



A Study on Ambiguity: Pedagogy and Creation in Ancient Greek Culture, Education and Drama

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ABSTRACT

Paidagogos and *demiurgos* are two terms of the ancient Greek language already present during the first millennium B.C. and still in use in contemporary Greek [1]. The purpose of this paper is to examine the changes in their meaning according to context in which they are used – intellectual, artistic and social – and to the areas in which they appear, as well as the obvious or latent relation between them. Both the terms *paidagogos* and *demiurgos* are not one-dimensional in ancient Greek language. The semiotic tool of *ambiguity*, via the analysis of Jean Pierre Vernant and Page du Bois, tested through a contemporary phenomenological lens based on Merleau Ponty [2], will help us interpret the changes in their meaning, as well as the reasons why such changes may occur. In poetic, historical, political, pedagogical and other ancient texts, the terms *paidagogos* and *demiurgos* can refer to persons with very different functions and social status. The ambiguity and the reversal of the status of the *demiurgos* and, more clearly, of the *paidagogos*, appear in a far clearer way when they refer to persons (*prosopa*) of Greek drama, especially tragedies, like Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Ion* and *The Heracleidae*. The findings of such research will help

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us penetrate the philosophical and phenomenological discourse concerning education in ancient Greece, taking into account that some of the main educational questions raised in Greek antiquity still remain relevant today.

Keywords: *Pedagogue; creator; ambiguity; ancient; Greek; education; drama; philosophy.*

1. INTRODUCTION: THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PAIDAGOGOS

What were the status and the functions of the *paidagogos* and the *demiurgos* in ancient Greece? What are the changes in their meaning, according to the intellectual, artistic and social context in which they are used and the areas in which they appear? What is and what must be a real *paidagogos*? What elements constitute the blessing and/or the challenge of education? How can addressing these questions, with the help of contemporary phenomenology and philosophy [3], can lead to new findings regarding an ancient but still relevant discourse? According to Herodotus [4], the *paidagogos* was a *paidos agogos*, meaning a – male – person who led the child, which usually was a boy, from the house to the school and back again. This person was a slave. The term, nevertheless, can refer to more composite functions and to apply to female persons too. In this sense, it is coupled with the terms *tithe* and *trofos*, a woman like Eurykleia, the nurse of Ulysses in the *Odyssey* (2.361) or a man like Phoenix, the *paidagogos* of Achilles [5]. It is clear that the *paidagogos*, male or female, regardless of his formal social status, often enjoyed a special prestige and this is very clear in the case of Phoenix in the *Iliad*. The old man is appointed, along with Ulysses and Ajax, by King Agamemnon, as a member of the embassy whose mission is to convince Achilles to forget his wrath and return to the battle. *Paidagogos* is further upgraded in Plutarch's *Lives*, where he metaphorically refers to the leader of a democratic or tyrannic regime [6].

The same evolution of meaning, as well as the correlated shift from literal to metaphorical, is encountered in the case of the term *demiurgos*. The term can either refer to someone who works for the people, meaning the civic body (*demos*), or a to a skilled workman or handicraftsman, which, in the case of the city-state of Athens, must be not an Athenian citizen but a *metoikos*, meaning a resident foreigner, or even a *doulos*, a slave. However, the term often acquires a metaphorical sense, as it happens with Hades, when he is called a craftsman fashioning fatal weapons causing death [7]. The metaphorical

sense can also concern the work of divination (*mantike*), legislation, rhetorics, or of evildoing. This evolution of meaning that starts from 'below', referring to slaves and resident foreigners deprived of civic rights (*metoikoi*), evolves, becoming a frequent title of city magistrates and then ascends to the highest sphere of the supreme God, the creator of day and night [8] or of *Ouranos*, Uranus [9].

