

**Laughter in Ancient Greek Drama
of the Classical Period.**

Tragedy and Satyr Play.

mgr Yvonne Borowski

**Praca doktorska
napisana pod kierunkiem
prof. dra hab. Jadwigi Czerwińskiej**

**Katedra Filologii Klasycznej
Uniwersytet Łódzki**

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In memoriam

Monika Szafrńska-Sienkiewicz

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Abbreviations

GREEK AND ROMAN AUTHORS AND WORKS

<i>A. Mart.</i>	<i>Acta Martyrum</i>	<i>Th.</i>	<i>Thesmophoriazusae</i>
		<i>Ra.</i>	<i>Ranae</i>
<i>Ael.</i>	<i>Aelianus</i>	<i>Ec.</i>	<i>Ecclesiazusae</i>
<i>Ael. Dion.</i>	<i>Aelius Dionysus</i>	<i>Pl.</i>	<i>Plutos</i>
<i>Aeschin.</i>	<i>Aeschines</i>	<i>Archil.</i>	<i>Archilochus</i>
<i>Fals. leg.</i>	<i>De falsa legatione</i>	<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Aristoteles</i>
<i>In Ctes.</i>	<i>Oratio in Ctesiphontem</i>	<i>Eth. Nic.</i>	<i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
<i>In Tim.</i>	<i>Oratio in Timarchum</i>	<i>Part. an.</i>	<i>De partibus animalium</i>
<i>Aes.</i>	<i>Aeschylus</i>	<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetica</i>
<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	<i>Rh.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
<i>Ch.</i>	<i>Choephoroe</i>	<i>Arr.</i>	<i>Arrianus</i>
<i>Eu.</i>	<i>Eumenides</i>	<i>Epict. Diss.</i>	<i>Epicteti Dissertationes</i>
<i>Pers.</i>	<i>Persae</i>	<i>Athan.</i>	<i>Athanasius</i>
<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Prometheus Vincetus</i>	<i>Or. Con. Ar.</i>	<i>Oratio contra Arrianos</i>
<i>Aesop.</i>	<i>Aesopus</i>	<i>Athen.</i>	<i>Athenaeus</i>
<i>Fab.</i>	<i>Fabulae</i>	<i>Babr.</i>	<i>Babrius</i>
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>Proverbia</i>	<i>Bacch.</i>	<i>Bacchylides</i>
<i>Aët.</i>	<i>Aëtius</i>	<i>Epinic.</i>	<i>Epinician odes</i>
<i>Alex. Aet.</i>	<i>Alexander Aetolus</i>	<i>Basil. M.</i>	<i>Basilium Magnus</i>
<i>Amm.</i>	<i>Ammonius</i>	<i>Call.</i>	<i>Callimachus</i>
<i>Vocab. diff.</i>	<i>De differentia adfinium</i>	<i>Del.</i>	<i>Hymnus in Delum</i>
	<i>vocabulorum</i>	<i>Dian.</i>	<i>Hymnus in Dianam</i>
<i>Anaxandr.</i>	<i>Anaxandrides</i>	<i>Cass. Dio</i>	<i>Cassius Dio</i>
<i>Antiph.</i>	<i>Antiphanes</i>	<i>Cic.</i>	<i>Cicero</i>
<i>Antipho Soph.</i>	<i>Antipho Sophista</i>	<i>De orat.</i>	<i>De oratore</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>	<i>Com. adesp.</i>	<i>Comica adespota</i>
<i>Apoll.</i>	<i>Apollonius</i>	<i>Crat.</i>	<i>Cratinus</i>
<i>Arg.</i>	<i>Argonautica</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Demosthenes</i>
<i>Apollod.</i>	<i>Apollodorus</i>	<i>Democr.</i>	<i>Democritus</i>
<i>A.D.</i>	<i>Apollonius Dyscolus</i>	<i>D. Chr.</i>	<i>Dio Chrysostomus</i>
<i>Synt.</i>	<i>De syntaxi</i>	<i>Diog.</i>	<i>Diogenes</i>
<i>Ar.</i>	<i>Aristophanes</i>	<i>D.L.</i>	<i>Diogenes Laertius</i>
<i>Ach.</i>	<i>Acharnae</i>	<i>Diogenian.</i>	<i>Diogenianus</i>
<i>Eq.</i>	<i>Equites</i>	<i>Diph.</i>	<i>Diphilus</i>
<i>Nu.</i>	<i>Nubes</i>	<i>Eleg. adesp.</i>	<i>Elegiaca Adespota</i>
<i>V.</i>	<i>Vespae</i>		
<i>Pax</i>	<i>Pax</i>		
<i>Av.</i>	<i>Aves</i>		
<i>Lys.</i>	<i>Lysistrate</i>		

Epich.	Epicharmus	<i>Ad Dem.</i>	<i>Oratio ad Demosthenem</i>
EM	<i>Etymologicum Magnum</i>	Jo. Chrys.	Johannes Chrysostomus
Eub.	Eubulus	<i>Virg. Corrupt.</i>	<i>De corruptoribus virginum</i>
Eur.	Euripides	Jo. Dam.	Joannes Damascenus
<i>Al.</i>	<i>Alcestis</i>	<i>Vita Barl.</i>	<i>Vita Barlaam et Joasaph</i>
<i>Ba.</i>	<i>Bacchae</i>	Jul.	Julianus Imperator
<i>Cyc.</i>	<i>Cyclopus</i>	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
<i>Hl.</i>	<i>Helena</i>	Lib.	Libanius
<i>Hclld.</i>	<i>Heraclidae</i>	<i>Decl.</i>	<i>Declamationes</i>
<i>HF</i>	<i>Hercules Furens</i>	Long.	Longus
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Hippolytus</i>	Luc.	Lucianus
<i>IA</i>	<i>Iphigeneia in Aulide</i>	<i>Am.</i>	<i>Amores</i>
<i>Io.</i>	<i>Ion</i>	<i>Dial. Mort.</i>	<i>Dialogi Mortuorum</i>
<i>IT</i>	<i>Iphigeneia in Tauride</i>	<i>Salt.</i>	<i>De saltatione</i>
<i>Md.</i>	<i>Medea</i>	<i>Somn.</i>	<i>Somnium sive Vita Luciani</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orestes</i>	<i>Vit. Auc.</i>	<i>Vitarum Auctio</i>
<i>Rh.</i>	<i>Rhesus</i>	<i>VH</i>	<i>Verae Historiae</i>
<i>Su.</i>	<i>Supplices</i>	Lycymn.	Lycymnius
<i>Tr.</i>	<i>Troades</i>	Lyc.	Lycophron
Eust.	Eustathius	Man.	Manetho Astrologus
<i>Comm. Od.</i>	<i>Commentari ad Homeri</i>	<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apotelesmatica</i>
	<i>Odysseam</i>	Men.	Menander
<i>Comm. Il.</i>	<i>Commentari ad Homeri</i>	<i>Dysc.</i>	<i>Dyscolus</i>
	<i>Iliadem</i>	<i>Epit.</i>	<i>Epitrepontes</i>
Gal.	Galenus	<i>Sam.</i>	<i>Samia</i>
<i>Nat. Fac.</i>	<i>De naturalibus facultatibus</i>	Men. Rh.	Menander Rhetor
Gr. Nyss.	Gregorius Nyssenus	Opp.	Oppianus
<i>Contr. Eun.</i>	<i>Contra Eunomium</i>	<i>Hal.</i>	<i>Haliutica</i>
Henioch.	Heniochus	<i>Par. Jer.</i>	<i>Paralipomena Jeremiae</i>
Heraclit.	Heraclitus	Pall.	Palladius Monachus
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>	<i>V. Chrys.</i>	<i>Dialogus de vita Joannis Chrysostomi</i>
Hrdt.	Herodotus	Paus. Gram.	Pausanias Grammaticus
Hes.	Hesiod	Philem.	Philemon
<i>Th.</i>	<i>Theogonia</i>	Phld.	Philodemus
Hipp.	Hippocrates	<i>Elect.</i>	<i>De electionibus et fugis</i>
<i>Morb. Sacr.</i>	<i>De morbo sacro</i>	<i>Rh.</i>	<i>Volumina Rhetorica</i>
Hsch.	Hesychius	Phil. Jud.	Philo Judaeus
<i>Lex.</i>	<i>Lexicon</i>	<i>Mut. Nom.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>
	(quoted without title)	Phil.	Philostratus Maior
Hom.	Homerus	<i>Imag.</i>	<i>Imagines</i>
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Ilias</i>	<i>VA</i>	<i>Vita Apollonii</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssea</i>		
<i>Hom. Hymn.</i>	<i>Homerici Hymni</i>		
Isoc.	Isocrates		

Philox. Gram.	Philoxenus Grammaticus	<i>Morb. Sacr.</i>	<i>De morbo sacro</i>
Phot.	Photius	Ps.-Zonar.	Pseudo-Zonaras
<i>Lex.</i>	<i>Lexicon</i> (quoted without title)	<i>Lex.</i>	<i>Lexicon</i> (quoted without title)
Phryn.	Phrynichus	Poll.	Pollux Grammaticus
<i>Ec.</i>	<i>Eclogae</i>	Quint.	Quintilian
<i>Praep. Soph.</i>	<i>Praeparatio Sophistica</i>	<i>Inst. Orat.</i>	<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
Pi.	Pindarus	Sapph	Sappho
<i>Is.</i>	<i>Isthmian odes</i>	<i>Sch.</i>	<i>Scholia</i>
<i>Olym.</i>	<i>Olympian odes</i>	Sext.	Sextus
<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythian odes</i>	<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Sententiae</i>
Pl.	Plato	Sopat. Rh.	Sopater Rhetor
<i>Chrm.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>	<i>ad Hermog. Stat.</i>	<i>Scholia ad Hermogenis status</i>
<i>Euthd.</i>	<i>Euthydemus</i>	Soph.	Sophocles
<i>Euthphr.</i>	<i>Euthyphro</i>	<i>Ai.</i>	<i>Aias</i>
<i>Lach.</i>	<i>Laches</i>	<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antigone</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Leges</i>	<i>El.</i>	<i>Electra</i>
<i>Meno.</i>	<i>Meno</i>	<i>Ich.</i>	<i>Ichneutae</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>	OC	<i>Oedipus Colonus</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>	OR	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>
<i>Phlb.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>	<i>Ph.</i>	<i>Philoctetes</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politicus</i>	<i>Tr.</i>	<i>Trachiniae</i>
<i>Prot.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>	Sosicr.	Sosicrates
<i>Res.</i>	<i>Res publica</i>	Stob.	Stobaeus
<i>Sym.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	<i>Anth.</i>	<i>Anthologium</i>
<i>Theaet.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>	Suid.	Suidae Lexicon
Plaut.	Plautus	Theocr.	Theocritus
<i>Stich.</i>	<i>Stichus</i>	Theoph.	Theophilus
Plin.	Plinius	<i>Apol. ad Autol.</i>	<i>Apologia ad Autolyicum</i>
<i>Hist. Nat.</i>	<i>Historia Naturalis</i>	Theophr.	Theophrastus
Plut.	Plutarch	<i>Ch.</i>	<i>Characteres</i>
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>Historia Plantarum</i>
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander</i>	Thgn.	Theognis
<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus</i>	Thuc.	Thucydides
<i>Caes.</i>	<i>Caesar</i>	<i>Trag. adesp.</i>	<i>Tragica adespota</i>
<i>Con. praec.</i>	<i>Coniugalia praecepta</i>	Xen.	Xenophon
<i>Def. Oracul.</i>	<i>De defectu oraculorum</i>	<i>An.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>
<i>Fab.</i>	<i>Fabius Maximus</i>	<i>Cyr.</i>	<i>Cyropaedia</i>
<i>Nic.</i>	<i>Nicias</i>	<i>Hell.</i>	<i>Hellenica</i>
<i>Prim. Frig.</i>	<i>De primo frigido</i>	<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>
<i>Quaest. Conv.</i>	<i>Quaestiones Convivales</i>	<i>Sym.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
Proteu.	<i>Protoevangelium Iacobi</i>		
Ps.-Athan.	Pseudo-Athanasius		
<i>Virg.</i>	<i>De virginitate</i>		
Ps.-Apul.	Pseudo-Apuleius		
<i>Herb.</i>	<i>Herbarium</i>		
Ps.-Hippoc.	Pseudo-Hippocrates		

JOURNALS

<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>CPh</i>	Classical Philology
<i>CQ</i>	Classical Quarterly
<i>CR</i>	Classical Review
<i>CW</i>	Classical World
<i>G&R</i>	Greece and Rome
<i>GRBS</i>	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
<i>HSCP</i>	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
<i>LCM</i>	Liverpool Classical Monthly
<i>MH</i>	Museum Helveticum
<i>TAPhA</i>	Transaction and Proceedings of the American Philological Association

STANDARD EDITIONS AND LEXICA

<i>CPG</i>	Schneidewin, F. G. and von Leutsch, E. L. eds. (1839), <i>Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum</i> , vol. I, <i>Zenobius, Diogenianus, Plutarchus, Gregorius Cyprius, cum appendice proverbiorum</i> ; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>DGE</i>	Adrados, F. R. and Gantua, E. eds. (1980-), <i>Diccionario griego-español</i> , in progress, Madrid.
<i>FGrHist</i>	Jacoby, F. ed. (1955), <i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> , teil III, Kommentar zu nr. 297-607, Leiden: Brill.
<i>IG</i>	Kirchner, J. ed. (1913-40), <i>Inscriptiones Graecae: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores</i> , editio minor, Berolini: G. Reimer: de Gruyter.
<i>LSJ/LSJ Suppl.</i>	Liddell H.G., Scott, R. and Jones, H.S. eds. (1996), <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9 th ed., with a revised supplement, ed. P. G. W. Glare, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.
<i>OCD</i>	Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. eds. (1996), <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3 rd ed., Oxford:
<i>ODEE</i>	Onions, C. T. <i>et alia</i> eds. (1966), <i>Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<i>OED</i>	Simpson J.A. ed. (1989), <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 2 nd ed., Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.
<i>OLD</i>	Glare, P.G.W. ed. (1968), <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.
<i>TrGF III</i>	Radt S. ed. (1985), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , vol. III, Aeschylus, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>TrGF IV</i>	Radt S. ed. (1977), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , vol. IV, Sophocles, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>TrGF V</i>	Kannicht R. ed. (2004), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , vol. V, Euripides, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>ThGL</i>	Stephanus, <i>et al.</i> eds. (1954), <i>Thesaurus Graecae Linguae</i> , vol. 1-9, Graz: Academische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt.

Introduction

There is nothing in which people more betray their character than in what they find to laugh at.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*¹

This dissertation attempts to examine the Greek terminology for laughter, analyze its use in Ancient Greek drama of the classical period as well as interpret the understandings of laughter in the surviving plays and fragments² of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. As indicated in the subtitle of the thesis, the primary subject of the study is the phenomenon of laughter in the tragedies and satyr plays of the three major Greek playwrights. In this dissertation, I treat the following questions:

- 1) What is laughter?
- 2) What is the terminology for laughter in the Ancient Greek language?
- 3) What are the understandings of laughter reflected in the Ancient Greek language?
- 4) What is the general perception of laughter in Greek drama?³
- 5) What are the similarities and differences in the treatment of the motif of laughter between the three major dramatists?

This study therefore is set to elucidate the fact that laughter is not only connected with humour and that the dramatists of the fifth-century BC recognized this fact and, in their works, evoked other aspects of the

¹ Goethe (1854) 140.

² Hereon, I use the word 'fragment(s)' as a technical term to denote the pieces of dramatic plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides which were not transmitted to our times in complete form.

³ Hereon, I apply the expression 'Greek drama' in reference to the defined corpus of texts by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

phenomenon of laughter. With this study, I hope to provide a thorough explanation of the phenomenon itself, present a classification of laughter and apply it in my analysis of the Greek texts.

In order to carry out a detailed examination of laughter in Greek drama, the material for study has been limited to the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In this thesis, I omit the works and fragments of Aristophanes, due to fact of a very large number of references to laughter found in the preserved plays and fragments of the comic playwright (91).⁴ Its addition to the 110 references found in the defined material of the three dramatists would exceed the limits of this thesis. Furthermore, in my study I am concerned with those passages containing the terminology for laughter which explicitly refers to the phenomenon and does not imply it. Next, it is not my focus of interest to analyze the potential reaction of laughter in the audience nor is my study devoted to the examination of comic elements in the tragedies and satyr plays.⁵ Finally, my lexical-semantic analysis excludes interjections, for there are no explicit references in the discussed texts to a Greek 'ha-ha-ha'. However, at times, I include into my discussion the possibility of an actor emitting laughter onstage, should the text provide any clues on the matter with the used terminology for laughter.

I have distributed the study into two main parts: the first deals with the phenomenon of laughter (subdivided into two chapters), whereas the second examines the understandings of laughter in the works and fragments of the

⁴ For a list of laughter-words in Aristophanean drama, see the beginning of Part II.

⁵ For comic elements in Greek tragedy, the most exhaustive study remains that of Bernd Seidensticker (1982), *Palintonos Harmonia: Studien zu komischen Elementen in der griechischen Tragödie*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Worth mentioning are the articles by Jacques Jouanna (1998), 'Le sourire des Tragiques grecs', and Simon Goldhill (2006), 'The Thrill of Mislplaced Laughter'. For humour in the works of Euripides, see the article of Justina Gregory (1999-2000), 'Comic elements in Euripides', in Cropp, M. J., Lee, K. H., and Sansone D., eds. (1999-2000), *Euripides and Tragic Theatre in the Late Fifth Century*, Champaign, Ill. (Illinois Classical Studies 24-25) 59-74. For comicality in the *Bacchae*, see Bernd Seidensticker (1978), 'Comic elements in Euripides' *Bacchae*, *AJP* 99: 303-320.

three major Greek playwrights (subdivided into three chapters). Chapter I discusses the subject of laughter in general, starting out with its universal definition provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, then it analyzes the three traditional theories of laughter as well as the modern explanations for the phenomenon. Chapter II examines the Greek terminology of laughter and distinguishes the its understandings in the Ancient Greek language. The following three chapters present the lexical-interpretative analysis of the references to laughter found in the studied texts of Aeschylus (chapter III), Sophocles (chapter IV), and Euripides (chapter V). In these three chapters, I will apply the same methodological criteria, which I intend to distinguish in the first part of this study, for the analysis of the Greek vocabulary of laughter and its interpretations in the dramatic texts of the three authors, should the texts allow to do so.

In this study, I have adopted the Harvard Referencing system. Accordingly, references to the texts of ancient authors are presented under the names of the editors. As the primary text source for the surviving dramas of the three playwrights, I use the Oxford Classical Texts editions: Page (1972) for Aeschylus; Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990) for Sophocles; and Diggle (1981, 1984, 1994) for Euripides, unless stated otherwise. All references to the three dramatists are given by the standard line-numbering, which is used by the editors above and by most translators. The fragments are cited from *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta (TrGF)* and their references follow the numbering from this edition. Since translators differ in their choice of rendering the studied Greek laughter-words, different translations of the plays and fragments are of use; this is every time clearly indicated. When I cite passages of analyzed texts, I emphasize the Greek terms for laughter in bold (should they occur) as well as their equivalents in the quoted English translations. Also, I aptly note those cases in which I have made my own translation of a passage, should its available translations not retain the original reference to laughter.

Proper names of authors, gods and characters are in Latinised form (e.g. Aeschylus, Dionysus, Polynices). Although the abbreviations of the Greek authors and their works come from the Latin versions (e.g. *Tr.* for *Troades*), I usually apply the English names of the Greek plays in the text of my thesis (e.g. *Trojan Women*).

Laughter may seem, at first, easy to identify. Its common association is that of a person's loud, audible reaction to the comic, i.e. to those things (people, items, situations) that possess such a quality in them that stimulate laughter. In relation to literature, this connection has a long tradition dating back to antiquity and is best represented by one of the two universal symbols of theatre, i.e. the laughing mask. Comedy, therefore, is a literary genre associated with laughter the most, since it is aimed at making its audience laugh. In classical scholarship, this association of laughter with comic drama, but also with other humorous literary genres prevails, as many studies which pose 'laughter' in the title, in fact, deal with the subjects of 'humour', 'comicality' or the genre of 'comedy' itself.⁶ In similar vein studies regarding other dramatic genres, particularly tragedy, apply the term 'laughter' in the title, when the subject of comic elements in Greek tragedy is in the author's focus of interest.⁷ In other words, when studies in drama are concerned, it is generally assumed that laughter has to do with that which is recognized to be funny.

⁶ This trend is discernible in studies in both Greek and Latin literature e.g. Erich Segal (1968), *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Umberto Albin (1997), *Riso alla Greca. Aristofane o la fabbrica del comico*, Milano: Garzanti; Anthony Corbeill (1996), *Controlling Laughter. Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; Stuart Douglas Olson (2007), *Broken Laughter. Select Fragments of Greek Comedy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; John R. Clarke (2008) *Looking at Laughter. Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.C. – A.D. 250*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁷ E.g. the 2006 article by Goldhill entitled 'The Thrill of Misplaced Laughter' analyzes those dramatic passages, which may evoke a humorous response in the audience. Similarly Jouanna in his 1998 article entitled 'Le sourire des Tragiques grecs', although here with reference to the term 'smile', nevertheless in the understanding of 'the comic'.

However, as many studies in the last century have shown, the phenomenon of laughter is not limited only to the association with the comic, but appears to be a far more complex set of behaviours taking place on many levels of human activity. At the turn of the twentieth century, new aspects of laughter were scientifically acknowledged. In his 1900 study entitled simply *Laughter (Le Rire)*, the French philosopher Henri Bergson pointed out the social functions of the phenomenon. A few years later, Sigmund Freud, in his 1905 study *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, argued for laughter's role in releasing psychic tension. The first monograph dedicated to the many psychological functions of the phenomenon was written by Boris Sidis in 1913, entitled *The Psychology of Laughter*. Although these three works devoted to laughter examined it still in connection with the comic, nevertheless they elucidated other aspects of the phenomenon: psychological and social. Throughout the twentieth century most studies included both laughter and the comic in their focus of interest, until, in 1972, Jan van Hoof presented his findings on the origins of the acts of laughing and smiling, which he presented in his influential article *A comparative approach to the phylogeny of laughter and smile*. The Dutch ethologist not only provided significant evidence for the phylogenetic origins of these two behaviours, but also indicated them as two separate phenomena. What is particularly interesting is the fact that his research was based on non-comic data and has set off the discourse on laughter without the need of relating it to humour. Since then, many studies have examined the phenomenon of laughter in its different aspects, of which noteworthy are the works of John Morreall (1983), *Taking Laughter Seriously*; Frank Buckley (2003), *The Morality of Laughter*; Wallace Chafe (2007), *The Importance of Not Being Earnest. The Feeling Behind Laughter and Humor*; and Alexander Kozintsev (2012), *The Mirror of Laughter*. The fullest treatment of the phenomenon of laughter in its various aspects has been provided by the American neurobiologist Robert Provine in his 2000 monograph entitled

Laughter: A Scientific Study, in which he argues for the complex socio-psychological nature of the phenomenon. Noticeably, these works from the last thirty years have provided evidence that laughter is more than only a reaction to the comic. In other words, laughter is not only about funniness.

In regard of research on laughter in ancient literature, in the last decades scholars have changed the narrow understanding of laughter from a distinct connection with the comic to that of a multi-faceted phenomenon. This trend has become noticeable from the 1990s, from which the first general studies on the phenomenon of laughter in ancient Greek drama come from;⁸ these are: the articles of Matthew Dillon (1991), 'Tragic laughter', and Stephen Halliwell (1991), 'The Uses of Greek Laughter in Greek Culture'; the second chapter in Ingvild Gilhus (1997: 28-42), *Laughing Gods, Weeping Virgins: Laughter in the History of Religion*; and the first chapter in George Minois (2000: 15-38), *Histoire du rire et de la dérision*; a set of studies on laughter in ancient Greece edited by Marie-Laurence Desclos (2000), *Le rire des Grecs*; the 1994 volume one of the series *Laughter down the Centuries* edited by Siegfried Jäkel and Asko Timonen; and two monographs fully dedicated to the subject: Dominique Arnould (1990), *Le rire et les larmes dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Platon*, and the most recent study by Stephen Halliwell (2008), *Greek Laughter. A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early Christianity*. To these works, which treat the subject of laughter in Greek drama in a general manner, there are also some articles, which deal with references to laughter in particular literary works. For

⁸ In relation to the studies on laughter in fifth century comedy, especially the works of Aristophanes, worth mentioning are: Dominique Arnould (1997), 'Le rire selon Aristophane: vocabulaire et images', in Thiery, P., and Menu M. eds. (1997), *Aristophane: la langue, la scène, la cité. Actes du colloque de Toulouse 9-19 mars 1994*, Bari: Levante Editore: 97-106; Alan H. Sommerstein (2000), 'Parlez du rire chez Aristophane', in Desclos (2000) 65-75 (reprinted in the English language as 'Talking about laughter in Aristophanes', in Alan Sommerstein (2009), *Talking about Laughter and Other Studies in Greek Comedy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 104-115; and on laughter in comedy in general, Stephen Kidd (2011), 'Laughter interjections in Greek comedy', *CQ* 61 (2) 445-459. Also, the general works on laughter in ancient Greece by Arnould (1990), Minois (2000), Halliwell (1991), (2008) discuss the subject on the examples of Aristophanic comedy.

instance, Gustav Grossmann's 1968 article, *Das Lachen des Aias*, discusses the mad laughter of the title character in Sophocles' *Ajax*; a few articles examine different references to laughter in Euripides' *Bacchae*, e.g. Matt Neuburg (1987), 'Whose laughter does Pentheus fear? (Eur. Ba. 842)', and similarly P.T. Stevens in his 1988 article as a response to Neuburg (entitled in the same way); as well as Giuseppina Basta Donzelli (2006), 'Il riso amaro di Dioniso. Euripide, Baccanti', 170-369'. As it is clear from the titles, these articles only include particular passages on laughter from chosen dramas.

The most influential works on the discourse of laughter in Greek drama are the mentioned above studies of Arnould (1990) and Halliwell (2008), but also the article by Dillon (1991). Although these works deal with many aspects of the phenomenon, nevertheless, they fail to avoid certain shortcomings in their treatment of laughter in Greek drama. For instance, Arnould (1990) pays attention to those references to laughter in the dramas which denote the social aspect of hostility between a laugher and his laughed at target.⁹ Although she does acknowledge references to laughter in its other aspects *passim* throughout the study, however she only mentions them briefly and provides no fuller treatment of them. In short, Arnould's discussion on laughter in the works of the three dramatists is general, since the French scholar does not include the differences in narration, style and messages conveyed in the dramas of the particular playwrights. Similarly the 1991 article of Dillon, who also makes general observations in regard of all three poets without including the specifics of their style. Although Dillon points out the main features of laughter in Greek drama, attempting to distinguish a separate type of 'tragic laughter', however, he omits the stylistic and narrative differences between the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In other words, the scholar bases his analysis on generalization. The last of the three main studies on laughter is

⁹ As suggested already in the title of the chapter 'ΤΕΛΩΣΙ Δ'ΕΧΘΟΙ ΔΑΝΣ ΛΑ ΤΡΑΓΕΔΙΕ'.

Halliwell's 2008 monumental monograph. In this excellent and exhaustive study, the British scholar extends his first observations on the general nature of Greek laughter presented in his 1991 article.¹⁰ Without any doubt, Halliwell is fully aware of the complexity of laughter reflected in Greek literature and examines the many references in all of the aspects of the phenomenon. However, in regard of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, he limits the discussion only to a few paragraphs in the Introduction to his study and presents his findings in a brief as well as generalizing manner. Only in a section of chapter III does the scholar pay more attention to the connection of laughter with the symposium in three Euripidean dramas: *Cyclops*, *Alcestis* and *Bacchae*.¹¹ Halliwell, thus, presents in brief the general characteristics of laughter in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides without any further discussion.

In general, these three studies have contributed greatly to the discussion on laughter in Greek drama, however, reveal certain deficiencies. Firstly, the authors do not present a clearly defined classification of the phenomenon of laughter. Arnould (1990) omits presenting any categories, similarly Dillon (1991), whereas Halliwell (2008), although he makes many references to modern findings on the phenomenon, nevertheless he does this in the form of copious footnotes. This fact does not facilitate the process of comparing and distinguishing the differences as well as the similarities between the ancient

¹⁰ Apart from distinguishing the different psychological and social aspects of laughter, Halliwell (1991: 283) draws a distinction between two types of laughter in ancient Greece: 1) playful, which includes 'lightness of tone; autonomous enjoyment; psychological relaxation; and a shared acceptance of the self-sufficient presuppositions or conventions of such laughter by all who participate in it', and 2) consequential, which is directed 'towards some definite result other than autonomous pleasure (e.g. causing embarrassment or shame, signaling hostility, damaging a reputation, contributing to the defeat of an opponent, delivering public chastisement', by 'its deployment of an appropriate range of ridiculing tones, from mild derision to the vitriolic or outrageously offensive' as well as by 'its arousal of feelings which may not be shared or enoed by all concerned, and which typically involve some degree or anatagonism'. Curiously, although acknowledged in his 2008 study, Halliwell does not base his discussion on these two types.

¹¹ Halliwell (2008) 127-139.

understandings of laughter and its modern perceptions. Lastly, I have not found a study that would distinguish, classify and interpret the Greek vocabulary for laughter in a clear manner. Halliwell avoids a separate introduction devoted only to the terminology for laughter. Although he discusses many of these terms, nevertheless he leaves his reader to search for the laughter-words throughout his 552 page-wide study.¹² Despite these discernible shortcomings in the the three main works on laughter in Greek drama, they are of great importance to my study and form the basis of my discourse on laughter in Greek drama

Having said this, it becomes clear that my study continues the discussion on ancient Greek laughter which has received more interest in the last three decades. With this thesis, I hope to extend the generalizations on the nature of laughter in the works of the three playwrights, pay more attention to the subject in classical tragedy and sayr play than it has received as well as elucidate the fact that already in antiquity laughter was recognized to be a far more complex set of behaviours than it is usually perceived today. Finally, since man's nature is itself complex, I will attempt to examine whether the distinctly human phenomenon of laughter reflects this complexity.

¹² Halliwell ends his study with an 'Index of selected Greek terms' on page 608-9, but without the meanings of the terms, hence, has the reader search throughout the book. Also, in Appendix I entitled 'The Greek (body) language of laughter and smiles' (pages 520-29), the scholar provides an elucidating analysis of a few chosen laughter-words.

Part I

Laughter

Better to write about laughter than tears,
for laughter is the property of man.

François Rabelais, *Gargantua*¹³

In this part of the thesis, I will define the modern understanding of laughter in order to compare it to that of the ancient Greek-speaking world. For this purpose, the discussion has been divided into two chapters: in the first, I analyse the general theories, historical explanations and modern concepts of laughter; in the second, I examine the ancient Greek terminology regarding the phenomenon in order to extract and define the general understandings of laughter in antiquity. The chief purpose of this part of the thesis is to distinguish universal as well as distinctly Greek categories of laughter, which will become the theoretical framework for my analysis of Greek drama in the second part of the thesis.

¹³ Rabelais (1995) 43 (my translation).

Chapter I

Laughter

Definition, Theories, and Sociality

Perhaps I know best why man alone laughs:
he alone suffers so deeply that he *had* to
invent laughter.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*¹⁴

In this introductory chapter, I would like to explore the research traditions and interpretations of laughter. The chapter consists of three sections. In the first part, I present the definition of the act of laughing, in order to indicate its characteristic features. The second section focuses on the prominent theories of laughter as to see if any comprises all aspects of the phenomenon. The third part deals with the sociality of laughter in detail. I conclude this chapter with presenting a categorization of laughter, which will become the main discursive line for our analysis of the Greek material in the following chapters.

1.1. Definition of laughter

Laughter is the action of laughing.¹⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the verb 'to laugh' as follows: 'to manifest the combination of bodily phenomena (spasmodic utterance of inarticulate sounds, facial distortion, shaking of the sides, etc.) which forms the instinctive expression of mirth or of sense of something ludicrous, and which can also be occasioned by certain physical sensations, esp. that produced by tickling.' The first entry concludes

¹⁴ Nietzsche (1968) 56.

¹⁵ *OED* s.v. 'laughter', n.¹, 1. a.

with: 'to have the emotion (of mirth, amusement, scorn) which is expressed by laughing'.¹⁶

What becomes apparent from this definition is that the word 'laughter' may refer to three separate actions: 1) a physical reaction which combines visual and auditory components, 2) a behavioural expression of the sense of funniness, and 3) the bodily manifestation of a certain state of mind. Therefore, according to the entry in the *OED*, the term 'laughter' does not describe one specific action but semantically encompasses a set of reactions: physiological (bodily actions), intellectual (perception of humour) and psychological (expression of an emotional attitude). In order to distinguish precisely each meaning behind the term 'laughter', let us analyze the three main components of its definition.

1.1.1. Physiology of laughter

First and foremost, the term 'laughter' pertains to a set of bodily reactions. From the physical description of the act of laughing we may distinguish three basic components: 1) muscular contractions of the face, 2) respiratory interruptions with an articulation of sounds, and 3) bodily actions.¹⁷

Facial muscles are primary in the production of laughter. In particular, spasmodic contractions of the cheek muscles (*zygomaticus major*) cause the mouth to widen and draw the lip corners upward. Often, the mouth opens and exposes bared teeth, whereas the muscles surrounding the eyes (*obicularis oculi*) pull the skin at the outsides of the eyes. This movement produces the distinctive laughing effect of 'crow's feet'. Together these actions form a specific facial display, which accompanies laughter and has been distinguished as the

¹⁶ *OED* s.v. 'laugh', *v.*, 1. a.

¹⁷ An early physiological description is found in Descartes (1989) V art. 124; Darwin (1998) 199. For a contemporary extensive description of laughter, see Ruch and Ekman (2001) 426-443.

‘Duchenne display’.¹⁸ Since facial actions occur as most observable, laughter is primarily identified with the human face.¹⁹

The act of laughing involves also other parts of the body – the so-called vocal organs, as a laugh is produced during the depletion of air from the lungs. The described above motions of the face are accompanied by spasms of the diaphragm, the larynx and the glottis. These organs regulate the breathing process while laughing and create its characteristic respiratory pattern which consists of a sequence of repeated expirations. It is with these emissions of air and the accompany of sound that the characteristic “ha-ha” of laughter is produced.²⁰ In point of the fact that the glottis opens and closes rhythmically when portions of air are expelled, the phonation occurs in staccato fashion. Finally, the emitted sounds vibrate through the vocal tract as the expired air escapes through the nostrils and mouth.²¹ As Provine notices: ‘laughing is, in essence, a movement that produces a sound.’²²

The English transcription of the distinctive sound of laughter is “ha-ha”, also “hee-hee” and “ho-ho”.²³ Its acoustic quality depends on the constitution of the vocal tract, the disposition of its components (larynx, tongue, jaw) and the

¹⁸ This display is typical for spontaneous, i.e. genuine laughter (alternatively termed ‘Duchenne smile’). For the differences between involuntary and voluntary, i.e. feigned laugh, see Ekman, Davidson, and Friesen (1990). Although a smile may be observable while laughing, it occurs independently as well, see Provine (2000) 49-53. On the distinct evolutionary origin of the two phenomena, cf. van Hooff (1972). In general, a smile requires less engagement of the face and body than laughing. Holland (1982) states that ‘laughter differs from smiling simply in that the smile does not interrupt breathing.’ Cited in Berger (1997) 45. For a psychological-cultural study of the smile, see Szarota (2006).

¹⁹ Cf. Parvulescu (2010) 28 regarding the face as ‘the throne of laughter’.

²⁰ Martin (2007) 159.

²¹ For a broader discussion on the physical properties of laughing, see Chafe (2009) 17-23.

²² Provine (2000) 5. The English language has a rich vocabulary to denote various types of audible laughter e.g. ‘cackle’, ‘chuckle’, ‘chortle’, ‘crow’, ‘giggle’, ‘guffaw’, ‘roar’.

²³ On the acoustics of laughter, see Bachorowski, Smoski, and Owren (2001). The word ‘laugh’ is of onomatopoeic etymology: Old English *hlæhhan*, from Proto-Germanic **klakhjanan*, from Proto-Indo-European **klak-*, (cf. Lat. *cachinare* ‘to laugh aloud’, Gr. *καχάζειν* ‘to cackle’). In Polish, the word for laughter *śmiech* comes from the Proto-Slavic *směxъ* composed of the prefix *χъ* from the verb **smv̅jati sę*, and contrary to the English ‘laughter’, it derives from the Indo-European root **smei-/smeid-*; similarly Eng. *smile*, Gr. *μειδιάω* ‘to smile’. Cf. Pokorny (1959) 967; Chantraine (1974) s.v. *μειδιάω*.

intensity of the muscular contractions occurring while laughing. Moreover, the age of an individual, his sex as well as the differences in the way people breathe while laughing and articulate sound influence the acoustic properties of their laughter.²⁴ In short, every person laughs in his or her own, characteristic manner.

In addition, other physiological symptoms may occur while laughing, such as increased heart rate, skin blushing, back-and-forward movements of the head and torso, even lacrimation.²⁵ Intensive laughter may also result in the trembling of the whole body, which, in extreme cases, may even convert into convulsion.²⁶

What becomes apparent from these observations is the fact that such compulsiveness of these physical components suggest a certain involuntary nature of laughter. Aristotle was first to describe this distinction in his work *On the Parts of Animals*. Laughter is provoked by the stimulation of the diaphragm (φρένες), which, according to the philosopher, shares responsibility in the process of thinking. Hence, its sensation 'disturbs the mental action as to occasion movements [i.e. laughter] that are independent of the will'.²⁷ Today neurobiologists ascribe the production of genuine laughter to the brain, although they differ in distinguishing its proper parts responsible for such reflex action.²⁸ In the view of Provine, people possess little conscious control

²⁴ Cf. Glenn (2003) 10-13.

²⁵ Keith-Spiegel (1972) 16-17.

²⁶ Berlyne (1972) 51.

²⁷ Arist. *Part. an.* 3.10, 673a 5-6: 'ποιεῖν ὁμῶς ἐπίδηλον καὶ κινεῖν τὴν διάνοιαν παρὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν.' (my emphasis, and likewise in all Greek passages hereon). English translation in Ogle (1957) 673a. For a broader analysis of this Aristotelian passage, see Labarrière (2000); cf. Halliwell (2008) 315-316.

²⁸ Defined parts of the brain in Berger (1997) 45, Damásio (2004) 74-79, Kozintsev (2012) 75-79, however Martin (2007) 171-73, argues for the need of further evidence; likewise Chafe (2009) 56-57. Curiously, already Hippocrates recognized the role of the brain in producing laughter, cf. *Hipp. Morb. Sacr.* XVII 1-3: Εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὅτι ἕξ οὐδενὸς ἡμῖν αἰ ἡδοναὶ γίνονται καὶ εὐφροσύνη καὶ γέλωτες καὶ παιδιαὶ ἢ ἐντεῦθεν. English translation in Jones (1962) 175: 'Men ought to know that from the brain only, arise our pleasures, joys, laughter and jests'.

over spontaneous laughter, since its involuntary nature reveals 'an instinctive behavior programmed by our genes.'²⁹ Such complexity of the physiological process of laughing indicates a certain automatic character of the phenomenon. Indeed, when concerning the body, genuine laughter seems to occur as a sort of reflex activity.³⁰

1.1.2. Reaction to humour

Reflex is an action which occurs in response to a stimulus. If this should apply to the phenomenon of laughter, its reflexive character would require a stimulus which would provoke the physiological process in the body. Since antiquity many distinguish thinkers have attempted to explain the various causes for laughter, amongst which the widest attention have received those basically referred to as 'humorous'.

This group of laughter-stimuli is characterized by a common feature, namely 'humour'³¹, defined twofold in the *OED* as 'the quality of action, speech, or writing, which excites amusement; oddity, jocularly, facetiousness, comicality, fun' as well as 'the faculty of perceiving what is ludicrous or amusing, or of expressing it in speech, writing, or other composition; jocose imagination or treatment of a subject.'³² According to this definition, for a

²⁹ Provine (2000) 1, esp. 49-52.

³⁰ Cf. Koestler (1964) 28-30.

³¹ The term 'humour' (in American English 'humor') stems from the Latin (*h*)*umor-em* nom. *humor* meaning 'fluid', 'moisture', which in the medical doctrine of Hippocrates (*De humore*) referred to one of the four 'cardinal humours', i.e. bodily fluids; cf. *ODEE* 452. Introduced into the English language through the Old French *humeur*, the term maintained its physiopathological meaning until the seventeenth century, when it began to encompass oddity and abnormal behaviours, hence entered the semantic sphere of the comic. At first a neutral term, in time 'humour' accepted positive connotations. For the term's lexicological evolution, see Ruch (1998) 5-11, esp. 8; Ermida (2008) 4-5. In Polish, the equivalent of the English term is *komizm*, cf. Ostromecka-Frączak (2008) 11. On the meaning of *humor* in Polish, see Gołaszewska (1987) 21; Garczyński (1989) 11-15; Dziemidok (2005) 13-19.; on the semantic differences between the terms *humor* ('humour'), *dowcip* ('the wit') and *komizm* ('the comic', 'the ridiculous'), see Bogolebska (2000).

³² *OED* s.v. 'humour', n., II 7. a. and 7. b. Though, in general, contemporary theorists agree that humour remains 'a universal human trait' (Raskin 1985: 2), however their interpretations of the

situation or item to be 'humorous', it must contain such quality, which evokes people's laughter, hence must be 'laughable', 'amusing', 'comical', 'funny' or 'ludicrous'. On the other hand, in order to recognize such a stimulus one must have the skill to perceive what is laughable, or experience what modern humour scholarship terms as 'humour response'.³³

Humour accepts many forms. In *The Psychology of Humor*, Martin (2007) divides the humorous stimuli into three types: 1) jokes, 2) conversational humour, and 3) unintentional humour.³⁴ A joke is a piece of text, narrative in form, which presents a short story ending with a 'punchline'. The humour is realized through the punchline as it shifts the meaning of the story in an unexpected way.³⁵ Conversational humour operates on a similar basis, creating the humorous effect by surprising shifts in meaning, however with differences in the intention or use of the humour. Eleven categories of such have been recognized: 1) irony, 2) satire, 3) sarcasm, 4) overstatement or understatement, 5) self-deprecation, 6) teasing, 7) replies to rhetorical questions, 8) clever replies to serious statements, 9) double entendres, 10) transformations of frozen expressions, 11) puns.³⁶ Finally, unintentional humour occurs on two plains: linguistic and spatial. The first refers to errors in spelling and pronunciation (e.g. spoonerism, malapropisms, Freudian slips) whereas the second concerns

term vary as well as its categorization, cf. Goldstein and McGhee (1972) xxi: 'there is no single definition of humor acceptable to all investigators in the area'; similarly Attardo (1994) 3. Ruch (1998) 6, emphasizes the coexistence of two terminological systems for the term 'humour' which 1) refers to one of the elements of the comic along with wit, nonsense, irony, ridicule, sarcasm and satire; cf. Freud (1905), (1928); and 2) 'humour' is employed as a neutral umbrella-term for all related phenomena, especially in current Anglo-American research, cf. Gajda (2000) 9. Same distinction in Dziemidok (2005) 13-14.

³³ Cf. Ruch (1998) 411.

³⁴ Martin (2007) 11.

³⁵ On the punchline, see Oring (1989). On joke competence, see Carrell (2000). A general study on jokes in Wilson (1979); see also Oring (1992).

³⁶ I follow the list of Long and Graesser (1988) reprinted in Martin (2007) 13. For alternative classifications, see Raskin (1985) 29-30. For an analysis of many of these categories (*inter al.* wordplay, phraseplay, teasing, irony, sarcasm), see Partington (2006) 110-224, who regards them as forms of 'laughter-talk', i.e. 'the talk preceding and provoking, intentionally or otherwise, a bout of laughter', *ibid.*1.

various forms of physical accidents perceived as humorous (e.g. slapstick acts like slipping on a banana peel).

The examples above clearly demonstrate that laughter may be evoked by the perception of a specific quality of words and action. In *Taking Laughter Seriously*, Morreall (1983) observes that humour 'is based on a conceptual shift, a jolt to our picture of the way things are supposed to be.'³⁷ Humorous stimuli, therefore, require a complex mental process during which the collected information (e.g. a joke, a situation) is analyzed in meaning and in the end recognized as a kind of to provoke laughter, i.e. 'laughable'. Many philosophers in the past as well as contemporary humour researches have termed differently what they find to be the laughable element: 'violation of expectations', 'surprise', 'opposition of ideas', 'contrast', 'contradiction', and especially 'incongruity'.³⁸ Furthermore, although theorists have coined various terms for describing this cognitive-perceptual process³⁹, correspondingly they regard itself as a highly complex reason for laughter. In the words of Koestler (1964) humour is 'the only domain of creative activity where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes.'⁴⁰ In sum, humour appears to be a cognitive experience which may be expressed by laughter.

As we can see, laughter generally occurs as the product of mental activity. Humour with its various forms only provokes a cognitive-perceptual process, which, once conducted successfully,⁴¹ may result in laughter. In this

³⁷ Morreall (1983) 60.

³⁸ For an account of these terms and their supporters, see section 1.2.2. below.

³⁹ 'Synergy' in Apter (1989) 129-141, esp. 133, 'bisociation' in Koestler (1964) 35-36, 'script opposition' in Raskin (1985) 99-100. For a discussion on the latter two, see Partington (2006) 25-39.

⁴⁰ Koestler (1964) 31.

⁴¹ The act of recognizing a situation as 'humorous', 'funny', hence 'laughable' has various determinants, of which personal dispositions and cultural background dominate. Early notion of the historical and social relativity in Ritter (1974) 79. An anthropological account in Apte (1985) 261, who denotes: 'humor is a culturally shaped individual cognitive experience,

case, it is the act of perceiving an 'external' stimulus which causes laughter. Thus, external stimuli function on an internal ground, for laughter comes as the result of what occurs in one's mind.

1.1.3. Expression of emotions

The word 'emotion' derives from the French *émouvoir* which comes from the Latin verb *emovere* (the prefix *e (ex)* 'out of something', and the verb *movere*, 'to move'), hence its primary meaning 'moving out', 'agitation' and 'perturbation'. In reference to the mind the term is used twofold, as it indicates: 1) a particular 'emotion', i.e. a mental 'feeling' or 'affection' which may be temporary, 2) an 'emotional state', i.e. a durable mental agitation or disturbance of the mind.

Since antiquity the interest in the sphere of human emotions has generated many theoretical premises.⁴² In particular, an early cognitive explanation may be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.⁴³ According to the Greek philosopher, an emotional response occurs to the experienced impressions of an item or situation. While processing information about a perceived object a person also judges its importance and constructs a thought (or belief) about it. As a result, this generated judgement, which is accompanied by the sensations of pleasure and pain, affects the mind, i.e. creates an emotional response.⁴⁴ Aristotle's observations gave ground to the tradition of connecting emotions with cognition, which remains prominent till today. A continuation, albeit in an extended form, may be found in the works of the American psychologist Lazarus on the so-called 'appraisal theory of emotions'. Accordingly, during

culturally determined because sociocultural factors are the primary trigger mechanism leading to its occurrence.' For a sociological view, cf. Zijderfeld (1983) 7.

⁴² For a survey on the history of emotions in philosophy, see Solomon (1993).

⁴³ Cf. Fortenbaugh (1975) 9-22, esp. 16-18.

⁴⁴ Arist. *Rhet.* 1378a 20-23: ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη δι' ὅσα μεταβάλλοντες διαφέρουσι πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις οἷς ἔπεται λύπη καὶ ἡδονή. cf. Cooper (1999) 406-23, esp. 415-16. In modern psychology a similar distinction between pleasure vs. displeasure expresses Barrett (2006).

the cognitive-perceptual process of a situation (e.g. a chance meeting with a friend) one simultaneously conducts its appraisal. It is this internal evaluation that causes an emotional response.⁴⁵ In the view of Lazarus a person may carry out an appraisal in two ways: 1) recognizing a personal benefit in the perceived object, or 2) considering it to bring harm to oneself. In the first case, one acknowledges the aroused emotions as beneficial, i.e. positive, whereas in the second, as harmful, i.e. negative. In this view, emotions origin from individual evaluations,⁴⁶ and hence may become manifested in behavioural manner. Accepting such an explanation for the origins of emotions in our analysis of laughter, we may consider the phenomenon to be an expression of one's emotional response to an external factor.

1.1.3.1. Humorous stimuli

Humorous stimuli are considered to evoke an emotion of pleasant nature.⁴⁷ The affinity of laughter and pleasure has a long tradition, as it begins with Plato, who in his dialogue *Philebus* identifies the two phenomena.⁴⁸ The English philosopher Hobbes explains the cause for laughing by a sudden act which pleases a person,⁴⁹ similarly Spencer regards 'acute pleasure' as a main stimulus.⁵⁰ A continuation of these ideas is traceable in the twentieth century in *inter al.* Bergson, Freud⁵¹ and especially in modern humour studies. Contemporary humour theorists attempt to denote this pleasant feeling with various terms, such as 'arousal' (Berlyne 1972), 'amusement' (Clark 1970),

⁴⁵ Lazarus (1991) 127-70.

⁴⁶ For a broader account on emotion, see Ze'ev (2000) 13-78. For other theories of emotions, see Rolls (1999) 59-74.

⁴⁷ Cf. Berlyne (1972) 44: 'It is, however, hard to imagine anybody finding something humorous and not enjoying it.'

⁴⁸ Plat. *Philb.* 50a 5-8: ἡμᾶς ... φησὶν ὁ λόγος ... ὠμολογῆσθαι ... τὸ δὲ γελαῖν ἡδονήν. For a discussion on Plato's remarks about laughter, see section 1.2.3.1. below.

⁴⁹ Hobbes (1991) 43.

⁵⁰ Spencer (1966) 304.

⁵¹ Bergson (2005) 102, reiterates Plato's observation 'laughter is always pleasure', correspondingly Freud (2002) 145.

'exhilaration' (Ruch 1993), 'mirth' (Martin 2007), or recently, in a more descriptive fashion, 'the feeling of nonseriousness' (Chafe 2009). Despite the variety of terms, they all recognize the pleasant nature of the predominant emotion associated with laughter.⁵²

In point of fact that the feeling of pleasure most often accompanies the humorous experience, there exists a tendency, as Glenn (2003) points out 'to treat laughter simplistically as response to humor and thus to imply a causal, stimulus-response relationship from humorous event to perception of humor to laughter.'⁵³ As a result, the phenomenon of laughter has been mainly associated with humour, referred to by some researchers as 'the language of humour'⁵⁴ or even identified with it. As a consequence of this, the terms 'humour' and 'laughter' have been used in synonymous fashion,⁵⁵ whereas the traditional 'theories of laughter' have been discussed by scholars and philosophers permutably as the 'theories of humour'.⁵⁶ Yet, despite the obvious link, 'humour' and 'laughter' remain two separate phenomena which may occur independently. Attardo emphasizes this distinction in his famous work *Linguistic Theories of Humor*, in which he considers humour to be 'a mental phenomenon', whereas laughter its possible 'complex neuro-physiological manifestation'.⁵⁷ Furthermore, laughter may accompany the humorous experience, however not necessarily,⁵⁸ and, as we shall see below, laughter may manifest an emotional response to a stimulus which lacks humorous quality.

⁵² For a broader discussion on humour research, see section 1.2.2.2. below.

⁵³ Glenn (2003) 24.

⁵⁴ Zijderfeld (1983) 26.

⁵⁵ E.g. Bergson (2005), Hertzler (1970).

⁵⁶ Awareness of the distinction in Chapman and Foot (1976) 4, Zijderfeld (1983) 26, Apte (1985) 14. Nevertheless, theoretical approaches to laughter in association with humour dominate e.g. Koestler (1964), Morreall (1987), Berger (1997); exceptionally Clark (1970) who emphasizes his focus on humour.

⁵⁷ Attardo (1994) 10.

⁵⁸ Cf. Douglas (1975) 148.

Therefore, despite a close relation the two phenomena do not always occur simultaneously nor are the words 'humour' and 'laughter' coterminous.

1.1.3.2. Non-humorous stimuli

An emotional response occurs in reference to many non-humorous stimuli. In his research on humour, the American philosopher Morreall (1983) enlists such 'unfunny' causes as: 1) tickling, 2) nitrous oxide, 3) seeing a magic trick, 4) regaining safety after being in danger, 5) solving a puzzle or problem, 6) winning a game, 7) meeting an old friend on the street, 8) discovering one has won the lottery, 9) anticipation of joyous events, 10) playing with a baby.⁵⁹

Firstly, laughter may be elicited by external factors, such as a physical sensation (no. 1) while being touched in certain parts of the body: the armpits, soles of the feet, the neck etc.⁶⁰ It may also be the result of a chemical reaction (no. 2) after inhaling 'laughing gas'.⁶¹ Secondly, an emotional response may occur in the case of situations perceived as positive which lack humorous quality. Laughter then becomes the expression of: one's feeling of success or triumph (no. 5, 6, 8), one's feeling of surprise (no. 3), one's feeling of relief after restraint (no. 4), one's joy (no. 7, 9), as well as one's attitude of play (no. 10). Many prominent thinkers incorporate the link of these emotions with laughter in their attempts in engendering a theoretical premise of the phenomenon. As I will analyze these views in more detail in section 2.1. here it will suffice only to connect these non-humorous feelings with a precise theory of laughter. Hence, 1) the 'superiority theory' will explain laughter as the manifestation of a feeling of self-content, success or triumph; 2) the 'incongruity theory' will consider the

⁵⁹ Morreall (1983) 1-2. For an alternative list of non-humorous causes, see Monro (1951) 20-34; Chafe (2009) 73-87.

⁶⁰ Arist. *Part. an.* 3.10, 673a 8-10: "Ὁ δὲ γαργαλισμὸς γέλως ἐστὶ διὰ κινήσεως τοιαύτης τοῦ μορίου τοῦ περὶ τὴν μασχάλην." English translation in Ogle (1957) 673a: 'For to be tickled is to be set in laughter, the laughter being produced by such a motion as mentioned of the region of the armpit.' On the characteristics of tickling, see Harris (1999) 344-351.

⁶¹ In opposition Ruch (1993) 611, who enlists nitrous oxide among his elicitors of 'exhilaration', i.e. a stimulant of a positive emotion.

pleasant effect of the 'unexpected element' or 'surprise'; and finally 3) the 'relief theory' will associate the liberating force of laughter with pleasure. Next, the connection of laughter with the feeling of joy has a long tradition dating back to the humanist writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, *inter al.* Castiglione, Joubert and Descartes.⁶² In the nineteenth century, this idea received support in the observations on primates of Darwin presented in his famous *Expression of the Emotions and Man and Animals*.⁶³ Today, although laughter is still seen as a natural and universal expression of experienced or anticipated joy, contemporary ethologists give evidence to an evolutionary development of laughter, which in a social setting appears to be a signal of a playful state of mind.⁶⁴ As we may see, all these non-humorous explanations find the source for laughter in a common cause – the experience of a pleasant emotion, albeit without humorous quality.

In the context in which it is evident that various emotions may be expressed in vocal-behavioural manner, laughter may manifest other states of mind than only amused or pleased, but also non-pleasant such as embarrassed, scornful, angry or even dysfunctional.

Firstly, in his famous study *Laughing and Crying: A Study of the Limits of Human Behaviour*, Plessner enlists among others embarrassment as an unpleasant cause for genuine laughter. Once a person recognizes to be tacitly observed and judged by others (e.g. children or young people amongst a group of adults) he/she considers his/her social situation as inferior. Laughter, then, may occur as an expression of a notion of social disruption.⁶⁵ Secondly, laughter's potential to express negative emotions, such as derision, anger or contempt, is observable in the act of laughing conducted with the deliberate

⁶² The famous works concerning laughter as a sign of joy are: Castiglione (1528), *Libro del cortegiano*; Joubert (1579), *Traité du Ris*; Descartes (1649), *Les passions de l'âme*. For a survey of early-modern theorists of laughter, see Skinner (2004) 142-144, esp. 144.

⁶³ Darwin (1998) 80; 195-196.

⁶⁴ Van Hooff (1972). On laughter and play, see section 1.3.5.1. below.

⁶⁵ Plessner (2004) 113-16.

intention to ridicule another person. As I will discuss the matter of derision in more detail,⁶⁶ here, it suffices to mention that, in general, the laugher's intentions are to experience himself/herself (optionally evoke in the third party) feelings of contemptuous pleasure, which are then expressed in laughter. According to Koestler (1964) such laughter becomes 'the puffing away of emotion discarded by thought.'⁶⁷ Thus, laughter allows a free expression of such emotions as 'malice', 'contempt', 'disrespect' or simply shows a negative disposition towards the laughed at person. Finally, uncontrolled and excessive laughter has been recognized as a symptom of mental abnormalities ever since antiquity.⁶⁸ Modern scientists acknowledge pathological laughter as a clinical manifestation of various psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia, pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) and mania. Also, it has been observed that other diseases resulting in brain disorders, i.e. Parkinson's disease, sclerosis may also manifest in abnormal laughter.⁶⁹ In this case, laughter becomes a symptom for an illness.

Given that emotions come as a result of an individual's appraisal of a situation (pleasant or beneficial, hence positive; non-pleasant or harmful, thus negative), their physical expression may signal to others that one is experiencing certain feelings or is in a certain state of mind. This manifestation may be genuine or pathological, but obviously maintains an informative function. In the words of Grotjahn, laughter 'can be used to express an unending variety of emotions.'⁷⁰

The detailed analysis of the *OED* definition of the verb 'to laugh' gives evidence that the term 'laughter' itself refers to an action of manifold nature. As

⁶⁶ See section 1.3.5.4. below.

⁶⁷ Koestler (1964) 56.

⁶⁸ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 17-18.

⁶⁹ For the characteristics of pathological laughter, see Duchowny (1983).

⁷⁰ Grotjahn (1957) ix.

we have seen, the act of laughing may occur on three plains: physical, intellectual and psychological. In general, we may observe that the physical reaction of laughter requires prior an internal activity: cognitive and/or emotional. In the light of the discussion above, we may come to the conclusion that laughter is a vocal-behavioural expression of emotions with communicative functions.

At this point it becomes apparent that the analyzed definition regards the act of laughing as an individual experience. Although the phenomenon's informative role is acknowledged, we find no explanations for the possible impact of such information on others. Hence, the classic definition of laughter omits a social context.⁷¹ In this case, two main questions appear. Firstly, may we find a universal theoretical explanation for laughter which would comprise all of the three analysed aspects? And secondly, does any of these theories include a social aspect within the discussed phenomenon? In order to provide answers to these questions, let us turn our attention to the so-called 'theories of laughter'.

1.2. Theories of laughter

Laughter *per se* remains a complex phenomenon. Since the act of laughing contains many components: physical, intellectual and psychological, a monolithic explanation for laughter would require references to all three of these aspects. Over the centuries philosophers, scholars and scientists have tried to produce a comprehensive set of principles for laughter, nevertheless their attempts were never fully satisfactory.⁷² As a result, many theories have been constructed of which three remain prominent till today: 1) the relief

⁷¹ An omission noticed also by Glenn (2003) 8-9. Interestingly, the origins of the *OED* date back to the nineteenth century and despite two editions (1st edn. 1933, 2nd edn. 1989) in the twentieth century the first entry of 'to laugh' has not been modified.

⁷² For a survey of the traditional and contemporary theories of laughter/humour with a critical analysis, see Dziemidok (2011) 9-64.

theory, 2) the incongruity theory, 3) the superiority theory.⁷³ These are traditionally known as the ‘theories of laughter’, which I will examine in more detail.⁷⁴

1.2.1. The relief vel release theory

The first discussed theory focuses on the mechanism of laughter from an internal (physiological or psychological) point of view. Relief theorists conduct research on the phenomenon’s bodily mechanism and the functions it plays in the laughing individual. In view of this theory, laughter occurs as a discharge of excess energy in the human body or psyche which originated from psychical excitation. Nervous excitement is basically gathered in the muscles, which is next dissipated through the muscular actions whilst laughing. The main role of laughter is liberation from tension.

1.2.1.1. The physiological explanation

In his essay *The Physiology of Laughter*, Spencer made the first attempt to describe the relief mechanism of the phenomenon, which occurs during the release of nervous energy in the human body. Spencer observes that the perception of an external stimulus (e.g. watching a theatrical play) may arouse in a person a set of psychical expectations. Once produced, this excitation is then accumulated in the body in the form of energy that puts the nervous system into a state of tension. Whilst a sudden change in the stimulus occurs

⁷³ I follow the traditional tripartite division in Morreall (1983) 4-37. Studies on humour chiefly refer to these three theories although under different terms e.g. ‘cognitive’/‘psychological’/‘social’ in Attardo (1994) 47. For alternative divisions of laughter/humour theories, see Monro (1951) 83-231; Keith-Spiegel (1972) 5-12; Martin (2007) 33-82; Dziemidok (2011) 12-13.

⁷⁴ In order to dispel any misapprehension, it is necessary to note what is understood under the term ‘theory’. Here, I follow the lead of Morreall (2009) 6-7, who uses the term to describe a whole group of theoretical explanations which share a common feature (the relief effect, the incongruous element, the expression of superiority). Hence, under the headings ‘relief theory’, ‘incongruity theory’ and ‘superiority theory’ we discuss a set of theories which share a main idea, however, may differ in other respects.

(e.g. an unexpected turn in the action of the play) the original expenditure of nervous energy is interrupted and seeks to be released in different manner. As Spencer explains 'the excess must therefore discharge itself in some other direction; and in the way already explained, there results *an efflux* through the motor nerves to various classes of the muscles, producing the half-convulsive actions we term laughter'.⁷⁵ This 'efflux' of nervous excitement brings physical relief to the body. In this view, laughter enables the relaxation of tension. This mechanical theory is considered to be one of the first philosophical acknowledgments of a liberating element within the act of laughing.⁷⁶

1.2.1.2. The psychological approach

Spencer's link of laughter with the 'efflux of psychic energy' has subsequently influenced Freud in his psychoanalytical investigations. In *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905) the famous psychologist considers laughter as a form of discharging redundant psychic energy in the individual. This discharge, which leads to the release of energy may be occasioned by three laughter-related phenomena: 1) 'joking' or 'wit' ('*der Witz*'), 2) the 'comic' ('*das Komische*'), and 3) 'humour' ('*der Humor*').⁷⁷ According to Freudian theory, internal inhibitions and external circumstances (social restrictions, taboos) restrain sexual and aggressive impulses in the human unconscious. A high quantity of inhibitory energy is used to repress these libidinal drives.

⁷⁵ Spencer (1911) 305 (my emphasis).

⁷⁶ An early notion of laughter's liberating force from constraints is traceable in the observation by the third Earl of Shaftesbury: 'The *natural free spirits* of ingenious men, if imprisoned or controlled, will find out other ways of motion to relieve themselves in their constraint; and whether it be in burlesque, mimicry, or buffoonery, they will be glad at any rate to vent themselves, and be revenged upon their constrainers' (my emphasis). Earl of Shaftesbury, *Sensus Communis. An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1711), cited by Morreall (2009) 16.

⁷⁷ On the problematic English translation of the German term *der Witz*, see the 'Translator's Preface' in Freud (2002) XXXii-XXXiii. On the 'comic' category, see *Ibid.* 177-234. The 'humour' category received additional attention in a separate paper, cf. Freud (1928). For a detailed discussion on the differences between the three Freudian types of laughter-related phenomena, see Morreall (2009) 17-23.

Interestingly, this repression may be interrupted by e.g. the perception of a joke which contains an element described by Freud as 'tendentious' ('tendenziös'), i.e. 'purposive'.⁷⁸ Such jokes fulfil a psychological function. Given that the joke 'will get around restrictions and open up sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible'⁷⁹, the previously restrained impulses have a chance of being briefly experienced. Consequently, a surplus charge of inhibitory energy appears, which is then released in the form of laughter. A tendentious joke enables a temporary pleasant experience of unrestrained sexual and aggressive impulses, whereas laughter becomes its expression. For a moment, then, the act of laughing enables man's liberation from social inhibitions or taboos.

The discussed release theories have originated in the nineteenth century at a time when human biology and psyche were the main focus of interest. As a consequence of this, the relief theory of laughter lays emphasis on the internal activities of a person, since it attempts to explain the phenomenon's origins (discharge of surplus psychic energy) and its biological or psychological function (liberation from tension). For the relief effect to occur, both Spencer and Freud acknowledge the prior presence of a cognitive stimulus, which they consider of incongruous quality.⁸⁰ Therefore, their theoretical premises are not confined only to the release factor. Furthermore, little attention receives the emotional aspect of the phenomenon, for, although both discussed theorists

⁷⁸ Freud recognizes also another category of jokes he refers to as 'innocent' ('harmlos'). Their role is to bring merely pleasure from the 'joke-work', i.e. the cognitive process stimulated by humorous discourse. However, Freud himself failed to provide any examples of such jokes. Modern humour theorists claim that this is because all jokes are purposive, cf. Gruner (1997) 147-78.

⁷⁹ Freud (2002) 100. On the cognitive aspect in jokes, see section 1.2.2. below.

⁸⁰ Spencer (1911) 307: 'laughter naturally results only when consciousness is unawares transferred from great things to small – only when there is what we call a *descending incongruity*' (my emphasis). According to Freud, the liberating effect of laughter is achieved by a cognitive distraction, which causes an interruption in repressing the libidinal impulses. The mechanism may occur only due to the 'joke-work' ('Witzarbeit') technique i.e. the preoccupation of one's conscious (superego) with the distracting intellectual element of a joke.

recognize an association of laughter with feelings, they link it basically to pleasure. As main emphasis is laid on the laughing individual, the social aspect of laughter is neglected.

1.2.2. The incongruity theory

The second discussed theory focuses on the intellectual mechanisms within the individual which lead to the evocation of laughter. Main emphasis is laid on two fields: 1) the devices (stimuli) capable of provoking a laugh due to an incongruous element, 2) the intellectual process responsible for perceiving these devices as 'incongruous', hence 'laughable'. In this case, laughter is considered to be a reaction to the perception of an 'incongruity'.

1.2.2.1. Incongruity *per se*

The word 'incongruity' derives from the Latin verb *congruere* 'to come together', 'to coincide', 'to agree with something' preceded with the Latin prefix *in-* meaning 'not', 'lacking', 'without'.⁸¹ Hence, an item identified as 'incongruous' is perceived as 'not coming together', 'not agreeing with something', 'not fitting in a certain way'. In reference to laughter, the term 'incongruity'⁸² was first used by the Scottish philosopher Beattie (1778) in his essay *On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*.⁸³ However, it ought to be stressed that first suggestions of a 'non fitting' element in eliciting laughter date back to antiquity. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle mentions the use of a specific technique in order to make the listeners laugh – to set up an expectation in the listeners and

⁸¹ *OLD* s.v. 'congruere'; *Ibid.* s.v. 'in-'.

⁸² The term itself is of quite modern origin, since, according to the *OED* (s.v. 'incongruity, 3.) it appears the earliest in the sixteenth century.

⁸³ Beattie (1778) 347, states that 'laughter arises from the view of two or more *inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances*, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, as acquiring a assort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them' (my emphasis).

then violate it.⁸⁴ A reiteration of the subject appears in Cicero's *On the Orator*, as the rhetorician states that the most common jokes are 'exemplified when *we are expecting to hear a particular phrase, and something different is uttered* (my italics.). In this case our own mistake even makes us laugh ourselves.'⁸⁵ Although these are merely minor accounts on the subject, we may nevertheless distinguish an idea that laughter can be occasioned by a thing escaping the expectation.

The beginnings of a modern incongruity theory are found in the observations of Hutcheson. In *Reflections upon Laughter* (1750) he introduces 'contrast' as the reason for a laugh. Its mechanism depends on 'the bringing together of images which have contrary additional ideas, as well as some resemblance in the principal idea'.⁸⁶ Laughter, then is evoked by the subjective perception of an opposition of ideas. In addition to 'contrast', in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant stresses the importance of the role of 'unexpectedness' or 'surprise' to the laughing experience⁸⁷, and following his lead Schopenhauer (1819) in the *World as Will and Representation* explains the source of the phenomenon in the discrepancy between the sensual impression of an item and its general concept.⁸⁸ Finally, in a similar vein, although on a different

⁸⁴ Arist. *Rhet.* III 1412a 27-8: 'Jibes involving change of a letter [i.e. puns] also have this effect, for they are deceptive', (ὅπερ δύναται καὶ τὰ παρὰ γράμμα σκώμματα· ἐξαπατᾶ γὰρ). The philosopher also mentions a kind of surprise element, for example in jokes with unexpected twists in meaning of words, cf. *Ibid.* 31-32: 'Changes of letter [as in a pun] make the speaker mean not what he says but what the word plays on', (τὰ δὲ παρὰ γράμμα ποιεῖ οὐχ' ὁ λέγει λέγειν, ἀλλ' ὁ μεταστρέφει ὄνομα). English translations in Kennedy (1991) 250.

⁸⁵ Cic. *De orat.* 2.63: 'Sed scitis esse notissimum ridiculi genus, cum *aliud exspectamus, aliud dicitur*. Hic nobismet ipsis noster error risum movet' (my italics). English translation in Sutton and Rackham (1948) 389.

⁸⁶ Hutcheson (1750) 19, explains the contrast occurring 'between ideas of grandeur, dignity, sanctity, perfection, and ideas of meanness, baseness, profanity'.

⁸⁷ Kant (2007) 159: 'Laughter is an affect arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing' ('aus der plötzlichen Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts').

⁸⁸ Schopenhauer (2010) 84: 'In every case, *laughter* arises from nothing other than the sudden perception of an incongruity between a concept and the real objects ('aus der plötzlichen wahrgenommenen Inkongruenz zwischen einem Begriff und den realen Objekten') that are, in some respect, thought through the concept; in fact laughter itself is simply the expression of this incongruity ('nur der Ausdruck dieser Inkongruenz').

philosophical premise, Kierkegaard (1846) distinguishes ‘contradiction’ as the sufficient criterion for laughter.⁸⁹

Interesting is the fact, that these historical figures base these conclusions on the example of jokes they find appropriate to support their views. Therefore, their analysis of laughter is lead chiefly in the association with humour. It is also important to stress, that these philosophers only made minor accounts on the subject of laughter, however, never have engendered a complete doctrine nor (with the exception of Beattie) did they devote a separate study. Such full treatments of the subject have appeared with the expansion of research on the laughable, which today has become a separate scientific field known as ‘humour studies’. Among various premises on humour and laughter, the incongruity theory remains predominant.

1.2.2.2. Laughter in humour scholarship

Contemporary incongruity theorists subscribe to the general formula outlined by the above-mentioned philosophers, albeit with more extensiveness and diversity in interpretation.⁹⁰ In general, modern researchers lay emphasis on the internal activities of an individual and attempt to answer the questions: what does one perceive to be laughable, and how does one conduct the process of this perception. As I have already discussed above the cognitive-perceptive process (section 1.1.2.) as well as the modern ideas of humorous stimuli (section 1.1.3.1.) these explanations need not be repeated here. From the innumerable contributors,⁹¹ who correspondingly employ this theory in their research on ‘humour’, ‘the comic’ or ‘the comical’, one of the most prominent has been

⁸⁹ Kierkegaard (1846) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, reprinted in Morreall (1987) 83: ‘The comical is present in every stage of life (only that the relative positions are different), for wherever there is life, there is contradiction, and wherever there is contradiction, the comical is present’. For an account on Kierkegaard’s views on humour, see Lippitt (2000).

⁹⁰ A condensed survey of the different approaches is presented in Baumli (1976) 16-29.

⁹¹ Cf. Monro (1951); Collins-Swabey (1961); Koestler (1964); Clark (1970); Raskin (1985); Ruch (1998); Morreall (1983), (1987), (1989), (2009).

established by Morreall. In his article 'Enjoying incongruity' (1989) the American philosopher discerns 'amusement' as one of three possible reactions to incongruity,⁹² and stresses its significance in appreciating humour. Since 'amusement is the enjoyment of something which clashes with our mental pattern and expectations' humour functions as the 'enjoyment of incongruity'.⁹³ In this view, the perception of incongruity itself becomes a source of pleasure.

Again, as in the case of the relief doctrine, the incongruity theory does not comprise all aspects of laughter we have distinguished in its definition. As main emphasis is laid on the cognitive process and laughter-provoking devices, investigations on laughter itself become secondary. Hence, the term 'laughter' is mainly used in association with 'humour', 'the comic' and 'humorous devices'. Other non-humorous occasions for laughter are usually omitted by incongruity theorists. Although an emotional response of pleasant nature to this intellectual action is acknowledged, it is nevertheless recognized as a neutral state of pleasure, which becomes then physically manifested. What is of significance to this study, incongruity theories basically neglect a social aspect of the discussed phenomenon.

1.2.3. The superiority theory

The third analyzed theory explains the cause for laughter through the arousal of an emotion in the laugher defined mainly as a 'feeling of superiority'. The term 'superiority' is of Latin origin. It is a noun constructed from the word *superior*, a comparative form from the adjective *superus* which basically means 'situated above' and 'upper'.⁹⁴ In fact, the semantic sphere of the term 'superior' which originally refers to someone or something 'higher in local position; situated above or further up than something else', extends into such as 1)

⁹² The other two are 'negative emotion' and 'puzzlement', Morreall (1989) 6-10.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 1.

⁹⁴ *OLD* s.v.

'higher in rank or dignity; more exalted in social or official status', 2) 'higher in degree, amount, quality, importance, or other respect; of greater value or consideration', and lastly 3) 'higher in status or quality than; hence, greater or better than'.⁹⁵ Since the *OED* defines the word 'superiority' as 'the quality or condition of being superior'⁹⁶, therefore, we may notice that the circumstances of being or feeling superior may occur in reference to 1) social status, 2) interpersonal value or 3) personal quality.

1.2.3.1. Ancient notions

Early notions of a certain feeling of superiority are traceable in some extant writings of ancient authors. In his dialogue *Philebus* Plato recognizes the 'laughable' (τὸ γελοῖον) in human vice (πονηρία), especially in people's mistaken perception of themselves in regard to their finances, physical appearances, moral conduct and intelligence.⁹⁷ Laughing at others' self-ignorance brings pleasure,⁹⁸ which, in the view of Plato, occurs simultaneously in the company of malice (ὁ φθόνος). Since this feeling is considered negatively as 'the pain in the soul' (λύπη ψυχῆς), laughter, then, manifests an ambiguous emotion, described by the philosopher as the 'mixture of pleasure and pain', what becomes most noticeable in the case of experiencing delight at the misfortunes of friends.⁹⁹ Plato concludes his discussion on the laughable

⁹⁵ *OED* s.v. 'superior', adj., A. 1.; A. 3; A. 5.

⁹⁶ *OED* s.v. 'superiority'.

⁹⁷ Plat. *Philb.* 48c-e. The often-quoted Platonian 'theory of laughter' (cf. de Vries (1985) 379) is presented by the character of Socrates, according to whom such self-ignorant people do not follow the famous inscription in Delphi, namely 'Know thyself' (γνώθι σαυτόν). This self-ignorance (ἡ ἄγνοια) is considered to be a misfortune (τὸ κακόν), which in the *Republic* Plato regards to be the truly 'laughable thing', Plat. *Res.* 452d 7-9: 'the man who thinks that anything other than baseness is ridiculous is a fool' (μάταιος ὃς γελοῖον ἄλλο τι ἡγείται ἢ τὸ κακόν). English translation in Emlyn-Jones and Preddy (2013a) 459.

⁹⁸ Plat. *Philb.* 49e 9: 'we enjoy... when we laugh at it' (χαίρομεν δὲ ... ὅταν ἐπ' αὐτῇ γελώμεν). Mytranslation.

⁹⁹ Plat. *Philb.* 50a 5-9: 'in our laughing at the absurdities of our friends, in blending pleasure with envy, we are blending together pleasure with pain; for we had agreed some time ago that envy was a pain of soul, but laughing was a pleasure, and the pair of them occurred

recognizing the same malicious pleasure when laughing at the characters in comedy.¹⁰⁰ In the case of Aristotle, who discusses comedy in a set of passages in the *Poetics*, the 'laughable' is considered to be 'one category of the shameful' for it 'comprises any fault or mark of shame which involves no pain or destruction'.¹⁰¹ On the basis of the references in which comedy is said to represent people 'inferior' (χειρόνες, *Poet.* 1448a 17) and 'base' (φαῦλοι, *Poet.* 1448b 26), however, 'not completely evil' (οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, *Poet.* 1449a 32), we may observe a certain attitude of superiority the spectators adopt towards the comic characters.

Similar ideas are noticeable in the transmitted works on oratory of Cicero and Quintilian. Following Aristotle's observations, Cicero indicates the laughable in human defects of moral and physical nature,¹⁰² since the source of laughter always lies in things which are deformed or offensive.¹⁰³ Quintilian comes closest to discerning a certain superior attitude of an orator towards his

simultaneously in these times (γελῶντας ἄρα ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν φίλων γελοίοις φησὶν ὁ λόγος, **κεραυνύντας ἡδονὴν αὐτῶν φθόνῳ, λύπη τὴν ἡδονὴν συγκεραυνύναι**: τὸν γὰρ φθόνον ὠμολογήσθαι λύπην ψυχῆς ἡμῖν πάσαι, τὸ δὲ γελᾶν ἡδονὴν, ἅμα γίνεσθαι δὲ τούτῳ ἐν τούτοις τοῖς χρόνοις). English translation in Benardete (1993) 60.

¹⁰⁰ In *Laws* (*Leg.* VII 816d) Plato defines comedy as 'the actions of ugly bodies and ugly ideas and of the men engaged in ludicrous comic-acting' (τὰ δὲ τῶν αἰσχροῶν σωμάτων καὶ διανοημάτων καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τὰ τοῦ γέλωτος κωμωδήματα τετραμμένων). English translation in Bury (1952b) 97.

¹⁰¹ *Arist. Poet.* 1449a 33-35: τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοῖον μόριον. τὸ γὰρ γελοῖον ἐστὶν ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἴσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν. English translation in Halliwell (2005) 45.

¹⁰² *Cic. De orat.* 2.59. 238: 'all laughing-matters are found among those blemishes noticeable in the conduct of people who are neither objects of general esteem nor yet full of misery' (materies omnis ridiculorum est in eis vitiis, quae sunt in vita hominum neque carorum neque calamitosorum); *Ibid.* 2.59. 239: 'In ugliness too and in physical blemishes there is good enough matter for jesting' (Est etiam deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies ad iocandum). English translation in Sutton and Rackham (1948) 375.

¹⁰³ *Cic. De orat.* 2.58. 236: 'Then the field or province, so to speak, of the laughable (this being our next problem), is restricted to that which may be described as unseemly or ugly' (Locus autem et regio quasi ridiculi - nam id proxime quaeritur - turpitudine et deformitate - quadam continetur). English translation in Sutton and Rackham (1948) 373. For a broader discussion on the laughable in Cicero, see Grant (1924) 73-6; on the joke in Ciceronian rhetoric, see Szostek (2004).

opponent. Once he concurs with Cicero on the nature of the laughable,¹⁰⁴ he observes that ‘laughter is never far from derision’¹⁰⁵, whereas to speak derisively of someone is ‘the most ambitious way of glorying oneself’.¹⁰⁶ From these indirect references we may notice the connection of laughter with the feeling of pleasure at others’ mistakes, infirmities and weaknesses, a feeling defined today as *Schadenfreude*.¹⁰⁷ It is, however, apparent that in the extant texts the discussion is lead mainly in respect to the laughter-evoking object, i.e. the laughable.¹⁰⁸

1.2.3.2. A feeling of superiority

The emotional aspect of laughter receives more attention in early modern times, as philosophers turn their interest from the laughable object onto the laughing subject. Laughter’s relation to feelings has been acknowledged by many thinkers, however, the first to explicitly state an emotion of superiority was the English philosopher Hobbes, who presented his famous definition on laughter in *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, the phenomenon appears as ‘nothyng else but a suddaine Glory arising from suddaine Conception of some Eminency in our selves by

¹⁰⁴ Quintilian quotes Cicero’s observation in *Inst. Orat.* VI 3.8: ‘Habet enim [i.e. risus], ut Cicero dicit, sedem in deformitate aliqua et turpitudine’.

¹⁰⁵ Quint. *Inst. Orat.* VI 3.7: ‘a derisu non procul abest risus.’ English translation in Selby Watson (1875).

¹⁰⁶ Quint. *Inst. Orat.* XI 1.22: ‘Ambitiosissimum gloriandi genus est etiam deridere.’ For an account on laughter in Quintilian, see Desbordes (1998).

¹⁰⁷ The loanword deriving from the German language is composed of *Schaden* ‘harm’ and *Freude* ‘joy’. For a discussion on the meanings of the term in the English language, see Portmann (2000) 3-6. Although there exists the Greek equivalent ἐπιχαιρεκακία which Aristotle uses to define the feeling of pleasure at others misfortunes (*Nic. Eth.* II 7, 1108b 1-6), the term does not appear in the association with laughter.

¹⁰⁸ For a broader discussion on the laughable in ancient rhetoric, see Grant (1924).

¹⁰⁹ Many humour theorists e.g. Ludovici (1932) 65, Morreall (1987) 19, Berger (1997) 22, Provine (2000) 14, Martin (2007) 44, entitle this work as *Human Nature*. Such modification results from the writing’s illegal edition in 1650, when the original text of *The Elements of Law* was divided into two separate, having one part published under the title *Human Nature, or the Fundamental Elements of Policie*. This gave the tradition to the different title. In this study I follow the lead of Hobbesian specialists, who quote the original 1640 source, cf. Ewin (2001), Skinner (2004).

Comparison with the Infirmities of others'.¹¹⁰ It is the recognition of one's 'eminency', i.e. 'greatness', 'importance', or 'prominence' that provokes the feeling of 'glory', used by Hobbes in the sense of 'vain-glory', i.e. 'self-esteem'.¹¹¹ As we may notice, a feeling of superiority evinces itself in joyous contempt, for its source lies in an unexpected, yet pleasant recognition of one's superiority (which elicits joy) and at the same time the discovery of another's inferiority (which evokes contempt) by comparing his imperfections and defects. In other words, laughter manifests a state of mind, namely a pleasurable and self-congratulatory feeling evoked by the awareness of being superior.

The Hobbesian view on the subjective aspect of laughter has found many supporters¹¹² and continuators, who describe laughter's feeling of superiority with different terms. For instance, Bain (1865) refers to it as 'the emotion of power' or 'the consciousness of superior power, energy or might';¹¹³ Ludovici (1932) regards it as 'superior adaptation';¹¹⁴ many have described this feeling as 'triumph';¹¹⁵ and more recently Gruner (1997) uses the expression 'thrill of

¹¹⁰ Hobbes (1969) 42 (original spelling). For a broader philosophical discussion of Hobbesian laughter, see Ewin (2001).

¹¹¹ Hobbes (1991) 42: 'GLORYING: which if grounded upon the experience of his own former actions, is the same with *Confidence*: but if grounded on the flattery of others; or onely supposed by himself, for delight in the consequences of it, is called VAIN-GLORY: which name is properly given; because a well grounded *Confidence* begetteth Attempt; whereas the supposing of power does not, and is therefore rightly called *Vaine*' (original spelling).

¹¹² *Inter al.* French writers: Stendhal (1907) devotes a full chapter (ch. II), basically in reference to comedy, cf. Bishop (1975); and Baudelaire (1956) who regards human superiority in a theological context, cf. Geier (2007) 135-136. Critically Hutcheson (1750) 6-15; Nietzsche (1955) 753, reputed Hobbes for trying to create a 'bad reputation' [*eine üble Nachrede*] for laughter; similar criticism in Eastman (1921) 33- 37, esp. 37, where he speaks of 'Hobbes's erroneous theory'.

¹¹³ Bain (1865) 118.

¹¹⁴ Ludovici (1932) 62: 'We laugh when we feel that our adaptation to life is superior. It may be a *purely subjective state* unprovoked by any external object, (Hobbes's self-glory covers this, too), or it may be a *state of mind* excited by a comparison, as when we laugh at a schoolboy howler' (my italics).

¹¹⁵ On the association of laughter with triumph, see section 1.3.5.3. below.

winning'.¹¹⁶ Despite the diversity, all these terms refer to the idea that laughter expresses a pleasant emotional experience, namely a joyful feeling of high self-esteem caused by a favourable comparison to others. Thus, it is apparent that the superiority theory basically regards human emotionality as it attempts to explain the psychological reactions within the laughing subject.

As we have seen, the superiority theory considers other emotions than just simple pleasure, and, in this regard, the term 'laughter' may refer to the evocation and experience of such sentiments as 'a feeling of superiority', 'glory', 'high self-esteem' or 'Schadenfreude'. However, as in the cases of the previously discussed two theories, the superiority doctrine fails to comprise all aspects of the definition of laughter we have distinguished earlier. Though emphasis is laid on the psychological reasons for laughing, little attention is paid to the cognitive process. Again, superiority theorists focus their research on the laughing individual, whereas, express little or no interest in the phenomenon's social dimension.¹¹⁷

The detailed analysis of the three prominent 'theories of laughter' has shown that none of the doctrines encompass all of the discussed aspects of laughter. In general, these theories attempt to give a single explanation for its evocation. Thus, a bout of laughter is explained in terms of human: 1) physiology (the relief theory), 2) cognition (the incongruity theory), and 3) psychology (the superiority theory). What is of significance to our investigation, the classical theories chiefly explain the laughter process within the individual, however, tend to omit, or make minor observations on the

¹¹⁶ Gruner (1997) 8: '*laughing equals winning*. (...) I use "winning" here in its broadest sense: *Getting what you want*. For it is "getting what we want" that makes us happy, isn't it? We say that we *enjoy* getting what we want' (original emphasis). Gruner designates his proposition as the 'laugh/win theory', cf. *ibid.* 12.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Baudelaire (1956) 140: 'The comic and the capacity for laughter are situated in the laugher and by no means in the object of his mirth.'

phenomenon's social effects. It is a curious fact, that such a trend dominated laughter/humour scholarship until the end of the nineteenth century. Only then does the subject of laughter become of interest to scientists of other fields of studies, such as ethology, anthropology, ethnology, as well as sociology. Since these studies examine human behaviours in a social setting, they have included a social dimension to the phenomenon of laughter. This way, in the twentieth century, studies on laughter have become more interdisciplinary. We shall, therefore, move to the next section, in which I will investigate the arguments for the sociality of laughter.

1.3. Social dimension of laughter

In this section we I examine laughter as a social act. Curiously, this 'sociality' became explicitly acknowledged only a century ago in the famous work of Bergson entitled *Laughter* (1900). It was the French philosopher who pointed at society as the phenomenon's 'natural environment' (*milieu naturel*), arguing that 'you would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others. Laughter appears to stand in need of an echo... Our laughter is always the laughter of a group.'¹¹⁸ Till today, Bergson's observations are recognized as groundbreaking in studies on laughter, which by accepting the social dimension have limited an essentially individualistic approach to the phenomenon.

Laughter requires a social context. It may occur between individuals or among groups. Recent experiments held on groups of people provide considerable supportive material to the collective nature of the phenomenon. In *Laughter - A Scientific Investigation* (2000), Provine adduces evidence on the social setting for laughter from an experiment held on 72 students, who were to note down every instance of their laughter and its social circumstances. He

¹¹⁸ Bergson (2005) 5-6.

claims: 'the *sociality* of laughing was striking... My logbook keepers laughed about 30 *times* more when they were around others than when they were alone – laughter almost disappeared among solitary subjects not exposed to media stimulation.'¹¹⁹ The main conclusion of this experiment is that laughter hardly ever occurs in solitude.

Man's constitution determines the social character of laughter. In *The Morality of Laughter* (2003), Buckley enlists such arguments for the phenomenon's sociality: 1) its human origin, 2) the human object, 3) transmission of information, and 4) formation of bonds.¹²⁰ Let us briefly analyze these social aspects.

1.3.1. Human laughter

To laugh is human. Already Aristotle makes the distinction between animals and human beings on the basis of the latter's capacity to laugh, as he finds man to be 'the only animal that laughs.'¹²¹ Furthermore, laughter's sociality becomes explicit since its subject, i.e. man – the laughing animal (*animal ridens*), happens to be at the same time an *animal sociale*. Aristotle mentions man's social nature in *Nicomachean Ethics* ('For man is a social being and by nature designed to live with others', *Nic. Eth.* IX 1169b) and makes a

¹¹⁹ Provine (2000) 44-45 (original emphasis). On the sociality of humorous laughter, see Chapman (1976), (1983).

¹²⁰ Buckley (2003) 17-19.

¹²¹ Arist. *Part. An.* III. 10, 673a 8: 'τὸ μόνον γελᾶν τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπον.' As is evident on the example of the Rabelaisian motto to this chapter, the thought has been reiterated through the centuries by many philosophers and writers, e.g. Whitehead (1754) 37: 'Twas said of old, deny it who can / the only laughing animal is man'; Beattie (1778) 323: 'Risibility... one of the characters that distinguish man from the inferior animal.' For the idea's evolution from antiquity till the Renaissance, see Screech (1997) 1-5. Similarly in Polish literature, e.g. Jan Kochanowski *Pieśń świętojańska o Sobótce*: 'Sam ze wszystkiego stworzenia / Człowiek ma śmiech z przyrodzenia / Inszy wszelki zwierz niemy / Nie śmieje się, jako chcemy', cf. Pelc (2003); Waclaw Potocki, *Moralia* III 168: 'śmiech i płacz imo wszystkie zwierzęta i ptaki/ Ma człek...'. Despite contemporary evidence for types of animal 'laughs' (see note 123 below) the idea of laughter being quintessentially human remains prominent, cf. Hertzler (1970) 27: 'True laughter, like true language, exists only among human beings'; Buckley (2003) 15: 'Thinking and risibility are both human attributes and limited to conscious beings'; Similarly in Polish thought, cf. Kołakowski (2003) 1.

fuller account in *Politics*, in which expresses the famous statement of man being 'by nature a political animal.'¹²² Although the philosopher did not mention the social nature of laughter *expressis verbis*, the connection, nevertheless, appears clear, since he defines laughter's subject, i.e. man as a social specie. In short, we may paraphrase in Aristotelian manner that man by nature is a social animal, the only one which laughs.¹²³

1.3.2. Human object of laughter

Secondly, the laughable should contain something manlike. According to Bergson, what evokes a laugh is the perception of a human feature in an object, 'for if any other animal, or some lifeless object, produces the same effect, it is always because of *some resemblance to man*, of the stamp he gives it or the use he puts it to.'¹²⁴ In case of items or animals, these have to resemble man in a certain way (means of appearance e.g. a carrot root resembling human form, or behaviour e.g. a bear dancing in the circus). It comes as no surprise, then, since Bergson acknowledges the laugh-provoking object as 'strictly human' (*proprement humain*), that man himself often becomes the most suitable object for laughter. Hence, not only does the human being appear to be the 'laughing animal', but also the proper 'animal laughed at'.¹²⁵

¹²² Arist. *Pol.* I 1253a 2: 'πολιτικὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον.' Here, the word πολιτικὸν resembles more the English word 'social', than 'political' what becomes more apparent in the Latin version *homo est animal sociale*. Cf. the explanation in Kitto (2009) 11: 'Man is an animal whose characteristic it is to live in a city-state.'

¹²³ The uniqueness of human laughter has been questioned by Darwin (1998) 131-3, who gives examples of chimpanzee laughter; similarly Leacock (1937) 21: 'Aristotle is scarcely correct when he says that man is the only laughing animal. There is good ground for saying that the *primates* all laugh' (original emphasis). Modern research on animals provides examples of laughter-like sounds emitted *inter al.* by primates, cf. Provine (2000) 75-97, dogs, cf. Simonet, Versteeg and Storie (2005), and even rats, cf. Panksepp and Burgdorf (2003).

¹²⁴ Bergson (2005) 4 (my emphasis). For an opposite view, cf. Morreall (1983) 64: 'If I find a bowling ball in my refrigerator, I may find this incongruous situation funny, even though I do not see the ball as a person.'

¹²⁵ Bergson (2005) 3-4. Early observation already in Montaigne (1958) 221: 'our own peculiar human condition is that we are as fit to be laughed at as able to laugh [*Nostre propre condition est autant ridicule, que risible*]'.

1.3.3. Laughter's communicative role

Laughter stands a form of communication. The British anthropologist Douglas (1975) notices in her research on body symbolism that 'the body's main scope is to express the relation of the individual to the group'.¹²⁶ In this regard, the physical manifestation of laughter becomes a 'unique bodily eruption which is always to be taken a communication.'¹²⁷ Laughter, therefore, is a psychosomatic form of behaviour which plays a social role in transmitting information about the position of the laughing subject relative to others, whether individual or group. This way, one's laughter not only expresses but also signals one's feelings.

1.3.4. Social effects of laughter

Laughter appears to be a phenomenon ambivalent in its social outcomes. Interestingly, the English language recognizes this ambiguity in the popular juxtaposition of the expressions to 'laugh with' and 'laugh at'.¹²⁸ For instance, in his remarks on laughter, Pope makes the distinction that 'those are my friends I laugh with, and those that are not I laugh at'.¹²⁹ On the basis of this example it becomes clear that the English poet points at two different intentional acts of his laughter: with the first expression he refers to the pleasant co-experience of group laughter shared with people he considers to be friends; whereas with the second, he describes an action intended to communicate the lack of such amicable relations with people he does not regard as friends. In short, 'laughing

¹²⁶ Douglas (1975) 167

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 167-68.

¹²⁸ 'To laugh with' is a simple construction of a verb and preposition phrase which refers to the action of sharing the experience of laughing, e.g. 'to laugh with a friend, classmates, neighbours etc.'; however, 'to laugh at' is idiomatic with the figurative meaning 'to deride', 'to ridicule', 'to mock' and 'to make fun of'. The *OED* s.v. 'laugh', *v.*, 4.b. attributes the first instances of this idiom to Chaucer (c. 1374): 'He laughethe at my peyne'. For a linguistic analysis of the verb 'to laugh', see Hiltunen (1994), esp. 218-219.

¹²⁹ Pope (1956) 111.

with' refers to positive personal interactions, whereas 'laughing at' expresses the negative.

1.3.4.1. Group cohesion

The act of 'laughing with' has a cohesive effect. According to Buckley shared laughter is as a form of 'a community-building device'.¹³⁰ Be it between individuals or within a group, laughter has the power to manifest or create affiliation. Provine stresses that: 'you can define "friends" and "group members" as those with whom you laugh', since laughter may express shared values or show the laughers' like-mindedness.¹³¹ It has the ability to unite its participants, even if they are total strangers,¹³² create social bonds and reinforce existing relationships. Modern scientific investigations in social interactions provide supportive material to the social facilitation and bonding function of group laughter.¹³³ Laughing with others often becomes a shared experience of pleasant nature and contributes to positive affective reactions in its participants: mutual understanding and closeness.¹³⁴ In short, laughter is a social act which, generally, brings its members together.

1.3.4.2. Social exclusion

Curiously, a single act of laughter which promotes in-group solidarity, at the same time, may have an opposite social effect. In an early twentieth century article 'Le problème sociologique du rire' (1928), Dupréel argues that the whole

¹³⁰ Buckley (2003) 184

¹³¹ Provine (2000) 47.

¹³² Zijderfeld (1983) 47: 'Joking and laughter unite people. They can even bring into association people who were previously unknown to each other, or otherwise have little to say to each other.'

¹³³ Researchers in various fields concur: ethology: Lorenz (2002) 173; Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989) 138; anthropology: Carty and Musharbash (2008) 209-14; sociology: Hertzler (1970) 93-98, Zijderfeld (1983) 47-52; psychology: Chapman (1976), (1983).

¹³⁴ Glenn (2008) 29. Cf. Bakhtin (1986) 135: 'laughter makes things close and familiar'.

problem of laughter is a sociological one,¹³⁵ for it is group dynamics that constitute the nature of the phenomenon. In particular, the French sociologist distinguishes two types of social laughter: 1) 'laughter of welcome' ('le rire d'accueil'), the pleasant group experience of shared laughter, which unites people and creates bonds; and 2) 'laughter of exclusion' ('le rire d'exclusion'), the social rejection of a chosen individual or group. This distinction has been confirmed in the studies of Australian anthropologists Carty and Musharbash, who concurrently claim that: '[l]aughter is a boundary thrown up around those laughing, those sharing the joke. Its role is demarcating difference, of collectively identifying against an Other, is as bound to processes of social exclusion as to inclusion.'¹³⁶ As it appears, laughter may simultaneously elicit two different social reactions in its participants: cohesive within the laughing group and exclusive for an individual or group at whom the laughter is directed at. Usually, the 'Other' refers to people who differ or stand in opposition to the laughers, such as outsiders, foreigners, antagonists and enemies.

As we have seen, Buckley's fourth argument for the sociality of laughter regards one of the phenomenon's social effects. As it will emerge, these depend on the type of message the laugher conveys to the participants with his/her laughter. Let us, then, pay our attention to the laugher's disposition.

1.3.5. The laugher's disposition

Laughter may reveal one's attitude to another. In his research on the social aspects of humour, Zillmann distinguishes two categories of interpersonal dispositions: 1) positive, considering such emotions as affection, admiration and love, as well as 2) negative, regarding e.g. resentment,

¹³⁵ Dupréel (1928) 213: 'Le problème sociologique du rire, c'est tout le problème du rire'.

¹³⁶ Carty and Musharbash (2008) 214.

condemnation or even hate.¹³⁷ The main idea of Zillmann's 'disposition theory' is based on the premise that people are disposed to laugh with friends at common antagonists and not the contrary.¹³⁸ Accordingly, a positive disposition is revealed among those who share the experience of laughing with each other, which, as we have seen, results in the promotion of group affiliation. However, laughing with a negative disposition depends on demonstrating one's superiority, a non-friendly attitude, disdain or even hostility towards the target of laughter. The social effects are the contrary of those of the positive disposition. Not surprisingly, then, the laugher's attitude determines the type of social outcome.

1.3.5.1. Playfulness

A positive disposition is often connected with playful laughter. This matter has received more attention in a subset of research on 'play'.¹³⁹ From the three main definitions of the word 'play', the most suitable for our discussion on laughter describes the phenomenon as 'an exercise or action for amusement or diversion' and, next, opposes the additional meaning of 'jest, fun, sport' to the term 'earnest'.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, 'play' defines an activity considered to be non-serious and which is conducted with a social-psychological purpose, i.e. to rouse amusement in its participants.

The connection of laughter and play has received scientific attention from primatologists, who give evidence to a phylogenetic development of laughter on the bases of comparative animal research. In his influential article 'A comparative approach to the phylogeny of laughter and smiling' (1972), van

¹³⁷ Zillmann (1983) 90.

¹³⁸ Zillmann and Cantor (1976) 101: 'Appreciation [of humour] should be maximal when our friends humiliate our enemies, and minimal when our enemies manage to get the upper hand over our friends.' Similarly on the laugher's affective disposition in Provine (2000) 20: 'we laugh more when bad things happen to obnoxious than to pleasant people.'

¹³⁹ Some scientists consider these studies as a separate 'theory of play', however I follow the approach accepted by Baumli (1976) 26.

¹⁴⁰ OED s.v. 'play', *n.*, II. 7. a.

Hooff observes in primates two specific facial displays, which appear only in non-hostile social activities, such as the context of play. The analysis of data suggests that the display denoted as 'relaxed open-mouth' originally served animals as a non-agonistic signal, which evolved from presenting an attitude of submission to reflecting a state of playfulness.¹⁴¹ In reference to human behaviour, the comparative evidence strongly favours the evolutionary origin of laughter from the analyzed 'relaxed open-mouth' display. Thus, in the words of van Hooff, human laughter stands 'a metacommunicative signal' which designates its association with play.¹⁴²

What becomes apparent from these investigations is that the origins and functions of laughter are of social nature. In the context of play, the discussed phenomenon appears to be a non-verbal behaviour which conveys to other participants of the non-serious activity expressive signals of friendliness, non-hostility or simply of being in a playful state of mind.¹⁴³ In this case, laughter

¹⁴¹ The other display defined as the 'silent bared-teeth' is to give origin to smiling, cf. van Hoof (1972) 225-231. On the smile, see note 18 above.

¹⁴² van Hoof (1972) 235.

¹⁴³ It is interesting to note, that in humour studies only recently has the semantic sphere of the term 'laughter' fully encompassed the connection of humour with the presence of a playful attitude. The link between humour and play has been generally omitted by theorists until the twentieth century. An early recognition of laughter's connection with play is expressed by Sully, who lists play as one of the occasions for laughter, even discerns the presence of a play-mood, however only in regard of children, see Sully (1902) 76, esp. 145-50. The first to stress the essentially playful nature of humour was Eastman in his work *The Enjoyment of Laughter*, who completely identifies humour with play and criticizes the serious treatment of the phenomenon by early researchers (2009) 15: 'Humor is play. Humor is being in fun. It has no general value except the values possessed by play... Therefore no definition of humor, no theory of wit, no explanation of comic laughter, will ever stand up, which is not based upon the distinction between *playful* and *serious*' (original emphasis). Since then the subject of play has attracted a great deal of professional attention and scholarly interest. Worth recalling is the famous work on the *homo ludens* by Huizinga (1955), as well as influential studies on the connection of humour and play by Fry (1963) and Berlyne (1969). A comprehensive theory of playful humour has been introduced by Apter, according to whom 'play' should be understood as a state of mind, i.e. (1991: 31): 'a way of seeing and being, a special mental 'set' towards the world and one's actions in it.' Such a non-serious mindset is recognized as *paratelic*, in the opposition of that of a *telic* (i.e. goal-oriented), serious mode. Hence, play enables an individual to engage in any activity in a purposeless way, lacking goal-orientation, and only for the sheer pleasure of it. In the view of Apter, humour can only be experienced through this playful state of mind, which, then, becomes manifested in laughter.

accepts positive interpersonal functions and, thus, may enhance group cohesion.

1.3.5.2. Hostility

Some researchers associated a laugher's negative disposition with aggression. An early example is the opinion of the Canadian writer Leacock (1935) who claims that 'the savage who cracked his enemy over the head with a tomahawk and shouted, "Ha! Ha!" was the first humorist.'¹⁴⁴ Today, on the basis of an evolutionary development, some specialists regard laughter as a primitive signal of hatred and hostility. For instance, the biologist Ludovici (1932) argues for laughter's origins from the 'showing of teeth', which 'are visible to the attacking or merely threatening foe' and belong to 'the animals' arsenal of weapons, its equipment for war and for survival in the struggle for existence.'¹⁴⁵ Lorenz (1966), who defines aggression to be 'the fighting instinct in beast and man which is directed against members of the same species',¹⁴⁶ views laughter as a 'ritualization of a redirected threatening moment.'¹⁴⁷ And similarly, the Austrian behaviourist Eibl-Eibesfeldt derives it from 'an ancient form of mobbing', and agrees on the affiliating effect between aggressive laughers for '[c]ommon laughter thus becomes a bonding signal between those who are common aggressors.'¹⁴⁸ Here, laughter is identified with non-friendly social behaviours, since threats are forms of attack posed to intimidate, whereas mobbing victimizes its target by emotional abuse. Accepting such agonistic origins for the phenomenon leads to the conclusion that of Albert Rapp's, who

¹⁴⁴ Leacock (1935) 9.

¹⁴⁵ Ludovici (1932) 70.

¹⁴⁶ Lorenz (2002) IX.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 284.

¹⁴⁸ Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989) 138: 'The loud utterance of laughter is derived from an *old pattern behaviour of mobbing*, in which several group members threaten a common enemy. Thus it is a special case of aggressive behaviour and this component retains its original significance. *If we laugh aloud at someone, this is an aggressive act*, bonding those who join in the laughter' (my emphasis).

in his *Wit and Origins of Humor* (1951) reckons human laughter 'a gesture born out of hatred and aggressiveness' for 'hostility is innate to mankind'.¹⁴⁹

Today, this evolutionary explanation of laughter's hostile origins has been widely criticized.¹⁵⁰ However, the presented ideas may be of hand for our discussion, for they elucidate the observable hostile aspect of laughter. In these views, we may recognize in the aggressor a hostile intention to belittle the victim by sending signals of one's power. Likewise in laughter, since it is a mean of communication, we may observe that the laugher transmits the message about his power or superiority over the laughed at target. As we will see, such signal of hostile might is most noticeable in the case of triumphant laughter, to which we draw our attention next.

1.3.5.3. Triumph

An old English proverb claims that 'he laughs that wins'.¹⁵¹ It is, however, a universal truth that laughter becomes the victor. Ancient sources of the Western world contain this belief, and especially the preserved texts of epic poetry provide numerous examples of triumphant laughter, i.e. the laugh of the victor over a vanquished foe.¹⁵² Though in the original Latin language the word *triumphus* regards a civil Roman celebration of military success, today the term 'triumph' pertains to such forms of behaviour as exultation of victory in

¹⁴⁹ Rapp (1951) 13. Accordingly, this innate predisposition is a determinant for laughter. Contrary Dolf Zillmann, who in the work *Hostility and Aggression* (1979: 361) argues that '[m]an is hostile and aggressive... not because he follows inborn impulses, but because these behaviors have utility.'

¹⁵⁰ Criticism: on Leacock, already in Eastman (2009) 130-131; and Kozintsev (2012) 177; on Ludovici, in Eastman *ibid.* 33 in footnote: 'The simple truth is that Mr. Ludovici's alleged "biology" is myth, and has about as much to do with the real attributes of man and animals as Mother Goose'; on Eibl-Eibesfeldt, in Kozintsev (2012) 184, 194, n. 21: 'The probable reason for Eibl-Eibesfeldt's mistake is that... he speculatively projected human behavior onto that of nonhuman primates, with which he was poorly acquainted.' Cf. Garczyński (1989) 145.

¹⁵¹ First instances of the proverb date back to 1546, cf. Manser (2006) 325. It was very popular and often quoted in early English drama, see L93 in Dent (1984) 462; in Shakespeare, e.g. *Othello*, IV 1: 'they laugh that wins', cf. Shakespeare (2006) 332.

¹⁵² Basically in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: For few Homeric examples of 'laughter of victory' in Jäkel (1994) 25; a fuller account on 'le rire du triomphe', in Arnould (1990) 31-36.

combat, joy of successful conquest, elation at an opponent's defeat or simply a rapturous delight at one's achievements.¹⁵³

A theoretical approach to this matter emerges only in early modern times. Hobbes's observations on laughter apply to his idea of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, i.e. man's constant struggle for power in which one's failure becomes the other's success.¹⁵⁴ Accordingly, laughter's expression of superiority turns into a victor's triumphant elation over the laughed at target, for 'we triumph when we laugh', hence, 'it is no wonder therefore that men take it heinously to be laughed at or derided, that is triumphed over'.¹⁵⁵ In this view, laughter aims at communicating to its target the message of his inferiority, and, in Hobbesian terms, his 'vanquish'.

In twentieth century research the connection of laughter with triumph has still received considerable attention. Similarly to Hobbes, though from a psychological stance, Sidis (1913) discerns laughter as an innate expression of triumph, described as the feeling of success after overcoming a difficulty.¹⁵⁶ Here, triumphant laughter forms the basis for the laughable.

Since laughter usually accompanies the successful defeat of one's opponent, some theorists attempted an evolutionary explanation for it as a developed primitive cry of triumph. In particular, Rapp (1951) derives the phenomenon from 'the roar of triumph in an ancient jungle duel';¹⁵⁷ and, correspondingly, Gruner (1978) sees the beginnings of his 'laugh/win theory' in 'the many generations of men who responded to their sudden victories in violent encounters with roars of triumph, over hundred of thousands of years,

¹⁵³ OED s.v. 'triumph', v., 4.

¹⁵⁴ On the world as a place of constant struggle, see Hobbes, *De Cive* (1642).

¹⁵⁵ Hobbes (1969) 41-2.

¹⁵⁶ Sidis (1913) 14: 'When we triumph over some difficulty after a period of long hard work, we laugh. (...) The politician, the statesman has his grim smile after a successful campaign, and the general has his grin after a triumphant battle. This is the laughter of triumph.'

¹⁵⁷ Rapp (1951) 21.

wore a groove, a riverbed, into the collective human unconscious'.¹⁵⁸ In these views, contemporary humour and wit developed from a primitive agonistic behaviour which in an aggressive form expressed hostility. According to Rapp, traces of the original 'roar of triumph' remain in derision, which, 'still shows its teeth and its claws' through which 'the savage still lurks'.¹⁵⁹

As we have seen, the ancient association of laughter with one's victory exists till today. In our investigations on the sociality of laughter, the triumphant aspect provides an explanation to the negative interpersonal relation between the laugher and his laughed at target, for a laugh of triumph indicates the victor and victim, simultaneously demarcating the winner from the loser. Thus, no social bonds are created, for, in the words of Lorenz, laughter draws a line.¹⁶⁰ A similar effect will be found in the succeeding section, which occurs not only after one winning in military combat, but also by other forms of conduct within a competitive milieu. What is more, such laughter-evoking behaviour may even be of humorous quality. Thus, we turn our attention to the matter of derision.

1.3.5.4. Ridicule

'Derision', 'ridicule' or 'mockery' are used permutably to describe an action which generally is based on a disdainful treating of another person. Or in other words, it is the act of laughing to scorn.¹⁶¹ For the mechanism of ridicule to occur, the sociologist Hertzler indicates three main elements: 1) the subject, i.e. the laugher, 2) the object, i.e. the person laughed at, the target or the butt of joke, and optionally 3) a third party (e.g. an audience) – an observer of the act.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Gruner (1978) 52.

¹⁵⁹ Rapp (1951) 13.

¹⁶⁰ Lorenz (2002) 284.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *OED* s.v. 'mock', *v.*, 1. a; 'ridicule', *n.*¹, 3; 'scorn', *v.*, 3.

¹⁶² Hertzler (1970) 29.

Or, following Buckley, it requires simply ‘the wit, the listener, and the butt.’¹⁶³ Accordingly, derisive laughter occurs at the expense of the target who becomes the source of amusement to the subject, and, optionally, to an audience. In order to practice mockery, the laugher uses means of contemptuous speech and behaviour, often of humorous quality,¹⁶⁴ sometimes even of vulgar or obscene nature.¹⁶⁵ Significantly, the subject’s intentionality forms the basis for ridicule, as his main intentions are to express (in humorous or non-humorous form) negative sentiments (anger, contempt, disdain) towards the butt of laughter and, through this, experience feelings generally recognized as positive, such as ‘playfulness’ and ‘mirth’.¹⁶⁶

Since we have stated in section 1.3.1. above that laughter stands a form of communication, it is clear that derisive acts may convey an unfavorable message to the target. In the *Psychology of Laughter* (1913), one of the first studies devoted exclusively to the phenomenon of laughter, Sidis provides a socio-psychological explanation for derision’s impact on the target as follows: ‘[m]an craves for the homage, for the respect of his fellow beings. Man hungers for praise, for fame. ...men, and especially women, fear the disapprobation of their fellow-beings; they fear disapprobation all the more when it is given to them in the form of disrespect as expressed by ridicule. *For ridicule means disapprobation, humiliation; it means inferiority, degradation.* Ridicule means the placing of the person below the level of the class to which he belongs by birth, connection, occupation, education and training.’¹⁶⁷ Thus, to be laughed at means to be socially degraded.

¹⁶³ Buckley (2003) xiii. Cf. Freud (2002) 97.

¹⁶⁴ For the humorous devices, see section 1.1.2. above.

¹⁶⁵ A famous example of extreme obscenity is Old Comedy, see Henderson (1977), Robson (2006).

¹⁶⁶ This intentionality is well encompassed in the English idiom ‘to make fun of somebody’ or ‘to poke fun at somebody’.

¹⁶⁷ Sidis (1913) 50-1 (my emphasis).

