Journal of Hellenic Studies ciii (1983) 13–34

THE ERINYES IN THE *ORESTEIA*: REAL LIFE, THE SUPERNATURAL, AND THE STAGE*

> Assuredly, according to Aeschylus's idea, the Erinnyes are as really present there, where Orestes first beholds them, as they are when they are pursuing him to Delphi and Athens: and it would have been nothing less than wilfully annihilating all truth of the poetic picture, had the Poet begun by treating those very beings, whom he meant to produce in the sequel as corporeal and actually present . . ., in the light of a mere fancy, the phantom of a diseased brain.
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> C. O. Müller, *Dissertations on the Eumenides of Aeschylus*[2] (anon. trans., Cambridge 1853) 7.

WITH these robust words Müller sought to argue that the Furies were actually visible to the audience at the end of *Choephori*.[1] More recent scholars, while generally agreed that this is not so, have still held a variety of views on the relation between the invisible Furies of *Cho.* and the visible ones of *Eumenides*, and the kind of existence that they should be conceived to possess. Thus Wilamowitz, who believed strongly in the subjectivity of Orestes' visions in *Cho.*, was prepared on occasion to carry this over into *Eum.*, and a similar thesis has been elaborated in detail by H. J. Dirksen.[2] Conversely F. Solmsen uses the objective reality of the Furies in *Eum.* to argue against Wilamowitz's conception of the end of *Cho.* ('it is after all impossible to regard the μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνες in one play as "Gewissensqualen" and in the other as real deities'), and others have taken up a similar position.[3] Finally John Jones claims that the image of 'a line extending from pure subjective fantasy to pure objective fact . . . provides a false frame of reference', or else that we must 'place the Furies at both ends of the line simultaneously'.[4]

There is clearly an issue here, and one that is likely to repay more sustained discussion than it has received, especially since the discussion will involve bringing Aeschylus' dramatic technique into close relation with his religious conceptions. I shall be examining in detail what happens at the end of *Cho.* and the beginning of *Eum.*, and how the Furies are depicted thereafter; and in the third part of the article I shall attempt to extend my findings by discussing how the different plays of the trilogy present supernatural forces in general.

I

The word Erinys is already very familiar to the audience's ears before they reach the last scene of *Cho.* Whatever functions Erinyes may have had in other mythical or religious contexts,[5] they are here consistently goddesses of vengeance and punishment. In most cases[6] they are referred to by people who have no more private information on the working of supernatural forces than ordinary individuals have in real life, and who are led to mention the Erinyes, whether literally or metaphorically, because they are talking about deeds of vengeance

* Some of the ideas here were tried out in seminars at Cambridge and Victoria, and I am grateful to those who attended. I am particularly indebted once again to Mrs P. E. Easterling and Dr A. F. Garvie for invaluable comments. I have attempted to dispose of certain subsidiary issues in 'Some Problems in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus', *JHS* cii (1982) 26–32, hereafter 'Problems'.

[1] He was pursuing a theory about Aeschylean choruses, which was refuted by G. Hermann, *Opuscula* vi (Leipzig 1835) 2.127–46. W. Whallon, *Problem and Spectacle* (Heidelberg 1980) 88–99, has now attempted to revive Müller's theory.

[2] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Tragödien* ii (Berlin 1919) 247; H. J. Dirksen, *Die aischyleische Gestalt des Orest* (Nuremberg 1965) *passim*, esp. 16–18.

[3] F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca N.Y. 1949) 186 n. 34. K. Reinhardt, *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe* (Bern 1949) 135–40, describes the end of *Cho.* in terms of the appearance of forces that were previously hidden. For a particularly dogmatic denial of 'psychology' in this scene see Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte der gr. Lit.* i 2.242 n. 7.

[4] J. Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London 1962) 104.

[5] For Erinyes in general see E. Wüst, *RE* Suppl. viii 82–166; B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London 1965) 91–156.

[6] *Ag.* 59, 463, 645, 749, 991, 1119, 1433, 1580, *Cho.* 402, 577, 652; *cf.* the δαίμων of *Ag.* 1468 ff., the Alastor of *Ag.* 1501 ff., the Ἀραί of *Cho.* 406.

and punishment which are known to be the Erinyes' concern. In such places the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical should not be too firmly drawn, since the thought-process which leads men from the events of the human world to the supernatural forces which these events imply remains much the same in either case.

At *Ag.* 1186–93 we find something different: Cassandra describes the Furies which she has actually seen, or otherwise detected, haunting the House of Atreus. This confirms that the forces whose operation has been deduced by others from events in the human world have an objective existence within the framework of the play. (At 1186 they are actually called a χορός in anticipation of the guise in which we shall see them in *Eum.*) Cassandra can see them because she has powers of second sight, given her by Apollo, which other mortals do not possess. At times, indeed, she is in a state of prophetic frenzy, and she can also be described as mad, not only in the course of Clytemnestra's abuse (1064) but also by the Chorus, who, it is interesting to note, see no inconsistency between the words φρενομανής and θεοφόρητος (1140). But if she is mad, then the madness is sent by Apollo and not by the Furies themselves, who have no direct concern with her. We shall be returning to these matters later.

The Furies whom she describes have drunk human blood (1188 f.), but this is the blood of the murdered children whom they will avenge, not that of their own victims. It is clear that, despite their physical presence in the House, they will act for the moment by overdetermining events that also have natural causes, and not by direct supernatural intervention; and this is borne out in what happens. Cassandra's description tallies closely with *Cho.* 577 f., where the Erinys is said to drink blood at each act of bloodshed in the House (though Orestes here is, once again, merely describing events of human life in supernatural terms). The idea of blood-drinking Erinyes is not demonstrably traditional,[7] and may be an Aeschylean invention based on the description of the Keres at [Hes.] *Scutum* 248–57, where they drink the blood of fallen warriors.

Then there are the 'attacks of the Erinyes' with which Orestes is threatened by Apollo's oracle if he fails to avenge his father (*Cho.* 278 ff.). They will include physical diseases, madness, nightmares and rejection by society and its gods. These are all torments which a man could suffer in real life and which, in Greek belief, a cursed and polluted man would be expected to suffer; we may note also that Orestes starts by describing the torments themselves and merely uses the words προσβολὰς Ἐρινύων as a way of referring to them in the course of the description. For these reasons we cannot say that even these Erinyes have moved far on the road from overdetermining natural events to direct supernatural causation. In any case the threat remains unrealised and its implications unexplored.

We may now consider in more detail what happens at the end of *Cho.* The onset of Clytemnestra's Furies is nowhere explicitly predicted until 924. Opinions will differ as to how far it is implicitly foreshadowed earlier.[8] At least the image of Orestes as a snake (527 ff.) does seem sufficiently disturbing to suggest that not all will be well after the matricide, but for most of the play it is certainly the positive necessity for Orestes' deed that Aeschylus emphasises, and nothing is allowed to cast serious doubt on this.

As soon, however, as Clytemnestra warns Orestes, ὅρα, φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας (924), it becomes dramatically inevitable that he will be pursued by these 'hounds' in some form or other. Orestes now refers to the matricide as τὸ μὴ χρεών (930), but this need only mean 'what is unfitting' (that is, no mother ought to die like this, although it is Clytemnestra's own fault that she will), and should not be taken to suggest that he is merely returning evil for evil.[9]

[7] The *v.l.* εἰαροπῶτις (for ἠεροφοῖτις) Ἐρινύς at *Il.* xix 87 is seized upon (with a wrong reference) by J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*[3] (Cambridge 1922) 215 n. 2, but it is doubtless derived from the blood-drinking Furies of the *Oresteia*, since εἶαρ, 'blood', does not occur in early Greek, and Aeschylus is actually mentioned in the note (Schol. T) which alone supplies the variant. See also n. 65 below.

[8] *Cf.* e.g. A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia* (Washington 1971) 97 f., 108 f., 114–16, 200 f., with the judicious comments of O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 359 f.

[9] I must be brief and dogmatic here, since I do not wish to become involved in the complex controversy over Orestes' attitude to the matricide before he performs it. (Does the Kommos strengthen his resolve?

At 931 the Chorus-leader, who has hitherto been wholeheartedly in favour of Orestes' vengeance, is distressed at what she has seen, and can now only regard it as the lesser of two ills. The following ode, therefore, which is a paean of unmixed joy designed to give strong reinforcement to our sense of Orestes' positive and necessary achievement, should not be taken to reflect all the feelings of the Chorus; it seems rather that they have had to choose, like the Chorus of *Septem* at 822–31, between paean and dirge, and despite the doubtful situation have not been able to mix the two.

The emphasis on Orestes' positive achievement continues in the ensuing speech, which is his justification of his deed before the Chorus, the Sun and the world. Actions in Aeschylus are public actions requiring public vindication or condemnation, and, as has often been noted, this speech, with its accompanying tableau of murder victims and blood-stained robe, corresponds closely in function with that of Clytemnestra at *Ag.* 1372–98. It must, therefore, be as important to Aeschylus' purpose as to that of Orestes that the denunciation of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus should be lucid and persuasive. The onset of Orestes' madness is, as we shall see, clearly and schematically indicated in the speeches that follow this one, and it is wrong to see any signs of it here.[10] His concern with the robe and with the crime of Clytemnestra is not an obsession but a necessary part of his defence; and if the reference of certain words (*νιν* in 997, *τοιάδε . . . ξύνοικος* in 1005) is unclear in the speech as we have it, this must indicate not incipient derangement (as such it would be thoroughly confusing for the audience) but textual corruption.[11]

The Chorus' comment is startling: they now grieve for the miserable death of Clytemnestra and prophesy further suffering for Orestes.[12] This does not seem directly justified by anything that he has said, though we may perhaps claim, if this is not reading too much into the thought-processes of a chorus, that they are aghast to see Orestes standing over two bodies just as Clytemnestra once did and to note the parallel between the two double murders.[13] In any case the grief which was briefly expressed at 931 now comes to the fore, the essential reason, from the dramatist's point of view, being that Orestes' achievement has been sufficiently stressed and the mood must now be darkened in preparation for the final event of the play.[14]

By the end of the following speech Orestes has come to share the Chorus's grief and its sense of impending disaster. This is a new and crucial development in his mental state, so it seems important to analyse in detail the sequence of ideas leading up to it.[15] This is far from easy, partly owing to textual corruption, but we may surely take it for granted that any rhesis in Greek tragedy presents, or once presented, *some* intelligible sequence of ideas. If a speech is interrupted

How real is his hesitation at 899?) My own view is that he *is* presented as feeling an instinctive revulsion from the matricide, but never doubts the moral and practical necessity of overcoming this; and that, while the revulsion should evoke our sympathy, his ability to overcome it is to be seen as a mark of heroism.

[10] Signs of madness were seen in this speech by Wilamowitz (p. 42 of his edition of *Cho.*; *Aischylos: Interpretationen* [Berlin 1914] 215) and several other commentators, but this idea is convincingly rejected by Fraenkel, *Agamemnon* iii 810 f.

[11] See esp. Fraenkel *loc. cit.* and H. Lloyd-Jones, *CQ* xi (1961) 181–4. But perhaps after all the best solution is that of Scholefield, to place 997–1004 before 983. There is no reason why Orestes should not describe the robe to the *Chorus* (and the audience) before having it displayed to the *Sun*.

