

ĒTHOS AND ATĒ IN AGAMEMNON*

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摘 要

本文主要探討希臘劇本*Agamemnon*中對希臘字*ate*及*dike*在整劇中意義的轉變及該二字對*Agamemnon*的*ethos*影響。

*Agamemnon*的*ethos*在劇本中兩處顯示出來，在這兩處是他經歷*proairesis*的過程。第一是在40-254行的登場歌，合唱隊在回應來自*Clytemnestra*非傳統（女性）政權方挑戰時，試圖去保存傳統（男性）政權。在此，*Agamemnon*起初被描述成*dike*（作正義解）的擁護者，但在他下予決心後，卻被認為是具*dike*（作報復解）傾向，因為此項決定顯示出他的*ate*受到*dike*的影響。因此，他的*ethos*和政權都不再受到合唱隊的辯護。合唱隊甚至明白第接受*Clytemnestra*的政權。在“繡帷場”中，修辭經由*Clytemnestra*如何支配*Agamemnon*來呈現特色：*Agamemnon*的*ethos*經由他難本場一開場所下的決定及在整場中無法堅持此項決定表現出來。此場是刻劃*Agamemnon*的*ate*（作痴迷解）導致其*ate*（作毀滅解）。

Abstract

Though present in the drama only briefly, *Agamemnon* is the *fons et origo* of much of the dramatic action and commentary, for both result specifically from decisions he made prior to his departure from Argos, while at Aulis and, finally, upon his return to Argos. These decisions disclose *Agamemnon*'s *ēthos*, and are further related in that the force of *atē* seems to be an influence in each. *Agamemnon*, then, is defined in terms of a morality based upon the intellect, for *atē* is essentially a failure of the intellect. Knowledge of events prior to the Greek arrival at Troy is somewhat obscured by the rhetorical intention of the Chorus, who seek to justify *Agamemnon*'s traditional (male) regime in response to the challenge by *Clytemnestra*'s non-traditional (female) regime. In the attempt to detach plot from rhetoric, the discussion of lines 40-263¹ is divided according to content, resulting in several internal parallel-sections. The section considering *Agamemnon* at Troy and Argos is divided into the Herald's return (503-680), the second stasimon (681-782), speeches by both *Agamemnon* and *Clytemnestra* (783-913), and the stichomythia between the two (914-57).

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¹ The first half of this essay is a consideration of the Parodos - its structure and its content. On the basis of content, I have divided lines 40-263, noting the use of ring-composition structures. This allows for the inclusion of the additional nine lines at the conclusion of the Parodos as traditionally conceived. Since the emphasis of the current paper is not the structure of the Parodos *per se*, I have not defended my views. C. Reeves, *Classical Journal* 55 (1960) 165-71; M. West, *Classical Quarterly* 29 (1979) 1-6 (at p. 1); H. Konishi, *The Plot of Aeschylus' 'Oresteia'* (Amsterdam, 1990) at pp. 46-55; and D. Porter, *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 102 (1971) 465-96 at p. 469 have offered their own views on the organizational structure of the Parodos. My intention in discussing the structure in relation to thematic unity resides chiefly in the fact that the rhetoric of the Chorus, if accepted literally, would oblige us to accept that the Atreidai are responding to Zeus, and thus *Agamemnon*'s *aporia* results from his compliance to Zeus. A number of essays.

***Ēthos* and *Atē* Revealed at Argos and Aulis (Lines 40-263)**

A. Section 1 (Lines 40-96)

1. Lines 40-71

Three comparisons involving the Chorus emerge from this section: (1) the contrast of the Watchman and the Chorus, based upon age and political orientation; (2) the contrast of the members of the expedition and the Chorus, based upon age and psychological condition; and (3) the contrast of Clytemnestra and the Chorus, based upon political status (rank in the polis) and gender. A consideration of these comparisons will reveal much about the rhetorical intention of the Chorus, thus serving to explain why they speak as they do. The Chorus begin the Parodos with a deliberate recollection of events that occurred ten years ago: the departure of Agamemnon from Argos. Their recollection of the past and its influence on the present stands in direct apposition to the Watchman's deliberate "forgetting" (*lēthomai*, 39) of the appearance of the sign of the light² (8), which too will have significance by relating the past with the present. Whether the Chorus understand the significance of the sign as apparition is uncertain, but the sign does have meaning for others for it will be communicated to "those who know" (*mathousin*, 39). This is to say that, in order for the message to have meaning, one must have knowledge. That the sign has limited meaning - paradoxically, it has meaning only to "those who [already]³ know" - indicates the concealedness of the message, and so stands as a paradigm for communication in Clytemnestra's regime.

The limitedness of meaning or significance is in strong contrast to the phenomenon of light: illumination at night. Extending beyond immediate relevance of the present

of essays are written following this reading: M. Ewans, *Ramus* 4 (1975) 17-32; A. Sommerstein, *American Journal of Philology* 101 (1980) 165-9; D. Cohen, *Greece and Rome* 33 (1986) 129-41; J. Fontenrose, *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 102 (1971) 71-109; H. Lloyd-Jones, *Classical Quarterly* 12 (1962) 187-99 and *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 12 (1956) 55-67; E. Dodds *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 6 (1960) 19-31; and A. Lesky, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 86 (1972) 78-85.

² The Chorus begin their participation in the drama as the result of either the beacon or the ceremonial fires that Clytemnestra offers. In either case, light as metaphor for knowledge draws together those who have experienced suffering, thus dramatizing the gnome 'learning through suffering' (*pathei mathos*) prior to its articulation by the Chorus. An extended commentary on the significance of light-imagery in the *Oresteia* is offered by T. Gantz, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977) 28-38; on Aeschylus' use of imagery and its relationship to dramatic action, see A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Structure* (Washington, 1971). See also S. Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative in The Oresteia* (New York, 1984) at pp. 11-3.

³ I have followed Goldhill's reading of lines 39-40, supporting this by his observation (*op. cit.*, p. 12): "This gap between the signifier and signified in communication is widened to the heuristic gap between subject and objects, between addresser and addressee ... Speech is used (*audō*) only to those who already know what it says." Thus the emphasis placed upon persuasion by both the Chorus and Clytemnestra indicates that each necessarily understands the other, but does not accept the other. While the modes of persuasion may differ according to gender, messages are not unintelligible through gender: The message is perhaps directed to Clytemnestra as well as Aegisthus.

context, the light has significance on several levels, for: (1) it is artificial rather than natural; (2) its meaning in Argos derives from events at Troy and (3) it precedes both temporally and causally the light accompanying the sacrifices performed by Clytemnestra. All three levels co-figure in the drama, standing apart from possible rhetorical intention. First, the fact that the lamp is artificial light rather than natural light suggests that events and actions will result from human, rather than natural or divine, causes. Second, the light will signal the commencement of the domestic solution by Clytemnestra (at Argos) for political actions performed by Agamemnon (at Aulis and at Troy). The sacrifice of Agamemnon⁴ performed by Clytemnestra will parallel the sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon. Agamemnon's sacrifice at Aulis will enable the Greek expedition to proceed to Troy; word of the Greek sacrifice of Troy will mark Clytemnestra's preparation of her sacrifice of Agamemnon. Third, the light associated with Clytemnestra's symbolic sacrifice of Agamemnon, which is simultaneously effected in her sacrifice to the gods (91), is the result of the light signifying the Greek sacrifice of Troy. The light of the first sacrifice results in the light of the second.

In apposition to the apparition of light and its limited significance is the sign of the Chorus that has meaning or significance for those who do not know the history of events at Argos. The immediate contrast is between sign as apparition and sign as speech, but at a further level it illustrates the contrast between the rhetoric of the Watchman and that of the Chorus. The Watchman, being too young to have engaged in the expedition, represents the generation of Argive male who has known only Clytemnestra's regime, which is characterized by the non-traditional subordination of the male to the female (3). With Clytemnestra's repression of speech, the Watchman is forbidden from speaking, except to "those who know." The Chorus, being too old to have engaged in the expedition (72-82), represent the generation of Argive male that knew the regimes of both Atreus and Agamemnon, both of which are traditional in that male dominates female. Their reason for speaking to Clytemnestra is to justify Agamemnon's traditional regime in light of the reasons for the Greek expedition to Troy. Their account begins with a description of the past (40-67) and its relationship to the present (67-8), and ends with their belief in the immutability of the future (68-71). Relating the past and the present, if not suggesting that events from the past cause the present (and the future), the Chorus express the view that, while divine causality may be a temporary force in the

⁴ Cf. C. Macleod, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982) 124-44; F. Zeitlin, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965) 463-505 and *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 97 (1966) 645-53; and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 194 (1968) 49-64 for discussions of sacrificial terminology and imagery employed throughout the trilogy. My intent in mentioning sacrifice is limited solely to exposing the Atreidic *ēthos* as one defined by teknophagy. The Tyndaric *ēthos*, though not for the purpose of teknophagy, does engage in sacrifice for the purpose of effecting retribution, and is thus essentially different.

cosmos, Moira (*to pepromenon*, 68)⁵ is the decisive force. Clytemnestra will formalize this belief in ritualistic terms following her sacrifice of Agamemnon, wherein the Chthonic force of *dikē* as retribution displaces the Olympian force of *dikē* as justice (1432-4; 1500-4; 1527 and 1535-6).

The Chorus' first statement concerning the past begins with a description of the two Atreidai in relation to the expedition to Troy. They are initially described as "great adversaries at suit" (*meḡas antidikos*,⁶ 41), but are later described as "forces of retribution" (*Erinus*, 59). The Chorus' contention is that the action of the Atreidai is supported by both Olympian (Zeus) and Chthonic (*Erinus*) forces, for they claim as a principle that Zeus sends the "late-avenging" (*husteropoinon*, 58) *Erinus* against transgressors (*parabasin*, 59) of his law. In the same manner, "the more powerful one" (*ho kreisson*, 60) sends the Atreidai against Paris. The Chorus assert that the Atreidai are *Erinus*, who effect retribution against violators of *dikē*. The first claim can be disputed by considering the fact that Zeus and the *Erinus* are believed to act in response to the "shrill-screaming cry of the birds' lament" (*oiōnothroon goon oxuboan*, 56). The Chorus' description incorporates metaphorical language, which may result from their traditional expression of history or, perhaps more accurately, from their attempt to persuade Clytemnestra. While the Atreidai have indeed been compared to birds (vultures) by force of the simile *tropon aigupion* (49), this comparison cannot substantiate belief in the action of the divine.⁷ The brothers are similar to the birds; they are not the birds themselves. As a result, the force of this analogy as indication of divine complicity is destroyed. The second claim can be disputed in that it, first, is based upon the validity of the simile *tropon aigupion* and, second, relates (*houto*, 60) the action of the Atreidai to the belief that Zeus sends the *Erinus*. Olympian forces (Zeus and *dikē* as justice) and Chthonic forces (*Erinus* and *dikē* as retribution) are united, but only at the

⁵ Commenting on the antithetical nature of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, H. Konishi (*op. cit.*, p. 41) writes: "Since the struggle between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra can be conceived as being between male and female, ... the struggles of Zeus' force and Moira's force requires both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra to remain in their own original sex throughout the trilogy, as they represent Zeus (male) and Moira (female) respectively." It appears, however, that Clytemnestra possesses a male *ēthos* and retains this throughout the drama, though the Chorus do not recognize this until the regicide.

⁶ In that the central notion of the trilogy is *dikē*, legal terminology is employed to express the duality of the concept *dikē* (as both "justice" and "retribution"). This use of language is defined and re-defined throughout the trilogy, with the result that legal concepts that formerly applied to one character, later apply to another – e.g., Agamemnon and Clytemnestra separately as pursuer/pursued, victim/victimised and sacrificer/sacrificed. Cf. C. Macleod (*op. cit., passim*), for an extensive discussion of legal terminology in the *Oresteia*. See also P. Burian, *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986) 332-42 at p. 335, n. 11; and E. Dodds, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 186 (1960) 19-31 at p. 25, n. 3. Commenting on *atē* and *dikē*, R. Doyle, *Traditio* 28 (1972) 1-26 at p. 23 writes: "[The relationship] is a process of retribution within a context of justice."

⁷ Konishi (*op. cit.*, pp. 49-50) is one of few commentators to discuss the metaphorical nature of the Chorus' language. Their intention is to persuade Clytemnestra, so their language cannot be accepted literally.

conclusion of the trilogy.⁸

The Chorus then attempt to establish that the unity of the two brothers (*zeugos Atreidan*, 44) derives from Zeus (*Diothen*, 43). This is stated first in terms of their power (*dīthronou*, 43) and then in terms of their honor (*diskeptrou timēs*, 43). The Chorus are asserting that Zeus does sanction the Atreidai – their regimes and their expedition to Troy – by recalling that *timē* is a political force, ultimately deriving from Zeus, that functions on both human and divine levels. The traditional account⁹ reveals that *timē* was utilized by Zeus to succeed Kronos and to preserve his own regime. In contrast to Kronos, who failed in his attempt to preserve his own *timē* as *Basileus* by suppressing his children, Zeus retains *timē* by justly (*eu*, 73) allotting *timai* to other divinities (*hekasta athanatois*, 73-4). He engaged in the system of *timai*-exchange with those divinities (*heio theon*, 392) who assisted him during the Titanmachia, simultaneously rectifying the injustices committed by Kronos and fortifying his own regime. The reciprocity of conferring and acquiring *timai* ultimately enabled Zeus to create *dikē* as justice,¹⁰ for Zeus became immune from *dikē* as retribution. By stating that the Atreidai are recipients of *timē* from Zeus, the Chorus propose that they represent the force of *dikē*: The actions of the Atreidai would enable Zeus to preserve his own *timē*, thereby ensuring the existence of *dikē* in the cosmos.