Some scholars go further and completely associate laughter with degradation. Stern (1954) introduces an axiological interpretation of the phenomenon, therefore, including its potential social outcomes. Accordingly, laughter occurs as 'an instinctive, negative value judgment concerning a degradation of values.'¹⁶⁸ Such evaluation has a negative social effect on the target, because he recognizes in the laughter a message about his inferiority. This, then, rouses unpleasant emotions in the person laughed at, hence makes him feel hurt and offended. Stern adds: 'and he is right to be offended, for instinctively he recognizes in this laughter an attempt to degrade his value or that of his work in the eyes of other people'.¹⁶⁹ Similarly, the English philosopher Scruton states: 'if people dislike being laughed at it is surely because laughter de-values its object in the subject's eyes' and concludes 'it is painful to be the object of laughter.'¹⁷⁰ In these views, interactional degradation is based on provoking the awareness of one's inferiority. Hence, laughter becomes a certain wordless form of judgement, which stresses the hierarchic structure of reality, as Wieczorek (2000) claims: 'the superiority of one thing over another, the "betterness" of one thing in comparison to another.'¹⁷¹ Thus, it is no wonder that derision, just as hostile laughter, often inflicts a negative response in the derided target.

Since common approval and acceptance is important to members of society, any forms of public depreciation, even in humorous form, threaten the

¹⁶⁸ Stern (1954) 17. A similar observation though not elaborated is expressed by Montaigne (1958) 221: 'the things we laugh at we consider worthless' ('les choses dequoy on se moque, on les estime sans pris').

¹⁶⁹ Stern (1954) 16.

¹⁷⁰ Scruton (1983) 163. However, the philosopher shows no interest in the social aspect of laughter as he considers it to be an aesthetic experience. Thus, in his opinion, the term 'de-valuing' (*Ibid.*) 'seems to be neither a precondition of amusement nor the result of it. It is rather the amusement itself... Amusement may thus be described as a kind of *attentive demolition*' (original emphasis). Scruton also rejects the superiority explanation, as he states *ibid.* 164: '[t]o lower the object is not necessarily to raise the subject; it might be to lower both together. It is by the universal lowering that one may come to feel 'kinship' with the thing at which one laughs'. For a criticism of Scruton's approach, see Dziemidok (2011) 20.

¹⁷¹ Wieczorek (2000) 18, (my translation).

image of the laughed at person. Not surprisingly, the target usually acknowledges such conduct as painful, offensive and insulting. As a result, negative emotions appear, namely ‘embarrassment’, ‘shame’, and ‘feeling of inferiority’.¹⁷² Also, the object of ridicule may experience other negative sentiments, such as anger and hatred which in extreme cases may even evoke the need for compensation or revenge.¹⁷³ Non-friendly laughter, then, may evoke a negative reaction in its object, as it remains an experience of unpleasant nature. Also as in the case of hostile or triumphant laughter, derision does not favour the formation of bonds between the laugher and its target.

With the power to belittle its victim in a funny way, ridicule is used against an antagonist in competition. Already ancient rhetoricians recommended ‘laughter’ as a weapon to baffle an opponent. For instance, Aristotle (*Rhet.* III 18, 7 1419b) follows the advice of Gorgias: ‘one should spoil the opponents’ seriousness with laughter and their laughter with seriousness’;¹⁷⁴ and similarly Cicero, who advises an orator to raise a laugh ‘because it overthrows the adversary, or hampers him, or makes light of him, or discourages, or refutes him.’¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, derisive laughter may be also used for corrective purposes. Many literary modes of speech and genres, such as irony, jokes, parody, farce, or comedy employ ridicule in a disciplinary manner. Most noticeable remains satire, which ‘always has a victim, always criticizes’.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Buckley (2003) 155: ‘Laughter can be modeled as a three-party game in which the parties bargain for inclusion in a two-party coalition (wit and listener) that excludes the third (the butt).’

¹⁷³ Bakhtin (1986) 135: ‘Indignation, anger, and dissatisfaction are always unilateral: they exclude the one toward whom they are directed, and so forth; they evoke reciprocal anger.’

¹⁷⁴ Aristot. *Rhet.* III 18, 7 1419b: δεῖν ἔφη Γοργίας τὴν μὲν σπουδὴν διαφθείρειν τῶν ἐναντίων γέλωτι τὸν δὲ γέλωτα σπουδῆ. English translation in Kennedy (1991) 280.

¹⁷⁵ Cic. *de Orat.* 2.58. 236: ‘vel quod frangit adversarium, quod impedit, quod elevat, quod deterret, quod refutat’. English translation in Jelby Watson (1875) 150. Concurrently Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly* (1986): ‘what can’t be refuted by argument often can be parried by laughter’. Today, this rhetorical device (slanter) is known as a ‘horse laugh’, cf. Moore and Parker (2004) 141. On the destructive force of laughter in rhetorical discourse, see Davis (2000).

¹⁷⁶ Pollard (1970) 73.

Following the motto *castigare ridendo mores*, satire aims at enforcing behavioural norms through the derision of human vices and follies.¹⁷⁷

Concerning the social aspect, famous remains the observation of Bergson who reckons laughter a social corrective.¹⁷⁸ 'In laughter we always find the unavowed intention to humiliate and consequently to correct our neighbour.'¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, people dread ridicule for they are aware of its humiliating effects. It is through this fear of humiliation that derisive laughter 'pursues a utilitarian aim of general improvement.'¹⁸⁰ A more recent work with the same functionalist approach to the phenomenon is Billig's *Laughter and Ridicule* (2005), who claims that 'ridicule lies at the heart of social life.'¹⁸¹ Here, social control is based on the employment of derision and the elicitation of embarrassment understood in the sociological terms of Goffman.¹⁸² In particular, Billig distinguishes two sorts of humour (considered to be a form of ridicule): 1) disciplinary, and 2) rebellious.¹⁸³ The first type is employed against transgressors of social convention, and its basic role is to maintain current social order. The second type, however, is used against the existing rules of society, as it challenges authority and the restraints of social norms and customs. Interestingly, Billig argues that rebellious humour may also serve

¹⁷⁷ The satirist remains fully aware of this purpose e.g. English poet John Dryden in the foreword to *Absalom and Achitophel* (1886) 90 states: '[t]he true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender, than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease.' In Polish literature, the same notion is expressed by Ignacy Krasicki (1778) in the poem *Monachomachia*: 'I śmiech niekiedy może być nauką/ Kiedy się z przywar, nie osób natrzęsa.' However, some theorists claim that satire enables an author's negative disposition to the attacked person, cf. Connery and Combe (1995) 2: 'satire is a literary Trojan horse for which polite (or politic) artfulness produces a dissembling form, serving first to contain and conceal, and then to unleash the primitive passions of the satirist.' For a recent general study on satire in Western literature, see Quintero (2007).

¹⁷⁸ Bergson (2005) 135. Noteworthy is the fact that Bergson ascribes only one function to laughter, namely the social one ['la fonction utile, qui est fonction sociale'].

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 136.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 20.

¹⁸¹ Billig (2005) 8.

¹⁸² Cf. the essay 'Embarrassment and social organization' in Goffman (2005) 97- 112.

¹⁸³ Billig (2005) 202.

disciplinary functions for mocking those at power does not equate rebellion against them, because as authority is laughed at, so is its power exposed and reaffirmed.¹⁸⁴ In both cases, the role of derision is a social one.

It is clear that the laugher's derisive acts convey an unfavorable message to the target. In the words of Chafe (2009) such laughter 'places the butt of the ridicule, outside the serious world by treating him or her as someone who, quite simply, is not to be taken seriously.'¹⁸⁵ Derision, therefore, is a purposeful act with the deliberate intention to disparage the object of laughter, i.e. to dishonour, discredit or lower the target's status, dignity or significance in society. Again, as in the case of hostile laughter, ridicule does not favour the formation of bonds between the laugher and its target.

At this point it becomes apparent that the laugher's disposition effects the quality of the relations between him/her and other participants of laughter. A positive attitude contributes to the creation of bonds, whereas a negative does not. There are, however, circumstances in which one's laughter does not apply to the actual emotional experience. This brings our attention to the matter of feigned laughter.

1.3.5.5. Feigned laughter

Laughter may be used in a conscious manner. Such behaviour occurs when a person wishes to feign positive emotions and mask his/her original feelings, not necessarily of pleasant nature. Already Darwin recognizes the employment of feigned laughter in the presence of shameful emotions,¹⁸⁶ and sociologist Goffman concurs enlisting 'a nervous hallow laugh' among 'signs of

¹⁸⁴ Billig (2005) 213.

¹⁸⁵ Chafe (2009) 95. Likewise, Kozintsev (2012) 44: 'The primary source of comedy lies not in the object, but in the fact that *the subject ceases to take the object seriously*' (my emphasis).

¹⁸⁶ Darwin (1998) 212: 'Laughter is frequently employed in a forced manner to conceal or mask some other state of mind, even anger. We often see persons laughing in order to conceal their shame of shyness'. Ludovici (1932) 62, terms it a 'bluff laugh' with which one pretends to express a 'superior adaptation' while actually feeling socially inferior. On the distinction of spontaneous and voluntary laughter see Ekman, Davidson, and Friesen (1990).

attempting to conceal embarrassment.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, laughter may be employed to mask one's true emotions, like sadness.¹⁸⁸ In a humorous context, however, an individual may laugh although he/she did not 'get the joke', i.e. uses laughter to mask his/her failure in appreciating a humour-related device. In these cases, such a voluntary act of laughing serves an important social role to an individual who, for various reasons, does not react in the same manner as a group of people he/she is amongst, and attempts to conceal his/her non-fitting reaction.¹⁸⁹ In the words of Hertzler: 'he laughs to be *in*.'¹⁹⁰ Feigned laughter, then, is employed voluntarily for social purposes, to create or maintain bonds with others.

In this section we have discussed the arguments for the sociality of laughter. The analysis has been based on ethological, anthropological, and especially sociological data, which has allowed us to expand our examination of the phenomenon beyond the traditional philosophical-psychological discourse. Three important observations have, thus, emerged. First of all, laughter is a fundamentally human behaviour. Man is the main laughing subject as well as becomes himself the most preferred object of laughter. Secondly, laughter reveals a rhetorical character, rather than biological, for its primary purpose is communication. A person's bout of laughter becomes a mean of transmitting information of that person's disposition towards another. Depending on the quality of this message, laughter effects the relationship between the laugher and his/her object in a positive or negative way. This brings us to the third observation, which is the fact that laughter plays an important role in human interactions, since it has the power to form, maintain

¹⁸⁷ Goffman (2005) 121 enlists also: 1) a fixed smile; 2) busy hands; 3) downward glance to hide the expression of the eyes.

¹⁸⁸ Ekman and Friesen (1975) 126, express it as 'laughing on the outside, crying on the inside.'

¹⁸⁹ Foot and McCreddie (2006) 309.

¹⁹⁰ Hertzler (1970) 70 (original emphasis).

or disrupt interpersonal relations. We may hence concur with the words of Provine that ‘laughter is about relationships’.¹⁹¹

1.4. Evaluations of laughter

Laughter has been judged throughout the ages. Although it hasn’t been thoroughly analyzed until the early modern times, nevertheless it has received a considerable amount of opinionated attention. Curiously, as we will see, main criticism towards laughter considers it a social behaviour.

1.4.1. The negative tradition

Laughter has the power to inflict pain in its object. In his investigations on the historical views of laughter, Morreall enlists eight primary objections to what we may define as ‘negative laughter’, which throughout the ages has been accused of 1) insincerity; 2) idleness; 3) irresponsibility; 4) hedonism; 5) diminish of self-control; 6) hostility; 7) promotion of anarchy; and 8) foolishness.¹⁹² As we may notice, these charges are basically of moral nature.

Already Greek philosophers expressed objections to the use of laughter, which may do harm. In particular, Chilon claimed wisely ‘do not laugh at the unfortunate person’ (Stob. 3.1.172) and Democritus was attributed the saying ‘Being human beings, it is proper for us not to laugh at human misfortunes, but to pity them’ (Democr. fr. 107a).¹⁹³ Plato, too, was aware of this, and in the *Laws* designated such dangerous act as laughing ‘with passion’ (μετὰ θυμοῦ, *Leg.* 935 d-e). Consequently, he argued that in an ideal state, for the sake of proper education of the young, ridicule ought to be strictly forbidden, especially that in the form of comedy, iambic and lyric poetry, with the exception of some forms

¹⁹¹ Provine (2000) 44.

¹⁹² Morreall (2009) 9.

¹⁹³ Stob. 3. 1. 172: Τῶ δυστυχοῦντι μὴ ἐπιγέλα. Democr. fr. 107a: ἄξιον ἀνθρώπους ὄντας ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων συμφοραῖς μὴ γελαῖν, ἀλλ’ ὀλοφύρεσθαι. Both English quotations from Stewart (1994) 35.

of playful laughter and only conducted under official control.¹⁹⁴ Aristotle concurred, as he forbade the young to watch certain types of comicality,¹⁹⁵ and proposed only institutionalized forms and occasions for derisive laughter to occur.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, in *Nicomachean Ethics* the Greek philosopher argued that many funny sources for laughter, such as the joke (τὸ σκῶμμα) or wit (ἡ εὐτραπελία) are recognized as ‘a form of abuse’ (λοιδόρημά τι ἐστίν, *Eth. Nic.* 1128a 31) and ‘educated insolence’ (ὑβρις ἐστίν, *Rhet.* 1389b 12), although used by witty people (εὐτράπελοι) they bring pleasure (περὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἢ μὲν ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς, *Eth. Nic.* 1128b). Verbal abuse for raising a laugh at the expense of another may be painful and in the *Rhetorics* Aristotle warns about this danger (*Rhet.* 1379a): ‘people...become angry at those who laugh at them and scoff and mock; for these wantonly insult them’ (ὀργίζονται δὲ τοῖς τε καταγελῶσι καὶ χλευάζουσι καὶ σκώπτουσιν· ὑβρίζουσι γάρ).¹⁹⁷ As we can see, Greek thinkers were highly aware of laughter’s injurious quality, hence, in order not to hurt the laughed at target recommended its control and avoiding negative emotional engagement in it.

Similar concerns have been expressed throughout the ages. The Church fathers condemned laughter for being a behaviour excessive in its nature,

¹⁹⁴ Pl. *Leg.* XI 936a: ‘Those to whom permission has been given, as we previously said, to write songs about one another shall be allowed to ridicule others *in jest and without passion* (ἄνευ θυμοῦ μὲν μετὰ παιδιᾶς ἐξέστω); but they shall *not be allowed to do so with passion and in earnest* (σπουδῇ δὲ ἄμα καὶ θυμουμένοισιν μὴ ἐξέστω)’ (my emphasis). English translation by Bury (1952b) 465. Such permission is given to poets recognized to be ‘personally good and honored in the State as performers of noble deeds’ (*Leg.* VIII 829d). English translation in Bury (1952b) 129.

¹⁹⁵ Arist. *Pol.* VII 1336b: ‘But it should not be granted to younger people to witness iambus or comedy (οὐτ’ ἰάμβων οὔτε κωμωδίας θεατὰς ἑατέον) until they have reached the age at which it is appropriate for them to participate in sitting at the table and drinking, at which time their education will make them entirely unaffected by the harm that comes from such things’. English translation by Kraut (1997) 33-4.

¹⁹⁶ In antiquity derision and ridicule were allowed at certain occasions like, festivals, symposiums, religious rites; cf. chapters 3, 4 and 5 in Halliwell (2008).

¹⁹⁷ English translation in Kennedy (1991) 128.

irrational and idle.¹⁹⁸ Not only was it apprehended as a hedonistic diversion, but could have even brought danger to the salvation of a proper Christian.¹⁹⁹ As a result, in the Middle Ages laughter was excluded from the official sphere of life (ideology, religious cult, state ceremonies, etiquette). The only exceptional permission for its presence, especially in the form of ridicule and mockery, was granted at times of feasts and festivities.²⁰⁰ With the change of perception in early modern times, when a general appreciation of laughter emerged²⁰¹, several moral objections still remained. Some philosophers associated derisive laughter with hostility. In particular, Descartes discerned its source in the mixture of joy and hatred which rises from perceiving the misfortunes of those who deserve it.²⁰² Curiously, even the so-called ‘founder’ of the superiority theory, Hobbes, shared a critical approach to the phenomenon, for, in his opinion, laughter generally signalled cowardness, for ‘much Laughter at the defects of others, is a signe of Pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper workes is, to help and free others from scorn’.²⁰³

In a similar vein, etiquette directives from the seventeenth until the nineteenth centuries dictated an economy in laughter.²⁰⁴ Many manuals on

¹⁹⁸ In the *Encyclopedia of Christianity* Bowden (2005) 219, marks: ‘Christianity is not generally associated with laughter. The New Testament never says that Jesus laughed.’ Screech (1999) 6-7, explains that despite pertaining to be ‘a religion of joy’, Christianity is actually a ‘religion of woe’. For the development of Christian discourse on laughter, see Gilhus (1997) 64-82.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. John Chrysostom, *Concerning the Statues, Homily XV*: ‘to laugh, to speak jocosely, does not seem an acknowledged sin, but it leads to acknowledged sin. Thus laughter often gives birth to foul discourse, and foul discourse to action still more foul. Often from words and laughter proceed railing and insult, and from railing and insult, blows and wounds, and from blows and wounds slaughter and murder.’ Quoted in Gilhus (1997) 67.

²⁰⁰ Bakhtin (1984) 73.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* 66.

²⁰² Descartes (1989) V art. 178: ‘Derision or Mockery is a species of *Joy mingled with Hatred* (‘une espèce de joie mêlée de haine’) which arises from perceiving some small misfortune in a person we think to be deserving of it. We have Hatred for this misfortune, and Joy in seeing it in someone who deserves it’ (my emphasis).

²⁰³ Hobbes (1991) 43 (original spelling).

²⁰⁴ Moderation in laughter was especially required from young ladies, cf. George Savile, Marquess of Halifax (1688) *The Lady’s New Year’s Gift; or, Advice to a Daughter*; such ideas were also expressed in novels of the time, cf. F. Burney (1788) *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World*; and periodical literature, cf. *The Lady’s Magazine: or Entertaining*

proper manners had been written, which advised the young becoming of age to exercise caution while laughing, for its scornful form was reckoned ungraceful behaviour. In particular, noticeable remain the remarks of Lord Chesterfield in *Letters to His Son* (1774), who perceived the phenomenon so undignified to the well-bred, that he summoned its complete rejection in life.²⁰⁵

From the eighteenth century, the subject of humour received more attention. Although the common appreciation of humorous laughter increased, nevertheless its negative aspect was not completely forgotten by philosophers and theorists. In particular, Baudelaire claimed laughter to be satanic,²⁰⁶ whereas Ludovici defined it as 'something sinister'²⁰⁷. What is more, with the evolution of the phenomenon's positive evaluation, many thinkers and researchers started to juxtapose it with the negative. For instance, Leacock metaphorically distinguished both varieties as two streams coming from one source: 'In one direction flowed, clear and undefiled, the humour of human kindness. In the other, the polluted waters of mockery and sarcasm, the "humor" that turned the cruel sports of rough ages, the infliction of pain as a perverted source of pleasure'.²⁰⁸

On the basis of the examples above we may notice that these ideas contributed to the over two thousand year old tradition of the negative evaluation of laughter. What is of significance to our inquiry is the fact that the phenomenon's non favourable evaluation originates in antiquity. Since then,

Companion for the Fair Sex (1791) vol. 22, 67: 'The most unpleasant of all sorts of laughter is the sneer, so very unpleasant, indeed, that I do not know whether it ought not to be excluded from the degrees of laughter, and reckoned an expression of malignity or revenge peculiar to certain dispositions and tempers. It is very ungraceful and unmannerly, and even where used to express contempt of vice, ought to be used with caution.'

²⁰⁵ Chesterfield (1889) 68-69: 'Having mentioned laughing, *I must particularly warn you against it*: and I could heartily wish, that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh, while you live. *Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners*: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind *there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter*' (my emphasis).

²⁰⁶ Baudelaire (1956) 140: 'le rire est satanique'.

²⁰⁷ Ludovici (1932) 17.

²⁰⁸ Leacock (1937) 30.

main objections rise to the use of derision and ridicule, considered to be immoral for the potential harm inflicted on others.

1.4.2. The positive approach

In the twenty first century a positive view of laughter predominates. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that contemporary theorists, even supporters of the superiority theory, conduct their research mainly in the association with humour, jokes, pleasure and play.²⁰⁹ Today, little attention is paid to the phenomenon's harmful powers and the potential infliction of pain on others.²¹⁰ Instead, laughter is generally recognized to be beneficial to man's health, both mental and physical.²¹¹ There even exists a separate field of science, namely 'gelotology',²¹² which investigates the physiological effects of laughter on the human body.²¹³ Finally, the predominant modern connection of laughter with playfulness leads some theorists to the complete rejection of the phenomenon's negative aspect. This is, for example, the case of the Russian anthropologist Kozintsev, who in his recent study *The Mirror of Laughter* (2012) rebuffs the dichotomy of 'good' and 'bad' laughter. In his opinion, the phenomenon's traditional connection with evil and violence is a serious 'misunderstanding', for the recognition of 'hostile', 'aggressive', hence 'negative' laughter had evolved as a cultural phenomenon. With the

²⁰⁹ Cf. Gruner (1997); Buckley (2003).

²¹⁰ For few contemporary ethical issues in humour/laughter, see Morreall (2009) 98-110.

²¹¹ Cf. Martin (2007) chapter 9 and 10. Worth mentioning is the book of Norman Cousins (1979) *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing*, through which the ideas of laughter's medicinal values became popular, e.g. 'laughter is inner jogging'.

²¹² The term composed from the Greek word γέλως ('laughter') is of modern origin, as it was coined by Fry's assistant Edith Trager in 1964, cf. Fry and Allen (1975) 9.

²¹³ Scientific investigations on laughter were pioneered by a group of American researchers in the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Known as the 'Palo-Alto-Group' scientists of psychology, psychiatry and social studies lead their transdisciplinary research on the phenomenon under the lead of anthropologist Gregory Bateson. However, the foundation of a separate science of laughter, i.e. 'gelotology' is attributed to one of its members, the psychiatrist William F. Fry. For an account of scientific evidence for the phenomenon's impact on physical health, see Martin (2007) 309-33. Criticism in Provine (2000) 190.

development of culture laughter ceased to reflect its original nature, namely 'the blissful ancient joy of disorderly play'.²¹⁴ Kozintsev explains : 'The tragedy is that most people do not understand this and use their evolutionary legacy not simply in a wrong way but utterly in spite of its nature. This is why "even he who no longer fears anything else in the world fears ridicule." Misuse of laughter is a fundamental error on the part of culture. Laughter itself is not culpable; it bears no hereditary guilt. The evil, which is mixed in with it, is unrelated to its nature. Although it, too, is partly rooted in our biology, the blame for the attempt to unite the ununitable – laughter and aggression – must be laid at culture's door'.²¹⁵

Certainly, we may agree with a critical approach to the hostile/aggressive evolutionary explanation and lay emphasis on the phenomenon's playful origins, which, as we have discussed before, contemporary research favours. However, difficulty arises in accepting Kozintsev's vehement negation of laughter's negative aspect. To disdain culture's influence on laughter and regarding it as a 'fundamental error' is a misapprehension, for what becomes evident from our investigation is that human laughter is a fundamentally cultural phenomenon. As we have seen in the course of this chapter, alike fashion, the interpretation and functions of laughter depend on current socio-cultural factors, mainly contemporary ideology and morality. In other words, 'evil' or 'negative' laughter is not, as Kozintsev's argues, one of the phenomenon's 'fake meanings', only one of its current interpretations. The negative tradition of laughter is not a mistaken perception, but only a reflection of people's mentality of a certain time and place. Thus, one should consider the socio-cultural background whilst

²¹⁴ This is the joyful experience of a non-serious violation of norms. Laughter's original context is the one of friendly play, which enables the experience of only one particular feeling, namely 'the blissful ancient joy of disorderly play.' Cf. Kozintsev (2012) 183-4. Interestingly, Bakhtin (1984) 71, sees the evolution of the negative tradition beginning from the Renaissance period.

²¹⁵ Kozintsev (2012) 188.

discussing laughter, for as Propp already stated 'we do not laugh now as people once laughed.'²¹⁶

1.5. Conclusion

In the course of this chapter I have examined concisely the modern definition of laughter and outlined various explanations for the phenomenon. The discussion has been based on a set of data on the subject from a span of over 2000 years, beginning with the earliest remarks by ancient Greek philosophers until modern research on laughter lead in various fields of study (physiology, neurosciences, linguistics, psychology, ethology, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, Humor Studies). The first and chief purpose of this chapter has been, therefore, explanatory, in order to provide answers to the following questions: what exactly is laughter? What are the causes for laughing? What are the functions of a bout of laughter? Three important observations have emerged from this theoretical analysis. Firstly, the analysis has provided supported material to emphasize the fallacy of equating humour with laughter, as other non-humorous stimuli have been indicated and explored. Thus, my discussion on laughter in Greek drama in the second part of this study will not focus on the subject only in relation with humour. Secondly, despite the large number of theories and interpretations, there is no homogeneous explanation for the phenomenon. The traditional three theories of laughter which have developed only in modern times fail to give a full explanation. They will, therefore, be of no use in the following chapters of this study. Lastly, it has become evident that laughter is a fundamentally human, however, multifaceted physico-psychic-social activity.²¹⁷ As it has emerged from my investigation in this chapter, the English language predominantly uses but a single lexeme 'laughter' to describe a set of behaviours occurring on

²¹⁶ Propp (1984) 127.

²¹⁷ Hertzler (1970) 11.

different levels of human activity: physiological, intellectual, psychological and social.²¹⁸

First of all, the word 'laughter' may denote spontaneous and complex bodily actions, particularly 1) a distinct sound, 2) a facial display, or even 3) compulsive movements of the body. Next, the term's meaning may be confined to internal activities: cognitive and psychological. Regarding cognition, the 'laughter' may regard 4) humour, 5) certain humorous devices (categories of humour as well as literary genres which evoke laughter), 6) the feeling of amusement elicited by these devices, or even 7) incongruity itself. Considering the sphere of emotions, the word may designate a manifestation of one's attitude, emotions or mental state. On the one hand, it may regard the expression of positive feelings, such as 8) pleasure or delight, 9) joy, 10) feeling of success, 11) relief, 12) playfulness and 13) friendliness, however, on the other hand, it may relate to the manifestation of negative sentiments such as 14) Schadenfreude, 15) superiority, 16) hostility, 17) feeling of triumph over an adversary or 18) derisive contempt. In extreme cases 'laughter' may even regard 19) a symptom for mental illness. Furthermore, the semantic sphere of the term may explicitly refer to the social dimension of laughter. Here, the word may mean 20) a group bonding element, 21) a form of social exclusion or 22) an act of laughing on purpose in order to communicate to others the feigned experience of positive sentiments. Lastly, depending on the emotions felt by the participants of laughter (pleasant or non-pleasant) as well as the general evaluation of the phenomenon, the term 'laughter' may refer to 23) a positive experience (individual or collective), as well as 24) a negative social behaviour. In result, the English term 'laughter' itself appears to be misleading. Not only does it comprise various ideas on the subject, but it may also regard different

²¹⁸ English synonyms do not show same semantic complexity. Apart from the basic reference to the audible aspect of laughter, they may regard a certain aspect of the phenomenon (derision, amusement etc.), depending on the context of their use, e.g. 'cachinnation', 'cackle', 'chuckle', 'chuckling', 'giggle', 'giggling', 'guffaw', 'snicker', 'snigger', 'snort', 'titter' etc.

concepts simultaneously.²¹⁹ Thus, when discussing laughter it is, necessary to specify which understanding of the term one applies.

This leads to the second purpose of this introductory chapter which has been to distinguish universal concepts of the phenomenon we may use as a backdrop in the following analysis of the Greek vocabulary of laughter. For this reason, the ideas of laughter enumerated above will serve as a heuristic explanatory tool in our examination of the Greek interpretations of the phenomenon in the next chapter. We must, however, bear in mind Hertzler's observation that 'languages have some non-parallel lexical, syntactical, and semantic elements that greatly retard or confuse direct translation.'²²⁰ Therefore, the Greek language may reflect some of these universal ideas, omit others, or even introduce concepts unique to its linguistic structure. Let us, then, turn to the next chapter which deals with the Greek vocabulary for laughter.

²¹⁹ Cf. Scruton (1983) 153.

²²⁰ Hertzler (1970) 63.

Chapter II

Greek Laughter

Terminology and Interpretations

Every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Mind and Reality*²²¹

This chapter is a general introduction to Greek laughter. My inquiry is based on presenting the vocabulary connected with laughter in the Greek language and providing its lexical-semantic analysis. The main purpose for this is to distinguish the general ideas and ways of understanding the phenomenon of laughter in the ancient Greek language. Final conclusions will be used to supplement my discursive line established in chapter I.

2.1. Terminology

Ancient Greek language produced a vast amount of terminology used in reference to laughter and its related phenomena. In my research, I have counted 133 words which refer to the discussed phenomenon either explicitly or indirectly.²²² These so-called laughter words belong to different lexical categories as well as stem from various roots. In general, we may distinguish three main roots from which majority of the words derive: 1) γελ-, 2) καχ-, and 3) χασκ-.

²²¹ Whorf (1956) 252.

²²² For this purpose, I have searched the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database available online (<http://www.tlg.uci.edu/>). This virtual database contains all Greek writings from Homer to early Medieval period.

2.1.1. Word-group with γελ- root

The first word-family is centred on the root γελ-. In terms of word-formation, three lexemes form the basis of the whole word-group, namely: 1) the verb γελάω 'laugh'²²³, 2) the noun γέλως 'laughter', and 3) the adjective γέλοιος 'laughable'.²²⁴ These terms along with their main derivatives are listed in table 1.

Lexeme		Meaning
τγελαιώς	<i>n.</i>	'laughter' ²²⁵
γελασεΐω	<i>v.</i>	'to be ready to laugh'
γελάσιμος	<i>adj.</i>	'laughable'
γελασίνη	<i>n.</i>	'female laughter'
γελασῖνος	<i>n.</i>	'laughter'
γέλασις	<i>n.</i>	'laughter'
γελάσκω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh convulsively'
γέλασμα	<i>n.</i>	'laugh' ²²⁶ , 'smile', 'cause of laughter'
γελαστέον	<i>gerund</i>	'must be laughed at'
γελαστής	<i>n.</i>	'laughter', 'sneerer'
γελαστικός	<i>adj.</i>	'able to laugh'
γελαστός	<i>adj.</i>	'laughable'
γελάστρια	<i>n.</i>	'female laughter'
γελαστός	<i>n.</i>	'laughter'
γελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh', 'smile' ²²⁷
γελοιάζω	<i>v.</i>	'jest', 'laugh', 'joke' ²²⁸
γελοίασμα	<i>n.</i>	'joke' ²²⁹
γελοιασμός	<i>n.</i>	'jesting'
γελοιαστής	<i>n.</i>	'jester', 'buffoon'
γελοιαστικός	<i>adj.</i>	'mirth-provoking'

²²³ I adduce the basic forms of Greek verbs in the manner of modern lexicographers, i.e. in the first person singular of the present tense. In all tables in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, the meanings of Greek lexemes are provided according to the ninth revised edition of the LSJ.

²²⁴ Originally, γέλοιος is a denominative adjective formed from γέλως; the latter, however, is a direct derivative of γελάω. Cf. Frisk (1960-70), Chantraine (1968-80), Beekes (2010), all s.v. γελάω.

²²⁵ My translation. Cf. LSJ s.v. γελαιώς; ὁ γέλως.

²²⁶ LSJ (1897) 303, s.v. γέλασμα.

²²⁷ LSJ Suppl. s.v. γελάω.

²²⁸ LSJ s.v. γελοιάζω: 'jest'; Abramowiczówna (1958-65) s.v. γελοιάζω: 'żartować, śmiać się, dowcipkować'.

²²⁹ DGE s.v. γελοίασμα: 'broma, chanza'. Cf. LSJ Suppl. s.v. γελοίασμα.

*γελοιάστρια	<i>n.</i>	‘female joker’ ²³⁰
γελοιάω	<i>v.</i>	‘laugh’
γέλοιος	<i>adj.</i>	‘mirth-provoking’, ‘amusing’
γελοιότης	<i>n.</i>	‘absurdity’
γελοιώδης	<i>adj.</i>	‘laughable’
γέλως	<i>n.</i>	‘laughter’
γελωτῖνος	<i>adj.</i>	‘ridiculous’
γελωτός	<i>adj.</i>	‘ridiculous’

Table 1. List of basic cognates centred on γελάω. † denotes a corrupted lexeme.

Notably, the verb γελάω has many cognates. With the extended stem γελασ-, it forms 1) nouns: γέλασμα ‘laugh, smile’, γέλασις ‘laughing’ and γελαστός meaning ‘laughter’, as well as agent nouns: γελασῖνος, ‘laugher’, γελαστής ‘laugher, sneerer’, and the forms γελασίνη as well as γελάστρια, both meaning ‘female laugher’; 2) adjectives γελάσιμος ‘laughable’, γελαστικός ‘able to laugh’, and γελαστός ‘laughable, ridiculous’; 3) verbs: γελάσκω ‘laugh convulsively’, γελασεῖω ‘to be ready to laugh’; and also 4) the gerund γελαστέον ‘must be laughed at’.

In word-formation, the root γελωτ- from γέλως ‘laughter’ is used to create other adjectives such as γελωτῖνος and γελωτός, both meaning ‘ridiculous’. Furthermore, the adjective γέλοιος creates other denominatives: 1) the nouns: γελοίασμα ‘joke’, γελοιασμός ‘jesting’, γελοιότης ‘absurdity, ridiculousness’, γελοιαστής ‘jester, buffoon’ and γελοιάστρια ‘cheerful woman, female joker’; 2) the verb γελοιάζω ‘jest, laugh, joke’; and 3) the adjectives: γελοιώδης ‘laughable, ridiculous’, γελοιαστικός ‘mirth-provoking, comical, funny’.

Modern lexica of the Greek language give a separate entry to the verb γελοιάω ‘laugh’, although it is a rare Epic form of the standard γελάω.²³¹ The

²³⁰ DGE s.v. γελοιάστρια: ‘mujer alegre, bromista’. * indicates hereon words not listed in the LSJ.

²³¹ E.g. the LSJ and DGE s.v. γελοιάω.

noun γελαῖως, however, is a corrupted *hapax legomenon* occurring without a context.²³² For this reason, it will not be of our further interest.

Due to the fact that three main terms, i.e. γελάω, γέλως, and γέλοιος play such a significant role in the formation of other γελ- rooted lexemes, I will, thus, begin my discussion from their lexical-semantic analysis. However, since it is the stem γελ- which carries the primary semantic content of the whole word-family, it will be useful to first pay attention to the origins this root.

2.1.1.1. Etymology

Etymology supplies us with interesting data on the γελ- rooted word-group. On the basis of comparative material, linguists derive this root from the Indo European etymon *gel-. In his dictionary *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1959), Pokorny argues that the Indo European lemma *gel- seems to share at the same time several meanings such as 'light' ('hell'), 'to shine' ('heiter glänzen'), 'to be bright' ('heiter sein'), 'to smile' ('lächeln'), and finally 'to laugh' ('lachen').²³³ Accordingly, the Austrian linguist attests the concept of laughter within *gel- through the comparison with other lexemes in Indo European languages.²³⁴ Furthermore, he notices the root's connection with the idea of brightness and shining on the example of other Greek words which, in his opinion, are likely to share the same root with γελάω; these are γαληνός 'bright, calm' ('heiter', 'ruhig'), γαλήνη 'stillness, calm of the sea' ('Heiterkeit', 'Meeresstille'), γλῆνος, 'trinket' ('Prachstück'), and γλήνη 'pupil of the eye, eyeball' ('Augenstern'). Finally, although Pokorny includes the concept of 'smile' within the semantics of the root, he does not give any supportive material for this. In fact, the linguist provides significant comparative evidence

²³² Hsch. s.v. †γελαῖως· ὁ γέλως.

²³³ Pokorny (1959) 366.

²³⁴ Armenian *catr*, gen. *cat-u* 'laughter', *ci-calim* 'laugh'; Cf. Clackson (1994) 126-132.

for the attachment of the meaning ‘smile’ to another root (*s*)*mei-*.²³⁵ Nonetheless, it is commonly accepted that already the Indo European root **gel-* showed semantic complexity.

Studies on Indo European roots have greatly influenced the research of etymologists of the ancient Greek language. Regarding the origins of *γελάω*, Pokorny’s hypothesis on the connection of the concept of laughter and brightness remains prominent till today. Etymologists of the Greek language, such as Frisk (1960-70), Chantraine (1968-80) and Beekes (2010) reflect Pokorny’s view on an etymological connection of *γελάω* ‘laugh’ between the words *γαλήνη* ‘calm, stillness of the sea’, *γλήνη* ‘eyeball’ and *γλήνος* ‘playthings, trinkets’,²³⁶ as well as with *γελανής* ‘cheerful’, *γελανόω* ‘cheer up’ and the Laconian *γελαρός* ‘calm of the wind’.²³⁷ Moreover, Frisk and Chantraine²³⁸ also see a possible etymological connection with other lexemes such as *Γελέων*²³⁹ (an epithet of Zeus meaning ‘illustrious, splendid’ as well as the name of Ion’s son) and *Γελέοντες*²⁴⁰ (i.e. ‘the illustrious, the brilliant’). Another argument in support of this etymological connection is provided by the *γελ-*rooted word *γελεῖν*, a unique form found only in Hesychius.²⁴¹ In his lexicon, the Byzantine scholar explains this gloss to be synonymous with *λάμπειν* ‘shine’ and *ἀνθεῖν* ‘bloom, flourish, be brilliant’.

²³⁵ Pokorny (1959) 967.

²³⁶ It is likely that all three lexemes share the Indo European root **gelH³-*/ **gl̥H³-* as *γελάω*. *γαλήνη* is formed from **γαλασ-*nā**, which probably derives from the *s*-stem **γελασ-*, found also in *γέλως*, *γελασ-τός*, cf. Beekes (2010) s.v. *γαλήνη*. The word *γλήνη* and its derivative *γλήνος* may derive from *γλη-*, *glā-* or *γλασ-*, cf. Chantraine (1968-80) s.v. *γλήνη*. It remains probable that the original meaning of these three words is ‘shine, bright’, cf. Hsch. s.v. *γλήνος* explained as *φάος* ‘light’.

²³⁷ It is probable that the theme *γελασ-* forms the lexemes *γελανής* (**γελασ-νής*) and *γελαρός* (**γελασ-ρός*), Frisk (1960-70) s.v. *γελάω*. Cf. Hsch. s.v. *γελαρός*: *γαληνή*. The verb *γελανόω* is denominative from *γελανής*.

²³⁸ Frisk (1960-70), Chantraine (1968-80), both s.v. *Γελέοντες*.

²³⁹ *IG 2².1072.6*: *Διὸς Γελέοντος*, ‘of Illustrious Zeus’. Inscription dated c. II d.C.

²⁴⁰ Castoriadis (2007) 24. These are the children of Ion’s son Geleon, who were one of the original four Ionian tribes

²⁴¹ To my knowledge, only the *DGE* distinguishes separately *γελέω* ‘smile’ (‘sonreir’), considering it to be a late form of *γελάω*. It supports this meaning with a single example found in *Proteu*. 36: *τὸ πρόσωπόν σου βλέπω ... γελοῦντα*, ‘I see your face smiling’.

It is, therefore, likely that the Greek root γελ-, just as its Indo European predecessor, contained both the idea of laughter as well as the concept of radiance and shining. This hypothesis is today regarded as plausible.²⁴²

2.1.1.2. γελάω

The basic lexeme composed with the root γελ- is γελάω. Other forms of this verb include the epic γελώω²⁴³ found in the works of Homer, γελοιάω²⁴⁴ in Homeric Hymns, as well as the Aeolic γέλαμι²⁴⁵ employed by some authors, such as Sappho and Theocritus. Modern lexical entries concur upon the verb's basic signification 'laugh'. However, besides this they also list other meanings, such as 'smile', 'be cheerful', 'be merry', 'rejoice', 'laugh at', 'deride', 'mock' and even 'shine' or 'glitter'.²⁴⁶ Let us briefly look through these meanings, one by one.

2.1.1.2.1. The meaning of 'laugh'

First and foremost, γελάω designates the vocalisation of laughter. Often, this aspect is emphasized by adverbial modifiers which distinguish certain types of the phenomenon's audibility.²⁴⁷ We may divide these types into two groups regarding 1) a soft sound, and 2) a loud outburst. In Greek texts, soft

²⁴² Cf. Arnould (1990) 138-139; Lopez Eire (2000) 14; Halliwell (2008) 13.

²⁴³ E.g. Hom. *Od.* 20. 390: γελώωντες; *Od.* 21. 105: γελώω. This is an instance of 'epic diectasis' or 'distension', i.e. the re-opening of a contracted verb with the alteration of its original stem vowel. In epic poetry, this is particularly common among -άω verbs. See, Chantraine (1958) 77-80.

²⁴⁴ Hom. *Hymn.* 5. 49: ἦδὺν γελοῦσασα φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη, 'the smile-loving Aphrodite laughed sweetly', (my translation). Hereon the translations of Greek passages are mine, unless stated otherwise.

²⁴⁵ Sapph. fr. 31. 5: γελαίσας. Theocr. 1.36: γέλαισα. On the inflection of γελάω, see van de Laar (2000) 99.

²⁴⁶ Cf. s.v. γελάω: LSJ: I. 'laugh'; II. 'laugh at'; II. 2. 'deride'; 'passive voice – to be derided'. DGE I. 1. 'sonreir', 'reir'; 2. 'reirse de'; 3. 'ser objeto de risa'; 4. 'reir', fig. 'resplandecer', 'exultar'. Abramowiczówna (1958-65): 1. 'śmiać się'; 2. 'promienieć', 'rozbłyskać'; 3. 'śmiać się z czegoś'; 'wysmiać'; pass. 'być wysmianym'; Ewing (1827) 307: 'I laugh, smile, am merry, rejoice; laugh at, mock; also shine, glitter, flourish' (original italics).

²⁴⁷ Arnould (1990) 164-68; Halliwell (2008) 523 n. 17.

laughter is indicated by the adverbs ἀβρα²⁴⁸, ἀπαλόν²⁴⁹, ἡρέμα²⁵⁰, and ἡσυχῆ²⁵¹ all meaning ‘softly, gently’. In opposition stand the modifiers stressing the high volume and intensity of a laugh, such as ἀδρόν²⁵² ‘loud’, καπυρόν²⁵³ ‘crackly loud’, πάνυ²⁵⁴ and μέγα²⁵⁵ both meaning ‘greatly’ and πλατὺ²⁵⁶ ‘widely, extensively’. Without any doubt, the basic Greek understanding of γελάω is the sound of laughter.

2.1.1.2.2. The meaning of ‘smile’

Ancient Greek makes a lexical distinction between laughing and smiling. The former is signified by γελάω, whereas the latter is denoted by the lexeme μειδάω (vel μειδιάω). Basically, the difference between these two phenomena lies in the fact that laughter includes vocalisation, whereas smiling does not. Therefore, the verb μειδάω, as well as the whole word-group centred on its

²⁴⁸ AP 12. 125 .1: ἐνύπνιον ἀβραὶ γελῶντος ὀκτωκαιδεκέτους παιδός, ‘a dream of an eighteen year old, gently-laughing boy’.

²⁴⁹ In Hom. *Od.* 14. 465, Odysseus mentions the power of wine to make people sing and laugh softly (ἀπαλὸν γελάσαι), cf. Athen. 5. 8. 8; Greek gods laugh softly, as well: Apollo in *Hom. Hymn.* 4. 281: ‘laughed gently’ (ἀπαλὸν γελάσας); Aphrodite in AP 16. 174: ‘laughed softly’ (ἀπαλὸν γελάσασα), cf. AP 9. 320; Eros in Long. 2. 4. 4. 2: ‘laughed very softly’ (ἐγγέλα πάνυ ἀπαλὸν).

²⁵⁰ In the dialogues of Plato, gentle laughter occurs just before an interlocutor is about to have his say, e.g. *Phd.* 84d: ὃς ἀκούσας ἐγγέλασέν τε ἡρέμα καὶ φησιν, ‘on hearing this, he [i.e. Socrates] laughed gently and said...’.

²⁵¹ Pl. *Phd.* 115c 5: Γελάσας δὲ ἅμα ἡσυχῆ καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀποβλέψας εἶπεν, ‘He [i.e. Socrates] laughed gently, looked at us and said...’.

²⁵² Laughing out loud (ἀδρόν γελάσαι) is listed among the business of a professional Flatterer in Antiph. fr. 142. 9 Kock.

²⁵³ Long. 2. 5. 1.1: Eros ‘laughed out very loud’ (πάνυ καπυρόν γελάσας). Instead of a prayer, the epitaph of Rhinthon, a Syracusan composer of tragic burlesques (*Phlyakes*), asks the passerbys to laugh out loud, cf. AP 7. 414 (Nossis): Καὶ καπυρόν γελάσας παραμείβεο καὶ φίλον εἰπὼν ῥῆμ’ ἐπ’ ἐμοί, ‘Laugh frankly as thou passest by and speak a kind word over me’; translation in Paton (1919) 225.

²⁵⁴ Pl. *Euthd.* 276d 1-2: πάνυ ἐγγέλασάν... οἱ ἐρασταὶ τοῖν ἀνδροῖν, ‘The pair’s admirers laughed heartily’.

²⁵⁵ Plut. *Nic.* 7. 6. 2: τοῖς δ’ Ἀθηναίοις ἐπῆλθε γελάσαι μέγα, ‘the Athenians were prompted to laugh out loud’.

²⁵⁶ Philostratus (*VA* 7. 39) depicts some authors laughing out loud at the art of wizardry (οἱ ἐγγέλασαν πλατὺ ἐς τὴν τέχνην).

root μειδ-,²⁵⁷ semantically regards a facial expression involving the movement of the lips which exposes the teeth.

The differentiation between γελάω and μειδάω is noticeable in line 204 from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. In reaction to the joking of the maid Iambe, the grief-stricken goddess is said 'to smile, to laugh and keep a gracious heart'.²⁵⁸ In this line, we observe Demeter's gradual change of mood as her spirits are being lifted. We may also recognize the communicative role of the facial expression denoted by μειδάω, signifying the subtle beginning of Demeter's shift of mood and, then, the outward manifestation of this emotional process expressed by the γελάω term. On the basis of this example, it is evident that the words μειδάω and γελάω semantically differ from each other.

Despite this distinction, in modern times, it has been a common practice to render the verb γελάω not only 'laugh', but also 'smile'. This is especially noticeable in the 18th and 19th century English translations of classical texts.²⁵⁹ In fact, a conceptual association of the two phenomena is observable today within the two most authoritative Greek lexica: the *Liddell-Scott Greek English Lexicon* as well as the *Diccionario Griego-Español*, since both include 'smile' as one of the

²⁵⁷ Derivates: nouns: μειδάμων 'smiling' (Pi. Is. I 47), μείδημα 'smile' (Hes. Th. 205), μειδίαμα 'smiling' (Poll. 6. 199), μειδίασις 'smile' (Poll. 6. 199), μειδίασμα 'smile' (Hsch. s.v.), μειδιασμός 'smile' (Poll. 6. 199); τὸ μειδιαστικόν 'hilarity' (Sch. Ar. Pl. 27.). Other formations are composed with prefixes δια-, ἐπι, and ὑπο-. Famous is the compound epithet of Aphrodite φιλομ(μ)ειδῆς 'with a friendly smile' (Hom. Il. 5. 375). This word-family is formed from the Indo European root *smei-, see Pokorny (1959) 967; cf. Chantraine (1968-80), Beekes (2010), both s.v. μειδάω. Interestingly, this stem forms the English 'smile' and Polish 'śmiać się' (meaning laugh).

²⁵⁸ Hom. Hymn. 2. 204: μειδῆσαι γελάσαι τε καὶ ἴλαον σχεῖν θυμόν. Translation in Foley (1994) 12.

²⁵⁹ The trend is not in doubt within the translations of Greek tragedy of the time; for Aeschylus, see the translations of Potter (1833) 240: 'The gods... smile (γελαῶ), as they view him rack'd with pain' (*The Furies*); Paley (1855) 484 n. 725: 'To her domestics indeed she concealed a smile (γέλων) under (within) a sorrowful eye trying to hid it (i.e. her delight)' (*The Choephorae*); for Sophocles, see Potter (1808) 274-5: '[Telamon] never, e'en in prosperous fortune wore a pleasing smile (γελαῶν),' (*Ajax*); Francklin (1832) 94: 'when we have done the deed, joy shall appear, and we will smile (γελαῶν) in safety', (*Electra*); for Euripides, see Potter (1823) 417: 'then with a horrid smile (γέλωτι) he cried', (*Hercules*); Buckley (1865) 53: 'How pleasantly dost thou smile (γελαῶς) upon the sorrows of thine own', (*The Troades*).

primary meanings of γελάω.²⁶⁰ Same connection is observable in the few English-Greek lexica, in which γελάω is one of the Greek equivalents for the verb ‘smile’.²⁶¹ Furthermore, an intricate connection between laughing and smiling remains quiet common amongst modern classicists. For instance, in his article ‘On the semantics of ancient Greek smiles’, Clarke generally claims that ‘γελάω is, of course, the standard word for smiling and laughter of various kinds’.²⁶² In a similar vein, though in relation to Attic Greek, Arnould states that in the classical period γελάω is used in both meanings, ‘laugh’ and ‘smile’.²⁶³ And finally, some scholars have even considered ‘smile’ to be the semantic prototype, i.e. the original sense of γελάω. This is the case of the famous British classicist Jebb, who states ‘the primary sense of γελᾶν was ‘smiling’ not ‘laughing’ – as appears in the figurative uses’.²⁶⁴ It is, thus, apparent that a significant group of scholars, lexicographers and translators have concurred on attributing γελάω with the meaning ‘smile’.

The question, however, arises whether the Greek γελάω semantically encompasses both concepts of laughing and smiling. As mentioned above in section 2.1.1.1., etymological data provides no evidence for such, therefore, Jebb’s doctrinaire view lacks supportive material.²⁶⁵ Also, the assumption of Clarke and Arnould gives rise to difficulties. In particular, Clarke presents no arguments for his translation of γελάω as ‘smile’ in the passages he investigates, as well as for treating the verb as synonymous with μειδάω ‘smile’.²⁶⁶ In regard of Arnould’s hypothesis, the French scholar makes her

²⁶⁰ LSJ Suppl.: ‘after ‘laugh’ insert ‘smile’; DGE I 1: ‘sonreir’, ‘reir’; both s.v. γελάω.

²⁶¹ Cf. Yonge (1849), Woodhouse (1910), both s.v. ‘smile’.

²⁶² Clarke (2005) 39.

²⁶³ Arnould (1990) 141: ‘γελᾶν note alors, à l’époque classique, à la fois le rire et le sourire, dans leur multiple valeurs.’

²⁶⁴ Jebb (1905) 279.

²⁶⁵ The British scholar provides but a single and disputable example from the Greek corpus, Aes. Pr. 89-90: κυμάτων/ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, which we discuss in detail in chapter III, section 3.2.7.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Clarke’s translations (2005: 40-41): Hom. Hymn. 2. 14 ‘all the earth gleamed/smiled (ἐγελάσσει) and the salty swell of the sea’; Hes. Th. 40: ‘and the house of loud-thundering father

claim on the basis of the scarce occurrences of *μειδάω* in classical Attic.²⁶⁷ It is a fact, that in classical texts, the usage of this verb is significantly rare, in comparison to the number of occurrences in archaic poetry.²⁶⁸ Scantiness, however, of one word is not a decisive sign for a change within the semantics of another.²⁶⁹ In these two cases, the inclusion of ‘smile’ within the semantics of *γελάω* again remains undefended. Moreover, the lexica mentioned above fail to provide accurate references to support the association of the two phenomena, for they adduce no convincing examples for ‘smile’ as a primary sense of *γελάω*.²⁷⁰ And lastly, the noticeable tendency to render *γελάω* with ‘smile’ in early translations of Greek texts may originate from the general aversion to laughter in the 18th and 19th centuries, a distinctive socio-cultural feature we have discussed already in section 1.4.1.²⁷¹ In this respect, relevant becomes the observation of Kott, who states that translation is an interpretative process.²⁷²

The reason which gives rise to such difficulties in modern translation is the fact that the idea of laughter denoted by *γελάω* consists not only of an audible element but also of a visual one. Lopez Eire, particularly, speaks of this

Zeus *shines/smiles with the lilyed voice* of the goddesses’ (my italics). Similar criticism in Halliwell (2008) 521 n. 7.

²⁶⁷ Similarly Sommerstein (2009) 104-5: ‘the only verb that can take its [i.e. *μειδάω*] place is *γελάω*’.

²⁶⁸ Arnould (1990) 141 n. 3, encounters 22 instances of *μειδάω* and cognates employed by Homer.

²⁶⁹ Though rare in classical authors, *μειδάω* appears in e.g. Ar. *Th.* 513; Pl. *Phd.* 86d 6; Xen. *Cyr.* 2.2.16; Theophr. *Char.* 8.2 etc. Cf. Halliwell (2008) 522 n. 11.

²⁷⁰ The LSJ Supplement only adds the laconic information on inserting the meaning ‘smile’, but adduces no new references nor does it indicate which examples in the original entry should regard this meaning. As for the Spanish lexicon, the *DGE* cites only one example, albeit questionable, with the meaning ‘smile’, cf. *DGE* s.v. *γελάω* I 1 μηδὲν ἤδιον γελᾶν ‘no dirigir una sonrisa más dulce’ in Soph. *Ai.* 1011; I will discuss this example in detail in chapter IV.

²⁷¹ Here, it suffices to mention that such reserve is observable also amongst classical scholars of the time. For instance, in his translation of Aeschylean drama, John Stuart Blackie (1850) is fully aware of the contemporary cultural preference for the smile over laughter, cf. Blackie (1850) 298: ‘I at once admit that *γελάω* is often used in Greek, where, accordingly to *our usage* (my emphasis), *smile* (orig. italics) would be the word’. Similarly, James Boise (1869) 186 argues for the translation of φιλομμειδῆς as ‘sweetly smiling’ on the basis that ‘this seems more suited to the idea of Aphrodite than *the somewhat coarse epithet* laughter-loving’ (my emphasis).

²⁷² Kott (1999) 7: ‘A translation, especially of a text written over two and a half millenia ago, is always a type of interpretation’ (my translation).

in his 2000 article, ‘Les mots pour exprimer l’idée de <<rire>> en grec ancien’. Accordingly, the concepts behind γελάω as well as μειδάω are predominantly visual, for both lexemes denote expressive movements of the face.²⁷³ As Lopez Eire claims, the verb γελάω signifies a behaviour by which ‘certain facial muscles contract in a fashion that stretch the lips, reveal the teeth and give the eyes a particular shine’.²⁷⁴ Indeed, in the extant Greek corpus, there are instances of γελάω in which the concept of sound appears secondary to the idea of facial expression.²⁷⁵ It is due to this fact, as well as the similarities of the facial movements denoted by both μειδάω and γελάω, that the latter has been commonly rendered ‘smile’. Similarity, however is not identity, as Halliwell advocates in his study *Greek Laughter: A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early Christianity*, in which he argues that just because γελάω may, at times, semantically encompass a facial expression overlapping a smile, it can never be perceived as fully devoid of its audible component.²⁷⁶ In this case, the semantics of γελάω appear complex, since the primacy of one of its concepts does not exclude the simultaneous invocation of another. In short, there is more to a Greek face described as laughing, than as smiling.

2.1.1.2.3. The meanings of ‘rejoice’, ‘take delight in’, ‘be cheerful’

A fundamental role of the emission of sounds as well as of facial expression is to manifest outwardly emotional processes within an individual.

²⁷³ Lopez Eire (2000) 23: ‘il y a, dans les verbes γελάω et μειδάω, prédominance des sensations visuelles par rapport aux sensations acoustiques.’

²⁷⁴ Lopez Eire (2000) 14: ‘contractant certains muscles du visage qui étirent les lèvres, découvrant les dents, et conférant aux yeux un brillant particulier, est en grec ancien γελάω’, (my translation).

²⁷⁵ E.g. Eur. *Ba.* 1021: ἴθι, ὦ Βάκχε, θῆρ ... προσώπῳ γελῶντι, ‘Go, o Bacchus, beast, with laughing face’, translation in Seaford (1996) 123. Cf. *Protoevangelium Jacobi* XVII 2: τί ἐστίν σοι τοῦτο, ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπόν σου βλέπω ποτὲ μὲν γελοῦντα ποτὲ δὲ στυγνάζον, ‘what’s wrong with you, that I see your face at one time laughing and at another time sad?’.

²⁷⁶ Halliwell (2008) 522-24.

According to Lopez Eire, γελάω denotes the manifestation of emotions, such as joy, pleasure, merriment, and frivolity.²⁷⁷

In the Greek corpus, γελάω apparently regards the expression of joyful delight in those cases in which the verb occurs along with other lexemes denoting the experience of positive feelings: χαίρω²⁷⁸ ‘rejoice at’, γηθέω²⁷⁹ ‘rejoice’, τέρομαι²⁸⁰ ‘enjoy, take delight in’, and ἥδομαι²⁸¹ ‘enjoy oneself’. Moreover, in those instances in which γελάω appears without another verb indicating the experience of pleasant emotions, the sentimental aspect may be stressed by adjectives, e.g. φαιδρός²⁸² in its figurative meaning ‘beaming with joy, cheerful’, or by adverbial modifiers e.g. ἡδύ²⁸³ ‘pleasantly, merrily’ and χλαρόν²⁸⁴ ‘gaily’. Also, the connection with joyful sentiments is evident in those passages in which laughter is located in the seats of emotions, for instance, the ἦτορ ‘heart’.²⁸⁵ Such examples are particularly interesting, in light of the hypothesis that the original semantics of γελάω, besides the idea of brightness, may have also encapsulated the idea of experiencing positive emotions. As we have mentioned in section 2.1.1.1 above, linguists trace a possible etymological connection between γελάω and the words γελανής²⁸⁶ ‘cheerful’ and

²⁷⁷ Lopez Eire (2000) 14, 26.

²⁷⁸ Antipho Soph. fr. 44b II 33- III 3: γελῶμεν χαίροντες καὶ δακρύομεν λυπούμενοι, ‘we laugh when we are happy and cry when we are sad’, translation in Pendrick (2002) 183.

²⁷⁹ Hom. *Hymn.* 2. 420-21: γέλασσε δὲ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων γηθήσας, ‘Phoebus Apollo laughed happily’.

²⁸⁰ Hom. *Od.* 21. 105: γελώω καὶ τέρομαι ἄφρονι θυμῶ, ‘I laugh in delight with a mindless heart’.

²⁸¹ Ar. *Pax* 335: Ἡδομαι γὰρ καὶ γέγηθα καὶ πέπορδα καὶ γελῶ, ‘Oh I’m glad, I’m happy, I fart and I laugh’, translation in Henderson (1998) 471.

²⁸² Long. 4.22.4: ἴασι φαιδροὶ καὶ γελῶντες, ‘here they come, laughing and beaming with joy’.

²⁸³ In Hom. *Il.* 23. 784, the Greeks laughed merrily (ἡδὺ γέλασαν) at Ajax’s stumble and fall into dung.

²⁸⁴ Pi. *Pyth.* 9. 38: χλαρόν χλοαρόν γελάσσαις, ‘laughing indulgently with gentle gaze’, translation in Francis (1972) 291.

²⁸⁵ Hom. *Il.* 21. 389-90: ἐγέλασσε δὲ οἱ φίλον ἦτορ γηθοσύνη, ὅθ’ ὄρατο θεοὺς ἐριδι ξυνιόντας, ‘[Zeus] laughed deep in his own heart, delighted to see the gods engage in all-out conflict’, translation in Fagles and Knox (1998) 532.

²⁸⁶ In Olympian ode 5, Pindar mentions Boreas, king of the winds, as sending his sons in succor to the Argonauts ‘willingly and with cheerful heart’ (ἐκὼν καρδίᾳ γελανεῖ, *Olym.* 5. 2.); also in

γελανόω²⁸⁷ ‘cheer up, brighten up’.²⁸⁸ Although these two lexemes appear seldom in the extant Greek corpus (γελανής: twice, γελανόω: once), it is an interesting fact that all three of their occurrences explicitly regard a traditional seat of emotions.²⁸⁹ Here, laughter lies literally in the heart.

Merriment and frivolity, or in other words amusement and playfulness, are other types of pleasant feelings signified by γελάω. Merry laughter usually occurs in a playful context which ‘involves a self-conscious suspension of the normal consequentiality of ‘taking things seriously’’.²⁹⁰ In the Greek language, popular indicators of such non-serious contexts are words centred on the verb παίζω ‘play’.²⁹¹ A look into the extant texts shows that παίζω often accompanies γελάω in reference to special events suitable for playful laughter to occur, such as civic festivals, revels (*komoi*), and drinking parties (*symposia*)²⁹². On the other hand, the Greek texts also give us examples of frivolous or non-serious laughter taking place in less former situations.²⁹³ Whether during a

Pythian ode 4, the poet prays to the sea nymph, Camarina, to accept ‘with a happy heart’ (θυμῶ γελανεῖ, *Pyth.* 4. 181) the gifts of victorious Psauimis.

²⁸⁷ Bacchylides describes the soul of Meleager asking the hero Heracles to ‘cheer up his heart’ (γελανώσας τε θυμόν, *Epinic.* 5. 80).

²⁸⁸ For the possible etymological connection (γελανής < *γελασ-νης?), see Frisk (1960-70), Chantraine (1968-80) and Beekes (2010), all s.v. γελάω.

²⁸⁹ The heart (denoted by καρδία in Pi. *Olym.* 5.2., and by θυμός in Pi. *Pyth.* 4. 181 and Bacch. *Epinic.* 5. 80) is described as being in a cheerful state (γελανής) or accepting a favorable attitude (γελανόω). However, any connection with the concept of laughter may be only metaphorical, cf. Halliwell (2008) 91 n. 95. For the role of θυμός in Pindar and Bacchylides, see Sullivan (1993); for καρδία, cf. Sullivan (1995).

²⁹⁰ Halliwell (2008) 20.

²⁹¹ E.g. παιδιά ‘childish play, amusement’, παίγνια ‘play, jests’. The etymology of this word group is based on παῖς ‘child’, cf. Beekes (2010) s.v. παῖς.

²⁹² *Eleg. adesp.*, fr. 27 West: ‘Hail fellow drinkers... we ought to laugh and joke (γελᾶν παίζειν χρῆσάμενους), behaving properly, take pleasure in being together, engage in silly talk with one another, and utter jests as to arouse laughter (σκώπτειν τοιαῦθ’ οἷα γέλωτα φέρειν)’, translation in Hunter (2004) 13. Ar. *Nu.* 623 ‘you pour libations and laugh’ (σπένδεθ’ ὑμεῖς καὶ γελάτ’). Curiously, symposiastic laughter is even found outer space, cf. Luc. *VH* 2.16: ‘They all drink from each of these when the revels begin, and thenceforth enjoy themselves (ἡδόμενοι) and laugh (γελώντες) all the while’, translation in Harmon (1913) 319.

²⁹³ E.g. at war: Hannibal’s laughing and joking (ἐπιέναι γελᾶν οὕτω καὶ παίζειν τῷ στρατηγῶ) uplifts the spirits of the Carthaginians, in Plut. *Fab.* 15. 4; at a household: the image of a playful and laughing wife (παίζουσα καὶ γελῶσα) is juxtaposed with that of her serious husband, in Plut. *Con. Praec.* 139f. 13; at the market: a joking and laughing fish seller (παίζειν καὶ γελᾶν)

culturally ordained occasion (holiday) or a quotidian circumstance (market, court, household), playful, i.e. non-serious conduct enables the experience of merriment and the free manifestation of this emotion through laughter. Therefore, another recognizable Greek understanding of γελάω is the experience of pleasant sentiments.

2.1.1.2.4. The meaning of 'laugh at something'

Modern lexica point to the cause of one's burst of laughter as they denote γελάω with the non idiomatic meaning 'laugh at'. In particular, this meaning first and foremost relates to the aspect of humour. In this regard, various humorous devices are recognized to elicit laughter in others. A thorough examination of Greek humour-related stimuli appearing in connection with γελάω would exceed the limits of this chapter. We may, however, divide them into two general groups: 1) visual humour, based on the perception of actions regarded to be laughable, e.g. appearances²⁹⁴, behaviours²⁹⁵, events²⁹⁶ etc.; as well as 2) verbal humour, based on the perception of words, expressions and language considered to be laughter-provoking, e.g. jokes²⁹⁷, funny sayings²⁹⁸ etc.

tries to sell stale fish, in Antiph. fr. 218 Kock; at court: the Athenians are described as jesting and laughing during a trial (παίζοντας καὶ γελώντας ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ), in Pl. *Euthphr.* 3e 1.

²⁹⁴ Heracles is overcome by laughter after seeing the effeminate Dionysus dressed up like himself, cf. Ar. *Ra.* 43-6: 'By Demeter, I just can't stop laughing (Ὁῦ... δύναμαι μὴ γελάω)! Even though I'm biting my lip, I can't help laughing (ἀλλ' ὁμως γελῶ) ... It's the sight of that lionskin atop a yellow gown', translation in Henderson (2002) 21-3. Similar reaction of Peisetaerus on seeing Euelpides in bird attire, cf. his answer to the question 'what are you laughing at' in Ar. *Av.* 803-5: 'Those wing feathers of yours. Know what you look just like in those wings? A painted goose, done cheaply!', translation in Henderson (2000) 129

²⁹⁵ In Ar. *Pl.* 723, Asclepiades laughs at Neocleides' violent reaction (jumping, screaming and shouting) to the god's medicinal remedies.

²⁹⁶ Dionysus speaks of some comical sport events, in Ar. *Ra.* 1089-93: 'I about died laughing at the Panathenaea (ὥστε γ' ἀφαιάνθην Παναθηναίοισι γελῶν) when some laggard was running, all pale-faced, stooped over, and fat, falling behind and struggling badly', translation in Henderson (2002) 175.

²⁹⁷ Xanthias asks his master if he can make a joke, one that usually makes the audience crack up, in Ar. *Ra.* 1-2: Εἶπω τι τῶν εἰωθότων... ἐφ' οἷς ἀεὶ γελῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι, 'shall I say anything of the usual stuff which makes the audience laugh?'; cf. Ar. *V.* 567-8: 'Others crack jokes to make me laugh (οἱ δὲ σκώπτουσ', ἔν' ἐγὼ γελάσω) and put away my anger', translation in Henderson (1998) 293.

It comes as no surprise that humorous laughter constitutes the basis of certain Greek literary genres such as iambic poetry, satyr play, and comedy, all aimed at providing amusement and laughter in their audiences. In short, the idea of humorous laughter as a pleasant experience stimulated by the perception of the comic is also found among the Greek understandings of γελάω.

2.1.1.2.5. The meanings of 'deride', 'mock', 'ridicule'

A salient feature in ancient Greek culture is to take pleasure in perceiving the misfortunes of others and manifest it through laughter. In her 1990 study entitled *Le rire et les larmes dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Platon*, Arnould explains that the laughter expressed in ἡδὺ γελάω chiefly lies in the experience of pleasure, delight or the feeling of satisfaction over a positive turn of events.²⁹⁹ She also adds that often these sentiments are far from being benevolent. The 'sweetness' of such laughter lies in the outward expression of sentiments such as superiority³⁰⁰ and triumph³⁰¹, which are pleasant to the subject, albeit malignant towards others. Concurrently, Zuntz (1960) regards this feeling of malicious pleasure in one's laugh as explicit *Schadenfreude*.³⁰²

The verb γελάω, then, reflects the idea of experiencing emotions that are quite dark hearted in their core. This is most evident in the cases in which laughter accompanies acts of derision. Mockery is denoted by different

²⁹⁸ In Ar. *Pax* 1066, Trygaeus laughs out loud at the expressions of the oracle monger Hierocles saying 'I enjoyed that one about the flashing-eyed monkeys' (Ἡσθην χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις).

²⁹⁹ Arnould (1990) 164.

³⁰⁰ In Hom. *Od.* 20. 358, the suitors laugh with disdain (ἡδὺ γέλασαν) at the seer Theoclymenos.

³⁰¹ Paris laughs triumphantly after wounding Diomedes, in Hom. *Il.* 11. 378-80: 'loosing a heady laugh of triumph (μάλα ἡδὺ γέλασας) Paris leapt from his hiding-place and shouted out in glory, "Now you're hit – no wasted shot, my winging arrow!'", translation in Fagles (1998) 309.

³⁰² Zuntz (1960) 38. Cf. the Greek army laughs from Schadenfreude at the beaten Thersites in Hom. *Il.* 2. 270: οἱ δὲ καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἡδὺ γέλασαν, 'for all their demoralization, they laughed at him with delight', translation in Halliwell (2008) 76. For Plato's notion as laughter manifesting simultaneously the feeling of pleasure and malice, see chapter I, section 1.2.3.1.

constructions of γελάω with: prepositions 1) ἐπὶ ‘at, towards’³⁰³ or 2) ἐν ‘in, within’³⁰⁴, both followed by a dative; and 3) εἰς ‘to’³⁰⁵ succeeded with an accusative; cases like 4) accusative³⁰⁶, 5) genitive³⁰⁷ or 6) dative³⁰⁸; and finally 6) a predicative participle³⁰⁹. The passive voice of the verb also regards the aspect of mockery.³¹⁰ At times, this aspect is indicated by the adverb σοβαρόν³¹¹ ‘haughty, disdainfully’ or πλατὺ³¹² ‘loudly and rudely’. Usually, malicious delight and scornful laughter appear together in relation to those regarded as ἐχθροί ‘enemies’.³¹³ Thus, γελάω may denote the expression of pleasant albeit malevolent sentiments, such as a feeling of superiority, triumph, disdain or even hostility.

2.1.1.2.6. The meanings of ‘shine’, ‘glitter’, ‘be bright’

In some lexical entries of γελάω, we find also the meaning ‘shine’.³¹⁴ Arguments based on etymology are plausible but not decisive, since the connection of the γελ- root with the idea of brightness remains hypothetical.³¹⁵

³⁰³ Hom. *Il.* 2. 270: ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἠδὺ γέλασαν, ‘they laughed heartily at him’.

³⁰⁴ Aes. *Ch.* 222: ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶν θέλεις, ‘you laugh at my misfortunes’.

³⁰⁵ Soph. *Ai.* 79: οὐκ οὖν γέλωσ ἡδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελᾶν; ‘isn’t laughing at your enemies the sweetest kind of laughter?’.

³⁰⁶ Ar. *Nu.* 820: τί δὲ τοῦτ’ ἐγέλασας ἐτέόν; ‘why do you laugh about that?’.

³⁰⁷ Soph. *Ph.* 1125: γελᾶ μου ‘he laughs at me’.

³⁰⁸ Philem. fr. 110-111 Kock: ἀνθρώποισιν ἡ τύχη γελᾶ ‘fate laughs at men’.

³⁰⁹ Hdt. 4. 36: γελῶ δὲ ὀρέων γῆς περιόδους γράψαντας πολλοὺς ἤδη καὶ οὐδένα νονεχόντως ἐξηγησάμενον ‘And I laugh to see how many have before now drawn maps of the world, not one of them reasonably’, translation in Godley (1921) 235.

³¹⁰ Aes. *Eu.* 789: γελῶμαι ‘I am laughed at’; Soph. *Ph.* 1023: γελῶμενος πρὸς σοῦ ‘laughed by you’.

³¹¹ Theoc. 20. 15: σοβαρόν μ’ ἐγέλαξεν ‘she laughed at me disdainfully’; AP 6. 1. 1: σοβαρόν γελάσασα ‘having laughed with forceful expiration’.

³¹² Cf. n. 256 above, in which audible laughter also contains the idea of derision.

³¹³ E.g. Soph. 1153: γελῶσι δ’ ἐχθροί: ‘the enemies laugh’. I will discuss this matter more in chapter IV.

³¹⁴ Abramowiczówna (1958-65) s.v.: ‘promienieć, rozbłyskać’; DGE s.v. ‘resplandecer, exultar’; Ewing (1827) s.v. ‘shine, glitter, flourish’.

³¹⁵ Etymological data has provoked some scholars to regard ‘shine’ as the original meaning of γελάω, e.g. William Bedell Stanford, who in *Greek Metaphor* (1936: 115) claims that the primary sense of the verb ‘is to be bright (original italics) and nothing more’, whereas laughter he

However, in the Greek corpus, there are noticeable occurrences of γελάω (or its derivatives) the uses of which strongly suggests the meaning ‘shine’ or ‘be radiant’. For instance, in the *Iliad* we hear of a laughing earth³¹⁶; Hesiod in *Theogony*, describes the house of Zeus as laughing;³¹⁷ in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* both heaven and earth are said to have laughed³¹⁸, and, in similar fashion, Theognis mentions a laughing earth.³¹⁹ What these examples share in common is the fact that the subject described as laughing is discernably non-human.³²⁰ In these cases, as West argues, the original semantics of ‘laugh’ accept a metaphorical meaning of ‘shine’.³²¹ By employing the word γελάω, ancient authors have transferred a typically human behaviour onto inanimate objects to express, in a more poetic fashion, their radiance and reflection of lights.³²² Thus, the meaning ‘shine’ occurs in the figurative sense of the verb.³²³ Such observation provides us with a metaphorical explanation for a wider semantic range of the lexeme, and has been as such included in the lexical entries. It is, thus, a metaphor that without doubt connects γελάω with the concept of brightness.

considers to be ‘only an incidental meaning, although a common one’. Criticism in Halliwell (2008) 13, n. 33; 523, n. 16.

³¹⁶ Hom. *Il.* 19.362: γέλασσε δὲ πᾶσα περὶ χθῶν, ‘the whole earth laughed about’.

³¹⁷ Hes. *Th.* 40-1: γελᾶ δέ τε δώματα πατρὸς Ζηνός, ‘the house of Zeus laughed’.

³¹⁸ Hom. *Hymn.* 2. 14: γαῖά τε πᾶσ’ ἐγέλασσε, ‘the whole earth laughed’.

³¹⁹ Thgn. 8-10: ἐγέλασσε δὲ γαῖα πελώρη, ‘the wide earth laughed’.

³²⁰ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 13-14: ‘where an association between laughter and light is directly attested, especially in poetry, it is hard to separate it from a tendency to personify the natural world, to project quasi-human features (not least, emotions) onto its more-than-human forces’.

³²¹ West (1966) 170.

³²² I will pay more attention to this poetic tradition in chapter III, section 3.2.7. as well as chapter V, section 5.2.12.

³²³ Cf. Arnould (1990) 138: ‘La transposition métaphorique, dans le domaine des sentiments et des expressions’; Chaintraine (1968) 214: ‘Tous les mots du groupe signifient <<rire>> mais cette notion est issue de cell d’ <<éclat>>, ce qui rend compte de l’emploi de γελάω avec χθῶν comme sujet’.

2.1.1.2.7. Semantic polysemy

Detailed analysis of γελάω gives evidence for the lexeme's semantic complexity. As we have seen, different concepts of laughter are encapsulated within this term: 1) sound, 2) facial expression, 3) experience of emotions, and 4) their manifestation, 5) reaction to humour, 6) expression of playfulness, 7) derision. In addition to this, another distinctively Greek notion of laughter has emerged from our discussion above which is based on a conceptual association with 8) the idea of radiance and brightness. Apart from this last idea, we may, generally, recognize the fact that the main concepts encapsulated within the semantics of γελάω correspond to modern understandings of laughter discerned in chapter I.

Moreover, just as the English term 'laughter' may encompass various concepts simultaneously, similarly γελάω may have multiple meanings. This is most noticeable in those cases in which both audible and visual concepts of laughter are evoked, as discussed in section 2.1.1.2.2 above, but may also occur in regard of the concepts of humour and different emotional experiences. In those instances in which it isn't possible to distinguish a single meaning of γελάω, it becomes then evident that the lexeme reveals semantic polysemy.

Having this said, the question arises whether a similar polysemous understanding of laughter can be detected in the other two main γελ-rooted lexemes, γέλως and γέλοιος. Let us first have a look at the basic noun for laughter.

2.1.1.3. γέλως

The chief Greek signifier for 'laughter' is γέλως. Modern lexica ascribe this lexeme with other meanings such as 'occasion of laughter', 'laughable

object', 'object of ridicule', 'a laughing stock', 'derision', also 'smile' and 'dimple'.³²⁴

In the first place, γέλως designates sonority. The noun, clearly, accepts such meaning in those cases in which it occurs with certain adjectives, e.g. πολύς³²⁵ 'loud', μέγιστος³²⁶ 'great, loud', and πλατύς³²⁷ 'wide, broad, loud'. In the company of some adjectives, the intensity of one's laugh is evoked, for instance: μέτριος³²⁸ 'moderate', ἄσβεστος³²⁹ 'unquenchable, inextinguishable', ἄμετρος³³⁰ 'immoderate', ἄτακτος³³¹ 'inordinate', ἐξαισίος³³² 'vehement', ἰσχυρός³³³ 'violent', and προπετής³³⁴ 'uncontrolled'. Curiously, other bodily movements may accompany a loud burst of laughter, like in the instances in

³²⁴ LSJ: I. 'laughter'; II. 'occasion of laughter, foof for laughter'; III. 'dimple in the hinder parts'; similarly in Abramowiczówna (1958-65) who based the her Greek-Polish lexicon on the LSJ; DGE: I. 'risa', II. 'motivo u objeto de risa, irrisión, ridículo', III. 'sonrisa'; Jurewicz (2000-1): 1. 'śmiech'; 2. 'rzecz śmieszna, przedmiot śmiechu, pośmiewisko'; 3. 'zmarszczka na twarzy od śmiechu'; 4. 'fałda, dołek na pośladku'; Lampe (1961) A. 'laughter'; B. 'derision'; Ewin (1827): 'laughter, mirth'; 'derision, an object of derision'; all s.v. γέλως.

³²⁵ Pl. *Chrm.* 155 b: ἦκε γάρ, καὶ ἐποίησε γέλωτα πολύν, 'he came and caused a loud burst of laughter'.

³²⁶ Pl. *Pol.* 295e: γέλως ἂν ὁ μέγιστος γίγνοιτο, 'a huge laugh would have arisen'.

³²⁷ In Aesop. *Fab.* 375 Perry, the crowd shrieks with laughter (γέλως δὲ πλατύς) on seeing a wig fly off a horseman's head.

³²⁸ Athen. 10. 41: οἱ Λακεδαιμονίων δὲ κόροι πίνουσι τοσοῦτον ὥστε φρέν' εἰς ἰλαρὰν ἐλπίδα πάντας ἄγειν εἰς τε φιλοφροσύνην γλώσσαν μέτριόν τε γέλωτα 'But the warriors of Sparta drink only enough to lead the spirits of all into joyous hope, the tongue to kindness and moderate laughter', translation in Gulick (1930) 461.

³²⁹ Hom. *Il.* 1. 599: ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν, 'unquenchable laughter rose among the blessed gods'; cf. Hom. *Od.* 8. 326.

³³⁰ Sext. *Sent.* 280a: ἄμετρος γέλως σημεῖον ἀπροσεξίας, 'immoderate laughter – a sign for the want of attention'.

³³¹ Dio Chrys. 4. 110: προῖτω γε μὴν νῆ Δία τρυφῶν τε καὶ μύρου καὶ οἴνου ἀποπνέων ἐν κροκωτῷ μετὰ πολλοῦ καὶ ἀτάκτου γέλωτος 'So, by heavens, let him step forth luxurious, breathing of myrrh and wine, in a saffron robe, with much inordinate laughter' translation in Cohoon (1932) 220-1.

³³² Pl. *Leg.* 732c: δὴ γελώτων τε εἰργεσθαι χρὴ τῶν ἐξαισίων, 'one must restrain from vehement laughter'.

³³³ Pl. *Res.* 388e: ὅταν τις ἐφιῆ ἰσχυρῷ γέλωτι, ἰσχυρὰν καὶ μεταβολὴν ζητεῖ τὸ τοιοῦτον, 'when anyone gives way to violent laughter, then such behavior is likely to lead to a violent reaction', translation in Emlyn-Jones and Preddy (2013a) 233.

³³⁴ Isoc. *Ad. Dem. Orat.* 1, 15: μῆτε γέλωτα προπετῆ στέργε, 'do not be fond of uncontrolled laughter'.

which γέλως is regarded to be συγκρούσιος³³⁵, ‘accompanied by the clapping of hands’. Furthermore, many verbal constructions express the evocation of audible laughter, as, for instance: τεύχω γέλω³³⁶ ‘stir a laugh’, τίθημι γέλων³³⁷ ‘cause laughter’, ποιέω γέλωτα³³⁸ ‘raise laughter’, κινέω γέλωτα³³⁹ ‘arouse laughter’, μηχανάομαι γέλωτα³⁴⁰ ‘arouse laughter’ etc. Also, the sonority of laughter is reflected in such expressions as σὺν γέλωτι³⁴¹ ‘with laughter’ or ἅμα γέλωτι³⁴² ‘along with a laugh’. In these few examples, we can easily recognize that the basic idea of γέλως is, unquestionably, the sound of laughter.

Apart from the audible aspect, γέλως, likewise γελάω, may signify the experience of pleasant sentiments such as mirth and joy. This is most noticeable in the noun’s occurrences alongside ἡδονή³⁴³ ‘pleasure, enjoyment, delight’, εὐφροσύνη³⁴⁴ ‘mirth, merriment’, and the adjective γλυκύς³⁴⁵ ‘sweet, delightful’. What is more, one’s emotions or state of mind may be detected by the visible γέλως on one’s lips³⁴⁶, face³⁴⁷ or within the eyes³⁴⁸.

³³⁵ In Diogenian. 3. 76 explained as ἄκοσμος καὶ ἄτακτος· παρόσον τινὲς γελῶντες τὰς χειρᾶς ἢ τοὺς πόδας συγκρούουσιν, ‘inappropriate and excessive; inasmuch as those who laugh clap their hands or stamp their feet’.

³³⁶ *Hom. Od.* 18.350: γέλω δ’ ἐτάροισιν ἔτευχε, ‘he stirred a laugh among the companions’.

³³⁷ *Eur. Io.* 1172: γέλων δ’ ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολλὸν, ‘he caused much laughter among the companions at the table’.

³³⁸ A parasite speaks of his skills in entertaining others at banquets, in *Epich. fr.* 35 3-4 Kaibel: ποιέω πολλὸν γέλωτα, ‘I get a big laugh’.

³³⁹ *Xen. Sym.* 1. 14: οὐκ ἐκίνησε γέλωτα, ‘he did not arouse laughter’.

³⁴⁰ *Xen. Cyr.* 2. 2. 14: ὁ γέλωτα αὐτοῖς μηχανώμενος, ‘he who arouses laughter in others’.

³⁴¹ *Xen. An.* 1.2.18: οἱ δὲ Ἕλληγες σὺν γέλωτι ἐπὶ τὰς σκηνὰς ἦλθον ‘the Greeks with a roar of laughter came up to their camp’, translation in Brownson (1921) 259.

³⁴² *Plut. Quaest. Conv.* 657 e 1: λέγων ἅμα γέλωτι, ‘speaking with laughter’.

³⁴³ *Plut. Nic.* 11.6: καὶ παρραυτικά μὲν ἡδονὴν τοῦτο καὶ γέλωτα τῷ δήμῳ παρέσχεν, ‘for a while, this event provided delight and laughter amongst the people’.

³⁴⁴ *Hom. Od.* 20. 8: ταῖ δ’ ἐκ μεγάροιο γυναῖκες ἦϊσαν ... ἀλλήλησι γέλω τε καὶ εὐφροσύνην παρέχουσαι, ‘the maids left the palace... making each other laugh in mirth’.

³⁴⁵ *Pi. Pyth.* 9. 38: γέλως γλυκύς, ‘sweet laughter’ is used in reference to a crowd laughing with delight over a competitor’s victory in the games.

³⁴⁶ *Theocr.* 7. 19-20: γέλως δὲ οἱ εἶχετο χεῖλευς, ‘laughter beheld his lips’.

³⁴⁷ In a painting described by Philostratus Major, the recently angry Apollo takes delight (χαίροντα) in the the playful mischief of the child Hermes, *Imag.* 1. 26: ‘his laughter (γέλως) is restrained hovering as it were over his face (ἐφιζῶνων τῷ προσώπῳ), as amusement conquers wrath (θυμὸν ἐκνικώσης ἡδονῆς)’, translation in Fairbanks (1931) 103.

Next, the lexeme is also used in the context of joking and play, i.e. non-serious activities conducted ἐπὶ παιδιᾷ καὶ γέλωτι ‘for fun and laughter’.³⁴⁹ The idea of playfulness is noticeable in expressions such as ἐν γέλωτι³⁵⁰ ‘in joke’, ἐπὶ γέλωτι³⁵¹ ‘for a laugh’ or ‘for fun’, μετὰ γέλωτος³⁵² ‘amidst laughter’; or along other words regarding non-serious activities such as παιδιά³⁵³ ‘childish play, amusement’, παίγνια³⁵⁴ ‘play, jests’, and σκῶμμα³⁵⁵ ‘jest, gibe, joke’. Often the objects considered to be γέλωτος ἄξια ‘worth a laugh’ imply humour.³⁵⁶

The noun γέλως denotes derision, as well. In this respect, many verbal constructions refer to the production of laughter at the expense of another person, e.g. ὀφλισκάνω γέλωτα³⁵⁷ ‘deserve ridicule’, παρέχω γέλωτα³⁵⁸ ‘cause laughter’, ἄγω γέλωτα³⁵⁹ ‘laugh at’, παρασκευάζω γέλωτα³⁶⁰ ‘provide a laugh’,

³⁴⁸ Aes. Ch. 738-9 τὸν γ’ ἐντὸς γέλων κεύθουσ’, ‘behind the eyes she hid her laughter’; cf. chapter III, sections 3.2.1. and 3.2.6.

³⁴⁹ Plut. Caes. 61. 3. 1.

³⁵⁰ Plu. Mor. 2. 124d: Ταῦθ’ ἡμῖν ὁ Γλαῦκος ἐν γέλωτι προύφερεν, ‘such words Glaucus passed over to us in joke’.

³⁵¹ In Plut. Alc. 8. 2., Alcibiades is said to punch Hipponicus in the face for no other reason than just for laughs (ἐπὶ γέλωτι).

³⁵² In the lost comedy *Women of Lemnos* (Antiph. fr. 144 Kock) a flatterer speaks of a life filled with laughter (ἡμῖν δὲ μετὰ γέλωτος ὁ βίος) as his profession is based on playing, provoking others to laugh, jesting and drinking plentiful wine (τὸ μέγιστον ἔργον ἐστὶ παιδιὰ ἀδρὸν γελάσαι, σκῶψαί τιν’, ἐκπιεῖν πολύν).

³⁵³ D. Chr. 75-6: ἦκον δὲ καὶ οἱ παῖδες τὴν ὕν ἄγοντες μετὰ γέλωτος καὶ παιδιᾶς ‘the boys came in laughing and full of fun, leading the pig’, translation in Cohoon (1932) 329.

³⁵⁴ Suda s.v. παίγνια· (...) οἱ δὲ ναρθηκοφόροι ἐδίωκον σὺν πολλῷ γέλωτι καὶ παίγνια ‘the rod-bearers chased them with much laughter and play’.

³⁵⁵ AP 9. 246: ἦν δὲ γέλως ἐπὶ σοὶ καὶ σκῶμματα πυκνὰ ‘there was laughter and many jokes at you’.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Men. fr. 1098 Kock: ὁ μὴ γέλωτος ἄξιός ἐστιν ἢ γέλως, / αὐτὸς πέφυκε τοῦ γέλωτος κατάγελας, ‘if a thing not being funny makes us laugh, then that laughter makes us look ridiculous’.

³⁵⁷ Pl. Theaet. 161 e 5: τὸ δὲ δὴ ἐμόν τε καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς τέχνης τῆς μαιευτικῆς σιγῶ ὅσον γέλωτα ὀφλισκάνομεν, ‘I do not speak of the ridicule I and my art of delivery deserve’; Ar. fr. 898 Kock: ἐγὼ διὰ ταῦτα, μὴ γέλων ὀφλὼν λάθω, / περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐξῆμμαι πηνίκην τινά, ‘Out of fear of becoming an object of ridicule, I wear a wig on my head’.

³⁵⁸ Ar. Th. 941-2: ἵνα μὴ ἔν κροκωτοῖς καὶ μίτραις γέρων ἀνὴρ γέλωτα παρέχω τοῖς κόραξιν ἐστιῶν, ‘I don’t want to give the crows a reason to laugh at me, an old man dressed up in a saffron gown and headband’.

³⁵⁹ Soph. Ai. 382: ἦ που πολὺν γέλωθ’ ὑφ’ ἡδονῆς ἄγεις, ‘how you must be laughing in your delight’, translation in Garvie (1998) 31.

and συντίτημι γέλων³⁶¹ ‘laugh at’. It is an interesting fact that expressions with γέλως may simultaneously regard both the audible aspect of laughter as well as the idea of mockery. For instance, asides ‘loud laughter’, the phrases πολὺς γέλως³⁶² or μέγιστος γέλως³⁶³ may signify ‘immense derision’ or ‘a major laughing stock’. Similarly, the expression γέλωτος ἄξια³⁶⁴ ‘worth a laugh’, in the context of mockery accepts the meaning of that which is ‘worth ridicule’. Derision, therefore, is another distinguishable concept encompassed in the semantic sphere of γέλως.

Additionally, modern lexica adduce few distinctly Greek expressions with γέλως. For example, Ἴωνικός γέλως³⁶⁵ ‘Ionian laughter’ as well as Μεγαρικός γέλως³⁶⁶ ‘Megarian laughter’ signify shameless or insolent laughter, whereas Αἰάντειος γέλως³⁶⁷, literally meaning ‘the laughter of Ajax’ was proverbial in antiquity for expressing a madman’s laugh. Curiously, one original Greek phrase σαρδάνιος (vel σαρδόνιος) γέλως³⁶⁸, ‘sardonic laughter’,

³⁶⁰ Pl. *Leg.* 669d: ποιηται δὲ ἀνθρώπινοι ... γέλωτ' ἂν παρασκευάζοιεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅσους φησὶν Ὀρφεὺς λαχεῖν ὥραν τῆς τέρψιος, ‘human poets ... would furnish a theme for laughter to all the men who, in Orpheus’ phrase, “have attained the full flower of joyousness”, translation in Bury (1952a) 147.

³⁶¹ Soph. *Ai.* 303: συντιθεῖς γέλων πολὺν ὄσσην κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτείσαιτ' ἰών, ‘he laughed loudly at all the violence he had gone and inflicted on them by way of vengeance’ translation in Garvie (1998) 47.

³⁶² Archil. 172. 3-4 West: πολὺς ἀστοῖσι φαίνεαι γέλως ‘you will become a major laughing-stock to the citizens’.

³⁶³ Gal. *Nat. Fac.* 2. 67. 6 Kühn: μέγιστον ὀφλεῖν γέλωτα ‘to incur great derision’.

³⁶⁴ E.g. Eur. *Heracl.* 507-8: ‘it would deserve only ridicule (γέλωτος ἄξια) if we were to sit here and lament as suppliants to the gods’.

³⁶⁵ Diogenian. 3. 87: Γέλως Ἴωνικός: ἐπὶ τῶν κιναίδων ‘Ionian laughter: concerning calamities’.

³⁶⁶ Diogenian. 3. 88: Γέλως Μεγαρικός: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀώρως θρυπτομένων ‘Megarian laughter: concerning those who are improperly effeminate’. Hesychius explains the phrase with ὁ σκωπτικός ‘mockers’.

³⁶⁷ Diogenian. 1. 41: Αἰάντειος γέλως: ἐπὶ τῶν παραφρόνως γελώντων, ‘laughter of Ajax: regarding those laughing in a deranged manner’. Men. fr. 401: Αἰάντειος γέλως. For a broader discussion on Ajax, madness and laughter, see chapter IV, section 4.2.4.

³⁶⁸ The Suda gives two explanations; under sigma 123 it states: ὁ προσποιήτος, ‘one who pretends’; under sigma 124, it gives different explanations for the saying (παροιμία), among which worth mentioning are 1) that it regards those who laugh themselves to death (ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ τῷ σφῶν αὐτῶν γελώντων), 2) it may also derive from the act of grinning maliciously (ἀπὸ τοῦ σεσηρῆναι μετὰ ἀνίας), and 3) it may refer to the poisonous effect of a

which the ancients applied in reference to scornful laughter as the expression of malicious delight at the misfortunes of others,³⁶⁹ has been introduced into many modern languages through its Latin translation *risus sardonius*.³⁷⁰

Difficulty arises in rendering γέλως, ‘smile’, for two main reasons. Firstly, amongst the authoritative Greek lexica, only the *DGE* explicitly attributes the lexeme with this meaning in a figurative sense.³⁷¹ However, the Spanish lexicon adduces but a single as well as disputable example to support this claim, for other lexicographers cite the same reference in terms of a metaphor for waves.³⁷² Secondly, the conceptual distinction between laughter and smile in the Greek language, as discussed in relation to γελάω in section 2.1.1.2.2. above, applies to the verb’s direct denominative, as well. In view of the fact that γέλως also reveals a wide range of meanings, it should not be perceived as limited to only a single idea of laughter. We should bare this in mind especially when interpreting those passages in which γέλως refers to a person’s face.³⁷³

And finally, in some lexica we can find the meaning ‘dimple’ ascribed to the noun, however, not in relation to the indentation in the cheeks occurring while laughing, but in reference to the curves of a woman’s hips.³⁷⁴

plant growing on Sardinia after which consumption one makes a laughing grin and dies. For a discussion on the etymology of σαρδάνιος, see Halliwell (2008) 93 n. 100.

³⁶⁹ Hom. *Od.* 20. 301-2: μείδησε δὲ θυμῶ / σαρδάνιον μάλα τοῖον, ‘Odysseus smiled in his heart in quite a sardonic way’; Pl. *Res.* 337a 3: ὃς ἀκούσας ἀνεκάγχασέ τε μάλα σαρδάνιον, ‘Upon hearing this he burst out laughing very sardonically’.

³⁷⁰ English: ‘sardonic laughter’; French: ‘le rire sardonique’; German: ‘Sardonisches Lachen’; Italian: ‘riso sardonico’ etc.; in Polish: ‘uśmiech sardoniczny’, by evoking the image of smile.

³⁷¹ Similarly in the English-Greek lexicon of Woodhouse (1910) s.v. smile: γέλως, γέλασμα, however without supporting references. In contrast Yonge (1849) who in his entry adduces μείδημα.

³⁷² Opp. *Hal.* 4. 334: κύματος ἀκροτάτιο γέλως ὅθι χέρσον ἀμείβει. The difference in interpretation is observable in the passage’s two available English translations by Jones (1722) 165: ‘Where thin expiring Waves salute the Land / With dimpled Smile, and kiss the dubious Strand’; and Mair (1928) 429: ‘where the laughter of the utmost wave skirts the land’.

³⁷³ E.g. Soph. *El.* 1310: γέλωτι τοῦμόν φαιδρὸν ὄψεται κάρα, ‘she will see my face beaming with laughter’. We discuss this example in more detail in chapter IV.

³⁷⁴ Luc. *Am.* 14: τῶν δὲ τοῖς ἰσχύοις ἐνεσφραγισμένων ἐξ ἐκατέρων τύπων οὐκ ἂν εἴποι τις ὡς ἦδὺς ὁ γέλως, ‘as for the hips’ flesh pressed on both sides of the figure, one cannot find words to describe that sweet dimple’.

In this section, we have paid attention to the various interpretations of γέλως. As it has emerged, the semantics of the noun consist of different ideas regarding the discussed phenomenon. These concepts, generally, correspond to those distinguished in our analysis of the verb γελάω. What is more, a single instance of γέλως may evoke more than one idea of laughter at the same time e.g. sound and derision, humour and ridicule etc. The noun, therefore, just as the verb, shows semantic complexity as well as polysemy.

I would now like to turn my attention to the third main γελ- rooted laughter word, namely, the adjective γέλοιος.

2.1.1.4. γέλοιος

The literal meaning of γέλοιος is ‘laughable’ or ‘laughter-provoking’. Modern lexicographers, however, propose such explanations for the adjective such as ‘mirth-provoking’, ‘amusing’, ‘funny’, ‘entertaining’ as well as ‘ludicrous’, ‘absurd’, ‘foolish’, and ‘ridiculous’.³⁷⁵ Already from these quoted meanings we may distinguish three main ideas of laughter appearing in connection with 1) humour, 2) playfulness, and 3) ridicule.

First and foremost, γέλοιος refers to the laughable quality perceived within an object.³⁷⁶ When used in reference to a person, the adjective signifies ‘one who makes others laugh’, thus is ‘laughable’³⁷⁷ or an explicit ‘joker’.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ LSJ I. ‘mirth-provoking’, ‘amusing’; II. ‘ludicrous’, ‘absurd’; DGE: I. 1. a) ‘divertido’, ‘ridículo’; b) ‘que es objeto de risa’, ‘ridículo’; 2. ‘divertido’, ‘bromista’, ‘que hace reír’; Abramowiczówna (1958-65): 1. ‘śmieszny’, ‘zabawny’, ‘żartobliwy’; 2. ‘śmieszny’, ‘bezsensowny’; Jurewicz (2000-1): 1. ‘śmieszny’, ‘zabawny’, ‘dowcipkujący’, ‘śmieszący’, ‘dowcipny’; 2. ‘śmieszny’, ‘bezrozumny’, ‘bezsensowny’; all s.v. γέλοιος.

³⁷⁶ Ar. Av. 99: Τὸ ῥάμφος ἡμῖν σου γέλοιον φαίνεται, ‘your crooked beak looks funny to us’; Ar. Ach. 1058: ὡς γέλοιον ... τὸ δέημα τῆς νύμφης, ‘how funny is the bride’s request’; Ar. V. 566: Αἰσώπου τι γέλοιον, ‘some funny joke by Aesopus’; Ar. V. 1258-9: λόγον ἔλεξας αὐτὸς ἀστεῖόν τινα, / Αἰσωπικὸν γέλοιον ἢ Συβαριτικόν, ‘you yourself can tell him some witty story, something funny by Aesop or Sybaris’, translation Henderson (1998b) 383.

³⁷⁷ Pl. Sym. 213 c: οὐδὲ εἴ τις ἄλλος γελοῖος ἔστι τε καὶ βούλεται, ‘neither anyone who is or would want to be laughable’.

³⁷⁸ Aeschin. In Tim. 126: ‘And Demosthenes by way of a jest presents himself as an example, for he poses as a man who knows how to indulge in pleasantries and to joke about his own manner

Curiously, in the neuter single τὸ γελοῖον designates a ‘joke’³⁷⁹ or in abstract terms ‘the comic’³⁸⁰, whereas in the neuter plural γέλοια (or γελοῖα) denotes ‘jokes’, ‘jests’³⁸¹, or ‘amusements’³⁸². On the whole, γέλοιος is conceptually connected with the sphere of humour, as it considers laughter the product of one’s reaction to the laughable, the feeling of pleasure, as well as, refers to the humorous quality in things, persons, words and actions which, in the end, get a laugh.³⁸³

Another idea of laughter distinguishable within the semantics of the term is related to that of humour and often occurs simultaneously. This is the concept of playfulness acknowledged in terms of fun, play, in other words, a general suspension of ‘taking things seriously’. Such understanding of γέλοιος becomes most evident in its common juxtaposition with the adjective σπουδαῖος ‘earnest’.³⁸⁴ In effect, the adjective denotes non-seriousness in one’s words and actions.

of life (ἡδὺς ὦν ἀνὴρ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἰδίας διατριβὰς γελοῖος), translation in Darwin Adams (1919) 103.

³⁷⁹ Ar. *Ra.* 6: Τὸ πάνυ γέλοιον εἶπω; ‘what about I say a really funny joke?’; Ar. *Ra.* 19-20: Ὡ τρισκακοδαίμων ἄρ’ ὁ τράχηλος οὐτοσί, / ὅτι θλίβεται μὲν, τὸ δὲ γέλοιον οὐκ ἐρεῖ, ‘Oh, thrice wretched this neck of mine, for though it’s being crushed, it cannot make a joke’.

³⁸⁰ In Pl. *Sym.* 215a, Alcibiades declares he will praise Socrates through likenesses, which he will use for the sake of the truth and not for the sake of the comic (ἔσται δ’ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἔνεκα, οὐ τοῦ γελοίου). An early definition of the ‘laughable’ is expressed by Aristotle in *Poet.* 1449a who considers τὸ γελοῖον to be a ‘category of the shameful’ (τοῦ αἰσχροῦ μόριον) and is a certain type of ‘fault or mark of shame which involves no pain or destruction (ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἰσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν)’, translation in Halliwell (2005) 45.

³⁸¹ In a fragment from the *Theognidea*, the author recommends telling jokes during meals with others; Thgn. 309-11: ‘At common meals a man should be discrete, everything escapes his notice so he seems absent, but he should bring laughter (εἰς δὲ φέροι τὰ γελοῖα)’, quoted in Hobden (2013) 117.

³⁸² In Aes. fr. 47a, the chorus sings to the baby Perseus about the amusements that await him (παρέξει τὰ γελοῖα) if he joins to live with the satyrs. See chapter III, section 3.3.1.2.

³⁸³ Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1371 b 35-1372 a 1: ἐπεὶ ἡ παιδιὰ τῶν ἡδέων καὶ πᾶσα ἄνεσις, καὶ ὁ γέλως τῶν ἡδέων, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰ γελοῖα ἡδέα εἶναι, καὶ ἀνθρώπους καὶ λόγους καὶ ἔργα, ‘since games are among pleasurable things, all relaxation is, too; and since laughter is among pleasurable things, necessarily laughable things (human beings and words and deeds) are also pleasurable’, translation in Kennedy (1991) 92. On the connection of humour with pleasure, see chapter I, section 1.1.3.1.

³⁸⁴ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.1. Comic poets could speak about both funny business and serious matters, cf. Ar. *Ra.* 389-90: Καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ’ εἶπεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα, ‘may I utter

A less humorous form of non-seriousness is that which is considered to be nonsensical. In this respect, γέλοιος denotes risibility within an object, resulting from a perceived nonsense, silliness or absurdity in it. Here, the adjective accepts the meanings ‘ludicrous’, ‘absurd’, ‘foolish’ but also ‘ridiculous’, for, in certain cases, the exhibition of a lack of good sense may merit derision.³⁸⁵ Therefore, γέλοιος may signify ridicule, since it designates a negative perception of what is regarded as lacking sense.

Up to this point, I have analyzed and discerned the main ways of understanding laughter encompassed within the three basic γελ- rooted words: γελάω, γέλως, and γελοῖος. The principal concepts represented in these three words recognize laughter as 1) a sound, 2) a specific facial expression, 3) the experience of emotions pleasant to the subject, 4) the manifestation of these sentiments or state of mind, 5) a reaction to humour, 6) a sign of playfulness, 7) an act of derision, and finally 8) a connection with the concept of shinning. We must, however, bare in mind, that this is only a general categorization of the Greek understandings of the discussed phenomenon. As stated before, various concepts may mingle within the semantics of a term, for example, the idea of sound and facial display may be evoked instantaneously or derision with humour. Also, different aspects of a specific idea may be evoked within a text, for instance, a laughter-word may regard derision in various degrees, from playful or humorous ridicule to hostile mockery. Therefore, for a full and

much that’s funny, / and also much that’s serious’, translation in Henderson (2002) 79. Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 816d; ‘it is impossible to learn the serious without the comic (ἀνευ γὰρ γελοίων τὰ σπουδαῖα ... μαθεῖν μὲν οὐ δυνατόν) or any one of a pair of contraries without the other’, translation Bury (1952b) 97.

³⁸⁵ Pl. *Prot.* 355a: γελοῖον τὸν λόγον γίγνεσθαι, ‘the argument becomes ridiculous’. Men. *Sam.* 686: γελοῖος ἔσομαι, ‘I would be a laughing-stock’; Pl. *Phdr.* 236d: ‘I shall make myself ridiculous (γελοῖος ἔσομαι) if I, a mere amateur, try without preparation to speak on the same subject in competition with a master of his art’, translation in Fowler (1913) 441. It ought to be, however, emphasized that γέλοιος seldom regards hostile, vitriolic mockery.

proper interpretation of a Greek laughter-word one must always consider the context in which it appears in.

2.1.1.5. Other cognates

The three main γελ- rooted words: γελάω, γέλως, and γελοῖος are used in the formation of other cognates. What is more, we may observe that the semantics of these three words also influence the semantics of their derivatives. For instance, the terms deriving from γελάω refer to such ideas of laughter: 1) sound (γέλασμα³⁸⁶ 'laugh', γέλασις³⁸⁷ 'laughing', γελαστύς³⁸⁸ 'laughter', γελαστικός³⁸⁹ 'able to laugh', γελασεῖω³⁹⁰ 'to be ready to laugh'), 2) bodily movements (γελάσκω³⁹¹ 'laugh convulsively'), 3) mockery (γελασῖνος³⁹², 'laugher', γελαστής³⁹³ 'laugher, sneerer', possibly γελασίνη³⁹⁴ 'she laugher', γελάστρια³⁹⁵ 'she laugher', γελαστός³⁹⁶ 'laughable, ridiculous', γελαστέον³⁹⁷

³⁸⁶ Aes. *Pr.* 90: κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα. 'Laugh' in *ThGL* s.v. γέλασμα: 'trius'. However, in the ninth revised edition *LSJ* s.v. γέλασμα appears 'smile'; same meaning in *DGE* s.v., although in figurative sense ('fig. sonrisa'). I will discuss this particular example in detail chapter III, section 3.2.7.

³⁸⁷ *EM* 801.13: Φρούαγμα· (...) λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γελάσεως 'used also in relation to laughing'.

³⁸⁸ Call. *Del.* 323-4: ἃ Δηλιάς εὔρετο νύμφη παίγνια κουρίζοντι καὶ Απόλλωνι γελαστύν 'These things did the nymph of Delos devise for sport and laughter to young Apollo', translation in Mair (1921) 111. A *hapax legomenon*, cf. Mineur (1984) 250 n. 324.

³⁸⁹ Luc. *Vit. Auc.* 5: ἄνθρωπος μὲν γελαστικόν, ὄνος δὲ οὐ γελαστικόν 'man is a creature that laughs, while asses do not', translation in Harmon (1919) 505.

³⁹⁰ Pl. *Phd.* 64 b: Νῆ τὸν Δία, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ πάνυ γέ με νυνδὴ γελασεῖοντα ἐποίησας γελάσαι, 'By Zeus, Socrates, I don't feel much like laughing just now, but you made me laugh' translation in Fowler (1913) 223.

³⁹¹ In *AP* 7. 621 a certain Sophocles dies laughing in convulsion (γελάσκων) after eating the poisonous plant Sardonian celery.

³⁹² Epithet of Democritus, known as the 'Laughing Philosopher', cf. Ael. VII 4. 20: κατεγέλα δὲ πάντων ὁ Δημόκριτος καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοὺς μαίνεσθαι ὅθεν καὶ Γελασῖνον αὐτὸν ἐκάλουσιν οἱ πολῖται 'Democritus mocked everyone and considered them mad; due to this the citizens called him the Laugher'.

³⁹³ Soph. *OR* 1422: Οὐθ' ὡς γελαστής, Οἰδίπους, ἐλήλυθα, 'I have not come, as a sneerer, Edipus'. The derisive aspect of the term is clear amongst ancient lexicographers, e.g. Ps.-Zonar. explains the term as ὁ ἐπεγγελῶν 'he who mocks', similarly Suda, both s.v. γελαστής.

³⁹⁴ Anaxandr. fr. 25. A *hapax legomenon* and word without context from the lost comedy entitled *Serio-Comedy* (Κωμωδοτραγῳδία).

³⁹⁵ Sch. Ar. *Th.* 1068.

‘must be laughed at’ and γέλασμα³⁹⁸ ‘cause for laughter’), and 4) humour (γελάσιμος³⁹⁹ ‘laughable’). Regarding the noun γέλως, its cognates include the concepts of derision (γελωτῖνος⁴⁰⁰, γελωτός⁴⁰¹, both meaning ‘ridiculous’). And finally, the words formed from the adjective γελοῖος retain its basic meaning of ‘laughability’ as they, generally, refer to the ideas of humour and 5) play (γελοίασμα⁴⁰² ‘joke’, γελοιασμός⁴⁰³ ‘jesting’, γελοιαστής⁴⁰⁴ ‘jester, buffoon’, γελοιάστρια⁴⁰⁵ ‘cheerful woman, female joker’, γελοιάζω⁴⁰⁶ ‘jest, laugh, joke’, γελοιώδης⁴⁰⁷ ‘laughable, ridiculous’, γελοιαστικός⁴⁰⁸ ‘mirth-provoking, comical, funny’). On the basis of the examples above we may notice that the semantic field of the cognates becomes limited to certain aspects of laughter.

³⁹⁶ Babr. 45. 12: ὁ δ' αἰπόλος γελαστός ἦλθεν εἰς οἴκους αἰγῶν ἔρημος ‘the ridiculous goatherd returned home without any goats’.

³⁹⁷ Plut. *Def. Oracul.* 420 b: εἰ δὲ χρὴ γελᾶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ, τὰ εἰδῶλα γελαστέον τὰ κωφὰ καὶ τυφλὰ καὶ ἄψυχα ‘If there is need for laughter in philosophy, we should laugh at those spirits, dumb, blind and soulless’, translation in Babbitt (1936/2003) 405.

³⁹⁸ This is an extra and late meaning attributed to the noun transmitted in the *Sententiae* of Secundus the Silent who in *Sent.* 18 describes old age (γῆρας) as a ‘timeworn object of laughter’ (πολυχρόνιον γέλασμα), translation in Perry (1964) 91.

³⁹⁹ Luc. *Somn.* 5: Μέχρι μὲν δὴ τούτων γελάσιμα καὶ μειρακιώδη τὰ εἰρημένα ‘Up to this point my story has been humorous and childish’, translation in Harmon (1921) 219. The grammarian Phrynichus, however, recommends the use of γελοῖος instead, Phryn. *Ec.* 199: γελάσιμον μὴ λέγε, ἀλλὰ γελοῖον, ‘do not say γελάσιμον, only γελοῖον’.

⁴⁰⁰ A *hapax legomenon* in Hesychius: γελωτῖνος· καταγέλαστος.

⁴⁰¹ A *hapax legomenon* in Sopat. Rh. *ad Hermog. Stat.* 46. 13: γελωτὸν ἂν εἶη τὸ προᾶγμα, ‘that would be a ridiculous case’.

⁴⁰² DGE s.v. ‘broma, chanza’. The word γελοίασμα is a gloss on ψιά ‘play’ in Hesychius, synonymous with χαρά ‘joy, delight’ and παίγνια ‘playthings’.

⁴⁰³ Sch. Ar. *Pl.* 87.

⁴⁰⁴ Athen. 6. 48: συμπότας ... τῷ βασιλεῖ συνάγεσθαι ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς πόλεως, οὓς προσαγορεύεσθαι γελοιαστάς ‘men from every city gathered to dine with the king were called jesters’.

⁴⁰⁵ A *hapax legomenon* in Ps.-Athan. *Virg.* 13 in a warning before dining amongst careless and cheerfully joking women (μετὰ γυναικῶν ἀμελεστέρων καὶ γελοιαστριῶν).

⁴⁰⁶ Athen. 2. 9 speaks of ‘boasting, ridicule, and jests’ (τὸ καυχᾶσθαι καὶ σκώπτειν καὶ γελοιάζειν) springing from the drinking of wine which alters the spirits.

⁴⁰⁷ Sch. Ar. *V.* 564 considers the term to be synonymous with γελοῖος.

