REFRAIN IN AESCHYLUS: LITERARY ADAPTATION
OF TRADITIONAL FORM

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NUMEROUS studies have shown that recurrent themes and images in Aeschylean tragedy are often controlled mechanisms by which the poet emphasizes and develops significant aspects of the dramatic action.[1] Thus far, however, scant attention has been paid to Aeschylus' use of a poetic form which is inherently recurrent, the lyric refrain. Critics have confined themselves to historical observations, attributing Aeschylean refrains, often imprecisely, to supposed ritual or other "primitive" antecedents of drama.[2]

It is easy to see why. For each refrain in Aeschylus, there is a precedent in nondramatic ritual, either in substance or in context. The triple refrain in the parodos of the *Agamemnon* (121, 139, 159 αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω) begins with an antique cry which is identical to the "Linos song" (Λίνον) attested in Homer (*Il.* 18. 570); the prayer for good with which the refrain concludes seeks to avert the evil implications of an omen, and is analogous to the apotropaic paean in *Iliad* 1. 473.[3] The celebration of the Eumenides' goodwill which closes the *Oresteia* employs two other refrains. Celebrants are summoned, subject to the usual ritual caution (*Eum.* 1035, 1038 εὐφαμεῖτε; cf. *Il.* 9. 171), to raise the same cry of exultation which was uttered by Eurycleia in the *Odyssey* (22. 408, 411): ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς (*Eum.* 1043, 1047). Functions of magic, lamentation, and necromancy are fulfilled by the remaining refrains in Aeschylus' extant plays. The "binding song" of the Furies is a magical incantation consigning Orestes to the Underworld (*Eum.* 328–33 = 341–46). Lamentation and necromancy combine in the conjuring of Darius by the Persian elders, the reverse process of the Furies' magic (*Pers.* 663, 671). The Danaids alternately lament and pray for deliverance from evil in the ephymnia of the parodos of the *Suppliants* (117–21 = 129–33, 141–43 = 151–53, 162–67, repeated after 175;

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1. E.g., O. Hiltbrunner, *Wiederholungs- und Motivtechnik bei Aischylos* (Freiburg, 1934); J. Dumortier, *Les images dan la poésie d'Eschyle* (Paris, 1935); R. D. Murray, Jr., *The Motif of Io in Aeschylus' "Suppliants"* (Princeton, 1958); A. Lebeck, *The "Oresteia." A Study in Language and Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971); for additional bibliography, see n. 7.

2. E.g., W. Kranz, *Stasimon* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 127–33; R. Arnoldt, *Der Chor im "Agamemnon" des Äschylus* (Halle, 1881), p. 23; M. Croiset, *Eschyle* (Paris, 1928), pp. 66, 93–94, 248; E. T. Owen, *The Harmony of Aeschylus* (Toronto, 1952), p. 116. Cf. P. Masqueray, *Théorie des formes lyriques de la tragédie grecque* (Paris, 1895), pp. 107–10; M. Horneffer, *De strophica sententiarum in canticis tragicorum responsione* (Bonn, 1914), p. 14.

3. M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 57 and 218, nn. 8, 10. In effect, the chorus repeat Calchas' paean, *Ag.* 146–54; cf. G. Méautis, *Eschyle et la trilogie* (Paris, 1936), p. 135; Owen, *Harmony*, p. 67; J. A. Haldane, "Musical Themes and Imagery in Aeschylus," *JHS* 85 (1965): 38. Unless noted, the text is the OCT of D. Page (1972).

cf. 889–92 = 899–902, esp. φοβερὸν ἀπότρεπε). These functions, too, have a much older origin. Formal lamentation is accompanied by refrain in Hector's funeral (*Il.* 24. 725–45). Refrain in necromancy may be implicit in Circe's instructions to Odysseus for evoking the spirits of the dead (*Od.* 10. 521).[4] Repeated language is in any case turned to magical purpose at least as early as the Dirae of Teos, a series of curses from the early fifth century B.C. which inveigh against wrongdoers who would harm the state: "let him perish, both himself and his race."[5] The intent of these curses is identical to that of the Furies in their "binding song."

It is not surprising, then, that critics of Aeschylean refrain find the requirements of exegesis served if reference is made to traditional, non-dramatic occurrences of similar forms. Contexts which demand a refrain regularly also determine its content. In the literary form of tragedy, however, the poet retains control of the material. Recent studies have shown how Aeschylus actively refashions tradition in matters of plot construction and characterization.[6] One suspects that the received forms of liturgical and magical refrain may be transformed by the same creative artistry. Aeschylus has also been proven a master at establishing powerful motifs which pervade the dramatic action.[7] The themes of sacrifice and of blood on the ground become fixed in the reader's mind whatever the mode in which the poet introduces them, visual or verbal, dialogue or lyric.[8] The emphasis of verbatim repetition in refrain might, a fortiori, be expected to focus attention on major themes, that is, in a sense, to create motifs.

That the poet does more with the refrain than merely transcribe traditional phrases has been maintained. For example, Kranz observes, without elaboration, that Aeschylus "hat es [the refrain] seinem künstlerischen Willen untertan gemacht und zu einem kraftvollen Mittel seines dramatischen Stiles gestaltet."[9] Other scholars have noted the thematic importance of individual refrains. The αἴλινον phrase in the parodos of the *Agamemnon* has been recognized as an intimation of the tragic conflict in the *Oresteia;* the ὀλολύξατε refrain has been perceived as a symbolic expression of its resolu-

4. "Invoke them *many* times," πολλὰ δὲ γουνοῦσθαι. For a different view, see S. Eitrem, "The Necromancy in the *Persai* of Aischylos," *Symb. Oslo.* 6 (1928): 5.

5. A. Kirchhoff's estimate of the date (*Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Alphabets*[3] [Berlin, 1877], pp. 12–13). For the inscription, see H. Röhl (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae antiquissimae praeter Atticas in Attica repertas* (Berlin, 1882), no. 497 (pp. 135–36) and E. Ziebarth, "Der Fluch im griechischen Recht," *Hermes* 30 (1895): 65–66.

6. G. Else, *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), esp. ch. 4, "Aeschylus: The Creation of Tragic Drama" (pp. 78–102); C. J. Herington, "The Influence of Old Comedy on Aeschylus' Later Trilogies," *TAPA* 94 (1963): 113–25.

7. F. Zeitlin, "The Motif of Corrupted Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," *TAPA* 96 (1965): 463–508; eadem, "Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 1235–37)," *TAPA* 97 (1966): 645–53; Lebeck, "*Oresteia*"; J. J. Peradotto, "Some Patterns of Nature Imagery in the *Oresteia*," *AJP* 85 (1964): 378–93; cf. G. S. Rousseau, "Dream and Vision in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," *Arion* 2 (1963): 101–36.

8. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," passim; R. F. Goheen, "Aspects of Dramatic Symbolism: Three Studies in the *Oresteia*," *AJP* 76 (1955): 115–26.

9. *Stasimon*, p. 127. For other general appreciations of Aeschylus' transforming artistry, see R. Hölzle, *Zum Aufbau der lyrischen Partien des Aischylos* (Ph.D. diss., Freiburg, 1934), p. 5; Croiset, *Eschyle*, pp. 33, 35–36.

tion.[10] These isolated observations have not, however, led to a systematic analysis of programmatic significance in Aeschylus' refrains.

I shall investigate Aeschylus' use of the form on two levels. First, I shall seek to demonstrate the extent to which Aeschylean refrain is more than mechanical in its immediate context, to show—whatever its ritual function—how far the refrain is integrated into its dramatic setting. Second, and more important, I shall examine the function of the refrain's components in the play as a whole, the extent to which they indicate major themes for the larger context.

One result of the investigation will be anticipated here, by way of explaining the manner of presentation. Previous studies have found the thematic force of a motif continuous throughout a drama, whether its most prominent statement occurs in lyric or in trimeter;[11] similarly, the motifs identified by refrain pervade all portions of a play. The refrain as such operates only in its immediate ritual context of incantation, lament, or religious ceremony. Its programmatic aspect, however, is developed freely in the drama, as its verbal components are employed in motific permutations and combinations which could not have been predicted from the refrain itself.

This study is limited to Aeschylus' single-line refrains, the αἴλινον and celebratory expressions in the *Oresteia* and the conjuring cry in the *Persians*. The brevity of the single-line phrase permits a more thorough analysis than would be possible for longer refrains like those in the *Suppliants* and the *Eumenides*. Moreover, the emphasis of repetition is exaggerated in a pithy, easily remembered phrase, and so it is preeminently the short refrains that can be expected to highlight important ideas.[12] Accordingly, I shall first examine the conjuring cry of the *Persians*—the Aeschylean refrain closest to its ritual roots—and then, in conjunction with one another, the refrains which begin and end the *Oresteia*.

REFRAIN IN THE "PERSIANS"

At first inspection, βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν· οἴ (663, 671), the refrain in the ode which conjures Darius, appears entirely straightforward, its simple meaning all on the surface: "Come, father without harm, Darius, Oh!" Each element of the cry has been uttered repeatedly throughout the ode.[13]

10. On αἴλινον, see E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: "Agamemnon,"* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1950), pp. 146–47; Owen, *Harmony*, pp. 67, 105–7; Méautis, *Eschyle et la trilogie*, pp. 135–36. On ὀλολυγμός, see Owen, *Harmony*, p. 130; Goheen, "Three Studies," pp. 124–25; Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," p. 393; Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," p. 507.

11. The lion imagery of the *Agamemnon* receives principal focus in the second stasimon; cf. B. Knox, "The Lion in the House," *CP* 47 (1952): 17–25. The male-female conflict in the *Oresteia*, introduced in the watchman's trimeters (*Ag.* 10–11), recurs in Cassandra's lyrics (esp. *Ag.* 1125–26) and in choral lyric (*Ag.* 1470–71, *Ch.* 594–601); cf. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra and the Vote of Athena," *JHS* 68 (1948): 130–47.

12. Preliminary investigations of these longer refrains indicate that Aeschylus uses them much as he does the shorter ones; see my "Patterns of Repetition in the Choral Odes of Aeschylus" (Ph.D. diss., Chicago, 1976), pp. 61–89, 246–51.

13. Repetitiveness within the ode receives ample notice in commentaries on the passage; see the summary in H. D. Broadhead (ed.), *The "Persae" of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 171 (ad 657–63).

