,
Going to and fro, year in, year out.

332–40

The ambiguity of τὰ δεινὰ, especially here, has provoked a good deal of discussion. Jebb is adamant that here τὰ δεινὰ is not “dread” nor “able” but “wonderful” (*ad loc.* p. 70). Campbell translates τὰ δεινὰ as “wondrous” too, but believes that its considerable ambiguity in meaning “is in transition from the earlier sense of ‘fearful’ to the later sense of ‘clever’ = ‘wonderful,’ or ‘mighty.’” (*ad. loc.* p. 428). Kamerbeek believes that the “whole gamut of meaning of the word is to be perceived: fearful, awful, dangerous, powerful, skillful, wonderful, strange.”³ Hogan observes that “the Greek word (δεινός in the neuter) suggests something wonderful and terrible; it is ‘terrible’ in 243 and 323, but is too common and colloquial in the echo of 243 to be very pointed.”⁴ He goes on to outline the ode as follows: “The first strophe (332–41) treats man’s triumph over the physical world; the first antistrophe (342–53) describes his conquest of animals; the second strophe (354–64) turns to intellectual, political, and medical achievement; and the second antistrophe (365–75) balances praise for human craft with a warning that political prosperity requires regard for divine and human law” (p. 140). Kaufmann, on the other hand, on

3. J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles: Part III: The Antigone* (Netherlands 1978) *ad. loc.* p. 82.

4. Hogan goes on to point out “the Aeschylean chorus (*LB* 585–651) also turns on the theme of daring” (*LB* 594–97; cf. *Ant* 370–71). For the topic of the evolution of civilization see *Prometheus Bound* 442–504, Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* 200–18, and Plato *Protagoras* 320c–22c. *ad. loc.*

how one translates words makes the following statement:

The line in *Antigone* that has so often been mistranslated in this fashion, says something quite different. Not only does δεινά usually mean terrors, dangers or sufferings rather than wonders, while δεινός can mean terrible or dangerous, skillful, clever, marvelous, strange, or uncanny, but the very same word occurs nine lines earlier (323), where it can only mean terrible. . . . It ought to be established as a primary principle of exegesis and translation that, confronted with some doubt about the meaning of a word, one has to check the other places where the word occurs in the same work, if not all uses by the poet. In *Antigone* one only needs to check a dozen lines, and every time the meaning required is “terrible” or “terror.” . . . The idea that an important term should be translated consistently by the same word is widely scorned by English and American translators, who associate it, for no good reason, with cribs and poetry . . . Reading Sophocles’ tragedies, one certainly does not gain the impression that he found man as such very wonderful. Rather, the poet’s world is governed by merciless powers, and men are strange, even frightening.⁵

Knox modifies Kaufmann's position somewhat, when he notes that

the fifth century in Athens was an age of intellectual revolution. Among the younger intellectuals, prophecies, especially those peddled by self-appointed professional seers (a class of operator common in ancient Greece but not unknown in modern America), were viewed with scepticism if not scorn; . . . Thucydides . . . dismissed prophecy contemptuously . . . Euripides attacked it . . . The philosophical attack on it was more radical; the dictum of the sophist Protagoras — “the individual man is the measure of all things, of the existence of what exists and the non-existence of what does not, πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον

5. Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy* (New Jersey 1968) pp. 276–78.; E. H. Plumptre, *The Tragedies of Sophocles* (London 1865), is in agreement with Kaufmann. He translated the beginning of the ode “Many the forms of life/ Fearful and strange to see/ But man supreme stands out/ For strangeness and for fear” (332) p. 163. A most interesting translation.

ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος / τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν/ τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν”⁶ —
subjected prophecy, and for that matter themselves, to a harsh criterion that found
them wanting.⁷

The presocratics demonstrate a growing focus on a metaphysical analysis of everything that surrounded them, particularly cosmology, how nature works, the constitution of a human being, and looking for the causes of everything, all of which was quite new. This intellectual activity opened all sorts of doors of exploration. Empedocles and Alcmaeon, at least, wrote theses “*On Nature*.” There was no question that one could not ask, and there was a spirit of freedom and open-mindedness, which attracted the attention of Jebb and the Apostles and which they did their best to embrace. Most certainly, Griffith has a very eloquent evaluation of this ode:

The ode is also of interest as a document of the “history of ideas.” It stands as one of the earliest extant examples of the growing Greek interest in the evolution of human societies and in the opposition between “nature” (φύσις) and “culture” (νόμος), subjects central to the new scientific, anthropological, and political currents of the mid-fifth century. Although the ode does not present a continuous evolutionary narrative, like that of “Protagoras” at Plato, *Prot.* 320c–22d, or Prometheus at A. *Prom.* 442–506 . . . it does provide a similarly comprehensive list of human achievements that distinguishes the higher stages of civilization from the life of beasts and culminates with “political” life, justice, and law . . . here . . . the ambiguous moral character of “technology” . . . and of human ingenuity in general is emphasized.⁸

Within the context of this *strophe* in particular, it is perfectly understandable that one might interpret δεινός as “wonderful” on the grounds that for man to have accomplished all these

6. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1957) p. 411 n. 1.

7. Bernard Knox, *Essays: Ancient and Modern* (Baltimore 1989) p. 48ff.

8. Griffith, 1999 p. 181. There is much more to say of Griffith’s statement later in this chapter.

things and done so without any instruction, but through his own ingenuity, is worthy of an awful lot of praise. Those who translate the plays of Sophocles may speculate on different perspectives, though most seem to stay with “wonders.” Ruby Blondell: “Awesome wonders are many/ but none of them more awesome/ than the human race.” Bertolt Brecht, with not so much a translation as a version of *Antigone* through which he hoped to see an uprising of the people against Hitler, gives a quite different interpretation of the ode: “Wandering with bowed heads, the Elders considered man/ and his monstrous power, how the sea with the keel, and the beast/ with the yoke, and the horse with the bridle were conquered/ and yet he will, like a monster, also conquer his fellow man.” Helaine Smith: “Many things are formidable/ and none more formidable than man.” Sir George Young, who first translated Sophocles in 1881: “Much is passing strange;/ Nothing surpassing mankind.”⁹ Plumtree translates δεινός:

Many the forms of life,
 Fearful and strange to see,
 But man supreme stands out,
 For strangeness and for fear.

But then Plumtree’s translation dates to 1865 and before Jebb’s influential commentary.¹⁰ We see not only the possibilities of a Greek word that is so ambiguous and so varied in the interpretations to choose from, but also the vast canvas of human accomplishments so far achieved and a future of possibilities that has no boundaries if we choose wisely:

ἀντ ἄ κυφονόων τε φύλον ὀρνίθων ἀμφιβαλῶν

9. *Sophocles* 1, eds. David Grene & Richmond Lattimore, 2nd ed. (Chicago 1991), trans. David Grene. Ruby Blondell, *Sophocles’ Antigone* (Massachusetts 1998). Bertolt Brecht, *Antigone* 1948, trans. Judith Malina (New York 1990). Helaine L. Smith, *Masterpieces of Classic Greek Drama* (London 2006) pp. 72–73. George Young, *Sophocles’ Antigone* (New York 1993) first published (London 1864). There is a considerable list of translations and adaptations at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/antigone_\(sophocles\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/antigone_(sophocles)) pp. 6–9.

10. E. H. Plumtree, *The Tragedies of Sophocles Vol. 1* (London 1865).

καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη πόντου τ' εἰναλίαν φύσιν	345
σπείραισι δικτυοκλώστοις	
περιφραδῆς ἀνὴρ.	
κρατεῖ δὲ μηχαναῖς ἀγραύλου	
θηρὸς ὄρεσσιβάτα λασιαύχενά θ'	
ἵππον ὀχμάζεται ἀμφὶ λόφον ζυγῶν,	350
οὔρειόν τ' ἀκμῆτα ταῦρον.	

And the light-hearted race of birds
 And the tribe of wild beasts
 And the fish of the sea,
 He snares in the woven meshes of his nets,
 Thoughtful man,
 Through his skills he becomes master
 Of the mountain ranging beasts
 Dwelling in the fields;
 And the horse with the shaggy neck,
 He makes obedient to the bit,
 And he tames the untiring mountain bull.

We begin to see just how wonderfully Sophocles reveals to us how clever and thoughtful ancient men and women have been in working out how to solve all the problems of practical life that would take care of the difficulties that made everyday life so hard. First, how to develop agriculture and fishing to feed themselves; next, how to acquire food and to capture and train and take care of the animals who could best help them to accomplish this, monumental tasks which we take for granted today. If we stop for a moment and reflect on these very difficult tasks developed from nothing, then we would appreciate just how enormous this task was and that

ancient man had no models to copy. He had to create everything from the very beginning.

It is interesting to note that the first *stasimon* in Aeschylus's *Choephoroi* (585–651) begins exactly opposite to Sophocles in two ways: the first two *στροφαί* are reversed in that where Sophocles begins with the praise of man and immediately relates the dangers of nature he has overcome, Aeschylus, in the first *στροφή*, begins with the awful dangers of nature that threaten man — Πολλὰ μὲν γὰ̃ τρέφει/ δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχη, “Earth nourishes many/ things evil and fearful” (585–86) — and begins the second *στροφή* with how absolutely awful men and women are, ἀλλ' ὑπέρτολμον ἀν-/ δρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι, “but who can tell of man's/ over-bold spirit/ and the reckless hearts of women?” (592–94). The whole of Aeschylus's ode is couched in negative terms. Everything — man, woman, nature, the gods — seems to be seen in a negative light. Sophocles, in the second *στροφή*, continues with the business of catching birds and beasts, etc. — the essentials of life. Finally, it must be noted that whereas in both Aeschylus and Plato's *Protagoras*, it is Prometheus who gives to man all of these qualities and skills.¹¹ In Sophocles, man, through his own creative imagination, figured out how to solve all these problems.

Next, Sophocles moves into the arena of the intellectual factors for founding communities so that life might be more settled, more peaceful and more organized:

στρ. β'

καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν

354

11. Aeschylus, *Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoedias* (Oxford 1972), ed. Denys Page. *Prometheus* 442–504; Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 200–18; Plato, *Collected Dialogues* (Princeton 1961) eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, *Protagoras* 320c–22c trans. W. K. C. Guthrie; Aeschylus gives creation to Prometheus, a Titan, who allows his brother Epimetheus to distribute the talents. It is interesting to note that the very first thing Prometheus claims, that he himself gave ὡς σφας νηπίους ὄντας τὸ πρὶν/ἐννοῦς ἔθηκα καὶ φρενῶν ἐπιβόλους, “even so, being in a mindless state, I placed in their possession reason and mindfulness,” 443–44. Euripides just speaks of “whatever immortal power,” and Plato, in the *Protagoras*, tells the story of Prometheus giving the distribution of talents to his brother Epimetheus, who is somewhat impetuous in his distribution, at least as far as man is concerned.

φρόνημα¹² καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς¹³ ἐδιδάξατο καὶ δυσαύλων
πάγων ἐναίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη,
παντοπόρος ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδέν ἔρχεται
τὸ μέλλον· Ἴαιδα μόνον φεῦξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται·
νόσων δ' ἀμηγάνων φυγὰς ξυμπέφρασται.¹⁴

360

Speech and wind swift thought
and such dispositions as regulates cities
he has taught *himself* [italics mine], by making a lodging
so as to flee the shafts of frost and tempestuous storms,
all-inventive man; without resource he meets nothing
that must come he cannot meet,
only against death shall he call for aid in vain;
but from baffling maladies he has contrived an escape.

We are so used to our own civilization that perhaps we do not stop and reflect enough on the items noted here by Sophocles, on what things need to be overcome to found communities, to run them in a just, lawful, economical and amenable way, to solve the problems of feeding ourselves and to devise ways to facilitate travel and trade. On top of all that, we taught ourselves to talk and to think. These are stunning achievements. And even more, we are so creative that we can solve any and all problems we face, except death. Two thousand five hundred years later we still have not solved that problem. An awareness of the fact that all men die is an awareness that has been with us since before the earliest literature. Homer records in both the *Iliad* and the

12. φρόνημα for the most part translates as speech, or an interpretation that falls within that meaning, but can also be taken to mean pride, arrogance and the like. Again ambiguity.

13. ὀργή can mean either temperament, mood, passion, or, anger, wrath and a passion of anger and rage. Now we begin to see Sophocles bringing into focus his understanding of the general instability of man.

14. There is nothing that man, through his own ingenuity, has not been able to find a solution for . . . except death. Sophocles takes us through two στροφή of affirming man's cleverness and building his confidence, then suddenly, the one thing that feeds our insecurities, frightens us the most, death, the leveller of all difference.

Odyssey very poignant moments of the reality of death. The very moving account of Priam, king of Troy, going to plead with Achilles, the great warrior of the Greeks, for the return of his son Hector's body so that he can bury him with full honours is perhaps, the most moving scene in the *Iliad*. Patroclus, Achilles' closest friend, had borrowed Achilles' armour in order to fight and had been killed by Hector. In his grief and distress, Achilles had dragged the body of Hector around the barrow of Patroclus three times a day for eleven days. What is of particular interest to the *Antigone* is that each night the gods repaired the torn body of Hector.¹⁵ They did not allow his body to be defiled, which makes the fact that Polyneices's body was not defiled by birds and beasts, at least until it fit with the plot of the play, more understandable. But to return to the topic of Death. Callinus, a seventh-century B.C. poet, observed about death: θάνατος δὲ τότ' ἔσσειται, ὁπότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσα . . . οὐ γάρ κως θανάτὸν γε φυγεῖν εἰμαρμένον ἐστὶν ἄνδρ, "death comes to us all in time, it is destiny . . . death comes in due time, it is not possible to escape death, it is allotted to man (8–9; 12–13)."¹⁶ In the *Eumenides*, Apollo tells the chorus,

Απ. ἀνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὰν αἶμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις
 ἅπαξ θανόντος οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις.
 Τούτων ἐπωιδὰς οὐκ ἐποίησεν πατήρ
 οὐμός,

15. Homer, *Homeri Opera, Tomus II, Iliadis Libros* (Oxonii 1902), eds. David B. Monro et Thomas W. Allen. bk. xxiv 14ff. and 411ff. In the *Odyssey*, ed. Henry Hayman (London 1882) bk. xi, the Book of the Dead, where Odysseus goes to consult the dead Teiresius in particular, the first of the dead to appear is his own man, Elpinor, who had died in Circe's house. Greatly distressed, he asked Elpinor, equally distressed, how he came to be there. Elpinor had been drunk and had fallen off the roof of the house and broken his neck. Elpinor then begged Odysseus to go back to Circe's island and bury him. Burial was very important even back in Homer's day. It is also very important to Sophocles. It is an issue in his first play the *Ajax* and here again in the *Antigone*. Plato speaks at considerable length about the essentials of burial, *Laws*: xii 958d–59d.

16. Callinus, *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Selection* (London 1967), ed. David A. Campbell p. 8. In his notes on the lines by Callinus, Campbell remarks re: Μοῖρα "originally 'part,' 'portion' (cf. Μείρομαι, get as one's share), came to be used like μόρος and αἶσα of a man's portion of life: . . . In the *Iliad* Moira is a goddess of fate, death and evil generally"; Campbell, p.164.

Once only do we die, for once the thirsty
dust has sucked up the blood of man,
there is no rising again, for this alone
my father has ordained no healing song.¹⁷

647–650

Death seems to be a topic of conversation throughout Greek literature — not so much in an intrusive manner, but rather as a fact of life. Achilles, the great hero of the Trojan War, one of those called up by Odysseus in the book of the dead, *Odyssey* xi, says that he would rather be slave than be in the underworld. In Homer’s day, life after death was not an attractive proposition, but by the time of the *Antigone* it has taken on a quite different perspective. Antigone is looking forward to joining her beleaguered family in Hades, which she, at least, sees as a happy place, free from all that has beset them on earth, where they will all be together and happy, with no hostilities or resentments. Ninian Smart, in his introduction to John S. Dunne’s *The City of the Gods*,¹⁸ points out that “it is surely unfortunate that that there has been little concern — with some exceptions, naturally — with death in the philosophical literature of the last two or three decades.” Of the declining focus, power and relevance of religion, especially since the sixties, he notes that “the power of religion does not rest in simple beliefs or theologies; it rests in the deep words and rights which enable us to face death and make a good end to living.” Dunne, in considering the situation as we see it in the *Antigone*, observes:

Since human societies had always been built upon solutions to the problem of death, the reception of an idea of God . . . according to which death is not a problem that man can solve, created a rather unprecedented situation. As long as the gods were divided into the gods of the living and the gods of the dead it

17. Page, 1972 p. 271.

18. John S. Dunne, *The City of the Gods* (London 1965). Smart, vii.

had been possible to conceive the rule of law as the rule of the gods, the gods of the living, that is, and to contrast it with the rule of man [I]t had been thought, and did not prove that the law's power was purely human. It had been readily acknowledged, therefore, that the law had no authority over the dead, so much so that among the Greeks any attempt to carry authority beyond the limit of death like the one dramatized in the *Antigone* of Sophocles where a ruler tries to prevent a private individual from burying the dead had been considered an abuse and an encroachment upon the realm of the nether gods.¹⁹

and when we only have a god of the living, people become more and more anxious.²⁰

ἀντ. β.	Σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν	365
	τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει·	
	νόμους γεραίρων χθονὸς θεῶν τ' ἔνορκον δίκαν	
	ὕψιπολις· ἄπολις, ὅτῳ τὸ μὴ καλὸν	370
	ξύνεστι τόλμας χάριν. μήτ' ἐμοὶ παρέστιος	
	γένοιτο μήτ' ἴσον φρονῶν, ὃς τάδε ἔρδει	375

Cunning beyond expectation, and having these
 Resourceful skills, he moves at one time
 Toward evil, at another time toward good,
 When he honours the laws of land,
 And the justice he has sworn by the gods to uphold,
 His city stands high, cityless is he, who,
 Through recklessness joins with something sinful.
 Never may he share my hearth,
 Nor share my thoughts, who does these things.

19. Dunne, 1965 pp. 150–51.

20. I have found it most interesting to experience, with people I know who are really committed Christians, that they are the ones who often are the ones most scared of death when faced with it.

Here, perhaps, we have the reason why Jebb was so adamant that δεινός should be translated as “wonderful” (332). Throughout his writings and in the introductions to his commentaries of Sophocles’ plays, Jebb is noted for much, but two things in particular, first his and Sophocles’ Homeric perspective, that man is able to reach more noble heights; second, Jebb’s frequent references to “balance and harmony” in both Sophocles and Homer, and here in this ode, there is a clear demonstration of both. In the first two stanzas, Sophocles has highlighted the positive side of man and his unique ingenuity in solving the problems that enable the human race to the much more vibrant and civilized life it was in Sophocles’ day.²¹ In these last two stanzas we see the limit and negative side of man. He can not conquer death, and he is responsible for the choices he makes, and, as Sophocles points out, he chooses how to respond to all the situations he confronts. His choice is governed by καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν/ φρόνημα, “Speech and wind swift thought” (354–55), which he taught himself ἐδιδάξατο, the middle case whereby he chooses “evil at one time, good at another” (366). What is really interesting here is that Sophocles puts evil, κακόν, first and good, ἐσθλόν, second. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, quotes Sophocles as saying of himself that “I portray men as they should be, but Euripides portrays them as they are.”²² Which is very true. Both Sophocles and Homer believed man could be far

21. Perhaps in this day and age we have forgotten what was needed to create the civilization that we enjoy. It is worth noting, too, that what we define as ‘classics’ today, the Heroic age, the Greeks through the ages, the Melic Poets, who developed and refined the concept of the ‘individual’ in the heroic age between Hesiod/Homer and the Presocratic philosophers of the Sixth century, Romans, were, really, an individual pursuit up until the Romantic age — late seventeenth/early eighteenth century. It was Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hunt, in the main who, in their beautiful and enthusiastic and very romantic embrace of the ancient Greeks in particular, reflected in their poetry, who stimulated the desire for a more national desire to study the ancients, and thus inspired universities to create departments of Classics, and also gave emphasis to literature and archaeology and other disciplines which were a part of the culture of these two ancient civilizations and their relationship to each other, and then on down through the Renaissance and German scholarship of the day.

22. *Poetics* 1460b33–4. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, (New York 1941) pp. 1455—1487. In his introduction to his translation of Euripides’ *Heracles*, Philip Vellacott, “To the question of a sufferer Sophocles offers one answer: reverence for the unfathomable wisdom and power of Zeus. Euripides wrote for men who had lost that faith, and exhorted them to rely on themselves, and, if they were fortunate, on the loyalty of friends.” Vellacott also says of Euripides that, “on the theme of human suffering, . . . Euripides was a master.” Very true. *Euripides: Medea/Hecabe/Electra/Heracles*. tr. Philip Vellacott (1963) pp.14–15. But did Sophocles have reverence

more noble, as did Jebb. Sophocles also says, through the choices we make we are responsible for the reputation and success of our cities too.

As we see in this ode, the chorus is responding to the news, given by the watchman, that someone has dared to defy Creon's edict and has performed a ritual burial of Polyneices. They assume it is a man. In response, this ode demonstrates quite clearly the balance and harmony for which Sophocles is so well known. On the one hand, two stanzas of the very laudable quality and achievements of man down through the ages; on the other, two stanzas of not only man's mortality, about which he can do nothing, but of his capability, by simple choice, of negating everything.

