with and cope with suffering, misfortune and waste. It is this sense of understanding (not isolated pearls of wisdom) that is the 'message' of a tragedy, that the great playwright imparts. This is well put in T. S. Eliot's essay 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca', where he argues that it is the quality of the emotional expression rather than the quality of the philosophy which makes literature great, which makes it 'strong, true and informative . . . useful and beneficial in the sense in which poetry is useful and beneficial'. 'All great poetry' Eliot writes 'gives the illusion of a view of life . . . for every precise emotion tends towards intellectual formulation'.

'Illusion'? Maybe; but emphatically not because the play is a fiction and the audiences' experiences the product of temporary artifice. (And all for nothing! For Hecuba?) Their experiences, both emotional and intellectual, are none the less real, and become part of the real person. The experience is not erased when we leave the theatre. Tragedy is only an illusion in so far as any claim to make sense of all the evils of our life is an illusion (and perhaps tragedy does not claim this). The 'tragedies' of real life, unlike those of the stage, are often shapeless, sordid, capricious, meaningless. But supposing this to be true (as I do), what then? It is not *human* to be content with this useless, even if ultimate, truth. We *must* try to understand, to cope, to respond. It is in this attempt that tragedy – that most great art – has its place. For it gives the hurtful twists of life a shape and meaning which are *persuasive*, which can be lived with. And that endurance and perspective are none the less real. As Gorgias so neatly put it 'the man who is deceived has more wisdom than he who is not.' And so in the end the 'deceit' is true to life and part of life and makes life the better for it.

By enthralling its audience tragedy unites emotion and meaning so as to give us an experience which, by creating a perspective on the misfortunes of human life, helps us to understand and cope with those misfortunes. There is nothing new or startling in this conclusion; but if it is along the right lines there is no harm in its being repeated and rephrased. *We* are now the audience of Greek tragedy. Are the actions and emotions and ideas I have been considering irremediably inaccessible? They still have the power, surely, to amaze indeed the very faculties of eyes and ears.

2

DECISION AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TRAGEDY OF AESCHYLUS

ALBIN LESKY

What I want to present here is an interpretation of four passages from the extant dramas of Aeschylus. Our point of departure will be the text and not any general consideration. I also want to avoid committing myself right at the outset on the question whether we have to exclude the idea of personal will from the tragedies merely because we do not find in them a corresponding term for it. I do want, however, to confess to one belief. It seems to me just as wrong to interpret the great poetry of the Greeks out of the ideas of our times, out of that *'Impertinente Nähe'* ('audacious Proximity') that Nietzsche spoke of, as it is wrong to regard the Greeks as completely different people, severed from our world by an unbridgeable gulf. The Aristotelian golden mean will here too be the best guide.

Let us begin with a passage from the *Suppliants*, a passage to which Professor Snell has also attributed particular significance.[1] I would like to emphasise, however, that, if I begin with a scene from the *Suppliants*, this does not mean that I have returned to the old view that dated the play in an early period. On the ground of the well-known papyrus-fragment of a Didascalia [production record] it seems to me on the contrary quite inevitable to date the performance of the play in the middle or in the second half of the 460s.

The situation in the first part of the drama needs no special introduction. The chorus is formed by the daughters of Danaos, who have fled to Argos from the impetuous and repulsive wooing of the sons of Aigyptos. (Incidentally, I shall take it for granted that the twelve members of the chorus represented all fifty daughters of Danaos.) Near the town of Argos, they have taken refuge at a large altar, where the images or symbols of a number of gods are combined. The king of the

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country comes to inquire about the business of the strange crowd. He learns of their desire to be received in the city and given protection against their Egyptian pursuers. The daughters of Danaos point out their relationship with Io, the woman of Argos. The king finds himself facing a momentous decision. The suppliants have sought the protection of Zeus *hikesios*, (god of suppliants), and regard for suppliants *is* a religious commandment, which ranks high in the canon of ethical norms. On the other hand, to receive the Danaides means that he will have to fight against the sons of Aigyptos, who will come in arms to force their uncle's daughters to marry them. The king now has to choose one way out of this dilemma. The manner in which he does this and the part that free choice and force respectively play in his decision are important not only for the course of the action in the *Suppliants*; a study of this passage will help our understanding of other, more difficult passages. In a lengthy epirrhematic scene, the chorus in its stanzas entreats the king to grant the requested protection. The king tries to escape by pointing out that the decision rests not with him but with the people of Argos. He inquires about the reason for the flight of the Danaides without, however, receiving a satisfactory answer to his question. It already becomes obvious in this passage that the king has recognised the difficulty of his decision. He expresses this clearly in his first speech which follows the quick movement of the preceding scene. Here we find the magnificent image of the diver, who has to fathom great depths with a clear eye. The city should not suffer damage from a fight, nor should a curse be brought down on Argos by abandoning the fugitives who are seeking protection at the altar of the gods (417). To the request of the chorus to consider the righteous command of the god (437) the king at the beginning of his second great speech, which surpasses the first in length and intensity, answers with the assurance that he indeed has (438). The hopelessness of the situation becomes evident; there is no solution without great pain (442). And when the king finally says he had rather be ignorant of the peril than aware of it, this is an attempt – however futile it may be – to evade the decision. And so it is interpreted by the chorus. For now the leader of the chorus announces that their words of awe and reserve have come to an end. New and different things are foreshadowed. The king is horrified to hear in answer to his questions that the girls would hang themselves on the images of the gods if their request were refused. This, however, would bring an inexpiable defilement and great disaster upon the city. The king knows this (473). Once more he weighs disaster against disaster, bloodshed against abandoning the fugitive. The girls' threat, however, has tipped the scale and what follows are simply the measures the king takes to protect the girls. It

