The *Oresteia*: A Theatrical Poetics

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ABSTRACT

The Oresteia: A Theatrical Poetics

An exploration of Aeschylus' Oresteia based on the premise that tragic meaning is most fully realized in performance. It is argued that Greek tragedy has the capacity to change the psychological distance between audience and dramatic theme, thereby shifting audience perspectives, both judgmental and emotional, on the unfolding action. Tragedy is predisposed to do this by nature of certain conventions of mise en scène specific to classical Athenian drama and its complex presentation of choruses and characters.

Part One: Classical Text as Acting Text

Section I: Language as Action, Motivation and Character identifies the language of action and motivation which indicates that classical dramatic text is designed for performance by actors. It assesses presentation of dilemma, conflict, argument and status through logos.

Section II: The Physical Actor in Space and Time focuses on the way in which the C5th convention of mask-wearing may have contributed to the quality of movement produced in tragic space. It examines implicit authorial suggestion à propos gestures in Oresteia and how interplay of mask and gesture may have engendered the constant in-and-out movement between various perspectives, the co-existence of illusion and 'disillusion', which characterizes tragic experience.
Part Two: The Role of the Three Oresteian Choruses: Language, Action and Emotion examines the distinctive characterizations of the three Oresteian choruses and their meaning. Their changing roles help alter mood and atmosphere in their respective plays, thus mediating audiences' perspectives on the performance. Choruses 'cipher' audiences' emotional proximity to, or distance from, the drama and its characters.

Part Three: Perspectives on Character: Orestes and Clytemnestra attempts more detailed construction of tragic characters, not only the linguistic means by which they are created, but their effect on an audience in live performance. The manner in which characters are presented in Oresteia suggests authorial intention to sway audiences' type and degree of focus on them.
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In recent years, there has been a growing consciousness amongst classical commentators that, since tragedy was designed for performance to an audience, this factor should influence our interpretation of the genre. It is perhaps most notably the work of such scholars as Webster, Taplin and certain others, concerned specifically with the technical production of meaning on the ancient stage, which first set this latest trend in motion. It is also true that, during the past decade or so and starting with the National Theatre's 1981 production of *Oresteia*, there has been a growing interest in producing Greek tragedy on the modern stage. Mutual benefit might be derived from an exchange of ideas between directors of ancient drama (who must make their productions accessible to modern spectators) and classicists (who have become increasingly willing to acknowledge the importance of the relationship between performance and audience in the shaping of tragic texts).

Taking its cue from the current tendencies of classical scholarship, the discussion which follows is an exploration of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* based on the premise that tragic meaning is most fully realized in performance. It is proposed that Greek tragedy has the capacity to change the psychological distance between the audience and the drama, thereby shifting audience perspectives, both judgmental and emotional, on the unfolding action. This conception of tragic drama as arising from the
tension between, and mutual dependence of, illusion and 'disillusion', was long ago noted by the modern theatre producer and director Peter Brook:

"Brecht's use of distance has long been considered in opposition to Artaud's conception of theatre as violent subjective experience. I have never thought this to be true. I believe that theatre, like life, is made up of unbroken conflict between impressions and judgements - illusion and disillusion cohabit painfully and are inseparable"5.

Brook's instinctive response to years of practical experience in the theatre brings forth a model which encapsulates the complexity and subtlety of theatrical experience, in which illusion and 'disillusion' are simultaneously produced and perceived in dramatic performance. The usefulness of such a model for increasing our understanding of certain conventions of mise en scène specific to classical Athenian drama6 and its complex presentation of choruses and characters7 is apparent from much recent work.

Some commentators accept the paradoxical cohabitation of distance and proximity, and an audience's capacity to reconcile awareness of dramatic artifice with the beguilement of 'make-believe'. Others8 will not admit of any overt form of 'disillusion' as characterizing the tragic genre. Addressing the audience or self-consciously and explicitly referring to theatrical production runs the risk of 'breaking the illusion'9 or sacrificing "characteristic tragic spell-binding"10. Yet work done on the metatheatrical
aspects\textsuperscript{11} of Greek tragedy reveals that tragic self-reflexiveness or \textit{Fiktionsironie}\textsuperscript{12} operates implicitly and subtly\textsuperscript{13}. Furthermore, "there is no such thing as a 'dramatic illusion' secure enough to be 'broken'"\textsuperscript{14}. With this in mind, we might allow for a 'submerged metatheatricality'\textsuperscript{15} as characterizing Greek tragedy since the terminology acknowledges the imaginative capability of spectators to collude\textsuperscript{16} with the dramatic fiction, while aware of its artificiality. Finally, this subtle \textit{Fiktionsironie} does not compromise the seriousness, dignity and grandeur of the tragic genre.

The methodology employed here is a highly eclectic one, but one which is intended to respond to the complexities of tragedy as outlined above, rather than imposing a single methodology on it from the outset. My experience as an actress has consistently vindicated such an eclectic approach. Thus reference is made both to classical studies, particularly those which focus on features found only in Greek tragedy (such as stichomythic exchange\textsuperscript{17} or the wearing of masks), and to the observations of modern theatre theorists\textsuperscript{18} and practitioners (such as Brook, Brecht and Artaud) not specifically concerned with the ancient drama.

In what follows I also hope to show how tragedy's ability to shift audience perspectives, both judgmental and emotional, on the dramatic action is reflected in conventions of production and presentation unique to the ancient genre.
Thus Part One examines the range of 'tools' available to the tragic actor - his character *logos/script* which motivates him and his potential deployment of mask and gesture in the carefully delineated tragic space.

**Part One: Classical Text as Acting Text** falls into two sections.

**Section I: Language as Action, Motivation and Character** identifies the language of action and motivation which indicates that classical dramatic text is designed for performance by actors. It assesses presentation of dilemma, conflict, argument and status through *logos*.

**Section II: The Physical Actor in Space and Time** focuses on the way in which the C5th convention of mask-wearing may have contributed to the quality of movement produced in tragic space. It examines implicit authorial suggestion *à propos* gestures in *Oresteia* and how interplay of mask and gesture may have engendered the constant in-and-out movement between various perspectives, the co-existence of illusion and 'disillusion', which characterizes tragic experience.

Parts Two and Three look beyond the mechanics of production and concentrate on the complex way in which interplay of choruses and characters affects spectators.

Specifically, **Part Two: The Role of the Three Oresteian Choruses: Language, Action and Emotion** examines the distinctive characterizations of the three Oresteian choruses and considers their meaning. Their changing roles help alter mood and atmosphere in their respective plays,
thus mediating audiences' perspectives on the performance. Choruses 'cipher' audiences' emotional proximity to, or distance from, the drama and its characters. It is proposed that the development of the Oresteian choruses also shows them to be vehicles for subtle, metatheatrical reflection on the nature and benefits of the tragic genre in performance.

Part Three: Perspectives on Character: Orestes and Clytemnestra attempts more detailed construction of tragic characters, not only the linguistic means by which they are created, but their potential effect on an audience in live performance. A provisional model for understanding the nature of character in Greek tragedy is put forward and then tested on the depiction of the central Oresteian characters Clytemnestra and Orestes, whose confrontation (Cho. 870-930) occupies the structural and symbolic heart of the trilogy. The manner in which characters are presented in Oresteia suggests authorial intention to sway audiences' type and degree of focus on them.

Appendices A, B, and C examine the way in which the Atreid house is presented as an integral part of the drama and suggest ways in which this significantly alters our interpretation of specific sections of the Oresteia.
Notes for Introduction

1 Wiles (1987); Green (1990); Rehm (1992). All three advocate awareness of the prime importance of performance to spectators and alert us to the dangers of a purely text-centred approach such as that taken by Goldhill (1984), 202-4 and (1989).
2 Webster (1970b).
3 Taplin (1977) and (1978).
4 Dale (1969); Jens (1971), Bauformen; Bain (1977); Mastronarde (1978)
5 Brook (1987), 47.
6 Padel (1990), 353-4, perceives the skene ("with its revolutionary portrayal of a three-dimensional façade on a two-dimensional wall") as emblematic (354) of the tragic genre's capacity to engender objectivity and subjectivity (353), what Brook calls 'disillusion' and illusion. Wiles (1991) too notes the 'double awareness' (12, 14) of theatrical spectators, their willingness to be 'bewitched' while retaining a degree of observational distance (26).
7 Segal (1982), with particular reference to Bacchae, characterizes tragedy as a mix of submission to the delight of the fiction and an awareness of its artificiality. This in turn produces the mixed sensations of pleasure and pain. See esp., 225, 232 and 263ff.
8 Bain (1975), (1977) and (1987); Taplin (1986), but see n. 11 below.
10 Taplin (1986), 171.
11 Segal (1982); Zeitlin (1980) and (1990); Foley (1980) and (1985); Goldhill (1986).
12 In his paper at the KCL Tragedy Conference (24/7/1993) "Ironies in serious drama", T.G. Rosenneyer showed that the term Fiktionsironie can be usefully applied to certain effects of Greek tragedy.
13 Cf. Taplin (1993), 26. This represents a significant shift from his earlier viewpoint.
14 Easterling (forthcoming), Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy.
15 In his paper at the KCL Tragedy Conference (24/7/1993), 'Comedy and the Tragic', Taplin spoke of the 'submerged metatheatricality' of tragedy.
16 Burns (1972); Goffman (1974); Styan (1975), 158; Elam (1980). For the nature of the tragic mask as inviting "emotional projection by the spectator", see Halliwell (1993), 208.
17 Gross (1905); Jens (1955); Ireland (1974).
18 Burns (1972); Goffman (1974); Elam (1980).
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PART ONE, CLASSICAL TEXT AS ACTING TEXT

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE, SECTION 1: METHODS, AIMS AND DEFINITIONS

In approaching a definition of tragedy, modern scholarship has shown that the structure and 'feel' of the tragic medium was influenced by the epic model (although commentators may differ regarding the degree of influence exerted and the various emphases that should be placed on it). It is clear that the tragedians derived their material largely from Cyclic epic (and lyric) poetry, but less often adopted strictly Homeric subject matter for the stage\(^1\). The debt to Homer is of a more complex nature and takes a more complicated form.

It has frequently been pointed out\(^2\) that the seeds of tragic conflict, rhetoric, realization and persuasion are to be found in Homer. Herington\(^3\) suggests that tragedians applied Homeric techniques of plot concentration and advancement by means of self-contained episodes centred on a point of conflict and/or crisis, and characterization by speech, to epic material. Even the interchange of long speeches and stichomythia, which gives form to, and distinguishes the tragic \(\delta\gamma\omega\nu\), is seen to be foreshadowed in Homer's characterized debates and dramatic arguments\(^4\). Others\(^5\) perceive the depiction of Achilles in the *Iliad* in particular as a model for the centrality to subsequent tragic characterization of self-knowledge, \(\delta\psi\mu\omega\thetai\alpha\) and realization when faced with a reversal of fortune, followed by arousal of \(\sigma\mu\pi\alpha\thetai\alpha\) and pity for the human condition.
Yet, as Vernant's seminal discussion of tragedy proposes, other sources of influence were at work when the phenomenon of the 'tragic moment' occurred. Broadly, he argues that with the emergence of the city-state and in the new agonistic atmosphere of the law-courts (whose effect on tragedy can be inferred in part from "the tragic writers' use of technical legal vocabulary"), tragedy in consequence had to confront the resulting tensions between heroic values and "the new modes of thought that characterize the advent of law within the city-state".

While accepting Vernant's view of contemporary politics and law-court debates as a catalyst for the 'tragic moment', some commentators are rightly wary of classifying the tragic experience merely in terms of tension between heroic past and civic present, embodied in the forms of epic and tragedy. Recently, some scholars have alerted us to the complexity of the relationship between tragedy and epic, to the "interpenetration of old and new elements" which tragedy represents, and to the continuing relevance for fifth-century audiences of some heroic values which it occasionally reveals. It is important to acknowledge that the 'Homeric imagination' was an ever-present source of influence, but that Homer, like epic in general, was never directly copied in extant tragedy, but rather was adopted, adapted and transformed for and by the tragic genre.
This originality through novel combination of the traditional and the new also characterizes the way in which all the metres of tragedy were not its own invention, but rather were borrowed from a vast range of pre-tragic poetic genres, and were re-disposed and transformed by the dramatic medium "in such a way as to create a totally new effect." (Since this 'metrical re-mixing' and the rich and complex diversity of metrical variety thereby produced by tragic poets has formed the main subject of many important works, it is not the intention of the subsequent discussion to give attention to it, except incidentally).

In spite of the acknowledged 'interpenetration' of epic and tragic elements in tragedy and its characteristic blending of old with new, the 'tragic moment' is simultaneously and distinctively a product of its own age in that it illustrates the fifth-century fascination with contradiction and ambivalence and is an "expression of the new sense of things, of debate and doubt and conflict over the belief-system of the ancient Greeks." What is variously described as the "new consciousness", the "new sense of things" which leads to a "new world-outlook" superimposes a sophisticated, agonistic framework and perspective on epic material as it produces the workings of moral dilemma, conflict, doubt, debate and paradox on every level of the tragic drama. Although both epic and tragedy have the capacity to analyse the effect of moral ambiguity, dilemma and paradox on human existence, the multivalent tragic medium
is able to signal, in a variety of ways not possible in the 'performance' of epic, the complexity of motivation in an altering universe\textsuperscript{19}.

At the centre is placed the tragic actor: he is both inspiration for, and a measure of, the new profundity and multivalency of tragic text. The actor may present the audience with his character's own moral dilemma, or it may be indirectly revealed in his interaction, debate, conflict with other actors or with the chorus, and in view of his place within the larger political, religious and ritual contexts of the play-world, he is the ideal vehicle for making possible "a new sophistication in the analysis of human behaviour and motivation"\textsuperscript{20}. Furthermore, it is the actor who, in the final and most important interaction of all, in performance before an audience, is best able to express the mutability and contradictions of the human condition in a rapidly changing environment.

Many studies\textsuperscript{21} stress the importance of the visual dimension of staging tragedy (perhaps because it is the most obvious and spectacular aspect of dramatic performance): the props, costumes, masks, settings of tragedy and their symbolic potential have been greatly discussed. Yet in spite of the centrality of the actor, to animate and give significance to these otherwise meaningless dramatic 'tools', less has been written about the actor's complex function and the linguistic forms by which it is indicated. In view of this, the following discussion will focus on the dramatist's exploitation of the possibilities which arise from the presence,
actions and interactions of the actor. First it will be necessary to identify the language of action and motivation which indicates that classical dramatic text is designed for performance. A brief assessment of the presentation of dilemma, conflict, argument and status through interactive language, particularly stichomythia, will follow. Finally, an analysis of the essential features, the economy yet range, of character-text, should reveal how tragic characters embody new modes of presenting the tensions, ambiguities and ironies which distinguish drama from epic.
Section 1: Language as Action, Motivation and Character

"Thus Aeschylus begins to introduce action into tragedy in two senses: the hero's decisive single act, preceded by agonized hesitation and . . . the action as a whole, leading through the decision to the pathos as its climax."

Many modes of non-interactive logoi (as opposed to the language of direct, immediate interaction of mortal characters on stage) feature prominently in both the imagery and activity of the Oresteian trilogy. The prayer, hymn, prophetic song, paean, dirge, lament, the act of calling on the dead and the weaving of a spell, are, in the main, forms of a one-way communication engaged in by mortals and directed to invisible chthonic or Olympian deities in the Oresteia. These song formats either feature as music actually sung in performance or as musical metaphors.

Intermingled with these traditional or ritual patterns of communication (which charge the stage-world with the potentiality of divine presence, and influence on, or intervention in, the activities of human characters), is the logos which prescribes a character's recollection or description of his or her actions or reasons for actions (i.e.: motivations). A brief survey of action logoi in Oresteia should give some idea of its salient characteristics.
I Examples of Action Logos in Oresteia

1.1 The Intention of Action/What I Intend To Do

At Ag. 1638-42, for example, Aegisthus tells the chorus how he intends to rule the city. However, the most detailed anatomy of intended action comes in the central play (Cho. 554-584), when Orestes describes how, in the guise of a stranger, he will gain access to the Argive palace with the false news of 'Orestes' death'; he then rehearses what he will say to the doorkeeper (Cho. 569-570) and previews the culminating act of his δόλας- the murder of Aegisthus - should he find him on his father, Agamemnon's, throne.

The full significance of this 'rehearsal scene' depends largely on the fact that it is then played out for the audience with variations from Orestes' original plan: he confronts his mother, not Aegisthus, in front of (instead of within) the house (Cho. 885-930.)

1.2 Description of Present Action/Who or What I Am and What I Am Doing, Thinking, Feeling

This loosest of categories covers the gamut of personal expression made by theatrical characters, ranging from simple statements (such as those which declare or confirm a character's name or occupation - Orestes indirectly affirms who he is to his sister, Cho. 225ff.) to descriptions of individual characters' sensations, emotions, thoughts and dispositions.
The most spectacular use of the description of present action, together with description of the sensations and emotions resulting from that action, comes at Ag. 1372ff. In her exultant speech over the corpses of Cassandra and Agamemnon (the visual evidence of her murderous exploits), Clytemnestra describes in the vivid present tense the sequence of actions which enable her to murder Agamemnon. Περιστιχίζω, παίω δίς and ἐπενδίδωμι re-live the entrapment and the three blows dealt to the victim: the queen's first two strokes elicit two death-cries (1384; these cries were heard by the audience at 1343 and 1345) as Agamemnon falls, the third stroke is delivered to him already πετωκότι (1385) to the ground. In this way Agamemnon's death, too, is vividly recreated\(^{26}\).

Clytemnestra gives further details of his end: the outrush of his final breath (ὁρμάνει, 1388)\(^{27}\) and the outpouring of blood from his wounds\(^{28}\), which sprinkles the queen with a 'bloody dew' (1390). It is the sensation of the latter in which Clytemnestra perversely delights (1391)\(^{29}\). Thus, description of the murderous act and its consequences for Agamemnon, is completed with an account of Clytemnestra's physical sensations and subsequent exultation at the victorious outcome.

I.3 Motivational Language: Reasons for Action

Having fulfilled her aim, the murder of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra is now released from hypocritical pretence, able to πολλῶν πάροιθεν
καρίως εἰρημένων/τὰναντί εἰπεῖν (1372-3) and thus to reveal motivations kept secret. This she does in 1431-1447, declaring that Agamemnon was sacrificed (1433) as he had sacrificed their child (1417), her φιλάτη daughter, like a sacrificial animal (1415-16). There is revenge, too, for Agamemnon's adulterous liaison with Cassandra (1438ff.) in the form of the queen's lover Aegisthus (1435-7).

Whereas Clytemnestra only tells her motivation after the event, the anatomy of Orestes' triple motivation (Cho. 269-305), in contrast, is made explicit long before the act of murder. Many forms of divine punishment predicted by Apollo, meted out by Fury avengers and ἐκ τῶν πατρῶων αἰμάτων τελομένω (Cho. 284), figure prominently as motivational factors for Orestes, as does banishment from the πόλις (289) and its rituals (291-94). Orestes explicitly reiterates his motivations/ἰμερω (299) at the end of the speech: the god Apollo's mandate, his father's πένθος, the impoverishing loss of his estate and concern that his citizens, who fought at Troy, are ruled by 'two women' (304). Concern, for acceptance by the city (289 and 291-94), and for the citizens, indicates Orestes' understanding of his communal responsibilities: he is afraid that he may not share in the communal κρατήρ (291), or that there will be no libation of friendship for him (292). His narrative seems designed to 'normalize' his mother's subversive use of sacral imagery. She talks of pouring libations, but to a corpse (Ag. 1386-7; 1395); she talks of a κρατήρ (Ag.
1397), but one Agamemnon filled with evil things and 'drank' on his return to Argos (Ag. 1397-8).

Orestes understands his responsibilities to the gods and his dead father. His whole speech cautiously adheres to ritual propriety, a concern with 'setting things right' in contrast with his mother who, after the act of murder (1372ff.), displays a perverted and exultant lack of a sense of αἰσχύνη. The differences between the stage at which Clytemnestra's and Orestes' motivations are revealed and the methods of revelation, significantly influence the audience's perspective on, and emotional reaction to, their respective acts of murder[^31].

While Aeschylus' presentation of characters such as Orestes and Clytemnestra (and the means by which their motivations are revealed) is perhaps a reflection of the "new sophistication in the analysis of human behaviour and motivation"[^32] made possible by the 'tragic moment', depiction of divine motivations through on-stage presentation of immortal characters works in a different way: the Fury chorus of Eumenides is motivated by what it is, for who and what the Furies are is synonymous with what they do. Frequent declarations of identity and activity, most noticeably in choral songs (e.g.: Eum. 307ff., 490ff.), are equivalent to statements of motivation by the Furies. This does not mean that their motivation does not alter and develop as Eumenides proceeds or that it is presented in an over-simplified way. Indeed, the very existence of the

[^31]:
[^32]:
Furies is based on an 'ancient honour', a λέχος decreed by Fate (172, 391-394), yet the proper role of the Furies appears to be constantly disputed in the final play until Athena eventually persuades them to accept a place within the Athenian community\textsuperscript{33}.

1.4 Recollection: Narrative of Past Actions

'What I have done', in contrast with recollective narrative of what others have done. Distinction may be made between description of, reaction to or prediction of, the past, present and future actions of others respectively, and the logos spoken by the individual character concerning his or her own actions in past, present and future. For example, Clytemnestra's 'victory' speech (\textit{Ag.} 1372ff.) opens with the claim that in the past she has said much to serve necessity. In \textit{Choephoroi}, Cilissa poignantly recollects her nursing of Orestes (734-6). She recalls both what she did for Orestes and what he was like as a small baby.
II  Language as Status: Orders and Colloquialisms

What I say to other actors in the form of instructions or requests for action. In general, the ability to give orders is an indication of κράτος and high status. The command is largely the domain of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon in the first play. At 944, Agamemnon requests his sandals to be removed so that he can walk on the tapestries (949), and earlier at 908-910 Clytemnestra sharply rebukes her female servants for hesitating in performing the duty of spreading the purples.

In the central play, despite her clear distinction between male and female prerogatives (672-673), Clytemnestra's use of imperatives suggests that she retains much of the κράτος over the house. She greets the 'strangers' and gives instructions regarding their care (712-715). Although she undertakes to tell the 'stranger's' news τοῖς κρατοῦσι δωματων (716), thereby suggesting a distinction between herself and 'those in power', in actuality Clytemnestra is ἡ κρατοῦσα (734) who orders Cilissa to summon Aegisthus. In the Mother/Son scene, Orestes' terse imperatives to his mother (significantly placed at beginning and end of a crucial stichic exchange, Cho. 904 and 930) indicate that he has eventually attained status superior to that of Clytemnestra. His capacity to control the situation after initial uncertainty voiced in the question to Pylades (899) is concomitant with his mother's loss of κράτος.
Orders are the most explicit means of suggesting status, both for those who give them and those who carry them out, especially in the case of instructions to mutes\textsuperscript{34}. In \textit{Oresteia}, status is not merely signified by exhortations: status \textit{logos}, whether explicit or implicit, is pervasive. This is not surprising in a drama which treats as one of its central themes the challenging or subversion of old hierarchies (whether sexual, political or religious) and the establishment of new ones. A few examples should suffice in illustration.

Clytemnestra's \textit{κράτος} is deferred to in quasi-religious terms (\textit{Ag.} 258); she is clear-thinking (\textit{Ag.} 275, 277), astute and in charge, and one who is to be seen in terms which, as the Watchman observes, imply aspiration to male authority and privilege (\textit{Ag.} 10-11; cf. 351)\textsuperscript{35}. While the queen possesses an \textit{ἀνδρόβολον κλαρ} (11), her lover Aegisthus is derogatorily addressed as \textit{γυναῖ} (1625), an \textit{oikουρός} (1626) who avoids battle (1625) as willingly as Clytemnestra joins it (940).

If Clytemnestra is ambitious to make use of the advantages associated with male power, aspersions are cast at a very early stage on her rule of the Argive palace (and so, it might be supposed, its wealth and possessions, symbols of royal status) in the absence of her \textit{ἄνηρ} (18-19). Thus when Agamemnon does eventually arrive at the palace (783ff.) to reclaim its rule, the audience is already partially alerted to the dangers inherent in Clytemnestra persuading her husband to tread on
tapestries, symbolic of domestic πλούτος (948-9): even the king himself concedes that such an action, τὸ δῶμενοφθορεῖν (948), subverts the proper status of the house. Furthermore, since the strewing of tapestries is a privilege indulged in by barbarian kings (918-922) such as Priam (935-6), or an honour properly reserved by the Greeks for the gods (922-928), the action of stepping on the πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος (910) implies an hubristic aspiration for the kind of status inappropriate for a Greek βασιλεύς, even if he is Τροίας πτολεμόθης (783).

In his capacity as the sacker of Troy, Agamemnon is accompanied by Cassandra, once a princess and prophetess of that city, now a slave. He commands someone (presumably Clytemnestra) to take her inside the house and be kind towards her (950-1), adding the maxim that the gods are well-disposed to those who rule their slaves (unwillingly submissive to the yoke of slavery, 953) μαλακώκως. Clytemnestra's first words to Cassandra (1035-46) seem to show some compliance with the first part at least of her husband's request: she has returned to get the slave-girl inside the house, issuing exhortations at 1035 and later at 1039. The queen also uses some πειθώ on Cassandra: if it is ordained by Zeus that you must be a slave, it is preferable to have wealthy masters (1043); even Herakles had to endure slavery (1040-41)36.

Cassandra's status as a slave functions to give prominence to her sudden reversal of fortune and in another sense, serves as a metaphor for
the inescapability of the human condition, the impossibility of eluding the 'bonds' of fate (1301). Cassandra's slavery also highlights the cruel irony of being divinely gifted with prophetic vision (1084), for the 'gift' of prophecy becomes a burden: Cassandra is as much the slave of Apollo (1202ff.) as she is of Agamemnon (954-955). While Cassandra's slavery is rather a special case, the other slaves of the Oresteia have very different functions.

First, it is necessary to examine what linguistic features may be used to distinguish slaves or any of lower status in Oresteia. It has long been recognized that colloquialisms or semi-colloquial language may be used dramatically to suggest a particular character's inferior status, but this is not to say that colloquialism functions exclusively as an indicator of low status. Aeschylus' use of colloquialism is sparing and he can give a character (such as the Watchman in Agamemnon) a 'conversational' intimacy of tone without resort to specifically identifiable colloquial expressions.

A character who does, however, use a significant number of colloquialisms is the Nurse in Choephor: it has been postulated that such a technique serves to characterize the Nurse as 'garrulous' and 'homely'. The confiding, intimate tone of the Nurse's speech (Cho. 734ff.), the essence of her characterization, is multi-purpose. It enables the audience to feel like an eavesdropper on a conversation between oiketou
(for the libation-bearers are διώδες οἴκων, 719, and Cilissa intimates that Clytemnestra's show of grief within the house was for the benefit of the domestic slaves, 737) and one which simultaneously humanizes Orestes: he is no longer solely an instrument of divinely sanctioned action, but has a past as a child ἐν σπεργάνως (755), entrusted to the Nurse's care by both mother (750) and father (762). The report of Orestes' death is the ultimate πῆμα (747) in a catalogue of sufferings for τάλανας Cilissa which have pained ἐν στέρνως φρένα (746);

Clytemnestra, in contrast, feigns an outward display of grief for the house-slaves, or so Cilissa alleges (737f.). In effect, the sympathetic, confiding characterization of Cilissa is designed to stimulate a deeper audience sympathy with Orestes, while intended to encourage dislike and distrust for the twin tyrants (972), Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. This hatred for the διπλή τυραννίς has been consistently expressed by those who serve the Argive palace (e.g.:- Ag. 18-19; Cho.111, 377f., 770) in contrast to the preservation of old loyalties to Agamemnon (e.g.:- Ag. 32-35; Cho. 81-83, 106-107, 354f.), a sense of allegiance which is also extended to his children, who have themselves lost their proper status as a result of their mother's behaviour (Cho. 301, 445f.): Electra and Orestes have been bartered like slaves in exchange for Aegisthus (Cho.132f., 916-17), a metaphor for the children's sense of betrayal bitterly expressed in Orestes' stinging rebuke to his mother (Cho. 915).
III Language of Interaction : Dialogue and Stichomythia

"δύσμαχα δ'ἐστι κρίναι". Agamemnon 1561.

Reference has already been made\textsuperscript{42} to the various forces which shaped tragic form, content and atmosphere. What emerges is that exchange of language (sometimes, but not always, taking the form of argument) is the common feature of otherwise markedly different sources of influence from which the 'tragic moment' is developed, and becomes an all-pervasive feature of Greek tragedy.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that in such an agonistic atmosphere\textsuperscript{43}, the requirements of an interactive format of language exchange were met by (or were possibly a consequence of) the introduction of the second actor, with which Aeschylus is credited\textsuperscript{44}, and the subsequent addition of the τριταγωνιστής made use of by Aeschylus only in Oresteia\textsuperscript{45}. Yet in spite of the availability of a third actor which Aeschylus on occasion exploits to great effect\textsuperscript{46}, the prevailing form taken by tragic interchange is duologue and, noticeably in Aeschylus, it is consistently expressed by means of stichomythia\textsuperscript{47}.

Some scholars\textsuperscript{48} emphasize what they view as the restrictive, artificial formularity of stichomythia, a rigidity possibly derived from its pre-tragic origins as either a process of ritual catechism between a priest and his initiate\textsuperscript{49} or a riddling exchange\textsuperscript{50}. Others perceive a diverse expressive richness even within the confines of the stichic form\textsuperscript{51} and
acknowledge the emotive valency of stichic exchanges, marking as they do a "crucial episode" or "point of crisis" in the unfolding tragic pattern, and furthermore constituting what has usefully been called "the equation of a relationship".

Gross and Jens analyse the various forms and effects of stichomythia. Ireland goes further first by identifying the various permutations of internal stichomythic form and secondly by attributing to this structural variety a wide range of dramatic functions.

Ireland's observations give fascinating insight into complex stichomythic exchanges, such as that between Clytemnestra and Orestes in Choephoroi (908-930). Here, the shifting patterns of argument and conflict, claim and counter-claim, are emphasized by repetition. The dialectic of parental authority dominates the exchange: Clytemnestra has given birth and reared (908, 928) her tekνου (910, 912, 920, 922) Orestes, who in turn attributes τὸ τραβελοῦ to the ἀνήρ (921), an argument linguistically reinforced by repetition of a word already used by his mother in 920. Clytemnestra reminds Orestes of obligations to the mother (922, 924) and is countered by Orestes' insistent use of the word πατήρ (909, 915, 925, 927). When Clytemnestra does use the word 'father', it is to remind Orestes to level the charge of sexual indiscretion against his other, equally blameworthy, parent (918).
Repetition or near-repetition of a key word or phrase (e.g.: 919 and 921 - ἐσω καθημένη / ἡμένως ἐσω) consistently used by one party is a technique which reinforces that individual's line of argument. However, taking up a word used by another party has a different effect and one which can be highlighted by use of connective particles. Strikingly, Orestes precedes his mention of Μοῖρα (911), picked up from 910, with connective particles: καὶ τόνδε τοῖνυν Μοῖρ' ἐπόροσεν μόρον. Ireland calls this 'refutation by addition', but it is rather refutation by repetition in a different context and so transformation, for the Μοῖρα of both father and mother must be taken into account; yet although the claims of Μοῖρα stand on both sides, inextricably linked, they are, inevitably, in opposition. Lines 910-911 give individual perspectives on a concept already expressed in more generalized terms (Cho. 309-10, 312-313 and 461; cf. Ag. 1560-1562, where the technique of repetition in antithesis is used to emphasize the inescapable circularity of the Curse which grips the Atreid palace.)

If Orestes has an early monopoly on connective particles, Clytemnestra briefly attempts to refute her son's rebukes (915 and 917) with questions or statements reinforced by particles : if her son was sold, where δητα is the price she received ? If the 'price' is her love of Aegisthus (as Orestes intimates, 917), the father's indiscretions must also be remembered (918 begins with the colloquial connective μὴ ἄλλαξ). In so
doing, Clytemnestra attempts to put herself on equal footing with the father, a premise instantly and irrefutably denied by Orestes. Indeed, so strongly is this implied allegation refuted in turn in a sentence which opens with the repetition of μή (919) that the dynamic of the exchange alters once more. When Clytemnestra makes a statement (920), it is counterbalanced by repetition of a key word, the sense and significance of which is transformed by its speaker. ἀνδρὸς in 920 is repeated in 921. ἔκπληκτην opens 922 and is picked up by Orestes in 923. Finally, the essence of Orestes' impossible dilemma is epigrammatically expressed in 924 and 925: here, πατρὸς (925) replaces μητρὸς (924), for the father's curse has already been powerfully evoked as one of Orestes' central motivations (273f. and 283f.) and the supremacy of the father has prevailed.

Repetition of certain key words or phrases and the use of particles, whether connective, emphatic or designed to add 'colour' in this exchange, help to indicate the profundity of Orestes' dilemma: he is connected to his mother, but it is this very link and the equal (and in the end more powerful) link with the father which dictates the nature of this duologue. The interaction of mother and son must be devoid of verbal agreement, for in spite of their blood ties, their confrontation must end in deadlock, μέχρι and death.
IV  

Language as Character


Orestes here adopts the most obvious strategy for becoming someone else: he takes on the outward appearance of a travelling stranger, and says he will complete the picture by speaking (Cho. 563-4) in the Parnassian dialect. (In fact, he does not do this subsequently, but Orestes' logos as a Phocian is distinguishable in style and tone from "the splendour of his diction when he is speaking in his own person"60). While outwardly donning the trappings and speech of a stranger is the means of disguising self and becoming 'other', it is the possibilities which arise from the interplay between characters, whether in the form of what characters say about each other, or to each other in face-to-face interaction, which validates the premise that "a new sophistication in the analysis of human behaviour and motivation"61 influenced the tragic medium.

It might further be suggested that the importance of character evidence in Athenian litigation, where the behaviour of the plaintiff was cited as argument to sway the jury, had a similar impact on tragedy, since "one of the mainstays of Greek oratory was argument from general trends in human behaviour to the particular instance. Against this background character is of vital importance. The general behaviour of a man, good or bad, enables us to imagine his conduct in a particular situation and assess
the truth or falsehood of the charge against him. In Athenian litigation, character evidence given before the verdict was considered neither inappropriate nor unduly subjective, as it would be in a modern trial. Indeed, argument from character was central to the plaintiff's plea. Similarly, appeals to emotion featured prominently, a practice aimed to elicit sympathetic jury response.

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle asserts that emotion affects judgement (1354b8-11, 1356a15-16, 1377b30-1378a5, 19-20). Thus, if the orator wishes to use emotion as a tool of persuasion to win over an audience, he must understand the nature, objects and grounds of individual emotions (1378a19-22). That is, he must understand that πάθη are cognitive in essence, cause and effect. Failure to do so on the rhetorician's part means that he will not arouse his audience's emotions sufficiently (1378a23-26). It is significant that Aristotle put persuasion 'through hearers' (1356a14) on a par with persuasion 'through demonstration' and persuasion 'through character'. Playing the audience's emotions could be as fruitful as persuading them of a client's ἔθος and πάθος, or of the orator's own emotional disposition towards listeners as an indication of his character.

In tragedy, too, the watching audience's opinion and emotion are swayed and shifted by dramatic presentation of subjective 'character evidence'.
This takes two forms:

1a) Everything X says about himself/herself (which may be at variance with),

b) what X actually does.

2a) What other characters say about X,

i) when X is on stage,

ii) when X is off stage.

Oresteian characters, most frequently when they are off stage, are often presented through the narrative of others. *Agamemnon*'s Watchman prefigures the conflict to come between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon by his discussion of those two characters, but also shapes audience perspectives on it. The woman's unnatural tendencies to counsel like a man (11) causing unspecified problems for the house (19) are set against the Watchman's affectionate loyalty for Agamemnon (32-35). Cilissa's narrative in *Choephori* (734ff.) follows a similar pattern: deep attachment, but this time for Agamemnon's son, φιλος Ὀρέστης (749) contrasted with disparagement of Clytemnestra's reaction to her son's death, considered to be a hypocritical display of grief (737-741).

While an audience will be more inclined to lend a sympathetic ear to the Watchman ("he is to us a fellow man, a fellow sufferer... we are forced to put ourselves in his place"67), and to respond to Cilissa's
potentially moving account of Orestes as an infant, a character like Aegisthus is depicted unsympathetically. His verbal banalities are a measure of his inability to manipulate language. He is unable either to use it to control others, preferring rather the threat of force (Ag. 1617ff.), or to take responsibility for action, avoiding the Trojan μᾶχη and the μᾶχη of vengeance alike; he is the woman-man/γυνή/οἰκουρός to Clytemnestra's man-woman.

The detailed discussion of such secondary characters which follows should illustrate the point that the presentation of character, if sympathetic, gives credence to that character's views and opinions on others. Thus through the testimonies of the Watchman and Cilissa, the audience is subjected to subjectivity, 'character evidence' which prefigures the actions/ἀγγέλους of central characters and prejudices audience reaction in favour of Agamemnon and his children, against Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. Through Watchman, Cilissa and indeed Aegisthus, the audience is already partially familiarized with Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Orestes and so is equipped to contextualize the crucial confrontations of such characters when they do meet (Ag. 810-974, the Carpet scene; Cho. 903-930, the Mother/Son scene).

Thus the shifting and subjective perspectives of such secondary characters on human behaviour as presented dramatically on stage reflect
the complexity of human 'real-life' reactions to different situations, a
response in which the watching audience is invited to engage.
V Secondary Characters

V.1 The Watchman

The prologue of Oresteia is a most remarkable example of character text, a scintillating narrative designed to draw audience focus into the very heart of the play world, "a work of high originality and indeed one of the great masterpieces of dramatic speech". Although it may not be directly addressed to the audience, it is meant for them, an implicit acknowledgement of their presence.

Narrative which describes individual location, motivation, disposition, sensation, emotion, even pose and gestural sequences, is set amidst the audience's first intimation of the central themes of the trilogy - woman/man, the house and darkness/light.

The Watchman delivers the prologue from the skene roof and thus appears akin to a living extension of the Argive palace (although in concluding his speech, he does not elaborate on τὰ ἄλλα, 36, shifting ultimate responsibility for revelation to the house itself, 37-8). This οἰκος is subjected to the rule of an unnamed man-woman (10-11) and is ill-managed (19) in the absence of its lord (35) whose wife sleeps within (26-27).

Motivation consists of his mistress' command to watch for the beacon signifying report of Troy's fall (8f.): φυλάσσω. The conditions of his lengthy watch are uncomfortable: night-time dews dampen his bed
(12). Both dreams (13) and refreshing sleep (14, 15) are denied him by his sense of fear: narrative of physical sensation gives way to description of emotional response. In turn (and in spite of attempts to counter their effects, 16), sleeplessness and fear (14) turn to weeping/κλωίω, an anatomy of emotional breakdown and a prescient lamentation for the house (18).

Given the conditions of his watch, it is not surprising that the φυλακεί opens with a request to the gods for τῶν ἀπειλληκεῖν πόνων74, followed by description arising from his own familiar prospect of the wheeling heavens, where the majestic movements of stars mark mortal seasons (4-7). The opening request is repeated, but this time optatively and so with less assurance, and it is focused on the house, affecting a transition from general to particular75; it is the intervening, personalized character narrative which stimulates audience focus on this particular house and household. As soon as this focus is accomplished, the dynamic shifts again: sighting the λαμπτήρυ νυκτός animates the φυλακεί into purposed activity.

The momentous sighting of the beacon (22ff.) is joyfully greeted -ὡ χαίρε (22) and ὅ τι ὅτι (25). The Watchman predicts that an ὄλολυγμός of good omen (28) will echo his own initial cries. After the listlessness of the prologue's first half (1-21), the gestural sequence implicit in lines
22-35 would provide appropriate physical expression to the Watchman's new-found euphoria.

In 28, the emphatically placed deictic suggests that perhaps a prop torch was lit by the Watchman on the skene roof; it would thus visually confirm and foreshadow Clytemnestra's description of the series of beacons lit in sequence, the swift travel of the messenger fire. By lighting the blazing torch on the roof, the Watchman would signal to the queen and the audience that Troy is taken; it is this lighted torch which inspires in turn the lighting of sacrificial fires throughout Argos (which are never seen by the audience, but which are described by the Argive Elders, 88ff.), accompanied by the joyful ὀλολυγμός, also foreshadowed and represented by the Watchman's utterance at 25.

Depiction of the Watchman's joy at seeing the beacon, which signals the fall of Troy and thus Agamemnon's return, suggests unfeigned love for his master, in contrast with the intimated aspersions cast on his mistress (10-11, 14, 18-19, 36-39). He is loyal, too, unlike his treacherous Homeric counterpart. The hand of his master is well-loved and he longs to clasp it in his own right hand. In lines 32-33, he talks of taking advantage of his master's lucky throw; the final success in beacon-watching is spoken of as a triple six of the dice, the best throw.

Finally, in lines 23-4 he says that the good news will cause much dancing in Argos and at 16, he describes how he attempts to keep his
spirits high by singing and humming. At 31, he says he will 'dance the
prelude'. Might the φθάς release (cf. ἄπωλλαλαγγή at 1 and 20) the tension
of a year-long vigil in a joyous and physical dance, fulfilling the promise
that φροίμων χορεύσομαι (31)? Lighting the torch and dancing the
prelude would be an enacted pre-echo of the dancing, singing and lighting
of sacrificial fires, unseen by the audience, but predicted by the
Watchman at the joyous news of Troy's downfall. The flurry of physical
activity after the sighting of the beacon would thus contrast strongly with
the despondency of the Watchman before the signal of good news and
with the solemnity of the subsequent dancing and singing of the chorus in
the parodos immediately following the prologue.

Even so, the narrative of 22-35 is tempered by a note of caution:
the conditional of 29 and optative of 34 giving way to the Watchman's
comprehensive withholding of communication from the audience (36f.)⁷⁹.

V.2 Aegisthus

Aegisthus is often described as an exponent of empty rhetoric,
bathos, bombast and βωμολοχία. But how is this characteristic
cliché-ridden logos devised so that in the character of Aegisthus the
audience recognize one who is a coward and is appropriately addressed as
γύναι (Ag. 1625)?
The technique is a simple one. Aegisthus uses images already familiar to the audience. They are clichés because unlike most of the images of Oresteia, which acquire different or additional meanings in the course of the trilogy, Aegisthus' logos consistently fails to add novel signification to ideas expressed within his narrative. He borrows directly from the words of others, and thus his rhetoric appears jaded and commonplace.

It should be strongly emphasized, of course, that Aegisthus is not depicted as consciously borrowing the phrases or logos of others (he does not, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night, write down useful phrases in a notebook!). The apparent 'borrowing' is an Aeschylean device, one which guides the audience to be aware that Aegisthus' hackneyed phrases serve as an indication of his status relative to Agamemnon (a true warrior and king) and Clytemnestra, whose male and super-human qualities enable her (rather than her lover) to murder Agamemnon. Thus it is the cumulative interplay of Aegisthus' words in contrast with the character-logos of others as devised by the author which gives an impression of borrowing, forming the basis for the characterization of Aegisthus as cowardly, weak and ineffectual.

In his first speech at the end of Agamemnon (1577-1611), this absence of fresh nuance (for verbal dexterity can indicate intellectual powers) is clear from his use of familiar imagery regarding darkness and
light, the net-robe and the path of Justice. His description of Agamemnon caught in the tangling coils of the Furies' robes (1580\textsuperscript{81} and 1611) devalues, limits and reduces all of the preceding complex of imagery concerning this device used to murder the king\textsuperscript{82}, thus implying Aegisthus' own limitations.

In his opening line \textit{ὅ φθεγγος ἐδφον ἡμέρας δικηφόρον} (1577), Aegisthus greets the day as kindly and one which brings justice. Earlier, both Watchman and Herald had hailed different kinds of light which variously marked their king's triumphant νόστος (\textit{Ag.} 22-4, 503-5 and 508). While the Herald greets the natural sunlight, the Watchman's welcome for the night-time beacon's gleam (22-23) shows an understanding of the oxymoronic potential of contrasting night and day, and also the metaphoricity of language: the beacon shines like daylight (\textit{ἡμερήσιον}) in the night. In contrast, although \textit{ἐδφον}'kindly' may connote 'night' or 'pertaining to the night', there is no indication that Aegisthus is aware of the oxymoronic combination, in his own first line, of \textit{ἐδφον-ἡμερας}; the audience may hear the oxymoron and mark its significance, but Aegisthus remains oblivious to the double meaning\textsuperscript{83}.

So in his speech, Aegisthus appears to derive the expression of greeting the day from those who serve the palace and Agamemnon. Indeed, whether he borrows from characters of high or low status, Aegisthus consistently perpetrates banal reductions of the often dense

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imagery and metaphors used by others. That even slaves of the Argive palace express more complex feelings in a more sophisticated, intense style than Aegisthus, highlights his own shortcomings further. Just as he is prepared to let the woman perform the act of murder, the impression is given that his own powers of expression fall short; he is less eloquent than household slaves, causing him to have the lowest status of all the trilogy's characters.

Aegisthus' first words also recall the oxymoronic pun devised by Clytemnestra, who first borrowed and then transformed the words of the Argive Elders at 264-5, as Goldhill points out. Yet again, he adds no new nuance (as Clytemnestra had done) to the secondary meaning ('of the night') implicit in ἐνφονν or 'kindly': "throughout this last short scene Aegisthus is seen precisely as possessing no manipulating skill with words, no πειθός.

Furthermore he reduces the complexity of divine cause and effect and the difficulty of defining it, which has pervaded the first play, in an image of gods looking down on the deeds of mortals (1578-9), an image already familiar, but in more sophisticated form, from Watchman (1) and Herald. In the scene between the latter and the Argive Elders, the Herald acknowledges that omniscience belongs to θεοί alone (Ag. 632-3 and 676f., where the Sun in the heavens sees and knows all) It is guessed that divine anger causes the storm which ravages the Achaean fleet (Ag. 635
and 663). But just as the gods have the power to destroy life, they also have the power to preserve and restore it - Zeus may yet bring the storm-wrecked Menelaus home (Ag. 674ff.), for it is the θεοὶ who provide ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων (Ag.1).

In 1607, Aegisthus boastfully claims Justice as his mother, thus mixing the metaphors of child-rearing with the divine nature of Justice (both imagery and claim are inappropriate), who reared him up and brought him back again to the Argive palace to exert vengeance. In this way, he completely avoids the issue of moral dilemma, just as he sidesteps the act of murder. At 851ff. and 910ff., Agamemnon had claimed that the gods have brought him back home again and his wife had identified the purple tapestries as the path of Justice. Aegisthus thus attempts to equate himself with the greatest Greek commander, Agamemnon. Like his cousin, he has been long absent (but on a 'campaign' of cowardly treachery), first as a result of enforced exile (1606ff.) and then θυραῖος δῶν (1608) by way of avoiding the murderous deed; divine Justice has not only brought him back, but has 'reared him'. (Agamemnon at least equivocates when faced with moral dilemmas such as the sacrifice of his daughter, Ag. 205ff., and the act of stepping on the tapestries; in contrast, Aegisthus' language is unequivocally self-righteous, yet he avoids debate with the Elders resorting rather to the threat of
violence by others, namely his bodyguard, just as he shuns committing murder himself.)

The gods look down on the ἀχνη of mortals and punish their misdeeds, the consequence of which is Aegisthus' opportunity to look on Agamemnon dead. Repetition of verbs of seeing (1579, 1580, 1603, 1611) and repeated evocation of Justice (1577, 1604, 1607, 1611) suggests an over-simplification of moral dilemma and divine causality, which further characterizes phrases spoken by Aegisthus such as ὁς τορώς φράσοι (1584) and ἐκ τῶν δέ σοι πεσόντα τῶν ἢδεῖν πάρα (1603). For Aegisthus, there is no moral dilemma or even awareness of the implications of his actions, his path is one of straightforward vengeance and his language reflects this blinkered morality and theology: it is repetitive, and the exploitation of paradox, ambiguity and the metaphorical potential of words is noticeable by its absence. The verbal technique of what might be called 'repetition without addition' suggests an intellectual narrowness, which is further indicated in Aegisthus' choice of a common proverb in 1629-32, the clumsiness and dullness of which is frequently noted by commentators.

Subsequently, Aegisthus claims he will use the threat of violence and hunger and the incentive of money (1638-9) to control the citizens; contrast this with Agamemnon's speech at 844ff., where the people will be controlled through taking counsel in full conclave. It is through
discussion that Agamemnon yoked the unwilling Odysseus (841-3); Aegisthus, however, will yoke the 'colt' (the people) with threats, enforced by his bodyguard (1639-42). He claims no fear of death (1610 and 1652)\textsuperscript{88}, but is surrounded by his henchmen. As expected, Aegisthus' words belie his actions.

When he makes his brief and final appearance in the central play (Cho. 838-845), Aegisthus' logos is again characterized by cliché, images 'borrowed' from others, neither adapted nor transformed. His 'grief' at the death of Orestes is expressed in the following image (Cho. 841-3):

\begin{quote}
καὶ τὸδ' ἀν φέρειν δόμοις
γένοιτ' ἀν ἕχθος ἰδειματοσταγεῖς, φόνω
τῷ πρόσθεν ἐλκαίνουσι καὶ δεδηγμένοις.
\end{quote}

Given the usually bathetic nature of Aegisthus' speech, we might replace ἰδειματοσταγεῖς with Portus's αἰματοσταγεῖς, especially since there is a precedent association between αἷμα and σταξέω\textsuperscript{89}. The house already afflicted with the burden of disease, continues to fester and be eaten away by the new burden of a fresh wound. Yet again, Aegisthus 'borrows' from a stock of well-established medical imagery\textsuperscript{90} without fresh adaptation.

At 848-50 in the first play, Agamemnon had spoken of corruption as a disease which must be cauterized or cut out; earlier in the same speech he had described as a double ἕχθος the heart's burden when poisoned by envy (Ag. 834-5).
Aegisthus too uses ἄχθος to describe the burden of disease which poisons the house. However, the more complex implications of all the preceding imagery, where the heart is both the seat of envy and fear described respectively in metaphors of poisoning and the run of yellow blood (Ag.834f. and Ag.1121) are reduced and over-simplified in Aegisthus' image at Cho. 841-3. He also appears to have borrowed the image of a poisoned house from Clytemnestra's speech (Cho. 691-9), where the queen describes the grief and destruction of a house, for which Orestes alone was the prospective ἴσαρπος. The notion of Orestes as representing the hope and promise of curing the house is merely one in a series of metaphorically expressed reactions to the news of her son's death by Clytemnestra. The Curse is personified, addressed as a wrestler hard to defeat (692), an archer (694) accurate of aim. Mention of the βακχεία κακή (698) reminds the audience of Cassandra's graphically described vision of κῶμος Ερυνών (Ag.1189-1193) hard to evict/δύσπεμπτος (Ag.1190) just as the Curse is hard to wrestle with (Cho. 692, δυσπάλαμυτης). Although the images of archery, wrestling, evil revelry and the proverbial mire of destruction (697) are familiar, their particular combination here produces a novel and rather hyperbolic effect. While Clytemnestra dwells on her emotional response to the death of Orestes, Aegisthus' expression of sorrow is resoundingly perfunctory; he is more concerned with checking the truth of the νέα φτερίς (839). The
whole gives the audience an impression, as with all Aegisthus' trite logos, of a lack of independent thought, an intellectual and imaginative narrowness.

The same technique is employed in his final words on stage (Cho. 838-854). He casts doubt on the words of women, as rumours that leap in the air and quickly die (845-6), apparently deriving the thought directly from an earlier statement of the Argive Elders (Ag. 475-487), and then immediately asks the chorus of women present for confirmation of Clytemnestra's words, relayed via Cilissa! He asks the chorus to help him δηλώσω φρένω (847), when the claim of his final line suggests his mind as perceptive, one which has eyes and cannot be easily deceived (854). The imagery of the mind's eye, usually a metaphor for the superhuman and mysterious qualities of the gods (for example, Hades at Eum. 273-5), Aegisthus here hubristically applies to his own mental agility; yet again it is empty bombast.

Aegisthus' logos, borrowing and imitating the words of others without imaginative nuance or transformation, thus sounds like trite cant, limiting and reducing the complex ambiguities and paradoxes of the spoken word: verbal banality is matched by an absence of intellectual profundity and grasp. His claims to have been nursed by Justice and to possess a mind with visionary powers of deduction are not only simplified reductions of the words of others, but are also redolent with
the boasting and bombast which distinguish the character-text of this woman-man. Since the audience perceives Aegisthus as occupying the lowest position in the status hierarchy, his own boastful claims to extremely high status are thus rendered worthless. This is the key to the audience's mistrust of Aegisthus: he speaks but does not act, he aspires to a high status which he does not possess.
NOTES ON PART I, SECTION 1

1. Gould (1983), 33. Cf. Herington (1985) who, however, sees Aeschylus as a significant exception to the general rule (134-135) that Homeric material was not used in tragic composition (139f.).


4. Ibid., 137 and 143.


7. Ibid., 25.

8. Ibid., 26.


12. In a similar way, the relationship between tragedy and ritual is not straightforward, for tragedy does not merely reproduce everyday ritual events, but rather adapts and re-combines them for the tragic medium. See Easterling (1988).


14. Ibid., Chapter 5; Dale (1948) and (1969) passim, esp. Chapters 14, 21 and 22; West (1982), 77-137 and (1987); Schroeder (1907); Schein (1979). Perhaps the only true metrical invention of tragedy was the dochmiac - Dale (1969), 102, cf. Herington (1985), 114.


16. Ibid., 34.

17. Ibid., 35.

18. Ibid., 34.

19. Ibid., 34-38.

20. Ibid., 34. Cf. Else (1965). In Chapter 4, Else recognizes the innovatory centrality to the tragic medium of conflict, climax, action and 'virtual action' as Aeschylus 'creative act'.

21. On the visual aspect of tragedy in general and the Oresteia in particular, see Herington (1985), 144-150; Taplin (1977) and (1978), 1-8 and 77-100; Hammond (1972) and (1988); Green (1989); Sider (1977) and (1978).

22. Tarkow (1980); Macleod (1975); Maxwell-Stuart (1973); Goheen (1955); Fowler (1967), esp. 23-74; Lebeck (1971), esp. 59-9; Vidal-Naquet (1988), 158, and Sommerstein (1989), 34 and 91, for the colour symbolism of black and white.

23. Else (1965), Ch. 4.

24. This is not the case in Eumenides, where the divine Fury chorus weaves a spell-like μελος ἔλεος around their human victim Orestes (307-396). Unusually, it is a case of ancient goddesses (normally the recipients, not initiators, of prayers and hymns) 'singing a hymn': the μελος format is used graphically to illustrate the Furies' power to madden mortal wrongdoers. In Agamemnon, the chorus of Argive Elders makes clear that the reverse process, in which mortals may attempt to use charms or spells (in this particular case, to restore the dead to life again) is strictly forbidden by Zeus (1019-1024).

25. Haldane (1965) notes the 'interpenetration' of musical imagery in the text and engagement in on-stage musical activity, while choosing to concentrate on the symbolic richness of the former, esp. 37ff. Cf. Taplin and Wilson (1993).

26. Connected to direct statements of action or intended action are what Mastronarde (1978), 9-10, calls 'deliberative questions' when "a particular course of behaviour is debated" (9). Questions regarding action often convey a sense of the questioner's aporia regarding contemplated action, whereas direct statement conveys in contrast the speaker's confidence.

Cf. below Part One, section 2, VII.1.
Fraenkel (1950, III, 653, n. on 1388) endorses those commentators who restore ὅρυγάνει in place of ὅρμαύει - the former certainly gives graphic, forceful detail. But the restoration of a word attested only by Hesychius is rightly questioned both by Denniston-Page (1986, 197, n. on 1388) and especially Thomson (1966, II, 105, n. on 1388), who argues that θυμων ὅρμαύει, modelled on ll.20.403, favours retention of θυμων ὅρμαύει at Ag. 1388 (although there is no exact parallel to ὅρμαύει as used in Ag. 1388 for 'gasp for his soul'). Fraenkel uses the same Homeric precedent, or rather Schol. BT's interpretation of it, to argue for his emendation and speculates (653) that Aeschylus may have interpreted the Iliad's phrase as the Scholium had done; but this is highly tentative and flies in the face of Aeschylus' consistently profound understanding of the Homeric model.

Ag. 1389, when literally translated as "breathing out a swift slaughter of blood", seems to defy easy interpretation. Fraenkel, (III, 105-106) rejects the solution, suggested by several commentators and editors, that by a kind of poetic inversion, renders αἷματος σφοργῆς as "the blood from the wound". Fraenkel's own solution, to read ἄργη rather than σφοργῆς, is in turn rejected by Thomson (III, 105-106) and Denniston-Page (1986, 198) all of whom refer to the parallel usage of σφοργῆ in Euripides Rhesus 790f., to which Fraenkel does not allude, as a strong indication that its presence at Ag.1389 cannot be so easily dismissed. Thomson sees in Ag.1389 the influence of the Homeric phrase ἐρεντίμησον φῶνα ἄργησας at ll.16.162. Fraenkel may be right to reject the poetic inversion type of solution such as that offered by Schol. on ll.16.162 - φῶνα ἄργησας ἀντὶ τοῦ αἵματος φύσιν, but the sense of such phrases is made perfectly clear through imaginative and free translation, such as Lattimore's "beleching up clotted blood" (1951, 334) for ll. 16.162.

Cf. below, Part One, Section 2, n. 213.

Cf. below, Part One, Section 2, nn. 216-17.

Cf. below, Part Three, III.1a.

Gould (1983), 34.

Cf. below, Part Two, sections 10a, b, c and d for detailed discussion of the Furies' characterization.


Fraenkel (II, 472), although accepting Wilawowitz's προαθέτη τῇ δολίας μάζις ὥτερα as the most helpful version of 1041, is wary of an 'eclectic' methodology which selectively edits the best readings from F and Tr.

Stevens (1945).

Fraenkel's (1977) studies in Sophoclean colloquialisms reveal that when syntactical or phraseological vulgarisms and colloquialisms are used by characters usually deemed heroic, 'aristocratic' or high status, they often indicate a "grande emozione" of some kind (excitement, madness or extreme distress) leading to social and verbal slippage. Fraenkel further suggests that the technique of vulgar speech ("la forma popolare dell' eikătiže", 36) as a means of characterization, by Sophocles in his depiction of Menelaus in Ajax, may be derived from Aeschylus' portrayal of Aegisthus in Ag. Thus colloquialism can function to suggest an 'aristocratic' character's banality or crudity.

Stevens (1945), 99-104.

Ibid., 97, 104.

For the conflict between the Nurse's claim and Clytemnestra's at 907, see Goldhill (1983), 167-171 and 180-183.

See above, Part One, section 1, nn. 3, 6-18, 16 and Duchemin (1945).


Ibid., 139-40.


Thomson (1941b, rpt. 1946), 177f.; Arnott (1989), 97-104, who suggests that the regularity and familiarity of the stichic form ensures audience understanding, 103f.

Thomson (1941a), 189ff.; cf. Thomson (1941b), 177f.

Meyers (1948).

Gross (1905); Jens (1955); Ireland (1974).
Ireland (1974, 513) proposes that mutual linguistic contact whether it be by means of connecting particles, paraletic linking or hypotaxis indicates a level of "sympathy between the two parties involved". In exchanges where linguistic contact is made by only one party, it might express the resistance from one party to another and so absence of interaction/sympathy, or the concern, anxiety, curiosity or indignation of the character seeking to maintain contact (517). Cf. Mastronarde (1978) 38, 53, 58.

Ibid., 518.


Stevens (1945), 96.

Gould (1983), 34.

Carey and Reid (1985), intro., 11.

Ibid., 8-12.

Ibid., 10.


Ibid., 205, 209, 216.


Bain (1975); cf. Taplin (1977) who does not rule our 'implicit address', 129-134, 394-5.


κυνὸς δίκηρη (3) suggests that the Watchman's chin rested on arms folded together on the parapet of the skene. Such a posture would not hinder clear delivery, which might be the case if the Watchman were to be lying down (Taplin, 1977, 277).


Taplin (1977), 276-277 - "the balance still tips in favour of having the Watchman on the roof - the more vivid staging to capture interest, and a highly imaginative use of the new skene" (277).

See Thomson (1935), Tierney (1937) and Bowie (1993), 24-26, for the possible mystical allusions of the phrase.


The Watchman's year-long vigil, φρουρῶς ἐτείς μῆκος recalls the description of the mercenary watchman (φύλασσο δὲ γ' ἐς ἔραυνῶν) set in place by 'treacherous Aegisthus' to ensure the successful ambush and murder of Agamemnon on his return (Odyssey 4.524ff). So the audience watching the opening of Orestesia might initially think that Aeschylus' Watchman is as treacherous an agent as his earlier Homeric counterpart. But the Orestian watchman is κυνὸς δίκηρη, like a dog who is faithful to the House of Atreus and its master (Ag. 31ff), although he is an unwitting instrument in Clytemnestra's plan. The image of the watchman as a loyal watchdog partially evokes the description of Argus, Odysseus' dog (Odyssey 17.290ff): both sit alone set apart from the normal day-to-day functioning of the house, but retain an affectionate loyalty for their respective masters.

A second use of the deictic, τὴν ἁ γερί at 35, might suggest to the actor a hand-raising gesture.

The image is drawn from the universally popular pastime of dice. See Fraenkel II, 21-22.

Goldhill (1984), 11.


Ag. 1580: Nauck, followed by Thomson and Wecklein, alters πέπλαως to πάγαιας. But in view of the suggestion that Aegisthus consistently resorts to the use of stock phrases, there is no need to emend πέπλαως, especially since, as Fraenkel (III, 743) points out ἄφατος πέπλαως recalls the similar Homeric expression (Od. 13.136=16.231 ἄθημα τ' ἀφατήτωρ and Od. 13.218 ἄφατα ἐξεμένο) where the adjective 'woven' is standardly applied to a garment/raiment.

The net-robe as image and concrete prop has been extensively discussed. See Lebeck (1971), esp. 63ff; Fowler (1967), esp. 23-40; Goheen (1955).

Despite the suggestions of some critics, e.g. Peradotto (1964), 390.

Goldhill (1984), 96ff.
Ibid., 96.
Ireland (1974), 515, for the confrontational nature implicit in the structure and syntax of the stichomythic exchange between Aegisthus and the Argive Elders.
Goldhill (1984), 97; Fraenkel III, 773-4; Lloyd-Jones (1979), 103. Lloyd-Jones also deprecates "Aegisthus' constant use of the tritest cant sayings" (102) in his notes on the recurrence of common metaphors or proverbs at 1617, 1623, 1624, 1668 (102-105).
See Fraenkel (III, 781) who argues convincingly for attribution of line 1652 to Aegisthus.
Medical imagery: Song is an ἀγως incised against sleep, sacrificial flames are drugged by holy oils, Clytemnestra and Apollo are invoked by the Argive Elders as healers, Persuasion the child of Ruin is an irresistible and incurable ἀίνος, δίβρος is a φόνος, also used to describe the delightful longing for those far away, silence is a medicinal cure against harm and Clytemnestra's actions will poison the House of Atreus beyond hope of healing. (Ag. 17, 94, 98, 146, 387-9, 1001-3, 542, 548 and 1101-3).
See Fraenkel (III, 507-9) and Denniston-Page (1986), 170-171 for this vexed passage.
Casaubon's restoration of 1122, δορὶ πτωσίμως, remains the most viable solution, since description of blood flow to the heart by πίπτειν is undoubtedly inappropriate. The κροκοδαπῆς σταγὼν refers to 'blood', where the drop of blood running to the heart is a metaphor for the sensation of fear and foreboding (yellow being the colour symbolic of terror).
The Aldine edition, followed by some commentators, attributed this speech to Electra, but this would destroy the dramatic tension of an exchange between Orestes in disguise and Clytemnestra. The confrontation is redolent with irony, for the agent of the Curse, which Clytemnestra thinks has struck 'from afar' (694), stands before her. Indeed, Orestes is the very embodiment of the Curse, for his vengeance is a μαχη, a wrestling bout (339, 498-9) and he is the 'man mighty with a spear' (160) who, although believed to be πρόσωπον, will wield the βέλος/τόξον of vengeance against his mother (see Fowler, 1967, 60).
See Garvie, 236, who argues convincingly for the emendation of 699 to -ιατρὸς ἐλκίς ἦν παροῦσα, ἐν ἐκκυρίως.
Fowler (1967) 28, 31-33, 60-61.
Garvie, 276-280, on Cho 838-854.
Fraenkel (1977), 36.
PART ONE:
Classical Text as Acting Text

SECTION II:
The Physical Actor in Space and Time
PART ONE, SECTION 2 : THE PHYSICAL ACTOR IN SPACE AND TIME

Part One, section 2 falls into roughly two parts.

The first part introduces the potential signification of various gestures and examines the symbolism of the ancient performance space in which those gestures were set. The implications for the Oresteia are considered in detail.

The second part tests the premise that the wearing of masks by actors in ancient production had a profound effect on the tragic process and in so doing shaped its gestural and choreographic form. A gestural sequence is 'choreographed' for a section of Choephoroi to illustrate how this might have worked and to suggest the intended effect of movement and gesture on an audience.
I **Decoding Gestural Meaning in Tragic Space**

No doubt because it stands in such contrast to the modern theatrical experience, "the sense of openness of space"¹ is a significant feature of the large, open-air theatres where tragedies were first staged. It is variously assumed that the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens which housed the first production of *Oresteia* in 458 B.C. had the capacity to accommodate an audience of between 12 and 15,000² on each day of the three-day Great Dionysia, but it has been recently suggested³ that such estimates are based on very slight evidence as to audience size in the fifth-century theatre. Since spectators and actors alike were open to the natural sunlight, no differentiation between audience and performance or changes of atmosphere within the performance could be achieved through various lighting effects (as in the modern theatre, where artificial light is focused on the performers, while the audience is concealed in darkness⁴). Actors were distinguished, however, by the wearing of masks, a Greek tragic convention which will be shown to have been of obvious benefit at well attended, naturally lit theatrical performances.

Masks prevent any recourse to natural facial expression, which in any case would be lost in a performance space the size of the Athenian Theatre of Dionysus. Rather, masks facilitate concentration on the spoken word⁵, but since they also inhibit any facial expressions, much physical expressivity is necessarily channelled into the gestures, movement and
dance of actors and chorus through space. Furthermore, given that the acting space was substantial by any standards, only bold, outward-directed gestures could have both matched its proportions and been registered by the watching audience. In this context, where masked actors work in a large space watched by an enormous audience, the gestural and choreographic provision implicit in tragic performance texts is particularly important. Although any reconstruction of gesture or choreography employed in ancient production is necessarily speculative, yet the implicit provision for them in tragic texts is discernible.

Since ancient playwrights were almost always the διδάσκολος of their own works (and on occasion, protagonists too), designing sets, props, costumes, masks, composing music and choreographing dance for their own productions, their intimate and continuing influence on all aspects concerned with the translation of text into performance must in turn shape our understanding and interpretation of tragedy. For if the writer was also the director concerned with his work's ultimate performance, provision for production as the realization of textual meaning must have been fundamental in shaping form and content of the text.

Concerning such textual implications regarding theatrical production, while much has been written about the possible symbolism of stage buildings and the design and usage of props, costumes and
masks, far fewer discussions give due focus to the actor\textsuperscript{7} who moves within the space designated by stage buildings, handles the props and animates the costumes and masks.

The actor, ancient or modern, was and is the professional interpreter of the dramatist's implications regarding a character's motivations, which propel the character through the play. The actor is equipped to express the complexity of tragic text, its contradictions and occasional paradoxes partly because he is ever able to alter his position in space and time in the potentially connotative framework within which he moves.

If it is the dramatist who provides the textual clues pertaining to a character's motivations (whether hidden or revealed) and the resultant outward actions, it is the actor who embodies them. From the outset and in contrast with the audience, the actor, by means of textual analysis and the rehearsal process, has charted the motivations which propel him through the play and thus is familiar with the modulations in that 'character journey', the instances where hidden motivations may be suggested in contradiction with outward expression or gesture. The audience, on the other hand, encounters a character for the first time in performance, during which the audience's perception of a character can only be cumulatively developed by the guidance of the actor. It is through the actor that the playwright provides for the audience the scope to
construct a sense of a character's inner motivations and the meaning of any contradictions arising between these and outward show and gesture. If there was a close, on-going relationship between actor and dramatist in a mutually creative rehearsal process, as has been proposed⁸, this suggests concern with the successful dramatic presentation of characters to an audience.

It is also true that for ancient audiences, gesture is likely to have been more inherently meaningful than for modern ones, given that gestures and gestural sequences pervaded the everyday ritual and political practices of the Athenians: the various stages of communal, religious festivals and the rites of passage such as birth, adolescence, marriage and death, and the act of voting, were all marked in part by their associated gestures. The importance of gesture is perhaps reflected by vase-painting and other art-forms of the first half of the fifth century B.C. However diverse the form and content of scenes pictorially depicted, it is frequently through the gestural configuration of characters represented (for facial expression is hardly indicated at all) that interpretation of the iconography is made possible. In view of this, the parameters of ancient production and the likelihood that in consequence the director-playwrights incorporated some provision for gestures designed to register in the large open-air theatres of their day, it becomes necessary to address the question of movement in tragic production.
Of all the more recent analytical approaches to our understanding of the performer's movement and gesture through space and time, one of the most comprehensive is that devised by Rudolf Laban, the innovative choreologist and creator of a special 'notation' of motion. Although Laban believed that "man expresses, creates and relates through a great complexity of movement patterns"⁸ to the extent that "understanding movements and their functions can therefore be a means of understanding people"⁹, as a professional choreographer he was primarily concerned with the formal role of gestures in dance and other performance contexts as contributing significantly to an audience's decoding of theatrical characters.

It has already been suggested that for masked actors playing to huge houses in large open-air spaces, gesture is likely to have emerged as a potent vehicle for expressing meaning. In this context of ancient production and in view of Laban's concentration on gestural expressivity and on the economy, yet scope, of gestural 'grammar and syntax' in performance, an application of Laban's ideas on movement to tragic theatre may yield some insights into ancient production, choreography and gesture.
II.1 Labanotation as a Semiotic Shorthand for Dance and Gesture: Motivation into Motion

"Dance movement goes much further than words".
Rudolf Laban

Rudolf Laban was an Austrian who found English the most flexible language in which to work; in devising a formal methodology applicable to dance and theatre he was assisted by Edward Carpenter, hence the nomenclature: the 'Laban-Carpenter Method'. Laban was a kinetist, choreologist and choreographer who considered that in theatre, movement is a potent means of expressing character for both dancer and actor. Movement can therefore provide an indication of a dramatic character's motivation, since it is motivation, in its literal sense, which produces that character's motion on stage. The actor's intellectual analysis of textual provision for character motivation may be physically projected and expressed on stage by gestural/movement choices. In essence, a theatrical character's motivations or what Laban termed 'inner attitudes' can find outward expression in gestural display and/or choreography. Laban, in his attempt to understand further what movement is, why it is expressive and how its use by performers affects an audience, split it into various factors; these four so-called Motion Factors were then distinguished by the labels of Weight, Space, Time and Flow. So 'Labanotation' becomes a semiotic shorthand for dance, gesture and movement.
At this stage, it is important to distinguish between terms used in Labanotation as distinct from the context in which they are perceived and revealed. In essence, the actor's understanding of a character's inner attitudes engender on-stage expression of the Motion Factors by means of gestures. All the connotative possibilities of these gestures (which have an archetypal role and which are intended to embody the motivations which give rise to them) may be exploited by the actor. If the actor's expression of an inner attitude through a gesture is perceived as a single 'point in time', several such points chart the actor's journey in the play or plays. In which case the spatial and temporal framework (which acquires its own set of meanings through the connotative potential of permanent and temporary stage buildings and movable or fixed props) of this journey is the acting space through which the actor progressively moves and in which he constantly alters his position relative to the stage space and other performers. It is particularly important to emphasize that Laban's notion of Space and Time, which together with Weight and Flow make up the four Motion Factors, is distinct from the spatial and temporal context in which they are expressed (the space in which and the time through which the drama is played).

Since Aeschylus' understanding of, and provision for, the actor's movement is likely to have been a significant element in his dramaturgy, it might be a valid exercise to apply the rudiments of Labanotation to the
Oresteian trilogy, the last surviving and (we may suspect) most theatrically effective of Aeschylus' works. But it is necessary first to outline the principles of Labanotation\textsuperscript{12} in greater detail.
II.2  Laban's Motion Factors - Weight, Space, Time and Flow

II.2a  Weight (Strong or Light)

Weight covers the characteristics which result from physique/physical presence. It is a concentration on both senses and physique, so that the mind makes the body aware of Weight. In Labanotation, the factor Weight is sympathetic to, and desirous of, physical contact and interaction with others and it is perceived of in terms of charisma or presence, not poundage. So, for example, a character with Strong Weight is perceived of as firmly grounded and charismatically dominating. In contrast, Light Weight characters resist the force of groundedness and do not acquire influence or status through the impact of charismatic presence.