Βάσκε is part of a litany of summons, first to the overseers of the Under-world (644 πέμπετε δ’ ἄνω, 649 ἀνίει[14]), then to Darius himself (658–59 ἴθι ἱκοῦ, ἐλθ’, 666 φάνηθι). The insistence of these requests actually led one scholar to "restore" Δαρεῖ’ ἄνει from Δαριάν· οἴ, so as to complete a second triad of imperatives (βάσκε—ἄνει—φάνηθι) parallel to ἴθι ἱκοῦ, ἐλθ’.[15]

Πάτερ is one in a series of epithets by which the late king is addressed, epithets which allude to all phases of his career: as present divinity while alive—ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεύς (634), Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῆ θεόν (643), θεομήστωρ (654–55); as king—βασιλεύς (634), ἀνάκτορα (651), βαλήν (657), δυνάστα (675); as individual—φίλος ἀνήρ (647); and as shade—ψυχήν (630), ὄχθος (647), [ὁ] θανών (674). The transition here from formal address by royal title to the greater intimacy of a term of family relationship is paralleled in the addresses of the chorus to Atossa and may reflect Persian practice.[16] At the queen's first entrance the elders greet her with a full panoply of honorific epithets, and she is called "mother" only with reference to her royal son: ὦ βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη, / μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου γεραιά, χαῖρε, Δαρείου γύναι (155–56). But when Atossa has revealed the anxiety caused her by an ominous dream about Xerxes, the chorus, in a more intimate tone of counsel, use the title "mother" in their own right (215 οὔ σε βουλόμεσθα, μῆτερ). In the present song, too, the term "father" is em-ployed only at the culmination of the appeal, after due respect has initially been paid, and when, in the image of Darius' tiara appearing over the tomb (661–62), there is a sense that the incantation has been effective. The cry thus comes at a moment of high emotion, when the chorus may be regarded as acting on instinct rather than protocol.

Darius' record as victorious king and general is implied by the next term of the refrain, ἄκακε; compare in the same ode ἦ φίλος ἀνήρ . . . οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνδρας πώποτ’ ἀπώλλυ πολεμοφθόροισιν ἄταις (647–53). It is the very different military record of Xerxes, epitomized by the contrasting alpha-privatives in the last line of the ode (680 ἄναες ἄναες), which necessitates the invocation of Darius' spirit. But the epithet ἄκακε may be proleptic as well, suggestively drawing an omen for the future from Darius' past record. The elders had entreated the nether powers for the king's release on the ground that he alone might know a "remedy of evils," κακῶν ἄκος (631), a phrase which plays on the sounds in ἄκακε. Finally, the term may serve an apotropaic function. The raising of the dead was a dreadful task; this is clear in the cautionary statements by queen and chorus that they make libation with kindly intention (609 πρευμενεῖς χοάς) and expect kindly return from Darius (610 ἄπερ νεκροῖσι μειλικτήρια) and from the gods below (625–27 αἰτησόμεθα . . . πομποὺς εὔφρονας). It is significant that at his appearance Darius allays that particular anxiety almost at once: χοὰς δὲ πρευμενὴς ἐδεξάμην (685). All these connotations of the concept "absence of evil" as

14. Reading with Broadhead and Murray (1955 OCT); Page accepts Brunck's ἀνείης.
15. See Broadhead, "Persae," p. 171.
16. Cf. Eitrem, "Necromancy," p. 14; Kranz, Stasimon, p. 88.

associated with Darius are present in the song itself, and all coalesce in the repeated epithet, ἄκακε.

The clustering of the king's name with a mourning cry (Δαριάν· οἵ) has also been anticipated earlier in the song: ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα· ἠέ (651). This cry of Δαριᾶνα· ἠέ closes one strophe (β, 647–51), the Δαριάν· οἵ of the refrain two others, the result being a litany of lamenting invocations of the late king. Further, if the text is sound, the unique spelling of "Darius" in this song (final -αν or -ανα instead of -ον, as elsewhere[17]) may represent a magical design in which the name of the man invoked enhances the efficacy of the ritual, as its sound seemingly compels the former "lord" (ἄναξ; cf. 651 ἀνάκτορα, 647 ἀνήρ) to "ascend" (644 ἄνω; cf. 649 ἀναπομπὸς ἀνίει). The -αν ending of Darius' name echoes not only the ἄναξ and ἀνά terms, but other -αν sounds which are surprisingly frequent in the ode: παναιολ' αἰανῆ . . . παντάλαν' ἄχη (636–38), αἰνέσατ' . . . Περσᾶν (643), ἄνδρας (652), βαλήν, ἀρχαῖος βαλήν (657), δέσποτα δεσποτᾶν φάνηθι (666), and νᾶες ἄναες ἄναες (680). There is also a high incidence of α and ν sounds in other combinations in the stasimon; to cite only a few, γύναι (623), forms of δαίμων (628, 634), Ἀιδωνεύς (649–50), ἀείρων (660), δυνάστα δυνάστα (675). As may be seen, the -αν sounds often occur in mournful contexts or in words denoting grief or wretchedness (e.g., αἰανῆ, παντάλαν'). Thus, even Darius' name is made to participate in an onomatopoetic representation of mourning which is reinforced at intervals by exclamations of grief: οἵ (663, 671), ἠέ (651, 656), αἰαῖ αἰαῖ (673).[18]

Sound is not the only means by which the effect of lamentation is created. Standard features of lament for the dead include interjectional cries, commands, and some form of address. A general address, like "my child," is frequent; address by name, extraordinary. "Among primitive peoples, it was believed that mention of the dead man's name would cause the return of his spirit, and it was therefore avoided."[19] In the present instance it is precisely the spirit's return which is desired, and both forms of address are found—the general term of relationship, πάτερ, and the king's own name, Δαριάν. Though cries, commands, and forms of address are plentiful throughout the song, it is significant that all are collected in the one line which is repeated as refrain.

The refrain, then, not only contains the elements which characterize ritual lament and incantation, it also captures the salient features of the tragic stasimon in which the ritual is embedded—the grief, anxieties, and childlike trust of the Persian elders who are called upon to raise the spirit of their dead king in the hour of defeat. Moreover, beyond the present

17. Eitrem, "Necromancy," p. 11, says the unique form may have been coined in order to comply with the magical requirement of using the true name of the person conjured.

18. The entire ode is a good illustration of W. Porzig's concept of the "lyric value" of sound: important words are "resolved" into their components and in this form permeate the whole (*Aischylos. Die attische Tragödie* [Leipzig, 1926], pp. 74–81). The αι-sound, which Porzig (p. 84) declares to have the absolute "gestural" value of expressing pain, is also frequent in this song.

19. Alexiou, *Ritual Lament*, p. 232, n. 14; see also pp. 131–37.

scene, in the wider framework of the play, nearly every term of the refrain has important multiple associations.

Of the connotations carried by ἄκακε in the conjuring song, the one with the widest application in the rest of the play is that Darius brought no harm to his people. The chorus raise that theme twice elsewhere in lyric: Darius is remembered as ἀβλαβής at the first report of the disaster at Salamis (555, first stasimon) and as ἀκάκας after the descent of his shade (855, third stasimon).[20]

Πάτερ suggests the wisdom of age and experience as a factor in Darius' success, and the late king is repeatedly described as "old" or otherwise connected with "ancient" splendor. Recalling that Darius never led his army into defeat, the chorus cry to him as ἀρχαῖος βαλήν (657); when his shade appears, they ascribe their reluctance to speak to a respect which springs from "ancient dread" (696 ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει). The connection between age and success becomes most explicit in the chorus' outburst of nostalgia following the descent of the shade (852–57):

ὦ πόποι ἦ μεγάλας ἀγαθᾶς τε πο-
   λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκύρσαμεν, εὖθ' ὁ γεραιὸς
παντάρκης ἀκάκας ἄμαχος βασιλεὺς
ἰσόθεος Δαρεῖος ἆρχε χώρας.

More precisely, however, πάτερ is a term of human relationship, and although it may have been Persian practice so to address their kings—Kranz observed that "Vater" was a "typische Beiname des Kyros"[21]—Darius was in the simplest sense the father of Xerxes. Thus, πατὴρ ἄκακος used of Darius suggests for Xerxes the analogue παῖς κακός, and indeed Aeschylus' insistence on bracketing Darius' age with success and wisdom, and Xerxes' youth with evil and folly, has often drawn fire from critics as unhistorical.[22]

Although the contrast runs throughout the play, it is seen most vividly where references to father and son are juxtaposed. Their names occur together, for example, in the lyric passage just mentioned (548–57, first stasimon): Δαρεῖος . . . ἀβλαβής (554–55) stands as foil to the triple incrimination Ξέρξης μὲν ἄγαγεν, ποποῖ, Ξέρξης δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοῖ, Ξέρξης . . . (550–52). The implications of πάτερ ἄκακε, however, are indicated more clearly in two passages in which the terms of relationship are themselves juxtaposed. In her speech preceding the conjuring scene, Atossa contrasts the current evils (606 τοία κακῶν ἔκπληξις) with times in which evil is unimagined (601–2), subtly avoiding associating either with the male members of her family. But the dissimilarity of the men's careers is implicit in the very need for the ritual at hand, and in describing her part in it Atossa sets the

20. In all three cases the epithet "harmless" is used in close conjunction with Darius' name.

21. *Stasimon*, p. 88.

22. E.g., Broadhead, "*Persae*," pp. xvii–xviii; H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study* (London, 1960), pp. 36–37; H. W. Smyth, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Berkeley, 1924; repr. New York, 1969), pp. 82–83; Croiset, *Eschyle*, pp. 95–96; but cf. Hdt. 7. 7–19.

kinship terms side by side: "I come," she says, "bearing kindly libations
to the father of [my] child" (609–10 παιδὸς πατρὶ πρευμενεῖς χοὰς / φέρουσ').
The divergence between father and son is still more strongly suggested in
the language used by Atossa to report her ill-omened dream (197–99):

> πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς, καὶ πατὴρ παρίσταται
> Δαρεῖος οἰκτίρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὁρᾷ
> Ξέρξης, πέπλους ῥήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σώματι.

The contrast between the two men is triply emphasized by the word order;
the personal names introduce successive trimeters, and παῖς and πατήρ are
not only juxtaposed but constitute the inner terms in a striking chiasmus:
"there falls the son, but the father stands [by]."

Atossa's dream, unfortunately, proves all too true. If Darius' age had
been proof against harm, Xerxes' youth has become inextricably bound up
with evils. In her speeches following news of the disaster, Atossa uses κακά
repeatedly—three times in the instructions for the incantation (598–622),
twice in the six-line description of Xerxes succumbing to evil counselors
(753–58), and twice as she announces that she will prepare fresh clothes
for her returning son (845–51). In the first and third of these passages,
Atossa explicitly uses παῖς of Xerxes (609, 847, 850). In the second, Atossa
reports that Xerxes' advisors sought to provoke a fresh campaign by playing
on the disparity between the two royal generations in prosperity (τέκνοις
πλοῦτον, πατρῷον ὄλβον) and mettle (αἰχμῇ, αἰχμάζειν) (754–56):

> λέγουσι δ' ὡς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνοις
> πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω σὺν αἰχμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὕπο
> ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῷον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν.