The distribution of *timai*, then, indicates an interest in preserving one's own *timē*. Beyond the conservative aspects to the use of *timē* in the polis, however, there are aspects that result in, or are co-extensive with, injustice. Actions resulting from the attempt to preserve *timē* after instances of adultery seem to characterize the Atreidic *ēthos*. Thyestes' adultery with Atreus' wife Aerope is requited by Atreus' sacrifice of Thyestes' children; Paris' adultery with Menelaus' wife Helen is requited by Agamemnon and Menelaus' sacrifice of Troy. In the first instance, the brothers are separated as a result of adultery, and one brother takes retribution against the other one (thus remaining within the *genos*); in the second, they are united as a result of the adultery, and the brothers take retribution against one outside the *genos*. Though both sacrifices are means of preserving *timē*, they are acts that extend beyond reasonable retribution for acts of injustice, and so stand as acts of injustice in themselves.¹¹ At the same time, the acts are representative of *hubris*, for persons who are overly concerned

⁸ The resolution of the conflict between Olympian and Chthonic forces coincides with the completion of the *Oresteia* (*Eumenides* 1042-57), suggesting that the trilogy is defined by this action. D. Cohen, (*op. cit.*, p. 133) and A. Lesky, (*op. cit.*, p. 83) have offered contrary views.

⁹ Hesiod, *Theogony* 68-74; 389-96

¹⁰ Hesiod, *Theogony* 901-06.

¹¹ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1132^a1-1132^b29.

with the acquisition of *timai* for themselves, or who engage in *timōria*, are hubristic.¹² While both apply to Agamemnon, the second is more relevant to the consideration of his *ēthos*. Agamemnon's decision at Aulis was based upon *themis* (216), which is the same normative force employed by Zeus to confer *timai* and, in the process, to preserve his regime.¹³

2. Lines 72-96

These lines provides two comparisons: The first is between the Chorus and the members of the expedition (72-82), the second is between the Chorus and Clytemnestra (83-96). Both comparisons begin in similar fashion, with the pronoun (*hēmeis* and *su*) followed by the strong adversative (*d'* and *de*), which marks the shifts between references. Having related the reason for the absence of Agamemnon (40-62), the Chorus explain the reason for their own presence in Argos by stating twice that they are both aged and young (comparing line 72 with 75; and lines 79-80 with 81). The Chorus are thus unable to contend physically in the expedition because they lack the physical vigor that the younger men have. Equally important, the Chorus are conceding to the present regent Clytemnestra that they may be unable to contend physically with her and her consort Aegisthus to re-establish Agamemnon's regime. The Chorus thus distinguish themselves from those on the expedition on the basis of age, and in so doing reveal another difference – one that is based upon state of mind. Describing the members of the expedition, and placing particular emphasis on the Atreidai, the Chorus state: “they are shouting a great Ares from the heart” (*megan ek thumou klazontes Arē*, 48). In contrast, the Chorus are bereft of Ares (*Arēs d'ouk eni*, 78).

The Chorus differentiate themselves from the men in the expedition on the basis of whether or not Ares is an influence on their actions. They are perhaps a proper judge of the merits and justice of the expedition, for in a later statement they pronounce:

*Zēna de tis prophronōs epinikia klazōn
teuxetai phrenōn to pan.* (174-5)

Whoever shouts from the mind “Zeus the Victor”
hits upon complete wisdom.

Located in the *Ode to Zeus*, this statement is a specific comment on Agamemnon's

¹² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378^b23-35

¹³ Hesiod, *Theogony* 383-403

deliberation and decision at Aulis; however, it has a greater significance that typifies the relationship between the divine (Zeus) and the object of intellection, wisdom (*phrenōn to pan*). A comparison between the description of the members of the expedition (48) and this statement (174-5) suggests that, since the Atreidai are acting in response to the *thumos* rather than the *phrēn*, they are irrational. This is shown by the function of each: *Thumos* is the faculty expressing or reacting to emotions; *phrēn* is the faculty of intellection.¹⁴ The Chorus' psychological status is influenced by the presence of Zeus, later enabling them to claim that they can understand the motivation of Zeus (367-8). A further conclusion can be drawn. In that the influence of Ares connotes destruction (436-44), it is contrary to the principles of conservation that are represented by Zeus and *dikē*. The relationship between *thumos* and *timai* is evident in Agamemnon's statement immediately preceding (in terms of reported discourse) his sacrifice of Iphigeneia. He bases his decision on social-right (*themis*, 216) to accede to the desires (*epithumein*, 216) of the members (*sph'*)¹⁵ in order to preserve the alliance and his own *timē*.

The second comparison in this section derives from the Chorus' request for Clytemnestra to divulge the reasons for her present activity - the sacrifices that she is offering. The Chorus surmise that she is privy to information restricted to the palace. By addressing Clytemnestra as *basileia*, it appears that the Chorus temporarily accept her as regent, and by using the expression *Tundareō thugater* (83-4), which parallels the traditionally masculine use of the father's name to identify the son, the Chorus explicitly compare Clytemnestra with the *Atreōs paidas* (60). The comparison elevates Clytemnestra's status, and diminishes that of the Atreidai. The Chorus question Clytemnestra's reasons for performing sacrifices and summoning them to the palace,

¹⁴ D. Sansone, *Aeschylean Metaphors for Intellectual Activity*, (Wiesbaden, 1975); and W. Thalman, *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986) 489-511 have discussed the mind (soul)/body relationship in Aeschylus' poetry at great length. Sansone (p. 16) writes: "... the metaphor Aeschylus uses to represent the mind's apprehension of abstracts, truth, the future & c. is that of *vision*. And the "mind", in almost every case in which it is expressed, is the *phren*." (See his note 22.) Regarding *thumos*, he states (p. 69): "...*thymos* and *kear* represent the same thing, namely the seat of *orgē* ("disposition")." See also T. Webster, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957) at pp. 149-54. Following their observations, I am confident in stating that Aeschylus is disclosing, albeit subtly, the distinction between the Chorus and the Atreidai, such that the actions undertaken by the expedition are subject to blame. At this point in the Parodos, the Chorus are unaware that their own depictions may be incriminating; hence, their "feeling" (rather than their knowledge) that something is wrong arises. This sensation is generally termed *pathos* by the Chorus themselves. On the relationship between *thumos* and necessity, R. Griffith, *American Journal of Philology* 112 (1991) 173-7 at p. 174 states: "[The Homeric chieftain] acted as his *thumos* bade him, while compulsion was the lot of slaves (*Cho.* 75-76) or even beasts, as the frequent collocation of *anagke* with yoke-imagery reminds us." While Agamemnon may be free from conscious compulsion, he is unaware of the compulsion that results from his *ēthos*.

¹⁵ Ewans (*op. cit.*, p. 27), agreeing with Bamberger, has suggested that the text of lines 216-7 should incorporate *sph' epithu-mein*. I disagree, though, with his assertion that *sph'* refers to Artemis. *Sph'* must refer to the men of the expedition so that they, instead of the gods, are being placated. This accords with Agamemnon's use of *themis* in the context of social or political contract that marks an alliance.

actions that define her *ēthos* in terms of the usurpation of the traditionally male role by the female. First, Clytemnestra is thought to have knowledge or information (*chreos* and *neon*, 85) that the Chorus lack, thus reversing the role of elder male as bearer of knowledge. The Chorus' recounting of the previous ten years of history or tradition (40-62) is now replaced by Clytemnestra's actions. Also, Clytemnestra is performing an action that is traditionally done by the male, and the male (Chorus) responds rather than initiates. Third, Clytemnestra has chosen a consort (Aegisthus), whose presence inside the house is representative of his submission.¹⁶ When the Chorus had stated that neither sacrifices, nor libations nor offerings would change the present or the future (65-70), they intended to bring to mind simultaneous events at Troy and Argos: Agamemnon's challenge of Troy and Clytemnestra's challenge of tradition, specifically the regime at Argos. The first is considered to be an act representing the unity of the Olympian (Zeus) and Chthonic forces (*moira*)¹⁷ to preserve *dikē*; the second, an act of transgression against *dikē*.

Clytemnestra's sacrifices are directed to all the gods – civic, Chthonic and Olympian (88-90) – therein uniting political forces with divine forces. Her sacrifices represent in action that which the Chorus had related about Agamemnon (55-9). The forces of Chthonic (*Erinus*) and Olympian (*Zeus*) divinities combine to effect *dikē* as justice. Clytemnestra is symbolically and publically expressing her orthodoxy, and her belief can be stated: There is divine intervention in the world with regard to the preservation of *dikē*. While the victory at Troy is a victory of Greek over Trojan (announced to the Chorus at 269, then accepted by them at 351-2), it is for Clytemnestra a sign of divine complicity in the matter, for the gods will enable Agamemnon to return to Argos in order to be sacrificed by her. The unity of both motives is shown most clearly and dramatically by the Chorus' description of Clytemnestra's offering of *pelanōi basileiōi* (96), a phrase that literally means "royal offering," but metaphorically

¹⁶F. Zeitlin, *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 149-84 at p. 168 has classified motive and action in the *Oresteia* in terms of 'antitheses'. She has noted the transfer of the masculine to the feminine in Aegisthus, and the feminine to the masculine in Clytemnestra, though she has not expressed this as being representative of each one's *ēthos*.

¹⁷As observed by N. Hammond, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85 (1965) 42-55 at pp. 50-1, translation of *moira* should emphasize 'apportionment' rather than 'fate'. He states (at p. 51, n. 25): "Events which lie in the future but on one day will have happened can be viewed in the same way as due to or in accordance with *Moirai*, but not for that reason as preordained and as overriding the power of choice in men." W. Scott, *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 336-46 discusses *moira* as 'apportionment', and considers Agamemnon's actions to be unjust. To some extent, D. Porter, (*op. cit.*, p. 469) agrees with this view. I cannot, for as I try to show, Agamemnon's actions are never considered to be just, or intended to bring about justice. On Agamemnon and justice, Scott (at p. 340) writes: "One *moira* which the Chorus feel Agamemnon may bear in the future is the necessity of paying for his crime – in this case, death."

means, “royal blood.”¹⁸ This unity of symbols will be continued throughout the drama, and finally completed in Agamemnon’s unwitting participation in the ritual performed by Clytemnestra at the conclusion of the stichomythia (958-60; 963-5; and 973-4).

B. Section 2 (Lines 97-106)

This section and its parallel (lines 255-63) integrate the dynamics of authority and rhetoric. In lines 97-106, the Chorus request from Clytemnestra the information that has led to the sacrifices. They seek this from Clytemnestra in the hope that she will answer, and assuage the *amēchania* (expressed as *merimnēs*, 99) that has resulted from the combination of their confused perception of the Atreidai, and Clytemnestra’s actions, which symbolically relate events at Aulis, Troy and Argos in the motif of sacrifice. Their suffering throughout the drama is not diminished, but changes, as a result of their anagnorisis, from one based upon fear to one based upon pity.¹⁹ The Chorus request from Clytemnestra that which she has the power (*dunaton*, 97) and the social-right (*themis*, 98) to say. Their use of *dunaton* and *themis* marks their acceptance of Clytemnestra’s position, though this will be immediately challenged with their claim that, on the level of personal power (*kurios eimi*, 104) derived from the gods (*theothen*, 105), they have the military prowess (*alkan*, 106) of persuasion (*peithō*, 106) to relate the “double-throned authority” (*dithronon*²⁰ *kratos*, 109) of the Atreidai. The Chorus’ lack of physical strength will be replaced by divine persuasion to defend Agamemnon from Clytemnestra’s (and Aegisthus’) usurpation of the throne. Here, the Chorus do not offer justification for Agamemnon’s regime, for tradition rarely requires this. Rather they do suggest that it is based on power (*kratos*) that will, at least for the time, be defended to preserve principles that traditionally derive from Zeus. This is the reason for the Chorus’ refusal to allow Clytemnestra to speak, though earlier they had implored her to do so (97-103). The argument of the Parodos (108-254) – that is, the text following this section (96-107) and preceding the parallel section (255-63) – fails to persuade Clytemnestra of the justice of the Atreidai and the injustice of her own actions. With their failure, the Chorus acquiesce from their request and allow her to remain silent, thus

¹⁸T. Gantz (*op. cit.*, p. 30) observes “But on the poetic level, beyond the immediate meaning, may not *pelanōi basileiōi* indicate ‘royal blood’, the generations of bloodshed that haunt the innermost recesses of the house of Atreus?”

¹⁹Two distinct psychological transformations occur within the drama: The Chorus’ suffering conforms to the two tragic emotions of *Poetics* 1453^b1 ff.; Cassandra first suffers (1073-1246) then understands (1247-1330), combining *pathos* and *mathos* of the gnostic statements at lines 176-7 and 250-1.

²⁰W. Higgins, *Classical Philology* 73 (1978) 24-35 at p. 29 observes that *di-* and its connotations represent the force of *dikē* as retribution, and thus symbolize Ares as much as Zeus: “Ares ... loves the double whip, the twin-speared ruin, the bloody couple (642-43).”

implicitly agreeing to accept Clytemnestra as regent (*hēkō sebizōn son ... kratos*, 258). This is symbolized by the transfer of authority (*kratos*) from Agamemnon (109) to Clytemnestra (258),²¹ an event that coincides with the disappearance of *dikē* as justice from their perception of the Atreidai.

C. Section 3 (Lines 108-59)

This incorporates the appearance of the portent (108-22), and its subsequent interpretation by Calchas (123-59), both of which occur at Argos. References to the house encompass this section: The portent appears “near the roof” (*iktar melathrōn*, 116) and Calchas announces to the “royal house” (*oikois basileiois*, 157). On the basis of divine intervention, there are three divisions, each concluding with the Chorus’ lament: “Speak of suffering, suffering; but may the good win out” (*ailinon ailinon eipe, to d’eu nikatō*; 122, 139 and 159). This expression relates suffering (expressed as *ailinon*) and the prevalence of the good (expressed as *to d’ eu nikatō*) in references that shift from Troy to Aulis to Argos.