[12] A different meaning can be obtained here by emendation (so Blass) or by far-fetched interpretation (so Tucker), but the tone of these anapaests is in any case so manifestly different from that of the last ode that the attempt seems pointless. We must beware of assuming, however, that talk of wretched deeds and a vile death means that Orestes was actually wrong to kill Clytemnestra.

[13] So Taplin (n. 8) 358.

[14] *Ag.* 475–88 notoriously illustrates how a chorus's attitude can be changed in response to dramatic requirements without much regard for consistent motivation (though there, as here, there are factors which help to justify and mitigate the change). At the end of Eur. *El.* (see Denniston on 1147–1232) there are shifts in the Chorus's mood similar to those in *Cho.* and serving much the same purpose.

[15] Reinhardt (n. 3) 138 f. does justice (or more than justice; see n. 56 below) to the importance of the transition that occurs here, but in talking of hidden forces revealing themselves he does not really interpret the passage in its own terms. Weil takes more trouble than most editors with the text of these lines, but his insertion of 997–1004 after 1013 compels him to rewrite 1014–17 in a way which, while certainly ingenious, takes him unduly far from the MS.

by some event which the speaker notices, the fact will be clearly indicated (e.g. *Ag.* 22, *Cho.* 10), and if the speaker's thoughts take an unexpected turn, there will at the very least be a particle to mark this.

The question ἔδρασεν ἢ οὐκ ἔδρασε; (1010) is taken by Wilamowitz[16] to indicate genuine uncertainty, but this can hardly be right, for the fact that Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon has not been questioned by anyone before in the trilogy and will not be again (she herself gloried in the deed), and it would be almost comic for Orestes suddenly to doubt it now. Elsewhere (*Sept.* 100, 202; Ar. *Lys.* 128) this form of double question is a mark of indignant impatience, and so it must be here—'Well, did she do it or didn't she?' Orestes is still defending himself, and here reproaches the Chorus for its apparent sympathy for Clytemnestra by appealing to the undoubted fact which justifies her death.[17]

The appeal to the robe, then, has the same initial purpose as that in the previous speech, though the mention of bloodstains and the murder weapon evokes the moment of Agamemnon's death still more vividly. This brings us to the difficult line 1014, νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμώζω παρών. Comparison with line 8 makes it fairly certain that αὐτόν is Agamemnon and that the repeated νῦν marks the contrast with the time of his death;[18] but this sense can hardly be obtained from the text as it stands, since the preceding lines provide no reference to Agamemnon and no contrast to νῦν. It is probably best, then, to mark a lacuna before the line, as Wilamowitz and Groeneboom do.[19] Since, however, Orestes is still talking about the robe at 1015, it does not seem that the sequence of ideas is seriously interrupted.

Editors are divided on whether 1015 goes with what precedes or what follows. Since the former punctuation leaves us with very stark asyndeton accompanying the new turn of thought at 1016, the latter (probably with Weil's δ' for θ' in 1015) seems preferable. In that case the robe is in Orestes' mind throughout the speech, and provokes not only his grief for Agamemnon in 1014 but his grief for the whole family in 1016.

In any case 1016–17 mark a notable change in his state of mind. The words ἔργα καὶ πάθος[20] could in themselves mean simply what was done by Clytemnestra and suffered by Agamemnon, but it is clear from what follows that they do not: Orestes is now able to see all the crimes of the accursed family, including his own, as a single whole, and to abhor them all together. He does not repent of killing Clytemnestra, and it is therefore rather misleading to talk of 'guilty conscience';[21] indeed the word μέν, as commentators point out, implies an antithesis, 'But I acted justly', which is not expressed until 1027, and this shows that he has not abandoned the purpose of self-justification with which he began the speech. But in the very course of this self-justification he has contemplated the robe which is not only the visible symbol of his father's death but also a symbol of the troubles enveloping the whole house,[22] and has thus, it seems, been reduced to lamentation at the whole dreadful train of events in which he has participated. He thus shares the attitude of the Chorus which he indignantly rejected at 1010; and, just as they coupled their horror at Clytemnestra's death with a prophecy of further troubles for Orestes, so he couples his horror with the first mention of his pollution (1017).

[16] *Gr. Trag.* (n. 2) ii 152, *Aisch. Int.* (n. 10) 215.

[17] This is further confirmed by the fact that μαρτυρεῖ μοι should, as can be seen from the lexicon, mean 'testifies on my behalf', not 'testifies to me'. δέ, if correct, will be continuative, the preceding double question being tantamount to an emphatic statement; though I strongly suspect that it should be γέ (a 'question-answering γε' not implying any doubt about the sufficiency of the robe's evidence).

[18] So several commentators here; also Fraenkel, *Agamemnon* iii 703 n. 2. Among other interpretations Hermann's αὑτὸν (i.e. ἐμαυτόν) has been popular, but it makes nonsense of παρών and goes against the evidence of line 8.

[19] Dr Garvie points out to me that other corrections are possible; but in a one-MS play lacunae are always among the first possibilities to consider.

[20] I see no good reason for the change of number and suspect that it should be πάθη (πάθας Weil, not an Aeschylean word). The corruption would be a natural one before γένος.

[21] *Cf.* H. W. Smyth, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Berkeley 1924) 203: 'the acute consciousness of his unhappy state, produced by a deed of such frightful and unheard-of justice, rather than the agonies of a sin-stricken soul'. Such distinctions seem unknown to M. Class, *Gewissensregungen in der griechischen Tragödie* (Hildesheim 1964) 46–8.

[22] For this aspect of the robe see Lebeck (n. 8) 67 f.

Even if we say that Aeschylus' purpose in writing this speech was to prepare for the final event of the play and not to illuminate Orestes' psychology, the fact remains that the speech must be somehow intelligible and, within the conventions of tragedy, plausible to the audience. If it ends with the fateful word μιάσματα, the idea of pollution must have come from somewhere; and, since it does not come from any external manifestation of that pollution, we cannot easily avoid saying (whether or not the above analysis is right in detail) that it derives from *some* sequence of thoughts which the speech presents.

The Chorus' comment at 1018–20, though intended by them to comfort Orestes by appealing to the general experience of mankind, also serves to deepen the audience's sense of impending disaster.

At the beginning of Orestes' next speech, directly after the first mention of pollution, comes the first mention of madness. But Orestes' purpose is still to justify his act, for those commentators are surely right who give ὡς ἄν εἰδῆτ' in 1021 the same reference as κηρύσσω φίλοις in 1026; 1021 begins a sentence the thread of which gets lost in successive parentheses, and 1026 picks it up again.[23]

But it is the parentheses, with their elaborate imagery, that reveal what is happening to Orestes and so advance the real 'action' of the scene. The first image is of a chariot out of control, the φρένες being seen as bolting horses which no longer obey the charioteer and so threaten to wreck the chariot. The charioteer is Orestes himself (ἡνιοστροφῶν), or, as we might say, his consciousness, will or reason (critics have justly compared the charioteer in Plato's *Phaedrus*), which ought to control the other mental faculties but which, when it cannot, is in danger of being unseated by them. The image can thus be seen as giving a rather precise and 'modern' picture of a mind 'going off the rails'.[24] The motive force leading to madness is provided by the φρένες and not by anything outside Orestes; and this is in full accord with the fact that the passage was preceded, not by any external event, but by the indications of his grief and sense of pollution.

In the second image (1024 f.) madness is directly associated with extreme emotion in the breast: Fear is ready to sing beside the heart, and the heart[25] is ready to dance in frenzy[26] to its tune. D. Sansone[27] says that the fear is located *near* the heart because it is *in* the φρένες, which are the seat of consciousness; but they were not the seat of consciousness in the preceding chariot image, and it seems to me better, both here and in parallel expressions elsewhere in Aeschylus,[28] to suppose that the consciousness is seated in the heart, on which the fear impinges. The Greeks tended to think of emotions as external forces acting on a person, and the conscious organ that they affect is identified for present purposes with the heart because fear is known to make the heart beat faster and more perceptibly.

H. J. Rose says (commentary on 1024) that the fear is fear of the Erinyes, of whose presence Orestes is beginning to be aware. But if this is so, why does Orestes not say so, and why does he cry out in surprise and horror at 1048? Surely Aeschylus has taken some trouble to show that Orestes does *not* see the Erinyes at any point before 1048. And when we compare the unbidden

[23] This interpretation, however, seems to me to involve reading Weil's ἡνιοστροφῶν rather than Stanley's ἡνιοστροφῶ for ἡνιοστρόφου in 1022. Stanley's reading virtually forces us to take ὡς ἄν εἰδῆτ' with this verb, thus crediting Orestes with a strangely formal announcement of his impending madness.

[24] It is true that madness is described in similar imagery elsewhere in tragedy (*PV* 883 f., Eur. *Ba.* 853), but even if such imagery were already standard by 458 this would not remove the need to consider how it functions in this particular context. In any case, we may now take it that *PV*, as well as *Ba.*, is post-Aeschylean; *PV* 878–86 may then be directly influenced by *Cho.* 1021–5.

[25] Reading Abresch's ἡ δ', with most editors, rather than M's ἠδ', which Page accepts. It is surely more pointed for the heart to dance to the accompaniment of Fear's singing (*cf.* 167, ὀρχεῖται δὲ καρδία φόβῳ) than for Fear to dance to its own accompaniment.

[26] If κότῳ is right, I suppose the word must be extended to mean 'frenzy' (so Paley) rather than 'anger'. This is not easy, but no emendation that I have seen (including Abresch's popular κρότῳ) carries much conviction.

[27] *Aeschylean Metaphors for Intellectual Activity*, Hermes Einzelschr. xxxv (1975) 72.

[28] *Sept.* 289; *Ag.* 179, 834, 976.

prophetic fear of *Ag.* 975 ff. and the vain fear coupled with madness at *Cho.* 288, it becomes clear that the fear at 1024 need not be *of* anything specific.[29] Rose goes on to say that 'Orestes is not, as in Euripides, simply insane and prone to imagine non-existent fiends, but in an abnormal state in which he can perceive what is usually invisible to the eye of flesh'; but, however true this may appear to be in the light of the next play, it is not what the text at this point implies.[30] The chariot image presented a prospect of sheer mental derangement leading to ruin and disaster, while that of singing and dancing described a mind possessed by simple terror. Such language seems almost to exclude the possibility that madness will take the form of increased insight into the supernatural; it certainly does not *suggest* that it will. We must indeed avoid interpreting *Cho.* in a way that will make nonsense of *Eum.*, but equally our knowledge of *Eum.* (which the audience of the *Oresteia* has not yet seen) does not entitle us to ignore or falsify the text of *Cho.*[31]

For the moment Orestes is still sane (1026) and able to speak rationally, as he could not if he were mad. He accordingly reaffirms the justice of his deed (1026 f.),[32] as was his intention from the start of the speech; proclaims his trust in Apollo and his oracle (1029–33); declares that he will flee to Delphi on Apollo's instructions (1034–9); gives one last command to the Argives (1040 f.);[33] and prepares for immediate exile (1042 f.).[34] Why will he make for Delphi instead of remaining to enjoy his patrimony? The answer we are given is that Apollo has ordered him to expiate his pollution in this way. But that is not quite the answer that would be expected by anyone who knew the myth; for surely the most pressing reason for Orestes' flight was that he was pursued by his mother's Erinyes. Although the speech reads naturally enough, the mention of Delphi and exile *without* any mention of the Erinyes is in fact a curious procedure which requires explanation. The fact that Orestes cannot yet see them is not a sufficient explanation in itself, for Apollo's instructions might reasonably have mentioned them, and Clytemnestra has certainly done so (924). The procedure can, indeed, be understood in terms of dramatic effect: Orestes must declare his intentions, so as to foreshadow the beginning of the next play, while he is still sane enough to do so, but he must not mention the Furies at this point because this would weaken the dramatic impact of 1048 ff. This explanation is doubtless correct as far as it goes; but it is also true, and significant, that, by not mentioning the Furies while Orestes is still sane, Aeschylus has avoided implying that they have an existence outside his madness.