If Atossa expresses regret over the evils into which her son has fallen,
Darius judges more harshly: Xerxes has not fallen victim to evil, but has
brought it upon himself. In two separate passages the old king links the
current evil with the *youthful* rashness of his *child*, and with the failure of
the son to keep the commands of his father. Thus, lines 743–44:

> νῦν κακῶν ἔοικε πηγὴ πᾶσιν ηὑρῆσθαι φίλοις·
> παῖς δ' ἐμὸς τάδ' οὐ κατειδὼς ἤνυσεν νέῳ θράσει,

and 781–83 (Darius is speaking):

> ἀλλ' οὐ κακὸν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλει.
> Ξέρξης δ' ἐμὸς παῖς νέος ἐὼν νέα φρονεῖ,[23]
> κοὐ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς.

We see, then, that the address πάτερ ἄκακε, in itself and in its implied
converse παῖς κακός, adumbrates a major contrast developed in the play.
The theme of the παῖς κακός is enunciated mainly in the familial setting
where mother and father meet at the central point of the play. The connec-
tion of youth and woe with Xerxes, however, pervades the drama from

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23. Keeping the MS reading.

first to last. Already in line 13 the chorus (whose guardianship was granted in virtue of their age, κατὰ πρεσβείαν [4]) allude to the youth of the army's commander (νέον δ' ἄνδρα).[24] Again, in the final antiphonal lament, the chorus castigate Xerxes so insistently for the evils (κακά) he has caused that at one point they virtually recite the word's declension: κακοφάτιδα βοάν, κακομέλετον ἰάν (936), κακὰ πρόκακα λέγεις (986), δόσιν κακὰν κακῶν κακοῖς (1041). The language in which Xerxes acknowledges their charges reinforces the connection between the present miseries, youth, and dangerous novelty (1010 νέᾳ νέᾳ δύᾳ δύᾳ), and the young king himself draws the contrast with his father Darius (932–34):

> ὅδ' ἐγὼν οἰοῖ αἰακτός,
> μέλεος γέννᾳ γᾷ τε πατρῴᾳ
> κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν.[25]

We come at length to the word with which the refrain begins, βάσκε. In context, it is the mere equivalent of the numerous other injunctions to the king's spirit to "come," such as ἴθι ἱκοῦ. But the rarity of the word, coupled with its emphatic position, may hint at greater significance than is immediately apparent. As a Homeric form, βάσκε lends the dignity of the heroic past to the ancient Darius. Further, in Homer βάσκε is used exclusively to exhort an immortal—Iris, Hermes, or the false dream of Agamemnon (Il. 24. 144, 24. 336, 2. 8)—to undertake a mission on earth; the shade of Darius, itself divine (cf. 643 Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῆ θεόν), is similarly exhorted to appear among men. Because of the different vantage point of the individuals here pronouncing the imperative, however, the sense of the word is subtly altered; Zeus dispatches messengers with βάσκε, the Persian elders summon Darius. Although testimonia for the word are scanty, the meaning "come" is found only in this Aeschylean passage.[26]

Thus, βάσκε strikes the ear as somewhat strange, and its prominent position reinforces the strangeness. Elsewhere in the play words for "go" are fearfully ambivalent: in the very first line, Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων has the intended meaning, "the Persian army is not here," but contains the foreboding that "the army has been destroyed"; οἴχομαι is similarly used at lines 13 and 60. In such a context the synonym βαίνω must also presage disaster (cf. 18 προλιπόντες ἔβαν). The negative meaning of these expressions is realized in the words of the messenger who announces the defeat at Salamis, echoing a metaphor from the parodos: τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν (252; cf. 59–60). That the army is "gone" in this disastrous sense is

24. Reading νέον with the MSS. Page reads ἐὸν δ' ἄνδρα βαΰζει; he posits a lacuna following line 13 which would have supplied a subject like mulier desiderans for βαΰζει, citing 63, 134, 288, and 541 as analogies. In both the anapaests and lyrics of the parodos, however, the chorus describe first the Persian army's triumphant departure and then the sorrow of the desolate relatives; the two topics are not combined. It is βαΰζει which is troublesome, not νέον. For a discussion of the attempts to explain this passage, see Broadhead, "Persae," pp. 249–50; cf. D. Korzeniewski's remark in his review of Page's OCT (Gymnasium 81 [1974]: 240).

25. Defeat has perverted Xerxes' role as leader (cf. ἄναξ, ἄνακτος); he is now αἰακτός.

26. The sense in which LSJ, s.v. βάσκω, takes βάσκ' ἄλαστε (Mim. Oxy. 413. 60) is unclear. "Go, wretch," seems most likely, without further context.

repeated in the closing *kommos* between Xerxes and the chorus, but here it is βαίνω, not οἴχομαι, which is picked up from the parodos (1002–3):

Ξε. βεβᾶσι γὰρ τοίπερ ἀγρέται στρατοῦ.
Χο. βεβᾶσιν, οἵ, νώνυμοι.[27]

Hence the unusual term used to summon the king's spirit in the conjuring ritual contributes to an ambivalence which attaches to the concept of absence throughout the play. At this moment of desperation, the chorus' words harbor an unintentional irony: Darius' shade may return for a moment, but the prosperity of the father's reign is lost as irrevocably as is the host at Salamis.[28]

This deceptively simple refrain in the *Persians*, then, contains the effective elements of the incantation ritual and suggests, allusively, the important themes of the stasimon and of the whole tragedy. Major dramatic motifs are similarly highlighted by the refrains in the *Oresteia*.

REFRAIN IN THE "AGAMEMNON" AND THE "EUMENIDES"

The refrain which punctuates the opening triad of the *Agamemnon* parodos (121, 139, 159 αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω) has elicited more critical comment than other Aeschylean refrains, both for its traditional elements and for its programmatic significance. Although this refrain, unlike the one in *Persians*, is not set in a religious ceremonial, the αἴλινον cry has ritual parallels and the precautionary wish, "may good come of it," is a standard coda to prayer.[29] Because the refrain is prominent in the opening chorus of the trilogy, scholars have observed that its conflicting strains of good and ill prefigure the ambivalence which dominates the dramatic action.[30]

Critics have also seen that the summonses to celebration which close the *Oresteia* (*Eum.* 1035, 1038 εὐφαμεῖτε δέ, χωρῖται [πανδαμεί]; 1043, 1047 ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς) are the culmination, now divinely sanctioned, of the many tainted and premature cries of triumph which resound earlier in the trilogy. But we should recognize, too, that the opening and closing refrains are analogs of one another: εὐφαμεῖτε and ὀλολύξατε joyously reverse the grief of αἴλινον and proclaim the fulfillment of the prayer, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.[31]

27. Cf. Broadhead, "*Persae*," pp. 236 (ad 1002–4), 38 (ad 1), who denies sinister significance to οἴχομαι and βαίνω in the parodos (13, 18, 60). Since the terms deliberately echo Phrynichus' *Phoenissae* and the outcome is known, these emphatically repeated words carry more than "factual" significance.

28. A chiastic juxtaposition in the third antistrophe (νεολαία . . . κατὰ πᾶσ' ὄλωλεν. βάσκε πάτερ) reinforces the notion: the beloved old monarch and the flower of youth are alike gone.

29. Cf. nn. 34–36 (αἴλινον), 41 (εὖ).

30. Arnoldt, *Der Chor im "Agamemnon*," pp. 10–11, 17, 20–24, assumes that each αἴλινον refrain was first delivered as a recitative, then repeated by the chorus or one of its divisions. Such repetition, if true, reinforces the idea of refrain as emphatic theme statement.

31. For criticism of the programmatic significance of the αἴλινον refrain and resolution in the final ὀλολυγμός, see n. 10. J. T. Sheppard, "The Prelude of the *Agamemnon*," CR 36 (1922): 5; Goheen, "Three Studies," p. 125; Haldane, "Musical Themes," pp. 37–38, all note the general counterpoint of lament and triumph in the trilogy.

The significance of the refrains extends to still finer detail. The dominant terms, εὖ and νικᾶν, and ritual cries of joy and sorrow recur pointedly throughout the *Oresteia*. In varying guises and definitions "good" and "victory" are the prayer and boast of all participants in the tragic conflict and its resolution; contrasting exclamations of disappointment and satisfaction mark all stages of the struggle. In this section I will show how Aeschylus has adapted the ritual forms of these two refrains to his dramatic purposes while retaining much of their traditional force, and trace the themes implicit in the refrains through the course of the trilogy.

AMBIVALENCE AND THE RITUAL ELEMENTS

The first refrain, a repeated cry of sorrow followed by a wish for good, reflects an ambivalent situation in which the proportion of good to evil remains uncertain, and any good will almost certainly come at the price of some ill. In the opening triad which it punctuates, therefore, the refrain responds admirably to the ambivalence in the omen of eagles and hare, in Calchas' interpretation of the omen, and in his prediction of its possible consequences.

In the strophe, where the omen is described, good (τὸ εὖ) is found in the sudden appearance of the eagles, "king of birds to the kings of ships" (*Ag.* 114), sorrow (αἴλινον) in the plight of the pregnant hare, "stayed from her last running" (119–20).[32] The omen's double character appears also in the distinction between the two eagles, one dark, one bright (114–15). In the antistrophe it is the seer's interpretation which is ambivalent, telling of assured success (εὖ) at Troy (126), shadowed (αἴλινον) by the chance of pollution and the threat of Artemis' anger (131–32). In this stanza the dissimilar eagles of the omen are mirrored in the Atreidae themselves, δύο λήμασι δισσοὺς Ἀτρεΐδας (122–23). The epode concentrates on the baneful aspects of the omen: bad weather may hinder embarkation (147–48); the remedy for unfavorable winds may create trouble for the future (154–55). But here, too, both sides of the omen find a place. Calchas mixes his fearful predictions (αἴλινον) with great goods (156 ξὺν μεγάλοις ἀγαθοῖς), and the apparitions are both favorable and not (145). The chorus explicitly select a refrain to accord with the ambivalence of the omen when they sing: τοῖς δ' ὁμόφωνον αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω (158–59).

But it is clearly the element of sorrow, indicated by the position of αἴλινον and its emphatic repetition, which predominates in the chorus' response to the events they describe; "the good" (τὸ εὖ) is present only as the object of fervent prayer.[33] Were they reacting merely to the potential evil which the

32. Reading βλαβέντα with the codices. On Page's βλάψαντε, cf. W. B. Stanford's remarks on "improvements" in his review of the 1972 OCT (*Hermathena* 117 [1974]: 87).
33. Athen. 14. 619C reports that αἴλινος may express good fortune as well as grief, but his source, Aristophanes of Byzantium, has misunderstood Eur. *HF* 348–49. Athenaeus has been quoted uncritically by Wilamowitz, *Euripides "Herakles,"* vol. 2² (Berlin, 1895), p. 84 (in a long note which is otherwise useful), and more recently by Alexiou, *Ritual Lament*, p. 218, n. 10, who (surely in haste) describes αἴλινον in our *Agamemnon* passage as "a cry of joy or victory"! F. A. Paley, *Euripides*, vol. 3² (London, 1880), p. 33 (ad *HF* 348–49), notes the misrepresentation of the Euripides passage in Athenaeus. According to Athenaeus, λίνος δὲ καὶ αἴλινος οὐ μόνον ἐν πένθεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπ' εὐτυχεῖ μολπῇ κατ' Εὐριπίδην; Euripides, however, states, αἴλινον μὲν ἐπ' εὐτυχεῖ

portent announces, the elders' note of despair would seem excessive and premature. They sing, though, remembering also how that evil was realized in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, and that further wrongs were destined to follow on that deed. Ten years after the omen at Aulis, its evil is very apparent to the elders, its good, the taking of Troy, still to come.