II.2b  Space (Direct or Flexible)

In Laban's theory, Space consists of the sphere of the intellect, so the ability to handle space is the ability to think. The presence of 'spatial awareness' in a character's movement gives a quality of intellectuality, an awareness of the character as a thinking being, both questioning and certain. Handling space confers an ability to conceptualize and to take positions and attitudes relative to ideas. In turn, the inner intellectual 'position' adopted may be echoed by both the position taken up on stage, and the nature of gestures engaged in by a particular character.
The typical movements (whether in the form of individual gestures made by parts of the body or the whole, progressive movement of the body through space) of Direct Space characters tend to be aligned along undeviating, clearly directed straight lines suggestive of the unswerving purposefulness of a character's motivation to reach his/her desired goal. Whereas Direct Space characters approach motivational fulfilment by confronting other characters, obstacles or problems 'face on', on both the physical and the intellectual level, Flexible Space characters achieve their aims by resorting to tangential or oblique approaches, using a variety of tactics and possibly tackling problems from, as it were, a variety of angles. This association between movement and thought is also apparent from terms descriptive of movement being used as metaphors of intellect. For example, although 'lateral' literally means 'relating to the side', and 'oblique' originally pertains to a slanting, acute or obtuse angle, both adjectives have come to be applied to motivations or actions which are roundabout, indirect or not straightforward. So 'lateral thinking' alludes to applying novel angles of approach to an issue or problem, 'obliqueness' is synonymous with indirectness, deflection or evasion.

An Oresteian example is provided by the confrontation of mother and son in Choephoroi (892-930). It opens with a direct statement of certain purpose and intent - ὃς καὶ ματρεῖν. But at 899, Orestes must turn away from his face-to-face interaction with his mother to have his doubts
alayed by Pylades. He asks Πυλάδη, πί δράσω; μητέρ' οίδεσθω κτωνείν;
The element of doubt verbally expressed suggests a brief physical
withdrawal from his 'head on' confrontation with Clytemnestra.

The actor is able to move between the spatial co-ordinates of the
acting area, and his relationship to them (i.e.: the staging, the timing and
locale of exits and entrances etc.,) provides a further medium of
expression for the signification of theatrical meaning. It has already been
emphasized that the stage space, which makes possible the definition of
the actor's specific location, and the individual's handling of Space or the
character's ability to think, are distinct and separate, although the first is
clearly a pre-requisite of the second, for all the Motion Factors require
space in which to be expressed. In Oresteia, the dramatist's implications
about the demarcation and significance of stage space and the means by
which actors move through space make a considerable contribution to the
way in which theatrical meaning is expressed and/or reinforced. Of prime
importance in Oresteia's spatial 'map' is the House of Atreus, which acts
as a spatial focus and reference-point in the first two plays of the trilogy;
it will therefore become necessary at a later stage to understand how and
why the Argive οἶκος is credited with such significance.
II.2c  Time (Sustained or Quick)

The ability to handle time is harnessed to intuitions and instinct, for a character's internal 'clock', the instinctive inclination to handle one's own Time in a quick or sustained\(^{13}\) manner, shapes the basic rhythmical form of external gestures. Although a character's Time may not connote a great deal \textit{per se}, in combination with one of the other three Motion Factors, the quick or sustained temporal base can contribute to a diverse range of inner attitudes and outward gestures. In much the same way, just as it is unwise to attach a specific emotional connotation to a particular Greek \(\rhoυθ\muκ\eta\) because "one and the same metre can in different contexts and with different words be used to convey the most diverse effects"\(^{14}\), Laban's definition of Time, like Greek \(\rhoυθ\muκ\eta\), is a flexible, contextual framework for expressivity, not expression itself.

II.2d  Flow (Bound or Free)

Flow is made up of the emotional response of individuals and their personal sensations and responses. Bound Flow characters tend to withhold expression of their feelings, and their gestures are correspondingly directed and gathered in towards the body, reflecting a tendency towards introspection and introversion. Whereas Free Flow indicates a character's ability to release his/her emotions, a condition expressed by outward-directed gestures radiating from the body.
Emotion is able to flow between audience and actors in live performance. In this sense, flow is infectious - an audience may be moved to tears or laughter by what it is watching, thus contributing its own emotional input. So Rehm\textsuperscript{15} notes, "production as participation meant that the audience, no less than the playwrights, producers and performers, were central to what was happening, part and parcel of the energies gathered and released in theatre".
II.3 Laban's Inner Attitudes and Outward Gestures

The actor is physically present and within himself carries the potential for a myriad of combinations between the various sub-divisions of the four Motion Factors Weight, Space, Time and Flow.

In the theatrical context, where actors' gestures and actions are designed to connote meanings significant to the audience's decoding of dramatic production, it is usual for one, or more often two, of the Motion Factors to be prominent for a character, since exaggerated, heightened effect is acceptable on stage. Practical application and identification of Laban's Motion Factors, and their connection with our understanding of gesture and movement, are perhaps best illustrated by an example.

Any actor about to play Iago would derive a strong sense of the character's misanthropy from careful analysis of the text of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Laban also used the label 'misanthropic' to describe an aspect of one of the six 'inner attitudes' which result from various pairings of the Motion Factors. Laban's priority, however, was to identify how the inner attitude could be given external form, and to this end, he viewed a particular combination of Space and Flow as the characteristic Motion Factors expressive of misanthropy. It is important to note that Space is revealed in thinking and Flow in feeling; to this particular combination of Motion Factors, Laban gave the title 'Remote', because Remote characters do not require the physical presence of, or physical contact with, others.
Thus for characters who display tendencies towards Remoteness, any substantial indication of the other two Motion Factors, Weight and Time, has been withdrawn. The attitude of Remoteness is introspective by nature and Weight, the charismatic presence, is antipathetic to Remoteness. In this sense, Iago is an exemplary 'Remote' character. His soliloquies, delivered when he is alone on stage, constitute a stream of consciousness-type narrative, a revelation of the hitherto secret inner workings of the mind: his hatred for Othello and his all-consuming desire to destroy him. At these times, the audience is not concerned with his physical presence, but rather his mental process.

Remoteness (revealed in thinking and feeling privately/at a distance from others) is further qualified by greater definition of the attitude's two prominent Motion Factors, Space and Flow. For the inner attitude labelled 'misanthropic' derives from a combination of 'direct space' and 'bound flow'. Again, Iago's soliloquies serve as excellent illustration: they are fuelled by pent-up emotions and a single-minded purpose directed against Othello. Iago is only explicitly 'misanthropic' when engaged in soliloquy, when the direction of his venomous thoughts may be openly revealed. At all other times, hypocrisy is a necessary cover for his single-minded hatred, a prerequisite of achieving his destruction of Othello. Thus, his deceit is driven by his misanthropy, his 'true nature', but of course it is impossible to show both states simultaneously. Iago is ruthless in his aim,
his journey through the play is driven and directed by his hatred of Othello and so he is appropriately a 'direct space' character. Yet his poisonous hatred becomes so precisely because it is not freely expressed, it is bound within his own mind.

Since the misanthrope is remote, a Direct Space and Bound Flow character for whom Weight is antipathetic, the outward gestures which give external expression to the inner attitude of misanthropy tend to be directed towards self rather than others. The misanthrope will indulge in gestures which are forcefully directed inwards towards the body, thus mirroring the introspective, bound quality of the inner attitude by the outward gesture. Misanthropic gestures are the 'press' and 'glide' which move along strong, clearly directed, undeviating lines in close proximity to the source of hatred, the misanthrope himself.

There are three further aspects to the Remote inner attitude. Maintaining the Direct Space, but releasing Flow so that it is 'free', rather than 'bound', gives us the Altruistic character whose thoughts, feelings and gestures give focus to others rather than self. The labels Timeless (Flexible Space/Free Flow) and Self-Contained (Flexible Space/Bound Flow) are applied to the two remaining manifestations of the Remote inner attitude.

In contrast, a character whose dominant Motion Factors are Weight and Time is labelled 'Near'. Since Weight can be further defined as

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'Strong' or 'Light' and Time as 'Sustained' or 'Quick', four inner attitudes result with even greater definition. For example, a 'Warm' character exhibits 'Strong Weight' and 'Sustained Time' and like all 'Near' characters, wishes to make contact, since Weight is sympathetic to physical contact; the three remaining aspects of 'Nearness' are defined by the labels 'Lusty' (Strong Weight/Quick Time), 'Fastidious' (Light Weight/Quick Time) and 'Sociable' (Light Weight/Sustained Time).

Thus 'Near' and 'Remote' combine to make up one of the opposite pairings which result from different combinations of the Motion Factors; the other four are 'Stable', 'Mobile', 'Awake' and 'Adream', where each of these inner attitudes can be subdivided into four headings, each associated with its archetypal gestures. The chart below shows how this works.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPACE</th>
<th>FLEXIBLE</th>
<th>DIRECT</th>
<th>COMMANDING</th>
<th>DEPENDABLE</th>
<th>SELF-CONFIDENT</th>
<th>RATIONAL</th>
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<tr>
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**LABAN'S:**

**INNER ATTITUDES**

- Lusty
- Warm
- Sombre
- Lofty
- Misanthropic
- Irradiant
- Altrusistic
- Remote
- Self-Contained
- Timeless
- Choleric
- Ecstatic
- Melancholy
- Ardent

**MOOTION FACTORS**

- Certain
- Pervasive
- Acute
- Doubting
- Ecstatic
- Timeless
- Choleric
- Melancholy
- Ardent
As the chart shows, the four Motion Factors of Weight, Space, Time and Flow thus give us the six inner attitudes of Stable, Mobile, Near, Remote, Awake and Adream. Each of these inner attitudes is further subdivided into four more closely defined inner attitudes, each of which is connected with an archetypal gesture.

Iago's inner attitude 'misanthropic' would typically be characterized by an introspective 'press' gesture. The inner attitude 'commanding' (Strong Weight/Direct Space) is also expressed through a 'press' gesture, but one very different in motivation and direction from the 'misanthropic press'. Since the Commanding character has strong charisma, he/she dominates the space moved through. 'Press' gestures of the Commanding character are directed in strong, clear lines towards those unable to ignore the presence of Commanding gestures by such a Strong Weight and Direct Space character. The Commanding character thinks objectively and easily translates thought into action through a self-assured dominance of space. The other outward gestures identified by Laban are the Punch, Slash, Wring, Dab, Flick, Float and Glide, each of which is coloured by the particular inner attitude it is outwardly intended to express.
II.4 Applying Laban to *Oresteia*; Clytemnestra and Cassandra

II.4a Ἑσοίλεξ Ὀλυμψίτρα and τὸ δοκεῖν

εἶδὼς λέγομι ἂν, εὖ γὰρ ἐξεπίσταμαι
ὅμιλίας κάτοπτρον, εἰδὼλον σκιᾶς,
δοκοῦντας εἴναι κάρτα πρεμυνείς ἐμοὶ.

Agamemnon, Ag. 838-40.

"Heaven is my judge, not I for love or duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.
For when my outward action does demonstrate
The native act, and figure of my heart,
In complement extern, 'tis not long after,
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve,
for doves to peck at: I am not what I am".

Iago, Othello, Act I, sc. 1, 59-65.

It was mentioned earlier that in Labanotation, the factor Weight is perceived of in terms of charisma or presence, not poundage; so a character with Strong Weight is considered charismatically dominating.

*Oresteia*’s best exponent of Strong Weight is Clytemnestra, whose presence is instantly felt to be demanding focus and attention.

The Argive queen is also an archetypal Direct Space character. Her single-minded intent and her confident intellect (*Ag. 275* and *277*) are mirrored by the directness of her responses to, for example, questions or expressions of doubt from the Argive Elders: she chooses to face her
questions full on, preferring directness to evasion or deflection. However, like Iago, she has the capacity to deceive.

As was stated above, the inner attitude title of Stability is applied where dominant Motion Factors expressed are Weight and Space. When Weight is further defined as 'strong' and Space as 'direct', the combination renders a more precisely defined aspect of Stability, namely the inner attitude Commanding. This is consistent with what has been identified as Clytemnestra's control of the threshold\textsuperscript{17}, the position of authority from which she dominates the theatre space. Indeed, she maintains this position of authority even when in her husband's presence (Ag. 810-974) and in blatant contradiction of her verbal deference towards him. This is where Clytemnestra's power lies, for it is in constant self-transformation that she conceals her secret intent to murder her husband.

But although Clytemnestra maintains a 'commanding' position throughout the Carpet Scene (Ag. 855-974), her attempts to persuade Agamemnon to walk on the tapestries, especially throughout the section of stichomythia from 931-943, are not overtly commanding or direct. Instead, the queen's technique is a mix of questions (933, 935) and cajoling flattery, which manipulates through oblique suggestion (that it is Agamemnon who retains the authority and wins the victory in the verbal μέχρι, 940, 941 and 943\textsuperscript{18}). In fact, Clytemnestra's stichomythic approach to her husband bears all the hallmarks of Flexible Space. Clytemnestra
cannot overtly order Agamemnon to do anything (as she can the palace
slaves - *Ag.* 908-909). Rather, she must employ in place of direct
statement, indirect questions, a tangential approach which appears to defer
to Agamemnon's superiority in that he is the character with Strong
Weight (having κράτος- *Ag.* 943). So in their stichomythic exchange,
Clytemnestra appears to be Light Weight (attempting to withdraw any
hint of dominance from what she says) and Flexible Space, using every
sophistic tactic at her disposal to coax, cajole, persuade, flatter and seduce
Agamemnon into the palace. The particular combination of Flexible
Space and Light Weight is known as Rationality and indeed all the queen
says is dialectically dexterous, a well-ordered, clear-cut and logical
argument. Yet the queen's maintenance of the position of authority at the
central doorway suggests that her display of verbal deference is a
consummate performance, precisely that kind of display of τὸ δοκεῖν
against which the Argive Elders had warned Agamemnon (*Ag.* 790-798).
In spite of Agamemnon's boast that he could command loyalty from that
master of disguise πολύμητς Όδυσσεύς (841-842), he is unable to
detect Clytemnestra's deceit.

So, prior to Agamemnon's appearance, Clytemnestra is indeed
'commanding', confident in her assurance that she should not be treated
like a young girl and narrating the swift passage of the beacon relays
(281-316) and sack of Troy (320-350) with as much certainty as if she
had been there herself. But before her husband, Clytemnestra displays her ability to manipulate his and the audience's perception of what would appear to be her inner attitude; for she does not attempt to command Agamemnon, but rather cajoles him, she does not use direct imperatives, but rather flexible interrogatives. By seeming to display the characteristics of various inner attitudes and manipulating others' perception of the resultant outward actions, Clytemnestra aims to achieve her 'peculiar end', just like Iago.

The audience may feel uneasy at this apparent change in Clytemnestra's character, while at the same time it decodes the suggested conflict between surmised inner attitude and outward display, but neither audience nor chorus have their fear or sense of foreboding confirmed until it is given concrete confirmation in the Cassandra scene.

II.4b Τάλους Κασσάνδρα and prophetic ἀλήθεια

In Agamemnon, Cassandra best exemplifies a character for whom the Motion Factors which are prominent are Flow and Time. This particular combination is further distinguished by the adjective 'mobile'.

In Mobility, Weight and Space are less significant, i.e. the states of sensing and thinking are withdrawn. For Cassandra this would indeed seem to be the case. Her body is merely a vessel for her prophetic visions which are not expressed clearly or rationally at first, until the switch to
trimeters at 1178 which signals Cassandra's decision to make her revelations in a more lucid and measured fashion. But until this change to the trimeter, the lyric metre used by her throughout this scene is largely the dochmiac.

The use of metre in the Cassandra scene is full of nuance. The dochmiac metre "appropriate to excited utterance" \(^{19}\) is the predominant metre used by Cassandra, although it is interspersed with lyric iambics and other lyric metres. However, for one ecstatically possessed such as Cassandra, the dochmiac metre which 'runs askew' in a short, broken line \(^{20}\), seems singularly matched to the gestures which Laban identified as characterizing the inner attitude 'ecstatic' (Quick Time/Free Flow). Typically 'ecstatic' gestures are the 'flick' and the 'slash', short, darting movements well-suited to a metre which has the potential to be verbally expressed through "excited resolution into short syllables" \(^{21}\).

Despite her own caveat regarding the virtual impossibility of applying specific connotation to one particular metre, Dale \(^{22}\) herself declares that "dochmiac and kindred types are I think the only lyric rhythms which carry an inherent emotional expression - namely passionate feeling of some kind". Of course the phrase 'passionate feeling' can cover the entire gamut of tragic emotions, but the remarkable compatibility between the Ecstatic, Quick Time and Free Flow gestures
and the uniquely emotive connotation of the dochmiac metre, makes it hard to reject the interplay of each with the other.

Indeed the infectious and free-flowing effect of Cassandra's striking use of this metre is what stirs the chorus of Argive Elders to express their deep-seated fear at her cryptic remarks in a run of dochmiacs at 1121-23. It is from this point until Cassandra's recourse to iambic trimeters and a more lucid narrative at 1178, that the dochmiac is the dominant metre used by both Cassandra and the chorus. From 1138 to 1178, it is Cassandra who intersperses the speech of ecstatic possession with occasional iambic trimeter couplets suggestive of sudden flashes of lucidity (1138-9, 1148-9, 1160-61 and 1171-2). Alternation between rational and emotive matter is implied through the metrical structure. Meanwhile, from 1140 the chorus does not speak in iambic trimeters at all - as Cassandra expresses her visions more lucidly, the Elders' sense of misgiving, distress and fear is mounting, metrically and emotionally 'running away from them'.

The whole is a wonderfully subtle, quick-tempo metrical score in which the dochmiac provides a base note of urgency, possession and excitement. In conclusion, this predominantly dochmiac section also contains the 'free flow' of visions through the mind and from the mouth of Cassandra; as was stated above, the inner attitude label given by Laban to such a Quick Time and Free Flow character is 'ecstatic'. It would be
surprising if the rapid, pulsating feel of the metre did not suggest the appropriate gestures. Characteristic gestures of the ecstatic state, the darting 'slash' or 'flick', would undoubtedly enhance and reinforce the audience's perception of Cassandra as one possessed with visions of past, present and future.

The characterizations of Cassandra and Clytemnestra exemplify the diametrical opposition of the inner attitudes Mobility and Stability to great theatrical effect. Clytemnestra is a Greek queen, Cassandra a barbarian (ξηθη, 1062) slave-girl (1037-38). The erstwhile Trojan princess has endured in actuality the journey from Troy to Argos which Clytemnestra can only encompass in imagination through tracing the course of the beacon-relays (Ἀγ. 281-316). Cassandra has also suffered first-hand the πόνοι πόλεως δολομένως (Ἀγ. 1167) which Clytemnestra, too, insightfully evokes, but with all the easy assurance of the victor (Ἀγ. 320-350). In contrast with the easy-flowing, confident assertions of Clytemnestra's narrative (the queen talks of the πόνος of others, 330), Cassandra's prophetic visions cause the δεινὸς πόνος of pain and anguish to herself (1214-16). Furthermore, where Clytemnestra boasts that the fire-god Hephaestus is her messenger (and so servant, 281), Cassandra is the servant of Apollo (1202) and it is the god of prophecy who has punished her most cruelly for her rejection of him. She is a self-declared ὀλισθόμαχος (1195, 1215, 1241) and is recognized as such by the Argive
Elders (1244), but was destined never to be believed by her own citizens (1212). The dramatic irony is striking; unlike Clytemnestra who is confident in the art of τὸ δοκεῖν to achieve her aim, Cassandra speaks truth and does not have to use πειθῶ to be believed or to conceal hidden motivations, but she has no active κράτος through her λόγος and the Elders do not in fact get the point of what she says (1251-2). Thus Cassandra nobly endures (1290, 1298, 1302) when Clytemnestra dares (1237); the prophetess struggles to find the right words, τί μν ἡκαλωσε τυφίλεῖς δάκος/ τῦχοιμ' ἐμ; (1232-33), while the murderous act/τύχη (1129, 1230) is described in suitably ambiguous terms.\(^2\)

In spite of displaying behaviour typical of the ecstatic aspect of Mobility, from her sure knowledge of past, present and future, Cassandra ultimately derives a sense of resignation to Fate, declaring τλῆσομαι τὸ κατθανεῖν (1290); she acquires, as it were, Stability. In contrast, when she has committed the grim murder of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra is suddenly and briefly Mobile, released from the strictures of pretence and revealing her true nature (already foreshadowed by Cassandra, especially 1231-1236) in her physical re-enactment of Agamemnon's murder (1372-1398).

Having outlined Laban's Motion Factors and considered the potential value of their application to the gestural performance of text (necessitated by the masks worn by actors in the ancient theatre), it is
necessary to evaluate in greater detail the relevance of the spatial context in which they were expressed and the way in which spatial meaning is expressed and/or reinforced. Of prime importance in *Oresteia's* spatial 'map' is the House of Atreus, which acts as a spatial focus and reference-point in the first two plays of the trilogy.
III.1 The Spatial Map in The House of Wealth, Power, Woe and Destruction: spatial context for the Motion Factors

"Conflict in the dramas between male and female, public and private, knowledge and imagination, is intricately related to the theater's physical contrast between real and imagined, seen and unseen space\(^{24}\)."

In *Agamemnon*, the house or palace at Argos and the acting area before it which the stage οἶκος commands, is the focus and forum for all exchanges of words and actions between the actors themselves and their audience. The prologue establishes at an early stage the importance of the royal house: perched on its roof is the φθαλαξία who imparts a mixture of hard fact and tantalizing speculation as to what transpires unseen within the palace.

Throughout the first play characters come before the house. After entering the orchestra, the Argive Elders defer to the supreme authority of the οἶκος in the hope of receiving information which will have repercussions for the Argive πόλις and ἥ. The herald brings news of the Greek victory to δόμος καὶ Κλυταιμήστρα (Ag.585) and so to πόλει (Ag.640), and then leaves. Agamemnon ends his spectacular, formal entrance speech by expressing his wish to enter the house from which he has been long absent (Ag. 851-53).
The central visual image of the king's short journey from the chariot to the palace door is made redolent with significance, for his path is strewn with purple tapestries which mark out what Clytemnestra apparently perceives as the path of Justice (Ag.910-11); later it is revealed that the 'path of Justice' has led Agamemnon to death within the house at the hands of his wife, since the king has been cajoled into the house by treacherous persuasion. In spite of her comprehensive perception of the house's sinister power, Cassandra nevertheless accepts her fate and goes in to take part in the 'household sacrifice'. Throughout the long Cassandra scene (1072-1330), misdeeds past, present and future had preoccupied the prophetess's visions. For her, entering the palace is akin to walking through the Αιδου πυλων (1291) of a house dominated not by its apparently trusty guardian (914) watchdog (607-8), but by one who is appropriately recognized as a Αιδου μητηρ (1235).

So the house is not only a focus of action, but acquires increasing symbolic significance as Agamemnon progresses. All the action and dialogue of the first play takes place in or in front of the house. In the central play, attention may at first be focused on the tomb of Agamemnon, but it is then 're-focused' on the polluted palace, with which the chorus of Choephoroi is very closely connected; thus the presence and relevance of the house is never allowed to recede from the audience's attention in the first two plays of the trilogy.
The house thus comes to represent and condense the complex networks of relationships between members of its household - it signifies the over-determined causality of their actions. It will be shown to symbolize riches, greed, ἐβρίς; it is actual 'evidence' of the accumulation of family wealth (which Orestes must reinstate in the central play, Cho.262-3 and 300f.). It is the focus of hospitality; in it the τρόπεξα, where ξενία is dispensed by the host to guests and strangers, is presided over by Zeus in his aspect as ξενος. The οἶκος is also the source of family life, providing the future generations that will inherit the κράτος passed down in royal households: the kindling of θάλας (969) or πῦρ (1435) at the domestic hearth features twice as an metaphor for sexual activity. In the first instance, it is implied by Clytemnestra that procreative potential is restored by Agamemnon's return (968-9), and her statement of faith placed in Aegisthus "while he lights the fire at my hearth" (1435) has a strongly erotic overtone. Finally, the house is perceived as occupying a prime position in a society which regards its royal family as sole rulers, wielding economic, military, secular and religious authority, for the imaginary Argos of Oresteia is a palace-centred society.

It is the chorus of Argive Elders which in the first stasimon provides a voice for the unseen people and πόλις of Argos, and it is the Elders who disclose that the decision of the Atreidae to raise an army
against Troy deprived not only Argive homes, but households throughout Greece of their young men (Ag. 427-31); the grief of individual families is touchingly conveyed, a grief which has turned to an anger as yet undirected, but one which will surely find its true target to be the Atreid house which has caused so much suffering. So a potential challenge to monarchic rule from a single palace is here foreshadowed, but for the purposes of the first two plays of the trilogy the house symbolizes not only the royal family which dwells within it, but the πόλις and γῆ over which it has jurisdiction.

In short, the house is an organic part of the trilogy. The audience can never ignore its presence, and it plays an active part in the way theatrical meaning is explored and conveyed.
III.2 Doorway, Throne, Hearth, Bed, Table and Altar

At *Agamemnon* 895-6, the king, returning home from Troy, is likened by his wife to the watchdog of the palace. As such, he is credited with supreme control over access to and from the palace. In the following lines (897-901), the motif of the house as a refuge from harm, especially when guarded by its lord and *σωτήρ*, is developed. It is implied that the house provides shelter from weather, the natural world and enemies; (cf. *Ag* 343-4 and 578-9, where the homeward journey constitutes an act of *σωτηρία*).

The house also figures as the source of hospitality for strangers, ξενία, which is the duty and domain of women within the house (*Cho* 668ff.). At *Ag.* 607f., Clytemnestra claims she has been a good watchdog for her husband's house to the Herald (who will then relay the situation at home to Agamemnon) and to the chorus. She says she is δωμάτων κύνω/ καθλην εκείνωι, and at 914 the king hails her in similar terms: δωμάτων ήμων φύλαξ. It appears that Clytemnestra accepts the inevitability of relinquishing the guardianship of the house and all that means to her returned lord. As Taplin points out, however, Clytemnestra may say in the Carpet Scene that the lord is the rightful watchdog of the house (*Ag.* 896) and she may tell her husband that she has been confined within the house, lonely, frightened by rumours and near-hysterical (*Ag.* 855ff.), but she retains the superior position in the central doorway
until she elicits from Agamemnon his agreement to walk on the
tapestries.

Thus Clytemnestra's language suggests an acceptance of her
husband's higher status, but her control of the doorway confutes this. The
seeming safety of the house (and Agamemnon's central contribution to its
maintenance as such, Ag. 895-901, which Clytemnestra acknowledges in
effusive hyperbole) and the apparent deference the queen displays towards
her husband (thus appearing to accept her position in the house) will be
shown to be false; the hidden dysfunctioning of the house, hinted at by
the Watchman, is a sub-textual parallel to Clytemnestra's unnatural
control over it.

Since attaining true power would seem to be the unspoken aim of
all the exchanges between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, it is useful to
note that the secular κρατος of the Argive palace is symbolized by the
royal throne, an emblem, like the sceptre, of divinely sanctioned kingship
(Ag.43 and 109), and one which is envisaged as being situated within the
house (Cho. 572). It would also appear that the reference to σευνοι
θυκοι by the Herald at 519 may have been facilitated by placing prop
seats outside the skene which represented the Argive palace27; at any rate,
the image of royal seats placed outside the royal palace evokes a picture
of heroic kingship familiar from Homer28. The distinctly Homeric
evocation of the σευνοι θυκοι before the house (such as those that
sceptre-bearing Nestor and his sons occupy in order to take counsel, Od. 3. 405-416) is not at any serious variance with Aeschylus' simultaneous location of the throne within the palace. Indeed, Orestes' declaration of murderous intent should he find the usurper Aegisthus ἐν θρόνοισιν πατρός (Cho. 572) when he has passed the courtyard gates calls to mind the iconography of the murder of Aegisthus scene commonly depicted in the tradition of Attic red-figure vases from 500 B.C.29, where Aegisthus is often (although not always) seated on a chair located in a what is clearly a domestic interior30.

In Aeschylus' version (which imaginatively allows for the co-existence of the exterior Homeric θήκος and the interior θρόνος, around which is focused the struggle between the tyrant Aegisthus and the rightful lord of the house, Orestes) and in the absence of Agamemnon, the queen is perceived as occupying the seat of power in her role as regent (Ag.258-60). This stands in sharp contrast, as was stated above, to Clytemnestra's claims that she has sat alone and despondent within the palace (Ag. 862 and 865), and to Orestes' view (Cho. 919) that his mother ἐσώ καθημένη and females in general, have it easy sitting safe within the house while their men toil abroad at the wars. The relationship between characters and the house highlights their status; Clytemnestra is able to manipulate others' perception of her status so as to achieve success in her plot against Agamemnon.
Also imagined to be in the house are the hearth, bed and table; the motif of the abuse of the house's interior foregrounds the theme of misuse and abuse within society, which is eventually to be reconstructed by Orestes.

The bed can serve as a symbol of innocence and the young (Ag. 50 and 53), but with regard to Helen, it is symbolic of the disastrous consequences of her adulterous liaison with Paris. Helen's desertion of her husband's bed, hearth and home brings destruction to the house, city and land of Priam (Ag. 406) and causes a war which deprives the households of Greece of their young men (Ag. 429-436). So the opening cry of Menelaus' household prophets is perhaps aptly ambiguous31; ἵω ἵω δῶμαι δῶμαι καὶ πρῶλοι (Ag. 410) is a lament equally valid for the royal houses of both the Atreidai and the Priamidai. However, as the speech of the prophets unfolds, it becomes clear that the focus of their predictions is the home of Menelaus, haunted as it is with tantalizing, disturbing visions of Helen. Similarly, the initial choral comment (Ag. 427-428) on the reported speech of the household prophets might be applicable to the sufferings of Trojans and Greeks alike, and it is only in the subsequent narrative (Ag. 429f.) that the land of Greece specifically emerges as the focus of a universal πενθει λησικέρως. Line 411 suggests that Helen, Paris and Menelaus are motivated by sexual desire alone, connoted by the λίχος; this is what spurred Paris to abduct Helen and it will incite
Menelaus to retrieve her. The poetic device of focusing solely on the bed is an appropriate one, for Helen, Paris and Menelaus are driven purely by the need for sexual possession, unconcerned with the consequences of their singled-minded actions for their respective households and communities.

At 1224f. and 1258f., Cassandra, Agamemnon's mistress, describes the adultery of Clytemnestra with Aegisthus, who shelters in the safety of the bed (ἐν λέχει, 1224) and the house: he takes the woman's role, which vindicates the use of the derogatory adjective οἰκουρός here and by the Argive Elders at Ag. 1626. Other images, but of adultery past not present, haunt the Argive palace; Cassandra's reference to Aerope and Thyestes (Ag.1192-3) discloses that cycles of adultery causing destruction have long been associated with the Clan of Atreus.

At 699f., the Argive Elders decry the corrupting influence of the adulterous love between Helen and Paris, which caused the Trojan οἶκος to lament, rather than sing the marriage-song. The situation calls for the misappropriation of a μέλος (706) which is a βρήνος (711), better suited to a 'marriage' which signals imminent disaster, because Paris did not give due respect to the ξενία of another: τροικάξας ἀτύμωσον ὑστέρω χρόνω καὶ ξυνεστίου Διός. At 399-402, Paris is said to shame the table of hospitality by the theft of a woman; contrast this with Iphigeneia who fulfils her ritual duty within the house ἐπεὶ πολλάκις/πατρὸς κοτ'
Andρώνας εὐτροπεῖς ἐμελψεν (Ag.243-5). Here, the image of feast and song centred around the table reflects the harmonious relations between father and daughter and the general prosperity of the entire household. Furthermore, that Iphigeneia's song accompanies the third libation traditionally poured to honour Zeus Soter suggests that the harmony of the household extends to its relationship with the gods and is maintained by respectful adherence to religious ritual. So the relationship of characters to the metaphorical table (connoting hospitality) provides the audience with a moral perspective on the potentially adverse or propitious influence of their actions. The picture of Iphigeneia and her father implies that the House of Atreus was not tainted from within, an impression which is consistently eroded as the narrative of Agamemnon unfolds, most explicitly by Aegisthus' revelations at 1587f.

In the House of Atreus (as in Greek houses in general32) the domestic hearth doubles as the focus of religious activity. Agamemnon says he will go to the hearth to give thanks to the gods for his return home (851-3), and at 1056, Clytemnestra describes the sheep standing at the hearth, waiting to be sacrificed in thanksgiving. The lighted hearth is μεσόμφαλος (which from 1056-8 could be inferred to be synonymous with the κτήσιος βωμὸς of 1038, a focus of domestic and sacrificial fire), the navel of the house and the domestic equivalent of the Delphic
διφαραλός (Cho.1036). The imaginary spatial 'map' of the house shows it to be considered the centre of all decision-making, religious and secular.

That the function of the house as a religious centre is wholly inappropriate, even perverse, is made clear by Cassandra's revelations. The palace is 'alive' with memories of past misdeeds (Ag. 1217ff. - the children proffering their own entrails to eat); Furies (Ag.1186f.) revel in the palace, unwelcome 'guests' in the οἶκος which is ready to perform the thanksgiving sacrifices for Agamemnon's return. All such visions lend weight to the quasi-personification of the house suggested by the Watchman's comments (37-8). In this way, the characterization of the house, via its spatial delineation, shows it to fulfil many roles - domestic, secular, political and religious - and reveals the inner corruption of the οἶκος.

Both the Argive and Trojan palaces come to be seen in the first play as representative of acquiring and desiring wealth. In the second stasimon of Agamemnon, the fable of the lion-cub is interwoven with a narrative concerned with the marriage of Paris and Helen which is disastrous for the house (718, 732, 733 and 736) and city (710 and 737) of Priam. But particular reference to the Trojan plight inspires more general comments about the dangers inherent in generational ὑβρις, strongly identified with χρυσόπαστα Ἑδεθλα (776) and δύναμις πλούτου (779), terms of reference which will be shown to be equally applicable to
the Argive palace. Following swiftly on from the lyric section of the stasimon comes Agamemnon's entrance and the action of stepping on the tapestries which signals an arrogant disregard for the δύναμις πλούτου of the house - an unmitigated act of ἤβρις.

It is not wealth *per se* that is dangerous, but rather the desire for excessive wealth, a burden much more likely to cause its acquirers to be guilty of boasting and acts of ἤβρις. That the spirit of destruction becomes ingrown in houses where the family members are guilty of stepping beyond the proper limit of wealth (751-54, where a general notion is drawn from the narrative seemingly concerned with the Trojan house), is confirmed by Cassandra's visions, the specific source of which is the Argive palace.

The motif of the house as a symbol of wealth and status is given great significance by John Jones\(^3\); for present purposes it is perhaps worth repeating that the image of trampling on the wealth of the house in the first play (372, 935-6 and 957) is implicitly linked to the crime of adultery (1192f.); furthermore, the description and treatment of his daughter Iphigeneia as a δήμων ἄγολα (208) by Agamemnon (thus she is seen as a choice portion of the household wealth to sacrifice) betrays a belief that the female household members equivalent to its wealth. Cassandra too is merely the best of the booty (954-5).
When Agamemnon is seen to crush the tapestries in the Carpet Scene, the single action alone has a plethora of meanings. Primarily, the entire scene is played out in front of the house, to which abundant reference is made (Ag. 863, 865, 896, 897-898, 914, 948, 961 and 966ff.); in vying to define their position regarding the house, Clytemnestra and Agamemnon assert their authority (or lack of it) over the ὀἶκος and through this, define their relationship with each other. The audience has come to see the house as a symbol of δύναμις πλουτοῦ, a focus of secular and religious decision-making. Stepping on tapestries is the dramatic crux of the first play, for in so doing Agamemnon shows a contempt for the status of the house, defined by its wealth, and for the gods.

By Agamemnon's own confession, walking on tapestries is the kind of privilege (like oriental obeisance, 920) which is confined to barbarian kings (919), and for the Greeks, the dedication of such priceless fabrics should be an action reserved for the gods alone (922). As he treads the delicately woven carpet, the king appears to be "like a barbarian" (919) and a mortal man (923, 925) aspiring to divine honours, despite his wish to disclaim either role (919, 925). Finally his apparent unease with the shame inherent in τὸ δωματοφθορεῖν does not prevent him walking on the tapestries; his action symbolizes the demeaning of other humans to
the position of slaves and/or chattels and recalls the deed which caused
the Elders so much anxiety for the future, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

Clytemnestra's πειθω has artfully manipulated her husband's
concern with the value of the house; she assuages her husband's fears by
the confident prediction that the patronage and blessing of the gods, like
the gift of wealth and power both bestow, is in never-ending supply
(Ag.958f.). She plays to Agamemnon's weakness, for in the warm glow of
victory the king is clearly inclined to widen the gap between himself and
other mortals even further.

Since the house is the source of familial wealth, woe and
destruction, to ensure that Agamemnon enters it is all-important: it
re-affirms his part in the inherited guilt of the House of Atreus. Δικη and
the gods may lead him home, but it is a wealthy and hubristic house
which the goddess Justice always spurns (772ff.). The beautiful threads of
the house's tapestries are also suggestive of the over-determined and
complex network of relationships which link Agamemnon with the Argive
palace and which eventually bind Agamemnon in his fated 'net of death'.

The atmosphere of tension and unease in which the Watchman had
veiled the house is thus validated. In the prologue, its mismanagement
and the adultery within it are hinted at. The house is the silent witness to
and symbol of the divine and human relationships which bind the House
of Atreus and its family members. But the house, although silent in the
sense that it is literally 'voiceless' (Ag.37-8), does 'speak' through the chorus and characters whose constant reappraisal of its definition and position foreshadow Orestes' journey from one belief-system to another, from the house to the city.

In conclusion, depiction of the ὀίκος in Agamemnon reveals the difficulties inherent in depending on a single royal house\textsuperscript{35} to perform a wide range of secular and religious duties. It has recently been observed\textsuperscript{36} that such theatrically depicted tensions between the prerogatives of ὀίκος and πόλις served to illuminate the real and ideological problems arising with the "beginning of an opposition which has perhaps been as fundamental in western civilization as that between nature and culture: the opposition between the public and private"\textsuperscript{37}. Furthermore, tragic representation of the house and city as "mutually defining institutions"\textsuperscript{38} helps illuminate the related tensions between female and male\textsuperscript{39}. 
IV  **Spatial Freedom: Orestes' Journey from Argos to Delphi to Athens**

Before entering into a discussion of the symbolic value of Orestes' journey from the Argive palace via Delphi to Athens, it is necessary to give a brief survey of the practical provision in the text which indicates change of location in performance.

IV.1  **The Mechanics of Location: Altar, Tomb, Temple and City**

In the ancient theatre, change of location would often be left to imaginative 're-focusing'\(^{40}\) with the help of a few connotative props.

In the first two plays, the *skene* undoubtedly represented the Argive palace, but an on-going debate surrounds the possible representation of altar and/or tomb in *Oresteia* and tragedy in general. Uncertainty remains as to whether the presence of a ritually functional *thymele* is supported at all by the evidence, archaeological and literary. If it is, did this *thymele* double as an altar/tomb significant in the stage action? If the Dionysiac *thymele* was located in the centre of the orchestra (and the weight of evidence, together in particular with Rehm's\(^{41}\) persuasive analysis of it, suggests that it was not), its dedication would symbolize the commitment of the Athenian audience to the participation of the πολιτεία in the Great Dionysia, and it seems extremely unlikely that it could double as a prop altar or tomb within the theatrical context\(^{42}\). For although the relationship between the ancient audience and its performance may have been

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sophisticated and complicated, it is difficult to accept the use of a 'ritually functional' altar, particularly in a trilogy concerned in part with the abuse of ritual and sacrifice. A prop altar (which an audience can see is a prop), is, on the other hand, devoid of any 'real' associations with ritual practice.

Once it is accepted that only a usable prop altar could be available, it becomes necessary to decide whether such an altar was a permanent fixture or a temporary, movable prop, which could connote in turn the τυμβος which dominates the first half of Choephori. Alternatively, there may have been two separate props, representing altar and tomb respectively. This inevitably leads to debate as to the exact location of the stage altar/tomb, and to a lesser extent, its/their appearance. More recent solutions to the 'problems' of staging in Oresteia arise from a new-found interest and belief in the in-built 'performability' of tragedy and "the demonstrable flexibility of the Greek theatrical space". My own inclination is to follow Poe's general premise that location of altar/tomb in tragedy was context-led and "shifted according to dramatic need". In Choephori (and other plays in which action centres around a prop altar/tomb for a considerable portion of the drama), this means that the tomb was located fairly centrally in the orchestra, a focus of stage action and audience attention. The demands of Choephori's staging constitute a first step in the general movement away from in-built preconceptions regarding the ancient theatre, proposed by Rehm. He
argues against a circular orchestra\textsuperscript{49} and a low wooden stage in the fifth-century theatre primarily because they give rise to what he considers to be unhelpful divisions between the actors' space and the chorus' space, and so goes on to advocate a one-level acting area for actors and chorus alike\textsuperscript{50}. But this presupposes that if there is a low wooden stage, actors are, as it were, imprisoned on it and cannot gain access to the 'orchestral' acting-area which is visually and acoustically superior. This does not have to be the case: a low wooden stage does not necessarily exclude flexibility of movement as the context requires.

What are the demands of \textit{Agamemnon} in this respect? It is generally held that Clytemnestra is seen to be closely associated with the house and control of its threshold\textsuperscript{51}. It will be argued elsewhere\textsuperscript{52} that during lines 83-103, Clytemnestra performs a series of ritual actions at a stage altar. My own view is that, for this purpose, a movable prop altar was placed at the base of the steps\textsuperscript{53} leading down to orchestra level from the low stage abutting the \textit{skene}, directly in line with the \textit{skene}'s central doorway (rather than electing to place the altar directly in front of the central doorway which would hinder the audience's view of it and Clytemnestra's frequent control of it), and at the same time facilitates quick access for the queen to perform the requisite ritual actions during lines 83-103\textsuperscript{54}. So in \textit{Agamemnon} and \textit{Choephor}, the altar/tomb was
positioned as context demanded: an altar near to the house in
_Agamemnon_, a centrally placed tomb in _Choephori._

Staging for _Eumenides_ and indication of change of locale are more
problematic because there are certainly two explicit changes of location
and, in my view, a third more fluid change of location from the interior
of the temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis to the outdoor setting of
the Areopagus court from _Eum_. 566 to the end of the trilogy^{55}.

Certainly the play is set at two swiftly identifiable locations: the
temple at Delphi (_Eum_. 1-234) and an imaginative conflation of Athenian
landmarks, leading to a more loosely defined, yet unmistakable Athens
for the remainder of the play.

For its opening, Sommerstein^{56} advocates the simple expedient of
placing before the _skene_-building prop tripods similar to those known to
stand before the Delphic temple, to suggest to the audience that this is
where we are. But the Pythian priestess' prologue almost instantly makes
clear that we are at Delphi, dwelling as it does on the divine aetiology of
the place, which for ancient audiences at least would be synonymous with
naming it. Should this not be enough to set the scene, the Pythian
priestess' re-emergence ἐκ δῶμων τῶν Ἀρχετῶν (35) and her description of
Orestes' supplicant stance at the _omphalos_ explicitly identifies the place as
Delphi. In view of this, the use of prop tripods would be superfluous to
an indication of location. Furthermore, given that the time spent at Delphi
is not considerable (roughly a fifth of what is anyway a short play), it would not be worth the effort of setting up props which would then have to be removed from any prominent position near the doorway before the scene changes to Athens at 235 and the skene represents the Temple of Athena Polias.

But how was Eum. 64ff. staged? Most commentators advocate that the Pythian priestess' narrative of 34-64 is rapidly made 'real' by the emergence of the ekkyklema between lines 63 and 64 bearing a detachment of the Fury chorus asleep before an Orestes clasped to the omphalos. Thus the audience is invited to accept swift movement from the exterior of Apollo's temple to its interior, an illustration of the imaginative fluidity with which Dale credits ancient audiences, more willing than modern ones to accept such elasticity of space and time.

The major scene-change thus comes between line 234 and line 235 which is directed to the 'lady Athena'. That this scene requires the presence of a prop statue to represent the παλαϊόν βρέτας of Athena Polias is implied by Orestes at 242, and that he is clasping the goddess' image is made explicit by the Furies at 259-260. The presence of a prop statue is clearly required, but how this was brought into view is more problematic.

Sommerstein suggests that the goddess' image with Orestes clasped about it emerges on the ekkyklema. He argues that the tableau
thereby revealed would thus mirror the earlier use of the ekkyklema at 64, where Orestes had also been seen in the suppliant position but at the Delphic omphalos. In Sommerstein's staging, then, the ekkyklema would enable two temple interiors, that of Delphic Apollo and Athena Polias, both particular patrons of Orestes, to be revealed, since "this would strengthen the visual parallelism of Orestes' two supplications."^60

The overriding objection to this staging is one already identified by Taplin:^61 the full menace of the Furies' 'binding song' (306-396) and the impact of their circular dance around their victim Orestes (χορῶν ἀψωμεν, 307) requires that any image of Athena around which Orestes is entwined should have a prominent position somewhere in the orchestra. For it is a specific trail of blood which has led the Furies to their particular quarry on this occasion (257-275) and since a refrain of the 'binding song' declares that it is sung ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν τεθυμβων (328=341) when it is specifically Orestes who has clearly been marked as a 'living sacrifice' (305), the whole certainly suggests a choreography which shows the Furies threatening, surrounding and engulfing their victim and which gives some indication of how their brain-maddening song is affecting Orestes.^62 This is much more likely to have had the proper effect in the larger space of the orchestra. Furthermore, as Taplin^63 points out, the change of scene to Athens covers a considerable lapse of time, so it is possible that the greater amount of time required to bring on and position
the prop statue in the now empty acting area might help mark the
temporal as well as the spatial division between Delphi and Athens even
further.

Rehm's\textsuperscript{64} imaginative staging of the opening of \textit{Eumenides} deals
with many of the problems inherent in the possible stagings outlined
above. His proposal\textsuperscript{65}, in which \textit{omphalos} and Athena's cult image are
represented by one and the same prop, the multi-purpose stage altar/tomb
placed somewhere in the orchestra, certainly ensures a seamless flow of
action and one which avoids what he indicates would be a clumsy use of
the ekkyklema\textsuperscript{66}. What he advocates is a persuasive, practical and
theatrically effective use of space and props. He further\textsuperscript{67} emphasizes the
thematic implications: the tomb at which Agamemnon's ghost was the
focus of necromantic persuasion in \textit{Choephoroi} doubles as the \textit{omphalos} of
\textit{Eumenides} at which Clytemnestra's ghost urges the visible spirits of
vengeance to action. If we add to the function of this
tomb/\textit{omphalos}/βρέταξ that of an altar at which Clytemnestra engages in
sacrificial action in \textit{Agamemnon} (83-103), how much more spectacular
this image of the ghost confessing to secret sacrifices to the Furies
\textit{(Eum.} 106-109), the ghost of a woman who murdered her husband and his
concubine within the house whose hearth is \textit{μεσόμφαλος} \textit{(Ag.} 1056)\textsuperscript{68},
and now making her confession at the very location where she had
engaged in sacrifices (apparently of thanksgiving) at \textit{Agamemnon} 83-103.
The last change of location is the most fluid, for the audience is invited to accept a change of location from Athena's temple on the Acropolis to the Areopagus court, an exterior scene (566-end). This rather non-specific re-focusing, flowing at no particular point in the text from Acropolis to Areopagus is greatly assisted by the requisite movement of props before Athena speaks line 566.

The court scene is the climax of Eumenides, for it enacts the first trial to be held on the rock of Ares. Since the act of voting and a degree of stage representation of the way in which Areopagus trials were conducted must be of prime importance in the dominant scene of the play, essential props are Athena's chair, jurors' benches, the two voting urns and a table to support them. Given the importance of the act of voting, the table and urns must have been prominently displayed somewhere in the front part of the orchestra. Sommerstein further suggests that prosecution and defence, to mimic the actual set-up of Areopagus trials, would stand on opposite sides of the orchestra, with a centrally placed seated Athena presiding.

Since the props play an important role in representing the first Areopagus trial, it is possible that something was made of their appearance and setting up on stage. By exploiting the act of setting up the first court with flair and spectacle (further suggested by the inclusion of a herald and trumpeter in the goddess' entourage - Eum. 566-9), the
problem of bringing several props on stage and removing the statue of Athena Polias (if we adopt a staging which requires the statue to be brought on stage), standing somewhere in the orchestra, is concealed.
IV.2 Orestes' Journey Through Space and Time

So much for the theatrical depiction of change of location. But Orestes' journey through space and time is symbolic of his rite of passage from one belief-system to another, which incorporates a re-appraisal and re-definition of the first. As has been shown, the House of Atreus, like its chief lord Agamemnon, is weighted down with the complexities of over-determined responsibility; its service to family and city, gods and men and its political, secular and religious roles lead to increasingly difficult choices.

When Orestes goes to Delphi for ritual purification, he draws the burden of religious authority, indicated by the perception of the hearth as μεσόμφαλος (Ag. 1056), away from the house; but arrival in Delphi signals only partial completion of his journey. Orestes must seek the final resolution of his fate at Athens (the location of the larger part of Eumenides), where the Areopagus acts as supreme arbiter of human problems and delegates the multiplicity of roles of the single Argive palace to the community of its people, institutions and gods.

Although it is true to say that the decline of the influence exerted by the Delphic oracle in classical Greece is historically attested\(^4\), it would be inappropriate to claim that Oresteia can be seen only as a historical document which advocates a shift in Delphi's religio-political function and status through the theatrical medium of Orestes' journey
from Argos to Athens via Delphi. The symbolism of the journey operates on many levels: in this way, the translation of myth into tragic production should be seen as a channel which inspires reflection and discussion rather than being read reductively as mere party politics.

Of course it is also true that consideration of the original audience must have coloured the location of the trilogy's finale in Athens, where the city is celebrated with typically hyperbolic patriotism: in the fantastic, theatrical, spectacle of the stage world even the god of prophecy, Apollo, must subject his protégé to Athenian jurisdiction (There is a Homeric precedent, of course, with Orestes' returning to Mycenae from Athens, Od. 3.307f.)

Also significant is the temporal context of Orestes' journey. The temporal (theatrical and real) distance between the Argive palace and the city of Athens (via Delphi) enhances the theme of the development from society's inward-looking focus on the house to a harmonious sense of religious and secular communitas in the city symbolized in the legal institution of the Areopagus. Although Eumenides represents an enactment of the foundation-myth of the first Areopagus (thus distanced in 'real' time from the watching Athenians), it is the final singularly Athenian image of the trilogy and its familiarity would have produced a sense of communal pride not inherent in depictions of Argos or Delphi.

The Oresteian Delphi is a worthy sanctuary for suppliants, but in the
Athenian πόλις a sense of divine and human *communitas* creates a new harmony between god and man, house and city - in its ideal form, a perfect symbiosis.
V Alienation, Cruelty and Catharsis Through Mask and Gesture

"Brecht's use of distance has long been considered in opposition to Artaud's conception of theatre as immediate and violent subjective experience. I have never thought this to be true. I believe that theatre, like life, is made up of unbroken conflict between impressions and judgements - illusion and disillusion cohabit painfully and are inseparable."

Peter Brook The Shifting Point

In his insightful assessment of the complexity of theatrical experience, Peter Brook suggests that illusion and disillusion are simultaneously produced and perceived in dramatic performance. He introduces this premise by first implicitly questioning the traditional opposition of Brecht and Artaud because their respective views have come to represent the apparent irreconcilability of theatrical disillusion and illusion. Brecht, in striving to disabuse spectators of any subjective, emotional reaction to theatre, sought to create a distance, from which objective judgement might more readily be made, between performance and audience. Artaud in contrast wished to immerse audiences in sensual and emotional subjective experience, a process in which an element of cruelty is necessary and one which encourages in an audience a feeling for the metaphysical world. Before examining the suggested paradoxical 'cohabitation' of theatrical illusion and disillusion, it will therefore be
necessary to give a brief survey of the theatre philosophy of Brecht on the one hand, exemplary advocate of disillusion (synonymous with Brecht's term 'alienation') and Artaud on the other, whose Theatre of Cruelty was founded on the power of illusion "to attack the spectator's whole organism and achieve, through a kind of Dionysiac breakdown, a more profound state of perception"\textsuperscript{78}. Although of course it is technically anachronistic to apply the precepts of subsequent theatre philosophies to ancient dramatic experience, it should become clear that an appreciation of Brecht's and Artaud's views on production, and the different functions ascribed by them to masks, might shed some light on ancient performance.

V.1 \textbf{Some Definitions: Alienation, Cruelty and Catharsis}

The terms 'alienation' and 'cruelty' in specific application to theatrical production were coined by two of the most prominent drama theorist-practitioners of the twentieth century - Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud - to express the fundamental, founding principle of their respective theatre philosophies.

Essentially, Brechtian 'alienation' ('Verfremdung') was the deliberate breaking of illusion, a means of estrangement and detachment between performance and audience which "turns the spectator into an observer, but arouses his power of action"\textsuperscript{79}. 

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Much of Brecht's drama theory was formed in reaction to the Aristotelian theory of catharsis or purging of the emotions of pity and fear through identification and empathy with the actor.

The Aristotelian theory of catharsis has itself been variously interpreted: after watching the terrible sufferings of a tragic hero or heroine the spectator might feel the relative insignificance of his own problems, he might indulge in the sadistic pleasure of seeing the tragic scapegoat suffer on his behalf or he might undergo the beneficial psychotherapeutic process of releasing unconscious thoughts.

But whatever may have been perceived as the beneficial potential of cathartic theatre, Brecht emphatically rejected Aristotle's theory which "was an essential part of the hypnotic, anti-critical theatre which Brecht so loathed; it meant 'carrying the audience with one, 'losing oneself in the play'". For Brecht, cathartic, empathetic theatre led the spectator to be uncritical and lulled into a smug satisfaction with his surroundings. 'Alienation', well suited to the political didacticism of Brechtian theatre, would break this mould, making the spectator think rather than feel, causing him to express his political will rather than conforming with the present state of affairs.

To achieve the alienation effect, Brecht resorted on occasion to the use of masks and to a style of acting in which the performer was called upon to show the attitudes/"Gesten" (where 'Gesten' simultaneously

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signifies 'gesture', 'gist', 'attitude' and 'point') of a character rather than indulging in emotions, aimed specifically at eliciting audience sympathy and empathy. Thus the performer, stripped of the power of illusion, was clearly identifiable as 'a performer', and so the new idea that 'der Zeigende gezeigt wird' ('showing must itself be shown') "excludes the psychological, the subconscious, the metaphysical unless they can be conveyed in concrete terms".83

For Antonin Artaud, on the other hand, the role of gesture was vastly different and formed the basis of a dramatic theory which sought to "wake us up heart and nerves" by "inspiring us with fiery, magnetic imagery and finally acting in us after the manner of unforgettable soul therapy".84 Here, the phrase 'soul therapy' strikingly evokes Aristotle's views on κάθωσίς as a medical treatment for souls (Pol.1341b32f.), although Artaud explores the means by which this can be achieved and concludes that audiences must be confronted with their own terrors, so that, for Artaud, catharsis was a by-product of the theatrical process rather than its chief end.

Artaud felt the 'spatial poetry' of gesture and production in general to be the key destined to unlock the metaphysical world of dreams, terror and cruelty, and simultaneously confront the audience with it. Artaud believed that the sensual and emotive impact of gesture would transform
into the abstract - "in our present degenerative state, metaphysics must be
made to enter the mind through the body"\textsuperscript{85}.

Masks too would function, like gesture, as part of the 'spatial
poetry' meant to confront spectators: all aspects of \textit{mise en scène} would
discard any "servile imitation of reality"\textsuperscript{86}, evoking rather the
unreal/surreal/hyper-real, often violent images of dreams and thus
effecting a "full-scale invocation of cruelty and terror, its scope testing
our entire vitality, confronting us with our potential"\textsuperscript{87}. Artaud advocated,
for example, the distortion of 'reality' through "thirty-foot-high effigies,
puppets, huge masks, objects of strange proportions"\textsuperscript{88}. He expressed his
own views most succinctly, together with the disparagement he felt for
text-centred theatre, when he wrote that it was imperative to "add the
expression of states of mind belonging to the field of semi-consciousness
to our known, ready-made feelings, which suggestive gestures will always
convey more adequately than the definite, exact meaning of words"\textsuperscript{89}.

Interestingly, although working from diametrically opposed
premises, Artaud and Brecht both advocated the use of gesture and mask
to achieve the vastly different theatrical effects they strove to produce.
But before suggesting the relevance of their theories to ancient drama, it
is necessary first to give a brief account of the religious function of the
mask and to investigate what degree of influence, if any, the ritual mask
had over the tragic mask.
V.2 The Ritual Mask: Concealment, Assimilation, Distance and the Apotropaic Effect

"Masks, the most ancient means of surrendering one's own identity and assuming a new extraordinary identity, come to the Greeks through various traditions"\(^90\).

"By bringing masks into play, the Greeks found it possible to face up to a number of diverse forms of otherness"\(^91\).

In a recent article, Halliwell\(^92\) has questioned "the widely credited and deeply entrenched supposition that tragic masks were religious in origin, and perhaps also in some inescapable degree always remained quasi-religious in function"\(^93\). One may agree with Halliwell that any "automatic presumption"\(^94\), based on an argument from origins, of the link between tragic masks and cultic practice, particularly that connected with Dionysus, can be distorting. Nevertheless it remains true that masks, ritual or dramatic, although used in widely divergent contexts, share an essential feature in common: both enable their wearers to be released into 'otherness', to undergo transformation. But, whereas transcendent experience and assimilation with divinity may be the individual's chief end in donning the ritual mask, for the actor, putting on the tragic mask is the first step in the process of role playing which is ultimately designed to have an effect on an audience; i.e.:- the purpose of the mask and the
nature of the transformation it brings about in these two contexts are vastly different.

It is apparent from various analyses of the ritual, cultic role of the mask in ancient Greek religion that the mask afforded the degree of concealment and disguise necessary to enable its wearer's access to, and assimilation with, 'otherness'.

This otherness takes various forms. Evidence\textsuperscript{95} for the Dark Age practice of wearing animal masks in the sacrificial context suggests to Burkert\textsuperscript{96} that "the sacrificer conceals himself by assimilating himself to the victim, and at the same time he seems to bring to life again the creature killed earlier". So the mask may enable access to the animal world and a lowering of status (for the priest assimilates himself with the victim just killed), yet by, as it were, resuscitating and restoring the victim's presence, a simultaneous access to the power of the god is also implicit. The mask allows for transformation into other worlds, both animal and divine. In the Classical period, the notion of men appearing as gods was connected especially with the mystery cults of Dionysus and Demeter\textsuperscript{97}, while Dionysus himself appears in the form of a masked dancer before the Horai on the François Vase\textsuperscript{98}. Indeed, central to Dionysiac cult and belief was the concept of god becoming man and man, god\textsuperscript{99}. 

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Dionysus in turn was surrounded by a theriomorphic entourage of Satyrs led by the divine Silenus, which was "simultaneously wild and controlled, stupid and intelligent, thoughtless and thoughtful"\(^{100}\). The ambiguous nature of Satyrs, simultaneously divine daemons, human and animal, extends to their capacity to "conflate solemnity and seriousness with humour and abandon"\(^{101}\), an ambivalence characterized by the Satyr mask.

It is the presence of 'character' masks, (especially those of hideous old women), drawn from the human sphere and found at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia\(^{102}\) which signals a further aspect to the ritual function of masks. In brief, although the goddess Artemis was not represented by a mask, masks are known to have featured prominently in the role-playing masquerades of young people, over whose initiation into adulthood the goddess presided; these masks found at the sanctuary suggest the inclusion of mimetic role-play in Spartan παυδεία: "during these masquerades and ritual games, the young Spartans were expected to mime out the most diverse and contrary of attitudes with gestures and the use of disguises and masks" thus "successively exploring every aspect of marginality and strangeness, assuming every possible form of otherness, learning how to break rules so as better to internalize rules that they would thereafter have to keep"\(^{103}\).
Without this specifically educative function, masks were generally worn, when, in the carnival atmosphere of religious festivals, role reversal featured prominently, in situations where order needed to be upturned so that it might be confirmed. In this context, masks allowed indulgence in burlesque, buffoonery and ἀισχρόλογία: an ideal opportunity to speak through the mask and enact gestures in an obscene way unthinkable at other times. This sort of activity particularly characterized Dionysian festivals. On the 'Choes' day of Anthesteria, for example, masked figures processing in wagons hurled insults at passers-by\textsuperscript{104}.

Amidst these masks which must be donned to enable their wearers' access to otherness, the Gorgoneion or Gorgo mask\textsuperscript{105} (an apotropaic icon familiar from both temple exteriors and a common decorative motif on domestic pottery) stands out as the very symbol of alien otherness: its apotropaic function warns off any engagement with its gaze, let alone its wearing by a mortal. Gorgo's gaze, emphasized by flanking prophylactic eyes, spells death, delirium and destruction, and by being exposed to it "man faces the powers of the beyond in their most radically alien form, that of death, nothingness and night"\textsuperscript{106}. Gorgo embodies the alien aspect and alienating potential of the mask, fear of which drives a necessary distance between mask and spectator.

Gorgo is claimed to share the power of mesmerizing mortals, by engaging their gaze, with Dionysus, although facing the masked god does
not exclusively result in destructive delirium, but can lead to joyful assimilation with the divine\textsuperscript{107}, by "swinging into the gaze of the god or becoming assimilated to him through mimetic contagion"\textsuperscript{108}.

Vernant's detailed analysis of the portrayal of the god of the mask, played by a masked actor playing the god in disguise in Euripides' \textit{Bacchae}, highlights the role of the tragic mask as well as the religious mask in concealing one's own identity in order to have access and be assimilated to the identity of another. Furthermore, given that the Dionysiac \textit{θιασός} facilitates the experience of becoming other "within the very framework of the city and with its agreement, if not its authority"\textsuperscript{109}, a civic 'framework' it shares with the theatrical experience, the conclusion that the dramatic aspect of religious Dionysiac ritual has features in common with the shared theatrical experience is not unlikely.

It is apparent, then, that the several ritual functions of the religious mask - alienation, concealment of self and assimilation or transformation to otherness - are part of the inheritance of the theatrical mask\textsuperscript{110}. In the theatrical context, however, alienation has a more formalized quality and effect. In the theatre, where there is already a physical distance between actors and audience, together with the 'psychological distance' between masked actors (thus distinguished as belonging to the stage action) and the unmasked audience which faces them, the audience consents to and colludes in the distance thus maintained while simultaneously making
itself open to the fascination exerted over it by actors, themselves wholly released into a display of radical otherness by the wearing of masks.

So where in the strictly religious context, contact with Dionysus spells the possibility of complete assimilation with the god, this could never be the case for spectators in an audience\textsuperscript{111}, for they are not party to the complete assimilation to, or transformation into, otherness, which is solely available to those that wear masks, i.e.: - actors. It is this paradoxical 'cohabitation' of distance as a means of defining potential access to otherness and of its fascination which draws the attention and involvement of the audience, of 'disillusion' and illusion, which characterizes the theatrical mask as typifying the paradoxical nature of its medium.
V.3 The Alienating Mask of Theatre?

For the ancient Greek actor, disguise of self was comprehensive. Analysis of the archaeological and literary evidence has led to a widely held consensus regarding the appearance of the mask in the Classical period: it was a complete head-mask (i.e.: covering the front of the face, including the ears) with a small mouth opening and a wig attached\textsuperscript{112}.

Κόθορνοι, the traditional foot-wear of actors, which, from the evidence of vase-painting, were undoubtedly in use from the 460's until the end of the century\textsuperscript{113}, were soft, flat shoes or calf-length boots with upturned toes, probably adapted from women's comfortable house shoes\textsuperscript{114}. Simon suggests a two-fold purpose in the adaptation of the κόθορνος in the theatre: its inherent female associations and the complete disguise of legs and feet it afforded. This, she believes, standardized "the way of walking, an unmistakable sign of individuality also visible from a distance"\textsuperscript{115}.

Of less certainty is the timing of the adoption of long sleeves for the actor's costume, possibly intended to conceal the actor's male physique\textsuperscript{116}. It is certain, however, that the comprehensive disguise afforded by mask, costume and footwear enabled an effective doubling of roles\textsuperscript{117}.

Disguise, then, seemed to be a controlling factor in the design of theatrical costume and footwear and of paramount importance in the
appearance of the mask. A striking feature of the mask in the Classical period was the absence of any facial expression - an "openness of regard" frequently correlated with the 'Severe Style' of the Olympia sculptures.

What function did this unchanging blankness, this "openness of regard" have, and how did the mask serve actor and audience alike? The mask, the inanimate barrier between actor and audience, could be said to 'alienate' audience members from being overly concerned with recognizing the actors playing various roles and their personalities, or to a lesser degree, identifying themselves too strongly with characters enacting a performance.

But from the evidence of vase-painting and literature, it is undoubtedly true that ancient audiences did achieve some imaginative identification with the dramatic characters, thus attaining a degree of emotional involvement in mythic re-enactment and re-creation. While some vase painters represent the mechanics of theatrical performance, clearly showing actors wearing masks and costumes, and occasionally rehearsing, others blur such distinctions, eliminating the trappings of dramatic production, and using theatrical performances to inspire their own recreation of familiar or novel mythic scenes.

A striking example of this phenomenon is the cluster of five vases (c. 450-440 B.C.) which appear after the production of Aeschylus'
Eumenides (458B.C.), which clearly provided a new iconography for the anthropomorphic Fury/Furies, previously depicted on vases as snakes. In his detailed discussion of these five vases, Prag\footnote{123} observed that this group of five vases does "not show any particular moment in Aeschylus' plays but manage to select the most important incidents in Eumenides"\footnote{124}. These vases further show the mutual influence of theatrical production and vase-painting on each other. The anthropomorphic Furies are composites of female monsters - Harpies and Gorgons - already familiar from art, which Aeschylus himself acknowledges (\textit{Eum}.50-51). At the same time, the Aeschylean characterization of the Furies/Semnai (again, a composite characterization equally indebted to earlier literary traditions) strongly influences their handling in subsequent iconography; they are depicted sometimes winged, often with snaky hair or holding snakes and wearing the \textit{κυνές} of Orestes - \textit{Cho}. 1048 and \textit{Eum}. 46-54.

Interestingly, the five vases under discussion are further united in their depiction of Furies as having the features of normal women, a consistent iconographic feature\footnote{125}, but one which stands in complete contradiction with the commonly held notion that Eumenides' text necessitates the wearing of horrific Gorgon masks by the Fury chorus: Sommerstein\footnote{126}, for instance, advocates hideous faces (i.e.: masks), possibly dark and incorporating snakes or snaky hair in some way.
According to Sommerstein, it is the chorus' continued wearing of Gorgon-like masks and their inherent power to frighten and embody ἔνδομ as a deterrent against wrong-doing which leads Athena to refer to their terrible aspect at Eum. 990-991. Sider sees an added bonus in a Gorgon-masked Fury chorus, since the outcome of its confrontation with the goddess Athena, whose aegis already bears the apotropaic Gorgoneion, is thus visually foreshadowed. On the other hand, Rosenmeyer stresses that the transformation of the Furies into Semnai, "the corroboration of the positive aspect which has vied for recognition almost from the start" (52) could not be indicated by any visual change (using Athena's reference to φοβερά πρόσωπα at Eum.990 as an argument in favour of his own solution, just as Sommerstein did to support his, very different suggestion).

Given the significance of the Furies' transformation and the pictorial representation of them as women, Rosenmeyer suggests that the "costuming and masking of the Furies struck a sober note, midway between fearsome and attractive, which could be useful and convincing in both parts of the play". It is perhaps significant that the renowned N.T. production of Oresteia (dir. Sir Peter Hall, 1981), which used an all-male, fully masked company of actors, resorted to this solution regarding Furies' masks: it was decided that any exact transliteration of their repulsive,
blood-dripping (Eum. 54) faces into masks would "have prevented any sense of their later benignity."  

Although, as regards the pictorial representation of tragedy, it is right to "be extremely hesitant in using scenes on pottery as quasi-photographic illustrations of what took place in the theatre," Green himself uses the apparent distinctions between the textual provision in Eumenides for the appearance of the Furies and their pictorial depiction on vases as exemplifying the idea that audiences can be persuaded to see and hold in their imagination features described in words alone: a kind of imaginative 'auto-suggestion' through verbal enhancement.

It is also worth remembering that choreography has as much, if not more to do with conveying the bestial, repellent nature of the Furies. After all, it is to their Gorgoneion-like forms or τύποις (49), not faces, to which the Pythian priestess refers. Indeed, Apollo associates their shape, or overall form, with their hideous function (192-193). Given the traditional archaic configuration of the running or flying Gorgon with arms spread wide, it was perhaps through such gestures akin to the "angular, prowling movements with crooked arms, splayed legs and constantly beckoning, mesmerizing, menacing hands" adopted by the Furies in the N.T. production that the initially bestial blood-sucking nature of the Furies was conveyed. Just as much as the smell of their own
breath is reeking and repulsive (53), the Furies are hounds (131-32) whose quarry, the 'fawn' Orestes (111, 147) is trailed by the splash, drip (247) and smell of blood - ὄσμη βρυστέων αἰμάτων με προσγελαῖ (253) - they may even have imitated the hunting dog in their attempts to sniff Orestes out. This, together with the Furies' exclusion from all interaction with gods and men (Ευμ. 55-56, 69-73, 190ff., 368-73 and 385-6), indicates that it is the overall disposition of the Furies against which every sense and feeling of mortals and gods is supposed to react.

Subsequently, it is the flexibility of gesture which easily encompasses the transformation of these repulsive huntresses into honoured metics, holy goddesses worshipped at Athens: in the N.T. production, the Furies visibly grew from crouching animals into grand and solemn protectresses (892ff.).

Given that the mask acts as a powerful barrier to too strong an identification, to a blurring between the physical and emotional distance between actors and characters, and that at the same time, there seems to have been some imaginative identification with dramatic, mythic characters, it is probable that the latter came about in part by means of gestural empathy.
V.4 Gesture Through Mask?

It is certainly true that in some degree the mask estranges or alienates the watching audience. The efficacy of this is clear: spectators require the availability of an emotional distance, so that they are able to retreat to a position from which judgement or contemplation of, or reflection on, the stage action is possible. So Sir Peter Hall comments on the importance of using full face masks in his 1981 National Theatre production of Oresteia: "the passions [the plays] deal with are so huge, so primitive, basic, that the naked face cannot deal with them in verbal terms . . . the emotions are so enormous that to verbalize them you have to have a mask to contain them". On another level, masks ‘mark off’, as it were, the actors who wear them as characters belonging to a theatrical production, which itself takes place at a physical distance from the spectators.

For the actor, the mask functions in a rather more complex way since it provides a means of distinguishing self from the character played to such an extent, in some cases, that the mask is the character. Or perhaps more accurately, the mask makes possible successful transformation into a dramatic character which simultaneously constitutes "an anguished fusion of self and role, which reduces neither to the other" (actor and role are mutually dependent), for tragic characters
"choose as persons who are their masks, not as individuals who play their parts".

In this sense, the mask is liberating, releasing the actor into a physicality not his own. If this is a correct appraisal of the paradoxical nature of the mask, then character, to a certain extent, must have been expressed through gesture; the blank mask releases the entire gamut of tragic emotions - violence, passion, madness, fear, pity, despair etc., - and simultaneously compels their physical depiction through gestures. The mask, which has initiated the actor's release into an expressiveness connoting otherness, is itself a beneficiary of the dynamism it has inspired. It has often been noted that in performance masks acquire a disconcerting 'life-like' quality of animation, and given that their original setting was one of dazzling sunlight which creates a depth of expressiveness through quick changing shadows and patches of light, it is hard to believe that the inherent dynamism of the mask was not exploited. This requires an understanding by the actor of ways to move and animate the mask, as opposed to the face beneath. That the lighting and mask work of the actors (focusing on moving the mask, not the face) in the N.T.'s version of Oresteia produced the desired effect, is apparent from a reviewer's comment that the masks visibly seemed to alter "according to the view of the spectator" (Benedict Nightingale quoted by R.B. Parker).
That this is true for the ancient, as well as the modern, actor, is graphically illustrated by two vases which have already been alluded to:\textsuperscript{143} the 430 B.C. red-figure pelike from Cervetri and the 460 B.C. red-figure bell-krater, both of which show actors dressing and rehearsing. In the former, a female mask lies on the floor while its owner dresses. To the left of this mask, stands a female figure raising her right arm in dramatic gesture - it is of course a male actor, in full costume and mask, rehearsing. The vase provides a fascinating insight into the actor's process: for the rehearsing actor, the mask appears to have released the gestures associated with the pending performance. These gestures in turn provide exuberant animation for the entire actor together with his mask, in stark contrast with the lifeless mask waiting to be worn by the dressing actor.