may be said right away that the theme of a final decision by the people of Argos has lost much of its weight. Later it will cause suspense, above all it will lead up to the song of blessing for Argos, in which the poet was interested mainly for political reasons. The fact, however, is that the decision was reached with the words of the king and that he made it in full consciousness of his responsibility.

But was the choice between two possibilities made in full freedom of will? This is the central question. First it has to be remarked that the poet presents in a very elaborate scene what is going on in the minds of the persons involved. It cannot be shown in detail here, but at least it should be mentioned briefly that Aeschylus elaborates the psychological development of the characters more fully than his successors. One may compare how in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* the change in Neoptolemos is shown as something completed whereas its development is hardly indicated at all. We may compare Euripides who contrasts Iphigeneia begging for her life and her later readiness to sacrifice herself without developing this change of attitude step by step. And let us compare with that the fully developed scene at the end of *Agamemnon*, when Klytaimnestra in spiritual combat with the chorus step by step changes from her ecstatic admission of her deed to a recognition of the fatal chain of events.

But let us return to the *Suppliants*. We may clearly distinguish two stages, which I should like to call recognition or, as it were, diagnosis and decision. It seems important that the decision does not immediately spring from the recognition. In the interchange between the chorus and the king, as well as in his speeches, the situation is thoroughly analysed. The conclusion is that disaster stands against disaster, that each decision must entail a catastrophe. There is no way out of the deadlock between equally strong forces. But a new element is introduced; the threat of girls to hang themselves on the images of the gods, the threat of unspeakable desecration. Now the decision is made, but the king adds two expressions we must not neglect; *anankē* and the wrath of Zeus. Of course, the decision remains a personal one, and he bears the responsibility for it. It has often been surmised, and in fact it seems very likely, that the full tragic consequence of this decision is the king's death, in the second part of the trilogy, in the fight that arose over the fate of the Danaides. But on the other hand we cannot fail to see that the king's decision was made under heavy pressure. We can anticipate a phrase that will concern us presently. 'He has taken upon him the yoke of *Anankē*.' Freedom and compulsion are united in a genuinely tragic way.

Yet another thing that is extremely characteristic of Aeschylus can be seen from this interpretation. It was Aeschylus who discovered the

problem of the uncertainty inherent in every human action. Man through his actions exposes himself to uncertainty. Many human actions have a double aspect – this holds true if not for all human actions, at least for all those which presuppose a decision. To protect the suppliants means disregarding the interests of the city; by giving preference to these, the king would prove his sense of responsibility towards the Polis, and yet he would gravely sin against Zeus, who protects the fugitives.

After these considerations let us now turn to a passage in *Agamemnon*, which has in recent years been the subject of lively discussion. It is the report given by the old men of Argos in the initial choral passage about the events before the departure of the fleet from Aulis. The external course of events can be outlined in just a few words. A strange omen appears to the Greeks. Two eagles differing in their plumage rend a pregnant hare. Without difficulty Calchas interprets the omen to signify the capture of Troy by the two Atreidai and the destruction of its possessions. But he adds that Artemis is angry because the two eagles did not even spare the young in the hare's womb. It must be feared that by an unfavourable wind she will prevent the fleet from sailing and demand another sacrifice that could bring about never-ending hatred. And so it happens. The fleet is held fast and the prophet announces that only the sacrifice of Iphigeneia can calm the winds and make departure possible. Agamemnon, after a heavy inner conflict, determines to sacrifice Iphigeneia, and she dies on the altar of the goddess. There is no word of her being saved. We may assume that the poet in the words of the chorus (247) passes over a tale current at that time which told how Iphigeneia was saved by Artemis. This would have been unsuitable, if Agamemnon's deed was to have its full weight.