Hogan says of the chorus and this ode:

While we may find a great deal in this ode that moralizes the play in a general way, only under torture will it yield a decisive dramatic position: the chorus hedges, not so much with studied ambiguity as with anxious generality. And this is altogether "in character" for this chorus, for it will not come off the fence for another seven hundred lines.²³

But at this point it must be remembered that only the audience know that Antigone has buried Polyneices; the chorus only knows that someone has performed the burial. Therefore, they are quite free to make any statement they wish, which will be taken as supporting Creon, so they have no fear, yet even though they are not completely in support of Creon's edict. This allows Sophocles to have the chorus make a very substantial and moral statement. This is the only

for Zeus, or for a metaphysical portrayal of the divine as represented by the "Unwritten Laws" as spoken of by Antigone? (451–52), given that quite clearly here, the destiny of each of us depends on the choices we make.
23. Hogan, p. 140.

possible moment that the chorus could do so. That they sit on the fence until almost end of the play is, in itself, a strong statement in that it reveals the uncertainty of the everyday citizens of Thebes. But even in accepting this position as given, Griffith points out another evaluation of the citizens that we tend not to take into account:

In choral lyric tradition, audiences were accustomed to using their intellects and imaginations to make connections between allusive myths, or free standing moral generalizations, and the immediate occasion and context of performance (cf. 944–87n.). So here, the ironies and paradoxes that we come to recognize with regard to the different ‘authors’ and audiences of this ode, and the sweeping vistas that are opened up for interpretation, in no way detract from its immediate dramatic relevance and function.²⁴

Jebb is sure that “the chorus had not thought it possible that anyone should brave death to bury the corpse” (*ad. loc.* p. 69), which would be perfectly understandable. It is worth noting that the chorus in *Antigone* is unique in that the protagonist is a young woman, but the chorus are old men. More often the chorus is the same gender as the protagonist, but a chorus of women would most likely be empathetic with Antigone, which would distract from Antigone’s complete isolation, which is essential in Sophocles. All his heroes are completely isolated and are tested to the extreme, and with the exception of Electra and Philoctetes, the heroes either do not survive or, for the two that do, do not survive unscathed. Another key element of Sophocles plays is that of kindred. The chorus being old men also gives the audience a different perspective. They are very much the average citizen whom we all know. About the ode, Goheen points out:

24. Hogan, p. 180. It is amazing how much is remembered when there was only oral tradition, although in the Athens of the day books were becoming more available. In medieval Britain, when books were scarce, the people remembered considerable amounts of what they saw and heard from the traveling bards.

This ode is by no means the simple glorification of human accomplishment for which later-day humanists seem often to take it. The dangerous quality of man's freedom is very strongly stated (365ff.), and a correlation of human with divine law is required (368-9). Yet in the final two strophes the picture of man as his own teacher and as free, except from the gods, is in telling contrast to the picture of man's domination over brute nature in the first two strophes. It is also in significant contrast to Creon's closely preceding characterization of his own rule and of citizens of his state by a draft-animal-yoking image (289-92).²⁵

This is such a truthful interpretation of the ode. Sophocles has so clearly laid out here the extremes, between which is balance and the ideal place to be, but how often does man actually achieve balance? Rarely! This lack of balance will become more and more evident and extreme as the play progresses. Balance lies between Creon's rigidity of rule and Antigone's commitment to the unwritten laws, and her conviction that she has done the right thing, which she has from the perspective of the centrality of kin. Today we do not have the same commitment to burying the dead as they did back then.

Bernard Knox, ever a reliable and insightful commentator, gives a very helpful analysis of this ode and what it meant within the context of Sophocles' Athens:

The Athenian πόλις seemed to its citizens to be the high point of a long development from savagery to civilization. In the famous ode which follows Creon's proclamation, the chorus sings of man's progress culminating in the creation of from helplessness to mastery of his environment, a process culminating in the creation of the πόλις. He conquers the sea and land, the birds, fishes, and beasts, he teaches himself speech and ἀστυνόμος ὄργας, 'attitudes that enable him to live in a community' (355-56). And this

25. Robert F. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone* (Princeton 1951) p. 32.

community, the πόλις, preserves the progress he has made and makes possible still further advance. The πόλις is the ship on which man makes his voyage forward, and at all costs it must be kept upright and afloat.²⁶

We see from Knox's evaluation that the ode is not only central to this play, but is also a very significant expression of where the culture, art, philosophy and politics stood in fifth-century B.C. Athens, which is crucial. Sophocles was seeking to express the whole idea of balance and harmony, which, ideally, it is possible to accomplish but unlikely to be maintained for any duration. Unfortunately man is so easily distracted by so many things. It is his understanding of human nature that allows Sophocles to note that we choose evil first, over freedom, and good second.²⁷

Alexander Pope, in the seventeenth/eighteenth century, wrote *The Essay on Man*, in four epistles which dealt with the nature and state of man in relation to God and the universe. This has a very specific and didactic focus and ultimately suggests freedom comes not from choice and responsibility but in a commitment and obedience to God. The interpretation of which will always depend on an interpretation by someone else, of what one needs to do in order to accomplish the harmony and salvation available.²⁸ The problem of who invented evil continues to vex.

As noted earlier, since the Second World War in particular, the *Antigone* has been staged

26. Bernard M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Los Angeles 1964) p. 86.

27. One cannot help but think of the 1960s song, *Me and Bobby McGee* 1969 written by Kris Kristofferson and made famous by Janis Joplin: "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." Now we have so many rules, regulations and restrictions, but do we really appreciate what this means to the concept of freedom? The latest news here in Ontario is most interesting. Young people are saying that after grade 8 or 9 they learn much better on their own and don't need, nor do they want, high school. They say it is too rigid and restricts their learning ability. CBC Radio 1 News, 27/06/2015.

28. Alexander Pope (1688–1744), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 1 (New York 1962) pp. 1719–26.

and interpreted in all manner of social and political situations around the world.²⁹ Bertolt Brecht's and Jean Anouilh's interpretations are probably the most well known.³⁰ Brecht's version was first performed in 1948 in Switzerland, and reflected his hope during the war that the German people would rise up against Hitler, but they did not. Anouilh's play first performed in 1944 in Paris was celebrated by the Nazis, who did not understand that it celebrated the rejection of authority, theirs, and actually paralleled the actions of the resistance. The Nazis thought the play was about the rejection of the authority of the previous government and allowed it to play for another year.³¹ Blake Morrison, in his review of a production of *Antigone* in the *Guardian* newspaper,³² says "Classics escape the prison of time. Whichever their era, they belong to every other era."

In the twentieth century the political idealist has chosen some obvious and some very unusual identities for Antigone: in Germany a reproach against Nazi collaborators; in France a martyred resistance person; in Ireland a committed IRA member, and in 1979 Heinrich Boll portrayed Antigone as Ulrike Meinhof, one of the founders of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Interpretations of the Ode to Man in the modern technological age is taken in a review of three books in *The Fortnightly Review* by Roger Berkowitz. He reviews the three books under the title *The Wonders of Man in the Age of Simulations*³³. He introduces his reviews with his translation

29. An extensive list of *Modern Adaptations*, can be found online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/antigone_\(sophocles\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/antigone_(sophocles)). It begins with Edward H. Plumtree (1865) and ends with Marie Slaughter (2014) and contains thirty-seven Translations and Adaptations, which is not complete, plus nineteen References and eight Further Readings, and does not include movies except the 1961 movie starring Irene Papas and the 1969 political fantasy based on *Antigone* starring Britt Ekland. Felix Mendelssohn, in 1841, wrote the score for a stage performance of *Antigone* at the Prussian Court Theatre, Potsdam.

30. Bertolt Brecht, *Antigone* first performed 1948. tr. Judith Malina (New York 1990). Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (London 1954), ed. W. M. Landers.

31. When it opened in London, Vivien Leigh played Antigone and Lawrence Olivier played the Corypheus. Creon was played by George Relph.

32. Blake Morrison, *Femme Fatale*, *The Guardian*, Saturday 4 October 2003, <http://www.guardian.com>.

33. Roger Berkowitz, "The Wonders of Man in the Age of Simulations," *The Fortnightly Review* (New York

of the first two lines of the ode, “Manifold the wonders/ And nothing towers more wondrous than man (332–23).” Such a man who tames nature is a wonder, according to the Ode’s opening line. In the first lines of his introduction to the reviews he does point out the possible translation of δεινόν, so that the reader understands that the word can also mean “terrible.” The first book he reviews is *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, by Ray Kurzweil. Kurzweil believes that in the coming age we “will merge human and machine into a higher and more intelligent form of life. Not only will man attain mastery over the world with intelligence unimaginable to mere human cognition, but humans will be able to choose their life-spans. . . . and that human life will be irreversibly transformed.” In essence we will be able to transfer our minds into a computer so that we will no longer need our human bodies. One of Kurzweil’s most vigorous critics is the author of the next book that Berkowitz reviews, Jaron Lanier’s *You Are Not a Gadget*, who opposes the whole premise of Kurzweil’s proposition that we humans will be transformed in super-intelligent robots and calls them “cybernetic totalitarians” and “digital Maoists,” although there has been much chatter in the media of late of this becoming a reality. Lanier also says that “people degrade themselves in order to make machines seem smart all the time.” I don’t believe this is what Sophocles was thinking of when he said that “sometimes we choose evil, sometimes good” (365–67). But it is an arresting thought. The third book is by Sherry Turkle, *Simulation and its Discontents*. In her 1984 book *The Second Self* she demonstrated how, contrary to the topic she took a leave of absence to study, that the computer would be moulded to fit a child’s mind, it turned out be the opposite, that children’s minds were being moulded to conform with the 0/1 technology of the computer, and that all choice is either is yes/no, black/white, operating on a two-dimensional principle, not the three-dimensional

2010), <http://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/berkowitz-simulations>.

depth, breadth, height and colour we are used to. She has seen nothing to change her perspective since 1984, which leads to this new book where she asks “What does simulation want?” Her answer is that simulation wants an immersion so deep in a technological reality that it comes to stand in for reality. and that “what simulation wants is such a complete immersion in a created and built artificial environment that the simulation proposes itself as a proxy for the real.” One cannot help but think that Sophocles would be at a loss to know how to interpret all of this in relation to his ode, or even his whole play.

But, to return to Sophocles’ ode: Helaine Smith, at the end of her analysis of the ode, states:

The ode concludes with a warning: human beings’ formidable powers must be used in accordance with “the laws of the earth and the justice of the gods,” a phrase suggesting that nature and the gods are one. If humans do not act in accordance with such law, their skill destroys them. Through that “if” the ode asserts that we have the power to choose the course we will follow.³⁴

But Jebb was quite adamant that we should translate δεινόν here as “wonderful,” regardless of the fact that throughout the rest of Sophocles it is “terrible” and only wonderful in two places where “wonderful” could clearly be sarcastic in intention.³⁵ And it is clear that it can be taken to mean “wonderful” without difficulty. It is up to us to choose and up to us to make of everything what we will. Nothing is imposed on us arbitrarily, although it is quite true of the play that nothing turns out well for anyone.

Of all these many modern interpretations of Sophocles’ plays, and there are many, the

34. Helaine L. Smith, *Masterpieces of Classic Greek Drama* (London 2006), p. 73.

35. See previous chapter, δεινός.

context in which Sophocles lived and worked, of the real culture of Greece, or of what might lie behind that culture, and of the creation of the first half of fifth-century Greece, Burkert's insight into the origins and source of the culture of Greece is most interesting. In his book *Babylon: Memphis: Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture*, he makes a fascinating analysis:

No doubt the Greek success had to do with freedom-of enterprise, of speech, of imagination, even of religion. The polycentricity of the Greek world must have played its role, the rise of the polis, the political system without a dominating and suffocating central power, the openness for agonistic competition, even if this meant a lack of stability. If the development of royal authority and state administration had been a necessary precondition for the establishment of high cultures in the East, their further development depended upon the retreat of the state and the opening of unlimited opportunity for small groups and individuals.³⁶

But Creon wants obedience. He is a sad character. At the very beginning of his first speech (163–75) as a king by default, he requests of the chorus, as representatives of the citizens of Thebes, that they give to him, also, the loyalty and reverence they had shown to Laius, Oedipus, and their children. Might this indicate a little insecurity? Throughout the play Creon's reaction to the watchman, the chorus, Antigone, Ismene, Haemon and Teiresias is hostile should they even hesitatingly question him. Before the ode we have seen this, when the chorus wonder if the gods might have played a part in the burial of Polyneices, and when the watchman reports the burial. The chorus, having finished the ode proper, conclude with an anapestic piece of absolute astonishment as the watchman, who had said right before the ode that he would not return, now does so with Antigone as his prisoner.

36. Walter Burkert, *Babylon: Memphis: Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture*. (London 2004) p. 15.

Whitman says that in the *Ajax*, which also deals with burial, “the inner law that compelled him to destruction was entirely personal — his own vision of himself which he preferred not to outlive,”³⁷ and in the *Antigone* he points out that the chorus tells her that “your own self-willed nature has destroyed you” (875). But she has no-one else to rely on, and as Whitman further notes, “the chorus has failed to reckon the moral destruction Antigone would have met had she obeyed the decree” (p. 89). And as we can see, the gods are not involved in these decisions, they come about through human choice, whether by the individual or by the chorus. Robert Parker suggest that “Sophocles may of course have believed, in advance of his age, that punitive action against the corpse is in all circumstances an outrage, but the moral premise of the play does not seem to to be that ‘even traitors are human, and deserve a minimum of respect.’ Nothing encourages us to view Polyneices in this light.”³⁸ In his note he comments that “not even Creon is ever allowed to use the word ‘traitor’ of Polyneices” (p. 48 n. 56.). But the whole point of the play, surely, is that once a person is dead, burial is civilized, regardless of previous activities.

Immediately everyone is confounded. The guard leads in Antigone. She it is who buried Polyneices, she it is who will pay. Sophocles is never simple.

37. Cedric H. Whitman, *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism* (Massachusetts 1951) pp. 88–89.

38. Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford 1983) pp. 48–49.

Chapter 5: Antigone

As Mark Griffith points out, “The Theban Saga of the Labdakids, Laios and Iocaste, Oidipous and his sons, the Seven against Thebes, and the Sons of the Seven (*Epigoni*), was one of the best known and most frequently handled of all in Greek literary and iconographic tradition.”¹ An exception is the *Antigone* of Sophocles. As far as is known, there is no previous account of Antigone burying her brother, Polyneices, contrary to Creon’s edict forbidding burial. The exception is the ending of Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes*. But the ending is considered by many, if not most, scholars not to be by Aeschylus, and many believe it was written and added after Sophocles’ play had been presented. Scholarship with respect to the inclusion or non-inclusion of these lines is very rigorous and has been since at least since the mid-eighteenth century. It is necessary therefore before addressing the *Antigone* to consider the ending of the *Septem*.

The *Septem* was produced in 467, some twenty years before Sophocles’ *Antigone*. But was the ending we have today included in that performance? Unless a spectacular discovery of manuscripts or papyri is made, we are most unlikely to have an answer to this question.

Generally the questions asked are: Does it belong? Was it known historically? Did Aeschylus

1. Mark Griffith, *Sophocles’ Antigone* (Cambridge 1999) p. 4. A. L. Edmunds’ treatment of the saga includes “The Cults and Legends of Oedipus” *HSPC* 85 (1981) pp. 221–38; R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (Cambridge 1983); S. M. Adams, “The Antigone of Sophocles” *Phoenix* 9 (1955) pp. 47–62; C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford 1944); R. D. Dawe, *Studies on the Text of Sophocles* Vol. III (Leiden 1978); L. Campbell, *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments* (Oxford 1879); James C. Hogan, *A Commentary on the Plays of Sophocles* (Carbondale 1991); Richard Claverhouse Jebb, *The Plays and Fragments of Sophocles: Vol. III: The Antigone* (Cambridge 1888); J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles: Part III: The Antigone* (Leiden 1978); B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley 1964); R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford 1983); C.H. Whitman, *Sophocles* (Cambridge 1951). It is always worth keeping in mind Jebb’s comment in his survey of the history of Greek literature, “The Greeks had no models. They invented the styles of poetry and prose which they perfected one after the other.” *Greek Literature* (London 1878) p. 10. This was an amazing accomplishment that perhaps we do not relish enough today. Their remembered mythology is still the stuff of theatre, literature and Hollywood.

actually write it? Was it written and added later? Hugh Lloyd-Jones has carried out an exhaustive study of this issue.² But perhaps these questions are best summed up by Cecil Bowra:

Unlike the *Ajax*, the *Antigone* is not based on a familiar and popular story. Antigone is not mentioned by Homer or, so far as we know, by the lyric poets. It is therefore difficult to assess how much the audience would know or what it would feel about her when Sophocles produced his play. It is true that the extant version of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* ends with a scene in which Antigone proposes to bury Polyneices despite the contrary orders of the Theban government (1026ff), but since the scene is spurious and even based on Sophocles, it tells nothing about the early history of the legend. In fact the legend seems less likely to come from books than from local tradition. We may assume that in all its versions Antigone tried to bury her brother in defiance of authority, but beyond this nothing is known.³

At the end of the *Septem*, half of the chorus goes with Antigone to bury Polyneices and the other half goes with Ismene back into the city, but this introduces a new problem not only at the end of a play, but at the end of a trilogy, which would be most unusual for Aeschylus, and which provokes Jebb to suggest that while the original outcome appeared to favour Antigone, Aeschylus would have “resorted to a divine mandate or intervention,”⁴ in order to accomplish such an outcome. No doubt the debate regarding the end of the *Seven* will continue *ad infinitum*.

2. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, “The End of the Seven Against Thebes,” *CQ* 9 (1959) 80–115.

3. C. M. Bowra (1944) p. 64; John Herrington, *Aeschylus* (New Haven 1986) agrees, believing that lines 1011–84 are “a post-Aeschylean addition,” p. 92, as does George Thompson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (New York 1968) p. 281; also H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London 1939) p. 52 n. 1, see R. D. Dawe, “The End of the Seven Against Thebes,” *CQ* 17 (1967) 16–28; A. L. Brown, “The End of the Seven Against Thebes,” *CQ* 26 (1976) 206–19 (who defends 1005–25 and 1054–58); O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 169–70. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1983) (p. 19 n. 6) suggests that if Aeschylus did introduce Antigone and Ismene so late in the play, “he did not do so with the anapests that stand in the text,” p. 19 n. 6; The whole question as to whether Aeschylus would introduce a completely new problem at the end of a play, much less at the end of a trilogy that still has to be solved, is moot.

4. Jebb (Cambridge 1888) p. x.

But if the ending of the *Seven* is not the true ending, then it would be reasonable to believe that the audience would have had no knowledge either of Antigone actually burying Polyneices in defiance of Creon's edict, or of how Sophocles would treat such a story. Victor Ehrenberg also suggests this is the case, and believes that much of the story of *Antigone* is Sophocles' own invention.⁵

Sophocles' prologues are always interesting. Aristotle says that the object of the prologue (in Latin, *exordium*) was to prepare the way and give the audience an idea of what was to come:

τὸ μὲν οὖν προοίμιον ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ λόγου,
ἧπερ ἐν ποιήσει πρόλογος καὶ ἐν ἀυλῆσει προαύλιον·
πάντα γὰρ ἀρχαὶ ταῦτ' εἰσι, οἷον ὁδοποιήσις τῷ ἐπιόντι.

The exordium is the beginning of a speech, such as the prologue in poem and the prelude in flute music; for all these things a beginning, like a preparation for what is to follow.

Rhet. 3.14. I

Thus, as Gilbert Murray notes,

The very first scene of THE ANTIGONE (sic), with its secret hurried opening, and the eager trust of Antigone in her sister, followed by its swift reversal, plunge us into the heart of the drama with an impetus quite foreign to the stately exposition scenes of Aeschylus and Euripides.⁶

5. Victor Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford 1954) p. 113. Jebb, 1888, p. ix n. 1. Antigone and Ismene are not mentioned by Homer, Hesiod or Pindar. Mimnermus (620 BC) said that Ismene was slain at Thebes by Tydeus. Ion of Chios (450) said that both sisters were burned in the Theban temple of Hera by Laomadas, son of Eteocles, during the war of the Epigoni, which would indicate that Sophocles' story is perhaps an Attic creation.

6. Murray (1941) p. 5. Murray goes on to say that Sophocles first and foremost "was more of a dramatist and less of a prophet."

Ὡ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμίνης κάρα,
 ἄρ' οἴσθ' ὅ τι Ζεὺς τῶν ἀπ' Οἰδίου κακῶν
 ὁποῖον οὐχὶ νῦν ἔτι ζώσαιν τελεῖ;
 οὐδὲν γὰρ οὔτ' ἀλγεινὸν οὔτ' ἄτης ἄτερ
 οὔτ' αἰσχρὸν οὔτ' ἄτιμόν ἐσθ', ὁποῖον οὐ
 τῶν σῶν τε κάμῶν οὐκ ὄπωπ' ἐγὼ κακῶν.
 Καὶ νῦν τί τοῦτ' αὖ φασι πανδήμῳ πολεὶ
 κήρυγμα θεῖναι τὸν στρατηγὸν ἀρτίως;
 ἔχεις τι κείσῃκουσας; ἢ σε λανθάνει
 πρὸς τοὺς φίλους στείχοντα τῶν ἐχθρῶν κακά;

O my dear Ismene, sister of shared inner-being,
 do you know what of the ills of Oedipus
 Zeus has not fulfilled on us while yet we still live?
 For there is nothing painful, nor without ruin,
 nor shameful, nor dishonourable,
 either of your or of my troubles which I have not seen.
 And now what is this new edict they speak of throughout the city
 that general has just now published?
 Do you understand and have you heard anything? Or are the evils of
 those hated ones coming toward those whom we love unknown to you?

