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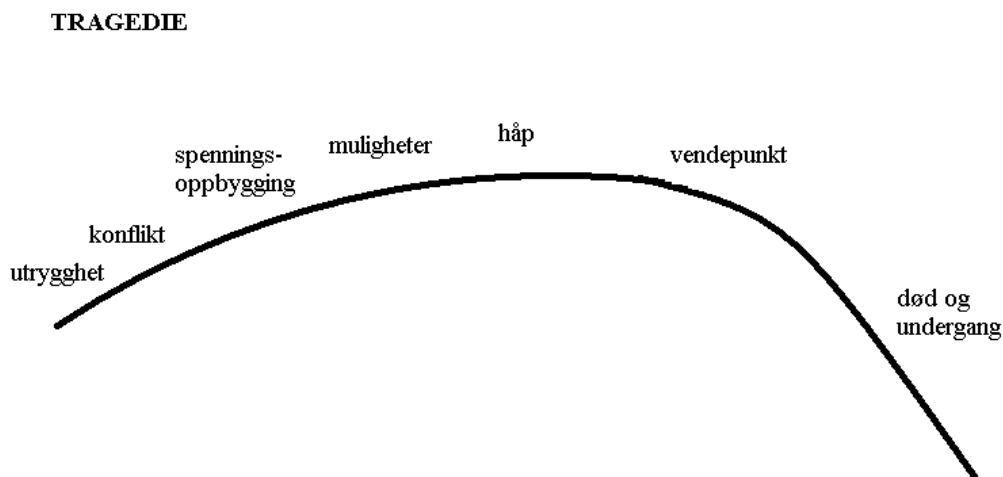
Tragedie

(_sjanger, _drama) Fra gresk “tragodia”: “bukkesang”. Skuespill som ender ulykkelig og som vekker tilskuernes frykt og medlidenhet. Et drama der personers indre og ytre kamp, lidelse og død er det sentrale. En tragedie viser menneskets sårbarhet og rommer handlinger som fører til stor sjelelig smerte. Spørsmålet om skyld og skjebne er viktig.

En kunstnerisk framstilling av menneskelig lidelse og undergang som ikke skyldes et uhell, men som er en konsekvens av menneskets egen “skyld”, dets skjebne eller dets historiske eksistens (Henckmann og Lotter 1992 s. 244). For at det skal ha tragisk effekt må skyld oppfattes som noe som gir mennesket betydning og storhet (Gelfert 1995 s. 77).

“A tragedy is a final and impressive disaster due to an unforeseen or unrealised failure involving people who command respect and sympathy. It often entails an ironical change of fortune and usually conveys a strong impression of waste. It is always accompanied by misery and emotional distress.” (Brereton 1968 s. 20; i kursiv hos Brereton) Tragediene handler om “human distress and despair, breakdown and wretchedness” (Eagleton 2003 s. x). Sjangeren “deals in blasted hopes and broken lives” (Eagleton 2003 s. 25).

Handlingsgang i en (vanlig) tragedie:



I en tragedie skal ikke katastrofen kunne forutsettes fra begynnelsen av handlingen; det skal være en mulig åpning til en lykkelig slutt (Brereton 1968 s. 54). Men handlingen har preg av en tomme skrue, og i en god tragedie “the turning of the screw is masterly” (Kitto 1986 s. 26). Tragedier på scenen har vært kjennetegnet av “sudden reversals, ironic backfirings, condensed, crisis-ridden action, a stringent economy of passion and the like.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 10) “[T]ragedy is a question of *kairos*, of time charged, crisis-racked, pregnant with some momentous truth.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 181)

“[T]ragic art is about symmetry, nemesis, swift retribution, actions deflected suddenly into their opposites, a whole cruelly inexorable logic which demands a stringent unity of action” (Eagleton 2003 s. 188-189). Det er “traumatic horror at the heart of tragedy” (Eagleton 2003 s. 225).

“A. C. Bradley holds that a tragedy is ‘any spiritual conflict involving spiritual waste’, while in a brave but imprudent flourish, Oscar Mandel offers as an all-inclusive definition of the form a situation in which ‘a protagonist who would command our earnest good will is impelled in a given world by a purpose, or undertakes an action, of a certain seriousness and magnitude; and by that very purpose or action, subject to that same given world, necessarily and inevitably meets with grave spiritual or physical suffering’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 5)

“Bradley tells us in *Shakespearian Tragedy* that tragedy is about waste, but that we feel the worth of what is wasted, so that the action is not in vain. The experience therefore does not leave us ‘crushed, rebellious or desperate’ [...] We observe injustice; yet there is no fatalism at stake, and certainly no question of a *spiteful* fate. Tragedy discloses a moral order. [...] though Bradley remarks elsewhere that we are made to feel that the protagonist is ‘in some degree, *however slight*, the cause of his own undoing’ [...] And though Bradley claims in justification of the tragic catastrophe that the hero is seriously flawed, the flaws he actually mentions – pride, credulousness, irresoluteness, excessive susceptibility to sexual emotions – are hardly hanging matters. [...] Tragedy would not be tragedy ‘if it were not a painful mystery.’ ” (Eagleton 2003 s. 134 og 136)

I boka *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic* (2003) undersøker den britiske litteraturforskeren Terry Eagleton “how some tragic art highlights what is perishable, constricted, fragile and slow-moving about us” (Eagleton 2003 s. xvi).

“Tragedy, as classically conceived, belongs with an ethics of crisis and confrontation – of revelations, momentous turning-points, dramatic disclosures and existential moments of truth, all of which turn their face aloofly from anything as drearily prosaic as everyday virtue.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 74-75)

“En tragedie er en etterligning av en seriøs og avsluttet handling av et visst omfang, i et språk som er krydret med forskjellige slags tilsetninger i de forskjellige delene

hver for seg, i dramatisk og ikke fortellende form; ved den medynk og skrekk som etterligningen fremkaller, fører den fram til en renselse av den slags sinnstilstander” (Aristoteles 2008 s. lxi). De greske ordene for medynk og skrekk er “eleos” og “fobos”. “Øivind Andersen argumenterer forsåvidt overbevisende for at frykt og medlidenhet ikke er særlig dekkende oversettelser av *fobos* og *eleos*, men han finner ikke selv bedre norske løsninger enn henholdsvis skrekk og medynk.” (*Morgenbladet* 2.–8. januar 2009 s. 35)

Den franske litteraturforskeren Roland Barthes “argues that ‘tragedy is only a way of assembling human misfortune, of subsuming it, and thus of justifying it by putting it in the form of a necessity, of a kind of wisdom, or of a purification. To reject this regeneration and to seek the technical means of not succumbing perfidiously (nothing is more insidious than tragedy) is today a necessary undertaking.’ ” (Eagleton 2003 s. 70)

“John Orr claims that ‘the essential tragic experience is that of irreparable human loss’ ” (Eagleton 2003 s. 4). Publikum ser “destructions of what we rate as especially valuable” (Eagleton 2003 s. 2). “How can an art form which trades in human despair and desolation represent the deepest human value?” (Eagleton 2003 s. 27) “A. C. Bradley sees tragedy as teaching that Man ‘may be wretched and he may be awful, but he is not small’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 27)

Etnologisk betraktet kan det tragiske ha sin opprinnelse i offerritualer (Gelfert 1995 s. 6). I Evripides’ *Bakkantinnene* blir Pentevs revet i filler av kvinnene, som kan minne om rituelle ofringer, såkalte “sparagmos” (Gelfert 1995 s. 31). Sparagmos innebar innen Dionysos-kulten å rive fra hverandre et levende offer, f.eks. en kalv eller en okse, men mennesker kan også ha blitt ofret på denne måten. I Osiris-kulten kunne offeret være et korn-nek eller et dyr. I Thrakia i Hellas skal det ha blitt ofret mennesker. Sparagmos-motivet finnes i noen tragedier, og selve ordet “tragedie” kan oversettes med “sang ved et bukke-offer”, selv om noen forskere snarere knytter etymologien til at skuespillere var dekket av bukkeskinn når de framstilte satyrer på scenen (Gelfert 1995 s. 32).

Sjangeren skal ha oppstått fra grekernes korsanger innen Dionysos-kulten (Arnold og Sinemus 1983 s. 304). Grekeren Aiskhylos stilte koret overfor to skuespillere, Sofokles tillot tre skuespillere.

“Den klassiske tragedies særkende er, at lidenskap, argumenter, fortid og valg står gjennomlyste på scenen og åpner for deltagelse i et fællesskab af skæbne og skyld; det er en anden by, en anden tid, men også nær på. Nærheden skabes af de æstetiske virkemidler, som Aristoteles så omhyggeligt gennemgår og køligt karakteriserer som plottets opbygning.” (Richard 2010)

I komedier “the characters are of moderate estate, the passions and dangers are mild, the outcome of the action is happy; but exactly the opposite is true of tragedy:

the characters are great, the dangers severe, the conclusion sad. Furthermore, in comedy things are upset at the beginning and peaceful at the close, in tragedy things take place in the reverse order. Tragedies express the view that life should be rejected, comedies that it should be embraced. Finally, the events of comedy are always fictitious, those of tragedy are often true and taken from history.” (Lerner 1989 s. 300)

“Aristotle says this concerning the hero, or protagonist, of tragic drama, and Shakespeare’s practice at every point supports him:

- (1) A tragedy must not be the spectacle of a perfectly good man brought from prosperity to adversity. For this merely shocks us.
- (2) Nor, of course, must it be that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for that is not tragedy at all, but the perversion of tragedy, and revolts the moral sense.
- (3) Nor, again, should it exhibit the downfall of an utter villain: since pity is aroused by undeserved misfortunes, terror by misfortunes befalling a man like ourselves.
- (4) There remains, then, as the only proper subject for tragedy, the spectacle of a man not absolutely or eminently good or wise, who is brought to disaster not by sheer depravity but by some error or frailty.
- (5) Lastly, this man must be highly renowned and prosperous – an Oedipus, a Thyestes, or some other illustrious person.” (Arthur Quiller-Couch i Lerner 1989 s. 174)

“In everyday language, the word ‘tragedy’ means something like ‘very sad’. We speak of the tragic car crash of the young woman at the busy crossroads, just as the ancient Greeks used the same epithet for a drama about the slaying of a king at a similar place. [...] a matter of fate and catastrophe, of calamitous reversals of fortunes, flawed, high-born heroes and vindictive gods, pollution and purgation, deplorable endings, cosmic order and its transgression, a suffering which chastens and transfigures [...] heroic resistance, exultant self-affirmation, dignified endurance, the peace which comes from knowing that one’s actions are predestined [...] it is supposed to have something fearful about it too, some horrific quality which shocks and stuns. It is traumatic as well as sorrowful. And doesn’t the tragic differ from the pathetic in being cleansing, bracing, life-affirming?” (Terry Eagleton i http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/sample_chapter/0631233598/eagleton.pdf; lesedato 07.08.15)

“Because its starting point, violent crime, is the raw material of tragedy [...] The expected, appropriate responses of horror and pity are constructed as natural and inevitable, common to all who share a basic human identity.” (Joy Wiltenburg i

<https://watermark.silverchair.com/109-5-1377.pdf>; lesedato 05.08.19) “[T]he essence of tragedy is the action that carries the protagonist to illumination through suffering (this movement from suffering to illumination being based on the assumption, fundamental to any tragic vision, that suffering has the power to illuminate).” (Hallett 1978)

Ordet “tragedie” kan “mean a lot of blood, death and destruction, regardless of its moral connotations and without involving much complex interiority. In early modern times it could simply be a synonym of death or ruin, as in Thomas Kyd’s ‘I’ll there begin their endless tragedy’ (*The Spanish Tragedy*, Act 4, sc. 5).” (Eagleton 2003 s. 8)

Den arabiske filosofen Averroës, som levde på 1100-tallet, “seems to think the word [“tragedy”] synonymous with ‘praise’ – the praise of suffering virtue.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 12)

Tendenser i både massemediene og i dagligtalen er at vi bruker “tragedie” både om “*Medea* and *Macbeth*, the murder of a teenager and a mining disaster.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 3) “What tragedy in the technical sense might demand – a crisis of recognition, a spectacular about-turn of consciousness – may prove less tragic in the common-or-garden sense of the word than such self-delusion, just as what tragic theory might require by way of fate and necessity may prove less tragic in the popular sense of the term than catastrophes which could have been prevented.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 69)

“For most people today, tragedy means an actual occurrence, not a work of art. Indeed, some of those who nowadays use the word of actual events are probably unaware that it has an artistic sense at all” (Eagleton 2003 s. 14). “Tragedy is held to be about the response to an event, not just the event itself; but this cannot mark the difference between art and life, since the distinction is a hard to draw in the one case as in the other.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 15-16)

Den tyske litteraturprofessoren Hans-Dieter Gelfert mener de følgende er blant de hendelsene som i dagligtalen ofte kalles tragiske, men som ikke utgjør det tragiske i tragediesjangeren:

Naturlig død i høy alder: Slik død er ikke tragisk selv om den døde fortsatt kunne ha utført svært viktige handlinger og selv om dødsfallet vekker stor sorg.

Unaturlig død grunnet sykdom: Selv om mediene ofte beskriver slike dødsfall som tragedier, særlig hvis sykdommen rammer barn og unge mennesker, er ikke slike dødsfall tragiske i streng forstand ifølge Gelfert. De medfører lidelse og sorg, og sykdommen kan til en viss grad være selvforskyldt, men likevel har ikke de syke egentlig en moralsk skyld.

Død på grunn av en tilfeldighet: Innen tragediesjangeren vet hovedpersonen at døden nærmer seg, mens ved en ulykke som fører til brå død, er ikke det tilfelle. Selv om den brå døden er selvforskyldt, kan ikke den døde oppfattes som et tragisk offer. I tragediene er ikke døden tilfeldig.

Meningsløs død gjennom feiltakelse: Hvis en person dør på grunn av en feiltakelse, f.eks. at en morder dreper feil person, er ikke den drepte en mulig helt innen tragediesjangeren. Det er snarere morderen som er tragisk, hvis denne ved en misforståelse dreper en uskyldig person og selv må bøte med livet for ugjerningen.

Fortjent død som straff: Til og med motstandere av dødsstraff oppfatter ikke en henrettelse som tragisk i egentlig betydning av ordet, så lenge ikke dommen skyldes et justismord. Saken stiller seg annerledes hvis det finnes konkurrerende lover som fører til at moralsk forsvarlig etterfølgelse av den ene loven ifølge den andre loven leder til dødsstraff. Det er i så fall et klassisk eksempel på en tragisk konflikt, slik blant annet Sofokles' *Antigone* viser. To rettsnormer står mot hverandre, begge er legitime, og konflikten mellom dem er uunngåelig.

Villet død ved selvmord: Det lenge overveide, planlagte selvmord bør ikke oppfattes som tragisk, mener Gelfert, særlig ikke hvis et større onde unngås, f.eks. uhelbredig sykdom resten av livet eller en livsvarig fengselsstraff. Hvis selvmordet skyldes en feilvurdering, fordi den antatt utveisløse situasjonen likevel ikke var utveisløs, kan det være tragisk (slik som i Shakespeares *Romeo and Juliet*). Også selvmordet til en person som egentlig ikke var så skyldig i et onde som personen selv trodde, kan ha tragisk effekt.

Martyrdød: Den som dør for sin tro, for sin religiøse overbevisning, kan bli en martyr, men egner seg ikke som protagonist i en tragedie. Personens død oppfattes mer som en triumf enn et nederlag. Det samme gjelder for den som ofrer sitt liv for et medmenneske. En slik død er mer beundringsverdig eller heroisk enn tragisk (Gelfert 1995 s. 12-14).

“As Geoffrey Brereton puts the point: ‘The death of a great man in an air-crash qualifies for tragedy unequivocally; if he is killed in a sports-car, the tragic quality becomes more dubious; if by falling off a bicycle, the whole conception is endangered!’ Perhaps this takes the metaphor of the tragic fall a little too literally. The theory of tragedy is full of such absurdities. [...] The discrepancy between tragedy as art and tragedy as life is an ironic one. For most pieces of tragic art behave exactly as though tragedy were indeed a matter of actual experience, rather than some purely aesthetic phenomenon.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 16-17)

“[T]he stuff of tragedy, as philosophers repeatedly need to learn (even if only to forget once again), is complex. One might even say that it is complexity and enigma that one faces in tragedy.” (Dennis J. Schmidt i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_021.xml; lesedato 04.02.22)

“Pure accident is not tragic in Brereton’s eyes, but neither is the unavoidable, such as natural calamities which could not have been foreseen or forestalled. [...] Brereton believes that to speak of tragedy, we must be able to say that something went wrong which might have gone right. And this is to say that the idea of tragedy includes a sense of failure lacking in the idea of fate.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 107)

“[T]ragedy can just mean something sombre and sorrowful; it need not satisfy such normative demands as that the suffering be largely unmerited, preordained, non-contingently caused, inflicted on a pre-eminent figure, partly his or her responsibility, revelatory of divine order, exultantly life-affirming, conducive to dignity and self-knowledge and so on. Someone who clung to the normative sense of the word could always exclaim ‘I don’t regard *that* as tragic!’ no matter how much blood was being spilt and torment inflicted. From the normative standpoint, only certain kinds of death, strife, suffering and destruction, treated in certain ways, qualify for the accolade of tragedy. [...] A further problem of definition springs from the fact that ‘tragedy’ can have a triple meaning. Like comedy, it can refer at once to works of art, real-life events and world-views or structures of feeling.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 8-9)

“Tragedy may concern states of emergency; but we should recall Walter Benjamin’s point that such states are routine for the dispossessed, and that the fact that everything just carries on as normal *is* the crisis. Whether crisis and the commonplace are opposed depends largely on where you happen to be standing.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 75) “The lesson is usually that one should beware of breaching the moral order. Usually, though not always – not, in fact, for Walter Benjamin, who sees tragedy as a shaking of the moral cosmos by one who has recognized himself to be superior to its gods.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 143) “Walter Benjamin writes of death as the form of the tragic protagonist’s life, rather than just its end.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 152)

“It can be claimed that tragedy springs not from violating a stable order, but from that order being itself caught up in a complex transitional crisis. And this then modifies the simplistic ‘free hero versus determining cosmos’ ideology of the form. ‘Transition is the zone of tragedy’, declares Karl Jaspers, while Benjamin sees tragic theatre as an historically necessary passage from myth to philosophy. The classicists J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet see Greek tragedy as emerging from a tension between old religio-mythical ways of thought and new politico-legal ones which still remain cloudy and contested. ‘Tragedy’, they announce, ‘is born when myth starts to be considered from the viewpoint of the citizen.’ ” (Eagleton 2003 s. 143)

“We still tend to fall into the trap of conflating tragedy and the tragic.” (Dennis J. Schmidt i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_021.xml; lesedato 04.02.22) “The gulf between the learned use and the

popular use of the same word is nowhere better illustrated than in ‘tragedy’. The term is used from day to day in referring to incidents of a distressful nature, and, in so far as it is popularly used as the name of a literary type, it is applied to any play or story with an unhappy ending.” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 285) I dramajangeren tragedie får mennesker sine liv ødelagt av “høyere” grunner enn teknisk svikt eller sosiale, økonomiske eller politiske faktorer (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 109). “Mystery is also the center of tragedy [sammenlignet med krimsjangeren]; however, it is mystery in the old-fashioned sense of the word, that is, some thing beyond human comprehension.” (Hallett 1978)

Den britiske forskeren Oliver Taplin “sees the value of tragedy as lying in the shape and significance it imparts to suffering, in contrast to the often meaningless, amorphous tragic events of everyday life. Tragedy ‘gives the hurtful twists of life a shape and meaning which are persuasive, which can be lived with’. But not all real-life tragedies are meaningless or disordered. The flowers reverently placed by mourners on the spot of some appalling catastrophe – a shooting at a school, a fire in a nightclub – are sometimes accompanied by a card inscribed with the single, bewildered word ‘Why?’ But the answer, it must bluntly be confessed, is often all too obvious: a psychotic youth neglected by harassed social services, a space packed too full of bodies for the sake of profit, a bridge left unrepaired for lack of funds. Not all tragedies, to be sure, are so readily explicable, and to be told that the child is dying of leukaemia is in one important sense not to have answered the question ‘Why?’ about its death. The query is more metaphysical than empirical. But the philosophical sense of tragedy as a divine mystery opaque to any mere human reasoning can be too quickly extended to historical disasters, in a way which then conveniently relieves those responsible of blame.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 28)

“If tragedy ennobles suffering, then it edifies only at the cost of the truth, since most real-life suffering is not in fact ennobling.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 29) “John Snyder in his *Prospects of Power* [1991] questions the life-enhancing power of tragedy (‘A tragic sufferer always loses’), though he later claims that the audience’s experience is one of communal strengthening, which sounds life-enhancing enough.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 70)

Hans-Dieter Gelfert kommer fram til at disse kravene må være oppfylt for at det skal dreie seg om en tragedie: En persons undergang er unaturlig, ikke tilfeldig, ikke villet, ikke selvforskyldt og ikke moralsk sett fullt fortjent (1995 s. 14). Personen mislykkes, men kjemper for å unngå nederlaget selv om kampen ikke lykkes. Det er en slags vekselvirkning mellom tilfeldighet og nødvendighet, mellom motstand og tap, mellom skyld og sterk lidelse. Det må i en tragedie dessuten inntreffe et vendepunkt der det tilfeldige vipper over i det uunnvikelige. Det edle ender i det skyldbelastede. Slike motstridende elementer fører hos tilskueren til en erfaring av det tragiske, men det må oppleves som tragisk av tragediens hovedperson også (denne bevisstgjøringen hos protagonisten kalte Aristoteles for “anagnorisis”). Gelfert definerer sjangeren slik: Tragedien er en

dramatisk framstilling av et hendelsesforløp der helten, som verken er en forbryter eller en helgen, gjennom et skyldbeflekket feiltrinn (Aristoteles' hamartia) først utsetter seg for fare og etter et vendepunkt (peripeti), og etter at han blir seg bevisst å være fanget (anagnorisis), styrtes i en uunngåelig fortapt tilstand, noe som hos tilskueren først vekker skrekk (phobos) og etter vendepunktet jammer (eleos), for så til slutt å etterlate en følelse av emosjonell lettelse (katarsis) (1995 s. 19).

For Aristoteles er phobos å skjelve for sin egen skjebne, mens eleos er å skjelve for andre mennesker, men disse måtene å føle frykt på henger nært sammen. Det man frykter for sin egen del, vekker medynk når det skjer med andre.

Dorothea Krook hevder i *Elements of Tragedy* (1969) at "tragic art" oppstår fra "the fundamental human condition; and involve a protagonist who shows some fighting spirit. The sufferings of a passive victim may be harrowing and pitiable, but they are not tragic. The hero must be representative of humanity as a whole, but at the same time elevated above his fellows. His suffering must be expiatory, must be conscious rather than blind, and must be accepted by both him and ourselves as necessary. This is so even if his transgression, like Oedipus's, is unconscious; the fact remains that cosmic order has been disrupted, and must be restored whatever the cost in human agony. Even if the tragedy is not the hero's fault, he is still representative of a depraved humanity, and to this extent deserves to be chastised. What may seem brutal and unjust by human standards, then, makes complete sense by cosmic ones. Indeed, Krook even appears to defend the death of Cordelia [i Shakespeares *King Lear*] in this light. In this way, tragedy reaffirms the supremacy of the moral order and the dignity of the human spirit, as propitiatory suffering plus redemptive knowledge reinforces the moral law. Through his courage and endurance, the hero converts the mystery of suffering into intelligibility, redeems it and achieves reconciliation. Our faith in the human condition is accordingly fortified and reaffirmed." (Eagleton 2003 s. 76)

Det er ingen tragedie uten lidelse, og lidelsen er (antakelig, oftest) både uunngåelig og trøstesløs. Sjangeren fokuserer på lidelsen og bortforklarer eller mildner den ikke. Publikum for et grufullt innblikk i hva lidelse er. Vi skal ta lidelsen inn over oss, men på en (kunstnerisk) avstand, for den gjelder menneskene på scenen. Det er egentlig ingen trøst for den dypeste sorg og lidelse, det kan ikke minskes, reduseres eller gjøres godt igjen. Tragediehelten har en dyp sjel, stor frihet og viktige samfunnsoppgaver, og har stor evne til å lide. Helten må ha en privilegert moralsk status, ellers ville ikke hennes eller hans ulykke vekke medlidenhet (Gelfert 1995 s. 117). Det er en person som tar ansvaret selv og som tar lidelsen over nederlag inn over seg. "The human condition is as inescapable as it is unendurable." (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 156) Det tragiske viser "et grusomt menneskeligt vilkår" (Birgitte Hesselaar i http://www.peripeti.dk/pdf/peripeti_13_2010.pdf; lesedato 09.08.19), men samtidig "heroes who are triumphant in defeat" (Eagleton 2003 s. 28).

Sjangeren preges av “the sense of totalizing agony, self-undoing, and damnation characteristic of the tragic” (Benjamin Mangrum i <https://watermark.silverchair.com/0510209.pdf>; lesedato 17.03.21). “Grekernes tragiske helter gjenopprettet gjennom sin lidende undergang både sin egen ære og verdensordenen.” (Gelfert 1995 s. 139) Den skyldige sonet sin skyld gjennom et overmål av lidelse.

Publikum kan oppleve “the ennobling role of suffering” (Eagleton 2003 s. x). “[S]uffering is a mightily powerful language to share in common, one in which many diverse life-forms can strike up a dialogue.” (Eagleton 2003 s. xvi)

“[T]he Boy Scout theory of tragedy [...] regards suffering as inherently valuable because through it we are toughened and matured.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 35) “For a lineage of modern thinkers from Hegel and Baudelaire to Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Yeats, Claudel, Mauriac and T. S. Eliot, tragedy represents a privileged mode of cognition, a spiritual experience reserved for the metaphysically minded few.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 46)

“Tragedy is the image of Fate, as comedy is of Fortune” (Susanne K. Langer sitert fra Eagleton 2003 s. 101). “Jean Anouilh’s *Antigone* is a modern *locus classicus* of this assumption that tragedy and fate walk hand in hand. As the Chorus of the play remarks, ‘The machine is in perfect order, it has been oiled ever since time began, and it runs without friction ... Tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless ... Death, in a melodrama, is really horrible because it is never inevitable. In a tragedy, nothing is in doubt and everyone’s destiny is known. That makes for tranquillity ... Tragedy is restful; and the reason is that hope, that foul deceitful thing, has no part in it. There isn’t any hope. You’re trapped.’ ” (Eagleton 2003 s. 101)

“Death itself dismantles the opposition between fate and freedom, since it is in one sense preordained and in another sense accidental. We cannot avoid dying in some kind of way, but what kind of way is a contingent rather than pre-scripted affair. [...] Death is a link between the alien and the intimate, between mighty determining forces and the secret recesses of subjectivity. Like the desire with which it is so closely affiliated, it is at once inalienably mine and utterly impersonal, existential value and everyday fact, that which springs from the depths of my being yet is intent on annihilating it.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 121) “False consciousness is our natural condition: at the core of human existence lies the monstrous trauma of death and the threat of eternal perdition” (Eagleton 2003 s. 215).

“Death is in one sense the very acme of objectivity, since it falls utterly beyond our experience, and in another sense the very kernel of the human subject. Humanity is suspended undecidably between the affirmation and negation of life” (Eagleton 2003 s. 271).

Helten i tragedien kjemper til døden mot sin skjebne, og gjennom en stor kamp for sin frihet, med skjebnen som motstander, hevder han denne friheten helt inn i det stadiet der all frihet er forsvunnet (Dastur 1994 s. 26; basert på tanker av den tyske filosofen F. W. J. v. Schelling). “One view of tragedy holds that its essence lies not in the hero’s responsibility (as some say) nor in his redemption (as others say), but simply in the quality of his defiance when the inevitable happens to him.” (Lerner 1989 s. 277) “D. D. Raphael, along with a whole raft of twentieth-century critics, finds in tragic art a collision between the forces of necessity and a self-conscious resistance to their sway.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 122-123)

“F. W. J. Schelling comes near to winning hands down, maintaining as he does in the *Philosophy of Art* that ‘only within the maximum of suffering can that principle be revealed in which there is no suffering, just as everywhere things are revealed only by their opposites’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 28)

“The strength of the form, its nurturing of human sympathies, is thus directly related to its moral embarrassments. If we are to be struck with admiring awe at the sight of a largely innocent victim heroically resisting his fate, we cannot avoid being equally struck with indignation at the fact that he should have to suffer at all.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 140)

“Walter Benjamin sees tragedy as breaching what he calls ‘demonic fate’, for in it humanity becomes aware that it is superior to its gods. ‘There is’, he writes, ‘no question of the “moral world order” being restored – instead, the moral hero ... wishes to raise himself by shaking that tormented world’. Tragedy is a strike against destiny, not a submission to it. For Schelling, there is no greater dignity than to know that one is up against a death-dealing power but to wage war on it even so. [...] If you have to go out, you might as well do so with a grandiloquently rebellious gesture, demonstrating your patrician contempt for the forces which have brought you to nothing, and thus wresting value from the very jaws of ruin. The very way you square up to death reveals an energy which negates it.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 104)

For tyskeren Friedrich Schlegel “the preciousness of tragedy lies in its affirmation of the free spirit, of a sense of dignity and supernatural order in the face of a forbidding destiny. Tragic fate cannot be overthrown; but it throws us back upon our own resources, so that we can pluck some virtue from this dire determinism.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 32-33)

“Tragedy is not a matter of masochism, of grovelling self-abasement, of the glorification of suffering. But if such suffering is forced upon you, there may be ways of turning it into the preconditions of a changed existence.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 98)

“If we have the resources to encounter our own deaths without undue terror, then we probably have some of the resources to live well too; and tragedy grants us opportunities for such an encounter in imaginative and thus non-injurious terms. In any case, living in the perpetual knowledge of death, which both St Paul and Martin Heidegger recommend as one constituent of an authentic human existence, allows us to sit loose to life and thus relish it more fully.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 36)
“Death, Hegel remarks in the *Phenomenology*, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold to it requires the greatest strength. [...] It is with Hegel above all that tragedy first becomes ‘essentialized’, reified to a spiritual absolute which presides impassively over a degraded everyday existence.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 41 og 44)

“The critic D. D. Raphael believes that tragedy ‘shows the sublimity of human effort’, while the playwright Eugene O’Neill proclaims that ‘the tragedy of Man is perhaps the only significant thing about him ... the individual life is made significant just by the struggle’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 25)

“For the classicist Gilbert Murray, tragedy ‘attests the triumph of the human soul over suffering and disaster’, a case which Macbeth might have found intriguing. Joseph Addison thought tragic art the noblest production of human nature. I. A. Richards, who considers tragedy to be ‘the most general, all-accepting, all-ordering experience known’, finds its value in its courage to dispense with subterfuges and illusions. The mind, instead, ‘stands uncomforted, unintimidated, alone and self-reliant’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 25)

Den tysk-britiske teologen Ulrich Simon “list other palpably non-tragic events such as floods, earthquakes which wipe out whole communities, genocide or the battle of the Somme. The Holocaust was not tragic, but rather the death of tragedy. Tragedy must be more than mere victimage; it must involve a courageous resistance to one’s fate, of the kind we witness in the great tragic works of art.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 15) Sosiologen Georg Simmel “observes that ‘in general we call a relationship tragic – in contrast to merely sad or extrinsically destructive when the destructive forces directed against some being spring from the deepest levels of that very being’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 5)

“D. H. Lawrence, who also understood the value of extreme commitments, said that a work of art “must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. And hence the antinomy, hence the conflict necessary to every tragic conception.”” (Leech 1964 s. 119)

“The tragic picture of the universe postulates a limited free will. Man cannot determine the pattern of events, but he is frequently responsible either for the initiation of an evil chain or for the release of evil forces latent in a situation. Moreover, his thoughts and feelings, his attitude to the enveloping situation, are in his own control: like Orestes, he can see the horror of the matricide he must commit; like Macbeth, he can recognize his own weakness and ultimately his own

insignificance in the universal scheme. Some degree of free will is, indeed, essential in tragedy, for we could hardly feel proud of an automaton.” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 295-296) “[T]he idea of the autonomous individual pitting her free will against an external fate is a relatively modern one. There is no exact ancient Greek equivalent for the notion of free will.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 105)

“Man by suffering shall learn” heter det i Aiskhylos’ *Agamemnon* (vers 177).

“Tragedy is commonly supposed to teach wisdom through suffering, as the Chorus chants in Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon*.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 31) Personers alvorlige og konsekvensrike valg får katastrofale følger. Tragediens hovedperson eller helt begår en “feil” (det Aristoteles kaller “hamartia”) og går til grunne (et jordskjelv er ikke tragisk i aristotelisk betydning av ordet, selv om mange mennesker dør).

“Hamartia” kan kanskje oversettes med “forblindelse” og “vurderingssvikt”. Det kan bestå i en form for selvgratulering, dvs. overdreven tilfredshet med seg selv. Hovedpersonen har det som har blitt kalt “the built-in flaw in the individual, which goes much deeper than ‘character’ ” (Brereton 1968 s. 80). Noen greskeksperter mener at hamartia ikke egentlig er en forblindelse eller en karakterbrist, men innebærer å miste styringen slik at personen går ut over en forbudt grense. Det kommer utenfra, ikke fra personen selv. Det er noe irrasjonelt ved hamartia. Og hamartia ligger tett opp til det beste og mest beundringsverdige ved en person.

“Aristotle seems to contrast not freedom and necessity, but inner and outer necessities. There is a dash of psychological determinism about his thought. Indeed, if the *hamartia* or moral flaw which supposedly causes tragedy is built into our temperament, and is less sin than innocent error, how can we be held responsible for it? Necessity is not always outside us: there is one’s *daimon* or bent of character, which for both Goethe and Lessing had all the force of destiny. An ‘authentic’ action is one which springs from the core of the self; but you might therefore quite as well call it irresistible as call it free. For Goethe, there can be a tragic collision between one’s purely empirical freedom and the inexorable dynamic of one’s inner character.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 118)

“*[H]amartia* or going awry is built into the action, not some external force which afflicts it, and one name for this perpetual missing of the mark is desire.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 245-246) Hamartia innebærer “to miss the mark,” understood in Greek tragedy as a mortal error in judgement. Such tragic flaws are, as Malcom Heath explains, “errors made in ignorance or through misjudgement; but it will also include moral errors of a kind which do not imply wickedness.” It is essential that whatever horrors that afflict the protagonist are not “due to any moral defect or depravity, but to an error” – if these were deserved punishments, the spectator would not feel fear and pity, but rather the satisfaction of justice being done.” (Benjamin Roberts og Ryan Shinkel i <https://www.athwart.org/netflix-necromancy-true-crime/>; lesedato 30.03.22)

“Ifølge Eric Bentleys *The Life of Drama* (1964), handler tragedien alltid om den ekstra-ordinære lidelse, og dét at døden er midt i livet. Der er ikke behov for en skurk, som der er i melodramaet. Den tragiske helt er en helte-skurk – det sidste på grund af sit feilgreb (hamartia).” (http://www.peripeti.dk/pdf/peripeti_13_2010.pdf; lesedato 09.08.19)

Tragediens helt må i prinsippet være moralsk god hvis publikum skal føle medlidenhet og beklage hans død, men kan ikke være fullkommen god. Han må ha begått en feil, for ellers vil hans død være “en skrikende urettferdighet, som kun etterlater indignasjon” (Grimminger 1990 s. 167). Men det har blitt hevdet at tragedier ikke har noe med rettferdighet å gjøre, i hvert fall ikke slik mennesker forstår rettferdighet (Pohtast 1989 s. 204). “It seems that tragedy can encourage compassion only by confessing injustice.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 142) “Much tragedy would seem testimony [...] to the more disturbing fact that an order exists but that it is not just.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 138)

“The catastrophe is plausible in the sense that it springs from the situation, but not in the sense that it is proportionate to it. [...] As Sadhan Kumar Ghosh points out, ‘it is the disproportion and not the punishment that constitutes the true terror of tragedy’ – so much so, indeed, that he believes justice and tragedy to be quite incompatible.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 139-140)

“For the most poignant tragedy of human life is the work of human blindness – the Tragedy of Errors.” (F. L. Lucas sitert fra Leech 1969 s. 62)

“Where there is compensation, there is justice, not tragedy.” (George Steiner sitert fra Eagleton 2003 s. 138) “This, once again, is inaccurate. Many tragedies end with the dispensation of justice; what is tragic about them is that so much bloodshed should have proved necessary to attain it, or that there should be crimes which call for such stringent penalties in the first place. The Book of Job is Steiner’s example of a narrative of justice rather than tragedy; but even if Job is finally comforted, was it not tragic for him to suffer so much affliction in the first place? Why should it be true that all’s well that ends well?” (Eagleton 2003 s. 138-139)

“Most tragedies end unhappily, but a fair number do not. [...] A tragic protagonist does not have to die, even though there are times when it would be more merciful if he did. [...] The play is a tragedy in the medieval sense of a drama of high seriousness about the fortunes of the great, but nobody is actually killed. [...] Tragic practice, then, is a considerably more mixed affair than most tragic theory.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 82-83)

I fire av de dramaene av franskmannen Pierre Corneille som regnes som tragedier, overlever helten, nemlig i *Le Cid*, *Horace*, *Cinna* og *Rodogune*. Men det er andre enn hovedpersonene som lider og dør i disse skuespillene, slik at det likevel blir en tragisk virkning. Corneilles *Polyeucte* er derimot et ikke-tragisk martyrdrama der

helten forlater denne verden i triumf (Gelfert 1995 s. 80-81). “Not all tragedy is about breaking and renewal. It may end simply in waste or rancour, despair or defiance.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 58)

“Corneille’s Polyeucte is a martyr resolute for death who refuses to back down from this glory even for his beloved Pauline. What to him is unconditional commitment is to others insane pigheadedness.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 234)

Hovedpersonen kan være en i bunn og grunn god karakter som er for svak til å si nei i rette øyeblikk (Rudorff 1991 s. 45). Personen kan være ukontrollerbart sjalu, ha altfor stor selvtillit eller ærgjerrighet, være avsendig forelsket eller lignende. “[T]he notion of tragedy attaches neither to a foreseen result due to a deliberate act, nor to the effects of pure chance; neither to the clearly expected nor to the totally unexpected.” (Brereton 1968 s. 9) Tragedien som litterær sjanger bygger på en idé om frihet, samtidig som ting skjer med tilsynelatende nødvendighet. Det er motsigelse og paradoks: En er både bundet og fri. Publikum skal oppleve en dirrende usikkerhet eller spenning mellom frihet og nødvendighet, en motsetning som er en forutsetning for den greske tragediekunsten. Den franske forskeren Jacqueline de Romilly forklarer i boka *Den greske tragedien* (1982) at det tragiske har to *parallele* forklaringsmodeller: den menneskelige og den ikke-menneskelige.

Når grunnen til et menneskes tragiske undergang verken ligger helt i personen selv eller helt utenfor personen, må grunnen følgelig være todelt: både hos den personen som tragisk mislykkes og på grunn av en annen faktor som fører til undergangen. Sistnevnte kan være en personlig motstander eller en allmenn instans, f.eks. staten eller en moralsk lov. Hvis personen som tragisk mislykkes og dennes motstander kan støtte seg på samme grad av moralsk rettferdiggjøring for sine motsatte handlemåter, har vi å gjøre med den klassiske situasjonen i en tragisk konflikt (Gelfert 1995 s. 14).

Den tragiske helt er “skydløs skyldig” (Gelfert 1995 s. 129); katastrofen stammer fra “en skydløst begått skyldig handling” (Gelfert 1995 s. 41). Mennesket er styrt av ukjente, tilsynelatende blinde krefter, men har også fri vilje og kan dermed på mange måter forme sitt eget liv og bidra til egen lykke eller ulykke. “It is true that the ancient Greeks did not enforce our own occasionally simplistic distinctions between guilt and innocence, agency and determination.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 33)

“The question ‘Am I responsible for my actions?’ thus cannot be answered in the terms in which it is commonly proposed, since it betrays too thin a conception of what it is to act. Which is not to say that we are thereby absolved from moral responsibility as the mere playthings of the gods, functions of genetic codes or products of social institutions.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 110)

“The ancient Greeks knew themselves to be morally responsible agents, but not quite in the modern sense morally autonomous agents. The boundaries of the self

seem for them more fluid and porous than for us. They perceived an irreducible ambiguity in human existence which made it hard to categorize actions simply as ‘willed’ or ‘fated’, ‘free’ or ‘necessary’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 106)

“[T]he Greek protagonist moves fearfully in a realm of half-legible signs and portents, groping timorously in darkness among baleful powers, perpetually at risk of stumbling up against some forbidden frontier, overreaching himself and bringing himself to nothing. And this state of emergency is routine. In this perilous condition, there can be no sure distinction between agent and victim, my action and yours, human and divine, subjective intention and objective effect. For tragedy to be possible, the realms of the human and the divine must be both distinguishable and inseparable, caught up in some intricate logic of collusion and opposition.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 109)

“So it is that freedom comes to invert itself into fatality, as projects which seemed at the time transparent and intentional slip from our grasp to form a field of anonymous forces in which we are no longer able to recognize our own confiscated subjectivity. It is this ambiguous condition, one in which we are neither fully responsible nor absolved from guilt, to which Christian theology gives the name of original sin – ‘original’ not in the sense of dating back to an ominous encounter with a reptile in a garden but in the sense of *a priori*, given from the outset, transcendental rather than transcendent, inescapably entwined with the roots of our sociality. One might call it objective guilt, if that did not have too Stalinist a ring, though the phrase has a Sophoclean ring too. But it is a *felix culpa* or happy Fall, one up into history and liberty rather than down to biology and the beasts, since such built-in destructiveness is a necessary correlative of our freedom, and could be eradicated only along with it. [...] Perhaps things are tragic not because they are ruled by a pitiless Law but precisely because they are not.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 111)

“The traditionalist conception of tragedy turns on a number of distinctions – between fate and chance, free will and destiny, inner flaw and outer circumstance, the noble and the ignoble, blindness and insight, historical and universal, the alterable and the inevitable, the truly tragic and the merely piteous, heroic defiance and ignominious inertia – which for the most part no longer have much force for us. Some conservative critics have thus decided that tragedy is no longer possible, while some radicals have concluded that it is no longer desirable.” (Terry Eagleton i http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/sample_chapter/0631233598/eagleton.pdf; lesedato 07.08.15)

“One can will a just society without willing the disruption it would no doubt entail, while still accepting such disruption as an inevitable corollary of one’s desire. And this is a classically tragic scenario. Rather like Oedipus, one does not will what is injurious, while nevertheless accepting some responsibility for it. [...] Tragedy differs from the more brittle forms of teleology in that the injurious remains

injurious; it is not magically transmuted into good by its instrumental value.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 38-39)

“Tragedy speaks not of secular dilemmas which may be resolved by rational innovation, but of the unaltering bias toward inhumanity and destruction in the drift of the world.” (George Steiner sitert fra Baguley 1990 s. 98)

“[T]here is the rare negative form which might be called Satanic tragedy, the drama which oversets tragic balance, not merely by denying immanent good, but by implying a Satanic universe, a world-order behind the manifestation of event as evil as the event itself.” (Una Ellis-Fermor i Leech 1964 s. 108)

Det kan være vanskelig å skjønne hva som egentlig er grunnen til at katastrofen inntreffer, og det kan hevdes at den tragiske følelsen hos publikum blir større ved grunnløshet enn når det er lett å se grunnen(e) (jf. Söring 1982 s. 12). Men tilfeldighet (gresk “tyche”) består kanskje snarere i hendelser som mennesket ikke klarer å se noen sammenheng i, altså der mennesket støter på en grense for sin forståelse. “The tragedy is most poignant in that it is purposeless, unreasonable.” (G. W. Knight i Lerner 1989 s. 144) Vi tar tilflukt til begrepet tilfeldighet når våre andre begreper ikke strekker til (Söring 1982 s. 47).

Diktere og filosofer gjennom tidene hatt ulike syn på det tragiske og den lidelsen som følger med hendelsene – “at times they believe that misfortunes come because they are merited, at times they feel that there is such a thing as bad luck: they waver between a planned universe of rewards and punishments and a chaotic universe in which chance operates without motive.” (Lerner 1989 s. 286)

Hos den franske senrenessansedikteren Alexandre Hardy er det ikke skjebnen eller gudene som har skylden for ulykkene. I Hardys tragedier er det makthaveres hensynsløshet som leder til katastrofen. Den tyske dikteren Bertolt Brecht mente at tragedien som sjanger har et konservativt livssyn, fordi menneskets livsbetingelser blir framstilt som uforanderlige (gjengitt fra Sayre 2011 s. 125). Alexandre Hardys tragedier viser derimot at det tragiske kunne vært unngått.

Den spanske 1500-tallsdramatikeren Christóbal de Virués har i likhet med den franske dramatikeren Alexandre Hardy “en forkjærlighet for menneskelige monstre og forbrytere” (Strosetzki 1996 s. 173). Hardys skuespill “are crude but eventful. They ignore the unities and violate *bienséance* [= sømmelighet], not least by their portrayal of violence on stage, including rape (in *Scédase*).” (<http://www.answers.com/topic/alexandre-hardy>; lesedato 29.10.13)

“Of the different views on may take of the nature of the human personality, this is the most desolate and may fairly be called the most tragic. What we do and what we are are inseparable; we have no control over what we are and usually no true knowledge of it; it is ourself in the most intimate sense, yet its nature is decided by

an outside agency – God, the gods, fate, social forces, or a fortuitous combination of genes. There is nothing whatever we can do about it.” (Brereton 1968 s. 78-79)

“The ‘law’ which is misunderstood or transgressed may be political, social, or psychological. The nation or the community may replace the ‘god’, and rejection by it will replace the damnation of the theologians. Disaster may even spring from neglect or unawareness of some purely material factor elevated to a ‘law’, such as the maximum stress-point of a metal or the alcohol-tolerance of the human body.” (Brereton 1968 s. 55)

“[T]he sense of the tragic derives from ‘an epiphany of law, of that which is and must be’ [Northrop Frye]. It is significant that, as Frye argues further, ‘the two great developments of tragic drama, in fifth-century Athens and in seventeenth-century Europe, were contemporary with the rise of Ionian and of Renaissance science’.” (Baguley 1990 s. 100) “It is not invariably true, as Northrop Frye suggests, that tragedy is ‘an epiphany of law, of that which is and must be’. This is just as vapid as most universal statements about the subject.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 107)

“I tragedien är utgångsläget ofta en stämning av onda aningar och antydningar om kommande katastrof, vilka hjälten dock hyser gott hopp att kunna avvärja genom kraftfull handling. Till en början verkar han ofta ha framgång i sitt uppsåt, den dramatiska utvecklingslinjen pekar uppåt. Men så kommer en avgörande vändpunkt i skeendet, peripetien eller lyckoomkastningen, och linjen pekar därefter ner mot undergång och slutlig katastrof.” (Bergsten 1990 s. 107) I den klassiske tragedien “består det tragiska inte enbart i att någon bestämd olycka drabbar hjälten utan också i att denne uppnår en viss insikt vars innebörd krossar honom. Denna insikt är att han själv i blindo hjälpt ödet – han har ivrigt arbetat på sin egen undergång.” (Skalin 1983 s. 103) Tragediesjangerens grunnleggende idé er at sannheten blir tydelig i nederlagets stund (Söring 1982 s. 49).

“Peripetien” i dramaet er Aristoteles’ ord for vendepunktet eller omslaget. Litteraturforskere som har skrevet om peripeti i tragediesjangeren synes å være enige om “(1) that a change of fortune is basic in tragedy, (2) that a sudden change is likely to have a greater impact, and (3) that *peripeteia* as interpreted by [Johannes] Vahlen is a special effect of marked ironic force.” (Leech 1969 s. 63-64) Peripetien er “som regel det punktet det phobos-fasen går over i eleos-fasen” (Gelfert 1995 s. 17), dvs. skrekken går over til medlidenhet med tragediens helt.

“That our purposes are outstripped by their effects, that we may not measure up to our own actions, that we always to some degree act in the dark, that understanding is always after the event – these are insights common alike to Hegel and Sophocles. Indeed, it is just this dislocation between impact and intention which the Greeks know as *peripeteia*, suggesting not simply a reversal but a kind of irony, double-

effect or boomeranging, aiming for one thing but accomplishing another.”
(Eagleton 2003 s. 107)

I det tragiske er det i prinsippet ingen mulighet for en lykkelig utgang: “a ‘disaster’ can sometimes be temporary or partial, while a ‘tragedy’ cannot” (Brereton 1968 s. 7). Dette gir det tragiske en spesiell aura: “‘Tragic’ has the advantage of conferring a certain nobility upon whatever it qualifies” (s. 8). Lidelsen er alltid sentral og overskrider menneskelige mål. “[T]he suffering shown in tragedy is disproportionate to the human cause.” (Brereton 1968 s. 40) Tragedien får sin dybde fra det som ikke lar seg forsones og den lidelsen dette skaper.

Den romerske politikeren, filosofen og dramatiker Seneca skrev i tragedien *Thyestes* at “Pain is real, and everything else is merely a moment of respite, irrelevant. Scars are the only parts of the body to trust.” (sitert fra Eagleton 2003 s. 259)

Hva er det minste som skal til for at noe er en tragedie? Et stort potensial som går til spille = tragedie? Skjebnens ødsling med menneskeliv = tragedie? Nederlag + patos = tragedie? Tragedien som sjanger kjennetegnes ved å “throwing in highest stakes, human happiness and human lives.” (Brereton 1968 s. 72) Tilskuerne opplever avstanden mellom det som kunne ha blitt (f.eks. et langt, lykkelig liv) og det som ble (f.eks. et selvmord). Noe stort og verdifullt skusles bort. Det er noe stort og beundringsverdig i menneskets kamp og undergang, men det smertelige resultatet av kampen er at noe verdifullt forsvinner, lykken blir ugjenkallelig borte og liv går til grunne.

Tragedier handler om “men we can recognize as sharing with us the human condition. The effect of balance is there obvious. Certainly it often concerns itself with opponents who can – at least in some measure – each claim right on his side. The anguish is thereby increased.” (Leech 1969 s. 58) “[T]hough below the level of immediate consciousness, we may sense that Hamlet and Lear die for us: they have taken our burden on them.” (Leech 1969 s. 53)

Hovedpersonen skal ha en viss fallhøyde. “Man har genom tiderna anført många motiveringar för den tragiska huvudpersonens höga sociala ställning. Han skall representera hela sitt land, har man sagt; det öde som drabbar honom drabbar även hans folk och vinner därmed i allmängiltighet.” (Bergsten 1990 s. 104) I de antikke tragediene er hovedpersonene adelige. I Shakespeares *Hamlet* er hoffmannen Osric direkte medskyldig i heltens død. Osric framstilles som falsk og korrump, en liten mann. Dermed blir han en kontrast til Hamlet: “Der store karakterer dør, er det ikke plass for en usling” (Poppe 1990 s. 53). “Vi er de vesen som lever i høyspenningsfeltet mellom en trang plass for kroppen og sinnets endeløse frihet. Prinsen har et opphøyet syn på vår stilling og skimter en tilværelse full av overskudd og verdighet.” (Haaland 1982 s. 98)

En adelig helt (en hovedperson av høy sosial og økonomisk stand) har som person en kapital av ære og i prinsippet også sjenerøsitet, kunnskap og lignende som en vanlig borger eller en slave ikke har (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 24). Den tyske filosofen og kritikeren August Wilhelm Schlegel oppfattet Macbeths tragedie i Shakespeares *Macbeth* som “forødslingen [tysk “Verwüstung”] av så herlige anlegg” (sitert fra Rudorff 1991 s. 45). Fordi så mange tragedier foregår blant representanter for høye dynastier – med konger, dronninger, prinser og prinsesser som de sentrale personene – har det blitt hevdet at alle tragedier er politiske (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 41).

Den ungarske filosofen György Lukács mente at tragedienes helter må være konger og prinser fordi bare slike skikkelser har en atmosfære av isolert betydningsfullhet ved seg, på toppen av et samfunnshierarki (Lukács 1965 s. 58). Lederne har både reell makt og symbolsk status.

“Universal, the decision of the king will gradually affect his person, his family, his nobility, the people, and all society: in event after event, the royal act resonates over the entire political body. Self-determining, the king is the only character really free to choose and therefore to *act* in the proper sense of the word. He is the primary and, in a certain sense, the only real actor in modern tragedy. As Kierkegaard put it in his reflections on the difference between ancient and modern tragedy: in the ancient world, ‘even if the individual moved freely, he still rested in the substantial categories of state, family, and destiny. This substantial category is exactly the fatalistic element in Greek tragedy, and its exact peculiarity. The hero’s destruction is, therefore, not only a result of his own deeds, but also a suffering, whereas in modern tragedy, the hero’s destruction is really not suffering, but is action. ... Our age has lost all the substantial categories of family, state and race. It must leave the individual entirely to himself, so that in a stricter sense he becomes his own creator.’ There remains only to add that the chief example of this ‘individual’ freed from ‘substantial categories’ *within* society (and not outside it, banished like a vagabond or leper) is furnished by the absolute sovereign, who is literally *absolutus*, that is, released, free. Tragedy could re-emerge only in the late sixteenth century, when the figure of the new prince had entered the stage of history. Without the absolute sovereign, modern tragedy would not have been possible.” (Moretti 2005 s. 45)

“In a powerfully suggestive essay, Franco Moretti sees Renaissance tragedy as staging the culture of absolutism in its process of dissolution. It represents the steady degeneration of such absolute sovereignty, but in conditions in which those caught up in this decline can no longer comprehend it. As a governing class in historical decay can no longer grasp its situation, the initiative is passed to the theatre spectators themselves, who must now, without an absolute authority to guide them, think and judge for themselves.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 145)

Tragediehelten “must be the centre of our most poignant interest, as he is the focus of the moral forces working in the play [...] He is bound to stand out above the crowd; his must be the choice at the crisis; he, the individual, must be seen at grips with his destiny.” (Kitto 1986 s. 29) Han må ha “dybde”: “All we need is that he should be morally and intellectually big enough to realize to the full what has come upon him and to see the dilemma in which he and his people are placed” (Kitto 1986 s. 26).

“Falls from a towering height make more of a splash. Indeed, even falling might prove something of a luxury: the protagonist of V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* remarks that ‘the tragedy of power like mine is that there is no way down. There can only be extinction’ (ch. 1). The anti-tragic teaching of a poet like Horace is to keep your head down and trust that a low profile will save you from disaster. Thomas Hardy believed much the same. As far as the public dimension of tragedy goes, Raymond Williams is right to see that the eighteenth-century shift to bourgeois or domestic tragedy represents in this respect both loss and gain: the sufferings of the untitled can now be taken seriously, but the general, public character of tragedy is by the same token steadily abandoned. There is, supposedly, less historically at stake in the ruin of an artisan than of an arch-duke, though the case is harder to sustain when it comes to a Corsican corporal or a first-century Palestinian vagrant, There is also usually a politely veiled implication that genteel upper-class souls feel their undoing more keenly than cowherds. But you can regard the afflictions of cowherds as tragic in the ordinary-language sense while denying that they are tragic in the more technical sense of the term.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 85)

“The bigger they come, the harder they fall. Schopenhauer, despite seeing tragedy as commonplace and everyday, thinks even so that the powerful make the best protagonists – not because they are necessarily noble-spirited, but because their more extravagant plunges from grace render the tragedy more grippingly terrible for the spectators.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 85)

“[T]ragedy should also centre on the exalted because, as Sir Philip Sidney claims with disarming candour in his *Apology for Poetry*, seeing them come unstuck provides some much-needed *Schadenfreude* for their downtrodden underlings. If you are disgruntled with your plebeian place in life, the sight of a prince being toppled from his throne may remind you that your own lot, precisely because it is harsher, is also more secure. ‘High place is desirable’, comments Agamemnon in Euripides’s *Iphigenia in Aulis*, ‘but, when attained, a disease.’ Or as Aethra pithily observes in the same author’s *The Suppliant Women*, ‘the gods stretch greatness in the dust’. The mighty are both blessed and cursed” (Eagleton 2003 s. 85-87). “Adrastus adds in *The Suppliant Women* that ‘gods are cruel, and men pitiable’. The closing lines of Sophocles’s *The Women of Trachis* contain a scorching denunciation of divine injustice.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 136)

Tragediens “elementary structure always consists in showing how values that should be in a relationship of dominance and subordination suddenly, mysteriously (the mystery of Iago [i Shakespeares *Othello*], of the witches in *Macbeth*, of passion in *Phèdre*) become autonomous and take on equal violence.” (Moretti 2005 s. 28)

“A fall there always is, and the tragic writer is inevitably concerned with how it operates. [...] What is necessary is that we should feel the interrelation of character and circumstance.” (Leech 1969 s. 38) “The fall may involve only a few individuals – in extreme cases, only one – but this does not make it ‘less tragic’. Tragedy is qualitative, while disaster tends to be quantitative.” (Brereton 1968 s. 11) En tragedie har også vært kalt “menneskehetens drama i kamp med ondskapens krefter” (Antoine Adam sitert fra Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 77). I en bok om ondskap som tematikk hos Fjodor Dostojevskij bruker litteraturforskeren Paul Evdokimov uttrykket “det ondes tragedie” (1978 s. 160). Det onde er en kvalitativ størrelse.

“Several critics speak of ‘evil’ as the chief concern of tragedy, though there are in fact fairly few tragedies in which evil in the metaphysical sense bulks large.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 36)

Mennesket havner i en situasjon der det skaper lidelse. Tragediene ender med lidelsens totale trøstesløshet og overveldende sorg. Dramaene viser til slutt den sjlelige smerten som uinnskrenket, og ofte som hemningsløs, for eksempel når en mor sørger over sitt døde barn.