Our examination of the shifting term *paidagogos* leads to some initial thoughts. A *paidagogos* can be a slave, eventually of high education, especially in the case that he is not a "slave commodity or merchandise" bought in a slave market, but a prisoner of war. However, regardless of his formal social status, he may enjoy a high social and political prestige when he happens to be in charge of the offspring – male or female – of a noble or royal family. This varying social and moral status survives also in the post classical and in the modern times and is connected with the multiform and multileveled influence of *paideia*, education, which can create special bonds of love and appreciation between the *paidagogos* and his student, that go beyond their formal relations.

2. RELATION BETWEEN THE PAIDAGOGOS AND ANCIENT GREEK CULTURE

In order to understand the relation between the *paidagogos* and ancient Greek culture, art and education, one has to clarify the semantic field of the word *paideia* (education). Our first pedagogue/guide in such investigation is the famous German scholar Werner Jaeger (1888-1961), who with his book *Paedeia. The Ideals of Greek Culture* [10] linked the polysemic signifier *paideia* with contemporary terms such as culture, education and art.

Already long before the publication of Jaegers' significant *Paedeia*, scholars dealing with ancient Greece were aware of the ambiguity of the term. The diverse meanings related to this signifier included the rearing of a child, its training, teaching and education, as it happens in Plato [11]. It could also refer to intellectual cultivation

(*cultura mentis* in Latin) [12], as well as to the cultivation of trees or/and to the punishment of children. It could also be a synonym of the age of childhood. With Jaeger, however, the term acquires a far deeper and multiform meaning. Extending far beyond the limits of the Greek city-states, particularly Athens, it reaches long before and after the classical era and embraces activities and achievements regardless of gender, referring to myth, art and history.

3. HISTORY OF EARLY GREEK CIVILIZATION

Jaegers' work constitutes indeed a history of early Greek civilization before the political eclipse of Athens after its defeat of Macedon on 338 B.C. at Chaironeia. It is clear that the path chosen by Jaeger to approach *paideia* is a synthesis of literature, theatre, art and history of civilization, including political history. One must realize that he strives to achieve a double objective. On one hand, to highlight how the ancient Greeks themselves understood the various aspects of *paideia*. On the other, to point out the ways in which this Greek heritage has survived in unexpected ways in modern times.

I have already stated that Jaeger covers a period and an area including, but also going beyond, the classical period and the city-state regime. His research therefore comprises of the heroic ideals of the nobles, called by Gregory Nagy "The best of the Achaeans" [13], but also extends to the life and culture of the agrarian classes and to the code of conduct of peasants, as it is defined by Hesiod in his *Works and Days*. He follows the evolution of the term *arête*, connected with the epithet *aristos*, the best, which, initially, in Homer as well as in Tyrtaeus, meant the best in battle, but gradually shifted, starting from Pindar, to refer to deeper moral values. The evolution of the concept of *dike* (justice) and its shifting *from the mythical and the theological* (Dike was still considered a goddess in Sophocles' *Antigone*) *to the political* is traced in a similar way. History of culture and ideas open the way to such an investigation.

Jaegers' itinerary necessarily leads him beyond the borders of the Athenian city state. The encounter with Spartan education becomes thus revealing. Such encounter leads to the study of a very diverse cultural, educational, political etc. system, which both deeply differed from the Athenian one, yet, on the other hand, constituted a point of reference – either positive or negative

– for Athenian politicians and thinkers. Let us underline that the inclusion of archaic times and of Hellenism beyond Athens offers the possibility to evaluate the important role of women, like the poetess Sappho or the Spartan queen Gorgo, whose conduct seems to have been the product of Spartan rearing, culture and education [14].

