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CLYTEMNESTRA AND THE VOTE OF ATHENA

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It will not be disputed that the relationship between the sexes was a subject of great interest to Aeschylus. The *Suppliants* turns on the question of marriage, willing or unwilling; and this is true, whether the Danaids were actuated by a passionate celibacy or by a horror of what they considered incest. The loss of the succeeding play renders the interpretation of the Danaid trilogy speculative. But in the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus returns to similar themes: marriage, wife and husband, the relative status of men and women. The last issue becomes explicit during the trial of Orestes, when Apollo proclaims the superiority of the male, and Athena endorses his judgement with her vote. This scene, if variously interpreted, has been recognised to be important. Equally it has been recognised that Clytemnestra, for whose murder Orestes was on trial, is herself depicted as an anomaly: a woman with the mind and counsel of a man.[1] The connexion between these two aspects of the trilogy deserves perhaps a further examination.

It is first necessary to consider the characterisation of Clytemnestra. Quite apart from the issues raised in the *Eumenides*, it is doubtful whether the accepted 'masculinity' of Clytemnestra has received attention commensurate with the stress which the poet has laid upon it, nor has it been fully considered in relation to the motives of her conduct. Some, indeed, will deprecate the psychological approach to an Aeschylean character.[2] But there are no *a priori* grounds on which we can decide up to what point the poet's interest in character developed, as develop it admittedly did. Clytemnestra is the test-case, and we must judge by what we find.

In any play – certainly a Greek play – the first references to a character are likely to be revealing. The Watchman in his opening soliloquy does not at first refer to Clytemnestra directly: he speaks (11) of 'a woman's heart of manly counsel' which has set him at his post. He is a

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servant in fear, and after this paradoxical phrase we know whom he fears. He is a servant in sorrow for his master's house, and hints at the adultery of his mistress (18 f.). When the beacon shines out, he calls to Clytemnestra, but we do not yet hear her name. It is Agamemnon's wife (26) whom he bids leap from her bed (which should be Agamemnon's bed) and raise the woman's cry of joy. But Agamemnon's wife has another consort; the woman has the mind of a man.

Clytemnestra is not addressed by name till 84, during the anapaests of the Chorus, when she makes a silent appearance to supervise the sacrifices.[3] She is addressed as daughter of Tyndareus, which immediately associates her with her sister Helen (62) for whom the Greeks and Trojans have fought a terrible war. As Helen was the bane first of Menelaus and then of Paris, so will Clytemnestra be of Agamemnon and later of Aegisthus. Disdaining to reply to the Chorus, she re-enters the palace, not to appear for 150 lines. The song of the Chorus is meantime concerned with the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, and we wonder what effect that sacrifice has had upon this woman of manly counsel. Iphigeneia, Aegisthus (hinted at only), the masculinity of Agamemnon's wife: the elements of the situation are now before us. It remains to see how they are combined.

The Chorus round off their ode with words intended for the ear of the approaching queen, when they call her 'the sole bulwark of the Apian land'. The chorus-leader speaks to her: 'I have come to pay homage, Clytemnestra, to your rule (258).' The word is *kratos* and (with *kratein*) is commonly used in the trilogy to denote authority, domestic or political. Indeed, to revert to the Watchman's speech, it is, in fact, from the verb *kratei* (10) that the audience derives its first impression of the queen.[4] 'I watch,' said the Watchman, 'for so rules a woman's hoping heart of manly counsel.' The words will be met again at salient points in the trilogy. Now Clytemnestra stands before us as a ruler, as sole ruler, but only in the absence of her husband. 'It is right,' says the chorus-leader, 'to honour the wife of a reigning prince, when the male throne is left empty' (259 f.).

The closing words of the chorus-leader, the opening words of the queen, have intricate associations. For instance, when the queen speaks of the night as of a mother that has given birth to the day (265, 279), it is to remind us of her own motherhood, of Iphigeneia, and of the theme of heredity which runs through the trilogy. The reference back to her masculinity is equally unmistakable. The leader suggests (262) that Clytemnestra's messengers of good may be merely hopes. This suggestion she rejects (266), and announces the capture of Troy. What then *is* the evidence (272)? A god. Is it a dream then (274)? Is it a rumour (276)? 'You make light indeed of my understanding, as though I were a young

girl.' Clytemnestra does not forget these accusations which impute to her the psychology, not only of a child, but of a woman, given to irrational hopes and, where her emotions are involved, easily convinced. When, in two brilliant speeches, her imagination has ranged over land and sea and over the scenes of siege and capture, 'Here,' she says, 'you have my woman's words (348).' No wonder the chorus-leader makes amends: 'Lady, you speak like a wise man' (351). It is a compliment which she has virtually demanded. On this note the scene ends, as it began.

The Chorus sing their first *stasimon*. What begins as 'an exultant hymn for triumph over Troy' ends in 'apprehension for the conqueror.'[5] It is almost with relief that they remember the news may not be true and return to their former allegations.[6] Good tidings have been brought by fire (475). But are they true? To trust such a message is childish (*cf.* 277), witless (contr. 351). To believe too readily is just like a woman (483, 485, 487). Better evidence, however, than the beacons is now at hand in Agamemnon's herald. Him they cannot disbelieve. But Clytemnestra herself has no need of a herald, except to carry a message to her husband; and in this message are reiterated the words – man, woman, husband, wife.[7] With irony and with a brazenness that deceives none of her listeners, she maintains the role of the conventional wife, the home-keeper, the watch-dog. When she speaks of the faithful wife who has never tampered with any seal, we think of Aegisthus. She is as innocent of joys from another man as . . . of the tempering of bronze: and we are reminded that this is no ordinary woman, subject to feminine weakness.

From this message we may pass rapidly to her greeting of Agamemnon.[8] The Chorus try to warn him on his entrance (808 f.), but he does not understand. He is proud, self-conscious, and sententious. His mind is on war and politics (matters outside a woman's sphere), concerning which he will 'take counsel'. He turns to enter his palace with the prayer that Victory, which has attended him, may remain still constant. On the word *nikē* Clytemnestra enters. The speech she now makes, her longest in the play, is of outstanding importance. In it all the elements of her character and situation are combined.

To Iphigeneia she does not refer openly, but when she speaks of a child who should have been present (877 ff.), Iphigeneia, as well as Orestes, is in her mind.[9] The references to Aegisthus are clear and extensive, as Headlam has shown.[10] But when Clytemnestra speaks of 'the fearful hardship for a woman without man to sit solitary at home' (861 f.), issues are raised which transcend adultery and go back to the man-woman of the Prologue. To the sister of Helen physical celibacy may

not have been congenial: but this is unimportant. That Clytemnestra had been literally, 'without man' is an ironical lie; but that is not all. Where this woman had sat solitary during her husband's absence was upon his throne, as the Chorus pointed out on her first speaking entrance;[11] and this to her was not 'hardship'. Now the royal man returns, and the glories of his state are described by Clytemnestra herself with fulsome rhetoric (896 ff.). The whole passage is dominated, like Clytemnestra's address to the Herald, by the theme of the relationship between man and woman.

The thesis of this article – and it is supported by the continual emphasis which the dramatist places upon the sexual antithesis and upon the anomalous personality of Clytemnestra – is that she hated Agamemnon, not simply because he had killed her child, not because she loved Aegisthus, but out of a jealousy that was not jealousy of Chryseis or Cassandra, but of Agamemnon himself and his status as a man. For she herself is of manly temper, and the dominance of a man is abhorrent to her. Thus, when she kills her husband, it is not only an act of vengeance, but also a blow struck for her personal liberty.[12] The same motive explains her choice of Aegisthus. Agamemnon, for all his weakness at Aulis and in the scene which follows, was a lion of the Pelopid house, a great warrior and conqueror. Aegisthus is seen in the vision of Cassandra as a lion indeed (a Pelopid), but a cowardly lion, and later as a wolf mating with this human lioness in the absence of the noble lion (1224, 1259). He was 'keeping the home' (1626) while the Greeks were at Troy. This was the woman's part. Aegisthus is addressed as a woman by the Chorus at the end of the play (1625),[13] and Orestes in the *Choephori* implies the same charge (304). This woman-man was chosen by the man-woman to be her mate. The return of her husband is a threat. Yet so great is she that she does not fear his return, but rather longs passionately for it, because it will give her the opportunity of avenging herself and of demonstrating her superiority. It is in the light of this situation that the next scene must be considered – the scene in which Clytemnestra induces Agamemnon to enter the palace treading on scarlet draperies.