Αἴλινον is a standard cry of woe, but it has specific associations which contribute to its appropriateness in context. The cry imitative of wailing was early rationalized as αἲ Λίνος,[34] and Linos was identified as a god of the Adonis type, associated with agriculture and so inevitably with death in the fullness of youth.[35] Linos is elsewhere described as the son of Urania, killed by Apollo out of jealousy for his musical ability—a type, according to Plumptre, "of life prematurely closed and bright hopes never to be fulfilled."[36] In either case, the Linos image is one of youthful life cut short and, as such, suits Calchas' prophecy well: Artemis hated the destruction of the young. It suits Iphigeneia even better, cut down in the flower of her maidenhood (*Ag.* 229, 245); in fact, a musical Iphigeneia, who sang at her father's libations (*Ag.* 243–47).

Stripped to its essentials, the Linos story signifies ritual death, as reflected in the "Linos song" which accompanies the grape harvest on the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18. 570). Linos and his mythical equivalents are associated with the problematic sacrificial aspect of the harvest and the offering of firstfruits. The cutting of the crop, or of its symbolic representative, is seen as necessary, even as desired by the gods, but also as a violent act requiring propitiation.[37] The cry αἴλινον, which connotes the ambivalence of sacrifice, is therefore particularly apposite to the offering of Iphigeneia (herself in a sense the firstfruits of the victory at Troy; cf. *Ag.* 227 προτέλεια νεῶν[38]), inasmuch as her sacrifice was simultaneously demanded and hated by Artemis. The cry also fits the imagery of dying vegetation and bitter harvest in the *Agamemnon*: αἴλινον is an apt lament for the withering of the

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μολπᾷ Φοῖβος ἰαχεῖ ("Hard on the paean triumphant-ringing / Oft Phoebus outpealeth a mourning song," in the Loeb translation of A. S. Way [1912]). Here as in the *Agamemnon*, though αἴλινον itself is sorrowful, its context is of mixed good and evil.

Apparently the only other support for a positive emotion in αἴλινον is another passage in Athenaeus (14. 618D), where it is said to be the song of workers at the loom: ἡ δὲ τῶν ἱστουργούντων ᾠδὴ αἴλινος, ὥς φησιν Ἐπίχαρμος, ἡ δὲ τῶν ταλασιουργῶν ἴουλος. As these designations are assigned to the comedian Epicharmus, we must surely understand a pun. The loom workers cry "αἲ, the linen!" as they lament their hard work (cf. Gulick's note in the Loeb Athenaeus [1937]); the spinners (ταλασιουργῶν) are "wretched workers" by definition, and their song is merely the cry ἰού. (G. Kaibel, *CGF* 93, interprets Athenaeus as attributing only the αἴλινος phrase to Epicharmus, but the ἴουλος statement is of similar stripe, transferring a standard hymn to Demeter to a new and punning context.)

34. Cf. Wilamowitz, *"Herakles,"* 2²:85.

35. Ibid., 2²:84–85. Sheppard, "Prelude," p. 8, paraphrases, "Woe for youth dead." Cf. Alexiou, *Ritual Lament*, p. 57, and Hdt. 2. 79; G. Thomson (ed.), *The "Oresteia" of Aeschylus*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1938), p. 17; E. H. Plumptre (trans.), *Aeschylus' Tragedies and Fragments*, pt. 2 (Boston, 1901), p. 16, n. 1.

36. Plumptre, *Aeschylus' Tragedies and Fragments*, pt. 2, p. 16, n. 1. For the killing of Linos by Apollo, see Paus. 9. 29. 6–7.

37. J. P. Guépin, *The Tragic Paradox* (Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 63–67, 184–90 (without serious assessment of the explanation of the *Heracles* passage in Athenaeus).

38. Cf. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," pp. 464–67.

"bloom of the Argives" at Aulis which is described in the parodos (197–98);
it could appropriately be extended to the murder of Agamemnon, which
Clytemnestra regards as a sacrifice and describes with an agricultural
metaphor (1390–92).[39] That "victim," however, Clytemnestra dispatches
with a different ritual cry, one which more nearly reflects her view of the
deed, the ὀλολυγμός.[40] Of this, more later.

Τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω reflects standard liturgical practice; such a wish was
regularly included in prayer.[41] Indeed, it recurs two more times in the
present song—in Agamemnon's εὖ γὰρ εἴη upon his decision to sacrifice
Iphigeneia (217) and in the chorus' closing words, "may success attend
upon these things" (255).[42]

In all three cases the wish for good is associated with some danger which
it seeks to turn aside.[43] In the opening triad the danger lies in the evil
augured by the appearance of eagles and hare. Recalling that omen, the
elders seek to reverse its negative effects with a positive prayer for good,
τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω, just as Calchas, interpreting the portent, had deprecated its
evil side with a paean (146–54).[44]

Agamemnon's prayer echoes that of the chorus even more closely. The
double cry of sorrow, αἴλινον αἴλινον, finds its counterpart in the king's
βαρεῖα . . . βαρεῖα, as he weighs the alternatives open to him: "dreadful not
to yield, dreadful to kill my child" (206–8). But the elders, lacking confi-
dence, at least pray for good without guile. When Agamemnon elects to
proceed with the sacrifice, arguing distortedly that it must be θέμις (214–17),
his attempt to avert pollution with an εὖ γὰρ εἴη (217) can be nothing more
than deliberate self-delusion.[45]

The final prayer for good issue in the parodos (255 πέλοιτο δ' οὖν τἀπὶ
τούτοισιν εὖ πρᾶξις) is a counsel of despair. The chorus acknowledge that
the prophecies of Calchas are not idle (249). Therefore, since the "untasted,
unmusical sacrifice" has been exacted, the "fearful, child-avenging μῆνις"
must also come (cf. 151–55). Yet the chorus ignore the clear implications
of their own words, as if to obviate their significance. "Before it happens,
let it go," they say (252), "may good come of it."

In the αἴλινον refrain the almost formulaic "may it be well" has unusual
urgency. The chorus' prayer for good is intimately bound up with the
aspirations of prophet, king, and Argive army, although its juxtaposition
with the mournful αἴλινον indicates apparent hopelessness. In the first play

39. See Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," pp. 379–81.
40. Cf. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," p. 496; eadem, "Postscript," p. 652.
41. Cf. H. J. Rose, A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1958),
pp. 13–14 (ad 121). Thomson, "Oresteia," 2:28–29, and Fraenkel, "Agamemnon," 2:126, give
parallels in connection with Agamemnon's prayer, εὖ γὰρ εἴη (217; 226–27 in Thomson).
42. See Fraenkel's remarks on the echo ("Agamemnon," 2:146–47).
43. A spot check of Thomson's tragic parallels for the phrase suggests that such a verbal "knock-
on-wood" is standard practice when potential evil is mentioned. Most contexts are clearly dangerous
or negative: Aesch. Supp. 974, "The world tends to reproach foreigners, but may all be well";
Pheres to Alcestis after her death (Eur. Alc. 627), "Even in the House of Hades may good befall
you"; at Eur. Hec. 902, Agamemnon wishes the old queen luck in her attempt to harm Polymestor.
44. Cf. Herodas 4. 85: a priestess prays, ἰὴ ἰὴ Παίηον· ὧδε ταῦτ' εἴη, the other character seconds
her, εἴη γὰρ, ὦ μέγιστε. See also n. 3.
45. Cf. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," pp. 493–95.

of the *Oresteia* it is indeed the pessimistic expectations of the chorus which are fulfilled. In time, however, the oft-repeated prayer has its own efficacy, even if the "good issue" of the trilogy is not one the elders could have foreseen.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

We see, then, how the refrain's ritual features enhance the literary context. More than that, the refrain as a whole incorporates an ambivalence which characterizes all of the tragic action in the *Oresteia*. Fraenkel has already observed a connection between refrain and dramatic structure; for him the disharmony between αἴλινον and εὖ is resolved in the trilogy by the progressive fulfillment of the will of Zeus, as expressed in the law which, however distressing when applied to individuals, ultimately prevails as the standard of order: Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει (*Ag.* 250–51).[46]

So cosmic a resolution, however, is concealed from the mortals of the drama. The refrain reveals the cruder human perspective on life—hope of change for the better, an ambition to triumph against great odds. As such it furnishes a model for the fears and hopes of individuals throughout the trilogy, but a model which is inevitably inadequate to the needs of society. Human aspirations tend to be narrow, a fact well expressed in the unusual formulation of the chorus' wish for good; the elders do not simply say, "may all be well," but rather, "may good [success?] win the victory." Satisfaction can be imagined only as the result of conflict, the dominance over another which victory implies; but human victory is never secure and dominance seems to exist only to invite further challenge.

"Victory" is, nevertheless, a recurrent battle cry in the trilogy. The setting of the tragic action against the background of the Trojan War makes νίκη an obvious metaphor for the ambitions of the characters, and in the judicial contest in the *Eumenides* νίκη is good Athenian idiom for winning one's case.[47] But the goals of victory and domination are adopted in turn by each of the principals in the *Oresteia*: Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes and Electra and their supporters, the Furies, Apollo, and finally Athene. Until the ultimate resolution each claim of triumph elicits a counter-challenge which prolongs the struggle and negates the prior claim. Only when Athene, as the mouthpiece of Zeus, demonstrates that one man's victory may be achieved without another's loss can a lasting settlement be reached.

What is τὸ εὖ for which the elders cry? It admits the meaning "moral good," but the chorus also seek fulfillment of the specific good augured by the omen—military success pure and simple. Even the definition of morality varies infinitely with circumstance and point of view. The prayer for τὸ εὖ, like that for victory, echoes throughout the trilogy, indiscriminately cloaking in respectability a great diversity of mutually exclusive desires. Only at the

46. Fraenkel, "*Agamemnon*," 2:147.
47. For "victory" as a law term, see LSJ, s.vv. νικάω, I. 5, IIb; νίκη, I. 3.

trilogy's end will personal fortune and moral right be integrated in a resolution which is simultaneously conducive to social and cosmic harmony.

In the refrain the chorus first cry αἴλινον, then pray for success, and hence implicitly desire also to exchange their sighs of grief for the vaunt of triumph, the ὀλολυγμός. As the action unfolds, intermittent peals of the ὀλολυγμός seem to signal fulfillment of the elders' hopes, but on each hallelujah follows another groan of woe. This alternation of the tones of joy and sorrow is the necessary consequence of the restricted perceptions of characters who struggle to realize conflicting visions of success; it can cease only when the nature of "good victory" is permanently established by one whose vision transcends human limitations. The lament was uttered in a context of prayer, and the exultation will likewise find its lasting and proper expression only in a divinely sanctioned setting in which the peal of celebration resonates in genuine harmony with an admonition to piety.

