CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

EURIPIDES

M.A. LLOYD

Introduction

The single most important factor in Euripides' treatment of time is that all his surviving tragedies observe the Aristotelian unity of time, and take place within a single day (*Poetics* 1449b13). This is also true of the surviving plays of Aeschylus (→) and Sophocles (→), with the sole exception of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. A story of broad time span is treated in the course of a plot which occupies no more than one day, and this means that Euripides needs to employ a great number of external retrospective and prospective narratives.¹ The relationship between story and plot corresponds to the relationship between offstage and onstage space, with the plays incorporating a much wider range of locations than can actually be represented on the stage.² Euripides often makes a point of setting the action on a particularly significant day, on which a crucial series of events takes place in a short space of time (*Alc.* 20–21, 27; *Hipp.* 21–22, 369, 726, 889–890; *Hec.* 43–44; *Or.* 48). This can itself contribute to the characteristically tragic sense of the sudden reversals to which human life is subject.³

¹ In the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* the position is taken that tragedies are no narratives (cf. *SAGN* 1:6–7); for a more liberal view see Goward 1999: 10–15; Lowe 2000: 163–164; Gould [1991] 2001: 319–322. The terms 'analepsis' and 'prolepsis' are therefore only applied to aspects of time *within* embedded narratives, while for the temporal function of the embedded narratives *themselves* the terms 'retrospective' and 'prospective narrative' are used.

² The editorial policy of the present volume is to use Pfister's ([1977] 1988: 197–198) distinction between story and plot with reference to a *whole play*, corresponding to the distinction between *fabula* and story with reference to narratives *within* a play (both systems deriving from the *fabula/sjuzet* distinction). It is unfortunate that 'story' is used in opposite ways in the two systems.

³ Cf. Lowe 2000: 165.

Euripides, like the other tragedians, keeps precise indications of time to a minimum. Several of his plays (*Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia Aulidensis*, as well as the fragmentary *Phaethon*) begin just before sunrise.⁴ This indicates daily routines in *Electra* and *Ion*, and is associated with nocturnal anxiety in *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. It also reinforces the sense of a beginning, especially when tragedies so often deal with the events of a specific day (cf. *Ba.* 677–679 at the beginning of a messenger-speech). There is, however, never any systematic indication in Euripides of the subsequent progression of the day towards nightfall.

This vagueness allows for a flexible treatment of the relationship between onstage and offstage time, which is especially notable in the context of messenger-speeches. ‘Seldom if ever is there enough time, literally speaking, in between the departure of the main characters to a catastrophic event and the arrival of the messenger to report it for the things which he reports to have happened.’⁵ The most extreme example of this in Euripides is in *Andromache*, where Orestes departs for Delphi (sixty miles away) at line 1008 and executes a plot which takes at least three days (1085–1087) before the messenger returns with the news at line 1070. Some scholars have wrongly tried to make his movements more intelligible in literal terms.⁶ Choral odes regularly intervene at this point, doing something to cover the lapse of time. There is however no choral ode in *Andromache* before the corpse of Neoptolemus arrives, immediately after the messenger has finished his speech. Similarly in *Electra*, a choral ode (*El.* 699–746) may cover the time for the events described in the messenger-speech, but the messenger then arrives remarkably quickly after Aegisthus’ death-cries are heard at line 747.

There is a notable asymmetry between onstage and offstage time in *Heracleidae*. Eurystheus and his army are at the Megarian border at lines 278–279, but already overlooking the plain of Marathon at 389–397; by then Demophon has made his own military preparations. The messenger arrives at line 784 with news of a pitched battle and the pursuit of Eurystheus to the Scironian rocks (860), and Eurystheus himself then arrives at line 928. The compression in *Hercules Furens* is even bolder, with the elaborate sequence of events described in the messenger-speech (*HF* 922–1015) corresponding to a simultaneous presentation which occupies a mere 24 lines (867–909). The beginning

⁴ Cf. Diggle 1970: ad 63.

⁵ Taplin 1977: 293.

⁶ Cf. Lloyd [1994] 2005: 162–163.

of Heracles' madness, with his unexpected silence and distorted eyes, is treated both in simultaneous (867–870) and retrospective (928–934) narration.

Beginnings

Euripides typically begins his plays with a prologue speech, in contrast to Sophocles, who begins with dialogue in six out of his seven extant plays. The effect is to present the prehistory of the play in a single block, rather than in the more fragmented manner favoured by Sophocles (→).