At 1044–7 it is the turn of the Chorus-leader, who by now is acting as a foil to all Orestes' changing moods, to deprecate ill-omened speech and to remind Orestes of what he has achieved. Throughout the scene the justice of his deed is regarded as antithetical to the pollution which it incurs, even though both Orestes and the Chorus can now see that both aspects coexist.

At 1048 Orestes can at last see the Furies. The brief physical description shows how vivid and real they are to him, but it is clear that this is the moment when he is struck by the madness

[29] For irrational fear and its significance in Aeschylus see J. de Romilly, *La crainte et l'angoisse dans le théâtre d'Eschyle* (Paris 1958) 55–106.

[30] At *Symb.Osl.* xxxii (1956) 6 f. Rose places more emphasis on the psychological aspects of the scene, talking of a 'compromise' between real Erinyes and the subjective visions of a guilty conscience. But I do not find 'compromise' a very satisfactory word.

[31] Embarrassment at the text of *Cho.* and desire to explain it away are overtly displayed by Solmsen *loc. cit.* (n. 3). He bases his argument not only on the reality of the Furies in *Eum.* but also on his account of the intervention of the Erinys in *Sept.*, an account which in my view is mistaken; see Brown, *Phoenix* xxxi (1977) 309–11. He does not attempt to explain *how* we can escape the apparent implications of the text of *Cho.*

[32] In 1026 f. 'I announce to my friends and say that . . .' is hardly attractive. Lobel reverses the order of 1027–8, but this weakens the effect of 1028; better to mark a lacuna after 1026, 'I announce to my friends ⟨that . . . ⟩ and I say that . . .'

[33] The text of 1041 is irrecoverable, but Orestes seems to be telling the Argives to bear witness on his behalf, so his speech continues to have the practical purpose of self-defence.

[34] The lacuna after 1042 or 1043 presumably contained not only the main verb of the sentence but also a reference for τάσδε κληδόνας, for otherwise the words must mean simply 'the reputation of being a wanderer and an exile', which is very weak. Wilamowitz's ⟨ἄπειμι, μητρὸς αὐτοχειρίᾳ φονεύς⟩ (after 1042) would be acceptable. It is unlikely that the Furies were mentioned in the lacuna: I would expect any reference to them in this speech to come before the reference to Delphi.

predicted at 1021–5—the moment when he is no longer ἔμφρων (*cf.* 1056). He can see Furies because he is mad, and his vision of them is the symptom of his madness.[35]

Do they appear to the audience in the theatre? Almost all scholars rightly assume not (but see n. 1 above). In the context of the present article, however, it is as well to establish the reason for the assumption. It is not quite sufficient to say that, if the Chorus cannot see them (1061), there is no reason why the audience should be able to, for a dramatist can sometimes allow his audience to share the private vision of one character at the expense of others.[36] The crucial factor is rather the way in which we have been prepared for what happens at 1048 by Orestes' earlier talk of madness. What the audience are expecting to see is simply what they would see if a man became deranged in real life, and in this context the entrance of a group of Furies played by extras would be startling and confusing. It is this preparation, then, that shows that the scene conforms to the conventions of *Ag.* and the rest of *Cho.*, where, as we shall see, supernatural powers are never visible in the theatre.[37] Nor need we take seriously the notion of Verrall that Orestes mistakes the *Chorus* for the Furies. This is based only on the word δμωαί at 1048, which must derive from scribal reminiscence of 84,[38] for the distinction between the Chorus that Orestes addresses and the Furies that he describes is perfectly clear in the rest of the scene.

The Chorus-leader asks what δόξαι are troubling Orestes (1051), and, although the word need not in itself mean purely empty fantasies, Orestes' reply shows that it does so here. It is easy enough to claim that the Chorus-leader is simply mistaken in using this word.[39] The fact that Orestes is mad need not, after all, mean that his visions are merely δόξαι in this sense, for Cassandra, whose visions were certainly of something real, could be described as mad also. On the other hand, one cannot compare Orestes with Cassandra in this way without becoming aware of important differences. In her case the emphasis throughout was on madness as divine possession, and so it was appropriate that the Chorus, while not understanding all her prophecies, never doubted the reality of her inspiration. Here the emphasis is on madness as simple derangement, and so it is appropriate for Orestes' visions to be dismissed as mere fantasies. Even Orestes himself claims only that they are not mere fantasies *to him* (1053),[40] and, if he is to be depicted as mad at all, he could hardly say less. Thus, while we must allow that the Chorus-leader *could* be mistaken in the language she uses, we must also note that nothing in the scene encourages us to think that she is.

At 1055 f. she explains further: it is the blood on Orestes' hands that causes the disturbance in his φρένες. We need not suppose that she means the *consciousness* of blood on his hands, for, even though the onset of his madness was preceded by what looked like a psychological process, this need not prevent the Chorus-leader, or Aeschylus, from expressing the overt diagnosis in terms of purely physical pollution, as any observer of such a case in Aeschylus' day would probably have done. The diagnosis receives some confirmation in Orestes' immediate echo of the word αἷμα at 1058:[41] the blood that he sees dripping from the Furies' eyes is a reflection of the blood-pollution that causes his vision, just as the snakes in their hair (1050) correspond to the snakes that he has killed (1047).[42] Aeschylus is developing the motifs of snakes and blood, which

[35] *Cf.* J. Mattes, *Der Wahnsinn im griechischen Mythos und in der Dichtung . . .* (Heidelberg 1970) 78.

[36] E.g. *Macbeth* iii 4, where the Ghost of Banquo is visible to Macbeth and the audience but not to the other characters.

[37] There is also the evidence of Euripides, who clearly has *Cho.* in mind in *El.*, *Or.* and *IT.* At *El.* 1342 f. κύνας τάσδε briefly indicates that the Furies are present, but much more would have to be said if they were brought on stage; in *Or.*, where Orestes' madness is heavily stressed, their presence on stage would be out of the question; and at *IT* 281 ff. we have a description of Orestes seeing Furies invisible to the speaker.

[38] It may therefore have displaced some quite dissimilar word. I find Lobel's δμοιαὶ, which Page reads (see Fraenkel, *Agamemnon* ii 318 n. 1), more ingenious than convincing.

[39] So Reinhardt (n. 3) 140; Groeneboom on 1051–8.

[40] *Cf.* G. Devereux, *Dreams in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1976) 157.

[41] Burges' στάζουσι νᾶμα, favoured by some editors, gains support from *Eum.* 54 (where λίβα is also Burges' conjecture but generally accepted). But if Orestes is merely saying that the Furies' eyes run, this seems a trivial detail to be singled out for mention here.

[42] It would be possible to account for both these echoes in psychological terms, by saying that Orestes is subconsciously picking up words that the Chorus-leader has used and incorporating them in the fantasy that is forming in his mind. But this is a *kind* of

have both been prominent earlier in the play, to form links between the horrifying details of Orestes' visions and the horrifying events that gave rise to them.

The Chorus-leader recommends supplication of Apollo at Delphi.[43] 'You do not see them', replies Orestes, 'but I do'. He is presumably not contradicting the Chorus-leader's advice, but simply saying that, because the Furies are so real to him, he can no longer stay to listen. And so he runs off, having some hope of ultimate salvation, but leaving the Chorus quite uncertain of the outcome.

So much for the detailed analysis of this scene. It remains to discuss what has emerged from this. We have seen that the first stage in the development of Orestes' madness is a sequence of ideas in his mind, rather obscure in detail but centred on the murderous robe, proceeding through grief for his father to grief at all the crimes of the family and a sense of his own pollution; that this was followed by the first stirrings of madness, described in subjective and psychological terms; that this in turn was followed by a vision of the Furies, which was the symptom of madness; and that it accordingly seemed reasonable for the Chorus-leader to describe this vision as a mere fantasy. Thus, while I have always tried to proceed impartially from the text, I have felt able at each stage to stress a quality that must be called realism or naturalism. Aeschylus has been presenting, through the conventions of Greek tragedy, not a miraculous and impossible event—a man set upon by mythical monsters—but one that could plausibly happen in real life—a man passing from sanity to madness. Certainly the conventions are there, and the realism does not emerge until allowance is made for them. A man would hardly in real life pass from sanity to madness in the space of forty lines, giving a lucid commentary on the process as he did so, any more than he would talk in iambic trimeters. But it must be remembered that the conventions of a genre are, or should be, means of expressing reality, not obstacles to doing so; a dramatist who is at home in his genre will depict real life *through* its conventions, not in spite of them. Only if we understand the conventions can we avoid seeing kinds of naturalism which are not really present (signs of madness in the incoherence of *Cho.* 973–1006, for instance) and perceive those which are.

The realism of which I am speaking, then, is a matter of broad conception rather than minute clinical observation. Aeschylus is interested in the madness of Orestes, not for itself, as a phenomenon deserving analysis, but for its wider significance in the sequence of events that the *Oresteia* depicts. In *detail*, therefore, his presentation is rather simplified and schematic, especially if contrasted with the more clinical realism of Euripides' *Orestes*. But the difference is merely one of degree, for it would be difficult to demonstrate any change in the essential conception of what madness *is*.[44]

When the scene has been considered in these terms, it becomes relevant to note that Aeschylus' Orestes is in the sort of position in which a man might go mad in real life. One does not have to be aware of modern psychiatric theories to feel that there can be a connection between madness and intolerable emotional pressure; if a person has killed his mother, no one expects him to behave very sanely. And we might expect this still less in a society which paid little attention to purity of motive (so that Orestes cannot even say 'Since I had no choice, my conscience is clear'), and which believed in blood-guilt and avenging Furies.[45]

This point—that there is some connection between what happens to Orestes and what might happen to a matricide in real life—will perhaps seem to some readers wildly implausible

psychological subtlety that I should not expect to find in Aeschylus.

[43] For text and interpretation of 1059 f. see 'Problems' 31.

[44] *Cf.* also the madness of Cassandra in *Tro.* and Agaue in *Ba.*, which is plausibly depicted although its causes are supernatural; and contrast that of Ajax in *Aj.* and Heracles in *HF*, which, for dramatic reasons, arises from arbitrary divine intervention to the virtual exclusion of psychological realism. See also n. 51.

