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A WRATH THAT REMEMBERS:

A FEMINIST COMPANION
TO AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*



by

MARY IRIS ALLISON

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ANCIENT STUDIES

PROFESSOR DAVID ROSELLI, SCRIPPS COLLEGE
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Thanks to my parents, who did not bat an eye when I said I was going to get a Classics degree from a liberal arts college. Though I haven't touched Latin since high school, my father's copy of *Amo, Amas, Amat and More* opened my eyes to the world of Ancient Studies. Then to my friends and classmates in Senior Seminar for your camaraderie and commiseration; and to Professor Jody Valentine for being in our corner through this entire process. Out of this amazing bunch, my heart goes out especially to Lilly Haave, Annamarie Wire, Graham Olson, and Nam Do. Thanks to Sarah Safford and Isabella Melsheimer for their unwavering friendship and for making Scripps College feel like home. Thanks finally to my partner Logan for supporting my love for a text that is unfriendly to husbands and boyfriends alike, and for making my life beyond this research both joyful and rewarding.

From the start, my relationship with this text has been one of self-exploration and healing. I am indebted most of all to the Aeschylean women, Clytemnestra, Cassandra, and Iphigeneia, for holding within them my own rage, grief, and rebirth.

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I am a goddess in a shower of blood
red twists of spiralled petals rise
corn rustles round my darkening thighs
scream of the swifts
who comes who comes
who makes me
stream of the golden arms and hair
immortal in ascending wind

Clytemnestra, John Fowles

Translator's Note

King Agamemnon is a giant in the *Iliad*, a phantom in the *Odyssey*, and in this eponymous play, something in between. Some four hundred years after these epic poems, Aeschylus the tragedian was compelled to explain this “in between”, writing what we now consider to be the only extant Greek Tragedy. But what is a tragedy? Gorgias in Plutarch's writings describes tragedy as a lie that reveals the truth: “he who deceives is more honest than he who does not deceive, and he who is deceived is wiser than he who is not deceived” (Plutarch 509). In *Poetics*, Aristotle gives this definition: “tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and possessing magnitude; in embellished language, each kind of which is used separately in the different parts; in the mode of action and not narrated; and effecting through pity and fear the *katharsis* of such emotions” (9). Good tragedy, Aristotle continues, features complex structure, imitates fearful and pitiful events, and does *not* show good men falling to misfortune¹. Where, then, does the death of King Agamemnon fall? According to Vernant, tragic conflict falls into two categories: the conflict of one *dikē* with another, and the conflict between heroic representation and reality (26). Aeschylus is remembered for increasing the number of actors in a tragedy from one to two, giving way for intercharacter conflict, and for debate on the tragic stage. Mythmaking, which Aeschylus takes part in via the tragic play, is a communal act, well-suited for the introduction of the twelve-person chorus. Jean-Luc Nancy comments, “Myth arises only from a community and for it: they engender

¹ We might ask, however, is King Agamemnon a good man? Griffith proposes in *Brilliant Dynasts*: “In his behavior at Aulis, at Troy, and before the palace door when confronted by his wife, King Agamemnon represents in many respects the embodiment of the democratically-perceived upper-class wastrel: ever amassing, flaunting, and squandering wealth, indiscriminate in violence, disrespectful of boundaries, sexually inconsiderate, yet easily dominated by a woman (mother or wife) in a way that a well-disciplined and free-minded Greek (especially Athenian) should find disgusting” (84).

one another, infinitely and immediately” (Nancy 50). In Athens, for example, the development of legal systems, the city-state’s conception of justice, was put on the tragic stage via the use of legal vocabulary: “the tragic poets make use of this legal vocabulary, deliberately exploiting its ambiguities, its fluctuations, and its incompleteness. We find an imprecision in the terms used, shifts of meaning, incoherences and contradictions, all which reveal the disagreements within legal thought itself (Vernant 25). Tragedy in its contradictions and complexities captured the dynamic and open-ended political world of Classical Athens. Yet the mythmaking of tragic performance did as much to shape ancient Athens as it did to observe and record it. Then perhaps, tragic theater had a democratizing effect on Athens, giving a voice and a platform for the marginalized, though filtered through the playwright². Prohibited from voting, representing themselves, or acting in the very plays written about them, women in fifth century Athens³ found their voice in religious ceremonies and behind closed doors. Then, Clytemnestra’s speeches and rule over Argos, to some in the audience, may have been a hopeful sight, to members of the audience who for the first time are enabled to identify with a variety of characters spanning social class, gender identity, nationality, etc.⁴ The *Agamemnon* does not exist on its own, whether in production or reception, and it is prohibitively difficult to classify Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* as an inherently “feminist” trilogy.. The

² In the words of Mark Griffith, “...*tragôidia* is transparently more ‘democratic’ as an art form, in its audience and occasion, its structures and conventions, even to some degree its language and meters, than both the epic and the various other kinds of choral and individual lyric, or iambic, that we know of. That is to say, Attic tragedy is an art form that, within and beneath its mythological and grandiose trappings, its bizarre stories of gods and Bronze Age royal families, is designed to appeal to a mass citizen audience, and to explore some of their fundamental concerns.” (1995, 62)

³ This is a broad discussion of a complex topic, one that excludes intersections of class, marital status, age, nationality, etc.

⁴ Cf. Wohl, on female audiences of tragedy: “This is problematic, however, not only because the evidence for women’s presence at the dramatic festival is far from conclusive, but also because it is dangerous to assume that women watched in a radically different way from men” (xx).

Oresteia trilogy continues with *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*, and tragedians Sophocles and Euripides both have their own retellings of the Atreides story. The perspectives of the unnamed characters fizzle out, narrowing in on the opinions of a small but powerful group⁵. As the trilogy progresses, Zeitlin identifies the transition from “matriarchy” to “patriarchy”: “Clytemnestra, the female principle, in the first play is a shrewd intelligent rebel against the masculine regime, but by the last play, through her representatives, the Erinyes, female is now allied with the archaic, primitive, and regressive, while male in the person of the young god Apollo, champions conjugality, society and progress” (151). *Libation Bearers* takes care to establish Clytemnestra as antagonistic to the men in the play and in the audience: her maternal rage that compelled her to act in *Agamemnon* is replaced by hostility towards her remaining daughter and son, and in exchange her affair with Aegisthus is emphasized. Both Clytemnestra and the Furies that avenge her are objects of male anxiety—Clytemnestra in her sexual promiscuity, and the Furies in that they can be neither dominated or escaped: they remain perpetually and monstrosly virginal. Taken as a whole, the *Oresteia* centers the grinding down of female resistance. Clytemnestra’s outrage at Iphigeneia’s murder, and the Erinyes’ outrage at the crimes of Thyestes, Orestes, and Atreus are sidelined and subordinated by a man, in service of establishing a patriarchal system of justice. Despite having everything to do with the figure of the woman, in every form: “goddess, queen, wife, mother, daughter, sister, bride, virgin, adulteress, nurse, witch, Fury, priestess” (Zeitlin 149-150), the *Oresteia* is principally concerned with controlling female behavior and mastering the female. Tragedy itself, via the lack of female participation, its elite patrons, and its partial roots in the satyr

⁵ Griffith notes how surprising this development is: “One might expect, given the movement of action from an ancient, distant, aristocratic-monarchical Argos to the new democratic Athens, that “lower-class” focalization would increase during the trilogy. Paradoxically, however, such perspectives—the view from below—become in fact less prominent (certainly less audible), as the trilogy progresses” (1995, 76).

chorus⁶, is built upon attributes of toxic masculinity. In fact, the Homeric narrative is one predicated on the transactional value and “sins” of a woman, Helen, and one that relies on the trafficking, exploitation, and rape of women as social currency and military strategy⁷. This trafficking in women appears in tragedy with what Victoria Wohl describes as: “almost obsessive regularity” (xiv). Yet, she continues, in most tragedies, the exchange is flawed, creating the twisted circumstances that bring about the play’s plot: “The result of these failed transfers is catastrophe: the relationships between men that should be cemented are instead sundered; the men who should be declared virile and heroic subjects are emasculated and eviscerated; the social order that should be instituted is more often left in ruins” (xiv). But ultimately, this problem is resolved, and the heteropatriarchal business of trafficking brides, daughters, is presumed to resume as normal. Thus the function of a tragic trilogy, pessimistically, affirms patriarchal hegemony through bringing up issues of social tension, often gendered, and squashing them:

Whether we regard this process as one of ‘manipulation’ from above, i.e., a kind of social control, in which the gullible masses are brainwashed into accepting and buying into the dominant ideology of the elite (to the extent of even giving prizes to the poets and producers who manipulate them), or (as I should prefer) as one of mutual mystification by elite and mass, in which the old stories are retold in terms that make the best available sense (given the traditions of mythical narrative and the public context of the Theater) to

⁶ Take, for example, Silenus’ claim in Euripides’ *Cyclops*: “Why, when you’re drunk, you stand up stiff down here (*Gestures.*) and then get yourself a fistful of breast and browse the soft field ready to your hands” (Griffith 19)

⁷ This exchange also characterizes the world at large: “in the broadest sense, the term refers to the movement of a woman from one man to another as a bride, a gift, or, as here, a prize. Whether the exchange is amicable (as in a marriage) or hostile (as in this contest), the transfer of a woman between two men constitutes the social world, generating bonds between the men and defining their social identities” (Wohl xiii).

an author and audience both of whom continue to take for granted the inequalities and privileges to which they are accustomed, in either case both sets of participants are grateful for this opportunity to have familiar values reaffirmed and troubling contradictions smoothed away (Griffith 1995, 111).

Optimistically, however, tragedy's unstable nature, by virtue of its problematizing tendencies, makes itself open to questioning. Wohl's tragic exchange is "a foundation that has been shown to be essentially unstable" (xiv), and investigations such as those she conducts in *Intimate Commerce* have been fruitful.

While the *Oresteia* is remarkable for being the only extant tragedy, *Agamemnon* is more than capable of standing on its own—the Greek is far more complicated, the text itself is longer, and the commentaries are much more plentiful. To some degree, reception studies have highlighted this text as a work of its own. What if *Agamemnon* was the only extant version of this narrative? We expect a lot of the *Oresteia*, being the only extant tragic trilogy, it is in some ways responsible for upholding our understanding of the tragic tradition. Yet our desire for "wholeness" perhaps excludes certain opportunities for intervention. We are not bound in any real way to translating the *Oresteia* as a whole, or at least a monolithic whole. Does a translation of the first play alone have to be informed by the rest of the trilogy? Zeitlin's monumental *Dynamics of Misogyny* tellingly takes on the entire *Oresteia* trilogy. Perhaps, without the conclusion of *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*, there are more chances for empowerment, or at least for questioning the status quo. For these reasons, and the unavoidable time and logistical constraints, my project focuses exclusively on *Agamemnon*. Is there a question of faithfulness in this choice? Emily Wilson writes in the introduction to her iconic translation of *Odyssey*, "The gendered metaphor of the 'faithful' translation, whose worth is always secondary to that of a male-authored

original, acquires a particular edge in the contexts of a translation by a woman of *Odyssey*, a poem that is deeply invested in female fidelity and male dominance” (Wilson 86). The *Oresteia* is equally concerned with female faithfulness to men. Can any translation of the *Agamemnon* that does not march in step with this program still be a “faithful” translation? Further, can there be any faithful translation at all? I have attempted to retain some connection to the original Greek text, but even this is a fraught endeavor. Despite its “complete” status, there is no lexical consensus on the text. Perhaps any attempt to replicate the Greek original is as much a contemporary choice as the translation work itself. Thus, how can a translator be faithful to something that is unstable? Female-identifying classicists often struggle to tease out sympathetic messages from texts written by and for a system of heteropatriarchy that relied on exploiting the reproductive and social labor of women. This work is as valuable, as necessary, as it is challenging. Our view and understanding of the woman’s experience in antiquity is colored by largely male authors, those both producing the texts and interpreting them throughout history. As Laura McClure aptly concludes, feminist scholars are compelled to “consider the conceptual foundations that inform the literary and mythical representation of women and how they intersect with social and political institutions. Central to this project has been the study of women and gender in Attic drama, a genre that offers a rich array of complex female characters” (4). Feminist and gendered readings of ancient sources reveal both patterns and inconsistencies in the ancient world, and provide tools to those who are marginalized by the original sources, ones that we can use to examine and question our contemporary world. Though some see this problematizing as new, fresh, “woke”, early Greek tragedians, were no strangers to the unstable. The patron deity of the tragic performance, Dionysus, was a representation of the always-changing—paradoxically a dominant and non-dominant religious figure. The worship of the Dionysiac, the participation in the

deindividuation of a tragic chorus, is itself a manifestation of the Nancean “singular plurality”, in which there is no individual existence, solely co-existence⁸. Dionysus is one deity, yet he is simultaneously—in fact *by definition*—multiple. The art of tragedy itself is imbued with this singular plurality, and this instability is seen in the texts themselves: “This necessary imbrication of power and resistance in tragedy—of reinscribing the exchange and challenging it—is not merely structural, however, but active, practical, and political...we can see tragedy as constituting a discursive framework, a set of problems, issues, and alternatives, that could then be taken up in different modalities and with varying effects in practice. Thus, discourse and practice form a continuum, as the business begun in the theater of Dionysus is finished in the household, the marketplace, the law courts, and the assembly” (Wohl xxi-xxii).

It is with this understanding that I have set to translate *Agamemnon*. I see this project as a feminist companion to the *Agamemnon*, one that highlights the gendered aspect to the tragedy, and perhaps reframes the narrative around Clytemnestra, rather than the absent and then dead king. Other characters, though crucial, are not prominent in my translation and discussion, primarily due to this project's constraints. Figures such as Cassandra, the Herald, and Aegisthus contribute significantly to a gendered reading of the play. Despite the title, the queen is certainly the play's protagonist: it is her grief and rage that propels the story. Traditional receptions of the play are often ill-equipped to discuss this “man minded” woman. As such, attention was given to especially those passages that concern Clytemnestra—whether she is present in the scene or discussed. With more time, my translation would be equal in length to the original. This first iteration, however, will focus primarily on Clytemnestra's relationships with Agamemnon, the

⁸ “Being singular plural means the essence of Being is only as coessence. In turn, coessence, or being-with (being-with-many), designates the essence of the co-, or even more so, the co- (the cum) itself in the position or guise of an essence” (Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* 30).

Chorus, and her children. These relationships coalesce under the umbrella of female rage and justice, “a wrath that remembers”⁹.

My footnotes consist largely of references to other scholarship, helpful definitions and vocabulary suggestions, and open-ended questions. These notes coalesce on themes that I have found pertinent to my own reading of the text, some of which I have elaborated on below:

Childbirth

Motherhood, its pains and joys, features heavily in Clytemnestra’s dialogue. Her role as a mother undergirds her justification and defense for murdering Agamemnon. But pregnancy appears earlier in the story, with the ravaging of the hare: the pair of eagles represents the pair of Atreidae, while the hare represents Troy and its children (119 ff.). After this omen, Iphigeneia is slaughtered. When Clytemnestra discusses this event, she emphasizes her maternal connection to Iphigeneia, referring to her as: “the dearest fruit of my/Childbearing pains” (1417-8), evoking the mother slaughtered earlier. Clytemnestra then refers to killing Agamemnon as a kind of rebirth: “Quickly, his wound ejaculated spurts of blood/Splattering me with its dark dewdrops/As I rejoice, no less than if it was god-given/The gleaming of a calyx erupting in child-birth” (1489-92); the sex act that is his murder conceives a new child, perhaps meant to be Iphigeneia herself.

⁹ This quote, which is the title of this project, comes adapted in Bakola’s “Seeing the invisible: Interior Spaces and Uncanny Erinyes in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*” from Somerstein’s 2008 translation of lines 154-155: “for there awaits, to arise hereafter, a fearsome, guileful *oikonomos*, a Wrath that remembers and will avenge a child” (Bakola 177)

Δίκη or dikē

Δίκη, or *dikē*, is the multipurpose Greek phrase that defines and populates the text of *the Agamemnon*. The term itself is a singular plurality, simultaneously and inextricably evoking notions of justice, order, custom, and manner: “the language of *dikē*—social order, right—is fragmented and split under Aeschylus’ tragic scrutiny” (Goldhill 33). We have no way of comprehending, much less replicating in modern English, what *dikē* would have meant to the Ancient Greek theatergoer. Characters and systems at work in the trilogy have different encoded ideas of what *dikē* ought to look like: for Clytemnestra and the furies, *dikē* is revenge, retribution; Agamemnon the Watchman envisions *dikē* as custom, in his comparison to a faithful guard dog. These conceptions come into conflict, as underneath the battle of wills and plans, *dikē* battles *dikē*.

Dehumanization

Throughout the text (footnote numbers) various characters are compared—often using Δίκη—or referred to as animals or objects, often as a way to revoke agency or culpability. Some instances of dehumanization are favorable to the object, such as when Agamemnon compares himself to a lion “lapping up” the blood of his enemies, but often these comparisons merely make explicit the underlying class, gender, and power distinctions between the characters. Iphigeneia, for example, is compared to the “jewel” or *agalma* of Agamemnon’s household, making her subject to trading and exchange during her sacrifice. During the act, she is compared to a young goat, a typical animal for slaughter, perhaps in an attempt to render the deed more palatable. But, the ultimate objectification is Agamemnon’s own:

“By the end of the play, it is Agamemnon himself whose body is on the scales. The most deeply implicated in the war's bad exchanges, Agamemnon is turned, literally, into an object; he is displayed on stage as a corpse, Clytemnestra's *ergon*, as she says, her handiwork. He dies in a vessel that recalls the urns bearing the soldiers' ashes "a silver walled tub," 1539–40), and his corpse becomes an *agalma* that testifies to Clytemnestra's supremacy. Agamemnon's murder enacts before our eyes the catastrophe that results from the dynamic of fetishism: the male subject—moreover a king and a hero—is turned into a mere object” (Wohl 97)

Gender Roles

“It is indeed not for a woman to long for battle”, Agamemnon declares to Clytemnestra in line 940. What *is* for a woman, we may then ask? Various male characters throughout the play dictate what the women—granted, upper-class women of some political or royal status—ought to do, and how they ought to be treated. The chorus, for example, only honors Clytemnestra's power because “it is customary to honor the wife of a chieftain man, when the male throne is abandoned”. This deviation from the typical role of a woman and wife, it seems, is only accepted under these extenuating circumstances. Similarly in line 621, the herald excuses Clytemnestra's speech, though boastful in tone, because it “is full of truth”. Clytemnestra understands these expectations, however, and confidently defies them throughout the play, delivering ironic lines such as: “Where he [Agamemnon], coming, ought to find his obedient wife in the home. The one he left behind, indeed, the dog of the household. Faithful to that man [Agamemnon, or Aegisthus?], poised against an enemy [Agamemnon?]”.

