

Texts of the 3 monologues interpreted

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS OF THE OCEAN NYMPHS

AESCHYLUS

Hephæstus. O Strength and Force,—for you, our Zeus's will
Presents a deed for doing.—No more!—but I,
I lack your daring, up this storm-rent chasm,
To fix with violent hands a kindred god,
Howbeit necessity compels me so
That I must dare it,—and our Zeus commands
With word as heavy as bolts—inevitable!
Ho!—lofty son of Themis, who is sage,
Thee loth, I loth, must rivet fast in chains
Against this rocky height unclomb by man,
Where never human voice nor face shall find
Out thee, who lov'st them!—where thy beauty's flower,
Scorched in the sun's clear heat, shall fade away,
And night come up with garniture of stars
To comfort thee with shadow, and the sun
Disperse, with retriect beams, the morning frosts;
And through all changes, sense of present woe
Shall vex thee sore, because, with none of them
There comes a hand to free. Such fruit is plucked
From love of man!—for in that thou, a god,
Didst brave the wrath of gods, and give away
Undue respect to mortals; for that crime
Thou art adjudged to guard this joyless rock,
Erect, unslumbering, bending not the knee,
And many a cry and unavailing moan
To utter on the air! For Zeus is stern,
And new-made kings are cruel.--

SOPHOCLES

Φιλοκτήτης [254-316]

Oh, how miserable I really am
how bitter to the gods, if not even a rumor that I'm living here, has arrived to my house or
to any part of Greece!

But those men who sinfully left me here
They keep silent and laugh making fun of me
while my illness is getting worse.
My son, you my boy whose father is Achilles,
Here in front of you, is standing, someone you may have heard of
as I have the weapons of Hercules,
being the son of Poian, Philoctetes, whom
the two chief commanders of the Greeks
and that king of Cefallonia, Ulysses,
have shamefully abandoned me here,
because I suffered from a horrible disease that defeated me
having been bitten by an echidna that carved me with its teeth.
And they, my son, deserted me here, all abandoned
After they set out with their ships from the island of Chrysis
Oh, with what joy,
did they have in the flattening of the sea waves
when they saw me from far away sleeping like a corpse lying unfortunate on the stones
under the light of the sun
and they left, leaving me nothing but rags and some food, I hope they have the same luck
as me.
My boy, can you imagine how I felt when then I woke up from my dream and they had
already left?
How I cried, how did I mourn,
when i saw the ships with which I myself I sailed,
drawing away, and not a single man was left by my side
no one to help me, no one to ease the pain
of my illness. I searched everywhere
but I didn't find anything that could cure me, and the pain multiplied.
Time passed by without me realizing it
I was taking care of myself in the cave
To fed my stomach I made a living
with this bow that I used to hit wild birds on the wing, even though after hitting them
I had to drag my body like a snake
hawling my crippled leg,
to catch them, me the poor man.. I did the same if I needed to drink water or even in
winter
when there was frost everywhere and to break a piece of wood I was miserably
stragglng, to drag myself in the search for it.
And hit stones to force a spark
and that was what kept me alive so far; of course the ceiling I have upon my head and my
fire,
were enough for me to endure everything, except for my health.
Listen now my boy, let me tell you about this island too

No captain who came here did it intentionally
For there is no port here, nor can he could sell his merchandise to anyone, nor is there
anyone who would accommodate him
No one who is smart enough does come here.
But of course, you might say, someone did come here
unintentionally; of course everything is possible
over time.
So when people came here they showed me
with their words their compassion,
and sometimes they left me some food
or clothes; but none of them
when I asked them too, they didn't even want to listen,
agreed to save me , bringing me back to my land; and so I'm fading away, the miserable
me
I've been struggling here for ten years
in the midst of hunger and suffering
and the insatiable disease devours me.
Such are the Atreides and this is the violence of the Great Ulysses, shown to me. May the
gods of Olympus make them suffer one day for what they did to me!