This practice leads to problems in identifying the point in the story at which the plot begins. A prologue speech is not usually an event in the plot, but is rather a narrative device by the playwright. The entrance of the prologue speaker is therefore not normally the beginning of the plot, with everything prior to that to be regarded as external retrospective narrative. In *Medea*, for example, the Nurse's account of Medea's grief is essentially simultaneous with her audible outbursts later in the play (96–97, 112–114, etc.): 'Poor Medea, finding herself thus cast aside, calls loudly on his oaths, invokes the mighty assurance of his sworn right hand, and calls the gods to witness the unjust return she is getting from Jason' (20–23).⁷ It would also be unnatural to take Medea's grief as the beginning of the plot, and to take Jason's betrayal of her (17–19) as retrospective narrative. The first event is usually what prompts the prologue speech. The plot of *Medea* thus begins with Jason's betrayal of Medea and marriage to the daughter of Creon (16–19; note 'now', 16). The Nurse's speech is prompted by her distress at this turn of events and Medea's reaction to it (56–58; cf. *Hec.* 68–76; *IT* 42–43). The plot of *Ion* begins with Creusa and Xuthus coming to Delphi (65–68), of *Phoenissae* with the truce organized by Jocasta (81–83), and of *Orestes* with the Argive assembly and the arrival of Menelaus (46–56). These events can only be taken as pieces of external retrospective narrative information if the prologue speech is treated as an event within the plot, as opposed to a narrative device by the playwright.

Gods differ from other prologue speakers in that their very arrival can be a crucial event, especially when it signifies the establishment of

⁷ Passages from Euripides are cited, sometimes with slight adaptations, from the Loeb translation by David Kovacs.

their cult and the punishment of their enemies (*Bacchae*, *Hippolytus*). In *Alcestis* and *Troades*, by contrast, the plot begins with the departure of a protecting god (*Alc.* 23; *Tr.* 25). In suppliant plays, the plot begins with the crisis which prompted the supplication. The prologue speech explains the opening tableau (*Hcld.* 31–38; *Andr.* 39–44; *HF* 35–50; *Hel.* 60–67). *Electra* is unusual in that there is nothing in particular that prompts the prologue speech, and the first event is the arrival of Orestes and Pylades at line 82.

Retrospective narratives

Euripides typically frames the plot with external retrospective narration at the beginning and external prospective narration at the end. The effect is to suggest that the play focusses on a single day from an extended story. The Nurse in *Medea* thus tells of the voyage of Argo through the Symplegades to Colchis to get the Golden Fleece for Pelias (1–6), followed by Medea falling in love with Jason and sailing to Iolcus (6–8), persuading the daughters of Pelias to kill their father (9–10), and going into exile in Corinth, where she lived happily with Jason as man and wife (10–15). It is at this point that the Nurse describes the beginning of the actual plot: Jason's remarriage (16–19), and Medea's response to it (20–45). This simultaneous narrative at the end of the prologue speech moves seamlessly into a dramatized presentation of the events.

There are completing external retrospective narrations later in the play. They include the details of the acquisition of the Fleece and Medea's role in it (476–482), Jason's oaths (160–163, 168–170, 208–209, 410–445, 492–495, 698), and the murder of Apsyrtus (167, 257, 1334). There are also repeating external retrospective narratives: Medea's voyage to Iolcus (166, 255–256, 431–435, 483–487, 534–544, 1329–1335), the death of Pelias (486–487, 504–508, 734), and Jason's remarriage (140, 309–310, 435–436, 488–489, 547–568, 690–703).

Another example of Euripides' extensive employment of external retrospective narration is *Andromache*, where the whole story of the Trojan War is incorporated in a series of narratives: the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (17–19, 1218–1219, 1231–1237, 1253); the marriage of Andromache and Hector (1–4, 222–227); the judgement of Paris (274–292); Cassandra's prophecy about Paris (293–300); Paris eloping with Helen (103–104, 592–604); Menelaus gathering an army (324–325, 605–