Legal terminology

Goldhill asserts that competition, struggle, or *agon*, is at the heart of tragedy: “Often character faces character, expresses a position with a set speech, is opposed by a set speech, and the scene turns to passionate line by line disagreement. This formal element—an analogue to the Assembly and law-court— is perhaps the key sign and symptom of what Vernant and Vidal-Naquet call ‘the tragic moment’” (15). The *Oresteia* trilogy, in fact, ends with the creation of the Athenian justice system, the court of the Aeropagus, resolving the intergenerational, elite conflicts of the house of Atreus and the bloodguilt that followed. “Of the three tragic poets whose work survives, it is Aeschylus who seems to address himself the most directly and eloquently to the issues of democracy, to the rule of law and the courts, and to the enduring achievements of his city” (Griffith 1995, 64). Democracy, according to Goldhill and Griffith, was emerging concurrently with the rise of tragic theater. This new system of government, however, bumped shoulders with the oligarchical old forms of governance, in which political power and risk were held by a set noble class (Griffith 1995, 66). J.P. Vernant argues that the conflict played out on stage between the chorus and the protagonist of the tragedy is representative of the 5th century ideological conflict between the masses and the elite, “heroic” individual. Thus it is unsurprising that legal language finds its way into the *Agamemnon*.

Sex

Wohl: “Just as Iphigeneia’s sacrifice was a rape, Agamemnon’s murder is intercourse” (Wohl 108). Wohl strengthens this affirmation by highlighting that unlike the typical death of a virgin, by suffocation or strangulation, Iphigeneia’s death as a sacrificial *animal* implies that her throat is cut, and her blood pours to the ground alongside her robes (*cf.* 239). If we imagine Iphigeneia's

murder in this way, as a rape, we are compelled to envision Agamemnon as her rapist: “If the murder is a defloration, then Agamemnon himself penetrates his daughter. The fantasy of incestuous penetration is the erotic counterpart to the failed marriage exchange: the father who fails to give away his daughter must marry her himself” (74).

Textiles

Textiles in *the Agamemnon* are representations of opulence, wealth, but also constraints, deadly ones. They appear at three crucial moments in the play: the slaughter of Iphigeneia, the homecoming of King Agamemnon, and Clytemnestra’s boastful speech describing her act of mariticide. Woven textiles bring to mind the act of weaving, a craft dominated in the ancient world by women. A connection to Penelope is undeniable. Both women are creating textiles, a mystified act, within the home, without the presence of their husbands. In the conception of Athena, Dionysus, and even in Christian mythology Adam and Eve, masculine anxiety is soothed by the conception of childbirth without women. But Clytemnestra turns this concept on its head with her textiles, as in essence women are birthing something original without the participation of a man, an asexual birth. Though Clytemnestra is not characterized as a proficient weaver of fabrics, she is a “weaver” in her own right—contriving schemes and traps for the returning King.

Without the modern conventions of stage direction, blocking, or any helpful description of what exactly was going on at the theater on some warm Athenian day in 458 BC, we are left to interpret and assume key elements of the play’s reception. But some things are clear: the action in *Agamemnon* took place outside of the palace. Clytemnestra and other characters are situated pointedly at the doorway, straddling the lines of the womens’ space and the public world. This translation is not as focused as others are on grammar, rather, I aim to enrich the reader’s historical and social understanding of the text, creating a resource I would have used

when I encountered the text—in English or Greek—for the first time. I hope my project serves as a reader's guide through the play, to empower students to engage in dialogue with the translations and commentaries we are provided.

THE *AGAMEMNON* OF AESCHYLUS

Trans. Mary Iris Allison

	Φύλαξ		WATCHMAN¹⁰
	θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων φρουρᾶς ἑτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην, ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὀμήγουριν,	1	I beg of the gods release from this suffering. As watchman of a years length, who lays At the house of the Atreides upon the elbows, custom ¹¹ of a dog ¹² , I came to understand the assembly of the nightly stars,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς		5	And the ones bringing winter and summer to mortal men— These bright rulers, conspicuous in heaven Both when they decay and in their rising. And now I stand guard for the beacon token For the light of fire will bring a speech,
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν. καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τό σύμβολον, αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσιν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν ἀλώσιμόν τε βάζειν: ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ		10	The tidings of conquest. For it rules thusly,

¹⁰ Who is the watchman? Florence Yoon develops a system of classifying these unnamed characters: personal servants, nurses and tutors, other servants (those attending the household at large), heralds, priests, and children. In some sense, Griffith argues, the watchman and the play's other unnamed characters are meant to be relatable to the growingly diverse audience: "these minor characters and this chorus are felt to be more *like* the theater audience, and *closer* to them, than are their leaders, upon whom so much attention (from both internal and theater audiences) is so fiercely focused" (1995, 73). The Athenian audience, and perhaps a modern reader, can take on the struggles of the Watchman as their own. He links the audience to the context of the play, and is the first to remark upon the beacon token, both signs of importance and relevance, yet he is a mere "dog" on the roof of the palace, not to speak again after this speech. In contrast to Homer's hired spy, the watchman is loyal to Agamemnon, and resents the new leadership—and the "man-minded" ruler Clytemnestra. Though this play opens with the "every-man", Aeschylus is perhaps didactic in his intentions.

¹¹ The first of many uses of δίκη: custom of, in the manner of, like. *Agamemnon* is chiefly concerned with questions of custom, tradition, ritual. This term also introduces metaphors by which characters are compared to animals, as here, and in line 233 when the chorus compares Iphigeneia to a young sacrificial goat. Why animalize these characters?

¹² Κυνὸς: Comparisons to dogs are compared to both men and women, in different ways. While the dog is a loyal guardian, female dogs in particular were considered "pre-eminently shameless" (Raeburn and Thomas lxvi). The watchman seems to be lamenting the toils of his work, a role that through his physicality reduces him to an animal. Yet, the audience may hear a sense of pride in this comparison, especially as he continues to expound on his loyalties to the king.

γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ.
εὖτ' ἂν δὲ νυκτίπλαγκτον ἔνδροσόν τ' ἔχω

εὐνήν ὄνειροις οὐκ ἐπισκοπούμενην
ἐμήν: φόβος γὰρ ἄνθ' ὕπνου παραστατεῖ,
τὸ μὴ βεβαίως βλέφαρα συμβαλεῖν ὕπνῳ:

ὅταν δ' αἰεῖδεν ἢ μινύρεσθαι δοκῶ,
ὕπνου τὸδ' ἀντίμολπον ἐντέμνων ἄκος,
κλαίω τότε οἴκου τοῦδε συμφορὰν στένων

οὐχ ὡς τὰ πρόσθ' ἄριστα διαπονουμένου.
νῦν δ' εὐτυχῆς γένοιτ' ἀπαλλαγῆ πόνων
εὐαγγέλου φανέντος ὄρφναίου πυρός.
ὦ χαῖρε λαμπτήρ νυκτός, ἡμερήσιον
φάος πιφαύσκων καὶ χορῶν κατάστασιν

This man-minded¹³ heart¹⁴ of a hopeful¹⁵ woman.
But when I, driven to wander in the night, hold
fast to

My dewy bed, not visited upon by dreams
For terror instead of sleep stands beside me,
Such that my eyelids do not soundly come
together in sleep.

So, whenever I think to sing or hum a tune,
Tapping into a remedy, as a substitute for sleep,
I wail instead as the misfortune of this house
moans

Not managed well, as it was before.

15 But now, luck may come, a deliverance from toil
When the fire of darkness reveals good news.

O greetings, lamp of night, a day's
Light, showing forth and establishing cause for
dances,

20

¹³ Ἀνδρόβουλον: male-counseling, man-minded; this characterization of Clytemnestra renders “her unnatural transgression plausible” for Raeburn and Thomas, who propose that the Athenian audience would have rejoiced at the restoration of the traditional patriarchal family. Clytemnestra is perhaps most villainous in her defiance of the male and female. Yet her danger is only understood by an audience that is already aware of Clytemnestra’s adultery and familiar with the events that are to come. To a completely fresh reader, “in the absence of her husband, Clytemnestra is trying to manage the household like a man would, in which case an Ἀνδρόβουλον κέαρ would be required, and possibly even beneficial” (Rader 8). Yet it is evident from the watchman’s tone and his later comments on the mismanagement of the house, that he perceives that there is something inherently wrong with her character.

¹⁴ Aeschylus uses κέαρ rather than φρήν; Argos is ruled by Clytemnestra’s emotion, and perhaps the watchman makes this implication in order to undermine her power. Her heart is out of line for a woman, as it functions like a man. Yet at the same time, Clytemnestra, due to her gender, is out of place as a ruler, since she rules with her heart. This style of ruling by “passion”, one enforced and underscored by the presence of the furies, is set up as antithetical to the emerging Athenian democracy, which is championed by Orestes. See Sullivan, Shirley, *Aeschylus’ Use of Psychological Terminology* (1997) 122-3.

¹⁵ Ἐλπίζον: expectant, hopeful. What does Clytemnestra hope for, in the eyes of the watchman, in the eyes of the audience? To what extent are the audience’s expectations for Clytemnestra as a mythical figure, or as a woman, imposed upon her? See Rader: “To resolve that hope and expectation so early in our experience of the play is to unnecessarily straightjacket our expectations of the characters, the plot and even Aeschylus himself” (93)

πολλῶν ἐν Ἄργει, τῆσδε συμφορᾶς χάριν. ιοὺ ἰοῦ.		Many in Argive, as thanks for this fortune. Hurrah! Hurrah!
Ἀγαμέμνωνος γυναικὶ σημαίνω τορῶς εὐνῆς ἐπαντείλασαν ὡς τάχος δόμοις	25	To the wife of Agamemnon I signal distinctly To rise up from the bed in order to raise up in the household
ὄλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα τῆδε λαμπάδι ἐπορθιάζειν, εἴπερ Ἴλιου πόλις ἔάλωκεν, ὡς ὁ φρυκτὸς ἀγγέλλων πρέπει:	30	A great cry of good cheer for this torch Since indeed the city of Ilia Has been dominated ¹⁶ , as the beacon is announcing
αὐτὸς τ' ἔγωγε φροίμιον χορεύσομαι. τὰ δεσποτῶν γὰρ εὖ πεσόντα θήσομαι τρὶς ἕξ βαλόυσης τῆσδέ μοι φρυκτωρίας. γένοιτο δ' οὔν μολόντος εὐφιλή χέρα ἄνακτος οἴκων τῆδε βαστάσαι χερί. τὰ δ' ἄλλα σιγῶ: βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσση μέγας	35	And myself, for my part I will dance a phroimion ¹⁷ My master's good throw is mine—let it be so. Three sixes this signal threw me Well, may the house's lord come That I may lift up his well-loved hand in mine. But of the other things, I am silent; a great ox takes rest
βέβηκεν: οἶκος δ' αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι, σαφέστατ' ἂν λέξειεν: ὡς ἐκὼν ἐγὼ μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ κοῦ μαθοῦσι λήθομαι.		Upon my tongue; but the house, if it may take a voice, Would speak very distinctly; as I, by choice. I have messages for those who know, But to the ignorant, I cannot recall a thing ¹⁸ .
		CHORUS ¹⁹
Χορός δέκατον μὲν ἔτος τόδ' ἐπεὶ Πριάμου μέγας ἀντίδικος, Μενέλαος ἄναξ ἠδ' Ἀγαμέμνων,	40	It is now the tenth year since Priam's Great prosecutors ²⁰ Lord Menelaus, and Agamemnon

¹⁶ Ἐάλωκεν: to be conquered, to fall into an enemy's hands, in Homer this term can refer to being taken by death (Od 5.312) or caught in a hunt (Il 5.487). I have chosen to translate this term in line with the latter interpretation with the term dominate, one that brings together the imagery of a hunt, and of a rape.

¹⁷ Φροίμιον: a hymnic prelude addressed to the gods (Raeburn and Thomas 70)

¹⁸ Which category does the audience belong to? Is the audience a knowing or unknowing spectator?

¹⁹ Who is the chorus? Is the audience assumed or expected to trust their judgment and narrative? Rader: "Their authority consists in normatively shaping the narrative in one particular and important way: so as to suppress the memory of Iphigeneia and to revise her mother's justifiable rage" (94)

²⁰ ἀντίδικος: legal term for an opponent. Adversary, match. This is the first occurrence of this word in any extant text (Fraenkel 27)

διθρόνου Διόθεν καὶ δισκῆπτρου		Double-throned and double-sceptered, by will of Zeus
τιμῆς ὄχυρον ζευγος Ἀτρειδᾶν		The strong yoke-paired ²¹ beasts ruling the Atreidae,
στόλον Ἀργείων χιλιοναύτην,	45	With an equipment of a thousand Argive ships
τῆσδ' ἀπὸ χώρας		From this land,
ἦραν, στρατιῶτιν ἀρωγὰν,		Set sail for martial aid
μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη		Roaring for violence ²² from the seat of their rage
τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν, οἷτ' ἐκπατίοις		Just as two vultures who, in excessive
ἄλγεσι παίδων ὕπατοι λεχέων	50	Pain, high above their nest,
στροφοδινοῦνται		Circle round
περύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,		Rowing their commanding wings
δεμνιοτήρη		
πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες:		As if suffering the younglings ²³
ὑπατος δ' αἰὼν ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων	55	Their cries heard by, say, Apollo ²⁴ on high,
ἦ Πᾶν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον		Or Pan, or Zeus, this calling of birds
γόνον ὄξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων		This shrill piercing cry of Olympus' metics ²⁵
ὑστερόποινον		The gods send upon their transgressors
πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν.		Such late avengers as the Erinys.
οὕτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσω	60	In this way, the children of mighty Atreus

²¹ The yoke in this text may serve as a stand-in for the “necessary evil” of war.

²² κλάζοντες Ἄρη: Fraenkel posits that rather than directly invoking Ares, or serving as a battle cry, this statement is best interpreted as a call for war, or in this translation, violence, vengeance.

²³ ἄλγεσι παίδων often translated as grieving the younglings. However, in the way that Menelaus and Agamemnon are both the vultures and the eagles, they are seen by the chorus as both grieving and causing grief. Fraenkel: “Naturally, it occurs to no one that the Atridae have lost children, but one near and dear has been torn from them, as from the birds” (32). Fraenkel here is referencing Helen, but this metaphor could be easily traced onto Clytemnestra’s loss of Iphigeneia that is to come.

²⁴ Why Apollo, the violator of Cassandra, the avenger of Chryseis? Fraenkel posits: “He may well be moved at the deed of violence, and help the great birds who cry for aid in their distress, just as he helps mortal men” (36). Yet, Apollo is a patron of the Trojans, despite his punishment of Cassandra. Invoking him here brings to mind the many Trojan women who are brutalised in the war.

²⁵ Μετοίκων: metics, foreigners in Athens

ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος
 Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς
 πολλὰ παλαίσματα καὶ γυιοβαρῆ
 γόνατος κονίαισιν ἐρειδομένου
 διακναιομένης τ' ἐν προτελείοις
 κάμακος θήσων Δαναοῖσιν

65

Were sent upon Alexander by hospitable²⁶
 Zeus²⁷; for a manhoarding woman²⁸
 With great grappling and laying down of limbs
 Knees propped in the dust and
 The spear shaft, too, in a premarital²⁹ ceremony,
 Is grated away in a sacrifice that honors the
 Danaoi

²⁶ Ξένιος: hospitable, pertaining to the rights of guests. Fraenkel alleges that Zeus is outraged by Paris' violation of Menelaus' guest-friendship (39). It should be noted in addition that one pillar of guest-friendship in the ancient Mediterranean was the betrothal and marriage of daughters across allied families. This trafficking of women undergirds the very concept of Xenia that the Greeks are allegedly waging war to defend, one that Aeschylus ascribes divine importance to.

²⁷ Griffith: "The capture of Troy is thus presented as the result of a joint venture by Zeus (King of Gods, Patron-Divinity of guests-and-hosts) and the Atreidai (the aggrieved family-heads, commanders-in-chief, and collectors of the lion's share of the loot, as well as of Helen herself). This alliance between the Olympian and Argive kings amounts in deed to a virtual "spear-friendship" (*doryxenia*); and like so many male homosocial alliances in the ancient and modern world, it soon turns out to involve the infliction of hideous crimes and sufferings. Not only do Agamemnon and the other Greeks (and Zeus) squander hundreds of valuable male lives in the war, but also, in recovering one misplaced female (Helen), each violates the person and/or prerogatives of his own daughter (Iphigeneia and Artemis, respectively), and thus incurs a sure payback upon the return of the expedition" (1995, 85)

²⁸ πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς: This phrase, which clearly identifies the exchange of one singular woman for many, plural, men, functions on two levels: Helen is both courted and avenged by many. This is typically taken to be taken as a derision of Helen's sexuality (Fraenkel 40). Manhoarding was chosen in some degree for the fact that "hoarding" sounds similar to the derogatory "whoring". But who is Helen, and why does the chorus loathe her? Wohl suggests that Helen is at once a fetishized commodity and an *agalma*: "Helen, like gold, is in constant circulation and facilitates the movement of other commodities—Greek soldiers, glory, Iphigeneia, Cassandra—but herself is beyond possession, like "a vision that slips through the arms and is gone" (424–25). Like a universal equivalent, Helen is the standard of all value, but is herself virtually devoid of value" (85). Thus, she continues, the problem is localized within her as an object: "Her very name shows destruction as imminent within Helen: she is the destruction her exchange causes. Thus the violence perpetrated in the name of Helen is projected onto her" (99), perhaps as a hegemonically codified coping mechanism for her "exchangers".

²⁹ Προτελείοις: "An Athenian understands in the first instance not a preliminary sacrifice in general, but in accordance with what is by far the most frequent use of the word, a sacrifice offered before marriage. For this very reason here and in 227 Aeschylus inverts it and gives it a sinister meaning" (Fraenkel 67).