1. Lines 108-22

Though the violation of the laws supported by *Zeus xenios* is the ostensible reason (*ep’ Alexandroi pempei zenios / Zeus*, 60-1), the portent is the proximate reason for the Atreidic (*dithronōn kratos*, 107) expedition to be launched. Elements in the Chorus’ description of the portent confirm, on the level of symbolism, their belief in the applicability and the result of the portent. Two eagles - one black (*kelainos*, 115) and one white (*argas*, 115), representing Agamemnon and Menelaus respectively - appear “near the roof” (*iktar melathrōn*, 116) on the “spear-hand side” (*cheros ek doripaltou*, 116) in full view (*pampreptois*, 115). This is interpreted to mean that the Atreidai will be successful in the expedition (“spear-hand side’ indicating the right side, which is fortuitous). The “brotherly leadership” (*zumphrona tagan*, 110) - emphasizing the single-mindedness of the leaders - of Hellas’ youth (*Hellados hebas*, 109) was sent by the “raging bird” (*thourios ornis*, 111). Immediately afterwards, the bird is described as the “king of the birds” (*oiōnōn basileus*, 114), which appears to the “kings of the ships” (*basileusi neōn*, 114-5). The first bird-image of the Atreidai, the simile “like vultures in excessive grief for the children” (*tropon aigupion / hoit’ ekpatiois algesi paidon*, 49-51), is modified in the present usage to include both the rage of the Atreidai and their royal

²¹H. Konishi (*op. cit.*, p. 56) writes: “The Elders now think that they have defended Agamemnon sufficiently and are confident enough to let Clytemnestra speak.” It is unclear, however, whether the Chorus have completed their defense of Agamemnon, or have realized the futility of continuing to attempt this.

status, where in the latter, the association with Zeus as “king of the Olympians”²² is intended. In the view of the Chorus, the bird-image of lines 115-120 has significance that extends beyond the immediate experience of the members of the Atreidic *genos*, and incorporates political and religious elements, for the birds devour a pregnant hare – “her of the hares’ race” (*laginan... gennan*, 119). On the political level, the image signifies an expansion of the conflict between the Atreidai and Paris so that it incorporates the Greek destruction of Troy and its future generations. On the level of religious significance, it suggests Zeus’ implicit acceptance of such destruction, if not his outright command to the Atreidai to engage in the expedition.

After concluding their description, the Chorus state: “Speak of suffering, suffering; but may the good win out” (*ailinon ailinon eipe, to d’ eu nikatō*, 122), which seems to refer to the Trojan suffering caused by the Greek expedition and the subsequent destruction. The Chorus intend to lessen Clytemnestra’s censure of Agamemnon for his decisions to engage in the expedition, and to continue the expedition by sacrificing Iphigeneia. They assert that, since Zeus sanctioned the Atreidai, Agamemnon is acting in accordance with *dikē* as justice. Agamemnon’s actions at Aulis would then appear to reflect his conviction in the traditional manifestation of *dikē* as justice. This expression of the relationship between suffering and the good is later employed in several other statements throughout the drama (20, 121, 217, 674 and 1568-76), and so stands as a universal statement of the orthodoxy of a particular action. Relating this concept to the gnomes expressed by the Chorus– *tōi pathei mathos* (177) and *tois pathousin mathein* (249) – it becomes evident that (the necessity of) suffering eventuates according to one’s level of understanding. To some extent, the remainder of the trilogy will be the reformulation, in action and speech, of these principles that originally comment upon Agamemnon at Aulis.

By reintroducing the bird-image of lines 49-54, however, the Chorus allow for both temporal and causal connections between the violations committed by Atreus and Thyestes upon each other, and those committed by Agamemnon and Menelaus at Aulis and Troy. The two bird-metaphors can be compared to reveal the implicit meaning of each: the teknophagy that typifies the Atreidic *ēthos*. In the first, the Atreidai were compared to vultures (*tropon aigupiōn*, 49) that, in extreme grief for their children (*ekpatiois algesi paidōn*, 50), circle high above their bed (*hupatoi lecheōn*, 51), having lost their “bed-confining labor” (*demniotērē ponon*, 53-4). Three levels of meaning function in the metaphor. It is concurrently a portrayal of suffering caused by the sacrifice and teknophagy of Thyestes’ children, Helen’s departure from Argos and the

²² Homer, *Iliad* 21. 200-9; *Odyssey* 19. 536-53 and 20. 242-6.

future sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon. All three events serve to define the Atreidic *ēthos* in expressions of suffering resulting from, or resulting in, sacrifice. This is further defined in the bird-image of the first stasimon, where the Chorus describe the “insufferable affliction” (*prostrimma apherion*, 395) brought to all the people by a “boy chasing a winged bird” (*diōkei pais potanon ornin*, 394). A comparison of Helen in the first bird-image and the second reference to her depicts Helen’s (and Clytemnestra’s) *ēthos*. The metaphor of Helen as stolen child is replaced, and she is now viewed as a “woman of many husbands” (*poluandros gunaikos*, 63), who will cause “many and languished struggles” (*polla palaismata kai guioharē*, 62)²³. Since the actions of the Atreidai in the present context are in response to Helen’s actions, it appears that the revelation of the Tyndaric *ēthos* coincides with the revelation of the Atreidic *ēthos*. However, the fact that the eagles of the second bird-image appear “near the roof” and “in full view” may be seen as a more compelling motivational force for the Atreidai than either political success or religious compliance, though both would be suitable reasons for Agamemnon and Menelaus to engage in the expedition. Considering the proximity of the portent to the house (the implied association with the *genos*) and its favorable outcome, it is rather unlikely that either of the Atreidai would be willing to withdraw, and risk the loss of his *zēlos*.

2. Lines 123-39

The interpretation of portent is a reading by *mantis* (or, as in this example, the “military-mantis” Calchas, 123) of sign in nature, whereby the future is discerned. This is in keen contrast to both the sign of natural light (*astrōn nukterōn homēgurin*, 4) read by the Watchman to know the cyclical nature of the cosmos, and the sign of artificial light (*selas*, 281) read by Clytemnestra to know the linear nature of human events and actions. Although the validity of Calchas’ reading is never directly challenged by Clytemnestra, she will later question Agamemnon’s acceptance of (or, belief in) both the portent and its interpretation (935) since her own suffering directly results from them. Calchas’ reading of nature and his subsequent interpretation are not completely independent of Atreidic involvement in the expedition. The Chorus observe that, after Calchas saw/knew (*idōn*, 123) the paired Atreidai (*dissous Atreidas*, 123-4) twin in resolve/audacity (*duo lēmasi*, 123), he learned (*ēdae*, 124) the “warlike devourers of the hare” (*maximous lagodaitas*, 124) were the “conducting chiefs” (*pompous archas*, 125).

²³J. Peradotto, *Phoenix* 85 (1969) 237-63 at p. 255 has commented on the repetition found at these lines, and the continuation of this pattern: “...in a startling *jeu de mots* the extent of the suffering is ironically compared with its object....”

This implies that Calchas bases his interpretation, to some extent, upon his knowledge of the Atreidic *ēthos*,²⁴ rather than either Agamemnon's or Menelaus' *ēthos* alone. This collective *ēthos* is brought to mind by the Chorus' description of Agamemnon and Menelaus as *dissous Atreidas* (123-4) and *duo lēmasi* (123). The savagery of their *ēthos* is expressed by *maximous lagodaitas* (124), and by Calchas' description of the eagles (the Atreidai) as *ptanoisin kusi*²⁵ (136) that "slaughter as a sacrifice" (*thumomenoisin*, 137) the hare (Iphigeneia).²⁶

The Chorus have expressed their belief that Calchas' knowledge of the Atreidic *ēthos* will apply to his interpretation of the portent. This is manifested by Calchas' use of the language of oracular interpretation, which simultaneously applies to events of the past, present and future.²⁷ Though void of motive, Calchas' language is no less abstruse than the Chorus'. By fusing diction and imagery that integrates events from seemingly unrelated times, Calchas recalls the former offenses of the Atreidic *genos* at Argos, and places them in the context of both the immediate future (Aulis) as well as the distant future (Troy). The use of *thuomenoism* (137) and the image of the more powerful (the eagle) preying on the weaker (the hare) are reminiscent of Tantalus' sacrifice and teknophagy of Pelops, and Atreus' sacrifice and teknophagy of Thyestes' children. These actions serve to define the Atreidic *ēthos*, the psychological force that precipitates the sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon, and the sacrifice of Troy by the Atreidai.

Calchas' interpretation includes three amphibolic statements that relate: (1) Greek and Trojan (127-130); (2) the hare and Iphigeneia (136-7); and (3) Iphigeneia and Agamemnon (151-4). In the first, he discloses to the Atreidai their future seen in terms of the destiny of Troy: In time (*chronōi*, 126), the expedition will capture Troy, but apportionment (*moira*, 129) will violently destroy the "vast supplies of the people" (*kiēnē dēmioplēthea*, 129) in front of the walls (*purgōn ... proste*, 129). The Atreidai are to take Troy, but their actions are neither literally nor symbolically dictated by *dikē*, since reference to Zeus is not included in the interpretation. Rather, the force that is

²⁴In this instance, *ēthos* is expressed as *lēma* since the circumstances dictate the activity of the mind described by the latter. While *ēthos* does allow for the definition of character based upon mental activity, *lēma* does so directly.

²⁵Homer, *Iliad* 1. 17 suggests that these two animals mentioned here (as one) are carrion-eaters, thus representing teknophagy.

²⁶J. Peradotto (*op. cit.*, p. 256, n. 72) writes: "In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's *aristeia* (11.15-283) is unmatched in its savagery and brutality: his shield bears the dreadful face of the Gorgon (36); in killing his opponents he is compared to a lion crunching in his teeth the *nepia tekna* of a deer (101-119); again compared to a lion, he slaughters the suppliant sons of Antimachus (122-142, recalling by contrast the mercy of Menelaus in 6.51 ff., which occasioned the expression of Agamemnon's blood-thirstiness); a third time he is compared to a lion, now as it slaughters a cow and laps the blood and guts (172-176; cf. Ag. 827f., *oméstés leon adén heleixen aimatos*)." *Iliad* 1. 70

²⁷Homer, *Iliad* 1. 70

perceived to be functioning in this action is apportionment, which will lay waste to either the wealth of the Trojans measured in cattle, or the wealth of both Greeks and Trojans measured in lives lost in the war.²⁸ This is later recalled by Cassandra in a description that incorporates the imagery of sacrifice and slaughter (*thusiai ... polukaneis botōn*, 1169-70) in terms of apportionment and suffering (*akos / d' ouden expērkesan / to mē polin men hōsper oun echei pathein*, 1169-72). The absence of Zeus' intervention, which would suggest his complicity in the matter of Greek against Trojan, is replaced with the inclusion of apportionment – a force in the cosmos that, superseding Olympian influence, dictates the extension of political and cosmic relationships.²⁹ This force defines the inevitability of the effect of *atē* on the Atreidic *genos* and the acts committed by its members.

The sole reference to Olympian intervention found in the interpretation is the statement indicating the possibility that one of the gods (*theothen*, 131) will deter (*knephasēi*, 131) the expedition because of jealousy (*aga*, 135). Artemis is then declared to be the divinity who might prevent the expedition from reaching Troy, and effecting what apportionment had dictated.³⁰ The goddess objects to the expedition due to: (1) her hatred of the feast of the eagles (*stugei de deipnon aietōn*, 138); and (2) her envy (*epiphthonos*, 135) of the “winged hounds of [the/her] father” (*ptanoisin kusi patros*, 136). Without an accompanying possessive pronoun, *patros* refers to both Zeus and Atreus so that the connotation includes Artemis' envy against, first, the perceived agents of her father (Zeus), who would not be representative of *dikē* as justice, but the savagery of *dikē* as retribution; and, second, the children of Atreus, who are expressing the Atreidic *ēthos* that preserves *zēlos* at the cost of the lives of the young (the children of both the *genos* and the polis). On the level of religious meaning, the inclusion of Artemis in events at Argos and Aulis signifies that the goddess is opposed to the expedition because of its similarities to an impious hunt. This is expressed in the amphibolic statement describing the Atreidai: *autotokon pro lochou mogeran ptaka thuomenoisin* (137). Artemis' vengeance is directed to the Atreidai, who simultaneously

²⁸H.Lloyd-Jones, (*op. cit.*, p. 62) has discussed this interpretation in conjunction with the moral connotations implied by the actions of the Atreidai. I would accept his view that the actions of the Greeks cause indiscriminate destruction that would coincide with the dictates of *moira*. More specifically, the effect of *moira* seems to define this destruction as an inevitable consequence of the Atreidic *ēthos*.

²⁹This observation by N. Hammond (*Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85 (1965) 42-55 at p. 51) accords with the fact that much of the trilogy is dictated by Chthonic forces that supersede Olympian forces. The only resolution to the problem of disunity in the cosmos (specifically in terms of the instability of *dikē*) is through the reduction of Chthonic authority.

³⁰In that this essay is primarily a consideration of Agamemnon's *ēthos*, I have not considered the significance of Artemis' intervention beyond the fact that it compelled him to engage in a decision. Two discussions of the symbolic nature of Artemis in the drama are provided by: S. Lawrence, *American Journal of Philology* 97 (1976) 97-110; and H. Lloyd-Jones, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 103 (1983) 87-102.

“slaughter for a sacrifice a trembling hare and its young before birth” and “slaughter for a sacrifice a trembling woman, his own child, on behalf of the army.”³¹ The actualization of this *ethos* will be the coalescence of past and future expressed in the imagery of sacrifice. Previously, the portent had provided an explicit depiction of Zeus’ dictate; now the interpretation discloses a contention between Chthonic (*moira*) and Olympian (Artemis) forces. The Chorus restate their lamentation, which now alludes to Iphigeneia’s death at Aulis and the resulting domestic suffering at Argos.

3. Lines 140-59

As Calchas’ interpretation continues, Artemis is referred to as the “well-minded one” (*euphrōn*, 140), who is kind (*kala*, 140) to the young of all animals (141-3). Paradoxically, the goddess is well-disposed to animals that represent predator (*malerōn leontōn*, 140) and prey (*thērōn*, 143). In that both predator and prey are young (*drossois*, 141; *obrikaloisi*, 143), Artemis is shown to be protectress of the young, regardless of their potentiality for later savagery. In dimensions applicable to humans, this is to say that Artemis does not differentiate according to *ēthos* until the *ēthos* can be actualized, which occurs for the Atreidic *genos* when they begin preserving their *zēlos* by sacrificing the young. Calchas recognizes this character, since the third amphibole associates the teknophagy within the Atreidic *genos* (*neikeōn tektona sumphoton*, 153; *teknopoinos*, 155) to the future sacrifices of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon, and Agamemnon by Clytemnestra (*thusian hete- / ran anomon tin’ adation*, 151-2).