A historical episode illustrates the role of education and especially that of the pedagogue beyond Athens in the Macedonian world. Plutarch, in his *Life of Alexander*, discusses the education of Alexander before his royal father Philip entrusted him as a teenager to Aristoteles. "The care of his education, as it might be presumed, was committed to a great many attendants, preceptors, and teachers, over the whole of whom Leonidas, a near kinsman of Olympias, a man of an austere temper, presided, who did not indeed himself decline the name of what in reality is a noble and honorable office, but in general his dignity, and his close relationship, obtained him from other people the title of Alexander's foster father and governor. But he who took upon him the actual place and style of his pedagogue, was Lysimachus the Acarnanian, who, though he had nothing special to recommend him, but his lucky fancy of calling himself Phoenix, Alexander, Achilles, and Philip Peleus, was therefore well enough esteemed, and ranked in the next degree after Leonidas". Lysimachus' presumptuous character almost costed the death of Alexander during the expedition in Persia, where he had followed him though he was rather a burden to his ex-student. Being aware of Alexander's adoration of Homer and especially Achilles, he insisted on following him in a very perilous expedition. "While the body of the army", says Plutarch, lay before Tyre, he made an excursion against the Arabians who inhabit the Mount Antilibanus, in which he jeopardized his life to bring off his master Lysimachus, who would needs go along with him, declaring he was neither older nor inferior in courage to Phoenix, Achilles's guardian. For when, quitting their horses, they began to march up the hills on foot, the rest of the soldiers outwent them a great deal, so that night drawing on, and the enemy near, Alexander was fain to stay behind so long, to encourage and help up the lagging and tired old man, that before he was aware, he was left behind, a great way from his soldiers, with a slender attendance, and forced to pass an extremely cold night in the dark, and in a very inconvenient place... "[15].

4. PAIDEIA AND THE PEDAGOGUE IN TRAGEDY

Tragedy, which is the other aspect of Greek education, is the other topic investigated by the author. Jaeger certainly is a precursor in the study of the dialogue between the tragedians and the sophists. His references to Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides on one hand and Gorgias and his colleagues on the other, inaugurate a strand of research combining theatre, education and moral philosophy. The section of this paper dealing with the theatrical part (*prosopon*) of the *paidagogos* in tragedy, constitutes an attempt to approach the complex question of culture and education in Ancient Greece through the lens of theatre. Which also means to return to our starting point. The dialogue between *paidagogos* and *demiurgos*, subsequently leading to the one between education and creation.

5. THE PART OF THE PEDAGOGUE IN EURIPIDES' ION OR THE TRAGICOMIC TEACHER OF EVIL

The list of the parts (*ta tou dramatos prosopa*) of Euripides' play *Ion* does not contain any reference to a Pedagogue. The very old man who assumes the task to poison Ion, the young hero who lends his name to the play, is just mentioned as a *presvytes* (old man) and indeed he is a very old and almost crippled man who tries – with no success – to commit the murder. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt for his previous functions. Queen Creusa herself calls him:

*o presvy paidagog' Erechtheos patros
toumou pot' ontos, enik' et en en phaei*
Oh, old pedagogue of my father Erechtheus

When he once was alive and saw the sun's light [16].

Commenting upon those verses, A.S. Owen reconfirms the functions of the old man, calling him a pedagogue and a retainer, "the teacher of Erechtheus in his youth" [17]. I maintain that Owens' commentary is not completely accurate and I will use a rapid overview of the play and the problems it presents to commentators, teachers and theatre directors, to explain my view on the function of the pedagogue in the play.

Along with *Alcestis* and *Helen*, *Ion* has often been considered as a liminal play and according to some scholars it is not a tragedy but rather a

precursor of New Comedy [18]. I sustain that the words Euripides put in the mouth of Creusa concerning the Pedagogue, as well as his dialogue with the queen and what he attempts – and fails – to do afterwards, offer a key to decide on the genre of the play. The man in question is indeed very old. He is in charge not of the queen but of her old father and his retainer until his death. His very old age and the fact he moves with great difficulty cast a shadow to the murderous infanticide plans he agrees to perform and confer a tragicomic element to the situation. However, not everything is comic concerning him and the play.