⁴⁰⁸ In his commentary to the *Odyssey*, Eustathius recognizes the comicality of the Irus-Odysseus scene in *Od.* 18. 1-116; cf. Eust. *Comm. Od.* II 166 (Stallbaum): τὸ γελοιαστικὸν τοῦ Ἴρου καὶ τοῦ ξείνου ἐπεισόδιον.

2.1.1.6. Derivatives with prefixes

In the γελ- rooted word-group, we may distinguish a large number of derivatives composed of a single prefix. These are shown in table 2.

Prefix	Compound		Meaning of compound
ἀ- 'not', 'without'	ἀγελαστέω	<i>v.</i>	'to be not laughing'
	ἀγελαστί	<i>adv.</i>	'without laughter'
	ἀγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'not laughing', 'grave'
	ἀγέλοιος	<i>adj.</i>	'not laughable'
ἀνα- 'up'	ἀναγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh loud'
ἀντι- 'against'	*ἀντιγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh back in retaliation' ⁴⁰⁹
ἀπο- 'from'	*ἀπογελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh', 'laugh out loud' ⁴¹⁰
δια - 'through', 'across'	διαγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at', 'mock'
	διαγέλως	<i>n.</i>	'derision'
ἐν- 'in', 'into', 'on'	ἐγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at', 'mock'
	ἐγγελαστής	<i>n.</i>	'mockers', 'scorners'
ἐκ- 'out', 'out of'	ἐκγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh out', 'laugh loud'
	ἐκγελιώσοιμι	<i>v.</i>	'jest', 'scoff', 'jeer at' ⁴¹¹
	ἔκγελως	<i>n.</i>	'loud laughter'
ἐπι- 'towards', upon'	ἐπιγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh approvingly'
	*ἐπιγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'ridiculous' ⁴¹²
	*ἐπιγελάστως	<i>adv.</i>	'ridiculously' ⁴¹³
κατα- 'down', 'against'	καταγέλαστής	<i>n.</i>	'mockers'
	καταγέλαστικός	<i>adj.</i>	'satirical'
	καταγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'ridiculous', 'absurd'
	καταγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh scornfully', 'mock'
	κατάγελως	<i>n.</i>	'derision', 'mockery'
περι- 'around'	περιγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh all around' ⁴¹⁴
προ- 'before', 'forth'	προγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh before'
προς- 'toward'	προσγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh in the direction of' ⁴¹⁵
συν- 'with', 'together'	συγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh with'
	*συγγελοιάζω	<i>v.</i>	'jest along with' ⁴¹⁶

⁴⁰⁹ Halliwell (2008) 6 n. 15.

⁴¹⁰ My translation.

⁴¹¹ LSJ s.v. ἐκγελιώσοιμι· ἐκχλευάσοιμι (s.v. ἐκχλευάζω: strengthened for χλευάζω 'jest', 'scoff', 'jeer at', 'treat scornfully').

⁴¹² Lampe (1961) s.v. ἐπιγέλαστος.

⁴¹³ Lampe (1961) s.v. ἐπιγελάστως.

⁴¹⁴ My translation.

⁴¹⁵ My translation.

⁴¹⁶ My translation.

ὑπερ- 'over', 'excessive'	ὑπεργέλοιος	adj.	'above measure ridiculous'
ὑπο- 'below', 'under'	ὑπογελάω	v.	'laugh a little', 'smile'

Table 2. List of γελάω derivatives with a single prefix.

From the examples in table 2, it is noticeable that certain words from table 1 function as the head in the lexemes formed with a prefix; these are γελάω 'laugh', γέλως 'laughter', γέλοιος 'laughable', γελάσιμος 'laughable', γελαστής 'laughter', γέλαστικός 'able to laugh', γελαστός 'laughable', and γελοιιάζω 'jest, laugh, joke'.

In word formation, the performative affix alters the basic meaning of the lexeme it joins. First, the prefix ἀ- signifies negation. Hence, the verb ἀγελαστέω⁴¹⁷ denotes a subject who 'is not laughing'; the adverb ἀγελαστί⁴¹⁸ regards conduct or surroundings 'without laughter'; the adjective ἀγέλαστος⁴¹⁹ signifies that which is 'not-laughing', hence 'gloomy' and 'grave', whereas ἀγέλοιος⁴²⁰ describes that which is 'non laughable'. Through the use of the privative alpha, the Greek language may regard with a single term the absence of laughter within an object.

In some compounds, prefixes regard the sonority of laughter. For instance, the affixes ἀνα- 'up', ἀπο- 'from' and ἐκ- 'out' stress the aspect of a sudden outburst of laughter as well as the high volume of its sound. Hence, the

⁴¹⁷ The famous example is Heraclitus (Heraclit. *Ep.* 7.8.) who considers himself to 'be always without laughter' (ἀεὶ ἀγελαστώ).

⁴¹⁸ Hesych. s.v. ἀγελαστί explains ἄνευ τοῦ γελάσαι, 'without laughing'; Pl. *Euthd.* 278e 1: ἀνάσχεσθον οὖν ἀγελαστί ἀκούοντες αὐτοί, 'you two must restrain yourselves and listen without laughing'; for rituals conducted without laughter, cf. Athen. 6. 79: 'if they sacrificed a bull to Poseidon and threw it into the sea without once laughing (ἀγελαστί), the evil would cease', translation in Yonge (1854) I 410.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. Phryn. *Praep. Soph.* 60. 1-2: Ἀγέλαστος· ὁ πρὸς γέλωτα οὐκ ἐπιτήδειος. καὶ ὁ στυγνός, 'one who is not fit for laughter; also, one who is gloomy'. Similar definition in Suda s.v. Ἀγέλαστα: τὰ μὴ γέλωτος ἄξια, ἀλλ' ἀγανακτήσεως, 'those which do not deserve laughter, but pain'. In the sense 'gloomy', 'grave', cf. *Hom. Hymn.* 2. 200: 'ἀγέλαστος' describing Demeter struck with grief. In the sense 'non-laughable' i.e. 'serious' AP 7. 409. 4: τὰν ἀγέλαστον ὅπα 'grave word'

⁴²⁰ Henioch. fr. 4. 6: λέγ' αὐτό· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀγέλοιόν ἐστ' ἴσως, 'Tell me about that! It's probably not a bad joke'.

verbs ἀναγελάω⁴²¹, ἀπογελάω⁴²² and ἐκγελάω⁴²³ mean ‘burst out laughing’ or ‘laugh loud’, whereas the noun ἔκγελωσ⁴²⁴ stands for ‘loud laughter’. In these examples, the prevailing idea of laughter is its sound.

Other affixes emphasize the communicative role of laughter. For instance, the prefix ἐπι- ‘towards’ signifies the manifestation of one’s feelings and, at the same time, their communication to others. When this experience regards positive emotions, ἐπιγελάω⁴²⁵ accepts the meaning ‘laugh appreciatively’ or ‘laugh favourably in response’. Similarly προσγελάω, as the prefix προσ- ‘in the direction of’ indicates the fact of conveying a favorable message towards others. According to Halliwell, this compound basically denotes ‘a *perceived* affability or warmth’ of the person laughing, hence, regards rather the emotional expressiveness of a person than his/her body language.⁴²⁶ For this reason it is impossible to literally choose between the ideas of laughter/smiles within the semantics of this compound. Therefore, the verb προσγελάω⁴²⁷ may be interpreted in various manners such as 1) ‘smile at

⁴²¹ E.g. Plut. *Alex.* 74: ‘Alexander having burst out with laughter’ (ἀναγελάσας); Xen. *Sym.* 45. 11: ‘all burst out laughing’ (ἀνεγέλασαν).

⁴²² The compound ἀπογελάω is a *hapax legomenon* in Philox. Gram. fr. 591: ‘they laugh out loud (ἀπογελάων) and then die’; the lexeme is uncertain, cf. Theodoridis (1976) 353 n. 8: ‘ἀπογελάων suspectum videtur’.

⁴²³ E.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 1. 3. 9: ‘with a loud laugh (ἐκγελάσαντα) Cyrus jumped to his grandson’; Hom. *Hymn.* 2. 389: ‘Zeus laughed aloud (ἐξεγέλασεν) at the sight of his deceitful son’.

⁴²⁴ A *hapax legomenon* without context in Poll. 6. 200. However, in *DGE* s.v. ‘ἐκγελωσ’: capaz de reírse (capable of laughter).

⁴²⁵ E.g. Pl. *Phd.* 77 e 3 Καὶ ὁ Κέβης ἐπιγελάσας ... ἔφη, ‘and Cebes laughing approvingly said...’; Pl. *Res.* 398 c 7 Καὶ ὁ Γλαύκων ἐπιγελάσας... ἔφη, ‘and Glaukon laughing favourably... said’; Xen. *Cyr.* 3. 1. 43. 1. ὁ Κῦρος ἐπιγελάσας εἶπε, ‘and laughing approvingly Cyrus said’; Ar. *Th.* 976-81: Ἐρμῆν τε νόμιον ἄντομαι / καὶ Πᾶνα καὶ Νύμφας φίλας / ἐπιγελάσαι προθύμως / ταῖς ἡμετέροισι / χαρέντα χορείαις, ‘And I entreat Hermes the Shepherd, and Pan and the dear Nymphs to appreciate our dances with a favorable laugh’. Cf. Austin and Douglas Olson (2004) 304 n. 977-80.

⁴²⁶ Halliwell (2008) 525 (original italics).

⁴²⁷ E.g. the greeting of a sale’s man to a client in Diph. fr. 33. 5-6 Kock: τούτων εἴ με προσγελάσειέ τις, / ἐδίδουν στενάξας ὅποσον αἰτήσιέ με, ‘if one of them lads would greet me with a laugh of delight, with a sigh I would pay the price he would have charged me with’; the delight of a young tyrant described in Pl. *Res.* 566 d., who at the beginning of his reign laughs with delight and greets everyone with joy (προσγελά τε καὶ ἀσπάζεται πάντα).

one'⁴²⁸, 2) 'laugh pleasantly towards another', 3) 'greet', 'welcome joyfully' or 'greet with a delighted laugh'. Noticeably, all these meanings relate to the aspect of signaling one's feelings. In general, both compounds ἐπιγελάω and προσγελάω signify not only the manifestation of one's emotions but especially their communication.

Obviously, not every case of expressive laughter sends a favorable message. As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, one's laugh may transmit information about one's negative sentiments towards others.⁴²⁹ In the Greek language, this aspect is, particularly, emphasized by using in composition the prefixes ἀντι- 'against', δια- 'across', ἐν- 'into', κατα- 'down', and περι- 'around'. The basic meanings of these affixes indicate a form of separation between the person laughing and its target. In particular, the radical sense of ἀντι- signifies opposition and antagonism, thus ἀντιγελάω⁴³⁰ means 'laugh back in retaliation'. The prefix δια- relates to division and separation, hence διαγελάω⁴³¹ denotes 'laugh at', 'mock' and the noun διαγέλως⁴³² 'derision'. Next, ἐν- points to laughter as directed onto its target,⁴³³ thus the

⁴²⁸ LSJ s.v. προσγελάω 1.

⁴²⁹ Cf. Chapter I, section 1.3.5.

⁴³⁰ A *hapax legomenon* in Gr. Nyss. *Contr. Eun.* 1. 1. 612. 7: ἀντιγελάσωμεν, 'we laugh back'.

⁴³¹ E.g. Plut. *Alex.* 14. 5, the followers of Alexander laugh at and mock (διαγελώντων καὶ σκωπτόντων) the excentric Diogenes of Sinope; Xenophon gives an unfavourable description of the general Meno who 'took pride in his ability to deceive, fabricate lies, and mock friends (τῷ φίλους διαγελάων, Xen. *An.* 2. 6. 26). Aeschines (in *Athen.* 5. 62) is said to laugh without moderation (οὐ μετροῖως διαγελάω) at the foul clothing of the lousy orator Telauges. Cf. the Byzantine form διαγέλαστος meaning 'serving for ridicule' in *Vitae Symeonis Stylitae Junioris* 194: ἦν δὲ οὗτος γνωστὸς πάσῃ τῇ πόλει καὶ τῇ χώρᾳ καὶ διαγέλαστος καὶ ἐξουθενημένος ὑπὸ πάντων, 'there was once this man well known in every city and in all the land and ridiculed and despised by everyone'.

⁴³² A unique form in Phld. *Elect.* 17. 18: μετὰ διαγέλωτος ἐπιφωνοῦντες, 'they exclaim with derision'; Cf. Indelli and Tsouna-McKirahan (1995) 200 n. 18: 'the author stresses the cynicism and hardness of the men who constitute his target: not only they do not help other people, but they laugh at them as well'.

⁴³³ Cf. Schwyzler (1950/2013) 457: 'ἐγγελάω 'verlachen', eig. 'ins Gesicht lachen' ('to deride', actually 'to laugh at one's face').

lexeme ἐγγελάω⁴³⁴ means ‘laugh at, mock’, and the noun ἐγγελαστής⁴³⁵ signifies a ‘mockers, scorner’.

Without any doubt, the most popular laughter-words denoting derision consist of κατα- ‘downwards, against’. With this prefix such words are formed: the verb καταγελάω⁴³⁶ ‘laugh down, deride, mock’, the noun κατάγελας⁴³⁷ ‘derision, mockery’, καταγέλαστής⁴³⁸ ‘mockers’, as well as the adjectives καταγέλαστος⁴³⁹ ‘ridiculous, absurd’ or even at times ‘a laughing stock’, and καταγέλαστικός⁴⁴⁰ ‘satirical’. Whilst laughter is concerned, this prefix signifies antagonism between the laugher and its object, hence the meaning ‘laugh against’ as well as the aim of degrading the target, thus the meaning ‘laughing

⁴³⁴ E.g. the mockery at a tragic poet’s style in Eub. fr. 26-27 Kock: καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν ἐγγελάωσι πῆμασιν / τὰ σῖγμα συλλέξαντες, ὡς αὐτοὶ σοφοί, ‘and they laugh at my labours counting the s’s, as if they were smart themselves’; for the fragment’s commentary, see Bartol and Danielewicz (2011) 306; the once derisive depreciation of love songs in AP 12. 23. 1-2: Ἦγρεύθη ὁ πρόσθεν ἐγὼ ποτε τοῖς δυσέρωσι / κώμοις ἠθέων πολλάκις ἐγγελάσας, ‘I am caught, I, who once often laughed at the songs of those young men madly in love’; the imaginary mockery of a detested enemy, as Hera speaks of Pelias in Apoll. Arg. 3. 63-65: ῥύσομαι ὅσον ἐμοῖσιν ἐνὶ σθένος ἔπλετο γυίοις, / ὄφρα μὴ ἐγγελάσῃ Πελίδης κακὸν οἶτον ἀλύξας, / ὅς μ’ ὑπερηγορήθῃ θύεων ἀγέραστον ἔθηκεν, ‘I will rescue [i.e. Jason] from danger as long as strength lies in my limbs, so that Pelias may not laugh at escaping his ill fate, who dared to dishonor me without sacrifices’.

⁴³⁵ Unique word in Eur. *Hipp.* 1001: οὐκ ἐγγελαστής τῶν ὀμιλούντων, πάτερ, ‘I am not a mocker of one’s companions, father’. Other occurrences are found only in the scholia to the *Hippolytus*, cf. Sch. Eur. *Hipp.* 1000. See also, chapter V.

⁴³⁶ Ar. *Eq.* 713: ἐγὼ δ’ ἐκείνου καταγελάω γ’ ὅσον θέλω, ‘I can laugh at him as much as I want’; Ar. *Ach.* 1081: οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· καταγελάῃς ἤδη σύ μου; ‘Oh, damn my luck, are you now mocking me?’; Xen. *Cyr.* 7. 5. 14: οἱ δὲ αὖ Βαβυλώνιοι ἀκούσαντες ταῦτα πολὺ ἔτι μᾶλλον κατεγέλων, ‘on hearing such news the Babylonians laughed with scorn even more’.

⁴³⁷ Ar. *Ach.* 1125: ταῦτ’ οὐ κατάγελας ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις πλατύς; ‘Isn’t this a piece of sheer guffawing mockery in the eyes of all men?’, translation in Sommerstein (1980) 145.

⁴³⁸ A gloss in Hesychius s.v. β ε λ ἄ σ explained as εἰρων, καὶ καταγελαστής, ‘a dissembler and mocker’.

⁴³⁹ In meaning ‘laughing-stock’, often expressed with γίγνομαι ‘become’ (e.g. Pl. *Lach.* 184 c: οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὅπως ἂν τις φύγοι τὸ καταγέλαστος γενέσθαι, ‘a man cannot by any means escape being made a laughing-stock’, translation Lamb (1952) 25); φαίνομαι ‘appear’ (e.g. Xen. *Mem.* 2. 6. 38: καταγέλαστος φαίνοιο; ‘wouldn’t you appear as a laughing-stock?’); and ποιέω ‘make’ (e.g. Aesch. *In Ctes.* 76. 9: καταγέλαστον τὴν πόλιν ποιῶν, ‘he [i.e. Demosthenes] made the city look ridiculous’). On the difference between being funny (γέλοιος) and ridiculous (καταγέλαστος), cf. Pl. *Sym.* 198 b: ἐγὼ φοβοῦμαι... οὐ τι μὴ γελοῖα εἶπω... ἀλλὰ μὴ καταγέλαστα, ‘I am not afraid that I would say something funny but rather something ridiculous’.

⁴⁴⁰ Menander Rhetor considers hymns to be καταγελαστικώτεροι ‘too satirical’, in Men. Rh. 337 Spengel. Pollux (5. 128; 6.200) lists the adverb καταγελαστικῶς ‘scoffingly’.

down'. It is an interesting fact that some laughter-words with *κατα-* are composed for humorous purposes. This practice is, particularly, distinguishable amongst comic playwrights, for instance, Aristophanes creates the fictitious *Καταγέλα* as a joke on the name of the Sicilian town *Γέλα*.⁴⁴¹ Similarly Plautus, who makes a comic pun on the proper name *Γελάσιμος* (lit. 'laughable') by composing *Καταγελάσιμος* ('Serving for ridicule').⁴⁴² As we may see, terms with *κατα-* regard various degrees of ridicule, from playful derision with humorous elements, to vitriolic mockery.

Furthermore, certain performatives added to *γελάω* regard the manner in which one laughs. In particular, the affix *περι-* signifies 'round about, around', hence the verb *περιγελάω*⁴⁴³ accepts the meaning 'laugh around', whereas the prefix *προ-* 'forth', 'forward' indicates the act of laughing beforehand, thus, the verb *προγελάω*⁴⁴⁴ denotes 'laugh before'. As a result of adding *ὑπο-* 'under', *ὑπογελάω*⁴⁴⁵ (literally meaning 'laugh underneath') denotes a far going moderation in one's laughter (the LSJ entry 'laugh a little') or even its suppression. Next, a collective manner of laughing is encapsulated within the prefix *συν-* 'together with', as in the compounds *συγγελάω*⁴⁴⁶ 'laugh with, join

⁴⁴¹ Ar. *Ach.* 606. The name *Γέλα* sounds alike to *γελάω* 'laugh', whereas *Καταγέλα* to *καταγελάω* 'laugh at, mock'. For a study of comic names in Aristophanean comedy, see Kanavou (2011) esp. 39-40 for the discussed example.

⁴⁴² Omitted in TLG, but included in LSJ s.v. *καταγελάσιμος*. The lexeme occurs only in Plaut. *Stich.* 630, in the Latinized 'Catagelasimus'. For an account on word-play in Plautus, see Mendelsohn (1907) esp. 17, 19 for the discussed example; cf. also Fontaine (2010) 240 n. 75.

⁴⁴³ Photius explains the Aristophanic *περικέκκασα* (Ar. *Eq.* 697) 'I cried cuckoo all around' with *περιεγέλασα καὶ καταωρησάμην* 'I laughed around and exulted over'.

⁴⁴⁴ Phil. Jud. *Mut. Nom.* 162: καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα μέντοι προγελάῃ πρὸς βαθὺν ὄρθρον μέλλοντος ἀνίσχειν ἡλίου, 'And the day also laughs in anticipation of the early dawn, when the sun is about to rise', translation in Yonge (1894) 270.

⁴⁴⁵ Pl. *Chrm.* 162b 11: ἅμα ταῦτα λέγων ὑπεγέλα τε καὶ εἰς τὸν Κριτίαν ἀπέβλεπεν, 'and he [i.e. Charmides] says these words while glancing at Critias with a suppressed laugh'.

⁴⁴⁶ In Athen. 6. 55, the parasite Cheirisophus seeing Dionysius and his company laughing (*Χειρίσοφον τὸν Διονυσίου κόλακα ἰδόντα Διονύσιον γελῶντα μετὰ τινῶν γνωρίμων*) joins in the laughter (*συγγελάων*).

in the laughter', and συγγελοιάζω⁴⁴⁷ 'jest along with'. Therefore, the prefixes περι-, προ-, ὑπο- and συν- signify the mode of performing an act of laughter.

Finally, the attachment of the prefix ὑπερ- 'above, over' to γελ-rooted adjectives emphasize the high level of risibility within the described object. Therefore, ὑπεργέλοιος⁴⁴⁸ accepts the meaning 'above measure laughable'.

At this point it is important to stress the fact that the mentioned above affixes may accept different meanings. As a result, certain laughter-words composed with a prefix may share different concepts of laughter. For example, ἀναγελάω along with ἐπί τινι accepts the meaning 'laugh at someone'⁴⁴⁹; διαγελάω may, at times, signify 'look bright'⁴⁵⁰, similarly περιγελάω⁴⁵¹ 'shine' and ἐπιγελάω 'be bright'⁴⁵². On the other hand, the latter may reflect the idea of laughter as a means of communication, however, instead of signaling positive emotions it may regard outright mockery⁴⁵³; thus, ἐπιγελάω may also mean 'laugh at, mock'. This meaning is noticeable in the adjective ἐπιγέλαστος 'ridiculous'⁴⁵⁴ as well as the adverb ἐπιγελάστως 'ridiculously'⁴⁵⁵. Derision, in

⁴⁴⁷ A *hapax legomenon* in Jo. Chrys. *Virg. corrupt.* 60: Μὴ παρῶρησιάζεσθαι δεῖ, μηδὲ χρονίζειν, γυναιξὶν ἀσέμνοις μὴ συγγελοιάζειν 'one should not speak openly to ignoble virgins, nor stand by them, nor make jokes with them'.

⁴⁴⁸ Dem. 19. 211: 'the matter was above measure ludicrous (τὸ πρῶγμ' ἦν ὑπεργέλοιον).

⁴⁴⁹ A derisive tone is noticeable in Xen. *Cyr.* 6. 1. 34: 'He [i.e. Cyrus] heard this and laughed at the man who claimed himself to be superior to the passion of love (ἀναγελάσας ἐπὶ τῷ κρείττονι τοῦ ἔρωτοςφάσκοντι εἶναι). Cf. the medieval form ἀναγελαστής occurring uniquely in the anonymous Byzantine romance novel *The War of Troy*, in Jeffreys and Papathomopoulos (1996) v. 2122.

⁴⁵⁰ E.g. Theophrastus speaks of the germination of cereals at the time 'when the season brightens' (διαγελώσης δὲ τῆς ὥρας; *HP* 8. 2. 4); Plut. *Prim. Frig.* 950b mentions 'water itself the deepest looks the darkest because there is so much of it, while those parts that lie near the air flash and sparkle (ταῦτα περιλάμπεται καὶ διαγελάῃ)', translation in Cherniss and Helmbold (1957) 255.

⁴⁵¹ In *Synt.* 284. 21, Apollonius Dyscolus argues for the Homeric form περιεγέλασε meaning περισοῶς ἐλαμπρύνθη 'it shined excessively', cf. Householder (1981) 231.

⁴⁵² Stob. *Anth.* 1. 49. 44: ἐπεγέλασέ τις ὕλη τῷ μίγματι, 'sparkle on the surface'.

⁴⁵³ E.g. the sayings of the sage Chilo quoted in Stob. *Anth.* 3. 1. 172: Τῷ δυστυχοῦντι μὴ ἐπιγέλα, 'laugh not at the unfortunate'; and Stob. *Anth.* 4. 48a. 11: Ἀτυχοῦντι μὴ ἐπιγέλακοινή γὰρ ἡ τύχη, 'laugh not at one in misfortune, for we all submit to fate'. Cf. the Laconian ἐπιγελαστάρ explained by Hesychius as ὁ καταγελῶν 'he who mocks'.

⁴⁵⁴ Gregory of Nyssa pardons his readers for quoting copiously the absurdities of Eunomius, in *Contr. Eun.* 2. 1. 606: 'I again crave pardon for the words; it is not to make a joke that I have set

fact, may be denoted by the verb περιγελάω as well, which then signifies ‘deride’.⁴⁵⁶ And lastly, ἐγγελάω may denote ‘laugh in’ or ‘laugh among’.⁴⁵⁷ We must, therefore, bare in mind that the interpretations of laughter-words highly depend on the context in which the lexemes appear.

In general, from the discussion above we may distinguish such concepts encapsulated within laughter-words consisting of a single prefix: 1) the negation or absence of laughter; 2) the auditory aspect of laughter; 3) laughter as an expression of emotions; 4) the communicative role of laughter. Concerning communication, these laughter-words may regard sending 5) amiable, hence positive messages to others, or the opposite, i.e. 6) signaling disdain or contempt. Furthermore, the analyzed terms may indicate the mode of performing laughter regarding either 7) time, 8) space, or even 9) collectivity. A social purpose is denoted in lexemes referring to 10) one’s suppression of laughter. The final recognizable idea relates to the distinctly Greek connection of laughter with 11) the concept of radiance. We may, thus, notice that by attaching prefixes, the broad meanings of the γελ- rooted terms become narrowed to specific aspects of the phenomenon.

these ridiculous words before my readers (ὡς οὐχὶ γελωτοποιῶν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τὰς ἐπιγελάστους ταύτας ἐξεθέμην φωνάς), but so as to persuade my audience what sort of verbal equipment he starts from, this man who besmirches our simplemindedness and then launches himself against the truth’, translation by Stuart George Hall in Karfíková, Douglass, and Zachhuber (2007) 196.

⁴⁵⁵ *ThGL* s.v. ἐπιγελάστως: ‘ad irridendum’, ‘ridicule’. Cf. Greg. Nyss. *Contr. Eun.* 3. 2. 68: ‘So having ridiculously (ἐπιγελάστως) spewed out this argument, the clever fellow again does not see that in what follows he refutes himself’, translation by Stuart George Hall in Leemans and Cassin (2014) 85.

⁴⁵⁶ Phot. s.v. περιεκόκκασα explains the Aristophanic (*Ar. Eq.* 697) neologism (meaning ‘I cried cuckoo all around’) with περιεγέλασα καὶ κατωρρησάμην ‘I laughed at you and exulted over’.

⁴⁵⁷ Socr. fr. 2 Kock: λεπτή ... ἐγγελῶσα αὐρα κύμασιν, ‘the light breeze laughed among the waves’.

2.1.1.7. Derivatives with compound prefixes

Greek word-formation also includes compound affixes in which two or three different prefixes are joined together. In the γελάω based word-group, we find a number of cognates created this way. These are listed in table 3.

Prefix	Compound		Meaning
ἀκατα-	*ἀκαταγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'that which avoids ridicule' ⁴⁵⁸
διεγ-	διεγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'twinkle in the eyes' ⁴⁵⁹
ἐγκατα-	*ἐγκαταγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'ridiculous', 'risible' ⁴⁶⁰
ἐπεγ-	ἐπεγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at', 'exult over'
ἐπικατα-	*ἐπικαταγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'jeer at' ⁴⁶¹
εὐκατα-	εὐκαταγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'exposed to ridicule'
κατεγ-	*κατεγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'mock', 'laugh at' ⁴⁶²
προκατα-	προκαταγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'ridicule before'
προσεγ-	προσεγγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at'
προσκατα	προσκαταγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at besides'
συνεπι-	συνεπιγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh at together'
ὑπερκατα-	ὑπερκαταγέλαστος	<i>adj.</i>	'exceedingly absurd'
ὑποκατα-	ὑποκαταγελάω	<i>v.</i>	'laugh in one's sleeve'

Table 3. List of γελάω derivatives with compound prefixes.

As the above table demonstrates, a majority of the lexemes with composite prefixes (11 of 13) adjoin the verb γελάω 'laugh', whereas only a few (3) attach to the adjective γελαστός 'laughable'. Regarding the compound prefixes, these are formed with two various prefixes, such as ἀκατα- from ἀ- with κατα-, διεγ- from δια- with ἐν-, ἐγκατα- from ἐν- with κατα-, ἐπεγ- from ἐπι- with ἐν-, ἐπικατα- from ἐπι- with κατα-, εὐκατα- from εὐ- with κατα-, κατεγ- from κατα- with ἐν-, προκατα- from προ- with κατα-, προσεγ- from προσ- with ἐν-, προσκατα- from προσ- with κατα-, συνεπι- from συν- with ἐπι-, ὑπερκατα- from ὑπερ- with κατα-, and ὑποκατα- from ὑπο- with κατα-.

⁴⁵⁸ DGE s.v. ἀκαταγέλαστος: 'no risible, que escapa al ridículo'.

⁴⁵⁹ LSJ s.v. διεγγελάω: gloss on γλοιιάζω.

⁴⁶⁰ DGE s.v. ἐγκαταγέλαστος: 'ridículo, risible'.

⁴⁶¹ Lampe (1961) s.v. ἐπικαταγελάω.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.* s.v. κατεγγελάω.

It is an interesting fact that, besides the single occurrence of the adverb ἐϋ, ‘well’, in εὐκαταγέλαστος, the components of these compound affixes are the same as the main prefixes listed in table 2.

The main idea of laughter discernable within these lexemes is that of derision. This occurs due to the fact that the basis of the new lexeme is a laughter-word composing already of one prefix, such as: ἐγγελάω, ἐπιγελάω, καταγελάω and καταγέλαστος. The addition of an extra prefix modifies the basic meaning which already pertains to ridicule and mockery. In particular, the prefixes ἐπι-, κατα-, and προσ- added to ἐγγελάω reinforce the derisive aspect of laughter; hence the meaning ‘laugh at’ shared by ἐπεγγελάω⁴⁶³, κατεγγελάω⁴⁶⁴ and προσεγγελάω⁴⁶⁵. Regarding καταγελάω, the additional prefix indicates the mode of derisive laughter: προ- in προκαταγελάω⁴⁶⁶ points to the act of ridiculing beforehand; προσ- in προσκαταγελάω⁴⁶⁷ signifies that ridicule occurs besides another act; and ὑπο- in ὑποκαταγελάω⁴⁶⁸ points out the fact of concealing one’s derisive laughter. As for ἐπικαταγελάω⁴⁶⁹, it seems that the additional ἐπι- only serves to underline the main concept of mockery in

⁴⁶³ Xen. *Cyr.* 5. 5. 9: ‘For I think I should rather ten times sink into the earth than be seen so humiliated and see my own men disregarding me and laughing at me (ἐπεγγελῶντας ἐμοί)’, translation Miller (1914) 99. Cf. Ps.-Zonar. s.v. γελαστής. ὁ ἐπεγγελῶν ‘sneerer: he who laughs at’. Aeschin. *Fals. leg.* 182: ‘Is he not indeed to be pitied who must look into the sneering face of an enemy (βλέπειν ἐχθροῦ πρόσωπον ἐπεγγελῶντος), and hear with his ears his insults?’, translation Darwin Adams (1919) 299.

⁴⁶⁴ Jo. Dam. *Vita Barl.* 341: ‘with a sober mind, Ioasaph laughed (κατεγγελῶν) the devil to scorn’.

⁴⁶⁵ This is the observation of the wolf after seeing a man laughing at a raven pecking on the back of a donkey, in Aesop. *Fab.* 190 Perry: ‘How miserable we are! The minute people see us, they chase us away. But at this they only laugh (προσεγγελῶσιν)’.

⁴⁶⁶ By προκαταγελάσαντες the Emperor Julian refers to those who may ridicule his arguments against the Cynics, *Jul. Or.* 6. 182B.

⁴⁶⁷ *ThGL* s.v. προσκαταγελάω: ‘insuper irrideo’. Athenaeus mentions the Athenian citizens adopting the laws of Solon and Draco but deriding (προσκαταγελᾶν) those of Plato, in *Athen.* 11. 508.

⁴⁶⁸ Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 4. 6. 21: καὶ ἅμα ὑποκαταγελῶ τῶν οἰκτειρόντων με, ‘at the same time I laugh into my sleeve at those who pity me’.

⁴⁶⁹ *Par. Jer.* 1. 5. 23: ‘I would laugh at you (ἐπικαταγέλων ἄν σοι) and say that you are crazy’, translation in Herzer (2005) 17.

καταγελάω. In relation to συνεπιγελάω⁴⁷⁰, the prefix συν- plays the same role as in the case of συγκαταγελάω, i.e. indicates the collective act of ridicule. As far as the four adjectives from table 3 are concerned, these are all based on the lexeme καταγέλαστος ‘ridiculous’, and the extra prefixes only slightly modify the basic meaning. For instance, ἐν- emphasizes the risibility of an object described as ἐγκαταγέλαστος⁴⁷¹ ‘ridiculous’; similarly with εὖ ‘well’ in εὐκαταγέλαστος⁴⁷², which literally means ‘well-ridiculous’, hence also ‘exposed to ridicule’; and ὑπερ indicates the high degree of ridiculousness of that which is considered to be ὑπερκαταγέλαστος⁴⁷³ ‘exceedingly absurd’. The negation with the ἀ- privative in ἀκαταγέλαστος⁴⁷⁴ denotes ‘that which avoids ridicule’.

The final lexeme, διεγγελάω, is an interesting case. It could be expected that the addition of δια- would function as an emphasis on the idea of mockery already encapsulated in ἐγγελάω,⁴⁷⁵ but the lexeme’s single occurrence does not regard this. In fact, it rather regards the idea of brightness, however, due to the scarcity of evidence, this interpretation remains hypothetical.⁴⁷⁶

In general, laughter-words composed of two prefixes pertain to the idea of mockery and ridicule. Except for ἐπεγγελάω, these lexemes do not appear in

⁴⁷⁰ The lexeme συνεπιγελάω occurs only in Amm. *Vocab. diff.* 57: ‘ἐπιχαίρειν μὲν γὰρ ἔστι τὸ συνεπιγελᾶν τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις κακοῖς’ to exult over is to share a laugh at the misfortunes of others’. However, the form is dubious as Valckenaer (1822) 56 n. 65 proposes the conjecture ἐπιγελᾶν.

⁴⁷¹ Unique form in A. *Mart.* 10.18.14: ὡς ἐγκαταγέλαστον, ‘how ridiculous’.

⁴⁷² Aesop. *Prov.* 104: Τὰ νυκτερινὰ ἔργα ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐκαταγέλαστα, ‘activities of the night are exposed to ridicule in the daytime’.

⁴⁷³ Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 192: ‘What is going on now with the case is utterly absurd (ὑπερκαταγέλαστος)’.

⁴⁷⁴ The explanation of the term ‘Christian’ (χριστιανός) in Theophil. *Apol. ad Autol.* 1. 12. 2-3: ‘That what is anointed is pleasant and useful and far from being ridiculed (τὸ χριστὸν ἡδὺ καὶ εὐχρηστον καὶ ἀκαταγέλαστόν ἐστιν)’.

⁴⁷⁵ This is the understanding in *ThGL* s.v. ἐγγελάω, which explains the lexeme with ‘irrideo’ (mock, deride) and ‘illudo’ (ridicule); a vague explanation in *DGE* s.v. διεγγελάω: ‘reír’ (to laugh).

⁴⁷⁶ The single occurrence is found in Hsch. s.v. γλοιάζειν: τὸ καταφερόμενον εἰς ὕπνον [καὶ] ἐπιμύειν τοῖς ὄμμασι καὶ κατιλλώπτειν, οἱ δὲ διεγγελᾶν, ‘twinkle or wink: to wink with the eyes falling asleep and look through the lid of the eyes; according to others [it means] to laugh’.

a large number within the extant Greek corpus and most of their occurrences are of late date.

2.1.1.8. Compounds

The γελάω based word-family consists of many compound forms created with other words, as well. Here, a γελ- rooted lexeme appears as one of the new word's components. These compounds are catalogued in table 4.

Compound		Components	Meaning
αἰσχρόγελως	<i>n.</i>	αἰσχροός + γέλωσ	'shamefully ridiculous'
ἀκαιρόγελως	<i>n.</i>	ἄκαιρος + γέλωσ	'given to unseemly laughter'
ἄχρειόγελως	<i>adj.</i>	ἄχρειος + γέλωσ	'untimely-laughing'
γελοδυτία	<i>n.</i>	γέλωσ + δύσις	'sunset' ⁴⁷⁷
*γελοιολογία	<i>n.</i>	γέλοιος + λόγος	'jesting language' ⁴⁷⁸
γελοιωμελέω	<i>v.</i>	γέλοιος + μέλος	'write comic songs'
γελοωμιλία	<i>n.</i>	γέλοιος + ὀμιλία	'fellowship in laughing'
*γελωτολόγος	<i>adj.</i>	γέλωσ + λόγος	'one who makes frivolous jokes' ⁴⁷⁹
γελωτοποιέω	<i>v.</i>	γέλωσ + ποιέω	'to create, make laughter'
γελωτοποιῖα	<i>n.</i>	γέλωσ + ποιέω	'buffoonery'
γελωτοποιῖκῶσ	<i>adv.</i>	γέλωσ + ποιέω	'ridiculously'
γελωτοποιός	<i>n.</i>	γέλωσ + ποιέω	'exciting laughter', 'ridiculous'
γελωτοφυή	<i>n.</i>	γέλωσ + φυή	'laughter- plant' ⁴⁸⁰
γελωτόφυλλις	<i>n.</i>	γέλωσ + φυλλίς	'laughter- salad' ⁴⁸¹
ἔγερσιγέλωσ	<i>n.</i>	ἔγερσις + γέλωσ	'laughter stirring'
ἠδύγελως	<i>n.</i>	ἠδύς + γέλωσ	'sweetly laughing'
κλαυσίγελως	<i>n.</i>	κλαῦσις + γέλωσ	'smiles mingled with tears'
κωμωδογέλωσ	<i>n.</i>	κωμωδός + γέλωσ	'comic actor' ⁴⁸²
μισογέλωσ	<i>n.</i>	μῖσος + γέλωσ	'laughter-hating'
παγγέλοιος	<i>adj.</i>	πᾶς + γέλοιος	'thoroughly ridiculous'
πολυγέλωσ	<i>n.</i>	πολύς + γέλωσ	'laughing often or a lot' ⁴⁸³
πραῦγελως	<i>n.</i>	πραῶσ + γέλωσ	'softly laughing' ⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁷ LSJ s.v. γελοδυτία: ἠλιοδυσία.

⁴⁷⁸ Lampe (1961) s.v. γελοιολογία.

⁴⁷⁹ DGE s.v. γελωτολόγος: 'que hace chistes frívolos, sin substancia'.

⁴⁸⁰ My translation.

⁴⁸¹ My translation.

⁴⁸² LSJ s.v. κωμωδογέλωσ: = κωμωδός.

⁴⁸³ My translation.

⁴⁸⁴ My translation.

σπουδογέλοιος	<i>adj.</i>	σπουδαῖος + γέλοιος	‘blending jest with earnest’
ὑβρίγελως	<i>n.</i>	ὑβρις + γέλωσ	‘a scornful laughter’
ύγρογέλωσ	<i>adj.</i>	ύγρός + γέλωσ	‘softly laughing’
φιλόγελοιαστής	<i>n.</i>	φίλος + γελοιαστής	‘a friend of jesters’
φιλόγέλοιος	<i>adj.</i>	φίλος + γέλοιος	‘fond of the ludicrous’
φιλόγελως	<i>n.</i>	φίλος + γέλωσ	‘laughter-loving’
φιλοπολύγελως	<i>n.</i>	φίλος + πολύς + γέλωσ	‘loving much laughter’

Table 4. List of γελ- rooted compound words.

Apparently, four basic laughter-words are used in word-composition; these are γελαστός ‘laughable’, γελοιαστής ‘jester, buffoon’, γέλοιος ‘mirth-provoking’, and γέλωσ ‘laughter’. A majority of these (26 words) are formed with the γελως. Accordingly, 15 lexemes, consist of this noun as the head of the compound, in which the modifiers are either adjectives (αἰσχρός ‘shameful’, ἄκαιρος ‘ill-timed’, ἀχρεῖος ‘unfit’, πολύς ‘many’, ἡδύς ‘sweet, pleasant’, πρᾶος ‘mild, soft, gentle’, ὑγρός ‘pliant’, φίλος ‘loved’), or nouns (ἐγερσις ‘awaking’, κλαῦσις ‘weeping’, κωμῳδός ‘comic poet’, μῖσος ‘hate, hatred’, ὕβρις ‘insolence’). Interestingly, more than one adjective may be attached to γέλωσ, as in the example of φιλοπολύγελως (φίλος ‘loved’ and πολύς ‘many’). Furthermore, 7 words have γέλωσ as the modifier of the lexeme. In particular, it is attached to such nouns as δύσις ‘setting of the sun’, φυή ‘plant’, and φυλλίς ‘leaves, salad’; in four cases it is adjoined to different forms of the verb ποιέω ‘make’ (γελωτοποιέω, γελωτοποιῶ, γελωτοποιῶ, γελωτοποιός). Next, 6 compounds consist of γέλοιος. This adjective, alike γέλωσ, is used twofold in word-composition: either as the compound’s modifier or as its head. In the first case, γέλοιος becomes attached to such words as λόγος ‘speech’, μέλος ‘song’, ὀμιλία ‘company’; in the second, it is preceded by the adjectives πᾶς ‘many’, σπουδαῖος ‘earnest’ and φίλος ‘loved’. In the end, the lexeme γελοιαστής ‘jester, buffoon’ composes but a single compound; with φίλος ‘loved’ it creates φιλόγελοιαστής.

Within these compounds, we may distinguish different concepts concerning the phenomenon of laughter. Firstly, the compounds reflect the basic ideas of the audible (sound) and visual (facial expression) aspects of laughter. For instance, the nouns πολυγέλως⁴⁸⁵ ‘laughing a lot’ and φιλοπολύγελως⁴⁸⁶ ‘loving much laughter’ denote one’s high tendency to laugh. Furthermore, the adjectives πραῦγελως⁴⁸⁷ and ὑγρογέλως⁴⁸⁸ denote a person who laughs in a gentle and relaxed way.⁴⁸⁹ Other words, like κλαυσίγελως⁴⁹⁰, ‘laughter mingled with tears’, refer to the actions of a laugher’s face. We may, then, easily recognize that a number of compounds refer to the physiology of laughter.

Another idea included in these composite forms is the production of laughter. For example, the Greeks recognize the fact that one begins to laugh after consuming certain plants; hence, the terms γελωτοφυή⁴⁹¹ ‘laughter-plant’ and γελωτόφυλλις⁴⁹² ‘laughter-salad’. Also, it is obvious that the words and actions of a person (or people) may arouse laughter in others. This act is signified by the verb γελωτοποιέω⁴⁹³ ‘create laughter’. A person who makes

⁴⁸⁵ Lib. *Decl.* 27. 1: ἤκω τὸ πολυγέλων τουτὶ μειράκιον ‘I come upon a much laughing youth’. Listed without context by Aelius Herodianus in his *Partitiones*, cf. Boissonade (1819) 206.

⁴⁸⁶ A *hapax legomenon* in AP 5. 243: Τὴν φιλοπουλυγέλωτα κόρην, ‘a girl loving much laughter’.

⁴⁸⁷ AP 10. 4. 4: πρῆγελως Ζέφυρος, ‘gently laughing Zephyr’; Licymn. fr. 2. 3: πραῦγελως Ὑγίεια, ‘tenderly laughing Hygieia’.

⁴⁸⁸ A *hapax legomenon* in Phryn. *Praep. Soph.* s.v. ὑγρογέλως: ὁ ὑγρὸν καὶ διακεχυμένον γελῶν, καὶ μὴ αὐστηρὸν μηδὲ βίαιον, ‘“soft-laughter”: one who laughs softly and in a relaxed way, not harsh or violent’.

⁴⁸⁹ Hsch. s.v. μελιχομειδής ‘sweetly smiling’ lists πραῦγελως ‘softly laughing’ and ἡδύγελως ‘sweetly laughing’; these instances, however, are not decisive.

⁴⁹⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 7. 2. 9: πάντα δέ τοὺς παρόντας τότε γε τῷ ὄντι κλαυσίγελως εἶχεν, ‘laughter mingled with tears did on that occasion really possess all who were present’, translation in Brownson (1921) 159.

⁴⁹¹ Transmitted in Latinized form *gelotophyen* in the Ps.-Apul. *Herb.* VIII; included in LSJ as the Greek γελωτοφυή (s.v.), however omitted by DGE.

⁴⁹² Transmitted in Latinized form *gelotophyllis* in Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 24.164. Jones (1966) 116 n. e, translates ‘leaves of laughter’. Today, this plant is recognized to be Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), cf. LSJ, DGE, both s.v. γελωτόφυλλις. Curiously, modern English street names for *Cannabis* include ‘laughing salad’ or just ‘salad’, cf. Jacquette (2011) 17.

⁴⁹³ In Pl. *Sym.* 189 a, Aristophanes is said to be joking than instead of making his speech about Eros (γελωτοποιεῖς μέλλων λέγειν). Socrates, in Xen. *Mem.* 3. 9. 9, admits that those who make

others laugh is considered to be an ἐγερσιγέλως⁴⁹⁴ ‘laughter stirring’ or γελωτοποιός⁴⁹⁵ ‘exciting laughter’ or ‘laughter-maker’; he/she behaves γελωτοποιικῶς⁴⁹⁶, i.e. in a manner which is laughter-producing, or simply foolish; and his/her conduct is regarded to be γελωτοποιῖα⁴⁹⁷ ‘laughter-provoking’ or just ‘buffoonery’. Moreover, the mode of speech is another way of eliciting laughter, as it is signified by the nouns γελοιολογία⁴⁹⁸ meaning ‘jesting language’ i.e. saying things which provoke a laugh, hence are considered to be amusing or absurd; and γελωτολόγος⁴⁹⁹ ‘one who makes frivolous jokes’. However, one who provokes a laugh discussing serious matters, albeit in a funny way, is called a σπουδογέλοιος⁵⁰⁰ ‘earnest jester’. Some compounds refer to literary genres, which aim at making its recipients (audience or listeners)

others laugh their profession (τοὺς γελωτοποιοῦντας), surely, do something (ποιεῖν τι), but, since it is a form of leisure, they should do something else (πάντας δὲ τούτους ἔφη σχολάζειν· ἔξεῖναι γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἰέναι πράξοντας τὰ βελτίω τούτων). Also, the provocation of laughter is not desired at funerary rites, cf. Plut. *Brut.* 45. 5: οὐ καλῶς ... τεθηκῶτι Κασσίου παίζοντες καὶ γελωτοποιοῦντες ἐναγίζομεν, ‘it is not appropriate for us, joking and provoking laughter, to bury the deceased Cassius’.

⁴⁹⁴ An epithet of Bacchus in *AP* 11. 60. 1: Σπείσομεν οἰνοποτῆρες ἐγερσιγέλωτι Λυαίῳ, ‘We wine drinkers pour a libation to Bacchus, the Eliciter of Laughter’.

⁴⁹⁵ As a noun, e.g. Socrates considers himself to be a ‘laughter-maker’ in Xen. *Sym.* 4. 50: γελωτοποιός εἰμι, ‘I am a laughter-maker’. As an adjective, e.g. Pl. *Res.* 620 c, speaks of the soul of ‘the the ridiculous Thersites’ (τὴν τοῦ γελωτοποιοῦ Θερσίτου).

⁴⁹⁶ A *hapax legomenon* listed in Poll. 149.

⁴⁹⁷ E.g. Xen. *Sym.* 4. 50: ἠρώτων αὐτὸν τί ὀρῶν ἐν τῇ γελωτοποιίᾳ μέγα ἐπ’ αὐτῇ φρονοίῃ, ‘they asked him [i.e. Socrates] what he saw to be proud of in causing laughter’, translation in Bowen (1998) 59. Cassius Dio speaks of the name Comazo as appropriate to provoking laughter (a play on words with the verb κωμάζω ‘revel, make merry’), in Cass. Dio 80. 4: ὁ Κωμάζων ... τοῦτο τούνομα ἔκ τε μίμων καὶ γελωτοποιίας ἔχων, ‘Comazo had a name befitting mimes and buffoonery’. Luc. *Salt.* 68 speaks of comedy’s capacity to provoke laughter (κωμικὴ γελωτοποιία) as the single activity appealing to the eye and ears of the spectators.

⁴⁹⁸ *DGE* s.v. ‘lenguaje bromista, divertido’. A *hapax legomenon* found in Athan. *Or. Con. Ar.* 1. 4: ὁ θαυμαστός Ἄρειος ... πλεῖστά τε τῶν ἄλλων αἰρέσεων ὑποκλέψας, τὴν τοῦ Σωτάδου μόνου γελοιολογίαν ἐζήλωσε, ‘This excellent Arius ... after taking plenty from other heresies, could only compete with Sotades in speaking absurdities’.

⁴⁹⁹ One of the undesirable characteristics of a Christian reader according to Jacob, *Sent. Ap.* p. 84: Ἰάκωβος εἶπεν· Ἀναγνώστης καθιστανέσθω ... μὴ γλωσσοκόπος, μὴ μέθυσο, μήτε γελωτολόγος..., ‘May there be a reader... neither of a sharp tongue, nor given to drink, nor one who makes frivolous jokes...’.

⁵⁰⁰ E.g. the Cynic philosopher and satirist Menippus, according to Strabo 16. 2. 29. 8: Μένιππος ὁ σπουδογέλοιος.

laugh, for instance, the verb γελοιωμελέω⁵⁰¹ meaning ‘write comic songs’ and the noun κωμωδογέλως⁵⁰² standing another word for ‘comic actor’. Also, an object or person acknowledged to be extremely risible may be described with the compound παγγέλοιος⁵⁰³. In these examples, we may notice that the production of laughter is often connected with the idea of humour.

Next, some compound laughter-words contain positive or negative evaluations of the phenomenon. In particular, one who enjoys laughter is considered a φιλόγελως⁵⁰⁴ ‘laughter-loving’ or ήδύγελως⁵⁰⁵ ‘sweetly laughing’. Another positive opinion about laughter, but in relation to humour and playfulness, is noticeable in the words φιλόγέλοιος⁵⁰⁶, ‘fond of the ludicrous’, and φιλόγελοιαστής⁵⁰⁷, ‘friend of jesters’. In opposition stands μισογέλως⁵⁰⁸,

⁵⁰¹ A *hapax legomenon* in *AP* 7. 719: Τέλληνος ὄδε τύμβος· ἔχω δ’ ὑπὸ βῶλακι πρέσβυν / τῆνον τὸν πρῶτον γνόντα γελοιομελεῖν, ‘I am the tomb of Tellen, and under ground I hold the old man, who was the first to learn how to compose comic songs’, translation in Paton (1919) 383.

⁵⁰² A *hapax legomenon* in *AP* 13. 6. 1-4: Τοῦτ’ ἐγὼ τὸ περισσὸν εἰκόνισμα / τοῦ κωμωδογέλωτος εἰς θρίαμβον / κισσῶ καὶ στεφάνοισιν ἀμπυκασθὲν / ἔστακ’, ὄφρα Λύκωνι σᾶμ’ ἐπέιη, ‘This admirable portrait of the comedian, crowned for a triumph with ivy and garlands, I set up that it might stand as a monument on Lycon’s grave’, translation in Paton (1918) 5.

⁵⁰³ E.g. the ludicrousness of speaking about a donkey as if it were a horse, in Pl. *Phdr.* 260 c 2: Παγγέλοιόν γ’ ἂν ἤδη εἶη, ‘that would be completely ridiculous’; Agamemnon presented as a ridiculous general in tragedies, in Pl. *Res.* 522. 1-2: Παγγέλοιον γοῦν ... στρατηγὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις Παλαμῆδης ἐκάστοτε ἀποφαίνει, ‘In the tragedies, Palamedes shows Agamemnon as a ludicrous general’.

⁵⁰⁴ Aristotle regards the young to be φιλογέλωτες ‘lovers of laughter’ in *Rh.* 1389b 11. As an abstract noun φιλόγελως ‘love of laughter’, cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1390a 22-23: ἐναντίον γὰρ τὸ ὀδυρτικὸν τῷ φιλογέλωτι, ‘the inclination to lamenting stands in opposition to a fondness for laughter’.

⁵⁰⁵ Pan is described ήδύγελως ‘sweetly-laughing’ at *Hom. Hymn.* 19. 37. Here, the ‘sweetness’ of one’s laughter indicates the subject’s delight or taking pleasure in laughter; such interpretation seems plausible in *AP* 5. 135. 4 in which a jug of wine is addressed as ήδύγελως ‘laughter-enjoying’; cf. Halliwell (2008) 68 n. 41.

⁵⁰⁶ Aristotle speaks of the sullen character of the old in *Rh.* 1390a 21-22: ὅθεν ὀδυρτικοὶ εἰσι, καὶ οὐκ εὐτράπελοι οὐδὲ φιλογέλοιοι, ‘they are more inclined to crying, than joking and laughing merrily’.

⁵⁰⁷ Listed by Pollux without context, amongst other Greek compounds with φίλος, cf. Poll. 161.1-2: Φιλοπαίκτης ‘fond of play’, φιλοπαίγμων ‘sportive’, φιλοπαίσμων ‘fond of play’, φιλοπαίστης ‘sportive’, φιλόγελως ‘fond of laughter’, φιλόγελοιαστής ‘fond of jesters’.

⁵⁰⁸ In relation to the tragedian Euripides, in Alex. Aet. fr. 7. 1-2 CA: στρουφνὸς μὲν ἔμοιγε προσειπεῖν, καὶ μισογέλως, καὶ τωθάζειν οὐδὲ παρ’ οἴνω μεμαθηκῶς, ‘morose to speak to, a

which indicates one who despises laughter. Also, a negative view of laughter is recognizable in few compounds which regard the phenomenon as something shameful (αἰσχρογόελω⁵⁰⁹ ‘shamefully ridiculous’), improper (ἀκαιρόγελω⁵¹⁰ ‘given to unseemly laughter’), or ill-timed (ἀχρειόγελω⁵¹¹ ‘untimely-laughing’). We may easily recognize the fact that these critical notions are of moral nature.

A number compounds represent other concepts of laughter. In particular, explicit mockery is indicated by the noun ὑβρίγελω⁵¹² signifying a ‘scornful laugher’, whereas γελοωμιλία⁵¹³ ‘fellowship in laughing’ refers to the social aspect of sharing a laugh with others. Lastly, the unique word γελοδυτία⁵¹⁴ meaning ‘sunset’ alludes to the distinctively Greek association of laughter with the idea of shining.

In this section, we have seen the different ideas of laughter reflected in the compounds of γελ- rooted words. These concepts, generally, include such meanings of the discussed phenomenon: 1) sound, 2) facial expression, 3) stimuli (plants, human conduct, speech, jokes, comic songs), 4) humour, 5) derision, 6) brightness, but also its evaluation as 8) a pleasant, thus positive experience, or 9) a morally disapproved phenomenon.

At this point it is important to specify that the concepts of laughter included in these compounds depend on the context in which the lexemes

laughter-hater, and someone who hasn’t learnt how to engage in mocking banter even at a drinking-party’, translation in Halliwell (2008) 270.

⁵⁰⁹ Unique form in Man. *Apot.* IV. 283: αἰσχρογόελωτας.

⁵¹⁰ Though included in the LSJ, this *hapax legomenon* is of late date, occurring only in Aëtius 6.8: ἀκαιρογέλωτες.

⁵¹¹ Cratinus rebukes the audiences untimely laughter during the performances, in Crat. fr. 323 Kock: χαῖρ’, ὦ μέγ’ ἀχρειόγελωσ ὄμιλε ταῖς ἐπίβδαις, ‘greetings, oh mob untimely laughing much just after the festival’.

⁵¹² Appears only twice in Man. *Apot.* IV. 280 (ὑβριγέλωτας) and IV 446 (ὑβριγέλωτας).

⁵¹³ In AP 9. 573, Ammianus speaks of a fellow who feigns his behaviour at a feast, whilst not being inclined to neither sharing tears (the unique κλαιωμιλία), not laughter (γελοωμιλία).

⁵¹⁴ A *hapax legomenon* in Hsch. s.v. γελοδυτία: ἡλιοδυσία ‘sunset’. The lexicographer quotes also other unique words connected to the concept of brightness and possibly based on the γελ- root: γέλας explained as αὐγάς ‘lights’ and γέλαν explained as αὐγὴν ἡλίου ‘light of the sun’.

occur in. For instance, the noun γελωτοποιός may signify a ‘jester’, a non-serious ‘buffoon’, but also a disdainful ‘mocker’. Similarly, παγγέλοιος may refer to the risibility of a person or object due to its absurdity but also ridiculousness; the latter meaning, hence, may pertain to derision.⁵¹⁵ In this respect, compounds may also reflect different ideas of laughter simultaneously.

In the discussion above, I have examined the first word-family regarding laughter in the Greek language. These lexemes, created from the root γελ-, form the largest as well as the most diverse lexical group referring to the phenomenon. Without any doubt, the three main lexemes, i.e. γελάω, γέλως, and γέλοιος surpass this word-family in regard of their semantic complexity as well as their number of occurrences in the whole extant Greek corpus.⁵¹⁶

2.1.2. Word-group with καχ- root

The second family-word designating laughter is formed from the καχ- root. In my research, I have found 15 lexemes belonging to this word group, as presented in table 5. In particular, it consists of verbs (13), mostly derivatives of καχάζω with attached prefixes (8), and of nouns (3).

Lexeme	Form	Meaning
ἀνακαγχάζω	verb	‘burst out laughing’
*ἐγκαγχάζω	verb	‘laugh loudly’ ⁵¹⁷
ἐκκα(γ)χάζω	verb	‘burst out into loud laughter’

⁵¹⁵ Notice the fear of becoming a laughing- stock expressed in Eub. fr. 53. 5-6 Kock: ‘χεζητιῶν μακρὰν βαδίζων, πολλὰ δ’ ἰδίων ἀνήρ, δάκνων τὰ χεῖλη, παγγέλοιός ἐστ’ ἰδεῖν’, ‘for one who needs to take a dump, walks far, sweats like hell and bites his lips, looks utterly ridiculous’.

⁵¹⁶ According to the TLG, the total amount of all occurrences in extant Greek texts is: for γελάω: 6002, γέλως: 4975, and γέλοιος: 2893, retrieved 3 February 2015 from <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/inst/textsearch>. For a survey on Greek laughter from Homer till early Christianity, see Halliwell (2008); also Gilhus (1997) 30-45, 64-82. For laughter in Byzantine literature, cf. Maltese (2005). The γελ- rooted words still exist in Modern Greek: γελώ ‘laugh’, and το γέλιο ‘laughter’.

⁵¹⁷ Lampe (1961) s.v. ἐγκαγχάζω.

ἐπεγκαχάζω	verb	‘laugh at’
ἐπικαχάζω	verb	‘laugh loud’
καγχαλάω (?)	verb	‘shout with joy’ ‘laugh out loud’ ‘rejoice’
καγχάομαι	verb	‘laugh excessively’ ⁵¹⁸
καγχαστής	noun	‘loud laughter’
καγχλάζω (?)	verb	‘laugh aloud’ ⁵¹⁹
κακχαδίαι	noun	‘thin-voiced’
κατακαχάζω	verb	‘laugh aloud at’
κα(γ)χάζω, κα(κ)χάζω	verb	‘laugh aloud’ ‘jeer’ ‘mock’
κα(γ)χασμός	noun	‘loud laughter’
*συγκαχάζω	verb	‘laugh loud together’ ⁵²⁰
ὑπερκαχάζω	verb	‘laugh to excess’

Table 5. List of καχ- rooted lexemes. (?) indicates the disputable origin of a lexeme.

The root καχ- is of Indo European origin and of onomatopoeic character, for it derives from the reduplicated interjection of laughter *kha kha* ‘ha, ha’.⁵²¹ Consequently, the original semantic content of this word family reflects the auditory aspect of laughter. Thus, the verb καχάζω (as well as its other forms κακχάζω and καγχάζω)⁵²² carries the concept of loud laughter.⁵²³ Apart from the basic meaning ‘laugh loud’, this verb may additionally signify mockery and derision depending on the context it appears.⁵²⁴ Many verbal compositions are attested, such as ἀνακαχάζω, ἐκκαχάζω (also ἐκκαγχάζω, ἐκκακχάζω),

⁵¹⁸ My translation. LSJ s.v. καγχαλίζομαι, καγχάομαι redirects to καγχαλάω.

⁵¹⁹ LSJ s.v redirects to καγχάζω.

⁵²⁰ My translation.

⁵²¹ Pokorny (1959) 634; Mallory and Adams (2006) 359-60. The reduplicated sound word appears in other Indo European languages, e.g. Sanskrit ‘kákhati’, Classical Armenian ‘xaxan-k’, Old Church Slavonic ‘chohotati’, Old High German ‘kachazzen’ ‘loud laughter’, Latin ‘cachinnus’ ‘resounding laughter’ and the verb ‘cachinnare’. Cf. Frisk (1960), Beekes (2010) I, both s.v. καχάζω. On the etymology of English ‘laugh’, see Chapter I, section 1.1., n. 23.

⁵²² Schwyzer (1950) I 315 for gemination, 647 for nasalization.

⁵²³ Lopez Eire (2000) 15, esp. 23: ‘καχάζω évoque fondamentalement la réalisation sonore du <<rire>>’.

⁵²⁴ Ajax imagines his enemies laughing out loud with their tongues at him (ἐχθρῶν δ’ ὕβρις... πάντων καγχαζόντων γλώσσαις) in Soph. *Ai.* 199. For the passage’s detailed discussion, See chapter III.

ἐγκαγχάζω, ἐπικαγχάζω, συγκαχάζω, and ὑπερκαγχάζω. In the same way as in the compounds with γελάω, also, in the compounds with καχάζω, the prefixes not only modify the word's semantics, but specify certain aspects of its basic concept, i.e. audible laughter. In particular, the attachment of ἀνα- and ἐκ- stress the sonority, intensiveness or suddenness of a burst of laughter. The same meaning is denoted by the prefix ἐν-, which signifies motion directed outwards in the direction of others. As a result, the verbs ἀνακαγχάζω⁵²⁵, ἐκκαχάζω,⁵²⁶ and ἐγκαγχάζω⁵²⁷ semantically encompass the concept of an outburst of loud laughter, thus share the meaning 'burst out laughing'. Concerning ἐπικαγχάζω 'laugh loud', the prefix ἐπι- denotes signaling one's sentiments to others, in this case, of derisive quality.⁵²⁸ This is noticeable in the example of the unique noun ἐπικαγχάστρια⁵²⁹ 'a she mocker'. Moreover, the prefix ὑπερ- signifies superfluity in one's guffaw, thus ὑπερκαγχάζω⁵³⁰ means 'laugh to excess'; in συγκαχάζω⁵³¹ 'laugh out loud together' συν- indicates the shared experience of laughing with others, whereas in ἐπεγκαχάζω⁵³² 'laugh

⁵²⁵ Thrasymachus bursts with loud laughter (ἀνεκἀγχασέ) in reaction to the words of Socrates in Pl. *Res.* 337a 3; similarly Ctesippus who guffaws (μέγα πάνυ ἀνακαγχάσας) at the comment of Dionysodoros, cf. Pl. *Euthd.* 300 d 3.

⁵²⁶ Critobulus bursts out laughing (ἐξεκἀγχασεν) at the weeping jester Philip, cf. Xen. *Sym.* I 16; Aristotle mentions the outburst (ἐκκαγχάζουσιν) of those who tried to restrain their laughter, but in vain (*Eth. Nic.* 1150b 11).

⁵²⁷ DGE s.v. ἐγκαγχάζω: 'reír a carcajadas' (guffaw, laugh out loud, break into laughter). Cf. Basil. M. 31. 961B: 'raucous laughter (ἐγκαγχάζειν δὲ τῆ φωνῆ) and uncontrollable shaking of the body are not indications of a well-regulated soul', translation in Wagner (1950) 271.

⁵²⁸ Hesychius glosses ἐπικαγχάζων with ἐπιγελῶν. Cf. Ps.-Zonar. s.v. ἐπικαγχάζειν: ἀκόσμως γελᾶν, 'to laugh inappropriately'. Zonaras 8. 2. regards the derisive reaction of the Tarantines who were 'laughing out loud' (ἐπικαγχαζόντων) at the soiling of the clothing of senator Postumus; quoted in Cary (1914) 300.

⁵²⁹ Ps.-Zonar. explains ἐπικαγχάστρια as ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰωθυῖα γελᾶν. ἢ γελάστρια, 'for "woman accustomed to laugh" or "she laugher"'.⁵³⁰

⁵³⁰ The death of the Stoic Chrysippus was caused by a fit of laughter, cf. D. L. 7. 185: ὑπερκαγχάσαντα τελευτήσαι 'he laughed so much that he died'.

⁵³¹ A *hapax legomenon* in Pall. V. *Chrys.* XII 69. 28-70.1: if there would not be anyone to laugh together (συγκαχάση) with ignoble laughter'.

⁵³² E.g. Lyc. 285: ὁ ληστής Δωριεὺς γελᾶ στρατός, ἐπεγκαχάζων τοῦ δεδουπότος μόρω 'the pirate Dorian host [shall not] laugh exulting in the doom of the fallen', translation in Mair (1921) 519.

at' and κατακαγχάζω⁵³³ 'laugh aloud at', the prefixes emphasize the social aspect of laughter directed and simultaneously aimed at another person. Among derivatives, we may find such nouns as καχασμός (vel καγχασμός) 'loud laughter'⁵³⁴, καγχαστής 'loud laugher'⁵³⁵, κακχαδίαι 'thin-voiced'⁵³⁶ as well as the verb καγχάομαι 'laugh uncontrollably'⁵³⁷. A possible derivative of the latter is καγχλάζω.⁵³⁸ Also, καγχαλάω (vel καγχαλόω) is considered to be a possible cognate, although the word's origin remains obscure.⁵³⁹ However, just as καγχάζω, it is of expressive and onomatopoeic character.⁵⁴⁰ As far as semantics is concerned, καγχαλάω contains the idea of manifesting positive emotions in an audible fashion,⁵⁴¹ thus, denotes 'shout with joy, laugh out loud, rejoice'.⁵⁴² In general, this word group regards two main concepts: 1) the body

⁵³³ E.g. *AP* 5.215.5-6: ἔργον γὰρ τι γυναιξίν... κατακαγχάζειν τῶν ἄγαν οἰκτροτάτων 'For it is more or less the business of women... to make fun of those who are too exceedingly pitiful'. English translation in Paton (1916) 235.

⁵³⁴ *Worse Argument* lists καχασμῶν 'laughs' as one of life's simple pleasures in *Ar. Nu.* 1073; *Suid.* s.v. καγχασμός explains as ὁ ἔκχυτος γέλως, 'immoderate laughter'.

⁵³⁵ *Phryn. Praep. Soph.* 78. 15, explains the lexeme as ὁ ἐπὶ τοῖς φορτικοῖς γελῶν καὶ μὴ ἀστείοις 'he who laughs at vulgar things and uncivilized jokes'.

⁵³⁶ A unique word in *Hsch.* s.v. κακχαδίαι: ἰσχνόφωνοι.

⁵³⁷ A *hapax legomenon* in *Hsch.* s.v. καγχᾶται: γελᾷ ἀτάκτως 'laugh excessively'.

⁵³⁸ *Duhoux* (2000) 77 includes the variant καγχλάζω as a lengthened form of καγχάζω. However, etymologists favor the verb's connection with χαλάω 'to relax, loosen, let go'. Cf. *Chantraine* (1970), *Beekes* (2010), both s.v. καγχαλάω. Cf. the explanation of *Apollonius Sophista* for the Homeric καγχαλόωσα (from *Hom. Od.* 23. 1) as χαίρουσα, διὰ τὸ ἐν χαλάσματι εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν, τουτέστιν ἐν ἀνέσει, 'she is rejoicing due to the easing of the mind, i.e. its relaxation'.

⁵³⁹ *Tichy* (1983) 222-5, argues for the lengthening of the stem καγχ- with the suffix -αλάω, as occurs in the cases of other words (e.g. ἀσχαλάω 'grieve', from ἄσχαλος 'who cannot hold himself').

⁵⁴⁰ *Frisk* (1960-70), *Chantraine* (1970), *Beekes* (2010), all s.v. καγχαλάω.

⁵⁴¹ *Hom. Il.* 10.565, Odysseus laughs raucously with delight (καγχαλόων) as he leads to the Greek camp the horses he has stolen from Rhesus; *Hom. Od.* 23.1 the Nurse laughs loud with joy (καγχαλόωσα) at her master's return, as she heads to tell the news of this to Penelope. Cf. *Halliwell* (2008) 57 n. 15, 87 n. 88.

⁵⁴² *Abramowiczówna* (1960) II s.v. καγχαλάω: 'cieszyć się głośno, śmiać się, radować'. Curiously, the lexeme's entry in the 8th edition of *LSJ* (1889) 'laugh out loud', has been modified in *LSJ* (1996) to 'rejoice, exult' (repeated in *Beekes* (2010) I s.v.). Cf. *Chantraine* (1970) II 'éclater de rire, rire aux éclats'; *Frisk* (1960-70) I, 751: 'laut jubeln, frohlocken', both s.v. καγχαλάω.

language of laughter, particularly its auditory aspect, and 2) the idea of mockery.

2.1.3. Word-group with *χασκ-* root

This laughter related family-word is formed from the *χασκ-* root. In comparison to the previous group, it is only a bit larger, as it contains of 7 lexemes: 3 verbs and 4 nouns. These we may find in table 6.

Lexeme	Form	Meaning
ἐγχάσκω	verb	'gape', 'grin', 'scoff at'
ἐπεγχάσκω	verb	'make mouths at another'
καταχάσκω	verb	'gape', 'jeer at'
καταχάσμησις	noun	'mockery' ⁵⁴³
καταχήνη	noun	'flouting', 'mockery'
χήνημα	noun	'wide gape', 'mocking laugh'
*χηνάω (χηνέω)	verb	'gape wide', 'laugh mockingly' ⁵⁴⁴

Table 6. List of *χασκ-* rooted lexemes related to laughter.

This group of laughter words is also of Indo European origin, as its stem derives from **ǵheh₂n-*, which means 'to break open, to yawn'.⁵⁴⁵ The verb *χάσκω* basically regards the act of opening the mouth wide, hence its primary meaning 'to gape'. The connection with laughter, however, is established in few cognates. In particular, the addition of the prefixes *ἐν-*, and *κατα-* alter the original semantics of *χάσκω* from 'gape' to 'laugh at'. Accordingly, *ἐγχάσκω* accepts the meaning 'laugh at', 'make fun of', 'tease', 'mock'⁵⁴⁶ and in

⁵⁴³ LSJ s.v. καταχάσμησις: gloss on καταχήνη.

⁵⁴⁴ LSJ s.v. χήνημα.

⁵⁴⁵ Pokorny (1959) 419; Beekes (2010) II, s.v. χάσκω.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Hsch. s.v. ἐγχάσκειν· καταγελάειν; Phot. s.v. ἐγχανεῖν· καταγελάσαι, καταμωκήσασθαι. Employed in Aristophanes to describe a prospective act of derision by: 1) a perpetrator, in *Ach.* 222: διωκτέος δέ· μὴ γὰρ ἐγχάνη ποτὲ ... ἐκφυγῶν Ἀχαρνέας, 'we must go after him, so he won't laugh at escaping us, the Acharnians'; 2) an enemy, in *Ach.* 1197: ἐκείνο δ' οὖν αἰακτὸν ἂν γένοιτο, Δικαιοπόλις εἴ μ' ἴδοι τετραυμένον, κᾶτ' ἐγχάνοι ταῖς ἐμαῖς τύχαισιν, 'But it would be true agony/ if Dicaeopolis should see me wounded/and jeer at

καταχάσκω the prefix changes the meaning to ‘jeer at’⁵⁴⁷. Similarly the nouns καταχήνη⁵⁴⁸ and its gloss καταχάσμησις⁵⁴⁹, in which the addition of κατα- alters the meaning to ‘scorn, mockery’⁵⁵⁰. In case of ἐπεγχάσκω⁵⁵¹, the only connection with laughter may be established through the concept of derision, as the lexeme accepts the meaning ‘to make mouths at another’. Finally, two unique forms also regard derisive laughter: the iterative verb χηνάω or χηνέω (transmitted only in the aorist χηνῆσαι) accepts the meaning ‘gape wide, laugh mockingly’ and the noun χήνημα signifies a ‘wide gape, mocking laugh’.⁵⁵² In these examples, we may notice that the semantics of cognates alter the original meaning of χάσκω from the act of gaping into the act of mocking, deriding, hence, laughing at another. It becomes, then, apparent that the words based on χάσκω regard two aspects of laughter: 1) the body language of the phenomenon, as they refer to the facial display of a person laughing, i.e. the wide opening of the mouth; and 2) the communicative role of one’s laughter

my misfortunes’, translation in Henderson (1998a) 211; 3) a lying demagogue: *Eq.* 1313: οὐ γὰρ ἡμῶν γε στρατηγῶν ἐγχανεῖται τῇ πόλει, ‘he will not mock the city by being our commander’; *V.* 1007: κούκ ἐγχανεῖται σ’ ἐξαπατῶν Ὑπέροβολος, ‘no longer will Hyperbolus make a fool of you with his lies’, translation in Henderson (1998b) 351; 4) a deceitful woman, in *V.* 1349: ἐξαπατήσεις κάγχανεῖ τούτῳ μέγα, ‘you will trick me and laugh at this greatly’; 5) a disdainful father to his son, in *Nu.* 1436: σὺ δ’ ἐγχανῶν τεθνήξεις, ‘you will die mocking me’; 6) a crowd towards a weird old man, in *V.* 720-1: ἐγὼ σ’ ἀπέκλειον ἀεὶ/ βόσκειν ἐθέλων καὶ μὴ τούτους / ἐγχάσκειν σοι στομφάζοντας, ‘I locked you up as to feed you and so the rants would not mock you’; 7) women towards the chorus of men, in *Lys.* 271: οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρον ἐμοῦ ζῶντος ἐγχανοῦνται, ‘By Demeter, they’ll not laugh at me while I’m alive’, translation in Henderson (2000) 305. Cf. Sommerstein (2009) 107-8.

⁵⁴⁷ Sommerstein (1994) 228 n. 1089, argues for the verbs occurrence in *Ar. Th.* 1089-90 κἀκκάσκεις μοι, ‘you jeer at me’, expressed in the Scythian archer’s broken Greek (instead of καταχάσκεις). In contrast Austin and Douglas Olson (2004) n. 1087-9, who explain ‘κἀκκάσκεις’ as ‘κα(ι ἐ)κκασκεις’, thus ‘καὶ ἐγχάσκεις’. This explanation seems probable, due to the late instances of καταχάσκω found in the works of Byzantine authors, e.g. Eust. *Comm. Il.* 3. 143. 3: καταχάσκοντες.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ar. V.* 575: τοῦ πλούτου καταχήνη, ‘derision of wealth’, *Ar. Ec.* 631-2: καταχίνητων σεμνοτέρων ἔσται πολλή, ‘it will be a great mockery of the rich [lit. those wearing signets]’.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. the lexica of Photius and Hesychius, both s.v. καταχήνη.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Suid. s.v. καταχήνη: κατάγελας; same entry repeated in Phot. s.v. καταχήνη.

⁵⁵¹ *Soph. fr.* 210. 49 Radt: οὐκ ἐς τσοῦτον ἦλθον ὥστ’ ἐπεγχανεῖν, ‘They did not get so far as to insult him’, translation in Lloyd Jones (1996) 91. For a broader discussion, see chapter IV.

⁵⁵² Cf. Schwyzer 719. Hesychius glosses these two lexemes with words explicitly denoting mockery: χηνῆσαι with καταμωκῆσασθαι ‘mock at’, and χήνημα with the unique noun καταμώκημα.

which conveys the message of treating another with disdain. In short, it is the act of making a face at another, in both literal and figurative senses, that underlies the concept of laughter encapsulated by this word-group.

2.1.4. Other Greek words for laughter

Lexicographers list many Greek terms in relation to laughter. Although these terms do not appear in the corpus of texts I will analyse in the second part of this dissertation, however, it will be useful to briefly pay our attention to them, in order to supplement our understanding of the Greek ideas on concerning laughter.

Apart from the the three main word-families discussed above, we may further distinguish two groups of laughter-words: 1) those formed with the root κίχλ-, and 2) lexemes based on various roots.

2.1.4.1. Word-group with κίχλ- root

This group of laughter-words is based on the κίχλ- root. In fact, this is the smallest word-family, for it consists of only 3 lexemes: 2 verbs and 1 noun. Table 7 demonstrates these few lexemes.

Lexeme	Form	Meaning
κίχλιδιάω	verb	'have a desire to giggle'
κίχλίζω	verb	'titter', 'giggle'
κίχλισμός	noun	'tittering', 'giggling'

Table 7. List of κίχλ- rooted lexemes.

Similarly to the case of the κίχλ- based word group, this word-family is also of onomatopoeic origin and again refers to the audible aspect of laughter. It is based on the Greek word κίχλη, which means 'thrush'. Since the lexemes are formed from the name of a bird, the verbal form κίχλίζω denotes the sound of laughter resembling that of a bird's chirping. In result, the verb

accepts the meaning ‘laugh’ and ‘giggle’.⁵⁵³ Other derivatives of κίχλη include: the verb κίχλιδιάω ‘have a desire to giggle’⁵⁵⁴ and the noun κίχλισμός ‘tittering, giggling’⁵⁵⁵. Although some linguists connect this group with ‘χελιδών’⁵⁵⁶, i.e. ‘swallow’, however its origin remains unclear.⁵⁵⁷ Again, as in the case of the lexemes based on the root καχ-, the main sense of the words formed with κίχλ- is the sound of laughter.

2.1.4.2. Laughter-words with various roots

Ancient Greek has also other words related to the phenomenon of laughter. Apart from the four group-words mentioned above, the LSJ reports also other verbs and nouns created from different roots. In particular, these few words are either unique or only loosely related to the discussed phenomenon. These lexemes are listed in table 8 below.

Lexeme	Form	Meaning
διαληκάομαι	verb	‘laugh at’
διαμωκάομαι	verb	‘mock’, ‘laugh at’
διαπαίζω	verb	‘laugh’, ‘jest at’
ἐκπαίζω	verb	‘laugh to scorn’
ἐπιμύσσω	verb	‘laugh at’
ἐπισκώπτω	verb	‘laugh at’, ‘make fun at’
προοσπαίζω	verb	‘laugh at’, ‘make fun of’

⁵⁵³ In the comedy *Clouds*, the Better Argument prohibits *inter alia* giggling (οὐδὲ κίχλιζειν, Ar. *Nu.* 983) in the proper education of young men; the giant Polyphemus speaks of girls laughing when he responds to their invitation, Theoc. 11. 77-8: πολλαὶ συμπαίσειν με κόραι τὰν νύκτα κέλονται, / κίχλιζοντι δὲ πᾶσαι, ἐπεὶ κ’ αὐταῖς ὑπακούσω, ‘Many girls seek me out, / Calling in the night, „come play with me”, / Giggling when I answer’, translation in Arnson Svarlien (1997) 163. On female giggling in an erotic context, cf. Halliwell (2008) 491 n. 52.

⁵⁵⁴ *Com. Adesp.* 1038 Kock, without context.

⁵⁵⁵ Paus. *Gram.* explains κίχλισμός with ὁ λεπτός καὶ ἀκόλαστος γέλως, ‘delicate but uncontrolled laughter’; Hesychius describes the term as γέλως σφοδρός, ‘vehement laughter’. Curiously, in Ar. *Nu.* 1073, all manuscripts, except for Ravennas 429, contain κίχλισμῶν instead of καχασμῶν (cf. n. 307 above). However, scholars consider it to be an accommodation to κίχλιζειν in Ar. *Nu.* 983; cf. Dover (1968) 226 n. 1073; Sommerstein (1982) 213 n. 1073.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Chantraine (1968) s.v. κίχλη, who explains its etymology as a reduplicated form related to χελιδών (‘forme populaire à redoublement qui doit être apparantée à χελιδών’).

⁵⁵⁷ Beekes (2010) I, s.v. κίχλη regards it as a Pre-Greek word.

χαραμβαλιαστύς	noun	‘loud laughter’
τριγλίζω	verb	‘giggle’

Table 8. List of lexemes related to laughter stemming from different roots.

In these examples, only two lexemes refer to laughter explicitly, namely χαραμβαλιαστύς⁵⁵⁸ (also its accepted reading κραμβαλιαστύς) ‘loud laughter’ and τριγλίζω⁵⁵⁹ ‘giggle’. Although both terms are transmitted without a context, we may recognize that the basic idea of laughter encapsulated in them is sound.

Considering the other lexemes listed above, they are, generally, employed in relation to derision. However, the intensity of such act of derisive laughter varies: some words refer to playful ridicule at the expense of others (ἐπισκώπτω⁵⁶⁰ ‘laugh at, make fun at’), others signify one’s non-serious treatment of an object or person (διαπαίζω⁵⁶¹ ‘laugh, jest at’, προσπαίζω⁵⁶² ‘laugh at’), some imply the manifestation of disdain (διαληκάομαι⁵⁶³ ‘laugh at’, διαμωκάομαι⁵⁶⁴ ‘mock, laugh at’, ἐκπαίζω⁵⁶⁵ ‘laugh to scorn’), and finally, some

⁵⁵⁸ A *hapax legomenon* in Hsch. s.v. χαραμβαλιαστύς reports γέλως ὁ μετὰ παιδιᾶς (one’s laughter amidst play). The form κραμβαλιαστύς is the commonly accepted reading of χαραμβαλιαστύς, thus a plausible derivate of κράμβος ‘loud’, cf. Hsch. s.v. κραμβόν: καπυρόν τινα <γέλωτα> καὶ ξηρόν φασιν (under κράμβόν they refer to something loud <laughter> and crackly).

⁵⁵⁹ Hesychius defines τριγλίζω as κατὰ μίμησιν ἐπὶ τῶν γελώντων (‘regarding the imitation of those laughing’). Here, the verb is based on the noun τρίγλη ‘gurnard’ or ‘red mullet’, formed from τρίζω ‘to buzz, gnash, squeak’, an onomatopoeic verb regarding the utterance of sounds by animals. Beekes explains that this noun refers ‘to the grunting sound from the friction of the gill cover bones when the fish is taken out of water’, cf. Beekes (2010) II, s.v. τρίγλη. Since τριγλίζω is a *hapax legomenon* in Hesychius, the LSJ regards it as a synonym to κιχλίζω.

⁵⁶⁰ In Xen. *Sym.* 1.5, Socrates speaks of Callias making fun of his guests (σὺ ἐπισκώπτεις ἡμᾶς).

⁵⁶¹ D. L. 4. 53: καὶ ὄλως καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ γεωμετρίαν διέπαιζεν ‘in general, he [i.e. Bion] laughed at music and geometry’.

⁵⁶² Men. *Epit.* 182: προσπαίζεις ἐμοί; ‘you’re making fun at me?’.

⁵⁶³ Ael. Dion. fr. 125 defines διαληκάσθαι as διαμωκάσθαι καὶ διαπαίζειν, ‘to mock and jest at’; similarly Hesychius s.v. διαληκάσθαι: διασύρειν ‘to laugh at: to ridicule’.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. n. above.

⁵⁶⁵ Phld. *Rh.* 2. 216 S quotes the philosopher Diogenes speaking of the Lacedaemonians mocking the art of rhetoric: Λακεδαιμόνιοι ... ἐκπαίζοντες αὐτήν (Diog. fr. 119).

simply refer to outright mockery (ἐπιμύσσω⁵⁶⁶ 'laugh at'). We must, however, remember that these subtleties in meanings highly depend on the context in which the laughter-word appears. Also, we should bare in mind the fact that although the LSJ renders these terms with 'laugh', these words do not denote laughter, but may only imply it.⁵⁶⁷ Due to this fact, these lexemes will not be taken into consideration in my discussion on laughter in Greek drama.

2.2. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have investigated the Greek vocabulary associated with laughter and its related phenomena. The purpose for this has been to distinguish the chief ideas on the phenomenon discernible within the semantics of the analysed terminology. Accepting such an approach has, on the one hand, been necessary due to the lack of ancient theoretical explanations for laughter, as I have discussed in chapter I. On the other hand, it has allowed me to explore and distinguish the ideas on laughter reflected in the general conceptual system of the Ancient Greek language, in accordance with the observation of Whorf quoted in the epigraph to this chapter.

My examination has included those lexemes related to laughter found in the authoritative English, Spanish and Polish lexica to the ancient Greek language. Also, the lexical-semantic analysis has been based on a set of data found within the extant literature composed in Ancient Greek, beginning with epic poetry of the archaic age, until the writings of Christian scholars in late antiquity. Such an extensive range of material has enabled me to follow the

⁵⁶⁶ Such meaning is uncertain for it is based on two vague instances: a conjecture in Luc. *Dial. Mort.* 6. 3., and Hesychius' corrupted entry ἐπέμυξαν· ἐπεμυκτήρισαν 'they laughed at: they sneered at'. In Homer, the verb originally means 'murmur', cf. Cunliffe (1963) s.v. ἐπιμύζω: 'to murmur or mutter at something'; e.g. Athena and Hera discontent at Zeus' policy mutter threats against Troy (αἰ δ' ἐπέμυξαν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη, *Il.* 4. 20, repeated verbatim in *Il.* 8. 457).

⁵⁶⁷ Original meanings of the words' stems are: childish behavior (παίζω 'to behave like a child'), sexual activity (ληκάω 'to have intercourse'), movement of the nose (μύσσομαι 'to snort') and derision (σκώπτω 'to mock'). Cf. Beekes (2010) s.v. 'ληκάω', 'μύσσομαι', 'παίζω', 'σκώπτω'.

evolution of Greek laughter-words as well as track modifications within the concepts regarding the phenomenon.

In the course of writing this chapter, some important conclusions have emerged. Firstly, in contrast to the English language, the Hellenic tongue consists of a larger lexical system used in reference to the phenomenon of laughter.⁵⁶⁸ Secondly, the lexical-semantic analysis has provided me with evidence that already the ancient Greeks shared the view of laughter being a multifaceted action. Thirdly, the vast set of data has shown that despite the evolution of the terminology (especially by compounding), the general concepts of laughter encapsulated within their semantics of the four main word-groups remain the same. And finally, the Greek concepts of laughter resemble, on the whole, many modern perceptions of the phenomenon I have distinguished in the previous chapter. Let us, then, recapitulate the basic Greek ideas of laughter acknowledged in modern lexica.

First and foremost, the analysed lexemes reflect the understanding of laughter in terms of human physiology. Sound is the principal idea reflected in the original semantics within the roots' of three word-families ($\gamma\epsilon\lambda$ -, $\kappa\alpha\chi$ -, $\kappa\iota\chi\lambda$ -). The second idea concerns the specific facial expression a person shows while laughing. This is the main concept reflected in the semantic prototype of the root $\chi\alpha\sigma\kappa$ - forming the forth large word-group, but it is also present in other lexemes with the root $\gamma\epsilon\lambda$ -. At times, I have also found within these words the idea referring to the movements of the whole body. Next, the examined Greek lore considers the phenomenon in terms of emotions. In this sense, the laughter-words may denote an emotional experience of pleasant nature (joy, cheerfulness, mirth, amusement, merriment, and delight). Depending on the context, this feeling of pleasure may be of malevolent nature, in which case laughter may signify one's malice towards others (Schadenfreude, triumph).

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. chapter I, n. 210.

Furthermore, humour is another concept found in many laughter-words. Here, the Greek terminology recognizes laughter as a reaction to the perception of humour, i.e. the laughable, or to specific humorous devices which cause laughter (jokes, jeering, literary genres like comedy etc.). Often, the concept of humour occurs along with the idea of playfulness understood, basically, as non-serious conduct. Next, the idea of laughter as a symptom of mental disturbances is also noticeable. Lastly, a large number of lexemes signify laughter in terms of derision, ridicule and scorn. To this list of concepts, which, on the whole correspond with modern interpretations of laughter, we must add one more which has emerged in the course of working on this chapter. This is the distinctly Greek association of the phenomenon of laughter with the ideas of radiance, brightness and shining. It becomes, then, evident that the Greek terminology associated with laughter reflects the manifold nature of laughter within the Greek language.

We must, however, bear in mind the fact that lexicographers aim at giving only a general explanation of lexemes. As a consequence, lexica do not, or rather may not include every possible concept regarding such a multifaceted phenomenon as laughter. This especially refers to the aspect of laughter as a means of communication, for whether one's laugh sends a friendly or hostile signal depends on a much wider context. In a similar vein, certain social aspects of laughter, for instance, the social consequences of group enhancement or exclusion need a wider context to be fully recognized. These are subtleties in meanings which emerge in a detailed analysis of a lexeme's use within a specific text, but become omitted by the lexicographer in his/her general overview. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that I may refer to certain aspects of laughter discussed in chapter I, albeit not included in chapter II, if these are ostensibly discernible in the discussed passages of Greek drama.

Having said this, we may enumerate the general ideas on laughter which will form the interpretative framework of my investigation of the meanings of

laughter in the dramatic Greek texts. For this purpose, I will refer to the following types of laughter:

In terms of physiology, laughter may be associated with:

- 1) a sound,
- 2) a specific facial display,
- 3) a set of bodily movements.

In terms of humour, laughter may refer to:

- 4) cognition,
- 5) various humorous devices,
- 6) incongruity
- 7) amusement evoked by humour-related devices.

In terms of emotions, laughter may consider the expression of:

- 8) joy, cheerfulness, merriment,
- 9) success, feeling of winning,
- 10) delight, pleasure,
- 11) relief,
- 12) playfulness,
- 13) superiority,
- 14) malice, Schadenfreude,
- 15) feeling of triumph,
- 16) madness.

In terms of communication and sociality, laughter may refer to the ideas of:

- 17) friendliness,
- 18) play,
- 19) derision, mockery,
- 20) hostility,
- 21) triumph,
- 22) feigned laughter.

In terms of Greek interpretations, laughter may be connected with:

23) the ideas of brightness and shining.

Lastly, in terms of evaluation, laughter may be considered:

24) a positive experience,

25) a negative behaviour.

Part II

Greek drama of the classical period

And so, if you want to discern a man and know his soul, you must look, not at how he keeps silent, or how he speaks, or how he weeps, or even how he is stirred by the noblest ideas, but you had better look at him when he laughs.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Adolescent*⁵⁶⁹

Fifth-century Greek drama contains of many references to laughter. In my research, I have distinguished twenty-six different Greek lexemes used to evoke the idea of laughter within the surviving plays and transmitted fragments of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides as well as Aristophanes. These laughter-words are applied by the four playwrights in the following numbers:

Lexeme	Aeschylus	Sophocles	Euripides	Aristophanes
ἀγέλαστος	3	-	-	-
ἀναγελάω	-	-	1 (?)	-
γελάω	6	18	12	21
γέλασμα	1	-	-	-
γελαστής	-	1	-	-
γελοῖος	1	1	1	13
γελωτοποιός	1	-	-	-
γέλως	3	10	23	10
διαγελάω	-	1	2	-
ἐγγελαστής	-	-	1	-
ἐγγελάω	-	3	6	-
ἐγχάσκω	-	1	-	8
ἐκγελάω	-	-	1	-
ἐπεγελάω	-	3	-	-
ἐπεγχάσκω	-	1	-	-
ἐπιγελάω	-	-	-	1
καταγέλαστος	-	-	-	9

⁵⁶⁹ Dostoevsky (2004) 353.

καταγελάω	1	-	2	16
κατάγελως	1	-	-	3
καταχάσκω	-	-	-	2
καταχήνη	-	-	-	3
καχάζω	-	1	-	1
καχασμός	-	-	-	1
κιχλίζω	-	-	-	2
προογελάω	1	1	2	1
συγγελάω	-	-	1	-
Sum of instances	18	41	52	91

Table 9. List of Greek terms on laughter present in the extant plays and fragments of the four playwrights. (?) indicates an uncertain lesson in the text.

As we can see, from a total of 202 instances of terms regarding laughter and laughter-related phenomena, nearly a half appears only in the works of the comic playwright Aristophanes (91 instances). In order to conduct a thorough analysis of the meanings of laughter in Greek drama and not exceed the limits of this thesis, my current inquiry will be limited to the tragedies and satyr plays of the three tragedians. In the future, however, I intend to extend my analysis of laughter onto the works and fragments of Aristophanes.

In what follows, I examine all 111 references found in the extant works and fragments of plays of the three tragic poets. My examination includes both genres of tragedy and satyr play. For the purpose of clarity, I have divided the discussion into three chapters according to the authors: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Each chapter contains of two parts: in the first, I analyse the passages regarding laughter from the extant plays; in the second part, I distinguish the concepts of laughter evoked in the fragments. Here, the discussion is based on the universal categories of laughter we have distinguished in chapter I as well as on its Greek understandings discussed in chapter II.

Chapter III

Laughter in Aeschylean drama

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a rapid ghastly river,
Through the pale door,
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh — but smile no more.

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*⁵⁷⁰

This chapter presents the analysis of laughter in the works of Aeschylus. Firstly, I examine the Greek laughter-words and discuss the concepts laughter in the extant tragedies: *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, *Eumenides*, and *Prometheus Bound*; secondly, I extend my discussion onto the references to laughter noticeable in the fragments of Aeschylus. The chapter concludes with final remarks on the general meaning of laughter in Aeschylean drama.

3.1. Laughter-words in the extant tragedies

Seven tragedies of Aeschylus have been completely transmitted to modern times. In regard of Greek laughter-words, we may count a total of twelve instances appearing only in four surviving dramas. Interestingly, a majority of these references (11 words) are found in the Oresteia trilogy, i.e. the tragedies *Agamemnon* (3 instances), *The Libation Bearers* (4 instances) and *The*

⁵⁷⁰ Poe (1981) 44.

Eumenides (4 instances). One laughter word occurs in *Prometheus Bound*.⁵⁷¹ The lexemes appear in the plays as follows⁵⁷²:

Verse	Lexeme	Form in text	Grammatical form
<i>Ag.</i> 794	ἀγέλαστος	ἀγέλαστα (πρόσωπα)	Acc. pl. (n)
<i>Ch.</i> 29	ἀγέλαστος	ἀγελάστοις (ξυμφοραῖς)	Dat. pl.
<i>Pr.</i> 90	γέλασμα	γέλασμα	Voc. sg.
<i>Ch.</i> 222	γελάω	γελάω (θέλεις)	Inf. pr. act.
<i>Eu.</i> 560	γελάω	γελάω	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
<i>Eu.</i> 789	γελάω	γελάωμαι	Ind. pr. m./p. 1 st sg.
<i>Eu.</i> 819	γελάω	γελάωμαι	Ind. pr. m./p. 1 st sg.
<i>Ch.</i> 448	γέλως	γέλωτος (έτοιμότερα)	Gen. sg.
<i>Ch.</i> 738	γέλως	γέλων (κεύθουσα)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ag.</i> 1271	καταγελάω	καταγελωμένην	Part. pr. m./p. Acc. sg.
<i>Ag.</i> 1264	κατάγελω	κατάγελωτα (έχω)	Acc. Sg.
<i>Eu.</i> 254	προσγελάω	προσγελάω	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.

Table 10. List of Greek laughter-words present in the extant tragedies of Aeschylus.

As we may notice from the table above, Aeschylus, generally, employs seven laughter-words: the verbs γελάω, καταγελάω and προσγελάω; the nouns γέλασμα, γέλως and κατάγελω; and the adjective ἀγέλαστος.

The grammatical forms of these lexemes provide us already with some information on their employment by the dramatist. Firstly, the only adjective used by Aeschylus is ἀγέλαστος, with which he refers twice to the absence of 'laughter' within certain objects (ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα, 'laughterless faces', *Ag.* 794; ἀγελάστοις ξυμφοραῖς, 'laughterless misfortunes', *Ch.* 29). Furthermore,

⁵⁷¹ I follow the classical attribution of this play to Aeschylus, despite the debate on its authorship. The dispute against the tragedy's designation as Aeschylean began in the 19th century with the so-called 'Zeus Problem', (the author of *Prometheus Bound* paints an unfavorable portrait of Zeus, which contrasts with the reverential treatment of the god in other tragedies, e.g. *The Suppliants* and *Agamemnon*), cf. Conacher (1980) 141-74. Modern arguments against the play's authenticity are based on the detailed analysis of its metres, dramatic techniques, vocabulary, style, and syntax, cf. Griffith (1977) 224: 'Had *Prometheus Bound* been newly dug up from the sands of Oxyrynchus, miraculously intact, but anonymous and lacking any ancient testimony linking it to any particular author, I think it is far to say that few scholars would regard it as the work of Aeschylus'; West (1990) 51-72, especially 67: 'From beginning to end the play offends against Aeschylean canons of composition.'

⁵⁷² Cf. the concordance of Italie (1964).

in two cases, the substantives for laughter, γέλως and κατάγελως, appear as the direct object of the verbs ἔχω 'have' (καταγέλωτα ἔχω, 'I receive mockery', *Ag.* 1264) and κεύθω 'hide; conceal' (γέλων κεύθουσα, 'her concealing laughter', *Ch.* 738). In another example, the noun γέλως appears in the grammatical construction *genetivus comparativus* to express the relation of laughter to another object (ἔτοιμότερα γέλωτος ... λίβη, 'more ready for laughter than tears', *Ch.* 448). Also, one character directly addresses 'laughter', and uses the noun γέλασμα in the vocative case (*Pr.* 90). Next, we may already recognize the fact that the six verbal forms of γελάω and its compounds are constructed in the present tense (*Ag.* 1271, *Ch.* 222, *Eu.* 254, *Eu.* 560, *Eu.* 789, *Eu.* 819). Three of these instances appear in the active voice: γελᾱ 'he/she laughs' (*Eu.* 560), προσγελᾱ 'he/she laughs in the direction of' (*Eu.* 254), and γελᾱν 'to laugh' (γελᾱν θέλεις 'you wish to laugh', *Ch.* 222); the other three references occur in the passive voice: twice the form γελᾱμαι 'I am laughed at' (*Eu.* 789, *Eu.* 819) and the participle καταγελωμένην 'her being laughed at, mocked' (*Ag.* 1271), in which the female subject recognizes the act of 'laughing' directed at herself. It is interesting that these verbal forms as well as the two verbs to which a laughter-word is the direct object (*Ag.* 1264, *Ch.* 738) appear only in the present tense. It would suggest that most laughter-words in Aeschylean tragedy (8 out of 12) would signify a direct reference to laughter (or an act perceived as such) taking place onstage or at present in the plot of the play.

Let us, therefore, proceed with my examination of the interpretations of the Greek vocabulary for laughter employed by Aeschylus in the preserved tragedies.

genuine reaction is not sadness but an emotional response she terms ‘laughter’ (γέλως). In her opinion, the queen only assumes a sad look in front of the servants (θέτο σκυθρωπὸν ὄμμα, *Ch.* 738), concealing, at the same time, her true feelings behind her eyes (τόν γ’ ἐντὸς γέλων κεύθουσα, *Ch.* 738-9). It is, however, through these eyes that the nurse manages to detect Clytaemestra’s ‘laughter’, i.e. positive response to the news about the death of Orestes. In truth, the news of her son’s death, albeit false, is considered by her to be most favourable (ἐπ’ ἔργοις διαπεπραγμένοις καλῶς, *Ch.* 739).⁵⁷⁵ The reason for this is the fact that with her son’s passing, the queen and her accomplice Aegisthus, who have been ruling Argos together after the killing of her husband, would be freed from dreading the return of Agamemnon’s heir and justified avenger.⁵⁷⁶ The mention of Clytaemestra’s γέλως, then, refers to her inner delight at the things that have worked out well for her (ἐπ’ ἔργοις διαπεπραγμένοις καλῶς κείνη, *Ch.* 739-40). In this interpretation, the word γέλως reflects the queen’s ‘mind full of delight’⁵⁷⁷ stimulated by a fortunate for her turn of events.

Delight, however, is not the only possible interpretation of Clytaemestra’s laughter in this passage. We must bear in mind the fact that the degree of one’s positive reaction to the news about another’s passing depends on the rapport between the two. If this relationship is more of an antagonistic character, then the death of an opponent may evoke a certain type of rapturous delight. I will, then, analyze this example once again in the part of my discussion concerning laughter in the context of triumph.

⁵⁷⁵ This favorability is stressed by the adverb καλῶς ‘of good fortune’, cf. LSJ s.v. καλός, C. adv. II. 2.

⁵⁷⁶ Moreau (2000) 402.

⁵⁷⁷ Rose (1959) on v. 738.

3.2.2. Joy

Another pleasant feeling encapsulated in the semantics of Greek laughter is joy.⁵⁷⁸ In the extant tragedies, we may distinguish that Aeschylus evokes the image of laughter in connection with joy in two general meanings, i.e. 1) a state of well-being, and 2) an outward expression of an inner feeling of gladness or rejoicing.⁵⁷⁹

3.2.2.1. State of happiness

It is a universal truth that laughter may denote one's happiness; its lack, however, signifies the opposite. Aeschylus reflects such an idea in the parodos, i.e. entrance song (*Ch.* 23-83) of the *Libation Bearers*. Sent by their mistress, Clytaemestra, the chorus of slave women comes to the grave of Agamemnon to pour libations to the dead. After reaching their destination, the women begin to sing about the misery they suffer in the royal household (*Ch.* 23-31):

Χο. ἰαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων ἔβαν
 χοὰς προπομπὸς ὀξύχειρι σὺν κόπῳ·
 πρέπει παρῆς φοίνισσ' ἀμυγμοῖς ὄνυχος ἄλοκι
 νεοτόμῳ—
 δι' αἰῶνος δ' ἰυγ-
 μοῖσι βόσκεται κέαρ—
 λινοφθόροι δ' ὑφασμάτων
 λακίδες ἔφλαδον ὑπ' ἄλγεσιν,
 πρόστερονι στολμοῖ πέπλων ἀγελάστοις
 ξυμφοραῖς πεπληγμένοι.

Chorus: I have been sent here from the house; I come
 in procession with libations, hands in the quick beat of grief,
 cheeks torn into bright crimson-red,
 my nails cutting furrows afresh-
 life-long my heart is fed upon wailing!-
 fine linens and their weave destroyed,
 noisily rent, ripping in grief,
 the folds of the robe over my breast
 battered by **laughterless** disaster.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.3.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. *OED* s.v. 'joy', , n.¹, 1. a. and 1. c.

⁵⁸⁰ English translation in Collard (2002) 52.

These grim words about the women's distress correspond with their appearance; their cheeks are torn and they wear ragged garments. Dressed in black, they bear the traditional signs of mourning, which, according to John Herington, visually sets the mood of grief within the play.⁵⁸¹ The chorus explains that its clothing has been tattered because of the 'laughterless disaster', (ἀγέλαστοις ξυμφοραῖς, *Ch.* 29). Without any doubt, this expression refers to the tragic events that occurred in the House of Atreus, the murder of the king by his adulterous wife.⁵⁸² Although many years have already passed, the women still grieve after the loss of their master, as they mention further in the choral ode ('chilled by hidden grief I weep beneath my garments for the senseless sufferings of my masters', δακρῶν δ' ὑφ' εἰμάτων ματαίοισι δεσποτᾶν τύχαις, *Ch.* 82-83). It ought to be, however, stressed that in the Greek original the expression ἀγέλαστοις ξυμφοραῖς appears in the plural dative and literally regards the robe tattered 'by misfortunes non-fit for laughter'.⁵⁸³ The adjective ἀγέλαστος, then, does not only refer to the single disastrous event (as Collard's quoted translation would suggest⁵⁸⁴), but to the many misfortunes the killing of Agamemnon has caused in the royal household of which the chorus speaks further in the parodos: the fall of a once majestic kingdom ('O hearth full of woe! O ruin of the house! Sunless darkness, abhorred by all, shrouds the house because its rulers have perished', ἰὼ πάνοιζυς ἐστία, / ἰὼ κατασκαφαὶ δόμων / ἀνήλιοι βροτοστυγεῖς / δνόφοι καλύπτουσι δόμους / δεσποτᾶν θανάτοισι, *Ch.* 49-53), and the disgraceful ruling of the treacherous queen ('that godless woman', δύσθεος γυνά, *Ch.* 46) aside her lover ('him who violates the

⁵⁸¹ Herington (1986) 131.

⁵⁸² Aeschylus presented this in the *Agamemnon*, the previous part of the Oresteia trilogy.

⁵⁸³ The plural form of συμφορά, lit. 'fates', 'misfortunes' (cf. LSJ s.v.) has been aptly retained in other translations such as Smyth's (1926) 161 'fortunes stranger to all mirth'. Sommerstein's (2008b) 'mirthless disaster' omits the plural form of συμφορά referring only to a single misfortune, i.e., the killing of Agamemnon. Similarly, Way (1908) 82 who also connects ἀγέλαστος with the image of smiling: 'Since calamity withered the blossom / of smiles from my eyes'.

⁵⁸⁴ Similarly, the translation of Sommerstein (2008b) 215: 'mirthless disaster'.

bower of maidenhood', θιγόντι... νυμφικῶν ἔδωλιών, *Ch.* 71). Since the sudden death of their king and rightful ruler of Argos, the slave women have suffered a life full of misery and sorrow, deprived of happiness and the joys, which laughter expresses. By employing the laughter-word with an alpha privative, Aeschylus verbally depicts the image of the 'lack of laughter', i.e. the lack of happiness amongst the servants. This verbal imagery of non-existing joy supplements the visual aspect of the mourning chorus. The word ἀγέλαστος, therefore, emphasizes the grief-stricken atmosphere of the House of Atreus.

3.2.2.2. Feeling of joy

Aeschylus evokes the idea of laughter as an expression of inner joy, content and gladness, in the third episode of the *Agamemnon*. On his return to Argos after the victorious siege of Troy, Agamemnon is greeted at the entrance to the palace by the Chorus of Elders (*Ag.* 782-93):

- Χο. ἄγε δὴ βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ',
 Ἀτρέως γένεθλον,
 πῶς σε προσείπω; πῶς σε σεβίξω
 μήθ' ὑπεράρας μήθ' ὑποκάμψας
 καιρὸν χάριτος;
 πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι
 προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες.
 τῷ δυσπραγοῦντι τ' ἐπιστενάχειν
 πᾶς τις ἔτοιμος, δῆγμα δὲ λύτης
 οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται,
 καὶ ξυχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς
ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι.
 < >
 ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
 οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτὸς
 τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
 ὕδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.
- Chorus: All hail, son of Atreus, captor of Troy,
 All hail to thee, King!
 How shall I greet thee, how tune my address
 So as neither to fall too short nor surpass
 Due measure of joy?
 Full many are they who unjustly respect
 Mere semblance of truth, and all men are quick
 With a tear to the eye for a neighbour's distress,

But with hearts untouched by his trouble.
Just so they rejoice with him, forcing a smile
Like his on their **laughterless** faces.⁵⁸⁵

In this passage, the Chorus speaks of different manners in which the people may welcome their king after war. While the Elders express their concern in showing a sufficient amount of delight towards Agamemnon (καίρῳ χάριτος, Ag. 786), they are fully aware of the fact that not all subjects will greet their ruler sincerely. As the Chorus observes in lines 797-8, there are people who assume false appearances (ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς, Ag. 792) by forcing their 'faces without laughter' (ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα, Ag. 793) into a grin only to appear as rejoicing (ξυγχαίρουσιν, Ag. 792) at a fortunate turn of events.⁵⁸⁶ Clearly, the Elders attempt to warn Agamemnon against those citizens of Argos who are displeased with the king's actions at Troy.⁵⁸⁷ Here, Aeschylus evokes the image of laughter in connection with the experience of joy, as he juxtaposes the adjective ἀγέλαστος 'without laughter' with the verb συγχαίρω 'rejoice with'.⁵⁸⁸ What is more, the poet uses the metaphor of 'faces lacking laughter' in regard of the negative emotions dwelling within some people discontent with the success of a neighbor (Ch. 790-793), whereas by employing the laughter-word negated with the α-privativum, this lack of positive sentiments becomes emphasized. In this example, therefore, the general idea of laughter evoked by the term ἀγέλαστος regards the feeling of joy, albeit through negation.

The lack of positive sentiments, however, is not the only possible aspect of the idea of laughter evoked in this passage. Since the Chorus speaks of people forcing their faces to conceal their 'lack of laughter', in order to appear cheery, it becomes apparent that the image of laughter in this passage is also connected with the aspect of communicating one's sentiments towards others.

⁵⁸⁵ English translation in Thomson (2013) 147-49.

⁵⁸⁶ Denniston and Page (1957) 138 n. 793-4. Sommerstein (2008b) 91 n. 164 sees this to be the sense of the missing line 794 which he proposes as '<to welcome one who has gained success>'.
⁵⁸⁷ Sommerstein (2008b) 90 n. 162.

⁵⁸⁸ On the connection of laughter with the idea of joy, cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.3.

I will, therefore, discuss this example again in the following section in which we turn our attention to the informative aspect of laughter.

3.2.3. Feigned laughter

Feigned laughter, undoubtedly, functions as a voluntary mean of communication. Through such controlled behaviour one may transmit the false message of non-genuine sentiments by assuming a certain facial expression or simulating an outburst of laughter. It is a strictly purposeful as well as social act, aimed at gaining personal benefits from others.⁵⁸⁹

In their welcoming speech to Agamemnon (*Ag.* 782-98), which we have discussed above in the previous section, we may notice the fact that the Chorus of Elders makes a clear distinction between expressing genuine and false sentiments. Accordingly, people are ready to feign emotions both positive and negative, for the Chorus speaks of those who groan with the misfortunate (τῶ δυσπραγοῦντι τ' ἐπιστενάχειν, *Ag.* 798), despite not feeling any grief (δῆγμα δὲ λύπης/ οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται, *Ag.* 790-91), as well as of those who rejoice with the fortunate (Ξυγχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς, *Ag.* 792) by 'using force on their laughterless faces' (ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι, *Ag.* 793). Here, it remains clear, just as we have mentioned in the previous section, that the idea of laughter evoked by the word ἀγέλαστος is connected with an emotional experience. However, it is also evident that in the context of simulating feelings, in this case joy, the concept of laughter is connected with the manifestation of these emotions, as well. The Chorus explains, a little further in their speech, the futility of such non-genuine actions (*Ag.* 795-98):

Χο. ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτὸς
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ύδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.

Chorus: But whoever is a good judge of his flock

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.5.

will certainly not be fooled by a man's eyes
whose gaze, pretending to come from a loyal disposition,
is fawning on him with watery affection.

In this passage, we may observe that the Elders explicitly point to the reasons governing those who feign emotions, and, consequently, simulate appropriate non-verbal behaviours, amongst other laughter; this is to pretend a 'cheery spirit', or as Sommerstein renders it, 'a loyal disposition' (εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας, *Ag.* 797). The Chorus is aware that the king's decision to set off on a punitive expedition against Troy in response to the abduction of his brother's wife, Helen, gained criticism amongst the citizens of Argos. Earlier in the play, the Chorus mentions the public hostility towards Agamemnon for having the Argive men perish in Troy in pursuit of a woman (*Ag.* 432-60):

Χο. πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἦπαρ
οὐς μὲν γάρ <τις> ἔπεμψεν
οἶδεν, ἀντὶ δὲ φωτῶν
τεύχη καὶ σποδὸς εἰς ἐκάσ-
του δόμους ἀφικνεῖται.
ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς
πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον, ἀν-
τήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτους.
στένουσι δ' εὖ λέγοντες ἄν-
δρα τὸν μὲν ὡς μάχας ἴδρις,
τὸν δ' ἐν φοναίς καλῶς πεσόντ'
"ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναι-
κος"· τάδε σῖγά τις βαῦ-
ζει, φθονερόν δ' ὑπ' ἄλγος ἔρ-
πει προδίκους Ἀτρεΐδαις.
οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τείχος
θήκας Ἰλιάδος γὰρ
εὐμορφοὶ κατέχουσιν, ἐχ-
θρὰ δ' ἔχοντας ἔκρυψεν.
βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις σὺν κότῳ
δημοκράντου δ' ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος·
μένει δ' ἀκοῦσαι τί μοι
μέριμνα νυκτηρεφές.

