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DISENTANGLING THE BEAST: HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS IN AESCHYLUS' *ORESTEIA*

I

THE Greeks of the polis, most of them with hands dirty from the earth and animals they worked with and struggled against every day, knew that there was a thin line that separated their own humanity from the life of the beast. Hesiod provides the first explicit testimony to the difference between the two worlds:

> But you, Perses, deliberate on this in your heart (φρεσί) and listen now to right (δίκη), forgetting violence (βίη) altogether. For the son of Cronus drew up this law for men, that fish and beasts and flying birds eat one another, since right (δίκη) is not in them. But to mankind he gave right (δίκη) which is by far the best. For if anyone knows the right (τὰ δίκαια) and is willing to speak it (ἀγορεῦσαι), to him far-seeing Zeus gives prosperity. (*WD* 274-81)

Man alone has access to justice, whereas animals are condemned to live by violence, turning on one another. But in an agrarian world where words are to be matched by deeds, justice is not a passive entitlement but must be spoken aloud and acted upon. For, as Hesiod continues, there is no prosperity for those whose words betray their humanity, for those who lie (ψεύσεται, 283) and swear falsely, who know one thing and speak forth another.

This connection between humanity, justice, and speech–and its contrast with the lives of 'dumb' beasts–is central to early Greek thought, and nowhere is it found with greater force than in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The trilogy depicts, as we are so often told, the birth of a more democratic community, the evolution of justice from a morally primordial desire for blood vengeance to a civic system of trial by jury. The 'beast' in this process is more than a mere foil for the human action, more even than a representative of the violence of retribution that must be caged and locked away if civilization is to progress. Animals in the pre-polis arena erected by Aeschylus are insidious creatures, refusing to accept simple metaphorical, that is, stylistically ornamental roles. When Agamemnon becomes an eagle, it is no simple figure of speech–the bird and king merge before our eyes. The boundaries of humanity itself are too porous, allowing the beast to slip in and out with discomforting ease. The poet's powerfully metaphorical language creates an anarchic world where man and beast are muddled, where human and non-human species share a single soul. The *Oresteia* presents an undifferentiated and untenable world that finally, under the force of humanity's unique endowment of speech, gives way to mankind's unique political structure, the polis. Only here can δίκη exist at all. By the end of the three plays, the bestial, human, and divine elements have been separated and channelled into their proper places in the polis, an institution which not only represents this proper arrangement, but also makes such an essential differentiation possible.[1]

[1] J.J. Peradotto, in an illuminating note not directly linked to his main argument, refers to the 'assimilation' of man to beast and its connection to the development of δίκη in *Oresteia*; 'The omen of the eagles and the ΗΘΟΣ of Agamemnon', *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 246 n.32. My paper is in several ways an amplification of that suggestion. Also similar in approach is T.G. Rosenmeyer, *The Art of Aeschylus* (Berkeley 1982) 138-41, who sees animals as representatives of the repulsive world which exists prior to the advent of civilization. A detailed study of this imagery and the theme of violence is A.M. Moreau, *Eschyle: la violence et le chaos* (Paris 1985) esp. 61-99, 267- 91. The introductory chapters of C. Segal's *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, MA 1981) on the man/beast and man/god polarities in Greek are still a good starting place for these issues, although Aeschylus does not maintain the 'in-betweenness' to the end and thus defies most structuralist approaches. Segal himself in a later study seems to note that Aeschylus must be treated differently; 'Greek tragedy and society', in J.P. Euben (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Berkeley 1986) 60; *cf.* P. Vidal-Naquet, 'Hunting and sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', in J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Tragedy and Myth in Ancient Greece* (tr. J. Lloyd, Atlantic

The purpose of this study is to set out the various ways Aeschylus presents this jumbled world, how it is finally resolved, and what is the thematic significance of this resolution. So many eagle-eyed readers have already tracked the animal imagery in the *Oresteia* that one may worry that the once dangerous and magnificent beasts have become a bit familiar, tamed by the frequent critical safaris. What can we possibly have left to learn? Can we just not leave the poor beasts alone? But there is in fact still a bit of uncharted territory, since most previous approaches to Aeschylean animals have taken one of only two routes. Some do not treat the creatures as primary symbols, but as subsidiary to what are considered broader motifs, such as the ubiquitous expressions of entanglement, sacrifice, corrupted fertility, spilled blood, etc. I believe, however, that the human/beast conflation is one of the primary images in the *Oresteia*, from which most of the other famous polarities ultimately derive.[2] Other scholars have concentrated on individual species—lions bagged this time, a viper and eagle trapped another, hounds collared in still another. But my interest is in the kind of world created when animals—any animals—are so easily blurred and confused with the human characters. There has been no attempt here to analyze all of the animal imagery in the trilogy, much less all of its potential meaning. Rather, by examining certain episodes in detail in the order in which they occur in the text (the few exceptions to this rule will, I hope, clarify rather than confuse the argument), the intimate connections of Aeschylus' style and structure with the moral and political themes of the text—how he embodies the thematic problems in the problems of his style and forces us to relive our lives in that fresh light[3]—will become more clear.

II

We can best begin by examining the first extensive use of animal imagery in the *Agamemnon* and the kind of critical response it has elicited. The extended simile towards the beginning of the parodos ostensibly compares the war cry of the Atreidae (μεγάλ' ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη, 48) evoked by the theft of Helen (60 f.) to the screeching of vultures robbed of their

Highlands, New Jersey 1981) 150-74. Aeschylus' style and structure result not merely in a tension between polarities but a mingling that can and must be—and *is*—brought to a end by the conclusion of the trilogy. The polis itself is in some ways the heroic figure in the *Oresteia*. The term polis in this study refers to the mature polis, the functioning, democratic institutions that a contemporary of Aeschylus would associate with Athens. The word itself is used in the *Oresteia* to describe Troy (25x), Argos (19x), a city in general (9x), and finally Athens (30x). Troy is a polis that becomes ἄπολις (*Eu.* 457) at its destruction. Argos is a dysfunctional polis, with Delphi as the transitional point to Athens, which is referred to 21 times as a polis in the final 300 verses of the trilogy. Here alone can the beast be co-opted into civilization.

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[2] Interestingly, the animal/human dichotomy does not make it onto the list of 26 antitheses compiled by F.I. Zeitlin, 'The dynamics of misogyny: myth and mythmaking in the *Oresteia*', *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 171-2. It does appear in the shorter list of Greek (not necessarily Aeschylean) polarities of R.G.A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1982) 62. Of course, one scholar's 'primary' metaphor may be another critic's derivative. B.H. Fowler suggests that the animal imagery derives from other figures of compulsion, an issue which itself is primarily related to gender; 'Aeschylus' imagery', *C&M* 28 (1969) 39. Rosenmeyer (n.1) 130 considers eating as the primary metaphor of which animals are a subset. An especially thorough treatment of imagery is E. Petrounias' *Funktion und Thematik der Bilder bei Aischylos* (Göttingen 1976) 129 f., who divides his chapters into a 'Leitmotiv'—usually animals—and secondary images. Less analytical but similarly arranged is J. Dumortier's *Les Images dans la Poésie d'Eschyle* (Paris 1975). We often take for granted that animal imagery is pervasive throughout the entire Aeschylean corpus. F.R. Earp's catalogue is revealing: there are more animal metaphors in the *Agamemnon* (33) than in the *Libation Bearers* (18) and *Eumenides* (13) together, more than in the other four plays combined. But even the *Eumenides* contains more than any Aeschylean play outside the trilogy. Earp counts only obvious metaphors, not all the allusions and twists of language; *The Style of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1948) 104.

[3] Nicely phrased by W.B. Stanford and R. Fagles in the introduction to Fagles' Penguin translation (1979) 49.

young (τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν οἵτ' ....., 49).[4] But the comparison involves a subtle shift, as Fraenkel and others have pointed out.[5] The simile[6] begins as a comparison between two different sets of cries, but it slips quietly into a deeper, more thematically significant level of thought. The poetic movement goes prosaically (and thus awkwardly) something like this: the sons of Atreus raise a cry like bereaved vultures whose lament is heard by a god who sends an avenging Fury—so does Zeus send the sons of Atreus to exact punishment on Paris for this theft. Even a straightforward reading of the simile, then, involves a fairly elaborate system of analogies. Few critics in the last forty years, however, have been content to walk away from such rich imagery. The vultures and their lost children are commonly viewed as representing Thyestes and his children, or Clytemnestra and Iphigenia, as well as Menelaus, Agamemnon, and Helen. A brief review of the arguments for these interpretations will provide a necessary background for the slightly different interpretation offered here of the meaning of Aeschylus' animal imagery throughout the *Oresteia*.

The Atreidae cry out war like vultures 'who, off their usual tracks in grief for their children, very high above their beds, wheel in circles, sped on by the strokes of their wings, having lost the labour they put into watching over the beds of their young'.[7] The pain felt by the vultures for the missing chicks (ἄλγεσι παίδων, 50) is brought into the human world by the anthropomorphism of παίδων and seems to demand explication. Moreover, if this is an analogy for the theft of Helen, critics have wondered at the significance of the plural (and indeed of why 'children' at all, instead, perhaps, of a spouse). One answer has been that buried here is a subtle allusion to Thyestes' children, lost to their father in beastly fashion. On the other hand, the individual most associated in the trilogy with grief for a lost child is Clytemnestra. Thus the plural chicks become Iphigenia, and the plural vultures Clytemnestra, or (in an ironic coupling) Clytemnestra and Agamemnon.

The rare use of λεχέων for nests has also drawn understandable attention. It is unquestionably appropriate for the immediate context—Menelaus' bed has been fouled by an Asiatic interloper—but how does it apply to the other possible referents? Thyestes' bed may have been an issue, as he seduced Atreus' wife— they were 'away from their usual tracks', to be sure. Agamemnon's bed has also entertained an adulterous affair for several years when the old men of the chorus chant these verses, but this has nothing to do with the causes of the war. From Clytemnestra's point of view, however, her marriage bed has been betrayed in the most brutal manner. The queen's anger derives from the slaughter of her daughter, Iphigenia, the child of her marriage, the product of her bed. Perhaps this can be connected with the rare adjective used of the labour the vultures wasted over the young— 'careful-watching-over-the-bed' (δεμνιοτήρη / πόνον, 53-4). The care and painful effort in raising children is not a central element in the life of Agamemnon or Menelaus. Thyestes could be accused by structuralists of becoming too

[4] The text is that of Page's OCT unless otherwise noted.

[5] On 59. B. Daube maintains that the cry of the Atreidae is a combination of lament (γόος) and call to war (βοή); *Zu den Rechtsproblemen in Aischylos' Agamemnon* (Zurich/Leipzig 1939) 99.

[6] Almost alone among recent scholars in rejecting any symbolism for the vultures in the simile is A.M. van Erp Taalman Kip, 'The unity of the *Oresteia*', in M.S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond* (Oxford 1996) 122-3 and 136 n. 11. Many of the following observations are standard in the critical literature; I have added a few which I think strengthen the argument, especially for the identification of the birds with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia.

[7] This translation uses an interpretation of ἐκπατίοις proposed by S. Goldhill, 'The sense of ἐκπάτιος at Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 49', *Eranos* 87 (1989) 65-69; see discussion below. I have nothing new to add to the debate over the meaning of ὕπατοι and simply repeat the standard translation.

close to his children,[8] and whatever effort he did take in watching his sons grow was certainly wasted. The extant tales of his family, however, do not suggest that he was any more involved in the rearing of his sons than any other mythological father. It is Clytemnestra, of course, who fits this picture most closely. She laments the loss of her child in quite similar terms when she contrasts her feelings towards Iphigenia with those of her husband who 'sacrificed his own child, my dearest child' (literally, 'one born through labour-pains', ἔθυσεν αὑτοῦ παῖδα, φιλτάτην ἐμοὶ / ὠδῖν', 1417-18). The 'careful watching over the bed' effort may implicate Clytemnestra in the vulture simile.[9] Perhaps it is no coincidence that the only other appearance of this adjective in all of extant Greek literature appears just thirty lines after Clytemnestra's reference to her fruitless labour-pains (1448-54). The chorus asks for a quick death rather than a painful and 'careful watching over the bed-' fate now that Agamemnon has been struck down (literally 'tamed', δαμέντος, 1451; *cf.* 1495) by a woman. The lingering labour wasted over the (presumed dead) young in the vulture simile now becomes the lingering death of the (still alive) old, and Clytemnestra is the figure lurking behind both passages. Sex (*cf.* κοινόλεκτρος of Cassandra, 1441), birth, and death are all linked by images of the bed, and—as we shall see—Clytemnestra is in the middle of it.

This survey of possible readings of the simile—by no means exhaustive[10]—indicates what most critics have long suggested, that Aeschylus' images are multivalent, that sets of meaningful analogies can be legitimate without being mutually exclusive. The simile conjures up for different readers Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, and Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Thyestes and his children. To what end, though? Why the multiple layers of correspondence? The reasonable answer usually provided by studies of imagery is that the symbolism foreshadows incidents and subtly evokes important themes such as parental loss, corrupted sacrifice, and perverted fertility that eventually become central to the tragedies. While I do not disagree with this approach, my suggestion is that the more important point here for understanding the trilogy is the fact of the ambiguity itself, the blurring of distinctions between human and animal in particular, that produces the desire for critical analysis and systematizing of the resulting disorder. Scholars for some time have pointed out that one of the constants in Aeschylean poetry is the movement from ambiguity to clarity, from multiple and muddled readings to a comparatively univocal resolution.[11] What is thematically significant, then, about this simile—and other animal images

[8] S. Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: the Oresteia* (Cambridge 1984) 14 n.11, for example, believes that in Lévi-Straussian terms such substitutions can be made, noting that Helen as the παῖδες can also be child, both child and not child.