EURIPIDES

HIPPOLYTUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

APHRODITE

I am a powerful goddess, celebrated
in heaven and among all mortal men,
who call me Aphrodite. Of all people
who gaze upon the sunlight and inhabit
regions between the Pillars of Atlas
and the Euxine Sea, I look with favour
on those who give my power due respect,
but I strike down all those who, stuffed with pride,
disparage me. For the family of gods
shares this attribute—they get great delight
from those honours human beings bestow.
That this is true I will soon demonstrate.
For Theseus and Hippolyta, an Amazon,
had a son, Hippolytus, and this lad,
a student trained by pious Pittheus,

is the only person here in Troezen
who claims that I, of all divinities,
by nature am the most despicable.
He refuses to have women in his bed,
turns his back on any thought of marriage,
and worships Zeus's daughter Artemis,
Apollo's sister, believing her to be
the greatest god of all. He spends his time
in green forests, always in the company
of that virgin goddess, scouring the land
for wild creatures with his swift hunting dogs.
The two enjoy a close relationship,
too close for any mortal with a god.
I bear him no ill will for that. Why should I?
But since Hippolytus has slighted me,
today I will avenge myself on him.
Most of my scheme is in place already—
what I have left to do will not be hard.
For Hippolytus went some time ago
from Pittheus' home to Pandion's land,
to see and celebrate the secret rites
of sacred Demeter. His father's wife,
the well-born lady Phaedra, saw him there,
and, thanks to what I had arranged, felt her heart
gripped by fierce desire.⁽²⁾ Before moving here,
to Troezen land, she had a temple built
in Athens, near Pallas Athena's rock,
a shrine to Aphrodite. It faced Troezen,
to mark her passion for her absent love,
and afterwards she let the people know
she had raised this temple to the goddess
in honour of Hippolytus. But now,
Theseus has left the land of Cecrops—
he has agreed to live for one whole year
in exile from his people, to escape
blood guilt for killing the sons of Pallas.⁽³⁾
He and his wife have now sailed to Troezen,
where she, poor woman, groans in agony,
driven out of her wits by stings of love
and dying in silence. None of her servants
knows of her disease. But this passion of hers
must not end like this. I will tell Theseus
about her love, and all will be revealed.

Then that young man who is my enemy
will be killed by his own father, Theseus,
with one of those wishes he was given,
a gift from Poseidon, lord of the sea,
(the god once said if Theseus prayed to him,
then his prayers would be fulfilled three times).(4)
As for Phaedra, she is a noble queen,
but nonetheless she dies. Her misfortunes
do not matter all that much, not enough
for me to avenge myself on enemies
in ways that do not satisfy my heart.
But I see Hippolytus on his way here,
returning from all that hard work hunting.
I will leave this place, for he is coming
with a huge throng of servants at his heels,
making a great din, as they howl their hymns
in honour of the goddess Artemis.
He does not realize that Hades' gates
are opening for him and this day's light
is the last light of day he will ever see.

Text interpreted in Ancient Greek language

Delphic Hymn to Apollo (138 BC) by Limenius of Thoinos, Athenian. Hymn to Apollo sculpted on an outer wall of the Athenian treasury at Delphi, found in 1893.

All the multitude of poets, inhabitants of Attica, sing your glory, O God,
famous guitarist. son of great Zeus, by this snow-crowned peak,
you who reveal to mortals the eternal and infallible oracles. They sing that you conquered
the prophetic tripod, which was guarded by a fierce dragon, when with your arrows you
pierced the coiled monster, which, after shrieking fearfully, cooled.
And they sing how the Gallic hordes, with their sacrilegious irreverence, while they tried to
pass... Let us go, son, warlike blaster..
Hear me, you who possess the deep forest Helicon, mounted daughters of majestic Zeus!
Fly to deceive with your words your golden-haired brother Phoebus, who on the twin
summits of the rock of Parnassus, accompanied by bright Delphic maidens starts for the
crystal streams of Castalia,
crossing at the Delphic promontory the prophetic peak.
Beyond glorious Attica, nation of the great city which, thanks to the prayers of Tritonides
the warrior, owns a hillside protected from all evil. On the sacred altars Hephaestus
dedicates thighs of sacred bulls. Black smoke rises from the flames towards Olympus.