609); Menelaus promising Hermione to Orestes (966–969); the sacrifice of Iphigenia (624–626); Menelaus promising Hermione to Neoptolemus (969–970); the Trojan War (304–308, 610–618, 1018–1021, 1037–1046), including the deaths of Hector (8–9, 107–108, 399, 456–457) and Achilles (247–248, 654–656, 1235–1237); the capture and sack of Troy (105–106, 301–302, 362–363, 400, 455, 1013–1017, 1022–1027), including the death of Astyanax (9–11) and Menelaus’ sparing of Helen (627–631, 685–686); Andromache going to Greece as Neoptolemus’ concubine (12–15, 24–25, 109–114, 141–142, 401–403); Neoptolemus becoming king of Phthia (21–23); Neoptolemus’ first visit to Delphi (51–53, 1194–1196); Andromache giving birth to Molossus (24–25, 395–396); the marriage of Neoptolemus and Hermione (29–31, 147–153, 619–624, 1186–1193); the death of Agamemnon (1028); Orestes killing Clytemnestra (972–981, 1029–1036); and finally Menelaus rebuffing Orestes’ pleas to marry Hermione (971–981).

This kind of procedure could be illustrated many times over in Euripides’ plays, with the plot set against a much larger background which is systematically reconstructed by retrospective narratives. He sometimes uses the chorus for this purpose (e.g. *Tr.* 511–567; *Ph.* 638–675).⁸ In the case of *Andromache*, as in others of Euripides’ plays (e.g. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Orestes*) the characters replicate familiar behaviour from earlier in the myth.⁹

Internal retrospective narrations are also common in Euripides, especially completing retrospective narrations describing events which have taken place offstage. The messenger-speech is the most notable example of this,¹⁰ but there are many other examples (e.g. *Alc.* 747–772; *Andr.* 802–819; *El.* 509–523, 619–633).

Prospective narratives

Drama may create a more immediate sense of the present moment than narrative, but each moment also implies a future. The events only happen as they do because they are part of a larger pattern which is to a greater or lesser extent unrealized. This aspect of drama has been

⁸ Cf. Gould [1991] 2001: 325.

⁹ Lloyd [1994] 2005: 6–7.

¹⁰ Cf. de Jong 1991a.

well described by Suzanne Langer: 'In actual life we usually recognize a distinct situation only when it has reached, or nearly reached, a crisis; but in the theater we see the whole setup of human relationships and conflicting interests long before any abnormal event has occurred that would, in actual life, have brought it into focus'.¹¹ In *Medea*, for example, the whole description of Medea's rage and grief in the prologue (20–35) by itself implies that she is going to do something violent, and the Nurse's fears for the children creates the expectation that something is going to happen to them (36, 90–95, 100–118). This is, however, overlaid by the more frequent and explicit references to an attack on Jason's new family (37–45, 106–110, 163–165, 259–266, 282–291, 364–409, 453–457, 625–626, 764–790). It thus comes as shock when Medea announces her intention to kill the children (792–793), regardless of whether there was a pre-existing version in which she kills them. Medea's concerns about which city will give her shelter (386–391, 502–508) create an expectation that the issue will be dealt with later in the play.

Many of Euripides' plays contain an elaborate plan or intrigue (*mēchanēma*), which foreshadows the events described in the messenger-speech (e.g. *IT* 1017–1055; *Hel.* 1032–1106; *Or.* 1105–1245). These plans are sometimes remarkably detailed and accurate. Medea thus describes her plan to the chorus: 'I shall send one of my servants and ask Jason to come to see me. When he arrives, I shall speak soothing words to him, saying that I hold the same opinion as he, that the royal marriage he has made by abandoning me is well made, that these are beneficial and good decisions. I shall ask that the children be allowed to stay, not with the thought that I might leave them behind on hostile soil for my enemies to insult, but so that I may kill the princess by guile. I shall send them bearing gifts, a finely woven gown and a diadem of beaten gold. If she takes this finery and puts it on, she will die a painful death, and likewise anyone who touches her: with such poisons will I smear these gifts' (*Med.* 772–789). She proceeds to give an equally accurate account of her murder of her children and flight from Corinth (790–796). Contrast Creusa's plan to kill Ion, where she says 'If it [the poison] passes down his throat, he will never come to glorious Athens but will die and remain here' (*Ion* 1037–1038), but Ion does not in the event drink the poison. The intrigue in *Electra* is worked out in dialogue (596–663), and includes accurate predictions not only of what the plotters

¹¹ Langer 1953: 311.

themselves will do but also of the reactions of their enemies Aegisthus (637) and Clytemnestra (656). Murderous plans are foreshadowed more obliquely and allusively at *Hippolytus* 725–731 and *Andromache* 993–1008.