Why is she at such pains that he should make his entrance so? Is it merely that the act is *epiphthonon* (envy-provoking), and that by putting him in the wrong before the gods she will facilitate her triumph? The symbolism of the act is unmistakable:[14] but was this her only motive? Again, why does Agamemnon give way so easily? Because he is a doomed sinner blinded by Ate? Some critics[15] have objected to the psychological interpretation of this scene, and yet both Clytemnestra's desire and Agamemnon's compliance have a psychological explanation.

It is suggested above that, in the last analysis, Clytemnestra killed her husband because he was a man and in order to avenge herself upon his male supremacy. But to kill him was only half of her victory. First she must prove herself the stronger. Her physical victory is won, necessarily, by craft; the spiritual contest is on equal terms, and in it Agamemnon will be compelled, as his own words reveal,[16] to play the woman's part.

'Pamper me not so,' he says, 'as though I were a woman; nor adore me as though I were a barbarian, with loud open-mouthed prostrations' (918 ff.). The protests are complementary and significant. Just as the conqueror of Priam is to be reduced to barbarism, so the cuckold of Aegisthus is to be reduced to effeminacy. If, then, he was so closely aware of the implications of his act, is it not unnatural that he should comply so readily? It is not unnatural, because his desire to tread those scarlet draperies is stronger than he knows, because he feels in his heart of hearts that such honour is no more than due to the conqueror of Troy.[17] Out come the copy-book maxims.[18] But they are too many; he protests too much; and, though he ends his speech with a refusal, the signs of weakness are evident. For the keynotes of his character are vanity and ambition. Ambition led him to sacrifice Iphigeneia at Aulis in order that he might become a sacker of cities. Now vanity tells him what is the fitting reward for the conqueror.

Clytemnestra turns from rhetoric to argument.[19] The brief dialogue which follows is the crisis of the play. It is a contest between two wills, in which the woman plays upon the weakness of the man, putting forward argument after argument which he ought to reject in terms but does not. The closing lines are particularly revealing (940 ff.). 'It is not for a woman to thirst for battle,' underlines the reversal of the normal roles. Clytemnestra's reply is itself based upon a conventional conception of the relation of man to woman, and so is irresistible to Agamemnon, who condescends to her: 'Do you too desire a victory in strife?' 'Be persuaded (*pithou*),' she replies, 'you are still the master (*krateis*) if you make a voluntary concession to me.' Every word is significant. *pithou*: and to be easily persuaded is the mark of the woman. *krateis*: yet the mastery at this very moment passes from him. *hekon* (willingly): for unless this is so, half the sweetness of her victory is lost. At 944 the victory is won.

After the victory of *peithō* (persuasion), the victory of *bia* (force). But this is delayed by the master-stroke of the Cassandra scene, which serves manifold purposes, most of them irrelevant to the present investigation. One aspect, however, is relevant, for Cassandra also has her place in what may be termed the sexual pattern of the play. The last words of Agamemnon proclaim his own subjection (956). A few lines earlier, commending his concubine to the queeen, he had said: 'No one submits willingly to the yoke of slavery (953).' Yet this is a precise description of his own behaviour and condition. Thus at the outset a point of comparison is established between Cassandra and Agamemnon in respect of bonds and freedom. The scene in which Clytemnestra bids her come down from the chariot and enter the palace is parallel to the scene between husband and wife which has just been examined. As an ingredient of her triumph, Clytemnestra means to kill Cassandra, as she means to kill Agamemnon; but in this instance also she wills to win a victory of persuasion, even where she could command (1052). But Cassandra makes no move and the queen admits defeat (1055, 1068). This slave has not yet learnt, like Agamemnon, to bear the yoke (1066). Her enslavement is of the body only.[20] When she has finished her prophesying, she faces her fate, recoils from it, but goes to meet it bravely, entering the palace a free soul.[21] Thus the slave proves herself superior to the conqueror, the barbarian to the Greek, the woman to the man.

After the murder of Agamemnon, the play falls into three parts: the speeches in which Clytemnestra justifies herself to the Chorus, the Kommos in which her anapaests alternate with their lyrical laments, and the Aegisthus scene. It is during the first two of these only, out of the whole play, that she can discard ironical pretence and stand revealed in her true colours. She exults, to the amazement of the Chorus. She claims that the deed of her hand was just; and then in two speeches she advances her justification.

The theme of the first speech is Iphigeneia. The Chorus wish to proceed against Clytemnestra for the murder of her husband. But what opposition did they make when Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter – her daughter – at Aulis 'to charm the winds from Thrace'? The point is unanswerable, and is not answered by the Chorus. 'Great are your designs' is their comment, for at the end of her speech the queen had spoken not as mother, but as competitor for power who has gained one victory of force and is prepared to gain another.

Her second speech is more complex. From Iphigeneia it moves to Aegisthus; from Aegisthus to the infidelities of Agamemnon, to Chryseis and Cassandra. The sequence of thought is subtle and will, it is to be hoped, continue to defy the transpositions of editors. Clytemnestra swears 'by Justice fully taken for my child, by Ate and Erinys', that she has no fear – 'so long as Aegisthus lights fire upon my hearth.' Thus the ground of her confidence is not only Justice, not only Iphigeneia, but Aegisthus. Now, as we have seen, the significance of Aegisthus lies in his function as a substitute for Agamemnon. As a person he is effeminate and she can dominate him; but as a male he can command force and so

is a necessary tool for her masculine will. The mention of Aegisthus leads Clytemnestra to accuse Agamemnon of sexual infidelity.

Is this simply a parry to the similar charge which has been brought, and will continue to be brought against her? If so, the charges cancel out,[22] and the amours of Agamemnon are not valid to justify Clytemnestra. Yet she reverts to this theme again in the *Choephori* (918). Was sexual jealousy then among her motives? But if Clytemnestra was jealous, she was jealous primarily of Agamemnon himself, who went to Troy and came back a conqueror, while she, knowing herself to be the stronger personality, was left to keep the home. If she was jealous of the Chryseids and Cassandra, perhaps it was not simply that they had shared his bed, but that Chryseis had shared his hut beneath the walls of Troy (1439), and Cassandra his life on board the ship (1442 f.).[23] But the significance of the charge is still not exhausted, for there is a link of primary importance between the first speech dealing with Iphigeneia and the second speech dealing with sexual infidelity.

Agamemnon died justly, because he had killed Iphigeneia; Agamemnon's death was 'not undeserved' (1443), because he had insulted Clytemnestra in her status as a wife (1438). To the latter charge, when it is repeated in the *Choephori*, Orestes replies by quoting, in effect, a 'double standard' of morality (*Cho.* 919), which is a symbol of that inferiority against which Clytemnestra chafed. No less, however, did the act of Agamemnon in sacrificing his daughter strike at the relationship of husband and wife and emphasise the inferior status of the wife. In considering the dramatic function of Iphigeneia, we need not over-simplify or suppose that, if Clytemnestra's deed was an act of self-liberation, vengeance for her daughter was a mere pretext. Doubtless she had loved her daughter; doubtless that love had turned into a hatred of her husband.[24] It is not merely, however, that two separate motives had combined to make her kill her husband. For the motives are inextricably connected. Clytemnestra describes her daughter as 'the dearest fruit of my labor-pains' (1417); later as a shoot or branch (1525). The terms insist upon the intimate physical connexion between mother and child.[25] In each case the phrase is completed by words expressive of the father's share in the child. 'His own child, my dearest birth-pang' (1417 f.). 'My branch raised up by him' (1525). It has already been noted that when, in her first speech to Agamemnon, Clytemnestra referred to the absent Orestes, she did so in terms which could apply to Iphigeneia. 'Wherefore there stands not by our side, as should have stood, the child, the ratification of my faith and yours. . . . ' Such was the value that Agamemnon placed upon the pledge of their mutual love, claiming full rights of disposal in a child that was hers no less than his. Thus both the offences of which

Clytemnestra accuses her husband are sins against marriage and strike at the status of the woman in marriage.[26]

On neither score can a defence be made by the Chorus for all their loyalty to the dead. They pray for death themselves. This is not the place for a full analysis of the ensuing Kommos, in which the traditional form of lamentation is complicated by a divergence of sympathy between the participants, by argument and counter-argument, and by reference to the deepest philosophical issues of the trilogy. The Chorus apostrophise the *daimon* 'that falls upon the house'; and, with the mention of the *daimon*, Clytemnestra, who had exultantly claimed full responsibility (1406), now changes her ground.