I resume very briefly the plot which I have translated, adapted and staged [19]: Creusa, princess of Athens and consort of king Xuthus visits with her husband the Delphic oracle, in order to ask Apollo, why she cannot give birth to a child. Years before, she had been raped by Apollo in a cavern at the foothills of the Acropolis. Nine months later she brought to life a male child, which Hermes, to whom the holy cavern is dedicated, transports to the sanctuary of Delphi. The boy, named Ion by Hermes, is adopted and raised by Pythia, the prophetess of Apollo, and becomes the sexton of the temple. Mother and son meet and sympathize mutually ignoring their relation. Xuthus, cheated by the oracle, is convinced that Ion is his son and organizes a banquet to celebrate the accomplishment of his desire. This is the moment when the pedagogue enters action. Creusa orders him to poison the boy she ignores he is her son, but the attempt fails, as a pigeon drinks the poisoned wine and dies. Ion, sword in hand, pursues Creusa in order to kill her, but, thanks to the intervention of Pythia, mother and son recognize each other and the play ends with their – apparently happy – return to Athens.

Nicole Loraux rightly maintains that, despite such plot, not very different from Menanders' *Epitrepontes* (*The Litigation*), might also be the one of a play of New Comedy, *Ion* is a tragedy. In fact, we must recognize that the general lines of a plot are not enough in order to specify the genre to which any play belongs. I therefore agree with Loraux' opinion, adding that the plays' happy ending is also something that occurs at the end of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Furthermore, the Gods – Hermes, Apollo, Athena – while absent in New Comedy, are very present and active in the play we discuss. Besides that, the imaginary setting of Delphi is not decorative but symbolic and the poison ineffectively used by the

paidagogos, is heavily charged with religious and mythical symbolisms. The two drops of Gorgon's blood, the one able to cause horrible death, the other capable of saving lives, symbolize the radical ambivalence of the maternal feelings of Creusa, which will not disappear, despite the plays' happy conclusion. The *paidagogos* of Ion is a very old man, a slave not because of his social condition but because of his moral depravity. Eager to cooperate to the planning of a vile crime, but unable to accomplish it, not very far from the immoral retainers of tyrannical kings, like Polonius in Hamlet and others, in the Elizabethan theatre. The *prosopon* (person) of the *presvytes* as he is called in the ancient list of the parts in *Ion*, is that of a ridiculous teacher of Evil. We shall now see that Iolaos in Euripides' *Heracleidae* represents quite the opposite character.

Iolaos, in the *Heracleidae* or Teaching *areté* (virtue) by one's own example.

At the beginning of the play Iolaos introduces himself with the following words: "...now that Hercules has gone to live among the rest of the gods, I take care of all of his children. I have taken them all under my wings and protect them, though, now, I, too, am in need of protection". Like the *Pedagogue* in *Ion*, Iolaos is a very weak old man. He does not formally call himself a *paidagogos*. The old companion and assistant of Hercules has, however, assumed the protection and guidance of his children, who, after Hercules was taken to the heavens, are persecuted by his cousin and enemy. Eurystheus has not only expelled them from Mycenae, but is trying to impose to the rest of the Greek city-states to refuse them hospitality. Iolaos therefore acts as their guard and teacher.

Under his guidance, the family of Hercules has resorted for asylum at the altar of Zeus in Marathon. The herald Copreus, the brutal messenger of King Eurystheus of Mycenae, attempts to seize by force the children of Hercules, and Iolaos, who tries to resist, is defeated by him and thrown to the soil. The Athenian King Demophon protects Hercules' family and this leads to an open confrontation between Athens and the army of the king of Mycenae. Makaria, Hercules' daughter commits a heroic auto-sacrifice assuring the Athenian victory. In the ensuing combat Iolaos miraculously recovers the strength of his youth, excels for his courage and skill as a charioteer and captures Eurystheus.