“Tragedy can be among other things a symbolic coming to terms with our finitude and fragility, without which any political project is likely to founder.” (Eagleton 2003 s. xv) Den engelske forfatteren Thomas Hardy “recognizes that drama of world-historical proportions can hinge on a mislaid letter or belated gesture – that the trope of an evolutionary universe is not only irony, but bathos. In such a world, the ordinary may be pregnant with a world-shaking meaning of which it betrays no trace. As Anton Chekhov remarks: ‘people are having a meal at the table, just having a meal, but the same time their happiness is being created, or their lives are being smashed up’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 91)

Den britiske forfatteren Thomas Hardy skrev om tragediesjangeren: “A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions. [...] Tragedy. It may be put thus in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire of his to end in a catastrophe when carried out. [...] Tragedy may be created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions.” (sitert fra LaValley 1969 s. 109).

Den amerikanske litteraturforskeren Timothy Reiss hevder i *Tragedy and Truth* (1980) at tragedien “shows up what is necessary for a certain social or legal order to exist, and thus, in sketching its outer horizon of meaning, the points where it trembles into silence and non-signification, acts as a kind of transcendental phenomenon. [...] For the function of the tragic is also to reduce this elusive silence to regulated knowledge, so that tragedy becomes ‘the art of overcoming unmeaning’. [...] Reiss contrasts the tragic as the absence, excess or impossibility of meaning with a tragic knowledge which tames and naturalizes this perilously destabilizing force, reducing it to a stable order of reference, representation and rationality. Tragedy acts out the chaos at the core of a socio-discursive order, but also recuperates for knowledge the ‘inexpressible’ which eludes that order. [...] The idea of the inexpressible, of a meaning which slips through the net of signification as a mere trace of madness and chaos, is simply the reverse of a notion of meaning as rationalized and regulated. Such pessimism needs such mysticism as its necessary complement. The only alternative to conceptual tyranny is conceptual indeterminacy, and for Reiss tragedy see-saws perpetually between the two.” (gjengitt fra Eagleton 2003 s. 19-20)

“It is with the onset of the modern epoch that the idea of tragedy begins to outgrow its humble incarnations in this or that closet drama or stage performance to become a full-blown philosophy in its own right.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 21)

Ifølge Aristoteles’ *Poetikken* skal tragedien gi publikum “katarsis” (også skrevet “katharsis”), dvs. “renselse”, på tross av lidelsen vi ser og sorgen vi føler. “Tragedy purges these emotions by first arousing them. It works as a kind of homeopathic medicine: tragedy cures the disease by administering a controlled dose of it and then clearing it away.” (Joseph Hillis Miller i Lentricchia og McLaughlin 1990 s. 67) “Katarsis” var i gresk brukt som medisinsk term, men kan også oversettes med “klargjøring” og lignende. De tre komponentene i en tragedie er handling, lidelse og innsikt.

Tragedien har blitt oppfattet som et terapeutisk middel (Gelfert 1995 s. 86). Disse dramaene skulle gi tilskuerne noe som kunne “rense” dem (“katarsis”), f.eks. det å oppleve i Sofokles’ skuespill Oidipus sin søken etter innsikt og sannhet, hans verdighet på tross av en ufattelig skjebne og hans lidelse og sorg som ikke rammer tilskuerne direkte, men i en kunstnerisk opplevelse. Tilskueren kan føle seg selv fri ved å se fiktive, ufrie personer gå til grunne. Den tyske barokkdikteren Georg Philipp Harsdörffer kalte tragediesjangeren “kongenes skole” fordi den lærer tilskuerne å føle medlidenhet (Szyrocki 1968 s. 200).

Gjennom skrekken blir tilskuerne oppskaket til et nesten uutholdelig nivå, men gjennom medlidenhet blir den “oppstuete opphisselsesspenningen” (“aufgestaute Reizspannung”) redusert igjen, slik at tilskuerne kan forlate teatret “katarsisk avlastet” (“kathartisch entlastet”) (Gelfert 1995 s. 21-22).

Den engelske litteraturforskeren I. A. Richards hevdet at tragedier “gives us ‘Pity, the impulse to approach, and Terror, the impulse to retreat’ brought into ‘a reconciliation which they find nowhere else’ (p. 245). [...] Pity is exercised on behalf of the suffering characters, Terror in relation to the doom that confronts them: it is difficult to imagine a pair of scales that could weigh them one against the other.” (Leech 1969 s. 56)

“Pity-and-fear is certainly an inadequate formula for tragic experience. Yet it gets at the idea that there can be something chastening about tragedy, in the full complexity of that term: humbling, subduing, shocking, rebuffing, restraining, purifying, disciplining, tempering.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 161)

“Pity refers to the social bond, whereas fear refers to the danger of its dissolution. They thus correspond roughly to the roles which Edmund Burke in his aesthetic treatise respectively assigns to the beautiful and the sublime – the former as the graceful affinities and acts of mimesis which bind social life together, the latter as the disruptive dynamic or restless enterprise which dissolves it only to recreate it anew. Tragedy, one might argue, is a blending of beauty and sublimity: it trades in the ordinary social relations of love and politics, but sees these as opening on to an otherness which they cannot entirely master.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 154)

“The ultimate effect of tragedy is to sharpen our feeling of responsibility, to make us more fully aware that we have erred as the tragic figures have erred (whether they be many or one in the play we see). We cry out against what has happened. We have experienced a *catharsis* only to reject it.” (Leech 1969 s. 54)

Den tyske filosofen Karl Jaspers “recognizes that failure and breakdown are in some sense where human reality reveals itself most significantly. [...] Tragedy for Jaspers, as for the early Georg Lukács, is a spiritual refuge from the drearily empirical: by bringing to realization ‘the highest possibilities of man ... it makes truth a part of us by cleansing us of all that in our everyday experience is petty, bewildering, and trivial’. [...] ‘There is no tragedy without transcendence’, Jaspers insists, but that transcendence would seem at times more of a flight from an insufferable reality than a depth within it.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 61)

Den ungarske filosofen og marxistiske litteraturforskeren Georg Lukács mente at helten til slutt opplever “den siste tragiske alene-tilstand [...] Ensomheten er imidlertid noe paradoksalt-dramatisk: Den er den egentlige essensen i det tragiske, for den sjelen som gjennom skjebnen har blitt seg selv, kan ha brødre blant stjernene, men ingen medreisende.” (Lukács 1965 s. 35-36)

Tragediehelten er ofte et stort menneske som på tross av umåtelig lidelse gjør motstand og kjemper for sin verdighet, uten å ville inngå kompromiss (Gelfert 1995 s. 35). For grekerne var ikke tilintetgjørelsen av tragediehelten det sentrale, men heltens kamp (agoni), hans selvhevdelse i en utveisløs situasjon. Hvis han bevarte

sin helte-verdighet i en slik situasjon, og verken jamrende ga etter eller inngikk noe kompromiss, kunne skuespillet slutte med en slags helbredelse – fordi “sykdommen” så å si ble drevet til sitt ytterste og dermed muliggjorde en frisk verden (Gelfert 1995 s. 36).

“Tragedien beror på at den tragiske helten ikke finner noen utvei” (Schillemeit 1971 s. 321). Bak det utveisløse i heltens situasjon “ligger meningsløsheten på lur” (Schillemeit 1971 s. 320).

“For sacrifice, like revolution, concerns the demand to yield up what you see as unutterably precious – in Abraham’s case, his son – in the name of some even greater value; and there is never any telling whether the bargain will prove worth it. It is this moment of crisis or aporia, when you cannot not choose yet cannot do so without unbearable loss, which Williams rightly terms tragic. In ancient cults of sacrifice, value stemmed from the expiatory, life-renewing potential of death and destruction. To translate the cultic into the political is not to trade human lives for the prize of a more just social order, but to trust that some forms of anguish will finally bear fruit in a more peaceable, fulfilled society, as Walter Benjamin hoped that the dispossessed would be retrospectively vindicated on Judgement Day. But that trust must come with a cry of outrage that attaining such a goal, given the corrupt, predatory nature of political systems, should ever need to involve such pain in the first place. This conception of tragic sacrifice differs from that of the literary anthropologists, for whom tragedy is the ritual by which the individual’s submission to the social whole strengthens its corporate life.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 60)

“Anagnorisis” er den greske termen (hos Aristoteles) for en spesiell erkjennelse eller gjenkjennelse, et omslag fra uvitenhet til innsikt. “Aristotle’s definition is simple: “A Discovery is, as the very word implies, a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages marked for good or evil fortune.” (Bywater’s translation) [...] if we take away the notion of suddenness that Aristotle seems to imply, we may go so far as to claim that this – not *catharsis* as an ultimate effect, not *hamartia* – comes as near as we can get to the essence of tragedy.” (Leech 1969 s. 64) “*Anagnorisis* implies ‘suffering’: it is the agency through which suffering, in the ultimate, mental sense, is brought into full being.” (Leech 1969 s. 67) “[T]he recognition is most painfully and most humiliatingly achieved.” (Leech 1969 s. 69).

Anagnorisis er for Aristoteles en “gjenkjennelse”, en plutselig oppmerksomhet på en skjult sammenheng som gjør at den dramatiske prosessen tar en tragisk vending (Gelfert 1995 s. 18). Anagnorisis er en innsikt i katastrofens sammenhenger som hovedpersonen har før sin død (Gelfert 1995 s. 29).

“Terence Cave (2002, 33), responding to Aristotle’s original formulation in *Poetics*, offers the following description of the Greek term: “‘Ana-gnorisis,’ like ‘re-cognition,’ in fact implies a recovery of something once known rather than

merely a shift from ignorance to knowledge.” Based on this etymology, Cave associates the term with *peripeteia* “in that anagnorisis too is said to be a change (*metabolê*) from one thing to or into (*eis*) its opposite, except that what is changed is not the ‘things being done’ but the degree of knowledge. Anagnorisis appears first as the epistemological [dvs. erkjennelsesteoretiske] counterpart or corollary of *peripeteia*.” ” (Benjamin Mangrum i <https://watermark.silverchair.com/0510209.pdf>; lesedato 17.03.21)

“In Aristotle’s definition, anagnorisis brings about a shift from ignorance to knowledge; it is the moment at which the characters understand their predicament fully for the first time, the moment that resolves a sequence of unexplained and often implausible occurrences; it makes the world (and the text) intelligible. Yet it is also a shift *into* the implausible: the secret unfolded lies beyond the realm of common experience; the truth discovered is ‘marvelous’ (*thaumaston*, to use Aristotle’s term), the truth of fabulous myth or legend. Anagnorisis links the recovery of knowledge with a disquieting sense, when the trap is sprung, that the common accepted co-ordinates of knowledge have gone awry.” (Terence Cave i Leblond 2010 s. 639)

“Kenneth Burke’s definition of tragedy in *A Grammar of Motives*, like Francis Fergusson’s in his immensely influential *The Idea of a Theater*, involves an essential moment of tragic recognition or *anagnorisis*, but while this may be true of Oedipus, it holds only doubtfully for Othello and hardly at all for Arthur Miller’s Willy Loman. In the case of Phaedra, no such recognition is needed because everything has been intolerably clear from the outset.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 5)

I greske tragedier er det en kobling mellom menneskers vilje og derav følgende feiltrinn (“hamartia”) og hva skjebnen har bestemt (“ananke”). Den tyske forskeren Heinz Schreckenberg skriver i boka *Ananke: Undersøkelser om en ordbruks historie* (1964) at ananke for grekerne ble oppfattet som ganske lik den tvang og det åket som slavene i samfunnet led under (Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 279). Mennesker kan velge, men det er likevel en ubønhørighet i det som skjer. De dødelige er underkastet livets betingelser samt overindividuelle og overmenneskelige krefter. Skjebnen er fastsatt i “det fullstendig uerfarbare”, i det guddommelige som er fullstendig ukommensurabelt (uforenlig og usammenlignbart) med menneskelige målestokker (Neis 1989 s. 63). Gudene kan slå et menneske med blindhet (“até”), slik at det blir prisgitt krefter som begrenser den individuelle styringen av livet. En “daimon”, en guddommelig makt, gjør det tragiske forløpet til noe uforståelig og uforklarlig, slik at mennesker rammes av “forces they have unwittingly let loose” (Eagleton 2003 s. 89). En antikk helt som motarbeider sin “bestemmelse”, opphever den ikke, men bare skjerper den (Söring 1982 s. 22).

“Tragedy for this vein of thought is supposed to be immanent, arising from the protagonist’s own actions. And this immanence is closely allied to the idea of fate.

By banishing extraneous causes, tragedy becomes a closed world with all the taut coherence of destiny. It works by its own internal logic, just like its self-determining hero, who by staying austere and faithful to his own being comes to resemble a work of art. Like the artefact, the hero steadfastly unfolds the implications of his situation without straying into the superfluous or accidental. Yet there is a moral price to be paid for this aesthetic purity. If the protagonist is really so self-contained, he risks becoming responsible for his own undoing and hence dispelling our pity. To evoke sympathy, his actions must breed effects or spring from causes for which he is not entirely to blame. [...] In practice, of course, tragic actions are never so self-contained. Their agents are brought low not just by their own contrivance but by external forces – say, sheer accident, or the malevolence of fate. But fate is rather too metaphysical a concept for modernity, even if it has its own ersatz versions of it; and accident is too demeaning a cause of tragic catastrophe.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 123)

“The tragic protagonist fails in the face of an indomitable destiny, just as the imagination shrinks and quails when confronted with the fearful majesty of the sublime. But both failures yield us a glimpse of a higher order of freedom and justice, which can be lit up only by the flames which consume the protagonist.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 121)

“If the ways of necessity are scandalously unjust (and some Greek tragedy harbours just such a suspicion), why should clarifying them mean validating them?” (Eagleton 2003 s. 31) “Tragic protagonists receive their actions back from a place which they cannot fathom, a realm of Delphic opaqueness and sibylline slipperiness which is nonetheless implacable in its demands.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 108)

“Chance, like the unique particular, is not intelligible to classical scientific inquiry; it is illegible, non-typical, and nothing more can be learned from it than from a gust of wind or scattering of raindrops. What is in fact being rejected here is less the accidental than the empirical, which poses a perpetual threat to tragic essentialism. Indeed, the division within tragedy between the essential and the empirical is reflected in the discrepancy between tragic theory and tragic practice. The former is really a kind of Platonic version of the latter, shorn of its embarrassing inconsistencies, so that tragedy can be extracted as an ideology or theoretical position in its own right from a host of deeply divergent texts. What tragic essentialism finds distasteful is randomness, contingency, the unravelling text of the empirical and everyday – in a word, comedy. Comedy is the domain of the non-intransigent, of those crafty, compliant, unkillable forms of life which get their way by yielding. Its adaptive, accommodatory spirit is thus the very opposite of tragic deadlock and clenched resolution. But accident is also a threat to tragedy because the agent ceases to be the source of her own action, lapsing instead into ignoble passivity. The refusal of accident, the necessary immanence of tragedy, and the self-affirmation of the agent, are closely allied conceptions.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 123)

Hvis Hamlet hadde dødd uten å vite at han ble forgiftet av Laertes' korde, så hadde den tragiske virkningen blitt betydelig mindre, og tilsvarende ville det ødelagt mye av den tragiske effekten hvis Othello etter å ha drept Desdemona hadde begått selvmord og aldri fått vite at hun var uskyldig. Ikke noe skuespill "kan betegnes som tragedie hvis helten går i døden uten å ha erfart omfanget av sine feiltrinn" (Gelfert 1995 s. 19). Den tragiske helten går under med full bevissthet om sin situasjon og grunnen til undergangen er verken naturlig eller tilfeldig, og verken fullt fortjent eller helt ufortjent (Gelfert 1995 s. 29).

"If tragedy springs not from chance but from the protagonist's own conduct, then this may risk alienating our sympathies, but it might also serve to temper the injustice of the tragic suffering itself." (Eagleton 2003 s. 123)

"Either tragedy results from accident, which is undignified; or from destiny, which is unjust; or from the hero's own actions, which makes him unpalatable. The best solution is a careful balance of the last two, but this is not easy in an age which has little belief in destiny in the first place." (Eagleton 2003 s. 124)

"The world is gift, not fate. It has its source in freedom, not compulsion. Like the artist and his product, God fashioned the world just for the hell of it, as a quick look around it will no doubt confirm." (Eagleton 2003 s. 128) "To see the world as governed by chance is to see it as not governed at all." (Eagleton 2003 s. 130)

"Even in late modern and postmodern culture, however, destiny of some sort is still much in vogue. It is just that it now has names like power and desire, forces every bit as lethal, capricious and implacable as the effects of a squabble on Mount Olympus. Freud speaks of destiny as having migrated in modern times to the family. Every domestic hearth is now a potential house of Atreus" (Eagleton 2003 s. 129).

"Cleanth Brooks dismisses the idea that suffering is ever just imposed on tragic protagonists; they must incur it by their own free decisions. It is hard to see how this is true of Iphigenia, Desdemona or Hedvig Ekdal of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*. It also comes embarrassingly close to implying that such protagonists are responsible for their own undoing, and so get what they deserve. A humanist insistence on free agency threatens ironically to issue in a lack of humanity." (Eagleton 2003 s. 125) "[W]hile there is nothing preordained about poverty and sexual exploitation, there is nothing accidental about them either. Like most of social existence, they fall somewhere between the two. When Raymond Williams speaks of revolution as 'the inevitable working through of a deep and tragic disorder', he does not mean that it is inscribed in the stars, but neither does he mean that it is fortuitous. Many tragedies are tragedies of fortune rather than fate; their point is not that wicked deeds backfire by some inexorable logic, but that life is a precarious business for the wicked and innocent alike. It is too arbitrary to have a shape about it, whether malign or beneficent." (Eagleton 2003 s. 126)

Ordet “skjebnen” passer ikke med noe gresk ord. Kanskje “nødvendigheten” er en bedre oversettelse av “ananke”. Ananke var for grekerne en guddom, en gudinnene for nødvendighet, tvang og uunngåelighet. I Homers *Iliaden* brukes begrepet mange ganger, men også lignende begreper, som i norsk oversettelse ofte blir til “skjebnen”. I 19. sang sier kong Agamemnon:

“Titt har akaiernes menn bragt dette på bane og bittert
lastet min ferd; men det er ikke meg som her bærer skylden.
Skjebnen har skylden og Zevs og Erinys, som vandrer i mørket.
Disse har lagt meg i sinn hin rasende dårskap på tinge
dengang jeg ranet med vold Akillevs’ hedrende kamplønn.
Dog, hva skal jeg gjøre? Den mektige dårskaps gudinne
evner jo alt, hint Allfaders barn som dårer oss alle,
grum som hun er.” (l. 85-92; oversatt av Peter Østbye)

Ananke er ifølge historikeren Michael Grant “a mere mechanical force arising from the laws of nature” (1961 s. 153). En mann eller kvinne gjør alt han eller hun kan for å leve et ansvarlig og moralsk liv, men viser seg å være maktesløs overfor høyere makters vilje. Han eller hun er skyldig uten å ha villet det onde. Tråder knyttes sammen på en ubønhørlig måte og den tragiske avslutningen blir uunngåelig. Ingen anstrengelser for å unngå katastrofen hjelper.

“The characters of Greek tragedy, so Oliver Taplin argues, are represented most of the time not as puppets but as reasonably free agents working out their own destinies. Sometimes, however, they are seen in more fatalistic terms, and at other times in both ways together. Human freedom is expressly denied in the Prologue to Euripides’ *Hippolytos*, but there seems nothing foredoomed about, say, the sufferings of Philoctetes. Greek tragedies quite often suggests that their narratives are not in the least predestined, and not one of Aeschylus’ characters conforms to the standard model of destiny.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 109)

Samtidig er altså mennesket fritt til å gjøre sine valg. Dette er et stort paradoks, men kanskje ikke like gåtefullt for grekerne som det er for oss i dag. Uklarhet om skyld kjennetegner alle heltene/heltinnene i tragedier (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 53). “Denne menneskets makt på godt og ondt – og samtidig fullkomne maktesløshet overfor en skjult virkende guddommelig faktor i tilværelsen, blir endevendt av alle de tre store greske dramatikere (Aischylos, Sofokles, Euripides).” (Egil A. Wyller i *Aftenposten* 16. september 1992 s. 18) Det greske teatret var: “a theatre of cruelty, [but] it is also a forum for civic debate.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 143)

“ ‘Through tragedy’, writes Adrian Poole, ‘we recognize and refeel our sense of both the value and the futility of human life, or both its purposes and its emptiness.’ This dual vision is marked in ancient Greece, with its sense of the human as both precious and precarious, its affirmation of culture along with the dark forces which

threaten it with dissolution. Perhaps it is this tenacious Greek belief in civility on the one hand and the turbulent powers which ravage it on the other which lays the foundation for tragedy, as it does in the writings of the later Freud.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 282)

“To see Greek tragedy as poised between the heroic-mythical and the rational-legal is to say that, like Freud, it is struck by the paradox that the very forces which go into the making of civilization are unruly, uncivil, potentially disruptive ones. This is most obvious in sexuality, at once anarchic passion and anchor of domestic life. But much the same is true of material production – the raw, earthy energies on which civilization is reared, and which bulk large in the myth of Prometheus. What holds in these cases applies equally to the ethico-legal sphere, in which justice is both thwarted and promoted by the archaic drive for vengeance. Political power, however enlightened, is still caught up in perils and taboos. If the Dionysian is both dreaded and revered, this deep-grained ambivalence extends to the making of civilization as a whole, an ambivalence which the Faust myth also encodes. Vernant and Vidal-Naquet thus reject the teleological reading of the *Oresteia* as a laborious trek from chthonic powers to civic legality; the drama is about both at once, about the law and the Eumenides together.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 144)

“Handlingerne implicerer skyld, og når vi ikke kaster sten mod helten, men følger ham og hende med frygt og medliden, er det fordi vi vedkender os skylden, der klæber til de menneskelige handlinger, om ikke som arvesynd, så som umuligheden af at handle fejlfrit, fordi vi kun kan anskue verden ud fra en begrænset synsvinkel. Sådan kunne helten Ødipus løse selve sfinksens gåde og frelse sin by, men ikke genkende sig selv som sin mors søn. Det er én grund til at føle frygt i konfrontationen med heltens handlinger, at end ikke helten undgår sin skæbne.” (Richard 2010)

Den engelske litteraturforskeren Una Ellis-Fermor er “certainly right in claiming for the choric utterances in the [Aiskhylos’] *Agamemnon* an expression of faith in the divine plan: here, indeed, is a passage which simultaneously brings out the remoteness of Zeus and the divine guidance of man through suffering to wisdom: [...]

Who setting us on the road
Made this a valid law –
‘That men must learn by suffering.’
Drop by drop in sleep upon the heart
Falls the laborious memory of pain,
Against one’s will comes wisdom;
The grace of the gods is forced on us
Throned inviolably.

Agamemnon (tr. Louis MacNeice) p. 18

Man thus has no certain knowledge even of God's name, and God is without pity in his hard discipline." (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 292-293)

Mennesket blir stilt i en utveisløs situasjon, der alle feil blir riktige eller alle blir feil. "Melodrama presents the struggle of right and wrong; tragedy – on one famous view of it – the struggle of right and right" (Eric Bentley i Lerner 1989 s. 258).

Det både skjer noe med mennesket utenfra og mennesket er ansvarlig selv – to perspektiver som det er vanskelig å forene. Det er noe irrasjonelt i at mennesket både er bundet og fri, og at disse kreftene er umulig å harmonisere. Mennesket er i nødvendighetens grep, styrt av krefter som destruerer mennesket. Hver person står til ansvar for hendelser som det ikke har oversikt over eller kan kontrollere. Tragediene preges av en understrøm av erkjennelse der vi innser at menneskene er marionetter i ukjente og følelsesløse maktens hender. Men menneskets frihet er for tragedien en nødvendig illusjon.

Den tyske dikteren Goethe skrev at mennesket umulig kan overskue sine egne handlinger og deres konsekvenser. Derfor lever alle mennesker i en tragisk verden (Neis 1989 s. 55).

Begrepet tragisk ironi "er faktisk en temmelig sen oppfindelse og savner helt korrelat i de klassiske og postklassiske tragedieteorier. Det stammer fra den romantiske litterat Adam Müller, som hævdede, at Schlegel-brødrene tog grunnleggende feil i, at tragik og ironi var uforrenelige. Ifølge ham er vores måte at forholde os til det tragiske på netop ironisk, dvs. distanceret selvbevidst, og ikke, som den aristoteliske poetik ellers hævder, indlevende og forfærdet. Müllers begreb videreudvikles af den engelske oldtidshistoriker og Schleiermacher-oversætter Connop Thirlwalls afhandling *The Irony of Sophocles* (1833). Thirlwell ser ligesom Müller sin teori om tragisk ironi som et afgørende brud med den aristoteliske tragedieteori. Thirlwell hævder, at Sofokles i *Kong Ødipus*, udfolder en dobbelt ironi, nemlig på den side "the irony of the action" og på den anden side "the irony of the poet". Handlingens ironi viser sig i at den tragiske skæbne altid er selvpåført: Ødipus handlinger viser sig at have en anden mening, end han umiddelbart tillægger dem. Denne form for handlingsironi, hvor handlingens mening vendes på hovedet, forbinder sig nøje til Aristoteles' begreber om peripeti og anagnorisis. Handlingens ironi er den skæbnens ironi, Ødipus selv erfarer. Digterens ironi er en anden. Det er den ironi, der gør os i stand til at erkende handlingens ironi længe før Ødipus. Digterens ironi skaber dermed en distance til handling og helt. Det er i kraft af digterens ironi, at publikum kan distancere sig fra handlingen og hengive sig til æstetisk refleksion, hvor det aristoteliske publikum lader sig opsluge af handlingen og de lidenskaber, den vækker. [...] Menke konstaterer, at den tragiske ironi er betinget af den tragiske helts dobbelte tale: alt hvad han siger, har en dobbelt betydning, som han ikke selv er herre over, og som kun tilskuerne kan fornemme." (Dahl 2010)

“Tragedy is a ritual which initiates men into reality, and irony is the perspective of tragedy.” (Leech 1964 s. 33) “[T]he tragic can be a negative image of utopia: it reminds us of what we cherish in the act of seeing it destroyed.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 26)

“The richness which dies along with a single human being is beyond our fathoming, though tragedy may furnish a hint of it.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 27)

“Tragedy can show us how value is released in the act of destruction itself, so that, as with the ecstatically burst grape of Keats’s ‘Ode to Melancholy’, we savour the opulence of a thing in the very moment of its ruin.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 26-27)

Det greske ordet “tyche” står for det tilfeldige i tilværelsen (i motsetning til “nomos”: orden, kontroll, beherskelse og ikke-tilfeldighet). (Tyche var også navnet på en gresk skjebnegudinne.) Mennesket må leve med dunkelhet og risiko, med noe uforklarlig og ufrakommelig, uten løsning (men dette betyr ikke at mennesket for grekerne er determinert, for tanken om det determinerte dukker først opp med stoikerne). Det greske ordet “moira” betyr nødvendighet eller “lodd”, og dette er noe som fanger inn hvert enkelt menneske – noe som tilkommer mennesket, noe som vil skje, “the non-choice of choice” (Paul Ricoeur). Det er noe “demonisk” (en slags overindividuell energi), en plutselig irrasjonell og uimotståelig tilsynekomst av “krefter” i mennesket og tilværelsen.

“[I]n Greece, *tragedy is not understood as a presentation of the conflict between good and evil, or right and wrong*; rather, it is one of the ways in which the horror that human beings can create for themselves is displayed and so asked about.” (Dennis J. Schmidt i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_021.xml; lesedato 04.02.22)

“The question of free will remains a highly dubious one in tragic writing. We are shown how things are, or as they appear to be to a writer who, at least for the time being, is seeing man’s condition as ultimately inseparable from disaster. But there is included the fact that, perhaps by some supreme irony, perhaps because he is what he is, a sentient being, a man has the experience of himself contributing to the process which involves his end. *Moira*, at least for the later Stoics, was only roughly equivalent to our ‘fate’: it meant rather the sum total of all things that have been, are, will be; it can be seen as independent of time, independent of the gods, through whom it was none the less mediated to men. William Chase Greene has thus indicated the position of Chrysippus in the third century B.C.: ‘All these arguments might be summarized in the proposition that the future is wholly contained in the present, or indeed in the past.’ (*Moira: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought*, reprinted New York and Evanston, 1963, p. 347.) Late as Chrysippus is in relation to extant Greek tragedies, the notion of ‘timelessness’ seems to underlie most of the major plays. Yet a man could accept, could will, his particular *moira*. In any event, whatever he did, as a sentient being, became part of

that totality which was his already written story. H. D. F. Kitto has assured us that in Greek tragedy: ‘The gods are a controlling element ..., but not in what the actors do and suffer: that is entirely their own affair’ (*Form and Meaning in Drama*, 1956, p. 244).” (Leech 1969 s. 41)

“Rather it is a world of essential strangeness, of a great sense of the power of life, nature, and destiny, and of an overpowering awareness of what exceeds what human beings can control. [...] it awakens in us a renewed sense that we do indeed live in a world that is larger than we can either control or define and that we are held in the grip of that which we cannot comprehend. [...] The roots of tragedy that are found in the riddle each of us is – for ourselves and for others equally – can never be erased or lifted.” (Dennis J. Schmidt i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_021.xml; lesedato 04.02.22)

“In his *Philosophy of Art*, Schelling assumes that tragedy must deal in destiny, and asks whether there can be a modern version of it. He replies that Shakespeare replaces fate with character, which now stands forth as an insuperable necessity. For the ancient Greeks, he argues, the gods often inflicted error on humanity, and their brand of fate is thus flawed; but this cannot be the case with the perfect God of Christianity. So fate as a cause of tragic downfall must shift instead to character, which can no longer be regarded as free. It is the destiny of our selves which proves hardest to elude. [...] for Hegel, Schelling, Schlegel, Hölderlin, Hebbel, Schopenhauer, Heidegger and their progeny, tragedy goes one step further and actually thematizes the contest between freedom and fate.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 118-119)

For filosofen Hegel “tragedy overturns rebellion and reinstates the Law. Yet in doing so it reveals that the love of freedom which drives the hero to his death is also its own. Destiny is simply the mask worn by liberty, compulsion the way Reason makes itself felt in the phenomenal world. There can thus be no final antagonism between authority and revolt. Freedom, did the insurgent hero but recognize it, is the stuff of the very sovereignty against which he pits his forces. And tragedy is the name we give to the moment of truth in which this recognition breaks upon him. In the act of being beaten down, the tragic hero is forced to contrast his own puny strength with the power of providence, and in doing so discovers that same infinity of power within himself. [...] tragedy humiliatingly exposes the limits of our powers, but in thus objectifying our finitude makes us aware of an unfathomable freedom within ourselves. [...] So defeat is also victory, since the power which crushes us is shown to be our own free spirit in objectified form. [...] The conservative moral of tragedy is that there is no need to revolt, since the Law is the law of freedom.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 122)

“Jean Anouilh’s Chorus in his *Antigone* sees tragedy as peculiarly restful, precisely because its action is predestined and there is nothing to be done. Hope and illusion have no part in it, which brings one a certain stoical serenity. Others, by contrast,

have seen it in Promethean style as dramatizing humanity's heroic resistance to destiny or oppression. Shelley remarks in his preface to *The Cenci* that Beatrice should not have taken revenge for being outraged by her father Count Cenci, but it is the fact that she does which makes her a tragic figure. For Albert Camus in *The Rebel*, every act of rebellion implies a tragic value, which is what distinguishes the rebel from the nihilist. [...] Alternatively, you can see the value of tragedy as a kind of aesthetic analogue of the scene of analysis, in which recounting a narrative of being possessed by forces as relentless as the Furies reaches its climax in a cure which mirrors the moment of tragic recognition or illumination. Tragic art involves the plotting of suffering, not simply a raw cry of pain." (Eagleton 2003 s. 63)

Mennesket kan ikke vite hvem som bestemmer over dets liv, og står dermed overfor en fundamental usikkerhet, og i siste instans kaos (sett fra menneskets perspektiv). Det er en gudegitt orden både i gudedimensjonen og i menneskedimensjonen i tilværelsen, men det er en avgrunn mellom disse to dimensjonene, og mennesket forstår ikke dybdene i den orden som hersker i menneskets liv.

Ingen unngår en forutbestemt skjebne. Utgangen er gitt fra begynnelsen og kampen allerede tapt når det gjelder den tragiske slutten. Mennesket har ikke mulighet til å unnfly det som skal skje. Alle mennesker er prisgitt krefter de ikke kan kontrollere, noe ufrakommelig, men må uansett velge og handle. Valgene har oftest potensial både for godt og ondt, for lykke og lidelse, inklusiv det katastrofale. Vi tar stadig på nytt skritt ut i mørket, ut i det usikre og ikke-kontrollerbare. Mennesket kontrollerer ikke seg selv, det har mørke og forferdelige krefter i seg. Menneskets begrensninger er satt. Kreftene er overindividuelle og overmenneskelige. Vi mennesker kan ikke forstå det – men det kan framstilles i et drama. Tragedien er en dyptforstyrrende konflikt i tilværelsen (Odd Inge Langholm). "Alt tragisk beror på en motsetning som ikke kan utjevnes. Så snart en utjevning forekommer, eller blir mulig, forsvinner det tragiske." (Goethe sitert fra Gelfert 1995 s. 92)

Menneskene er fjerne og uvesentlige i gresk religion/mytologi (Homers guder, dvs. de olympiske gudene, inngikk sammen med et mangfold av andre guddommelige krefter), med en helt underordnet status og posisjon i tilværelsen sammenlignet med det guddommelige. Vi mennesker er perifere og uviktige i tilværelsens store krefter. Verden er en enorm "kraftmasse" som bare så vidt inkluderer mennesket. Gudenes storhet blir målt i menneskenes nederlag. Fordi gudene er udødelige, kan de ikke erfare menneskets heroiske kamp mot dødskreftene.

Ifølge den britiske filosofen Bernard Williams er tragedier "the very reflection, the realization of such uncompromising powers of fate or nature: the world neither was created for us, nor us for the world, our history is not a story with some aim and there is not any place outside of the history and world, from where our activities can be justified. By this explanation Williams refuses early metaphysical Nietzsche who affirms art that metaphysically redeems life. Life full of sorrow, as artistically portrayed in the tragedy, does not supply the precariousness of our (spectator's)

own life [...] The tragedy rather enables us to experience and contemplate fictive horrors and disasters and in this “fictive experience” we adopt “attitudes we cannot take towards real horrors, because we are either “practically engaged in them” (overwhelmed by fear, grief etc.), or “healthily inattentive to them”. In the reflection about tragedy, we are healthily engaged in them, i.e. we are not engulfed by them, but we pay them full attention – for example by the distribution in time, which is not possible in the real life: first we cry and after having shed tears we have time to clearly and deeply think about these uncomfortable matters including our previous passions. In this sense, the benefit from contemplating tragedy, as described by Williams – “...some understanding of the real horrors” –, possibly includes (in Aristotelian way) some purgation of fear from our minds. And mainly, unlike the direct hit which immobilizes us (either by apathy, or by grief), the tragedy can provoke our energy, action, political activity, [...] the appeal of Tekméssa who asks friends “*to stand in the way of a necessary chance*” (*Aiás*, 803). Williams sees the tragedy mainly as a reflection that justice is never done in our world, reflection which encourages always to stand against present force or threat.” (Tomáš Hejduk i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

Hovedpersonen i en gresk tragedie blir slått av en slags blindhet (gresk “até”) som får han eller henne til å begå en handling i forblindelse, som en slags innskytelse eller et feiltrinn (“hamartia”). Dette feiltrinnet har noe irrasjonelt ved seg, og er ikke det vi i dag ville kalt en karakterbrist. “Det dreier seg nettopp ikke om noen “karakterbrist” eller *tragic flaw*, som det lenge het i toneangivende tolkninger, men en feil, en bommert, som riktignok i tragedien får fatale følger, men som ikke er forankret i karakteren (selv om en dikter bør sannsynliggjøre at nettopp den og den karakteren vil gjøre den og den feilen). Det er en “stor feil”, sier Aristoteles; det skal antagelig forstås slik at det er en feil med store konsekvenser. *Hamartia* springer ut av uvitenhet, en uvitenhet om viktige ting, som får folk til gjøre noe de ikke burde ha gjort.” (professor Øivind Andersen i Aristoteles 2008 s. xlix).

“The catastrophe, to be sure, is sometimes predestined by a prima-donna-like god or the star-crossed history of a house; but for the most part it would not have come about if some previous, avoidable event had not happened as well.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 89) Helten er utsatt for “a *skandalon* or stumbling-block” (Eagleton 2003 s. 288).

Begrepet hamartia har blitt tolket på mange måter, med forskjellige nyanser i forståelsen av hva Aristoteles kan ha ment. “ “There has been perhaps more scholarly blood shed over the meaning of *hamartia* in Aristotle’s *Poetics* than over any other concept in the history of literature”, skrev Robert Dyer i 1965 [...] Betegner *hamartia* et karaktertrekk som avslører en moralsk mangel hos tragediehelten? Eller viser *hamartia* snarere til en feil som ikke har sin grunn i heltens karakter, men heller er et utslag av mangel på viktig informasjon eller andre uheldige omstendigheter? [...] Mens flere filologer hevder at *hamartia* er forankret i en moralsk brist hos den tragiske helten, mener andre at *hamartia* inntreffer som

følge av uunngåelig uvitenhet. [...] 1800-tallets forklaring av *hamartia* som en karakterbetinget feil, en såkalt *tragic flaw*. [...] Selv om den tragiske helt ikke er uskyldig, betyr ikke dette at den tragiske utgangen er fortjent – snarere tvert imot.” (Hilde Vinje i <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20)

“I *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* fra 1894 skisserer S. H. Butcher tre mulige tolkninger av *hamartia*, og viser her til *Den nikomakiske etikk*: Som synonymt med *hamartēma* og brukt om en enkelt handling, kan *hamartia* for det første leses som en “error due to inadequate knowledge of particular circumstances” (Butcher 1951:317-318) [...] en viss grad av moralsk klanderverdighet, ettersom omstendighetene ved handlingen *kunne* ha vært kjent for aktøren gjennom innsats. *Hamartia* kan også knyttes løst til en feil grunnet på uunngåelig uvitenhet. I begge tilfeller skjer feiltrinnet uten hensikt, og den moralske undertonen i begrepet vil avhenge av hvorvidt den tragiske helt selv er ansvarlig for uvitenheten. Butchers andre tolkning er “the moral *hamartia* proper”, hvor handlingen skjer med hensikt, men uten å være veloverveid – handlinger som begås i sinne eller forhastelse (Butcher 1951:318-319). Sist, men ikke minst, skriver Butcher, kan *hamartia* betegne en mangel ved tragedieheltens karakter. En slik mangel er på den ene siden forskjellig fra et enkelt feilskjær (“an isolated error or fault”); på den andre siden er den forskjellig fra laster som er forankret i en fordervet vilje. Under denne tolkningen faller enhver menneskelig og moralsk svakhet som ikke er preget av en ond hensikt. *Hamartia* vil her ikke leses som en enkelthandling, men derimot som en permanent tilstand ved karakteren (Butcher 1951:319). [...] Fordi Butcher åpner for så vel en moralsk som en ren intellektuell lesning av *hamartia*, kan vi plassere ham i vannskillet mellom tolkningen av begrepet som *tragic flaw* og *tragic error*. Lesningen av *hamartia* som et intellektuelt feiltrinn som har sin grunn i mangel på viktig informasjon – en *tragic error of judgement* – får herfra økt oppslutning. [...] Butcher oversetter for øvrig *hamartia* med “error or frailty” i sin engelske utgave av *Poetik*, og impliserer dermed en potensiell moralsk skyld.” (Hilde Vinje i <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20)

Den nederlandske filologen Jan Maarten Bremer skrev doktorgradsavhandlingen *Hamartia: Tragic Error in the Poetics of Aristotle and in Greek tragedy* (1969). “Som tittelen antyder, konkluderer han med at *hamartia* best forstås som “*tragic error*”, i.e. a wrong action committed in ignorance of its nature, effect etc., which is the starting point of a causally connected train of events ending in disaster” (1969: 63). [...] Bremer skjelner mellom tre mulige betydninger av ord som har roten *hamart-* (1969:30). For det første kan tilfeller av disse ordene samles under meningen “å bomme” (*miss*). For det andre som “å feile” (*err*), som enten vil si å misforstå noe, eller å gjøre en glipp. For det tredje som “å krenke” (*offend*), som mer presist innebærer å handle klanderverdig, herunder å bryte loven. [...] Hos de tre klassiske tragediedikterne – Aiskhylos, Sofokles og Euripides – tenderer *hamart*-ordene mot å overveiende brukes om klanderverdige handlinger med

tragiske konsekvenser.” (Hilde Vinje i <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20)

“It seems rather flinty not to feel a twinge of compassion for someone who wrenches his car steering-wheel in a momentary flare of irritation and ends up without any limbs.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 154-155)

“Det er ikke til å komme unna at uvitenhet er et sentralt element i Sofokles’ handlingsforløp. I forlengelse av dette kan man argumentere for at den utslagsgivende faktoren for vendingen fra lykke til ulykke nettopp er Oidipus’ uvitenhet og ikke hans moralske brister – som både van Braam og Bremer gjør. P.W. Harsh, som derimot insisterer på at *hamartia* bør forstås som en moralsk kvalitet (og slik faller inn under den gamle skolen), tilbyr en ganske annen lesning av *Kong Oidipus*: “... surely the pre-eminently good and just man does not fly into a fury when a carriage crowds him from the road, and he does not commit murder indiscriminately even when he is lashed by the driver. Surely such a man, given the oracle of Oedipus, would die before slaying a man old enough to be his sire or before marrying a woman old enough to be his mother.” (Harsh 1945:48) Oidipus ønsker ikke med vilje å handle galt, er ikke ondsinnet og fortjener heller ikke den ulykken han havner i – men han bærer likevel et snev av skyld for dette resultatet, konkluderer Harsh. Selv om Harsh gjør klokt i ikke å fraskrive Oidipus alt ansvar for sin egen undergang, er det ikke til å komme bort fra at uvitenheten om det partikulære – at Laios og Iokaste er hans foreldre – spiller en viktig rolle i handlingsforløpet. Oidipus bestrider aldri at det er galt å myrde ens egen far og gå til sengs med sin mor, og mangler derfor ikke kunnskap om det allmenne. Snarere er det ved vurderinger av enkelttilfellet han kommer til kort.” (Hilde Vinje i <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20)

“De historiske fortolkningene av *hamartia* har et vidt spenn: Farget av nytestamentlig gresk ble begrepet forstått som “synd” under den italienske renessansen; under den franske klassisismen stivnet forståelsen av begrepet som “skyld”; mens den tyske filosofien i kjølvannet av Hegel tilla den tragiske helten en metafysisk skyld gjennom begrepet *tragische Schuld*. [...] vil det imidlertid ikke gi mening å hevde at hovedkarakteren fortjener sin tragiske skjebne – for medlidenheten vekkes først når noen ufortjent går til grunne. Overgangen fra 1800-tallets lesning av *hamartia* som *tragic flaw* til 1900-tallets insistering på *tragic error* har likevel enkelte problematiske aspekter ved seg. Dersom *hamartia* begrenses til en intellektuell feilvurdering og tømnes for et mulig moralsk innhold, fremstår ikke lenger den tragiske helten som en handlende aktør. Det er nettopp i den subtile forbindelsen mellom ansvar og ulykke diktningen fremkaller de tragiske følelsene på sitt mest effektive. Frykten vekkes ved at helten ligner på oss, og medlidenheten følger når han går fra lykke til ulykke – verken som et uskyldig offer eller en forhåndsdømt synder, men som en *mimēsis* av menneskelig

handling.” (Hilde Vinje i <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20)

Den amerikanske filosofen Martha Nussbaum skriver i *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (1986): “To come to grief through *hamartia* is, then, to fall through some sort of mistake in action that is causally intelligible, not simply fortuitous, done in some sense by oneself; and yet not the outgrowth of a settled defective disposition of character. Further examination indicates that *hamartia* can include both blameworthy and non-blameworthy missings-of-the-mark” (her sitert fra <https://filosofisksupplement.no/wp-content/uploads/2013-vinje-hamartia.pdf>; lesedato 17.02.20).

I kapittel 13 i *Poetikken* Aristoteles “claims that the tragic hero, ‘a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just’, should fall from prosperity to misery through a fatal flaw in his character or an error of judgement, and thus he defends the unhappy ending in tragedy; in Chapter 14, however, he gives especial praise to that type of tragedy in which disaster is avoided at the last moment through the revelation of something previously unknown. The contradiction may well be due to the conflicting claims of philosophic theory and dramatic effectiveness. In any event, it may serve as a warning of the difficulty of achieving consistency in a theory of tragedy, and of deciding exactly which plays are to be accepted as tragic.” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 286-287)

Aristoteles’ tragedieteori bygger på en “konflikt mellom stof og form” (Dahl 2010), dvs. noe avskrekkende i innholdet (stoffet), men tiltalende i formen. “I den aristoteliske poetik står tragediens tragik og æstetik i et antagonistisk forhold til hinanden. Formen, den poetiske og skønne fremstilling, kolliderer med indholdet, som er forfærdende. Det er i dette spændingsfelt mellem fremstillingens behag og det fremstilledes ubehag, at betingelserne for publikums indlevelse, affekt og katharsis skabes, hvor selv blodtørstige tyranner kan bevæges til tårer.” (Dahl 2010)

Den danske forskeren Anne Birgitte Richard ga i 2010 ut boka *Den urimelige kunst: Om tragediens former og de tragiske følelser*. “Ifølge Aristoteles er tragediens mening de følelser, den afsætter hos tilskueren, men hvordan kan et tragisk forløb og heltens undergang føre til en følelsesmæssig forløsning, og kan det være meningen med tragedien? *Den urimelige kunst* diskuterer meningen med tragedien gjennom en række analyser og i dialog med en række teoretikere, der siden har forsøgt at tolke, anfægte, arve og protestere mod Aristoteles. Den klassiske tragedie er kendetegnet ved sin stramme form og det æstetisk velordnede forløb. Men den bevæger sig også på grænsen af kaos, det ufortolkelige i verden og det ulæselige i mennesket. Ødipus reddede sin by og blev konge, da han løste sfinksens gåde med svaret: mennesket. Men hans tragedie var, at svaret kun var det halve, for han genkendte ikke sig selv som søn og mand. Det er tragediens gru, at den skyr enhver forsoning og river tæppet væk under vores ønske om et

endegyldigt svar på en mening, også med og om os selv. Det er ganske urimeligt, men gør også tragedien til en æstetisk grundform for, hvad kunst kan, når den viser det ubærlige, men gør det netop som kunstnerisk form.” (<https://samfundslitteratur.dk/bog/den-urimelige-kunst>; lesedato 12.11.19)

“De eneste græske tragedier, der lever op til de aristoteliske forskrifter om sandsynlighed og nødvendighed er faktisk Sofokles’ *Kong Ødipus* og Euripides’ *Ifigenia hos taurerne*. Resten af de græske tragedier har en mere eller mindre episodisk opbygning.” (Dahl 2010)

Christian Dahls studie *Tragedie og bystat: Om fællesskab og konflikt i Athens dramatiske kultur* (2010) analyserer blandt andet “bystatens tvedelte selvforståelse som på den ene side hele samfundet, herunder kvinder, børn og slaver, og på den anden side det politiske fællesskab af frie, mandlige borgere: den inklusive polis over for den eksklusive polis. For at de frie, mandlige borgere kan realisere sig selv som politiske væsner, må privatsfæren udskilles, men tragedierne viser, at privatsfæren, især kvinderne, ikke lader sig neutralisere politisk. Den fortrængte privatsfære vender hævnende tilbage. Stjerneeksemplet er Sofokles’ *Antigone*, som Hegel analyserede ud fra præcist dette perspektiv.” (<https://tidsskrift.dk/kok/article/view/15763>; lesedato 12.11.19) “Tragediens vigtigste funktion var således ifølge Dahl “at bringe bystatens iboende sociale og politiske modsætninger og forskelle til artikulation på en måde, som ikke forstærker disse spændinger.” (19) Dahls tanke synes at være, at tragedien fungerede som et medium for ventilering af en kollektiv angst for “det fortrængtes genkomst” (14, 286). [...] “aporien mellem skyld og skæbne” (11). Desuden ses tragedien som “et kors for tanke og etik” (7), der angriber “grænserne for erkendelse, menneskelighed og fornuft” (15).” (Claus Esmann Andersen i <https://tidsskrift.dk/kok/article/view/15763>; lesedato 12.11.19)

“Not all tragedies portray suffering as ennobling. Amory Blaine of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* reflects that ‘all tragedy has that strain of the grotesque and squalid – so useless, futile’ (ch. 2). Sophocles forces us to listen to the agonized bellows of Heracles and Philoctetes, squeezing every drop of theatre he can out of their raw, pointless, unbearable pain. In the case of Heracles, this happens to a son of Zeus himself, one who has loyally served the gods and is now reduced to ‘a thing that cannot crawl, a piece of nothing’. And all this, in an extra sadistic twist of the knife, stems not from some cosmic pattern but from the sheerest blunder: Heracles’s wife gives him an anointed shirt to keep him faithful, which accomplishes that aim superbly by corroding his flesh. The drama ends with his son Hyllus accusing the gods of gazing down stony-faced and unmoved on such atrocities. Neither Heracles nor Philoctetes bear their pain with a shred of stoicism, yet they are tragic figures for all that.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 31)

“Tragediens æstetiske behag modsvares altså af et moralsk eller normativt ubehag ved den tragiske fabel. “Sweet violence” kaldte den elizabethanske aristoteliker Sir

Philip Sidney det sælsomme behag, tragediens tilskuere hensættes i ved at betrakte begivenheder, som uden for scenen blot ville være modbydelige.” (Dahl 2010)

“Even a figure as bohemian as Antonin Artaud takes a depressingly conventional line on the value of tragedy, writing that tragic theatre ‘collectively reveals their dark powers and hidden strength to men, urging them to take a nobler, more heroic stance in the face of destiny than they would have assumed without it’. Once again, tragedy is really a superior way of cheering yourself up. The paradox of tragedy as a supremely positive mode is encapsulated by Christopher Caudwell’s comment that ‘tragedy is not in itself tragic; it is beautiful, tender and satisfying – in the Aristotelian sense cathartic’. The form is not melancholic, even if the content is. Lear, on this view, is redeemed not by Cordelia, but by the very splendour and integrity of the verse which unflinchingly records his disintegration. Perhaps the form satisfies our desire for immortality, lending us a sense of being indestructible as long as this magnificent poetry pulses on.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 26)

I Sokrates’ filosofi fører rett tanke til rett handling. Slik er det ikke i tragedienes verden, og dette er én av grunnene til at tragedien ikke får plass i idealstaten som ble uttenkt av Sokrates’ elev Platon. Fenomener som tanken ikke kan gripe, skulle ekskluderes fra Platons ideelle stat.

Den romerske dikteren Seneca skrev i det 1. århundre e.Kr. tragedien *Phaedra*. I dette skuespillet får publikum oppleve det romerne kalte “nefas”, som var en forbrytelse “mot naturen”, der mennesket forlater det menneskelige og blir et monster (Bessières 2011 s. 403). Den kvinnelige hovedpersonen Fedras “nefas” er å elske sin stesønn Hippolytos; Hippolytos’ “nefas” er å avvise kvinner og ville leve et “rent” liv; kong Tesevs’ “nefas” er å påkalle guden Neptun for å straffe den uskyldige Hippolytos (Bessières 2011 s. 403).

Mennesker kan også bli straffet av gudene for sitt overmot (“hybris”). Helten kan ha hybris eller for mye stolthet (“superbia”). Meningsløs lidelse kan i tragedien omtolkes til gjengjeldelse (Söring 1982 s. 53), f.eks. for hybris. Hybris innebærer at “gudene lar de som de vil miste, bli gale, og de gale trakter etter en tilstand og en makt som overskrider grensene for deres rang” (Souiller 1988 s. 70). Et tre som vokser for høyt, blir rammet av lynet ... Enhver handling der et menneske våger noe stort, er en risiko. Når et menneske handler ut fra egen styrke, begår det feil. Krefter i tilværelsen setter en grense for den selvmektige person, særlig når det setter seg selv som mål. Den som har hybris, altså overmot/forblindelse, blir innhentet av gudene og straffet. En guddommakt, med sin “sjalusi”, griper inn i et individs liv og rammer det svært hardt.

Mennesket med hybris overskrider rimelige mål for hva et menneske skal bety og utføre. Hybris som overskridelse er en synd mot “naturens lover” slik disse voktes over av (de greske) gudene.

Det greske uttrykket “pathei mathos” betyr “læring gjennom lidelse” (eller “lid og lær”) og er de greske gudenes “advarel” mot hybris. “[S]uffering reveals something, a limit, or a violence, and the knowledge involved in it is important for the physical and ethical survival of the individual.” (Gaetano Chiurazzi i https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-2795-3_3; lesedato 27.04.21)

“Greek tragedy, from its beginning, is much concerned with the boundaries set to the pride and accomplishment of man; with his mistaking his little life for the whole of life and his limited power for omnipotence. It does not make an exultant delight in life and a full exercise of human power culpable in themselves – without them there could be no heroes. But when a more than common human virtue mistakes itself for super-human virtue, it challenges divine wrath and its presumption or *hubris* is fittingly punished and rewarded. It is perhaps the central mystery of tragedy that the pride which makes the hero also destroys him.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 26)

“Tragic art, to be sure, can teach you ‘upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded’, as Philip Sidney insists, and thus act as a bulwark against hubris. It can also reconcile you to your humble place in life, as the Earl of Shaftesbury suggests: tragedy ‘consists in the living representation of the disorders and misery of the great; to the end that the people and those of a lower condition may be taught the better to content themselves with privacy, enjoy their safer state, and prize the equality and justice of their guardian laws’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 141)

I en bok om tragediesjangeren skrev W. Macneile Dixon at “the tragic poets, wiser than the philosophers, recognize that there is a tragic flaw, but one that sometimes is not in the character of the sufferer, but in the universe itself”, men Kitto protesterer: “I doubt if the tragic poets would agree. [...] When it [jorden] does not run even, when disaster befalls the innocent, the reason is, in Shakespeare, as in the *Antigone*, that human folly has made the grounds uneven.” (Kitto 1986 s. 10-11)

I gresk mytologi skryter kong Capaneus av at ikke engang et lyn fra Zevs kan hindre han i å nå sitt mål. Straffen var å bli drept av et lyn. Hans dronning Evadne kastet seg inn i flammene for å dø. I Aiskhylos’ *Perserne* (472 f.Kr.) går en persisk invasjonsstyrke under i slaget ved Salamis, et sjøslag som grekerne gikk seirende ut av. Stykket framstiller grunnen til nederlaget som perserkongens og persernes hybris, deres overmot når de overskrider de grensene som er satt for dem. Derfor tukter Zevs dem, for deres “altfor høye tanker”.

Jo mer “psykologisk” de greske tragediene spilles i dag, desto mindre tragiske ville de blitt opplevd i gresk forstand. På engelsk har “até” blir oversatt med “ruin, folly, delusion”, på fransk med “ulykke” (“Malheur”; Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 276).

Når skjebnens vektskåler er i balanse, er det Zevs som med sitt lyn lar den ene skåla senkes ned (Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 85). Grekerne trodde på de tre

skjebnegudene som ble kalt “Moirai” og ingen mennesker kunne unnslippe deres vilje (Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 106). Dessuten visste den greske gudinnen Metis ifølge dikteren Hesiod “mer enn noen annen gud eller dødelig menneske”, blant annet alt som i framtiden skulle bringe lykke eller ulykke (Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 144). Det er fem vanlige motiver i sjangeren skjebnetragedie: spådom om en kommende ulykke, en familieforbannelse, blodskam, drap på slektninger og hjemkomst (Kayser 1973 s. 380).

“If the so-called Unities of Time and Place are observed, we feel more easily that the characters presented in the drama cannot get away from each other: they have to fight (and die sometimes); there is no room for anything but elegance or at least economy, no room to sprawl.” (Leech 1969 s. 75)

Hva kan være opprinnelsen til tragediesjangeren? Den romerske grammatikeren Aelius Donatus skriver at “tragedy and comedy had their beginnings in the religious observances with which the ancients performed their sacrifices in accomplishment of their vows made for their crops” (siteret fra Brereton 1968 s. 48). Denne antakelsen om dramasjangerens opprinnelse kalles “the theory of the Corn King”, en slags årskonge. ”The King [...] is appointed for a fixed term, during which he receives all the respect and honour due to his royal standing. At the end of the term he is taken out and ceremonially slaughtered and his blood sprinkled on the fields as an offering to the mysterious powers which determine the quality of the crops. A new king is immediately chosen to reign for the next period, at the end of which he will be sacrificed in his turn. [...] The sacrifice will still be a ‘King’: he will incarnate the best that the community has to offer. He will represent the ‘best’ not merely as a physically vigorous individual, of high value for labour and war, but because he personifies the power and aspirations of the community.” (Brereton 1968 s. 49)

Kongen er altså i prinsippet den beste representanten for samfunnet, og inkarnerer samfunnets makt og fellesskap. Myten om Kornkongen har antakelig sitt utspring i en primitiv fruktbarhetsrite. Først blir han feiret, får respekt og blir æret, senere blir han drept på en seremoniell måte og hans blod blir sprutet ut over markene som et offer til en mystisk makt som bestemmer hvordan avlingen skal bli. Deretter blir en ny konge valgt for neste syklus, til også denne kongen ofres (Brereton 1968 s. 49). Jo mer syndebukken lider, jo mer akseptabelt er offeret for de guddommelige maktene (Brereton 1968 s. 49). Syndebukken kompenserer for alles synder. Den kjøper frihet for andre gjennom å lide og ofres. Grekernes betegnelse på syndebukken som måtte ofres for det felles beste, var “pharmakos”. Det kreves et grusomt offer av tragediens helt, for å gjenskape en balanse som har gått tapt. Heltens død fungerer som en ofring (Liptay og Bauer 2013 s. 392).

