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TRANSGENERATIONAL NEMESIC CHAOS IN THE *ANTIGONE* SOPHOCLES' CLASSICAL FOREWARNING TO HEGEMONISTS

If the multiple dualities in the Antigone are considered in an intragenerational context, i.e. as concordant conflicts in Antigone's lifetime, then the plot of the drama might be perceived as stochastic and rather unpredictable as to its catastrophic outcome, i.e. the destruction of all protagonists, while their polis is entrapped in a seemingly unstable equilibrium. But if the dualities are viewed in a transgenerational context, i.e. as the final episode in a chain of dramatic and intertwined events that span many a generation of conflict between the royal house of the Labdacids and the divine or cosmic order, then the plot might be considered as deterministic and rather predictable as to its tragic outcome. From such perspective, the downfall of the dynasty might have been predestined by divine providence or cosmic teleology: In a transgenerational period, the polis might have been converging to a stable equilibrium all along, in line with the natural order of the universe, i.e. an equilibrium preconditioned on the extinction of the hubristically aberrant dynasty. In this context, the underlying forewarning of Sophocles to hegemonists comes to the fore in the Antigone: Even the most powerful and self-righteous perpetrators of hubris may in fact act as unaware pawns of divine will or cosmic teleology – pawns entrapped in a predestined and dynamically chaotic course of action that ultimately, in a transgenerational period, leads to the absolute prevalence of invincible Nemesis.

Keywords: Sophocles' Antigone, Hubris, Nemesis, Hegemonism, Chaos Theory.

1. Transgenerational Nemesis¹

In the *Antigone*, Sophocles gives a powerful lyrical² account of the dire consequences of hubris, which entails that "no form of ruin is lacking, but it spreads over the bulk of the race" (ἄτας οὐδὲν ἐλλείπει γενεᾶς ἐπὶ πλῆθος ἔρπον) (l. 584-5). Even worse, in an intertemporally dynamic context of unpredictability, such ruin evolves in a transgenerational period because "each generation does not set its race free, but some god hurls it down and the race has no release" (οὐδ' ἀπαλλάσσει γενεὰν γένος, ἀλλ' ἐρείπει θεῶν τις, οὐδ' ἔχει λύσιν) (l. 596-7).

In the second stasimon, Sophocles outlines an Heraclitian perspective of the drama (l. 599-617): A hubristic action sets in motion a complex or even chaotic³ chain of intertwined events – an intragenerational feedback loop (app. Fig. 1) that may also become temporally intergenerational and even transgenerational – wherein such hubris is avenged by Olympian Zeus and goddess Nemesis through the (unintentionally retributive) hubris of another subject, in a vicious circle wherein the hubris of the latter subject is in effect (functions as) the nemesis of the former, and so forth from generation to generation and from equilibrium to (new) equilibrium.

In such dynamic context, the protagonists in the *Antigone* are members of the intertemporally hubristic royal "house of the Labdacids" (τὰ Λαβδακιδῶν οἴκων) (l. 593, 600): That dynasty was plunged in a chaotic (nemesic) transgenerational vicious circle of royal alienation, that included irreverence to the divine initially, and filicide, infanticide, parricide, suicide and fratricide in the following generations. Indicatively, king *Laius*, son of king *Labdacus* (who was grandson of *Cadmus*, the founder of Thebes), attempted infanticide against his son *Oedipus*, who thereafter unintentionally and unknowledgeably – but still nemesically as to his father and hubristically as to himself – killed his father and married his mother *Jocasta*. As consequence of *Oedipus'* hubris, *Jocasta* committed suicide and *Oedipus* blinded himself, abdicated the throne and was banished from his *polis*. In the chaotic whirlwinds of that nemesic cycle, the two male offsprings of that aberrant family, *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Antigone's* brothers, both committed fratricide by killing each other, and thus the royal dynasty was nemesically led to ultimate extinction. Furthermore, in spite of such behavioral and even criminal aberrations, the *Labdacid*

Complex as to the right of every king of the *Labdacid* dynasty to the crown had haunted every generation of that house, with catastrophic implications in every generation [3, p. 88-94].

In that chaotic context, adolescent *Antigone* was caught into the epicenter of a triple hubris swirling all around her: that of her brother *Eteocles*, usurper of the throne against her other brother *Polynices*, who in reaction became a (hubristic) traitor of his *polis*⁴, and (after their fratricidal *tisis*) the hubristic folly of king *Creon* against nature and the gods. *Creon's* hubris escalates dramatically to blatant violation of the natural order and to grave irreverence against the divine, as implied by seer *Tiresias* in his dramatic denunciation of *Creon's* wrongdoing (l. 1068-1071):

You have thrust below one of those of the upper air and irreverently lodged a living soul in the grave, while you detain in this world that which belongs to the infernal gods, a corpse unburied, unmourned, unholy

(Ἐχεις μὲν τῶν ἄνω βαλῶν κάτω ψυχὴν τ' ἀτίμως ἐν τάφῳ κατώκισας, ἔχεις δὲ τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ' αὐ θεῶν ἄμοιρον, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον νέκυον)

2. Breaking out of a nemesic vicious circle

Under such dire circumstances, the nemesic (self-destructive) spiral of death drive in the *Antigone* is both transgenerational and multidimensional: There are multiple and concurrent levels of dramatic conflict in the tragedy, e.g. between legality and legitimacy, lawfulness and morality, order and change, society and family, citizenship and individuality, material power and moral strength, political expediency and cultural traditions, the earthly (mortals) and the transcendental (immortals)⁵. Even a generation gap is quite visible in the drama, e.g. as implied by *Tiresias'* explicit reference to *Creon's* "rage against younger men" (τὸν θυμὸν οὗτος ἐς νεωτέρους ἀφῆ) (l. 1072-1073).