In comparison to Sophocles, Euripides makes very little use of prophecies and dreams to foreshadow what is to happen: ‘such prophetic items within the body of the a play are a marginal feature of Euripides’ strategy’.¹² There are dreams at *Hecuba* 68–97, *Iphigenia Taurica* 42–66, and *Rhesus* 780–788, but in *Electra* he eliminates the dream which is prominent in Aeschylus (*Ch.* 22–41, 514–539) and Sophocles (*El.* 417–425). He makes much more use of predictions in prologue speeches, which have special authority when they are made by a god (*Alcestis*, *Hippolytus*, *Troades*, *Ion*, and *Bacchae*). Even in these cases, however, Euripides can manipulate the audience’s expectations, and this is especially notable in *Ion*, where Apollo turns out to be unable to predict and control events. Hermes describes Apollo’s intentions as follows: ‘he means to give his own son to Xuthus when he enters this shrine and say that Xuthus is the father. In this way the boy will enter the house of Creusa his mother and be recognized by her: thus not only will Loxias’ liaison be kept a secret but also the boy will receive what belongs to him’ (*Ion* 69–73). As things turn out, Apollo’s plan encounters a series of near-disastrous obstacles, and Creusa eventually recognizes Ion not in Athens but in Delphi.¹³

Euripides sometimes has prospective narration by the chorus.¹⁴ There are two examples of the chorus anticipating the outcome of a plot. At *Medea* 976–1001, the chorus correctly predicts the outcome of Medea’s plot, while at *Bacchae* 982–991 they go so far as to quote what Agave will actually say (incorrectly in detail, but correctly in general sense; cf. 1106–1109). The chorus of *Hippolytus* correctly predicts Phaedra’s suicide (767–775). Examples of external prospective narratives are *Hecuba* 444–483, where the chorus of Trojan slaves speculates about the future which awaits them in Greece, and *Iphigenia Aulidensis* 751–802, where the chorus evokes the imminent war at Troy.

Euripides ends nine of his seventeen surviving tragedies with a speech by a *deus ex machina*, who explains aspects of the action which the humans may have misunderstood, gives them instructions, and predicts what will happen to them in the future. The god tells the characters

¹² Goward 1999: 122.

¹³ Cf. Hamilton 1978: 279–283; Lloyd 1986.

¹⁴ Cf. Gould [1991] 2001: 325.

their place in the myth, and relates the action to a continuing custom or cult. In several other plays (e.g. *Medea*, *Hecuba*), a human character is granted temporary predictive powers and fulfils a similar role. These prospective narratives balance the retrospective narratives in the prologue speech: Euripides' plays focus on one segment of a myth, and these speeches at the beginning and end of a play give the rest of the story in condensed form.

Order within narratives

Euripides' embedded narratives generally proceed in a lucidly chronological order. Medea typifies Euripides' treatment of events in narrative when she says 'I shall begin my story at the beginning' (*Med.* 475). In prologue speeches, there are only quite minor deviations from chronological order. In the prologue of *Alcestitis*, for example, Apollo mentions his servitude to Admetus (1–2) before the reason for it (3–7), and his protection of Admetus' house (9) before the reason for that (10–11). Messengers give their news in brief at the outset (e.g. *Andr.* 1073–1075), but their speeches normally recount the events as they experienced them, in strict chronological order. They sometimes employ narrating focalization, especially in revealing *ex eventu* knowledge of a plot (e.g. *Andr.* 1088, 1101), in order to set out the events in a clearer chronological order.¹⁵ De Jong observes that the regular use of experiencing focalization means that there are few analepses or prolepses in messenger-speeches, and she finds very few cases even of implicit prolepses.¹⁶ Narratives in dialogue similarly proceed in chronological order, for example Creusa's narrative at *Ion* 265–307, in which there is a minor anachrony explaining her marriage to Xuthus (293–298).