The question now is this: Does Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his own daughter spring from his own will? Is it the result of a free choice? Such eminent interpreters of Greek tragedy as Dodds[2] and Kitto[3] answer the question in the affirmative, whereas such outstanding scholars as Page[4] and Rivier[5] deny that there was a choice between two possibilities. Agamemnon could not act differently, he had no choice; for it would be unthinkable that he should stop his campaign and refrain from his punishment of Troy. It is important to point out that Agamemnon himself describes such an action as that of a *liponaus* (ship deserter) with which Professor Fraenkel rightly compares *lipotaxis* as a current term for (military) deserter.

But would it have been absolutely impossible for Agamemnon to dismiss the fleet and to discontinue the campaign so that there was no question of a free choice? Must we not remember that Agamemnon's situation is developed in an entirely different way in another drama? I

am thinking of *Iphigeneia in Aulis* by Euripides, where in the rapid shift of scenes at the beginning Agamemnon and Menelaus one after the other seriously consider discontinuing the campaign and are willing to dismiss the fleet. Of course, we at once have to raise the objection that the dramas by Euripides and by Aeschylus are not the same, just as Euripides' *Herakles* cannot be compared to Sophocles' *Ajax* in spite of an externally similar situation. What we have to do, therefore, is to turn back to the text, and we shall there find support for the two contrary opinions. For the text of our choral passage shows a psychological development similar to the one we saw in the king of Argos in the *Suppliants*. As a matter of fact, the two passages have a good deal in common, which manifests itself in verbal parallels, and this can help us in our understanding of the far more difficult lines in *Agamemnon*.

The first reaction of the Atreidai to the prophet's revelation is utter horror. They beat their sceptres on the ground, tears spring from their eyes. After line 205 we hear about Agamenmon only. We see him, like the king of Argos, facing two alternatives which both lead to disaster. Agamemnon's conclusion 'which of these courses is free from evil'? (211) corresponds exactly to the words with which the king of Argos summarises the situation (*Supp.* 471). The scale at this point is not yet tipped, although the necessity of a choice between two equally disastrous possibilities has become evident. In both plays, however, there is at this point a change which quickly brings about the decision. In the *Suppliants* it comes from outside; the girls' threat to commit suicide at the altar forces the king to give in. In *Agamemnon*, however, the change takes place in the soul of the hesitant hero. 'How am I to become the deserter of my ships (*liponaus*) losing my allies?' (212) Agamemnon asks, and as soon as he utters this phrase, by which he envisages the disgrace and shame he would incur by deserting his post, the scales are no longer even. His decision no longer springs from a free choice between equal possibilities; one has to be avoided at any cost. Iphigeneia *has* to be sacrificed. It is still the king's personal decision springing from his will but the freedom of will is overshadowed by the overwhelming force of the situation which clearly influences the decision. Thus, it is correct to speak of a free choice up to a point. As for the final decision, however, I agree with Rivier that *acte volontaire, nécessité*, and *perturbation* are united in it. Two more parallels in the text indicate that we have correctly compared the ways in which a decision is reached in the *Suppliants* and in *Agamemnon*. Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia because it was *themis* (ordained) to do so is followed by the sceptical and resigned words (217) which echo *Suppliants* (454), in which the king expresses his sombre premonition of things to come. However, it

is far more important still that in both cases the decision is connected with the word *anankē*. It is *anankē* to the king of Argos to avoid the anger of the Zeus of the suppliants. And Agamemnon, it is said, after making his decision took the yoke of *anankē* upon him (218).

Thus far we may confidently draw the parallel but here it ends and our task is to examine what is different in *Agamemnon* and what new motives significant for Aeschylus are introduced.

The king of Argos was drawn from outside into a fatal situation. Agamemnon, however, right from the beginning is involved in the fatal series of events that concern the house of the Atreidai; he is a key-figure in a drama 'whose central problem consists in the connexion between guilt and atonement', as Professor Fraenkel put it. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia is not only a horrible necessity imposed upon him, it is at the same time, his personal and his passionately desired deed, for which he is responsible and for which he has to atone. If one makes a clear logical distinction, of course, one will say: 'A man who acts under necessity is not acting voluntarily.' But to insist upon logical consistency would mean that we should have to reject considerable parts of Aeschylus' tragedies, for many of the tragic situations he presents do, in fact, spring from the rationally indissoluble fusion of necessity and personal will. The words of the passage we are concerned with, express this in a way that leaves no doubt about fusion. First of all, the way Agamemnon expresses his decision in the monologue reported by the chorus: there is no longer any question of shrinking back in despair from the necessity; *themis* must cover not only the deed as such, but also the impetuous desire for it (214). In the following strophe the chorus sings of the 'evil-counselling, merciless infatuation, first cause of ill [*prōtopēmōn*]' (222) which has befallen Agamemnon. This distraction, bordering on insanity, encourages people to horrible deeds.