The earlier red-figure bell-krater makes similar distinctions between the animated gesture of the masked and costumed actor, and the unmasked actor. This vase shows the latter holding his mask to face the observer in prominent display, while the other masked figure (on whom the fixed demeanour of the mask is distinguished), arms widespread and right foot forward, sports the lively, almost frenzied configuration appropriate to a nebris-wearing maenad.

Both vases clearly allude to their theatrical source through inclusion of masks emphatically lifeless when in isolation, but they also suggest the
gestural liberation which the wearing of the mask seemed to produce in the ancient theatre, where male actors indulge in feminine gestures, in striking contrast with the more subdued, undramatic postures of their unmasked companions.

The mask is the means by which such emotive gestures, expressive of character, are found by the actor. Simultaneously, the mask's role in 'marking off' its wearers as belonging to a dramatic piece enable the audience to observe at a distance; yet the emotional expressiveness released by the mask engenders in the audience a capacity to sympathize with, or alternatively feel revulsion at, the stage action. In one sense, the mask allows the actor to display, and the audience to regard, with a degree of impunity, aspects of shared experiences not otherwise given formal expression. So Tony Harrison observes "the mask and its language compel us to keep our eyes open in situations of extremity, when we might otherwise flinch away in horror and stop looking, and therefore stop thinking and feeling".144

In conclusion, the tragic mask, although sharing some features in common with the ritual mask, uniquely embodies the paradoxical cohabitation of 'disillusion' and illusion which characterizes the tragic medium. The tragic mask alienates spectators so that they may watch and judge the difficult subject-matter treated with a degree of impunity. It simultaneously releases the actor into playing another and so enables him
to express powerful tragic emotions through voice and 'gestus', which in turn stir audience empathy.
VI  Gestures in Tragedy

So for audience and actors alike, the mask was defensive protection and simultaneously escape from self, giving access to the gamut of tragic emotions. In tragic production, gesture was also multifunctional. The important role of gesture in Oresteia has already been included amongst the arguments in favour of Clytemnestra's appearance and gestural sequence between lines 83 and 103 of Agamemnon\textsuperscript{145}. Indeed, this short dramatic episode serves to illustrate a general point that gestures are able to provide a kind of 'punctuation' which enhances the text and highlights important moments.

Furthermore, it has been shown that when the kineticist Laban's approach to motion is applied to the text, it reveals that the simplest of movements can yield a degree of character identification and can evoke complex associations\textsuperscript{146}. But apart from the potential enhancement of any dramatic text through gesture as appreciated by Laban, in the ancient theatre gesture must have served additional functions.

The wearing of full face masks, itself a possible consequence of tragic performances being held in large, open-air theatres\textsuperscript{147}, must have engendered in turn a degree of dependence on bold, heightened gestures designed to be seen and fully registered by the audience.

As for the exact nature of these gestures, only tentative surmise is possible, but it is apparent from the evidence of vase painting that gesture
both played a significant role in the everyday rituals of the Athenians, such as mourning\textsuperscript{148}, and was used to express the often violent confrontational scenarios of myth, themselves recreated on the tragic stage.

Then as now, violent gestures have the power to shock and revolt; whereas ritual gestures, often implicit in the rhythmic texts of tragedy, may be fully exploited for their cathartic effect. Recent studies\textsuperscript{149} have suggested a complex relationship between 'real life' ritual and its tragic counterpart, a relationship in which the latter does not merely reproduce the former. Most obviously, ritual and tragedy "work through similar forms"\textsuperscript{150} and both use symbolism and 'make-believe'. But more significantly, as P.E. Easterling\textsuperscript{151} has indicated, "ritual was able to provide tragedy with a range of particularly potent metaphors, which tragedy likewise expressed in words, music and action"\textsuperscript{152}. By this means, 'everyday' ritual was adopted, then adapted for dramatic presentation. Often the precisely codified stages of various 'real life' rituals were conflated in tragic texts and action into "a complex constellation of rituals"\textsuperscript{153} or inverted and/or subverted to suggest a dysfunction in the play world. Understanding the relevance of the theatrical ritual gesture within this complex system is therefore important.

In what follows, it will be shown that the gestural pattern of \textit{Oresteia} underscores the cyclical themes of vengeance and expiation it
addresses, for the violent gesture of murder must be redressed by the cathartic gesture of expiation and finally, blessing.
VI.1 Gestural Meaning in Choephoroi

Any discussion of gesture or dance on the tragic stage should necessarily begin with a caveat: the inadequate amount of source material on tragic dance and music compels any reconstruction of it to be highly speculative and has led to hugely differing views on the subject. But although it is impossible to choreograph confidently in such a way as minutely to reproduce the appearance and effect of ancient production, it is true that clearly identifiable provision and scope for specific gestures can be found in tragic texts, not least Aeschylus' Oresteia. If gestures form even the barest framework from which to develop a sense of the look and feel of ancient productions, an understanding of their nature and function might provide a slight insight into the overall choreographies of tragedies.

Furthermore, despite the fact that modern productions of ancient texts cannot always properly explore or respond to the metrical intricacies and tones of the original (either because they use translations or because they simply cannot call upon the almost operatic qualities employed by ancient actors to express the nuances of spoken, chanted and sung verses in a plethora of distinctive metres), it is interesting to note that the instinctive responses of latter-day directors to textual clues uncover the need to punctuate text with significant gestures.
In *Orestesia*, the 'gestural score', redolent of the symbolism of ritual lament and murder-cum-sacrifice, is prominent and emerges most strongly in the formal structure and complex content of the Great Kommos.

VI.1a Mimesis of Everyday Lamentation in the Great Kommos

Essentially, the Great Kommos more easily lends itself to a more detailed choreography because, as has long been recognized, it borrows several elements of the traditional θρηνος and ritual of invocation at the tomb. The strong display element already inherent in the real-life grief rituals offered material ideally suited to adaptation for the theatre and to the latter's use of spectacle.

Alexiou's comprehensive survey of ancient and modern Greek ritual lament confirms this to be true and also illustrates the fact that some elements of the ancient θρηνος are so strongly adhered to in the tradition that they have persisted into modern Greek culture. This bodes well for a more detailed picture of the way in which the Great Kommos was staged or 'blocked': the picture of modern Greek female mourners deep in antiphonal lament, robed in black and employing the hand-raising and breast-beating gestures of their ancient counterparts, is the closest we may come to imagining the appearance, actions and emotional impact of *Choephoroi*’s chorus.
If we can take it as a working assumption that many of the words and gestures of traditional lament were used in the Great Kommos and were as familiar to an ancient audience as they are alien to a modern non-Greek one, it remains to examine the effect the Great Kommos was designed to have on an audience. However, before addressing this last question, it is necessary to discuss the Asiatic, barbarian character of the chorus and their lamentations, and the implications of this for Greek 'everyday' practice.

VI.1b τὸ βορβορικόν and the danger of feminine excess in the chorus of Choephoroi

At Cho. 423-4, the choral cry goes up:-

\[ \varepsilon \kappa \omicron \varsigma \kappa \omicron \mu \dot{o} \nu \ \varepsilon \rho \iota \omicron \omicron \nu \ \varepsilon \nu \ \tau \varepsilon \ \kappa \iota \sigma \iota \alpha \varsigma \]
\[ \nu \dot{o} \mu \varsigma \iota \ \iota \lambda \epsilon \mu \iota \sigma \tau \iota \alpha \varsigma \].

Detailed description follows of what the \( \kappa \omicron \mu \dot{o} \varsigma \ \varepsilon \rho \iota \omicron \omicron \) entails: the head is struck unceasingly and resounds with blows, bleeding as the hair is torn out. As Garvie shows, both form and content of 423-28 conspire to create "this picture of an emotional oriental lament with its rain of blows upon the head and breast". It is possible that the gesture of beating was supplemented with the rending gesture associated with the
laments of Kissan women\textsuperscript{163} (and one which has already been displayed by the present chorus - \textit{Cho}. 28-30).

The text at \textit{Cho}.75f. strongly implies that the libation-bearers are Asiatic, barbarian slavewomen, but what does this contribute to the play? Hall\textsuperscript{164} has suggested that the convention of such generic female, barbarian slave choruses in tragedy paradoxically emphasized the enforced reliance of such choruses on central characters, while they are simultaneously marginalized "distanced from the individual actors both physically and in role"\textsuperscript{165}.

Not quite so straightforward an analysis is applicable to \textit{Choephoris}’s chorus. The libation-bearers are called upon by Electra as \textit{σύμβουλοι} (86) and \textit{μετατίμω} (100). Nor do they only adopt this advisory role, restraining the children from unhelpful flights of fancy (372f.) and partly orchestrating the purpose of the Great Kommos as both lamentation and hymn for victory against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (340f.). It is they who tell Orestes of his mother’s dream (523f.) and who move on the action by telling him to give instructions to his supporters (552-553). Most significantly, they positively influence the action by persuading the Nurse to tell Aegisthus to come alone, without his bodyguard, to meet the ‘stranger’ (770-773).

Although the antiphonal dirge was sung by both Greeks and barbarians in tragedy, its eastern origins\textsuperscript{166} and the wild, oriental gestures
connected with the κομμιός format\textsuperscript{167}, help explain its frequent association with Asiatic frenzy. In Athenian every-day life, this practice with its non-Greek overtones was most strongly associated with the lament of women for their dead. It was this aspect of mourning which Solon sought to restrict (Plu. \textit{Solon} 21), καὶ γὰρ εὐσταλεῖς ἔποιησε τὰς ἱερουγίας καὶ περὶ τὰ πένθη προφότροπος, θυσίας τινὰς εὕθυς ἀναμίξας πρὸς τὰ κήδη, καὶ τὸ σκληρὸν ἀφελῶν καὶ τὸ βαρβαρικὸν ἰ συνείχοντο πρότερον αἱ πλείσται γυναῖκες (12.8). Solon also ἐμμέχας δὲ κοπτομένων καὶ τὸ θρηνεῖν πεποιημένα καὶ τὸ κωκύειν ἄλλον ἐν ταφοῖς ἐτέρων ἀφείλεν (21.4). Yet Aeschylus' libation-bearers indulge in self-mutilation, and lament one to whom they are unrelated, in the formal antiphony of the traditional kommos.

Alexiou\textsuperscript{168} has suggested that this characterization of the chorus as "slaves in the palace ordered by Clytemnestra to take part in the lamentation" reflects "the origin of the lament in the antiphonal singing of two groups of mourners, strangers and kinswomen"\textsuperscript{169}. Furthermore the 'hired songs' (presumably, equated with what Plutarch termed θρηνεῖν πεποιημένα), often performed by Carian women at funerals, were also legislated against by Plato in his \textit{Laws}\textsuperscript{170}, which indicates both the persistence of hiring mourners in the classical period and the desire to prevent what was seen as the practice's adverse effects.
By making his chorus Asiatic slavewomen, Aeschylus exploits the Athenian associations of excessive, wild, threnodic expression with the 'otherness' of the barbarian/oriental as inferior to the Greek. The polarization of barbarian:Greek is generically parallel to polarities inherent in Greek social distinctions which made women inferior to men and slaves inferior to citizens. Paradoxically, therefore, the barbarian character of the libation-bearers gives license to expression of those strong emotions which despite legislation, Greek women continued forcefully to express\textsuperscript{171}, while at the same time distancing such excessive display as distinctly 'un-Greek', although such gestures as self-mutilation by women are attested in much fifth-century B.C. vase-painting\textsuperscript{172}. In the public context of theatre, the characterization of \textit{Choephoris} chorus would appear to give vent in some degree to those emotions which Greek women continued to express in the private context of lament at the tomb.

Loraux\textsuperscript{173} has observed that "les lois entendent refréner le deuil maternel; la tragédie, parce qu'elle fait la part du politique et celle du non-politique, reconnaît qu'elles sont les seules vraies ordonnatrices du deuil, \textit{avant de contenir à nouveau} [my italics], et très civiquement, le débordement prévisible de leur douleur". It is true that later tragedy\textsuperscript{174} may have come to reflect the tensions between the \(\thetaρ\overline{η}νος\) as an indication of the articulate and authoritative female voice\textsuperscript{175} on the one hand, and the reduced and limited role of Greek women in the civic and
political context on the other. Since lamentation was the woman's prerogative, the loss of female power, linked in some measure with the "shift from the threnos to the eulogy"\textsuperscript{176}, is implicit in that paradigmatic eulogy, Pericles' Funeral Oration (reported by Thucydides in Book II of \textit{The Peloponnesian War})\textsuperscript{177}.

Aeschylus, however, avoids such circumspect and constraining treatment of female power in \textit{Oresteia}. While Cassandra questions (\textit{Ag.} 1286) the efficacy of the lament she is engaged in\textsuperscript{178}, Clytemnestra exemplifies the power of a mother's grief to inspire a dangerous desire for vengeance upon her child Iphigeneia's murderer (\textit{Ag.} 1412-1425, 1431-1433), an implacable \(\mu ν \dot{\varepsilon} \mu \omega \nu \ Μ\dot{\eta} \nu \zeta\) (\textit{Ag.} 155)\textsuperscript{179}. Similarly, \textit{Choephoroi}'s chorus members harbour a \(\pi \kappa \rho \delta \nu \ σ\acute{\theta} \gamma \omicron \omicron \zeta\) (80) towards their rulers, Agamemnon's murderers, against whom the dead king is still capable of expressing \(\tau \delta \ ε\gamma \kappa \omega \tau \epsilon \iota \upsilon\) (41)\textsuperscript{180}. anger is the corollary of grief.

Freed from having to cater to any preconceptions of how Greek women's behaviour should be portrayed, Aeschylus exploits the very alien nature of \textit{Choephoroi}'s chorus so that its capacity to act untypically is further intensified. All the disturbing, dangerous and fascinating aspects of female power\textsuperscript{181} evoked through lamentation and then anger expressed by female characters, yet enacted by male performers within the safety of the tragic/mythic context, were precisely those which posed a threat to Athenian civic order and which endured severe constraint in proscriptive,
legislative measures regarding 'real life' lamentation (excessive, emotive and female) for individuals, ultimately giving way to the preeminence of the funeral oration for the anonymous group spoken by a male eulogist.

To return to the overall effect of the Great Kommos: although the inclusion of an expression of the desire for vengeance (linked as it was with conjuration of the wronged dead person) within a lamentation might surprise a modern audience, for those watching the 458 B.C. production, it would have been an expected and accepted part of the ἰπνήνος ritual, especially that of a king wrongfully murdered and buried without due τιμή. To this end, the act of τὸ ἀνακαλεῖσθαι is used to great effect in Choephoroi (315, 332, 382, 396, 405-9, 429-33, 434-8 and 461-2), where direct address by Electra and Orestes to their father, appeal to ὁ Ζεὺς (409) and the various cries of ἵω and οὐμω are later supplemented by the narration of Agamemnon's death, designed to rouse Agamemnon from the dead, to stir the outrage and sympathy of the audience and to motivate Orestes to vengeance.

This account of the king's death is contained in strophes 7, 8, 9, and antistrophes 7, 8 and 9 (lines 424-55) and concentrates wholly on conveying the ἀνακαλεῖσθαι of Agamemnon's death which itself resulted in the subsequent dishonour of his remaining daughter.
It is followed by an expression of a sentiment which has not yet surfaced in such explicit terms: a wish for Orestes' and Electra's father to materialize φίλους (456) and πρῶς ἐχθροῦς (460), to show that he has heard their prayers and that he endorses, together with Zeus and the chthonic powers, the appropriateness of the forthcoming 'battle'. More detailed examination reveals that success in conjuring the spirit of Agamemnon indicates not only that prayers have been heard, but also that requests for vengeance are considered right and proper.

That favourable response on hearing prayers is met by the gods' sending an agent of fulfilment, is already familiar from the vulture simile (Ag. 49ff.). In Agamemnon it is appropriately a sky god/ ὑπατος who, on hearing/ ἐαυτῷ (55) the pitiful cries of the vultures (also sky dwellers - ὑπατος) sends/πῆμπει (59) not merely a divinatory sign of intent, but a full-blooded avenger or ὑστερόπουλος Ἐρμύς. This τὸ κλάειν/τὸ πῆμπεις formulation is closely echoed in the necromantic incantations of the central play.

So too in Choephoroi, even before the Kommos, the notion of conjuration appears as a leitmotif foreshadowing its central prominence in the latter half of the Kommos and the closely related dialogue which follows (479-513). At 129ff., Electra opens her prayers by importuning Hermes and earth to hear them; 139 reiterates the plea, κλάθι μου, this time to her father, and the whole invocation ends with:-
This τὸ κλήειν-τὸ πέμπειν formula is frequently used in the Kommos itself. At 332, Electra repeats her by now familiar wish κληθί νῦν and the choral marching anapaests (476-8) which mark the transition from the conclusion of the kommos to spoken dialogue, direct the plea to hear to the μάκαρες χθόνωι. Orestes echoes his sister's supplication of 148-9 by calling on Zeus κάτωθεν ἀμπέμπειν ὑστερόποινὸν ἢταν (382-3; closely recalling once more the vulture simile where Apollo, Zeus or Pan send the ἑστερόποινος Fury to punish transgressors and in response to the vultures' γόος -Ag. 57) against reckless men; and when at 459-60, the libation-bearers ask that Agamemnon show he has heard their prayers by coming ἐς φάος to be with his children/φίλοις (456) against his enemies, the implication that the avenging ἀτη sent by Zeus is associated with Agamemnon (who φοάνει δὲστερον ὀργάς- 326), is overwhelming.

Since Agamemnon is pre-eminent amongst the chthonic τύραννοι (355-359), he is presumably included in the imprecation of 399 for Earth and the χθονίων τιμῶι to hear. The cry is taken up by Orestes at 405, swiftly followed by an appeal to the personified Curses to behold what remains of the Atreidae clan. The whole suggests the gathering forces of the Underworld where Agamemnon's spirit, the embodiment of his Curse and Ἀτη are virtually indistinguishable. Not surprisingly, the Great
Kommos is resoundingly concluded with an encapsulation of the hearing/sending formula, a hope that the chthonic powers will send an ἀρωγή to bring νίκη for the children (477-8).

The form of the spoken dialogue (479-513) which proceeds from the formal end of the kommos is well-suited to what is initially the far more explicit and lucid nature of Orestes' and Electra's prayer to their father, framed as it is in terms of mutual benefit: restoration of the house in exchange for continued and proper tendance for Agamemnon's tomb.

But in the quick-fire symmetry of 489-499, we are returned to the urgent and almost frenzied desire for Agamemnon's outrage at the shamefulness of his death to draw him into the light. The section opens with a request to Earth to send their father as witness to the ensuing μάχη. Electra responds with δῶς κράτος aimed to elicit support from Persephassa. Gruesome details follow the recollection of Agamemnon's murder, deliberately intended to sting him into action, as is clear from the urgent interrogatives of 495 and 496. The repetition of ὃ (489-90), μὴμνησθο (491-2), ἄρ' (495-6) gives an incantatory structure to what is surely a spell for raising the dead: the specificity of the final climactic question ἄρ' ὑπὸν οἰκεῖς φίλτατον τὸ σῶν κέρας; begs to be answered by Agamemnon's appearance on stage. However he does not materialize and so the request must be modified; if not present himself, he must at least send Δίκη as an ally or favourably sway the outcome of the battle.
After the passionate frenzy of 489-99, the issue of the race's preservation is returned to with the winning promise in line 509.

How exactly these exhortations, either to hear prayers or to send from the Underworld a punitive spirit or for Agamemnon to appear in response to direct appeals, were marked by gesture, is impossible to know with absolute certainty. But since the traditional stance for invocation was one which involved the raising of both arms towards the object of entreaty\textsuperscript{183}, (in this case a raised mound of earth - Cho.4) with palms turned upwards, it is possible that adoption of such a position (standing with arms raised) is entirely suited to a request for the sending/τὸ πέπειν of an ᾧρωγῆ for the children from below to above, enabling Agamemnon to come from darkness up into light (Cho.382-3, 456, 460, 477-8)\textsuperscript{184}.

To balance the specific upward direction of this gesture of beckoning/invocation/conjuration, perhaps the requests directed towards Agamemnon to hear (332, 500 and 508) and prayers particularly aimed at the chthonic realm and its gods (399, 476, 489 and 490) would by marked by the rhythmic pounding of earth, attested by literary sources to be a feature of 'real-life' supplication to the underworld\textsuperscript{185}.

In the end, however, such a detailed allocation of specific gestures to the gamut of exhortations which are associated with conjuration ('hear',

153
'grant', 'behold', 'send upwards into' or 'appear in the light'\textsuperscript{186}) is necessarily speculative.

However, distinction of the different ritual stages of conjuration, and the possibility of their clarification through gesture, is apparent from \textit{Persians} 681ff.: (Darius speaking)-

\begin{quote}
stένει κέκοπταί καὶ χαρᾶσσεται πέδον, 
λεύσων δ’ ἵκοιτιν τὴν ἐμὴν τάφον πέλας 
tαρβώ, χοᾶς δὲ πρεπεμνής ἐδεξάμην. 
.vmεῖς δὲ θρηνεῖτ’ ἐγγύς ἐστώτες τάφου 
καὶ ψυχαγωγοῖς ὅθριαζοντες γόον 
οἰκτρῶς καλεῖσθε μ’.
\end{quote}

This ghost's eye-view of lamentation-conjuration reveals that getting the attention of those underground is of prime importance. So powerfully is the earth shaken by beating that it trembles and it is this, together with the sound of mourning, which draws Darius to gaze upwards and observe his wife pouring libations down into the earth. Necessarily, reaching those below earth needs ritual and gestures to be aimed downwards. Once Darius is focused on the world of the living, those standing near the tomb would most probably have signalled the start of the pyschagogic ritual with arms raised and palms upturned to coax and beckon the Persian king from darkness into light.

The significance of the ψυχαγωγός γόος in \textit{Persians}\textsuperscript{187} illuminates its Oresteian counterpart, and the powerful image of the ground trembling
and rumbling with repeated blows (Pers. 681) invites the use of such a
gesture to reinforce the incantation of Cho. 489-99, each line possibly
ending with a beating of the ground as if to mark the urgency of its
message and its journey below earth.

If 489-97 is directed so that the chorus cap each line by thudding
the ground in the reverberating κομμός gesture, Orestes and Electra
might be pictured kneeling as suppliants near the tomb. Agamemnon's
children might then be imagined to reinforce their opening addresses to
Earth and Persephassa by pounding the earth first and then supplementing
their respective requests ἄνες μου πατέρ' (489) and δῶς κράτος (490)
with upward-beckoning gestures of conjuration. The next four lines
pertaining to Agamemnon's death require merely that κέκοπται πέδον by
the chorus at line ends, while in the parallel, climactic question of 496-7
the children would again have recourse to the arm-raising psychagogic
gesture.

In such a potentially explosive atmosphere of anger and vengeance
stirred to a pitch of readiness by emotive gestures, the effect on the
audience must have been the very one that strict legislation on the form
of ritual lamentation sought to prevent.

Funerary legislation, although variable in detail from city to city,
was characterized by a desire to curb extravagant displays of grief, where
the use of professional mourners and recourse to self-mutilation were
believed to be a social threat. As was briefly discussed earlier, in Athens, the form taken by sixth century B.C. Solonian reforms\textsuperscript{189} suggests the overall intention of moving the emphasis away from the clan cult (sustained chiefly by women) to the local cult groups focused around a local hero rather than the clan chief. The aim of this, coupled with the celebration of public funerals, "was to reserve the right of conferring 'heroic' honours on the dead to the polis"\textsuperscript{190}. The curb on women's involvement in the funerary process was particularly restrictive: women under the age of 60 were not allowed to attend either πρόθεσις or ἐκφορά unless relations of the deceased to the degree of first cousins once removed or second cousins\textsuperscript{191} nor were they allowed to lacerate themselves or weep (Cicero, de Legibus ii, 59ff.; Plutarch, Solon 21).

Undoubtedly, it was primarily concern with the power of women as a "medium of display"\textsuperscript{192} capable of keeping alive memories of the deceased and so awareness of the need for vendetta, which caused them to be prominent targets of Solon's legislative process: "the women maintained the consciousness for the need to take revenge by constant lamentation and evocation at the tomb"\textsuperscript{193}. Furthermore, lavish display incurred extravagant expenditure.

If these displays of public grief, and the force of vengeance which in part fuelled them, were considered so threatening as to bring about recourse to law to stop them, it is clear that they succeeded in stirring
emotions of hatred and vengeance. As Alexiou\textsuperscript{194} sums up "What more effective way could there be to stir up feelings of revenge than the incessant lamentation at the tomb by a large number of women 'for those long dead' ?"

It is precisely this kind of exaggerated display whose effect Aeschylus exploits in \textit{Choephoroi}'s kommos. For Aeschylus makes full use of all the trappings and rituals of grief (pouring libations, weeping tears, ripping cheeks in self-mutilation and rending the black robes of mourning)\textsuperscript{195} accompanied as they are by the increasingly forceful expression of the need for, and justice of, vengeance. The whole contrives to stir in the audience pity and indignation, not least because it shares in the several motives which compel Orestes to steel himself for matricide.

So Aeschylus, by restoring the public lament in most spectacular form in the theatre, seeks in part to stimulate in the audience those emotions which funerary legislation sought to check.
VI.1c Πληγή of grief for πληγή of violence

Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

_Macbeth_, Act IV, sc.3, 226-227.

At Cho. 150-151, Electra seals the act of pouring libations to her
dead father with instructions to the chorus both to lament and to sing a
paean. As Garvie points out, given that the paean is a song of
confidence or joy in hope or thanks before a battle, "its appearance in this
context of lamentation is therefore a striking oxymoron. . . the idea of the
paean looks ahead to the victory which Electra hopes to win as she enters
battle on behalf of her dead father." The paean is also a hymn/prayer
expressing hope of healing diseases real or metaphorical, frequently
addressed to Apollo in his capacity as the Healer (Ag. 146, 512-13; cf.
_O.T._'s choral address ἔθε Δάλιε Παϊάν, 154), and is thus particularly
appropriate in _Choephori_, where ἐλπὶς is a metaphorical ἱετρὸς (699).

The θρήνος/παϊῶνoxymoron re-emerges at the opening of the Great
Kommos. The θρήνος (335) is the necessary rite of mourning unfulfilled
by Clytemnestra, but the chorus expresses the wish that ἀντὶ δὲ θρήνων, a
παϊῶν (343) will herald the rule of Orestes in the palace, a feast of
thanksgiving presumably intended to mark the death of the tyrants
Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, Orestes' victory in the μάχη against his
mother and her lover. Furthermore, the oxymoron of θρήνος and παϊῶν
conveys the polarity between the threnodic, foreign emotionalism of lament and the inherently Greek associations of the paean. 99

So if it is strongly implied that the Great Kommos has a dual purpose as both ἑρὴνος and ποιῶν, where the latter is an ode looking forward to, or thankful for, victory in the battle for just retribution, it is not surprising to find that there is one gesture, the πληγῇ, which encompasses both the emotions of grief and vengeance.

The typical κομῳδείς gesture of beating the breast appears early in Choephoroi and together with the pouring of libations, weeping tears, ripping both flesh and garments, is perceived as an outward indication of the grieving heart (27), since all such outward gestures are fed by an inner grief - ἵνα μνήσῃ (26-7), ὑπʼ ἀλγεσίν (29), ὄγελάσως ξυμφορᾶς (30-31).

The mention of rhythmic, self-inflicted blows first comes at Choephoroi 23 with the choral phrase ἥξυχερι ὁ ἐν κόπω, but the detail that it is the breast which is struck is not supplied until the conclusion of strophe α: here it is the clothes which cover the breast/πρόστερνοι, which are showered by blows. Thus to the distinctive sound of garments being rent is added the rhythmic pounding of the πληγῇ gesture.

Within the Great Kommos it is a similar display of rhythmic blows, this time aimed at the head not the breast, which initiates the narrative regarding the ἄτιμως of Agamemnon's burial. This further compounds the
outrageous nature of Clytemnestra's murder, since her disregard for the νομός of lamentation is a dreadful moral condemnation (422-455). In strophe 7 (422-428)\textsuperscript{200}, the chorus-women engage in the κομμός, the mourning style of the Arian and Cissian, consisting of the hands' repetitive, rhythmic bloody blows to the head, as if such an extreme show of physical self-abuse\textsuperscript{201} might atone for the murderous blows their lord endured. The unceasing striking of the hands, the rapid succession of blows and the sound they make, implicitly recall the regular thud of oars/δρόγματα (426) in unison as they strike and move through the sea\textsuperscript{202}.

The image of the chorus totally immersed in the oriental gesticulation of lament stands in complete contrast to the following account which recalls that king Agamemnon was ἀνυμωκτός (433) without the attendance or πενθημάτα (432) of his citizens. Furthermore - the final shame - Agamemnon was mutilated before burial. This is compounded by Electra's lament regarding her own ἀτυμία, her appalling treatment necessitating a secret πολύδεκαρφος γόος (448) for her own plight.

The propriety of the ritual actions of the chorus and Electra, bent as they are on restoring the correct words and appropriate gestures of ritual lamentation ὦς νόμος βροτόις (91) merely serves to highlight further Clytemnestra's ἀνυμία. It is twice repeated that Agamemnon was buried ἀνυμωκτός (511 and 933) by wife and citizens and also that he was
mutilated (439f. and 491-4). Libations, which in any case are powerless to cleanse the stain of human murder (66ff.), are sent by Clytemnestra, but too late (516).

The whole conspires to colour the perception of the audience: Clytemnestra deserves punishment at the hands of her children whose restoration of the νόμος of grief goes a long way in upholding the justice of their vengeance, entitling them to believe:-

    ἄλλα νόμος μὲν φονίας σταυρόνας
    χυμένας ὡς πέδον ἄλλο προσωπεῖν
    αἵμα. (400ff.)

This is the central gnome of Choephori, a sentiment often repeated regarding the reciprocal and cyclical nature of vengeance, framed in terms of stroke for stroke at the opening of the Great Kommos:-

    ἄντι δὲ πληγής φονίας φονίαν
    πληγήν τινέτω (312-313).

The figurative πληγή of vengeance resurfaces in the choral comment which concludes the Great Kommos where the αἵματόδεσσα πλαγγά (468) is just one in a catalogue of expressions which convey the apparently unstoppable cycles of suffering and vengeance which weigh heavily on the House and clan of Atreus.

However it is when the bloody blow as a metaphor for vengeance combines forces with its visual counterpart, the blow to breast and head
or the beating of the ground, that the remarkable complexity of its associations can be fully appreciated, especially at 372-379.

Lines 375-379 of this choral admonition to the children not to be carried away by 'wishful thinking' but to concentrate on the act of vengeance ahead, are problematic, giving rise to a variety of readings differing in punctuation and meaning. Of these, the most convincing is Thomson's rendering of 376-9 as:

\[
\ldots \tau\nu \mu\nu \alpha\nu \acute{\alpha} \nu \gamma\nu \zeta \zeta \eta, \tau\nu \nu \delta \varepsilon \kappa \rho \alpha \tau \sigma \omega \tau \omega \nu \nu
\chi\varepsilon \rho \varepsilon \zeta \omicron \upsilon \chi \delta \omicron \omega \alpha \iota \nu \sigma \nu \gamma \varepsilon \rho \delta \nu \tau \omega \nu
\pi\omega \sigma \iota \tau \zeta \mu \alpha \lambda \lambda \nu \gamma \gamma \varepsilon \nu \nu \tau \omega \nu;
\]

Lines 378-9 are thus translated "what is more hateful than these things to the children?", which rather presupposes that the two matters identified in the \(\mu\nu \ldots \delta \varepsilon\) clause will serve as the 'double scourge' of line 375. It is the fact that, contrary to his children's wishes, Agamemnon and those who can deliver aid to Orestes and Electra are \(\kappa \sigma \tau \alpha \gamma \nu \zeta \zeta \eta\) (377) and that the murderers are polluted (thus deserving punishment) which should act as 'twin-pronged' motivation to action. It is also perhaps implied that the \(\delta \nu \lambda \varepsilon \zeta \mu \alpha \rho \alpha \gamma \nu \zeta \delta \nu \pi \omega \zeta\) (375-6), a metaphor for the double motivation of the two children, is reinforced with a gesture of beating the ground, since \(\delta \nu \pi \omega \zeta\) signifies any heavy or thudding sound.

In the preceding stanza, Electra had indulged in the vain wish that her father were not dead beneath Troy's ramparts. To re-focus her on the
issue in hand, the chorus emphasizes that since Agamemnon is indubitably κατὰ γῆς (377), requests for the help and support of ἀρωγοί (376) must necessarily be made in the chthonic direction: this is the first aspect of the διπλῆς μακρύγνης (334-5). The second spur to concentrate the διπαὐς θρήνος is a choral reminder that the twin tyrants are polluted - χερες οὐχ ὅσι (377) - and it is no doubt this which inspires Orestes to emphasize that Zeus punishes those with unclean hands, sending the spirit of the late-avenging ruin against βροτῶν τλήμον καὶ πανοβργω/ χειρί (384-5). But the idea that Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are polluted murderers, conveyed in the image of bloody hands, does not simply work on one level.

Orestes and Electra are embarking on a θρήνος which is also a παιών, a two-edged γόος, for it is one which simultaneously seeks first to justify and then to consolidate by triumphant positive action the quest for vengeance (330-331). In so doing and with the chorus' support, the children use gestures intended to appropriate the attention and aid of the chthonic gods and Agamemnon: the beating of the breast, head and earth is a single gesture with a double meaning (like the twin points of the metaphorical goad), for as an outward indication of grief it is also intended to stir the emotions of vengeance. The heavy thud of fists on the body and ground may for modern observers be a sinister foreshadowing of violence, but for the ancient audiences it was well within the
lamentation/conjuration νῦσσ, an image of contrast with the polluted hands of murderers (378-385), whose prayers would not be heard or granted.

The image of the wholly violent potential of thudding fists is exploited in Electra's unambiguous prayer to all-powerful Zeus (394-399). One might picture Electra indulging in the very gesture of violence she would wish visited on her mother and her consort: raising both fists (possibly synchronized with the double exclamation φεῦ, φεῦ at 396) she smashes them to earth in hopeful foreshadowing of Zeus' severing of Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' heads. Such a movement is a grim aping of hands striking the head in ritual self-abuse, but with her adaptation of it, Electra highlights the transition from grief into anger, and lamentation into revenge - she does not strike her own head, but rather shows the intent of violence towards others. As the gesture of beating the ground was associated with exhorting the chthonic gods to hear prayers, this is how Electra concludes (399); but the connotation of the πληγή gesture in the preceding prayer is overwhelmingly violent.

Thus in the Choephoroi and especially in the θῆνος/παυῶν of the Kommos, the double symbolism of the πληγή of both grief and violence is fully exploited. It is as if actual blows to head, heart and earth, interposed with the figurative 'bloody blows of vengeance', might conspire
to compel Orestes to strike the matricidal blow, which seems, impossibly,
to be just.
VII.1 *Action Replays: Violence on Show*

Whatever unspoken restrictions may have militated against depicting the very act of murder on stage, it is apparent that murderous deeds and violent actions were suggested or expressed in tragic performance either through graphic and detailed narrative, or through re-enactment, or through a mix of the two.

Firstly, although homicide itself was not shown on stage, the consequences of murder were vividly portrayed. Putting aside the debate as to the precise mechanics of staging murder tableaux\(^{205}\), it is certainly true that in the first two plays of *Oresteia*, the set-piece of the murderer standing over his/her victims was intended to have powerful impact.

In *Oresteia*, the despicable nature of Clytemnestra's deed is underscored by the sight of Agamemnon in the bath, probably still tangled in the net-robe, while his wife crows exultantly over her handiwork (Ag.1372-1672). When roles are reversed and Clytemnestra and Aegisthus lie dead at Orestes' feet, the reappearance of the net-robe, prominently displayed in all its horror, underlines the much discussed parallelism\(^{206}\) between the two acts of murder expressive of the apparently inescapable cycles of slaughter and vengeance, in turn linked with the central Oresteian gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔροςαυτοῦ (Ag.1564). The resonance of the two scenes, whether standing alone or more especially when
compared and contrasted with each other, is enhanced by the complex use of proleptic images most notably explored by Lebeck. Resort to such 'murder tableaux' was perhaps the result of the dramatist's disinclination, on practical and aesthetic grounds, to represent the actual deed of murder to spectators. Instead, murder is most usually described through the narrative of other dramatic characters. But in Oresteia, Agamemnon's death is represented more imaginatively: Cassandra's 'preview' (in the form of prophetic visions) of the murder is then vividly 'replayed' by Clytemnestra in her 'victory speech' Ag.1372-1395.

This graphic narrative of Agamemnon's death begins with a kind of anti-apology, the first open statement of deliberate deceit and murder long-pondered by Clytemnestra. The queen stands "where she struck" (1379) which implies the need for recourse to another kind of imaginative re-focusing: the audience is to imagine that the interior of the palace is on display but that simultaneously Clytemnestra is addressing the chorus (and so the audience) outside the palace.

Line 1379 thus transfers audience imagination to the very place of the murder and prepares for the vivid re-enactment which ensues. After frequent use of the past tense in the opening ten lines of her speech (ἦλθε, 1378; ἐστηκα and ἐπιεικε, 1379; ἐπροφέξα, 1380) Clytemnestra resorts more frequently to the present tense for the remainder of her
account (1382-92): so sharply detailed is her recollection of events that what began as an exultant narrative transforms into a re-enactment, a physical and emotional reliving of a scene recently played out within the house. It would be difficult for the actor playing Clytemnestra to refrain from the use of gesture to express so remarkable a version of the murder sequence. First, Agamemnon is thoroughly restrained with the all-embracing robe - \(\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\chi\iota\zeta\omega\) (1383). The triple strike/\(\pi\alpha\iota\omega\) swiftly follows, the third blow of which takes the form of a thanksgiving to infernal 'Zeus' - \(\kappa\pi\epsilon\nu\delta\iota\delta\omega\mu\). Her own workmanlike dispatch of Agamemnon is interspersed with her cool appraisal of his death agony - two cries respond to her first two blows; once down, her third blow is the final mortal wound, Agamemnon breathes his last and Clytemnestra is spattered with blood. Her own pleasurable sensations\(^{209}\) at this are conveyed in her comparison of the spray of blood to the longed-for dews at growing time.

Since the use of the vivid present by Clytemnestra extends to the description of Agamemnon - \(\delta\rho\mu\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\) (1387) and \(\beta\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\) (1390) - it reinforces the notion of action replay as opposed to static narrative. It is as if Clytemnestra becomes caught up in the process of recollecting recent events, and the sequence of \(\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\chi\iota\zeta\omega\) (the embracing gesture which traps Agamemnon), \(\pi\alpha\iota\omega \delta\iota\varsigma\) and \(\kappa\pi\epsilon\nu\delta\iota\delta\omega\mu\) (the three blows to Agamemnon\(^{210}\), followed by Clytemnestra's revelling in the sensation of
Agamemnon's blood spattering her like dew in which she rejoices as the corn crop does διωσδότωι γένει (1391-1392), lends itself well to a degree of gestural re-enactment. Thus the murder of husband by wife is effectively shown on stage after all.

Clytemnestra's verbal οἰσχύνη (an ὀλολογικός/ paean ἡσπέρ ἐν μέχρις τροπήν instead of a θρήνος, as predicted by Cassandra - 1236-7), the shameless corruption and manipulation of the proper use of language 211 and the imagery of bountiful, divinely blessed nature (Ag. 1390-92) 212, is matched and supplemented by the depraved re-enactment of murder perceived in terms of thanksgiving libation/sacrifice to Hades 213, which is particularly inappropriate to one who is also seen as engaged in a 'war' with her husband, ἐκσπονδόν τ' Ἀρη/ φίλοις πνέουσα (1235-6). The whole picture graphically brings home Clytemnestra's perversion of societal and ritual propriety.

The impact of Agamemnon's murder is strengthened by the mode of its dramatic presentation. Cassandra's fractured narrative of images and sensations connected with the slaughter of husband by wife (Ag. 1107-1111, 1114-1118, 1125-1129, 1223-1238, 1246) constitute what for her is felt so immediately that it would seem to be taking place in present time, but which for audience and chorus will come to be seen as an ironic preview of murder. Choral reaction to Agamemnon's death cries (Ag.1346ff.), the Argive Elders' lack of unified purpose, graphically
illustrates the breakdown of coherent thought and action which is a consequence of the regicide for the chorus. In contrast, Clytemnestra's replay of her husband's murder is assured and triumphant. In this way, Agamemnon's death is mediated by the manner of its theatrical representation. Thus, the audience is not merely presented with a two-dimensional picture, a *de facto* theatrical murder, but is encouraged to regard it from many perspectives.
VII.2 The Power of Stillness:Narrated Violence

As impactful as the recollection of violence through re-enactment, is violence narrated unadorned by any significant gestural 'action replays'. It would be hard to imagine that the chorus of Argive Elders supplemented their recital of the events leading up to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia with any comprehensive re-enactment. Rather, it might be that these old men who held staves (Ag. 75 and 85), were intended to employ a style in some degree reminiscent of the rhapsodic mode.

Literary sources regarding rhapsodes abound: we are told by Plato that rhapsodes were frequently filled with emotion like an actor\(^{214}\). Aristotle also linked the rhapsodic performer and actor, but points out that the former would (or rather should) rely far less on gesture\(^{215}\). The rhapsode's power lies in the impact of a single voice to move huge crowds largely by the spoken word, the act of τὸ ἐπιείναικλέγειν and τὸ ἀκόντων\(^{216}\). Yet the use of a few restrained gestures is perhaps confirmed by what is the only certain pictorial representation (490-80 B.C.) of an epic rhapsode on a red-figure amphora by the Kleophrades Painter\(^{217}\). Even then, Herington\(^{218}\), following Davison\(^{219}\), argues that this rhapsode is not a professional at a public contest, but one reciting epic in a private context. However, this does not preclude the possibility that any epic rhapsode, amateur or professional, may have used the staff in forceful, yet restrained, ways, as a kind of rhetorical punctuation\(^{220}\).
The staves of *Agamemnon*’s chorus function partly to signal their old age, which itself limits excessive mobility. Prop *σκάπτω* may also make available a range of simple, yet powerful, sparingly used gestures in those parts of choral text which often evoke epic (especially Homeric) form and content and which, like epic, "demand impersonation [and] skilful variations in tone, tempo, and dynamic."

Of course, the structure of *Agamemnon*’s parodos is too complex to be limited to one style of delivery, but the need for voice characterization (reported speech by Calchas at 126-137, 140-155 and Agamemnon at 206-217) and the complexity and richness of the narrative would be given clearest expression by a style which concentrates on stirring the emotions through verbal impact without the distraction of too many gestures or any complex choreography. Gestures here, unless restrained, might not clarify, but rather become merely superfluous gimmicks.

In much the same way and in keeping with some evocation of the rhapsode’s mode, the static position and dependence on the power of the voice to sway audience sympathies, would be appropriate to the delivery of messenger speeches where the narrative often contains material too sensitive or complex to muddy or diminish with lavish gesture/re-enactment.

*Oresteia* employs both styles and exploits the very different effects each produces: violence on show in action replays or even the threat of
pending violence find expression in both the appropriate gestures and
choreographed storytelling through reenactment. The power of stillness on
the other hand, closer to the rhapsode's mode, commands the complete
concentration of the audience on information which, although
second-hand, significantly shapes the stage action. The parodos of
*Agamemnon* and the messenger's speeches (*Ag.* 551-582 and 636-680, in
which past events are imaginatively recreated) are prime examples of
places where this style may well have been employed.

The natural inclination of many modern productions\(^{223}\) to make use
of these different styles of delivery in response to the playwright's
implicit patterned interplay of stillness and movement, may shed some
light on the potential impact of gestural variation in *Oresteia.*
Notes on Part I, Section 2

5. Ibid., 39.
6. Taplin (1977); Hammond (1972) and (1987); Green (1989); Padel (1990); Tarkow (1980); Macleod (1975); Sider (1977) and (1978); Maxwell-Stuart (1973).
7. However, see Rehm (1985).
10. Ibid., 17.
11. Ibid., 19.
12. I should like to acknowledge with gratitude the teaching of Peter Kennyn at the Drama Studio, London, who introduced me to Laban's methods and always gave insightful and inspired analysis of them.
13. The adjective 'sustained' was chosen rather than 'slow' which might be interpreted pejoratively.
17. Taplin (1977), 299-300.
18. See Fraenkel (1950, Vol. II, 427-429) who convincingly argues for reading Agamemnon 943 as πίθην κροτώς μετοικοφερών κατά Πολιοτή (cf. above n. 14, Part One, section 1. The dochmiac may have been the only metrical invention of the tragic genre, perhaps in response to the levels of emotion released in performance.
19. Lloyd-Jones (1979), 75, fn. on Ag. 1072.
22. Ibid., 254. Cf. above n. 14. The term 're-focusing' was first brought to attention by Taplin (1977), 10 and 339.
25. Garvie (1988), xlii. The term 're-focusing' was first brought to attention by Taplin (1977), 10 and 339.
27. Hammond (1972), 435.
31. This tendency towards non-specificity or ambiguity in attributing exact or traditional mythic locations to characters in Oresteia is a notable feature of Agamemnon. The usual location of the house of Menelaus and Helen is Sparta (e.g. - in Odyssey 4 and Euripides' Helen at 17, 30, 472, 492, 495 etc.), sometimes Argos (Od. 4.561-2), yet Aeschylus seems deliberately to avoid this distinctive, separate setting; instead, in Aeschylus' version, it is implicit that Agamemnon and Menelaus jointly rule the land of Argos. The convincing political and poetic reasons for this are set out by Macleod (1982), 126-7. Just as both the royal Trojan and Greek houses and common households are affected by suffering, so the source of their hardships, the Trojan War, is the joint responsibility of the Atreidae brothers. (For the role of the stage house as representative of both the Trojan and Argive royal households reflected in the multivalency of narrative imagery, see Knox (1979)). Such verbal ambiguities lend themselves well to attaching a fluid, potentially multivalent symbolism to significant stage properties. In view of this, the stage house could be said to be equally representative of Menelaus' house, haunted by visions of the absent Helen (Ag. 420-26) as much as it is possessed by Furies (1190) and the ghosts of murdered children (1217f.).
33. Ibid., 82-111.
This is not to say, of course, that Aeschylus is presenting a critique of kingship per se, since kings were acceptable figures in the tragedians' evocation of an heroic, mythical past. It is rather that the responsibilities which devolved upon kings and individual royal households offered ideal material for examining the difficulty of resolving dilemmas personal and political, secular and religious. See also Foley (1981), 151 and 154.


Ibid.

Foley (1981), 156.

Ibid., 157ff. Foley sees in the depiction of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon a reflection of "the tensions between ἀλος and πᾶλιν in the battle of the sexes by an outright inversion of the norm" (157). Clytemnestra rejects her role in the household, while Agamemnon "sacrifices the youth of the state and its resources"; indeed, in so doing, he also abuses the ἀλος (Foley, 154-155; 157).


Arnott (1962), 45; Hourmouziades (1965), 75; Pickard-Cambridge (1946), 131.

Garvie (1988), xli-xliv, provides a useful list of the various options regarding the nature and position of the altar and tomb required by the stage action in the trilogy's first two plays and he also presents valid objections to most of them. Once the thymele is discounted as a possible choice and the importance of visual prominence is brought to the fore, fewer options are available.

See also, Webster (1970b), 127; Newiger (1977); Rehm (1988); Poe (1989).

Rehm (1988) n.118, 296. 'Re-focusing' is, in a sense, a corollary of this spatial and imaginative flexibility.

Poe (1989), 116f.

Ibid., 116.


Following Gebhard (1974). See also Green (1991), 18-20, esp. n.7, 18, who, however, sounds a note of caution in interpreting the evidence, 17-18.

Cf. Ley and Ewans (1985) who also argue for the 'orchestral' acting area.

Taplin (1977), 307 and 309.

See Appendix C below.

I follow the majority view that a low wooden platform was in place in front of the skene building, with steps leading to ground level, and was a part of the stage equipment required by the 458 B.C. production of Oresteia. Cf. Arnott (1962), 1-42; Hourmouziades (1965), 58-74; Hammond (1972), 412; Gould (1989), 12. See Flickinger (1936), 78-103, for arguments in support of one level for actors and chorus alike. As Taplin (1977, 442) emphasizes in reference to Hourmouziades, the overriding value of the raised platform is that it "would make the actors more conspicuous, and would distinguish them during acts".

Given that Agamemnon in particular is noted for its focus on the skene building representing the Argive palace and Clytemnestra's significant dominance of the central door (Hammond, 1972, 435-6), it is hard to see how the simple expedient of a low raised platform to highlight significant entrances into and exits from the Argive palace would not be exploited. Furthermore, the importance of registering the link between the murder tableaux in the first two plays (Ag 1372ff. and Cho 972ff., whether or not the corpses were carried out or, as is much more likely, revealed by the ekkyklema - Dale 1969, 119-129, 259-271) would have been greatly facilitated by the presence of a low platform.

Poe, (1989), 121-122, objects to Clytemnestra standing at a prop altar by stating that "surely it would have been dramatically inept not to have her first appear from the door and remain standing before the palace". But it is her actions, unsupported by words, between 83 and 103, which draw our attention and far outweigh the need to have her always at the door. There is ample exploitation of her control of the doorway at other points in the play.


Sommerstein (1989), 79.
For this as the majority view: Dale (1969), 123-4; Hammond (1972), 439; Brown (1982), 29; Sommerstein, 93-4. Apollo would then step onto the back of the revealed ekkylklemata to speak line 64 to Orestes. Against this, Taplin (1977, 365-74) argues that the Furies do not appear until 140. Sommerstein (93) rightly point out, however, that Taplin offers no convincing solution for the staging of the Clytemnæstra Ghost Scene (Eum. 94-139), for which Taplin requires that Clytemnæstra's ghost direct her conversation (therefore with her back to the audience) to Furies as yet unseen, but heard groaning and snorting from within the Delphic temple. For alternative views, see Rehm (1988), 290-301; Hammond (1988), 22-33.

Dale (1969), 120.


Ibid., 123.

Taplin (1977), 377 and 386, n.1.

Sommerstein does not address the point that Orestes needs to be shown as the particular and individual victim of the Furies on this occasion. Rather, he argues against Taplin on the technical grounds that there is nothing in the text which indicates explicitly that the Furies dance around Orestes (23).


Rehm (1988), 290-301.

Ibid., 297-298: omphalos=βρέτας. Cf. Hammond (1988), who, like Rehm, has the βρέτας in the middle of the orchestra from the opening of Eumenides, although his is a 'small wooden statue' of Athena placed on the central thymele (24). Unlike Rehm, Hammond advocates use of a separate prop omphalos (24-5), brought on and placed mid-stage by Orestes at Eum. 64-68. This is unnecessarily clumsy.


Ibid., 299-301.

For the altar which is itself multifunctional and multivalent, see Appendix C below.

Sommerstein (1989), 123 and 184.

Taplin (1977), 391; Dale (1969), 120.

Sommerstein (1989), 185; Taplin (1977), 391.

Sommerstein (1989), 185.

Hammond (1972, 441) initially proposed that Athena and her entourage of herald, trumpeter and jurors took up a position either against or on the pagos situated on the eastern edge of the orchestra. (See Green, 1991, 41, who is rightly doubtful of Hammond's literal translation of either text or iconographical evidence into performance.) Given the importance placed on the act of voting and Athena's endorsement of Orestes' acquittal and the foundation of the Areopagus, it would be far more conspicuously and appropriately staged in the orchestra. In a subsequent article, Hammond (1988) does in fact propose this orchestral staging of the court scene with Athena centrally placed, Orestes and Apollo to one side of her and the chorus ranging freely in the lower half of the orchestra (Hammond, 1988, Fig.2.) He persists, however, in placing the voting paraphernalia and the scene of the jurors casting their votes on the orchestra's eastern edge, which once again fails to give the scene its proper significance.

Parker (1985).


Rehm (1992), 108.

Brook (1987), 47; cf. Padel (1990), 353-354, who perceives the skene ("with its revolutionary portrayal of a three-dimensional facade on a two-dimensional wall") as emblematic of the tragic genre's capacity to engender objectivity and subjectivity (353), what Brook calls 'disillusion' and illusion. Wiles (1991) too notes the 'double awareness' (12, 14) of theatrical spectators, their willingness to be 'bewitched' while retaining a degree of observational distance (26).


Willett (1977), 170.

Aristotle's own views on tragic catharsis are notoriously difficult to assess, especially as the brief description of tragedy at Poetics VI.2-4 (1449b24-28), δι' ἥλιου καὶ φῶς ἁρπαίοντο τὴν ἔννοιαν τῶν τοιοῦτων παθημάτων καθαρσίαν evades straightforward interpretation. Many scholars (e.g., Lucas {1968}, 273-290, and Carnes {1982}, esp. 122) either influenced by the Bernaysian theory's focus on the medical derivation of the term 'katharsis' and its
meaning, or by heavy reliance on the apparent implications of *Politics* 8, have suggested that Aristotelian catharsis (including tragic catharsis) is a homeopathic purgation of strong emotions, such as pity and fear, expressed in terms of possession, and leaving the soul once 'possessed' with a feeling of well-being or ἱδρον (Cf. *Poetics* 51b23, 53b11, 53a36, 59a21, 62a16, 62b13).

Belfiore (1992) questions the usefulness of *Politics* 8 in decoding tragic catharsis (326) and disputes what she considers to be the biased 'homeopathic prejudice' of the critical tradition (260-266), suggesting instead that Greek medical catharsis (cf. Halliwell {1987}, 186-93, esp. n. 37) and indeed the cathartic process in general was believed by ancients to be *allopathic* - "interactive . . . effected by means of opposites rather than by means of similars" (291). All interpretations of catharsis claim its end-product to be curative in some respect, resulting in either a sense of self-satisfaction, well-being or pleasure. It was particularly to this idea of 'well-being' as the end-product of the cathartic process that Brecht objected, in much the same way as Plato had done (Resp. 605c-606b). Brecht and Plato both strongly scorned the collective ἱδρον (as Aristotle was to call it) which they thought resulted from an indulgent, uncritical reaction to the tragic dénouement and which encouraged 'surrendering oneself to' or 'losing oneself in' the play.

See Hodgson (1988), 50-52; Henn (1956), Ch. 1; Halliwell (1987). That there are merely superficial resemblances between Aristotle's exegesis of catharsis, which is largely derived from contemporary medical views and their concentration on the balance of humours, and the mainly psychological, psychotherapeutic bias of subsequent interpretations, particularly Freudian ones, is a point well made by Lucas (1969), 289-90.

Willett (1977), 172.

Ibid., 173.


Ibid., 105.

Ibid., 109.

Ibid., 109.

Ibid., 104. For Artaud's view on the place of masks and gesture in the Theatre of Cruelty, see also 102 and 103.

Ibid., 113.

Burkert (1985), 103.


Ibid., 197.

Ibid., 199.

Burkert (1985), 51, 65 and 103.

Ibid., 65.


Burkert (1985) 414, fn. 45.


Napier (1986), 58.

Ibid., 53, an ambivalence in which Napier suggests that the concept of "the supposed dual origins of tragedy and comedy in the impersonation of Satyrs" might lie.


Burkert (1985), 105 and 238.


Ibid., 201-205; Vernant (1988), esp. 390 and 411-12.

Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux (1988), 204.


Cf. Pickard-Cambridge (1962), 69-82 for the early history of the mask. The Suda s.v. Thespis credits the unknown creator of tragedy with the early adoption of disguise by smearing the face with white lead, then covering the face with purslane. It was Thespis "who introduced the use of masks, making them in linen alone". Dioscorides *Anth. Pal.* vii.410 talks of Bacchus leading "a wine-smeared chorus", a practice echoed in Horace's description of "peruncti faecibus ora" (*Ar. Po.* 275-7). If the type of structured mask familiar from C5th B.C.
archaeological evidence (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 191) was not worn at the very beginning of tragedy, disguise of the face seems to have been an early requisite. Cf. Calame (1986), 128-130. In any case, in the C5th B.C. theatre, the wearing of the mask was a familiar and accepted convention (see Rehm, 1992, 39-40).

Halliwell (1993), 197 fn. 4, rightly objects to Wiles' (1991) 'cautious claim' that the spectator was "possessed by Dionysus, thanks to the operation of the mask" (113).

Gould (1985), 24. Cf. Simon (1982) trans. C.E. Vafopoulou-Wilson, 10. One practical advantage of the wearing of masks was that it facilitated the doubling of roles by a single actor. Gould (23) further suggests that because masked drama makes it difficult to identify individual speakers in a group, dialogue between a large number of actors was never adopted as it might have led to audience confusion. In addition, it would be difficult to find "trained voices capable of meeting the vocal demands of text and theatre" (Gould, 1985, 23). See also Knox (1979), 39-40, for the expense of hiring professional actors and the lengthy training and high standards required by the latter.

These overwhelmingly practical considerations may have combined to make it easy to distribute parts between 3 actors, although a fourth actor may have been used as required (as advocated by Ceadel, 1941, for the problematic part-distribution of O.C. and by Taplin (1977) for the dilemma of staging lines of 875-902 of Choephoroi, 354). The number of actors may not have been a 'rule', as it is misleadingly described (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 135-6), but merely context- and circumstance-led. However, as Garvie (1988, intro., xlix) points out, if availability of the fourth actor were the case, one might expect to find more evidence for the license in surviving tragedy".


Both Aeschylus and Sophocles are credited with the introduction of κόθορνοι into theatrical usage. Aeschylus' biographer states that the poet equipped actors with gloves and long robes καὶ τῶν σύρματος ἔξωγκώσας μεῖζον τε τῶν κοθόρνων μετεωρίσας (Vita, 10). However, this attribution must surely allude to the platform-soled boots of the Hellenistic period as the result of some misunderstanding (Gould, 1985, 26). Sophocles' biographer records that φαινεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἰασόν τὰς λευκὰς κρατῆδας αὐτῶν ἔξωπερησαί, ἢς ἑκολογεῖαι οἱ τε ἐπορκιάσαι καὶ οἱ χορεύται (Vita of Sophocles, 6). This description is more in keeping with the depiction of κόθορνοι on vases; that κόθορνοι were quickly assimilated into the iconography of the theatre (indeed κόθορνοι become the mark of identification that such scenes are likely to be theatrical) from the 460's B.C. strongly suggests that they were certainly in use at the time of Aeschylus, even if it is impossible to say whether or not they were invented by him.


Simon suggests that long-sleeved costumes were in place at the time of Aeschylus, drawing on the late Life of Aeschylus, 12-13. In contrast, Gould (1989), with a survey of the archaeological evidence, puts the introduction of the long sleeve at the end of the fifth century, 26-7.

Cf. n. 115. See Rehm (1992), 41, for the range of flexibility in role-playing afforded by the disguise of mask, costume and footwear.

Gould (1985), 24. Wiles (1991) refers to the 'neutral' of the tragic mask (24) as obliging "the actor to externalize emotion and develop the expressivity of his whole body". He makes the further interesting point that modern mask theorist-practitioners from both western traditions, such as Lecoq (69, 104) and eastern traditions, such as the Noh actor Kanze Hisao (105), explain how the blank mask allows for a far greater range of emotional expressivity by its wearer.

Simon (1982), 10-11 (Cf. Halliwell, 1993, 204-209). A common example used to illustrate the correlation between the sculptural 'Severe style' and dramatic mask is the red-figure jug (c. 470-450 B.C.) from the Athenian agora, Agora Museum, Inv. P11810, which shows a female mask with hair cropped short to indicate mourning (Pl. 4.1. Simon= Pl. IVa Gould, 20).

Rehm (1992) rejects the possibility (cf. Halliwell, 1993, 206-7) that masks could be used 'self-consciously' to alienate (40). Perhaps by this, Rehm means that ancient actors did not use the mask in a strictly Brechtian sense, i.e. when the mask specifically and solely functions to alienate and the actor is aware of this function; this is indeed the case. But the theatrical mask both inherently acts as a barrier and paradoxically makes possible emotional involvement of
actors and audience alike. Furthermore, Aeschylus may have made use of the alienating quality of the Gorgon's face-mask/τρόπωστον, donned by the Fury chorus in Eumenides, to comment implicitly on the function of tragedy. On this, see Belfiore (1992), 19-30; cf. Taplin and Wilson (1993), 175-6. At first, the Gorgon mask is terrifying and repellent (i.e.-alienating); by the end of Eumenides, it is beneficial, an apotropaic charm to produce αἰδώς - the audience may look on this face with acceptance.

Inevitably, however, the actor's degree of success in transformation through modulation in voice (Kainmo, 1993, 26) and gesture lent him renown in his own right (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 167-176). Conversely, the strongly competitive element already inherent in the distribution of roles amongst three 'grades' of actor (Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 134-5), meant that only the most highly skilled actors would appear at the City (as opposed to the Rural) Dionysia (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 169), where the prize for the best protagonist was awarded (This latter practice was probably started at the Dionysia in 449 B.C. See Ghiron-Bistaghe, 1976, 20 and Kainmo, 1993, 20.) Thus, actors were at pains to impress their audience (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 170) to the extent that the C4th actor Theodorus forbade any actor to appear before him and so win audience sympathy. However this anecdote may be taken (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 135; Green, 1991, n.3, 16), it must have been the case that, ever-conscious of their place in the Athenian version of a 'star system', actors strove to win over audiences, even though spectators had no 'official' capacity in judging the special contest for protagonists For this view see Kainmo (1993), 25-28 contra Ghiron-Bistaghe (1976), 160.

Rehearsing and dressing scenes showing the mechanics of production include a red-figure bell krater (ε.460 B.C.) from tomb 173 Valle Pega, Ferrara (Pl. 6.1. Simon=Pl. Ilb Gould, 18), and a red-figure pelike from Cervetri, c. 430 B.C., (Pl. Illa Gould, 18). Cf. Calane (1986), 132.

Prag (1985), 44-51 and Pls. 30-32.
Ibid., 271.
Sider (1978).
Ibid., 22-24.
Rosenmeyer (1982), 52.
Ibid., 53.
Parker (1986), 339.
Hallinwell (1993) makes the same point: the neutral mask allows "emotional projection by the spectator" (207-208).
Napier (1986), Pls. 35e, 37a and b, 38a and b, 46, 80.
Parker, (1986), 339.
Ibid., 338.
Ibid.
Wiles (1991) emphasizes that in tragedy, as in comedy, γεςτο/στικία (like the voice) is the prime purveyor of πάθος (21, 24-25, 68-69). But whereas in New Comedy, ἡθος is fixed by the nature of the mask (25), "the ἡθος of the [tragic] protagonists emerged exclusively through the action of the play, and was not revealed by the mask" (24). Voice and gesture appear to emanate from the mask (108).
Parker (1986), 341-342.
See above, n. 122.
Hodgson (1988), 208-209.
See Appendix C below.
See Part One, Section 2, II.1 above.
Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum (1954), vols. 1-2, 43, 46, 86, 96.8; Garland (1985), passim;
Easterling (1988), 89.
Ibid.
Almost every feature of the lamentation had its counterpart in *Choephori*, where the rituals of grief were interwoven with the more sinister gestures of intended violence. The table below compares Alexiou's picture of everyday death rituals with their prominent representation in *Choephori*. Of course, Alexiou's work is itself based on speculative reconstruction of literary, artistic and epigrammatic evidence.

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<td>Right hand stretched over corpse,</td>
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<td>Hands raised above the head,</td>
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<tr>
<td>beating and tearing out hair (6).</td>
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<td>Lacerating the cheeks (forbidden by legislation) and tearing clothes (18).</td>
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<td>Lamentation involved movement as well as wailing and singing, accompanied by σφιδας (6).</td>
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<td>Interplay of solemn and ecstatic gestures (Diehl's suggestion that kommos, accompanied by frenzied gestures, was associated with Asiatic grief-RE xi, 1195ff.) indicates that something already inherently dance-like about lamentation and its dual moods of grief and anger, requiring distinctive gestures.</td>
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<td>Cut lock of hair placed on tomb (7).</td>
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<td>Pouring χοαί (7-8, 9, 22).</td>
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<td>πέλανος of meal, honey, oil (7).</td>
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<td>Custom of hiring or compelling strangers to lament gives rise to kommos, the antiphonal lament between hired slaves and kin.</td>
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<td>τὸ ἀνακαλείσθαι-appeals by name/invocation to raise spirit of dead from grave. This aspect of funerary ritual at tomb preserved today (8, 22, 31, 46-7, 59, 80-2, 109-10, 134-7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiterated cries, often linked with climax of emotion, to establish contact with dead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Garvie (1988), 53-4, disputes the view that the libation-bearers are Asiatic; Hall (1989), 116, quite rightly points out that "the text implies otherwise". However, it is equally inappropriate to infer a specifically Trojan identity, and all this implies, for Choephoris's chorus. That there is no textual evidence for this supposition is convincingly argued by Marsh McCall (1990).

That the use of the instantaneous aorist ἔκωφε suggests a temporal flexibility is a point well made by McCall (op. cit.): Choephoris's chorus engage in a spontaneous display of grief which simultaneously recalls "their lamentation earlier in the parodos" and "their grief long ago at the time of Agamemnon's death" (20).

Following Garvie (1988) on the compound adjectives of Cho. 425: ἄπραξιτόπληκτα carries the vivid sense 'striking and pulling out the hair as they strike'. Πολυτάλακτα is, as Garvie, indicates, more effective than either πολύπλαγκτα or πολυπλάνητα, and is appropriately graphic in the context of excessive oriental mourning

Garvie (1988), nn. on Cho. 423-428, 158-160. See also Thomson (1966) 148, for an emphasis on the oriental character of this κομμός.

Ibid., 160.

Ibid., 115.

Nilsson, (1911), 620 n.2.

Diehl, RE xi, 1195-1207.


Ibid., 13.

Plato. Laws 800c. 1-3. See also Loraux (1990), esp. 19-47.


Loraux (1990), 47.


Easterling (1991). The Iliad's female characters provide appropriate models for tragic heroines who "express thoughts and perceptions that their society might 'officially' think them incapable of formulating", (149).

Loraux (1986), 47.


See below, Part Two, section 4, on the Cassandra Scene. Cf. Loraux (1990), 92.

Loraux (1990), 76-77; 62-63.

See below, Part Two, section 9c.

Loraux (1990), 83 and 99; M. McCall (1990), 27.

Given that there is so much in this choral characterization which is implicitly 'anti-civic', it is hard to give any credence to Garvie's (1988, 316f.) suggestion, strongly endorsed by McCall (25-26), that the chorus is equated with "the conventional representatives of Argos" based purely on the inference that lines 980 and 1040 are in some way addressed to the chorus. 980 could equally be interpreted as an implicit address to the audience, and, in any case, contains no mention of 'Argive' identity. When Orestes does refer to the Argive citizenry (302-303), he alludes to the men who fought at Troy and are "the most renowned citizens among mortals" and in 1040, it is this male Argive citizen body which Orestes enjoins to keep memory of his deeds alive in future time, ἐν χρονῶι. The chorus members are barbarians whose role as house-slaves is first made explicit at 84. The πᾶς Ἀργείων πόλεως (1046) are quite distinct from the chorus of foreign domestic slavewomen.


Burkert (1985), 75.
It is probably a similar scene of dramatized τὸ ἄνωκαλεῖσθαι (given the characteristically fixed regard of what must be identical masks and the uniformity of costumes) which inspired the depiction of a group of six men, directing towards a grave and its rising spirit, arm-raising gestures and forward steps in unison strongly suggestive of choreographed movement on the early C5th B.C. red-figure krater in Basle. See Simon (1982), Plate 2.


'Hear' :- 125, 139, 157 [332, 399, 459, 476], 489, 500, 508.

'Send a spirit of punishment/an ἀφωγὴ of some kind' :- 147-8, [382-3, 477-8], 499.

'Agamemnon/παρηγὴ be present/come up into the daylight' :- [456, 460], 495-496.

'Grant' :- 480 and 490; 'Behold' :-[406, 407], 501.

This brief survey, (where [ ] indicate the Great Kommos) reveals that exhortations 'to hear', 'send' and 'appear' variously directed to Zeus, the chthonic deities and Agamemnon, are predominant. My own view is that wishes to be heard and seen in the underworld, if not always accompanied by the beating of earth, would require the downward focus of kneeling or at least lowering the gaze towards earth, whereas requests for Agamemnon to appear (or himself send help), sent by Zeus or one of the μάκαρες χήραι would be marked by gestures of beckoning or invocation performed from a standing position. This sequence of downward and upward gestures is apparent from Persians 681ff. - ἐκοιμηθηκαί τᾶς ἑως to elicit Darius' attention and gaze which is thus drawn upwards to the act of τὸ ἄνωκαλεῖσθαι by the elders standing near the tomb (686).

See also recent fragments of Aeschylus' Psychagogoi in Radt (1985), Vol. 3, 370-374. The evidence here suggests a heavy reliance on Odyssey 11 as source material and indicates, like Persians, that Aeschylus had thoroughly exploited the spectacular effect of staged necromancy and its successful outcome (i.e.:- raising of the dead) in the theatre. Broadhead (1960) notes in Appendix III "Necromancy" that whereas in Odyssey 11, the consultant must go to an entrance of the Underworld, in Persians, the tomb as a focus of necromancy is a more flexible location (303-4).

In Oresteia, where the audience may expect Agamemnon's ghost to appear in response to wishes expressed in Choephoron's kommos, it must remain disappointed. In contrast, the unexpected appearance of Clytemnestra's ghost at Eum. 94, makes theatrically effective use of the surprise element.


Humphreys (1983), 89.

Ibid., 85. Also, Garland (1985), 42.

Humphreys (1983), 86.

Alexiou (1974), 21. Reducing the effect of keeping the memory of an individual alive was also facilitated by Solon's transformation of the Genesia from a private remembrance of a person's 'death-day' to a public Festival of the Dead held on 5th September. For discussion of Genesia, see Garland (1985), 105 and Humphreys (1983), 87.


Cf. n. 157 above.


Garvie (1988), 81.

Ibid., n. on Cho 343, 135.

Hall (1989), 132 and n. 85, 130.

For the impact of both the sight and sound of this stanza and its deployment of unusual compound epithets, repetition and onomatopoeia, together with wild, distinctly oriental gestures, see Garvie (1988), 160.

Lonsdale (1993) makes the point that the "self-directed disfiguration of the mourner" (243) represents the antithesis of well-ordered choral dances intended to please the gods (242-3). Wild gestures of lament contrast with the female mourners' tendency of the corpse, a reaction "born of revulsion to the stillness of death" (258).


Ibid., 142-3.

Thomson (1966), 146.

Taplin (1977), 356-359.
Lebeck (1971), passim.
For initial discussion of this passage, see above Part One, section 1, I.3.
For the nuance of sensual pleasure derived from this spattering of blood, see Moles (1979).
For the three blows as part of the triadic symbolism of *Oresteia*, see Burian (1986), 335-336.
Goldhill (1984), 89-95.
Here, however, Clytemnestra’s subversive use of the traditional form and function of nature imagery adds to the sense of perversion which characterizes the entire speech. On this, see Peradotto (1964).
Clytemnestra’s words in 1385-1387 suggest that the third blow struck to her husband is perceived in terms of a ‘votive libation’ - ἀπεταία χόρος. It was customary to pour the third libation to Zeus Soter. Here, the recipient of the libation is the chthonic ‘Zeus’, Hades, ironically titled κατὰ χθονός... νεκρῶν σωτήρ (1387-8). Lucas (1969) argues that in using the term ‘to pour a libation on a corpse’, the poet is alluding only to Agamemnon’s role as a ‘sacrificial victim’ (66), since ”σωτήρ had no place in a Greek funeral” (65). While this is very probably the case, Lucas’ belief that 1395 is not in any way connected with 1385-87 and 1397-1398 (see Zeitlin, 1965, 463) would seem to deny the associative technique which particularly characterizes *Oresteia*.
The image of the third libation (variously symbolic of placating, anticipating help from, or thanking a deity) is here surely poured in a spirit of thanks to Hades, the Zeus Soter of the underworld (1387), but the image of devotion is ironically subverted to describe the third blow to one who is πεπτωκότα, already a corpse; thus it is aptly in honour of a ‘Zeus beneath the earth and guardian of corpses’ (See Burian, 1986, 335.). 1395 is connected with this initial libation allusion and thus catachrestically combines the notion of thanksgiving libation with pre-sacrifice libation to describe a murder, and although Lucas denies the possibility, the horror of Clytemnestra’s choice of expression is undoubtedly heightened by the fact that it was placatory χοροί that were properly poured to the dead and the chthonic powers, not libations.
See Haldane (1965), 37.
*iodes* 535b-e, 536a; Resp. 395a.
Poetics, Chapter 26, esp. 1462a 6-7.
Ibid., Plate 1, 12; Beazley ARV2 138, no.15; B.M. E270.
Davison (1968), n.2, 56.
Fraenkel (1978) III, 781-784, points out their sudden animation towards the end of *Agamemnon* (1650ff.) to defend themselves with ‘swords’ against Aegisthus’ henchmen, if they do have prop swords which is hotly contested by Denniston-Page (1986, 221). It is plausible, however, that they did use their σκιτάρια as weapons, thus ‘like swords’.
For example, David Wiles’ workshop on “Performance Conventions of Greek Theatre” presented at the British Museum in March 1992, which illustrated with performed excerpts of Euripides’ *Hippolytus* the effect of contrasting the still delivery of powerful narrative with choreographed storytelling and action replays.