[45] A paranoid person will naturally imagine himself possessed by whatever Furies, devils or Martians his society happens to believe in, and his account of them will reinforce the belief of others: *cf.* E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley/L.A. 1951) 66 f.

and to others too obvious to need stating. To deny the connection, however, would involve accepting a rather remarkable coincidence, if nothing more; and I suspect that most readers of *Cho.*, if they do not think too hard about the question, in fact assume that such a connection exists. They may then be surprised to notice that Aeschylus has no word for a guilty conscience or a psychological trauma: instead his Chorus talks confidently of madness arising from blood-pollution, and this cannot be dissociated from those supernatural forces whose existence has been clear enough earlier in the trilogy. But if Aeschylus interprets the events of his plays in religious terms, this is not because these events are divorced from reality, but because he would have interpreted reality itself in religious terms. As Mrs Easterling has put it, 'of course a divine explanation of human behaviour came as naturally to Aeschylus as to Homer or Herodotus. But what we must remember is that such an explanation is a *diagnosis of something actually observed in human behaviour*, and not a piece of mumbo-jumbo independent of observed phenomena.'[46] The last scene of *Cho.*, though not adduced by Easterling, is a particularly good illustration of that principle.

Certainly Aeschylus need not have written the scene as he did. Orestes' defence of his deed could have been followed immediately by the direct intervention of the Furies, and his madness could either have come after this intervention (*cf.* Euripides' *HF*) or have gone unmentioned altogether. In either case the Furies would have seemed much more like pure mumbo-jumbo, as they may well have done in earlier poetry.[47] Their connection with madness does not seem inevitable, for a belief in avenging demons could presumably have arisen simply from people's horror at certain types of crime, from the victim's desire that his curses should be visited on the criminal, and from the criminal's fear that they might. This is confirmed by the nature of the Erinyes in Homer, which work purely by overdetermining 'natural' events;[48] and even when Erinyes pursue their victim in a more direct and supernatural way, as in the myths of Orestes and Alcmaeon, it can be argued that madness *need* not be involved.[49] I imagine, however, that the connection with madness, explicit in the Orestes story from Aeschylus on, was at least implicitly present in the myth ever since it was first told, and a poet who brought it out in his treatment would thus be displaying his sensitivity to one aspect of the myth's significance.

So far I have not confronted the question of the Furies' reality at the end of *Cho.* We have noted that nothing in the scene itself encourages us to think that they have any existence outside Orestes' madness. But their objective existence will be clear in the next play, and has, indeed, been taken for granted elsewhere in *Ag.* and *Cho.* If, then, Aeschylus is presenting them here as illusions, in the full sense in which the word is understood today, will he not stand convicted, not merely of a regrettable inconsistency, but of 'wilfully annihilating all truth of the poetic picture', as Müller put it?[50] Evidently we must not regard them as illusions in quite this sense; but we still need to do justice to the realism of the scene, a realism which involves Aeschylus in ignoring the idea that the Furies *cause* madness in favour of the idea that a vision of them is a *symptom* of madness, as though he were fully aware of the distinction.

To resolve this paradox we should note, first, that Aeschylus and his audience are unlikely to

[46] *G&R* xx (1973) 5 f.: the whole of the paragraph is highly relevant here.

[47] One of the few things known about Stesichorus' *Oresteia* is that Apollo gave Orestes a bow with which to ward off the Erinyes (*fr.* 40 P). This suggests that he presented them as tangible demons, although we need not assume that he was consistent in this presentation or that, even if he was, his audience was unable to see a connection between these demons and the forces of madness that might pursue a matricide in real life (see also n. 49).

[48] They are twice associated with ἄτη (*Il.* xix 87 f., *Od.* xv 233 f.), but in both cases this is simply folly of an everyday kind, far short of insanity.

[49] At Paus. viii 34, however, we find an aberrant and primitive-sounding Arcadian version of the Orestes story in which Orestes goes mad and is pursued by Μανίαι. These were actually worshipped in a local cult, and in Pausanias' opinion were identical with the Eumenides. Unless there is literary influence here (and it hardly seems likely), this is proof that at least one version of the non-literary myth made the madness explicit.

[50] There might be some temptation to regard Orestes' vision as prophetic: the Furies he sees in *Cho.* will *later* start pursuing him in reality. But there is no indication of this in the text, and the idea will not bear close examination.

have possessed any firm and consistent conception of the illusory and the subjective (a conception which does not seem to have been fully formulated before Aristotle). Certainly the word δόξαι at *Cho.* 1051, being used in opposition to real Furies, must mean very much what we mean by 'illusions'; but the fact that a concept can be expressed need not mean that its implications are fully realised. Thus Euripides, who seems for the most part to have no difficulty in presenting Orestes' visions as purely subjective, at times surprises us by reverting to religious language and saying that the objects of his visions are the agents causing his disease.[51] Again, we may remember that Clytemnestra could regard a charge of madness as a mere insult (*Ag.* 1064), although in fact Cassandra's madness was identical with her divine inspiration (*Ag.* 1140), and the objects of her visions certainly had some reality.[52] So it may indeed be necessary, as Jones put it (n. 4), to place the Furies 'at both ends of the line simultaneously'—or rather successively; they *can* be described as subjective, but need not be *consistently* so described.

Aeschylus, then, has not started with an abstract idea of what he wants to present and then translated this into dramatic terms. A dramatist clearly *can* work in this way; we may imagine that when T. S. Eliot wrote *The Family Reunion* he made a conscious decision at the outset that the Eumenides would symbolise psychological forces within one of his characters. But he can also start from the play itself and follow the logic of the dramatic presentation wherever it may lead. (This distinction between the logic of the dramatic presentation and that of an abstract conception is often a useful one, and I shall appeal to it elsewhere in this article.) Thus the crucial factor here is that *Cho.* has throughout been a play about human beings and in particular about Orestes, so that dramatic logic requires the action to continue developing at the human level, showing what would plausibly happen to Orestes in his new situation. The final scene begins with Orestes and the Chorus in the orchestra after the matricide; if Orestes then behaves in a way that seems psychologically plausible, and the Chorus reacts as real spectators would be likely to react, this may be largely because such a development is natural in *dramatic* terms, given such a starting point. This involves presenting the Furies in such a way that they look like illusions to us, but it need not follow that Aeschylus and his audience consciously thought of them as such. We need not place any less value on the realism of the scene if we conclude that Aeschylus arrived at this realism, not by abstract reasoning about the nature of madness or Furies, but simply by being true to the form in which he was working, drama being the medium of his thought and not merely the vehicle for its expression.

II

We do not see the Furies in *Eum.* until after the Pythia's brief scene.[53] This scene has various functions, as critics have pointed out—for instance, to establish the setting at Delphi, to bring home to us the holiness of the place and the abomination of its defilement by the Furies, to emphasise the lofty status of Apollo as the representative of Zeus, and perhaps to depict a harmony between old and new gods which will be restored at the end of the play.[54] I believe, however, that it has one important function which, as far as I know, has gone unrecognised, namely to effect a transition from a level of reality at which the Furies manifest themselves only through the visions of a madman to a level at which they have a concrete and visible existence.[55]

If they were mere hallucinations, as we understand the term today, then clearly there could

[51] *Or.* 37 f., 238 and esp. 408–12. This last passage comes shortly after Orestes' famous description of his disease as σύνεσις (396), but he (in a moment of sanity) and Menelaus can still agree, in language that cannot easily be seen as metaphorical, that the goddesses he sees when mad are actually pursuing him.

[52] Note also *PV* 673 f., where the onset of Io's madness coincides with her actual change of form, and 878–86, where she describes her madness in graphic terms, recalling those used by Orestes (see n. 24), *after* a scene in which the reality of her visions was not doubted by anyone.

[53] I shall assume here that we do see them immediately after line 63, as was argued in 'Problems' 26–8.

[54] *Cf.* Dirksen (n. 2) 4 f.

[55] For yet another function see p. 30 below.

never be any question of their being seen by anyone but Orestes. But I have argued that the idea of hallucinations, while not absent from the end of *Cho.*, is not to be pressed home in all the implications that it has for us. The Greek audience will be able to make the step from the idea of madness and illusion, however heavily stressed, to that of second sight and perception of a higher reality, if it has occasion to make it. It will not, then, be surprised, or feel that anything has changed, if it turns out in *Eum.* that the Furies which were visible to Orestes are visible also to other people who share his abnormal type of vision. And one reason why the Pythia is brought on stage is, I believe, that she, if anyone, can be assumed from the first to have the second sight required to perceive whatever supernatural beings may be present.

So, although her re-entry at 34 is a stunning and unexpected stroke of theatre, the fact that the Furies are visible to her will in itself cause no surprise. As she starts her description of them, however, it is by no means clear that they will be visible to the audience, for the natural assumption will be that the conventions remain the same as in the previous play. But as this description proceeds for its (probably) fifteen lines, the audience will come to picture the Furies more and more clearly in their own minds, seeing them, so to speak, through the eyes of the Pythia, until they reach a point where the conventions of the previous play are forgotten and the Pythia's vision is accepted as the only reality. After this, if the scene within the temple were revealed and it turned out *not* to contain visible Furies, this would itself be surprising.

I do not wish to argue that this is the only possible reason for lines 46–59, for a passage in a great dramatist can naturally have more than one function. Choruses are not, indeed, normally described before they appear, but the description of this one would doubtless help to enhance the horror of its appearance, since it is unlikely that makers of fifth-century masks and costumes had the resources to generate much horror without assistance from the text. I do claim, however, that a modulation between two levels of reality is there to be felt by anyone who has seen or visualised the trilogy; it would be difficult, I believe, to maintain that the visibility of the Furies seems unnatural after the preparation of 46–59, or that it would seem natural without it.

I have insisted on this point because it seems to me to have important consequences. The transition works; it is, in fact, an exceedingly skilful device; so it can hardly be thought to have arisen by accident. Aeschylus, then, was aware that he would be presenting his Furies differently in his third play and that a transition was needed. This means that we must be cautious in using the Erinyes of *Eum.* as evidence for those of *Cho.*, or *vice versa*, and helps to confirm that we were right in wishing to do justice to the 'realistic' picture that *Cho.* presents.[56] On the other hand we cannot treat *Cho.* and *Eum.* as such totally separate works that the conventions of one play have no bearing on those of the other, for then again no transition passage would be required. Nor, thirdly, can we regard Aeschylus as such a confused and 'primitive' thinker that he was simply unaware of any difference between his two ways of presenting these beings.

We must now look at what follows the transition. In particular we must consider whether the change is merely in the dramatic convention through which the Furies are presented, or whether it affects the conception of their nature; for we have already noted that it is not always possible to distinguish neatly between *what* is depicted and *how* it is depicted.

The change in convention can in itself be readily accounted for. We can say that, having had the brilliant idea that the Furies might form the Chorus of the third play, Aeschylus still wished their onset to follow shortly after the matricide in *Cho.*, so as to emphasise the connection between these events and form a link between the two plays. And that entailed making them invisible in *Cho.*, since otherwise Aeschylus and the choregus would have been put to the trouble and expense of either a second chorus or a group of extras, and the dramatic effect of the revelation of the Furies in *Eum.* would have been much weakened.[57] But the question is not whether this account is true—I do not doubt that it is—but whether it is the whole truth.

[56] Thus it is here that unseen forces break into the action of the trilogy, and the idea of Reinhardt (n. 3) that the major change comes around *Cho.* 1010–17 is, I believe, seriously misleading.