I will insist in this miraculous transformation of the old man, due to the divine intervention of his deified friend, Hercules, and the one of his consort Hebe, goddess of the eternal youth. The tutor of Hercules' children recovers the appearance and strength of a young man, this external metamorphosis in a way being the revival and extension of the heroic ethos that has never abandoned him. Hylos, Hercules' son who appears leading military reinforcements and above all Makaria, the heroin that through her auto immolation offers the victory to her family and to the Athenian army are responding to the old man's heroic example. It is through this example that Iolaos proves to be the right teacher, guide and pedagogue of *arête*.

The Pedagogue of Electra: a synthesis of *metis* and *arête*. How to teach the Actor.

The *paidagogos* in Sophocles' *Electra* is a central part of the play and one that demands a particular skill on behalf of the actor who interprets it. He is present right from the beginning of the play, strictly admonishing Orestes and Pylades to follow his instructions in order to accomplish their plans of revenge against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. He is not only the pedagogue but also their leader – and the one who supervises and leads to fulfilment Apollo's oracle ordering the punishment of the couple who are guilty of impious uxoricide and regicide.

The *morceau de bravoure* of the play is by all means the Pedagogue's fake messenger speech, narrating, while Orestes is alive and present, Orestes' supposed death. A messenger speech is always something central in the text and the performance of a tragedy. As far as the content is concerned, it constitutes a series of decisive information that will produce a decisive reversal of the sequence of events as well as of the feelings of the listening *dramatis personae* and of course the spectators. On the level of the theatrical interpretation, it requires a special craftsmanship on behalf of the actor. Taking into account the special conditions existent in an open ancient Greek theater, the *Anghelos* (Messenger) has to dominate with his movement and far more with his voice an audience composed by several thousand spectators. His narration of events includes his shifting from a person to another present in it. He might be considered at a time a single man and a whole

company and this constitutes an important theatrical lesson *per se*.

The part of the Pedagogue/Messenger in *Electra* is, however, almost unique. He has to interpret a speech which is false but must appear as completely true. In a way it resembles the fake speech with which Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* deceives and traps her husband, leading him to death. Yet the fake speech of the Pedagogue, has the power to produce the feeling not only of truthfulness, but of a moment of true life, comparable *mutatis mutandis*, with the feeling created by "live" news concerning some tragic event in contemporary television.

The content of the Pedagogue/Messenger speech is Orestes' supposed death in a chariot race. One has to cite at least a part of this speech in order to refer to the feelings created by it:

*They took their stand where the judges
Had cast their lots and ranged their cars.
The brazen trumpet rung out! Away they
bound,
Cheer the hot steeds and shake the reins;
As with a body the large space is filled
With the huge clangor of the rattling cars.
High whirl aloft the dust-clouds; blent
together,
Each presses each and the lash rings; and
loud
Snort the wild steeds, and from their fiery
breath,
Along their manes and down the circling
wheels
Scatter the flaking foam. Orestes still
as he swept around the perilous pillar
Last in the course, wheeled in the rushing
axle;
The left rein curbed, that on the right hand
Flung loose. So on erect the chariots rolled!*

*Sudden the Ænian's fierce and headlong
steeds*

*Broke from the bit – and, as the seventh time
now*

The course was circled, on the Libyan car

*Dashed their wild fronts: then order changed
to ruin:*

Car crashed on car; the wide Crissæan plain

*Seemed a sea strewed with wrecks; the
Athenian saw,*

*Slackened his speed, and wheeling round
the marge,*

Unscathed and skillful, in the midmost space,

Left the wild tumult of that tossing storm.

Behind, Orestes, hitherto the last,

Had yet kept back his coursers for the close;

Now one sole rival left – on, on he flew,

*And the sharp sound of the impelling
scourge*

Rang in the keen ears of the flying steeds.

*He nears, he reaches – they are side by side
–*

Now one – the other – by a length the victor.