She sees herself, or would have the Chorus see her, not as the wife of Agamemnon, but as the embodiment of an ancestral curse (1497 ff.). The instrument of the curse indeed she is, but personal responsibility Aeschylus will not allow her to disclaim (1505 ff.); the less so perhaps that she is actuated by motives extraneous to the bloody history of the house of Atreus.[27] It is at this point that she returns (1521 ff.) to the theme of Iphigeneia, with that phrase which links her and Agamemnon as parents of the murdered child, and thus relates her vengeance as a mother to her status as a wife. Yet again she returns (1555 ff.) to Iphigeneia, and it is the climax of bitterness when she tells how the daughter will meet her father at the rapid Ford of Sorrows, will fling her arms about his neck and kiss him. Yet when she has played this her strongest card, she reverts to the Daimon. For she knows, without the Chorus's ominous suggestions of further bloodshed, that the matter is not ended by appeal to the memory of Iphigeneia; that she cannot claim to be the embodiment of the Daimon and deny its implications. It is a change of mood indeed when she tries to strike a bargain with the ancestral curse and so rid the palace of 'the madness of mutual slaughter' (1567 ff.). But such compromise is futile; and Aegisthus is a symbol of its futility.

The entry of Aegisthus is an effective piece of bathos. The stage, which has held only Clytemnestra and her victims, now fills with soldiers. The queen stands silent while Aegisthus, who has had no share in the emotional tension of the preceding scene, makes a forensic speech.[28] A crude character, he prides himself on his cunning, his worldly wisdom, his clear-sightedness (1623).[29] He advances the male interpretation of the death of Agamemnon, in terms of fathers, sons and brothers, and of the competition for power. For this death he takes full credit to himself, claiming the male prerogative of planning and decision; he claims full authority in the state (1638 ff.). But which is the ruler? Which is the man? The Chorus-leader calls him the woman and taunts him with his home-keeping (1625 ff.);[30] and the audience will draw the correct

conclusion. Yet this is the person that Clytemnestra has hailed as her shield of confidence (1437). For it is part of her predicament that she cannot dispense with the formal protection of a man and of the armed force which a man alone can command. Between the death of Agamemnon and the entry of Aegisthus Clytemnestra spoke without pose or dissimulation. Now she enters upon her new role, the consort of Aegisthus as formerly of Agamemnon. She listens with contempt to the altercations of the men; and when these threaten to lead to bloodshed, she intervenes with good counsel, but closes with her old irony: 'Such is a woman's word, if it is worth hearing' (1661). The quarrel continues to reverberate until she ends it and the play with two significant lines. 'Pay no regard to these idle yelpings; I and thou, as masters of this house, will make good order' (1672 f.). Mastery in the dual number (*kratounte*); but the first person singular (*egō*), from word-order and rhythm, receives great emphasis. It is Clytemnestra who will, in fact, be master, and it was for this mastery that she killed her husband.

kratei (10) was the first indication of the character of Clytemnestra; *kratos* (258) greeted her first speaking appearance; the ironical *krateis* (943) marked the climax of her struggle with Agamemnon; and with *kratounte* (1673) the first play ended. The *Choephori* opens with *kratē* – with Orestes appealing to Hermes Chthonius: 'who watchest over my father's sovereignty.' For the son has now returned to claim his birthright and to retrieve the defeat, the loss of mastery, which his father had suffered. Here, as elsewhere in this play, the reference is primarily political; but, since Orestes is to renew with Clytemnestra the duel between man and woman, it is personal also. It is both personal and political, for she is now the real master of house and state, whose harsh government is revealed by the Chorus of female slaves who enter with Electra – servants in fear, as the Watchman of the *Agamemnon* was a servant in fear. If Clytemnestra does not dominate the second play as she dominated the first, her near presence is always felt; and, though her part is short, the scenes where she confronts her son are the peaks of dramatic interest in the play.

The immediate preparation for entry is a striking theatrical effect. For Orestes, in his role of Phocian messenger, bids the servant summon one in authority, a woman – or better a man . . . 'man speaks to man with confidence and makes plain his evidence' (663 ff.). It is Clytemnestra who enters. What does she say? She behaves with formal propriety as the lady of a house. She offers the hospitable services for which a woman is responsible – the bath and the bed; 'but if anything needs be done requiring counsel, that is the work of men,' to whom she will communicate it. But 'counsel' and 'men' in juxtaposition must recall the *androboulon kear* ('man-counselling heart') of Clytemnestra; and there is significance even in the hospitality she offers. For, using the functions of a woman to carry out her manly counsel, she had killed her husband in a bath.[31] She dissimulates, as in the *Agamemnon*; but when, after the false news, which she receives with coldness and reserve,[32] she rounds off the scene by saying that she will communicate these things to the masters of the house and will take counsel, we know who is the master and who the counsellor.

The expected catastrophe is postponed, as in the *Agamemnon* by the Cassandra scene, so here by the entry of Orestes' Nurse. This simple soul takes us back to the past, and in so doing illuminates the immediate future. Soon mother and son will face one another, and she will plead with him by her motherhood. So the poet reminds us of the infancy of Clytemnestra's child. At the same time, he makes the Nurse, and not Clytemnestra, display a mother's affection and a mother's grief.[33] He achieves two purposes which may conflict upon the level of prosaic logic, but combine poetically to enhance the scene between unnatural mother and unnatural child; and it is to this scene that the Chorus now look forward (827 ff.), when Clytemnestra will cry *teknon* ('child') and Orestes will harden his heart.

The reference to Clytemnestra prepares the entry of Aegisthus, as hers was prepared by expectation of him. He cannot enter the trilogy without bathos, and his very inferiority is a commentary upon her predicament. Hypocritical, pompous, and with a good conceit that he cannot be imposed upon, he is now to be the vehicle of subtle irony. For, like the Elders in the *Agamemnon*, he doubts that the news is true; and he uses the same metaphor of fire to express his doubt (845 f.). Thus for the last time Clytemnestra is accused – and by one who should have known better – of a woman's weak credulity. Yet this time the accusation is justified. For Clytemnestra no longer controls the situation. She is numbered among the deaf and the sleepers (881); she asks, not answers, questions (885). Nevertheless, it is the circumstances that have changed, not the fibre of the woman. This is clear in the contest which follows.

The death-cry of Aegisthus is heard, and the Chorus-leader says that the issue of the battle is now decided (874). But this is not true: the real battle has not yet begun – the contest between mother and son which resumes the contest between husband and wife and which, like that earlier battle, is fought with the twin weapons of *peithō* and of *bia*. 'The dead the living slay,' cries the Servant to Clytemnestra (886); and she reads the silly riddle with characteristic speed. 'By craft we shall perish as we slew.' She demands a 'man-slaying axe',[34] to decide the issue

of victory or defeat. It is her instinct to do battle as a man. She does not realise that Aegisthus is dead; the words of the Servant did not imply it. But the sight of Orestes and Pylades with drawn swords reveals to her the true situation and her own ignominious weakness. The 'might' of Aegisthus (her 'shield' of the *Agamemnon*) has perished;[35] for a woman force, unprepared by cunning, was futile, and on this occasion the cunning had been used against her. The weapon of persuasion remains. With a swift efficiency she turns to wheedle her son as she had wheedled her husband; and the scene which follows is parallel to the scene in which she persuaded Agamemnon to tread the scarlet draperies. At the word *teknon*, at the sight of the breast, Orestes hesitates. Will Clytemnestra win yet another victory? But Apollo speaks, with the voice of Pylades. 'I count thee victor (903),' replies Orestes; for the victory in the contest belongs neither to the son nor to the mother, but to the god of Delphi.