“Sacrifice can be a way of losing in order to win, appeasing Nature or the gods so as to get them on your side.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 293)

“The scapegoat or *pharmakos* has a long history in tragic thought. Tragedy means ‘goat song’, but it might perhaps be better translated as ‘scapegoat song’. It may be that Greek tragedy has some roots in animal sacrifice, though the question is controversial.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 277-278)

“[T]he figure of the scapegoat is dearly central to a certain strain of tragedy. At the annual rite of Thargelia in ancient Greece, the pollution accumulated by the city during the previous year was expelled by selecting for purification two *pharmakoi*, chosen from among the most destitute and deformed of the city, who were housed and maintained by the state and fed on certain special foods, then paraded through the streets, struck on the genitals, thrust out of town and in early times perhaps even put to death. One could be, so to speak, a professional *pharmakos*, as one cannot really be a professional martyr; but this is logical, since the whole point of the scapegoat is its anonymity, as a human being emptied of subjectivity and reduced to refuse or nothingness.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 278)

“The *pharmakos* is symbolically loaded with the guilt of the community, which is why it is selected from among the lowest of the low. It is then thrust out into the wilderness, the symbol of a traumatic horror which we dare not contemplate. Yet in thus representing the community and having the power to deliver it from its trespasses, it is an inverted image of the king, who is likewise a representative figure charged with the health of the *polis*. In the figure of the scapegoat, the borders between power and weakness, sacred and profane, central and peripheral, sickness and health, poison and cure, are accordingly blurred. [...] As E. R. Dodds remarks, ‘the *pharmakos* is neither innocent nor guilty’, inhabiting like the subjectively innocent but objectively polluted Oedipus some indeterminate zone between the two.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 277-278)

“The scapegoat incarnates dirt, deformity, madness and criminality, and rather like the insane of classical antiquity, it is both shunned and regarded with respectful awe. This unclean thing is a substitute for the people, and thus stands in a metaphorical relation to them; but it also acts as a displacement for their sins, and is in that sense metonymic. In burdening it with their guilt, the people at once acknowledge their frailty and disavow it, project it violently outside themselves in the slaying of the sacrificial victim or its expulsion beyond their political frontiers. The victim is thus both themselves and not themselves, both a thing of darkness they acknowledge as their own as well as a convenient object on which to off-load and disown their criminality. Both pity and fear, identity and otherness, are at stake. [...] To pity the *pharmakos*, however, is to identify with it, and so to feel horror not of it but of the social order whose failure it signifies.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 279)

Forfatteren Henry James “understood how many innocent victims had to be sacrificed to pay for the civility he practised. His secretary Theodora Bosanquet writes of him that ‘When he walked out of the refuge of his study and into the world and looked about him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey

perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of doomed, defenceless children of light'.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 293)

“With the birth of guilt goes the desire to be discharged from it. The transgressions of the community are transferred symbolically to the sacrificial King, who goes to his death loaded with both excellence and sin, with the shame of the community as well as its pride. The sacrifice has become expiatory as well as propitiatory. Thus the King, representing the ‘best’ qualities of the community, can at the same time be made responsible for its worst qualities, be at once hero and scapegoat. Is not this, it may be asked, the essence of the tragic ambivalence; a definition, in general terms, of the typical tragic hero? Further, is it not significant that so much dramatic tragedy treats of kings or their equivalent in exactly those terms – powerful yet fallible, admirable yet guilty – and do not most tragedies culminate in the ending of an order (the old Corn King’s reign) and the inception of a new?” (Brereton 1968 s. 50)

“In any form in which it can be conceived, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, the expiatory sacrifice of the King excludes all that we have so far seen of the tragic conditions. It is not, in any moral sense, ‘final’. It is not a ‘disaster’, but a triumph. The suffering which it entails may engender pity – on an instinctive and unreflective level – but not fear when it is regarded as a labour necessary to obtain a certain reward. The same will apply to every example of Christian martyrdom, and indeed of martyrdom in any cause which is felt to have triumphed. The moment one envisages either a successful sacrifice of expiation or a reward beyond death one has moved away from the tragic, for these things can only imply, on some plane or another, a happy ending.” (Brereton 1968 s. 51)

Kristne martyrtragedier ble skrevet av bl.a. den tyske dikteren Andreas Gryphius (Szyrocki 1968 s. 214). Gryphius skrev på 1600-tallet både martyr- og tyrann dramaer, men disse er ikke ekte tragedier, fordi martyrer går skyldløse i døden, og triumferer i dødsøyeblikket. Tyrannen får hos Gryphius en fortjent straff enten fordi han er en som urettmessig har tilranet seg makten, eller fordi han som legitim hersker forbryter seg mot den guddommelige orden og derfor får sin fortjente straff. Publikum ser en slik tyranns undergang med glede, men det er ifølge Hans-Dieter Gelfert en moralsk tilfredsstillelse hos tilskuerne, ikke en tragisk (1995 s. 77). Gryphius skrev barokke sørgespill. Hans første, *Leo Arminius eller fyrstemord* (1646), er et tyrann drama som ligner et lærestykke om hvordan den ene urettferdige og grusomme herskeren erstatter den andre (Gelfert 1995 s. 77).

Jesus fra Nazareth ville bare kunne framstå som en tragisk skikkelse hvis han mislyktes. Hans ord på korset om at Gud har forlatt han, kan ikke tas bokstavelig av den troende kristne (Brereton 1968 s. 52).

“Three historical periods have produced unquestionable ‘great’ dramatic tragedy which was also materially successful and clearly not out of harmony of the age. Yet

Athens of the fifth century B.C., Elizabethan-Jacobean England, and seventeenth-century France were each in a phase of confidence and expansion” (Brereton 1968 s. 65). Det kan derfor ikke være riktig at tragedier skrives i land og perioder i nedgang og ulykke, snarere skrives store tragedier “when the main trend was upward, creative and exhilarating” (Brereton 1968 s. 66).

Britene Cyril Tourneur (med *The Revenger's Tragedy*) og John Webster (med *The White Devil* og *The Duchess of Malfi*) viste på begynnelsen av 1600-tallet et borgerlig publikum adelens korrupsjon i blodige sensasjonstragedier (Gelfert 1995 s. 64). Websters karakterer er ofte lidende, men ondskapsfulle personer i en farlig verden.

Hovedpersonen i Websters *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613-14) “is at the beginning of the play merely an attractive and enterprising woman, but it is when she cries, in the midst of torment: ‘I am Duchess of Malfi still’, that we recognize her full stature. Lear develops even more remarkably from a vain, hot-tempered tyrant to a man who sees the omnipresence of social wrong and bodily distress of the poor. So, too, our attitude to Electra and Orestes and Oedipus is inevitably one of growing admiration. Because, moreover, the dramatist has made it clear that his tragic hero is human, a man with weaknesses like our own, we feel not merely admiration but pride: we are proud of our human nature because in such characters it comes to fine flower. In a planned but terrible universe we see man justifying his existence. Thus the equilibrium of tragedy consists in a balancing of Terror with Pride. On the one hand, we are impelled to withdraw from the spectacle, to try to forget the revelation of evil methodized; on the other, we are roused to withstand destiny, to strive to meet it with the fortitude and the clear eyes of the tragic figure. This feeling of Pride comes into full existence when the hero knows his fate and contemplates it: it is essentially distinct from the hubris which he may display, but which we cannot share in, before his eyes are opened.” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 295)

Den første engelske tragedien skal ha vært *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*, oppført i juledagene 1561 ved advokatutdanningen ved Inner Temple i London, og skrevet av Thomas Sackville og Thomas Norton (Gelfert 1995 s. 49). “[T]he work that initiates English tragedy: *Gorboduc*, written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville in 1562. The play tells the story of a king who abdicates and divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The latter murders his brother to seize entire control of the realm, but he in turn is murdered by his mother. At this point, the people rise up and kill both king and queen. The nobles, assembled in parliament, put down the rebellion, and although the Duke of Albany betrays their common enterprise to secure the throne for himself, the play concludes with the clear suggestion that the aristocracy-in-arms will put down the rebellion.” (Moretti 2005 s. 43) “[T]he force that the king manifests in his decision proclaims him not only a tyrant, but incapable of governing as well. [...] tragedy represents absolutism as an irresolvable paradox.” (Moretti 2005 s. 46)

“Whether the chorus of ancient tragedy really functioned as [den tyske filosofen] Hegel claims (a question open to considerable debate), in modern tragedy at any rate, the chorus, still existing in *Gorboduc* where it coincided at the end of the play with the aristocracy-in-arms, is missing. With it disappears a universal, ‘higher’ point of view.” (Moretti 2005 s. 55)

Den engelske dramatiker Thomas Kyds *The Spanish Tragedy* (ca. 1587) innleder en tradisjon med engelske hevntredier (Gelfert 1995 s. 66).

The Revenger’s Tragedy (1606, publisert 1607) ble antakelig skrevet av engelskmannen Thomas Middleton. Dette skuespillet “has many classic ingredients of the genre of Revenge Tragedy, so popular in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England: An obsession with vengeance, with death, with both moral and physical decay, a court riddled with intrigues and illicit sexual desire, where sycophancy hides jealous and vengeful ambitions. [...] Vindice, the central character, is bent upon revenge on the Duke for the murder of his mistress Gloriana. He edges his way into the bosom of the court by disguising himself and gaining employment as a pander to the Duke’s son Lussurioso. Lussurioso, heir to the Duke’s throne, is a foppish young man intent upon seducing Vindice’s own sister. His jealous and ambitious step sisters’ are busy plotting his murder meanwhile, to secure their brother’s succession. The brother is in gaol under suspended sentence for rape however. The Duke’s bastard son is adulterous with the Duchess herself, while the Duke is pursuing his own fancies, encouraged and entrapped by the disguised Vindice. All of the court is deceived and deceiving, and this rotten core only decays further as the play goes on.” (<https://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/reviews/theatre/Revengerstragedy.htm>; lesedato 11.07.16)

“Revenge tragedy, drama in which the dominant motive is revenge for a real or imagined injury; it was a favourite form of English tragedy in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and found its highest expression in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The revenge drama derived originally from the Roman tragedies of Seneca but was established on the English stage by Thomas Kyd with *The Spanish Tragedy* (performed c. 1587). This work, which opens with the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge, deals with Hieronimo, a Spanish gentleman who is driven to melancholy by the murder of his son. Between spells of madness, he discovers who the murderers are and plans his ingenious revenge. He stages a play in which the murderers take part, and, while enacting his role, Hieronimo actually kills them, then kills himself. The influence of this play, so apparent in *Hamlet* (performed c. 1600-01), is also evident in other plays of the period. In John Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge* (1599-1601), the ghost of Antonio’s slain father urges Antonio to avenge his murder, which Antonio does during a court masque. In George Chapman’s *Revenge of Bussy d’Ambois* (performed c. 1610), Bussy’s ghost begs his introspective brother Clermont to avenge his murder. Clermont hesitates and vacillates but at last complies, then kills himself. Most revenge tragedies end with a scene of carnage that disposes of the avenger as well as his victims. Other examples

are Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (performed 1589-92), Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (performed 1602), and Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607)." (<https://www.britannica.com/art/revenge-tragedy#ref60028>; lesedato 26.05.21)

"[C]ollusion between Law and desire is obvious enough in revenge tragedy. Revengers like Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois or Vindice of *The Revenger's Tragedy* turn by some fateful logic into the image of those they hunt down, growing less and less distinguishable from them. If Vindice punishes the wicked, he also gloats over doing so. The revenger is both criminal and law-enforcer, custodian of order and violator of it. Ferdinand, the symbol of authority in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, is a monster of evil. To clamour for justice as an avenger is to be sucked into the very order which denies it, accepting its warped reciprocities, its exchange-values, its barren tit-for-tat logic. Only by some gesture of absolute refusal, some gratuitous act of foregoing and forgiveness, might one cut the knot of this situation, breaking the deathly circuit; yet this is to allow injustice to flourish, so that it is not easy to distinguish such transcendence from criminal indifference." (Eagleton 2003 s. 151)

Engelskmannen John Marstons *The Malcontent* (1604) "rails at the iniquities of a lascivious court [...] Although Marston used all the apparatus of contemporary revenge tragedy in *The Malcontent*, the wronged hero does not kill any of his tormentors and regains power by sophisticated Machiavellian stratagems." (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Marston>; lesedato 26.05.21)

The Witch of Edmonton ble, såvidt forskerne vet, skrevet av både William Rowley, Thomas Dekker og John Ford i 1621. Stykkets hovedperson er den gamle kvinnen Elizabeth Sawyer, som på grunn av sosial utestenging selger sin sjel til djevelen. Djevelen framstilles om en svart hund. En annen av dramaets sentrale skikkelser er en bigamist som dreper sin andre kone. "[I]nspired by real events of the recent past in an English village, the play is homier and humbler than the usual Jacobean fare. There are no arrogant duchesses or swaggering, poison-wielding princes in Edmonton. The people who commit the play's central crimes are of the everyday variety. And though Dog is around to whisper dark motivating words into their ears, it is intriguingly open to debate as to whether the Devil really made them do it. [...] A multilevel tale related with few of the flourishes of fancy poetry, "Witch" has the magnetic pull of a broadsheet ballad of murderous love. [...] the play's suggestion that hearts are often divided, and that a devil's easiest mark is an ambivalent soul. We are always aware of a tantalizing ambiguity as to why these people commit the crimes they do. And in the case of Elizabeth, we're not entirely sure what crimes she is responsible for, or the extent to which the townspeople turn her into the vengeful harpy she becomes. Guilt, it seems, is a gray zone in Edmonton." (Ben Brantley i <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/05/theater/reviews/05witch.html>; lesedato 17.02.20)

“Calderón and Lope de Vega might show evil in their plays, but it was an evil which attended on divine forgiveness or on an acceptable retribution; they might show suffering, but with them indeed it was the suffering of purgatorial fire. Nor should we look for tragedy in the classical drama of India: the gods there are seen as close to man, as his friends and teachers, ready to test human beings but ultimately to reward virtue wherever it should show itself. We can, however, find tragedy in those European countries which were brought most fully under Renaissance influences, with a weakening of medieval faith and some return to stoicism. In the atmosphere of comparative toleration under Elizabeth and James, English tragedy was especially free to develop. In seventeenth-century France, Racine would write tragically, though the form of his plays makes them appear almost like careful exercises in imitation of the classics” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 297-298).

Dikteren og kritikeren T. S. Eliot påpekte “how readily, in a period like the Elizabethan, the Senecan attitude of Pride, the Montaigne attitude of Scepticism, and the Machiavellian attitude of Cynicism, arrived at a kind of fusion in the Elizabethan individualism.” (i Lerner 1989 s. 306)

Forskeren Carl J. Stratman kom fram til at det i perioden 1565-1900 ble trykt ca. 1700 engelske tragedier, dvs. skuespill som ble utgitt med denne sjangerbetegnelsen (gjengitt fra Gelfert 1995 s. 49).

Et “confident society can afford to tolerate subversion when presented to it in established art-forms [...] a healthy society uses the tragic, in drama and on occasion in other literature, as an outlet for its misgivings and anxieties. On the other hand, a precarious society will not dare to ask questions for fear of the possible answers (we have already said that tragedy is more than a simple lament.) [...] Great tragedy is always bold in its conceptions and the speculations which it opens up. Declining cultures are afraid of being hurt and are inclined to take refuge in petty repetitions and unadventurous didacticism.” (Brereton 1968 s. 73-74)

Richard B. Sewalls bok *The Vision of Tragedy* (1980) handler om tragedien som “ett visst sätt att uppfatta tillvaron. Den “tragiska visionen” låter sig svårligen formuleras i ord, eftersom den snarare är en osystematisk anhopning av känslor, stämningar och intuitiva insikter än en sammanhängande doktrin. [...] frågor om individens skuld respektive släktförbannelsen. [...] Individens varse blir demoniska krafter inom och utanför det egna jaget, ställs inför förtvivlans och dödens ofrånkomliga fakta, men slår sig inte till ro, vare sig i en kvietistisk hållning eller i en dogmatism av optimistisk eller pessimistisk art, utan tar i stället upp kampen mot ödet och tillvaron, och ställer dessa till ansvar för oförskyllt lidande. [...] Tragedin innehåller av denna anledning mer av upphovsmannens personliga engagemang än andra dramatiska former. Den blomstrar också under perioder då ett relativt stabilt normsystem, religiöst eller filosofiskt, inte längre förmår tillfredsställa och omsluta individens erfarenheter, varvid de centrala livsfrågorna

åter opplevs som brännande og ofrånksomme.” (Pär Hellström i <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1060186/FULLTEXT01.pdf>; lesedato 06.07.18)

“Med “Jobs bok” og “Kung Oidipus” som prototype for två slæktled inom tragedikategorien – ett alienationens, skuldens og overgivenhetens eskatologiske drama, og en mindre visionær tradition som hellre syssler med tillvaron sådan den är, än sådan den borde vara – anser sig Sewall kunna vaska fram tre “konstanter” for tragedien: den skall syssla med yttre eller inre destruktive krafter; den skall samtidig understryka individens möjligheter att gå utöver sine begrensninger i en frivilligt vald handling, på en gång rettfærdig og skuldbelastad, god og ond, og dærigenom nå kunnskap genom lidande; dette psykiske lidande leder till en omgruppering av etablerede værdinger og oppkomsten av nye, vilke gör plågan mindre meningsløs eftersom den oppnat vægen mot videre insikter i existensen. [...] “Kristen tragedi” är ett sjælvmodsigende begrepp, menar författaren, eftersom det onde enligt læran en gång i tidernes fullbordning oåterkalleligen är dømt till undergang. Lidandet ger dessutom inte længre kunnskap, utan leder i første hand till identification med det gudomme, og kampen mot ødets og tillvarons dunkle makter avløses av oppmaningen att acceptere dem i fœrlitan på en kommende belønning. [...] Titelfiguren i Marlowes “Doctor Faustus” slits mellom opplevelsen av sin egen storhet og sjælvtilræckelighet og den medeltidige ortodokse krav på underkastelse og oppgiveness, ett dilemma som i all sin vænde var typisk for tidevarvet. Denne orientering mot inre sjælslige fœrløp var kristendommens bidrag till tragediens utvekkling.” (Pär Hellström i <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1060186/FULLTEXT01.pdf>; lesedato 06.07.18)

“Man har ofte sagt at den kristne middelalder ikke kjenner til det tragiske; men det ville vært mer nøyaktig å formulere det som at alt tragisk i middelalderen var omsluttet av Kristi tragedie.” (Auerbach 1988 s. 296) De antikke tragediene og antikkens tragedieteori var ikke ukjent i middelalderen, men den kristne livsforståelsen var en hindring for å skrive den typen tragedier. Alle menneskeskjebner på jord får innen den kristne tro mening fra Kristi liv og død på korset, og det som kan synes tragisk her på jorden, får sin avslutning først i det hinsidige med dommen over menneskets sjel (Auerbach 1988 s. 302). Tragedien er for middelaldermennesket aldri avsluttet her på jorden, for det jordiske liv er bare en kort fase i Guds store plan med menneskheten (Auerbach 1988 s. 302).

Blant de første franske tragediene var *Den ofrende Abraham* (1550) av Théodore de Bèze og *Den fangete Kleopatra* (1553) av Étienne Jodelle (Ligny og Rousselot 2016 s. 28). Få år senere skrev Robert Garnier en rekke tragedier, blant andre *Hippolytos* (1573) og *Antigone* (1580).

Den spanske forfatteren Andrés Rey de Artiedas tragedie *Elskerne* (1581; spansk tittel *Los Amantes*) har ingen mytologiske innslag (Strosetzki 1996 s. 173). Det er menneskenes egne lidenskaper som forårsaker tragedien, ikke overnaturlige makter.

Den tyske 1600-tallsdramatiker Daniel Casper von Lohensteins tragedier handler om mennesker som er “blindet” av sine lidenskaper, og som derfor handler forkastelig og leder seg selv inn i sin egen undergang (Szyrocki 1968 s. 214).

Engelskmannen George Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* (publisert 1631) “is an elaboration of the maxim (printed at the end of the play's ‘argument’) that ‘Only a just man is a free man’, a stoic paradox that must frequently have served as the subject of a *chria* or a debate. Chapman seems to have believed that it is the function of an ‘authentic tragedy’ to excite its audience to virtue and dissuade it from vice (Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions*, p. 76). In the earlier tragedies attempts at representing inner conflict regularly fall into the inflexible mode of the deliberative oration; the character weighs up the pros and cons of an action before deciding what to do next. Gradually the rigidities of rhetoric were relaxed, so that the soliloquy revealed the speaker's thoughts as they occurred, rather than as they were predetermined by the dramatist.” (Dixon 1971 s. 57-58)

Den franske 1700-tallsdikteren Voltaire skrev 28 tragedier (Cresson 1958 s. 91). Franskmannen Pierre de Belloy skrev *Gabrielle de Vergy* (1770) der den kvinnelige protagonisten Gabrielle tror at hennes elskede Raoul er død og velger å gifte seg med Fayel. Da det viser seg at Raoul er i live, blusser kjærligheten kraftig opp mellom dem, og Fayel utfordrer sin rival til duell. Raoul blir drept og Fayel gir Gabrielle et skrin som inneholder Raouls fortsatt varme hjerte, som fører til at hun blir gal og dør.

I 1792 skrev den tyske dikteren Friedrich Schiller et essay med tittelen “Om grunnene til tilfredsstillelsen ved tragiske gjenstander”, der han prøvde å besvare hvorfor teaterpublikum opplever en slags glede ved å se simulerte mord på scenen. Og hvordan kan tilskuerne forlate teatret med en følelse av “sedelig tilfredsstillelse” etter at teppet har senket seg over likene? Kan det generelt være at mennesker gleder seg over andres ulykke, fordi ens egen situasjon dermed virker relativt lykkelig i sammenligning? Filosofene Lukretius og Thomas Hobbes mente begge at det er tilfelle, mens filosofen Descartes hevdet at mennesket finner alle former for psykisk opphisselse behagelig, så lenge det er under smertegrensen (Gelfert 1995 s. 20). Andre, f.eks. Aristoteles og lord Shaftesbury, mente at det var medlidenheten tragediepublikummet fant behagelig, ikke mordene, smerten og sorgen hos personene i dramaene. Filosofen David Hume innvendte mot denne sistnevnte oppfatningen at hvis den stemte, ville et opphold på et sykehus med lidende pasienter være mer behagelig enn å se en tragedie i teatret (Gelfert 1995 s. 20). Schiller selv ga et annet filosofisk svar på spørsmålet: Det å medleve en tragedie i et skuespill utgjør en erkjennelsesprosess som ikke kun mobiliserer en moralsk følelse, men gir innsikt i “den etiske verdensorden og dermed gir kognitiv tilfredsstillelse” (Gelfert 1995 s. 21).

“Tragedy gives pleasure because the purging of excessive emotion is enjoyable in itself; because we take pleasure in mimesis as such, even representations of

disasters; because tragic art shapes suffering into a significant pattern, containing it while rendering it agreeably intelligible; or because it puts our own petty troubles in chastening perspective. We revel in the steadfastness of the human spirit in the face of mind-wrenching calamity, or find an epistemophilic satisfaction, however morose, in learning the truth and knowing the worst. We relish tragedy because observing the wretchedness of others is a source of malicious delight to us, or because we enjoy pitying its victims, which is always at some level a pleasurable self-pity as well. We reap moral and intellectual fulfilment from seeing the balance of cosmic justice harmoniously restored, though we also enjoy identifying with the rogues and rebels who disrupt it. Moreover, there is pleasure to be had from symbolically rehearsing and so disarming our own deaths, which fictional representations of death allow us to do. Further answers to the question are not lacking. It is imaginatively gratifying to identify with someone else, however unenviable his or her plight, and in tragedy this carries with it an agreeable sado-masochistic bonus. Tragedy is satisfying because it allows us to indulge our destructive fantasies while knowing that we ourselves cannot be harmed, thus unleashing in us the delights of the death drive in culturally reputable guise. This libidinal joy in wreaking havoc may mix with our moral sense that there is indeed some value in suffering. We find fulfilment in the moral education which tragedy puts us through, and find it enjoyable simply to be so intensely stimulated, whatever the horrific nature of the stimulus.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 169)

“Some of our pleasure in tragedy no doubt springs from simple curiosity. We don’t witness brutal murders every day, and are thus intrigued to come across them even in fictional form. Indeed, the fact that they are fictional is the basis of one theory of tragic pleasure: for David Hume, in his essay on tragedy, we enjoy in art what we wouldn’t in life. [...] Form plucks a kind of victory from defeat, thus reversing the tragic action itself.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 169) Den skotske 1700-tallsfilosofen David Hume “does not argue that we take malicious delight another’s misery, just that our own happiness is enhanced by the contrast.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 158)

“[T]he pleasure we take in the tragic action, a pleasure which itself raises some unease among commentators, can be seen as a sense of exaltation released in us by destruction, thus transforming this morally rather shady enjoyment into a justification of suffering.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 133)

“The critic Maud Bodkin believes that tragedy is enjoyable because it gives us a ‘tribal’ feeling of the renewal of group life through sacrifice. [...] Franco Moretti offers a more original (though less grandly universal) proposal in *The Way of the World*: the modern world valorizes unhappiness and takes pleasure in disconsolate endings because this eases bourgeois society’s bad faith about not living up to its own principles. If only some external force had not intervened, perhaps it might have done. Destiny thus relieves it of responsibility, which is always an agreeable sensation.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 171)

Edmund Burke “makes the hard-headed point that we do not, in fact, always prefer fictional to real-life suffering. A crowd, he argues, will desert a theatrical spectacle in droves to witness a real-life execution.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 170)

“Like sublimity for Kant, tragedy for Schiller demonstrates the sway of the supersensible over the sensible, of dignity over pain and autonomy over pathos, as the protagonist shakes himself free from the compulsive forces of Nature and exultantly affirms his absolute freedom of will in the face of a drearily prosaic necessity.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 32) “It is not true that all tragic actions are predetermined. [...] And if not all tragedy is determined, not all determinism is tragic. [...] If tragedies *are* predetermined, then their protagonists are either puppets or waging war on the inevitable.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 102-103)

Den tyske filosofen Friedrich Nietzsche hevder at tragedien gir “metafysisk trøst”, som er noenlunde samme tankegang som hos Schiller. “[F]or Nietzsche, forgetfulness is tragic too – but tragedy this time as a celebration of mutability, a scandalous affirmation of what is cruel, barbarous and bestial in humanity, an ecstatic yea-saying to life’s sheer obdurate imperishability. [...] And ‘culture’ is Nietzsche’s scathingly dismissive name for the opiates we take in order to numb ourselves to these terrors. In place of the man of culture, then, he will mischievously offer us the satyr, those mocking, aboriginal, libidinal creatures of Nature who are eternally the same, who have seen civilizations come and go and who will finally see them off.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 53-54)

For Nietzsche “Tragic art, then, is the sworn foe of science, political progress, revolutionary optimism and ethical culture. It is also the enemy of mimesis, since the role of art is to transfigure rather than reflect. [...] It is a victory over the workaday world, not an illumination of it. For him as for Yeats, only a slavish, ignoble art needs to leech on reality. [...] Tragedy has no truck with ethics: instead, it offers us an aestheticized version of sacrifice, of death-in-life and life through death, which is as implacably amoral as the old fertility cults. It is this world of wounded gods and life-enhancing heroes which will provide a vibrant alternative to Christianity and secular humanism alike, disfigured as they are by their sickly obsession with guilt, sin, pity and altruism.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 56)

For Nietzsche “Tragic Man is he who is brave enough to endorse the beauty and necessity of illusion, in the teeth of the Platonists who would peer peremptorily behind it, but also he who risks gazing into the abyss of the Real and dancing on its edge without being turned to stone, reading what the scholars decorously call history as a squalid genealogy of blood, toil and terror.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 53)

“What are we to make of the constant emphasis on tragedy as predestined, mysterious and life-affirming? Why does this critical clamour so often drown out the cries of misery and howls of anguish emanating from the works themselves? One answer is that tragedy, as we have suggested already, is a kind of secular

theodicy. The ancient Greeks had less need for such a science, since their gods were a fairly scurvy bunch in any case; but Christianity posits a perfect God, who is then notoriously hard to square with his less than perfect creation. The existence of evil is one of the most convincing arguments against religious faith, and no religious apologist has ever dealt with it convincingly. Like theology, tragedy is disturbed by the presence of evil in the world, and seeks in some rather gestural way to account for it. In general, the tragedians have had as little success in this enterprise as the theologians. But if tragedy is predetermined, then this at least shifts the responsibility for such evil from our own shoulders; if it has an aura of sacred mystery, then we can only profane it with such obtusely rationalist questions as ‘Why?’; and if it is life-affirming, then at least some good springs from its negative features, which is some sort of justification for them. If butchery and betrayal are predestined, then we can make a necessity out of a vice. Or we can see them as only partly determined, in which case we can also shift some of the blame on to the protagonist. If you are partly the architect of your own overthrow, as in Aristotle’s theory, this raises fewer uncomfortable questions about the injustice of the world in general. It is a choice between excusing the hero and exculpating the gods. Even so, the embarrassing fact remains that tragedy, in traditionalist eyes, is supposed to disclose the presence of a cosmic order, but ends up all too often showing just how appallingly unjust the world is. It is this disconcerting truth which must somehow be negotiated.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 133)

Den engelske litteraturforskeren Adrian Poole har hevdet at “tragedy affirms with savage jubilation that man’s state is diverse, fluid and unfounded [...] In interrogating convention and celebrating diversity, posing questions to which there can be no satisfactory answers, its menace and promise ‘lie in this recognition of the sheer potentiality of all the selves we might be, and of all the worlds we might make together or destroy together’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 62)

“Rüdiger Bittner argues boldly that tragedy is falsifying [...] that it pursues a moment of totality which is untrue to what we are, as dispersed, time-ridden creatures: ‘the totality of the tragic hero is not something we lack. It is an illusion. There is no such thing as one’s all that could be put at stake. The decision in tragedy is void: we do not stand nor do we fall because, unlike the towering hero, we are in many places. Tragedy errs.’ [...] Tragedy, in short, is in this view an extremist form, a crystalline structure of forces and counter-forces” (Eagleton 2003 s. 188).

“A good deal of tragedy is about being trapped in irresolvable dilemmas, coerced into action by dully compulsive forces. Some tragic art affirms diversity, while some charts the dismal constraints of human existence, its dingy, monotonously repetitive dimensions, the alarming narrowness of our scope for free decision.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 62)

Et tragisk dilemma “is staged by Thomas Otway’s drama *Venice Preserv’d*, in which Jaffeir must either betray his friends or allow Venice to become a bloodbath. Chimena in Corneille’s *Le Cid* is another such instance, torn between her love for Don Rodrigo and her outrage at the fact that he has slain her father. The eponymous hero of Corneille’s *Cinna* is a traitor if he assassinates Caesar, but will lose the love of Emilia if he does not. The great tragedian of this condition, however, is Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen feels the imperative to fulfil oneself as an absolute law, so that the self-sacrificial Irena of *When We Dead Awaken* has committed ‘self-murder – a mortal sin against myself’. As with D. H. Lawrence, you hold yourself in sacred trust, and Nora of *A Doll’s House* must act on this merciless obligation to be oneself even if it means walking out on her children. Yet what if the result of reaching for one’s own fulfilment is the crippling, betrayal and scapegoating of others, as so often in Ibsen? And what if the guilt which this engenders then weighs in on your self-realization to corrode it from the inside?” (Eagleton 2003 s. 230)

Hans-Dieter Gelfert har i en monografi om tragediesjangeren hevdet at publikum i såkalte “vertikale samfunn” føler skrekk når heltens liv er truet, men ikke medlidenhet, mens dette ikke vil være tilfelle i horisontale, egalitære samfunn, der de kun vil føle medlidenhet (1995 s. 29). Gelfert mener at tragediesjangeren kun har blomstret i perioder og samfunnstilstander der en vertikal ideologi er i overgangen til en horisontal ideologi, slik at publikum lever med en ideologisk ambivalens. En historisk betingelse for å skrive tragedier har ifølge Gelfert vært en revolusjonerende overgang fra den ene samfunnstypen til den andre. Publikum er da i stand til å identifisere seg med den aristokratiske helten og samtidig være mistroisk overfor enkeltpersoner som er hevet over andre. “Med den ene halvparten av sitt hjerte må athenerne ha vært beredt til å se opp til de store heltene og frykte for deres skjebne, mens de med den andre halvdelen var klare til å oppfatte deres nedstyrting som en følge av heltens overmot, slik at de uten langvarig dødsklage gikk katarsisk avlastet ut av teatret.” (Gelfert 1995 s. 34-35)

“Tragedy, as Raymond Williams remarks, often ‘attracts the fundamental beliefs and tensions of a period, and tragic theory is interesting mainly in this sense, that through it the shape and set of a particular culture is often deeply realized’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 21)

“I oktober 2016 ble Therese Johaug utestengt fra skisporten på uventet vis. Den olympiske atleten hadde ved en feil fått i seg det forbudte stoffet klostebol etter å ha brukt en salve for å lege et sår. Trass i at landslagslegen selv hadde anbefalt henne kremen, sto medikamentet på dopinglisten – til alles forferdelse. Riktignok overså Johaug den røde varseltrekanten på pakningen. Men den ulykkelige vendingen saken deretter tok, kan vanskelig sies å stå i stil med feilen som startet det hele. Feilskjæret fikk katastrofale konsekvenser for Johaug’s karriere: Hun ble først suspendert, mens landslagslegen trakk seg med umiddelbar virkning. Saken endte med at hun ble dømt for brudd på dopingreglementet og utestengt i 18

måneder. For en atlet som har viet sitt liv til skisporten, er det vanskelig å se for seg en bitrere skjebne enn å bli nektet deltagelse. Straffen holdt Johaug borte fra konkurranser i to sesonger. Alt som skulle til, var et øyeblikks uforsiktighet. Det slående med denne historien er at den på eksemplarisk vis oppfyller kravene som den greske filosofen Aristoteles stilte til en vakker tragedie. I det korte verket *Om diktetekunsten* forklarte han hva som skal til for å skape et drama av dette kaliberet: Det skal vise oss et forholdsvis godt og lykkelig menneske oppleve et omslag til ulykke på grunn av en “feil” – på gammelgresk: *hamartia*. Et slikt scenario får oss til å føle medlidenhet og frykt, og fremkaller en renselse i oss.” (Hilde Vinje i *Morgenbladet* 23.–29. november 2018 s. 20)

“Therese Johaug's dramatiske fall går inn i hjertet av aristotelisk tragedieteori på flere vis. Hennes fortvilelse over alt som ble tatt fra henne, kaller på vår medlidenhet. At en av våre egne skidronninger står i fare for å ha mistet sine beste år og den nødvendige treningen for å hevde seg under sin tilbakekomst, gir oss grunn til å føle frykt. Vi forstår godt at hun handlet i beste mening, selv om det ikke var ettertenksomt. Og trass i at feilen skjedde i uvitenhet, ble den like fullt gjort av Johaug selv. [...] Mest interessant er hennes *hamartia*. En førsteklases tragedie handler nemlig ikke om hvem som helst, og fallet skyldes heller ikke hvilken som helst feil. Ifølge Aristoteles befinner hovedpersonen seg mellom to moralske ytterpunkter: Hun er ikke moralsk plettfri, men heller ikke noe dårlig menneske. Den tragiske helten er en person som ikke når helt opp: Hun er god, fortrinnsvis bedre enn oss – men aldri så god at hun er perfekt. Dette kaster et lys over hvilke feil som er egnet i en vakker tragedie. En tragisk feil viser oss nemlig at helten ikke er perfekt. Samtidig er ikke feilen så grov at den gjøres med overlegg, for dét ville gjøre helten til en kjeltring. Feilen ligger i en gråsone: Den gjøres i uvitenhet, men skyldes ikke en ren mangel på informasjon. Snarere overser helten viktig informasjon som allerede er tilgjengelig, og ender med å gjøre et dårlig valg. Til syvende og sist kan man si at den tragiske feilen er en feil ved helten selv: Hun mangler evnen til å handle klokt i en presset situasjon.” (Hilde Vinje i *Morgenbladet* 23.–29. november 2018 s. 20)

“Hva gir Johaug tragiske kvaliteter? Mens antikkens tragiske helter utmerket seg ved å nedstamme fra guddommelige slekter og bli født inn i fornemme familier, beundres de norske idrettsheltene for sine grensesprengende prestasjoner. Johaug har noe de aller fleste av oss aldri vil få, nemlig olympiske ferdigheter i Norges nasjonalsport. Hun har allerede bevist at hun er en skiløper av høy rang og er en atletisk storhet vi ser opp til. Likevel fikk den tragiske feilen alt til å breste. Johaug forhastet seg i et avgjørende øyeblikk og endte opp med å ødelegge for seg selv. I etterpåklokskapens lys er det lett å se at hun burde ha handlet annerledes. Heller enn å stole blindt på legen, burde hun ha kastet et blikk på pakningen med det åpenbare varselssymbolet. At Johaug ikke sjekket pakningen godt nok, var også noe domsutvalget i Norges idrettsforbund la vekt på: “At Therese Johaug nok ikke hadde en bevissthet om rekkevidden av eget ansvar, og at hun derfor burde ha gjort slike tilleggsundersøkelser, kan ikke frita henne for skyld.” Samtidig viser glippen

at Johaug ikke er perfekt. I et uklokt øyeblikk overså hun lett tilgjengelig informasjon som ville avsløre at medikamentet fra legen i virkeligheten var starten på en katastrofe. Slik endte hun med å utløse sitt eget tragiske fall, uten riktig helt å forstå det selv – ikke ulikt heltene i de greske tragediene.” (Hilde Vinje i *Morgenbladet* 23.–29. november 2018 s. 20)

Den norske TV-serien *Delete me* (2021; av Marie Kristiansen m.fl.) har “et markant element av gresk tragedie [...] en undertone av svart ironi som skaper en fornemmelse av at Skjebnen morer seg med å manipulere rollefigurenes liv. Dette inntrykket forsterkes av det faktum at historien fortelles baklengs, slik at også det harmoniske stille-før-stormen infiseres av vissheten om helvetet som skal komme.” (Aksel Kielland i *Morgenbladet* 5.–11. mars 2021 s. 36)

“Tragedy and carnival are all about change, abrupt reversals, the larger than life, in contrast to the seedy continuities of everyday life” (Eagleton 2003 s. 186).

Greske tragedier

Det greske teatret var en offentlig institusjon med en tydelig sosial og religiøs funksjon. Dramaene inngikk i konkurranser (“agon”, som også kan bety strid og kamp), slik at publikum både så, vurderte og dømte. Det var et årvåkent publikum, som hovedsakelig bestod av de frie borgerne i den byen der et teater lå.

Tragedienes emner hentes ofte fra Homers to epos *Iliaden* og *Odysseen*, fra heltepos og fra mytologien. “Aeschylus is supposed to have called his plays ‘slices from the great banquet of Homer’.” (Merchant 1986 s. 17)

Framføring av tragediene innebar for grekerne å oppleve offentlige/kollektive kunstverk i en religiøs-politisk sammenheng. Om formiddagen ble det framført en tetralogi, som bestod av tre tragedier og et satyrspill, og om ettermiddagen ble det framført en komedie (Neis 1989 s. 22).

Dansken Christian Dahls avhandling *Tragedie og bystat: Om fællesskab og konflikt i Athens dramatiske kultur* (2010) fokuserer blant annet på den politiske konteksten for tragediene. “Bystatens politiske institusjoner har faktisk en rolle å spille i tragediene. Orestes blir omsider fri fra hevngudinnene etter at gudinnen Athene innstifter en domstol på Areopagos-høyden, like nedenfor sitt tempel på Akropolis, og overlater til dem å dømme i saken. Både i Euripides’ tragedie *De bønnfallende kvinner* og i Aiskylos’ tragedie *De bønnfallende* overlater henholdsvis kongen i Athen og kongen i Argos (begge mytiske skikkelser) viktige spørsmål til en folkeforsamling. I den grad tragediene går inn i en spesifikk politisk diskurs, og ikke kun en allmenn etisk/religiøs refleksjon, stiller de effektive, men også vilkårlige beslutningsprosesser under eneherskere opp mot lover, formelle institusjoner og kollektivt ansvar. I så måte feiret tragediene bystaten så vel som guden Dionysos, hvis festival tragediene inngikk i, uten å ta konkret stilling til nøyaktig hvordan bystatens politiske institusjoner burde være utformet eller

hvordan maktforholdet skulle være mellom dem. [...] I det demokratiske Athen, og nok også i mange andre bystater, var teaterforestillingene en del av de liturgiske pliktene til de rikeste borgerne, som ble utnevnt til koreger, finansielt ansvarlige for å stille korene, som hadde en svært sentral rolle i skuespillene. Teateret var således en måte for eliten å konkurrere på bystatens premisser, og etter festivalens avslutning ble det stemt over hvem som skulle hedres med priser for sin innsats. Denne fredelige kappestriden var dermed i høyeste grad statsbevarende, og ut ifra overleverte taler ser vi tydelig hvordan medlemmer av eliten legitimerte sin egen posisjon i staten og forsvarte sin personlige ære ved å vise til sin gavmildhet” (Ingvar Mæhle i <https://www.idunn.no/ht/2011/03/art06>; lesedato 09.08.19).

“[I]n the Greek theatre the actor was a remote figure, masked, wearing *cothurnoi* on his feet and an *onkos* on his head (so that he had a height of some seven and a half feet), and was taking part in a religious and civic rite at a special festival. He stood for the people [...] he was in an important sense their victim – but he was representing a king or hero, he spoke with a poet’s majestic words, he was manifestly doomed. He necessarily induced awe, a sense of being ‘above’ even as he fell.” (Leech 1969 s. 33-34)

“535 B.C., when Peisistratus made it [dvs. tragediesjangeren] part of his enlarged and glorified Dionysiac Festival. We know from Aristotle that it took a long time for Comedy to be thought worthy of a place in the festival: the tragedy of Thespis must surely have been a serious form of art.” (Kitto 1986 s. 23) I boka *Den greske tragediens politiske kunst* (1988) viser Christian Meier at dramaene innebar en politisk orientering for tilskuerne. Samtidens konflikter ble vist fram i mytologisk forklødding. Det er en sammenheng mellom samtidens politiske forhold og når en tragedie ble skrevet og framført. For eksempel handler Aiskhylos’ *Orestien* om bystatens/polis’ tilblivelse. Dramaene stiller og gir svar.

“Tragediekoret synes å gi uttrykk for de moralske og religiøse oppfatningene som rådde i det samfunnet som frembrakte dramatikken.” (Haarberg, Selboe og Aarset 2007 s. 42) Koret framførte sanger og danser på orkestraen, den runde plassen som utgjør det greske teatrets scene. Koret fungerte oftest som et kollektiv, en gruppe som talte med én stemme, en slags rollegruppe. Koret lar seg lett lede av den som taler i dramaet, det har en tendens til å være “værhane”.

Koret er et bærende element i de greske tragediene, en viktig bestanddel i framføringen, og til stede under hele forestillingen. Koret bestod av ca. 15 personer. Koret kunne spalte seg i to (f.eks. en gruppe med 7 personer og en gruppe med 8 personer), slik at disse gruppene kunne henvende seg til hverandre i strofer og motstrofer. Koret var nesten hele tiden i bevegelse, og gjennom sine bevegelser illustrerte det følelssvingninger og stemningsskifter. Koret i Sofokles’ *Kong Oidipus* viste antakelig fysisk hvordan stykket svinger mellom tvil og sikkerhet, og mellom lykke og ulykke. Koret markerer altså det tematiske i skuespillene. Kor-

sangene kaltes “stasima” (entall: “stasimon”), mens “kommos” var en vekselsang mellom kor og skuespillere.

“Strukturen i en gresk tragedie hviler i hovedsak på balansen mellom deler sunget av koret (*stasimon*) og deler med dialog mellom hovedpersonene (*epeisodon*). En prolog (*prologos*), i form av en monolog eller dialog, presenterer den innledende situasjonen. Den følges av at koret kommer inn (*parodos*). Deretter veksles det mellom korets opptreden og episoder i handlingen, vektlagt gjennom sterke innslag av *agon* (konflikt mellom personene), *kommos* (dialog sunget av vekselvis koret og en hovedperson), og *melos* (en hovedpersons egen sang). Til slutt ender tragedien med at hovedpersonene og koret forlater scenen, i en *exodos*.” (Bessières 2011 s. 360).

“Urtragedien” var antakelig korsanger uten skuespillere. De første tragediene skal ha hatt kun én skuespiller, som kan ha vært dikteren selv.

Blant de eldste greske tragediedikterne var Phrynichus, som skal ha vært den første som hadde kvinneroller (spilt av menn!) på scenen. Han skal ha skrevet ca. ti tragedier, som i dag bare er kjent ved sine titler. To av disse hentet stoff fra samtiden: *Erobringen av Milet* og *De fönikiske kvinnene*. Det førstnevnte av disse to, oppført i 492 f.Kr., minnte athenerne på hva et militært nederlag innebærer, og rørte publikum til tårer, men førte til at dikteren ble bøtelagt (Neis 1989 s. 8). *De fönikiske kvinnene* fungerte som en forherligelse av grekernes seier ved Salamis, sett fra fiendens perspektiv, og dette stykket ble på oppfordring av den athenske politikeren Themistokles iscenesatt med ekstra festivitas. Det viktigste i disse tragediene var korsangene, med fløytespill, mens handlingen var underordnet (Neis 1989 s. 9). Aiskhylos *Perserne* har blitt oppfattet som en slags æresbevisning for Phrynichus, siden Aiskhylos’ stykke behandler det samme stoffet.

“In Greek tragedy, there were limits on what could be staged. When Phrynichus showed his play *The Fall of Miletus* in 494 BC, which depicted the Persian sacking of the Athenian allied city, “the whole theater fell to weeping” and the unlucky tragedian was fined one thousand drachmas – the equivalent to two years wages for unskilled labor. Herodotus recounts that this play “[brought] to mind a calamity that affected them so personally, and forbade the performance of that play forever.”” (Benjamin Roberts og Ryan Shinkel i <https://www.athwart.org/netflix-necromancy-true-crime/>; lesedato 30.03.22) “Phrynichus is the earliest tragedian of whose work some conception can be formed. Phrynichus’s first victory in the festival contests probably occurred about 510 BC, and he may have been the first to introduce female masks (i.e., female characters) into tragedy. After the Persians captured Athens’s former ally Miletus in 494, Phrynichus produced the tragedy *The Capture of Miletus*, which so harrowed Athenian feelings that he was fined.” (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Phrynichus-Greek-tragic-poet#ref164136>; lesedato 30.03.22)

De mest kjente greske tragediedikterne fra den greske antikken er Aiskhylos, Sofokles og Evripides. Av Aiskhylos er ca. 80 dramatiske titler kjent, men kun 7 er bevart. Blant disse er *Perseus* og trilogien *Orestien*. Aiskhylos skal ifølge en annen kilde ha skrevet 90 tragedier, der 79 titler er kjent i dag (Neis 1989 s. 9). Han var skaperen av det som har blitt kalt “karakterdrama” (Neis 1989 s. 10). Hans kvinneskikkelse Klytaimnestra er den første tragiske karakteren som handler av fri vilje og føler ansvar for sine egne handlinger, upåvirket av en ytre makt. Likevel handler ikke Aiskhylos’ dramaer primært om menneskelig lidenskap, men om sedelig-religiøse konflikter i tilværelsen (Neis 1989 s. 10).

Den tyske dikteren Gerhart Hauptmann skrev: “Aiskhylos’ tragedier var hellige handlinger. Tretti tusen borgere satt i Athens teater og hørte – framstilt og forsterket av en halvgud – det som befant seg i deres egne hoder, det indre drama, som ethvert menneske har i seg. Det blir framstilt på den menneskelige bevissthets plattform.” (sitert fra Poppe 1990b s. 95)

Ifølge den antikke grammatikeren Aristophanes skal Sofokles ha skrevet 123 dramaer, og vunnet førsteprisen i dramaoppføringer 20 ganger (Neis 1989 s. 13). “Hva Sofokles angår, kjenner vi fra bibliotek katalogen i Alexandria titlene på 123 stykker.” (Haarberg, Selboe og Aarset 2007 s. 42) Men det er bare overlevert 7 dramaer. Blant hans mest kjente tragedier er *Kong Oidipus*, *Antigone* og *Elektra*.

Sofokles brukte tre skuespillere, alle spilt av menn. Disse tre skuespillerne måtte fordele seg i mellom alle rollene i spillet, så det kunne aldri være mer enn tre personer på scenen samtidig (i tillegg til koret). De tre skuespillerne ble kalt “protagonistes”, “deuteragonistes” og “tritagonistes” (Neis 1989 s. 22). I *Antigone* av Sofokles spilte den første skuespilleren Antigone, Teiresias, budbæreren og tjeneren, den andre skuespilleren spilte Ismene, Eurydike, Haimon og vokteren, og den tredje spilte kun Kreon (Neis 1989 s. 22).

Evripides skal ha skrevet 92 dramaer, og 19 av dem, inklusiv satyrspillet *Kykloperne*, er bevart. Han ble oppfattet som en “scenekunstens filosof” fordi han tematiserte kvinners selvbestemmelse, verdien av moralske begreper, menneskets natur m.m. (Neis 1989 s. 16). Interessen forskjøv seg med Evripides fra mytologi til psykologi, inklusiv det patologiske (Neis 1989 s. 17). Han har blant annet skrevet *Hippolytos* og *Bakkantinnene*, det siste et dionysisk kultdrama om en gruppe kvinner som fanatisk følger fruktbarhets- og vinguden Dionysos.

Tyskeren Paul Ernst skrev i boka *Dramaet og den moderne verdensanskuelse* (1899) at da Evripides stod fram med et livssyn som innebar at den samme handlingen kunne være god eller ond alt etter omstendighetene, var den greske tragediens epoke forbi. Greske tragedier forutsetter en moral som skiller mellom godt og ondt på en måte som er gyldig under alle omstendigheter (Žmegač 1980 s. 341).

I tragediene fra den greske antikken er det ofte drap innen familien, storfamilien, slekten (et kjennetegn som også er vanlig i tragedier fra senere tider). Siden storfamilien var det viktigste sosiale sikkerhetsnett og den sentrale referanserammen i grekernes liv, var det å se personer på scenen som drepte sine nærmeste, trolig ekstra tragisk for tilskuerne i Hellas.

Brian Vickers' bok *Towards Greek Tragedy: Drama, Myth, Society* (1973) "argues against the application of transcendent schemes of 'critical modes' like 'hybris and nemesis', 'hamartia', 'dramatised ritual'; and he asserts that the variety and immediacy of the presentation of human emotions wrung out by the social strains of tragedy cannot be reduced to such impersonal patterns. He lays a salutary stress on pity and revulsion as tragic emotions and introduces the importance of family relationships, of crime, and of pollution. [...] Vickers goes on to show how the myths which the tragedies exploit and scrutinize explore the violation of human relationships within the family and society as a whole, and how tragedy uses the terrible and destructive consequences of the disruption of such relationships. [...] the humanness of tragedy and the way it shows people suffering under the destructiveness and waste of tragic situations." (<https://www.boekwinkeltjes.nl/b/181785011/Towards-Greek-Tragedy-Drama-Myth/>; lesedato 05.07.18)

I de greske tragediene ble de skrekkeligste, voldeligste handlingene holdt unna scenen, dvs. de foregikk inne i et hus eller et helt annet sted utenfor synsvidde, og ble så fortalt om av en tjener eller en budbærer (Neis 1989 s. 39).

Handlingen og undergangen i tragediene var for grekerne ikke uttrykk for en rettferdighetstanke. Vi lever tvert imot i en uhellssvanger, dunkel, ubestemmelig, ukjent verden. Livet setter krav til deg som du ikke kan oppfylle: kravet om innsikt. Du kan ikke vite! Vi lever en ikke-beskyttet eksistens i ikke-forståelse av de dype sammenhengene. "Mennesket feiler gjennom mangel på innsikt. Grensene oppdages gjennom handlingens følger og her ligger straffen. Alle kan spare seg for å bli forarget på andre, siden alle forløper seg, hver på sitt vis." (Haaland 1982 s. 96)

Mennesket blir i de greske tragediene påført en skyld, eller påfører seg selv skyld, og må lide konsekvensene av denne "uskyldige skyld" (Neis 1989 s. 52). Det er noe tvetydige ved hele menneskets eksistens, en slags ironisk forbannelse – som da kong Oidipus løper rett i armene på katastrofen når han tror seg å løpe bort fra den.

Den britiske dikteren W. H. Auden skrev i artikkelen "The Gulty Vicarage" (1948): "Greek tragedy and the detective story have one characteristic in common, in which they both differ from modern tragedy, namely, the characters are not changed in or by their actions: in Greek tragedy because their actions are fated, in the detective story because the decisive event, the murder, has already occurred. Time and space therefore are simply the when and where of revealing either what has to happen or what has actually happened." (her sitert fra Bessières 2011 s. 471)

Aiskhylos, Sofokles og Evripides skapte skjebnetragedien (mens mange har hevdet at Shakespeare skapte karaktertragedien) (Neis 1989 s. 55). I en skjebnetragedie skjer hendelsene med kausal nødvendighet, og mennesket er bare en marionettfigur, et vesen underlagt en ubønnhørlig skjebne. I en karaktertragedie griper ikke skjebnen på samme måte inn på en uventet måte, men oppstår ut fra menneskers handlinger – personer som handler etter tilbøyeligheter, evner og viljer. Mennesket handler slik det “må”. Livets “må” ligger i mennesket, i våre lidenskaper og viljer, og i sammenstøtet mellom ulike viljer. “Skjebnen er mennesket selv” hevder Edgar Neis om karaktertragediene (1989 s. 55), og henviser til et utsagn av personen Illo i Friedrich Schillers *Wallenstein* (1799): “Tro meg, i ditt bryst er din skjebnes stjerne.”

I Aiskhylos’ tragedie *De bønnfallende* (ca. 463 f.Kr.; også kalt *Hiketides*) er det “perhaps the most purely tragic of tragic situations: a total divorce of suffering from guilt or responsibility, a situation that Aristotle would not accept, because he found it shocking” (Kitto 1986 s. 10). Stykket viser “the spectacle of the hero isolated before some awful rift in the universe, looking, like Pelasgus, into the chasm that must engulf him.” (Kitto 1986 s. 29) Om Zevs’ rolle i stykket skriver H. D. F. Kitto: “His mind is an abyss which no mind can fathom [... this] is true, tragic, and Aeschylean” (1986 s. 17).

I *De bønnfallende* er det femti døtre som utgjør koret. De ankommer med sin far byen Argos på flukt fra Egypt for å unngå å bli giftet bort der. Kongen i Argos frykter at det å ta imot flyktningene vil føre han på kollisjonskurs med egypterne, men ikke å beskytte dem kan føre Zevs’ vrede over byen. For kongen “a chasm is opening beneath his feet. [...] he cried: ‘I see, and shudder.’ He is in a cleft stick: either he must undertake a dangerous and unwanted war, or he must risk the anger of the gods.” (Kitto 1986 s. 8) De femti kvinnene kommer med trusler om å “hanging themselves at the altars of the gods – threats which they are presently to apply to the King of Argos.” (Kitto 1986 s. 5)

“Eteocles in *Seven Against Thebes* [av Aiskhylos] sees himself as doomed to fight his brother, but the Chorus warns him against such corrosive fatalism. The ancient Greeks, a people not unknown for their philosophical proficiency, were perceptive enough to recognize that determination and free agency are subtly interwoven.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 110)

Aiskhylos gjorde “kamper mellom likeverdige fiender til moralske konflikter, om hevn og arverett. I *Orestien*, som tar utgangspunkt i Homers fortellinger fra Troja, blir den mykenske kongen Agamemnon, hjemvendt seierherre fra Troja, drept av sin kone og hennes elsker. Dette skjer i første del av *Orestien*, *Agamemnon*. Dette drapet blir hevet av hans sønn, Orestes i andre del, *Gravofferet*. Men i stedet for å ende som evig blodhevn, viser Aiskhylos en vei ut; opprettelse av en domstol i tredje del, *Eumenidene*. Orestes blir jaget fra sted til sted av hevgudinnene som

bærer dette stykkets navn, men ved å erkjenne sin skyld foran en jury opprettet av Athene, får Orestes tilgivelse, og nye runder med blodhevn kan unngås. Det tradisjonelle forsvaret for hevn blir derfor kritisert i Aischylos' tragedie. Det er ikke hevnen som avslutter *Orestien*, men ideen om at konflikter kan løses og bør løses gjennom et rettsvesen. Aischylos' tragedie illustrerer at det ikke er sånn at alle tragedier ender tragisk, med død og vold. Dette kan derfor heller ikke brukes som kjennetegn på tragedien, selv om det også fins flere tragedier som ender med død og fordervelse. Den mest kjente er *Kong Oidipus*. Ifølge des Bouvries er det heller et dypere brudd med grunnleggende sosiale normer som er tragediens kjennetegn; i *Kong Oidipus* bryter Oidipus med incest-normen. Det er ikke Oidipus' skyld som fokuseres i *Kong Oidipus*, men hans brudd med en sosial norm – selv om den ikke er en bevisst handling. Det tragiske i tragedien er bruddet med normen, og har ikke noe med å gjøre om dramaet ender med død (som i *Kong Oidipus*) eller forsoning (som i *Orestien*) å gjøre. I *Orestien* myrder Clytaimnestra sin egen mann Agamemnon, og myrdes selv av sin sønn Orestes. Den forsoning mellom gudene som man finner i *Orestien*, er også en rangering av forholdet mellom menn og kvinner. Tragedien befester den mannlige arveretten. De kvinnelige hevmaktene (*Eumenidene*) tvinges til forsoning og tilbys en kult i det underjordiske Athen. Det sentrale normbruddet i *Orestien* er dermed bruddet på den mannlige arveretten, dvs. at sønnen Orestes fordrives fra sin rettmessige *oikos*, sin eiendom, sitt hjem og rike. Det er denne retten som gjenopprettes når han dreper sin mor og hennes elsker, og som utfordres av eumenidenes rop om hevn, dvs. de som representerer den gamle morsretten.” (Tor-Helge Allern i <http://www.dramapedagog.no/generelt-om-kunstnerisk-virksomhet/klassisk-dramaturgi/alle-sider>; lesedato 11.11.15)

“The drama of the *Oresteia* consists in the fact that the old and new accounts of justice are completely opposed. The old gods of revenge, the Furies, who are all women, put the family ahead of all other values; the new gods, mostly men, are for detached universal law that makes no exception for particular individuals, families, or cities.” (Dreyfus og Kelly 2011 s. 92)

De athenske politikerne Lykurg fikk vedtatt i byens folkeforsamling at det skulles stilles opp statuer av Aiskhylos, Sofokles og Evripides i Athens teater, og at det skulle etableres offisielle versjoner av deres verk som alle skuespillere måtte rette seg etter (Neis 1989 s. 12).