I must object to the attempt to disparage these words of the chorus as a personal opinion or even a misunderstanding on its part. It is also impossible to interpret the words of the chorus as relating to the irrational sphere only, which has nothing to do with the will that springs from rational consideration. The words in our passage do not permit of this interpretation. The metaphor taken from wind and seafaring (219) expresses the change that has taken place in Agamemnon, the change by which horror at the dreadful alternatives is replaced by the readiness to sacrifice Iphigeneia. The image of 'the turn', incidentally, is also used by the king in the *Suppliants*, though during this state of indecision (442). It is highly characteristic of Aeschylus that in one and the same sentence he speaks of the *anankas lepadnon* ('yoke of necessity') that Agamemnon had to take upon himself and simultaneously calls his change

of will, the *phrenos tropaia*, vile and abominable. Thus, what Agamemnon is forced to do under the yoke of *anankē* is at the same time what he wants to do, the crime that entails guilt and atonement, that he will have to atone for with his own fall. The words of the chorus also clearly indicate that the king is not just carried away by irrational forces but rationally accepts his fatal deed (221). Thus we are shown from a new angle the double aspect of human action. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia is necessary because of a fatal situation, and at the same time is not only accepted, but passionately desired by Agamemnon, and therefore he is responsible for it. It might seem a rationally acceptable solution to assume that once Agamemnon has surrendered to the necessity, forces are released in him that makes him passionately seek to fulfil his aim. But I seriously wonder whether we should not be reading too much of modern psychology into Aeschylus. It seems to me more correct simply to state this union of external coercion and personal readiness; the meaning of this genuinely Aeschylean union is that in this way man, acting out of necessity, has to take upon himself guilt and the need for atonement under the divine order.

Logically, this union cannot be analysed; in fact, the stumbling-block in the way of an attempt at logical analysis goes much farther. This was shown by Professor Page in the introduction to his edition. Is not the campaign against Troy a just punishment inflicted on behalf of the highest god, Zeus, who protects the rights of hospitality? Thus Agamemnon acts on behalf of the god who wills this punishment. And yet the price for this punishment is a terrible guilt, for which the king has to atone with his death. Here there is no rational consistency. But the campaign against Troy is obviously another example of the twofold judgement to which human action is so often subject in Aeschylus. The anapaests before the first Stasimon and its first strophe stress that it was Zeus' punishment that came upon Troy (367). But in the course of the Stasimon we are brought to see the other aspect of this victory. Instead of the many warriors an urn returns and the victims of the war are mourned (447). And when it is said later on in the Stasimon that the gods do not overlook mass-murderers (460) – and that the Erinyes destroy unjust felicity, we no longer think of Troy, but of the returning conquerors and their king. He will be struck by the lightning from the eyes of Zeus, the same Zeus who as the protector of the rights of hospitality wanted Troy to be destroyed. Agamemnon himself, on his return, speaks with a shudder of the catastrophe which came on a flourishing city 'for the sake of a woman' (823). The two contrary conceptions of Zeus we have developed are juxtaposed with epigrammatic brevity in the passage with which we are immediately concerned. In the introductory

lines it is said about the Atreidai that 'Zeus guardian of host and guest sent them against Alexander because of a promiscuous woman' (61). However, when the chorus tells of Agamemnon's fatal decision and at once marks it as a horrible crime, the deed is described as 'to aid a war to avenge a woman' (225). Let us go back to the *Suppliants* again for a moment, where the king regards it as particularly grave that men should die for the sake of women (477). Thus, Agamemnon's double fate of victory and atonement corresponds to the double meaning the poet clearly and explicitly gives to the campaign against Troy. . . .

We have seen the king of Argos and Agamemnon in situations in which necessity and man's personal decision to act are indissolubly united. The situation is basically the same in two other dramas by Aeschylus. The figure of Eteokles in the last part of the Theban trilogy has in recent years become the subject of a lively discussion. For our present purposes we must focus our attention on a certain scene in the final part. Almost all interpreters regard the speech of Eteokles that begins at line 653 as a turning-point in the course of the action. Eteokles has learned from a messenger that the attacker at the city's seventh gate will be his own brother Polyneikes, and he bursts out in a desperate lament, whose tragic content was impressively expounded by Professor Fraenkel in his analysis of the seven pairs of speeches. I cannot enter here in detail upon the way in which the poet has left in the dark the time when the defenders were allocated to the seven gates. In any case it was his intention to make us realise that it is Eteokles' fate to face his own brother at the seventh gate and that this is brought about by the curse that the house of the Labdakadai is under, and which took new effect in Oedipus' curse upon his sons. Thus, Eteokles in the words just mentioned recognizes the fatal fulfilment of his father's curse. After his first outburst of despair he tries to compose himself and we find him ready to take up the fratricidal fight and thus to fulfil his fate.