There exists another dimension to Artemis’ inclusion in events at Argos. On the level of the divine revealing human *ēthos*, the goddess is forcing Agamemnon to make a decision (*proairesis*), which will allow for Agamemnon to be judged in terms of *ēthos*, for *proairesis* is a voluntary and conscious act.³² With regard to the revelation of character, Artemis and Apollo have similar functions, though in different modes. At Aulis, the Atreidic *ēthos* will be revealed through Agamemnon’s actions (206-17) that coincide with Apollo’s absence; at Argos, it will be revealed through Cassandra’s speech (1096-7, 1186-93, 1217-8) that coincides with Apollo’s presence. In that Apollo does not respond to the Chorus’ plea (146-7) and fails to intervene at Aulis, Zeus and *dikē* as justice are absent.³³

³¹ The amphibolic expression, “a masterpiece of Aeschylean ambiguity,” is noted and discussed by P. Vidal-Naquet in *Aeschylus’ The Oresteia*, ed. H. Bloom (New York: 1988) at p. 78. His observations on this support the contention that Artemis is forcing Agamemnon to decide between two markedly different alternatives, by which his *ēthos* is revealed.

³² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1110^a and 1139^a, and *Eudemian Ethics* 1226^b-1227^b

³³ *Eumenides* 616-18 offers evidence that Apollo represents Zeus, so that Apollo’s absence from the scene indicates Zeus’ implicit agreement in the matter that results from Artemis’ appearance. See also *Eumenides* 17-19, 713 and 797. Cf. J. Fontenrose. (*op. cit.*, pp. 84 and 102).

Agamemnon's inability to understand Calchas' interpretation with regard to his own *ēthos* – an unstated expression of *atē* – intensifies with his inability to understand the causal relationship between the sacrifices described in the third amphibole. Since the Chorus echo Calchas' expression that the future is a combination of the favorable (*dexia*, 145 and *megalos agathos*, 156) and the ominous (*katamompha*, 145 and *morsim'*, 157), it appears that their rhetoric is departing from suggesting that Agamemnon responds to dictates issued by either Olympian or Chthonic forces. The Chorus now seem persuaded of his injustice. As the Chorus conclude their narrative of Agamemnon at Argos by relating suffering and the good (159), the influence of Olympian divinity has shifted from Zeus' approval (114-20) to Artemis' objection (133-8) and, finally, to possible disapproval by Zeus (146-55). Paralleling this transformation, the tone of this section has ranged from assurance to ambiguity, concluding with focus upon Agamemnon rather than divinity. Agamemnon's decision to depart Argos, which is not immediately depicted by the Chorus but displaced from the narrative sequence (218-27), is grounded in his knowledge that he is subject to *phthonos*. Further, a decision by him to continue to Troy, should nature interfere during the voyage, would be made with the knowledge that Zeus opposes the Atreidai.

D. Section 5 (Lines 160-83)

1. Lines 160-73

Connecting Argos with Aulis, the *Ode to Zeus* follows the description of the portent and its interpretation (108-59), and precedes the description of the motives that influence Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia (184-217).³⁴ It serves as a commentary that discusses the relationship between the limits of human intellection and its result in terms of human experience: *pathos*. The content of the *Ode* is primarily epistemological. Lines 160- 3 focus on the Chorus' uncertainty about the nature of Zeus; lines 174-83 focus on Zeus' function in the process of intellection. Both divisions are marked by a sense of suffering. The first half describes the Chorus' own suffering and its relationship to Zeus. The second generalizes human suffering into gnomic statements related to both knowledge of Zeus and knowledge derived from Zeus. The content and the tone of the *Ode* are related according to the context, for the Chorus

³⁴R. Dawe, *Eranos* 64 (1963) 1-21; L. Bergson, *Eranos* 65 (1967) 12-24; and R. Egan, *Eranos* 77 (1976) 1-9 argue that the position of the *Ode* at 11. 160-83 is inaccurate. They fail to recognize that the *Ode* operates as a condemnation of Agamemnon's action (the sacrifice of Iphigeneia), which results from his decision to accept the portent as valid. In doing so, he expresses the *hubris* that the Chorus condemn.

begin with their statement of *amēchania* that results from, or is at least associated with, their inability to comprehend or invoke Zeus. The Chorus state:

Zeus, hostis pot' estin, ei tod' au-
tōi philon keklēmenōi,
toulo nin prosennepō. (160-2)

Zeus, whoever you are, if this name is pleasing,
then with it I will invoke you.

They are capable of invoking Zeus by name, but are incapable of identifying him (160-1). Next, they wonder whether the name is appropriate to their conception of Zeus' identity. The Chorus' account of Zeus as a force in the world has shifted from Zeus being the divine force motivating and supporting the Atreidic actions (40-62) to the explicit absence of Zeus (except in symbolic form) from the portent.

The fact that the Chorus abruptly (attempt to) invoke Zeus after the god's sustained absence from the drama is symptomatic of their *amēchania*. Calchas' interpretation informed Agamemnon that Artemis disapproved of the sacrifice of Troy, and that Zeus (represented by Apollo) did not oppose the goddess' intervention. The Chorus' present invocation of Zeus suggests: (1) their skepticism in associating Zeus and *dikē* with the Atreidic expedition; and (2) that they are reformulating their belief in the soundness of Agamemnon's actions at Aulis, which were based upon the interpretation of the portent. The Chorus' earlier appeal to Clytemnestra (97-103) is temporarily replaced by their appeal to Zeus (160-5), which indicates that, although they have lost conviction in Zeus as proponent of the Atreidic expedition, they are aware that Zeus is the true (*ētētumōs*, 166) recourse available to alleviate their *amēchania* (here expressed as *phrontidos achthos*, 165). The Chorus' *amēchania* is their unconscious foreboding of the suffering that will result from Agamemnon's actions at Aulis. That the Chorus invoke Zeus rather than the present Argive ruler implies their belief in the power of the divine over the power of humans. That they invoke Zeus rather than his predecessors Ouranos (168-9) or Kronos (170-1) implies the importance of Zeus' ascendancy. The divinities preceding Zeus are unnamed, thus suggesting that their present status in the cosmos is insignificant, if not non-existent. Since the remainder of the *Ode* (174-83) discusses the relationship between Zeus and human intellection, the inclusion of Zeus' ascendancy in the *Ode* is meant to bring to light the importance of the intellect – the agency that Zeus once employed to overwhelm Kronos, and continues to employ in order to retain his

prominence in the cosmos.³⁵

The traditional (or Hesiodic) conception of divine progression in cosmic creation initiates with the injustices of Ouranos (*Theogony* 156-60)³⁶ and concludes with the *dikē* of Zeus (901-6). Coinciding with this development is the transfer of social dependency from female to male: creation of the sexual (Aphrodite, 178-200) resulted from the loss of male generative powers, and creation of the intellectual (Athena, 886-900 and 924-6) resulted from the loss of female generative powers. Prior to this, Ouranos and Kronos, both aware that they would be displaced by the result of their sexuality, attempted to resolve the challenge to their supremacy posed by generational ascendancy.³⁷ In both instances, the intervention of the (traditional) female mother, whose actions dictate priority of the child over the father (161-75 and 468-491), prevented the father from securing his place as supreme deity. Their failures resulted in the generation of a primitive, cyclical form of *dikē* (retribution), and the necessary continuation of the process of sexual creation. When Zeus ingested *mētis*, thus bringing the act of creation solely into the male, he became immune to usurpation by a future generation assisted by the mother. With this, the stability of a permanent cosmic order among the divine could come into being. Zeus is not, therefore, subject to *dikē* (as retribution) from divinities within the *genos* or outside of it; his regime will be founded upon the principle of *themis*, by which he affirms his position as *primum inter pares* (389-96), and formalizes the creation of *dikē* (as justice, 901-6). That the generation of Athena occurs through *mētis* and from Zeus' head suggests the ascendancy of the mind (with the accompanying noetic creation) over the body (with the accompanying sexual creation). Zeus' rule among the Olympians, then, will be distinguished by the preeminence of the mind – whether it be formulated in terms of *mētis*, *phrēn* or *gnōmē*. Further, this form of generation is consonant with the continuity of Zeus' regime, for it will enable him to know whether his descendants are capable of usurpation.³⁸

The account of Zeus' ascendancy, recalled to mind by the Chorus, bears great

³⁵D. Blickman, *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 341-355 at p. 345 defends the actions of Zeus: "Thus, if the swallowing of Metis were the only ethically significant act of Zeus in Hesiod - if Zeus did not, for instance, marry Themis as well - a negative evaluation would be more reasonable...."

³⁶All continued references to Hesiod are to the *Theogony*.

³⁷On Zeus' sovereignty, F. Zeitlin (*Arethusa* 11 (1978) 149-84 at p. 152) writes: "Athena's birth is of founding significance in the creation of the world. In terms of Hesiod's theogonic myth of succession, Zeus, by this act, puts an end to any threat to his sovereignty, by incorporating the principle of intelligence through the swallowing of Metis and making that principle manifest in the world through the birth of a child whose sex indicates that she will be no political threat to her father and whose filial relationship proclaims her dependence on the male." On Zeus' creation of Athena, see also L. Sussman, *Ramus* 7 (1978) 61-77 at pp. 71-2; M. Arthur, *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 63-82 at pp. 64 and 78; D. Nichols, *Interpretation* 9 (1980) 83-91 at pp. 85-6; and A. Bowie, *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993) 10-31 at pp. 12-4.

³⁸Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 76 (1956) 55-67 where he has discussed that Zeus' ascendancy and the stability of his reign result from his creation of Athena.

significance on Agamemnon's plight, particularly in that his decisions at Aulis reflect the Atreidic *ēthos*. The teknophagy often employed by this *genos* to retain its *zēlos* within the polis differs from the "teknophagy" employed by Zeus to retain his preeminence within the divine polis of Olympus. The former use of teknophagy results in death; the latter results in birth. Also, the effect of Zeus' usurpation of female powers of generation precluded the possibility that the (traditional) female mother could ever interfere with the process by which the male retains his status. Agamemnon's (symbolic) reenactment of Zeus' ingestion of *mētis* – that is, his sacrifice of Iphigeneia³⁹ – differs from the original in two respects. First, Agamemnon lacks the potentiality to generate *phrēn* or another aspect of intellection, by which he may secure his regime. Without this, he is forced to engage in *timōria*. Second, Agamemnon has not displaced the female (Clytemnestra) from the process of procreation or nurturing and, by failing to do so, does not prevent her from possible interference in the conflict of the preeminence of child over father. By violating the principles defining the *genos*, Agamemnon becomes subject to retribution within the *genos*.⁴⁰

2. Lines 174-83

After concluding the description of Zeus' ascendancy, the Chorus state in direct terms, denoting their conviction, the importance of *phrēn* with regard to the rise and continuation of Zeus' regime as well as to the psychological process by which human intellection occurs:

*Zēna de tis prophronōs epinikia klazōn
teuxetai phrenōn to pan.* (174-5)

They emphasize *phrēn*, as the use of *prophronōs* and *phrenōn* indicates. This statement

³⁹P. Vidal-Naquet, (*op. cit.*, p. 80) has suggested that Agamemnon's sacrifice and (possible) teknophagy is representative of incest, writing: "The raw and the cooked, the hunt and the sacrifice - these meet each other at the precise point where man has become no more than animal. The *oikeia bora* is, in short, the equivalent of incest." Unfortunately he does not explain on what level of action or thought the incest occurs. As a result, I am inclined to disregard what otherwise appears to be an interesting comment.

⁴⁰Orestes differs from Agamemnon in that his rebirth liberates him from possible retribution within the *genos*. On this theme, F. Zeitlin (*op. cit.*, p. 69) notes: "Orestes had denied his mother by the act of matricide and sought a new birth at the male-centered *omphalos* of Delphi. That new birth was just a beginning that sent him further to another altar, Athena's altar ... [which] provided him with the salvation he had sought. The positive material figure, in fact, restored him to his father and freed him to claim his social and political identity based on a new embryology and a traditional theogony. Like Athena, he now belongs wholly to his father." Cf. C. McCleod (*op. cit.*, p. 143).

is a vivid contrast to the psychological condition of the Atreidai, who are members of the expedition described as *megan ek thumou klazontes Arē* (48). The Chorus emphasize distinctions based upon divinity (Zeus and Ares) and faculty (*phrēn and thumos*), implying that the psychological condition of the Atreidai is far removed from the one conducive to preserving their place in the polis.

The theme of suffering and its relationship to human intellection is introduced by the Chorus, who declare:

ton phronein brotous hodō-
santa tōi pathei mathos
thenta kuriōs echein (176-8)

Zeus has placed humans on the course to intellection (*ton phronein*) by establishing authoritatively (*thenta kuriōs echein*) a law: “Understanding [comes] to the one who suffers” (*tōi pathei mathos*). After the Chorus announce Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigeneia (248-9), they reintroduce the law:

Dika de tois men pathousin mathein
epirrepei (250-1)

Dikē apportions (*epirrepei*) understanding (*mathein*) to those who suffer (*tois pathousin*). The concepts thus formalized encompass the narrative of Agamemnon’s decision and resulting sacrifice, serving as a commentary on his actions. In addition, they will exemplify a principle that extends beyond the actions of the immediate present actions to actions committed by other members of the *genos* throughout the trilogy.

