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Il teatro delle emozioni: la paura

a cura di
Mattia De Poli

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a cura di
Mattia De Poli

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Tra il testo e la scena

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The Metres of Fear in Attic Drama

Mattia De Poli

ABSTRACT: The analysis of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* shows us an emotion like fear in a variety of hues, expressed in a variety of ways. Then, a comparative analysis, that takes into account several plays of Aeschylus again, but also Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, suggests that ionic metres mostly occurred in choral songs and were usually related to horror and petrifying or wearing fear.

1. Introduction: metrics and communication

Both the actors and the chorus of Attic drama wore masks, so their faces could express no emotion felt by the characters on the stage. Anyway, apart from the facial expression, other resources of the body language, i.e. gesture, movement and dace, made an important contribution to the aim. And the voice, too: a tragic or comic poet, while writing his play, could indeed choose metres from a wide traditional range and give a character or the chorus utterances in spoken, *recitativo* or even sung lines.

The text is a fundamental starting point for our comprehension of the ancient dramatic performances, since it provides also a hint of nonverbal (e.g. body language) and paraverbal (e.g. speaking or singing) communication thanks to words and metres. First, the analysis of a single play, Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, will show us an emotion like fear in a variety of hues, expressed in a variety of ways. Then, a comparative analysis, that takes into account several plays of many classical authors (Aeschylus again, but also Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes), will suggest that ionic metres mostly occurred in choral songs and were usually related to horror and petrifying or wearing fear.

2. Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*¹: fear and metrical structures

«Of all Greek tragedies, the one in which fear is most central to the theme is Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes*»². Together with *Laius*, *Oedipus* and the satyr-play *Sphynx*, it was the third drama in a tetralogy, which gained victory at the City Dionysia in 467 BC, but the very few fragments from the other plays do not allow us to say much about the fear in the whole tetralogy or the formal structure of the other texts³. This tragedy is anyway a masterpiece even in itself.

The action is set in a besieged city and the perspective is strictly internal: the focus is on the Thebans, their feelings in front of an extreme danger and their reaction to the assault of the Argive army. As a character of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus says that the *Seven against Thebes* was "a play chock-full of Ares" (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1321 δρᾶμα ... Ἄρεως μεστόν), but he just means that every single man who watched this play at the theatre "was hot to be warlike" (1322 ἠρόσθη δάτιος εἶναι)⁴. There is no fight indeed on the stage of this tragedy: we only hear the confused noises of the armies⁵ or some messengers telling of the danger menacing the city. In fact, the stage of the *Seven against Thebes* is chock-full of fear. "Fear", Φόβος, son of Ares and warrior fighting on the battlefield beside his father at Troy⁶, is actually evoked by the Scout first in the prologue, when he tells about the Argive warriors' oath (45-46), and then in the shield scene, while he is describing a very self-confident Hippomedon (500). Further, this is of course the feeling that the attackers inspire the victims within the wall of a besieged city like Thebes: the Chorus of Theban women are worried about being defeated and losing their freedom, and finally about the safety of their king Eteocles.

The words meaning fear vary with the different situations, and sometimes they focus on the symptoms. The language is accurate, but Aeschylus was probably even more skilful in the metrical-musical design of the tragedy as a whole. The symmetry of the structures, that precede and follow the shield scene, is evident⁷ and it is usually related to the two parts of the play, the first

¹ The following analysis of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* mostly bases on the text edited by WEST 1990: I will point out some changes in the footnotes and quote the English translation by SOMMERSTEIN 2008.

² KONSTAN 2006, p. 144.

³ Aeschylus, fr. 121-122a (*Laius*), fr. 173 (*Oedipus*) = 387a (*Incert. fab.*), fr. 235-237 (*Sphynx*) Radt. See HUTCHINSON 1985, pp. xvii-xl, on their contents and their relationship with the *Seven against Thebes*: he pays particular attention to Apollo's oracle and Oedipus' curse.

⁴ Translation by HENDERSON 2002, p. 163.

⁵ See IERANÒ 1999.

⁶ See e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 13.298-300.

⁷ The symmetry in the structures of the *Seven against Thebes* is clearly illustrated by THALMANN 1978, pp. 26-29.

focusing on Eteocles as the king of Thebes (1-652) and the second on Eteocles as one of the Oedipus' sons (653-1004). SCOTT 1984, p. 160, states that «the *Seven against Thebes* does not seem to develop its themes through an association with specific meters», but the contrast of order and disorder, self-control and excitement is well expressed by the spoken lines as opposite to the choral songs. Moreover, THALMANN 1978, pp. 103-104, claims that «the lyric rhythms ... progress from panic through dread and mantic excitement to sorrow»: although I would change «mantic excitement» to horror or prophetic fear, as I am going to explain, anyway it means that this tragedy does not look like a black-and-white but a nuanced play with some variations in intensity.

2.1. Prologue (1-77): the speeches of self-control and courage

At the very beginning of the play Eteocles, the king of Thebes, already embodies rationality and courage. In the first lines of the prologue he speaks to the “citizens of Cadmus' land” (1 Κάδμου πολῖται) and urges them to be brave and defend their own city: “stand firm ... , have good confidence, and don't be too afraid of this horde of foreigners” (34-35 μῖνοντες εὖ θαρσεῖτε, μηδ' ἐπηλύδων ταρβεῖτ' ἄγαν ὄμιλον). Courage (θάρσος) is strictly set in contrast with terror (τάρβος): although nobody has entered the stage in fright yet, Eteocles tries to prevent it. Suddenly a Scout arrives from the battlefield and tells him the oath that the seven Argive warriors have sworn, to destroy Thebes or perish. While doing it, they invoked two gods: Ares, the god of war, and his blood-loving son “Fear”, Φόβος (45-46). War and fear come closer and closer to the scene: now the Messenger can see the dust arisen by the enemies and hear the thunder of the foreign army, but he only means that it is the right time for Eteocles to make a decision and react. So his first call for courage and strength is even more compelling after the Messenger's report and the king finally prays for gods' help.

In this first part of the play Eteocles and the Messenger speak only in spoken iambic trimeters. The prologue consist of tree *rhesis* of a shorter and shorter length (1-38: Eteocles' *rhesis* = 38 iambic trimeters; 39-68: the Messenger's *rhesis* = 30 iambic trimeters; 69-77: Eteocles' prayer⁸ = 8 or 9 iambic trimeters), that reveal a slightly increasing anxiety, but order, self-control and resoluteness are still prevailing over disorder, excitement and fear, when they both exit⁹.

⁸ Against the deletion of line 73, see NOVELLI 2005, pp. 60-64.

⁹ See TAPLIN 1977, pp. 139-141.

2.2. *Parodos (78-181): the song of panic*

Abruptly, a new frenzy devastates the empty space of the orchestra: fear spreads without any control, as the female cries reveal. Some Theban maidens enter upset and frightened by the imminent struggle, and they do not speak, like the characters in the prologue, but they sing: *θρέομαι φοβερὰ* (78, “I cry aloud ... in my terror”¹⁰) are the first two words of the entrance song of the Chorus. The inside and the outside get mixed now: the voice of the young women in the orchestra sounds like an echo of the dreadful noises heard from the battlefield, while the maidens wonder whether and how the gods will help the besieged city. But they really seem to be doubtful. The source of their uncontrolled “terror” comes from the “warlike arms” of the enemies (121-122 *φόβος δ’ ἀρείων ὄπλων*) and they forcefully pray and ask Athena and Poseidon to give them release from that terror (134-135 *ἐπίλυσιν φόβων ἐπίλυσιν δίδου*). This long choral ode consists of a complex and astrophic part (78-149)¹¹ and two regular strophic pairs (150-181), but, when the song seems to have reached a structural balance, new cries (150 and 158) even louder than the earlier break off a text made of short sentences, which describe the sounds of the struggle. Finally, the young women pray the gods and beg them again (172 *λιτάς*; cf. 143 *λιταῖς*).

Dochmiacs are the rhythmical *Leitmotiv* throughout the song: first, in the *astrophon*, they gradually decrease in number until the first prayer of the Chorus (128-149)¹²; then, they increase again in the first strophic pair, which is mostly dochmiac (150-157=158-165), while the final prayer in the second strophic pair is a mix of iambo-cretic *cola* and only a few dochmiacs (166-173=174-181). The resolution of a long element is always avoided in the iambic metres, but it is a quite common feature in the others. One trochaic metre has the first element resolved (108b). In the cretic metres two short syllables stand for the first long element more often than for the second one. In the *astrophon* the resolved forms of dochmiacs are larger in number than the unresolved ones, and the two short syllables usually stand for the second element, more seldom for the third or for both; in the two strophic pair all the dochmiacs have one (and only one) resolved element, mostly the second.

¹⁰ This is my translation; in Sommerstein’s translation «I cry for great, fearful sufferings» the adjective *φοβερὰ* seems to be neuter as an attribute of *ἄχη*, instead of being feminine like the subject of *θρέομαι*.

¹¹ On the structure and the metrical analysis of Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 78-150, see LOMIENTO 2004, who reconsiders the colometry preserved by the medieval manuscripts and rejects the metrical responsion at 108-149, usually accepted by the modern editors of this text.

¹² See LOMIENTO 2004, p. 60.