But that is not yet all. In the subsequent dialogue with the chorus which presently takes lyrical form, there emerges surprisingly a new theme, which, however, will not be unfamiliar to us after what has been said already. The chorus reminds Eteokles of the inexpiable crime of fratricide, and when the king points out that this is a question of honour the chorus retorts that he is not only accepting the fatal conflict but that he is desiring it out of his own will. In the very first lines of the chorus the word *orgē* [passion, anger] (678) is used, which at once reminds us of the *orga periorgōs epithumein* ('insanely, mad lusting after') spoken in a closely similar situation in *Agamemnon*; in its first stanza, however, the chorus speaks of 'mad lust for battle', of the 'evil passion' of Eteokles. And in the following stanza it accuses the king of being driven too much

by the desire to commit a murder which will bear bitter fruit, to shed blood he must not touch. Do we not find here again what our analysis of the passage in Agamemnon so clearly showed: man being led by fate to a terrible deed, which, however, he not only accepts but desires and passionately undertakes?

My view, however, is in contrast with an interpretation which by now has become something of a *fable convenue*. According to this interpretation the words of the chorus I have cited simply spring from a misunderstanding. It is women who are speaking here, and the heroism of Eteokles, who saves his city, is incomprehensible to them, and thus they misinterpret his attitude. In my view this way of understanding the scene is mistaken because it totally fails to recognize the characteristically Aeschylean union of fatal necessity and personal will. It not only has no support in the text, but contradicts it in a number of essential points. If it had been the poet's intention to confront Eteokles with a female chorus that misunderstood him, he would have indicated this misunderstanding. At least he would have made Eteokles contradict the women, which, however, Eteokles never does. . . . Furthermore, the words the chorus speaks about the two brothers after the catastrophe, 'they perished for their impious intent' (831), aptly express the degree of free will the poet recognizes in Eteokles. Thus, the deed of Eteokles, too, reveals the twofold aspect of human action; the king's defense of Thebes, which proves his heroism, becomes at the same time the terrible crime of fratricide. This aspect reveals Aeschylus' conception of the old idea of a curse lying on a family, to which he gave a new and profound meaning; the effect of the curse consists in a crime renewed from generation to generation.

The most significant traits that our analysis has shown are to be seen very clearly in another Aeschylean figure, in Orestes. I shall try to be brief here because I have dwelt upon the problems concerning the figure elsewhere.[6] Suffice it to say here as much as necessary to place the figure of Orestes in *Choephoroi* in the context of our analysis. The necessity imposed upon man from without is particularly emphasized in this case by Apollo's command that he should exact vengeance on his own mother. In his speech before the great Kommos he goes to great lengths in describing the horrors with which the god threatened him in case he should refuse to obey. Opinions differ on this great Kommos between Orestes, Elektra, and the chorus. By some it is interpreted as a mere description of the situation with no intention on the part of the poet to reveal what is going on in Orestes' soul. In contrast to that, I have given a dynamic interpretation of the Kommos, not, however, in the sense that Orestes only here makes the decision to murder his mother; that

decision is made before he enters the stage. I believe I have shown, however, that what goes on in Orestes is the same thing that we have been able to observe with Agamemnon and Eteokles; once they are determined to commit the dreadful deeds under the coercion of necessity, one to kill his own daughter and the other to take up the fatal fight against his brother, they at once begin to desire the disastrous deed. In this respect I basically agree with Professor Rivier who says in his study of Aeschylus 'At no moment does the act he must perform lose its necessary character but once again, the hero must accept, he must give in to necessity.'[7] May I remind you, without repeating my own line of argumentation, that during the whole Kommos neither Apollo's command nor even the god's name is ever mentioned? May I also remind you how the chorus and Elektra urge on Orestes with their reports of Klytaimnestra's vile deed. When he bursts out in the words 'She will pay for dishonouring my father by the action of the gods and by the action of my hands' (435) he is no longer acting only on behalf of Apollo, but he wants to do the deed that he must do just as in Agamemnon and in Eteokles compulsion and volition are one.