Chorus: There is much, at any rate, that strikes deep into the soul;
one knows the men sent off,
but instead of human beings

urns and ashes arrive back
at each man's home.
Ares, the moneychanger of bodies,
holding his scales in the battle of spears,
sends back from Ilium to their dear ones
heavy dust that has been through fire,
to be sadly wept over,
filling easily-stowed urns
with ash given in exchange for men.
And they lament, and praise this man
as one expert in battle,
that man as having fallen nobly amid the slaughter –
“because of someone else's wife”.
That is what they are snarling, under their breath;
and grief steals over them, mixed with resentment
against the chief prosecutors, the Atreidae.
And over there, around the city wall,
the men in their beauty occupy
sepulchers in the land of Ilium:
the enemy's soil covers its conquerors.
The talk of the citizens, mixed with anger, is a dangerous
thing:
it is the equivalent of a publicly ordained curse:
I have an anxiety that waits to hear
of something happening under cover of night.

The loss of loved ones at the Trojan war elicited negative emotions within the citizens towards Agamemnon and Menelaos (Ag. 451), such as grief (ἄλγος, Ag. 450), resentment (φθονερόν, Ag. 450), but also anger (κότος, Ag. 456). Since the people of Argos are visibly disaffected with their king, although for now they express their discontent only verbally through snarling in secret (σιγὰ τις βαῦζει, Ag. 449-50) or just talking with one another (βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις, Ag. 456), however, the Chorus fears the possibility of their anger assuming a more physical form.⁵⁹⁰ It becomes apparent that in their welcoming speech 782-809, the Elders attempt to warn Agamemnon against the hostility of some citizens, who will not openly manifest their true disposition towards their ruler. One of the modes of concealing these negative feelings is by assuming a false

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. Sommerstein (2008b) 54 n. 99: ‘A veiled reference to the possibility of a *coup d'état* and/or an assassination attempt against one or both of the Atreidae’.

image of rejoicing with cheer at the return of their king.⁵⁹¹ It is this ‘cheer’ which the Chorus regards as laughter, or, precisely, points to its lack. It becomes then apparent that ἀγέλαστος in line 793 refers also to the idea of laughter as simulated non-verbal communication.⁵⁹²

The idea of feigned laughter may also be suggested by Aeschylus in the kommos (Ch. 306-478) of the *Libation Bearers*. After many years living apart, the siblings Electra and Orestes have finally reunited. Together with the Chorus of captive women, they lament upon their father’s ignoble death and pray to his spirit for vengeance. As Electra enlists the misfortunes she has suffered, at one point she recalls the day of the king’s funeral (Ch. 444(5)-449):

ΗΛ. λέγεις πατρῶον μόρον· ἐγὼ δ’ ἀπεστάτου
 ἄτιμος, οὐδὲν ἄξια,
 μυχῶ δ’ ἄφειρκτος πολυσινοῦς κυνὸς δίκαν
 ἔτοιμότερα γέλωτος ἀνέφερον λίβη,
 χέουσα πολύδακρυν γόον κεκρυμμένα.

Electra: You speak of our father’s death. I was not there-
 I was dishonoured, treated as worthless;
 shut up in the bowels of the house, like a dangerous dog,
 I brought up drops that flowed more readily than **laughter**,
 pouring out a lament full of tears, though hidden from view.

Electra was not allowed to mourn her father in public, for she was locked up in the palace. Only in seclusion, according to line 448, did she have the opportunity to give vent to her tears ‘more readily than laughter’ (ἔτοιμότερα γέλωτος). Although the antithesis of tears with laughter is a universal trait, the interpretation of this line raises certain problems. First of all, we must bear in mind the fact that the word ἔτοιμότερα, ‘more ready for’, is the comparative female form of the adjective ἐτοιμος ‘ready, prepared for’, and as such regards

⁵⁹¹ Thus, in their translations of ἀγέλαστος many scholars favour the word ‘smile’, in order to regard the communicative role of the facial display, cf. Smyth (1926): 67: ‘...in seeming sympathy they join in others’ joy, *forcing their faces to smile*’; Lattimore (2013a) 30: ‘And in joy likewise they show joy’s semblance, and torture the face to the *false smile*’; Sommerstein (2008b) 91: ‘...they put on an appearance of sharing joy forcing their *unsmiling faces* into a grin’ (my emphasis).

⁵⁹² Arnould (1990) 140.

Electra being more ready to shed tears than laughter. However, this reference occurs in the most pathetic part of a tragedy, namely, the dirge (*kommos*), in which there are no explicit references to events associated with laughter or people rejoicing to which Electra could be referring to. Due to this, the word γέλως remains open for interpretation, which is noticeable in the various understandings of the term provided by translators and scholars. For instance, the translations of the early twentieth century connect γέλως with the idea of Electra acknowledging her miserable, i.e. not apt for laughter position.⁵⁹³ Another approach regards the reference to laughter as a *comparatio compendaria*, according to which the heroin in general compares her burst of tears to a burst of laughter.⁵⁹⁴ Finally, a third interpretation of γέλως is based on the idea of Electra being forced to publicly accept and rejoice at her mother's new relationship with Aegisthus. This idea is reflected in the commentaries by Rose (1958) and Garvie (1986), in which the former considers Clytaemestra as the source of stress on her daughter,⁵⁹⁵ whereas the latter suggests that Electra, generally, acknowledges the fact that there were 'others who did laugh'.⁵⁹⁶ In these views, the word 'laughter' bears the understanding that Electra was more ready for tears than to publicly share the joy of her mother's new nuptials. Such interpretation of line 448 would shed light on the reasons for Electra's seclusion and not being granted permission to attend her father's funeral, as it would imply that she was either incapable of accepting Clytaemestra's *liason* or, what seems more plausible, had no intention to assume a false appearance in order to

⁵⁹³ Through γέλως translators regard Electra's: 1) loss of happiness, e.g. Morshead (1901) 102: 'in place of my laughter rose sobbing and tears'; 2) state of sorrow, e.g. Murray (1923) 36: 'I laughed not, yet rejoiced that none saw me weep'; or 3) recognition of the situation apt for tears, e.g. Smyth (1926) 203: 'I gave full vent to my streaming tears – that came more readily than laughter'. Today, a similar understanding is found in Moreau (2000) 401, who considers γέλως to be a sentimental reference to past moments for laughter ('la nostalgie du rire').

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. Burian and Shapiro (2003) 123: 'crying great streams of grief as readily as someone else might laugh'.

⁵⁹⁵ Rose (1958) 161.

⁵⁹⁶ Garvie (1986) 166 n. 447-9.

please one she considers to be a ‘cruel, shameless mother’ (ὠὼ ἰὼ δαΐα πάντολμε μᾶτερ, *Ch.* 429-30).⁵⁹⁷ With such interpretation, the word γέλως in *Ch.* 448 may refer to feigned laughter.

3.2.4. Positive communication

In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus connects the imagery of communicative laughter with the alluring power of blood. Orestes has taken revenge on his father’s murderers and comes to Athens to stand trial for his deed. Just after reaching the temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis (*Eu.* 235-43), he is followed by the chorus of Furies (Ἐρινύες). As guardians of the primal law of vengeance, the Erinyes are compelled to chase and terrorize the young prince because of spilling kindred blood, as they say: ‘a mother’s blood is drawing me on: I shall pursue this man to punish him – I shall hunt him down!’ (ἐγὼ δ’, ἄγει γὰρ αἷμα μητρῶον, δίκας / μέτειμι τόνδε φῶτα κάκκυνηγέσω, *Eu.* 230-1). Like a pack of hunting dogs following the blood trail of an injured prey, the chorus manages to track Orestes down by picking up ‘a clear sign of the man’ (τὰνδρὸς ἐκφανὲς τέκμαρ, *Eu.* 244), i.e. the trail of blood left behind him. We may, however, observe that this trail, albeit of a sensory kind, pertains more to the Furies’ sense of smell than sight, for once they move closer to Orestes, they exclaim (*Eu.* 253-4):

Χο. καὶ νῦν ὄδ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἐστὶ που καταπτακῶν’
 ὀσμὴ βροτείων αἱμάτων με **προσγελαῖ**.

Chorus: And now that the man is here somewhere, cowering down:
 the scent of human blood **is greeting** me.

⁵⁹⁷ From her outraged cries in the kommos, it is evident that Electra holds resentments against her mother for the killing of her father as well as his ignominious burial unfit for a king (‘it was a cruel funeral / when you had the hardihood to bury your husband, / a king, without the presence of his city’s people, / without mourning and with no lamentation!’ δαΐαις ἐν ἐκφοραῖς / ἄνευ πολιτᾶν ἀνακτ’, / ἄνευ δὲ πενθημάτων / ἔτλας ἀνοίμωκτον ἄνδρα θάψαι, *Ch.* 430-33), but also for her own mistreatment: being forbidden to attend her father’s burial (‘I was dishonoured, treated as worthless’, ἄτιμος, οὐδὲν ἀξία, *Ch.* 445) and being treated as a slave (‘I am no better than a slave’, καγὼ μὲν ἀντίδουλος, *Ch.* 135). For the connection of Electra’s tears with the feeling of dishonour, see Arnould (1990) 53.

The chorus, literally, sniffs the matricide out by following the smell of Clytaemestra's blood whiffing off her son. In fact, this scent plays an active role in helping the Furies pursue their victim; it is, in their own words, a 'voiceless informant' (μηνυτῆρος ἀφθέγκτου, *Eu.* 245) leading the avengers of perjury to the perpetrator's hideout. In the end, as the Erynies approach their prey, this smell (ὄσμη) of human bloodshed (βροτείων αἱμάτων) comes out to welcome (προσγελά) them. The odour of blood, therefore, does not only appeal to the chorus, but practically allures them.

In order to describe the communicative power of kindred blood spilt in murder, Aeschylus applies the word προσγελάω. As we have seen in chapter II, the addition of the prefix προσ- to γελάω emphasizes the informative aspect of laughter, hence its literal meaning 'laugh in the direction of'. As mentioned before, this lexeme basically refers to the expressive act of signaling one's feelings.⁵⁹⁸ For this reason many scholars favour rendering the word 'smile'.⁵⁹⁹ In similar vein translators of the *Eumenides*, who in the discussed passage, refer to the scent of blood as 'smiling'.⁶⁰⁰ However, according to Halliwell's argumentation (2008), it is generally impossible to literally choose between the ideas of laughter/smiles as the only meaning of προσγελάω.⁶⁰¹ The same applies to its occurrence in *Eu.* 254. Nevertheless, we may discern the communicative aspect within the semantics of προσγελάω which enables the

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. LSJ s.v. προσγελάω 1: 'smile at one'. In classical literature e.g. Ar. *Pax* 596-600: 'And so the vines / and the young fig trees / and all the other plants together / will receive you with joyful smiles (προσγελάσεται)', translation in Henderson (1998b) 503; Eur. *Med.* 1162: 'smiling (προσγελάωσα) at her own phantom image there', translation in Way (1894) 111; Eur. *Med.* 1041: 'why smile (προσγελάτε) to me the latest smile of all?', translation in Way (1894) 106. Both Euripidean examples are discussed in chapter V. On the ideas of laughter and smiling within semantics of the γελ- root, see chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.2.

⁶⁰⁰ Collard (2002) 92: 'the scent of human blood smiles its greeting to me'; Podlecki (1989) 151 n. 253: 'the smell of human blood smiles'. In contrast, Smyth (1926) 297: 'the smell of human blood makes me laugh for joy', who seems incapable of imagining such a horrific object as blood or its odour in terms of a 'laughing' agent. Hogan (1984) 158 n. 253 correctly observes that the Greek in this line is 'bolder' than the English translation of Smyth.

⁶⁰¹ Halliwell (2008) 524.

figurative meaning of 'greet, welcome'. What is more, by combining the idea of laughter as a message of amiability with that of odorous bloodshed, Aeschylus creates a macabre image of human blood 'smiling in welcome' or 'inviting delightfully' non amiable forces.⁶⁰² The verb προσγελάω, then, refers to the intangible communication between the whiffing evidence of kindred bloodshed and the pursuing archaic powers of vengeance. It is also another example of the scant but stirring imagery of laughter within Aeschylean drama.

3.2.5. Mockery

Mockery connects the idea of laughter with contemptuous speech and behaviour. It is an interpersonal phenomenon, because it always concerns at least two people. The aim of derision is for its agent to express non friendly emotions towards another in a hurtful way and take pleasure in this act. Mocking or scornful laughter has at the same time a communicative as well as social role, for it informs the target of the agent's non amicable feelings, such as disregard, disrespect, contempt or even hostility. The social role of scornful laughter is that it disrupts any positive relations between the people involved, or preserves the already broken relations.⁶⁰³

In the extant tragedies, we may observe that the characters are aware of this disrespectful aspect of laughter and fear it. A noticeable example is found in the *Libation Bearers*, in the recognition scene of Electra and Orestes. Sent to pour offerings at her father's grave, the princess finds there a lock of hair which resembles her own (*Ch.* 168). She is aware that this hair can only belong to her brother, who lives in a land far away from Argos (*Ch.* 177). She speaks of this with the chorus that Orestes might have sent his hair to pay respects to their

⁶⁰² Sommerstein (1989) 127 n. 253: 'to the Erinyes the scent of human blood is as delightful as the face of a friend'. Podlecki (1989) 151 n. 253: 'a bold, chilling image... its horror lies precisely in the repulsiveness of the object which is said to "smile in welcome" to the Erinyes'. A similar horrific image will be discussed on the example of Eur. *Tr.* 1176-7 in chapter V, section 5.2.12.

⁶⁰³ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.4.

deceased father (*Ch.* 179), yet then she discovers footprints around the grave (*Ch.* 205). Astonished that the prints fit the size of her own feet (*Ch.* 206), she follows them until she meets a young man unknown to her. Orestes, hidden nearby the grave, overheard Electra's hopes about her brother's return. Now, face to face with his sister, he reveals to her his identity (*Ch.* 217-23):

Oρ.	σύνοιδ' Ὀρέστην πολλά σ' ἐκπαλουμένην.
Ηλ.	καὶ πρὸς τί δήτα τυγχάνω κατευγμάτων;
Oρ.	ὄδ' εἰμί· μὴ μάτευ' ἐμοῦ μάλλον φίλον.
Ηλ.	ἀλλ' ἢ δόλον τιν', ὦ ξέν', ἀμφί μοι πλέκεις;
Oρ.	αὐτὸς κατ' αὐτοῦ τάρρα μηχανορραφῶ.
Ηλ.	ἀλλ' ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶν θέλεις;
Oρ.	κᾶν τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἄρ', εἶπερ ἔν γε τοῖσι σοῖς.
Orestes:	I'm aware that you were very much extolling Orestes.
Electra:	And in what way, may I ask, have I gained what I prayed for?
Orestes:	I am he. Don't try to find one that's more your friend than I am.
Electra:	Look here, sir, are you trying to weave some web of trickery around me?
Orestes:	If I am, then I must be hatching plots against myself!
Electra:	What, will you laugh at my sufferings?
Orestes:	If I'm laughing at yours, then I'm also laughing at my own. ⁶⁰⁴

This dialogue, mainly based on the disbelieving sister questioning the brother, is presented in stichomythia, a technique of dramatic verse serving to increase tension and gradually lead to the characters' recognition.⁶⁰⁵ Although Orestes reveals to Electra that he is her brother with the blatant 'I am he' (ὄδ' εἰμί, *Ch.* 219) she, at first, does not receive the news well. In fact, she accuses him of being a stranger (ὦ ξέν', *Ch.* 220) who laughs at her amidst her misfortunes (ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶν θέλεις, *Ch.* 222).⁶⁰⁶ Here, we may recognize that the expression γελᾶν θέλεις, literally meaning 'you wish to laugh at', refers to Electra's disbelief in unexpectedly meeting her brother. With this expression, the princess apprehends Orestes' response as a possible act of ridiculing her.

⁶⁰⁴ English translation in Sommerstein (2008b) 241.

⁶⁰⁵ Rutherford (2012) 170.

⁶⁰⁶ Garvie (1986) 100 n. 222 notices that 'in the midst of my misfortunes' is a common expression in tragedy.

Noticeably, in her reserve towards the encountered stranger, Electra shows her fear of meeting a person negatively disposed to her, who would take pleasure in making her hope for her brother's return in vain. Her anxiety, therefore, is for being mocked.⁶⁰⁷ In this passage, then, the meaning of γελᾶν θέλεις 'you wish to laugh at' regards the idea of laughter as mockery, i.e. a disdainful behaviour, one that is set to hurt another by showing the laugher's non-friendly disposition.

Curiously, in his edition of the play, Sommerstein adds a stage note in this passage suggesting the fact that Orestes is 'laughing' as he says line 221.⁶⁰⁸ In this respect, the brother's laughter would be in reaction to Electra's accusation of pulling a trick (δόλος) on her (*Ch.* 220). With such interpretation, Electra's line 222 would be referring not only to the incredulity of Orestes' words, but also to his vocal burst of laughter. Such stage direction is an interesting addition, although possible, however, it is not necessary in explaining the meaning behind γελᾶν θέλεις in line 222. Whether the actor playing Orestes would, indeed, laugh or not, it remains clear that Electra's mention of laughter regards her perception of dealing with the mockery of a possible imposter with hostile intentions.

An unfriendly disposition may be expressed by one person to another, be it a mortal or a god. In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus presents the chilling image of a god laughing with superior delight at the misfortunes of a perpetrator. Orestes stands trial for matricide. Whilst Athena has gone to establish a jury of the best Athenian citizens to hear his case, the chorus of Erinyes sing of their role in maintaining the divine laws of vengeance (*Eu.* 489-565). Accordingly, the Furies speak of the a mortal man's obligation to 'respect the altar of Justice' (βωμὸν αἰδεσθαι δίκας, *Eu.* 539) if a one seeks prosperity in his life (οὐκ

⁶⁰⁷ Similar fear expressed by the Sophoclean Electra in Soph. *El.* 880.

⁶⁰⁸ Sommerstein (2008b) 241. In contrast, Smyth (1926) 183, Murray (1923) 26, Lloyd Jones (1979) 143.

ἀνολβος ἔσται, *Eu.* 551) and wishes to avoid total ruin (πανώλεθρος δ' οὔποτ' ἄν γένοιτο, *Eu.* 552). Such life devoid of misery is possible only when, apart from honouring the gods, one obeys two other ordained laws: honour thy parents (τοκέων σέβας εὔ προτίων, *Eu.* 545), and honour thy guests (ξενοτίμους / ἐπιστροφὰς δωμάτων / αἰδόμενός, *Eu.* 546-8). The chorus, then, through the metaphor of a sailor whose ship has gone off course, describes the miserable fate of a perpetrator of these laws (*Eu.* 558-65).

Χο. καλεῖ δ' ἀκούοντας οὐδὲν ἐν μέσῃ
 δυσπαλεῖ τε δίνα·
 γελαῖ δὲ δαίμων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θερμῶ,
 τὸν οὔποτ' ἀρχοῦντ' ἰδὼν ἀμαχάνοις
 δύαις λαπαδνὸν οὐδ' ὑπερθέοντ' ἄκραν:
 δι' αἰῶνος δὲ τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον
 ἔρματι προσβαλὼν δίκας
 ὤλετ' ἄκλαυστος, ἄστος.

Chorus: In the middle of the eddies, unable to fight his way out,
 he calls, but they [i.e. the gods] pay no heed;
 the deity **laughs at** the headstrong man,
 seeing him powerless, the one who boasted it could never
 happen,
 helpless distress, as he fails to surmount the crest of the
 wave:
 he has wrecked the ship of his former lifelong prosperity
 on the reef of Justice
 and perishes unwept, unseen.

Aeschylus depicts the chilling image of an unspecified divinity laughing (γελαῖ δὲ δαίμων) with malicious delight at the pleading of a man who thought he can avoid punishment for transgressing divine laws.⁶⁰⁹ What increases the horrifying effect of this image is the fact that this undefined deity, justly and without remorse, laughs at the destruction of the perpetrator. Without any sign of mercy, for ordained justice requires punishment, the vengeful god takes pleasure in seeing the ruin of the violator of law. Thus, the god's laughter signifies his/her justified negative disposition and, particularly, his/her *Schadenfreude*.

⁶⁰⁹ Podlecki (1989) 174 n. 560.

Olympian gods are also presented as scornful and vengeful forces. In the *Agamemnon*, Apollo is depicted not only as the patron of the prophetess Cassandra, but also as her destroyer. Taken captive by Agamemnon after the war, the Trojan princess accompanies her new master to Argos. Upon arrival, once the king and queen enter the palace, Cassandra speaks in prophetic frenzy of her future doom (Ag. 1256-60; 1264-76):

Κα. παπαῖ, οἶον τὸ πῦρ· ἐπέρχεται δέ μοι.
ὄτοτοῖ, Λύκει' Ἀπολλον, οἱ ἐγὼ ἐγώ.
αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη
λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσία,
κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν·
(...)
τί δῆτ' ἐμαυτῆς **καταγέλωτ'** ἔχω τάδε,
καὶ σκῆπτρα καὶ μαντεῖα περὶ δέρη στέφῃ;
σὲ μὲν πρὸ μοίρας τῆς ἐμῆς διαφθερῶ·
ἴτ' ἐς φθόρον· πεσόντα γ' ὠδ' ἀμείβομαι.
ἄλλην τιν' Ἄτην ἀντ' ἐμοῦ πλουτίζετε.
ἰδοὺ δ' Ἀπόλλων αὐτὸς οὐκδύων ἐμὲ
χρηστηρίαν ἐσθῆτ'. ἐποπτεύσας δέ με
κὰν τοῖσδε κόσμοις **καταγελωμένην** μέγα
φίλων ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οὐ διχορρόπως, μάτην
< >
κακουμένη δέ, φοιτὰς ὡς ἀγύρτρια,
πτωχὸς τάλαινα λιμοθνῆς ἠνεσχόμην·
καὶ νῦν ὁ μάντις μάντιν ἐκπράξας ἐμὲ
ἀπήγαγ' ἐς τοιάσδε θανασίμους τύχας⁶¹⁰

Cassandra: Papai! How the fire comes upon me! Ototoi! Apollo the Wolf-god! Ah me, ah me, <the pain!> [*Pointing wildly again*] This is the two footed-lioness, sleeping with a wolf while the noble lion was away, who will kill me, wretched that I am:

(...)

Why, then, have I got this gear on **to mock me**, and this staff, and the prophetic bands about my neck? I'll destroy you before meeting my own fate! [*She breaks her staff and throws the pieces to the ground.*] Go to perdition [*throwing off her neck-bands*] – now you're on the ground, this is how I get my own back on you [*trampling on them*]! Makes some other woman rich with ruin, instead of me! [*As she tears of her robe*] Look, it is Apollo himself who is stripping me of my prophetic garb. He looked on when I, wearing all these accoutrements, was being roundly and unanimously **mocked** by friends who acted like enemies <while I prophesied the truth> in vain, <and he did nothing to help

⁶¹⁰ Greek text in Sommerstein (2008b) 152-4.

me>; I endured having to wander like an itinerant begging priestess, a wretched, starving pauper. And now he, the Seer, has collected his debt from me, the seer, by hauling me off to this deadly fate;

The central point of this speech is the malignant influence of Apollo on Cassandra's life.⁶¹¹ The god had fallen in love with the beautiful Trojan princess and, in exchange for the promise of marriage, bestowed upon her the gift of prophecy ('the seer Apollo assigned me to this function', μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῶδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει, *Ag.* 1202). Cassandra, however, was not willing to submit her body to the god, hence rejected his seductive advances ('I consented, and then I cheated Loxias', ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην. *Ag.* 1208). In revenge for such deception, Apollo cursed the girl so that no one would believe her prophecies ('After I had done him this wrong, I could never make anyone believe anything I said', ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, ὡς τὰδ' ἤμπλακον, *Ag.* 1212). From this point on, Cassandra's life was deeply affected by Apollo's curse: although she became his priestess, her surroundings gave no credence to her words considering her to be mad.⁶¹² As we hear in her speech in lines 1258-60, Cassandra expresses her knowledge about her awaiting doom. She, then, blames her vengeful patron, Apollo, for leading her to this dreadful fate, as punishment for her misconduct: 'And now he, the Seer, has collected his debt from me, the seer, by hauling me off to this deadly fate' (καὶ νῦν ὁ μάντις μάντιν ἐκπράξας ἐμὲ /ἀπήγαγ' ἐς τοιάσδε θανασίμους τύχας, *Ag.* 1275-6).

In the passage quoted above, Cassandra makes two references to laughter: the expression καταγέλωτα ἔχω (*Ag.* 1264), literally meaning 'I receive, accept mockery', and the participle καταγελωμένην (*Ag.* 1271), meaning 'laughed down, mocked'.

The first laughter-word appears in line 1264, in which the princess speaks of her accoutrements as dispensing κατάγελως 'mockery' onto her.

⁶¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the so-called Cassandra scene in *Ag.* 1072-1330, see Chodkowski (1985) 233-67.

⁶¹² On Cassandra and prophetic madness, see Feder (1980) 84-90.

Here, she is referring to the prophetic regalia she is wearing: a staff (σκήπτρα), woolen ribbons hanging around her neck (μαντεία περὶ δέρη στέφη) and prophetic robe (χρηστηρίαν ἐσθῆτ'). These garments indicate her office as a prophetess, but also stand an ambiguous symbol of her dedication to Apollo as well as the god's curse sent upon her. In face of upcoming death, the Trojan princess has no longer reasons to fear Apollo's wrath, thus tears off the prophetic insignia, which to her have become a symbol of the god's mockery.⁶¹³ Significant is the fact that as punishment for his rejection, Apollo did not unstow the gift of prophecy from Cassandra, but modified it in such a way that it became a burden.⁶¹⁴ The garments, then, embody Apollo's derisive vengeance of the deceitful princess.

Curiously, despite her office as a priestess, Cassandra was also laughed at by her friends and family whose mocking disposition was influenced by the insulted god. Apollo, then, only watched as the princess experienced ridicule and humiliation in Troy. The laughter of her fellowmen, therefore, was also a part of Cassandra's punishment.

In the discussed passage, therefore, we may recognize that both references to laughter concern the idea of mockery: the expression καταγέλωτα ἔχω (Ag. 1264), considers indirectly Cassandra's vengeful pursuer, Apollo, whereas the word καταγελωμένην (Ag. 1271) relates to the hostile reaction of the princess' Trojan fellowmen towards her.

A final example of laughter connected with mockery in the extant plays of Aeschylus can be found in the *Eumenides*. Orestes has been freed by the Athenian court from the accusation of matricide. The Erinyes are furious with this sentence and take it as a dishonor to their ordained role as persecutors of

⁶¹³ Denniston and Page (1957) 185 n. 1264ff. 'Since she is to die, and Apollo has long ago turned against her, she has nothing more to fear from man or god, and there is nothing to deter her from wreaking such feeble vengeance on Apollo as she may be destroying the symbols of his worship.'

⁶¹⁴ Schein (1982) 12

mortal guilt. Despite Athena's efforts to calm them down, the chorus twice expresses its outrage (*Eu.* 789-92 and repeated verbatim in 819-22)

Χο. **γελῶμαι** δύσοιστ' ἐν
 πολίταις ἔπαθον·
 ἰὼ μεγάλατοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς
 Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς.

Chorus: **I am laughed at**; what I suffer
 from the citizens is hard to bear.
 Oh, your ruin is great,
 you ill-fated daughters of Night
 grieving for your dishonour!⁶¹⁵

Here, the horrific deities of vengeance, the Erinyes themselves, become the object of laughter. The Furies hold the gods, Athena and Apollo, as well as the Athenians responsible for their situation: losing the case, losing the rights to the perpetrator Orestes, and most importantly, losing their honour. The chorus is extremely protective of its τιμή 'honour', which may be understood also as 'worship' as well as 'office'.⁶¹⁶ Here, the chorus equates the adjective ἄτιμος 'dishonoured' (*Eu.* 780; 810) with the passive γελῶμαι 'I am laughed at' (*Eu.* 789; 819). Again the image of laughter is a social one for it is associated with the idea of disrespect and personal disgrace from others.⁶¹⁷ This aspect is underlined by the social setting of the scene – the Erinyes are surrounded by the Athenian judges, representatives of the state and Athena herself.⁶¹⁸ The outraged Erinyes fall into their retaliatory mood and swear to send misfortune onto Athens for their dishonor (*Eu.* 780-87; 810-17). However, Athena manages to persuade them not to do that by ascribing new roles to them, as benevolent goddesses. Their new office will be preventing mortals from transgressing ancient laws of piety, hospitality and honoring one's parents (*Eu.* 903-15). At

⁶¹⁵ English translation in Collard (2002) 106-7.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v. τιμή.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. the translation of γελῶμαι in Sommerstein (2008b) 455: 'I am a laughing-stock'.

⁶¹⁸ Chodkowski (1975) 95. Orestes leaves the scene at *Eu.* 778, during the chorus' cry of outrage. Likewise Apollo, although the text does not indicate the exact moment of his exit. In his edition of the play, Sommerstein (2008b) 451 n. 157 places this moment at *Eu.* 754.

first reluctant, the Furies agree to change their functions and become, hence, known as the Eumenides.

From the examples above it becomes apparent that references to laughter in Aeschylus may regard the idea of mockery. Interestingly, both mortals and gods are capable of laughing in derision, however, we have seen that the gods are justified for such action – they laugh at perpetrators and transgressors of divine laws. In the extant plays, we find examples of men laughing at men (Orestes at Electra, friends at Cassandra), and gods laughing at men (a god at a perjurer, Apollo at Cassandra), but not men laughing at gods. Such action would only bring suffering onto man, for it would be a transgression. The social role of laughter is presented to remind the audience that one must maintain respectful relations with the divine, or else he/she will experience the gods' wrath. The message emerging from these few occurrences of mockery is clear: honour thy gods, or else, apart from punishment, you will earn their malicious, yet justified, laughter.

3.2.6. Triumph

Triumphant laughter may be connected with the feeling of glee over one's achievements, a fortunate turn of events, but most commonly with the defeat of an enemy.⁶¹⁹ The main difference between a laugh of triumph and a laugh of simple delight lies in the fact that the former explicitly regards interpersonal relations, whereas the latter needs not. Since the killing of Agamemnon antagonized Clytaemestra with her children, some scholars view the nurse's remark about the queen's γέλως (*Ch.* 738) in terms of a 'gloating laugh of triumph'.⁶²⁰ In order to accept such an interpretation of laughter for

⁶¹⁹ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.3.

⁶²⁰ Burian and Shapiro (2003) 134; Arnould (1990) 40: 'rire de triomphe'; similarly, Moreau (2000) 402: 'le sourire du méchant triomphant', here γέλως interpreted as 'smile'.

this example, we must specify the quality of the relations between Clytaemestra and her offspring.

Agamemnon's children reveal a highly negative disposition towards their mother. In particular, such attitude is discernible already from the beginning of the play. In the first episode, Electra's prayer at her father's tomb reflects the general reasons for her animosity with Clytaemestra (*Ch.* 132-144):

ΗΛ. πεπραμένοι γὰρ νῦν γέ πως ἀλώμεθα
 πρὸς τῆς τεκούσης, ἄνδρα δ' ἀντηλλάξατο
 Αἴγισθον, ὅσπερ σοῦ φόνου μεταίτιος.
 κἀγὼ μὲν ἀντίδουλος, ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων
 φεύγων Ὀρέστης ἐστίν, οἱ δ' ὑπερκόπως
 ἐν τοῖσι σοῖς πόνοισι χλίουσιν μέγα.
 ἐλθεῖν δ' Ὀρέστην δεῦρο σὺν τύχῃ τινὶ
 κατεύχομαί σοι, καὶ σὺ κλυθὶ μου, πάτερ·
 αὐτῇ τέ μοι δὸς σωφρονεστέραν πολὺ
 μητρὸς γενέσθαι χεῖρά τ' εὐσεβεστέραν.
 ἡμῖν μὲν εὐχὰς τάσδε, τοῖς δ' ἐναντίοις
 λέγω φανῆναι σοῦ, πάτερ, τιμάορον,
 καὶ τοὺς κτανόντας ἀντικαθθανεῖν δίκη.

Electra: For at present we are [i.e. Electra and Orestes] virtually vagrants, sold by our mother, who has received in exchange a new man – Aegisthus, the same who shared the guilt of your murder. I am in the position of a slave, Orestes is in exile, deprived of his property, and they are greatly and extravagantly luxuriating in the wealth for which you toiled. I pray to you – and do hear me, father – for Orestes to come here by some stroke of fortune; and for myself, grant that I may be far more virtuous than my mother, and more righteous in action. These prayers for us. Upon our enemies I ask for there to appear an avenger for you, and for the killers to meet justice and perish in their turn.

As we can see, Electra refers to her mother in the most unfavourable terms; the queen is depicted as a shameless murderess and lustful woman ('[She] has received in exchange a new man – Aegisthus, the same who shared the guilt of your murder', ἄνδρα δ' ἀντηλλάξατο / Αἴγισθον, ὅσπερ σοῦ φόνου μεταίτιος, *Ch.* 133-34), an illegitimate ruler ('they are greatly and extravagantly luxuriating the wealth for which you [i.e. Agamemnon] toiled', οἱ δ' ὑπερκόπως / ἐν τοῖσι σοῖς πόνοισι χλίουσιν μέγα, *Ch.* 136-37), and a

considerably cruel parent ('we are virtually vagrants, sold by our mother', πεπραμένοι γὰρ νῦν γέ πως ἀλώμεθα, *Ch.* 132-33; 'I am in the position of a slave, Orestes is in exile', καγὼ μὲν ἀντίδουλος, ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων / φεύγων Ὀρέστης ἐστίν, *Ch.* 135-35). The princess ends her prayer by asking for Clytaemestra and her accomplice to be 'justly slain in turn' (ἀντικαθθανεῖν δίκῃ, *Ch.* 144). Without any doubt, Electra holds a grudge against her mother for the killing of her father as well as for her own and Orestes' mistreatment. In fact, she considers Clytaemestra to be an explicit 'enemy' of hers,⁶²¹ what she later straightforwardly tells Orestes: 'for *her* I hate, with every justification' (ἡ δὲ πανδίκως ἐχθαίρεται, *Ch.* 241).⁶²² Throughout the play Electra speaks only ill of her mother and plots against her. It is, hence, obvious that the princess' sentiments towards her mother are far from filial love.

Not surprisingly, Orestes shares his sister's hostility towards Clytaemestra. His reason for returning to Argos is to take revenge on Agamemnon's murderers, which means killing his own mother, as he says in *Ch.* 435-37:

Ορ.	πατρός δ' ἀτίμωσιν ἄρα τείσει ἕκατι μὲν δαιμόνων, ἕκατι δ' ἀμᾶν χερῶν.
Orestes:	Well, she shall pay for degrading my father with the help of the gods and with the help of my hands.

Orestes will maintain his stance even after having slayed Clytaemestra and Aegisthus; upon the corpses of his mother and her lover, the young prince will stress the fact of the hostility which has risen between the queen and her children 'who were once her friends but are now, as they have shown, her deadly enemies' (φίλον τέως, νῦν δ' ἐχθρόν, ὡς φαίνει, δάκος, *Ch.* 993). It

⁶²¹ After finding on Agamemnon's grave a lock of hair resembling her own (*Ch.* 168), Electra deliberates upon its only two possible sources: her mother or brother. Interestingly, she makes a clear distinction between whom she considers to be her 'enemy' (ἐχθρός, *Ch.* 198), i.e. Clytaemestra, and whom her 'kin' (ξυγγενής, *Ch.* 199), i.e. Orestes.

⁶²² Original emphasis. Literal meaning: 'she is justly detested'.

becomes, then, evident that Electra and Orestes share the hostility towards their mother.

In relation to the queen's disposition towards her children, the siblings are convinced that their antagonism is reciprocal. Orestes explicitly speaks of this just after revealing his true identity to his sister: 'I know that our closest kin are bitterly hostile to us both' (τοὺς φιλτάτους γὰρ οἶδα νῶν ὄντας πικρούς, *Ch.* 234). Also the Chorus of elderly women, who accompany Electra and Orestes during their reunion, reflect the same negative opinion about the queen's animosity with her kin and support the siblings in their plans for her killing.⁶²³ However, in the *Libation Bearers* we have more opportunities to hear about Clytaemestra from other characters than to witness her words and actions onstage. As a *dramatis persona*, Aeschylus has the queen to appear for the first time only midway through the play when she meets her son disguised as a merchant (*Ch.* 668-718). Apart from this short scene, we only see her next when her son is about to kill her (*Ch.* 885-930). Therefore, the only opportunity to observe Clytaemestra's character occurs during her two encounters with Orestes.

In the third episode, on hearing the news about her son's death (albeit false), the queen raises a lament (*Ch.* 691-699):

Κλ. οἱ γῶ, κατ' ἄκρας εἶπας ὡς πορθούμεθα.
ὦ δυσπάλαιστε τῶνδε δωμάτων Ἀρά,
ὡς πόλλ' ἐπωπᾶς κάκποδῶν εὖ κείμενα,
τόξοις πρόσωθεν εὐσκόποις χειρουμένη.
φίλων ἀποψιλοῖς με τὴν παναθλίαν.
καὶ νῦν – Ὀρέστης ἦν γὰρ εὐβούλως ἔχων,
ἔξω κομίζων ὀλεθρίου πηλοῦ πόδα –
νῦν δ' ἦπερ ἐν δόμοισι † βακχίας καλῆς
ιατρὸς ἐλπίς ἦν, παροῦσαν ἐγγράφει.

⁶²³ The Chorus also refers to the queen in terms of an 'enemy', cf. *Ch.* 123: τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἀνταμείβεσθαι κακοῖς, 'to return your enemy evil for evil'; and *Ch.* 173: ἐχθροὶ γὰρ οἷς προσῆκε πενθῆσαι τριχί, 'those who ought to have mourned him with hair-offerings are his enemies'. Cf. Sommerstein (2008b) 233 n. 35: 'Despite the plural, the description fits no one but Clytaemestra'.

Clytaemestra: Ah me, we are completely, utterly ruined! Curse of this house, so hard to wrestle free of, how much you keep your eye on, even when it's placed well out of the way! Scoring hits at long range with well-aimed arrows, you strip me, wretched me, of my loved ones! And now Orestes – he was showing wisdom in keeping his feet clear of the deadly mire; but now, the hope there was in the house of a cure for your evil revelry – write it down as having betrayed us!

With such a spontaneous reaction to the sad news, we may be of the impression that Clytaemestra's response seems contradictory to her negative image as a parent presented earlier in the play by other characters, i.e. Electra and Orestes who described her as a 'mother, who has an impious spirit towards her children that belies the name of mother' (μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπώνυμον / φρόνημα παισὶ δύσθεον πεπαμένη, *Ch.* 190-91). In fact, her lament seems typical of a parent shocked to find out about the passing of her child.⁶²⁴ In this respect, the scene of Clytaemestra's first encounter with Orestes does not give decisive evidence for the queen's animosity towards her children, at least in regard of her son Orestes.

However, Cilissa's remarks in *Ch.* 668-718 about Clytaemestra's feigned sorrow and concealed inner 'laughter' shatter the ambivalent impression the queen might have made in her first appearance (*Ch.* 668-718). In his 1994 study, Chodkowski points to the important role the nurse's description plays in the audiences reception of the queen's character.⁶²⁵ In particular, any sympathy Clytaemestra could have evoked with her lament is lost through Cilissa's astute observations about the queen's clandestine response to the news (*Ch.* 737-41). The most striking image is that of Clytaemestra's γέλως, i.e. inward laughter (*Ch.* 738) at the news of her son's death. As discussed in the previous section, it is the queen's eyes that function as a non-verbal leakage, i.e. they give away her

⁶²⁴ Garvie (1986) on vv. 691-99: 'There is... not a word in the speech that need be taken as anything other than the sincere and natural reaction of a mother who has lost her son'.

⁶²⁵ Chodkowski (1994) 230: 'Wspomniana uwaga prostej kobiety o niegodziwej radości królowej ma na celu eliminację jakiegokolwiek sympatii widza dla tej, którą Orestes ma zabić jako swą matkę'. Cf. Rosenmeyer (1982) 218: 'She [i.e. Cilissa] helps us immunize against Clytaemestra's terror'.

true sentiments. Clytaemestra, therefore, is but a vicious murderess laughing at the fact to get away with her crime.⁶²⁶ Indeed, little sympathy, if not none, becomes a heartless mother pictured as laughing over the death of her son.

Aeschylus reinforces the queen's negative image by juxtaposing the information of her feigned maternal grief with the nurse's expression of genuine sorrow (*Ch.* 743-63):

Τρ. ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ·
 ὡς μοι τὰ μὲν παλαιὰ συγκεκραμένα
 ἄλγη δύσοιστα τοῖσδ' ἐν Ἀτρέως δόμοις
 τυχόντ' ἐμὴν ἤλγυνεν ἐν στέροιν φρένα,
 ἀλλ' οὔτι πῶ τοιόνδε πῆμ' ἀνeschόμην.
 τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τλημόνως ἦντλουν κακά·
 φίλον δ' Ὀρέστην, τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς τριβὴν,
 ὄν ἐξέθρεψα μητρόθεν δεδεγμένη
 καὶ νυκτιπλάγκτων ὀρθίων κελευμάτων
 < >
 καὶ πολλὰ καὶ μοχθήρ' ἀνωφέλητ' ἐμοὶ
 τλάση – τὸ μὴ φρονοῦν γὰρ ὡσπερεὶ βοτὸν
 τρέφειν ἀνάγκη, πῶς γὰρ οὔ; τρόπῳ φρενός·
 οὐ γὰρ τι φωνεῖ παῖς ἔτ' ὢν ἐν σπαργάνοις,
 εἰ λιμός, ἢ δίψη τις, ἢ λιψουρία
 ἔχει· νέα δὲ νηδὺς αὐτάρκης τέκνων.
 τούτων πρόμαντις οὔσα, πολλὰ δ', οἶομαι,
 ψευσθεῖσα, παιδὸς σπαργάνων φαιδρύντρια –
 κναφεὺς τροφεὺς τε ταῦτὸν εἰχέτην τέλος.
 ἐγὼ διπλᾶς δὲ τάσδε χειρωναξίας
 ἔχουσ' Ὀρέστην ἐξεδεξάμην πατρί·
 τεθνηκότος δὲ νῦν τάλαινα πεύθομαι.

Cilissa: O wretched me! For I found the old griefs that have happened in this house of Atreus hard enough to bear, all mixed together as they were, and they pained my heart within my breast; but I have never yet had to endure a sorrow like this. Under the other troubles I patiently bore up. But dear Orestes, who wore away my life with toil, whom I reared after receiving him straight from his mother's womb! <Over and Over again I heard> his shrill, imperative cries, which forced me to wander around at night <and perform> many disagreeable tasks which I had to endure and which did me no good. A child without intelligence must needs be reared like an animal – how could it be otherwise? – by the intelligence of his nurse; when he's still an infant in swaddling clothes he can't speak at all if he's in the grip of hunger or thirst, say, or of an urge

⁶²⁶ Hogan (1984) 133 n. 737.

to make water – and the immature bowel of small children is its own master. I had to divine these things in advance, and often, I fancy, I was mistaken, and as cleaner of the baby’s wrappings - well, a launderer and a career were holding the same post. Practising both these two crafts, I reared up Orestes for his father; and now, to my misery, I learn that he is dead!

In comparison to Clytaemestra’s lament in *Ch.* 691-699, Cilissa’s sadness seems more sincere. Her reminiscence of the past toils she had to endure while nursing the baby prince, albeit meticulous in certain details, which some scholars find pertaining to the comic (especially the reference to nappies and urination)⁶²⁷, is far more personal, than the queen’s complaints about Orestes being another victim of a curse sent upon the House of Atreus (*Ch.* 692-94).⁶²⁸ With this juxtaposition of feigned and genuine maternal grief, Aeschylus makes a first direct reference to the queen’s animosity with her son.

Any remaining doubts regarding Clytaemestra’s negative disposition towards Orestes are completely dispelled in her second appearance within the play which also happens to be her final encounter with her son in *Ch.* 892-931. As the queen recognizes that Agamemnon’s heir has come to avenge his father, the first thing she does is seek a weapon for self-defense: ‘Someone give me, right away, an axe that can kill a man! (δοίη τις ἀνδροκμηῆτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος, *Ch.* 889). Confronted with Orestes but unskilled with weaponry, she attempts to emotionally manipulate her son by the gesture of baring one breast (*Ch.* 896-98):

Κλ. ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ’ αἶδεσαι, τέκνον,
 μαστόν, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἄμα
 οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα.

⁶²⁷ Cf. Jouanna (1998) 168-69; Burnett (1998) 111 considers Cilissa an ‘almost carnivalesque figure... who is a fresh surprise each time one turns to this play’; Moreau (2000) 404 stresses the incongruity between the nurse’s low style of language and the tragic milieu (‘Le spectateur sourit, bien sûr, du décalage entre les occupations triviales de la nourrice et l’atmosphère tragique’); Goldhill (2006) 89: ‘It might be suggested that this combination of words that we might not expect to see except in comedy, delivered by a less elevated character, is a scene, therefore, of comic potential’.

⁶²⁸ Bennett Anderson (1932) 306; Sommerstein (1996) 267.

Clytaemestra: Stop, my son, and have respect, my child, for this breast, at which you many times drowsed while sucking nourishing milk with your gums!

Although the gesture makes the prince hesitate for a moment, however, in the end, it does not stop him from fulfilling his plan. The queen then tries to use persuasion by giving arguments for her past crime, but in vain.⁶²⁹ Finally, when she realizes her end is near, Clytaemestra threatens Orestes with the Furies, goddesses of vengeance, who will haunt him for matricide: 'Take care! Beware your mother's wrathful hounds!' (ὄρα, φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας, *Ch.* 924). On the basis of the queen's behaviour towards her son based on 1) physical self-defense, 2) manipulation, 3) mediation and finally 4) posing threats, it is evident that Clytaemestra does not treat Orestes with maternal love. On the contrary, her actions are typical of a person attacked by an aggressor. The hostility between mother and son is most visible in Clytaemestra's statement expressed just after demanding an axe: 'Let us find out whether we're to be the winners or the losers' (εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν, ἢ νικώμεθα, *Ch.* 890). In the end, it is Orestes, Agamemnon's avenger who wins the fight over the House of Atreus, as the prince refers to his act of matricide as a 'victory' (νίκη, *Ch.* 1017).

It becomes, thus, clear that, from the beginning of the play, reciprocal antagonism forms the basis of the rapport between Clytaemestra and her children. In this respect, apart from 'delight', the queen's γέλως, i.e. inner laughter mentioned by the nurse in *Ch.* 738, may also be interpreted as a 'laugh of triumph', namely, of a person believing to have been freed of a dreaded enemy.

⁶²⁹ The manipulation is obvious when we bear in mind Cilissa's remark about caring for Orestes, whom she 'reared after receiving him straight from his mother's womb' (ὄν ἐξέθρεψα μητροθέν δεδεγμένη, *Ch.* 750). In this respect, Clytaemestra had little to do with her son's nursing.

3.2.7. Idea of brightness

A typically Greek understanding of laughter connects the phenomenon with the concept of shinning. As discussed in chapter II, many Greek laughter-words contain this idea within their semantics, especially γελ- rooted terms.⁶³⁰

Such reference to laughter in relation to brightness is traceable in the tragedy *Prometheus Bound*. By Zeus' command, Prometheus is to be punished for stealing fire from the gods and supporting the race of mortal men. After being chained to a mountain in the Caucasus, the Titan begins his speech with an invocation to the elements (*Pr.* 88-92):

Πρ. ὦ δῖος αἰθήρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτορ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ.
ἴδεσθέ μ' οἷα πρὸς θεῶν πάσχω θεός.

Prometheus: Bright sky, springs of the rivers, swift-winged winds,
numberless laughter of the sea's waves, Earth,
mother of all, and all-seeing circle of the sun:
I call upon you all to see what I,
a god, suffer at the hands of gods.⁶³¹

In this passage, Prometheus calls upon the sky (αἰθήρ), the winds (πνοαί), the rivers (ποταμοί), the sea (πόντια κύματα), the earth (γῆ) and the sun (ἥλιος) to witness his torture.⁶³² Whilst summoning the sea, the Titan speaks of its waves' 'numberless laughter' (ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, *Pr.* 89). Here, Aeschylus connects the image of a typically human phenomenon with that of the actions of a natural element, in this case, the sea. What is of our interest is the fact that the reference to laughter occurs in relation to a non-human subject.

The connection of nature with laughter is well attested in Greek literature of the archaic and classical period. In regard of the sea, Theognis

⁶³⁰ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.6.

⁶³¹ English translation in Grene (2013) 73.

⁶³² For other similar apostrophes in Greek tragedy to inanimate or non-human witnesses of a hero's suffering, see Griffith (1983) 101-102 n. 88-92. On the Eastern convention of calling upon gods or cosmic elements as witnesses, see West (1997) 20-21, 580.

describes it as ‘rejoicing’ along with ‘laughing’ as he presents nature’s reaction to the birth of Apollo.⁶³³ Moreover, the image of the sea explicitly laughing is found in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Here, along with the earth and sky, the sea ‘laughs’ at the appearance of the sweetly scented narcissus.⁶³⁴ In drama, we find another reference to a ‘laughing’ sea in fr. 336 of a tragedy of unknown authorship, according to which ‘the calm sea laughs in its ripples’.⁶³⁵ On the basis of the examples above, we may recognize that ancient Greek poetry had a well-established tradition of projecting human behaviours onto natural elements, with the sea, in particular.⁶³⁶

It is, therefore, apparent that by having the title character speak of the sea waves’ ‘countless laughter’ in the quoted passage, Aeschylus follows this poetic tradition of regarding nature in a metaphorical manner.⁶³⁷ In view of the fact that the γελ- root has a strong connection with the concepts of brightness,⁶³⁸ the figurative sense of γέλασμα, chiefly, alludes to the visual aspect of

⁶³³ Thgn. 8-10: ἐγέλασσε δὲ γαῖα πελώρη, γήθησεν δὲ βαθὺς πόντος ἄλος πολιῆς, ‘the huge Earth laughed, and the deep waters of the hoary brine rejoiced’; translation in Edmonds (1954) 231. Cf. Zalewska-Jura (2003) 68. For the debate on the disputable authenticity of v. 1-18 of the *Corpus Theognidum*, see Bartol (2005) 341.

⁶³⁴ *Hom. Hymn.* 2. 13-14: πᾶς τ’ οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ὑπερθεῖν γαῖά τε πᾶσ’ ἐγελάσσε καὶ ἀλμυρὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης, ‘the whole vast heaven and the whole earth laughed, and the salty swell of the sea’; translation in Foley (1994) 2.

⁶³⁵ *Adesp. trag.* 336 N: ἀκύματος δὲ πορθμὸς ἐν φρίκη γελαῖ (my translation).

⁶³⁶ Cf. Poll.6.200: παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς (Aischyl Prom 89) τὸ τῆς θαλάττης γέλασμα, ‘in poetry, (Aes. Pr. 89) the laughter of the sea’. Same motive in Roman literature, e.g. Lucretius 1.8: ‘tibi rident aequora ponti’; Catullus 64. 269-74: ‘quae tarde primum clementi flamine pulsae / procedunt leviterque sonant plangore cachinni’, ‘The breakers are sluggish at first in the gentle breeze / and splash on the beach with the sound of quiet laughter’, translation in Mulroy (2002) 67. Noticeable examples in English literature: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4. 165: ‘Cheer’d with the grateful smell old ocean smiles’; Moore, *Light in the Haram*: 158-70: ‘for she brighten’d all over – / like any fair lake that the breeze is upon, / when it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun’; Byron, *Giaour* 12-15: There mildly dimpling Ocean’s cheek / Reflects the tints of many a peak, / Caught by the laughing tides that lave / Those Edens of the eastern wave.’ Modern Greek poetry also maintains this tradition, cf. Y. Kotzioulas, *Love of Nature*: “Under the haze of Nature’s mantle/I see the land laugh:/Oh, could I but rise, at such a time/Ever upwards with the smoke”, cited in Merry (2004) 287.

⁶³⁷ In contrast, Castoriadis (2007) 24, who by hypallage ascribes ἀνήριθμον ‘countless’ to κυμάτων ‘waves’ and not to γέλασμα ‘laughter’. Cf. the scholiast’s interpretation of the laughter-word as a substitution for χῦμα, ‘flow’ in Sch. Aes. Pr. 90a (ed. Herington).

⁶³⁸ See chapter II, section 2.1.1.1 for etymological evidence.

Prometheus' perception of the sea, i.e. the innumerable reflections of light on the sea's surface. Although we may not exclude the evocation of other concepts through this lexeme, for instance, the idea of sound, however, scholars agree upon the predominance of the visual element in the semantics of γέλασμα.⁶³⁹ Noticeably, such is the main understanding of this laughter-word reflected in the many English translations of this Aeschylean tragedy.⁶⁴⁰ In the *Prometheus Bound*, then, γέλασμα reflects the distinctly Greek perception of laughter's relation to the phenomenon of shining.

What is of importance in this example is the fact that the poet, again, employs the image of laughter for metaphorical purposes. As Gilbert Norwood notices in his 1920 study *Greek Tragedy*, 'metaphor is the natural speech' of Aeschylus, with which he creates in his dramas a picturesque style of language.⁶⁴¹ The word γέλασμα, then, with its figurative sense, enriches the picturesqueness of the *Prometheus Bound*.

In the first part of this chapter, I have discussed the interpretations of laughter-words employed by Aeschylus in the preserved tragedies. What has emerged from my examination is the fact that the poet evokes various concepts of laughter, despite a small number of its references. On the basis of our analysis above, we may distinguish four main ideas of the discussed phenomenon. Three of these refer to the universal understandings of laughter

⁶³⁹ For γέλασμα perceived as exclusively visual, see Mather (1883) 71 n. 89-92: 'laughter always implies sound as well as sight, which makes it inappropriate here'; Griffith (1983) 102 n. 90: γέλασμα: the twinkling of the sunlight on the surface'; Rackham (2013) 47 n. 90: 'γέλασμα betokens the flashing of ripples in the sun... not their plashing on the beach'.

⁶⁴⁰ The idea of shining is common, although translators render γέλασμα differently: 1) 'laughter', e.g. Smyth (1952) 225: 'multitudinous laughter of the waves of ocean'; Scully and Herington (1989) 33-34: 'you the waves the immense laughter easing the sea'; 2) 'smile': Podlecki (2005) 81: 'countless smiles on the billowing sea'; Conacher (1980) 34-35: 'many-twinkling smiles of ocean waves'; 3) 'twinkle': Sommerstein (2008a) 455: 'countless twinkling waves of the sea'. For modern problems in translating the expression ποντίων τε κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα (although in the French language), see Mund-Dopchie (1984).

⁶⁴¹ Norwood (1920) 121-4, who considers picturesqueness as one of the three characteristics of Aeschylean drama, along with grandeur and simplicity.

in terms of 1) expression of emotions, 2) mean of communication, and 3) act of derision. Considering the sphere of sentiments, we find images of laughter related to the experience of triumphant delight. Interestingly, Aeschylus also mentions laughter in association with a feeling of joy or a state of happiness, however through negation. In regard of communication, the references to the phenomenon include sending a positive message in the form of a greeting as well as a feigned message of amiability. Next, the concept of mockery is clearly discernible in those instances in which the characters recognize themselves to be the object of others' laughter and, hence, fear it or resent it. Finally, the last general concept of the discussed phenomenon appears in connection with 4) the idea of brightness. It is, therefore, apparent that, in his tragedies, Aeschylus is fully aware of the complexity of the phenomenon of laughter.

3.3. Laughter in the fragments

Aeschylus is assumed to have composed approximately 70 tragedies and 15 satyr plays.⁶⁴² Apart from the extant 7 tragedies, we are in the possession of around 400 fragments of lost plays. Out of these fragments only 6 contain discernible laughter-words. These lexemes are enlisted in table 10 below.⁶⁴³

Fragment	Lexeme	Form in text	Grammar
fr. 290	ἀγέλαστος	ἀγέλαστος (φρήν)	Nom. sg. (m)
fr. 47a	γελάω	γελαῖ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
fr. 281a	γελάω	καγγέλα	Imp. pr. act. 2 nd sg.
fr. 47a	γελοῖος	τὰ γελοῖα	Acc. pl. (n)
fr. 180	γελοτοποιός	γελοτοποιόν (βέλος)	Acc. sg. (n)
fr. 455	γέλως	γέλως (σαρδόνιος)	Nom. sg. (m)

Table 11. List of Greek laughter-words in the fragments of Aeschylus.

⁶⁴² Information from ancient sources remains inconclusive, however scholars tend to accept this number, e.g. Chodkowski (1993) 24. In general, the *Vita Aeschyli* (13) ascribes 70 tragedies and 5 satyr plays, Suda declares 90 dramas in whole, whereas the incomplete catalogue of Aeschylean works in the oldest manuscript *Mediceus* (M) *seu Laurentianus* enlists 73 (or 72) titles. For the debate on the number of dramas, see Steffen (1958) 21, Lesky (2006) 74, Zalewska-Jura (2006) 50.

⁶⁴³ The fragments of Aeschylus are numbered according to the edition of Radt in *TrGF* III.

Four of these references to laughter are found in attributed fragments, i.e. fr. 180 fr.281a and twice in fr. 47a; whereas the sources of the other two, namely fr. 290 and fr. 455 remain unknown. Moreover, fr. 290 has been preserved only in the form of two-word expressions: φρήν ἀγέλαστος ‘laughterless mind’, whereas fr. 455 with the reference to σαρδόνιος γέλως ‘Sardonic laughter’ is generally considered to be non-authentic. Noticeably, the other four fragments occur in a larger context which enables a broader discussion. For this reason, I have divided this section into three parts: firstly, I will examine the fragments with a preserved context; secondly, I will analyze the fragment preserved as an expression; and finally, I will shortly discuss the single spurious fragment.

3.3.1. Fragments with context

From the six instances of laughter-words in Aeschylean fragments, four occur within larger passages. I will discuss these references to laughter in relation to such general concepts: 1) signal of amiability, 2) amusement, 3) derision, and 4) Schadenfreude.

3.3.1.1. Signal of amiability

A reference to laughter as a mean of communication is found in fr. 47a attributed to the satyr-drama *Net-Haulers* (Δικτυουλκοί). Although only seven fragments of this play have survived, scholars, however, have been able to reconstruct its general plot.⁶⁴⁴ Set on the island of Seriphos, the drama narrates the story of the rescue of Danaë and her baby by the satyrs. The Argive princess and her son had been cast into the sea in a wooden chest by her father Acrisius. In fr. 46a, we hear of two characters spotting the chest at sea and seeking help

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. Podlecki (2005) 9-11.

to haul it on shore.⁶⁴⁵ Next, in fr. 46c, we find out that these characters are in need of further assistance to pull the object in, thus, call upon the locals for help. Instead of the island farmers, the chorus of satyrs appears along with Silenus.⁶⁴⁶ The next fragment 47a, the longest surviving of the play, contains the dialogue between Danaë and the smitten Silenus, who woos her and tries to convince her to stay with him. The fragment ends with the chorus of satyrs singing about the pleasures of the life of a satyr and rejoicing at the union of Silenus and the princess. Scholars suggest that the play must have resolved in Danaë being rescued by Dictys, the brother of the island's ruler, Polydectes, from her forthcoming 'marriage' to the Father of the satyrs.⁶⁴⁷

The explicit reference to laughter appears in this longest fragment 47a of the *Net-Haulers*. Silenus expresses his interest in the beautiful Danaë and wants to become her official supporter as well as protector (πρόξενόν... καὶ προπράκτορα, fr. 47 a 768-769). In order to convince the princess, he points to her son's visibly favourable disposition towards him (fr. 47a 770-771):

Σι.]. ε μαῖαν ὡς γερασμίαν]. ἠπίοις προσφθέγμασιν
Silenus:	[And look, the baby is greeting me fondly] as if I were his honoured nurse, [and address]ing me with tender sounds. ⁶⁴⁸

Despite the fragmentary state of the verses, scholars, generally, perceive the baby's reaction to the Father of the satyrs as positive. For instance, Denys L. Page proposes reconstructing the missing predicate in line 771 referring to the

⁶⁴⁵ Scholars disagree in indicating these two characters, e.g. two fishermen (*piscatores*) in Steffen (1935) 11; Dictys and Silenus in Lloyd-Jones (1957) 532; a fisherman and Dictys in Sommerstein (2008c) 44-47.

⁶⁴⁶ Argued by Zalewska-Jura (2006) 51, who points at the similarities with Soph. *Ich.* 39-44 Lloyd-Jones. Here, the chorus of satyrs response to Apollo's summon for help in finding his stolen cattle, although the god referred to local men.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Sommerstein (1996) 332;

⁶⁴⁸ Translation in Sommerstein (2008c) 49. Hereon, all Greek texts and English translations regarding Aeschylean fragments come from Sommerstein (2008c).

infant's action with *σαίνει* meaning 'greet's'.⁶⁴⁹ According to Silenus, Perseus treats him as if he were a familiar 'old woman who takes care of him' (*μαῖαν γερασμίαν*), and, hence, makes towards him 'tender sounds' (literally 'childish salutations', *ἠπίοις προσφθέγμασιν*). This idea is repeated a little further by Silenus in line 786, in which he recognizes these sounds to be the baby's laughter sent in his direction (fr. 47a 786-88):

Σι.	ἰδο]ύ, γελα̃ μου προσορῶν].. ὁ μικκός λιπαρόν τὸ μιλτ[ό]πρεπτον φαλακρόν
Silenus:	[Loo]k, [this] little one is laughing As he looks at my sleek Smooth dome, picked out in red...

Here, the image of laughter is clearly evoked as the papyrus preserves the form *γελα̃* 'he laughs'. The baby Perseus is said to be laughing (*ὁ μικκός... γελα̃*) while he is looking at Silenus' bald head (*προσορῶν... φαλακρόν*). In this example, we may notice that the chief concept behind the word *γελα̃* is the baby's positive disposition signaled to and recognized by Silenus as a greeting.⁶⁵⁰ This idea remains the same even in those translations of line 786 which render the laughter-word 'smile'⁶⁵¹. Moreover, by evoking the concept of laughter as a signal of amicability, Aeschylus creates a comic effect by juxtaposing Perseus' positive reaction to Danaë's suitor to that of his mother. In particular, Silenus' two remarks about the infant's friendliness towards him enclose the princess' negative reaction to the proposition of marriage. In her monologue (lines 773-785), Danaë appeals to the gods to save her from a life of slavery among the satyrs ('a captive' *αἰχμάλωτος*, v. 777), regarded as 'beasts' (*κνωδάλοις*, v. 775) who will only mistreat her ('I will be disgraced'

⁶⁴⁹ Page (1950) *ad. loc.*: [καὶ μὴν ὁ παῖς] γε μαῖαν ὡς γερασμίαν [σαίνει προσορῶν] ἠπίοις προσφθέγμασιν. For other conjectures of lines 770-771, see Werre-de Haas (1961) 40-41.

⁶⁵⁰ Arnould (1990) 86: 'un accueil aimable' ('a friendly greeting').

⁶⁵¹ E.g. Lloyd-Jones (1957) 539: 'Look, the little one is smiling sweetly as he looks on this shining raddled bald plate'. Although the complex semantics of *γελάω* enable different interpretations, (see chapter II, section 2.1.1.2), nevertheless, in view of Silenus' remark about the baby's emission of sounds in lines 770-771, the interpretation of 'laugh' in line 786 seems more likely.

λυμανθήσομαι, v. 776). For a moment, she even considers committing suicide ('I will hang myself' ἀγχόνην ἄρ' ἄψομαι, v. 778) to avoid a fate worse than death. In the end, Danaë's quasi-pathetic *rhesis* appears to be for nothing since Silenus does not respond to her words. In fact, throughout his speech in lines 786-801, although poorly preserved by the papyrus, we may clearly distinguish the fact that the Father of satyrs takes no more notice of the princess, but only focuses on his future stepson.⁶⁵² Silenus, then, takes Perseus' laughter to be a positive sign in his advances towards Danaë for in lines 786-832 he seems to treat the matter of marriage as settled. As we can see, a baby's laughter may communicate a message contrary to its mother's wishes.

At this point, it ought to be stressed that in fr. 47a Aeschylus invokes the image of a laughing baby only for humorous purposes. In order to create such effect, the poet, basically, employs verbal humour in lines 786-788 when Silenus describes the direct object the baby is laughing at, namely his 'shinning, bright-red bald head' (λιπαρόν τὸ μιλτόπρεπτον φαλακρόν). In his 1987 article entitled 'Silenus erectus: Euripides Cyclops 227', Seaford points to the linguistic similarities between the terms φαλακρόν 'bald head' and φαλλόν 'phallus', proposing that the former may function as a pun on φαλλόν ἄκρον 'erected penis'.⁶⁵³ Such *double entendre* coming from Silenus corresponds with the satyrs' two distinct features: 1) brazen sexuality, and 2) phallic appearance. In a satyr drama, the sexual nature of Silenus and the satyr-chorus was reflected in their bawdy speech and obscene actions, but also in their costumes which included furry shorts, a mask, a tail and, most noticeably, a phallus.⁶⁵⁴ In this respect, we may observe that the humour of lines 786-788 is produced by little Perseus

⁶⁵² It is also possible that Silenus again mentions the baby laughing (or smiling) at him in the fragmentary verse 792 restored as [προ]σγελάς μοι 'you smile to me', see Sommerstein (2008c) 51, who considers this restoration plausible.

⁶⁵³ Seaford (1987) 143. Similar pun in fr. 171 of a Sophoclean satyr play, cf. chapter IV, section 4.3.1.

⁶⁵⁴ On the satyr-costume, see Kocur (2001) 227-229.

taking notice of Silenus' visible *membrum virile*.⁶⁵⁵ Moreover, since we have discussed that the baby's laughter functions as a friendly greeting, then the comicality of the passage is increased by depicting the infant as showing its positive disposition not towards Silenus but towards his φαλακρόν. In result, the child's laughter signals its interest as well as friendliness to the character's phallus, and it is of this fondness that the Father of satyrs speaks a little further in line 795, when he refers to the baby as 'the penis-loving child' (προσθοφιλής ὁ νεοσσός). It becomes, then, apparent, that the comicality of this passage is based on a baby's laughter being the expression of its liking in such a sexual object.

We have to keep in mind the fact that in a classical dramatic performance no actor played the role of a baby. On the contrary, scholars argue that props were used to represent corpses, detached body parts, and also infants.⁶⁵⁶ Therefore, the character of baby Perseus would have been represented by an object, a sack or other sort of model. In this regard, Silenus's remarks about the actions of little Perseus occur as necessary not only in creating the comic effect but maintaining the illusion of the play, as well. Therefore, in this satyr drama, the image of a baby laughing at a character's *membrum virile* is evoked only to entertain and amuse the audience of the play. As it, then, appears innocent laughter in a sexual context also belongs to the rich imagery of Aeschylean drama.

3.3.1.2. Amusement

Another laughter-word appearing in association with positive emotions is traceable in the same fragment 47a of the *Net-Haulers*. After proposing to Danaë, Silenus and the satyrs play with her child. In lines 805-820, from the

⁶⁵⁵ According to Shaw (2014) 74-75, Aeschylus bases the comicality of the passage by making the audience expect a sexual reference by enlisting first the adjectives 'shiny' and 'bright-red' but then using φαλακρόν instead of φαλλόν. See also Zalewska-Jura (2012) 17-18.

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. Roisman (2014b) s.v. 'props'.

longest continuous passage preserved by the papyrus (v. 802-83), the chorus⁶⁵⁷ sings to little Perseus about the future that awaits him once his mother marries Silenus:

Χο. δεῦρ' εἰς παῖδας ἴωμεν ὡς τά[χιστα·
 ἴξη παιδοτρόφους ἐμά[ς,
 ὦ φίλος, χέρας εὐμενεῖς,
 τέρψη δ' ἴκτισι κα[ῖ] νεβρο[ῖς
 ὑστρίχων τ' ὀβρίχοισ[ι,
 κοιμάση δὲ τρίτος ξὺν
 ματρὶ [καὶ π]ατρὶ τῶδε.

ὁ πάπα[ς δ]ὲ παρέξει
 τῶ μικκῶ **τὰ γελοῖα**
 καὶ τροφὰς ἀνόσους, ὅπως π[ι]
 ἀλδῶν αὐτὸς ε...[.]...[
 χαλᾶ νεβροφονο[υ] ποδ[ὸς
 μάρπτων θήρας ἄνευ δ[ι]
 θῶσθαι ματρὶ παρέξεις
 κ]ηδεστῶν τρόπον οἴσιν
 ἔ]ντροφος πελατεύσεις.

Ch. Come here, let's join the boys ri[ght away:]
 you'll come, my dear, to my kindly
 child-rearing hands,
 you'll take delight in martens, fawns,
 and young porcupines,
 and you'll make a third in bed
 with your mother [and] your father here.
 And daddy will provide
 his little one with **fun**
 and a healthy upbringing, so that [eventually,] after
 growing
 [to full strength,] you can yourself [in the mountains],
 with the hoof of your fawn-slaying foot,
 chase down the wild creatures, and without a s[pear]
 provide fare for your mother to feast on,
 in the same way as do your stepbrothers,
 among whom you will be reared as a dependent.

It appears that the satyrs have already accepted the baby and its mother into their family.⁶⁵⁸ According to the chorus, the baby's new 'dad' (ὁ πάπας, v. 812) will provide his 'little one' (ῶ μικκῶ, v. 813) with a proper satyr-education

⁶⁵⁷ I follow the opinion of Sommerstein (2008c) who attributes these lines to the Chorus. Other scholars, however, ascribe this song to Silenus, cf. Steffen (1958) 36; Lloyd-Jones (1957) 539.

⁶⁵⁸ Cf. Werre-de Haas (1961) 65: 'Neither Silenus nor the chorus doubt for a moment that their plans will be carried out. Perseus belongs to them already, and with him, Danae!'

based on ‘fun’ (τὰ γελοῖα⁶⁵⁹, v. 813) and a ‘healthy life-style’ (τροφὰς ἀνόσους, 814). Concerning the laughter-word in line 813, two interpretations have emerged. Some scholars, like Lobel, perceive τὰ γελοῖα in relation to humour, hence, translate it as ‘jokes’.⁶⁶⁰ Such interpretation seems to correspond with the understandings of the other few instances of this substantive plural neuter for γελοῖος preserved in classical drama.⁶⁶¹ However, despite their poor state, the preserved fragments of the *Net-Haulers* give no slight indication of a self-aware joking Silenus. Therefore, the predominant understanding of τὰ γελοῖα, as seen in the translation of Sommerstein adduced above, regards the concept of ‘fun’, i.e. those things which please, amuse, excite, hence, evoke pleasant emotional experiences which may be expressed in laughter. What is more, the two paternal tasks of Silenus explained in lines 812-814, i.e. providing fun and a healthy upbringing for his stepson, do not have to indicate two independent actions.⁶⁶² Due to the fact that both direct objects to the predicate παρέξει ‘he will provide’ in line 812 are expressed in the plural: τὰ γελοῖα and τροφὰς ἀνόσους, it would be possible to classify these apposed independent terms as hendiadys. With this figure of speech, the lexeme τὰ γελοῖα would not refer to separate amusements a father has to arrange for his child,⁶⁶³ but would rather function as a modifier to τροφὰς ἀνόσους. In result, lines 812-814 could be interpreted as ‘daddy will provide his little one with an amusing life’. This

⁶⁵⁹ Supplied by Lobel *et al.* (1941) 11.

⁶⁶⁰ Lobel *et al.* (1941) 13 n. 16: ‘Dad will provide you with jokes’.

⁶⁶¹ In comparison to the many instances of γελοῖος in the singular in classical drama (e.g.), its form in the plural neuter is quite rare: cf. Soph. *Ich.* 370: ‘You should not make silly jokes (γελοῖα)’, translation in Lloyd-Jones (1996) 173; for a broader discussion, see chapter IV, section 4.3.2. Cf. also Ar. *Ra.* 389-390: ‘And may I utter much that’s funny (γέλοιά), and also much that’s serious (σπουδαῖα)’, translation in Henderson (2002) 79; Anaxandr. 10: γελοῖα λέγειν ‘to make jokes’.

⁶⁶² As suggested in the translation of Lloyd-Jones (1957) 541: ‘And daddy shall give the little one his fun. And you shall lead a healthy life’.

⁶⁶³ Cf. Werre-de Haas (1961) 65: “What exactly this [i.e. τὰ γελοῖα] means is of no consequence. It does appear to belong to the task of bringing up the child which the father takes upon himself. Mentioned in the same breath with τροφή it strengthens our impression that an authentic satyr-education is awaiting Perseus from his “father”.’

γελωτοποιὸν, τὴν κάκοσμον οὐράνην,
ἔρριψεν οὐδ' ἤμαρτε· περὶ δ' ἐμῶ κάρα
πληγῆϊσ' ἐναυάγησεν ὀστρακουμένη
χωρὶς μυρηρῶν τευχέων πνέουσ' ἐμοί

Odysseus: This is the man who once threw in my direction an object designed to make me a **laughing-stock**, the evil-smelling chamber-pot, and he did not miss his aim; it struck me on the head and smashed into fragments, wafting over me an odour very unlike that of perfume-jars.

Clearly, Odysseus complains about having become the victim of a suitor's assault. Accordingly, this aggressor (the fragment does not specify his identity) threw a chamber-pot (τὴν οὐράνην) at the beggar-Odysseus, which hit him on the head and spilled excrements all over him.⁶⁶⁶ Here, we may observe how Aeschylus refers to the well-known motif of the indignities inflicted upon the hero by his wife's suitors at his own house. For instance, in the *Odyssey*, the courter Ctesippus throws an ox hoof at the beggar-Odysseus only for his and his companions amusement.⁶⁶⁷ Similar reasons are noticeable in fr. 180, in which the hero describes the chamber-pot as a γελωτοποιός βέλος 'a missile aimed to mock'. Odysseus is, therefore, fully aware of the fact that the suitors mistreat him only to laugh at his expense. It becomes, then, apparent that the semantics of the lexeme γελωτοποιός do regard the meaning 'laughter-maker', however not in the sense of a 'joker' or 'jester' but in relation to a person who becomes the object of laughter.⁶⁶⁸ The fragment, therefore, evokes the concept of mockery.

3.3.1.4. Schadenfreude

A direct reference to laughter has been preserved in fr. 281a attributed to the so-called *Dike Play*. However, the real title of this play remains unknown as

⁶⁶⁶ The dispute of the play's classification rises, generally, from the locution τὴν κάκοσμον οὐράνην 'the evil-smelling chamber-pot' argued by some scholars to be un-tragic; cf. Podlecki (2005) 16

⁶⁶⁷ Hom. *Od.* 20. 287-302.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.8.

well as and it is not certain whether this was a tragedy or satyr play.⁶⁶⁹ Despite the poor state of the verses of which almost none have been preserved complete, we may recognize that they contain the dialogue between Justice (Δίκη) and an unknown character.⁶⁷⁰ At one point, Justice speaks of her role in upbringing a young god (fr. 281a 31-41):

Δι. ἔθρε[ψ.] παῖδα μάργον ὄν τίκτει [ποτέ
 Ἥρα μιγείσα Ζηνὶ θυμοιδ[
 δ]ύσαρκτ[ο]ν, αἰδῶς δ' οὐκ ἐνή[ν] φρο[ν]ήματι·
]υκτα τῶν ὄδοιπόρων βέλη
]δως ἀγκύλαισιν ἀρταμῶν·
]ῶν ἔχ[αι]ρε **κἀγάλα** κακὸν
]ν στάζοι φόνος·

Justice: I reared the savage son whom Hera [once] bore in union with Zeus, an unruly [child(?)] of swollen spirit, in whose mentality there was no shame; [he shot many (?)] wayfarers with arrows [from which] one could [not escape (?)] shameless]sly (?) slaughtering them with the bowstring, [and] **he laughed** and rejoiced [in doing these (?)] evil deeds [whenever (?)] the blood [of his victims (?)] dripped [from his hand]s (?).

In this passage, Dike speaks of an unspecified offspring of Hera and Zeus. In particular, Justice depicts an unfavourable portrayal of the gods' son described as 'violent' (μάργον, v. 31), 'irascible' (θυμοιδές or θυμοίδη, v. 32)⁶⁷¹, 'unruly' (δ]ύσαρκτ[ο]ν, v. 33), and 'shameless in mind' (αἰδῶς δ' οὐκ ἐνή[ν] φρο[ν]ήματι, v. 33). The subsequent lines 34-37 have been poorly preserved, but we may notice that Dike speaks of a person who shoots arrows at wayfarers (τῶν ὄδοιπόρων βέλη, v. 34), slaughters them with a bow-string (ἀγκύλαισιν ἀρταμῶν, v. 35) and takes delight in such cruelty (ἔχ[αι]ρε κἀγάλα κακὸν, v. 36) leading to murder (φόνος, v. 37). Since these actions appear in immediate

⁶⁶⁹ Radt (*TrGF* III 380ff.) lists it in *the Incertarum Fabularum Fragmenta*. Podlecki (2005) 15-16, includes this play in his analysis of Aeschylean satyr-drama, although stressing the uncertainty of its genre.

⁶⁷⁰ Lloyd-Jones (1957) 576 sees the possibility of this being the Chorus-leader.

⁶⁷¹ Conjectures *ad loc.* by: Mette (1959): θυμοιδ[ές τέκνον] 'irascible child'; Lloyd-Jones (1957): θυμοί[δη θεόν] 'irascible god'.

context to lines 31-33, scholars consider them to be a reference to the young god Justice mentioned first. Also, the brutality of deeds, and most importantly, the fact of enjoying their fulfilment corresponds to the violent character of Zeus' and Hera's son. Not surprisingly, scholars, generally, view this cryptic description to be of Ares.⁶⁷² Dike, therefore, would be describing the hot-tempered character of the Greek god of savage and brutal war.⁶⁷³

What is of our particular interest is the fact, that this young god is presented as 'rejoicing and laughing' while posing violence on others. Despite the need of a minor conjecture the meaning of the expression ἔχ[α]ρξε καγέλα in line 36 is clear and understood as 'he rejoiced and laughed'. As we have discussed in chapter II, the Greek language does recognize the connection of the phenomenon of laughter with the experience of pleasant emotions, such as joy and delight.⁶⁷⁴ Without any doubt, the emotional aspect of laughter is emphasized by the juxtaposition of the γελάω word with the verb χαίρω 'rejoice'. Moreover, the context in which the young god's laughter occurs specifies the feelings he expresses, namely, the delight in seeing as well as inflicting harm on others, in this case, innocent travelers (οἱ ὁδοίποροι, v. 34). In this respect, we may notice that, apart from the basic understanding as sound, the idea of laughter evoked in this passage pertains to the concept of feeling and expressing malicious pleasure described today as *Schadenfreude*.

As we have seen, the preserved context of the fragments discussed above allows us to specify the ideas of the phenomenon Aeschylus evokes by employing certain laughter-words. Thus, we may recognize such general

⁶⁷² Lobel *et al.*(1952) 41: 'there is no choice but to take Ares as meant'; similarly Cipolla (2010) 139-141.

⁶⁷³ On the connection between Ares and justice, cf. *Hom. Hymn.* 8. 4: συναρωγὲ Θέμιστος 'helper of Justice' and 8.5: δικαιοτάτων ἀγὲ φωτῶν 'leader of the most righteous men'; *Aes. Ch.* 461: Ἄρης Ἄρει ξυμβαλεῖ, Δίκη Δίκα 'Ares will meet with Ares, and Dike with Dike', translated by Sommerstein (2008b) 271: 'Violence will clash with violence, justice with justice!'

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. chapter II section 2.1.1.2.3.

concepts of laughter understood as 1) a mean of communication (fr. 47a 786), 2) an expression of experienced pleasant emotions (fr. 47a 813, fr. 281a), and 3) an act of disdainful behaviour towards another (fr. 180). Despite the fragmentary state of the discussed passages, we may clearly see that, in similar vein to the extant tragedies, also these four fragments reflect the poet's understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of laughter.

3.3.2. Fragments transmitted without a context

A single Aeschylean reference to laughter has been transmitted as a fragment without a context. The genre of the play, its titles or even the character who speak this expressions remain unknown. Fr. 290 comprising only of the two-word expression may be found in the *Synagoge*, one of the largest lexica of the ancient Greek language⁶⁷⁵ (Σβ α 269 Cunningham):

ἀγέλαστος· ὁ μὴ πρὸς γέλωτα ἐπιτήδειος καὶ ὁ στυγνός. ἔστι δὲ καὶ πέτρα Ἀθήνησιν οὕτω λεγομένη. Αἰσχύλος δὲ φησι καὶ **φρῆν ἀγέλαστος**. οὐκοῦν οὐκ ἐκάλυσε λέγειν καὶ νοῦς ἀγέλαστος καὶ διάνοια ἀγέλαστος καὶ τὰ ὅμοια.

Laughterless: a person not inclined to laugh as well as someone sullen. There is also a rock named like this by the Athenians. Aeschylus says 'laughterless heart'. Therefore, it is not permitted to say also 'laughterless mind' as well as 'laughterless thought' and the like.⁶⁷⁶

In this entry to ἀγέλαστος, we may notice the wide range of the semantics of the term. It seems that the lexicographer distinguishes two main understandings of the adjective: emotional and intellectual. Without any doubt, the former is noticeable in the term's main definition regarding man's incapability to feel positive feelings (ὁ στυγνός) as well as to express them through laughter (ὁ μὴ πρὸς γέλωτα ἐπιτήδειος); the emotional aspect is also traceable in the Attic name ἀγέλαστος πέτρα 'laughterless rock' to which the

⁶⁷⁵ Same entry in Phot. s.v. ἀγέλαστος.

⁶⁷⁶ My translation. The same Greek quote is found in the lexicon of Photius s. v. ἀγέλαστος; it is also ascribed to the Attic orator Phrynichus, cf. *Praep. Soph.* fr. 60.

lexicographer refers to.⁶⁷⁷ The latter understanding, on the other hand, is reflected in the few expressions the author of the *Synagoge* adduces, composed of the adjective with words referring to mental faculties such as the νοῦς ‘mind’ and διάνοια ‘thought, process of thinking, intelligence’.⁶⁷⁸ However, it is a curious fact that the lexicographer forms these two expressions on the basis of an Aeschylean quote φρήν ἀγέλαστος ‘laughterless heart’ which seems to pertain to the sphere of emotions than cognition. In order to specify whether this phrase refers to the emotional or intellectual aspect of ἀγέλαστος, as well as to explain my translation of the expression, we must pay some attention to the traditional Greek understanding of the term φρήν.

The LSJ defines the word φρήν variously in terms of human 1) physiology, 2) emotionality, 3) cognition and 4) volition. Firstly, the word may regard a bodily organ, which scholars, chiefly, discern as the diaphragm or midriff, i.e. the muscles separating the heart and lungs from the abdominal viscera.⁶⁷⁹ Secondly, φρήν may indicate a seat of emotions, hence its general meaning ‘the heart’. Thirdly, the term may refer to a seat of intellect, as well, thus may signify ‘the mind’. Finally, the LSJ also defines φρήν in relation to the process of making and acting upon decisions. What we may observe from these explanations is the fact that the semantics of one term, generally, comprise of two distinct, as it would seem from a modern point of view, ideas: a bodily organ (the diaphragm) and the psychological-cognitive processes that occur

⁶⁷⁷ The adjective regards the condition of the goddess Demeter who sat on a rock at the entrance to Hades grief-stricken by the abduction of her daughter Persephone; cf. Apollod. 1.5.1: καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπ’ ἐκείνης κληθεῖσαν Ἀγέλαστον ἐκάθισε πέτραν ‘And first she sat down on the rock which has been named Laughless after her’, translation in Frazer (1921) 37. See also, Hsch. s.v. ἀγέλαστος πέτρα· ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ, ἐφ’ ἧς ἐκαθέσθη ἡ Δημήτηρ, ὅτε τὴν κόρην ἐζήτηι, ‘Laughterless rock: in Attica upon which Demeter sat during her search for Kore’; similarly Suda s.v. Σαλαμῖνος. Demeter is described to be ἀγέλαστος ‘laughterless’ in *Hom. Hymn.* 2. 200.

⁶⁷⁸ LSJ s.v. νοῦς and διάνοια.

⁶⁷⁹ E.g. *Pr.* 881: καρδιά δὲ φόβῳ φρένα λακτίζει, ‘the heart kicks the midriff out of fear’. For the discussion on indicating the internal organ, see Thalmann (1986) 489, Sullivan (1997) 49.

within it. In short, the term pertains to either a part of the human body or to human inward faculties.

The connection of sentiments and mental activities encapsulated in the semantics of φρήν has been analyzed by Padel in her 1992 study entitled *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the tragic Self*. The British Hellenist argues that, in the view of fifth century Greeks, man perceives and feels with the internal organs, of which the diaphragm plays a key role.⁶⁸⁰ Accordingly, the φρήν is perceived to be a sort of inward ‘container’ or ‘receptacle’, which accommodates ‘emotion, practical ideas, and knowledge’.⁶⁸¹ Furthermore, Padel explains that although in classical tragedy φρήν (also expressed in its plural form φρένες without greater semantic distinction) becomes a popular word for ‘mind’, it is still regarded to be a conscious inwardness responsive and receptive to sentiments, especially that of love and grief.⁶⁸² It comes, then, as no surprise that in the preserved tragedies the word φρήν (or φρένες) occurs often in both emotional and intellectual contexts.

In her study *Aeschylus’ Use of Psychological Terminology*, Sullivan views the term φρήν as highly psychological.⁶⁸³ The Canadian scholar examines all 104 instances of the word φρήν (or φρένες) found in Aeschylean drama being the most often employed psychic term by the poet.⁶⁸⁴ What is of our particular interest, Sullivan analyzes 41 examples of φρήν described by an adjective or participle, of which a quarter reflects a distinctly emotional dimension; these

⁶⁸⁰ Such understanding of φρήν is criticized by the author of the work *On the Sacred Disease*, cf. Ps.-Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 20: ‘The diaphragm (φρένες) has a name due merely to chance and custom, not to reality and nature, and I do not know what power the diaphragm has for thought (νοεῖν) and intelligence (φρονεῖν). It can only be said that, if a man be unexpectedly over-joyed or grieved, the diaphragm jumps and causes him to start. This is due, however, to its being thin, and having a wider extent than any other organ; it has no cavity where it can receive any accident, good or bad, but it is disturbed by both owing to the weakness of its nature. Since it perceives nothing before the other parts do, but is idly named as though it were the cause of perception’, translation in Jones (1959) 179-81 (my emphasis).

⁶⁸¹ Padel (1992) 21.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.* 22.

⁶⁸³ Sullivan (1997) 49.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 13, excluding the occurrences from *Prometheus Bound* (14 instances).

are ἀγέλαστος ‘mirthless’ fr. 290, ἄκρος ‘top of, highest’ Ag. 805, ἀμαυρός ‘dark, dim’ Ag. 546 and Ch. 158, ἀπένθητος ‘free from sorrow’ Ag. 895, γαθοῦσα ‘rejoicing, cheerful’ Ch. 772, εὐθυμος ‘cheerful, confident’ Per. 372, μελαγχίτων ‘black-robed’ Per. 115, φαιδρός ‘joyous, bright, cheerful’ Ch. 565, φίλιος ‘loving’ Ag. 1491, and φίλοικος ‘mournful, sad’ Ag. 1143.⁶⁸⁵ From these examples we may distinguish four main emotions Aeschylus connects φρήν with: 1) grief (ἀμαυρός ‘dark, dim’ Ag. 546 and Ch. 158, ἀπένθητος ‘free from sorrow’ Ag. 895, φίλοικος ‘mournful, sad’ Ag. 1143) , 2) love (ἄκρος ‘top of, highest’ Ag. 805, φίλιος ‘loving’ Ag. 1491), 3) joy (γαθοῦσα ‘rejoicing, cheerful’ Ch. 772, εὐθυμος ‘cheerful, confident’ Per. 372, φαιδρός ‘joyous, bright, cheerful’ Ch. 565), and 4) fear (μελαγχίτων ‘black-robed’ Per. 115). In relation to the discussed fr. 290, Sullivan places the expression φρήν ἀγέλαστος in the context of grief, as she considers the adjective to signify ‘mirthless’.⁶⁸⁶ It becomes, hence, apparent that in Aeschylean drama the word φρήν may be a psychological term used in regard of the sphere of emotions.

In order to determine the meaning of the adjective ἀγέλαστος in fr. 290, let us compare the understandings of this word from its other instances preserved in the works of Aeschylus. We may recognize the fact that Sullivan’s interpretation of ἀγέλαστος as ‘mirthless’ follows that of the meanings of its other two references: ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα ‘laughterless faces’ in Ag. 794, and ἀγελάστοις ξυμφοραῖς ‘by laughterless misfortunes’ in Ch. 29. I have already discussed these two examples of the adjective in the sections above of this chapter.⁶⁸⁷ Therefore, it suffices only to reiterate the main idea encapsulated within this term. In general, ἀγέλαστος functions as an antonym to the experience of those sentiments or mental states which stimulate one to laugh,

⁶⁸⁵ Sullivan (1997) 49. The other contexts are: 1) intelligence, 2) age, 3) memory, 4) holiness, 5) madness, 6) pride, 7) justice, 8) prophecy, 9) speech, 10) courage, 11) physicality, 12) depth, and 13) deception.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 60, 178.

⁶⁸⁷ See section 3.2.2.1. and 3.2.2.2. above.

such as cheer, joy, delight or even a state of happiness. By indicating one's 'lack of laughter' the adjective refers to an inward incapability of laughing due to the presence of non-pleasant emotions such as sadness or grief.⁶⁸⁸ Aeschylus, then, by employing the word ἀγέλαστος, evokes the image of laughter only to emphasize the fact of its nonexistence.

In light of the discussion above it becomes clear that the lack of a wider context in fr. 290 does not restrain us from distinguishing the general idea of laughter within this two-word expression. In view of the uses of the adjective in Ag. 794 and Ch. 29, the interpretation of ἀγέλαστος raises little, if not any doubts. By emphasizing the fact of the conditions non-fit for laughter, Aeschylus with φρήν ἀγέλαστος seems to refer to an inner, emotional incapability of experiencing pleasant feelings. In this respect, the term φρήν in fr. 290 would signify the inward faculty to feel emotions. Therefore, the translation 'laughterless heart', which I propose, regards the noun in terms of a seat of emotions (not a physical organ), i.e. an inward receptacle overwhelmed by sorrow or any other non-pleasant emotion which impedes one to laugh. Here, the translation 'grief-stricken heart' could also be applied.⁶⁸⁹

We must, however, bear in mind the fact that without a specific context, the term φρήν is open for interpretation. For instance, the noun may also signify the intellectual activity of the mind interrupted by emotions which make it 'non-fit for laughter'.⁶⁹⁰ This understanding would also explain the instances of νοῦς ἀγέλαστος and διάνοια ἀγέλαστος adduced by the lexicographer of the *Synagoge*. And finally, it remains in the sphere of possibility that Aeschylus, known for his preference for the use of metaphor, could have made an explicit reference to the 'laughterless diaphragm' within a

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. the obscure explanation by Moreau (2000) 397: 'this adjective regards a person who does not laugh, who is not capable of laughing' ('cet adjectif qualifie celui qui ne rit pas, qui n'est pas capable de rire'), my translation.

⁶⁸⁹ Such interpretation would also tempt us to ascribe fr. 290 to a lost tragedy. However, until new evidence is discovered, this assumption remains undefended.

⁶⁹⁰ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 18 n. 40 who considers the noun a metonymy for 'mind'.

body. As we can see, the wide semantics of φρόνην enables its various understandings, in contrast to ἀγέλαστος which, without any doubt, refers to the sphere of emotions.

3.3.3. A dubious fragment

The expression Σαρδόνιος γέλως had been proverbial in antiquity.⁶⁹¹ Aeschylus is ascribed with making a reference to ‘Sardonic laughter’ in fr. 455, which has been transmitted by the Greek sophist, Zenobius, in his work *Collected Proverbs* (5.85):⁶⁹²

Σαρδόνιος γέλως: Αἰσχύλος ἐν τοῖς Περὶ παροιμιῶν περὶ τούτου φησὶν οὕτως: ‘Οἱ τὴν Σαρδῶ κατοικοῦτες, Καρχηδονίων ὄντες ἄποικοι, τοὺς ὑπὲρ τὰ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτη γεγονότας τῷ Κρόνῳ ἔθουον γελῶντες καὶ ἀσπαζόμενοι ἀλλήλους: αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἠγοῦντο δακρῦειν καὶ θρηνεῖν. Τὸν οὖν προσποίητον γέλωτα Σαρδόνιον κληθῆναι.’

Sardonic laughter: Aeschylus in his work *On Proverbs* gives such an explanation of this: ‘The inhabitants of Sardonia, who were Carthaginian settlers, sacrificed to Cronos old men who have exceeded the age of seventy; while doing so they laughed and embraced each other, for they believed it was shameful to shed tears and lament. This is how an artificial laugh was called ‘sardonic’.⁶⁹³

This fragment, however, is not considered to be genuinely Aeschylean, since the fifth-century dramatist is not known to compose other forms of poetry apart from drama. Scholars, generally, ascribe this explanation for ‘sardonic laughter’ to another Aeschylus of Alexandria, an epic poet of the second century, who may have written a collection of proverbs.⁶⁹⁴ As a consequence, Radt lists fr. 455 in the section of *Fragmenta dubia* in his edition of the fragments of Aeschylus.⁶⁹⁵ Due to the commonly accepted spuriousness of fr. 455, I exclude a thorough examination of the phrase Σαρδόνιος γέλως in my discussion on Aeschylean drama.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3.

⁶⁹² CPG 1, 154, 1. Similar explanations are given by Phot. and Hsch, both s.v. Σαρδόνιος γέλως.

⁶⁹³ My translation.

⁶⁹⁴ Cf. Jacoby’s commentary on Demon in *FGrHist* 327 F 18; also Crusius (1883) 148 n.1.

⁶⁹⁵ *TrGF* III, 499.

In this part of the chapter, I have examined the Greek vocabulary of laughter as well as its interpretations within the fragments of Aeschylus. As we can see, despite their small number, the fragments reveal a variety of understandings of the discussed phenomenon. In particular, Aeschylus evokes such ideas of laughter in connection with 1) communicating one's positive disposition towards another (fr. 47 a 786), 2) feeling amusement and pleasure (fr. 47 a 813), 3) dispensing mockery (fr. 180), 4) experiencing malicious delight at inflicting harm onto others (fr. 281a), as well as 5) emphasizing the lack of pleasant emotions within a person (fr. 290). Therefore, the chief ideas of laughter within the fragments relate to the concepts of emotion (amusement, Schadenfreude, non-mirthful sentiments), communication (amiability), and derision.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter contains the examination of Aeschylean references to laughter. My discussion has been based on the analysis of the Greek vocabulary for laughter found within the works and fragments of Aeschylus. From the investigation we may distinguish such conclusions. Firstly, in the seven tragedies and many fragments which have been preserved till our times, we may find only a handful of references to laughter, a mere number of 18 in sum (12 instances in the tragedies and 6 in the fragments). Secondly, only one instance (fr. 47a 786) might have referred to the sound of laughter occurring onstage. The other references, however, regard various concepts connected with the discussed phenomenon. The first discernible idea regards the sphere of emotions. In Aeschylean drama, we have distinguished positive sentiments associated with laughter such as 1) amusement, 2) delight, and 3) joy. Interestingly, however, apart from amusement, the poet evokes these positive emotions through negation by employing the adjective ἀγέλαστος. In relation

to negative sentiments, I have analysed passages in which we may discern such emotions as 4) a feeling of triumph, and 5) Schadenfreude. Therefore, the expressive nature of Aeschylean laughter becomes apparent.

Throughout the course of this chapter it has emerged that such feelings of malicious delight, particularly, regard interpersonal relations, since they arise with the subject's recognition of harm being done to others. This leads us to the second general idea of Aeschylean laughter which is connected with its social aspect. In particular, we may distinguish that laughter serves as a mean of communicating one's sentiments about another and to the other. Here, the message sent may be favourable, non-favourable, or feigned. In regard of favourability, I have found examples of laughter signalling one's 6) amiability, or serving as a greeting. Considering non-genuine laughter, we have seen references to 7) artificial laughter adapted by others to feign a positive disposition or the experience of benign feelings. Finally, many examples refer to 8) mockery in which a character recognizes the fact of becoming the object of others' laughter. In this case, the target perceives another's action as a form of disrespectful treatment, hence fears it and resents it. What is of great importance is the fact that these references to mockery do not only describe the disdainful actions of one character against another, but inform of the quality of the relationship between the subject and target of laughter. In this respect, the social aspect of laughter is visible, since it regards and defines interpersonal relations. Thus, it is evident that Aeschylean laughter is social.

On the basis of the analysed material, we may notice a complex image of laughter emerging from Aeschylean drama. It is also quite a negative view. We do find examples of benign laughter in fr. 47 a, which presents the friendly laugh of baby Perseus or of laughter rising out of pleasure mentioned further when the chorus of satyrs sings of the joys and amusements one may experience living the life of a satyr. As we may see, Aeschylus, without any doubt, was aware of the pleasant side of laughter associated with joy, pleasure

and play. However, we must bear in mind the fact that these two examples referring to the innocent laughter of that of a baby as well as the joys of fantastic beings like satyrs, occur but in a satyr play, i.e. a drama which was aimed to provide fun and amusement to the audience. These instances, therefore, stand out as an exception.

A noticeably grimmer image of laughter emerges from the rest of the Aeschylean fragments and complete dramas. The reason for this is the fact that the world depicted by Aeschylus is governed by divinely ordained laws both mortals and gods must obey. One's life, however, becomes disrupted with the violation of these laws, as the perpetrator must pay the consequences for his crime. This wrongdoing can be either dishonouring a god (the example of Cassandra) or spilling kindred blood (the curse of the House of Atreus). As it is shown in the preserved tragedies, violation deprives the perpetrator, but also his/her kin of laughter i.e. joy, mirth and a general state of happiness. As a result, life becomes filled with misery and misfortune. Apart from this, such violation many-a-case antagonizes relations making them want to triumph over each other. Bloodshed often is the effect of an earlier violation in the family, which then again requires retaliation. A chilling metaphor of this is the image of Clytaemestra's blood spilt on Orestes alluring the Furies, the personification of vengeance for kindred bloodshed, with a welcoming laugh.

While the gods are concerned, they remain the only ones with the full right to laugh in scorn. Moreover, as part of a violator's punishment the gods may influence the reaction of others, as we have seen in Cassandra's case. Finally, even gods who violate laws are punished, as it is with Prometheus. For violating Zeus' law, the Titan has been chained to Caucasus for eternity. It is there where the god makes the only reference to laughter in the *Prometheus Bound* which is that of the sparkle of the sea. Prometheus but can only observe the waves' 'laughter' from afar, evoking the ideas of sunshine and freedom, for he too has violated divine law.

Derision in Aeschylus is also ascribed to those in power or in a socially superior position. In *Ch.* 222, Electra, at first, believes Orestes to be a stranger mocking her amidst her misfortunes; in fr. 180 the suitors show their superiority towards Odysseus in guise of beggar by mistreating him for fun; and fr. 281, despite its poor state, preserves well the line in which a god laughs in delight at the harm inflicted on others (mortals plausibly).

We may, therefore notice that the predominant image of laughter in Aeschylean drama is not quite negative, as it is just. What is more, laughter in Aeschylus is highly social for it generally refers to the quality of relations between two or more characters. Social and just, associated with derision, Schadenfreude and triumph, Aeschylus sure does depict a grim image of laughter which reflects the type of interpersonal relations between gods and men, but also between men themselves. In many cases, Aeschylean laughter is about relationships.

Noteworthy is the fact that Aeschylus is the only tragedian, in contrast to Sophocles and Euripides, who uses the lexeme ἀγέλαστος 'laughterless'. In general, we may recognize that this adjective aptly describes the dark side of laughter devoid of pleasant and benign emotions such as joy, cheerfulness or a feeling of happiness. In this respect, we find a parallel to Poe's similarly grim image of laughter depicted in his poem quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The House of Usher, once a prosperous and happy residence, but now ruined, is described as haunted and howling with loud laughter. As the American writer stresses in his famous line, the haunting ghouls 'laugh, but smile no more', referring to the lack of benign, hence positive emotional load manifested and communicated through the laughter resonating in the infamous estate. What Poe defines as devoid of a 'smile', Aeschylus describes by the adjective 'laughterless', and, in this respect, both poets evoke a similar dark image of laughter. In relation to Aeschylean laughter, we may, generally, consider it as ἀγέλαστος, indeed.

Chapter IV

Laughter in Sophoclean drama

And the little prince broke into a lovely peal of laughter, which irritated me very much. I like my misfortunes to be taken seriously.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*⁶⁹⁶

This chapter examines the instances of laughter-words in the works of Sophocles. I have divided the analysis into two parts: in the first, I examine the Greek laughter-words and discuss the understandings of laughter in the extant tragedies: *Ajax*, *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Philoctetes*; in the second, I discuss the references to laughter noticeable in the fragments of Sophocles, including the surviving passages of the *Searchers* (*Ichneutae*). The chapter concludes with final remarks on the general meaning of laughter in Sophoclean drama.

4.1. Laughter-words in the extant tragedies

Thirty-four laughter words appear in six extant plays of Sophocles. However, their distribution within the dramas is very uneven: *Ajax* contains of fifteen instances,⁶⁹⁷ *Electra* has eight examples, *Antigone* contains of five references, both *Oedipus Coloneus* and *Philoctetus* have three instances each, whereas only one laughter-word is found in *Oedipus Rex*. In spite of the fact that the same number of tragedies of both Aeschylus and Sophocles have survived till today, the latter poet employs laughter terms considerably more often. In

⁶⁹⁶ de Saint-Exupéry (1971) 9.

⁶⁹⁷ Nota bene, the largest amount of laughter terms in a single play from all the extant dramas of the three poets.

the table below, I have listed the lexemes connected to laughter and their passages from the surviving plays of Sophocles:⁶⁹⁸

Verse	Word	Form	Grammatical form
OR 1422	γελαστής	γελαστής	Nom. sg. (m)
<i>Ai.</i> 79	γελάω	γελᾶν	Inf. pr. act
<i>Ai.</i> 383	γελάω	γελᾶ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 957	γελάω	γελᾶ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 961	γελάω	γελώντων	Imperat. pr. act. 3 rd pl.
<i>Ai.</i> 1011	γελάω	γελᾶν	Inf. pr. act.
<i>Ai.</i> 1043	γελάω	γελῶν	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg. (m)
<i>Ant.</i> 483	γελάω	γελᾶν	Inf. pr. act.
<i>Ant.</i> 551 ⁶⁹⁹	γελάω	γελῶ	Ind. pr. act. 1 st sg.
<i>Ant.</i> 838	γελάω	γελῶμαι	Ind. pr. m./p. 1 st sg.
<i>El.</i> 880	γελάω	γελᾶς	Ind. pr. act. 2 nd sg.
<i>El.</i> 1153	γελάω	γελῶσι	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd pl.
<i>El.</i> 1295	γελάω	γελώντας	Part. pr. act. Acc. pl. (m)
<i>El.</i> 1300	γελάω	γελᾶν	Inf. pr. act.
OC 1423	γελάω	γελᾶσθαι	Inf. pr. m./p.
<i>Ph.</i> 258	γελάω	γελῶσι	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd pl.
<i>Ph.</i> 1023	γελάω	γελώμενος	Part. pr. m./p. Nom. sg. (m)
<i>Ph.</i> 1125	γελάω	γελᾶ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 79	γέλως	γέλως	Nom. sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 303	γέλως	γέλων (πολὺν συντιθείς)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 367	γέλως	γέλωτος (οἴμοι)	Gen. sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 382	γέλως	γέλωτα (ἄγεις)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ai.</i> 958	γέλως	γέλωτα (πολὺν)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ant.</i> 647	γέλως	γέλων (φῦσαι)	Acc. sg.
<i>El.</i> 1310	γέλως	γέλωτι (φαιδρὸν κάρρα)	Dat. sg.
OC 902	γέλως	γέλως (γένωμαι)	Nom. sg.
<i>El.</i> 277	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελῶσα	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg. (f)
<i>El.</i> 807	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελῶσα	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg. (f)
OC 1339	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελῶν	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg. (m)

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. the concordance of Ellendt and Genthe (1965).

⁶⁹⁹ In this line, the verb γελάω appears twice in the same form (ἀλγοῦσα μὲν δῆτ', εἰ γέλω ἐν σοὶ γελῶ, *Ant.* 551). Here, I accept the grammatical form in the indicative mood, although it may be also a conjunctive. Also I follow the commonly accepted lesson of εἰ γέλω, cf. n. 765 below.

<i>Ai.</i> 454	ἐπεγγελάω	ἐπεγγελῶσιν	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd pl.
<i>Ai.</i> 969	ἐπεγγελάω	ἐπεγγελῶεν	Opt. pr. act. 3 rd pl.
<i>Ai.</i> 989	ἐπεγγελάω	ἐπεγγελᾶν	Inf. pr. act.
<i>Ai.</i> 199	καχάζω	καχχαζόντων	Part. pr. act. Gen. pl. (m)

Table 12. List of Greek words on laughter present in the extant tragedies of Sophocles.

Out of the total thirty-four instances, twenty-five laughter-words appear in verbal form. Besides γελάω and its compounds (ἐγγελάω ‘laugh at, mock’; ἐπεγγελάω, ‘laugh at, exult over’), Sophocles may have also employed the word καχάζω, ‘laugh loud’ (*Ai.* 199).⁷⁰⁰ In particular, only three instances occur in the passive voice: γελῶμαι ‘I am laughed at’ (*Ant.* 838), γελᾶσθαι ‘to be laughed at’ (*OC* 1423), γελώμενος ‘laughed at’ (*Ph.* 1023), whereas the rest appears in the active voice. Out of these, two examples occur in the first person singular (γελῶ, ‘I laugh’, repeated twice in *Ant.* 551), and only one in the second person singular (γελᾶς, ‘you laugh’, *El.* 880). The majority, however, regards a third person laughing, either in the singular (*Ai.* 383, *Ai.* 957-8, *Ai.* 1043, *El.* 277, *El.* 807, *OC* 1339, *Ph.* 1125) or in the plural (*Ai.* 199, *Ai.* 454, *Ai.* 961, *Ai.* 969, *El.* 1153, *El.* 1295, *Ph.* 258). Amongst these forms, one appears in the optative mood (ἐπεγγελῶεν, *Ai.* 969) and a single example occurs in the imperative mood (γελώντων, *Ai.* 961); the rest, however, are found in the indicative. For this reason, we may expect that these terms refer to current acts of ‘laughing’ performed by the characters on stage or to other behaviours related to laughter. Apart from personal forms of verbs, we may find six participles in the active voice and in the present tense (*Ai.* 199, *Ai.* 1043, *El.* 277, *El.* 807, *El.* 1295, *OC* 1339). Noticeably, the forms themselves of these particles indicate the agent of the action described by the verb; these may be a single man (γελῶν, *Ai.* 1043; ἐγγελῶν, *OC* 1339), a single woman (ἐγγελῶσα in *El.* 277 and *El.* 807), but also a group of men (καχχαζόντων, *Ai.* 199; γελώντας, *El.* 1295). This observation is of significance to my discussion on laughter in

⁷⁰⁰ Some scholars question this lesson, cf. section 4.2.7.5. below.

Sophocles, for it implies that six times in the plays the act of laughing occurs simultaneously with another activities. As for the nouns, two forms are found: γελαστής ‘laugher’ (OR 1422) and γέλως ‘laughter’. The latter appears in many cases: twice in the nominative (*Ai.* 79, *OC* 902); once in the genitive in the function of *genetivus exclamationis* (οἴμοι γέλωτος, ‘Oh! The laughter!’, *Ai.* 367); once in the dative in the function of a *dativus instrumenti* (γέλωτι φαιδρὸν κάρα, ‘face bright with laughter’, *El.* 1310), and four times as the direct object of an action (συντιθεῖς πολὺν γέλων, ‘constructing loud laughter’, *Ai.* 303; γέλωτα ἄγεις, ‘you keep laughing’, *Ai.* 382; γέλωτα γελᾷ, ‘he/she laughs loud, *Ai.* 958; γέλων φῦσαι, ‘to bear laughter’, *Ant.* 647). This brief analysis of the grammatical forms of the laughter-words suggests that Sophoclean characters, generally, use these lexemes in reference to current actions in the plot. Thus, the examination of the context in which these terms appear will allow us to recognize the specific understandings of the phenomenon of laughter as well as its connotations.

4.2. Ideas of laughter in Sophoclean tragedy

Greek laughter-words are traceable in six surviving tragedies of Sophocles. In this part of the chapter, we will see that the playwright applies the Greek terminology in order to evoke different aspects of the phenomenon of laughter.

4.2.1. Sound

Laughter is, primarily, a sound. As it has emerged from my analysis in chapter II, the audible aspect of laughter forms the basis of the semantics of γελ- rooted words.⁷⁰¹ Sophocles evokes the idea of audible laughter in the *Ajax*. In the first episode of the play, Tecmessa explains to the Chorus about her

⁷⁰¹ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.1.

husband's dreadful acts committed in a sudden stroke of frenzy ('Seized by madness our famous Ajax fell into disgrace in the night', *μανία γὰρ ἀλούς ἡμῖν ὁ κλεινὸς / νύκτερος Αἴας ἀπελωβήθη*, *Ai.* 216-17).⁷⁰² In a detailed account, she describes how the hero suddenly left their tent at night, carrying a sword in his hand (*Ai.* 285-94). To her surprise, he later returned dragging some domestic animals with him (*Ai.* 296-7), which he eventually slaughtered (*Ai.* 298-300).⁷⁰³ Moreover, Ajax's odd behaviour did not cease after his killing of the animals (*Ai.* 301-4):

Τε.
 τέλος δ' ὑπάξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιᾶ τινα
 λόγους ἀνέσπα, τοὺς μὲν Ἀτρειδῶν κάτα,
 τοὺς δ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσσεῖ, συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν,
 ὅσῃν κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσσαιτ' ἰών:

Tecmessa: In the end he rushed off through the door, and talked to some shadow painfully dragging out his words, some against the sons of Atreus, others about Odysseus, and with them he **laughed loudly** at all the violence he had gone and inflicted on them by way of vengeance...

According to Tecmessa, who was observing her husband from inside their tent, the maddened hero ran outside and spoke there with 'some shadow' (*σκιᾶ τινα*, *Ai.* 301). Moreover, she recounts the fact that while he was talking about the Atreidae and Odysseus (*λόγους ἀνέσπα...*, *Ai.* 302), he was also laughing loudly (*συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν*, *Ai.* 303). In this example, the expression *γέλωσ πολύς* evokes the image of laughter in connection with the concept of sound, for the original meaning of the phrase is 'loud laughter'.⁷⁰⁴ Also, since the verb *συντιθέναι* accepts the meaning 'to combine' or 'to mingle with', it refers to the fact of the hero emitting audible laughter intermittently while speaking.⁷⁰⁵ On the basis of line 303, we may notice that, from inside the tent,

⁷⁰² Translation in Garvie (1998) 41. Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of the *Ajax*, unless stated otherwise.

