of filial love, through long endurance hardened into a "fixed idea," is irrepressible, and Orestes, supported by Pylades, goes directly to his aim in obedience to Apollo. But nothing can exceed the tenderness of the recognition scene—lines 1098-1321, and the description of the falsely reported chariot race (681-763) is full of spirit.

In the *Trachinian Maidens* there is a transition towards that milder pathos which Sophocles is said to have finally approved (⅛0ικα>τατo∣' *κal aptστov).* The fate of Deianira is tragic indeed. But in her treatment of her rival, Iole, there are modem touches reminding one of Shakespeare. The play may have been produced at a time not far removed from the peace of Nicias; and if this were so Deianira’s prayer that her de­scendants may never undergo captivity—lines 303-305—might remind Athenian matrons of the captive Heracleids from Pylos, descendants through Hyllus of Deianira herself. The “ modern ” note is even more conspicuous in the *Philoctetes,* where the inward conflict in the mind of Neoptolemus, between ambition and friendship, is delineated with equal subtlety and force, and the contrast of the ingenuous youth with the aged solitary, in whom just resentment has become a dominant idea, shows great depth of psychological insight. The tragic catastrophe of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the *Trachiniae* is absent here. The contending interests are reconciled by the intervention of the deified Heracles. But even more clearly than in the *Ajax* the heroic sufferer, rejected by men, is accepted by the gods and destined to triumph in the end. The *Philoctetes* is known to have been produced in the year 408 B.c., when Sopho­cles was 87 years old. The *Oedipus Coloneus* is said to have been brought out after the death of Sophocles by his grandson in the archonship of Micon, 402 B.c.

The question naturally arises, why a work of such surpassing merit should not have appeared in the lifetime of the poet. The answer is conjectural, but acquires some probability when several facts are taken into one view. It is surely remarkable that in a drama which obviously appeals to Athenian patriotism, local sanctities should obtain prominence to the exclusion of the corresponding national shrines on the Acropolis. It has been thought that the aged poet felt a peculiar satisfaction in cele­brating the beauty and sacredness of his native district. This may well have been so, but could hardly supply a sufficient motive for a work destined to be presented to the assembled Athenians in the Dionysiac theatre. But there was a crisis in Athenian politics when “ Colonus of the Knights ” acquired a national significance. Those who organized the constitution of the Four Hundred made the precinct of Poseidon at Colonus the place of meeting, and probably sacrificed at the very altar which is consecrated by Theseus in this play. There must have been some reason for this. May it not have been that the occu­pants of the whole region, including the Academy, belonged mostly to the oligarchic faction? May not those who honoured Colonus by frequenting it—lines 62 and 63—have belonged to the order of knighthood? The name Colonus Hippius (or *τωv lππkωv)* would then have an appropriate meaning, and the equestrian statue of the eponymous hero (line 59) would be symbolical. In times of political agitation Colonus would then be regarded like St Germain, as the aristocratic quarter, while the Peiraeus was that of the extreme democracy, a sort of Fau­bourg St Antoine. It was there that the counter-movement reached its culmination. If so much be granted, is it not possible that this play, so deeply tinged with oligarchic influence, may have been thought too dangerous, and consequently withheld from production until after the amnesty, when the name of Sophocles was universally beloved, and this work of his old age could be prudently made public by his descendant? The knights in Aristophanes (424 b.c.) make their special appeal to Poseidon of the chariot race and to the Athene of victory. The Coloniates celebrate the sons of Theseus as. worshippers of Athene Hippia, and of Poseidon.

Theseus in Euripides (*Supplices)* is the first citizen of a republic. In this drama he is the king whose word is law, and he is warned by Oedipus to avoid the madness of revolutionary change (lines 15361-538). The tragic story of Oedipus is resumed, but in a later and deeper strain of thoughtful emotion. Once more the noble spirit, rejected by man, is accepted by the gods. The eternal laws have been vindicated. Their decrees are irreversible, but the involuntary unconscious criminal is not finally condemned. He has no more hope in this world, but is in mysterious communion with unseen powers. The sufferer is now a holy person and an author of blessing. An approach is even made to the New Testament doctrine of the sacredness of sorrow.

Whatever may have been the nature of a Sophoclean tetra­logy, the practice which at one time prevailed of describing the *Oedipus Rex, Oedipus Coloneus* and *Antigone* as “ the Theban trilogy” was manifestly erroneous and misleading. The three plays belong to different periods in the life-work of the poet, and the *Antigone* is the earliest of the three.

The spectator of a Sophoclean tragedy was invited to witness the supreme crisis of an individual destiny, and was possessed at the outset with the circumstances of the decisive moment. Except in the *Trachiniae,* where the retrospective soliloquy of Deianira is intended to emphasize her lonely position, this exposition is effected through a brief dialogue, in which the protagonist may or may not take part. In the *Oedipus Tyrannus* the king’s entrance and his colloquy with the aged priest intro­duce the audience at once to the action and to the chief person. In the *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* the entrance or discovery of the hero is made more impressive by being delayed. Immediately after the prologos the chorus enter, numbering fifteen, either chanting in procession as in the *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus,* or dispersedly as in the *Oedipus Coloneus* and *Philoctetes,* or, thirdly, as in the *Electra,* where, after entering silently during the monody of the heroine, and taking up their position in the orchestra, they address her one by one. With a remarkable exception, to be noted presently, the chorus, having once entered, remain to the end. They always stand in some carefully adjusted relation to the principal figure. The elders of Thebes, whose age and coldness throw into relief the fervour and the desolation of Antigone, are the very men to realize the calamity of Oedipus, and, while horror-stricken, to lament his fall. The rude Salaminian mariners are loyal to Ajax, but can­not enter into his grief. The Trachinian maidens would gladly support Deianira, who has won their hearts, but they are too young and inexperienced for the task. The noble Argive women can sympathize with the sorrows of Electra, but no sympathy can soothe her distress.

The parodos of the chorus is followed by the first scene or epeisodion, with which the action may be said to begin. For in the course of this the spectator’s interest is strongly roused by some new circumstance involving an unforeseen complication— the awakening of Ajax *(Aj.),* the burial of Polynices *(Ant.)*, the dream of Clytaemnestra *(El.),* the dark utterance of Teiresias *(Oed. Tyr. ),* the arrival of Lichas with Iole *(Trach.),* the report of Ismene announcing Creon’s coming *(Oed. Col.),* the sudden entreaty of Philoctetes crossed by the entrance of the pretended mariner *(Phil.).* The action from this point onwards is like a steadily flowing stream into which a swift and turbulent tribu­tary has suddenly fallen, and the interest advances with rapid and continuous climax until the culmination is reached and the catastrophe is certain. The manner in which this is done, through the interweaving of dialogue and narration with the various lyrical portions, is very different in different dramas, one of the principal charms of Sophocles being his power of ingenious variation in the employment of his resources. Not less admir­able is the strength with which he sustains the interest after the *peripeteia@@,1* whether, as in the *Antigone,* by heaping sorrow upon sorrow, or, as in the first *Oedipus,* by passing from horror to tenderness and unlocking the fountain of tears. The extreme point of boldness in arrangement is reached in the *Ajax,* where the chorus and Tecmessa, having been warned of the impending

@@@1 A tragic action has five stages, whence the five acts of the modern drama: the start, the rise, the height, the change, the close.