Once again we can see here the twofold judgement of the deed. Orestes is the obedient servant of the god of Delphi, he is the faithful son of his father as the chorus calls him (1051), he is the deliverer of Argos, and yet his deed is a terrible crime. Already in *Agamemnon* Cassandra says prophetically that Orestes will be the one to complete the desecration of the family (1283), (and she calls him 'the son that slays his mother, an atoner for his father') (1281), giving in a nutshell the two aspects of his deed. It is also characteristic how the chorus immediately after trying along with Elektra to strengthen Orestes' will speaks of 'sorrow inbred in the race', 'bloody stroke of ruin', and 'pain impossible to ease'. It is the same chorus that at the end of the drama places Orestes' deed among the crimes in the house of the Atreidai and once more emphasizes the duality of its judgement: 'and now thirdly, has there come from somewhere a deliverer . . . or shall I say a doom? ' (1073).

To conclude our observations we may take it as proved that two elements of high significance in Aeschylus can be clearly shown: the close union of necessity imposed by the gods and the personal decision to act. This union leaves a certain space for the will of the individual but at the same time limits it. Secondly, we have seen what an important part in Aeschylus' dramas the ambiguity of human action plays. It can be the fulfilment of a duty, obedience to a divine order; and yet at the same time be a dreadful crime.

What I have tried to show here, of course, touches upon a problem which has recently been discussed and which is contained in the title to a well-known book by Karl Reinhardt, *Aischylos the Theologian*. Now, Aeschylus certainly was not a theologian in the sense that he wanted to work out a logically well-founded system. But with all the powers of his mind, he wrestled with the problems arising from the conflict between human existence and divine rule. He does not present a solution in the manner of a well-solved mathematical problem, and for this he may be criticised by those who have such a solution to offer. The tragic power of his dramas, however, springs from those antitheses I have tried to show here. We may apply to our subject what Virginia Woolf said about the language of Aeschylus: 'There is an ambiguity which is the mark of the highest poetry.'[8]

NOTES

O. Taplin: Emotion and Meaning in Greek Tragedy (pp. 1–12).

1. One of my purposes in *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977) is to elucidate this 'grammar' of dramatic technique. W. Jens' *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (1971) is an attempt, far from successful but none the less enterprising, to compile the whole of this 'grammar'. Disciples of Walter Jens at Tübingen contribute sections (of greatly varying quality) on the structure of opening and closing scenes, on the acts and choral songs, speech, stychomythia, lyric dialogue, and monody; there are also three parerga on supplication, props, and the significance of on- and off-stage.

2. This point is hammered home by Brian Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy* (33 ff., esp. 41–2). Vickers' confutation in his section 'Metaphysics and Mystiques' (3–51) of various 'transcendant schemes' which have been vainly imposed on Greek tragedy is one of the best parts of a stimulating, if uneven, book. The most influential account of the Greek theatre as ritual has probably been Ch.i of Francis Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theatre* (Princeton, 1949).

3. I relegate a couple more hobby-horsical reflections to a footnote. Another motive for the search of ritual may be the desire of some to find religious or quasi-religious motives for all valuable human activities so that they are all done to the greater glory of god (even if it is the wrong god). Another more modern motive is the desire of the 'counter-culture' to stress all that is anti-rational, impulsive, and 'primitive' in our life. The driving forces of this movement are too complex and too close for analysis, but they include the decline of traditional religion, disillusion with scientific 'progress', Freudian psychology, expression of solidarity with non-Western cultures, and simple revolt against whatever system is nearest at hand. Greek tragedy, they gather, was a 'primitive ritual', so it is annexed as a venerable support for these cultural trends. But the ancient Greeks are treacherous allies. The undeniable powers of the irrational, the cruel, and the impulsive are clearly recognized by Greek tragedy, but they are not admired; they are rather forces of destruction and inhumanity.

4. The authoritative account is Pickard-Cambridge's *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (1968, ch. ii, 57–125).

5. This should be put in its place a fragment of the fourth-century comedian Antiphanes which has been taken much too seriously. His character is trying to show that comedy is much harder to compose than tragedy because you have to make up the story:

> I have only to mention Oedipus, and they know the rest
> that his father was Laius, his mother Jocasta,
> who his daughters are and his sons,
> what he is going to suffer, what he has done . . .

The crudity of this proves, in a sense, the opposite of what it purports to prove.

6. There is an interesting exercise in comparison to be found in the fifty-second (so-called) *Oration* of Dio Chrysostom (Loeb Classical Library, vol. iv, ed. A. L. Crosby, 338 ff.), in which he discusses the three *Philoctetes* plays of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles (only the last survives). The fixed elements are that Odysseus and others have to fetch Philoctetes from Lemnos to Troy: the differences between the three plays move them worlds apart.