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Notes for Part Two
PART TWO: THE ROLE OF THE THREE ORESTEIAN CHORUSES: LANGUAGE, ACTION AND EMOTION.

Section 1: Introduction to Part Two

Something has already been said about the role of the three Oresteian choruses. Their relation to the changing proportion and significance of language and action as the trilogy of *Oresteia* unfolds should also be noted: the three respective choruses are characterized in part by their increasing involvement in the stage action. The first chorus seems least effectual in the context of action (although the Elders do attempt to take action against the tyrants towards the end of the play); the central chorus contributes significantly to the action at certain key moments while maintaining a degree of distance from it at others, while the final chorus largely motivates, and interacts within the context of, the central plot-action of its play; in effect the Furies are what they speak and act on what they say. This changing role of the three choruses can be linked with the thematic development from obscurity to clarity, which is conveyed by the clarification of language and its further enhancement through action. If this language/action model is correct and is indeed linked with the three choruses, their connection may contain comment on and evaluation of the 'progress' (perhaps 're-definition' would be a less contentious word) of communication (language + action) by the poet; i.e. inherent in the trilogy is the message that language and action need to be
constantly re-defined and improved to match the ever more complex requirements of its community, Athens. Implicit in this is a comment on the growth of the 'new consciousness' in Greece and all that this in turn implies.

It is possible, then, to detect the poet's comment on and evaluation of his own community in the changing interrelation of language, action and the Oresteian choruses; but this would suggest a very dry reading of a theatrical piece, designed ultimately for performance in the theatre. If there is a degree of authorial comment about Athenian society in the Oresteia, it naturally follows that this will include certain references which are specifically self-reflexive or metatheatrical (since theatre simultaneously influences and is influenced by its community). If so, the language/action model and its link with the development of the Oresteian choruses will be seen to have a far more complex effect than at first suggested. Through the choruses of his final great work, Aeschylus seems to talk implicitly about the tragic development itself, a mixture of unashamed borrowings from the forms, styles and subject-matter of the pre-tragic poets which, re-shaped (apparently paradoxically) as complex innovation, is finally dependent on a unique audience-performance interaction.

Of course, this kind of self-reflexiveness is in itself a borrowing from Homer. In the Odyssey, there are numerous mentions of bards and
singing and thus the poet refers to his own art and its influence. As scholars have pointed out⁴, the emotional and sorrowful reaction of Odysseus to the song of his own actions at Troy (Od. 8) is particularly foregrounded by contrast with the straightforward entertainment value in the other, more distant, story of Ares and Aphrodite, which also serves as a cautionary tale with a moralizing view-point and tone. The whole episode highlights the wide and complex range of responses which can be elicited from the listening and watching audience. The latter can variously be entertained, moved by ever-vacillating degrees of sympathy and identification with the subject-matter, or distanced.

This potential for changing the relationship of the audience with the performance, manipulating their responses from the rational to the most emotive, was taken up and used with great effect by the tragic poets. In Oresteia, it was partly through the changing role of the three Oresteian choruses and its relationship to the language/action model that Aeschylus achieved this ‘manipulation’ of audience perception and perspective.

The three choruses influence the mood, tone, atmosphere and feel of their respective plays, thus conditioning the audience's emotional responses to, and objective judgements of, the actions on stage (often by stating their own emotional reactions and judgements).

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In *Orestesia*, it is the three choruses which signal that human response to vengeance is necessarily emotional and which open the channel for the 'flow of emotion' between performance and audience.
Section 2: The Flow of Emotion: Atmosphere, Mood, Feeling

An overwhelming atmosphere of fear and unease pervades the first play of the trilogy and is often evoked through descriptions of anxiety/\(\phi \beta \rho \omicron \zeta\) as expressed by the chorus of Argive Elders in response to events past, present and predicted for the future. Significantly, too, it is the 'heart'/mind that is located as the seat of a whole range of emotions - grief, fear, hope, rage- not only by the Argive Elders, but also by the two subsequent choruses; thus, the motif of the 'emotional heart' acts as a link between the choruses.

It would be helpful therefore to look at the question of tragic atmosphere in the context of various fruitful discussions regarding Aeschylus' formal 'system' for conveying a sense of the physical and emotional 'inner life'.

In a recent article, Thalmann has suggested that \(\theta \nu \mu \dot{\alpha} \zeta\) connotes the initial sensation (in physiological terms, the flow or movement of blood vapour) of any irrational or violent emotion, which, only when it has taken hold, is located in the \(\kappa \alpha \rho \dot{\delta} \dot{\iota} \alpha\). This refines the 'dualist' perspective pioneered by Sansone and, to a lesser extent, Webster, which sets the faculties of the \(\phi \rho \eta \nu\), cognition, noesis, logical assessment/judgement and the ability to express all these through logos, against the irrational or intuitive emotions which are associated with any of the following: \(\theta \nu \mu \dot{\alpha} \zeta\), \(\kappa \alpha \rho \dot{\delta} \dot{\iota} \alpha\), \(\iota \pi \omicron \rho\), a group collectively known as
'innards'/σπλάγχνα. Thalmann's suggestion is that Aeschylus' extant tragedies reveal a remarkably consistent and effective portrayal of the physiology of the emotions centred around the interrelation of θυμός, καρδία and φρήν.

Sansone's\textsuperscript{12} remarkable study shows that physical/physiological aspects of inner activity are inextricably related to the psychical and psychological (whether intellectual or emotional processes), whereas our own modern bias causes us to demarcate clearly between body and 'soul'. In Aeschylus, the motions or sensations of the inner organs (the flow of liquids or vapours in the innards) are synonymous with emotions which in turn motivate not only the speech, but also the stage movements, gestures and dance of tragic actors and chorus. The 'physio-psychology' of emotions in Aeschylus is therefore highly appropriate to the dramatic medium which uses the outward expression (motion) to an audience of 'inner' thoughts and feelings (emotion).

In \textit{Agamemnon}, the predominant hold of fear over the hearts of the Argive Elders is established at a very early stage (\textit{Ag.}99-103).

\begin{verbatim}
... αὖνει ποιῶν τε γενοῦν
tήσει μερίμνης,
η νῦν τοτὲ μὲν κακόφρων τελέσει,
tοτὲ δ' ἐκ θυσίων δὲς ἀναφαίνεις
ἐλπίς ὁμόνει φρονίδ' ἐπιληπτον
†τὴν θυμοφθόρον λύπης φρέναν†.
\end{verbatim}
Although the text of 103 is impossibly corrupt, the important idea of the innards as the seat of μερινμα can be deduced with a certain degree of confidence. Lattimore's\textsuperscript{13} translation gives the flavour.

This anxiety is directed to Clytemnestra whose silent presence is no comfort without verbal confirmation of the fall of Troy. The queen does not respond, but re-enters the palace at, or after, 103\textsuperscript{14}; so the chorus is forced to resume the narrative of past events which led to the Trojan War. Lines 104-159, a metaphorical 'prophetic song' about the initial interpretation of the eagle omen by the prophet Calchas, is framed with a refrain laden with present fear and an unspecified hope that the future will/may be better. Such a refrain signals the central and over-riding fear of the Argive Elders - wrong-doings of the past will inevitably determine the present by an eventual demand for vengeance. We may hope for good in the future, but the sorrowful past described in their narrative song will eventually make for a sorrowful present and ultimately (through the self-perpetuating cycle of vengeance) the potential for an equally sorrowful future. The much greater likelihood of the latter (in contrast with the better future hoped for in the song-refrain) is expressed later by the Argive Elders themselves (\textit{Ag.} 251-254).

Of course the inner faculties can simultaneously hold the conflicting emotions of hope and fear, joy and grief; for the Argive Elders, the heart is often portrayed as experiencing widely different
emotions, which reflects the difficulty of reconciling the actions of the
king who justly punished Troy and Paris, but who simultaneously
murdered his innocent daughter to achieve this 'just' aim. So at 479-82,
their initial excitement and gladness at the predicted return of their king
disintegrates. To believe the apparently propitious lighting of beacons
(wordless signs in place of true *logos* which is both communicated and
received by the *φην*) is to kindle the irrational heart or *καρδία* (481)
with false interpretation. The choral mood quickly turns to despondency
when there is no more concrete confirmation of his arrival, a *logos* of
victory which could be rationally processed by the *φρένες*.

At the king's arrival, the chorus openly confesses to their earlier
emotional difficulty with his decision to embark on the Trojan War - at
that time, Agamemnon was "written/inscribed unfavourably" or "painted
in ugly colours{in their hearts}"\(^{15}\). But now he is back, their hearts are
filled with a duteous love which is truly felt, not feigned. (*Ag*, 799-809).
Genuine emotion in the *καρδία* or *ημαρ* means that it will be sincerely
expressed by the noetic organ, the *φην*. Thus in their desire to find the
right words of encomium -πώς σε προσεύπω; πώς σε σεβίξω; -785f.),
the choral *logos* will not come ἀπ' ἔκρισις φρένας (805).

True joy comes from deep within a true heart; it is made clear that
any pretended emotion, even if in evidence from the actions and outward
appearance of joy or grief, is not located deeply and truly in the heart. In
feigned grief the pang of sorrow does not touch the heart/ ἤπειρο (Ag. 791-2). It is therefore deeply ironic when Clytemnestra, who is able to feign every emotion and hide her 'true' inner feelings, comments on the tears of the Elders as indicative of their loyal thoughts (Ag. 271). Their tears of joy are not a "fawning with watery love" (Ag. 798).

Tension between love/duty towards Agamemnon and foreboding are the emotions which dominate the heart in the stichomythia between the Argive Elders and the Herald in the first play, 540-550. The Herald's love for his country is reciprocated with the love felt by Argive citizens for their absent men. The Argive Elders' foreboding is generated by the absence of Agamemnon and the leadership of the man-woman Clytemnestra, although this is not explicitly stated; it is simply hinted that there were some to cause fear when the kings were away (549-50).
Section 3: The Prophetic Soul: Fear, Pity and Lamentation in the Cassandra Scene

The parodos of *Agamemnon* is a narrative of past events interlaced with expressions of fear and hope, arising from the difficulty in defining and therefore understanding human and divine causality and motivation. The Argive Elders, whose song it is, talk of themselves as having a 'prophetic' authority to tell of past events, to recall the prophet Calchas' own interpretation of the eagle omen at Aulis (Ag. 104-6). Applying the metaphor of prophecy to a clear and accurate narrative of past events implies that some further interpretation of those facts will be required (prophecy is, after all, an interpretation of signs and symbols, an insight which goes beyond a straightforward factual narrative). As has been said earlier, it is fear which shapes the song-refrains of the opening lyric triad of 104-159 and which later elicits a fatalistic suggestion that thinking about the future is grief too soon given; underlying this apparent desire to block the future by not speaking or thinking about it in specific terms (very much the thought behind line 248) is a very real dread of a self-perpetuating cycle of unstoppable ἡξβρος. If the prophetic metaphor is used to convey the rational (factual narrative) and emotional (interpretative/intuitive) response of the Elders to events in the past, what happens when they are confronted with the much-feared prediction of the future with which the true prophetess Cassandra presents them?
In many ways, the Cassandra scene is the culmination of the first play. It reveals that despite their claims to 'prophetic' insight\(^{18}\) at the opening of the play, the Argive Elders find Cassandra's prophecies at first difficult to understand, then difficult to accept and finally, her extraordinary insight can do nothing to alter an apparently fated outcome - human action is ineffectual. The possibility of hope is blocked and as predicted, it only remains to resort to grief, lament and pity.

If the metaphor of prophecy can be seen to refer in part to human intuition, the Elders' reaction to Agamemnon's walking on the tapestries is certainly one full of fearful foreboding (\textit{Ag.} 975-83). Here, fear is unmovable, set before the 'divining heart' of the Argive Elders; the outcome seems fearful from every perspective, there is no room for 'trusty courage', nor is this sensation, like insubstantial dreams, 'hard to \textit{interpret}'. This is obviously significant - the Argive Elders can broadly interpret the eventual outcome of the unstoppable cycle of events started by the Trojan expedition, but by not speaking about it, they hope to avoid involvement and the grief and pain it would bring.

It is this which leads them to attempt to check Cassandra with their \textit{προφήτως δ'οὕτως ματεῖομεν} (1099), which contrasts strongly with her relentless search for true information and interpretation (1093-4). A subsequent statement (\textit{Ag.} 1130ff.) reveals that the \textit{logos} of the professional seer (\textit{πολυεπεῖς τέχνας}, 1134) transforms intuitive \textit{δείμα}}
into something intellectually comprehensible, and so to cognition - φόβον μαθεῖν (1135). However, for the Argive Elders at least, 'fear's lesson' never induces effective cognition leading to positive action. Their words here contain a note of overwhelming despondency - no good, only evil, comes from the words of prophets, and the emotion of fear is thus justified.

When confronted with the potentially distressing interpretations of the prophetess Cassandra, the Elders often express a lack of understanding. In 1105-6, it is clear that they do understand Cassandra's reference to Thyestes' feast on his children (1095f.), since they were witnesses to it as a past event, but they do not grasp her cryptic allusion to the νεκρὸν ἀχοῦ (1101). They continue to be at a loss (ἀμηχανῶ at 1113 and 1177) to decipher her obscure riddles, to infer the hard fact/conclusion/τυφλό from her wild and sorrowful song.

The prophetess inspires fear in the Elders because her accurate visions of past events, Aerope's adultery and Thyestes' feast, are unassailable and recounted as if she had been there (1201). Their terrified response to her chilling accuracy is located in the heart, as earlier. At 1121, the Elders break into dochmiacs¹⁹ which signal a sudden extreme of emotion. Lines 1121-4 are at first difficult to interpret, but this arises partly from the fact that the Elders are distressed; their thoughts are confused and unstructured in response to the wild song of Cassandra²⁰.
The Elders' short speech at 1242ff. and the stichomythia which follows it are vital to the audience's understanding of the role of this first chorus. Fear possesses them because Cassandra had previously outlined the Thyestes story in precise clarity of detail, as if resoundingingly to prove herself a true prophet. Her recollection was not told with obscure images, metaphors and similes, through which the truth can only be partly identified.\(^{21}\)

Her emotive descriptions of the monstrous Clytemnestra, the murderous woman, they do not grasp, running from the path of understanding both here (1245) and at 1252. This leads Cassandra to foretell the immediate future in the clearest terms. No one could fail to understand the meaning of 1246. Yet even after this, the chorus refuses to accept the prophetic logos and its attendant action. As Cassandra emphasizes, they resort to words, hoping against hope that the prayer μὴ γένοιτο πῶς (1249) will somehow prevent the pending violent action of those who plan to act - ἀποκτείνειν (1250).

Even if comprehension (ξυνήκα, 1243) does follow after the floundering sensation of being at a loss (ἀμηχανῶ), the Argive Elders are characteristically ineffectual against the actions of destruction. Towards those destined for a fated end decreed by the gods (for such is the nature of Apollo's punishment of Cassandra who admits to guilt in the matter - ἦμι πλακόν, 1212), pity is the only option. As Cassandra sings a θρήνος...
for herself (lament for those still alive is part of the greater theme of
corrupted song/feast/sacrifice which will be discussed later), the Argive
Elders' sense of pity grows. Later (1372ff.) it will be the Elders
themselves who renew the song of weeping and fear, ineffectual as they
appear against the twin force of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.
Section 4: A Threnody of Weeping: Lamentation and Pity

At first, Cassandra's unmusical song\textsuperscript{22}, an apparently premature lament by a living creature over herself, is explained as a result of divinely inspired madness by the chorus (\textit{Ag.} 1140-45). The nightingale-singer Procne laments forever her son Itys, served up as a feast to his father Tereus, to punish him for the rape and mutilation of her sister, Philomela. The allusion is apt. In the Itys story, Tereus cuts out Philomela's tongue to prevent her from telling of her rape; Cassandra too is deprived of her voice, since she is fated by Apollo never to be believed (1212). But like Philomela (who uses a tapestry to depict the story of her rape to her sister Procne), she will eventually weave together the threads of past, present and future convincingly and coherently, only to find that such a picture (which includes the thread of her own life) is easily swept away (1329). The Itys story also contains the motif of the father eating his child, a crime inspired to punish the crime of adultery/abuse by Tereus. So too, the feast of Thyestes is a punishment for the crime of adultery. Both events are recalled through the prophetic visions of Cassandra (1095-1097 and 1191-1193).

The sorrowful refrain of the lamenting nightingale, encapsulated in the repetition of the name 'Itys, Itys' (1144), parallels Cassandra's reiterated \textsc{i}ω, \textsc{i}ω (1136, 1146, 1156 and 1166). The whole lyric section from 1136 to 1177 is a necessary lament for the prophetess' own death
and destruction, linked as it is with the fateful marriage of Paris and the
destruction of Troy and Priam's royal family. In 1173f., the Elders still
hope that this unnatural lament is the result of divinely inspired madness.

However, after Cassandra's long speech (1256-1294) in which she
clearly predicts her own death, the Argive Elders recognize that her wild
\( \theta \rho \acute{\eta} \nu o\zeta \) has not been aimless or pointless, although she herself
subsequently questions the need for lament (1286). Her noble endurance
(1290, 1298 and 1302 - being \( e\nu\tau\partial\lambda\mu o\zeta \) in contrast with the reckless
daring of Clytemnestra at 1237) is recognized. At first, though, the chorus
questions her apparent acquiescence - will she go willingly like a
sacrificial animal to the altar, in spite of the obvious truth of her
predictions (they are believable, 1213, and therefore should be truly
[1296] persuasive)?

The stichomythia of 1299-1306 holds the answer and an appraisal
of the human condition, which is a core motif of tragic feeling and which
first finds expression in Homer\(^{23}\).

Cassandra's clear foreknowledge, unlike the Elders' undefined fear,
enables her to see that there is no release (1299) in flight (1301).
Cassandra rejects this. The Elders praise her, she will have the \( k\lambda\deltao\varsigma \)
usually afforded to the Homeric warriors for enduring her fate. But for
her it is an empty fame, the pointless prize in a culture governed by
honour in battle and insignificant in comparison with the destruction of
her family and city. Her only 'choice' is to suffer and the Argive Elders can only respond with pity. Like the audience, they are witnesses to her final lament and to her final, hopeful prayer, which predicts the coming of Orestes. Her lament is not born of fear (1316), but of the knowledge that vengeance, grief and death are inescapable because divinely decreed (1321). Although pity flows to her from the chorus, her expansive insight recognizes herself as a particular example of the universal human condition.

The note of lamentation is taken up again by the Argive Elders after the death of Agamemnon from 1372 to the end of the first play. Despite Cassandra's clear prophecy concerning the king's death, the Argive Elders can do nothing to prevent it; now it remains for them to mourn. In the refrain of 1489-1496=1513-1520, the flow of grief is unsuppressible and comes, as did joy at his previous arrival, \( \phi\pi\varepsilon\nu\zeta \ \varepsilon \ \phi\iota\lambda\iota\alpha\zeta \). Later, the Elders are concerned that the murderers will lament and bury Agamemnon (1530-1551), thus corrupting the purpose of the \( \theta\rho\eta\nu\zeta \), making it \( \delta\upsilon\sigma\phi\gamma\mu\omicron\zeta \). Lament, like joy, (805) should come from a sincere 'heart'/\( \phi\rho\eta\nu \) (1550). Yet in spite of this, implicit in the repeated choral questions \( \pi\omicron\varsigma \ \sigma\epsilon \ \delta\omega\kappa\rho\upsilon\sigma\omega \; \tau\iota \ \pi\sigma \varepsilon \iota\pi\omicron \omega \) (1490-91=1514-15) is the inability of the Elders' \( \phi\rho\eta\nu \), the faculty of \textit{logos}, to express coherently in words the due sense of grief at the murder of Agamemnon.
In 1530-1534, the Elders once again experience ἀμηχανία (cf. 1113 and 1177). In the Cassandra scene, ἄρην had been the seat of prophecy (1084), which predicted evil outcome (1064, 1102, 1131, 1133, 1144, 1165, 1174 and 1214). In 1530ff., it is the location of the confused, bewildered, uncertain grief felt by the Argive Elders for a house certain to fall. Stripped of 'the resourceful thought of the mind', the Elders flounder, just as they did in the Cassandra scene, yet again when they heard Agamemnon's death-cry and could not decide a course of action, and now. Physical movement or palpitation in the innards, the ἐνταλαμός μὲριμνᾶ of the φροντίς, causes confusion in the outward motion expressive of choral concern/uncertainty - "where shall I turn as the house is falling" (1532).

Ultimately, it is Aegisthus' entrance which inspires the first note of directed hatred, a collective desire at least for positive action (1650); the potential battle is defused, but the motif of increasing desire for effective action, driven by anger and a right to vengeance is the over-riding one of the central play. In Choephoroi, the chorus will be seen to be far more effective in the action, which parallels the double purpose of its central lament as a hymn for victory, a way of turning the negative to positive.
Section 5: The Collective Conscience as a weapon against ἀνηχερία and the Elders as representatives of the Argive city

At 844f., the ἄραξ Agamemnon recommends:

τὰ δ’ ἄλλα πρὸς πόλιν τε καὶ θεοὺς
κοινοὺς ἀγώνας θέντες ἐν πανηγύρει
βουλευσόμεσθα.

This is the king's suggested remedy for the problems hinted at by the chorus at 807f.: gods and men will share in taking counsel - a communal activity.

But at 1343ff.24, when the Argive Elders hear the cries of their king being murdered within the palace, they flounder as to what course of action they should take. For the first time, the chorus is not μονόφρων - the separate voices of each of its members are heard in a discourse, in which they struggle to reach a decision for action. Here, they are not commenting on, or witnessing, the action (though responding to the off-stage cries), or engaging with one of the characters, but have an internal discussion. The Argive Elders have recourse to a phraseology which suggests communal decision and action as embodied in the democratic, legal and judicial structures of the Athenian community depicted in the final play.

The various Elders emphasize the importance of communal decisions - κοινωσώμεθα (1347) and κοινωνῶς ὡν (1352) when taking counsel (1347, 1358 and 1359) signify group debate, decision and action.
One choral voice wavers, desirous of the concrete evidence / τῇκυμῶρ
usually submitted to jurors (1366-7); another, earlier, suggestion (1352-3; cf. 1349, 1350-51) had been to follow a course of action. Significantly, that Elder talks of this most positive option in terms of exercising the right to vote - ψηφίζομαι τὸ δραμαντὲς.

One chorus member suggests that a herald be sent to raise the alarm amongst the citizens, who might come to the aid of the house (1349). Tyranny (1355 and 1365 - words emphatically placed at the beginning and end of lines) in the ὀικος will affect the πόλεις and only the community can prevent the tyrant/supreme commander from making all the decisions which affect it. This is what will be shown to be awry in Agamemnon, the Atreid House decides how πόλεις throughout Greece, deprived of any part in the decision, must fight a war, the cause of which is entirely domestic, yet which has far-reaching effects.

It is made clear in the 1st stasimon (Ag. 427-437) that it is the homes and households of Greece which are destroyed by, and so have legitimate grievance against, the royal House of Atreus which wields so much power as to stir up all of Greece into military action. The audience is invited to imagine the wide scope of suffering which ranges from the hearths of individual houses (427, 431, 435-6) to the whole land of Greece (429), although the ἄστοι of 456 are specifically the Argives. Like Zeus sending the Fury against transgressors and the Atreidae against
Alexander, the Greek houses send forth their youth and get funeral urns in their place - these are the grim spoils of war the herald does not mention as adorning the houses of Greece (578). The cold ashes of the dead contrast strongly with the warm fire in the hearth which signals and symbolizes Agamemnon's return to the palace (968).

The universality of the Atreidæ's cause and the way it commands the whole of Greece is further exemplified at 109, where the Trojan expedition becomes the cause of Ἐλλάδος ἡβας (109) and the victory spoils are displayed throughout Greece, καθ' Ἐλλάδα (578). Furthermore, the notion of a united Greek identity (as opposed to the more specific identity of city and/or region) is enhanced by the appellation 'Achaeans/Greeks' used at 269, 320, 624 and 660.

In Agamemnon, it is the Argive Elders who act as a link between their city and the royal house and who, in their present time, convey events and opinions in the πόλις, both to the audience (when they are open and specific in details) and to the other characters (when they are more veiled. For example, 548). They know what is happening in the πόλις and thus they represent the Argive citizens to an extent; at 855, for example, the queen addresses them as ἐνδρες πολίται, πρέσβος Ἀργεῖων τόδε. It is the Elders who, seeing the altars ablaze throughout the city (88ff.), come to the royal house to verify the rumour spreading like wildfire through the city (475-7). At 1106 also, the chorus knows the
story which preoccupies the citizens - that of Thyestes' feast on his
children and the curse on the house - \( \pi\alpha\sigma\alpha\ \gamma\dot{\alpha} \rho \ \pi\delta\lambda\varsigma \ \beta\sigma\dot{\epsilon}n. \)

In the first stasimon, the Elders are largely concerned with the
suffering houses and cities throughout Greece, and at 457f., they describe
the anger of the Argive citizens which they are witness to. Thus the
Elders, as well as being prophet-like narrators of past events, also provide
vital information about current events for the audience and by so doing,
incorporate the \( \pi\delta\lambda\varsigma \) into the overall meaning of \( Agamemnon. \)

The audience is a community itself, sharing in the grief of the
Argive city far more than Clytemnestra, herald and watchman, who are
all primarily concerned with the \( o\dot{i}k\omega \) and rarely, if ever, discuss the
citizens. Only the chorus narrates past events in the Argive \( \pi\delta\lambda\varsigma \) and
make a further link between themselves and the communal group
witnessing and listening to the play, the audience.

How is this unique link between chorus, citizens and audience
created? Having narrated the story of the eagle omen, the delay at Aulis
and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in the parodos, the Argive Elders use the
first stasimon to weave the role of Helen into the story of the Trojan
expedition. Having narrated past events in an attempt to fix and
understand the reason for the Trojan War, the chorus then reveals the
grief and anger of the citizens at what has happened - a grief and anger
which exists in their \( present. \)
The collective, angry rumblings of the citizens will find shape as a *curse*, an utterance which is subsequently described as leading eventually to banishment, exile, even stoning (1409-11, 1615-16): the power of the collective *πόλις* is incited as a positive force against the polluting evil of tyranny.

The tangible force of the people's anger, their *βαρεία φάτις*, is perceived to be a very serious threat; even though the Argive *άστοι* are never *seen* by spectators, their presence is *felt* through the representations of the Argive Elders. Although the Argives are not seen (in one sense, they are like those ἐν... *άστοις* of 466-7), yet like the Furies and the οὐκ ἄσκοποι θεοί (unseen, but seeing), they are ever watchful against *οἱ πολυκτόνοι* (461-2). Unlike the Elders, who are incapable of articulating their unspecified *μέρμνα* (459-60) regarding something vaguely alluded to as *τι νυκτηρεφές*, for the Argive citizenry the emotion (*κότος*) is cognitive because it can be articulated (*φάτις*) and so may lead to action.

What is important here is that the unseen Argive city is introduced into the story by the Argive Elders, who are the spokesmen of their *πόλις*. Furthermore, so compassionate is their description of the people's grief that the citizens are no longer a vague and shapeless mass as at 403 and 580 (where the people are simply assessed in terms of military
strength - the faceless fighting machine, ἀργεῖον δάκος, 824), they are individuals in their houses grieving for the particular man they have lost (445ff.).

This exposition of the detailed individuality yet collective sympathy of the Argive people creates a potential further link between them and the audience who, whether ancient or modern, would identify strongly with them.

Contrast this sympathetic view of the people with Clytemnestra's at 880ff., where the queen cleverly diverts Agamemnon's attention from Orestes' absence by depicting the dangerous mood of the people in the theoretical case of defeat. The people can be cruel, they kick a man when he is down, taking any opportunity to cause anarchy. Contrast this with the chorus' depiction of the Argive people as justly angry against a king who is 'fortunate without justice' (464). Contrary to Clytemnestra's description, the Argive people stay well within the bounds of justice, there is no lack of order in their anger against a king who has transgressed all the boundaries.

Indeed in further contrast to this, the watchman and herald create the impression that the citizens will be unequivocally glad at the return of the expedition and the lord Agamemnon (22f.). The herald too assumes that the day of his commander's return will be εὖφημον ἡμῶν... πόλει (636f.).
Nowhere is the mixed emotion caused by the king's return better captured than in the chorus' greeting to Agamemnon at 783ff. The Elders express both the unreserved and honest affection of servants, such as the watchman and the herald, and also the anger of the citizens whose young men have been sacrificed 'Ελένης ἐνεκα (800).

At the end of their lengthy greeting to the king, the Elders hint at the mismanagement of the ruling house. The phrase πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν (809) succinctly describes the position of the house as the housekeeper/guardian of the city, the kingly rule of one over many. The Elders are hinting at the activities of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (see also 1626), since οἰκουρός alludes both to the mistress of the house and to the man who stays at home from the war. There is also a warning in their greeting about hypocrites, experts in the art of seeming (788), of which Clytemnestra is the undoubted queen, but so subtle are the hints and hidden warnings that they pass Agamemnon by. He immediately assumes that any trouble would be caused by the citizens, those outside his own house, in his description of the man who envies the happiness of others (836-7).

Furthermore, it is clear from 844f. that Agamemnon believes there is trouble from the πόλις, since he suggests a βουλή as the best way to diagnose and heal citizen dissent (846-7). It is the king who is afraid of φήμη δημόθρων (938), when Clytemnestra is persuading him to walk on
the tapestries, and who wishes to consult with the citizens in full assembly so as to discover what is wrong (845-6). Whereas Clytemnestra only pays lip-service to the power of the people, using her pretended fear of δημόθρους ἀνωρχία (883) to conceal the 'real' reason for Orestes' voluntary exile. Contrast too Agamemnon's view of kingship with Aegisthus' (1638-9). Aegisthus will rule through bribery and largesse. If that does not succeed, imprisonment, hunger, darkness and death will keep the citizens in check. So in the first play, a transition is signalled from the rule of the βασιλεύς Agamemnon to the enforced regime of the tyrant Aegisthus. This in turn creates a changing role for the πολιτεία of Argos - the citizens gain greater definition as the play progresses.

To counter tyranny, the Elders had resorted to threat by proxy: they remind the queen of the curses (1409) of the citizens (1411). However, Clytemnestra recalls that they did not bring the same indictment, as was appropriate, against Agamemnon; they are not suitably impartial judges (1420-21) - the king was hailed as πολιτεία (782), not rejected as one ἀπὸ πολιτεία (1410). Unable to respond to Clytemnestra's charge regarding their own bias, they change tack once more (1426f.).

Civic identity and power is implicitly bound up with the proper restoration of Orestes' authority over palace and city (1667; cf. 1279ff. and 1322ff.). In the central play, Orestes makes explicit his sense of duty towards the Argives (Cho. 302ff.), those 'most renowned citizens amongst
mortals'. The futility of the Argive Elders' own discourse and putative actions (1347ff.) thus contrasts strongly with the civic persona of the Argives which empowers the city with a degree of control.

To Summarize

The Argive Elders operate on many levels:-

1) They narrate and interpret past events, and use metaphors of prophecy to describe themselves acting thus.

2) They describe present events in the city of Argos, 
   a) openly to the audience only/amongst themselves (1st stasimon),
   b) in a cryptic/subtextual way to:-       
      i) Herald,
      ii) Agamemnon.

3) Although they are narrators and interpreters of present events in the city, they attempt to block Cassandra's prophetic narrative which concerns the present and future events in the house.

4) After the murder of the king, the Elders shift focus to the citizens as potential saviours of the house and therefore its community. It is the threat of the curses of the people and public stoning which will exile the polluters/murderers.

This means that the audience, made up of the Athenian citizenry, knows more of what is happening in the Argive city than the characters. The Argive Elders narrate many of the events which happened in the past
(before the stage action which is related in present and theatrical and real
time) or happen outside the physical boundary of the stage-world, which
the audience sees. However, it is Clytemnestra and the Herald who
between them narrate the falling of Troy and its effects.
Section 6a: Old Age and the Age-Old Wisdom: Thematic Linkage of the three Oresteian Choruses

The purpose of this section is to show how the motif of old age, and the authority which it brings, acts as a significant link between the three Oresteian choruses. Yet, although the leitmotif of seniority gives a degree of thematic unity to the various choral identities, its handling is articulated differently in the three plays. This in turn modulates our perspective on the central moral questions of the trilogy variously handled by the three choruses.

Aeschylus chooses to make the chorus of Agamemnon old, and as such the Elders have authority to comment upon the past. They themselves talk about their own age and contrast it with the 'youth of Greece', many of whom fell at Troy; at Ag.109, Ελλάδος ἤβας and at 197 ἄνθος Ἀργεῖων are used of the youth of Greece in their prime. Thus, the Elders attain the 'character' of old age - regretting their physical condition, and also the loss of youth. They have reached that stage of life where it is possible to see the cyclical nature of human existence; old men have the strength of children as they enter their 'second childhood' (Ag.72-82). These lines not only provide important clues to the physical and mental disposition of the Argive Elders (they walk with sticks, the spirit of youthful prowess is absent and they resent their physical limitations27), but also establish the Elders as commentators upon cycles.
of birth and death - they exemplify what they describe. The contrast between generations is emphasized rhetorically, for example, with ἴσοςποιαίδε (75) and ἴσοςπρεβυς (78) coming at the beginning of their respective lines. The image from nature, stressing the complete withering of foliage in extreme old age, contrasts with the dry staves on which they support themselves and with the connotation of power which the regal σκῆπτρον carries (43) - the twin sceptre which symbolizes the mighty power of the Atreidae.

However, they do have an authority which has grown up with them, the persuasive divinely inspired authority of old age (Ag. 104-6). This "strength in song" coeval with their long lives is especially apt. The Elders are well placed to be familiar with the outcome of Calchas' predictions, now ten years old, of 'an architect of quarrels grown up in the house' (151).

The chorus of the central play, foreign slavewomen turned libation-bearers, also has an authority based on seniority (Cho. 171) and experience. Unlike their predecessors in the first play, who ask questions rather than answer them, the libation-bearers have a confidence and singleness of purpose on which Electra, an outcast herself, relies. Electra beseeches these household slavewomen to give her good counsel, to decide with her how to shape her words for her father's tomb. The question posed by the first chorus ἵω ἵω βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ ἰπῶς σε
δεκαπόσω (Ag. 1489-90=1513-14) is answered, not by a protagonist, but by the chorus of the central play. Thus the libation-bearers, from the very start of Choephori, are helpers and advisers (86, 100), initiating the use of words which will lead to positive action and, through a reiteration of the justice of their united cause, inviting the audience to sympathize strongly with the royal children who are also 'saviours'. (Cho. 264f., where the chorus of women advocates silence demanded by the success of vengeance, rather than the silence of the Argive Elders necessitated by fear, Ag. 548.)

Despite the paradoxical authority of the slavewomen chorus of the central play, the libation-bearers are prepared to learn from the young despite their seniority (Cho. 171). A similar sentiment is also formulated by the Argive Elders (Ag. 583-4). In typical fashion, it is Aegisthus who abuses this idea by suggesting that it is violence, not wisdom, which teaches a 'lesson', even to the old (Ag. 1619-20).

In sharp contrast, the Furies, as the chorus of the final play, are deeply resentful of any interference from the younger gods, whose actions are without justice (Eum. 162-3). Apollo, the mere child of Zeus (also the child of Leto at 323) is especially blameworthy, transgressing the proper respect due to parents and to the older deities (i.e.: themselves), generally representative of authority through seniority (Eum. 149-54).
The very existence of the Furies is based on an 'ancient honour', a λόχος decreed by Fate, and thus it is described at 171-2, 334 and 394- a γέρως παλαιών. So the conflict between Apollo and the Furies is apparently one of old against new. At 721f., Apollo denies the existence of any respect/honour for the Furies; rather, they are outcasts. But at 731f., the Furies still expect respect born of seniority and submit the apparent conflict of old v. young to the law-court of the Areopagus (Eum. 731-3). After Orestes is acquitted, the Furies' anger at being robbed of an inherited, fated authority grows to a pitch of despair and rage. The younger gods have spurned the παλαιῶν νόμους (778) and the ancient wisdom of those who dispense them - the dishonour is overwhelming (Eum. 837-40). The disrespect is made worse because the younger gods have tricked the older powers out of their τιμή δηναιά (879-80).

Athena, however, is not like Apollo, who spurned the Furies as unwanted outcasts without privilege and without position in the divine or human community (Eum. 197, 644 and 721-2, the last of which indicates that Apollo considers the Furies to have no place in an old or new community). Her persuasion is successful in part precisely because she focuses on the authority of their old age as something requiring awe and reverence. Athena foregrounds the importance of combining old with new, redefining the past in terms of the present and future. She concedes that the Furies have an age-old wisdom, but she too has understanding
which comes from Zeus; better to be persuaded into harmonious alliance than resort to the rage and destruction of unstoppable vengeance which have dominated the first two plays (Eum. 847-850; 881-4).

Why do the Furies accept her offers, enacting a transformation from old to new (which still incorporates the old)?

In the first two plays, the choruses of Argive Elders and libation-bearers had talked of an age-old wisdom, an age-old wisdom which is made visible in the appearance and actions of the Furies, the chorus of the last play.

Indeed, it is an unequivocal formulation of this age-old wisdom which begins the Great Kommos of the central play; it is the libation-bearers who begin this complex song which is both lament and paean, giving authority and confidence to the prayer for vengeance followed by the assurance that the saying is an ancient one, linked (like the λαχος of the Furies in the final play, 335) with Fate (Cho. 306-314). The libation-bearers have no doubt that this formulation of Justice is the right one. Initially, their certainty is absolute. Yet at the end of Choephori, their θερσος has disintegrated: the play ends with two interrogatives (Cho.1073-6) which cast doubt on the validity of their earlier logos.

Certainty has given way to verbal and moral equivocation. Indeed, they serve to give a limited focus (thus shifting the audience's perspective on the stage action and also its moral appraisal), concentrating on the justice
of Orestes' cause alone, vindicating it on both a rational and emotional level. The libation-bearers, in keeping with their lack of moral ambiguity (until after the killing) as to the justice of his cause, do not put Orestes' act of vengeance into a wider context, unlike the Argive Elders who dread the endless cycles of acts of vengeance, envisaging Justice sharpening her sword of destruction on other whetstones of Fate - Ag. 1535-6. If the Argive Elders are spokesmen for the Argive πόλεως, as was suggested above, the libation-bearers shift focus to the individual's motivation for vengeance.

At Cho. 66f., the libation-bearers express the idea of blood which will not flow away. The Argive Elders too talk of the irremovable stain of blood once it has been spilled in murder, symbolizing the inexorable requirement for vengeance. (Ag. 1019-21). The Argive Elders present a formulation (Ag. 1560-1566) of what the libation-bearers call τρυγλερων μοθος (a saying shown to be authoritative through its age) at the start of the Great Kommos (Cho. 314). The choruses of the first two plays are thus linked by one of the core ideas of the Oresteia - δράσας αποθεῖν and παθεῖν τὸν ἔξωκαντα (Ag. 1564). However, a different perspective on meaning and interpretation is provided by the two choruses, thus shifting the audience's interpretation of the stage-action. In Agamemnon, the phrase παθεῖν τὸν ἔξωκαντα is used in a context inspired by fear, grief and ἀπορία at the apparently inexorable cycles of destruction which plague
the entire γίνος of Pelops. In contrast in the central play, the saying δράσαντα παθεῖν (Cho.313), already validated by its maturity (τριγέρων- 314), is used by the chorus to spur Orestes to action (see also Cho. 400-404).

The notion of δράσαντα παθεῖν is the motivation of the Furies who drive on the action in the final play. Unlike the first two choruses, who formulate general comments with regard to actions which they witness, the Furies are what they speak and act on what they say. Much of what they say recalls the choral statements from Agamemnon and Choephoroi.

The first stasimon or Binding Song of the final play, is an assertion by the Furies of their ancient λάχος, and simultaneously an illustration to the audience of what that entails. The violence of Ares (Eum. 355) is matched by the violence of the Furies who swoop on the victim. The power of the Furies, the παρακαταπέδε they bring, is conceived of as a physical strength, an irresistible dance of powerful feet (Eum.37, 374) around their victim. They therefore embody on stage what has been notionally conveyed in the central play: the idea of the age-old wisdom being worked out through the justified use of force is often repeated in Choephoroi. Force is associated with Justice and Zeus (Cho. 244-5) and Zeus is perceived as supremely powerful in physical terms. The
inevitability of a clash of violent action is succinctly expressed by Orestes (Cho. 461).

In Choephoroi, blood for blood, the act of vengeance embodied by Fury/Furies, is deemed lawful (400-4), and indeed the Furies do consider themselves as legitimate agents of vengeance in the final play. In the Binding Song, they give an assurance that the innocent are never punished with the guilty, their administration of justice is not arbitrary (Eum. 312-15). The notion of a pre-ordained plan, a divine influence which is not arbitrary or anarchic (presented as a novel idea in the first play- Ag. 757-762), is strongly advocated in the 2nd stasimon of the final play by the Furies.

The idea that the Furies are just, or indeed have any place in either human or divine society, is denied by Apollo. The god of prophecy claims that the authority of his divine house (60 and 179) comes from the very throne of Zeus (614-21), and indeed his divine prerogative is recognized by the Furies themselves (229). That Apollo has this supreme authority is confirmed by his constant reiteration that Zeus, all the Olympians, the human community and even wild animals consider the Furies to be polluted outcasts (Eum. 69-70, 73, 190-97 and 644). How will these violently conflicting views of the Furies be reconciled?
Section 6b: Flux, Change, Re-Definition: Old with New.

The proper role of the Furies appears to be constantly disputed in the final play. They cause the dishonouring of men (369), but are themselves dishonoured (385). They stand apart from the gods, spurned outcasts (386), yet their λάχος is ἐκ θεῶν (392). Uncertainty as to their position continues until Athena eventually persuades them to accept a place within the Athenian community; at 210, they punish matricides; 269f., reveals that they punish all those who harm god, guest or parents; at 320 they punish all murderers, and at 605, they punish only parent-killers. Yet what the Furies advocate in Eumenides bears a remarkably close resemblance to the surmised purpose of the gods (Zeus especially) in the first two plays. In Choephori, Justice, the truly named daughter of Zeus, breathes rage against her enemies (952), just as the Furies threaten to do against Athens (Eum. 840). But the Furies most powerfully recall the imagery and atmosphere of unease/flux/chaos from the first play, as well as Agamemnon's preoccupation with the need for moral structure.

The second stasimon of the final play (490-565) constitutes an extremely coherent and cogent presentation of the workings of Justice and the dangers inherent in society without juridical structure: the Furies predict that Orestes' acquittal could lead to anarchy, a total absence of moral framework, i.e.:- the house of Justice will fall (516). Furthermore,
murder victims (especially parents) will have no redress - all pleas to Justice and the Furies' thrones will be in vain (Eum. 508-516). The notional image evoked here suggests the idea of the Furies seated on thrones in the House of Justice, in startling contrast with the actual image of them asleep on the thrones of Apollo's prophetic house, described as a terrible pollution by the Pythia (34ff.; Cassandra, Apollo's other priestess, had perceived the corrupting influence of revelling Furies in the Argive palace - Ag.1188-90). It is for the master of the prophetic house (60) to clear it of a pollution, which is not δίκαιος for divine images or human houses (55-6), as he does in his role as τοῖς ἄλλοις δωμάτων καθήρσιος (63).

Indeed, Apollo does remove the Furies from the throne and house of prophecy (179), a god whose seat of prophecy (616-18) derives authority from the throne/royal seat of Zeus himself (229). The Olympian family seems destined never to dwell in the same house as the Furies (360ff.).

Yet in spite of this apparent irreconcilability between Olympians and chthonic Furies, an on-going preoccupation with the meaning of justice links the choral voices of the first and last plays. The Furies tell the audience βωμὸν αἰδέσσαν Δίκας (Eum.539); so too the Argive Elders advise that those who kick aside the altar of Justice into darkness, perpetrating crimes of ῥήματος κόρος and aspiring to property and position
μείζον ἡ δικαίως (Ἀγ. 374-384), will themselves be relegated to dwell in darkness (Ἀγ. 461-8), sharing that underground dwelling with the Furies who punish them (Εὐμ. 386-7).

In the second stasimon, the Furies not only advocate ἀἰδῶς for Justice, but also ἀἰδῶς for parents and strangers. Clearly, they will punish those who abuse their parents (Εὐμ. 492 and 513-15), this is their traditional λάχος; but their warnings about ἀἰδῶς for strangers indicate an apparent overlap with one of Zeus' traditional roles as ξενος. While any of the sky-gods named (55-56) may send the Fury against transgressors, it is specifically Zeus of strangers who sends both the Atreidae against Alexander (Ἀγ.60-62).

In Ἀγαμέμνον, the Argive Elders had drawn attention to their being collectively μονόφρων (Ἀγ.757), having thoughts distinct from others, distinct from the παλαιόφατος... ἐν βροτοὶς γέρων λόγος (Ἀγ. 750). The ancient saying revolves around the notion that prosperity, mere good fortune, a luck whose source is untainted by evil, sometimes invites a perverse, undeserved punishment. This implies that in spite of human aspirations to be god-like and occasional reward from the gods, misery is the usual mortal condition. This kind of deity is evoked in Achilles' description of the gods and Zeus especially (Ἰλιάδ, 24. 524-33). If Achilles' perception of divine involvement in the human context is
correct, it only remains to lament and even that, as Achilles points out, is useless (II. 24.524).

In contrast, the Argive Elders do see (or perhaps hope to see confirmed) a degree of moral divine purpose. They are μονόφρων because they discern a pattern of punishment for acts of impious ἴθρυς, which is variously described as δυσεβῆς (Ag.758) and ἐν κακοῖς βροτῶν (Ag. 765). The choral doctrine requires a degree of moral judgement in the punishment of mortals; those who attain ὀλβος are not automatic candidates for an arbitrary reversal of fortune.

At Ag.1001ff., it is man's constant abuse of the proper boundaries which leads to disaster. But if a man jettisons the excessive weight of ἴθρυς, the metaphorical ship of state/house of Justice will not sink, the disease of ἴθρυς will not prevail. (It is a shrinking fear which inspires these decisions; indeed, fear is good on occasion, inspiring a healthy respect for Justice - Eum.517-525. The Argive Elders have a healthy respect and awe for divine power, but as has been shown, their final assessment of the gods' influence leads to a piteous desperation, which finds a voice in lament).

The Furies too take up the idea of a moral purpose behind punishment (Eum.550-65). Any man who is just will have good fortune (he will be ὀλβος) and will not be destroyed. However, he who overloads the ship with the heavy cargo of ἴθρυς, which is acquired ἄνευ
δίκας (Eum.554), will eventually strike the reef of Justice and be obliterated. The chorus of the final play aspires to a moral order founded on Justice, the necessary solidity of which is variously conveyed through the images of the house and the ship.

The ancient goddesses re-iterate the 'original' thought expressed by the Argive Elders at Ag.763ff., reproducing in outline the thoughts that in the first play were δίκας δ' διαλλων - impiety's child is ὑβρις, the healthy mind does not incur arbitrary punishment, adhering as it does to the middle path - a path which yields κράτος.

It is when this pattern of moral purpose is broken that an arbitrary, cruel and undirected rage threatens. The Furies threaten to punish the Athenians with a release of anarchic rage which will bring disease (Eum.778-792=808-822 and 837-840), despite their criticisms of the life of anarchy, a life of violence which is not "from a healthy mind" (Eum. 526-537). So too, Zeus rewards the balanced man by ensuring nature's fertility and preventing νόσος (Ag. 1015-17); Zeus ensures that such a man is δλαβεῖς: the advantages of divine order can be seen as paralleled by the blessings of nature (the re-incorporation of the Furies into human society leads to their propitiatory blessings on Athens and its fertility, prosperity and δλαβεῖς, re-affirmation of which shapes the Ode of Benediction - Eum. 903-end). It is the hope and need for some degree of
divine moral purpose, confirmed by the final tableaux of the trilogy, which initially find a strong voice in the 'Hymn to Zeus'.

In conclusion, the identity of the Furies, embodied in their λάχος, is in constant flux; but the potentiality for a new identity, the possibility that the Furies can be guardians of the city as opposed to the implacable avengers of familial murder focused in the house alone, is ever-present, foreshadowing their dramatic transformation at the end of the trilogy. Apollo's description of the Furies as γραφαὶ παλαιὰ παϊδεῖς (Eum. 69) prophetically encapsulates the characterization of the Furies as successfully combining old with new: they retain their ancient prerogatives, but a novel sense of authority grants their dispensations a fresh sense of purpose.

This acceptance of the need for change, of reappraisal of the old and transformation into something new, enacted in the Furies' transformation, signals a degree of moral direction in the divine purpose and the communal identity, which in the first play was hoped for but never found. The Elders were presented as attempting a new moral perspective on gods whose involvement in human existence could not be construed as arbitrary (described by the παλαιὸστος γέρων λόγος, 750) but who actively disapprove of self-perpetuating impiety (758ff.) - in this, the chorus is δίχος δὲλλων μονόφρων (757). Their attempt as old men to break new ground is not successful, for in the final stages of
*Agamemnon*, the cycles of destruction which affect the royal house, and their own sense of ἀπορία, appear endless (1530-1536; 1565-1566).

The characterization of the Furies, however, symbolizes *successful* combination of old with new; indeed, Athena displays the respect of a younger deity for more mature goddesses (847) in her persuasive, placatory rhetoric which eventually wins the Furies over.

That the Furies are linked with divine Justice is an underlying theme of the trilogy; through the clarification of their role and their position in Athenian society, the characterization of the Furies allows Zeus to be revealed, although only in part, to the audience. Some of the questions of definition and/or re-definition posed in the 'Hymn To Zeus' are answered.

This leads us to examine how the 'Hymn to Zeus' provides the initial framework in which the quest for moral and divine purpose can be set and how, incidentally, it foreshadows the widely different characterizations of the three Oresteian choruses in its three stanzas (strophe β, antistrophe β, strophe γ, 160-183).
Section 7a: The 'Hymn To Zeus' and its relation to the characterization of the three Oresteian choruses.

At Eum.508ff., the Furies assure the audience that those who are wronged will no longer be privileged to call on them (the dishonouring of their ancient privilege will therefore be paralleled in the human sphere)-
μὴ δὲ τὶς κυκλησκέτω (Eum.508)- if their authority is overridden in the trial of Orestes. Thus, divinities unambiguously outline their intention to mortals. In contrast and despite their uncertainty, the Argive Elders of the first play feel able to call on Zeus, however carefully the address is made - εἰ τὸδ’ αὐτῷ φίλον κεκλημένω (160-1).

The opening of the 'Hymn to Zeus' (160-83) shows an uncertainty in naming the supreme god because the proper divine title is the key to the 'true identity' or character which it represents. Indeed, the first stanza is reminiscent of a kletic hymn in form, but in content more closely resembles a prayer- it is important that the Elders name the god correctly to ensure their request is granted. The first three lines are intricately worded so as not to offend, and lay emphasis on saying (κεκλημένω 161, προσενεπω,162) what is εὖφημος .Unlike the technique where the actual name of the character is delayed (Calchas' name is not mentioned until 156, although it is he who is described and he who speaks in lines 123ff.), the hymn's first word is the name 'Zeus'
and the name is used twice more, and prominently, at the start of lines (165 and 174).

Zeus, despite the uncertainty about his name, appears to be the final reference in this desperate crisis of uncertainty. Most recently, P.M. Smith has argued that the indirect, implicit object of the Argive Elders' comparison (of προσεκάσω, 163) is to be understood as the events at Aulis, culminating in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, which is the central topos of the parodos. Smith further views the choral profession of incapacity (οὐκ ἐξω, 163) as referring to the Elders' inability to understand or explain Iphigeneia's murder, unless it is set in the 'context' of Zeus (165), against whom/which it can somehow be identified. This interpretation rejects the notion, previously prevalent amongst scholars, that, in 163-5, the choral difficulty lies in finding anything to compare with Zeus except Zeus himself.

Yet, arguing against Smith's rather narrow focus, I would suggest that the very open-endedness which inspires such debate could be construed as deliberate, i.e.:- the Greek is able to carry a double interpretation for the audience, whereas translation into English necessitates a single choice. Thus in the Greek two ideas are able to co-exist - Zeus is 'unmetaphorizable', defying complete definition and yet he is the final resort of those who truly want to shift anxiety from a mind
plagued with the moral dilemmas/conflicts contained in the narrative of Iphigeneia's sacrifice and the Trojan War.

Zeus is unknowable and yet a god of mental ease; unlike Helen who was truly named (and thus completely understood/defined -Ag.681-2) and unlike Justice, who shows herself to be rightly named the daughter of Zeus (Cho.948f.)\(^3\), the Argive Elders cannot truly name the supreme Olympian, and approach the name 'Zeus' with respectful caution; they have not got his measure, but he does \(\varepsilon\tau\eta\tau\upsilon\mu\omega\zeta\) shift the burden of anxiety from the mind/heart.

The first stanza thus provides the audience with a startling paradox - if Zeus is morally unfathomable, how can he provide the answer to the equally unfathomable problems foregrounded by the narrative of the Trojan War? Or do the Elders recognize that the motif of moral uncertainty/ambiguity is the link between Zeus and the Trojan War, the former being the contextual frame for the latter, a link which is later shown not to be shrouded in ambiguity at all? Rather, some kind of patterning to the divine purpose begins to emerge. Zeus is the supreme motivator and the context in which human affairs are set (cf. Ag. 1485-8, and Eum., where Zeus exerts supreme influence over the spheres of prophecy - 616-18, 713-714 and 797). Zeus is also the prime mover behind the Athenian Areopagus (826, 850 and 973-4); the
Furies-Eumenides also joyfully acknowledge his all-powerful prescience at 918 and 1045-6).

If this is so, the Elders expose an important difficulty - it is not that we cannot use imagery and other kinds of language to understand what 'Zeus' means, but rather that Zeus' association with the mental process and abstract concepts (with which he is synonymous) leads us to formulate a new kind of language to communicate the meaning of Zeus. In the 'Hymn to Zeus', both kinds of language, conceptual/ideological and metaphorical, are put to use.

Yet in lines 167-175 of the 'Zeus hymn' the 'new kind of language' is briefly abandoned and we are presented with a treatment of Zeus already familiar from other genres: in stanza two, Zeus is traditionally and mythologically depicted. In lines 167-173, Zeus does not need to be named; the Athenian audience would have been au fait with the traditional succession myth in which Zeus topples his father Cronos, who had overthrown his father Ouranos. Zeus' supremacy is explained anthropomorphically and the dynastic battle is described in physical terms - in three falls of the wrestling bout, Zeus proves his overall supremacy as the third in line. The language here is reminiscent of Hesiod's *Theogony* (453f.) and Pindaric victory odes, where the wrestler/winner is hailed as καλλίνικος; like the victor of the human wrestling match, Zeus should be hailed as καλλίνικος (Ag. 174).
Lines 167-173 show that the poetic images of traditional, anthropomorphic mythologizing are still a valid means for understanding Zeus, and indeed it is in this way that the chorus has perceived and explained Zeus up to this point. At 55, Zeus is ἅπατος; in epic, this is used only of Zeus as a metaphor for 'supreme in power' and in this context it also carries its more literal meaning of 'in the heights' (i.e.: - in the domain of vultures and eagles). Zeus is thus perceived as a physical being (possessing 'weight' in Laban terms\textsuperscript{32}) with a position in space. As the supreme commander and father of the gods he is concerned with and initiates the actions of human kings/rulers/supreme generals (Διόβδην, 43). In 60, Zeus is ὁ κρείσσων meaning 'the stronger'; this is reminiscent of the Homeric κρέιων meaning 'lord', and also re-emphasizes his power in physical terms (indeed it is he who actually 'sends' the Atreidae against Troy). Furthermore, he is depicted in the various traditional roles that are his - at 61, he is Ζεύς ἔνιος and at 135 he is Artemis' πατήρ; he guards the hospitality laws of human families and at the same time heads his own divine dynasty.

This depiction of Zeus in supreme physical terms, which shapes the victory-ode format of the second stanza, makes it necessary to digress and examine the use of imagery connected with athletics, chariot-racing, wrestling and archer. It will then be possible to show how an image
drawn from the last of these pursuits marks a transition from stanzas 2 to 3 of the 'Zeus hymn'.
Section 7b: The Triple Wrestling Bout and the Race

At Ἄγ. 60-63, the greater one, Zeus, sends the Atreidae against Alexander and in the struggle over one woman of many men there will be many wrestling bouts, παλαιόμωμος in the Trojan War. Rather than being the victor in the triple wrestling bout, Zeus here initiates the bitter struggles of the ten-year war.

Another image drawn from the athletic sphere is that of the relay-race and the double course of the chariot and running race. The speedy message of Troy's fall conveyed by the beacon-fires is like a torch relay race; the desire for victory, which properly belongs with the first and last in the race (Ἄγ.314) conquers any desire to sleep (Ἄγ.290-291).

If the beacon-messages are akin to a torch relay-race, with different runners for each lap, the νόστος from Troy which it signals is also conceived of as a race. It is not enough to be a victor on one leg of the track alone, the runner/the Greek expedition must successfully complete the second leg/the return home (Ἅγ.343-4). As Clytemnestra says, the significant rewards of victory belong in part to τελευταῖος δραμὼν (Ἅγ. 314); the completion of the course is vital.

Line 314 continues to evoke a wide variety of translations, interpretations and emphases, some of which Fraenkel\textsuperscript{33} summarizes. Fraenkel perceives an almost 'grotesque' paradox in what he views as a strong contrast between the Athenian Lampadedromia (a competition

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between four teams of relay-runners) and Clytemnestra's use of the image to describe her ingenious 'relay' of beacon-fires, a metaphor significantly bereft of the competitive element of the real race because in the latter there is only one 'team', that of Clytemnestra.

This may be so, but in general the wish to fix a single meaning in this particular line, and in many others in Aeschylus, tends to limit the often complex and multiple meanings contained in Aeschylean metaphor and imagery. What follows is an examination of the possible meanings contained within line 314, which will illustrate how the many levels contained in Aeschylean metaphor enhance the audience's understanding of the performance and particularly the character of Clytemnestra.

Most obviously, it is impossible to say with absolute certainty, drawing on frequently conflicting ancient sources, whether torch races were continuous or staged in relays\textsuperscript{34}; however, the bulk of the ancient sources concerned with torch races at the Panathenaeia, Hephaesteia and Prometheia tend to favour the relay format\textsuperscript{35}. This leads to an important point: it is more than likely that Clytemnestra is drawing on an familiar image, that of the popular torch-race, without necessarily introducing a literal or specific association with a particular religious festival.

Fraenkel focuses on the fact that Clytemnestra's image is made significant because the relay race she describes lacks competition. Herodotus (8.98.2), like Aeschylus, draws on the image of the Greek
relay torch race in a factual comparison with the special Persian relay messengers; but the latter are surely a team without competition, a group of messengers who work in a single sequence and whose ultimate goal is conveying news. It is a useful comparison, but in Herodotus the two descriptions do not tally in every detail; however the main link, the idea of the relay itself, is successfully conveyed. Thus it could be argued that lines 312-14 evoke the image of the Persian relay-runners, but at the same time evoke images of any race, relay or individual, in which torches were held - the Aeschylean metaphor conveys all these images simultaneously, without being solely dependent on one of them for significance.

So the contrast between reality and metaphor provides a much wider theatrical context than Fraenkel's suggestion perhaps implies. This contrast is already abundantly clear, since the laps of the 'race' as described in Clytemnestra's 'Beacon Speech' (Ag. 281-316) span large geographical expanses from Troy across the Aegean to Argos. (The Athenian Panathenaic torch-race and also that of the Hephaisteia covered the relatively short distance from the Akademos to the Acropolis via the Dipylon Gate and the Agora³⁶; the torch-race connected with the Prometheia used fire kindled on the altar of Prometheus also in the Akademos, but this race stopped at the city boundaries³⁷). Clytemnestra's account of the travelling fire and her mention of Hephaestus, who she
implies is her 'messenger', will be shown to set her apart as super-human. Indeed, it is the super-human scope of Clytemnestra's beacon-fires and her visionary description of them which gives resonance to the relay-race metaphor.

No doubt it is this aspect of Clytemnestra's character which has led some commentators to suggest that line 314 refers to Hephaestus himself⁸. If one accepts the possibility of multiple meaning contained within an apparently simple image, it is certainly attractive to suggest that Hephaestus is referred to here, without the implied allusion to him being the entire purport of the line. Such an hubristic allusion to her divine 'helper' would emphasize the 'grotesqueness' of Clytemnestra's claims even more. Fire is the carrier of news, rather than being carried as in Lampadedomia; Clytemnestra's mention of Hephaestus at 281 implies that the god of fire is in some way subject to her wishes.

Furthermore there is, in a sense, a degree of competition between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. Her beacon-fire arrangement enables her to have foreknowledge of Agamemnon's return which undercuts the grandeur of the king's subsequent chariot-entrance. Indeed, in her use of another race image (Ag.343-4), Clytemnestra emphasizes the importance of *completing the course.*

In the first race image (312-14), it is also implied that the Greek 'team'/army has won the race - the Greeks can justly claim victory over
the Trojans. But line 314 could be said to give emphasis to the personal victory of the House of Atreus. On one level, Agamemnon himself as a representative of the House of Atreus could be perceived as ὁ πρῶτος because the first victory torch is kindled in close proximity to ruined Troy. After all, Clytemnestra highlights the fact that her husband makes his announcement 'from Troy' itself (316); the beacons serve on one level as a personal message between husband and wife.

In the wider political context, Agamemnon is also the victorious Greek general whose news is sped to Argos, which is thus able to celebrate the victory. Victory over Troy is victory for Argos, which is thus the joyous τελευταῖος/victor.

But on the more personal level, if ὁ πρῶτος is linked with Agamemnon, τελευταῖος is the 'final runner' who comes to Clytemnestra, who by association is the final interpreter of the 'news'. The idea of the communal sharing of victory apparently conveyed by the metaphor of relay teams is undercut by this more personal allusion, and also the image of Greeks as still having to complete the course (Ag.343-4).

The apparently uncomplicated and celebratory tone of 314 is thus undermined by this later image. So it is the contrast between the two race images which gives sinister resonances, rather than the contrast between 'reality' and metaphor in the first image alone. In 312-14, Clytemnestra implies a victory in her 'race' against Agamemnon, the final leg of whose
νόστος is yet to be completed. It is her constant fore-planning and fore-knowledge which are eventually revealed to have fatal consequences for the apparent victor in the story, Agamemnon. Although the two images are catachrestic, drawing on the different fields of relay torch-race and chariot track-race, the combination of the two creates the multi-perspectival effects which characterize Aeschylean metaphor.

The idea of 'first' and 'last' also suggests the importance of completing cycles/ending bloodshed, which pervades the trilogy. Clytemnestra feels that she is able to end the chain of vengeance (Ag. 1567ff.).

What is extraordinary, then, is not the imagery per se, but the way in which Clytemnestra's manipulation of it leads to a picture of apparent victory, joy and celebration at Agamemnon's return as conquering general, undercut by unease and foreboding, suggestions and mere hints of Clytemnestra's super-human qualities.

Fraenkel rightly sees the virtual grotesquerie of line 314, a powerful claim to victory for herself and the Argive people, as typical of Clytemnestra's logos, which is characterized as full of ambiguity and irony. Conacher39 goes further, emphasizing the potentially adverse symbolism of the Beacon Speech as a whole. The fires "portend, in Clytemnestra's mind, her own victorious vengeance on the king", the fires

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thus representing the unstoppable chain of events which will lead to Agamemnon's death.

Lloyd-Jones\textsuperscript{40} sees another level of symbolism in the concluding section of the Beacon Speech (310-11) - for this chain of fires which "plunges down upon the house of the Atreidae" (\textit{Ag}.310) stands for the avenging power of Zeus. In the larger divine context, Zeus is partially identified as the ultimate \textit{τέλευταῖος}- the accomplisher of prayers which request completion/fulfilment (\textit{Ag}.972-4). Agamemnon may be the 'man of power', but the final authority of Zeus is unassailable.

Finally, the potentially sinister associations of the torch are propitiously altered in the final torch-lit procession of the trilogy (\textit{Eum}. 1005, 1022, 1029, 1041-2), a procession which significantly evokes the Panathenaic Festival geared to the presentation of the new \textit{πειπλαζ} in Athena's temple on the Acropolis, without in any way mimicking or precisely reproducing its ritual details\textsuperscript{41}.

The theatrical image of the newly robed Furies transformed further by torchlight evokes two important aspects of the Panathenaic Festival - the torch-race and the procession which ends on the Acropolis. Just as the depiction of the latter on the Parthenon Frieze conveys the sense that "with the humbling of the low and the triumph of the high, everything is in its proper place"\textsuperscript{42}, the final image of \textit{Oresteia} conveys hopes and prayers for order through change, re-definition and appraisal. This is
signalled by the emphasis on the propitiatory/ celebratory/ purificatory symbolism of fire/ torch-race, seen not in the context of Clytemnestra’s Argos, but from the patriotic Athenian perspective⁴³.

While such torch race and torch images frame the trilogy, the central play re-introduces wrestling motifs which first appeared at Ἀγ. 60-63. Will Zeus champion Orestes’ wrestling-match in Choephoroi? His sister Electra sees disaster as a potentially invincible enemy (Cho.338-9). Significantly, Orestes' struggle against his mother is conveyed in terms of a μάχη (physical and metaphorical) for νίκη; this is what makes the Great Kommos a hymn for victory or παυλὸν (Cho.343) as well as a lament. Like the central stanza of the Zeus Hymn, the central play of the trilogy uses images of athletic excellence and physical strength to describe a physical battle, which in itself is the theatrical metaphor for the moral conflict/dilemma surrounding the administration of vengeance/justice.

In Choephoroi, Zeus himself is perceived in physical terms as a destroyer, just as he was the supreme wrestling champion against Cronos and Ouranos - the τριακτήρ (Ἀγ.172-3); it is this invincible strength (Cho. 394-7) that Electra calls upon with ferocious confidence, a strength which will enable Orestes to win the triple bout against disaster (Cho. 394-7), an ἀτάκα which Electra had previously believed unassailable (339).
As Orestes' confidence grows through the victory-hymn/lament of the Great Kommos, he is able to pray that his father send Justice as an ally in his battle (Cho. 497-9). Orestes draws on an image from wrestling again to emphasize the personal satisfaction Agamemnon will have in vengeance - Orestes will get a grip on Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and they will be thrown in turn; the desire for reciprocity, the need to restore Agamemnon's authority and victory, is overwhelming.

But Clytemnestra and Aegisthus did not win in open fight; Agamemnon was shackled in a net-robe of treachery, as his children recall throughout the central play (e.g.: Cho. 491-4). This is a victory without honour, in which the victor resorts to δολος; Orestes recognizes his own actions as such (Cho. 1017), but at the same time he is a wrestler, blessed by god, whose victory in the triple bout will bring liberty, light and safety to the Argive palace (Cho. 866-8). The libation-bearers hope that Zeus will favour Orestes as king Agamemnon was favoured; Agamemnon had put on the yoke-strap of necessity (Ag.218) and his son is also harnessed to a chariot, which must run a straight course in order to reach a goal which will bring safety and freedom; the safe completion of the course/race will confirm Orestes as a σωτήρ (Cho. 794ff.). This image of the safe course completed by the 'colt' Orestes is overturned at Cho. 1021ff.. Here, it is Orestes who is the charioteer reining the horses; but the charioteer is out of control and the chariot is driven from the track.
Implicit in the earlier image was the idea that Zeus as the charioteer who had reined in Orestes had a controlling, moral influence on Orestes' actions. In the later simile, it is Orestes alone who must suffer the uncontrollable madness of terror. The 'will of Zeus' appears to be a mass of incomprehensible contradictions.

On one level, Zeus in the 'Zeus hymn' should be hailed as the noble victor in the wrestling bout, but in the final play the Furies' interpretation of the succession story is rather different. In response to Apollo's revelations that Zeus favours the father/man/king, the Furies recall the story of Zeus binding Cronos; Zeus is no noble victor, but like Clytemnestra, who trapped her husband before killing him, resorts to a treacherous imprisonment of his own father (Eum.640ff.). Apollo cannot refute the story, but draws an important distinction between imprisonment and murder- the latter is irreversible, Zeus did not make spells to restore the dead to life. (Indeed, those who do attempt such restoration are punished by Zeus, Ag. 1019ff.)

By recalling the shackling of Cronos by Zeus, the Furies undermine the image of the supreme god as depicted in the second stanza of the 'Zeus hymn'; indeed they think of themselves as locked in a verbal 'wrestling-bout' with Orestes, in which the first fall has gone to them (Eum.589-90). So too, the Furies are able to outstrip the fastest human runner and the march of their feet brings death, destruction and madness.
(Eum. 375-6). It would seem that the images of Orestes as the colt of Zeus and the victorious wrestler in the central play were falsely hopeful; Zeus himself, the victorious, supreme god of the 'Zeus hymn' did not gain his succession in a fair fight, but bound his father. The divine model, and its workings in the human sphere, seem incomprehensible.
Section 7c: The Metaphorical Archer: Hitting the Target of Understanding

Anyone who does hail Zeus as victorious in the cosmic wrestling-match will hit upon the complete target of understanding (Ag. 175); the implicit metaphor drawn from archery marks a transition between stanzas two and three in the Zeus Hymn to a different kind of conceptualizing language, which introduces terms and ideas which will later be given significant treatment by the Furies in the last play.

The image of the archer perfectly expresses παντὶ μέσω τὸ κράτος (Eum. 529), a precept whose establishment the Furies attribute to the divine. The archer must time the release of his arrow so that it does not overshoot the target or reach ground before it hits. Excessive strength does not mean supremacy, as it does to a much greater degree in wrestling; the archer must rely on a control of physical strength and accurate and timely decision making. The image of the archer as a metaphor for accurate, timely and apt decision/action is used to convey Zeus' just punishment of Alexander's transgressions against ξενία (Ag. 362f.). Here, καυρίς (365) is the right time to shoot the arrow, not too late or too early. So in turn it is used to convey the accuracy or truth of verbal expression. The herald praises the verbal accuracy/insight/truthful depiction by the Argive Elders as akin to the precision of the master Bowman (Ag. 628-9); it is this truthfulness, reached through accurate expression, for which the Argive Elders strive
on Agamemnon's return (Ag.785-89). Words of praise, like praiseworthy deeds, must strike a note which is καύριως, an accuracy which matches the middle path of one who is truly δεξιως without resorting to the excesses of νηρις. Thus the untruthful word and the miscreant action are the mark of those who live ἀκαύρως (808) and who exploit the possibilities of τὸ δοκεῖν (Ag. 788). Cassandra's status as a true prophetess is conveyed in the image of her as the archer who hits the mark (Ag. 1194-5). Her accurate prophecies include her foretelling her own death; she can only hope that the blow of the weapon will be accurate, swift and mortal - ἐπεύχομαι δὲ καύριως πληγής τυχεῖν (1292).

Cassandra, priestess of a god who wields a plague-spreading bow, is an archeress of true aim/a true prophetess, whose gift merely allows her to foretell her own death and that of Agamemnon with an accurate and deadly blow, she can do nothing to alter the future; thus Agamemnon's death-cry echoes her words (Ag. 1343). It subsequently appears that Clytemnestra has managed to deal this blow precisely because she has managed to give the semblance of speaking and acting καύριως (Ag.1372-3).

The moral uncertainty of the Argive Elders is clearly justified - the pretence of justice and truth are apparently indistinguishable from their 'reality'. Verbal expression and moral values seem to be in constant flux -
how will it ever be possible to hit upon the complete target of understanding?

As has been shown, Stanza two of the 'Zeus hymn' had placed Zeus in a generational struggle - great emphasis is laid on Ouranos and Cronos as having existed in the past (πάροιδεν, πρίν), but as having significance no longer - Ouranos had thundered with spurious courage and now will not be counted; Cronos, the next in line, has departed after meeting his match. Aeschylus thus depicts Zeus as a physical being in time and space and his supremacy is described in 'human' terms.

But what of Zeus as a god made supreme through association with the concepts of justice and 'wisdom'? In lines 174-181, Zeus is described in a new kind of conceptualizing language. Firstly, Zeus is closely linked with the noetic and expressive processes located in the φρήν - ἄπαθος φροντιδος (165), φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν (175), προφρόνως (174), τὸ φρονεῖν (176) and τὸ σωφρονεῖν (181). Secondly, his supremacy and uniqueness is expressed in phrases such as παρτ' ἐπισταθμώμενος (164), τεῦξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν (175) and he brings comprehensive release from mental anguish (166) by creating uncompromising rules -θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν (178); in one sense, Zeus advocates precepts established κυρίως which lead to words and actions which are spoken and performed κυρίως. Anyone who uses the images and myth of Stanza 2 to understand Zeus' supremacy and hails him as 'the victor', will find complete understanding.
Even then, τεῦξεταὶ φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν is ambiguous - conceding how and why Zeus is supreme can lead to partial understanding, because simultaneously only Zeus himself τεῦξεταὶ φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν. Even τὺγχάνω plus the genitive has a variety of meanings - 'hit, chance upon, happen on, be subject to' and the verb's ambiguity suggests the various possibilities which arise from acknowledging Zeus as supreme.