⁷⁰³ In his delusion, Ajax slaughters a flock of sheep and herd of cattle, which the Greeks took as spoils after capturing Troy.

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3.

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. Jebb (1896) 56 n. 303; similarly Kamerbeek (1953) 76.

Tecmessa was able to hear not only Ajax's words spoken to some shadow but also his laughter. The hero's wife, therefore, indicates loud laughter as one of the mad behaviours of her deluded husband.⁷⁰⁶

Interestingly, scholars have suggested that Tecmessa's remark about Ajax's laughter may be a stage direction for an earlier scene in the play, i.e. the prologue scene, in which the maddened hero appears onstage. Athena unfolds to her favourite, Odysseus, about how she prevented Ajax from killing him and the Greek leaders (*Ai.* 39-65). Enraged with the Atreidae, who decided that Odysseus should receive the famous shield of Achilles ('Anger overwhelmed him because of Achilles' armour', *Χόλω βαρυνθείς τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων, Ai.* 41), the title character decided to take revenge for his dishonour and kill his enemies at night ('He set out alone against you, by night and stealthily', *Νύκτωρ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς δόλιος ὀρμᾶται μόνος, Ai.* 47). Yet, his plan was disrupted by the goddess, who sent a fit a madness on the warrior (*Ai.* 51-4). In order to demonstrate to the son of Laertes her powers over Ajax, Athena decides to summon the hero, who is still in a maddened state and is torturing the animals in his tent (*Ai.* 65-7). She then makes Odysseus invisible and calls the madman to her (*Ai.* 89-117):

- | | |
|-----|--|
| Αθ. | Ὡ οὔτος, Αἴαν, δεύτερόν σε προσκαλῶ
τί βαιὸν οὕτως ἐντρέπη τῆς συμμάχου; |
| Αι. | Ὡ χαῖρ', Αθάνα, χαῖρε, Διογενὲς τέκνον,
ὡς εὖ παρέστης· καί σε παγχρούσοις ἐγὼ
στέψω λαφύροις τῆσδε τῆς ἄγρας χάριν. |
| Αθ. | Καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό μοι φράσον,
ἔβαψας ἔγχος εὖ πρὸς Ἀργείων στρατῶ; |
| Αι. | Κόμπος πάρεστι κοῦκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή. |
| Αθ. | Ἴη καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρεΐδαισιν ἠχμασας χέρας; |
| Αι. | Ὅστ' οὔποτ' Αἴαντ', οἶδ', ἀτιμάσουσ' ἔτι. |
| Αθ. | Τεθνᾶσιν ἄνδρες, ὡς τὸ σὸν ξυνῆκ' ἐγὼ. |
| Αι. | Θανόντες ἤδη τᾶμ' ἀφαιρείσθων ὅπλα. |
| Αθ. | Εἶεν· τί γὰρ δὴ παῖς ὁ τοῦ Λαερτίου;
ποῦ σοι τύχης ἔστηκεν; ἦ πέφευγέ σε; |
| Αι. | Ἴη τοῦπίτριπτον κίναδος ἐξήρου μ' ὅπου; |

⁷⁰⁶ I discuss this example in relation to laughter as a symptom of madness in section 4.2.4. below.

Aθ. Ἔγωγ' Ὀδυσσέα τὸν σὸν ἐνστάτην λέγω.
*

Αι. Ἕδιστος, ὦ δέσποινα, δεσμώτης ἔσω
θακεῖ· θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ τί πω θέλω.

Aθ. Πρὶν ἂν τί δράσης ἢ τί κερδάνης πλέον;
*

Αι. Πρὶν ἂν δεθεῖς πρὸς κίον' ἐρκείου στέγης –

Aθ. Τί δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ἐργάση κακόν;

Αι. Μάστιγι πρῶτον νῶτα φοινηχθεῖς θάνη.

Aθ. Μὴ δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ὧδέ γ' αἰκίση.

Αι. Χαίρειν, Ἀθάνα, τᾶλλ' ἐγὼ σ' ἐφίεμαι,
κεῖνος δὲ τείσει τήνδε κοῦκ ἄλλην δίκην.

Aθ. Σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τέρψις ἦδε σοι τὸ δρᾶν,
χρῶ χειρὶ, φείδου μηδὲν ὦνπερ ἐννοεῖς.

Αι. Χωρῶ πρὸς ἔργον, τοῦτό σοι δ' ἐφίεμαι,
τοιάνδ' αἰεὶ μοι σύμμαχον παρεστάναι.

Athena: You there, Ajax, I summon you a second time. Why do you pay so little heed to your ally?

Ajax: Oh hail, Athena, hail daughter of Zeus, how well you have stood by my side; and I shall honour you with golden spoils in gratitude for this hint.

Athena: Well said. But tell me this, did you dye your sword thoroughly in the army of the Argives?

Ajax: I can freely boast of it, and I don't deny that I did it.

Athena: Did you really turn your armed hand on the sons of Atreus?

Ajax: The result is that these men will never again dishonour Ajax.

Athena: The men are dead, as I understand your word.

Ajax: They are dead. Now let them deprive me of my arms.

Athena: Well then, what of Laertes' son? In what state do you have him? Has he escaped you?

Ajax: Are you asking me where the villainous fox is?

Athena: I am; I mean Odysseus your adversary.
*

Ajax: He is sitting inside, mistress, a most welcome prisoner; for I do not want him to die for a while yet.

Athena: Until you do what or gain what benefit?
*

Ajax: Until tied to a pillar of my house –

Athena: What harm, pray, will you do to the wretched man?

Ajax: Until his back is first reddened with the whip before he dies.

Athena: Pray do not torture so the wretched man.

Ajax: In everything else, Athena, I bid you have your way, but this, and no other, is the punishment that he will receive.

Athena: Very well then, since it is your pleasure to act like this, take action, spare none of the things you plan.

Ajax: I am off to work; but this I bid you, always stand beside me as an ally of this kind.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁷ * indicates the possible moments for the actor playing Ajax to have raised a laugh.

As we can see, lines 91-117 correspond with Tecmessa's account in 301-5: Ajax comes out of the tent (after *Ai.* 90), speaks of the violence he has inflicted on the Atreidae (*Ai.* 97-100) and on Odysseus (*Ai.* 101-113), and then goes back into the hut (after *Ai.* 117).⁷⁰⁸ In his 1953 commentary to the play, Kamerbeek argues for considering Tecmessa's mention of her husband's loud laughter in line 303 (*συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν*) to be an indicator for the character's bout of laughter during his encounter with Athena; the critic states that 'somewhere Ajax must laugh' and suggests that this should take place either before line 108, in which Ajax describes what he will do to the prisoned Odysseus, or optionally before line 105, in which Ajax answers Athena's question to the whereabouts of Odysseus.⁷⁰⁹ In effect, some scholars, like Revermann, fully accept Kamerbeek's suggestion and consider the reference to loud laughter in line 303 to be an explicit stage direction for the scene in the prologue.⁷¹⁰ However, apart from Tecmessa's remark, we possess no other evidence to support this hypothesis. For this reason, the matter of the original audience of the *Ajax* hearing the title character's delusional laughter on stage remains only in the sphere of possibility.⁷¹¹

Apart from the title character of the *Ajax*, also Odysseus is referred to as laughing aloud. In the first episode of the same tragedy, once the main hero returns to his senses, he recognizes the consequences of his actions committed in the state of madness, i.e. the failed attempt at taking revenge on his enemies and, consequently, his loss of honour as a warrior (*Ai.* 348-76). At one point of his lamentation, Ajax imagines the reaction of Odysseus upon learning about the hero's madness (*Ai.* 379-82):

⁷⁰⁸ Cf. Stanford (1963) 100 n. 301-5; Garvie (1998) 153 n. 301-4.

⁷⁰⁹ Kamerbeek (1953) 76 n. 303.

⁷¹⁰ Revermann (2006) 60: 'Where it not for Tecmessa's mentioning it [i.e. laughter] in passing, we would not have the faintest idea of this stage direction'.

⁷¹¹ Cf. Taplin (1996) 191; Finglass (2011) 229 n. 302-4.

- Ai. ἰὼ πάνθ' ὄρων ἀπάντων τ' ἀεὶ
κακῶν ὄργανον, τέκνον Λαρτίου,
κακοπινέστατόν τ' ἄλημα στρατοῦ,
ἧ που πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἄγεις.
- Ajax: Ah, thou who watchest all things, thou ready tool of every
crime, ah, son of Lartius, thou foulest knave in all the host, I
warrant **thou laughest loud and long** for joy!⁷¹²

As we can see, Ajax is convinced of the fact that the son of Laertes, his arch-enemy since the contest for the armour of Achilles, rejoices at his former rival's disgrace and expresses his delight with laughter ('thou laughest loud and long for joy' πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἄγεις, *Ai.* 382). Here, we find the expression πολὺς γέλως used to denote 'loud laughter'. Moreover, since this phrase is the direct object to the verb ἄγω, which in this example accepts the meaning 'keep up, sustain, maintain',⁷¹³ the reference, then, suggests prolonged laughter.⁷¹⁴ Ajax, therefore, envisions his most detested enemy as laughing loudly at the hero's misfortunes.

Interestingly, the same image of Odysseus raising a loud laugh at the ruin of Ajax is evoked by the Chorus in the kommos after the fourth episode. In this scene, Tecmessa and the Salaminian Sailors lament upon the death of their master, who has committed suicide to restore his honour (*Ai.* 866-972). Aware of the fact that Ajax's utter destruction will bring delight to his enemies, the Sailors imagine their outrageous reaction upon hearing the news (*Ai.* 955-60):

- Xo. ἧ ῥα κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφουβρίζει
πολύτλας ἀνήρ,
γελαῖ δὲ τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχεσιν
πολὺν γέλωτα, φεῦ φεῦ,
ξύν τε διπλοῖ βασιλῆς
κλύοντες Ἀτρεΐδαι.
- Chorus: In truth the much-enduring man exults over us in his dark
mind, **and laughs loudly at** our frenzied sorrows, and with

⁷¹² Translation in Jebb (1896) 67.

⁷¹³ LSJ s.v. ἄγω.

⁷¹⁴ Garvie (1998) 161 n. 383; similarly Stanford (1963) 111 n. 379-82: 'It implies a more prolonged bout of laughter than συντιθείς γέλων πολὺν in 303'; cf. the translation of the line in Finglass (2011) 252 n. 383: 'I suppose you laugh long and loud in your delight'.

him will laugh, when they hear the news, the two sons of Atreus.⁷¹⁵

Observably, the Chorus evokes the image of Odysseus laughing loud at the hero's misfortunes, in similar fashion to Ajax's evocation in the example previously discussed (*Ai.* 379-83). Again, the audible aspect of laughter is denoted by the expression πολὺν γέλωτα, 'a loud laugh', which is the direct object to the verb γελᾷ, 'he laughs'. It appears, then, that the Salaminian Sailors, alike their master earlier, are convinced of their misfortunes causing their enemies to laugh loud with delight at their adversaries' misfortunes.

As we have seen, Sophocles seems to evoke the image of laughter in connection with the concept of sound only in one tragedy, i.e. the *Ajax*. In all three examples, the audible aspect of the phenomenon is denoted by the expression πολὺς γέλως. However, as we have seen, only one instance may refer to loud laughter emitted onstage by the actor playing Ajax (*Ai.* 303), whereas the other two examples in relation to Odysseus are merely interpretations by other characters (Ajax in *Ai.* 382; the Chorus in 957-8) of his anticipated reaction to the news of the title hero's ruin. In this respect, in one case it is possible that the protagonist's laughter may have resounded in the original production of the *Ajax*, however, in the other two instances, the loud laughter of Odysseus is merely spoken of.

4.2.2. Facial expression

Sophocles makes a single reference to laughter in connection with a facial expression. In the fourth episode of the *Electra*, the title character is overwhelmed with joy, after discovering the fact of her brother being alive and returning to Mycenae to avenge the murder of their father Agamemnon (*El.* 1224-87). Orestes, however, fearing that his sister's excitement may reveal his identity to their mother when they enter the palace, urges Electra to subdue her

⁷¹⁵ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 119.

emotions ('And see to it that our mother does not learn your state from that joyous countenance when we go into the house, but lament as though the disaster falsely told of were the truth!', Οὕτω δ' ὅπως μήτηρ σε μὴ 'πιγνώσεται / φαιδρῶ προσώπω νῶν ἐπελθόντοιν δόμους / ἀλλ' ὡς ἐπ' ἄτη τῆ μάτην λελεγμένη / στέναζ', *El.* 1296-9). The protagonist obliges to restrain her enthusiasm and tells her brother where to find their enemies (*El.* 1307-12):

ΗΛ. Ἀλλ' οἶσθα μὲν τὰνθένδε, πῶς γὰρ οὐ; κλύων
 ὀθούνεκ' Αἴγισθος μὲν οὐ κατὰ στέγας,
 μήτηρ δ' ἐν οἴκοις· ἦν σὺ μὴ δείσης ποθ' ὡς
 γέλωτι τοῦμὸν φαιδρὸν ὄψεται κάρα·
 μῖσός τε γὰρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτηκέ μοι,
 κἀπεὶ σ' ἐσεῖδον, οὐ ποτ' ἐκλήξω χαρᾶς
 δακρυροοῦσα.

Electra: Well, you know how things lie here, of course; you have heard that Aegisthus is not in the house, but that my mother is at home. Do not be afraid that she will ever see my face radiant **with smiles**; for long since hatred for her has seeped into me, and now that I have seen you, I shall never cease to weep for joy.⁷¹⁶

In particular, Electra reassures Orestes that she will not allow their mother to see her face 'radiant with smiles' (γέλωτι... φαιδρὸν ὄψεται κάρα, *El.* 1310). However, in the Greek original, the heroine literally speaks of her face being bright 'with laughter' (γέλωτι). Interestingly, since the noun γέλως appears here in direct connection with the face, many English translators prefer to render the term 'smile':⁷¹⁷ Jebb (1894), Storr (1913), Young (1920) and Lloyd-Jones (1994a) render γέλωτι, 'with smiles', Meineck and Woodruff (2007) sustain the original singular form with 'smile', whereas Campbell (2009) translates 'with a smiling face'.⁷¹⁸ Although there is no doubt about γέλως

⁷¹⁶ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 295. Hereon, I adduce other English passages from this edition of the *Electra*, unless indicated otherwise.

⁷¹⁷ As of May 2015, I have not yet found an English translation, which renders γέλως, 'laughter', in *El.* 1310.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. lines 1309-10 in Jebb (1894) 175: 'face lit up with smiles', and same translation in Storr (1913) 233; Young (1920) 120: 'countenance radiant with smiles'; Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 173: 'She won't see me with a smile or a shining face'; Campbell (1883) 288: 'Not fear / She should behold me with a a smiling face'.

referring to the face, however, the interpretation of ‘smile’, albeit possible, gives rise to difficulties. Firstly, the plural translation ‘with smiles’ for the singular γέλωτι may suggest that Electra would not allow herself to be caught smiling by her mother more than once, yet, from the context it is clear that both she and Orestes are talking about her restraining her facial expression only once, i.e. the moment they enter the palace to take revenge on Clytaemestra. Secondly, the translations of Campbell (2009), ‘with a smiling face’ as well as of Meineck and Woodruff (2007), ‘with a smile or a shining face’, omit the fact that in the Greek original Electra describes her face (κάρα) to be ‘bright’ or ‘beaming’ (φαιδρόν), whereas with γέλωτι in the dative she specifies what her face particularly radiates. In other words, her face is literally described as beaming with laughter.⁷¹⁹ In this respect, we may notice that in line 1310 the word γέλως, although it does regard Electra’s facial appearance, nevertheless it rather indicates what her bright face expresses. For this reason, the choice of the interpretation of ‘smile’ for γέλως limits the originally broad semantics of the noun, which may evoke the idea of laughter in connection with the expression of emotions.⁷²⁰ As I have discussed in chapter I, the chief role of any physical manifestation of laughter, especially through a specific facial expression, is nonverbal communication.⁷²¹ Certainly, in lines 1307-12 Electra is fully aware of this fact, since she promises her brother to keep her face ‘beaming with laughter’ away from their mother’s eyes. Therefore, the visible γέλως on her countenance denotes her feelings outwardly expressed. Having said this, I will analyze the same example in the following section, in which I discuss the idea of laughter evoked in relation to the sphere of emotions.

⁷¹⁹ Some translations stress the aspect of radiance on Electra’s face, e.g. Carson (2001) 102: ‘And don’t worry: / she’ll see no *glow* on my face’, (my emphasis).

⁷²⁰ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3.

⁷²¹ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.3.

4.2.3. Joy

One's laughter may be the manifestation of joy elicited by good fortune. In the fourth episode of the *Electra*, the reunited children of Agamemnon make two references to laughter in connection with elation. Earlier in the play, Orestes sends to Mycenae false news about his death, in order to have his mother and her lover lulled into a false sense of safety (*El.* 32-50).⁷²² The prince, then, comes to the royal palace, in order to deliver to the queen the urn with her son's supposed ashes (*El.* 1098ff.). At the entrance he meets Electra, who on hearing that the stranger is carrying the remains of her brother, raises a loud lament (*El.* 1126-70). After learning that the grieving woman is his sister, Orestes reveals to her his true identity (*El.* 1205-23). Not surprisingly, the news elevates Electra's spirits from despair to immense joy: she hugs her brother passionately ('Do I hold you in my arms?', *El.* 1226) and expresses her elation fervently ('Dearest of bodies ever engendered, now you have come; you have found, you have arrived, you have seen those whom you desired!', Ἰὼ γοναί, / γοναὶ σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων, / ἐμόλετ' ἀρτίως, / ἐφεύρετ', ἦλθετ', εἶδεθ' οὐς ἐχρήζετε, *El.* 1232-35). In fact, the woman's rapture is so great that Orestes calms her down as not to have anyone in the palace hear them ('I am here; but keep silent, and wait!', Πάρεσμεν· ἀλλὰ σῖγ' ἔχουσα πρόσμενε, *El.* 1236; 'It is best to keep silent, in case anyone inside should hear', Σιγᾶν ἄμεινον, μὴ τις ἔνδοθεν κλύη, *El.* 1238). Also, due to the fact that the prince wants to carry out his revenge immediately, he urges Electra to subdue her excitement and control her emotions when they enter the palace (*El.* 1296-1300):

Οἱ. Οὕτω δ' ὅπως μήτηρ σε μὴ 'πιγνώσεται
 φαιδρῶ προσώπω νῶν ἐπελθόντοιν δόμους·
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἐπ' ἄτη τῆ μάτην λελεγμένη
 στέναζ'· ὅταν γὰρ εὐτυχήσωμεν, τότε

⁷²² In *El.* 293-8, Electra speaks of her mother dreading Orestes' return. After receiving the false news of his death, Clytaemestra expresses her relief of no longer having to fear her husband's avenger, cf. *El.* 773-87.

χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελαῖν ἐλευθέρως.

Orestes: And see to it that our mother does not learn your state from that joyous countenance when we go into the house, but lament as though the disaster falsely told of were the truth! When we are triumphant, then we shall be able to rejoice and **laugh** in freedom.

Apparently, Orestes points to the fact that only after executing vengeance on the murderers of their father will it be appropriate for them 'to rejoice and laugh' (χαίρειν... καὶ γελαῖν, *El.* 1300). In this example, we may notice that the verb γελαῖν, 'to laugh', evokes the idea of laughter in association with the expression of emotions, for it appears in close proximity to the verb χαίρειν, 'to rejoice', which denotes the experience of pleasant sentiments. Orestes, therefore, conjures the image of laughter to describe the joyful state he and his sister will be in as well as will be capable of expressing freely (ἐλευθέρως) after having their enemies punished.⁷²³

In light of the discussion above, we may recognize a more suitable interpretation for the term γέλως used by Electra in the response she gives to her brother in lines 1307-12, which I have examined in the previous section. Since the sister accepts Orestes' request not to reveal a 'joyous countenance' (φαιδρῶ προσώπω, *El.* 1297), we may recognize that her mention of her 'face beaming with laughter' (γέλωτι τοῦμόν φαιδρὸν... κάρα, *El.* 1310) regards her expressing the state of joy. Hence, with the word 'laughter', Electra would be referring to the elation she is experiencing after being reunited with her brother.⁷²⁴ Electra, however, reassures that she will not adopt a cheerful expression in front of their mother, because of her feeling a mixture of

⁷²³ Blundell (1989) 177.

⁷²⁴ Finglass (2007) 486 n. 1297 points to the fact that φαιδρῶ προσώπω is 'a characteristic expected often of those welcoming a long-expected member of the household. Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.3. Curiously, Orestes' reaction to the family reunion is less emotional in comparison to his sister's extreme joy. For this reason, some scholars view his treatment of Electra as a sign of indifference, cf. Blundell (1989) 174: 'After recognizing his sister Orestes shows her little affection'; Wright (2005) 186: 'Brother and sister have completely different temperaments and emotions, and there is no affinity whatsoever between them'.

emotions: joy, on the one hand ('now that I have seen you, I shall never cease to weep for joy', *κἀπεί σ' ἔσειῖδον, οὐ ποτ' ἐκλήξω χαρᾶ / δακρυροοῦσα*, *El.* 1312-13) after the happy reunion, but on the other, the constant hatred towards Clytaemestra ('for long since hatred for her has seeped into me', *μῖσός τε γὰρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτηκέ μοι*, *El.* 1311). Because of the simultaneous experience of two extreme feelings, Electra declares that she will be weeping out of joy, and by accepting such a countenance, she will deceive the queen of her true feelings. In this case, we may agree that in line 1310 *γέλως* primarily denotes the protagonist's emotional state of joy, which she promises not to show on her face.⁷²⁵

Another Sophoclean example of joyous laughter appears in the first episode of the *Ajax*. After the temporary fit of madness sent by Athena, the title character returns to sanity only to recognize the true outcome of his deranged actions, i.e. the killing of animals instead of his enemies. Sitting in his tent amidst the slaughtered sheep and cattle (*Ai.* 346-7), Ajax laments upon his utter humiliation because of the failure to kill the Atreidae and Odysseus (*Ai.* 372-6). Especially in regard of the latter, the hero expresses his anger and disappointment in having his rival for Achilles' shield escape his revenge and, to his horror, imagines the son of Laertes as taking delight in his misfortune (*Ai.* 379-82). At this point, the Chorus of Sailors attempts to console its agonized master with a universal truth about the nature of opportunities in life (*Ai.* 383):

Χο. Ἐὐν τῷ θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾶ κώδύρεται.

Chorus: It depends on the god whether any man **laughs** or wails.

⁷²⁵ Interestingly, the interpretation of 'smile' for *γέλως* in *El.* 1310 dominates in modern translations. As of May 2015, I have only managed to find two English translations of the play which interpret *γέλως* as an emotion, cf. Plumptre (1878) 228: 'fear not / Lest she should see my face blithe with joy'; Kitto (1998) 145: 'you need have no fear / That she will see a look of happiness / Upon my face'. Such interpretation is also found in the latest Polish translation by Chodkowski (2012) 426: 'Nie musisz się lękać, / że może ujrzeć *radość* na mej twarzy', (my emphasis).

In this passage, the Sailors utter a gnome about one's circumstances being dependent on divine will. The sententious tone of line 383 is evident due to its generalizing character, noticeable in the use of the expression ξὺν τῷ θεῷ, which regards divinity in general,⁷²⁶ as well as the adjective πᾶς, here denoting 'every man'. Interestingly, the Chorus expresses such opinion with the juxtaposition of two images of man's possible reactions to different experiences in life: one of him laughing (γελᾶ) in case of success, the other of him crying (καὶ ὀδύρεται) in case of failure. As we can see, Sophocles refers to the dichotomy of laughter and tears understood to be audible or visible signs of one's feelings: joy in relation to the former, and sadness in regard of the latter. Therefore, in line 383 of the *Ajax*, the verb γελάω denotes joyous laughter occasioned by fortunate opportunities.⁷²⁷

Curiously, in the same tragedy, Sophocles again makes a reference to laughter in connection with expression of joy, albeit through negation. In the fifth episode, Teucer, the half-brother of the title character, laments upon the body of Ajax, who has just committed suicide (*Ai.* 992-1039). At one point, Teucer anticipates the reaction of their father Telamon on learning about the death of his older son (*Ai.* 1008-16):

Τευ. ἦ πού με Τελαμών, σὸς πατὴρ ἐμός θ' ἄμα,
δέξαιτ' ἂν εὐπρόσωπος ἰλέως τ' ἴσως
χωροῦντ' ἄνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ οὐχ; ὅτω πάρα
μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι μηδὲν ἥδιον γελᾶν.
Οὗτος τί κρύψει; ποῖον οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακόν,
τὸν ἐκ δορὸς γεγῶτα πολεμίου νόθον,
τὸν δειλία προδόντα καὶ κακανδρία
σέ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἢ δόλοισιν, ὡς τὰ σὰ
κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοιμι σούς.

Teucer: Telamon, no doubt, your father and mine alike, would receive me cheerfully and graciously when he sees me coming

⁷²⁶ Finglass (2011) 252 n. 383. Stanford (1963) 111 n. 383 calls attention to the emphatic positioning of ξὺν τῷ θεῷ. Although the expression appears in the singular person ('with a god'), however its generalizing sense permits the translation in the plural, cf. line 383 in Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 20: 'It's up to the gods if a man laughs or cries' (my emphasis).

⁷²⁷ On the idea for the cyclical change of human fortune, see Garvie (1998) 161-2 n. 383.

without you. Of course he will; he who even in good fortune finds it just as impossible **to laugh** with pleasure. What will he keep back? What kind of insult will he not utter against the bastard born from the enemy's spear, the man who betrayed you, dearest Ajax, by cowardice and unmanliness, or by deceit, so that I might administer your power and house when you are dead!

In particular, Teucer dreads the moment of his homecoming to Salamis and facing his father without Ajax (χωροῦντ' ἄνευ σοῦ, *Ai.* 1010). With detectable sarcasm, the younger son is sure to receive a 'warm welcome' from Telamon ('with a kind and cheerful face', εὐπρόσωπος ἰλέως τ' ἴσως, *Ai.* 1009), who is known for his stern temper.⁷²⁸ Continuing his speech in a sarcastic tone, Teucer gives an austere description of his father's character, 'who even in good fortune finds it impossible to laugh with pleasure' (ὄτῳ πάρα / μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι μηδὲν ἦδιον γελαῖν, *Ai.* 1010-11). As we may observe, the hero's brother evokes the image of laughter in relation to their parent's reaction to circumstances regarded as fortunate, which, generally, should give reasons for joy and laughter. However, as Teucer explains, it is not Telamon's custom 'to laugh more sweetly' (μηδὲν ἦδιον γελαῖν) even when 'enjoying good luck' (μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι). Here, the son emphasizes not the fact that his father's laughter is less sweet than it should be in positive circumstances, but the fact of Telamon not performing such laughter at all.⁷²⁹ In this respect, Teucer evokes the image of laughter to describe the father's inability to experience positive emotions,

⁷²⁸ Both Ajax (*Ai.* 462-5) and Teucer (*Ai.* 1008-10) expect a hostile reception from their father. For this reason, according to Kyriakou (2011) 194 Telamon 'seems to hover over the play, an imposing and unforgiving figure of a severe elder'.

⁷²⁹ Finglass (2011) 426 n. 1010-11: 'the contrast is between not laughter which is more and less sweet, but the absence of laughter and sweet laughter (which is sweeter than no laughter at all)'; similarly Arnould (1990) 86 who considers this absence to be 'a sign of a particularly cheerless and difficult character' ('comme la marque d'un caractère particulièrement sombre et difficile'), (my translation). For the opposite view, which regards the comparative ἦδιον to contrast Telamon's degree of laughing, see Kamerbeek (1953) 197: 'ἦδιον γελαῖν: more brightly, more kindly than usual'; cf. also Jebb (1896) 154 n. 1010f. 'the man whose wont it is to wear no brighter smile (than usual), even when he is fortunate', here with the interpretation of 'smile' for γελαῖν.

such as joy or pleasure, which are commonly expressed with laughter.⁷³⁰ Therefore, we may agree that in line 1011 the phrase ἤδιον γελαῖν⁷³¹ denotes the act of laughing pleasantly in connection with the feeling of joy or a joyous state of mind.⁷³²

4.2.4. Madness

Laughter may manifest the condition of being mentally deranged. In Sophoclean drama, only one character is regarded as having laughed in a delusional state, i.e. the title character of the tragedy *Ajax*. As I have discussed before, the hero's wife, Tecmessa, mentions her husband as laughing aloud in her account of his maniacal actions (*Ai.* 284-306). Lines 302-4 particularly regard the moment of the hero's deranged laughter:

Τε.
τέλος δ' ὑπάξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιᾶ τινι
λόγους ἀνέσπα, τοὺς μὲν Ἀτρειδῶν κάτα,
τοὺς δ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσσεῖ, συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν,
ὄσσην κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσαιτ' ἰών:

Tecmessa: At last he darted through the door and rapped out words addressed to some shadow, denouncing now the sons of Atreus, now Odysseus, **laughing loudly** at the thought of what violence he had inflicted in his raid.⁷³³

The analysis of this passage in section 4.2.1. above has shown that the idea of laughter evoked by Tecmessa primarily appears in connection with the audible aspect of the phenomenon, since she reports to the Chorus that she heard her

⁷³⁰ Garvie (1998) 219 n. 1010-11: 'Telamon is no more cheerful in good fortune than in bad'.

⁷³¹ For a discussion on the meanings of the expression ἤδῦ γελαῖν, 'to laugh sweetly', see Arnould (1990) 165. Cf. also chapter II, sections 2.1.1.2.3. and 2.1.1.2.5.

⁷³² Curiously, many scholars tend to interpret γελαῖν in *Ai.* 1011 as 'to smile', cf. Jebb (1896) 155: 'he who, even when good fortune befalls him, is not wont to smile more brightly than before'; Storr (1913) 85: 'Telamon / Who in his hours of fortune never smiles!'; Stanford (1963) 188 n. 1010-11: '...being the kind of man who is incapable if smiling cheerfully even in good fortune'; Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 45: 'Has the man ever smiled, even at good news?'; Garvie (1998) is inconsequential in his interpretation of γελαῖν, which he renders 'to laugh' in his translation, yet 'to smile' in the commentary to lines 1010-11. In my opinion, this may be due to the close proximity of εὐπρόσωπος, 'with glad countenance' in *Ai.* 1008. For the discussion on the meaning of 'smile' for γελάω, cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.2.

⁷³³ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 59.

husband ‘laughing loudly’ (συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν, *Ai.* 303) as he vilified the Atreidae and Odysseus. However, an additional interpretation for this reference to laughter emerges as well, since Tecmessa includes the reason for the hero’s audible outburst, i.e. his delusional conviction of having executed vengeance on his enemies (ὄσσην κατ’ αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσαιτ’ ἰών, *Ai.* 304).⁷³⁴ In his maddened state, Ajax believes to have fulfilled his plan of killing Odysseus and the sons of Atreus.⁷³⁵ Yet, it is apparent to the other characters of the play (Tecmessa, Athena, Odysseus) as well as to the audience of the tragedy that the hero’s attempt to kill his enemies ended in failure, due to Athena’s intervention. In effect, the divinely ordained stroke of madness altered Ajax’s senses to the point that he mistook sheep and cattle for the Greek leaders.⁷³⁶ Nonetheless, in his deranged mind the hero considers his revenge to be complete and laughs at the thought of this. Thus, without any doubt, Ajax’s laughter is that of a madman, i.e. of one who sees things the way they are not and, hence, reacts accordingly to his hallucinations.⁷³⁷

In this example, we may observe that to the bystanders the hero’s mad laughter appears as one of the aberrant actions performed in derangement. However, we may also recognize that the protagonist laughs out loud in his delusion to express his self-contentment. In other words, we may observe that the maddened Ajax laughs loud in a ‘state of wild joy’⁷³⁸, elicited by his imagined victory over his opponents. Such understanding of the hero’s mad

⁷³⁴ Cf. Kamerbeek (1953) 77 n. 304; Stanford (1963) 101 n. 304; Finglass (2011) 228 n. 302-4.

⁷³⁵ The hero himself speaks of this to Athena in the prologue, cf. *Ai.* 91-117.

⁷³⁶ Cf. Knox (1961) 5: ‘He [i.e. Ajax] is mad, of course, and the madness has been inflicted on him by Athena. But it consists only in his mistaking animals for men; the madness affects his vision more than his mind’. Similarly, Holt (1980) 22 who states that the hero’s frenzy is ‘nothing more, and nothing less, than a failure to see things correctly – a delusion that he was killing and torturing Greek warriors when in fact he was only venting his wrath upon sheep and cattle’. For a discussion on Ajax’s madness based on inverted vision, see Padel (1995) 66-79.

⁷³⁷ Halliwell (2008) 18 points to the fact that the hero is ‘roaring with derision as he imagines himself gloating in front of the army’s commanders’. The laughter of the delusional Ajax later became proverbial: Αἰάντειος γέλως; cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3. Cf. also Grossmann (1968) 65.

⁷³⁸ Papadopoulou (2005) 67.

laughter finds support in other passages in the plays. For instance, Tecmessa notices her husband's delusional joy, as she says to the Chorus: 'he himself, when he was still sick, enjoyed the troubles which held him in their grip, but to us who were sane his company caused distress' (Ἄνῆρ ἐκεῖνος, ἠνίκ' ἦν ἐν τῇ νόσῳ, / αὐτὸς μὲν ἦδεθ' οἷσιν εἶχετ' ἐν κακοῖς, / ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς φρονοῦντας ἠνία ξυνών, *Ai.* 271-3). Moreover, the hero's deranged self-complacency is evidently shown in the prologue during his short conversation with Athena (*Ai.* 91-117). In particular, when he is asked by the goddess whether he managed to carry out his vengeance, the hero exclaims 'I can freely boast of it, and I don't deny that I did it' (Κόμπος πάρεστι κούκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή, *Ai.* 96). Ajax, also, exults that the Atreidae will never again dishonour him (Ὡστ' οὔποτ' Αἴαντ', οἶδ', ἀτιμάσουσ' ἔτι, *Ai.* 98) for, in his deluded view, they are dead (Τεθνᾶσιν ἄνδρες, *Ai.* 99). When Athena ironically asks Ajax about his treatment of Odysseus, the hero boasts about keeping his enemy as 'a most welcome prisoner' (ἡδίστος δεσμώτης *Ai.* 105) in his tent,⁷³⁹ in order to torture him before killing him (Μάστιγι πρῶτον νῶτα φοινιχθεὶς θάνῃ, *Ai.* 110). As I have mentioned before, it is during this exchange of words that the actor playing the protagonist might have burst out with loud laughter.⁷⁴⁰ What is more, the two possible moments for Ajax to have laughed are suggested in that part of the conversation which particularly concerns the hero's treatment of Odysseus.⁷⁴¹ In this respect, we may recognize the fact that, should have Ajax laughed just before line 105 or 108, he would have been expressing his malicious delight at capturing his most detested enemy. In other words, the hero's deranged laughter would be, in fact, also the expression of his exultation over defeating Odysseus.⁷⁴² Such interpretation has been proposed by Gustav

⁷³⁹ Literally 'the sweetest prisoner'.

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. section 4.2.1. above.

⁷⁴¹ Kamerbeek (1953) 76 n. 303: 'Somewhere Ajax must laugh; probably before vs. 108 (or before 105)'.

⁷⁴² Arnould (1990) 228-9: 'le rire de triomphe et l'insulte'.

Grossmann, in his article entitled 'Das Lachen des Aias' (1968). According to the German scholar, Ajax's insane laughter occurs as an ironic inversion of the heroic laughter of triumph well known in the Homeric poems.⁷⁴³ However, the irony of the situation of the Sophoclean hero is the fact that his triumph takes place only in his mind. After Ajax regains his senses, he regards the temporary stroke of madness as well as the deeds he committed in such state as utterly shameful.⁷⁴⁴ Moreover, the actions which made him laugh in his delusion, now, when he is sober, make him cry ('with some difficulty he eventually returned to sanity, and when he saw the house so full of carnage he struck his head and cried aloud', ἔμφρων μόλις πως ξὺν χρόνῳ καθίσταται, / καὶ πληῆρες ἄτης ὡς διοπτρεύει στέγος, / παίσας κάρα θώυξεν, *Ai.* 306-8). Indeed, the hero recognizes the fact that his previous laughter was completely misplaced.

In the *Ajax*, therefore, we may notice that the hero's deranged laughter of mistaken triumph (*Ai.* 303 and possibly emitted onstage in the prologue) only increases the dramatic effect of his ominous derangement, which brings him public disgrace and loss of honour. In other words, Ajax's mad laughter anticipates the ruin of a once glorious warrior, which is the central theme of this tragedy.⁷⁴⁵ Since 'madness', in the words of Padel, 'is the perfect image of a tragic fall',⁷⁴⁶ we may agree that Sophocles also evokes the image of the hero laughing in frenzy for tragic purposes.

4.2.5. Mockery

Derision regards interpersonal behaviours aimed at expressing and communicating one's disdain or contempt towards others. As mentioned before, it is a purposeful act with the intention to depreciate the target of

⁷⁴³ Grossmann (1968) 71.

⁷⁴⁴ Padel (1995) 155: 'Ajax is shamed and dishonoured by having been mad, having failed to do what he meant, and having let his enemies live; and he is ashamed at killing cattle... All these are elements of his shame'.

⁷⁴⁵ Barlow (1981)113: 'the humiliation of a great man through madness'.

⁷⁴⁶ Padel (1995) 241.

ridicule, and may lead to the damage of reputation in society. In other words, to dispense mockery, generally, means to treat another with disrespect.⁷⁴⁷

The title character of the *Antigone* reveals a great sensitivity to being an object of other's laughter in the fourth episode of the play. In particular, the daughter of Oedipus defies Creon's orders not to bury the body of Polynices for his being a traitor to the city of Thebes (*Ant.* 21-38; 45-6). Antigone, however, performs funerary rites over her brother's corpse, and once caught, she is sentenced to being buried alive in a cave (*Ant.* 773-80). In the kommos scene, while she is being led to her death, the Chorus praises her glorious deed ('Is it not with glory and with praise that you depart to this cavern of the dead?', Οὐκοῦν κλεινὴ καὶ ἔπαινον ἔχουσ' / ἐς τόδ' ἀπέρχη κεῦθος νεκύων; *Ant.* 817-18).⁷⁴⁸ When Antigone compares her fate to that of Niobe, a descendent of Zeus, who died through petrification (*Ant.* 823-33), the Old Theban Men profess that she too will gain similar fame after death ('it is a great thing for the departed to have the credit of a fate like that of those equal to gods, both in life and later in death', Καίτοι φθιμένη μέγα κάκουσαι / τοῖς ἰσοθέοις ἔγκληρα λαχεῖν / ζῶσαν καὶ ἔπειτα θανοῦσαν, *Ant.* 836-8). Surprisingly, Antigone does not receive these words of praise well (*Ant.* 838-52):

Av. οἶμοι γελῶμαι.
τί με, πρὸς θεῶν πατρώων.
οὐκ οἰχομέναν ὑβρίζεις,
ἀλλ' ἐπίφαντον;
ὦ πόλις, ὦ πόλεως
πολυκτῆμονες ἄνδρες·
ὦ Δικαῖαι κρῆναι Θή-
βας τ' εὐαρμάτου ἄλσος, ἔμ-
πας ξυμμάρτυρας ὑμ' ἐπικτῶμαι,
οἷα φίλων ἄκλαυτος, οἷοις νόμοις
πρὸς ἔργμα τυμβόχωστον ἔρ-
χομαι τάφου ποταινίου·
ὦ δύστανος, βροτοῖς
οὔτε <νεκρὸς> νεκροῖσιν

⁷⁴⁷ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.4.

⁷⁴⁸ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 81. Hereon, I adduce other English quotes from this edition of the *Antigone*, unless stated otherwise.

μέτοικος, οὐ ζῶσιν, οὐ θανοῦσιν.

Antigone: Ah, **I am laughed at!**
Why, by the gods of my fathers, do you
Insult me not
When I have gone
But when you see
Me still before you?
O city, O men
Of the city, with
Your many possessions!
Ah, springs of Dirke
And sacred ground
Of Thebes of the
Beautiful chariots – at least
You will be
Witnesses to how I go, un-
Lamented by any
Friends, and because of what
Kinds of laws, to the high-
Heaped prison of my
Tomb, my strange and
Dreadful grave. Ah,
Unfortunate that I am –
Neither living among those
Who are alive, nor
Dwelling as a corpse
Among corpses, having
No home with either
The living of the dead.⁷⁴⁹

As we may observe, Antigone's complaint at the words of the Old Men of Thebes comes as unexpected. Earlier, in the first episode, the girl expressed her determination in fulfilling her sisterly duty towards her dead brother, although she knew it would mean breaking the law (*Ant.* 21-38). Moreover, she was fully aware that her civic disobedience would bring upon her the ultimate punishment, however, in spite of this, she kept to her decision with full conviction that it was the right thing to do ('It is honorable for me to do this and die', καλόν μοι τοῦτο ποιούση θανεῖν, *Ant.* 72). Yet, once Antigone faces the anticipated consequences for her actions and receives the expected praise from others for her act of defiance, she behaves in a manner which contradicts her

⁷⁴⁹ Translation in Gibbons and Segal (2003) 91-2.

words earlier expressed.⁷⁵⁰ In fact, with her surprising exclamation, 'Ah, I am laughed at!' (οἶμοι γελῶμαι, *Ant.* 838), it is evident that she regards the Chorus' praise of her and favourable comparison to the gods as an insult.⁷⁵¹ In this reference to laughter, we may recognize that the protagonist evokes the idea of mockery by using the passive form of the verb γελάω, with which she considers herself to be object of the Chorus' laughter.⁷⁵² Furthermore, she accuses the Old Theban Men of insulting her (ὕβριζεις, *Ant.* 840) for expressing their opinion into her face, albeit sympathetic, about her coming to die in glorious fashion and not waiting for the moment after her death (*Ant.* 838-41). Antigone, hence, reacts in a pejorative manner to the discernible praise of her brave and heroic deed. In effect, she evokes the image of derisive laughter to denote her negative response to the Chorus' approval of her heroism. In short, she considers their words to be a mockery of her person.

The question, therefore, rises why should Antigone feel mocked by the Chorus of Old Theban Men, who speak of her facing death with glory and praise (κλεινὴ καὶ ἔπαινον ἔχουσ', *Ant.* 817)? In my opinion, a convincing explanation has been provided by Robert Chodkowski in his 2012 Polish edition of the tragedy. Accordingly, the scholar points out that, as Antigone is being led to death, her distinguishable heroism, previously expressed in the first part of the play, gives way to her emotions. In other words, in her last moments of life, the title character reacts more as a young girl reluctant to die than as a hero.⁷⁵³ This is noticeable in her regrets, expressed further in the

⁷⁵⁰ Blundell (1989) 110.

⁷⁵¹ Gibbons and Segal (2003) 149 n. 899/839.

⁷⁵² Griffith (1999) 270-1 n. 839-52. This aspect of laughter is, generally, recognized in most translations, e.g. Jebb (1928) 155: 'Ah, I am mocked'; Storr (1912) 379: 'Alack, alack! Ye mock me'; Brown (1987) 91: 'Oh, this is mockery'; Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 83: 'Ah, I am being mocked!'; Slavitt (2007) 38: 'You mock me?'

⁷⁵³ Chodkowski (2012) 260 n. 106: 'In the first part of the play, Antigone was overwhelmed with heroic passion, however, now her disposition of a young girl comes out, of one is reluctant to die' ('W pierwszej części sztuki Antygona była ogarnięta heroicznym uniesieniem, obecnie do głosu dochodzi jej natura młodej dziewczyny, która broni się przed śmiercią'). My translation.

kommos scene, about not having the chance of being married (*Ant.* 876-8; 916-17), nor having children (*Ant.* 918). Although it is obvious that Antigone shows no signs of remorse for her deed, nevertheless, she is overwhelmed with sadness at the fact of dying prematurely. In this respect, we may notice a discrepancy occurring between the protagonist and the Chorus in the perception of her fate: the heroine views her misfortunes from the point of a young woman, whereas the Old Men of Thebes regard them as those of a glorious hero. As a result of this discordance of perception, Antigone becomes irritated with the treatment she receives from the Chorus, considering it to be disrespectful and insulting. As we can see, one's misapprehension of another's feelings may be perceived as an act of derision.⁷⁵⁴

Incredulous opinions may be regarded as mockery, as well. In the *Electra*, the title character has come to believe in the false news about Orestes' death (*El.* 808-22). After the kommos scene in the second stasimon, in which Electra laments upon the loss of her brother as the long-awaited avenger of her murdered father (*El.* 823-70), she encounters her sister Chrysothemis, who brings to her tidings of joy (*El.* 871-80):

Χο.	Ὑφ' ἡδονῆς τοι, φιλτάτη, διώκομαι τὸ κόσμιον μεθεῖσα σὺν τάχει μολεῖν· φέρω γὰρ ἡδονάς τε κἀνάπαυλαν ὧν πάροιθεν εἶχες καὶ κατέστενες κακῶν.
Ηλ.	Πόθεν δ' ἂν εὖροις τῶν ἐμῶν σὺ πημάτων ἄρηξιν, οἷς ἴασιν οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἰδεῖν;
Χο.	Πάρεστ' Ὀρέστης ἡμῖν, ἴσθι τοῦτ' ἐμοῦ κλύουσ', ἐναργῶς, ὥσπερ εἰσορᾶς ἐμέ.
Ηλ.	ἀλλ' ἦ μέμνηας, ὦ τάλαινα, κἀπὶ τοῖς σαυτῆς κακοῖσι κἀπὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶς;

Chrysothemis: Delight, dearest one, spurs me to come fast, letting go care for dignity! For I bring happiness and relief from your previous troubles, over which you have lamented.

Electra: And where could you find help for my sorrows, for which it is possible to see a remedy?

⁷⁵⁴ For an alternative interpretation of the reference to laughter, see Brown (1987) 194 n. 839-52: 'Antigone is conscious only of the cruelty and injustice of Creon's sentence, and the 'mockery' and 'insult' lie in trying to present it as a privilege'.

Chrysothemis: We have Orestes here – know this from me – unmistakably,
just as you see me!
Electra: Are you mad, poor creature, and **are you mocking** my
troubles and your own?

Evidently, Electra gives no credence to her sister's words about their brother's arrival to Mycenae.⁷⁵⁵ The reason for this is obvious, for the heroine has just recently heard for herself about the death of Orestes from the stranger who brought the news to the queen (*El.* 673-763). Consequently, she considers Chrysothemis' words to be a sign of either madness (*μέμηνας*, *El.* 879) or mockery (*γελάω*, *El.* 880). Here, the verb *γελάω* clearly evokes the idea of laughter in connection with derision. Utter disbelief has Electra disregard her sister's discovery and reject it as mere ridicule of their mutual misfortune. Despite Chrysothemis' denial of mockery and further explanation of how she came about this revelation (*El.* 892-919), Electra reaffirms only of her sister's madness ('Alas, how I have been pitying you for your folly all this while!', *Φεῦ τῆς ἀνοίας, ὥς σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι*, *El.* 920) and reveals to her the sad news, which she has earlier learned from the stranger ('He is dead, poor creature! Your chance of salvation by him is lost; do not look to him!', *Τέθνηκεν, ὦ τάλαινα· τὰ κείνου δέ σοι / σωτήρι' ἔρρει· μηδὲν ἐς κείνόν γ' ὄρα*, *El.* 924-5). In the *Electra*, therefore, the idea of derisive laughter is evoked in connection with the title protagonist's disbelief in her sister's revelation.

Sophoclean characters fear of incurring derisive laughter in others. In the *Oedipus at Colonus*, Theseus takes certain actions in order to prevent the possibility of becoming the object of mockery. The Athenian king has granted asylum to the blind Oedipus (*OC* 631-41), promising to protect him in case of any danger (*OC* 649). However, Creon arrives at Colonus with his men determined to bring his brother-in-law back to Thebes (*OC* 728-60). When Oedipus resists, the Thebans inform him of having already abducted his daughter Ismene (*OC* 818-19) and seize his other child, Antigone (*OC* 826-32),

⁷⁵⁵ Finglass (2007) 376 n. 879-80.

who accompanied her father in his exile. Upon hearing the calls of the Chorus, Theseus comes to Oedipus' aid and orders his attendant to form a search party in order to reclaim the two abducted girls (OC 897-903):

Θη.	οὐκουν τις ὡς τάχιστα προσπόλων μολῶν πρὸς τούσδε βωμούς, πάντ' ἀναγκάσει λεῶν ἄνιππον ἵππότην τε θυμάτων ἄπο σπεύδειν ἀπὸ ῥυτῆρος, ἔνθα δίστομοι μάλιστα συμβάλλουσιν ἐμπόρων ὁδοί, ὡς μὴ παρέλθωσ' αἱ κόραι, γέλωσ δ' ἐγὼ ξένω γένωμαι τῶδε, χειρωθεὶς βία.
Theseus:	Ho! hasten to the altars, one of you, Command my liegemen leave the sacrifice And hurry, foot and horse, with rein unchecked, To where the paths that packmen use diverge, Lest the two maidens slip away, and I Become a mockery to this my guest, As one despoiled by force. ⁷⁵⁶

Evidently, Theseus is willing to keep his promise given to Oedipus in line 649. Should he fail to do so, then he would be violating two laws sacred to the Greeks: 1) ξενία, i.e. the law of hospitality, and 2) ἱκετεία, i.e. the law of suppliance, both considered to be 'formal relationships involving reciprocal rights and obligations'.⁷⁵⁷ Once Oedipus has been granted asylum in Colonus, he has become an official guest (ξένος) but also supplicant (ἱκέτης) to the Athenian king.

In this respect, it is clear that, by coming to his guest's aid, Theseus fulfils a formal obligation towards Oedipus. In the passage quoted above, he specifically refers to this in lines 902-3, in which he expresses his fear of becoming a mockery to his guest, should he fail to bring the two girls back (ὡς μὴ παρέλθωσ' αἱ κόραι, γέλωσ δ' ἐγὼ / ξένω γένωμαι τῶδε, χειρωθεὶς βία). It is, hence, apparent that the Athenian hero wishes to avoid becoming a laughing-stock (γέλωσ δ' ἐγὼ) in the eyes of his guest (ξένω γένωμαι τῶδε) for not being able to resist the violence inflicted (χειρωθεὶς βία). We may, then,

⁷⁵⁶ Translation in Storr (1912) 237.

⁷⁵⁷ Belfiore (1998) 144.

recognize that the noun γέλως denotes derision.⁷⁵⁸ In other words, Theseus sends his men to retake Oedipus' daughters in order to fulfil his duty as a host and a person earlier supplicated to,⁷⁵⁹ but also to avoid the possibility of becoming the object of his guest's mockery.

Some scholars, however, favour another interpretation for the word ξένος, as they render it 'stranger' and not 'guest'. As a result, the term in OC 903 would not refer to Oedipus as the 'guest' of the Athenian king, but to Creon, the 'stranger', who has used violence against his brother-in-law. Moreover, if we accept a different reading for ξένος in this example, then the meaning of γέλως in OC 902 alters, as well. In this case, I will discuss this example once more in section 4.2.7. below, in which I analyze those Sophoclean references to laughter evoked in connection with the concept of triumph.

As it has emerged from the discussion in this section, in the tragedies of Sophocles, different circumstances may occasion derision. Firstly, we have seen that one's disbelief in the views of others may have one discredit these opinions and regard them as a mockery (*El.* 880). Secondly, one's misapprehension may be also considered to be a derisive act of depreciating another (*Ant.* 838). And finally, one's failure to act accordingly to a situation may provoke mockery (OC 902). In all three cases, laughter is evoked in connection with incredulous words, misunderstood views or failed actions, however, not in regard of the rapport between two or more characters. In other words, these few examples present laughter in terms of a temporary act of disdain (*El.* 880; *Ant.* 838) or possible loss of face (OC 902), but not as a signifier of interpersonal relations. Yet, mockery may signal stronger emotions than only that of disdain if it is dispensed amongst people opposed to each other. When the rapport between two or more persons is of antagonistic nature, one's laughter becomes the

⁷⁵⁸ Cf. Kamerbeek (1984) 132 n. 897-904 s.v. γέλως: 'food for laughter, object of derision'.

⁷⁵⁹ Belfiore (1998) 146.

manifestation of mutual unfriendliness or enmity. I would like to now pay attention to those Sophoclean examples in which the terminology for laughter is used to denote outright hostility between the characters.

4.2.6. Hostility

In fifth-century literature, the Greek term *φιλία* is used to signify relationships based on affection, friendliness or alliance. Chiefly translated as 'friendship' or 'kinsmanship',⁷⁶⁰ this word denotes various types of rapports amongst family members: parents, children, siblings, spouses, relatives but also friends, business partners, citizens of a *polis* or even between other Greek communities, which are based on reciprocity and solidarity.⁷⁶¹ *Φιλία*, according to Schein, 'allows, even requires, that one person think of another as someone on whom to rely and who can rely on one in turn'.⁷⁶² Reliability, therefore, is crucial among those who consider themselves to be *φίλοι*, literally translated as 'friends', 'beloved', 'dear ones' or 'our own'.⁷⁶³ According to Belfiore, apart from possible reciprocal affection, such people also have 'ethical and legal obligations to help one another'.⁷⁶⁴ In the classical period, therefore, close relationships, whether of personal, social or even political character, bonded people with affection and trust, but also with mutual responsibility.

Yet, the ties of *φιλία* may be destroyed, should one fail to fulfil the expectations of the relationship. As a consequence, the previous rapport of reciprocal good-will converts into mutual enmity, whereas people turn into explicit *ἐχθροί*, 'enemies'.⁷⁶⁵ As we will see below, Sophocles applies the

⁷⁶⁰ LSJ s.v. *φιλία*. For the history and evolution of the semantics of the term, cf. Schein (1988) 182-90.

⁷⁶¹ For a discussion on the various rapports regarded as *φιλία*, see Blundell (1989) 31-50

⁷⁶² Schein (1988) 179.

⁷⁶³ LSJ s.v. *φίλος*. For the meaning of 'one's own' ('*swój*') as the semantic prototype of the term, see the Introduction in Sowa (2007) 8.

⁷⁶⁴ Belfiore (2000) 19.

⁷⁶⁵ Blundell (1989) 37.

language of laughter in relation to the hostility that has occurred between φίλοι.

Enmity between family members may be the result of one's disappointment with the other. In particular, the tragedy *Antigone* shows the disruption of the loving relationship between the title character and her sister. In the prologue of the play, Antigone reveals to Ismene her plan to bury their brother Polynices, whose body, by the order of king Creon, was supposed to be left unburied after the battle of Thebes ('Will you bury the dead man, together with this hand of mine?', Εἰ τὸν νεκρὸν ξὺν τῆδε κουφιεῖς χερί, *Ant.* 43). Her sister, however, afraid of committing an act of defiance against the city and its ruler, refuses to assist the illegal burial (*Ant.* 49-68), considering it to be futile to resist those with power ('for there is no sense in actions that exceed our powers', τὸ γὰρ / περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα, *Ant.* 67-8). Observably, Ismene's decision immediately elicits her sister's aversion towards her ('I would not tell you to do it, and even if you were willing to act after all I would not be content for you to act with me!', Οὐτ' ἂν κελεύσαιμι' οὐτ' ἂν, εἰ θέλοις ἔτι / πράσσειν, ἐμοῦ γ' ἂν ἠδέως δρώης μέτα *Ant.* 69-70), which increases throughout their dialogue to the point that it turns into outright hostility. In effect, Antigone expresses her enmity twice towards her sister: first, when she is urged to conceal her dangerous plan ('Ah, tell them all! I shall hate you far more if you remain silent, and do not proclaim this to all', Οἶμοι, καταύδα· πολλὸν ἐχθίων ἔση / σιγῶσ', ἐὰν μὴ πᾶσι κηρύξης τάδε, *Ant.* 86-7); and second, when she is told not to attempt the impossible ('If you say that, you will be hated by me, and you will justly incur the hatred of the dead man', Εἰ ταῦτα λέξεις, ἐχθαρή μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ / ἐχθρὰ δὲ τῷ θανόντι προσκείση δίκη, *Ant.* 93-4). The title character, then, expresses sarcastically her determination in fulfilling her obligation towards the deceased brother by herself and leaves her disappointing sister alone (*Ant.* 95-7). Therefore, by refusing her sister, Ismene

has incurred Antigone's animosity, which, consequently has led to the disruption of their familial rapport.

It is in relation to this perverted bond between the two daughters of Oedipus that Sophocles applies the language of laughter in the third episode of the tragedy. Antigone has been arrested by the king's guards for breaking the law that forbade Polynices any burial rites (*Ant.* 376ff.). When Creon accuses also Ismene of being her sister's accomplice in the crime, she immediately accepts the allegations (*Ant.* 536-51):

- Ισ. Δέδρακα τοῦργον, εἶπερ ἦδ' ὄμορροθεῖ,
καὶ ξυμμετίσχω καὶ φέρω τῆς αἰτίας.
Αν. Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔάσει τοῦτό γ' ἡ Δίκη σ', ἐπεὶ
οὔτ' ἠθέλησας οὔτ' ἐγὼ 'κοινωσάμην.
Ισ. Ἀλλ' ἐν κακοῖς τοῖς σοῖσιν οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι
ξύμπλουν ἐμαυτὴν τοῦ πάθους ποιουμένη.
Αν. Ἵν τοῦργον Ἄιδης χοὶ κάτω ξυνίστορες·
λόγοις δ' ἐγὼ φιλοῦσαν οὐ στέργω φίλην.
Ισ. Μήτοι, κασιγνήτη, μ' ἀτιμάσης τὸ μὴ οὐ
θανεῖν τε σὺν σοὶ τὸν θανόντα θ' ἀγνίσαι.
Αν. Μὴ μοι θάνης σὺ κοινά, μηδ' ἄ μὴ 'θιγες
ποιοῦ σεαυτῆς· ἀρκέσω θνήσκουσ' ἐγώ.
Ισ. Καὶ τίς βίος μοι σοῦ λελειμμένη φίλος;
Αν. Κρέοντ' ἐρώτα· τοῦδε γὰρ σὺ κηδεμών.
Ισ. Τί ταῦτ' ἀνιάς μ' οὐδὲν ὠφελουμένη;
Αν. Ἀλοῦσα μὲν δῆτ', εἰ γελῶ γ', ἐν σοὶ γελῶ.
Ismene: I did the deed, if she agrees, and I take and bear my share of
the blame.
Antigone: Why, justice will not allow you this, since you refused and I
was not your associate!
Ismene: But it you time of trouble I am not ashamed to make myself a
fellow voyager in your suffering.
Antigone: Hades and those below know to whom the deed belongs!
And I do not tolerate a loved one who shows her love only in
words.
Ismene: Sister, do no so dishonour me as not to let me die with you
and grant the dead man proper rites!
Antigone: Do not try to share my death, and do not claim as your own
something you never put a hand to! My death will be enough!
Ismene: And what desire for life will be mine if you leave me?
Antigone: Ask Creon! You are his champion!
Ismene: Why do you give me such pain, when it does you no good?
Antigone: It grieves me **to mock you, if I do mock you.**

As we can see, Ismene claims to share responsibility for the forbidden deed, in order to show her support for her sibling. However, Antigone rejects such late display of familial loyalty (οὐτ' ἠθέλησας οὐτ' ἐγὼ 'κοινωσάμην, *Ant.* 539), reaffirms the earlier expressed hatred towards her sister (λόγοις δ' ἐγὼ φιλοῦσαν οὐ στέργω φίλην, *Ant.* 543), and uses sarcasm against her (Κρέοντ' ἐρώτα· τοῦδε γὰρ σὺ κηδεμών, *Ant.* 549). When Ismene complains about her sister's taunt causing her great pain (*Ant.* 550),⁷⁶⁶ Antigone calls attention to her own sisterly pain by saying 'it grieves me to mock you, if I do mock you' (Ἀλγοῦσα μὲν δήτ', εἰ γελῶ γ', ἐν σοὶ γελῶ, *Ant.* 551). With such statement, the title protagonist makes it clear that she grieves over the fact of the hostility that has risen between them, which compels her to act towards her sister in a particular way typical of an antagonist.⁷⁶⁷ In line 551, the verb γελῶ, 'I laugh', denotes (twice) Antigone's hostile disposition towards her sister provoked by the latter's earlier refusal to fulfil her familial duty.⁷⁶⁸ As we can see, one's action, or rather its lack may be considered to be an act of betrayal of sisterly φιλία.

On the basis of the example above it becomes apparent that the reference to hostile laughter occurs in the context of perverted family bonds. As we have seen, the ties between Antigone and Ismene become disrupted by one side of the relationship failing to fulfil the expectations of the other. As a consequence

⁷⁶⁶ Griffith (1999) 215 n. 549: 'a sneer by which Ismene is understandably 'hurt' (550)'.

⁷⁶⁷ Brown (1987) 167 n. 551-60 points out the softening of Antigone's tone in line 551, in which she admits 'her grief at the estrangement'. Cf. the translation of line 551, albeit without the reference to laughter, by Slavitt (2007): '...It gives me pain to say harsh things'. The opinion of Griffith (1999) 215 n. 550-3, who regards Antigone in line 551 regretting the fact of her mockery directed at Creon being also directed at Ismene, seems unconvincing.

⁷⁶⁸ In my analysis, I have followed Heath's conjecture εἰ γελῶ γ', commonly accepted by other editors, cf. *ad loc.* Storr (1912); Jebb (1928); Brown (1987) Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990); Griffith (1999). Few scholars, e.g. Dain and Mazon (1967), retain the original lesson εἰ γέλωτ' from the manuscripts, which transmit the accusative (sometimes in the form of γέλωτ') of the noun γέλως. For the transmission of the text, cf. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990) v-xvi. However, accepting this lesson would not have changed the interpretation of laughter in line 551.

of the betrayal of *φιλία*, the disappointed side has the right to laugh at its offender. In this example, the applied laughter-word clearly refers to the hostile rapport between the antagonized *φίλοι*.

As I will demonstrate below, there are many more references to laughter in regard of the disrupted bonds of *φιλία* between Sophoclean characters. However, what distinguishes the next group of examples from the one in *Ant.* 551 discussed above, is the fact that the rapport between the former *φίλοι* is not only based on hostility, often mutual, but also on outright aggression. Although Antigone declares herself to be her sister's enemy and dispenses hostile mockery at her, nevertheless she does not seek Ismene's ruin. In this unique case, the applied laughter-word refers to the enmity but not ill will of one sister towards the other. Hatred and malice are the basis of triumphant laughter, the subject of the following section.

4.2.7. Triumph

A laugh of triumph may denote hostile rapports, in which one side gains superiority over the other by acts of violence or injustice. As it will emerge from the discussion below, triumphant laughter may occur amongst those Sophoclean characters, whose conduct is governed by the basic moral principle contained in the maxim 'help your friends and harm your enemies'.⁷⁶⁹ According to this ethical code, one is expected to act in a certain manner appropriate to the quality of the relationship with another, i.e. to support and provide aid to those considered to be *φίλοι*, but also to inflict injuries or suffering on those regarded as *ἐχθροί*. Notably, the second part of the principle proves of the importance to the Greeks of retaliation or repayment in kind for received harm, since enmity, generally, is caused by one's act of wronging

⁷⁶⁹ Pl. *Men.* 71 e 4: τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς. Scholars agree that this ethical code, although dominant in the heroic society of the times of Homer, was still valid in the fifth century and continued to be recognized until the Roman period, cf. Knox (1961) 3; Blundell (1989) 26.

another.⁷⁷⁰ As a consequence, the unjust mistreatment stimulates aggression in the victim towards the offender, which may lead to the use of violence against the antagonist. Thus, the traditional moral code of ‘helping friends and harming enemies’ functions, simultaneously, as a definition of justice for injuries sustained.⁷⁷¹

This ethos determines the behaviour of those, who have become enemies after having the bonds of *φιλία* disrupted. In Sophoclean drama, we may find examples in which the image of triumphant laughter is evoked in relation to the antagonism between such *φίλοι*:⁷⁷² 1) spouses, 2) parents and children, 3) siblings, 4) kin and 5) allies.

4.2.7.1. Spouses

The vanquish of one’s detested spouse may occasion a feeling of triumph. In the *Electra*, Clytaemestra is described as laughing triumphantly at the thought of having murdered her husband, Agamemnon. In the first episode, Electra, who has despised her mother ever since the death of her father, gives a detailed account to the Chorus on her mother’s actions ever since the killing of the legitimate king (*El.* 261-81):

ΗΛ. ἡ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ μητρὸς ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο
ἔχθιστα συμβέβηκεν· εἶτα δώμασιν
ἐν τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τοῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς
ζύνειμι, κακ τῶνδ' ἄρχομαι, κακ τῶνδέ μοι
λαβεῖν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ τητᾶσθαι πέλει.
Ἐπειτα ποίας ἡμέρας δοκεῖς μ' ἄγειν,
ὅταν θρόνοις Αἴγισθον ἐνθακοῦντ' ἴδω
τοῖσιν πατράοις, εἰσίδω δ' ἐσθήματα
φοροῦντ' ἐκείνῳ ταῦτά καὶ παρεστίους
σπένδοντα λοιβάς ἐνθ' ἐκείνον ὤλεσεν;
ἴδω δὲ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὕβριν,
τὸν αὐτοφόντην ἡμῖν ἐν κοίτῃ πατρὸς
ξὺν τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί, μητέρ' εἰ χρεῶν
ταύτην προσσαυδᾶν τῶδε συγκοιμωμένην.

⁷⁷⁰ Blundell (1989) 38.

⁷⁷¹ Cohen (1995) 65-6.

⁷⁷² For a broader discussion on different *φίλοι*, cf. Blundell (1989) 39-49.

ἡ δ' ὦδε τλήμων ὥστε τῷ μιάστορι
 ξύνεστ', ἐρινὺν οὐτιν' ἐκφοβουμένη;
 ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
 εὐροῦσ' ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ἣ τότε
 πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,
 ταύτη χοροὺς ἴστησι καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ
 θεοῖσιν ἔμμην' ἱερά τοῖς σωτηρίοις.

Electra: First, my relation with the mother who bore me is one of bitter enmity; next, I am living in my own home with my father's murderers; they are my rulers, and it rests with them whether I receive or go without. And then what kind of days do you think I pass when I see Aegisthus sitting on my father's throne, and when I see him wearing the same clothes he wore, and pouring libations by the same hearth at which he murdered him; and when I see their final outrage, the murderer in my father's bed with my miserable mother, if she can be called mother when she sleeps with him? But she is so abandoned that she lives with the polluter, having no fear of any Erinys; but as though **she is gloating over** what she has done, she observes the day on which she treacherously killed my father and on it sets up dances and slaughters cattle, sacrificing monthly victims to the gods that have preserved her.

In this passage, Electra calls attention to the fact that every month Clytaemestra marks the anniversary of her shameful crime with festivities and sacrifices (*El.* 278-81), during which she seems to be 'gloating over what she has done' (ὥσπερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις, *El.* 277).⁷⁷³ Here, Electra uses the verb ἐγγελάω, 'laugh at, mock', to denote her mother's state of mind during the monthly celebrations. In her view, the queen performs these practices in order to commemorate not the death of her husband, but the fact of having him murdered. Therefore, we may notice that Electra's reference to Clytaemestra's laughter (ἐγγελῶσα) indicates the queen's continuous exultation over having killed Agamemnon.⁷⁷⁴ In this respect, the daughter describes her mother as laughing triumphantly over her deed.⁷⁷⁵ Therefore, in line 277, ἐγγελάω

⁷⁷³ Cf. the translation of line 277 in Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 130: 'It's as if she's laughing away her crimes'.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. Jebb (1894) 44 n. 277: 'with mocking exultation in her course of conduct'.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Kells (1973) 98: 'Here Clytaemestra triumphs at her own deeds'. In contrast Finglass (2007) 182 n. 277, who argues for the interpretation of 'mockery' and states that the laughter-word 'cannot mean 'exulting in''.

denotes the queen's triumphant laughter over the successful killing of her husband.⁷⁷⁶

We must, however, keep in mind the fact that such an unfavourable image of Clytaemestra is simultaneously the reflection of her daughter's feelings towards her. As Electra mentions herself in the passage quoted above, after the killing of Agamemnon, her mother has become her 'bitter enemy' (ἔχθιστα συμβέβηκεν, *El.* 261). In addition to this, Electra not only had to share the same house with his murderers (τοιῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς / ξύνειμι, *El.* 263-4), but also had to comply with their will (κὰκ τῶνδ' ἄρχομαι, *El.* 264), see how Aegisthus usurped the role of her father as king (*El.* 266-70), and, to her dismay, observe his dishonourable union with her mother (*El.* 271-4). As a consequence of this, the relationship between Electra and her mother has been perverted and developed into outright as well as mutual hostility. In the following section, I will demonstrate that, in the same tragedy, Sophocles conjures the image of triumphant laughter in relation to the disrupted bonds of family φιλία between the royal mother and her children.

4.2.7.2. Parents and children

The hostility between Clytaemestra and her children is an important theme in the tragedy *Electra*. Again, we will see that the title heroine describes her mother as laughing triumphantly, however, this time over the supposed death of her son. In the second episode of the play, Electra and her mother receive the false information about Orestes' sudden death at the Pythian games (*El.* 673-763). At first, the queen does not seem to know how to accept such news of her son ('O Zeus! What of this? Am I to call it fortunate, or terrible, but beneficial? It is painful, if I preserve my life by means of my own calamities', Ω

⁷⁷⁶ In the second episode, Clytaemestra unfolds to Electra her motives for murdering Agamemnon in revenge for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, cf. *El.* 526-46. For this reason, the queen regards her deed as just, 'Yes, Justice was his killer, not I alone' (ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἶλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη, *El.* 528).

Ζεῦ, τί ταῦτα; πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω / ἢ δεινὰ μὲν, κέρδη δέ; λυπηρῶς δ' ἔχει,
 / εἰ τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σῶζω κακοῖς, *El.* 766-8). Her uncertainty, however,
 is only shortwhile, for she soon recalls the anxiety she has lived in for so many
 years, dreading the return of her husband's heir and avenger (*El.* 773-82). The
 news, albeit sad, has liberated her from this fear (*El.* 783-7). Electra, on the other
 hand, is stricken with grief over the loss of her brother (*El.* 674; 677; 788-90), but
 also of her only chance of avenging Agamemnon's death on his murderers ('We
 have been stopped, far from stopping you', Πεπαύμεθ' ἡμεῖς, οὐχ ὅπως σὲ
 παύσομεν, *El.* 796). Moreover, she clearly acknowledges the fact that this news,
 which is utterly disastrous to herself, comes to her mother's liking ('Now is you
 moment of good fortune', νῦν γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσα τυγχάνεις, *El.* 794). When
 Clytaemestra leaves for the palace, Electra comments upon her mother's
 outrageous behaviour (*El.* 804-7):

Ηλ.	ἄρ' ὑμῖν ὡς ἀλγοῦσα κώδυνωμένη δεινῶς δακρῦσαι κάπικωκῦσαι δοκεῖ τὸν υἱὸν ἢ δύστηνος ᾧδ' ὀλωλότα; ἀλλ' ἐγγελάωσα φροῦδος:
Electra:	Well how did she look to you – shattered by grief? Heartbroken mother bewailing her only son? No – you saw her – she went off laughing! ⁷⁷⁷

Here, it is evident that Electra condemns Clytaemestra for her failure to display any signs of sorrow at the loss of her son. Moreover, the daughter recognizes, to her dismay, that the queen accepted the news as quite favourable, since she left for the palace 'laughing' (ἐγγελάωσα, *El.* 807). In this line, Electra, again, employs the verb ἐγγελάω to describe her mother's glee over the fortunate turn of events.⁷⁷⁸ Due to the fact that the queen clearly regarded Orestes as a dreaded enemy, it is apparent that the evoked image of her laughter may be in

⁷⁷⁷ Translation in Carson (2001) 81.

⁷⁷⁸ Finglass (2007) 351 n. 807.

relation to triumph.⁷⁷⁹ Hence, in line 807 the title heroine expresses her abhorrence toward her mother's triumphant laughter.

Electra speaks of the queen as laughing in triumph for the third time in the fourth episode. After receiving the urn with her brother's (supposedly) ashes (*El.* 1123-5), the princess expresses her grief in a long and emotionally-charged speech (*El.* 1126-70). At one point, she describes her miserable state with Orestes being dead (*El.* 1149-56):

ΗΛ. Νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ
θανόντι σὺν σοί· πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας
θύελλ' ὅπως βέβηκας· οἴχεται πατήρ·
τέθνηκ' ἐγὼ σοί· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἶ θανών·
γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί· μαίνεται δ' ὑφ' ἠδονῆς
μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἧς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις
φήμας λάθρα προύπεμπες ὡς φανούμενος
τιμωρὸς αὐτός.

Electra: And now all this has vanished in one day, with your death; like a whirlwind, you have gone, carrying of everything! My father is gone; you have killed me; you yourself are dead and gone. Our enemies **are laughing**; and our evil mother is mad with delight, she whom you often said in secret messages, that you yourself would come and punish.

In particular, the belief of having lost Orestes adds to Electra's misery, for now she is deprived of both a father and a brother (οἴχεται πατήρ / τέθνηκ' ἐγὼ σοί· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἶ θανών, *El.* 1151-2). In addition to this, she is fully aware of the fact that her loss comes to the advantage of her enemies, i.e. Aegisthus and Clytaemestra, whom she imagines as laughing (γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί, *El.* 1153). In light of the fact that her mother earlier regarded the news of Orestes' death as positive,⁷⁸⁰ it is evident that Electra, in line 1153, considers her enemies' laughter to be the expression of their ultimate triumph over her and her deceased brother. Also, by evoking such an image of the king and queen, the heroine reflects her losing hope of avenging Agamemnon's murder.

⁷⁷⁹ Cf. the translation of line 807 in Jebb (1894) 117: 'Nay, she left us with a laugh'; Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 239: 'No, she is gone gloating'.

⁷⁸⁰ Cf. *El.* 773-87.

Electra's feeling of devastation appears to be shortwhile, for Orestes, who witnessed her lamentation upon the urn, reveals to her his true identity (*El.* 1205-23). As I have discussed before, the recently grieving sister becomes overwhelmed with extreme joy to the degree, that her brother has to calm her down.⁷⁸¹ Furthermore, although the prince is pleased with the familial reunion (*El.* 1224-6), however, he is in haste to fulfil the plan of revenge. For this reason, he asks Electra to briefly explain to him the whereabouts of their enemies (*El.* 1288-95):

Ορ. Τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες,
καὶ μήτε μήτηρ ὡς κακὴ δίδασκέ με
μῆθ' ὡς πατρῶαν κτῆσιν Αἰγισθος δόμων
ἀντλεῖ, τὰ δ' ἐκχεῖ, τὰ δὲ διασπείρει μάτην·
χρόνου γὰρ ἄν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείργοι λόγος.
ἅ δ' ἀρμόσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ
σήμαιν', ὅπου φανέντες ἢ κεκρυμμένοι
γελῶντας ἐχθροὺς παύσομεν τῇ νῦν ὁδῷ.

Orestes: Let go all superfluous words, and do not explain to me that our mother is evil, nor that Aegisthus is dissipating the wealth of our father's house by waste and aimless spending; for the recital would deprive you of the moment for action. But tell me what will suit the present time, where we must appear or where we must hide to put a stop to our enemies' **laughter** by our present expedition.

Orestes is determined to execute vengeance on his father's killers and put a stop to the 'enemies laughing in triumph' (γελῶντας ἐχθροὺς παύσομεν, *El.* 1295). Here, we may clearly recognize the fact that the evoked image of hostile laughter appears in direct connection with the idea of triumph, i.e. the victorious glee over the defeat of an antagonist. In fact, this was the reason for Orestes sending the news of his false death to the royal palace, i.e. to have his mother and her lover believe that their enemy, the son of Agamemnon, is dead, which would lull them into a false sense of security. The prince, therefore, envisages his enemies, Clytaemestra and Aegisthus, as laughing triumphantly over their supposed good fortune. Yet, he knows that their sense of victory is

⁷⁸¹ For Electra's emotional reaction to the reunion, see section 4.2.3. above.

temporary, for he has come to turn the tables on the illegitimate rulers and take revenge for the disgraceful killing of his father.

To the children of Agamemnon, retribution will be their moment of triumph. Orestes, particularly, speaks of this to his sister, when he urges her to restrain her joy until their enemies receive punishment for their crime (*El.* 1299-1300):

- Oῤ. ὄταν γὰρ εὐτυχήσωμεν, τότε
χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελᾶν ἐλευθέρως.
- Orestes: When we are triumphant, then we shall be able to rejoice and
laugh in freedom.

As I have discussed before, the brother asserts that he and Electra will have the possibility 'to rejoice and laugh' (χαίρειν... καὶ γελᾶν, *El.* 1300) when they will be prosperous (ὄταν γὰρ εὐτυχήσωμεν, *El.* 1299). Without any doubt, with εὐτυχήσωμεν, 'we will be successful', Orestes alludes to the the future victory over their adversaries ('we put an end to our enemies laughter', γελῶντας ἐχθροὺς παύσομεν *El.* 1295). Since the siblings' good fortune depends on their enemies' defeat, we may notice that the anticipated time for rejoicing and laughter refers to the moment in which they may express their triumph.⁷⁸² In this case, the term γελᾶν, 'to laugh', in line 1300 pertains not only to the idea of manifesting one's joy, but also one's feeling of glee over a vanquished foe. Therefore, we can see that Orestes promises his sister to laugh triumphantly together, after taking revenge on their mother and her lover.

It is apparent that the animosity between Clytaemestra and her children is an important theme in the tragedy *Electra*. Sophocles, alike Aeschylus, employs the language of laughter in relation to the antagonistic relationship between the royal mother and her two children.⁷⁸³

⁷⁸² The tragedy, however, does not show this moment, as it ends with Orestes leading Aegisthus to his death inside the palace.

⁷⁸³ Cf. chapter III, section 3.2.6.

A parent's misfortune caused by a son's act of defiance may bring malicious delight to one's enemies. In the *Antigone*, Creon fears that an act of betrayal of family *φιλία* may, generally, incur the laughter of his enemies. In the fourth episode, Haemon comes to speak to his father, the king of Thebes, after learning about Antigone being sentenced to death (*Ant.* 626ff.). Creon, however, anticipates that his son may protest against losing his fiancé, hence, speaks to him about the loyalty a child is expected to show towards its parent (*Ant.* 641-7):

Κρ. τούτου γὰρ οὐνεκ' ἄνδρες εὐχονται γονὰς
κατηκόους φύσαντες ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν,
ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἀνταμύνωνται κακοῖς,
καὶ τὸν φίλον τιμῶσιν ἐξ ἴσου πατρί.
Ὅστις δ' ἀνωφέλητα φιτῦει τέκνα,
τί τόνδ' ἂν εἴποις ἄλλο πλὴν αὐτῷ πόνους
φῦσαι, **πολὺν** δὲ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖσιν **γέλων**;

Creon: It is for this that men pray to have obedient children born to them in their homes, so that they may requite their father's enemy with evils and honour friends as much as he. But when a man begets useless children, you cannot say that he has bred anything but troubles for himself and **much laughter** for his enemies.⁷⁸⁴

In this passage, Creon alludes to his son's obligation in not only obeying but also sharing with his parent the same disposition towards others. Accordingly, whom the father considers to be friends, they should also be the friends of his progeny, and the same in regard of the father's enemies. In view of the king of Thebes, a son's possible act of defiance would bring about only troubles for the father (*πόνους φῦσαι*, *Ant.* 646-7), but also 'much laughter for his [i.e. the parent's] enemies' (*πολὺν δὲ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων*, *Ant.* 647). In this example, the expression *πολὺς γέλως* accepts the meaning 'much laughter', hence pertains to the idea of triumphant laughter, which may be dispensed by undefined enemies of a father upon learning about his disrupted relation with his progeny. Since, according to Creon, a son's defiance becomes a father's

⁷⁸⁴ Translation in Brown (1987) 75.

misfortune, it may well bring delight to the latter's enemies. It becomes, therefore, evident that in line 647 Creon evokes the image of triumphant laughter in a political context.

Although Creon evokes the image of laughter in relation to undefined enemies, nevertheless we may notice that this reference might also imply the king's rapport with his son. We may presume that should Haemon behave in a defiant manner, he would also become an enemy to his father, the king of Thebes. Without any doubt, in adducing such an example of the negative outcomes of a disobedient offspring, Creon alludes to the duties Haemon has towards him. What is more, we may recognize that the king describes their father-son relationship in more political, than personal terms, as he calls attention to the consequences the father has to face after his son's potential defiance, i.e. the laughter of his enemies.⁷⁸⁵ Since Haemon's act of disgracing his father would be regarded by Creon as a betrayal of their *φιλία*, his son would have then become his enemy.

4.2.7.3. Siblings

Hatred between siblings may rise after one's mistreatment of the other. In the *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles evokes the idea of triumphant laughter in relation to the animosity between the brothers Eteocles and Polynices. In the first episode of the play, Ismene describes to her father at Colonus about the current situation at Thebes. Accordingly, after the departure of Oedipus, his sons were supposed to share the rule over the city, however they started to argue over the throne (OC 371-3). The younger son Eteocles managed to gain the support of the Thebans and expelled his older brother from the land (OC 374-6). In want of revenge for his unjust treatment, Polynices entered an alliance with the king of Argos and gathered an army of men to retake his

⁷⁸⁵ Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 63 in line 647 translates *πολύς γέλως* as 'much delight'.

rightful inheritance (OC 377-81).⁷⁸⁶ Ismene, then, stresses the fact that according to a prophecy he shall take rule over Thebes who shall have the support of Oedipus ('They say that their power will depend on you', Ἐν σοὶ τὰ κείνων φασὶ γίγνεσθαι κράτη, OC 392).⁷⁸⁷ Aware of the fact that his sons are only interested in the throne of Thebes and not the in well-being of their disgraced parent, Oedipus curses both and declares not to support any sides of the conflict (OC 421-7).⁷⁸⁸ However, in the fourth episode, Polynices himself arrives at Colonus to gain his parent's approval for his military excursion against his brother (OC 1254 ff.). In a lengthy speech of over 60 lines, the son argues for his cause and pleas for his father's blessing (OC 1284-1345). At one point, he alludes to the mistreatment he and Oedipus both suffered from Eteocles (OC 1334-9):

Πο. αἰτῶ πιθέσθαι καὶ παρειαθεῖν, ἐπεὶ
πτωχοὶ μὲν ἡμεῖς καὶ ξένοι, ξένος δὲ σύ·
ἄλλους δὲ θωπεύοντες οἰκοῦμεν σύ τε
κάγώ, τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον' ἐξειληχότες.
ὁ δ' ἐν δόμοις τύραννος, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ,
κοινῇ καθ' ἡμῶν ἐγγελαῶν ἀβρύνεται·

Polynices: I beg you to be persuaded and to give way, father, for we are beggars and strangers, and you are a stranger. You and I both live on the charity of others, since we have a fate that is the same; and the tyrant at home, woe is me, **delights in mocking us** both together.

In this passage, we may notice that Polynices attempts to present his younger brother as an enemy of his and his father. This is especially discernible in his unfavourable depiction of Eteocles as a tyrant who prides in laughing triumphantly at his exiled family (κοινῇ καθ' ἡμῶν ἐγγελαῶν ἀβρύνεται, OC 1339). Polynices' enmity towards his brother is explicit from the succeeding two

⁷⁸⁶ Polynices along with the other six main warriors of his army constitute the famous seven attackers of the city; Aeschylus describes their siege in his tragedy *The Seven Against Thebes*.

⁷⁸⁷ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 457. Hereon I adduce other English quotes from this edition of *Oedipus at Colonus*, unless stated otherwise.

⁷⁸⁸ In lines 342-5, Oedipus points to the fact that only his daughters take care of him in his misfortune, but non of his sons.

lines, in which he declares to crush Eteocles, should Oedipus support his cause ('If you will stand by my purpose, with small trouble and toil I will destroy him', ὄν, εἰ σὺ τῆμῃ ξυμπαραστήση φρενί, / βραχεῖ σὺν ὄγκῳ καὶ χρόνῳ διασκεδῶ, OC 1340-1). It is, therefore, clear that in this example Polynices evokes the image of laughter in connection with the feeling of triumph he imagines his brother to express at himself and his father.⁷⁸⁹ Yet, such reference to Eteocles' laughter of triumph appears to be for naught, for Oedipus spurns his son's plea and curses him again.

Despite his father's rejection, Polynices intends to carry out his plan of attacking Thebes. Antigone tries to persuade him to abandon his cursed expedition, yet he remains determined and briefly gives his reasons for doing so (OC 1422-3):

Πο. αἰσχρὸν τὸ φεύγειν καὶ τὸ πρεσβεύοντ' ἐμὲ
οὕτῳ γελαῖσθαι τοῦ κασιγνήτου πάρα.

Polynices: To run away is shameful, and it is shameful for me, the senior, **to be mocked** like this by my brother.

Evidently, Polynices stresses the fact of the shamefulness of being the object of his younger brother's laughter (αἰσχρὸν... γελαῖσθαι). Again, he evokes the image of Eteocles laughing in triumph over him and presents it as an argument for the military expedition against Thebes. Once more the language of laughter is used in relation to the antagonism between Polynices and Eteocles.⁷⁹⁰ As we can see, both references to laughter in OC 1339 and OC 1423 reflect Polynices' view of his brother's shameful mistreatment of him, which has not only broken their bonds of familial φιλία, but has also turned them into political enemies.

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. Miralles (2000) 409.

⁷⁹⁰ Cf. Arnould (1990) 39.

4.2.7.4. Kin

The idea of triumphant laughter caused by the betrayal of *φιλία* amongst kin is traceable in the *Oedipus Rex*. Abhorred with the discovery about his accidental murder of his father Laius and life in incest with his mother Jocasta, the king of Thebes blinds himself out of shame (OR 1267-76). After the *kommos* scene, in which Oedipus laments upon his miserable fate (OR 1297-1366), the Chorus informs him about Creon coming his way (OR 1416-23):

Χο.	Ἀλλ' ὦν ἐπαιτεῖς ἐς δέον πάρεσθ' ὅδε Κρέων τὸ πράσσειν καὶ τὸ βουλεύειν, ἐπεὶ χώρας λέλειπται μούνος ἀντὶ σοῦ φύλαξ.
Οἱ.	Οἴμοι, τί δῆτα λέξομεν πρὸς τόνδ' ἔπος; τίς μοι φανεῖται πίστις ἔνδικος; τὰ γὰρ πάρως πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντ' ἐφεύρημαι κακός.
Κρ.	Οὔθ' ὡς γελαστής, Οἰδίπους, ἐλήλυθα, οὔθ' ὡς ὀνειδιῶν τι τῶν πάρος κακῶν.
Chorus:	Here Creon comes in fit time to perform or give advice in what you ask of us. Creon is left sole ruler in your stead.
Oedipus:	Creon! Creon! What shall I say to him? How can I justly hope that he will trust me? In what is past I have been proved toward him an utter liar.
Creon:	Oedipus, I've come not so that I might laugh at you nor taunt you with evil of the past. ⁷⁹¹

In this passage, Oedipus anticipates an unfavourable reaction from his brother-in-law, who, as a result of the king's ruin, has become the new ruler of Thebes. Yet, in the very first words addressed to his sister's husband, Creon explains that he comes not 'as a laughter' (ὡς γελαστής, OR 1422).⁷⁹² Here, we find the rare noun γελαστής, meaning 'laughter' or simply 'he who laughs'⁷⁹³, used in the context of mockery.⁷⁹⁴ Creon, therefore, upon meeting the ruined king,

⁷⁹¹ Translation in Grene (2010) 137. However, other English passages of the *Oedipus the King* are quoted in the translation of Lloyd-Jones (1994a).

⁷⁹² Cf. the translations of line 1422 in Jebb (1908) 185: 'I have not come in mockery, Oedipus'; Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 473: 'I have not come to mock you, Oedipus'.

⁷⁹³ The female form is γελάστρια, cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.5.

⁷⁹⁴ OR 1422 is the only preserved instance of the literary use of γελαστής.

stresses the fact that he is not going to laugh at his kin's misfortunes, although he is in the position to do so (OR 1423).

The reason for Oedipus' apprehension of meeting his brother-in-law lies in the fact of the hostility that has earlier arisen between them. In the second episode of the play, before discovering the truth about Laius' murder and its horrible consequences, Oedipus charges Creon with plotting against him (OR 512-648). The ruler of Thebes has come to such a belief that his kin desires the throne, after his interrogation of the seer Teiresias, from whom he received the incredulous news of himself being the killer of Laius ('I say that you are the murderer of the man whose murderer you are searching for!', Φονέα σέ φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν, OR 362). Incapable, at the time, of believing in the truth, Oedipus comes to his own, seemingly plausible conclusions and publicly expresses his accusations against the brother-in-law ('Is it Creon, or who, that has made these discoveries?', Κρέοντος ἢ σοῦ ταῦτα τὰ ξευρήματα; OR 378). Upon hearing this, Creon comes to the king and expresses his indignation about being rendered a traitor in political, personal and familial terms ('a traitor to the city and a traitor in your eyes and in those of my friends', κακὸς μὲν ἐν πόλει / κακὸς δὲ πρὸς σοῦ καὶ φίλων, OR 521-2).⁷⁹⁵ In general, Creon considers such accusation to be 'a damage to himself' (ἡ ζημία μοι, OR 520), however, Oedipus reaffirms his charges (OR 537, 541-2) and calls his kin a 'bitter enemy' (δυσμενῆ γὰρ καὶ βαρύν, OR 546). Regardless of the fact that Creon refutes these allegations with reasonable arguments (OR 583-615), the angered king remains implacable and, at one point, even demands that his brother-in-law should pay the highest price for his alleged crime ('I want death for you', θνήσκειν... σε βούλομαι, OR 623). When the dialogue between the two kinsmen increases in emotionality, Jocasta appears and brings their quarrel to an end (OR 634-48). However, she does not manage to reconcile the opposed

⁷⁹⁵ Creon alludes to the complexity of the allegations with Οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἀπλοῦν in OR 519, cf. Dawe (1982) 146.

men. Although Oedipus reluctantly allows his wife's brother to go free, nevertheless he sustains his outright hatred at him ('he, wherever he is shall be loathed!', οὗτος δ' ἔνθ' ἂν ἦ στυγῆσεται, *OR* 672). Creon leaves, recognizing this enmity, but not understanding the reasons for it (*OR* 673-5, 676-7).

As we can see, according to Oedipus, Jocasta's brother has betrayed their bonds of *φιλία* as kinsmen. The king particularly refers to this fact when he accuses Creon of plotting against him ('If you believe that you can harm a kinsman and not pay the penalty, you are unwise', Εἴ τοι νομίζεις ἄνδρα συγγενῆ κακῶς / δοῶν οὐχ ὑφέξειν τὴν δίκην, οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖς, *OR* 551-2). Noticeably, before the false allegations, the ruler of Thebes was in considerably good terms with his brother-in-law; as shown in the beginning of the play, Oedipus relied on the assistance of Creon (*OR* 68-146), emphasized the kinship between them (ἐμαυτοῦ γαμβρόν, *OR* 70; ἐμὸν κήδευμα, *OR* 85) and considered him to be an old friend (οὐξ ἀρχῆς φίλος, *OR* 385). In spite of this, as well of the fact of the lack of evidence for any plots against the king, Oedipus believes in his false conclusions, and, hence blames Creon for turning out to be a traitorous friend (κακὸς φαίνῃ φίλος, *OR* 582). Thus, in view of the king his kin has done him wrong.

Yet, after discovering the horrible truth about his identity, Oedipus recognizes his earlier unjust abuse of Creon. Only then he becomes aware of the fact that it was he, not Creon, who betrayed the ties of *φιλία* with his accusations of disloyalty, angry insults and even vehement desire to punish his kin with death. Oedipus, hence, may anticipate enmity from his former φίλος, since they both parted earlier as enemies.

Creon, however, acts magnanimously towards the ruined king and refuses to gloat over Oedipus in his misfortunes. With this unexpected act, the new ruler of Thebes is a unique example of ceasing the opportunity to laugh at an enemy for injuries sustained. In this respect, we may see that the pitiful sight

of his blinded kinsman,⁷⁹⁶ who has come upon great misfortune and suffering, has Creon give up his right to express his hostility towards Oedipus, provoked by the latter's blind violation of their bond of *φιλία*. By ceasing from laughter, Creon ceases from being an outright *ἐχθρός*. With this said, it becomes clear that the single reference to laughter found in the *Oedipus Rex* pertains, albeit through negation, to the idea of triumph.

Creon behaves in a less magnanimous way towards the perceived betrayal of *φιλία* by his niece, the title character in the *Antigone*. From the outset of the play, Antigone explicitly states her hostility towards her uncle and ruler of Thebes, who has officially forbidden the burial of Polynices (*Ant.* 7-10). However, the princess defies the king's orders and is later caught performing funerary rites upon the body of her brother (*Ant.* 407-440). In the third episode, when she is interrogated by the king about her crime, she proudly admits of having performed her act willingly ('I say that I did it and I do not deny it', *Καὶ φημὶ δρᾶσαι κούκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μῆ, Ant.* 443) and in full awareness of its illegitimacy ('I knew it; of course I knew it. It was known to all', *Ἦδη· τί δ' οὐκ ἔμελλον; ἐμφανῆ γὰρ ἦν, Ant.* 448). Moreover, Antigone treats her uncle in a discernibly derisive manner,⁷⁹⁷ as she dismisses the king's law as 'an arrogant design of some man' (*ἀνδρὸς οὐδενὸς / φρόνημα, Ant.* 458-9) and calls him a fool should he perceive her actions to be foolish (*Ant.* 469-70).⁷⁹⁸ Creon reacts to Antigone's boldness with indignation (*Ant.* 480-89):

Κρ. Αὕτη δ' ὕβριζειν μὲν τότε ἔξηπίστατο
 νόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα τοὺς προκειμένους·
 ὕβρις δ', ἐπεὶ δέδρακεν, ἦδε δευτέρα,
 τούτοις ἐπαυχεῖν καὶ δεδρακυῖαν γελᾶν.
 Ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνήρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνήρ,
 εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατὶ τῆδε κείσεται κράτη.

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. the Messenger's words about Oedipus' appearance in *OR* 1295-6: 'you shall soon see such a sight as would drive to pity even one who hates him' (*θέαμα δ' εἰσόψει τάχα / τοιοῦτον οἶον καὶ στυγοῦντ' ἐποικτίσαι*).

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Chodkowski (2012) 239 n. 64.

⁷⁹⁸ Griffith (1999) 204 n. 469-70 alludes to the distinguishable sarcasm which arouses a strong emotional response in Creon.

Ἄλλ' εἴτ' ἀδελφῆς εἴθ' ὀμαιμονεστέρα
τοῦ παντός ἡμῖν Ζηνὸς Ἐρκείου κυρεῖ,
αὐτὴ τε χὴ ξύναιμος οὐκ ἀλύξετον
μόρου κακίστου·

Creon: This girl knew how to be insolent then, transgressing the established laws; and after her action, this was a second insolence, to exult in this and **to laugh at** the thought of having done it. Indeed, now I am no man, but she is a man, if she is to enjoy such power as this with impunity. But whether she is my sister's child or closer in affinity that our whole family linked by Zeus of the hearth, she and her sister shall not escape a dreadful death!

Not surprisingly, the king is infuriated with his niece's arrogant words and self-righteous behaviour. In this passage, Creon specifically calls attention to two acts he regards as an insolence (ὑβρις) on Antigone's behalf: 1) breaking his ordained law (νόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα τοὺς προκειμένους, *Ant.* 481), and 2) laughing at the thought of having committed her crime (δεδρακυῖαν γελᾶν, *Ant.* 483). Evidently, Creon considers the girl's audacious deed to be an act of defiance against him as the king of Thebes. Such understanding is particularly discernible from his double use of the words related to insult: ὑβρίζειν, 'to commit an offence' (*Ant.* 480) and ὑβρις, 'insolence', 'violence', 'lawlessness' (*Ant.* 482). With these two terms Creon defines Antigone's act as a 'wilful and criminal disregard' of his rights as king.⁷⁹⁹ By committing her crime, but also by not feeling any remorse about it, the girl has defied the official authority of the city, hence has placed herself in the position of its enemy. As a result, any familial bonds between the uncle and niece lose their significance, for, as Creon mentions further in his speech, an enemy of the king must be suitably punished (*Ant.* 486-89). Indeed, since treacherous actions turn φίλοι into ἐχθροί, it is evident that Antigone's act of defiance against Creon fully disrupted their bonds of familial φιλία.

Regarding Antigone's laughter, mentioned by her uncle in line 483, it is clearly evoked in connection with the idea of triumph. Noticeably, Creon is

⁷⁹⁹ Brown (1987) 163 n. 480.

appalled by the fact of being defied and disparaged by a woman, who, in his view, is challenging his authority with her bold words and arrogance ('For sure, I am no man, and she is the man, if, with impunity, victory and control in these things are to reside with her', Ἡ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνὴρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνὴρ, εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατὶ τῆδε κείσεται κρᾶτη, *Ant.* 484-5).⁸⁰⁰ The king explicitly refers to this by viewing Antigone as usurping ταῦτ'... κρᾶτη, 'such power', or in Griffith's translation, 'victory and control'. Hence, we may recognize that Creon perceives Antigone's self-righteous superiority as damaging to his position as king. It is, therefore, evident that he refers to his niece's audacious behaviour towards him as her triumphant laughter over him. In the end, Creon condemns Antigone to join her family in the underworld not only for her crime, but also for her arrogant defiance of her kinsman ('Then go below and love those friends, if you must love them! But while I live a woman shall not rule!', Κάτω νυν ἐλθοῦσ', εἰ φιλητέον, φίλει / κείνους· ἐμοῦ δὲ ζῶντος οὐκ ἄρξει γυνή, *Ant.* 524-5). Creon, therefore, sentences his niece to death as punishment for her crime, but also, as it seems, for her feeling and expressing her superiority over the king, who views her behaviour in terms of triumphant laughter.

The final reference to laughter of triumph in the context of betrayal of φιλία amongst kin may be found in the *Oedipus at Colonus*, in the passage, in which Theseus expresses his anxiety at causing laughter in his guest, should he fail to bring the abducted girls back (OC 902). I have already discussed this reference in relation to the idea of mockery.⁸⁰¹ However, another interpretation of Athenian king's words is possible, as shown in the 2005 translation of Grennan and Kitzinger (OC 897-903):

Θη. οὐκουν τις ὡς τάχιστα προσπόλων μολῶν
 πρὸς τοῦσδε βωμούς, πάντ' ἀναγκάσει λεῶν
 ἀνιππον ἰππότην τε θυμάτων ἄπο
 σπεύδειν ἀπὸ ῥυτῆρος, ἔνθα δίστομοι

⁸⁰⁰ Translation in Griffith (1999) 206 n. 484-5.

⁸⁰¹ Cf. section 4.2.5. above.

μάλιστα συμβάλλουσιν ἐμπόρων ὁδοί,
ὡς μὴ παρέλθωσ' αἱ κόραι, γέλωσ δ' ἐγὼ
ξένῳ γένωμαι τῶδε, χειρωθεὶς βία.

Theseus: Let one of my men run to the altar
with all speed. Tell all who are there
to race from the sacrifice on horseback or on foot
straight for the place where the two highways meet,
so those girls may go no further
and I, bested by this brutish deed of his,
not become a **mockery** to this stranger.⁸⁰²

In particular, the word ξένος, accepts two basic meanings: 'guest', but also 'stranger'.⁸⁰³ The fact that Theseus is referring to a person in his presence becomes evident with the demonstrative pronoun τῶδε to ξένῳ (in the dative) signifying 'the guest/stranger who is near, who is seen'. However, we must keep in mind the fact that Creon, after having his men leave with Antigone (OC 847), remained to seize Oedipus as well. Therefore, apart from Oedipus, the other Theban is also present when Theseus gives his orders to rescue the kidnapped girls. For this reason, it is permissible to consider the demonstrative pronoun to be used to indicate Creon and not the blind ex-king of Thebes. As a result, the different meaning of ξένος in line 903 not only significantly changes the agent to γέλωσ in line 902, but also the interpretation of the idea of laughter in this reference. Consequently, Theseus, instead of fearing the derision of his guest, i.e. Oedipus, provoked by a failed attempt to help, would in fact be expressing his anxiety at incurring triumphant laughter in the stranger, i.e. Creon, should he disgrace the Athenian king by carrying out his violent act successfully (γέλωσ δ' ἐγὼ / ξένῳ γένωμαι τῶδε, χειρωθεὶς βία, OC 902-3). Interestingly, such understanding of lines 902-3 may be found in many modern translations of the play.⁸⁰⁴ What is more, we may notice that the Theban's use of

⁸⁰² Translation in Grennan and Kitzinger (2005) 73.

⁸⁰³ Cf. LSJ s.v. ξένος.

⁸⁰⁴ Cf the translations of lines 902-3 in Jebb (1900) 147: '...lest the maidens pass, and I become a mockery to this stranger, as one spoiled by force'; Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 519: '...so that the girls do not pass through first, and I am made to look foolish by this stranger, being worsted by

force against one who is under the official protection of the local ruler turns into an act of violence against the city of Athens itself. In other words, by attacking Oedipus and his family, Creon violates the already tattered bonds of *φιλία* with his kin, but also simultaneously becomes an enemy of Theseus.⁸⁰⁵ Since the Athenian king is concerned with the possibility of his antagonist laughing at him after being ‘conquered by an act of force’ (*χειρωθεὶς βία*), it is acceptable to interpret *γέλως* in *OC* 902 as triumphant laughter, that which is elicited with the defeat of one’s opponent.⁸⁰⁶ Therefore, Theseus acts immediately to retaliate the wrong done to his new *φίλος*, Oedipus, but also to avert the dreaded dishonour of becoming the object of an enemy’s laughter of triumph. It is obvious that the reference to laughter in line 902 denotes directly the antagonistic rapport between Creon and Theseus, however their hostility has come to being through the betrayal of *φιλία* between the Theban kinsmen.

4.2.7.5. Allies

Acts of treachery may antagonize people bonded by political alliances. In two of his surviving tragedies, the *Philoctetes* and the *Ajax*, Sophocles exploits the idea of triumphant laughter in connection with the wilful betrayal of *φιλία* amongst the Greek allies during the Trojan War.

In the *Philoctetes*, I have distinguished three references to laughter, in which the Greek leaders, i.e. the Atreidae and Odysseus, are imagined by the title protagonist as laughing triumphantly at his misfortune.

Neoptolemus and Odysseus arrive at the island of Lemnos in order to persuade Philoctetes into accompanying them to Troy. Ten years have passed, since the Greeks left their former *φίλος* on the deserted island because of the

violence’; Slavitt (2007) 189: ‘They should be able to get there first. If not, / this stranger will have me look like a fool!’.

⁸⁰⁵ Cf. Miralles (2000) 409: ‘Au moment où il envisage la possibilité que Créon le raille, Thésée le tient déjà pour un ennemi’.

⁸⁰⁶ Cf. the translation of Fagles (1982) 324: ‘... before the girls are past the point / and I’m a mockery to my enemy here, / easy game for the first rough hand’.

unpleasantness of his physical disability (*Ph.* 1-5).⁸⁰⁷ Yet, according to a recent prophecy, the Greek army will not win the war against the Trojans without the bow of Heracles, bestowed by the hero upon Philoctetes. Odysseus, therefore, plots a scheme together with Neoptolemus, in order to divest the abandoned ally of his weapon (*Ph.* 101-34). Also, the king of Ithaca is in need of extra aid to carry out the plan, for it was he himself who persuaded the Atreidae to abandon the wounded hero in treacherous manner (*Ph.* 46-7; 75-6).⁸⁰⁸ Because of this, Odysseus is fully aware of the hatred Philoctetes may feel towards him. Later, his predictions are confirmed in the speech the title character delivers upon meeting Neoptolemus, who pretends not to know the identity of the encountered islander (*Ph.* 254-84):

Φι. ὦ πόλλ' ἐγὼ μοχθηρός, ὦ πικρὸς θεοῖς,
οὐ μὴδὲ κληδῶν ὧδ' ἔχοντος οἴκαδε
μηδ' Ἑλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῦ διήλθέ που,
ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ
γελῶσι σῖγ' ἔχοντες, ἢ δ' ἐμὴ νόσος
ἀεὶ τέθηλε κἀπὶ μεῖζον ἔρχεται.
ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ πατρός ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως,
ὄδ' εἴμ' ἐγὼ σοι κεῖνος, ὃν κλύεις ἴσως
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὄπλων,
ὁ τοῦ Ποϊάντος παῖς Φιλοκτήτης, ὃν οἱ
δισσοὶ στρατηγοὶ χῶ Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ
ἔρριψαν αἰσχρῶς ὧδ' ἔρημον, ἀγρία
νόσῳ καταφθίνοντα, τῆδ', ἀνδροφθόρου
πληγέντ' ἐχίδνης ἀγρίῳ χαράγματι,
ξὺν ἧ μ' ἐκεῖνοι, παῖ, προθέντες ἐνθάδε
ᾤχοντ' ἔρημον, ἠνίκ' ἐκ τῆς ποντίας
Χρύσης κατέσχον δεῦρο ναυβάτη στόλῳ.
Τότ' ἄσμενοί μ' ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου
εὐδοντ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρῳ,
ράκη προθέντες βαῖα καὶ τι καὶ βορᾶς
λιπόντες ᾤχονθ', οἷα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ
ἐπωφέλημα σμικρόν· οἷ' αὐτοῖς τύχοι.

Philoctetes: O wretched indeed that I am, I abhorred of heaven, that no word of this my plight should have won its way to my home, or to any home of Greeks! No, the men who wickedly

⁸⁰⁷ This was due to the stench of the festering wound from a snakebite on Philoctetes' foot as well as his annoying cries of agony.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Blundell (1989) 184-6.

cast me out keep their secret and **laugh**, while my plague still rejoices in its strength, and grows to more!

O my son, O boy whose father was Achilles, behold, I am he of whom haply thou hast heard as lord of the bow of Heracles, - I am the son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom the chieftains and the Cephallenian king foully cast upon this solitude, when I was wasting with a fierce disease, stricken down by the furious bite of destroying serpent; with that plague for sole companion, O my son, those men put me out here, and were gone, - when from sea-girt Chryse they touched at this coast with their fleet. Glad, then, when they saw me asleep - after much tossing on the waves- in the shelter of a cave upon the shore, they abandoned me, - first putting out a few rags, - good enough for such a wretch, - and a scanty dole of food withal: - may Heaven give them the like!⁸⁰⁹

Upon learning that his person and fate is commonly unknown in the Greek world, Philoctetes expresses his resentment at the Atreidae and Odysseus (δισσοὶ στρατηγοὶ χά Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ, *Ph.* 264), for having abandoned him on Lemnos in a 'despicable manner' (ἀνοσίως, *Ph.* 257) and being pleased with this (ἄσμενοί, *Ph.* 271).⁸¹⁰ As it emerges from the first lines of his speech, Philoctetes is especially angered at his former φίλοι for concealing their mistreatment of him, as he says 'the men who wickedly cast me out keep their secret and laugh' (οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ / γελῶσι σῖγ' ἔχοντες, *Ph.* 258). Enraged with the Greeks *damnatio memoriae* of him, he evokes the image of his enemies laughing with delight at their disgraceful behaviour (γελῶσι σῖγ' ἔχοντες, *Ph.* 258).⁸¹¹ At first, it seems that this reference to laughter pertains to the idea of derision, as it has been rendered in many modern translations.⁸¹² However, a closer look at the nature of Philoctetes' hostility enables an additional interpretation for the imagined laughter of the Greeks.

⁸⁰⁹ Translation in Jebb (1908) 51-53.

⁸¹⁰ Cf. Blundell (1989) 196.

⁸¹¹ Kamerbeek (1980) 60 n. 257-58: 'not quite "laugh in their sleeve", "but laugh <at my fate> while they keep silent about it"'. Similarly Jebb (1908) 51 n. 258: 'saying nothing about Ph.'s fate, but allowing it to pass out of men's mind'.

⁸¹² Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 283: 'But those who threw me out in unholy fashion quietly mock me'; Phillips (2003) 43: 'they mock me in silence'; Interesting is the attempt to reflect hostile mockery by evoking also the audible aspect of laughter in Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 201: 'Those depraved men who marooned me here / cackle at each other - their secret safe'.

In his speech to Neoptolemus, Philoctetes emphasizes the fact of his being the victim of the Greeks' wrongdoing. For the last ten years, apart from the excruciating pain from the incurable wound, the hero also had to suffer hunger (*Ph.* 287-92), live in dire conditions (*Ph.* 292-99), face solitude (*Ph.* 300-304) and remain in total separation from the Greek world (*Ph.* 310-11). In addition to this, his life as an outcast on a deserted island stripped him of the chance of achieving fame at the Trojan War. In this regard, it comes as no surprise that he is infuriated with the news of his miserable fate being concealed from the general public, as Neoptolemus has lead him to believe (*Ph.* 254-9). It is at this point of his speech that the hero juxtaposes two images: one of his enemies laughing (γελῶσι, *Ph.* 258) with that of him enduring the physical pain from the incurable wound ('my plague still rejoices in its strength, and grows to more!', ἡ δ' ἐμῆ νόσος / ἀεὶ τέθηλε καπὶ μείζον ἔρχεται, *Ph.* 258-9). Due to the fact that as a warrior Philoctetes has been deprived of the glories of taking part in a war, whereas Odysseus and the Atreidae have been not, it is clear that the hero views his loss to be his enemies' gain. Philoctetes, therefore, distinguishes the Greeks as those superior in comparison to his miserable situation and, hence, imagines them laughing triumphantly at his loss.⁸¹³

The second reference to laughter in connection with the enemies' triumph over the title protagonist is found in the third episode of the play. Neoptolemus, ashamed of deceiving the disabled hero with his seemingly unselfish aid, reveals to him the real reason for his arrival to Lemnos (*Ph.* 915-16).⁸¹⁴ As the two are having a furious discussion, Odysseus arrives with his men and seizes Philoctetes (*Ph.* 974). Deceived again by the king of Ithaca, the hero speaks to his enemy with words full of hatred (*Ph.* 1019-28):

⁸¹³ Miralles (2000) 408.

⁸¹⁴ For a discussion on the matter of Neoptolemus' shame, see Cairns (1993) 250-63.

Φι. ὄλοιο· καί σοι πολλάκις τόδ' ἠϋξάμην.
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ οὐδέν θεοὶ νέμουσιν ἡδύ μοι,
 σὺ μὲν γέγηθας ζῶν, ἐγὼ δ' ἀλγύνομαι
 τοῦτ' αὖθ', ὅτι ζῶ σὺν κακοῖς πολλοῖς τάλας,
 γελώμενος πρὸς σοῦ τε καὶ τῶν Ἀτρέως
 διπλῶν στρατηγῶν, οἷς σὺ ταῦθ' ὑπηρετεῖς.
 Καίτοι σὺ μὲν κλοπῇ τε κἀνάγκῃ ζυγεῖς
 ἔπλεις ἄμ' αὐτοῖς, ἐμὲ δὲ τὸν πανάθλιον,
 ἐκόντα πλεύσανθ' ἐπτὰ ναυσὶ ναυβάτην,
 ἄτιμον ἔβαλον, ὡς σὺ φῆς, κείνοι δὲ σέ.