7. This dialogue occurs at the most harrowing moment of *Jude the Obscure* when Jude and Sue have discovered the violent death of their children:

> 'Nothing can be done' he replied.
> 'Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue.'
> She paused, 'Yes! Who said that?' she asked heavily.
> 'It comes in the Chorus of Agamemnon. It has been in my mind continually since this happened.'

To move from the sublime to the less than sublime see the very title of Cocteau's version of *Oedipus, La Machine Infernale* (1934). The prologue voice says, 'Spectator, this machine, you see here wound up to the full in such a way that the spring will slowly unwind the whole length of a human life . . .' The radio comedy show *I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again* ended its version of *Oedipus* 'My fate, my fate are killing me!'

8. Aeschylus' *Persians* is the exception which proves the rule. Not only is the play not a tragedy about Athens, but the Persian rulers are given the status and distance of tragic heroes indistinguishable, dramatically speaking, from the usual figues of the heroic age. Even those who generally agree with my case would until recently have made an exception of *Eumenides* and granted that it contains political propaganda. But it seems to me that Colin Macleod in his article on the unity of the *Oresteia* (1973) is completely convincing in his denial of specific topical allusions and in his claim that the play is political in a much more ideal and time-free sense. On the 'dramatic illusion' of Greek tragedy see the first and last chapters of David Bain, *Actors and Audience* (Oxford, 1977).

9. See, for instance, Anne Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London, 1962, repr. Penguin, 1967).

10. Excellent translations of the more important fragments are collected in the first section of *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1972).

11. Some fragments of Gorgias are in Russell and Winterbottom (op. cit.), but for a translation of all the little that survives see that by George Kennedy in *The Older Sophists*, ed R. K. Sprague (South Carolina, 1972, 30 ff.). The standard text is in Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (vol. ii, 7th ed., rev. Kranz, Berlin, 1951–4).

12. A Phonetic rather than literal transcript brings out Gorgias' use of the letters *r*, then *l*, then *t* to vary the predominant emotional *p*: *prikē peripobos kai eleos poludakrus kai potos pilopentēs*.

Albin Lesky: Decision and Responsibility in the Tragedy of Aeschylus (pp. 13–23)

1. B. Snell, *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama, Philologus SB* 20, Heft 1 (1928).

2. *Proc. of the Cambr. Philol. Soc.* 186 (1960), 27.

3. *Form and Meaning in Drama* (London, 1956), 4.

4. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* xxvii.

5. *Etudes de Lettres* 6 (1963), 73–112 (*Bull. de la Fac. des Lettres Lausanne*). On all these questions, cf. also H. Lloyd-Jones, 'The Guilt of Agamemnon', (printed

below); his interpretation corresponds in many cases with that developed here and in *Hermes* 66 (1931), 190.

6. *Sitzb. Akad. Wien. Phil. hist. Kl.* 221.3 (1943).

7. Op. cit. 101.

8. This paper was delivered to the Joint Meeting of Greek and Roman Societies at Cambridge in August 1965. The author wishes to thank Prof. R. P. Winnington-Ingram and Mr F. H. Sandbach most warmly for their help with the English of the text.

Helen H. Bacon: The Shield of Eteocles (pp. 24–33)

1. The following authors, not referred to elsewhere in the text or notes, have greatly helped me, in some cases to conclusions quite different from theirs – E. Fraenkel, 'Die sieben Redepaare im Thebanerdrama des Aeschylus', *Sitz. Bay. Akad. phil.-hist. Klasse* (1957, 3). B. Snell, 'Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama', *Philologus*, suppl. 20 (1928), 1–64. F. Solmsen, 'The Erinys in Aischylos' *Septem*' *Trans. Amer. Philol. Ass.* 68 (1937), 197–211, and *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1949). E. Wolf, 'Die Entscheidung des Eteokles in den *Sieben gegen Theben*', *Harv. Stud. Class. Philol.* 63 (1958), 89–95.

The translations are mine. I regret the necessity of making them so ruthlessly literal.

Since lines 1004 to the end do not enter into my discussion the question of their authenticity is of no direct importance for this paper. I am strongly swayed by the arguments of H. Lloyd-Jones ('The End of the *Seven Against Thebes*', *Class. Quart.* n.s. 9 (1959), 80–115) to regard them as authentic. Their discontinuity in tone and imagery with the rest of the play is perhaps to be explained by the fact that they are the conclusion not of this play alone, but of the whole trilogy.