Zeus has put mortals on the path to understanding. This implies that the journey is incomplete and requires progressive re-definition of meanings along the way in order to make even partial advances towards τὸ φρονεῖν. Furthermore, Zeus has established firmly the rule/law of πάθει μάθος. Those who προφρόνως accept Zeus as the initiator of the journey which leads to τὸ φρονεῖν by learning through suffering/experience/precedent will already have progressed in the journey's path.

Smith\textsuperscript{44} rightly alerts us to the dangers of applying inappropriate overtones of the sinner's redemptive wisdom acquired by suffering to the πάθει μάθος (177) gnome. No Judaeo-Christian sentiment should be attached to this traditional phrase. But the claim that experience's lesson is merely equivalent to δράσαντι παθεῖν\textsuperscript{45}, is equally inappropriate.

Zeus sets mortals on the 'path' to understanding (177-8) which suggests that the acquisition of τὸ φρονεῖν and μάθος is progressive, i.e.: reached after a 'journey' of some kind, whereas the operation of
δράσαντι παθεῖν gives rise to seemingly unstoppable, inexorable cycles of violence and suffering, βία without χάρις. πάθει μάθος is therefore somewhat different from δράσαντι παθεῖν - stepping onto the path of good sense offers the possibility of breaking, of moving away from, self-perpetuating chains of suffering where ἅπαρμεν continues to reproduce itself (758ff.)

Smith⁴⁶ also argues that it is to Paris that the chorus is alluding as the unspoken paradeigma of πάθει μάθος. This, he claims, is far preferable to taking Agamemnon to be the one who learns here, as has been the understanding of many scholars⁴⁷, since Agamemnon does not appear to 'learn' anything⁴⁸. Smith suggests the audience is meant to think of Paris-Alexander (61) on hearing 176-81. But the reductionism of this approach, of narrowing the deliberate open-endedness of the Elders' narrative so that it is solely applicable to Alexander, plays into the hands of what Knox⁴⁹ called the 'official view'. The stance taken by this particular chorus suggests that "behind the bright facade of the 'official view'' lies "a dark and complicated reality"⁵⁰ and that the dramatist's intention was to tax and disturb spectators.

So we might suppose that something more complex is being alluded to in the second strophe of the 'hymn' (esp.176-181). First, whose πόνος is under discussion in 179-80 and what is its nature? The recollection of suffering drips before the heart in place of sleep, itself a
recollection of the watchman's words (14). In the prologue, it is specifically φόβος which prevents the φίλαξ from slacking in his duty of φρονεῖ (2).

In the 'Zeus hymn', the pain of remembering the suffering of others, the fear of undergoing the πάθη of others (e.g.: 472-474), is, I would suggest, included in the chorus meditations here. Observation of others' πάθος is potentially instructive, a μάθος which is intended to deter wrong-doers' ill-advised θράσος (222, 769, 803) and utter daring (of Agamemnon 221, of Clytemnestra 1237) because they are sufficiently afraid of the consequences. The concept of πάθη μάθος, of the threat/fear of punishment as the consequence of daring/hubristic actions, is obscurely linked with Δίκα by the Elders (Ag. 250-251).

Those, like the Argive Elders, who willingly embrace the 'lesson' of good sense, may avoid enduring πάθος itself. But those who embark on foolish or daring actions, even though it goes against their will, will learn (like Paris) τὸ σωφρονεῖν (180-81), "compelled by bitter experience". That is, the willing (those subject to the πόνος of fear) and the unwilling are clearly differentiated.

In the central choral ode of the final play, the Furies, apparently rejected by Zeus, reveal however that they adhere to a moral code remarkably close to that of Zeus as outlined in the 'Zeus hymn' of the first play.
At Eum.499-507, the Furies elaborate their prediction of indiscriminate destruction; without the preservation of their λάχος, the house of Justice, together with the idea of 'learning through experience', will indeed perish. In this atmosphere of divine anarchy, mortal men will have no certain recourse to law, city or god (Eum.506-7): men will call on the Furies μάταν. This is in contrast with the Elders, who when they find themselves in the exact dilemma described above, seek final solace in Zeus to shift τὸ μάταν δεχθος (Ag.165). Without πάθει μάθος and τὸ σωφρονεῖν, mortal men will have no moral guide and will be free to act indiscriminately (Eum.494-5).

As has already been observed, in the 'Hymn to Zeus', wisdom comes even to those who do not willingly accept it - for those who have no φόβος, force will be the only means of ensuring τὸ φρονεῖν. The course of justice/the path of understanding, if freely accepted, may be a relatively painless journey. So too, the Furies describe as δάμως the man who embarks on such a journey ἀναγκάς ἂτερ (Eum. 550). Such a man does not suffer punishment (Eum. 312-15).

In Eumenides, the concept of φόβος/τὸ δεινὸν (698) is explicitly confirmed to be beneficial by its inclusion in the practical application of justice (699) - citizens who fear do so ἐνδίκως (700). If πάθει μάθος in the 'Zeus hymn' prefigures the "place where the terrible is good" (517ff.) in Eumenides (that is, a place, Athens, where the threat/fear of suffering
deters would-be wrongdoers), it also encapsulates the benefits of tragedy. Watching the \( \pi \acute{a} \theta o \varsigma \) of dramatic characters, spectators may feel the \( \pi \acute{o} \nu o \varsigma \) of fellow feeling and pity. Yet the emotion of fear which replaces sleep is \( \mu \nu \rho \sigma i \pi \acute{h} \mu \omega \nu \) (i.e.: it moves the cognitive/intellectual faculty of memory)\(^33\), creating the proper distance from which on-stage figures may be assessed\(^34\), deterring onlookers from identifying absolutely with those on stage. Thus the theatrical experience is an instructive as well as an emotional one, a \( \mu \acute{a} \theta o \varsigma \) for spectators who are also citizens. "Clarification without emotional experience brings intellectual understanding, philosophy not art. Emotional experience without clarification may be art, but it is at best melodrama"\(^35\).

The Elders seek (or at least hope for) clarification, but in their allusions to their own unremitting experience of fear (Ag. 1243-44, 1530ff.), anxiety (\( \mu \acute{e} \rho i \mu \nu \alpha - 99, 460, 1531; \) also, \( \phi \rho o n \tau \iota \varsigma \ \xi \pi \lambda \eta \zeta \sigma o \varsigma \), 102 and \( \xi \chi \theta o \varsigma \ \phi \rho o n \tau \acute{t} \iota \rho o \varsigma \), 165), concern, uncertainty in their \( \phi \rho \eta \nu \) (99f., 1033) or \( \kappa \alpha \rho \delta \iota \alpha \) (179, 481, 1028, 1121ff., 1471), it is clear that they derive nothing useful, no \( \mu \acute{a} \theta o \varsigma \), from witnessing the \( \pi \acute{a} \theta o \varsigma \) of others; they only suffer fear. The Elders are overpowered (1470-1) by their inability to act on their feelings (1530-34). The light of fire does not clarify, or alleviate the concern of, their 'dark hearts' (460, 1030); rather, it fans the flames of their anxiety (481, 1033) - an experience which is
\(\thetaυμαλγής\) (1033) rendering the chorus like someone \(φρενῶν \ kεκομενός\) (479-82).

Fear has no benefit for them; it brings no cognition, no \(τὸ \ \sigmaωφρονεῖν\) with regard to appropriate actions to be taken, of ways to break the spell of moral malaise. Despite their hopes (102- \(\epsilonλπίς\)), there is no \(μάθος\).

In \textit{Eumenides}, however, \(τὸ \ δεινὸν\) can be \(εὖ\), an ever-watchful guardian of \(φρένες\) and bringer of good sense under constraint (521). The Elders may have aspired to be \(σωφρονοῦντες \ \καὶ \ \xρόνωσι\) (\textit{Eum.} 1000; i.e.: after travelling along the 'path' of understanding for some time), but it becomes the privilege of Athenian citizens, a state of grace (\(χάρις\)), of tragic pleasure, for those \(ικτερο \ ήμενοι \ Διὸς\) (\textit{Eum.} 998). But the threat of punishment from Zeus, his capacity to use \(βία\) (\textit{Eum.} 826ff.), does not recede altogether - his is a \(χάρις \ βίανος\) which can be dispensed from the \(σκληρὰ \ σεμνὸν\) of the gods (\textit{Ag.} 182-3).

The Elders' wish/hope/prayer\(^{56}\) for \(πάθει \ μάθος\), not answered in \textit{Agamemnon}, is met at the end of the trilogy. The phrase evokes the concept embodied in the threat of punishment, a deterrent which keeps the peace, maintaining \(Δίκα\) via the juridical institutions of the \(πόλις\). It simultaneously evokes the tragic experience, where pity at the \(πάθος\) of others and fear lest we suffer in their place, are educative, not merely leading to black despair. This \(μάθος\) is only made possible when pity and
fear, disillusion and illusion, are in proper proportion to each other\textsuperscript{57}, and to the staged \textit{πάθος}. Emotions should not hold sway, but they are essential to this learning about the benefits of one's own civic identity, and celebrating it and the theatre which depicts it.

In reaching some conclusions regarding the 'Hymn to Zeus', it is significant that the hymn's three stanzas strikingly evoke the respective characterizations of the three Oresteian choruses.

The first stanza (\textit{Ag.}160-66) contains an attempt at the act of naming in a hope to fix some degree of meaning. It expresses an anguish caused by uncertainty regarding terms of reference, and fear/hope about the future, shaped by the past, which is the characteristic preoccupation of the Argive Elders. The first stanza, however, concludes on a more positive note - a wish that the mind's burden (165) can somehow be alleviated. However, for the Elders (in the first play as in the first stanza of the 'Zeus hymn'), effective cognition, and any attendant \textit{logos} or action, are somehow 'jammed'.

In contrast, the libation-bearer chorus of \textit{Choephoroi} initially appropriates with enormous confidence the power of the spoken word: speaking a \textit{μῦθος} (\textit{Cho.}314) is synonymous with action, in this case \textit{δράσαοντα παθεῖν} (313). This idea that the word is all-powerful is foreshadowed in the second stanza of the 'Zeus hymn' - one who \textit{oδὸς} \textit{λέξεως} (\textit{Ag.}170) is no longer of any account or capable of action.
As has already been noted, the central stanza of the 'Zeus hymn' evokes the use of metaphors of athletic prowess and physical strength which depict Orestes as a conquering hero. If Zeus grants victory to his protégé Orestes (Cho. 791-6), mortal success is in turn part of the greater divine victory. In this way, the libation-bearers' confident conversion of the θρήνος to the victory ode/paean in Choephoroi (340-44; 935-971) is prefigured by the belief expressed in the second stanza of the 'Zeus hymn' that ἀνυοὐν ζήναι δὲ τις προφήτωνς ἐπινίκηκε κλάξων, will hit upon the target of understanding (Ag. 174-5).

In the final stanza of the 'Zeus hymn', an attempt is made to describe Zeus' attributes in ideological and conceptual terms, signalling a move away from the familiar logos of myth. The third stanza aspires to the successful operation of cognitive emotions, and the aspiration is met: the emotion of fear πρὸ καρδίας (Ag. 179) becomes the salutary guard of the φρήν, the organ of cognition, in the final play (Eum. 517ff.). Indeed, the benefits of fear (first alluded to at Ag. 179-180) and the lesson of τὸ σωφρονεῖν it can bring (first alluded to at Ag. 181), are closely linked with the Fury chorus's self-declared manifesto in Eumenides: there is a place where the terrible is good (Eum. 517) and there is a need for the enforcement of τὸ σωφρονεῖν (Eum. 521). The citizen-spectators do indeed attain 'wisdom' after witnessing, and engaging in, the experience of the trilogy, which is vaguely alluded to as a 'path' towards
understanding in the 'Zeus hymn' (Ag. 176-177): they are thus finally 
σωφρονούντες ἐν χρόνω (Eum. 1000).

In spite of initial intimations of disharmony, the Furies clearly are
linked with Zeus; as his agents they ensure that the path of understanding
is straight and just, tempered by a measure of fear, τὸ σωφρονεῖν and
πάθει μάθος for those who are both willing and unwilling to learn that
there is a moral purpose in divine action. Through their eventual
transformation, the Furies signal that morality has to be potentially
enforceable to be positively helpful in the communal context.

The 'Hymn to Zeus' attempts a new appraisal of the divine role in
human society. For the Elders, it constitutes a new idea - that of
identifying ἕβρους as the impious act which leads to other crimes of
vengeances (Ag. 757ff.). For the Furies, this idea of self-perpetuating
ἕβρους, of unstoppable violence, would result if Orestes was acquitted -
the 'new laws' (Eum. 490-91) are threatened with overthrow if a bad
precedent is set up at their inception, if they do not incorporate fear, τὸ
σωφρονεῖν and πάθει μάθος.

The Furies' transformation is a dramatic and spectacular
confirmation of old being dressed as new; innovation is a new perspective
on an old idea. So δρᾶσαι πάθειν still holds true, but the source and
scope of its power are perceived differently.

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Indeed, it is the three Oresteian choruses that shape the audience's moral perspective (their rational, emotional and theological view-points on the dilemmas enacted before them) on the very question of moral perspective in their own community. In the final analysis, the House of Justice is not the Argive palace or the Delphic temple, but the Areopagus and Fury-cult, which represent the most propitious aspects of divine influence on the human community.
Section 8: The Corrupt Word

The Trojans and Greeks, together with Iphigeneia, are ironically spoken of as 'preliminary sacrifices' (Ag.65, 227). Humans perversely replace animals as the customary sacrificial victims; at Ag. 232, Iphigeneia is a goat lifted high above the altar, and is clearly to be identified with the hare, which the eagles of Zeus rip apart in a 'sacrificial feast' (Ag.136-7). Agamemnon is the θυρηρ (224) of his daughter, perpetrating an impious abuse (Ag.220).

The fated outcome of the Trojan War cannot be prevented either by libation or by burnt offering - the insatiable power of rage, like the self-perpetuating ἰβριξ, is not to be checked (Ag.67-71). That propitiatory offerings to the gods are unacceptable in the first play is clear from Cassandra's lament (Ag.1167-1172).

Calchas prophesies that the adverse aspect of the Eagle Omen will in turn lead to another sacrifice; Artemis does indeed demand the death of Iphigeneia, which in turn will demand another sacrifice in a chain of apparently unstoppable murders (Ag.150-55). The recollection of Iphigeneia's sacrifice as one which is without song and feast contrasts strongly with the proper burnt sacrifices on the Argive altars, accompanied by the δλολνυμναξ of good omen (Ag.28); this sacrifice which is accompanied with pious words and actions indicates a mood of thanksgiving for victory and a return to prosperity. Just so, Iphigeneia

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herself sang the paean of thanksgiving at her father's table (Ag. 245-7).

[That the atmosphere of joy, hope and thanksgiving in Argos is
groundless is confirmed by Cassandra's vision of Furies revelling in the
Argive palace; their όλονγυμός reflects the seething corruption within the
house (Ag. 1189-90), which itself began with the impious feast of
Thyestes on his children - Ag. 1095ff.].

The other traditionally propitious song, the marriage-song, is in the
first play a great lament - πολυθρηνος (711); at 410ff., the prophets of
the Trojan palace had hailed the fated marriage of Paris and Helen with a
like lament. Cassandra too laments for the marriage of her brother
(Ag. 1156). The inescapable impiety of Helen's marriage, the
misappropriation of the lament in place of the paean of
blessing/thanksgiving, is enhanced by the depiction of Helen as a bride of
spears (686); indeed, the 'priest' who presides over this marriage is a Fury
which makes brides weep (749), and the Μῆνις brings a connection by
marriage (κῆδος, 699) which is beset with trouble63.

It is clear that the word of thanksgiving and blessing in the first
play is corrupted, unnaturally transformed into a βρηνος. So too,
Cassandra's prophetic logos in the first play inevitably turns into a lament
for past, present and immediate future. The Argive Elders perceive
Cassandra's lyric lamentations as inappropriate; but Cassandra's νῦμος
ξυρμος (1142) is an apt accompaniment to the 'sacrifice' of herself and

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Agamemnon, a sacrifice demanded by the earlier murder of Iphigeneia which was 'without song or feast'\textsuperscript{64}.

But Cassandra's prophetic logos turned lament strikes a chord with the Argive Elders precisely because it expresses their own unease at the apparently joyful return of their king, who hubristically walks on tapestries into the palace. Hope is utterly gone, foreboding and fear are like the tuneless Fury's lament in their hearts (Ag.988-1000). Unlike the power of prophecy, which Περθώ (106) had bestowed upon the Argive Elders at the beginning of the play, this dirge of the Erinys is self-taught, inspired by personal interpretation. The prophetic hearts of the Elders foresee the inevitability of lamentation, just as Cassandra's visions do. Despite their attempts to hope through prayer for a better future (just as they do at 998-1001), the Elders' propensity to grieve for the future before it has happened (253) inevitably outweighs the transient possibility of ἐλπὶς.

If the prophetic logos of Cassandra and the intuition and foreboding of the Argive Elders (expressed by metaphors of prophecy) are corrupted and transmuted into a ϑρηνος, then Clytemnestra's first logos over the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra, which should be one of grief, is a speech of victory and thanksgiving, a paean. If she had been permitted to pour the votive libation\textsuperscript{65}, Clytemnestra would not have hesitated to have done so (Ag.1372ff.). The Elders recognize the corrupted and
inappropriate nature of Clytemnestra's speech as inspired by the spirit of
the Argive palace; its 'prayer' is like the crow's discordant song
(Ag. 1472-4).

Clearly, the Argive Elders fulfil a role in the first play as
collectors on the apparent corruption and break-down of
communication both amongst mortals and between men and gods. At the
end of Agamemnon they re-emphasize the significance of using the right
words - the need for their king to be properly lamented is uppermost.
Any lament from Clytemnestra would be hubristic, an act of daring.

It is the chorus of the central play which initiates the true θρῆνος
for Agamemnon, which begins to restore the χάρις between men and
gods through the words they utter (in contrast with the ἔχαρις χάρις of
Clytemnestra's lament, Ag. 1545; cf. Cho. 44). The lament initiated by the
libation-bearers is also a paean, a song of thanksgiving and victory, a
song to restore Orestes and Electra to their rightful status. The note of
fear which pervaded the first play, and which condemned the Argive
Elders to a desperate ineffectuality in the on-going action (in spite of
their narrative authority regarding past events - κύριας ἕλμι θροεῖν), is
positively transformed by the libation-bearers into a sense of hopeful
purpose, an involvement in the action which can lead to a better future.
Section 9a: *CHOEPHORI: ὄρνος to παύσω, fear to hope, ineffectuality to action*

The whole of *Choephori* is geared to the restoration of rightful words and actions, a reconstitution of the χάρις between gods and men. That χάρις is a delicate *two-way* relationship and one which brings mutual advantage to both parties is clear from Orestes' prayer to Zeus (Cho. 246ff.)⁶⁶. If Zeus does not restore Orestes and Electra to their proper status, they in turn will not be able to restore the proper sacrifices in exchange for which the gods send σήματ' ἐνπιθῇ βροτοῖς (259). Without the 'eagle's children', there will be no need for Zeus to send eagle-signs/omens as he did in the first play.

Thus from the very beginning of the central play, the need to speak the καίριος (ἐνφιμοζ) λόγος is foregrounded. In contrast with her mother (who is angry at being treated like a young girl, showered with questions which indicate the doubt of the Argive Elders - *Ag.*277), Electra has a relatively low status before the chorus of household slavewomen; she is humble before their seniority (171), and her need for support and alliance compels her to ask them to help her choose the correct prayer to accompany the rites before her father's tomb (Cho. 87ff). Here it is a central character who asks 'what shall I say, how shall I distinguish it as from a well-disposed heart?' In the first play, it was the
chorus which felt itself constantly plagued by such questions
(Ag. 1489-91).

In Choephori, it is the libation-bearers of the chorus who answer
the questions asked both by Electra and the Argive Elders; they provide a
moral context within which Electra can frame a proper prayer. The
stichomythia of 106-123 reveals how the libation-bearers teach, instruct
and cajole Electra into believing that a prayer for Orestes' return and
vengeance for their father is justified. Thus when she asks rhetorically if
in asking for vengeance against the hated Aegisthus (112) she also speaks
for them, their reply shows that Electra has indeed learnt their lesson well
(113). Electra thus engages the household women to be σύμβουλοι (86)
and μετανόης (100); they teach her what to say and give a moral frame
to the central play, powerfully reiterated in their own rhetorical question
to Electra at 123, the final confirmation of the justice of vengeance which
inspires her lengthy prayer to chthonic Hermes.

However, Electra has their advantage in the episode of the lock on
the grave. As she had learnt from them (113 and 118), so they are
prepared to learn from her, to hear her interpretation of the lock's
symbolism (171 and 175). Ultimately, it is Orestes who provides the
proper interpretation of the sign, his appearance on stage confirming that
the sign is propitious and, more importantly, that Electra's prayer has
been answered, her brother has returned; the καιρός λόγος has worked,
the sharply focused moral framework provided by the chorus has been validated. The entire opening of the second play (until the start of the Great Kommos at 306) illustrates the advantages of joint action and exchange - Electra and chorus learn from each other, Orestes' narrative adds greater detail to the complex network of motivations which will inspire him to the act of vengeance. This sense of communal purpose and mutual interdependence is in part vocalized in the Great Kommos. (Orestes is concerned with the fate of his citizens, who conquered Troy, 302-5; these are the citizens for whom the Argive Elders were shown to be spokesmen in the first play).
Section 9b: Lament with Paean

The libation-bearers of the chorus are clearly instructors and teachers of the eagle's children. So too without much difficulty they assume a parental role of guardianship over Orestes and Electra. Thus Orestes is addressed as τέκνον (324) and Electra's imagined vision of a more noble death for her father is checked by a gentle rebuke from the slave-women - Electra is still a child with vain dreams (372). The children reiterate the nobility of their father, their lament signals an attempt to restore their father to his proper status amongst the dead (Cho. 354-8).

So the Great Kommos is in part a lyric lament tinged with the necessary eulogistic elements to re-affirm the status of the dead man. But despite the ritual requirements of lament, the Great Kommos also gives condensed expression of human grief - many tears have been shed, the children are both protected suppliants and fearful exiles, for whom moral dilemma still remains - πί τῶν ἔν, πί δ' ἔτερ κακῶν; (338).

As soon as Electra strikes this doubtful note, the chorus introduces a new possibility. Electra's questions are unequivocally answered. It is the libation-bearers who initiate the idea of the paean of thanksgiving in the house growing from, and transforming, the lament for Agamemnon. Much has already been said about the misappropriation of the lament and the paean. Here they are rightfully restored to proper and propitious usage.
(Cho. 340-344). Just as Iphigeneia's holy paean accompanied the thanksgiving-libation (Ag. 245f.), so the song and ritual of thanksgiving and blessing will be restored in the Argive palace. The memory of Clytemnestra's unnatural song of victory and thanksgiving over the corpse of her husband in the first play\(^{68}\), where Agamemnon is envisaged as drinking the cup of evil he had himself filled (Ag. 1395-1398), will be wiped out with a libation of newly mixed wine from a new wine-cup. The paean is also an advance victory ode - Orestes will triumph in the battle against his adversaries, it is he who will exchange the libations for the dead with new libations of felicity for those living in the Argive palace.

The libation-bearers' moral certainty finds further expression when they discuss the irrepressible nature of human rage - anger, especially collective anger, requires an outlet. What is important to emphasize here is that the chorus signals to the audience that the emotion of rage is an undeniable and justifiable motive for vengeance (Cho. 386-392). There is no equivocation, no doubt that the desire to shout with joy over Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' corpses might be impious; for the chorus, this is a righteous murder and thus it provides a backdrop of moral certainty. In contrast, it is Electra and Orestes especially who labour under the weight of moral uncertainty, like the chorus of the first play. When Orestes asks questions (Cho. 409 and 899), he recalls the \(\delta\mu\eta\chi\alpha\nu\varnothing\) of the Argive Elders.

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The short passage of anapaests at *Cho*. 855ff., is an excellent illustration of the differences between the choruses of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*. As Electra and Orestes had asked them how to frame their prayer-lament-paean, so the libation-bearers initially reiterate the important question τί λέγω. The act of polluting murder could signal the utter destruction of the Argive house, or the justified act of vengeance could signal the light of freedom in the house, a restoration of the Argive dynasty to δλβος (865; the proper status of a contented man as opposed to the impiety of the hubristic man, from which it is clearly distinguished in the first play). Just as god (340-41) had established (highlighted with a pun on θεός/θείη - for Zeus as an establisher see *Ag*. 178) the possibility of good outcome, the potential for transformation of lament into paean, so the victory of the god-like champion Orestes in the wrestling-bout (*Cho*. 867) will re-establish the status of the house and thus re-define it. Before *Agamemnon*’s death-cry, the Argive Elders reiterate their essentially pessimistic view of the human condition; in contrast before Aegisthus’ death-cry, the libation-bearers resume their 'paean', their expectation of Orestes’ victory.

Orestes does indeed fulfil the expectations of the household women - he is the saviour who brings light and renewed hope to the Argive palace (935-71); the καίριος λόγος here is the δλαλυγμός of joy (942), a cry of thanksgiving^{69} for a 'sacrifice' (the murder of the polluters
Clytemnestra and Aegisthus) which is not corrupt precisely because it signals the purification of the polluted palace and of Orestes himself, who leads the Furies away from the Argive palace and the Delphic temple to Athens.
Section 9c: The Dark Heart: Grief, Rage and Fear in *Choephori*

Much has already been said about the fearful atmosphere which dominated the first play; it was the Argive Elders, *Agamemnon*’s chorus, who defined the overwhelming anxiety in their innards.

This fear motif is continued in *Choephori*, but in the central play the libation-bearers are not paralysed into inactivity by fear, but rather describe the fear of others. This significantly shifts the audience’s emotional focus on the action; in *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra spread uneasiness, whereas in the central play she herself is subjected to fear. Terror grips Clytemnestra, Aegisthus and the Argive palace. For the libation-bearers, it is the emotions of grief and rage which initially dominate and are gradually transformed into an overwhelming sense of hope for a better future through the actions of ῶρ Orestes.

The libation-bearers’ torn mourning garments⁷⁰, the outward show of grief (28-31), reveal a heart/κλαχ which feeds on lamentation. The initial and thus impactful visual image given by the chorus of the central play is that of the funeral procession. The chorus carries libations for the dead, wearing black robes ripped in mourning like their cheeks (22-31); in the Great Kommos the slave-women beat their breasts with the ritual gestures of mourning (423-8). The proper actions must be seen to be done. Initially, the audience does not know for whom the chorus mourns, but it is subsequently revealed that Clytemnestra has sent them. The
prophetic interpretation of her terrifying dreams reveals the accusations and anger of those underground against their murderers - Agamemnon's spirit still wields influence, the power to ἐγκοτεῖν (41) against the living.

So too in the epode of the parodos, the libation-bearers reveal their own secret anger, a πικρὸν στῦγος (80) which they have learned to control and conceal. Like Cassandra before them, these women are slaves who accept the fate of their city, enforced by θεοί (76). Unlike Cassandra, they find acquiescence to their mortal masters less easy; however, by controlling their secret thoughts - βίων φρενῶν (80), they outwardly obey Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, despite having an unequivocal view on what is just and what is unjust.

But if their hearts harbour a powerful hatred against their current masters, their grief for Agamemnon sounds genuine enough. The veiled and secret tears they shed for him are revealed to the audience. This is a significant element of Choephoroi. The audience is enlisted to share in the secrets of the house, divulged by the chorus, to be party to the just and complex motivations of Orestes and Electra as they are gradually revealed. In complete contrast with Clytemnestra in Agamemnon, the libation-bearers openly reveal the secrets of the 'dark heart'.

Thus, when Electra asks them to formulate a prayer at her father's tomb, the libation-bearers speak a word of genuine-sounding grief and respect for Agamemnon (Cho.106-7). They also reverence and regard as
righteous Agamemnon's rage beneath ground, which like their own
concealed hatred for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, comes ἐξ ὀμορράς
φρενᾶς (157-8).

In contrast with the emotions of grief and rage openly revealed by
the libation-bearers, is the secret fear which overshadows the Argive
palace.
Section 9d: Phobos the Dream Prophet - Choephorí 32-41

A terrifying cry pierced the silence of the women's inner chamber. It is Clytemnestra who cries out in sleep inspired by the ὄρθρις (32) prophet Fear. Phobos is a clear prophet (τορός), both inspiring the dream-scape and 'interpreting' it: the dream contains the breath of κότος (33). Phobos the dream-prophet reads the dream accurately, since divinely inspired (θεότητι, 39), 'real' prophets confirm the anger of those underground (40-41).

Thus terror pervades the Argive palace; φόβος lurks ἐν γυναικείῳ (36) and chthonic κότος is directed against its guilty occupants, τοῖς κτανοῦσι (41). The libation-bearers do not claim prophetic insight, but have made known the situation in the house by relating the prophecies of others.

They also reveal religious propriety, concern with speaking κοάριος λόγος. They are afraid to lament on Clytemnestra's behalf: she is impious, sending a hopeless appeasement, since murder is irreversible.71 Clytemnestra's λόγος is δυσφημος, she herself is δυσθεος (46), and thus χάρις (the proper links between living and dead and between gods, δαίμονες and mortals) is corrupted, is ἄχριτος (44).

Fear is also a darkness which veils the house (51-3), causing a 'living death' for its guilty inhabitants. Just as fearful dreams plague Clytemnestra, so the terror which overshadows the house grips Aegisthus:
φοβεῖται δὲ τις (57-8). As often in Aeschylus an apparently generalized observation has a more particular resonance for the watching audience. Aegisthus was a despot surrounded by his body-guard, intent on ruling his subjects by fear and the threat of violence in Agamemnon. In the central play, he must necessarily fear reprisal. As metaphors of prophecy were used in Agamemnon for intuitive emotion, so in Choephorís parodos, it is implicit that the new rulers of Argos intuitively sense the threat of punishment: fear is a tangible atmosphere which lurks over the Argive palace and its guilty occupants. In the first play, it was the audience and Elders who were suspended in this half-darkness of fearful uncertainty.

In the Great Kommos, any reservations the libation-bearers may have felt at expressing their inner rage are dissolved (Cho. 388-92). Why should the emotion which completely dominates the φρῆν (389) not be revealed, especially since this cognitive organ has the capacity to articulate emotion, in this case στύγος (392), which initially manifests itself in the "more primitive and violent operation of the irrational faculties" [κραδία and θυμός, 391-2]72.

If rage is one motivation which spurs mortals to the action of vengeance, that the libation-bearers also serve to highlight the transformation of fear into hope is clear from their response to Orestes' expression of doubt at 409 - "where can one turn to, Zeus?". The
introduction of this element of anxiety causes the chorus to feel temporarily a similar emotion: at 410, the heart jumps with fear. (Just so the chorus responds with temporary fear when Electra see Orestes' lock on the grave-mound, asking her to elaborate since ὅρχειτωι δὲ καρδία φοβω, 167.) To hear an ἐπος of fear darkens the light of freedom which Orestes represents; fear corrupts hope, making it δύσελπις (412).

The text of 415-17 is uncertain. However, given the importance of fear being turned into hope by employing a logos which transforms lament into paean, the passage as restored below, following Garvie73, looks promising:-

\[\text{δόταν δ' αὐτ' ἐπὶ ἄλκαν [Blaydes] <τράπωμωι> [Garvie]}
\[\text{ἐλπίς [Blomfield] ἀπεστασεὶν ἐχος}
\[\text{πρὸς τὸ φομίσωι καλῶς. [Conington/Blass]. Cho. 415-17}

τράπωμωι works well here because it directly answers Orestes' question (409). Yet it makes better sense that the object of τράπωμωι, the strength the chorus turns to in a crisis, is Zeus, rather than the 'altar'/tomb of Agamemnon, as Garvie74 proposes. Implicit in 416-17 is the idea that 'Zeus' is the auspicious word to speak when in doubt, he removes ἐχος and inspires ἐλπίς. In the 'Zeus Hymn' of the first play, the Argive Elders were far more cautious in approaching Zeus and his name. In contrast, the religious certainty of the libation-bearers confidently affirms and thus parallels the unequivocally positive nature of Zeus. As the libation-bearers say at 340f., it is god who establishes fairer songs, who
inspires the paean of thanksgiving (Zeus himself as Soter receives the third libation) in houses once beset with lamentation. If Zeus Soter speaks the propitious word for the Argive palace, Orestes should speak the word of faith which expresses positive hope that will be restored through his actions and the divine aid.

450-55⁷⁵ recalls an image from the first play: memory 'written' indelibly on the mind. At Ag.801f., the Elders recall that the king's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia caused their anger. But their resentment is swept aside at the joy they feel at his safe return. There is no such emotional ambiguity for the libation-bearers. They simply wish that outrage at the treatment of Electra, adding to the motivations which will inspire Orestes to action, will be etched on his heart. Electra's story (μὸθος, 452) will be concealed within ἡσυχεῖον φρένων βήσει⁷⁶, but will surely be recalled when the time to strike comes. This is an exemplary instance of emotion (in this case experienced via memory) which, because located in the cognitive φρήν (452), is educative: it teaches a path of positive action (454, τὸ μαθεῖν). Although the audience is invited to share in Orestes' motivations, he must resort to caution when he first confronts Clytemnestra; his disguise signals the importance of concealing emotion, the anger he has learnt (454) in his dark, secretive heart.

In conclusion, although both chorus and Orestes experience temporary bouts of anxiety, they display overall great emotional resolve,
which is supported by the anger of the dead. In contrast, Clytemnestra's experience of φθρος intimates loss of the confident daring she displayed in the first play.
Section 9e: The Song of Female Daring - Moral Certainty in Choephoroi

The Song of Female Daring is placed fairly centrally in the central play of the trilogy (Cho. 585-651). In effect, it is a list of paradeigmata, which although inevitably different in detail, focus on the single theme of the danger of female daring. It is apparent that Clytemnestra is the implicit subject of this choral poem; although she is not named, she is alluded to in 623-630, since the drama casts her as the archetypal παντόπολιος. In Agamemnon (1233-4), Cassandra had alluded to Clytemnestra as a Scylla monster; in the Song of Female Daring, the libation-bearers tell of another Scylla's story - 612-22; the mortal girl who murders her father for a golden necklace may not be a monster, but her deed of patricide is monstrous.

The three mythological exempla used all have aspects which link them to Clytemnestra's daring murder of her husband. Althaea's plan is here depicted as one of pre-meditated δόλος (μήσαρτο, 605). Althaea causes the burning of the brand, in full knowledge that it will end her son Meleager's life; Clytemnestra orders the kindling of torches which give her the advance warning she needs of Agamemnon's homecoming. The torch/brand is linked implicitly with pre-meditated murder.

The name 'Scylla' too, as was suggested above, recalls Clytemnestra's monstrous, superhuman nature. Scylla like Clytemnestra was an ἐκθρός to one who should have been a φίλος (615), killing her
father Nisus in the vulnerability of sleep; similarly, Agamemnon was caught unguarded, murdered in the bath in another pre-meditated plot (626).

The last paradeigma evokes other significant aspects of the Clytemnestra story. The Lemnian women kill their men because they have taken concubines; Clytemnestra is partly motivated by the infidelities of her husband (Cho.918). But the other myth of Lemnos, that of the Pelasgians murdering their Athenian concubines and children, evokes the child-murder motif of the Althaea/Meleager story and most obviously prevents the audience from forgetting entirely that Agamemnon murdered his child Iphigeneia. However, it is female daring which dominates the choral ode.

τὸ Λήμυνων (631) is a story familiar to the people; it is the archetypal tale of abomination which causes an entire race to be destroyed, to be exiled by the pollution of dishonour. This is the fate for murderers - to be excluded from human and divine company (highlighted by the emphatically placed θεοσωτυγήτωι and βροτοῖς at the beginning of their respective lines, 635-6); it is the curse of the people which drives away such pollution (Ag.1407-1411) and which should drive away the murderers Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The mythological exemplum of τὸ δεινῶν (Cho. 634) is in the final play no longer a 'mere' story;
fear/awe/respect is incorporated into the Areopagus/Fury-cult, its
apotropaic power is enacted and illustrated in Eumenides.

Although the Song of Female Daring in Choephoroi is undoubtedly
the most concentrated discussion of female influence for evil in the
trilogy, it is foreshadowed by the Argive Elders' reference to Helen in
their quest to fix a cause for the Trojan War (Ag. 1454-61). It is through
women that Agamemnon (Ag. 1451-1454) and his dynasty are brought
down (Ag. 1468-71). For the libation-bearers, it is love which arouses
this all-daring spirit in the hearts/minds of women, identified by the
Elders as κράτος ἐκ γυναικῶν (Ag. 1470). But this is a love which is not
love (600), ἔρως which is in fact ἔρις (Ag. 1461). It is also θηλυκρατῆς
(600), both a force which conquers females and with which women
overpower men. Love, in the hands of women, has the power to inspire
acts of female daring; love becomes anti-love when perceived as a battle
between male and female in which one party must prevail (παρανικῶς
600).

In Choephoroi's Song of Female Daring, the mythological exempla
give a far narrower focus to the actions of women, concentrating
specifically on the emotional motivations which drive them to commit
acts of daring. The chorus of the first play had acted in part as
representatives of the Argive πῶλος, putting the events of the Trojan War
and its consequences in a wide political and theological context. The
chorus of the central play, however, is characterized quite differently; the libation-bearers are δυσωτοὶ γυναῖκες (Cho. 84, 1048), slavewomen totally without any connection to the Argive city\textsuperscript{80}. As they serve to focus audience concentration on the House of the Atreidae and the tomb of Agamemnon, so also they concentrate the motif of struggle and conflict in sexual/individual/personal/familial terms, excluding to a large extent the political and cosmic frameworks which gave rise to the over-determined complexities of the first play. The libation-bearers thus create an atmosphere where the importance of human interplay is uppermost: grief, anger, shame and desire are all shown to be significant motivations to human action.

In conclusion, the chorus of the central play draws the audience's attention to what it presents as the morally unambiguous lessons to be drawn from the myths chosen in the Song of Female Daring. The Lemnian story (631f.) has attained its moral significance because πρεσβευτα (631)\textsuperscript{81}. It is with another ancient principle that the libation-bearers initiate the Great Kommos (Cho. 312-314). Thus they are able to formulate a simple answer (121) to Electra's anguished question (120) - the need for reciprocal action is unassailable. The Song of Female Daring highlights the libation-bearers' moral assurance, their confidence in transforming lament into paean, fear into hope, through the actions of their hero Orestes. The unrelenting repetition of female blame
foreshadows the reduction of conflict to human terms which shapes the male/female clash of the mother/son scene.
Section 9f: From Logos to τὸ δρᾶν

This choral self-assurance leads in turn to the ability of the libation-bearers to inspire action in others. Unlike the Argive Elders before them, they have a significant role as the instigators of action. Their confident λόγος leads to τὸ δρᾶν.

At 510-13, the libation-bearers assure Orestes that his preceding λόγος, the lament-paeon at his father's tomb was καύριος. But now that he has set his thoughts straight φρενὶ (512) by saying a καύριος λόγος he must match it with τὸ δρᾶν.

What follows is a necessary clarification of the reason for the bringing of libations to Agamemnon's tomb. The story of Clytemnestra's vain attempts to appease Agamemnon's ghost (521) serves as a contrast to Orestes' determined actions which will change the future. Clytemnestra's attempt to avert disaster through the words and actions of others on her behalf is futile - all the libations in the world will not remove the stain of blood.

After Orestes interprets his mother's snake-dream propitiously, the libation-bearers yet again urge the need for action - for clarifying (just as the snake-dream was made clear) who is to do what in the plan for vengeance (Cho. 552-3). In response, Orestes gives them the entire 'word' which will lead to action - ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος (554).
Clearly, indicating to people when to refrain from action (μὴ τι δρᾶν λέγων, 553) is as important as giving instructions to act. In the Cilissa scene, the chorus is seen to have a significant influence over the action; they persuade Cilissa to alter her message to Aegisthus (770-772) and tell him to come without his bodyguard. As Orestes uses a treacherous persuasion to gain entrance to the Argive palace, so the libation-bearers will employ this persuasion on Cilissa - thus through collusion between chorus and protagonist, Aegisthus will come unarmed to the palace, an easy and unsuspecting target.

At 726f., it is clear that knowing exactly when to strike is as important as planning what to do. 'Now' (urgently reiterated three times, 725-6 ) is the time for treacherous Persuasion to enter the arena and engage in the 'battle' on Orestes' side.

The libation-bearers thus consider that on occasion it is necessary to employ treacherous persuasion in a just cause. On Orestes' behalf, altering a message/telling lies is a κακός λόγος, it is setting a bent word straight - 773. In the first play, it was Clytemnestra who used treacherous persuasion to achieve her end; here, both chorus and Orestes collude in treacheries which significantly alter the course of the action.

But the libation-bearers are also able to maintain a degree of distance. They are after all foreign slavewomen whose own tragic status allows them an insight into the vagaries of human fortune, and although
they sympathize, encourage and collude with Orestes and Electra, they
can never themselves recover their lost city. Furthermore, they have been
brought under the yoke of slavery (Cho. 75-77), and the bond of marriage
which confirms alliance and status is denied them.

Thus at 871f., they stand aside from the actions within the house,
so as to appear to have no connection with the completion of this murder
(Cho. 871-874). At 101, they were μεταίτια, at 873, they wish to
appear ἄνεωτιαν. This partly prepares the audience for the intense
mother/son scene which follows, unsupported as it is by the comments or
active participation of the previously influential chorus. But the audience
is also aware that the chorus has played a significant part in inspiring
Orestes to successful action; in many ways, the reactions of the libation-
bearers are parallel to those of the audience. The audience colludes with
the conditions of the 'theatrical frame', allowing itself to be moved and
yet maintaining a necessary distance, overwhelmingly fascinated with the
final outcome of events, the theatrical τέλος.

Yet in the closing stages of Choephoroi, the confident choral λόγος
gradually disintegrates into lamentation - 931, 1007-1009, 1019-20. This
θρήνος strain clearly influences Orestes' own expression of grief
(1014ff.)82. Orestes struggles to present a coherent defence λόγος while
he remains ξυμφών (1026); that is, while his φην, the cognitive faculty
of coherent speech, still has sufficient control, in spite of the emotion of
fear which is ready to take hold of the irrational faculty of the καρδία (1024). The chorus attempts to prevent Orestes from speaking ill-omened words (1044-5), but madness eventually takes hold of him. In spite of their own attempts to restore Orestes' unequivocal confidence in the correctness of his actions (1044), their own uncertainty about how to frame the final words of the play (1073-4) betrays their loss of verbal and moral certainty.:-

 νῦν δ' αὖ τρίτος ἥλθε ποθεν σωτήρ
 ἡ μόρον εἶπὼς.
Section 10a: The Angry Ones in Eumenides

It is not surprising, given the choral influence on audience perceptions, that the final play provides yet another range of new perspectives. In Eumenides it is divine motivation (merely guessed at in Agamemnon) which is revealed, the divine view of mortals. The enactment of the mythic logos, the face-to-face interaction between men and gods, serves to bring the divine to the level of mortal men, making the theoi more understandable. The chorus of Furies which dominates the final play takes on the role of a leading actor in the drama. It is they who pose the initial dilemmas of divine motivation and present a potential answer in their final transformation.

Much has already been said about the appearance and function of the Furies. Their fearful visages, which symbolize their role as inexorable punishers, are verbally foreshadowed by the choruses of Agamemnon and Choephoroi, where they are linked with Zeus' justice. However, in the final play it is precisely this link which is under dispute - The Furies are exiles from human and divine company (Eum. 365-6), yet their privileges are undisputed and ordained both by Fate and the gods (Eum. 389-93).

As the motivations of the Furies are revealed, and as they resonate with precepts connected with the supreme Olympian, so Zeus' nature is clarified in part for the audience. Zeus allows himself to be identified
through the Furies and their transformation which of course is fated to occur, just as his authority governs the actions of his children Apollo and Athena. It is through the Furies, their emotive choral outbursts, their 'anthropomorphic' feelings of anger, pain and hatred that the audience bears witness to the shifting of the divine perspective and is also put on the road of understanding which leads to Zeus. Significantly, the final image of the trilogy is of Zeus coming into the human 'arena' with Fate to be an 'all-seeing' spectator of human affairs (Eum. 1045-7). At Cho. 726-9, the chorus requests that Persuasion and Hermes watch over Orestes' battle in the arena. In the final play, Hermes does appear and Athena shows persuasion to be a powerful force in the verbal battle. Thus at the end of the trilogy, the image of Zeus being the all-seeing spectator signals that ultimate control lies with him. Although much has been revealed and clarified through the appearance of various gods and goddesses, Zeus himself does not appear, maintaining a distance through seeing the whole, rather than being seen.
Section 10b: The Angry Heart

In *Eumenides*, the Furies feel and express those feelings on a human level. Clytemnestra's ghost finds them in that most vulnerable human state of sleep, when it is in the Furies' hearts especially that μη στήμων πόνος (*Ag.* 180) should drip instead of sleep. In the final play, Clytemnestra exhorts them (*Eum.* 103) δρα δὲ πληγὰς τὰσδὲ καρδίαν ἁθεῖν. She reveals the gashes in her heart, but implies that the Furies too are wounded; they too feel the pain, anguish and rage of the murdered victims they avenge. This counterbalances the cruel torments by the Furies that await the guilty and which are catalogued by Apollo (*Eum.* 186-90). The idea is succinctly expressed by Clytemnestra's ghost - the Furies will feel pain in their own hearts at her reasonable reproaches and at the memory of the wounds in her heart, and will breathe a destructive, fiery wind from their guts to destroy the murderer (*Eum.* 135-9). That the Furies truly feel excruciating pain and anger, as experienced by Clytemnestra, is clear from 155-61. Clytemnestra's reproach is felt as a wound to the mind/heart and the guts.

Emotion takes effect on two fronts: ὑπὸ φρένας, ὑπὸ λόβου (159). It assaults both the cognitive faculty, the φρήν and the more intuitive, irrational faculty/organ, the liver/λόβος. Interestingly, neither λόβος nor womb/νηδύς (138) appear in *Agamemnon* or *Choephoroi*; by emphasizing
such 'human' psycho-physiological details, the author makes the Furies convincingly anthropomorphic.

The wounding sensation which symbolizes the Furies' empathy with Cytemnestra's injuries and her own δνέκεδος (155) for the Furies' tardy response to them, is also the lash of the public executioner (160). For those who are normally the executioners of wrong-doers (Eum. 186-90), the metaphor drawn from the humiliation of public punishment is startling.

The emphatic location of pain, rage and indignation in the hearts/minds/guts of the Furies gives an unusual perspective on these ancient goddesses; it signals a re-emergence of the flux and chaos of the first play, since it is normally the Furies who are imagined as inspiring fear in the hearts of others, when they punish wrong-doers with irresistible wounds.

The Furies are aggrieved, feeling wounded, because they sense the overthrow of all they represent by the younger gods, especially Apollo (he causes them pain - 174). If they were not motivated by heart/mind to punish crime, especially murder, what would act as a guardian to the hearts and minds of mortal men? The fear that the Furies inspire is a necessary deterrent and an essential component of any justice-system (Eum. 517-25).
The existence of the Furies is inextricably linked with the λαχην of mortals (310), and thus when Orestes is acquitted by the newly-founded Areopagus, the Furies' emotions range from lament and humiliation to outrage and anger. What is startling here is that the θρηνος strain should be re-introduced by embittered deities - in the first two plays, it is only for mortals to lament their fate and their παθες (790=820; cf. 143-4, 145, 837=870). But in the case of the Furies, their lamentation will be transformed to a destructive anger against Athens and her people (Eum. 779-792=808-822).

The libation-bearers had also turned from grief to anger; but they transformed lament into paean, both a victory song for Orestes and a song of blessing, thanksgiving and felicity for the House of Atreus in expectation of propitious outcome. In contrast, the poisonous sense of grief which grips their hearts will cause the ancient goddesses to blast and infect the Athenian land with barrenness. Similarly, in A Midsummer Night's Dream the turbulent emotions of the fairy king and queen set the seasons awry.

But divinity and immortality does not prevent the Furies (or Titania and Oberon) feeling emotions on an entirely human level. The chorus of the final play expresses, in the first person singular, grief (στεναξω, 788), insecurity (τι δεξω; 788), humiliation (γελωμω, 789) and finally suffering - (παιδον, 790); it is this last emotion of pain and suffering
which caused Orestes to falter in *Choephori*. He did not wish to inflict a shameful crime on his mother, causing her to suffer what she should not *(Cho. 930)*; similarly, Orestes suffers after the deed of murder *(Cho. 1009)*.

That the Furies feel the pain of human suffering for a considerable amount of time is apparent from a repetition of their grievances, despite Athena’s attempts to soothe them *(Eum. 836-847=870-880)*. Their sufferings cause them to feel a shooting pain in their sides - ὄδινα (842). They are bereft of honour before men and gods, they can only have recourse to an irrational release of anger from their seething innards.
10c: Charms, Spells, Curses into a Paean of Benediction

The possibility and actuality of Orestes' acquittal inspire the Furies to threaten the unleashing of an uncontrollable, anarchic and indiscriminate rage in contrast with a righteous κότος against those who have committed misdemeanours (Eum. 499-500). At 810f., the Angry Ones threaten to loose their anarchic rage against the land and city of Athens, which are the source of their ἀτυμία.

In Eumenides, the Furies feel themselves to be the victims of dishonour (780-81). But earlier in the trilogy it is they who, under normal circumstances, would punish murderers and other wrong-doers with what is equivalent to the civic punishment of ἀτυμία. The Furies regulate the actions of punishment, once the criminal has been cursed with exile from the city or been condemned to death by stoning.

The Furies' usual modus operandi is outlined in the first stasimon of Agamemnon, where the righteous anger of the Argive people finds expression in a communally sanctioned curse (Ag. 456-460). It is the Furies who are relied upon to punish those who are ἀνευ δίκας (464). Indeed, they symbolize the curses of aggrieved parties, they are the Ἀρων of the people, the unvoiced curse of Iphigeneia (237) and Thyestes' outcry against the feast on his children (1601), all of which are directed forcefully against the House of Atreus.
This is relevant to what has already been said about the way in which the Argive Elders consider the πόλυς as a potential avenger of their murdered king, in a passage of debate which is full of the language of legal and communal decision-making and action (Ag. 1343-71). Just as the Elders talk of themselves as prophets when they discuss prophecy, so here they are like the citizens who they hope will take counsel, weigh the evidence and punish the crime of murder and so remove the threat of tyranny. They speak in the language of jurors and at the same time attempt to be like jurors in making a decision which will lead to action. However, it is apparent that the Elders cannot readily decide upon a course of action until it is too late. For the remainder of Agamemnon, the chorus does not act successfully against the new tyrants Clytemnestra or Aegisthus (although it gets as far as trying to resist - 1650 and 1652), but rather the threat of action from the πόλυς hangs over the spectators and characters alike.

The threat of communally-decided punishment is the only weapon the chorus can wield against Clytemnestra, who after her victory speech over the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra, seems physically and mentally supreme (Ag. 1407-1411). Clytemnestra picks up on the Elders' image of themselves as 'jurors' (See especially, 1343ff.); she mocks them - if they are jurors and judges they failed in their duty to exile the
muderer Agamemnon from the land, but are hard judges when it comes to her actions (Ag. 1412-13, 1419-21).

The Argive Elders, despite their self-image, are not true jurors. As Clytemnestra points out so clearly, they administer justice unfairly and subjectively: they did not apply the punishment of τὸ ἀνδρηλακτέῖν to Agamemnon (1419-20) who is equally guilty of polluting murder. They are partisan and that is why the queen challenges them to accept a quasi-legal exchange ἐκ τῶν δυμών. This exchange which follows is awry and confused, a poor counterpart to the true workings of justice at the end of Eumenides, where Clytemnestra is replaced by impartial Athena and the confused elders of Argos become the well-organized and clear-minded Athenian jurors. It is of course true that, unlike the Elders, the jurors in Eumenides do not speak and so cannot be misinterpreted through the ambiguities of λόγος. Instead, they act unequivocally by casting pebbles into voting urns (Eum. 748-9).

It is clear then that the πόλεις has the authority to sentence murderers to exile - the people's anger and fear of pollution become vocalized as a δημόθρου ἄρχα. That the communally voiced opinions of the people of Argos are something to be feared is apparent from Clytemnestra's claim that she sent Orestes away because of the threat of δημόθρου ἀναρχία (883). Anarchy, the action of disobedience, would arise from a communal decree uttered by the people - words lead to
deeds. So too, Agamemnon is afraid of what the people will say if he walks on the purples (938).

The collective voice of the people (unlike women's mere rumours, see 483f.) is a powerful force. Once the word of the people, the ἰημύθρους ἄρα, is uttered, it carries with it the threat of serious punitive action. As the chorus had threatened Clytemnestra with the curses of the people and the possibility of exile, so too when they confront Aegisthus, the Elders mention the people's punishment - death by stoning (1615-16). The community is able to take direct action against tyrannicides, just as the insatiable band of Furies will take action against the murderers in the house. The parallel between communal acts of vengeance by the city and the duties of the Furies is clearly important (see Cassandra's comments at 1117f.).

Significantly, stoning is one of the punishments which the Furies are said to administer against crimes of wrongdoers by Apollo. In Eumenides, however, Apollo undoubtedly sees the barbaric punishments to be as polluting as the crimes which inspire them (Eum. 186ff.). Yet in Choephoroi, Apollo had threatened Orestes' possible inaction with προσβολαὶ Ἐρυνύων (Cho. 283), which include the exclusion of the wrongdoer from all communal activity (Cho. 286-296) in the πόλεως. Thus the dilemma of vengeance is presented through the characterization of the Fury chorus. Furies are embodiments of the people's collective
curse, doing nothing 'without justice'; in contrast, at 500 and 780f., their anarchic anger is inspired by their rejection by men and gods, i.e.: their role is reversed - they suffer the dishonour of exile rather than dispensing punishments against crimes.

_Eumenides_ provides a partial answer to this moral dilemma. The Furies are reinstated in the human and divine communities. Although partially transformed, they still retain their ancient dispensations: old incorporates new. It will be another shift in perspective such as this one, rather than complete metamorphosis from old into new, which colours the conclusion of the trilogy. The potential pollution/threat of the curse is a blessing in disguise, for it is an apotropaic charm of good omen for the city and people of Athens. Righteous anger must be voiced and those who are without justice must be punished by the combined forces of the Athenians and the Furies - punishment is not indiscriminate and the threat of punishment will lead to the prevention of crime (Similarly, Zeus retains the threat of his thunderbolt, if persuasion does not work - _Eum._ 826f.).

Charms to restore the dead (_Ag._ 1021-1024; _Eum._ 644ff.; cf. _Ag._ 1418, where the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is spoken of as a 'charm' to dispel the Thracian winds) are forbidden by Zeus, but propitious charms/spells are the rightful dispensations of the Furies - their apotropaic charm is also a positive prayer for good, an ode of blessing and benediction⁸⁷ (_Eum._ 300)
904, 921-26) on those who aspire to be δῶμεισι without ἕβρυς. Λόγος
(and so its attendant action) is once more κοάριος (Eum. 914) spoken
γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς (989). At Eum. 903 ff., benediction will ensure blessings
from land, sea and sky; in the first two plays, however, the sea
symbolizes the endless flow of blood and thus endless cycles of ἕβρυς
(Ag. 958ff.) and the sky, sea and earth are the source of numberless fears
for mortals (Cho. 585ff).
Section 10d: The Furies' transformation symbolizes shifting attitudes towards emotions

On another level, the inclusion of the Furies into the city signals a shift in attitude towards emotions. As has been noted, the Furies feel the pain of Clytemnestra's grievance in the intuitive faculties/organs and the very breath from their innards brings destruction (137-8; 248-9). Yet their operation of vengeance is systematic and well-organized - the wrongdoer is singled out and punished. Furthermore, the god of the Furies' traditional realm, Hades, oversees mortal activity δελτογράφων φρενί (275) (i.e.: with the cognitive memory). So although Furies sing a song which is φρενοδαλής (330) and δέσμιος φρενῶν, the purposefulness of their own actions has a fearsome lucidity and logic.

However, after Orestes' acquittal, the Furies will no longer visit a righteous κάτος and madness against criminals, but they will unleash an indiscriminate and comprehensive destruction (501; cf. 782-4=812-14; 840=873).

But this is at odds with the Furies' own vision of the positive role of the emotions (fear - 517) as curbs on both the intuitive, irrational faculty of the καρδία (523) and the cognitive φην (518, 536), of the individual's inner harmony and its external counterpart, unified civic identity (984-86)\(^8\). The eventual transformation of the Furies into a positive force within the city embodies the conversion of irrational
emotions into controlled, beneficial forces as guardians of the φήνη,
individual and collective. This emotional conversion is, perhaps, the most
significant unspoken brief of the tragic experience itself.
Section 11: Some Conclusions

The link between the three choruses should by now be apparent. All three express their emotional state to the audience (the motif of emotion located in the heart/mind signals this link). The Argive Elders are ever-fearful; their terrified intuition, conveyed by metaphors of prophecy, overturns their initial hope for a morally unambiguous, divine context for human affairs. The first play ends with an overwhelming sense of ineffectuality against the inevitable bleakness of human existence. The Elders also represent the unseen Argive city and establish the convention of sharing information with the audience which is not exchanged with the characters of the stage-action.

In the central play, this technique is vitally important, for it encourages the audience to collude and sympathize with Orestes' individual motivations. The audience shares in Orestes' secrecy and δόλος, the libation-bearers concentrate on the individual's need for vengeance. In contrast with the philosophical speculations about the definition of the divine in the first play (and the much larger political and theological context of the first play, which exacerbates the ever-present problem of moral over-determination ), the libation-bearers simplify the moral viewpoint, and offer one which gives more effective results. The Song of Female Daring, for example, catalogues exempla of the unequivocal results of female daring.
The final play again enlarges the contextual frame, this time to include staging the workings of divine motivation which were pondered on in the first play - the chorus and their actions are the driving motivation of *Eumenides*. The Furies are described in human terms, creating an atmosphere in which human and divine are levelled, thereby providing another new perspective - the divine view of human affairs. The three Oresteian choruses thus enliven the problematic of human/divine motivation by providing the perspectives of city, house and gods. The possibility of an eventually harmonious co-existence of these three is brought about by re-definition, re-appraisal and re-ordering of old with new. In the final play, rage is transformed through the action-*logos* of the Attic law-courts. Transformation leads to changing perspectives on, and definitions of, a previously unassailable age-old wisdom.
Section 12a: "Ciphers To This Great Accompmt": Metatheatricality and the Three Oresteian Choruses

In the drama subsequent to Greek tragedy, there was never a counterpart to the depiction and complex role of the Greek tragic chorus.

Shakespeare of course used a single Chorus figure quite frequently, but his chorus-narrators are unashamedly and explicitly metatheatrical. The narrator Gower frames the episodes which combine to make up Pericles, Rumour presents Henry IV, Part 2, a Chorus figure introduces both Romeo and Juliet and Henry V. In the latter two plays, the Chorus draws attention to the fact that what the audience is about to see is merely theatrical entertainment. The setting of the stage scene, the self-reflexive reference to actors communicating with an audience and the direct appeal to the audience's indulgence, are all explicit metatheatrical techniques.

"Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene.
Is now the two hours' traffick of the stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend".  
(Romeo and Juliet, Prologue).

"... But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work".  
(Henry V, Prologue).
The same technique of direct address to the audience was employed in the asides which abound in Restoration comedies, but they produce a far different effect. The characters of Restoration plays use asides to make comic revelations, while the action behind them is, as it were, 'frozen'. The asides break the dramatic flow because the actors literally move away from the stage action, but thereby induce a sense of superior knowledge and collusion in the audience. Moreover, asides often add to the humorous intricacies of plot and hidden identities which are central to a great deal of Restoration comedy and at the same time inevitably explain away the dramatic impasse which often arises from them.

These explicitly metatheatrical devices which draw attention to the exchange and collusion between actors and audience "appear to be cases of 'breaking frame', since the actor is required to step out of his role and acknowledge the presence of the public, but in practice they are licensed means of confirming the frame by pointing out the pure facticity of the representation".

In contrast, and typically of Greek tragedy, the three Oresteian choruses never break frame in quite so an explicit way; rather their addresses to the audience are more akin to the Shakespearean soliloquy, which shares the apparently private thoughts of a particular character (i.e.: thoughts withheld from the other characters of the stage world) publicly with the audience. The 'open secret' technique of the soliloquy
format often leads to theological musings and philosophical speculations, a need to set the private thoughts and dilemmas of a character in the divine context and sphere of influence\textsuperscript{92}.

This 'open secret' soliloquy technique, the implicitly metatheatrical convention, is the one most used by the choruses of the \textit{Orestea}. But it is the Watchman perched on the Atreidae's roof at the opening of the trilogy who establishes its use. Within the conventional prologic context, he 'talks to himself', and on another level talks to the audience, establishing the significance of the divine context with the first word of the trilogy, focusing attention on the House of Atreus and the man-woman Clytemnestra. He establishes the importance of light/dark imagery and metaphor and finally is the first exponent of the secret collusion with the audience ("I willingly speak to those who understand"... \textit{Ag}. 38-9)\textsuperscript{93}, which has been shown to be a significant factor in the relationship between the chorus and audience, especially in \textit{Choephoroi}\textsuperscript{94}.

For the choruses, the convention of talking to oneself means talking to the other members of the group. So on one level, the parodos of \textit{Agamemnon} could be perceived as choral narrative concerning the history of the Atreid House and the Trojan War, while it simultaneously motivates the Elders' entry: they are coming to the house to verify current indications of Agamemnon's imminent \textit{νόστος} from conquered Troy. But of course the Elders also communicate essential information, while at the
same time characterizing themselves as old men of Argos, which legitimizes their specific attachment to the location represented on stage. It is the latter which allows them to move freely between commentary and emotional response to others' actions, and interactional dialogue with characters on stage.

Similarly, the chorus of the central play has a role in conveying significant details of the factual background: the libation-bearers outline the salient aspects of Clytemnestra's snake-dream, for example. The collective characterization of choruses, the men of Argos, the foreign household slave-women and the enraged divine Furies, ensures that the complex role of the chorus is not over-simplified. Choruses may serve to provide essential information, but their various 'characters' influence their interpretation of that information. Thus the Argive Elders survey human action in a wide political and theological context, simultaneously providing a channel of emotion from the unseen citizens of Argos to the watching citizens of Athens. The libation-bearers narrow audience focus onto the house alone, their reduced circumstances as slave-women providing an insight into Electra's ill treatment. They especially attempt to influence the audience response to the actions of Choephoroi, using their own emotional responses to the words and deeds of others to shape the audience's emotional interaction with the theatrical frame. The Oresteian choruses thus make a significant contribution to the emotional, subjective
audience perception of actions from which it is simultaneously distanced and alienated. They influence the ever-fluctuating, shifting perspectives of the audience, ciphering dry fact with the complicating model of many view-points, but simultaneously relying on the collective imagination.

This technique can be seen in the way in which the audience watching *Eumenides* is invited to regard its mythic representations, as was discussed earlier\(^9\): by 'humanizing' the Furies, Aeschylus makes them more accessible to his audience. Their presence also signals a levelling of human and divine, the necessity of their mutually productive exchange. With this novel shift in perspective, Aeschylus involves the audience in the stage action. It is the Athenian citizen body which is finally represented by their mythic forebears and counterparts (the silent 'chorus' of jurors which votes in the first Areopagus trial) and to whom the Furies direct their choral odes (the precepts aimed at Orestes in the first stasimon are opened up to the entire audience in the second), in which the legitimacy of their 'case' is outlined. In effect, the audience is engaged more immediately by the chorus as part 'jurors' in this theatrical trial.

The entire final play engages the audience with this more unabashed metatheatricality. The Pythia's prologue relates to the audience as if they were Hellenes waiting to consult the Delphic oracle (*Eum.* 31-33).
Athena especially uses the metatheatrical address - at 566 she asks the herald to gather up the people by sounding his trumpet; the watching audience is already gathered, but the entrance of the silent chorus of jurors highlights the special import and relevance of what is about to take place. Athena often makes mention of the 'citizens of the future'. Thus she gives indirect praise and encouragement to the Athenian audience which is made up of those very citizens whose existence she dramatically prophesies and who will continue to use the Areopagus and tend the Fury cult (Eum. 484, 570-572, 681-684, 707-708, and 1028-1031). The perspective and control of events is thus shifted away from the stage to the audience itself.

This shift is enhanced by the increasing involvement in the action by the three choruses as the trilogy proceeds. Ineffectuality in the first play is gradually replaced by more positive action in the central play, until in Eumenides, anarchy threatens if the irresistible driving action of the Furies is blocked. The shift of focus from chorus/orchestra to audience implies that the final power to act lies with the watching citizens, and the theatrical frame is almost broken in the decidedly untragic celebration of Athens with which the trilogy ends.

If the complex purposes of the Oresteian choruses include a metatheatrical role - one in which the chorus' identification and relationship with the audience ultimately helps to define the meaning of
that audience both as a body watching actions on a stage and as an 'actual' community controlling its own actions, then it is also true to say that the *Oresteia* contains a self-reflexive comment on the meaning of theatre itself\(^{98}\) and thus that another level of metatheatricality comes into play.
12b: The Oresteia as metatheatrical comment on the production, nature and benefits of tragedy

Despite continuing debate as to the origin of tragedy and the degree of influence exerted by different pre-tragic modes on it\textsuperscript{99}, it is not disputed that the large body of pre-tragic poetry influenced Greek tragedy. There is also a general consensus that Aeschylus, through a transformation of form and content drawn from many stylistic strata - epic, choral lyric, personal lyric, iambic and the Attic spoken in the law-courts - is a creative innovator of the essential prototype of the tragic drama - "Attic tragedy does not invent; rather, it blends and rediscourses in such a way as to create a totally new effect"\textsuperscript{100}. Aeschylus' innovations are not the invention of new metres or mythic material, it is rather his dramatic use of them which creates a new emotional effect or meaning.

Thus the influence of the Homeric epics on Aeschylus requires a delicate appraisal. Aeschylus may begin the Oresteia with characters and story-line inspired by Odyssey and Stesichorus' Oresteia, but the final mythic spectacle of the trilogy is an Athenian one: here, in fact, Aeschylus does invent new mythic elements in the foundation-story of the Areopagus, making Orestes' trial the first it judges rather than that of Ares; also significantly, the trial is judged not by the Olympian gods but by the Athenian citizens with Athena presiding\textsuperscript{101}. 

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In _Agamemnon_ the dramatist especially evokes an Homeric atmosphere, without pastiche or direct quotation. The parodos of the first play, with the Elders recalling the words of Agamemnon and Calchas in direct, characterized speech, brings to mind the rhapsode's form of presentation, the acted recital of Homer. Yet the metre is never the Homeric hexameter untransformed. For example, the lyric triad of 104-59 echoes the dactylic rhythm of the kitharode, evoking but in no way merely reproducing Homer. The Homeric model pervades the opening of the trilogy, but its influence is not obviously explicit. Even if the poet uses this model to draw attention to the different moralities of the epic heroes and the increasingly complex demands made by his own society, certain heroic qualities must have remained of value for Aeschylus' audience, in spite of their new perspective on them. A clear dividing line between Homer and Aeschylus is a gross over-simplification of the complex influence of one over the other. "The interpenetration of language is so pervasive that we ought surely to look for a more complicated model"102.

So when we come to the central play, the rich 'interpenetration of language' here suggests the influence of various song forms which, however, are not Homeric. The great kommos of _Choephori_ contains traditional motifs drawn from 'real life' ritual103, but it is also an accumulation of contributions made by chorus, Orestes and Electra.
intended to arm Orestes with the *emotional* capacity to perform the act of murder. The kommos is thus an emotive motivation, stirring living and dead to righteous anger, substantiating the logic of vengeance already expressed (Cho. 269ff.)\(^\text{104}\). Yet this θρηνος (Cho. 335) also promises to be a παυων (Cho. 343) which will consist of more 'auspicious strains' (Cho. 341).

It becomes clear that choral prayers for successful outcome are expressed in terms which evoke the lyric genre of the victory ode made famous by Pindar. Yet Pindar's songs feted victorious athletes in sporting events, whereas the libation-bearers wish in anticipation for Orestes' 'victory' (Cho. 478, 868) in a deadly game, which is not an athletic ἀγών, but a μάχη which will end in matricide.

While wrestling metaphors\(^\text{105}\) have made up one leitmotif of the central play, at Cho. 866-8, Orestes is *explicitly* cast as a wrestler, but he is also given the Homeric epithet θεῖος (cf. Ag. 1547 of Agamemnon dead); thus, there is a tension between the heroic status this epithet grants him and his role as a player in a 'contest' which is a battle.

Other athletic images, for example those of the charioteer who controls the horses' reins (familiar from Pindar. Ql. 13.20), are used in strikingly novel ways by Aeschylus. In a prayer addressed to Olympian Zeus (Cho. 784, 789 and 791), the supreme god is the charioteer who is asked to set a measure (μέτρον 797) on the course of the colt Orestes'
sufferings to establish a ῥυθμός (798) in a 'race' which will end in salvation. The chorus wishes that the colt Orestes, with god's help, will complete the course (signalling the end of cycles of destruction) by reaching a steady pace. But the allusion here is not merely confined to the unusual appropriation of victory-ode athletic motifs, it also makes implicit self-reference to the act of singing by using technical words associated with μελος - μέτρον and ῥυθμός. The full significance of this is 'cashed out' subsequently at 819ff.

When the measured 'race' (the saving 'pace') of Orestes ends in victorious salvation, the libation-bearers will sing a glorious (κλυτος, 819) νόμος of release (820) which will be ομιωστάτης. The 'breeze/breath/inspiration of their μελος/ὄμος will bring about a 'fair sailing', a propitious completion and vindication of their own 'course' of song. This, however, proves to be a vain hope. After the act of murder, Orestes' wits, like horses driven off the track, are deranged, derailed (Cho. 1021ff.) The charioteer is not the victor, instead, his 'horses' (=φρένες δύσαρκτοι - 1024) conquer him (1023, νικώμενος). Orestes goes on:-

"... πρὸς δὲ καρδίαν φόβος
ἐαυτὸν ἐτοίμος ἢ δ' ὑπορχείσθαι κρότων".  (1024-5).

The choral wish that, on completion of the course as the colt of Zeus (794ff.), the chorus will sing an ομιωστάτης νόμος (821-822), is dashed absolutely since φόβος inspires the heart's song and sets the beat for its
dance. There is no sure and steady μέτρον and ῥυθμός, either in Orestes' 'race' or in the 'song' which follows it. The allusion of lines 1024-1025 prefigures the δύνας δῆμος, the Furies' on-stage song and dance of destruction in the final play (Ευμ. 307ff.)\(^{111}\). Their binding song is ἀφθομικτος (333=345), in contrast to the hoped for λυτῆρος νόμος of the libation-bearers which is δέκρεκτος (822), and which aspires to the aversion of ἄτοκ (825), not its visitation (Ευμ. 329, 342).

This prominent leitmotif of the 'song of fear' was first introduced in the third stasimon of Αγαμέμνων, to which Aeschylus' system for conveying a sense of the physical and emotional inner life, discussed earlier\(^{112}\), is relevant. For Αγαμέμνων's chorus, fear beats its wings before the divining heart. This ἀνδάκ (979) is uncontrollable, it sings although ἀκελευστας and ἀμυθος. The φη, that faculty of reasoned judgement, cannot make sense of it. Yet intuition of something terrible is ever present (975, ἦμπεδως), impossible to dispel (980). This sense of foreboding is so powerful that it takes the form of a premonitory θηνος' Εωνύς (991). What is fascinating here is that this lament is sung by the θυμός (992). That is, the vapour, breath, spirit which inspires this ἀνδάκ of grief is fear. It is this μελος ἄνευ λύρας which sets the heart dancing, effectively set in motion by the tune of φόβος. In counterpoint to this throughout the third stasimon, the φη (983, 996) is consistently portrayed as incapable of objectivity, assessment or
judgement towards what, in general, constitutes Δίκαιον. The φρήνες' capacity to render judgement is surely the uppermost meaning in the application of the adjective ἐνδίκος to that organ in 996. Having seen Agamemnon step onto the purples, the Elders find it increasingly difficult in the king's case to reconcile intuition with the cherished hope, expressed in prayer (994, 999), that he has acted within the jurisdiction of justice. They pray that their instincts, the terrible conclusion of their 'song and dance of fear', may not be concluded.