Philoctetes: Alas! May you perish! Yet I have often prayed for this; but since the gods never grant me any pleasure, you are alive and happy, and I feel pain at the very thought that I am alive with many troubles, **mocked by** you and by the two generals, sons of Atreus, whom you are serving in this matter. Yet, you sailed with them after being kidnapped and compelled, and I, the unfortunate one, had sailed of my own free will with seven ships before them, as you say, but as they say you, threw me out, dishonoured.⁸¹⁵

Philoctetes curses Odysseus and expresses his indignation at the man who caused him a decade of suffering. Similarly to his words in 258-9, the hero again juxtaposes two images: one of his former φίλος leading a happy life (σὺ μὲν γέγηθας ζῶν, *Ph.* 1021) with that of his own existence filled with misery and adversities (ἐγὼ δ' ἀλγύνομαι / τοῦτ' αὖθ', ὅτι ζῶ σὺν κακοῖς πολλοῖς τάλας, *Ph.* 1021-2). Also, he mentions the fact that the awareness of him being mocked by Odysseus and the Atreidae only added to his suffering (γελώμενος πρὸς σοῦ τε καὶ τῶν Ἀτρέως / διπλῶν στρατηγῶν, *Ph.* 1023-4).⁸¹⁶ Here, the passive participle γελώμενος 'laughed at' denotes the fact of Philoctetes' viewing himself as the victim of his enemies' laughter.

Despite the hero's curses at Odysseus and pleas to the gods for justice, the Greeks deprived him of his bow and abandon on the island once more (*Ph.* 1080). Philoctetes, then, raises a lament with the Chorus at his misfortune (*Ph.* 1081-1217). In strophe β of the second kommos of the play, the hero deploras the loss of his weapon (*Ph.* 1123-39):

⁸¹⁵ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 359.

⁸¹⁶ Blundell (1989) 194: 'His [i.e. Philoctetes'] grievance... is their [i.e. Odysseus and the Atreidae] ingratitude towards a loyal friend'.

Φι. Οἶμοι μοι, καί που πολιᾶς
 πόντου θινὸς ἐφήμενος,
 γελα̃ μου, χειρὶ πάλλων
 τὰν ἐμὰν μελέου τροφάν,
 τὰν οὐδεὶς ποτ' ἐβάστασεν.
 Ὡ τόξον φίλον, ὦ φίλων
 χειρῶν ἐκβεβιασμένον,
 ἧ που ἐλεινὸν ὄρα̃ς, φρένας εἴ τινας
 ἔχεις, τὸν Ἡράκλειον
 ἄθλιον ὧδέ σοι
 οὐκέτι χρῆσόμενον τὸ μεθύστερον,
 ἄλλου δ' ἐν μεταλλαγα̃
 πολυμηχάνου ἀνδρὸς ἐρέσση,
 ὄρων μὲν αἰσχροῦς ἀπάτας,
 στυγνόν τε φῶτ' ἐχθοδοπόν,
 μυρὶ ἀπ' αἰσchrῶν ἀνατέλλονθ' ὅσ' ἐφ' ἡ-
 μῖν κάκ' ἐμήσατ' οὐδεὶς.

Philoctetes: Why me? Me? He's out there
 Sitting by the surging gray sea,
Laughing at me, flaunting my bow,
 Which no other mortal man has owned.
 Oh, beloved bow, my friend,
 Ripped from my loving hands,
 If you could only feel,
 You'd look with pity
 On this follower of Heracles
 Who'll never hold you again.
 You have passed into the hands
 Of a new master now;
 A tactician manipulates you.
 And you'll see such blatant deceit
 In the face of my most hated enemy
 And infinite lies devised against me.⁸¹⁷

In his cries over the much-beloved weapon, a gift from his friend Heracles, Philoctetes envisions Odysseus laughing at him (γελα̃ μου, *Ph.* 1125) while brandishing the bow in his hand (χειρὶ πάλλων, *Ph.* 1125). Certainly, this reference to laughter evokes the idea of mockery directed at the hero by the enemy after outsmarting him of his precious possession.⁸¹⁸ Yet, it is obvious

⁸¹⁷ Translation in Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 236.

⁸¹⁸ The general translation of γελα̃ μου is 'he mocks me', cf. the translations of Lloyd-Jones (1994b) 367; Phillips (2003) 82. The meaning of derision becomes apparent with the direct object appearing in the genitive (μου). Although scholars indicate this as the only example of γελάω governing this case, however, the genitive is used with other verbs denoting scorn or belittlement, e.g. καταγελάω, 'laugh at, mock'; καταφρονέω, 'think slightly of';

that the vivid image of Odysseus' ostentatious exhibition of his glee over Philoctetes pertains to the behaviour typical of a victor over a vanquished foe. In light of the fact that the hero has been recently mistreated (again) by his 'most hated enemy' (στυγνόν τε φῶτ' ἐχθοδοπόν, *Ph.* 1138), it becomes evident that Philoctetes imagines his offender as exulting over his enemy's discomfiture.⁸¹⁹ In other words, he imagines Odysseus laughing in triumph over him.

As we have seen, the title character of the *Philoctetes* makes all three references to laughter in regard of the undeserved maltreatment he has received from his former φίλοι. In particular, the first image of his enemies laughing at him appears with his dismay at the Greeks for concealing the news of his disgraceful fate (*Ph.* 258); the second occurs after him finding out about Odysseus' scheme against him (*Ph.* 1023); and the third takes place after losing his bow to his arch-enemy (*Ph.* 1125). In all three situations, Philoctetes sustains new injuries from his enemies: *damnatio memoriae*, deception and finally deprivation, and in all three cases he evokes the image of their hostile laughter. Thus, it becomes apparent that the language of laughter not only denotes Philoctetes' vying hostility against his wrongdoers, the Atreidae, and especially Odysseus,⁸²⁰ but also reflects his perception of their rapport in terms of victors/victims. Noticeably, such understanding is in accordance to the part of the moral code of 'harming one's enemies', which regards victors laughing in triumph at their defeated foes. It is obvious that Philoctetes considers himself to be the victim of the treacherous actions of his former φίλοι, and, to his sorrow, he remains incapable of retaliation.⁸²¹ In general, it is apparent that the image of

ὀλιγορέω, 'esteem little', cf. Kamerbeek (1980) 155 n. 1125; Schein (2013) 295 n. 1125. Curiously, Jebb (1908) 177 n. 1025 emendates γελαῖ μου with ἐγγελαῖ.

⁸¹⁹ Cf. Arnould (1990) 38.

⁸²⁰ Cf. Dillon (1991) 345-6.

⁸²¹ Noticeably, the hero's imagining of his enemies' laughing in triumph only adds to his mental pain of one of a disgracefully deserted φίλος. Such understanding of laughter corresponds with the tragedy's theme of suffering, cf. Maślanka-Soro (1991) 98; Chodkowski (2009) 289.

laughter in the *Philoctetes* is evoked in relation to the perceived triumph of the protagonist's enemies, his former political allies.

Triumphant laughter is a discernible theme in the *Ajax*. This tragedy unfolds the consequences of the title character's failure to take revenge on the Greek commanders for awarding Odysseus with Achilles' arms. Since Ajax was, generally, acknowledged to be the second greatest warrior at Troy after the son of Peleus, he considered himself to be more entitled to the prize. As a result, he viewed the allocation of the armour to the son of Laertes as a personal dishonour as well as a betrayal of *φιλία* on behalf of the Greeks.⁸²² To Ajax, then, such unjust mistreatment marked the beginning of the hostile rapport between him and the allies. Consequently, the hero's wrath and enmity led him to the decision of taking revenge for his disgrace on the Atreidae and Odysseus. However, the planned murder of his new, in his opinion, *ἐχθροί* misfired because of Athena's intervention. In particular, the stroke of divinely inspired madness had Ajax slaughter some sheep and cattle which, in his delusion, he took for the detested Greek leaders. In effect, the hero failed in his attempt to execute vengeance and restore his honour.

Ashamed with his utter humiliation, Ajax is of the opinion that his enemies, the Atreidae and Odysseus, not only take delight in his misfortune but exult in their success against him. As I will demonstrate below, this conviction manifests itself in the hero's obsession with the idea of his enemies laughing in triumph at him.⁸²³

The notion that it is justifiable to laugh at the misfortunes of an enemy is expressed in the prologue of the play. Athena confirms Odysseus' suspicions about Ajax having slaughtered the sheep and cattle at night and explains that she has prevented the hero from killing the Greek leaders (*Ai.* 39-65). She then

⁸²² Blundell (1989) 69-70: 'He is filled with hostile wrath towards the erstwhile friends who have violated the law of friendship... and craves the vengeance sanctioned by the talio'.

⁸²³ Halliwell (2008) 138 n. 89.

summons the hero from his tent, in order to expose his madness (*Ai.* 66-72).

However, the son of Laertus vehemently objects to the idea (*Ai.* 74-82):

- Oδ. Τί δρᾶς, Ἀθάνα; μηδαμῶς σφ' ἔξω κάλει.
Αθ. Οὐ σίγ' ἀνέξῃ, μηδὲ δειλίαν ἀρῆ;
Οδ. Μή, πρὸς θεῶν· ἀλλ' ἔνδον ἀρκείτω μένων.
Αθ. Τί μὴ γένηται; πρόσθεν οὐκ ἀνὴρ ὄδ' ἦν;
Οδ. Ἐχθρὸς γε τᾶδε τάνδρῃ καὶ τανῦν ἔτι.
Αθ. Οὐκουν γέλως ἥδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελαῶν;
Οδ. Ἔμοι μὲν ἀρκεῖ τοῦτον ἐν δόμοις μένειν.
Αθ. Μεμηνότ' ἄνδρα περιφανῶς ὀκνεῖς ἰδεῖν;
Οδ. Φρονοῦντα γάρ νιν οὐκ ἂν ἐξέστην ὀκνω.
Odysseus: What are you doing, Athena? On no account summon him outside.
Athena: Won't you face him quietly and avoid the charge of cowardice?
Odysseus: Please no; be content that he should stay indoors.
Athena: In case what may happen? Was he not a man before?
Odysseus: Yes he was my enemy before and still he is.
Athena: Why, is it not **the sweetest laughter to laugh** at one's enemies?
Odysseus: I am content that he should stay in house.
Athena: Do you shrink from seeing a madman in full view?
Odysseus: Yes, if he had been sane I should not have kept out of his way or shrunk from him.

Observably, Odysseus protests to be near the maddened warrior, whose actions may be unpredictable and dangerous. The goddess, however, wishes to display Ajax's humiliation by showing him in an inglorious state of frenzy that thwarted the hero's plan of taking vengeance on the Greek leaders. In other words, Athena invites the reluctant Odysseus to exult over the fall of his spiteful enemy.⁸²⁴ In line 79, she, particularly, encourages him to gloat over the fallen Ajax, when she poses the rhetorical question 'is it not the sweetest laughter to laugh at one's enemies?' (Οὐκουν γέλως ἥδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελαῶν;). The goddess gives Odysseus the opportunity to laugh triumphantly

⁸²⁴ Stanford (1963) 67 n. 79 refers to such behaviour as 'the normal heroic attitude'; Garvie (1998) 131 n. 79: 'Athena's question is in keeping with the code of helping friends and harming enemies'.

over an enemy (literally ‘enemies’ εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελαῖν⁸²⁵), which she regards to be the most pleasant form of laughter (γέλως ἠδιστος⁸²⁶). Interestingly, although the son of Laertes acknowledges the hostile rapport between Ajax and himself, nevertheless he still refuses to indulge in such pleasure (*Ai.* 80) and maintains his stance even after seeing the deluded hero (‘... but I pity him in his wretchedness nonetheless, although he is my enemy, because he has been harnessed to an evil delusion...’, ἐποικτίρω δέ νιν / δύστηνον ἔμπαρ, καίπερ ὄντα δυσμενῆ, / ὀθούνεκ’ ἄτη συγκατέζευκται κακῆ, *Ai.* 121-3). In doing so, Odysseus is one of the few Sophoclean characters who ceases from laughing at the misfortunes of an enemy.⁸²⁷ However, we must keep in mind the fact that, although the son of Laertes does not comply with Athena’s wishes to express triumph over his disgraced enemy, nevertheless he does not deny the general idea of employing such behaviour. In general, Athena’s gnomic remark in line 79 opens the discernible theme of triumphant laughter in the *Ajax*.

The next reference to a laugh of triumph is found in the *parodos* (*Ai.* 134-200). The Chorus of Salaminian Sailors, who accompanied the title hero to Troy, expresses its indignation with the news Odysseus has been spreading amongst the Greeks about Ajax’s dishonourable nocturnal actions (*Ai.* 148-50). Appalled with the fact that the Atreidae give credence to the ‘evil rumour’ (κακὰν... φάτιν, *Ai.* 186) and repeat it to others (*Ai.* 187-9), the Sailors summon their master to abandon his tent and put an end to such slanderous talk (*Ai.* 192-200):

Χο. Ἄλλ’ ἄνα ἐξ ἐδράνων
ὅπου μακροαίωνι
στηρίζη ποτὲ τᾶδ’ ἀγωνίῳ σχολᾶ
ἄταν οὐρανίαν φλέγων.
ἐχθρῶν δ’ ὕβρις ὦδ’ ἀτάρβητα
ὄρμαται ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις,
πάντων **καχαζόντων**

⁸²⁵ Kamerbeek (1953) 34 n. 79 indicates that the hostile intentions of laughing are stressed with the preposition εἰς, ‘at’, which here accepts the meaning ‘in the face of’.

⁸²⁶ On the epic expression γέλως ἠδύς, ‘sweet laughter’, see Finglass (2011) 161 n. 79 with references; also Arnould (1990) 164-6.

⁸²⁷ The other example is Creon in *OR* 1422 discussed in section 4.2.7.4. above.

γλώσσαις βαρυάλητα·
ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ἔστακεν.⁸²⁸

Chorus: Now rise up!
You've sat in there far too long!
No more brooding, missing battle,
Fanning the flames of your ruin up to heaven!
Your enemies' insolence knows no fear;
It sweeps on, howling across the plain.
They're all **laughing at** you,
Mouthing your misery!
I can hardly bear the pain!⁸²⁹

Noticeably, the Chorus compares the hero's inactivity to an 'idleness in a battle' (τᾶδ' ἀγωνίῳ σχολᾶ, *Ai.* 194), when 'flames of ruin blaze up to the sky' (ἄταν οὐρανίαν φλέγων, *Ai.* 195). In particular, the adversaries of this conflict are visioned as spreading their insolence (ὑβρις, *Ai.* 196) fearlessly as well as far and wide. Without any doubt, the Salaminian Sailors use the the word 'enemies' (ἐχθρῶν, *Ai.* 196) chiefly in reference to Odysseus and the Atreidae, who distribute the shameful rumour amongst the other warriors. Moreover, they are also presented, in the literal translation, as 'all laughing loudly with their tongues in a painful to us [i.e. the Chorus] manner' (πάντων καχαζόντων / γλώσσαις βαρυάλητα, *Ai.* 199-200).⁸³⁰ In this phrase, we find the laughter-word καχάζω, which originally means 'laugh aloud', however, here it is used in the context of derision.⁸³¹ The way the men are imagined to dispense such mockery is by the means of their 'tongues' (γλώσσαις), a possible metonymy for the act of speaking the earlier mentioned 'evil rumour' (κακὰν φάτιν, *Ai.* 186; 191). Finally, with the adverb βαρυάλητα, 'in a very painful way', the Sailors call attention to their distress upon hearing Ajax's enemies speak about

⁸²⁸ Greek text from the edition of Finglass (2011) 86.

⁸²⁹ Translation in Meineck and Woodruff (2007) 13.

⁸³⁰ In his 2011 edition of the text, Finglass accepts at *Ai.* 199 Dindorf's conjecture of καχαζόντων, instead of the transmitted καγχαζόντων, and argues convincingly for such choice in detail in Finglass (2009) 221-2. Other editors, e.g. Stanford (1963) as well as Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990) prefer the variant βακχαζόντων, 'while they revel like Bacchant's', which omits any reference to laughter, cf. the criticism in Garvie (1998) 145-6 n. 198-9, who reads καγχαζόντων. For the transmission of the text of the play, see the Preface to Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990) vii-xiii; Finglass (2011) 59-69.

⁸³¹ Cf. Arnould (1990) 161-3; see also chapter II, section 2.1.2.

him in such an insulting manner. Their pain is even greater, since they are fully aware of the fact that the insolent words distributed by Odysseus have elicited malicious pleasure amongst the Greeks ('For he now speaks plausibly about you, and everyone who hears it, even more than the speaker, enjoys arrogantly mocking your distress', *περὶ γὰρ σοῦ νῦν / εὐπείστα λέγει, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κλύων / τοῦ λέξαντος χαίρει μᾶλλον / τοῖς σοῖς ἄχεσιν καθυβρίζων*, *Ai.* 150-3). The Chorus, therefore, presents Ajax's disrupted relations with the Greeks, especially with Odysseus and the Atreidae, in terms of a combat, in which the enemies use malign words against the hero and laugh triumphantly at their adversary's misfortunes.⁸³²

Tecmessa, instead of Ajax, hears the Chorus' call and comes out of the tent to confirm the truth of the rumour concerning her husband (*Ai.* 201-7). The woman, then, provides the Salaminian Sailors with a detailed account about Ajax's mad actions (*Ai.* 284-330), when suddenly the hero begins to bewail from within the tent (*Ai.* 333; 336) and call upon his family (*Ai.* 339; 341-2). Apparently, Ajax, after returning to sanity, recognized the disgraceful actions he performed in a fit of madness, i.e. the slaughter of the Greeks' sheep and cattle. In the following *amoibaion* scene, the hero appears on stage and laments upon his misfortune in the presence of his friends, Tecmessa and the Chorus (*Ai.* 348-429). Firstly, he deplores the disgraceful deed he has committed in his frenzy (*Ai.* 364-7):

Ai. ὄρᾱς τὸν θρασύν, τὸν εὐκάρδιον,
 τὸν ἐν δαΐοις ἄτρεστον μάχαις,
 ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηρσί δεινὸν χέρας;
 ὦμοι γέλωτος, οἷον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα.

Ajax: Do you see the bold man, the stout-hearted man, the one who
 was fearless in battle among the foe, do you see me so terrible
 in might among unfearing beasts? **Alas for the laughter!**
 What insults then have I suffered!

⁸³² Cf. Finglass (2011) 201 n. 199-200 renders *καχάζω*, 'triumphant or insulting laughter'.

Noticeably, Ajax is particularly ashamed of the fact of slaughtering helpless animals, an act he considers unworthy of a glorious hero. He emphasizes this fact by the juxtaposition of two images: 1) one of him as fearless amidst destructive battles (ἐν δαΐοις ἄτρεστον μάχαις, *Ai.* 365), and 2) the other, however, of him being terrible amidst unfearing animals (ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηροῖσι δεινόν, *Ai.* 366). As a result of his maddened conduct, Ajax is convinced to have become a laughing-stock amidst his enemies, as he exclaims in line 367: ‘Alas for their laughter! What an outrage, it seems, I have suffered!’ (ὦμοι γέλωτος, οἷον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα).⁸³³ The hero specifies the agent of this imagined laughter a little further in his lamentation (*Ai.* 379-83):

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Αἰ. | ὠὖ πάνθ' ὄρω̄ν ἀπάντων τ' ἀεὶ
κακῶν ὄργανον, τέκνον Λαορτίου,
κακοπινέστατόν τ' ἄλημα στρατοῦ,
ἧ̄ που πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἠδονῆς ἄγεις. |
| Ajax: | Ah, you who see all things and hear all things, instrument of every crime, son of Laertes, filthiest trickster of the army, how you must be laughing in your delight! ⁸³⁴ |

Ajax is certain that the son of Laertes takes malicious pleasure in his enemy's disgrace and expresses his delight with laughter (πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἠδονῆς ἄγεις, *Ai.* 383).⁸³⁵ In order to recognize the chief idea connected with the images of laughter evoked in these two examples, it is necessary distinguish the source of the hero's shame, which is not the fact of having slaughtered some animals in a divinely inspired fit of frenzy, but the fact of having failed in the nightly assault.⁸³⁶ Ajax explicitly speaks of this in lines 372-3, as he regrets having the detested Greeks avoid punishment from his hands ('Oh, unhappy that I am, who from these hands let go the accursed men', ὦ δύσμορος, ὅς χειρὶ μὲν / μεθήκα τοὺς ἀλάστορας). It becomes, then, evident that the hero's disgrace

⁸³³ Translation in Finglass (2011) 246 n. 367.

⁸³⁴ Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1994a) 67.

⁸³⁵ Stanford (1963) 111 n. 379-82 suggests the translation 'Surely you laugh loud and long in your delight <at my disgrace>.' For the idea of sound in this example, see section 4.2.1. above.

⁸³⁶ Garvie (1998) 160 n. 364-7.

origins in the failure to execute vengeance on his enemies. Further in the second part of the first episode, Ajax himself gives the Greeks' escape from his revenge as the reason for their triumphant laughter at him (*Ai.* 441-59):

Αι. Καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ' ἐξεπίστασθαι δοκῶ·
εἰ ζῶν Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν ὀπλῶν τῶν ὦν πέρι
κρίνειν ἔμελλε κράτος ἀριστείας τινί,
οὐκ ἄν τις αὐτ' ἔμαρψεν ἄλλος ἀντ' ἐμοῦ.
Νῦν δ' αὐτ' Ἀτρεΐδαι φωτὶ παντουργῶ φρένας
ἔπραξαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδ' ἀπώσαντες κράτη·
κεῖ μὴ τόδ' ὄμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοί
γνώμης ἀπῆξαν τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐκ ἄν ποτε
δίκην κατ' ἄλλου φωτὸς ὦδ' ἐψήφισαν.
νῦν δ' ἡ Διὸς γοργῶπις ἀδάματος θεὰ
ἤδη μ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς χεῖρ' ἐπεντύνοντ' ἐμῆν
ἔσφηλεν, ἐμβαλοῦσα λυσσώδη νόσον,
ὥστ' ἐν τοιοῖσδε χεῖρας αἰμάξαι βοτοῖς·
κεῖνοι δ' ἐπεγγελῶσιν ἐκπεφευγότες,
ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐχ ἐκόντος· εἰ δέ τις θεῶν
βλάπτοι, φύγοι τᾶν χῶ κακὸς τὸν κρείσσονα.
Καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
ἐχθεὶ δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.

Ajax: And yet this much at least I think I understand: if Achilles had been alive and was to assign to anyone the victory for excellence in the matter of his own arms, no one else would have seized them instead of me. But now the sons of Atreus have procured them for a man who is at heart a villain, and have thrust aside *my* triumphs. If these eyes and mind had not been distorted and parted company from my intention, they would never have procured by voting such a decision against another man. But as things are, while I was already directing my hand against them, the daughter of Zeus, the Gorgon-eyed unconquerable goddess, inflicted on me the disease of madness and tripped me up, so that it was on animals like these that I bloodied my hands; and **they laugh at me** because they have escaped, not with *my* consent; but, if some god were to ruin one, even the coward might escape the better man.
And now what should I do? I who am clearly hated by the gods, while the Greek army loathes me, and the whole of Troy and these plains hate me.

In this passage, Ajax briefly presents his impressions on the circumstances that have led to his dishonour amongst the Greeks and has incurred their laughter: the violation of his right to claim Achilles' arms (*Ai.* 442-4); the Atreidae's

unjust voting (*Ai.* 445-6); Athena's casting the stroke of madness on him (*Ai.* 447-53); and finally, the Greeks' having escaped the assault (*Ai.* 454-5). In line 454, Ajax refers to his enemies outrageous behaviour at him with the rare compound *ἐπεγγελάω*, 'laugh at, exult over'.⁸³⁷ In light of the evident mutual hostility between the title protagonist and the Greek leaders (*Ai.* 457-9) as well as the fact of his failure in avenging his earlier loss in the competition for the arms, we may notice that the hero applies this particular laughter-word in the meaning 'laugh in triumph'.⁸³⁸ In the hero's view, his loss of honour becomes his enemies' victory.

In the fourth episode, Ajax commits suicide to restore his honour, (*Ai.* 815-65).⁸³⁹ In his final words, he calls for vengeance at the Atreidae as well as the whole Greek army (*Ai.* 835-44):

Ai. Καλῶ δ' ἀρωγούς τὰς αἰεὶ τε παρθένους
αἰεὶ θ' ὀρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,
σεμνάς Ἐρινῦς τανύποδας μαθεῖν ἐμὲ
πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας.
Καί σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους
ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ
αὐτοσφαγῆ πίπτοντα, τὼς αὐτοσφαγεῖς
πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο.
Ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐρινύες,
γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.

Ajax: And I summon as helpers the everlasting virgins, who for ever observe all human suffering, the holy Furies with their long strides, to learn how in my wretchedness I am being destroyed by the sons of Atreus. [And may they snatch them away the wretches in utter wretchedness and total destruction, even as they look upon me falling at my own hands; so may they perish at the hands of their closes

⁸³⁷ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.7. Interestingly, in Greek drama, only Sophocles employs this compound three times in the *Ajax*.

⁸³⁸ Miralles (2000) 408.

⁸³⁹ This is the only known example in Greek tragedy for a character to take his life on stage. For a discussion on the matter of staging the suicide, see Garvie (1998) 203-4 n. 815-65.

descendants.] Come, you swift avenging Furies, devour them,
spare not the whole body of the army.⁸⁴⁰

Here, it is noticeable that Ajax's enmity against the Greeks does not lessen even when facing death, since he calls on the Erinyes, goddesses of vengeance, to punish his enemies. The hero particularly holds the sons of Atreus, i.e. Agamemnon and Menelaus, responsible for his utter destruction (τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας, *Ai.* 838). In addition to this, he includes the Greek army in his curse (Ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐρινύες, / γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ, *Ai.* 843-4), which must, in his opinion, share their leaders' hostility towards the hero after learning about the planned assault.⁸⁴¹ Clearly, Ajax's failed act of aggression has not only disgraced him as a warrior, but also has antagonized him with all of the Greeks at Troy. As a result, he and his φίλοι (Tecmessa, the Salaminian Sailors ect.) have become the ἐχθροί to the Greek leaders and their troops.⁸⁴² Although Ajax kills himself out of shame (*Ai.* 864-5), nevertheless his death does not alter the hostility between his friends and his enemies. As it will emerge below, despite the hero's death, his friends still anticipate his enemies malicious laughter of triumph.

Ajax's body is discovered by Tecmessa (*Ai.* 891), who together with the Chorus laments over the hero's death (*Ai.* 894-972). At one point of the kommos scene, the grieving woman holds Athena responsible for her husband's ruin and blames the goddess for doing so to the benefit of the son of Laertes ('Yes, such is the pain that Pallas, the terrible daughter of Zeus, produces to please Odysseus', Τοιόνδε μέντοι Ζηνὸς ἢ δεινὴ θεὸς / Παλλὰς φυτεύει πῆμ'

⁸⁴⁰ Garvie puts the translation of lines 839-42 in brackets in order to identify those parts of the texts considered to be an interpolation; cf. Garvie (1998) 206 n. 839-42; Finglass (2011) 384 n. 839-42.

⁸⁴¹ Cf. Ajax's awareness of the army's hatred towards him in *Ai.* 458: 'the Greek army loathes me' (μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός).

⁸⁴² The third episode begins with the Messenger given an account on the hostile reaction of the Greek soldiers towards Teucer, who threaten to stone him because of his brother's attempted assault, cf. *Ai.* 721-32. Cf. Garvie (1998) 197 n. 728: 'The treatment proposed for Teucer shows how Ajax himself is now regarded by the army'.

Ὀδυσσέως χάριν, *Ai.* 953-4). The Chorus shares Tecmessa's opinion about the hostile disposition of the king of Ithaca (*Ai.* 955-60):

Χο. ἦ ῥα κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει
πολύτλας ἀνήρ,
γελαῖ δὲ τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχεσιν
πολὺν γέλωτα, φεῦ φεῦ,
ξύν τε διπλοῖ βασιλῆς
κλύοντες Ἀτρεΐδαι.

Chorus: No doubt he grows insolent in his black heart, the much-enduring man, and **laughs with much laughter at** Ajax's frenzied sorrows, alas alas, and with him the two kings, the sons of Atreus, when they hear of them.

Noticeably, the Salaminian Sailors are convinced that the news of their master's disaster brings malicious delight to Odysseus as well as to the Atreidae. In particular, they imagine the son of Laertes as one who 'laughs with much laughter at the frenzied sorrows' (γελαῖ δὲ τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχεσιν / πολὺν γέλωτα, *Ai.* 957-8). Here, the image of the laughing enemy is evoked by two laughter-words: the verb γελάω, 'laugh', and the expression πολὺς γέλως, 'loud laughter'. Although some critics interpret the latter reference in connection to the concept of sound,⁸⁴³ however, the context strongly suggests the association with the idea of triumph. Firstly, the Chorus provides the reason for Odysseus' laughter, which is caused by Ajax's 'frenzied sufferings' (τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχεσιν, *Ai.* 957). Secondly, the enemy's glee over the hero's misfortunes is emphasized in line 955, as the Chorus points to the fact that 'he grows insolent in his black heart' (ῥα κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει). Here, the word ἐφυβρίζει indicates Odysseus' malicious exultation over the fallen hero.⁸⁴⁴ In this respect, we may recognize that by applying the two laughter-words in lines 957-8 in close proximity, the Salaminian Sailors stress the fact of the immensity of Odysseus' triumphant laughter at the death of their master. Although the expression πολὺς γέλως very often appears in connection with

⁸⁴³ Cf. section 4.2.1. above.

⁸⁴⁴ LSJ s.v. ἐφυβρίζω. Cf. the translation of the line in Finglass (2011) 412 n. 954/5-956: 'Indeed, he makes mockery in his dark soul'.

the audible aspect of the phenomenon, nevertheless the context favours its interpretation of triumphant laughter.

Tecmessa immediately answers the Chorus, in which she continues the expressed thought about their enemies laughing with glee at the hero's disaster (*Ai.* 961-73):

Τε. οἱ δ' οὖν γελώντων κάπιχαιρόντων κακοῖς
τοῖς τοῦδ': ἴσως τοι, κεί βλέποντα μὴ 'πόθουν,
θανόντ' ἄν οἰμώξειαν ἐν χρεῖα δορός.
οἱ γὰρ κακοὶ γνῶμαισι τὰγαθὸν χεροῖν
ἔχοντες οὐκ ἴσασι, πρὶν τις ἐκβάλῃ.
ἐμοὶ πικρὸς τέθνηκεν ἢ κείνοις γλυκύς,
αὐτῷ δὲ τερπνός: ὦν γὰρ ἠράσθη τυχεῖν
ἐκτήσαθ' αὐτῷ, θάνατον ὄνπερ ἤθελεν.
τί δῆτα τοῦδ' ἐπεγγελάων ἄν κάτα;
Θεοῖς τέθνηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοισιν, οὔ.
Πρὸς ταῦτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν κενοῖς ὑβριζέτω·
Αἴας γὰρ αὐτοῖς οὐκέτ' ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ
λιπῶν ἀνίας καὶ γόους διοίχεται.

Tecmessa: Then **let them laugh** and rejoice over this man's misfortunes; even if they did not miss him while he was alive, they may perhaps lament his death when they turn out to need his spear. For people of poor judgement do not realize the advantages that they have in their hands until they are thrown away. His death is as painful to me as it is sweet to them, and pleasant for himself; for he has got for himself what he longed to obtain, the death which he wanted. Why then should **they laugh at** him? It is for the gods that he has died, not for them. Therefore let Odysseus display his futile insolence. For them Ajax no longer lives, but in his passing he has left me with sorrows and lamentation.

In this passage, Tecmessa also evokes the image of Ajax's enemies laughing at him (γελώντων κάπιχαιρόντων κακοῖς / τοῖς τοῦδ', *Ai.* 961-2). Here, the triumphant aspect of their laughter is clear, since the woman points to the fact of the Greek leaders rejoicing over her husband's misfortunes (κάπιχαιρόντων κακοῖς); also, in line 966 she stresses the fact of the hero's death being pleasant (literally 'sweet') to the enemies (τέθνηκεν ἢ κείνοις γλυκύς). Clearly, we can see that Tecmessa recognizes the fact of Odysseus and the Atreidae exulting over Ajax's fall. Noticeably, she is of the opinion that their laughter will not last long, in contrast to her grief. She explicitly refers to this in line 969 when she

poses the question ‘Why then should they laugh at him?’ (τί δῆτα τοῦδ’ ἐπεγγελάωεν ἄν κάτα). Here, the compound ἐπεγγελάω, ‘laugh at, exult over’, corresponds with the idea of the hero’s enemies laughing with glee at his death. Yet, in line 971 she ironically asserts that the laughter of Odysseus is pointless (‘Therefore let Odysseus display his futile insolence’, Πρὸς ταῦτ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν κενοῖς ὑβριζέτω). Despite her assertions of the enemies’ exultation at her husband’s ruin being shortwhile, she is, nevertheless, fully aware of the fact of their laughter being that of triumph.

Tecmessa’s notion of Ajax’s enemies laughing triumphantly after his death is shared by Teucer, in the fifth episode. On learning about the hero’s suicide, his half-brother raises a lament and expresses his fear about Ajax becoming the object of public scorn (*Ai.* 988-9):

Τευ.	τοῖς θανοῦσί τοι φιλοῦσι πάντες κειμένοις ἐπεγγελάω.
Teucer:	It is true that all men are accustomed to laugh at the dead when they are down.

In this notion expressed in a discernibly sententious tone, Teucer reveals his anxiety at the outrageous behaviour Ajax’s friends may expect from the hero’s enemies, who take pleasure (literally ‘love’, φιλοῦσι) in laughing at the dead (ἐπεγγελάω). Here, the compound ἐπεγγελάω clearly denotes triumphant laughter, which manifests the agent’s satisfaction with the fall of an enemy.⁸⁴⁵ Therefore, in line 989 again we find that the idea of laughter is evoked in connection with expressing one’s triumph over the ruin of an opponent.

Once Teucer delivers his grievous speech over his brother’s body, the Chorus notices one of the Greek commanders coming in their direction (*Ai.* 1040-3):

Χο.	Μὴ τεῖνε μακρὸν, ἀλλ’ ὅπως κρούσεις τάφῳ
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⁸⁴⁵ Finglass (2011) 421 n. 988-9: ‘All men love to mock the dead as they lie’. A similar idea is found in Soph. fr. 210, which I discuss in section 4.3.4. below.

φράζου τὸν ἄνδρα χῶ τι μυθήσῃ τάχα.
βλέπω γὰρ ἐχθρὸν φῶτα, καὶ τάχ' ἄν κακοῖς
γελῶν ἃ δὴ κακοῦργος ἐξίκοιτ' ἀνήρ.

Leader: Do not prolong your speech, but consider how you are going to hide the man in a grave, and what you will soon say. For I see an enemy coming, and perhaps when he arrives **he will be laughing** as a scoundrel would, at our misfortunes.

Apparently, the Salaminian Sailors recognize one of their master's enemies in the person approaching (βλέπω γὰρ ἐχθρὸν φῶτα, *Ai.* 1042). In result, they fear the confrontation with a possibly evil man (κακοῦργος), who has come to laugh at the misfortunes of others (ἄν κακοῖς γελῶν). Therefore, in line 1043, the Chorus uses the language of laughter to denote their antagonistic rapport with Ajax's enemies. Their expressed fears of dealing with an adversary are soon confirmed when the man turns out to be Menelaus, coming to forbid the burial of the hero's body ('You there, I call on you not to put your hand to burial-arrangements for this corpse, but to leave it as it is', Οὔτος, σὲ φωνῶ, τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν χεροῖν / μὴ συγκομίζειν, ἀλλ' ἔαν ὅπως ἔχει, *Ai.* 1047-8). From this point on, the antagonism between the hero's φίλοι (Teucer, Chorus) and his resentful ἐχθροί (the Atreidae) will be explicit, as both sides will argue over the burial of Ajax. Although the play ends with the hero's friends receiving the consent from the Greek commanders to have Ajax buried, nevertheless, their mutual hatred does not cease. Indeed, once enmity is declared, it never ceases to exist, even after the death of an enemy.

Without any doubt, triumphant laughter becomes an important theme in the *Ajax*. In comparison to other Sophoclean extant plays, this drama exceeds in the number of references to laughter with the total sum of 15 references, of which only one does not appear in direct or indirect connection with the idea of triumph.⁸⁴⁶ In general, the language of laughter is applied to denote the antagonistic relationship between the title character and his former political

⁸⁴⁶ This is the single example of Telamon's inability to laugh with joy in face of good fortune in *Ai.* 1011, cf. section 4.2.3. An indirect connection with triumph is discernible in Ajax's laughter of madness, discussed in section 4.2.4. above.

φίλοι, which has risen between them since the contest for the armour of Achilles. It is clear that Ajax becomes obsessed with the idea of his enemies laughing at him in his disgrace and it is this conviction that leads him to the decision of committing suicide. Therefore, the motif of laughter also plays a role in the title character's decision-making.

From the discussion above it becomes evident that triumphant laughter occurs as a recurring theme in most of the extant tragedies. Interestingly, we have seen that the phenomenon in connection with the idea of triumph, i.e. the exultation over the misfortune of ruin of an enemy, is evoked in the context of the betrayal of φιλία amongst family members (wives and husbands, parents and children, siblings, relatives) or allies. All these examples share two features in common: 1) the antagonistic rapport is occasioned by a single act of violence or harm inflicted by one φίλος (or φίλοι) onto another; and 2) the image of laughter is generally evoked by the victim to denote his perception of the superior position of the violator of φιλία. This laughter is not heard onstage, but only talked about by other characters. Sophocles, therefore, uses the language of laughter in metaphorical manner to denote the antagonistic rapport between his characters, who not only hate each other, but are also inclined to inflict harm on each other. Thus, triumphant laughter is ascribed to those who succeed in harming their enemies.

In the first part of this chapter, I have analyzed the understandings of laughter discernible in the surviving Sophoclean tragedies. On the basis of my analysis above, I have distinguished three main ideas connected to the evoked image of laughter in terms of 1) body language (sound and facial expression), 2) expression of emotions (joy) or mental states (madness), and 3) the manifestation of one's disposition towards another (mockery, hostility, triumph). In similar vein to Aechylus, also Sophocles appears to be aware of the

complexity of the phenomenon of laughter and makes many references to its various aspects.

4.3. Laughter-words in the fragments

Sophocles is assumed to have composed approximately 120 dramas. Apart from the extant 7 tragedies, we are in the possession of many fragments of lost plays. Out of these fragments only 4 are concerned with the idea of laughter. These lexemes are enlisted in table 13 below.⁸⁴⁷

Fragment	Lexeme	Form in text	Grammar
<i>Ich.</i> 369	γελοῖος	γέλοια	Nom. pl. (n)
fr. 210 v. 48	γέλως	γέλωτα (ἔχω)	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
fr. 160	γέλως	γέλως (σαρδόνιος)	Nom. sg. (m)
fr. 171	διαγελάω	διαγελῶν	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg.
<i>Ich.</i> 353	ἐγχάσκω	ἐγχάσκοντα	Acc. sg. (m)
fr. 210 v. 49	ἐπεγχάσκω	ἐπεγχανεῖν	Inf. aor. act.
<i>Ich.</i> 298	προσγελάω	προσγελαῖ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.

Table 13. List of Greek laughter-words in the fragments of Sophocles.

Six of these references to laughter are found in attributed fragments: three instances belong to the satyr play the *Searchers* (*Ich.* 369; 353; 298); two come from the tragedy *Eurypylos* (fr. 210 v. 48, fr. 210. v. 49), whereas one appears in a fragment of the satyr play entitled *Little Dionysus* (fr. 171). The source of fr. 160 remains unknown as well as it occurs only in the form of a two-word expression. Here, I will pay more attention to the general understanding of the saying σαρδόνιος γέλως.

From the seven instances of laughter-words in the Sophoclean fragments, six appear in a broader context. I will discuss these references to laughter in relation to such general concepts: 1) signal of amiability, 2) derision, 3) Schadenfreude, 4) triumph and finally 5) Sardonic laughter.

⁸⁴⁷ The fragments of Sophocles are numbered according to the edition of Radt in *TrGF IV* with the exception of fr. 314, which I quote with the abbreviation *Ich.* from the drama's Latin title *Ichneutae*.

4.3.1. Signal of amiability

The image of friendly laughter is evoked in fr. 171 of the lost *Little Dionysus*. It is certain that this play was a satyr drama and its plot revolved around the childhood of baby Dionysus amongst the satyrs.⁸⁴⁸ In the passage, Silenus describes the behaviour of the child-god towards him:

ὅταν γὰρ αὐτῷ προσφέρω βρωσιν διδούς,
τὴν ῥῖνά μ' εὐθὺς ψηλαφᾷ κᾶνω φέρει
τὴν χεῖρα πρὸς <τὸ> φαλακρὸν ἠδὲ διαγελῶν

Whenever I bring him food and give it to him, he immediately feels my nose and brings his hands up to my bald head, **laughing** sweetly.⁸⁴⁹

The baby reacts lively to the father of the satyrs as he comes to feed him: the little one touches his nose (τὴν ῥῖνά μ'... ψηλαφᾷ) and tries to grasp his bald head (κᾶνω φέρει / τὴν χεῖρα πρὸς <τὸ> φαλακρὸν). Noticeably, Dionysus responds to Silenus in a positive manner, for he is said to make his vivid movements 'as he laughs sweetly' (ἠδὲ διαγελῶν). In this respect, it is clear that the chief idea behind the word διαγελῶν is the baby's friendliness signaled to Silenus. Even in those translations which render the laughter-word 'smile', the concept of signaling amiability remains the same.⁸⁵⁰ The laughter of baby-Dionysus, therefore, expresses his liking of Silenus, as well as of his nose and bald head.⁸⁵¹

Without any doubt, the Sophoclean fr. 171 resembles the Aeschylean fragment of the *Net-Haulers*, which describes a similar positive reaction of baby-Perseus to Silenus (Aes. fr. 47a).⁸⁵² What is more, in both examples the image of

⁸⁴⁸ As indicated in the diminutive form of the title Διονυσίσκος, i.e. 'Little Dionysus', or 'The Wee Dionysus', cf. Hahnemann (2012) 171. Other sources pass down the information that the play presented the invention of wine, see Zalewska-Jura (2006) 68.

⁸⁴⁹ Translation in Shaw (2014) 74.

⁸⁵⁰ E.g. Lloyd-Jones (1996) 67: 'For when I offer him the drink I'm giving him, at once he tickles my nose, and brings up his hand to the smooth surface, smiling sweetly'.

⁸⁵¹ Zalewska-Jura (2006) 67-8 discusses the similarities of the god's description in fr. 171 to that in eclogue III of the Latin poet Nemesianus, in which baby-Dionysus also laughs and touches Silenus' nose and bald head.

⁸⁵² Cf. chapter III, section 3.3.1.1.

laughter is evoked in order to create a humorous effect, as both infants are described as laughing at Silenus' 'bald head'. I have already discussed the possible sexual overtone of the term φαλακρὸν in my analysis of Aes. fr. 47a.⁸⁵³ Therefore, it is likely that Sophocles, like Aeschylus, may have employed a baby's sweet laughter towards a character's *membrum virile* for comic purposes of his play.⁸⁵⁴

Another example of the idea of communicative laughter is found in the *Searchers*, the largest preserved fragment of a Sophoclean satyr drama (fr. 314 Radt), which presented the story of a group of satyrs searching for the stolen cattle of Apollo.⁸⁵⁵ Following the cows' tracks, the search party reaches a cave on Mount Cyllene from which a strange noise emanates (*Ich.* 131ff.). Fearing the source of the unusual sounds, never heard by them before (*Ich.* 142-4), Silenus and his children make such commotion at the entrance to the cave that the nymph Cyllene emerges from it (*Ich.* 221ff.). She, then, explains to the satyrs about her taking care of baby Hermes, the newborn son of Zeus, who is growing very fast and has even recently made a new instrument (*Ich.* 284-6). The end of her speech, however, as well as the Chorus' response is missing (*Ich.* 287-97), but then the dialogue resumes (*Ich.* 298-300):

Kυ.	μὴ νῦν ἀπίστει· πιστὰ γάρ σε προσγελαῖ θεᾶς ἔπη.
Χο.	καὶ πῶς πίθωμαι τοῦ θανόντος φθέγμα τοιοῦτον βρέμειν;
Kυ.	πιθοῦ· θανῶν γὰρ ἔσχε φωνήν, ζῶν δ' ἀναυδος ἦν ὁ θήρ.
Cyllene:	Now don't be so disbelieving! When the words of a goddess smile their greeting , they may be believed!
Chorus:	And how am I to believe that such a voice resounds from the dead (creature)?

⁸⁵³ Cf. previous note above.

⁸⁵⁴ Shaw (2014) 74: 'Although the primary reading of these verses is humorous without any sexual interpretation, and although the fragmentary state of the *Dionysiskos* makes it impossible to verify these double entendres, the nature of satyrs and satyr drama would obviously invite instances of such innuendo'.

⁸⁵⁵ On the myth of Hermes' cattle-theft in other Greek literature, see Zalewska-Jura (2006) 97-109; for the latest discussion on the relationship of the *Ichneutae* with the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, see Vergados (2013) 79-86.

Cyllenes: Believe it! In death the creature obtained a voice, while in life it was voiceless.⁸⁵⁶

Apparently, before line 298 the satyrs must have expressed their disbelief in the nymph's words about the device Hermes uses for producing the scary sound. This idea is confirmed in line 299, in which the Chorus sustains its incredulity in the fact that such noise may be produced by a dead creature. In this regard, we may notice that in line 298, Cyllene admonishes the doubtful satyrs to give credence to her 'words of a goddess deserving belief' (πιστὰ... θεᾶς ἔπη) which 'smile their greeting to them [i.e. the satyrs]' (σε προσγελάῃ). In other words, one should not doubt the contents of a god's clarification.

As we can see, line 298 contains the verb προσγελάω, which semantics I have discussed before in regard of a similar instance in the *Eumenides*.⁸⁵⁷ Hence, it suffices to reiterate that the informative aspect of the concept of laughter forms the basic meaning of this particular laughter-word. Moreover, in both examples, προσγελάω appears as the verb to a non-human, but also inanimate subject: in Aeschylus this was 'the scent of human blood' (ὄσμη βροτείων αἱμάτων, *Eum.* 254), in Sophocles these are 'words worthy of credit' (πιστὰ ἔπη, *Ich.* 298). This fact, thus, suggests that the verb occurs in a figurative and not literal meaning, thus, is used in order to lay emphasis on the aspect of communication.⁸⁵⁸ Therefore, in line 298 προσγελάῃ primarily stresses the fact of the goddess directing her words to the satyrs.⁸⁵⁹

However, the obvious semantic connection of this verb with the idea of laughter may also regard the manner in which Cyllene considers her providing the Chorus with explanations. In her 2006 study on satyr drama, Hanna Zalewska-Jura calls attention to the satyrs' courteous behaviour towards the

⁸⁵⁶ Translation in O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 367.

⁸⁵⁷ Aes. *Eu.* 254, cf. chapter III, section 3.2.3.2.

⁸⁵⁸ As reflected in the translation of Lloyd-Jones (1996) 167: 'Don't be so disbelieving, when a goddess greets you with words that you can trust!'

⁸⁵⁹ Such understanding of the verb is clearly evoked in the translations of Walker (1919) 473: 'Be no longer faithless, for with faithful words a goddess speaketh graciously unto thee'.

nymph and their attempts at speaking to her in quasi-epic fashion.⁸⁶⁰ Such gallant and seemingly respectful manners provoke Cyllene's amiability towards them, that she even confides in them the secret about Hermes' birth (*Ich.* 262-76), his miraculous growth (*Ich.* 277-83) and invention of the lyre (*Ich.* 284ff.). In view of this, it is evident that with *προσγελα̃* in line 298 the nymph may be referring to her amiableness or at least indulgence towards the satyrs.⁸⁶¹ In this example, therefore, the language of laughter appears in reference to a goddess' surprise at the disbelief her words have caused amongst a bunch of wild creatures, to whom she has so graciously spoken. As it will emerge from my analysis of the next reference to laughter found in the same play, Cyllene's amiability will give way to her irritation with the satyrs, which is caused by their ridiculous, in her opinion, accusations against Hermes. With this said, I would like to pay some attention to the example of laughter in the *Searchers* which pertains to the idea of derision.

4.3.2. Derision

References to derisive laughter are found in another preserved passage of the *Searchers*, in which Cyllene expresses her indignation with the satyrs. After their initial discussion about the instrument invented by the child-god, the Chorus comes to the conclusion that it must have been Hermes who has stolen Apollo's herd of cattle ('You must know, lady, that whoever the god may be who invented this, none other than he is the thief, you may be sure!, ἴσθι τὸν δαίμον' ὅστις ποθ' ὄς / ταῦτ' ἐτεχνάσατ', οὐκ ἄλλος ἐστὶν κλι̃οπεὺς / ἀντ' ἐκείνου, γύναι, σάφ' ἴσθι, *Ich.* 332-4).⁸⁶² Upon hearing such incredulous accusations towards her nursling, the nymph vehemently refutes them. In the

⁸⁶⁰ Zalewska-Jura (2006) 138 points out the comic effect of the satyrs' quasi-Homeric language.

⁸⁶¹ Halliwell (2008) 524 brings the meaning of the verb down to 'a metaphorically reassuring look', however, with no references to the goddess' appearance or face, but only on her utterances, I find such interpretation unconvincing.

⁸⁶² Translation in Lloyd-Jones (1996) 171. Hereon, I adduce other quotes from the *Searchers* in this translation.

next few lines, both sides exchange their opposite opinions, however the satyrs begin to treat Cyllene with noticeable irony (*Ich.* 338-43).⁸⁶³ At one point, the nymph makes an angry speech (*Ich.* 352-70):

Ky. (about 11 letters)] ἄρτι μανθάνω χρόνῳ,
 πονηρέ, σ' ἐγχ]άσκοντα τήμῃ μωρία.
 δρᾶς δ' ὑγιᾶς οἴδ' ἐν, ἀλλὰ παιδιᾶς χάριν.
 σὺ δ' οὖν τὸ λοιπὸν εἰς ἔμ' εὐδίαν ἔχων
 εἴ σοι φέρει χάρ]μ' ἢ τι κερδαίνειν δοκεῖς
 ὅπως θέλεις κ]ά]χαζε καὶ τέρπου φρένα·
 τὸν παῖδα δ' ὄ]ντα τοῦ Διὸς σαφεῖ λόγῳ
 μὴ βλάπτε κιν]ῶν ἐν νέῳ νέον λόγον·
 οὗτος γὰρ οὐτε] πρὸς πατρὸς κλέπτης ἔφυ
 οὐτ' ἐγγενῆς μ]ήτρῳσιν ἢ κλοπῇ κρατεῖ.
 σὺ δ' ἄλλοσ', εἴ τί]ς ἐστι, τὸν κλέπτην σκόπει
 σκοπὴν ἀ]καρπον· τοῦδε δ' τούπανατ' δόμος
 δεῖξ]ει γένος πρόσαπτε τὴν πονηρίαν
 πρὸς] ὄντιν' ἦκει· τῷδε δ' οὐχ οὕτω πρόπει.
 ἀλλ' αἰὲν εἴ σὺ παῖς· νέος γὰρ ὢν ἀνήρ
 πῶγωνι θάλλων ὡς τράγος κνήκῳ χλιδαῶ·
 παύου τὸ λεῖον φαλακρὸν ἠδονῇ πιτνάς.
 οὐκ ἐκ θεῶν τὰ μῶρα καὶ γέ]λοια χρῆ
 χ]ανόντα κλαίειν ὕστερ', ὡς ἐγὼ γελῶ.⁸⁶⁴

Cyllene: ... At last I understand, you villain, that you are simply **grinning at me for an idiot!** You're up to no good, but all you do you do for the sake of fun! Well, for the future, if it gives you any pleasure or any hope of profit, **laugh at me** to your heart's content, enjoy yourselves at your ease so far as I'm concerned! Only don't slander a child who can prove that his father is Zeus; stop inventing new charges against a newborn child! He was not born a thief on his father's side, and theft does not prevail among his mother's relatives. Look somewhere else for your thief, if there is one, in your fruitless search; the ancestry of this child will be revealed by the halls above! Fix the crime where it belongs; to fix it upon him is not proper! You have always been a child; grown male as you are, with your yellow beard, you are as lascivious as a goat. Cease to expand your smooth phallus with delight! You should not make **silly jokes** and chatter, so that the gods will make you shed tears **to make me laugh.**

Cyllene's indignation with the satyrs is apparent. In particular, she finds fault with their treatment of her, as she blames them of jeering at her foolishness (ἐγχ]άσκοντα τήμῃ μωρία, *Ich.* 352) and doing everything merely for the sake

⁸⁶³ Zalewska-Jura (2006) 140.

⁸⁶⁴ Text with supplements of lines comes from the edition of Lloyd-Jones (1996) 172.

of fun (ἀλλὰ παιδιᾶς χάριν, *Ich.* 353). The nymph, then, tells the Chorus to laugh at her to its heart desire (κάχαζε καὶ τέρπου φρένα, *Ich.* 357), but not verbally abuse the divine child of Zeus (τὸν παῖδα δ' ὄντα τοῦ Διὸς σαφεῖ λόγῳ / μὴ βλάπτε κιν]ῶν ἐν νέῳ νέον λόγον, *Ich.* 358-9). After providing arguments for Hermes' innocence (*Ich.* 359-64), Cyllene criticizes the satyrs again for acting like children despite their mature age (ἀλλ' αἰὲν εἶ σὺ παῖς· νέος γὰρ ὦν ἀνὴρ, *Ich.* 366) as well as speaking ridiculous and foolish opinions (τὰ μῶρα καὶ γέλοια... χ]ανόντα, *Ich.* 368-9), with which they may incur the gods' punishment. The latter, as she remarks, would especially come to her liking (ὡς ἐγὼ γελῶ, *Ich.* 370).

In this passage, there are three distinguishable references to laughter connected with the idea of derision. The first two, ἐγχ]άσκοντα (*Ich.* 353) and κάχαζε (*Ich.* 357) explicitly regard the mocking laughter Cyllene perceives as directed at her from the satyrs. Evidently, she is displeased with this fact, nevertheless she, prefers her being the object of the satyrs' mockery than the divine baby in her care. Although it is only highly probable that these two laughter-words appear in the text, since they require supplementation, however, we may notice that the meanings of these two words correspond with the nymph's angry tone and criticism towards the satyrs'. The third reference to laughter appears with the term γέλοια (*Ich.* 368), with which the nymph denotes the ridiculousness of the satyrs expressed opinions. In her view, the ideas presented by the Chorus about little Hermes being the thief of Apollo's cattle are stupid (μῶρα) and absurd (γέλοια). Cyllene, therefore, derisively rejects them.⁸⁶⁵

As we can see, the satyrs' accusations appear to the nymph as incredulous, hence worthy of derision. It is her disbelief in the possibility of a

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 19 n. 42.

child-god committing such a crime at such a young age which causes her to spurn the satyrs' charges.

Cyllene makes one more reference to laughter in *Ich.* 370, which, although related to derision, discernibly pertains to the idea of expressing emotions. I will, then, analyze this last instance in connection with the feeling denoted as Schadenfreude.

4.3.3. Schadenfreude

Malice is the emotion of delight caused by perceiving the misfortune of others. In lines 369-70 of the *Searchers*, Cyllene admonishes the satyrs not to express such ridiculous and foolish ideas about the baby Hermes, unless they wish to suffer the wrath of the gods. The nymph then ends her reprimand pointing out the fact that should the satyrs be punished for such behaviour, their tears would make her laugh (ὥς ἐγὼ γελαῶ, *Ich.* 370). Here, it is clear that these words denote Cyllene's anger and irritation with the arrogant satyrs to the degree that she would take delight in their suffering, should they be punished by the gods. Without any doubt, the nymph evokes the image of laughter understood as the expression of malice at the possible misfortune of the satyrs. Cyllene, then, takes delight in the idea of having the annoyingly foul-mouthed creatures suffer. In other words, her imagined laughter would be the expression of her Schadenfreude.

4.3.4. Triumph

A reference to laughter in the context of triumph is discernible in fr. 210 of the lost *Eurypylus*.⁸⁶⁶ From the scant information we possess about this tragedy, we know that it revolved around the story of the hero Eurypylus, who was killed at Troy by Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles.⁸⁶⁷ Fr. 210, the largest

⁸⁶⁶ Soph. fr. 206-222 preserved in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1175 + 2081 (b).

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1996) 82-5; Sommerstein (2010) 265-6.

preserved fragment of this play, contains the dialogue of a Messenger reporting about the hero's death to his mother, Astyoche. Upon hearing the news of her son's killing in combat, the woman asks about the state of his body⁸⁶⁸ (fr. 210 v. 47-9):

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Ας. | ἡ κάμβεβᾶσι το<ι>ν νεκρο<ι>ν πρὸς τῷ κακῷ
γέλωτ' ἔχοντες α<ι>νὸν Ἀργεῖοι βία; |
| Αγ. | οὐκ ἐς τοσοῦτον ἤλθον ὥστ' ἐπεγχανεῖν... |
| Astyoche: | Did the Argives trample on the corpses with violence, laughing with a dire laughter , to crown this evil? |
| Messenger: | They did not get so far as to insult them. |

Noticeably, Astyoche's question reflects her fear about Eurypylus' corpse being maltreated by the enemy, whom she envisages committing such a disgraceful act 'laughing with a dire laughter'.⁸⁶⁹ She, therefore, imagines the victorious Greeks as capable of expressing their triumphant glee by mistreating the bodies of their vanquished foes. Clearly, such hostile act would only add to the mother's misery over her son's death, as indicated in the expression πρὸς τῷ κακῷ, meaning 'in addition to this evil'. In this respect, we may recognize that in line 48, Astyoche uses the expression γέλωτ' ἔχοντες αἰνὸν (literally 'having a horrible laugh') in reference to the Greeks' laughter of triumph.

The Messenger, however, denies such act to have taken place and points out the fact that the Greeks did not reach the corpses 'as to insult them' (ὥστ' ἐπεγχανεῖν, v. 49). Here, he uses the rare compound ἐπεγχάσκω, which Lloyd-Jones renders 'insult'. We may notice that in this translation the compound, generally, regards the shamefulness of the Greeks' behaviour over their defeated opponents. However, modern lexica explain ἐπεγχάσκω with

⁸⁶⁸ In line 47, Radt has τὸν νεκρὸν in the accusative singular, however, Lloyd-Jones suggests το<ι>ν νεκρο<ι>ν in the dualis in regard of two bodies: Eurypylus and his companion Helicaon, see Lloyd-Jones (1996) 91 n. a.

⁸⁶⁹ The famous example of such mistreatment is that of Hector's body by Achilles in the *Iliad*, cf. Hom. *Il.* 22.395-405; 24.14-54.

‘make mouths at another’,⁸⁷⁰ in which the compound prefix ἐπεν- indicates the fact of directing one’s act of ‘gaping’ (the basic meaning of χάσκω) in the direction of another. As discussed in chapter II, the verb ἐπεγχάσκω mainly regards mockery reflected in one’s facial expression.⁸⁷¹ In my opinion, this understanding of the verb applies to its use in a fragment of Aelian, which has been quoted by Byzantine lexicographers.⁸⁷² However, the preserved context in fr. 210 suggests a broader meaning for ἐπεγχάσκω than only ‘make mouths at’, for it seems incredible that after a successful battle the Greeks would confine themselves to jumping over the enemies’ bodies and merely making faces at them, albeit in derisive manner. Due to the fact that the expression ὥστ’ ἐπεγχανεῖν (v. 49) occurs as a direct answer to Astyoche’s fear of the Argives γέλωτ’ ἔχοντες αἰνὸν (v. 48), we may recognize a connection with triumphant laughter in the former expression, as well. Since the word refers to an act of manifesting one’s triumph with disgraceful behaviour as well as may imply possible bouts of mocking laughter, I would suggest the meaning of ‘laugh at in triumph’ or ‘mock in triumph’ for the instance of ἐπεγχάσκω in this Sophoclean fragment. In short, fr. 210 evokes (albeit through negation) the image of enemies laughing in triumph as they maltreat the bodies of their vanquished foes.

4.3.5. Sardonic laughter

The last Sophoclean reference to laughter concerns the Greek proverbial expression σαρδόνιος γέλως, ‘Sardonic laughter’. In the scholia on Plato’s *Republic*, the commentator presents an extensive account on the origins and

⁸⁷⁰ LSJ s.v. ἐπεγχάσκω; Abramowiczówna (1958-65) s.v. ἐπεγχάσκω: ‘robić szydercze miny, stroić grymasy’.

⁸⁷¹ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.3. n. 331.

⁸⁷² Ael. fr. 69: ‘Avenging justice did not allow the insolent and haughty boy to make mouths at the death of Meletus’, οὐ μὴν ἢ τιμωρὸς δίκη τὸν ὑβριστὴν παῖδα καὶ ὑπερόπτην εἴασεν ἐπεγχανεῖν τῷ τοῦ Μελήτου θανάτῳ, (my translation).

semantics of the lexeme σαρκάνιον used by the philosopher in *Res.* 337a.⁸⁷³ At one point, the scholiast adduces the term's explanation given by the poet Simonides (*Sch.* Pl. *Res.* 337a 22-26):

Σιμωνίδης δὲ ἀπὸ Τάλω τοῦ
χαλκοῦ, ὃν Ἡφαιστος ἐδημιούργησε Μίνω φύλακα τῆς νήσου ποιήσα-
σθαι, ἔμψυχον ὄν, τοὺς πελάζοντάς φησι κατακαΐον ἀνήρει· ὅθεν ἀπὸ
τοῦ σεσηρῆναι διὰ τὴν φλόγα τὸν σαρκάνιον φησι λεχθῆναι γέλωτα.
ὁμοίως καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἐν Δαιδάλω.

According to Simonides the origin of the expression is the story of Talos, the bronze figure which Hephaestus crafted for Minos to establish as guardian of the island. It was alive, he says, and destroyed those who approached by burning them up. This was the origin, he says, of the term 'sardonic laughter', because they grimaced in the flames. Similarly Sophocles in his *Daedalus*.⁸⁷⁴

Noticeably, the quoted passage does not contain an explicit fragment of a work by Sophocles, only a mere notion of the poet having had employed the traditional expression in his play entitled *Daedalus*. Nevertheless, this remark has entered the list of Sophoclean fragments under the number 160 Radt. Little is known about the mentioned drama.⁸⁷⁵ Scholars, generally, suppose it was a satyr play,⁸⁷⁶ and from fr. 160 infer that it must have regarded something about the bronze giant Talos, guardian of the island of Crete.⁸⁷⁷ According to Hanna Zalewska-Jura, it is possible that in this play Sophocles had Daedalus, the famous craftsman who left Athens for Crete, create the giant for king Minos.⁸⁷⁸ Regarding the phrase sardonic laughter, we may notice that Simonides derives the adjective σαρκόνιος from the verb σαίρω, meaning 'grin' (σεσηρῆναι, *Sch.*

⁸⁷³ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3. n. 149.

⁸⁷⁴ Translation in Campbell (1991) 455.

⁸⁷⁵ The *TrGF* IV adduces only eight short (sometimes consisting on a single word) fragments (fr. 158-164a).

⁸⁷⁶ Lloyd-Jones (1996) 64.

⁸⁷⁷ Similar information in *Soph.* fr. 161: ὁ Τάλως ἐπὶ τοῦ σφυροῦ σύριγγα εἶχεν ὑμένι περιεχομένην. σύριγγξ δὲ λέγεται ἢ περόνη, ἧς ῥαγείσης εἴμαρτο αὐτῷ ἀλῶναι. ὅτι δὲ εἴμαρτο αὐτῷ τελευτῆσαι, λέγει καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἐν Δαιδάλω, "Talos had a hole on his ankle covered with a thin plate of metal. In the hole was a pin, after which removal he would be conquered. He was then due to die; also mentioned by Sophocles in his *Daedalus*' (my translation).

⁸⁷⁸ Zalewska-Jura (2006) 70.

Pl. Res. 337 a 25).⁸⁷⁹ This was one of the two popular in antiquity explanations for the word's origin, the other referring to a plant growing in Sardinia, which consumption resulted in death with a wide grimace on one's face.⁸⁸⁰ In lack of other evidence, we may only presume that Sophocles employed this phrase σαρδόνιος γέλως in connection with the faces of the victims of the bronze guardian of Crete.

In this part of the chapter, I have examined the Greek vocabulary of laughter as well as its interpretations within the fragments of Sophocles. In particular, I have distinguished such ideas of laughter reflected in vocabulary found in the fragments: 1) the communication of one's amiability towards another (fr. 171; *Ich.* 298), 2) derision (*Ich.* 352, 357, 368), 3) the experience of malicious delight (*Ich.* 370), 4) triumph (fr. 210 v. 48-9), and 5) sardonic laughter (fr. 160). Therefore, despite their small number, Sophoclean fragments contain a variety of understandings of the phenomenon of laughter.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the Greek laughter-words employed by Sophocles in six of his surviving dramas and in four fragments. My examination included a total of 41 references, from which 34 are found in the surviving tragedies, whereas 7 in the fragments. As it has emerged from my discussion in this chapter, it is evident that the poet recognizes the complexity of the phenomenon and conjures its image in various connotations.

The first main idea of laughter in Sophocles is that related to bodily phenomena, i.e. sound and a specific facial expression. Considering the former, the analysis of passages has shown that loud laughter is mostly imagined and spoken of by the characters (*Ai.* 382, *Ai.* 957-8). Only in one case the reference to

⁸⁷⁹ LSJ s.v. σαίρω: 'part the lips and show the closed teeth', 'grin'. Cf. Halliwell (2008) 93 n. 100.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3. n. 148. See also Pearson (1917) 112-13 n. 160.

laughter may be regarded as a possible stage direction (*Ai.* 303), suggesting that an actor might have laughed in an earlier scene of the play. Apart from this single example, other references do not denote laughter occurring onstage. In regard of laughter connected with the face, it is also merely talked about by the characters and only in relation to future events (*El.* 1310). Therefore, Sophocles evokes laughter in its primary meanings connected to the human body.

The second main understanding of laughter is in relation to the expression of emotions. Accordingly, the poet applies the language of laughter in order to describe his characters' internal experiences of various emotions, such as joy (*El.* 1300; *El.* 1310; *Ai.* 383; *Ai.* 1011), Schadenfreude (*Ich.* 370), and also abnormal states of mind, such as madness (*Ai.* 303).

The third discernible chief understanding of laughter is related to the manifestation of one's disposition towards another. For instance, some examples conjure laughter as a mean of communicating positive feelings towards another like amiability (fr. 171; *Ich.* 298). However, the largest number of references clearly appear in connection with manifesting a negative disposition: derisive (3 examples), hostile (1 example), but especially antagonistic (24 examples). Sophocles, therefore, very often refers to the expressive function of laughter.

Two main conclusions emerge on the nature of Sophoclean laughter from my analysis in this chapter. First, the general image of laughter in the tragedies and fragments of Sophocles seems to be quite negative. Only two out of the forty-one instances explicitly regard benign laughter: the friendly laughter of baby-Dionysus in fr. 171 and the gracious greeting sent by Cyllene to the satyrs in *Ich.* 298. However, these instances appear only in satyr plays, in similar fashion to what I have demonstrated in the previous chapter concerning Aeschyles.⁸⁸¹ Moreover, it seems that benevolent laughter occurs only amongst

⁸⁸¹ Cf. chapter III, section 3.4.

immortals, for in both examples the agent who laughs is of divine origin (Dionysus, Cyllene). In fact, Sophocles clearly states that pleasant laughter lies within the province of the gods, on whom it entirely depends whether mortals may laugh in such joyful manner (*Ai.* 383). Nevertheless, the only two examples regarding laughter in a positive sense refer to the actions of the gods presented in satyric drama.

In relation to human laughter, only two characters are mentioned in association with joy: Electra and Teucer. Yet, the laughter of the former appears to be chiefly inappropriate, for it is either ill-timed (*El.* 1300), or in need of being concealed (*El.* 1310); the latter character, however, is described as a person incapable of feeling and expressing joy, hence, unable to laugh pleasantly (*Ai.* 1011). These two examples show that Sophocles seldom refers to laughter as the expression of pleasant as well as benign emotions.⁸⁸²

The second observation on the general nature of laughter in the dramas of Sophocles is its discernible sociality. It is evident that most of the references to laughter (27 examples) regard interpersonal relations between the characters, and, as it has emerged, basically of hostile quality. This comes as no surprise since Sophocles usually presents his main characters in opposition to others, due to a conflict of values.⁸⁸³ What often leads to such discord as well as antagonism between the characters is one's earlier actions perceived by another as an act of injustice: mistreatment (Electra, Creon, Oedipus), treachery (Philoctetes), murder of a parent (Electra, Orestes), murder of a child (Clytaemestra), banishment (Polynices), or even losing a contest for arms (Ajax). Noticeably, Sophocles especially presents such conflicts taking place amongst people bonded with ties of familial or political *φιλία*: 1) spouses (Agamemnon vs. Clytaemestra), 2) parents and children (Electra and Orestes

⁸⁸² Also, the fact that Electra's joy regards the anticipated killing of her mother adds a negative undertone to her positive emotional experience.

⁸⁸³ de Romilly (1994) 79.

vs. their mother; Haemon vs. his father), 3) siblings (Polynices vs. Eteocles), 4) kin (Oedipus vs. his brother-in-law; Creon vs. Antigone), 5) allies (Philoctetes and Ajax, vs. Odysseus and the Atreidae). As a consequence of a single act of betrayal, φίλοι become antagonists, who not only feel hatred towards each other, but also contend with each other in inflicting harm. Sophoclean laughter, hence, is basically about relationships disrupted by an act of betrayal.

It is this discernible sociality which may increase the negative impression of Sophoclean laughter, due to the fact that the majority of references relate to the experience, expression and communication of malevolent sentiments by one character towards another. However, these reactions result from the fact that Sophoclean characters follow the traditional moral code of 'helping friends and harming enemies' and expect to receive the worst from declared adversaries (or those whom they consider to be their antagonists). As shown in this chapter, this morality governs the world of Sophoclean heroes, for whom failure in inflicting harm on an enemy is dishonourable and may bring upon shame, disgrace or even utter ruin.⁸⁸⁴ Hence, for people living according to such moral standards laughter becomes a socially potent mean of communication, which conveys the message of another's disrespect, contempt or even superiority. As it has emerged, Sophocles uses the language of laughter to denote those moments when his characters fear or recognize the social damage of their reputation or status. This, in effect, has others treat them without appropriate respect.

In accordance to the words of the Pilot of the *Little Prince*, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, Sophoclean characters do not react well when others no longer treat them seriously and dare to laugh at their misfortunes.

⁸⁸⁴ For an account on the general characteristics of the Sophoclean hero, see Knox (1964) 1-61; Winnington-Ingram (1980) 304-29. For the distinction of the 'shame-culture' noticeable in the world of Sophocles, see Dodds (1956) 28-63.

Chapter V

Laughter in Euripidean drama

Laughter is the closest distance between two people.

Victor Borge⁸⁸⁵

In the fifth and last chapter of this thesis, I examine the laughter-words found in the surviving works of Euripides. Similarly to the previous chapters, I have divided the analysis into two parts; first, I discuss the ideas on the phenomenon found in the extant dramas (the tragedies and the only surviving satyr play *Cyclops*); next, I analyse the lexemes for laughter discernible in Euripidean fragments. The aim of this chapter is to specify the understandings of laughter applied by the youngest of the three classical tragedians.

5.1. Laughter-words in the extant dramas

In the fifteen surviving dramas of Euripides, I have counted a total of forty three instances of Greek laughter-words. These terms, however, are distributed unevenly: the largest number of references (10 instances) is found in *Bacchae*, followed by *Medea* (9 terms); few laughter-words appear in other plays: 4 instances in *Trojan Women*; 3 examples in *Madness of Heracles*, *Ion* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris* each; 2 occurrences in *Alcestis* and *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, whereas the dramas *Children of Heracles*, *Cyclops*, *Helen*, *Hippolytus*, *Orestes*,

⁸⁸⁵ Quoted in Kleiser (2005) 118.

*Rhesus*⁸⁸⁶ and *Suppliant Women* contain but a single laughter-word each. The forms and the Euripidean passages are listed in the table below.⁸⁸⁷

Verse	Lexeme	Form in text	Grammatical form
<i>Tr.</i> 332	ἀναγελάω	ἀναγέλασον	Imp. aor. act. 2nd sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 380	γελάω	γελάσαι	Inf. aor. act.
<i>Ba.</i> 439	γελάω	γελῶν	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 1021	γελάω	γελῶντι (προσώπῳ)	Part. pr. act. Dat. sg.
<i>Cyc.</i> 687	γελάω	γελῶμαι	Ind. pr. m./p. 1st sg.
<i>Hl.</i> 1349	γελάω	γέλασεν	Ind. aor. act. 3rd sg.
<i>IA</i> 912	γελάω	γελᾶ	Ind. pr. act. 3rd sg.
<i>IT</i> 276	γελάω	ἐγέλασεν	Ind. aor. act. 3rd sg.
<i>IT</i> 502	γελάω	γελώμεθα	Ind. pr. m./p. 1st pl.
<i>IT</i> 1274	γελάω	γέλασε	Ind. aor. act. 3rd sg.
<i>Md.</i> 797	γελάω	γελᾶσθαι	Inf. pr. m./p.
<i>Tr.</i> 406	γελάω	γελᾶς	Ind. pr. act. 2nd sg.
<i>Al.</i> 804	γέλως	γέλωτος (ἄξια)	Gen. sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 250	γέλως	γέλων (ὄρῳ)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 854	γέλως	γέλωτα (ὀφλεῖν)	Acc. sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 1081	γέλως	γέλων (τιθέμενον)	Acc. sg.
<i>HF.</i> 285	γέλως	γέλων (διδόντας)	Acc. sg.
<i>Hcl.</i> 507	γέλως	γέλωτος (ἄξια)	Gen. sg.
<i>HF.</i> 935	γέλως	γέλωτι	Dat. sg.
<i>HF.</i> 950	γέλως	γέλως	Nom. sg.
<i>Io.</i> 528	γέλως	γέλως	Nom. sg.
<i>Io.</i> 600	γέλως	γέλωτα (λήψομαι)	Acc. sg.
<i>Io.</i> 1172	γέλως	γέλων (ἔθηκε)	Acc. sg.
<i>Md.</i> 383	γέλως	γέλων (θήσω)	Acc. sg.
<i>Md.</i> 404	γέλως	γέλωτα (ὀφλεῖν)	Acc. sg.
<i>Md.</i> 1041	γέλως	γέλων (προσγελᾶτε)	Acc. sg.
<i>Md.</i> 1049	γέλως	γέλωτα (ὀφλεῖν)	Acc. sg.
<i>Or.</i> 1560	γέλως	γέλως	Nom. sg.
<i>Su.</i> 846	γέλως	γέλωτα (ὀφλεῖν)	Acc. sg.
<i>Tr.</i> 983	γέλως	γέλως	Nom. sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 272	διαγελάω	διαγελᾶς	Ind. pr. act. 2nd sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 286	διαγελάω	διαγελᾶς	Ind. pr. act. 2nd sg.

⁸⁸⁶ In our analysis, I include this drama classically attributed to Euripides, despite its dubious authorship. For a discussion on the authenticity of the *Rhesus*, cf. Liapis (2012) lxvii-lxxv; Fries (2014) 22-47.

⁸⁸⁷ See the concordance of Allen and Italie (1954).

<i>Ba.</i> 322	διαγελάω	διαγελαῖς	Ind. pr. act. 2nd sg.
<i>Hipp.</i> 1000	ἐγγελαστής	ἐγγελαστής	Nom. sg.
<i>Al.</i> 724	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῖς	Ind. pr. act. 2 nd sg.
<i>Ba.</i> 842	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῖν	Inf. pr. act.
<i>Md.</i> 1355	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῶν	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg.
<i>Md.</i> 1362	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῖς	Ind. pr. act. 2nd sg.
<i>Rhes.</i> 815	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῶντες	Part. pr. act. Nom. pl.
<i>Tr.</i> 1176	ἐκγελάω	ἐκγελαῖ	Ind. pr. act. 3rd sg.
<i>IA</i> 372	καταγελάω	καταγελαῶντας	Part. pr. act. Acc. pl.
<i>Md.</i> 1041	προσγελάω	προσγελαῖτε	Ind. pr. act. 2nd pl.
<i>Md.</i> 1162	προσγελάω	προσγελαῶσα	Part. pr. act. Nom. sg.

Table 14. List of Greek words on laughter present in the extant tragedies of Euripides.

As we may notice from the table above, Euripides, generally, employs nine laughter-words: the verbs ἀναγελάω, γελάω, διαγελάω, ἐγγελάω, ἐκγελάω, καταγελάω, and προσγελάω; also nouns, such as γέλως and ἐγγελαστής.

A half of the occurrences contains of verbal forms (24 examples). Although many personal forms appear in the present tense, Euripides applies also the aorist tense, as, for instance, in the forms: ἀναγέλασον ‘laugh loud!’ (*Tr.* 332), γέλασε ‘he laughed’ (*IT* 1274), ἐγέλασεν ‘he laughed’ (*IT* 276), γέλασεν ‘she laughed’ (*Hl.* 1349), and γελάσαι ‘to laugh’ (*Ba.* 380). In relation to the latter instance, we may already notice that the tense only refers to the completeness of the action regarded in the infinitive mode (i.e. to fulfill the act of laughing); similarly ἀναγέλασον, in which the tense intensifies the imperative (‘laugh out loud!’). As for the other three instances, we may assume that the aorist tense is used in accounts of past events. The analyses of these terms within the context will inform us if the characters refer to past events within the play or not.

Considering the persons of the verbal forms, in Euripidean plays we may recognize seven instances with the verb in the second person (‘you laugh at’ in all six instances: *Al.* 724, *Ba.* 272, *Ba.* 286, *Ba.* 322, *Md.* 1362, *Tr.* 406; and one in the plural: *Md.* 1041). Furthermore, in the extant dramas we find no self

reference of a character laughing, and only one instance of the verb in third person singular (*Tr.* 1176). Also, we may observe a wider range of participles employed by Euripides, in a total amount of six occurrences (γελῶν 'laughing', *Ba.* 439; προσώπῳ γελῶντι 'with a laughing face', *Ba.* 1021; καταγελῶντας 'them laughing at', *IA* 372; προσγελῶσα 'her laughing in the direction of', *Md.* 1162; ἐγγελῶν 'laughing at', *Md.* 1355; ἐγγελῶντες 'laughing at', *Rhes.* 815). Since all these participles appear in the present tense, we may recognize that Euripides regards a character laughing alongside another action. As for the passive voice, we may find three forms of γελάω, such as γελῶμαι 'I am laughed' (*Cyc.* 687), γελώμεθα 'we are laughed' (*IT* 502) and γελᾶσθαι 'to be laughed' (*Md.* 797).

In regard of nouns, γέλως appears twelve times in different cases, i.e. nominative (*HF.* 950; *Io.* 528; *Or.* 1560), genitive (γέλωτος ἄξια 'worthy of laughter', in both *Al.* 804 and *Hclld.* 507), dative (γέλωτι 'with laughter', *HF* 935), and accusative as a direct object of such verbs as ὀρᾶν, 'to see' (*Ba.* 250), ὀφλεῖν, 'to incur' (*Ba.* 854; *Md.* 404; *Md.* 1049; *Su.* 846), δίδοναι, 'to give' (*Hclld.* 285), λαμβάνειν, 'to take' (*Io.* 600) and τιθέναι, 'to dispose' (*Io.* 600; *Io.* 1172; *Md.* 383). Here, Euripides also uses other tenses than only present (used in *Ba.* 250, *Ba.* 854, *Ba.* 1081, *HF* 285, *Md.* 404, *Md.* 1049), such as future (γέλωτα λήψομαι 'I will receive laughter', *Io.* 600; γέλων θήσω 'I will cause laughter', *Md.* 383) and aorist (γέλων ἔθηκε 'he/she caused laughter', *Io.* 1172). Lastly, the other noun applied by Euripides is ἐγγελαστής 'mocker', which appears only once (*Hipp.* 1000).

This short grammatical analysis of the Euripidean vocabulary of laughter provides us with such preliminary information. Firstly, the poet favours applying different derivatives of γελάω extended with such prefixes: ἀνα-, δια-, ἐν-, ἐκ-, κατα- and προσ-. This suggests that in the following section we will see references to various aspects of the discussed phenomenon specified by the attached prefix. Secondly, although we recognize the predominance of the

present tense of these verbal forms, nevertheless we also find many examples of laughter-words in relation to past and future events. This diversity of tenses may suggest a broader temporal dimension of laughter in the works of Euripides. Let us, then, turn to our analysis of Euripidean laughter.

5.2. Ideas of laughter in Euripidean dramas

Greek laughter-words are traceable in fifteen surviving plays of Euripides. In this section, we will see that the poet is aware of the complexity of the phenomenon, as he evokes the idea of laughter in many of its aspects.

5.2.1. Sound

Laughter is, basically, an audible phenomenon. In the surviving dramas of Euripides, we may find instances of the terms γελάω and γέλως used in their basic meaning regarding sound.

The first example of a character presented as laughing appears in the choral ode devoted to Apollo in the third stasimon of *Iphigenia in Tauris* (*IT* 1234-1281). In a set of fifty lines the Chorus of Greek Slave Women narrates the story of the god's birth (*IT* 1234-1248) as well as his early actions as a child: the killing of the guardian dragon in Delphi (*IT* 1249-1251) and acquiring the sacred precinct for his own cult (*IT* 1251-1257). At one point, Apollo comes to Zeus on Mount Olympus in order 'to beg removal of the earth-goddess's wrath from his Pythian home' (Πυθίων δόμων χθονίαν ἀφελεῖν μῆνιν θεᾶς, *IT* 1272).⁸⁸⁸ Gaia, enraged by the god's illegitimate claiming of the Delphic oracle which previously belonged to her daughter Themis, decided to debunk Apollo's exclusiveness in prophecy and began to send prophetic dreams to mortals (*IT* 1263-1267). In face of losing his honours as the main god of divination (*IT* 1267-1269), Apollo decides to immediately act and seek remedy

⁸⁸⁸ Translation in Cropp (2000) 153-5. Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of the *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

from Zeus. In lines 1274-1276, the Chorus describes the father's reaction to his son's plea for help:

Χο. γέλασε δ' ὅτι τέκος ἄφαρ ἔβα
πολύχρυσα θέλων λατρεύματα σχεῖν·
ἐπὶ δ' ἔσεισεν κόμαν παῦσαι νυχίους ἐνοπάς

Chorus: Zeus **laughed**, that his son had come so quick
In his eagerness to own the gold-rich offerings.
With a shake of his hair he ended the nocturnal declarations

Noticeably, Zeus expresses his consent in physical form: first, with a burst of loud laughter (γέλασε, *IT* 1274), and then with the shaking of his hair (ἔσεισεν κόμαν, *IT* 1275).⁸⁸⁹ Although some translators render γέλασε in line 1274 with 'he smiled',⁸⁹⁰ nevertheless, comparative material suggests the word's interpretation in relation to sound. For instance, in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, we find an analogous scene in which Zeus bursts out with loud laughter (Ζεὺς δὲ μέγ' ἐξεγέλασεν) in reaction to the cunning demeanour of his baby son Hermes.⁸⁹¹ Here, the audible aspect is indicated not only by the prefix ἐξ- attached to the γελάω form⁸⁹² but is also additionally emphasized by the

⁸⁸⁹ Cf. Cropp (2000) n. 1276. Zeus' nod is considered to be a traditional form for indicating agreement and approval, cf. *Hom. Il.* 524-7 (quoted in the translation in Fagles (1998) 95):

Look. I will bow my head (κεφαλή κατατεύσομαι) if that will satisfy you.
That, I remind you, that among the immortal gods
is the strongest, truest sign (μέγιστον τέκμωρ) that I can give.
No word or work of mine – nothing can be revoked,
there is no treachery, nothing left unfinished
once I bow my head (ὅ τί κεν κεφαλή κατατεύσω) to say it shall be done.

According to Càssola (1975) 465, the nod of Zeus must have become a regular motif in poetry, and as such may have been used by any poet ('il cenno di Zeus doveva essere un tema abituale del repertorio epico, e qualunque rapsodo poteva usarlo').

⁸⁹⁰ E.g. Coleridge (1891) 381: 'and Zeus smiled to see his son come straight to him, because he would keep his worship, rich in precious gifts'; Way (1912) 393: 'Smiled Zeus, that his son, for the costly oblations / of his worshippers jealous, so swiftly had come'; Meagher (2002) 449: 'Then Zeus smiled on his beloved son, / Amused at his frenzy and his haste / In claiming the golden spoils of piety'.

⁸⁹¹ *Hom. Hymn.* 4. 389-90: Ζεὺς δὲ μέγ' ἐξεγέλασεν ἰδὼν κακομηδέα παῖδα / εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως ἀρνέυμενον ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν', 'Loud was the laughter of Zeus when he saw the roguish child / Denying about the cattle in fine and skillful speech'; translation in Crudden (2002) 57.

⁸⁹² For the meaning of ἐκγελάω, see chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

adverb μέγα ‘greatly’.⁸⁹³ Furthermore, in the *Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus depicts a similar picture of Zeus reacting with laughter and nodding in approval (πατήρ δ' ἐπένευσε γέλασσας, Call. *Dian.* 28) to the wishes of his child daughter Artemis (παῖς ἔτι κουρίζουσα, Call. *Dian.* 5). The similarities of these scenes are striking, for in all three examples we have the same parent confronted with a young progeny making its claim in a most adult manner.⁸⁹⁴ On the basis of comparison, we may notice that Zeus, at first, emits a laugh before responding to the words of his young, yet behaving in mature fashion children. In this respect, it is apparent that the term γέλασε in the Euripidean passage quoted above chiefly refers to a laugh emitted by the Father of the Gods and men.

Apart from Zeus, Euripides depicts other Greek gods as laughing. In the second stasimon of *Helen*, the Chorus reveals the story of Demeter, the goddess of harvest, grieving after the abduction of her daughter (*Hl.* 1301-68). As a consequence of her sorrow, the earth becomes bare, which soon results in a shortage of food for both gods and men (*Hl.* 1327-38). In order to convert the dire situation, Zeus sends a team of deities to console Demeter with song and dance (*Hl.* 1341-52):

Χο. βᾶτε, σεμναὶ Χάριτες,
 ἴτε, τᾶ περὶ παρθένῳ
 Διοῖ θυμωσαμένα
 λύπαν ἐξαλλάξατ' ἀλαλᾶ,
 Μοῦσαι θ' ὕμνοισι χορῶν.
 χαλκοῦ δ' αὐδὰν χθονίαν
 τύπανά τ' ἔλαβε βυρσοτενῆ
 καλλίστα τότε πρῶτα μακά
 ρων Κύπρις: γέλασεν δὲ θεὰ
 δέξατό τ' ἐς χέρας
 βαρύβρομον αὐλὸν
 τερφθεῖσ' ἀλαλαγμῶ.

⁸⁹³ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.1.

⁸⁹⁴ The baby Hermes refutes the accusations of stealing Apollo's cattle with sensible arguments worthy of an adult (*Hom. Hymn.* 4. 368-86), whereas the child Artemis, in a set of 19 lines, asks her father for bestowing upon her the honours and powers she deserves as a goddess (Call. *Dian.* 6-25).

Chorus: “Go, you august Graces,
 go and from the heart
 of Deo angered for her daughter
 drive the grief by loud cries,
 and you, Muses, by dance and song.”
 It was then that Cypris, loveliest of the blessed ones,
 first took up the rumbling voice of bronze
 and the drums of stretched hide.
 The goddess **laughed**
 and took into her hand
 the deep-sounding pipe,
 delighting in its loud cry.⁸⁹⁵

The divine revelry carries off Zeus’ plan successfully as their music makes Demeter laugh (γέλασεν δὲ θεὰ, *Hl.* 1349) and join in the festivities. A closer look at this passage shows us that it contains of many musical references. First, we hear of Zeus asking the Graces and Muses to lift Demeter’s spirits with their music: the former are to achieve this literally ‘with an ἀλαλή’ (*Hl.* 1344), whereas the latter with ‘hymns of choral dances’ (ὕμνοισι χορῶν, *Hl.* 1345). Therefore, the son of Cronos requires both groups of goddesses to appease the saddened Demeter, particularly, with their singing. Moreover, the succeeding lines 1346-47 regard the musical instruments used by Aphrodite, who also participates in the divine delegation; these are 1) cymbals,⁸⁹⁶ metaphorically described as ‘the earth-born voice of bronze’ (χαλκοῦ δ’ αὐδὰν χθονίαν, *Hl.* 1346), and 2) the drums covered with stretched hide (τύπανά... βυρσοτενῆ, *Hl.* 1347). In result, divine song is accompanied with the sound of music. This combination of voices and instruments (as well as dance) proves to be a success, for the appeased goddess joins in the merry crowd with ‘the deep-noised pipe’ (βαρύβορον αὐλόν, *Hl.* 1351) and allows herself to ‘take delight in the joyful sounds’ (τερφθεῖσ’ ἀλαλαγμῶ, *Hl.* 1352). Finally, the description of the divine revelry is marked by two onomatopoeic lexemes regarding the

⁸⁹⁵ Translation in Kovacs (2002) 163-5. Hereon, I adduce other English quotes from this edition of the *Helen*.

⁸⁹⁶ Barker (1984) 76 n. 93 considers this a metaphor to κρόταλα than κύμβαλα, whereas Allen (2008) 305 n. 1346 includes the possibility of the instrument being a bronze gong.

emission of sounds: ἀλαλή (*Hl.* 1344), i.e. loud cries of ‘ἀλαλαί’⁸⁹⁷, to which Zeus exhorts the Muses to express in front of Demeter; and ἀλαλαγμός (*Hl.* 1352), i.e. the sound of ritual instruments⁸⁹⁸, in this case the pipe (αὐλός). In light of the many acoustic references traceable in lines 1341-52, it becomes evident that the notion of sound occurs as an important theme in the quoted passage.

In this respect, the interpretation of Demeter’s reaction in line 1349 seems to raise little doubt: upon seeing and hearing the divine revelry the goddess raises a laugh (γέλασεν δὲ θεὰ, *Hl.* 1349).⁸⁹⁹ Here, γελάω primarily regards the concept of sound, which corresponds to the acoustic theme discernable in the passage.

Loud laughter accompanies Bacchic revelries, as well. In the first stasimon of the *Bacchae*, the Chorus specifies the powers of Dionysus (*Ba.* 378-85):

Χο. ὄς τάδ’ ἔχει,
θιασεύειν τε χοροῖς
μετά τ’ αὐλοῦ γελάσαι
ἀποπαῦσαι τε μερίμνας,
ὅπταν βότρυος ἔλθη
γάνος ἐν δαιτὶ θεῶν, κισ-
σοφόροις δ’ ἐν θαλίαις ἀν-
δράσι κρατῆρ ὕπνον ἀμ-
φιβάλλη.

Chorus: The god whose province is to participate in the dances of the thiasos, and **to laugh** with the pipe, and to put a stop to anxieties, whenever the bright joy of the grape-cluster comes

⁸⁹⁷ LSJ s.v. ἀλαλή: ‘loud cry’; differentiated meanings in *DGE* s.v. 1. ‘war-cry’ (‘grito de guerra’); 2. ‘orgiastic shriek’ (‘alarido orgiástico’); 3. ‘cry of pain’ (‘grito de dolor’); 4. ‘festive-cry’ (‘grito festivo’). In extant classical drama, the interjection ἀλαλαί appears thrice in Aristophanes (*Ar. Av.* 952; 1763; *Lys.* 1291) as an expression of triumphant excitement, cf. Nordgren (2012) 223.

⁸⁹⁸ *DGE* s.v. ἀλαλαγμός 2: ‘estrépito de instrumentos rituales’. Cf. Eur. *Cyc.* 65: τυμπάνων ἀλαλαγμοί, ‘the noise of drums’ (my translation).

⁸⁹⁹ In contrast the translation of Way (1916) 583: ‘Then Demeter smiled, and forgot her grieving’; also Peter Burian renders γέλασεν with ‘smile’ in Burian and Shapiro (2011) 315: ‘The Mother smiled at last’. Demeter’s smiling (μειδῆσαι) is differentiated from laughing (γελάσαι) in *Hom. Hymn.* 2. 204. On the idea of ‘smile’ in the semantics of γελάω, see chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.2. For the connection of Demeter’s laughter in *Hl.* 1349 with the expression of emotions, see section 5.2.3.2 below.

in the feast of the gods, and in the ivy-bearing festivities the mixing-bowl throws sleep around males.⁹⁰⁰

In particular, we may distinguish three crucial characteristics of the rites held in honour of the god of wine: 1) revels with dances (θιασεύειν χοροῖς, *Ba.* 379), 2) laughter with the sound of the pipe (μετά τ' αὐλοῦ γελάσαι, *Ba.* 380) and 3) dispersion of worries (ἀποπαῦσαι τε μερίμνας, *Ba.* 381). As we can see, Dionysiac practices engage the worshippers on three levels: corporal, through dancing, vocal, through laughing, and mental by the release of cares. According to the *Bacchantes*, therefore, loud laughter also appears to be a form of worshipping Dionysus.⁹⁰¹

Interestingly, the god of wine who seems to require bursts of laughter in his honour is also described as laughing himself in the second episode of the *Bacchae*. Enraged with the spreading of the new Dionysian cult in his kingdom, king Pentheus orders to capture the Lydian stranger (*Ba.* 352-57) he has heard of being the leader of the Bacchantes (*Ba.* 233-38). Once the ruler's men arrive with the bound priest, one of them reports how easily they fulfilled their master's orders (*Ba.* 434-40):

Θε. Πενθεῦ, πάρεσμεν τήνδ' ἄγρην ἠγρευκότες
ἐφ' ἣν ἔπεμψας, οὐδ' ἄκρανθ' ὠρμήσαμεν.
ὁ θῆρ δ' ὄδ' ἡμῖν προῶς οὐδ' ὑπέσπασεν
φυγῆ πόδ', ἀλλ' ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας
οὐδ' ὠχρός, οὐδ' ἥλλαξεν οἰνωπὸν γένυν,
γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κἀπάγειν ἐφίετο
ἔμενέ τε, τοῦμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος.

Servant: Pentheus, here we are, having hunted down this prey, against whom you sent us, and our setting was not in vain. This beast, we found, was gentle, and did not pull back his foot in flight, but gave us not unwillingly his hands, (he was) not pale, nor did he change (the colour of) his wine-coloured

⁹⁰⁰ Translation in Seaford (1996) 87-9. Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of the *Bacchae*, unless stated otherwise.

⁹⁰¹ The body of literature on Dionysus and his cult is vast and evergrowing. For a concise account, see Seaford (2006) esp. 152-4 with references to the most important studies on the matter. For a recent and exhaustive discussion, see Rybowska (2014) with references.

cheeks, but **laughing** he told us both to bind him and to lead him off, and he waited, making my task easy.⁹⁰²

According to the Servant, the Stranger (who was, in fact, the god himself in human guise) willingly gave himself to the guards. Curiously, in doing this, the man is said to have been laughing (γελῶν, *Ba.* 439). In the past, scholars favoured the interpretation of ‘smile’ for the laughter-word in this passage.⁹⁰³ However, as discussed in chapter II, the basic sense of the verb γελάω is ‘laugh’ and only occasionally does it accept the meaning ‘smile’.⁹⁰⁴ In his commentary to the play, Seaford acknowledges that the latter interpretation for γελῶν in *Ba.* 439 may have been influenced by the similarities of the scene of capturing the Stranger with that described in the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, in which the son of Zeus is said to be smiling (μειδιάων) while being captured by pirates (*Hom. Hymn.* 7. 14).⁹⁰⁵ The difference, however, between the Euripidean and epic scenes lies in the fact that the author of the latter uses not γελάω, but the term μειδιάω, denoting ‘smile’, without any doubt. Furthermore, in the *Bacchae*, the guard gives us no reason to reject the interpretation of ‘laugh’. In fact, such sense of the word corresponds with the Stranger’s other unexpected physical reactions observed by the reporting guard: no attempt to escape (οὐδ’ ὑπέσπασεν, *Ba.* 436), no change of colour of the skin (οὐκ ὠχρός, οὐδ’ ἥλλαξεν οἰνωπὸν γένυν, *Ba.* 439), willingly holding out the hands (ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας, *Ba.* 437), and remaining still (ἔμενέ, *Ba.* 440). In this respect, the form γελῶν in the present participle indicates that the act of laughing occurred simultaneously with the action expressed by the verb ἐφίημι, which in the middle voice accepts the meaning ‘allow’ or ‘permit’. It is, thus, possible to imagine the Stranger emitting a laugh while he allowed the guards to take him

⁹⁰² Translation in Seaford (1996) 91.

⁹⁰³ Cf. the translation of line 439 in Way (1912b) 37: ‘But smiling bade us bind and lead him thence’; similarly Kirk (1979) 61: ‘but smiling he invited me both to bind him and take him away’. For the interpretation of γελῶν in line 439 as a reference to the actor’s mask see my discussion in section 5.2.1.2. below.

⁹⁰⁴ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.2.

⁹⁰⁵ Seaford (1996) 186 n. 439. See also, Halliwell (2008) 136 n. 86.

away (γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κἀπάγειν ἐφίετο, *Ba.* 439). Hence, we may agree that the term γελῶν in line 439 evokes the idea of sound. Although we only hear of the Stranger's laughter, which, according to the guard, came as an unexpected reaction from a person who was about to be imprisoned, nevertheless, the only mention of it adds only to the oddity of the mysterious Stranger.

Few Euripidean examples regard mortals laughing out loud. In the *Madness of Heracles*, the Messenger speaks of Heracles as laughing in his account on the hero's fall into insanity (*HF* 931-35):

ΕΞ.	<p style="text-align: center;">ὁ δ' οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐν στροφαῖσιν ὀμμάτων ἐφθαρμένος ρίζας τ' ἐν ὄσσοις αἱματώπας ἐκβαλὼν ἀφρὸν κατέσταζ' εὐτρίχου γενειάδος. ἔλεξε δ' ἄμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ</p>
Messenger:	<p>and he was no longer himself, But diseased in the rolling of his eyes And after sprouting bloodshot veins in his eyes He was dripping down froth from his thick beard And he spoke with deranged laughter...⁹⁰⁶</p>

The Messenger then quotes the hero's aberrant speech, in which he unexpectedly expresses a desire to kill Eurystheus and leave immediately for Mycenae (*HF* 936-46). What is of our particular interest is the fact that Heracles is said to have made his insane speech along 'with a deranged laugh' (ἄμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ, *HF* 935). As discussed in chapter II, the basic idea encapsulated in the expression ἄμα γέλωτι is sound.⁹⁰⁷ On the basis of line 935 we may assume that the Messenger witnessed the hero speaking nonsense and laughing intermittently in a 'maniacal' (παραπεπληγμένῳ) manner.⁹⁰⁸ Heracles, therefore, laughs loud in his maddened state.

⁹⁰⁶ Translation in Halleran (1988) 52-3. Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of *Madness of Heracles*, unless stated otherwise.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3.

⁹⁰⁸ I will discuss this example in relation to 'mad laughter' in more detail in section 5.2.2.3. below.

Laughter also befits a symposium. In the *Ion*, a servant of Creusa relates to the Chorus about his mistress' attempt at killing her husband's newly discovered son (*Ion* 1122-1228). Accordingly, the Athenian queen had the Old Tutor to sneak into a banquet hosted by Ion and poison the young man (*Ion* 978-1047). In lines 1170-1176, the servant describes the manner in which the killer tried to assassinate his victim:

Θε.
— ὡς δ' ἀνεῖσαν ἡδονήν,
— παρελθὼν πρέσβυς ἐς μέσον πέδον
ἔστη, γέλων δ' ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολύν,
πρόθυμα πράσσω· ἔκ τε γὰρ κρωσσῶν ὕδωρ
χεροῖν ἔπεμπε νίπτρα κάξεθυμία
σμύρνης ἰδρῶτα χρυσέων τ' ἐκπωμάτων
ἦρχ', αὐτὸς αὐτῶι τόνδε προστάξας πόνον.

Servant: When they had satisfied their desire <for food>, an old man came forward and took his place in the middle of the floor, and **he caused much laughter** among the feasters by his eager bustling. From the water jars he kept bringing water for the guests to wash their hands, burned myrrh resin as incense, and had charge of the golden drinking cups, having assigned this duty to himself.⁹⁰⁹

In order to have easy access to the pouring of wine, the Old Man assumed the role of a cup-bearer. Moreover, to avoid any suspicion he ingratiated with the banqueters by having them laugh (γέλων δ' ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολύν, *Ion* 1172) at his zealous actions (πρόθυμα πράσσω, *Ion* 1173).⁹¹⁰ In this example, the interpretation of γέλων δ' ἔθηκε πολύν 'he caused much laughter' raises little doubt. The idea of sound is evoked in the verbal construction of τίθημι γέλων 'cause laughter', whereas the addition of the adjective πολὺς to the object γέλων emphasizes the high sonority of this laugh. In short, loud laughter befits a feast, though it may be, at times, evoked and abused by those with non-benign intentions.

My final example in which a reference to laughter primarily pertains to the audible aspect of the phenomenon may be found in the first episode of the

⁹⁰⁹ Translation in Kovacs (1999) 457-9.

⁹¹⁰ Owen (1939) 148 n. 1173.

Trojan Women. After the siege of Troy, the fate of its' women lies in the hands of the Greeks. Hecuba receives the news from the victors' herald Talthybius that her daughter, Cassandra, is to become Agamemnon's concubine (*Tr.* 249). The princess, then, enters the stage holding torches in her hands, dancing in an ecstatic manner and singing about her forthcoming 'nuptials' with the Greek commander (*Tr.* 307-341).⁹¹¹ In her frenzy, Cassandra exhorts the Trojan Women to rejoice at her future union (*Tr.* 325-41):

Κα. πάλλε πόδα.
 αἰθέριον ἄναγε χορόν· εὐᾶν εὐοῖ·
 ὡς ἐπὶ πατρός ἐμοῦ
 μακαριωτάταις
 τύχαις· ὁ χορὸς ὅσιος.
 ἄγε σύ, Φοῖβε, νῦν· κατὰ σὸν ἐν δάφναις
 ἀνάκτορον θυηπολῶ,
 Ἵμῆν, ὦ Ἵμέναι', Ἵμῆν.
 χόρευε, μᾶτερ, ἀναγέλασον·
 ἔλισσε τᾶδ' ἐκεῖσε μετ' ἐμέθεν ποδῶν
 φέρουσα φιλτάταν βάσιν.
 βόασαθ' Ἵμέναιον, ὦ,
 μακαρίαις ἀοιδαῖς
 ἰαχαῖς τε νύμφαν.
 ἴτ', ὦ καλλίπεπλοι Φρυγῶν
 κόραι, μέλπετ' ἐμῶν γάμων
 τὸν πεπρωμένον εὐνᾶ
 πόσιν ἐμέθεν.⁹¹²

Cassandra: Let your feet dance, rippling the air; let the chorus go,
 as when my father's fate went in blessedness.
 O sacred circle of dance.
 Lead now, Phoebus Apollo: I wear your laurel,
 I tend your temple,
 Hymen, O Hymenaeus!
 Dance, Mother, dance, **laugh**; lead; let your feet
 wind in the shifting pattern and follow mine,
 keep the sweet step with me,
 cry out the name Hymenaeus
 and the bride's name in the shrill
 and the blessed incantation.
 O you daughters of Phrygia robed in splendour,
 dance for my wedding
 for the husband fate appointed to lie beside me.⁹¹³

⁹¹¹ For a fuller discussion on the Cassandra scene (*Tr.* 294-461), see Papadopoulou (2000); Rutherford (2014a) 126-33.

⁹¹² Greek text in Murray (1913).

Cassandra especially summons her mother, Hecuba, to sing, dance, and even laugh at her daughter's so-called 'wedding'.⁹¹⁴ Without any doubt, the form ἀναγέλασον (*Tr.* 332) in the aorist imperative regards the audible aspect of laughter.⁹¹⁵ It is, however, crucial to point to the fact that such interpretation is possible only if we accept the occurrence of this laughter-word in line 332, which only few scholars have been inclined to.⁹¹⁶ Most editors, however, reject ἀναγέλασον in favour of ἄναγε, πόδα σὸν.⁹¹⁷ As a result, the reading of line 332 slightly changes, for the latter lesson makes no reference to laughter but includes an invitation to lead the dance.⁹¹⁸ Scholars present various reasons for their rejection of ἀναγέλασον.⁹¹⁹ For example, Barlow points to metrical discrepancies this lesson produces, although she admits that a reference to laughter would make Cassandra's invitation to rejoice 'much bolder'.⁹²⁰ On the other hand, Lee completely rejects the laughter-word for it, generally, 'makes poor sense' on the basis that 'an invitation to <laugh aloud> is out of place'.⁹²¹ As problems with the metrics of line 332 give ground for calling the lesson into

⁹¹³ Translation in Lattimore (2013b) 94.

⁹¹⁴ For the language of Cassandra's monody, see Barlow (1986) 173-4 n. 308-340; Shapiro and Burian (2009) 85 n. 341-90 / 308-340.

⁹¹⁵ For the basic meaning of ἀναγελάω regarding sound, cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

⁹¹⁶ E.g. Murray (1913); Biehl (1970) *ad loc.* In general, ἀναγελάω is seldom found in extant Greek texts.

⁹¹⁷ Cf. *ad loc.* in Nauck (1884), Parmentier (1948), Lee (1976), Diggle (1981) and Barlow (1986). In this respect, the imperative ἄναγε summons to lead, whereas πόδα σὸν becomes the object to ἔλισσε, hence the meaning 'move your foot'. Curiously, in their concordance, Allen and Italic (1954) s.v. ἀναγέλασον, consider the opposite: 'ἄναγε, πόδα σὸν ἔλισσε P. lect. dub.'

⁹¹⁸ Cf. the translation by Barlow (1986) 81: 'Dance, mother, lead the dance, join in most gladly'; Kovacs (1999) 49: 'Dance, mother, dance / lead off and whirl your foot this way'; Shapiro (2009) 42: 'And you, mother, / You, too, lead the dance, join in it / Joyously'.

⁹¹⁹ The discrepancy rises from three medieval manuscripts, which stand the principal sources of the text: 1) V = Codex Vaticanus Graecus 909 (XIII century); 2) P = Codex Vaticanus Palatinus Graecus 287 (early XIV century), and 3) Q = Codex Harleianus 5743 in the British Museum, London (late XV century). V. contains 'χόρευε, μάτερ, ἀναγέλασον', whereas PQ has 'χόρευε, μάτερ, χορευε (-εὐ' P), ἄναγε, πόδα σὸν'. Since no manuscript is of superior credibility, the choice of the lessons depends on the editors' judgement. For a general account on the transmission of Euripidean plays, see. Zuntz (1955) 249-88; on the history of the text of the *Trojan Women*, see Biehl (1970) v-xvii; Diggle (1981) v-xiv.

⁹²⁰ Barlow (1986) 175, n. 332.

⁹²¹ Lee (1976) 131, n. 332.

question, Lee's interpretative argument, however, against ἀναγέλασον proves ineffective. In fact, Cassandra's seemingly nonsensical summon to laugh corresponds with her frenzy, i.e. a mental state of 'normality gone wrong'.⁹²² To the maddened princess, who sings a frenzied wedding hymn, a reference to celebratory laughter would not be inappropriate. Nonetheless, a noticeable discrepancy arises from the fact that the summon to laugh in joy is expressed at a time of the Trojan Women's greatest misery. Yet, Biehl sees this as a conscious act on behalf of Euripides who, in his opinion, juxtaposes the image of laughter with the image of the visibly grieving Hecuba.⁹²³ In general, we may notice that Cassandra's nuptial references, albeit distorted, form a sharp contrast between her mention of a joyous event (which, in other circumstances, would occasion her mother to celebrate with song, dance as well as loud cries of laughter) and the brutal reality she and her companions suffer. The effect of her parodic wedding-song is horrific, for its main role is to emphasize the tragic fate of the Trojan Women, a fate which gives no causes for rejoicing or laughter. For this reason, on an interpretative basis, the lesson ἀναγέλασον in line 332 is permissible, since it is clear that an exhortation to laugh in this scene would serve tragic purposes.

Euripides evokes laughter in the understanding of a sound in seven instances. In particular, different persons are mentioned as laughing out loud: the gods Zeus (*IT* 1274), Demeter (*Hl.* 1349), Dionysus (*Ba.* 439); the hero Heracles (*HF* 946) as well as groups of people, like banqueters (*Ion* 1172) and Bacchic worshipers (*Ba.* 380). Noticeably, some of these laughing subjects are characters appearing in the plays (Dionysus, Heracles, Bacchantes), others, however are not (Zeus, Demeter, banqueters). At this point it must be noted that these examples are found in the songs of the chorus (*IT* 1274; *Hl.* 1349; *Ba*

⁹²² Barlow (1986) 173 n. 308-340.

⁹²³ Biehl (1989) 181, n. 332: 'Kassandras outrierte Aufforderung an die Mutter, sie solle 'laut auflachen', bildet den krassen Gegensatz zu Hekabes tränenreicher Klage, die Cassandra soeben noch in bewegten Worten beschrieben hat (315-317)'.

380) or in reports of events delivered by messengers (*Ba.* 439; *HF* 946; *Ion* 1172). Except for *Ba.* 380 which presents acts of laughing aloud as part of Dionysiac rites, we may observe that laughter understood as sound is, mainly, evoked in relation to former events, be it recent (as in the reports of offstage events) or unidentified (in as the choral odes). Euripides only has his *dramatis personae* speak of loud laughter. Thus, we only hear about persons laughing, but do not hear laughter itself from the stage. Although we have but one example of a character's exhortation to laugh (Cassandra in *Tr.* 332), nevertheless it is left with no response. The sound of laughter, therefore, does not resonate in Euripidean drama.

5.2.2. Facial expression

In the extant dramas, Euripides makes but a single explicit evocation of the idea of laughter in connection with the face. Such example is found in the choral ode in the fourth stasimon of the *Bacchae*. After Dionysus leaves with the maddened Pentheus to spy on the Bacchantes on Mount Cithaeron (*Ba.* 976ff.), the Chorus sings an angry ode, in which it urges the god to punish the 'godless, lawless, unjust earth-born offspring of Echion' (τὸν ἄθεον ἄνομον ἄδικον Ἐχίονος / γόνον γηγενῆ, *Ba.* 1015-16) for his insolence (*Ba.* 977-1023). At the end of their song, the Bacchantes summon Dionysus to come in person and hunt down Pentheus (*Ba.* 1020-3):

Χο. ἴθ', ὦ Βάκχε, θηραγρευτᾶ βακχᾶν
 γελῶντι προσώπῳ περιβαλε βρόχον
 θανάσιμον ὑπ' ἀγέλαν πεσόν-
 τι τὰν μαινάδων.

Chorus: Go, o Bacchus, beast, **with laughing face** throw around the hunter of bacchantes the deadly noose as he falls under the herd of maenads.

Apparently, the *Bacchae* invoke the god of wine to appear in animal form and punish 'with a laughing face' (γελῶντι προσώπῳ, *Ba.* 1021) the impious ruler

of Thebes. Due to the fact that the image of laughter is explicitly evoked in connection with the face, as specified by the noun πρόσωπον, translators tend to render the participle γελῶντι ‘smiling’.⁹²⁴ Also, this interpretation is favoured by some scholars who recognize the expression γελῶντι προσώπῳ as a reference to the original mask worn by the actor playing the character of the Stranger.⁹²⁵ However, the context in which the present participle of γελάω appears provides no reasons for rejecting the basic meaning of ‘laugh’ for the verb, since, in this passage, we do not see the character of Dionysus on stage nor hear him. All we possess is the Chorus’ enigmatic remark about the god’s face, which makes it difficult to determine whether the idea evoked in this reference pertains only to that of smiling.