2.3. Episode 1 (182-286): domesticating a female fear

The different metrical composition of the prologue and the parodos is a first evidence of the dystonia between Eteocles and the Chorus¹³. The opposition of spoken and lyric lines clearly reveals it again in the first episode, which can be divided into four parts: the first Eteocles' *rhesis* (182-202), a lyric-epirrhematic *amoibaion* (203-244), a *stichomythia* (245-263), and the second Eteocles' *rhesis* (264-286). The ring composition of this episode, framed by two speeches of the same character, shows that resoluteness and rationality are finally prevailing over doubt and excitement, but it is the result of an educational process.

During wartime everyone should behave in a way that gives confidence (184 θάρσος) to the beleaguered population, but the frightened women (190 δείσασα) can only cry, howl, run around in all directions and fall down before the images of the city gods, as the Theban maidens did in the parodos, so they spread cowardice and panic among the citizens (192). Such a behaviour is natural for women, so they should stay inside, at home, without dealing with the out-of-door affairs that only concern men.

After Eteocles has entered again, he reproaches the Chorus of this tragedy – and generally the feminine gender – very harshly, as a king and a male, but he always speaks in a controlled manner: at 182-202 he utters a quite long and articulate *rhesis* in regular iambic trimeters.

He finally urges the young maidens to obey his command (196) and caustically asks them whether they heard him or they are deaf (202). The noises of the armies are indeed stronger than his voice to their ears and the Chorus are still totally absorbed in the confusion coming from the battlefield, i.e. from a place out of the house and even of the city walls. In fact, the Theban women engage a dialogue with Eteocles in form of a lyric-epirrhematic *amoibaion* (203-244), but it does not produce any concrete change, at least to all appearances, and only remarks the dystonia between the women, who sing three strophic pairs, mostly dochmiac, and the king, who goes on speaking. Every effort he makes seems to be vain: he maintains the power of λόγος (218, 225), that is the expression of and the general belief based on rationality and common sense; he traces again a borderline between the masculine and the feminine gender (230-232); finally he asks them to be moderate: “in order to avoid making our citizens lose heart, be calm and don't get too excessively frightened” (237-238 ἀλλ' ὡς πολίτας μὴ κακοσπλάγχχνους τιθήις / εὐκηλος ἴσθι μηδ' ἄγαν ὑπερφοβοῦ). All in vain. In the first strophic pair and in the third antistrophe the maidens give an explanation of their former behaviour – the noises were dreadful and they ran and prayed the gods to protect their city – and they say the same

¹³ See IERANÒ 1999, p. 329.

reason with almost the same words: at the beginning “I was frightened when I heard the sound of the rattle, of the rattle of chariots” (203 ἔδεις’ ἀκούσασα τὸν ἄρματόκτυπον ὄτοβον ὄτοβον) and “I rose up in fear to pray to the blest ones ...” (214 δὴ τότε ἤρθην φόβῳ πρὸς μακάρων λιτάς ...); at the end “As soon as I heard that unprecedented din, I came in terrified fear to this citadel” (239-241 ποτανὸν κλύουσα πάταγον ἄμ’ ἰᾷ ταρβουσύνῳ φόβῳ τάνδ’ ἐς ἀκρόπτολιν ... ἰκόμαν).

Each one of the six Eteocles’ utterances consists of three iambic trimeters; on the other hand, the Chorus sing three strophic pairs, each one of the six strophes begins with a series of dochmiacs and almost all of them have at least the resolution of the second element: the number of lines gradually decreases (7 in the first couple, 4 in the second, 3 in the third)¹⁴ and gives a faster pace to the dialogue.

After the amoibaion, the maidens hear the noises from the battlefield again and once more they get extremely frightened, but now Eteocles is there and his presence contains the expressions of their fear. What follows is an agitated stichomythia (245-263) in iambic trimeters between the king and the Choryphaios. Courage vanishes and terror seizes hold of their tongues (259 ἀψυχίαι γὰρ γλῶσσαν ἀρπάζει φόβος), while anxiety is growing up (249 δέδοικ’). Nevertheless, Eteocles is so resolute that he does not allow the Chorus Leader to influence him and their fear to weaken his determination: at the beginning he exhorts the Choryphaios to ‘hear’ the dreadful noises from the battlefield but not openly ‘show’ the fact (246 μὴ νυν ἀκούουσ’ ἐμφανῶς ἄκου’ ἄγαν) and finally he commands him to “be silent ... and don’t terrify” the other Thebans (262 σίγησον ... μὴ φίλους φόβει). At the end of this individual debate the Chorus Leader accepts to keep silent (263 σιγῶ) and seems to give up, like a wild animal domesticated: the Theban women were just called as beasts (182 θρέμματ’)¹⁵ by Eteocles in the first line of the *rhesis* at the beginning of this episode.

The training is, anyway, to be completed, so Eteocles utters a new *rhesis* in iambic trimeters and teaches the Chorus a new lesson: the Theban women must listen to him and his prayers, and then they will sing aloud a paian, an auspicious and joyful song of triumph in order to “give confidence” to the other citizens and “dispel their fear of the foe” (270 θάρσος φίλοις, λύουσα πολεμίων φόβον). He looks like a good rhetor, putting the opposite nouns θάρσος and φόβος at the beginning and at the end of the same iambic trimeter, as well as a good political teacher for the control of the emotions, mainly fear in a public situation. Then, Eteocles leads by example and commands the Chorus to do the

¹⁴ See FLEMING 1973, pp. 47-49.

¹⁵ See CAMERON 1971, p. 81, on the horse imagery in this tragedy.

same way and leave off crying without any result. Finally, he exits and goes to arrange protective measures at the seven gates of Thebes.

2.4. Stasimon 1 (287-368): putting a great deal of effort into self-control

Left alone by his master probably too soon, the Chorus try to keep on task: he sings a long song, the first stasimon, that consists of three strophic pairs: 287-303=304-320, 321-332=333-344, 345-356=357-368.

At the beginning of the first couple the Theban maidens immediately announce their new determination: “I heed your words” (287 μέλει). Deep down nothing has actually changed: “terror will not let my soul sleep: close to my heart, thoughts are kindling fear” (287-289 φόβωι δ’ οὐχ ὑπνώσσει κέαρ, / γείτονες δὲ καρδίας / μέριμναι ζωπυροῦσι τάρβος). The Chorus look like a dove, “all trembling” (294 πάντρομος), who “fears” (293 ὑπερδέδοικεν) the snakes threatening the chicks in the nest. Anyway, at the end of the first strophe (301 ss.) the Chorus start singing a paian and go on all along the following antistrophe. They pray the gods to protect the city and “cast upon those outside the walls the cowardice that destroys men, the panic that makes them throw away their arms” (313-316 τοῖσι μὲν ἔξω πύργων ἀνδρολέτειραν καταρρίψοπλον ἄταν ἐμβαλόντες). They transfer their own feelings to the hosts, as a revenge, and their self-control is particularly evident in the metrical-rhythmical composition: the first strophic pair of this stasimon consists of iambic, cretic, trochaic, choriambic and glyconic metres, but for the first time in this tragedy the choral song has no dochmiacs at all.

Anyway, the second couple shows that the Chorus’ self-control is a too weak achievement. At the end of the paian the maidens describe their prayer as “shrill” and “wailing” (320 ὄξυγόοις λιταῖσιν) not far from those in the parodos. Indeed, in the following lines they cry (ἐ ἔ *extra metrum* at 326-327 and 338-339) and evoke the defeat of Thebes and the effects of it: the city is “ravaged and turned to flaky ashes ... while the women are taken captive and led away ... dragged by their hair like horses” (325-328). This is not real yet, this is not the present situation, but the Chorus foresee it and are frightened of it: “grievous indeed is the fate I fear!” (332 βαρείας τοι τύχας προταρβῶ). Metres reflect such a shift: the second strophic pair opens with two mournful anapaestic dimeters

(321-322=333-334)¹⁶ and, according to the colometry of the manuscripts¹⁷, it contains four dochmiacs again (329-330 ρηγνυμένων φαρῶν· [dochm] | βοῶι δ' ἔκκενουμένα πόλις [dochm ia] =341-342 -ει, τὰ δὲ πυρφορεῖ· | καπνῶι χραίνεται πόλισμ' ἄπαν).

Dochmiacs appear again at the very beginning of the third couple (345=357) and then at 347=359¹⁸. In the third strophic pair the Chorus let the imagination run wild and try to “guess” (356 εἰκάσαι) what sufferings will follow the defeat of the Theban army: the women “can expect (ἐλπὶς ἔστι) to come to a nocturnal consummation with the dominating enemy” (365-367).

2.5. Episode 2 (369-719): in a maze of passions

After the six iambic trimeters uttered by the Chorus Leader in order to announce the return of the Scout (369-371) and Eteocles (372-374), the second episode mostly consists of the so-called ‘shield scene’ (375-682), followed by an amoibaion (683-711) and a short stichomythia (712-719).

The true core of this tragedy, a sort of catalogue of the heroes who are going to fight at the seven gates of the city, shows a balanced structure: the Scout describes the Argive warrior in a *rhexis* of iambic trimeters, Eteocles announces the Theban warrior he sets against in another *rhexis* of iambic trimeters, finally the Chorus sing a few lyric lines as a reaction. This sequence is repeated seven times, with a change just in the last choral part.