[9] Clytemnestra had earlier (1392) rejoiced in the shower of Agamemnon's blood no less than a crop 'during the birth-pangs' (ἐν λοχεύμασιν) of the buds. Although there is no careful separation of the terms τέκνον and παῖς in the *Oresteia*, it is interesting that Clytemnestra uses only παῖς of her daughter (cf. *Ag.* 1432). She calls Orestes both τέκνον (*Ch.* 896, 910, 912, 920, 922; *cf.* 829) and παῖς (*Ch.* 896). At *Ag.* 877 she refers to Orestes as παῖς, but in a context that at first could easily, and with painful irony, refer to Iphigenia. Agamemnon, according to the chorus, called his daughter τέκνον (208). Clytemnestra resented being treated like a παῖς (277), no doubt at least in part because she had witnessed how lightly a woman's life and speech could be valued. R.J. Rabel, 'Apollo in the vulture simile of the *Oresteia*', *Mnemosyne* 35 (1982) 325 notes the frequent use of παῖδες for the children, but places these references in the context of Apollo's role as protector of young.

[10] R.J. Rabel, for example, suggests that the παῖδες here become the Ἀτρέως παῖδας in v. 60 and are to be numbered among the 'lost children' of the trilogy; 'The lost children of the *Oresteia*', *Eranos* 82 (1984) 211-13. B.H. Fowler's detailed study of the Furies finds them in the vultures—indeed, in most of the animals and characters in the three plays—but for reasons discussed later, I remain skeptical; 'The creatures and the blood', *ICS* 16 (1991) 85-100.

[11] B.H. Fowler's 1969 article (n.2) and A. Lebeck's *The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Structure* (Washington 1971) formed the basis for this kind of reading of images and they touch on most categories of symbolism. A nice summary of the Aeschylean progression from ambiguity to clarity can be found in J. Herington, *Aeschylus* (New Haven 1986) 67.

with similar linguistic richness—is not so much any exact analogy for the vultures and their young but the troubling fusion of human and bestial identities the poetic ambiguity creates. The poet's language mirrors the thematic conflation of the various polarities—and their ultimate resolution—so often recounted in the scholarship. The audience, in other words, becomes lost at times in the menagerie of images from which we are slowly extricated over the course of the dramas.

What is dangerous about the pre-polis world represented by the action of the plays is that these two categories of living beings can be, and consistently are, confused, and the results are predictably disastrous. We are by nature beastly, and it is—as Aristotle will later set out more systematically—the polis that keeps us from devolving to our uglier sides. The city-state makes it possible for us to live fully human lives. Humans are speaking, law-needing animals.[12] Aeschylus tells us that without the polis we live in moral chaos. And the single most important part of the development of culture is the isolation of the beast in us, the differentiation of our separate parts into their proper places. Νόμος, as Pindar said, is everything.

The *Oresteia* traces just such a progression, from a world where animals and humans are inextricably and ruinously woven together to the rise of a differentiated polis with animals, humans, and gods in their respective places. This balance, or order, is one of the various meanings of δίκη articulated in the text. Studies tracing the development of images throughout the three plays tend to emphasize the subordination of one side of a polarity to another by the trilogy's end—women to men, family to state, etc.—or speak of a harmonizing or shift in the meaning of the symbolism (sacrifice, wind, wrestling, etc.). But a better description of this movement for the animal imagery would be from mingled to separated, conflated to segregated. We can return to the opening lines of the parodos to discover just how perilously fluid this world is at the beginning of the trilogy.

III

Before the simile even begins, the chorus of elders combines a metaphor from the human polis with one appropriate to animals. The first image used to describe Menelaus and Agamemnon comes from the world of the Athenian courts—μέγας ἀντίδικος (41)—avenger, to be sure, but with connotations of an adversary at law.[13] But in the same sentence they are also called the 'firm pair of Atreidae' ὀχυρὸν ζεῦγος 'Ατρειδᾶν, 44), the word for 'pair' really meaning a pair of yoked animals.[14] Here is an immediate conflation of what will later in the trilogy come to represent the most human/civic of institutions, the court of law, with the animal world. The sons of Atreus are harnessed by Zeus (Διόθεν, 43) to seek justice. So the polis, justice, Zeus, and the human agents are bound together in the first five verses of the parodos through a metaphor taken from the domestication of animals.

This important thematic imagery of entanglement, binding, and control so frequently observed in the *Oresteia*—nets, yokes, snares, robes, traps, coils, webs, bits etc.—derives its power, I would suggest, from the connection with animals. Animals are to be trapped and domesticated for the good of the community—agriculture and sacrifice will provide the images of a just polis at the end of the trilogy. By its very definition, the yoking of men—an activity

[12] See the discussion of C.W. Macleod, 'Politics and the *Oresteia*', *JHS* 102 (1982) 135. He compares Plato's *Laws* 937el, where the law itself is said to civilize or tame (ἡμέρωκε) all human life. We will see this image again at the beginning of the *Eumenides*.

[13] See Fraenkel *ad loc.*; cf. στρατιῶτιν ἀρωγήν, 47.

[14] The term is less likely here to allude to the vehicle pulled by a pair of animals. Thomson *ad loc.* remarks that the image 'anticipates the image of the eagles which follows' in that it could be used of a pair of birds.

for animals brought into the human sphere—reveals an unhealthy and chaotic world. It is not merely uncivilized or inverted, it is confused. To be coupled with Zeus in the pursuit of justice must appear at first to be the most appropriate of images for kings seeking vengeance for a direct violation of divinely-sanctioned hospitality. Subsequent events, however, will prove that something is seriously wrong with the fusion suggested in the metaphor, with Agamemnon's putting on the 'harness of necessity' (ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον, 218). Human and animal must not be bound so closely, so tightly 'yoked' that their worlds are indistinguishable.

The Atreidae share in the animal kingdom again just as the simile is introduced. The participle used to describe their war cry is κλάζοντες (48), a word borrowed from Homer that resonates with both the shouting of men in war and the screeching of birds.[15] In fact, in one of the similes frequently pointed to as a source for the Aeschylean passage, *Iliad* 16.428-30, κλάζω depicts both the warriors' shouts (κεκλήγοντες, 430) and the cries of the vultures (κλάζοντε, 429) to whom they are compared.[16] Aeschylus chooses a word to describe the human shouts of the Atreidae that already has connections with the animal world. It is the perfect pivotal point from which to dangle the human on one side and the animal on the other. In Homer, the point is merely a comparison of the martial screams of different sets of fighters—the word is repeated for each pair. In Homeric similes, often wonderfully complex in their own right with multiple analogies to both past and future action, the two objects of comparison remain distinct.[17] For Aeschylus, however, the cries belong to the same world, where human and animal overlap. The sons of Atreus metaphorically share in the world of the birds *before* they are compared to them in the simile. The boundaries are already insecure.

The adjective modifying the vultures' grief, ἐκπατίοις (49), a hapax, has most often been translated 'extreme' or 'immense'. Simon Goldhill has recently argued for 'off their usual tracks', returning to the definition given by the scholion in M and Tr, and in Hesychius, and compatible with the Homeric expression ἐκ πάτου.[18] If this is right, we are presented with a particularly vivid picture of the birds' 'distraught circling', and, as Goldhill observes, another element of comparison between the Atreids and the vultures in the suggestion that they both turn away from their homes as a result of their loss.[19] This is part of the preparation for the more complex hybridization of the brothers to come.

[15] Vultures, cranes, a heron and an eagle, as well as various warriors, are subjects of the verbal idea in Homer; the root also modifies the screech of dogs, arrows, and the wind. At *Scutum* 442, Ares himself shouts. Aeschylus uses the word elsewhere six times of persons, once of bells and once of axles on a chariot. For κλάζω of men and animals in other early Greek authors, see M.S. Silk, *Interaction in Poetic Imagery* (Cambridge 1974) 18 n.2.

[16] The parallels between the Homeric and Aeschylean passages, as M.L. West observes, do not demand Page's change from μέγαν to the Homeric μεγάλ'; 'The parodos of the *Agamemnon*', *CQ* 29(1979) 1 n.1; so also Bollack and Judet de La Combe *ad loc.*

[17] Cf. *Il.* 17.755-9, for the repetition of κεκλήγοντες with each pair. As Segal (n.1, 1981) 7 asserts, in the Homeric epic the limits between human and bestial, though threatened, are relatively stable. See K.C. King, *Achilles: Paradigms of the War Hero from Homer through the Middle Ages* (Berkeley 1987) 17-24 on the slippage of Achilles into the bestial in the lion simile at *Il.* 20. 164 f. I find in the Homeric language of the Aeschylean passage little of what M. Ewans calls 'epic confidence'; 'Agamemnon at Aulis: a study in the *Oresteia*', *Ramus* 4 (1975) 19. See M.W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Volume V: books 17-20* (Cambridge 1991) 24-41 for an excellent summary of the different forms and functions of the Homeric simile.

[18] (n.7); see his complete review of the history of this issue.

[19] The main verb of which the vultures are the subject is also a hapax, στροφοδινοῦνται (51). We have no way of being certain that the verb was unknown at the time, but its filling up the entire verse—as δεμνιοτήρη, another word unique to Aeschylean verse (used twice, as we have seen) will shortly do (53)—suggests poetic pride. Fraenkel dryly reminds us of Aristophanes' ῥῆμα βόειον. Perhaps an astute listener would have heard Homer's στρεφεδίνηθεν (*Il.* 16.792), the subject of which are Patroclus' eyes after his Apolline slap on the back; see Bollack and Judet de La Combe on 51. If so, the tragic and very human context of fated loss and suffering might also bring the vulture's pain into the human arena.

Verse 50 contains two well-known examples of anthropomorphism mentioned above. The Atreidae give the war cry like vultures 'in grief for their children (παίδων), very high above their nests (λεχέων)'. The use of the noun παίδων for animal offspring is extremely unusual, its only previous application to non-humans being in a fable of Archilochus (179 W). Clearly this brings the vultures' lives into the human sphere, almost demanding the kind of exegesis so frequently undertaken. Who is the human counterpart to the 'children'? Helen hardly fits the part, so we naturally (despite Denniston-Page's hesitation) turn to other lost children in the myth.[20]

As is often noted, λέχος is also borrowed from the human world. Aeschylus is the first to apply the word to animals.[21] It appears in only two other places in the *Oresteia*, both of which are in the *Agamemnon* and are suggestive. At 410-11, the chorus laments for the house and the Atreidae (πρόμοι), as well as for the bed (λέχος) and the 'husband-loving tracks'.[22] No matter how we read this last expression, clearly the reference is to the violated bed of Menelaus and Helen, the cause of the Trojan War and thus of the action of the play. The other appearance of λέχος is equally portentous, as it refers to the betrayed bed of the elder son of Atreus. Cassandra tells the chorus that there is someone—an impotent lion tumbling in bed, a stay-at-home (λέοντ' ἄναλκιν ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον / οἰκουρόν)—plotting vengeance against the master on his return (1223-6). Fraenkel (on 1224) comes to the odd conclusion that strictly 'it is only the indolence of Aegisthus which is here denoted, not his adultery'. This interpretation ignores the obvious significance of the tumbling in bed (Clytemnestra will not be shy about her strange sexual thrill at the death of her husband (1388 f., esp. 1446-7), as well as the consistent use in pre-Aeschylean Greek of λέχος as a bed of cohabitation.[23] It is also frequently used in Homer of a funeral bier—that of (or planned for) Patroclus, Lycaon, Hector, Achilles, and Odysseus. For Andromache, it is both empty marriage bed and bier for her husband (*Il.* 24.743). That is, λέχος is polyvalent and ambiguous by nature, a place of love and life, treachery and deceit, death and burial. Its appearance as a vultures' nest, now empty of offspring, a site of mourning and the source of war, should make us take notice.[24] Although slightly off the beaten track as well, a more detailed examination of the Aegisthus-as-lion passage would be useful at this point. Here we find the conflation of human and animal used in particularly vivid fashion, and the lessons we can learn from its examination can better illuminate the nature of Aeschylean imagery.

A strengthless lion tumbles in Agamemnon's bed. The mixing goes further than the mere

[20] On παῖδες in Archilochus as a probable reference to animals, see West (n.16). Bollack and Judet de La Combe *ad loc.* compare the use of ἶνιν at *Ag.* 717-18 of the lion cub and think παίδων gives the passage an allegorical rather than Homeric twist. W. Whallon, 'Why is Artemis angry?' *AJP* 82 (1961) 82, concludes that 'the vocabulary in which the symbolism is couched conveys the lack of distinction between human and bestial lives', but he does not follow up on this insight.

[21] He uses the adjective λεχαίων to modify the τέκνων of a dove at *Sept.* 291-2; *cf.* Sophocles' *Ant.* 422-5.

[22] So Denniston-Page and Fraenkel take στίβοι φιλάνορες, although some other commentators read it as a reference to the tracks left on the bed by Helen and Paris.