Clytemnestra, however, does not easily accept defeat; and in the following thrust and parry we are taken back to the fundamental issues. For Orestes now threatens her life, as Agamemnon had threatened her liberty. To Orestes, indeed (as to the Choruses in both plays), the explanation of her conduct lies in her passion for Aegisthus (894 f.), whom she had preferred to Agamemnon in life, with whom she must sleep in death (904 ff.). Clytemnestra replies with an appeal which misses the reality by an equal margin: 'I nursed you and would grow old beside you' (908). Not only is this appeal already somewhat prejudiced by the Nurse's speech: it is inherently absurd, for Clytemnestra no more needs a son in her old age than she needed a husband in her prime; and the reply of Orestes means more than he knows: 'Could you who killed my father live with me?' The dialogue as it proceeds is packed with meanings that do not relate to our present theme. But, when Orestes charges his mother with selling him into slavery, the climax is approaching. 'Where, she asks, 'is the price which I received in exchange (916)?' It is a price which Orestes is ashamed to put into words. To such a simple charge, she makes a simple reply; she advances, as she had advanced in the *Agamemnon*, the infidelities of her husband. The lines which follow are the very core and centre of the dialogue.[36]

'Do not criticise him who works, you who sit within.' 'It is grief for women to be parted from their man, my child.' 'Yes, but the man's work supports them while they sit within' (919-21). The two lines spoken by Orestes are straightforward statements of male superiority. The husband supports the wife with his labour, with his valour, and in return demands that he be free from her criticism. 'Sitting within' (919) is reiterated and re-emphasised by 921. For this was Clytemnestra's

situation, while Agamemnon was at Troy; and her own intervening comment carries us back to the entry of Agamemnon and her speech of greeting (*Agam.* 861 ff.). Then, when she deprecated solitude, it was an ironical lie, which yet hinted at the crude assumptions of Orestes. Yet, in reducing her to the level of her paramour, it is such an over-simplification of the relationship between man and woman as the rest of the trilogy repudiates. It is corrected by that twofold reference to the woman who sits at home, which implies the collision of the powers and gifts of Clytemnestra with the conditions of her life as a woman.[37] The price which she received for the murder of her husband and for the banishment of her son was indeed Aegisthus, whose outward protection it was part of her humiliation to need, but whose weak character allowed her to continue the male role. Her predicament and its sorry solution lead as directly to the matricide (922) as the husbandhood of Agamemnon led to his murder (*Agam.* 1405).

Clytemnestra has a speaking part in the *Eumenides* also, but the short scene in which her ghost upbraids the sleeping Furies tells us little about Clytemnestra living. The woman who in the *Agamemnon* despised the 'plausible visions of a dream' (*Agam.* 274 f.), but in the *Choephori* allowed her action to be governed by a dream (*Cho.* 32 ff.), is now herself a dream in the minds of her avengers (116). This is in itself a symbol of that decline in psychological interest which the broad design of the trilogy imposed upon the dramatist. In the *Eumenides*, the divine powers and the general issues hold the stage; and it is through the utterances of gods that the special case of Clytemnestra is set against a wider background. But amid the debates of the gods we shall do well to remember the woman of the earlier plays.

These debates turn largely upon the relative status of man and woman. The Furies are the champions of Clytemnestra – of Clytemnestra as mother. But Apollo, in defending Orestes, speaks for Agamemnon, not only as a husband, but as man (625 ff.); he disparages the motherhood of Clytemnestra, denying the right of the female to be regarded, in the full sense, as parent of the child (658 ff.). Athena casts her vote for Orestes frankly on grounds of preference for the male (737). But these pronouncements come at the end of a long process of argument, which must now be examined.

The scene between Apollo and the Furies at Delphi (179-234) is a kind of preliminary, in the absence of the defendant, to the later trial before the Areopagus. It serves to present in a vivid form the direct clash, in interest and point of view, between the two parties. 'Your oracle bade that he should kill his mother.' 'My oracle bade that he should bring vengeance for his father' (202 f.). To the Furies it seems

inconsistent – and perhaps it is – that the god who accepts the polluted man should hurl abuse at his 'escort' (206). There may, in fact, be more in common between the two parties than either could willingly admit. 'We drive matricides from their homes.' 'When a woman kills her husband, what then?' (210 f.). The answer, as Apollo knows, is that, according to his own code, the son must avenge the father or suffer persecution by Furies. But it is a good point to make against his opponents. When they reply that in such a case no kindred blood is shed (212), the narrowness of their interests is revealed; and Apollo retorts effectively that they dishonour the institution of marriage, pledged by Zeus and Hera – they dishonour Cypris and the love of man and woman (213 ff.). This solemn reference to marriage is clearly of the first importance, and, whether Apollo is fully entitled to his argument or not, he gets on the whole the better of the first exchange, despite the arrogant violence of his partisanship. But this is only a preliminary contest. We must now pass to the trial itself.

The entry of Apollo to witness and to plead, is dramatic,[38] but his wrangle with the Furies is not immediately resumed. Instead, the Furies address to Orestes questions which are intended to elicit facts, but which soon lead to controversy. The rival claims of the dead are starkly juxtaposed (598 f.). Orestes bases his case upon the crimes of his mother, who had killed a man, a husband and a father. He asks, as Apollo had in effect asked (211), why the Furies did not pursue Clytemnestra when she was alive (604), and he receives the same answer: 'She was no kin of the man she slew.' We are back to the issue of the earlier scene. But, where Apollo's rejoinder had referred to the institution of marriage, Orestes asks, bitterly, whether he was, in fact, of his mother's blood (606). 'A false step,' observes Professor Thomson; and so it is, for Orestes bases his reply on the weakness, not (like Apollo) on the strength of his case. Yet it is in this kinship of blood that the horror of matricide resides. 'How then,' say the Furies, 'did she nurture thee beneath her girdle? Dost thou abjure thy mother's blood?'[39] They appeal to the apparent fact and to the universal sentiment of mankind; and at this point the reaction of the audience is bound to be sympathetic. The position is beyond Orestes, who invokes the aid of Apollo. The god will return to the question of kinship between mother and son, but his earlier arguments also must be carefully examined.

Apollo makes four speeches, in the first of which he seeks to dispose of the matter on the basis of authority. He is the prophet who never lies (615);[40] he is the mouthpiece of Zeus. But not only are 'appeals to authority useless when there is a conflict of authority':[41] this appeal is subtly prejudiced for an Athenian audience: 'Never yet,' says Apollo,

'have I spoken on my throne of prophecy, concerning man, woman, or city, what was not ordered by Zeus, father of the Olympians' (616 ff.). 'Concerning the city': from the god who medised [i.e. went over to the Medes – ed.].[42] And if he could be wrong about politics, he is not necessarily right about man and woman. The appeal was to Zeus, but for Aeschylus the will of Zeus is something to be anxiously explored, not accepted upon the authority of an Apollo. Did Zeus say: 'Avenge a father's death and pay no honour to a mother?' This is the reply of the Furies (622–4), and Apollo must now argue the point.

His argument is a simple one. The death of a man is different (625) – different, that is, from the death of a woman. This particular man is qualified as noble and as a king, by divine right. His death is rendered the more shocking by the fact that a woman killed him, not in open fight, but by treachery: the method is described in detail. The speech must be read in the light of earlier plays. Craft (which it is perhaps not for Apollo to disparage)[43] was imposed upon Clytemnestra, since in the circumstances of her life it was impossible for her to fight as an Amazon (or as a goddess). Yet with the weapons at her command she fought, and reversed the roles, so that Agamemnon became the woman, she the man. We cannot judge Apollo's argument out of all relation to the portraits of man and woman in the *Agamemnon*, and Aeschylus has ensured that we shall not do so in two ways: by reference to the generalship of Agamemnon (631 f.), and by reference to the manner of his death. Agamemnon was killed on his return 'from warfare, where he had, for the most part, won success'. There had, as Headlam says, been 'unfortunate incidents'.[44] Then why refer to them? In order to remind the audience of Iphigeneia, of Clytemnestra's justification (such as it was), of Agamemnon's weakness at Aulis – and at Argos. For when Apollo speaks of the robe, the embroidered garment with which Clytemnestra fettered her husband (635), we are meant to think not only of the material, but of the spiritual entanglement; not only of the robe, but of the carpet (*Agam.* 923), by means of which she had subjected his will to hers and forced him to accept the feminine role.[45] There is thus a certain irony in justifying the matricide on the grounds that Clytemnestra the woman had killed Agamemnon the man.