Τρωσί θ' ὁμοίως. ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργᾶς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει.
ἡμεῖς δ' ἀτίται σαρκὶ παλαιᾷ

τῆς τότ' ἀρωγῆς ὑπολειφθέντες
μίνομεν ἰσχὺν
ἰσόπαιδα νέμοντες ἐπὶ σκῆπτροις.
ὅ τε γὰρ νεαρὸς μυελὸς στέρνων
ἐντὸς ἀνάσσω
ἰσόπρεσβυς, Ἄρης δ' οὐκ ἔνι χώραι,

τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη
κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοῦς
στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων
ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει.
σὺ δέ, Τυνδάρεω

And the Trojans the same. Now this is as such,
It is to end as it was fated:
Not by burnt offering, nor poured libations
70 Nor by the bloodless shedding of tears
Will this spirited rage be satisfied.
But we, excluded from such vengeance by our
aged flesh
Are left behind by the aiding force,
Staying strong and
75 Holding to our staves like children.
For youthful marrow
Springs up within the breast
Just as it does with an old man, when Ares is not
in his place
The falling of leaves in old age
80 Withers one away to three feet as along the way
He walks, no braver than a child.
A dream wanders about in the day.
³⁰But you, Tyndareus'

³⁰ Where is Clytemnestra? Fraenkel suggests that lines 83ff “are addressed to the queen while she is still inside the house: the excitement of the elders makes it possible to address Clytemnestra as if she were present” (51). It is possible that Clytemnestra has entered the stage here, rather than at the end of the parodos when she first speaks. Though she doesn’t reply to the chorus’ line of questioning, according to E. H. Pool, “the verbal evidence for the queen’s presence during 83-103 is overwhelming” (72). If she is in fact on stage for this section, there are several unanswerable questions that follow: what was she doing? How and why does she eventually leave to return some hundred lines later? Perhaps she is within the house and visible, and the chorus is calling to her from outside, as Fraenkel proposes?

<p>θύγατερ, βασίλεια Κλυταιμίστρα, τί χρέος; τί νέον; τί δ' ἐπαισθομένη,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">τίνος ἀγγελίας πειθοῖ περίπεμπτα θυοσκεῖς;</p> <p>πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων, ὑπάτων, χθονίων, τῶν τε θυραίων τῶν τ' ἀγοραίων, βωμοὶ δῶροισι φλέγονται: ἄλλη δ' ἄλλοθεν οὐρανομήκης λαμπὰς ἀνίσχει, φαρμασσομένη χρίματος ἀγνοῦ μαλακαῖς ἀδόλοισι παρηγορίαις, πελάνῳ μυχόθεν βασιλείῳ.</p> <p>τούτων λέξασ' ὅ τι καὶ δυνατὸν καὶ θέμις αἰνεῖν, παιῶν τε γενοῦ τῆσδε μερίμνης, ἢ νῦν τοτὲ μὲν κακόφρων τελέθει, τοτὲ δ' ἐκ θυσιῶν ἀγανὴ φαίνουσ' ἐλπὶς ἀμύνει φροντίδ' ἅπληστον τῆς θυμοβόρου φρένα λύπης.</p>	<p>85 daughter³¹, Queen Clytemnestra³², What's the matter? What's new? What do you perceive By some message That persuades you to send men round making offerings? For all the gods protecting the city The ones high above, down below, 90 In the heavens and in the marketplaces With altars burning offerings; Here and there, they shoot up smoke to heaven Keeping the light Chaste with oils and unguents 95 Soft, genuine praise, A godly mixture brought forth from the women's chambers. Speaking of these things, those that are possible And set to be, you become a deliverer From this care 100 Which now comes to be malignant in this place, But from sacrifice graciousness is revealed Hope wards away insatiable attentions The heart-eating grief pains my breast.</p>
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³¹ I am deliberately removing the case from this line, rendering Daughter “daughter” to underscore the disrespect put towards Clytemnestra by the chorus. The enjambment between line 84-85 undercuts the weight of her name and title. Though a queen, she is always defined by her relationships with men, either her father, husband, or lover.

³² Κλυταιμίστρα: Some authors provide the etymology of her name, Clytemnestra as κλυτή (renowned) and μνηστεύω (romantic pursuing, wooing). Patricia A. Marquardt proposes that this etymology “highlights the fundamental point of contrast between the cunning wives [Penelope and Clytemnestra]—marital fidelity and infidelity” (241). She explains that Homer used the v/n spelling in the Odyssey, and describes Penelope’s virtue rising in contrast with the negative example of Clytemnestra. Fraenkel prefers the spelling *Clytemestra* (κλυτή, renowned; μῆτις, cunning), arguing that the v/n inserted to create “Clytemnestra”, is, as Fraenkel quotes Shulze, “entirely due to the etymologizing fancies of a later period” (52). The insertion of v thus calls attention to an attribute that Fraenkel claims was never attached to her character. Despite this debate, the spelling Clytemnestra is overwhelmingly popular in modern translations and discussions of the *Agamemnon*.

κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν ἐκτελέων: ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνεύει		I am entitled to cry aloud an omen for the journey of mighty and empowered ³³ men
πειθῶ μολπᾶν ἀλκᾶν σύμφυτος αἰών:	105	That is brought forth to me: for still pried away from the gods Comes persuasion, dance, these strengths ³⁴ ageing with me;
ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἦβας ξύμφρονα ταγάν, πέμπει σὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ' ἐπ' αἴαν, οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νε-	110	How Achea, the two-throned commanders of the youth of Greece, Single-minded in battle Sent with exacting spear and right hand By the sight of a bird set upon the Teucrian earth Fierce birds appearing to the kings ruling over the ships
ῶν ὁ κελαινός, ὃ τ' ἐξόπιν ἀργᾶς, φανέντες ἵκταρ μελάθρων χερὸς ἐκ δοριπάλτου παμπρέπτοις ἐν ἔδραισιν, βοσκόμενοι λαγίναν, ἐρικύμονα φέρματι γένναν, βλαβέντα λοισθίων δρόμων. αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.	115	Black, and white shining behind, Appears close to the roof, on the side where the spear flies Conspicuous in their perch Ravaging a hare carrying the begotten fruit of its womb ³⁵
	120	Caught in her last foot-race. O dread, o dread, I say, but may fortune prevail.

³³ Ἐκτελέων: fully-grown, brought to an end, perfect. Fraenkel proposes that this can be taken to mean “men in power”, or to reference duty, “men in power” (62)

³⁴ Ἀλκᾶν: “ἀλκή in its original sense has long deserted the elders, but they still retain the power which can take its place, the power which enables them once again in song to renew the great experience of ten years ago. He who tells a tale that can be trusted, and hands on a true story for all time to come, falls not far short in merit, if short at all, of him who did the deed; this was a widespread view in the time of Aeschylus” (Fraenkel 64). Compare this to the chorus’, and audience’s, reception of Cassandra.

³⁵ What are we to make of the eagle’s feast? Perhaps, as Fraenkel suggests, “the sign indicates what the Atreidae are going to do to Troy and the Trojans, not only the men but also the women and children” (96). Menelaus and Agamemnon, previously compared to vultures, are elevated to eagles, but at the same time, perform a wicked deed in metaphor: consuming the unborn. The destruction of Troy ended bloodlines and destroyed families but its violence was felt by women who were raped, enslaved, and separated from their children. While a soldier’s misery can end on the battlefield, “conquered” women live the consequences of war.

τούτων αἶνει ζύμβολα κρᾶναι,
 δεξιὰ μὲν, κατάμομφα δὲ φάσματα
 στρουθῶν.
 ἰήιον δὲ καλέω Παιᾶνα,
 μή τινας ἀντιπνόους Δαναοῖς χρονίας
 ἐχενῆδας ἀπλοίας
 Τεύξη, σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἐτέραν ἄνομον
 τιν' ἄδαιτον,
 νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον, οὐ δεισήνορα.
 μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος
 οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις
 τεκνόποιος,·
 τοιάδε Κάλχας ξὺν μεγάλοις ἀγαθοῖς
 ἀπέκλαγγεν
 μόρσιμ' ἀπ' ὀρνίθων ὀδίων οἴκοι βασιλείοις:

τοῖς δ' ὁμόφωνον
 αἴλινον αἴλινον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.
 Ζεὺς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὐ-
 τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ,
 τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω.
 οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι
 πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος
 πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
 χρῆ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως.
 οὐδ' ὅστις πάροιθεν ἦν μέγας,
 παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,
 οὐδὲ λέξεται πρὶν ὧν:
 ὃς δ' ἔπειτ' ἔφω, τρια-

These things the signs do portend
145 Fortunate on the one hand, twisting monstrously
 as sparrows
 I invoke with a cry the Paean
 That she not raise some adverse winds upon the
 Danaoi, that may detain readied
150 Ships for a long while, having demanded another
 sacrifice, an impious one, of which none may eat
 An innate crafter of strife, which fears no man⁴⁰.
 A lingering fright remains as house-keeper:
155 Wrath, that treacherous, unforgetting,
 child-avenger⁴¹”
 Thus proclaimed Calchas⁴²; with great blessings
 The things destined from the machinations of
 birds at the palace of the king
 Sharing one voice
 O dread, o dread, I say, but may fortune prevail.
160 Zeus, whoever he be, if this
 Summons please him,
 I address him thusly.
 I am unable to compare him
 When pondering all things
165 Except “Zeus”, if I must cast this fruitless burden
 From my mind in truth.
 No, the one who was once mighty,
 Waging war on everyone in abounding
 impudence,
170 He will not be called as before;
 But rather the one coming next,

⁴⁰ Fraenkel: “This second act of bloodshed, the murder of Iphigenia, builds up strife, and this is brought about without any fear of the man, i.e. the husband, or any sense of respect for him” (92)

⁴¹ Is this description meant to refer to Clytemnestra? Fraenkel, speaking for the long-dead Aeschylus, argues that “in this passage the poet has no thought of such play with a double meaning” (93). He dismisses the connection to Clytemnestra, claiming that it is the essence of Agamemnon’s vanity and impiety that allows “an evil thing” to take root in the house of Atreides.

⁴² Despite the gravity of his earlier proclamation, Calchas is only named here, perhaps separating the man from the prophecy and its grizzly implications.

<p>κτῆρος οἴχεται τυχῶν. Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν: τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὀδώ- σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν. στάζει δ' ἔν θ' ὕπνω πρὸ καρδίας μνησιπήμων πόνος: καὶ παρ' ἄ- κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν. δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βίαιος σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων. καὶ τόθ' ἡγεμὼν ὁ πρέ- -σβυς νεῶν Ἀχαικῶν, μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων, ἐμπαίοις τύχαισι συμπνέων, εὗτ' ἀπλοία κεναγγεῖ βαρύ- νοντ' Ἀχαικὸς λεώς, Χαλκίδος πέραν ἔχων παλιρρόχ- θοις ἐν Αὐλίδος τόποις: πνοαὶ δ' ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος μολοῦσαι κακόσχολοι νῆστιδες δύσορμοι, βροτῶν ἄλαι, ναῶν τε καὶ πεισμάτων ἀφειδεῖς, παλιμμήκη χρόνον τιθεῖσαι τρίβῳ κατέξαινον ἄνθος Ἀργείων: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ πικροῦ χείματος ἄλλο μῆχαρ βριθύτερον πρόμοισιν μάντις ἐκλαγξεν προφέρων Ἄρτεμιν, ὥστε χθόνα βᾶκ- τροις ἐπικρούσαντας Ἀτρεί- δας δάκρυ μὴ κατασχεῖν: ἄναξ δ' ὁ πρέσβυς τότε εἶπε φωνῶν: 'βαρεῖα μὲν κῆρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι,</p>	<p>Chancing ruin with the wrestler. But should any earnest victor cry "Zeus", 175 He may be completely informed. The one leading mortals to understanding, Appoints suffering as their teacher, With great authority. But dripping over the sleeping heart 180 Comes the toil of remembering guilt So also comes wisdom From gods, a charity or violence, Sinking into their hallowed row-bench. And then the elder chief of 185 the Achaean ships, Objecting to no seer Blowing together with the sudden winds of fortune When, delayed from sailing, drained of vital strength, The Achaean men were tormented 190 The tides ebbing back and forth across from Chalcas In the region of Aulis. A blast of wind comes from the Strymon Bringing wicked idleness, hunger, detention To mortal men, 195 Showing no mercy to ships or shipcables Stretching the length doubly long Rendering tattered and worn the flower of the Argives, Made bitter and wintered. Another remedy now, heavier. 200 The foremost prophet cried aloud, "Artemis", striking his staff upon the earth And the Atreidae could not hold back their tears. 205 The old lord then said "Though heavy the fate of the one not obeying,</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">βαρεῖα δ' εἰ τέκνον δαΐζω, δόμων ἄγαλμα, μιαίνων παρθενοσφάγοισιν ῥεῖθροις πατρῶους χέρας πέλας βωμοῦ: τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν, πῶς λιπόνανς γένωμαι ξυμμαχίας ἀμαρτῶν; παυσανέμου γὰρ θυσίας παρθένιου θ' αἵματος ὀρ- γᾶ περιόργως ἐπιθυ-</p>	<p>210</p> <p>215</p>	<p>Heavy still! If I take⁴³ My child⁴⁴, the royal jewel of my home⁴⁵, Dyed in virgin's shed blood Streaming from a father's hand, near my altar; What then is without evils? How do I render a deserting fleet, Failing allies? For a wind-ceasing sacrifice And maidenly blood, it is right that they rage⁴⁶, Angrily lusting after a penalty⁴⁷;</p>
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⁴³ Take is an intentional innuendo. Agamemnon's sacrifice is not only heinous and impious, but it carries sexual connotations: if we are to take up the thread that Iphigeneia arrives on the shores of Aulis under the pretenses that she is to be married, Agamemnon's betrayal is inserting himself into his daughter's union, and usurping the ritual that any promised husband (say, Achilles?) would undertake: We might read the sacrifice of Iphigeneia as a sort of failed marriage exchange, then, in which the father, rather than giving his daughter away, destroys her, and thus both loses her (gives up his own rights to her use value) and, paradoxically, keeps her for himself" (Wohl 71).

⁴⁴ Iphigeneia is never named in this passage—referred here in reference to her father and killer, Agamemnon

⁴⁵ Foley's analysis of Homeric marriage demonstrates the woman's role as a "precious object", linking families via exchanges of gifts and brides to secure military security and power (63). Yet Agamemnon's slaughter of Iphigeneia intercepts this exchange. Thus Agamemnon's wrongdoing is as societal as it is familial: "Equally central are the tragic tensions that reflect a classical marriage system in which the daughter is, at least potentially, never fully transferred, as apparently in epic, to her marital family." (84).

Iphigeneia, in asserting her value, is compared to an object—a jewel. Victoria Wohl examines this objectification through the Marxist lens of commodity fetish: "Iphigeneia, as we are told... is a *dōmon agalma*, an invaluable object belonging to the house: the phrase evokes Marx's commodity fetish, for it implies an inherent value and, by locating the commodity within the house, denies its exchange... When Agamemnon calls his daughter a *dōmon agalma*, he evokes her potential exchange value through marriage" (Wohl pp. 67-8).

⁴⁶ Ὀργᾶ: anger, passion.

⁴⁷ Θέμις: literally, that which is laid down. Yet, this conception of justice appears to be more geared towards retribution—the men lust after bloodshed as they lusted after Helen. Hammond: "These words are almost blasphemous. They show that passion for war and fear of public opinion are turning Agamemnon into a hypocrite."(47)

μεῖν θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἶη.⁴⁸
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδω λέπαδνον
 φρενὸς πνέων δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν
 ἄναγνον ἀνίερρον, τόθεν **220**
 τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω.
 βροτοῦς θρασύνει γὰρ αἰσχρόμητις
 τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων.
 ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτῆρ γενέσθαι

May it go well⁴⁸
 When he crowned himself with the yoke of
 necessity⁴⁹
 His thoughts blowing with an unholy wind,
 Debased, wicked;
 He audaciously twisted his mind to impiety.
 For the root of base desires emboldens mortal
 men.
 This is the first kind. Thus,
 he dared then to render his daughter

⁴⁸ Hammond: “Agamemnon himself is uneasy. He knows he is committing a wrong but he hopes for the best, as he does later when he walks on the purple carpet (944-7)”. (47)

⁴⁹This is a contentious line. Was Agamemnon restrained by prophecy, in what Goldhill terms a “tragic double bind” (26), or did he deliberately choose to slaughter his child? How clear was Calchas, and how inescapable was his prophecy? Many scholars have interpreted this passage without any room for Agamemnon’s personal agency. Hammond argues that any such curse or divine/inherited fate is *not* the primary reason Iphigeneia is slaughtered, though it may act on other decisions in the play: “Aeschylus believed men to be free in taking some actions and at the same time recognised the limitations which circumscribe the conditions of men” (42). But if free men, kings, are seen as having limited will, does this excuse their actions? If the system of hypermasculinity and misogyny constrains everyone, can anyone be held accountable? Clytemnestra says *yes*. “From the point of view of Aeschylus it was all-important that nothing but Agamemnon’s deliberate decision should appear as the primary cause of his sufferings” (Rader 99). Thus I have chosen “crowned”, which I feel reflects the voice and agency of the original Greek, while infusing Agamemnon’s lust for power and pomp. This choice exchanges the life of Iphigeneia for Agamemnon’s glory and the glory of his *hetaireia*. This may connect to the historical moment of epic tradition (which is the setting for this Classical text), as Agamemnon is choosing to forsake his family in favor of his allies: “Agamemnon's conflict is at least in part one between duty to the oikos (household) and military duty, a conflict between his two most important roles as an aristocratic male—as head of his oikos...and as king and general...The decision to sacrifice his daughter, then, would seem to be a reaffirmation of Agamemnon's allegiance to his allies (summakhoi), a reconfirmation of the homosocial bonds of aristocratic, male society, and the sacrifice itself the enabling factor for the war, that greatest of male bonding experiences” (Wohl 70).

<p>Θυγατρός, γυναικοποιῶν πολέμων ἄρωγᾶν καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν. λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρώους παρ' οὐδὲν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς. φράσεν δ' ἄόζοις πατήρ μετ' εὐχὰν δίκαν χυμαίρας ὑπερθε βωμοῦ πέπλοισι περιπετῆ παντὶ θυμῷ Προνωπῆ λαβεῖν ἀέρδην, Στόματός τε καλλιπρώρου φυλακᾶ κατασχεῖν φθόγγον ἀραῖον οἴκοις, βίᾳ χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδῳ μένει.</p>	<p>225</p> <p>230</p> <p>235</p>	<p>An offering⁵⁰, to facilitate a woman-punishing⁵¹ war, With a mere ritual of the ships. Her prayers and pleadings, “father!” And her virginity were set to nothing⁵² By her war-roused⁵³ judges; After a prayer, father instructs the acolytes As a young goat, above the altar Ensnared in her robes⁵⁴, face down on the altar, with their entire hearts, To seize her, prone, lifting her up, Muzzling her fair-prowed mouth To confine her cries entreating his house, The bit restrains⁵⁵, forcing silence;</p>
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⁵⁰ Victoria Wohl provides an in depth look at the trafficking and objectification of women highlighting how this sacrifice is especially perverted: “First of all, the usual economics of sacrifice, whereby the gods receive honor and respect and mortals in turn receive a certain insurance against disaster and assurance of future prosperity, are perverted here by the abomination of human sacrifice” (69)

⁵¹ Γυναικοποιῶν: woman punishing, literally the vengeance upon/for a woman. Despite the Greeks claiming they are merely restoring a wife to her husband, and defending their households, the Trojan War grows to be about more than Helen. The disproportionate consequences of the ten-year conflict fall squarely upon the women and children in Troy and those left behind.