[23] In Homer and the *Homeric Hymns*, for example, λέχος is used of the bed of Zeus and Hera, Aphrodite and Anchises, Helen and Paris, Nestor and his wife, Alcinous and Arete, Hephaestus and Aphrodite, Odysseus and Penelope, Hades and Persephone, Dawn and Tithonus, Aeolus' sons and daughters, and Circe and Odysseus. Perhaps most interestingly, Agamemnon refers to his λέχος at home in Mycenae (*Il.* 1.31), where he imagines a captive slave girl, 'whom I prefer to Clytemnestra', tending his needs. Cassandra has taken Chryseis' place. Fraenkel is a bit squeamish about such matters. He believes, for example, that Clytemnestra's reference to her bed at 1447 is unqueenly and out of character, and so sides with critics who believe εὐνῆς to be corrupt.

[24] The verb πατέω is applied with similar double-sidedness to Atreus' marriage bed, Paris' abduction of Helen, and the slaying of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; see R. Rehm, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton 1994) 48.

comparison of a man to a lion. A man—unnamed (τινά) but whom we know to be Aegisthus—becomes a lion that in turn romps in a human bed. Here, as with the two vultures, the poet wants the blending of the two worlds to be felt, and so he chooses a word that had never before (as far we know) been shared by both. Aeschylus could have used a more familiar synonym, εὐνή, which in fact he does use eight times in the *Oresteia* (six in the *Agamemnon*, three times for Clytemnestra's bed—27, 1447, 1 62—and once for Atreus' violated bed, 1193). This word (and others with the same root) had a long tradition of metaphorical application to the animal world. Homer uses it six times of animal beds, including once of a nest.[25] Instead, Aeschylus opts for a more severe metaphor, similar to his choice of παίδων instead of the well-established τέκνων for animal young. The poet thus manages to blur the dividing lines between the human and bestial, even to the point of pushing the language to the breaking point.

In this same passage, the reference to Aegisthus as a λέοντ' ἄναλκιν has raised some objections by editors. Denniston-Page, for example, insist that Aegisthus as lion 'is most unexpected, particularly since the same metaphor is applied to Agamemnon in 1259; and the phrase as a whole, "a cowardly lion", is so unlikely that corruption of the text may well be supposed here. ...' Fraenkel goes further, claiming that the phase is 'hard to swallow ... it would be for a Greek one might say an offence against the laws of nature to call a lion—of all creatures—ἄναλκις'. Since Bernard Knox's pathbreaking article on the lion imagery nearly half a century ago (not, it seems, considered by Denniston-Page), we have learned to be more appreciative of the subtlety and flexibility of Aeschylus' handling of his animals.[26] Still, this and most other analyses aim to unveil the meaning of specific species—lions, serpents, dogs, etc. We can, I think, add to the many important insights these studies have supplied by considering the lion image as another example of the conflation of animals with humans.

To begin with, it seems clear (as Fraenkel notes) that these lines about Aegisthus should be read with similar words about Clytemnestra's lover later snarled by the chorus at the usurper himself:

γύναι, σὺ τοὺς ἥκοντας ἐκ μάχης μένων
οἰκουρὸς εὐνὴν ἀνδρὸς αἰσχύνων ἅμα
ἀνδρὶ στρατηγῶι τόνδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον;

Woman, did you lie in wait for those returning from battle, a house-keeper defiling a man's bed, plotting his death, the chief of the army? (1625-7)

The parallels are obvious on both the verbal and the thematic level: ποινάς (1223) — μόρον (1627); βουλεύειν (1223) — ἐβούλευσας (1627); λέχει (1224) — εὐνὴν (1626); οἰκουρόν (1225) — οἰκουρός (1626); τῶι μολόντι (1225) — τοὺς ἥκοντας (1625); δεσπότηι (1225) — στρατηγῶι (1627). I would suggest that another parallel is to be found in the two words λέοντ' (1224) and γύναι (1625). Aegisthus is compared to an animal in one passage and a woman in the other. We are conditioned from Homeric usage to accept the former as a natural description of martial prowess—particularly in the case of a lion[27]—and the latter as an insult. But Aeschylus differs from Homer in the underlying meaning of his bestial images. The lion, as Knox showed us, does not stand for any single character (*pace* Fraenkel) but for the ever-renewed process of evil that moves from generation to generation. Aegisthus is a lion here,

[25] *Od.* 5.65; it is used especially of a deer's lair: *Il.* 11.115, 15.580, 22.190; also a pig-pen (*Od.* 14.14); cf. *Od.* 4.438, where the places for ambush of Menelaus and his men disguised as seals are called εὐνάς.

[26] 'The Lion in the House (*Agamemnon* 717-36)', *CP* 47 (1952) 17-25.

[27] See A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon, *Lions, Héros, Masques: Les Représentations de l'Animal chez Homère* (Paris 1981) 38-63.

a wolf to Agamemnon's lion thirty-five verses later. But the larger point is that none of these animal images is meant to be flattering or positive (except, perhaps, in the misguided minds of the characters). Humans should not confuse themselves with the beast that lives in us all. Agamemnon may be a 'better' lion, that is, more courageous than the feeble Aegisthus, but his conflation with the beast bodes no better—indeed, his actions are more savage than anyone else's in the play. Rosenmeyer concluded that most animal imagery in Aeschylus has a negative value,[28] and here is the reason why that must be so. Fraenkel's reference to a cowardly lion's being an 'offence against the laws of nature' is to the point, but not as he means it. Aegisthus is not fully human, but is too like a beast. Indeed, he is triply unnatural—a human who is a beast, a man who is a woman, a 'king' who knows nothing of war.[29] These oxymorons are at the heart of Aeschylean imagery, with the human/animal dichotomy supporting most of the others.

We return now to the conflation in the opening simile, which grows increasingly labyrinthine in verse 52. The vultures circle, very high above their nest, rowed by the oarage of their wings (πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι). That is, the sons of Atreus are sailors—itself an unusual depiction of the leaders in the literary tradition (*cf.* 114-15, 184-5)—who are like birds who are like sailors.[30] Animals and humans stumble over each other in the final four verses of the sentence as well. The vultures have lost the 'watching over the bed' (δεμνιοτήρη, 53) labour for their chicks. The noun buried in this word, another of Aeschylus' trademark compounds, is δέμνιον (usually found in the plural), 'bed', used thirteen times in Homer (it is not found in Aeschylus), only of human or divine sleeping places. The compound adjective, a word from the human world (its only other appearance in Greek literature, as we saw above, is in an explicitly human context), is applied to the effort of the vultures to raise their ὀρταλίχων (54), a word specifically limited to the young of animals, particularly birds.

With ὀρταλίχων we find ourselves back in the animal world of the simile, but the metaphorical ground remains shaky. Some god on high hears the 'shrill-screaming, bird-crying lament of these metics' (οἰωνόθροον / γόον ὀξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων (56-57) and sends a late-avenging Fury. The lament suggests that the missing chicks can be presumed dead, an implication that fits the underlying Thyestes' children/Iphigenia readings better than Helen herself. But the modifiers of the wailing complicate the imagery, again confounding species. The funereal weeping is labelled a bird-cry, but the vultures have suddenly been transformed into metics, a word taken directly from the very human, civic world of fifth-century Athens. The usual explanation for this description—the high flying birds are temporary residents of the gods' polis—is acceptable but hardly sufficient (on the Erinyes/Semnai Theai as metics, see below).

[28] (n.1) 138, 140.

[29] The adjective ἄναλκις is exactly the right word for Aegisthus, as Fraenkel concedes. Homer had already used it to describe Aegisthus (ἀνάλκιδος Αἰγίσθοιο, *Od.* 3.310; *cf.* 3.263-75). The suitors are also described as ἀνάλκιδες, wishing to be in the bed (ἐν εὐνῇ) of Odysseus, another Trojan hero not yet back from the war (*Od.* 4.333-40). All twenty appearances of the adjective in Homer refer to those who avoid, flee from, or are unfamiliar with war. The suitors, of course, did not fight, but stayed home like Aegisthus. See Edwards (n.17) 33 for a discussion of this passage, including an interesting suggestion that Homer employs a pun on the word for bed in his use of ξυλόχῳ at *Od.* 4.335.

[30] D. Rosenbloom, 'Myth, history, and hegemony', in B. Goff (ed.), *History, Tragedy, Theory. Dialogues on Athenian Drama* (Austin 1995) 106-107, suggests that Aeschylus emphasizes the maritime nature of the Atreidae's leadership as part of his growing concern over Athens' naval hegemony and imperial dreams. For the reversal here of the typical imagery (a boat has wings rather than birds have oars), see D. Van Nes, *Die maritime Bildersprache des Aeschylos* (Groningen 1963) 109-110. Goldhill (n.8) 14 observes that there is a 'slide between subject and object as the structure of the simile (*x* is like *y*) becomes self-referential (*x* is like *y* in that *y* is like *x*)—and thus subverted away from the function of generating new meaning'. But my argument is that this slide itself does carry meaning and does not merely represent the slipperiness and unreliability of language.

Once again the human and animal have been integrated in startling fashion, and this time in the context of a major theme of the trilogy, the pursuit of justice and the role of the divinely sanctioned human polis. The god hears the birds and sends an avenging Erinys. As Rose notes (on 59), the chorus is still humanizing the birds, for we would not expect the gods to be concerned with justice within the animal kingdom, much less to send a Fury to avenge them. Indeed, one might suspect that the main reason a god conjures an Erinys here is so that the chorus can shift to the central theme of vengeance.

After this elaborate (nearly 80-word) simile, the old men change the point of similitude: 'so Zeus sends the sons of Atreus after Alexander...' (60 f.) The thought is intricate and carefully executed: the Atreidae cry out like vultures whose lament upon discovering their chicks missing is heard by god who sends (πέμπει, 59) a punishing Fury; so does Zeus send (πέμπει, 61) the Atreidae to wring justice from the Trojans. The Atreids are both victims and punishers, both vultures and Fury.[31] This is an important mixture, since we shall discover in the *Eumenides* that the Furies are the embodiment of the conflated world we have been witnessing in this simile. They will eventually be differentiated and brought into the community as metics. And here at the beginning of the trilogy the Atreids are found both in birds who have become metics and also in an avenging Fury itself.

The opening simile of the parodos introduces the central theme of the fusion of human and animal. The language and imagery blend the two worlds in a difficult and complex fashion, creating a poetic environment where little is secure. This is a more thematically significant system than is usually discussed under the rubric of 'fusion' or 'intrusion'.[32] These are stylistic terms used to describe the tendency in similes for elements of one part of the comparison to slip into the other. This sort of thing happens in Homer's similes as well, although not to the same degree as in Aeschylus. It is not merely a stylistic device, however, but a thematic issue of corrupted boundaries and unworkable blending. It can make for disconcerting and difficult reading, and it is intentional.[33] The dangers of this intermingling are presented in the rest of the parodos, then acted out with increasing clarity until the end of the final play.

[31] F.I. Zeitlin, 'The motif of the corrupted sacrifice in Aeschylus' Oresteia', *TAPA* 96 (1965) 482-3 compares this to the lion parable, arguing that the animals 'transcend' their immediate context, moving from victim to avenger to murderous impulse.

[32] O. Smith, 'Some observations on the structure of imagery in Aeschylus', *C&M* 26 (1965)52-65 calls it fusion when parts of a simile coalesce and the poet does not distinguish strictly between the 'illustrans' and the 'illustrandum', terms invented by H. Friis Johansen, *General Reflection in Tragic Rhesis* (Copenhagen 1959). Oddly, Johansen (17-18) himself concludes that the vulture simile is purely ornamental or descriptive, not argumentative or reflective, and that it adds 'clearness' to the description of the action. Silk (n.15) 138 f. labels this intrusion. He comments, for example, on the 'faint and slightly surreal "proleptic" evocation of Iphigenia' and concludes that 'there is certainly a remarkable amount of intrusion of one sort or another in the play' (146-47), but does not link this directly with the themes of the *Oresteia*. Rosenmeyer (n.1) 121 f. calls it a transference from the 'vehicle' to the 'tenor'. I think he goes too far in suggesting that Helen and Troy are forgotten, replaced by thoughts of Iphigenia (125-27). The referents are fully integrated–one does not exist without the other–and it is this integration that is of importance. Long ago W. Headlam put it simply, 'no one has his [Aeschylus'] habitual practice of pursuing a similitude, of carrying a figure through'; 'Metaphor, with a Note on Transference of Epithets', *CR* 16 (1902) 436.

[33] W. Whallon has made the imaginative proposal that the confusion between the simile (and the later omen) and the events themselves is the result of the chorus' incipient senility: they 'truly think like old men'; 'The Herm at *Agamemnon* 55-56: stocks and stones of the *Oresteia*', *Hermes* 121 (1993) 496. In a similar if less extreme vein, E.T. Owen states that the old men's 'words turn against them and defeat their purpose'; *The Harmony of Aeschylus* (Toronto 1952) 65-66. I agree rather with the majority of critics who see the chorus as speaking under severe conditions, cryptically and cautiously, and occasionally saying more than it knows. As R.P. Winnington-Ingram puts it, the *Oresteia* reveals a 'polysemous circle of reference [that] shows Aeschylus' brilliance in the art of suggestion: by the disposition of parallels and analogies he indicates connections we could never have dreamt of, opens up perspectives which give added meaning to each other'; *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1983) 363.