Independent of the ritual forms and motific ambivalence in the refrain, therefore, the words of the refrain are themselves thematically important. This will emerge more clearly in an examination of the expanding significance in the *Oresteia* of νικᾶν and its cognates and of the substantive εὖ and its principal compounds such as εὐτυχεῖν and εὔφρων. The development of these themes can then be related to the antiphony of joy and sorrow, and especially to the final summons, εὐφαμεῖτε and ὀλολύξατε, which together announce the long-awaited consonance of piety and victory.

VICTORY

Aeschylus has described each of the major conflicts in the *Oresteia* in the language of victory. The fact and nature of Agamemnon's conquest of Troy, the success of Clytemnestra's plot to kill her husband and assume his throne, that of Orestes' plot to kill his mother at Apollo's direction, the conflicting claims of the parties in the trial in Athens—all find expression in the terms νίκη and νικᾶν. Even apparently casual or metaphorical uses of the words have applications to one or more of these four themes.[48] When one character's victory is contended by another, that, too, is reflected in the language. Although the struggles in the trilogy have varying implications, all the principals share at base a competitive orientation.[49] And, indeed, each act of vengeance requires the active contest, the almost martial strife, implicit in the term νίκη.

In the *Agamemnon* the frequency of νίκη and νικᾶν in Clytemnestra's speeches indicates an unequaled drive for dominance. Moreover, by carefully manipulating her words, the queen strives to turn the gods' grant to her husband of victory at Troy into a guarantee, even a justification, of success in her plot against him. In this play Clytemnestra controls the use of

48. On the other hand, "victories" outside these contexts are described by other terms; cf. *Ag.* 935, *Eum.* 728.

49. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," pp. 130–40, sees the νίκη-terms as part of the battle between the sexes for power (κράτος, ἀρχή, νίκη), but that theme, however pervasive, is only one dimension of the broader struggle for νίκη which is developed "consistently and importantly" (Zeitlin's criteria, "Corrupted Sacrifice," pp. 463–64) throughout the trilogy.

"victory" language, and the words of other characters play against her own.

Reporting that the Trojan War is won, Clytemnestra assigns a share in that victory to the "runners" whose beacon relay brought word of it home to Argos: νικᾷ δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος δραμών (314). If the news has arrived, the Greek troops themselves have yet to follow. The triumphant flight of the beacons would have been impeded had the watchers not resisted sleep (290–91 οὐδ'... ὕπνῳ νικώμενος); just so, the army's victorious return might be hindered by sacrilegious greed. The queen deprecates this possibility, making an omen of verbal repetition: ἔρως δὲ μή τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτῃ στρατῷ / πορθεῖν ἃ μὴ χρή, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους (341–42).

More ominous for being unconscious, however, is a further echo by the herald who arrives to confirm the beacons. He seems to tarnish the triumph of his message when, weighing the pain of war against the joy of final success, he expresses his conclusion, νικᾷ τὸ κέρδος (571). At this point, when the loss of the fleet is still unknown, the herald's very presence refutes the dangerous *kledon*,[50] and the chorus, professing to be "conquered" by his words (583), accept his evaluation of the Trojan campaign. Thus far νίκη and νικᾶν have applied exclusively to the discussion of the victory, which Agamemnon, returning, formally claims and prays to stabilize: νίκη δ', ἐπείπερ ἕσπετ', ἐμπέδως μένοι (854).

Agamemnon's wish will not be granted, for victory begins to shift to Clytemnestra's camp. By recalling the phrase she used to describe the watchful beacon "runner" (cf. 290–91), the queen reveals her intention of duplicating the success of the signal relay in her plot against Agamemnon. Of the "celebrations" in honor of his homecoming she says, "A concern not conquered by sleep (912 οὐχ ὕπνῳ νικωμένη) will tend to them." In the carpet scene Clytemnestra's aspirations to victory become transparent (941–43):[51]

> Κλ. τοῖς δ' ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει.
>
> Αγ. ἦ καὶ σὺ νίκην τήνδε δήριος τίεις;
>
> Κλ. πιθοῦ· κρατεῖς μέντοι παρεὶς ἑκὼν ἐμοί.

Agamemnon's incredulity at his wife's insistence on gaining the upper hand does not engender caution. He succumbs. After the murder, Clytemnestra denies the elders any authority to criticize her except from the same position of power she has obtained: ἀπειλεῖν ὡς... ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων, χειρὶ νικήσαντ' ἐμοῦ ἄρχειν (1422–24).[52]

In time her challenge is met, not by the Argive elders, but by her own children. The vulnerability of the victories of both Agamemnon and Clytem-

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50. An apparently casual utterance interpretable as an omen; cf. J. J. Peradotto, "Cledonomancy in the *Oresteia*," *AJP* 90 (1969): 1–21, esp. 11–12; Lebeck, "*Oresteia*," p. 215, n. 11.

51. Reading with Murray and Fraenkel. See Fraenkel, "*Agamemnon*," 2:426–27 (ad loc.); cf. Goheen, "Three Studies," pp. 129–30; Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," pp. 133–34.

52. Thomson, "*Oresteia*," 2:138, argues for Wilamowitz' νίκη τέλειος at *Ag.* 1378 over Heath's νείκης παλαιᾶς (or MS νίκης παλαιᾶς). Although Wilamowitz' reading necessitates greater change of the MS, it makes better sense and echoes two important concepts from the carpet scene. Eager for νίκη, after Agamemnon enters the house, the queen prays, Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τέλειε (973–74). Similarly, Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 134, n. 45.

nestra is pointed up by verbal similarity. In the first play the queen had sought to assure herself the prerogative of punishing Agamemnon by praying that the return of the Greeks from Troy not be forestalled by any "ἔρως to do what they must not, conquered (νικωμένους) by gain" (341–42). That "conquering passion" had prevailed, in the sack of the Trojan temples (527), but had not deprived Clytemnestra of her own victory. The chorus of the *Choephoroi*, seeking a precedent for Clytemnestra in natural and human horrors, unwittingly revert to her own language of destructive ἔρως and distorted victory: θηλυκρατὴς ἀπέρωτος ἔρως παρανικᾷ κνωδάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν (600–601).[53]

The campaign for νίκη is now taken up by the royal children. The idea figures prominently in Electra's appeal for vengeance to her father's spirit (*Ch.* 147–48 ἡμῖν δὲ πομπὸς ἴσθι . . . σὺν . . . δίκῃ νικηφόρῳ) and in the chorus' similar appeals to the chthonic powers (477–78 πέμπετ' ἀρωγὴν παισὶν προφρόνως ἐπὶ νίκῃ) and to Zeus (868 εἴη δ' ἐπὶ νίκῃ).[54] Orestes, like Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, is so obsessed with victory that he fashions favorable omens from events leading up to the stroke of retribution. Telling the false tale of his own death, Orestes speaks as if Clytemnestra's acceptance of the urn for burial in Argos would symbolize victory (683 εἴτ' οὖν κομίζειν δόξα νικήσει φίλων); and he accepts Pylades' advice, to regard anyone his enemy rather than the gods (902), as "victorious," that is, as insuring his own ability to overcome Clytemnestra's appeal to her motherhood (903 κρίνω σε νικᾶν, καὶ παραινεῖς μοι καλῶς).[55]

Because each apparent victory is met with a further challenge, there is a recurring confusion about the roles of conqueror and conquered. As Clytemnestra confronts Agamemnon, she induces him to walk on the tapestries by arguing that a victor should be great enough to submit on occasion: τοῖς δ' ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει (*Ag.* 941). Orestes, in turn, before the encounter with his mother, reminds Agamemnon's spirit that his defeat may yet be reversed, and pleads, "Grant your aid, εἴπερ κρατηθεὶς γ' ἀντινικῆσαι θέλεις" (*Ch.* 499). On the point of facing Orestes, Clytemnestra is much more direct: εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν ἢ νικώμεθα (*Ch.* 890).

The second play, like the first, sees the erstwhile victor defeated. But Orestes, unlike Clytemnestra (cf., e.g., *Ag.* 1388–92), experiences no exultation. He finds the victory polluted (*Ch.* 1017 ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδ' ἔχων μιάσματα)[56] and himself overcome almost immediately by fear and frenzy (1023–24 φέρουσι γὰρ νικώμενον φρένες δύσαρκτοι). An assurance by the chorus that he has succeeded magnificently (1052 μὴ φοβοῦ, νικῶν πολύ) is of no avail. Ultimate victory in this conflict remains an illusion.

In the *Eumenides* the struggle for domination continues, this time between Orestes and his mother's Furies. Here the contest is openly avowed rather

53. See Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 138, n. 76, for fuller analysis.
54. Similarly, Electra invokes Κράτος as ally (244–45) and prays for εὔμορφον κράτος (490).
55. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 140, sees Apollo as the victor here, and the δαίμων as the victor in the *Agamemnon* (p. 136, n. 59); ultimately, however, the victories of these divinities are no more permanent than those of the human actors.
56. Cf. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," pp. 496–97.

than secretly plotted; played out in an arena of reason, not violence; and ultimately resolved in a draw, with each contender a winner, in the transcendent victory of Zeus and of mankind as symbolized by Athens.

The fight continues to be described in the language of victory. Both parties are warned against any weakness in the preliminary skirmishes that might preclude victory in the direct encounter; Apollo, echoing the chorus of the *Choephoroi* (cf. 1052), counsels Orestes, μὴ φόβος σε νικάτω φρένας (88); Clytemnestra urges the Furies, μή σε νικάτω πόνος (133).[57] Athene monitors the conditions for the ensuing struggle. She insists on a consideration of motives, not permitting a decision based on an oath which merely stipulates whether the deed was done: ὅρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν λέγω (432). Undaunted, both sides share absolute conviction that they will prevail, the Furies threatening blight on the state should they be defeated (477 μὴ τυχοῦσαι πράγματος νικηφόρου),[58] Apollo arrogantly enunciating his expectation as fact (722 νικήσω δ' ἐγώ).

In the event, Athene and her newly established court of Athenian citizens adjudicate the matter in a way unmatched in the trilogy—in a victory which does not involve a corresponding defeat. Aeschylus formulates this precisely. As the final ballots are deposited, Athene announces the minimum condition of Orestes' acquittal: νικᾷ δ' Ὀρέστης κἂν ἰσόψηφος κριθῇ (741). For the disappointed Furies she draws a paradoxical conclusion from the same facts: Orestes won, but they did not lose; on the contrary, they were honored: οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ', ἀλλ'ἰσόψηφος δίκη / ἐξῆλθ' ἀληθῶς οὐκ ἀτιμίᾳ σέθεν (795–96). The goddess makes good her statement by a promise of glorious precincts and steadfast respect from the citizens of Athens (804–7).