Now fear is the effect of the Scout’s report. First, it is the “terrifying clang” made by the bells of beaten bronze on the underside of Tydeus’ shield, whose sound is also suggested in the text by the triple alliteration of κ (386 χαλκήλατοι κλάζουσι κώδωνες φόβον). Then, the Scout presses Eteocles and asks him who will be able to stand against the braggart Capaneus and await his attack “without panic” (436 μὴ τρέσας). Finally, the entire description of Hippomedon is shaped in order to inspire terror. The Scout has gone himself through an experience of

¹⁶ For the mournful tone, see οἰκτρὸν (321, “it is pitiful that ...”) and κλαυτὸν (333, “it is lamentable”) at the beginning of the strophe and the antistrophe. These lines are usually analysed as a catalectic and a ionic trimeter syncopated (WEST 1990, p. 469; FLEMING 1973, p. 52), but there is no evidence for this interpretation in KRAUS 1957, p. 64. I believe that two anapaestic dimeters are to be singled out also at 331=343.

¹⁷ This is the colometry in **M**, as I checked. On the colometry of the other manuscripts, see FLEMING 1973, p. 52.

¹⁸ The text and colometry of the first six lines present some problems both in the strophe and in the antistrophe: see FLEMING 1973, pp. 53-54. I suggest to read: 345-347 κορκορυγαὶ δ' ἀνὰ ἄστν, ποτὶ πτόλιν (2dochm) | δ' ὀρκάνα πυργῶτις, (ithyph) | πρὸς ἀνδρὸς δ' ἀνήρ δορι κλίνεται (dochm ia) = 357-359 παντοδαπὸς δὲ καρπὸς χαμάδις πεσῶν | ἀλγύνει κυρήσας, | πικρὸν δ' ὄμμα <τῶν> θαλαμηπόλων. On the possible analysis of 358 as a noteworthy ithyphallic with initial spondee, see GENTILI, LOMIENTO 2008, pp. 140-141.

fear, when he saw the Argive warrior brandish his round shield, and he admits it without any reticence: “I shuddered, I won’t deny it” (490 ἔφριξα ... οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρῶ). As soon as the time to fight comes, Hippomedon is in a fury like a maenad “with a fearsome look in his eye” (498 φόβον βλέπων): possessed by Ares, he has become the personification of “Terror”, who “is now vaunting at the gate” (500 Φόβος γὰρ ἤδη πρὸς πύλαις κομπάζεται). On the other hand, Eteocles gives as good as he gets and tries to overcome this verbal pressure. As far as Tydeus is concerned, he claims that he “would not tremble at the accoutrements of any man” (397 κόσμον μὲν ἀνδρὸς οὔτιν’ ἄν τρέσαιμι’ ἐγώ). But he is not the only brave among the Theban heroes: also Megareus, son of Creon, standing against Eteocles, “will not be terrified into retreating from the gate by the noise of horses’ wild neighing” (475-476 ὃς οὔτι μάργον ἱππικῶν φρυαγμάτων βρόμον φοβηθεὶς ἐκ πυλῶν χωρήσεται). Eteocles’ faith in the city gods is steady and balances the increasing anxiety of the Scout.

The Chorus have no relevant part in this virtual struggle: like mere passive spectators, the maidens can do nothing, but they feel more and more frightened. As soon as Tydeus and Melanippus, the first couple of heroes, have been presented, the Chorus seem to foresee the death of the Theban soldiers, who perish fighting for their own city, and so they “tremble” (419 τρέμω). Further, after the presentation of the fifth couple of heroes, the maidens feel shocked and upset after hearing the words cried by the Argive Parthenopaeus and the Theban Actor: “their words pierce through my breast, and each lock of my hair stands up on end” (563-564 ἰκνεῖται λόγος διὰ στηθέων, τριχὸς δ’ ὀρθίας πλόκαμος ἴσταται). Here the Chorus do not mention fear openly, but its symptoms. Another expression of it is prayer: the Theban women go on begging the gods with “righteous prayers” (626 δικαίους λιτᾶς).

The Chorus sing six short songs, organised in three strophic pairs (417-421=452-457, 481-485=521-525, 563-567=626-630) as a reaction after each couple of *rheseis*. Although some differences among them, the dominating metre and the characterising rhythm is dochmiac, in both unresolved and resolved forms, with some free respension between dochmiacs and hypodochmi. The resolved elements vary in number, and affect even the cretic metres in the last strophic pair.

At the end of the shield scene, after the two last *rheseis*, the Chorus do not sing, but unexpectedly the Chorus Leader utters six iambic trimeters. The seventh couple of heroes are Polyneices and Eteocles, the two brothers and sons of Oedipus. Suddenly the fear machine stops working, since another passion has come to light: anger. Now the victim is the strongest supporter of the self-control: Eteocles. The Chorus Leader makes a desperate attempt to convince

the Theban king to stay without fighting: “do not let your passions¹⁹ make you like that utterer of evil words!” (677-678 μή ... γένηι ὀργῆν ὁμοῖος τῶι κάκιστ’ αὐδωμένῳ). He means Eteocles is going to be similar to Polyneices, reacting to a provocation, but nothing can stop him.

What follows is almost a reverse situation of the *amoibaion* in the previous episode: in this new lyric-epirrhematic dialogue (683-711) the Chorus try to domesticate Eteocles’ passions and teach him the self-control, but they fail. Eteocles is the first and the last speaker in a circular structure. The Theban maidens answer him singing four mostly dochmiac songs, grouped in two strophic pairs. Here dochmiacs are not actually an expression of fear. Of course, we cannot say that the Chorus are controlled and quiet now, they are resolute but still excited.

Then the *amoibaion* moves to a short *stichomythia* (712-719) in iambic trimeters: the women asks the king to “listen to *them* women” (712 πείθου γυναιξί), but it is all in vain. Eteocles concludes that “when the gods send evil, one cannot escape it” (719 θεῶν διδόντων οὐκ ἄν ἐκφύγοις κακά).

2.6. Stasimon 2 (720-791): the petrifying horror and the curse

The Chorus are alone in the orchestra for the third time in this play and the maidens feel frightened again. The second stasimon is a long song – more than 70 lines – divided into five strophic pairs: 720-726=727-733, 734-741=742-749, 750-757=758-765, 766-771=772-777, 778-784=785-791.

The first word of the first couple is the verb *πέφρικα* (720 “I shudder”): it expresses a symptom of their fear, the same evoked by the Scout in the shield scene (490 *ἔφριξα*, “I shuddered”), but now it describes the present situation of the Chorus in the orchestra. Properly, fear has moved to horror, a petrifying feeling as a reaction to the strong suspicion that finally Erynis “is working out the wrath of unhinged Oedipus in his dark frenzy, who spoke the awful Curse” (724-725)²⁰: at the matter of fact, while the Chorus sing the second stasimon, Eteocles and Polyneices are killing each other and their family is going to be destroyed. Nobody cries, nobody utters any exclamation or interjection. Instead of the dochmiacs of the *parodos*, the ionic metres mostly scan this part of the song.

¹⁹ On the ambiguous meaning of *ὀργή* here, see LUPAS, PETRE 1981, p. 216. MAZON 1921, p. 133, translates it as “*ta colère*”.

²⁰ This translation by НЕЧТ, ВАСОН 1973, p. 53, fits the text *πέφρικα ... Ἐρινὸν τελέσαι τὰς ... κατάρας Οἰδιπόδα* and expresses the idea of anxiety and suspicion about what is happening or going to happen rather than awareness of what has already happened, like in Sommerstein’s translation: “(I shudder) that it has fulfilled the angry imprecations of Oedipus’ warped mind”. See also MAZON 1921, p. 135: “j’ai peur que ... l’Érinys ... n’accomplisse les imprecations courroucées d’Oedipe en démente”.

As far as the metrical composition, the first strophic pair is completely different from the following ones, that are characterised by the presence of iambic metres mixed to a variety of other metres (cretic, bacchiac, glyconic, trochaic and *kat' enoplion*). In the second couple we can probably single out a dochmiac metre (737 μελαμπαγῆς αἶ- = 745 Ἀπόλλωνος εὐ-), at least according to the colometry of M²¹, and there is an interjection (739 ὦ). At the end of the third antistrophe the Chorus are worried about the city: it could be the catastrophe not only for Eteocles and the royal family but for Thebes itself (764-765 δέδοικα δὲ σὺν βασιλεῦσι μὴ πόλις δαμασθῆι, “I fear lest together with the princes the city may be laid low”). Two dochmiacs are suspected at 770 (ἀνδρῶν ἀλφιστᾶν) = 776 (τὰν ἀρπαξάνδραν) in the fourth strophic pair, while three other ones are to be single out in the last couple, first at 778 (ἐπεὶ δ' ἀρτίφρων)²² and then at 782 (δίδυμα κάκ' ἐτέλεσεν) = 789 (διὰ χερὶ ποτε λαχεῖν). Only these have a resolved form, and immediately after the last one the Chorus conclude the stasimon in a circular way and sum it up, expressing again his fear of what might happen: “And now I tremble lest the swift-footed Fury may fulfil this” (790-791 νῦν δὲ τρέω μὴ τελέσῃ καμψίπους Ἐρινύς, cf. 720-726 πέρφρικα ... Ἐρινὺν τελέσαι).