“Hard to analyse, impossible to translate” — such, says J. T. Sheppard, is “Sophoclean language at its best.”⁷ That certainly applies to the first line of *Antigone*, ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμίνης κάρα, “O my dear Ismene, sister of shared inner-being.”⁸ It also presents us with an opening line

7. Sheppard (1911) quoted in *Sophocles: The Theban Plays*, tr. E. F. Watling (Harmondsworth 1947) p. 16.

8. The only comparable artistic expression that might be considered to be of equal passion and power and beauty is the aria *Un bel di* in Puccini’s opera *Madama Butterfly*. I speak only of the effect of the first lines, the opening note of the aria is heart-stopping, since the play and the opera are not really alike. For an overview of an interpretation of this line, see: Jebb p. 8; Griffith p. 120; Hogan p. 127; Bayfield p. 52; D’Ooge p. 15; G. H. Wells, *Sophocles’ Antigone* (London 1900) p. 61; Edward Wunder, *Sophocles*, Dindorf Text (London 1854); Kamerbeek (1978) p. 35. Cambell takes κοινόν not only to mean “of common parentage” but to have the further significance “of common interests and feelings,” 405 n. 1; Hogan, “Family ties and family loyalties are primary themes,” p. 127 nn. 1–3. Kamerbeek, κοινόν in itself means “related by consanguinity” (perhaps here referring also to the special

which, while considered untranslatable by many scholars today, would undoubtedly have been clear and significant to a fifth-century B.C. Athenian audience.

What are we to make of this line? Jebb notwithstanding, these words do convey the special closeness of the two sisters, a closeness that is not only of emotion but of blood. There is another factor, too; there is something about sharing a womb. Such closeness is a thing of the soul that science is unlikely ever to find an answer for, but often shared by siblings, especially in families that are particularly close. The sisters have lived through some discoveries that surely must have been devastating: the discovery that their father Oedipus, is their brother, and their mother is their grandmother; that their father Oedipus killed his own father, Laius, wed his own mother, and that the four of them — Eteocles, Polyneices, Antigone and Ismene — are born of this union; and that there is a curse on the family that has affected three generations and now seems to be about to finish its course. Another indication that Sophocles wished to emphasize this closeness not only of the sisters, but of the whole family regardless of the curse, is the use of the dual number $\nu\tilde{\omega}\nu$ (line 3) used of only two people. Murray (1941 p. 6) gives us a wonderful

relation of their parents) and, together with the emphatic $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\nu$ (here implying that they are the daughters of the same father and mother), it is expressive of the nearness by close kinship which forms the starting point of Antigone's desire to communicate with her sister. p. 37 n. 1; Griffith, $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\nu$, appealing to her sister's identity of blood and interests, cf. *Trach.* 826, and Apollo at Aesch. *Eum.* 89–90, $\sigma\acute{\upsilon} \delta' \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\nu \alpha\dot{\iota}\mu\alpha \kappa\alpha\dot{\iota} \kappa\omicron\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, Ἑρμῆ, “but you my blood brother of a common father.” However, Griffith goes on to say that, in this play, it frequently “speaks of the blood-tie as a place of incest, of parricide and fratricide, and of suicide.” N. Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, tr. A. Forster (Cambridge 1987). Jebb quotes the line in *O.C.* 535, $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu \gamma\epsilon \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\epsilon\alpha\dot{\iota}$, “indeed, sisters of their father.” Oedipus is lamenting with the chorus his wretched history of having married his mother and had four children with her. But yet, in *Antigone* he says that “it will not bear the added moral sense, ‘having common interests and feelings.’” (p. 8 n. 1), but the *Antigone* is all about morality. The combination of $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ and $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\nu$ is used only twice more, at lines 503 and 696. However, we must keep in mind that the *Antigone* is not about incest. As Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (London 1986) pp. 82–83, points out, Antigone herself says, $\theta\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\epsilon\iota. \sigma\acute{\upsilon} \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \zeta\eta\eta\varsigma, \eta \delta' \acute{\epsilon}\mu\eta \psi\upsilon\chi\eta \pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\iota / \tau\acute{\epsilon}\theta\eta\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu \acute{\omega}\sigma\tau\epsilon \tau\omicron\dot{\iota}\varsigma \theta\alpha\nu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu \acute{\omega}\phi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\dot{\iota}\nu$, “Be of good cheer. You live, but my life was given over to death long ago, so as to serve the dead” (559–60). Lefkowitz goes on to say that “in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. it was common that families were reunited in death.” See also S. C. Humphries, *The Family, Women, and Death: Comparative Studies* (London 1983) p. 106; W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (London 1968). All of the plays of Sophocles reveal to us that he was a very sensitive observer of human beings and insightful into their nature. Jebb does also note that “the Greek mind was sometimes drawn towards mystic doctrine, but through its whole history it resisted the rule of priests” R. C. Jebb (1878) p. 45.

picture of the profound sensitivity Sophocles had in his insight into the depths of character, when he observes that Sophocles “loved the clash of characters and the clash of moods inside a character.” In addition, the use of the dual would have been noted by the audience and would have alerted them to what to expect from the drama they were about to see, because they would undoubtedly have been aware of the particular talents and tendencies of Sophocles, and therefore would know what to expect, just as English audiences knew what to expect from Harold Pinter in the 1960s and 70s, and the audience of Shakespeare’s day back then.⁹ In addition, Antigone asks Ismene, ἄρ’ οἴσθ’ ὅ τι Ζεὺς τῶν ἀπ’ Οἰδίου κακῶν/ ὅποῖον οὐχὶ νῶν ἔτι ζῶσαιν τελεῖ; “do you know what of the ills of Oedipus, Zeus has not fulfilled on us while yet we live?” (2–3). Knox says of Antigone:

The devotion of Antigone to those of her own blood, an over-riding loyalty which allows no rival, is urged upon us from the start by a host of phrases (many of them containing words which seem to be fresh coinages of Sophocles) which emphasize the physical intimacy, the near unity, of those born of the same mother.¹⁰

And still this cry of despair continues for Antigone. Not only does she clearly feel all of the elements of shame and disgrace that the exposure of the curse has had on her family historically,

9. Antigone uses the dual to speak of herself and Ismene only until Ismene refuses to help her bury Polyneices and then no more. She uses the dual to speak of both her brothers whenever it is called for, as does Ismene. As Griffith points out, “this is the first in a dense cluster of duals (3, 13–14, 21, 50, 55–57, 58, 61–62, 144–47, 170–72, 561–62 (488–89 n. where Creon assumes they both buried Polyneices and clumps them together), describing natural but frustrated pairings — murderous brothers, disunited sisters, sister and dead brother, dying bride and groom; cf. *O.C.* 337–45” (121). The dual is not really taught today. It is said that it is not much used. Some grammar books do not even include it in their summary of verbal forms, even though it is really necessary to understanding the development of character in this play in particular. Aristophanes is quite liberal with his use of the dual. In addition Antigone speaks of Zeus here, almost in an accusatory manner. She will speak of the “unwritten laws” and in her final speech she will speak of being “abandoned by the gods.” There are leaps of connection, tenuous and fragile in a number of instances in this play, as we shall see.

10. B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper*; (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967) p. 79. The words he mentions include αὐτογέννητος (864), συμφιλεῖν, συνεχθεῖν (523). See also Murray n. 5, for an appreciation of the sensitivity of Sophocles.

but there is this new shame heaped upon her head by, of all people, her uncle Creon, who now rules Thebes not only because he is Jocasta's brother, but because he is the last man standing of the family. Antigone, in relating the edict to her sister, speaks of Creon as, τὸν στρατηγὸν, "the general." or perhaps, by using the article — "that general" (8). In either case, she does not now, and will not ever, refer to Creon as "king" (βασιλεύς). This could suggest an acrimonious relationship with her uncle that is ongoing, and could be the first indication of the hostility that exists between them, as we shall see. Since Antigone and Ismene are having this conversation outside the palace and in the night, the Argive enemy having fled, it can safely be assumed that Creon issued his edict on the battlefield. Antigone asks Ismene if she has heard about the edict and the evils that are coming upon "their loved ones" (τοὺς φίλους) from "their enemies" (τῶν ἐχθρῶν). In just ten lines, Sophocles, with profound dramatic and artistic skill, has caught the audience in a firm grip of excited anticipation for what is to come. And in these first ten lines Sophocles has, as Murray again notes, "plunged us into the heart of the drama" and given us an introduction to the resoluteness of Antigone's character.

Ismene responds to Antigone by saying that she has heard nothing good or bad (11–13), which tells us a little something about the sisters. Antigone is the more outgoing of the two. No doubt she is the one who makes decisions, connects with people, and finds out what is going on. Ismene is more reserved and quiet, and quite possibly is the diplomat who would smooth feathers ruffled by Antigone. She probably depends on Antigone to lead the way. Antigone already knows this, but it is appropriate for Sophocles to make this point for, as we shall see, it will lead to the complete isolation of Antigone. In any event, Ismene does see that something clearly awful is troubling her sister (20). Antigone then gives Ismene her account of Creon's edict. It must be that

Creon delivered the edict on the battlefield after the Argives fled the previous evening, ἐν νυκτὶ τῇ νῦν, “in this night just now past” (16).¹¹ His edict says that Eteocles is to be buried with all the state honours, but as to Polyneices, his brother and the enemy, φάσιν ἐκκεκηρῦχθαι τὸ μὴ/ τάφῳ καλύψαι μηδὲ κωκῦσαί τινα/ ἔαν δ' ἄκλαυτον, ἄταφον, οἰωνοῖς γλυκὺν/ θησαυρὸν εισορῶσι πρὸς χάριν βορᾶς. “They say that it has been declared that none/ shall put him in a tomb nor/ mourn him;/ he is to go unwept, untombed, a sweet feast/ for the birds when they are looking for food” (27–29).

As she relates the edict to Ismene, Antigone says that τοιαῦτά φασι τὸν ἀγαθὸν Κρέοντα σοὶ/ κάμοί, λέγω γὰρ κάμέ, κηρύξαντ' ἔχειν, “These are the things, they say, that the good Creon has declared his edict for you and me, indeed, I say for *me*” (31–32). The “good Creon” is clearly sarcastic, and “indeed I say for *me*” not only expresses her outrage, but clearly shows that she thinks it is directed to her personally, giving added emphasis to the implication that the relationship between uncle and niece is not all it might be. At the end of Antigone’s speech she challenges Ismene to show whether she is truly the daughter of her noble parents or not (37–38). Will she defy the edict and help her bury Polyneices? Ismene is completely taken aback, and it is clear that Antigone was expecting her sister would say yes. But it is beyond Ismene to defy the state. For her to do so is madness, and she cannot:

ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ' ὅτι
 ἔφουμεν ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχομένα,
 ἔπειτα δ' οὔνεκ' ἀρχόμεσθ' ἐκ κρεισσόνων,

11. From Homer’s *Iliad* we know that the armies woke early, had a good sturdy breakfast (one cannot fight on an empty stomach), and then fought all day, came back for an equally sturdy supper and probably strategy planning for the next day, then slept. It would be understandable, therefore, that the Argives would have fled right after supper, as Ismene remarks, ἐν νυκτὶ τῇ νῦν, “in this night just now past” (16).

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀκούειν κᾶτι τῶδ' ἀλγίονα.

But, we must remember this, that first we were born women
so that we should not to contend against men;
and second, because we are ruled by stronger people,
we must listen to these things and things even more distressful than these.

61–64

There is a considerable amount of discussion and even controversy over the status of women in the Athens of the day. Here, Ismene is judged by some to be weak on the grounds of this statement. Many scholars believe that women were sequestered in fifth-century Athens and were not only not allowed outside of the women's quarters, and were of little consequence. Yet right here at the beginning of the play, the women have come out quite freely to discuss matters. Homer, throughout his works, speaks of women with warmth and great respect. Even Helen is treated with respect. It is rather Paris who does not measure up. If we look at the central female characters in the three tragedians, we see that all of them are very strong women. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra may not be the most pleasant character, but no one can doubt that she is very strong. In Sophocles, Antigone, Electra and, even to a degree and in their own way, Ismene, Tecmessa, Deianira and Chrysothemis are stronger than at first might appear. Equally, the women of Euripides are in many cases tortured, but even so, very strong, and significant. It must also be noted that in all of these plays not one of the women is sequestered.

The end of Pericles' Funeral Speech in Thucydides is often pointed to as demonstrating a disdainful view of women, but if we look at the speech clearly, this is evidently not the case at all. First, we must remember that this is a speech made to all the people, and especially to the soldiers who are present. It is a laudatory speech — it could not be otherwise — praising those

who have fought and died for Athens.¹² Second, Pericles praises Athens' history, its success and glory in previous military encounters,¹³ its open-mindedness, its artistic pursuits,¹⁴ its democracy. Then he praises most generously the qualities that led the men who have died to fight for Athens, their courage, commitment, nobility of spirit. At the end of his speech he lists those elements of character deemed noble and honourable in these times and urges everyone, and especially young men:

οὓς νῦν ὑμεῖς ζηλώσαντες καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμον τὸ ἐλεύθερον,
τὸ δὲ ἐλεύθερον τὸ εὐψυχον κρίναντες, μὴ περιορᾶσθε
τοὺς πολεμικοὺς κινδύνους. . . . τὸ γὰρ φιλότιμον ἀγήρων
μόνον, καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἀχρείῳ τῆς ἡλικίας τὸ κερδαίνειν,
ὥσπερ τινὲς φασι, μᾶλλον τέρπει, ἀλλὰ τὸ τιμᾶσθαι.

Take these as your model, and judging happiness to be
the fruit of freedom and freedom of valour, never decline
the dangers of war. . . . For it is only the love of honour that
never grows old; and honour it is, not gain, as some would
have it, that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness.

Thuc. 2.43.4, 2.44.4

There are some scholars who suggest that women did not take part in the actual burial process, but rather, prepared the body and carried out their ululations in the house and then it was

12. For example, we might remember Winston Churchill's speeches. The importance of his "Never has so much been owed by so many to so few" was very significant to the people, and to the pilots who flew their planes often with very little training but carried out dog-fights with great ability and dedication. It was also crucial in that Hitler had decided he would not invade England unless he had defeated the British Air Force, and when he clearly lost that battle, he invaded Russia instead. Also, his "We will fight on the beaches etc." was part of our bread and milk as children. Uplifting the people is as important as praising and encouraging those fighting, if one wants to win.

13. Undoubtedly, what would be in the minds of all would be the sack of Athens in 480 by the Persians and the defeat of the Persians in 479 at Salamis and Plataea, where Aeschylus fought, and proudly so.

14. A little earlier in his speech, Pericles makes a statement that speaks volumes with regard to the social/political philosophy of Athens and to Athens' understanding of democracy. "He says, 'We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning and observing . . . we trust less in system and policy than in the native spirit of our citizens . . . At Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger'" (Thuc. 2.39).

the men alone who escorted the body to the burial ground and performed the interment and the rest of the burial ceremony, yet here Pericles is saying quite clearly the opposite,

ξυνεκφέρει δὲ ὁ βουλόμενος καὶ ἀστῶν καὶ ξένων,
καὶ γυναῖκες πάρεισιν αἰ προσήκουσαι ἐπὶ τὸν
τάφον ὀλοφυρόμεναι.

Any citizen or stranger who may so wish can join in the procession: and the female relatives are there to wail at the burial.

2.34.4

By the same token he exhorts the women by first speaking of “female excellence,”

εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ
ἔσονται μνησθῆναι, βραχεία παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ.
τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χεῖροσι γενέσθαι
ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἢ δόξα, καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς
πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾗ.

On the other hand, if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all comprised in this brief exhortation. Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men whether for good or for bad.¹⁵

2.45.2

Does this, the second comment of Pericles, really deride women? Both of these comments appear

15. E. C. Marchant, *Thucydides*, Book II (London 1961) pp. 49 and 51; Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (New York 1985) p. 29, points to the considerable number of women represented on vases and their role at funerals, both in the lamentation and in the actual burial. Plato speaks glowingly of Aspasia's grasp of rhetoric. Socrates not only says that she taught him the art of rhetoric and suggests that she also wrote Pericles' funeral speech. Plato, *Menexenus* 235e–236b, tr. Benjamin Jowett, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, *Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton 1961) pp. 186–99.

to show that Pericles, when he speaks of women, is actually very respectful and that “female excellence” is considered, at least by him, to be perfectly natural.¹⁶ This would surely be taken as such, as indeed this was the case in World War I. There was a certain honour and dignity that was expected of everyone and was respected by most, but it did not survive the First World War. A.

W. Gomme, in an excellent review of women in Greek literature, says,

There is, in fact, no literature, no art of any country, in which women are more prominent, more important, more carefully studied and with more interest, than in the tragedy, sculpture, and painting of fifth century Athens.¹⁷

Knox deems Pericles’ words to be “cold words” but then immediately notes,

But there is one category of evidence that poses a problem — the picture of women that emerges not from the law court speeches, vases, and inscriptions but from the poetry, the epic and the drama. For classical Greek literature presents us with an astonishing wealth of imposing female characters . . . Homer’s *Odyssey* . . . gives us not only Penelope, the faithful and resourceful wife, but also Helen, the wife whose adultery caused a ten year war and who now presides in queenly fashion over the court of the husband whom she abandoned; it gives us Nausicaa, one of the most charming — and intelligent — young women in all literature, as well as Circe, the enchantress who turns men into swine, and Calypso, the importunate divine mistress.¹⁸

He continues to point to a considerable list of notable and strong women.¹⁹

Ismene, while asking for a pardon from the spirits below (Hades), says the women must

16. Pericles, who was married, nevertheless was devoted to his mistress, Aspasia, until the day he died. She is reported to have been a very smart woman and an intellectual who, one might suspect, was a wise counsellor to Pericles and with whom Pericles would likely have discussed current affairs.

17. A. W. Gomme, “The Position of Women in Athens in The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.,” in *Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford 1937) p. 92.

18. B. M. W. Knox, *The Oldest Dead White European Males* (New York 1993) pp. 50 and 52–53.

19. Not every Greek writer is complimentary. One might think of Hesiod and Semonides, and Aristophanes, where women are not really blessed; nevertheless, there are an awful lot of women who are strong, both good and bad.

obey the dictates of the rulers. We are hardly halfway through the prologue and we are certain of three things: that Antigone will indeed bury Polyneices, that she will die for doing so, and that, with her being now abandoned by Ismene, she is completely isolated. Indeed, all Sophoclean heroes are completely isolated. They are not subject to the vagaries of fate, but rather they choose and take responsibility for what they do.²⁰ From here on Antigone will not use the dual again when speaking of herself and Ismene, only of herself and one of her dead brothers.

But immediately we run into another important, but not often commented on, feature of Sophocles. His use of the couplet in a course of stichomythia to emphasize a point or even to change the direction or focus of the debate. Stichomythia is a useful and significant artistic tool. It is a series of, usually, one-line, snappy exchanges between two characters that advance the action of a play. In Sophocles though, a couplet, and sometimes even a triplet, is used to highlight a point or an issue, or to change direction somewhat, and should always be paid attention to. Following Ismene's refusal of help, in a couplet in the middle of the stichomythia, Antigone declares, ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ τάφον/ χάσουσ' ἀδελφῶ φίλτάτῳ πορεύσομαι, "I will go and heap the earth upon my dearest brother" (80–81). It should not be missed that this is when Antigone's commitment becomes absolute. It is unchangeable that she bury Polyneices. When Ismene begs her then not to reveal it to anyone, saying that she will not reveal it either (85–86), Antigone responds with an adamant assertion that Ismene should declare it to the world. The end of the prologue is a very telling and tender urging by Ismene that Antigone remember, τοῖς φίλοις δ' ὀρθῶς φίλη, "to those who love you, you are truly loved" (99). Thus, the prologue begins with that "untranslatable" line of Antigone's passionate appeal to her dearest sister and ends with

20. The difficult question of whether Oedipus is responsible or not for killing his father, Laius, at the crossroads is much debated by scholars, but I would refer to the excellent discussion by R. Drew Griffith, *The Theatre of Apollo: Divine Justice and Sophocles' Oedipus The King* (Kingston 1996).

Ismene's declaration of love for Antigone. In between these two statements of great love and affection a great gap has opened. Antigone is going to die; Polyneices will get at least a token burial and, as Bowra points out, we understand the central principle of the play, which is that

the *Antigone* presents a conflict between a man and a woman, between Creon and Antigone, on a precise issue: should the traitor Polyneices be forbidden burial or not? . . . Whether Polyneices shall be or not is a matter of ultimate principle. It does not matter whether he is a traitor or not, whether he is a good man or not.²¹

What is truly fascinating about this prologue is that, over the course of only ninety-nine lines, Sophocles achieved an enormous amount of progress through action, without using any chariot chases, flash-bangs or sword fights.

The girls had been talking outside the palace in order not to be overheard. Now Ismene goes back into the palace and Antigone storms off stage left to go to the battlefield to bury Polyneices. It is still dark.