IV

Just forty verses after the conclusion of the simile begins the notorious omen of the eagles' devouring the hare and her unborn young (109 f.). At the heart of this passage lies Artemis' anger, the obscure motivation for which has launched much of the analysis of the nature of justice in the trilogy. But from the perspective of this study, once again the pursuit of exact analogies for the animal actors is not as important as the amalgamation of human and bestial in general, culminating in the 'corrupted' sacrifice of Iphigenia.[34] Key words and images from the simile appear in the first few verses of the omen: δίθρονον (109) – διθρόνου (43); πέμπει (111) – πέμπει (59, 61); θούριος ὄρνις (112) – αἰγυπιῶν οἵτ'...στροφοδινοῦνται (49-51); βασιλεῦσι νεῶν (114-15) – στόλον 'Αργείων χιλιοναύτην (45). And a familiar connection between birds and humans begins immediately with the order of words: οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νε- / ῶν (114-15). The eagles and Atreidae are juxtaposed before Calchas utters a word about the omen and its relation to the capture of Troy (ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἅδε κέλευθος, 126). The kings, victimized vultures in the first part of the simile, now become the punishing Erinyes sent against Troy (Τευκρίδ' ἐπ' αἶαν, 112) promised in the second part (ἐπ' 'Αλεξάνδρωι, 61). The city of Troy is viewed as prey to be hunted down–ἀγρεῖ is a rare verb in tragedy, its root again taking us outside the polis to the wild.[35]

The sons of Atreus have once more become birds of prey. Human and animal are less and less distinguishable, leading us to the terrible climax in the sacrifice of a human being. Again, Aeschylus carefully crafts powerfully ambiguous language. The most famous example of this is verse 136, αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισιν, which Stanford long ago noted could be translated 'slaying a trembling hare and its young before their birth', but also 'sacrificing a trembling, cowering woman, his own child, on behalf of the army'.[36] Less frequently commented upon is the conflation that leads to this blending of hare with innocent young girl. Artemis in pity bears a grudge against the hounds of her father (πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ

[34] Reviews of the standard interpretations of the imagery can be found in S.E. Lawrence, 'Artemis in the *Agamemnon*', *AJP* 97 (1976) 97-110 and D.J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Oresteia: A Literary Commentary* (Toronto 1987) 76-83. For bibliography, see B.H. Fowler (n.10) 87 n.11. Conacher disapproves of Lebeck's understanding of the omen because she sees in it both the sack of Troy and the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Similarly, H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Artemis and Iphigenia', *JHS* 103 (1983) 87-88 disagrees with the Page/Conington interpretation that Artemis is angry with the eagles themselves and not what they symbolize, because this 'confuses' the world of the portent with reality. As is clear by now, I think it is exactly this confusion that is significant. K. Clinton, 'Artemis and the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*', in P. Pucci (ed.), *Language and the Tragic Hero* (Atlanta 1988) 11 answers Lloyd-Jones, but only by separating Artemis' reaction to the event (unsymbolic) from the other characters' response to the symbolism. But to us, the audience, it is the combination of event and symbolism that is so striking–Artemis is just another one of the characters.

[35] *Cf.* πόλιν νεαίρετον, 1065, juxtaposed with Cassandra as a θηρὸς νεαιρέτου, 1063. There is perhaps some inter-species confusion built into the scene. The vultures have become eagles–is there a suggestion here that these eagles are the exact same birds who lost their young and so wreak vengeance by destroying the unborn? Have they, like the sons of Atreus, become their own Furies? This may seem far-fetched, since the first pair of birds exists only in the imaginations of the chorus, and besides, they were αἰγυπιοί and the second pair are αἰετοί (137). But in fact the two names were often confused in antiquity–they were considered by many to refer to the same bird; see the passages cited by D.W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (London 1936) in articles under both names: 'The vultures were, and are, frequently confused under the name ἀετός', and he suggests that this passage is one of the confused references (5). Zeitlin (n.31) 481, Thomson 1, 21, and J.H. Finley, Jr., *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, MA 1955) 9-10 consider both sets of birds to be eagles. English-only readers of Lattimore's translation (Chicago 1953) would scarcely come to any other conclusion. D.R. Slavitt's recent version (Philadelphia 1998) labels the first pair of birds 'eagles' and does not specify the species of the second pair at all. Interestingly, vultures had a reputation in antiquity for inordinate affection for their young–and the young of other species; see J.R.T. Pollard, 'Birds in Aeschylus', *G&R* 17 (1948) 116-17, and Petrounias (n.2) 130 with n.496.

[36] W.B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford 1939) 143-4, citing Lawson's 1932 edition on *Agamemnon* 137.

πατρός, 135) who 'sacrifice' (θυομένοισιν)—a purely human activity—the hare. These flying hounds of Zeus are the eagles, of course, so the chain of poetic images runs like this: 'Artemis is angered with dogs (who are really eagles who are the Atreidae) who sacrifice a hare and her foetuses who stand for ...' what? Iphigenia, or Troy, or Thyestes' feast again? Or all three? There is no easy way to resist analogy hunting.[37]

Calchas concludes his interpretation with a terrifying presentiment, praying that Artemis not bind the ships by winds and thus bring about a θυσίαν ἑτέραν ἄνομόν τιν' ἄδαιτον (150), a second sacrifice, unholy and not to be eaten. The adjective ἄδαιτον is strange and evocative. Why a sacrifice that can't be eaten? Why emphasize the ingestion of the prey by the eagles at all? Clearly Iphigenia's sacrifice is the immediate point, since there will be no customary eating of the flesh of the victim after her death. But there is more. The eagles, in the chorus' words, fed on a family (βοσκομένω...γένναν, 119), a feast which is later referred to as a δαίς (λαγοδαίτας, 124) and a meal (δεῖπνον, 137) hated by Artemis. These words again are borrowed from the human world—the eagles take part in a feast that elicits a prayer that there not be a second sacrifice that is *not* a feast.[38] The animal and human worlds are completely collapsing, for we are now seemingly plunged into the realm of threatened cannibalism as well. The one human meal that is an issue in the *Oresteia*, the one unholy substitution of a human for an animal at a feast, is that of Thyestes—τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν (1242; *cf.* the lion parable, where the lion cub enjoys a home-made δαῖτα, 731). We are back in the same complex series of multivalent analogies of the simile. The chorus and the seer, after all, are capable of telling us their interpretation of the symbolism: the Atreidae are the eagles. All the rest, the other analogies that have been found by readers and are suggested above, are the result of the basic conflation of human and animal. Aeschylus mixes the worlds into a chaotic jumble that even Calchas' foresight cannot disentangle—and we have spent the past 2,500 years trying to understand the exact homologies. It is not that there is no meaning here, but that there are too many possibilities.[39]

The obvious admixture of Iphigenia and a beast that forms the emotional climax to the parodos has so often been noted that we can merely review the images in passing. She is first presented as a hare in Calchas' prophecy, then said to have been tossed on the altar like a goat (δίκαν χιμαίρας, 232).[40] Within a few verses she becomes equine, gagged into silence by a bit (βίαι χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδωι μένει, 238). The chorus contrasts the pitiful picture of her last, silent pleas to the songs sung by the 'chaste'—so LSJ for ἀταύρωτος (245)—maiden at her father's table at home. The adjective seems to mean literally the 'unbulled' girl—it is, as

[37] Fraenkel, citing Wilamowitiz, sees the hounds as servants. That is, the Atreids (human) are eagles (animal) who are dogs (animal) who are servants (human). Birds and dogs dominate the zoology of the *Agamemnon*, combined here in the canine eagles.

[38] The word δαίς is used of animal meals at *Il.* 24.43, δεῖπνον at *Il.* 2.383, Hes. *Op.* 209, and Archil. 179 W; see H. Pelliccia, *Mind, Body, and Speech in Homer and Pindar* (Göttingen 1995) 79 n.130.

[39] The deconstructionist leanings of the 1980s reached their nadir in such nihilistic readings as that of G. Elata-Alster, 'The King's double bind: paradoxical communication in the parodos of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*', *Arethusa* 18 (1985) 27, who faulted critics for sharing the (apparently nutty) 'presupposition that Calchas is making some sort of statement'. Goldhill's (n.8) 20-23 insistence that the 'unbounded metaphoricity' and 'literalization of metaphor'—terms that I can agree with—'challenges that process of production of meaning by challenging the produced level of referentiality' (69) goes too far in this direction, I think. R. Seaford rightly warns of the 'fetishization' of ambiguity and the fuzziness of the critical terminology; 'Historicizing tragic ambivalence: the vote of Athena', in Goff (n.30) 202-204.

[40] My colleague Helen Moritz has pointed out to me that the choice of the word χίμαιρα, instead of one of the other more common words for goat, must have evoked images of the mythological creature as well as the domestic animal sacrificed before battle. Iphigenia is not merely confused with an animal, but is described as a mixed-species creature to be killed by a grotesquely mock-epic Bellerophon.

Denniston-Page suggest, a brutal word, and connects the young girl with yet another species. Clytemnestra later notes angrily that Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter, thinking no more of it than of the death of a beast (βοτοῦ μόρον, 1415). There is further irony here in that young women were supposed to be 'yoked' and 'tamed' in Greek culture, as the terms frequently used of marriage and wife reveal.[41] Iphigenia is to be denied her place in the community–and her life itself–and this tragedy is marked by a word that simultaneously connects her to and isolates her from the world of animals. She is both human and animal, culture and nature, simultaneously: clothed, she sheds her garments;[42] filled with voice, she is without words; unyoked, she is bridled; she is like a figure frozen in art, the old men say, but her death is so real that they cannot speak of it even ten years later. Iphigenia is not merely a corrupted sacrifice–a woman substituted for an animal–but a hybridized creature. Her father, too, is both breaker of animals and subjugated beast. Bound to Zeus' justice (see above), he puts on the harness of necessity (ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον, 218) and will eventually yoke Troy (Τροίαι περιβαλὼν ζευκτήριον, 529). But it does not matter on which side of the analogy characters find themselves, agent or victim, yoker or yoked, for it is the melding with animals through poetic language that is the main issue. The parodos reveals with painful clarity that the world of the *Agamemnon* mixes the human and animal with far too much ease. No good can come of this conflation, and none does.

One of the telling expressions in the eagle and hare omen is the description of the eagles as Zeus' hounds. The sons of Atreus become birds who become dogs. This instability even within the animal imagery marks the *Agamemnon*, a play in which birds and dogs dominate the landscape.[43] The watchman's appearance at the opening of the play lying or crouching like a dog (κυνὸς δίκην, 3) sets the stage: humanity stands only moments away at any time from collapse into its bestial state. Since the thematic point is the chaotic fluctuation between human and animal, there is no consistent characterization of a character as any one particular animal.[44] Different species dominate our attention at different times, adding to the impression of instability. Thus Agamemnon is a vulture (49), eagle (112-137), hound (135, 896), horse (218),

[41] See the gender reversal implied by the chorus' use of δαμέντος (1451) and δαμείς (1495 = 1519) of Agamemnon's slaughter by his wife. Enger inserts δάμαρτος into 1495, a suggestion Fraenkel finds attractive.

[42] T.A. Tarkow, 'Thematic implications of costuming in the *Oresteia*', *Maia* 32 (1981) 156 proposes that the shedding of clothing, especially by Iphigenia and Cassandra, reduces them to the level of animals by separating them from an aspect of culture that distinguishes humans. Even more intriguing is C. Sourvinou's suggestion that the *arktoi* of the Brauronia festival shed the *krokotos* during the ritual as a mark of their successful fulfilment of a 'bear's' career; 'Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 641-647', *CQ* 21 (1971) 339-42. Thus the description of Iphigenia's final actions may have conjured up this crucial moment from the ceremony for the Athenian audience and so produced complex associations of animal and beast: Iphigenia is presented as a 'bear' who is becoming human just as she is sacrificed, a near inversion of the myth in which she is replaced at the last moment by a deer or even a bear (Schol Ar. *Lys.* 645, cited in Sourvinou 340 n.5).

[43] The conflation of dogs and birds, as seen in Zeus' eagles, may help make some sense of a passage that has caused problems. Clytemnestra tells her husband that she fell asleep each night watching for the beacons, sleeping so fitfully that she could be awakened from her dreams by the light flight (ῥιπαῖσι) of a θωΰσσοντος κώνωπος (892-3). What exactly is the noise made by this gnat? LSJ, under both θωΰσσω and ῥιπή, define it as the 'buzz of a gnat's wing'. Fraenkel argues that this translation cannot be right because θωΰσσειν always indicates a loud shout, cry, etc. He suggests 'trumpeting', seeing in it Clytemnestra's supposed agony at such moments, and accepts Barrett's argument for something like a loud rush through the room (*Addenda* III, 830). But might not the participle conjure up a bark (*cf.* Hom. *Fr.* 25), so the gnat keeps Clytemnestra awake like a dog barking next door? This would be in keeping with the conflation of winged creatures and dogs.