2.7. *Episode 3 (792-821) and Exodos (822-1004): from fear to sorrow*

Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* seems to be a tragedy of the eternal recurrence thanks to the repetition of words and the ring composition of some structures, but nothing actually stays. The Messenger who arrives at the beginning of the third episode repeats the same verb (792 θαρσεῖτε, “have no fear”) as Eteocles speaking to the citizens of Thebes in the prologue (34). Nevertheless, he is not the king and he is just speaking to a group of Theban women. He reassures them: the hosts have been defeated. “Things are well – he claims – *for the most part*, at the six gates; *but* at the Seventh ... ” (799-800 καλῶς ἔχει τὰ πλεῖστ', ἐν ἑξ πυλώμασιν, τὰς δ' ἑβδόμας)²³. The Messenger gives some more details in a short stichomythia, answering the urgent questions of the Chorus Leader: “your words – he says, completely upset – are frightening me out of my mind” (806 παραφρονῶ φόβῳ λόγου). After a short *rhesis* (792-802) and a short stichomythia (803-810), there is another short *rhesis* of the Messenger (811-821) – again in a ‘perfect’ ring composition – to make a clear announce of the death of Eteocles and Polyneices.

²¹ See FLEMING 1974, p. 61.

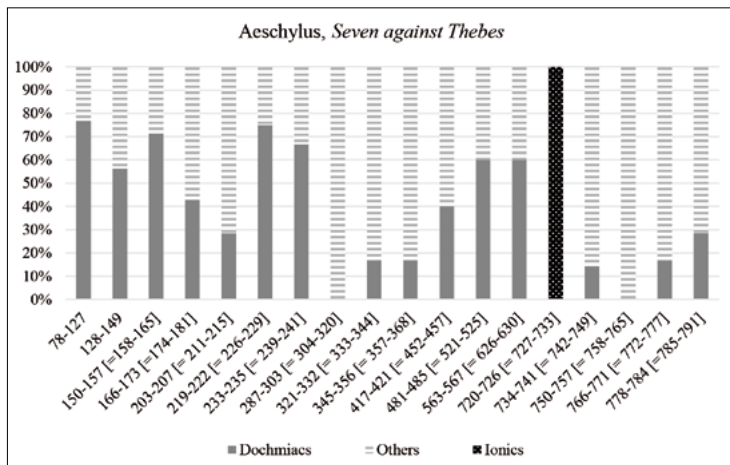
²² It is probably in responson to an iambic penthemimer: 785 τέκνοις δ' ἀραίας. See FLEMING 1974, p. 65.

²³ Italics is due to me.

Success was just an illusion. Suspicion has finally become reality: now it is just time for pain and sorrow. The Chorus start singing a huge and complex lament (822-1004) until the end of the play²⁴.

2.8. General considerations: metres, characters and emotions

All in all, we may properly consider the *Seven against Thebes* as a tragedy of passions, not only fear but finally also anger and grief. On the other hand, if the actor speaks and the Chorus sing, there is nothing surprising in itself, but Aeschylus in this play generally matches the contrast between speaking and singing with the difference between Eteocles and the Theban maidens as characters, i.e. male vs. female, rational vs. irrational, controlled vs. agitated.



As far as the choral songs are concerned, dochmiacs are the most distinguishing metres: while lyric iambs are those among the sung metres, which sounded most similar to the spoken iambic trimeters, dochmiacs usually express high emotions like panic in the parodos or sorrow in the final *kommos*. A sort of excitement is somehow expressed by dochmiacs even in the amoibaion after the shield scene, near the end of the second episode: the Chorus have just heard that Eteocles is going to fight against his brother Polyneices at the seventh gate of Thebes and the women try to persuade him to renounce that foolish action. Their anxiety is now opposite to his resoluteness. Although Aeschylus was not the creator of dochmiacs as a metre²⁵, it is reasonable that

²⁴ On the authenticity of the last scene (1005-1077), see LUPAS, PETRE 1981, pp. 281-282.

²⁵ On the presence of dochmiacs in the lyric poetry of the archaic age, see PRETAGOSTINI 1979.

he was «the creator of dochmiac lyric»²⁶, i.e. a poet who composed series of dochmiacs or even dochmiac stanzas in order to express «a definite emotional connotation»²⁷. The resolution of the second and third elements is a particular feature of these highly pathetic dochmiacs. Examples from other tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides can easily support such considerations, even when they eventually show any deliberate change of the ‘model’.

Parodos

78-127: dochmiacs 76,75% (33/43); others 23,25% (10/43)

128-150: dochmiacs 56,25% (9/16); others 43,75% (7/16)

151-165: dochmiacs 71,4% (4/7); others 28,6% (3/7)

166-181: dochmiacs 42,9% (3/7); others 57,1% (4/7)²⁸

	Unresolved Dochmiacs	Resolved Dochmiacs
78-150	k l k l 18 [79a 81b 82a 85b 90(bis) 94 97b 101a 104 113/114b 121/2(bis) 125b 126(bis) 147(bis)] k l l l 2 [123 136] k l l l 1 [101b] l l k l 2 [97a 116/117a] r l k l 2 [108a 142/143] l l r l 1 [120] r l r l 1 [78] Tot.: 27	k r k l 17 [79b 80b 82b 83/84(?) 86a 88b 92/93(bis) 95(bis) 96b 98 109 110/111a 128/129b 134/135(bis)] k r l l 2 [89 113/114a] k r r k l 3 [86b 106 115] l r k l 6 [81a 110/111b 125a 130/131b 132 146b] l r r k l 1 [80a] k l r k l 3 [88a 91 128/129a] Tot.: 32
151-157 = 158-165	None	k r k l 8 [151a=159a 153a=161a 155a=163a 156a=164a] l r k l 7 [151b=159b 153b=161b 155b=163b 156b] l l r k l 1 [164b] Tot.: 16
166-173 = 174-181	None	k r k l 4 [171/172(bis)=180(bis)] l r k l 2 [173=181] k l r k l 2 [169=177] Tot.: 8

²⁶ DALE 1968, p. 104.

²⁷ DALE 1968, p. 110.

²⁸ LOMIENTO 2004, p. 60, analyses 169 as an iambic dimeter and includes it among the “mixed” (or other than dochmiacs): the result is dochmiacs 28,6% (2/7); others 71,4 (5/7). Nevertheless, I prefer to scan 169 as a dochmiac compound (*dochm + cr*).

1st Episode (lyric-epirrhematic amoibaion)

203-207 [= 211-215]: dochmiacs 28,5% (2/7); others 71,5% (5/7)²⁹

219-222 [= 226-229]: dochmiacs 75% (3/4); others 25% (1/4)

233-235 [= 239-241]: dochmiacs 66,7% (2/3); others 33,3% (1/3)

	Unresolved Dochmiacs	Resolved Dochmiacs
203-207 = 211-215	None	k r k 2 [203b=211b] k r r k 2 [204b=212b] l r k 2 [203a=211a] Tot.: 6
219-222 = 226-229	k k 2 [221b=228b] Tot.: 2	l r k 10 [219(bis)=226(bis) 220(bis)=227(bis) 221a=228a] Tot.: 10
233-235 = 239-241	k k 1 [239a] Tot.: 1	k r k 1 [233a] k r r k 2 [233b=239b] l r k 4 [234(bis)=240(bis)] Tot.: 7

1st Stasimon

287-303 [=304-320]: dochmiacs 0% (0/17); others 100% (17/17)

321-332 [=333-344]: dochmiacs 16,7% (2/12); others 83,3% (10/12)

345-356 [=357-368]: dochmiacs 16,7% (2/12); others 83,3% (10/12)

	Unresolved Dochmiacs	Resolved Dochmiacs
287-303 = 304-320	None	None
321-332 = 333-344	k k 2 [330=342] Tot.: 2	l r k 2 [329=341] Tot.: 2
345-356 = 357-368	k k 2 [347=359] Tot.: 2	l r k 2 [345(bis)=357(bis)] Tot.: 2

²⁹ This analysis bases on the colometry and almost the text of **M**, which are usually modified by modern editors: 203-207 ὦ φίλον Οἰδίπου τέκος, ἔδεις' ἀκού- | -σασα τὸν ἀρματόκτυπον (*cho ia* |) | ὄτοβον ὅτε τε σύ- | -ριγγες ἐκλαγξαν ἐλικότροχοι | ἰππικῶν τ' ἤαυτων† | πηδάλιων δία στόμ<ι>να (*cho ia*) | πυριγενετᾶν χαλινῶν; 211-215 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ δαμόνων πρόδρομος ἦλθον ἀρ- | χαιᾶ βρέτη πίσυνος θεοῖς, (*cho ia*) | νίραδος ὄτ' ὀλοᾶς | νευφομένας βρόμος ἐν πύλαις· | δὴ τότε ἦρθην φόβωι | πρὸς μακάρων λιτάς, πόλεος (*cho ia*) | ἴν' ὑπερέχοιεν ἀλκάν.