The chorus of fifteen elderly Theban gentlemen enters from the city and the parodos begins. Sophocles opens the parodos with the most interesting words: ἀκτίς ἀελίου, “beam of sunshine” (100), an understandable outburst of joy at their victory in the war against Polyneices and his Argive army. The choice of these two words as the opening of the chorus is particularly poignant, in that Pindar chooses these same words to open *Paeon IX*, written to celebrate the

21. Bowra (1944) pp. 63ff. The Haitian/American author Edwidge Danticat speaks of the Tonton Macoute in Haiti, created by François “Papa Doc” Duvalier in 1959. He did not trust the military and thought they were planning to overthrow him. They would kill people and leave their bodies in the street. Relatives would have to go out in the night to pick up the bodies of the people and bury them. She said it reminded her of *Antigone* (Writers & Company, CBC.ca, Radio One, Sunday, March 22, 2015, interviewer Eleanor Wachtel). See Danticat's book *Create Dangerously* (Princeton 2010). This is also the title of a speech given by Albert Camus, in which he speaks against the treatment of Algerians by France. His lecture was delivered at Uppsala University (Sweden, December 14, 1957) just before he died.

passing of an eclipse of the sun in 478.²² But then Pindar, in the first strophe, goes on to question the significance of the eclipse; does it mean that any one of a number of possible disasters are about to strike Athens, and what of the future?²³ Could Sophocles, by using ἀκτις ἡελίου to begin the parodos, not only be having the Theban chorus celebrate their victory over Polyneices and the Argives but also be using the chorus sub-consciously to suggest a warning that the future may not turn out to be quite so celebratory as they first think? It is impossible to say, but thought provoking. This would have been especially poignant given that the Persians had sacked Athens in 480, destroying its temples, including the Parthenon. Sophocles, a lad of fifteen at the time, would have still had graphic memories of that defeat, as would a great many other Athenians. The Greeks had soundly defeated the Persians a year later, in 479 in a naval battle with the Athenian fleet at Salamis, and by a land army of the Spartans, Argive and other Peloponnesian armies at Plataea.

Herodotus gives us some added points that scholars seem to overlook. Xerxes, the Persian king, who had already burned all of Attica, including Athens, and was camped at Phaleron with his fleet, had asked his fleet Commander, Mardonius, to ask the other commanders whether they preferred to stay where they were or attack the Greeks at Salamis. They all favoured Salamis except Artemisia, commander of five ships. She asked Mardonius to take a message to the king, advising him that, if they remained where they were, they could defeat the Greeks on the open sea, but that if they attacked them at Salamis, Xerxes and the Persians would be roundly

22. J. E. Sandys, *The Odes of Pindar* (London 1978) p. 546.

23. It would seem that in fifth-century B.C. Athens the interpretation of the meaning of an eclipse was uncertain. It is hard to remember that the time of the Theban war (The Seven Against Thebes) actually took place before the Trojan War, some seven or eight centuries before the time of Sophocles' writing about it. But the war against the Persians that included the destruction of Athens, took place in 480 and Thebes joined the Persians against Athens. What also is worth keeping in mind is that in 511, Phrynichus had entered a play about the Persian war against Miletus that was so realistic it reduced the audience to such a state of distress by the considerable reminders of events that the poet was fined and an edict was passed that plays should not address recent events (Hdt. 6.21.10).

defeated. The majority ruled, and the commanders stayed with going to Salamis. At the same time, at Salamis the Greek commanders, by the same process and being led by Themistocles, decided to attack the Persians at the Isthmus (Phaleron). In the night, however, Mnesiphilus came to Themistocles and advised him that if they attacked the Persians at the Isthmus, they would be defeated, because the Greek ships were smaller and slower, and there they would have to fight on the open sea. Themistocles went to his own commander, Eurybiades, and, giving him all of Mnesiphilus' suggestions, encouraged Eurybiades to stay at Salamis. Convinced, Eurybiades commanded the fleet to stay. At the beginning of the battle the Greek commanders, feeling a little overwhelmed, started to back up toward the shore, when a woman's phantom shape appeared and in a very sharp voice asked them how much further they intended to back up. Chastised, they set to and defeated the Persians.

Why are these points important? First, it is interesting that it was one woman who saved and another who lost the day. Second, if Mardonius, who believed that what Artemisia said made sense, had been able to convince the other commanders and Xerxes to stay at Phaleron, and if Themistocles and his commanders had not been chastised by the phantom woman and turned around, Persia would have won the battle, Greece would have lost and the world would not have had the literature, architecture, sculpture, political ideology, or anything else in the form of what we have today. We would have something so completely different it is hard to imagine. We may not even have a democracy.²⁴ The chorus give us a wonderfully colourful and graphic account of the attack by the Argives and the war. The Parodos certainly engages the imagination, and again we have a reference that is at least a little puzzling. In describing the attack, the chorus tells us

24. Herodotus, in *The Histories*, gives us a wonderful description of the battle of Salamis, and he also gives some very interesting points and features that go largely unmentioned-upon (Hdt. 8: 68–96). Pausanias also paints a favourable picture of Artemisia (3.11.3).

that the Argive host, ὄξέα κλάζων/ αἰετὸς εἰς γᾶν ὧς ὑπερέπτα, “like a shrill screaming eagle he flew over our land” (112–13). The eagle²⁵ is Zeus’s bird, so why does Sophocles choose the eagle here? Is the bird accompanying Polyneices and the Argives? Is the eagle perhaps meant to be a message from Zeus to the effect that he cannot, or will not stop the army attacking, but that he will ensure their defeat? Could it be that the reference to Zeus’s bird indicates that Polyneices was just in his claim to take up the throne after a year according to the agreement made by the brothers, but is not justified in raising an army and attacking the city of his birth?

When Capaneus reaches the top of a tower of Thebes, that is the turning point; that is when defeat for the Argives is a given, and Zeus strikes him down with a thunderbolt (131). After all, as the chorus tells us, Ζεὺς γὰρ μεγάλης γλώσσης κόμπους/ ὑπερεχθαίρει, “for Zeus hates exceedingly the boasts of a proud tongue” (127–28), and Capaneus has the loudest and most boastful tongue of anyone. Then as the Argives are fleeing in defeat, Zeus strikes the ground in front of Amphiara’s chariot as it turns away from Thebes and creates a rift in the ground into which Amphiaras and his chariot fall, so that he would not be killed or captured by his enemies, the Thebans. Amphiaras was a seer, respected especially by Zeus. He did not want to go on this war, as he thought it was ill-advised, but Adrastus the king forced him. Sophocles is full

25. Thompson says that the origin of the αἰετὸς, eagle, is unknown. The eagle is found in many cultures and is always seen as a royal bird. In Egypt some were found in tombs, mummified. Thompson gives a detailed account of the eagle and an exhaustive list of literary references. When Priam seeks to go to the Achaean camp and the tent of Achilles to ask for the body of his son, Hector, for burial, Priam prays to Zeus and asks for a sign that will assure his safe journey. Immediately, Zeus sends an eagle, which flies across from Priam’s right and affirms his safety (*Il.* 24.308ff). Thompson also says that often the vulture is confused with the eagle. D’arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford 1936). Vultures, though, are quite unique. They tend to eat carrion rather than kill their own food, and so may stand in a decomposing carcass. To counter the dangers of harmful bacteria, vultures have bacteria in their saliva thousands of times stronger than those of humans; these same bacteria also exist in their feces, and they defecate on the wing so that the bacteria in their feces can eliminate the bacteria on their legs and feet. Ted Andrews, *Animal Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small* (Minnesota 1993), p. 204. See also *Il.* 16.88 and 17.429; Aeschylus, *The Suppliants* (Denmark 1980) eds. H. Friis Johansen and Edward W. Whittle. (*Supp.* 212 vol. II). The editors discuss at length the fact that sometimes it would appear that there is confusion between whether the eagle is seen to be Zeus or as the bird itself but representing Zeus. There is not that confusion here.

of references that make one wonder. In antistrophe gamma the chorus speaks of the two young men, Eteocles and Polyneices, facing each other at gate seven and each killing the other. It is interesting to note here that the chorus uses the dual number to speak of the brothers.²⁶ After recounting the battle and the tragedies involved, the chorus advocates celebrating their victory by visiting all the temples of Thebes and by dancing and singing all night long with Bacchus as their leader (149–54). Then they see Creon coming and wonder why. There is just a small hint of uncertainty, of puzzlement.

Creon now enters in order to deliver his edict to the elders and, through them, to the whole community. He speaks to the loyalty that the Thebans had shown to Laius, Oedipus, and, he says, ἀμφὶ τοὺς κείνων ἔτι/ παῖδας μένοντας ἐμπέδοις φρονήμασιν, “still your steadfast loyalty of mind upheld their children” (168–69). He lets them know that, since the brothers had killed each other, he now possessed the throne (more or less by default). First, he defines the qualities he deems essential to ruling well in lines 175 to 190. These are the lines quoted by Demosthenes in his speech on the Embassy (19 § 247). Creon’s is a fine speech when taken out of this present context, but in this context it is full of ironies and qualities with which, we will see, Creon is consistently at odds as the play evolves. At the end of this segment he announces his edict and, as Jebb notes, the chorus “submissively acknowledge his right to do so, but express no approval” (Jebb p. 40 at *Ant.* 161). A point that is most noticeable in Creon’s interaction with the chorus at the end of his speech is that a simple question from the chorus. His reply reveals beginnings of paranoia and insecurity.

26. In the *Seven Against Thebes* by Aeschylus, in the *Redepaare* (375–685), the messenger relates the name of each general at each gate, followed by a description of his shield decoration, and then Eteocles appoints the general he feels most suited to that man and describes the character and accomplishments of that general. Thus he ends up appointing himself to face Polyneices.

The watchman enters. He says the body has been buried, ceremoniously, with a light sprinkling of dust. First, he says that he was slow in coming (224), that he often stopped to question himself (225–26), that he was very disturbed, that he is very sure of the outcome for him, but yet he was compelled to come, so here he is, and he must suffer his fate, whatever that may be τὸ μὀρσιμον, “my fate, doom, destiny to die” (236). In response to the watchman’s own account of his coming, Jebb sees him as a “frightened and irresolute watchman”; Griffith, a “garrulous, cowardly, yet witty figure whose selfish preoccupations and practical perspective throw into relief the more high-minded ideals of the main characters;” Hogan sees him as a “humorist;” Kamerbeek, on the other hand, sees the watchman “as taken from life.” Campbell comments that “the half-comic or rustic character of the watchman in this play is an extension of the common character of the ‘messenger’ whose natural rudeness of speech and thought brings into prominence the horror or pathos of the events he describes.” But this sounds more Shakespearean than fifth-century B.C. Bradshaw says that “the watchman has the best of reasons for being afraid for his life: he has failed in his duty. No wonder he emphasizes the fact no pickax, spade, or wagon has been used: if they had, the complicity of the watchmen could not be denied.”²⁷ This is a very good reason, and perhaps one might add that, since the guard is so adamant that neither he nor his colleagues had seen or done anything, he is also afraid of facing Creon because, in the course of his military duties, he has discovered what Creon is really like. Perhaps it is another of Sophocles’ subtle indications of character-building and what is to come with regard to Creon. They were all scared to death by the discovery and heatedly accused each other of being somehow responsible (259–68), but they know this is not possible, given that they

27. Jebb, p. 53; Griffith, p. 165; Hogan, p. 136; Kamerbeek, p. 69; Campbell, p. 420; Bradshaw, “The Watchman Scenes in the *Antigone*,” *CQ* 12 (1962) p. 201.

were the first day-watch and had been together the whole time. He continues that they were ready to “take hot iron in hand, or walk through fire, or make an oath by the gods that they had not buried Polyneices themselves” (264–65). Then the watchmen become filled with dread, because they realize that someone must inform Creon. In deciding who should bring the news to Creon they drew straws, and it was he who drew the short one. The chorus, scared by the report, interject somewhat timidly,

ἄναξ, ἐμοί τοι, μή τι καὶ θεήλατον
τοῦργον τόδ', ἢ ξύννοια βουλεύει πάλαι.

O King, My thoughts have long thought this,
That the deed was carried out by the gods.

278–79

Creon is furious at the suggestion and excoriates the chorus and asks them how could they possibly think, *πρόνοιαν ἴσχειν τοῦδε νεκροῦ πέρι*, “that the gods might have a care for this corpse” (283). He continues through the rest of his speech in an unrelenting and hostile manner, denouncing all watchmen as corrupt and venal people who are motivated by greed and the lust for money (280–314). Patriotism is not a part of their make-up, and they have no morality, according to Creon. At the end there is no longer any question as to the nature of Creon, but it does leave one wondering how this question will be resolved. At the end of his speech, Creon has a short negative interaction with the guard, but it must also be noted that the watchman is testy too. As he is about to leave, the watchman announces that whether the culprit is found or not, he will not be back, *οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ὄψει σὺ δεῦρ' ἐλθόντα με . . . ὀφείλω τοῖς θεοῖς πολλὴν χάριν*, “truly, you will not see me back here again . . . I owe the gods a great thank-you” (329–31). And so the watchman leaves.

The chorus now delivers the “Ode to Man,” which I have already dealt with. Jebb’s brief summary in his notes really gives us the justification for the placement of the ode right here and its relevance to the theme and ongoing action of the play:

Its theme is man’s daring, his inventiveness, and the result to his happiness . . .
Man is master of the sea and land; he subdues all other creatures; he has equipped his life with all the resources, except a remedy against death. His skill brings him to prosperity, when he observes divine and human laws, but to ruin when he breaks them. At that moment Antigone is led in and the Coryphaeus speaks the closing anapests” (332–75).²⁸

As soon as the chorus completes the ode, the watchman returns with Antigone. The chorus are astounded and do not know what to say. The first thing the watchman says is that one should not make oaths, because too often one might have to go against them, as he does here. He had declared that he would not be back again (327–31), yet here he is, this time with Antigone, whom, he says, they caught burying Polyneices (402). Then he reveals all that took place. On his return to his post he and his colleagues had dusted the dirt off the body, which was beginning to decay and was getting very smelly, so they retreated to the top of a hill upwind to continue their watch. In light of Creon’s rather excessive threats they each made sure no one dozed off. At the hottest part of the day a dust storm came up,²⁹ and when it passed, Antigone was seen at the

28. The question is often asked, e.g., “Does the Ode fit here?” The place of the ode in this play was dealt with in the previous chapter.

29. It is often assumed that this would be noon, but that is doubtful given that the hottest part of the day tends to be around 2 PM. It takes time for the earth to warm up and this is the time when the temperature of land and air are slightly out of balance and a wind arises (if we pay attention, it happens here in Ontario; an afternoon breeze is very common and most farmers know this well). Indeed, if there is no afternoon breeze but a wind comes up after supper, that often means the weather is going to change. I grew up on a farm. The first person I knew from my early childhood was “old Albert,” who taught me from the very beginning about nature, birds, hedging, all wildlife, life and rick building and who shared his beer (my first at fourteen). After we finished evening milking during the haymaking and harvesting season, he would look at the clouds, sniff the air and check wind direction and then say what the weather would be tomorrow. I never knew him to be wrong. But then he had spent four years in the trenches.

body. When she saw the body had been dusted off, she κἀνακωκῶει πικρᾶς/ ὄρνιθος ὀξὺν
 φθόγγον, ὡς ὅταν κενῆς/ εὐνῆς νεοσσῶν ὀρφανὸν βλέφῃ λέχος, “wailed a loud, shrill, bitter cry,
 just as a bird does, whenever it sees its nest bereft of nestlings” (423–25). This is a lovely and
 poignant visual description of Antigone, which lets the audience know just how distressed she is
 and how much family means to her. The watchman goes on to describe her bringing “thirsty
 dust” with her hands to sprinkle again on Polyneices’ body, and then from the ewer she had
 brought with her, she pours the necessary three libations.³⁰ This cameo of the first watchman,
 with his description of Antigone in her grievous distress, gives us a wonderful insight into the
 ability and sensitivity of Sophocles to look inside his fellow human beings to see, understand and
 portray the essence that makes them “them.” It is a rare gift and should be appreciated as such.
 This quality of Sophocles is given extra emphasis, when we observe what the watchman says
 when they arrested Antigone:

ἄμ' ἠδέως ἔμοιγε κάλγεινῶς ἅμα.
 τὸ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐκ κακῶν πεφευγῆναι
 ἥδιστον, ἐς κακὸν δὲ τοὺς φίλους ἄγειν
 ἀλγεινόν.

At once to my joy and to my pain.
 To have escaped my evils is very sweet;
 but it is painful to lead a friend to suffering.³¹

436–39

The question always is, why a second burial? When Antigone first came to bury

Polyneices, she came hastily. She had expected Ismene would come with her, but that was not

30. What is even more interesting about Antigone’s activities is that the watchmen would hardly have been a half-mile away, yet she carries out the whole burial process, which could not have been performed in five minutes, so did the watchmen let her perform the whole process before they arrested her?

31. Why would a simple soldier consider a princess to be his friend? This tells us what a decent and outgoing person she is.

the case. If Ismene had said “yes,” undoubtedly the two would have gone back into the palace to collect the things necessary for a burial, but with Ismene refusing to help she came in a rush, did what she could and now comes back to complete a proper burial. But another point must be considered. At the end of the prologue, Ismene had begged Antigone not to tell anyone she had buried Polyneices. Antigone was adamant and had told Ismene to tell the world, because she did not care and that she would not be guilty of denying the funeral rights it was her responsibility to perform for her brother. Therefore she would not be guilty of failure, nor die ignobly, if she were to die, for in death she would be with those she loved and who loved her.³² The first burial had been done in the dark, and, as she tells us later, Eteocles had been buried with all the honours that morning and she had prepared his body too (900–903). She had discovered during the morning that no one knew who had buried Polyneices. It is of the utmost importance to her that everyone know she did it. It is essential to her whole concept of family and their dignity that they do so. And now she must deal with Creon.

As Griffith so insightfully points out, this second *episodion* (376–581) is composed of three increasingly revelatory phases. In the first phase (376–445), the watchman enters leading Antigone, relates how they caught her re-burying the body, and leaves a free man. In the second phase (446–525), we have the exchange between Creon and Antigone, which escalates the tension of the play with the rapidly growing hostility between Antigone and her uncle, and the beginning of the disintegration of Creon’s mental composure. In the third phase (526–81), Ismene

32. Today, we shuffle off the body of our dead to a funeral parlour where all the procedures are performed by strangers, and on the day of the funeral strangers bring the body to the church and strangers take the body to the graveyard. Such practices would have horrified the Greeks, and many other civilizations for whom taking care and being intimately involved in the whole process of burial was very important. Indeed, in outport Newfoundland and Labrador it is still the custom that the funeral is a community affair with the body often being in an open coffin on the dining table and the wake mourns the dead and celebrates who he/she was, and involves a great deal of food and drink and remembering. It is a very moving affair.

is brought in, and a three-way dialogue ensues, which puts an end to the possibility of any resolution (Griffith, 190–91). With regards to the first phase and the watchman’s description of the capture, Griffith makes this very interesting observation:

The speech vividly portrays Antigone’s devotion to her brother’s body, while also deepening the sense of mystery surrounding the burial, as we hear of the sudden dust-storm that allowed her to escape the notice of the guards. Critics have puzzled (though audiences generally have not) as to why Antigone has returned to Polyneices’ body, and, if she was planning to re-bury it (as her carrying a pitcher implies (430)), why she was so surprised to find the corpse uncovered (423–28).³³

The suggestion that perhaps the gods did it is perfectly understandable, but the audience knows better, and the escalating tension of the play lies in the unfolding of the action. It always does.

The second phase, which gives us the confrontation between Antigone and Creon, is fascinating and contains some very interesting details. Creon is disquieted by the discovery that she knew very well about his edict, because it was public knowledge (448), and yet she deliberately acted against it. He asks her, “Why?” and Antigone replies with the observation that has fascinated scholars for generations, the unwritten laws:

οὐ γὰρ τί μοι Ζεὺς ἦν ὁ κηρύξας τάδε
οὐδ' ἢ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη
τοιούσδ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ὄρισεν νόμους;
οὐδὲ σθένεν τοσοῦτον φώμην τὰ σὰ

33. Griffith, p. 191. The audience are not surprised, because they know of her unswerving commitment. She left Ismene in a hasty manner, and an emotional state, as noted earlier. There is nothing to indicate that (an inside source notwithstanding) she had no reason to know that the body had been swept clean. Her cry clearly demonstrates that; otherwise, why would she cry out in such great distress? As to whether the dusting off of the body actually negates the first burial or not, is not the point, Antigone does not know, and even if she had known it before, just to see it having been done would have been devastating.

κηρύγμαθ' ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν
νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν.
οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθές, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ποτε
ζῆ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου ἴφάνη.

Yes. For it was not Zeus who proclaimed that edict
to me nor did Justice living with the gods below
determine the laws among men,
nor did I think your edict to be so great as to overthrow
the unwritten laws of the gods.
For their life is not of today nor yesterday,
but from from all time, and no man knows when they appeared.