[44] F. Saayman, 'Dogs and lions in the *Oresteia*', *Akroterion* 38 (1993) 11-18, esp. 11 notes the shifting of positive to unfavourable meaning of the dog images, arguing that they are positive when associated with war against Troy, but perverted when functioning in the context of the family. Goldhill (n.8) 204-205 again feels the difficulty in limiting the inter-references of the dog image is a challenge to meaning itself; *cf.* his similar discussion of serpent imagery, 201-202.

bull (1126), and lion (1259; *cf.* 824 f.). Casssandra becomes a sparrow (1050), horse (1066), nightingale (1140-5), cow (1297-8), and swan (1444). Clytemnestra, as one might expect, displays tremendous versatility: a watchdog and bitch (607, 1093, 1228; cf. *Ch.* 420), cow (1125), serpent (1233), lionness (1258), crow (1472-4), spider (1492), and hen (1671).[45] Even a minor character like Aegisthus changes from lion (1224) to wolf (1259) to cock (1671) only to end up a decapitated serpent (*Ch.* 1046-7). Homer's similes also compare individual animals to many different characters: Hector, Ajax, Diomedes, Sarpedon, Patroclus, Menelaus, Achilles, Aeneas, Agamemnon, Automedon, Odysseus, Artemis, the Trojans, the Achaeans, Polyphemus —even Penelope—are all compared to lions, for example. But as important as these are to the texture of the epic poems, they do not approach the level of conflation of the *Oresteia*.

V

The *Agamemnon* presents a morally unworkable world, a place where humans have not yet progressed beyond the most instinctual impulses. The gods themselves are implicated in this moral and political disorder, and it will take another generation of suffering to attain the necessary discrimination between human and animal. The insidious blending continues in the *Libation Bearers*, not as pervasive and diffuse as before, yet more focused and hostile.[46] The language becomes less ambiguous, the vocabulary of human and beast less directly mixed, but only because the characters themselves now make no effort at all to distinguish themselves from beasts. The first play creates a world where species are conflated; the second play shows more directly what happens in this kind of world. Whereas before Agamemnon had become a vulture or eagle primarily through the verbal dexterity of other actors (especially the chorus), in the *Libation Bearers* Orestes transforms himself into a snake, victim of a snake, and snake-killer all at once, and we watch it happen.

If the *Agamemnon* is a text of species confusion centering on birds and dogs, the second play concentrates on the enmity inherent in the image of the serpent. The transition is neatly marked by Orestes' re-reading of the parodos. At *Ch.* 246 f., Orestes compares himself and Electra to abandoned chicks (νεοσσούς, 256), orphaned offspring of an eagle father (γένναν εὖνιν αἰετοῦ πατρός, 247) killed in the twisted coils of a terrible viper.[47] He thus ties the entanglement imagery so prevalent in the description of Agamemnon's death to a specific

[45] While the 'demonization' of Clytemnestra may grow stronger over the course of time, her characterization is consistently bestial, and until the very end of the trilogy, no beast is a good beast. For the gradual devolvement of Clytemnestra, see R.F. Goheen, 'Aspects of dramatic symbolism: three studies in the *Oresteia*', *AJP* 76 (1955) 130, and A. Betensky, 'Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: the power of Clytemnestra', *Ramus* 7 (1978) 11-25.

[46] Excellent on the violence inherent in the confusion between man and beast is Moreau (n.1) 71.

[47] Electra repeats the image by referring to herself and Orestes as νεοσσοί sitting by the tomb (*Ch.* 501). E. Belfiore traces the death of the hare back to the destruction of Troy by the Trojan horse (ἵππου νεοσσός, *Ag.* 825) through the imagery of inverted parent/child relationships; 'The eagles' feast and the Trojan horse: corrupted fertility in the *Agamemnon*', *Maia* 35 (1983) 3-12. See also R. Janko, 'Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Archilochus', *CQ* 30 (1980) 291-3 for the reversal of the vulture image. On the traditional enmity between eagles and snakes, see references in Garvie on *Ch.* 247-9. Perhaps we are also asked to look back at the initial simile in a new light. What happened to the vulture chicks? Did a snake take them? Has there been a serpent lurking in the trilogy from the beginning? It was well known that eagles ate snakes—see *Il.* 12.200-207, Arist. *H.A.* 609a 4-5, and the fable of the eagle and the snake eventually transformed into the eagle and the fox (F.R. Adrados, 'El Tema del Aguila, de la Epica Acadia a Esquilo', *Emerita* 32 (1964) 267-82—but snakes were also known for stealing into birds' nests and devouring both eggs and fledglings; see Nicander *Ther.* 451-2 and especially *Il.* 2.308-19 for the famous omen of the serpent and the sparrows at Aulis. If Aeschylus modelled much of the parodos on this Homeric passage, as I argue in a forthcoming article in *Classical Quarterly*, then we are indeed warranted in wondering about the unmentioned fate of the missing chicks. If we are to imagine that they may have been eaten by a hungry serpent, then the serpentine Erinyes are sent to avenge the eagles in a further ironic—and ominous—conflation of species.

animal allusion (cf. *Ag.* 1164, 1232-6). His words carefully evoke the initial three events of conflation in the parodos. The helpless young birds now lament the loss of their parent, an inversion of the vulture simile. The omen of the eagle and hare is echoed in Orestes' plea that for Zeus to allow the eagle brood to be wiped out would make it impossible for him to send (πέμπειν, 259; *cf.* πέμπει in *Ag.* 59, 61, 111) easily-persuading signs to mortals (σήματ' εὐπιθῆ βροτοῖς *Ch.* 259; *cf.* μόρσιμ' ἀπ' ὀρνίθων ὁδίων, *Ag.* 157). The hare, allusively called λαγίναν...γένναν at *Ag.* 119, may be evoked as well in the reference to the destruction of the family/race (γένναν, 247; *cf.* γένεθλ', 258) of the eagle. And Iphigenia's sacrifice must surely be felt in Orestes' reference to his father as θυτήρ (255), a word used in the extant plays of Aeschylus only of the killers of Agamemnon's daughter (*Ag.* 224, 240-1).[48] And even here, as the parodos is being reconfigured, we find the disquieting combination of human and animal. Agamemnon, a father eagle of young birds, is a human sacrificer who brings sumptuous gifts with a very human hand (χειρός, 257).

Although other species do not disappear from the *Libation Bearers*, it is of course the serpent that dominates the play. The intriguing aspect of the snake imagery is the competition between Orestes and Clytemnestra—who is going to be the snake? Clytemnestra is first characterized as a viper by Orestes in the passage discussed above.[49] We next hear of Clytemnestra's famous dream of suckling a snake (527-34), and then witness Orestes' remarkable linguistic contortion into a serpent to kill his mother (ἐκδρακοντωθείς, 549). The metamorphosis implied in this 'powerful ἅπαξ' (Garvie *ad loc.*) is exactly the problem posed in the trilogy: the lack of boundaries between human and animal, so thoroughly embedded in the father and now passed on to the next generation, will inevitably lead to more chaos. The chorus, however, seems to prefer the initial imagery, for it encourages Orestes to become Perseus for the unstated but clear purpose of hunting down the serpentine Clytemnestra (831-7). Which is he to be—lethal snake or dragon slayer, chthonic beast or civilizing hero? The two possibilities should be mutually exclusive, yet in the world of the *Libation Bearers* they have become one. Clytemnestra never envisions herself in this play as reptilian and so consistently (if too late) sees in her son the snake of her dream (928). Orestes, however, counters with his original insistence that she is a μύραινα or ἔχιδνα (994), defiling everything by her mere presence. This is the triumphant image of the duel, as the chorus concludes that he has fulfilled his role of Perseus, liberating Argos by decapitating the two snakes (δρακόντοιν) of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus with one stroke (1046-47).

Like the lion imagery, the snakes represent the entanglement and ceaseless coils of the cursed house, of the old system of vengeful justice. They also reveal the dangerous complexity of the intertwining of beast and human in the royal household. Mother and son see each other as serpents who have turned on loved ones, and each tries to make that interpretation into reality. Orestes wins the battle of images, but the war is not over so easily. Certainly it is no coincidence that immediately after the chorus congratulates him for destroying the two serpents, he spies the snake-wreathed Furies (1048-50). We now take it for granted that the Furies are somehow serpentine, but it should be noted that the only direct allusion in the *Oresteia* to this

[48] See Moreau (n.1) 93.

[49] N.S. Rabinowitz, 'From force to persuasion: Aeschylus' *Oresteia* as cosmogonic myth', *Ramus* 10 (1981) 159-91 has much to say about Clytemnestra's serpentine characteristics, seeing her in the 'mythic role of dragoness'. Although Rabinowitz seems to me to make too much out of the mythic parallels, her comments on the cosmogonic movement from mixed and undifferentiated matter to an ordered world fit in well with my argument. It is not a battle merely with a dragon but with all similar images as well. See also Zeitlin (n.2) 164. On the snake in the trilogy, see W. Whallon, 'The serpent at the breast', *TAPA* 89 (1958) 271-5, Petrounias (n.2) 162-73, and Dumortier (n.2) 88-100.

aspect of their appearance occurs in these lines (πεπλεκτανημέναι / πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν, 1049-50). Orestes quickly adds that they are the hounds of his mother (1054; *cf.* 924), thus blending animal species as had Zeus' eagles earlier. The Furies are the last—and best—representations of the unacceptable conflation of animal and human (as anthropomorphic deities) as well as the divine. The resolution of this entanglement—the necessary and difficult isolation of the human, bestial, and divine—is the story of the *Eumenides*. As with so many Aeschylean themes, we see the verbal images of the first two plays now acted out on stage by the Furies in the final movement of the trilogy.[50]

VI

The *Eumenides* begins, as has been frequently observed, on a falsely peaceful note. A non-violent inheritance tale of Delphi is substituted by Aeschylus for the more common version of Apollo's subjugation of a chthonic power.[51] The forces of civilization are emphasized, the present world thus cast in an unreal image of harmony with nature gently tamed rather than forcefully overthrown—there is, for example, no suggestion of the killing of the serpentine Python. The shrine, so the Pythia informs us, was handed down through succeeding generations willingly rather than by force (θελούσης, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν, 5) and even as a birthday present (γενέθλιον δόσιν, 7). A version of the foundation legend that takes Apollo through Attica rather than Boeotia on his way to Delphi puts Athens in a favourable light. Apollo lands in Attica, greeted by the 'road-building children of Hephaestus' (13). These civilizing agents escort him to Delphi, making an untamed land tame (χθόνα / ἀνήμερον τιθέντες ἡμερωμένην, 13-14).[52] Thus this initial scene-setting connects—better, contrasts—Delphi and Athens, foreshadowing the reconciliation of powers and offering a momentary vision of harmony towards which the entire play moves.[53] Delphi is the place of archaic conflation, Athens of progressive differentiation. This optimistic opening also serves as a foil for the dramatic demonstration of just how thin is this veneer of civilization, how thoroughly mixed the world remains.

There are hints even before the second entrance of the priestess that all is not as orderly as she would have us believe. The Pythia is still part of a world, so familiar from the first two plays, where animal and human mix too effortlessly. She says that she worships the nymphs on a rock loved by birds, the haunt of gods (22-23). Here humans live with wild animals in peace, with an additional element so important to the play: gods also share in this idyllic existence. The next allusion broadens the crack in this picture, intimating the violent reality of such an undifferentiated existence. Bromius too holds sway at Delphi, from where the god led his

[50] The best statement and first steps towards demonstrating this are found in Lebeck (n.11) 131 f. D.H. Roberts, 'Orestes as Fulfillment, *Teraskopos*, and *Teras* in the *Oresteia*', *AJP* 106 (1985) 291 n.18, astutely avers that Aeschylean images move easily from metaphor or simile to verbal description to actual representation on stage. For the reconciliation of images in the *Oresteia* through the transformation of the Furies, see Moreau (n.1) 267-91.

[51] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Myth as history: the previous owners of the Delphic Oracle', in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (Totowa, NJ 1986) 215-41 demonstrates how the myth is structured to express this progression, homologous to Zeus' own succession myth and reign of justice. See also Vidal-Naquet (n.1) 162.

[52] See the explanation of Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 31b), cited in Sommerstein on 10. A scholion adds that when a sacred delegation was sent to Delphi, it was led by men with axes as if they would 'tame the land'.

[53] On parallels between the opening and close of the play, see P. Roth, 'The theme of corrupted *xenia* in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993) 16 and S. Said, 'Concorde et Civilisation dans les Euménides', in *Théâtre et Spectacles dans l'Antiquité* (Leiden 1983) 99-104. On the significance of Delphi, see A.M. Bowie, 'Religion and politics in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *CQ* 43 (1993) 14-16. F.I. Zeitlin establishes the centrality of Athens as an image in Greek tragedy, with Thebes as the 'anti-Athens', in 'Thebes: theater of self and society in Athenian drama', in J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (Princeton 1990) 130-67.

Bacchants in war against Pentheus. Dionysus 'devised a death for Pentheus like a hare' (λαγὼ δίκην Πενθεῖ καταρράψας μόρον, 26). There is no immediately obvious reason to recount a Theban tale to reveal the power of the god, a part-time tenant at Delphi, except to remind us of the destruction inherent in the mingling of beast and human which Dionysus represents so well. Delphi, where order meets disorder and control meets instinct, provides the ideal symbolic backdrop for the major themes of the trilogy. After all, even in Classical times Apollo took an extended leave whenever Dionysus came to town. Both the rational and irrational, order and flux, may need to be incorporated into life, but they do not and cannot share the same space at the same time. This brief allusion balances the earlier omen at Aulis where the eagles/Furies hunt the hare (λαγίναν γένναν) with the imminent hunting of Orestes as hare (πτῶκα, *Eu.* 326; *cf.* καταπτακών, 252) by the Furies who will call themselves maenads (499-500). Dionysus is a logically symbolic home for the familiar imagery of binding ('stitched tight' is the literal translation of καταρράψας) and the deadly intermingling of human and animal.