Still, despite that chaotic context of multiple and concurrent dualities, whereby everything seems to be at stake, including *Antigone's* own life, *Antigone's* reverent adherence to moral law, i.e. to natural or divine laws of the cosmic universe, is characterized by the Chorus in the second stasimon as "dazzling light" (τέτατο φᾶος) (l. 599), much brighter than the (narrow) "beam of the sun"⁶ ("ἄκτις ἀελίου") (l. 100) effected by the Thebans' military victory alone. That "dazzling light" offers "hope, whose wanderings

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are so wide, that it truly is a benefit to many men" (πολύπλαγκτος ἔλπις πολλοῖς μὲν ὄνασις ἀνδρῶν) (l. 615-6). In the Sophoclean world, civil war is a *nemesic* consequence of *hubristic* actions of men in power, and, as such, that type of (hubristic) war entails a transgenerational "deadly darkness" (ἔρεβος) (l. 588) to the detriment of society or even ruin of the *polis*-state, including both the defeated and the victors of the civil war, as in the Peloponnesian War in Sophocles' time.

Sophocles presents quite clearly Antigone's view or subjective justification of her defiant course of action (l. 905-912). He draws the attention of the audience by having Antigone ask a rhetorical question: "For the sake of what law, you ask, do I say that?" (τίνος νόμου δὴ ταῦτα πρὸς χάριν λέγω;) (l. 908). Antigone speaks as a citizen who is conscientiously obedient to the law of her *polis* and highly respectful of the citizens' will. She explicitly recognizes that she has violated not merely Creon's decree but also the post-battle collective will of her co-citizens (l. 907). Moreover she states that the enforcement of the law of her *polis* is more important than any citizen's family ties. Thus she implies that no matter how "self-opinionated" her "impulse" (αὐτόγνωτος ὀργή)⁷ might be (l. 875), she is still neither a revolutionary nor an egocentric individual obsessed with her family: She explains that she would never defy the law of her *polis* as wife for her husband or as mother for her child (l. 905-906), or even as sister for her brother if she had one (l. 911-912). Her reasoning for her civil disobedience is based on her blood tie with Polynices not as mere brother but as her *last* brother. His death entails that there is no one left to pass the name of the family. From her perspective, the corpse of her *last* brother embodies symbolically the irreversible fact that the transgenerational passing of the *name of the father* or *nom-du-père* is ever since impossible: The royal *name of the father* in her dynasty is doomed to extinction. It is this dramatic interruption (extinction) in the course of both *nature* and her *polis* that induces Antigone to honor the *house of the Labdacids* (l. 593) by tending the corpse of the *last* male descendant of that royal line.

Therefore, what underlies the conflict between (Creon's) *political law* and (Antigone's) *divine law* is a conflict of diverging perspectives of duty (under extreme circumstances), i.e. correspondingly as to *political expediency* (right after a bloody battle in a civil war) and *genetic extinction* (due to the death of Polynices). In effect, by presenting Antigone's view explicitly, Sophocles raised prophetically the issue of the limits of *conventional law* with respect to *extinction*⁸ two decades before the genocidal massacre (extinction) of the people of Melos by his co-citizens in 416 BC in the Peloponnesian War.

In sum, the Chorus points out that *adolescent* Antigone is the only hope (ἐλπίς) for their *polis* and the royal house to break out of the transgenerational *nemesic* vicious circle at last, once and for all, through Antigone's reverence to the divine: More specifically, Antigone's dramatic defiance of Creon's decree might be perceived as a desperate act of reverence that rather belatedly aims to counterbalance, if possible, the *hubristic* legacy of transgenerational irreverence of her royal house, and thus (hopefully, at gods' mercy) to absolve her *polis* and all citizens from the transgenerational *nemesic* curse of the gods. From such (Heraclitian) perspective, the real defender of the *polis* in the duel between the two protagonists is the powerless one (adolescent Antigone) – who in effect is the only citizen who strives to help both the *polis* and the royal house out of their transgenerational⁹ predicament – rather than the powerful one (adult king Creon), whose decree, however well-intentioned, plunges the *polis* and the royal house, or what

is left of it, even deeper into the abyss (ἔρεβος) (l. 588) by maintaining and furthering the *nemesic* circle.

In this context, Creon is a subject of *hubris* to the extent that he exerts his political power against the possibility of a new (benevolent and not *nemesic*) equilibrium of his *polis*, i.e. against a (new) state of affairs in line with eternal and universal laws, which were defended conscientiously and knowledgeably by Antigone, who stated explicitly that she didn't think king Creon's decrees were of such force "that could enable a mortal override the unwritten and unfailing statutes given us by the gods" (ὥστ' ἀγραπτα κάσφαλή θεῶν νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν) (l. 454-455).

3. Alternative equilibria

In terms of Chaos theory and at a first analytical level, the two protagonists converge each to a different *attractor*¹⁰, which for Creon is temporal (temporary) political stability or *relative* human law (particular to the *polis*, i.e. to legality at a certain point in spacetime), while for Antigone is intertemporal (eternal) divine will or *absolute* moral law (conceivably applicable to all humanity in all time)¹¹.

In Kantian terms [9, p. 169-171], the two mortals interact with each other as finite entities, i.e. as phenomena of intensity and extensity, whereby the *repulsive force* and the *attractive force* of each entity are the implicit dual protagonists of the drama: Antigone's (moral) *repulsive force* leads her to defy her king's edict in the name of divine will; king Creon's (authoritarian) *repulsive force* leads him to condemn Antigone to death in the name of law and order in their *polis*; still the king and the *polis* exert their *attracting forces* on Antigone, as evidenced by her explicitly expressed reaffirmation of her obedience to every law other than the king's particular edict (l. 908-912); at the same time, Antigone exerts her *attracting force* on the *polis*, i.e. the Chorus and finally king Creon, as manifested by his belated vain attempt to save her life in violation of his own royal edict. In this dynamic interplay, the moral individualistic sovereignty of Antigone collides with the stately royal sovereignty of Creon: Antigone is a moral intruder who threatens the king's earthly dominion (i.e. the way he exerts power) and the cohesion of their *polis*; on the other hand, Creon is a hegemonic intruder who trespasses Antigone's ideational realm of fundamental moral principles and eternal norms of the divine. Both protagonists seek the *measure* (μέτρον) of the appropriate order, divine (Antigone) or earthly (Creon). But in Hegelian terms, immanent to every order, *in itself*¹², are the seeds or potential of (evolutionary) disorder – e.g., in the *Antigone*, such seeds take the form of concordant, one-sided, opposite and thus incompatible ethical claims – which sometimes, especially under extreme circumstances, may lead to chaos and ultimately to the destruction of all protagonists of the former order.