The choral κέαρ (997) is τελεσφόρος δίνως κυκλούμενον. The heart is set dancing in a circle; that is, it goes round and round on the same track contemplating the cycles of destruction and ὠρος explicitly linked to the Priamidae, implicitly connoting the Atreidae. The circular dance motivated by pure, instinctive emotion is very different from the progressive 'path of understanding', motivated by cognition, on which mortals are set by Zeus (176f.). The dance must have an end (i.e.: in τελεσφόρος δίνως) but it will be a false closure, a temporary ἀκόρεστον τέμπα (1002; cf. τέμπα ὠμηχανω, 1117) which leads to yet another fear-inspired song and dance.

The metaphors of song and dance further suggest a self-reference by the Elders to the production of meaning through ἀνοίξα and dancing the κύκλος, to their own role in the tragic genre. The chorus is αὐτοδίδακτος (991) and ἀκέλευστος (979). These terms bring to mind
processes usually associated with the training of the chorus. Tragic choruses were coached by a professional chorus trainer, the ὑποδιδάσκαλος, and paid for by a choregos. But the chorus of Elders' song is αὐτοδίδακτος (991), ἀκέλευστος (979) and ἔμισθος (979). In effect, the ode implicitly refers to the technical production of choruses at the City Dionysia, using a series of allusions as a metaphor used to call into question and cast doubt on the proper 'production' of tragic meaning to an audience.

This is a remarkable ode in that it is presented as if it were a stream of consciousness; or, perhaps more helpfully, a stream of inner attitudes. The innards do 'speak' without folly (995-7). The heart makes sounds like thunder (βρέµει at 1030; βρέµω in Homer is always applied to the elements; the sounds of the heart's 'speech' are non-human, inarticulate, yet evocative, noises - that of birds' wings -ποτάτω, 977- and elements of nature), which although they have their own impact, are not patterned so as to form a comprehensible λόγος, to unravel a timely word/meaning/purpose (1032) from the inner feelings.

The magic property of words is called into question (1019-21), and the subject of the paradeigma, Asclepius, is not named. The transaction of λόγος and song by a chorus to spectators is unstable, is called into question. If it were permitted by the gods, προφθάσασα καρδία/γλῶσσαν ἐν τάδ' ἔξεχει (1028-9), these powerful emotions would
be explained. The third stasimon thus has the conventional form of a tragic song, but its contents are intended to be interpreted as the covert, inner sensations and feelings of the Elders - the spectators are thus invited into the choral inner identity. Although they are speaking these lines, it is as if the chorus do not dare to speak. In Elizabethan theatre too, the soliloquy construction suggested inner musings, 'secrets' conveyed and entrusted to the confidence of the audience, yet the words were spoken out to spectators clearly visible in the natural light.

Earlier, the Elders had spoken of their own μὲριμνα (460) on hearing the ἀστῶν φάτις (456). Here, the citizens' emotions (of κότος, 456) are expressed in λόγος/φάτις, i.e.: it is suggested that emotions may lead to cognition for them. For the Elders, however, intellection remains an impossibility - ὑπὸ σκύτω τὸ βρέχει (1030) (1034- the mind is on fire, but it is not an illuminating sensation\textsuperscript{118}).

The promise that citizens' emotions can lead to positive cognition and action (intimated by lines of 456ff. of Agamemnon) is fulfilled in the final play - fear in the heart (Eum. 523) is a guardian, a beneficial watchdog of the φρενες (Eum. 518). Thalmann\textsuperscript{119} sees in this a ratification of the harmonious interrelation and interdependence of θυμος, καρδια and φρήν which, essentially, bring about the unified effectiveness of citizens and cities - πόλις βροτός θυμοίος (Eum. 524). Similarly, if the destabilizing doubts of the Elders, particularly in the third stasimon,
called into question the tragic genre (a song which discredits its own
status as song, preferring dark concealment 'within the self', bypassing
speech by speaking \( \kappa \alpha \rho \delta \alpha \) to \( \kappa \alpha \rho \delta \alpha \)), self-reference to the positive
effects of tragic experience in the final play centres on tragedy's
predisposition and capacity to harness the emotions of spectators, so that
they are able to lead to cognition and action. Yet on another level, it still
remains true that \( \mu \omega \rho \alpha \mu \omega \rho \alpha \nu \varepsilon \kappa \theta \varepsilon \omega \nu / \varepsilon \iota \rho \gamma \epsilon \mu \eta \ \pi \lambda \nu \nu \ \varphi \rho \epsilon \rho \epsilon \nu \), as the
Argive Elders claimed in \textit{Agamemnon} (1025f.)\textsuperscript{120}.

\( \pi \lambda \nu \nu \ \varphi \rho \epsilon \rho \epsilon \nu \) refers in one sense to man's unfulfilled wish to
comprehend/explain the gods (rather than merely cite them as the source
of instinctive, intuitive insights), yet the phrase also alludes to man's
tendency towards hubristic acquisition, desire for profit, the \( \delta \nu \sigma \sigma \varepsilon \beta \varepsilon \zeta \ \xi \rho \gamma \nu \) (798-99) which is another \textit{topos} of the third stasimon (1001).

Man's greed can be remedied by removing extraneous baggage
\( \sigma \phi \varepsilon \nu \delta \nu \alpha \zeta \ \alpha \tau \iota \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \mu \kappa \varepsilon \tau \rho \nu \) (1010) - fair measure (metre) in speech (cf.
\textit{Cho.} 797), considered caution in action, are implicitly synonymous. When
the house is overloaded by \( \delta \beta \rho \zeta \) (1012, \( \gamma \varepsilon \mu \omega \nu \)), like Clytemnestra's
hyperbole (\( \kappa \omega \mu \pi \zeta \zeta \), \( \tau \zeta \zeta \ \alpha \lambda \eta \theta \varepsilon \iota \zeta \zeta \ \gamma \varepsilon \mu \omega \nu \), 613) it signals danger. To say
too much is to want too much.

Yet the chorus of \textit{Choephoroi} persevere in their confident wish to
replace the \( \theta \rho \gamma \nu \zeta \) with the \( \pi \alpha \omega \nu \), although it is problematic. Is it proper
\( \kappa \phi \nu \mu \nu \gamma \sigma \varepsilon \ \omega \lambda \lambda \varepsilon \gamma \mu \delta \nu \) (\textit{Cho.} 386-7) over one who has been destroyed?
The superficial word-play of ὀλολυγμῖδι (387) and ὀλλυμὲνας (389- of the female victim Clytemnestra) suggests that, for the libation-bearers at any rate, it is proper. One should cry in joy, ἐπολολυξατε (Cho. 942) to Apollo, evoking the god's name in his role as victory-bringer; for it is not appropriate, as the Elders noted, to call on this god ἐν γόους (Ag. 1078-9). But although Apollo's name reveals him as the ideal recipient of the ὀλολυγμῖς, the name also carries the connotation of destruction - Cassandra calls on ὤπολλον as her ἀπόλλων (1085-86).

The paradoxical concept of a rage-inspired ὀλολυγμῖς resurfaces in the παιὼν for victory (935ff.) which follows the mother/son scene. In self-exhortation, the libation-bearers (942ff.) raise the cry ἐπολολυξατ' ὦ δεσποστῶν δόμων ἀναφυγῶι κακῶν (cf. 'the song which releases the house', 820-22). They also declare that by calling on Justice as the very daughter of Zeus they are using the right words (literally), appraising the moral situation accurately (metaphorically) - τυχόντες καλῶς (951). They are appropriately inspired to call on Δίκα, but she herself is filled with the 'breath' of destruction and hatred against enemies (952).

The act of addressing the gods in the right way is a theme extensively treated in Oresteia. To enlist the help of the gods such as Apollo or Zeus, one should praise (Cho. 960) them as if victorious (κατάληψιν). In turn, by granting success to mortals, by answering their prayers, the supremacy of immortals is somehow vindicated (Cho. 956-8).
The same sentiment is expressed in the 'hymn to Zeus' - 

Ze ᵃ δὲ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάξων τεῦξετω φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν (Ag. 174-5).

Yet the gods themselves attain victory when they προφρόνως (Cho. 478) establish νίκη for mortals by answering their prayers (476ff.). Such an arrangement may be mutually beneficial (Cho. 791-793). The victory ode and paean chords are struck in many different keys and have many different purposes.

But even before the choral 'ode of triumph' (935ff.), the libation-bearers grieve the impossible dilemma of mother and son (931). Indeed, no παύων, no ὀλολυγμός, follow the appearance of Orestes over the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Instead, there are repeated cries of choral lamentation - αἰώ τοί (1006, 1008, 1019). It is the force of this dilemma which lies behind the choral questions at 855ff.:-

Ze ᵃ Ze ᵃ, τί λέγω; πόθεν ἀρξώμαι 
τῶν ἐπευχομένη κάπιθεάζουν', 
ὑπὸ δὲύνοιας
πῶς ᾽ ὕσον εἰποῦσ' ἀνύσωμαι;

The questions "What can I say ? Can I sing a song of joy and triumph over a corpse, over one who deserves or requires the ῶῼνος ? Can I pray to the gods for fulfilment of evil and malicious intent ?" have already been posed by Electra to the same chorus which repeats them here (Cho. 87-9, 118, 120-23). Behind these questions lies the fundamental Oresteian dilemma - when, if at all, is the act of murder (regicide, matricide)
justifiable, even desirable? Is it ever right to replace ἰθήνως with παίων to utter prayers inspired by hatred? Real moral dilemma surrounds the difficulty of choosing the right words (τί λέγω; τί φως;) in seeking out the right song.

But reference to the act of finding an appropriate μελος (and the obvious metaphorical significance of song in the trilogy\(^{121}\)) may also allude to the act of tragic creativity and inventiveness; since Aeschylus first adopts, then adapts or re-combines Homeric or Pindaric images, for example, to create a variety of novel effects. The flexible metaphoricity of tragedy (itself a consequence of highly eclectic borrowings from the metres, styles and material of other genres) makes it an ideal vehicle for subtle self-comment, *Fiktionsironie*.

It is also possible to detect self-reference to the role of tragic δύσις in the tragic experience. In *Choephoroi*, light and the ability to see are metaphors of restoration and salvation. It is hoped that the Atreid house itself will be able to look up (808) and that the ἐλευθερίας φως (cf. 863) will look on Orestes favourably (809-11). But it is also important for the libation-bearers to witness (ἰδεῖν - 787, 799) Orestes' success and the proper reinstatement of the house (961). At the end of their victory ode (935ff.), the libation-bearers predict that, eventually (in time - χρόνος at 965) pollution in the house will be entirely cleansed καθαρμοσίων ἐλατηρίως (968) when:-

324
"In the light of fortune fair to look on can we see
the whole, as we cry out,
'The tenants of the house shall be cast out"\textsuperscript{122}.

To see τὸ πᾶν (969), the μῦνος ἔπαυ of the house (967) fully cleansed by
παντελής χρόνος (965) alludes to the importance of ὅψις in 'completing
the picture' of tragic experience and meaning. τὸ ἰδεῖν also connotes the
mental clarification which tragedy brings, a curative katharsis which
forces disaster away. Here, it is by virtue of τῷχον ἔντροποσώπω (969)
that the unwelcome μέτοικος of the house, the Furies, will be driven out.
In contrast, the Furies in \textit{Eumenides} are positively incorporated as
μέτοικος (\textit{Eum.} 1011, 1018) of Athens, where their own faces (\textit{Eum.}
990-991), in spite of being fearful, are considered beneficial - as if their
φοβερὰ πρόσωπα could be construed as sufficiently beneficial to be
ἐντροποσώπα. They symbolize φόβος with a fair face which looks over the
φρένες of spectators and citizens (\textit{Eum.} 518-20): the act of τὸ ἰδεῖν is
therefore reversed, the watchers are being watched. The Furies also
symbolize the preventive, prophylactic katharsis of tragic experience
which deters wrong-doing. Tragic katharsis prevents putative disaster
(i.e.: disaster taking shape in the φρένες) from being put into practice,
from requiring actual cleansing καθαρμοῖν ἐλατηρίους (\textit{Cho.} 968). If
it is true that in some sense the Furies of \textit{Eumenides} are 'icons' which
evoke the experience of tragedy, the subtlety of such a self-reference
must also be noted\textsuperscript{123}.
It has already been observed by commentators that what characterizes the *Eumenides* is clear *logos*, a precise and open statement of human and divine motivations. Verbal elucidation is corroborated by visual confirmation. On-stage characters embody figures and concepts merely alluded to in the dense, often obscure verbal images of the first two plays. Aeschylus greatly reduces the problem of interpretation as the trilogy proceeds, by causing his characters and chorus to speak and act in a clear style, with far less prominent use of complicating metaphorical language. Yet although the style of *Eumenides* is lucid, there is still an apparently unsolvable clash between Orestes and the Furies, and the Furies' *λάχων* are highly controversial.

It has previously been noted that the *λάχως* of the Furies and its definition is presented in highly contradictory ways, thereby implying that the Furies are ill at ease with themselves and their role. Similarly, we have seen how in the first two plays different song styles (epic, lyric etc.) were used, occasionally in disharmonious conjunction, to convey moral uneasiness, *ἀπορία* and dilemma, as if tragedy's own purpose, its *λάχως* and its appropriation of song were themselves under question. When, however, the Furies are incorporated into Athens, it is not their *λάχως* *per se* which changes, but its purpose; their ancient prerogatives will now function purely for the defence and benefit of Athens and her people. Similarly, tragedy will use its range of eclectic effects and styles for the
good of its audience. The song of the Furies, tragic song, while
maintaining its creative eclecticism, will always be used to good effect -
the Furies' χάρις is spoken (939) so as to prevent the
'breath'/wind/utterance of harm (βλάβα, Eum. 938ff.). Earlier, the breath
of their song, their inspiration, was destruction (Eum. 137; 840=873).

The driving action and final resolution through transformation in
Eumenides, signalled by the transformation of the chorus, serves in part
as a paradeigma. This paradeigma tells of the development, nature and
effects of tragedy achieved through a re-definition, re-appraisal, resolution
and transformation of all the pre-tragic song styles which influenced it.

Nor do self-conscious, metatheatrical choral allusions to the
production of tragic meaning end with references to the role of speech
and song in tragedy. They also extend to the mimesis\textsuperscript{126} inherent in
theatrical production and so to the actor's art; that is, representation of
truth which in actuality is seeming, pretence, τὸ δόκειν.

In their veiled warning to Agamemnon about hypocrites (surely
implicitly about Clytemnestra too), the Elders describe those who seem to
share joy with another's good fortune, but who in fact are ἀγέλαστα
πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι (Ag. 794). However, a good ruler should be able
to discern pretence of good will in the eyes/δύμωσι of the hypocrite (796-
798). Clytemnestra is a consummate actress\textsuperscript{127}, however, well able to
adopt a variety of false 'masks', πρόσωπα, to achieve her end,
effortlessly concealing her inner emotions (in the ἡπαρ, 792) and the motivations which arise from them (deep in the φη), In the meantime, she will use false words ἀπ' ἀκροὺς φρενικάς (805) to convince her husband to walk on the purples. Acting, seeming, pretence, together with the πρόσωπον or mask which is their icon, are rendered dangerous by the character of Clytemnestra, means to a murderous end.

In the first play, δψις, the appearance of objects and figures, is, like song, called into question. Something will be said about Cassandra's use (Ag.1327ff.) of a painting metaphor to refer to the illusory nature of both life and art. Graphic mimesis is rendered unstable because what it represents is at best like σκιά (1328), at worst, easily obliterated by the artist's sponge (1329). Earlier on, the Elders had painted a most terrible picture of Iphigenia πρόσωπον θ' ὑς ἐν γραφοῖς (242). Her face, particularly her eyes (241) remain powerfully expressive, yet she is prevented from articulation of her φθόγγος (237) because she is gagged. In Agamemnon, speech and δψις, those essential ingredients of tragic expressivity, are in disharmony, unable to combine effectively.

While Clytemnestra is the dangerous actress in Agamemnon, in Choephoroi, Orestes too implicitly refers to the actor's art, his mimetic adoption of another's outward appearance. He reveals that he will look (560) and speak (563-4) ἥξινων εἰκών, but his 'acting' still constitutes a murderous δόλος.
In *Eumenides*, the Pythian priestess suggests that the Furies are something like a painting of Gorgons she has seen (*Eum.*, 49-51); that is, they possess the same type of terrifying faces as Medusa and her sisters. Eventually, those very visages and the act of seeing them is deemed profitable:-

\[ \textit{ek ton foberow tonde proswpωn} \]
\[ μέγα κέρδος ὃρω τοίσδε πολίτως} \quad (990-991).\]

Similarly, their new robes mark them as strangers (in one sense, *ξυνω* εικώς), yet they are costumed in purple robes (1028) which signify their incorporation as welcome strangers, μέτουκοι in Athens. Thus the actor's mimetic artifice, of masks (through which he speaks another's words) and of costumes (in which he moves like another), are finally deemed a beneficial δόλος for the sake of citizen-spectators. Propitious words and spectacle, essential to tragedy, are in alliance at last in the tragic genre.

If Aeschylus used the three Oresteian choruses to provide a model which shows the efficacy of combining old with new, of creating innovation through re-definition, re-appraisal and a new perspective in and on society's belief-systems, it is a theatrical model which is equally applicable to the new consciousness of Athenian society and the tragic moment which is part of it. Theatre, in its ideal form, engenders in spectators the proper proportions of ὀικτος and γνώμη (*Eum.*, 674). The
ability to demand pity for the πάθως of others is a foundation of Justice for injured parties (Eum, 511ff.), yet enough objectivity is required to render fair judgement. The cohabitation in theatre of illusion and disillusion, of sympathetic proximity and alienating distance, strives to make of its spectators compassionate judges and to extend this ability to make fair and sympathetic judgement to the daily life of the city and its institutions. The Oresteia is thus a self-reflexive, metatheatrical comment on the development and celebration of the theatrical medium as much as it is an appraisal of the Athenian society which watched it. It is to this extraordinary account of Athenian society and theatre that the three Oresteian choruses are remarkable, complex and ever-changing ciphers; but the final accountability for change lies with the watching audience.
Notes on Part Two: The Role of the Three Oresteian Choruses

2. Cf. above, Part One, section 1, nn. 15-19.
3. Herington (1985). Chapters 5 & 6 give detailed analysis of tragic development and the notion that "tragedy is a mixture".
5. de Romilly (1958).
6. In Agamemnon, the seat of emotion referred to by the Argive Elders is most often φρήν (103, 546 & 805), variously translated as 'heart', 'mind' or 'spirit', or καρδία usually only translated by commentators on Agamemnon as 'heart'. With regard to the Argive Elders, the latter is usually used in contexts where anxiety is extreme and overwhelming; whereas, the less acute anxiety, which arises from more considered speculation, is located in the 'mind/heart' complex, frequently connoted by φρήν. This subtle distinction is well-illustrated by Ag.1028-33 - if the passionate καρδία held sway, the Elders would indulge in an outpouring of their emotions. But it is the more restraining φρήν, which although blazing with pain, restricts such an outpouring, since it will not be καρδίας.
8. Onians (1951), 54.
   "Be healer to this perplexity
   that grows now into darkness of thought,
   while again sweet hope shining from the flames
   beats back the pitiless pondering
   of sorrow that eats my heart".
15. So Lattimore completes the thought in translation. Although "in their hearts" is not expressly given in the Greek, the image often used in tragedy of an emotional condition inscribed on the mind/heart is very possibly implicit here. [For the tragic use of the anachronistic image of writing on the heart, cf. Easterling (1985)].
16. Aeschylus' audience would have known that the κεδυός στρατόμυτος of 122, who interpreted the eagle omen at Troy, was Calchas, although his name is not mentioned until much later (155), which further adds to the effect of not fixing a cause or meaning straightaway. The same technique is used for Helen - she is alluded to first at 255ff, then throughout the 1st stasimon and eventually named in the 2nd stasimon.
17. Prophecy and prophets constitute a significant leitmotif of Agamemnon. The true insight of named prophets such as Calchas (122, 156) and Cassandra, together with the rather shadowy δύων προφήτας (409), is proved in the unfolding of events past, present and future. Whoever named Helen (681-687) is also deemed to possess seer-like prescience (683-4), the art of τὸ μαντινατολεῖν.
18. At 105, the chorus praises, in effect, the wind/breath of divinely persuasive inspiration. The metaphor of prophetic narrative and interpretation applies to human decision-making. Choices are made in response to analysis of fact and to emotional impulse. So, the Argive Elders use a wind metaphor to describe Agamemnon's 'change of heart'. 218ff. - Ag.'s decision is clearly perceived as a change/deviation from the correct path; it is an impious and unholy thought which will eventually lead to an act of δορίς. For a detailed analysis of wind imagery, cf. Scott (1966).
19. Cf. above, Part One, Section 2, II.4b 'τάλαουνα Cassandra and prophetic ἀλήθεια.'
So too in *Hamlet*, Ophelia's language after Polonius' death is that of madness, yet it is tinged with some understanding, some truth and much feeling. Of her it is said:-

"her speech is nothing.

Yet the unshaped use of it doth move the hearers to collection; they aim at it, And both the words up fit to their own thoughts;" (Act IV, Sc.5, 7-10).

Ophelia's speech thus has a 'half sense', a multiplicity of possible meanings and none certain. So too, in *Agamemnon*, deep emotion can elicit a confusion of feeling and thus expression. The Elders talk of the yellow-dyed drop running to the heart. At 1162ff., fear is a painful, bloody wound which is fatal (like the earlier described spear-wound of the dying warrior): words can cause, as it were, 'physical injury'. Surely implicit then in the yellow-dyed drop at 1121-2 are two interwoven thoughts: the idea is that fear, connoted by the yellow colour of the blood (see Denniston-Page on *Agamemnon* 1121, 170; cf. Padel [1992], 26 and fn. 59, 26-7), is like a physical sensation located in the heart, and in this case, a mortal blow to the heart. Thus, following Casaubon it is "a drop which, for those who fall by the spear, reaches its end with the rays of a setting life". The blood runs to the heart to denote the sensation of fear and simultaneously the καρδία is wounded by the fatal pain of fear, where the blow is bloody because the blood flows from the wound of the dying victim. Just as the warrior's wound must end in death, so here in the case of the Argive Elders the fateful wounding is a metaphor for a sense of fear which predicts an inevitable outcome of death and destruction. Cassandra predicts her own death and clearly foresees Agamemnon's at 1246; later, the Elders themselves see death as the only way out from the cycle of fear, death and grief which pervades the first play (1448f.)

οὐδέν ἤμισυκαινέα (1244) as opposed to the Elders' use of προσείκακος 1131, where Cassandra's prophecies lead to a sense of fear, without a clear factual basis for it. For an authoritative study of προσείκακος, especially in the Zeus-Hymn., see Smith (1980), 8-12.

Haldane (1965), 39.

See Rutherford (1982).

Winnington- Ingram (1954a) first noted how this scene is true to the characterization of the Elders as unable to act in crisis. Sienkewicz (1980) has noted that the ring composition structure of the scene (Fig. D, 141) is typical of the presentation of the Elders. "In these men Aeschylus presents a fully developed and dramatically essential character whose confusion is consistently expressed within textual structures, such as ring composition and circular thought patterns, which mirror the chorus' mental state" (136).

The coexistence of heroic kingship with democracy is anachronistic, but ultimately unobtrusive for the audience. In *Oresteia*, it signals the importance of the judicial/democratic system which ends the trilogy and which in effect is celebrated as a new way of problem-solving. See Easterling (1985).

Podlecki (1972), esp. 196, first noted this link.

Similarly, the Theban Elder chorus of Euripides' *Hercules Furens* refers to the physical debility of old age (HE 107-113, 119-129). The Theban Elders, like their Argive counterparts, rely on σκέπτεσα (HE 253) and resent their loss of strength (νῦν δολοδει διεφρέ, 313; cf. 649-50) and their dream-like insubstantiality (HE 111-112; cf. Ag 81-82). Yet, like the Argive Elders, they have power in song which, in their particular case, defies the bounds of old age by conferring eternity on the subject of their ἀοίδη through commemoration (HE 673-679).


Clinton (1979), 5.


For ἐστήμωνς/ ἐστήμως in reference to the importance of distinguishing clear, truthful logos as opposed to seeming/lying, e.g. Ag 477, where the Elders are uncertain as to the validity of the reported fall of Troy, and Fum 487-8 where Athena indicates that true interpretation and judgement (in contrast with the uncertainty of the Elders) is essential for the welfare of her citizens.

Justice must be rightly named the daughter of Zeus because she visits unequivocal destruction on her enemies (Ch 946); in contrast, Helen brings complete and indiscriminate destruction to Greeks and Trojans alike, true to her name of 'destroyer' (Ag 682). At Fum 534f., the Furies distinguish ἄρεις as the true child of impiety; the man who is δολος has no part in such a definition.
Cf. above, Part One, Section 2, II.2.
33 Fraenkel II (1950), 166-169.
35 Sittlington-Sterrett (1901).
37 Sittlington-Sterrett (1901), 410-12.
38 So, for example, Thomson (1966), Vol. II, 30-31.
40 Lloyd-Jones (1979), 33-4.
41 Cf. below, Part Two, n. 130.
42 Burkert (1985), 232.
44 Smith (1980), esp. 22.
49 Knox (1952), 18.
50 Ibid.
51 Clinton, op. cit., 27.
52 Smith, op. cit. (fn. 84, 70-71) claims that Lebeck (1971, fn. 3, 174) "is willing to have the chorus speak of themselves as the unwilling on whom σωφρονεῖται is forced by Zeus". However, her observation that the chorus is referring to itself is specifically confined to lines 179-180, i.e.: "there drips before the heart in place of sleep (following Emperius) a pain which recalls suffering".
53 Sansone (1975), op. cit., 55ff.: memory is primarily associated with the φρήν.
54 Alford (1992), 156, 170, 178.
55 Ibid., 170.
56 Clinton (1979), 5.
57 Alford, op. cit., 159.
58 Cf. above, Part Two, sections 7b and c.
59 Cf. above, Part Two, section 12a.
60 Thalmann (1986), 507-8.
61 Following the MS. reading κοσμοστροφοῖ τοῖς θεσμίων and translating the 'destruction of new laws' contra Thomson (1966, Vol. II), 209 and Sommerstein (1989), 172-173. The Furies are concerned that the new administration of justice by the Areopagus, just established by Athena (Eum. 482ff.), will fail if it does not incorporate the ancient principles with which they are associated: punishment of parent-murderers (491-493, 513-515). It is in this ode that they themselves make novel claims about their ancient prerogatives, linking their λάχος with the benefits of fear (517), τὸ σωφρονεῖται (521) and moderation (529) as means of insuring respect for parents and strangers (545f.)
62 'Corrupt' as in 'corrupt sacrifice' as used by Zeitlin (1965).
63 For the use of the ambiguous κηδείας, meaning both sorrow and connection by marriage, see Goldhill (1984), 61.
64 Lloyd-Jones (1953); cf. Haldane (1965), 39, fn. 33.
65 Cf. above Part One, section 2, VII.1, n. 213.
66 The central play gives a fairly balanced view of χάρις as a mutually beneficial exchange between gods and men. The first play reveals a world where χάρις has been totally overturned and where the chorus approaches the gods with the greatest uncertainty. In the final play, there is a divine perspective on χάρις, when Apollo reveals (Eum. 232-4) that, for both gods and mortals, to betray a suppliant is something terrible.
67 Cf. above, Part One, section 2, VI.1.
68 Cf. above, Part One, section 2, VII.1.
69 See above, Part Two, section 9f., for the disintegration of the confident choral λάχος into lamentation and uncertainty.
70 See Macleod (1975).
71 There are no spells or charms to restore the dead to life. Zeus, who has not made such restorative spells himself (Eum. 644ff.), punishes those who attempt to do so (Ag. 1017-24).
Ibid.
Ibid., 166-7 on 451-2. In M, γράφου starts line 451, and so leads to the conjectured restoration of γράφου at the end of 450 where the first γράφου was lost by haplography.
Electra’s story is a secret, inner motivation located “where the mind is moving quietly” (Garvie, 1986, 167). This μνήμη, which has been shared with the audience, will not be spoken/externalized verbally again, but will stir Orestes to action.
Ibid., n. on 631-8, 217-18.
Zeitlin (1978), 155.
See also Ag.408, 773ff., 1448-1461.
For the opposing view, see McCall (1990), 25. Cf. Part One, section 2, n.181 above.
It is with another ancient principle that the libation-bearers initiate the Great Kommos (Cho. 312-314). Thus they are able to formulate a simple answer (121) to Electra’s anguished question (120) - the need for reciprocal action is unassailable.
Cf. above, Part One, section 2, n. 6.
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act II, Sc.1, 81-117.
The Furies’ emotions of pain, rage and humiliation are predominantly seated in the heart or gut/solar plexus, as opposed to the φρύν/heart/mind. It was suggested earlier that the φρύν was the location of more rationally governable emotion, whereas the καρδία signalled that the emotion was passionate and probably irrepressible. φρύν is used twice in the final play at 159 and 517 (of men’s minds); whereas καρδία is used at 103, 523 and 782. Passionate emotion is also seated in the ημπορ (135), is equated with νηδος πυρ (138) and is further located in λυσίς (159). Finally, it is a shooting pain in the sides -πλευρας οδύσκα (842).
The author strives to show that the Furies have the physiology, and thus the passionate emotions, of mortal men and women.
Despite Denniston-Page’s arguments in their commentary for taking ἀράς with ἀτκίνας, it would be preferable for ἀράς to be taken with ἀτκίνου. This would make far better sense - the point is not that the queen has ‘cast away and cut away the execrations of the public voice’, but rather that she has put upon herself a murder (spoken of as a ‘sacrifice’) and has therefore incurred the people’s curses. Denniston-Page suggest that ἀράς should be taken with ἀτκίνας for otherwise it will make an awkward couple with θος, and ἀτκίνος ἀτκίνου will be left without any conceivable object. But it is far more impactful for Clytemnestra to have incurred (ἀτκίνου) the people’s curse than to have cast it away. The notion of the curse of individuals such as Iphigeniae and Thetides is pivotal to the play - the power of the curse is unstoppable, it cannot be simply ‘cast away’ at will. Secondly, the power of line 1410 is far more telling if it is taken as a single lines, when the ‘three chords’ struck by the chorus sound like a judicial sentence (Aeschylus gives strength to the weight of their sentence by using a triad of alliterative words) - ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας ἀτκίνας. .
On this, see Scott (1984), 19; Segal (1989), 342.
Thallmann (1986), 508.
The relevance of metatheatricality of ‘metatragedy’, intertextuality and ironic or ludic self-reflection and self-reflexiveness to the tragic genre was first given prominence by Segal (1982); Zeitlin (1980) and (1990); Foley (1980) and (1985); Goldhill (1986).
See Styan (1986), 204ff., 126ff.
Elam (1980), 90.
Cf., e.g., Hamlet’s soliloquies.
Cf. Easterling (forthcoming publication) ‘The play’s the thing’ in the Cambridge Companion To Greek Tragedy. "The audience are not openly acknowledged, but this does not mean that they are not to be reminded of their role as spectators".
Cf. above, Part Two, sections 9c and 9d.
Cf. above, Part Two, sections 10 a and 10b.
Bain (1975, 1977 and 1987) and Taplin (1986) reject the possibility of audience address in tragedy.

Taplin dispenses rather too swiftly with the subtleties of audience address in Eumenides (more amply dealt with by Sommerstein, 1989, who argues convincingly for audience address in Aeschylus' play, 34, 177, 185-186, 188, 272, 284, 286). Taplin (166) argues that the "strongest candidate" for audience address, Eum. 681, is "surely contradicted by the next line" which explicitly specifies the addresssees as 'those judging the first trial for the shedding of blood' (682).

But this overlooks the next line, 683, which refers to the Athenians of the future, the audience (cf. Eum. 572, 707-8) who are thus closely associated with the Areopagites representing them on stage. So address of the audience here does not mutually exclude address of the audience. The future citizens, the entire πάλιν, are overtly distinguished from those first Areopagites on stage, πώσοδε (Eum. 572-3; cf. 601, 614-15, 629-30, 748-9, 948-9). But the inclusive generality of subsequent addresses made by the Fury chorus (Eum. 997) and their escort chorus (Eum. 1039, 1047), together with the evocation of a non-specific civilian body or ἀρσενικός at Eum. 566, 668, 683, 762, 889 (not discussed by Taplin), strongly favours subtle audience address (or at least implicit acknowledgement of spectators) in Eumenides which encourages connection or even a degree of merging between the audience and the on-stage jurors. Cf. Easterling, (forthcoming publication) who suggests that "perhaps the main difference between tragedy and comedy lies not in their contact with the audience but in the tone of that contact" [my italics].

In the National Theatre's production (first performed November 1981) Oresteia, directed by Peter Hall, at the end of the performance the Furies processed out of the theatre through the audience, which was invited to stand up as a mark of respect. This staging was effective in signalling the handing over of the Athenian future to the audience which modern audiences seem able to understand.


Else (1965); Herington (1985).

Herington (1985), 114.

Sommerstein (1989), 5-6.


Cf. above, Part One, section 2.

Cf. below, Part Three, Section III.1b.


Ibid. Punctuating as Garvie suggests (259) gives better sense:-

εἰνη γεγενεν ἀρμοσιν, πητιμησιν δὴν ὅρμω, προστιθεσίς μέτρον. .

If σωζόμενω replaces σῳζόμενον (Cho.798), the important motif of Orestes' victory as the 'light of salvation' for the Atreid House is significantly re-introduced (already expressed at the opening of the prayer, if Garvie's suggested alteration of 786 to κόρων φάσος φέρων is put in place).

785-6 would then read:

δῶς τιχάς εἴ τιχέιν [Bamberger] δόμιον
κυρίαν φάσος φέρων
μαυσολέους ἱδειν.

"Grant my prayer that the house may prosper, bringing the appointed light of salvation to those who long to see it". (Garvie's translation, 257).

For 'wind' used metaphorically to connote breath, see Pindar Py. 4.3 ὑδρόν ἣμων and Nem. 6.29 ὑδρόν ἐκεῖνων ἐκλέκτην.

Cho. 824 - πλεῖ τόδ' εἴ [Kirchoff] "The metaphor would continue that at 814 and 821, so that the κόμος, which is like a wind, has metaphorical sea-voyage also for its theme" (Garvie, 269).

Taking Abresch's ἤ δ' in place of Μ'ς ἤδ and his further alteration of κότω to κρότω. As Garvie (337-338) points out, "this simplifies the metaphor and brings it more into line with the idea discussed at Cho. 167".
In denying the possibility of χορός referring specifically to the role of dance in the tragic context, Taplin does not account for the fairly explicit ἐγείρε δὴ καὶ χαρόν ἄφωμεν (Fum. 307) which opens the Furies' μέλος/δήμος and χορός designed to enmesh their victim (Taplin, 1986, 169). However, Taplin (1993) has now substantially altered his position and cites The Binding-Song as "the closest to an explicitly self-referential example to be found in extant tragedy" (174).

Cf. above, Part Two, section 2.


Ibid., 88f.

Segal (1989), 343-44, makes the interesting point that here οὐντοδίδακτος "implies the suffering mortals' isolation and enclosure within grief and anxiety from which no divine relief is envisaged".

Garson (1985), esp. 5.

Thalmann (1985) refers to Ernst Neustadt's view that "in the demonic world of the Oresteia, the word has a magical power, it both reveals the nature of a thing and, when uttered, can conjure a thing up". (225)

Garson (1985), 5.

Thalmann (1986), 508-511.

Thalmann (1986, 500) says of these lines "the two moirai in the immediate context are those of the tongue and the kardia respectively. ... Since articulate speech requires use of the tongue under the prompting of the phren, the chorus cannot express what is in the kardia because that has not entered the phren". Although it is hard not to endorse Thalmann's ingenious interpretation of these lines, they are, I think, more profound than his analysis allows. To use charms to raise the dead (1019-24) crosses the clear demarcation between mortals and immortals. Nor should mortals expect πλοῦν φρένων as far as a clear explanation of divine motivation is concerned. The Zeus Hymn of Suppliants is particularly illuminating in this respect. Although in Zeus ἤμενος (Supp. 88) is 'hard to track down' and the paths of the immortal προατές (89) are dark and tangled, it would not be unreasonable to assume that, despite the elusive nature of divine motivation which this suggests, the emotion or desire of Zeus is perceived to be located in the divine innards. The translation of emotional ἤμενος into cognitive φόρησις (101) and then action (ἐξετραχεύει - 103) is encompassed simultaneously and without effort (ἐξητονο). There is no interim stage ('movement') between Zeus' feelings-thoughts-actions (still seated, i.e.: without movement - ἤμενος, 101) "somehow, from that very place, he brings about the object of his thought". To understand the gods remains impossible, yet to equip oneself as mortals to cope with the hostile universe governed by immortals is possible.

Haldane (1965); Segal (1989), 341; Wilson and Taplin (1993) who view references to mousike in Oresteia as indicative of its "submerged self-referentiality" (169).

Following Groeneboom, Murray, Rose, Wilamowitz, the text runs: τύχαι δ' εὐπροσώπως κείται τὸ πάν ἱδείν, ἤρωμενος "Μέτοικοι δόμων πεσοῦνται πάλιν". See Garvie (1988), 316. Translation is that of Lloyd-Jones (1979), 65.


See above, Part Two, section 6b.

Cf. Zeitlin (1990), who suggests that the inherent deceptiveness of tragic mimesis (84-86) is strongly associated with, and characterized by, dramatic representation of feminine otherness (80, 86).

See below, Part Three, section II.1.

See below, Part Three, Section III.2, n. 160.

In his study of Euripides' Bacchae as metatragedy, Segal (1982) sees Pentheus as taking on "the metatragic role of the actor playing roles" (248), while Dionysus is both an actor among actors and a 'stage director' (225, 230, 258). Cf. Zeitlin (1990), 64-65, 80, 84, 87. The implicit sense of a play-within-a-play which this produces has its visual counterpart in the on-stage masking and unmasking of actors (260).

In contrast, Taplin (1993) argues that "while tragedies may be self-reflexive in various covert and subtle ways, they do not explicitly acknowledge their own theatricality. They do not use
the language of playwrights, actors, costume, theatre architecture etc." (26). Thus he limits the metatheatrical potential of disguise, dressing-up scenes and any reference to ἡ οἰκεία (and related words), to the comic genre (1993, 67-68).

Yet at Cho. 560, Orestes clearly refers to his treacherous adoption of another's 'costume' - ἐνω γὰρ εἰκῶς, παντελῆ σαγήν ἐχων (where σαγήν=sagein).

Easterling (1988), 99 fn. 31, notes that "not all scholars accept the association with the Panathenaeae" (first put forward by Headlam, 1906, 268-277) and she gives a summary of various alternative interpretations. Easterling has shown in this article that the relationship between tragedy and ritual is elaborate and complex. The ritual details in the final scene of Eumenides (especially that of the red cloaks worn by metics in the Panathenaic procession to Athena's temple brought to mind by the red robes to be worn by the Furies - Eum. 1028) are thus not intended to mimic exactly on stage the specific procedures of 'real-life' ritual, but rather evoke the spirit of the metics' inclusion in the Panathenaeae; seen in more generalized terms, the evocation of the Panathenaeae may represent any harmonious cooperation of citizens with strangers and the proper relations between men and gods.

Herington (1985), 131: Aeschylus "delivers a message that is new, analysing a culture which was then evolving fast".
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PART THREE
PERSPECTIVES ON CHARACTER: ORESTES AND CLYTEMNESTRA

1a TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF DRAMATIC CHARACTER IN GREEK TRAGEDY

The difficulty of defining the function and meaning of theatrical character has led to ever-fluctuating perspectives on its construction as diverse and subjective as the reactions of individual audience members watching a theatrical production together. To arrive at even provisional, useful models for understanding character, it is necessary first to clarify the problems which surround the various attempts at its definition and to test the efficacy of such a definition in the decoding of character in Greek tragic texts.

Firstly, if in a particular methodology, dramatic character is construed merely as a kind of theatrical counterpart to a 'real person' in the 'real world', the construction founders once it is recognized that the definition of a person is in itself problematic and variable. Thus, any straightforward 'equation' between a dramatic figure on stage who operates in the sphere of 'make-believe', and a personality who inhabits 'reality', is rendered virtually meaningless.

The difficulty largely arises from too simplistic a polarization of 'make-believe' on the one hand, and 'reality' on the other, where more accurate assessment reveals that the two spheres overlap in a variety of
complicated ways. In this respect, the work\textsuperscript{3} of Goffman and Burns in particular has done much to redress this over-simplification and has led to greater awareness that "the connection between on-stage and off-stage reality is intricate"\textsuperscript{4}, constituting an "extremely complex interplay between dramatic roles and roles in real life"\textsuperscript{5}.

Fundamental to both Goffman and Burns\textsuperscript{6} is the idea that the audiences collude/"collaborate" with the formalized 'fabrication'\textsuperscript{7} of staged actions which take place within the 'theatrical frame'\textsuperscript{8} in a different 'key'\textsuperscript{9} from any similar 'real events', and thus seem well-equipped "to mark the difference between actual face-to-face interaction and that kind of interaction when staged as part of a play"\textsuperscript{10}. Indeed, the production of theatrical meaning is in part reliant "on the capacity of onlookers to respond to intentionally planted signals; which, of course, onlookers seem remarkably able to do"\textsuperscript{11}.

The ability of audiences to receive, and then decode, theatrical signs as they were intended to be read, is greatly assisted by what has helpfully been called the 'purity' of any fictive dramatic character\textsuperscript{12}, since "in ordinary life the spectator selects the characters and events to which he will pay attention. But for the theatre audience the selection is of course made by dramatist, producer and performers. The spectator responds to their sign language and accepts their version of reality"\textsuperscript{13}. In the theatrical frame, "things serve only to the extent that they mean"\textsuperscript{14}.
and, extending application of this dictum to character, on-stage figures "have the power to perform a wide-ranging service for their audiences"\textsuperscript{15}. So we might use the following definition: "a character is a transaction whose reality emerges from the relationships between the author's text, actor's embodiment, and the audience's recognition"\textsuperscript{16}, especially since, in the case of the present investigation, it gives proper significance to "the increasing consciousness [amongst classical scholars] that the plays [of classical drama] were written for performance"\textsuperscript{17}.

But when it comes to application of a general definition of character to Greek tragic experience, the definition must be made with caution. Exponents of the 'aesthetics of reception'\textsuperscript{18} alert us to the vast 'ideological and cultural gaps' between ancient Greek society, its self-definition, notions of a person, theatrical presentation/conventions on the one hand, and their modern equivalents on the other. It is with this in mind that scholars such as Vernant\textsuperscript{19} emphasize the importance of 'contextualizing' Greek tragedy as far as possible, of relating it to its original historical, socio-religious milieu. Furthermore, the new-found emphasis on the effect of ancient production values\textsuperscript{20} in shaping the form of the tragedian's text (where the latter is perceived of as "something which the poet used in conjunction with the performers in rehearsal"\textsuperscript{21}) suggests that the importance of performance in classical Athens, which this implies, should be taken into account in any modern critical
approach. (The dangers of anachronism in purely text-centred approaches are discussed by Green\textsuperscript{22}).

However, while acknowledging that "something has changed"\textsuperscript{23} in the intervening centuries which separate fifth-century Athens from today, Hollis\textsuperscript{24}, viewing Greek tragedy from a philosophical perspective, locates in its characters' "anguished fusion of self and role"\textsuperscript{25}, which is expressed in the "ultimate choice"\textsuperscript{26} between two equally compelling societal roles, a model relevant to a modern 'category of self'. He is able to do this because he perceives the quest for the sense of self as having a homogeneous nature while questions about it are framed in consistently differing terms from age to age.

One may derive from Hollis' approach a wariness in adopting a methodology which is overly preoccupied with viewing tragedy merely within its own context. Such an approach is solely concerned with decoding what Burns\textsuperscript{27} calls 'authenticating conventions', those features which distinguish Greek drama and the society which produced it from subsequent developments in theatre\textsuperscript{28}, and on which Gould focuses in his seminal discussion of the subject. He views Greek tragic characters as paradigms which do not show human behavioural traits, but which acquire meaning only "in the total image the play presents"\textsuperscript{29}. This is certainly true, some of the time, but it is a partial truth. For there are moments when characters display traits of human behaviour, which in
spite of the 'cultural and ideological gaps' between the fifth-century and today, modern audiences not only identify, but identify with, and are profoundly moved by. Audiences have the same capacity to collude with/become involved in the shared emotional experiences as they do to mark the distance between themselves and the performance (the distance from which they may analyse 'character view-point' and so "evaluate the moral action" on stage). A few examples should illustrate how presentation of what Gill calls the 'personality view-point' operates in Oresteia.

Let us take the initial encounter between Orestes and Electra at Choephoroi 212-245. In spite of its formal stichic structure, this recognition scene, as pointed out by Kennedy, is intensely personal. Electra's wary questioning, a "testing charged with reciprocal emotion", gives way to an expressive outpouring of love, delight and expectation directed at her brother Orestes. The emotional 'charge' thereby created momentarily overrides both the distance between classical Athens and the present and the qualitative distance between audience and performance, inviting emotional empathy, not only judgemental response.

In this way, emotional 'contact' may be made between ancient tragic action and modern onlookers, either at points of narrative regarding identifiable human behaviour or human emotions expressed in powerful and affecting terms. The Watchman gives a personalized account of the
fitfulness of sleep when gripped by fear (Ag. 14-15); the chorus recalls how Iphigeneia's pleadings to her father could not prevent her sacrifice (Ag. 228); monstrous as she is, Clytemnestra's instinctive expression of grief for the loss of παῖς φιλάτερη ἐμοί ὠδίς evokes an implicit link with the pain experienced at Iphigeneia's birth, now cruelly replaced by pangs of grief (Ag. 1417-18) at her death.

Yet, although there are aspects of tragic character presentation which are "psychologically compelling"\(^{35}\), this does not warrant a full-blown application of psychoanalytic techniques to the tragic genre which is on occasion advocated\(^{36}\). Uniquely, the psychoanalytic, specifically Freudian, approach makes no adjustment for, nor does it even admit the effect of, the aforementioned 'cultural and ideological gaps' which separate ancient and modern production. This point is forcefully made by Vernant\(^{37}\), who rightly criticizes the methodological tendency of the advocates of 'tragic psychoanalysis' to see in the wide range of extant tragedies, heterogeneous in form, feel and content, the same, universally applicable, answer: "the universal Oedipal key"\(^{38}\).

The Freudian psychoanalyst also appears to presuppose that, for his analysis, the most significant manifestation of the psyche is generically homogeneous. An individual represses subconscious thoughts and wishes which conceal taboo erotic and/or murderous intent towards parents, which are most consistently revealed via interpretation of the subject's
dreams. This approach fails to address a significant point: the psychological phenomena and feelings in tragedy cover a diverse emotional spectrum, they are not solely preoccupied with repressed erotic desires. Moreover, Vernant makes the point that this takes no account of the Greek distinction between the concepts of ἐρως (sexual desire) and φιλία (family attachment). This 'pansexualism' (a reductionism to which Freud's interpreters are more prone than Freud himself), together with the tendency to 'oedipalize' different dramas, draws us into ever decreasing circles, where profound Greek tragedies are assessed merely in terms of "how well they conform to Freud's categories".

The assumptions of psychoanalysis also beg the question 'whose psyche is being analysed?' If it is the psyche of a dramatic character, the aforementioned problems resurface. It is the usual brief of psychoanalysis that the intensely personal revelation of the individual subconscious is shared with one other, constituting a 'closed circuit'. A character in a play, however, cannot be equated with a real individual with 'a soul' or 'a past', so the psychoanalysis of a theatrical character is highly implausible.

Secondly, any notion that the audience is intended to engage in sociodrama psychoanalytic analysis of its own subconscious when interpreting the interaction of two characters on stage is impractical, nor do theatrical conventions admit of such an intention. Onlookers belong to the 'theatrical frame' and since figures in a text and characters in performance
are distinct from 'real' individuals, it is unsound to apply psychoanalysis to literature in general (precisely because it "involves its own repressions"\textsuperscript{43}, i.e.: it has a tendency to "repress the unconscious which it purports to be explaining"\textsuperscript{44}), and to Greek tragedy in particular\textsuperscript{45}. Such a notion would give rise to misconstruction of the defining demarcations which distinguish the 'theatrical frame' from the 'psychoanalytic frame'.

It should have emerged from the discussion so far that the transactional nature of the text-	extit{mise en scène}-performance triad is fundamental to understanding character.

So the following model of tragic character, drawing heavily on the work of many scholars, may tentatively be proposed. Tragic characters are paradigmatic textual figures engaged in multivalent interaction, which only attain their full potential meaning in the metaphorical world of drama and so strictly within the 'theatrical frame'. Tragic characters invite audiences to evaluate their on-stage actions, and simultaneously have the capacity to influence the audience's emotional state in psychologically compelling ways.

Admittedly, this is a highly eclectic definition, yet one which aspires to respond to the complexity and nuance of character in its tragic context (for "tragedy is a mixture"\textsuperscript{46}), one which does not impose a single methodology on its variety of effects\textsuperscript{47}.  

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The emphases of this theoretical model of character are closely akin to those of another eclectic, yet pragmatic, approach, designed to adapt to the practical requirements of dramatic material - a modern acting approach. In the following discussion a brief outline will be given of some modern views on acting a character and the worth of their application to fifth-century drama will be tested with particular reference to the character presentation of Clytemnestra and Orestes in *Oresteia.*
Ib  Acting a Character: Some Practical Approaches to Performance, the Actor's Perspective

The pragmatic bias of ancient production values and conditions towards effective performance to an audience which is implicit in the flexibility of the rehearsal process\textsuperscript{48} and the tragedians' 'hands-on' involvement as directors/producers/composers/even actors of their own work\textsuperscript{49}, suggests strong awareness in classical Athenian theatre of the tripartite interaction of text-mise-en-scène-performance as essential to the creation of characters. At every stage of this tripartite interaction, the actor is fundamental as both interpreter and agent.

Actors are professional fabricators, predisposed by experience and equipped by training to be aware of 'keying', the 'theatrical frame', audience 'collaboration' and all that these terms\textsuperscript{50}, these 'rhetorical conventions'\textsuperscript{51}, imply. The actor's awareness of the complex audience-performance relationship is a necessary prerequisite of his ability to take the process a stage further. Through analysis of figures in the text (what his own character says/does, what other characters say about him\textsuperscript{52}), an actor has pre-knowledge of his character's motivations, actions, relationships, and his character's place in the overall dramatic scheme (all intentionally 'planted' by the playwright-director), yet acts as if the character does not possess this comprehensive character information before the performance. Thus the actor colludes with the fiction of staged
events as if occurring for the first time and sequentially to his character, taking on "the task of incidentally providing information needed by the onlookers"\textsuperscript{53}. In this way, "the audience is given the information it needs covertly, so the fiction can be sustained that it has indeed entered into a world not its own"\textsuperscript{54}. So Goffman\textsuperscript{55} elaborates: "obviously the playwright, the producer, the prompter and the players all share a single information state concerning the inner events of the play; they all know what will prove to be involved in the happenings and how the happenings will turn out. Rehearsals make this all too clear. Just as obviously, during a performance the characters projected by the performers act as if they possess different information states, different from one another, and, of course, less complete than the one the actors and production crew possess . . . this means that at least some of the characters will be hoodwinking other characters, that all will be 'ignorant' of certain problematic outcomes, and that the play will therefore be, given only the actors and their real information states, a keying of a fabrication" [my italics].

Furthermore, an actor has pre-knowledge of (and so the capacity to exploit) the polysemous nature and various functions of his character. He is thereby able to elicit from the audience objective judgement (distance), emotional empathy (involvement) and a sense of what may roughly and provisionally be called the overall meaning of the play or plays being
watched, what Stanislavski\textsuperscript{56} called the 'super-objective', "the essential idea, the core, which provided the impetus for the writing of a play"\textsuperscript{57}.

It is to the director Peter Brook\textsuperscript{58}, however, that we might turn for the most comprehensive and remarkable assessment of the actor's complex functions: his status relative to the play's overall meanings/super-objective', his capacity "to change the psychological distance between the audience and the theme" by activating "the constant in-and-out movement between planes"\textsuperscript{59} and so serve onlookers.

Brook writes: "the more the actor understands his exact function on all levels, the more he finds the right performance pitch. The way opens when he sees that presence is not opposed to distance. Distance is commitment to total meaning: presence is a total commitment to the living moment; the two go together. If the actor truly feels this question (what the play is asking) to be his own he is unavoidably caught in the need to share it: a need for the audience. Out of this need for the audience comes an equally strong need for absolute clarity. This is the need that eventually brings forth the means. It forges the living link with the poet's matrix, which in turn is the link with the original theme"\textsuperscript{60}.

It might be objected that applying such modern approaches to classical drama carries the risk of anachronism, yet earlier discussions\textsuperscript{61} have suggested that the tragic genre is particularly well suited to interpretation in terms of "psychological distance between the audience
and the theme" and "constant in-and-out movement" between audience objectivity and audience involvement with dramatic characters in performance. As for fifth-century actors/playwrights-directors and their present day counterparts, they have in common concern with the pragmatic means with which to serve audiences.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that the modern actor's predisposition to be aware that his status when playing a character is relative to the 'poet's matrix', the 'super-objective', the 'overall meaning' of a play, and finally the audience, indicates strongly the collective emphasis of rehearsal and performance processes and evokes to some degree a sense of the relations of the fifth-century Athenian citizen-individual to others, his πόλις and his world.

It now becomes necessary to test these existential constructions of Greek tragic characters and modern practical approaches concerning their projection in live performance on particular characters in Oresteia. In this respect, Clytemnestra and Orestes are excellent candidates for detailed analysis. Both characters are present in each play of the trilogy, if not on stage then through the narrative of other characters. The substantial amount of information concerning Clytemnestra and Orestes divulged by secondary characters, and its manner of presentation, suggests authorial intention to influence the nature of the audience's focus on mother and son, and prepares for their scene of agonistic interaction (Cho. 870-930)
which occupies the structural and symbolic heart of the trilogy.
I: CLYTEMNESTRA

II.1 Seeming⁶⁴ and Self - Transformation: Clytemnestra the Actress

"It was the mask engaged your mind
Not what's behind?" W.B. Yeats The Mask (1910).

λέξασα κἀκτείνασα φαιδρόνοις δίκην,
ἀτης λαθραίον τεῦξεται κακήν τύχην".

Cassandra, Agamemnon 1229-30.

Lebeck⁶⁵ pays tribute to Srebrny's analysis of tragic character (in this case Orestes) "because he stresses the meaning hidden behind Orestes' words, the feelings Orestes must continually thrust from him"⁶⁶.

Goldhill⁶⁷ rightly objects to this on the grounds that character construction can only be located within the parameters of the text; furthermore, theatrical characters do not enjoy a 'real life' outside performance of that text and so cannot be assessed in terms of possessing 'souls', as Lebeck⁶⁸ proposes later.

However, when meanings hidden behind words are integrated in the text (or constitute a character's 'sub-text'⁶⁹), and not merely hypothesized by the critic's imagination, we have something quite different. Those meanings often serve a specific dramaturgical purpose in suggesting, perhaps, the duplicity of an on-stage character, and thus onlookers are presented with something intentionally perplexing: conflicting personae presented by one character, occasional use of deliberately ambiguous or open-ended narrative, creating in the audience an unspecified, yet
fascinated, uneasiness with surmise as to that which might lie behind a character's metaphorical 'mask', while the question is posed in concrete terms when tragic performers conceal their faces with actual masks. As the term 'sub-text' suggests, a character's motivation can be implicitly intimated or perceived as the force which fuels overt words and actions, as well as explicitly stated, though sub-textual motivation by its very nature excludes definite 'proof'. It is a subtle technique, yet one derived entirely from the text and best illustrated by example.

In the case of Clytemnestra, the sub-textual, inner and secret motivations which drive her to the act of murder are not directly stated (Ag. 1372ff. - end) until that objective has been achieved: she must maintain an impression of being φαιδρόνυς towards her spouse until maricide is accomplished, while a series of other characters hint at or report Clytemnestra's duplicity, her capacity to present many 'faces'.

The first of these is the Watchman, the implicit sub-textual quality of Clytemnestra's character is hinted at by him at the very beginning of the trilogy - he foregrounds the idea of hidden, secondary meanings related to the queen and the house (Ag. 18-19, 36-39). His renowned attribution to the queen of an ἐνδρόθεουλον ἐλπίζον κραφ (11) establishes Clytemnestra's supreme authority over the house and her ability to take counsel like a man. This foregrounds one important aspect of the queen's characterization in the first play. It will become apparent that for
Clytemnestra male and female status are easily interchangeable; in the absence of her lord, Clytemnestra enjoys the benefits of male privilege and adapts quickly to discussion in the political sphere. On Agamemnon's return, the queen reverts to the stereotypical female Penelope figure confined to the house (Ag. 855ff., especially 861-2)\textsuperscript{71}. The precise meaning of ἐλπιζον, unusually here without an object, is less easily determined and begs the question "concerning what is this ἄνδροβολον κεκρυστον hopeful?" The wide range of critical responses to this problem\textsuperscript{72} merely shows that the object of ἐλπιζον must remain obscure, an unspecified variable, a source of unease for the audience, "a reformulation of the enigma of waiting, the answer 'jammed'"\textsuperscript{73}.

Similarly, the prologue ends on this note of incomplete and inexplicit meaning (Ag. 36-39). The Watchman refrains from specifically naming the fear which tortures his sleep and the source of his tearful grief at the troubles of the house (Ag. 16-21). The Elders too, unable to voice specific charges against the chief offender, warn Agamemnon about the dangers of hypocrisy (Ag. 788-798) in generalized terms: the outward show belies the secrets hidden within the ἡπαρξ. In Choephoroi, the Nurse expressly accuses the queen of indulging in feigned grief while concealing her sense of pleasure at report of Orestes' death (Cho. 737-741). (At Agamemnon 271, Clytemnestra had suggested that the outward expression of the δυμα revealed the genuine inner feelings of
heart or mind. An ironic wish, perhaps, that this would be believed of her before the regicide).

The visionary Cassandra also recognizes the dangers of Clytemnestra's ability to transform herself, when she pictures the queen fawning before her lord to conceal her secret plan (Ag. 1227-1238). Cassandra foregrounds the utter daring of the woman's intent to kill her man, to enter into a kind of μαχη (1237) with the supreme and recently victorious Greek commander. In her attempt to describe the inhuman monstrosity of the queen, she variously represents Clytemnestra as a fawning bitch, an amphisbaena, a man-destroying Scylla and a hell mother breathing 'truceless Ares'. The first conveys seeming, the queen's ability to appear φαυδρόνος; the amphisbaena, the two-headed snake (also the symbol of chthonic Furies) again denotes duplicity. The many-headed Scylla evokes the host of monstrous females who inhabit Odyssey and the traditional identification of Scylla as sea monster, ναυτίλων βλασβη, recalls the dangers encountered by the Greek fleet and the portentous storm described by the Herald (Ag. 636ff.), while also suggesting that Clytemnestra presents the hazardous, indeed fatal, end to Agamemnon's νόστος. Finally, as a "Αιδον μητηρ, the queen is designated as a woman of sorts, a mother, but one who goes against the natural female instinct in her desire to bring destruction and the male domain of war not to her enemies, but φιλοις.
Clytemnestra, then, is perceived not only as man-woman, but as something superhuman, a monster who like the Furies (Eum. 48-9) merely resembles a woman (Ag.1500). Yet the Elders, while acknowledging her monstrous aspect (Ag.1407f.), refute her attempts as a soi-disant ἀλᾶστωρ (1501) to exonerate herself entirely from the bind of human responsibility: she is not ἀνεῖστος. The generational δαίμων may work through human agents, but the latter are not blameless (Ag. 1468-1471). This coincidence of human motivation and a sense of divine ordering is the very stuff of the tragic genre so insightfully described by Stephen Halliwell as "a combination of impulses that hold each other in constant tension: on one side, an intuition of the incompleteness or insufficiency of purely human accounts of action and experience; on the other, a refusal of the transcendent, in the sense of a perspective in which the human is ultimately eclipsed and its standards definitively transvalued".

The extra-ordinary, varied aspects of Clytemnestra's character, man-woman and more-than-human, arouse audience suspicion that their source is a profoundly subversive motivation and one made more dangerous a threat precisely because of its cryptic quality. (Cross-cultural, anthropological perspectives indicate that the ambitious androgyne, in her quest for male power, has often been considered monstrous and evil, a threat to social institutions). This technique of presenting Clytemnestra's
character as multi-faceted intentionally confounds onlookers, inviting the audience's ἀπορία; creating constant uncertainty as to Clytemnestra's representation of ἀλήθεια or τὸ δοκεῖν. Choral ἀμηχανία mediates and reflects audience ἀπορία, when in the first play the Argive Elders are at a loss to perceive the queen's secret motivations before the deed of murder (Ag. 1113, 1177, 1240-1255) and at a loss to make sense of them after Agamemnon's death (Ag. 1530).

Construction of Clytemnestra is, in the final analysis, elusive by authorial design (since she is the consummately hypocritical ὑποκριτής) and perhaps explains the wide range of diverging critical views on the subject. In the wider context, Aeschylus' presentation of her reflects the fact that the tragic τέλος can never be rendered with absolute certainty and indicates the poet's disinclination "to override the tragic intuition that human explanation can be real yet incomplete"\(^{76}\). Rather, tragedy is characterized by "a relation of men to gods in which the interweaving of multiple strands of causation creates something irreducibly enigmatic or inscrutable"\(^{77}\).

Before returning to this larger question and the means by which Clytemnestra's character might be seen as a partial reflection of tragic inscrutability and incompleteness, it is necessary to give a brief assessment of Clytemnestra as a superhuman man-woman and to suggest
how the presentation of the various aspects of her complex character might affect an audience.
II.2: Clytemnestra as androgyne: sexual and political power, status\textsuperscript{78}, language, space\textsuperscript{79}.

The instances of Clytemnestra's masterful usurpation of male prerogative and privilege have been exhaustively documented\textsuperscript{80} and variously interpreted. Oresteia has been deemed a gynecocratic document\textsuperscript{81} and its dramatist has been variously credited with re-affirming the misogynistic status quo\textsuperscript{82} of his time and with lamenting the limits such a society sets on women\textsuperscript{83}. The tendency of such approaches is to over-emphasize surmise as to Aeschylus' personal views on women, when it might be more helpful to assess how Clytemnestra's androgynous aspect is part of that character's strategy to achieve revenge for her murdered daughter, so that spectators find her complex, difficult to read, ever shifting their perspective and judgement on her.

From her first exchange with the chorus of Argive Elders in Agamemnon, the queen's powerful status in the male sphere of politics is assured. She initiates and concludes their conversations, and is the only character who moves freely in and out of the house, which reflects her control over it and her self-transforming powers\textsuperscript{84}.

More notable is her apparent awareness (Ag. 587-99, as if she had overheard their previous choral comments) of the male image of women as it is standardly expressed by the Argive Elders. Women are easily persuaded by, and so prone to voicing, unsubstantiated rumours (Ag. 483-
7). To believe such a γυναικογήρυνον κλέος is to behave childishly (παιδνός) or worse, as one deranged (φρενών κεκουμένος, 479), a counterpoint to Clytemnestra's earlier objection to being treated 'like a young girl' (277) or one whose opinion is formed βριζόνης φρενός (275).

In the Carpet Scene, the queen masterfully projects an image of herself as the stereotypical female: confined within the house (Ag. 861, 865, 867), so susceptible to the wave of incoming rumours (Ag. 863, 869, 874) that she often attempted suicide (Ag. 875-6). Yet the opening speech which paints the picture of the woman virtually incapacitated when ἀφονος δίχα (861; cf. the female inclination to show τὸ τάρβος, 858) evokes the language of the law-court defence λόγος. The form of this articulate plea belies its initial content (861-876) and subtly reaffirms Clytemnestra's capacity to speak κατ' ἀνδρα σωϕρον' ευφρόνως (351).

Clytemnestra, it turns out, does not have a muddled brain. She understands the logical processes of τὸ φρονεῖν and τὸ σωφρονεῖν, the male rationale and source of male control. It is this which enables the queen to base her considerable powers of persuasion and belief on hard evidence (τέκμαρ, 315) rather than being deceived by rumour. The queen's access to 'male' thought-processes is supported by further rebukes against the chorus when she is treated like a "foolish woman" (Ag. 1401).
Yet notably the tactic of pretended deference towards Agamemnon transforms into 'real' deference before Aegisthus, \[\phi\'\lambda\tau\alpha\tau\ '\alpha\nu\delta\rho\omega\nu\ (Ag. 1654).\] Before him she appears genuinely to reduce her status, using persuasion to diffuse potential violence: \[\delta\delta' \ \varepsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \gamma\nu\nu\alpha\nu\kappa\delta\varsigma, \ \varepsilon\iota\ \tau\iota\varsigma \ \acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\omega\ \mu\alpha\theta\epsilon\iota\nu\ (Ag. 1661).\] This rather more conventionally demure female attitude prepares the audience for presentation of Clytemnestra in \textit{Choephori}.
II.3a: Clytemnestra ἄλαστρῳ

"The location of heroic lives near the limits of the human entails a starkness of relation between men and gods."\(^86\)

When the ghost of Clytemnestra appears in the final play (Eum. 94ff.), she exhorts the Furies to restore her honour among the dead and thus repay the debt of her libations poured to earth. Cassandra's intimation that Clytemnestra should be included in a catalogue of female monsters (Ag. 1232-1237), outside the bounds of human and divine society, proves to have been an accurate premonition of the queen's current status, rejected among the dead and seeking redress from those who are also rejected and despised (Eum. 73).

Although she is overtly linked with the chthonic Furies in the final stage of the trilogy, there is nothing which explicitly points to Clytemnestra's associations with the Underworld in the first play. Rather, Clytemnestra would seem to have a special relationship with the ᾦπατοι, first intimated in the Beacon Speech (281-316) and one which is linked to the extraordinary visionary quality she displays in Agamemnon.
II.3b Visions of Destruction: The Beaconfires and Troy in Ashes

*Ηφαίστος ἔπεμπεν (283). . . ἡμοί (316).

In the Beacon Speech, not only is it suggested that fire is the anthropomorphized messenger-carrier of news (rather than being carried as in Lampadedromia⁸⁷), but the 'recruitment' of Olympian gods to serve Clytemnestra's purpose is explicit in 281 (the god of fire is the queen's ἄγγελος) and implied in the passage of the λαμπάως from Hermes' rock (283) to Zeus' crag of Athos (285). Furthermore, Clytemnestra's system unnaturally conjures light like sun (288) and moon (298) from darkness. The whole insinuates her attempt at "self-alliance with the gods and her exuberant appropriation of natural phenomena"⁸⁸.

The queen's tracing of the beacon's journey suggests what appears an impossibly familiar knowledge of far-ranging geographical locations. It is as if, in imagination at least, Clytemnestra were travelling at superhuman speed over the route from Ida to Argos, the kind of journey which can only be the privilege of goddesses (see Athena's journey, Eum.397-405⁸⁹ and that of the avenging Furies, 249-50. Athena hears Orestes' cry πρόσωπον, Eum.397. Clytemnestra receives the message of Troy's downfall 'from afar' through the agency of fire attaining superhuman capability through superhuman ingenuity).

The final destination of the hurtling force of the φῶς (302, 308) is the Argive palace, represented on stage, before which Clytemnestra
stands: Ατρειδῶν ἐς τόδε σκῆπτει στῆγος (310). The use of σκῆπτω, frequently used of Zeus' thunderbolts\(^{90}\), gives the audience the briefest glimpse of a hidden wish for vengeance vented against the Atreid House\(^{91}\). Hephaestus, after all, sends (ἐκπέμπων, 281) the fire message just as his brother Zeus πέμπει the Erinys of vengeance against transgressors (58-9), responding to the γόος of those bereft of young (like Clytemnestra). The Fury's force can be felt through the actions of mortals (Zeus πέμπει the Atreidae against Paris, 60-63) and foreshadowed in the sending (111) of an eagle omen (111-119) signalling destruction as clearly (the birds are φονέντες, 116) as the unnatural light in darkness signifies the apparently good news of Troy's fall.

**Il.3bii: Troy in Ashes**

\[ τὰ δὲ ἐνθεν οὐτ' εἶδον οὐτ' ἐννέπω' \] \textit{Ag.} 248.

Clytemnestra's graphic narrative of the conquered Trojan πόλις (320-350) works on many levels. It pre-empts with a prescience resembling the prophet's τέχνη the traditional format of the Messenger Speech\(^{92}\) and the appearance of the army Messenger whose narrative confirms much that the queen foretold. The speech further reveals the queen's awareness of the delicate nature of the communication between god and man and how it is smoothed by attention to ritual propriety. Clytemnestra's thanksgiving sacrifice and the resulting ὀλοκληρομένη
(ἐὔφημος 28, 87ff., 594ff.) provide a counterpoint to intimations of
punishment if the Greek army (338ff.) shows disrespect to the gods (as it
indeed does, Ag. 527-8) by ravaging ἄ μὴ χρῆ (342).

The initial stages of Agamemnon, then, present the audience with a
Clytemnestra who radiates a sense of indestructibility, boundless
ambition, the insight of a Cassandra and unsleeping energies: something
more than human. Betensky further detects the queen's ἀφθονον μὲνος
as the force behind her perception of the sea's store as παρισάιροις
(960). It might also be suggested that she, like the sea, is unstoppable, set
on an unrelenting course of vengeance (τίς δὲ νῦν κατασβεῖει; Ag.
958).

The ἐὔφημος ὀλοκληρώδης which accompanies the thanksgiving
sacrifices ordered by Clytemnestra in Argos is echoed by the cries of
victory uttered by the Greek soldiers in captured Troy. The queen
describes the contrast between the type of βοή uttered by the conquerors
and the conquered as if she hears the sound herself- the victory cry of the
Achaeans mixes with the οἰμοι lament (Ag. 329) of the Trojans for their
φίλτατοι.

Regarding the situation of the Achaeans at Troy, the accuracy of
Clytemnestra's 'vision' is suggested by the vividness of startlingly specific
details of army life. In the Trojan houses they now occupy, the Achaeans
find release (ἄπαλλα χθέντες, 336) from worry and can sleep "without a

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guard" (337). Such vignettes stress that the Greeks are careless now, prone to err before the gods. In contrast, the servants of Clytemnestra must be ever watchful, unaffected by sleep (the Watchman at Ag. 15 and the fire messenger who is not ἀφρασµίδως ὑπνώωνυ νικώµενος, Ag. 290-291).

This is appropriate for a queen who declares her own mind to be undefeated by sleep in pursuit of an outcome δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἰµιαρµένα (912-913). A mind οὐχ ὑπνώω νικώµενη (912) is essential, since the ambiguously described 'suffering of the dead' (connoting all the casualties of war: dead Trojans, Greeks and sacrificed Iphigeneia, as well as Thyestes' slaughtered children, 346-347) is ready to be awakened and kept alive (contrary to the Herald's assumption, 568-9, that the dead pose no threat) in the thoughts and actions of others.

After the description in visual and aural terms of Troy, the queen emphasizes the importance of harmony between gods and men. Clytemnestra warns that if the Achaeans dishonour the Trojan gods by defiling their images and take spoils, there is a danger that those who have conquered will in turn be conquered (338-40). Overwhelmed by the desire for profit, they may sack and destroy what they should not, endangering their return home. The νόστος has still to be achieved and unlike the relay of the fire-messengers, concluded at the δόµος, it is compared to the second limb of the double track, still to be completed.
When the Herald, who has witnessed and taken part in the events at Troy, returns, he informs the audience that Troy has indeed been sacked and that its altars and divine images have been destroyed (527-28). Furthermore, the νόστος has not been completely successful. He belongs to the only ship which is known to have survived the storm (648ff.) and Menelaus is missing: undertaking the διαφόρον θάτερον καλον (344) has indeed proved hazardous. Has the returning Greek expedition incurred divine wrath just as Clytemnestra predicted? Does her speech in effect 'remind' the gods that the actions of the Greeks at Troy constitute τὸ δυσσεβῆς ἔργον and require punishment? Not only do the Greeks destroy Troy, but they will arrogantly hang their spoils in houses throughout Greece (577-9).

Clytemnestra is ensuring that the gods take notice of the Greeks' impiety; her ritual actions, on the other hand, of sacrifice and prayer, are correct and blameless. Although they could be taken as springing from a 'true' desire to show thanksgiving and to ensure the safe return of Agamemnon, there is a sub-textual implication that these ritual actions are the queen's way of securing her husband's return without even the gods detecting her plan of murder. In lines 345-50, Clytemnestra is cleverly ambiguous. Even if the Greeks return safely and without the anger of the gods, they may have to face the "awakened suffering of the dead". Are
these dead the Trojans, the Greeks, the children of Thyestes or her own murdered daughter? Surely all of them are implicated.