This ominous imagery bursts onto stage when the Pythia returns after catching a glimpse of the blood-stained suppliant and the ooze-dripping creatures snoring around him. This same woman who just a few moments ago so calmly and confidently recounted the orderly establishment of Delphi now crawls out of the shrine on her hands and knees, an old woman suddenly turned child (ἀντίπαις, 38). Her undignified posture casts her as an animal as well, like the watchman on all fours at the beginning of the *Agamemnon*.[54] In one swift moment the self-possessed priestess has lost her grip on her Apolline disposition, descending rapidly to the level of animals. This conflation forms the heart of the first half of the play, acted out in the physical presence of the horrific Furies, presented anthropomorphically here perhaps for the first time.[55] They must undergo the reverse process of the priestess of Apollo whose thin shell of humanity is cracked so quickly. The Furies are to shed their bestial aspects and so become the symbols—and guardians—of a fundamental shift in the nature of human existence.

The animal characteristics of the Furies are frequently observed in the critical literature, but upon close inspection their beastlike qualities are left rather vague. The ancient goddesses are difficult to describe, amorphous, not anything seen by human or god. They are most commonly referred to as dogs, usually in connection with hunting imagery as they smell blood and track down the mother's killer (e.g. *Eu.* 131-32, 230, 244-53; cf. *Ch.* 924, 1054). Oddly, their inherent serpentine qualities are never commented upon directly in the *Eumenides*. The Pythia notes their similarity to the Gorgons without explanation, but no doubt their snake-like appearance is the point (48; cf. *Ch.* 1048-50). Clytemnestra tries to rouse her slumbering avengers with the rebuke that sleep and toil have sapped the strength of the terrible she-dragon (δεινῆς δρακαίνης, 128). Although the use of the singular and her frequent earlier characterization by others as a serpent may suggest that this is a self-reference by the dead queen, the image applies more directly to the sleeping deities. Still, this is a surprisingly limited number of direct references to the two animals most commonly associated with the Furies. They also compare themselves to goaded horses at one point (155-9; *cf.* 136). The priestess claims they snore or snort—ῥέγκουσι, 53—a word used only once elsewhere in tragedy where it refers to the sound of horses.[56] Apollo, who has few nice things to say about them at any point in the play, insists

[54] O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 363 contrasts the Pythia's humbling posture with her previous 'quiet dignity' and compares Euripides' Polymestor (*Hec.* 1056 f.) who similarly enters on all fours and is explicitly compared to a four-footed mountain beast.

[55] See the discussion in Sommerstein's commentary, 2-12.

[56] Euripides *Rh.* 785; *cf.* μύζοιτ', 118, the sound of sleepers but also used of dolphins, fish, and wounded men and dogs. Rose on 53 compares *Scutum* 267, where Achlys has a running nose and blood drips from her cheeks; I think, rather, that Aeschylus' point is the bestial sound, not the swollen sinuses.

that they should dwell in the cave of a blood-drinking lion. The lion imagery of the *Oresteia* thus ends on a particularly dark note.[57] Resenting their independence and wanting to emphasize their isolation and lack of honour Apollo compares them to a herd of goats (αἰπολούμεναι, 196) with no goatherd. In Athens they slyly rejoin that all the land 'has been shepherded' (πεποίμανται, 249), that is, 'traversed by our flock'—they need no help from the Olympians.

In general, then, the Furies are beastlike but not like any particular beast. They are closely tied to the image of the hunt that pervades the first half of the play, but even here we should pay close attention to their characterization. At 110-13, for example, Clytemnestra tells the Furies that Orestes has escaped from the middle of their nets (ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων, 112) like a fawn. Even so astute a critic as Sommerstein (on 111) is slightly misleading, commenting that 'the Erinyes are hounds, Orestes their quarry'. This is true in other places (e.g. *Eu.* 131-32, 230, 244-53), but not here. The nets surely must belong to human (or at least relatively anthropomorphic) hunters—whose nets could they be other than those of the Furies? Similarly, at 147 the chorus wakes up to discover that the beast has escaped their nets (ἐξ ἀρκύων πέπτωκεν, οἴχεται δ' ὁ θήρ). The Furies are human hunters ready to sacrifice (again, a purely human activity) their prey (328; *cf.* Powell's emendation of κἀκκυνηγέσω at 231, accepted by Sommerstein). My point is that the Furies are much more rarely depicted as particular species of animals in the text than is usually assumed. They are the ultimate representatives of the indeterminancy of species as they are now depicted as hounds on the scent, now as hunters driving on the dogs and holding nets.[58] The dominant picture of the Furies is in fact that of a disgusting conflation, a combination of elements that makes them part beast, part human, certainly divine but excluded from the ranks of all three categories. They embody Aeschylus' thematic concern with the unhealthy fusion of disparate elements, and it is only by separating these—a 'rite of passage from savagery to civilization', Stanford and Fagles call it[59]—that civilization itself can progress to the differentiated and differentiating world of the polis.

From the very first description of the Furies by the Pythia (46-59), it is clear that they do not belong to any world at all. They are women but not women, Gorgons but not Gorgons, Harpies but not Harpies (they have no wings). Aeschylus here almost goes out of his way to dissociate the Erinyes from any particular species. Wings would make them birdlike and familiar, if monstrous.[60] Even their dress is unfitting for both gods and humans to observe, much less to wear. The Pythia concludes that she has never seen the tribe to which this company belongs, nor a land that could boast without pain that it had brought them forth. They are unique and nearly indescribable.

Apollo, with a large axe to grind, goes one step further in his first words of the play. He calls them γραῖαι παλαιαὶ παῖδες (or γραῖαι παλαιόπαιδες), old women who are still

[57] At 106 Clytemnestra tells the Furies that they have lapped up (ἐλείξατε) many of her sacrifices. The verb is used of a flesh-eating lion at *Ag.* 828 who feasts on the blood of Trojan kings, though it could describe the drinking of any number of animals.

[58] Compare the λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβέ in 130 shouted by the Furies in their sleep. Are these the shouts of hunters to their dogs or the 'vocalization of hounds on the trail' as Sommerstein suggests *ad loc.*?

[59] (n.3) 19.

[60] *Cf.* 250-51, where the Furies have just arrived in Athens across the water ἀπτέροις ποτήμασιν / ἦλθον. Sommerstein (on 51) points out that they do have wings in later tragedies (e.g. Eur. *IT* 289, *Or.* 317) and some post-*Oresteia* vase paintings. At 424 Athena asks them if they ἐπιρροιζεῖν Orestes into flight. It is not clear to what kind of inarticulate noise this refers. Podiecki *ad loc.* notes that it is used by Theophrastus of a croaking raven; LSJ cite the Aeschylus passage and translate 'shriek flight at him'. But Sommerstein senses the rushing noise of a pack of hounds in full cry, and Thomson hears the cries or whistles of the hunters urging on the pack, comparing Eur. *H.F.* 860. In no other place does Aeschylus use bird imagery of the Erinyes, which in my mind greatly weakens the central thesis of Fowler's (n.10) detailed examination of the animal imagery associated with the Furies.

children (69), thus conflating the old/young dichotomy that is stressed in the confrontation between the Olympians and the chthonic deities. The young god goes on to claim that these repulsive maidens with whom 'no god or man or beast (οὐ.../ θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ) ever holds any intercourse' are hateful to both men and the Olympian gods (69-73). They fit into none of the traditional categories of being. They are outcasts from the Olympians, hated and avoided by them, as both Apollo (196-7, 644, 721-2) and the Furies themselves (350-1, 365-6, 385-6) frequently acknowledge. Even the magnanimous Athena is puzzled at first sight (406-14). She says that they are like no seed of begotten beings (ὁμοῖαι δ' οὐδενὶ σπαρτῶν γένει, 410), neither goddesses nor in human form. They are like nothing else in this world, on earth or on Olympus. Athena, not wishing to insult her guests, has to stop herself from gushing on about their unclassifiable appearance.

The Furies, then, are deities who are not welcome among deities; they are intimately connected to human actions—their sheer existence depends on mortals—but they are not humans; they are beasts—Apollo calls them κνώδαλα (644)—but they do not belong completely to that realm either.[61] Their most memorable and appalling aspect, the ingestion of human blood, defies all definition. If they were simply animals, then they would be merely the equivalent of the blood-sucking lions or serpents we have seen before. But since they are divine, and presented anthropomorphically, such scenes are nearly cannibalistic. Orestes is to supply blood for them to drink, fodder for them to eat, and even a live sacrifice (183-4, 264-6, 302, 305; cf. *Ag.* 1188-90, *Ch.* 577-8). This version of vampire Erinyes is almost unknown in Greek literature, and seems designed to accentuate the distance of the goddesses from both human and animal.[62] The blood and gore dripping from their eyes (54) puts them beyond any animal species familiar to man.

The Furies are the ultimate representatives of the old world where human and beast are undifferentiated, where deity is mixed up in the ugly convolutions of human suffering without end. The first part of the *Eumenides* emphasizes the composite nature of the goddesses and the hideous consequences of empowering such anomalies.[63] They are ostracized from the rest of the cosmos (with the possible exception of a few other 'older' gods), hated by Olympians and men, dedicated to the dead rather than attached to the living, grotesquely consumed with hatred and wounded pride. Apollo's spite is little better, however, and it must be through Athena that the Erinyes are given a chance to separate the various aspects of their nature and so become integrated in the community. The hunting imagery dissipates, as Petrounias has shown, barely noticeable after Orestes' final reference to Clytemnestra's trap (ἀγρεύμασιν, 460), and the animal imagery itself is rarely evident after the trial.[64] The chorus may not realize it, but they have already begun to fall under the power of Athena's rhetoric when they tell Orestes that his confidence will disappear when the verdict 'catches' him (μάρψει, 597). As Sommerstein notes (on 583-4), the use of διώκειν and other terms connected with pursuit and capture common to Attic forensic vocabulary transforms the metaphor. First there is the pursuit of Orestes in the trial, then the hunt of the Furies by Athena. These will now be hunts with words, as the human element associated with *logos* rises and the animal imagery subsides. The remaining references to animals increasingly point to the necessary separation of beast and man—and god—with each

[61] Sommerstein on 644 notes that nowhere else in tragedy are humans, let alone deities, addressed as beasts. Aeschylus uses κνωδάλων at *Ch.* 587 to refer to beasts of the sea and contrasts them at 601 with mortal men.

[62] See A.L. Brown, 'The Erinyes in the *Oresteia*: real life, the supernatural, and the stage', *JHS* 103 (1983) 26.

[63] They are, perhaps, the tragic equivalent of the comic satyrs as composites of bestial and divine used to explore the boundaries of human life; see F. Lissarrague, 'Why Satyrs are good to represent', in Winkler and Zeitlin (n.53) 228-36.

[64] (n.2) 178; see also Rosenmeyer (n.1) 141.

playing its separate and crucial role in the rise of the polis.

The tale of the incorporation of the Furies into the community is a familiar one in the critical literature, but what needs to be seen more clearly is that the process is really one of a successful differentiation of the divine, bestial, and human in the social and political development suggested by the trilogy. External integration requires internal disintegration. Athena is the supreme example of this careful demarcation of elements and thus the appropriate figure to bring about the Furies' own individuation.[65] Female yet masculine, divine yet always closely associated with the welfare of men and the polis, anthropomorphic yet regularly linked in cult and myth to birds and snakes, she manages to keep her various elements distinct. The development of the Furies under Athena's guidance is to tell us something about human nature itself and about the function of the polis as both representative of and necessary for our own humanity.

VII

Athena is gracious from the start to the older goddesses.[66] She concentrates on the goddesses' immediate and most consistent complaint, that they are dishonoured deities, attacked especially by the younger gods. They repeatedly bewail their loss of privileges, first in Apollo's usurpation and then in the jury's verdict (209, 227, 323-7, 385-8, 419, 622-24, 747, 780, 792), complaints which they frequently couch in the equine expression of being 'ridden down' by the other gods (150, 731, 779 = 809). And so Athena promises them a home in the city where they will be honoured as resident deities by the citizens (804-807), but they return to their lament (808-22). The goddess insists once more that they are not dishonoured (824) and then, as if to act on her promises, immediately addresses them as θεαί (825). The carefully controlled use of the word θεός/θεά in the *Eumenides* is worth noting. Clytemnestra calls on them as κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί at the beginning of the play (115)—that honourable label, along with the name of Clytemnestra herself, may be the reason the proud deities are finally roused a bit from their sleep—but they are never called 'goddesses' again until Athena's words at 825.[67] Athena's task is to get them to set aside certain parts of their nature that are antithetical to a role as tutelary deities of a civic community without their having to give up any of their essential powers.

Athena cleverly juxtaposes the vocative θεαί with a grammatically unconnected βροτῶν to focus on their separate and elevated status, as well as to suggest the new responsibilities to mortals that come with this promised role. She wants them to protect rather than destroy the land and its citizens. They will reside near Athena herself, she promises, and most importantly, get first fruits as sacrifices from citizens before marriage and childbirth (834-35). Not only is this a reminder of what will be impossible should the Furies vent their anger on the land and destroy everything bearing fruit (καρπόν, 831), but it provides the first subtle suggestion of the correct relation between parts of the world Athena is trying to establish. The goddesses will preside over a community that flourishes in the areas commonly associated with a just

[65] See Moreau (n.1) 276-78 with bibliography.