Since Athene's elegant solution to the dilemma is dependent on the jury's absolute impartiality, it is appropriate that both parties to the dispute accord the Athenians themselves a share in the victory.[59] Orestes, as soon as the vote tally proclaims his acquittal, promises friendship between Argos and Athens, and prays victory for Athens over her enemies (776–77 πάλαισμ' . . . δορὸς νικηφόρον). A "worthy victory" is also what the Furies are instructed to invoke for Athene's city when the goddess has convinced them of their own success in the trial. "What magical incantations do you bid us make?" the Furies ask (902); ὁποῖα νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα (903) is the reply. Athene's similar and final injunction to the Eumenides also redeems the notion of "profit" which had spoiled the Trojan victory (cf. *Ag.* 341–42, 571) by transferring it to the common good: τὸ δὲ κερδαλέον πέμπειν πόλεως ἐπὶ νίκῃ (1008–9). In both cases the spirits comply.

Orestes in his acquittal, the Eumenides in their cult, the Athenians in a new political alliance and in the special care of the Eumenides—all are victors in some sense. But the ultimate victory Athene ascribes to Zeus,

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57. Clytemnestra continues, μηδ' ἀγνοήσῃς πῆμα μαλθαχθεῖσ' ὕπνῳ (134). It must particularly gall the ever-alert Clytemnestra (*Ag.* 912; cf. 290) that *her* Furies were "conquered by sleep."

58. Athene's prediction, but accurate; cf. 780–87 = 810–17. The Furies anticipate general anarchy if Orestes wins, i.e., εἰ κρατήσει δίκα . . . τοῦδε μητροκτόνου (491–92).

59. Cf. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 146: the Athenians are "pioneers and beneficiaries of the new order."

Zeus and an altered concept of success and the good: ἀλλ᾽ ἐκράτησε Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος, / νικᾷ δ᾽ ἀγαθῶν / ἔρις ἡμετέρα διὰ παντός (973–75).[60] In this statement we come full circle from the Argive elders' attribution of victory to Zeus in their hymn to that god in the *Agamemnon* parodos: Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων / τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν (174–75). The Argive chorus alluded principally to Zeus's mysterious but permanent victory over his immortal predecessor; Athene extends Zeus's triumph, both on the cosmic level, in the settlement with the Erinyes, and in the human sphere, in the institution of a revised charter of human relationships and human justice.

THE GOOD

Characters who echo the Argive elders' prayer τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω in the *Oresteia* often reveal morally questionable goals of success (εὐτυχεῖν, εὖ πράσσειν), limited self-interest, or futile hopes. For these characters the prayer is dangerous or gratuitous, its apparent fulfillment a delusion. The Furies introduce a new context for good—fear, τὸ δεινόν. Again, it is Athene who lays the groundwork for the prayer's genuine fulfillment with her redefinition of good in terms of society.

The transformation of the Furies is a crucial factor in the goddess' achievement. In the new dispensation they become εὔφρονες (*Eum.* 992, 1030), a demonstration that true good is inseparable from good intention. Before this point in the trilogy εὔφρων and its synonyms ironically share the qualifications and imperfections of τὸ εὖ itself.

Like those for "victory," the terms for "good," "success," and "goodwill" accompany and provide commentary on the principal conflicts in the tragedy and on their resolution.

Mortals in the *Oresteia* usually pray for good in circumstances which offer little chance of its realization. Faced with alternatives of sacrificing his daughter or abandoning the Trojan expedition, Agamemnon finds neither course unobjectionable (*Ag.* 211 τί τῶνδ᾽ ἄνευ κακῶν), and yet prays εὖ γὰρ εἴη (217). The chorus break off their description of that sacrifice to pray that all be well (255). The refrain itself, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω, punctuates the telling of the double-edged omen and its fearful interpretation. Beyond hope, all these prayers at first seem granted. Troy is taken.

Clytemnestra's announcement of the victory, however, almost instantly renews the need for prayer. As the queen speculates on conditions in the captured city, she dwells on the potential for evil which is still present. Thus, in the cry with which she concludes her narrative, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ κρατοίη μὴ διχορρόπως ἰδεῖν (349), the idiom is that of the elders, but her goodwill is not equally beyond question (cf. 271); although she deprecates uncertainty in the issue, it is not clear what issue she intends. Ostensibly Clytemnestra prays that the Greek troops will resist the temptation to plunder temples

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60. The Furies earlier recognized Zeus as παγκρατής (918); cf. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 145. For the victory of Zeus, see Haldane, "Musical Themes," p. 38; Méautis, *Eschyle et la trilogie*, pp. 282–83.

at Troy, the moral victory (341–42 μὴ . . . κέρδεσιν νικωμένους—"good" and "victory" appear close together here) being necessary to insure their safe return.[61] Agamemnon's homecoming, however, will only deliver him into Clytemnestra's murderous arms. The queen's next words hint obscurely at a personal request for vengeance underlying her prayer for τὸ εὖ (345–47):

> θεοῖς δ' ἀναμπλάκητος εἰ μόλοι στρατός,
> ἐγρηγορὸς (εὐηγορὸς?) τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων
> γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πρόσπαια μὴ τύχοι κακά.[62]

The dark and disputed syntax so multiplies and confuses the conditions under which Agamemnon could enjoy a clear triumph that his ability to extricate himself from all possible dangers is cast into serious doubt. Whether the "pain of the dead" be hypothetically "roused" or "smoothed over," that πῆμα is clearly a factor with which to reckon. And who are "the dead"? Clytemnestra dissembles with the plural: a few lines earlier she masked her obsessive eagerness for Agamemnon's return with a wish for the safety of the whole army (338–45),[63] and here she is thinking first and foremost of Iphigeneia's death.[64] The effect of the speech, therefore, is to preclude realization of the prayer. In the light of the potential dangers Clytemnestra has enunciated, the good seems impossible of attainment; in the light of her hidden intentions, the goal seems only questionably good.

Elsewhere, too, the context works against the hope of good issue. The watchman in the *Agamemnon* seeks good fortune for himself in the beacon which will announce his master's return (20 εὐτυχὴς γένοιτ' ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων); by a repetition of the πόνος-root, however, he associates his own pains with those of the royal household (18–19 οἴκου τοῦδε . . . διαπονουμένου); and, in fact, that house, its former excellence already diminished (19 οὐχ ὡς τὰ πρόσθ' ἄριστα), will only sink deeper into trouble when the king returns.[65] The Argive elders later conclude an ode which recounts the people's resentment at the loss of loved ones for the sake of a faithless woman with the prayer εὖ γὰρ πρὸς εὖ φανεῖσι προσθήκη πέλοι (500). The herald appends the wish γένοιτο δ' ὡς ἄριστα (674) to the tale of Menelaus' disappearance.

The next wishes for "good" are grouped just before the crisis in the *Choephoroi*. Orestes' old nurse echoes the herald's wish for Menelaus in a situation which is similarly hopeless. Agreeing to an apparently pointless ruse which will bring Aegisthus to the palace unattended, and in despair at news of Orestes' death, she prays, γένοιτο δ' ὡς ἄριστα σὺν θεῶν δόσει (782).

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61. Fraenkel "*Agamemnon*," 2:178 (ad 348–49) connects this prayer, which concludes the speech, with the future in general, not the return voyage alone; certainly, however, any future presumes that voyage.

62. Thomson, "*Oresteia*," 2:42 (ad [his] 357–59 [εὐήγορον]), and Fraenkel, "*Agamemnon*," 2:177 (345–47 [παρηγορεῖν]) argue for a word of favorable meaning. But see J. D. Denniston and D. Page, *Aeschylus' "Agamemnon"* (Oxford, 1957), p. 100, for a good explanation of the passage.

63. Similarly, Clytemnestra uses the plural in referring to the need to respect Troy's temples (338–42); but the herald connects Agamemnon alone with their sacking, in a vivid ring composition (522–31: ἥκει—ἄναξ—Τροίαν—βωμοί, ἱδρύματα—Τροίᾳ—ἄναξ—ἥκει).

64. Cf. *Ag.* 865 and Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 132.

65. Cf. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra," p. 137, n. 70, on a possible reminiscence in *Ag.* 1673.

The handmaids, with more reason for confidence, continue the prayer: good fortune for the house (808 εὖ δὸς ἀνιδεῖν δόμον ἀνδρός) and for themselves the privilege of raising the cry of triumph (824 πλεῖ τάδ' εὖ).[66] "Good" is the expected result of the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; yet when those murders are accomplished, the chorus' first word is στένω (931).

Although so often the object of prayer, the good is elusive, its nature unclear. Even the apparent attainment of good fortune is not wholly satisfying. Agamemnon's herald pronounces the Trojan War a success (Ag. 551 εὖ γὰρ πέπρακται), but in his very next words the old ambiguity of the omen at Aulis comes again to the surface (552–53 τὰ μὲν . . . εὐπετῶς ἔχειν, τὰ δ' αὖτε κἀπίμομφα; cf. 145). Agamemnon sadly realizes that few men endure a friend's good fortune with equanimity (832–33 φίλον τὸν εὐτυχοῦντ' ἄνευ φθόνων σέβειν) and that success (846 τὸ καλῶς ἔχον) must actively be safeguarded against inevitable threats (847 ὅπως εὖ μενεῖ βουλευτέον). For Cassandra, a life of success is an illusion, a shadow, preferable to misfortune but equally evanescent (1327–29):

> εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν
> σκιᾷ τις ἂν πρέψειεν, εἰ δὲ δυστυχῇ,
> βολαῖς ὑγρώσσων σπόγγος ὤλεσεν γραφήν.

At the end of the *Choephoroi* Orestes cannot rest in the success the chorus attribute to him (1044 ἀλλ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξας), but flees into exile pursued by the Furies (cf. 1042–43, 1048–50). The chorus see him off with a prayer that he might yet fare well (1063 ἀλλ' εὐτυχοίης), but sink at once into despair over the fortunes of the house (1065–76).

For all these characters success has its shortcomings—contamination with evil, impermanence, and envy. For the chorus of the *Agamemnon* success contains the threat of another danger, impiety. Pondering the news of the victory at Troy, the Argive elders become apprehensive: too much acclaim (εὖ κλύειν) is dangerous (468–69). Yet human appetite for success is insatiable (1331 τὸ μὲν εὖ πράσσειν ἀκόρεστον ἔφυ), a universal truth the elders readily apply to Agamemnon (1335 καὶ τῷδε). This passage intimates a tendency to hybris in the successful man; man acknowledges no surfeit of success, never shuts the doors of his overflowing house against it (1332–34). The chorus had earlier associated such excess (κόρος) with injustice and impiety (381–84; cf. 374–78):

> οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἔπαλξις
> πλούτου πρὸς Κόρον ἀνδρὶ
> λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας
> βωμὸν εἰς ἀφάνειαν.

