

nal state – Achilles' own *experience* of otherness created by his grief and anger – that makes the hero more open to his enemy, Priam, in the end of the *Iliad*? And due to this openness, is it possible for them to find a common ground, both being mortals and living under the cruel oppression of fate? The Greeks sometimes stressed this shared ground for animals and humans as well – in contrast to the immortality of the blessed Gods. The shared ground made it possible to compare human life with the animal world as is carefully done, e.g., in Homer and in the tragedies, especially in the *Agamemnon*.

As always, we have to be very careful with the terms we use of the Others, because our languages are imbued with contempt for them. Although the early Greeks felt an obvious superiority to animals, animals were not, in principle, viewed as corrupt – or "beastly" in its most pejorative meaning – at least not before the Hellenistic period. Animals have their well-directed places in Greek culture and some of them were thought to be "bad", some not. It was the mythical monsters which were mostly viewed negatively due to their hybrid nature. Thus, I would prefer to see also gradation and continuity, not only the bipolarity in Greek thinking about the humans and non-humans – while the binary oppositions, of course, existed, too.

There are also many sentences which strike me as promoting the legacy of Humanism, especially when H. uses the words "nature", "culture", and "civilization" in Greek context (e.g. "nature unharnessed from civilization is rarely a pretty sight in the ancient Greek world", p. 138). The early Greek connotations to the word *physis* are, of course, not the same as our word "nature".

The word "other" or the Other offers the third terminological difficulty. There seems to be no discrepancy in meaning whether the word is written with a capital letter or not – this may be the editor's fault. While H. is well acquainted with the modern discussion about animal rights and the moral status of animals, the study of otherness (and the different kinds of otherness) is not presented as thoroughly. I especially missed the comprehensive approaches to otherness and alterity made by continental philosophers (e.g., phenomenologists and, of course, Jacques Derrida).

However, on the whole, I find the book well-written – an example of an articulate language – and of high scholarly standards. As a Finn, it was a delight to notice that we Finns seem still to be viewed as people who can cultivate silence (p. 18).

Tua Korhonen

THALIA PAPADOPOULOU: *Heracles and Euripidean Tragedy*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005. ISBN 978-0-521-85126-8 (hb). XI, 229 pp. GBP 48, USD 80 (hb).

Euripides' *Heracles* is a complex play that has been the subject of many differing views in scholarly discussion. It has been praised as well as reprehended, but in general, its value has been somewhat underestimated by the critics. Although *Heracles* has been studied widely during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a comprehensive reading of the play, which takes into account the diverse contexts of the history of Greek drama as well as fifth-century BC Athenian society has been lacking before Thalia Papadopoulou's *Heracles and Euripidean Tragedy*.

Papadopoulou's thesis in her book is to offer a comprehensive reading of *Heracles*, which explores the literary and cultural background of the play as well as Euripides' dramatic technique by examining it in the context of Euripidean dramaturgy and that of Greek tragedy more generally, and finally, of fifth-century Athenian society. She also illuminates aspects of Heracles as a mythical hero, and it is her aim to show that Euripides' *Heracles* is a far more complex play than it has been previously given credit for, a play that raises important questions of divinity, ancient religion and human values.

The book is divided into four sections: an introduction and three main chapters. The introduction offers a short outline of Heracles in tradition as a background for the analysis of the play. In the first chapter, "Ritual and Violence", the writer examines the central role of the ambivalence of Heracles' character and his *arete* that Euripides uses for dramatic purposes. The interplay between Heracles' virtue and his hubristic excess is the crucial aspect in *Heracles*, not the question of whether the hero is innocent or a megalomaniac conqueror. The central issue in the play is the inherent ambivalence of Heracles and the way in which this ambivalence can be dealt with. Papadopoulou shows that in *Heracles*, Euripides problematizes the nature of Heracles' heroism and its manifestations in the civilized world outside the context of the wild world of his labours.

The second chapter, entitled "Madness and the Gods", focuses on the madness-scene in the play and its interrelated questions. In *Heracles*, the course of the events culminates in the scene where the hero kills his wife and children in a fit of madness. This is caused by the goddesses Iris and Lyssa, but originates from Hera's hatred towards Heracles. Papadopoulou considers Heracles' divine-induced madness and the problem of the role of the divine in Euripidean drama by setting them against the background of other presentations of madness and divine causation in Greek tragedy. She shows that this play contains evidence of Euripides' scepticism of traditional religion as well as of erasure of the traditional gods. Papadopoulou points out that for this reason, *Heracles* is a play of extreme importance in the discussion of religion in Euripidean drama.