2nd Episode (lyric-epirrhematic amoibaion)417-421 [=452-457]: dochmiacs 40% (2/5); others 60% (3/5)³⁰481-485 [=521-525]: dochmiacs 60% (3/5); others 40% (2/5)³¹563-567 [=626-630]: dochmiacs 60% (3/5); others 40% (2/5)³²

	Unresolved Dochmiacs	Resolved Dochmiacs
417-421 = 452-457	k k 5 [417a=452a 418a=453a 418b] Tot.: 5	k r k 3 [417b=452b 453b] Tot.: 3
481-485 = 521-525	None	k r k 3 [481b 482a=522a] r k 5 [482b=522b 483a=523a 523b] Tot.: 8
563-567 = 626-630	k k 5 [563(bis)=626(bis) 564a] k 2 [566b=629b] Tot.: 7	k r k 1 [564b] r k 2 [627(bis)] k r k 1 [566a] r k 1 [629a] Tot.: 5

³⁰ This analysis bases on the colometry and almost the text of **M**, dividing πρόμαχος ὄρνυται. τρέμω (*lecyth*) | δ' αἰματηφόρους μόρους (*lecyth*) | ὑπὲρ φίλων ὀλομένων ιδέσθαι (*ia ithyph*) = πρὶν ἐμὸν ἐσθορεῖν δόμον | πωλικῶν θ' ἐδωλίων | ὑπερκόπτωι δορί ποτ' ἐκλαπάξαι (419-421=455-457). Modern editors usually accept the colometry of **F** (αἰματη- [*2dochm*] | φίλων [*2ia*] | ιδέσθαι [*ithyph*]), adding one more dochmiac colon: see WEST 1990, p. 470; FLEMING 1974, pp. 55-56. As a consequence: dochmiacs 60% (3/5); others 40% (2/5), like in the two following strophic pairs.

³¹ This analysis bases on the colometry and almost the text of **M**, dividing ἐπεύχομαι δὴ τάδε μὲν εὐτυχεῖν, (ιώ), (*penth^{ia} dochm ~ penth^{ia} hypod*) | πρόμαχ' ἐμῶν δόμων, τοῖσι δὲ δυστυχεῖν. (*2dochm*) | ὡς δ' ὑπέραυχα βάζουσ' ἐπὶ πτόλει (*dochm hypod ~ 2dochm*) = πέποιθα τὸν Διὸς ἀντίτυπον ἔχοντ' {α} | ἄφιλον ἐν σάκει τοῦ χθονίου δέμας | δαίμονος, ἐχθρὸν εἴκασμα βροτοῖς {ι} τε καὶ (481-483=521-523). I consider ἰώ *extra metrum* and eventually scan Διὸς as a monosyllable with the consonantalization of iota in Διός. Modern editors usually adopt different emendations, but the colometry and the metrical analysis are quite the same.

³² This analysis bases on the colometry and almost the text of **M**, dividing μεγάλα μεγαληγόρων (*2cr*) | κλύων ἀνοσίων ἀνδρῶν· εἰ θεοὶ (*2dochm*) | θεοὶ τοῦσδ' ὀλέσειαν ἐν γαῖ (*hippon*) = δορίπωνα κάκ' ἐκτρέπον· | τες γὰς ἐπιμόλους· πύργων δ' ἔκτοθεν | βαλῶν Ζεὺς σφε κἀνοὶ κεραυνῶι (565-567=628-630). See FLEMING 1974, pp. 57-59. WEST 1990, pp. 93, 97, 470, introduces some changes in the text and colometry and consequently offers a different metrical analysis.

2nd Stasimon

720-726 [= 727-733]: dochmiacs 0% (0/7); others 100% (7/7) [ionics 85,7% (6/7)]³³
 734-741 [= 742-749]: dochmiacs 14,3% (1/7); others 85,7% (6/7)
 750-757 [= 758-765]: dochmiacs 0% (0/8); others 100% (8/8)
 766-771 [= 772-777]: dochmiacs 16,7% (1/6); others 83,3% (5/6)
 778-784 [= 785-791]: dochmiacs 28,6% (2/7); others 71,4% (5/7)

	Unresolved Dochmiacs	Resolved Dochmiacs
720-726 = 727-733	None	None
734-741 = 742-749	k k 2 [737=745] Tot.: 2	None
750-757 = 758-765	None	None
766-771 = 772-777	2 [770=776] Tot.: 2	None
778-784 = 785-791	k k 1 [778] Tot.: 1	r r r k 2 [782=789] Tot.: 2

3. Ionics as Metres of Fear: the Seven against Thebes and Other Examples

A striking element in the metrical composition of the *Seven against Thebes*, which has gone almost unnoticed, is the presence of ionic metres in the first strophic pair of the second stasimon, a song that expresses «the high point of the chorus’s fear»³⁴ in the play. Now I would suggest that Aeschylus was the creator of dochmiac lyric, as well as he was the ‘creator’ of ionics as metres of fear: ionic metres had been already used by earlier poets, e.g. Anacreon, but they do not usually express fear or horror, as far as we know³⁵.

If so, Sophocles, Euripides and somehow Aristophanes are some ‘followers’ of him. Although this particular usage of ionic metres did not spread so extensively like the emotional dochmiacs, a chronological survey in Attic drama will point out some other passages³⁶ similar to the second stasimon of the *Seven against Thebes*.

³³ This analysis mostly bases on the colometry and the text of M. See FLEMING 1974, pp. 60-66.

³⁴ THALMANN 1978, pp. 98-104.

³⁵ On some possible examples of ionic metres in pre-tragic poetry connected with fear, see DE POLI 2013, pp. 139-140.

³⁶ My list will be not a complete survey of the ionic metres in Attic drama, but a selection of passages from both tragedy and comedy by different authors.

3.1. *Aeschylus, Persians*³⁷ (472 BC): 65-113, 694-696 = 700-702

There is no doubt about the presence of ionic metres in several passages of Aeschylus' *Persians*³⁸, but the modern scholars usually consider them as the evidence of «an un-Greek culture and code of behaviour»³⁹: so they are perfectly fit for the Chorus of Persian statesmen and the setting at Sousa. Nevertheless, I would suggest that here the emotive function is to be preferred to the referential function: I mean that sometimes Aeschylus used ionic metres in order to express a particular emotional condition of the singing Chorus⁴⁰ and some commentaries to this tragedy are along this line, although unwittingly.

65-113. The parodos consists of three parts: both the first (1-64, marching anapaests, matched with the entrance of the Chorus) and the third (140-154) are anapaestic, while the second (65-139) is pure lyric. Here ionic metres are to be found out in the first part of the song, particularly in three strophic pairs (65-72=73-80, 81-86=87-92, 102-107=108-113) and an epode (93-101).

The frame of this central section just contains some allusions to fear or its symptoms. The Persian statesmen initially focus on their own concerns: «the spirit within me, all too ready to foresee evil, is troubled about the return of the King and of his vast army of men» (8-11 ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ καὶ πολυχρύσου στρατιᾶς ἤδη κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται θυμὸς ἔσωθεν); but the Chorus are not the only to be worried, since also the «parents and wives [of the soldiers] count the days and tremble as the time stretches out» (63-64 τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδὸν τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται). Again at 115 the theme is the Chorus' fear: «my mind is clothed in black and torn with fear» (ταῦτά μου μελαγχίτων φρήν ἀμύσσειται φόβῳ): the adverbial ταῦτα («for that reason»), in emphatic position at the beginning of the line and of the fourth strophe, just refers to what is said in the previous ionic lines (65-113). The two questions and the following consideration in the epode are particularly disturbing: «But what mortal man can escape the guileful deception of a god? Who is so light of foot that he has the power to leap easily away? For (deception) begins by fawning on a man in a friendly way and leads him astray into her net, from which it is

³⁷ The following analysis of Aeschylus' *Persians* mostly bases on the text edited by WEST 1990: I will point out some changes in the footnotes and quote the English translation by SOMMERSTEIN 2008.

³⁸ Some ionic metres are probably to be found out also at 647-652=653-657, 658-664=665-671 and 949-954 = 962-966, as pointed out by HALL 1996, p. 113. On the analysis of 633-671, see FLEMING 1974, pp. 15-20. On the presence of ionic metres at 949-954 = 962-966, see DE POLI 2013, pp. 135-136.

³⁹ DALE 1968, p. 124. HALL 1996, p. 113: «Headlam (1900, p. 108) suggested that its predominance (scil. of ionic *a minore* metre) in the *Persians* helped to create its eastern atmosphere». See also GARVIE 2009, p. 46.

⁴⁰ See HARDIE 1887, pp. 158-160; BROADHEAD 1960, pp. 48-49, 292.

impossible for a mortal to escape and flee» (93-101 δολόμητιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ τίς ἀνήρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει; τίς ὁ κραιπνῶι ποδι πηδήματος εὐπετέος ἀνάσσω; φιλόφρων γὰρ σαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον παράγει βροτὸν εἰς ἀρκύστατα, τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ θνατὸν ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν)⁴¹. This is the true core of the lyric part of the parodos: a «more emotional, imaginative, and pessimistic section», where «the chorus express their acute anxiety about the fate of the Persian forces»⁴².

From 114 onwards the tone of the iambo-trochaic song becomes mourning: it evokes laments and the *extra metrum* interjection ὄᾶ breaks off the fourth strophic pair twice, at 116 and 122. A different interpretation is offered by BROADHEAD (1960, pp. 48-49): according to him, the part in ionic metres «reflects in the main the Chorus' confident spirit, though the undertones of anxiety are somewhat more prominent, and rise to a climax in lines 115 ff. [i.e. 114 ff.], where there is a change to trochaic measures». Nevertheless, we must distinguish the petrifying, prophetic fear for a disaster that seems to be certain from the resulting sorrow.