Perserne

Hovedpersonene i Aiskhylos' *Perserne* (oppført 472 f.Kr.) er Xerxes, en persisk konge, og hans mor Atossa. For grekerne fungerte stykket som en slags feiring av deres militære seier over perserne ved Salamis. Xerxes har lidd nederlag, og er på vei hjem med sine overlevende soldater. Atossa drømmer imens en illevarslende drøm, og forteller om den til koret. Et kongestyre som persernes står og faller med kongens person, og Atossa frykter at Xerxes er død og at kongedømmet dermed vil gå til grunne (altså direkte politiske konsekvenser). Koret bebreider kongen. Atossa klandrer deretter koret for at de har tolket drømmen hennes på en uheldig måte. En

budbringer kommer og skildrer sjøslaget der perserne tapte. Atossa og koret er enige om at nederlaget bare kan forklares ved noe som ligger utenfor mennesket, altså at overnaturlige krefter må stå bak. Det er som om gudene har narret perserne. En av grunnene til nederlaget slik grekerne oppfattet det, var at gudene hadde slått Xerxes med en slags blind galskap (“até” på gresk).

Perserne er fra begynnelsen av preget av forutanelser og angst for det som skal skje, og stykket forteller om innfrielsen av forutanelelene. Ordet “daimon” brukes ca. 20 ganger i skuespillet. Xerxes krysset en ulovlig grense da han gikk over broen ved Hellespont (i dag kalt Dardanellene). Likevel får han sympati i stykket, fordi publikum kunne gjenkjenne en type overskridelse som også greske ledere hadde begått. Overskridelsen leder til katastrofe. Tragedien inneholder en lang klagesang mellom Xerxes og koret, med svært sterke følelser. Kongen oppfordrer koret til å leve ut sorgen, samtidig som han framtrer som et mer beundringsverdig *individ* etter nederlaget. Han står tilbake som “bare” et menneske, ikke som en kongelig halvgud, og får dermed sympati. Publikum ser hans sårbarhet. Men den modningen som han har oppnådd, oppstår for sent til å komme hans kongerike til gode.

Perserne handler om grunnen til Perserrikets undergang. Naturkreftene, eller selve Naturen, virker mot perserne. Xerxes ville underlegge seg naturen og legge et slags åk på havguden Poseidon, og derfor hevnet naturen seg. Han hadde hybris. Den persiske herskermakten knuses, og vi minnes på hvor rikt og stort Perserriket var under Xerxes’ far Dareios. Dynastiet går under. Stykket slutter med en slags formell klagesang (på gresk “threnos”), en lyrisk klage over de døde og tapet. Publikum opplever persernes undergang, som for et gresk publikum sikkert fungerte som et bilde på tyranniets selvdestruksjon.

Dette skuespillet er “the only surviving Greek tragedy which treats of a non-mythical subject. It was exhibited in 472 B.C., nearly seven years after the final defeat of the Persians, whose overthrow it celebrates. [...] In no work of Aeschylus is the grandeur of his mind more strikingly revealed. In the hands of an ordinary poet the play might easily have been converted into a mere manifestation of national pride. But the Persians is pitched in a higher key. The tone is one, not of triumph, but of solemn warning, addressed to victors as well as vanquished. The truth continually enforced is the certainty of the retribution which awaits the oppressor. In the great history of the Persian War, that which strikes the imagination of Aeschylus is, not so much the struggle of liberty against despotism, or of Greek against barbarian, as the spectacle of divine justice humbling the pride of nations. [...] The purpose of the tragedy, then, is essentially a moral one: the glory and triumph of the Greeks are only incidentally displayed. At the same time no device can be conceived, which would have placed the victory of the Greeks in a clearer light than the device adopted by Aeschylus. In laying the scene in Persia he made his countrymen the witnesses, as it were, of the ruin and degradation of their adversaries; and it is easy to imagine the emotions which such a performance must have excited in the minds of the Athenian audience. Most of them had taken an

active part in the great events described. In the drama which was now unfolded before their eyes they saw their enemies receiving, in abject despair, the successive tidings of calamity; they heard the stately narrative of those life and death struggles from which they had just emerged; and they beheld the actual workings of that oppressive despotism from which they themselves had narrowly escaped. A spectacle of this kind must have gone to their hearts with a directness which no legend could hope to equal.” (Arthur E. Haigh i http://www.theatredatabase.com/ancient/aeschylus_005.html; lesedato 19.06.17)

“It has often been observed that no individual Greek is mentioned by name in the course of the play. The omission is remarkable, and was due, not so much to the fear of exciting jealousy and party feeling, as to the desire of avoiding everything familiar, and of imparting a sort of mysterious dignity to the tragedy, by confining it to strange scenes and distant peoples. [...] The sense of strangeness is intensified by the local colouring given to the play. Many instances are to be found. Long enumerations of Persian names, and barbarous exclamations of sorrow, are of frequent occurrence. The chorus of elders address the queen with oriental adulation as “wife and mother of a god”; and are so terrified by the sight of Darius, that they dare not look in his face, or answer his questions. Atossa’s high-flown description of her libations [et religiøst ritual] – “drops from the flower-working bee, watery tricklings of virgin fountain, splendour of ancient vine, stainless draught of untamed mother” – suggests the extravagance of oriental imagination. The final scene, too, in which Xerxes and the chorus, amid wild and barbarous music, abandon themselves to paroxysms of sorrow, is no doubt intended as a picture of Persian effeminacy. Yet it is to be observed, at the same time, that Aeschylus, like Shakespeare, and most early poets, shows little regard for archaeological accuracy. The gods invoked by the Persians are the ordinary Greek gods, Zeus, Hermes, and Apollo; a statue of Apollo stands, in Greek fashion, before the royal palace; the offerings on the tomb of Darius are Greek, and not Persian.” (Arthur E. Haigh i http://www.theatredatabase.com/ancient/aeschylus_005.html; lesedato 19.06.17)

Aiskhylos bruker ofte metaforer fra sjølivet (f.eks. i *De syv mot Theben og Perserne*) og legekunst (f.eks. i *Promethevs i lenker*), som er områder preget av usikkerhet og trussel (drukningsdød og dødelig sykdom). Mennesket kan gå under, tilintetgjort av ville bølger, eller langsomt gjennom en snikende sott.

“In Aeschylus we find moral laws which have the same sort of validity as physical and mathematical laws.” (Kitto 1986 s. 143)

“The Greek playwright Aeschylus was a “Marathon Man.” He had been present at one of the most glorious military victories in history when an outnumbered Athenian army defeated the army of the Persian Empire on an empty plain north of the city of Athens. If the Second World War was our “good war,” the campaigns that made up the Persian Wars were the equivalent for Athens. [...] “Tragedy as a form is the study of the human soul in the process of making decisions.” This

definition of Aeschylean tragedy given by Eric Voegelin differs from more common understandings of tragedy, like that of Aristotle. The suffering of the tragic hero is not put forward for the pleasure or emotional catharsis of the audience. Instead, it shows us a mature and responsible soul in action under a variety of difficult situations. This could not have been done, according to Voegelin, until the development of Greek philosophy differentiated the soul as a independent source of order – a place where the divine and the human meet: the Platonic *metaxy*.” (Hrezo og Parrish 2010 s. 66-67)

Kong Oidipus

Sofokles' *Kong Oidipus* ble antakelig spilt første gang i år 431 f.Kr., som var det første året i den såkalte peloponneskrigen, en krig mellom Athen og Sparta.

“Oidipus” betyr “han med de oppsvulmete føttene”. Navnet hans betyr “svellfot” (Neis 1989 s. 63). Det greske “oida” betydde å vite, å kunne, mens “oideo” betydde å hovne opp (jf. “ødem”). Ordet “pous” betydde fot. Navnet Oidipus henspiller på de opphovnete anklene etter at han som lite barn ble bundet og båret etter anklene. Han skulle dø for ikke å oppfylle en advarsel fra gudene (et orakelsvar) om at han kom til å drepe sin far og gifte seg med sin mor. Orakelets svar var ofte dunkelt og flertydig, men i denne tragedien kan ikke svaret misforstås (Neis 1989 s. 28). I skuespillet er det noen påfallende hentydninger til føtter, og sammenhengen skal etter hvert gå opp for både Oidipus og oss tilskuere.

Oidipus “is divided in his very name between knowledge and monstrosity – between *oida* (‘know’) and *oidieo* (‘swell’, ‘be swollen’), referring to his wounded foot. There is a fissure in his name between the enlightened subject of cognition and the obscure trauma which brings it to birth. Simon Goldhill adds other possible word-plays on his name (‘I don’t know’, ‘I suppose’, ‘Know where’), observing that ‘the name of the king is excessive, overdetermined in its excess’. When you come to self-knowledge, you confront yourself as a piece of deformity. Oedipus believed that he was equated with the gods; but the Chorus has added up the total of the life of this man so talented in working out equivalences, and finds that it amounts to zero. The swollen foot is the sign of a secret history of dependency upon others; but it is an acknowledgement of these lowly dependencies and material affinities which prevents you from being a monster in the literal sense of a self-sufficient beast.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 281)

Kong Oidipus er en skjebnetragedie der protagonisten mot sin vilje blir drevet til å bli skyldig på grunn av en overmektig skjebne (Gelfert 1995 s. 15).

Den unge Oidipus rømmer fra Korinth for å unngå at spådommen skal gå i oppfyllelse. På vei inn i Theben løser han sfinksens gåte og blir deretter en mektig og klok kongen i byen. Likevel går spådommen om at han skal drepe sin far og gifte seg med sin mor i oppfyllelse, og det skjer i Theben, som uten at han vet det

er hans egentlige hjemby. Oidipus tror at han flykter fra den uhyggelige spådommen, men han flykter i stedet mot den. Han ønsker å sikre sin egen makt i byen gjennom å undersøke mordet på kong Laios, men knuser i stedet sin egen maktposisjon. Han arbeider på sin egen undergang – en bitter ironi. Oidipus avslører til slutt den virkelige betydningen av at han kom til byen og giftet seg med dronningen.

“Oedipus was said to have stood before the Sphinx, riddle confronting riddle, and there he gave the answer to one riddle, in one word, “man,” and with this answer he simultaneously saved the city and set himself on the path to his own destruction. The crossroads at which he confronted his father, Laius, only to kill him, was not the only, nor even the decisive crossroads at which he stood. The second crossroads came in the form of the riddle put to him. It was a riddle that he answered in general and in the abstract, but the other riddle, the riddle of his own identity, would be the one he would fail to understand until it was too late to bear its truth. Hölderlin charts the trajectory of this “deranged seeking for a consciousness” that defines Oedipus as precisely this failure to grasp the idiom of his own being which strangely we can see from the outset.” (Dennis J. Schmidt i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_021.xml; lesedato 04.02.22)

I omtrent 15 år lever Oidipus et godt liv som hersker over Theben. Han er en mektig og lykkelig konge. Men så kommer det pest over byen, og den skyldige for denne ulykken må finnes. Den skyldige er den som drepte den tidligere kongen i Theben, kong Laios. Oidipus vil søke etter sannheten om hvem som drepte kongen og denne sannhetssøkingen skal gjøre at gudene ser i nåde til byen og ikke lar pesten utslette alle innbyggerne. Men oppklaringen av årsakssammenhengene i hva som skjedde med Laios, fører til katastrofe for både Oidipus (som blinder seg) og hans dronning og mor Iokaste (som tar livet sitt).

Sofokles har vært sparsom med hvilke personer som er involvert: gjeteren som skulle sette den nyfødte Oidipus ut i fjellområdet Kithairon, er også den eneste overlevende etter drapet på Laios og hans ledsagere, og budbæreren som kommer med beskjed om at kong Polybos er død, er den andre gjeteren som overtok det lille barnet og tok det med til det korintiske hoffet (Neis 1989 s. 62).

“Verket “Kong Oidipus” selv er et redselsdrama. Byen Teben uttrykt ved koret, står i sentrum av hendelsene. Dens frigjørelse fra Sfinxens demoni ble oppnådd samtidig med at en forsyndelse har funnet sted mot de guddommelige makter. Og det, viser det seg, er Oidipus’ uforskyldte skyld. Frigjørelsen har lagt skyld over byen, besmittet den derved at han uten selv å vite det har drept sin egen far og ektet sin egen mor. Nå må den renses. Og så handler tragedien om hvordan kongen i byen, Oidipus selv, i en umettelig vilje til sannhet – sannheten skal frem, koste hva det koste vil – møter seg selv i døren: Du er mannen! Det er ikke menneskets lavtliggende drifter, det er dets edleste drift, sannhetsbegjæret, som i dette verk, og

i den greske tragedie overhodet, fører til dets egen undergang. [...] Dog – byen Teben er derved rensset. Det er den enkelte som går til grunne; byen, staden, fellesskapet er blitt frelst nettopp ved det. Dypest sett er verket et offerdrama. Det er derfor ikke underlig at enkelte fortolkere av den greske tragedie i sin alminnelighet og Sofokles i særdeleshet heri ser et forvarsel om det kristne forløsningsmysterium på Golgata. “Det er bedre at et menneske dør for folket, enn at hele folket går til grunne”, sa dengang ypperstepresten Kaifas. Dette er en tvetydig innsikt, for den spiller i både godt og ondt. Nettopp denne type tvetydighet skaper det mørkt funklende spill i den greske tragedies lysskimmer – en drøm før solen står opp.” (Egil A. Wyller i *Aftenposten* 16. september 1992 s. 18)

“Historien om kong Oidipus er en av de frykteligste historiene som noensinne er blitt fortalt. Den handler om en mann som for enhver pris vil vite sannheten. Men selv om den ligger rett for nesen på ham, får han ikke øye på den. Og da han endelig ser den, blir han så ulykkelig at han stikker ut øynene sine.” (Thurah 2007 s. 29)

Kong Oidipus viser at hovedpersonen leder seg inn i en dobbelt selvforskyldt ulykke: Kong Laios’ død og pesten kommer fra hans egne handlinger. Oidipus er hissig. Han dreper sin far “uaktsomt”, i oppfarende vrede, krenket verdighet og rasende hevnløst. Men han vet ikke hva han “egentlig” gjør, at det er sin egen biologiske far han dreper. Oidipus’ karakter, hans personlighet, fungerer som et redskap for å fullbyrde hans tragiske skjebne. Oidipus er i vredens vold, og vi ser i forholdet til Kreon at denne oppfarende vreden er typisk for han. Oidipus har stor respekt for seg selv, og denne selvrespekten er en bakenforliggende grunn til at han dreper Laios.

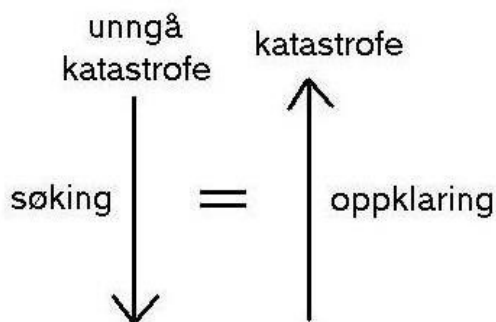
Oidipus er selvbevisst, og insisterer på at det var han selv, ikke spåmannen Teiresias, som løste sfinksen gåte. Kongens ærekjærhet viser seg i iveren etter å finne Laios’ morder. Oidipus har en beundringsverdig vilje til å vite, til kunnskap om sannheten, til å søke og stå ved sannheten. Han får noe manisk og besettende over seg i jakten på sannheten og på innsikt. Samtidig representerer han fornuft og rasjonell viten, i motsetning til Teiresias. Oidipus framtvinger selv avsløringene av det som har skjedd – avsløringer som knuser hans dronning og lar han selv stå tilbake i fortvilelse og lidelse.

I grekernes øyne viste Oidipus også en mangel på intellektuell våkenhet, en mangel som utleverer mennesket til en tragisk skjebne (Gelfert 1995 s. 18).

“[T]he Oedipus of *King Oedipus* never once summons his subjective lack of guilt in his self-defence. It would not occur to him to imagine that an incestuous parricide could be spared from pollution simply on account of his ignorance. Even so, it is surely perverse to find a drama’s deepest value in the fact that its hero accepts responsibility for what is palpably not his fault. [...] Oedipus is certainly a sacrificial scapegoat, who will finally come to assume the burden of the

community's sins; but in *Oedipus at Colonus* he rightly considers himself ill-treated by the heavens, and appeals to his ignorance as the ground of his innocence." (Eagleton 2003 s. 33) "Sophocles's Oedipus, another innocent, tells the Chorus at Colonus that he has 'endured foulest injustice'." (Eagleton 2003 s. 137)

Kong Oidipus er et analytisk drama der de avgjørende begivenhetene allerede har funnet sted når skuespillet begynner: Oidipus har allerede drept sin far og giftet seg med sin mor. Det er noe ubønnhørlig over avsløringene som Oidipus leder (han er som en etterforsker som ikke vet at han selv er forbryteren). Dynamikken i det analytiske dramaet er slik:



Det som har skjedd før stykket begynner, blir avslørt. *Kong Oidipus* er et drama som går "baklengs" inn i katastrofen. Oidipus aner hvilket slag han skal få like før han får det, men "det må høres". Det er for sent å snu, og han har fortsatt drivet i seg etter å komme til bunns og finne sannheten. Å komme til et endelig resultat lokker, samtidig som det blir mer og mer truende. Katastrofen kommer som en logisk følge av Oidipus' ubøyelige vilje til å få kunnskap om fortiden. Sannheten er den avgrunnen som Oidipus styrter ned i (Neis 1989 s. 63). Og katastrofen er ufravikelig, i og med at alt det forbudte *allerede* har skjedd. Oidipus må erkjenne det som ødelegger hans liv. I *Kong Oidipus* "the perfection of its form implies a world-order" (Kitto 1986 s. 144).

Det han vil sikre seg mot er uunngåelig, og hvert skritt han tror seg å ta vekk fra det, fører han i retningen avgrunnen (Neis 1989 s. 54). Gjennom selvavsløringen tilintetgjør han seg selv, og dette til tross for at avsløringen skjer etter påbud av guddomskrefter og med de edleste hensikter (Neis 1989 s. 54). Han handler ansvarlig og pliktoppfyllende, men ødelegger gjennom dette sin egen eksistens. Mennesket må handle (ikke å handle er også en handling), men gjennom sine handlinger vikler personen seg inn i noe uoverskuelig og pådrar seg skyld. Mennesket er blindt når det gjelder skjebnens gang. Men i den greske tragedieheltens kamp kommer det fram en ny, individualistisk og opplyst selvforståelse, som erstatter den kollektive og mytiske virkelighetsforståelsen (Gelfert 1995 s. 42).

Oidipus er både en kompromissløs sannhetssøker og en pragmatisk politiker som vil finne en løsning på byens problemer (Gelfert 1995 s. 41). Han driver sin vilje igjennom og presser fram sannheten. Noen av personene i dramaet prøver å hindre videre avdekking (fordi de før Oidipus ser hvor det bærer), og deres motstand fungerer som små retardasjoner/forsinkelser. Gjeteren, Teiresias og Iokaste ser stupet, og ønsker å trekke foten tilbake. Teiresias vil tie etter at han har kommet inn på scenen, og budbringeren går over fra å være pratsom til at Oidipus må true ordene ut av han. Men Oidipus er ubønhørlig og ustoppelig (nesten som om han allerede er blind) – og forholder seg derfor til de andre slik skjebnen forholder seg til hans eget liv. Han viser stadig mer dramatiske og ekstreme reaksjoner, som da han anklager Kreon for forræderi. Han går fra å framstå som svært rasjonell til å bli stadig mer irrasjonell.

Stykket har en slags dynamisk, svingende rekkefølge mellom scener som avkrefter spådommer og scener som bekrefter spådommer. Publikum opplever dette som tvetydig. Oidipus forbanner de som myrdet Laios og alle som dekker over mordet. Det må ha gått et gys gjennom publikum da de hørte denne forbannelsen, for myten om Oidipus var velkjent for tilskuerne.

Både Oidipus og Iokaste spotter i løpet stykket gudene og Apollons orakel, og viser dermed sin hybris. Dermed kan det sies at de bidrar til å nedkalle straffen over seg selv. Iokaster bagatelliserer og forkaster orakelsvaret (men sier likevel noe som gjør Oidipus mistenksom). Gjennom sin avvisning av de guddommelige ordene som er rettet til menneskene, avviser Iokaste guddommelig makt i tilværelsen. Men senere ofrer hun likevel til gudene og ber en bønn til den Apollon som hun like før har forkastet som sannhetskilde. Koret er forarget over Iokastes blasfemi. Kjeden av orakelsvar binder handlingen sammen og representerer at det er en ikke-menneskelig sammenheng i tilværelsen. Oidipus' innsikt skal lede publikum til from frykt og ærbødighet overfor gudene.

Den greske tittelen er *Oidipus tyrannos*, og tyrann var for grekerne en som ikke var født til å bli konge, men likevel hadde tatt makten. I stykket har dette et ironisk islett, fordi Oidipus er født av en konge. Oidipus framtrer som en tyrann ikke bare politisk, men "eksistensielt": Alt skal føye seg etter hans vilje. Det er et ironisk meningsspill mellom hans stolte selvbevissthet og at han setter igang den prosessen som knuser han. Oidipus' ulykke er i *dobbelt* betydning selvforskyldt: Den kommer fra hans egne handlinger, og det er han selv som framtvinger avsløringene som fører til at han i desperasjon blinder seg.

Med Oidipus' "managerial efficiency, he is successful in ridding Thebes of its curse; it is just that the curse turns out to be himself. Oedipus is *tyrannos*, meaning a self-made king, proud of his self-dependence and forensic powers. Marrying your mother and becoming your own father is doubtless the nearest you can come to being entirely self-generated. Yet something quite alien acts and speaks in him,

persisting as a riddling subtext within his speech, decentring his imaginary selfhood and finally destroying him.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 281)

Det brukes ofte dramatisk ironi i de greske tragediene: Publikum skjønner allerede hva personene i skuespillene snart skal oppdage. Tilskuerne vet mer enn personene på scenen. Personene foran øyne våre skal snart skjønne det samme som oss. Vi har bevissthet om deres ennå-ikke-bevissthet.

“Oedipus, as we see him time after time, is intelligent, determined, self-reliant, but hot-tempered and too sure of himself; and an apparently malignant chain of circumstances combines now with the strong, now with the weak side of his character to produce the catastrophe. A man of poor spirit would have swallowed the insult and remained safe in Corinth, but Oedipus was resolute; not content with Polybus’ assurance he went to Delphi and asked the god about it, and when the god, not answering his question, repeated the warning given originally to Laius, Oedipus, being a man of determination, never went back to Corinth. It was a coincidence, but not an unnatural one, that Laius was on his way from Thebes to Delphi. They met at the cross-road, and a father and son were of similar temper the disaster occurred. Even so, he could have arrived at Thebes safely, had he not been a man of high intelligence; for then he could not have read the riddle of the Sphinx. But again, though intelligent, he was blind enough to marry a woman old enough to be his mother, certain that his mother was in Corinth.” (Kitto 1986 s. 138-139)

Den tidligere kongen, Laios, er uhevnet, og dette kan være en grunn til at gudene hevner seg på byen. Hevntanken legitimeres, og en urett kan bare utjevnes gjennom en manns blodige fall. Taushet og glemsel er ingen mulighet her. Men Theben er “smittet” og “forpestet” også i overført betydning, nemlig ved ekteskapet mellom mor og barn. Det ligger noe farlig og trykkende under utbruddet av pest som rammer folket. Men Oidipus bærer byens skjebne på sin skuldre. Hans rolle som hersker blir sterkt framhevet. Folket og prestene kommer til han for å få slutt på pesten i byen. Kong Oidipus sier at han føler byens lidelser konsentrert i seg selv, og at folkets sorger veier tyngre enn hans eget liv. Kongen er den myndige enehersker som påtar seg å avhjelpe folkets problemer. Hans lidelse til slutt har preg av et sonoffer til gudene, for å rense byen fra pest og synd. Kongens død bringer naturens og gudenes orden i lage igjen.

Oidipus’ søken etter sannheten er uttrykk for menneskets verdighet på tross av en ufattelig skjebne – en skjebne skapt av guder eller ukjente makter. Det er som om maktene har lagt en felle for Oidipus, og at han går i fellen selv om han flyktet fra den. Anelsene er der tidlig i stykket, og forsterkes stadig som en streng som spennes, til strengen brister. Dialogene og handlingen er gjennomvevd av dobbeltydighet. Oidipus’ mistanke blir vakt da dronning Iokaste forteller at kong Laios ble myrdet ved et veikryss. Lettelsen etter at budbringeren fra Korinth har fortalt at kong Polybos (stefaren som Oidipus tror er faren) er død, gjør bare neste avsløring enda mørkere. Det at Polybos er død, fungerer som en retardering.

Gjeteren og sendebudet sitter inne med forskjellige grader av viten og også dette innebærer at handlingens tempo senkes. Avsløringen av sannheten blir forsinket. Det er en langsom, effektiv dramatisk bevegelse i retning sannheten, som da budet fra Korinth deretter forteller at Polybos ikke var Oidipus' far.

“In many tragedies the recognition is the culminating point. Nearly always it gives a touch of completeness and finality to a drama which would otherwise be a less clear-cut emotional experience. But it is not often that the tragic situation only exists in virtue of it, as it does in Sophocles' play” *Kong Oidipus* (Brereton 1968 s. 84). Oidipus oppsøker ufrivillig sin skjebne i stedet for å unngå den. Men i all sin maktesløshet overfor skjebnen, er han likevel et menneske som kan *ville* det rette.

Oidipus er seg ikke bevisst å ha gjort noe umoralsk, og føler seg “uskyldig”. Han ønsker å rense byen for pesten, selv om det koster han livet. At han ikke var fri, at han var underlagt en forutbestemt skjebne, gjør ikke hans gode vilje til skamme. Han handlet som om han var fri, og det kunne ha gått godt, om gudene hadde villet det. Men skjebnens veier er innviklede og ugjennomskuelige for menneskene. Fordi vi ikke kan vite eller forstå alt, fordi vi i våre liv ikke vil la oss styre av gudene eller skjebnen, må vi bruke vår egen vilje og ha våre egne planer som vi forsøker å gjennomføre.

Stykket skal vise at det finnes en langtverkende skjebne som virker *gjennom* Oidipus' handlinger – handlinger som er *både* frie og skjebnebestemte. Mennesket må velge, selv om gudene bestemmer utfallet. Mennesket er et stykke på vei fritt selv om gudene har bestemt et utfall av handlingene på forhånd. Problemet for Oidipus og andre tragedieskikkelser er: Hva er de frie til, og hva er skjebnens vilje? I dette ligger det et for mennesket ubegripelig paradoks.

Jo nærmere sannheten Oidipus kommer, jo nærmere er hans egen destruksjon. Jo bedre han ser sannheten, jo nærmere er katastrofen og blindingen. *Kong Oidipus* som analytisk drama har en ironisk struktur, med utstrakt bruk av dramatisk ironi og tragisk ironi. Ironi er vanlig i tragedier: “Irony is a favourite standby of the tragic dramatist because of the effectiveness with which it underlines the change of fortune.” (Brereton 1968 s. 15) Tragedien kjennetegnes ved “the frequent incidence of an ironical change of fortune, the feeling of waste, the emotional misery” (Brereton 1968 s. 54). Noe verdifullt, edelt, stort og godt går tapt for alltid. Beundringsverdige personer går til grunne, noe skylles bort og livet står redusert tilbake.

Oidipus' søken etter den skyldige favner først vidt, men snevrer seg så stadig mer inn, til han til slutt selv står der som den skyldige, den som gudene har forstøtt. Sannheten må søkes “innover”. Teiresias er blind, men er likevel mer “seende” enn de fleste – fordi han skuer inn i tilværelsens mysterier. Han er altså den blinde som ser. Oidipus derimot er blind for de sanne sammenhengene, men han vil ha alt fram i lyset. *Kong Oidipus* viser motsetninger eller paradokser mellom synskraft og

blindhet. Oidipus kan (fysisk) se, men er blind, mens Teiresias er (fysisk) blind, men kan se, og begge bebreider den andre for å være blind (Neis 1989 s. 64).

Det er mange metaforer og henspillinger på lys og mørke i stykket. Mennesket søker lys, men havner i mørket. Vi kan se, men er blinde for de avgrunnsdype konsekvensene våre handlinger kan få. På slutten av stykket er Oidipus famlende og lyttende på blindes vis, og hans blindhet blir et tydelig bilde på hans hjelpeløshet. Til slutt er alt klart, avslørt, men Oidipus må leve som blind. Det er en paradoksal struktur i skuespillet mellom å være blind og kunne se: Da Oidipus trodde han kunne se og avsløre alt, var han blind, og da han har blindet seg selv, skjedde det fordi han så alt i sin grufulle sannhet. Blindingen blir et uttrykk for den dunkelheten som råder i tilværelsen, og Oidipus' kropp gjør fysisk synlig denne dunkelheten og det "blinde" bak menneskets synsevne (Neis 1989 s. 69).

“[D]en blinde Ødipus beder om at blive ført ud af byen, men Kreon ønsker ham indespærret af frygt for at han vil besudle byen ved at vise sig i Apollons dagslys.” (Dahl 2010)

Det er skjebnen som har forårsaket incesten, men det er likefullt avskyelig, skremmende og fullstendig forbudt. Thebens redningsmann kan ikke unngå skammen og redde seg selv. Den store, mektige kongen er som et blad i vinden for gudenes vilje og bestemmelse. Flere personer i skuespillet sier til Oidipus at han ikke vet hva han sier og hva han gjør. Lys og mørke nevnes vanligvis sammen i dette skuespillet, som krefter som råder over oss.

Det er en enorm ironisk brodd i at Iokaste henger seg mens Oidipus ser på seg selv som lykkens barn eller sønn, at han akkurat da føler at lykken intensiveres. Han føler seg på grensen til det guddommelige før han får sin fulle innsikt. Når Oidipus kaller seg "lykkens sønn" tenker han seg som gudinnen Tyches sønn, gudinnen som etter lune og vilkårlighet fordeler lykke og ulykke, godt og vondt i menneskelivet. Å være sønn av Tyche vil si å godta tilfeldigheter, og det gjør nå Oidipus lykkelig – fordi han som konge ikke blir ydmyket av å få vite at han har lav herkomst, men er av kongelig slekt (Neis 1989 s. 37). Oidipus' gode humør smitter over på koret, som uttrykket at det kan vise seg at han i Kithairon ble født av en gud, altså at han har guddommelig opphav (Neis 1989 s. 38).

Men i linje 1188 og utover synger koret at den største lykken for et menneske er å tro seg lykkelig, underforstått: det finnes kun innbilt lykke, ikke sann lykke (Neis 1989 s. 39). Koret synger bl.a.: “And none among mortals, none, / Seeking to live, hath won / More than to seem, and to cease / Again from his seeming.” (oversatt av Gilbert Murray)

Kong Oidipus er en “tragedy of recognition [...] full of opportunities for irony [...] the audience knows how the tragedy will end, the irony is constantly in evidence. It is present from the first moment when the people of Thebes come humbly and

trustingly to Oedipus to ask him to deliver them from the pestilence. [...] Oedipus, in flight from the evil he is supposed to be at Corinth, finds it irrevocably in Thebes. It is a classic instance of an irony which can properly be called tragic because of its inherence in the destiny of the individual.” (Brereton 1968 s. 84-85)
“As the revelation grows nearer, so the speeches of Oedipus become unconsciously more double-edged.” (Brereton 1968 s. 85)

Oidipus’ skjebne fungerer som et eksempel på å vokse i motgang og bli større gjennom lidelse. Han er aldri mer selvbevisst enn etter å ha blindet seg selv. Han er nesten hånende overfor seg selv. Det er som om all den ironien han har oversett tidligere i stykket, nå fortetter seg. Oidipus får en slags verdighet gjennom lidelsen, og han framstår som sta og selvrådig igjen, slik han var mens han trodde at han var skyldfri. Det er som om han har “overtaket” på verden gjennom sin uutholdelige lidelse, som om alle andre framstår som bagatellmessige liv sammenlignet med hans.

“[A]ll of Sophocles’s heroes, as Bernard Knox points out in *The Heroic Temper* [1964], are distinguished by a ferocious obstinacy of being, by their capacity to stay in some fundamental way unbroken even in the most terrible of circumstances. As Knox comments: ‘there is something monstrous, more or other than human, in such inhuman stubbornness’, which is evident alike in Oedipus, Ajax, Antigone, Philoctetes, Electra and Heracles. These are figures who typically court disaster by their intransigence, driven by it to the margins of social life, cross-grained, incorruptible and solitarily self-sufficient.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 233)

Dronning Iokaste får den fulle innsikten i den grufulle sammenhengen før Oidipus får den. Hun vil stanse kongen i hans undersøkelser når hun har forstått at hun er gift med sin egen sønn. Hun representerer underbevissthetens mulighet – i form av at livet fortsatt kan leves hvis det grufulle holdes unna, fortrenget. Kongen nesten spotter sin dronning da han ser henne løpe sin vei. Senere går også kongen inn i borgen. Borgen eller kongsgården er et lukket rom for det intime, usynlige, for driften og lidelsene – og det er her Iokaste henger seg og Oidipus blinder seg.

Oidipus tar det personlige ansvar gjennom å blinde seg. Blindingen representerer selv-nedverdiggelse (i motsetning til hans tidligere sterke selvhevdelse). Gjennom blindingen fratrer Oidipus fra makten og utstøter seg selv fra samfunnet. Blindingen er en (relativt) fritt valgt handling, og kan tolkes som en protest mot den guddomsstyrte skjebnen. Det er en siste selvhevdelse før han går under som en av de svakeste og mest hjelpeløse i samfunnet. Med blindingen hevder han sin egen vilje og sin frihet. Selv om Oidipus ikke overskuer verken sin fortid, nåtid eller framtid, er han likevel fri til å handle og må ta ansvar for sine handlinger (Neis 1989 s. 58).

Etter blindingen virker Oidipus igjen bydende ved å forlange å bli landsforvist. Nå kan han handle med viten og innsikt, og har innsett de menneskelige begrensninger.

Dette gir han en paradoksal styrke. Det er som om han reiser seg *i* lidelsen. Han er fortsatt stor og betydningsfull, men med motsatt fortegn i forhold til begynnelsen av skuespillet. Han fraber seg alle gode råd! Han insisterer på konsekvensene av det forbudte han har gjort: drept sin far og giftet seg med sin mor. Koretts fattigslige trøst tar han som en fornærmelse. For han er ulykken total og ugjenkallelig. Det er noe stort og beundringsverdig i at han klarer å vurdere sin egen ulykke. Å dø er for svakt og tamt for han. Nå vil han leve resten av sitt liv i lidelse og i vissheten om det grufulle.

“Oedipus swears to discover the criminal and punish him, and from that point the whole truth is gradually made clear. [...] He is warned of the danger and attempts to avert it by a practical act, but all his efforts only lead him more surely towards it. His destiny proves to be inescapable. [...] like other tragic heroes, he realised that he had no place in the scheme of things and blinded himself to see nothing more” (Brereton 1968 s. 77-78)

Grunnen til at Oidipus blinder seg selv er fordi han ikke lenger vil se de han føler skyld og skam overfor: sine egne barn, innbyggerne i Theben, de hellige gudebildene, og til slutt sine egne foreldre i underverdenen (Neis 1989 s. 40). Blindingen fungerer også som hans egen straff mot sine øyne for det de har sett og for det de ikke har sett, altså for det han har opplevd (ikke minst å gifte seg med sin egen mor og få barn med henne), men også for det han ikke har visst eller innsett om sitt eget liv (Neis 1989 s. 58).

“Oedipus accepts his guilt and punishes himself by blinding himself (a symbolic castration) and by exiling himself from the human community to wander the roads until he dies. On the other hand, again, how can Oedipus be held responsible for acts he did not intend to commit? Nor is it even absolutely certain, as recent critics have argued, that he did in fact kill his father. There is a contradiction in the evidence about the massacre of Oedipus’s father, Laius, at the crossroads. In one account, the murderer is said to have been one man. In another account, there were three murderers. As Creon observes, “One man and three men just does not jibe.” Oedipus condemns himself by putting the somewhat ambiguous evidence together in a way that convicts him. He plays the roles of both detective and murderer in this aboriginal detective story. But it may be this act of narration itself that creates the crime and points the finger of guilt at Oedipus. As Cynthia Chase has observed in a brilliant essay, the crime exists neither in the original acts, which were innocent, in the sense that Oedipus did not know that he was murdering his father and sleeping with his mother, nor in the “now” of the play, in which Oedipus bit by bit pieces together the data he is given and makes a story out of them. The crime exists somewhere in between, in the relation between the events of the past and the present recovery and highly motivated ordering of them.” (Joseph Hillis Miller i Lentricchia og McLaughlin 1990 s. 73-74)

“Oedipus sees himself in the role of the detective. He thinks of himself as the outsider whose cool dispassionate approach to the problems of Thebes is exactly what has been lacking among its citizens. He intends to solve the problem through the application of “the power of the human mind to observe and reason.” Oedipus is quick to point out to Teresias that all of his augury and soothsaying was incapable of solving the riddle of the sphinx whereas Oedipus himself, through the use of his reason alone, unaided by divine powers, was capable of solving that problem, and, he predicts, his powers will also be capable of ridding Thebes of the plague. As detective, Oedipus also hopes to sever the murderer (whom he does not connect with himself or his fate) from the community, an act which will restore order. Clearly Oedipus regards himself as a detective, views the world as rational, and denies that human life has anything mysterious within it. [...] The supreme irony in this play, a play noted for its ironies, is that Oedipus’s reason finally reveals to him its own inadequacy and Oedipus realizes that the world is not merely metaphoric and mysterious but mysterious in its very essence, that its rhythm and order are and must remain mysterious to man. [...] In *Oedipus* the level of the retrospective plot, the level at which Oedipus conducts his life, is discovered to be the realm of illusion. This is the tragic illumination he gains. [...] Where he thought of himself as a disinterested investigator, he finds that he is both the pursued and the pursuer.” (Hallett 1978)

“It might be argued that *Oedipus the King* does not so much tell a story as dramatize a striking example of the way storytelling, the putting together of data to make a coherent tale, is performative. *Oedipus the King* is a story about the awful danger of storytelling. Storytelling in this case makes something happen with a vengeance. It leads the storyteller to condemn, blind, and exile himself, and it leads his mother-wife, Jocasta, to kill herself. [...] Insofar as clear kinship names and identifications are necessary to a man’s or a woman’s sense of who he or she is and where he or she has come from, *Oedipus the King* presents a story in which the possibility of such clarity is questioned and suspended. The play, it is true, gives a narrative form to the logically insoluble problem of the origin of man. [...] there remains at the end the fundamental enigma of why Oedipus should be so punished for crimes he has not knowingly committed.” (Joseph Hillis Miller i Lentricchia og McLaughlin 1990 s. 74)

Oidipus’ spor leder inn i avgrunnen. Gudene eller skjebnen bruker han i et spill der han selv sparker bort det fundamentet han står på, der han driver seg selv inn i ulykken og fortvilelsen. Han er vergeløs, også fordi han ikke vet hvor fienden befinner seg, og dette er grunnen til at han begjærlig griper etter Kreon som syndebukk. Oidipus mistenker Kreon for å ha sammensvoret seg med de delfiske prestene. Disse vet sannheten. De har kontakt med det guddommelige. Iokaste kommer svært nær blasfemi i sin omtale av orakelsvaret fra Delfi. Hun nedvurderer det hellige og ukrenkelige, men dette slår til slutt igjennom som den uimotsigelige sannhet. *Kong Oidipus* fungerer som et forsvar for tillit til og respekt for gudene.

Oidipus' uskyldighet-skyldighet (Borne 1992 s. 57) er tragediens paradoks. Skjebnen eller gudene straffer den ondskapen som den samme instansen selv har forårsaket (Borne 1992 s. 58). I *Kong Oidipus* er det "a conception of destiny embodied in personality, or – to vary the terms – a refusal to draw a distinction between destiny and personality." (Brereton 1968 s. 79) Når Oidipus har innsett at han har drept sin egen far, giftet seg med sin mor og ført pest over byen, "he fully accepts his guilt. From the moment when the truth dawns upon him, he does not offer a word of self-exculpation. He takes the full horror of responsibility upon himself (Brereton 1968 s. 79). Det kan hevdes at Oidipus er subjektivt uskyldig, men objektivt skyldig (Kästler 1990 s. 10). "What happens is the natural result of the weaknesses and the virtues of his character, in combination with other people's", hevder Kitto (1986 s. 139).

"The notion presupposed by the Greek Oracle is that the future is pre-ordained; that is to say, there is no real future because it is already latent in the present. If one asks, therefore, what would have happened if Oedipus had remained in Corinth instead of running away, the only answer can be that, although the actual events would have been different, the results would have been the same; in the end he would have murdered his father and married his mother. What the Oracle says may be put in a riddle form, but, once this is deciphered, what it says is not a promise but a statement of fact like a statement of a scientific law, and there is no question of belief or disbelief." (W. H. Auden i Lerner 1989 s. 219)

En av personene i stykket er den gamle, synske Teiresias. Han skal ha blitt blind som straff fra Athene, fordi han så henne bade naken (Detienne og Vernant 1974 s. 88). En annen forklaring fra antikken var at han ble han straffet med blindhet fordi han som spåmann røpet gudenes vilje for menneskene. Også Oidipus ender som blind. "The blind Tiresias is the real representative of truth, and for this reason Oedipus persecutes him. The conflict played out by this tragedy is the conflict between the human pretension of owning the totality of truth and the accepted blindness of the seer. Oedipus will end his days blind: he decides to blind himself, because when he could see, he was not able to see the real truth. By putting out his eyes, he lets his inner and intellectual eye see the real light of truth." (Chiara Chinelloh i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

"Oedipus is not the voluntary author of his first actions. He suffers his destiny. However, the end of his story shows that there is still something that he can do: he can carry upon his shoulders that unwilling guilt, by acknowledging himself as the starting point of his actions. He is able to acknowledge his responsibility in this initiative." (Chiara Chinelloh i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

"One might say that, though there is a history of Oedipus, Oedipus himself has no history, for there is no relation between his being and his acts. When the play opens

he has already committed parricide and incest, but he is still the same person he was before he had done so; it is only when he finds out that the old man whom he killed in a quarrel about precedence, a deed which neither he nor his audience are supposed to think wrong, was, in fact, his father, and that the Queen of Thebes to whom he has been happily married for years is, in fact, his mother, that there is a change, and even then this is a change not in him but in his status. He who formerly was a happy king beloved by his subjects is now a wretched outcast.” (W. H. Auden i Lerner 1989 s. 220) Koret sier at Oidipus har vært misunt av mange, men skuespillet viser til slutt at det var uten grunn.

Den tyske filosofen Arthur Schopenhauer beundret Oidipus på grunn av hans mot til å avsløre sin egen fryktelige skjebne, og “forske” videre selv om han aner at svarene på hans spørsmål vil være fryktelige (Safranski 1999 s. 255).

Sigmund Freud oppfattet *Kong Oidipus* som et skuespill som iscenesetter en avsløringsprosess som kan sammenlignes med psykoanalyse (Bellemin-Noël 1989 s. 46).

Det er en vanlig tolkningsmåte å oppfatte “Oedipus purely as a victim of Fate. Fate is a generalised name for some cosmic force which decides the particular destiny of the individual. This destiny is still inescapable but it is distinct from the personality. The latter thus possesses some independent essence of its own. Theoretically it could even have an independent existence. One might perhaps use the metaphor of the plant trained up a stake. It must follow the line of the stake, but it is not the same thing as the stake and it could perfectly well be conceived as existing without it. When instead of a plant there is a conscious individual, he may well have the illusion of doing just that. In mind, if not in act, he can ‘rise superior to his destiny’. He can shout defiance at the external thing before it forces him back into line. Some essential part of him – expressed as his personality, or his soul, or his spirit, or his will – remains unbroken. The objection against reading this conception into Sophocles’ play is that, if it were there, Oedipus ought to have gone down with his flag flying. He should – and it would have been perfectly in character – have been ‘heroic’. But, instead of condemning Nemesis for the filthy tricks she plays on mankind, he fully accepts his guilt. From the moment when the truth dawns upon him, he does not offer a word of self-exculpation [= å frikjenne seg selv]. He takes the full horror of responsibility upon himself.” (Brereton 1968 s. 79)

“Nothing that Oedipus did or omitted to do would have made any difference. We are left with only two alternatives. Either the gods, having decided to destroy Oedipus in any case, amused themselves by playing with him first. This, besides being a doubtful interpretation of the Greek fifth-century conception of the superhuman powers, would not account for Oedipus’ overwhelming personal feeling of guilt, as we have already suggested. Secondly, we are brought back to the only tenable hypothesis: the built-in flaw in the individual, which goes much deeper than ‘character’. Once again, Oedipus fails because he is the man he is. He

himself is the failure.” (Brereton 1968 s. 80) “Sophocles is not trying to make us feel that an inexorable destiny or a malignant god is guiding the events.” (Kitto 1986 s. 139) “[I]n the ode that immediately follows the catastrophe the chorus says not that the fate of Oedipus is a special display of divine power, but on the contrary that it is typical of human life and fortunes.” (Kitto 1986 s. 140)

“Oedipus, horrified by the oracle’s prediction, flees from Corinth straight into the arms of his destiny; in his case, ‘I was fated’ and ‘I doomed myself’ come to much the same thing. It does not occur to him in the play to excuse himself because his actions were unintentional, since his guilt is not subjective. Fate and freedom are not so separable: Oedipus’s *moira* or allotted portion in life is woven into his conduct in a way best captured by the Freudian concept of overdetermination – so that while it is undeniably he who acts, there is also an otherness which acts in him. Indeed, it may be that Oedipus’s tragedy is predicted rather than predetermined – that his actions are freely undertaken even though they are foreseen. For Christian faith, likewise, God sees what I will freely do in the future because he is omniscient, not because he forces me to do it. Nor can God foretell what is inevitably going to happen, since in an open-ended universe there is no such thing as what is inevitably going to happen, and thus nothing to be foretold.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 109)

Er det i *Kong Oidipus* en “grim determinism? Is Sophocles telling us that Man is only the plaything of Fate? Or does he mean, as Bowra suggested, no more than that the gods have contrived this awful fate for Oedipus in order to display their power to man and to teach him a salutary lesson?” (Kitto 1986 s. 138) “[T]he whole texture of the play is so vividly naturalistic that we must be reluctant to interpret it as a bleak Determinism. These people are not puppets of higher powers; they act in their own right.” (Kitto 1986 s. 140)

Oidipus går fra å være en stolt konge til en blind tigger. På samme måte er alle menneskeliv truet av undergang og tilintetgjørelse (Neis 1989 s. 58). Oidipus får publikums medlidenhet fordi han er uskyldig i det som fører til hans lidelse, og fordi han er en edel mann som folket kan takke for å ha blitt reddet (Neis 1989 s. 57). Og tilskuerne kjenner frykt fordi skjebnen er så vilkårlig og grusom, og fordi ethvert menneske lever utrygt, uten noen sikkerhet mot kommende katastrofer. Vi har ingen beskyttelse mot de fundamentale kreftene i tilværelsen.

Oidipus erkjenner sin skyld og finner selv ut hvilken straff han fortjener (blindingen og å leve som tigger). Kreon vil finne ut hva som bør skje med den blinde Oidipus, ved å spørre orakelet i Delfi på nytt, for det er noe guddommelig ved hvordan gudene har grepet inn i Oidipus’ liv både på godt og ondt (Neis 1989 s. 68). “I still / Tremble, and fain would ask Apollo’s will sier Kreon” (oversatt av Gilbert Murray).

“The evil is finally proved to lie in the King himself, the honoured head of the community and once its saviour from the Sphinx, who is now marked down as a necessary sacrifice. [...] It is impossible not to recognise in this [handlingen i *Kong Oidipus*] some of the main features of the Corn King tradition – the offering of a victim prominent enough to satisfy the gods and upon whose head all the disease or sin of the community can be heaped. And no doubt somewhere in the genesis of the Oedipus legend this element was dominant, no doubt also its influence persists in the tragedy which Sophocles wrote, as it does in numerous other tragedies.”
(Brereton 1968 s. 81)

I *Kong Oidipus* omtales både Artemis og Dionysos (og noen andre guder). Artemis var opprinnelig en dødsgudinne, men også fruktbarhetsgudinne, kjent blant annet for sin misunnelse og uberegnelighet. Dionysos må dø for deretter å gjenoppstå. Om vinteren er han i underverdenen. Hans gjenkomst krever offer (dyreoffer) (Neis 1989 s. 78).

Fra linje 1414 i stykket uttrykkes en tanke om at hendelsene er så forferdelige at de kan smitte over på andre (Neis 1989 s. 40). Oidipus beroliger folket: “What? Do ye fear to touch a man so sore / Stricken? Nay, tremble not. My misery / Is mine, and shall be borne by none but me.” (oversatt av Gilbert Murray) Oidipus håper nå å dø på Kithairon, slik han som barn skulle ha gjort hvis ikke oraklets spådom hadde gått i oppfyllelse.

“The Chorus of Theban elders who close the play speak only of the miserable fall of Oedipus the individual and draw from it a moral for other individual men.”
(Brereton 1968 s. 81) Stykkets lærdom er blant annet at intet menneske kan prise seg lykkelig før det har kommet til livsveiens ende. Koret avslutter dramaet med ord som minner om den athenske statsmann og dikteren Solon, kjent for sin visdom og for å ha uttalt blant annet at “La ingen kalles lykkelig før han er død. Fram til da er han bare heldig”:

“Ye citizens of Thebes, behold; ‘tis Oedipus that passeth here,
Who read the riddle-word of Death, and mightiest stood of mortal men,
And Fortune loved him, and the folk that saw him turned and looked again.
Lo, he is fallen, and around great storms and the outreaching sea!
Therefore, O Man, beware, and look toward the end of things that be,
The last of sights, the last of days; and no man’s life account as gain
Ere the full tale be finished and the darkness find him without pain.”
(oversatt av Gilbert Murray)

Ifølge den tyske filosofen Christoph Menke i *Tragediens samtid: Forsøk om spill og dom* (2005; på tysk) “er *Kong Oidipus*’ refleksjon over subjektivitetens betingelser nøye forbundet med tragediens karakter af retsdrama. Ganske vist ender Oidipus som forbandet og udstødt, men tragedien tematiserer snarere indestiftelsen af en retsorden, idet den legger ritualets orden bag sig. Således bryder Oidipus med

den rituelle praksis, da han ved tragediens begyndelse iværksætter en retsundersøgelse af, hvad der har bragt smitte til Theben, i stedet for at uddrive smitten rituelt gennem en vilkårligt udvalgt syndebuk. At denne retsproces ender med, at Ødipus forbander sig selv, røber ganske vist en brist i domshandlingens subjektivitet. Men vi kan ikke forstå forbandelsens karakter, hvis vi analyserer den i ritualismens førretlige optik. [...] Ødipus lærer af sine lidelser, men hans erfaring er til ingen nytte. Tragediens erfaring er, som Menke siger “en metaklogskab”, som handler om grænserne for vores viden, men uden at formå at flytte dem. For Ødipus bliver konsekvensen af denne erfaring, at han forbander sig selv, og idet han giver sig skæbnen i vold mister han evnen til at handle og leve.” (Dahl 2010)

Menke mener at “Ødipus’ klage over sin skæbne viser, hvad det at dømmes i virkeligheden betyder: tabet af evnen til at handle og leve; selvbedømmelse betyder for Ødipus selvtab.” (Dahl 2010)

“I en hegeliansk analytik er gudernes magt udtryk for uerkendte, objektive kræfter, der endnu mangler at blive erkendt som fornuft. Et aktuelt eksempel på en sådan protohegeliansk fornuftsbestemmelse af tragediens mytiske kræfter finder man i henholdsvis Vernant og Girards ritualistiske tragedieanalyser. Her bliver tragediens skæbnemagter oversat til sociale kræfter. Det er nu ikke guderne, der hersker over Ødipus, men polisfællesskabet, der udsondrer ham som syndebuk. Vernant forklarer, at Ødipus på en gang inkarnerer og truer polis’ værdier, og derfor bliver han syndebuk, ophøjet og udstødt. Ifølge Girard er denne udstødelse grundlæggende for etableringen af den sociale orden, og det er denne grundlæggelse tragedien gør til ritual. Et problem ved den slags syndebuklæsninger af *Kong Ødipus* er imidlertid, at polisfællesskabet i Sofokles’ drama (repræsenteret af koret af ældre thebanske borgere) intetsteds forsøger at gøre Ødipus til syndebuk. Tværtimod nedkalder Ødipus selv forbandelsen over sig, ligesom han frivilligt abdicerer efter at have blindet sig.” (Dahl 2010)

Sofokles’ drama *Oidipus i Kolonos* viser hva som skjer videre med den avsatte, blinde kongen. Han har blitt en paria som aldri finner hvile, men til slutt blir han forsonet med gudenes vilje. Den verste forbannelsen Oidipus kan tenke seg er å ønske en motstander det samme livet som han selv må leve (etter at de har tatt datteren Antigone fra han). Han ønsker ikke at koret skal forhøre seg om hans fortid, men det er vitebegjærlig og vil ikke tie. Tilsvarende måtte Oidipus i *Kong Oidipus* stadig gå videre i sin trang til å vite og hale ordene ut av munnen på mennesker som helst ville tie.

“Having arrived at Colon, Oedipus can determine which crime he has really committed, he can evaluate his acts. He now comprehends his innocence. ‘I am charged with a crime, stranger;’ says Oedipus, ‘yes, I am so charged in spite of myself; let the gods know, I wanted nothing of this (421-422).’ No one else but Oedipus has killed his father and married his mother, and he feels regret, but he can

also feel relief because of his ignorance and innocence.” (Chiara Chinelloh i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

Den østerrikske dikteren Hugo von Hofmannsthals skuespill *Oidipus og sfinksen* (1905) er en slags forløper (førfølger) til Sofokles' drama, som blant annet viser den hemmelige tiltrekningen mellom mor og sønn (Neis 1989 s. 73). Nederlenderen Max Croisets *Oidipus og hans mor* (1950) er en slags visualisering av Freuds idé om Oidipus-komplekset, der Oidipus i dette tilfellet med vitende og vilje gifter seg med sin mor for å ta henne fra sin forhatte far. Den amerikansk-britiske dikteren T. S. Eliots *The Elder Statesman* (1959) flytter handlingen fra Sofokles inn i vår tid.

Antigone

I de greske tragediene står ofte hensynet til individet mot hensynet til samfunnet. Samfunnsplikt er i konflikt med personlige interesser. I Sofokles' *Antigone* står familie og stat, religion og rasjonalitet, personlig samvittighet og offentlige lover mot hverandre (Kästler 1990 s. 44). *Antigone* har en av kong Oidipus' døtre som hovedperson. Hennes to tvillingbrødre Polyneikes og Eteokles kjemper om tronen i Theben. Polyneikes tvinges til å forlate byen, men kommer tilbake med en stor hær. Begge brødrene blir drept i kampen, og Kreon (en av dronning Iokastes brødre) arver tronen. Han nekter folk å begrave Polyneikes fordi han angrep byen, og lar liket ligge som åtsel for ville dyr og fugler. Stykket begynner i stillheten etter et angrep på byen, etter en krig. Hovedkonflikten i skuespillet er at Antigone nekter å bøye seg for onkelens påbud, og foretar en provisorisk gravleggelse ved å drysse jord over broren. Hun er individet som motsetter seg maktmenneskets påbud og autoritet.

“Pliktkollisjon” er typisk for tragedier, slik at protagonisten pådrar seg skyld uansett hvilken av pliktene som følges (Schillemeit 1971 s. 320).

Antigone er en konflikttragedie, mens *Kong Oidipus* er en skjebnetragedie (Gelfert 1995 s. 35).

“Antigone feels no guilt about her supposed transgression, which can only be seen by the ruling powers and local mores as madness or evil. She refuses to give way on what she regards as the laws of heaven, and allows this refusal to carry her to her death. The martyr is the one who raises some contingent object to the sublime status of the Thing, the enigmatic law or unconditional injunction of the ethical, and who values this more than life itself.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 234)

Polyneikes kjenner sin skjebne, at han kommer til å bli drept, men tier med den for ikke å ta kampmotet fra sine soldater. Dette kan tolkes som en parallell til hvordan gudene behandler menneskene: Skjebnens gang er bestemt, men fordi skjebnens innhold er ukjent, blir det likevel meningsfullt å kjempe videre. Polyneikes ber om

å bli gravlagt, og legger dermed grunnlaget for tragedien i *Antigone*. Han bidrar til å bringe en ond skjebne over sin søster.