The religious dimension in Euripides' plays is a complex and diverse issue, and in *Heracles* in particular, religious problematization is significant. The understanding of the play profits from the consideration of the issues of divine motivation and human response. Human despair, when in an hour of need gods are nowhere to be found, results in criticism of the gods and has its climax when Heracles in his agony, after killing his family, refuses any longer to call them gods. Papadopoulou shows that in Euripides' *Heracles*, humans fail to understand gods because they judge them by human standards - it is not possible for a human being to set moral standards for the gods. However, Heracles' madness has a secular dimension as well. During his insane rage, Heracles is made to horribly misperceive reality when he believes that he is killing his enemies, when it is actually his own family he is slaying. However, as such, his brutal actions reflect the way he would treat any enemy of his even when in full consciousness. Thus, the horrible action that Heracles commits in a mad fit is not alien to his normal self. Papadopoulou argues convincingly that the similarities between the mad and the sane Heracles invite thought about the hero's unstable position between divinity and humanity after his labours. Madness is the reason that makes Heracles choose humanity over divinity in the end.

In the third chapter, "Arete and the Image of Athens", Papadopoulou turns to examining the political undertones in the play and the concept of *arete*. Heracles' madness problematizes the question of his valour, turning the focus of the plot towards an Athenian context: Heracles'

mad rage ends as the goddess Athena arrives and casts a stone at him, making him fall asleep. When Heracles wakes up, he is sane again, and has to confront the horrible reality of himself as the murderer of his own family. He decides to kill himself because he cannot stand the guilt and the shame, but the intervention of Theseus, Athens' representative, makes Heracles choose life after all. The political aspect along with the issue of Heracles' *arete* becomes central in this last part of the play.

The question of honour and voluntary death is already presented in the beginning of the play in Heracles' wife Megara's speech. Papadopoulou discusses different aspects of honour and shame in fifth-century Athenian society and their reflections in Euripidean tragedy through detailed analysis of depictions of Heracles as an archer as well as a hoplite. She compares Euripides' portrayal of Heracles to that of Sophocles in *Women of Trachis*, providing an interesting analysis of the differences between the two poets' ways of depicting the hero. Euripides' Heracles chooses to live instead of committing a suicide, which suggests a change in the concept of nobility: archaic values of heroic individuality now give way to solidarity and the value of community, and enduring life in spite of terrible misfortunes becomes a mark of courage. Theseus' role in Heracles' decision is significant. He is determined to help his friend despite the feared possibility of ritual pollution. Euripides' presentation of the friendship between Heracles and Theseus reflects the idea of human solidarity, which supports mortals who are brought down by capricious gods. The portrayal of Theseus also has a wider significance as a representative of the city of Athens. Through the actions of Theseus, Athens alone becomes the city courageous enough to accept a man polluted by murder to live in it.

Papadopoulou concludes her study in a brief chapter where she summarizes her arguments effectively: Euripides' *Heracles* is a play of high quality and complexity, which has great significance in examinations of other Euripidean dramas. In this play, the poet uses the broad ancient tradition of Heracles in developing a portrayal of an ambivalent yet very human hero. Euripides' Heracles has performed many superhuman labours, but when he returns to the civilized world, it becomes uncertain how he is to combine the world of his labours with it. *Heracles* deals in an almost unique way with the issues concerning the religious universe of Euripidean tragedy. The hero's divine-imposed madness and its terrible affect on him question the role of the gods, their justice and concern for humans. At the end of the play, Heracles refuses to call gods the faulty creatures of Olympos, but still maintains his faith in "perfect gods". In his treatment of the issue, Euripides calls into question humans' ability to understand the divine. Euripides' ideology culminates at the end of the play, when human values such as friendship and solidarity turn out to be the strength and support for mortals rather than incomprehensible gods.

Papadopoulou's analysis is detailed and her arguments are carefully considered and convincing. She sets her discussion of the play into the context of Euripidean drama as well as Greek tragedy in general, providing a full and interesting analysis of the play and its reception in antiquity. Papadopoulou has enclosed in her book a number of necessary quotations from the play, which are given both in Greek and in English (translations are the author's). This is a very reader-friendly decision, as one does not have to read with the play in the other hand, and serves both the audiences that can read Greek as well as those who cannot. A wide bibliography and general index complete the study, which is of importance for all scholars and students of Euripidean tragedy.

Sanna-Ilaria Kittelä