[66] This may help to explain her seemingly unnecessary and odd statement on arrival in Athens that she came 'without wings' (πτερῶν ἄτερ, 404). She is suggesting to the Furies that she does in fact share something with these strange creatures who also came to Athens ἀπτέροις ποτήμασιν, 250. If this is her motivation, then this supplies further argument for retaining 404 and excising 405; Sommerstein *ad loc.* summarizes the issues.

[67] Most of the references to gods in the play are either to individual deities (especially Apollo and Athena) or to the Olympians in general, with whom the Furies are consistently contrasted, even in the speech of the Furies themselves. At 411, Athena blurts out that they are not among goddesses seen by the Olympian gods, if we follow the manuscript and read ὁρωμέναις. Page emends to ὁρώμεναι, which would then suggest even more strongly that the Furies were not seen as goddesses by the gods.

community: fertility of crops, flocks, and citizens.[68] Athena first refers to crops and citizens–it is too soon to hope for the de-beasting of the goddesses–but even this limited appeal is quickly rejected by the enraged Furies.

The Erinyes persist in their complaint about loss of honour (845-6), and Athena counters with promises that they will be honoured by the citizens as nowhere else (853-4). But she ties her rosy vision to words of warning (858-66): the goddesses are not to spoil her territory with bloodshed, not to plant in her citizens a heart like that of fighting cocks (ἀλεκτόρων). She adds, 'I take no account of a bird that fights at home' (ἐνοικίου δ' ὄρνιθος).[69] Civil war–she explicitly condones foreign war–is not to be transplanted from the beast into her citizens. The Furies are to excise their natural propensity for inspiring internecine strife, not to clone their own hybrid ethos into the community. The bird imagery has already undergone an important transformation under Athena's guidance. Always representative of the bestial within human nature that has exploded throughout the trilogy within the family, this imagery now represents the potential within man for civil strife. This corresponds to the shift in the play's movement from family justice to civic justice, from concern over individuals (i.e. Orestes) to the community at large now threatened by the irate deities. As the Furies gain recognition from the polis, its citizens, and its gods, they must abandon their mingled nature. The beast within must be isolated and relegated to its proper role in the state. Should they accomplish this, they will gain the divine honours (868) by sharing in a land beloved by the gods (869).

The Furies remain immune to Athena's rhetoric, however, and repeat their lament (870-80 = 837-47). Athena now makes one final, ultimately fruitful verbal assault. She insists that the Erinyes will never be able to say that an aged divinity (θεὸς παλαιά) was dishonoured by a younger deity and the people of the city (881-84). The goddess thus amicably acknowledges not just their divinity (θεός) a second time but the respect due to the elder generation (she uses the root τιμ– two more times in her final eight lines). She promises them landowner status (890) and oversight of the *oikos* (895) as their honour (τιμή once more, 894). As the Furies relent under the onslaught of proffered respect, they wonder what prayers they should ask for, and Athena's answer puts the bestial in its proper place:

καρπόν τε γαίας καὶ βοτῶν ἐπίρρυτον
ἀστοῖσιν εὐθενοῦντα μὴ κάμνειν χρόνωι,
καὶ τῶν βροτείων σπερμάτων σωτηρίαν

Invoke upon the land that] the abundant fruits of the earth and grazing beasts, flourishing, not fail our citizens over time, and preserve the seed of man ... (907-909)

They are to pray that the fruit of the land and flocks–the καρπός now includes the animal world–flourish for citizens, and that human generation be protected. Crops, flocks, and humans are to be fertile, overseen by divinities now separated from their previous bestiality. Athena herself will look after all three, setting the paradigm. She says that like a φιτυποίμην–a shepherd of plants–she will look over the just race of men (911-12). This image is carefully chosen by Athena, combining the agricultural, pastoral, and human. The gods are not to be

[68] For classical references (beginning with *Od.* 19. 109 f. and Hes *Op.* 220 f.), see C.P. Segal, 'Nature and the world of man in Greek literature', *Arion* 2 (1963) 29 f. Vidal-Naquet notes the shift in vocabulary from the hunt to agriculture and husbandry (n.1) 164. J.J. Peradotto, 'Some patterns of nature imagery in the *Oresteia*', *AJP* 85 (1964) 378-93, esp. 379-83, examines the development of nature and vegetation metaphors in the trilogy and finds a resounding harmony at the end. I think that the order established with the close of the *Eumenides* can always fall back into chaos; see below.

[69] On the cock as a symbol of civil war and tyranny (*cf.* the chorus' jibe at Aegisthus, discussed below) and the Erinyes' association with *stasis*, see Saïd (n.53) 109-11.

bestial themselves but to be a shepherd of flocks and gardener of fruits; in other words, to tend to mankind. From shepherdless herd the Furies are to emerge as protectors of the flock.[70]

Athena concludes by insisting that she will honour the city (τιμᾶν πόλιν, 915) by bringing victory in war. The Furies seem convinced, echoing that they will not dishonour the polis (οὐδ' ἀτιμάσω πόλιν, 917), and they accept co-residency with Athena. They have moved from concern over their own honour to a new position of honouring the city, from thinking of destroying the land with their poison (478-9, 729-30, 780-7, 810-17) to vouching for its fertility. Their subsequent prayer responds directly to Athena's suggestions: they pray that trees be free from blight, buds from heat, crops from sterility, and that Pan rear flocks and make them flourish with offspring at the appointed time (943-5). Animals are now in their proper position, not residing destructively within man or god but on the land for their benefit.

More specifically, the βοτά (907) and μῆλα (943) whose increase was hoped for by Athena and the Furies are now merely that, animals in the fields. They have no more composite, metaphorical meaning–no articles have been written about *these* humble grazers. Almost all the generic references to beasts before this in the trilogy carried broader, more sinister ramifications as indicators of the bestial conflation with the human. The term δάκος, for example, referred to the men in the Trojan horse (*Ag*. 824), Clytemnestra (*Ag*. 1232), and Orestes (*Ch*. 530; he calls himself a τέρας a few lines later, 548). The single appearance of κτῆνη indicated the flocks or cattle in front of Troy, a passage which is usually interpreted to refer to the people themselves who will perish in the Achaean pursuit of justice (*Ag*. 129).[71] The most memorable use of μῆλον is in the famous parable of the lion cub, a beast who stands for all the principal human figures and the entire destructive inheritance of the house.[72] There we are told that the lion turns on its 'parent' with 'ruinous slaughter of flocks' (μηλοφόνοισι σὺν ἄταις, *Ag*. 730). And θήρ usually applies to humans in ominous circumstances, e.g. Cassandra (*Ag*. 1063), Agamemnon (*Ch*. 251,998), Orestes (*Eu*. 131, 147), as well as the wild beasts that Artemis cares for (*Ag*. 142-3) that set off the destruction of innocent human life. Now, at the end of the trilogy and for the first time, beasts may simply be domestic animals out in the fields.

With the acknowledgement of this necessary segregation of elements, the Furies are ready to be enrolled among the deities of the polis. Athena puts her stamp of approval on their acquiescence, granting them great power among the immortals both above and below the earth, and among humans as well (950-53). The Furies, having prayed for the fertility of the earth and animals, now move to the third characteristic area of fertility in a just city, men and women (956-60). To mark this transformation, the Furies call on their sister Fates to see to it that their prayers are answered. Previously in the play the Furies had held up the Fates as examples of the dishonour given older deities by the younger generation (169-73; 723-4, 727-28). Now these other dark powers have been co-opted into the city as most honoured of gods (πάνται τιμιώταται θεῶν, 967) through the agency of the Furies. Not only are the Erinyes committing themselves to their new cause, they are recruiting for it.

The chorus also responds to Athena's animal imagery, praying that *stasis* never roar (βρέμειν) in the polis (976-8). They bury their former vampirical selves, asking that the dust

[70] Petrounias (n.2) 179-83 traces the images of shepherd, watchdog, and protector.

[71] This interpretation requires πρόσθε τά rather than Page's πρόσθετα. H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Three notes on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*', *RhM* 103 (1960) 77-8 gives the best explanation for this reading, that in oracular language humans are referred to by animals. But even this is unnecessarily limited–the mixture of animal and human extends far beyond prophetic topoi..

[72] Knox (n.26) 18, 20. C. Nappa, 'Agamemnon 717-36: the parable of the lion cub', *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994) 82-87 replaces Helen with Paris as the primary referent. μῆλον also surfaces in several sacrificial contexts discussed below.

not drink up the black blood of the citizens (980). Athena rewards their rejection of the past by immediately labelling them 'kindly ones', the same appellation given to the citizens themselves (εὔφρονας εὔφρονες, 992). There is an identity between the Furies and the just citizenry. Most revealingly, the Furies now display their own manipulation of animal imagery. Having cut themselves free of the bestial, they create the last direct animal allusion of the trilogy. As they bid farewell, they observe that the people of the city 'having grown wise in time' (like themselves) are now *objects* of reverence: Παλλάδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς / ὄντας ἅζεται πατήρ (1001-1002). Zeus is calmly now accepted as father, marking the new position of the 'kindly ones' among the gods who once scorned them. And Zeus reveres the Athenians, a remarkable inversion that places the city of Athens and its citizens close to divine status. To emphasize this new importance of the polis, the Furies suggest that the Athenians are nestlings 'under Athena's wings'. The goddesses now hand over the animal conflation to Athena in a final reversal of the repeated bird images of the trilogy. Instead of brutal visions of stolen chicks, murderous eagles, orphaned eaglets, and bellicose cocks, the corrupted fertility and wasted nurturing so central to the trilogy find their resolution in a picture of comforting, political custody. The only bestial element allowed in the polis is the protection afforded the population under the aegis of Athena. And so in their final words the chorus bids farewell to all the δαίμονές τε καὶ βροτοί throughout the city (1014-20).[73] This also marks another shift in the concept of deity: Zeus' justice, perhaps Zeus himself, has changed; the Furies have been transformed; and the virginal, male-oriented, and martial goddess assumes a maternal (at least parental) role.[74]

These dramatic metamorphoses are signalled by visual cues. Commentators frequently note the new political status of the Erinyes as metics (1011, 1018), presented quite theatrically by the donning of purple robes (1028-29). The vultures in the parodos had been metics too, but abstractly and temporarily, annual resident aliens of divine Olympus. Now the gods are invited into the human polis. At the beginning of the trilogy the reference to metics signalled an inappropriate conflation of human, animal, and divine; at the end the gods, having put the bestial part of their characters in its proper place, are to share in and aid the city.[75] The Furies do not lose their bite—they retain their ability to punish, and their blessings are conditional upon the good behaviour of the citizens. But their psyches now are similar to that of Athena, with

[73] Thus Sommerstein's remark (on 1016) that the 'unity of the Athenian πόλις transcends the gulf between mortals and immortals' is only partially correct, for the larger issue is that each section of the polis is in its rightful place—animals exist as a means to establish communication between men and the divine (not really 'transcendence') and so are now excluded from the list. There is no pathetic fallacy here, no farewell to birds, sheep, fields or trees that are part of the wild, not of the polis.

[74] The 'development' of deities within a work is still a controversial claim, but clearly at least what the gods stand for has been altered; see Sommerstein 19-25. Athena, ironically, evolves into the parental figure that Agamemnon and Clytemnestra fail so wretchedly to become. The polis becomes Athena's 'family'. The virgin goddess is many things to Odysseus and his royal house in Homer's epic—and she even seems to transform herself into a bird to watch his final act of vengeance—but it is hard to imagine the hero tucked metaphorically under her wings.

[75] On the Furies as metics, and on the associations with the Panathenaia, see W. Headlam, 'The last scene of the *Eumenides*', *JHS* 26 (1906) 268-77 with Bowie's detailed discussion and bibliography (n.53) 27-30. On the technical status of the Furies as metics with a review of the issue, see P. Vidal-Naquet, 'The place and status of foreigners in Athenian tragedy', in C. Pelling (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford 1997) 111. D. Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic* (Cambridge 1977) 38 sees this reference as outside the semantic norm in Aeschylus because of its apparent positive associations. But this may be Athena's greatest trick, to keep the Furies as an essential part of the polis without overwhelming it in some destructive fashion. As Whitehead concludes (38 f.), there is a duality about the *metoikia*: to have metics in the city was advantageous; to *be* a metic was not. Athena manages to play up the positive aspects of this situation by manipulating the Furies into looking at the role from the outside. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that a central rite of the Panathenaic Festival was giving Athena a veil/robe illustrating the battle of the Olympians with the giants. The procession itself marks the successful suppression of the hybrid creature that is so dangerous.

the controlled differentiation of divine, human, and beastly elements supported by and in service to Athens.

But there is an even more striking theatrical effect indicating the Furies' transition. As they prepare to march off, the escorts enter with torches—and with animals for sacrifice to the Furies (σφαγίων τῶνδ'...σεμνῶν, 1007). These sacrificial beasts bear the Furies' own adjective, σεμνῶν, as if to note their connection with the goddesses' development into their more positive manifestation.[76] This connection between the deities and sacrifice is of great significance. As Albert Henrichs has demonstrated, the Erinyes and the Eumenides/Semnai Theai represent polar identities—opposite yet mutually reinforcing aspects—of the same chthonic beings, one sinister, the other benign.[77] The Erinyes *qua* Erinyes received no cult anywhere in Greece, the Eumenides/Semnai Theai no myth. The mere appearance of sacrificial animals at this point, then, carefully marks the transition of this group of deities into its more benevolent nature, from Erinyes into Eumenides.