Kreon står med sine prinsipper og politiske hensyn mot Antigones krav, men han må bøye seg for høyere makter. Kreon ender like ensom som Antigone var. Han blir offer for sine egne prinsipper (Kästler 1990 s. 65). Tragediehelten Antigone må lide ufortjent for en handling som har et edelt motiv (Kästler 1990 s. 92). Hun er både uskyldig og skyldig, hun er “uskyldig skyldig” (Kästler 1990 s. 74). Lidelsen er både begrunnet og ufortjent (Kästler 1990 s. 91).

Antigone er drevet av en sterk vilje og er villig til å ofre sitt eget liv. Hennes imperativ er: Du skal lyde gudene mer enn mennesker. Hun tar inn over seg lidelsene både for sin far, kong Oidipus, og sine brødre. Hun forakter søsteren Ismenes engstelighet og fryktsomhet. Ismenes liv i middelmådig ynkelighet er ifølge Antigone i seg selv en passende “straff” for søsteren. Ismene er den eneste av Oidipus-slekten som blir tilbake, men hun er den svakeste av dem.

“Kreon is depicted as a typical technocrat of power; he perceives himself as a saviour of the city whose only task is to lead it straight after the times of turmoil and unrest. His very first appearance ought to make two things clear: Kreon is the ruler and he will rule for the sake of the *polis*, regardless of what ends. He emphasizes that he rules because of the kinship with the dead ones. However, his own principles of rule have nothing to do either with gods he invokes at the beginning of his speech or with the duties to the deceased ones. [...] anyone “who feels that someone close to him is more important than his own fatherland” does not even exist for him. [...] Kreon sees the political work simply as a kind of technical behaviour that demands obedience and uniformity from its subjects. When Antigone calls him a tyrant (l. 506) – this term does not have all its negative connotations yet – he replies that she is the only one to think so; Antigone replies that the others are merely silenced and perhaps afraid to talk. Kreon surprisingly does not dispute this but he asks whether she is not *ashamed for not thinking as they do* (l. 510), i.e. he considers diversity and independence of views to be something shameful.” (Jakub Jirsa i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

Når Kreon oppdager at noen har drysset jord over Polyneikes’ lik, blir han rasende. Det er ironisk at både Kreon og vaktmannen taler om gjerningsmannen. Det fungerer også ironisk at da Kreon kommer med sitt forbud, har Antigone allerede brutt det. Kreon anklager sin omgivelser (blant andre Teiresias) for konspirasjoner og korrupsjon. Han frykter at hans posisjon skal bli underminert, slik at han blir fjernet fra maktens tinde. Dramaet viser at det ikke er en politisk fare som truer, men Kreon klarer ikke å identifisere faren. Det fungerer ironisk at han ser i feil retning. Kreon ser moralsk forfall rundt seg: Mennesker lar seg bestikke, korrumpes av gullets fristelser, og mangler troskap til og respekt for landets hersker. Her viser dramaet at han tar feil. Det finnes moralsk høyverdige og

rakryggete mennesker rundt han, men dette er personer han fordømmer. Antigone og Kreons egen sønn Haimon har de kvalitetene som Kreon sier at han savner. Det er et stort paradoks i dramaet at Kreon etterlyser noe og tilintetgjør det selv.

I sin første monolog uttrykker Kreon forakt for en feiging som viker tilbake bare for å redde sitt eget skinn. Dette er indirekte en lovprisning av den holdningen Antigone har. Men for Kreon går hjembyen og fedrelandet foran pliktene overfor slekt og familie. Han legger stor vekt på lydighet i familien, men statens trygghet er premissen og målet. Kreon representerer staten, mens Antigone representerer familie- og blodsband. To juridisk-moralske prinsipper står dermed mot hverandre, personifisert ved Kreon og Antigone. Kong Kreon sier uttrykkelig at han ikke ville kunne spare selv sin nærmeste slektning. Staten går foran alt.

Antigone er den eneste som står imot alt press, som gjør det riktige etter egen vurdering uansett lover, påbud, forbud og dødelige konsekvenser. Antigone sier til Kreon at den største straffen som han er i stand til å gi henne, veier lite mot det gode hun oppnådde ved å begrave sin bror. Hun er på sett og vis usårlig, uskadelig. Hun er sterkere enn all verdens makt, tvang og straff. Av Kreons neste replikk skjønner vi at Antigone har talt på en stolt og spottende måte, som gjør Kreon enda sintere og mindre forsonlig. Antigone oppfatter Kreons forbud som uttrykk for hybris. Han trosser gudenes lover, mens hun forsvarer det hun har gjort ved å henvise til gudenes og slektsærens lover, som hun oppfatter som evige, i motsetning til statens lover, som er menneskeskapte. Statens lover er av den typen som Kreon og andre feilbarlige mennesker kan lage. Gudenes og slektskapets lover er derimot overlevert fra evigheten av.

Haimon, som er Kreons sønn og Antigones forlovede, står i et sterkere følelsesforhold til Antigone enn til sin far Kreon. Han er også mer fornuftig og sindig enn sin far, noe som vitner om hans sjelelige storhet og gjør han til et verdig "objekt" for den tragiske lidelse. Haimon taler om ubøyelighet på samme negative måte som hans far Kreon tidligere gjorde om Antigone. Både Antigone og Kreon er sta og trassige, og ligner dermed hverandre.

“At one moment Antigone compares herself to a daughter of Tantalus, Niobe (l. 823 ff); chorus immediately warns her not to mix categories, since Niobe was from the race of the gods whereas they are just mortal human beings (l. 834-839). It seems that Antigone is too quick in transgressing boundaries between human beings and gods, between mortals and the dead (treated as immortals). [...] Antigone remains confident (and therefore commits the radical act of suicide as well) until the very end. The only place where she reveals certain insecurity is on lines 923-928: ‘If all this does seem good to the gods, then I through suffering would know within myself that I did wrong ...’ That is the only place where she seems to acknowledge – quite formally – that her point of view might not be the correct one. Antigone makes clear in her last words that she understands her situation as a tragic one: she calls her tomb a bridal chamber (l. 891) and describes

herself as the last and worst among the shadows (l. 895) and as a suffering being (l. 943). However, her confidence about the right way of action remains unshaken. Kreon, on the other hand, stays alive in order to suffer the loss and the tragedy of his situation.” (Jakub Jirsa i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

“The life in the polis has an essential value to all ancient Greeks (cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 322b ff. or Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a3 ff.). Ismene and Haimon acknowledge the role of the personal but at the same time claiming that the personal is not the political. They respect a certain plurality in their lives and make it clear that they can live in the world that is not entirely according to their own views. Ismene and Haimon seem to be aware of what [filosofen Hannah] Arendt calls “boundlessness of action” and therefore of a risk which someone runs when one takes an absolute standpoint (or course of action) without any moderation. In order to avoid these risks, they accept some elementary value pluralism and try to view more options as being possibly the correct and valuable ones. Ismene tries to convince Antigone and Haimon attempts the same with Kreon that other ways of life and other opinions might have some truth. However, Antigone is fully devoted to “the justice that dwells with the gods below” (l. 451) and does not recognize any other values; in this respect she is fully “a law to herself” (*autonomos*, l. 821). Kreon, on the other hand, levels out any differences between private and public. He claims that “he who is a good man in his domestic affairs will be shown just in the city too” (l. 662-663). Charles Segal notes that “Kreon ... lacks a deep awareness of the complexities within the human realm” and the same must also be said of Antigone.” (Jakub Jirsa i <http://journal.aither.eu/data/hostedit2/userfiles/files/cu1.pdf>; lesedato 26.04.17)

“For Antigone innebærer situasjonen en utålelig vanære, *atimía*. [...] Her finnes det ingen uutgrunnelig gåte, ingen sjokkerende sannhet, kun et ufravikelig kall, en uendelig subversiv vilje. Uten å tenke seg om, trosser Antigone makten og begraver sin bror. Som straff dømmes hun til døden og sperres inne i en hule. Igjen svarer hun med ubøyelig trass og tar selv hånd om sin egen død. Og denne ultimate handlingen, selvmordet, rammer til slutt Kreon, som mister både sønn og hustru, som en indirekte, utilsiktet konsekvens av Antigones opprør. [...] For [den tyske filosofen] Hegel var “Antigone” det ypperste verket den klassiske kulturen hadde frembrakt: På eksemplarisk vis illustrerer det den uløselige tragiske konflikten mellom to like berettigede etiske “substanser”, staten og familien. [...] Antigone velger en utvei som ifølge makten ikke finnes. Hun aksepterer ikke rammen som ideologien setter for hva som er mulig. Hun skjærer gjennom de symbolske grensene og trer ut av situasjonen slik den thebanske staten har definert den. Ifølge Ismene er Antigone “forelsket i det umulige”. Søsterens replikk er fryktsom, og muligens ment som en formaning. Men enhver handling som virkelig betyr noe, vil i utgangspunktet fremstå som umulig. Virkelige handlinger hører til unntakene. Ved å handle slik hun gjør, definerer Antigone situasjonen og dens regler på nytt. Derfor representerer Sofokles’ drama et nødvendig, men risikabelt alternativ til den

rådende tesen om at tiden for radikal endring er over, eller utsatt på ubestemt tid.”
(Gisle Selnes i *Klassekampen* 19. oktober 2011 s. 13)

For Haimon er det en tragisk avstand mellom et lykkelig ekteskap og å se at hans tiltenkte brud har begått selvmord. Død og bryllup sammenknyttet metaforisk. Katastrofen utsletter håpet om lykke. Lidelsen overvelder Haimon. Kreons trass faller på få minutter, men da er det allerede for sent. Dette er både tragisk og ironisk. Korsangen etter Kreons “omvendelse” er en påkallelse av og hyllest til guden Dionysos, som bl.a. representerer livskrefter.

Haimon angriper sin far for å drepe han, fordi Kreon har krenket slektens evige lover som holder familiebånd hellig. Kreon får nå selv oppleve hvordan det er når disse lovene er satt ut av spill, med en sønn som ønsker å drepe han. Haimon, som i sin første tale var ydmyk og æret sin far, ønsker nå at faren skal dø.

At Haimon forsøker å drepe sin far, kan altså tolkes som et uttrykk for at Kreon har krenket slektens bånd og lover. Kreon har også oversett familiens bånd gjennom tidligere å “ofre” sin eldste sønn Megareus, og nå gjennom å fordømme Antigone og bli skyld i hennes død. Kreon står tilbake omgitt av lik. Han har unngått å bli drept av sin sønn, men ønsker deretter døden selv å dø.

Antigone nedvurderer slektskapspliktene overfor en framtidig ektemann og barn, men samtidig klager hun over at hun ikke fikk oppleve å ha egen familie. Kanskje hun nedvurderer det for å gjøre tapet og det ikke-realisererte mindre. Det kan spille inn at hun lenge mistenker Haimon for å stå på Kreons side og at hun derfor vil spotte sin forlovede.

Antigone mener at hun dør med ære, og da er døden intet onde. Det var den guddommelige retten til å begraves hun forsvarte med sitt liv, og dermed Polyneikes’ ære. Polyneikes ville aldri funnet hvile i Hades uten Antigones (symbolske) gravleggelse. Dermed kan det oppfattes som at Antigone vil hindre en tragedie ved å gravlegge broren, på bekostning av sitt eget liv. Hun kjemper imot det tragiske, men blir selv offer for det. “Min død er min”, sier Antigone til Ismene. Hun er fundamentalt alene med sitt valg, men står inne for det med sitt liv. Hennes død etterlater mennesker med svakere vilje enn hennes. De “små” går fri og lever videre: vokteren, Ismene, Kreon, koret.

Antigone “har ved flere anledninger blitt oppført som politisk teater. Bertolt Brecht bearbeidet stykket under tittelen “Antigonemodell” (1948) til en kritikk av fascismen. I “The Island” (1973) iscenesatte den sørafrikanske dramatikerer Athol Fugard to svarte fangers framføring av “Antigone” på Robben Island. Griselda Gambaros “Antígona Furiosa” (1986) gir assosiasjoner til de som forsvant under det argentinske militærdiktaturets “skitne krig” mot sivilbefolkningen.”
(*Klassekampen* 19. oktober 2011 s. 13)

“Syria’s civil war has created nearly four million refugees – most have lost family members in the conflict and are living in camps in neighbouring countries. Women in one of these centres have joined a drama project and are finding that an ancient Greek tragedy is proving cathartic. [...] Antigone is the story of a young woman whose city had been ripped apart by civil war. Her dead brother is lying outside the walls and she wants to bury him. But he’d fought on the losing side and his body has been left out to rot as an example. If Antigone defies the king’s decree and buries him, she herself will face death. Feminists love Antigone because it’s about a young woman defying male authority. [...] we all want and need to bury our loved ones. It’s an important part of the grieving process. [...] a group of about 30 Syrian women refugees perform the same play. Greek dramas always have big casts because of the chorus. The actresses range in age from early 20s to late 50s. Most are mothers, many are widows – all dressed in long black abayas with their heads covered, but not their faces. [...] Why do they think this Greek tragedy is still relevant today? Muntaha is the first to answer. “I lived this story,” she says raising her hand to her heart and hitting her chest several times for emphasis. “My brother was detained, taken away by the regime in Syria. I think he is dead and I want to bury him but I can’t. I don’t know where his body is,” she says, her voice full of anguish and her eyes brimming with tears. Antigone of Shatila is named after the refugee camp these women now call home. Camp doesn’t describe it properly. It’s an overcrowded, fetid slum measuring 1 sq km in the centre of Beirut. [...] Antigone in Shatila was produced by a well-known theatre director and a playwright from Damascus, both now refugees. The playwright wrote down the women’s stories and incorporated them into the Greek text. The funding for the project came from Unicef and the British Council. Is it right, I ask the Syrian women cast members, to spend money on drama projects when there are so many other pressing needs such as food, shelter, electricity, schools? Muntaha grabs my hand and holds it tightly. “We need this. Do you know how lonely and depressed all of us were? These women have lost everything, their homes, their husbands, some of them have lost children.” “Before we were introduced to Antigone’s story, we felt alone,” says Fadwa. “Then we realised these tragedies keep happening throughout history and it gave us the courage to speak out. Together we feel stronger and more confident.” ” (Kirsty Lang i <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33362642>; lesedato 22.01.16)

Etter å ha sett *Antigone* i en oppsetning, uttalte tidligere LO-leder Gerd-Liv Valla: “For meg er hun sterk og prinsippfast. Hun kjemper for det det rette, og må betale for det med døden. Men kanskje døden ikke er så farlig for henne? Hun snakker jo om hvordan hun får se sine foreldre og sin bror igjen i dødsriket. Jeg ser at noen har sammenlignet henne med en IS-kriger [dvs. en islamistisk kriger]. Det synes jeg ikke er noen interessant sammenligning. [...] hun er motivert av kjærlighet til broren. Hun er, som hun sier, født til kjærlighet. [...] Vi står sterkest sammen. Men av og til kan det være nødvendig å stå oppreist og si klart ifra hva man mener, selv om ikke alle deler ens oppfatning. Det mest relevante ved *Antigone* i dag er at hun gjør nettopp dette, uten å frykte konsekvensene. [...] Hvis *Antigone* hadde gitt etter,

tror jeg hun hadde fått et dårlig liv. [...] en gammel tragedie som ikke virker så gammel, som viser noen helt grunnleggende verdikonflikter og valg som trolig er gyldige til alle tider.” (tidsskriftet *Plot* i mai 2018 s. 74 og 78)

Den amerikanske TV-serien *Dexter* (2006-13) handler om en seriemorder som dreper for å uskadeliggjøre mordere som ikke blir dømt for sine drap. Dexter vil følge det han oppfatter som et rettferdighetsprinsipp. Han har blitt sammenlignet med Antigone, fordi han gjennom sine handlinger respekterer et ideal om likeverd og rettferdighet (Maurice 2009 s. 112). Selv om Dexters drap er forbudt av samfunnet, får de likevel en slags legitimitet (rettferdigheten i at en person som er skyldig i mord ikke slipper unna).

Andre greske tragedier

De greske tragediene var “knyttet til ritualer og symboler: Tidlig i handlingen marsjerte koret syngende inn på orkesterplassen, og dramaet sluttet med at det forlot orkesteret samme vei som det kom. Skuespillerne brukte masker for å signalisere sine rollefigurer; den tragiske helten var dessuten utmerket ved sitt iøynefallende skotøy. For øvrig var handlingen omhyggelig segmentert i kor-partier (oder) og replikkvekslinger (episoder), enten mellom skuespiller og kor, eller mellom flere skuespillere. Og av sjangerhensyn var ikke bare versemålet, men også språkformen i odene en annen enn i episodene. Med ett unntak – Aiskhylos “*Perseer*” (472 f.Kr.), som er det eldste overleverte dramaet – henter alle de greske tragediene vi kjenner handlingen fra gammelt mytestoff. Det vil i hovedsak si fra de to store sagnkretsene som poetene allerede hadde sunget om i flere århundrer, nemlig den trojanske og den thebanske.” (Gisle Selnes i *Klassekampen* 19. oktober 2011 s. 12)

I Sofokles’ *Elektra* er hovedpersonen datter av Agamemnon og Klytaimnestra, og søster av Orestes. Moren og hennes elsker ydmyker henne etter å ha drept hennes far, men det er et sterkt emosjonelt bånd mellom henne og broren. Bror og søster samarbeider om å drepe moren og morens elsker Aigisthos. Det “etiske” blir underordnet hevnen. Dette vil senere forfølge Orestes: Mordet på moren er grufullt, selv om det er “rettferdig”. Koret vil utjevne, lede inn på en middevei, men for koret er Elektra også et høyt og edelt eksempel på trofasthet og sjelestyrke. Elektras tale kombinerer klage og påkallelse – et ønske om hevn, et rop om gjengjeldelse – og både sorg og håp. Lykke på et feigt og falskt grunnlag (som hos Elektras bror Krysothemis) framstilles som usselt. Det er bedre å leve stolt og ulykkelig.

Sofokles’ *Kvinnene fra Trakhis* har fått sin tittel fra koret, som består av kvinner fra byen Trakhis. Herakles har drept en kentaur, og blodet fra denne skal bli en kjærlighetseliksir. Blant Herakles’ krigsbytte er den unge kvinnen Iole, som er kong Eurytus’ vakre datter, og Herakles’ kone Deianeira vil bruke kentaurblodet som middel til å holde på mannens trofasthet og kjærlighet. Deianeira smører kentaurens blod på en drakt og sender den til sin mann, men drakten kleber seg til

kroppen hans og gir grusomme smerter. Herakles trygler om å få dø. Han vil dø straks, men er ikke fysisk sterk nok til å ta sitt eget liv. Herakles har utført store heltegjerninger, men blir ironisk nok drept ved en feiltagelse. Deianeira begår selvmord. Sønnen Hyllus uttrykker seg bittert om gudenes likegyldighet, men koret minner om at Zevs' vilje må skje uansett. Herakles beholder gjennom desperasjonen og de voldsomme lidelsene en slags verdighet, fordi han ikke glemmer sin status og beholder en slags kontroll. "Heracles realizes that the prophesies about his death have come to pass: he was to be killed by someone who was already dead (namely, Nessus the centaur). As the play draws to a close, a somewhat chastened Heracles begs to be put out of his misery, bidding his soul meet his fate joyfully. He expresses a final wish that Hyllus should marry Iole, which Hyllus (under protest) promises to obey. At the end of the play, Heracles is carried out to be burned alive in order to end his suffering. [...] A major theme of the play is that of loyalty and responsibility to one's family. Each of the main characters grapples with issues of duty and obedience, although none of them performs perfectly, and Heracles' lack of respect for his wife is a prominent point of stress in the play. The plight of women is described with some sensitivity (at least for its time) and the destructive power of love is another theme with which Greek audiences would have been quite familiar." (http://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_sophocles_trachiniae.html; lesedato 29.12.17)

Euripides' *De trojanske kvinnene* handler om kvinnene på den tapende siden etter krigen om Troja (kampene skildres i Homers epos *Iliaden*). Publikum skal oppleve de tapende sin fortvilelse og høre deres klage. Dramaet "was first presented at the City Dionysia of 415 BCE [...] It follows the fates of Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra and the other women of Troy after their city has been sacked, their husbands killed, and their remaining families about to be taken away as slaves [...] a penetrating depiction of the barbaric behaviour of Euripides' own countrymen towards the women and children of the people they subjugated in war. [...] Euripides' tragic commentary on the inhumanity of war challenged the very nature of Greek cultural supremacy. In contrast, the women of Troy, notably Hecuba, appear to shoulder their burdens with nobility and decency. Led by the circumstances they find themselves in, the Trojan women, Hecuba in particular, repeatedly question their faith in the traditional pantheon of gods and their dependence on them, and the futility of expecting wisdom and justice from the gods is expressed again and again. The gods are portrayed in the play as jealous, head-strong and capricious, which would have greatly disturbed the more politically conservative contemporaries of Euripides, and it is perhaps no surprise that the play did not win in the Dionysia dramatic competition, despite its obvious quality. The main Trojan women around whom the play revolves are deliberately portrayed as very unlike each other: the weary, tragic old queen, Hecuba; the young, holy virgin and seer, Cassandra; the proud and noble Andromache; and the beautiful, scheming Helen (not a Trojan by birth, but her view of the events is also presented by Euripides for contrast). [...] Of the two male characters in the play, Menelaus is portrayed as weak and officious, while the Greek herald Talthybius is

represented as a sensitive and decent man caught up in a world of depravity and grief, a much more complex character than the usual anonymous herald of Greek tragedy, and the only Greek in the whole play who is presented with any positive attributes at all.” (Luke Mastin i http://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_euripides_trojan.html; lesedato 15.06.17)

Evripides' *De fønikiske kvinnene* (ca. 411-408 f.Kr.) “henter sit stof fra en ganske fjern fortid; Euripides lader Iokaste i den indledende monolog orientere om forhistorien, inden tragedien går sin skæbnesvangre gang. Fjernt fra os er også koret, som har navngivet stykket; de fønikiske kvinder er krigsbytte og kommenterer begivenhederne fra denne vinkel, som fremmede, som kvinder og som krigens ofre. Desuden indgår der i stykket spådomme og referencer til byen Thebens blodige forhistorie, der også inddrager de græske guder og krigsguden Ares' hævngherrige følelser mod byen. Som tragedie er stykket mærkeligt, fordi det mangler en helt; heltet karakteren er dels spaltet på to rivaliserende brødre, Ødipus' sønner, der strides om byen og slår hinanden ihjel, dels er sorgen, protesten og fornuften placeret hos kvinderne, moderen, fønikerinde-koret og sluttelig datteren Antigone, der træder ud af sit jomfrukammer og op mod sin onkel, kong Kreon. Kernen i plottet er de forgæves forsøg på at afværge det gensidige brodermord, hvor kærlighed går under i en hadefuld magtkamp, der ødelægger både familien og byen. Undervejs strides også forklaringerne, og det er ikke blot brødrene, der foretager dårlige valg. Så fjernt det er, har tilskuere i dag ingen vanskeligheder med at blive draget ind i dette familie- og borgerkrigsdrama, hvor rationalitet og lidenskab, den skæbnesvangre forhistorie og de mulige valg er til stadig konfrontation og afvejning, mens kvinderne ikke blot sørger, men protesterer, raser og handler mod de malstrømme af destruktion, der følger brødrenes færd. Netop spændingen mellem orden, det velordnede plot, som Aristoteles beskriver det, og det truende kaos fra menneskelig dårskab og en uigennemskuelig skæbne, er brændpunktet i den græske tragedie; det er her tilskuerens affekt bindes, i spænding, men jo også i frygt for hvad der sker, og som kunne ske også for mig, fordi det er sandsynligt, og medliden med karaktererne (oftest helten), hvis skæbne er ubønhørligt grim, og ikke kun i kraft af egen dårskab. Brødrenes undergang er deres egen, men også familiens og tæt forbundet med byen og dens historie.” (Richard 2010)

“I *Fønikerinderne* sker opbygningen gennem de stadige fortvivlede og fortvivlende forsøg på at afværge katastrofen; undervejs begår Kreons ene søn selvmord som en offerhandling til byen, der viser sig forgæves og meningsløs. Skruen strammes mellem den strenge kausalitet, skæbnens ubønhørlighed og persongalleriets passionerede handlinger, dårlige valg, protesterne og korets sorg. Det trænger ind mod en kerne, brodermordet, familiens undergang, lidenskabernes rasen [...] De krigeriske brødre gennemfører deres skyldige handlinger, men forløbet minder skæbnesvangert om, hvor vanskeligt det er at afværge en lidenskab, der er blevet sin egen grund. *Fønikerinderne* peger mod kaos og meningsløshed, men rummer også en stærk vilje til at trodse, protestere, sørge [...] I *Fønikerinderne* er det især

Iokaste og Antigone, der kæmper imod den katastrofe, som de indbyrdes kæmpende tvillingebrødre tilsyneladende blindt har kurs med, idet de alt for sent får syn for, at det er den elskede broder, de myrder. Kvinderne er i magtens periferi, men i stykkets centrum, og inkarnerer derigennem radikalt den tragiske trods, alle de kræfter der i tragedien går imod det skæbnesvangre forløb.” (Richard 2010)

I en av Evripides’ siste tragedier, *Bakkantinnene*, triumferer krefter som ligger utenfor menneskets forståelse og kontroll. *Bakkantinnene* (ca. 406 f.Kr.) minner sterkt om et dionysisk kultdrama, men det er uklart om det fra dikterens side var ment som troserklæring eller kritikk. Det avgjørende for handlingen er ikke bare guden Dionysos, men kvinnenens sjeleliv, deres lidenskaper og irrasjonalitet. Kong Pentevs framstilles først som en appollinsk motkraft til den dionysiske rus, men blir deretter en latterlig voyeur.

Dionysos opptrer i *Bakkantinnene*, men oftest i kamouflert skikkelse. Han er vinens, fruktbarhetens og lidenskapens gud, og representerer dermed det mest irrasjonelle i mennesket. Mye av dramaet er knyttet til møtet mellom guden og kong Pentevs. Dionysos ser ut som et menneske, og føres fram for kongen som fange, der han utgir seg for å være en av dyrkerne av Dionysos. Hans replikker til kongen er overlegne og tvetydige. Han vet at intet menneske kan triumfere over han. Han ironiserer over andres uvitenhet. Pentevs framstår i stykket som latterlig, nesten som en komediefigur. I en mellomstilling, ulik den selvrådige (og komiske) Pentevs, er bakkantinnene (også kalt menader), som dyrker Dionysos. De blir grepet av dionysisk raseri og deltar i ekstatiske orgier der til slutt Pentevs blir drept av sin egen mor. Moren spidder sin sønns avrevne hode på en thyrsos-stav og bærer det i triumf. Pentevs’ hode på staven blir det grusomme synet som moren får se når hun våkner opp fra sin rus. Skuespillet viser at mennesket taper mot det guddommelige. Dionysos viser seg som en demonisk kraft og en grusom gud.

“Euripides gives the first speech of his play to the god himself. Dionysus interweaves autobiography with motive. He has returned to his birthplace, Cadmeian Thebes, ostensibly to avenge his mother’s death. Semele lay with Zeus, he in disguise, and boasted to her sisters of her liaison. They disbelieved and mocked her, suggesting that the so-called god should prove his status by self-revelation in his true form, which in the Chief Olympian’s case would be the lightning-bolt. Semele used feminine wiles to put Zeus in a deadly (to her) double-bind. When the divine effulgence consumes Semele, at least part of the blame falls on her girlish narcissism and inanity; but the rivalry of the sisters and the division of the family into factions figure as important details, too. In the moral entanglement that Dionysus imputes to these events guilt spreads everywhere – and any vengeance that justifies itself based on that guilt must therefore strike everywhere. Guilt becomes irrelevant. Dionysus presents himself, not as the rectifier of a particular or differentiable offense, but as the power of general dissolution whose hatred extends to any manifestation of order, understood as an

offense against the god wherever it prevails.” (Thomas Bertonneau i <https://voegelinview.com/living-out-the-bacchae-america-burns/>; lesedato 07.09.21)

“*Lysios*, one of the epithets that bedeck Dionysus, means “he who breaks things up.” Order itself, the order of the family or of the city, affronts the mob and must atone. Dionysus in his opening monologue speaks these lines (Davie’s translation): “I have spurred those same sisters to madness and driven them in distraction from their houses”; but it will only suffice that, “all the female seed of Cadmus’ people, all the women folk, I have caused to quit their homes in frenzy.” Dionysus likewise turns his ire on his cousin by maternal descent, “Pentheus,” grandson of Cadmus and current King of Thebes, “who makes war on divinity in my person by thrusting me away from his sacrifices and making no mention of me in his prayers.” ” (Thomas Bertonneau i <https://voegelinview.com/living-out-the-bacchae-america-burns/>; lesedato 07.09.21)

Det kan stilles spørsmål om *Bakkantinnene* underbygger troen på Dionysos eller om dramaet kritiserer kulten rundt han som leder til en konges død og en mors sorg. Uansett gir denne tragedien innsikt i menneskers sjeleliv. Lidenskap står mot rasjonalitet, vanviddsrus mot psykisk balanse, ekstase mot kontroll, og de kvinnelige dionysosdyrkerne mot den mannlige kongen. Dionysos er immanent, dvs. han virker i både naturen og i menneskets sjel, også i Pentevs, som blir “forført” av den guddommelige kraften. Dionysos lurer den apollinske Pentevs inn i det dionysiske ved tilværelsen (jf. Nietzsches distinksjon). Pentevs er svak overfor de ville orgiene med de ustyrlige kvinnene som han offisielt vil nedkjempe, og lar seg lede til å betrakte dem. Evripides lar ofte skuespillene avsluttes med *deus ex machina*, og det skjer også her. Dionysos står til slutt på scenen og hevder at alt publikum har sett følger Zevs’ vilje. Dionysos har fordi han er en gud makt til alt, og bakkantinnekorset synger derfor til slutt til hans ære.

“I tragedierne træder mennesket ind på scenen og mister sin menneskelighed, som *Bacchantinderne* hos Euripides, hvor Dionysos hævner dem, der fornægter ham og deres egen forbindelse til det dyriske. Mennesket er også køn, rus, krop og passion, og den viden er en del af tragediernes som en stadig modpol til det ophøjede apollinske, som de klassiske tragedier også fejrer. Tragedierne peger på det umulige og nødvendige i at rumme begge dele. I rusen intensiveres livsfølelsen, men den blænder også for rusens, f.eks. blodrusens, kurs mod udslettelsen. I den ophøjede helts ædle forsøg på transcendens, stræben mod indsigt og ædel handling hylder vi menneskets kulturskabende potentiale, men er blinde for begrænsningen; at fejl ikke blot er mulige, men uundgåelige, at mennesket ikke er en gud.” (Richard 2010)

Evripides’ *Medea* har som flere av hans skuespill en kvinnelig protagonist. For å hjelpe Jason svikter Medea sitt hjemland, og sammen med sine to barn drar hun og Jason som flyktninger til Korint, der kong Kreon hersker. Men her sviker Jason henne, og gifter seg med Kreons datter. Medea bestemmer seg for å ta den mest

grusomme hevn hun kan tenke ut. Før Medea dreper sine barn sier hun blant annet dette i en monolog: “I know indeed what evil I intend to do; but stronger than my deliberations [*bouleumata*] is my *thymos* [what makes me move], which is the cause of the greatest evils among mortals” (oversatt av H. Arendt). *Thymos* er hennes irrasjonelle jeg, og fungerer som Evripides sin avvisning av filosofen Sokrates overbevisning av at onde handlinger bare skyldes uvitenhet (M. I. Finley gjengitt fra Müller 1995 s. 61).

“Medea er en prinsesse med trolldomsevner som flykter fra sitt hjemland ved Svartehavet for å gifte seg og leve sammen med den greske helten Jason. Etter at de har søkt tilflukt i Korint sammen med sine to sønner, forelsker imidlertid Jason seg i den korintiske kongens datter og bryter med Medea, som opplever dette som en uopprettelig krenkelse og blir fra seg av sjalusi. Til slutt hevner hun seg ved å ta livet av deres barn, da dette er den grusomste måten hun kan ramme Jason på. Juridisk er nemlig sønnene mer hans enn hennes. Men hvor patriarkalsk det greske samfunnet enn var, tillot det like fullt tragedier der kvinnen i all offentlighet kunne skrike ut den urettferdigheten hun ble utsatt for. “For ublu medgift må hun kjøpe seg en mann”, sier Medea i en av sine monologer, “og det som verre er, den husband hun har fått, / er den som fritt kan råde over hennes kropp. / Da er det store spørsmål: Har hun fått til mann / en slyngel eller hedersmann? Ti kvinner kan / ei skilles uten skam og ei gå fra sin mann.” Men mannen kan altså forlate sin hustru. Like fullt finnes det en klangbunn for Medeas klage og pine, sjalusi og hevn i det urettferdige samfunnet hun lever i. Hun skriker følgelig ikke ut sin smerte for døve ører. Det er selvfølgelig av betydning at Medea er av høy byrd, og at hun derfor har desto større grunn til ikke å godta å bli krenket. Hennes sosiale status bidrar også til at hennes sjalusi, lidelse og hat møtes med allmenn forståelse, representert ved for eksempel athenerkongen Aigevs, som blir hennes andre ektemann – etter at hun i sjalusi har drept både Jasons nye hustru, hennes far (kongen i Korint), og sine egne barn med Jason. I dag synes en lignende klangbunn for sjalusis rettmessighet og smertefullhet å være fraværende, fordi den nå i så stor grad er individualisert, ja, privatisert, og fordi den i tillegg blir så patologisert. Begreper som ære, verdighet, ydmykelse og krenkelse spiller heller ikke den samme rollen i liberale demokratier som i den greske antikken, selv om de så absolutt fremdeles er virksomme.” (Per Buvik i *Morgenbladet* 19.–25. august 2016 s. 29)

I *Alkestis* av Evripides står halvguden Herakles fram som en “*deus ex machina*” allerede halvveis i skuespillet og griper inn i handlingen ved å hente Alkestis tilbake fra dødsriket. Til dette kommenterer Hans-Dieter Gelfert: “Skuffede forhåpninger og oppnåelse av det som ikke lenger håpes på, synes å være den tematiske grunnfiguren i Evripides’ tragedier.” (1995 s. 40) Hos Evripides har ikke gudene moralsk sett rett, men de har makten, og menneskene er lidende utlevert til det som framstår som tilfældigheter. Og alle håp om redning leder til skuffelse. Først når et menneske har oppgitt håpet, kan det plutselig dukke opp en reddende gud som vender om på hendelsene like tilfældig som ulykken gjorde (Gelfert 1995

s. 41). “Hos Evripides synes menneskene å leve i en verden som vi i dag ville kalt absurd. De havner tilfeldig og for det meste skyldløst inne i et maskineri som både de menneskelige makthaverne og til og med gudene bidrar til, men som ikke synes å ha noen moralsk orden ved seg.” (Gelfert 1995 s. 39)

Hos Evripides er det ingen tydelige kriterier for hva som er godt og ondt. I *Hippolytos* er tittelhelten en mann med streng moral, og nettopp derfor blir han offer for Afrodites hat (Gelfert 1995 s. 40). I *Herakles* blir helten så sinnsforvirret på grunn av guders manipulering at han dreper sin kone og sine egne barn.

Evripides' *Hippolytos* ble første gang oppført i 428 f.Kr. I likhet med flere andre av hans tragedier, kommer hovedpoenget med dramaets historie fram allerede i stykkets prolog. Det sentrale er to krefter som står mot hverandre, og som trekker personene i forskjellige retninger. Denne motsetningen representeres av gudinnene Artemis og Afrodite. Evripides har antakelig oppfattet Artemis og Afrodite som psykiske krefter som bør være i balanse for at et menneske skal ha et harmonisk liv. Disse to gudinnene kan altså tolkes som immanente krefter i menneskene. Jaktgudinnen Artemis representerer i skuespillet en streng overholdelse av sømmelighet, og jomfruelighet, Afrodite det motsatte. I stykket blir dronning Fedra et medium for Afrodites gudekraft, en hjelpeløs brikke i denne gudinnens plan. Prins Hippolytos dyrker Artemis, med en spesielt dyp respekt for denne gudinnen. Den som ærer én av gudene, kan vanskelig gjøre like mye ære på de andre gudene, og dette medfører fare. Hippolytos er ensidig og selvgod, og har dermed hybrisk. Kjærlighetsgudinnen Afrodite forlanger å bli dyrket med ærefrykt, og vil først og fremst ramme Hippolytos fordi han avskyr de livskreftene hun representerer. Fordi han er asketisk, skal han tilintetgjøres. Hippolytos har tilsynelatende selvkontroll, men når han til slutt mister kontrollen over sine hester, blir det hans undergang.

Fedra er – som så mange av kvinnene hos Evripides – en splittet karakter, med en dyp motsetning i seg. Etter hvert klarer hun ikke å undertrykke sin lidenskap for sin stesønn Hippolytos eller lytte til sin fornuft og følge sin dømmekraft. Det blir umulig for henne å ta et moralsk og rasjonelt valg. Afrodite (Eros) tar over kontrollen. Hippolytos sverger å tie om Fedras lidenskap overfor han da han får vite om den, og holder sitt løfte. Han gjør et bevisst, etisk valg og holder fast ved dette valget selv om han blir forbannet av sin far.

Ammen, Fedras tjener, har en pragmatisk og opportunistisk moral. Hun er en slags sofist, som vinner makt gjennom sin tale. Hun fungerer som en karikatur av en taler som vinner kun gjennom sine ord. Kong Tesevs er en annen person som svikter moralsk. Han er handlingsmenneske og politiker, og handler uten refleksjon når han kommer med forbannelsen av sønnen og ønsker hans død.

Det ligger en ironi i at Artemis i avslutningen taler svært likt Afrodite, når hun sier: “Leave it at that, Hippolytus. Because even in the darkness of the earth where you are buried, Aphrodite’s anger which has broken over you, your chastity and virtue

will be rewarded by many and great honours. I, personally, will see that justice will be granted to you with these unerring arrows of mine, by shooting them at another mortal, whoever is the dearest to her. And to you, you poor, suffering man, for these pains you have endured, I shall grant you the highest honours in the city of Troezen. Unmarried girls will cut their hair before their wedding and through the passage of many years, you will harvest an abundance of tears of their grief, for you. Virgins will cherish you for ever and they will sing about you and keep the memory of Phaedra's love for you alive. [...] I urge you not to hate your father because you know well Fate by which you were destroyed.” (her sitert fra <https://bacchicstage.wordpress.com/euripides/hippolytus/>; oversatt av George Theodoridis; lesedato 04.04.17) Artemis gir Tesevs en slags syndsforlatelse ved å uttrykke at han ikke var ansvarlig for sønnens død – selv om kongen gjorde en stor feil – fordi gudene allerede hadde bestemt at Hippolytos skulle dø.

Hippolytus handler om illusjoner og begrensninger i menneskelivet. Et menneske kan avlegge eder og holde dem, og det viser storhet. Men menneskene befinner seg ofte i et moralsk kaos. Konflikten er mellom *nomos* (lov, orden, harmoni) og *physis* (natur, kaos). Fedra prøver å holde på sin selvrespekt, men kan ikke stå imot kreftene som kommer både utenfra (Afrodite) og innenfra (hennes sjeleliv). Det undertrykte i mennesket skaper frykt. Afrodites prosjekt fullbyrdes gjennom menneskenes egne handlinger og gjennom deres karakteregenskaper. Dette er en dyp ironi i tragedien. Alle menneskelige handlinger ender med frustrasjon, og ofte med død. Evripides framstår som en mann med stor psykologisk innsikt, men det er ikke en harmonisk menneskepsyke han viser. Kaoskrefter råder i tilværelsen. De ukontrollerte kreftene ødelegger eksistensen for personene vi ser på scenen.

En ekkyklema var en slags plattform som kunne rulles inn på scenen i det greske teatret for å vise liket til en person som hadde dødd utenfor scenen, f.eks. Hippolytos etter å ha blitt drept av hestene sine da de ble skremt av havoksen. Selve dødsscenen blir kun fortalt, ikke vist, men publikum kan se resultatet: en ung manns døde kropp (spilt av en skuespiller).

Evripides' *Hekabe* er “en av hans mange rystende tragedier fra historien om grekerens felttog mot Troja. Hekabe er dronningen av Troja som ved krigens slutt er grekernes fange. Av hennes utallige barn er det bare tre igjen, men også de tas fra henne på blodigste vis. Kjernen i Evripides' tragedie er grekernes ofring av datteren Polyksena (som gjenferdet av den nylig døde Akilles vil ha med seg til underverdenen), Hekabes grusomme hevn mot dem som har tatt livet av sønnen Polydoros, og hennes påfølgende fall fra det menneskelige. (I noen versjoner av myten blir hun etter hevnen forvandlet til en hund.) Mens Polyksena dør med all verdighet i behold, hevner Hekabe seg “på menneskelivet selv og på selve grunnlaget for verdens verdier”, som [Martha C.] Nussbaum formulerer det. Hekabe har betalt den høyeste pris for å ha elsket andre og gitt seg verden tillitsfullt i vold, men verken Evripides eller Aristoteles ser noen alternativer til de dyder som

har fått styre den lykkelige delen av hennes liv.” (Erik Bjerck Hagen i *Morgenbladet* 18. – 31. mars 2016 s. 66)

“Euripides, through the familiar imagery of the old gods, reveals the irresponsible, meaningless or even malevolent forces that overbear man’s valour. His gods, it is true, are more powerful than man, but certain of them are less noble, and from them comes the frustration which annuls creation, confuses valour, and cripples wisdom. Even in those plays where this interpretation is less clearly defined, the perception of pain and the poet’s sympathy with it outweigh all else. And Euripides’ nearest approach to a vindication of life’s processes would appear to be Hecuba’s in *The Troades*, where she justifies the sufferings of Troy as the raw material of art.” (Una Ellis-Fermor i Leech 1964 s. 109)

“A wholly unpredictable world would be the ruin of our liberty, not the ground of it. Indeed, this would not be a bad description of some Euripidean tragedy, portraying as it does a world so arbitrary and undecidable that the very notion of responsible agency is grievously undermined.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 106)

Euripides bruker ofte “stikomyti”, dvs. replikker som består av én linje, og som gir et høyt tempo i dialogen, med dramatisk tilspissing, ofte som en “verbal krigføring”.

I Sofokles’ tragedie *Ajax* (eller *Aias*) møter vi den homeriske helten Ajax etter krigen. “The wrongs exist only in Ajax’s own mind. He has received what is to him a shattering reverse and a deadly insult, and he cannot accommodate himself to it: his answer is to attempt a treacherous and frantic murder, the nemesis of his obstinate pride.” (Kitto 1986 s. 122) To ganger i dramaet sier en budbærer “that Ajax is unable [... to] ‘think human thoughts’, to recognize the limitations of humanity and to behave accordingly. [...] Athena says: ‘One single day can overthrow or raise up anything human’ ([verselinje] 131). Ajax himself (679-83) reflects that neither friendship nor enmity endure, and he is echoed in this by Odysseus (1359).” (Kitto 1986 s. 123) I stykket taler Tecmessa i verselinjene 485ff. “of the blind stroke of fate [...] which destroyed her fortunes; and she lets us see how she faced it.” (Kitto 1986 s. 124)

Ajax torturerer dyr som han tror er mennesker, og roser i sin forblindelse seg selv. Når forvillelsen er over, blir smerten overført fra dyrene til han selv. Han blir selv den pinte og lidende, som identifiserer seg med sine egne ofre. Ajax’ død river til slutt hans nærmeste med seg i ulykken. Hans elskerinne Tecmessa sier at selv en uvenn må bli grepet av Ajax’ død, dvs. at den tragiske katastrofen overskrider de moralske aspektene ved hans handlinger. Også Odysseus innser dette. Koret avslutter med sin livsvisdom: Tilværelsen er fundamentalt usikker.

“I det ene øyeblikket vil han [Ajax] piske andre til blodet renner, i det neste vil han selv bli avlivet, før han skriker at han var den modigste og aldri mistet fatningen, så

hvorfor er livet blitt en vits nå etterpå? Ajax, en av mytenes aller største krigere, oppfører seg som en lærebok i det man i dag ville kalle posttraumatisk stresslidelse. [...] I 2010 [men første gang i 2008] reiste teatergruppen Theater of War rundt til 50 militære installasjoner [el. institusjoner] med opplesninger [...] fra Sofokles' stykker om Filoktetes og den ovennevnte, traumatiserte Ajax." (*Morgenbladet* 14.–20. januar 2011 s. 11) Ajax torturerer dyr i stedet for (som han tror) mennesker – senere identifiserer han seg med sine ofre. Sofokles hadde selv vært offiser i krig. "Theater of War Productions, which presents readings of ancient plays to military communities across the U.S., will be staging readings of Sophocles' "Ajax" on Friday and Saturday [...]. The event, which will include a panel discussion with audience participation [...]. Over the past year, Theater of War has delivered more than 100 performances at more than 50 military sites throughout the U.S. and Europe. Nearly 25,000 service members and veterans of every rank, from high-level Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs officials to Special Forces and Army and Marine Infantry, have attended the performances." (<http://wlunews.wordpress.com/2011/02/03/theater-of-war-2/>; lesedato 15.02.11)

"New York Times leverer en forunderlig nyhet: Pentagon skal bruke 3,7 millioner dollar på å la den uavhengige teatertruppen *Theater of War* reise rundt og sette opp stykker av Sofokles på amerikanske militærbaser. For eksempel stykket *Aias*: Hovedpersonen planlegger å myrde en gresk general, men det ender med at han slakter husdyr og tar selvmord. Soldatene får også med seg *Filoktetes*, der konspirerende greske generaler prøver å lure helten til å angripe Troya. Teatertruppens leder, Bryan Doerries, beskriver oppsetningene som et "*public health project*". Hensikten er å hjelpe militære og deres familier til bedre å møte stigmatiserende holdninger og psykologiske problemer. For selv historiens modigste helter sliter mentalt." (*Morgenbladet* 13.–19. november 2009 s. 24)

En veteran fra Vietnam-krigen sa om sine traumer: "I do not want to take drugs for my nightmares because I must remain a memorial to my dead friends" (sitert fra <http://www.lisazunshine.net/>; lesedato 10.03.16).

Shakespeare

"[I]n Greek tragedy the principal stress is on moral issues, as defined by the actions of the characters; in Shakespearean tragedy the characters do not so much define the issues as contribute to their creation." (Brereton 1968 s. 95)

Når borgerne i Shakespeares Storbritannia så tragiske helter på scenen, beundret de deres storhet og ønsket å være beskyttet av en slik mektig hersker, men følte også slike herskere som trusler – en ambivalens som bidro til tragediesjangerens blomstring (Gelfert 1995 s. 79). Tragedier oppstår ifølge en tysk forsker i en "tragisk bruddsone", der "kontinentalplatene" av vertikal og horisontal tenkning støter mot hverandre" (Gelfert 1995 s. 85). Gelfert sikter her til folkets vertikale

lengsel etter en sterk autoritet og folkets horisontale krav på borgerlige rettigheter og friheter – som altså støter sammen.

“The essence of Shakespeare’s tragedies is the expression of one of the great paradoxes of life. We might call it the paradox of disappointment. Defeat, shattered hopes, and ultimately death face us all as human beings. They are very real, but somehow we have the intuitive feeling that they are out of place. They seem to be intruders into life. Tragic literature confronts us afresh with this paradox and we become fascinated by it. [...] Let us consider several characteristics common to Shakespeare’s four great tragedies. Each play is especially concerned with one central figure or tragic protagonist. Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, and Macbeth are the protagonists of their respective plays. It is significant that each is the story of a man because the paradox of tragedy in real life is experienced mostly by individual men. Thus as we identify ourselves with the protagonist the sense of tragedy is aroused in us. The protagonist is therefore portrayed vividly as a believable human being. Traits may include strength of character as in Othello, intelligence and cleverness as in Hamlet, foolish vanity as in King Lear, and even treachery as in Macbeth. We are led to identify ourselves with the protagonist as in Hamlet’s soliloquies we share the thoughts that only Hamlet knows. Similarly in Macbeth we find ourselves let in on the plot to murder Duncan and we hear the prophecies that motivate Macbeth. Such characterization of the central figures is well suited to expressing tragedy. Each play contains an element of hope that is disappointed or ambition that is frustrated. Here is the acting out of the disappointment paradox. Macbeth is the most straightforward example. Macbeth murders Duncan with the assurance of good reward. He then enters battle with what again seems to be positive assurance. Only when it is too late does he realize that he is being led to his destruction.” (David Chandler i <http://www.lcurve.org/writings/Tragedy.htm>; lesedato 06.04.16) “[T]he tragic figure or figures shall sense a point of no return.” (Leech 1969 s. 68)

“Alle hans tragiske helter faller på grunn av en lidenskap som gjennom sin styrke på den ene siden gjør helten stor, men på den andre siden gjør han skyldig overfor fornuften. Hos Macbeth er det ærgjerrighet, hos Othello sjalusi, hos Coriolanus stolthet, hos Antonius forblindet kjærlighet, hos kong Lear hissighet og såret forfengelighet. Kun Hamlet holder inntil fjerde akt fast på fornuften, men som i sin tur er grunnen til at han ikke kan handle. Men i femte akt blir også for han fornuftens bastion overstrømmet av lidenskap, da han i Ophelias grav lar seg rive med til kamp mot hennes bror Laertes og dermed lar seg lokke i fellen. [...] Stadig dukker fornuften opp som den moralske herredømmeinstansen, mens lidenskapene, som i middelalderen ble oppfattet som dødssynder, hos han [Shakespeare] framtrer som noe som besverger fram faren for det tragiske fallet, men samtidig viser menneskelig storhet og eksistensfylde. Her ser vi begynnelsen på nytidens horisontaliseringsprosess, der på den ene siden den guddommelige fornufts hierarki *ennå* blir anerkjent, på den andre siden blir individets lidenskaper *allerede* gitt den

samme verdi, slik at begge sidene står mot hverandre som to fiendtlige leire i menneskets indre.” (Gelfert 2010 s. 142)

Kong Lear “have trespassed beyond the limits of humanity and entered that hellish realm of horror and psychosis which the ancient Greeks call *ate*.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 283)

Hamlet mangler lidenskap, mens andre av Shakespeares tragediehelter blir overstrømmet av ukontrollerbar lidenskap som ødelegger deres liv (Gelfert 1995 s. 58-59). Kun mot slutten kobler Hamlet ut fornuften og blir et offer for lidenskapen, når han hører Laertes’ klage over sin søster Ophelias død ved hennes grav.

I en Shakespeare-tragedie skal publikum både få sympati for den fremragende helten (en vertikal akse, fordi helten står over publikum i menneskelig “verdi”) og oppleve heltens fall og få en katarsis-opplevelse av dette (en horisontal akse). Det er i ferd med å skje en sosial reorientering fra vertikale hierarkier til en horisontal verdi-akse, i sin ytterste konsekvens fra aristokrati til demokrati, en sosial omkalfatring som speiles i tragedienes skakende hendelser (Gelfert 2010 s. 143).

Romeo and Juliet regnes som den første romantiske tragedien, altså der en kjærlighetshistorie er helt sentral i handlingen. Handlingen foregår i Verona i det nordøstlige Italia (hele 17 av Shakespeares skuespill har handling i Italia). I *Romeo and Juliet* er hver av de sentrale personene “for svak for sine egne følelser i øyeblikket, med sterk hang til å la forbigående stemninger munne ut i handling, og vill hast med å gjennomføre sine uoverlagte tiltak.” (Haaland 1982 s. 14)

Slutten av *Romeo and Juliet* har fått noen tilskuere og litteraturkritikere til å spørre seg om den representerer en slags seier – “the play’s fundamental question [...] is its ending frustration or fulfilment?” (Lerner 1989 s. 17) De to unges død er en “Liebestod”, altså død som følge av intens kjærlighet. “Shakespeare ensures that our final emotion is neither the satisfaction we should feel in the lovers’ death if the play were a simple expression of the *Liebestod* theme, nor the dismay of seeing two lives thwarted and destroyed by vicious fates, but a tragic equilibrium which includes and transcends both these feelings.” (Lerner 1989 s. 32)

“In Shakespearean tragedy, the hero is always a man of outstanding social status. He may be a king (as in *King Lear* and *Julius Caesar*), a prince (as in *Hamlet*), and a very high official (as in *Othello* and *Macbeth*) etc. [...] These heroes undergo a series of sufferings and hardships and torture. In the early tragedies, the form of this suffering is physical but in the later stages, it is not merely physical torture but mental upheaval which sways and rocks them. The hero, under the stress of these sufferings, appears shaken in spite of his greatness and heroic capacity for suffering. Hamlet by his mental torture is virtually laid on the rock. Othello experiences a tempest in his very soul. Lear turns mad. Macbeth loses all interest in life and is obliged to characterize it as “A tale told by an idiot, / Full of sound and

fury, signifying nothing.” [...] There is a certain tragic flaw in the character of the hero, which Aristotle termed as “Hamartia” and which provides the ground for the calamity which eventually overwhelms him. Bradley observes: ‘Lear’s tragedy is the tragedy of dotage and short-sightedness, Othello’s that of credulity, Hamlet’s that of indecision, Macbeth’s that of ambition, Antony’s that of neglect of duty and so on’. In Shakespeare, we find a variety of tragic flaws, while in Marlowe’s tragedies, the Hamartia is common and that is “Uncontrolled Ambition”. [...] The conflict is of two kinds, both of which generally go on simultaneously in Shakespearean tragedy. Antony’s mind is torn between the opposite pulls of love and duty; Macbeth’s between those of ambition and duty. In *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard II*, the conflict is almost entirely external. A lot of bloodshed is generally found in Shakespearean tragedy.” (Shuaib Asghar i <http://shuaib6727.blogspot.no/2013/08/shakespearean-tragedy-shakespeare-as.html>; lesedato 04.05.16)

“Chance plays an important role in the tragedy of the hero. In *Romeo and Juliet* it is by chance that the hero does not get the Friar’s message about the potion, and the heroine does not awake from her long sleep a little earlier. In *Hamlet* it was a chance that Hamlet’s ship was attacked by the pirates and he was back in Denmark to face the tragic end. Some people think that the introducing the element of chance is to manipulate the action of the play to suit one’s own purposes. But this is not correct because chance or accident is as much of a real life as any normal happening. But where Shakespeare has proved superior to many other playwrights is that he keeps the role of chance within the probable limits. He does not allow even chance or accident to take more importance than the character of the hero. [...] Shakespeare’s plays give a large place to the supernatural. This is because he wrote for an audience which had a liking for the fabulous and the marvelous. There are Witches in *Macbeth*, Ghost in *Hamlet*, Hautboy music in *Antony and Cleopatra*. These have a close relation with the abnormal conditions of minds of the protagonists. Hamlet’s mobility of mind is connected with the appearance of [the] ghost in the first act and in mother’s closet. Macbeth’s lust for power is aroused by the witches.” (Shuaib Asghar i <http://shuaib6727.blogspot.no/2013/08/shakespearean-tragedy-shakespeare-as.html>; lesedato 04.05.16)

“Hamlet also has a central, well considered ambition, but its result is not so straightforward. Hamlet wants to avenge his father’s murder, but the whole matter is so entangled with every thing from petty court rivalries to national politics that his success is accompanied by disaster.

And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall’n on the inventors’ heads. (*Hamlet*, V ii)

Finally, we should consider a very prominent part of all four tragedies: death to the protagonist. Death is important in expressing tragedy because it is at the very heart of the paradox of disappointment. For secular man and even for many religious men death brings final conclusive disillusionment to every meaningful hope. It is the embodiment of defeat. In the tragedies under consideration, death is not used as an extreme expression of human suffering. Rather it is used symbolically to emphasize the disappointment and defeat that accompany it. The symbolic character of death is especially notable in Othello's suicide. Iago's treachery caused several other deaths but not Othello's. Othello's suicide is a response to his despair. The tragedy in Hamlet is not specifically Hamlet's death, but the overall miscalculation and unnecessary bloodshed. Hamlet's own death merely confirms the disaster. We have said that tragedy deals with one of the great paradoxes of life. It does not propose a solution to the paradox. It does not tell us that life is meaningful in spite of defeat and disappointment, nor does it point to despair and proclaim the worthlessness of our hopes. Rather it affirms the paradox and challenges us with it." (David Chandler i <http://www.lcurve.org/writings/Tragedy.htm>; lesedato 06.04.16)

"Only Hamlet can act – and we return to his double-bind which can be stated in this way. If the ghost is from heaven and speaks truly, Hamlet should act; if the ghost is from hell and is deceiving Hamlet, Hamlet's actions may damn his own soul forever. The double-bind is clear at this point." (Bates L. Hoffer i <https://www-s3-live.kent.edu/s3fs-root/s3fs-public/file/11-Bates-L.-Hoffer.pdf>; lesedato 19.08.20)

"Desdemona, as she appears in relation to Othello, is not so much individual woman as the Divinity of love. Iago is cynicism incarnate. He stands for a 'devil-world', unlimited, formless, negative. He is the spirit of denial of all romantic values." (Maud Bodkin i Lerner 1989 s. 102) Fra skurkens perspektiv viser skuespillet "the Machiavellian interest in plots for their own sake, which Iago could not resist and allowed to destroy him." (William Empson i Lerner 1989 s. 111)

Othello og Desdemona er nesten *for* lykkelige, og i dette ligger det en trussel. "The words of Othello greeting Desdemona communicate the experience of that high rapture which in a tragic world brings fear. We feel a poise of the spirit like that of the sun at its zenith, or of the wheel of fate, before the downward plunge. [...] To the menace immanent in the form of the ecstatic moment substantial shape is given in the figure of Iago. [...] the shadowing fear that lies in excess of happiness" (Maud Bodkin i Lerner 1989 s. 100-101). "There is terrible truth in the reflection that if a man is wedded to his fantasy of woman as the steadfast hiding-place of his heart, the fountain whence his current flows, so that he grows frantic and blind with passion at the thought of the actual woman he has married as a creature of natural varying impulse – then he lies at the mercy of life's chances, and of his own secret fears and suspicions." (Maud Bodkin i Lerner 1989 s. 103)

“When Othello wagers, ‘My life upon her faith!’ (I. 3. 295), both terms ironically come true: she is faithful, and he pays with his life.” (R. B. Heilman i Lerner 1989 s. 121)

Jago er “i slekt med sjalusionen til Othello. I tillegg blir han et menneske uten tilknytning til andre, siden alle hans verdier blir samlet rundt hans egen vilje alene. [...] Andre teller bare som redskap for hans personlige formål. [...] en inntrengende studie over Machiavellis statsmannskunst overført på privatlivet” (Haaland 1982 s. 28-29).