⁵² Rader compares the slaughter of Iphigeneia to the feast of Thyestes: “She [Iphigeneia] too is a dead child, one killed at the hands of one ‘not a φίλος’—in this case a father who had abdicated his paternal responsibility and treated his daughter like an animal—whose gore presumably stained the hands of all involved in the sacrifice, sating in particular Agamemnon’s taste for blood.”(122)

⁵³ Roused here is selected to tie into the “epithumia”, and the soldiers’ lust for violence

⁵⁴ This positioning of Iphigeneia mirrors Agamemnon’s murder—later in the play Clytemnestra throws his own robes around him to render him defenseless. Perhaps, as in other accounts of this story such as later Euripidean plays, Clytemnestra is present, witnessing this murder.

⁵⁵ Wohl suggests there is a sexual layer to this metaphor: “The ‘force of the bridle’ that leads Iphigeneia as a sacrificial animal to the slaughter also evokes the trope familiar from lyric poetry of the young girl as a wild animal captured and tamed by her first sexual encounter” (72)

<p>κρόκου βαφὰς δ' ἐς πέδον χέουσα ἔβαλλ' ἕκαστον θυτήρ- ων ἀπ' ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτω, πρέπουσά θ' ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς, προσεννέπει θέλουσ', ἐπεὶ πολλάκις πατὴρ κατ' ἀνδρῶνας εὐτραπέζους ἔμελψεν, ἀγνῆ δ' ἀταύρωτος αὐδᾶ πατρός</p>	<p>240</p> <p>245</p>	<p>Saffron⁵⁶ dyed robes heaped on sacred ground Directing her eyes at each of her slayers With the shot of a piteous glance Conspicuous, and as if addressing them in a painting Willfully so, since many times In the sumptuous hall of her father's men⁵⁷</p>
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⁵⁶ The use of crocus and saffron could have many layers. While the rarity of this dye often indicates wealth, much like the deep embroidered textiles that appear later in the play, the act of harvesting saffron from the crocus flower is loaded. Upon blossoming, three stigma are plucked from the open flower and used to dye textiles or flavor food. The beautiful and treasured crocus is grown in order that its virginal products are “taken”, as the sacrificial victim in this case is metaphorically “deflowered”. Wohl comments, “Iphigeneia in the sacrifice scene is right on the cusp of adult sexuality. She is at the point of perfected virginity, just about to cross over into womanhood, and it is this perfect (youth) in part that makes her such an ideal sacrificial victim. The liminal nature of the moment is marked by the imagery of female initiation. The saffron colored robes Iphigeneia wears...are those worn by brides and also by the girl initiates at the festival of Artemis Brauronia” (72). Clytemnestra later compares her emotions surrounding childbirth, motherhood, and grief using a botanical metaphor (1391-2; 1417-8). Is Iphigeneia the crocus flower all along?

⁵⁷ In what context do Iphigenia's killers know her? The text seems to state that Iphigeneia performed for her father and his allies. “Her father’s men” are an example of the *synōmosia* or *hetaireia* Griffith describes: “Membership is exclusive, male, and usually upper-class; the group meets in private houses, to feast and drink; it may give itself some peculiar, even silly name; its purpose may be entirely social, or may be determinedly political (usually anti-democratic). Often both purposes are present... Sometimes, it seems, the initiatory oath was followed by some shared outrageous act which served to bind the ‘comrades’ to loyalty and secrecy” (70). Groups such as these would be suspicious in a fledgling democracy; is this group of men merely coincidentally resonant with a *synōmosia*, or is this an attempt to ally Agamemnon with an unsavory and, at the time of performance, unsympathetic holdout of aristocracy? And if we are to feel suspicious of Agamemnon’s men, what is there to stop us from suspecting Agamemnon’s own motivations, when he takes on the “yoke of necessity”?

<p>φίλου τριτόσπονδον εὔποτμον παιῶνα φίλωσ ἐτίμα. τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω: τέχλαι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι. Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ- ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει: τὸ μέλλον δ', ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω: ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν. τορὸν γὰρ ἤξει σύνορθρον ἀυγαῖς. πέλοιτο δ' οὔν τάπὶ τούτοισιν εὔ πρᾶξις, ὡς θέλει τόδ' ἄγγιστον Ἀπίας γαίας μονόφρουρον ἔρκος.</p>	<p>250</p>	<p>She celebrated with song, holy and virgin was her voice⁵⁸ She honored the beloved third libation⁵⁹—a doctor of good fortune for her father. The next things I did not see, nor will I tell⁶⁰; The handiworks of Calchas were not fruitless; But justice on the one hand weighs out learning to sufferers, but the future, when it comes to be; you may hear whenever it happens. Greet it head on, or, beforehand, rejoice. It is equal to grieving beforehand. For it will come plain, dawning along with the rising sun However that may be, the things coming upon this house, may they be well, as She wishes, the closest one, alone a defender of the Apian land.</p>
	<p>255</p>	<p>However that may be, the things coming upon this house, may they be well, as She wishes, the closest one, alone a defender of the Apian land.</p>

⁵⁸ Wohl: The Greek medical texts discuss the thickening of the throat in a young girl as a sign of defloration; the widening of the upper throat in sympathy with the widened lower passage would deepen the girl's voice and offer proof of her sexual activity. Thus, in these lines, the purity of Iphigeneia's voice when she sings the paeon is associated with the fact that she is still a virgin. If defloration opens the throat and deepens the voice, virginity would mean keeping the throat (upper, as lower) tightly closed; the most extreme and infallible indication of virginity, then, would be total silence" (pp 77-78).

⁵⁹ Foley remarks that the third libation was always poured by men. So, though Iphigeneia is not delivering such rites, she is observing and honoring them, occupying the position of a respected woman.

⁶⁰ Rader: "Given their [the chorus'] revealingly inauspicious start we may have reason to consider two possible scenarios: (1) that their authority is suspect and will only amount to a partial (and thus prejudiced) account of the expedition's history; and/or (2) that, precisely because of their partiality and prejudiced investment in this history, their authority consists in normatively shaping the narrative in one particular and important way: so as to suppress the memory of Iphigeneia and to revise her mother's justifiable rage" (94). If the chorus is unreliable for either reason, we may be compelled to imagine our *own* version of the killings that are less sympathetic to the king and his men. Despite the chorus' investment in the glory of their king and the morality of his decisions, if they are invested at all, they are compelled to share the graphic details of the murder of a young girl, in a narrative that is unequivocally pitiful.

ἤκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμήστρα, κράτος:
δίκη γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀρχηγοῦ τίειν

γυναῖκ' ἐρημωθέντος ἄρσενος θρόνου.
σὺ δ' εἴ τι κεδνὸν εἶτε μὴ πεπυσμένη
εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν θυηπολεῖς,
κλύοιμ' ἂν εὐφρων: οὐδὲ σιγῶση φθόνος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εὐάγγελος μὲν, ὥσπερ ἡ παροιμία,

ἕως γένοιτο μητρὸς εὐφρόνης πάρα.
πεύση δὲ χάρμα μεῖζον ἐλπίδος κλύειν:
Πριάμου γὰρ ἠρήκασιν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν.

Χορός

πῶς φῆς; πέφευγε τοῦπος ἐξ ἀπιστίας.

Κλυταιμήστρα

Τροίαν Ἀχαιῶν οὕσαν: ἦ τορῶς λέγω;

Χορός

χαρά μ' ὑφέρπει δάκρυον ἐκκαλουμένη.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εὖ γὰρ φρονοῦντος ὄμμα σοῦ κατηγορεῖ.

Χορός

τί γὰρ τὸ πιστόν; ἔστι τῶνδὲ σοι τέκμαρ;

I have come, Clytemnestra, honoring your power⁶¹
For it is customary to honor the wife of a chieftain
man,

260 When the male throne is abandoned.
But if you learn of good or bad things,
You perform sacrifices hoping for good news,
Which I would hear cheerfully, bearing no ill-will
towards your silence.

CLYTEMNESTRA

On the one hand, bringing good news, as is the
proverb,

265 May dawn arrive from her mother night.
You will learn of a victory surpassing your hope
For the city of Priam has been seized by the
Argives.

CHORUS

What do you mean? Your word escapes my
disbelief.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Troy belongs to the Achaeans. Am I speaking
plainly?

CHORUS

270 Delight creeps upon me, enticing my tears.

CLYTEMNESTRA

For this is prudent, when your eye speaks against
you.

CHORUS

What is the proof? Is this your token?

⁶¹ The chorus praises Clytemnestra's κράτος: Homeric tradition uses this term in reference to physical power, while alternate translations emphasize political—or perhaps, interpersonal—power.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔστιν: τί δ' οὐχί; μὴ δολώσαντος θεοῦ.

Χορός

πότερα δ' ὀνείρων φάσματ' εὐπιθῆ σέβεις;

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐ δόξαν ἂν λάβοιμι βριζούσης φρενός.

Χορός

ἀλλ' ἦ σ' ἐπίανέν τις ἄπερος φάτις;

Κλυταιμήστρα

παιδὸς νέας ὧς κάρτ' ἐμωμήσω φρένας.

Χορός

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις;

Κλυταιμήστρα

τῆς νῦν τεκούσης φῶς τόδ' εὐφρόνης λέγω.

Χορός

καὶ τίς τόδ' ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν ἀγγέλων τάχος;

Κλυταιμήστρα

Ἥφαιστος Ἴδης λαμπρὸν ἐκπέμπων σέλας.
φρυκτὸς δὲ φρυκτὸν δεῦρ' ἀπ' ἀγγάρου
πυρὸς

CLYTEMNESTRA

What is here: in what way is it not? Lest it is disguised by the gods.

CHORUS

Or, do you believe in the phantoms of dreams?

CLYTEMNESTRA

275 I would not be led by a sleeping mind⁶².

CHORUS

Or could you have been seduced⁶³ by common rumors?

CLYTEMNESTRA

You criticize my mind as if I were a very young child.

CHORUS

But when, in fact, was the city ravaged?

CLYTEMNESTRA

In that which now brings light—I say, in the nighttime.

CHORUS

280 And who among messengers could arrive so swiftly?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Hephaestus, sending forth a bright fire from Ida.
From beacon to beacon, from the poster of fire

⁶² Fraenkel 1511: “The sense of Clytemnestra’s answer to the question in 274 must be that she rejects dreams as the source of her conviction...here we may sympathize with her pride in her cleverness and discernment. In her anger she descends to a rather lower level of speech...” How does Fraenkel regard his Clytemnestra? As a (rightfully) angry woman with a level head? And does she lose her credibility to him when expressing outrage?

⁶³ Perhaps a judgment of Clytemnestra’s ongoing affair with Aegisthus

ἔπεμπεν: Ἴδη μὲν πρὸς Ἑρμαῖον λέπας		It was sent this way. First from Ida, towards the Hermean rock
Λήμνου: μέγαν δὲ πανὸν ἐκ νήσου τρίτον Ἀθῶον αἶπος Ζηνὸς ἐξεδέξατο, ὑπερτελής τε, πόντον ὥστε νωτίσαι,	285	In Lemnos. Then, a great torch, third on the island, Then Zeus ⁶⁴ steep mount Athos received it, And it soared high, skimming across the surface of the sea,
ἰσχυρὸς πορευτοῦ λαμπάδος πρὸς ἠδονὴν πεύκη τὸ χρυσοφεγγές, ὥς τις ἥλιος, σέλας παραγγείλασα Μακίστου σκοπαῖς: ὁ δ' οὔτι μέλλων οὐδ' ἀφρασμόνως ὕπνω νικώμενος παρήκεν ἀγγέλου μέρος:	290	This strong flame, traveling joyously. The golden-beaming pine-torch, as some sun, Passes her light to the watchtowers of Macistus. He, neither hesitating, nor unaware Conquered by sleep, did not let his role as messenger fall aside.
ἐκὰς δὲ φρυκτοῦ φῶς ἐπ' Εὐρίπου ῥοὰς Μεσσαπίου φύλαξι σημαίνει μολόν.		Far off, the beacons light, upon the river Euripos The coming light gave a sign to the watchmen of Messapion.
οἱ δ' ἀντέλαμψαν καὶ παρήγγειλαν πρόσω γραΐας ἐρείκης θωμὸν ἄψαντες πυρί. σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη, ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδίον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας	295	And they in turn lit pyres, sending the message forward, Kindling the fire with heaps of old heather. And this strengthened fire, not yet grown dim, Leaping over the plain of Asopos, in the custom ⁶⁵ Of the shining moon, towards the rock of Kithairon,
ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός. φάος δὲ τηλέπομπον οὐκ ἠναίετο φρουρὰ πλεον καίουσα τῶν εἰρημένων:	300	It roused another succeeding messenger-flame. They did not spurn the far-journeying light, rather The guards made a flame greater than what they were commanded.

⁶⁴ Fraenkel 154: “The triad Hephaistos, Hermes, and Zeus would stand significantly at the beginning and the allusion to the Soter would give the fire-message from the very start an implication of good omen to take on its way”

⁶⁵ Here another metaphor using Δίκη, uniquely comparing the subject (the beacon flame) to a celestial body, the moon. Perhaps this comparison renders the flame more powerful, and universal. In this example the moon, σελήνης, is gendered feminine, deriving from the goddess Selene.

λίμνην δ' ὑπὲρ Γοργῶπιν ἔσκηψεν φάος:	The light was hurled over the Gorgon-eyed ⁶⁶ waters,
ὄρος τ' ἐπ' Αἰγίπλαγκτον ἐξικνούμενον	Coming as supplicant upon the Aegiplanctus mountain,
ὄτρυνε θεσμὸν μὴ χρονίζεσθαι πυρός. πέμπουσι δ' ἀνδαίοντες ἀφθόνῳ μένει	Urging that the ordinance of fire not tarry. 305 And they sent it, lighting up with bounteous might,
φλογὸς μέγαν πῶγωνα, καὶ Σαρωνικοῦ πορθμοῦ κάτοπτον πρῶν' ὑπερβάλλειν πρόσω	A great beard of fire, to shoot forward over the foreland which looks down upon the Saronic passage ⁶⁷ ,
φλέγουσαν: ἔστ' ἔσκηψεν εὔτ' ἀφίκετο Ἀραχναῖον αἶπος, ἀστυγείτονας σκοπᾶς:	Burning up, until it shot down, reaching Steep Arachnaeus, bordering on the city watchtower:
κάπειτ' Ἀτρειδῶν ἐς τόδε σκίηπει στέγος φάος τόδ' οὐκ ἄπαππον Ἰδαίου πυρός. τοιοῖδε τοί μοι λαμπαδηφόρων νόμοι, ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλου διαδοχαῖς πληρούμενοι:	310 After that, it fell down upon this Atreidae roof This very fire is not bastard ⁶⁸ of the flame of Ida. This is the sort of torchbearer I have set, One passing to another they completed this task:
νικᾷ δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος δραμῶν. τέκμαρ τοιοῦτον σύμβολόν τέ σοι λέγω ἀνδρὸς παραγγείλαντος ἐκ Τροίας ἐμοί.	The victor being the one who ran first, and last. 315 This token is the symbol I give you, Which my husband passed along from Troy to me. ⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Fraenkel (160) advocates that rather than a proper name, Γοργῶπις λίμνη is a colloquial description of the lake: “The story in Hesychius... that Gorgo daughter of Megareus and wife of Korinthos threw herself into the lake, which thereupon came to be called Γοργῶπις instead of εσχατιωτις, does not prove that the name Γοργῶπις was ever actually given to the lake in living speech; the shadowy Gorgo... and the trivial story of her suicide may quite easily have been an etymological invention to account for a single reference in some poet, possibly this very passage”. Nevertheless, the connection of a body of water to a woman’s suicide is unique, despite Fraenkels dismissal: “it is impossible to say why the poet uses fancy names to designate lake and mountain; perhaps it is just for the sake of variety” (161). Hesychius’ description, and the story’s attribution by Fraenkel himself to “some poet, possibly this very passage” in fact reveals a moment of ancient reception that cannot be overlooked. Despite its triviality, there is an indication, even if very minor, that someone in the ancient past, and Fraenkel himself allows the possibility that it was Aeschylus himself, was able to view this type of poetry from a gendered perspective.

⁶⁷ 306 and 307 are largely switched to maintain understandable word order

⁶⁸ Ἄπαππον: Unfathered, ungrandfathered

⁶⁹ Foley: “She has framed her description to bring the fires of Troy’s destruction metaphorically to rest on the house of Atreus” (208)

Χορός

θεοῖς μὲν αὖθις, ὧ γύναι, προσεύξομαι.
λόγους δ' ἀκοῦσαι τούσδε κάποθαυμάσαι
διηνεκῶς θέλομι' ἂν ὡς λέγοις πάλιν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

Τροίαν Ἀχαιοὶ τῆδ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.
οἶμαι βοὴν ἄμεικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν.
ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἐγγέας ταυτῶ κύτει
διχοστατοῦντ' ἂν, οὐ φίλω, προσεννέποις.
καὶ τῶν ἀλόντων καὶ κρατησάντων δίχα
φθογγὰς ἀκούειν ἔστι συμφορᾶς διπλῆς.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀμφὶ σώμασιν πεπτωκότες
ἀνδρῶν κασιγνήτων τε καὶ φυταλμίων
παῖδες γερόντων οὐκέτ' ἐξ ἐλευθέρου
δέρης ἀποιμώζουσι φιλάτων μόρον:
τοὺς δ' αὖτε νυκτίπλαγκτος ἐκ μάχης πόνος

νήστεις πρὸς ἀρίστοισιν ὧν ἔχει πόλις

τάσσει, πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐν μέρει τεκμήριον,
ἀλλ' ὡς ἕκαστος ἔσπασεν τύχης πάλον.
ἐν δ' αἰχμαλώτοις Τρωικοῖς οἰκήμασιν
ναίουσιν ἤδη, τῶν ὑπαιθρίων πάγων
δρόσων τ' ἀπαλλαγέντες, ὡς δ' εὐδαίμονες
ἀφύλακτον εὐδήσουσι πᾶσαν εὐφρόνην.
εἰ δ' εὖ σέβουσι τοὺς πολισσούχους θεοὺς
τοὺς τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς θεῶν θ' ἰδρύματα,

οὐ τὰν ἐλόντες αὖθις ἀνθαλοῖεν ἂν.

CHORUS

To the gods, in turn, my lady, I will offer prayers;
But to hear these words and marvel at them
Is my continuing wish, if you would tell it again.