The ionic strophes largely consist of dimeters and trimeters, both acatalectic and catalectic. There are also some anaclomena or anacreontics (e.g. 85=92). They are occasionally mixed with reiziana or prosodiacs, that can be analysed as ionic according to the context: «it seems necessary to admit the monocronon, or the protraction of the long, in the first syllable» of the sequence $\Gamma \quad | \quad \Gamma \quad | \quad | \quad reiz$ ⁴³ (e.g. 70=78, 71=79, 72=80 *reiz ion*), as well as in the second meter of the sequence $\Gamma \quad | \quad | \quad | \quad | \quad reiz$ (97); the sequence $\Gamma \quad | \quad a \quad | \quad k \quad u \quad pros$ can also be analysed as *ion tr_λ* vel *anacr_λ* (99, 107=113). The colometry of **M**⁴⁴ points out even some monometers (e.g. 69 -μὸν ἀμείψας = 77 τε θαλάσσας), even in the catalectic form (e.g. 107 τε κλόνους = 113 -μασι λα-), but I prefer join them with the previous or the following line in a trimeter, both acatalectic and catalectic, or in a sequence consisting of one ionised reizianum and one ionic metre, like 72=80.

694-696 = 700-702. In the middle of the play, the dead king Darius appears as a ghost, after being invoked by the Queen. «The sight of my wife close to my tomb causes me fear» (685 ταρβῶ), he asserts and asks the Chorus what is going on (681-693, 697-699). Standing in front of the past king, the Persian statesmen feel completely upset, nearly petrified: the apparition is disturbing and they speak to him just like to a god, in a way that is very respectful (694-695 σέβομαι

⁴¹ On textual matters, see FLEMING 1974, pp. 3-4. Here, I have partially changed Sommerstein's translation.

⁴² HALL 1996, p. 106. See also GARVIE 2009, p. 46.

⁴³ GENTILI, LOMIENTO 2008, p. 184; it is probably to understand «in the first metre», as in the original Italian text. A similar phenomenon is probably to understand also in the following sequence.

⁴⁴ See FLEMING 1974, pp. 1-5.

μὲν ... σέβομαι δ' ... , "I am too awed ... , I am too awed ... "; 699 τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ μεθείς, "setting your awe of me aside") but also deeply frightened (696 σέθεν ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει, "because I feared you of old"; 700-701 δίομαι μὲν ... δίομαι δ' ..., "I am afraid ... , I am afraid ... "). They can hardly tell him something unpleasant, and Darius notices that fear is an obstacle to the communication (702 δέος παλαιὸν σοι φρενῶν ἀνθίσταται, "your old fear is standing guard over your mind"), so he finally addresses the Queen.

Their fear is in a sharp contrast with that of the King, who guesses that something wrong has happened and presses the Chorus. The actor first speaks in iambic trimeters and then moves to trochaic tetrameters catalectic, a change that reflects the increasing anxiety of the character. On the other hand, the Persian statesmen sing two short strophes, each one consisting of two ionic dimeters and a paroemiac as clausula: the sentences are basic, full of repetitions and alliterations, as if they are stuttering.

3.2. *Aeschylus, Seven against Thebes (462 BC): 720-726 = 727-733*

In this tragedy the presence of ionic metres is limited to the first strophic pair of the second stasimon. The word κακόμαντις, "prophet of evil" (722), occurred also in Aeschylus' *Persians* (10 κακόμαντις ... θυμὸς, "the spirit ... ready to foresee evil"): although the syntax is different – the Persian statesmen were describing their own emotional condition, while in the song of the Theban women κακόμαντις refers to the Erinys – both these passages have a prophetic content⁴⁵. The two tragic Choruses remember the past – the departure of the Asian army and Apollo's oracle to Laius – and foresee the 'future' events – the dramatic failure of Xerxes' military expedition and the fulfilment of the god's prophecy, that a Messenger will announce later on the stage. The ionic strophes are just an expression of fear, i.e. their present passion, as irrational consequence of knowledge and imagination.

The choral song of the *Seven against Thebes* consists of some metrical units, which are almost the same as in the two lyrics of the *Persians*: ionic dimeters (722=729, 724=731), anacreontics (721=738, 723=728)⁴⁶, catalectic trimeters (725=732). The first line of each strophe is made of a reizianum or iambic penthemimeres (720=727 κ | κ | |) and one ionic metre; the clausula is an Alcaic decasyllable (726=733).

⁴⁵ See THALMANN 1978, pp. 98-104.

⁴⁶ The scansion of 723 is uncertain (κ | | | κ | | or κ | κ | κ | | with *correptio in hyato*), but both are acceptable.

3.3. *Sophocles, Ajax*⁴⁷ (450?-440? BC)⁴⁸: 227-232 = 251-256, 622-645

In Sophocles' *Ajax* the condition of the Chorus of Salaminian sailors depends on the fortune of their master, and they are already aware of it, as they claim in the parodos: «when you prosper I rejoice» (136 σὲ μὲν εὖ πρᾶσσοντ' ἐπιχαίρω), but if the gods are hostile, the Greeks spread evil rumours and everything goes wrong, «I am greatly anxious and am fearful» (139 μέγαν ὄκνον ἔχω καὶ πεφόβημαι). They do not actually know what has happened last night to Ajax, until Tecmessa arrives.

227-232 = 251-256. At the beginning of the first episode the amoibaion (201-262) between Tecmessa and the Chorus is mostly anapaestic. True lyric is limited to a couple of stanzas (221-232=245-256), sung by the Salaminian sailors. Tecmessa enters and tells the Chorus all that she knows about Ajax's madness: her speech is somewhere pathetic (233 ὦμοι), but she always speaks in anapaestic metres. The Chorus are alarmed as she is, and at first they answer in the same metres, but later the sailors sing their fear. According to the colometry of **L**, we may single out some ionic metres at the end of each strophe (227-232=251-256): 227=251 consist of an iambic penthemimeres and one ionic metre, just like 720=727 in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*; 228=252 and 230=254 are reiziana $\Gamma \quad | \quad \kappa \quad | \quad |$, which can be analysed as *anacr*_{ΛΛ} and are similar to the sequence $\Gamma \quad | \quad \alpha \quad | \quad \kappa \quad \cup$ (*pros* = *ion tr*_Λ vel *anacr*_Λ) in Aeschylus' *Persians* 99 and 107=113. The analysis of 229=253 $\kappa \quad | \quad | \quad | \quad \kappa \quad \kappa \quad | \quad |$ as pherecrateans and 231=255 $\kappa \quad | \quad | \quad | \quad \kappa \quad \kappa \quad | \quad \kappa \quad \kappa \quad |$ as glyconics with anapaestic close⁴⁹ is more uncertain, but note the regular word end after the first 'baccheus'. Finally the clausula is an iambic dimeter catalectic (*ia ba*). Right in these lines the Chorus express their worries: "Alas, I fear the future" (227 ὦμοι, φοβοῦμαι τὸ προσέρπον) and "I am afraid of sharing the agony of the violence of stoning with him" (253-255 ... πεφόβημαι / λιθόλευστον Ἄρη / ξυναλαγεῖν μετὰ τοῦδε τυπεῖς).

Later the Sailors suspect a god of being the origin of Ajax's fury (278-279 δέδοικα μὴ 'κ θεοῦ πληγὴ τις ἦκει), but the Choryphaios utters words of solace speaking to the hero in iambic trimeters. Anyway, Telamon's son seems to be resolute in his decision to kill himself and the Chorus are afraid of his eagerness (583 δέδοικ' ἀκούων τήνδε τὴν προθυμίαν). Finally Ajax exits, Tecmessa and Eurysaces follow him, and the Chorus, alone in the orchestra, start singing again.

⁴⁷ The following analysis of Sophocles' *Ajax* mostly bases on the text edited by LLOYD-JONES, WILSON 1990, but I also checked the colometry of **L**. I will point out some changes in the footnotes and quote the English translation by LLOYD-JONES 1994.

⁴⁸ On the date of Sophocles' *Ajax*, see AVEZZÙ 2003, p. 117. According to LLOYD-JONES 1994, p. 9, this play may belong «to the thirties or the twenties» of the fifth century. I quote his translation of *Ajax*.

⁴⁹ See GENTILI, LOMIENTO 2008, p. 164.

622-645. The first stasimon (596-645) consists of two strophic pairs. The first one (596-608=609-621) focuses on the sailors' situation at the present time in a foreign land, after Ajax went crazy: the tone is mourning and nostalgic, the metres are mostly glyconic according to the colometry of L. On the other hand, each stanza of the second couple is divided into two parts: 622-627=634-639 are mostly glyconic again, two long syllables opening the first three *cola*; 628-633=640-645 are ionic, three long syllables opening all the *cola* apart from the reizianum (= *anacr_{AA}*) $\Gamma \quad | \quad \kappa \quad | \quad |$ at 630=642. So the second strophic pair has two ionic caudae: here the Chorus foresee the reaction of Ajax's mother (strophe) and father (antistrophe), when they will hear that their son died⁵⁰.

Ionic metres never occur elsewhere further in this play.