There are several important variations between the laws: *Dikē* replaces Zeus as the corrective force in the cosmos; *epirrepei* replaces the unstated *hēkō/erchomai*, which emphasizes the shift from the balance of justice to the imbalance of retribution; the plural *tois pathousin* replaces the singular *toi pathei*. Zeus is no longer considered the dominant motivating force in the drama, as previously claimed by the Chorus (43, 56, 62, 114, 136 and 160-183), and his position in the drama as proponent of *dikē* as justice is replaced by *dikē* itself, now understood to be retribution. With this transformation in the Chorus’ perception of the relationship between Zeus and *dikē*, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia will be understood, not as a necessary prerequisite to effect *dikē* as ordained by Zeus (40-61), but as cause for Clytemnestra’s sacrifice of Agamemnon. This sense of *dikē* as retribution continues in Clytemnestra’s response to the Chorus after the regicide: “[Agamemnon] suffers as he has done” (*axia drasas, axia pasxōn*, 1527). The Chorus

then comment upon Clytemnestra's actions with regard to Agamemnon, stating "Reproach answers with reproach / ... Plunderer is plundered" (*oneidos hekei tod' ani' oneidos' / ... pherei pheront'*, 1560-3). The concept of retribution within the *genos* will again appear when Orestes declares before the matricide: "You have killed whom you should not, now suffer what you should not" (*ekanes hon ou chren, kai to me chrein pathe*).⁴¹ The difference between the three acts of sacrifice within the *genos* derives from each one's knowledge of the consequences.⁴²

The Chorus continue with the theme of suffering (*ponos*, 180) and its relationship to understanding:

*stazei d'anth' hupnou pro kardias
mnesipemon ponos. kai par' a-
kontus elthe sophronein.* (179-81)

Drop by drop, in front of the heart, there comes,
in stead of sleep, the suffering of remembrance;
and moderation arrives unwillingly.

The relationship between suffering and understanding that was expressed in lines 176-8, and later modified at lines 250-1, is now restated to include: (1) the object of understanding, *sōphrosunē*; and (2) the manner in which *sōphrosunē* is apprehended, unwillingly (*a-kontas*, 180-1) and violently (*biaiōs*, 182). The agency that enables the apprehension of *sōphrosunē* is the *daimōn*, which "sits on the revered rowing-bench" (*selma semnon ēmenōn*, 183). The metaphor for intellectual activity introduced here is later presented in the Chorus' opinion of Agamemnon's decision to seek retribution for Helen: "he was not managing the helm of the mind well" (*oud' eu prapidōn oiaka nemōn*, 802). The second metaphor continues the imagery of the first, thus allowing for a judgement of Agamemnon's moral state based upon his psychological condition. The remainder of this section will provide insight into principles of human intellection that can be related to Agamemnon's psychological condition. The position of *daimōn* as a force determining or defining human *ēthos* is prevalent in traditional Greek morality,

⁴¹ *Choepheroi* 93C

⁴² E. Dodds, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 6 (1960) 19-31 at p. 31 comments on the conclusion of the *Oresteia*: "... We seem to have a fairly logical progression, from Agamemnon, the blind instrument of justice, who never learns, through Clytemnestra, the half-blind instrument, who learns too late and incompletely, to Orestes, the conscious instrument, whose insight comes before the deed and achieves contact with the divine will." In other words, Agamemnon fails to understand his own actions and their consequences; Clytemnestra understands after the fact that she is subject to retribution; Orestes knows before, and is thus spared of retribution.

particularly in Heraclitus' statement: The *daimōn* is mankind's *ēthos* (*ēthos anthropōi daimōn*, B119).⁴³ A further conclusion can be drawn: Human intellection of the distinction between the divine and the human is accomplished through the agency of the *daimōn*. In terms of morality, the apprehension of the distinction is manifested in *sōphrosunē*;⁴⁴ ignorance of the distinction is *hubris*. This concept is relevant to the drama in that the Chorus' stated belief in the *charis daimonōn* (182), now understood in terms of the Heraclitean concept of *daimōn* that enables understanding to occur, is a judgment on Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia. They are stating that Agamemnon's *ēthos*, manifested in his decision, precludes his learning of *sōphrosunē*. Without this moral force that moderates *hubris*, and preserves *phrēn*,⁴⁵ Agamemnon is unaware of the possibility of retribution.

E. Section 6 (Lines 184-247)

This begins the Chorus' narrative of Agamemnon at Aulis. The *Ode to Zeus*, an expression of the relationship between intellection and suffering, unites Agamemnon's unstated decision at Argos with his stated decision at Aulis. On the basis of thematic elements, there are three divisions: (1) the effect of the adverse winds (*antipnoous*, 147) – the death of the “flower of the Argives” (*anthos Argeiōn*,⁴⁶ 198); (2) the effect of their deaths on Agamemnon, who sacrifices Iphigeneia to suspend their suffering; and (3) the description of the death of Iphigeneia. The first and third divisions – the theme of both is death – are centered around the second, which depicts Agamemnon in terms of both his own discourse (205-217) and the Chorus' commentary (218-27). The ring composition

⁴³J. Peradotto, *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 237-63 at p. 257 writes: “If Agamemnon is victimized, it is by his own *ethos*; the scene at Aulis is Heraclitus' *ēthos anthropōi daimōn* dramatized.” While these remarks provide insight to understanding Agamemnon in the context of Heraclitus' B78, it is not apparent, first, in which way the *daimōn* functions to ruin Agamemnon, and, second, in which way the *daimōn* is related to intellection, which seems to be the focus of the *Ode to Zeus*. For this, I refer to S. Darcus, who has identified and thoroughly discussed many of the instances in which *daimōn* is used in Greek literature, focusing on its use by Heraclitus. She notes that *daimōn* is the psychological force that enables humans to engage in noetic activity. Connecting B119 to B78, she observes (*Phoenix* 28 (1974) 390-407 at p. 400-1): “Man can never have an *ēthos* identical to the *theion ēthos*, but he can attain a degree of *gnomē* because he possesses a spark of divinity, his *daimōn*.” A further association between Heraclitus' thought and the *Ode* is found in the fact the B78 preserves the difference between man and the divine, a distinction that Agamemnon fails to recognize. For different interpretations of the significance of the *daimōn* in the *Ode*, see H. Lloyd-Jones, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 76 (1956) 55-67 at p. 63; P. Smith, *On the Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Chico, Ca., 1980) at pp. 26-30; and D. Cohen (*op. cit.*, p. 133).

⁴⁴Plato, *Charmides* 164d-165b

⁴⁵Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140^a11

⁴⁶It is notable that Iphigeneia is never described as *anthos*, but Helen (742), Cassandra (955) and the Greek soldiers are. This fact reflects the numerous objects of Agamemnon's concern, which Clytemnestra and (to a lesser extent) the Chorus condemn.

intensifies the causal relationship between Agamemnon's concern for the preservation of his *zēlos* and his decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia.

1. Lines 184-204

The Chorus begin their narrative of events at Aulis with wind-imagery applied to Agamemnon: As he accepted responsibility (*mantin outina psegōn*, 186) for the possible advent of the winds in nature (146-7) and the sacrifice of his daughter (151-5), Agamemnon is described as “bowing to the sudden blasts of fortune” (*empaiois tuxaisi sumpneōn*, 188). External wind-imagery replaces internal wind-imagery, therein relating Agamemnon to the suffering inflicted upon the Greeks at Aulis (188-9, 193-5, and 198-9), which is the realization of Artemis' disapproval of the Atreidic expedition to Troy. This division concludes with a further reference to Agamemnon, whose own suffering (202-4) results from Calchas' revelation that Artemis is cause, and from his knowledge of the unstated remedy (*mēchar*, 198). The winds arose in Agamemnon when he decided to continue the expedition at the risk of Iphigeneia; the winds arise in nature to force Agamemnon to chose between the two alternatives left to him.

2. Lines 205-26

After Agamemnon learned from Calchas the cause of the winds, he states that the choice between alternatives does not allow for a consequence that is “without evil” (*aneu kakōn*, 211). This perception of his condition is representative of *amēchania* on two levels: (1) were this true, then the *amēchania* stemming from the dilemma would be valid; and (2) since the present crisis results from a prior decision by Agamemnon, the *amēchania* is in fact valid. Agamemnon declares that the two choices available to him to arrest the suffering of the Argives are disobedience (*to mē pithesthai*, 205) or rending his child (*teknon daizō*, 206), both of which would result in a severe fate (*bareia kēr*, 205). Agamemnon's perception of his situation is problematic, for it might seem that the choices described at lines 214-7 have resulted from his obedience to Zeus. Also, in that the object of possible disobedience (*to mē pithesthai*, 206) is unstated, there is little indication as to whether Agamemnon would intend to obey Zeus or Artemis, or to abide by his prior decision to continue with the expedition, even after Calchas' interpretation suggested the possibility of a sacrifice.

Replacing narrative (205-16) with commentary (217-27), the Chorus continue by reintroducing the wind-image of lines 186-8 in conjunction with the harness-image (*anagkas edu lepadnon*, 217): As he changed his mind (*phronein metegnō*, 221) and resorted to utter recklessness (*pantolmon*, 221), the “wind of [Agamemnon's] mind

changed and blew impious, impure and unholy” (*phrenos pneōn dussebē tropaian / anagnon anieron*, 219-20). It may appear that this connection of imagery applies to Agamemnon immediately preceding his decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia,⁴⁷ thus allowing for the transfer of the wind-imagery from Artemis to Agamemnon, from the external to the internal. Both the wind-image and the harness-image, however, depict Agamemnon as he accepts the possibility that another sacrifice – unconventional and uneaten (*anomon tin’ adaiton*, 152) – might be required.

The metaphor of the harness is employed several times throughout the trilogy to suggest either voluntary or involuntary compulsion to forces within the *genos* or the polis.⁴⁸ Formerly, the metaphor applied to the description of the unity of the Atreidai (*zeugos Atreidan*, 44), indicating that Agamemnon is “harnessed” to Menelaus as: (1) a member of the Atreidic *genos* (implying the Atreidic *ēthos*); and (2) an instrument of Zeus in the process of preserving *dikē*. The two bases of the associations from this metaphor apply to the Chorus’ intent to demonstrate, first, the futility of Clytemnestra’s attempt to displace two regents rather than one; and, second, the injustice of her actions to usurp power that originates with Zeus. Their description allows for the possibility that Agamemnon is unconscious of his association with Menelaus (that is, affected by *atē*), and thus does not recognize the Atreidic *ēthos*. Also, Agamemnon may not recognize that he is perceived to be an agent of Zeus.

The later harness-image, however, the expression “he put on the harness of necessity” (*anagkas edu lepadnon*, 218), marks Agamemnon’s subjugation of himself when he decides at Argos to accept the possibility that he must sacrifice Iphigeneia in order to continue the expedition to Troy.⁴⁹ This indicates that Agamemnon “harnesses” himself to necessity as the result of a conscious decision he makes – one that is

⁴⁷ N. Hammond (*op. cit.*, p. 48); A. Lesky (*op. cit.*, p. 82); and D. Conacher, *Aeschylus’ ‘Oresteia’* (Toronto, 1987) at pp. 14-5 have suggested this. To this view W. Scott, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 97 (1966) 459-71 at p. 464 suggests that the “companion of the curse and its destructive force is the wind. It is Agamemnon’s partner as he comes to Aulis, he makes his choice under its compulsion, and finally the general himself becomes the incarnation of its ruinous might as he breathes out from his own mind the change of the wind.”

⁴⁸ *Agamemnon* 529, 953, 1071, 1226, 1563, 1618, 1640; *Choephoroe* 676, 795, 947, 1044; *Eumenides* 405. As the trilogy progresses, fewer instances of harness-imagery are employed. Orestes’ symbolic rebirth at Delphi and knowledge granted by Athena release him from the constraint of an inherited *ēthos* and the resulting retribution, represented by the harness-imagery.

⁴⁹ K. Dover, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973) 58-69; M. Ewans, (*op. cit.*, *passim*); A. Lesky, (*op. cit.*, *passim*); and H. Lloyd-Jones, (*op. cit.*, *passim*) among others argue extensively (and, I argue, incorrectly) that Agamemnon was limited to the two choices available to him at lines 205-17, which would preclude any possibility of free-will in the drama. M. Edwards, *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10 (1977) 17-38, argues well that the wind-imagery is not necessarily restricted to Agamemnon at these lines, but rather applies to him at lines 140-59, thereby strongly allowing for the possibility that free-will is a factor in the drama. In line with this, I would suggest that, without the possibility that Agamemnon had other choices available to him previously, the resulting action (his own and Clytemnestra’s) would be meaningless on the human plane. See also T. Gantz, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 87 (1983) 65-86 at p. 75.

associated with the “change of mind” (*phronein metegnō*, 223) that leads to “complete recklessness” (*pantolmon*, 221). The shift in meaning between the two images is an indication that the Chorus are recognizing Agamemnon himself, rather than the Atreidai, as being responsible for the sacrifices committed at Aulis and Troy. Further, this shift accords with the Chorus’ prior statements depicting the brutality of the Atreidic *ēthos* rather than obedience to Zeus. In that Agamemnon is now shown to be conscious of his actions, his *ēthos* is clearly and accurately revealed. The traditional account expressed by the Chorus to persuade Clytemnestra of the justice of the Atreidic actions, and the injustice of her own actions, now loses validity without the force of Zeus as advocate.

Rather than commentary on Agamemnon’s immediate decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia in order to preserve the alliance, the Chorus’ judgement applies to Agamemnon’s initial decision. The consistent use of the aorist tense (*edu*, 218; *metegnō*, 221; *etla*, 224), denoting the non-specific past, allows for an interpretation of the actions in this narrative sequence to be commentary on an action prior in time. In this context, the wind-imagery is not an internalization of nature, but an externalization of psychological forces, initiated by Agamemnon and continued by Artemis. After Agamemnon decided to continue the expedition, Artemis causes the winds in nature and the resulting suffering of the Greeks, thus forcing him to enact the decision. With this, Artemis’ intervention concurrently reveals the nature of the expedition and Agamemnon’s *ēthos*. Were the Chorus commenting upon Agamemnon’s current predicament, his *ēthos* would not be revealed, for the choices available to him are essentially the same.⁵⁰

After hearing Calchas’ interpretation of the portent, Agamemnon’s mind (*phrēn*, 219) was affected by *atē* (expressed as *parakopa*, 224),⁵¹ which is consonant with his decision to continue the expedition, for at that point Agamemnon is aware that he is subject to both divine envy (135) and the possibility of having to sacrifice Iphigeneia (151-5) in order to reach Troy. Agamemnon changed his intention from effecting justice to preserving *zēlos*, and, at that juncture, he figuratively became the sacrificer of his daughter (*thutēr genesthai thugatros*, 224) avenging the loss of a woman (*gunaikopoinōn*, 226) as a “preliminary right for the fleet” (*proteleia naōn*, 227). This view is reinforced by the fact that Agamemnon bases his decision on *themis* (the force that preserves alliances and consequently *zēlos*), and that he associates his decision with the possibility of moral failure (*hamarton*, 213). Although disobedience (*to mē*

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140^a33; also consider *Poetics* 1450^b8.