CLYTEMNESTRA

- 320 On this day the Achaeans hold Troy.
I suppose a noise is emerging loud in the city.
Pouring sour-wine and oil into one jar,
They will stand apart, called, perhaps, unloving.
And such is the lot of conquered and conquerors
- 325 The voices are to be heard, fortunes double fold
For the ones fallen round the bodies
Of husbands, brothers, and upon parents
Children, old men who never again from free
Throat bewail loudly the fate of their dearest
- 330 While these, on the contrary, wander at night from
the pain of battle
Causes hunger before breakfast, when they take
the town
In marshal order, not in proven turns
But as each drew a fortune's lot.
In the spear-stripped⁷⁰ homes of Troy
- 335 They are already dwelling, from public founts
And dew they are delivered, as the fortunate;
Unguarded they sleep well through the kind night.
And if the much revered structures of the gods
Those of the conquered earth, supported by
divinities,
- 340 The conquerors will not be conquered again in
turn.

⁷⁰ Αἰχμάλωτος, translated “taken by the spear” of course refers to the violence by which Troy was conquered. But referring specifically to the homes, the *domus*, which are often classified as feminine/female spaces, αἰχμάλωτος takes on a new, sexual layer. This translation, “spear-stripped” attempts to bring out the gendered connotations that come along with conquering, relying on the modern connotations of “strip” to evoke not just the notion of taking something from the household, but similar themes of sexual violence as, say, ravage, despoil, even rape.

ἔρωσ δὲ μή τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτῃ στρατῷ
πορθεῖν ἢ μὴ χρῆ, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους.

δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς οἴκουσ νοστήμου σωτηρίας
κάμψαι διαύλου θάτερον κῶλον πάλιν:
θεοῖσ δ' ἀναμπλάκητος εἰ μόλοι στρατός, 345
ἐγρηγορός τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων
γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πρόσπαια μὴ τύχοι κακά.
τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ κλύεις:
τὸ δ' εὖ κρατοίῃ μὴ διχορρόπως ἰδεῖν.
πολλῶν γὰρ ἐσθλῶν τήνδ' ὄνησιν εἰλόμην. 350

Χορός

γύναι, κατ' ἄνδρα σώφρον' εὐφρόνως
λέγεις.

ἐγὼ δ' ἀκούσας πιστά σου τεκμήρια
θεοὺσ προσειπεῖν εὖ παρασκευάζομαι.
χάρις γὰρ οὐκ ἄτιμος εἴργασται πόνων.

Χορός

νικώμενος λόγοισιν οὐκ ἀναίνομαι:
ἀεὶ γὰρ ἦβη τοῖσ γέρουσιν εὖ μαθεῖν.
δόμοισ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ Κλυταιμῆστρα μέλειν 585

εἰκὸς μάλιστα, σὺν δὲ πλουτίζειν ἐμέ.

Κλυταιμῆστρα

ἀνωλόλυξα μὲν πάλαι χαρᾶσ ὕπο,
ὄτ' ἦλθ' ὁ πρῶτος νύχιος ἄγγελος πυρός,
φράζων ἄλωσιν Ἴλιου τ' ἀνάστασιν.

But may no prior lust fall upon the army
To ravage things they ought not, conquered by
desire.

For it is necessary for their safe return homewards
To turn back and repeat their course

But if, not offending the gods, the army comes,
They might awaken the misery of those destroyed
Should no sudden evil come to be.

You hear these words from me, a woman⁷¹:

May we see the strong not waver.

For I desire many good things.

CHORUS

Woman, in the way of a soundminded man you
speak cheerfully.

And I, having heard your believable token,
The gods, to whom we address well, prepare me
For grace which is not dishonored performs our
labor.

(355-582)

CHORUS

Being conquered by your words, I do not disagree:
For, always, the elderly learn well from the youth.

But these things shall interest the household, and
Clytemnestra

Very much, and enrich me as well.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I raised up a cry long before,
When the first messenger-flame arrived by night
Announcing that Ilium was captured and razed.

⁷¹ Fraenkel: "Clytemnestra is probably calling attention to her superior, man-like insight into the nature of human affairs, including her knowledge of the reverence due to the gods, and also her experience of what life is like in the midst of the turmoil of war. This latter is particularly remarkable in a woman" (178)

καί τίς μ' ἐνίπτων εἶπε, 'φρυκτωρῶν δία
πεισθεῖσα Τροίαν νῦν πεπορθῆσθαι δοκεῖς;

ἦ κάρτα πρὸς γυναικὸς αἶρεσθαι κέαρ.⁷
λόγοις τοιούτοις πλαγκτὸς οὐσ' ἐφαινόμην.
ὅμως δ' ἔθυον, καὶ γυναικείῳ νόμῳ

ὀλολυγμὸν ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν κατὰ πτόλιν
ἔλασκον εὐφημοῦντες ἐν θεῶν ἔδραις
θυηφάγον κοιμῶντες εὐώδη φλόγα.

καὶ νῦν τὰ μάσσῳ μὲν τί δεῖ σέ μοι λέγειν;

ἄνακτος αὐτοῦ πάντα πεύσομαι λόγον.
ὅπως δ' ἄριστα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰδοῖον πόσιν
σπεύσω πάλιν μολόντα δέξασθαι:—τί γὰρ

γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἦδιον δρακεῖν,

ἀπὸ στρατείας ἀνδρὶ σώσαντος θεοῦ
πύλας ἀνοιξαι;—ταῦτ' ἀπάγγελον πόσει:

ἦκειν ὅπως τάχιστ' ἐράσμιον πόλει:
γυναῖκα πιστὴν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὖροι μολῶν

οἶαν περ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα

ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμίαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,
καὶ τᾶλλ' ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον
οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου.
οὐδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίψογον φάτιν

590 And some scolded me, saying, are fire-signals so
compelling to you, that you now think Troy has
been ravaged?

It is womanly for one's heart to be raised
By such words I was made to appear daft.
But nevertheless I made offerings, and, following
the woman's tradition,

595 There was ululating across the city,
Cries of good fortune in the shrines of the gods,
Who devoured offerings, lulled to rest by the
fragrant flame.

So, why now do you need to tell me the long
story?

From the master himself I will learn everything.

600 As best as possible, I will have
My revered husband, coming back to take—for
what

To a woman is more welcome than to see the
torchfire⁷²?

This man is spared by the god from perilous battle
To open the gates? Report these things to my
husband:

605 Come as swiftly as possible to the beloved city,
Where he, coming, ought to find his obedient wife
in the home.

The one he left behind, indeed, the dog of the
household

Faithful to that man, poised against an enemy
And similar in all other things, a sealing mark

610 Not once miscarried, in this time.

I know neither delight, nor implicating talk

⁷² Clytemnestra is speaking deceptively here, exploiting the chorus' expectations of gender roles to speak ironically of her wishes. She manipulates their idea of an obedient wife, the "dog of the household", to describe herself on multiple levels. Though this statement is true, she *is* in fact overjoyed at the beacon light, her expectations are not to shower him with praise, but to slaughter him.

ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς.

With another man, any more than I know the dipping of bronze.⁷³

Κήρυξ

τοιόσδ' ὁ κόμπος τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων 620
οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναία λακεῖν.

HERALD

Such a boast, full of the truth
Is not shameful for a noble woman to proclaim.

(622-781)

Χορός

ἄγε δῆ, βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ',
Ἄτρέως γένεθλον,
πῶς σε προσεῖπω; πῶς σε σεβίζω 785
μήθ' ὑπεράρας μήθ' ὑποκάμψας

CHORUS⁷⁴

Come now, o king, ravager of Troy
Offspring of Atreus
How shall I speak to you, how shall I honor you?
Neither overshooting nor underestimating

⁷³ Rader: “It is as if Clytemnestra is flaunting her transgressions, acknowledging and simultaneously scoffing at the likelihood that everyone knows what has been happening in Agamemnon’s absence. For a woman as savvy as her it seems odd that she’d be unaware of the confessions echoing behind her obstreperous denials, the defensiveness behind her declarations. I suspect Clytemnestra is playing the chorus—and us, too, who think we know better than she does what she’s saying and thinking. How can we be so sure that, for a while at least, her claims to fidelity and to solicitude for her husband weren’t genuine? Presumably she didn’t immediately take up with Aegisthus after Agamemnon’s departure, which would imply an affair concurrent with her marriage. That seems unlikely. How unlikely is it, though, that the murder of her daughter didn’t change her opinion permanently, that after Agamemnon went *there* she could no longer suffer the thought of being his wife? If he was willing, she might be thinking, to sacrifice a blood relation so callously, what’s to say he wouldn’t just as readily find an excuse to sacrifice a non-blood relation such as his wife the next time a dubious case (like another war) arises? All of this is to say simply: We cannot assume that Clytemnestra’s eventual affair with Aegisthus happened terribly quickly and we certainly cannot write it back into her relationship with Agamemnon retrospectively as if she were preternaturally disposed to cheat and kill” (112-113)

⁷⁴ Fraenkel 293: “Agamemnon is visible only during one long scene. The play called after him is well advanced when at last he enters, and he disappears long before the end. But that one scene is the centre of the tragedy: not only is it placed in the middle of the whole fabric but it is also as it were the centre of gravity. Its density is enormous. The more we study it, the more we realize that here the poet has concentrated all his creative power on one objective. Nothing was to be admitted that would not accentuate some essential feature of the great central figure, the king, and have a bearing upon his tragic fate”. A perversion of the longing for Odysseus in Ithaca, every aspect of the scene at the palace gates has been specifically set up for this very homecoming.

<p style="text-align: center;">καιρὸν χάριτος; πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες. τῷ δυσπραγοῦντι δ' ἐπιστενάχειν πᾶς τις ἔτοιμος: δῆγμα δὲ λύπης οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται: καὶ ξυγχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων, οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός, τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας ὑδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι. σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν 800 Ἑλένης ἕνεκ', οὐ γάρ σ' ἐπικεύσω, κάρτ' ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος, οὐδ' εὖ πραπίδων οἶακα νέμων θράσος ἐκ θυσιῶν ἀνδράσι θνήσκουσι κομίζων. νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀπ' ἄκρας φρενὸς οὐδ' ἀφίλων</p> <p style="text-align: center;">εὐφρων πόνος εὖ τελέσασιν. γνώση δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος τόν τε δικαίως καὶ τὸν ἀκαίρως πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν.</p>	<p>790 Your deserved grace? It seems that many mortal men Honor appearance before what is just And the unlucky are to groan in answer To all that is at hand, but the bite of grief Does not reach the liver And assuming the appearance of congratulation They contort their grave countenance.</p> <p>795 But to the one who is a good judge of character It does not escape his eye that Though appearing to be well-wishers They beguile with watery affections. But you to me, marshaling an army 800 On account of Helen, ay I will not conceal it I depicted you as uneducated⁷⁵, Not controlling your rudder with sound mind, Deriving a boldness from sacrifice For the benefit of dying men.</p> <p>805 But now, from deeper in my spirit and not lacking affection, Those who fulfill their duties do so cheerfully In time you will come to know through inquiry Those who have acted customarily, and those who were ill-suited to stay home and guard the people.⁷⁶</p>
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⁷⁵ This is a rare moment in which the chorus disapproves of Agamemnon. Here they show a distaste for Helen, supported in their earlier screed against her. Why only this concern, and not the rape of Troy, or the murder of Iphigeneia? Or, any number of events for which the gods have punished the Atreides. But Rader proposes, “the others’ forgetfulness of Iphigeneia is *deliberate*; for this reason her [Clytemnestra’s] memory is deliberate. This raises the question of whether in fact the chorus is here suppressing any mention of Iphigeneia. Because they were just meditating about lions in houses and violence breeding violence—unless they’re daft or sociopathic (either of which is certainly possible), how could they not be thinking of her when they mention the very beginning of the war?” (115)

⁷⁶ Rader: “Are we to imagine that all Argives will be as (superficially and non-offensively) honest as the chorus of elders? What about the women and mothers in the city? Would Agamemnon particularly care?” (114)

Ἀγαμέμνων

πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταιτίους
νόστου δικαίων θ' ὧν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν
Πριάμου: δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοῖ

κλύοντες ἀνδροθνήτας Ἰλίουφθορὰς
ἐς αἵματηρὸν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως
ψήφους ἔθεντο: τῷ δ' ἐναντίῳ κύτει

ἐλπίς προσήει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῳ.
καπνῷ δ' ἀλοῦσα νῦν ἔτ' εὖσημος πόλις.

ἄτης θύελλαι ζῶσι: συνθνήσκουσα δὲ

σποδὸς προπέμπει πίονας πλούτου πνοάς.
τούτων θεοῖσι χρῆ πολύμνηστον χάριν

τίνειν, ἐπεὶ περ καὶ πάγας ὑπερκότους
ἐφραξάμεσθα καὶ γυναικὸς οὐνεκα

πόλιν διημάθουνεν Ἀργεῖον δάκος,
ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδηφόρος λεώς,
πήδημ' ὀρούσας ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν:
ὑπερθορῶν δὲ πύργον ὠμηστής λέων
ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ.
θεοῖς μὲν ἐξέτεινα φροῖμιον τόδε:

τὰ δ' ἐς τὸ σὸν φρόνημα, μέμνημαι κλύων,
καὶ φημί ταῦτά καὶ συνήγορόν μ' ἔχεις.
παύροις γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἔστι συγγενὲς τόδε,
φίλον τὸν εὐτυχοῦντ' ἄνευ φθόνου σέβειν.
δύσφρων γὰρ ἰὸς καρδίαν προσήμενος
ἄχθος διπλοῖζει τῷ πεπαμένῳ νόσον,

τοῖς τ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ πῆμασιν βαρύνεται
καὶ τὸν θυραῖον ὄλβον εἰσορῶν στένει.

εἰδὼς λέγοιμ' ἄν, εὖ γὰρ ἐξεπίσταμαι

AGAMEMNON

810 First, Argos, and the gods that inhabit it,
I ought to address, those who have helped me
Return home and to rightfully come upon the city
Of Priam: for it is not custom to, from the tongue
of a god,

Hear murderous ruin for Ilia
815 Unto bloody implements, unwaveringly
The voting pebbles were cast; though the vessel
opposite
Came near in hope; no hand cast a vote to fill it.
Now conspicuous smoke rises from the conquered
city.

The storms of Ate still live: and the together
expiring

820 Embers send forth abounding blasts of riches
In these affairs we should be mindful to pay our
thanks

To the gods, since the traps are cruel
That we set round them, and on account of a
woman

It destroyed the city: the Argive beast
825 A fledgling horse, the shield-bearing men
Leapt forward as the Pleiades set,
Vaulting over the tower, the flesh-eating lion
Lapped up his fill of tyrant blood.
Though indeed I stretched out this introduction for
the gods:

830 But as for your mind, I recall hearing
And I say these things, and your advocate has me.
Since few men innately have this,
To honor, without ill-will, their prosperous friend.
For a sorrowful poison rests on the heart

835 The burden doubling for he who acquires this
sickness

He weighs himself down with his own grief
And seeing the happiness outside his doors, he
moans.

From knowledge I speak, since I know well

ὀμιλίας κάτοπτρον, εἶδωλον σκιᾶς
840δοκοῦντας εἶναι κάρτα πρευμενεῖς ἐμοί.
μόνος δ' Ὀδυσσεύς, ὅσπερ οὐχ ἐκὼν ἔπλει,
ζευχθεῖς ἔτοιμος ἦν ἐμοὶ σειραφόρος:
εἴτ' οὖν θανόντος εἶτε καὶ ζῶντος πέρι
λέγω. τὰ δ' ἄλλα πρὸς πόλιν τε καὶ θεοῦς

κοινοὺς ἀγῶνας θέντες ἐν πανηγύρει
βουλευσόμεσθα. καὶ τὸ μὲν καλῶς ἔχον

ὅπως χρονίζον εὖ μενεῖ βουλευτέον:

ὄτῳ δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
ἦτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνας
850πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου.
νῦν δ' ἐς μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐφεστῖους

ἐλθὼν θεοῖσι πρῶτα δεξιώσομαι,
οἵπερ πρόσω πέμψαντες ἤγαγον πάλιν.

νίκη δ' ἐπείπερ ἔσπετ', ἐμπέδωζ μένοι.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἄνδρες πολῖται, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,
οὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι τοὺς φιλόνορας τρόπους
λέξαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς: ἐν χρόνῳ δ' ἀποφθίνει
τὸ τάρβος ἀνθρώποισιν. οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα
μαθοῦσ', ἐμαυτῆς δύσφορον λέξω βίον
860τοσόνδ' ὅσον περ οὗτος ἦν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ.

The company of mirrors, shadow phantoms,
840 Appearing to be very gracious to me.

But only Odysseus, he who unwillingly sailed
He was the readied yoke-animal to me
Whether dead or alive,
I speak of him thusly. As for anything else
concerning other cities and gods,

845 After setting common assembly courts
We shall deliberate it⁷⁷. Also, for the beautiful
things

We must plan so that their beauty perseveres in
time,

But when a healing drug is necessary
Indeed, with fire or the kind knife

850 We shall endeavor to divert the plague of misery.
But now, in the halls and by the fireside of my
home

I am going, first paying greeting to the gods
They who sent me forward brought me back
again.

And victory, following after, remains firmly set.

CLYTEMNESTRA

855 Men, citizens, and Argive elders here,
I will not be ashamed of my man-loving turn,
To lay it before you, in time it dies away,

The anxiety among men. Uncoached
By others, I may tell of my burdensome life

860 As long as this man was beneath Ilia

⁷⁷ Agamemnon here reassumes his role as ruler of Argos swiftly, through these commands to the chorus. Though the chorus is reassured, the audience knows what is to come, and know that Agamemnon's promises will remain unfulfilled. Additionally, the king promises to conduct this work as a group "we shall deliberate", rather than acting alone, perhaps a favorable nod to democracy. Mark Griffith proposes a view of "Athenian tragedy in general as an exercise, on the part of rulers and ruled, in mutual mystification and reassurance about the exercise of 'democratic' power" (65). To some degree, the audience must be convinced that Agamemnon, and thus Orestes, are the rightful rulers of Argos, *regardless* of their ancestry. Perhaps then, including this moment of level headed political planning serves to justify Agamemnon's unforgivable crimes at Aulis?

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν,
πολλὰς κλύουσιν κληδόνας παλιγκότους:
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἦκειν, τὸν δ' ἐπεσφέρειν κακοῦ
κάκιον ἄλλο πῆμα, λάσκοντας δόμοις.

καὶ τραυμάτων μὲν εἰ τόσων ἐτύγγανεν
ἀνὴρ ὄδ', ὡς πρὸς οἶκον ὠχετεύετο

φάτις, τέτρηται δικτύου πλέον λέγειν.