Euripides' lyric narratives usually adhere to chronological order, for example the accounts of the earlier history of Thebes in the odes of *Phoenissae* (e.g. 638–675; cf. Arthur 1977), the description of the capture of Troy in *Troades* (511–567, with some *ex eventu* knowledge at 534–535), the account of the foundation of the Delphic oracle at *Iphigenia Taurica* 1234–1283, and the narrative of the Labours of Heracles at *Hercules Furens* 359–429. There is some anachrony in the 'shield of Achilles' ode (*El.* 432–486), which begins with the voyage of the Greek ships to Troy,

¹⁵ Cf. de Jong 1991a: 30–56.

¹⁶ De Jong 1991a: 45–49.

and then moves back to Achilles receiving his armour (with its images of earlier episodes from myth), before moving forward to the murder of Agamemnon, and finally predicting the murder of Clytemnestra.

Rhythm

Lowe observes that in drama ‘time runs at a fixedly literal rate’, and that ‘summary, stretch (retardation), and pause are virtually impossible’.¹⁷ It could be argued against this that there are examples of pause in Euripides, where the action comes to a standstill. This happens in speeches with passages of quasi-soliloquy like Orestes’ reflections on nobility (*El.* 367–400) and Hippolytus’ tirade against women (*Hipp.* 616–668). A subset of these speeches is the entrance soliloquy, where sometimes, as Bain says, ‘the action freezes’.¹⁸ He discusses the pause at *Hercules Furens* 525–529, during which Heracles takes in the scene, and Megara’s instructions to the children (520–522) are ignored (cf. *Tr.* 1285–1332).

There is more scope for differences of speed in embedded narratives. Euripides’ messenger-speeches are highly scenic, with more use of direct speech than Sophocles’ (→). Occasionally, however, he speeds up the narrative with short passages of summary. A good example is the description of Aegisthus’ slaves preparing a sacrifice (*El.* 798–802): ‘the slaves ... put forth their hands to their work: some brought a bowl to catch the blood, others brought baskets, still others proceeded to light the fire and set cauldrons upright about the altar. The whole house resounded with activity’ (cf. *Med.* 1141–1142; *Ba.* 1054–1057, 1131–1136). Compare the response to the effect of Medea’s poison on Creon’s daughter (*Med.* 1177–1180): ‘And at once one servant went to her father’s chambers, another to her new husband to tell of the bride’s misfortune: the whole house rang with the sound of drumming footsteps’. The iterative optative is sometimes used in such contexts, as at *Iphigenia Taurica* 324–326: ‘But when some of us *fled*, others ran up to the men and pelted them. When the men *drove* them *off*, those who had just run away came back and pounded the men with stones’ (cf. *Med.* 1216; *Hipp.* 1226–1231). A rather different use of iterative narration, with reference to an

¹⁷ Lowe 2000: 164.

¹⁸ Bain 1981: 24–29.

imagined viewer, can be found in the following passage: ‘You could have seen one of the women tearing asunder a bellowing fatted calf with her hands, while others tore heifers to pieces. You could have seen their flanks and cloven hooves hurled this way and that ...’ (*Ba.* 737–741; cf. *Andr.* 1135–1136). The passing of time can also be evoked by comparisons: ‘And in less time than a runner could have finished both legs of a hippodrome he flayed off the hide and loosened the flanks’ (*El.* 824–826; cf. *Med.* 1181–1184). The messenger-speech in *Andromache* begins with an unusually extended summary, describing Orestes’ plotting (*Andr.* 1085–1099), including an iterative direct speech.

Frequency

The frequency of the events represented in a play, as opposed to those described in embedded narrative, might be thought to be necessarily singulative. It could, however, be maintained that the opening sequences of several of Euripides’ plays are in a significant sense iterative in that they represent either habitual behaviour or at least behaviour which has been going on for some time. This is the opposite of Genette’s concept of ‘pseudo-iteration’ in Proust, referring to scenes which are ostensibly iterative ‘whereas their richness and precision of detail ensure that no reader can seriously believe that they occur and reoccur in that manner, several times, without any variation’.¹⁹ These passages in Euripides are ostensibly singulative, but in reality have a significant iterative element.

Medea’s offstage laments (96–213) are essentially an illustration of the behaviour described iteratively by the Nurse in the prologue (20–36), and thus have an iterative quality of their own. In *Troades*, Hecuba’s opening monody (98–152) similarly picks up on Poseidon’s reference to her in his prologue speech (37–38). Hermione’s accusations in the agon of *Andromache* (155–158) illustrate the iterative behaviour described by Andromache in the prologue (32–35). This is even clearer in the case of *Electra*, where the domestic tasks which Electra performs in the prologue are evidently representative of her life in general (54–81), and her lamentation is explicitly represented as typical (e.g. ‘always’ at line 145; the repetitive quality of Electra’s laments is even clearer in

¹⁹ Genette [1972] 1980: 121.