⁵¹ L. Bergson (*op. cit.*, p. 17); M. Edwards (*op. cit.*, p. 26); D. Conacher (*op. cit.*, p. 14); and R. Dawe, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 72 (1968) 88-123 at p. 109 observe that these terms are identical.

pithesthai, 206) allowed for either a divine or human object, his employment of *themis* here indicates priority of the human over the divine, for *themis* does not signify religious compliance.⁵² In a later observation on Agamemnon, the Chorus will conclude: What is socially-not-right (*to mē themis*) continues when one transgresses (*parakbantes*) the sacredness of Zeus (*Dios sebas*) impiously (*ou themistes*).⁵³ His sense of the priority of the public (the Argive soldiers) over the private (his daughter) is a manifestation of the Atreidic *ēthos*.

3. Lines 227-45

The imagery of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is employed here (*parthenosphagoisin*, 209), and is fused with the description of Iphigeneia as virgin. Both elements are prominent in later associations (*thusias*, 214, and *partheniou th' aimatos*, 215; *dikan chimairas*, 232, and *partheneion*, 229) to provide two contrasts: (1) the animal (typical) and human (non-typical) sacrifices; and (2) the innocence of Iphigeneia and the wantonness of Helen. An extended comparison, involving the image of the eye, expresses the second contrast with reference to Zeus. Iphigeneia sent each one of her sacrificers a "pitiful arrow from her eye" (*ommatos belei philoiktōi*, 240-1) and Helen is a "soft arrow of the eyes" (*malthakon ommatōn belos*, 742-3). An image of Zeus hurling a thunderbolt from his eyes – *balletai gar ossos / Diothen keraunos* (470) – follows and precedes statements advocating *sōphrosunē* (468-9 and 471-4), suggesting that Zeus punishes the hubristic one. The comparison of the three comments on Agamemnon's acts: His *hubris* (the sacrifice of Iphigeneia for the sake of Helen) will result in retribution from Zeus. Another description of the Atreidic *ēthos* is found in the transfer of the bridle-image from the Trojans (*stomion*, 134) to Iphigeneia (*chalinōn*, 237). Visual reference is then replaced by sound reference. Iphigeneia's stifled curses to the house (*araion oikois*, 236) will recall Thyestes' former curse to the Pleisthidae (*arai / ... pan to Pleisthenous*, 1601-2). With this transfer, the Atreidai are described as "war-lovers" (*philomachoi*, 230), where previously they were "great adversaries at suit" (*megas antidikas*, 41). An unstated comparison further unites Aulis and Argos: Iphigeneia's silence during the sacrifice performed by Agamemnon parallels Clytemnestra's silence during her current sacrifices.

⁵²J. Harrison, *Themis: A Study on the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1927) at p. 516 notes that "*themis* is specialized to man, the social conscience...." Alternatively, L. Bergson (*op. cit.*, p. 16) observes: "It is fair to infer that Agamemnon describes the sacrifices as *themis*, because it is a condition put forward by Zeus." It appears that Bergson has, following the Hesiodic account, associated Zeus' use of *themis* and Agamemnon' use here as an interdiction or command with which Agamemnon complies.

⁵³*Choephoroe* 641-5.

F. Section 7 (Lines 246-54)

This section and its parallel (lines 123-59) focus on Calchas' arts (*technai Kalchantas*, 246) and their effects. In the first, Calchas' interpretation of the portent indirectly resulted in Iphigeneia's death, for it was the basis of Agamemnon's decision to continue with the expedition. In this section, though, Iphigeneia's death is directly described as the result of Calchas' actions rather than Agamemnon's. The litotes intensifies the condemnation directed toward Agamemnon. The gnome previously stated to relate Zeus and suffering (176-7) is now modified to apply to Clytemnestra and the Chorus themselves (250-1) as victims of the suffering caused by Agamemnon. As a result of his transgression of *dikē* as justice, Agamemnon is seen as a future victim of *dikē* as retribution. The Chorus' conviction of this application is coalescent with their knowledge of the suffering to come (*ison de tōi prostenenin*, 253) with the transfer of power from the traditional to the non-traditional.

G. Section 8 (Lines 255-63)

The Chorus restate the theme of authority and rhetoric, now recognizing the non-traditional (female) regime of Clytemnestra in terms of *dikē* (259). Their acceptance of Clytemnestra is professed to be related to Agamemnon's absence (260), but is, in fact, derived from their understanding that Agamemnon will be subject to retribution. His transgression against *dikē* coincides with his absence from Argos. In the initial section dealing with this theme (97-106), the Chorus urged Clytemnestra to inform them of the reasons for her sacrifices, but their defense of Agamemnon prevented her from replying. As a sign of loyalty (*euphrōn*, 263), the Chorus' power to speak (104-6) is replaced by their willing acceptance of Clytemnestra's silence (*sigosei*, 263). The unity of Olympian and Chthonic forces later invoked by the Chorus (*ō Zeu basileu kai Nux philia*, 355) will parallel Clytemnestra's actions (88-90), thus formalizing their recognition of her non-traditional regime.⁵⁴

Ētos and Atē Revealed at Troy and Argos (Lines 503-957)

Initially a metaphor for knowledge in the Parodos, the image of light was continued

⁵⁴To this point of view, H. Konishi (*op. cit.*, p. 56) writes: "... the Elders repeat their question as to the cause of her sacrificial offerings, but they expect that Clytemnestra, having been thoroughly confuted by them, either would confess the evil motive of her sacrificial offerings, or would prefer to leave the place in silence." Since it appears that Clytemnestra does neither of the alternatives that Konishi suggests, I would argue that she has not been confuted by the Chorus.

into the first stasimon, though with particular significance as metaphor for justice (387-93 and 456-66). This marks another transformation in the Chorus' perception of Agamemnon,⁵⁵ since visual reference is incorporated into spoken reference: The Chorus transfer to their description imagery that Clytemnestra had initiated with her sacrifice. The transformation will continue with the first instance in the drama that provides actual speech of events at Troy rather than communication through sign - the Herald's discourse with the Chorus. Prior to this, the Chorus had questioned the validity of Clytemnestra's speech (478-92) because they had doubted her mode of communication (sign) and the reliability of the female *ēthos*. The Chorus would believe her provided that they hear (*akousai*, 318) what she says (*hōs legeis*, 319). Cassandra's later use of this mode of communication in her prophetic visions suggests that it is representative of the female *ēthos*; thus, Clytemnestra stands in close conjunction to Cassandra, though Clytemnestra either does not realize or does not accept this (1050-2). Both women emphasize the visual mode of communication over the spoken mode. Clytemnestra and Cassandra claim that they speak the truth, and both express the possibility that belief of their speech by the Chorus is problematic: Clytemnestra professes to the Chorus to be speaking the truth, unless she is deceived by a god (*mē dolōsantos theou*, 263); Cassandra is speaking the truth, though she is not believed because she has deceived a god (*Loxian epseusamēn*, 1208).

In their reactions to Clytemnestra's first speech, the Chorus initially state their acceptance of her, basing this on their recognition of her male *ēthos*, which is defined in terms of the mind (*kat' andra sophron' euphronōs legeis*, 351).⁵⁶ The Chorus' later criticism of Clytemnestra derives from their distrust of her female *ēthos* (485-7), with the difference in the reactions due their fear of the regent. In so doing, the Chorus have publically adopted the female *ēthos*, and will maintain this until Clytemnestra's exit and the Herald's entrance. Even with Clytemnestra's absence during the regicide, the Chorus are unable to decide upon a suitable course of action (1346-71). Only with the emergence of Aegisthus, who is described as having a female *ēthos* (1643-4), will the Chorus be able to contend, and then only in speech (1611-74).

Prior to the entrance of the Herald, the Chorus conclude the first stasimon with implied censure of Clytemnestra:

⁵⁵On the use of language in the stasimon, A. Lebeck (*op. cit.*, p. 38) observes: "The anapestic introduction begins with the bolt of Zeus striking Alexander; in the second ephymion the chorus again mention Paris (399). In between there flow one from another a series of reflections having little to do with Troy and Paris, everything to do with the destiny of Agamemnon. [See her note 2.] Within this circle his past and future are simultaneously evoked."

⁵⁶S. Goldhill (*op. cit.*, p. 39) states: "Now Clytemnestra speaks *like a man*, she is in possession of *phrenes*, *euphronōs*. This is sufficient proof for the chorus, *pista tekmeria*."

*hostis tad' allōs tēid' epeuxetai polei,
autos phrenōn karpoito tēn humaritan.* (500-1)

Whoever prays otherwise in this for our city
May he himself reap the errors of his mind.

The direct reference is to Clytemnestra, whose attempt to overtake the traditional regime of Agamemnon is considered immoral⁵⁷ by the Chorus. Their distrust of Clytemnestra, then, is not limited to their skepticism about her sign. The Herald's arrival is welcomed by the Chorus for it will signal to the Chorus both the return of the traditional mode of communication and, more importantly, the reinstatement of the traditional regime. After the Herald's exit, though, the Chorus describe with a similar reference to the mind when they comment upon Agamemnon's decision to engage in the expedition for the return of Helen:

*su de moi tote men stellōn stratian
Helenēs henek', ...
oud' eu prapidōn oiaka nemōn,* (799-802)

You, when leading the army out
for Helen's behalf, ...
were not managing well the helm of the mind,

The inherent, though unexpressed, relationship between the two statements is that Agamemnon's departure enabled Clytemnestra's usurpation. The Herald's account will provide the standard for the Chorus to judge both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, for the Herald enters the drama as the accepted mode (speech) and gender (male) of the bearer of knowledge.⁵⁸ The Chorus must accept his account. If the Herald's account of Troy in

⁵⁷R. Dawe, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 72 (1968) 88-123 at p. 109 writes: "The *Oresteia* is not primarily conducted in terms of *atē* or *hamartia*: for although the word *atē* comes frequently enough, it is usually in its ordinary sense of *Schaden* without specific reference to the mind." I must disagree with Dawe. Citing R. Doyle (*Traditio* 28 (1972) 1-26 at p. 1), *atē* functions on both objective and subjective levels; that is, as 'ruin' and 'blindness', with the objective sense dominating. I argue that a causal relationship between the two levels exists in the drama, and is the central idea for it allows – if not suggests – the possibility that Agamemnon's ruin is brought about by his own failures.

⁵⁸On the function of the Herald within the drama, H. Konishi (*op. cit.*, p. 69) has suggested: "It is now Clytemnestra's turn to quash conclusively the Elder's arguments. She achieves this by producing the Messenger who confirms everything that she had stated and denies, by implication, all that the Elders had claimed. The Elders do not realize that, like the fire beacon, the Messenger is a part of Aegisthus' scheme which is executed by Clytemnestra." While there are striking similarities between the imagery that the Chorus and the Herald employ, there is insufficient textual evidence to support the claim that the appearance of the Herald is a theatrical contrivance.

speech coincides with Clytemnestra's account in sign, then Clytemnestra and her (non-traditional) regime are vindicated, and Agamemnon and his (traditional) regime are condemned.

The Herald offers three speeches upon his arrival at Argos (503-37, 551-83 and 636-80) and among them there is a progression: The Chorus' inquiries directed to the Herald (538-50 and 615-35) seem to cause him to alter his account, with the result that the depiction of Greek suffering becomes more pronounced. As the Herald restates his account according to the Chorus' questions, the dramatization of the gnome *pathei mathos* is intensified. Similarly, Clytemnestra will later declare (863-76 and 887-94) that the reports from Troy concerning Agamemnon heightened her suffering. Clytemnestra's experience of the gnome is on a different level, though, for the exaggerations of her own experience of suffering are intended to present the traditional female *ēthos*, and to expose Agamemnon as the cause of Greek suffering.

Coinciding with the escalation of suffering is the transformation in the portrayal of the gods. While the first speech alludes to the gods (Zeus, Pytho/Lord Apollo, and the gods of the assembly) as source of the Greek victory, there is also the Herald's statement that Apollo had attacked the Greeks at Troy (*ho Pythios t' anax ... eis hēmas belē*., 509-10). By incorporating the same imagery that the Chorus had employed to express their belief in Zeus as source of the victory (*Dia toi xenion ... teinonta palai toxon*, 362-4), the Herald's account contradicts the Chorus' contention in the Parodos that the Atreidai are acting in response to Zeus. Apollo's presumed absence from Aulis (147-9) signified Zeus' absence; Apollo's vengeance at Troy indicates Zeus' disapproval.

The inclusion of Zeus at Troy is further challenged by the Herald's comment that Agamemnon:

...Troian kataskapsanta tou dikephorou
Dios makellēi, ... (525-6)

... has thoroughly ruined Troy with the axe of
Zeus, bearer of justice ...

The description of Zeus as "bearer of justice" contrasts strongly to descriptions of Agamemnon's actions at Troy, which are violent (*ophlōn gar harpagēs ... patrōion ethrisen domon*., 534-6) and unjust (*Paris gar oute ... tou pathous pleon*, 532-3 *dipla d'eteisan Priamidai thamartia*, 537). By implying that Agamemnon is responsible for the victory, the Herald will be able to condemn him in the second and third speeches. These depictions precede and follow statements extolling Agamemnon (*eudaimōn*, 530);

tiesthai d' axiōtatos brotōn tōn nun., 530-1), with the implication being that honor results from acts of injustice. If Agamemnon accepts honor (either as *timē* or *geras*) upon his return to Argos, then he will be shown unjust. With this revelation, the Chorus will no longer be able to contend, as they did in the Parodos, that Agamemnon is acting in accordance with *dikē* as justice.