450–57

Griffith says, “This speech is one of the most famous in all Greek tragedy. With its forthright espousal of unwritten = divine = natural ‘laws,’ as against written (or proclaimed) = human = civil legislation, it has been quoted in support of countless acts of disobedience and rebellion against governments of all kinds” (p. 199). Jebb’s examination of Antigone’s claim is interesting. He begins his comment (450–53) by saying that “Zeus is opposed to Creon’s edicts, not only as supreme god and therefore guardian of all religious duty, but also in each of his two special qualities, as χθόνιος (‘the god below’), and as οὐράνιος (‘the god above’), since denial of burial pollutes the realm of οἱ ἄνω θεοί, ‘the gods above.’” (450). We omit the observances of common, decent human behaviour at our peril. These laws are natural, unwritten and eternal; they are Antigone’s defense, for burial is central in the *Antigone*, as it is in the *Ajax*. Aristotle includes these lines of Antigone in his discussion of the Unwritten Laws in his *Rhetoric* 1.13.2. This question of laws, unwritten and man-made has occupied us ever since, and we still have not really reached a solid conclusive answer.³⁴

34. As noted, reference to this discussion ancient and modern is considerable. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.13.2, *de Anima*

As noted the beginning of this chapter, the evolution that is taking place at that time, on every front was such as has not been seen since, and part of that evolution was the movement in thought from the practical to the metaphysical. From time immemorial the human race has had gods. They have always been a way of explaining the unexplainable to our satisfaction. The ancients spoke of the gods as being eternal. In Homer the gods are super-human characters, and they are not moral beings. The poets, in the years between Homer and the Presocratics, were perhaps the first to develop the concept of the individual. Then the Presocratics and the tragedians ask the questions, “What is the nature of the universe, and of human beings? What constitutes civilization? And what about freedom of choice, as opposed to the unavoidable imposition of Fate?” It is about taking personal responsibility for ourselves and our actions, doing the right thing, because it is the right thing to do. It is now the new age, and in *Antigone*, Antigone represents the new age and Creon the old. In light of this, and while Sophocles does refer to Zeus, which would have been immediately understandable to the audience, when Sophocles has Antigone speak of the “unwritten laws,” is it possible that he is also entertaining these new ideas and working his way through them? It is more than possible. And one thing is quite certain: Antigone’s “unwritten laws” give Creon absolutely no ground to stand on. And he knows it.

In this speech, Antigone makes two straightforward statements, first about the unwritten laws, secondly, that if she is to die for it, so be it. She is quite willing to do so. There is no equivocation. As this *episodion* continues, the hostility between Creon and Antigone escalates.

405a 29; Plato *Laws* 793a; *Phaedrus* 245c; Thuc. 2.37; Hes. 256–60; Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* 863–70; William Shakespeare *Troilus and Cressida* 1.3.85ff; Bowra (1944) presents an extensive and interesting discussion p. 96ff; H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study* (London 1939) 123ff; Victor Erhenberg, *From Solon to Socrates* (London 1969) pp. 204, 231, 263, 340, 449.

She has no fear of death. What would be much worse for her would be “if my mother’s child, in his death, had been unburied, prey of dogs, that would have grieved me” (466–67). This is a real insight into Antigone, and she considers that if her deeds are judged to be foolish the one who judges is also foolish. The chorus tells her she is passionate just like her father, and that she does not know how to bend before troubles. This leaves unsaid, but meant, that they believe she is the author of her own fate. The attitude of the chorus is a little short of robust. Watkiss-Lloyd describes them in the following manner: “The submissiveness of the Senatorial Chorus throughout enhances the expression of the tyranny of Creon, and of his depression and degradation at last when he endures to be advised if not lectured by them.”³⁵ Make life hard enough and she will buckle, like iron under pressure, or a difficult horse, if you apply the bit harshly (475–79). They all fall in line after a while, so he believes. Now, he says, “she is the man, not me, if she wins this battle” (484). But what is really sinister is that he says even if she were as close as his own child, she cannot escape her punishment (486–89). As if this is not enough, he sends for Ismene, as he is sure she is part of this, so she can die too.

We see everything getting out of control for Creon. As we shall see now and in all the interactions Creon will have during the rest of this play (with Antigone, his son, the chorus and finally with Teiresias), Creon lacks any form of grace or dignity. In his very first address to the Theban elders he had asked for their loyalty, as they had shown it to Laius, Oedipus, and Eteocles and Polyneices. About Laius’ rule we know nothing. Oedipus, as king of Thebes had

35. W. Watkiss-Lloyd, “On The Electra and Antigone of Sophocles,” *JHS* 10 (1889) pp. 131–42. The chorus actually never gets off the fence, and although at the end they support the dictates of Teiresias, they still manage to end the play with something of a facile cliché (1348–53). They accuse Antigone “of being the passionate child of a passionate father” (471–73). They forget that over his reign Oedipus had been a good king, only becoming somewhat violently passionate on trying not to realize that the plague assaulting his realm is caused by the fact that he is the one who killed their king, his father, and married their queen, his mother, and had four children with her. I would think that might rattle anyone’s cage.

clearly been a ruler of grace and dignity, fairness and justice. There is a line in the sand with respect to power — keep one step behind the line and things go well, one step beyond and everything disintegrates — and we watch now as it seems that the only thing Creon can do is add disaster to disaster and be unaware of doing so. He sees everyone else as betraying him. Over the course of history we have seen very few people in power manage that power well, and Creon is not one of them. To use an old colloquialism, “poor old Creon can’t win, for losing.” As Mary Glover points out, “Tragedy for us is found supremely in the downfall of character, ‘the noble and most sovereign reason like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh’; or perhaps in the cost at which a noble character retrieves defeat.”³⁶ And every facet of that disaster is seen in Creon’s interaction, not just with Antigone.

Creon ends his hostile exchange with Antigone by snarling at her, ἐμοῦ δὲ ζῶντος οὐκ ἄρξει γυνή, “while I am alive, no woman will rule me” (525). At Creon’s request, two servants then bring in Ismene, and a very interesting exchange follows between Antigone and Ismene.

It is always worthwhile paying close attention to Sophocles’ use of stichomythia.³⁷ Here, in the first exchange between Antigone and Ismene since the prologue, the exchange is very significant. Sophocles uses these first three exchanges between Antigone and Ismene to emphasize, through the use of three couplets each, how Ismene completely changes her position. Now she is not simply willing to die with Antigone but wishes to do so. Ismene’s first response to Creon’s question, “did she help Antigone bury the body?” is that she will claim that she did so,

36. Mary R. Glover, “Some Interpretations of Greek Plays,” *CR* 42 (1928) pp. 97–106, quoting Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III. i. 161–62. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. W. J. Craig (Oxford 1905) pp. 870–907.

37. For an evaluation of stichomythia, please see above. A brief explanation can also be found in H. Friis Johansen and Edward W. Whittle, *Aeschylus: The Suppliants* (Denmark 1980) vol. 2. p. 236, in discussing the possibility of a line missing at 294, they say that this suggestion “has nothing to support except the unfounded assumption that the basis of an Aeschylean stichomythia ought to be as simple as possible.” I cannot affirm this with regard to Aeschylus, but in the *Antigone* at least, Sophocles uses the stichomythia in a very meaningful way.

if Antigone will allow it. When first asked by Antigone, she had said “no” (49–68). Many commentators speak of Ismene as being weak, but does a “weak” person, given a little time to think, come back and volunteer to die? No. Antigone says that “justice,” δίκη (538), will not allow it. Commentators also say that Antigone is quite cruel to Ismene when, somewhat irritated, at line 551 Antigone says to Ismene, ἀλοῦσα μὲν δῆτ', εἰ γελῶ γ', ἐν σοὶ γελῶ, “Indeed, if I mock you, it is with pain that I mock you.” (This is an important line, as we shall see later). Antigone argues that she buried Polyneices on her own and that it is only right and proper that she should bear the punishment for doing so all alone. It is also the case that all of Sophocles’ heroes are completely solitary. Sophocles uses this solitude to emphasize the responsibility of each person to bear the burden of his or her own choices. This is a new philosophical direction, but it is not possible to say of Sophocles that his thinking is final and absolute on this, but rather, his work suggests the ongoing process of revising our ideas that we all go through continuously.

Throughout the stichomythia that follows (548–60), the sisters debate the issue, but Antigone is unbending in her resolve. Creon interjects, declaring that one sister (Ismene) is newly mad and the other (Antigone) has been mad since birth. This gives confirmation to the notion, which emerged at the beginning, that the antagonism between Antigone and Creon has been present for a considerable length of time. Now Creon begins a stichomythia with Ismene. He continues his hostility toward the sisters, but now he begins to sound more and more as if he is confounded by them both and their arguments, and he sounds out of his depth. He also continues his hostility toward women in general. Ismene asks him whether he is really going to put to death the betrothed of his son. Creon is unmoved and sneers that, “there are other fields for him to plough” (569). When Ismene responds that there will not be another love, “as this was

fitting for him and for her” (570), it is Antigone who responds at line 572, ὦ φίλταθ' Αἴμον, ὥς σ' ἀτιμάζει πατήρ, “Oh my dearest Haemon, how your father dishonours you!” Many commentators give this line instead to Ismene, but does it make sense for Ismene to speak to Haemon in such intimate terms? Sophocles has already demonstrated that a line or two can convey a very great deal. Jebb is of the opinion that “one of the finest touches in the play is effaced by giving line 572 to Ismene” (p. 110 *ad. loc.*).³⁸ Indeed it is. This line reveals the contempt Creon has for his son, and the love Antigone has for Haemon. If this line is assigned to Ismene then it would seriously weaken both the impact of Creon's contempt, and the depth of Antigone's love; Sophocles does not draw his characters so strongly and so beautifully to rob them of that distinction half-way through the play. Assigning this line to Antigone gives added weight to the fact that she is willing to die for burying Polyneices. This is the third time Sophocles has used one line by an actor to make a significant point: in 436, when the guard said that it was a joy to get himself out of difficulty but hard to put a friend (Antigone) in deep trouble; next, when Antigone tells Ismene that she must bear this alone, but it pains her to exclude her sister (551); and now here, where in one line she reveals how much she loves Haemon (572). And so this final brief and poignant comment by Antigone brings this *episodion*

38. Some MSS give this line to Ismene, and Jebb says that in L the main MS, the assignment of lines to another character is not unusual, and that the “taunt, κακὰς γυναῖκας υἱέσι, ‘evil wives for my sons,’ moves Antigone to break the silence that she has held since 560.” Griffith believes there is a double problem here, involving also lines 574 and 576, which are given to the chorus. He believes that “stichomythic logic” should assign both these lines to Ismene. He believes a “single-line interruption of a two-person stichomythia is unparalleled in S” (p. 217). But I must disagree with Griffith, who says that to assign the line to Antigone unnecessarily “sentimentalizes” her. Quite the opposite, it gives a very brief but insightful glimpse of the Antigone of before this disaster. There is no justification to thinking that Antigone has no other side to her than this one, who is in an uncompromising opposition to the unthinking and unfeeling dictator. Campbell rightly notes that there is a real bitterness in this line when assigned to Antigone, and that Creon's snap-back τὸ σὸν λέχος, “your marriage bed,” is surely directed at Antigone. All this also reveals the delicacy of Sophocles' insight into human nature, which is present throughout the writings of his that we have. Kamerbeek (p. 115) disagrees with E. R. Schwinge, *Die Stellung der Trachinierinnen im Werk des Sophocles* (Göttingen 1962) p. 74. n. 1. that to assign the line to Antigone on the grounds “that to do so would be contrary to the evolution of the ‘Dreigesprach’ in Sophocles.”

to a close, except for Creon's final, petty comment that the guards take the women inside where, as women, they should be, at least by his standards.

The sentence of death just passed on Antigone, the second *stasimon* (582–625) leads the Chorus to reflect on the destiny of her house, and on the power of fate, generally. When a divine curse has once fallen upon a family, thenceforth there is no release from it. Wave after wave of trouble vexes it.

Jebb at 112

What is of particular interest in the closure of this *stasimon* is that in the last lines the chorus return to their observation at the end of the first *stasimon*, “The Ode To Man.” They observe again:

σοφία γὰρ ἔκ του κλεινὸν ἔπος πέφανται
τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἐσθλὸν
τῷδ' ἔμμεν ὄτῳ φρένας
θεὸς ἄγει πρὸς ἄταν,

For with wisdom does the famous maxim from old
say that sometimes evil seems good
to him whose mind the gods have
drawn to misery.³⁹

620–24

Clearly the fluidity of the human desires was very much known and understood.

At this point, Haemon, Creon's last remaining son, enters. Creon asks him if he comes in a state of loyalty to his father or in anger given that Haemon is betrothed to Antigone, whom his father has condemned to a long, slow death by starvation. Haemon declares his loyalty to his

39. Here Sophocles perhaps does demonstrate his engagement with the emerging new metaphysical philosophy and that he has not yet reached a final conclusion. Also, he uses concepts and terms that would be perfectly understandable to the audience of his day.

father, then Creon responds.

The speech of Creon here (639–80), is quite the opposite of the speech he gave at the beginning of the play (175–90), in which he presented to the chorus all the maxims he believed were essential to a just and wise rule, and which were quoted by Demosthenes to highlight the wrongs committed by Aeschines.⁴⁰ One would best describe this speech as a rant in which he takes no responsibility for anything he has done. It is all someone else’s fault. It is the speech of a dictator, such as those rulers whom Athens had replaced when first developing their democracy, initially under Solon, then more substantially under Cleisthenes and more permanently under Pericles. His comments about Antigone show a complete disregard for the fact that she is his son’s betrothed and for his son’s feelings. Creon’s speech is all about Creon. When he says at lines 658–59, *πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐφθυμνεῖτω Δία/ ζύναμιον*, “let her invoke the gods of common blood on behalf of these things,” he demonstrates no grasp of what really motivates Antigone, the ties of kindred blood. Glover, in her article, explores this aspect with great insight.⁴¹ As she points out, this tie is really quite central to a number of the strong female characters of all three tragedians. Clytemnestra, Electra, Antigone, Deianira, and many of Euripides’ female characters are driven to do what they do by this tie. I shall return to this later. He ends his speech declaring, “we must defend order and in no way be defeated by a woman.” This would be a perfectly reasonable statement, were it not steeped in vitriol. The chorus agree, then Haemon speaks.

His speech is a classic demonstration of diplomacy. If Creon had delivered Haemon’s speech, Thebes would surely have celebrated. But alas! Haemon first declares that *φρένες*, “reason,” is given to men by the gods, and that he himself has not been blessed with it yet (684).

40. Note Jebb pp. 42–43.

41. Glover pp. 97–106.

Then he declares his loyalty to his father and tells Creon that he always keeps watch on his father's reputation (688). He is a loyal son. He also tells his father that there is muttering in the city about Antigone's sentence (692). "Of all women," they say, "this one should not perish so shamefully for deeds so glorious as hers" (694–95). Haemon continues to remake the points already made and praises her for not letting her brother's body be desecrated by vultures and dogs. His father had said earlier to Antigone that the strongest iron is easily broken under pressure and the most sturdy horse is brought to account by just a small bit; now Haemon tells his father that trees growing by the river survive in a storm when they bend to the conditions; otherwise, they break. He finishes by suggesting to his father that it is always wise to listen to those who speak common sense.

But Creon is now so enraged and so far beyond common sense — let alone rationality — that there is no appealing to him under any circumstances, so that in a couplet Creon completely rejects all that Haemon has said. In a responding couplet Haemon suggests that his father note his words, not his years. Then they move into a long stichomythic exchange that is completely destructive to their relationship. It is during this final exchange between father and son that Haemon makes, perhaps, the most perceptive comment about Creon in the whole play, *καλῶς ἐρήμης γ' ἂν σὸ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος*, "you would make a great ruler, ruling alone in a barren land" (739). The exchange ends with Haemon declaring in great anger that his father will never see him again and that Antigone will not die alone. There is no doubt at the end that Haemon has tried everything in his power to convince his father that the action he is taking is wrong and will prove to be disastrous for all, but Creon is not listening. Haemon leaves to be with Antigone.

The chorus now sings the third *stasimon* (781–805), an ode to love that speaks of love

(ἔρως) as something that one cannot escape, that can, and often does, create havoc, but that just as often brings one into realms of inexplicable joy. The chorus of old men is carried to the extreme of tears over the plight of Antigone, especially as she comes on stage to sing her lament, her last farewell. They finish the formal ode by speculating that perhaps by worshiping the gods of Hades she might achieve some form of release (781–800). And still the chorus, though moved to tears, accuse her of being the author of her own demise (819–22). Thus the chorus ends the ode.

Antigone begins her κομμός (“a lament, lit. a beating of the breast,” 806–82) immediately. A lament is a formal exchange between the central character and the chorus, and usually marks the end of the central character’s role. Antigone begins her lament mourning the loss of her opportunity to experience marriage and motherhood,

ὄρᾳτ' ἔμ', ὧ γὰρ πατρίας πολῖται, τὰν νεάταν ὁδὸν
στείχουσιν νέατον δὲ φέγγος λεύσσουσιν ἀελίου,
κοῦποτ' αὐθις, ἀλλὰ μ' ὁ παγκοίτας Ἄϊδας ζῶσαν ἄγει
τὰν Ἀχέροντος ἀκτάν,

See me, citizens of my fatherland, setting out on my last path,
looking upon my last shaft of sunlight, and never hereafter,
but Hades, who gives sleep to all of us, is leading me while I am still living
to Acheron’s shore.⁴²

806–13

She compares herself to Niobe, the Phrygian princess, daughter of Tantalus, who was married to

42. Jebb points out here in his note on lines 806ff. the similarity between these lines of Antigone and the lines of Chthonia in Swinburne’s *Erechtheus*, who, as she speaks to the chorus of Athenian Elders as she is about to die for Athens, the price of her father’s victory of the Thracian Eumolpos: “People, old men of my city / lordly wise and hoar of head / I, a spouseless bride, and crownless but with garlands of the dead / from the fruitful light turn silent to my dark unchilded bed . . . Day to day makes answers / first to last, and life to death; / but I, born for death’s sake, / die for life’s sake.” A. C. Swinburne, “Erechtheus,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* 126 (1879) pp. 421–22.

Amphion and who had given birth to many children and claimed that she ought therefore to be worshipped above Leto, who had had only two children. But, as the chorus remind her, Niobe was goddess⁴³ and her two children were Apollo and Artemis. After Apollo and Artemis had killed all her children, a grieving Niobe was turned into stone on Mount Sipylus, which, when it rained, gave the impression that it/she was weeping. Antigone is to be imprisoned in a cave and slowly starved to death. The common denominator is that both would be encased in stone.⁴⁴

When the chorus remind Antigone that Niobe was a goddess, Antigone accuses them of mockery. Again Antigone says that she passes to a ἔργμα τυμβόχωστον, “a rock-enclosed prison” (849), and the chorus respond that she has προσβᾶσ' ἐπ' ἔσχατον θράσους “she has rushed to the very edge of daring” (853), and in this, πατρῶον δ' ἐκτίνεις τιν' ἄθλον “you are paying in full for the troubles of your father” (856). As we started with the focus on the family history that lies behind all of the troubles of the house of Labdacus, so, as Antigone is about to be led off, we come back to what is, for her, the centre of her being. In a few lines she embraces them all. She acknowledges all their mistakes, but condemns none of them. She does not regret, she mourns. Again, the chorus accuse her of being the cause of her own ruin (p. 160 l.875).

Enter Creon (883).

Creon's sarcastic comment, “that if those who are about to die could put death off by lamenting, they would lament forever,” is what one might expect.⁴⁵

43. Or, as Rick Riordan calls the children born to humans and parented by the Olympians in his children's series of books *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (New York 2005), “half-bloods.”

44. For more on Niobe and fate, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, tr. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington 1964); Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York 1940) pp. 238–39; Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore, 1993) pp. 488, 536–39.

45. As is credited to Samuel Johnson, “the prospect of hanging focuses the mind wonderfully.” www.samueljohnson.com/apocryph.html.

Now we come to the speech of Antigone that most scholars would love to see proved not to belong in this play. As Jebb notes, “few problems of Greek Tragedy have been more discussed than the question whether these vv. or some of them, are spurious” (p. 164).

οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἂν εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν,
οὔτ' εἰ πόσις μοι καταθανὼν ἐτήκετο
βία πολιτῶν τόνδ' ἂν ἠρόμην πόνον.
τίνος νόμου δὴ ταῦτα πρὸς χάριν λέγω;
πόσις μὲν ἂν μοι καταθανόντος ἄλλος ἦν
καὶ παῖς ἀπ' ἄλλου φωτός εἰ τοῦδ' ἤμπλακον,
μητρὸς δ' ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιιν
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἂν βλάστοι ποτέ.

Never, if at any time I had been the mother of children,
nor if my husband lay mouldering in death,
would I have chosen this grief for myself in life
in opposition to the city. What law, I ask, justifies that word?
With one husband dead another might be found for me,
and children from another man might replace the first,
but with mother and father lying buried in Hades
there can not be a brother who might bloom for me.