3.4. Euripides, *Theseus* (455?-422? BC)⁵¹: *frr. 385-386 Kannicht*

Among the Euripidean plays two fragments from his *Theseus* seem to be relevant to the issue. The plot is almost uncertain; anyway, the scholars usually agree about the presence of a secondary Chorus made of Theseus' companions, i.e. the seven youths and seven maidens sent by the Athenians as an offering to the Minotaur⁵². They sing these two following fragments, which have been preserved to us by the text and the scholia of Aristophanes' *Wasps*.

fr. 385. It is literally quoted by Aristophanes in *Wasps* 312 τί με δῆτ', ὦ μελέα μᾶτερ, ἔτικτες; ("Why, then, o my poor mother, did you bear me ...?"). The scholium to 313 asserts that the speakers are the youths sent from Athens to Crete in order to be eaten by the Minotaur. Under the threat of a horrible death they wonder why they were born: the question expresses their anguish⁵³ like those of the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Persians* 93-101. This line is an ionic trimeter.

fr. 386. Aristophanes, *Wasps* 314 is a parody of these Euripidean words, as the scholium attests:

ἀνόνητον ἄγαλμα
πάτερ, οἴκοισι τεκῶν.

"... begetting this ornament for your house in vain, o father". The fragment is usually written as a single line, but I prefer to rearrange it as two *cola* just like

⁵⁰ For further considerations on *Ajax* 622-645, see DE POLI 2013, pp. 145-147.

⁵¹ On the date of this play, see COLLARD, CROPP 2008, p. 417; JOUAN, VAN LOOY 2000, pp. 146-147. I will quote the English translation by COLLARD, CROPP 2008.

⁵² On the secondary chorus in this play, see COLLARD, CROPP 2008, p. 416; JOUAN, VAN LOOY 2000, p. 154.

⁵³ MASTROMARCO 2006, pp. 158-159: «i vv. 312-314 della parodo delle *Vespe* ... riprendono i fr. 385 ... e 386 Kn. ..., tratti da una patetica scena del *Teseo* di Euripide: i giovani ateniesi destinati ad essere dati in pasto al Minotauro esprimono tutta la loro angoscia per la orribile fine cui stanno andando incontro».

Aristophanes, *Wasps* 314a-b⁵⁴, according to the colometry of V. All the modern editors emend the text and add the interjection ὦ (Bergk) after ἄγαλμα, i.e. ἄγαλμ' <ῶ>, but the transmitted text gives a sequence ρ | ρ | κ that actually makes no trouble as an ionised reizianum. The second *colon* is an ionic dimeter catalectic.

The attribution of these words to Hippolytus is a mistake of the scholium to *Wasps* 314: the speaker is the same of the previous fragment, i.e. the secondary Chorus of the play. Also this fragment contains an anguished reflection of the youths on their condition and life: the previous one was addressed to the mother and this one to the father, while the parents are both far away at home. We may compare these two fragments to the double focus of the second strophic pair in the first stasimon of Sophocles' *Ajax*.

3.5. Aristophanes, *Wasps*⁵⁵ (422 BC): 273 = 281, 291-316

The songs of Aristophanes' *Wasps* are almost uniform as far as the metres are concerned (mainly glyconic, trochaic and iambic), apart from the two strophic pairs of the parodos (273-280=281-289). The Chorus of old jurymen are going to a trial early in the morning, their sons help them along the way and they are in a hurry, but they are worried about Philocleon who is surprisingly in late. So they decide to sing something of Phrynichus, i.e. something in Phrynichus' manner, in order to call Philocleon out of his house.

273=281. Most of the first strophic pair consists of *kat'enoplion-epitrites* metres, but the clausula is an ionic dimeter catalectic (280=289) and – what is more important – the opening, too, is made of ionic metres. According to the colometry of V, 280=289 are both divided into three *cola*, but I prefer join the catalectic monometer at the very beginning with the following dimeter:

τί ποτ' οὐ πρὸ θυρῶν φαίνεται ἄρ' ἡμῖν
ὁ γέρων οὐδ' ὑπακούει;

“Why ever does the old man not show himself to us outside his door, nor answer our call?”. So the first line is one ionised reizianum followed by one ionic metre, like Aeschylus' *Persians* 72=80 and 107-108=113-144; the second is a regular dimeter. These ionic metres express the anxiety of the Chorus who are wondering why Philocleon is not there yet⁵⁶.

291-316. The second strophic pair (291-302=303-316), which includes the

⁵⁴ See SOMMERSTEIN 1983, p. 34; HENDERSON 1998, p. 260.

⁵⁵ The following analysis of Aristophanes' *Wasps* mostly bases on the text edited by WILSON 2008, but I also checked the colometry of V. I will point out some changes in the footnotes and quote the English translation by SOMMERSTEIN 1983.

⁵⁶ Also 283b seems to be an ionic *colon* (ρ | ρ | κ) in free responsion to *cr tr* (276a).

parody of Euripides' *Theseus* fr. 385-386, is an ionic lyric. It is an amoibaion between the Choryphaios and his son, one of the boys helping the old men, who is the authentic leader of this dialogue. His father's order at 290 (ὑπαγ', ὦ παῖ, ὑπαγε, "move on, boy, move on") is a single verse, again an ionic dimeter catalectic, that may be interpreted as an epode after the first strophic pair, but the following request of the son introduces a new theme: "Then will you give me something, father, if I ask you for it?" (291-292 ἐθελήσεις τί μοι οὖν, ὦ πάτερ, ἦν σου τι δεηθῶ;). He is hungry and worried about his nourishment: he would like some dried figs, but his father claims that dried figs cost too much and he does not earn money enough. The boy protests that he will be not his father's guide any more. His anguish is particularly evident in the antistrophe, when he is worried about the lunch. He quotes some words from a Pindaric dithyramb (fr. 189 Maehler), but his interpretation of πόρος (308) as "resource" instead of "strait" gives no sense in the original context⁵⁷. Finally, he asks the desperate question of the secondary Chorus of Euripides' *Theseus* (fr. 385 Kannicht). Time is again the origin of an emotional crisis, because the future – his lunch (305-306 πόθεν ὦνη- | σόμεθ' ἄριστον; "how shall we buy any lunch?") – will not fulfil the expectations of the past – his birth (312 τί με δῆτ' ... ἔτικτες; "o why ... didst thou bear me?"). Now this boy looks like a crying child who protests his excessive requests in a pathetic way, but his fear is exaggerated and unjustified: nobody actually will deprive him of any food but the expansive dried figs. So these ionic metres are properly parodic as metres of fear.

Most of the song consists of dimeters acatalectic⁵⁸, a couple of anacreontics, one trimeter acatalectic and one catalectic, a reizianum Γ | Γ | | as clausula. The free responsions between a dimeter *ion tr* (296) and an ionic dimeter catalectic (308), between a dimeter acatalectic (297a) and a monometer (309), and between a reizianum (301a) and a dimeter acatalectic (314a) may be a consequence of the change of singer: the father sings 296, 301a in the strophe and 309 in the antistrophe, while the son sings 297a in the strophe and 308,

⁵⁷ FABBRO 2012, p. 153 note 78, suggests that the boy evokes the myth of Helle, because she was fleeing famine that her death and his brother's should stop.

⁵⁸ My analysis mostly bases on the colometry and the text of V: 291-302 Πα. ἐθελήσεις τί μοι οὖν, ὦ | πάτερ, ἦν σου τι δεηθῶ; | Χο. Πάνυ γ', ὦ παιδίον. ἀλλ' εἰ- | πέ, τί βούλει με πρίασθαι | καλόν; οἶμαι δέ σ' ἔρεῖν ἄ- | στραγάλους δήπουθεν, ὦ παῖ. | Πα. μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἰσχάδας, ὦ παπ- | πία- ἦδιον γάρ – Χο. οὐκ ἄν | μὰ Δί', εἰ κρέμαισθέ γ' ὑμεῖς. | Πα. μὰ Δί' οὐ τᾶρα προπέμψω σε τὸ λοιπόν. | Χο. ἀπὸ γὰρ τοῦδέ με τοῦ μισθαρίου | τρίτον αὐτὸν ἔχειν ἄλ- | φιστα δεῖ καὶ ξύλα κώψον· | σὺ δὲ σὺκά μ' αἰτεῖς. ~ 303-316 Πα. ἄγε νυν, ὦ πάτερ, ἦν μὴ | τὸ δικαστήριον ἄρχων | καθίστη νῦν, πόθεν ὦνη- | σόμεθ' ἄριστον; ἔχεις ἐλ- | πίδα χρηστήν τινα νῶν ἢ | πόρον Ἑλλάς ἱερόν; | Χο. ἀπαπαῖ φεῦ, | μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε νῶν οἶδ' | ὀπόθεν γε δειπνον ἔσται. | Πα. τί με δῆτ', ὦ μελέα μήτερ, ἔτικτες; | Χο. ἴν' ἔμοι πράγματα βόσκειν παρέχης. | Πα. ἀνόνητον ἄρα σ', ὦ θυ- | λάκιόν, σ' εἶχον ἄγαλμα. ἔ ἔ. | πᾶρα νῶν στενάζειν. On metrical and textual matters, see ZIMMERMANN 1984, pp. 100-103; ROMANO 1992, pp. 131-135.