“Iago may be considered ‘consubstantial’ with Othello in that he represents the principles of jealousy implicit in Othello’s delight in Desdemona as a private spiritual possession. Iago, to arouse Othello, must talk a language that Othello knows as well as he, a language implicit in the nature of Othello’s love as the idealization of his private property in Desdemona. This language is the dialectical opposite of Othello’s; but it so thoroughly shares a common ground with Othello’s language that its insinuations are never for one moment irrelevant to Othello’s thinking. Iago must be cautious in leading Othello to believe them as *true*: but Othello never for a moment doubts them as *values*.” (Kenneth Burke sitert fra Bygrave 1993 s. 99)

“What then were the real moving forces of Iago’s action? [...] Let us remember especially the keen sense of superiority, the contempt of others, the sensitiveness to everything which wounds these feelings, the spite against goodness in men as a thing not only stupid but, both in its nature and by its success, contrary to Iago’s nature and irritating to his pride. Let us remember in addition the annoyance of having always to play a part, the consciousness of exceptional but unused ingenuity and address, the enjoyment of action, and the absence of fear.” (A. C. Bradley i Lerner 1989 s. 94)

“The Iagos of this world cannot bear the ponderous, overblown rhetoric of the Othellos. They suspect that behind this pompous facade lurks some utter vacuity, some unimaginably dreadful non-being, and their sadistic delight is to expose it for what it is.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 261)

“Iago did not clearly understand what was moving his desire; though he tried to give himself reasons for his action, even those that had some reality made but a small part of the motive force; one may almost say they were no more than the turning of the handle which admits the driving power into the machine. Only once does he appear to see something of the truth. It is when he uses the phrase ‘to *plume up my will* in double knavery’. To ‘plume up the will’, to heighten the sense of power or superiority – this seems to be the unconscious motive of many acts of cruelty which evidently do not spring chiefly from ill-will, and which therefore puzzle and sometimes horrify us most. It is often this that makes a man bully the wife or children of whom he is fond.” (A. C. Bradley i Lerner 1989 s. 95)

“The boy who torments another boy, as we say, ‘for no reason’, or who without any hatred for frogs tortures a frog, is pleased with his victim’s pain, not from any disinterested love of evil or pleasure in pain, but mainly because this pain is the unmistakable proof of his own power over his victim. So it is with Iago. His thwarted sense of superiority wants satisfaction. What fuller satisfaction could it find than the consciousness that he is the master of the General who has undervalued him and of the rival who has been preferred to him; that these worthy people, who are so successful and popular and stupid, are mere puppets in his hands, but living puppets, who at the motion of his finger must contort themselves in agony while all time they believe that he is their one true friend and comforter? It must have been an ecstasy of bliss to him. And this, granted a most abnormal deadness of human feeling, is, however horrible, perfectly intelligible. There is no mystery in the psychology of Iago; the mystery lies in a further question, which the drama has not to answer, the question why such a being should exist.” (A. C. Bradley i Lerner 1989 s. 95-96)

“Iago’s longing to satisfy the sense of power is, I think, the strongest of the forces that drive him on. But there are two others to be noticed. One is the pleasure in an action very difficult and perilous and, therefore, intensely exciting. This action sets all his powers on the strain. He feels the delight of one who executes successfully a feat thoroughly congenial to his special aptitude, and only just within his compass; and, as he is fearless by nature, the fact that a single slip will cost him his life only increases his pleasure. His exhilaration breaks out in the ghastly words with which he greets the sunrise after the night of the drunken tumult which has led to Cassio’s disgrace: ‘By the mass, ‘tis morning. Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.’ ” (A. C. Bradley i Lerner 1989 s. 96)

Jago “ ‘is,’ says [William] Hazlitt, ‘an amateur of tragedy in real life; and, instead of employing his invention on imaginary characters or long-forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more dangerous course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connexions, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution.’ ” (Lerner 1989 s. 96-97) “It is like the passion with which a tragic hero wholly identifies himself, and which bears him on to his doom. It is true that, once embarked on this course, Iago *could* not turn back, even if this passion did abate; and it is also true that he is compelled, by his success in convincing Othello, to advance to conclusions of which at the outset he did not dream. He is thus caught in his own web, and could not liberate himself if he would. But, in fact, he never shows a trace of wishing to do so, not a trace of hesitation, of looking back, or of fear, any more than of remorse; there is no ebb in the tide. [...] His fate – which is himself – has completely mastered him: so that, in the later scenes, where the improbability of the entire success of a design built on so many different falsehoods forces itself on the reader, Iago appears for moments not as a consummate schemer, but as a man absolutely infatuated and delivered over to certain destruction.” (A. C. Bradley i Lerner 1989 s. 97-98)

“Iago seems to Othello so honest, so wise beyond himself in human dealings, possessed of a terrible power of seeing and speaking truth, because into what he speaks are projected the half truths that Othello’s romantic vision ignored, but of which his mind held secret knowledge. If we attempt to define the devil in psychological terms, regarding him as an archetype, a persistent or recurrent mode of apprehension, we may say that the devil is our tendency to represent in personal form the forces within and without us that threaten our supreme values. When Othello finds those values, of confident love, of honour, and pride in soldiership, that made up his purposeful life, falling into ruin, his sense of the devil in all around him becomes acute. Desdemona has become ‘a fair devil’; he feels ‘a young and sweating devil’ in her hand. The cry ‘O devil’ breaks out among his incoherent words of raving. When Iago’s falsehoods are disclosed, and Othello at last, too late, wrenches himself free from the spell of Iago’s power over him, his sense of the devil incarnate in Iago’s shape before him becomes overwhelming. If those who tell of the devil have failed to describe Iago, they have lied:

I look down towards his feet – but that’s a fable.
If that thou be’st a devil, I cannot kill thee. (V. 2. 288)

[...] Iago – a being through personal yet hardly human, concentrated wholly on the hunting to destruction of its destined prey, the proud figure of the hero.” (Maud Bodkin i Lerner 1989 s. 104-105)

“The fifty-two uses of *honest* and *honesty* in *Othello* are a very queer business; there is no other play in which Shakespeare worries a word like that. *King Lear* uses *fool* nearly as often but does not treat it as a puzzle, only as a source of profound metaphors. In *Othello* divergent uses of the key word are found for all the main characters; even the attenuated clown plays on it; the unchaste Bianca, for instance, snatches a moment to claim that she is more honest than Emilia the thief of the handkerchief;” (William Empson i Lerner 1989 s. 107).

Den engelske litteraturforskeren Una Ellis-Fermor har hevdet at “the very principle of order apparent in the formal articulation of tragic plays acts as a counterpoise to the evil chaos that seems to prevail. Her view, in brief; is that the tragic equilibrium consists in the simultaneous holding in the mind of the two conflicting ideas: that the universe is divinely directed and that it is devil-ridden. [...] The difficulty in Professor Ellis-Fermor’s position is that the indications of a divinely controlled universe are in many tragedies scarcely sufficient to counterpoise the presentation of evil. It is not enough that in *Othello* we have characters who mean no harm: Othello and Desdemona are well-intentioned enough, but their disaster comes upon them through his credulity and her lack of directness: in view of the magnitude of the suffering that is brought about by these comparatively minor faults, it is difficult to see that their good qualities point to a divinely controlled universe. [...] many characters in these plays are subjected to an evil for which they are in no way

responsible. Nor is there in great tragedy the suggestion that these things will be put right in another world.” (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 288-290)

“The demonic is mysterious because it appears to be without cause. It is an apparently unmotivated malignancy, which delights in destruction for its own sake. Or, as the saying goes, just for the hell of it. It is hard to know quite why Iago feels so resentful of Othello. The witches of *Macbeth* reap no obvious profit from driving the protagonist to his doom. This kind of wickedness seems to be autotelic, having its grounds, ends and causes in itself. It thus joins a privileged, somewhat underpopulated class of objects, which includes God and art. It is enigmatic because it is brutally itself, not because it has the inscrutability of something too deep to fathom.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 253-254)

“G. R. Elliot, in *Flaming Minister*, says Shakespearean tragedy is “the tragedy of pride” (xix-xxi). In saying so, though, he is choosing to put his total focus on one flaw, thus regarding “such characteristics as the credulity or jealousy of Othello, Macbeth’s overweening ambition or Antony’s sexual passion” as not as important as the flaw of their pride. Muir quotes A. C. Bradley’s *Shakespearean Tragedy* saying, “We remain confronted with the inexplicable fact, or no less the inexplicable appearance, of a world traveling for perfection, but bringing to birth, together with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self-torture and self-waste. And this fact or appearance is tragedy” (13). At the end of many Shakespearean tragedies, though, it does not seem as though good has prevailed or that we are in a world traveling towards perfection. Where is the good in Desdemona’s dead body? Where is the good in all the bodies the dying Hamlet is stepping over to finish his task and add one more by killing Claudius? As Muir says, “The world does not seem to be traveling for perfection... but rather bent on substituting the ordinary for the exceptional” (13).” (Shane O’Hara i https://www.southeastern.edu/acad_research/programs/writing_center/pick/backissue/volume30/assets/ohara.pdf; lesedato 11.04.16)

I *Macbeth* drives hovedpersonen Macbeth av ærgjerrighet og maktlyst, men også av en “gåtefull, dunkel indre nødvendighet” (Neis 1991 s. 22), av en slags “demon i sitt indre” (s. 22) som driver han framover til det som utløser fryktelige ytre handlinger, men også vekker skremmende, grusomme bilder i hans indre. Han forsvinner stadig dypere inn i en sjelelig natt og overgir seg helt til mørket og ondskapen (Neis 1991 s. 62). Samtidig skjer handlingen med hans vitende og vilje, altså frivilling og med bevissthet om alle følger, og har blitt kalt “det ondes heroisme” (Neis 1991 s. 74). “Slik starter mordet som en arbeidsdeling mellom to unnfalne partnere. Kona gir ordre og tar skylden, men er for feig til å utføre ugjerningen. Mannen utfører overgrepet, men på ektefellens ansvar.” (Haaland 1982 s. 72) Den tyske litteraturviteren Walter Naumann skrev i boka *Shakespeares dramaer* (1978) at “naturens uhyggelighet har valgt seg ut et menneske” (siteret fra Neis 1991 s. 87), nemlig Macbeth, og betoner dermed mindre det frivillige enn det Neis gjør.

Macbeth er en skyldtragedie, der hovedpersonen mislykkes etter å ha kommet med ønsker og krav som ikke kan rettferdiggjøres (Gelfert 1995 s. 14-15). Hans lidenskap er sterkere enn hans moral. Macbeth vet at hans handlinger et utilgivelige. Mange litteraturkritikere påpeker at denne selvvinnsikten hos hovedpersonen gjør at vi som publikum blir litt forsonet med hans blodige handlinger og får medfølelse med han (Rudorff 1991 s. 47). Menneskene i *Macbeth* er bundet og lammet av ondskaperen i verden. I 1907 skrev Walter Raleigh at Shakespeares tragedier “har å gjøre med det som er større enn mennesket; med makter og lidenskaper, med elementærkrefter, med lidelsenes dunkle avgrunner” (siteret fra Rudorff 1991 s. 75). Mennesket begår stadig syndefallet på nytt (Rudorff 1991 s. 84).

Shakespeare “made this man, a sworn soldier, murder Duncan, his liege-lord. He made this man, a host, murder Duncan, a guest within his gates. He made this man, strong and hale, murder Duncan, old, weak, asleep and defenceless. He made this man commit murder for nothing but his own advancement. He made this man murder Duncan, who had steadily advanced him hitherto, who had never been aught but trustful, and who (that no detail of reproach might be wanting) had that very night, as he retired, sent, in most kindly thought, the gift of a diamond to his hostess. To sum up: instead of extenuating Macbeth’s criminality, Shakespeare doubles and redoubles it. [...]

He [Shakespeare] could, by majesty of diction, make them [sitt publikum] feel that Macbeth was somehow a great man: and this he did. He could conciliate their sympathy at the start by presenting Macbeth as a brave and victorious soldier: and this he did. He could show him drawn to the deed, against will and conscience, by persuasion of another, a woman: and this – though it is extremely dangerous, since all submission of will forfeits something of manliness, lying apparently on the side of cowardice, and ever so little of cowardice forfeits sympathy – this, too, Shakespeare did. He could trace the desperate act to ambition, ‘last infirmity of noble minds’: and this again he did. All these artifices, and more, Shakespeare used. But yet are they artifices and little more. They do not begin – they do not pretend – to surmount the main difficulty which I have indicated, How of such a criminal to make a hero? [...] to make our hero – supposed great, supposed brave, supposed of certain winning natural gifts – proceed to his crime *under some fatal hallucination ...*” (Arthur Quiller-Couch i Lerner 1989 s. 174 og 176-178)

Macbeth “is one who commits monstrous deeds without becoming wholly a monster, since his knowledge of the right principle is never altogether obscured, though it is almost in Act IV. We can understand such a person and hence feel fear and pity of a kind for him because he is only doing upon a grander scale and with deeper guilt and more terrifying consequences for himself and others what we can, without too much difficulty, imagine ourselves doing, however less extremely, in circumstances generally similar. For the essential story of *Macbeth* is that of a man, not naturally depraved, who has fallen under the compulsive power of an imagined

better state for himself which he can attain only by acting contrary to his normal habits and feelings; who attains this state and then finds that he must continue to act thus, and even worse, in order to hold on to what he has got; who persists and becomes progressively hardened morally in the process; and who then, ultimately, when the once alluring good is about to be taken away from him, faces the loss in terms of what is left of his original character.” (R. S. Crane i Lerner 1989 s. 210)

“[T]he catharsis is effected not merely by the man’s deserved overthrow but by his own inner suffering and by his discovery, before it is too late, of what he had not known before he began to act. If we are normal human beings we must abhor his crimes; yet we cannot completely abhor but must rather pity the man himself, and even when he seems most the monster (as Macbeth does in Act IV) we must still wish for such an outcome as will be best, under the circumstances, not merely for Scotland but for him. [...] If the catharsis of the tragedy is to be complete, we must be made to feel both that Macbeth is being killed in a just cause and that his state of mind and the circumstances of his death are such as befit a man who, for all his crimes, has not altogether lost our pity and goodwill.” (R. S. Crane i Lerner 1989 s. 211)

Den amerikanske litteraturforskeren Wayne C. Booth skriver om Macbeth og Lady Macbeth at “the suffering of these criminals is worse than their crimes. [...] murders, then, are followed immediately by scenes of suffering and self-torture. It is almost as if Shakespeare were following a rule that Aristotle never dreamed of because none of the plays he knew presented this kind of problem: by your choice of what to represent from the materials provided in your story, insure that each step in your protagonist’s degeneration will be counteracted by mounting pity. [...] The hero here must be really aware, in advance, of the wickedness of his act. The more aware he can be – and still commit the act convincingly – the greater the regret felt by the spectator. [...] The conclusion brings a flood of relief that the awful blunder has played itself out, that Macbeth has at last been able to die, still valiant, and is forced no longer to go on enduring the knowledge of what he has become.” (i Lerner 1989 s. 187 og 189-190)

“Macbeth knows what he is doing, yet he does not know. He knows the immorality of the act, but he has no conception of the effects of the act on himself or his surroundings. Accustomed to heroic killing, in battle, and having valorously ‘carv’d out his passage’ with ‘bloody execution’ many times previously, he misunderstands what will be the effect on his own character if he tries to carve out his passage in civil life. And of course he cannot foresee that success in the first murder will only lead to the speech ‘to be thus is nothing; But to be safely thus’, and to ever increasing degradation and suffering for himself and for those around him.” (Wayne C. Booth i Lerner 1989 s. 188)

“Macbeths verden er tett og sluttet, og det lar seg ikke gjøre å unngå. Selv naturen er marerittaktig ugjennomtrengelig og tett, den består av søle og fantomer.” (Kott 1966 s. 97)

“I den verden hvor mordet blir pålagt en som skjebne, tvang og indre nødvendighet, finnes det bare en drøm: drømmen om et mord som bryter mordets onde sirkel, som vil åpne en vei ut av marerittet og dermed bety befrielse. For tanken på mord som må begås, mord man ikke kan slippe fra, er enda verre enn mordet selv.” (Kott 1966 s. 98)

“Macbeth har drept ikke bare for å bli konge, men for å bekrefte seg selv. Han har valgt mellom den Macbeth som er redd for å drepe og den Macbeth som har drept. Men den Macbeth som har drept, er en ny Macbeth. Han vet ikke bare at man kan drepe, men også at man må drepe.” (Kott 1966 s. 99)

“Fra første scene og hele veien fremover definerer Macbeth seg selv gjennom negasjon. Overfor seg selv er han ikke den som er, men snarere den som ikke er. Han er nedsenket i verden som i intetheten; han eksisterer bare potensielt. Macbeth velger seg selv, men etter hver valghandling finner han seg selv mer skremmende, mer fremmed for seg selv. “... alt som bor i ham, fordømmer seg selv fordi det er der.” (V. 2) De formler Macbeth prøver å definere seg selv med, minner forbløffende om det sprog eksistensialistene benytter seg av. “Å være” har for Macbeth en tvetydig eller ihvertfall en dobbelt betydning; det er en konstant, fortvilende motsetning mellom eksistens og essens, mellom å være “for seg selv” og “i seg selv”.

Han sier:

... ingen ting er til
unntagen det som ennå ikke er. (I, 3)” (Kott 1966 s. 101)

“Før han begikk sin første forbrytelse, nemlig mordet på Duncan, trodde Macbeth at døden kunne komme enten for tidlig eller for sent. “Å, var jeg bare død en time før, hadde mitt liv vært lykkelig.” (II, 3) Nå vet Macbeth at døden ikke forandrer noen ting, at den er like absurd som livet. Hverken mer eller mindre. For første gang er Macbeth ikke redd. “Jeg husker ikke lenger hvordan skrekken kan smake.” (V, 5) Det er ingenting å være redd for lenger. Han kan omsider godta seg selv, fordi det er gått opp for ham at ethvert valg er absurd, eller rettere sagt – at det ikke finnes noe valg.” (Kott 1966 s. 103)

“For Macbeth spiller holdningen ingen rolle, han tror ikke lenger på den menneskelige verdighet. Macbeth har nådd den menneskelige erfarings grenser. Alt det han har igjen er forakt. Selve hans menneskebilde har smuldret, det er ingenting igjen. [...] Selvmord er enten en protest eller en innrømmelse av skyld. Macbeth føler seg ikke skyldig, og han har ingenting å protestere mot. Alt han kan gjøre før han dør, er å trekke med seg ned i intetheten så mange levende vesener som mulig.

Dette er den siste konsekvens av verdens absurditet. Macbeth er ikke i stand til å blåse verden til vær. Men han kan fortsette å myrde helt til slutten.” (Kott 1966 s. 104)

Heksene i *Macbeth* spiller en viktig rolle. Shakespeare “purposely left vague the extent of their influence; purposely left vague the proportions of their influence and Macbeth’s own guilty promptings, his own acceptance of the hallucination, contribute to persuade him; vague as the penumbra about him in which – for he is a man of imagination – he sees that visionary dagger. For (let us remember) it is not on Macbeth alone that this horrible dubiety has to be produced; but on us also, seated in the audience. We see what he does not see, and yearn to warn him; but we also see what he sees – the dagger, Banquo’s ghost – and understand why he doubts. [...] As witchcraft implies a direct reversal of the moral order, so the sight and remembrance of the witches, with the strange fulfilment of the Second Witch’s prophecy, constantly impose the hallucination upon him – ‘Fair is foul, and foul is fair.’ Evil, be thou my good.’ ” (Arthur Quiller-Couch i Lerner 1989 s. 178-179) “In *Macbeth*, the witches prophesy that Macbeth shall become king. If he had listened to them as a Greek would have listened to the Oracle, then he would have been able to sit and wait until by necessity it came to pass.” (W. H. Auden i Lerner 1989 s. 219) Shakespeares samtidspublikum “believed in the power of curses” (Lerner 1989 s. 30).

Richard i *Richard 3*. “liker ondskapen for dens egen skyld. [...] Blant annet er han helt uten sans for de kvinnelige verdier hos Anne og Elisabeth, og søker å vise at der finns intet annet livsgrunnlag enn hans egen foregripping av den aller groveste maktvilje, med “samvittighet” som et tomt ord de feige gjør bruk av for å temme de sterke, siden rå kraft er livets eneste lov (V 3). – Slike utbrudd foregriper Nietzsches syn på slave- og herremorale med tre hundre år. [...] Svakhetens fellestrekk er begjær, feighet og uvitenhet om følgen av var egen atferd. Slik blir Richard en følgestreng studie i borgerkrigens kilder. [...] Slik blir Richard en rendyrket utgave av borgerkrigens motsigelser. Utfallet er likevel at han sluker seg selv, ved at hans uberegnelige opptreden gjør ham helt ensom til slutt. [...] innenfor sin egen ramme kommer Richards verden til å mangle mening. Til gjengjeld finns der bestandig et felt som ligger utenfor forkrøplingens forferdelser. For alle som viser at en underordnet verden mangler mening, blir selv opphav til et videre og bedre ordnet univers.” (Haaland 1982 s. 51-52 og 54-55)

Richard 3. bestemmer seg for å erobre den engelske tronen, koste hva det koste vil, om det så krever mord. I *Richard 3*. viser Shakespeare “sit digteriske mesterskab ved at krybe helt ind i hovedet på denne ene mand, som beslutter at anvende hele sit ikke ubetydelige potentiale til det ene formål at sætte sin ondskab kompromisløst igennem. Som omdanner sin virkelyst til glubende ambition. Som anvender sin følsomhed til at vælge empatien fra. Og som vender sin kærligheds-hungrende afmagt på hovedet og gør den til en hadets almagt. Hvad sker der i hovedet og hjertet på en mand, der vælger det menneskelige fællesskab radikalt fra

og hengiver sig hæmningsløst til sin egen grænseløse individualitet? [...] [dramaet viser] hvor let det kan være for én enkelt ond vilje at manipulere en hel nation, når den vælger at basere sin politik på angst og trangen til at sikre sig selv. [...] Personerne i *Richard III* er bange. De er lige kommet ud af en stor krise, og de frygter for at blive slynget tilbage i krisen. De plejede at være bange og urolige, det vil de *ikke* være igen. De plejede at være udsatte, det vil de *ikke* være igen. Så de indgår klippefaste aftaler med sig selv og hinanden om at sikre sig selv og egne privilegier, alt imens de overser at de netop derved holder den angst i live, som lige netop er dét Richard skal bruge, og har tænkt sig at bruge, og bruger. Frygt er den hest, som Richard af Gloster rider til magtens tinde på.” (Albinus 2016)

Shakespeares drama om Richard 3. “er historien om et menneske, der har besluttet sig for at sætte alt til side for at få genoprejsning og som derfor siger: Hvad sker der, hvis vi suspenderer det, der hedder medfølelse? [...] Når man tænker over det, er der noget næsten lærestykkeagtigt konsekvent, noget næsten eksemplarisk over, hvordan ofrenes *egne* karakteregenskaber, deres egen individualitet, bliver kernen i deres fald: Den sladdervorne og lemfældige Clarence fældes af sladder og lemfældighed. Den forbandende Margareta rammes af *sin egen* forbandelse. Edwards egen hidsighed og tøjlesløshed lægger indirekte ham selv i graven. Elisabeth rammes af sig egen forstillelse (over for Clarence). Som en dygtig judokæmper bruger Richard kraften i de andres udfald mod dem selv. [...] Richard (antikrist) siger: Intet kommer af nåde! Medfølelsen er det, der slører vores blik. Væk med den! Han sætter klarhed frem for medfølelse, konsekvens frem for føleri. [...] Når han vel er slået *helt* i bund og fuldt ud har indset sin egen udsathed, så vælger han *alligevel* – til *allersidst* – at række en hånd ud mod publikum – sin trofaste følgesvend på rejsen – og sige: “Kom! Lad os Gå! Lad os afskaffe samvittigheden!” Og det siger han vel at mærke på et tidspunkt, hvor han til fulde har indset, hvad dette credo indebærer! “Samvittighed, det ord har krystere/ skabt for at holde stærke sjæle nede./ Slå til kun, kan vi ej til himlen nå/ så skal vi hånd i hånd til helvede gå” ” (Albinus 2016).

“Richard er hverken psykopat eller humørløs livshader. Han er fuldstændig ond og deformeret i sit sind. Men ondskaben og deformiteten er ikke en skæbne, han er kastet ind i som følge af tragiske hændelser, overgreb eller katastrofer. Det er ikke noget, han ikke selv er herre over. Det er værre: Det er noget, han bevidst vælger til. Ved sine sansers fulde brug, og med anvendelsen af al sin følsomhed, humor, og ikke mindst intelligens, vælger han et blik på verden, der er så fuld af lede, så færdig med verdens dumhed og uretfærdighed og smålighed, at han med åbne øjne vælger det onde til. Han vælger sin egen skygge over solen, vælger at lade denne skygge vokse og bringe ham så langt det går. Og medfølelsen, menneskeligheden, dagen, lyset, de andre. Alt det vælger han fra. [...] han inkarnerer hadet, han definerer sig selv ved det – og ligesom hos et par af Shakespeares andre notoriske hadere (Shylock, Jago) findes der motiver og forklaringsmuligheder bagved (moderen, den deformede krop, osv.) – men egentlig er det fuldstændig rene had

måske så attraktivt (og medrivende), i og med at det sætter sig blindt igennem.” (Albinus 2016)

Richard 3. dreier seg om “Overlevelse! Først og sidst det: Vi befinder os “in the aftermath of a great civil war” [...]. Ingen kan vide sig sikre. Ingen ved, hvad der kommer til at ske rundt om næste hjørne: Hastings, Catesby, Tyrrell, Stanley, Brakenbury, Buckingham. Som med mere eller mindre held forsøger at placere sig med størst mulig personlig vinding i spillet. Hvem er væk i næste øjeblik? Hvem viser sig at have satset rigtigt? Hvem har netop forsegleet sin egen skæbne? [...] den borgerkrig, der går forud for handlingen i *Richard III*, udryddede en femtedel af landets samlede befolkning. En *femtedel!* Dvs: Alle kender nogen, alle er i familie med nogen, der er forsvundet i løbet af natten, pludselig er væk, for ikke mere at dukke op. I morgen kan det være dig. Eller mig. Det er i et sådant landskab, at denne teateraftens karakterer famler efter OVERLEVELSE. Hver gang nogen åbner munden i denne tekst er det for at gribe “denne ene chance”! Der er ikke plads til tilbagelænet sniksnak – der er ikke plads til at føle sig tryk: – Hastings, som et øjeblik tillader sig at “slappe lidt af” og føle sig i tryk forvisning om sin egen sikkerhed: Han kommer til at opleve følgerne umiddelbart!” (Albinus 2016)

Det første ordet i *Richard 3.* er “Now”, “og heraf kan samtlige medvirkende passende tage stikord! Alle som åbner munden, satser, de taler NU. Lad mig tale NU, mens jeg endnu ikke er slæbt bort. Lad mig tage chancen NU, den kommer ikke igen – INGEN ved, hvordan det ser ud i morgen. Eller om en time. Eller om 5 minutter. På sin vis er det et mentalt pres, der kan minde om udryddelseslejren. Man kan ikke engang blot satse på at holde lav profil. For måske er det netop dem, der *ikke* satser, der bliver de næste. Hvad der betød overlevelse i går, kan være lig med udryddelse i dag. Det er så radikalt. [...] Når Anna beslutter sig for at begræde sin dræbte ægtemand midt i Londons gader, udviser hun et gigantisk mod. Og det er én, der vil OVERLEVE, som foretager dette sats! Når Margaret ser alle sine fjender samlet på ét sted ved hun at dette er øjeblikket. NU. Når hertuginde siger til Richard: “Lad mig tale”, er det i knivskarp bevidsthed om, at hun har dette ene vindue til at gøre det i. Denne ene chance. NU.” (Albinus 2016)

Jens Albinus skriver om *Richard 3.*: “Der er følsomhed i ham. Og der er en næsten fortvivlet lede ved at verden er sådan, at han kan sætte sig igennem på den måde, han gør. Samtidig med at der er fryd og glæde og nydelse og lyst og leg. [...] Netop fordi man *ikke* er sammensmeltet med verden – men befinder sig på afstand af den – kan verden læses og spilles. Man forsvinder ikke ind i verden. Man fremkaldes i absurdum (4.akt sc.3) – man kan ikke give sig hen til verden (medfølelse er ikke en mulighed) og ikke acceptere at slippe den og ikke dø. Man kan ikke give sig ind under verden. Verden er *forskellig* fra en selv. Man kan aflæse verden og underlægge verden. Verden er et *fremmed* sted.” (Albinus 2016)

Det er “contrasting plot-forms embodied respectively in *Othello* and in *Richard III*: the first a tragic plot-form in the classic sense of Aristotle’s analysis in *Poetics* 13;

the second a plot-form which Aristotle rejected as non-tragic but which appealed strongly to tragic poets in the Renaissance – a form of serious action designed to arouse moral indignation for the deliberately unjust and seemingly prospering acts of the protagonist and moral satisfaction at his subsequent ruin.” (R. S. Crane i Lerner 1989 s. 208-209)

De mannlige hovedpersonene i Shakespeares tragedier er konger, prinser, feltherrer, adelsmenn og viktige personer fra romersk historie. Alle er av “edel byrd”, kun med unntak av jøden Shylock i *The Merchant of Venice*, som ikke har en viktig politisk posisjon, men snarere er en paria i sitt samfunn (Auerbach 1988 s. 298-299). Shylock er ut fra tradisjonelle kriterier ikke verdig til å være en tragisk hovedperson, og han fungerer primært som en hindring for en edlere og åndelig friere mennesketype som tilhører aristokratiet (Auerbach 1988 s. 300). Det er mulig at Shakespeare ville at jøden Shylock skulle oppfattes som en hovedsakelig komisk karakter, til tross for sin hardhet og grusomhet, ikke primært tragisk slik han ofte oppfattes i dag (og at skuespillet er en komedie fordi det ender lykkelig for mange, men ikke for Shylock).

Hovedpersonen i *Hamlet* avskyr det hoffet som utgjør hans virkelighet. At onkelen gifter seg med hans mor og overtar kongemakten etter hans døde far “crowns his disgust and misgivings [...] Hamlet can never again be confident of behaving rationally, since his rational world has collapsed. [...] He must live on to avenge his father. It is worth noting, however, that even if he succeeds in this, revenge will not diminish the horror he has experienced. His mother’s infidelity and the manner of his father’s death are irrevocable.” (Brereton 1968 s. 86-87) *Hamlet* er en hevntragedie, men Hamlet tviler, nøler og spiller sinnssyk samtidig som han er på grensen til å bli sinnssyk eller allerede har tippet over grensen. I Hamlets bevissthet skjer det “a dissemination of evil through awareness of it to a point at which it cankers everything” (Brereton 1968 s. 93).

Hamlet har mulighet til å drepe sin fars morder mens denne ber til Gud, men gjør det ikke. Dette har blitt tolket som at Hamlet ikke ville blitt en god konge, for han er full av tvil, en egenskap som ikke egnet seg for en konge etter datidens oppfatning (Schneider 1967 s. 63). (Men: “They say best men are moulded out of faults” sier Mariana i Shakespeares *Measure for Measure*; 5. akt, 1. scene)

“What we seem to have is a wholesale contamination of the court of Denmark by the murder of the old King and the incestuous union of his brother with his widow. That little world is ‘rotten’ because of the evil which is abroad in it and which must run its course like a disease until every character of note has been destroyed. Even Hamlet’s friend Horatio is about to commit suicide and so complete the shambles of the last scene; he is only dissuaded by Hamlet in order that one witness may survive to tell the tale. It is as though a force of nature has been released which dwarfs questions of personal innocence and guilt. It cannot abate until the old order

has been extirpated and a new order, foreshadowed by the arrival of Fortinbras of Norway, is ready to take its place.” (Brereton 1968 s. 92)

“That Hamlet is suffering from an internal conflict, the essential nature of which is inaccessible to his introspection, is evidenced by the following considerations. Throughout the play we have the clearest picture of a man who sees his duty plain before him, but who shirks it at every opportunity and suffers in consequence the most intense remorse. To paraphrase Sir James Paget’s well-known description of hysterical paralysis: Hamlet’s advocates say he cannot do his duty, his detractors say he will not, whereas the truth is that he cannot will.” (Ernest Jones i Lerner 1989 s. 49)

“Hamlet is not nauseated simply at the philosophical thought of the eternal return of the same: that thought of the eternal return of revenge. Rather, he is nauseated because this tragic knowledge of revenge’s eternal return in human affairs is a mimetically paralyzing sort of knowledge. It is at odds with the insistent, unreflective mimetic impetus for revenge that characterizes the man of instant action. If one pauses long enough in reflection, then one recoils in horror before one’s destiny to be another tragic cliché. We might say, Hamlet is conflicted about conflict: he wants it; but he hates himself for it. This is his entirely rational nausea. [...] Poor Hamlet, traumatized by his father’s death, knew that it would not be possible for him to benefit from a “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable” (*Hamlet* 1.2.133) repetition of the murderous event. At first, he seeks to find artistic purification for his sickness in quasi-Nietzschean fashion. He turns to the mimesis of poesis for his catharsis. He stages a play for the usurper king in the hope that art actually can trigger a remaking of the world. But Hamlet finds out in disappointment that the staged drama can bring no this-worldly consolation. The messy drama of the world cannot be mirrored on stage and thereby managed. For in the real world, the tragic world, where there are no alternatives to violence, the play can only reflect back the violent mimesis of Hamlet’s violent world. Tragedy cannot rewrite this world and get a happy ending. True to its genre, it can only reflect reality” (Christopher S. Morrissey i <https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2015/09/on-nietzsche-and-hamlet-how-shakespeare-mirrors-sick-moderns.html>; lesedato 07.09.21).

Hamlet “is not a whodunit [dvs. en type krimfortelling], nor is Hamlet a dispassionate observer. Hamlet is responding to the situation as a total human being, and as a revenger he is walking on the line between focusing on Claudius as a murderer and recognizing at the same time that the problem of killing the murderer of his father is not merely that of eliminating an evil man. Yet while he partially recognizes that in its widest dimensions the problem is not world-imminent but rather has a metaphysical dimension to it, he is continually stymied in his efforts to give full formulation to the problem. As frequently as he tries, his symbolism can’t get hold of the magnitude of the problem. Nor should this be surprising, as the problem of evil in the world and what is to be done about it

ultimately is not formulable in rational terms. Therefore, the fact that the revenge hero is related to the murdered man and that he is emotionally involved in the pursuit of evil has just the opposite effect from what one might expect. Normally one would expect him to be a more virulent pursuer than the disinterested detective whereas because of his total involvement Hamlet is able to intuit the complexity of the situation, and it is this complexity which makes the directness and ferocity of the detective impossible for the revenge hero. [...] In the revenge tragedy the problem has a metaphysical dimension which precludes the restoration of an edenic order through the simple act of killing an evil man. Consequently, the problem transposes itself in revenge tragedy to a tragic meditation for which there is no simple solution and in some instances no solution at all. The tragic situation the hero of a revenge tragedy finds himself in is that he is wrong if he seeks to bring the murderer to justice and wrong if he doesn't. It is a situation that admits of no rational solution, yet paradoxically it leads to the most illuminating of insights." (Hallett 1978)

"The long 'repressed' desire to take his father's place in his mother's affection is stimulated to unconscious activity by the sight of someone usurping this place exactly as he himself had once longed to do. More, this someone was a member of the same family, so that the actual usurpation further resembled the imaginary one in being incestuous." (Ernest Jones i Lerner 1989 s. 58-59) Hamlets egen " 'evil' prevents him from completely denouncing his uncle's, and in continuing to 'repress' the former he must strive to ignore, to condone, and if possible even to forget the latter; *his moral fate is bound up with his uncle's for good or ill*. In reality his uncle incorporates the deepest and most buried part of his own personality, so that he cannot kill him without also killing himself. This solution, one closely akin to what Freud has shown to be the motive of suicide in melancholia, is actually the one that Hamlet finally adopts. The course of alternate action and inaction that he embarks on, and the provocations he gives to his suspicious uncle, can lead to no other end than to his own ruin and, incidentally, to that of his uncle. Only when he has made the final sacrifice and brought himself to the door of death is he free to fulfil his duty, to avenge his father, and to slay his other self – his uncle." (Ernest Jones i Lerner 1989 s. 62)

"By refusing to abandon his own incestuous wishes he perpetuates the sin and so must endure the stings of torturing conscience. And yet killing his mother's husband would be equivalent to committing the original sin itself, which would if anything be even more guilty. So of the two impossible alternatives he adopts the passive solution of letting the incest continue vicariously, but at the same time provoking destruction at the King's hand. Was ever a tragic figure so torn and tortured! Action is paralysed at its very inception, and there is thus produced the picture of apparently causeless inhibition which is so inexplicable both to Hamlet and to readers of the play. This paralysis arises, however, not from physical or moral cowardice, but from that intellectual cowardice, that reluctance to dare the exploration of his inmost soul, which Hamlet shares with the rest of the human

race. 'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.' ” (Ernest Jones i Lerner 1989 s. 63-64)

Det har blitt hevdet at “Hamlet is a conscious instrument in the progress towards disaster/expiation, and he is an imperfect one. He is too delicate, or too subtle, for the purpose.” (Brereton 1968 s. 90) Hamlet er mer en grublende dikter enn en maktsøkende prins, og han trives bedre blant skuespillere enn blant hoffmenn. Han er ikke den direkte, rasende hevner som griper til våpen uten skygge av tvil. Laertes, Polonius’ sønn, er Hamlets motsetning når det gjelder innbitt pågangsmot i å utføre hevn. Laertes synes å glemme både denne verden og den hinsidige: “Let come what comes”, sier han.

“Litt dypere sett blir Hamlet en overgangsskikkelse med to sprikende trekk. På den ene side bærer han frem en ny tids verdier, med tvil, innsikt og forandring, men under overflaten gir han seg over til gjenferdets påtrykk i retning av kritikkløst tilbakefall i en av fortidens aller mest hardkokte følelser, begjæret etter uhemmet hevn.” (Haaland 1982 s. 106)

“The world of *Hamlet* is a world where one has lost one’s way. The Prince also has no doubt lost his, and we can tell the precise moment at which he finds it again. ‘Not a whit. We defy augury. There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ‘tis not to come: if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is’t to leave betimes?’ If I wanted to make one more addition to the gallery of Hamlet’s portraits I should trace his hesitation to the fear of death; not to a physical fear of dying, but a fear of being dead. [...] Any serious attention to the state of being dead, unless it is limited by some definite religious or anti-religious doctrine, must, I suppose, paralyse the will by introducing infinite uncertainties and rendering all motives inadequate. Being dead is the unknown x in our sum.” (C. S. Lewis i Lerner 1989 s. 72)

I sine monologer veksler Hamlet mellom lavstil og høystil, med vittigheter, lyriske formuleringer, ironisk-absurde uttalelser, spott og dyp (selv-)refleksjon (Auerbach 1988 s. 301).

Hamlets “famous soliloquy from Act III Scene 1, “To be or not to be, that is the question,” takes on the fundamental issue of whether he should choose to live or choose to die. The very idea that he understands this as a choice open to him indicates that his culture no longer takes it for granted that God determines these fundamental facts of our existence. This is not to say, of course, that nobody ever contemplated suicide before Hamlet. But the cultural interpretation of what one is up to when one is contemplating such a thought is radically different for Hamlet than it would have been for a character of the Middle Ages. In the medieval tradition suicide is understood as an act of rebellion against God, an attempt to take over from God a decision that is rightfully his. (Indeed, Dante puts the suicides in

the seventh of the nine circles of Hell, sitting right beside the blasphemers against God.) [...] For Hamlet, by contrast, the thought that suicide would be an affront to God never seems to occur. [...] The question is whether *it's a better decision* – “nobler in the mind” – to suffer or to commit suicide.” (Dreyfus og Kelly 2011 s. 18)

“For what, after all, is happening to us when we read any of Hamlet’s great speeches? We see visions of the flesh dissolving into a dew, of the world like an unweeded garden. We think of memory reeling in its ‘distracted globe’. We watch him scampering hither and thither like a maniac to avoid the voices wherewith he is haunted.” (C. S. Lewis i Lerner 1989 s. 73) Hamlet er “a dishevelled man whose words make us at once think of loneliness and doubt and dread, of waste and dust and emptiness, and from whose hands, or from our own, we feel the richness of heaven and earth and the comfort of human affection slipping away.” (Lerner 1989 s. 77)

Hamlet er en mann som “på postmodernistisk vis plages av sin egen teatrale tomhet og derfor fascineres av skuespillerens overbevisende illusjonskunst” (Haarberg, Selboe og Aarset 2007 s. 237). Den tyske filosofen Friedrich Nietzsche “warned us that what we can find words for is already dead in our hearts, so that there is always a kind of contempt in the act of speaking. Hamlet agrees with Nietzsche” (Bloom 1995a s. 523).

“[T]he ‘psychological’ element found in Shakespeare is an addition, or a potential addition, to the concept of the dramatic character in general, and need not be exclusive to tragedy. While therefore it increases the complexity of tragedy, and so the difficulty of its analysis, it appears to bring no basic change to the theoretical tragic components. Hamlet is a different kind of hero from Oedipus. He might be described as ‘more human’, ‘more credible’, ‘more interesting’, ‘more complex’, and by various other comparatives. But rigorously he is not ‘more tragic’.” (Brereton 1968 s. 96)

“Orestes’ mandate to revenge his father’s murder encompasses the reinstatement of Agamemnon’s political power as Orestes takes his father’s place. Oedipus assumes his father’s identity involuntarily, but he fulfils his role both politically and sexually. Hamlet sees himself compelled to behave in a role more typical of his aggressive father than himself. Phèdre envisions herself as the victim of the same curse that Venus imposed upon her mother. In the course of Ibsen’s *Ghosts* Oswald grows into the likeness of his father, Captain Alving. In each of these cases, the protagonist’s identification with the parent encompasses his or her destruction.” (Lyons 1983 s. 181)

“The sense in which death is the subject of *Hamlet* will become apparent if we compare it with other plays. Macbeth has commerce with Hell, but at the very outset of his career dismisses all thought of the life to come. For Brutus and

Othello, suicide in the high tragic manner is escape and climax. For Lear death is deliverance. For Romeo and Antony, poignant loss. For all these, as for their author while he writes and the audience while they watch, death is the end: it is almost the frame of the picture. They think of dying: no one thinks, in these plays, of *being dead*. In *Hamlet* we are kept thinking about it all the time, whether in terms of the soul's destiny or of the body's. Purgatory, Hell, Heaven, the wounded name, the rights – or wrongs – of Ophelia's burial, and the staying-power of a tanner's corpse: and beyond this, beyond all Christian and all Pagan maps of the hereafter, comes a curious groping and tapping of thoughts, about 'what dreams may come'. It is this that gives to the whole play its quality of darkness and of misgiving. Of course there is much else in the play: but nearly always, the same groping. The characters are all watching one another, forming theories about one another, listening, contriving full of anxiety." (C. S. Lewis i Lerner 1989 s. 71-72)

“*Hamlet* ble oppført i Krakow i 1956, utvetydig og med en forferdende klarhet. Utvilsomt var det en forenklet *Hamlet*. Men like sikkert er det at denne tolkningen var så suggestiv, at da jeg tok frem teksten etter forestillingen, så jeg ikke annet i den enn et skuespill om politiske forbrytelser. På det klassiske spørsmål om Hamlets galskap er virkelighet eller forstillelse, ga fremførelsen i Krakow følgende svar: Hamlet spiller gal, han anlegger med kaldt blod en gal manns maske for å gjennomføre et statskupp; Hamlet er gal, fordi politikken selv er galskap når den ødelegger all hengivenhet, enhver følelse. Jeg har ingenting imot en slik tolkning. Og jeg savner ikke alle de andre Hamlet'ene: moralisten som ikke er i stand til å trekke en klar linje mellom godt og ondt; den intellektuelle som ikke makter å finne tilstrekkelige grunner for å handle; filosofen som stiller seg tvilende til hele verdens eksistens. Jeg foretrekker denne unge mannen som er trukket dypt inn i politikken, blottet for illusjoner, sarkastisk, lidenskapelig og brutal. En ung opprører som har noe av James Deans sjarm over seg. Hans lidenskap virker iblant barnslig. Han er utvilsomt mer primitiv enn alle tidligere Hamlet'er. Aksjon, ikke refleksjon, er hans styrke. Han er vill og beruset av harme. Den polske Hamlet etter den 20. partikongress. En av mange. Han opplever ennå ikke noen dype moralske tvil, men noen dumrian er han ikke. Han vil være fullt viss på at hans far virkelig er myrdet. Han kan ikke riktig stole på gjenferdet, ikke på noe gjenferd for den saks skyld. Han ser seg om etter mer overbevisende vitnesbyrd, og det er derfor han arrangerer den psykologiske prøven ved å iscenesette den forbrytelsen som er blitt begått. Verden fyller ham med avsky, derfor ofrer han Ofelia. Men han viker ikke tilbake for et statskupp. Han vet imidlertid at et kupp er en vanskelig ting. Han veier for og imot. Han er den fødte konspiratør. “Å være” betyr for ham å hevne sin far og myrde kongen, mens “ikke være” betyr å gi opp kampen.” (Kott 1966 s. 58-59)

Noen av Shakespeares tragedier og historiske dramaer kan oppfattes som varianter av en Fortuna-tradisjon i teatret fra middelalderen, der det ble vist en mektig persons oppkomst og fall (Rudorff 1991 s. 6).

Om *King Lear* skriver Franco Moretti: “[T]he simple and slight reason Lear adduces for abdicating – the weight of his old age – clearly suggests that he has betrayed his political and public function to the advantage of his physical and private person. Like Claudius or Macbeth, albeit in different form, Lear thus yields to ‘fallen nature’, and this yielding points to the transformation of the king into a tyrant. The entire abdication scene is dominated by Lear’s arrogant absolutism. [...] Lear does not stop at simply rejecting the advice of his counsellor Kent; he banishes him from the kingdom under pain of death. What gratifies him in the speeches of Goneril and Regan is the abyss they excavate between himself and them, the unlimited dependence they declare. Conversely, what infuriates him in Cordelia is her untainted feudal spirit: ‘I love your Majesty / According to my bond; no more nor less’ (I, i, 92-3). Cordelia still inhabits a world of reciprocal obligation, of feudal rights and duties, whereas Lear aspires to absolute omnipotence.” (Moretti 2005 s. 51)

“Kongen, ennå i den tro at han er på toppen av verden, forbanner Goneril og ber naturen gjøre henne steril. Tordenen begynner å skralle utenfor samtidig som stormen bryter løs på innsida av kongen. Han nekter å kripe og begir seg ut i uværet. Dette, skriver Harvard-professoren Marjorie Garber, er det som gjør Lear til en tragisk helt. Han velger skjebnen sin, han viker ikke unna, men konfronterer, omsider, seg selv. [...] Litteraturforskeren Stephen Greenblatt er blant dem som har påpekt at Shakespeare flere ganger, og tydelig i “Kong Lear”, med vilje gjør handlingen mindre rasjonell enn den er i kildene han baserer seg på. [...] Yale-professor og Shakespeare-formidler Harold Bloom, skriver om “Kong Lear” at “alle utenom Edmund enten hater eller elsker for mye”. Lears kjærlighet til Cordelia er umettelig og overmodig, frykten for å bli sviktet er for stor, og han ber henne om for mye. Slik forårsaker han sitt eget fall. [...] Harold Bloom beskriver “Kong Lear” som “en storm som ikke letner”. Gudene som kongen påkaller, ordner ikke opp, og den nye innsikten, kan ikke brukes til noe. Til sist er også Cordelia tapt, og med det tapet går også det siste, nemlig språket. Kongen, bøyd over Cordelias lik, klarer bare å si at hun aldri mer skal komme til ham, “aldri, aldri, aldri, aldri, aldri”. Mannen som forlangte ordrike kjærlighetserklæringer i første akt, reduseres til en besvergende repetisjon og til sist til stillhet. “Kong Lear” handler om folk som fratas alt, av seg selv og andre, til bare kjernen står igjen. Og så bare fortsetter reduksjonen. Det er tragedien.” (*Dagbladet* 12. november 2013 s. 48)

Kong Lears hamartia i Shakespeares skuespill er hans manglende evne til empati med andre (Tatjana Silec i <http://babel.revues.org/2045>; lesedato 12.05.15). “Lear is selfish, self-centred. The images he creates of his three daughters’ love are quite false, sentimentalized: he understands the nature of none of his children, and demanding an unreal and impossible love from all three, is disillusioned by each in turn. But, though sentimental, this love is not weak. It is powerful and firm-planted in his mind as a mountain rock embedded in earth. The tearing out of it is hideous, cataclysmic. A tremendous soul is, as it were, incongruously geared to a puerile

intellect. Lear's senses prove his idealized love-figments false, his intellect snaps, and, as the loosened drive flings limp, the disconnected engine of madness spins free, and the ungeared revolutions of it are terrible, fantastic." (G. W. Knight i Lerner 1989 s. 131-132)

"The overriding critical problem in *King Lear* is that of its ending. The deaths of Lear and Cordelia confront us like a raw, fresh wound where our every instinct calls for healing and reconciliation. This problem, moreover, is as much one of philosophic order as of dramatic effect. In what sort of universe, we ask ourselves, can wasteful death follow suffering and torture? Nor is this concern an extrapolation from our own culture. It is, rather, implicit in Lear's own image, when he calls for tongues and eyes to howl 'That heaven's vault should crack' (v. 3. 259), and in his despairing question:

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? (V. 3. 306)

[...] The impression of unreconciled savagery and violence in the ending has been mitigated, in our generation, by a critical reading that would interpret Lear's last emotion as one of joy, even ecstasy, rather than one of unbearable agony. [...] one might, for all the enormous difficulties involved, affirm that a species of order is re-established. If not, however, then the impression is irresistible that in *King Lear* Shakespeare was confronting chaos itself, unmitigated, brutal, and utterly unresolved." (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 147-148)

"Gloucester died between extremes of joy and grief, at the knowledge that his son was miraculously preserved, Lear between extremes of illusion and truth, ecstasy and the blackest despair, at the knowledge that his daughter was needlessly butchered. Gloucester's heart 'burst smilingly' at his reunion with Edgar; Lear's, we are driven to conclude, burst in the purest agony at his eternal separation from Cordelia." (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 151-152) "Edmund's fate is nobly tragic: 'The wheel has come full circle; I am here' (V. 3. 175). And Edmund is the most villainous of all. Again, we have incongruity; and again, the Gloucester-theme reflects the Lear-theme. Edmund is given a noble, an essentially tragic, end, and Goneril and Regan, too, meet their ends with something of tragic fineness in pursuit of their evil desires. Regan dies by her sister's poison; Goneril with a knife. They die, at least, in the cause of love – love of Edmund. Compared with these deaths, the end of Cordelia is horrible, cruel, unnecessarily cruel – the final grotesque horror in the play." (G. W. Knight i Lerner 1989 s. 144)

I *King Lear* sier Earl of Gloucester: "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods – / They kill us for their sport." (4. akt, 1. scene) "Many have argued that Shakespeare, as well as Gloucester, believed that "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' Gods: They kill us for their sport." They believed that Shakespeare's view of the world in *King Lear* was essentially pessimistic – most die, cruelty remains unchecked, and

all are ravaged by evil. Thomas Roche, states that the play's ending is "as bleak and unrewarding as man can reach outside the gates of hell". Samuel Johnson, himself one of Britain's most famous literary figures, claimed the play is, "contrary to the natural ideas of justice." (<http://www.stjosephscomp.co.uk/wordpress/>; lesedato 14.06.17)

"All seventeenth-century English tragedy is, indeed, marked by a feeling that, if there are gods who control the universe, they are far away from men, and indifferent to the individual's fate. Sometimes this sense of remoteness becomes sharpened into a belief that the gods are malicious, enjoying the impotence and the suffering in the world beneath them. Gloucester's cry in his despair: As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods – / They kill us for their sport. [...] is almost paralleled by this piece of bitterness from [John Websters] *The Duchess of Malfi*:

We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and bandied
Which way please them.

V. 4.

But these are dramatic utterances, mere exclamations of the characters' despair, and are no more to be taken as expressing the totality of the playwright's attitude" (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 291-292).

"So, too, it is remarkable that in *King Lear* there are repeated references to divine justice. [...] What kind of justice, we wonder, is this, which will seize on so small a fault and inflict so terrible a punishment? The 'justice' of the gods, as seen in tragedy, is as terrible as their indifference: in fact, we shall not see tragedy aright unless we recognize that the divine justice mirrored in it is an indifferent justice, a justice which cares no whit for the individual and is not concerned with a nice balance of deserts and rewards. This justice operates like an avalanche or an echo in an enclosed space. If an evil act is committed, no matter how trifling, it will bring consequences which are far more evil than the original act. Lear, vain and delighting in power and its display, indecently demands a public profession of love from his daughters: that leads to the events of the heath, the hanging of Cordelia, the loss of Gloucester's eyes, civil war, and Lear's own death. [...] We may therefore easily understand why the revenge-motive is so common in Greek and Elizabethan tragedy: the blood-feud is the most obvious example of the kind of situation in which wrong inevitably succeeds to wrong." (Clifford Leech i Lerner 1989 s. 293-294)

Kong Lear "er ein av oss, eit menneske som går til grunne og blir driven ut i galskapen når sanninga går opp for han. Kong Lear ser gjennom samværet med narren sin at det ikkje finst nokon naturens orden, inga rettfærd, inga sanning og ingen nåde i verda. Da kong Lear har lært denne lekse, forsvinn narren. Kongen overtar narrens språk, og tragedien kan fullendast. Ribba for alt, ikkje minst den kongeære som han trudde ville følgje han også da han hadde gitt makta frå seg, ser han til slutt at han er eit menneske: "Dei sa eg var alt her i verda. Det er løgn, eg er

ikkje herre over frostrier.” [...] Naturens nådelause krefter og menneskeleg vondskaap omgir han heile vegen og sørger for hans fall. [...] dersom ein vågar å følgje kong Lear, med alle hans brå kast og irrasjonelle handlingar, der galskap og fornuft skifter om å ha styringa, der irrasjonalitet og overlegg etterfølgjer kvarandre, ja, der dagklare tankar og vrangforestillingar avløyser kvarandre, blir han eit menneske med tragiske dimensjonar, og ein som som liknar på oss som lever no.” (Edvard Hoem i *Klassekampen* 26. april 2014 s. 14)

I *King Lear* “almost every possible point of view on the gods and cosmic justice is expressed, from a malevolent, wanton polytheism (IV. I. 36-7) to an astrological determinism (IV. 3. 32-3), from an amoral, personified Nature-goddess (I. 2. 1) to ‘high-judging Jove’ (II. 4. 223). But the very multitude, concern, and contradictory character of these references do not cancel each other out, but rather show how precarious is the concept of cosmic justice. [...] Despite the pagan setting, the problem of theodicy, the justification of God’s way with man, is invoked by so many characters, and with such concern, that it emerges as a key issue in the play.” (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 153)

“[S]ocial ritual, whether religious in character, like confession or periodic fasting, or secular, like the ceremonial convening of a legislature, is an attempt to strengthen the bond of a covenant inevitably weakened by the attrition of evil and the brute passage of time. These are all, in a sense, acts of penance, that is, acts whose deepest intent is to purge us of guilt and the fear of being abandoned, to refresh our bond with one another and with our private and collective destiny. [...] with Lear’s death, each audience, by the ritual of the drama, shares and releases the most private and constricting fear to which mankind is subject, the fear that penance is impossible, that the covenant, once broken, can never be re-established, because its partner has no charity, resilience, or harmony – the fear, in other words, that we inhabit an imbecile universe.” (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 159-160)

Hos Shakespeare er vi vitne til oppbruddet fra et vertikalt verdihierarki til en moderne, horisontal tenkning. I alle hans tragedier er det etter heltens død pragmatikere som tar over makten, f.eks. Fortinbras i *Hamlet* (Gelfert 1995 s. 63). De som overtar er mennesker i mindre skala, som trer i steden for de falne kjempene. De nye herskerne har ikke den samme aristokratiske storheten som de foregående og de mangler den kompromissløse hardheten som tidligere herskere hadde. *King Lear* slutter med ordene: “The oldest hath borne most: we that are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long.” Dette kan tolkes som at den tragiske verden tilhører fortiden og at en ny, mindre tragisk tidsalder har begynt (Gelfert 1995 s. 63).