Apollo's argument does not impress the Furies. They return to Zeus. Does Zeus, who bound his father Cronus, give greater honour to a father's fate (640 ff.)? A debating-point which causes Apollo to lose his temper.[46] By making the obvious retort that bonds are not to be compared with death, which is irrevocable,[47] he plays into the hands of his opponents. For, as they are quick to remark, this is the very charge against Orestes – that he had shed a 'mother's kindred blood'. Thus Apollo is forced

back to the very point at which Orestes had handed over his defence (606). Unless he can dispose of it, the matricide stands condemned.

Apollo puts forward (658 ff.) the famous physiological argument, which has been so much discussed. The mother, while she has the function of nourishing the child in the womb, is not the true parent or progenitor, but a stranger who gives safe keeping to another's plant. The purpose of this argument is to defend matricide from the charge that it violates the relation of kinship, and the god has been driven to the position at which it is the only argument which can do so. Such a doctrine, perhaps already known in Athens,[48] might be welcomed in a masculine society as a counterpoise to the manifest uncertainty of fatherhood. For, if one thing is sure, it is that the mother carries and bears the child, and the intimacy of this relationship is confirmed by instinct and emotion. When Orestes first questioned the tie of blood between himself and Clytemnestra, the audience was bound to share in the indignation of the Furies. Did Aeschylus intend that they should now accept, upon the authority of Apollo (already damaged), a physiological theory which deprived the mother of real kinship with her child?

Aeschylus was a poet, not a physiologist. On the physiological theory, as such, the poet passes no judgement, but the inference which depreciates the relationship of mother and child he cannot accept without undermining one of the bases of tragic emotion in his trilogy. Not only does the dramatic tension of the *Choephori* derive from this relationship,[49] but in the *Agamemnon* also interest is focused upon the relationship of Clytemnestra to her daughter Iphigeneia and upon the violation of a mother's rights. Yet, if she is not fully the parent of Orestes, she is not fully the parent of Iphigeneia either. This is the kind of point on which we should expect Aeschylus to give verbal guidance to his audience; and he does so. The word *ernos* (plant, shoot), which occurs twice in this speech (661, 666), had been used by Clytemnestra of Iphigeneia in a striking passage.[50] But that is not all. The mother, says Apollo, 'like a stranger keeps safe the plant (*ernos*) – provided a god blast it not (661).' Why make this qualification?[51] To remind us of the pregnant hare of the *Agamemnon* and her offspring (*Agam.* 120), of the offence against motherhood which called down the wrath of Artemis and led to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. For the hare was both the symbol and the cause of Iphigeneia's death.[52]

With this argument, so deadly to the tragedy and yet the only argument which can represent the matricide as a blameless act, Apollo's bolts are all shot (676).[53] The Furies are equally ready for the verdict to be pronounced. If the audience at this stage makes its own summing-up, it may feel that the balance has been held steady between Apollo and

the Furies. Both parties have been shown to disparage an intimate human relationship. If the weakness of the Furies in disregarding the marriage-tie is obvious, the attempt of Apollo to brush aside the tie of blood between mother and child in the superior interest of the male has been subtly criticised, his consistency and his authority impugned. When the votes of the human jurors are counted, they are found to be equal; and this verdict not only corresponds to the balance of argument, but is a sign that Orestes was confronted with an intolerable dilemma, being subjected to contradictory claims *both* based upon the blood-tie and backed by the law of the vendetta. It has been well said that 'Aeschylus was not interested in the solution of an insoluble conundrum'.[54] What Orestes did was terrible: what else, in the social circumstances, Orestes could have done, it is not the purpose of the dramatist to show; his eyes are on the future. But the matricide is acquitted, and the acquittal is brought about by the 'vote' of Athena, given for a specific reason. Apollo is so treated in the trilogy that we can to a considerable extent discount his *ex cathedra* pronouncements. Athena, with her dignity and courtesy, is far more impressive; as the protectress of the men of Athens and foundress of the Areopagus she carries more weight.

The reason which she gives for her support of Orestes is already hinted at in the closing speech of Apollo, who quotes her as evidence in favour of his theory of parentage (662 ff.). For Athena, daughter of Olympian Zeus, was not nurtured in the darkness of the womb (665). As evidence, the analogy has little weight, for all human beings are so nurtured, nor can Apollo's physiology abolish this physical fact (659). But if his case is not strengthened thereby, the audience is prepared for the partisanship of the goddess. When the time comes, Athena could not give her reason more explicitly. She votes,[55] not out of pity, not out of respect for the suppliant, not in order to gain advantage for her city, but on these grounds. 'No mother bore me. The male I commend in all things – except for marriage – with all my heart, and am strongly on the father's side. Thus I will not pay more regard to the death of a woman who killed a man, the master of a house.' This is the climax of the man-woman theme. 'Zeus,' said the Furies to Apollo (640) 'pays more regard to a father's fate, by your account'; and Apollo's view is now ratified by Athena. How is this to be explained? We may fall into error if we attempt to answer this question without reference to Clytemnestra.

For there is a sense in which Athena is the counterpart of Clytemnestra and serves as the poet's final comment upon her character and motives. When Orestes reached Athens, he prayed to Athena, wherever she might be, whether in Libya or 'whether, like a bold captain (296),

she surveys the plain of Phlegra'. For Athena fights like a man. In fact, she was neither in Libya nor at Phlegra, but in the Troad, as she tells in her first words (397 ff.), taking possession of the land which the leaders and princes of the Achaeans had given her as the prize of war. For she had fought at Troy; and Orestes (454 ff.) can refer to her comradeship-in-arms with Agamemnon. Athena fought at Troy; Clytemnestra, left to keep the home, hated the very Chryseis who had shared Agamemnon's hut and the Cassandra who had sailed with him on his homeward voyage. When he returned, she could not kill him in fair fight ('like an Amazon, with far-shot arrows'), but with craft and traps. Everything, then, that Clytemnestra's nature demanded and her sex forbade or hampered, Athena is free to do, by virtue of her godhead. She is god-goddess to Clytemnestra's man-woman; and her masculinity wins her praise and worship, while that of Clytemnestra leads to disaster for herself and others. There is thus a bitter irony, when the goddess, who in all things commends the male and is free to exercise her preference in action, condemns the woman of manly counsel for seeking the domination which her nature demanded.

Yet it is altogether unnatural that Athena should vote as she does. Herself in authority, she respects the status of the master. Daughter of Zeus, she can sympathise with the relationship of child to father, and so votes for Orestes. But the issue of the trial had come to turn upon two other relationships, in which she had no part. The argument was between Apollo, who stood (at least at 213 ff.) for the marriage-tie, and the Furies, who stood for the bond between child and mother. Upon this issue Athena, who was born of no mother, the virgin-goddess who eschewed wedlock, gives her vote; and since there can be no question upon which side it will be cast, we should at least ask how much validity and what precise significance attaches to this vote. The matter must be considered in two ways: in terms of theology and in terms of society.[56]

Theologically, Athena has importance, for Aeschylus, only as a potential spokesman of the will of Zeus. Apollo, with considerable pomp, had claimed to speak for his father, but this claim was prejudiced in various ways. Athena also is a child of Zeus, and, as her bearing is more dignified, so her solutions are clearly better than Apollo's. At the voting, she speaks for herself and makes no claim to higher authority, but later, when she brings her divine persuasion to bear upon the Furies, she makes reference to her father's will.[57] 'Bright testimony,' she tells them, 'came from Zeus; and he who gave evidence was he himself who prophesied that Orestes for this deed should not come to harm' (797 ff.). This must, of course, be read in the light of her preceding remarks: that the Furies were not defeated, that the outcome of the trial was an equally divided vote, which was an honest one (796). It is noteworthy that the key-word *dikē* (justice)[58] is associated with the equal votes of the human jurors and that the wording of the oracle is negative. Orestes – and this is the will of Zeus – was to suffer no harm for what he did (799). For the main responsibility rested upon Apollo, who gave the oracle – that is to say, upon the social code under which Orestes acted. This code was imperfect and embodied 'justice' to a limited degree. We see it in the process of supersession. This is the significance of the reference to Zeus in the next speech of Athena. Tactfully, yet firmly, she reminds the Furies of the thunderbolt of Zeus – which had already been employed against recalcitrant divinities of an older generation.[59] The will of Zeus for the evolution of human society is not to be frustrated. But there is no need of the thunderbolt in this case (829), for the Furies recognise Zeus as all-powerful (918) and accept their place in the new order which his daughter has established in Athens.[60]

It is generally recognised that a great part of the interest in the trilogy, and particularly in the *Eumenides*, is sociological, in the sense that Aeschylus has dramatised a signal advance in the organisation of human society – from the vendetta to the court of law. The point need not be laboured. Athena succeeds where Apollo failed, because his code was still tied to the obsolete blood-feud.[61] The dilemma which faced Orestes could only be escaped by the establishment of a court of law to try cases of homicide. The divided vote seems to recognise this fact; and the jurors who returned this verdict were, in fact, those Athenians who are represented as at once the pioneers and beneficiaries of the new order. But their goddess did not give the vote which acquitted Orestes on the ground that he had been placed in an impossible position: she gave it out of preference for the male. Has this fact, too, a sociological significance?