314a in the antistrophe. Moreover, the son at 308 and 314a in the antistrophe is rearranging some words from Pindar and Euripides. The son's cry ἐῖ (315), only in the antistrophe, is *extra metrum*.

3.6. *Sophocles, Oedipus the King*⁵⁹ (413?-411? BC)⁶⁰: 483-512

Fear affects even the Chorus of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. At the beginning of the play, the Theban old men enter the orchestra, worried about the present situation of their city: "I lie prostrate, shaking my fearful mind with terror"⁶¹ (153 ἐκτέταμαι φοβερὰν φρένα δειματι πάλλων). In the following episode Oedipus asks Tiresias about the origin of the plague, but he suspects the prophet and Creon of conspiring against his kingdom. After a violent quarrel, they exit; then the Chorus sing the first stasimon and wonder who the oracle from Delphi is about. They trust in Tiresias, as they claim in the first strophic pair (466 ff.), which is a couple of polymetric stanzas.

Anyway, his words were not clear and they feel confused: "grievously now, grievously is the wise interpreter of birds throwing me into confusion, as I can neither believe nor reject his words; I am at a loss as to what to say" (483-486 δεινά με οὖν, δεινὰ ταράσσει | σοφὸς οἰωνοθέτας, οὐ- | τε δοκοῦντ' οὐτ' ἀποφάσκονθ', | ὅ τι λέξω δ' ἀπορῶ). They do not know what they should expect (487 πέτομαι δ' ἐλπίσιν, "I am in flight in my expectations"), their bodies fluctuating in the air without any vigour: the future is nebulous, just like the present and the past (487-488 οὐτ' ἐνθάδ' ὄρων οὐτ' ὀπίσω, "seeing neither the present nor the past"⁶²). This is the condition they express in the second strophic pair (483-496=497-512), which mostly consists of ionic dimeters, both acatalectic and catalectic⁶³, and ionised reiziana.

⁵⁹ The following analysis of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* mostly bases on the text edited by LLOYD-JONES, WILSON 2000, but I also checked the colometry of L. I will point out some changes in the footnotes and quote the English translation by FINGLASS 2018 (commentary).

⁶⁰ On the date of this play, see LONGO 2007, pp. XXVI-XXVIII. Otherwise FINGLASS 2018, pp. 1-6: «if forced to name a specific decade, this (*scil.* 430s) is the one I would go for, but a date in the 440s or 420s would not surprise».

⁶¹ Translation by FINGLASS 2018, p. 212.

⁶² Translation by LLOYD-JONES 1994. FINGLASS 2018, p. 330, translates ὀπίσω as the future, but I believe that here this meaning is less probable.

⁶³ The colometry of V is often wrong in these lines, as also GIANNACHI 2009 shows. Among other reconstructions I would suggest this one: 483-496 δεινά με οὖν, δεινὰ ταράσσει | σοφὸς οἰωνοθέτας, οὐ- | τε δοκοῦντ' οὐτ' ἀποφάσκονθ', | ὅ τι λέξω δ' ἀπορῶ. | πέτομαι δ' ἐλπίσιν οὐτ' ἐν- | θὰδ' ὄρων οὐτ' ὀπίσω. | τί γὰρ ἢ Λαβδακίδαις | ἢ τῷ Πολύβου νεῖ- | κοσ ἔκειτ' οὐτε πάροιθέν | ποτ' ἔγωγ' οὐτε τανῦν πω | ἔμαθον, πρὸς ὅτου δὴ | βασάνω | ἐπὶ τὰν ἐπίδαμον | φάτιν εἴμ' Οἰδιπόδα Λαβ- | δακίδαις ἐπικουρος | ἀδήλων θανάτων = 497-512 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὖν Ζεὺς ὁ τ' Ἀπόλλων | ξυνητοὶ καὶ τὰ βροτῶν εἰ- | δότες ἀνδρῶν δ' ὅτι μάντις | πλέον ἢ γῶ φέρεται, | κρίσις οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής· | σοφία δ' ἂν σοφίαν | παραμείψειεν ἀνήρ. | ἀλλ' οὐποτ' ἔγωγ' ἂν, | πρὶν ἰδοῦμ'

3.7. General considerations

We may conclude that Attic tragedy actually exploited ionic metres with an expressive function and several examples show that they were particularly used as metres of fear. Often time has a role as origin of this kind of fear, when the present situation is nebulous or when the future seems to deny what the past promised. They were neither gendered, because both male and female choruses sang ionic stanzas, nor closely related to old rather than young people. Probably this usage was so common to Attic tragedy that Aristophanes turned to them with a parodic purpose.

3ion (r | l | r | l | r | l): A. *Pers.* 65=73, 68/69=76/77; Ar. *Ve.* 300=312.

3ion (l | l | r | l | r | l): S. *Aj.* 628=640.

ion anacr (r | l | r | k | l | k | l): S. *Aj.* 633=645.

3ion_λ (r | l | r | l | r | l): A. *Pers.* 106=112; A. *Se.* 725=732; E. fr. 385.1 ; Ar. *Ve.* 301=313.

reiz^{ion} *ion* (r | r | l | r | l): A. *Pers.* 72=80; Ar. *Ve.* 273a=281a.

2ion (r | l | r | l): A. *Pers.* 66=74, 67=75, 81=87, 82=88, 83=89, 84=90, 85=91, 93, 94, 95, 100, 104=110, 105=111, 694=700, 695=701; A. *Se.* 722=729, 730*¹, 724=731; Ar. *Ve.* 273b=281b, 291=303, 292=304, 293=305, 294=306, 295=307, 297*², 302b=315; S. *OT* 484=498, 485=499, 487=501, 491=505, 492=506, 499=510.

2ion (r | k | r | l): Ar. *Ve.* 314*⁴.

2ion (l | l | r | l): S. *Aj.* 629=641, 631=643, 632=644.

ion tr (r | l | l | k | l): A. *Se.* 723*¹; Ar. *Ve.* 296*³.

anacr (r | k | k | l): A. *Pers.* 85=92, 96; A. *Se.* 721=728; Ar. *Ve.* 298=310, 299=311.

2ion_λ (r | l | r | l): A. *Pers.* 98, 101, 102=108, 103=109; E. fr. 386.2; Ar. *Ve.* 308*³; S. *OT* 486=500, 488=502, 489=503, 508*⁵.

ion tr_λ (r | l | l | k | l): A. *Pers.* 99.

anacr_λ (r | k | k | l): A. *Pers.* 107=113.

reiz^{ion} (r | r | l | l): A. *Pers.* 70=78, 71=79; E. fr. 386.1 ; Ar. *Ve.* 302a*⁴; S. *OT* 493=507, 494a=509, 496a=511.

reiz^{ion} (r | l | l | l): A. *Pers.* 97.

reiz^{ion} (l | l | r | l): S. *OT* 490=504.

reiz^{ion} (r | k | l | l): S. *Aj.* 228=252, 230=254, 630=642; Ar. *Ve.* 302c=316.

ion (r | l | l): Ar. *Ve.* 309*².

ion_λ (r | l): S. *OT* 494a*⁵.

ὄρθον ἔπος, μεμ- | φομένων ἄν καταφαίην. | φανερά γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ | πτερόεσσ' ἦλθε κόρα | ποτέ,
καὶ σοφὸς ὦφθη | βασιάνω θ' ἠδύπολις· τῶν | ἀπ' ἑμᾶς φρενὸς οὔποτ' | ὀφλήσει κακίαν.

glyc^{ion?} (k | l | | r | r | l): S. Aj. 231=255.

pher^{ion?} (k | l | | r | l | l): S. Aj. 229=253.

other openings:

reiz^{ia} ion (k | k | l | r | l | l): A. Se. 720=727.

reiz^{ia} ion (l | l | k | l | r | l | l): S. Aj. 227=251.

cho adon (l | r | l | l | r | l | l): S. OT 483=497.

other clausulae:

par (r | l | l | r | l | l): A. Pers. 696=702.

decasyll. alc. (l | r | l | r | l | k | l | l): A. Se. 726=733.

zia_λ vel ia ba (k | k | k | l | l | l): S. Aj. 232=256.

hemiascl. I (k | l | l | r | l): S. OT 496b=512.

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A cura di Mattia De Poli

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ἀψυχίαι γὰρ γλῶσσαν ἀρπάζει φόβος
Pavida, la mia lingua è prigioniera della paura
(Eschilo, *Sette contro Tebe* 259)

Questo volume raccoglie i contributi proposti in occasione del Convegno internazionale "Il teatro delle emozioni - La paura" (Università degli Studi di Padova, palazzo del Bo', aula I. Nievo, 24-25 maggio 2018). I vari testi sono stati organizzati in tre sezioni principali: "Tra il testo e la scena", "Individuo, società, politica" e "La paura e il femminile". All'interno di ciascuna di esse si è cercato di seguire uno sviluppo cronologico e di favorire allo stesso tempo il confronto fra le manifestazioni teatrali più antiche e quelle più recenti. Si tratta, tuttavia, di una partizione puramente orientativa: alcuni studi, infatti, dialogano tra loro in modo costruttivo, e quasi si completano a vicenda, anche se sono stati collocati in sezioni diverse del volume. La sezione "Classici-Contemporanei: letture e materiali didattici sul filo della paura" raccoglie materiali prodotti o utilizzabili in ambito scolastico.