Although Clytemnestra is presented as monstrous and superhuman, her character cannot be assessed as one wholly possessed by the ἀλαστρω, as Murray\textsuperscript{94} suggests. She herself disclaims any wandering in wits (593). Rather, human motives (1431ff.) conspire with divine patterning: an elusive concept which both chorus and queen struggle with in their lengthy epirrhematic exchange (Ag. 1407-1577) after the victory speech. Disaster cannot be seen as the sole responsibility of individual mortals. When the Elders attempt to lay blame on "mad Helen who alone (μία) destroyed many lives ", Clytemnestra refutes the charge (1462-67). The δεαίων is then identified as the manipulator of a κράτος (1470) which nevertheless works through humans, ἐκ γυναικῶν (1470). Nothing for mortals is ever ἄνευ Διός (1487), yet βρότοι can never be deemed ἄναιποι (1505). It is only conceded that the ancient ἀλαστρω (1501, 1508) may have been Clytemnestra's συλλήπτω (1507).

As interchange between chorus and queen proceeds, Clytemnestra's superhuman aspect appears to wane. Seen earlier as possessing a kind of manic bloodlust (Clytemnestra is deemed μεγαλόμητις, 1426, with a raging mind, 1428), the queen finally hopes that the Pleisthenid δεαίων will take elsewhere (1574-5) the madness in which kindred blood is shed (1575-76). The feeling of her own indestructibility seems to have left her:
she will be happy with a portion of the familial wealth she once considered to be in endless supply (the house with the help of the gods πένεσθαι δ' οὐκ ἑπίσταται, 961-2)⁹⁵. The subsidence of her superhuman strength towards the end of *Agamemnon* foreshadows her depiction in *Choephoroi* and is paralleled by her reversion to a more conventional female type in the second play⁹⁶. Through Aeschylus' theatrical mythopoeosis, the human motives which mitigate Clytemnestra's crime prevent audiences from letting her become merely one of many paradigmatic two-dimensional monstrous females in some simple cautionary tale, like those described by the libation-bearers in the Song of Female Daring (*Cho. 585-638*). Clytemnestra's portrayal in *Choephoroi* makes such straightforward relegation impossible. With Clytemnestra, moral ἀπορία is never far away. A shift of emphasis is needed away from critical focus on 'change⁹⁷ in the queen's character per se to its effect on spectators. The mutability of her ἐθνός creates ever-changing audience perspectives on her and defies straightforward construction. The enigma of Clytemnestra mirrors the enigma of human motive in the divine universe⁹⁸.
II.4: The Carpet Scene\(^9\) (Ag. 810-974) as Preparation for the Mother/Son Scene

Just as the Carpet Scene prepares us for its counterpart the Mother/Son Scene in Choephori, so the Herald Scene of the first play acts as precursor to the Carpet Scene.

Agamemnon has sent a messenger to be the first to tell his queen of Troy's overthrow; but Clytemnestra has pre-empted the extraordinary speed of Agamemnon's messenger and already knows that Troy has been taken. She rejects the idea of hearing πῶς λόγος (599) from the messenger, saying that she will hear it from Agamemnon. The audience knows that she has already given a 'visionary' description of Troy in Ashes. She seemingly defers to the superior knowledge of her lord, although she has already been shown to have that information. At the same time, she turns Agamemnon's initiative back on him and uses the Herald to her advantage: he will tell the king that the city longs for him and that his wife is faithful and loving (Ag. 605ff.).

Clytemnestra claims that she has been a faithful watchdog for his house (607-8), compared with the 'fawning bitch' (1228) Cassandra will see her to be. The queen declares that her returning lord is the sweetest light to behold, although she subsequently reveals that Aegisthus is the fire at her hearth (1435-6). She says she has been πολεμίω τοῖς δύσφρους (608), whereas the audience subsequently witness her
engagement in a battle of words and actions with one who should be her φίλος.

Clytemnestra concludes her speech to the messenger with the boast that no more has she been unfaithful than she knows how to temper metal (612)100. Audience suspicion as to the irony of her closing remarks to the messenger is proved true by her subsequent Amazon-like101 ability to wield the male's weapon against her husband, and by the revelation of her adulterous liaison with effeminate Aegisthus102. So too the sub-textual desire implicit in her saying that she is considering how best to hasten her reception for her οἴδοιος πόσις is her wish for him to return so that she may perform the long-pondered avenging murder. Her lengthy, hyperbolic expressions of delight at her lord's return are groaning under the weight of apparent ἀληθεία (613): she 'goes overboard' to conceal her lies.

The queen had started her speech (587ff.) with another rebuke to the Argive Elders' disbelief regarding the beacon-messages; she throws back their own words at them in mockery (Ag. 590-92). She thus ironically re-confirms her authority over those around her, while simultaneously describing herself as the faithful wife who will defer to her returning lord. The audience is thus prepared to observe the manner in which the sub-textual ambiguities of Clytemnestra's character manifest themselves in the Carpet Scene.
The Oresteian 'mirror scenes' of murdered victims in tableaux (Cassandra and Agamemnon in *Agamemnon*, Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in *Choephori*) accentuate visually the inevitable cycles of familial crime and punishment which plague the Atreid House.

Yet the Carpet Scene and the Mother/Son Scene, although linked by themes held in common, generate distinctive impressions and atmospheres. Thus any account of the Mother/Son Scene must be prefaced by brief assessment of the more frequently discussed Carpet Scene.

Much has already been said about the false position of female deference Clytemnestra assumes before her lord, belying the character's earlier behaviour: to sit in the house is an εκταγάλον κακόν (*Ag.* 862). Apparently conventional female deference also manifests itself in Clytemnestra's claim that on advice from a male ally, she has sent away Orestes to protect him from the treacherous, possibly murderous, intentions of the people (877-885). In tension with Clytemnestra's conventional female ἥθος is the queen's male persona. In their stichomythic exchange, Agamemnon notes Clytemnestra's androgynous aspect: οὗτος γυναικὸς ἐστίν ἰμείρειν μόιχης (940). Clytemnestra does not deny that the desire for battle is not woman-like but rather deflects Agamemnon's focus by accentuating his status as victor.
The uneasy *coincidentia oppositorum* in Clytemnestra of a male and female ἥθος, together with the confusing signals it engenders for the audience when located behind a single mask, permeates the Carpet Scene. The queen's hyperbolic λόγος (esp. *Ag.* 895-907) smack of eastern extravagance and her very public speech of welcome (initially addressed to ἄνδρες πολίται, 855) usurps what is designated in later rhetorical handbooks as the usually male privilege of presenting the λόγος ἐπιβατήριος. In this way, aspects of alien (barbarian) rhetoric, combined with the sophistic strategies of a formal defence speech (similarly presented in the male public sphere) compounds the 'otherness' of a female (usually ἄρσενος δίχως) dominating male space and, it has been argued recently, subverting what is conventionally the male/king's prerogative of μεγαλοπρέπεια. The verbal victory in Clytemnestra's battle of words, won through πειθώ and δόλος, won through strategies both male and female, barbarian and Greek, prefigures her use of both purple tapestries (the work of women, associated with the oriental luxury) and the sword (the Greek warrior's standard weapon) to murder Agamemnon (*Ag.* 1379-1387).

So the initial picture of the queen, deserted, inside the house and easy victim to rumours of Agamemnon's death, which purportedly produce images of a man gashed with holes like a net (868) and the monstrous Geryon (870), is contradicted by the queen's subsequent,
confident performance in the Carpet Scene; yet what Clytemnestra
pretends to be here proves an ironic 'rehearsal' for the presentation of her
character in the central play. Before her son, she pleads to be allowed to
resume the woman's proper status\textsuperscript{111} as wife and mother (909, 920), again
complaining of the woman's lot (Cho. 920- ἄλγος γυναιξὶν ἄνδρῳς
ἐξερευθαί, τέκνῳ), but these female privileges have been fatally
forfeited. In the Carpet Scene, Clytemnestra, with confident magnanimity,
had boasted that she would have offered up πολλῶν πατησιμῶν εἰμάτων
(963) if it had been prescribed by the oracle (964). In Choephori, the
'dream-prophet' is an all-pervading sense of φόβος (Cho. 32-7, 928): fear
of terrible dream-visions of the suckling snake drives Clytemnestra to
send appeasing libations to her husband's tomb (Cho. 523-34), whereas the
visions she had described at Ag. 868-873 can be assigned to feigned fear
concealing secret hopes. The queen's superhuman, glorious
indestructibility in the first play gives way to genuine doubt and fear in
the second. In Choephori, Clytemnestra is truly bereft (thus ironically
enduring the ἐκπεφαγέλων κακόν of Ag. 862) of φίλου despite her claim
(Cho. 717)\textsuperscript{112}.

In terms of visual impact, too, the scenes are further distinguished
from each other. It is the grandiose gestures (to match a λόγος groaning
with hyperbole and grandiloquence) of spreading the tapestries and
Agamemnon's stepping onto them which add to the atmosphere of the
Carpet Scene: optical opulence carefully managed for effect in the public
arena. In contrast, the sparse stichic exchange of mother and son is
framed in direct, unadorned language. This creates the highly intimate
tone of a face-to-face interaction, unmediated for the onlookers in the
auditorium by the incorporation of an on-stage public represented by the
chorus of Argive Elders\textsuperscript{113}. Instead, the libation-bearers stand aside (Cho.
872) disentangling themselves from the discourse and action and so
intensifying audience concentration on Orestes and Clytemnestra\textsuperscript{114}.

Finally, the treading of tapestries is symbolic of both sacrilege\textsuperscript{115}
(linked with the wanton death of Iphigeneia and also the loss of Greeks
and Trojans in a pointless war and the "broad hubris of wasting the
house's wealth"\textsuperscript{116}. Orestes, however, enters the μαχη to restore the wealth
of the house, his own status and that of his sister and citizens. These
constitute Orestes' justifiable ίμεροι (Cho. 299-305), but in Agamemnon,
Clytemnestra's desires are deemed those of an unnatural, subversive
androgyne (Ag. 940).
II.5: Clytemnestra victorious: motivation and emotion

If the elevated status of Clytemnestra has been implicitly depicted as instrumental in achieving her goal, her 'victory speech' (Ag. 1372-1398) over the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra and the subsequent unfolding of the remainder of the first play is an extraordinary outpouring of hitherto hidden motivations and emotions.

Before the act of murder, the queen had never directly claimed her status as a powerful woman. Rather the audience's perception of her extraordinary status as both man-woman and super-human had been intimated through the observations of others (such as the Watchman), and through her dominance of 'male' space from the vantage point of the threshold, and confirmed in her confident handling of the Argive Elders. In her own statements regarding herself, she had foregrounded her status as that of a 'mere woman', whereas in her victory speech and all that follows it, she exults openly in her physical and mental supremacy over her fallen lord. Everything consequent to the act of vengeance is a revelation of motives and a declaration of the emotional satisfaction derived from both confession and act.

In the first two lines of her victory speech, Clytemnestra freely admits to feeling no shame at resorting to deception and time-serving. This is no uneasy confession arising from fear, guilt and shame, but rather in parody of both funeral oration and victory speech, an exultation
in the murder of Agamemnon. That she has positive feelings of glory and
joy (1391, 1394) in her actions is clear from the concluding section of the
victory speech (Ag. 1393-4). In justification of her actions, Clytemnestra
claims she can have no αἰδοὺς before the shattered bond of marriage.
Earlier, she identified children as the evidence of the marital oath, its
confirmation (Ag.877-8 of Orestes; cf. 1525 of Iphigeneia). For his wife,
Agamemnon's sacrifice of ψιλατέτη (a word subsequently reserved by
Clytemnestra for Aegisthus - Ag. 1654) Iphigeneia signals the destruction
of the marriage oath (Ag. 1415-18). Ψιλίξ is thus re-directed to the
adulterous relationship with Aegisthus, since Agamemnon who should be
a φίλος is, in fact, an ἔχθρος (Ag. 1374-6).

The queen has resorted to τὸ δοκεῖν, a lengthy inner life of secret
planning and pretended friendship to enemies arising from necessity. Just
as Clytemnestra denies that she is a mere woman (Ag.1401), so too she
denies that Agamemnon is her husband (Ag.1496-1499). Her anger at her
husband's negation of the validity of the marriage bond is further
exacerbated by his infidelity with Cassandra (1438-1447). Agamemnon's
unfaithfulness is balanced by Clytemnestra's love for Aegisthus, which
she openly declares - Aegisthus is her hope, her shield, the fire at her
hearth and εὖ φρονῶν towards her (Ag. 1434ff.). In effect, he will take on
the role of husband and ruler of the house, thus banishing danger and
fear.
The marital infidelities of both Clytemnestra and Agamemnon are also important in Choephoroi. In the Mother/Son scene, when the queen attempts to counter her son's allusion to her adultery by arguing that blame must be equally (δυνατος) directed at the πατρις ματας (Cho. 918), the operation of a double standard is made explicit. The μορθος of male responsibility (the man is δ πονων, 919, and δ τριφων, 921) for the household renders his adultery permissible.

The queen's subversive treatment of φιλος is enforced by her graphic 'replay' in narrative and gesture117 of the murder sequence visually confirming her monstrous nature (even the inner workings of the φρην are to be outwardly registered in the blood-shot eyes of Clytemnestra: ληβος ἐπί δυνατων αἰματος ἐπεξεργασθει, 1429). If Clytemnestra can blur the definitions of friendship and enmity, love and hate, she also defies the distinctions between life and death when she imagines blood as nurturing. The Argive Elders read this defiant δροις as blood-lust and mania (Ag.1426ff.). Clytemnestra rather claims that she is motivated/possessed by the Fury of the race, the Fury of slaughtered children, both her own daughter and the children of Thyestes (Ag. 1433 and Ag. 1500ff.). She deflects blame from herself and her sister (1464) and focuses on the crimes against νεκραθης (1504). Her relationship with Aegisthus is thus partly explained and strengthened by their apparently common purpose.
Clytemnestra's subversive behaviour further manifests itself in her adamant refusal to give her husband the proper rites in death. She tells the chorus that there will be no mourning in the house (1554) for Agamemnon. (The true nature of his father's ἀρμίος in death is subsequently recollected as spur to Orestes' motivation, Cho. 439ff.). As the Argive Elders point out (1409-1411), Clytemnestra's disregard for the rules of society will mean exclusion from it. Murder incurs the curses of the people, driving the pollution from the city and land. The end of Agamemnon thus foregrounds a theme vital to the central play and the mother/son scene. Through the experience of exile, driven by the need for purification and fearful of being condemned as one ἀπόπολος (Cho. 286-296), Orestes will eventually be reincorporated into society; he will not be a polluted μισθος as his mother had been.

1372ff. serves to confirm for the audience that Clytemnestra is able to transform herself into man-woman, thereby becoming something monstrous, more than human. It is this superhuman, monstrous Clytemnestra who is recalled in the central play to motivate Orestes to reciprocal murder and contradicts the on-stage construction of the queen's character in the second play.
III:  CLYTEMNESTRA AND ORESTES

III.1a Motivations Compared

The way in which the audience perceives the motivation and characterization of Orestes and Clytemnestra is manipulated so as to ensure our sympathy with Orestes. Our perspective on him alters our emotional response to him. Orestes in identifying himself to his sister (Cho. 225f.) identifies himself to the audience. Their espousing of a common cause against their mother is also the sharing of that cause with the audience, and although Orestes may employ his mother's δόλος against her, to the audience his early and manifest honesty implies that our moral construction of him should be very different from that applied to his mother. This shifts our moral perspective, exposing onlookers to the individual character's progress through the play and engendering a sense of emotional 'proximity' to his particular πάθος.

Like the chorus of libation-bearers, the audience share in the often repeated motives which drive Orestes to murder. What was hidden and only revealed after the deed of murder in the case of Clytemnestra, is overtly communicated by Orestes far in advance of the matricide. (This technique of theatrical presentation evokes the voice of the confiding narrator of Homeric epic, particularly Odyssey, where the audience is constantly kept informed regarding the hero's secrets, thoughts and motives, and is always forewarned of Odysseus' transformation into
'another. In one sense, audience members are the individual hero's co-conspirators/σύμβουλοι/μεταίτιοι. Clytemnestra is perceived as possessed with the spirit of vengeance before the deed, Orestes afterwards. The mother becomes a Fury, the son is pursued by the Furies who are eventually exorcised/transformed. Clytemnestra misguided hopes that she can make a bargain with the Fury of the House of Atreus (Ag. 1567-1576), Orestes, understanding the requirements of ritual action, makes the necessary journey and finds purification.

Yet, although Orestes is depicted sympathetically, he is still guilty of using δόλος against his mother. Although it is mitigated somewhat by the form of revelatory self-confession it takes, the substance of Orestes' statement, ἐκδρακοντωθεῖς δ' ἐγὼ/κτείνω νυ, (549-50) is chilling. His confident assumption here that he will effortlessly transform into the murderous snake is shaken when actually confronted by Clytemnestra - "you killed one whom you should not have, now suffer what you should not" (930). This perfectly encapsulates the logic of treachery as both subversive and justifiable. Emotionally, Orestes' awareness of this duality mirrors audience appraisal (for it, like Orestes, treachery must be fearful, yet understandable) and simultaneously makes him far more sympathetic to onlookers than his mother. The character Orestes implicates and disturbs spectators.
What are Orestes' motives and how are they depicted?

Orestes' speech at Cho. 269ff. is a direct statement of his motives. Unlike his mother's glorying victory speech in the first play, its formal and rational structure implies a 'clear mind'. Orestes prime motive is Apollo - his oracles warn of terrible punishments if Orestes does not avenge his father, whose Furies will torment him and will prevent him from partaking in the practices of the human and divine community. Apollo seems to have appropriated knowledge of, and therefore some authority over, the chthonic realm and the jurisdiction of the Furies (Cho. 283). Not obeying Apollo's commands would mean total exclusion from society, or ἄτυχις; following his precepts means regaining the lost estates of his father and recompensing the subjection of the Argive citizens by those unfit to govern. The speech ends with a clear reiteration of motives (Cho. 299-305). Divine precepts (θεοῦ ἔφεσια, 300) conspire with human motives/ὑπερηφανεία. There is anger here too at the usurpation of his father's throne by Aegisthus, more strongly expressed at Cho. 571ff. These emotions and motives are repeated in Eumenides (Eum. 462f).

So the audience is party to Orestes' motivations from the outset of the central play. But how does the Great Kommos contribute to our perception of Orestes' motivation?
II.1b The Kommos of Choephoroi as Motivation

"But I must also feel it like a man".
   Macduff, Macbeth, Act IV, Sc.3, 220.

"...Be comforted;
Let’s make us medicine of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief".

"Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it".

\[
\begin{align*}
\tau\alpha \ \mu\delta\nu \ \gamma\alpha\rho \ \omicron\tau\omega\varsigma \ \varepsilon\chi\epsilon\iota, \\
\tau\alpha \ \delta\alpha\upsilon\tau\delta\zeta \ \delta\rho\gamma\alpha \ \mu\omicron\alpha\theta\epsilon\iota\nu. \\
\pi\rho\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota \ \delta\alpha\kappa\alpha\mu\pi\tau\omicron \ \mu\acute{\epsilon}n\epsilon \ \kappa\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu. \\
\text{Cho. 453-455}^{119}
\end{align*}
\]

Virtually all discussions of the kommos\textsuperscript{120} are prefaced with references to the influence on its critical assessment exerted by three scholars in particular. Wilamowitz’s\textsuperscript{121} view that the kommos maps Orestes' moral struggle of conscience to reach the decision regarding matricide is violently opposed by that of Schadewaldt\textsuperscript{122} who perceived Orestes' 'decision' as static and without progression, and who focused rather on the kommos as ritual 'set-piece' invoking Agamemnon. Between these two extreme positions, Lesky\textsuperscript{123}, followed by Lebeck\textsuperscript{124}, charts a middle course, based on the premise that the kommos does show Orestes' 'inner struggle'. These firmly entrenched points of view would appear, however, to be based on various unsupported assumptions. Firstly, the theses of
Lebeck and Lesky are based on assessment of Orestes' decision as if it must be made believable in 'real terms', in respect of a 'realistically' precise chronology of decision-making and the nature of that decision. There are various objections to this approach. The central one is raised by Conacher\textsuperscript{125} - "the chief difficulty facing Lesky's view, that in the kommos alone is Orestes' human and personal desire for vengeance aroused, is provided, as Lesky himself sees, by the lines (297-305) immediately preceding it". Secondly, as has been noted by Goldhill\textsuperscript{126}, the underlying assumption of this debate assumes the polarization of psychological/emotional expression, fulfilment and impact on one hand, and ritual on the other; rather, "ritual presupposes the psychological development inherent in the work of mourning"\textsuperscript{127}.

Through the insights of Conacher and Goldhill, we might approach the kommos differently. The ritual of mourning (in which the conversion of grief to anger is already inherent\textsuperscript{128}) raises Orestes' emotional state so that he is thereby prepared to act in a pitch of emotional readiness, stirred by exhortations of Electra (Cho. 450) and the chorus (Cho. 451-455)\textsuperscript{129} to feel anger at the maltreatment of his father in death and his sister in life. "The working up of the spirit of Orestes and the spirit of vengeance is all part of the same operation"\textsuperscript{130} and so the former must be given the same weight as the latter which Schadewaldt's\textsuperscript{131} emphasis fails to do. Schadewaldt does however stress the importance of the audience as a
factor influential in the kommos' dramatic design and impact. The kommos is vital in closing down the emotional distance between Orestes and audience, for the latter is already acquainted with his 'logical choice'\textsuperscript{132}. Onlookers are thereby enlisted, like the chorus, to become \(σύμβουλοι\) (86) and \(μεταίπτοι\) (100) in the murder plot. As Garvie\textsuperscript{133} observes "Orestes' three statements [\textit{Cho}, 18, 297ff. and 306ff.] of determination form a dramatic sequence. Orestes reaches his decision paratactically in different but parallel ways". The construction of Orestes' character, the kommos' role in supplying Orestes with the emotional capability to turn the logic of justifiable vengeance into action, to "feel it like a man", stirs \(συμπάθεια\) in spectators.

The Great Kommos gives emotional substance to interrelated motivations, in which the audience shares as it listens to long-withheld, heart-felt grievances: a revelation of Orestes' 'sub-text'. Clytemnestra had said in her 'victory speech' that she had pondered \(σὺν χρόνω \) (\textit{Ag.} 1378) on the act of vengeance arising \(οὐκ ἀφρόντιστος πέλαξι νεῖκης παλαιᾶς \) (\textit{Ag.} 1377-8). In part, the Great Kommos is suggestive of long-pondered grievances gaining force by being linked and spoken of. If Clytemnestra had to become an \(ἀλάστωρ\) to commit murder, Orestes and Electra unite and enlist the supernatural power of their father. Their conjuration (119) matches their mother's link with the chthonic world and counteracts her superhuman status in the first play. Brother and sister are
both the children of the eagle father (247f.), but they must also resort to
the wolf-nature of their mother\textsuperscript{134} to achieve their goal (421-2). Similarly,
in contrast to the catalogue of monsters to which Cassandra had attempted
to compare Clytemnestra (where the allusiveness of naming her evokes
the difficulty of decoding her multifaceted character - \textit{Ag.} 1232f.), the
overt revelation of Orestes' ophidian characteristics has a markedly
different effect because the audience know him as snake by \textit{his own}
confession (\textit{Cho.} 527-550), whereas it is for others to hint at
Clytemnestra's serpentine nature (\textit{Ag.} 1233; \textit{Cho.} 994, 1046-1047).

The kommos is also an \textit{open} prayer to Zeus for help and success as
opposed to Clytemnestra's secret, ambiguous prayer to Zeus the
Accomplisher at the end of the Carpet Scene (\textit{Ag.} 973-4). Wishing to
enlist, not deceive, the gods, brother and sister are humble suppliants
(336-7) before their father's tomb. They are also saviours (\textit{Cho.} 203-4,
264 and 1073) of their father's house and line (503-504), which vindicates
the act of vengeance still further.

Inherent then in the characterization of Orestes before the
Mother/Son scene is the notion of the re-construction of a belief-system
abused by Clytemnestra in the first play, together with a re-definition of
the terms on which that system is based. Orestes will redress the balance,
placating his father's spirit and restoring his status among the dead, by
reasserting his status among the living. \textit{Ατριφα} (\textit{Cho.} 295 and 435) will
be replaced by the proper respect for the dead (Cho. 106 and 108).
Orestes will also restore his sister's status within the house. When Orestes regains the κράτος τῶν δόμων (Cho. 480), proper access to and usage of the wealth of the house will return, and if Electra's full dowry is restored, the proper status of her father will necessarily be given prime attention with the wedding libations (Cho. 486-8). In effect, the status of the house is defined by its wealth; to restore the proper usage of the house's riches means the re-definition of its correct status relative to its family members, its citizens and gods. Saving the house and its children will re-constitute the proper bond between the human and divine through sacrifice and feast, confirming the proper exchanges which produce σέβας and χάρις (Cho. 255-61). Orestes will fulfill his part of the bargain, if Zeus will aid his cause; this re-affirms Orestes' understanding of the ritual requirements for communal harmony (cf. Eum. 276f.). Orestes and Electra both comprehend the necessary rites which will restore σέβας and χάρις, signalling harmonious relations between men and gods. Thus stands in strong contrast to the reckless ἰβρις of their parents.

Parallel to this, is the restoration of human harmony - a return to a belief-system which reserves φιλία for family members, friends and allies. Implicit in this is the re-emergence of αἰδώς before one who is a φίλος. In the first play, Clytemnestra's had exulted shamelessly in her husband's murder (Ag. 1373 - οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι). In Choephoroi,
Orestes' question to Pylades "what shall I do Pylades? Be *shamed* to kill my mother?" highlights the emotions of tragic doubt and fear. In the Mother/Son scene shame is coloured with guilt\textsuperscript{135}. Human emotion complicates further a scene already over-determined by the particular relationship of its two participants.
III.2  Mother versus Son: An Examination of Choephoroi, 870-930

The Battle of Words and Its Emotional Consequences

"Theatre has the potential - unknown in other art forms - of replacing a single viewpoint by a multitude of different visions."\(^{136}\)

πάθος ἀνθέει  

Choephoroi 1009.

The vehemence of the children's hatred for their mother and their own bond of love is an emphatic force in the central play (Cho. 309-10, 456 and 460), and indeed the underlying strength of human emotion and the human condition in general pervades Choephoroi. Suffering (πάθος) and the endurance of πόνοι are predicted for Orestes by the chorus subsequent to the act of murder (Cho. 1009 and 1016). For Orestes, there is grief, sadness, regret and pain when the deed of murder is reflected upon: his victory is polluted, his mood despondent, enraged and terrified (1023-25) in startling contrast with the boastful triumph of his mother's victory speech (Cho. 1014-17):-

νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, ἀπομιώξω παρῶν,
πατροκτόνων γύφαιμα προσφωνῶν τόδε·
ἀλγὼ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένος τε πᾶν,
ἀξηλα ύπικης τησδ’ ἐχων μιᾶςμετα.

Orestes' poignant ἀλγῶ (conveying both physical pain and mental distress) is a far cry from Clytemnestra's physical pleasure (Ag. 1391-1392) and boastful exultation (Ag. 1394, ἐπεδχομαι; cf.1400) in murder

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successfully accomplished. In self-confession, Orestes admits to the polluting sacrilege of matricide: άζηνλα νικης μιάσματε (Cho. 1017). As a preliminary to mariticide, Orestes’ mother had encouraged Agamemnon to walk on tapestries as one rightfully ἐπιζηλος and one who, with the victor’s prerogative, is able to grant victory. Clytemnestra’s νικη over Agamemnon gives her satisfaction, Orestes’ victory over his mother does not. Orestes accepts the burden of μιάσματε, whereas his mother had refuted (Ag. 1419-20) the charge (Ag. 1409-11) levelled by the Argive Elders that as a source of pollution she would have to be expelled from Argos. It is this accurate understanding of the pollution that murder carries which leads Orestes to seek the necessary purification, unlike his mother.

Together with the hope and expectation of continuation which Orestes brings, an atmosphere of fear pervades the central play. In Agamemnon, Clytemnestra had discredited dreams (Ag.274ff.) and had discounted the possibility of fear while allied to Aegisthus (Ag. 1434). In contrast, the terror of her dream-visions in the women's chambers of the snake drawing blood from her breast as recounted to Orestes by the chorus (Cho.533) indicates her purely human status. In the second play she is subject to the emotion of fear. It is this vision which gives rise to the initial procession of the play. Φόβος is the first resounding note of the play (Cho. 32f.) and spreads equivalent terror to the chorus (46-7)\textsuperscript{137}. 

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In his exchange with the chorus (Cho, 523ff.), Orestes correctly identifies himself as the murderous snake of his mother's dreams. The final three lines of the Mother/Son scene (928-30) confirm the accuracy of the fearful dreams, as Clytemnestra recognizes. The queen is confronted with her nightmare. The dream-snake is her son Orestes, returned from exile, and, if she credited the deceitful story of her own son, from the dead. The perturbing fear which arose from dreams is a true prophet (929): dream is made concrete through theatrical enactment. Orestes' response to his mother's piteous realization is equally piteous (930), inspiring grief from the chorus (933) for τὰ λῆμων ὦ Ὀρέστης (in contrast, Clytemnestra is παντὸς λῆμος, Ag. 1237; it is Cassandra in the first play whose noble suffering the chorus recognizes and pitied by addressing her as τὰ λῆμων, 1302). He acknowledges that his mother will suffer and will endure what she should not; the 'double bind' here expressed, "the reciprocity and transgression " of Orestes' words, is the most explicit vocalization of tragic over-determination, compounded by the emotional anguish of moral dilemma. Despite the constant reiteration of her treatment of Agamemnon and his surviving children, and her adultery with Aegisthus, the scene ends on a note of guilt and self-realization. Clytemnestra faces her worst fear and Orestes faces the trap of his situation, the constant moral weighing of his mother's murderous acts and his own (Cho, 929-930).
Near the beginning of the scene, Clytemnestra realizes that she has been tricked: Orestes has used the same treachery on her as she had on Agamemnon, he has successfully concealed his identity (Cho. 888). Both mother and son are treacherous persuaders (726), yet Orestes shares the strategies of his δόλος (554ff.) with his friends, thus following the libation-bearers who so exhort him τἀλλαξ ἐξηγοῦ φίλοις/τοὺς μὲν τι ποιεῖν, τοὺς δὲ μὴ τι δρὰν λῆγων (552-553). The watching audience is, in one sense, enlisted like the chorus as the φίλοι of Orestes, thus the moral bias is firmly weighted in his favour. Much later (1026-7), Orestes declares to the choral witnesses (and therefore to the onlookers in the theatre) κηρύσσω φίλοις/κτανείν τὲ φημὶ μητέρ' οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης. Thus, in the Mother/Son scene, where the dialectic is framed partly in terms of, and so reappraises the meaning of, φίλος/βχθρός\textsuperscript{139}, Orestes' victory in battle is already intimated to be the favoured outcome, morally and emotionally justifiable.

That both mother and son espouse treachery, but in markedly different ways, is emphasized further by their identification with the net robe. In her victory speech over the corpses of Cassandra and Agamemnon, Clytemnestra revels in her successful subjection of her husband by entangling him in a net-robe (Ag. 1382-1383). In contrast, Orestes' speech (Cho. 972ff.) over the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus contains a contemptuous rejection of the use of deceit, a hope
that the monstrous purpose of the net will be held up as material evidence of his mother's daring and treachery.

Orestes intends to assume the dress and dialect of a Parnassian and thus gain entrance to his ancestral home. He will become an actor and transform himself convincingly\textsuperscript{140}, just like the hero of \textit{Odyssey}. That Orestes is convincing $\xi\kappa\nu\omicron\alpha\varepsilon\iota\kappa\omega\varsigma$ (560) is borne out by his exchange with his mother (668-718). He had hoped that this entrance to the house would lead to a confrontation with Aegisthus (\textit{Cho}. 571f.) and so he tries to contrive it in his speech to the door-keeper (658f.). Instead, Clytemnestra appears and it is to her that he reports second-hand the story of his own death. Mother and son, both consummate deceivers and actors, maintain the courtesies of host and guest. The scene is heavily ironic - host and guest outdo each other in politeness ($\xi\kappa\nu\omicron\alpha$ and related words are emphatically repeated at 668, 674, 680, 684, 700, 703, 706, 710 and 712). Orestes praises his hosts and wishes he could have brought them better news; his mother claims that even though bad news has been brought to the house and to the $\varphi\iota\lambda\omicron\eta$ (695, echoed by the 'stranger' at 705) of Orestes, nonetheless the stranger will be a friend (708) to the house. Ironically, these two who should be $\varphi\iota\lambda\omicron\eta$ and appear to be so when transformed into others, meet later in the Mother/Son scene as enemies.
Clytemnestra is apparently saddened at the news brought by the 'stranger' (691ff.), but this is undercut by Cilissa's description of her mistress as concealing her joy with a sad face before the servants (Cho. 737-41). Critical debate over this speech centres on whether Clytemnestra's emotions can be read as 'genuine' or hypocritical. The audience, already familiar with Clytemnestra's ability to conceal her 'true' emotions, is reminded of it in the Nurse's observations. But perhaps the tensions between true and false grief, genuine emotion and outward display, are deliberately formulated in this way. The difficulty of decoding with certainty this character's emotional state grows directly from the "paradox of exchanges and confusions in love and hate [which constitute] Klytaimestra's unresolvable dilemma"\textsuperscript{141}. Able to treat strangers as friends (708), she spurns her children in favour of an adulterous liaison, hating the man she should have loved - δν δε χρην φιλειν στυγεις. In this sparse stichomythic rebuke (907), the essence of Clytemnestra's subversion of φιλία, both personal and relational\textsuperscript{142}, her subversion of society, is encapsulated (even if her grief for Orestes is genuine, it is obliterated by her love which is 'un-love' - ἀπέρωτος ἔρως, 600). She cannot win in the coming battle.

This presentation of the Mother/Son scene as a verbal and physical 'battle' of two similarly equipped opponents is foregrounded in much that comes before it\textsuperscript{143}. It was argued earlier that in order to murder her
husband, Clytemnestra could transform herself from faithful wife to man-woman (prepared to enter into physical and mental μάχη, Ag. 940) and ἀλάστωρ.

In its counterpart the Mother/Son scene, Clytemnestra again resorts to the various tactics allowed her by her capacity for self-transformation. She is quick to solve (887f.) the servant's riddle and is clearly prepared to resort to violence and use the weapon of male combat to defeat a man: the "man-cutting axe".

Interestingly, her initial response is not to her son: her feelings for Aegisthus override even her own sense of self-preservation. She again addresses him as φίλαπτως (893; cf. Ag.1654). Her grief for him may be fleetingly expressed, but it is piteous, evoking a complex emotional response from the audience, counterbalanced by Orestes' response of anger. For Orestes, the bond of love and alliance between Aegisthus and Clytemnestra motivates a powerful hatred (she is μίασμα and στόχος, 1028). His mother exchanged the love owed to his father for hatred and her ability to give life with her capacity to destroy (Cho. 906-7 and Cho. 991-6).

Clytemnestra had transgressed all the precepts of society, confusing love and hate, friendship and enmity and life and death; thus she is necessarily excluded from society. Yet she still falls back on the rules she had transgressed in order to persuade her son not to kill her.
Clytemnestra initially succeeds in her persuasion, when she urges restraint from her son, claiming that she has given him life and reminding him of the necessary shame before the mother's breast. This throws Orestes: despite his undeniable understanding of his moral duty and the morality/belief-system his action will restore, he cannot deny the existence of the blood tie between mother and son. In spite of the timely conjunction of divine precepts and human motivations, the emotive force of the great kommos to substantiate Orestes' justification with anger, and the careful rehearsals of treacherous strategies confidently handled when Orestes is in ξένος guise, the mother's unpredicted gesture, erotic and powerful\(^{144}\), stops him (and the audience, similarly unprepared) short: Πνεύμα, τί δράσω; μήτερ' αἰδεσθώ κτονεῖν;

Orestes has never uttered the word 'mother' until this crisis of doubt. His sister Electra, however, has done so at 90, 141, 240, and it is she who uses it for the first time in the kommos\(^{145}\). In fact, Orestes' narrative preceding 899 is significantly marked by a reluctance to name ητήρ, especially in conversation with the chorus regarding the snake dream (514ff.). The libation-bearers, in loco parentis, address Orestes as τέκνον (523) and even they are unable to call Clytemnestra Orestes' 'mother'; instead, she is a δώδεκα γυνή (525). In the Mother/Son scene, Clytemnestra's evocation of ητήρ (922, 924) is countered and finally replaced by πατήρ (909, 925, 927). By overcoming the emotive gesture
which displays the nurturing, maternal breast, Orestes obliterates Clytemnestra as 'mother', a role which was her central motivation, powerfully expressed in Agamemnon, to justify maricide. By rejecting her as μητήρ, Orestes coincidentally refutes the validity of her role as mother of 'dearest' Iphigeneia (the ἐρυθος from both parents, Ag. 1525) for whom she endured birth-pangs (Ag. 1417-18). Since the queen's gesture has failed, verbal argument to reinstate herself as mother and Orestes as child (912, 920, 922, 928) proves futile (μάτης, 926).

It is Pylades who counters Orestes' doubt (900f.), reminding him of the oaths which bind him to Apollo's commands; to restore and re-define the belief system abused by Clytemnestra, it is necessary "to count all men your enemies rather than the gods". Pylades thus removes the problematic of human motivation and emotion, and the stichomythia which ensues is a hardening of Orestes against the emotive appeals of his mother.

Earlier discussion has shown how the public nature of the Carpet Scene is partly created by Clytemnestra's use of hyperbolic rhetoric and her usurpation of the verbal initiative, by the queen's unilateral use of connective particles in the stichic exchange with her husband. In contrast, it has already been noted that the distribution of connective particles and the general structuring of the mother-son stichomythia (Cho. 908-930) encapsulates with epigrammatic restraint the double bind
gripping Orestes, the dilemma created by the claims laid on him by both parents.

How can a woman who denied life to her husband, continue living with her son? This mother's privilege has surely been forfeited. Her claim to such rights from her ἡκνον, whom, she claims, she bore and reared (896-8, 928), are countered by the fact that she treated her son as if he were a slave, 'selling him' in exchange for Aegisthus (915-17) and thus condemning him to exile, to τροφή in an alien land. The audience knows that Cilissa too lays claim to the rearing of Orestes, whom both mother and father (Cho. 750 and 762) handed over to her charge.¹⁵⁰

Indeed, despite Clytemnestra's reminding her son of his father's infidelities (Cho. 918), in response to the charge of her own adultery, Orestes mitigates his father's transgressions by focusing on the paternal role in providing τροφή for the house (921). Clytemnestra, as she did in the Carpet Scene (Ag. 858ff.), highlights the loneliness of the woman sitting in the house: the ἄλγος (920) of the wife in turn is partial excuse for infidelity. The queen yet again attempts to convince others that she is a 'mere woman'. When the persuasion of the woman and mother is unsuccessful, she employs the more forceful reminder of her super-human self (just as her androgynous nature had briefly resurfaced in her call for an axe at 899). If Orestes murders her, he will be pursued by "the bloodhounds of his mother's hate", which will arise from his mother's
powerful curses (Cho. 912 and 924). Again, she tries to give a spuriously religious connotation to her actions by saying that Orestes should feel στῆβας (912) in deference to the threat of her own retribution, while at the same time deflecting guilt from herself by naming Μοῖρα (910) as equally blameworthy. This recalls the dilemma of human culpability which is debated by queen and chorus in their epirrhetic exchange at the end of Agamemnon. Claims of sole human responsibility (Ag.1405-6, 1455-56) are refuted (1464-5), nor can divine ordination or agency (Ag.1500-1501) be wholly accountable - Clytemnestra is not ὄνοματος (Ag.1505), rather immortals work through mortals (Ag.1470-1507). If, as Clytemnestra claims in the central play, Μοῖρα is παρερικό in her husband’s murder, her rhetoric merely displaces the problem of human responsibility as a source of difficulty, it does not solve it. Orestes' counter-claim, the argument that Μοῖρα (highlighted as a co-operative agent in the Great Kommos, 306) is equally instrumental in his actions and that the Furies of his father are to him an equivalent and powerful threat, (already outlined in his long speech at 269ff.), merely re-directs Clytemnestra's argument against herself (a concept reflected in Orestes' statement at 923). The whole force of the Great Kommos lies behind the question of Cho. 925. The question forces concession from Clytemnestra that, by the rules of the retributive battle/justice, her own actions have caught her up. Her transgression of the boundaries between love/hate, friendship/enmity,
fidelity/adultery, life/death and the definitions of shame/respect/honour, the boundaries of human and divine communication, the boundaries of society itself, must be punished/cleansed by death. In turn, her death will ensure Orestes' successful rite of passage to a society resurrected and redefined to incorporate old with new. The change undergone by the individual Orestes, his personal journey, symbolizes, and is part of, society's rite of passage.

Yet while an audience is able to evaluate the paradigmatic symbolism of on-stage characters and can re-appraise changing uses for "the terms of familial and social relations which have been major referents of the discourse"\textsuperscript{151}, its response to the Mother/Son scene must be charged with emotion, for the problem of human emotion is never allowed to recede from the dialectic of their exchange. Αἰδώς (899 and 917, where feeling shame is a consequence of his mother's adultery), ἀλγος (921), grief (926), φόβος (929) must each be accounted for as they shift our perspectives on Orestes and Clytemnestra, nor can the son evade the emotional consequences of matricide. His πάθος (1009 and 1016) after the deed of murder almost exactly counterpoints the claims of his mother in their stichic exchange: Orestes too feels pain (ἀλγῶ, 1016), grief (ἀπομιωτῶ, 1014) and φόβος (1024). Finally, his own sense of outrage (κότος, 1025) which had helped him to act, is eventually displaced in his φρῆν (1024) by the anger of the mother (embodied by the μητρὸς


\textit{\textepsilon\gamma\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\upsilon\kappa\nu\nu\varepsilon\zeta}, 1054), driving out his sense of self and driving him off the stage. In this case, the pervasiveness of emotion (its effect metastasising like a cancer 'flowering' in the body, 1009) does not lead to cognition and logical action, rather it deranges and derails its subject with overpowering madness$^{152}$.

It has been argued$^{153}$, drawing on the more recent work of cognitive psychologists$^{154}$, that emotions may trigger cognition. This in turn leads to \textit{\mu\acute{a}thoc} and positive action undertaken by on-stage characters, who thereby educate and arouse spectators to undergo a similar experience. This may be true, but in the theatrical frame, the values of such theories must be scrutinized in the light of the already complex relations between actors and audience. There are differences of type and degree between emotions engendered on stage and those experienced by individual onlookers, themselves qualitatively differentiated from the collective audience. The relationship of mother and child is common to all. But from performance to performance, its representation on stage is bound to be diversely construed by individual spectators, depending on their personal experience of that relationship.

Of course the theatrical medium, its techniques and the occasional self-reflexiveness of its performance text to performance mode/the watching audience, presupposes both the importance of the shared experience of live performance and the fact that "whatever is there is
significant, and it is not too much to be surveyed in toto\textsuperscript{155}. Given the intensifying nature of drama, the emotional 'quotient' on stage is most likely intended to elicit emotions (but possibly to a different degree) in spectators. Onlookers can both empathize directly with a character's declaration of feeling and can equally be guided to react in a certain way by choral response to a character's actions.

We now come to the central question of how culture-specific emotions are. It might partially be answered by noting the continuing preoccupation of modern drama practitioners and theorists with emotional effects in theatrical experience, which is usefully formulated by reference to the polarized views of Brecht and Artaud\textsuperscript{156}. Brecht, for whom drama was a didactic, political tool, rejected any notion of empathetic theatre, of "carrying the audience with one, losing oneself in the play"\textsuperscript{157}, blunting the spectator's ability to think and act. Artaud advocated cruelly confronting the audience with the psychological and metaphysical to "wake us up heart and nerves" by "inspiring us with fiery, magnetic imagery and finally acting in us after the manner of unforgettable soul therapy"\textsuperscript{158}, where the latter has a sharpening, not a blunting, effect.

Examination of Oresteia would suggest that emotions may be both didactic and instructive to mind and political self/social conscience (cf. Cho. 302-304) and simultaneously stir heart/soul to rage through sensations of grief. Reference to the chorus' exhortation of Orestes δραγά
\( \mu \alpha \theta \epsilon \nu \) (Cho. 454)\(^{159} \) may suggest that, like Brecht, Aeschylus mediated the audience's didactic experience, \( \pi \alpha \theta \epsilon \iota \mu \alpha \theta \omicron \omicron \zeta \) (Ag. 177), through its representation on stage as a spur to Orestes to note his sister's suffering and to resolve to act. On a different level, the kommos wakes Orestes' "heart and nerves", raising the volatile emotion of anger in him (to screw his courage to the sticking place) and audience alike, and enlarges the frame to include the metaphysical realms of Olympian and chthonic gods. In effect, the Artaudian and Brechtian spirit co-exist painfully in the tragic genre.

However, emotions may equally draw 'un-action'. Contrary to the cognitist's assumptions that emotions must always be part of a developing process, \( \pi \alpha \theta \eta \) may sometimes create a gap, an absence, a freeze or delay of action. Orestes cannot act when confronted with his mother's breast, Electra cannot pour libations to her father until she has 'learnt' (118) the right words which have proper emotional impact. Revulsion at the smell of blood and death prevents Cassandra from entering the Atreid palace (Ag. 1306-1312).

On a different level, there are occasions when tragic endurance entails the passive reception and suffering of pure feeling, a response which embraces stillness/inaction as a positive choice. Cassandra endures (Ag. 1290, 1298, 1302) rejecting flight (1301). The reaction from the chorus must be an emotional one and is poignantly simple: \( \dot{\omega} \tau \lambda \eta \mu \omega \nu \),
οἰκτίρω σὲ (1321), undoubtedly evoking feelings of tragic pity from the audience. In such scenarios, a more profound type of μάθος is revealed: god-given cognition is constituted by the recognition that any action which contradicts 'what must be' (θεσφάτος -1321) is not viable. Cassandra's observations (1327ff.) constitute an important reflective 'lesson', especially since the divine source of her visions gives them supreme validity: her final 'secret rapture' reflects the onlookers' pity (1321) for her particular case back on to her audience and to the human condition in general: ἵνα βρότεια πράγματ' (1327). . . καὶ ταύτ' ἐκεῖνων μᾶλλον οἰκτίρω πολὺ (1330). This is god-inspired prescience (to which the preliminary was a phase of divine madness, 1140), which perceives and acknowledges the annihilation of life, the θεσφάτος μόρος (1321), with resigned despair. Here, possession of the φρήν by τὸ θείον (1084) grants profound cognition: insight into bleak darkness.

Emotions can also generate the subversion of cognition; in its most extreme form, madness. The madness of Orestes, connoted by the pursuing Furies, visible only to him in Choephoroi, but visible to all in the final play, is, in emotional terms, a potential source of danger and crisis. This begs the question of the audience "Are these real citizens now mad? Or polluted? Orestes' Erinyes have become everyone's". An attempt to answer these questions will be made in the final section of this discussion.
Conclusion: Orestes and Clytemnestra in Choephoroi

If theatre has the unique capacity "to change the psychological distance between the audience and the theme"¹⁶², Aeschylus' presentation of Clytemnestra and Orestes is intended to reduce the psychological distance/emotional gap between them and their audience, while sympathy is consistently elicited on behalf of the son. In so doing, the dramatist graphically illustrates the way in which human emotions exacerbate the ἀπορία surrounding the dilemma of human motivation and responsibility in a divine universe which is a central preoccupation of the tragic medium. This perplexity of tragic experience is partly eased in the final play.
IV: ORESTES IN EUMENIDES

Rites of Passage, Orestes as Mythic Citizen and Endings as Beginnings

"The important thing is not the distance itself, but the constant in-and-out movement between various planes". Peter Brook

Zeitlin's detailed assessment of the paradigmatic value of Orestes' character identifies him as being the common factor linking three motifs brought together for the first time in Oresteia: the matriarchy myth, the pattern of initiatory rites of passage and the myth of dragon combat. Not only is Aeschylus' combination of these traditional motifs innovatory, but his treatment of them constitutes an act of novel mythopoiesis.

Orestes' rite of passage marks the transformation of adolescent into adult male, but he is reincorporated not only back into the οἶκος, but also into the city, a new Aeschylean emphasis which is marked by Orestes' role as "the catalyst that brings a secular non-cultic institution [the juridical Areopagus and its voting system] into being." Similarly, in facing the monstrous Furies, Orestes will not "play out the part of the typical hero and slay the dragon. Nor will the dragon truly be slain, but tamed." Indeed, this strikingly non-violent act of taming the dragon is reflected in the foundation of the Σενυς cult worshipped in a cave-sanctuary near the Areopagus, a source of beneficence for Athens, when the 'dragon' is assimilated into the ritual activity of the city. All these myths
mark beginnings. But that is not all: they are all beginnings located in the city of Athens: Orestes' adult citizenhood, the start of a cult (to be attended by Athenian women, Eum. 1024) of goddesses who will grant fertility and protection solely to the πόλεως of Athens and the foundation of the Areopagus, a uniquely Athenian judicial institution. There is also Orestes' allusion to the foundation of his own hero cult at Argos (Eum. 767ff.), but Argos is not specifically named. Even here, the final emphasis lies on the ways in which the hero Orestes can benefit the city of Pallas (772) and her people (762 and 775). The newness of these beginnings is marked by the dramatist's novel handling of them.

In this way, the dilemma posed by Orestes' act of matricide, his ambiguous status as guilty/not guilty, treacherous/not treacherous, is resolved by altering the perspective from which it is viewed - "the task now ascends to a higher level, to the level of both gods and city, even as the myth of matriarchy can only reach its prosperous conclusion in this new setting through a similar upward revision of its traditional terms" [my italics].

This is certainly true. In one sense, Orestes as a recognizably human, psychologically compelling character, recedes from us in Eumenides to a higher mythological plane, widening the 'psychological distance' between stage action and audience: he can be seen as a more distant figure in the broader panorama of symbol and myth.
And yet, as he recedes from onlookers, the *divine* level of operation is brought closer into view: the stage is peopled with deities. Apollo, Athena and the chorus of Furies and their motivations and emotions (particularly those of the latter\textsuperscript{173}) are, to some extent, depicted on a 'human level'. The Furies have the physiology of, and so the capacity to feel like, humans. In *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra's ghost exhorts the chorus to feel her wounds in its *καρδία* (103), to reawaken its *φρήν* (104) on behalf of her cause; the ghost further urges *ἄλγησον ἦπαρ* (135) so that her avengers can destroy their victim Orestes with *νηδόνς πυρί* (138). Their pain, outrage and suffering have the equivalent force of those emotions when experienced by mortals: *ἐπάθομεν πάθος* (*Eum*. 145; cf. 837=870) and *δόνα* (842=875). In 143-146, the Erinyes engage in an emphatically repetitive outcry against *πάθος*.

Padel\textsuperscript{174} argues that the on-stage Furies of *Oresteia*’s final play represent the daemonic assault on the human (i.e.: -Orestes) *phrenes* (*Eum*. 330, 332=345, 343) and are simultaneously "inside and outside *phrenes*"\textsuperscript{175}. Yet this does not account for the Erinyes' own location of pain and suffering *ὑπὸ φρένας, ὑπὸ λοβόν* (159). It might be argued that having human sensations and emotions constitutes the Erinyes' *μάθος* (mirroring the role of tragic emotion as partly educative for the audience: a place "where the terrible is good", 517), enhancing their capacity to be "spies, monitors of fear, in *kardia* and *phrenes*"\textsuperscript{176} to become the
legitimate, well-qualified watchers (518) of those onlookers presently watching them on stage.

Human impetus is partly attributable to the influence of daemonic and/or divine agents on mortals. Yet, since the motives of gods and daemons are themselves partly anthropomorphized, we have come full circle without solving the enigma, since the latter merely returns us to explication in human terms. If the wishes of immortals are made explicit (intimation of Zeus' will expressed via Athena and Apollo at Eum. 616-618, 640, 713-714, 797, 826, 850, 973, 1045), this does not explain, however, the motives which lie behind the divine will. Theatre, like myth, "perhaps explains nothing and does no more than displace the difficulty, but by displacing it, it appears at least to mitigate any logical scandal".177

To draw us away from this unanswerable problem and distract our collective perplexity regarding the play's modus operandi on a logical or philosophical level, Aeschylus shifts audience perspective once more, exploiting the unique capacity of theatre to engage those watching it "in the constant in-and-out movement between various planes".178 For his Athenian audience, the dramatist locates the closure of his trilogy at the emergence of recognizable institutions of the city of Athens.

In one sense, the mythic city beginning to take shape on stage is at a temporal distance from the onlookers of fifth-century Athens. Yet in another sense, the inclusion of the audience of 458 B.C. by Athena's
direct addresses to the people at 572, 683, 707-8, and specifically to the
**citizens of the future**, to ὀστοίους ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν (**Eum.** 707), draws the
watching citizen body into the stage action: "the characters are not
stepping partly out of the world of the play, rather the audience is being
invited to step partly in"\(^{179}\). Furthermore, the audience is reflected in the
two subsidiary choruses, male Areopagites\(^ {180}\) and female πρόσωπολοι\(^ {181}\),
who engage in the gestures associated with the legal (**Eum.** 707-9) and
ritual procedures of the onlookers' own time. Finally, the sense of
proximity to the stage action is further enhanced by what could certainly
be interpreted as addresses (1039,1043 and 1047) made by the chorus of
processing προσωποί in the final song of the trilogy, exhorting the
audience to join in the final ὀλολυγή\(^ {182}\): "the Athenian people are made to
feel a *part of the drama* [my italics], and the last voices they hear in it are
their own"\(^ {183}\). It is significant that in these addresses it is specifically the
collective unity of the citizen body which is called upon, as if to 'heal' the
heterogeneous responses which may have been called forth from
individual spectators as they were manipulated by the clash of emotions
presented in, for example, the Mother/Son scene. Audience well-being
finally comes παντὸμεν (1038).

The sublime *coup de théâtre* of the *Oresteia's* final movement
suggests that the presence of the audience and the state of their emotions
were prime factors in Aeschylus' dramatic design. Making the Erinyes
plain for all to see (what is so dangerous about Clytemnestra, after all, is the sense that there is always something hidden contradicting the outward show) is sufficient as a *theatrical* explanation, since the Furies, usually instigators of human madness and suffering, are themselves seen to be prey to a range of πάθη, thereby reducing somewhat the pure, unmitigated sense of danger and crisis for mortals which they previously represented. Revelation is often inherently cathartic; it is covert behaviour which spells uneasiness for onlookers\textsuperscript{184}.

The theatrical transformation of the Furies, their incorporation into the city, is mirrored by the inclusion of the audience in the final play which will think, *but more importantly feel*, as if with one mind and heart - χάρματα δ' ἀντιδιδοίειν κοινοφιλεῖ διανοίαν ἴκων στυγεῖν μιᾶ 
φρενί (Eum. 984-6).

The citizen body, once enlisted as the φίλοι of Orestes in the central play, are now the φίλοι of the beloved goddess and they are granted a privileged proximity to Zeus (998-1000). The dangers of a φρήν subject either to the clash of contradictory emotions, or to emotions which lead to inactivity, or the dangers of subversive, maddening emotions, are obviated by the single φρήν of the people which delights in the benefits of its own sense of unified purpose; having homogeneous loves and hates creates citizens who are σωφρονοῦντες (1000). Furthermore, their special
collective position ἰκτερ Ἁδίς (998) is deemed beneficial, whereas the proximity of individual heroes to the divine carries the danger of ἑρος.

Thus, the audience is invited to participate in the closure of the trilogy; first to see itself reflected on stage and then, in an atmosphere of self-celebration (where the inherent theatricality of ritual, in this case procession, is re-energized and redoubled by its representation on stage), to understand itself to be directly connected to a city uniquely founded by the gods. They, like the mythic citizen Orestes, can enjoy all the privileges of citizenship which arose in response to Orestes' arrival at Athens, together with the benefit of collective tragic pleasure. Yet in the final frame, Zeus alone amongst the gods retains his privilege as ultimate spectator - παντὸς θεοῦ (1045). Apollo, Athena and the Furies are all seen by the audience, and it is partly this spectacle which incorporates onlookers in the drama. The final, verbal image of Zeus is of the supreme god as he casts a beneficent, unseen eye on the tragic experience.
NOTES FOR PART THREE

1 For a preliminary discussion, see above Part One, section 1.
2 See Easterling (1990), for a review of various approaches to character definition and analysis of the significance of such diversity.
4 Easterling (1990), 86.
5 Ibid. The complexity of this interplay is further reflected in the use made by some anthropologists, philosophers and psychologists of various aspects of the paradigm of dramaturgical experience (including the use of dramatic terminology) as models helpful in comprehending what a person is (Holli, 1985, 217-233; esp. 222-223, 227-230), and how that individual self functions in 'everyday life' (Laing, 1969 2nd ed.). The significance of Laing's observation that "the vocabulary of psychology is deeply implicated with theatrical terminology" is noted by Easterling (1990), 85.
7 Goffman (1974), 83; cf. Easterling (1990), 86.
8 See n. 6 above; cf. Easterling (1990), 85-6.
10 Ibid., 138, quoted in Easterling (1990), 87.
12 Easterling (1990), 89-90; cf. Langer (1953), 310.
13 Burns (1972), 228.
14 Elam (1980), 12.
15 Easterling (1990), 90.
16 Hodgson (1988), 56; cf. Green (1990), 15: "a theatrical performance is of course a complex interaction of text, mise en scène and audience".
17 Green (1990), 15.
18 Elam (1980), 93-95.
20 Green (1990), esp. 15-21; Rehm (1992), esp. Part I.
21 Green, op cit., 16.
22 Ibid., fns. 4 and 5, 17.
23 Hollis (1985), 223.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 222.
26 Ibid., 227-230.
29 Ibid., 61f.
30 Gill (1986).
31 Easterling (1990), 91.
32 Gill (1986), 266.
33 Kennedy (1983), 45-46.
34 Ibid., 46.
35 Cf. n. 32 above.
36 Anzieu (1966); Green (1975); Devereux (1976).
37 Vernant (1988), Ch. 4.
38 Ibid., 93.
39 Ibid., 100-102; cf. Goldhill (1984), 111, esp. fn 17: "philein' does have undeniable sexual connotations, but it extends beyond simply sexual connotations".
40 Devereux (1976). This is an analysis which fails to take account of the ancients' own interpretation of dreams where "sex is the signifier, not the signified" (Alford, 1992, 5, referring to Foucault).
41 Wollheim (1971), 107.
42 Alford (1992), 2.
43 Goldhill (1984), 139.
44 Felman (1977), 194, quoted by Goldhill (1984), 140, fn. 76.
Vernant (1988), 93; Goldhill (1984), 137, fn. 60.

μυτικαί...τροχοφόρος", Aristoxenus fr. 81, Wehrli. See Herington (1985), 110.

For other, more eclectic (and therefore, in my view, more helpful) approaches, see Segal (1986), Chapter 8, Alford (1992).

Green (1990), 16-17.

Rehm (1992), 25f.

See nn. 7-9 above.

Cf. n. 27.

Cf. above Part One, section 1.


Ibid.

Ibid., 134f.; cf. 151f.


Ibid., 137-138.

Brook (1987).

Ibid., 46.


See above Part One, section 2; cf. Rehm, 45-51.

Cf. n. 18. 'Cultural and ideological gaps' do separate classical and modern theatre. But today's actors are consistently inclined, or encouraged, to take due account of the 'authenticating conventions' (see n. 27 above) of any drama of another period, both its stylistic presentation and its original socio-religious, political milieu, in as far as these can be 'accurately' reconstructed from the conflicting viewpoints of scholarship. See Easterling (1990), 88-89.

Cf. n. 1.

See above, Part One, section 2.


Ibid.


Lebeck (1971), 114.

A word coined by Constantin Stanislavski. See Stanislavski (1990), 136-137.

See above Part One, section 1, V.1.

Cf. n. 64; see also Anderson (1929), 141.

Winnington-Ingram (1983), fn. 10, 103; Denniston-Page (1986), 68; Anderson (1929), 149.


Halliwell (1990), 172.

Harris (1973), 158.

Halliwell (1990), 175.

Ibid.

Cf. above, Part One section 1.II.

See below, Appendix C.

For an early example, see Anderson (1929).

Zeitlin (1978), 173.

Vickers (1973), 347-437; Thomson (1944), 288.

Winnington-Ingram (1983), cf. n. 72.

Cf. n. 79.


Halliwell (1990), 174.

Cf. above, Part Two, nn. 33-40.

Betsky (1978), 14.

Winnington-Ingram (1983), 125-6. For an opposing view, see Dawe (1963) who views the Beacon Speech as "a mouthpiece for Aeschylean iambics which merely indulges Aeschylus' passion for geography", 50-51.

Betsky (1978), fn. 20, 23.

The significance of σκέπτεται's association with Zeus' destructive power and punitive aspects through agency of the thunderbolt/κρανίος (see Eum. 828) might be underlined further by the actor's vocal emphasis. Cf. above, Part Two, n. 40.

Cf. Dawe (1963), 51. For this sense of Clytemnestra's prescience elsewhere in Agamemnon, see Taplin (1977). About Ag. 587, he says: "at that very moment Clytemnestra, as though she..."
knew [my italics] that all thoughts were turned to her, appears at the door" (300).

Betensky (1978), 18.

Murray (1920), xii-xiii; see Anderson (1929), 136-139, for a different view.

Michelin (1979), 55.

Ibid., 155-156.

Ibid., esp. 160 and fn. 16, 162. See also Conacher (1974).

Cf. nn. 76 and 77.

Cf. n. 64.

See Fraenkel (Vol. II, 1950), 304-305 and Thomson (Vol. II, 1966), 54. Since no process of 'tempering' copper or bronze is attested, both commentators infer that the bronze referred to in the phrase χαλκὸς βοσφός is being used generically to mean 'metal' and that we are meant to be thinking of σιδήρου rather than χαλκοῦ. But perhaps if 612, taken literally, was jarring to an audience of Aeschylus' day, Clytemnestra's phrase is intentionally inaccurate, in keeping with the presentation of her character as ignorant of the male sphere of activity.

Tyrrell (1984), fn. 30, 141 and 93-94.

See above, Part One, section 1, V.2.

Taplin (1977), 100-103, 356-359: "The mirror scene suggests first and foremost that the blood feud has repeated itself and is extended to yet another generation" (358).

T.G. Rosenmeyer, in his paper Ironies in serious drama (KCL Tragedy Conference, July 1993) gives the taxonomic label "Clytemnestra" to that type of 'forensic irony' (which he describes as "aggressive or defensive dissembling") which consists of "engaging in intentional double entendre; victim [Agamemnon in this case] not to catch on. Prominent in intrigues".

Crane (1993), 120.

Ibid.

Winnington-Ingram (1983) notes Clytemnestra's ability to invest 'un-Greek' action with spurious yet compelling justification: she is able to make φύσις in the guise of ζηλοῦ seem acceptable to the sack of Troy. Similarly, she invests the sacrilege of τὸ παράτιν tapestries with a false sense of ritual propriety: the Atreid House is blessed with unending prosperity σὺν θεῶς (Ag. 961).

Crane (1993), 132. Ireland (1974) describes the stichomythic exchange between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon as a "one-sided attempt [by Cly.] to maintain dramatic and syntactic contact in face of continuous resistance" (515). Her lines contain a significant number of connecting particles, which indicates that she initiates and controls the discussion "because she has a vested interest in maintaining contact" (515).

Crane (193) stresses that πορφυρὰ ἐμετα often imply "something foreign, soft, and adulterated" (131).

Tyrrell (1984), 93-95: "sword and weaving, tokens of separate domains in the Greek order of things, are united to destroy Agamemnon" (95).

An attempt to recoup her female privileges is consistent with presentation of her character elsewhere in Choephoroi, her wish to consult Aegisthus (673, 718) and her clear distinction between male and female prerogatives (672-673). See Michelin (1979), 156.

Ibid., 156-157; Anderson (1932) remarks regarding Cho. 716-718 "how odd to tell a stranger that the rulers do not lack friends! The words may well indicate the contrary" (304).

While the chorus of libation-bearers withdraw from the arena of the action so as to be seen as ἀνασκαία in the outcome of the μάξη (872-4) and while the presentation of the Mother/Son scene, its unmediated, direct use of both language and space, conspires to focus attention on the two combatants, onlookers are drawn into unprecedented proximity with the on-stage characters. Choral witnesses are excluded from the space of the exchange. (In contrast to Ag. 855, where the chorus is specifically incorporated by one of the interlocutors.)

In the Carpet Scene, Agamemnon might remain in the orchestra, while Clytemnestra occupies the threshold (Rehm, 1988, fn. 81, 282). The spatial distance between them would then be suggestive of Agamemnon's reluctance to converse directly with his wife, and of their dysfunctional relationship. In contrast, Orestes and his mother must engage each other close to the δομος (whether it has one [Taplin, 1977, 343-4, 349ff.] or two [Garvie, 1986, intro., 41-54] doors.) Alternatively, the scene could be played in the orchestra, as Ewans and Ley suggest in their detailed staging (1983). Certainly, the orchestra has been left free by the very pointed withdrawal of the chorus. Ewans and Ley, however, do not indicate whether or not the ekkyklema revealed Aegisthus' corpse, 892f. (and so brought out Orestes and Pylades), and

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how, if it did, this might alter the scene's dynamic. The ekkyklemata would certainly delay Orestes' movement into the orchestra at 891, as advocated by Ewans and Ley (81).

Cf. Taplin (1977), 348-349.

Lebeck (1971), 74-79.

Jones (1962), 87.

See above, Part One, section 2, VII.1.

See, for example, _Odyssey_ XIII, where audience members are party to Athena's and Odysseus' plan for deceiving the suitors and regaining the wealth of the Ithacan palace, and especially 429-440 for the hero's physical transformation into another.

Taking μεθεύν as the infinitive for the imperative and emending M's δραγξ to δραχα with Sealiger, _Cho_ 454 is a direct exhortation to Orestes to 'learn anger'. That is, he should use the sensation of anger as a cognitive emotion which will lead to action, enabling him to enter the contest _κενθήσει_ (455) ἐκείνη πανικός μὲν οὖν and so succeed. For other readings and interpretations of the Greek, see Thomson (Vol. II, 1966), 149 and Garvie (1986), 167.


Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1914), 205-10 and (1900), 143-144, 148.


Lesky (1943).

Lebeck (1971), 93-95, 110-130.


_Ibid._, 138.

See above, Part One, section 2, VI.1a, VI.1b and VI.1c.

Lebeck (1971): "Motifs associated with invocation to the dead are used here to arouse the living" (121).


Garvie (1986), 124.

Reflecting, from the cross-cultural perspective, "the passage of evil mystical attributes to the uterine tie" (Harris, 1973, 157).

Dodds (1951), Chapters 1 and 2.

Brook (1987), 10.

See above Part Two, _passim_.


_Ibid._, 183.

Cf. above, Part One, section 1, IV.

Michelini (1979), 157.

Goldhill (1984), 111.

For the motif of Orestes' engaging in a battle with his mother, see especially _Cho_ 19, 123, 160, 489 and 497; for the additional motif of Orestes as engaging in a chariot race and a wrestling match, see _Cho_. 339, 499, 866 and 1021. For the Carpet Scene as a 'battle' between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, see Taplin (1977), 306-308.

Zeitlin (1978), 157-158.

For the reluctance in the kommos to vocalize ηθπ, see Lebeck (1971), 116 and 119.

Knox (1972).

See above, Part Three, II.4.

Cf. n. 108 above.

See above, Part One, section 1, III.

Whallon (1958).

Goldhill (1984), 183.

Padel (1992), 175ff.

As was done by Dr. I. Lada in her interesting paper "Emotion and Meaning in Tragic Performance" at the _Tragedy and the Tragic_ Conference, KCL, July 1993.

Ortony, Clore and Collins (1990).

Langer quoted by Goffman (1974), 144.

See above, Part One, section 2, V.1.
157 Ibid., n. 82.
158 Ibid., n. 84.
159 Cf. n. 119 above.
160 Ag. 1328f.: Fraenkel (III, 620ff.) retains the MSS. reading τρήσειν in 1328; Thomson (II, 1966, 101-102) suggests the more plausible τρεψειν. But surely the point here is that man himself is like (τρήσειν, Denniston-Page, 1986, 191, following Boissonade) the image of a shadow when fortunate. So insubstantial is he that, when misfortune comes, the σκαταράφιος (also the theatrical σκηνογράφος, Thomson II, 101) can wipe out his picture at a single stroke.

Ag. 1330. Fraenkel (III, 123) states that "in 1330 ἔκεινα picks up the preceding (1327f.) μελα- clause, ταῦτα the δέ- clause (1328f)". The prophetess thereby alludes to Agamemnon's reversal of fortune in the μελα- clause with the δέ- clause a reference to her own δυστύχια.

But, as Denniston-Page point out (191), there is a sense in which ταῦτα refers to the general human condition which is more piteous to Cassandra than the particular instance of her own misfortunes.

Human life is as illusory as the theatrical experience itself. The image indirectly undercuts the dramatic, artistic medium by which it is presented. Since Aeschylus is unable anachronistically to use a self-reflexive 'play-within-a-play' image (there was no theatre in the heroic world), he alludes to painting, its capacity to shift perspectives and deceive the eye into believing a flat surface to be three-dimensional. Yet ut pictura poesis: theatre with its shifting perspectives, like painting, presents us with convincing images of 'reality', yet it is illusory. Cassandra's image is thus doubly threatening and destabilizing: the 'real world' on which the theatrical illusion is based is itself an illusion.

Compare Prospero's declaration on the ephemeral illusion of life and art. "These our actors" are "like the baseless fabric of this vision [i.e. the pageant just witnessed, Tempest IV.1, 151].

"And like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rake behind. We [actors/humans] are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded by a sleep" (155ff.).

161 Padel (1992), 181.
162 Brook (1987), 46.
163 Ibid.
164 Zeitlin (1978).
169 Ibid., 164.
170 Ibid., 162.
173 See above, Part Two, section 10b.
175 Ibid., 186.
176 Ibid., 189.
178 Cf. n. 162 above.
179 Sommerstein (1989), 186.
180 Ibid., 185.
181 Ibid., 277.
182 Ibid., 284, 285, 286.
184 See above, Part Three, section II.1.
CONCLUSION

It was proposed at the start of this discussion that Greek tragedy has the capacity to change the psychological distance between the audience and the drama, thereby shifting audience perspectives, both judgemental and emotional, on the unfolding action. In effect, the claim is made that the cohabitation of 'disillusion' and illusion is intrinsic to the fabric of Greek tragedy. In turn this paradoxical cohabitation depends on an audience's capacity to reconcile awareness of dramatic artifice (through the distance/'disillusion' marking off audience from the world of the drama) with the beguilement of 'make-believe' (illusion).

But how does this rubric apply across the cultural and temporal divide, if at all? Perhaps some sort of answer can be reached by returning to the definition of a tragic character suggested at the start of Part III.

The model put forward, which emphasized the transactional nature of the text-mise en scène-performance triad, was as follows:

Tragic characters are paradigmatic textual figures engaged in multivalent interaction, which only attain their full potential meaning in the metaphorical world of drama and so strictly within the 'theatrical frame'. The 'theatrical frame' is the generic term for devices which enable audiences to distinguish staged drama from any similar 'real events'.

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Tragic characters invite audiences to evaluate their on-stage actions, and simultaneously have the capacity to influence the audience's emotional state in psychologically compelling ways.

This definition was prefaced by a caveat: vast 'ideological and cultural gaps' between ancient Greek society and audiences on the one hand and their modern-day equivalents on the other make it important to contextualize Greek tragedy as far as possible, by relating it to its original historical, socio-religious milieu. This may be done by decoding what have been called 'authenticating conventions', those features which distinguish Greek drama and the society which produced it from subsequent developments in theatre.

Yet while the existence of 'authenticating conventions' maintains a partially irreducible distance between the 458 B.C. audience watching the first production of Oresteia and an audience of today, it is the underlying premise of this dissertation that any audience is able to collude/collaborate' with the formalized 'fabrication' of staged actions which take place within the 'theatrical frame'. It is thus the 'rhetorical conventions' of tragedy (those conventions which serve to mark off what is contained within the theatrical frame, and which rely on spectators' ability "to mark the difference between actual face-to-face interaction and that kind of interaction when staged as part of a play"), tragedy's

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inherent capacity to engender illusion and 'disillusion' in spectators of any age which acts as a significant link between ancient and modern productions and their respective audiences.

As a particular instance, it was proposed in Part I section two that the specifically ancient Greek convention of mask-wearing embodied the paradoxical cohabitation of distance and proximity which characterizes the tragic medium. The tragic mask, distinguished by the absence of any facial expression in the Classical period⁷, alienates spectators so that they may watch and judge the difficult subject matter treated with a degree of impunity. It simultaneously releases the actor into playing another and so enables him to express powerful tragic emotions through voice and 'gestus', which in turn activate audiences' emotions. That ancient audiences achieved a degree of imaginative identification with the drama is suggested by vase-paintings which reflect tragedy without reproducing specific scenes in minute detail⁸.