In such context, the evolution of the plot implies a dynamic oscillation of the *polis* – as evidenced by the decisions, actions and contentions of the protagonists and the Chorus, that expresses the public opinion of the *polis* – between lawfulness and lawlessness, legitimacy and illegitimacy, morality and immorality, and so on, as the *polis* faces all those intertwined dilemmas of conflicting multiple dualities. For example, near the end of the plot, when king Creon decided to spare the life of Antigone, the *polis* seemed to be moving towards a new equilibrium of lawfulness, legitimacy and morality. But soon thereafter, when king Creon rushed belatedly to Antigone's tomb and witnessed the catastrophic consequences of his initial edict, i.e. the death of his son and heir to the throne prince Haemon and soon thereafter the suicide of Creon's wife queen Eurydice, the *polis* seems to have moved to a final equilibrium of lawfulness, illegitimacy and immorality (app. sec. II).

Metaphorically speaking, at a higher analytical level, the two protagonists might be following a trajectory (course of interaction in their spacetime) that converges to a razor's edge (saddle path) above an abyss that might lead the *polis* to a new equilibrium, which might be either benevolent (stable) if Creon spares Antigone's life and thus breaks the nemesis curse over the Theban royal house of the *Labdacids*, or malevolent (unstable) if he entombs the adolescent defender of moral law and thus sets off a chain of events that will lead to *tisis*, i.e. to the destruction of both Antigone and Creon's own family.

Therefore, in terms of Chaos Theory, if the dualities in the *Antigone* are viewed in an intragenerational context, then the plot might be considered as *stochastic*, i.e. probabilistic and chaotically uncertain as to its catastrophic outcome: the destruction of *all* protagonists, while their *polis* is entrapped in a seemingly *unstable equilibrium* ("malevolent"). If the dualities are viewed in a transgenerational context though, then the plot might be considered as *deterministic* and therefore as rather predictable: The *Antigone* might then be perceived as the *epilogue* of the transgenerational tragedy of the house of the *Labdacids*, whose downfall had been predestined by divine providence or cosmological teleology, in order for the *polis* to converge to a *stable equilibrium* – in line with divine and natural order – i.e. a long-term equilibrium preconditioned on the extinction of the sinful dynasty and characterized as "malevolent" or "benevolent" on the basis of the aforementioned criterion (unnecessary human sacrifice).

Only timing, i.e. Creon's final decision (prudent but belated) will determine which of the two new equilibria the *polis* will move to. In general, the characterizations "malevolent" and "benevolent" herein, as to the new equilibrium of the *polis*, pertain to every protagonist's survival, which is at stake in the drama: In this monograph, if the *polis* attains a new equilibrium at the human sacrifice of the protagonists – most prominent citizens of the *polis* – then the equilibrium is characterized as "malevolent"; otherwise, if no human sacrifice takes place on the altar of the new equilibrium, then it is characterized as "benevolent". In this context, in the fifth and last stasimon (l. 1115-1152), the Chorus is looking forward to a benevolent new equilibrium, where the "whole city", that at present is "held subject to a violent plague" (βιαίως ἔχεται πάνδημος πόλις ἐπὶ νόσου), might be purified by divine intervention if Dionysus comes to Thebes stepping with his "purifying feet over steep slopes of Parnassus, or over groaning straits"¹³ (καθαροῖσι ποδὶ Παρνασσίαν ὑπὲρ κλιτῶν ἢ στονόεντα πορθμόν) (l. 1144-1145).

What actually happens though, falls short of the Chorus' expectations. The pollution is indeed removed from the city, but in a way contrary to what the Chorus hoped for, i.e. by Antigone's death and Creon's destruction. It seems that the *polis* moves towards a malevolent new equilibrium by sacrificing its worthy representatives, i.e. king Creon, glorious victor of the Theban-Argian war, Antigone, honorable descendant of the royal house of the *Labdacids*, and previously all Theban young heroes that fell in the ferocious battle that is outlined at the beginning of the tragedy, in the *Parode* (Πάροδος), as if

the polis can only continue its existence by sacrificing those who are its most respected representatives, and there is no end to this persistent self-sacrifice . . . Antigone's choral songs are penetrated by a sense of the fragility of human civilization. This fragility is due to man's nearness to nature in combination with his nearness to the divine, which is deceitful and dangerous [15, p. 159].

And potentially chaotic.

In this context, the *Antigone* reflects a Sophoclean pessimistic view as to the more-or-less cannibalistic dimension of human organization: In human history, a *polis*-state or a country may occasionally sacrifice the welfare or even the life itself of many of its citizens, sometimes the most prominent or worthy of them, on the altar of social and systemic cohesion or even of freedom and independence, as the *polis* moves to a new state of equilibrium, always in wartime (e.g. fallen heroes or so-called *collateral losses*) and sometimes in peacetime (e.g. fallen security officers or victims of miscarriage of justice). That viewpoint permeates the *Antigone* and is in line with Homer's similar ontological view, as symbolically reflected by the pre-war human sacrifice of princess Iphigenia (Ἰφιγένεια) in order for the Greek fleet to disembark from Aulis (Αὐλῆς) against Troy. Similarly, in the *Antigone*, king Creon's irreversible decision to sacrifice princess Antigone is rationally founded on the grounds of indispensable legal order (systemic cohesion) of his *polis*, especially in the aftermath of a civil war, and the imperative need for the *polis* to reach a new state of equilibrium in peacetime.