[57] Similarly Tucker on his *Cho.* 1046.

If our first vision of the Furies is through the eyes of the Pythia, it evidently does not continue so, for she exits before they appear and they remain long after she has been forgotten. We (the audience), however, are now on the same footing as she and Orestes, and able to see any supernatural beings for ourselves. And it helps considerably that when they first appear the Furies are asleep and motionless, so that for some time we see only that vision of them which the Pythia described, and they do not stir or speak until we have grown thoroughly used to the fact of their physical presence. The question of whether they can be seen by ordinary mortals on stage will not arise until much later, when the Jurors enter, and by that time it will not occur to anyone to worry about any slight inconsistency there may be.

More serious is the fact that the Furies continue to pursue Orestes at a time when he claims to have been purified and is apparently quite sane. Their presence at Delphi poses no problem if at that stage he is still polluted and still mad.[58] By the time he reaches Athens, however, he has at *some* stage gone through a purification process which he considers effective; its effectiveness is further accepted by Athena (474), and (see 'Problems' 31) presumably manifested in visibly clean hands. And, if his sanity has not returned by this time, we shall be hard put to it to say when it does return. This being so, the Furies' continued pursuit is inexplicable in the terms in which their onset was presented in *Cho.*, where Orestes' vision of them derived from his pollution and madness.

There is a temptation to deal with this problem in terms of Orestes' sense of guilt: even after ritual purification his guilt remains, and it can be expiated only through acquittal by his fellow men in a fair trial. Accounts along these lines are given by Dirksen and others.[59] They do not, even if correct, restore true consistency between *Cho.* and *Eum.*, since in *Cho.*, whatever Orestes' emotional state may be, the explicit and indispensable link between emotion and the Furies is madness, which we know to be absent here. All the same, there are evident attractions in any interpretation which invests the Furies of *Eum.* with psychological significance.

I do not believe, however, that the text will support this. In the first place, Orestes unwaveringly proclaims that he acted *justly*, and in the trial especially, while he does not know what the verdict will be (744), he displays nothing but calm assurance in the presentation of his case.[60] Dirksen claims (118) that doubts about the justice of his deed are revealed at *Cho.* 1010 ff. and *Eum.* 612 f.: I have dealt with the first of these passages (p. 16), and the second is equally invalid for Dirksen's purpose, since Orestes, although he carefully avoids asking a leading question, has been repeatedly assured of Apollo's protection and must know very well what his witness will say. The word ἀλάστορα at *Eum.* 236 is also seen by Dirksen (20–5) as a sign of guilt, but it cannot be right to interpret a single word in a sense that defies the tenor of its context.[61] The only way of evading the fact that Orestes does *not* display guilt would be to claim either that the emotion is buried in his subconscious or that Aeschylus wanted to present it in external and symbolic form *alone* (through the Furies) and not to duplicate this with a literal and direct presentation. But either of these claims amounts to saying that Aeschylus has set his audience a puzzle to which he has not provided a key, and such methods, being uncontrollable, could be used to demonstrate that any feature of a play means anything the critic likes. If Aphrodite in

[58] That he is still polluted was argued in 'Problems' 30–2. That he is still mad is not obvious from the text of the scene at Delphi, but we are given no reason to think that he has become sane, and it may be partly to preserve ambiguity in this matter that Aeschylus gives him only three lines in the scene.

[59] Dirksen (n. 2) *passim*; Class (n. 21) 46–65. Wilamowitz (n. 2) actually seeks to explain the Furies' continued presence *after the trial* in terms of Orestes' conscience, but this seems evidently impossible, since they are there concerned not with Orestes but with Athens.

[60] For a slightly different argument see E. Rohde, *RhM* i (1895) 10 (=*Kl. Schr.* 233) n. 1.

[61] In fact Taplin's ἀλήτορα, 'wanderer', ([n. 8] 379 n. 4) seems irresistible, even though D. Bain is right to point out (*JHS* xcix [1979] 172) that Hesychius' ἀλήτωρ, 'priest', will be primarily connected with λήτωρ and not with ἀλᾶσθαι. For ἀλήτωρ beside ἀλήτης *cf.* ἁρμόστωρ (*Eum.* 456 ἅπ. λεγ.), ἀσπίστωρ (*Ag.* 403 ἅπ. λεγ.), γεννήτωρ (*Supp.* 206), δέκτωρ (*Eum.* 204 ἅπ. λεγ.), εὐνάτωρ (*Supp.* 665), κωλύτωρ (*fr.* 17.20 M ἅπ. λεγ.), (ξυν)οἰκήτωρ (*Supp.* 952, *Eum.* 833), πορθήτωρ (*Ag.* 907, *Cho.* 974), beside ἁρμοστής, ἀσπιστής, γεννητής, δέκτης, εὐνάτας, κωλυτής, οἰκητής, πορθητής.

Hippolytus, the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Eumenides in *The Family Reunion* to some extent symbolise psychological forces acting within other characters, they certainly do not do so *to the exclusion* of direct revelation of these forces from the characters' own lips, and, if they did, their symbolic significance would be very difficult to discern.[62]

In the second place, if the Furies embody Orestes' guilt, their behaviour should display, if not perfect consistency, at least some degree of conformity with their symbolic function. And this it quite fails to do. One of the first things that happen after their first appearance is that they remain on stage while Orestes leaves it. Their wakening by the Ghost, complaints in the Parodos and argument with Apollo, besides having little scope in their details for symbolic interpretation, could not easily represent anything happening in Orestes' mind because he is far away and knows nothing of these things. More strikingly still, the Furies refuse to vanish even after Orestes' acquittal, and instead turn their wrath against Athens, which presumably feels no guilt about anything; this was foreseen much earlier (476–9), and can make sense only if they have an objective, non-symbolic reality within the play. Nor would their final conversion into beneficent beings be intelligible if they represented any abstract idea,[63] whether conscience, blood-guilt or the power of curses, since it is only particulars that can change their nature, not abstractions; Langland in *Piers Plowman* is able to depict the Seven Deadly Sins converted from their sinfulness by the preaching of Reason and Repentance because they are portrayed not as personified abstractions but as sinful individuals.

It should be clear that I believe the Furies' continued pursuit of Orestes, as well as their ability to divert their wrath to new objects and to change their nature, to be explicable in terms that are almost the reverse of symbolic. Now that they have acquired a visible existence as anthropoid beings played by human choreutae, they must obey the logic of this new dramatic presentation. They cannot suddenly vanish when Orestes is purified, or even when he is acquitted, any more than human avengers could, for, if the manner of their onset in *Cho.* was 'realistic' in terms of the psychology of Orestes, they have now acquired a psychology of their own, and 'realism' must now be judged in terms of this. Since they are fiercely loyal to Clytemnestra and their task of avenging matricide, it is psychologically natural for them to deny that Orestes' purification has been effective, just as it is natural for them to wish to punish Athens for acquitting him, and possible for their character to change through the influence of persuasion.

There must often have been real cases at Athens in which the prosecutors claimed that the defendant was polluted while he claimed otherwise. In such cases the language of physical defilement would have to be used, even though the parties would not imagine that the issue could be settled simply by looking at the defendant's hands and seeing whether they were bloodstained or not. The language of physical defilement would in a sense be metaphorical, although the distinction between metaphorical and literal would not have been fully formulated by those using it. If this is so, the Furies' reference to Orestes' bloody hands in 316 f., and their general assumption in the Binding Song that he is still defiled (when he cannot be physically so), can be understood as 'metaphor' in this qualified sense. It is less easy to apply this explanation to 246 f., where they claim to be tracking Orestes, like a wounded fawn, by a trail of blood, but here we are rescued by another kind of ambiguity, since the blood in question *could* be Orestes' own. That it is so is suggested by the simile of the fawn, which is evidently tracked by its own blood, and also by what follows, since one might naturally suppose that the blood here is the

[62] It is true that when we stand *outside* the play we are free to see the Furies, the gods and indeed Orestes himself as significant in more or less symbolic ways. Orestes, we may say, embodies a test case, showing how a man can be guilty by one standard and innocent by another, and the Furies embody that law, or human instinct, which would find such a man guilty. Hence, perhaps, the parallels which Class finds, (n. 21) 58–65, between their operation and that of conscience. But when we ask whether Orestes feels guilt, we are asking a question about a character within the play and accepting the fiction of his existence, and the answer to such a question must depend on what is actually said by him or about him in the text.

[63] The point remains valid for my purpose even though the Furies will retain many, perhaps all, of their old functions (927–37). *Some* change must occur around 900, even if it is only a change of attitude enabling them to perform their old functions to the advantage of Athens.

same blood whose smell entices the Furies at 253, and that this in turn is the blood which they threaten to drain from Orestes' body at 264 ff. It is true that if we *restrict* the reference of 247 to Orestes' own blood, to the exclusion of any idea of blood pollution, as Verrall wanted (on 244), we shall weaken the imaginative force of the passage and set puzzles for the audience (why is Orestes wounded?); but I think that the ambiguity is real and mitigates the inconsistency by preventing the audience from feeling sure that even the Chorus believe Orestes to be *physically* dripping with his mother's blood when he reaches Athens.[64] We thus have a progression from undoubted physical defilement at Argos and Delphi, through an ambiguous reference at 246 f., to a pollution in the Binding Song which, though described in similar language, need not literally be physical. And in the trial it is notable that they confine themselves to the moral issue and do not mention pollution of any kind.

If we now look at how the Furies' mode of action is described in this play, we find, in the Binding Song and elsewhere, a profusion of horrific language which, however, is often difficult to pin down to a precise meaning, since so much could be either literal or figurative. Indirect action through the 'natural' events of human life, as in *Ag.* and *Cho.*, is not to be ruled out here, especially from such vague and general accounts of the Furies' power as 553–65. But they often refer also to physically hunting down their victim, as indeed we see them doing; and in 264–6 we have their claim that they will drink his blood, a claim echoed in their reference to feeding on him at 302 and 305, and anticipated in Apollo's words at 183 f. (where, however, there is nothing to show that the human blood drunk by the Furies is not that shed by murderers, as at *Ag.* 1188 ff., *Cho.* 577 f.). Now that the Furies are occupying the same plane of reality as their victim, Aeschylus sees that he must give them a physical means of destroying him, and since he has already exploited (and perhaps invented) the idea that they drink blood, this new idea that they drink their *victim's* blood carries immediate conviction as well as being suitably horrific.

It has often been assumed that Aeschylus took over the idea of vampire Erinyes from popular belief. There can be no certainty in the matter, but if we can see the conception arising in the course of the trilogy, in response to intelligible dramatic needs, from that of Erinyes drinking *spilt* blood, then that is evidence that it originates here. And in extant ancient literature outside the *Oresteia* vampire Erinyes seem almost unknown.[65] Vampire-like qualities were attributed to demons with other names, such as Lamia,[66] but conscious belief in these creatures was apparently limited to children and the most backward peasants. Childish terrors are potent, and may never be entirely forgotten; perhaps the function of the vampire Erinyes of *Eum.* is to reawaken them in an adult audience.