So Professor Thomson argues. 'If we ask why the dramatist has made the outcome of the trial turn on the social relations of the sexes, the answer is that he regarded the subordination of women, quite correctly, as an indispensable condition of democracy . . . a necessary consequence of the development of private property.'[62] That Aeschylus has, in fact, made the outcome of the trial depend upon the relationship between the sexes cannot be denied; and it is the less possible to disregard the emphatic pronouncement of Athena because it is not only the trial but, if the foregoing analysis has been correct, the whole trilogy which turns upon this relationship. One may doubt, however, whether the simple statement (made by Professor Thomson in a different context)[63] that to Aeschylus 'the subjection of women was not only just but preferable to the liberty which they had formerly enjoyed' is an adequate description of the dramatist's views.

It might, for instance, be considered that Aeschylus adopted a strange method of proclaiming the natural superiority and rightful dominance of the male, when he opened his trilogy with a play in which the man – husband, king, and general – is routed upon every plane by the woman. And not by one woman only, if the superiority of Cassandra to her conqueror is admitted. It is, indeed, striking how interest and sympathy are concentrated upon the women in the *Agamemnon*, where, to set against Iphigeneia, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra, we have the humiliated Agamemnon and the ignominious Aegisthus.[64]

But Clytemnestra, it will be said, is an abnormal woman, in that she has the mental characteristics of a man. This is true, and it is the cause of a personal tragedy which is almost Sophoclean. This tragedy, given its final touch of irony by the words of Athena, is absolute, since it was impossible in Clytemnestra's own society, and equally impossible in democratic Athens, for a woman of dominating will and intelligence to exploit her gifts to her own satisfaction and for the advantage of the community. The underlying social problem is one which has only been solved partially and intermittently in human history. If Aeschylus, who had fought against Artemisia at Salamis, realised the normal predicament of such a woman in a predominantly male society, this does not mean that he saw how it could be avoided, or that, when he made Athena proclaim the primacy of the male, he did not recognise that this was a historical necessity Her words, at that solemn moment, were not vain; nor could they be. Yet, even so, we have not perhaps exhausted the significance of the theme.

The trilogy treats of the relationship between man and woman and of the institution of marriage. Against this institution, Clytemnestra rebels, partly because it is ill adapted to such as her, partly because, in the matter of Iphigeneia, her husband had violated the basis of mutual respect upon which marriage should stand. Clytemnestra is not only the tragic exception, over whom the general rule rides roughshod: she is a symbol of all wives and mothers who suffer from the inferior status of the woman in marriage. It is for this reason, if for no other, that the dramatist has taken pains that Iphigeneia shall not be forgotten in the *Eumenides*. The foundation of the Areopagus solved, triumphantly, the social problem of homicide. Did Athena's proclamation of male superiority solve the social problem of the relationship of the sexes in marriage? Did democratic Athens in the fifth century solve this problem, or did Aeschylus think that it had done so?

Athens did not. We need not indeed suppose that the most extreme statements of feminine subjection tell the whole truth, or that no respectable woman in Athens had any scope for the development of her personality, or that there was no equality, no mutual respect, in any Athenian marriage. There is evidence to the contrary.[65] But the impression remains that in this field of social life the Athenians had, on the whole, failed to achieve a harmonious balance and, in degrading the status of women, had committed an injustice which damaged their society.[66] Euripides was very conscious of this, and his Medea speaks for her sex. But did not Clytemnestra do the like? It is hard to believe that Aeschylus, whose women have such powers and courage, regarded with complacency a state of affairs which can have changed but little in the generation which separates the *Oresteia* from the *Medea*.

At this point we badly miss the end of the Danaid trilogy, which Aeschylus may have been able to take for granted, when in the closing scene of the *Eumenides* he passes to other themes. For the earlier trilogy also dealt with the institution of marriage; and, if it led to the conclusion that the married lot must be accepted by women, there is some reason to suppose that it was also concerned with their dignity in marriage.[67] The *Oresteia* makes by implication the same claim on behalf of women – a claim which was, broadly, not met by Athenian society. Aeschylus, who regarded, and rightly regarded, the Athenian democracy as a new peak in social achievement, to which the closing scenes of the *Eumenides* are, in one respect, a triumphant hymn, was not necessarily its blind propagandist.[68] Athena, who inaugurates the new order with dignity and patience, does not necessarily speak the final word of the wisdom of Zeus, when she gives her vote to Orestes with such an explicit absence of sympathy for the opposite cause. To achieve her ends she employs the sovereign democratic virtue of Persuasion; yet *Peithō* had work still to do, in creating a just social order, which was beyond the imagination of this masculine goddess, but not perhaps beyond the poet's.[69]

31. *telos* recurs in the *Oresteia* almost as frequently as *dike* and its cognates. See William B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1939), 157: 'The whole play is full of references to differently conceived *telē*, all of which are eventually reconciled in Aeschylus' final solution of the tragic situation.' The significance of this repetition is also discussed by Philip Wheelwright, *The Burning Fountain* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1954), 259–60.

32. Fischer, *Telosgedanke*, 9, distinguishes three specific levels of meaning. First, the simplest sense: any human action which implies a fixed goal. Next a *telos* fixed by fate, imposed on man; in this connection the word is often associated with the Erinyes and the hereditary curse which they embody. Third is the *telos* of divine power and perfection which finds fulfillment in the will of Zeus.

33. The association of this word with the mysteries and the implications of this fact for the *Oresteia* should not be overlooked despite the disfavor incurred by the views of George Thomson – see 'Mystical Allusions in the *Oresteia*', *Journ. Hell. Stud.*, 55 (1935), 20–34; see also his commentary. One may not agree with all of Thomson's conclusions, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to overlook the elements in the trilogy which led him to form those conclusions. What Thomson overemphatically calls 'allusions to the mysteries' might be better termed imagery and themes drawn from the sphere of mystery religion; for example, imagery of light and darkness, the theme of salvation and *apallagē ponōn* (deliverance from strife), and significant repetition of the type discussed here, especially that in the second stasimon and the carpet scene. (Compare Plato's *Phaedrus* where similar imagery and repetition is employed, its connection with the mysteries unequivocal.)

Such a suggestion as the foregoing is sometimes dismissed with, 'But we know from Aristotle that Aeschylus was not an initiate.' That is to mistake the issue. Initiate or not, Aeschylus seems to have been on the same wavelength as the initiated, to have been absorbed in the poetic celebration of a mystery not unlike their own. Or so, at least, it appeared to his contemporaries, as *The Frogs* of Aristophanes and that selfsame passage in the *Nichomachean Ethics* show.

34. *pelomai* and *tellō*, to turn, to come into being, to become, and *telson*, the turning point in ploughing, are related words. See Hofmann, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen*, s.v.

35. In addition to the meanings already mentioned the word has another connotation of importance to the *Oresteia*. There is the *telos*, or fulfillment, of Dike which comes *teleōs*, at last. Compare Hesiod, *Erga*, 217–18, and Solon's elegy to the Muses (Diehl fr. 1; Bergk fr. 13), 17-32. Daube, *Zu den Rechtsproblemen*, 116–18, observes, 'the distinguishing characteristic of the gods, their ability in the end to bring their will to fulfillment, is repeated through *telos* and formulated through related expressions.'

36. Clytemnestra prays to Zeus *teleios* the god who gives decision in battle as well as the fulfiller of prayers. In persuading Agamemnon to walk upon the carpet she has already waged one battle, attained one victory, achieved one *telos*. She now prays for favorable outcome in the second battle and fulfillment of the second *telos*, Agamemnon's murder. See Fischer, *Telosgedanke*, 127–8.