2. H. Patzer, 'Die Dramatische Handlung der *Sieben gegen Theben*', *Harv. Stud. Class. Philol.* 63 (1958), 97–119.

3. A. Lesky, 'Eteokles in dem Sieben gegen Theben', *Wiener Studien*, 73 (1960), 5–17. B. Otis, 'The Unity of *Seven Against Thebes*' (*Gk. Rom. Byz. Stud.* 3 (1960), 153–74) came to my attention when this essay had already gone to the printer. My analysis parallels his in making Eteocles' achievement of insight into his relation to the Erinyes the unifying fact of the play. I reach very different conclusions about what it is that Eteocles comes to understand.

4. Eteocles and Polyneices are referred to as *philoi* (i.e. related by blood) to each other, just as Laius, whom Oedipus met only as he murdered him, is included among those who are *philtatoi* in *O.T.* (line 366).

5. H. Lloyd-Jones (op. cit. p. 85 n.3) makes a strong case against the view of Wilamowitz and others that Aeschylus presents the Argives as barbarians who do not even speak Greek. See also H. Bacon, *Barbarians in Greek Tragedy* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1961), 17.

6. This is one of the commonest ways of warding off an evil spell (see Kuhnert in Pauly-Wissowa s.v. *fascinum*). For each Argive (except Amphiaraus, who casts no spell) Eteocles has a word or a symbol, or both, whose purpose is just this (see below for the magic and counter-magic employed by the brothers against each other). From this we must conclude that Eteocles relies on magic no less than the attackers do. T. Rosenmeyer in his chapter on *Seven* (*The Masks of Tragedy* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1963), 5–48) is the first critic to discuss the pervasive importance of the shields and the fear magic associated with them. He argues, however, that there is no appeal to magic in the shield device of Polyneices or the speeches in which Eteocles calls up the Theban champions. His interpretation of the play depends to a large extent on the implications of the contrast he finds here.

7. R. Lattimore (*The Poetry of Greek Tragedy* (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1958), 39–45) argues that the fact that Thebes has seven gates is a crucial element in the fate of Eteocles. If so, it is likely that the symmetries suggested verbally were also indicated in the staging. As the seven gates have seven attackers with seven shield devices we can expect to *see* on stage the seven defenders with their seven shields, each one claiming the protection of one of the seven gods whose statues stand on the stage.

8. See G. H. Chase, 'The Shield Devices of the Greeks', *Harv. Stud. Class. Philol.* 13 (1902), 61–127.

9. Though this, and related phrases, sometimes refer to the night rather than the moon (Aesch. *Pers.* 428 and Eur. *I.T.* 110, *Phoen.* 543), in context in this passage it can only refer to the moon. So also Pindar *Ol.* 3.20. For eyes as shield devices see Chase, ibid. 105.

10. In *Aeneid* 4.6 *Phoebea lampade* is definitely the sun.

11. W. Schadewaldt, 'Die Wappnung des Eteokles', *Eranion, Festschrift für H. Hommel* (*Tübingen*, 1961), 105–116.

12. Op. cit. 13.

S. M. Adams: Salamis Symphony: The Persae of Aeschylus (pp. 34–41)

1. This point Aeschylus, because his design so requires, leaves vague until the time for explanation comes; Herodotus naturally makes it perfectly clear, with his account of chains and proclamation.

2. The discarding of Atossa when her functions have been performed has often been noted; later drama would have required the projected meeting with her son.

3. Incidentally, if the question arises in their minds, this passage serves to inform the audience that the Persians know about *Apate* and *Ate* and so will be able to understand the lesson when it comes; the word *hybris* is withheld until Darius's final explanation.

4. The stasimon may thus, I think, be read with 93–100 in their manuscript position. With O. Müller's transposition of these verses to follow 114 (accepted by Smyth and Murray) the effect of the metaphor (87–90) is not lost. Foreboding emerges in the metaphor; the old men seek to overcome it by dwelling on Persia's might and valour and divine mission to wage wars; this leads to the thought of the Sea, and the foreboding reappears in the *double entendre* (112–14); then comes the *Apate* passage, which leads directly to foreboding unrestrained.

5. With 252 cf. 59–60.

6. The extraordinary expression 'they are mangled by the voiceless children of the deep' (577–8) is not arbitrary grotesquery: the Sea is undefilable; its own 'children' devour its offenders and prevent its pollution.

7. To the standard Hellenic milk, water, honey, and wine are added, for foreign flavour, olives and garlands of flowers. The stilted language in which all these are described appears to be the language of ritual, based on the principle that you make a thing more potent if you describe it in magnifying terms.

8. It seems to have been very well known. In the *Agamemnon*, when Aeschylus is setting forth the *hybris* shown by the Greeks in captured Troy, he drives home the point by repeating, almost exactly, a verse from it: *Ag.* 527 = *Pers.* 811.

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