905–12

Jebb feels that the composition of vv. 909–12 are unworthy of Sophocles (p. 164); Kitto believes these line to be “a frigid sophism borrowed from Herodotus.” Griffith carries out a quite extensive examination of scholarly opinion and reaches the conclusion that to excise these lines, as many do, is not justified on two fronts. First, Aristotle has these lines in his text when suggesting that, if you say something extraordinary, give the cause so that people might understand your thinking. Second, because, as Griffith points out at 454–55, Antigone only states

that she is following the “unwritten laws,” which have existed from time immemorial. In essence, these are the laws of civilization and are laws we ought to know in our souls. Griffith believes that these two reasons are more than adequate for us to accept them as written by Sophocles, and intended.⁴⁶

But there is a far more important justification for her statement that so far only one scholar has really come to terms with. Glover addresses this issue in her paper and makes some very significant points. As she notes, “I would suggest then, first, that the fact of kin was for [Greeks] more significant than it is for us” (p. 98). Glover notes that Clytemnestra says that, “she is more deeply bound to Iphigenia than to Agamemnon, because she belongs to Iphigenia by blood.” She does also point out that as she sees it, the central theme of the *Oresteia* is the tie of blood. Glover talks of religion too, speaking, I would suspect, from experience when she says that “our religion does not teach us to regard burial as a matter of great importance (as it clearly is to Antigone), but another religious act might be compared to burial for the Roman Catholics, baptism. For Catholics baptism is of profound importance.”⁴⁷ Glover believes that the

46. H. D. F. Kitto (New York 1941 tr. 1939) p. 130; Griffith (1999) pp. 277–79; F. J. H. Letters, *The Life and Work of Sophocles* (London 1953) p. 168, agrees with Kitto; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 16.1417a, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, tr. Richard McKeon (New York 1941); Stephanie West, “Sophocles’ *Antigone* and Herodotus Book Three” pp. 109–36 in Jasper Griffin, *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford 1999). West looks in detail at the relationship between *Antigone* 904–20 and Herodotus 3.119 and in agreement with most scholars believes there is a very strong relationship between the two, saying that “Herodotus ascribes to the wife of the Persian grandee Intaphernes condemned to death (unjustly) as the leader of a conspiracy against Darius. When told she could save only one member of her family, she chose her brother on the grounds that she could get another husband and children, but with parents dead she could not get another brother. But she has experienced marriage and childbirth. Hogan, like Griffith, looks at a number of scholars and the various interpretations rendered. But, even though Sophocles, Herodotus and Pericles were good friends, Herodotus did not publish his Histories for another ten years. Whether Sophocles actually borrowed from Herodotus or not is, at best, uncertain. *The Histories*, tr. Aubrey de Selincourt (Harmondsworth 1954) p. 252. Kamerbeek also gives a long, convoluted debate with respect to these words. It is interesting to observe such tortured debates in order to avoid accepting ideas that some find difficult to accept.

47. When I was a student midwife, a baby delivered in the night was clearly not going to survive. The priest phoned to ask if I thought he would be able to get to the hospital in time to baptize the baby. I felt he would not, so he asked me to perform the baptism and told me what to do. I did so, and I have never felt so uncomfortable and I have not forgotten that little baby. The priest arrived too late but he did perform some ceremony to ameliorate his absence.

prominence of the burial theme in Ancient Athens springs from a sense of mystery.⁴⁸ I would agree with her, and that today it is to a large degree lost. After exploring many of the plays and especially the importance of Pericles' funeral speech in Thucydides, Glover closes with this observation: "Oedipus and Antigone and Neoptolemus and Ajax and Hecuba and Phaedra, these all had a nobility which nothing could destroy." We should add to this appreciation the understanding that for women their natal family was really the only family they had.

On marriage, the husband-to-be came to the bride's house and took her away to his parents' home, where after the marriage she was still not considered to be a family member but rather had to obey her in-laws in all things. This certainly gives the importance of Polyneices to Antigone and would impel her to bury him regardless of the price to be paid. It would also give weight to Ismene's desire to die with her sister. While Antigone may wonder if the gods have deserted her, a normal reaction to imminent death one might think, and feel abandoned by all, nevertheless, she has no hesitation, makes no compromise, has no regrets, and goes resolutely to her death at the end. And she wishes no worse punishment on her enemies than has been meted out on her. Her very last words are that she is going to her death simply because τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα, "I feared the fear of Heaven" (943). And so Antigone leaves the stage.

The rest of the action (400+ lines) addresses the outcome of Creon's actions on his family and the city of Thebes.

Immediately after Antigone leaves the stage, the chorus sing the fourth *stasimon*. This is a really interesting song. Does it refer to Antigone? Or perhaps to Creon? Or, can we say, as Jebb

48. Death and burial have significant relevance in most cultures, and frequently involve some mystical dimension. When I was working down on the Labrador, an Inuit colleague told me that when her mother was dying, the whole family was sitting around her bed. They all saw their grandmother's face at the window and they knew that she had come to fetch her daughter and felt comforted. Two hours later their mother died.

does, “But the chorus does not mean to suggest Antigone’s guilt or innocence; still less, to foreshadow the punishment of Creon. On this side, the ode is neutral, purely a free lyric treatment of examples. Such neutrality suits the moment before the beginning of the *περιπέτεια* (Jebb pp. 168–76, 944–87.). We must remember that the chorus has not been particularly deep or focused throughout. They recall three myths in which the central characters suffered a cruel punishment. Danae, Lykourgos and Kleopatra (not the Cleopatra of movie fame!). Danae was the daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos, who received a prophecy from Delphi that his daughter would give birth to a son who would kill him. He locked her up in chamber he built for the purpose in his house. But Zeus visited her in a golden shower and she gave birth to a son, Perseus. Acrisius then built a large wooden chest and set the two adrift on the Aegean to founder. Zeus heard her pleas for help and sent the chest to the island of Seriphos where they were rescued (Jebb 944).⁴⁹ Griffith believes that the only paradigmatic connection there can be between the three myths is that fate is inescapable (p. 283). He sees no connection between each other, and certainly not with Antigone's situation. He summarizes the myths briefly, “Danae, unjustly imprisoned by her father; Lykourgos, opposed Dionysus when he came to Thrace from Asia, and chased Dionysus under the sea. Zeus blinded Lykourgos, who was easily given to his own anger, driven to madness by Dionysus, he was then imprisoned in a cave until he came to his senses. Kleopatra, imprisoned (?) by Phineus (and his new wife?), and her children blinded. Kleopatra married Phineas and bore him two children” (p. 284). Afterwards he put her in prison, and fell in love with another woman, Eidothea, sister of Cadmus, who founded Thebes, who put out the eyes of Kleopatra’s children and put them in prison too. Many commentators also

49. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York, 1940), pp. 141–43, 148. Gantz, 1993, pp. 208, 299–304, 309–10. Apollodorus 2.4.1. Both Sophocles and Euripides wrote a play titled *Δανάη*, and Sophocles wrote a play titled *Ἀκρίσιος*, none of which we have. These myths are examined in detail in Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1993) Vol 2. (pp. 299–304).

conclude that the point of this *stasimon* is that one cannot escape fate, but can we say with certainty that Sophocles believed so absolutely in the concept of fate? Given all of the intellectual and artistic activity taking place at this time, perhaps we cannot say with any assurance. Nevertheless, the chorus do say at the end of the ode, ἀλλὰ κάπ' ἐκείνα/ Μοῖραι μακραίωνες ἔσχον, ὦ παῖ, “yet on her as well the immortal fates had a hold, my child” (986–87).

Teiresias enters, and the first thing he does is state a truth that is also a metaphor. He is blind and needs a guide to guide him: δύο' ἐξ ἐνὸς βλέποντε, “two seeing with the eyes of one” (989). The boy is his guide, just as he is a guide for others. This warning seems to pass over Creon’s head, for he simply demands the aged seer’s tidings. First Teiresias asks Creon if he is willing to listen. We shall see why. Teiresias then gives him the news, none of which is good, and he tells Creon that it is not good for him. We get, in his reply to Teiresias, τί δ' ἔστιν; ὡς ἐγὼ τὸ σὸν φρίσσω στόμα, “What is it? How I am chilled by your message” (997). This is the first hint that perhaps Creon is beginning to realize that his decisions have not been wise ones. The old seer says that he has followed his normal routine and has taken his seat at the site of augury where, under normal circumstances, the birds gather around and rest close by, so that he could listen to their noises, and his guide could tell him where they are sitting, moving about and doing whatever else it is birds do that seers interpret for good or ill. This day it was different. The birds were shrieking and screaming in a fierce rage, tearing at each other and behaving completely out of character.⁵⁰ This indicated to the seer dire things.

He decided that he needed to offer burnt offerings to confirm what he was hearing. His

50. We are reminded immediately of two events. First the chorus’s description of Polyneices’ attack on Thebes, like birds screaming in a bloodthirsty manner (110–13). Second, the watchman’s description of Antigone’s response when she discovered the body of her brother Polyneices had been dusted clean, she gave a shrill cry, like a bird when it discovers its nest has been robbed of its nestlings” (423–25). Antigone had been one of the original four nestlings, so to speak.

burnt offerings would not burn. As the old seer describes the birds' activities in a most graphic and colourful way, they represent disaster. Again, he says that he asked for a sign from his boy, who sees for him and is his guide as, indeed, as a seer, he is a guide for others (1012–14). His final point is most shocking to Creon: καὶ ταῦτα τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις, “It is your counsel that has brought this sickness on our city” (1015). Teiresias goes on to describe how the vultures are polluting all the altars and the hearths of the city with their pickings from the body of the δύσμορου, “hapless” son of Oedipus, Polyneices (1018).⁵¹ Clearly Teiresias is telling Creon he is in the wrong and must set things right. He adds that when you have been told you are in the wrong, you can no longer claim to be unaware, so Creon needs to set things right, right away. But here, Sophocles makes a most important statement that perhaps gets overlooked. He has Teiresias say:

ἐπεὶ δ' ἀμάρτη κείνος οὐκέτ' ἔστ' ἀνὴρ
 ἄβουλος οὐδ' ἄνολβος, ὅστις ἐς κακὸν
 πεσὼν ἀκεῖται μηδ' ἀκίνητος πέλει.
 αὐθαδία τοι σκαιότητ' ὀφλισκάνει..

But, whenever someone has gone wrong
 that person is no longer ill-advised
 nor is he wretched, who heals himself
 from the evil he has fallen into.

Self-will,⁵² in truth, incurs willfulness and folly.

51. Many comment on the fact that up until that point Sophocles has claimed that the body of Polyneices has not been touched by the scavenging birds or dogs, and that a thin covering of dirt would not keep them away. That may well be true, but it is not the point. Keeping the body untouched until now suits his artistic purpose; it is a way of having the gods approving of Antigone's burial of her brother and of disapproving of Creon's denial of burial.

52. αὐθαδία translates as “self-will” (Jebb p. 182. l.1028); it can also be translated as “stubbornness” or “stupidity,” it is true, but Jebb's translation of self-will, as given in the *LSJ*, brings to our attention in a text of Sophocles the idea that he is thinking beyond simple fate to the notion that we choose to make our own decisions, good and bad, which was an exciting part of the new metaphysical thinking that was beginning to emerge at this time. Griffith sees first stubbornness/stupidity but identifies “self-willed” with stubbornness etc. But Creon has not

Teiresias ends this first speech by noting that all he is looking for is that Creon see the error of his ways and that he set things right for the good of all, but Creon is not remotely interested. In his response to Teiresias, he accuses him of evil intent and the whole seer tribe of bribery. But then Creon makes a statement of such outrage that even the audience must have gasped. He says he does not care if the birds defile the throne of Zeus, he believes that mortals cannot defile the gods, and he will not concede, no matter what, to the prognostications of a corrupt seer, who only prophesies for a bribe. In the stichomythic exchange that follows these continue their bitter exchange until the end when Teiresias tells him to stop or ὄρσεις με τὰκίνητα διὰ φρενῶν φράσαι, “you will rouse me to declare what is hidden in my soul” (1060). Creon sneers and urges him to do so, but not for money. Teiresias reluctantly reveals his prophecy, that before the day is over Creon will give one of his own children as “a corpse for a corpse.”⁵³ He goes on to say that he has committed an act of outrageous proportions that is completely unacceptable, since he has put a living being in a grave and kept above ground a body who belongs to the gods below, “unhallowed, unhonoured, and unburied” (1071). Teiresias also confirms what Antigone (509) and Haemon (692–93) had told him before, that there is great resentment against him among the citizens. Teiresias leaves in a state of high dudgeon.

The chorus now appeals to Creon. They say they have never known Teiresias to give a false prophecy, not from his youngest years as a prophet until now, not ever. Creon must agree and now he is finally alarmed and asks the chorus what he should do. They tell him, as indeed

just been stubborn but was convinced that he, and only he, was right. He has deliberately rejected everyone else’s opinion — Antigone, the watchman, Ismene, the chorus, Haemon — and now he will reject the aged seer, Teiresias. 53. Creon had already lost his other son to this battle. His son Menoecus, on a prophecy that he do so, had jumped off the walls of Thebes in an attempt to save the city from the Argive invasion.

Teiresias had, to free the maiden and bury the dead. He agrees anxiously and orders his servants to get their axes and come with him.

Following his departure, the chorus sing a *ὑπόρχημα*, a dance song of celebration. They hope Creon will be in time and that all will be saved and order restored.

A messenger comes on stage, and immediately he highlights the positive accomplishments of Creon in days gone by. Now, though, he says he counts him as a breathing corpse. Alarmed, the chorus ask him what has happened. *Τεθνᾶσιν*, “They are dead,” he says. And he makes the further observation that *οἱ δὲ ζῶντες αἴτιοι θανεῖν*, “the living are guilty for the dead” (1173). Haemon is dead, he tells them, having committed suicide. At this point Eurydice, Creon’s wife and Haemon’s mother, comes on stage. She asks what is the news she overheard them talking about (1183–91). The messenger explains. He tells how things came about. First they buried Polyneices, then they went to release Antigone. However, as they approached, they heard wailing coming from the cave. Creon, very distressed, sent his servants in to see what was wrong, though he is sure he knows and realizes that his has changed beyond measure and finally he knows how wrong he has been. They see that Antigone has hanged herself, and that Haemon, in great distress, is clinging to her waist.

When he sees his father he rushes at him and spits in his face. Then he draws his sword and falls on it. Eurydice listens to the messenger, then leaves the stage without saying a word. Sophocles says so much often with very little. Eurydice’s not saying anything is a fine touch of interpretation. It suggests that perhaps Creon was as stubborn with his wife as he was with everyone else, and it does reveal the depth of her distress. When the chorus and messenger hear nothing more from inside the palace the messenger thinks he needs to check. At this point Creon

comes on stage carrying the body of Haemon. He finally confesses to all his stubbornness and failure to listen, to pay attention, to demonstrate any compassion. It has cost him his children, his city, his dignity, everything.

And now the messenger enters from the palace and tells him that his wife is dead. She has stabbed herself at the altar. Creon, the messenger and the chorus all lament the deaths caused by Creon. He can only wish for death. But, as the chorus tells him, it never comes when we would wish. He and the chorus now share Creon's brief κομμός, which is all lament, confusion and regret. From a man at the beginning of the play being absolutely confident he knew what was best for everyone and every situation and had no doubts at all, he has gone to a man whose has lost everything and knows nothing, and is fully aware of it. He has no idea what to do.

Perhaps the last word should go to Jebb, whose understanding of this play has yet to be surpassed. In his evaluation of kingship in Homeric times, he observes that "to give crooked judgments is the mark of a bad king, who will not escape the vengeance of the gods."⁵⁴

54. R. C. Jebb, *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry* (New York 1887) p. 17.

Conclusion

Jebb, in the preface to his commentary, says, “The *Antigone*, one of the earliest of its author’s extant plays . . . belongs by time, as by spirit, to the very centre of the age of Pericles.” And of Antigone herself he says, “The figure of Antigone, as drawn by the poet, bears the genuine impress of this glorious moment in the life of Athens. It is not without reason that moderns have recognized that figure as the noblest, and the most profoundly tender, embodiment of woman’s heroism which ancient literature can show; but it is also distinctively a work of Greek art at the highest.” This observation does give credibility to the notion that the *Antigone* was Jebb’s favourite play.

In both Jebb and Sophocles we are faced with a timeless and fascinating question: What is it that a very few people have that captures people’s inner spirit generation after generation? Despite much academic questioning with respect to Jebb’s interpretation of some Sophoclean use of language, he remains the authority to go to when it comes to Sophocles. And two thousand five hundred years later Sophocles is still the favourite ancient playwright people embrace, and in particular the *Antigone*. But Sophocles is really a mystery. Each of his protagonists commits him- or herself to a course of action, which demands their complete isolation but is morally upright, and none more so than Antigone. Not too many people would continue their journey in the face of certain death, but Antigone does. In Sophocles it is important to pay attention to the little things because he often reveals a great deal in the odd statement.

Sophoclean Greek is far from easy, and a great deal of ancient Greek is so ambiguous, which makes it difficult to translate and is sometimes a mystery. Δεινός is one of those mysteries

being so varied in the possibilities of translation, especially when so emphatically used in the first line of “The Ode to Man,” itself a mystery. Today we like to have things cut and dried, we do not like ambiguity, especially in language, yet language is not only our primary method of communication with each other, it is a magical way of sharing that can take our imaginations to places we never dreamed of. And when it is our primary way of speaking and sharing, as in Sophocles’ day, it is excitingly creative, and when it is in the hands of a playwright with the gifts of Sophocles, we can only do our best to try to grasp the subtleties of his gift. The intellectual revolution of Sophocles’ day on all possible human fronts must have been stimulating and surely facilitated the development of language in order to express many new thoughts. Jebb is still the leading scholar on Sophocles because it is recognized that he understood this, and his own insight into and understanding of language allowed him to express his own gift without being boringly boastful.

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Appendix A: Eglantyne Jebb

Eglantyne Jebb (1876–1928) and her sister Dorothy (1881–1963) founded the Save The Children Fund in 1919,¹ and in 1922 Eglantyne suggested “that Save The Children adopt a document ‘defining the duties of adults toward children, which each country should recognize either by means of State (sic) intervention or by private action.’”² Later in the year she circulated a draft of her own Children’s Charter. After much discussion and some minor revisions, and with the strong support of her friend and colleague Etienne Clouzot, General Secretary of Save The Children International Union, her *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the Save The Children International Union on May 17, 1923, and in September 1924 Eglantyne Jebb’s *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* was officially adopted by the League of Nations. It was short, simple and concise, containing five points:

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1923)

By the present Declaration of the Rights of the Child, commonly known as the “Declaration of Geneva,” men and women of all nations, recognizing that Mankind owes to the Child the best it has to give, declare and accept it as their duty that, beyond and above all considerations of race, nationality, or creed:

I. THE CHILD must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually.

II. THE CHILD that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and waif must be sheltered and succored.

1. Clare Mulley, *The Woman Who Saved The Children: A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb: Founder of Save the Children* (Oxford 2009) p. 246.

2. Mulley, p. 305.

III. THE CHILD must be the first to receive relief in times of distress.

IV. THE CHILD must be put in a position to earn a livelihood and must be protected against every form of exploitation.

V. THE CHILD must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow-men.³

Eglantyne Jebb spent her life being socially active and being involved in a number of charitable organizations in England and in Europe. These two accomplishments, Save The Children and *The Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, are her lasting and most significant contributions.

Eglantyne was the fourth of six children born to Eglantyne (Tye or Tiny) Louisa and her cousin and husband Arthur Trevor Jebb. Eglantyne Louisa was the sister of Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb, the internationally acclaimed classical scholar of Cambridge University. In addition to raising six children, Eglantyne Louisa was also a socially active woman who founded the Home Arts and Industries Association, which sought to teach poor children all manner of technical trades whereby they might better their lives in Victorian England.

It is worth mentioning here that all of Eglantyne's three sisters were also activists. The eldest, Emily (Em), married Beverly Ussher. They moved to Waterford, Ireland, where Emily wrote the novel, *The Trail of the Black and Tans*, published in the autumn of 1921 under the pseudonym "The Hurler on the Ditch." It was judged by many to be on a par with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Her book was inspired by witnessing, with her visiting sister Eglantyne, the brutality of the British suppression of the Easter Uprising of 1916. The book created such outrage that its publisher, Talbot Press, removed it from circulation. Thereafter, both the book and Em seem to

3. [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_the_Child](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_the_Child), 14/10/2012.

disappear from view.⁴ Clare Mulley says, however, that the novel was a best-seller. Mulley points out that “Em’s previous publications had been limited to botanical teaching observations and a guide to public schools.”⁵

Louisa (Lill), the next sister, was the first woman to take an Agricultural Diploma in the U.K., in 1897, at Newnham, one of two women’s colleges at Cambridge. She became Governor of the Agricultural Society and, when World War One began, she saw immediately that women would be needed to fill the jobs of male farm labourers who had been conscripted to fight. In 1915, she made a call to women, which was published in *The Times*: “Mrs. Roland Wilkins, ‘To the Land!’ Britain’s Battle-Cry to the Women To-day!”⁶ Within a year, over nine thousand women were working on farms. In 1917, she was rewarded for her work and for founding the Women’s Land Army with an OBE.⁷ But earlier in the century, in 1902, before the necessity of war captured her time and talent, Lill

travelled across Asia Minor with her college friend Victoria Buxton, two rusty revolvers and a geological hammer to test the soil, rocks and agricultural operations. Their route deliberately crossed countries that, Lill wrote, had “not yet been ticketed and docketed for the tourist.” Highlights included being held up by armed men while floating down the Tigris on a raft made of inflated goatskins.⁸

These travels resulted in a book *By Desert Ways to Baghdad*.⁹ She remained active throughout her life, dying of cancer in 1929.

4. <http://ukbookworld.com/book-details/leckey/14366/the-hurler-on-the-ditch-pseud-for-mrs-emily-horsley-the-trail-of-the-black-and-tans-> 15/10/2012.

5. Mulley, pp. 195–96. A search of other online booksellers, however, reveals that the book is classed as rare and it is quite expensive.