37. Several associative connections link this passage to 1385-92. One prior to, one after, Agamemnon's death, both allude to that death in a similar manner, the second openly, the first in veiled terms. Lines 966-74 refer to Zeus *teleios*; 1385–92 play upon the third libation offered Zeus *sōtēr*. Zeus *teleios* is identical with Zeus *sōtēr*: both epithets designate the god who receives the third libation (see Fischer, 127-9). In the first passage Zeus makes the grape yield wine, a dramatic irony which suggests bloodshed. In the second Clytemnestra sheds Agamemnon's blood like a libation of wine to Zeus *sōtēr*. The first uses motifs of root and foliage along with seasonal change from heat to cold. The second describes blood as a shower of rain which refreshes the plant as it gives birth to seed. Thus the same complex of ideas and imagery appears in both passages. As Fischer, 131, puts it, the second is the 'Enthüllung' (revelation) of the first.

R. P. Winnington-Ingram: Clytemnestra and the Vote of Athena (pp. 84-103)

1. Cf. W. B. Stanford, in *Class. Quart.* 31 (1937), 92 f. *Agam.* 11.

2. E.g. Jaeger, *Paideia* i, 327. 'In Aeschylean drama man is not yet a problem in himself, he is merely the instrument of Fate. It is Fate itself that is the problem.' Broadly true, this may need some qualification in the case of Clytemnestra. The more austere, however, is the view taken of Aeschylean characterisation, the more is it incumbent on the critic to give proper weight to this characteristic of Clytemnestra (largely irrelevant to the traditional story) in considering the general themes of the trilogy.

3. Thomson's arguments (*Oresteia* II, ad 59) for her presence at 83 are convincing.

4. *kratei* is a natural word for a house-slave to use, but obtains a broader significance as the play develops (see Daube, *Zu den Rechtsproblemen in Aischylos' Agamemnon*, 39 ff.); it is closely associated with *nikan*, etc.

5. Headlam, *Cambridge Praelections, 1906*, 110. This does not mean that the ode is intended to express a sequence of emotions in the Chorus. But their train of thought is such that they end in a greatly changed mood. (I say this to avoid a possible misunderstanding.)

6. Thus it is the male Chorus, not Clytemnestra, whose beliefs and disbeliefs are conditioned by their hopes and fears. (This characteristic of the Chorus is put to brilliant use at 1346 ff. in order to ease the difficulties of the dramatic situation: note esp. 1366 f., which gives them their excuse for not entering the palace.)

7. 600, 602, 603, 604, 606 ff., 612

8. The intervening *stasimon* bears on Clytemnestra through the theme of Helen, though their relationship is not yet fully brought out, and on Iphigeneia through the theme of heredity.

9. See Thomson on 877 (his 868).

10. See Thomson on 889–94 (his 880–5).

11. 258–60.

12. Cornford (*Thucydides Mythistoricus*, 160) speaks of 'the proud and masterful princess, at the death-grip now with the principle of Agamemnon's lordship', and presents the issue in terms of a historical transition from matriarchy to patriarchy. Snell (*Philologus*, Suppl. xx. i. 122 f.): 'The murder of Agamemnon is also an act for liberation on the part of Clytemnestra.'

13. See p. 91.

14. 'An open act of pride which will symbolise the sin he is about to expiate' (Thomson, *Oresteia* i, 25).

15. E.g. Daube, 127 n. 11. But if the behaviour of Agamemnon is not psychologically interpreted here, the critic is liable to misinterpret the scene at Aulis also, since the two scenes are parallel and in both the same Agamemnon acts out of the same weakness (see Méautis, *Eschyle et la trilogie*, 178 f.).

16. The tone of Agamemnon's speech (914 ff.)? He is at once worried and

gratified by her fulsome praises; at once cautious and unsuspecting. One can hardly agree with Méautis (op. cit. 180) that 914 f. is 'une bonne plaisanterie' spoken with a broad smile.

17. Compare the tone of 832 ff.

18. Cf. Headlam, *Praelections*, 129.

19. Thomson, *Oresteia*, i, 26.

20. Hence the irony of 1084.

21. Cf. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* i, 100, E. Fraenkel, *Die Kassandraszene der Orestie*, 9.

22. Daube points out (op. cit. 182) that, unlike Aegisthus, Agamemnon is not culpable in Attic law. But the Chorus do not attempt to defend him on this score, any more than in his treatment of Iphigeneia. For Aeschylus he was guilty on both counts of an offence against marriage (see below).

23. The two spheres over which her imagination had ranged commandingly in her first great speeches to the Chorus (see p. 85). It is of the second of these speeches that Wilamowitz could say: 'that Clytemnestra, the woman who sat at home could describe the conquered city . . . is truly improper. Nowhere else do we find such naïve dramaturgy . . .'. (*Aischylos Interpretationen*, 167 f.). When Wilamowitz erred, his errors were upon the same lordly scale as his successes!

24. When the fountains of her tears had dried up (887 f., cf. 1525).

25. And are, therefore, relevant to the argument about parentage in the *Eumenides* (see p. 98).

26. Since Apollo stands forth as the champion of marriage (*Eum.* 211 ff.), it is interesting to note a parallel between his argument there and Clytemnestra's here (1412 ff.). Where Apollo says to the Furies, in effect: 'You pursue an offence by a child, but not an offence by a wife against her husband', Clytemnestra says to the Chorus: 'You pursue an offence by a wife against her husband, but not an offence against a child.'

27. If the *daimon* represents, as in a sense it does, an evil heredity, Clytemnestra does not share in this heredity. It is hardly to the point to suggest (Daube, op. cit. 192) that she had acquired the family curse by marriage. Helen and Clytemnestra are both extraneous circumstances used by the *daimon* to effect its purposes.

28. Note the specious lucidity of 1583–6, which omit the one point damaging to his case (yet already known to the audience from 1193).

29. Note esp. 1623. This characteristic reappears in the *Choephori*.

30. 1625–7 are, without doubt, addressed to Aegisthus (see Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: New Texts and Old Problems*, 21 f.) The sexual theme is further emphasised at 1639, at 1643 f., and at 1671 (the conventional view).

31. The circumstances of his death were mentioned as recently as 491 ff.

32. On the ascription of 691-9 to Electra see *Class. Rev.* 60 (1946), 58 ff.

33. Cf. 749 f. See Méautis op. cit. 233 f.

34. It matters little whether, or in what version of the story, she killed her husband with an axe. The stress is on the epithet and on the first half of it.

35. *bia* is significant and the periphrasis should not be emended away as by Thomson, *Class. Rev.* 56, 71.

36. Thus 924 f. return to 912; 927 to 910 f.; 928 to 908 – leaving the discussion of motive and the man-woman theme in the centre of the design.

37. And by expressing those conditions in economic terms offers a fundamental generalisation about men and women.

38. Entering on *dikē* (573), he interrupts Athena, whose account of her *thesmoi* (laws) is postponed till 681 ff. When it comes, it picks up many of the ideas thrown out in the preceding chorus and shows how her new order preserves such merits as the Furies could claim. Meantime, we have a scene which displays the inadequacies of Apollo's compromise.

39. Which is *philtaton*, 'nearest and dearest.' Compare and contrast, therefore, Apollo's commentary on marriage (216). But has either of these bonds the priority over the other? If 605 f. insist on the horror of matricide, perhaps they also imply the question: is the bond between mother and son any closer than that between husband and wife?

40. Cf. *Cho.* 559, but perhaps the days of his infallibility are over.

41. Thomson, *Oresteia* i, 62.

42. Moreover, as Thomson points out (*Aeschylus and Athens*, 278), the more advanced democrats, at least, would not willingly admit the infallibility in political matters of an oracle which had such close connexions with the Dorian aristocracies.

43. Which his own agents employed in the *Choephori* (557, 726, 888).

44. See Thomson ad loc.

45. *Agam.* 918.

46. He loses his temper because the charge of inconsistency which they make, and to which the attention of the jury is specially called (642 f.), is true. His abusive language (644) recalls 68 ff. and 185 ff., and it is this abuse of the beings with whom he is really so closely involved that gives the clue to his inconsistency.

47. A constant theme: *Cho.* 71 ff., 520 f., *Eum.* 261 ff. Note particularly *Agam.* 1019 ff.

48. Thomson ad loc.: Aly, *Philologus*, Suppl. xxi, 40 (who argues that Aeschylus introduced the doctrine from Sicily).

49. We are made to feel that the matricide is not just another crime, but the very climax of horror, which is particularly associated with the word *teknon* (child) (e.g. 829, 896, 922).