4. Transgenerational insights in the *Antigone*

In this context, the transgenerational duel between the house of the *Labdacids* and the divine, between royal legacy and Olympian justice, is explicitly stated in the *Antigone*, e.g. by the Chorus in the second stasimon (l. 593-596) and by Antigone herself at the opening scene of the drama (l. 2-3), where she attributes the evils befalling the house of Oedipus to Zeus. Although the script barely specifies the psychological tools by which Atē (l. 584-5, 612-4, 622, 624-625) has been spreading mental confusion among the members of the house to their self-destruction, the *transgenerational* impact of the *Atēan effect* (distorted view of reality) is indeed stated descriptively, and rather explicitly, both by the Chorus (l. 596-7) and by Ismene, Antigone's sister (l. 49-60):

Alas! Think, sister, how our father perished in hatred and infamy, when, because of the crimes that he himself detected, he smashed both his eyes with self-blinding hand; then his mother-wife, two names in one, with a twisted noose destroyed her life; lastly, our two brothers in a single day, both unhappy murderers of their own flesh and blood, worked with mutual hands their common doom. And now we, in turn—we two who have been left all alone—consider how much more miserably we will be destroyed, if in defiance of the law we transgress against an autocrat's decree or his powers

(Οἶμοι. Φρόνησον, ὦ κασιγνήτη, πατὴρ ὡς νῦν ἀπεχθῆς δυσκλήης τ' ἀπώλετο, πρὸς αὐτοφώρων ἀμπλακημάτων διπλᾶς ὄψεις ἀράξας αὐτὸς αὐτοῦργῶ χειρὶ. ἔπειτα μήτηρ καὶ γυνή, διπλοῦν ἔπος, πλεκταῖσιν ἀρτάναισι λωβάται βίον: τρίτον δ' ἀδελφῶ δύο μίαν καθ' ἡμέραν αὐτοκτονοῦντε τῷ ταλαπύρῳ μόρον κοινὸν κατειργάσαντ' ἐπαλλήλοιν χερσῶν. νῦν δ' αὖ μόνᾳ δὴ νῶ ελεειμμένα σκόπτει ὄσω κάκιστ' ὀλοόμεθ', εἰ νόμου βία ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν)

Therefore, at a transgenerational analytical level, rational analysis might allow quite a few members of the audience to give their own answers to questions concerning the internal, even subconscious, motives of the protagonists. Should Creon's authoritarian intransigence be attributed to his impartial leadership and his unwavering royal will, or to his feelings of insecurity due to the (transgenerational) *Labdacid Complex*? Does Antigone's persistent adherence to universal moral law stem from her high sense of family duty and from pure reverence to the divine, or from her inner need to reaffirm her noble origin, as a member of a (transgenerational) royal family, by burying her *last* brother properly, as befits a former prince (albeit member of an infamous royal family), in the shadow of the

(transgenerational) *Labdacid denial syndrome*? Is Antigone that naive to blame only Zeus the divine avenger, but in no way her ancestors (perpetrators of crimes) for the evils befallen on her (transgenerational) royal house? Are both Creon and Antigone mentally confused pawns in a (transgenerational) Grand Plan of Zeus, Atē, Nemesis and Aphrodite¹⁴ for the (nemesic) downfall of that sinful (hubristic) dynasty?

In case of a positive answer to the last question, then the mathematical theory of Chaos might offer useful insights: The evolution of the plot could then be perceived as deterministic (predestined) rather than stochastic (random), i.e. as predictable with absolute certainty. All characters could then be perceived as subconsciously (on impulse rather than reason) tending to converge to a divine *attractor* that was preset by the gods, generations ago, for the downfall and ultimate extinction of the Labdacid dynasty, because the omnipotent divine justice "*neither Sleep, the all-ensnaring, nor the untiring months of the gods can defeat*" (οὐθ' ὑπνος αἰρεῖ ποθ' ὁ πᾶντ' ἀγρεύων, οὔτε θεῶν ἄκματοι μῆνες) (*I.* 606-607) – in spite of the "*indeterminacy in the concept of measure*" [16, p. 94; 19, p. 22] and therefore the indeterminacy in the (intertwined) concept of *hubris*, and notwithstanding the reasonable but still subjective and debatable argumentations of the characters as to basic¹⁵ multiple dualities, rational or aesthetic, in the *Antigone*. In sum, understanding the *Antigone* adequately (and usefully) is conditioned on considering the plot from a due transgenerational perspective.

5. The classical forewarning to hegemonists

It is only from a transgenerational perspective that Sophocles' view of (long-term) *sustainability* of well-being may be understood. According to Sophocles (*I.* 1347-1352), "*thinking prudently*" (τὸ φρονεῖν) and "*abstaining from any act of irreverence*" (μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν), all the time and without exception, not even once, "*is a prime precondition of happiness*" (εὐδαιμονίας πρῶτον ὑπάρχει). Creon was a glorious king for a brief period of time, leader of a victorious *polis*. But due to his irreverence and his fatal delay in reaching self-awareness, he doomed his royal house to extinction and thus harmed his *polis* intergenerationally (over the dead body of his son and heir to the throne prince Haemon) and transgenerationally (over the dead body of his wife queen Euridice) by inducing the self-destruction of his family and thus by decapitating his victorious *polis*, i.e. by depriving the *polis* from a *sustainable* royal house when most needed: in the aftermath of civil war. It was then high time for the king to take *measured* action in order to heal the wounds of the war, and thus minimize the collective post-war trauma of his society, or even collude with Antigone in breaking once and for all the transgenerational cycle [4, p. 1–11] of death drive that had plagued their royal house. Instead, under the spell of Atē, he deprived his royal authority of legitimacy and thus exposed his *polis* to further dangers in the foreseeable future.