At this point it is important to repeat that the basic function of any physical manifestation of laughter (including the facial expression) is nonverbal communication.⁹²⁶ With this in mind, we may notice that the reference to laughter in *Ba.* 1021 may concern not only the physical appearance of the god’s countenance (laughing or smiling), but also the manifestation of his feelings. Such interpretation is possible due to the set of various connotations of the verb γελάω, which I have examined in chapter II.⁹²⁷ In this respect, Seaford’s translation of γελῶντι προσώπῳ, ‘with laughing face’, reflects best, in my opinion, the semantic complexity of the laughter-word, and allows its additional interpretation. This, then, leaves us with the question what does Dionysus’ laughing face, particularly, express? The answer, I hope, will be

⁹²⁴ Cf. the translation ‘with smiling face’ included by Kirk (1979) 109 and Kovacs (2002) 113.

⁹²⁵ Dodds (1960) 131 n. 439: ‘the actor who played the Stranger no doubt wore a smiling mask throughout’; Foley (1980) 127: ‘this figure [i.e. Stranger] with a smiling mask (smiling as we know from lines 439 and 1021)’; Segal (1982) 249: ‘The *prosōpon* in this choral prayer is possibly a reference to the “mask” as well as the “visage” of the smiling Stranger in the early scenes of the play’ (original emphasis). Yet, the evidence is limited only to two references in the play: γελῶντι προσώπῳ (*Ba.* 1021) and γελῶν (*Ba.* 439). For doubts on the theatrical hypothesis, see Halliwell (2008) 136-7, 546. For a full discussion on the god’s mask in the context of cult, see Rybowska (2014) 85-9.

⁹²⁶ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.3.

⁹²⁷ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.

provided in section 5.2.11. below, in which I analyze Euripidean references to laughter in connection with the idea of expressing one's disposition towards another.

5.2.3. Humour

Laughter and humour are two phenomena universally associated with each other.⁹²⁸ In the extant dramas of Euripides, we may find few examples of Greek laughter-words which evoke the idea of laughter in connection with incongruity and the feeling of amusement.

Few passages of Euripidean tragedy regard laughter in relation to the feeling of pleasure at perceiving something considered to be humorous. The first example we find is Zeus' reaction to Apollo's claim for Delphi described by the Chorus in the third stasimon of the *Iphigenia in Tauris* (*IT* 1234-1281). As I have argued in section 5.2.1., the Father of the Gods and men initially bursts out laughing upon hearing his son's plea for help (γέλασε, *IT*. 1274). However, the passage we have discussed above also distinguishes the cause for the god's outburst, i.e. 'that his son had come so quick / in his eagerness to own the gold-rich offerings' (δ' ὅτι τέκος ἄφαρ ἔβα / πολύχρυσα θέλων λατρεύματα σχεῖν, *IT* 1274-75). As we may notice, the reason for Zeus' laughter is not Apollo's request, as Dillon states,⁹²⁹ but the fact that the deity who vies for the monopoly in prophetic functions is still a child (τέκος). Moreover, this child god pursues the recognition of his divinity in a mature as well as clever way, namely, by taking over the oracle in Delphi, a rich precinct filled with luxurious offerings (πολύχρυσα λατρεύματα).⁹³⁰ The incongruity of these two facts, namely, the god's very young age with his very mature actions, may appeal to Zeus as

⁹²⁸ Cf. chapter I, section 1.1.2.

⁹²⁹ Dillon (1991) 351.

⁹³⁰ Kyriakou (2006) n. 1273-75: 'Zeus laughs because Apollo is a wonderboy, very young and already very determined, but also because the honors the child asks to have restored to him include an extremely lucrative cult.'

amusing, thus result in his burst of laughter.⁹³¹ Such humorous interpretation of the word γέλασε in line 1274 may be supported by the appearance of the adverb ἄφαρ ‘quickly’, ‘immediately’ which refers to the haste⁹³² Zeus recognizes in his son’s arrival and desire to claim full honours as a god. The divine father, then, laughs with amusement at the determination and cleverness his progeny shows in fulfilling his young godly desires.⁹³³

The feeling of amusement provoking laughter may be hinted at in the *Ion*. As the Servant relates to Creusa the failed attempt of poisoning Ion at the banquet (*Ion* 1122-1228), he describes the manner in which the assassinator behaved in order not to attract suspicion: this was having the banqueters burst out laughing at his zealous actions (γέλων δ’ ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολύν, πρόθυμα πράσσων, *Ion* 1172-3).⁹³⁴ Thus, to the banqueters the man’s unexpected or unusual eagerness in his assumed role as a cup-bearer must have appeared as amusing, since it made them laugh. We may, therefore, presume that the assassinator must have behaved in a funny way.

Another reference to laughter in relation to the feeling of amusement is found in the tragedy *Madness of Heracles*. After his account of the hero’s first symptoms of frenzy and aberrant speech (*HF* 931-46), the Messenger gives a detailed description of Heracles’ abnormal conduct. In his delusion, the hero believes he is travelling to Mycenae on a mounted chariot to kill his enemy Eurystheus (*HF* 947-49), however, in reality, he is running around the main hall

⁹³¹ Zeus reacts in a similar way after listening to the claims of his other children: the infant Hermes (*Hom. Hym.* 4. 389-90) and the young Artemis (*Call. Dian.* 28). Cf. n. 12 above.

⁹³² Apollo’s speediness has been already indicated a few lines earlier during his ascent to Olympus in the adjective ταχύπους ‘swift-footed’ (*IT* 1270). Cf. the translations of Murray (1911) 79: ‘Zeus laughed to see the babe, I trow, / So swift to claim his golden rite; / He laughed and bowed his head, in vow / To still those voices of the night’.

⁹³³ Such interpretation also favours the translation of γέλασε as ‘laughs’ instead of ‘smiles’, which appears in older translations, cf. Potter (1938): ‘Zeus smiled, that the child so quickly came/ to ask for worship that pays in gold’; Way (1958) ‘Smiled Zeus, that his son, for the costly oblations of his worshippers jealous, so swiftly had come.’

⁹³⁴ Owen (1939) 148 n. 1173.

of the palace in Thebes. The Messenger, then, mentions the reaction of those who witnessed the odd behaviour of the great hero (*HF*. 950-2):

Εξ. διπλοῦς δ' ὀπαδοῖς ἦν γέλως φόβος θ' ὁμοῦ,
καί τις τόδ' εἶπεν, ἄλλος εἰς ἄλλον δρακῶν·
Παίζει πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεσπότης ἢ μαίνεται;

Messenger: The servants felt both fear and **laughter** together,
And looking at one another they said,
“Is our master teasing us or is he mad?”

In this passage, we may notice that the servants were not certain how to react to their master's strange actions. This is, particularly, emphasized in line 950 in which the Messenger describes the twofold (διπλοῦς) emotional response they experience at the same time (ὁμοῦ) while perceiving Heracles' conduct, i.e. laughter (γέλως) and fear (φόβος). With this juxtaposition, we may clearly recognize that the applied laughter-word refers to the experience of a pleasant emotion which could result in a burst of laughter. Since this feeling, which rises in the servants in reaction to the hero's unexpected and abnormal behaviour, makes them wonder in line 952 whether their master 'is playing a game' with them (παίζει), it becomes apparent that the emotion indicated by γέλως is amusement.⁹³⁵ However, the simultaneously felt anxiety (φόβος) leaves the servants uncertain in their reaction and even has them doubt in the hero's sanity (μαίνεται, *HF* 952). The result of their ambiguous emotional experience is confusion in whether they are witnessing a humorous sight or not; hence, the question posed in line 952.⁹³⁶

As the Messenger then describes, the servants' uncertainty dispersed once the delusional Heracles aimed with his bow and arrows at his own children (*HF* 967-71). By then, the feeling of fear overcame all witnesses of the hero's insanity and manifested itself in a shriek of horror (βοᾶ δὲ ... οἰκετῶν τ'

⁹³⁵ Both Way (1912b) 205 and Kovacs (1998) 401 render γέλως with 'mirth'.

⁹³⁶ Cf. Papadopoulou (2005) 67-8: 'the by-standers wonder in turn whether they should laugh at Heracles' joke or tremble at what was a manifestation of madness'.

ᾄχος, *HF* 978. Although at first tragic madness may seem funny, in the end gives it leaves no space for laughter to occur.

In the analyzed examples we may observe that Euripides acknowledges the concept of laughter connected with humour. As we have seen, the references to laughter appear with the perception of an incongruity: Zeus sees the unexpected eagerness of his progeny to receive divine honours despite a very young age; the baquetters perceive one's unusually eager actions at a feast, whereas the servants of Heracles witness their master's odd conduct. In the first two case, the used laughter-words refer to the expression of amusement (γέλασε, *IT* 1274; γέλων δ' ἔθηκε... πολύν, *Ion* 1172), whereas in the third, it denotes this feeling itself (γέλως, *HF* 950). Again, we only hear about the characters' amused laughter (expressed outwardly or only felt inwardly), however, do not witness it on stage.

5.2.4. Delight

One's laughter may express a high degree of pleasure. The image of a person laughing in delight is evoked in the sixth episode of the *Medea*. Jason's servant brings Medea news of the death of Creon and his daughter (*Med.* 1122ff.). In lines 1134-1230, the Messenger gives a detailed account of the disaster brought on the Corinthian royals by the barbarian woman, who had sent poisoned wedding robes as a gift to Jason's bride (*Med.* 956-8). According to the servant, the princess was first displeased with seeing Medea's children bringing the present ('Then she veiled her eyes and turned her white cheek away, disgusted at seeing the children come in', ἔπειτα μέντοι προουκαλύψατ' ὄμματα / λευκὴν τ' ἀπέστρεψ' ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα, / παίδων μυσσυχθεῖσ' εἰσόδους, *Med.* 1147-9).⁹³⁷ However, Jason's prompting (*Med.* 1151-55) as well as the sight of the finery before her (ὡς ἐσεῖδε κόσμον, *Med.* 1156) made the young

⁹³⁷ Translation in Kovacs (1994) 401. Hereon, I adduce other English passages from this edition of the *Medea*, unless stated otherwise.

meaning of ‘smile’, favoured by the LSJ as well as many translators of this play.⁹³⁹ I have already argued in the previous part of my thesis on the semantic complexity of the verb προσγελάω, calling attention to the fact that it is impossible to clearly specify which concept, whether that related to laughter or to smiles, is specifically evoked by the lexeme in its non-figurative use.⁹⁴⁰ In reference to the instance in *Md.* 1162, it is possible that the Messenger describes the dressed up princess not only as smiling to herself in the mirror, but also as laughing with pleasure at her beautiful image.⁹⁴¹ Such an expressive behaviour as laughter not only would emphasize the emotional shift that has taken place in her from the initial disgust with Jason’s children (μυσαχθεῖσ’, *Md.* 1149) to the extreme delight in their mother’s gift (ὑπερχαίρουσα, *Md.* 1165), but it would also correspond with her lively reaction to the robes.⁹⁴² For it is important to keep in mind the fact of the very young age of Creon’s daughter, whose vivid behaviour described in lines 1157-66 appears typical for a young teenage girl pleased to receive a pretty new dress.⁹⁴³ Since the princess’ gaiety is

⁹³⁹ LSJ s.v. προσγελάω 1: ‘smile at’ with reference to Eur. *Md.* 1162. For the translations, see, e.g. Way (1946) 375: ‘She took the rich-wrought robes and clad herself, / Circling her ringlets with the golden crown, / And by a shining mirros ranged her tresses, / Smiling at her own phantom image there’; Kovacs (1994) 401: ‘she took the many-coloured gown and put it on, and setting the gold crown about her lock, she arranged her hair in a bright mirror, smiling at the lifeless image of her body’; Arnson Svarlien (2007) 108: ‘she took the intricate / embroidered robe and wrapped it round her body, / and set the golden crown upon her curls, and smiled at her bright image – her lifeless double’.

⁹⁴⁰ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

⁹⁴¹ This ambiguity in the semantics of προσγελάω is given in the translation of Blondell (1999) 206: ‘...[she] took a bright mirror and arranged her hair, smiling and laughing (προσγελῶσα) at her body’s lifeless image there’.

⁹⁴² Halliwell (2008) 524 points to the Messenger’s emphasis on the ‘physically excited joy’ of the princess.

⁹⁴³ According to Roisman (2014) 118, lines 1147-66 illustrate the princess as ‘vain and self-absorbed’. Similar notion in Torrance (2007) 289: ‘The beautiful poisoned robe and crown... are particularly appropriate in that they appeal to the vanity and material greed of the princess, who immediately succumbs to their charms (1156-66)’. Stuttard presents a similar non-flattering description of Jason’s bride in his translation cf. Stuttard (2014) 196: ‘And when she saw the beauty of your gifts, well, she could not resist. No. She agreed to everything her husband asked. And as soon as Jason and his sons had left her rooms, she took the dress, so shimmering, so fine, and wrapped it round her. And she set the golden crown upon her head and took a mirror in her hand and in its brightness bunched her curls and laughed to look upon the ghostly

evident, we may, thus, accept the interpretation of her reaction described with προσγελῶσα as 'laughing with delight'.

At this point it should be added that scholars have pointed to the importance of line 1162 in building up the tension in the Messenger's narration. In their editions of the play, commentators concurrently perceive the expression ἄψυχον εἰκῶ, 'lifeless image', as anticipating the horrible consequences of Jason's bride accepting the gift from Medea.⁹⁴⁴ From line 1167 it is clear that the girl's fate is irreversible, as the Messenger narrates in meticulous detail her excruciating death in flames from the poisoned robes ('But then there was a terrible sight to behold', τοῦνθένδε μέντοι δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ' ἰδεῖν, *Md.* 1167ff.). We may, thus, agree that the mention of the princess' 'lifeless image of the body' impends her doom. However, we may also notice that line 1162 simultaneously presents two images of the princess: 1) one alive, who laughs and takes delight in her looks, and 2) the other dead, in reference to a lifeless corpse. It is in this opposition of the two images that the tension of the Messenger's speech is created, i.e. by setting the contrast of the princess' future 'lifeless body' with her present 'gaily laughter'.⁹⁴⁵ Line 1162, thus, contains the juxtaposition of two ideas, i.e. the idea of death evoked in the words ἄψυχον εἰκῶ... σώματος, with the idea of life evoked by the word προσγελῶσα. The invocation of the pleasant connotations of the princess' laughter, whilst alive, increases the horrific effect of the account of her death. Euripides, therefore, uses the language of laughter for his own tragic purposes.

Another example of a laughter-word evoking the idea of experiencing delight is found in the *Helen*. In the choral ode in the second stasimon, to which

spectre of her face reflected there. She stood up from the chair she sat on, and she walked from room to room, treading softly, airily on milk-white feet, enraptured by your gifts, and many times she'd arch her back and gaze in admiration at her loveliness'.

⁹⁴⁴ Elliott (1969) 96 n. 1162: 'Glaucus' reflection grimly anticipates the sequel: it has no psyche, and soon she will lose hers'; Mastronarde (2002) 354 n. 1162: 'ἄψυχον εἰκῶ: the 'lifeless likeness' is an ominous portent of her impending death'.

⁹⁴⁵ Dillon (1991) 351 points to the irony of the scene, in which the princess' innocent laughter is undercut by the audience's superior knowledge of her upcoming fate.

I paid attention in section 5.2.1. above, I have recognized the fact that the divine revelers sent by Zeus to appease Demeter achieved their goal. With song and dance, the gods managed to lift the grieving mother's spirits to the point that she joined in the merry-making. Lines 1349-52, particularly, regard the moment of the goddess' solace:

Χο.	γέλασεν δὲ θεὰ δέξατό τ' ἐς χέρας βαρύβρομον αὐλὸν τερφθεῖσ' ἀλαλαγμῶ.
Chorus:	The goddess laughed and took into her hand the deep-sounding pipe, delighting in its loud cry.

Apparently, the gods' singing and dancing must have been to Demeter's liking, since it resulted in her outburst of laughter and participation in the divine revelry. In line 1349, we may notice that the word γέλασεν, 'she laughed', indicates not only the goddess' vocalization of laughter, for which interpretation I have argued above, but it also signals her shift in mood from the feeling of deep grief to that of a more pleasant nature. Here, the laughter-word γελάω clearly describes the outward manifestation of Demeter's emotional process.

The goddess' laughter in *Hl.* 1349 recalls the same reaction described in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,⁹⁴⁶ however, we may distinguish certain differences in the two version's of Demeter's appeasement. In the hymn, the goddess is cheered up by the joking and prancing of the maid Iambe ('knowing Iambe jested with her and / mocking with many a joke moved the holy goddess / to smile and laugh and keep a gracious heart', χλεύης μιν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδυῖα / πολλὰ παρασκώπτουσ' ἐτρέψατο πότνιαν ἀγνήν / μειδῆσαι γελάσαι τε καὶ

⁹⁴⁶ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.2.

ἴλαον σχεῖν θυμόν, *Hom. Hymn.* 2. 202- 4),⁹⁴⁷ whereas in the *Helen*, it is the singing and dancing of the gods' that prompts her change of mood. Therefore, two different stimuli make the goddess laugh: in the hymn it's the power of words, in the drama it is the power of music. As a consequence, Demeter's behaviour after her emotional shift also differs: the goddess in the hymn remains seated in the company of other women and receives the barley-drink κυκεῶν ('she bid them mix barley / and water with soft mint and give her to drink. / Metaneira made and gave the drink to the goddess as she bid', ἄνωγε δ' ἄρ' ἄλφι καὶ ὕδωρ / δοῦναι μίξασαν πιέμεν γλήχωνι τερεῖνη. / ἢ δὲ κυκεῶ τεύξασα θεᾶ πόρεν ὡς ἐκέλευε, *Hom. Hym.* 2. 208-10); whereas the Euripidean Demeter is prompted to participate in the divine revelry by playing the pipe (*Hl.* 1350-2). In the first case, the goddess' static, if not calm reaction agrees with the grandiose style of the hymn aimed at presenting an aetiological narrative for the Eleusian Mysteries held in honour of the goddess;⁹⁴⁸ in the second, however, the more active response corresponds with the musical character of the whole choral ode.⁹⁴⁹ We may, thus, see that Demeter's behaviour after her burst of laughter depends on the function of the genre presenting the myth: the Homeric Hymn describes her actions with reverence for it was composed to celebrate the goddess, whereas the Chorus in the *Helen* presents a more lively response from Demeter to suit the chiefly entertaining function of the second choral ode.⁹⁵⁰ Euripides, therefore, evokes the image of a goddess laughing in

⁹⁴⁷ All English quotes of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* come from the translation of Foley (1994). For a discussion on Iambe's mockery of Demeter, see Rosen (2007) 47-55.

⁹⁴⁸ Cf. Richardson (1974) 13-30; Foley (1994) 84-97, 169-75. For a discussion on the hymn in connection with ritual laughter, see Halliwell (2008) 161-66.

⁹⁴⁹ On the importance of the musical aspect of the second choral ode, see Marshall (2014) 115-22.

⁹⁵⁰ This has been the traditional approach of scholars who view the ode as a mere ἐμβόλιμον, i.e. a choral interlude which is not related to the subject of the play (cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1456 29a); see Dale (1967) 147 n. 1301-68: 'The ode is in fact introduced for its own sake'. For the discussion on the relevance of the ode in understanding a metaphorical function of the *Helen*, see Foley (1992); Swift (2009).

delight in that part of his drama, which main purpose is to delight the audience.

5.2.5. Joy

Laughter befits festivity. In section 5.2.1., we have seen that it becomes an important part of ecstatic cults along with music, song, cries, and loud exclamation. Regarding the mention of laughter in the first choral ode of the *Bacchae*, which I have already discussed in relation to the phenomenon's audible aspect (*Ba.* 378-85), we may also recognize that the used laughter-word γελάσαι may also evoke the idea of a positive emotional experience. Such interpretation is suggested by Dodds in his commentary to the play, who translates line 380 μετὰ τ' αὐλοῦ γελάσαι with 'to be gay with the music of the pipes'.⁹⁵¹ In particular, the connection of gaiety with the Dionysiac cult is explicitly mentioned by the Chorus in their description of the god's rites (*Ba.* 135-66):

Χο. ἦδὺς ἐν ὄρεσσιν ὅταν
ἐκ θιάσων δρομαίων
πέσῃ πεδόσε, νεβρίδος ἔχων
ἰερὸν ἐνδυτόν, ἀγρεύων
αἶμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν,
ἰέμενος εἰς ὄρεα Φρύγια Λύδι'
τό δ' ἔξαρχος† Βρόμιος·
εὐοῖ.
ῥεῖ δὲ γάλακτι πέδον, ῥεῖ δ' οἴνωι,
ῥεῖ δὲ μελισσᾶν νέκταρι.
Συρίας δ' ὡς λιβάνου κα-
πνὸν ὁ Βακχεὺς ἀνέχων
πυρσώδη φλόγα πεύκας
ἐκ νάρθηκος αἰσσει
δρόμωι καὶ χοροῖσιν
πλανάτας ἐρεθίζων
ἰαχαῖς τ' ἀναπάλλων
τρυφερόν <τε> πλόκαμον εἰς αἰθέρα ῥίπτων.
τᾶμα δ' ἐπ' εὐάσμασιν ἐπιβρέμει τοιάδ'†
Ἦ ἴτε βάκχαι,
ὦ ἴτε βάκχαι,

⁹⁵¹ Dodds (1960) 120 n. 378-81.

Τμώλου χρυσορόου χλιδά,
 μέλπετε τὸν Διόνυσον
 βαρυβρόμων ὑπὸ τυμπάνων,
 εὔια τὸν εὔιον ἀγαλλόμεναι θεὸν
 ἐν Φρυγίαισι βοαῖς ἐνοπαῖσί τε,
 λωτὸς ὅταν εὐκέλαδος
 ἱερὸς ἱερὰ παίγματα βρέμηι σύνοχα
 φοιτάσιν εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος· ἠδομέ-
 να δ' ἄρα πῶλος ὅπως ἅμα ματέρι
 φορβάδι κῶλον ἄγει ταχύπουν σκιότημασι βάκχα.

Chorus: He is welcome in the mountains, when from the running thiasoi he falls to the ground, wearing the sacred garment of a fawnskin, hunting goat-killing bloodshed, joy in eating raw flesh, rushing to the mountains of Phrygia, of Lydia. The leader is Bromios. Euoi. The ground flows with milk, it flows with wine, it flows with the nectar of bees. The Bacchic(god), holding up the blazing flame of the pine torch, like the smoke of Syrian frankincense, rushes with the fennel rod, with running and dances arousing the wanderers and agitating them with cries (of joy) and tossing his delicate locks into the air of heaven. Along with the joyful cries he roars these things: 'O onward bacchants, O onward bacchants, pride of gold-flowing Tmolos, celebrate in song Dionysus to the deep-booming drums, exalting with joyful cries the god of joyful cries among the Phrygian shouts and calls, when the well-sounding sacred pipe booms its sacred playings that accompany movement to the mountain, to tha mountain.' Joyfully then, like a foal with its grazing mother, the bacchant moves her swif-footed limbs in her leapings.

In this passage, we may distinguish specific words which allude to the joyfulness of the Dionysiac experience. Firstly, the adjective ἠδύς, 'sweet', 'pleasant' (*Ba.* 135) used in reference to the god of wine himself indicates the Bacchants' delight in his presence at his rites.⁹⁵² Their elation becomes then explicit with their cry εὔοι (*Ba.* 141), a traditional Bacchic exclamation used to express the state of religious joy.⁹⁵³ Next, the Chorus describes Dionysus as agitating the Bacchae with 'shouts of joy' (ἰαχαῖς, *Ba.* 149), delivering his speech to his worshippers 'amidst joyful cries' (ἐπ' εὐάσμασιν, *Ba.* 151), whom he regards as 'exulting with joyful cries the god of joyful cries' (εὔια τὸν εὔιον

⁹⁵² Dodds (1960) 85 n. 135. See also Susanetti (2010) 172 n. 135 for a discussion on the alternative meanings of the adjective.

⁹⁵³ Nordgren (2012) 156-8, esp. 158: 'it seems that εὔοι is a cry primarily associated with the cult of Dionysus... uttered in a state of excitement, a kind of positive, joy-related emotion'.

ἀγαλλόμεναι θεὸν, *Ba.* 157). The Chorus ends its song by noticing the joy a Bacchant feels (ἡδομένα, *Ba.* 164-5) while she actively participates in these rites.⁹⁵⁴

The above discussion demonstrates that the ecstatic form of worshipping Dionysus is described by the Chorus as a joyful experience. In this respect, it becomes apparent that the reference to laughter in *Ba.* 380 may also evoke the idea of joy, since the passage in *Ba.* 378-85 refers to specifics of the Bacchic cults. Therefore, loud, but also joyful laughter is one of the ways of honouring the god of wine.

5.2.6. Madness

Another ancient Greek form of experiencing the powers of a god within oneself is madness. Out of the four main maddened characters found in the extant dramas of Euripides, only one is referred to as laughing; this is the title hero of the *Madness of Heracles*.⁹⁵⁵ In the fourth episode, the Messenger gives a detailed account on the catastrophic consequences of the hero's temporary loss of senses.⁹⁵⁶ Accordingly, the first symptoms of Heracles being 'no longer himself' (οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς ἦν, *HF* 931) became visible in his appearance: his eyes turned red with bloodshot streaks (*HF* 933), which he rolled around in a frenzy manner (*HF* 932); also foam came out of his mouth and was dripping down his beard (*HF* 934).⁹⁵⁷ The hero, then, unexpectedly expressed his decision to leave for Myceanae and kill his enemy Eurystheus (*HF* 935-46):

⁹⁵⁴ Similar description of a Bacchant moving with delight compared to a fawn escaping a hunter in Eur. *Ba.* 873-76: 'it bounds, storm-swift with the fast-running efforts, to the plain by the river, rejoicing (ἡδομένα) in the wilderness without mortals and the shoots of the shady-leaved forest'. Translation in Seaford (1996) 113-15.

⁹⁵⁵ The other three are: Agave in the *Bacchae*, Cassandra in the *Trojan Women*, and the title character of *Orestes*.

⁹⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion on the narrative of this messenger-speech, see de Jong (1991) 165-71.

⁹⁵⁷ Czerwińska (2005a) 173 alludes to the fact of the hero's madness manifesting itself as an illness (νόσος). Bond (1981) 309 n. 930-1009 considers these features as based on genuine epileptic symptoms, thus he refers to the hero's laughter as 'hysterical'. For a broader

Εξ. ἔλεξε δ' ἄμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ
 Πάτερ, τί θύω πρὶν κτανεῖν Εὐρυσθέα
 καθάρσιον πῦρ καὶ πόνους διπλοῦς ἔχω;
 ἔργον μιᾶς μοι χειρὸς εὖ θέσθαι τάδε.
 ὅταν δ' ἐνέγκω δεῦρο κρᾶτ' Εὐρυσθέως
 ἐπὶ τοῖσι νῦν θανοῦσιν ἀγνιῶ χέρας.
 ἐκχεῖτε πηγᾶς, ρίπττετ' ἐκ χειρῶν κανᾶ.
 τίς μοι δίδωσι τόξα; τίς <δ> ὄπλον χερῶς;
 πρὸς τὰς Μυκίνας εἶμι· λάζυσθαι χρεῶν
 μοχλοῦς δικέλλας θ' ὥστε Κυκλώπων βάθρα
 φοίνικι κανόνι καὶ τύκοις ἡρμοσμένα
 στρεπτῶι σιδήρῳ συντριαινῶσαι πάλιν.

Messenger: And he spoke **with deranged laughter**,
 "Father, why do I sacrifice with purifying fire
 Before killing Eurystheus, and have twice the trouble?
 To set these things right is the work of a single blow of my
 hand.
 And when I bring here Eurystheus' head
 I'll purify my hands of the present murder.
 Pour out the libations, throw the baskets from your hands.
 Who'll give me my bow and arrows? Who my hand's
 weapon?
 I'll go to Mycenae; I must seize
 Crowbars and axes to totally shatter with iron tools
 The Cyclopean foundations, fitted together
 With lines marked in red and with chisels."

In line 935, the Messenger reports that Heracles delivered his aberrant speech 'with deranged laughter' (ἄμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ). In general, we may discern two main ideas included in this expression. Firstly, as I have argued before, this reference to laughter evokes the idea of sound, for we may imagine the hero speaking his insane words with intermittent laughter.⁹⁵⁸ Secondly, in similar vein to my discussion on Ajax' loud laugh in Soph. *Ai.* 303, we may notice that Heracles' laughter appears as one of the physical symptoms of his madness. The Messenger explicitly refers to this by describing the hero's γέλως with the word παραπεπληγμένος, 'maniacal', 'deranged'. The hero's laughter, then, manifests his abnormal mind.

discussion of Heracles' physical signs of frenzy, see Papadopoulou (2005) 63-66. For pathological laughter, see chapter I, section 1.1.3.2.

⁹⁵⁸ Cf. section 5.2.1.1. above.

A closer look at the word *παραπεπληγμένος* in 935 may shed some light on the nature of Heracles' madness and with it of his laughter. In her 1995 study, *Whom Gods Destroy: Elements of Greek and Tragic Madness*, Padel discusses various lexemes used in fifth-century tragedy to denote insanity.⁹⁵⁹ A significant number of these are compounds formed with the prefixes *παρα-* 'aside', 'beside', and *ἐκ-* 'out of'.⁹⁶⁰ The adjective *παραπεπληγμένος* is, in fact, the passive participle of the verb *παραπλήσσω* (*παραπλήττω*, in Attic) denoting 'strike at the side'.⁹⁶¹ Curiously, only in the passive voice does the lexeme establish a semantic connection with pathological states of mind and, thus accept the meaning 'be deranged'. In relation to the compounds formed with *παρα-*, the sense of madness appears in different forms of verbs meaning 'strike' and 'hit'.⁹⁶² Padel, therefore, argues that the Greek terminology for insanity reflects the concept of an external source for the derangement of mind, which occurs as a sudden 'strike' or 'hit' from outside.⁹⁶³ To the Greeks, such external agent is often a god, who strikes a mortal's mind (*φρήν*) with madness. Divine intervention, or rather imposition, is obvious in the *Madness of Heracles*, since Euripides presents Lyssa, the personification of frenzy, as a character in this play, sent by Hera to punish the hero (*HF* 815-74).⁹⁶⁴ She achieves this by sending to 'fits of madness, disturbances of mind to kill his children' (*μανίας τ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῶιδε καὶ παιδοκτόνους / φρενῶν ταραγμούς*, *HF* 835-6). Here, Lyssa uses *μανία* to change the hero's perception, which will lead him to the committing of disastrous acts. Similarly to the Sophoclean Ajax, also Heracles

⁹⁵⁹ Padel (1995) 13-22 for various Greek words for madness; 23-33 for a discussion on the verb *μαίνομαι*.

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 120-3.

⁹⁶¹ LSJ s.v. *παραπλήσσω*.

⁹⁶² *Ibid.* 121. Padel lists with references: *παρακόπτω*, 'strike falsely', *παράκοπος*, 'frenzied'; *παραπαίω*, 'strike on the side'; *παρακρούω*, 'strike aside', *παράκρουσις*, 'striking falsely'; *παραπλήξ*, 'stricken sideways'.

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.* 105: 'the grammar comes down more heavily in favor of madness caused from outside'.

⁹⁶⁴ Lyssa appears in the company of Iris, Hera's Messenger. Their physical presence, according to Hartigan (1987) 127: 'emphasizes the external nature of Herakles' punishment'.

experiences a sudden disturbance of mind that alters his vision and thinking.⁹⁶⁵ As a result, the hero sees what is not real and reacts according to his hallucinations.⁹⁶⁶ His delusions last long enough for him to commit the disgraceful deed of murdering his wife and children, whom he takes for his enemies. As we can see, it is divinely inspired misperception that forms the basis of Heracles' madness.

Having said this, it is evident that the hero's 'maniacal laughter' emitted during his first speech delivered in derangement (*HF* 936-460) expresses the emotional load of his mistaken thoughts, namely, the malicious delight in killing Eurystheus and his family. Alike the maddened Ajax, who laughs believing he has punished the Greek commanders, the deranged Heracles finds himself in 'a state of wild joy' from his upcoming revenge.⁹⁶⁷ In his deranged mind, the hero is rejoicing his planned victory over Eurystheus. We later hear in the Messenger's report that Heracles once again expresses his malicious glee after shooting his first victim (*HF* 981-3):

Εξ. ὁ δ' ἠλάλαξε κάπεκόμπασεν τάδε·
 Εἷς μὲν νεοσσός ὄδε θανῶν Εὐρυσθέως
 ἔχθραν πατρῶιαν ἐκτίνων πέπτωκέ μοι.

Messenger: But his father raised a shout and added this boast:
 'This one dead nestling of Eurystheus
 Has fallen at my hands, paying fully for his father's hatred.'

As we can see, the hero's murderous plans earlier unfolded with a malicious laugh (*ἄμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένω*, *HF* 935), later turn into his victorious boasts accompanied with a triumphant cry (*ἠλάλαξε*, *HF* 981).⁹⁶⁸ It is, thus, evident that both expressions of Heracles' emotions, the malicious anticipation

⁹⁶⁵ Cf. chapter IV, section 4.2.2.4.

⁹⁶⁶ As noticed by Barlow (1981) 121: 'belief is unshakeable in delusion'. Hence, no one can talk sense to Heracles following mad logic, as seen in the futile attempts of Amphitryon (*HF* 965-7) and Megara (*HF* 975-6).

⁹⁶⁷ Papadopoulou (2005) 67.

⁹⁶⁸ Bond (1981) 317 n. 981.

of future joys and a feeling of triumph, reflect his misperception of his deeds.⁹⁶⁹ Only after gaining back his senses does he recognize the horror of his erroneous actions (from *HF* 1089). Therefore, Heracles' γέλως παραπεπληγμένος functions not only as an expression of his maddened state, but also as a signal of his forthcoming misery.

Unlike Sophocles in the *Ajax*, Euripides does not have his audience see the maddened Heracles on stage, nor hear his deranged laughter. Nonetheless, the Messenger's meticulous narrative does not allow any detail of the hero's divinely inspired loss of mind, not even the slightest odd behaviour like laughter escape the attention of his listeners.

Without any doubt, Euripides is aware of laughter's association with the sphere of human psychology. As we have seen, the poet uses the discussed Greek terminology in relation to feelings or mental states. From the analysis in this section it has emerged that both men and gods may express their emotions, like delight (Jason's bride in *Md.* 1162, Demeter in *Hl.* 1349) or joy (Bacchic revelers in *Ba.* 380) through laughter. Only in once case does the emission of loud laughter manifest one's abnormal state of mind (Heracles in *HF* 946). Yet, again, Euripides only has his characters speak of others expressive laughs and not have his audience hear it.

5.2.7. Communication

Laughter may play an informative role in signalling to others one's feelings or state of mind. In Euripidean drama, I find only two instances in which the communicative aspect of laughter seems to be evoked.

The first example is a possible, albeit questioned, reference to laughter in the third episode of *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Clytaemestra and her eldest daughter have been summoned by Agamemnon to Aulis as to have Iphigenia marry

⁹⁶⁹ Cf. de Jong (1991) 171: 'to him [i.e. Heracles] this delusion appears real, justified, and even attractive'.

Achilles. However, after reaching their destination, the women find out that the Argive princess is to be sacrificed to Artemis, who in her anger has prevented the Greeks from sailing to Troy. Aware that her husband supports the idea of having Iphigenia killed, Clytaemestra pleases Achilles for help, arguing that she has no one else to turn to (*IA* 912-13):

Κλ.	οὐδὲ φίλος οὐδεὶς γελάῃ μοι: τὰ δ' Ἀγαμέμνονος κλύεις, ὠμὰ καὶ πάντολμ'.
Clytaemestra:	Not a single friendly smile to greet me! My husband, a bloodthirsty, unbridled villain! ⁹⁷⁰

The queen of Argos knows well that the Greek troops will back the decision of their leaders, Menelaus and Agamemnon, to appease the angered goddess with Iphigenia's sacrifice. Clytaemestra, thus, finds herself alone in her attempt to save her child and, particularly, refers to this fact with the words οὐδὲ φίλος οὐδεὶς γελάῃ μοι, 'not a single friend laughs (smiles) to me' (*IA* 912). With this observation the desperate mother is referring to the cruel intentions of her husband and his companions towards her and Iphigenia. Therefore, the expression accepts a figurative meaning as it regards Clytaemestra's recognition of no one showing any willingness to help prevent her daughter from being sacrificed.⁹⁷¹ We may notice that the verb γελάω does not describe an explicit act of laughing or smiling, but should be interpreted metaphorically.⁹⁷² In this respect, the idea evoked by γελάῃ μοι would be communication in which laughter becomes not necessarily a signal of amiability, but a sign of perceived support in having the life of Iphigenia spared.

⁹⁷⁰ Greek text and English translation in England (1891) 92.

⁹⁷¹ Clytaemestra expresses these words in the company of Achilles and the Chorus, hence, does not refer to any visible, physical reaction of the Greek army or its leaders.

⁹⁷² Hinted, though with the concept of shining, by England (1891) 92 n. 912: 'Perhaps γελάῃ here means literally *looks bright* as in the Epic passages where it is used of inanimate things'.

It is an interesting fact that the laughter-word γελά̃, transmitted in the two main manuscripts of the text,⁹⁷³ has given rise to doubts. As a result, the eighteenth century English scholar Jeremiah Markland emended this word with the adverb πέλας, ‘near, nearby’. The emendation in οὐδὲ φίλος οὐδεὶς πέλας μοι slightly modifies the meaning into ‘not a single friend by my side’.⁹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, we may recognize that the general idea of this sentence remains the same for it indicates Clytaemestra’s perception of being alone in her will to save Iphigenia. This is chiefly due to the fact that Markland’s emendation πέλας μοι functions in a figurative manner similar to the lesson γελά̃ μοι. In this case, since both lexemes γελά̃ and πέλας regard the same meaning in metaphorical manner, it seems that the only reason for proposing such an emendation might have been the discrepancies between the semantics of the English term ‘laugh’ and its Greek equivalent.⁹⁷⁵ Other ancient texts do give examples in which the semantics of γελάω contain the idea of sending a message a favourability.⁹⁷⁶ In spite of this, Markland’s rejection of the language of laughter has, consequently, divided scholars between those who accept the emendation and those who do not.⁹⁷⁷ However, it is clear that regardless of the choice of the preferred lesson, be it not having anyone at one’s side (πέλας) or anyone signalling his support (γελά̃), the general idea expressed in line 912 is communication.

⁹⁷³ These are the codex Laurentianus XXIII, 2 (L) and the codex Palatinus 287 (P).

⁹⁷⁴ Markland’s emendation is based on the similarity of *IA* 912 with *Alc.* 79 : ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ φίλων πέλας <ἔστ’> οὐδεὶς.

⁹⁷⁵ Cf chapter II, section 2.1.1.2.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. *Philem.* fr. 110: ‘whenever fate laughs favourably to men (ὅταν πότε ἀνθρώποισιν ἡ τύχη γελά̃)’, my translation. More often the communicative aspect of laughter is stressed by the use of prefixes ἐπι- and προσ- (cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.); e.g. *Ar. Th.* 977-80: ‘And I ask Hermes the Shepherd / and Pan and his dear Nymphs / to enjoy these dances of ours / and smile generously (ἐπιγελάσαι προθύμως) upon them!’, translation in Henderson (2000) 579. Also *Soph. Ich.* 298 discussed in chapter IV, section 4.3.1.1.

⁹⁷⁷ For editions with γελά̃, e.g. England (1891), Murray (1913/1943), Günther (1988), Stockert (1992a); with πέλας e.g. Way (1946), Jouan (1983), Diggle (1994), Kovacs (2002).

Euripides also employs the idea of communicative laughter in the fifth episode of the *Medea*. The children have been spared a life of exile, after successfully placating the princess with the gift from their mother (*Med.* 1002-4). Medea, however, receives the news with cries of woe (*Med.* 1007; 1009) and tears (*Med.* 1005; 1012) to the surprise of her children's Tutor ('This is not in tune with my tidings', τὰδ' οὐ ξυνωιδὰ τοῖσιν ἐξηγγελημένοις, *Med.* 1008). She is aware that with the upcoming death of the princess, her plan to kill Jason's children becomes irrevocable.⁹⁷⁸ Her first emotional reaction, therefore, signals the emergence of her maternal feelings. Once the Tutor leaves the scene, the title character is left alone with her two boys (*Med.* 1020) and begins her famous monologue, in which she deliberates with herself upon fulfilling her horrific plan (*Med.* 1021-80). Medea opens her speech with a lament over the loss of her children (*Med.* 1021-39). In a set of 19 lines, she speaks of the vanity of her toils in giving birth to her sons as well as having hopes for their future, since, in the end, they are going to be separated from their mother. Papadopoulou alludes to the ambiguous sense of these lines, which at first may seem to be the complaints of a parent banished from the life of her children, however, they are also typical utterances for a woman in mourning.⁹⁷⁹ This ambiguity is most noticeable at the end of her lament: 'you will no longer see your mother with loving eyes but pass into another manner of life', ὑμεῖς δὲ μητέρ' οὐκέτ' ὀμμασιν φίλοις / ὄψεσθ', ἐς ἄλλο σχῆμ' ἀποστάντες βίου, *Med.* 1039).⁹⁸⁰ Indeed, the first lines of Medea's great monologue illustrate her maternal feelings for her children, but, at the same time, they reflect her acceptance, albeit painful, of the awaiting infanticide.

⁹⁷⁸ Papadopoulou (1997) 645.

⁹⁷⁹ Papadopoulou (*ibid.*) states that 'in her [i.e. Medea's] mind and at the time that she utters these words the children are already dead'. Cf. the lament of Hecuba over the corpse of her grandson in *Tr.* 1197-88.

⁹⁸⁰ Cf. Mastronarde (2002) 336 n. 1039.

This acceptance, however, becomes suddenly disturbed, once Medea takes a look at her children's countenances (*Md.* 1040-48):

Μη. φεῦ φεῦ· τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;
τί προσγελάτε τὸν πανύστατον γέλων;
αἰαῖ· τί δράσω; καρδία γὰρ οἴχεται,
γυναῖκες, ὄμμα φαιδρὸν ὡς εἶδον τέκνων.
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· χαιρέτω βουλευματα
τὰ πρόσθεν· ἄξω παῖδας ἐκ γαίας ἐμούς.
τί δεῖ με πατέρα τῶνδε τοῖς τούτων κακοῖς
λυποῦσαν αὐτὴν δις τόσα κτᾶσθαι κακά;
οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγε· χαιρέτω βουλευματα.

Medea: Alas! Why do you turn your eyes' gaze upon me, children?
Why do you laugh that final laugh? Oh god, what shall I do?
My strength is gone, women – it left when I saw my
childrens' shining glance. I couldn't do it. Farewell to my
previous plans – I shall take my children with me from this
land. Why, by hurting their father through their suffering,
should I have to bring twice the pain on myself? No, I won't
do it! Farewell, my plans!⁹⁸¹

The sight of her sons has a great effect on Medea. Upon seeing her children's faces, her mood rapidly shifts from determination in carrying out the revenge, to hesitation ('What shall I do?', τί δράσω; *Md.* 1042), and finally to the double renouncement of her designs ('Farewell, my plans!', χαιρέτω βουλευματα, *Md.* 1044, 1048). The previous certainty in her plans has been ruined by the sudden emotional disturbance.⁹⁸² As we can see, this uncontrolled outburst of maternal affection comes as the result of Medea's perception of her children's bodily expression.

Medea's agitation is triggered by her taking notice of two specific features in her sons: their shining eyes (τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, *Md.* 1040; ὄμμα φαιδρὸν... τέκνων, *Md.* 1043) and laughter (τί προσγελάτε τὸν πανύστατον γέλων, *Md.* 1041). In regard of the latter, two laughter-words are employed, προσγελάω and γέλως. Since these lexemes appear in proximity to the reference to the children's eyes, scholars, generally, render both verb and

⁹⁸¹ Translation in McDermott (1999) 54.

⁹⁸² This agitation is reflected in her exclamations φεῦ φεῦ (*Md.* 1040) and αἰαῖ (*Md.* 1042) as well as in the spasmodic structure of her speech in lines 1040-48.

noun in line 1041 with ‘smile’.⁹⁸³ However, as I have argued before, the semantics of both προσγελάω and γέλως are complex, thus, cannot be limited only to the concept of ‘smile’.⁹⁸⁴ Considering προσγελάτε in *Md.* 1041, Halliwell presents the same arguments as in reference to προσγελάωσα in *Md.* 1162, pointing out the difficulty in discerning a single meaning for the lexeme; he says: ‘the children, blithely ignorant of what Medea is contemplating, can be easily pictured chuckling as smiling’.⁹⁸⁵ Therefore, in terms of semantics, both προσγελάω and γέλως may evoke the idea of laughter as well as that of smile.⁹⁸⁶

Despite the difficulties in choosing between the concepts of laughter and smiles for the children’s behaviour in front of their mother, it is clear that the word προσγελάω specifies the communicative role of the children’s πανύστατος γέλως. The informative aspect of the verb gains prominence, due to the alteration of the semantics of γελάω by the attachment of the prefix προσ-, meaning ‘in the direction of’. As I have already discussed in chapter II, the compound προσγελάω indicates the fact of conveying a message towards others with one’s laughter/smile.⁹⁸⁷ In this regard, we may observe that in line 1041 Medea recognizes her sons’ πανύστατον γέλων as signaled to her. However, their ‘final laughter’ does not transmit to their mother the typical information about their own feelings,⁹⁸⁸ but rather reflects Medea’s own interpretation of their γέλως, which she describes as being their last,

⁹⁸³ E.g. Way (1946) 365 : ‘Why smile to me the latest smile of all?’; Kovacs (1994) 391: ‘Why do you smile at me this last smile of yours?’; Svarlien (2007) 104: ‘Why do smile, my children, your very last smile?’. Blondell (1999) 203: ‘Why smile at me this final laughing smile?’.

⁹⁸⁴ For γέλως, cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3., also in reference to section 2.1.1.2.2. For προσγελάω, see chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

⁹⁸⁵ Halliwell (2008) 524.

⁹⁸⁶ Since line 1041 does not explicitly refer to the children’s faces, but only implies it, I exclude this example from my discussion on the connection of laughter with the face in section 5.2.1.2.

⁹⁸⁷ See chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

⁹⁸⁸ We find no mention of the children’s emotions in the text. In general, it is accepted that throughout the play Medea’s sons, unaware of their mother’s intentions, remain in a state of childish ignorance; cf. Yoon (2012) 36 n. 108: ‘they remain innocent of her [i.e. Medea’s] distress as well as her intentions throughout’.

πανύστατος.⁹⁸⁹ In other words, the children's final laughter conveys to the heroine the message of the irrevocability of her horrific decision. It is the sudden awareness of this fact that strikes her after line 1039, once she has looked closely at her boys' innocent faces. Perplexed with the emotional impact of her children's bright eyes and laughter, Medea spontaneously decides to give up on her revenge and go with her boys into exile. In this respect, we may see that the children's laughter has brought out the mother in Medea. In other words, through her son's laughter Medea gets the message about what exactly she is planning to do.

Yet, this outburst of maternal affection does not last long. In the following lines of her monologue, we witness Medea's current of thought and emotional struggle that leads her to the rejection of the idea of ceasing her revenge; she also refers to her sudden hesitation as a momentary softness of character ('No, it is mere weakness in me even to admit such tender words into my heart', ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς κάκης, / τὸ καὶ προσέσθαι μαλθακοὺς λόγους φρενί, *Md.* 1051-2). She ends her speech emphasizing the pain she suffers as a mother, but also reaffirming her determination in carrying out her horrible designs ('And I know well what pain I am about to undergo, but my wrath overbears my calculation, wrath that brings mortal men their gravest hurt', καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἶα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά, / θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων, / ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς, *Md.* 1078-80).⁹⁹⁰

Medea's reference to her children's laughter serves the same dramatic purpose as her whole interior monologue, i.e. to secure the audience's support of the heroine by unveiling her human side despite her inhuman actions. We must keep in mind the fact that Euripides presented a drastically modified version of the myth by having Jason's sons die from the hand of their mother

⁹⁸⁹ Mastronarde (2002) 336 n. 1041 alludes to the common use of this adjective in tragedy in connection with death.

⁹⁹⁰ For a discussion on the authenticity of the last 24 lines of Medea's speech, see Kovacs (1986); Mastronarde (2002) 388-97.

and not from the Corinthians' in vengeance for the death of their king.⁹⁹¹ Therefore, Medea's infanticide was not a common motif as it is considered today. Since the title character of this tragedy was to commit such a horrible crime, its author needed to find a way in eliciting sympathy towards the child-murderess. For this reason, Euripides introduced Medea's monologue in 1021-80, portraying her patterns of thinking as well as emotional distress, in order to have the audience sympathize with her. Without any doubt, one of the most intensive parts of this speech are lines 1040-48, in which the cunning barbarian woman reveals herself, at least temporarily, as an affectionate mother touched by the laughing appearance of her sons. For a moment, we may witness her reaction to the awareness of the irrevocability of her children's death that struck her in their 'final laughter', which is the vehement protest of a loving mother. As a result, the communicative role of the boys' πανύστατος γέλως is doubled, since the audience should be ready to protest together with Medea against her heinous plans, just like the playwright intended.

5.2.8. Playfulness

Playfulness is, generally, the experience of the feeling of non-seriousness.⁹⁹² The ancient Greeks provided various culturally ordained circumstances for its participants to suspend serious conduct, spend time in convivial playfulness, and, most importantly, share a laugh or two together. A well-known occasion for playful laughter to occur was a drinking party, namely, the symposium.⁹⁹³

Euripides makes a reference to laughter in connection with playfulness in a sympotic context in the fourth episode of *Alcestis*. Heracles arrives to Pherae to visit his old friend Admetus. He is welcomed and received as a guest

⁹⁹¹ Mastronarde (2002) 50-52.

⁹⁹² Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.1.

⁹⁹³ Cf. Halliwell (1991) 290, who lists also the κῶμος and civic festivals as conventional occasions for playful laughter to occur.

by the Thessalian king, despite the fact of the kingdom being in mourning for the death of its queen Alcestis. Unaware of this, the hero indulges himself in feasting and revelry to the dismay of the household servants. In lines 747-72, a manservant expresses his outrage at the guest's shameful behaviour consisting of excessive eating (*Alc.* 753-55), drinking unmixed wine (*Alc.* 756-59) as well as singing loud and out of tune (*Alc.* 759-60).⁹⁹⁴ The moment the servant ends his aggrieved speech, the slightly intoxicated Heracles approaches him. The hero thinks that the butler is excessively grieving the death of someone insignificant to the royal household, as he's been earlier persuaded to believe by Admetus (*Alc.* 536-50), and, thus, scolds the servant for his sad appearance (*Alc.* 773-78):

Hq. οὔτος, τί σεμνὸν καὶ πεφροντικὸς βλέπεις;
οὐ χροῖ σκυθρωπὸν τοῖς ξένοις τὸν πρόσπολον
εἶναι, δέχεσθαι δ' εὐπροσηγόρῳι φρενί.
σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἑταῖρον δεσπότης παρόνθ' ὀρώων
στυγνῶ προσώπῳ καὶ συνωφρυνμένῳ
δέχη θυραίου πῆματος σπουδὴν ἔχων.

Heracles: You, there, why are you looking so solemn and worried? Servants shouldn't *scowl* at guests but should rather receive them with a courteous air. But *you*, though it's a man who's companion of your master's you're looking at, you show him an unfriendly, frowning countenance, just because you're mourning for someone not even in the family.⁹⁹⁵

Heracles continues his speech on the inevitability of death among the race of mortal men (*Alc.* 779-86) and urges the butler to dispel his sorrow and concerns by drinking wine (*Alc.* 787-98):

Hq. ταῦτ' οὖν ἀκούσας καὶ μαθὼν ἐμοῦ πάρα
εὐφραϊνε σαυτόν, πῖνε, τὸν καθ' ἡμέραν
βίον λογίζου σόν, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τῆς τύχης.
τίμα δὲ καὶ τὴν πλεῖστον ἡδίστην θεῶν
Κύπριν βροτοῖσιν· εὐμενῆς γὰρ ἡ θεός.
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔασον πάντα καὶ πιθοῦ λόγοις
ἐμοῖσιν, εἴπερ ὀρθά σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.

⁹⁹⁴ Scholars call attention to the parallels between the hero's one-man wine-drinking with that of Polyphemos in the satyr drama *Cyclops*, cf. Seaford (1984) 185 n. 425-6; Parker (2007) 204 n. 760; O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 184 n. 425-6.

⁹⁹⁵ Translation in Conacher (1988) 123 (original emphasis). Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of the *Alcestis*.

οἶμαι μὲν. οὐκ οὖν τὴν ἄγαν λύπην ἀφείξ
πίη μεθ' ἡμῶν [τάσδ' ὑπερβαλὼν τύχας,
στεφάνοις πυκασθείς]; καὶ σάφ' οἶδ' ὀθούνεκα
τοῦ νῦν σκυθρωποῦ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος φρενῶν
μεθορμιεῖ σε πίτυλος ἐμπεσῶν σκύφου.

Heracles: Well, then, now that you've heard and learned all this from me, cheer up, drink up, reckon life from day to day your own, the rest as fortune's! Honour Aphrodite as absolutely the sweetest of all the gods for mortals. For that goddess is indeed most kindly. Forget all else and just heed my advice – if indeed I seem to you to have got things right at all! *I* think I have. Then won't you dispel excessive grief and drink with us, [decking yourself with wreaths and overcoming these misfortunes]? For well I know that the mad fit of the wine – cup, when it has assailed you, will soon unmoor you from your sullen and clotted state of mind.

The hero's philosophical message bearing resemblance to the idea expressed in the saying *carpe diem*,⁹⁹⁶ i.e. to enjoy the present day and not worry about the future, is not well received by the servant who sternly refuses the invitation to join in the merriment (*Alc.* 803-4):

Θε. ἐπιστάμεσθα ταῦτα· νῦν δὲ πράσσομεν
οὐχ οἷα κώμου καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια.

Servant: We know all about that. But just now our misfortunes are such that neither feasting nor **laughter** is suitable.

What is of our particular interest is the reference to laughter in the butler's response to Heracles in line 804, in which he indicates that the situation of the household is 'not suitable for merry-making and laughter' (οὐχ οἷα κώμου καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια). Here, Euripides uses the expression γέλωτος ἄξιος to describe an object which is, in literal sense, not 'worthy of laughter'.⁹⁹⁷ Thus, we may recognize that through the negated form of γέλωτος ἄξια, the servant speaks of the inappropriateness of laughter in the royal palace given the sad circumstances.⁹⁹⁸ In this regard, the interpretation of γέλωτος seems clear; since

⁹⁹⁶ Conacher (1988) 185 n. 773-802.

⁹⁹⁷ Euripides applies the same expression γέλωτος ἄξια in *Held.* 507, albeit in a different meaning, see section 5.2.5.2.2. below.

⁹⁹⁸ Parker (2007) 212 n. 803-4. Cf the translation of Kovacs (1994) 241: 'But our present circumstances do not call for carousing and laughter'.

the lexeme appears along with the term κῶμος, ‘revel, merry-making’, it is likely to signify bursts of loud laughter as a sign of rejoicing or merriment, common to occur among revelers at a symposium.⁹⁹⁹

Nonetheless, the context of the servant’s encounter with the ignorant guest may suggest another meaning for γέλως in line 804 in regard of playfulness. We have to keep in mind the fact that by the orders of the king, the hero was gusted in a remote part of the royal palace, secluded from the rest of the household (*Alc.* 546-50). As a result, Heracles’ feasting was absolutely solitary.¹⁰⁰⁰ Although a single-man banquet may occasionally take place,¹⁰⁰¹ however, it stands in contradiction to the primary sense of the Greek term for ‘drinking party’, συμπόσιον, which is based on the verb συμπίνω meaning ‘drink together’. Community, therefore, is at the essence of a symposium. However, at the house of Admetus, Heracles is deprived of any company. Since the only people around the lonely guest are the attending servants, it comes as no surprise that the hero pays more attention to the butler himself, than he would if he were amongst other drinking companions. In his complaints expressed in line 773, we may notice that Heracles is rebuking the servant’s gravity and haggardness (‘why are you looking so solemn and worried?’, τί σε μνὸν καὶ πεφροντικὸς βλέπεις; *Alc.* 773), which are quite the opposite to his own feelings of non-seriousness and carelessness.¹⁰⁰² Heracles is in a distinguishably non-serious, i.e. playful mood,¹⁰⁰³ and thus in need of a companion to share the sympotic fun. However, the only person available is a

⁹⁹⁹ For the association of laughter and revelry with wine-drinking, cf. Phil. *Imag.* 1.25.3: ‘Dionysus also sails to the revels of Andros... He leads Laughter (Γέλωτά) and Revel (Κῶμον), two spirits most gay (ἰλαρωτάτω) and most fond of the drinking-bout (ξυμποτικωτάτω)’. Translation in Fairbanks (1931) 99.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Halliwell (2008) 132.

¹⁰⁰¹ Cf. the example of Polyphemus’ drinking wine in *Cyc.* 416-26. For a discussion of the sympotic context in the *Cyclops*, see Halliwell (2008) 127- 130.

¹⁰⁰² Due to the visible contrast between the jovial guest and the grieving servant, some scholars have credited this scene with comic potential, cf. Grube (1961) 141.

¹⁰⁰³ Conacher (1988) 185 n. 773-802 defines this mood as ‘roystering’.

servant who attends him not ‘with an easily approachable mind’ (εὐπροσηγόρῳι φρενί, *Alc.* 775), as the hero notices, but ‘with a hostile and frowning face’ (στυγνῶ προσώπῳ καὶ συνωφρυσμένῳ, *Alc.* 777).¹⁰⁰⁴ In this regard, lines 773-78 contain the hero’s recognition of the butler’s non-favourable disposition towards him. Heracles speaks to the servant in a superior but ‘matey tone’, as Parker identifies it, in order to have the servant alleviate his seriousness and join in the wine drinking (‘For well I know that the mad fit of the wine – cup, when it has assailed you, will soon unmoor you from your sullen and clotted state of mind’, καὶ σάφ’ οἶδ’ ὀθούνεκα / τοῦ νῦν σκυθρωποῦ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος φρενῶν / μεθορμιεῖ σε πίτυλος ἐμπεσῶν σκύφου, *Alc.* 796-8). Heracles, thus, delivers his speech in reaction to the servant’s mood unfitting a symposium, but also to the perceived unfriendly disposition towards himself.

In light of the discussion above it becomes clear that another interpretation for γέλως in line 804 seems possible, one which would apply to the hero’s reproach of the butler’s seriousness. In particular, the servant’s remark about the unsuitable circumstances for revelry and laughter (οὐχ οἶα κώμου καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια) may include the inappropriateness for him in accepting a non-serious, i.e. playful mood, the hero was urging him to do in his speech (‘cheer up and drink up’, εὐφραϊνε σαυτόν, πῖνε, *Alc.* 788). Although the manservant expresses this argument in the first person plural, as if speaking in name of the whole royal household, however it is clear that he is referring first and foremost to himself. In this regard, the evoked image of laughter would pertain to the idea of playfulness in relation to an atmosphere devoid of any concerns or feelings of seriousness. Such interpretation seems permissible.

The manservant later reveals to the ignorant guest the reason for the inappropriateness of wine drinking and laughter due to fact of the queen’s

¹⁰⁰⁴ Translations in Parker (2008) 206 n. 775 and 777.

passing (*Alc.* 821). Upon learning the truth of his host's misfortune, Heracles suspends feasting (*Alc.* 831-2) and attempts to help his friend in need (*Alc.* 840-2). Only then it becomes obvious to him that one in mourning is incapable of suspending one's seriousness. Indeed, the experience of grief leaves no room for playfulness nor laughter.

5.2.9. Mockery

Ridicule, derision, scorn and mockery refer to the act of laughing or treating another in a disrespectful manner. Contrary to laughter elicited by humorous stimuli, which manifests the feeling of pleasure or amusement, derision is the purposeful act of showing one's disdain or contempt towards another.¹⁰⁰⁵ In this section, I analyse Euripidean examples of mockery according to the object of ridicule; this can be 1) one's words, 2) one's appearance, or 3) one's actions.

The first discernable object regarded by Euripidean characters as ridiculous are words and opinions. In the *Ion*, we may distinguish a passage in which the expressed statement of one character appear ridiculous to another. Xuthus meets Ion outside the Delphic oracle he came to consult about his childlessness (*Ion* 517). Upon seeing the young man, the old king attempts to embrace him (*Ion* 519). Surprised and displeased with Xuthus' affectionate reaction, Ion reproaches him (*Ion* 520-29):

Ιων	εὖ φρονεῖς μέν; ἢ σ' ἔμηνεν θεοῦ τις, ὦ ξένε, βλάβη;
Ξο.	οὐ φρονῶ, τὰ φίλταθ' εὐρῶν εἰ φιλεῖν ἐφίεμαι;
Ιων	παῦε, μὴ ψάσας τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ στέμματα ῥήξης χειρί.
Ξο.	ἄψομαι· κοῦ ῥυσιάζω, τὰμὰ δ' εὐρίσκω φίλα.
Ιων	οὐκ ἀπαλλάξει, πρὶν εἴσω τόξα πλευμόνων λαβεῖν;
Ξο.	ὡς τί δὴ φεύγεις με σαυτοῦ γνωρίσαι τὰ φίλτατα;
Ιων	οὐ φιλῶ φρενοῦν ἀμούσους καὶ μεμνηότας ξένους.
Ξο.	κτείνει καὶ πίμπρη· πατρὸς γάρ, ἦν κτάνης, ἔσσι φονεύς.
Ιων	ποῦ δέ μοι πατήρ σὺ; ταῦτ' οὖν οὐ γέλωσ κλύειν ἐμοί;
Ξο.	οὐ· τρέχων ὁ μῦθος ἄν σοι τὰμὰ σημήνειεν ἄν.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Cf. chapter I, section 1.3.5.4.

Ion: Are you quite sane? Or has some god-sent derangement afflicted you?
 Xuthus: Am I not sane if having found my heart's desire I am eager to touch him?
 Ion: Stop! If you touch the god's fillets you may break them with your hand!
 Xuthus: I shall put my hands on them: I am no robber but am finding one I love.
 Ion: Get away before you get an arrow in your chest.
 Xuthus: Why do you shrink from seeing in me what you hold dearest?
 Ion: I do not like to admonish mad and ill-bred strangers.
 Xuthus: Kill and burn me! Then you will be your father's murderer!
 Ion: How can you be my father? Is that not a **laughable** story?
 Xuthus: No: as the tale proceeds it will make plain what I am saying.¹⁰⁰⁶

Xuthus then reveals to Ion the fact that he has received from Apollo information about finding his son within the first young man he sees after leaving the god's precinct (*Ion* 530-38). In result, the two men discuss the events of their pasts which could have led to this situation and, in the end, accept the possibility of this fact (*Ion* 539-62). However, in the passage quoted above Ion is appalled with the unexpected affection Xuthus has suddenly shown towards him. When the young man, in line 525 points to the fact that he is dealing with the deranged behaviour of a stranger, the old king reveals the news that he is his father (*Ion* 526). Ion reacts with disbelief and considers this idea to be ridiculous (γέλως, *Ion* 528). Here, the word 'laughter' indicates the fact of the young man perceiving the news of Xuthus being his father as absurd, hence, worthy of ridicule. As we may see, disbelief may occasion mockery.

A similar example of incredibility giving rise to ridicule is noticeable in the *Orestes*. Pylades convinces the title character and his sister Electra to murder Helen, in order to avoid the Spartans' hostile plans of having them executed ('Let us kill Helen – a bitter pain for Menelaus', Ἐλένην κτάνωμεν, Μενέλεωι λύπην πικράν, *Or.* 1105).¹⁰⁰⁷ However, their efforts are in vain, for once they reach the royal palace, it turns out that the queen of Sparta has miraculously

¹⁰⁰⁶ Translation in Kovacs (1999) 381-83.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Translation in West (1987) 135. Hereon, I quote other English passages from this edition of the *Orestes*.

disappeared ('but she from the chambers had vanished out through the house', ἅ δ' ἐκ θαλάμων / ἐγένετο διαπρὸ δωμαίων ἄφαντος *Or.* 1494-5). They capture, then, Helen's daughter, Hermione, instead, and lock themselves within the palace (*Or.* 1536). Menelaus later arrives and charges at the palace door to retrieve his child ('I bid my attendants press through the doors here, so we may at least rescue my daughter from murderers' hands', προσπόλοισ λέγω / ὠθεῖν πύλας τάσδ', ὡς ἂν ἀλλὰ παιῖδ' ἐμήν / ῥυσώμεθ' ἀνδρῶν ἐκ χειρῶν μαιφόνων, *Or.* 1561-3). He has heard the rumour about his wife's miraculous disappearance, but gives it no credit (*Or.* 1556-60):

Με. ἤκουσα γὰρ δὴ τὴν ἐμήν ξυνάορον
ὡς οὐ τέθνηκεν, ἀλλ' ἄφαντος οἴχεται –
κενήν ἀκούσας βᾶξιν, ἣν φόβῳ σφαλεῖς
ἤγγειλέ μοί τις. ἀλλὰ τοῦ μητροκτόνου
τεχνάσματ' ἐστὶ ταῦτα καὶ πολὺς γέλως.

Menelaus: What I have heard is that my consort is - not dead, but vanished away: an empty rumour that someone deluded by terror told me. No, this is the matricide's trickery, quite **ridiculous**.

The king of Sparta is convinced that Orestes and his accomplice have slain Helen (*Or.* 1557).¹⁰⁰⁸ Consequently, not only does he express his disbelief in the news, but he considers it to be a trickery (τεχνάσματα, *Or.* 1560) on Orestes' behalf. Moreover, he rebuffs the idea entirely by using the expression γέλως πολὺς, 'great laughter' (*Or.* 1560). As argued by Arnould, the expression γέλως πολὺς may designate: 1) loud laughter that lasts long, 2) an object perceived to incur much laughter, or 3) derision.¹⁰⁰⁹ In the example from the *Orestes*, the third meaning is evident, since the idiom is used by a character who vehemently rejects the words or opinions of others.¹⁰¹⁰ Thus, we may recognize the fact that the vocabulary of laughter signifies Menelaus' ridicule at the idea

¹⁰⁰⁸ West (1987) 287 n. 1557.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Arnould (1990) 167.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.* 182.

of Helen having vanished in a miraculous way.¹⁰¹¹ Again, we see that disbelief may lead to a scornful rejection of an idea.

Repudiation may give rise to derision, as well. In the third episode of the *Trojan Women*, Helen attempts to save her life by explaining to her husband Menelaos the reasons for her departure to Troy (*Tr.* 914-65). First, she blames Hecuba for bearing Paris himself (*Tr.* 919-20). Next, she accuses the old man who failed to abandon the infant prince in the woods, but raised his as his own child instead (*Tr.* 920-22). Furthermore, Helen argues that she herself was treated as an object ‘sold for her beauty’ (εὐμορφίαι προαθεῖσα, *Tr.* 936) by Aphrodite to Paris at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. And finally, she places responsibility for her weakness on the goddess of love herself, who, in Helen’s view, accompanied Paris on his visit to Sparta (‘He arrived with no insignificant goddess on his side, this man’, ἦλθ' οὐχὶ μικρὰν θεὸν ἔχων αὐτοῦ μέτα, *Tr.* 940).¹⁰¹² The arguments are heard by Hecuba, who in lines 969-1032 refutes them. At one point, she refers to Helen’s remark about the goddess Aphrodite assisting Paris in Sparta (*Tr.* 982-88):

Εκ. Κύπριν δ' ἔλεξας (ταῦτα γὰρ γέλωσ πολὺς)
 ἐλθεῖν ἐμῶι ξὺν παιδὶ Μενέλεω δόμους.
 οὐκ ἂν μένουσ' ἂν ἤσυχός σ' ἐν οὐρανῶι
 αὐταῖς Ἀμύκλαις ἤγαγεν πρὸς Ἴλιον;
 ἦν οὐμὸς υἱὸς κάλλος ἐκπρεπέστατος,
 ὁ σὸς δ' ἰδὼν νιν νοῦς ἐποιήθη Κύπρις·

Hecuba: You said that Cypris came to Menelaus’ house with my son (that is a **ridiculous suggestion**). Could she not have transported you, and all of Amyclae too, to Troy by just remaining quietly in heaven? No, my son was outstandingly handsome, and your mind, on seeing him, transformed itself into Cypris.

¹⁰¹¹ Arnoud (1990) 183, considering γέλωσ πολὺς as the equivalent of ‘that’s a laugh!’ (‘laissez-moi rire’) or ‘that’s a joke!’ (‘la bonne blague’). However, Willink (1986) 340 n. 1556-60 finds the expression discordant to the disposition of Menelaos who ‘could scarcely be further from ‘laughter’.

¹⁰¹² Translation in Barlow (1986) 127. Hereon, other English quotes of *Trojan Women* come from this edition.

According to the Trojan queen, full responsibility for Menelaus' wife leaving Sparta lies not on the goddess of love, but only on Helen herself. Hecuba repudiates this idea with the expression ταῦτα γὰρ γέλωσ πολὺς which literally translates into 'this is a great laugh'. Again, we find the same expression used to denote derision as in the previous example in the *Orestes*, for γέλωσ πολὺς signifies the ridiculousness of Helen's argument. In the *Trojan Women*, therefore, it is evident that Hecuba finds Helen's blaming Aphrodite for the whole situation to be only worthy of scorn.

Another example of one's mockery being provoked by another's expressed opinion is found in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*. At the temple of Artemis, a Taurion herdsman brings to the priestess Iphigenia news about capturing Greek strangers at the seaside. In lines 260-339, the herdsman gives a detailed report about how the two foreigners were seized. A group of cattlemen was resting at the seaside when one of them spotted the two young men and pointed them to his fellows. However, he took the Greeks for some gods ('there are deities sitting here', δαίμονές τινες, / θάσσουσιν οἶδε, *IT*. 268-7), and being a pious man (θεοσεβής), he spoke a prayer to maritime divinities in order to reverse any evil.¹⁰¹³ Upon hearing this, another fellow reacted in a less pious manner (*IT* 275-8):

Bo. ἄλλος δέ τις μάταιος, ἀνομία θρασύς,
 ἐγέλασεν εὐχαῖς, ναυτίλους δ' ἐφθαρμένους
 θάσσειν φάραγγ' ἔφασκε τοῦ νόμου φόβω,
 κλύοντας ὡς θύοιμεν ἐνθάδε ξένους.

Herdsmen: But another man, foolish and bold in his irreverence **laughed** at these prayers and declared it was shipwrecked sailors sitting in the crevice for fear of our usual custom, since they had heard we sacrificed strangers here.

Here, the idea of laughter appears in regard of the disdainful reaction of one herdsman to the prayers of his fellow which he ridicules (ἐγέλασεν εὐχαῖς, *IT*. 276). Although the herdsman reporting the events to Iphigenia, considers the

¹⁰¹³ Kyriakou (2006) 116 n. 267-69, explains this by the sudden appearance of the two strangers.

scoffer to be ‘foolish’ (μάταιος) and ‘arrogant with irreverence’ (ἀνομία θρασύς, *IT* 275),¹⁰¹⁴ nevertheless, he was right in recognizing the two young men to be strangers from afar. In the end, it was the observation of the mocker, not of the extremely pious man, which seemed convincing to the rest of the herdsmen who, then, captured the two Greeks. Again we may see that one’s idea is refuted derisively by another. In this case, the idea of the supernatural is rejected by a rational explanation, or, in other words, reason ridicules irrationality.¹⁰¹⁵

One’s incredulous opinions may be regarded as mockery, as well. In the *Trojan Women*, the maddened Cassandra presents arguments for the grief-stricken Trojan Women to view their defeat in war in positive terms (*Tr.* 353-405). According to the deranged princess, the recently ruined Trojans should be regarded as more fortunate than the victorious Greeks (‘this city of ours is more blessed than the Greeks are’, πόλιν δὲ δείξω τήνδε μακαριωτέραν / ἢ τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς, *Tr.* 365-6). In particular, Cassandra argues for acknowledging the many misfortunes of the Trojans as blessings:¹⁰¹⁶ the men had a chance to die for their country (*Tr.* 386-7); the Trojans were lucky to be buried by their loved-ones (*Tr.* 387-90); those remaining alive still could have enjoyed the company of their families (*Tr.* 391-3); also, Hector’s death for his country has brought him eternal fame (*Tr.* 394-7); and finally Paris gained fame for marrying Helen, the daughter of Zeus (*Tr.* 398-9). Cassandra ends this list by telling her mother not to be sad with the outcome of war as well as with her daughter’s union with Agamemnon, for it will bring destruction on their enemies (‘With my marriage I shall destroy those you and I hate the most’, τοὺς γὰρ ἐχθίστους ἐμοὶ / καὶ

¹⁰¹⁴ Scholars consider ἀνομία as ‘rejection of traditional beliefs and practices’, cf. Cropp (2000) 193 n. 275;

¹⁰¹⁵ We should not, however, consider the scoffing herdsman to be completely impious, for he follows his fellowmen in capturing the two strangers in order to have them sacrificed to the goddess, cf. Kyriakou (2006) 118 n. 275-8.

¹⁰¹⁶ For a discussion on Cassandra’s argumentation, see Papadopoulou (2000) 523-25.

σοὶ γάμοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς διαφθερῶ, *Tr.* 404-5). After hearing these words, the Chorus comments as follows (*Tr.* 405-6):

Χο. ὡς ἠδέως κακοῖσιν οἰκείους γελᾶις
μέλπεις θ' ἄ μέλπουσ' οὐ σαφῆ δείξεις ἴσως.
Chorus: You **laugh** with gladness at your own misfortunes and you
sing things which your song perhaps leaves obscure.

Obviously, the Trojan women give no credence to Cassandra's distorted rhetoric, which they consider to be a form of showing disdain at hers as well their misfortunes (κακοῖσιν οἰκείους, *Tr.* 405). Although they are well aware of the girl's derangement,¹⁰¹⁷ nevertheless they regard her behaviour as 'laughing with delight', as stressed by the adverb ἠδέως 'sweetly'.¹⁰¹⁸ It is the princess' curse cast on her by Apollo that no one believes in her prophecies. However, we may also notice that her words stand in sharp contrast to the Trojans' recent tragic experiences. Hence, for these two reasons, the Chorus cannot accept Cassandra's argumentation, and, as a result, considers it as mockery on her behalf. Again, we find an example in which the idea of derision is evoked in connection with a character's disbelief in another's opinion.

Apart from words, also one's odd appearance may incur derisive laughter. In the first episode of the *Bacchae*, Cadmus, the former king of the Thebans as well as the diviner Teiresias prepare themselves for honouring Dionysus in his rites (*Ba.* 170-209).¹⁰¹⁹ Once they have adorned the traditional Bacchic garments and are ready to leave for the celebrations, they encounter Pentheus, the present ruler of Thebes, who opposes the newly introduced Dionysiac cult (*Ba.* 248-54):

¹⁰¹⁷ In line 341, the Chorus calls her βακχεύουσιν, 'raving'. Later, Talthybius refers to her as a maenad (*Tr.* 415), who was struck out of her wits by Apollo (σ' Ἀπόλλων ἐξεβάκχευσεν φρένας, *Tr.* 408); cf. Rybowska (2004) 47-9. On the Bacchic vocabulary for madness, cf. Padel (1995) 28.

¹⁰¹⁸ Cf. the translation of Kovacs (1999) 55: 'How happily you smile at your own misfortunes and prophesy, and yet perhaps you will show that your prophecies are unreliable'.

¹⁰¹⁹ For a comic reading of the old men's dressing scene, see Seidensticker (1978). In contrast, Seaford (1996) 167, who stresses that the mood of the scene is not comic, but festive 'like the festivals it prefigures'.

Πε. ἀτὰρ τόδ' ἄλλο θαῦμα, τὸν τερασκόπον
 ἐν ποικίλαισι νεβρίσι Τειρεσίαν ὄρῳ
 πατέρα τε μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς—**πολὺν γέλων**—
 νάρθηκι βακχεύοντ'· ἀναίνομαι, πάτερ,
 τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον.
 οὐκ ἀποτινάξεις κισσόν; οὐκ ἐλευθέραν
 θύρσου μεθήσεις χεῖρ', ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάτερ;

Pentheus: But here's another strange business: I see the diviner Teiresias dressed in dappled fawnskin, and my mother's father – a **ridiculous sight** – playing the bacchant with a wand. It pains me, old sir, to see your gray head acting so foolishly. Shake off that ivy, grandfather, and free your hand of that wand!.¹⁰²⁰

Apparently, the sight of the two old men dressed as Bacchants comes as a surprise to the young man, but also as an oddity worthy of laughter. This becomes explicit through the expression *πολὺν γέλων*, 'a ridiculous sight' (*Ba.* 250), which Pentheus uses in relation to the Bacchic appearance of Teiresias and Cadmus (τὸν τερασκόπον... Τειρεσίαν ὄρῳ πατέρα τε μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς, *πολὺν γέλων*, *Ba.* 248-50). However, Pentheus' reaction to the perceived incongruity is far from that connected to humour, for instead of enjoying the strange sight, he plainly rejects it (*ἀναίνομαι*, *Ba.* 251).¹⁰²¹ This is especially noticeable in regard of his grandfather who, in his view, acts in a foolish manner unsuitable for his old age (τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, *Ba.* 252). This incongruity, therefore, is perceived by Pentheus as shameful rather than comic, for it does not elicit his amusement, but only a desire to put an end to it.¹⁰²² As a result, Pentheus orders Cadmus to get rid of the ivy and thyrsus (*Ba.* 253-4). However, after a vehement exchange of words with Teiresias, the two old men do not submit to the ruler's command (*Ba.* 322-25):

¹⁰²⁰ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 33.

¹⁰²¹ Cf. the three reactions to incongruity enlisted by Morreall (1989) 6-10, which are: 1) negative emotion, 2) puzzlement, and 3) amusement. See chapter I, section 1.2.2.2. above.

¹⁰²² This complies with Morreall's observations on the outcome of the negative emotions elicited by a perceived incongruity (see note above). Hence, I cannot agree with Seidensticker (1978) 314-15, who considers Pentheus as the 'eyewitness commentator' and 'first interpretator' of the comicality of the scene. Although I acknowledge some comic potential of the dressing scene of two old men's in *Ba.* 170-209, nevertheless I cannot recognize Pentheus' laughter as a response to the comic. Similar criticism in Halliwell (2008) 134 n. 82.

- Τε. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ Κάδμος, ὃν σὺ διαγελάς,
 κισσῶ τ' ἐρεψόμεσθα καὶ χορεύσομεν,
 πολιά ξυνωρίς, ἀλλ' ὅμως χορευτέον,
 κού θεομαχῆσω σῶν λόγων πεισθεῖς ὕπο.
- Teiresias: I shall crown my head with ivy and join the dance, and so will Cadmus, whom **you mock**. We are a pair of grey heads, but still we must dance. Your words will not persuade me to fight against a god.¹⁰²³

As we can see, the diviner identifies Pentheus' earlier reaction to Cadmus as derisive, indicated by the laughter-word διαγελάς (*Ba.* 322), which signifies outright mockery.¹⁰²⁴ In this respect, we may recognize that the reference to laughter in the expression πολὺν γέλων (*Ba.* 250) denotes, primarily, Pentheus' disdain at his grandfather dressed up aptly to honour Dionysus. Thus, the Bacchic appearance of an old man attracts the young king's scorn.¹⁰²⁵

In the tragedies of Euripides, we may recognize that actions, generally, considered to be ignoble may attract mockery. This idea is traceable in the *Children of Heracles*, in which the title hero's progenies are pursued by their father's enemy, Eurystheus of Argos. After wandering through Greece for many years, the Heraclidae take refuge at the altar of the temple of Zeus at Marathon. However, their persecutor finds them and threatens their supporters, the Athenians, with war. The children of Heracles receive an oracle that Athens will defeat the Argive army only if a maiden of noble family will be sacrificed ('to rout the enemy and save the city, they bid me sacrifice to Demeter's daughter a virgin born of a noble father', σφάξαι κελεύουσίν με παρθένον κόρηι / Δήμητρος, ἣτις ἐστὶ πατρὸς εὐγενοῦς, / τροπαῖά τ' ἐχθρῶν καὶ πόλει σωτηρίαν, *Hcl.* 408-9 and 402).¹⁰²⁶ After hearing this, one of the

¹⁰²³ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 39.

¹⁰²⁴ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

¹⁰²⁵ Czerwińska (1999) 202. Seaford (1996) 167 points out that πολὺν γέλων in line 250 expresses Pentheus' 'hostility of the uninitiated'. For the prince's enmity towards Dionysus and his cult, see section 5.2.5.3.2.

¹⁰²⁶ Editors e.g. Kovacs (1995), follow Diggles (1984) transposition of line 402 right after 409.

hero's daughters¹⁰²⁷ offers her life to have her siblings spared. Iolaus, a kinsman to Heracles and his children's guardian, objects to her decision, but she argues for it with full determination (*Hclid.* 501-19):

Πα. ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὴ πρὶν κελευσθῆναι, γέρον,
 θνήσκειν ἐτοίμη καὶ παρίστασθαι σφαγῆι.
 τί φήσομεν γάρ, εἰ πόλις μὲν ἀξιοῖ
 κίνδυνον ἡμῶν οὐνεκ' αἴρεσθαι μέγαν,
 αὐτοὶ δὲ προστιθέντες ἄλλοισιν πόνους,
 παρὸν σφε σῶσαι, φευξόμεσθα μὴ θανεῖν;
 οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ τοι καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια,
 στένειν μὲν ἰκέτας δαιμόνων καθημένους,
 πατρὸς δ' ἐκείνου φύντας οὐ πεφύκαμεν
 κακοὺς ὀραῖσθαι: ποῦ τὰδ' ἐν χρηστοῖς πρόπει;
 κάλλιον, οἶμαι, τῆσδ' – ὃ μὴ τύχοι ποτέ –
 πόλεως ἀλούσης χεῖρας εἰς ἐχθρῶν πεσεῖν
 κάπειτ' ἄτιμα πατρὸς οὖσαν εὐγενοῦς
 παθοῦσαν Ἄιδην μηδὲν ἦσσον εἰσιδεῖν.
 ἀλλ' ἐκπεσοῦσα τῆσδ' ἀλητεύσω χθονός;
 κοῦκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι δῆτ', ἐὰν δὴ τις λέγηι
 Τί δεῦρ' ἀφίκεσθ' ἰκεσίοισι σὺν κλάδοις
 αὐτοὶ φιλοψυχοῦντες; ἔξιτε χθονός·
 κακοῖς γὰρ ἡμεῖς οὐ προσωφελήσομεν.

Maiden: I am ready, old man, of my own accord and unbidden, to appear for sacrifice and be killed. For what shall we say if this city is willing to run great risks on our behalf, and yet we, who lay toil and struggle on others, run away from death when it lies in our power to rescue them? It must not be so, for it deserves nothing but **mockery** if we sit and groan as suppliants of the gods and yet, though we are descended from that great man who is our father, show ourselves to be cowards. How can this be fitting in the eyes of men of nobility? Much finer, I suppose, if this city were to be captured (God forbid!) and I were to fall into the hands of the enemy! Then when I, daughter of a noble father, have suffered dishonor, I shall go to my death all the same! But shall I then accept exile from this land and be a wanderer? Shall I not feel shame if someone thereafter asks, "Why do you come here with your suppliant branches when you yourselves lack courage? Leave this land: for we do not give help to the base"¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁷ Later tradition attributes her with the name Macaria, which has been transmitted in the manuscripts. However, the girl is not named in the text, thus many editors refer to her as ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ, 'maiden', cf. Wilkins (1993) 111 474.

¹⁰²⁸ Translation in Kovacs (1995) 57.

Observably, the maiden's motivation to accept death voluntarily is based on a strong awareness of her noble status as a progeny of the hero Heracles. This notion of inherited nobility impels her to avoid disgraceful conduct, which would be showing cowardice, instead of facing the enemy with honour. It is at this point that Heracles' daughter mentions the possible social consequences she and her siblings would have to experience, i.e. scornful laughter, in case they continue freighting and fleeing for their lives ('though we are descended from that great man who is our father, show ourselves to be cowards', πατρὸς δ' ἐκείνου φύντας οὐ πεφύκαμεν / κακοῦς ὀρᾶσθαι, *Hclld.* 509-10). In this respect, the maiden uses the expression γέλωτος ἄξια 'worthy of laughter' (*Hclld.* 507) to describe the general mockery the Heraclidae would incur among other Greeks if they were to continue to coward before their enemy.¹⁰²⁹ A child of Heracles, therefore, is fully aware that the shameful actions of noble men may receive scorn from the general Greek public.

Fear of being ridiculed by others for one's conduct is also discernible in the *Ion*. Xuthus wants the title character to join him to Athens and engage in the affairs of his rediscovered father ('leave the god's precincts and your homeless life, join the purposes with your father, and come to Athens', ἐκλιπῶν θεοῦ δάπεδ' ἀλητεῖαν τε σὴν / ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας στεῖχε κοινόφρων πατρί, *Ion* 576-7). Ion does not react with enthusiasm to the idea, thus explains to Xuthus his fear of the Athenians not accepting foreigners well in their city ('They say that the famous Athenians, born from the soil, are no immigrant race', εἶναί φασι τὰς αὐτόχθονας / κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας οὐκ ἐπείσακτον γένος, *Ion.* 589-90). The young man then envisages the people's reaction towards him, should he move to Athens (*Ion* 595-606):

Ιω. ἦν δ' ἐς τὸ πρῶτον πόλεος ὀρμηθεὶς ζυγὸν

¹⁰²⁹ Although the girl does not explicitly acknowledge who should deride the children of Heracles, however, since their father's fame reached the whole Greek world, we may presume that she implies the same.

ζητῶ τις εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ἀδυνάτων ὑπο
 μισησόμεσθα· λυπρὰ γὰρ τὰ κρείσσονα.
 ὅσοι δέ, χρηστοὶ δυνάμενοί τ' εἶναι σοφοί,
 σιγῶσι καὶ σπεύδουσιν ἐς τὰ πράγματα,
γέλωτ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μωρίαν τε **λήψομαι**
 οὐχ ἡσυχάζων ἐν πόλει φόβου πλέα.
 τῶν δ' ταῦτ' ἀπολογίῳ τε χρωμένων τε τῇ πόλει
 ἐς ἀξίωμα βὰς πλέον φρουρήσομαι
 ψήφοισιν. οὕτω γὰρ τάδ', ὦ πάτερ, φιλεῖ·
 οἱ τὰς πόλεις ἔχουσι καξιώματα
 τοῖς ἀνθαμίλλοις εἰσὶ πολεμιώτατοι.

Ion: If I attempt to be somebody by aspiring to the city's helm, I shall be hated by the powerless: men always hate what is above them. As for all those who are of good character and have an aptitude for wisdom but live quietly and do not exert themselves in public affairs, they will think **I am laughably foolish** not to keep quiet in a city full of fear. But if I invade the prestige of those who speak in public and engage in politics, by their votes I will be kept in check even more. That is the way things usually happen, father. Those who hold office in their cities are always most hostile to their competitors.¹⁰³⁰

Ion distinguishes three groups of Athenian citizens: 1) those with no political power, 2) those who could engage in politics but choose not to, and 3) those who go into politics.¹⁰³¹ Accordingly, all three groups of people would not accept Xuthus's foreign and bastard son in the public life of Athens: the first group would hate him (τῶν μὲν ἀδυνάτων ὑπο μισησόμεσθα), the second would find him foolish to engage in unpleasant affairs (μωρίαν τε λήψομαι), whereas the third would keep checking his every action (φρουρήσομαι ψήφοισιν).¹⁰³² What is of our particular interest is the reference to laughter which occurs in line 600 regarding the disdainful reaction of the second group of those who refrain from politics. Here, Ion fears that by getting involved with public affairs he 'will attract ridicule and be accused of folly' (γέλωτ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μωρίαν τε λήψομαι). He then explains the reason for this, for such people, whom he considers to be good and wise (χρηστοὶ δυνάμενοί τ' εἶναι σοφοί),

¹⁰³⁰ Translation in Kovacs (1999) 397.

¹⁰³¹ Cf. Lee (1997) 227 n. 595-606.

¹⁰³² Owen (1939) 113 n. 603.

are aware of the vanity of trying to do something useful in politics. In this example, therefore, we may see that the evoked idea of laughter pertains to derision, or, more precisely, to the fear of attracting ridicule from others. This fear of public mockery, therefore, is one of the reasons for Ion's hesitance to come to Athens with Xuthus.

The last example of a person's conduct incurring scorn is found in the fourth episode of the *Suppliant Women*. Theseus, the king of Athens, has managed to retrieve from Creon the bodies of the six warriors who died in their attack on Thebes. He then brings the corpses to the mothers of the deceased and asks Adrastus, king of Argos, to deliver a funeral speech (*Su.* 840-56):

Θη.	νῦν δ' Ἄδραστ', ἀνιστορῶ πόθεν ποθ' οἶδε διαπρεπεῖς εὐψυχία θνητῶν ἔφυσαν; εἰπέ δ' ὡς σοφώτερος 843 νέοισιν ἀστῶν τῶνδε· ἐπιστήμων γὰρ εἶ. 846 ἐν δ' οὐκ ἐρήσομαί σε, μὴ γέλωτ' ὄφλω ὄτω ξυνέστη τῶνδ' ἕκαστος ἐν μάχῃ ἢ τραῦμα λόγχης πολεμίων ἐδέξατο. κενοὶ γὰρ οὗτοι τῶν τ' ἀκουόντων λόγοι καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος, ὅστις ἐν μάχῃ βεβῶς λόγχης ἰούσης πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πυκνῆς σαφῶς ἀπήγγειλ' ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός. οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην οὐτ' ἐρωτῆσαι τάδε οὐτ' αὖ πιθέσθαι τοῖσι τολμῶσιν λέγειν· μόλις γὰρ ἂν τις αὐτὰ τὰναγκαῖ' ὄρᾶν δύναιτ' ἂν ἐστῶς πολεμίοις ἐναντίος.
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Theseus:	...now I ask you, Adrastus: how did it happen that these men were so superior to other men in bravery? Tell the young sons of these citizens, since you are wiser and have the requisite skill. One thing I will not ask or I'd be laughed at : whom each of these men stood facing in the battle and by what foeman he was wounded. Such a recital wastes the time of both hearers and speaker: can a man stand in battle as the spears fly thick and fast before his eyes and tell us clearly who was brave? I could not ask for such a report nor believe anyone who ventured to give it. When a man stands face to face with the enemy, he is barely able to see what he needs to see. ¹⁰³³
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In his request to Adrastus, we may notice that Theseus does not wish a full account about how the warriors fought in war unless he should attract laughter

¹⁰³³ Translation in Kovacs (1998) 99.

(μὴ γέλωτ' ὄφλω, *Su.* 846). The Athenian king is of the opinion that such a detailed report is a waste of time for both listeners as well as the speaker (κενοὶ γὰρ οὔτοι τῶν τ' ἀκουόντων λόγοι / καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος, *Su.* 849-50). The reason for such a view is the fact that he finds it incredible for a person being capable of carefully observing the deeds of warriors amidst battle (ὅστις ἐν μάχῃ βεβῶς / λόγχης ἰούσης πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πυκνῆς / σαφῶς ἀπήγγειλ' ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός, *Su.* 850-52). It appears, then, that Theseus regards such detailed accounts of the events from battlefields to be useless, for they lack credibility (οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην οὔτ' ἐρωτῆσαι τάδε / οὔτ' αὖ πιθέσθαι τοῖσι τολμῶσιν λέγειν, *Su.* 853-54). It, therefore, does not befit the Athenian king to ask Adrastus for such an account, due to the fact that such narratives appear to be ridiculous.

The reference to laughter in line 846 of the *Suppliant Women* has received extra attention from scholars who regard it to be more than just a dramatic character's fear of attracting ridicule. In fact, as Christopher Collard argues in his commentary, the set of lines 846-56 have been commonly acknowledged to be the poet's 'sneer at the conventions of simulated realism in messenger-speeches'.¹⁰³⁴ Accordingly, Theseus' criticism could be, in fact, Euripides' derision at the tragic convention of having a character present a very detailed account of off-stage events. In effect, scholars have suggested that in lines 846-56 the poet could be making a direct allusion to the lengthy speech the character of Adrastus was supposed to give in the Aeschylean tragedy *Eleusinians*, now lost to us.¹⁰³⁵ It remains in the sphere of possibility that Euripides may have made a derisive remark to the meticulousness of the messenger-speech of which Aeschylus was famous for.¹⁰³⁶ The object of ridicule, then, would be the poetic style of a rival playwright. This way the discernable

¹⁰³⁴ Collard (1975) 321 n. 846-56.

¹⁰³⁵ On the connection of the *Suppliants* with the Aeschylean *Eleusinians*, see Zuntz (1955) 22-25.

¹⁰³⁶ For this reason, some editors found *Su.* 846-56 incongruous and, hence, deleted them from their editions, cf. Collard (1975) 321 n. 846-56.

in line 846 idea of derision becomes ambiguous as it simultaneously would regard two dimensions: the tragic world of the *Suppliant Women* as well as the tragedian's world of the fifth century.

On the basis of the examples discussed above, it becomes apparent that the views expressed by Euripidean characters, their appearance or conduct in certain situations may incur mockery. As we have seen, those opinions are considered to be ridiculous, which contain an idea pertaining to the miraculous: a god's prophecy (*Ion* 520-29), heavenly intervention (*Or.* 1556-60; *Tr.* 982-88), or divine epiphany (*IT* 275-8). Mockery, thus, seems to be a character's first inclination upon hearing from others about the manifestation of the supernatural. Also, one's unusual appearance may attract derision (*Ba.* 248-54). Furthermore, we may distinguish a discernable fear in Euripidean characters of becoming the object of others' ridicule. Noticeably, this anxiety rises from an awareness of one acting in a manner non-fitting to one's social status, be it one of noble birth (*Hcld.* 501-19; *Su.* 840-56) or of foreign origin (*Ion* 595-606). Here, the anticipated subject dispensing mockery is a group, usually the Athenians or the wide public of the Greek world. In general, Euripides uses the language of laughter in order to describe the characters' disdain at others' opinions, appearances or behaviours.

5.2.10. Hostility

The dramas of Euripides consist of many references to hostile laughter occurring between people in conflict. In general, we may distinguish four main contexts leading to the antagonization of Euripidean characters: 1) betrayal of *φιλία*,¹⁰³⁷ 2) military context, 3) enslavement, and 4) power struggle.

¹⁰³⁷ On the Greek understanding of *φιλία*, see chapter IV, section 4.2.6.

5.2.10.1. Betrayal of φιλία

Traitorous actions turn φίλοι into ἐχθροί. In the *Hippolytus*, Euripides evokes the idea of mockery in the context of the betrayal of φιλία amongst relations. In the agon-scene between Theseus and his son (*Hipp.* 902-1103),¹⁰³⁸ the former accuses the latter of having raped queen Phaedra ('Look at this man! He was born from my loins, and yet he disgraced my bed and is clearly convicted of utter baseness by the dead woman here!' σκέψασθε δ' ἐς τόνδ', ὅστις ἐξ ἐμοῦ γεγώς / ἤισχυνε τὰμὰ λέκτρα κάξελέγχεται / πρὸς τῆς θανούσης ἐμφανῶς κάκιστος ὢν, *Hipp.* 943-45).¹⁰³⁹ To the hero, Hippolytus is no longer a φίλος (*Hipp.* 925-31) not because he violated a women, but because he committed a crime on his father's wife, thus acted against his own parent.¹⁰⁴⁰ Theseus' outrage is even greater, for his son is commonly known to be a pious person and pure ('You consort with the gods as a superior man? You are virtuous and pure of evils? I couldn't be persuaded by your boasts', σὺ δὴ θεοῖσιν ὡς περισσὸς ὢν ἀνὴρ / ξύνει; σὺ σώφρων καὶ κακῶν ἀκήρατος; / οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην τοῖσι σοῖς κόμπους ἐγὼ , *Hipp.* 948-50). In light of the lack of evidence and witnesses to call upon, Hippolytus is but left with refuting his father's charges with words (*Hipp.* 993-1003):

Ιπ. εἰσορᾷς φάος τόδε
καὶ γαῖαν· ἐν τοῖσδ' οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἀνὴρ ἐμοῦ,
οὐδ' ἦν σὺ μὴ φῆις, σωφρονέστερος γεγώς.
ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ πρῶτα μὲν θεοὺς σέβειν
φίλοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ ἀδικεῖν πειρωμένοις
ἀλλ' οἷσιν αἰδῶς μήτ' ἐπαγγέλλειν κακὰ
μήτ' ἀνθυπουργεῖν αἰσχροῦ τοῖσι χρωμένοις,
οὐκ ἐγγελαστής τῶν ὀμιλούντων, πάτερ,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς οὐ παροῦσι κάγγυς ὢν φίλοις.
ἐνὸς δ' ἄθικτος, ὦι με νῦν ἔχειν δοκεῖς·
λέχους γὰρ ἐς τόδ' ἡμέρας ἀγνὸν δέμας.

¹⁰³⁸ For a discussion on the agon in *Hippolytus*, see Lloyd (1992) 43-51.

¹⁰³⁹ Translation in Halleran (1995) 115. Hereon, other English quotes come from this edition of the *Hippolytus*.

¹⁰⁴⁰ On the problem of the different understandings of the concept of φίλος by the characters of the *Hippolytus*, see Goff (1990) 47-8.

Hippolytus: You see this light and earth; in these there is no man – even if you should deny it – more inherently virtuous than me. For I know first of all how to revere the gods and to associate with friends who do not attempt wrong but who would be ashamed either to give evil commands to their friends or to repay disgraceful deeds in kind; I am not someone **who laughs at** his companions, father, but the same to them when they're away as when nearby. And by one thing I am untouched, the thing by which you now think you have me: to this very moment my body is pure of sex.

In his defense, Hippolytus lists such qualities of his character which correspond to a person described as σώφρων 'virtuous': 1) piety (ἐπίσταμαι... θεοὺς σέβειν, *Hipp.* 996), 2) companions with similar morals (φίλοις... μὴ ἀδικεῖν περιωμένοις..., *Hipp.* 997-9), 3) loyalty to friends and family (οὐκ ἐγγελαστής τῶν ὁμιλούντων, *Hipp.* 1000), and most importantly, 4) chastity (λέχους... ἀγνὸν δέμας, *Hipp.* 1003). Here, Hippolytus attempts to convince Theseus of his son's innate σωφροσύνη, i.e. 'soundness of mind, 'moderation', 'self-control' or 'temperance', which would not allow him to commit such an heinous crime he has been accused of.¹⁰⁴¹ A characteristic feature of such moral self-control is a constant and loyal disposition towards those reckoned as φίλοι, i.e. friends and family, to which the young man alludes in line 1000: 'I am not someone who laughs at his companions, father', (οὐκ ἐγγελαστής τῶν ὁμιλούντων, πάτερ). By denying the fact of being an ἐγγελαστής, i.e. an explicit mocker¹⁰⁴², Hippolytus argues that not only would he dare to violate the bond of φιλία between him and his father, but also secretly exult for having done so.¹⁰⁴³ In the *Hippolytus*, therefore, the title character rejects the possibility of laughing with scorn at his kin, since such conduct would be, in his opinion, a

¹⁰⁴¹ LSJ s.v. σωφροσύνη 1; 2. For a general discussion on the complex semantics of the term, see Rademaker (2005) 7-14, and 163-73 in regard of the *Hippolytus*.

¹⁰⁴² Both Way (1946) 241, and Kovacs (1995) 221, translate the lexeme with 'mocker'.

¹⁰⁴³ Barrett (1964) 350 n. 1000-1: 'laughter at the discomfiture of someone you have injured'. See also, Halleran (1995) 235 n. 1000-1; Roisman (1999) 143.

sign of one's loss of self-control, hence, would not befit a person regarded to be σώφρων.¹⁰⁴⁴

A similar image of a son mocking his parent is evoked in the fourth episode of the *Alcestis* in the famous agon-scene between Admetus and Pheres.¹⁰⁴⁵ During the queen's funeral, the son blames his senile father for refusing to sacrifice himself to save his child's life ('When I was in danger of perishing, then was the time you ought to have shown your sympathy. But no! You kept out of the way and, old man though you are, let another person, a *young* (orig. ital.) one, do the dying', τότε ξυναλγεῖν χρῆν σ' ὅτ' ὠλλύμην ἐγὼ / σὺ δ' ἐκποδῶν στάς καὶ παρεῖς ἄλλωι θανεῖν / νέωι γέρον ὦν τόνδ' ἀπομώξει νεκρόν; *Alc.* 633-35).¹⁰⁴⁶ As we may notice, the king's accusations towards his parent rely on two concepts: old age and φιλία.¹⁰⁴⁷ Although family members, generally, were required to provide each other with mutual services and favours,¹⁰⁴⁸ however, Admetus finds it mandatory for a φίλος to give up his life for another. For this reason, he considers both of his parents' refusal to die in his stead as a betrayal of family φιλία.¹⁰⁴⁹

In his fury, Admetus accuses the old man with outright faintheartedness in failing to die for him ('you most certainly surpass everyone in cowardice', ἢ τᾶρα πάντων διαπρέπεις ἀψυχίαι, *Alc.* 642), and, hence, denies any relationship with his father ('For I'm dead, as far as you're concerned!', τέθνηκα γὰρ δὴ τοῦπι σ', *Alc.* 666). Consequently, Pheres finds his son's insolence outrageous ('Your insults go too far and you'll not get away with hurling these brash taunts at me', ἄγαν ὑβρίζεις καὶ νεανίας λόγους /

¹⁰⁴⁴ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 126 n. 69.

¹⁰⁴⁵ For a discussion on the agon in *Alcestis*, see Lloyd (1992) 37-41; Czerwińska (1995) 98-101.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Translation in Conacher (1988) 113. Hereon, I adduce other English quotes from this edition of the *Alcestis*.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mastronarde (2010) 228.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Blundell (1989) 40-3.

¹⁰⁴⁹ In *Alc.* 338-9, Admetus speaks to his dying wife about the hatred he will keep towards his mother (στυγῶν μὲν ἦ μ' ἔτικτεν) as well as his father (ἐχθαίρων δ' ἐμὸν πατέρα) who, in his opinion, turned out to be φίλοι in words (λόγῳ) but not in deeds (οὐκ ἔργῳ).

ρίπτων ἐς ἡμᾶς οὐ βαλῶν οὕτως ἄπει, *Alc.* 679-80) and refutes the accusation by stating the fact that a parent need not die for his child ('For I've received no ancestral mandate, nor any Greek law either, that fathers are to die for sons', οὐ γὰρ πατρῶιον τόνδ' ἐδεξάμην νόμον, / παίδων προθνήσκειν πατέρας, οὐδ' Ἑλληνικόν, *Alc.* 683-4).¹⁰⁵⁰ He, then, points out Admetus' selfishness for allowing a woman give her life for his own ('you talk about *my* (orig. itals.) cowardice, when you, most base of all, were bested in courage by your wife, who died for you, the fine young husband!', ἐμὴν ἀψυχίαν / λέγεις, γυναικός, ὦ κάκισθ', ἠσσημένος, / ἦ τοῦ καλοῦ σοῦ προύθανεν νεανίου; *Alc.* 696-8). After Pheres' tirade, the callous debate transforms into an angry exchange of mutual revilement (*Alc.* 711-30):

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Αδ. | ταῦτόν γὰρ ἠβῶντ' ἄνδρα καὶ πρέσβυν θανεῖν; |
| Φε. | ψυχῆι μιᾷ ζῆν, οὐ δυοῖν, ὀφείλομεν. |
| Αδ. | καὶ μὴν Διός γε μείζονα ζώης χρόνον. |
| Φε. | ἀρᾷ γονεῦσιν οὐδὲν ἐκδικον παθῶν; |
| Αδ. | μακροῦ βίου γὰρ ἠσθόμην ἐρῶντά σε. |
| Φε. | ἀλλ' οὐ σὺ νεκρὸν ἀντὶ σοῦ τόνδ' ἐκφέρεις; |
| Αδ. | σημεῖα τῆς σῆς γ', ὦ κάκιστ', ἀψυχίας. |
| Φε. | οὔτοι πρὸς ἡμῶν γ' ὤλετ'· οὐκ ἐρεῖς τόδε. |
| Αδ. | φεῦ· |
| | εἶθ' ἄνδρὸς ἔλθοις τοῦδέ γ' ἐς χρεῖαν ποτέ. |
| Φε. | μνήστευε πολλάς, ὡς θάνωσι πλείονες. |
| Αδ. | σοὶ τοῦτ' ὄνειδος· οὐ γὰρ ἠθελες θανεῖν. |
| Φε. | φίλον τὸ φέγγος τοῦτο τοῦ θεοῦ, φίλον. |
| Αδ. | κακὸν τὸ λῆμα κοῦκ ἐν ἀνδράσιν τὸ σόν. |
| Φε. | οὐκ ἐγγελαῶς γέροντα βαστάζων νεκρόν. |
| Αδ. | θανῆι γε μέντοι δυσκλεῆς, ὅταν θάνῃς. |
| Φε. | κακῶς ἀκούειν οὐ μέλει θανόντι μοι. |
| Αδ. | φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ γῆρας ὡς ἀναιδεῖας πλέων. |
| Φε. | ἦδ' οὐκ ἀναιδής· τήνδ' ἐφηῦρες ἄφρονα. |
| Αδ. | ἄπελθε κάμὲ τόνδ' ἔα θάψαι νεκρόν. |
| Φε. | ἄπειμι· θάψεις δ' αὐτὸς ὦν αὐτῆς φονεύς, |
| Admetus: | Is it then the same thing for a young man and for an old man to die? |
| Pheres: | Our due is one life's span, not two. |
| Admetus: | Then may you live a longer life than even Zeus! |

¹⁰⁵⁰ Mastronarde (2010) 229 calls attention to the complexity of the issue, which also depends on external circumstances, e.g. a father is obliged to die at war in defence of his family, including his children.

Pheres: You'd make this blasphemous prayer for your parents, when you've suffered no injustice from them?

Admetus: Yes, for I've noticed your eagerness for lengthy days.

Pheres: But aren't you having this corpse carried out in place of yourself?

Admetus: That is, rather, a proof of your cowardice, you wretch!

Pheres: It was not because of us, at least, that she perished. You won't have the audacity to say that!

Admetus: Hah! I hope that some day you'll have need of help from me!

Pheres: Go on and marry more wives, so that more may die!

Admetus: It's just this matter of dying that's a reproach to you: for you were unwilling to die.

Pheres: Sweet, most sweet, it is to look upon this light of day!

Admetus: Base is your spirit and not worthy of a man!

Pheres: At least **you'll not be mocking** an old man as you carry out the corpse.

Admetus: You'll die at length, dishonoured when you die!

Pheres: Evil report won't hurt me when I'm dead!

Admetus: Alas! How full of shamelessness, old age!

Pheres: This one wasn't 'shameless.' But you found her somewhat lacking in good sense.

Admetus: Be off! And let me bury this corpse alone!

Pheres: All right, I'm going. You'll bury her then, being the very one who slew her...

In these lines, we may recognize that Euripides applies the technique of stichomythia, in order to increase the emotional aspect of the dialogue between father and son.¹⁰⁵¹ Such passionate outburst, in effect, emphasizes the tense atmosphere of the whole agon-scene. Both men speak to each other in a discernibly vituperative manner; they do this not to convince the other to one's ideas, but only to express their indignation; the son uses sarcasm (*Alc.* 713, 715), he repeats the accusation of his parent's cowardice (*Alc.* 717, 723), considers his father as morally worthless (ὦ κάκιστε, *Alc.* 717; 723) as well as shameless (*Alc.* 727), and, finally, threatens him with a bad reputation after his death (*Alc.* 725). Pheres, on the other hand, justifies his decision in a sentential tone (*Alc.* 712, 722), regards his son's words as cursing (*Alc.* 714), uses sarcasm (*Alc.* 720), expresses disdain at the young man (*Alc.* 724, 726) and even calls him an explicit murderer (φονεύς, *Alc.* 730). Without any doubt, the invective tone of

¹⁰⁵¹ Czerwińska (1995) 100.

this dialogue reflects the disruption of the familial relationship between father and son.

It is in this passionate part of the agon that Pheres evokes the image of Admetus mocking his old father. He, particularly, speaks of this in line 724 as he says to his son 'you are not laughing scornfully (οὐκ ἐγγελάς) as you carry out an old man dead'.¹⁰⁵² Here, the lexeme ἐγγελάω denotes outright scorn the angry parent imagines his son will perform at his father's funeral. Certainly, this statement expresses Pheres' indignation with Admetus, however, it also reflects the antagonism between him and his son, whose vitriolic verbal attack and denial of familial relationship has violated the parent-child φιλία.¹⁰⁵³ As a consequence of this violation, Pheres may consider his son being capable of performing other offensive acts against him, such as dispensing mockery. In the *Alcestis*, therefore, we find the example of the image of laughter used to describe the hostile relations of a father and son.

The laughter of enemies in connection with the betrayal of φιλία is a discernible theme in the *Medea*. This tragedy unfolds the consequences of Jason's repudiation of his wife and mother of two sons. In order to marry Creon's daughter and, hence, enter into an alliance with the Corinthian royals, Medea's husband officially rejects his family. With this act, he betrays his previously given marriage vows. As it is stated in the prologue, this treachery has transformed the once close relationship between Jason and his former wife into that of outright hostility ('But now all is enmity, and love's bonds are diseased', νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα, *Md.* 16).¹⁰⁵⁴ Medea's

¹⁰⁵² Translation in Parker (2007) 195 n. 724.

¹⁰⁵³ Schein (1988) 196: 'This is a radical rejection of what Greek convention and Attic law held that a son owes to his parents, a total rupture of the bond of family φιλία'.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Sicking (1998) 66: 'A rephrasing of the words spoken by the nurse would then yield the following: as Jason's benefactress (rather than as his wife), Medea claims the right to be treated as φίλη by him, a right he himself has recognized by the promises he made to her under oath. His leaving her, therefore, is a case of ἀδικία: he deprives her of the ἀμοιβή she is entitled to, and in line with his own standards *ipso facto* turns into her ἐχθρός'. Cf. also Belfiore (2000) 131-2.

anger, therefore, as well as her revenge is, chiefly, caused by Jason's violation of their *φιλία*-relationship.¹⁰⁵⁵

Insulted by her husband's betrayal, Medea is of the opinion that Jason and his new family take delight in her disgrace. As I will demonstrate below, this conviction manifests itself in her obsession with the idea of her enemies laughing at her.¹⁰⁵⁶

Medea already mentions the hostile laughter directed at her in the first episode of the play. Creon, the king of Corinth has come to inform her of his decision to banish her and the children from the kingdom (*Med.* 271-6). He fears that she might want to take revenge on his family because of his alliance with Jason (*Med.* 282-91). Medea pleads to postpone her banishment for one day and the king hesitantly grants her wish (*Med.* 348-56). Once he departs, Medea reveals to the Chorus her decision to kill the king, his daughter and Jason as well ('I shall make corpses of three of my enemies, the father, his daughter, and my husband', *τρεις τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν νεκρούς / θήσω, πατέρα τε καὶ κόρην πόσιν τ' ἐμόν, Med.* 374-5). At first, she deliberates murdering her enemies in the royal palace, however soon rejects the idea due to the high risk of being caught (*Med.* 381-3):

Μη.	ἀλλ' ἐν τί μοι πρόσαντες: εἰ ληφθήσομαι δόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη, θανοῦσα θήσω τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἐχθροῖς γέλων . κράτιστα τὴν εὐθείαν, ἣι πεφύκαμεν σοφοὶ μάλιστα, φαρμάκοις αὐτοῦς ἐλεῖν.
Medea:	There's just one threat. It I am apprehended entering the house, my ruse discovered, I'll be put to death; my enemies will laugh at me . The best way is the most direct, to use the skills I have by nature and poison them, destroy them with my drugs. ¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵⁵ Schein (1990) 60; Czerwińska (1999) 164; Sluiter (2008) 12-3.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Halliwell (2008) 138 n. 89.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Translation in Arnson Svarlien (2007) 76.

