

# Karakantza on Ajax and Achilles

What is Karakantza's thesis?

How much does Ajax resemble Achilles?

Does Sophocles take stuff directly from Homer, or does he avoid that by taking indirectly?

How closely does Sophocles follow Homer?

How much does he take from other traditions?

## Pity, Fear, and Catharsis

Where do pity and fear appear in the play?

What elements of the fear evoke pity and fear?

Do your feelings of pity and fear change during the play? Do the characters change?

# Odysseus

Compare and contrast Odysseus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Ajax*.

Is Odysseus fundamentally different in *Ajax*, or does he just hide his nature?

Would your picture of Odysseus differ if you read the plays in a different order?

## The Armor

Compare the stories of how Achilles' armor came back to the Greek camp and how Odysseus got the armor. What does the *Philoctetes* say, and what does the *Ajax* say?

Who tells the story in the *Philoctetes*?  
How does he get his information?

What are the other stories? Which seems best?

# Theodicy

In *Ajax*, why is there evil in the world?  
Aren't gods supposed to be good and just?

Compare and contrast theodicy in the *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*. Does evil exist to allow a greater good that follows? Do the gods' ends justify their means? Or is something else going on?

## Tecmessa

What is her story, and what is her future?

What does her character bring to the *Ajax*?

How does her role change the play?

What does putting a slave woman's character on stage in an otherwise entirely male tragedy say about Athens? About tragic pity and fear?

## Teucer

Who is Teucer, and what is his role in the play?

What will happen to him after the play?

Does that change anything?

What does Teucer bring to the play?

Why do we need him on stage after Ajax is dead?

Why can't the play just end with Ajax' suicide?

## Staging

Do you agree with the translators' notes on assigning parts? Is Ajax played by the same man as Agamemnon, or is he also Teucer?

Can you work out an alternate way to assign speaking roles to three actors? What might be the advantages/disadvantages of each scheme?