Sophocles, e.g. *El.* 86–120). Andromache's elegy has a similar quality (e.g. 'always', *Andr.* 91), although she mentions her immediate situation at the end.

The beginning of *Hippolytus* is more elaborate. Hippolytus' first appearance (*Hipp.* 58–120) clearly illustrates (in both lyric and iambic modes) the characteristic pattern of behaviour which Aphrodite has described in her prologue speech (*Hipp.* 10–19), namely devotion to Artemis, hostility to Aphrodite, enthusiasm for hunting, and rejection of sexual activity. The initial presentation of Phaedra (*Hipp.* 176–361) is likewise an iterative illustration of Aphrodite's account of her plight (*Hipp.* 38–40). In *Ion*, Ion's opening monody (*Ion* 82–183) represents his mode of life in general as much as anything which he does on a particular day (note 'always', *Ion* 103). For a similar effect in a messenger-speech see *Bacchae* 680–713.

Euripides also employs repetition. The sequence of events in his plays is ostensibly chronological, but to a greater extent than in Aeschylus or Sophocles is organized as a repeating presentation of the same events in a variety of modes. One example of this is his exploitation of the tragic convention whereby 'a situation is realized first in its lyric, then in its iambic aspect—that is to say, first emotionally, then in its reasoned form'.²⁰ The most extreme example of this is in *Alcestis*, where Alcestis dies first in a lyric scene (238–279), and again at the end of an iambic scene in which both she and Admetus make lengthy speeches and engage in stichomythia (280–392). The same motifs are repeated at the end of each section: darkness coming over the eyes (269, 385), 'I am no more' (270–271, 387), farewell to her children (272, 389). John Gould has used this scene as a paradigm case of the way in which Euripides' use of different modes of presentation means that 'both the action and the stage figures should be seen and felt by us, the audience, as fragmented and discontinuous'.²¹ This example is extreme because Alcestis dies at 272, the climax of a remarkable passage of simultaneous lyric narrative, and there is no attempt to relate the lyric and iambic sections in any naturalistic way. In other examples, the transition from lyric to iambic is subtly smoothed, for example by being presented as an attempt at more coherent utterance (*Tr.* 348–350, 366–367; *Hel.* 252–253; cf. *A. A.* 1178–1185). Scholars have pointed to the way in which

²⁰ Dale [1954] 1978: ad *Alc.* 280ff.

²¹ Gould 1978: 50 = 2001: 91.

Euripides pushes this convention to an extreme as part of his presentation of Alceste in an ambiguous condition between life and death.²²

The anapaests which precede the *parodos* in *Medea* (96–130), the *parodos* itself (131–213), and Medea's opening speech (214–266) essentially recapitulate the Nurse's account of her behaviour in the prologue speech (20–45). The same topics recur in various modes: Jason's oaths (21–23, 160–163, 168–170, 208–209, 410–430); Medea's wish for death (24–26, 96–97, 141–142, 151–154, 226–227); her harshness and rejection of consolation (27–29, 98–110, 142–143, 173–189); her regrets about leaving Colchis (30–35, 166–167, 255–258, 441–443, 645–662); her hostility to her children (36, 92–93, 100–105, 112–113, 116–118). These themes are treated further in her speech in the agon (465–519).

Conclusion

Euripides differs from Sophocles (→) in presenting the prehistory of the play in a block in the prologue speech, and he often also inserts external retrospective narratives later in the play. The prologue speech is balanced by external prospective narration at the end, often by a *deus ex machina*. The effect is to present the plot of the play as a brief if crucial segment of an extended story. The messenger-speech is the most notable example of internal retrospective narration in Euripides. More distinctive is his use of detailed and usually accurate internal prospective narration in his plotting scenes. His embedded narratives, both iambic and lyric, tend to proceed chronologically, and this is indeed an aspect of his characteristic clarity of structure. His boldest effects in the treatment of time are not in his embedded narratives but in his repeating presentation of the same events in a variety of modes.

²² E.g. Gregory 1991: 32; cf. Buxton 1987: 19–23 = 2003: 173–179.