6. *The Times*, c. 1915, in Mulley, p. 343 n. 6.

7. Order of the British Empire, Mulley, p. 195.

8. Mulley, p. 89.

9. Louisa Jebb Wilkins, *By Desert Ways to Baghdad* (London 1908).

Their brother Richard (Dick) became an authority on Empire and Colonial Nationalism. He published several books on the topic and wrote a column for the *Morning Post*. He entered politics, but when defeated in the election of 1910, he withdrew from public life. Their brother Gamul died at 16 of pneumonia but he stayed a presence in the lives of all, particularly Eglantyne's and Dorothy's.¹⁰

Eglantyne was born at The Lyth, the family's country home in Shropshire, and grew up in an active and intellectual environment. She early learned to love solitude and long solitary walks. It is perhaps a good early indication of her character that when she arrived at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, to read history and was presented with a book of the rules, "she sat down on her trunk and considered whether she should leave immediately or stay long enough to break all the rules and be sent down."¹¹ She graduated with a second class honours.¹² This was followed by a year of teacher-training.

She told her mother that she wanted to teach poor children, both because it was needed and because she felt it was a task for which she was suited. She had been interested in education for a while, inspired by her mother's example of teaching the children of poor families through her Home Arts, and by reading Aristotle on education, and the Athenian idea of using education in the formation of character. There had already been some reforms in education, and in 1880 education was made compulsory for children aged between five and ten. Continued campaigning by the National Education League resulted in elementary education being made free in England

10. Mulley, pp. xxiii–iv. Dorothy, being the youngest, was particularly close to Gamul. The name Gamul was "an ancestral surname in the family, most famous for Sir Francis Gamul, who, family myth recorded, stood beside King Charles I watching defeat at Chester" (Mulley, p. 13).

11. Mulley, p. 32.

12. Women could take a degree program but were not allowed to receive a BA. They had to wait until 1920 before they could. They were given a diploma instead. www.localhistories.org/vicwomen.html.

and Wales in both board and voluntary (church) schools.¹³ Also, “Eglantyne’s Uncle Richard, now a distinguished Cambridge Classics scholar and Conservative MP for the university, had thrown himself into this public debate, supporting the expansion of both primary and secondary education and emphasizing the need for teacher training.”¹⁴ But, when she approached schools in poor areas, such as the London docks, head mistresses did not offer her a job. The poor schools did not want Oxford-educated teachers. Finally, her Uncle James, who lived in Malborough, Wiltshire, where Gamul had died, helped secure a position for her in St. Peter’s Girls’ School in a lower-working-class neighbourhood. She taught there for a year plus one term, then, at the urging of friends and family, she resigned. Teaching children was not for her, and she realized that she did not even like children individually. “I have nothing of the natural qualities of a teacher: I don’t care for children, I don’t care for teaching.”¹⁵ But what also had a quite significant effect upon her were the appalling conditions in which the children lived. She had visited them at home and their almost casual familiarity with death, so common in their families and community, shocked her. But she never lost her interest in and commitment to education. Her friend Dorothy Kempe, whom she had met at Oxford, believed that, had Eglantyne cared for children individually, she could not have fulfilled her mission.

Eglantyne did not marry or have children. For the next several years Eglantyne lived in Cambridge, where her family had moved, and cared for her mother whose health was fragile. She travelled with Tye to various spas in Europe, attended some lectures in Cambridge, and did volunteer work with different charities, but for these few years her life moved at a less intense, more leisurely pace. In 1904, her sister Dorothy married Charles Roden Buxton, known to his

13. *Elementary Education Act 1870*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elementary_Education_Act_1870. 15/10/2012.

14. Mulley, p. 54.

15. Mulley, p. 63.

friends as Charlie.¹⁶ The mid-nineteenth century had seen the introduction “of a very harsh New Poor Law, based on the principle that destitution was caused by moral failure rather than structural or economic failure.”¹⁷

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth saw a great deal of political and social upheaval. In the December 1905, the Liberals won a minority government. In the General Election of January 1906, the Liberals won a landslide and would bring into effect measures that constituted the very solid foundation of the Welfare State.¹⁸ This in turn created an atmosphere of concern and tolerance for social and human issues. The Balkan region of the European continent was in a state of great upheaval. As the Ottoman Empire dissolved between 1908 and 1918, the brief alliances between the various countries it once ruled and the intolerance of all religions each for the other brought appalling results. Following the massacre of Macedonian insurgents in 1903, Charlie and his brother Noel set up the Macedonian Relief Fund (MRF) as an independent arm of The Balkan Committee, which they had formed in 1902. Their goal was to raise funds for relief. By 1912 they were concerned about the distribution of funds and realized they needed an emissary to go to Macedonia to evaluate the situation. They asked Eglantyne. She enthusiastically raised funds and in 1913 set off alone. As she travelled around, the sight of thousands, if not tens of thousands, of women and children, starving and displaced, had a lasting effect on Eglantyne.¹⁹ Her response was to be pragmatic and to set about seeking

16. Mulley, p.82. Charlie's great-grandfather was Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had brought forward the bill to abolish slavery in the colonies (1833). Sir Thomas's wife was Hannah Gurney, Elizabeth Fry's sister. Sir Thomas believed that “the great difference between men, between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is *energy — invincible determination*.” Charlie took this philosophy to heart. When Charlie and Dorothy were engaged, he would address his letters to her “Dear Comrade,” and when they took walking tours in the south of England they were sometimes mistaken for tramps. Charlie had taken a first in Classics Trinity, studying under Dorothy's uncle Richard. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Roden_Buxton, 19/10/2012.

17. Mulley, p. 95.

18. Some of the politicians elected were David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Herbert Asquith and Edward Grey, significant figures of the twentieth century. <http://www.liberalhistory.org.uk/>.

19. Mulley, pp. 149–51.

solutions to the distribution of food and funds for housing, clothing, etc. One thing Eglantyne met again and again that had a most profound effect on her was that when she talked with people of all the nations and all the religions, they all made the same comment about the others: “This was the first time I had heard the phrase, shortly to become so familiar, ‘without human feelings.’”²⁰

Raising funds for relief in 1913–14 was difficult, though. People felt that war was not that far away. Nevertheless, she was adamant about aid and that “no distinction should be made on religious or political grounds in the giving of alms, and that the work of charity was a work in which we should all unite in fraternal union whatever our differences.”²¹ It was her first public official statement of the basic humanitarian position from which she would never deviate.

During her travels through these war-ravaged countries, she talked with a great many people from every group involved. It is impossible to imagine what she saw, what she heard. There were countless reports of wholesale slaughter of this or that group by this or that other group. She heard “a man describe war as drunkenness, under conditions of which any man may lose his head and become an animal.”²² Eglantyne concluded from this that war itself was the enemy, not any race or individual, and in fact later she would say that “events have now convinced me that all the Balkan races are equally barbarous. . . . It is in war itself, not in its victims, that barbarity lies.”²³

Throughout the war, all the Jebbs continued campaigning for peace and justice. During 1915, Eglantyne experienced health issues, with a tumour in her thyroid. X-ray treatments were recommended by her doctor, but she kept postponing them. In 1916 she finally had surgery and

20. Mulley, p. 140.
21. Mulley, p. 154.
22. Mulley, p. 158.
23. Mulley, p. 167.

after was dispatched to her sister Em in Ireland to recuperate. It was while she was with Em that she and Em witnessed the Easter uprising and the brutal British suppression, which resulted in Em's book.²⁴ At the end of the year she returned first to Cambridge then to London and the home of Dorothy and Charlie to continue her charitable work. During the war, Dorothy gathered around herself a considerable number of friends and volunteers in order to translate articles from German and other continental newspapers that spoke not of military or political matters but rather of human issues, such as the lack of food, the common suffering, etc. — issues that countered the jingoistic and prejudiced tone of the censored British press. Her translations were carried in the *Cambridge Magazine* and were very popular.

After the Armistice, Dorothy, Eglantyne, their friends and family and an ever-growing band of supporters and like-minded, concerned people fought relentlessly to lift the economic blockade and to ease the conditions imposed by the Versailles Treaty so that progress could be made and children could be saved. At this time a pamphlet was produced.²⁵ On the front of the pamphlet is a picture of a child, two and a half years old, weighing twelve pounds, “not born of nature but produced by British, Liberal, post-war economic policy.”²⁶ Eglantyne was arrested for distributing these pamphlets in Trafalgar Square. She and the friend with her, Barbara Ayrton Gould, continued to hand the pamphlets out as the police led them away.²⁷

Eglantyne and Gould went to trial on May 15, 1919. Eglantyne defended herself. They were charged with the unauthorized distribution of two leaflets and a poster. The poster said,

24. See above.

25. The pamphlet, Mulley says, is very graphic in its depiction of the starving child.

26. Mulley, p. 232.

27. Mulley, pp. 235–36. As Mulley points out, during the war, raising funds for any cause, but especially for the starving children of the enemy, had been difficult, but with the Armistice there was a resurgence of charitable giving. It was estimated that between four and five million children were starving over the area of conflict.

“What does Britain stand for? Starving babies, torturing women, killing the old.”²⁸ Clearly these women were not given to understatement or compromise. Eglantyne’s defence followed two lines of argument, first, that her pamphlets were outside official jurisdiction, because they were not political but humanitarian in subject, and second, that she had not violated the *Defence of the Realm Act* because either the war was officially over and therefore the *Act* was no longer applicable or the war was not over, in which case the economic blockade is one of the most egregious weapons of war known. Even so, Eglantyne was found guilty. She was fined five pounds.²⁹

On the 19th of May, Eglantyne and Dorothy held a Famine Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall. They were hoping to capitalize on the publicity of the trial, which was carried in all the major newspapers.³⁰ The turnout was stunning. It must be said too, though, that a good number of those attending came with eggs and tomatoes, because some of the people saw the sisters as traitors. But their programme was intelligently organized. First, there was an eyewitness account of just how devastating the effect of the blockade was on ordinary people like themselves. One speaker was Henry Noel Brailsford:

Not content with rolling out descriptions of skeleton-thin women, and passive, wide-eyed, dying children, Brailsford spoke of seeing unarmed men fighting mounted police in the streets, not in public protest but simply to seize a police-horse which they tore apart there and then for food.³¹

After more speakers, Eglantyne and Dorothy spoke last. Eglantyne spoke briefly and very

28. Mulley, p. 240.

29. Mulley, p. 242. Mulley notes that May 15 coincided with the state funeral of Edith Cavell, the English nurse who had been executed by the Germans for helping over two hundred Allied soldiers escape from occupied territory. Five pounds in 1913 would be worth £384 today. <http://eh.net/hmit>.

30. What is amazing about this is that the Royal Albert Hall has a capacity of 8,000. It filled to overflowing. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Albert_Hall, 25/10/2012

31. Mulley, p. 244.

effectively, saying in part:

It is impossible for us as normal human beings to watch children starve to death without making an effort to save them . . . We have only one object, to save as many as possible. We have only one rule, we shall help them whatever their country, whatever their religion.³²

Dorothy spoke at greater length, making the case for the Save the Children Fund and detailing the political consequences for children in Europe and appealing for food for these children. By this time, apparently, the audience was silent and the rotten things brought with them stayed in their bags. She ended with a simple but effective closing line. Waving a can of condensed milk above her head she said, “there is more practical morality in this can than in all the creeds.” “And so,” Mulley tells us, “the Save the Children Fund was launched as a spontaneous public collection was taken up around the hall.” Mulley goes on to say that “the inspiration behind Save the Children was the creation of a ‘better social order’ as well as individual child welfare.”³³

In 1920, the Save the Child International Union was established in Geneva. In 1922, Eglantyne circulated her “Children’s Charter,” which, she felt, defined the duties of adults toward children around the British Save the Children. There were other charters in circulation at this time, but in the end it was Eglantyne’s that was presented to the Save the Children International Union in Geneva in January 1923. The *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* was accepted by the International Union on 17 May 1923. The Assembly of the newly founded League of Nations unanimously accepted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* on 26 September 1924.

32. Mulley, p. 245.

33. Mulley, p. 245.

Four years later, in December 1928, sick but nevertheless still ready to do all she could, Eglantyne died. She had given her life to working for the disenfranchised, especially children. She believed them to be the vehicle for promoting a just and peaceful society. She never compromised her integrity. She said:

To the end of my days, I don't think I shall ever get out of my head the sound of children crying.³⁴

34. Mulley, p. 251.

Appendix B: The Apostles

The two old English universities in the first decades of the nineteenth century were extremely small, with no more than 1,500 students between them. Moreover, they remained what they had been since the Reformation of the sixteenth century, quasi-seminaries of the Church of England. They had essentially religious functions: the training of the clergy of the established church and the education of the nation's social elite in Christian morality. "Oxbridge" emphasized not research but what was taken in the day to be a liberal education — classics at Oxford and mathematics at Cambridge — because these subjects were thought to give unique mental and moral discipline. Further, the two universities were organized on the collegiate model, which meant that they were federations of relatively autonomous colleges in which the teachers and the students lived and worked. Though a small number of chaired professors delivered lectures, the great majority of instruction was done by the college tutors, who taught on the tutorial or "catechetical" method, which they regarded as the best method for moral training.¹

This was the academic climate in which the *Conversazione Club*,² better known as "The Apostles," was founded in 1820 by George Tomlinson at Cambridge University.³ In the early part of the century, new clubs came and went regularly; they were debating clubs and were focused

1. Thomas William Heyck, "Educational" in *A Companion To Victorian Literature & Culture* (Oxford 1999), ed. Herbert F. Tucker, pp. 194–211. It is worth noting that during the first half of the nineteenth century, there were only these two universities in England, but by the end of the century a number of "red-brick" universities had been established.

2. "Soiree given by learned or art society," *OED* 1964. "An evening of conversation, social recreation and amusement," *OED*² s.v.

3. W. C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820–1914: Liberalism, Imagination and Friendship in the British Intellectual Aristocracy* (Cambridge 1998) p. 27. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cambridge_apostles. <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/archive-month/january-2011.html>. Edmund Richardson, *Classical Victorians* (Cambridge 2013) p. 184, is quite wrong in saying that Connop Thirlwell was the founder of the Apostles. He was an Apostle but not the founder.

around Anglicanism. Most of the Apostles of the first few years were theological students who sank into “obscure, if no doubt worthy, clerical careers”;⁴ also, before a student could graduate, he had to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the *Evidences of Christianity* by William Paley, of the watchmaker and intelligent design theory, was a set text. The Apostles, therefore, started out as a simple religious debating club. In 1823, F. D. Maurice was elected to the Apostles and John Sterling joined in 1824. Maurice and Sterling began the change that made the Apostles such a significant and different group. The personality and commitment of Maurice to the principles of the Apostles — freedom, open-minded and respectful discussion of any subject, the liberation of women and their education at all levels and all children in the country, and the liberation of all education from the grip of the churches — were so strong and effective that Apostles have been led by commitment to these principles and that Apostles then and now worship him almost as a divinity.

I have today seen Rogers, who tells me that amongst other things that you know Maurice,” Hallam wrote to Gladstone, in some excitement. “I know nothing better suited to a letter of somewhat a serious kind than an exhortation to cultivate an acquaintance, which, from all I have heard, must be invaluable. I do not myself know Maurice, but I know well many whom he has known, and whom he has moulded like a second Nature, and these too men eminent for intellectual power, to whom the presence of a commandin[g] (*sic*) spirit would in all other cases be a signal rath[er] (*sic*) for rivalry than for reverential acknowledgement. [The] effect which he has produced on the minds of man[y] (*sic*) at Cambridge by the singular creation of that society, the Apostles, (for the spirit though not the form *was* created by him) is far greater than I can dare to calculate, and will be felt

4. Peter Allen, *The Cambridge Apostles: The Early Years* (Cambridge 1978) p. 22.

both directly and indirectly in the age that is before us (*sic*).⁵

It is impossible to overestimate the commitment and effect of Maurice. His life was dedicated to the social wellbeing of people, especially the poor, and in pursuit of education for all. This was a very controversial topic, given that in Victorian England

if they (the Aristocracy) considered the education of the other classes at all, its view was that their education, as any other commodity they needed, should be bought

and, with respect to the role of religion,

the various religious bodies, who provided most of the formal education available for the working class, were quite explicit on what kind of education should be provided because they had a very clear goal at which to aim. Their schools were provided for religious purposes. Their aim was that the next generation should believe in the Christian religion. Children must, therefore, learn to read the Bible. The ability to write was less important than the ability to read, and some even held that it might be Dangerous to teach writing since he who could write might write criticisms of the faith

5. Hallam to Gladstone [23 June, 1830], British Library Add. MS. 44352, fols. 158–59. In Allen, p. 56. Arthur Henry Hallam 1811–1833, came up to Cambridge in 1828 and was elected to the Apostles. Perhaps best known as the subject of Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam A.H.H.* When Hallam died at 22 from a brain haemorrhage, Tennyson was devastated. He both wrote *In Memoriam* in honour of his friend and named his first son Hallam. It is impossible to overestimate the commitment and effect of F. D. Maurice. Not a religious man but a man of great faith, his life was given to helping others, especially the poor. In 1854 he helped found Queen's College for Governesses; in 1854 he founded The Working Men's College in London where professors taught for no salary and a co-operative of students and faculty administered the college; 1874 he founded the Women's Working College with Frances Martin; he advocated against the religious tests and for the admission of women and dissenters to university and the equality of all people. In 1866 he was appointed Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge. The group was also nicknamed the "mystics"; Allen maintains that the nickname was given to those who were followers of Maurice, "in holding that social regeneration would come not through political change but through the spiritual influence of modern literature, specifically the writings of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats." Allen, p. 36. [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Denison_Maurice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Denison_Maurice).

and of the established political order.⁶

This overlooks the fact that if people can read, they are then able to read any literature available.

The Apostles practiced secrecy, which became more necessary by the mid-century so as not to draw attention to themselves. Secret clubs do tend to elicit an attitude of sneering and skepticism, but by keeping the society out of the public eye it allowed its members to feel more relaxed and free in their open-minded discussions. They were, in effect, liberals and were opposed to any form of religious control or dogmatism and any other method of mind or spiritual control. There were three themes that they followed — liberalism, imagination, and friendship — which persist to this day.⁷

They also sought manliness and, as Lubenow puts it, “manliness was in contrast to the aristocratic arrogance or intellectual prissiness” of the day but rather saw manliness “not so much as masculine but as courageous, frank, upright, mature, undogmatic, and earnest” (p. 31).

The Apostles met every Saturday evening during term, usually in the rooms of the Apostle whose turn it was to present an essay for discussion. The topic could be on any subject the member chose, there was no restriction, and members could agree or oppose as they chose; the discussion was wide open and the only restrictions were that no-one be aggressive and that everyone speak with complete candour. Open-mindedness and candour were sacrosanct and influential in creating the friendships that were so treasured by Apostles and lasted for their lifetime. The topics they discussed in the early days were quite varied and included the

6. P. W. Musgrove, *Society and Education in England Since 1800* (London 1968) pp. 10–11. This really reveals how confining the intellectual prison was that the church placed on the minds of the people. In fighting against this restriction, and winning in the end, one might call the Apostles true revolutionaries.

7. Lubenow, p. 20.

following:

Has the application of the system of “The Division of Labour” since the beginning of the reign of George III been beneficial to the country?

[Everyone thought it had not.]

Is the practice of Fornication justifiable on principles of expediency? [Only one Apostle thought it was, probably Arthur Buller, who was notorious for his sexual adventures.]

Is the Greek drama founded upon true principles of Art? [Seven members, including Hallam, thought it was, but one did not and one abstained.]

Is suicide under any circumstances justifiable? [Six thought it was not, three thought it was, and two, including Hallam, abstained.]

Are all mankind descended from one stock? [Four thought they were, and three, including Hallam, thought they were not.]⁸

As soon as Maurice was elected in 1923, the political direction of the Apostles began to change. Under his inspiration they began a movement to reform education in the university. They wanted to break the hold of religion on the university, which they saw as being intellectually and spiritually crippling. In addition, they sought to put an end to the requirement that fellows, dons, tutors and assistant tutors be celibate, and at this time, they wished for “Dissenters” (those whose religion was other than strict Church of England) to be admitted. It is not that they were not admitted, but rather that they could not receive a degree unless they signed the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, which all students were required sign at the end of their

8. Allen, p. 3.

studies. Finally, they wanted to open education to subjects other than mathematics, classics and theology, and they wanted education for everyone. As Musgrove notes, “Adam Smith was, however, a Scot who knew from experience that education was the basis of good civil government, of much economic activity and of social progress” (Musgrove, p. 8). At this time university education was dominated by those of privilege and birth who also dominated in the primary profession, Law, Politics, the Church and the Military. As Lubenow points out:

The problem the professions faced in the nineteenth century was to escape from the old corruption, with its sinecures, bribes, gratuitous fees, and patronage, and to establish independent status and reputation. They sought separation from an *ancien régime* at the same time that their numbers exceeded available occupational opportunities.⁹

The restrictions on the subjects that could be studied at university were not confined to Britain but were present across Europe and, as Lubenow further points out,

Russian people of learning lived in a Muscovite tradition, buried in their own past, cut off from both medieval scholasticism and seventeenth-century rationalism. In Germany a person of learning required an office or a title to be taken seriously. In France they were a closed society, most frequently on the left, critics of authority and the church, pronouncing authoritatively on the moral condition of society. Bohemia was not a strange land in Central Europe; it was a country in which imagination dwelt on the fringe of bourgeois society.¹⁰

9. Lenore O’Boyle, “The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800–1850,” *Journal of Modern History* 42 (1970) pp. 471–95. Lubenow, p. 4.