We also find references to madness and the like, which again provide a link with the previous play. The nearest approach to consistency with the last scene of *Cho.* will be found at *Eum.* 320, where the Furies say that they 'appear' to the polluted man. On the other hand we learn at 377–80 that the victim, because *ἄφρων*, will not know what is happening to him (compare 932 f.), and this, while conforming to the common Greek notion of *ἄτη*, cannot strictly be reconciled with the idea that the Furies appear to their victim in his madness.

But more prominent than either of these passages is that at 328–33 (=341–6), which, with its echo of 306, clearly serves to explain what is happening in the ode as a whole; and here the Furies are using a magical invocation and dance to *cause* madness in Orestes. This is in line with *Cho.* 288, where madness is listed among the penalties which Erinyes can inflict, but not with the end of *Cho.* if we press the logical distinction between beings causing madness (which should themselves be real) and beings seen in madness (which should be illusory). Indeed we receive a

[64] At 230 *ἄγει γὰρ αἷμα μητρῷον* need mean little more than 'the crime of matricide leads me on'; *cf.* e.g. *Cho.* 1038, *φεύγων τόδ' αἷμα κοινόν*.

[65] The sole instance I have found is Soph. *fr.* 743 P/R, which Radt prints in the form *Τεισὼ δ' ἄνωθεν †εστινη† αἱματορρόφος*. *Τεισὼ* is R. Pfeiffer's conjecture for *τίσω* (*WS* lxxix [1966] 63–5), and is supposed to be a hypocoristic form of *Τεισιφόνη*: this is plausible, especially since *Τεισιφόνη* is attested much earlier than Pfeiffer himself realised (see R. R. Dyer, *JHS* lxxxix [1959] 52). The epithet will then be a reminiscence of Aeschylus. For Homer see n. 7.

[66] M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York 1940) 91; MacDowell on Ar. *Vesp.* 1035.

strong impression that, if the Furies have their way, the final result of their haunting Orestes will be to drive him mad, but that this has not happened yet. And this presentation of the Furies is appropriate to the dramatic context here, just as their presentation as beings seen in madness was appropriate to the dramatic context at the end of *Cho.* (though this is not to deny that the different references to madness provide an effective link between the plays). Again, it might seem strange that the Furies, who are the means by which curses are fulfilled, should themselves resort to casting magical spells, but this too becomes natural once they are realised as anthropoid creatures in the theatre; for how else does one person drive another mad?[67]

It is worth looking briefly at the question of relations between the Furies and Zeus, which is important for the interpretation of the trilogy. In *Ag.* and *Cho.*, as has often been pointed out,[68] the Furies are closely associated with Zeus' justice. This is paradoxical, since they are creatures of darkness and horror far removed from the Olympian gods, but the paradox is inherent in their function as gods of retribution, which itself is both just and horrible. (Similarly the Devil of Christian belief is in most respects diametrically opposed to God, but carries out God's will when he punishes sinners in Hell.) The grim ethos of these two plays, in which justice always involves the perpetuation of suffering and all that men can hope for from the gods is the *χάρις βίαιος* of ensuring that crime is punished, is encapsulated in this sinister alliance. In *Eum.*, on the other hand, there is no explicit reference to this alliance (unless for special reasons at 360 ff.; see n. 71 below), no doubt because the possibility is being opened up that Zeus will, in the end, have a better deal to offer us. Here again it is useful that the presentation of the Furies on stage concentrates our attention on their repulsive nature, which any Olympian god must abhor, and diverts it from their symbolic function.

But the change goes no further than this, and we should not exaggerate it, as so many critics have done.[69] That the Furies fulfil the purposes of Zeus may not be explicitly stated in *Eum.*, but the possibility is never ruled out. Zeus is not a character in the play; he seems almost as remote from the divine characters who take the stage here as from the human characters of *Ag.* and *Cho.*, and his purposes remain a matter of debate. The issue of the trial turns on his will, and, although Apollo knows much more about this than the Furies, they too accept, however grudgingly, that Zeus is the ultimate authority. They are still much concerned with justice of the kind familiar from *Ag.* and *Cho.* (154, 312 ff., the whole Second Stasimon),[70] and, if this justice is no longer directly linked with the name of Zeus, it is still favoured by Athena (696 ff., 927 ff.). Like the other Olympians, Zeus avoids their company (365 f.[71]), but a king may enforce his laws through executioners whom he would not care to meet (we may think again of the Devil and his demons in relation to God). When they complain about the actions of 'the younger gods' (162 ff., 778 ff.), they are evidently thinking, principally at least, of Apollo and (in the latter place) Athena, Zeus' children: Zeus himself is never described as a younger god,[72] and, while the

[67] To the modern reader the picture of hideous old women dancing round their victim and chanting spells at once suggests witches. *φαρμακίδες* were known in the fifth century (Ar. *Nub.* 749), but I cannot find evidence that the Greeks pictured them in this way.

[68] See esp. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Gnomon* xxiii (1951) 417 and *JHS* lxxiv (1954) 18–21.

[69] E.g. Solmsen (n. 3) 189: 'Now the antagonism between Zeus and the Erinyes becomes acute.' But he himself goes on to qualify this (197 ff.), making some of the points that I shall make here; *cf.* also Taplin (n. 8) 408 n. 2.

[70] *Cf.* M. Gagarin, *Aeschylean Drama* (Berkeley/L.A. 1976) 72 f. Note also *Eum.* 269 ff., where the Furies sing with relish of Hades punishing offences against god, guest or parents.

[71] At the beginning of this antistrophe there is no agreement as to even the approximate sense. The view commonly held, that the Furies are claiming to relieve the other gods of the task of punishment, would favour my present argument; but *τινα* (360) cannot mean 'the other gods'. More than one scholar has conjectured *Δία*, which could have become *τινα* by way of *Ζῆνα*: so e.g. *σπευδομένα* (M^{ac}) *δ' ἀφελεῖν Δία* (Heath) *τάσδε* (*vulgo*) *μερίμνας, θεῶν* [*δ'*] (Hermann) *ἀτέλειαν ἐμαῖς μελέταις* (Voss) *ἐπικραίνω* (Hartung), and then as Page. 'We do Zeus' dirty work,' the Chorus sing bitterly, seeing things from their own warped viewpoint, 'but of course such vile creatures are beneath his notice.' But one could hardly rely on this.

[72] His subjection of Kronos is mentioned (640 ff.), and the emphatic statement at 19 that Apollo is the prophet of Zeus might remind the audience that the older oracular powers were not. But these hints cannot suffice to convert the theology of *Eum.* into that of *PV.*

expression at 162 and 778 *could* include him, Aeschylus cannot intend his audience to reach for copies of Hesiod and *PV* to make sure that it does. At 334 ff. the Furies' prerogatives are said to be assigned by Moira, who is linked with the Furies elsewhere (172, 723 ff., 959 ff.), but at 392 in a similar context μοιρόκραντον is at once followed by ἐκ θεῶν δοθέντα. Anyway Athena recognises these prerogatives (418 ff., 476, 794 ff. etc.), so we cannot easily claim that Zeus does not.

Indeed it should be understood once and for all that there is no trace in *Eum.* of a quarrel between Zeus and Moira. The normal Greek assumption, questioned only in special cases,[73] was that the will of Zeus corresponded with that of Moira, since either could be thought of as the ultimate arbiter of what must be. So it was in *Ag.* and *Cho.* (specifically at *Cho.* 306), and we are told nothing different in *Eum.*; for it would be astonishing to find a novel theological development, and the sudden resolution of a previously unmentioned conflict, in the very last lines of the play.[74] Thus in connecting the Furies with Moira, as in the other ways I have discussed, Aeschylus does not deny their connection with Zeus, but merely avoids making it explicit.

It is true that *Apollo* feels nothing but contempt for the Furies. Although at 185–95, if the lines are taken literally, he allows that they do have their place somewhere, his only real concern is that it should be somewhere remote from him. But, while his idealism must command our sympathy, it is widely recognised that his attitude is incomplete compared with the mature wisdom of Athena, who appreciates the need for fear and τὸ δεινόν (698 f. etc.) and has a fuller understanding of the will of Zeus. To accuse Apollo of inconsistency, however, on the ground that the Furies were his ministers at *Cho.* 269 ff.,[75] involves reading that passage in a way that seems to me too literal-minded (see n. 92 below).

One further difficulty is that the Furies of *Eum.* claim at 210 ff. that they only pursue matricides, and have no interest in the crimes of Clytemnestra, whereas in *Cho.* Orestes had to fear the Erinyes of his father if he did *not* kill his mother (283 f., 925), and in *Ag.*, as sometimes also in *Eum.* (e.g. 421), Erinyes seem to take account of unlawful murders of any kind.[76] The difficulty is mitigated by the fact that the Greeks commonly spoke of the Erinyes of a particular individual, so that those of Clytemnestra will be different from those of Agamemnon (*Cho.* 924 f.), and we can suppose that the group we see in *Eum.* use the first person plural to refer sometimes to themselves alone and sometimes to Erinyes in general. But although this may seem logical enough, no one watching the play is likely to work out these details, for the play contains no reference to other Erinyes than these, and the impact of much of it, especially the ending, would be reduced if we did not take these to represent all the Erinyes that there are.[77] It is better, once again, to look at the matter from the point of view of the audience in the theatre. We can then note that at the end of *Cho.*, where the Furies were invisible spirits of vengeance described

[73] For the function of *PV* 515–20 in its context, and the fact that even here the author is not really interested in a 'theological hierarchy' (not that *Eum.* would be much affected if he were), see Fraenkel, *Agamemnon* iii 729 f.

[74] *Eum.* 1045 f., Ζεὺς παντόπτας οὕτω Μοῖρά τε συγκατέβα, is constantly taken in accounts of Aeschylean religion (e.g. recently R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: an Interpretation* [Cambridge 1980] 156–8), and often also in translations and commentaries (see esp. Thomson *ad loc.*), to refer to a reconciliation between Zeus and Moira. But the singular verb does not encourage this interpretation (*cf.* the distinctions drawn in Kühner–Gerth i 77–9), and the -κατα- element practically rules it out. The only other instance of συγκαταβαίνειν in Aeschylus is *Cho.* 727, where Peitho is to 'descend to the aid of' or 'enter the contest on the side of' Orestes. Similarly here the powers which *collectively* determine the future (coupled for emphasis as at Soph. *Phil.* 1466–8, Eur. *El.* 1248) are now allied with Athens: 'Thus hath all-seeing Zeus and Fate entered the contest on behalf of the citizens of Pallas' (Paley *ad loc.*). The interpretation will stand whether or not it is right to punctuate after ἀστοῖς.

[75] R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *CR* xlvii (1933) 97–104; *cf.* H. D. F. Kitto, *Form and Meaning in Drama* (London 1956) 68. It is worse still to suppose, with Kitto, that, because the fate of Cassandra could be seen from one point of view as the work of Apollo and from another as the work of the Furies (those of the House of Atreus), Apollo was conceived as making use of the Furies in *Ag.*

[76] *Cf.* Solmsen (n. 3) 181 f.; R. D. Dawe, *PCPS* clxxxix (1963) 59.

[77] *Cf.* Kitto, *Greek Tragedy*[3] (London 1961) 91.

by a madman, it would have seemed pointless to ask whether Orestes could see all the Furies in existence or only a group of them; and that in *Eum.*, where their behaviour is determined by their own character, it is only natural for them to display single-minded devotion to the cause which called them into being. Aeschylus leaves open the possibility that other Furies exist, but he knows that no normal member of the audience will think of them.