The piercing rustling of the lotuses murmurs their song, and the golden, sweet-sounding guitar answers the voices of the people....

Τον κιθαρίσει κλυτόν παίδα μεγάλου Διός, ός αΐσι μα παρ' ακρονιφή τόνδε πάγον
αμβρότων εκ μυχών πάσι θνατοΐς προφαΐνεις, σε κελαδήσομεν, τρίποδα μαντεΐον ως
εΐλες, εχθρός ών εφρούρει δράκων, ός τέοισι βέλεσιν έτρησας αΐολον ελικτάν φυάν,
έσθ' ο θήρ συχνά συρίγμαθ' ιεΐς αθώπευθ' απέπνευς όμως πρών δέ Γαλατάων Άρης...
Κέκλυθ' Ελικώνα βαθύδενδρον αΐ λάχετε Διός εριβρόμου θύγατρες ευώλενοι, μόλετε,
συνόμαιμον ίνα Φοΐβον ωιδάεισι μέλψητε χρυσεοκόμαν, ός ανά δικόρυνθα Παρνασσίδος
ταάσδε πέτερας έδρανα μετά κλυταΐεις Δελφΐσιν, Κασταλίδος ευύδρου νάματ' επινίσσεται
Δελφόν ανά πρώνα μαντεΐον εφέπων πάγον. Ανακλυτά μεγαλόπολις Αθΐς, ευχαΐσι
φερόπλοιο ναΐουσα Τριτωνίδος δάπεδον άθραυστον αγΐοις δε βωμοΐσιν Άφαιστος αΐΐθει
νέων μήρα τάουρων, ομού δε νιν Άραψ ατμός ές Όλυμπον ανακίδναται λιγύ δέ Λωτός
βρέμων αΐόλοις μέλεσιν ωδάν κρέκει, χρυσέα δ' αυδύθρους κΐθαρις ύμνοισιν αναμέλπεται
ο δέ θέρων πρόπας εσμός Αθθΐδα λαχών.

Interpreted text

from Epictetus Golden Sayings

'You would fain be victor at the Olympic Games, you say. Yes, but weigh the conditions, weigh the consequences; then and then only, lay to your hand--if it be for your profit. You must live by rule, submit to diet, abstain from dainty meats, exercise your body perforce at stated hours, in heat or in cold; drink no cold water, nor, it may be, wine. In a word, you must surrender yourself wholly to your trainer, as though to a physician

Then in the hour of contest, you will have to delve the ground, it may chance dislocate an arm, sprain an ankle, gulp down abundance of yellow sand, be scourge with the whip--and with all this sometimes lose the victory. Count the cost--and then, if your desire still holds, try the wrestler's life. Else let me tell you that you will be behaving like a pack of children playing now at wrestlers, now at gladiators; presently falling to trumpeting and anon to stage-playing, when the fancy takes them for what they have seen. And you are even the same: wrestler, gladiator, philosopher, orator all by turns and none of them with your whole soul. Like an ape, you mimic what you see, to one thing constant never; the thing that is familiar charms no more. This is because you never undertook aught with due consideration, nor after strictly testing and viewing it from every side; no, your choice was thoughtless; the glow of your desire had waxed cold.'

Friend, bethink you first what it is that you would do, and then what your own nature is able to bear. Would you be a wrestler, consider your shoulders, your thighs, your loins--not all men are formed to the same end. Think you to be a philosopher while acting as

you do? Think you to go on thus eating, thus drinking, giving way in like manner to wrath and to displeasure? Nay, you must watch, you must labour; overcome certain desires; quit your familiar friends, submit to be despised by your slave, to be held in derision by them that meet you, to take the lower place in all things, in office, in positions of authority, in courts of law.

Weigh these things fully, and then, if you will, lay to your hand; if as the price of these things you would gain Freedom, Tranquillity, and passionless Serenity.'

Antigone text will be interpreted as well

Enjoy the reading