In fact, Sophocles' zero-tolerance of *irreverence*, and his absolutist view of *prudence* as a precondition of *sustainability* and thus of collective *well-being* and individual *happiness*, is in line with the Aristotelian view on this issue. More specifically, policies that *seem* to be pragmatic or even *are* effective at present, and thus *seem* to be in line with *measure* (μέτρον), could still be *hubristic* (beyond the bounds of *measure*) if their desired effects are unsustainable in the foreseeable or even the distant future. To make this point, Aristotle employs the same Sophoclean metaphor of the lifetime of an individual (Aristotle, *Ethics* 1101a14-20):

Therefore what would prohibit us from saying that he is happy who is active in accordance with complete virtue and is

sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout his complete lifetime? Or must we add "*and who is destined to live thus and die accordingly*"? Because the future is hidden from us, and we consider happiness as a teleological goal, something utterly and absolutely complete. And if this is so, we shall pronounce happy those among the living in whom these conditions are, and are to be, fulfilled—and we'll call them happy human beings

(Τί οὖν κωλύει λέγειν εὐδαιμόνα τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν ἐνεργοῦντα καὶ τοῖς ἐκτὸς ἀγαθοῖς ἰκανῶς κεχορηγημένον μὴ τὸν τυχόντα χρόνον ἀλλὰ τέλειον βίον; ἢ προσθετέον καὶ βιωσόμενον οὕτω καὶ τελευτήσοντα κατὰ λόγον; Ἐπειδὴ τὸ μέλλον ἀφανὲς ἡμῖν ἐστίν, τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ τέλος καὶ τέλειον τίθεμεν πάντη πάντως. Εἰ δ' οὕτω, μακαρίους ἐροῦμεν τῶν ζώντων οἷς ὑπάρχει καὶ ὑπάρξει τὰ λεχθέντα, μακαρίου δ' ἀνθρώπους)

The analogy underlying this metaphor—encountered in pre-classical and classical works, like those of Homer¹⁶, the Great Tragedians and Aristotle—is obvious: The lifetime of an individual might span three to four generations, while the historical course of a *polis*-state normally spans many more generations or even centuries. An individual should be considered happy (εὐδαίμων) and virtuous (ἐνάρετος), i.e. "*acting in accordance with complete virtue*" (κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν ἐνεργῶν) only if he lives a *measured* life throughout his entire lifetime, away from the pitfalls of extreme misfortune and misery. Likewise a *polis*-state should be considered successful only if it applies *measured* policies with effects that are sustainable in a long-term (transgenerational) historical period. On the basis of this analogy, a definition of *measure* in both individual behavior and socio-political organization should rather satisfy the axiom of *sustainability*, which is the criterion for discerning between *actual* measure, that is sustainable, and *illusory* measure, that is unsustainable.

Therefore, in a transgenerational context of divine or teleological retribution against acts of irreverence or injustice, no one (individual, family, society, city, state, country or Great Power) could rationally claim that the Great Tragedian has not forewarned them all, in time, and in all conceivable ways – through explicit argumentation (in line with pertinent Aristotelian metaphors about ethics and sustainability), implicit reasoning (underlying the multiple dualities of the plot) and scenographical aesthetics (as to normative perceptions of *measure*) – in the *Antigone* in the Classical era and ever since.

ANALYTICAL APPENDIX (Supplementary modeling material)

I. A classical evolutionary double-vortex system

As to human conflict, the dynamic interrelation between the classical concepts of Atē (Ἄτη), hubris (ὑβρις), Nemesis (Νέμεσις) and Tisis (Τίσις), implies two concurrent intertwined loops or vicious circles (Fig. 1):

1. The first (*Atēan*) loop, i.e. Atē (Ἄτη) ⇆ hubris (ὑβρις), pertains (a) to the mental effect of Atē on a human subject, who consequently, in mental confusion, commits a hubristic act (Atē → hubris), and (b) to the feedback effect of that act on Atē (Atē ← hubris), who is thus induced to intervene again by intensifying the perpetrator's mental confusion, instigating the perpetrator further to commit a new or even worse hubristic act (Atē → hubris), and so on.

2. The second (*Nemesic*) loop, i.e. hubris (ὑβρις) ⇆ Nemesis (Νέμεσις), is set in motion as teleological consequence of a perpetrator's hubristic act (hubris → Nemesis); thereafter, sooner or later, divine retribution (Nemesis) befalls the perpetrator (hubris ← Nemesis); the retributive blow, by itself, exacerbates the mental confusion of the perpetrator (already possessed by Atē in the

concurrent *Atēan* loop) instigating the perpetrator to commit a new or even worse hubristic act, which in turn induces Nemesis to befall the perpetrator with another or even heavier retribution (hubris → Nemesis), and so on.

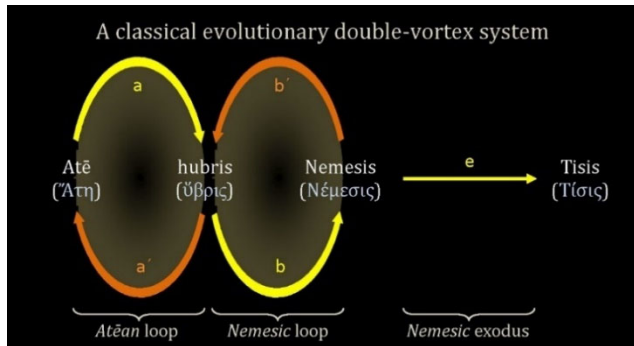


Fig.1

In functional combination, the two intertwined vicious circles or vortexes (Fig. 1), i.e. Atē (Ἄτη) ↔ hubris (ὕβρις) ↔ Nemesis (Νέμεσις), may be perceived as a multiple-feedback double-vortex system, that might ultimately lead the perpetrator and even the perpetrator's descendants in a transgenerational period (as outlined in Section 1) to catastrophe and even annihilation, as in the *Antigone*: As consequence of such interplay between divine justice and human aberration, the hubristic perpetrator—in a mental state of confusion, denial or even panic under the spell of Atē and the blows of Nemesis – takes self-destructive decisions that accelerate the perpetrator's downfall, i.e. Nemesis (Νέμεσις) → Tisis (Τίσις), which sooner or later seems to be the only way out of the chaotic double vortex.

In general, a hubristic subject's path to destruction (Tisis or Τίσις) may involve an early intervention of Nemesis (b' in Fig. 1), e.g. as in the path (Fig. 1) abb'a'abb'be, or a relatively belated one as in the path aa'aa'abb'be.