We have seen that there are manifold differences, including, from the point of view of armchair logical analysis, some inconsistencies, between the Furies of *Cho.* and those of *Eum.* The transition at the beginning of *Eum.* is not merely a staging device, irrelevant to the way in which the Furies are conceived: staging and conception are inseparable, and, just as the text of *Cho.* could best be appreciated by ignoring the physical reality of the Furies in *Eum.*, so the text of *Eum.* can best be appreciated by stressing that physical reality at the expense of *Cho.* (This richly characterised Chorus should not be omitted, as it commonly is, from discussions of Aeschylean character-drawing.) The inconsistencies are not arbitrary or accidental, however,[78] seeing that each play makes sense in its own terms and that a conscious transition is made between them.

III

If we hope to reach an understanding of the purpose and significance of the shift in conventions at the beginning of *Eum.*, we shall have to broaden the discussion to include more supernatural beings than the Erinyes; for it is not just the Erinyes that the shift affects. They provide the test case, since they are conspicuous by their invisibility at the end of *Cho.* We know, however, that the whole action of *Ag.* and *Cho.* is overseen and in some sense willed by the gods, but no god walks the stage, even in the privileged positions represented (in later tragedy, at least) by prologues and rooftop epiphanies. We know that the Ghost of Agamemnon is at work in *Cho.*, but we do not see him rise above his tomb, even when he has been invoked at much greater length than Darius in *Persae.* All that we learn about any divine power we learn from human beings. In *Eum.*, on the other hand, as soon as we have seen the Furies we also see one or two gods and a ghost in rapid succession, as though Aeschylus were determined to leave us in no doubt that a change has taken place in the conventions of the trilogy. (In fact this would perhaps provide the best motive for the introduction of Hermes, if he is indeed introduced; see 'Problems' 30.) And the rest of the action continues very much on the divine plane, with human figures (Orestes and the Jurors) appearing passive and colourless beside the supernatural ones.

Can this be dismissed as coincidence or as a simple matter of convenience in staging? Is it sufficient to say that the action of the whole trilogy moves at two levels, and that the dramatist merely chooses to bring one level into focus in the first two plays and the other in the third? We have already answered 'No' to a similar question concerned solely with the Furies; we shall now have to answer 'No' to the question in this broader version. A clear indication of this is that the avoidance, throughout *Ag.* and *Cho.*, of miraculous events and direct intervention from the supernatural world extends not only to the action on stage but to the much more extensive 'action' which is reported to us. The emphasis which critics place, with good reason, on the importance of divine forces can easily make us forget the simple fact that the world of these two plays conforms strictly (with one exception, considered below) to the laws of real life as Herodotus, for instance, would have understood them. The influence of supernatural forces can be seen in human affairs by wise old men like the Chorus of *Ag.*; these forces reveal themselves more directly through portents, like that of the eagles and the hare, through other 'natural' phenomena, like the winds at Aulis, and through oracles, like that of Apollo; and inspired figures like Calchas and Cassandra are in close touch with them. All this, to a fifth-century Greek, would seem realistic and normal. As soon, however, as the gods are seen directly in *Eum.*, this

[78] I am largely in agreement with the *professed* attitude of Dawe (n. 76) 21–6. It is unfortunate that, by the time he reaches *Eum.* (58 f.), Dawe's good intentions have been overcome by the temptation to be clever at the dramatist's expense.

kind of realism (there may, as we have noted, be others) hardly comes into question, for the gods are now capable of impinging on men's lives almost as physically and indiscriminately as the monsters of science fiction.

Apart from the Furies, the change is most noticeable in the case of Apollo.[79] In *Cho.* we are repeatedly told (269 ff., 900 f., 1029 ff.) that Orestes has consulted his oracle, and there is evidently no more direct way of discovering his will. At 1034 ff., when Orestes declares that he will take refuge at Delphi, we have no reason to suppose that Apollo will be there in person. Accordingly, when the Pythia appears at the beginning of *Eum.*, the audience will confidently expect her to prophesy, for what other role should a Pythia have, especially in a prologue? Sure enough, it turns out that in her whole speech 1–33 she is preparing to receive inspiration from Apollo, and, when she enters the temple in order to do so, it is evident that she will shortly deliver to us the fruits of that inspiration: perhaps Orestes will enter by a parodos and she will emerge to give him the oracle that he seeks. Thus one of the most astonishing features of her sudden reappearance at 34 is that she does *not* prophesy. It would be hard to think of another place in tragedy where the natural expectations of the audience, deliberately built up by the dramatist, are so startlingly confounded.[80] So terrible is the scene within the temple that the Pythia's arts fail her and she can only call upon Apollo in person (*αὐτῷ . . . Λοξίᾳ*, 61) to come and save the situation. There can perhaps be no place for prophecy in this new phase of the drama (except for blessings bestowed on Athens after the issues of the play are resolved), for, now that the gods are to participate in the action instead of overseeing it, we must not think of them as able to predict its outcome; and this failure of prophecy seems to go with the fact that Orestes' acquittal will be a spontaneous and miraculous act, freeing him from those chains of causation which have motivated the earlier events of the trilogy.[81] Be this as it may, the direct intervention of Apollo can be seen as a substitute for the oracle which the Pythia cannot give, and thus this brilliantly contrived scene provides not only a transition to visible Furies, but at the same time a preparation for a visible Apollo. And now that the Furies and Apollo have been 'made visible' in this manner, the visibility of other supernatural beings (the Ghost, Athena, perhaps Hermes) will seem natural to the audience without further preparation.[82]

I have a different point, however, to make about the Ghost, since her scene provides a neat illustration, on a small scale, of what I mean by following the logic of the dramatic presentation rather than that of an abstract conception. At *Eum.* 94 ff. she appears to the Furies in a dream, and the dream is modelled on those in Homer ('Problems' 26 f.). When Homer talks about a dream, he uses a word denoting a subjective experience which men in real life have during sleep. When, however, he depicts it in objective terms as a visitation by a figure outside the dreamer, he is led away from the real-life experience by something much like the logic of drama—in this case the logic of the scene as he has pictured it in his mind. Thus the dream figure may address the dreamer with the word *εὕδεις* (*Il.* ii 23, xxiii 69, *Od.* iv 804), not because dream figures in real life commonly do so, but, I believe, because the poet has in his mind a picture of a waking figure addressing a sleeping one, and in this situation *εὕδεις* is a natural comment for the waking figure

[79] But the change in Apollo's *character* since his punishment of Cassandra, which is seen here by Kitto *loc. cit.* (n. 75), seems to me illusory. Cassandra was punished for breaking her word to Apollo, whereas Orestes is rewarded for obeying and trusting him: in both cases Apollo preserves his *τιμή*. It is true that in *Eum.* we are shown a more benevolent *aspect* of Apollo, as of Zeus, but there is no indication in *Ag.* that he is never benevolent, nor in *Eum.* that he is now entirely civilised in his treatment of women.

[80] For some other instances of 'false preparation' (but not this one) see Taplin (n. 8) 94–6.

[81] One reader who presumably took the scene in this way was Richard Wagner: the failure of the Norns' prophetic powers in the Prelude to *Die Götterdämmerung* similarly indicates that prophecy is at an end and that the future is no longer determined by the past (though for quite un-Aeschylean reasons). See now M. Ewans, *Wagner and Aeschylus* (London 1982) 213–18.

[82] But if, as I have suggested ('Problems' 30), Athena, like Apollo, is first seen on the roof, then Aeschylus is very cautious in bringing each of these gods *gradually* into contact with the action in the orchestra. Orestes does not, in fact, meet an Olympian at ground level until 566; and even the Furies do not *actively* confront him until 244. *Cf.* S. Melchinger, *Die Welt als Tragödie* i (Munich 1979) 115 f.

to make. And in general, while the psychology of the dreamer may enter the reckoning, the words and actions of the dream figures reflect their own purposes rather than any typical features of dreams as we (or, I suspect, the Greeks) know them.[83]

Aeschylus, composing an actual drama for performance on stage, takes this considerably further. His ghost of Clytemnestra appears to all the Furies at once, not because a real dream could do so but because an externally visible visitant could. She quarrels with the Furies, as Patroclus' ghost does with Achilles, for being asleep when they should not be, since this again is natural for a waking figure addressing sleepers. But strangest of all, the Furies turn out at the end of the scene to be dreaming *about something else*, namely their pursuit of Orestes (130–2). Formally the inconsistency is absolute, for the Furies can dream either that they are pursuing Orestes or that they are being reproved for not doing so, but hardly both at once. But the logic of the dramatic presentation has enabled Aeschylus to ignore the fact that Clytemnestra is a dream figure, and so to insert a second dream, of a less stylised and more realistic kind, which the audience cannot see. It is a tribute to the power of this logic that the inconsistency probably troubles no one watching the play.

Let us now return to the world of *Ag.* and *Cho.* To the rule that throughout the action of these plays, both on and off stage, there is no divine intervention of a purely legendary kind, I have noted only one exception, the encounter of Cassandra with Apollo. It is true that, as we saw earlier, she is φρενομανής as well as θεοφόρητος (*Ag.* 1140), and certainly the treatment of Orestes showed us that Aeschylus was not consistently aware of the difference between seeing illusory beings in madness and being haunted by real supernatural forces. We have also seen, however, that while madness is heavily emphasised at the expense of divine possession in the case of Orestes (in *Cho.*), the reverse is true in the case of Cassandra, who more resembles Io. And we cannot doubt that she had a real meeting with a solidly anthropomorphic Apollo. Although I take παλαιστής at *Ag.* 1206 rather more figuratively than Fraenkel does *ad loc.* (for if Apollo had actually come to grips with her, what opportunity could she have had to break her word to him?), we cannot hope to reduce this encounter to some sort of mystical experience.

This, then, does count as an exception to the 'naturalism' of reported events, and so precludes a rigidly schematic account; but all the same there are factors which make Aeschylus' procedure explicable and mitigate the force of the exception. The possession of Cassandra is not, like that of Orestes, an essential element in the plot of the trilogy: moving and powerful though her part is, she has no effect whatever on future events in the House of Atreus, and is in a sense a piece of 'stage machinery' serving to reveal past and future and the divine forces at work behind 'natural' events. For this reason it matters less that her madness should seem plausible in terms of the conventions of *Ag.* and *Cho.* than that the audience should be convinced of the reliability of her visions. It is also worth noting that inspired prophets were familiar at Athens in real life,[84] and, although sexual union between god and priestess was not a regular feature of Greek belief,[85] it would not be surprising if unbalanced girls sometimes claimed to have received sexual attentions from the gods and were half believed by those around them, so that to this extent even Cassandra's possession, and its cause, might be seen as realistic and plausible.

Indeed, the distinction between the kind of divine intervention that occurs in everyday life and the kind confined to legend cannot be absolute, since many ordinary Athenians no doubt claimed miraculous experiences; there are miracles in this sense to be found in Herodotus, even in accounts of fairly recent times (e.g. Apollo's defence of Delphi at viii 36–9). It is not surprising,

[83] On Homeric dreams and their relation to dreams in real life see A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* (Utrecht 1978) 155–62 and *passim*. The extent and purpose of poetic stylisation in Homeric dreams have been much disputed, as Kessels' account shows, and I do not claim that the point I am making explains all the phenomena.