10. Edward Shils, “Ideology and Civility: On the Politics of the Intellectual,” *Sewanee Review* 66 (3) (July–September 1958) pp. 450–52, and *The Intellectuals and the Powers and other Essays* (Chicago 1972), pp. 3–7. In Russia, the revolutionary Peter Kropotkin was training as a royal page in Moscow when Tzar Alexander I repealed the Serfdom law in 1861. Kropotkin and a number of his fellow pages started Sunday classes teaching the now-free serfs to read and write. The serfs were very quick to learn, but the aristocracy put an end to the classes after eighteen

F. D. Maurice would not sign the Thirty-Nine Articles and so could not graduate from Cambridge. His home was a place of religious difference. His father was a Unitarian who was tolerant of all religions, his sisters were Calvinists and were tolerant of none, believing that dogma ruled everything.¹¹ Clearly this contributed significantly to his inspiration and commitment to the liberation of education at Cambridge and to freedom from the grip of religion, and undoubtedly was the inspiration that provoked the response of other Apostles that would make him a beloved and revered person within them. It would take many decades before the Apostles would see their commitment to these principles fulfilled, but through the generations they have never lost their commitment.

Wherever they went they would pursue the issues that were important to them with the society they were in, with each other and, as they saw it, to society at large, and do so throughout their lifetime, quietly and effectively. In pursuing their various aims the Apostles were trying to recapture some of the spirit of fifth-century Athens. W. H. Auden, in the introduction to *The Portable Greek Reader*, speculates:

Nevertheless, the bewildered comment of any fifth century Athenian upon our society from Dante's time till our own, and with increasing sharpness every decade, would surely be: "Yes, I can see all the works of a great civilization; but why cannot I meet any civilized persons? I only encounter specialists, artists who know nothing of science, scientists who know

months, fearing an educated poor might start demanding all kinds of things.

11. Maurice's father was a non-conformist who had been educated at Leeds Grammar School and then at the Hoxton Academy that offered an alternative to Oxford and Cambridge. The three teachers there were an Arian, a Socinian, and a Calvinist. Maurice went to Hackney College, notorious for its radicalism, even to believing in the principles of the French Revolution. Allen says that at a college like Hoxton they taught their students to "read what they liked, discuss what they liked, think what they liked, but the usual effect of this freedom was to produce a single kind of liberal mind" (Allen, p. 60). Even so, it should not be missed that freedom of thought and open-mindedness were very much encouraged.

nothing of art, philosophers who have no interest in God, priests who are unconcerned with politics, politicians who only know other politicians? Civilization is a precarious balance between what Professor Whitehead has called barbaric vagueness and trivial order. Barbarism is unified but undifferentiated; triviality is differentiated but lacking in any central unity; the ideal of civilization is the integration into a complete whole and with minimum strain of the maximum number of distinct activities.¹²

This is exactly what the Apostles sought to put into practice over the generations that they have existed. Over the years a good number of graduates would return to Cambridge as tutors, dons and fellows, making education a pleasure for many of their students and effecting change in any area they could. In addition, a greater number took positions in education both in the public schools and in schools all over Britain and abroad in Egypt, Greece, India, France, Germany, Canada, the United States and a number of other countries. Many joined the Civil Service, where

they worked tirelessly for intellectual freedom within the universities which, they thought, should admit anyone irrespective of his religious beliefs, and for the creation of a public service open to talent. If they can be said to have had a Bill of Rights it was the Trevelyan-Northcote report of 1853 on the reform of the civil service and their Glorious Revolution was achieved in 1870–1 when entry to public service by privilege, purchase of army commissions and the religious tests were finally abolished.¹³

12. W. H. Auden, *The Portable Greek Reader* (Harmondsworth 1948) p. 7.

13. Allen, p. 199. Noel Annan, "The Intellectual Aristocracy," *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan*, ed. J. H. Plumb (Cambridge 1955) pp. 243–87; the quotation occurs on p. 247. It is interesting that the Apostles would speak of their success finally coming to fruition as a "Glorious Revolution" — that was the term used by the English when William of Orange landed at Brixham, Devon, in 1688 at the head of a strong army and overthrew James II of England, VII of Scotland. James was openly Catholic and, under him, religious persecution began again. Under William, the Monarchy became constitutional. Eric D. Delderfield, *Kings and Queens of England and Great Britain* (London 1970) pp. 94–95.

From its earliest days the Apostles held an annual dinner in London. The dinner was very much valued as it gave the Apostles of all ages an opportunity to get together and for the new Apostles to meet and get to know a little the older Apostles, now called Angels, and it served to make the Apostolic bonds stronger and closer and keep the Apostles in touch since their careers had them scattered hither and yon. If they could possibly attend then most of them did. Caroline, Jebb's wife, relates the following story. Jebb had been travelling in Greece and Italy (1878, the year he was president of the society), where

he must have caught the infection of illness, for scarcely had he reached London on the morning of the 18th when he was seized, while breakfasting at his club, with a shivering fit. It was always difficult for him to change a plan or break an engagement; and his strong will made him put aside physical discomfort, sometimes till the breaking point was reached. He went out to Richmond at once, ordered a room at the hotel and stayed in bed, shivering under heavy blankets, until it was time to dress, the next night, for the dinner. Unable to touch food, he presided at the long dinner, made the speech expected of the President, and even walked in the gardens with one or two friends till midnight. The next afternoon he was just able to get home. "I'll go to bed" was the last entry in his diary for many weeks. From the 20th of June to the 7th of August he lay wasting with fever, not suffering, sleeping most of the time, but very dangerously ill.¹⁴

The principal task of the president was to give a speech, binding the young to the old by forging a narrative of collective memory contrasting the Real world of the Society with the Phenomenal world of the Angels."¹⁵ — which Jebb did. This tells us how important the Apostles

14. C. Jebb, p. 209; Lubenow, p. 65.

15. Lubenow, p. 65.

were to each other and to their society. Of membership in the Apostles and just how important it really was is demonstrated by both J. M. Kemble and Jebb:

No society ever existed in which more freedom of thought was found consistent with the most perfect affection between the members, or in which a more complete tolerance of the most opposite opinions prevailed. I shall say nothing of what the actual and former members of the society have done; but very few of the Cambridge men of our time have not been members of it; and it existed to remedy a fault of our education. Its business was to make men study and think on all matters except mathematics and classics professionally considered. Its metaphysical tendency has altered (first in Trinity) the system of the university examination itself . . . To my *education* given in that society I feel that I owe every power I possess, and the rescuing myself from a ridiculous state of prejudice and prepossessions with which I came armed to Cambridge. From “the Apostles” I, at least, learned to think as a *free man*.¹⁶

Jebb was equally affected:

I have always felt that nothing ever did me more good than belonging to this society, for there was something in its whole spirit and in the peculiar sort of intimacy among its members which helped one, just at the critical time of life, to resist common standards, to aim high and be independent.¹⁷

And Sir Frederick Pollock, writing his memoirs in 1887, speaks of comments about the Apostles

16. J. M. Kemble, written in 1847, in John William Adamson, *English Education 1789—1902* (Cambridge 1964) p. 73.

17. Adamson, p. 427. Caroline Slemmer, Jebb’s future wife, says of his election as an Apostle that it was something “which he always valued, and which at once brought him into intimate relations with many of the best men in the University” (*LL*. p. 29).

made by Sir Arthur Helps in his book *Realmah*,¹⁸ a novel set in India. Helps has Sir Arthur, one of the characters, say of his experience of the Apostles, which surely reflects Helps' own experience:

The best protest I ever knew made against worldly success was by a small society of young men at college. Their numbers were few, and their mode of election was the most remarkable I have ever known. . . . Rank neither told for a man nor against him. The same with riches, the same with learning, and, what is more strange, the same with intellectual gifts of all kinds. The same, too, with goodness; nor even were the qualities that make a man agreeable any sure recommendation of him as a candidate. . . . Our man was not to talk the talk of any clique...

Of his own experience he goes on to say:

. . . but I may tell you that, above all things, he (an Apostle) was open-minded. When we voted for a man we generally summed up by saying, "He has an apostolic spirit in him," and by that we really meant a great deal. . . . There was no subject which might not be introduced for discussion, and no differences of opinion ever interfered with the affectionate friendship which prevailed among its members — and this was a friendship not confined to contemporaries, but extending backwards and forwards to all older and younger members.¹⁹

They were there for each other in the good times and the bad. There were many cases of

18. Arthur Helps, *Realmah* (London 1868).

19. Richard Pollock, *Personal Remembrances of Sir Frederick Pollock, Second Baronet* (London 1887) pp. 69–71. It is hard to grasp in the 21st century, where we can, and do, discuss anything we desire, to have lived in a culture where this is not really possible in the world at large but suddenly becomes so within this small group of very young men, and that it persisted, and that it made them free to make it so in the outside world. Helps was elected an Apostle in 1833.

illness, depression, family issues in which the men sought help from other Apostles and were never turned down. One particular case is that of James Duff Duff. He graduated in 1884 and was elected to a fellowship in 1891. He took duty and responsibility seriously and was dedicated to his students and work at the university, giving it his all. In 1891 he asked Laura Lenox-Conyngham to marry him, then immediately he fell into a nervous collapse with all the accompanying symptoms, bouts of severe depression, unable to sleep or to carry out his duties.²⁰

Fellow Apostles Henry Babington Smith and Arthur Clough²¹ took him to Italy and, taking turns since both had to work, they took him all over Italy, taking care of him and making sure that he did not kill himself. He would remember their kindness with great gratitude all his life. Quite a number of Apostles experienced mental illness and there was almost always another Apostle there to help them through their time of difficulty. The same applied also in the case of death. Fellow Apostles were always there. They also helped each other wherever possible in any of the issues that beleaguer people and this helped to consolidate and strengthen their friendships and identity as Apostles. And the Apostles were there for each when scandal struck. William Johnson, elected an Apostle in 1844, later became both a fellow at King's and a master at Eton, then resigned all his academic posts and changed his name to Cory after threats of blackmail surfaced following a scandal with respect to the future Earl of Rosebery, who had been a pupil of

20. Laura accepted his proposal but he was overcome by the realization that in addition to giving his all to his students and their education and health and wellbeing, he was now wishing to add the same intense commitment to a wife, household and children and it all overwhelmed him. However, four years later, he asked her again and she said yes, again; they were married in 1895. They had three children, but his mental problems persisted. Even so, Duff Duff became very successful as a Latinist and for translating Russian novels into English; Lubnow, p. 76 n. 214. When Babington Smith died, Duff Duff wrote to his widow telling of their time in Italy and how very grateful and appreciative he was for all that her husband had done for him. Duff Duff wrote Babington Smith's obituary for the *Cambridge Review*, finishing with "[t]hose who knew him best, loved him best." Lubnow, p. 76.

21. Lubnow continues that Clough himself fell ill when preparing to marry and that his depression continued after his marriage, indeed he suffered with it all his life. In the end Duff Duff, Clough and Babington Smith all experienced depression. While they were all in Italy another Apostle, James Fitzjames Stephen fell ill, later his son, James Kenneth went mad and starved himself to death in an asylum.

his. After his scandal Johnson, now Cory, moved to Devon. Lubenow explains further:

After William Johnson had been sacked and left Eton for Devon, the Apostles sought his company at the annual dinner (“I thought I had washed out my trail,” he wrote). Montagu Butler, bringing Pratt with him, Frederick Pollock, and Henry Sidgwick, came to stay with the former Eton master at Haldon. Neither did they turn their backs on O.B. Two years after Dr. Hornby forced him out of Eton, the Apostles made Browning the president of the annual meeting over which he presided at the Star and Garter in Richmond.²²

Before moving to the next issue of great importance the Apostles really were committed to, it is worth just noting another quiet demonstration of the early Apostles’ deep affection for, and commitment to, the principles they embraced and kept alive and vivid throughout his life. As noted earlier, Tennyson was also very much influenced by the Rev. F. D. Maurice and, in fact, was godfather to his son. Tennyson dedicated a poem to Maurice:

Come, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

The poem continues for eleven more verses, all of which tend to be critical of those who see Maurice as being an unclear, unfocused and unacceptable member of the Academy and especially on the religious front. He says that Maurice’s theology “was always a little indefinite,” but given the principle of open-mindedness embraced by the Apostles, are the rigid constraints of

22. Lubenow, p. 85. O.B. = Oscar Browning, elected an Apostle in 1858. See the collection of letters and papers associated with O. B.’s presidency in the Oscar Browning Papers, 2/7 in Lubenow, p. 85 n. 278.

formal religion superior to a deep and profound faith, which he demonstrated throughout his whole life?²³ It is hard to believe that Maurice's religious thought was indeed indefinite, given that Maurice attracted both the attention and the following of so many notable and intelligent people.

Another strong cause pursued by the Apostles was the education of women and their admission to education at all levels and in all circumstances. They did not see women as beneath them but as equals. Lubenow puts it very well:

If the Apostles worked to open the university to those who had been excluded by religious tests, they were also eager to acquire the talents of women for the university. At Oxford Samuel Butcher and Arthur Sidgwick (brother of Henry) worked for women's education. At Cambridge Benjamin Hall Kennedy, James Stuart, F. D. Maurice, Arthur Verrall, James Ward, and James Duff Duff lectured to women at Girton and Newnham."²⁴ Ward opened his Moral Sciences lectures to women in 1879. Kennedy, an outspoken advocate for opening university examinations to women, believed "free intellectual competition" would benefit men as well as women and would serve as "one of the best and most potent agencies for future civilization." When women were admitted to examinations, Jebb wrote:

The votes by which the ladies won
Were as a Leap Year's days;

23. Hugh Walker, writing in 1897, has little good to say of Maurice. Walker was a Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Wales. Hugh Walker, *The Age of Tennyson* (London 1904) p. 156. What Walker does not appear to understand in his criticism of Maurice was that Maurice was not a man to adhere to religious dictates, but rather was searching for the truth, and did so until the day he died.

24. Girton College, the first Women's College at Cambridge, was established in 1869 by Emily Davies, Barbara Bodichon and Lady Stanley of Alderley, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/girton_college_cambridge. 26/05/2013. Girton, along with Newnham the other women's college at Cambridge, was only admitted to full membership of the university in 1948.

A Math's brief tale would all but tell
The number of the nays.
Thus, as the sun in heaven, our cause
Is clear to men of sense;
The adverse tide is little more
Than Lunar influence.²⁵

It was a telling victory. The Grace on which the house hung passed 398 *placets* to 32 *non-placets*. Arthur Sidgwick came up to Cambridge for the Senate House vote. All of his friends supported the measure and their success was marked by cheers for his brother Henry at Newnham.²⁶

Prominently, he took a role in promoting the higher education of women. He helped start the higher local examinations for women, and the lectures held at Cambridge in preparation for these. It was at his suggestion and with his help that Anne Clough opened a house of residence for students, which developed into Newnham College, Cambridge.²⁷

Jebb also was very supportive of education for women. In fact, the last speech he gave in parliament before leaving for South Africa where the British Association were to hold their meeting, and where he was due to give an address, was on the second reading of the Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill.²⁸ The bill addressed the injustice of recent Acts that did not allow women to sit on county council or borough councils. This new bill, if passed,

25. Richard Jebb to Henry Sidgwick, 25 February 1882; Sidgwick MSS, Add. MS c94.56. In Lubenow, p. 347 n. 251.

26. Richard Jebb to Henry Sidgwick, 25 February 1882; Sidgwick MSS, Add. MS c94.56. In Lubenow, p. 347 n. 251.

27. Henry Sidgwick, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/henry_sidgwick, 12/05/2013.

28. When Jebb returned from South Africa he became very ill, and he died December 9th, 1905. The speech he gave in South Africa was on education and it was considered by attendees that it justified the whole meeting.

would make it legally possible for women to stand for election to all local, county and borough councils. A part of what Jebb said is:

So far as his experience went, he could add his testimony to the abundant testimony that was forthcoming from all who had had similar experience that the assistance of women in the discussion of educational questions was of the greatest possible value. In matters relating to public health, the employment of children, the prevention of cruelty to children, industrial schools, and many other matters, the intervention of women in local government was obviously of the greatest good. They brought to these departments of local government a knowledge and insight into the conditions affecting women and girls which men could not possibly contribute.²⁹

This highlights just one women's issue that he vigorously endorsed.

There was a great deal of activity on all fronts in Victorian England: Education, women's rights, the plight of children, workers, society at large, and every aspect of society in all its complexities, and more often than not a former Apostle could be found contributing and making a difference. They were not ostentatious, but they were almost always committed to the issue that they took on. In the beginning it was Maurice who was their inspiration and example *par excellence*. In the mid-century it would be Henry Sidgwick. Like Maurice, he was a committed man who accomplished many things. Elected an Apostle in 1856, he exercised a great deal of influence. He was one of the founders, in 1882, of the Society for Psychological Research, which was a non-profit organization . . . Its stated purpose is to understand "events and

29. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/professor-richard-jebb/1905>

abilities commonly described as psychic or paranormal by promoting and supporting important research in this area” and to “examine allegedly paranormal phenomena in a scientific and unbiased way.”³⁰

He was a member of the Metaphysical Society, founded in 1869 by James Knowles, which examined philosophical questions such as moral sciences, immortality of the soul, etc. It folded in 1880.³¹ He was a vigorous promoter of equality for women, higher education for women, and co-founder of Newnham College for women at Cambridge University with Anne Clough.³² He helped start the higher local examinations for women and the lectures at Cambridge that prepared the women to sit these exams. Sidgwick is reported to have defined the essential essence and tradition of the Apostles as Maurice likely saw and intended as “a belief that we *can* learn, and a determination that we *will* learn, from people of the most opposite opinions.”³³ He was elected to a fellowship at Trinity in 1859. He resigned the fellowship in 1869 on the grounds that he could not in all good conscience subscribe to the Church of England any longer. His resignation is said to have directly resulted in the abolition of the religious tests in 1871.³⁴ In 1865, Sidgwick

reluctantly resigned his active membership “to relieve the weight of years that seemed to be pressing on the Society,” he had set about establishing an alternative discussion group among the more senior members of the

30. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/society_for_psychical_research, 30/03/2013. A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London 2002) p. 439. Lubenow suggests that the Society for Psychical Research was particularly appropriate for the Apostles since most were progressives and agnostics and could therefore meditate on and discuss what might lie beyond the physical experience (Lubenow, p. 230).

31. It is worth noting here that the Apostles joined a good number of clubs or societies, most of which were based around food and discussion. The Ad Eundem Club, The Dilettanti Club, the Sterling Club and the Metaphysical Society were all “apostolic avenues for pursuing Reality by Phenomenal means” (Lubenow, p. 230). Other clubs included the Savile Club, the Grote Club, the Alpine Club and others that really demonstrate the diversity of their thinking and willingness to explore any and all issues.

32. Allen, p. 19. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/henry_sidgwick, 13/05/2013.

33. Allen, p. 210.

34. Allen, p. 217.

intellectual community at Cambridge. This group, eventually named the Grote club . . . included several Apostles . . . used to meet once or twice a term at Grote's vicarage. . . in the later sixties they included Maurice . . . [a memorable meeting was one where] Sidgwick devoted himself to drawing out Maurice's recollections of English social and political life in the thirties, forties, and fifties. Maurice's face shone out bright, with its singular holy radiance, as he responded to Sidgwick's enquiries and suggestions; and others said afterwards that we owed all the delight of that evening to him.³⁵

Sidgwick is credited with bringing the Apostles to a new position of liberal opinion by the time of his death in 1900.³⁶ It is impossible to cover in an appendix the vast number of accomplishments of either the Apostles as a group or their individual members, but the part they played in the intellectual, educational, social, political, gender and other aspects of the revolution of the Victorian era is very significant. But perhaps it is the case that the most profound revolution they initiated was that of open-mindedness, non-judgementalism, freedom of thought and the definition and practice of friendship among men which, clearly, was very liberating for them. Perhaps the most profound expression of this friendship is that given by Henry Sidgwick on his deathbed:

I can only describe as the spirit of the pursuit of the truth with absolute devotion and unreserve by a group of intimate friends, who were perfectly frank with each other and indulged in any amount of humorous sarcasm and playful banter, and yet each respects the other when he discourses, tries to learn from him and see what he sees. Absolute candour was the only duty that the tradition of the society enforced. No consistency was demanded with opinions previously held — truth as we saw it then and there was what

35. Allen, p. 217.

36. Lubenow, p. 33.

we had to embrace and maintain and there were no propositions so well established that an Apostle had no right to deny or question, if he did so seriously and not out of mere love of paradox. The gravest subjects were continually debated, but gravity of treatment, as I have said, was not imposed, though sincerity was. In fact it was rather a point of the Apostolic mind to understand how much suggestion and instruction might be derived from what is in form a jest — even in dealing with the gravest matters.³⁷

It is this inspiration, commitment to the search for truth and to the idea of truth and loyalty, to open-mindedness and friendship, this unwillingness to see anything other than that man is capable of being a far better race of beings than we currently are. Even though we might consider it hopelessly idealistic today, many of the earlier Apostles believed that the Greeks of fifth-century B.C. Athens, at least during the πεντηκονταετία, had set an example, a guide and an inspiration for the struggle. This is what made them, for such a small group, so active and effective a group down through almost two hundred years.

37. Allen, p. 217.