The courses all are past – the wheels erect –

*All safe – when, as the hurrying coursers
round*

The fatal pillar dashed, the wretched boy

Slackened the left rein: on the column's edge

Crashed the frail axle: headlong from the car

*Caught and all meshed within the reins, he
fell;*

And masterless the mad steeds raged along!

Loud from that mighty multitude arose

A shriek – a shout! But yesterday such deeds,

To-day such doom! Now whirled upon the earth,

Now his limbs dashed aloft, they dragged him – those

Wild horses – till all gory from the wheels

Released; and no man, not his nearest friends,

Could in that mangled corpse have traced Orestes.

They laid the body on the funeral-pyre;

And while we speak, the Phocian strangers bear,

In a small, brazen, melancholy urn,

That handful of cold ashes to which all

The grandeur of beautiful hath shrunk.

The structure of the fake messenger speech of Orestes' pedagogue, the suspense created by the narration of the event of the supposedly fatal chariot race, the thrill provoked by the alternating sequence of the events, remind us of the similar feelings we experience while watching thriller and noir films. Such feelings are reinforced not only by the context of what is said but also by the theatrical situation in which all this is said. The messenger/pedagogue is pronouncing his *angelike rhesis* (messenger's speech) in front of Clytemnestra, a woman who, if we remember the fake speech with which she received her husband in Aeschylus *Agamemnon*, is an expert in lies. The pedagogue, Orestes and Pylades who follow the fake speech are present with a false identity. In case the lies concerning Orestes' death and the false identity of those who brought the message are revealed, death awaits them. We are therefore in the middle of the *en tais filiais pathe*, the family clashes or evils mentioned by Aristotle in his *Poetics* and *phobos*, fear, a central word in the philosophers' definition of tragedy, is constantly present. This is a typical theatrical situation, quite common in Greek epics and tragedy, where the hunter who sets with his words the net to catch the prey can be trapped and be transformed into a prey himself. Clytemnestra will not hesitate to order his execution.

The "hunter" pedagogue uses therefore a special oratory tactic. Knowing that he speaks to a dangerous audience – Clytemnestra – he strives to keep the attention of his audience – the one on stage and the other, seated on the stands of the ancient theatre – constantly focused on his words. His dangerous audience must be caught in the net of his words following his narration with bated breath, something that will prevent it from discovering the deceit: The sequence of the events narrated serves that objective. A) At the beginning of the race Orestes remains behind his competitors, controlling his steeds and demonstrating a wise restraint. B) The chariot of one of the competitors is crouched creating a tumult and creating for Orestes the occasion to counter attack. C) Orestes reaches close to victory. D) He dies and is cremated and buried. Expectation, hope, joy, death and mourning create a blistering atmosphere culminating into a shock that neutralizes any critical control.

The pedagogue/messengers' speech leads to some questions that are certainly connected with tragedy but also reaching beyond theatre: The status and the ethics of education in Greek *paideia*. There is no doubt that theatre, especially the tragic one, represented a very important part of the *paideia*/education of the Athenian polis and of Greek culture. Theatre was officially sponsored by the state through the public institution of *choregia* imposing to wealthy citizens to support financially theatrical productions. The tragic and comic plays were represented on the occasion of the holy festivals of Great and Small Dionysia and Lenaia, which constituted at a time central but also political events. Politics was a main concern of the Athenian playwrights and it is quite clear that Athenian patriotism combined with bold but constructive political criticism of the polis-state of Athens were both constantly present in tragic and comic texts, sometimes, in the case of unpopular criticism, exposing the theatrical creators to severe sanctions. To conclude, we may say that the tragedian is considered not only the aesthetic but also the political pedagogue of the polis-state.