In claiming that voice and 'gestus' are the tools used to elicit emotional and imaginative response, it should be made clear that gestural meaning, together with the emotions it calls forth may vary from age to age. While certain gestures, types of gait and overall forms cross cultural and temporal divides, others are culture-specific⁹. So in an attempt to bridge these cultural and temporal divides, the choreographic
reconstruction of the Great Kommos attempted earlier in Part I, section
two itself draws on the speculative reconstruction of literary, artistic and
epigraphic evidence which helps shed light on the 'actual' gestures of
everyday death rituals contemporary with the first production of *Oresteia*.

Inevitably, however, any such reconstruction is interpretative and
subjective, since there is nothing concerning staging in the Great
Kommos which is explicitly prescriptive, nothing which is a virtual stage
direction as is, for example, Clytemnestra's exhortation to her son at *Cho*.
896f. :-

\[\varepsilon\pi\iota\sigma\chi\varepsilon, \delta \omicron \omicron \omega, \tau\omicron\nu\delta\omicron\varepsilon \delta \iota\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\sigma\omega\iota, \tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\nu, \mu\acute{a}\alpha\omicron\omicron\omicron. \ldots\]

The deictic pronoun \(\tau\omicron\nu\delta\omicron\) here calls forth some kind of gesture, although
its exact nature is debated\(^{10}\). The baring of the mother's breast to her son,
however it was indicated on the stage, is powerfully emotive. We might
guess that for a 458 B.C. audience, as for a modern one, the chosen
gesture would reflect the horror and guilt attached to the son's intended
action and would recall the prediction of his ophidian nature as the snake
who sucks at the breast (*Cho*.527ff). That is, for an audience ancient or
modern there are instances of authorial 'sign-posting', instances of
audience manipulation.

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This notion of audience manipulation is most apparent in Aeschylus' presentation of Clytemnestra and Orestes. It was suggested in Part III that the depiction of these two characters in the mother/son scene (Cho.870-930) is intended to reduce the psychological distance/emotional gap between them and their audience, while sympathy is consistently elicited on behalf of the son. Of course women in a 20th century audience watching Oresteia might strongly resist colluding with such manipulation (rather choosing to react against it) and might not sympathize with Orestes as willingly as fifth-century male Athenian spectators may have done, but this does not alter the fact that such authorial manipulation is much in evidence in Oresteia.

Indeed, Part II suggests that much of this manipulation of the audience is mediated through the three Oresteian choruses. For example, it was shown that these three choruses derive their authority as commentators and 'manipulators' from the motif of old age which acts as a significant link between them. Yet, although the leitmotif of seniority gives a degree of thematic unity to the various choral identities, its handling was shown to be articulated differently in the three plays: the changing roles of the three choruses help alter mood and atmosphere in their respective plays, 'ciphering' audiences' emotional proximity to, or distance from, the drama and its characters. All three express their

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emotional state to the audience (the motif of emotion located in the heart/mind signals this link). The Argive Elders are ever-fearful; their terrified intuition, conveyed by metaphors of prophecy, overturns their initial hope for a morally unambiguous, divine context for human affairs. The first play ends with an overwhelming sense of ineffectuality against the inevitable bleakness of human existence. The Elders also represent the unseen Argive city and establish the convention of sharing with the audience information which is not exchanged with the characters of the stage-action.

In the central play, this technique is vitally important, for it encourages the audience to collude and sympathize with Orestes' individual motivations. The audience shares in Orestes' secrecy and δόλως, while the libation-bearers concentrate on the individual's need for vengeance. In contrast with the philosophical speculations about the definition of the divine in the first play (and the much larger political and theological context of the first play, which exacerbates the ever-present problem of moral over-determination), the libation-bearers simplify the moral viewpoint, and offer one which gives more effective results. The Song of Female Daring, for example, catalogues exempla of the unequivocal results of women's transgressive actions.

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The final play again enlarges the contextual frame, this time to include staging the workings of divine motivation which were pondered on in the first play - the chorus and their actions are the driving motivation of *Eumenides*. The Furies are described in human terms, creating an atmosphere in which human and divine are levelled, thereby providing another new perspective - the divine view of human affairs. The three Oresteian choruses thus enliven the problematic of human/divine motivation by providing the perspectives of city, house and gods. The possibility of an eventually harmonious co-existence of these three is brought about by re-definition, re-appraisal and re-ordering of old with new. In the final play, rage is transformed through the action- *logos* of the Attic law-courts. Transformation leads to changing perspectives on, and definitions of, a previously unassailable age-old wisdom.

If Aeschylus used the three Oresteian choruses to provide a model of the trilogy's meaning which shows the efficacy of combining old with new, of creating innovation through re-definition, re-appraisal and a new perspective in and on society's belief-systems, it is also a metatheatrical model which is equally applicable to the new consciousness of Athenian society and the tragic moment which is part of it. Theatre, in its ideal form, engenders in spectators the proper proportions of *oiktoς* and *γνώμη* (*Eum*. 674). The ability to demand pity for the *πάθος* of others is a
foundation of Justice for injured parties (Eum. 511ff.), yet enough
objectivity is required to render fair judgement. The cohabitation in
theatre of illusion and 'disillusion', of sympathetic proximity and
alienating distance, strives to make of its spectators compassionate judges,
and to extend this ability to make fair and sympathetic judgement while
partaking in the daily life of the city and its institutions. The Oresteia is
thus a self-reflexive, metatheatrical comment on the development and
celebration of the theatrical medium as much as it is an appraisal of the
Athenian society which watched it. It is to this extraordinary account of
Athenian society and theatre that the three Oresteian choruses are
remarkable, complex and ever-changing ciphers; but the final
accountability for change lies with the watching audience.

It should have emerged that the link between the conventions of
ancient mise en scène (particularly the wearing of masks), together with
the presence of the choral persona ciphering audience judgement on, and
sympathy for, tragic characters, is constituted by the inherent cohabitation
of 'disillusion' and illusion which characterizes all aspects of the tragic
genre. This cohabitation is only full revealed to an audience in the
transaction of live production of the drama to spectators.

In conclusion, it is the demands that Greek tragedy makes on
audiences' judgements and emotions, and the manner in which such

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demands are made on spectators' thought and imagination, which are unchanging. The 'submerged metatheatricality' of Greek tragedy in general and the Oresteia in particular, where the three Oresteian choruses act as vehicles for subtle, metatheatrical reflection on the nature and benefits of the tragic genre in performance, suggests that it was the original intent of the genre both to educate spectators and to create in them a sense of well-being. Yet it is also true that the nature of audience response varies from age to age, reflecting the shifts and movements necessitated by ever-changing social, political and moral contexts.

Notes
3. Burns (1972), 32. Authenticating conventions "model' social conventions in use at a specific time and in a specific place or milieu" suggesting "a total and external code of values and norms of conduct from which the speech and action of the play are drawn".
5. Burns (1972), 31. Rhetorical conventions are "the means by which the audience is persuaded to accept characters and situations whose validity is ephemeral and bound to the theatre".
10. Taplin (1978), 61: "at this point Clytemnestra cannot (as many commentators declare) bare her breasts- not only for the sake of decorum, but also because this part is played by a male actor".

Additional Bibliography

APPENDICES:

The Oresteian House

Appendix A:
Aeschylean and Other Tragic Silences

Appendix B:
A Possible Interpretation of Agamemnon, 255-257

Appendix C:
The Importance of Spatial Control and Theatrical Silence
APPENDICES - THE ORESTEIAN HOUSE

Appendix A - Aeschylean and Other Tragic Silences

Σωπώσι γάρ παρὰ ποιηταῖς τὰ πρόσωπα ἡ δι'ανθρακίας ἡ ἀθανάτεια, ὡς Ἀχιλλεύς ἐκ τοῖς Φρούξι Σοφοκλέους, ἡ διὰ συμφοράν ὡς ἡ Νιόβη παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ, ἡ διὰ περίσκεψιν, ὡς ὁ Ζεῦς παρὰ τῷ Ποιητῇ... Scholion in M on Prometheus 436.

Ἐμοὶ δ' οὖν ἢ τ' ἔγαν συγὴ βαρὺ
δοκεῖ προσεῖναι χή μάτην πολλὴ βοή.

Καὶ τῆς ἕγαν γάρ ἑστὶ που συγῆς βάρος.

Sophocles' Antigone, 1251-2 and 1256.

It is often at the momentous pinnacles of tragic performance that silence is employed, as if in self-reference, drawing attention to the importance of action which requires no words.

In the theatrical context, silence often signals acquiescence or in complete contrast, defiance. The use of theatrical silence is in itself daring, for its inclusion by the author indicates (in Aeschylus’ case at least) a confidence in the impact and effectiveness of theatrical action alone.

Clytemnestra's ritual actions are performed in silence (Ag. 83ff.) indicating her disregard for the Argive Elders' mounting anxiety and increasingly importunate questioning. Cassandra is on stage for 262 lines before she speaks at Ag. 1073. That Clytemnestra reads her silence as
defiance, inspiring in the queen a temper as yet unseen (especially Ag. 1068), highlights the disconcerting power of τὸ σογᾶν to spread unease.

When Cassandra starts to enter the palace, where she knows she will be 'sacrificed' together with Agamemnon (Ag. 1313f.), she describes her emotions. Her prophetic ability allows Cassandra to accept the inevitability of her fate; underlying her acquiescence is a strength and calmness which the chorus acknowledges - hers is a noble death (1304).

In contrast, both Deianeira in Trachiniae and Jocasta in Oedipus The King, Sophocles' suicidal queens, face their deaths alone in the terror of inescapable self-knowledge.

As Jocasta begins to comprehend the revelations concerning her relationship with Oedipus, she desperately attempts to prevent Oedipus enquiring further about his past, she begs for a silence which will bring at least temporary respite:-

δύως πυθοῦ μοι, λίσσομαι, μὴ δρᾶν τάδε (O.T. 1064).

Unlike Clytemnestra who, by means of cajoling sophistry, persuades her husband to indulge in the positive action of walking on the tapestries (Ag. 905ff., especially the stichomythic exchange of 931-943, the climactic last line of which begins with πυθοῦ, followed by a direct entreaty to Agamemnon which is sweetened by the notion that in yielding victory to his wife, he himself is victor²), Jocasta urges her husband not to act, hoping against hope that Oedipus will not follow through the σῆμερα
(O.T. 1059) of true identity already laid before him by the Messenger.

Her final few words of lament, the inexplicable resistance to explaining her meaning, cause the chorus to fear her silence:-

\[ \delta \delta \omega i \chi \delta \pi \omega s \]
\[ \mu \eta \ 'k \ \tau \eta s \ \sigma \omega \pi \eta s \ \tau \eta s \delta \ \alpha \nu a \rho \rho \zeta \zeta e i \ \kappa \kappa \alpha \ (1074-5). \]

So too, Deianeira exits in silence to her suicidal death after listening to the vivid description of her husband's suffering (Trach.812). Again, the impossibility of giving any coherent verbal expression, causes the chorus to be afraid of the queen's unfathomable silence:-

\[ \tau \iota \ \sigma \gamma \,' \alpha \phi \epsilon \rho \pi e i s ; \ \sigma \nu \ \kappa \alpha t o i o \theta \ \delta \theta o \nu \nu e k a \]
\[ \xi \nu \nu \gamma o r e i s \ \sigma i \gamma \omega \sigma a \ \tau \omega \ \kappa a t \eta \gamma o r \omega ; \ (813-14). \]

Perhaps the most moving and effective application of meaningful silence in Sophocles can be seen in the behaviour of Eurydice after hearing details of her son's death. Eurydice does not respond in any way to what she has heard; she simply walks into the palace, an action which defies precise interpretation. Initially, the chorus is uneasy at her lack of comment, her disappearance \[ \pi r i n \ \varepsilon i p e i n \ \varepsilon \sigma \theta \lambda o n \ \eta \ \kappa a k \alpha n \ \lambda \gamma o n \ (A n t . \ 1245) \]. The Messenger interprets it as signalling a wish to mourn in private. Eventually, however, both chorus and Messenger concur in conceding that this kind of silence, this withholding from expression of pent-up grief and anger, might portend a burdensome, disastrous danger (Ant. 1251-2 and 1256).
The terrified silence of these queens powerfully indicates the virtually impossible task of expressing such moments of self-knowledge, τὸ μαθεῖν, in words. In the Sophoclean context, the silent instant of comprehension, the apparent acquiescence inherent in the absence of verbal comment, spreads terror to the witnessing choruses. At such moments in modern performances, it is often the case that the watching audience is touched with a particular kind of silence, in sympathy with the inexpressible horror of self-knowledge encountered by characters on stage. In theatrical performance, silence (like words and actions) is thus shared with the audience.

In the Oresteian context, Aeschylus handles τὸ σιγᾶν quite differently. Clytemnestra's silent actions suggest a range of emotions - self-control, disregard for the Elders, a silent prayer to the gods to seal Agamemnon's fate, and an ability to control and plan future actions. So great is her confidence that she defies chorus and audience alike: intent on her own plan, she does not need to explain herself to others.

Clytemnestra (unlike Jocasta, Deianeira, Eurydice and Cassandra) displays this characteristic defiance even when faced with death at the hands of her son:-

δοῖη τις ἀνδροκηντα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος'
εἰδώμεν εἰ νικόμεν ἡ νικάμεθα. (Cho. 889-90).
She will not silently accept death, and even death itself fails to stop her irrepressible anger, for her ghost haunts the Furies and goads them to action in *Eumenides*. It is also particularly in the last play of the trilogy that ritual silence plays an important role, linked as it is with Orestes' acquittal.

Orestes' best defence lies in his strict knowledge of the religious νόμος which dictates λέγεω διπον δίκη/ σιγάν θ' θρήσκος (*Eum.* 277-8). He does not respond to the Furies at 302 nor does he speak again until specifically requested to do so by Athena. In his reply, Orestes emphasizes that he has been purified of his crime and thus is permitted to speak, for ἀφθονιῶ ἐνα τὸν παλαμναίον νόμος (448). Similarly, when he called upon the absent Athena he did so ἀφ' ἀγνοοῦ στόματος (286).

Orestes' silence may indicate a defiance of the Furies, but it also shows him to observe ritual silence. Unlike Clytemnestra, Orestes reveals the reasons for his silence, he is seen to exemplify proper religious behaviour. His mother in contrast never reveals her motivations until the deed of murder is accomplished: the audience can only surmise the meaning of Clytemnestra's silent prayers at the altar at the beginning of the trilogy. It is the enigma of Clytemnestra's silence which affords it such power; similarly in the first two plays of the trilogy, the gods are literally silent, but 'speak' via mortals (e.g. Apollo through Cassandra) or by means of wordless σύμβολο (e.g.:- Zeus's eagle omen). In the final
play, the gods make themselves visible to mortals. Only Zeus does not, retaining power precisely because of his cryptic, mysterious quality and making his will known through the agency of Athena and Apollo - 'speaking' through others. It would appear to be an understood rule that Zeus never appeared as an active stage character in any fifth-century tragedy⁴.

In Eumenides, Zeus, as the god who is τελέως and ἐπιστος (28), gives authority to his son (149) Apollo's Delphic oracles (16, 229, 614-621, 622-624, 713-14, 796-799) and implicitly directs his daughter (415) Athena's founding of the Areopagus (826-828, 850, 973-5, 998). In his other aspect as ἐκνος (92-93), he is the divine model for inspiring the sacredness of the marriage bond, yet his divinity exceeds the bounds of mortal union - Athena is born (in some versions fully armed) from her father's head (663-666). His power is expressed in terms of physical might (640-643 and 828), his omnipotence is manifest in all things except the restoration of the dead to life (640-651) and is finally recognized by the Fury-Semnai (918). The complex, occasionally paradoxical nature of Zeus pervades the play, and since he is a god with many faces, to bring him on stage would be reductive and would limit his multidimensional nature. Zeus δοτις πὸτ' ἐστίν (Ag. 160) evades direct interpretation by, or engagement with, an audience.
In this way, even the multivalent power of theatre is unable to contain or express the physical, actual 'presence' of Zeus. Rather, he watches over and directs the action of the trilogy as he would watch over and direct mortal actions in 'real life'. Since Zeus is the context in which events (real and theatrical) happen, he cannot be entirely revealed within it. The audience may watch the unfolding theatrical performance of *Eumenides* as one which does much to diminish the gap between gods and men, emphasizing their *mutual* obligations to each other shaped by the implicit transformation of the supreme god, but in the final analysis Zeus παντόπατας (1045) is omnipotent by means of his silent aloofness, by being the one 'who sees all' rather than being seen.

In conclusion, the use and significance of silence must be assessed in relation to its specific context. Its potential as a vehicle for a complex range of emotions should not be devalued, which is the tendency when text alone is analysed as opposed to theatrical performance.

**Notes on Appendix A**

1. See below, Appendix C.
4. Taplin (1977), 431-433, argues against Zeus's appearance in tragedy and is rightly suspicious of basing suggestions that Zeus appeared holding scales in *Psychostasia* on Polliux 4.130. "That there was some sort of inhibition against impersonating Zeus himself on the tragic stage" is strongly suggested by existing evidence.
Appendix B: A Possible Interpretation of *Agamemnon* 255-257.

The concluding stanza of *Agamemnon's* parodos has provided commentators on Aeschylus with material sufficient to produce an enormous range of views; but without avoiding any discussion of these interpretations altogether, what follows focuses specifically on lines 255-257 and to what or whom ἀγχιστόν μονόφρουρον ἔρκος refers.

In essence there are two fiercely opposed schools of thought. Some believe that lines 255-257 constitute an address by the chorus of Argive Elders to queen Clytemnestra as she emerges from the Argive palace, others that the lines are self-reference by the chorus to itself. The acrimony which surrounds the debate and the dogmatically opposing views that have arisen from it suggest that there is uneasiness in taking ἔρκος to refer either to Clytemnestra or to the Argive Elders; the unease is well founded, for the objections to either view abound.

To review the arguments on both sides briefly¹:-

Those who read ἔρκος as 'Clytemnestra' argue that, taken metaphorically, ἀγχιστόν means "nearest to the king" in authority and succession - the queen is thus entitled to be the regent of Argos. By the same token, μονόφρουρον refers to Clytemnestra's single-handed rule in the absence of Agamemnon, her husband. Headlam and Fraenkel consider it normal practice for a character's first appearance to be announced and
described in this way, and the transition by means of ὅδε is deemed
typical of Aeschylus' entry announcements by Kranz.

Ranged against these commentators, who represent the majority by
favouring reference to Clytemnestra, are Lloyd-Jones² who states
categorically that "there is no instance of a chorus introducing an actor
who enters the stage before the singing of the ode is finished" and Taplin³
who makes the more cautious observation that in Aeschylus "more entries
are not announced than announced" and that lyric announcements of entry
by a character are rare, if not unknown.

That a choral lyric announcement of a character's entry contravenes
a well-attested Greek tragic convention is the conclusion of Hamilton's⁴
statistical analysis of entry announcements in surviving plays: "a character
whose entry directly followed a choral stasimon was not announced
unless he was part of a tableau" (a tableau being either a group of
prisoners with an escort or dead bodies being brought in).

If the statistical evidence undeniably suggests that lines 255-57 are
unlikely to be an entry announcement for Clytemnestra, considerations of
dramatic effect and dynamic at this particular point in the play make it
even more implausible. If the queen's entry is announced and described,
the dramatic impact of her characteristically abrupt entrances and the
novelty of a character emerging from the skene (and so immediately
dominating the acting area), as opposed to the necessarily more prolonged
entrance from either parodos, would be lost. Clytemnestra's abrupt entrances in Agamemnon (at 587, 855 and 1372, for example) serve to emphasize the almost super-human prescience of the queen. Her control of the central door highlights her charismatic influence over the stage-space and the other characters who inhabit it. It is the importance of dramatic technique which above all persuades Taplin⁵ to see lines 255-57 as self-reference by the chorus; 258-63 are then taken as a 'greeting' to the queen.

There are two final objections to reading ἐρκως as "queen". It is hardly likely that the chorus would point to the queen Clytemnestra as τόδε (256), an abrupt and crude style of reference to one of royal status. Secondly, why would the chorus consider the queen the benign and nearest 'sole bulwark of our Apian land', given that the Elders spend two lines emphasizing that the woman is merely a regent when the man is away: it is the king Agamemnon who is the true ruler of the house; Clytemnestra is merely worthy of respect by virtue of the fact that she represents ὁ ἀρχηγός when he is absent from his seat of power (259-60). Furthermore, given the comments of the Watchman at 19 and the chorus's veiled warning to Agamemnon at 806f., it is clear that Clytemnestra's regency is considered suspect, yet absence of proof and fear of her ἀνδροβολων κέρα (11) instils an uneasy silence⁶. It would be perverse, given the obvious fear which the queen inspires, for the chorus to speak
of her as an individual who is ἀγχιστὸν Ἀπίας γαῖας μονόφρουνον ἐρκος, especially since her entry at 258 leads to a greeting in which she is praised not for her own virtue, but for her borrowed office alone.

So far, the only available solution has been to take 255-57 as a self-reference by the chorus of Argive Elders, a suggestion supported by the Scholion on 256f. - ἐπεὶ μόνοι γροντεῖς ἐφύλαξσον τὴν Ἑλλάδα. Some support this view by drawing attention to the depiction of the chorus at the opening of Persians: the Persian Elders are φύλακες (4) entitled to ἐφορεῦεν (7) both the riches of Xerxes and the Persian land7. But the Persian Elders are hand-picked by their king, officially appointed to the role of guardianship, an honour accorded because of seniority. In contrast, there is no indication in Agamemnon that the Argive Elders' concern arises from any official appointment by their king. They come to the Argive palace to acquire information from the queen and are ἐνδρεὺς πολίτων, πρᾶσβος Ἀργείων (855); the πρᾶσβος suggests that they are a revered group, but theirs is an informal standing, they do not have an official position and prerogative. In Persians, it is the selected guardian Elders who provide information and support for queen Atossa. So the superficial parallel between the Argive and Persian Elders, appealing at first glance, is significantly weakened by close examination: the dramatic dynamic and context for the relationship between queen and chorus in the two plays are profoundly different.
Others support self-reference by the chorus by claiming it to be a common tragic technique for choruses to talk about themselves at the end of songs. This alone is not enough to convince that this is the case in Agamemnon, and choruses are also known to refer to themselves at the start of songs.

Taking their cue from the Scholion, Denniston-Page rigidly endorse the view that lines 255-57 are self-reference by the chorus. They argue that χελιστον alludes to the Elders' position as 'a very present help' to the Argive land. For this meaning of χελιστον, D.-P. cite Pindar Pythian 9.64:-

αὐτῆς εἶναι στοιχεῖα χαριμον στόμαν αυτήν.

In the context of the latter, such a superlative of praise does not appear out of place, and as Taplin points out, "χελιστον is an epithet particularly suitable to a supernatural presence". For the Argive Elders, however, concerned as they are with the dangers of ὑπερμείων, such a hyperbolic claim for their own standing, would be remarkably uncharacteristic.

Denniston-Page further suggest that the Elders have a good idea of what the queen intends for her husband and therefore would not hope that things would turn out as she wishes. Faced with the plots of their wicked regent, they are the sole defenders of the land, a notion conveyed by
μονόφρουρον. But this implies that the Elders have a certain knowledge regarding the queen's intentions at so early a stage in the play as to render such characterization both illogical and undramatic. Furthermore, if the Elders are singling themselves out as the sole defence of Argos, this contains an implicit criticism of Clytemnestra.

But the strongest argument against taking ἔγχυστον μονόφρουρον ἔρκος as self-reference by the Elders, is the earlier description they give of the physical limitations of old age (Ag. 72-82). Here, their mood is one of regret that the frailty of extreme years has meant that they are left behind, incapable of defending the Argive cause in the Trojan expedition. Contrast this self-image with that of the Persian Elders (see n.7 below), who feel that they have been specifically chosen to stay behind at Sousa, that they have an important function to fulfil. The latter are picked κατὰ πρεσβείαν (Pers. 4), 'according to age and dignity'; for the old men of Argos, seniority is a bane, not a bonus. Even if they do have strength in song (104), their physical strength is indubitably absent by their own confession. Given the way they describe themselves at 72f., they would hardly then represent themselves as 'the sole bulwark of the Apian land'. It is important in the first play that they are seen as coming to and depending on the house for information and that they are mostly indecisive when it comes to action (i.e. at the time of Agamemnon's murder) and hope that the πόλις will be the new defenders of justice.
With this in mind, both context and sense do not allow lines 255-57 to refer to the Elders.

In *Agamemnon*, the Elders largely serve as communicators and interpreters of information about others\(^{13}\), self-reference, though impactful, is economic and brief, and it is most unsatisfactory to suggest that the Elders would conclude the parodos with reference to themselves and in such startling contradiction to 72ff. Why would they want to talk about themselves at this point in the narrative? Self-reference here would be untheatrical, bathetic and uncharacteristic.

Given that self-reference by the Argive Elders is highly implausible and that the suggestion of address by them to the queen is also beset with insurmountable difficulty, it is necessary to look at the alternatives. It is far better to take ξρκος as a reference to the royal οικος of Argos. The aptness of such a choice is borne out by a survey of the usage and meaning of ξρκος in pre-tragic poets, by Aeschylus himself and by the tragedians who came after him\(^{14}\).

As often in Aeschylus a word is chosen which has many meanings. ξρκος is a fence, hedge, or wall, especially around the courtyard of *houses*. Predominantly in Homer, the ξρκος is the orchard or courtyard wall, the physical delineation of the entire palace complex - for example, *Iliad* 5.90, 24.306, 16.231 and *Odyssey* 7.113, 8.57 (where ξρκεσια = the courts of the palace) and 21.238. The enclosed house complex was under
the protection of Zeus Herkeios whose statue would stand in the courtyard.

'Ερκός also means 'a defence' and 'a net or snare for birds'. From its specific associations with defence of domestic property, Ερκός came to mean any form of defence or protection against enemies in the broadest sense - so at Plato *Sophist* 220B it is πάν δοςν ἔνεκα κωλύσεως εἴργη τι περίβουν. It is therefore not surprising that in the heroic, military context it made frequent appearances. Thus at *Iliad* 4.229 it is the structure of the fighting army - the way in which Nestor deploys his troops; at 4.137 and 15.646, Ερκός is the warrior's defence/shield against weapons. Similarly, Alcaeus 54.10 describes the bright greaves of fighting men as Ερκός ἴσχύρῳ βέλεος.

It is true to say that Ajax in particular is often referred to as Ερκός 'Αχιοῦ (II. 3.229, 6.5, 7.211) and Pindar's fragment 52f.85 recalls Achilles as πιστῶν Ερκός 'Αχιοῦ. It is clear that Ερκός can apply to an individual hero, but for it to refer to a tragic queen is somewhat incongruous.

Mostly, but not exclusively, in its plural form, Ερκός also has a more sinister meaning; at *Odyssey* 22.469 it is a snare or trap. But how is the word used in the Oresteian trilogy?

At *Ag*. 1611, Aegisthus crows over Agamemnon's corpse τῆς Δίκης ἐν Ερκεοὶ. The Ερκός (here in its plural form) is no defence; it is
a sinister net-robe, used as an accessory to murder. Agamemnon is
trapped in a net of death which symbolizes the over-determined network
of responsibilities which link him to the House of Atreus, whose
apparently protective qualities belie the treacherous plots of Clytemnestra
which await Agamemnon within. Given the paradoxical associations with
protection/defence and death by an unsuspected trap, ἔρκος is aptly
applied to a palace which is a seeming haven, but which is revealed by
Cassandra to house a band of revelling Furies, the ghosts of murdered
children and a recollection of past adultery and misdeeds, which inspires
her foreboding of imminent disaster for its present occupants.

Of course, it must be emphasized that the association of ἔρκος with
the trapping net merely implies a sinister aspect to the seemingly benign
presence of the house, but the irony is not fully realized or 'cashed out'
until the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra within the Argive
palace is known to have taken place. As often in Aeschylus, the
significant placing of a potentially ambiguous word foreshadows a final
outcome fraught with evil.

A derivative of ἔρκος is used in its domestic sense in Cho. 653f.,
where the delineation of boundaries between house and outside world is
referred to:-

ποι ποι, θύρας ἀκούσον ἔρκειας κτύπον,
τίς ἔνδον, ὦ ποι ποι μάλ' αὖθις, ἐν δῷμοις;
So in the central play of the trilogy, ἐρκος is clearly important in the spatial delineation of boundaries and the way in which the house is represented on stage.

But in the final play:-

ἡ τάδε ἀκοῦετε, πόλεως φρούριον,
oi ἐπικραίνει; (Eum. 948-9).

This is how Athena interrogatively rallies the Areopagus and the Areopagites in the concluding sections of the final play: the Areopagus is the guardian garrison/φρούριον of the Athenian city and land, just as the Argive palace had been the μονόφρονον ἐρκος of the Apian land in the first play. So too it is the institution of the Areopagus, the complex of place and people visually symbolized and identified with the structure/building of the law-court, which is referred to at 700ff:-

τοιόνδε τοι ταρβούντες ἑνδίκως σέβας
ἐφεύρε τε χώρας καὶ πόλεως σωτήριον
ἐχοιτ' ἐν οἴνον οὕτίς ἀνθρώπων ἔχει,
oὐτ' ἐν Σκύθησαν οὕτε Πέλοπος ἐν τόπως.

Even though it is the Areopagites who must administer justice, it is the Areopagus itself which embodies the law and thus is eternal defender of city and land. The internal moral structure of the Athenian city is what makes it indestructible in the face of external enemies. Thus in Persians 348-9, the Athenian city, made up of its people, is ἐρκος ἀσφαλῆς. (The people are indistinguishable from its institutions and vice versa; for the
expression of a similar sentiment compare Alcaeus 35 a 10 ἔνθες γὰρ πόλιος πύργος ἀρεύοι).

Given the way that the Areopagus is depicted in the final play of Oresteia, surely it is attractive to suppose that the royal Argive palace is the μὸνόφρονον ἔρκος in the first play. This makes the symbolic transition from palace-centred to πόλις-centred society far more effective.

In Agamemnon, the actions in the house are the source of events in the πόλις and whole land of Greece. In his evocation of the past, Aeschylus depicts the royal house as the pinnacle of the social system which granted Agamemnon the supreme command of all Greece. The heavy weight of sole responsibility could be said to be conveyed in the adjective μὸνόφρονος.

More light would be thrown on this interpretation of μὸνόφρονος by examining the usage of the term in Aeschylus' Supplices, since in the latter, the tension between two different views of kingship, which has a bearing on the meaning of μὸνόφρονος in Agamemnon, is powerfully conveyed.

Although Agamemnon contains no debate regarding kingship, as Supplices does, Pelasgus' insistence on joint decision by himself and his city regarding the fate of the Danaans evokes a choral response redolent of the view of the king's authority as portrayed in Agamemnon. For the
Danaans, the king is the city and the people, beyond judgement or judicial process, having religious as well as secular authority over the altar, the hearth/focus of the land. At *Supplices* 370ff., it is to the monarch that the sole vote belongs, for the king has ultimate κράτος, symbolized by sceptre and throne:-

σὺ τοι πόλις, σὺ δὲ τὸ δήμον'
πρῶταις ἅκροτος ὅν
κρατύνεις βωμόν, ἔστιν χθονός,
μονοψήφοις νεῦμασιν σέθεν,
μονοσκήπτροι δὲν βρόνοις χρέος
πάν ἑπικραίνεις'.

Similarly, Agamemnon's palace (which on stage represents its absent lord) is the sole secular, military, political and religious focus of power and this is aptly given the title 'sole bulwark'.

Part of the dilemma of the first play is that a single house cannot hold so much responsibility: its prosperity or decline have enormously far-reaching consequences for household, city and land.

In *Agamemnon*, the οἶκος has to fulfil too many roles to survive. It is both a defence and a haven, but it becomes a literal death-trap of destruction by a net: the other meanings of ἔρκος are thus made significant use of in the first play. Both the Argive and Trojan houses are rotten from within and thus there is an irony in calling the Argive palace 'the sole bulwark of the land'. The house which appears to be a safe
defence from harm, in a play full of false appearances and illusions, is an
irresistible, corrupting and destructive trap.

Of all the commentators on 255-57, Verrall\textsuperscript{15} alone champions the
idea of ξρκός as referring to the Argive fortress, but his choice is tied
rather to his dissatisfaction with e\upsilon\pi\rho\alpha\xi\varsigma (which as a single word is
certainly not attested) - "e\upsilon\pi\rho\alpha\xi\varsigma or e\upsilon \pi\rho\alpha\xi\varsigma for e\upsilon\pi\rho\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha is an
incorrect form" (33) - and with the inappropriateness of the syntax which
arises if πέλαυτοι is taken with πράξις. Thus he punctuates the Greek
differently:-

πέλαυτο δ’οιν τ’απί τούτοις εν, πρά-
ξις ώς θέλει τόδ’ εγχριστον, Ἀπίας
γαίας μονόφρουρον ξρκός.

This he translates as:-

"Enough: let us pray for such immediate good as present act
requires. Here is our next concern, this fortress, sole protection of
the Argive land".

The central objection to these emendations is that despite the radical re-
disposing of the Greek, the phrase πράξις ώς θέλει is jarring; 'as the
situation wishes/requires' is inappropriate and this meaning of θέλω is
not attested. Furthermore, the way in which Verrall splits up 255-6 into
short phrases makes the lines vague in expression, relying too heavily on
the audience's ability to complete the thought. Verrall's rather vehement
condemnation of the possibility of taking ξρκός as either Clytemnestra or
chorus, supported by little argument, has led him to alter the text unnecessarily.

It makes better sense to retain the text and to take ἔρπκος as a reference to the royal house of Argos. Of course, if one does, it can be argued that the house as an inanimate object can not be said to wish - ἰθέλει (256). However, the apparent personification of the house here is foreshadowed earlier in the play. In Αγαμέμνων, the house is the active symbol of its household: it has a past, present and uncertain future, and is conceived of as indistinguishable from its household members. Unlike the audience, the house is imagined as having been an actual witness to the past and it is within the stage-house that the murders of Greek tragedy occur. It is through Cassandra that the Argive palace finds a 'voice' to describe extracts from its gruesome history.

Taken all together, Cassandra's prophecies (Αγ. 1186f. and 1217ff.) reveal the house to be alive with the good and evil influences of its household members, past and present. In the future, Orestes will save his sister and the people of Argos by restoring the palace to its former status. The house is an integral part of the drama as it is nowhere else to such a degree in extant Greek tragedy.

Furthermore, the Watchman virtually personifies the Argive palace in the prologue, where the reservation of the conditional clause in effect emphasizes the 'virtual' personification further:-

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This idea of the house as the expert witness of adultery and shame within its walls is taken up by Euripides in *Hippolytus* 415ff., when the queen asks Aphrodite:-

\[\alpha \iota \pi \omega \varsigma \pi o\tau', \ \omega \ \delta \epsilon \sigma \pi o\nu\varsigma \ \pi o\tau\nu\varsigma \ \Κ\upsilon \pi \nu,\]
\[\beta \lambda \epsilon \sigma \pi o\varsigma \nu \ \epsilon \iota \varsigma \ \pi \rho \sigma \sigma \omega \pi \alpha \ \tau \overline{o} \nu \ \xi \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu\]
\[\sigma \nu \delta \ \sigma \kappa \omicron \tau \omicron \ \phi \rho \iota \varsigma \sigma \omicron \sigma \iota \ \tau \overline{o} \nu \ \xi \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu\]
\[\tau \epsilon \tau \rho \alpha \mu \nu \alpha \ \tau \omicron \overline{o} \kappa \omicron \nu \ \mu \eta \ \pi \omicron \tau \epsilon \ \phi \theta \omicron \gamma \gamma \gamma \nu \ \dot{\alpha} \phi \nu;\]

But to return to *Agamemnon*. Line 255, "but as for the immediate future", clearly signals a gear-change in the Argive Elders' three-stage exit from a lengthy narrative about the past. Having recounted events surrounding the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in vivid detail, followed by speculation regarding an indeterminate future spoken of in broadly general terms, the Argive Elders hope against hope that the outcome of the immediate future will be a propitious one. The mood change from despair to hope is also marked by the Argive Elders focusing not on themselves or the queen, but on the house where they have come in expectation of news of the Trojan palace. Thus the deictic τόδε serves as a gestural indication, a re-focusing of attention by the chorus on the house and its present situation; ἕγχυστον is therefore taken as a superlative of space, re-affirming the importance of the house as the
tangible (and indeed only) reference-point significant to the present moment.

By pointing to the house as the focus and symbol of all the action in the first play with τῶθ ἐγχιστον μονόφρουρον ἔρκος, the chorus returns the audience's attention to the house (where it has come to receive information) and to the doorway from which Clytemnestra is about to emerge. Her connection with the house is thus more striking than if lines 255-57 were taken to refer to the queen, and the relative status of, and complex interplay between, the house and Clytemnestra can be soundly established. The queen is merely a regent, it is the house which embodies the sole rule of the city and land of Argos. For Clytemnestra is merely one of the vessels through which the inexorable fate of the Argive palace must work itself out.

The reference to the ἔρκος is almost γρίφος-like. The Elders point to their nearest source of information and defence, the house; yet before the audience has time to make a full interpretation, the queen emerges from the Argive palace. The riddle of the house, the house's secrets and the secret plans of its queen are only revealed in the concluding stages of Agamemnon - the queen is perceived as having been in league with the δεῖμων of the Argive palace (Ag. 1468ff.). The benign appearance of both house and queen is shown to conceal a destructive force, and the riddle of the link between the house and queen is confirmed by
Clytemnestra herself at 1500ff.: she has been inspired by the spirit of the house, the memories of past misdeeds.

To conclude, if ἅρκος is taken as ὀίκος, Aeschylus is properly credited with exploiting the ambiguity of a word to powerful dramatic effect. As has been shown, ἅρκος, in its singular or plural form, does refer to the defensive structure of a house, and also operates on a metaphorical level as both net/trap and defensive stronghold. This aptly captures the paradoxical nature by which the house of Atreus comes to be characterized: its appearance and reality are revealed to be powerfully opposed.

It is both theatrically and symbolically effective for ἅρκος to be a reference to the House of Atreus in the first play. Jones\(^{16}\) rightly give emphasis to the House of Atreus as a complex of place and people. The house is a focus of past, present and future - the enduring evidence of an idea/concept/meaning held in perpetuity in contrast with the generations of men, who are nevertheless essential to its continuance. The complex nature of the House of Atreus and its importance in the first two plays of the trilogy, constitute a strongly compelling argument for taking ἄγχιστον μονόφρουρον ἅρκος as a reference to the hugely significant Argive palace and household. This is particularly so if the *skene* was a novel feature of *Oresteia*, as is highly likely\(^{17}\).
Notes on Appendix B

1 Taplin (1977), 285-88, gives a useful summary of the arguments.
2 Lloyd-Jones (1979), 30.
3 Taplin (1977), 286-7.
4 Hamilton (1978), 72.
5 Taplin (1977), 287.
6 Clytemnestra is under suspicion (Ag. 19 and 306f.), yet fear inspires silence (Ag. 36f. and 548).
7 Persians 1ff.:—
  τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οίχομένων
  Ἑλλάδι ἐς αἰῶν πιστὰ καλεῖται,
  καὶ τῶν ὀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρόνων
  ἀνά οἰκείως κατὰ προσβέσιαν
  οὐς αὐτὸς ἥνας Ζέρης βασιλεὺς
  Δαρσισιγηνῆς
  ἐξετο χώρας ἐφορεῖσθαι.
8 For example, Kainio (1970), 45ff.
9 Examples include Cho. 75f., Eum. 174, Soph. Ajax 200, Eur. Troiades 233-4, Phoen. 354 and
  Iph. in Taur. 447ff.
10 Pers. 1ff., Eur. Hipp. 121ff., for example.
12 Taplin (1977), 286.
13 See above, Part Two, sections 5 and 6a.
14 Subsequent to Aeschylus, the tragedians used the potential ambiguity of the term ἔρκος to
great effect. In Sophocles, Athena traps Ajax in the ἔρη σκακά of madness (Ajax 60). At
  Trachiniæ 615, the poisoned robe which eventually destroys Herakles is contained in a casket
  - ἔρκει. Electra 837 reveals that the necklace given by Polynices to Eriphyle as a bribe to
compel Amphiaråus to fight against Thebes, is a beautifully wrought, but treacherous, golden
  'net'. Euripides takes up this idea of ἔρκος as something apparently beautiful, but which
  brings destruction in the end. The poisonous robe itself which is given as a gift to Creon's
daughter in Medea is a ἔρκος (986). (Euripides also uses ἔρη to mean 'toils' at Electra 155
  and Bacchæ 958).
15 Verrall (1893-1908), 32-33.
16 Jones (1962), 82-111.
17 Taplin (1977), 432-459; cf. Padel (1990), 342 and fn. 27.

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Appendix C- The Importance of Spatial Control and Theatrical Silence

If the many functions of the House of Atreus are illuminated by the imaginary 'map' of the palace's interior, then the presence and visual symbolism of the stage altar could be said to be equally responsible for enhancing spatial definition in *Agamemnon*.

Linked with the role of the stage βώμος is the continuing debate over whether or not line 83 (or indeed lines 40 or 59) signals Clytemnestra's entrance and the related question as to when, or indeed if, she exits and at what line. It is therefore essential summarily to analyse the arguments for and against the queen's early entrance before proceeding to assess the position, function and symbolism of the stage βώμος.

I: Clytemnestra enters at 83, exits at 103.

Although it is the particular note of urgent directness pervading these lines which has led me to follow the majority of commentators in believing that they require the presence of Clytemnestra as their source and focus, the arguments ranged against the queen's early appearance here at first seem considerable and their main proponent is Taplin.

Taplin rightly disposes of Denniston-Page's suggestion that Clytemnestra appears at line 40: that such a charismatic figure who comes to be characterized by short, yet dominant, appearances, should be
relegated to enter in the flurry of choral movement is entirely untheatrical and inappropriate. Besides, the prelude of the parodos (lines 40-82) initiates the chorus-audience relationship, one in which important narrative about the past and the present situation within the Argive city is confided by the Argive Elders to those watching the performance. Nor does Thomson's⁵ superficially attractive suggestion that the queen's entrance coincides with ἔφυνν in line 59 have enough to commend it: a character's entrance in the middle of the prelude favours neither the importance of the choral narrative nor the dominating quality of the queen. It would be hard to believe that this particular chorus would continue their narrative in the presence of their queen and there is so much more in the tone of 83 to commend it as a line inspired by the queen's sudden and unexpected entrance.

So entry as early as lines 40 or 59 is entirely untheatrical, just as is Denniston-Page's⁶ suggestion that the queen remains on stage until line 1068. That Aeschylus would abandon this particular central character to be on stage without purpose for so long a time is unlikely. Such a staging would be entirely untheatrical: there would be long periods of purposeless silence in which Clytemnestra would be unnoticed⁷, when to ignore such a presence is dramatically implausible. Far preferable are the short, dominant appearances already discussed (supra, p.27), which help to characterize the queen as charismatic and powerful.
Others surmise that Clytemnestra enters at 83 and remains on stage until she next speaks at 264. Taplin⁸ rightly points out that this would render meaningless the entry announcement of lines 258-263, the second instance of addressing the queen precisely because she has come on stage. Taplin's objection to the queen's early entry is based entirely on the assumption that entry at 83 or earlier requires Clytemnestra to stay on stage until she next speaks, but even he⁹ concedes that for the duration of 83-103, Clytemnestra is undeniably the "centre of attention", given direct focus by the Argive Elders. Indeed, if we have the queen exiting at line 103, Taplin's position is considerably weakened and his objections appear groundless¹⁰. Furthermore, it is specifically the sudden switch at 83 from an involved narrative about the past to a series of directed questions of which Clytemnestra is the pivot, which has led so many commentators to believe that she does appear at 83. One can also argue that it is her departure at 103 without attempting to answer the questions and ease the stress of the Argive Elders which compels the chorus to be self-reliant and attempt their own interpretations of the past and its effect on the present, as they embark on the narrative of the parodos proper.

Lines 83 -103 employ the kind of heightened pitch of urgency which strongly suggests their source to be the actual presence of a character deemed able to provide some answers. What else would
motivate this kind of direct address\textsuperscript{11}, followed by a series of urgent questions, other than the very presence of Argos' regent herself?

It is their urgent desire to have the sacrificial fires they have seen throughout the city interpreted that causes the Argive Elders to break an intense narrative about the past and the inward-looking reflections about their own old age; after their own strength is compared to δναρ ἡμερόφηντον (82), the tangible presence of the powerful queen inspires a direct address stripped of all poetic niceties. Line 85 begins with two colloquially expressed and peremptory questions, and the third emphatic τί, together with the interrogative τίνος ἀγγελίας/ πειθοί, suggests an irrepressible desire to have answers while possible from the only person who can provide them. Emphatic urgency is evoked by the use of the direct and unadorned language and staccato structure of 83-87 - the four direct questions gain in length as they gain in coherence. This mode of questioning accurately evokes the way in which people express themselves with increasing importunity in 'real life' when faced with an unanswered dilemma.

So strong is their need for Clytemnestra's explanation of events that the Argive Elders, abandoning the interrogative, finally resort to the imperative ἄνει μνημόν τε γενοῖ (98); if she can soothe the sacrificial flame with healing holy oil, she must parallel this ritual action by becoming the healer of their mounting anxieties.
Also significant are the attempts of the Elders to get Clytemnestra to speak, τοῦτον λέξαν ὅ τι καὶ δυνατόν (97) and ἀνει (98), when she seems impervious to their questions. This is comparable with the usual "questions about the silence which are put to the silent character -τί φης;τί συγχάς; . . . a recurrent feature of silences in Euripides and Sophocles"\textsuperscript{12}, which are given attention while in progress. Since Clytemnestra's silent presence and ritual gestures\textsuperscript{13} are the focus to which choral address and audience attention alike are directed, this seems to fulfil the central qualification of an 'Aeschylean silence' as defined by Taplin.

But it is further argued that such urgent, peremptory, direct address does not require its focus to be present because "it is well known in Greek tragedy that characters can in their lyrics apostrophize characters who are off stage"\textsuperscript{14}. Commentators who uphold this view frequently support it by comparison with Sophocles' Ajax 134ff. and Euripides' Hippolytus 141ff. But close examination of these two examples and Agamemnon reveal that any superficial similarities are entirely outweighed by differences in structure, tone, context, choral characterization and the differing relationships between the choruses and their central characters.
II: Rhetorical Apostrophe in Sophocles and Euripides

Sophocles' Ajax 134ff.

Here, the initial apostrophe, Τελαμώνει παί, is purely a rhetorical device which begins the chorus of sailors' well-ordered narrative about mocking rumours they have heard (141-153), further inflamed by Odysseus, concerning Ajax's actions.

Lines 134-171 do not attain the level of desperate urgency evoked by the Argive Elders' direct interrogation of the queen in Agamemnon, rather rhetorical questions merely provide a suitable poetic framework for the various, hypothetical scenarios (lines 172-181) the chorus puts forward as potential causes of Ajax's behaviour, which of course it has not witnessed firsthand.

Surmises as to the divine or human causes of Ajax's madness come late in the parados of the sailor-chorus (Ajax 172-181); in contrast, the Argive Elders launch immediately into a series of quick-fire questions to Clytemnestra concerning an event which they themselves have witnessed very recently (but which they do not understand and do not attempt to interpret in full), their initial urgency designated by the absence of verbal niceties or poetic embroidery which embellishes the language of the sailor chorus.

The sailors provide solace and advice for their lord - they are committed to a two-way exchange of support and information with him.
(136 and 160-161). The Argive Elders, on the other hand, come to the
Argive palace solely to gain information from the queen. Her presence on
stage between lines 83 and 103 and their direct questioning of her
regarding the altar fires in the city and her own actions serve to illustrate
the relative status and relationship of the chorus and central character of
*Agamemnon*.

Finally, the sailors may be afraid and anxious (*Ajax* 139-40 and
200), but at this stage they do not give their own feelings particular
prominence. In the Argive Elders' case, however, they reach such a pitch
of desperation that they employ two imperatives to the queen (*Ag* 98) and
dwell on the effects of their anxiety on themselves in 100-103. (Although
103 is almost irretrievably corrupt, the sense that their minds are filled
with a gnawing and constant grief can at least be gleaned.)

But the problems inherent in upholding the idea that the Argive
Elders are apostrophizing a character who is not on stage by reference to
this Sophoclean example are most apparent when it is discovered that
Ajax is hiding from the outside world and it is for this reason particularly
that his loyal sailors approach his tent and attempt to coax him out (171:
*ἐὰν σὺ φωνεῖς*, and 190-195). The entire dramatic thrust of the parodos
springs from the fact that Ajax's absence implies admission of guilt, the
need to hide madness in secret. In this context, of course, the chorus will
apostrophize a character who is not present if it is precisely his absence
(and the sense of shame and guilt which this implies) which fuels the
dramatic meaning of the play. (Ajax does not leave the environs of his
tent until after 692. The chorus first sees him when Tecmessa opens the
door at 346.)

Euripides' *Hippolytus* 144ff.45

This parodos too contains some choral surmise as to the possible
causes of a character's, in this case, Phaedra's withdrawal from every-day
life. Just like the sailor-chorus, this female chorus provides, in a
framework of rhetorical questioning, a series of hypothetical divine or
human explanations for the queen's sickness (141-160). On a personal
level, the Trozenian women are not themselves emotionally fraught in any
sense, which is reflected in the well-ordered, poetic flow of their
narrative.

Yet again, it is the absence of the central character and what it
might signify which informs the dramatic structure of the first section of
the play. The Trozenian women lay great emphasis on the gossiping
rumour regarding the queen's condition:-

\[ \text{τειρομέναν νοσερὲξ} \\
\text{κοίτας δέμος ἑντὸς ἔχειν} \\
\text{οἶκων... *Hippolytus* 131f.} \]

Furthermore, the queen has covered her head and has not eaten for three
days (*Hipp*. 135-140). Again, it is natural for the chorus to apostrophize an
absent character, for her absence is part of the dramatic texture of the first section of *Hippolytus*: it prepares for the emotional tone of the play and the supportive function of the Trozenian women, the latter being a common characteristic of the Euripidean female chorus. Finally, that Euripides himself intended the impact of Phaedra's supported entrance to come after surmise as to her absence is clear from the unequivocal entry announcement at 170f.

Thus, the apostrophic context and content of these two examples is largely rhetorical, essentially providing a framework in which the two choruses attempt interpretation of an action by the character on whom they focus. In so doing, they suggest various human or divine causes for the actions and extrapolate from them more generalized comments about the human condition and/or divine nature (E.g.: *Hippolytus* 161-4 and *Ajax* 157-161.)

The sailors and Trozenian women make it clear that the character they address has chosen concealment and like them, the audience can only guess as to the reasons for it. So the choral apostrophe of the absent character helps to build the audience's expectation of the possibly imminent entrance of that character. Of equal importance regarding the two choruses under discussion is their willingness to take a supportive role, by means of which the audience is invited to sympathize with the central character.
The decision as to whether a character addressed by choral apostrophe is either on or off stage is entirely dependent on the individual tragic context, depiction of the central character and his/her relationship with the chorus. A brief examination of the opening sections of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and *Electra* supports this view.

In both these cases, it looks as though the chorus enters unannounced, in keeping with 'Hourmouziades' rule', to a stage occupied by only one character. In *Trachiniae*, it is at line 94 that the chorus of women of Trachis appear on a stage occupied only by Deianeira, who has been on stage from the opening of the play, when her long-pondered distress and grief at the absence of her husband are immediately shared with the audience. Similarly in *Electra*, it is after Electra's grief-driven monody of lines 86-121 regarding the fate of her father and expression of her wish for her brother to return home (117), that the chorus of Mycenaean women approach the palace at 121.

Electra and Deianeira have much in common and are very different from Ajax and Phaedra who are ashamed to come out of their respective houses, blighted as they are by madness. Electra and Deianeira, in contrast, are strong women held in the grip of a long-harboured grief and a desire for the return of their men, Orestes and Heracles respectively. They are well able to articulate their feelings and both give the
impression of a willingness to share problems directly with the choruses of women gathered at the royal palaces to give support and offer advice.

The choral apostrophe of Electra and Deianeira perhaps implies a level of friendship through shared and openly articulated grief. By bringing them on before the chorus, Sophocles undoubtedly wished that the impact of their emotions should be expressed firsthand, thus engaging the audience so firmly in their individual narratives (i.e.: not given secondhand and interpreted by the chorus), that it, like the chorus, becomes their personal 'friends'.

In contrast, Clytemnestra's appearance at 83 provokes a series of questions which the queen does not deign to answer and her ritual gestures at the stage altar have a secret, and as is revealed subsequently, a sinister, purpose, for they are presumably sacrifices to ensure success in her plan to murder Agamemnon. It remains to examine how the symbolism of the stage altar in Agamemnon adds to our impression of Clytemnestra as a character both secretive and powerful, a resourceful and dominating man-woman, who shares nothing with either chorus or audience.
III: The Connotative Prop: *Agamemnon's* stage βωμός

Something has already been said about the position of the altar and the impossibility of stating its exact location with absolute certainty. However, it seems to be generally agreed that an altar was part of the acting space and was visible as such to the audience.

If it is accepted that the audience is invited to imagine the House of Atreus (a representational stage house) as containing a hearth, altar, bed, table and throne, all of whose symbolic significance accumulates as *Agamemnon* proceeds, it is not impossible that the stage altar is also meant to evoke a series of associations which further shape the demarcation and meaning of space in the first play.

At the end of the parodos' prelude and in the context of a parodos solely dependent on recollective narrative concerning the past, the chorus of Elders recount one event at least which they have just recently witnessed in the Argive city - thanksgiving, sacrificial fires ablaze on every altar:

πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων,  
ὑπάτων, ξυνίων, τῶν τε θυραίων  
τῶν τ’ἀγοραίων  
βωμοί δώρουσι φλέγονται  
ἐλλή δ’ἐλλοθεν οὐρανομῆκης  
λαμπτάς ἀνίχσει  
φαρμακοσμεῖν θρίματος ἀγνοῦ  
μαλακαῖς ἀδόλουσι παρηγορίαις

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Here, the entire divine spectrum is represented by the gods who 'rule the
city', ἀστυνόμιοι (88). The sky-gods Apollo, Pan and Zeus have already
featured (55ff.) as potential punishers of transgression by means of the
υστερόποινος Ἕρως. Thus the realm of heavenly gods (deities who
dwell on the heights of Olympus), although not explicitly referred to in
terms of altars, and Zeus's authority to send signs from the sky (Ag.
112-21), is introduced early as a significant spatial reference-point. So in
line 92, the vivid image of the altar flames which rise upwards to reach
to heaven - οὐρανομήκης - further evokes a direct line of contact between
the human and elevated divine spheres. Not surprisingly, the chthonic
powers or χθόνιοι are mentioned in tandem with their polar opposites,
the ὕπατοι. But the apparent formularity of this should not cause us to
overlook a real concern with the tensions between the Olympian and
Chthonic which is an important motif of the trilogy and of which more
will be said later.

Completing the divine catalogue are the gods of the threshold and
the gods of the city, i.e., the gods of the private household and the public
meeting-place. But however evocatively described the scenes in the city
are, they cannot be visually realized in the limited theatre space. The use
of stage space is necessarily economical and inevitably demands some
dependence on connotative props. Decoding the text of Agamemnon
would certainly be greatly assisted by the presence of a stage altar which is representative of all the unseen altars imagined to be 'in the city'.

As has been stated earlier, the house is the 'nerve centre' of all the action of the first play and the space before it acts as a forum for exchange of information between house and city, and the influence they hold over each other\textsuperscript{22}. It is fitting, therefore, that the stage altar, standing as it does somewhere in the space which symbolizes this house/city and private/public conjunction\textsuperscript{23}, by implication represents the altars τῶν τε θυρεῖων/τῶν τ' ἀγοραῖων.

If, as it were, the horizontal axis of the acting space expresses the tensions between public and private, then the vertical axis is defined by the reference-points of heaven and earth. This may seem an over-simplified configuration of theatre space in \textit{Agamemnon}, but it is a simplification which paradoxically allows for a series of greater complexities and associations.

When Clytemnestra's emergence from the palace and subsequent actions at the altar (between lines 83 and 103) are added to the rich symbolism of the stage βωμός, the audience's perception of her character and the important motif of non-verbal communication is greatly enhanced.

Unlike the Argive Elders, the audience is aware that the city's altar fires have been inspired by Clytemnestra's hasty reaction to the good news from Troy, and the joyous response by the city is foretold by the
Watchman (22-25). But he also reveals that his primary duty is to report the news to Clytemnestra who sleeps within the house (26-30) and who is deemed to possess ἐνδόμονλαν κεφ (12). Thus, when Clytemnestra exits from the palace and proceeds to perform sacrifices at the altar which represents threshold and market-place gods, her actions connote her assurance in the public sphere, her ability to enter and even dominate the public domain of men.

Much later, in Eumenides, it is revealed that when living, Clytemnestra had sacrificed secretly to the chthonic Furies (Eum. 94-116). Implicit then in Clytemnestra's sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Olympian gods who initiated Agamemnon's expedition (Ag. 55-62) and who ensure his safe return (Ag. 810-13) is her secret link with the spirits of vengeance and the Fury of her dead child. Her ambiguous prayer to the supreme Olympian at the end of the Carpet Scene (Ag. 973-974) further illustrates her ability to harness the assistance of ἅπαξ (including Hephaestus, Ag. 281) and earth deities to ensure the success of her plans: she may genuinely pray for Agamemnon's safe journey home, but only in so far as it ensures that her act of vengeance will take place. It is appropriate that she should be seen to perform sacrifices at an altar which connotes ritual links with both Olympian and Chthonic deities.

Thus the position of the multifunctional altar, at which she stands to perform her ritual actions, serves to sharpen the definition of the
theatrical space in the first play: a connotative prop, it represents all the unseen altars of the city, built for gods of sky and earth, threshold and market-place. By implication, the space within which this prop altar stands could be said to mark a conjunction between the interior, demarcated by the threshold, and the public sphere, unseen on stage, but represented by the presence of the Argive Elders, who frequently report the situation within the Argive city.

Seen in this light, Clytemnestra's appearance at 83 and the ritual gestures which occupy her until 103, do not make up some awkward pretext to fill a period of silence, but rather her actions are a potent spectacle, a visual premonition of her ability to move freely in and out of the palace and to dominate the space before it (often from her prime position at the central door). Her actions at the representational stage altar serve to foreground her potential for a constant self-transformation between the states represented by house and city respectively, the first symbolizing the female, domestic, individual sphere and the latter connoting the political, male forum of public discussion. So it is worth considering that the Elders' description of the blazing altars in the city is suggested on stage by Clytemnestra's actions at the prop altar.

At Ag. 96, the Elders specifically locate the source of the city fires: they are fed by the holy oil which comes from the royal store, πελανωβασιλείωμα and which is μυχόθεν, 'from the innermost chambers' of the
palace. On a figurative level, this gives a sense of the queen's enormous influence over the city\textsuperscript{25}, through the image of the domestic oil feeding the city fires. But the lines also serve as a literal description of what the Elders see before them - the queen lighting the altar flame\textsuperscript{26} and feeding it with oil from her own palace's store.

Clytemnestra's visible actions at the altar near the beginning of the play, subsequently deemed to constitute a sacrifice of thanksgiving (\textit{Ag.} 262 and 594), are echoed later by the thanksgiving sacrifices conceived as taking place on the \textit{kтисιος βωμός} (1038) within the house, but unseen by the audience. Since audience and chorus alike may be lulled by the apparent innocence and pure intent of Clytemnestra's thanksgiving sacrifices (fed as they are by \textit{χρύματος ἄγνωθ/ μαλακοῖς ἀδόλουσι παρηγορίας}, 95) any surmise that similar sacrifices will take place in the imagined house interior is soon to be dashed. Clytemnestra does indeed sacrifice, but the victim is her husband and the divine recipients are the \textit{Δίκη, Ἀτη} and \textit{Ερων} of her murdered/sacrificed daughter (\textit{Ag.} 1432-3). So the initial image of Clytemnestra's ritual actions foregrounds the importance of sacrifice and the subsequent corruption of its proper functions\textsuperscript{27}.

This may at first appear akin to a 'structuralist' exposé which allocates importance to the decoding of spatial coordinates within tragic texts\textsuperscript{28}, but the emphasis is better placed on a textual provision intended
to translate well into the practical production of tragedy within the limited theatre space. It would be surprising not to find the use of connotative props, given that textual provision for the use of props and spatial definition is only fully realized in performance, when the significance of visual meaning takes effect. The characteristics of theatrical text (such as spatial provision, characters' action, interaction and use of props etc.) are largely performance-motivated. So although accounts of the spatial coordinates implied within tragic texts are undoubtedly intended to work on a figurative level, they are surely also designed to be given concrete expression in three-dimensional space. It is in production that the definition of space works both on a literal and a figurative or metaphorical sense, and audiences are able to interpret the definition of space through the spoken word and the movement and gestures of the actors who inhabit it.

Finally, one of the great strengths of Clytemnestra's characterization is the tension between motivations revealed and kept secret and the image of her sacrificing in silence foreshadows the important part secretiveness and deceit plays in the successful outcome of her plan to murder Agamemnon. If Clytemnestra's religious actions signal the importance of sacrifice and guide the audience to give attention to the handling of the sacrifice theme, then the impact of her ritual gestures in
silence brings to the fore the important Oresteian motifs of non-verbal 
communication, silent signification\textsuperscript{30}.

Her silence can only evoke surmise as to its cause (secret prayers, 
defiance, disdain, power, pride, status of almost divine proportions, 
evasiveness), but in a play where silence creates an air of mystery and 
connotes power and αὐθαξία\textsuperscript{31}, it is a strong pointer to Clytemnestra's 
status and her attitude to the chorus. This is precisely why the chorus beg 
for interpretation; the λαμπάζ which signalled the fall of Troy (28), 
which in turn inspires the λαμπάζ (93) flickering on the stage altar to 
represent the city fires, is a silent sign, but potent nonetheless.

Clytemnestra's power lies in the fact that she alone can interpret the signs 
and so can choose if and when she does (This inspires the remarkable 
caution of the choral approach to her later on at 261-3.)

Hers is not an empty silence nor does she adopt a still, tragic pose 
brought about by grief or despair. Rather, lines 83-103 are filled with 
purposeful gestures\textsuperscript{32} (Later, her gestural re-enactment of the murder of 
her husband, 1379-1392, colours the apparent propriety of her ritual 
actions at the beginning of the play with a gruesome irony). The audience 
may deduce that they echo similar gestures of thanksgiving in Argos; but 
Clytemnestra's silent intent and purposefulness, signalled by her choosing 
not to respond to the importunate Elders, arouse audience curiosity and
unease just as her behaviour fails to quell the collective μερίμνα of the chorus.

Seen in this light, Clytemnestra's brief appearance and actions engage the audience's interest in her and prepare for the potential ambiguities of her character and its sub-text, and militate against any tendency towards 'reading text' as opposed to perceiving performance which might limit the dramatic use of silence and/or gesture as a means of highlighting such important theatrical moments.
Notes on Appendix C
1 Taplin (1977), fn.2, 280.
2 Pool (1983) in particular presents very powerful and detailed arguments which favour Clytemnestra's silent presence during Ag. 83-103. The 'illocutionary force' (79) of the 'real' information-seeking questions (81) in Ag. 85-7, the importunate requests to speak in Ag. 97-8 (89) and the honorific form (90-91) of the greeting for 'queen Clytemnestra' (Ag. 83-4) all strongly suggest to Pool (as they do to me) that the addressee, Clytemnestra, is present, contra Mastronarde (1979), 101-103.
3 Taplin (1972) and (1977), 280-285.
4 Taplin (1972), 90.
6 Denniston and Page (1986), 117.
7 Taplin, (1972), 89-94.
8 Taplin's essential argument (1972), 89-90, repeated in Stagecraft (1977), 280-85.
9 Taplin, (1972), 90.
10 Pool (1983), 74-75.
11 The change of structure and dramatic tone in lines 83-103 strongly favours the appearance of Clytemnestra at 83, and not before. See Scott (1984), for this use of a sequential questioning structure (where the chorus "does not answer its question but rather adds an intensifying idea to make the question more pointed and more difficult to answer" -155) to evoke, as it were a feeling of 'real conversation'/a conversational tone at Ag. 85ff., and its part in a larger scheme which shows "a tendency [for the chorus] to break from traditional choral form under the strain of coping with events around it" (esp. 150-158; 164-5).
12 Taplin, (1972), 96.
13 Gestures of sacrifice to which later reference are made at 262 and 594. Cf. Hammond (1972), 436.
14 Taplin (1977), 281.
16 Hamilton (1978), 70 and 75.
17 There is a possibility that Deianeira exits before 94 with Hyllus and the Nurse, but it is far more theatrically effective for her to be on stage for lines 94-131. Firstly, her presence outside the house lends great weight to the choral comment that she never sleeps or ceases to think about her absent husband (Trach. 106-110). Secondly, the familiarity with which the chorus refers to Deianeira directly as 'you' at 122, 126 and 136 is more plausible if the queen is present, and since her first comment to the chorus alludes to its knowledge of her πάθημα (141-2), it is more likely that she has heard their comments than not. Thirdly, the entry of the chorus will be announced, unless it is to a stage occupied by one actor. Since the entry of the chorus is not announced in Sophocles here at Trachiniae 94, Electa 121 and Philoctetes 135, it is strongly indicative that on each occasion the chorus is entering an occupied stage - see Hamilton (1978), 70.
18 See above Part One, section 2 IV.1. My own view is that a movable prop altar/tomb was used and located as context demanded. If we extend Rehm's (1988) practical scheme which attributes to Choephoroi's prop tomb functions as both δυσφαλός and βρέκτας in Eumenides, the same multifunctional prop might be used as Clytemnestra's altar in Agamemnon. Poe (1989) argues that textual and archaeological evidence (132, 137) indicate that a conical column altar, like those sacred to Apollo Agyieus, was placed on the stage near the palace door (thus indicating that the skene represented a house or palace). My own view is that Apollo's column altar was represented on Agamemnon's stage and that this does not conflict with the presence of a usable prop altar near the base of the proskenion steps. Rehm (1988, n.81, 282) objects to the positioning of such a column altar near the door in Agamemnon, since it has led to misinterpretation of the staging at the opening of the Cassandra scene. Most commentators have Cassandra speaking lines 1072-1080 as she is approaching the house; her outburst against Apollo Agyiastes at 1081 is then motivated by her seeing his conical altar as she nears the door.

Rehm observes that this constitutes a "rushed near-exit" by Cassandra which is undramatic at the start of the scene. It also means that Cassandra speaks her first 8 lines upstage! To overcome these obstacles, I would propose that Cassandra does descend from the chariot and approach the house, but the sight of Apollo and some prescience of her fate connected
with this particular house, cause her to reel away from the Argive palace (i.e.: into the central acting area) before the scene begins at 1072. That the house is tangibly horrific to Cassandra, causing a physical revulsion, is clear from 1306 ff.

Padel (1990) points out how in tragedy the domestic interior, "this imaginary unseen, has a complex spatiality, built often in detail in the audience's mind" (343). In contrast, the visible public space of the theatrical orchestra reflects, and is reflected by, that other public space, the agora (337).

Cf. Supplices 24-27 for this standard pairing:

ό τόλμη, ὦ γῆ καὶ λευκὸν ἔδωρ,

ύπατοι τε θεοί καὶ βαρυτίμοις

χόνοι θηκάς κατεχοντες,

καὶ Ζεὺς ποτήρ τρότος...

At Ag 89-90, the Argive Elders make what is, in a strictly technical sense an error, by mentioning χθόνωι altars since sacrifices to the subterranean realm took place on the ἕγχαρα (e.g. Eum. 108) or ground-level pit, not on a βωμός. Indeed, the raised βωμός and ground-level ἕγχαρα were fundamental in marking the ritual opposition between the Olympian and Chthonic spheres. Yet in the theatrical context, an imaginative conflation of βωμός and ἕγχαρα is permissible, just as the single stage altar may be representative of all the altars unseen by the audience, but described by the Elders (88-91). Nor would the paradoxical opposition-cum-interdependence of Olympian and Chthonic be alien to the Greek psyche, particularly in view of the fact that in many sanctuaries, chthonic offering sites stood side by side with altars of Olympian gods. See Burkert (1985), 199-203. See also Padel (1990) for tragic representation and imaginative evocation of the Underworld (345).

The Argive Elders have witnessed the altar fires in the city (88ff.) and they also relate the grievances of the unseen and otherwise unrepresented Argive citizens (456ff.). Furthermore, it is Menelaus' domestic crisis (403ff.) which leads to grieving houses throughout Greece (429-31): in effect, the personal grievances of a single household cause the Trojan War.

See n. 19 above and Padel (1990), 344.

For Clytemnestra's assurance and domination in the public sphere and her political aspirations, see Zeitlin (1978), 149-184, esp. 150-54; Winnington-Ingam (1983), 101-131. For the anthropological perspective, see Humphreys (1983), esp. 34 and 40-41; Foley (1981), 133, 139, 142, 146, 151, 153, 155, 157.

Oil for the city fires and Clytemnestra's thanksgiving flame is fed by oil from τελασιών μυγάθει βωμάδων. This connotes the far-reaching influence of the house's actions on the city, for the source of the news and attendant ritual actions which spread throughout the city is the royal palace. The influence of house on city can later be seen in the quasi-religious status with which the former is credited - its domestic altar, the κτήσιος βωμός (1038) is, like the Delphic oracle, μεσοφάλος (1056).

The far-reaching authority of the house is further enhanced by use of the key word λαιμάς. When the Watchman refers τὸς λαιμάδοι (28) from his roof-top vantage point, it is possible that he lights a prop torch. This torch in turn inspires the λαιμάς (93) on each city altar, connoted by the λαμάτας which flickers on the prop altar before the House of Atreus. In the Beacon Speech, the συμβολον of the λαμάς (281, 287 and 296) is perceived of as a speaking, moving messenger or a series of messengers working in a relay system under the constraints of λαματησίων τόμων (312). The great scope of the vast geographical distances travelled by the 'fire-messengers' is finally focused and concentrated on the Argive palace.

Zeitlin (1965).

Segal (1986), Chapter I.

For Clytemnestra's sub-textual and secret motivations see Part Three above.

See above, Appendix A.

Cf. the various meanings attributed to silence in M's Scholion on Prometheus Bound 436 - silence conveys αἰθοδοξία, σωμφόρα and περίσκηψ.

It is of course impossible to say precisely what these ritual gestures may have been, but their scope is partly limited by time, since lines 83-103 cover approximately 50-60 secs. In that time, it is possible for the queen to approach the altar, light it with a torch and engage in the act of τὸ θέου (the act of fumigation, where the rising smoke and flame are intended to reach the heavenly gods - Burkert, 1985, 62, 73 and 200), by feeding the sacred flame with a
libation of holy oil or χρύσατος ἀγνοῦ πέλαρος (where the πέλαρος of line 96 alludes to the thick, liquid consistency of the offering - Fraenkel, II, 54-55). Clytemnestra may also have poured out a libation of wine and lifted face and hands upwards in the gesture of prayer (like Achilles at Iliad 16.231-232), while apparently deaf to the prayers of those around her. Pool (1983) suggests that Clytemnestra does not engage in ritual gestures but "was simply standing in the doorway and listening to the choral address" (104). Such a theatrically ineffectual appearance fails to take account of the power of dramatic gesture.

Taplin (1972, 89) concedes that Clytemnestra's entrances and exits are usually inexplicit. It can only be surmised that Clytemnestra's abrupt entrances from the vantage-point of the central doorway and short appearances connote preciosity and authority (1977, 288). The entrance of Clytemnestra at 83 and the actions which occupy her until 103 fulfil all the criteria of the queen's other dominant, charismatic appearances at 285-350, 587-614, 855-974 and 1035-1068.

Taplin's earlier discussion (1972, 78) of Cassandra's long, unexplained silence in Agamemnon (to which specific attention is not directed) concludes "Cassandra's silence helps to show her independence; but its chief point lies in its breaking" and "it surrounds her with mystery. Aeschylus' arousal of this mystery is deliberate and pointed". Given Aeschylus' novel treatment of Cassandra, it is no less likely that he afforded the same potent enigmatic 'silence' to Clytemnestra.

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Abbreviations

AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AJP American Journal of Philology
CH Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
BICS Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
CJ Classical Journal
Class.&Med. Classica et Mediaevalia
CP Classical Philology
CQ Classical Quarterly
CR Classical Review
G&R Greece and Rome
GRBS Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
HSCPh Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
JHS Journal of Hellenic Studies
LCM Liverpool Classical Monthly
PCPS Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
QUCC Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica
RHR Revue d'histoire des religions
TAPhA Transactions of the American Philological Association
YCS Yale Classical Studies
YFS Yale French Studies
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