εἰ δ' ἦν τεθνηκώς, ὡς ἐπλήθουν λόγοι,

τρισώματός τ' ἄν Γηρυῶν ὁ δεύτερος
πολλὴν ἄνωθεν, τὴν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγω,
χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν ἐξηύχει λαβεῖν,
ἅπαξ ἐκάστῳ καθανῶν μορφώματι.
τοιῶνδ' ἕκατι κληδόνων παλιγκότων
πολλὰς ἄνωθεν ἀρτάνας ἐμῆς δέρης
ἔλυσαν ἄλλοι πρὸς βίαν λελημμένης.
ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰ παῖς ἐνθάδ' οὐ παραστατεῖ,

ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,
ὡς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης: μηδὲ θαυμάσης τόδε.
τρέφει γὰρ αὐτὸν εὐμενῆς δορυξένος
Στρόφιος ὁ Φωκεύς, ἀμφίλεκτα πῆματα
ἐμοὶ προφωνῶν, τὸν θ' ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ σέθεν

First, with a woman torn away from a man
To sit lonely in the home is a violent evil
Hearing so many festering rumors⁷⁸

And for it to come, to bring in another evil
865 A pain besides this pain, howling amidst the
household.

And if as many traumas chanced upon
This man as the rumors conveyed to our house
from

The heavens, he would be pierced through more
than any net to speak of.

Yet if he were dying, as the rumors were
multiplied

870 Then perhaps three bodies, a second Geryon—
Many on high, of the things below I do not speak—
He boasted of taking a three-fold earthly cloak
One for each dying shape
For the sake of these malignant omens

875 Nooses above my neck
Have been loosened by many others' strong grips.
It is for this reason that our child does not stand
here,

The possessor of mastery, yours and mine,
As needed, Orestes: do not wonder at this.

880 For he is being reared by our kindly ally
Strophius the Phocian, double-ended calamities
Were declared to me, of you under Ilia,

⁷⁸ Clytemnestra is feminizing herself in this opening address: “she pretends to be vulnerable to rumors and dreams in typical female fashion, having earlier denied any such weakness to the chorus (274)” (Foley 210). She is playing the part that Agamemnon and the chorus have expected.

κίνδυνον, εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία
βουλὴν καταρρίψειεν, ὥστε σύγγονον
βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον.
τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει.

ἔμοιγε μὲν δὴ κλαυμάτων ἐπίσσυτοι
πηγαὶ κατεσβήκασιν, οὐδ' ἔνι σταγῶν.
ἐν ὀνικοίτοις δ' ὄμμασιν βλάβας ἔχω
τὰς ἀμφί σοι κλαίουσα λαμπτηρουχίας
ἀτημελήτους αἰέν. ἐν δ' ὄνειρασιν
λεπταῖς ὑπαὶ κώνωπος ἐξηγειρόμην
ρίπαϊσι θωύσσοντος, ἀμφί σοι πάθη
ὀρῶσα πλείω τοῦ ξυνεύδοντος χρόνου.
νῦν ταῦτα πάντα τλάσ' ἀπενθήτω φρενὶ

λέγοιμ' ἂν ἄνδρα τόνδε τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα,

σωτήρα ναὸς πρότονον, ὑψηλῆς στέγης

στῦλον ποδήρη, μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί,

καὶ γῆν φανεῖσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα,
κάλλιστον ἦμαρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χειμάτος,
ὀδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος:
τερπνὸν δὲ τὰναγκαῖον ἐκφυγεῖν ἅπαν.
τοιοῖσδέ τοί νιν ἀξιῶ προσφθέγμασιν.

Both the danger, and if anarchy's popular clamor⁷⁹
Should overthrow your council, as innate
To mortal men: to kick the fallen more.
But indeed, such an excuse does not carry any
cunning.

But for me at least, my violent weepings
Have run out of water, not one last drop.
In my late-watching eyes I have damage
Lamenting the beacon-lights beside you,
Ever unnoticed. In dreams,
I am awoken by the faint noise of
Buzzing gnats, in which your experiences
That I saw overflowed the length of sleep.

Now having suffered all these things, my mind is
free from grief

I would speak of my husband here as the dog of
the house

The salvation of the ship's mast, of these lofty
halls,

Their pillars down to the feet, the only son of his
father,

And land appearing to men at sea beyond hope,
A beautiful day to see after the winter,
The stream from a spring to a thirsty traveler,
The pleasure of escaping a prison.

In these ways he is worthy of address.

⁷⁹ Griffith: “δημ- words in *Agamemnon* occur frequently of ‘the people’s feelings’ (458, 883, 938, 1409, 1616)...and often this perspective is differentiated (at least implicitly) from that of the Chorus, and presented as if this is the view of ‘the masses,’ ‘the rabble.’ Particularly striking is the usage of δημό- words for semi-articulate complaint or approval: ‘murmurs,’ ‘uproar,’ ‘groans,’ and ‘curses’...Overall, the play conveys a vivid, though vague and indeterminate, sense of Argos as an unstable community torn by dissension and fear: just as the ruling elite are bitterly divided amongst themselves, so too the men and women of Argos, with their muttered, half-suppressed dissatisfactions with the royal family, represent an important ingredient in the building of anxiety throughout this first play of the trilogy” (1995, 76-77). Is it that Clytemnestra, though a woman, and therefore unfit, ruler of Argos, understands and expertly exploits this undercurrent of popular dissatisfaction, one that perhaps predates her usurping of power, to entrap her husband?

φθόνος δ' ἀπέστω: πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ πρὶν κακὰ

ἠνειχόμεσθα. νῦν δέ μοι, φίλον κάρα,

ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μὴ χαμαὶ τιθεῖς

τὸν σὸν πόδ', ὦναξ, Ἰλίου πορθήτορα.
δμωαί, τί μέλλεθ', αἷς ἐπέσταλται τέλος

πέδον κελεύθου στρωννύναι πετάσμασιν;
910 εὐθύς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος

ἔς δῶμ' ἄελπτον ὡς ἂν ἠγῆται δίκη.
τὰ δ' ἄλλα φροντίς οὐχ ὕπνω νικωμένη

θήσει δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἰμαρμένα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Λήδας γένεθλον, δωμάτων ἐμῶν φύλαξ,
ἀπουσία μὲν εἴπας εἰκότως ἐμῆ:
μακρὰν γὰρ ἐξέτεινας: ἄλλ' ἐναισίμως

αἰνεῖν, παρ' ἄλλων χρὴ τόδ' ἔρχεσθαι γέρας:

καὶ τᾶλλα μὴ γυναικὸς ἐν τρόποις ἐμὲ

ἄβρυνε, μηδὲ βαρβάρου φωτὸς δίκην
χαμαιπετὲς βόαμα προσχάνης ἐμοί,

But may ill-will be absent, since the woes were so
great

905 Which we endured before. But now for me, dear
decider,

Come down from this carriage, do not set your
feet

On the ground, master, ravager of Ilia.

Women, why delay, whose matters I have
commanded,

To strew tapestries in a path for his feet?⁸⁰

910 May his pathway become direct, spread with
purple cloth,

Led by Justice into a home beyond hope.

As for the rest, my attention—not conquered by
sleep—

Will set things customarily, my destiny with the
gods'.

AGAMEMNON

Offspring of Leda, guard of my household,

915 Your speech is suited for my absence,

For you stretched it too long; but to speak my
praises,

It is necessary that this gift of honor come from
others!

And for the other things, do not treat me
delicately, in the ways of women,

Nor, in the custom of a barbarian man⁸¹,

920 Falling down crying before me,

⁸⁰ Why does Clytemnestra orchestrate this impiety? Perhaps the bringing of textiles, a work created independently of the king in his absence in the womb-like interior of the house, is itself a form of childbirth. These richly colored fibers evoke the gods, but also perhaps the ornately adorned Iphigeneia at Aulis. She invites him to trample on the fruits of her labor a second time (see Wohl, p. 86), which he does.

⁸¹ Agamemnon claims that the pampering of the orientalized “barbarian” is inferior by feminizing it: “This antithetical barbarian world is portrayed in the Greek imagination as the world of effeminacy and of sensual delights even as it is the world where, logically enough, female domination is perceived as a cultural reality and where the myths of matriarchy are most often located” (Zeitlin 154)

μηδ' εἵμασι στρώσασ' ἐπίφθονον πόρον
τίθει: θεοῦς τοι τοῖσδε τιμαλφεῖν χρεών:

ἐν ποικίλοις δὲ θνητὸν ὄντα κάλλεσιν
βαίνειν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἄνευ φόβου.
λέγω κατ' ἄνδρα, μὴ θεόν, σέβειν ἐμέ.
χωρὶς ποδοψήστρων τε καὶ τῶν ποικίλων
κληδῶν ἀντεῖ: καὶ τὸ μὴ κακῶς φρονεῖν
θεοῦ μέγιστον δῶρον. ὀλβίσαι δὲ χρῆ
βίον τελευτήσαντ' ἐν εὐεστοῖ φίλη.

εἰ πάντα δ' ὡς πράσσοιμ' ἄν, εὐθαρσῆς ἐγώ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

καὶ μὴν τόδ' εἰπέ μὴ παρὰ γνώμην ἐμοί.

Ἀγαμέμνων

γνώμην μὲν ἴσθι μὴ διαφθεροῦντ' ἐμέ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἠϋξῶ θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ᾧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε.

Ἀγαμέμνων

εἵπερ τις, εἰδὼς γ' εὖ τόδ' ἐξεῖπον τέλος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δ' ἂν δοκεῖ σοι Πρίαμος, εἰ τὰδ' ἤνυσεν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐν ποικίλοις ἂν κάρτα μοι βῆναι δοκεῖ.

Nor throwing garments set my path liable to envy
It is necessary to worship the guards with such
things;

To tread on beautiful embroidery as a mortal
To me is in no way without fear;

925 I say as a man, not a god, to worship me.

Distinctly foot-cloths and embroidery
Cry aloud in omens: to not think of evil
Is the best gift of god, but it is necessary to deem
one happy when in lovely well being his life
comes to an end.

930 If in all ways I should act thusly, I may be safe.

CLYTEMNESTRA

And verily, speak to me not apart from your mind.

AGAMEMNON

But know that I will not corrupt my mind.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Would you, fearing, pray to the gods to do these
things?

AGAMEMNON

Yes, if some knowledgeable man had declared this
fate good.

CLYTEMNESTRA

935 And what would you expect Priam to do, if he had
accomplished these feats?⁸²

AGAMEMNON

Surely, it seems to me he would step on the
embroidery.

⁸² Clytemnestra taunts, or tempts, Agamemnon with the idea of Priam, who though defeated exists within Agamemnon's ego. Despite refusing to be greeted in the manner of foreigners (919), Agamemnon seems to capitulate to this tactic, desiring to define himself in relation to the revered Trojan king.

<p style="text-align: center;">Κλυταιμήστρα</p> <p>μή νυν τὸν ἀνθρώπειον αἰδεσθῆς ψόγον.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLYTEMNESTRA</p> <p>Well then, do not stand in fear of the censure of lesser men.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ἀγαμέμνων</p> <p>φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGAMEMNON</p> <p>At any rate, the things said by the people have great strength.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Κλυταιμήστρα</p> <p>ὁ δ' ἀφθόνητός γ' οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLYTEMNESTRA</p> <p>But the envied one, at any rate, does not become admirable.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ἀγαμέμνων</p> <p>οὔτοι γυναικός ἐστιν ἰμείρειν μάχης.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGAMEMNON</p> <p>940 It is indeed not for a woman to long for battle.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Κλυταιμήστρα</p> <p>τοῖς δ' ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLYTEMNESTRA</p> <p>But it is for the famous. At any rate, even to be conquered is blessed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ἀγαμέμνων</p> <p>ἦ καὶ σὺ νίκην τήνδε δήριος τίεις;</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGAMEMNON</p> <p>Even you value victory in this contest?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Κλυταιμήστρα</p> <p>πιθοῦ: κράτος μέντοι πάρες γ' ἐκὼν ἐμοί.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLYTEMNESTRA</p> <p>Obey! Indeed, willingly let your strength fall to me⁸³.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ἀγαμέμνων</p> <p>ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ σοι ταῦθ', ὑπαί τις ἀρβύλας</p> <p>λύοι τάχος, πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός.</p> <p>καὶ τοῖσδέ μ' ἐμβαίνονθ' ἄλουργέσιν θεῶν</p> <p>μή τις πρόσωθεν ὄμματος βάλοι φθόνος.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGAMEMNON</p> <p>Well if it seems so to you, have someone come under</p> <p>945 My shoes and swiftly loosen them, slaves to my wandering foot.</p> <p>And as for me, stepping upon the sea-purple garments,</p> <p>May no ill-will strike me from the faraway eyes of gods</p>

⁸³ This is one of the crucial moments of the play. Clytemnestra, a woman, has defeated her husband in an argument. At this moment she plainly reveals her desire for his submission. Agamemnon's decision to give way and tread on the tapestries is the catalyst for his undoing.

πολλή γὰρ αἰδῶς δωματοφθορεῖν ποσὶν
φθειρόντα πλοῦτον ἀργυρωνήτους θ' ὑφάς.

τούτων μὲν οὕτω: τὴν ξένην δὲ πρηνεμένῳς

τήνδ' ἐσκόμιζε: τὸν κρατοῦντα μαλθακῶς
θεὸς πρόσωθεν εὐμενῶς προσδέκεται.
ἐκὼν γὰρ οὐδείς δουλίῳ χρεῖται ζυγῶ.

αὕτη δὲ πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐξαίρετον
ἄνθος, στρατοῦ δώρημα', ἐμοὶ ζυνέσπετο.

ἐπεὶ δ' ἀκούειν σοῦ κατέστραμμαι τάδε,
εἴμ' ἐς δόμων μέλαθρα πορφύρας πατῶν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔστιν θάλασσα, τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει;
τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον

κηκίδα παγκαίνιστον, εἰμάτων βαφάς.

οἶκος δ' ὑπάρχει τῶνδε σὺν θεοῖς ἄλις
ἔχειν: πένεσθαι δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται δόμος.

πολλῶν πατησμὸν δ' εἰμάτων ἄν ηὔξάμην,
δόμοισι προυνεχθέντος ἐν χρηστηρίοις,
ψυχῆς κόμιστρα τῆσδε μηχανωμένη.
ρίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ' ἐς δόμους,

σκιὰν ὑπερτείνασα σειρίου κυνός.
καὶ σοῦ μολόντος δωματῖτιν ἐστίαν,

θάλπος μὲν ἐν χειμῶνι σημαίνεις μολόν:
970 ὅταν δὲ τεύχη Ζεὺς ἀπ' ὄμφακος πικρᾶς
οἶνον, τότε ἤδη ψυχὸς ἐν δόμοις πέλει,

For shame ruins the house via the feet
Destroying its riches bought with silver and costly
webs.

950 These things are thus. But for the foreign girl,
kindly

Carry her in. A mighty god
Looks gently upon this household from afar.
For no one would furnish himself with the yoke
of slavery.

But this one, the choice of great riches,
955 The blossom flower, the gift of my army, attends
to me.⁸⁴

If I am to be subdued to listen to you,
I will tread into our house upon purple cloth.

CLYTEMNESTRA

There is the sea, and who shall drain it?
Containing great stores of purple dye, worth its
weight in silver

960 Bubbling forth, ever-fresh, with which we dip our
garments.

Our household sets out, with the gods,
Having enough: and this household does not know
poverty.

I vowed to trample on so many garments
If it was proposed by an oracle,

965 Devising a reward for saving your soul.
For the root exists, and leaves come suppliant to
the house,

Stretching shadows to Sirius the dog-star.
And you are coming back to the home and its
hearth

Showing that warmth comes in the winter,

970 When Zeus makes from the bitter, unripe grape

⁸⁴ Foley: "...importing a concubine into a household presided over by a wife was frowned upon in Athens" (214-15). Thus, are we to expect that the audience would be sympathetic towards Clytemnestra, on account of this transgression? Likely not. Agamemnon would not be held accountable for adultery under Attic law, while Clytemnestra would.

ἀνδρὸς τελείου δῶμ' ἐπιστρωφωμένου.
Ζεῦ, Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς τέλει:

μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶν περ ἄν μέλλης τελεῖν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εἴσω κομίζου καὶ σύ, Κασάνδραν λέγω, **1035**
ἐπεὶ σ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀμηνίτως δόμοις

κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων, πολλῶν μέτα

δούλων σταθεῖσαν κτησίου βωμοῦ πέλας:
ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μηδ' ὑπερφρόνει.

καὶ παῖδα γάρ τοί φασιν Ἀλκμήνης ποτὲ **1040**
πραθέντα τλῆναι δουλίας μάζης τυχεῖν.

εἰ δ' οὖν ἀνάγκη τῆσδ' ἐπιρρέποι τύχης,
ἀρχαιοπλούτων δεσποτῶν πολλὴ χάρις.
οἱ δ' οὔποτ' ἐλπίσαντες ἤμησαν καλῶς,
ὡμοί τε δούλοις πάντα καὶ παρὰ στάθμην. **1045**
ἔχεις παρ' ἡμῶν οἷά περ νομίζεται.

Wine, then at that moment there is cool in the
house

The perfect man to occupy⁸⁵ this house.

O Zeus, Zeus, perfecter, fulfill my prayers to thee!
May you take care of that which you are destined
to fulfill⁸⁶.

(975-1034)

CLYTEMNESTRA

I say, take care to go inside as well, Cassandra,
Since Zeus, has placed you within this house
without further animus

As a companion in the cleansing of hands,
amongst the many

Slaves stood within the property, near his altar.⁸⁷
Come down from this procession, do not look
down upon it.

For even the child of Alcmene⁸⁸ once
Suffered being sold off, befalling the barley-bread
of slaves.

If, then, necessity allots this fate to any,
Masters of generational wealth are of great grace
For those who, not ever hoping to, reaped greatly,
Treat their slaves harshly by any measure.
You have, with us, that which is customary.

CASSANDRA

⁸⁵ Alternate translation: haunt

⁸⁶ Rader: "Like everyone else in the play, it seems, Clytemnestra is no stranger to opportunistically writing her malicious machinations into the cosmos"(118). What is the nature of Clytemnestra's connection to Zeus, the father of her sister Helen?

⁸⁷ This is the first and only conversation between the two women of the play. Fraenkel 467: "Condescending she certainly is, but she begins by using persuasive, if not gentle language; it is not until later that she loses control of herself". Commentaries are concerned especially in this section with Clytemnestra's manners and her treatment of Cassandra.

⁸⁸ Heracles, identified here through his mother Alcmene. Zeitlin further clarifies that Heracles is enslaved to a *queen*, Omphale of Lydia (154).