The connection between hybris and success adumbrated in the *Agamemnon* is made explicit in the *Choephoroi*. In the parodos the chorus of maid-servants describe a city in which success has displaced all other values,

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66. Kirchhoff's reading maintains the nautical weather imagery; cf. Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," pp. 386–87.

divine as well as human: τὸ δ' εὐτυχεῖν, / τόδ' ἐν βροτοῖς θεός τε καὶ θεοῦ πλέον (59–60).

By the time the matter is referred to Athene in the *Eumenides,* the need for a new conception of the good is undeniable. Against the self-serving and contradictory human definitions, the Furies advance a view which is at least less narrow. In the second stasimon (490–565) they claim that *they* are the good, since by virtue of their dire offices fear of retribution inhibits wrongdoing and reckless sinners are punished (517 ἔσθ' ὅπου τὸ δεινὸν εὖ). Athene concurs, to a degree; she adjures her citizens "not to cast dread (τὸ δεινόν) entirely from their city" (698), for justice cannot survive without some measure of fear (699).

But the goddess' vision is more comprehensive. The Furies must be incorporated into the city, but with a new orientation to their task. Henceforth, in addition to controlling evil, they must reward and foster good. By so doing, the Furies will gain a share of honor in Athene's "most god-beloved land," εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένην (868–69). Athene's assignment of good here is like her assignment of victory described earlier: it is shared by all parties. Under the old system, one man's victory meant another's defeat, success involved corresponding failure, the good was inseparable from evil. Athene rejects such destructive contests. For her, as for Zeus (973), the victory lies in a "rivalry in good": νικᾷ δ' ἀγαθῶν ἔρις ἡμετέρα διὰ παντός (974–75).

In the final scenes of the play the abstract τὸ εὖ is replaced by concrete benefits (ἀγαθά), and the Eumenides, who truly embody τὸ εὖ, compete with Athene in inaugurating the new dispensation wherein good may be common to all. The Furies wish the Athenians a harmonious exchange of joy and affection (984–85 χάρματα δ' ἀντιδιδοῖεν κοινοφιλεῖ διανοίᾳ). Athene, foreseeing victory (1009) and justice (992–95) from the Eumenides' good offices in the city, instructs her citizens in the responsibility to reciprocate: they must requite the Furies' benefactions with benevolence (1012–13 εἴη δ' ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὴ διάνοια πολίταις) and return goodwill (εὔφρονες) to the spirits of goodwill (992 τάσδε εὔφρονας).[67]

From the vantage point of the resolution, where the spirits of vengeance become "Eumenides" or, in Aeschylus' term,[68] εὔφρονες, we can see that the compounds which express "kindly intention" undergo a development in the trilogy inseparable from that of the Furies and parallel to that of τὸ εὖ. Before Athene establishes conditions which can produce genuine good, these εὖ-compounds often cloak intrigue in the murder plots or indicate points at which appearance diverges from reality. In most of these passages we can unveil a latent truth by substituting "Erinys-like," in the primitive sense of "vengeful," for εὔφρων or εὐμενής.

67. Word repetition also suggests reciprocity in the love of Athene and her citizens (999 παρθένου φίλας φίλοι), mutuality of goodwill between Furies (1030 εὔφρων ἥδ' ὁμιλία) and citizens (1034 ὑπ' εὔφρονι πομπᾷ).

68. The term Εὐμενίδες does not occur in the surviving text. G. Hermann posits a lacuna after *Eum.* 1027, in part to allow for the expected term (*Aeschyli Tragoediae*², vol. 2 [Berlin, 1859], p. 645 [ad loc.]).

A few examples will illustrate. The Argive elders, not suspecting guile, greet the queen's contorted prayer for the return of Agamemnon with approbation (*Ag.* 351 εὐφρόνως λέγεις). Agamemnon's herald invokes the city's gods who sent them forth to receive propitiously (*Ag.* 516 εὐμενεῖς) the remnant of the host. Coming in disguise to the royal house, Orestes professes to regret that his unhappy news must preclude entertainment in so prosperous a house—"for what is more friendly (*Ch.* 703 εὐμενέστερον) than a guest to his hosts?" In truth, Clytemnestra in her wish for Agamemnon's return, the gods in their welcome of the king, and Orestes in return for the "unexpected" hospitality act, rather, "like Erinyes."[69]

Aeschylus has even contrived a link between one of these compounds and the Furies' genealogy. Deviating from Hesiod's account of the Furies' origin in the castration of Ouranos (*Theog.* 178–85), Aeschylus makes their sole parent Night, Νύξ, or, euphemistically, εὐφρόνη.[70] The spirits of vengeance themselves do not call their mother by this gentle name (cf. *Eum.* 321–22, 416, 745, 791–92, 844, 1034). Nonetheless, in the *Oresteia* εὐφρόνη refers almost exclusively to a single night, that on which Paris' theft of Helen was finally redressed by the capture of Troy. In the pointed use of εὐφρόνη for that particular "night," we can recognize the mentality which greets brutal vengeance, paradoxically, as though it were an act of benevolence. Not surprisingly, then, the term is a favorite with Clytemnestra and appears three times in her announcement of the sack of Ilium; the irony is heaviest in her opening words, in which the maternity of Night is also explicit: εὐάγγελος μέν, ὥσπερ ἡ παροιμία, / ἕως γένοιτο μητρὸς εὐφρόνης πάρα (*Ag.* 264–65; cf. 279, 337). If Clytemnestra's prayer is answered, a welcome "dawn child" will bring vengeance to Agamemnon, just as its "kindly" mother, Night, brought retribution to Troy. The king's herald ironically describes Agamemnon as he comes from his vendetta as "he who lights up the kindly time" (*Ag.* 522 φῶς ἐν εὐφρόνη φέρων). Aegisthus' first words play on the same ideas; addressing the day which sees Agamemnon in the web of the Erinyes (*Ag.* 1580 ἐν πέπλοις 'Ερινύων), he cries, "Oh light of good will!" (*Ag.* 1577 ὦ φέγγος εὔφρον; cf. 1581 φίλως ἐμοί).[71]

Human agents of vengeance may rejoice in their task, but they do not perform it with "kindly disposition." The necessity for human agency is disregarded by the Furies when they argue (*Eum.* 517–37) that their function of vengeance (τὸ δεινόν) both demonstrates goodwill and promotes "right-mindedness" by imposing a healthy restraint on men's minds (φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον) which rewards them with prosperity (ἐκ δ' ὑγιείας φρενῶν . . . ὄλβος). The contradictions involved in this disquieting interconnection of εὐφρόνη, vengeance, and kindliness are alleviated somewhat when Athene transfers the vengeance function of the Furies to the Areopagus; the salutary fear which the court inspires, she says, will prevail by day and by

69. Cf. *Ag.* 950–52, 1434–36, *Ch.* 109, *Eum.* 631–32.
70. For some implications of this genealogy, see F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, 1949), pp. 179–83, 203–5; cf. G. Thomson (ed.), *The "Oresteia" of Aeschylus*, vol. 2² (Amsterdam, 1966), pp. 56–57; Lebeck, "*Oresteia*," pp. 43, 64, and 184, n. 21.
71. Cf. Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," p. 390.

night (*Eum.* 692 καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ὁμῶς). Night can henceforth truly be "kindly." By quoting their warning of the necessity of dread (696–99), Athene confirms that the Furies fulfill a beneficial function in society.[72] It is only when an individual mortal presumes to usurp that function that the designation εὔφρων becomes bitterly ironic.[73]

Nonetheless, like εὖ, the εὔφρων terms do not wholly assume their proper significance until the Furies personally take a part in the new order. When in addition to deterring and punishing crime they undertake to foster well-being in Athens, the daughters of Εὐφρόνη fully inherit the "kindliness" of their mother.[74] In the closing pageant Night and her children are genuinely illuminated by torches which conduct the transformed spirits to their new abode; in the accompanying celebration of mutual good will the salient terms are juxtaposed for the last time (1029–34):

> Αθ.   καὶ τὸ φέγγος ὁρμάσθω πυρός,
> ὅπως ἂν εὔφρων ἦδ' ὁμιλία χθονὸς
> τὸ λοιπὸν εὐάνδροισι συμφοραῖς πρέπῃ.
> Προπομποί. βᾶτε δόμῳ μεγάλαι φιλότιμοι
> Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἄπαιδες ὑπ' εὔφρονι πομπᾷ.

As the Furies become εὔφρονες and their benevolence is reflected in human society, the elders' prayer, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω, is realized at last.

THE FINAL REFRAINS

The refrains εὐφαμεῖτε δέ, χωρῖται [πανδαμεί] (*Eum.* 1035, 1038) and ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς (*Eum.* 1043, 1047) have both a liturgical purpose in the sacred installation of the Eumenides and a broader significance which arises from the resolution of the trilogy.

In context, εὐφαμεῖτε is a ritual admonition to piety required by the solemn ceremonies inaugurating the new cult.[75] The imperative also captures the "euphemism" of the closing scene in the etymological sense; it echoes on the human level the compliments and good feeling exchanged moments before by Athene and the Eumenides. The exuberant religious confidence in ὀλολύξατε is at home in the closing pageant as nowhere else,[76] for the Eumenides have promised Athens eternal good fortune in return for the establishment of the cult (1018–20; cf. 1031), and the goddess Athene looks benignantly on.

As the trilogy comes full circle, the final refrains also signify the complete satisfaction of the terms of the Argive elders' original prayer, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.

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72. Cf. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus*, p. 198.

73. Since virtually every other character has at one point or another acted as a "child of Night," i.e., as an Erinys or spirit of vengeance, it may be significant that the drafter of the resolution of the conflict, Athene, is in no sense a child of darkness, as Apollo declares (*Eum.* 665): οὐκ ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη. Cf. Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," pp. 388–93 (on "Light and Darkness").

74. Peradotto, "Nature Imagery," pp. 392–93; cf. Lebeck, "*Oresteia*," p. 22.

75. Εὐφαμεῖτε here (*pace* LSJ, s.v., II. 1) clearly belongs to the category of ritual injunctions barring impious speech, and is so taken, e.g., by Goheen, "Three Studies," p. 124, n. 25; Thomson, "*Oresteia*," 2²:233 (ad 1035).

76. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," p. 496.

In εὐφαμεῖτε, "sing εὖ," the Athenians celebrate the combination of advantage with morality which only Athene was able to effect; the inclusiveness of the summons (χωρῖται, πανδαμεί) shows that Athene's settlement is at last a good (τὸ εὖ) for all society. In ὀλολύξατε they celebrate the joy of a victory beyond the Argive elders' imagination, the victory of Zeus proclaimed by Athene when the Furies acquiesced in the new order (973).[77]

Scholars have noted that this ὀλολυγμός is the only fully vindicated cry of triumph in the series of such cries throughout the trilogy.[78] But the final ὀλολυγμός is at the same time an answer to the αἴλινον of the opening refrains. It substitutes a different set of ritual assumptions and replaces the original mood of despair with exultation. Moreover, the contrast between these cries, which bracket the *Oresteia*, is emblematic of the alternation of grief and joy in the trilogy and of the eventual predominance of joy.