As we can see, the reason for her giving up on the idea of sneaking into Creon's palace is the fact that, should she fail at her attempt, she would become the object of her enemies' laughter (θανουῖσα θήσω τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἐχθροῖς γέλων, *Md.* 383). Medea imagines Jason, his bride and father-in-law as enjoying her possible failure.¹⁰⁵⁸ In her view, such outcome is unacceptable.¹⁰⁵⁹

It is a curious fact that the image of the enemies' laughing in scorn appears only after her encounter with the Corinthian king. Before this, Medea's outrage was directed merely at Jason, the only person she primarily intended to punish.¹⁰⁶⁰ However, we may recognize that with the decision to have her banished from Corinth, Creon has officially proclaimed his solidarity with Jason, and, hence, his hostility against the barbarian woman. As a result, Medea includes him and his daughter into her vengeful scheme. This becomes evident in the next reference to her enemies' mocking laughter (*Md.* 395-406):

Μη. οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν ἦν ἐγὼ σέβω
 μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ξυνεργὸν εἰλόμην,
 Ἐκάτην, μυχοῖς ναίουσαν ἐστίας ἐμῆς,
 χαίρων τις αὐτῶν τοῦμόν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαρ.
 πικροὺς δ' ἐγὼ σφιν καὶ λυγροὺς θήσω γάμους,
 πικρὸν δὲ κῆδος καὶ φυγὰς ἐμὰς χθονός.
 ἀλλ' εἶα φείδου μηδὲν ὧν ἐπίστασαι,
 Μῆδεια, βουλεύουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη
 ἔρπ' ἐς τὸ δεινόν· νῦν ἀγῶν εὐψυχίας.
 ὄρᾳς ἅ πάσχεις; οὐ γέλωτα δεῖ σ' ὀφλεῖν
 τοῖς Σισυφείοις τοῖσδ' Ἰάσονος γάμοις,
 γεγῶσαν ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς Ἥλιου τ' ἄπο.

Medea: For by my mistress Hekate, whom I revere
 above all other gods, she whom I choose as my
 accomplice, dwelling in the recess of my hearth,
 not one of them shall grieve my heart and then rejoice!
 I'll make their marriage bitter and lamentable,
 bitter their new ties and my exile from this land

¹⁰⁵⁸ As is it stressed in the translation of Kovacs (1994) 331: 'If I am caught entering the house and plotting its destruction, I will be killed and bring joy to my foes'.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Sicking (1998) 68.

¹⁰⁶⁰ In lines 259-63, Medea asks the Chorus to keep the information of her scheming against her husband a secret. Line 262 with a reference to Creon and his daughter is commonly considered to be an interpolation, as in the edition of Diggle (1984) *ad loc.*; see also Page (1938) 91 n. 262; Kovacs (1994) 319 n. 262; Mastronarde (2002) 215-16 n. 262.

Come now! Spare none of all the stratagems you know,
Medea. Weave your plans, concoct your crafty schemes.
Move towards this awful thing. **You must not incur
laughter** from Jason's Sisyphian marriage-bond.
Your father's noble; your grandfather's Helios;¹⁰⁶¹

Apparently, Jason's new φίλοι have become Medea's new ἐχθροί. In an oath to the goddess Hecate, she resolves not to let any of the three enemies (τις αὐτῶν, *Md.* 398) get away with taking delight in making her heart grieve (χαίρων τις αὐτῶν τοῦμὸν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαο, *Md.* 398).¹⁰⁶² What is more, she regards the new antagonism as occurring between two family lines: the house of Sisyphus, from whom Creon and his daughter originate, and to which Jason has married into (τοῖς Σισυφείοις τοῖσδ' Ἰάσονος γάμοις, *Md.* 405), in opposition to the bloodline of Helius, the god of the sun, from whom the Colchidian princess descends (γεγῶσαν ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς Ἥλιου τ' ἄπο, *Md.* 406). These two last lines add an extra dimension to Medea's motivation for revenge, for she indicates the proclaimed hostility between a royal, albeit mortal, family with that of divine origin.¹⁰⁶³ As we can see, the first episode of the play identifies the two sides of the antagonism, which has occurred as a result of Jason's betrayal of his relationship with Medea.

The title protagonist makes the next reference to her enemies' laughter in the third episode. As a consequence of her two encounters with Jason and Aegeus, in which the former denies his responsibility for Medea's exile (*Md.* 446-626),¹⁰⁶⁴ whereas the latter promises to grant her asylum in Athens (*Md.* 663-758), Medea modifies her vengeful plans. As punishment for her humiliation, she intends to have Creon's daughter die through poisoning along

¹⁰⁶¹ Translation in Blondell (1999) 384.

¹⁰⁶² Cf. Mastrorade (2002) 236 n. 398.

¹⁰⁶³ Cf. Burnett (1973) 14: 'The honor of the Sun's line has to be defended against the disrespect of upstarts (406), and he provides the gift that baits the murder trap (954), and then the escape that makes his granddaughter's vengeance perfect in the end'.

¹⁰⁶⁴ For a general discussion of the agon between Medea and Jason, see Czerwińska (1998); for its analysis in the context of betrayal of φιλία, see Sicking (1998) 70-1; Mueller (2001) 473-86.

with 'anyone who touches her' (κακῶς ὀλεῖται πᾶς θ' ὃς ἂν θίγηι κόρης, *Md.* 788). Yet, she also decides to kill her own children (*Md.* 791-97):

Μη.
ὦμωξα δ' οἷον ἔργον ἔστ' ἐργαστέον
τοῦντεῦθεν ἡμῖν· τέκνα γὰρ κατακτενῶ
τᾶμ'· οὔτις ἔστιν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται
δόμον τε πάντα συγχέασ' Ἰάσονος
ἔξειμι γαίης, φιλτάτων παίδων φόνον
φεύγουσα καὶ τλᾶσ' ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον.
οὐ γὰρ γελαῖσθαι τλητὸν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, φίλοι.

Medea: Ah me, I groan at what a deed I must do next! I shall kill my children: there is no one who can rescue them. When I have utterly confounded the whole house of Jason, I shall leave the land, in flight from the murder of my own dear sons, having committed a most unholy deed. **The laughter of one's enemies is unendurable**, my friends. Let that be as it will.

Here, Medea explicitly gives the reason for committing such a heinous crime, which is the idea of enemies mocking her in her misfortune. As we can see, she decides to take vengeance on her former husband by 'confounding the whole house of Jason' (δόμον τε πάντα συγχέασ' Ἰάσονος, *Md.* 794), and with divine help (σὺν θεῶι, *Md.* 802) she will deprive the perpetrator of his children as well as any future progeny ('He shall never from this day see his children by me alive, nor will he have children by his new bride since that wretch must die a wretched death by my poisons', οὐτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γὰρ παῖδας ὄψεταιί ποτε / ζῶντας τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτε τῆς νεοζύγου / νύμφης τεκνώσει παῖδ', ἐπεὶ κακὴν κακῶς / θανεῖν σφ' ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐμοῖσι φαρμάκοις, *Md.* 803-6). Although Medea is aware that such form of punishment will also inflict on her great pain, nevertheless she declares that 'it is the way to hurt my husband the most' (οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα δηχθείη πόσις, *Md.* 817). In her view, the murder of her children will prevent her from becoming the object of her enemies laughter (γελαῖσθαι ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, *Md.* 797). Yet, first, she will have to deal with her own feelings as a mother, in order to fulfil such an 'unholy act' (ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον, *Md.* 797).

The struggle between maternal affection and passion for revenge forms the basis of Medea's great monologue in the fifth episode.¹⁰⁶⁵ As discussed in section 5.2.7., the perception of her children's laughter emotionally overwhelms Medea to such a degree that she temporarily relinquishes her scheme (*Md.* 1040-8). However, just after bidding farewell to her plans (χαιρέτω βουλευμάτα, *Md.* 1048), Medea suddenly shifts back to her previous determination in punishing her enemies (*Md.* 1049-52):

Μη.	καίτοι τί πάσχω; βούλομαι γέλωτ' ὀφλεῖν ἐχθροὺς μεθεῖσα τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἀζημίους; τολμητέον τάδ'; ἄλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς κάκης, τὸ καὶ προσέσθαι μαλθακοὺς λόγους φρενί.
Medea:	But what is coming over me? Do I wish to suffer mockery , letting my enemies go unpunished? Must I put up with that? No, it is mere weakness in me even to admit such tender words into my heart.

Again, we can see that the idea of enemies laughing at Medea's misery motivates her to fulfil the horrible scheme.¹⁰⁶⁶ It is in lines 1049-50 with the reference to hostile laughter, as Sicking calls attention to, that indicate the values she is operating on.¹⁰⁶⁷ Despite the pain suffered as a mother, she acknowledges her anger at her foes to be greater ('And I know well what pain I am about to undergo, but my wrath overbears my calculation', καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δοῦν μέλλω κακά / θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων, *Md.* 1078-9). It becomes evident from her great monologue that what infuses this

¹⁰⁶⁵ Burnett (1973) 22: 'she [i.e. Medea] finds herself caught between a pair of passionate imperatives: "Kill the children because you hate their father," and "Do not kill them because you love them as their mother." ... Psychologically speaking it is a struggle between Medea's masculine, honor-oriented self and her feminine, hearth-oriented self.' Similar interpretation in Knox (1979) 300: 'In this great scene the grim heroic resolve triumphs not over an outside adversary or adviser but over the deepest maternal feelings of the hero herself'. For the interpretation of Medea's struggle as the conflict between her masculine and feminine aspects of her identity, see Foley (1989).

¹⁰⁶⁶ Cf. Czerwińska (1999) 136: 'The awareness of the fact that by relinquishing her murderous plans she will incur, in her opinion, the enemies' mockery, who would go feeling unpunished, brings an end to her hesitation' (my translation).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Sicking (1998) 73. Cf. Elliott (1969) 94 n. 1049-50: 'Here, as in 797, Medea is concerned not so much that her treatment has been unjust, but that her enemies may have the chance to laugh at her. Moral principle plays no part in her revenge'.

‘wrath’ (θυμός) is the idea of Jason, Creon and his daughter mocking her miserable life in exile.¹⁰⁶⁸

The Colchidian princess successfully carries out her murderous plans. From the messenger we hear of the scorched deaths of Creon and his daughter as an effect of Medea’s poisonous gifts (*Med.* 1136-1220). As a result, Jason comes to his former house concerned about his children, who may pay for their mother’s crime and be punished by Creon’s kin (*Med.* 1301-5). To his horror, he finds out about his sons’ killing by the hand of their mother (παῖδες τεθνᾶσι χειρὶ μητρῴϊαι σέθεν, *Med.* 1309). Outraged and in want of justice he tries to open the doors to the house, when suddenly Medea appears aloft in a winged chariot, which was a gift from her grandfather Helios (after *Med.* 1316).¹⁰⁶⁹ The former husband and wife exchange words of resentment and hatred towards each other. One of the first things that Medea points to is the fact of depriving Jason and his Corinthian family of the pleasure of mocking her in exile (*Med.* 1354-7):

Μη. σὺ δ’ οὐκ ἔμελλες τᾶμ’ ἀτιμάσας λέχη
 τερπνὸν διάξειν βίσιον ἔγγελων ἐμοὶ
 οὐδ’ ἢ τύραννος, οὐδ’ ὅ σοι προσθεῖς γάμους
 Κρέων ἀνατεῖ τῆσδέ μ’ ἐκβαλεῖν χθονός.

Medea: You were not going to cast aside my bed and then spend a pleasant life **laughing at** me, no, nor the princess either, nor was Creon, who offered you his daughter, going to exile me with impunity!

¹⁰⁶⁸ Czerwińska (1999) 128 points out that θυμός denotes Medea’s agitation caused by her slighted pride and her husband’s rejection.

¹⁰⁶⁹ The sudden appearance of Medea *ex machina* has caused much debate on her superhuman transformation: some see her as a ‘demon of vengeance’, e.g. Lesky (2006) 353; others as a ‘god’, e.g. Knox (1979) 304: ‘Medea is presented to us not only as a hero, but also, at the end of the play, by her language, action, and situation, as a *theos* or at least something more than human’; in contrast Rutherford (2014b) 96: ‘Medea’s apotheosis... is no such thing’. For the discussion on her suprahuman features, see Luschnig (2007) 63-84, esp. 84: ‘There is in Medea something not human’; Hall (2014) 139-46, esp. 145: ‘Medea is not exactly a goddess, but neither is she susceptible to most of the constraints of mortality – she can physically escape what, for a mortal woman, would now be certain death at the hands of Jason and the Corinthians, and she can fly in a supernatural vehicle; what is more, there is no ancient tradition, in any Greek or Roman author, that she ever died’.

Again, the avengeress evokes the image of her three enemies laughing in delight at her misfortune. However, it is evident that the main recipient of her revenge was, chiefly, Jason, the perpetrator of their marital vows. For this violation, she had his new φίλοι killed, but also deprived him of any descendents. Jason tries to appeal to Medea's sufferings as a mother, but she regards the pain satisfactory (*Med.* 1361-2).

Ια.	καὶ τή γε λυπῆ καὶ κακῶν κοινωνὸς εἶ.
Μη.	σάφ' ἴσθι· λύει δ' ἄλγος, ἦν σὺ μὴ 'γγελαῖς.
Jason:	Yes, and you also have grief and are a sharer in my misfortune.
Medea:	Of course, but the pain is worthwhile if you cannot mock me.

Medea violently denounces Jason and exults over his misfortune. Their angry dialogue ends with her triumphant flight on the winged chariot carrying away the bodies of the children. In doing so, she adds the final touch to Jason's misfortunes by depriving him the possibility of burying his children.

Hostile mockery becomes an important motif in the *Medea*. Apparently, it plays a crucial role in the protagonist's motivation and decision making.¹⁰⁷⁰ According to Czerwińska, apart from a desire for revenge, the second main reason for Medea's infanticide is the obsessive idea of her enemies' derisive laughter aimed at her.¹⁰⁷¹ This obsession becomes evident due to the fact that she is the only character in the play to evoke the image of enemies laughing in delight.¹⁰⁷² In particular, Medea uses the language of laughter in two respects: 1) in relation to her fear of becoming the object of Jason's and his new family's laughter (*Med.* 383; 404; 797; 1049), and 2) to express her own delight at preventing her enemies from dispensing mockery (*Med.* 1355, 1362). In *Medea*, therefore, the references to laughter stress the hostile rapport between the title

¹⁰⁷⁰ Arnould (1990) 40; on the complexity of her motives, see Mastronarde (2002) 15-22.

¹⁰⁷¹ Czerwińska (1999) 151.

¹⁰⁷² On the basis of her discernible sensitivity to laughter, a strong feeling of pride and fear of losing her reputation, scholars have pointed to the similarities between Medea and tragic heroes, especially those presented by Sophocles, cf. Arnould (1990) 40; Mastronarde (2002) 234 n. 383; some even have considered her as a 'heroic character', cf. Knox (1979) 297-301.

character and her ἔχθροί, who came to being due to Jason's disloyalty towards his old φίλοι.

5.2.10.2. Military context

Enmity between people is evident when one side of a conflict prepares a military expedition against the other. In the tragedy *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the Greeks must sacrifice Agamemnon's daughter, if they wish to set sail against Troy. Menelaus, however, discovers his brother's attempt at preventing Iphigenia's arrival to Aulis. Enraged by the deception, the Spartan king furiously reproaches his brother for doing ill to his fellowmen (*IA* 370-2):

Με. Ἑλλάδος μάλιστ' ἔγωγε τῆς ταλαιπώρου στένω,
ἢ θέλουσα δρᾶν τι κεδνόν, βαρβάρους τοὺς οὐδένας
καταγελῶντας ἔξανήσει διὰ σέ καὶ τὴν σὴν κόρην.

Menelaus: I lament most for poor Hellad! Though she wanted to accomplish something good, now, because of you and your daughter she will let the worthless barbarians go, barbarians **who are mocking** us.¹⁰⁷³

In particular, Menelaus is blaming Agamemnon as well as his daughter for impeding Greece's chance in accomplishing something 'valuable', or 'good'¹⁰⁷⁴ (τι κεδνόν, *IA* 371), which is the invasion of Troy. As a consequence of this, their enemies, whom he refers to as 'the worthless barbarians' (βαρβάρους τοὺς οὐδένας) already 'mocking' the Greeks (καταγελῶντας, *IA* 372), will avoid punishment for their actions, i.e. the abduction of Helen by Paris, the Trojan prince. Although, in the quoted translation, Kovacs indicates 'us' as the object of the Phrygians mockery, however, the Greek text does not give the direct object to καταγελῶντας. This omission, thus, leaves room for different interpretations of the addressee of the barbaric laughter. Firstly, it may refer to the Greeks, at whom the Trojans would be dispensing ridicule for their failure expedition to retrieve Helen. Secondly, it may include both the Atreidae, the

¹⁰⁷³ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 203.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Cf. Stockert (1992b) 304 n. 370-72.

Greek commanders for their ineffectiveness in carrying out such an expedition. And finally, it may regard Menelaus himself for losing his wife in such a disgraceful manner to another man, *nota bene*, a Trojan. All three interpretations remain permissible, for all three possible objects of mockery have good reasons to be in a hostile rapport with the Trojans. In any of these cases, the mention of the Trojans' laughter alludes to the Greeks hostility towards them, occasioned by various reasons: personal, fraternal or national.

War is a state of armed hostilities between two groups of people. Without any doubt, in the tragedy *Rhesus*¹⁰⁷⁵, the rapport between the Trojans and their aggressors, the Greeks is of hostile character. This is apparent not only in the military actions of the two sides of the conflict, but also in their manner of speech. In the fifth episode, Hector refers to the enmity between him and the Greeks by evoking the idea of hostile mockery. One night, Odysseus and Diomedes manage to sneak into to Trojan camp, kill Rhesus, the Thracian king, and steal his prized horses.¹⁰⁷⁶ After hearing the news, Hector expresses his outrage to the Chorus of Trojan sentinels (*Rh.* 808-19):

Εκ. πῶς, ὦ μέγιστα πῆματ' ἐξειργασμένοι,
 μολόντες ὑμᾶς πολεμίων κατάσκοποι
 λήθουσιν αἰσχρῶς καὶ κατεσφάγη στρατός,
 κοῦτ' εἰσιόντας στρατόπεδ' ἐξαπώσατε
 οὔτ' ἐξιόντας; τῶνδε τίς τείσει δίκην
 πλὴν σοῦ; σὲ γὰρ δὴ φύλακά φημι εἶναι στρατοῦ.
 φρουροὶ δ' ἄπληκτοι, τῆι Φρυγῶν κακανδρῖαι
 πόλλ' ἐγγελῶντες τῶι στρατηλάτῃ τ' ἐμοί.
 εὔ νυν τόδ' ἴστε – Ζεὺς ὁμώμοται πατήρ –
 ἦτοι μάραγνά γ' ἢ καρανιστῆς μόρος
 μένει σε δρωῶντα τοιάδ', ἢ τὸν Ἔκτορα
 τὸ μηδὲν εἶναι καὶ κακὸν νομίζετε.

Hector: Workers of great ruin, how could enemy spies have slipped past you to your disgrace, and the army have been put to the sword, and you raised no cry either when they entered the camp or left it? Who is going to be punished for this but you? For you, I maintain, are the men guarding the army. They have got away without a scratch, **laughing loudly** at the

¹⁰⁷⁵ For the discussion on the authorship, see n. 2 above.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The story is narrated also by Homer in the 10th book of the *Iliad*.

Phrygian's cowardice and at me as general. You may be quite sure – Father Zeus be my witness – that the lash or the headsman's ax awaits you for doing this, or you may consider Hector a cipher and a coward.¹⁰⁷⁷

As we may observe, the matter of honour is of greater importance to Hector than the loss of an ally.¹⁰⁷⁸ According to the Trojan commander, the Greeks' successful night expedition is a disgrace to the Trojans (πολεμίων κατάσκοποι λήθουσιν αἰσχρῶς, *Rh.* 809-10). As a result of his feeling of shame, Hector imagines his enemies laughing in derision (ἐγγελῶντες) at the Trojans for their cowardice (τῆι Φρυγῶν κακανδρία) but also at himself as well (πόλλ' ἐγγελῶντες τῶι στρατηλάτῃ τ' ἐμοί, *Rh.* 815). Clearly, the idea of hostile mockery is evoked, in which the derisive aspect is not only indicated by the prefix ἐν attached to the form of γελάω,¹⁰⁷⁹ but also emphasized by the word πολλά 'greatly'. In his translation, Kovacs also includes the audible aspect of laughter by rendering πόλλ' ἐγγελῶντες 'laughing loudly'. However, the adverb πολλά may as well indicate the degree of the Greeks' mockery Hector imagines to be directed not only at the Trojans, but also at himself.¹⁰⁸⁰ We may notice that his reaction bears similarities to that of Menelaus in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, i.e. in face of a sudden misfortune from the hands of one's enemy, one uses the language of laughter to describe the hostile rapport between opponents.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 437. Hereon, all English quotes of *Rhesus* come from this edition.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Cf. Rosivach (1978) 68: 'Hector expresses no grief at the deaths of his allies, and he is concerned only with the mockery to which these deaths will subject the Trojans in general and himself in particular'. Cf. Fries (2014) 418 n. 808-19. This approach is already recognizable in his words expressed in *Rh.* 102-4: 'The god has handed our enemies (θεοῦ διδόντος πολεμίους) to us, and it is a disgrace (αἰσχρὸν) to us, and a mischief (πρὸς αἰσχύνῃ κακόν) as well, to let them run away without giving them battle, considering the great harm they have done us'.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Cf. the translation of lines 814-15 in Way (1916) 227: 'They are gone, unsmitten! – gone, with many a scoff / at Phrygian cowardice and me, your chief!'; Liapis (2012) 288 n. 814-15: 'now they have disappeared unwounded, laughing mightily both at the Phrygians' cowardice and at me, the commander-in-chief'; (my emphasis).

Euripidean characters dread the possibility of having their enemy laugh at them even after death. In the tragedy *Madness of Heracles*, while the title hero is away fulfilling his labours, his family residing in Thebes finds itself in peril. Lycus usurps the throne and decides to murder Amphitryon, Megara and her children. The play opens with Heracles' father, wife and children taking refuge at the altar of Zeus the Saviour. The usurper king approaches them and points to the vanity of their hope of surviving, since Heracles is presumably dead, hence, there is no one who will come to their rescue ('For how long do you seek to prolong your life? What hope of defense do you perceive to avert death? Do you believe that their father, who lies dead in Hades, / Will come back?', τίν' ἐς χρόνον ζητεῖτε μηκῦναι βίον; / τίν' ἐλπιδ' ἀλκὴν τ' εἰσορᾶτε μὴ θανεῖν; / ἢ τὸν παρ' Ἄιδῃ πατέρα τῶνδε κείμενον / πιστεύεθ' ἦξειν; *HF* 143-46). Since the suppliants refuse to abandon their position, Lycus commands to set the whole altar on fire and have Heracles' family burnt alive (*HF* 240-46). Upon hearing this, Megara persuades Amphitryon to surrender to the king (*HF* 284-92):

Με. ἡμᾶς δ', ἐπειδὴ δεῖ θανεῖν, θνήσκειν χρεῶν
 μὴ πυρὶ καταξανθέντας, ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων
 δίδοντας, οὐμοὶ τοῦ θανεῖν μεῖζον κακόν.
 ὀφείλομεν γὰρ πολλὰ δώμασιν καλά·
 σὲ μὲν δόκησις ἔλαβεν εὐκλεῆς δορός,
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν δειλίας θανεῖν σ' ὕπο,
 οὐμὸς δ' ἀμαρτύρητος εὐκλεῆς πόσις,
 ὅς τούσδε παῖδας οὐκ ἂν ἐκῶσαι θέλοι
 δόξαν κακὴν λαβόντας· οἱ γὰρ εὐγενεῖς
 κάμνουσι τοῖς αἰσχροῖσι τῶν τέκνων ὕπερ·

Megara: But we, since we must die, ought to die
 Not wasted by fire, **giving laughter**
 To our enemies, which to my mind is a greater ill than death.
 We owe many fine things to our house:
 you got an illustrious reputation for combat
 So that's intolerable for you to die through cowardice,
 While my husband needs no witnesses for his glory,
 And he would be unwilling to save these children
 At the price of their getting a bad reputation. For the noble
 Are distressed at their children's disgraces;

Apparently, Megara has lost all hope for her husband to return, therefore, she prefers to end her life willingly and in a manner suitable of her noble status.¹⁰⁸¹ In her view, to perish in a fire as a suppliant would be commonly perceived as a sign of cowardice. In result, this would be a disgrace totally unworthy of Heracles' family.¹⁰⁸² Moreover, as she stresses in lines 285-6, such cowardly death would also 'provide laughter to enemies' (ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων δίδοντας, *HF* 285-6). Such particular image of a foe mocking his/her deceased opponent is, in Megara's opinion, 'an evil greater than death' (οὔμοι τοῦ θανεῖν μεῖζον κακόν, *HF* 286).

We may notice that Megara's words resemble those expressed by the Maiden in the *Children of Heracles*, which I have discussed in section 5.2.9. Also, the circumstances leading the hero's wife and daughter to face death willingly bear similarities: 1) both are pursued by an enemy, who 2) threatens to murder them, therefore 3) they seek refuge at a religious precinct. Most importantly, their motivation to accept death voluntarily is based on a strong awareness of their noble status deriving from Heracles' glory. The only difference between the two women is the person they refer to as the possible mocker: in case of the hero's daughter, these are the citizens of other Greek cities, who would disrespect the Heraclidae for their acts of cowardice; in Megara's case, however, the dreaded laughter would come from the enemy Lycus and his men.

It becomes, then, evident, that one's death does not bring hostility to an end. On the contrary, once people are defined as enemies, their hostile relationship does not change and, as we may recognize from the words of Orestes or Megara, it even transcends the boundaries of existence. In short, the

¹⁰⁸¹ Bond (1981) 135 n. 284.

¹⁰⁸² As the daughter of Creon, the former legal ruler of Thebes, Megara is of royal descent. However, in her appeal she derives her nobility from the heroic deeds of her husband (οὔμος δ' ἀμαρτύρητος εὐκλεῆς πόσις, *HF* 290) and his father (σὲ μὲν δόκησις ἔλαβεν εὐκλεῆς δορός, *HF* 288).

laughter of an enemy, be it experienced, dreaded or even expressed in the future, will always reflect this once established hostility.

5.2.10.3. Enslavement

People may regard each other with hostility in those situations, in which one side imposes unwanted authority on the other. In the ancient world, such an oppressor usually gained and sustained his control over another by force. In the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the fear of having one's oppressor laugh at one, even after death, motivates Orestes not to reveal his identity to the savage Taurian priestess who is about to sacrifice him and his companion to the goddess Artemis. However, before fulfilling the ritual she interrogates him about his identity (*IT* 502-4):

Oρ.	504	τὸ σῶμα θύσεις τοῦμόν, οὐχὶ τοῦνομα.
Iφ.	503	τί δὲ φθονεῖς τοῦτ'; ἢ φρονεῖς οὕτω μέγα;
Oρ.	502	ἀνόνημοι θανόντες οὐ γελώμεθ' ἄν.
Orestes:		It's my body you'll be sacrificing, not my name.
Iphigenia:		But why do you grudge me this? Are you so proud?
Orestes:		If I die unnamed I shall remain unmocked .

In his refusal, we may recognize in Orestes an importance of maintaining one's reputation even after death. At this point of the play, the Argive prince is unaware of the fact that he is speaking to his sister, Iphigenia, whose life has been spared in Aulis by the goddess Artemis and has since lived among the Taurians. In lines 502-4, it is apparent that the young man considers the inquisitive priestess to be nothing more but a barbarian with unfriendly intentions. To Orestes, therefore, their rapport is clearly antagonistic. Only by concealing his true identity may the Greek prince deprive one he regards a barbaric enemy of the possibility to mock his name after death.¹⁰⁸³ Without any doubt, with the words οὐ γελώμεθ' ἄν, 'I will not be laughed at', Orestes refers to the feared mockery from the Taurians, who were commonly known

¹⁰⁸³ For a discussion on the character of Orestes, see Czerwińska (2013) 297-310.

for their declared hostility and aggressiveness towards any foreigner who would arrive at their land.¹⁰⁸⁴

In the satyr drama *Cyclops*, enmity characterizes the rapport between the title one-eyed giant and the Chorus of satyrs. As we hear in the prologue, these traditional companions of Dionysus have been captured and enslaved by the Cyclops¹⁰⁸⁵ ('We were caught and are slaves in the house of one of them. They call the master we serve Polyphemus. And instead of Bacchic revels we tend the flocks of a godless Cyclops'¹⁰⁸⁶, τούτων ἐνὸς ληφθέντες ἐσμὲν ἐν δόμοις / δοῦλοι· καλοῦσι δ' αὐτὸν ᾧ λατρεύομεν / Πολύφημον· ἀντὶ δ' εὐίων βακχευμάτων / ποιίμνας Κύκλωπος ἀνοσίου ποιμαίνομεν, *Cyc.* 23-6). The satyrs are unhappy with their lot, since they are forced to labour for the oppressor who has deprived them of the joyful life in the company of the god of wine (*Cyc.* 63-75). Later in the play, when Polyphemus seizes the astrayed Odysseus with his men and plans to eat them, the Chorus expresses its disgust with such cruel practice and yearns for a chance to abandon the Cyclops' house ('Let me be rid of this dwelling! / Let me be rid of this / godless †sacrificet† of victims, / †which† the Cyclops of Etna †conduct†, as he rejoices in / the meat from his guests for food', χαιρέτω μὲν αὖλις ἄδε, / χαιρέτω δὲ θυμάτων / ἀποβώμιος †ἂν ἔχει θυσίαν† / Κύκλωψ Αἰτναῖος ξενικῶν / κρεῶν κεχαρμένος βορᾶι, *Cyc.* 363-7). Once the opportunity to escape appears with Odysseus presenting a plan of blinding the drunken Polyphemus, the satyrs

¹⁰⁸⁴ Cf. *IT* 403-406: ἔβασαν ἄμεικτον αἶαν, ἐνθα κούραι / δίαί τέγγει / βωμοὺς καὶ περικίονας / ναοὺς αἶμα βρότειον; '[they] come to this unwelcoming land, where / for Zeus's maiden daughter / altars and columned temples / are soaked with human blood'. For a discussion on the Taurians, see Cropp (2000) 47-50, esp. 49: 'the Taurians... show no sign of commerce with other peoples, or the laws of hospitality, see strangers as victims to be haunted down for sacrifice, and mutilate human bodies'.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Silenus refers to the Cyclops as δεσπότης, 'master, lord' (*Cyc.* 34, 90, 163, and 267 with the diminutive δεσποτίσκει, 'o little master'), whereas to himself and the satyrs as δοῦλοι, 'slaves' (*Cyc.* 24, 79). Zalewska-Jura (2006) 182 indicates Polyphemus as a slave owner, whose captives take care of his sheep and household, when he himself spends time on hunting. For a discussion on the tyrannical features of Polyphemus, see O'Sullivan (2005) 128-134.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Translation in O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 77. Hereon, I adduce other quotes from the *Cyclops* from this edition.

agree without hesitation ('Wow! Wow! I;m happy, we're crazy about what you've come up with', *ἰοὺ ἰοῦ* / *γέγηθα μαινόμεσθα τοῖς εὐρήμασιν*', *Cyc.* 464-5). Moreover, they wish to actively 'take part in this bloodshed' (*Cyc.* 471) and 'smoke out – like a nest of wasps – the eye of the damned Cyclops' (*Cyc.* 474-5), however, in the end, their assistance comes down to merely urging Odysseus, while he punishes their detested master (*Cyc.* 656-62).¹⁰⁸⁷ As we can see, the disposition of the enslaved satyrs towards Polyphemus is, noticeably, the opposite of amiability.¹⁰⁸⁸

Happy with their oppressor's misfortune, the Chorus of satyrs taunt the blinded Cyclops just before abandoning him (*Cyc.* 663-88):

Kυ.	ᾧμοι, κατηνθρακώμεθ' ὀφθαλμοῦ σέλας.
Χο.	καλός γ' ὁ παιάν· μέλπε μοι τόνδ' αὖ, Κύκλωψ.
Kυ.	ᾧμοι μάλ', ὡς ὑβρίσμεθ', ὡς ὀλώλαμεν. ἀλλ' οὐτι μὴ φύγητε τῆσδ' ἔξω πέτρας χαίροντες, οὐδὲν ὄντες· ἐν πύλαισι γὰρ σταθεῖς φάραγγος τῆσδ' ἑναρμόσω χέρας.
Χο.	τί χρῆμ' ἀυτεῖς, ᾧ Κύκλωψ;
Kυ.	ἀπωλόμην.
Χο.	αἰσχρός γε φαίνημι.
Kυ.	κάπι τοῖσδέ γ' ἄθλιος.
Χο.	μεθύων κατέπεσες ἐς μέσους τοὺς ἄνθρακας;
Kυ.	Οὐτίς μ' ἀπώλεσ'.
Χο.	οὐκ ἄρ' οὐδεὶς <σ> ἠδίκηι.
Kυ.	Οὐτίς με τυφλοῖ βλέφαρον.
Χο.	οὐκ ἄρ' εἶ τυφλός.
Kυ.	πῶς φῆς σύ;
Χο.	καὶ πῶς σ' οὐτίς ἂν θείη τυφλόν;
Kυ.	σκώπτεις. ὁ δ' Οὐτίς ποῦ 'στιν;
Χο.	οὐδαμοῦ, Κύκλωψ.
Kυ.	ὁ ξένος ἴν' ὀρθῶς ἐκμάθητις μ' ἀπώλεσεν, ὁ μιαρός, ὅς μοι δούς τὸ πῶμα κατέκλυσεν.
Χο.	δεινός γὰρ οἶνος καὶ παλαίεσθαι βαρύς.
Kυ.	πρὸς θεῶν, πεφεύγασ' ἢ μένουσ' ἔσω δόμων;
Χο.	οὗτοι σιωπῆι τὴν πέτραν ἐπήλυγα λαβόντες ἐστήκασι.
Kυ.	ποτέρας τῆς χέρος;
Χο.	ἐν δεξιᾷ σου.
Kυ.	ποῦ;
Χο.	πρὸς αὐτῆι τῆι πέτραι.

¹⁰⁸⁷ On the cowardice of satyrs as a dramatic stock joke, cf. Seaford (1984) 191 n. 469-75.

¹⁰⁸⁸ O'Sullivan (2005) 146: 'the chorus of satyrs look forward to the demise of Polyphemos'.

ἔχεις;
 Κυ. κακόν γε πρὸς κακῶι· τὸ κρανίον
 παίσας κατέαγα.
 Χο. καί σε διαφεύγουσί γε.
 Κυ. οὐ τῆιδέ πηι, τῆιδ' εἶπας;
 Χο. οὐ· ταύτηι λέγω.
 Κυ. πῆι γάρ;
 Χο. περιάγου κείσε, πρὸς τὰριστερά.
 Κυ. οἴμοι **γελῶμαι**· κερτομεῖτέ μ' ἐν κακοῖς.
 Χο. ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὗτός ἐστι σοῦ.

Polyphemus shouts from within.

Cyclops: Ah! Ah! The light of my eye has been burnt to charcoal!
 Chorus: A beautiful song of triumph! Sing it for me again, Cyclops.

Polyphemus comes to the mouth of the cave.

Cyclops: Ah! Ah! Look how I've been assaulted! How I've been
 destroyed! But you will never escape from this cave without
 paying, you nonentities! Because I'm going to stand in the
 cleft's opening here and block it with my hands.
 Chorus: Why are you shouting, Cyclops?
 Cyclops: I am destroyed!
 Chorus: Well, yes, you do look ugly.
 Cyclops: And I'm in a pitiful state on
 top of all this.
 Chorus: Did you stumble into the middle of the coals while you were
 drunk?
 Cyclops: Nobody has destroyed me.
 Chorus: So no one has wronged you.
 Cyclops: Nobody has blinded my eye.
 Chorus: So you are not blind.
 Cyclops: How do you mean?
 Chorus: And how could nobody make you blind?
 Cyclops: You are laughing at me. But Nobody, where is he?
 Chorus: Nowhere, Cyclops.
 Cyclops: The stranger destroyed me – so you may understand correctly
 – that bastard who gave me the drink and drowned me in it.
 Chorus: Yes, for wine is powerful and hard to wrestle with.
 Cyclops: By the gods, have they fled or are they staying in the cave?
 Chorus: They're standing here in silence occupying an overhanging
 rock.
 Cyclops: On which side of me?
 Chorus: On your right.
 Cyclops: Where?
 Chorus: Just near the rock itself.
 Have you got them?

The Cyclops hits his head on the rock.

Cyclops: I've got worse on worse! Now that I've banished my skull and
 I'm broken.
 Chorus: Yes – and now they're getting away from you.
 Cyclops: Did you say, here somewhere, here?

Chorus: No. I said, right here.
 Cyclops: Where exactly?
 Chorus: Turn around that way, to your left.
 Cyclops: Ah! **I am being laughed at!** You're taunting me in my misery.
 Chorus: But not any more. Anyway, here he is in front of you.

In this passage, we may observe how the Chorus dispenses mockery at their vanquished oppressor. They rejoice at his painful cries, considering them to be 'a song of triumph' (παίαν, *Cyc.* 664), then, joke at his addressing Odysseus as 'Nobody' (*Cyc.* 672-5) and, finally, misguide him round the cave entrance (*Cyc.* 682-6).¹⁰⁸⁹ Polyphemus complains at the satyrs' derisive mistreatment of him, as we may discern from his references to their behaviour with the words: σκώπτεις, 'you are making fun'¹⁰⁹⁰ (*Cyc.* 675), κερτομεῖτέ μ, 'you (plural) are sneering at me' (*Cyc.* 687), and γελῶμαι, 'I am laughed at'¹⁰⁹¹ (*Cyc.* 687). Here, we may notice that with the latter, preceded with the tragic interjection οἴμοι, the Cyclops signals his awareness of being the object of the Chorus' hostile laughter.¹⁰⁹² Without any doubt, Polyphemus himself gave enough reason for receiving such an unfriendly reaction from the Chorus, whom he enslaved, abused and, most importantly, deprived of the drinking of wine. Thus, just before sailing off with Odysseus, the satyrs take the last opportunity to express their long concealed enmity and laugh at their former master. Indeed, he laughs best, who laughs last.

¹⁰⁸⁹ On the slapstick comicality of the scene, see Zalewska-Jura (2006) 206, 246-7.

¹⁰⁹⁰ LSJ explains the verb σκώπτω with 'mock, jeer, scoff at'. In *Cyc.* 675, the Cyclops uses the verb in reference to the scornful quality of the Chorus' joking and play on the word οὐτίς. For similar responses beginning with the reproof σκώπτεις in the second person singular, cf. the Old Woman's answer to Chremylus' derisive implication of her drinking in *Ar. Pl.* 973: 'You're making fun of me (σκώπτεις), but I am all banged up, poor woman!', translation in Henderson (2002) 563; the answer of Sostratus to his gofer's ridiculous question of planning to fall in love once leaving the house, in *Men. Dysc.* 54: 'You're making fun of me, Chaireas, for I am in a bad shape', σκώπτεις: ἐγὼ δὲ, Χαιρέα, κακῶς ἔχω (my translation).

¹⁰⁹¹ The other dramatic instances of γελῶμαι are the examples of *Aes. Eum.* 789 and 819 (cf. chapter III, section 3.2.4.), as well as *Soph. Ant.* 839 (cf. chapter IV, section 4.2.4.)

¹⁰⁹² Cf. Zalewska-Jura (2006) 191; O'Sullivan and Collard (2013) 222 n. 687: 'the laughter of one's enemies was a serious concern for heroic figures and was to be avoided virtually at all costs... Here such laughter contributes in no small way to Polyphemus' torment'. For the paratragic effect of οἴμοι, see Seaford (1984) 223 n. 687.

5.2.10.4. Power struggle

Hostility may occur between two sides fighting for power. At times, such competition may accept even violent form. In the *Bacchae*, Pentheus' struggle for maintaining his power and violent resistance to the newly introduced cult of Dionysus is clear from the beginning of the play. Already in the prologue, the god himself recognizes the Theban king's antagonism towards him ('[i.e. he] fights against deity in his treatment of my cult, and rejects me from libations and has no concern for me nowhere in his prayers', θεομαχεῖ τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ καὶ σπονδῶν ἄπο / ὠθεῖ μ' ἐν εὐχαῖς τ' οὐδαμοῦ μνείαν ἔχει, *Ba.* 45-6).¹⁰⁹³ Also, it is hinted by Teiresias who speaks of the Thebans lacking sense in resisting the new god (μόνοι γὰρ εὖ φρονοῦμεν, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι κακῶς, *Ba.* 196).¹⁰⁹⁴ When the ruler of Thebes finally enters (*Ba.* 215ff.), he explicitly expresses his contempt towards the new god and his cult: he considers the introduced rites as spreading 'new evils in the city' (νεοχμὰ τήνδ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν κακά, *Ba.* 216), he decides to stop the Theban women from honouring the god ('I will fasten then in iron nets and soon put an end to their pernicious bacchic revelry', καί σφας σιδηραῖς ἀρόσας ἐν ἄρκυσιν / παύσω κακούργου τῆσδε βακχείας τάχα, *Ba.* 231-2), he threatens to seize a stranger follower of Dionysus ('But if I capture him within this land, I will stop him beating his thyrsus and tossing his hair, cutting his neck from his body', εἰ δ' αὐτὸν εἴσω τῆσδε λήψομαι χθονός, / παύσω κτυποῦντα θύρσον ἀνασειόντά τε / κόμας, τράχηλον σώματος χωρὶς τεμών, *Ba.* 239-41), and he regards the origins of the god as a lie ('He [i.e. the Stranger] says that Dionysus is a god, he (says that D.) was once sewn in the thigh of Zeus, Dionysus, who was with his mother burnt up by the flame of the thunderbolt, because she lied about sex with him', ἐκεῖνος εἶναί φησι Διόνυσον θεόν / ἐκεῖνος ἐν μηρῶι ποτ' ἐρράφθαι Διός· / ὃς ἐκπυροῦται

¹⁰⁹³ Unless stated otherwise, I adduce the English quotes of the *Bacchae* from the translation in Seaford (1996).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Cf. Seaford (1996) 169 n. 195-6: 'The thought is of male members of the polis'. This includes the city's ruler, too.

λαμπάσιν κεραινίαις / σὺν μητρὶ, Δίους ὅτι γάμους ἐψεύσατο, *Ba.* 242-5). In his view, all these things are outrageous, hence, should be brought to an end, even by force ('Are these things not terrible and deserving of strangling, performing these outrages, whoever the stranger is?', ταῦτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ καγχόνης ἔστ' ἄξια / ὕβρεις ὕβρίζειν, ὅστις ἔστιν ὁ ξένος; *Ba.* 247-8). From his very first speech (*Ba.* 215-62) it becomes evident that Pentheus establishes himself as an enemy of Dionysus.¹⁰⁹⁵

The language of laughter is used to denote the king's hostility.¹⁰⁹⁶ In particular, Pentheus first directs his anger at the imposition of the new god at the Bacchic worshippers. As we have seen in my analysis of the passage *Ba.* 248-54, Pentheus disdainfully treats Cadmus and derisively refers to his Bacchic appearance as 'a big laugh' (πολὺς γέλως).¹⁰⁹⁷ What is more, in the same speech he also treats with contempt the diviner Teiresias, whom he blames for 'introducing pernicious initiation rituals' (τελετὰς πονηρὰς εἰσάγων, *Ba.* 260). In effect, the blind seer responds to Pentheus' accusations in a set of 60 lines (*Ba.* 266-327), attempting to refute the erroneous opinions about Dionysus and his cult ('you have a fluent tongue as if possessed of understanding, yet in your words there is no sense', σὺ δ' εὔτροχον μὲν γλῶσσαν ὡς φρονῶν ἔχεις, / ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ' οὐκ ἔνεισί σοι φρένες, *Ba.* 268-9).¹⁰⁹⁸ Firstly, Teiresias refers to the king's denial of the divine powers of Dionysus (*Ba.* 272-4)

Τε. οὔτος δ' ὁ δαίμων ὁ νέος, ὃν σὺ διαγελαῖς,
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μέγεθος ἐξειπεῖν ὅσος
καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἔσται.

Teiresias: This new divinity **you are laughing to scorn** – I could not fully express how great he will be in Greece.¹⁰⁹⁹

¹⁰⁹⁵ Czerwińska (1999) 207.

¹⁰⁹⁶ For the thematisation of laughter in the *Bacchae*, see Halliwell (2008) 133-9.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See section 5.2.5.2. above.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Seaford (1996) 174 n. 266-327 views the scene of Teiresias responding to Pentheus' accusations against the god as resembling an agon. Cf. Lloyd (1992) 10, who finds this resemblance superficial.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 35.

He explains the god's greatness, emphasizing his benevolence towards humans alongside the goddess Demeter (*Ba.* 276-85). Next, the seer answers Pentheus' disbelief in the divine birth of Dionysus (*Ba.* 286-7):¹¹⁰⁰

- Τε. καὶ καταγελαῖς νιν, ὡς ἐνεργάφη Διὸς
μηρῶ; διδάξω σ' ὡς καλῶς ἔχει τόδε.
- Teiresias: Another point: **you laugh at** him and the story of his being
sewn into Zeus' thigh? I will teach you how subtle this really
is.¹¹⁰¹

After a thorough clarification on the matter (*Ba.* 288-97), Teiresias explains the god's prophetic province in madness (*Ba.* 298-305) and urges the king to accept the new deity in Thebes (*Ba.* 312-13). As we may notice, in his response, the diviner uses twice words denoting Pentheus' outright mockery: διαγελαῖς, 'you laugh to scorn' (*Ba.* 272) and καταγελαῖς, 'you laugh at' (*Ba.* 286). With these two references to laughter, Teiresias alludes to Pentheus' non-favourable disposition towards Dionysus.¹¹⁰² The seer, then, concludes his speech by pointing to the fact that everyone in power, both gods and men, like to be revered and treated with respect (*Ba.* 319-5):

- Τε. ὀρᾶις; σὺ χαίρεις, ὅταν ἐφεστῶσιν πύλαις
πολλοί, τὸ Πενθέως δ' ὄνομα μεγαλύνῃ πόλις·
κακέϊνος, οἶμαι, τέρπεται τιμώμενος.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ Κάδμος, ὃν σὺ διαγελαῖς,
κισσῶ τ' ἐρεψόμεσθα καὶ χορεύσομεν,
πολιὰ ξυνωρίς, ἀλλ' ὅμως χορευτέον,
κοῦ θεομαχήσω σῶν λόγων πεισθεὶς ὑπο.
μαίνῃ γὰρ ὡς ἀλγιστα, κοῦτε φαρμάκοις
ἄκη λάβοις ἂν οὔτ' ἄνευ τούτων νόσου.
- Teiresias: Do you see? You rejoice, when a throng stands at the gates,
and the polis magnifies the name of Pentheus. He too, I think,
takes pleasure in being honoured. I then, and Kadmos, whom
you mock, will cover our heads with ivy and will dance, and I
will not be persuaded by your words to fight against the god.
For you are behaving madly in the most painful way, and
would get a cure for your illness neither with drugs nor
without them.

¹¹⁰⁰ Czerwińska (1999) 208 explains this as a sign of Pentheus' extreme rationality.

¹¹⁰¹ Translation in Kirk (1979) 51.

¹¹⁰² Halliwell (2008) 134.

After Teiresias, also Cadmus tries to convince his grandson in recognizing the god in Dionysus and giving him praise ('Join us and give honour to the god' μεθ' ἡμῶν τῶι θεῶι τιμὴν δίδου, *Ba.* 342). The young man, however, vehemently rejects the offer, referring to the old men's piety as stupidity (μωροίαν τὴν σὴν, *Ba.* 344) and folly (τῆς σῆς <δ'> ἀνοίας, *Ba.* 345).

From the discussion above it becomes apparent that the scene in which Pentheus meets the two old men exposes the young king's antagonism towards the new god. Noticeably, his derision of Cadmus and contempt at Teiresias origins from the men's association with Dionysus. Hence, by expressing his disdain at the senile Bacchic revelers, Pentheus simultaneously manifests his antipathy for the god they worship.¹¹⁰³ In this respect, the four references to laughter in this scene (*Ba.* 250; 272; 286; 322) designate primarily Pentheus' hostility.

Dionysus, as I have mentioned above, is fully aware of the king's arrogance towards him, yet, does not set himself as Pentheus' enemy at once. In fact, this only happens when the young ruler becomes determined in carrying out a military expedition against the Bacchants, despite the warnings from the god himself (*Ba.* 809-11):

Πε.	ἐκφέρετέ μοι δεῦρ' ὄπλα, σὺ δὲ παῦσαι λέγων.
Δι.	ἄ· βούληι σφ' ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένας ἰδεῖν;
Pentheus:	Servants, my armor from the palace! And you, shut your mouth!
Dionysus:	(<i>with imperious authority, countermanding Pentheus' orders</i>) Stop! Do you want to see them sitting together on the mountains? ¹¹⁰⁴

According to Burnett, the ἄ spoken by Dionysus in line 810 marks a turning point in his treatment of Pentheus; with this exclamation the god ceases completely from his previous attempts at convincing the human to himself and

¹¹⁰³ Segal (1982) 199; also Donzelli (2006) 4.

¹¹⁰⁴ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 89.

focuses on punishing the man for his immutable hostility.¹¹⁰⁵ Dionysus, then, uses his supernatural powers to exercise his vengeance. In particular, he casts a spell on Pentheus, with which he alters the king's plans towards the Bacchants by persuading him to spy on the women on Mount Citaeron. In order to do so and not get caught, the god convinces the man to adorn the guise of a female Bacchic worshiper. However, as Dionysus explains to the Chorus, the king's disguise is to serve another purpose, as well (*Ba.* 854-6):

Δι. χρηζω δέ νιν γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν
 γυναικόμορφον ἀγόμενον δι' ἄστεως
 ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρὶν, αἴσι δεινὸς ἦν.

Dionysus: I desire him **to incur laughter** from the Thebans as he is led through the town in the form of a woman after the earlier threat with which he was so frightening.

In this passage, we may notice that an important part of the god's revenge is having his enemy suffer from the mockery of the citizens of Thebes (γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν, *Ba.* 854). Dionysus, aware of the destructive power of ridicule, intends to publically humiliate Pentheus, by having his subjects see him in female garments.¹¹⁰⁶ Such act, as the king mentions earlier himself, is considered to be shameful and may inflict harm on his honour (*Ba.* 828, 840-2).¹¹⁰⁷ Although Dionysus plans to use derisive laughter in retaliation, however, we do not hear more about this.¹¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, we may see that laughter may accept a punitive role, whilst hostility is concerned.

¹¹⁰⁵ Burnett (1970) 23: 'At this point, and only at this point, Pentheus becomes an object not of beneficence but of justice and Dionysus begins to function as an agent of punishment'. Nordgren (2012) 107 suggests that the interjection ἄ 'could be an expression of him [i.e. Dionysus] coming to think of something, and using this to turn Pentheus' attention to something other than he had planned'; cf. also Dodds (1960) 175 n. 810-12.

¹¹⁰⁶ Cf. Pentheus initial shame at the thought of dressing up as a woman in *Ba.* 821-42. See also the discussion on his fear of incurring the ridicule of the Bacchants in such clothing (*Ba.* 842) in section 5.2.5.4 below.

¹¹⁰⁷ I discuss this matter in more detail in section 5.2.5.4. below.

¹¹⁰⁸ Cf. Seaford (1996) 216 n. 854-5.

the two characters, of which one imposes his power onto the other to the latter's dismay.¹¹¹² However, the *Bacchae* contains also some references to hostile laughter connected with the feeling of glee over a vanquished foe. Let us, hence, turn our attention to those examples which refer to triumphant laughter.

5.2.11. Triumph

A laugh of triumph may manifest one's exultation resulting from victory. In the *Bacchae*, I have found two references to laughter in connection with the idea of triumph over the defeat of an enemy; these are the instances in *Ba.* 842 and *Ba.* 1012. Before I proceed with the examination of these two examples, it is necessary to first elucidate the rapport between Pentheus and the Bacchants.

From the very beginning of the play, the hostility of the king of Thebes towards the female worshipers of Dionysus is evident. In particular, the opening lines of his first speech (*Ba.* 215ff.) express his anger with the Theban women taking part in the Bacchic rites (*Ba.* 217-25), his attempts to hunt them down (*Ba.* 226-7) as well as his intentions of imprisoning all free Bacchants (*Ba.* 229-32). Pentheus, hence, has used force before and plans to use it again on the women raving in on Mount Cithaeron. Upon hearing the news about two failures in pacifying the Bacchae (*Ba.* 443-8; 677-774), his fury and aggression towards them increases. In his view, the women's behaviour is an outrage (ὑβρισμα βακχῶν, *Ba.* 779) and a great blemish to the Greeks (ψόγος ἐς Ἑλληνας μέγας, *Ba.* 779), hence should be put to a definite end, even if it requires bloodshed ('I will sacrifice, indeed, stirring up much female slaughter, as they are worthy of it, in the folds of Kithairon', θύσω, φόνον γε θῆλυν, ὥσπερ ἄξιαι, / πολὺν ταράξας ἐν Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς, *Ba.* 796-7). Before Dionysus finally interferes with his divine powers, the ruler of Thebes orders

¹¹¹² Kott (1999) 192 refers to this as the clash of mystical arrogance ('arogancja mistycyzmu) with that of rationality ('arogancja racjonalności'). Similarly, Czerwińska (1999) 252.

military action against the Bacchantes ('Order all the shieldbearers and the riders of swift-footed horses to muster, and those who brandish light shields and pluck with hand the strings of bows, as we shall make war on the maenads', κέλευε πάντας ἀσπιδηφόρους / ἵππων τ' ἀπαντᾶν ταχυπόδων ἐπεμβάτας / πέλτας θ' ὅσοι πάλλουσι καὶ τόξων χερσὶ / ψάλλουσι νευράς, ὡς ἐπιστρατεύσομεν / βᾶκχαισιν', *Ba.* 781-5). In light of his outward contempt, aggression and determination to use physical violence, it is obvious that the Theban king not only considers himself an enemy of the Bacchae, but also as being at war with them.¹¹¹³

The first example of triumphant laughter in this tragedy may be traced in *Ba.* 842 only if we accept the idea of an open conflict between Pentheus and the Bacchae. Dionysus has just begun to use his powers in order to take vengeance on the impious man (*Ba.* 810ff.). Falling under the god's spell, the Theban king expresses a sudden desire to see the Bacchic revels on Mount Citaeron (*Ba.* 812). Once he decides to spy on the women, Dionysus points to the fact of him needing to sneak in the guise of a Bacchant (*Ba.* 821-23). At first, Pentheus is reluctant to the idea, considering it shameful for a man to dress up in female clothing (*Ba.* 828), however, gradually, he is persuaded by the god to do so (*Ba.* 838). Before entering the house so to adorn the Bacchic attire, Pentheus expresses his concern about being seen in such clothing by the citizens of Thebes (*Ba.* 840-2):

Πε.	καὶ πῶς δι' ἄστεως εἶμι Καδμείους λαθῶν;
Δι.	ὁδοὺς ἐρήμους ἴμεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἡγήσομαι.
Πε.	πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε μὴ ἴγγελαῖν βᾶκχας ἐμοί.
Pentheus:	And how can I go through the town without being noticed by the Kadmeians?
Dionysus:	We shall go through deserted streets; and I will lead you.
Pentheus:	Anything is better than that the bacchantes laugh (in triumph) over me.

¹¹¹³ Pentheus emphasizes this with the words ἐπιστρατεύσομεν βᾶκχαισιν, 'we will make war with the Bacchantes' in *Ba.* 784-5.

As we can see, in line 842, the king transfers, from one moment to another, his fear of incurring laughter at his appearance from the Thebans onto the Bacchantes. Here, he uses the term ἐγγελάω, 'laugh at', which primary sense regards mockery.¹¹¹⁴ However, this sudden switch of the feared subject of laughter has had scholars dispute over the meaning of line 842, since it appears as an illogical response in the dialogue.¹¹¹⁵ In his 1987 article, entitled 'Whose laughter does Pentheus fear? (Eur. Ba. 842)', Neuburg argues against the interpretation of the king's anxiety of being seen in female garments by the Bacchantes and, hence, attract their mockery. In his view, such understanding lacks sense, for, as Dionysus mentioned in *Ba.* 823, should the disguise fail and have Pentheus' identity be discovered, then the maenads would kill him.¹¹¹⁶ Neuburg, thus, proposes the emendated πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε μὴ γελαῖν βᾶκχην ἐμέ, which alters the meaning of the line into 'anything but that [someone] should laugh at me for being a Bacchant'.¹¹¹⁷ In effect of these changes, the sense of line 842 would follow, albeit indirectly, the idea of line 840, since Pentheus is referring to himself in female appearance, which could attract public ridicule (with the Thebans implied). Neuburg's proposition, however, has been criticized by Stevens in his 1988 article under the same title, in which the scholar proves no need for an emendation in the disputed line. Accordingly, Stevens also objects to the interpretation of Pentheus fearing the Bacchantes' mockery at his female appearance, therefore suggests the meaning 'triumph over' for ἐγγελάω instead of 'laugh at'.¹¹¹⁸ To support his argument, the scholar adduces two passages indicating the king's fury at the maenads (*Ba.* 785-6; 803), whose wild conduct regarded as an 'outrage' (ὕβρισμα, *Ba.* 779)

¹¹¹⁴ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6.

¹¹¹⁵ Dodds (1960) 179 n. 842. This obscurity is visible in the translations of Way (1912b) 73: 'Better were anything than Bacchantes' mock!'; Kirk (1979) 50: 'Anything is preferable to the bacchantes mocking at me'; Kovacs (2002b) 93: 'Well, any course is better than having the bacchantes treat me with contempt'.

¹¹¹⁶ Neuburg (1987) 228.

¹¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 229.

¹¹¹⁸ Stevens (1988) 246.

provokes his open hostilities.¹¹¹⁹ As a result, Stevens proposes such understanding of Pentheus' thinking in line 842: 'I still find repugnant the idea of dressing as a woman, but anything would be better than allowing the Bacchants to triumph over me, and a reconnaissance in disguise could be the first move against them'.¹¹²⁰ As we can see, this interpretation corresponds to my discussion on the king's notion of being at war with the female worshippers of Dionysus. We may, therefore, agree with Stevens on the matter that the term ἐγγελάω appears in relation to this conflict. Nevertheless, his suggestion of the meaning 'triumph over' for the verb excludes from its semantics the original idea of laughter.¹¹²¹ While the feeling of triumph may be expressed by laughter, nevertheless, it need not always be. In *Ba.* 842, however, Pentheus evokes, primarily, the image of the Bacchants laughing, and it is this laughter he recognizes to be directed against him. In the context of his open conflict with the maenads, we may notice that he fears not his defeat, but the possibility of his enemies laughing with glee at him. In this respect, his anxiety of the Bacchae in 842 corresponds to that of the Thebans in 840, for both lines reveal the king's fear of becoming the object of others' laughter. As we can see, Pentheus shares the characteristics of the 'shame-culture', which considers the act of being 'laughed at' to be the most intolerable of insults.¹¹²² Therefore, we may agree that the instance of ἐγγελάω in *Ba.* 840 denotes not triumph, but triumphant laughter the king imagines to incur from the Bacchants.¹¹²³

Regarding the Bacchae's disposition towards Pentheus, it is not, at first, distinctly outlined. In the first part of the play (*Ba.* 1-862), we may observe that the Chorus recognizes Pentheus' animosity towards it but does not seem to reflect it. Firstly, the Bacchants are appalled with the king's verbal attack at

¹¹¹⁹ Stevens (1988) 246.

¹¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 247.

¹¹²¹ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 138 n. 89.

¹¹²² Segal (1982) 199. Similarly Seaford (1996) 215 n. 842.

¹¹²³ Same meaning reflected in the translation of Gibbons quoted in Gibbons and Segal (2001) 75: 'Anything's better than the Bakkhai laughing that they've won'.

their god and them, considering it to be an act of ‘impiety’ (τῆς δυσσεβείας, *Ba.* 263) and ‘impure insolence’ (οὐχ ὀσίαν / ὕβριν, *Ba.* 374-5), however, do not reciprocate it. Next, they invoke Dionysus to shorten Pentheus’ aggressive plans towards them (*Ba.* 537-55), yet do not ask for retaliation. Nonetheless, we may notice a significant alteration of tone in the Chorus’ speech after Dionysus changes his strategy towards the Theban king in line 810. In the choral ode of the third stasimon, the Bacchae speak of divine punishment awaiting those who insult the gods (*Ba.* 882-96):

Χο. ὀρμᾶται μόλις, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 πιστόν <τι> τὸ θεῖον
 σθένος· ἀπευθύνει δὲ βροτῶν
 τοὺς τ' ἀγνωμοσύναν τιμῶν-
 τας καὶ μὴ τὰ θεῶν αὖξον-
 τας σὺν μαινομέναι δόξαι.
 κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως
 δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ
 θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον· οὐ
 γὰρ κρεῖσσόν ποτε τῶν νόμων
 γινώσκειν χρῆ καὶ μελετᾶν.
 κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-
 ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν,
 ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον,
 τό τ' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῶι νόμιμον
 ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός.

Chorus: Slowly does heaven move, but still
 its strength is <something> sure:
 it brings to destruction those mortals
 who honor folly
 and in the mad imagination of their hearts
 do not reverence the gods.
 The gods craftily conceal
 the unhastening tread of time,
 and they hunt down the impious man.
 Never should a man’s thought and practice
 rise above the laws.
 For it costs but little to believe
 that these have sovereign power:
 the might of heaven, whatever it be,
 and what through long ages has ever been lawful
 and upheld by nature.¹¹²⁴

¹¹²⁴ Translation in Kovacs (2002b) 99.

The Chorus continues the theme of hunting down impious men in their next choral ode in the fourth stasimon. Here, however, they directly express their desire for vengeance on Pentheus (*Ba.* 992-96, repeated verbatim in 1011-16):

- Χο. ἴτω δίκαια φανερός, ἴτω
 ξιφηφόρος φονεύου-
 σα λαιμῶν διαμπὰξ
 τὸν ἄθεον ἄνομον ἄδικον Ἐχίονος
 γόνον γηγενῆ
- Chorus: Let justice go manifest, let her carrying a sword slaughtering
 right through the throat the godless, lawless, unjust earth-
 born offspring of Echion.

As we can see, only with their god's direct interference in Pentheus' military actions do the Bacchantes dare to express their outward hostility towards their oppressor.

It is in the fourth choral ode that we find the second instance of triumphant laughter in the *Bacchae*, which is, in my opinion, discernable in the reference to Dionysus' 'laughing face' (*Ba.* 1021). At one point in their ode of vengeance sung in the fourth stasimon, the Chorus of Bacchantes summons Dionysus to hunt down their oppressor Pentheus (*Ba.* 1017-23):

- Χο. φάνηθι ταῦρος ἢ πολύκρανος ἰδεῖν
 δράκων ἢ πυριφλέγων
 ὄρᾶσθαι λέων.
 ἴθ', ὦ Βάκχε, θῆρ ἀγρευτᾶι βακχᾶν
 γελῶντι προσώπῳ περίβαλε βρόχον
 θανάσιμον ὑπ' ἀγέλαν πεσόν-
 τι τὰν μαινάδων.
- Chorus: Appear as a bull or a many-headed snake (for us) to see or a
 fire-blazing lion to behold. Go, o Bacchus, beast, **with
 laughing face** throw around the hunter of bacchantes the
 deadly noose as he falls under the herd of maenads.

As discussed in section 5.2.2. above, the reference to laughter in line 1021 may denote not only how the face of the beast-Dionysus looks, but what it expresses. Since the Bacchantes expect their god to punish Pentheus for his aggression towards them, they may evoke the image of the god coming 'with a laughing face' in order to denote their feeling of anticipated triumph over the previously

aggressive ‘hunter of bacchants’ (ἀγρευτᾶι βακχᾶν, *Ba.* 1020). In chapter IV, we have seen a similar example in the Sophoclean *Electra*, in which the title character promises her brother to conceal ‘her laughter on the face’ (Soph. *El.* 1310). As I have argued, *Electra*’s γέλωσ expresses her anticipated joy in vanquishing her detested mother.¹¹²⁵ Similarly in the case of the *Bacchae*, for the Chorus imagines its god as also sharing their anticipated joy at the forthcoming destruction of the ruler of Thebes. With this interpretation, the expression γελῶντι προσώπω refers simultaneously to Dionysus’, but also the Chorus’ anticipation of the forthcoming punishment of the Theban king, who was previously aggressive towards them. As we see further in the play, the *Bacchae* rejoice at the news of Pentheus’ death (‘I cry in ecstasy, a stranger, with barbarian songs. For no longer do I cower under fear of chains’, εὐάζω ξένα μέλεσι βαρβάροις / οὐκέτι γὰρ δεσμῶν ὑπὸ φόβῳι πτήσσω, *Ba.* 1034-5). Therefore, it is apparent that the image of the god’s laughing face in 1021 anticipates the Bacchants’ triumph over their enemy.

5.2.12. The concept of shining

A single reference to laughter associated with the concept of brightness is found in the fourth episode of the *Trojan Women*. The Greeks have murdered Astyanax, Hector’s son, by hurling him from the city walls of Troy to his death. After the execution, the child’s body is brought to the Trojan Women for burial (*Tr.* 1118). His grandmother, then, laments over the little corpse placed on his father’s bronze shield. In a set of fifty lines (*Tr.* 1156-1206), Hecuba delivers a speech, personal in tone, in which she intermingles memories about the child’s past with her observations on his present lifeless body (*Tr.* 1173-77):

Εκ. δύστηνε, κρατὸς ὡς σ’ ἔκειρεν ἀθλίως
 τείχη πατρῶια, Λοξίου πυργώματα,
 ὄν πόλλ’ ἐκήπευσ’ ἠ τεκοῦσα βόστρυχον

¹¹²⁵ Cf. chapter IV, section 4.2.2.3.

φιλήμασιν τ' ἔδωκεν ἔνθεν ἐκγελαῖ
ὄστέων ῥαγέντων φόνος, ἴν' αἰσχρὰ μὴ στέγω.

Hecuba: How brutally, poor boy, your father's walls, the towers built by Apollo, hale shorn those curls on your head which your mother so often tended and kissed, and where the blood now **laughs out** between the broken bones. I will not hide the brutality of it.

The queen's reminiscence about Astyanax's features whilst alive clashes with her description of his disfigured corpse. In the cited passage, Hecuba juxtaposes two images of the boy regarding the past and present conditions of his head (literally 'curl', βόστρυχος); before, it was the tender object of maternal affection (ἐκίπευσ' ἢ τεκοῦσα βόστρυχον / φιλήμασιν τ' ἔδωκεν, *Tr.* 1175-6), but now it lies on his father's shield as evidence of shameless murder ('I will not hide the brutality of it', ἴν' αἰσχρὰ μὴ στέγω, *Tr.* 1177). It is at this point that Hecuba applies the language of laughter to describe the poor state of her grandson's crushed head 'where the blood now laughs out between broken bones' (ἔνθεν ἐκγελαῖ / ὄστέων ῥαγέντων φόνος, *Tr.* 1176-7). Here, the verb of this sentence is ἐκγελάω 'burst out laughing', a rare compound that usually implies the vocalization of laughter.¹¹²⁶ Also, without any doubt, the subject to this verb is the noun φόνος which can mean 'murder', 'slaughter', 'gore' or 'blood'.¹¹²⁷ Since the subject of a typically human action is a non-animated object, we may already recognize that the lexeme ἐκγελάω is used in metaphorical manner.

Scholars, generally, accept one of the two possible figurative meanings of ἐκγελάω in *Tr.* 1176 either 1) pertaining to the aural aspect of laughter, or 2) to the visual element of the phenomenon. In particular, the former interpretation of the term is found in modern lexica, which, in their entries to ἐκγελάω, adduce the example of *Tr.* 1176-7 in the meaning of 'a liquid that rushes out

¹¹²⁶ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.6. See also, Halliwell (2008) 522 n. 12.

¹¹²⁷ LSJ s.v. φόνος.

with a *gurgling* sound'.¹¹²⁸ According to the lexicographers of the LSJ or *DGE*, ἐκγελάξ signifies the bubbling noise the blood makes coming out of Astyanax's crushed skull. However, Lee argues that the speed of blood pouring out of a head-wound is too slow to make a sound resembling that of laughter.¹¹²⁹ In effect, most scholars prefer the visual interpretation of ἐκγελάξ in *Tr.* 1176, although they allude to this meaning in different manner. For instance, some translators, e.g. Way and Kovacs, render ἐκγελάξ with 'smile' or 'grin', in which the visual aspect of laughter is identified with the facial expression.¹¹³⁰ Others, like Barlow (cited above), Shapiro and Lattimore, allude to the brightness of the blood coming out of the wound.¹¹³¹ In light of the possible etymological connection of the γελα- root with the concept of shining, this last interpretation especially seems plausible.¹¹³² In this case, the verb ἐκγελάξ 'laughs out' is used to signify the shining quality of its subject described by the term φόνοϛ.

The noun φόνοϛ, however, as mentioned above, may accept different meanings: on the one hand it may designate 1) 'murder' or 'slaughter', which is a specific action, i.e. the act of killing a living being in barbarous fashion; on the other, it may signify 2) 'blood', thus, regard a physical object, in this case, a bodily liquid in living creatures. In effect of the semantic ambiguity of the term, two interpretations of the sentence ἔνθεν ἐκγελάξ ὀστέων ῥαγέντων φόνοϛ in

¹¹²⁸ LSJ s.v. ἐκγελάω; also *DGE* s.v. ἐκγελάω 2: 'de un líquido salir a borbotones'. (original emphases).

¹¹²⁹ Lee (1976) 262. Similarly Clarke (2005) 50 n. 22: 'Hekabe is imagining the child lying dead at the present moment of her speech, some time after the murder itself; any gurgling of blood would have lasted only a few seconds after the child hit the ground'.

¹¹³⁰ Way (1916) 445: 'through shattered bones forth grins murder – a ghastliness I cannot speak'; Kovacs (1999) 125: 'the blood now appears in a smiling gash, to speak the ugly truth plainly'. Cf. the macabre comparison of strips of blood to that of a smile in Denniston (1936) 116: 'the white strip of bone between two strips of blood is compared to a set of teeth smiling between two red lips'. The idea of grinning in *Tr.* 1176 is common amongst Polish scholars, cf. Abramowiczówna (1958-65) s.v. ἐκγελάω: 'E. Tr. 1176 skąd wyszczerza się mord'; Łanowski (2006) 195: 'teraz tam szczyrzy kość roztrzaskana'.

¹¹³¹ Shapiro (2009) 71: 'The skull now broken, bright blood gushing out / Like wicked laughter between the bones'; with the noticeable omission of any reference to laughter in Lattimore (2013b) 125: 'where the brightness now is blood shining through torn bones'.

¹¹³² Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.1. and 2.1.1.2.6.

Tr. 1176-7 are permissible: either the expression signifies the child's blood visible between the shattered bones,¹¹³³ or it becomes a metaphor for the Greeks' brutal murder of the boy, which evidence is seen on his crushed skull.¹¹³⁴ It becomes, then, apparent that the interpretation of lines 1176-7 in the *Trojan Women* depends not only on the accepted meaning of the verb ἐκγελάω but also on the reading of its subject φόνος as well.

Worth mentioning is the interesting interpretation of *Tr.* 1176-7 proposed by Arnould who is of the opinion that Euripides employs the double connotations of both ἐκγελάω and φόμος. According to the French scholar, the verb appears to evoke the concept of laughter in both of its aspects, aural and visual, whereas the noun seems to indicate the object of blood, but as a result of the act of murder. In this view, the sentence ἔνθεν ἐκγελαῖ ὀστέων ῥαγέντων φόμος reflects two ideas simultaneously: although it primarily refers to the brightness of the visible blood (and brain) in the head-wound, however, at the same time, it is a metaphor for the hostile laughter of the Greeks satisfied with committing such a brutal crime on an innocent child.¹¹³⁵ Here, the reference to the sound of laughter is noticeably metonymic. Arnould, hence, proposes a double reading of *Tr.* 1176-7, combining the different possible meanings of both ἐκγελάω and φόμος.

In the *Trojan Women*, we find an example of the language of laughter applied in relation to the descriptive image of a murdered child. By evoking the image of laughter with the word ἐκγελάω, Hecuba creates a striking metaphor to express the horror of the sight that lies before her: bright blood, crushed white bones, the inside of a skull, blood-stained curls, the dead body of a little boy. Without any doubt, the power of this metaphor resides in the grotesque

¹¹³³ As in the translation of Way (1916) *ad loc.*

¹¹³⁴ Cf. the translations of Barlow (1986); Kovacs (1999); Shapiro (2009); all *ad loc.*

¹¹³⁵ Arnould (1990) 139: 'ἔνθεν ἐκγελαῖ ὀστέων ῥαγέντων φόμος — <<d'ou jaillit l'éclat meurtrier des os brisés>>: à la fois éclat lumineux du sang et de la cervelle, et éclats de rire des ennemis, satisfaits de leur crime'. For the meaning of 'brain' for φόμος, cf. Sch. Eur. *Tr.* 1176: φόνον δὲ λέγει τὸν ἐγκέφαλον, 'he terms brain with φόμος', (my translation).

combination of laughter with gore. Although we can recognize that the visual element in the semantics of ἐκγελάω corresponds more aptly with Hecuba's verbal description of what she sees, nevertheless we cannot fully exclude the possible evocation of the concept of sound. In fact, the dramatic effect of this disturbing metaphor noticeably increases if we accept Arnould's suggestion on the simultaneous reference to both aural and visual aspects of the concept of laughter in *Tr.* 1176-7.

Having said this, I would like to turn my attention to the discernable functions Hecuba's description of Astyanax serves in this tragedy. Firstly, the queen's verbal depiction of her grandson's body is necessary in maintaining the illusion of the play, due to the fact that in ancient performances props were used to imitate corpses.¹¹³⁶ Therefore, only her words may draw the audience's attention to the lifeless body. Secondly, by focusing on the smallest physical detail in the depiction of Astyanax, Euripides gives Hecuba's speech extra dramatic significance; apart from conveying her distress, the verbal description of her grandson's body plays a role in heightening the emotional tension of the whole scene (*Tr.* 1156-1206).¹¹³⁷ As part of the queen's pictorial language, the grotesque reference to laughter may only contribute to this dramatic effect.¹¹³⁸ It is, therefore, for tragic purposes that Euripides exploits the ambiguous semantics of ἐκγελάω in the *Trojan Women*.

¹¹³⁶ Cf. Roisman (2014b) s.v. 'props'.

¹¹³⁷ Barlow (1971) 80-1.

¹¹³⁸ Interestingly, in her paper 'Laughter and Blood: A Homeric Echo in Euripides' *Trojan Women*', presented at the 145th Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association in Chicago, January 2-5 2014, Emily Allen Hornblower proposes a connection between Eur. *Tr.* 1176-7 and Hom. *Il.* 6. 471-75, on the basis of the occurrence of ἐκγελάω 'laugh out loud' in both passages. In her view, Euripides employs the rare laughter-word in the *Trojan Women*, in order to recall the Homeric scene, in which the boy's parents, Hector and Andromache, 'laugh out loud' at the sight of their son being afraid of his father's helmet (ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατήρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ, *Il.* 6. 471). With the evocation of the Iliadic familial scene, Euripides creates a sharp contrast between Astyanax's happy past and the present horror of his death, which, according to Hornblower, increases the dramatic effect of Hecuba's speech upon the body of her grandchild.

In this part of the chapter, I have discussed the interpretations of laughter-words employed by Euripides in his surviving dramas. In general, I have distinguished six main categories of the phenomenon the applied Greek terminology refers to: 1) the physiology of laughter (sound and facial expression, 2) its connection with humour, 3) the psychological aspect of laughter (delight, joy, state of madness, 4) the communicative function of laughter, 5) laughter as the manifestation of one's disposition towards another (playfulness, mockery, hostility, triumph), and 6) the Greek association of laughter with the concept of shinning. It is, thus, evident, that the poet recognizes laughter to be a multi-facted phenomenon.

5.3. Laughter-words in the fragments

Euripides is believed to have staged 88 plays.¹¹³⁹ Today, we possess a very large number of fragments which complement our understanding of Euripidean drama. Nonetheless, these fragments consist only of eight instances of laughter-words; these are listed in table 12 below:¹¹⁴⁰

Fragment	Lexeme	Form in text	Grammar
fr. 327	γελάω	γελᾶν	Inf. pr. act.
fr. 492. 3	γελοῖος	(μισῶ) γελοίους	Acc. pl.
fr. 460	γέλως	γέλως (γίγνεται)	Nom. sg.
fr. 492. 1	γέλως	τοῦ γέλωτος	Gen. sg.
fr. 492. 5	γέλως	(ἐν) γέλωτι	Dat. sg.
fr. 1063	γέλως	(μέγας) γέλως	Nom. sg.
fr. 991	ἐγγελάω	ἐγγελαῖ	Ind. pr. act. 3 rd sg.
fr. 362	συγγελάω	συγγελαῖν	Inf. pr. act.

Table 15. List of Greek words on laughter present in the fragments of Euripides.

¹¹³⁹ Czerwińska (2005b) 774. However, the number varies among ancient sources, e.g. *Vita Euripidis* and the Suda list 92 works composed in general, but the former states 75 dramas as surviving to the Byzantine period, whereas the latter declares 77; for a discussion on the number of works and the history of the transmission of the texts, see Lesky (2006) 319-28.

¹¹⁴⁰ Fragments of Euripides are numbered according to the edition of Kannicht in *TrGF V*.

In this section I will be dealing with such lexemes: three verbs γελάω, ἐγγελάω, συγγελάω, one noun γέλως and one adjective γελοῖος. Furthermore, we will see that six of these references are found in fragments attributed to specific plays (fr. 327; fr. 362; fr. 460; fr. 492), whereas the sources of the other two references remain unknown (fr. 991; fr. 1063). I will discuss these fragments in the same manner as I have done in the previous two chapters, firstly focusing on the attributed fragments, then turning to those of unknown plays.

5.3.1. Fragments of identified plays

Six laughter-words are found in fragments attributed to specific plays. These are the *Danae* (fr. 327), *Cretan Women* (fr. 460), *Erechtheus* (fr. 362), and *Melanippe Captive* (fr. 492). It is worth noting that the passages I will discuss below come from tragedies.

5.3.1.1. Derision

The first reference to laughter in a Euripidean fragment comes from the lost play *Danae*. This tragedy presented the story of the Argive princess baring the child of Zeus and being cast with it in a chest by her father, Acrisius.¹¹⁴¹ In fr. 327, an unknown character speaks of the social impact of wealthy people:

φιλοῦσι γάρ τοι τῶν μὲν ὀλβίων βροτοὶ
σοφοὺς τήγγεισθαι† τοὺς λόγους, ὅταν δέ τις
λειπῶν ἀπ' οἴκων εὖ λέγη πένης ἀνήρ,
γελᾶν· ἐγὼ δὲ πολλάκις σοφωτέρους
πένητας ἀνδρας εἰσορῶ τῶν πλουσίων
καὶ <τοὺς> θεοῖσι μικρὰ θύοντας τέλη
τῶν βουθυτούντων ὄντας εὐσεβεστέρους.

The truth is, men usually regard† the words of the prosperous as wise, but when some poor man from a modest house speaks well, **they laugh**. I often observe that poor men are wiser than the rich, however, and that those who

¹¹⁴¹ For a reconstruction of the tragedy's plot, see Karamanou (2006) 22-9.

offer small sacrifices to the gods are more reverent than those who sacrifice oxen.¹¹⁴²

We may recognize the fact that this fragment has been preserved for its sententious tone,¹¹⁴³ in which the character makes a general observation of men (βροτοὶ, v. 1) tending to (φιλοῦσι, literally 'they love', v. 1) give credence to the words of the rich (τῶν μὲν ὀλβίων, v. 1), but also being fond of laughing (φιλοῦσι... βροτοὶ... γελᾶν) at those with less money (λειπῶν ἀπ' οἴκων... πένης ἀνὴρ, v. 3). Accordingly, people treat with respect the opinions of those who are rich, whereas reject similar views expressed by those of lesser wealth. Apparently, the speaker reproaches this human tendency to ridicule others on socially biased grounds. Here, the word γελᾶν in line 4 clearly evokes the idea of derision in regard of dismissing those public speakers only on the basis of their low material status.¹¹⁴⁴

5.3.1.2. Schadenfreude

Malicious delight connected with laughter is discernable in a fragment of the lost tragedy *Cretan Women*. In general, the play unfolded the consequences of the improper liaison of the Cretan princess Aerope with a manservant. Her father, king Cathreus, decided to have her killed for such a disgraceful act and handed her to Nauplius, an Argive commander, who, instead of executing the girl, had her marry Pleisthenes.¹¹⁴⁵ It is commonly presumed that fr. 460 deals with the discovery of Aerope's disgraceful affair, since the unknown character speaks of the necessity of concealing the fact of committing shameful deeds.

λύπη μὲν ἄτη περιπεσεῖν αἰσχρᾶ τινι·

¹¹⁴² Translation in Collard and Cropp (2008a) 335. Hereon, I quote the English translations of other Euripidean fragments from this edition, unless stated otherwise.

¹¹⁴³ Transmitted in Stob. 4.33.14.

¹¹⁴⁴ Cf. Karamanou (2006) 98 n. 4.

¹¹⁴⁵ Sch. Soph. *Ai.* 1297a: ἡ ἱστορία ἐν ταῖς "Κρήσσαις" Εὐριπίδου, ὅτι διαφθαρεῖσαν αὐτὴν λάθρα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεράποντος ὁ πατὴρ Ναυπλίῳ παρέδωκεν ἐντειλάμενος καταποντῶσαι· ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἠγγύησε Πλεισθένεια. Difficulties, however, remain in reconstructing the plot of the play, cf. Collard and Cropp (2008a) 517-18.

εἰ δ' οὖν γένοιτο, χρὴ περιστεῖλαι καλῶς
κρύπτοντα καὶ μὴ πᾶσι κηρύσσειν τάδε·
γέλως γὰρ ἐχθροῖς γίγνεται τὰ τοιάδε.

It is painful to have a shaming disaster befall one; but if it should happen, one must conceal and cover it well, and not proclaim to it at all. Such things become a **mockery** for one's enemies.

Noticeably, this fragment contains the motive of dreading the laughter of enemies. We may clearly recognize the speaker's fear of making those people who are hostile towards him/her, laugh maliciously at him/her should they find out about the 'shaming disaster' (ἄτη... αἰσχρᾶ, v. 1) Here, it is evident that the word γέλως in line 4 pertains to the idea of Schadenfreude, since the dreaded subject of laughter are explicit enemies (ἐχθροῖς, v. 4) taking delight at one's misfortunes. Again, the language of laughter is used to evoke the image of people laughing at the misfortunes of their antagonists.

5.3.1.3. Humour

Greek laughter-words used in relation to humour appear in a fragment of the lost *Melanippe Captive*.¹¹⁴⁶ In fr. 492, an unknown character expresses his/her detest towards people who make others laugh as well as the humorous devices they employ:

ἀνδρῶν δὲ πολλοὶ τοῦ γέλωτος εἵνεκα
ἀσκοῦσι χάριτας κερτόμους· ἐγὼ δὲ πῶς
μισῶ γελοίους, οἵτινες τήτει σοφῶν
ἀχάλιν' ἔχουσι στόματα, κεῖς ἀνδρῶν μὲν οὐ
τελοῦσιν ἀριθμόν, ἐν γέλωτι δ' εὐπρεπεῖς.

Many men practise ingratiating mockery **for a joke**, but I am inclined to despise **those jokers** who keep their mouths unbridled for want of wise things to say; they may be conspicuous **for joking**, but they do not count as men.

Interestingly, this fragment alone contains of three laughter-words: two instances of the noun γέλως, of which one refers to the elicitation of laughter in others (τοῦ γέλωτος εἵνεκα, lit. 'for a laugh', v. 1) whereas the second regards

¹¹⁴⁶ On the plot of the play, see Lesky (2006) 507.

the skill of joking (ἐν γέλωτι εὐπρεπεῖς, lit. 'conspicuous for joking', v. 5); and a single occurrence of the adjective γελοῖος, which is used in the plural as a substantive to denote 'jokers' (γελοῖους, v. 3). As we can see, the cumulation of these terms depict a social image of laughter consisting of witty people telling jokes and having others laugh with amusement. Mockery, therefore, mentioned in line 2 (χάριτας κερτόμους), is used for humorous purposes.¹¹⁴⁷ In this regard, we may recognize the fact that the speaker expresses his hatred for humorous laughter, in particular.

5.3.1.4. A negative evaluation of laughter

In the Euripidean fragments, we may find references to laughter, which refer to the phenomenon in non-favourable terms. Such example is found in the previously discussed fr. 492, in which the unknown character dismisses mockery, but also jokes and those who make them for fun. Clearly, the speaker expresses a strong dislike (μισῶ, v. 3) in those people who perform ridicule (ἀσκοῦσι κερτόμους, v. 2) in order to raise a laugh (τοῦ γέλωτος εἴνεκα, v. 1) as to gain other's favour (χάριτας, 2).¹¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, such humorists (γελοῖους, v. 3), noted for their art of joking (ἐν γέλωτι δ' εὐπρεπεῖς, v. 5), incur laughter only to make the impression of being wise (οἵτινες τήτει σοφῶν, v. 3). However, such behaviour is considered to be highly immoderate. This is especially noticeable by the speaker's use of the expression 'unbridled mouths' (ἀχάλινα στόματα). In effect, the unknown character does not regard such people, who speak in an excessive manner, as real men (κεῖς ἀνδρῶν μὲν οὐ / τελοῦσιν ἀριθμόν, v. 4-5). Without any doubt, the speaker's objections to

¹¹⁴⁷ For a discussion on the verb κερτομέω 'sneer', 'taunt at' in connection with laughter, see Arnould (1990) 115-16.

¹¹⁴⁸ Cf. Halliwell (2008) 19 n. 42.

derision but also humour are of moral nature.¹¹⁴⁹ In short, fr. 492 preserves the views of a discernible laughter-hater.¹¹⁵⁰

A similar non-favourable view of laughter is found fr. 362 of the tragedy *Erechtheus*. In this fragment, the title character gives a farewell speech to his young son, listing many pieces of good advice on life.¹¹⁵¹ At one point, the king of Athens speaks of what sort of people his child should avoid in the future (fr. 362 21-23):

ὀμιλίας δὲ τὰς γεραιτέρων φίλει,
ἀκόλαστ<α δ>' ἦθη λαμπρὰ **συγγελαῶν** μόνον
μίσει· βραχεῖα τέρψις ἡδονῆς κακῆς.

Welcome the company of older men, and scorn unbridled behaviour which wins acclaim only **by raising laughs**: there's brief enjoyment in dishonourable pleasure.

In these lines, we may notice that Erechtheus advocates temperance in his son's life. Accordingly, this virtue requires a moderation in certain behaviours, which, performed in excess may dispense disgrace, in spite of their pleasant character. As the Athenian king stresses in line 2, such dishonour is brought upon by ἀκόλαστα ἦθη, 'undisciplined manners', which gain the approval of others only by making them laugh (λαμπρὰ συγγελαῶν μόνον). Such disapproval is emphasized by the king's juxtaposition of the two groups of his son's possible companions: the one of older men (γεραιτέρων), whose company the father recommends (indicated by the imperative φίλει, 'love'), in opposition to that of, as we may deduce, young men, whose company he condemns (indicated by the imperative μίσει, 'hate').¹¹⁵² In reference to the

¹¹⁴⁹ Similar notion expresses the Better Argument who in Ar. *Nu.* 992 promises to teach the young Phidippides 'to feel shame at what is shameful and flare at anyone who mocks you' (καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς αἰσχύνεσθαι κἄν σκώπτῃ τίς σε φλέγεσθαι). Translation in Henderson (1998b) 145.

¹¹⁵⁰ Curiously, Euripides is considered to be a μισογέλως 'laughter-hater' in Alex. Aet. fr. 7. 1-2 CA, cf. chapter II, n. 288. See also Halliwell (2008) 271 n. 18.

¹¹⁵¹ For the reconstruction of the plot of the play, see Collard and Cropp (2008a) 363-7. For a general discussion on the play, see Lesky (2006) 423-4, and esp. 423 n. 165 for further references.

¹¹⁵² On the fondness of laughter amongst the young, cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1389b 11, who calls the young φιλογέλωτες, 'laughter-lovers' (cf. chapter II, n. 284). In Ar. *Nu.* 983, Better Argument

latter group, Euripides employs the very rare compound συγγελάω, meaning ‘laugh together with’, with which he indicates the social aspect of laughter. However, this sociality is, too, condemned by the king. The reason for this is the indecency of the ‘unbridled behaviour’, which cause laughter and, thus, make it also improper itself. Although Erechtheus recognizes the pleasant nature of such shared experience, nevertheless it is a short-lasting and a dishonourable sort of pleasure (ἡδονῆς κακῆς). As we can see, this fragment reflects a negative image of laughter in terms of morality, should it be incurred by indecent conduct and shared in the wrong company.

In the fragments attributed to specific Euripidean tragedies, we may recognize that, generally, four main concepts of laughter are evoked in connection with: 1) derision, 2) hostility, 3) humour, and 4) the negative evaluation of the phenomenon.

5.3.2. Fragments of unidentified plays

The last two Euripidean uses of laughter-words are traceable in fragments of unknown dramas. Neither the title, nor the genre of the plays are known to us. However, we may distinguish one common feature in both fragments, namely, the evocation of the idea of laughter in connection with derision.

As discussed before, incredulous views about the gods may attract mockery.¹¹⁵³ A similar notion is reflected in the two-versed passage of fr. 991:

ἀλλ' <ἔστιν> ἔστι, κεί τις ἐγγελάῳ λόγῳ,
Ζεὺς καὶ θεοὶ βρότεια λεύσσοντες πάθη.

But there really are, there really are, even if **one laughs at** the saying, Zeus and the gods noticing mankind's suffering.¹¹⁵⁴

disapproves of a young man giggling (οὐδὲ κιχλίζειν); for the semantics of this verb, see chapter II, section 2.1.4.1.

¹¹⁵³ Cf. section 5.2.5.2.

This sententious fragment refers to the disdain one may express at the thought of divine activity. Here, the lexeme ἐγγελαῖ indicates the scornful stance one may reveal towards the saying about the gods taking notice of human sufferings. Again, we find an example of ridicule occasioned by one's disbelief in the supernatural.

In the next fr. 1063, a character considers a certain circumstance as ridiculous. From the grammatical forms, we may recognize that the speaker is female who talks about the behaviour of a despotic husband towards his wife.

δεῖ πυνθάνεσθαι γάρ σε νῶν χήμας σέθεν.
 τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, οὐποτ' ἄνδρα χρῆ σοφὸν
 λίαν φυλάσσειν ἄλοχον ἐν μυχοῖς δόμων·
 ἐρᾷ γὰρ ὄψις τῆς θύραθεν ἡδονῆς·
 ἐν δ' ἀφθόνοισι τοῖσδ' ἀναστρωφωμένη
 βλέπουσά τ' εἰς πᾶν καὶ παροῦσα πανταχοῦ
 τὴν ὄψιν ἐμπλήσασ' ἀπήλλακται κακῶν·
 {τό τ' ἄρσεν ἀεὶ τοῦ κεκρυμμένου λίχνον.}
 ὅστις δὲ μοχλοῖς καὶ διὰ σφραγισμάτων
 σῶζει δάμαρτα, δρᾶν τι δὴ δοκῶν σοφὸν
 μάταιός ἐστι καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖ·
 ἥτις γὰρ ἡμῶν καρδίαν θύραζ' ἔχει,
 θᾶσσον μὲν οἰστοῦ καὶ πτεροῦ χωρίζεται,
 λάθοι δ' ἂν Ἄργου τὰς πυκνοφθάλμους κόρας·
 καὶ πρὸς κακοῖσι τοῦτο δὴ μέγας γέλως,
 ἀνήρ τ' ἀχρεῖος χῆ γυνὴ διοίχεται.

You must learn from us two, therefore, and we from you. The biggest thing is, a wise husband should never keep his wife too much under guard in his inner house; for her eyes long for the pleasure that is out of doors. If she wanders freely and ungrudged among those things, however, and looks at everything and is present everywhere, her eyes are sated and she is kept from trouble. {A male too is always prurient about what is hidden.} The husband who keeps his wife safe by means of bars and seals, imagining that he is doing something wise, is a fool and his thinking makes no sense; for any of us who has her heart abroad is off faster than an arrow or a bird on the wing, and would evade the clustered eyes of Argus – and there's **much to laugh at** here, as well as trouble: the husband is helpless, and his wife is gone.¹¹⁵⁵

In this monologue, it becomes evident that the woman is trying to convince the interlocutor about the need for a man to give his wife some freedom. In fact, the

¹¹⁵⁴ Translation in Collard and Cropp (2008b) 567.

¹¹⁵⁵ Translation in Collard and Cropp (2008b) 599.

female character considers a husband's repressive actions towards his spouse to be a sign of his foolishness (μάταιός ἐστι, v. 11) and mistaken thinking (φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖ, v. 11). She, then, points to the vanity of guarding one's wife, if her heart is already beating for someone else (literally 'has her heart outside', καρδίαν θύραζ' ἔχει, v. 12). In such a situation, as the speaker notices, there can only be 'much to laugh at' (μέγας γέλως, v. 15), for the cuckold husband cannot do anything ('helpless man', ἀνήρ ἀχρεῖος, v. 16) to prevent his wife from leaving him (διοίχεται, v. 16). Since the female character speaks of a husband's useless efforts with disdain, it is clear that the idea of laughter she evokes in line 15 is derision.¹¹⁵⁶ Therefore, with the expression μέγας γέλως, 'great laughter', the woman considers the possible consequences of a man's worthless repressiveness as worthy only of ridicule.

5.3.3. A fragment in the Amherst Papyrus?

The concordance to Euripides of Allen and Italic (1954) includes one more instance of the term γέλως, which is traceable in the second Amherst papyrus. According to Grenhell and Hunt, the editors of the papyrus, it contains a fragment of an argument to the lost Euripidean satyr drama *Sciron*, in which few lines of the play were quoted (P. Amh. II 17).¹¹⁵⁷ Due to the poor state of the papyrus, only few phrases are discernable, among others the words γέλωτα κινεῖν (P. Amh. II 17. 9). This expression, in its basic sense, means 'to arouse a laugh', hence refers to the production of laughter.¹¹⁵⁸ Yet, the lack of a context makes any further study of this example impossible.

In the last decades, however, scholars have questioned the attribution of P. Amh. 17 II to the drama *Sciron*, which has resulted in a tendency to omit this

¹¹⁵⁶ Halliwell (2008) 80 n. 68.

¹¹⁵⁷ Grenhell and Hunt (1901) 8.

¹¹⁵⁸ Cf. chapter II, section 2.1.1.3. with n. 119.

fragment in recent studies on this play.¹¹⁵⁹ For this reason, the reference to laughter in the Amherst papyrus is of no relevance to my discussion.

This part of the chapter presented a lexical-interpretative analysis of the Greek terminology related to laughter found in the fragments of Euripides. As it has emerged, the discussed passages have been basically preserved for their sententious tone. In particular, they reflect three main understandings of the phenomenon in connection with 1) its unfavourable evaluation in terms of morality (fr. 362; fr. 492), 2) the signalization of hostility (fr. 460), 3) the idea of derision (fr. 327; fr. 991; fr. 1003), and 4) humour (fr. 492). In general, the Euripidean fragments reflect the same connotations of laughter as distinguished in the surviving dramas, but, additionally, present a negative view of the phenomenon.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the Greek laughter-words traceable in fifteen surviving plays and six fragments of Euripides. My analysis encompassed a total of 51 references to laughter, from which 43 instances appear in the extant dramas, whereas 8 are found in the fragments. As it has emerged from my discussion concerning Euripides' use of the Greek terms listed at the beginning of this chapter, it is apparent that the poet evokes the idea of laughter in a variety of connotations.

First of all, laughter is obviously connected with sound. Interestingly, the poet presents both mortals and immortals as capable of laughing, as shown on the examples of gods (Zeus in *IT* 1274, Demeter in *Hl.* 1349, Dionysus in *Ba.* 439), men (Bacchic followers in *Ba.* 380, banqueters in *Ion* 1172) and heroes (Heracles in *HF* 946). However, the texts of dramas do not provide supportive

¹¹⁵⁹ Zuntz (1955) 134; Steffen (1971) 25-33.

material for the poet presenting any of his characters as laughing onstage. As I have pointed out, even the single possible exhortation to laugh aloud (*Tr.* 332) remains without a response. In Euripidean drama, therefore, we hear (or read) about laughter, but do not hear laughter itself.

Euripides gives but a single example of the phenomenon evoked in relation to facial expression (*Ba.* 1021). Yet, also in this case, the image of Dionysus' laughing face is conjured up in an invocation delivered by the Chorus. Hence, it does not explicitly refer to events onstage, although scholars debate whether the mention of the god's face, who appears as a character in the play, is not a reference to the actor's mask.

Euripidean drama also provides instances of laughter evoked in connection with humour. Here, it is apparent that the perception of an incongruity elicits amusement in the observer (Zeus' in reaction to Apollo's behaviour in *IT* 1274; the baquetters to a man's excentric behaviour in *Ion* 1172; the Servants' in response to Heracles' actions in *HF* 950). In one case, this pleasant feeling leads to a loud outburst (*IT* 1274; *Ion* 1172), whereas in the other, it remains unexpressed (*HF* 950). However, these examples of humorous laughter in the extant dramas regard past events (recent in *Ion* 1172 and *HF* 950 but unidentified in *IT* 1274) and are only mentioned by others. As for fr. 492, it presents a negative view on humorous laughter elicited by people performing jokes.

Next, we have seen that the poet conjures up laughter in relation to different psychological states, such as the experience of various emotions: delight (the princess in *Md.* 1162; Demeter in *Hl.* 1349), joy (the Bacchants in *Ba.* 380), Schadenfreude (unidentified enemies in fr. 460), but also mental states like madness (Heracles in *HF* 935). Here, it is clear that laughter is taken to be an outward manifestation of internal processes.

Furthermore, the poet employs the language of laughter in relation to nonverbal communication between two characters. This is clearly the case of

Clytaemestra, who evokes the image of laughter to denote her not receiving support from the Greek army (*IA* 912). Interesting is the example in *Med.* 1041, in which the children's innocent laughter reflects to Medea the horror of her plans. As we can see, Euripides exploits the communicative aspect of laughter in order to enable another character's self-reflection.

Moreover, the poet is aware of the semantic connection of $\gamma\epsilon\lambda$ -rooted words with the concept of brightness, as we have seen in the gruesome example of 'laughing blood' in *Tr.* 1176. Here, the metaphor of laughter enriches the rich imagery of Euripidean drama.

Finally, the largest amount of references to laughter associate the phenomenon with revealing one's disposition towards another. As it has emerged from the discussion, these attitudes may be playful (*Alc.* 804), derisive (13 examples), hostile (19 examples), or even antagonistic (*Ba.* 842, 1021). These instances reflect the understanding of laughter as an interpersonal phenomenon.

In view of such large collection of meanings of laughter evoked in the plays and fragments of Euripides, it is obvious that the poet is fully aware of the complexity of the discussed phenomenon.

Noticeably, the general attitude towards laughter in Euripidean drama appears to be quite unfavourable. Firstly, it seems that only immortals and those who receive their benevolence are allowed to experience laughter without any consequences. Amongst the gods presented as laughing, it is noticeable that Zeus (*IT* 1274) and Demeter (*Hl.* 1349) laugh pleasantly, the first with amusement, the latter with delight. As for the laughter of Dionysus in *Ba.* 439, it is too enigmatic for its nature to be defined. Next, in regard of mortals, we have seen that Bacchic worshippers are expected to honour their god with joyful bouts of laughs (*Ba.* 380). Thus, the protection of Dionysus grants his followers a pleasant experience. Similarly the banqueters in *Ion* 1172, who feast under a

god's care (in this case it is Apollo) and share laughter together.¹¹⁶⁰ Piety, therefore, as it appears, grants humans the possibility to enjoy the pleasure of laughter.

In contrast stand the other Euripidean examples of mortal men laughing. Although we have seen that some characters may laugh in a seemingly positive way (Jason's bride with *Md.* 1162; possibly Medea's children *Md.* 1041) or feel an urge to laugh (the servants in *HF* 950), nevertheless their laughter is shortwhile and appears just before disaster happens in their surrounding (*HF* 950), or worse, falls upon them (*Md.* 1162; *Md.* 1041). As we can see, even such laughter defined as 'innocent' does not end well.¹¹⁶¹ Euripides, however, uses these instances of seemingly pleasant laughter for dramatic purposes, in order to increase the tension of the scenes or narratives.

It seems that Euripides leaves no room for his characters to experience pleasant laughter. We have seen that Cassandra's exhortation to laugh just after the defeat of her city (*Tr.* 332) as well as Heracles' urge for the manservant to accept a more playful mood, despite his obvious mourning (*Alc.* 804), occur as highly improper under the circumstances. Also, the views expressed in some fragments discernibly disapprove of the experiences of group laughter (fr. 362) or shared fun (fr. 492). In general, then, we can see that despite some instances that evoke laughter in the positive sense, Euripides seldom alludes to laughter as a pleasant experience. In other words, there is little pleasure in Euripidean laughter.

Having said this, I would like to refer to the second important observation on laughter in the drama of Euripides, which is the fact of its distinct social nature. This comes as no surprise, since a majority of Euripidean references (35 examples) evoke the idea of laughter in connection with

¹¹⁶⁰ While laughing, the banqueters are ignorant of the fact that their laughter has been provoked by a man with criminal intentions, hence, their pleasure remains undisturbed and has no extra consequences.

¹¹⁶¹ Cf. Dillon (1991) 351.

revealing one's disposition towards another. Therefore, laughter is used to denote the quality of interpersonal relations between the characters of the plays. Interestingly, Euripides favours using the language of laughter to define non-amicable rapports, which, often, have been disrupted by one of the sides of a relationship. This has become evident from the four main circumstances I have distinguished as leading to hostile rapports: 1) betrayal of *φιλία*, for instance, between fathers and sons (Theseus and Hippolytus in *Hipp.* 1000; Pheres and Admetus in *Alc.* 724), but also husbands and wives (Jason and Medea in *Med.* 383, 404, 797, 1049, 1355, 1362); 2) open conflict between two nations (the Greeks and the Trojans in *IA* 372 and *Rh.* 815), or between invaders and local rulers (Lycus with his army and Heracles' family in *HF* 285); 3) enslavement of strangers (Orestes by the Taurians in *IT* 504; the satyrs by the Cyclops in *Cyc.* 687); and last, 4) the struggle for power between two opponents (Pentheus and Dionysus in *Ba.* 250, 272, 286, 322, 854, 1081). Euripides seems to be especially interested in the matters of interpersonal relationships between his characters. It is noteworthy to point to the fact that the two dramas with the highest numbers of references to laughter are the *Bacchae* (10) and *Medea* (8), whose plots revolve around the difficult or disrupted rapport between the two main protagonists (between a god and man, as well as between former *φίλοι*). We may, therefore, recognize that like Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides also evokes the idea of laughter in regard to human relationships; however, his chief focus is on the negative state of these rapports, dysfunctional, disrupted or even militant. In other words, for the most part Euripidean laughter denotes broken relationships between people as well as between people and gods.

It is, thus, possible to paraphrase the saying of Victor Borge, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that laughter is the shortest distance between two Euripidean characters.

Conclusion

Laughter has no foreign accent.

Paul Lowney, *Toads*¹¹⁶²

This study was set out to explore and identify the understandings of laughter in the works and fragments of the three major Greek playwrights of the classical period: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. My thesis has also sought to know whether the dramatists reflect a similar recognition of laughter to modern explanations of the phenomenon. Despite the increasing interest on laughter in antiquity in the last years, the theoretical literature on the subject considering Greek tragedy and satyr play has been scant and usually dealt with the matter in generalities. Such approach, consequently, omitted the characteristics of style of the three playwrights. Hence, in my opinion, there has been a need for a broader discussion on the subject, which this thesis has attempted to provide.

In order to give answers to the five research questions posed in the Introduction, I have examined the references to laughter discernible in the surviving works and fragments of the three classical Greek playwrights. My investigation has been divided into two parts: in the first, I have established the conceptual framework for the study of laughter in fifth-century Greek drama; in the second, I have applied this theoretical framework in my lexical-interpretative analysis of the particular references to laughter found in the defined corpus of texts.

In chapter one, devoted to the discussion on laughter itself, I have studied the traditional theories and modern explanations for the phenomenon. At this stage it has emerged that there was and still is no single theory which

¹¹⁶² Lowney (1997) 11.

would define laughter in all of its aspects. As it has been shown, laughter appears to be a complex phenomenon occurring on different levels of human activity: physiological, intellectual, psychological and social. Finally, the analysis in this introductory chapter allowed me to distinguish twenty-four universal understandings of the phenomenon, which I have used as a backdrop in my investigation on the meanings of the Greek terminology related to laughter in the following chapter of the study. Thus, this chapter answers the first research question of the thesis, for it presents laughter to be a complex physical, psychological and social human phenomenon.

In chapter two, the general classification of the various aspects of laughter proved applicable to the examination of the Greek terms for laughter, which I have analyzed according to five main word-groups. Special attention has been paid to the semantics of the Greek terminology of laughter. The lexical-semantic analysis in this part of my study has shown that the ancient modern English shares a similar understanding of the complexity of the discussed phenomenon as in Greek language, for all twenty-four categories of laughter distinguished in chapter one have been already recognized by the ancient Greeks, as the study of the semantics of the Greek terminology for laughter has shown. Also, I have also identified an additional and distinctly Greek connotation for the phenomenon of laughter, since the Greek language reflects, in certain terms for laughter, the concept of brightness. On the basis of the discussion in chapter two, I have discerned twenty-five general understandings of the phenomenon of laughter reflected in the ancient Greek language, which constituted the conceptual framework applied in my investigation in the second part of the study. Hence, this chapter provides the answers to the second and third research questions regarding the Greek terminology for laughter: firstly, I have shown that the Greek language possess a rich (consisting of 133 terms) vocabulary for laughter and laughter-related

phenomena; secondly, it has become apparent that already the Greek language reflected the understanding of laughter about the complex nature of laughter.

In the second part of my thesis, consisting of three chapters, I have examined the Greek terminology for laughter appearing in the extant plays and fragments of the three dramatists. The particular findings on the meanings of laughter and the distinct use of its references by individual authors are chapter specific and I have summarized them in detail within the respective chapters: Aeschylean laughter in chapter three, Sophoclean laughter in chapter four and Euripidean laughter in chapter five. In general, the results from my analysis of the defined corpus of Greek texts have provided such answers to the last two research questions posed at the beginning of this study, regarding the general perception of laughter in Greek drama as well as the similarities and differences in its treatment by the three poets.

Firstly, it is evident that Greek drama also reflects the understanding of the complexity of laughter, since the analyzed references evoked laughter in connection with such concepts: bodily actions (sound, facial expression), emotional experiences (joy, delight, amusement, Schadenfreude), states of mind (madness), manifestation of dispositions (friendliness, hostility, derision, triumph), communication, and the idea of brightness. Therefore, the authors of the Greek dramas and fragments of plays discussed in this study share the same general perception of laughter as a multi-faceted phenomenon.

Secondly, the three poets share a common interest in the expressive and social aspects of laughter, since they all tend to evoke most often those images of laughter in connection with the manifestation of different emotions as well as dispositions. It has become clear that Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides apply the language of laughter in order to denote the quality of the relationships between the dramatic characters in their plays.

Thirdly, despite the similarities between the three playwrights in perceiving as well as referring to the same aspects of laughter, every dramatist

uses the motif of laughter in his own manner and for his own purposes. In particular, the references to Aeschylean laughter correspond with world depicted by him in his drama governed by divine laws the characters have to abide; the instances of Sophoclean laughter reflect the traditional moral code that governs the social relationships of the characters in the world presented by Sophocles; and finally, the examples of Euripidean laughter show the poet's interest in the emotional interactions between his characters. Hence, it has become apparent that the three poets use the motif of laughter in accordance to the general themes presented in their dramas.

This study continues the discussion on laughter in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides and, hopefully, contributes to the fuller understanding of the phenomenon itself and its representation in Greek drama. I hope to have presented a clear framework of the understandings of laughter for its examination in Greek texts. In my opinion, it is important to keep in mind the fact of that references to laughter do not imply humour or the comic, as some scholars tend to associate or even identify in their research on Greek classical drama. In accordance to the view of Halliwell (1991), (2008), it is evident that the dramatists make references to laughter as a socially potent mean of communication. Sociality, therefore, is a crucial aspect of laughter in Greek drama. In this respect, although hostile laughter is rather dominant, especially in the tragedies, however, it is not exclusive, as it may seem in Arnould (1990) and in the Introduction to Halliwell (2008). In regard of the generally negative impression of laughter in the tragedies, which Dillon (1991) calls 'tragic laughter', it has become apparent that the references to laughter in the dramas correspond to the general themes presented by the individual playwrights in their works. And finally, although the main ideas on laughter in Greek drama distinguished in this study are consistent with those presented by Arnould (1990), Dillon (1991) and Halliwell (2008), nevertheless I attempted to broaden their general discourse with my detailed examination of the Greek

terminology for laughter and interpretations of the phenomenon in the analyzed texts.

This thesis has encountered a number of limitations, which I have considered in the Introduction, and, as a consequence, leave room for further research. First and foremost, to complete the discussion on laughter in Greek drama of the classical period, the next study on this subject should take into account the 91 references to the phenomenon found in the surviving plays and fragments of Aristophanes. I am currently investigating the matter, for, in my opinion, the inclusion of fifth century comedy will allow to expound the perception of laughter in all three dramatic genres and distinguish whether the genre influences the discernible meanings of laughter. With such a comparatistic approach I would also continue Dillon's 1991 discussion and see whether the new findings would confirm or not his distinction of a separate type of 'tragic laughter'. Another possible study could include all references to laughter in the many fragments of other playwrights of the fifth and fourth century. Also, it would be interesting to study the references to laughter distinguishable in the preserved works and fragments of Menander. Such broad material would extend the discussion to the drama of the Hellenistic period, hence would allow a full understanding of the dramatic presentations of the phenomenon of laughter.

This study has had the phenomenon of laughter, 'the most familiar yet elusive of human behaviours'¹¹⁶³, as its focus of interest. The ancient Greeks recognized this elusiveness of the phenomenon and therefore never attempted to give it a definition or a theory. However, as shown on the example of the preserved texts of the three major dramatists, the Greeks were fully aware of the complexity of laughter, which exceeds the single connection with the sphere of the comic. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides clearly share this

¹¹⁶³ Halliwell (2008) viii.

understanding about laughter being mostly a human phenomenon and concerning basically interpersonal relations. In this respect, it is clear that the discourse on laughter did not begin with Plato nor Aristotle, as it is usually assumed, but was already undertaken by the classical dramatists of the fifth-century.

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