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**Of This and That: The Recognition Formula in Sophocles' *Electra***

This paper examines the recognition formula as it occurs in Sophocles' *Electra* and argues that it is used not only to mark traditional recognitions (the *anagnoriseis* of Aristotle's *Poetics*), but also to express other claims to congruity. These attempts to identify *this* with *that* should be understood within the agonistic framework of a play in which competing interpretations provide the locus for the struggle for power.

Recognitions in tragedy are commonly marked by a verbal acknowledgment of the identity of two entities previously held to be distinct. The formula that expresses this congruence frequently juxtaposes two demonstrative pronouns. This formula occurs at all four key moments of recognition in Sophocles' *Electra* (1177-8, 1222, 1352, 1479-80).

These salient examples of successful recognition should be considered within a broader set of attempts to argue equivalence between *this* and *that*. This corpus includes instances of incorrect identifications, problematic identifications and failed attempts at identification, many of which use the double demonstrative formula or an abbreviation or variant of it. The recognition formula can be uttered from a position of knowledge, it can be used to feign ignorance, or it can serve to draw attention to the limits of a character's knowledge.

The identification of *this* with *that* is central to the play for a number of reasons. As well as offering a plot of disguise and recognition, the play stages the return of Orestes, in which the arrival of *that* man transforms him into *this* man. But the language of *this* and *that* also reflects the ethical concerns of the play, since the characters in the play invoke a retaliatory justice founded on equivalence. Their attempts to claim the support of Dike are not only disputed throughout the play, they also founder through their exclusivity, since the trajectory of reciprocal justice progresses from *this* to *that* to *the other*. Attempts to delimit the scope of its application are challenged by others or fall foul of the pervasive multivalence that is a key feature of the dramaturgy of this play. Our awareness of disjuncture is heightened by the frequent recourse to the recognition formula, with the result that we are constantly asking ourselves whether the comparanda match.