[84] Dodds (n. 45) 88 n. 46 cites Plato *Apol.* 22c, *Meno* 99c, *Ion* 534c. The Euripidean Cassandra, in the first part of her scene (*Tro.* 308–64), gives rather the impression of being drawn from life.

[85] Herodotus i 182 ascribes this belief, which he rejects, to certain Chaldean, Egyptian and Lycian cults.

then, that Aeschylus has not made such a distinction with *perfect* consistency; what matters is that he has made it as clearly as he has.

It is not only *Ag.* and *Cho.* that are concerned with the realities of human life rather than a purely mythical world, for the same conventions are shared by *Pers.*, *Sept.* and *Supp.*[86] The only serious breach of 'naturalism' that I have found in these plays[87] is the Ghost in *Pers.*, and I would account for this in much the same terms as the possession of Cassandra—not so much a part of the story which Aeschylus is telling as a device for exploring the significance of that story, and anyway not too remote from what would have been thought plausible in real (if not everyday) life. The thoroughly supernatural action of *PV*, on the other hand, would obviously place it, if it were genuine, in the same class as *Eum.*[88] Much of the evidence for lost plays also seems compatible, as far as it goes, with a firm distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' tragedies[89] (there was presumably no such distinction among satyr plays), though it would doubtless be rash to conclude that this was *invariably* observed.[90]

If religion in *Ag.* and *Cho.*, or in other plays, is presented from the point of view of human characters, and manifests itself as it does in real life, this does not mean that it can be taken any less seriously; rather the reverse. All that is said about supernatural forces in these plays is significant, and most of it (perhaps all of it, even Clytemnestra's account of the Alastor at *Ag.* 1500–4) should be taken as reflecting some sort of reality. But there is a real danger in ignoring the way in which these forces are presented and treating them as though they were shown directly in the manner of *Eum.*, as can be seen from the notorious excesses of Page's introduction to the Denniston–Page *Agamemnon*,[91] where Aeschylus seems to move in an extraordinary world of solidly anthropomorphic demons unconnected with any actual human experience. I am not disputing Page's claim that Aeschylus failed to advance beyond the religion (or superstition) of his own times, and I see no reason to expect a dramatist to do so. My point is rather that he did succeed in being true to that religion—to the experiences which gave rise to it and its significance for those who practised it—while the demonology of Page is not merely confused and primitive but has little to do with any religion that has ever existed. Certainly we cannot deduce a coherent theology from the various properties attributed to different divinities by different characters on different occasions, but we are not invited to do so: these properties, like those which men attribute to the gods in real life, are related not to one another but to the various ways in which the gods reveal themselves in the human world.[92] To some extent these

[86] *Cf.* Brown (n. 31) 308 n. 25.

[87] Zeus' seduction of Io, however true and significant in the world of *Supp.*, is sufficiently remote in time to count as myth from the point of view of the Danaids themselves rather than as part of the 'offstage action'. I am similarly untroubled by incidental references to the Sphinx at *Sept.* 539 ff., 776 f.

[88] The scrap of learning ἐκ τῆς Μουσικῆς Ἱστορίας found at the end of the Life of Aeschylus remarks, for what it is worth, that some of his tragedies διὰ μόνων οἰκονομοῦνται θεῶν καθάπερ οἱ Προμηθεῖς. But one may doubt whether the author could have cited any examples besides οἱ Προμηθεῖς (to which the information as given does not strictly apply).

[89] The fact that Aphrodite was a character in *Danaides* (*fr.* 44 M) could well mean that in this tetralogy, as in the *Oresteia*, there was a shift to the supernatural level in the third play (even though here the Chorus evidently remained human). In the Theban tetralogy the one irreducibly supernatural feature of the story, the Sphinx, is carefully relegated to the satyr play (she must doubtless have been mentioned in *Oedipus*, but the mention could have been brief and incidental to the play's action, as in Sophocles' *OT*). *Psychostasia*, on the generally accepted view, was set partly at Troy and partly on Olympus, but the extreme scepticism of Taplin (n. 8) 431–3 may well be justified.

[90] The case would evidently be altered, though we cannot tell exactly how, in plays which involved a divinity going unrecognised in the human world (Hera in *Semele*, Dionysus in *Edoni*).

[91] Pp. xiii–xvi; *cf.* H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* lxxvi (1956) 65. This position has not gone unchallenged: see e.g. H. D. F. Kitto, *Poiesis* (Berkeley/L.A. 1966) 38–74. The second chapter of W. Kranz, *Stasimon* (Berlin 1933), despite the use that Page makes of it, is not tarred with the same brush: at one point (46) Kranz actually makes the slightly exaggerated claim 'dass alle verschiedenen Erscheinungen des Über- und Unterirdischen in dieser Welt nur Ausdruck ist für eine gerade im Augenblick als wirksam empfundene Macht'.

[92] Thus, if an expedition avenging a breach of hospitality is said to be sent by Zeus Xenios (*Ag.* 60 ff.), and the winds that delay it are attributed to Artemis (*Ag.* 140 ff., 201 f.), this does not mean that we should concern ourselves with the theological implications of a breach between Artemis and Zeus (*cf.* J. J. Peradotto, *Phoenix* xxiii [1969] 251 f.). Indeed the whole question of Artemis' motive here should not be discussed as though she were a character on stage to whom the

properties can be seen as symbols or metaphors, though they also provide the best means available to men for making sense of what happens around them. If Aeschylus, while setting a play in the human world, had arranged its plot to reflect some theological theory of his own, he would have been guilty both of artificially manipulating the action without regard for human plausibility and of showing himself out of touch with the religious impulses that men actually feel.

For Homer, as for Aeschylus, there is a difference between gods as seen directly by the poet and gods as manifested in human life. Every reader of the *Iliad*, especially, observes that most of the gods' interventions in the human world are, in a crude sense, unnecessary to the plot, since they produce no results that could not have been produced by natural causes. The gods here, as in *Ag.* and *Cho.*, merely overdetermine actions which in their essentials could plausibly happen in real life, and human figures (who, as is often pointed out, may be aware that a god is at work without being able to put a name to him) have much the same view of them as any ordinary Greeks would have had. When, on the other hand, the omniscient narrator depicts the private lives of the gods on Olympus, the demands of realism pull him in another direction, towards giving the gods characters that resemble those of human beings. Some incongruity results, for it is not always clear why the gods as we see them on Olympus should restrict themselves to overdetermining events that could really happen instead of interfering arbitrarily in men's affairs whenever they choose. In places the poet, as though aware of the difficulty, invents prohibitions by Zeus preventing other gods from interfering, or tells us that Zeus himself is subject to Moira; in other places, such as *Il.* v, the world of Olympus spills over onto the battlefield of Troy and fully anthropomorphic gods act upon men in ways to which the word 'overdetermination' cannot be applied. Homer, then, does not segregate the world of 'real life' from that of fully anthropomorphic gods as strictly as Aeschylus, but even so the distinction between the two worlds is clearly discernible.[93]

I have not yet discussed the reason *why* Aeschylus should have abandoned the human viewpoint of *Ag.* and *Cho.* when he came to *Eum.*, given that that viewpoint enabled him to be true to life without in any way preventing him from exploring the religious implications of the action, and given the sacrifice of strict consistency which the change entails. Whether the change was 'required by the plot' is a question that cannot be objectively answered, but it is possible to imagine a sequel to *Cho.* in which the Furies remain invisible, the Chorus consists of Athenian citizens, the trial is instituted by the King of Athens, the prosecution is conducted by a Tyndareus or an Erigone, and Orestes defends himself without calling a witness.[94] If we ask why Aeschylus did not follow such a scheme, part of the explanation will no doubt be that the visible presence of divine forces brings home their existence and importance all the more powerfully to the audience, and a complete explanation would depend upon a complete interpretation of the play, something which scholars who value their reputation have so far barely attempted, and which certainly will not be attempted here.

I offer, however, a few subjective comments. *Ag.* and *Cho.* present us with a problem that is strictly insoluble in its own terms: the doer must suffer, and therefore crime must breed further crime in an endless cycle. It is often said that this is what makes these plays truly tragic, and, whether or not that term has any precise meaning, the plays certainly have a dignity and an enduring serious interest which no play could have if it dealt merely with a problem which the dramatist claimed to have solved. In *Ag.* all is darkness, and, although it is clear that the particular

dramatist was obliged to ascribe plausible mental processes; she is revealed purely through the phenomena that she causes, like gods in real life. Again, if certain events can be seen from different viewpoints as the work of Apollo or the Furies (p. 28 above), this does not commit Aeschylus to a doctrine that Apollo and the Furies are in alliance.

[93] Contrast the Cyclic poets, who, being less interested in human realism, admit the purely miraculous much more freely: see J. Griffin, *JHS* xcvii (1977) 39–53.

[94] It is far from certain, indeed, that the trial was itself traditional: see F. Jacoby, *FGrH* IIIb (Suppl.) i 22–5, ii 20–9. For Tyndareus and Erigone as prosecutors see *ibid.* ii 48 n. 8.

villains of this play will not triumph for ever, there is no sign that positive good can ever prevail. In *Cho.* there are indications that Apollo may perhaps be willing to end the chain of crime and punishment, but it is impossible to see how he can do this without the sort of miraculous intervention which does not occur in life and which is therefore ruled out by the conventions of this play; and so the Chorus at the end can still foresee no solution. And indeed, if the gods had simply burst miraculously into the world of *Cho.* to end the sequence of evil by their own arbitrary decree, the audience would have felt cheated and the issues of the first two plays would have been intolerably trivialised. The same would have been true, I think, if the human agents had suddenly found that they could somehow solve the problem by themselves. Aeschylus wants to preserve the serious, 'tragic' vision of *Ag.* and *Cho.*, but he also wants, however illogically, to end the trilogy on a note of joy and hope, which expresses, perhaps, an emotional faith in what might be (the blessings bestowed on Athens at the end are to be fulfilled from 458 BC on) rather than a belief about existing reality. The impossible is achieved partly through the complexities and ambiguities of the Trial Scene (the equal vote showing that the insoluble problems of *Ag.* and *Cho.* are not forgotten), but partly also, I believe, through the deliberate alteration, at the beginning of *Eum.*, of the very premises on which the action rests; for, once the issue has been turned into a conflict between divine powers on stage, this can be resolved by the defeat and conversion of one party. To alter the terms of a problem that you cannot otherwise solve may not be an honest procedure in logic, but because Aeschylus' procedure is *dramatically* honest and never fails to convince us, his art can seem to accomplish what logical argument never could.

When Beethoven wrote symphonies in minor keys but wanted to end them joyfully in the major, he similarly faced the problem of achieving this without negating and trivialising the 'tragic' vision of the earlier movements. In both the Fifth and the Ninth Symphonies he sought to solve this problem by providing self-conscious transition passages to show that the finale stands in some peculiar relation (however this is to be defined) to what has gone before, and also by altering his very medium (adding new instruments in the Fifth and a choir and soloists in the Ninth) to show that the music is moving to a different plane. Parallels between different artistic forms can never take us far, but there may be some force in this one.

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