II. Modeling of concurrent dualities

In terms of elementary mathematical modeling, the temporal evolution of a socio-political entity, like a polis or a country, as to the *fundamental* attributes of *lawfulness* (L₁), *legitimacy* (L₂) and *morality* (L₃) – they are *fundamental* to the degree that the long-run (transgenerational) *sustainability* of the entity may be conditioned on them, per Aristotle's *zero tolerance* [17, p. 58] of acts of injustice – could be modeled as an autonomous system of (3) ordinary differential equations in the following form:

$$\dot{L}_i = f_{i1} L_1 + f_{ij} L_j + f_{ik} L_k \quad (i, j, k = 1, 2, 3) \quad (1)$$

where

$$f_{iq} = f_{iq}(L_i, L_j, L_k) \quad (q = 1, 2, 3) \quad (2)$$

Every functional parameter, *f_{iq}*, denotes the *net effect* exerted by a certain value of L_q (q = 1, 2, 3) on the change in the value of L_i. In this context, Relation 1 may be written in the following matrician form:

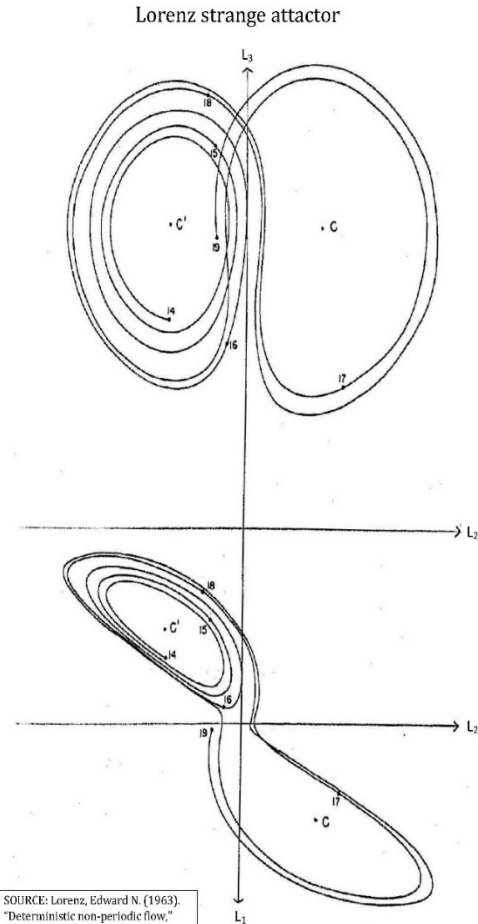
$$\dot{\mathbf{L}} = \mathbf{FL} \quad (3)$$

where

$$\dot{\mathbf{L}} = \begin{pmatrix} \dot{L}_1 \\ \dot{L}_2 \\ \dot{L}_3 \end{pmatrix} \quad \mathbf{L} = \begin{pmatrix} L_1 \\ L_2 \\ L_3 \end{pmatrix} \quad \mathbf{F} = \begin{pmatrix} f_{11} & f_{12} & f_{13} \\ f_{21} & f_{22} & f_{23} \\ f_{31} & f_{32} & f_{33} \end{pmatrix} \quad (4)$$

The values of the dependent qualitative variables, i.e. (actual) *lawfulness* (L₁), (perceived) *legitimacy* (L₂) and (perceived) *morality* (L₃), might be measured or approximated

according to standard statistical methods [11, p. 244-251; 21, p. 149-166], i.e. through social surveys, proxy variables, etc. As to the values of matrix *F* in Relation 3, they may differ between culturally different *poleis* or countries, or even continents, reflecting different perceptions of *lawfulness*, *legitimacy* and *morality*, and thus different sets of *repulsive forces* and *attractive forces* of the dynamically interacting agents (individuals, economic classes, etc.) in such socio-political entities, e.g. different values of matrix *F* between China and the US [5, p. 167-180; 10, p. 675-695].



SOURCE: Lorenz, Edward N. (1963) "Deterministic non-periodic flow." *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences*, 20 (2): 137.

Fig. 2

For example, in terms of Relations 1-4, the oscillation of the *polis* in the *Antigone* between two opposing perspectives, the Antigonean and the Creonian, might be perceived as graphically akin to the dynamic pattern of the *Lorenz strange attractor*, which is indicatively depicted¹⁷ in Fig. 2 as a two-vortex (C and C') three-dimensional chaotic system, i.e. with an Antigonean vortex (around point C) of *lawfulness* (L₁ < 0), *legitimacy* (L₂ > 0) and *morality* (L₃ > 0), and a Creonian vortex (around point C') of *lawfulness* (L₁ > 0), *illegitimacy* (L₂ < 0) and *immorality* (L₃ < 0), for the following particular values of matrix *F* in Relation 3:

$$\mathbf{F} = \begin{pmatrix} -10 & 10 & 0 \\ 28 & -1 & -L_1 \\ L_2 & 0 & -\frac{8}{3} \end{pmatrix} \quad (5)$$

That is, in this example, *f₁₁* = -10, *f₁₂* = 10, *f₁₃* = 0, *f₂₁* = 28, ..., *f₃₃* = -8/3. Projections on the L₁L₂ (lower) plane and the L₂L₃ (upper) plane in phase space depict the segment of the trajectory from iteration 1400 ("14") to iterations 1500 ("15"),

1600 ("16"), up to 1900 ("19"), with the initial iteration having started near the origin, i.e. at (0, 1, 0).

It is noteworthy that the *Lorenz strange attractor* [13, p. 130-142) has a *fractal* structure, i.e. no point is visited more than once by the same trajectory and thus no two trajectories will ever intersect, as clearly depicted on the (lower) L_1L_2 plane in Fig. 2. In this context, that attractor might be used educationally as a mathematical construct for giving useful insights as to the fact that history might sometimes emulate (approximately) itself, but never repeats (identically) itself, per Marx's saying that History may only repeat itself *"the first time as tragedy, the second as farce"* [14, p. 31] in a human world whose evolution might be perceived as chaotic [6, p. 301-317].

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Notes

¹In this monograph, all original text of the *Antigone*, in Ancient Greek, has been copied from F. Storr's first volume of two-volume *Sophocles*, as it appears in digital form in the Perseus Digital Library of Tufts University. All Ancient-Greek words in the monograph are hyperlinked to the Liddell-Scott Greek-English online lexicon at that library. Some footnotes (6, 7, 13 and 14) contain the authors' comments regarding Sir Jebb's classical English translation [8] of the *Antigone* (also digitized by the Perseus Digital Library).