“In *Romeo and Juliet*, redemption comes when the tragic hero affirms the traditional frame of values of society, love, an appropriate marriage, peace, and the like, though society has, in practice, ceased to follow them. The result is to enhance the *sancta* of society by the sacrifice of life itself. In *Hamlet*, redemption only

comes, finally, when the tragic hero spurns and transcends the *sancta* of society, and appeals to a religious mysticism into which human wisdom can have no entry, and in which, at most, ‘the readiness is all’. The final result, however, is none the less the redemption of society and the reconciliation of the tragic hero to it; for Hamlet’s last act is to cast a decisive vote for the next king of Denmark. Even *Othello*, domestic tragedy though it is, ends with the reconciliation of the tragic hero and society; and Othello’s last act is an affirmation of loyalty to Venice and the execution of judgement upon himself. *King Lear* is Shakespeare’s first tragedy in which the tragic hero dies unreconciled and indifferent to society. The opening movement of *King Lear* is, then, not merely a physical exile from, but an abandonment of the formal *sancta* and institutions of society, which is pictured as even more bankrupt than in *Hamlet*. In *Hamlet*, only one man’s deliberate crime corrupts the Danish state, ‘mining all within’; in *King Lear*, animalism, atheism, brutal ambition, superstition, self-indulgence, and lethargy all contribute to society’s decay.” (J. Stampfer i Lerner 1989 s. 156-157)

Angus Fletchers bok *Evolving Hamlet: Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy and the Ethics of Natural Selection* (2011) “writes of Darwinism, “it asks us to accept that our nature is alien to the nature that conceived us” (xii). For Fletcher, the way forward – and the way out of the crisis that follows upon natural selection’s (apparent) disqualification of ethics and its own (apparent) unsuitability as an ethics of its own – lies in the domain of “tragedy” that, particularly in its seventeenth-century English form, can offer a “practical remedy to a biological problem” (xiv). [...] for Fletcher, seventeenth-century English tragedy, epitomized in *Hamlet*, offers a powerful mechanism by which the audiences (in the theater or in the study) can themselves be embroiled in crisis and conflict that require a pragmatic solution. [...] Fletcher offers powerful and frequently compelling readings of a range of plays, beginning with Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*; continuing on to *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello* (including the Restoration versions of *Othello*); and extending into a series of Restoration tragedies (particularly plays by John Dryden) including *The Indian Emperour*, *All for Love*, and *The Conquest of Granada*.” (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/591560/pdf>; lesedato 22.06.16)

Ifølge noen forskere er hovedpersonen i Shakespeares *Julius Caesar* (publisert i 1623) ikke Julius Cæsar, men Brutus. Tragedien “has Brutus as its tragic hero. On this view Brutus is the sensitive idealist who in his moral innocence and lack of awareness of the practical realities of power-politics kills his best friend from the highest motives and produces in Rome an exacerbated version of the very despotism that killing has been designed to prevent. Supporters of this view cite the many scenes where we see Brutus exhibiting kindness, sensitivity, high moral feeling and disinterested concern for the welfare of the state and quote Antony’s concluding remark that ‘all the conspirators save only he / Did that they did in envy of great Caesar.’ Brutus thus appears as an exemplar of private virtue as opposed to public virtue, his behaviour and his fate illustrating the fact that private virtue

cannot in itself cope with the necessities of public life and that, however admirable in a domestic context Brutus may appear, in a public context the very qualities that make him a good private person make him a menace. This, it is argued, is a genuinely tragic insight. There are situations in which virtue can be politically and socially dangerous, and in such situations a shrewd sense of *Realpolitik*, a genuine apprehension of the real motives which inspire men and the most effective way to get them to act, which often goes together with a degree of lack of moral scruple, is what best serves the public welfare. Both Cassius, who proceeds against Caesar from personal jealousy but who knows just what he is doing and what ought to be done if the assassination of Caesar is to result in the consequences he wishes, and Antony, who combines personal passion with a cool ability to manipulate the passions of others in his own interest, are morally inferior though politically superior to Brutus. Octavius, a cold fish who conducts himself with a quiet awareness of his own interests which he identifies with those of the state, emerges at the end as the natural restorer of order and thus, while far from the ideal man morally, is the effective practical man whom his country needs. Such an interpretation would construe *Julius Caesar* as a politico-moral play about the relation between virtue and power.” (Daiches 1976 s. 7-8)

Cæsars mordere oppdager kort tid etter det politiske drapet at “the assassination of Caesar was undertaken in vain. They are weary and resigned men, with no longer any sense of public policy (if indeed they ever had one after Caesar’s death) and only a sense of private doom. Yet somehow the two friends, in talking together for the last time, sound in their elegiac tones of sad foreboding touchingly human, and more appealing than the two together have ever sounded before. It is not that we are invited to admire failure more than success; it is rather that the mixed motives and impulses which brought these two men together in an illogical and ill-starred political murder in the end reveal to us with moving clarity something of the moral and psychological ambiguities of human character and behaviour. [...] they no longer knew the public cause for which they were fighting.” (Daiches 1976 s. 54-55)

Shakespeares *Titus Andronicus* har blitt kalt “grusomhetens og det absurdes teater” (Diane Larquetoux i <https://ml.revues.org/723>; lesedato 02.06.16). Stykket begynner med en slags feiring av heroisme, men fortsetter med å vise et paradoksalt forhold mellom det positive ved slike verdier og det destruktive ved dem (<https://ml.revues.org/723>; lesedato 02.06.16).

I Shakespeares kongedramaer er temaet maktens tragedier (Schneider 1967 s. 65).

Doctor Faustus

Den engelske renessanse-dramatikeren Christopher Marlowe skrev bl.a. tragedien *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (ca. 1592, antakelig framført første gang i 1594). Faustus inngår en pakt med djevelen. Han er villig til

at hans sjel går evig fortaapt etter døden, mot at djevelen sørger for at han får det han ønsker inntil han dør. “Faustus wilfully denies himself the choice of salvation.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 33) Marlowes Faust er et prometheisk menneske, en “overreacher” som straffes for sin umåtelige hybris (Gelfert 1995 s. 76).

Faustus “makes it plain that he is no humble seeker after instruction, but one whose personal fame and honour are to be [the] main concern [...] Faustus goes to conjure alone, and alone he concludes his pact with the devil. What use will he make of his hazardously won powers? His dreams [are] self-centred [...] the seeds of decay are in his character from the first – how else should he come to make his fatal bargain? Beside his passion for knowledge is a lust for riches and pleasure and power. [...] the promptings of his soul reveal themselves in the words of the Bad Angel:

Be thou on earth, as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.” (W. W. Greg i Leech 1964 s. 93 og 95-97).

“Though *Faustus* is “modern” in thought, it has the guise of a morality play.” (Leech 1964 s. 11)

“[D]espite the supernatural elements of *Doctor Faustus*, the protagonist gets himself into trouble by making a very common mistake: he imagines that having power will make him free. Faustus pursues magic because he wants to live a life unconstrained by laws, a life in which his will is unencumbered and uninhibited. He wants to transcend the laws of physics, to kill with impunity, to glut himself on pleasures, and to dominate other people. [...] It is quite common for us, like Faustus, to believe that power and freedom are the same, and that by increasing our power we will increase our freedom. But, Marlowe’s tragedy consistently complicates this easy equation. That Faustus can only acquire his power by binding himself to the Devil is meant to illustrate the intractability of human limits. By transcending the traditional boundaries of the human condition, Faustus only succeeds in introducing new, more terrible limitations. This is not a liberation, so much as it is a substitution of one set of rules for another. Faustus imagines he can escape the bounds of the human condition to occupy some horizonless zone beyond the reach of gravity’s pull, somewhere where his will can operate unimpeded by obstacles. [...] However, all of this ambition seems to be forgotten, when, later in the play, years [later], Faustus is seen playing pranks on the Pope and performing parlour tricks in the court of Charles V. Is this the same man who was going to join continents together and learn the answers to questions that have baffled philosophers? For someone with near absolute power, Faustus accomplishes very little.” (Andrew Moore i <https://voegelinview.com/doctor-faustus-on-power-and-human-freedom/>; lesedato 03.09.21)

Marlowe dikter om “masterful personalities overpowered by contradictory circumstances – the immovable object, the irresistible force. Love and majesty do

not agree with each other; affection, seemingly thwarted, gives way to aggression [...] Among the reiterated images that carry his peculiar impetus through his various writing, probably the most typical recurrence is the constellation of “topless towers” and “quenchless fires.” Both of these complementary phrases impose concreteness on the idea of infinity: unlimited construction, ambition, pride; unlimited destruction, purgation, suffering. [...] Insofar as power was a dream he shared, it was one that he looked at with astonishingly clear eyes, admiring the man who fully and remorselessly exercised that power, yet knowing his term was limited, his ambition never satisfied, his self-regard comic. [...] what is conspicuously lacking in Marlowe’s heroes, the motives of altruism and self-sacrifice.” (Leech 1964 s. 11 og 27-28)

“[A]n inexorable fatality looms behind a capricious fortune, limiting the range of man’s potentialities, and humbling his virtue by weakening his free will. [...] Will, overreaching itself, encounters the limitation superimposed by fate. But wit, the intellect, climbing toward the infinite, is not so readily circumscribed. It is forever striving to refute the geographers, to prove cosmography, to resolve ambiguities. If it cannot probe unsearchable mysteries, it can push to the outside limits of the known;” (Leech 1964 s. 32).

“Marlowe, whose tragedy appears at its height and in characteristic form in *Faustus*, takes up a unique position as a tragic thinker, because of the implacable paradox on which his reading of the universe rests; man’s innate fallibility on the one hand, and, on the other, the infallibility demanded by inflexible law. To this paradox there is only one conclusion: “Why then belike we must sin and so consequently die.” The precision and finality of this deduction indicate a vision terrifying alike in its assumptions and in its omissions. For implicit in Marlowe’s premiss is the predestination of man to destruction by some determinate power capable of purpose and intention, and, as such purpose can only be sadistic, the world order it implies must derive from a Satanism [...] Marlowe, in the opening argument of the play, sees the

Wearisome condition of humanity,
Born under one law, to another bound.

[...] he reveals his belief that evil is not only inherent in man’s destiny but both irremediable and predetermined.” (Una Ellis-Fermor i Leech 1964 s. 109-110)

Marlowe hadde en “notion of the irresponsibility with which the universe functions. [...] He wrote tragedy because he was aware that man’s aspirations made his destruction more poignant. His tragedy had always an undercurrent of comedy because he had a sense of the absurdity of man’s trying.” (Leech 1964 s. 9-10)

“After the scholars have left, the mockery of Mephostophilis administers a last turn of the screw: “ ‘Twas I, that when thou wert i’ the way to heaven, Dammed up thy

passage; when thou tookst the book To view the scriptures, then I turned the leaves And led thine eye.” Faustus weeps. It is a terrifying speech, recoiling upon our whole experience of the play. But without it the exploration of the mystery of evil would not be complete; it is the dramatic equivalent of the gospel’s equally disturbing, “Then entered Satan into Judas” (*Luke* xxii. 3). From one point of view the play’s devils are only symbols of “aspiring pride and insolence,” and it is simply Faustus’s wilful pride that turned the leaves and led his eye. [...] In the tragic tradition, Satan’s power is like a malignant fate (man is punished for the pride he was born with) [...] Faustus’s great final soliloquy consummates the play in both its aspects – Morality and Heroic Tragedy – and each in its own way triumphs over the other. In fear we acquiesce in the littleness and powerlessness of man, and in pity we share his sufferings and endorse his protest.” (Leech 1964 s. 115-116)

“Mephistophilis’s honest realism evokes a charge of cowardice from the excited Faustus, who urges him to learn ‘manly fortitude’. For Faustus, Mephistophilis remains the glorious means whereby he is going to be ‘great emp’ror of the world’. But the expectation, the ultimate disappointment and the final tragedy spring wholly from Faustus; they are not inspired by any dishonesty or false promises on the part of Mephistophilis. Once the pact is made Mephistophilis carries out his side of the bargain faithfully, albeit somewhat disappointingly in terms of Faustus’s expectations.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 38)

“Marlowe does not allow us to forget the Gospel question, ‘what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ ” (Brockbank 1977 s. 45) Dramaet handler om “the pathos and folly, arrogance and splendour of a man bound to the human condition he refuses to accept.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 33-34) Det er “a bitter irony that the will in its freedom can more readily fall than climb.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 54)

“Faustus’s ordeal is specifically that of the aspiring mind (the ‘unsatiable speculator’ as the Faust-book has it), of that part of our nature which is dissatisfied with being merely human and tries vainly to come to rest in fantasies of omnipotence and omniscience. It is a romantic agony which oscillates across an abyss between extremities of hope and despair. Marlowe, seeing it for what it was, related the hope to the imperial and speculative ambitions of his time, and the despair to that side of Christianity which brings home to us the inescapable mortality and doom of man.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 59)

“[T]he three character defects in Faustus that led to his ultimate domination by Mephistophilis: his overweening pride; his restless intellect; and his desire to be more than man, to possess the power and the insight of a god. [...] In some ways Faustus’s aspirations are admirable.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 32)

“Faustus succumbs easily to the threats of Mephistophilis. There is a prevailing feeling that evil has power over him because he is fascinated by its conflict with good, and by the powers it promises.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 36)

“Love and revenge are alike insurances against salvation. “Helen” then is a “spirit,” and in this play a spirit means a devil. [...] Faustus commits the sin of demoniality, that is, bodily intercourse with demons. [...] But with Faustus’ union with Helen the nice balance between possible salvation and imminent damnation is upset. [...] But in presenting the fall and slow moral disintegration of an ardent if erring spirit, he [Marlowe] did not shrink from depicting, beside Faustus’ spiritual sin of bartering his soul to the powers of evil, what is in effect its physical complement and counterpart, however he may have disguised it in immortal verse.” (Leech 1964 s. 105-107)

Faustus’ ord “Divinity, adieu”, som han sier i begynnelsen av skuespillet, “will have a different meaning at the end of the play.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 33) Når døden nærmer seg, oppdager han at hans hjerte har blitt så forherdet at han ikke klarer å angre. “Faustus hardens his heart by resolutely dismissing the salutary fears of conscience.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 18) “As Faustus pleads that ‘one drop’ [en tåre] then ‘half a drop’ would save his soul, he confesses his barren littleness of life in the vastness of the moral universe.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 57)

“Even without appeal to Christian symbolism, the play has made the streaming blood emblematic of eternal life. Blood refuses to flow when Faustus cuts his arm, it “dries with grief” as his “conscience kills it,” and it gushes forth from his eyes “instead of tears.” As Faustus pleads that “one drop” then “half a drop” would save his soul, he confesses his barren littleness of life in the vastness of the moral universe.” (Leech 1964 s. 117)

“There are two kinds of conflict in the play: one between rival views of the nature of evil, and the other between the choice of good and the choice of evil. The first is at its sharpest in the contrast in the first acts, between Faustus and Mephistophilis; the second, in the play’s soliloquies. Faustus’ initial obstinacy makes him persist in an heroic view of evil and renders him incapable of moral reflection.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 39) “[T]he impression of a will paralysed by incapacity grows stronger as the play advances.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 41)

“From one point of view the play’s devils are only symbols of ‘aspiring pride and insolence’, and it is simply Faustus’ wilful pride that turned the leaves and led his eye. It is *as if* the devil were directing him. But when Christianity externalised and personalised pride in its dramatic mythology of Satan it exposed itself to the hazard it meets here: man is prey to an adversary whose power daunts even Faustus [...]. In the tragic tradition, Satan’s power is like a malignant fate (man is punished for the pride he was born with); in the Morality tradition it has grown into an inexplicable challenge to the power and mercy of God.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 55-56)

“Yet the Good Angel denies the devil’s ultimate power over man: ‘Hadst thou affected sweet dinity Hell or the devil had had no power on thee’; and Faustus’s failure to affect divinity is manifestly voluntary and culpable. But whether we take Mephostophilis’s claim literally or metaphorically, we are left to repeat Augustine’s unanswerable question: ‘what can cause the will’s evil, the will being sole cause of all evil?’ ” (Brockbank 1977 s. 56)

“*Doctor Faustus* has been called an inverted morality play, where the controlling impulse is towards evil rather than good. The final speech at the Chorus may be in conflict with much in the play, but its feeling is close to that of the morality play. From the morality play comes the element of allegory in *Doctor Faustus*, the Good and Evil Angels and the Old Man; the theme of the struggle between vice and virtue for the possession of the soul of man. In spite of their moral purpose, the ‘moralities’ sometimes contained a great amount of crudity; and the level of clowning was closely related to that in the comic scenes of *Doctor Faustus*.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 21-22)

Faustus’ utvikling viser publikum “the betrayal of ideals, the lapse into luxury and buffoonery. And what, in the devil’s name, would the critics have? I say “in the devil’s name,” because all that happens to Faustus once the pact is signed is the devil’s work: “human standards” are no longer relevant. Who but a fool, such a clever fool as Faustus, would dream that any power but evil could be won by a bargain with evil, or that truth could be wrung from the father of lies? “All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” is indeed an aphorism to which few Elizabethans would have subscribed; but Marlowe knew the nature of the power he put into the hands of his hero and the inevitable curse it carried with it.” (W. W. Greg i Leech 1964 s. 96)

“After the bond is signed the discussion is renewed, but while the devil loses nothing in dignity of serious discourse, we can already detect a change in Faustus; his sceptical levity takes on a more truculent and jeering tone. [...] the progressive fatuity of Faustus’ career, which in the clownage and conjuring tricks at Anhalt sinks to the depth of buffoonery. [...] the gradual deterioration of Faustus’ character and the prostitution of his powers” (Leech 1964 s. 98 og 100).

“Faustus’s great final soliloquy consummates the play in both its aspects – Morality and Heroic Tragedy – and each in its own way triumphs over the other. In fear we acquiesce in the littleness and powerlessness of man, and in pity we share his sufferings and endorse his protest.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 56)

“The Chorus leaves us with, the tragic sense of waste. Faustus, who might have been a force for good, remains as a warning to those who desire a power beyond what God is prepared to grant.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 37)

“Faustus’s choice is Elizabethan, not medieval – he sacrifices eternity for twenty-four years of full life now – yet the authority of the Middle Ages and the Church remains. *Doctor Faustus* opens in a spirit of rebellion; it closes in one of orthodoxy. That is the basic conflict in the mind of Faustus, a man caught between two worlds.” (Bunnell 1978 s. 32-33)

“Without alluding to the Old Testament, Marlowe moves in the same territories of the imagination, and feels Ezekiel’s fascination for conjunctions of beauty, passion and destruction (see *Ez. xxiii*).” (Clifford Leech sitert fra Brockbank 1977 s. 52)
Hos profeten Ezekiel i Det gamle testamente, kapittel 23, vers 46-49, står det om Guds straff for to prostituerte kvinner: “For så sier Herren Gud: Jeg samler en menneskemengde mot dem og gir dem over til angst og plyndring. Mengden skal steine dem og skamhugge dem med sverd. Sønnene og døtrene deres skal de drepe, og husene skal de brenne. Jeg gjør slutt på skamløsheten i landet. Alle kvinner skal ta lærdom av det, de skal ikke lenger leve skamløst som dere. Jeg gir dere igjen for skamløsheten, dere må selv bære straffen for den syndige avgudsdyrkelsen. Da skal dere kjenne at jeg er Herren Gud.”

Faustus, “through his bargain with hell, has himself taken on the infernal nature, although it is made clear throughout that he still retains his human soul. [...] Faustus calls on Christ to save his soul [...] Thus the possibility of Faustus’ salvation is left nicely poised in doubt – like that of the archdeacon of scholastic speculation. It is only when, back among his students at Wittenberg, he faces the final reckoning that Faustus regains some measure of heroic dignity. [...] One good, or at least amiable, quality – apart from a genuine tenderness towards his students – we may be tempted to claim for him throughout: a love of beauty in nature and in art” (Leech 1964 s. 102-103).

“In the last phase of the play the damnation of Faustus is ruthless and absolute, the proper punishment of ‘self-conceit’. Yet we are made to feel that it is a reward too – an end at once pitiful and magnificent – with the experience of damnation endorsing the splendours of the moral order in a final vision of the wrath and the sacrificial love of God.” (Brockbank 1977 s. 30)

“A man who died in 1593 belongs to the earliest phase of Elizabethan dramatic writing. It was a phase in which formal rhetoric was the staple medium of high utterance, when the long set speech was cultivated as a matter of course, when departures into informality stood out in sharp and simple contrast. A very few years after Marlowe’s death, we can find Shakespeare and others using a much freer manner of writing, in which the tension could slacken unobtrusively.” (Leech 1964 s. 2)

Tamburlaine the Great

Marlowes *Tamburlaine the Great* (oppført i 1587) handler om en kriger som blir en mektig feltherre. “The tragic flaw in Tamburlaine’s nature goes deep. As judged by sixteenth-century standards, his passions have fallen victim to three ills: immoderation, misdirection, and delusion. Or, to put the matter another way, his tragedy is explainable in terms of the degenerate source of his inspiration, the mistaken goal of his aspiration, and the intemperate course of his desire.” (Leech 1964 s. 57) “This blindness-of-mind we may regard as the cause of Tamburlaine’s never contented life. His argument for thinking an earthly crown the sole felicity is that Nature teaches us to have aspiring minds. [...] Ambition, furthermore, takes away a man’s concern for his life; it causes him to contemn religion; and it offers violence even to the laws of nature, for it causes the murder of parents, children, and brothers.” (Leech 1964 s. 60-61)

“Tamburlaine can enjoy no rest. He is insatiably greedy for glory. He loves to flatter himself in furious and frantic actions.” (Leech 1964 s. 62) “Regarded from the Elizabethan vantage point, Tamburlaine’s idealism appears in quite another light than that in which modern criticism has interpreted it. The great Scythian’s tragedy, when measured by the canons of Marlowe’s day, is seen to be the result of uncontrolled, misdirected, and diseased passions. The spectator feels *pity* when he beholds Tamburlaine’s aspiration turned wholly toward things of earth, carrying a noble man headlong into ambition and its attendant misery. And the spectator experiences *fear* and takes warning when he sees Tamburlaine’s inspiration, grounded in human passions rather than in divine wisdom, bringing a fevered madness. [...] Marlowe depicts Tamburlaine as the type of insatiable conqueror who falls victim to his own covetousness.” (Leech 1964 s. 67 og 69)

“One of Tamburlaine’s most important traits, his infinite aspiration, receives its first major treatment in a much discussed speech in the second act about the “thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown” (II, 7, 12-29). [...] It is a manifestation of the will to “soar above the highest sort.” When Tamburlaine seizes his first crown, the crown of Persia, he makes the act symbolic of his will [...] His contempt for earthly potentates and the assertion of his will combine in his conception of himself as the scourge of God, a conception which he shares with Hercules (III, 3, 41-54). He is the avenger, nemesis to the mighty of the world, contemptuous demonstrator of the absurdity of their claims, liberator of captives. He is not so much the instrument as the embodiment of a divine purpose. His serene confidence that his will is seconded by destiny gives him the magnificence of the hero who transcends the merely human. The activities of such a hero are always confined to the earth, though always pointing, in some sense, to a goal beyond. Thus Seneca’s Hercules Oetaeus, while rejoicing in his earthly deeds, never forgets that he is destined to become a star. Toward the end of Part II Tamburlaine begins to speak of an otherworldly goal, but even before this time the thrones and crowns of the world stand for something which though *in* the earth is yet not *of* it. Their importance to Tamburlaine lies in taking them away from tyrants like Bajazeth, for whom they have intrinsic value. Tamburlaine’s last instructions to his son are to sway the

throne in such a way as to curb the haughty spirits of the captive kings (Part II, V, 3, 234-41). An earthly crown represents the sweet fruition of his purpose in being. Tamburlaine's moving description of the aspiration for sovereignty has the utmost value in the play in presenting his double attitude towards the earth. And as he both seeks and despises earthly glory, he both claims and defies the power of the gods. "Jove himself" will protect him (I, 2, 179); not even Mars will force him to give up the crown of Persia (II, 7, 58-61). He does not belong entirely to either earth or heaven. Though he has distinctly human characteristics, both good and bad, he has something of the magnificence and the incomprehensibility of a deity. [...] He is not merely more angry, more cruel, more proud, more powerful [enn andre herskere, som han dreper]. Though sharing certain characteristics with his victims, he embodies a force of a different order." (Leech 1964 s. 72-74 og 77)

"In the depiction of the Herculean hero there is no relaxation of the tensions between his egotism and altruism, his cruelties and benefactions, his human limitations and his divine potentialities. Marlowe never lets his audience forget these antitheses. [...] The last moments of the play appeal to the spectator's pity by insisting on the tragic limitation of Tamburlaine as a human being." (Leech 1964 s. 90)

The Duchess of Malfi

John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* ble skrevet i årene 1613-14, men først publisert i 1623. "The Duchess of Malfi is a young widow forbidden by her brothers Ferdinand and the Cardinal to marry again. They put a creature of theirs, Bosola, into her service as a spy. The Duchess loves and secretly marries her steward, Antonio, and has three children. Bosola ultimately discovers and reports this. Antonio and the Duchess have to fly. The Duchess is captured, imprisoned and mentally tortured, and put to death. Ferdinand goes mad. In the last act he, the Cardinal, Antonio and Bosola are all killed with various confusions and in various horror." (Rupert Brooke i Rabkin 1968 s. 15) "Brooke tells only of five corpses: to these we must add the Cardinal's mistress Julia, two of the Duchess's children, her maid Cariola, and a servant – ten in all." (Rabkin 1968 s. 15) "The end is maze of death and madness." (Rabkin 1968 s. 9)

Hertuginnen av Malfi "is almost blameless. A young widow, she remarries beneath her, secretly, and against her brothers' wishes; but these blemishes on her conduct, stressed in Webster's narrative source, are almost unfelt in his portrayal of her gracious charm, shining out beside her brothers' blackness." (L. G. Salingar i Rabkin 1968 s. 106)

"The Cardinal's irrelevant mistress, Julia, dies of kissing a poisoned book – a favorite incident with the Elizabethans. The Cardinal himself is killed by Bosola, his attendants disregarding his cries for help, because he has told them that he will very likely imitate the ravings of his mad brother, and no one must pay any

attention [...] Bosola kills Antonio by mistake, and Ferdinand and Bosola kill each other. There is scarcely room on the stage for all the corpses” (William Archer i Rabkin 1968 s. 19).

“With respect to his own tragedy, Bosola’s emergence may be described as follows: as a kind of cynical act of rebellion against an evil universe, he pursues an evil course himself, rationalizing it in terms of gratitude and devotion to Ferdinand. He learns, through observing the suffering of the Duchess and through his other experiences, the virtue of her passiveness and a somewhat more masculine, active concept, which is that even in an evil universe one must remain virtuous – true to himself – and actively labor for what appears right. One must not only *see* himself: one must *be* himself. This, in Malraux’s famous phrase, is *la condition humaine*; and this is one of the facts which give tragic significance to human life. So Bosola seems to suggest, in his dying words:

... Oh this gloomy world,
In what a shadow, or deepe pit of darkness,
Doth (womanish, and feareful) mankind live!
Let worthy mindes nere stagger in distrust
To suffer death or shame, for what is just – (V. v. 124-128)

Bosola emerges then as a kind of baroque figure, struggling against an unyielding, darkly beautiful universe which produces evil, insists on virtue, but ultimately destroys evil and virtue alike. For Webster and for others, this is certainly man’s tragic fate.” (C. G. Thayer i Rabkin 1968 s. 111)

“The often weak motivation for the killings emphasizes the irrational evil that makes his world so nightmarish. Yet it is in death that Webster’s characters realize themselves, summon up the best of their humanity. Even his villains usually meet it with dignity.” (Herbert J. Muller i Rabkin 1968 s. 105)

“Images of death are everywhere in *The Duchess of Malfi*. They all but dominate the proposal scene. Ferdinand conjures up fantastic ways of murdering the Duchess and her husband, and his images of murder twine with the sexual imagery to create a horrifying effect.

I would have their bodies
Burnt in a coal-pit, with the ventage stopp’d,
That their curs’d smoke might not ascend to Heaven:
Or dip the sheets they lie in, in pitch or sulphur,
Wrap them in’t, and then light them like a match:
Or else to boil their Bastard to a cullis,
And give’t his lecherous father, to renew
The sin of his back. (II. v. 87)

There are the strange, hysterical images of death the Duchess evoked when she was confronted by the strangling cord. There is Bosola, disguised as a maker of tombs; there are the wax figures and the dead man's hand; and there are the murders of the Duchess and the screaming Cariola. In almost every scene, death makes its appearance. [...] The fourth act shows the destruction of good by evil and the way in which humanity can assert its integrity even in defeat. The fifth act shows what happens in a world where good is dead and integrity is absent. The lascivious Julia is murdered by her lover. Antonio is killed in error by the man who sought to save him. The Cardinal is trapped by Bosola. A servant who attempts to summon help is stabbed. The Cardinal's screams for help rouse the lunatic Ferdinand, and in the three-way scuffle the "wretched eminent things" are fatally wounded. Evil turns on evil: these are the rampaging disasters that follow the destruction of good, the full flood tide of death. [...] Webster is careful to show that all the important characters except the hysterical Cariola and the insane Ferdinand welcome death as inevitable. They seem to feel that death is not the result of man's inhumanity to man so much as a slight hastening of the processes of natural decay and a return, ultimately, to sweetness. The Cardinal asks "to be laid by, and never thought of." Bosola's soul is weary. Antonio senses that life is merely "a preparative to rest." [...] There is terror in this death struggle of evil, but there is dignity as well, and quiet – a quiet that seems almost an answer to the tormenting problems of the world." (Travis Bogard i Rabkin 1968 s. 47-49)

"Ferdinand, until Act IV, is more gruesome than his brother the Cardinal. His pathologically brutal treatment of his sister, culminating in the exquisite tortures he devises for killing her body and shattering her soul, certainly horrifies us more than the Cardinal's frigid Machiavellism. Yet it is Ferdinand, not his brother, who finally elicits our sympathies, for of the two only he finally struggles towards some morally oriented integrity of life. His famous utterance – "Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young" – is the inception of a struggle towards goodness – a struggle, it turns out, which ends in madness. But even his madness is a kind of triumph, for we can recognize its source as being moral self-revulsion. The Cardinal also struggles to maintain his integrity of life, but because for him this only involves a fight to hold on to the fruits of his viciousness, because he never retreats from evil, when he dies he is merely defeated. The Cardinal dies wishing only to be forgotten; Ferdinand with the words "O my sister" on his lips. Surely the difference in effect is very much "a question of virtue and vice." [...] Who should know better than Bosola, an essentially moral man who has yielded to the pressures of corruption, that the only thing which makes the struggle for integrity of life meaningful is its direction. His final knowledge that he has not suffered death and shame for what is just, that he has suffered them for nothing, is an agonized testament of faith in the moral structure of the world." (Seymour L. Gross i Rabkin 1968 s. 113)

"The later Elizabethan and the Jacobean poetry is forever brooding upon the more terrifying aspect of death, of the death of evil-doers, and of physical mortification

and corruption. No doubt the recurrence of the plague in London, with all its incidental horrors, acted as a constant stimulant to this mortuary imagination” (T. S. Eliot i Rabkin 1968 s. 102).

Nesten alle personene er “driven by compulsions they scarcely sense themselves, in which a Bosola’s awareness of the moral implications of his own actions has no binding power on that action and the imagery underlines the plot’s insistence that abnormality is the norm.” (Rabkin 1968 s. 6) “An intense capacity for feeling and suffering, within a clueless intellectual maze, springs from the deepened insight into character which was Webster’s greatest strength as a dramatists. [...]

In what a shadow, or deepe pit of darknesse,
Doth (womanish, and fearfull) mankind live. (V. v. 125-6)”
(Rabkin 1968 s. 28)

“[T]he theme of natural evil is central to the play. This theme, like that of courtly reward and punishment, is divided into three parts which are treated concurrently through the tragedy: first, the bestiality of man; second, the conception of the rotting body, accompanied by images of sexuality and of widespread corruption; and third, the dignity of death.” (Travis Bogard i Rabkin 1968 s. 42-43)

“The moralist teaches men how to avoid catastrophe. Webster is concerned only with how they accept it. The moralist explains the justice of men’s falls; Webster does not reassure us that measure for measure is the law of existence. Armed with the doctrine of free will the moralist cannot believe in fatality; but in the hideous mist of error that enshrouds Webster’s characters, no man can be called master of his fate, and no choice is clear until circumstances force men’s decisions. Webster dramatizes the mystery of the irrational will without moralistic gloss. [...] the Cardinal does not attempt to explain his goals, while Ferdinand calls attention to the nightmarish confusion of his mind. Even as Goneril and Regan have no reason to torture Lear, so Ferdinand has no reason to torture his sister, unless a frenzied egomania is “reason” enough.” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 66)

“Antonio has escaped to Milan, and the Duchess is back in Amalfi, where Ferdinand favors her with a visit. Alleging that he has “rashly made a solemn vow never to see her again,” he begs her to receive him in the dark. Then, affecting to “seal his peace with her,” he thrusts upon her a dead man’s hand.” (Rabkin 1968 s. 17)

“Like Flamineo, Bosola is a malcontent, embittered by experience, and hungry for the security which advancement will afford. He lacks Flamineo’s high-spirited wit but he is capable of true moral feeling, and although he can for a time relish his Machiavellian successes he is finally appalled by Ferdinand’s insane revenge upon the Duchess. He would like to be “honest” in Antonio’s way, but he knows himself

and the world too well to try, and he can never escape the self-pitying anger of the “neglected” man.” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 67)

“The Cardinal is a complementary portrait of the buried life: his diseased ego is satisfied not by a brute assertion of will but by a rational mastery of Machiavellian arts. He pursues, it would seem, the ultimate intellectual refinement of Machiavellian technique that becomes an end in itself. He does not have the Elizabethan Machiavel’s instinctive appetite for horrendous crime. He has a connoisseur’s taste for flawless villainy, for security in evil. On the surface he is nerveless, emotionless, so much the master of himself that even Bosola must admire his seeming fearlessness. But what appears at first to be a mastery of passion is finally revealed to be a deficiency of normal feeling, an emotional lifelessness. [...] Antonio knows better: “Some such flashes superficially hang on him, for forme: but observe his inward Character: he is a mellancholly Churchman” (I. i. 157-58). Apart from these superficial flashes the Cardinal has no commitment to life. He spends his last hours troubled by a dull headache of remorse and bored by the whisper of his conscience. Together with Ferdinand he represents the collaboration of sadistic fury and intellectuality that lies behind the totalitarian savagery in *Lear* and in the world around us. If there is a heavy-handed irony in the manner of his death, his sudden display of cowardice is not surprising in one so expert at murdering defenseless women. [...] If the Cardinal has any virtue it lies in the final knowledge of his insignificance – his request to be laid aside and forgotten.” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 70-71)

The Duchess “capriciously ignores the challenge of an aristocratic life, but the challenge of death – the supreme challenge in Jacobean tragedy – she accepts boldly and triumphantly. There is a beauty in her death that makes the ugliness of Ferdinand’s life unbearable and that shakes the cynical nihilism which is Bosola’s defense against conscience. What begins as a vicarious purge of the filthiness of Ferdinand’s mind becomes in the end a conflict of inner strength between the Duchess and her torturers. Caught in the trap that Fortune set for her she ceases to be Fortune’s slave. Her murderers would drag her down and open her eyes to the “realities” which they perceive; they would have her share the horror of their lives. They bring her to her knees, but it is the posture of heaven. They surround her with assassins but it is she who gives the last command:

Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out,
They then may feede in quiet. (IV. ii. 243-44)

From the lips of a woman who has gone beyond despair we learn the annihilating truth that the power to oppress and kill is an ultimate value only to those who find death “infinitely terrible.” ” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 71-72)

“For the Duchess no gesture of defiance is needed to obliterate the terror of death. It is against the attempt to despoil her humanity that she flings her celebrated

assertion of individuality, “I am Duchesse of *Malfy* still.” Perhaps we tend to exaggerate the heroic ring of this line, which could be justly interpreted as a tremor of meaningless pride. But even if it is an expression of that quality which Chapman called “noblesse,” there is no justification for removing the line from its context as *the* quintessential moment of the play. The Duchess’ strength is not a lonely existential awareness of self but a remembrance of love, expressed in her parting words to Cariola and in her answers to Bosola. The spirit of woman that once betrayed now sustains her, for she knows that the fragile, “illusory” joys of devotion are the deepest certainties of human existence. Webster’s other heroes and heroines die obsessed with their sins and follies, projecting their individual experience as the pattern of man’s fate. The Duchess is the only one to move out of self, to turn her thoughts outward upon those she loves and upward in serene religious faith. More than a conventional artistic “solution,” the Duchess’ piety seems an intuition of a realm of values obscured by the corruption of the Church (in which the Cardinal is a Prince) and by the cant that passes for religious conviction. Yet Webster does not allow us to share the Duchess’ conviction of the providential nature of her torments. As in *Lear* the characters in the *Duchess* interpret their tragic experiences in various and contradictory ways. And if any one character speaks for Webster at the close, it is not Delio, the outsider, but Bosola, who was an actor “in all the maine of all”:

Oh, this gloomy world,
 In what a shadow, or deepe pit of darknesse,
 Doth (womanish, and fearefull) mankind live!
 Let worthy mindes nere stagger in distrust
 To suffer death, or shame, for what is just – (V. v. 124-28)

It is not the courage of to be greatly evil which Bosola commends, but the courage to be greatly good in a world which offers a hundred crooked subterfuges and which demands the sham, not the reality, of virtue.” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 72)

“It is a commonplace of Webster criticism that *The Duchess of Malfi* falls into anticlimax in Act V, with the Duchess dead and only a huddle of murders to follow. There is some truth in the criticism, for the presentation of Ferdinand’s grotesque raving, Bosola’s uneasy and fumbling pursuit of virtue, the Cardinal’s sudden maladroitness, is more impressive as a scheme than as part of an acted play. But the intention is surely to suggest the presence of the dead Duchess haunting those who have lived along with her. She is mentioned in every scene; her murder is the immediate cause of every detail of the action here; Ferdinand dies invoking her. Webster does not need her ghost – he is content to make a dubious echo speak for her, borrowing Antonio’s words – but her presence is meant to be felt as that of the dead Julius Caesar in the concluding scenes of Shakespeare’s play. And the effect of this is to reduce the stature of those still alive in the fifth act: they are haunted men who cannot escape the disembodied judgement that hangs in the air. So, in

their loss of stature, in the now patent impotence of the individual will, they become almost the “maggots” that Rupert Brooke believed to be the only inhabitants of a Webster play. [...] These men acting out their doom are, to change the image, seen through the wrong end of the telescope. We may at moments find the horrible and the pitiful in what happens to them, but we are not properly involved in the immediate event. We ceased to feel such an involvement at the end of Act IV, and we cannot much doubt that this effect was deliberate.” (Clifford Leech i Rabkin 1968 s. 89)

“When the eight madmen have gone through their frigid antics and talked their dismal nonsense, Bosola enters disguised as an Old Man, announces himself as a tomb-maker, and talks a great deal of fantastic stuff “fit for a charnel,” as the Duchess aptly observes. Then enter “Executioners, with a coffin, cords, and a bell,” who proceed to strangle, on the open stage, first the Duchess, and then the struggling, shrieking, biting and scratching Cariola. From the modern editions it would seem that they also strangle in sight of the audience the Duchess’s two young children. But when we read the original quarto, in the light of our better knowledge of the structure of the Elizabethan stage, we see that the children were strangled behind the scenes, and their bodies revealed by the drawing of a curtain.” (William Archer i Rabkin 1968 s. 18-19)

“[F]or all the references to Fortune in the *Duchess*, Webster’s characters are not the playthings of a capricious goddess. Nor are they like the heroic characters of *The White Devil* swept blindly to their graves. For the unreflecting villains of Webster’s first tragedy there is no hope of redemption, no chance of moral illumination before their deaths. For Bosola, Antonio, and the others the redemptive moment is possible; the moral opportunity is real and within their grasp. They have the chance to protect, spare, or rescue the woman who is the center of their lives. Some form of moral awareness comes to all of them (even to the Cardinal), and when they awaken too late from the sordid dreams of their past they despair, not of life itself but of their contemptible selves. For Antonio and Bosola the burden of self-knowledge is almost as terrible as it is for Ferdinand. Even though it gives them the strength to try to change their lives, it warps their actions as they move through death-in-life towards the grave. In Antonio and Bosola we confront again, but with deeper understanding, the paralysis of will that committed Flamineo to a career which he knew was hopeless. We see now that it is not conscience which makes cowards of us all but a hunger for personal safety; we discover with Bosola that security is the suburb of Hell. In *The White Devil* only the pious were deluded by false securities; in the *Duchess*, however, those who seem to see the world most clearly are most deeply infatuated with nonexistent safeties.” (Robert Ornstein i Rabkin 1968 s. 66-67)

“There are roughly five types of curse: curses upon wrongdoers, either by the sufferer (imprecation) or the Church (excommunication); curses as adjunct to an oath; malignant cursing of the innocent by witches and sorcerers; hereditary curses

(blights) upon a family – usually an extension of cursing in the first sense; and general curses upon specific acts, by whomsoever committed, which are a form of primitive legislation and of which the Jewish curse pronounced by the Levites from Mount Ebal is a powerful example. The curse which the Duchess lays on her brothers invokes the powers of God and is a religious imprecation. Such a curse is the last weapon left to the helpless and oppressed, and was frequently used in Elizabethan tragedy, notably by Titus in *Titus Andronicus*, by Anne and other victims in *King Richard III*, by Constance in *King John*, and pre-eminently by Timon and Lear. The power of such a curse was greatest in a parent or king, in whose outraged authority God saw an image of His own. [...] In the earlier scene where she first recognizes the doom which is upon her, the Duchess realizes that the hereditary curse lies upon her children, and says

I intend, since they were born accurs'd;
Curses shall be their first language. (III. v. 137-8)”
(Muriel C. Bradbrook i Rabkin 1968 s. 28-29)

“Webster returns again to themes of “impossible desire” and situations where “pity would destroy pity.” Haunted by his predecessors’ conception of moral law, he can neither accept nor amend it; in a world he sees as corrupt through and through, he can only exploit his own discomfort.” (L. G. Salingar i Rabkin 1968 s. 108)

Fedra

I franskmannen Jean Racines tragedier skrevet på 1600-tallet kan det være lidenskapelig kjærlighet, men det er alltid et innslag av hat i kjærligheten (Jules Lemaitre gjengitt fra Roubine 1971 s. 163). Et av Racines hovedtemaer er menneskets ensomhet (Roubine 1971 s. 218 og 221). Han er mest kjent for *Fedra* (1677), en bearbeiding av en tragedie av Evripides. For mange tragedier, og for Racines tragedier i særdeleshet, gjelder dette: “Maktkampen ser med andre ord ut til å være et viktig tragisk fundament: maktkamp mellom guder, mellom guder og mennesker, og menneskene innbyrdes. Selv om Racines personer kan ha visjoner om et annet liv, tvinges de inn i genrens eget verdisystem. Den tragiske helt streber etter makt og ære, etter å oppfylle eller bekrefte sin aristokratiske bestemmelse, også i kjærlighet eller kanskje nettopp i kjærlighet (hos Racine)” (Karin Gundersen i Gundersen, Henriksen og Reinton 1982 s. 33).

“Racine remarks proudly in his preface to *Phèdre* that ‘the smallest faults are severely punished’ in the play, as though this were a recommendation. Justice for the Jansenist Racine is dispensed by a hidden God whose ways we should not even expect to be intelligible to us; it is enough for us to know that, God being God, they are divine. If the Almighty transcends our discourse, then his actions are not just, but neither are they unjust. Despite this, Roland Barthes argues in *Sur Racine* that Racine’s universe is manifestly unjust, and that in order to rationalize this men and

women must fabricate some guilt for themselves. Tragic characters are thus born innocent, but become guilty in order to save God's face." (Eagleton 2003 s. 139)

Dramaene viser fram menneskers store, voldsomme lidenskaper, i et forsøk på å framstille det evig-menneskelige i livets mest avgjørende øyeblikk (Auerbach 1988 s. 367). Litteraturforskeren Erich Auerbach kaller det "den til det ytterste drevne lidenskapskulten" (1988 s. 369). Mennesket er fullt av motsetninger og en fange av sine lidenskaper (Ligny og Rousselot 2016 s. 42). Hos Racine og de andre franske tragediedikterne i hans samtid taler de tragiske personene med "sublim stilisering og hengir seg til sine lidenskapelige følelser" (Auerbach 1988 s. 364). Handlingen og språket virker løsrevet fra all hverdagsvirkelighet.

"Desire in the tragedies of Racine has just this merciless, inhuman quality, as a sort of natural catastrophe which suddenly rears its head and knocks you sideways. It is a sickness or affliction to be lamented as deeply as death, and from which death is often the only exit. Racinian theatre is one in which desire continually misses its target, so that its strict economy is often enough a balance of non-reciprocities, a failure of symmetry all round, as one character loves another who loves another. Andromache loves her dead husband Hector, Pyrrhus loves Andromache, Hermione loves Pyrrhus and Orestes loves Hermione. In *Britannicus*, Nero is in love with Junia, beloved of Britannicus; Titus of *Bérénice* loves Bérénice but casts her off, while Antiochus loves her unrequitedly. Phèdre loves Hippolytus, who detests her, Aricia loves him too, and Hippolytus loves her in return. All this then gives rise in Racine's drama to the series of mismatchings, mystifications, backfirings, double effects, mutual misperceptions, counter-productive strategies, self-undoings and self-divisions by which desire may finally cancel itself out into death. This stringent neoclassical form is less a matter of equipoise than of a tight web of mutual thwartings, which seems harmonious only because all the characters are potentially engulfed in such conflict. The homogeneous language hints at this claustrophobic enclosure even as its elegance rises above the appalling savagery it portrays. These mannered patricians are also libidinal monsters. There is constant disruption within the most rigorous order, so that disruption becomes itself a kind of sinister symmetry, the pitiless repetitions of desire. The choice for a Phèdre is between being ravaged by this unforgiving law, or destroyed by the equally unrelenting edicts of society." (Eagleton 2003 s. 147)

Hos Racine inntreffer katastrofen ikke bare som en straff for umoralske handlinger, men for kjærlighet og lidenskap av en styrke som samtidens Frankrike fant upassende (Monika Ritzer i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41756963>; lesedato 29.08.22).

"[P]assion is a register as well as a delirium, a remorseless fate as well as a random infection. Love is at once inevitable and fortuitous: this irreplaceable person is the only conceivable object of it, even though of course it could always have been someone else. Though characters like Phèdre act and scheme as free agents, they

are determined at every point by this ruthlessly impersonal yearning, which divides them so radically from themselves that they can only look on helplessly as their passion carries them to their ruin. [...] Love is a lethal addiction which makes you a stranger to yourself, forces you into dissembling, disavowal, self-torture, and can veer in the blinking of an eye into its opposite.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 148)

“As for Jean Racine, dramas like *Andromache*, *Britannicus* and *Phèdre* involve violence and destruction, but there, are no deaths in *Bérénice*, which ends in reconciliation, while in *Athalie* the murderous Athalie is herself killed so that freedom and justice may triumph.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 84)

Pierre Corneille tar i sine dramaer utgangspunkt i krig, politiske komplott og revolusjon, som er skremmende i seg selv, mens det hos Racine er personlighetene som er skremmende når de kommer i en tilstand der de glemmer alt: verdighet, forsiktighet, fornuft (Germain 1962 s. 10). Personene blir som blinde og kan bli grusomme. “Kriminelle på tross av seg selv, ynkvverdige på tross av sine forbrytelser” (Germain 1962 s. 12). “Alt i alt er Racines menneske en egoist” som vil være lykkelig og bruker alle midler for å oppnå lykken, også umoralske midler (Germain 1962 s. 12). Alle er “fanger av sin egen egoisme og de andres, de finner alle som en konsekvens av deres karakter den *tragiske ensomhet*” (Germain 1962 s. 13).

Intens kjærlighet eller store ambisjoner får mennesket til å miste sin vei og gå til grunne (Ligny og Rousselot 2016 s. 46). I klassisismens århundre var tilskuerne fascinert av hvordan Racine framstiller det irrasjonelle og voldsomme. Stykkene hans viser kjedereaksjoner der følelsene blir stadig sterkere. I 4. akt lar han lidenskapene roe seg litt slik at det øynes håp, men i 5. akt tar de rasende følelsene helt over og leder til katastrofen.

“Incest, rivalry among brothers, murder of the father, overthrow of the sons – these are the fundamental actions of Racinian theatre” (Roland Barthes sitert fra Eagleton 2003 s. 163). “Few of Racine’s characters understand the meaning of the word moderation.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 234)

Hos Racine og de andre klassisistiske tragediedikterne er det aldri en gammel, syk eller sosialt degradert person som står i sentrum av tragedien. Det er aldri en kong Oidipus eller en kong Lear på scenen i disse dramaene (Auerbach 1988 s. 362). Tematisering av det kroppslige mente Racine hørte til på komediescenen.

I flere av Racines verk er en kvinne forelsket i en mann som ikke elsker henne, og dette misforholdet framstilles som noe helt utenfor menneskets kontroll (Germain 1962 s. 7).

I Racines dramaer er en konge, prins eller prinsesse alltid bevisst sin posisjon i samfunnet, uansett hvilke tragiske hendelser de måtte utsettes for. Selv i de

sterkeste følelsesutbrudd omtaler de sin sosiale stand ved å kalle seg “fyrste”, “prinsesse” eller en annen høy tittel (Auerbach 1988 s. 355-356).

Fedra er fylt av følelser: kjærlighet, håp, skam, anger, sjalusi. Hun elsker sin stesønn, men vet at denne kjærligheten er forbudt. Temaet i Racines skuespill er lidenskapenes tragedie (Lanson og Tuffrau 1953 s. 284). Han viser sjeler i krise. I hvert menneske slumrer det impulsive krefter, og den sterkeste er kjærligheten (Lanson og Tuffrau 1953 s. 285). Derfor er det kjærligheten som oftest utløser det tragiske. Det er umulig å motstå denne kraften. For Racine er kjærligheten *fatal* (s. 285). Det hjelper ikke å bebreide seg selv, å dømme eller fordømme seg selv. Denne oppfatningen av følelsene er helt forenlig med oppfatningen innen jansenismen, den religiøse retningen som Racine stod nærmest. Jansenistene oppfattet menneskenaturen som svak, uten evne til å styre seg hvis den ikke har Guds nåde. Menneskets vilje strekker ikke til, særlig ikke hos kvinner (s. 286). Fordi kvinnene er mer i sine lidenskapers vold enn mennene, var det naturlig for Racine å skape mange kvinnelige hovedroller. Hos Racine er imidlertid både kvinner og menn ofte impulsive og får angre dette (Lanson og Tuffrau 1953 s. 194). Slik oppstår “the ‘majestic sadness’ Racine achieved” (Secretan 1973 s. 42).

Kvinnene domineres av følelser: Hermiones stolthet, Roxanes ærgjerrighet, Fedras samvittighetskvaler (Germain 1962 s. 9). Racines heltinner “er ikke noe annet enn en lidenskap” (Germain 1962 s. 10). Følelsene, ikke minst opplevelsen av ulykke, blir hvitglødende (Germain 1962 s. 19).

Tesevs elsker Fedra som elsker Hippolytos som elsker Aricie (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 30). Fedras kjærlighet til Hippolytos er sosialt forbudt, og en forbudt kjærlighet leder hos Racine til døden. I Racines skuespill er kjærligheten både en irrasjonell, uimotståelig og destruktiv kraft, og slår ned som et lyn. Fedras navn kommer fra et gresk ord for “strålende” (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 16). Den oppstår som en plutselig flamme og piner personen som den oppflammer (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 30-31). Tilværelsen blir for Fedra en lidelse, en tortur (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 18). Fedra kaller seg selv et monster; det er hun som (ifølge Racines forord til skuespillet) sterkest føler det skrekkelige i at hun elsker Hippolytos. I forordet skriver Racine at Fedra “verken er helt skyldig eller helt uskyldig”.

Racines dialoger i hans dramaer “forandrer nesten ikke følelsene og lidenskapene som personene har; de er først og fremst en ny mulighet for motstanderne til å lide, til å tenke seg at den andre ønsker å være ubarmhjertig, som i sin tur rettfærdiggjør deres [heltinnes] egen ubarmhjertighet.” (Germain 1962 s. 12) Personene forstår hverandre ikke.

Kjærlighet er hos Racine en uforutsigbar lidenskap som gjør mennesker moralsk blinde (Garapon 1988 s. 40). Denne lidenskapen befinner seg utenfor det viljestyrte, og den står derfor i motsetning til frihet (Garapon 1988 s. 57). Fedra vet

at hun er et offer for kjærlighetsgudinnens Afrodites hevn. Afrodite (også kjent som Venus) vil hevne seg på Solen for at denne lyste opp da hun hadde et ulovlig kjærlighetsmøte med guden Mars. Fedra er datterdatter av solguden Helios.

Alt tilsier at Fedra skal elske Hippolytos: gudene, arv, hennes alder, Tesevs utroskap, Hippolytos' uskyld, hennes egen dyd, hennes hang til drømmerier, hendelsene i seg selv og de dårlige rådene fra hennes tjener CEnone (Germain 1962 s. 16). "Racine's Phèdre is literally dying of desire, and his Hippolytus speaks of love as the author of dreadful ruins and calamities." (Eagleton 2003 s. 268)

"[D]esire is a wayward, anarchic force which plays havoc with duty and violates the bonds of friendship, kinship, legality, civic allegiance. Desire, as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel is aware, is no respecter of social distinctions, which is one reason why it is so baneful. To see desire as anarchic is no doubt particularly tempting for a rationalistic age, one for which emotion can only be defined as the rival of reason" (Eagleton 2003 s. 147-148).

Gjennom bekjennelsen til Tesevs på slutten av stykket og ved modig å ta på seg ansvaret for Hippolytos' død, "renser" Fedra seg og kan dø med en "gjenopprettet" moralsk standard (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 18). Hun dør med verdighet.

Hippolytos er sønn av kong Tesevs og amasonedronningen Antiope. Etter sin død ble Hippolytos æret som en gud (Mathé og Couprie 1988 s. 57; i Italia under navnet Virbius).

Den franske litteratursosiologen Lucien Goldmann "derived Racine's 'tragic vision' directly from his Jansenism, and related this religious creed in turn to the discontent of a particular social class. This was the *noblesse de robe*, the higher ranks of the legal profession" som ble utmanøvrert av kongens byråkrati og som fikk en tragisk livsfølelse (Brereton 1968 s. 66-67). Goldmann setter tre begreper opp mot hverandre: Gud, verden og mennesket. "When the middle term is out of harmony with the other two or, to put the proposition in another way, when God, though not absent from the World, is 'silent' in it, the man who is conscious of this possesses a tragic awareness." (Brereton 1968 s. 67) Den tragiske opplevelsen slik den kommer til uttrykk hos Racine på 1600-tallet, skyldes ifølge Goldmann en religiøs livsfølelse innen en bestemt sosial klasse.

Det har blitt hevdet at den klassiske franske tragedien er nært kulturelt og politisk knyttet til eneveldet som samfunnssystem (Sayre 2011 s. 217). Franco Moretti kaller "the age of absolutism" for "the age of tragedy" (Moretti 2005 s. 27). "In the world of tragedy the monarch is truly *absolute*." (Moretti 2005 s. 43) "Only tragedy looks the new prince straight in the face, taking his absolutist claims at their word and systematically elaborating them." (Moretti 2005 s. 49)

I forordet til *Berenice* (1670) skrev Racine: “Det er ikke essensielt å inkludere blod og lik i en tragedie. Det er nok at handlingen er opphøyd, skikkelsene heroiske, lidenskapene vekket, og mest av alt, at stykket puster den majestetiske tristheten som er tragediens hele fornøyelse.” I *Ifigenia* (1674) slites den greske kongen Agamemnon mellom kjærligheten til sin datter og begjæret etter ære. En kilde opplyser at den unge Ifigenia i dramaet, som skal ofres, fikk hele det franske hoffet til å gråte (Ligny og Rousselot 2016 s. 47).

Gudenes stemmer kommer i Racines tragedier til uttrykk som orakler, syner og profetier, som mystiske og destruktive krefter langt utenfor menneskers kontroll (Tony Gheeraert i <https://journals.openedition.org/episteme/922?lang=en>; lesedato 17.03.21).

Handlingens, stedets og tidens enhet ble innen den franske klassisismen en standard som måtte følges. Tragediedikterne oppfattet det som usannsynlig at det i løpet av et par timer på scenen kunne utspille seg hendelser som lå langt fra hverandre i tid og sted. Mulighetene for å skape illusjon på scenen var små på grunn av teatrenes tekniske begrensninger (Auerbach 1988 s. 365-366).

I Frankrike på 1600-tallet var (kunstnerisk vellykkete) tragedier den litteraturen som med størst sikkerhet ga både intellektuell anerkjennelse og økonomisk gevinst (Joch og Wolf 2005 s. 51).

Tragedien på 1700-tallet

Den engelske forfatteren og dramatikerinnen Hannah Mores *Percy* (1777) “is based on a twelfth century story of Eudes de Faiel, which Belloy (the author of *Le Siège de Calais*) had already dramatised; but the horrible episode of Raoul de Coucy’s heart was, of course, omitted. The action takes place among old-fashioned English heroes and shows how Elwina, betrothed to Percy from her childhood, has wed earl Raby at her father’s behest, but cannot return his love. Just as the earl’s suspicions are being aroused at this coldness, Percy returns with glory from the crusades and hastens to his lady, not knowing that she is married. The spectators watch the sentimental lover as he is gradually trapped by the jealous husband, while the heroine is torn between duty to her marriage vow and her unconquerable passion for the suitor of her youth. In the end, Elwina goes mad and drinks poison, while Raby slays Percy, and then, learning that his wife was chaste, kills himself. Artificial and insipid as the play now seems, its combination of emotion, action and theory was considered a revelation. Besides the most ample recognition in London, the drama was acted in Vienna, and the authoress was elected a member of the Paris and Rouen academies.” (<http://www.bartleby.com/221/1209.html>; lesedato 22.06.16)

Tyskeren Johann Wolfgang von Goethes *Ifigeneia på Tauris* (1779) “epitomizes Goethe’s original approach to tragedy. [...] For sheer beauty, *Iphigenie* is nearly

unsurpassed; the control of strong and vital emotions, the circumscribed setting (a holy shrine, between the King's palace and the island's coast), the loftiness of language and ideal, the gradual victory of enlightened humanity over barbarism: these are some of the features that make up this more meditative and lyrical, rather than dramatic, masterpiece of the period. The German term *Trauerspiel* (literally 'play of grief') fills the bill much better than *tragedy*: Goethe's deepest convictions lay in an educational idea, namely the development of the individual towards self-knowledge, towards knowledge of the great laws governing the universe, in practice, towards greater humanity, awareness and fulness of life." (Secretan 1973 s. 72-73)

Det første borgerlige sørgespillet var antakelig det anonyme *Arden von Feversham* (ca. 1592), fulgt av Thomas Heywoods *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (ca. 1603), så det anonyme *A Tragedy in Yorkshire* (ca. 1605-08), Thomas Dekker m.fl.s *The Honest Whore* (1604) og John Ford m.fl.s *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) (Gelfert 1995 s. 66-67). Men det går an å skille mellom borgerlige sørgespill og tragedier som foregår i borgerlig miljø, slik Gelfert hevder at tyskerne Gotthold Ephraim Lessings *Emilia Galotti* (1772) og Friedrich Schillers *Kabal og kjærlighet* (1784) er tragedier i borgerlig miljø (Gelfert 1995 s. 72).