(silent)⁸⁹

Χορός

σοί τοι λέγουσα παύεται σαφή λόγον.
ἐντός δ' ἄν οὔσα μορσίμων ἀγρευμάτων
πείθοι' ἄν, εἰ πείθοι': ἀπειθοίης δ' ἴσως.

CHORUS

To you she has paused her clear speech.
Ensnared in the foredoomed net,
Comply, please, if you do comply...but perhaps
you will not⁹⁰.

CASSANDRA

(silent)

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκη **1050**
ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,
ἔσω φρενῶν λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγῳ.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why if she really is not, in the custom of a
swallow⁹¹,
Possessed by unknown and foreign voice
I shall speak from a persuasive mind

CASSANDRA

(silent)

Χορός

ἔπου. τὰ λῶστα τῶν παρεστῶτων λέγει.
πιθοῦ λιποῦσα τόνδ' ἀμαξήρη θρόνον.

CHORUS

Follow! She speaks to the more desirable
circumstance.
Obey, leaving this high carriage.

CASSANDRA

(silent)

⁸⁹ Rather than simply implying Cassandra's presence, I have left space for her (lack of) dialogue. The chorus and Clytemnestra interpret this as barbarism, perhaps disrespect, but silence was praised in women. McClure writes: "both Athenian and non-Athenian literary texts universally praise female silence and verbal submission while equating women's talk with promiscuity and adultery" (20)

⁹⁰ Does this line carry, as Fraenkel sees, "true sympathy" for Cassandra (476)?

⁹¹ Another example of a δίκην animal metaphor. Clytemnestra compares her husband's foreign mistress to a bird. Perhaps her voice and her language is supposed to sound like a bird's, and this comparison serves to characterize the barbarian tongue that she *would* be speaking in (if she were not speaking Greek onstage). Comparisons to birds often evoke fragility, omens, and freedom as well.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὔτοι θυραία τῆδ' ἐμοὶ σχολὴ πάρα **1055**

τρίβειν: τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐστίας μεσομφάλου
ἔστηκεν ἤδη μῆλα πρὸς σφαγὰς πυρός,
ὥς οὔποτ' ἐλπίσασι τήνδ' ἔξιν χάριν.
σὺ δ' εἴ τι δράσεις τῶνδε, μὴ σχολὴν τίθει.

εἰ δ' ἀξυνήμων οὔσα μὴ δέχη λόγον, **1060**
σὺ δ' ἀντὶ φωνῆς φράζε καρβάνῳ χερί.

Χορός

ἐρμηνέως ἔοικεν ἢ ξένη τοροῦ
δεῖσθαι: τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νειρέτου.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἧ μαίνεται γε καὶ κακῶν κλύει φρενῶν,
ἧτις λιποῦσα μὲν πόλιν νειάρετον **1065**
ἦκει, χαλινὸν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν,

πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἐξαφρίζεσθαι μένος.
οὐ μὴν πλέω ῥίγασ' ἀτιμασθήσομαι.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Indeed, with such a thing at my door, there is no
leisure

To spend up time, for at the central hearth
The sheep have already been set for slaughter
By those who never hoped to have such luck.
As for you, if you wish to participate in the
sacrifice, make no haste⁹².

If, not comprehending, you accept no word,
You may point instead with some foreign gesture.

CASSANDRA

(silent)

CHORUS

This woman needs an interpreter,
A plain one. She is in the manner of a newly taken
beast.

CASSANDRA

(silent)

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why she is maddened indeed, hearing cruel voices
She, leaving a newly sacked town, **1065**
Arrives here, not knowing how to bear the vicious
bit,
Before she has exhausted her rage in blood.
But I will not shame myself by hurling insults at
her.

CASSANDRA

(silent)

⁹² This line ironically anticipates Cassandra's "sacrificial" death at Clytemnestra's hands. Though she has no direct hand in the murder of her daughter, Wohl proposes that their fates are in some way, linked via exchange: "Iphigeneia died to buy back Helen, but instead bought Cassandra; and if Iphigeneia is the price paid for Cassandra, Cassandra is killed in part to avenge Iphigeneia" (pp. 100-111)

Χορός

ἐγὼ δ', ἐποικτίρω γάρ, οὐ θυμώσομαι.

ἴθ', ὦ τάλαινα, τόνδ' ἐρημώσασ' ὄχον, 1070
εἴκουσ' ἀνάγκη τῆδε καίνισον ζυγόν.

CHORUS

Well, I, taking pity, will not take my anger out upon her.

Come, wretched, and abandon your carriage. Yield to the necessity of this new yoke⁹³.

(1072-1342)

Ἀγαμέμνων

ὦμοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω

AGAMEMNON

O! I have been speared deep by a firm blow!

Χορός

σῖγα: τίς πληγὴν ἀυτεῖ καιρίως οὐτασμένος;

CHORUS

Hush! Who is this one crying, wounded by a deep strike?

Ἀγαμέμνων

ὦμοι μάλ' αὖθις, δευτέραν πεπληγμένος. 1345

AGAMEMNON

O, and again more! For a second time I've been struck!

Χορός

τοῦργον εἰργάσθαι δοκεῖ μοι βασιλέως οἰμώγμασιν.
ἀλλὰ κοινωσόμεθ' ἦν πως ἀσφαλή βουλευματα.

CHORUS

The deed has been performed, it seems to me, by the king's wailings. But let us convene on how we may reach a sound resolution.

(1348-1371)

Κλυταιμήστρα

πολλῶν πάροιθεν καιρίως εἰρημένον τάναντί' εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I have said many things before for a purpose But I am not ashamed now to say the opposite⁹⁴

⁹³ This is the second time necessity's yoke appears in the play. Does their common circumstance in any way unite Cassandra and her enslaver, her rapist?

⁹⁴ Clytemnestra's admission is relatable to women on multiple levels: "Women, as a muted group, must learn the dominant discourse in order to speak and yet, at the same time, they generate specific, alternate codes that they may use among themselves. As a result, women can be considered "bilingual" in that they understand both their own discursive strategies and those of the dominant group, engaging in 'code-switching' in order to function in societies in which they are subordinated" (McClure 27). See also W.E.B DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, pp. 3-4, for the formative use of this concept.

πῶς γάρ τις ἐχθροῖς ἐχθρὰ πορσύνων, φίλοις

δοκοῦσιν εἶναι, πημονῆς ἀρκύστατ' ἄν
φράξειεν, ὕψος κρεῖσσον ἐκπηδήματος;
ἐμοὶ δ' ἀγὼν ὄδ' οὐκ ἀφρόντιστος πάλαι
νείκης παλαιᾶς ἦλθε, σὺν χρόνῳ γε μήν:
ἔστηκα δ' ἐνθ' ἔπαισ' ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις.
οὕτω δ' ἔπραξα, καὶ τὰδ' οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι:
ὥς μήτε φεύγειν μήτ' ἀμύνεσθαι μόρον,
ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,
περιστιχίζω, πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν.
παίω δέ νιν δίς: κὰν δυοῖν οἰμωγμάτοι
μεθῆκεν αὐτοῦ κῶλα: καὶ πεπτωκότι
τρίτην ἐπενδίδωμι, τοῦ κατὰ χθονὸς
Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτήρος εὐκταίαν χάριν.
οὕτω τὸν αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ὀρμαίνει πεσών:
κάκφουσιῶν ὄξειαν αἵματος σφαγὴν
βάλλει μ' ἐρεμνῆ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου,
χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν ἦσσαν ἢ διοσδότῳ
γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν.
ὥς ᾧδ' ἐχόντων, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,

χαίροιτ' ἄν, εἰ χαίροιτ', ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεύχομαι.

εἰ δ' ἦν πρεπόντων ὥστ' ἐπισπένδειν νεκρῷ,

τῷδ' ἄν δικαίως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν.

τοσῶνδε κρατῆρ' ἐν δόμοις κακῶν ὅδε

For else how could I, preparing enmity for an
enemy, one appearing

- 1375** Friendly, fence him round with hostile
Nets of a higher height than he can leap?
For me this old contest is not heedless
An old contest came with time, for me indeed.
I stand where I struck him. An accomplishment.
1380 And I have acted thusly; I will not deny it.
To neither flee nor defend was his fate,
An inescapable net that works round, just as a fish,
I threw all around him, so rich was the malady.
I struck him twice. And with two cries aloud
1385 He gave up his limbs and to the fallen
I gave a third blow, from chthonic⁹⁵
Zeus, deliverer of the dead—a votive favor⁹⁶.
In this way, his spirit eagerly falls.
Quickly, his wound ejaculated spurts of blood
1390 Splattering me with its dark dewdrops⁹⁷
As I rejoice⁹⁸, no less than if it was god-given
The gleaming of a calyx erupting in child-birth
This is the way the matter was brought about,
revered Argives
Take pleasure then, if you do take pleasure, while
I am reveling.
1395 If it had been fitting to pour libations upon his
corpse,
Then I, ever observant of custom, would have
done so, justly.
The house's cup of evils is sufficient,

⁹⁵ Χθονὸς

⁹⁶ According to Goley, the third libation is always poured by men. In her killing of her husband, and perhaps more so in this account of it, Clytemnestra is stepping into the role of a man.

⁹⁷ This highly sexualized metaphor makes Agamemnon's murder into a sex act, one that later bears fruit. Perhaps Clytemnestra, through her mariticide, is remaking her role as mother.

⁹⁸ Foley: "She implicitly remakes the rules of marriage and inheritance, reverses traditional sexual mores, and publicly expresses a female sexual pleasure in her triumph" (204)

πλήσας ἀραίων αὐτὸς ἐκπίνει μολῶν.

Having been filled with his curses, he now comes to drink from it.⁹⁹

Χορός

θαυμάζομέν σου γλῶσσαν, ὡς θρασύστομος,
1400 ἦτις τοιόνδ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ κομπάζεις λόγον.

CHORUS

We marvel at your mouth, how insolent you are
To speak over your husband, such boastful
phrases¹⁰⁰.

Κλυταιμήστρα

πειρᾶσθέ μου γυναικὸς ὡς ἀφράσμονος:
ἐγὼ δ' ἀτρέστῳ καρδίᾳ πρὸς εἰδότας
λέγω: σὺ δ' αἰνεῖν εἴτε με ψέγειν θέλεις

CLYTEMNESTRA

You go at me as if I were a senseless woman
But I with my steady heart to you “knowers”¹⁰¹
Proclaim, and whether you wish to praise or blame
me is all the

ὅμοιον. οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς
1405 πόσις, νεκρὸς δέ, τῆσδε δεξιᾶς χερὸς

Same: this is Agamemnon, my
Husband, dead, the work of my own right hand¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Foley: “This perverted banquet is also a perverted fertility ritual-birth-sexual climax as well as a (from this perspective legitimate) claim to cosmic justice, in which the avenging Clytemnestra symbolically becomes the earth’s crops ecstatically renewed by the moisture of the king’s blood” (211)

¹⁰⁰ The chorus takes umbrage, not at the murder of Agamemnon, but with her duplicity and boasting. In this moment, Agamemnon is not the slain king, but a betrayed husband, and Clytemnestra an unfaithful wife. Why is this concern the priority of the elder statesmen? McClure proposes that particularly given the citizenship laws of 451/50, male resentment of women grew on the grounds that she alone could know the truth of paternity, and were thus able to conceal it from their partners (27). Thus, a well-spoken woman threatened the sanctity of the *oikos* as well as the *demos*.

¹⁰¹ Clytemnestra is a woman, but certainly not a senseless one. Foley: “Clytemnestra repeatedly undercuts the chorus’ attempts to reflect on and comprehend the crime by envisioning and formulating the issues from a different perspective that is clearly conditioned by her social role as a woman, albeit an unusually androgynous one. At the same time, she uses her ability to mimic and appropriate masculine and public language to serve what from the choral perspective would be a regime that entirely undercuts the status quo” (203-4).

¹⁰² The right hand is perceived as masculine (Foley 212)

ἔργον, δικαίας τέκτονος. τάδ' ᾧδ' ἔχει.

The craftwork of justice. So these matters stand¹⁰³.

Χορός

τί κακόν, ᾧ γύναι,
χθονοτρεφές ἐδανὸν ἢ ποτὸν
πασαμένα ῥυτᾶς ἐξ ἄλως ὀρόμενον
τόδ' ἐπέθου θύος, δημοθρόους τ' ἀράς;

1410 ἀπέδικες ἀπέταμες: ἀπόπολις δ' ἔση

μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς.

Κλυταιμήστρα

νῦν μὲν δικάζεις ἐκ πόλεως φυγὴν ἐμοὶ
καὶ μῖσος ἀστῶν δημόθρους τ' ἔχειν ἀράς,

οὐδὲν τότε ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐναντίον φέρων:
ὅς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὡσπερὶ βοτοῦ μόνον,

μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,
ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλτάτην ἐμοὶ

CHORUS

What evils, you woman¹⁰⁴,
Have been bred from the deep earth, food or drink,
Or sent flowing to you from the sea
That you brought upon yourself a sacrifice, and
the bane of the mobs?

1410

You have thrown him down, you have torn him
out. You will be tossed out of this land
By the immense hatred of its people.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Ah, now you sentence me to flee from the city
And to bear the hatred of the people, and the
uttered curses,

1415

But you brought nothing against this man here,
Who, caring no more than if it were the fate of a
beast

In an abundant flock of fleecy sheep,
Slaughtered his own child, the dearest fruit of my

¹⁰³ Hammond: "Thus the *Agamemnon* ends with the triumph of Justice, daughter of Zeus, in the punishment of Paris, Troy, Agamemnon and the Greeks for the unjust war in which they all engaged; of Paris especially for his breach of hospitality which offended Zeus Xenios; of Agamemnon especially for his lawless sacrifice of his own daughter...At the same time the punishment of Agamemnon coincides with the desire of the Erinyes to avenge the killing of Thyestes' children by Atreus through the killing of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, by the agency of Aegisthus. They acted as they did for their own personal reasons, which were in each case sinful." (50)

¹⁰⁴ Rather than say her name, or her title, the chorus simply refers to Clytemnestra as "woman".

τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι.

That you pay a price, blow for blow.¹⁰⁸

Κλυταιμήστρα

καὶ τήνδ' ἀκούεις ὀρκίων ἐμῶν θέμιν:
μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην,
Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', αἴσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ,
οὔ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπὶς ἐμπατεῖ,
ἕως ἂν αἴθη πῦρ ἐφ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς

1435

CLYTEMNESTRA

Hear this too¹⁰⁹: The righteousness of my oath
That was fulfilled for my daughter by Justice,
Ate, Erinys¹¹⁰, with them I slayed him,
Hope does not walk in my halls of fear
As long as a fire is kindled upon my hearth¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ The chorus does not respond in any way to Clytemnestra's outrage. Rader: "Either they are too sociopathically insensitive to her maternal concerns to acknowledge them or they are too savvy to acknowledge (and thus potentially justify) her aggressive self-defense. We know the chorus is capable of revealing criticism, but they never really own up to the injustice of Agamemnon's decisions. They've fully internalized the story about Agamemnon, Iphigeneia and Artemis—the story they invented and have been peddling to themselves... Better ultimately to persist in the fantasy that 'it is what it is' and simply claim that Clytemnestra is a woman subject to fits of irrational passion" (125-126).

Rader: "They simply refuse to acknowledge her justification, a fact that is symptomatic of a generic male unwillingness to listen to a woman in this story (the Greeks' failure to understand Helen's departure with Paris, Agamemnon and his men's refusal to heed Iphigeneia's cries and curses, the chorus' initial hesitation to believe in Clytemnestra's dreams and their subsequent inability to hear Cassandra's warnings)." (127)

¹⁰⁹ Clytemnestra compels the chorus to listen with the present indicative ἀκούεις, which to Raeburn and Thomas is "even more assertive than an imperative would be" (219-220). The chorus' earlier description of Iphigeneia's death in the parodos ends with a compartmentalization; they refuse to recount the rest of the gruesome story. But here, Clytemnestra forces them to take in her story.

¹¹⁰ Who are the Erinyes, and why do they demand this kind of justice? Hammond: "The Erinyes are primaeva goddesses, daughters of Night, who carry out the laws of the natural world mercilessly and automatically... The gods of Olympus, on the other hand, came into existence later than the Erinyes. Zeus was born later still, being the grandson of the first ruler of the sky." (45)

¹¹¹ Foley indicates that "lighting one's hearth" has sexual connotations, as it is used in *Choephoroi* 629-30 (214). Pulleyn clarifies that there is, perhaps, a connection to be drawn between the shape and seclusion of the hearth and the vagina (567). In which case, is this phrase an indication that the affair between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus was more than practical? In her affair with Aegisthus Clytemnestra does something rather bold: she selects and courts her own sexual partner.

Αἴγισθος, ὡς τὸ πρόσθεν εἶ φρονῶν ἐμοί.
 οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἄσπις οὐ μικρὰ θράσους.
 κεῖται γυναικὸς τῆσδε λυμαντήριος,
 Χρυσηίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ:
 ἢ τ' αἰχμάλωτος ἦδε καὶ τερασκόπος
 καὶ κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε, θεσφατηλόγος
 πιστὴ ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων
 ἰσοτριβῆς. ἄτιμα δ' οὐκ ἐπραξάτην.
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὕτως, ἡ δὲ τοι κύκνου δίκην
 τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον
 κεῖται, φιλήτωρ τοῦδ'· ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν

1440

1445

By Aegisthus, as before, understanding to me¹¹².
 Since to me he is a shield; not small, but bold.
 But the woman-destroyer lies here,
 The darling of the Chruseids at Ilia,
 And his prisoner, prophetess,
 And paramour. Ah, prophet,
 Faithful bedfellow, pressing the sailors' row-bench
 Meeting no unhonorable fate.
 For he is thus, and she, in the manner of a swan¹¹³
 Wailing her final, deadly, song,
 Lies by her lover: but she brought

¹¹² Foley, on the union of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in Euripides' *Electra*: "Aegisthus, by marrying the higher-status Clytemnestra, has become her man and of less account, rather than the reverse (931, 937)" (66). Zeitlin compares Aegisthus to the exoticised and despised figure Paris: "the subordinate male, the strengthless lion" (154). Is the disempowerment of Aegisthus necessary to the empowerment of Clytemnestra? This interpretation resonates with more contemporary perceptions of women who enter male-dominated spaces as "emasculating" their husbands or partners. Contempt towards fathers who stay at home with children, heterosexual couples in which the woman contributes more economically, or in current social media, the "simp", are all modern manifestations of the strengthless lion. Yet the Athenian audience might have seen this union, as Griffith puts forward, as "...a sickening perversion, not only of legitimate marriage-vows (cf. *Ag.* 877-78), but also of the traditional "loyalty oath" sworn between *hetairoi*...Neither a properly married couple, nor a band of comrades united for conventional political ends, the pair of usurpers constantly misuses the language and procedures of sacrifice, hospitality, and feasting, as they attempt to legitimize, stabilize, and ritualize their rule" (1995, 85).