The Chorus' expression of their own suffering (545-7) continues in the Herald's second speech, where he announces:

*... en pollōi chronōi
ta men tis an lexeien eupetōs echein,
ta d' aute kapimompha tis de plēn theōn
hapant' apēmōn ton di aiōnos chronon;* (551-4)

... Of those events that happen in a long time
one might say that some are fair,
and some are condemned; but who except the gods
is free from pain for his whole life?

The relationship between the gods and suffering emphasizes the difference between the first speech and this one. In the first, the gods were the cause of the victory; now they are differentiated from man in that they alone are devoid of suffering. At first Greek was supported against Trojan by the gods; now Greek and Trojan are essentially the same. Suffering at Troy is depicted in terms of nature, thereby suggesting a continuation of the intervention of Artemis that originated at Argos. This association is further disclosed by the similarity between the Herald's speech and Calchas' interpretation of the portent, for both are a combination of the favorable and the auspicious. Calchas integrated *dexia* and *katamompha* (144); the Herald associates *ta ... eupetōs echein* (552) and *ta kapimompha* (553). The Herald rephrases Agamemnon's expression at Aulis (*eu gar eiē*, 217) to incorporate censure of the regent. He prefaces the narrative of suffering with the expression *eu gar pepraktai* (551) and concludes with *nikai to kerdos* (574), replacing *eu* with *kerdos* to emphasize the theme of suffering and its relationship to success. A final connection between success (*laphura*, 578) and suffering is made as the Herald completes the second speech with a reference to Agamemnon (*tous strategous*, 581) and to Zeus (*charis Dios*, 582). Agamemnon is shown to be responsible for the suffering, and Zeus is shown to be the source of retribution against the Greeks for their injustices committed at Troy. The comparison, then, signifies Agamemnon as the cause of the suffering that was endured for the sake of

gain.

The second speech continues with a reference to Clytemnestra's sign that has now been replaced with the Herald's speech. His appearance is validation of his gender (the male over the female), and his expression "It is appropriate to boast in the light of the sun ... 'Troy was taken by the Argive expedition.'" (*hōs kompasai tōid' eikos hēliou phaei ... Troian helontes dē pot' Argeiōn stolos*, 575-7) differs in respect to both the time when Clytemnestra's message appeared (day rather than night) and the mode (speech rather than sign). The Chorus can no longer contest Clytemnestra's message or her views about circumstances at Troy. Now compelled to accept her mode and message, the Chorus will prepare for the possibility that their representation of tradition was inaccurate. In the Herald's third speech, the correlation between the gods (primarily Ares) and the notion of suffering introduced in his second speech will be expanded to emphasize a causal relationship. Ares' influence on the Atreidai, reported by the Chorus in the Parodos (48), is later revealed in the god's effect upon the Greeks (640-5). The Chorus sense that Menelaus' disappearance is the result of a storm, therein connecting Aulis and Troy through wind-imagery. The storm is initially supposed by the Chorus to be the result of the "anger of the *daimōn*" (*daimonōn kotōi*, 635), but the Herald's account differs in expression (*ouk amenitōn theōn*, 649), which suggests the inclusion of Olympian divinities, and recalls both Apollo's absence and Artemis' presence at Aulis. The interplay of the forces of nature on mankind has concurrent functions in the drama. At Aulis Artemis had delayed the fleet through nature to prevent the Argives from sailing to Troy and to force Agamemnon to disclose his *ēthos*. During the return from Troy, contrary elements of nature combined to destroy the fleet in retribution for their destruction of Troy. Agamemnon's *ēthos* will be disclosed in terms of *atē* when he fails to recognize the correlation between Artemis and her effect on nature, which began with his acceptance that further action might necessitate sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

With the conclusion of his third speech, the Herald professes that he has delivered the true account (*talēthē*, 680) of the Greek experience following their departure from Aulis. The causal relationship frames the truth such that the Greek victory at Troy is now seen in light of retribution upon the Greeks during their return from Troy. Allusions to the gods as source of the Greek victory are replaced by allusions to the gods as cause of the retribution directed at the Greeks during their return. The conclusion to be drawn is that Greek success is followed by retribution: If Zeus is indeed associated with *dikē*, then their actions were unjust. In the final reference to the gods, Zeus is considered to have the potential to destroy the *genos*. Reference to the gods shifts from the past to the future, and from Troy to Argos.

As the Herald concludes his speeches by alluding to the truth, the Chorus begin

their response with a similar allusion (*etētumōs*, 682). While both conceptions of the truth explain the cause of suffering, they are essentially different. The Herald had implicitly denounced Agamemnon, but the Chorus will initially denounce Helen. Acceptance of Agamemnon as source of Greek suffering would necessitate that the Chorus both repudiate their association of Zeus with the Atreidai, and relinquish their insistence in the priority of the male over the female. Condemnation of Helen, though, will be only temporary, for the principles addressed by the Chorus at the conclusion of the stasimon comment upon Agamemnon at Aulis and at Troy, specifically designating him as guilty.

The theme and the structure of the second stasimon (681-782) are related in that strophic pairs *a* and *b* focus on involuntary forces; strophic pairs *g* and *d* focus on voluntary forces. Another pattern is present: Strophes *a* and *b* present the appearance of a particular subject, while antistrophes *a* and *b* conclude the pair by emphasizing the reality of the respective subject. The third strophic pair reiterates the theme of appearance/reality by furnishing a statement in the strophe that is later revised in the antistrophe. The distinct contrast between initial and subsequent thoughts stresses the voluntary as source of motivation. Strophe *d* expands this theme in terms of two contrary moral forces: *hubris* and *dikē*.

The Chorus express their belief in destiny (*tuxai*) rather than in voluntary actions: Helen is named in accordance with destiny, for her name suggests the effect that she later had. The Chorus connect Helen to her own destiny and to the destiny of others on the basis of her name: Helen is *hele-naus*, *hel-andros* and *hele-ptolis* (689-90).⁵⁹ The expression of an involuntary force as source of Helen's action continues with strife (*di' Erin*, 698) and wrath (*Menis*, 701), so that the Trojans sang of her initially in terms of the erotic (*humenaion*, 707) and then in terms of the fatal (*poluthrenon*, 711).⁶⁰ With this transformation, Helen and Iphigeneia become parallel symbols, unrecognized by Paris and Agamemnon respectively, for the escalation of suffering from the *genos* to the city. Strophic pair *b* continues the theme of unrecognized potential, though in terms of metaphor rather than history. The lion – a symbol⁶¹ with great significance in the motifs

⁵⁹D. Conacher (*op. cit.*, p. 26) has discussed the correlation between Helen's name and her *ēthos*, writing that this is "a theme developed in a terrifying sequence of images which begins with beguiling sweetness but ends with the victim's blood."

⁶⁰On the relationship between the erotic and the fatal in the second stasimon, see A. Lebeck (*op. cit.*, p. 70); and F. Zeitlin, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965) 463-505 at pp. 465 and 478.

⁶¹On the depth and import of the lion-image in the *Oresteia*, B. Knox (*Classical Philology* 47 (1952) 17-25 at p. 23) has written: "The parable of the lioncub is a central reference-point for the recurrent lion image of the play." Thus, as Knox has noted (p. 23), the lion represents both Helen and Agamemnon. The transformation in the Chorus' allusion from Helen to Agamemnon is consonant with the transformation of the focus of their censure. Additionally, A. Lebeck (*op. cit.*, p. 51) states: "The recollections of Orestes' nurse contrast the innocence of his childhood with the cruel act which he must now commit. [See her note 10.] This is the moral of the lion parable." Thus the savagery of the *ēthos* continues, though Orestes realizes that his act must be without compulsion to *zēlos* (*Choephoroe* 1016-7).

of sacrifice and teknophagy – is reared (*ethrepsen*, 718) apart from its own mother (*agalakton*, 718) to be both a “good friend of the children” (*euphilopaida*, 721) and a “delightful object to elders” (*gerarōis epicharion*, 723). Despite such nurturing (*ethrepsen*, 718; *neotrophou*, 724; *tropheusin*, 729; and *prosethraphthē*, 736)⁶² by humans, the lion’s *ēthos* from its parents (*pros tokeōn*, 729) shows forth (*apedeixen*, 727). The lion’s potential for destruction, seen in an image of the involuntary (*gastros anagkais*, 726), actualizes as it matures (*chronistheis*, 727). This recalls Artemis’ intervention at Argos (135-45), where Agamemnon displayed his *ēthos* by engaging in a decision.

The resulting slaughter of the flock (*mēlophonoisin*, 729) and the images “house” (*oikos*, 732) and “house-hold” (*oiketais*, 733) recall the connection between the thematic elements of death (resulting from sacrifice and battle) and the *genos*. Antistrophe *b* concludes with the Chorus’ contention that (a) god (*ek theou*, 734) reared (*prosethraphthē*, 736) the lion in the house (*domois*, 736) to be a priest (*hiereus*, 734) to *atē* (734-5). The Chorus are declaring that: (1) *ēthos* is immutable despite nurturing; (2) *ēthos* derives from the divine or some divine force (the *daimōn*); and (3) *ēthos* – in this example, an *ēthos* that is violent – serves *atē*, and thus acts in conjunction with the dictates of *atē*. With specific reference to the house, the condemnation of Agamemnon continues by focusing upon the causal relationship between *atē* as blindness (735-6) and *Atē* as destruction (730).

The theme of appearance/reality continues with strophe and antistrophe *g*. In strophe *g*, the Chorus initially depict Helen in terms of the erotic (*phronēma men nēnemou ... dēzithumon erōtos anthos*, 743-5), then conclude the strophe with a depiction of her as source of ruin (*dusedros kai dusomilos*, 746; and *numphoklaous Erinus*, 749) emphasizing Helen as cause. In antistrophe *g*, the Chorus begin with an expression of tradition (*palaiphatos d’ en brotois gerōn logos*, 75): Suffering (*oizun*, 756) in the *genos* is caused or generated (*teknousthai*, 752) by prosperity (*olbon*, 751) or good fortune (*agathas tuchas*, 755). In concluding the antistrophe, however, they state a repudiation of a principle well-established in tradition.⁶³ An impious deed (*to dussebes*

⁶²A. Lebeck, (*op. cit.*, p. 51) and J. Peradotto (*op. cit.*, p. 260) have noted that this continues into the *Choephoroe*, suggesting that the principles established here are played out in the future with Orestes. See also Knox (*op. cit.*, p. 23). On this, S. Goldhill (*op. cit.*, pp. 62-3) writes: “There is a dominating image of parents handing on characteristics to children, the ‘birth’ of faults...”

⁶³D. Abel, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 74 (1943) 92-101, and R. Doyle, *Traditio* 26 (1970) 293-303 discuss the concept that ethical or moral theory in many of the poets follows a birth-creation principle motif, which lends itself by comparison to the idea of inherited guilt. Abel (at pp. 94-5) writes: “When, however, Heaven gives this prosperity (*Olbos*) or wealth (*Ploutos*) to men, these gifts produce in a man a feeling of fullness or satiety or surfeit (*Koros*). This feeling of fullness makes man grasping and there is born from it a presumptuous and over-riding insolence and outrage in action (*Hubris*) which brings in its wake mental and moral blindness (*Atē*).”

ergon, 758) begets (*tikteī*, 759) deeds more in number (*pleiona*, 759) but similar to the original in kind (*eikota gennai*, 759). The association of the image of birth (*TE'KO) with the generation of both suffering and impious deeds is of consequence, for the Chorus emphasize that an impious deed rather than wealth or good fortune is the cause of another impious deed. Acts of impiety or injustice result from voluntary actions, not from involuntary actions. As the Chorus state that they alone (*allōn monophrōn*, 757) understand the difference between voluntary and involuntary acts as source of ruin, they distinguish themselves from Agamemnon and Clytemnestra.

Strophe *d* introduces *hubris* – the unstated contrary to *sōphrosunē* – in the same imagery of birth/creation (*tikteīn*, 764) that was applied to *olbos* and *dussebes ergon*. While the three unite different generations within the *genos*, *hubris* is different for the emphasis placed on the past (*palaia*, 764) recalls the first act of *hubris* in the Atreidic *genos*, and its influence on the Atreidic *ēthos*. This *hubris* will be specifically defined by Cassandra as *protarchon atēn* (1192). The Chorus then state that *hubris* gives birth to the *daimon*, the “black *atē*” (*melainan Atan*, 770) for the house (*melaitiroisin*, 770) “resembling the parent” (*eidomenan tokeusin*, 771). This image of *atē* specifically refers to the bird-image and its appearance next to the house (*malathron*, 116), which had signified the effect of *atē* on Agamemnon. The image will be present at the conclusion of Agamemnon’s participation in the drama, as the effect of *atē* on Agamemnon induces him to enter the house (*es domōn melathra*, 957) as the victim of a sacrificial ritual. The Chorus are distinguishing a conscious act as cause from an involuntary force (*olbos* and *agathē tuchē*) as cause. The Chorus have restated a connection between the intellect and *sōphrosunē* that they introduced in the first stasimon (377-80), seemingly in reference to Paris, though now with direct reference to Agamemnon. The generation of a *dussebes ergon* is implicitly contrasted with the generation of a *dikaion ergon*, which creates fair offspring (*kallipais*, 763). In the context of voluntary actions, the lion-image (*malerōn leontōn*, 141) at Argos and the metaphor of the lion (717-36) combine to emphasize Agamemnon’s decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia. The continuation of this image at Troy (827) will be Agamemnon’s own depiction of the result of his decision.