Det vesentligste kjennetegnet ved borgerlige sørgespill er at personene tilhører borgerskapet (eller lav-adelen), og altså ikke er konger og prinser. Vanlige borgere i samfunnet skal på scenen i disse dramaene være i stand til å vekke tragiske følelser når deres ulykker og katastrofer framstilles. Et skuespill i denne tradisjonen er franskmannen Paul Landois' *Silvie* (1741). To tyske eksempler på borgerlige sørgespill er Gotthold Ephraim Lessings *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755) og Friedrich Schillers *Kabal og kjærlighet* (1784). Begge handler om ulykkelige kjærlighets-historier med en ung kvinne fra borgerskapet i sentrum av handlingen. Schillers skuespill angriper adelen som ikke kan tolerere et ekteskap mellom en borgerlig kvinne og en adelig mann.

I borgerlige sørgespill blir skrekk og medlidenhet (de greske betegnelsene var "phobos" og "eleos") til et skyld-og-soning-mønster (Gelfert 1995 s. 66). Lessing hevdet at medlidenhet gjør publikum til bedre, mer moralske mennesker (Monika Ritzer i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41756963>; lesedato 29.08.22). Sørgespillene er arvtakere fra den "høye" tragedie (Grimminger 1990 s. 178). Borgerskapet hadde blitt mektig og selvbevisst nok til å plassere personer av sin egen stand i tragedier, i noen grad til fortrenghet for adelsmenn og -kvinner (Arnold og Sinemus 1983 s. 310). I Lessings sørgespill erstattes hoffets høyadel med mennesker fra landadelen (Grimminger 1990 s. 178-179).

I Lessings *Emilia Galotti* (1772) synes hennes far at en død datter er bedre enn en umoralsk datter, og hun selv vil heller dø enn å bli en fyrstes elskerinne. Hun er en borgerlig kvinne som nekter å la seg forføre og utnytte av en adelsmann. Hennes holdning skyldes en dyp anstendighetsfølelse som har blitt kalt "plikstens heroisme"

(Grimminger 1990 s. 181). Heltinnen blir en martyr for plikten. Den er viktigere enn livet. Alt kan ofres, unntatt dyden.

Det har blitt hevdet at de borgerlige sørgespillene ikke er ekte tragedier fordi de ikke fører til en opplevelse av katarsis, men bare rører tilskuerne til tårer (Gelfert 1995 s. 88). Dette gjelder f.eks. Lessings *Miss Sara Sampson*, men ikke *Emilia Galotti*. Det førstnevnte viser et konfliktfylt forhold mellom adelen og borgerskapet, og mellom dyd og synd. Men i *Emilia Galotti* er det ingen enkel moralsk dualisme. Emilia tror ikke at hennes dydighet er sterk nok, og derfor ber hun sin far om å drepe henne. Idealet om dyd kan bare reddes gjennom et dødelig offer, som er en tragisk situasjon (Gelfert 1995 s. 89).

Fram til sluttscenen med Emilia Galotti og hennes far har hun hatt tid til å tenke igjennom betydningen av den lange kjeden av hendelser som prinsens erotiske tilnærming innledet. Til slutt forstår hun at en kompromissløs holdning, og som hennes far utvilsomt ville rådet henne til å ha, ville forhindret at hennes forlovede Appiani ble drept. Hennes nøling eller svakhet, hennes respekt for en prins som påberopte seg å ha Gud på sin side, ledet til drapet på forloveden. Nølingen var hennes hamartia, og hun føler at hun kun gjennom å dø kan sone sin "synd" (Schillemeit 1971 s. 56-57). Hennes respekt for autoriteter, og dessuten å lytte til sin svake, pragmatiske mor, leder til hennes død. Hun utvikler seg gjennom dramaet fra heteronomi (lydighet overfor en autoritet utenfor henne selv) til autonomi (i denne sammenheng fri anerkjennelse av sin plikt) (Schillemeit 1971 s. 60).

Friedrich Schiller framstiller mennesket som splittet mellom to krav eller nødvendigheter: det kroppslige og det åndelige. Mennesket er fritt, men samtidig konfrontert med disse to dimensjonene i tilværelsen som står i motsetning til hverandre. Det er alltid slik at et fritt menneske skader andre menneskers frihet, og Schiller viser utveisløshetene som oppstår (Schneider 1967 s. 78-79). For han er menneskehjertet, ikke samvittigheten, en garantist for at mennesket handler riktig, med hjertet som symbol for individets integritet (Schneider 1967 s. 82).

Schiller viser tragiske konfrontasjoner mellom "maktens trauma" og ideen om frihet (Grimminger 1990 s. 224). Hans ungdommelige tragediehelter overlever ikke den splittelsen de har i seg selv, men i undergangen erkjenner de "fornuftens imperativer som de har forbrutt seg mot" (Grimminger 1990 s. 208).

Den engelske dramatiker George Lillo's *Merchant of London* (1731) er et borgerlig sørgespill. En svak mann blir forført av en ondskapsfull kvinne og ender som angrende synder i galgen. Dramaet er en "domestic tragedy [...] The play was originally advertised as *The Merchant; or, the True History of George Barnwell* [...] The play does not open with the tragic hero, or indeed, with an exposition for the plot. It opens with a discourse presenting the values and attitudes of the ideal

merchant. Thorowgood first asserts the immense political power of the group he represents, for it is a group which decides about war and peace; then he demonstrates his role as an exemplary father presiding over a well-regulated household. In the following scene, the vixenish Millwood prepares to seduce Thorowgood's apprentice Barnwell. As the embodiment of the antagonistic principle, she challenges the ideal set by Thorowgood. Far from being an incidental flaw in construction, the disjunctive structure of this beginning plays a vital role in shaping the drama's meaning. It sets the frame which defines the ideology of domestic tragedy in general and that of *The History of George Barnwell* in particular, with Thorowgood embodying the ideals of peacefulness, order, civilization, and Millwood embodying their opposites, namely war, civil disorder, and barbarous exploitation. Thus Thorowgood's presence, which critics have frequently found obtrusive and unmotivated in terms of dramatic necessity, is important in terms of ideological necessity. Validated by the respect accorded to him by all of the characters except Millwood, Thorowgood's viewpoint provides the standard against which Barnwell's behaviour is measured." (Doris Feldmann i <https://books.openedition.org/psn/3828?lang=en>; lesedato 26.05.21)

Tragedien på 1800- og 1900-tallet

Tradisjonen med borgerlige sørgespill fortsatte på 1800-tallet. Henrik Wergeland ga i 1828 ut *Sinclars Død: Historisk nationalt Sørgespil i tre Acter med Mellemspil og Efterspil*. Tyskeren Friedrich Hebbel skrev også innen sjangeren. "Til grunn for Hebbels dramatikkk lå en tragisk verdensanskuelse. Han så enkeltindividets tilværelse som et frafall fra en opprinnelig sammenheng, et "ur-jeg", og derfor som en form for eksistensiell synd, uavhengig av og forut for enhver individuell skyld eller konkrete sosiale omstendigheter. Karakteristisk for hans dramatikkk er de store kvinnerollene, utviklingen av tragedien gjennom avdekking av katastrofens forhistorie, i tilslutning til Sofokles' *Ødipus*, og tilknytningen til det borgerlige sørgespill. Hebbel, som selv kom fra svært beskjedne kår (hans far var murer), ville vise at tragedier kunne utspille seg også i slike omgivelser. I *Maria Magdalene* [1843] driver faren hensynet til borgerlig moral og ære ut i det absurde og får datteren Klara til å se selvmord som eneste mulighet til å oppnå uavhengighet" (Narve Fulsås i https://www.ibsen.uio.no/BRINNL_brevInnledning_7_2.xhtml; lesedato 09.08.19). Hebbel skrev også *Agnes Bernauer: Tysk sørgespill* (1851).

Russeren Vissarion Belinskij ble ekskludert fra universitetet i 1832 fordi han hadde skrevet tragedien *Dmitri Kalinin*, som angrep livegenskapet, dvs. at småbønder som leide jord ikke kunne forlate stedet og ble behandlet som slaver. I skuespillet "the main character commits incest and fratricide, crimes that the author blamed the regime of servitude" (<https://thebiography.us/en/belinsky-vissarion-grigorievich>; lesedato 30.03.20).

I den tyske dikteren Heinrich von Kleists lange novelle “Michael Kohlhaas” (1821) blir hovedpersonen, på grunn av sin prinsippfasthet og sitt sterke behov for å realisere en viktig verdi, kastet inn i den konflikten eller dialektikken en slik prinsippfasthet kan føre med seg. Kohlhaas blir som forblindet, som så gjør at hans positive streben snus om til sin motsetning. Det kompromissløse, den absolutte verdien han kjemper for, leder til katastrofen (Gelfert 1995 s. 15).

“Like the Sartrean existentialist, the Greek protagonist in Schelling’s eyes chooses to be responsible for all that he has done, wittingly or not; but since he can do so only by embracing death, he loses this freedom in the act of gaining it. A textbook example would be Heinrich von Kleist’s *Prince Friedrich von Homberg*, in which Homberg is sentenced to death by the Prussian state and subsequently pardoned, but determines to be executed anyway so as to glorify the law, exercise his supreme freedom, and accept responsibility for his actions. In a final irony, the gallantry of this resolution saves him in any case.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 120)

Den amerikanske dikteren og dramatiker George H. Boker skrev en rekke tragedier på 1800-tallet, bl.a. *Anne Boleyn* (1850) og *Francesca da Rimini* (1855). “Boker’s first play, *Calaynos* [1848], was a tragedy known for its depiction of the racial issues between the Spanish and the Moors. This play attracted audiences in London, Chicago, Baltimore, and Albany. It portrays a detailed story of a wife who is seduced by her husband’s devious friend, who exposes that Calaynos has Moorish ancestry. During this time of writing his plays, Boker was determining, himself, the difference between poetic and dramatic style. Boker is best remembered for his last play, *Francesca da Rimini*, which is a verse tragedy based on the story of Paolo and Francesca from the fifth canto of Dante’s *Inferno*. According to critic Paul D. Voelker, this is to be known as Boker’s “masterpiece,” which some scholars rate as the “best nineteenth-century American play.” ” (http://pabook2.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Boker__George_Henry.html; lesedato 15.06.16)

Den tyske politikeren og forfatteren Ferdinand Lassalles *Franz von Sickingen: En historisk tragedie* (1859) “assigns to personality a role in determining the course of history. [...] Lassalle wanted to improve upon the historical drama as created by Schiller and Goethe; to go a step further. The historical struggle was not, as is especially the case with Schiller, merely to supply the background for the tragic conflict, while the real dramatic action is concerned only with purely individual interests and destinies. The historical conditions of the times and of the people were to be the actual subject of the tragedy, so that this should not concern itself with individuals as such, individuals who are but the representatives and embodiment of the conflicting interests, but with the greatest and most potent destinies of nations – “destinies which determine the weal or woe of the general spirit of the time, and which are made by the dramatis personae with the consuming passions begotten of historic aims, the one question of their life.” [...] As its title indicates, its central idea is the struggle of Franz von Sickingen against the German princes. Sickingen,

a Franconian nobleman, was one of those nobles who, at the time of the Reformation, stood out not only against the princes of the various German states, but also against the rule of the Church of Rome in Germany. Sickingen towered above others of his class by his moral and intellectual qualities, his military capacity, his broad view, and his readiness to succour the oppressed. Together with his learned, and even more enthusiastic friend, Ulrich von Hutten, he attempted to bring about a revolutionary movement, with the object of restoring to the German Empire its past glory, but freed from the influence of Rome. But their efforts failed. The burghers in the towns and the peasants in the country had no confidence in the nobles, while most of the latter deserted their leaders. Sickingen was defeated by the superior armies of the princes, and fell, mortally wounded, at Landstul in 1523. Hutten was forced to fly to Switzerland, where he died, in poverty, at the little island of Utnau, on the Lake of Zurich. [...] "Read my tragedy," he writes to Sophie von Soltzew; "everything I could say to you here, I have made Hutten say. He too had to bear all kinds of calumny, every form of hatred, every species of malevolence. I have made of him the mirror of my soul, and I was able to do this as his fate and my own are absolutely identical, and of astounding similarity." " (Eduard Bernstein i <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bernstein/works/1893/lassalle/chap02.htm>; lesedato 18.12.19)

"To write tragedy means in some sense to believe, if not in God or some other metaphysical order, then at least in human dignity. It was that that made Ibsen above all a writer of modern tragedy who occasionally used comic techniques in his work to communicate an essentially tragic vision." (Howarth 1978 s. 164) Innslag av komedie finnes f.eks. i Ibsens *Vildanden* (1884).

Ibsen viser "a deadlock between past and present, as the contaminated origins of your present achievement, as in *Pillars of the Community*, return to plague you, or as the struggle to clear away present falsehood in the name of the future strangles that future at birth. It is impossible to live without accruing debts, but to pay them or pass them over are often just as deadly." (Eagleton 2003 s. 230-231)

"Truth and happiness in Ibsen are not easily compatible. [...] Rosmer's emancipatory ideal is both lofty and dreary, and figures like Hedda Gabler or Hilde Wangel suggest that idealism can be quite as self-interested as the pragmatism it castigates. The truth may be just as deadly as deception." (Eagleton 2003 s. 231)

En tysk litteraturforsker hevder at Ibsens "tragedier" egentlig ikke er tragedier. Hos Ibsen består personenes ulykke i et liv som fra begynnelsen av er bygd på løgn og skyld, ikke som i tragedier, der hovedpersonen fra begynnelsen er moralsk sunn og sterk (Gelfert 1995 s. 132). De døende personene hos Ibsen går ikke undergangen i møte på grunn av en handling som belaster dem med skyld, men er hele tiden preget av feighet og illusjoner (livsløgn). I en ekte tragedie framstår helten som stor i undergangen, fordi lidelsen overskrider hans eller hennes skyld, i motsetning til i Ibsens skuespill, som ender i enten frigjøring eller i en ynkelig tilstand der

hovedpersonen ikke klarer å se sannheten i øynene (Gelfert 1995 s. 133). Publikum føler ikke skrekk når de ser en helt som flykter inn i illusjonenes verden, kun medlidenhet og sorg (Gelfert 1995 s. 135). Slike karakterer mangler tragisk verdighet. Den tyske dramatiker Gerhart Hauptmann skrev: “Ibsen ser det tragiske for det meste bare i den såkalte mislykkete eksistens. Det tragiske ved full eksistens er høyere. [...] Det er en oppgave å oppnå på nytt den kosmiske kraften i den gamle tragedie.” (sitert fra Gelfert 1995 s. 137)

I Gerhart Hauptmanns tragedier blir helten eller heltinnen nesten knust under vekten av en uforskyldt eller i hvert fall ufortjent lidelse, for så plutselig å oppleve en fundamental tvil på om det råder noen rettferdighet i verden (Gelfert 1995 s. 138). Personen opplever seg som et leketøy i fremmede makters hender, utsatt for en guddom som kanskje ikke finnes. Her kan det være en påvirkning fra filosofen Schopenhauers eksistensielle pessimisme (Gelfert 1995 s. 140). Men kanskje kunne mennesker som har sett ned i tilværelsens avgrunner, skapt en bedre verden enn det en eventuell Gud har gjort.

“Schopenhauer scoffs that ‘only the dull optimistic Protestant-Rationalist or peculiarly Jewish view of life will make the demand for poetical justice and find satisfaction in it’. The tragic hero in Schopenhauer’s view knows that he atones not for his own sins, but for the crime of existence itself. Tragedy, in other words, contains both the justice and injustice of sacrifice: the act of sacrifice is a necessary expiation for some communal crime, yet its victim must be innocent.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 143)

Den tyske forfatteren Frank Wedekinds drama *Vårløsning: En barnetragedie* (1891; på norsk 1983) har blitt oppfattet som innledningen på sjangeren barnetragedie (Wagener 1991 s. 61). Wedekind skrev om stykket: “For dette er det spesielle med denne grusomme tragedien: at barn, uten at deres sjeler er skyldige, uten patetiske lidenskaper, uten hjertekonflikter, mister lykken og livet bare gjennom å være til, gjennom sin vorden, sin kroppslige utvikling.” (sitert fra Wagener 1991 s. 112) Andre barnetragedier fra samme periode var Max Halbes *Ungdom* (1893), Henrik Ibsens *Lille Eyolf* (1894) og Gerhart Hauptmanns *Hannele* (1894) (Wagener 1991 s. 174).

Tragediesjangeren overlapper med operasjangeren i modernismen og helt opp til vår egen tid. “Verdi and Wagner are the principal tragedians of their age, and Wagner in particular is a dominant figure in the history of tragic form” skriver George Steiner (1961 s. 285). “In the twentieth century, opera has further [etter Wagners opera-tragedier] strengthened its claim to the tragic succession. There is little in the prose or the revival of verse drama to match the coherence and eloquence of tragic emotion which we find in the operas of Janáček and Alban Berg. [...] It is not a play but an opera that now holds out the most distinct promise of a future for tragedy” hevder Steiner (1961 s. 288-289).

“Is there a bleaker opera than Berg’s “Lulu,” with its wrenching 12-tone score and sordidly depressing story? It tells of a calculating femme fatale who can also be seen as a victimized young woman getting ahead as best she can in a male-dominated society. The opera would seem guaranteed to leave you shattered, almost sickened. [...] Many powerful operas wed ingenious music to grim stories, like Britten’s “Peter Grimes” and Janacek’s “Jenufa.” But Berg’s “Lulu” and his earlier masterpiece, “Wozzeck,” stand out as works with disturbing stories that provide not just grandeur but a kind of uplift. [...] Consider the story of “Lulu.” By the midpoint of the three-act opera, she has gone through three husbands, including a painter who slashes his throat when he learns more about her sexual past and a newspaper editor she shoots during a heated argument. Lulu goes to prison, contracts cholera, breaks out (thanks to the sacrifice of a lesbian countess obsessed with her), flees to Paris and winds up in London working as a prostitute, where she makes the fatal mistake of taking in the wrong client: Jack the Ripper. What makes this tale bearable rather than over the top and lends the opera tragic depth is that Berg’s music presents these outrageous characters with such brutal yet sympathetic honesty. The compositional language mostly uses Schonberg’s 12-tone technique, though Berg folds in evocations of cabaret, ragtime and jazz to subtle dramatic effect. The resulting score pulses with Expressionist tension while heaving with sadness and frailty. When music cuts to the core of roiling passions and contrary feelings, as Berg’s does, it can be distressing, but you feel heartened to be in the hands of a composer who sees human nature so acutely. The artful way he tells her story offers its own kind of redemption.” (Anthony Tommasini i <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/arts/music/from-lulu-to-madama-butterfly-tragedy-transcended-by-a-visceral-truth.html>; lesedato 08.06.16)

“Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly,” [...] is as depressing a story as opera offers. Set in Nagasaki, Japan, in the early 20th century, “Butterfly” looks unflinchingly at the racism permeating American imperialism. Pinkerton, a dashing naval lieutenant, is beguiled by the young geisha Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton is the biggest cad in opera. That we care about him at all, even if just briefly, is due to the soaring love duet that Puccini provides at the end of the first act. At least on their wedding night, Pinkerton seems to truly adore his Butterfly. The opera’s ending is famously harrowing. After three years’ absence, Pinkerton returns with his new American wife and proposes to take his son home to be raised in the States. The stricken Butterfly agrees on the condition that Pinkerton claim the boy in person, and she times her suicide to his arrival. [...] Puccini renders Cio-Cio-San with stunning realism: an abandoned wife swept up in a tangle of fierce resolve and abject humiliation. The first time she tries to stab herself, Cio-Cio-San is interrupted by her little boy, whom she embraces almost “to suffocation,” the libretto indicates in stage directions. “Tu, tu, piccolo iddio!” (“You, you, my little god!”), she sings – anguished, molten music. No great singer of Cio-Cio-San can seem a pathetic character, and the operagoer leaves feeling that unique combination of emotions: depressed and yet not defeated. Even somehow, yes, uplifted.” (Anthony Tommasini i <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/arts/music/from-lulu-to->

madama-butterfly-tragedy-transcended-by-a-visceral-truth.html; lesedato 08.06.16)
Operaen *Madame Butterfly* (1900) er basert på en novelle av amerikaneren John Luther Long.

Den sveitsiske forfatteren Friedrich Dürrenmatt hevdet: “Tragedy presupposes guilt, suffering, balance, responsibility. In the muddle of our century [dvs. 1900-tallet], in this last dance of the white race, no one is guilty and no one is responsible any longer. Nobody could help it and nobody wanted it to happen. Everybody really is dispensable. . . . That is our bad luck, not our guilt: guilt only exists now as a personal achievement, as a religious act. All we are entitled to is comedy.” (sitert fra Howarth 1978 s. 172)

Den spanske filosofen Miguel de Unamuno skrev i 1913 i boka *Om den tragiske livsfølelse* at det er religiøs fortvilelse hos oss mennesker som skaper den tragiske opplevelsen (Unamuno 1937 s. 152). Det er “den evige angsten” som er den tragiske livsfølelsens kilde (1937 s. 241). Et annet sted i samme verk hevder han at det er kjærligheten som er det mest tragiske i livet, fordi den er “illusjonens barn og desillusjonens far” (1937 s. 160). Unamuno skrev også: “Den ypperste skjønnhet er tragediens skjønnhet.” (Unamuno 1937 s. 239)

Den amerikanske dramatikerene Eugene O’Neill skrev: “The tragedy of Man is perhaps the only significant thing about him. What I am after is to get an audience leaving the theatre with an exultant feeling from seeing somebody on stage facing life, fighting against the eternal odds, not conquering, but perhaps inevitably being conquered. The individual life is made significant just by the struggle.” (sitert fra <http://www.eoneill.com/library/laconics/1/1k.htm>; lesedato 09.05.16) “*Sorga kler Elektra* er Eugene O’Neills adaptasjon av *Orestien*. O’Neill ønsket å finne en måte å gjenskape de antikke tragedienes skjebnetyngde i moderne drakt, og på slutten av 1920-tallet var det nærliggende å ty til psykoanalytisk teori. Freuds ødipus- og elektra-komplekser fikk da de greske gudenes plass som menneskelivets ubønnhørlige krefter.” (*Morgenbladet* 4.–10. mai 2012 s. 35)

O’Neill skrev i 1923 i et brev til en sykepleier som ti år tidligere hadde pleiet han på et sanatorium: “I’m far from being a pessimist. I see life as a gorgeously-ironical, beautifully-indifferent, splendidly-suffering bit of chaos the tragedy of which gives Man a tremendous significance, while without his losing fight with fate he would be a tepid, silly animal. I say ‘losing fight’ only symbolically for the brave individual always wins. Fate can never conquer his – or her – spirit. So you see I’m no pessimist. On the contrary, in spite of my scars, I’m tickled to death with life!” (her sitert fra https://d11.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/672856/course/section/107493/Dowling_-_Eugene_Oneill_A_Life_in_Four_Acts_%282014%29.pdf; lesedato 26.05.21)

I desember 1946 publiserte tidsskriftet *Life* en anonym artikkel med tittelen “Untragic America: Our Democratic Faith Needs Correcting If We Are To Produce

Great Tragic Drama”, skrevet i forbindelse med uroppføringen av O’Neills *The Iceman Cometh* (1946). I artikkelen stod det blant annet: “To gain a sense of tragedy, Americans must therefore virtually reverse two of their dearest values: on the one hand, we must recover our awareness of evil, uncertainty and fear; on the other, we must gain a sense of man’s occasional greatness (which is quite a different thing from “the dignity of the common man”). For tragedy, in essence, is the spectacle of a great man confronting his own finiteness and being punished for letting his reach exceed his grasp. The Greeks had two words for this – *hybris*, pride, and *moira*, fate – which told them that subtle dangers lurk in all human achievements and that the bigger they are the harder they fall. But if Americans believe that there are no insoluble questions, they can’t ask tragic questions. And if they believe that punishment is only for ignorance or inadequate effort, they can’t give tragic answers, they can’t have the tragic sense.” (her sitert fra <http://www.erhfund.org/wp-content/uploads/407.pdf>; lesedato 26.05.21)

Amerikaneren Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) har tydelige tragiske elementer. Den hamartiaen som utløser Blanches undergang, gjorde ikke at hun fortjente en knusende tilintetgjørelse. Det som ifølge en tysk forsker mangler for at dette dramaet skulle blitt en ekte tragedie, er Blanches motstand mot “skjebnen”. Hun er tvertimot svak, og glir inn i undergangen, og det var også hennes svakhet som påførte henne skyld. Derfor har ikke tilskueren en slik “skjult beundring” for henne som er vesentlig i en tragedie (Gelfert 1995 s. 149). De fleste tilskuere vil kun føle sympati på grunn av det som er edelt i henne, og medlidenhet med hennes lidelse.

Den tyske dramatiker Bertolt Brecht var skeptisk til tragediesjangeren fordi den ikke åpner for menneskets revolt (gjengitt fra Bessières 2011 s. 474). Skjebnen råder uomgjengelig, og det har ingen hensikt å sette seg opp mot den. Brecht mente at denne formen for skjebnetro var påført folket av den herskende klassen for å hindre en samfunnsutvikling som truet herskerne.

Brecht mislikte sjangeren fordi han mente tragedier ikke viser noen utvei for lidende mennesker og fordi det er vanskelig å kritisere de katastrofene som handlingen leder til. Mennesket er ikke utlevert til sin skjebne, mente han, men former den selv, og en kommunist vil alltid velge folkets sak framfor sin private lykke (Schillemeit 1971 s. 319).

“For Bertolt Brecht, a rejection of metaphysical fate must be actually built in to the dramatic form itself. What he rather misguidedly calls ‘Aristotelian theatre’ – misguided because Aristotle, as we have seen, believes in unified plots but says nothing about fate – presents a seamless narrative which denies the audience the freedom of the subjunctive mood, thus reinforcing its political fatalism. A dramatic structure thus precipitates a whole ideology. His own ‘epic’ or episodic theatre, by contrast, ‘would at all costs avoid bundling together the events portrayed and presenting them as an inexorable fate ... nor does it wish to make the spectator the

victim, so to speak, of an hypnotic experience in the theatre'. A unity of dramatic form reflects itself in the doped consciousness of the spectator, which needs to be stirred into self-division by the joltings of montage, disconnected episode, contradictory character, multiple possibility." (Eagleton 2003 s. 126-127)

Den svenske oppfinneren og prisinnstifteren Alfred Nobel skrev skjønnlitteratur, blant annet "tragedien *Nemesis*, skrevet mot slutten av hans liv. Stykket er basert på legenden om den unge romerske adelspiken Beatrice Cenci (1577-1599), som ble voldtatt av sin far og led martyrdøden etter at hun hadde hevnet seg. Voldtekt, tortur og bestialske drap er viktige ingredienser i dramaet, som ble skrevet mens Nobel lå syk og ensom i sin nyinnkjøpte luksusvilla i San Remo ved den italienske Rivieraen. Lidelse finnes overalt, den stjernebestrødde himmelen er "besatt med millioner verdener, der mennesker synder og straffes, lider og sukker". Det finnes ingen nåde, bare smerte i universet." (Anne S. Simensen i *Aftenpostens* magasin *Historie* nr. 2 i 2019 s. 50)

"Det uden tvivl mest indflydelsesrige argument mod tragediens samtidighed finder man hos G.W.F. Hegel, som i *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) foretager en fortættet historiefilosofisk analyse af Sofokles' *Antigone*, der udlægges som en nødvendig og uundgåelig konflikt mellem to ligeberettigede, men ufuldstændige retsprinsipper, hvis legitimitet begge er normativt forankrede. Det ene princip forbinder sig til familien og individet (det private), det andet til staten (det offentlige). Ifølge Hegel ophæves muligheden for tragiske sammenstød mellem individet og almenheden imidlertid med indstiftelsen af retsstaten. Retsstaten har nemlig til forskel fra polis ikke værdifællesskabet som sit grundlag. I stedet er den forankret i en procedural fornuft, der forhindrer den slags normative selvmodsigelser, tragedielitteraturen er rig på, hvor handlinger på én gang fremstår moralsk nødvendige og forbryderiske. Denne argumentation flugter med en grundantagelse i Oplysningens historiefilosofi: at modernitetens historie er en fortælling, hvor mennesket, idet det fortrænger skæbnetroen som ufornuft, vinder sin frihed. I det moderne projekt er der derfor ikke plads til en kunstform som tragedien, der insisterer på forekomsten af moralske dilemmaer, som ikke blot er uløselige, men også nødvendige. Samme konklusion når også den marxistiske tragediekritik, hvor eksempelvis Bertolt Brecht afviser tragedien, fordi den i hans øjne maskerer det kontingente som nødvendighed. Hvad tragedien bestemmer som uforanderlig skæbne, dækker i et marxistisk perspektiv over samfundsskabte konflikter, som kan løses politisk." (Dahl 2010)

"Ifølge Schlegel-brødrene er den uafvendelige, tragiske skæbne uforenelig med et borgerligt frihedsideal, og de foretrak derfor den mere frie komedie frem for den "antikverede" tragedie. Hvad skal vi moderne dog stille op med tragediens tilsyneladende så anakronistiske skæbnebegreb? [...] Friedrich Schlegel finder ligefrem tragedien antikveret og foretrækker komediens frihedserfaring som "det skønneste symbol på borgerlig frihed". Komediens frie og legende form er ikke hæmmet af skæbnedramaets atavistiske indhold. Samme ubehag ved den

aristoteliske indlevelsespoetik finder man også langt senere hos Brecht, der heller ikke bryder sig om skæbnedramaer, fordi man ikke kan lære af dem. Brecht foretrak lærestykket, hvis helte er utragiske, fordi de formår at lære af deres erfaringer.” (Dahl 2010)

Den danske forfatteren Astrid Saalbachs skuespill *Aske til aske, støv til støv* (1998) “har mange mindelser om en meget omtalt kriminalsag, som kulminerede med en mordbrand, hvor en mor og to små børn brændte inde i deres hjem på Bornholm. Man kunne måske forvente, at et drama, som i den grad lader os associere til det dokumentariske også ville være optaget af en psykologisk forklaring og en moralsk dom over hovedpersonen, den unge læge, Nina. Men det sker jo ikke. [...] Stykket har en afsluttende monolog, hvor de kræfter, vi er omgivet af sammenlignes med de sorte huller i universet. Man kan ikke se dem, man kan ikke forklare dem, man kender dem kun gennem deres virkninger. Sådan er det for karaktererne i Saalbachs drama. Lidelsen slår igennem fuldstændig ukontrollerbart. Og det gør den for *alle* karaktererne. Det interessante er de øjeblikke, hvor disse kræfter slår ind i figurene. Hvor de mister verdensfortroligheden, hvor selv deres refleksion styres af disse kræfter. Og nu kan vi jo tillade os at kalde dem kræfter. Men de svarer jo til de græske guder i den antikke tragedie, som rider menneskene som marer og jo heller ikke selv kan styre noget som helst. De er underlagt skæbnen, det er jo en af de store pointer. Saalbachs drama er et eksempel på de lommer af ekstra-moralsk natur, der kan eksistere inden i en grundlæggende moralsk kultur. Disse lommer er væsentlige, fordi vi dér bliver hjulpet til den erkendelse, at vi ikke altid skal spørge til skyld og straf, når vi står over for lidelsen, men at der i vores eksistens kan være lidelsesforhold, hvor et moralsk blik simpelt hen ikke gør fyldest, fordi det får os til at lukke af for den rædsel, der egentlig er på færde. [...] Det er jo så menneskeligt at spørge: Hvorfor? Hvem har skylden? Den ekstra-moralske tragedie er hinsides dét. Der er intet svar på “hvorfor”? [...] Det lyder, som om manglen på et egentligt tragisk perspektiv i den moderne kultur kan medføre en vis nådesløshed, fordi der hele tiden skal placeres et personligt ansvar [...] Men det kan vi nok ikke undgå i en kultur, som på mange måder er en journalistkultur. En journalist vil altid forsøge kritisk at finde ud af, hvem man kan drage til ansvar. [...] Vi er inden for det moralfilosofiske felt, men uden at kunne udpege det gode og det onde.” (Birgitte Hesselaa og Steen Sidenius i http://www.peripeti.dk/pdf/peripeti_13_2010.pdf; lesedato 09.08.19)

I Terry Eagletons bok *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic* (2003) er tragediebegrepet “så bundet til ideen om det tragiske, at det mister enhver formel eller genretypologisk bestemmelse, hvorfor en betragtelig del af hans tragedier faktisk er hentet fra romanlitteraturen.” (Dahl 2010) For Eagleton findes det mye “tragic art, though not necessarily one centred on the stage” (Eagleton 2003 s. 144).

Eagleton setter opp mot hverandre “two warring views of tragedy, the traditionalist’s represented by George Steiner, author of *The Death of Tragedy*, and the radicals represented by Mikhail Bakhtin, the great writer on art as carnival, are

fighting on the same ground. Both camps agree that the conception of tragedy turns on a number of distinctions – “between fate and chance, free will and destiny, inner flaw and outer circumstance, the noble and the ignoble, blindness and insight, historical and universal, the alterable and the inevitable, the truly tragic and the merely piteous, heroic defiance and ignominious inertia”. The difference is that conservative critics believe, along with Nietzsche, that tragedy has died since we no longer believe in fate and the gods. This they lament: a proper appreciation of the darkness of human hearts has “ruinously yielded in our time to chance, contingency, democracy, rationality, religious disenchantment and a callow progressivism”. As Steiner puts it: “At the touch of Hume and Voltaire the noble or hideous visitations which had haunted the mind since Agamemnon’s blood cried out for vengeance disappeared altogether or took tawdry refuge among the gaslights of melodrama.” The left usually favours an anti-tragic mode. Bakhtin, the guru of alternative radical theatre in the 1960s, is against premature harmonising, the tightening of the world into a metaphysical view. He believes truth lies in the open-ended, the “carnavalesque”: a tragic plot expresses “the profound crime of all self-asserting individuality”. So the conservatives have concluded that tragedy is no longer possible while the radicals have concluded it is no longer desirable.” (Howard Brenton i https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/sep/21/higher_education.news; lesedato 09.08.19)

“Steiner har direkte kaldt et af sine værker *The Death of Tragedy* (1961), og her skriver han bl.a. om tragedien, at den er så sort i sit væsen, at ethvert forsonende træk, der føjes til, vil forskyde genren til noget andet, og at vi i de moderne samfund netop *vil* tilføje forsonende træk, fordi vi er præget af den forestilling, at vi kan slippe af med lidelsen. De moderne samfund har satset på fornuft, videnskab, marxisme etc., og kan slet ikke lade være med at tænke i en af disse kategorier – og derfor er tragedien, ifølge Steiner, død.” (Steen Sidenius i http://www.peripeti.dk/pdf/peripeti_13_2010.pdf; lesedato 09.08.19)

“To alchemize the base metals of daily life into the pure gold of tragedy, one may have to take these men and women and push them to the very limit of their endurance. But tragedy, that privileged preserve of gods and spiritual giants, has now been decisively democratized – which is to say, for the devotees of gods and giants, abolished. Hence the death-of-tragedy thesis. Tragedy, however, did not vanish because there were no more great men. It did not expire with the last absolutist monarch. On the contrary, since under democracy each one of us is to be incommensurably cherished, it has been multiplied far beyond antique imagining.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 94)

Tragediesjangeren, “in the hands of the theorists rather than the practitioners, moves into a democratic era with a fond backward glance at honour, hierarchy and heroism, and opposes ancient fate to modern freedom. It elevates the value of suffering above the drive to eradicate it, repudiating reason for myth, history for eternity, accident for essence. Tragedy pits a patrician rhetoric against the demotic

idiom of the modern, clinging to unbending commitments which will brook no workaday compromise. What makes life meaningful in its eyes is not love or friendship, but death. It scorns the notion of secular progress, and is sceptical of the self-determining subject. [...] its suspicion of reason, order and progress [...] This view of tragedy, astonishingly, arises in an era which has witnessed more real-life tragedy than any other in history. While the scholars have been speaking of tragedy with caught breath as estimable and ennobling, or issuing elegiac laments for its decline, history has been awash with warfare, butchery, disease, starvation, political murder. It is true that as suffering has escalated apace, so by and large has our sensitivity to it. The most bloody of epochs has also been the most humanitarian. This is not just cosmetic, though it is doubtless that as well; it is also because a humanism and individualism which are sources of that destructiveness can also have a genuine respect for human life. But it is in this blood-soaked period that tragedy is declared, bemusingly, to be either dead or of absolute value. In a further ironic twist, the former claim usually entails the latter, since the death of tragedy is generally mourned as the passing of something ultimately precious. But both assertions are responses to the havoc and butchery, not just disavowals of it. If tragedy is dead, then as we have seen already it is because it posits a sense of value which a history of terror has supposedly extinguished. And if it is of absolute value, whether alive or dead, it is because it represents a reaction to modern barbarism. It is just that what it complains of in that era is usually science, democracy, liberalism and social hope rather than injustice, exploitation and military aggression. In this sense, it remains bound to the very social forms which it disowns.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 205-206)

“[T]ragedy is no longer the supremely cherished form that it once was. It has not died, just ceased to be so ideologically crucial.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 119) “Tragedy is both the showcase of liberal humanism and its subversion.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 132)

“The only qualification for being a tragic protagonist is that you are a member of the species. What category of member, as far as rank, profession, provenance, gender, ethnicity and the like go, is a supremely indifferent affair. [...] They do not need to be duchesses, guerrilla fighters, strenuous combatants in the battle of life, hapless victims of an invidious fate, moral innocents or acutely conscious of their plight to earn our sympathies.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 94)

“[T]he tragic protagonist is caught in this metaphysical cross-fire. His freedom is assured, but for the same reason he can now practise it only in a paltry world. Moreover, God’s ominous silence, the loss of heaven, makes that world more precious at the very moment that it highlights its perishability.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 209) “[W]hat we need to know, for tragedy to occur, is that a man or woman is being destroyed – for who says ‘humanity’ now says ‘ultimate value’.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 94) “One might well complain that if tragedy demands no more of human beings than to be human, then it demands too little of them, and we purchase our tragic stature on the cheap.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 95)

“Tragic democracy thus cuts through the jealously patrolled frontiers between tragic resisters and non-tragic victims, those debacles which allow us a glimpse of supreme value and those which do not, those cut down by accident and those by some updated version of destiny, those who are engineers of their own undoing and those afflicted with ruinous misfortune from the outside. Far from there being ‘nothing democratic in the vision of tragedy’, as George Steiner asserts, absolutely nobody is safe from tragedy in such a world.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 95)

Den tyske dikteren Gerhart Hauptmann viste med sitt skuespill *Rottene* (1911) at det tragiske ikke er knyttet til en høy sosial klasse, men at også de fattige sliterne i et samfunn kan ha en tragisk skjebne som publikum blir grepet av (Brinkmann og Poppe 1988 s. 12). En vaskehjelp kan være sentrum i en tragedie (Brinkmann og Poppe 1988 s. 67). Enhver sterk skjebne og lidelseshistorie egner seg for en tragedie, hevdet Hauptmann (gjengitt fra Brinkmann og Poppe 1988 s. 70).

Steiner hevdet at dagens ledere har mindre ansvar enn det tidligere tiders prinser og konger kunne ha. I dag er ansvaret spredt på mange, på sosiale institusjoner. Denne fordelingen (eller pulveriseringen) av ansvar gir enkeltmennesket mindre betydning, mindre selvstendighet, mindre integritet. Men det tas fortsatt livsavgjørende beslutninger, og kanskje er det evnen til å innse det smertefulle og evnen til å sørge som er det sentrale i tragediesjangeren.

“It is commonly urged that today we have not faith enough in man to see him as a tragic figure.” (Leech 1969 s. 77)

Den amerikanske forfatteren Henry James mente at “the old dramatists ... had a simpler civilization to represent – societies in which the life of man was in action, in passion, in immediate and violent experience. These things could be put upon the playhouse boards with comparatively little sacrifice of their completeness and their truth. Today we’re so infinitely more reflective and complicated and diffuse that it makes all the difference ...” (sitert fra Eagleton 2003 s. 191).

“ ‘The history of the decline of serious drama is, in part, that of the rise of the novel’, observes George Steiner, and one could no doubt forge some sort of narrative out of this sequence. A tragic theatre bound up with the despotic absolutism, courtly intrigue, traditional feuds, rigid laws of kinship, codes of honour, cosmic world-views and faith in destiny of the *ancien régime* gives way in the novel to the more rational, hopeful, realist, pragmatic ideologies of the middle class. What rules now is less fate than human agency, less codes of honour than social conventions. Work and home, not court, church and state, become the primary settings, and high politics yieldst to she intrigues of everyday life. It is a shift from the martial to the marital – the former being part of a problem, the latter of a solution.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 178)

“[T]he idea of the tragic in the age of modernity has been so prominent and persistent [...] it might be worth pointing out that perhaps the most obvious reason – that the modern age has been far the most bloodstained on record – is not one of them. It is not one of them because modern tragic theory has not typically put routine, unedifying suffering at the centre of its inquiry. The first reason is that tragedy, with its spiritual absolutes and transcendent sublimity, seeks to replace religion in a secular age. There have been many candidates for such a project over the past couple of centuries – Art, Culture, the Religion of Humanity, the Humanities, even the Science of Society – and they have all proved spectacularly unsuccessful. When it comes to bringing the most imposing absolute truths to bear on the daily conduct of countless millions of ordinary men and women, religion is simply unbeatable. [...] Secondly, tragedy promises to provide an aesthetic solution to the question of why it is that men and women seem everywhere free yet everywhere in chains. The question, in short, of freedom and determinism. [...] Thirdly, tragedy has acted as a kind of modern-day theodicy or justification of evil. Transcendence survives in our age only in the form of its negation. Auschwitz, it would appear, is the nearest we can get to the supernatural. [...] tragedy has been no more successful than any other kind of theodicy.” (Terry Eagleton i https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789047443223/Bej.9789004166257.i-334_002.xml; lesedato 30.03.22)

“[S]ome critics, as Henri Peyre suggests, blame the death of tragedy on the novel, which ‘captured the essentials of tragic emotion, while diluting and often cheapening it’. Thomas Mann thought rather disdainfully that democracy was ‘the state for novels’, which were not to be confused with Culture.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 178)

I tyskeren Thomas Manns roman *Trolldomsfjellet* (1924, på norsk 2002) Naphta “ends by shooting himself. He is the pure spirit of tragedy as the traditionalists conceive it: ascetic, elitist, sacrificial, hierarchical, anti-rationalist, spiritually absolutist, hostile to modernity.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 272)

“The temper of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English fiction, the heyday of the making of the English middle class, is anti-tragic. It is not until that class moves into its epochal decline in the later nineteenth century that the tragic novel emerges as a major form. Tragedy, having been overtaken by the novel, catches up with it again.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 179)

“Walter Kerr believes that Freud, a determinist in his eyes, has helped to scupper the possibility of modern tragedy, while Patrick Roberts doubts that psychoanalysis is such a full-blooded determinism but concedes that it limits our freedom. Other critics, conversely, claim that modern-day determinism has actually renewed the tragic spirit. Henri Peyre maintains that in a world of wars, technology, revolutions and the like, modern humanity can no longer be sure that it is master of its own

fate, so that tragedy stages a reappearance. What has buried the form for some has resurrected it for others.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 132)

“[T]he gods stage a come-back in the form of Reason, providence, in the shape of scientific determinism, and nemesis in the guise of heredity.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 225)

“Ordinary experience may be laced with a large dose of delusion, but it can also speak the truth. It is this which is overlooked by the elitists of tragedy, for whom only those perched loftily above the masses can pierce the veil of false consciousness and peer boldly into the abyss.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 100)

“To claim that anyone can be a tragic subject, however, is not to suggest that every tragedy is as poignant or momentous as every other. The loss of a child may be more catastrophic than the loss of a fortune, or even than the loss of one’s mind. The point is just that there are now no distinctions in principle between potential candidates for such cataclysms. Tragedy returns as everyday experience at exactly the point when a democratic age has grown wary of it as ritual, mystery, heroism, fatalism and absolute truth.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 95)

“For Nietzsche, as for such latter-day custodians of the classical tradition as George Steiner, tragedy has died because fate, the gods, heroism, mythology and a proper appreciation of the darkness of human hearts have ruinously yielded in our own time to chance, contingency, democracy, rationality, religious disenchantment and a callow progressivism.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 20)

“The traditionalist conception of tragedy turns on a number of distinctions – between fate and chance, free will and destiny, inner flaw and outer circumstance, the noble and the ignoble, blindness and insight, historical and universal, the alterable and the inevitable, the truly tragic and the merely piteous, heroic defiance and ignominious inertia – which for the most part no longer have much force for us.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 21)

“[T]he world of Beckett, along with history after Auschwitz, have been seen as post-tragic. There can be no more tragedy, so the hypothesis runs, because a monstrous excess of the stuff has finally obliterated our sense of the value by which it might be measured. [...] It is as though alienation is now so total that it cancels all the way through and leaves everything apparently as it was, having also alienated the criteria by which we could judge our condition to be abnormal. [...] Tragedy is too highbrow, portentous a term for the deflation and debunkery of Beckett’s work. His farce and bathos may spell the ruin of hope, but they also undercut the terrorism of noble ideals, maintaining a pact with ordinariness which is a negative version of solidarity. [...] His characters are too busy fussing over their pathetic clutch of knick-knacks or keeping their heads biologically above water to lose

much sleep over the meaning of life. There is no such unitary phenomenon to have meaning in the first place, or for that matter to lack it.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 64-66)

Den tyske filosofen Christoph Menke ville med avhandlingen *Tragediens samtid: Forsøk om spill og dom* (2005; tysk tittel *Die Gegenwart der Tragödie: Versuch über Spiel und Urteil*) “relancere tragedien som en særlig, irreducibel refleksjonsform, idet han gør op med en række fastgroede forestillinger om hvad en tragedie er. Et af de viktigste opgør i *Die Gegenwart der Tragödie* fremgår allerede af bogens tittel, som insisterer på tragediens nærvær og samtidighet. Dette opgør retter sig mod en udbredt og måske ligefrem dominerende tilbøjelighet i det moderne til at anskue tragedien som en overstået eller usamtidig kunstform.” (Dahl 2010)

“There must still be a trace of truth in the world, since otherwise why would one be driven to specify so punctiliously one’s doubts about its existence? [...] Perhaps the ultimate tragedy is to have lost the capacity to identify one’s condition as such, which has been true of a whole lineage of tragic protagonists. It did not start with modernism.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 68)

“What would it mean to pity Adolf Hitler? In what sense might he be seen as a tragic character? One answer might be that for all we know, Hitler might well have turned out in different circumstances to be a valuable human being. What is pitiable is not the man himself, but the waste and monstrous warping of humanity which his wickedness represents.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 81)

Death of a Salesman

Ifølge George Steiner i boka *The Death of Tragedy* (1961) er det ikke plass for tragedien som litterær sjanger når vi tror på framskritt og vitenskapelige løsninger også på store, fundamentale problemer (en medisinsk oppdagelse kunne ha kurert Osvald Alving i Ibsens *Gjengangere*). Moderne mennesker er dessuten ofte små brikker i et stort maskineri, og har derfor ikke den tragiske fallhøyden som tidligere tiders prinser og konger hadde. Mennesker faller ned og knuses, men vi ser også at noen mennesker justerer sitt selvbilde og sine mål etter omstendighetene. Noen moderne tragedier handler om små nåtidsmennesker, som det (med det greske sjangerutgangspunktet) skulle være umulig å skrive tragedier om. Moderne mennesker har ikke samme fallhøyde som en eneveldig konge, men har tvert imot bare små seire og små nederlag. Det er liv som snarere preges av langsam nedsliting eller oppsmuldring enn av stupbratte fall. En tragediehelt kan i utgangspunktet ikke avfinne seg med nedjusterte krav og trøstende illusjoner, men må velge døden når det “ekte” livet har blitt umulig.

“If tragedy, as John Jones argues, centres more on an action than a character, a condition rather than a personal quality, then much of the debate about high and low protagonists is in fact irrelevant. What began as a technical point about how

best to represent the action – choose an eminent personage because his fall has more of a moral and dramatic impact – later becomes an ideological affair of noble souls and patrician sentiments, part of tragedy’s campaign against a despicably ignoble modernity. Since then, there has been a gradual scaling down from seigneurs to salesmen. [...] One might also see it as a shift from hero to victim, though there are plenty of the latter in Euripides.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 96)

“[T]he central figure is given a position of manifest eminence. He will appear to have a special claim to our attention, and [...] a special claim to be our victim. But in contemporary writing, unless we go back to the past for our material, we have not enough candidates for the position. In our scheme of things, the higher the eminence, the greater the responsibility and the more restricted the power. A shop steward or a students’ leader (lacking major responsibility) can exercise authority more easily than a prime minister, a president of a business firm or a university. This seems indeed to be increasingly the situation even with princes of the church. In the drama, as for a long time in the novel, we now have ordinary men as heroes, for almost all the extraordinary men live in private life and are therefore in that sense ordinary. They may, none the less, when brought to the stage or the pages of a novel, stay more firmly in our minds than men in apparently more prominent places.” (Leech 1969 s. 36)

Amerikaneren Arthur Miller prøvde med *Death of a Salesman* (1949) å skrive en tragedie der hovedpersonen, selgeren Willy Loman, er en tragisk hovedperson. Willy Lomans fallhøyde er fra en innbilt storhet til en sann litenhet og ubetydelighet (Loman = low man). Willys kone Linda sier om ektemannen: “I don’t say he’s a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He’s not the finest character that ever lived. But he’s a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He’s not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.” (Miller 1977 s. 44) Willy på sin side sier om Linda: “ ‘Cause she’s suffered Ben, the woman has suffered. You understand me?” (Miller 1977 s. 99). Kanskje er Linda en av hverdagens “stille martyrer” (Kierkegaard).

“[E]fter hvert som tomheten bak fasaden avdekkes, går det opp for oss at Lomans tragedie stikker dypere enn den brutale slutt på en karriere i en kald forretningsverden. Aldri har denne mannen vært i kontakt med verdier som ikke måles i penger, aldri hatt annet håp og andre ønsker for seg selv og sine sønner enn å gjøre karriere, øke inntektene, oppnå anseelse og beundring. [...] Biff finner til slutt ut at han hører skog og jord til, og fremfor alt at han ikke hører hjemme i farens livsløgn om ham selv som den overlegne sønnen som skal erobre verden.” (Eilif Straume i *Aftenposten* 22. april 1992 s. 35)

Willy Loman blir holdt oppe av sin families kjærlighet, tross alle hans feil og feigheter. For bak fasaden er det falskhet, svik, fiasko og livsløgn. Han lever på illusjoner om seg selv og sine to sønner. Drøm og virkelighet glir over i hverandre,

og han fortrenger ubehagelige episoder fra fortiden. Sønnene vil ikke skuffe sin far, men klarer ikke å leve opp til hans skyhøye forventninger. Willys selvbilde er oppblåst, og han er langt mindre betydningsfull og verdsatt i de flestes øyne enn det han innbiller seg. Måten skuespillet *Death of a Salesman* er konstruert på gjør at vi stadig gjennomskuer Willy: hans urealistiske forhåpninger, pompøse idealer og uærlige selvbetraktninger. Denne gjennomskuingen gjør at han påkaller vår medlidenhet.

“Tragedy can be an index of the outrageous price we have sometimes to pay for them [sannhet og rettferdighet], not of their illusoriness.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 57)

“There are times, as Miller’s Willy Loman is wisely instructed, when a man simply has to walk away; but Loman can do this no more than he can fly, which is both his victory and his undoing.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 235-236)

Blant mange andre har litteraturkritikeren Garland kommentert det tragiske i skuespillet: “Willy has created an image of himself which fails to correspond with Willy Loman as he is. According to the playwright, it’s the size of the discrepancy that matters. In *Salesman Loman*, the discrepancy is so great that it finally slays him. Ironically, by his own unsteady hand. In *Death of a Salesman*, the present and the past of Willy Loman exist concurrently – the “stream of consciousness” idea – until they collide in climax. Isn’t it true that the Willy Lomans of this world are their own worst tragedy? At the Morosco [= et teater,], only Linda Loman kan foresee the end. And she, as wife and mother, is powerless to prevent it. This, to me, is the play’s most tragic tragedy.” (R. Garland sitert fra Poppe 1988 s. 73)

“The failure of a great potential could never be so moving or so universally understandable as in the fate of Willy Loman, because his complete happiness could have been so easy to attain.” (W. Hawkins sitert fra Poppe 1988 s. 74) Willy er en “enkel sjel” som først og fremst ønsker en lykkelig familie og litt økte inntekter år for år. Hans gigantiske drømmer på sine egne og sønnenes vegne skyldes at de to mindre kravene til livet ikke blir oppfylt. Emmel fokuserer på den amerikanske drømmen og skriver at *Death of a Salesman* er ”en tragisk framvisning av den typiske amerikanske suksess-optimismen som skal realiseres for enhver pris” (F. Emmel sitert fra Poppe 1988 s. 78)

Arthur Miller “sought to combine social with tragic drama, a knotty problem he has also addressed in the essay “Tragedy and the Common Man” (1949). On the one hand, so strong are the social pressures in the lives of his characters that they threaten to turn into mere victims. Tragedy, on the other hand, must present human life in terms of individual conscience and responsibility. This is the conflict at the heart of Miller’s drama, not least in the story of the failed American salesman, Willy Loman.” (Ro 1997 s. 286)

“[A]part from the fact that Loman’s tragedy does spring from his own situation, and that he could be seen as a representative figure, the play manages to violate almost every tenet of tragic theory. Willy is far from noble, though he is morally speaking on a par with his audience; he is more victim than agent, and puts up little resistance to the forces destroying him; he does not accept his suffering as necessary, and if he goes willingly to his death it is for pragmatic reasons only; he understands precious little of what is happening to him, and so flouts the doctrine of *anagnorisis*; the issues at stake are historically specific ones, quite the reverse of timeless; there is nothing expiatory about his suffering, though there is something selfless about his dying; his fortunes are in no sense preordained, and his death rights no sort of moral balance and confirms no kind of cosmic justice. All this, one might argue, nonetheless relies on traditional notions of high-born suffering, if only to generate dramatic impact by bowling such stereotypes audaciously over. One might even claim the same of Othello, who is ruined by a handkerchief rather than dying in battle. Loman discloses a kind of value in his sheer self-deceived tenacity of commitment, his courageous refusal to back down from the problem of his identity; as Miller himself observes in the Introduction to his *Collected Plays*, Willy cannot settle for half, but must pursue the dream of himself to the end. It is not, however, the kind of value which fortifies our faith in the justness of the human condition, least of all in that bit of it known as American capitalism.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 98)

“Loman is not, in his author’s eyes, entirely bereft of self-awareness: he is haunted by the hollowness of the objects in which he has invested his selfhood. [...] Miller rightly insists, complete consciousness is not possible for human subjects, and there is ‘a severe limitation of awareness in any character’. After Freud, *anagnorisis* is bound to look more ambiguous. In fact it can always be argued, as we have seen already, that such self-blindness deepens rather than dilutes the tragedy. To go to one’s death like Willy Loman without ever having known who one was is arguably more poignant than to enter it in the full panoply of tragic self-consciousness, which in such situations is anyway a limited sort of value.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 98-99)

“In Miller’s eyes, Loman is brought to his death by refusing to give up on his desire, keeping faith with a law – the law of success rather than love – which is in fact baseless. Yet it is only such laws which make life supportable for many under their punitive sway. Without the law which declares that a social failure has no right to live, life would be painfully befuddling for many men and women. Like Conrad and Ibsen, then, Miller is not wholly censorious of such enabling fictions. It is true that what matters for him is not law but truth; but this is not quite the same as a contrast between falsehood and reality. For the truth in question is the quasi-existentialist one of integrity rather than of validity; it is the truth of one’s unfaltering fidelity to an ideal, even if the ideal is false and one’s fidelity to it finally lethal. What matters for Miller when it comes to tragedy, here as in *A View from the Bridge*, is what he calls an ‘intensity of commitment’, which may well be

commitment to a spurious goal. The real tragedy of Willy Loman is that he has no choice but to invest his admirably uncompromising energies in a worthless end.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 99)

“In the throes of one particular crisis in *Death of a Salesman*, Biff Loman urges his father to back off, reminding him that people like themselves are a dime a dozen. Loman, in a movingly dignified response, rounds on his son and declares: ‘I am not a dime a dozen! I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman!’ (Act 2). And the truth is that they are both right. Biff urges the cold-eyed reality of the capitalist market-place, where individuals are indifferently exchangeable, whereas Willy appeals to the humanist ideology – all individuals are unique (or, as the present-day American banality goes, ‘everybody’s special’) – which cloaks and ratifies that indifference. If Biff is both right and insulting to insist on the bleak reality, Willy is both correct and deluded to deny it. There is, as Ibsen knew, a tragedy of demystification, denunciation, violent unmasking; but there is also the more tortuous tragic experience of clinging to one’s delusions because in a false situation this is the only way to preserve, in however mystified a guise, a few shrivelled seeds of truth.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 99-100)

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