50. *Agam.* 1525.

51. As unnecessary, and therefore as significant, as the reference to the 'unfortunate incidents' at 632.

52. 'The young hare in the womb on which they feast is the child of Clytemnestra' (J. T. Sheppard, *Class. Rev.* 36, 8).

53. 676. On the ascription of 676 f. to Apollo see *Class. Rev.* 49, 7 f. Apollo adds a piece of testimony in favour of his contention (662–6: see below), and an appeal to the self-interest of the jurors (667–73).

54. Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens*, 289.

55. It is unnecessary, for the purposes of this article, to go into the question whether Athena casts a vote in addition to laying down the principle of 'acquittal if the votes are equally divided'.

56. Not in terms of the psychology of Orestes, which is of comparatively little importance in the *Choephori*, and of less in the *Eumenides*. At the most we can say that he is given some personal motives, over and above the duty of vengeance, i.e., the desire to recover his father's throne and wealth, and to terminate his own exile. What is more relevant, perhaps, is the absence of personal relationship between him and Clytemnestra. The bond between mother and son is here as tenuous and abstract as it could very well be. This, of course, has the effect of emphasising the general sociological issue, but it also helps to make the acquittal of Orestes morally tolerable.

57. Orestes, in his speech of thanks, joins 'the third Saviour' (758 ff.) with Pallas and Loxias. The motives which he ascribes to Zeus are those which he has

found in his patron Apollo, including a violent detestation of the Furies. But this is not the spirit of the succeeding scene.

58. Cf. esp. 573, 580 f., 609–15.

59. The reference to Phlegra at 295 prepares this hint of force.

60. Cf. 850. The relationship between Zeus and the Furies, which is the basic metaphysical problem of the trilogy, cannot be discussed here.

61. Such advance as the Delphic code may have made upon the justice of the Furies need not be discussed here.

62. Op. cit., 288: cf. 289 ('the principle of male precedence, now formally ratified as the basis of democracy . . .'); 291 ('the matricide is acquitted by an appeal to historical expediency'). Professor Thomson's treatment of the whole subject raises many questions upon which anthropologists are far from agreed. For the purposes of the present argument, it can be granted that Aeschylus was consciously envisaging the change from a tribal to a democratic society, in the former of which women enjoyed a greater freedom than in the latter. The actual setting of the story is, of course, the aristocratic half-way stage in which the institution of marriage is firmly established and male supremacy strongly marked, and in which the blood-feud is seen operating within the family and not the clan. Nor is it necessary to examine the hypothesis that the Erinyes were – and were thought by Aeschylus to be – originally associated with matrilineal descent. In the trilogy they have, in theory, an equal interest in both parents (cf. *Eum.* 512). The dramatic situation forces them, however, to be bitter partisans of the mother (cf. *Eum.* 210), though they do not – and could not logically – disparage the man-father in the way that Apollo disparages the woman-mother.

63. Op. cit., 306 (in discussing the *Supplices*, on which see below).

64. And the Watchman, the Herald, and the Elders – all dominated by the queen's superior personality. The Elders, in particular, play the feminine role to her.

65. See Gomme, *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, 89 ff.

66. Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, 329 ff. gives a well-balanced account.

67. Cf. D. S. Robertson in *Class. Rev.* 38, 51 ff. and Thomson, op. cit. 308. It is clearly impossible to discuss the problems of this trilogy adequately in a footnote. Perhaps the evidence does not permit a final verdict on the crucial question whether the objection of the Danaids was to marriage with their kin or to marriage as such. In either case, however, the sons of Aegyptus, in attempting to force themselves upon the Danaids, were committing an act of *hybris* (see H. G. Robertson in *Class. Rev.* 50, 104 ff., with references in his p. 107 n. 2), for which they – all but one – suffered an appropriate punishment. The clearest evidence for this (and it is also impartial) is in *P.V.*, 856 ff. 'If that was the crime of the sons of Aigyptos, it was a crime enjoined in democratic Athens by an express provision of the law and committed regularly by the dramatist's contemporaries in the happy belief that by so doing they were serving simultaneously the gods, the state and their own interests' (Thomson, op. cit. 306). But perhaps this happy belief was not fully shared by the dramatist.

68. For the sensibility of the artist is bound to detect and likely to reveal the flaws that inevitably mar the harmony of any social or political system. It is this, in part, which gives him his social importance. Thomson assumes, on rather inadequate evidence, that Aeschylus regarded the wealth of the community as now equitably distributed (op. cit. 289). I see no reason why he should not have praised the just achievements of Athenian democracy without being blind to its actual or potential defects.

69. 970 (*peithous*). It is Zeus only who, for Aeschylus, represents absolute wisdom and justice, and he is inscrutible. All other deities – Artemis, Apollo, Hermes, the Furies, even Athena – represent aspects, approximations, partial and imperfect harmonies.

C. J. Herington: Aeschylus: The Last Phase (pp. 123–137)

1. A convenient publication, translation, and discussion of this papyrus is that by H. Lloyd-Jones in his Appendix to H. W. Smyth's *Aeschylus*, Volume ii (second edition, 1957), 595 f.

2. This point is well made by F. Solmsen in *Trans. Amer. Philol. Ass.* 68 (1937), 204.

3. Herodotus 1, chapters 6–91, *passim*. If Professor D. Page is right, this Herodotean story will have been based itself on an early fifth-century tragedy or group of tragedies by an older contemporary of Aeschylus; see *A New Chapter in the History of Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1951), with some startling evidence in support (*Trans. Cambr. Philol. Soc.*, 186 n.s. 8, 1962). In that case we should have the record of *three* tragic works, earlier than the Aeschylean late group, which presupposed the undivided cosmos discussed here. But it is right to add that Page's theory, excellently argued as it is, still faces certain difficulties, and does not yet seem to be generally accepted.

4. Aeschylus, *Threissai*, fr. 292 in Mette's collection of the fragments.

5. Aeschylus, *Phryges e Hektoros Lytra*, fr. 254 Mette.

6. The ancient versions of the Danaid story are surveyed, for example, by J. Vürtheim, in *Aeschylos' Schutzflehende* (Amsterdam, 1928), 10 ff.

7. Evidence: fr. 124 Mette (43 Nauck, Murray). Although the exact reading of this fragment is in dispute, its general drift and reference seem fairly certain.

8. *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Volume 20 (1952), 21 f.; reprinted by Mette as fr. 125. The tiny fragments of the nineteen lines which preceded those translated in my text here contain one, possibly two, references to *cattle* (lines 2, 6); and perhaps references to *the mating of cattle* (line 2, as restored by Mette) and to *parturition* (line 7).

9. It probably consisted of the tragedies *Myrmidones, Nereides*, and *Phryges e Hektoros Lytra*; see Mette's collection of the fragments, pp. 70–92.

10. For the detailed arguments (as I see them) I refer to my article on Aeschylus and Old Comedy in *Trans. Amer. Philol. Ass.* 94 (1963), 113 ff. Some new considerations are added here.

11. Summarily: (1) *Suppliants* 556 ff. implies a theory of the risings of the Nile otherwise attributed to Aeschylus' younger contemporary Anaxagoras (fr. A42; cf. J. Vürtheim, *Aeschylos' Schutzflehende*, 79 ff.). (2) *Danaides*, fr. 125 Mette, seems closely related to passages in Empedocles (frs. B71–73; cf. *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 195 n.). (3) Apollo's 'biology' in *Eumenides* 658 ff. abruptly introduces almost the sole Athenian reference to a problem known to have been under discussion by six non-Athenian philosophers and medical men in the middle years of the fifth century (evidence collected by A. Perretti in *Parola del Passato* ii (1956), 241 ff.). (4) *Prometheus* 88 ff. (allusion to the Four Elements, and perhaps to Empedoclean thinking? Compare, e.g. *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 180 ff.). (5) *Prometheus* 459 ff., on the excellence of arithmetic (evidently a Pythagorean notion; cf. G. Thomson, note on lines 475 f. in his edition of the play).

12. Noticed at least as early as 1663 by Stanley (quoted by E. Fraenkel in his edition of the *Agamemnon*, i, 43), and often since.

13. Paragraph 10, ed. Arnaldo Monte, *Le Lettere di Dante* (Milan, 1921).

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