¹¹³ Clytemnestra, again, compares Cassandra to a type of bird using Δίκη

εὐνής παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆς.

An additional delicacy to my bed.¹¹⁴

Χορός

φεῦ, τίς ἂν ἐν τάχει, μὴ περιόδυνος, μηδὲ
δεμνιοτήρης, 1450
μόλοι τὸν αἰεὶ φέρουσ' ἐν ἡμῖν
Μοῖρ' ἀτέλευτον ὕπνον, δαμέντος
φύλακος εὐμενεστάτου

πολλὰ τλάντος γυναικὸς διαί:
πρὸς γυναικὸς δ' ἀπέφθισεν βίον. 1455
ἰὼ ἰὼ παράνουσ Ἑλένα
μία τὰς πολλὰς, τὰς πάνυ πολλὰς
ψυχὰς ὀλέσασ' ὑπὸ Τροίᾳ.
νῦν δὲ τελέαν πολύμναστον ἐπηνθίσω 1460
δι' αἴμ' ἀνιπτον. ἦ τις ἦν τότε' ἐν δόμοις
ἔρις ἐρίδματος ἀνδρὸς οἰζύς.

CHORUS

Alas, that something comes quickly, not
exceedingly painful, nor lingering,
Should come bringing to us eternal
And, fated, endless sleep,
As our well-disposed guardian has been
overpowered,
Undergoing great suffering through a woman
And by a woman his life was wasted away.
O! O desperate¹¹⁵ Helen
Who alone destroyed many, many
Souls in violence at Troy.¹¹⁶
And now the final, well remembered adornment
Of insoluble blood. For something that was in the
house
An unconquerable strife, the affliction of a man.

¹¹⁴ Clytemnestra refers to Cassandra rather harshly in these lines. Does Aeschylus set up a contrast of this nature between the play's two (living) women? Foley: "Over the course of the play, she [Cassandra] gradually fills the structural role of the proper "wife" abandoned by Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra herself exulting over the entwined bodies of the dead Agamemnon and Cassandra, mocks her rival not only as the sharer of his bed...but as his faithful bedmate...She clearly means to imply that Cassandra has threatened to double or replace her" (Foley 92). Is this interpretation just? Simon Pullyen proposes four interpretations of 1446-7: "I (a) Agamemnon brought in over my head a side-dish to the luxury of my bed [i.e. *He hoped to enjoy Cassandra's favours as mistress in addition to my own*]. I (b) Cassandra brought in a side-dish to the luxury of my bed [i.e. *she was herself the dish and she intended herself as an extra treat for Agamemnon*]. II (a) Agamemnon brought a side dish to the luxury of my bed [i.e. *he intended to enjoy Cassandra as a mistress but I killed Cassandra and I enjoyed it*]. II (b) Cassandra brought in a side-dish to the luxury of my bed [i.e. *although she had the audacity to think she could rival me, I killed her and I enjoyed it*]" (565). He continues to describe how sexual pleasure was often described metaphorically by the enjoyment of food. Though Agamemnon does not get to "enjoy" Cassandra, perhaps Clytemnestra does. This interpretation does more to tarnish Clytemnestra's character than Agamemnon's or Cassandra's. To the modern reader, there is more that unites this pair than divides them. We are left to wonder why Clytemnestra killed Cassandra, a fellow victim of Agamemnon's callousness and lust.

¹¹⁵ παράνουσ

¹¹⁶ The chorus is miraculously able to trace even this situation back to the hated Helen.

Κλυταιμήστρα

μηδὲν θανάτου μοῖραν ἐπεύχου
τοῖσδε βαρυνθείς:
μηδ' εἰς Ἑλένην κότον ἐκτρέψης, **1465**
ὡς ἀνδρολέτειρ', ὡς μία πολλῶν
ἀνδρῶν ψυχὰς Δαναῶν ὀλέσασ'
ἄξύστατον ἄλγος ἔπραξεν.

Χορός

δαῖμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ διφυίοισι
Τανταλίδαισιν,
κράτος τ' ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν **1470**
καρδιόδηκτον ἐμοὶ κρατύνεις.
ἐπὶ δὲ σώματος δίκαν
κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεῖς' ἐκνόμως
ὑμνον ὑμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται

Κλυταιμήστρα

νῦν δ' ὄρθωσας στόματος γνώμην, **1475**
τὸν τριπάχυντον
δαίμονα γέννης τῆσδε κικλήσκων.
ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀίματολοιχὸς
νεῖρα τρέφεται, πρὶν καταλῆξαι
τὸ παλαιὸν ἄχος, νέος ἰχώρ. **1480**

CLYTEMNESTRA

Do not pray as if the part of death
Burdens you with such things
Nor upon Helen shall you turn your rage¹¹⁷
As some man-destroyer¹¹⁸, as one alone
Destroying many Danaoi spirits,
Bringing to pass an incurable sorrow.

CHORUS

O demon who falls upon this house and the two
Tantaleids,
Of equal might and spirit to the women
Your rule gnaws at my heart.
Perched over his body in the manner of
A hateful raven you are stationed¹¹⁹,
To recite a monstrous hymn of prayer.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Now you have set straight your mouths' judgment
The thrice-gorged¹²⁰
Demon of this race is who you call upon.
From it the lust, the bloodthirst
Increases down low, before it ends
The ancient wound, there is young blood.

¹¹⁷ Clytemnestra rejects the chorus' blame of Helen: "she refuses to allow them to rely on the traditional poetic cliché they have been bandying about, especially in the second stasimon, which finds the root of all evils in women and their adultery" (Foley 216)

¹¹⁸ Foley: "Clytemnestra's term man destroyer...implicitly assimilates Helen to the Amazons. It literalizes and makes absurd the chorus' claim that Helen could actually kill many men (perhaps in unspoken contrast to the deed of the heroic, androgynous Clytemnestra herself)." (216)

¹¹⁹ Foley: "The participle describing the crowlike figure [σταθεῖς]...might be either male (the [δαῖμον]), or female (Clytemnestra), but the visual image evokes Clytemnestra's posture on stage." (216)

¹²⁰ Foley: "By calling the [δαίμονα] thrice-fattened...she paves the way for making a connection between the current crime against Agamemnon and two earlier ones. In her mind, the two earlier crimes would logically be the death of Thyestes' children and Iphigeneia; if so, Clytemnestra implicitly remakes inheritance law by integrating her daughter into the direct lineage of the royal house (usually considered male, especially when the daughter has a brother)." (216)

Χορός

ἧ μέγαν οἰκονόμον
 δαίμονα καὶ βαρῦμηνιν αἰνεῖς,
 φεῦ φεῦ, κακὸν αἶνον ἀτη-
 ρᾶς τύχας ἀκορέστου:
 ἰὴ ἰή, διαὶ Διὸς
 παναιτίου πανεργέτα:
 τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται;
 τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντὸν ἐστίν;
 ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ,
 πῶς σε δακρῦσω;
 φρενὸς ἐκ φιλίας τί ποτ' εἶπω;
 κεῖσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῶδ'
 ἄσεβεῖ θανάτῳ βίον ἐκπνέων.
 ὦμοι μοι κοίταν τάνδ' ἀνελεύθερον
 δολίῳ μόρῳ δαμεις δάμαρτος
 ἐκ χερὸς ἀμφιτόμῳ βελέμνῳ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

αὐχεῖς εἶναι τόδε τοῦργον ἐμόν;
 μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
 Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
 φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ
 τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστῳ
 Ἀτρώως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος

CHORUS

You speak of the great homeminding
 Demon, the wrathful one,
 Woe, woe, an evil tale of
 Fate, unceasing woes.
1485 Ah! Ah! Through Zeus,
 All-creating, all-doing,
 What do mortal men accomplish without the god?
 What is not wrought by the gods?¹²¹
 O, O, king, king,
1490 How shall I weep for you?
 Out of my loving spirit, how will I speak of you?
 You who lie dead in the spider's web of woven
 robes
 Breathing away your life in an impious death.
 O me, me! I am not free from the lair
1495 Of a miserable fate, brought low by your wife,
 From her hand a two-edged dart.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Do you proclaim that this deed is mine?
 Do not place this upon me,¹²²
 I am not Agamemnon's wife
1500 Appearing a phantom of the wife of a corpse
 Did the ancient, fierce avenging spirit
 Of the Atreides, lord of a cruel feast

¹²¹ Rader: "In a curious about-face the chorus claims that the death of Agamemnon is the product of Zeus' will... a rather self-defeating charge if, as they averred earlier, Zeus was responsible for Agamemnon's expedition to Troy and subsequently his victory" (127).

¹²² Why does Clytemnestra deny personal responsibility, after proudly claiming it upon her entrance? And are we meant to believe her? Foley writes, "Indeed, depending on how we interpret the notoriously difficult passage, *Agamemnon* 1497-1504, it could be argued that Clytemnestra is not an autonomous moral agent at all" (203). On page 220 Foley seems to argue that the Alastor is "a daimonic incarnation of Clytemnestra's relation to Aegisthus".

Alternatively, scholars such as Matt Neuberger argue that both dramatically and philosophically (38), Clytemnestra shifting agency to the ἀλάστῳ makes no sense with what he determines to be a logical reading of the *Oresteia*. She does not deny responsibility later in *Libation Bearers*, where Neuberger claims she would be most served to do so.

τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν,
τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

Χορός

ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων;
πῶς πῶς; πατρόθεν δὲ συλλήπτωρ γένοιτ' ἂν
ἀλάστωρ.

βιάζεται δ' ὁμοσπόροις
ἐπιρροαῖσιν αἱμάτων
μέλας Ἄρης, ὅποι δίκαν προβαίνων
πάχνα κουροβόρω παρέξει.

ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ,
πῶς σε δακρύσω;
φρενὸς ἐκ φιλίας τί ποτ' εἶπω;
κεῖσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῷδ'

ἀσεβεῖ θανάτῳ βίον ἐκπνέων.
ὦμοι μοι κοίταν τάνδ' ἀνελεύθερον
δολίῳ μόρῳ δαμεῖς
ἐκ χερὸς ἀμφιτόμῳ βελέμνῳ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὔτ' ἀνελεύθερον οἶμαι θάνατον
τῷδε γενέσθαι.

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτος δολίαν ἄτην
οἴκοισιν ἔθηκ';
ἀλλ' ἐμὸν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἔρνος ἀερθέν,
τὴν πολυκλαύτην

Take this man in vengeance
A grown man for a young woman's sacrifice.

CHORUS

1505 If then you are innocent,
Of this slaughter, who will bear witness?
And how, how? But the father's curse might be the
avenging spirit, your accomplice.¹²³

Forced amid kindred
1510 Rivers of blood
Dark Ares, advancing to where he ought
Offer the clotted blood of sacrificed children.

O, O, king, king
How shall I weep for you?
1515 From a loving spirit, how will I speak of you?
You who lie dead in the spider's web of woven
robes

Breathing away your great life in impious death.
O me, me! I am not free from the lair
Of a miserable fate, brought low by your wife,
1520 From her hand a two-edged dart.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I do not think his death was shameful
In the way it occurred

For did this one not set pain and ruin
Upon himself and his household?
1525 But for myself, I raised his offspring,
The much grieved

¹²³ Does the chorus “buy” Clytemnestra’s story? Hammond posits that “the chorus places the responsibility fairly and squarely on the shoulders of Clytemnestra” (43). And why shouldn’t they, given her earlier confession? Yet, if the chorus has been willing to excuse Agamemnon’s own slaughter through blaming the gods’ and their “yokes”, why is Clytemnestra’s story so unbelievable to them?

Rader: “Apparently, the only way they’ll [the chorus] ever hear Clytemnestra is when she ventriloquizes (or is ventriloquized by) the δαίμων” (127)

Ἰφιγενείαν, ἄναξια δράσας

ἄξια πάσχων μηδὲν ἐν Ἅιδου
Μεγαλαυχείτω, ξιφοδηλήτω,
θανάτω τείσας ἅπερ ἤρξεν.

Χορός

ἀμηχανῶ φροντίδος στερηθεῖς
εὐπάλαμον μέριμναν
ὄπα τράπωμαι, πίτνοντος οἴκου.
δέδοικα δ' ὄμβρου κτύπον δομοσφαλῆ
τὸν αἵματηρόν: ψακὰς δὲ λήγει.
δίκην δ' ἐπ' ἄλλο πρᾶγμα θηγάνει βλάβης
πρὸς ἄλλαις θηγάναισι μοῖρα.
ἰὼ γὰ γὰ, εἴθ' ἔμ' ἐδέξω,
πρὶν τόνδ' ἐπιδεῖν ἀργυροτοίχου
δροίτης κατέχοντα χάμευναν.
τίς ὁ θάψων νιν; τίς ὁ θρηνήσων;

ἦ σὺ τόδ' ἔρξαι τλήση, κτείνας'
ἄνδρα τὸν αὐτῆς ἀποκωκῦσαι
ψυχῆ τ' ἄχαριν χάριν ἀντ' ἔργων
μεγάλων ἀδίκως ἐπικρᾶναι;
τίς δ' ἐπιτύμβιον αἶνον ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θείῳ

σὺν δακρύοις ἰάπτων
ἀληθείᾳ φρενῶν πονήσει;

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐ σὲ προσήκει τὸ μέλημ' ἀλέγειν

Iphigeneia¹²⁴, deemed a worthy sacrifice for a
worthy deed.

Let him not boast in the halls of Hades
Since he, slain by sword,
Pays the price, death, for that which he began.

CHORUS

1530 I am at a loss for thought, bereaved
Of inventive meditation—
Where shall I turn, with the house falling
I fear the house-shaking crash of rain,
Bloodstained, no more a drizzle.
1535 Yet for another deed, Fate sharpens justice
On another whetstone still.
Woe, earth, earth! Would that you had taken me
Before I saw this silver-sided
1540 Bath, where he lays dead.
Who shall perform his rites? Who will grieve for
him?
Will you bring yourself to this, you who slayed
Your husband, will you mourn his
1545 Spirit, a graceless grace in place of
The great unholiness you have accomplished?
And who, taking the tale upon his tomb, a man's
grave
Will send on with tears
1550 The truth of his mind's exertions?

CLYTEMNESTRA

This charge is not yours to take on

¹²⁴ This is Iphigeneia's first mention by name in the entire play. Despite the graphic parodos, the chorus willfully forgets her role, perhaps in an attempt to undercut Clytemnestra's justifications for her actions. Yet, her death has irrevocably changed her mother: "As much as the play—or at least the men in it—wants us to forget her role as a forcibly bereaved mother, we cannot take that away from her. To do so would be to take the side of the very chorus, and also Agamemnon, who desperately want to believe the war's preludes and ramifications have found peaceful resolution. In this world of tragedy, and in the world of this tragedy in particular, that cannot and will not happen" (Rader 116).

τοῦτο: πρὸς ἡμῶν
κάππεσε, κάθθανε, καὶ καταθάψομεν,

οὐχ ὑπὸ κλαυθμῶν τῶν ἐξ οἴκων,
ἀλλ' Ἰφιγένειά νιν ἀσπασίως
θυγάτηρ, ὡς χρῆ,
πατέρ' ἀντιάσασα πρὸς ὠκύπορον
πόρθμευμ' ἀχέων
περὶ χειρε βαλοῦσα φιλήσει.

Χορός

ὄνειδος ἤκει τόδ' ἀντ' ὀνειδούς.
δύσμαχα δ' ἔστι κρῖναι.
φέρει φέροντ', ἐκτίνει δ' ὁ καίνων.
μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς
παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα: θέσμιον γάρ.
τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλῃ δόμων;
κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἄτα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔς τόνδ' ἐνέβης ξὺν ἀληθείᾳ
χρησμόν. ἐγὼ δ' οὔν
ἐθέλω δαίμονι τῷ Πλεισθενιδῶν
ὄρκους θεμένη τάδε μὲν στέργειν,
δύσκλητά περ ὄνθ': ὁ δὲ λοιπόν, ἰόντ'
ἐκ τῶνδε δόμων ἄλλην γενεὰν
τρίβειν θανάτοις ἀθένταισι.
κτεάνων τε μέρος βαιὸν ἐχούση

By our¹²⁵ hands

He fell, down to his death, and down below he
will be buried

Not beneath the tears of his household

1555 But Iphigeneia shall gladly welcome him,
As is due a daughter to

Her father¹²⁶, face to face at the swift-flowing
Rivers of sorrow,

And shall throw her arms around him in affection.

CHORUS

1560 This reproach comes in place of reproach
It is difficult to distinguish the two.

He carries who is carried; the killer pays the price
Remain as Zeus remains enthroned

The actor comes to suffer: for this is fixed.

1565 Who may throw out of the house its own
offspring?

The bloodline is inlaid with suffering.

CLYTEMNESTRA

You venture in truth

Into this prophecy. But I

Am willing to, with the demon of the Pleisthenidai

1570 Swear by a set oath, to be content with what has
occurred,

As hard to bear as they are. For the rest, going

Out from this house and to another bloodline,

May he lay waste to them through murder.

I shall keep portion of my property

¹²⁵ Who is Clytemnestra referring to? Her alliance with the δαίμων, or with Aegisthus?

¹²⁶ In this last twist of the blade, Clytemnestra flips the gendered expectations of Iphigeneia's duties to her father. Is this consistent with our idea of Iphigeneia? Why would Clytemnestra say this? Is it, as Hammond argues, a means to show that Clytemnestra does not grieve Iphigeneia nearly as much as she hates Agamemnon (44)? How do we imagine Iphigeneia's implication in the murder of her father, based on this information and the chorus' parodos? If we are to believe she was an *unwilling* sacrifice, as evidenced by her being restrained and silenced, then can she be considered as a posthumous conspirator? Is this assumption fair to her?

πᾶν ἀπόχρη μοι μανίας μελάθρων 1575 And though small, it will be enough for me if I
ἀλληλοφόνους ἀφελούση. have taken away from this house the madness
Of murderous frenzy.

(1577-end)¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Foley “Even when Aegisthus appears, they do not accept the act as his because he planned it. In their view a woman did it, and in so doing, brought pollution to the land and the gods...Aegisthus is in their eyes a “woman,” and hence the deed is now doubly a woman’s” (224). Though Clytemnestra stepped into the masculine *role* in her work, Foley cautions us against classifying Clytemnestra’s relationship with Aegisthus as merely a heteronormative one flipped on its head, due to the way that they interact: “Later in the scene with Aegisthus, Clytemnestra’s behavior further suggests a process of refeminization, although playing the wife remains more role than reality for Clytemnestra to the end, and she certainly maintains authority more effectively than Aegisthus in this scene” (229).

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