²Right from the *Parode*, as in other chorals in the *Antigone*, Sophocles applies the technique of delineating a series of conceptual paintings by "drawing" them descriptively and poetically, i.e. by means of lyrical words and phrases in iambic meter. Aristotle ascribes to Sophocles the innovative introduction of scenography or σκηνογραφία (scene-painting), which is the art of evoking a picture of a locality, or a sequence of dramatic events, by means of words (*Poetics* 1449a18). Etymologically, σκηνογραφία (scenography) is derived from σκηνογράφος (scenographer), which is a compound derived from σκηνή (scene, stage) + γράφω (scratch, delineate, describe).

³As a relatively new interdisciplinary science based on mathematical analysis and simulation of linear and non-linear systems of equations, Chaos theory was formalized as of 1960s, when the development of computing systems had rendered complex and extensive calculations feasible and practical [18, p. 291-312]. Still Homer and the Great Tragedians could be considered as the *poets of chaos* in human affairs because, in their masterpieces, chaotic dynamics between humans – as well as between humans, nature and the divine – are outlined or described in symbolic (poetic) language implicitly and sometimes explicitly.

⁴At the end of the first stasimon ("Ode to Man"). The Chorus, standing for the people of Thebes, implicitly repudiates the burial of countryless (ἄπολις) Polonices as sinful and contrary to the prosperity of the *polis*-state (l. 365-375) [2, p. 1].

⁵In mathematical terms, the multiplicity of conflict levels renders such system *multidimensionally chaotic*, quite tedious to model as a dynamic system of at least two equations *per level* of conflict or *per duality*, and barely possible to solve by non-numerical methods for defining its solution in parametric form at (new) equilibrium.

⁶Sir Jebb's translation (ibid) of "ἄκτις ἑλίου" into "beam of the sun" or "shaft of the sun" (instead of "ray of the sun") is brilliant. In lines 100-105 in the *Parode*, Sophocles describes a post-battle scenery that is dark, at early dawn, apparently under cloudy sky: The sun has been rising, but just a narrow *shaft* of the sun, i.e. only one visible *beam* of sunlight, through a hole in the clouds – but not the bright sun itself, with multiple *rays* radiating from of the sun – "has shone forth at last" (ἐφάνθη ποτὲ) and breaks dimly the darkness of the scenery only to a degree that just a shadowy "eyelid" (βλέφαρον) takes shape in either the (cloudy) sky or on a (mountain) ridge in the dark horizon. The darkness of the post-battle scenery stands for the ominous aftermath of civil war, given the transgenerational impact of that kind of war: Military victory of any side in a civil war scales down to only a promising "shaft of the sun", i.e. to only the *beginning* of a painful and very long (transgenerational) healing process for the polarized society or the dichotomized nation.

⁷Sir Jebb's translation of "αὐτόγνωτος ὀργή" into "self-willed disposition" (l. 875) approximates adequately the true meaning of this phrase, because αὐτόγνωτος is a compound derived from two roots: αὐτός (self) + γνῶναι, which is the past-tense infinitive of γινώσκω (know). An alternative and rather more precise translation of "αὐτόγνωτος ὀργή" might be either "gnomic impulse" or "self-opinionated impulse". On the contrary, translating it into "self-righteousness" might be misleading, because it would connote a rather derogatory generalization as to Antigone's character (psychological predisposition), while the Chorus merely denotes two *facts* by this phrase, as to her (impulsive) idiosyncrasy and (rational) state of *mind*: In her defiance

against Creon's degree, Antigone acts not merely on *impulse* (ὀργή) but also on the *rational* basis of her personal view and educated conviction or *knowledge* (γνώσις) of moral law.

⁸Extinction may be either physical (as in *death penalty* or *genocide*) or non-physical (as in *character assassination* or *oblivion of history*).

⁹It is noteworthy that the Sophoclean transgenerational effects of insults to God are a repeated biblical theme, as in the following passages: "Yahweh ... will by no means clear the guilty, and will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation" (Κύριος ... οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον ἀποδοιδούς ἀμαρτίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα ἕως τρίτης καὶ τετάρτης γενεᾶς) (*Numbers* 14.18), "God of our salvation ... do not be angry with us forever; or do not draw out your anger from generation to generation" (ὁ Θεὸς τῶν σωτηριῶν ἡμῶν ... μὴ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ὀργισθῆς ἡμῖν; ἢ διατενεῖς τὴν ὀργὴν σου ἀπὸ γενεᾶς εἰς γενεάν) (*Psalms* 85.5).

¹⁰In the theory of Chaos, *attractor* is a state (equilibrium) or a set of states (multiple equilibria) towards which a system (e.g. society, city, country, or the World) tends to evolve [6, p. 119].

¹¹The dynamic interaction between concurrent dualities in the *Antigone* might be modeled mathematically as shown in the Appendix (Relations 1-4).

¹²That is, 'in itself' (*an sich*) is implicit, inherent, or potential, and not yet developed. . . What settles the character of the act is just this: whether the deed is a real thing that holds together, or whether it is merely a pretended or 'supposed' performance, which is *in itself* null and void and passes away. . . It is not thus distinct in virtue of the fact that it took as its constitutive principle either existence *for itself*, or mere being *in itself*, for both are equal essential moments of its life. . . But such reality means nothing else is here self-complete *in itself* and *for itself* – *for itself*, i.e. is morality of a consciousness: *in itself*, i.e. has existence and actuality" [7, p. 63, 184, 294, 368].

¹³Sir Jebb's translation of "Παρνασσὸν ὑπὲρ κλιτύν" as "steep Parnassus" is herein improved as "steep slopes of Parnassus" – so that the phrase becomes contextually relevant and enlightening to students of mathematics with exposure to dynamical systems—given that κλιτύν is a noun meaning *steep slope* of a mountain and not an adjective ("steep") as Sir Jebb translates it. The use of geometrical (vectorial) terms in symbolic language (slope or κλιτύς, strait or πορθμός, etc.) to describe human interaction with nature and the divine, is a legacy of Homer, whose sense of *measure* and chaos reflects on his epics. That technique is used scenographically and extensively by Sophocles in the *Antigone*.