I have mentioned those facts in order to underline some central problems present in the speech of the Pedagogue in *Electra*. This speech constitutes, to use a very important term of the ancient Greek vocabulary, a typical example of *metis* [20]. *Metis* is the practical wisdom aiming not at the discovery of truth but at the achievement of the desired result. The fact that

Metis was held in high esteem by the Greeks is among others corroborated by her divine nature as she was considered to be the daughter of Zeus. Her earthly importance becomes clear if we take into account that she was present in the speech of political orators and the one of their teachers, the sophists, using metis in order to transform a “small” (weak) argument into a big (strong and convincing) one. Before Plato, who with the exception of Protagoras, openly condemned the sophists, the tragedians as well as Aristophanes, were critical towards the sophistic movement. The words of the sophists as well as the words of the poets based on mythos (myth) is – not only by Plato in the *Republic*, especially the section dealing with education, but also in other cases – deemed to be a *pseudes logos* (false speech).

Despite that neither *metis* nor the sophists and the poets based on myths as well as the part of the Pedagogue in *Electra* can be condemned with simplistic arguments. The archetype of *metis* – the practical wisdom assuring success – is Ulysses, rightly called *Polymetes aner*. In the Iliad and more clearly in the Odyssey he changes his appearance and/or uses fake words. The story of the Trojan Horse, the one of the Cyclops and the final episodes of the Odyssey in Ithaca are quite eloquent in this sense. Athens on the other hand owes its existence to the fake message that Themistocles sent to Xerxes, trapping the Persian fleet in the narrow channel of Salamis, thus assuring the victory of the Greeks in the naval battle. Poseidon the lord of the sea and Athena the goddess of the olive tree disputed the patronage of the Acropolis and the daughter of Zeus won the contest for the Acropolis and Athens. The contest between sea and earth did not stop then. Conservative and radical intellectuals, including those dealing with the topic of the correct education, continued discussing about the advantages and the disadvantages of Earth and Sea. Earth was deemed the domain of *arête*, where applied the – immutable for a long period – Greek rules of battle. Sea, on the contrary, was thought to be the domain of *metis* where applied the complex and changing techniques of naval battle. Marathon, symbol of a victory on the soil of Attica, versus Salamis, the victory in the sea, epitomized this couple of opposites. It has been rightly maintained that Sophocles' *Electra* differs from Aeschylus *Libation Bearers*, because while Aeschylus underlines the horror of the matricide, Sophocles presents such a monstrous and tyrannical mother that her killing by Orestes

seems more or less justified [21]. The Pedagogue in *Electra* represents, however, a synthesis of those two opposed principles. He uses *metis* and *dolos* to serve *arête*. His lies will open the path for the punishment of Agamemnon's murderers and, as Sophocles underlines with the last verse of the play, the return of freedom in Mycenae.

6. CONCLUSION

The changing *prosopa* of the pedagogue in Greek literature and especially in Greek tragedy are raising the question of ethics and orientation in education. To serve truth and morality and to serve the desired results are two inevitable conditions for any serious educational effort. Both, however, demand, on behalf of the teacher and the pupil, imagination and creativity. In this sense, deploying the discussion on enigma in ancient drama by Vidal-Naquet and Vernant and especially their use of the term ambiguity, any successful *paidagogos* (pedagogue) has also to be a *demiurgos* (creator). Furthermore, drawing from the thought of Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* [22], in which he is addressing the age-old question regarding whether it is nature or culture that has the primary influence on human conduct, we realize that the two notions of creating and educating are interlinked on another, philosophical level. Therefore, going back to Plato, when he is discussing the question of *paideia*, education, in his *Republic* and recognizing this aspect of *paideia* in the final sections of his dialogue, where he makes peace with Homer, who is finally deemed to be not a creator of false *logoi*, but someone absolutely necessary for the education of the ideal city, comes as a natural next step. It was Victor Goldschmidt who with his study, *Questions Platoniciennes* [23], has opened the way to reconsider the idea that Plato was an unconditional enemy of myth and poetry. Homer and the other poets, including the tragedians, were therefore reauthorized to assume the *paideia* of the *Politeia*.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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