The sacrificial nuances of αἴλινον were noted earlier. The problematic ritual aspects of the harvest are embodied in the tale of a beautiful human, Linos, whose death, like the cutting of the crop, is mourned in the cry. As the crop must be "killed" to be utilized by humans, so must an offering be destroyed to be consecrated to the gods; in each case there is destruction of objects of value which must be compensated, mystically, by ritual lament.[79] Thus, αἴλινον is an expression of anxiety amid the uncertainty of divine approval, and it is especially appropriate in the Argive elders' response to the unholy sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

The ὀλολυγμός expresses a different emotion associated with sacrifice, the exhilarated release of tension when the victim is struck or the offering otherwise irreversibly committed to the gods.[80] The ritual enthusiasm of the ὀλολυγμός is seen especially in the cry of the Pylian women when Nestor sacrifices a gilded cow to Athene in the *Odyssey* (3. 449–52). Its almost involuntary peal may sometimes reflect a magical attempt to bind φθόνος, but the tone of this early, inarticulate form of prayer is generally positive. The sacrificial connotations of the ὀλολυγμός apparently derived from a more elemental signification: the cry was fundamentally a spontaneous expression of strong emotion. One such emotion was joy, and in particular the joy of victory.[81]

All these elements, relief, joy of victory, prayer, deprecation of divine envy, ring in the ὀλολυγμός of the Argive women as they celebrate the imminent return of their men from Troy (*Ag.* 594–97, esp. 595–96 ὀλολυγμὸν . . . ἔλασκον εὐφημοῦντες[82]). Elsewhere in the trilogy, however, the emotions of

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77. For ὀλολυγμός in the joy of victory, cf. L. Deubner, *Ololyge und Verwandtes*. Abhand. der Preuss. Akad. der Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl., no. 1 (Berlin, 1941), p. 12. In hailing Zeus victor, Athene's citizens exhibit the soundness of mind once defined by the chorus of the *Agamemnon* (174–75; cf. *Eum.* 1034).

78. See the references in n. 10, esp. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," p. 507; eadem, "Postscript," pp. 652–53.

79. Guépin, *Tragic Paradox*, pp. 165, 181–90.

80. Ibid., pp. 164–65; Deubner, *Ololyge*, pp. 5, 21–22.

81. Deubner, *Ololyge*, pp. 17–18 (magic), 18–23 (prayer), 12 (strong emotion), 10–12 (joy), 6, 12, (joy of victory).

82. The combination of piety and triumph reflected in the juxtaposition of ὀλολυγμός and εὐφημεῖν is genuine in the Argive women and in the beacon watchman (cf. *Ag.* 28), but it is not achieved by the main characters until the conclusion of the trilogy; cf. n. 75.

sacrificial enthusiasm and joy of victory do not combine so felicitously in the ὀλολυγμός. Clytemnestra's ululation (*Ag.* 587), though spontaneous enough, celebrates more the anticipation of her own victory over Agamemnon than his conquest of Troy. The queen also regards the murder as a sacrifice, but Cassandra shows Clytemnestra's cry of triumph, like that of the Furies in the household (*Ag.* 1117–18), to be sacrilegious mockery (*Ag.* 1235–38).[83]

The chorus of the *Choephoroi* pray (386–89) to raise the ὀλολυγμός of victory over the bodies of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra; since this vengeance is divinely prescribed and to some extent socially sanctioned, they pray with a truer heart than Clytemnestra. Nonetheless, when the anticipated moment comes, the chorus' spontaneous reaction is στένω (931); the ἐπολολύξατ' ὤ comes more deliberately, after they remind themselves that Apollo had enjoined the deed (942–45; cf. 939–41). But the vacillation of the handmaids about the bloodshed endemic in the house (cf. 466–78) requires the anxious αἴλινον, not the exuberant spirits of the ὀλολυγμός. Orestes and Electra themselves raise no shout of triumph.[84]

Only when Athene proclaims Zeus the ultimate victor (*Eum.* 973–75) and prescribes solemn rites in honor of the Erinyes/Eumenides (1007 σφαγίων τῶνδ' ὑπὸ σεμνῶν) do joy of victory, confidence in sacrifice, and piety once more unite in the ὀλολυγμός.

In addition to its ritual connotations, αἴλινον is a general exclamation of sorrow; this is clear from the mournful sound αἶ in the expression itself.[85] In the *Oresteia* its opposite is found in the ὀλολυγμός, which invariably signifies joy.[86] Joy is implicit in the watchman's greeting to the beacon, which will give rise to the first ὀλολυγμός in the drama (*Ag.* 22 χαῖρε; cf. 27–29), and in his irresistible impulse to dance (*Ag.* 31). It sounds again in the farewells of Athene and the Eumenides (*Eum.* 996, 1003, 1014 χαίρετε) and bursts out in the song of the celebrants in the exodos (*Eum.* 1043, 1047 ἐπὶ μολπαῖς; cf. 1042 τερπόμεναι). Clytemnestra explicitly avows the joy of her own exultation (*Ag.* 587 ἀνωλόλυξα . . . χαρᾶς ὕπο).

The antithetical refrains αἴλινον and ὀλολυγμός, then, represent the sorrow and joy which mark the stages of competition for νίκη and τὸ εὖ in the trilogy. At each victory or defeat, gain or loss of "good," the exclamations of characters and chorus modulate from woe to joy and back again until the end. A strophe in the second stasimon of the *Agamemnon* is paradigmatic: the Trojans' jubilant wedding song for Paris and Helen (707 ὑμέναιον) gives way in a moment to lament (711 πολύθρηνον μέγα), when the true significance of Helen's marriage becomes clear.

Just so with reactions to the taking of Troy. Clytemnestra's joy in it

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83. Deubner, *Ololyge*, pp. 12, 21–22; Zeitlin, "Postscript," 647–53.
84. Zeitlin, "Corrupted Sacrifice," pp. 496–97.
85. Porzig, *Aischylos*, p. 84.
86. For ὀλολυγμός as the reverse of αἴλινον, see the parallel in Euripides' *Orestes*, a play which shares some plot elements with the *Oresteia*. Orestes and Pylades plan the crafty murder of a woman, Helen, expecting their deed to be met with a cry of triumph: ὀλολυγμὸς ἔσται, πῦρ τ' ἀνάψουσιν θεοῖς, κτλ. (1137–39; with πῦρ τ' ἀνάψουσιν θεοῖς, also cf. *Ag.* 594–97). Instead, a Phrygian slave of the household reacts with αἴλινον αἴλινον ἀρχὰν θανάτου βάρβαροι λέγουσιν, αἰαῖ (1395–96).

(*Ag.* 266 χάρμα) is soon overpowered by the grief and anger (445 στένουσι, 456–57 βαρεῖα φάτις, δημοκράντου ἀρᾶς) of the Argive citizens. Agamemnon's herald at first reports it with satisfaction (574 πολλὰ χαίρειν συμφοραῖς), but then is forced to reveal the πῆμα of the army's loss at sea (629, 638, 643; cf. 571–73); in the midst of the city's good fortune (647 χαίρουσαν εὐεστοῖ) he had hesitated to mix good with ill (648 κεδνὰ τοῖς κακοῖσι). The Greeks' triumphant capture of an enemy city is to Cassandra the mournful loss of a homeland (1167 ἰὼ πόνοι πόνοι πόλεος ὀλομένας τὸ πᾶν).

To Clytemnestra Agamemnon's death is also a source of joy (*Ag.* 1391 χαίρουσαν) in which she invites the chorus to join (1394 χαίροιτ' ἄν, εἰ χαίροιτ'); to the elders, it brings inexpressible grief (e.g., *Ag.* 1489–90, 1513–14 ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ, πῶς σε δακρύσω;), as it does to Agamemnon's children (*Ch.* 333 πολυδάκρυτα πένθη). The handmaids of the *Choephoroi*, in turn, expect joy in the death of the usurpers (387 ὀλολυγμός; cf. 819–24), but Aegisthus' death is sorrow to his servant (875 οἴμοι πανοίμοι δεσπότου) and his mistress (893 οἲ 'γώ, τέθνηκας); and, when Orestes murders his mother, even the chorus falter, both before (931 στένω) and after (1008, 1019 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ) delivering the victory cry they had anticipated (942). The Furies would deprive Orestes eternally of joy (*Eum.* 423 ὅπου τὸ χαίρειν μηδαμοῦ νομίζεται); but, when the verdict is rendered, it is not Orestes, but they, who grieve (e.g., 791–92, 821–22 ἰὼ μεγάλατοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς) until Athene promises a happy abode (893 πάσης ἀπήμον' οἰζύος) and rejoicing becomes general.

These are but the clearest examples of the conflicting emotions which accompany the principal events in the trilogy. For individuals, the pattern is always that of the Trojan singers at Helen's wedding: first joy, then grief. For the *Oresteia* and society as a whole, however, the succession is that of the opening and closing refrains, and of the αἴλινον refrain itself: initial sorrow replaced ultimately by victory, good, and joy.

The trilogy's first song (*Ag.* 106 μολπαί) rehearsed the dangerous omen at Aulis and was punctuated with cries of despair (αἴλινον). From the watchman's vigil for the beacon signal, even before the elders' prayer τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω, mortals had longed for an end of woes (*Ag.* 20) and a good in which they could rejoice (cf. *Ag.* 28 ὀλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα). Impiety and narrow self-interest had belied early claims of achieving that goal, a goal which required nothing less than the transcendent victory of Zeus. When good became the shared concern of society under divine auspices, only then could true piety (εὐφαμεῖτε) and genuine joy (ὀλολύξατε) combine, and song become part of the general rejoicing: εὐφαμεῖτε δὲ πανδαμεί, ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς. The stages of progression toward this resolution are clearly marked, not least by the poet's use throughout the *Oresteia* of the terms which dominate its refrains—victory, good, ritual cries.

In conclusion, the refrains in the *Persians* and the *Oresteia* exhibit both a primitive aspect, in the use of ritual and traditional elements, and an artistic sophistication, in the adaptation of these elements to their context and in the use of repetition to emphasize key ideas. We may go a bit farther. The

choruses of Argive and Persian elders are locked in the past, and the refrains they sing reflect the old order, the benevolent paternalism of Darius, a system of honor inseparable from a destructive vendetta. Within the refrains, however, are concepts which are not so fixed. The association of departure and death, the suggestion of youthful folly as the antithesis of ancient wisdom: these themes pervade and partly define the tragedy in the *Persians* quite independently of the dramatic role assigned to the play's chorus. In the economy of the *Oresteia*, νίκη and τὸ εὖ of the elders' prayer take on a life of their own, to be realized, ultimately, in a way that would have exceeded those elders' imperfect understanding. The joy and confidence of the final *Eumenides* refrains, on the other hand, are tied to the image of divine intervention in the progress of human affairs. These refrains, then, anchored in tradition, are at the same time submissive to the poet's creative will. [87]

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