¹⁴Even love between adolescents is presented in chaotic terms in the *Antigone*, in the context of the self-destruction of prince Haemon by the side of his beloved Antigone at the end of the drama. In so far as the Chorus is concerned, the third stasimon barely constitutes an "Ode to Love", i.e. love as a unifying and creative (life-generating) force in the universe: Instead, the elders of the Chorus direct their remarks to god *Eros* in a tone and wording that reflect frustration or even agitation as to the ruinous power of that god, who intervenes destructively in human affairs "by descending upon riches" (ἐν κτήμασι πίπτων) (l. 781), by intruding "among the homes of men in the wilds" (ἐν τ' ἀργονόμοις αὐλάς) (l. 785), "by seizing the minds of just men and dragging them to injustice, to their ruin" (δικαίων ἀδίκους φρένας παραπτῶν ἐπὶ λῶβᾳ) (l. 791), and so on. Furthermore, *eros* is the name of the god of love when written with upper-case first character (Ἐρως), and may also mean (erotic) love in the classical (not Christian) sense of the word, pertaining mostly to sexual passion, when written with lower-case first character (ἐρως). In this stasimon, the Chorus members address their remarks only to that god, by calling him by his name: In the original script, Ἐρως is written repeatedly with upper-case initial character ("E", not "e"). Therefore, to avoid ambiguity, Ἐρως should rather be transliterated into *Eros* (the name of the god) rather than *love* or *Love* – although Sir Jebb does translate it into *Love* – so that the chaotic and often destructive interference of that god in human affairs is duly pointed out as in the original Ancient-Greek text. Furthermore, in the context of the Chorus' negative connotations as to *Eros*, the elders consider Aphrodite, the goddess of love, as "unbeatable" or "unwinnable in battle" (ἄμαχος). Therefore a precise (literal) translation of "ἄμαχος γὰρ ἐμπαίζει θεός, Ἀφροδίτη" (l. 800) should rather be "because a god unwinnable in battle, Aphrodite, playfully makes a fool of everyone". Nevertheless Jebb translates this phrase more freely as "for in all this divine Aphrodite plays her irresistible game", i.e. he translates the verb ἐμπαίζει (make a fool of) into "plays her . . . game". But from the perspective of the Chorus, *Eros*' interference and Aphrodite's influence are chaotically destructive, at least in the *Antigone*, and thus barely constitute a "game".

¹⁵Whenever the dualities in the *Antigone* are viewed in a temporal (intragenerational) rather than intertemporal (transgenerational) context, then they are herein characterized as *basic*, i.e. obvious and more or less visible to every member of the audience. For example, as to the duality of legality vs. morality, Antigone might be reasonably be considered a hubristic violator of the law or even a traitorous rebel in wartime, at least from a rationally valid but still simplified (intragenerational) perspective, similar to that of king Creon [1, p. 504-516; 12, p. 4-15].

¹⁶Aristotle gives credit explicitly to Homer as the Great Mind who first implied that *sustainability* is a precondition for the happiness of individuals and thus for the well-being of organized societies (Aristotle, *Ethics* 1100a4-9):

For [happiness] requires, as we said, not only complete virtue but also a complete lifetime. Indeed, many changes and vicissitudes of all sorts occur in one's lifetime, and the most prosperous man may fall into great misfortunes in old age, as is told of Priam in the Trojan epic; and no one calls happy a man who has experienced such misfortunes and has passed away miserably.

(Δεῖ γάρ, ὥσπερ εἶπομεν, καὶ ἀρετῆς τελείας καὶ βίου τελείου. Πολλὰ γὰρ μεταβολαὶ γίνονται καὶ παντοῖα τύχαι κατὰ τὸν βίον, καὶ ἐνδέχεται τὸν μάλιστα εὐθνηοῦντα μεγάλας συμφοραῖς περιπεσεῖν ἐπὶ γῆρας, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς Τρωικοῖς περὶ Πριάμου μυθεύεται: τὸν δὲ τοιαύταις χρῆσάμενον τύχαις καὶ τελευτήσαντα ἀθλίως οὐδεὶς εὐδαιμονίζει.)

¹⁷The Lorenz strange attractor is graphically reproduced herein (Fig. 2) from Lorenz' original publication [13], slightly modified contextually for easy readability.

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ТРАНСГЕНЕРАЦІЙНИЙ ХАОС НЕМЕЗИДИ У "АНТИГОНІ": КЛАСИЧНЕ ЗАСТЕРЕЖЕННЯ СОФОКЛА ГЕГЕМОНИСТАМ

Якщо множинні дихотомії в "Антигоні" розглядати в контексті внутрішнього покоління, тобто як співзвучні конфлікти за життя Антигони, то сюжет драми можна сприймати як стохастичний і досить непередбачуваний щодо його катастрофічного результату, тобто загибелі всіх дійових осіб, тоді як їхній поліс потрапив у пастку, здавалося б, нестійкої рівноваги. Проте, якщо дихотомію розглядати в трансгенераційному контексті, тобто як останній епізод у ланцюжку драматичних і взаємопов'язаних подій, які охоплюють багато поколінь конфлікту між царським домом Лабдакідів і божественним або космічним порядком, то сюжет може вважатися визначеним і досить передбачуваним щодо свого трагічного результату. Із такої позиції, падіння династії могло бути зумовлене божественним провидінням або космічною телеологією: у період зміни поколінь поліс, імовірно, міг весь час наближатися до стабільної рівноваги, відповідно до природного порядку Всесвіту, тобто рівноваги, зумовленої зникненням зарозумілої династії. У цьому контексті в "Антигоні" на перший план виходить основне попередження Софокла гегемоністам: навіть наймогутніші та самовдоволені винуватці зарозумілості можуть насправді діяти як несвідомі пішаки божественної волі чи космічної телеології – пішаки, спіймані в пастку наперед визначеним і динамічно хаотичним ходом дій, який ерешті-решт, у трансгенераційному періоді, призводить до абсолютного панування непереможної Немезиди.

Ключові слова: "Антигона" Софокла, гібрис (зарозумілість), Немезида, гегемонізм, Теорія Хаосу.