With Clytemnestra’s momentary absence, the Chorus are the first to speak to Agamemnon upon his arrival at Argos. Their address is partially censure (799-804) and partially admonition (795-98 and 805-09). This suggests the Chorus’ disapproval of his *ēthos* (and regime), but, at the same time, their hope that Agamemnon will survive to supplant Clytemnestra. Several variations of previous expressions in the drama are incorporated. In their address to Agamemnon, the Chorus include the appellation “Descendant of Atreus” (*Atreōs genethlon*, 782), signifying their knowledge of the Atreidic *ēthos*, exhibited in the Atreidic *genos*. This will be paralleled as Agamemnon

unconsciously recalls the Tyndaric *ēthos* in his address to Clytemnestra (*Lēdas genethlon*, 914). The Chorus then ponder the appropriate manner to address Agamemnon (*pōs se proseipō*, 785), which parallels the statement used when they addressed Zeus (*touto nin prosennepō*, 162). Both suggest their uncertainty about the nature of the one addressed and, further, the relationship between the two. Agamemnon's description of the gods' participation in the animalistic devastation of Troy (821-8) replaces the earlier association of Zeus with the bestial found in the Parodos (43-57 and 114-6).⁶⁴ In this Agamemnon is unwittingly expressing the scope of his injustice; the Chorus can no longer maintain their conviction that Zeus advocated Agamemnon's actions.

As the Chorus continue, they express their awareness of the importance of *sōphrosunē*, for they will attempt to maintain a balance between extremes (786), employing the same phrasing that had earlier defined their conception of Zeus (365-6). The theme of appearance/reality continues with their comment that many (*polloi brotōn*, 788) esteem (*protiōsi*, 789) appearance (*to dokein*, 787) more than reality (*einai*, 788) after transgressing justice (*dikēn parabantes*, 789). This direct reference and admonition to Agamemnon is expressed in terms that formerly applied to Paris (*parabasin*, 59). The Chorus' rhetorical intention is, first, to ensure that their own speech is not hubristic; and, second, to warn Agamemnon so that he can identify and distinguish their moderate speech from Clytemnestra's hyperbolic speech (855-913).

The urn-image (*kutei*, 816) in Agamemnon's description of the god's vote can be contrasted with the urn-image (*kutei*, 322) in Clytemnestra's description of the sack of Troy. The comparison of the two images allows for the comparison of Agamemnon's belief in the influence of divine forces in the Greek victory (810-28) with Clytemnestra's belief in the god's neutrality or indifference (320-37). The *hubris* of Agamemnon is thus contrasted specifically with the *sōphrosunē* of Clytemnestra. His *hubris* with regard to his perception of divine complicity is displayed in the contentions that: (1) the gods must be paid "with ever-mindful gratitude" (*polumnēston charin*, 821) for their part in the destruction of Troy for a woman's sake; and (2) the gods have sent him to Troy and returned him to Argos (854). While both indirectly reflect his psychological condition in terms of *atē*, the expression *atēs thuellai zōsi* (819) does so directly. On one level of interpretation, the description is in apposition to the dying embers (819-20) at Troy. At a deeper level, though, it is a continuation of both the wind-

⁶⁴The association of the divine with the bestial as guide for human action is condemned throughout the drama; thus it appears to be in line with Aristotle's view: "He who is without a polis, by reason of his own nature and not of some accident, is either a poor sort of being, or a being higher than man ..." *Politics* 1253^a3

image describing Agamemnon's decision at Argos and the externalization of the wind. The blasts (*thuellai*)⁶⁵ of *atē* refer both to the destruction at Troy and Agamemnon's own *atē* to accept responsibility for his decision to continue the expedition at the risk of incurring *phthonos* (*empaiois tuchaisi sumpneon*, 186; *phrenos pneōn dussebē tropaian*, 219). His *zēlos* and his *atē* are manifested simultaneously as he arrives at Argos with Cassandra (Iphigeneia's replacement). There is another association of Agamemnon and the wind-image: In that the *atē* of Troy results in the "send[ing]forth of rich winds of wealth" (*propempei pionas ploutou pnoas*, 819) the wind imagery continues, thereby expressing the object of Agamemnon's *zēlos*: *ploutos*.

The significance of the tapestry scene, beyond the symbolism of the violation of *dikē*,⁶⁶ is that it simultaneously depicts the Atreidic and Tyndaric *ēthē*. Immediately prior to Clytemnestra's request, Agamemnon had failed to understand the import of her speeches, which function on two levels – that of hyperbole aimed at the man infatuated by his *zēlos*, and that of irony aimed at demonstrating his *atē*. He is therefore shown to be blind to the reality of the present, which has resulted from his sacrifice of Iphigeneia. This portrayal of Agamemnon will continue, and finally conclude, with the exchange between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra during the *stichomythia*. In devising this situation for Agamemnon, Clytemnestra has presented circumstances at Argos that parallel those at Aulis, enabling her to reveal publically⁶⁷ Agamemnon's motivation, and thereby his *ēthos*. In this regard, walking on the tapestry and sacrificing Iphigeneia are analogous: Both must be performed by Agamemnon for him to attain an end.⁶⁸ At Aulis Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigeneia to reach Troy; now he must walk on the tapestry to reach his house. Both actions are prefaced by statements relating Agamemnon to Olympian divinities: Prior to the sacrifice, the Chorus had indicated that Agamemnon was acting in response to Olympian divinities (40-61 and 109-20); prior to the *stichomythia*, Agamemnon stated that his purpose to enter inside the

⁶⁵C. Caswell, *A Study of Thumos in Early Greek Epic* (Leiden, 1990) at p. 60 observes "that *thuo* is related semantically to *thumos* and that it strengthens the case for synonymy between the level of the individual and the cosmic level of the elements."

⁶⁶Cf. A. Lebeck, (*op. cit.*, 74-9) has discussed the imagery of the trampling of *dikē* found throughout the *Oresteia*; however, this is not the focus of the scene. Clytemnestra must persuade Agamemnon to do this through a change of mind that will convince the Chorus of the injustice of Agamemnon's decisions and actions prior to his return to Argos. The imagery is then subordinate to the discourse.

⁶⁷M. Flaumenhaft, *Interpretation 17* (1989) 69-110 at p. 74 observes: "The theatrical *agōn* that she produces is a test, a trial, not in the full sense that the word comes to have by the end of the trilogy but like it in that it questions and exhibits the man whom she must judge."

⁶⁸It appears that Clytemnestra is associating *telos* as 'sacrificial ritual' and *telos* as 'purpose of motivation', both of which Agamemnon cannot see. On the use of *teleie*, *telei* and *telein* (973-4), see A. Lebeck, (*op. cit.*, pp. 68-73); F. Zeitlin, *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 96 (1965) 498-508 at pp. 498-581; S. Goldhill, (*op. cit.*, pp. 65-78); and J. Fontenrose, (*op. cit.*, pp. 93-4)

house was to pray to Olympian divinities (810-3 and 851-4). In both instances, though, Agamemnon will be risking *phthonos*, which will negate the earlier associations of his actions with Olympian divinities. With Agamemnon's eventual submission to Clytemnestra at the conclusion of this scene, represented by his compliance to her request (944-57), Agamemnon will be demonstrating to the Chorus that he was not motivated by *dikē* as justice, thus condemning his own regime and vindicating Clytemnestra's. In this, Helen and Clytemnestra are symbolically related as forces of motivation that led Agamemnon to destruction: He had followed Helen to Troy, and Clytemnestra to the house.

Agamemnon's reasons refusing to comply with Clytemnestra (916-29) present an *ēthos* in speech that is essentially different from the one he displayed at Argos, Aulis and Troy. He concludes his refusal to Clytemnestra with a statement combining speech (*eipon*, 930) and action (*prassoim'*, 930) that would conceal his character. If Clytemnestra can persuade Agamemnon to accede, his action would disavow his earlier claims. The ensuing stichomythia, then, is Clytemnestra's attempt to reveal Agamemnon's *ēthos* by persuading him to repudiate his reasons. The transformation during the stichomythia will occur in the context of morality, for Agamemnon's statements describing the act as shameful encompass the stichomythia. In the first, Agamemnon refuses to comply to Clytemnestra by stating that "the greatest gift of god is not to think shamefully" (*kai to mē kakōs phronein / theou megiston dōron'*, 927-8). In the second, Agamemnon complies, yet says that "shame restrains me from ruining the wealth of the house with my feet" (*gar kakos dōmatophthorein posin / phtheironta plouton*, 948-9). Clytemnestra's rhetorical domination in the exchange results in Agamemnon's unwitting reenactment of his change in mind (*phronein metegnō*, 221) at Argos, directing the Chorus' previous commentary on Agamemnon (174-83) to the present.

In order for Clytemnestra to expose Agamemnon's *ēthos*, Agamemnon must answer according to his mind (*me para gnōmēn*, 931). His agreement to do this (*gnōmēn men isthi me diaphtherount' eme*, 932) expresses both the truthfulness of his response (*diaphtheirein* as 'to conceal') and the result of his truthfulness (*diaphtheirein* as 'to destroy'). She initiates the stichomythia by relating Agamemnon's confidence regarding his refusal (*eipon, tad' hos prassoim' an eutharsēs egō*, 930) to his experience of fear (*deisas*, 933). Agamemnon's statement that fear (*phobou*, 924) should deter him from acceding to Clytemnestra will be defined by him at the conclusion of the stichomythia as fear of divine envy (*phthonos*, 947). Clytemnestra's first question serves to compel Agamemnon to refer to his decision at Argos, where he was aware that he was incurring divine envy (*epiphthonos*, 135) by continuing the expedition. Because Agamemnon

admits that he would have vowed to the gods on the advice of an expert (*tis eidōs g' eutod' exeipen telos*, 934), he could not have been motivated by fear of *phthonos*, for Calchas' interpretation stated that Agamemnon would be subject to divine envy if he continued. It then appears that Agamemnon would vow to the gods to sacrifice Iphigeneia, should the situation arise, in order to continue the expedition and thereby retain his *zēlos*.

With the admission that he had relied upon Calchas' interpretation, Agamemnon implicitly admits that he understood the three amphibolic statements included in the interpretation (126-30, 135-7, and 151-4). Clytemnestra can associate the sacrifice of Iphigeneia to the destruction of the Greeks at Troy with the result that Agamemnon's responsibility is now enlarged to include suffering within the *genos* and outside it. In order to portray Agamemnon's injustice, Clytemnestra will imply that Agamemnon was contending with Priam, rather than with Paris. This will indicate that Agamemnon was not sanctioned by Zeus to prosecute Paris, which had been claimed by the Chorus in the Parodos (61-4).

By asking whether Priam would have risked *phthonos* by walking on the tapestry (935), Clytemnestra will induce Agamemnon to equate himself with Priam, knowing that he had risked *phthonos* during the expedition. By acknowledging that Priam would have walked on the tapestry, and by doing the same, Agamemnon will be equating Greek and Trojan with the result that his argument for divine complicity in the Greek victory (810-28 and 852-4) will deteriorate. Also, with the similarity between Greek and Trojan, Clytemnestra can direct the Chorus' previous censure of Paris (370-402) to Agamemnon. Clytemnestra continues to urge him by saying that human reproach (*anthrōpeion psogon*, 937) should not be a concern, basing her opinion on his willingness to risk divine envy. Agamemnon realizes that if he admits similarity to Priam then he implicitly admits, first, that he could not be acting in response to Olympian divinity, and, second, that his own condemnation of the Trojans will apply to himself. He then counters by stating that the people's censure is powerful (*phēmē gementoi dēmothrou mega sthenei*, 938), which is contrary to his earlier contention that the fortunate one must be envied to receive honor (*ton eutuchount' aneu phthonou sebein*, 833). Without envy, Clytemnestra will argue, one is unable to retain his *zēlos*.

Because Clytemnestra has found a contradiction in Agamemnon's argument, she can now force him to admit that his desire for *zēlos* prevailed over the people's reproach. Clytemnestra's statement that the unenvied one (*ho aphthonētos*, 939) cannot possess *zēlos* (*epizēlos*, 939) results in Agamemnon's refusal to contest with a woman (940). With this response, Agamemnon is stating his belief that honor received from a woman or from within the *genos* would be diminished. *Zēlos* dictates priority of the

male over the female, and the public over the private. Both are manifested in terms of *timē* when Agamemnon returns with Cassandra (*stratou dōrēm'*, 955) rather than with Iphigeneia. In that Agamemnon bases his unwillingness to accede on gender, Clytemnestra then states that for Agamemnon to remain fortunate (*olbiois*, 941) and, hence, to retain possession of his *zēlos*, he must accede (*nikasthai*, 941). Clytemnestra is relating Agamemnon's desire for *zēlos* to his previous statement that it is appropriate to consider someone fortunate only after he has ended his life in prosperity (*olbisai de xrē / bion teleutēsant' en euestoi philēi*, 927-8). Unable to refute Clytemnestra, Agamemnon again admits that he will risk *phthonos* to retain his *zēlos*, since he allows himself to be considered fortunate, a condition that results in *phthonos* and concomitant *atē*.⁶⁹ Clytemnestra's final statement in the stichomythia – “Comply; you are indeed stronger if you consciously accede to me” (*pithou krateis mentoi pareis [g'] hekōn emoi*, 943) – expresses Agamemnon's motivation to sacrifice Iphigeneia. At Aulis, he complied (*pithesthai*, 206) with his vow to the gods in order to retain his preeminence among the Greeks.

With Clytemnestra's rhetorical mastery over Agamemnon (*all' ei dokei soi tauth'*, 944; *epei d' akouein sou katestrammai tade*, 956) his *ēthos* is revealed concurrently with his *atē*. The *talaina Peithō* (385), used in the context of transgression against *dikē*, is regarded to have been issued from *atē* (386). This is a reformulation of the *talaina atē* (as *parakopa*, 224) associated with Agamemnon's decision to accept the possibility that he would sacrifice Iphigeneia. In both cases Agamemnon is led to *atē* by *peithō*. His *atē* (as intellectual failure) will be transformed to his *atē* (as destruction): Agamemnon will be transformed from sacrificer to sacrificed. Unaware of his own plight, Agamemnon refers to divine envy in eye-imagery (*ommatos baloi phthonos*, 947) that associates Iphigeneia (240-1) and Helen (742-3) in the context of Zeus and *sōphrosunē* (468-74). In this, Agamemnon himself is unwittingly providing further justification for his sacrifice by Clytemnestra.

⁶⁹Herodotos, *Histories*, Book 1. 34-36.