On the same stage, then, are the Furies, the animals, and the citizens, separate and distinct but sharing space, as it should be in a flourishing community.[78] The animals have now taken on their most important role in the classical world as mediators between man and the gods. The ritual shedding of blood distinguishes the separate spheres of men, gods, and beasts, since animals provide access by men to the divine. Here may be the first legitimate sacrifice in the trilogy.[79] So it is most appropriate that the final reference to the honours so coveted throughout the play by the Furies is connected with sacrificial victims: τιμαῖς καὶ θυσίαις (1037). The goddesses are fully part of the polis and human life, receiving divine honours in the form of sacrifices. Sacrifice itself has been redeemed from its corrupted state, but this is possible only because the animal victims are no longer overlapping with either human or divinity. Walter Burkert has demonstrated that sacrifice stands at the heart of the Dionysian tragic festival, both in the possible connection with the sacrifice of a τράγος and in the constant visual reminder of the θυμέλη erected in the heart of the orchestra.[80] These rites at the end of the *Oresteia* represent initiation, overcoming of crisis, succession of young to old, and the reintegration of community that form the central function of sacrifice in the Greek polis. And so as the goddesses earn their proper Athenian cult-title, Σεμναὶ <Θεαί> (1041), and their sinister side subsides, animals and humans take their appropriate place in the polis. The transformed deities fulfil what appears to us to be the new purpose of Zeus, a new concept of the balance, order and reciprocity referred to as δίκη. As Heraclitus observed, Helios will not overstep his bounds (μέτρα); otherwise, the Furies—guardians (hired thugs?) of Justice, will find him out

[76] The adjective σεμνός is applied by Clytemnestra to the feast of the Furies (*Eu.* 108), thus ironically anticipating the metamorphosis of the deities (see A. Henrichs, 'Anonymity and polarity: unknown Gods and nameless altars in the Areopagos', *ICS* 19 (1994) 44) and also by the Furies to themselves (383), but it is only at the very end of the play (1041) that they are officially recognized as Semnai Theai, as most commentators now accept Hartung's supplement Θεαί.

[77] (n.76) 27-58; see also H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Erinyes, Semnai Theai, Eumenides', in E.M. Craik (ed.), *'Owls to Athens': Essays in Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover* (Oxford 1990) esp. 208-11.

[78] Taplin (n.54) 412 observes that the text even implies that sacrifices were carried out on stage. Henrichs (n.76) 47 and n.98 reminds us that σφάγια can refer to both slaughtered animals and victims still in the process of being sacrificed.

[79] Even when mentioned earlier in the context of sacrifice, animals rarely remained simply animals. Clytemnestra angrily insists that there were many flocks (μῆλα) available when Iphigenia was slaughtered like a beast (*Ag.* 1415-17). Clytemnestra grows impatient with Cassandra, declaring that the flocks (μῆλα) stand ready for sacrifice (*Ag.* 1057). Cassandra comments on her father's useless sacrifices (*Ag.* 1169). A transition is made at *Eu.* 450 and 452 where Orestes claims he was purified by the animal sacrifice (βοτοῦ/βοτοῖσι). This is the beginning of the change in imagery. Good on the role of sacrifice in tragedy in general is Segal (n.1 1986) 50 f.

[80] W. Burkert, 'Greek tragedy and sacrificial ritual', *GRBS* 7 (1966) 87-121.

('Ερινύες...Δίκης ἐπίκουροι).[81] Once the representatives of political disorder through their own hybrid natures and in the pursuit of a personal justice, they now become the powers that exact punishment and restore order when the limits of δίκη are transgressed within the polis as well.

VIII

It is no wonder that the sign on the weaving that designates Orestes an Atreid and proves his identity to his sister is a θήρειος γραφή (*Ch.* 232). The house has been stigmatized by a constant confusion of human and animal since Thyestes' feast on kindred rather than animal flesh (the Pelops episode does not appear in the trilogy). The 'beastly figure' is left intentionally vague–there is no need to attempt to identify what animal is enmeshed in the fabric.[82] With the end of the trilogy, we have moved away from the family tragedy in kingly Argos to the rise of the polis in Athens. Here the correct model for dealing with the beast residing in us all has been played out before our eyes–the polis simply cannot tolerate this kind of conflation. The beast must be given its own place–in the fields and as victims to maintain harmony between man and god, community and cosmos. For Sophocles, these issues and tensions create a civic background from which the heroic character is increasingly isolated. In Plato, this will become a battle in and for the soul, in Euripides a window into human psychological perversity. But for Aeschylus the emphasis is on the religious and political nature of the problem and its solution. This we can see through the means by which this transformation of the Furies is brought about, the uniquely human characteristic of speech.[83]

Athena's weapon in her engagement with the Furies is, as is often remarked, persuasion, the tool of the polis. Her victory with words over the Furies is homologous to the triumph of civilizing mortal heroes over similar but irredeemable hybrid monsters like the Minotaur, Medusa, and the Centaurs. It also parallels the Olympians' defeat of the composite giants, another succession myth that featured Athena–the tale was represented on the Parthenon, inside

[81] *Fr.* 94; see the discussion of Henrichs (n.76) 27 n.4. For δίκη in the larger sense of order and balance, and a discussion of all its various meanings in the trilogy, see M. Gagarin, *Aeschylean Drama* (Berkeley 1976) 66-68 and W.G. Thalman, 'Speech and silence in the *Oresteia*', *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 104-105. Brown (n.62) 27 reminds us that the Furies had been associated with the justice of Zeus in the first two plays, and thus the closure in the *Eumenides* represents a return to the former harmony under a new dispensation.

[82] Knox (n.26) 20, for example, welcomes Headlam's guess that it must be a lion as the badge of the dynasty of Pelops; see also Garvie *ad loc.*

[83] My use here of 'politics' is much less specific than that found in the flood of recent work that attempts to place Greek tragedy into its political context. The trilogy is no longer merely mined for contemporary allusions to Argos or the reforms of the Areopagus, but for information on the tensions within the democracy. A good review can be found in A.H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Bari 1996) 288-95. No matter which side of the liberal/conservative debate scholars come down on, there is general agreement on my central assumption that 'the polis is always implied here as being part of the route from chaos to order', C. Meier, *The Political Art of Greek Tragedy* (tr. A. Webber, Cambridge 1993) 131-2; see also W.F. Zak, *The Polis and the Divine Order* (Lewisburg 1995), M. Griffith, 'Brilliant dynasts: power and politics in the *Oresteia*', *CA* 14 (1995) 62-114, and C. Rocco, *Tragedy and Enlightenment* (Berkeley 1997). Griffith (64) concludes that 'by any account the ending of the *Eumenides* represents a ringing endorsement of Athens and its political system. Such, I take it, is the prevailing view of Aeschylus' masterpiece'. This does not mean, of course, that most critics find a simplistic, comfortable closure to the trilogy–many issues remain unresolved. Goldhill (n.8) 280, 283 in particular sees a 'profound ambiguity in the reconciliation ... achieved through language, *peitho*', and so the 'telos of closure is resisted in the continuing play of difference'. But even he agrees that the city's order, the polis itself, is never seriously questioned as the necessary basis of civilization; 'The great Dionysia and civic ideology', in Winkler and Zeitlin (n.53) 114. Since he sees the 'difference' as a matter inherent in the nature of language, there can be no avoidance of 'slipping'. My approach is less sophisticated, suggesting difference is species-bound, and the slippage between species, or between genders or age groups, etc. can be and is stopped through divine guidance. Language can be used by humans to organize and reflect upon reasonably sensible lives within a community.

the shield of Athena Parthenos, and on the peplos brought to her at the Panathenaia (when the metics donned purple robes).[84] This at least in part explains the puzzling reference by Orestes in his prayer that Athena come to his aid whether in Libya or 'reviewing the Phlegraean plain like a man who is a bold commander' (Φλεγραίαν πλάκα / θρασὺς ταγοῦχος ὡς ἀνὴρ ἐπισκοπεῖ, *Eu.* 295-6). Phlegra was the traditional site of the battle between the Olympians and the Gigantes,[85] and Orestes summons the goddess to wage another war against dangerously composite agents of chaos, this battle directly connected with human as well as cosmic order.

Athena's victory through language goes deeper than representing mere forensic power over physical force and archaic religious obligations. Athena uses a distinctly human quality, speech, to civilize the Furies–she is the mouthpiece for a new vision of humanity, a vision represented in the victory of Zeus of the Agora (Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος, 973). The oft-noted development of Peitho across the three plays is significant here,[86] but it is more useful to recall that language is frequently cited by the Greeks as the main feature distinguishing humans from animals. When Achilles' horses begin to speak, the carefully differentiated worlds of human and beast are intolerably mixed, and so the Erinyes as guardians of the natural order put the cosmos back in order by silencing the animals.[87] Humans alone can speak, and this enables communities to be formed for the pursuit of justice. The best known formulation of this is found in Aristotle's *Politics* 1253a, where man is famously labelled a πολιτικὸν ζῷον. The issues there are directly related to the dramatic movement of the *Oresteia*. Language, man's unique endowment, enables him to sort out what is right and wrong:

> For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech (λόγος). The mere voice (φωνή), it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well ... but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right (δίκαιον) and wrong (ἄδικον); for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state (πόλις). (Rackham, tr.)

Language makes the polis possible. And the polis, as Aristotle argues here and in his *Ethics*, through its laws and customs, habituates humans into the good life. Except as a member of a polis (οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως)–and here almost all Greeks agreed–we can not be human at all, but must be either a beast or a god (θηρίον ἢ θεός).

The success of the polis, the establishment of laws, the rise of justice, the exercise of our humanity–civilization itself–are tied to the use of speech. This connection becomes commonplace in later rhetoric, where speech makes civilization possible and thus Athens, the

[84] See Moreau (n.1) 271. A convenient survey of the Gigantes and Athena can be found in T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore 1993) 445-54.

[85] See Sommerstein *ad loc.* for references.

[86] Especially good on the 'politically redemptive role' of persuasion in the *Oresteia* is F.I. Kane, 'Peitho and the Polis', *Ph&Rh* 19 (1986) 99-124. M.W. Edwards, 'Agamemnon's decision: freedom and folly in Aeschylus', *CSCA* 10 (1977) esp. 25 f. examines the close link between persuasion, temptation, and infatuation. Peitho is not always a matter of logical persuasion; *cf.* Gagarin (n.81) 85 f., Buxton (n.2) 105-114, and the bibliography in Rabinowitz (n.49) n.80. On the place of rhetoric in Aeschylus' world, see S. Halliwell, 'Between public and private: tragedy and the Athenian experience of rhetoric', in Pelling (n.75) 121-41.

[87] The bT-scholia: ἐπίσκοποι γάρ εἰσι τῶν παρὰ φύσιν. For the role of the Furies at *Iliad* 19.404 f., see J. Heath, 'The legacy of Peleus: death and divine gifts in the *Iliad*', *Hermes* 120 (1992) 397-99 with bibliography, though *cf.* Edwards (n.17) *ad loc.* For a discussion of speech as the special property of humans, with primary references, see Buxton (n.2) 49-62, U. Dierauer, *Tier und Mensch im Denken der Antike* (Amsterdam 1977) 32-35, R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (Ithaca 1993) 80-86, and Pelliccia (n.38) 25-6, 105-8. R.M. Harriott, 'The Argive Elders, the discerning shepherd and the fawning dog: misleading communication in the *Agamemnon*', *CQ* 32 (1982) 13 makes some provocative comments in passing on the significance of animals' inability to speak.

locus of articulateness, superior to other Greek city-states, and Greeks superior to other cultures. And for a professional speaker, of course, the mastery of speech is humanity's greatest accomplishment:

> For we are in no way superior to other living creatures with respect to the other powers we possess. We are, in fact, inferior to many in swiftness and bodily strength and other faculties. But, since we have developed the ability to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we want, not only have we been set free from living like beasts (τοῦ θηριωδῶς ζῆν), having come together we have founded cities and made laws and invented arts. (Isocrates, *Nicocles* 5-6; cf. *Paneg*. 48 f.)

Xenophon's Socrates states simply that the power of human expression 'enables us to impart to one another all good things by teaching and to take our share of them, to enact laws and administrate the polis' (*Mem*. 4.3.12). This idea is buried deep in Greek thought, long before Aeschylus. Hesiod, whose *Works and Days* is discussed in the first paragraph of this study, connects the advance of mankind from the animal realm to the replacement of violence by justice. And justice requires the correct use of speech. As the poet notes in his other poem as well, speech is intimately linked with justice and the just community:

> All the people look towards him [the Muse-favoured king] as he decides cases with just judgements (ἰθείῃσι δίκῃσιν). Speaking out unerringly he quickly brings even a great dispute to a wise end. For this is why the wise are kings, since in the agora they easily accomplish restitution for those who have been wronged, persuading them with gentle words. (*Th*. 84-90)

But we really do not have to move outside the *Oresteia* itself to learn that speech is a human characteristic and to lose it is to become mingled with the world of the beast. Athena's speech may be a victory for Peitho, but this is only one part of a larger theme of the triumph of speech over silence, of human articulation over bestial howls.[88] From the opening lines of the fearful watchman with an ox on his tongue to Iphigenia's gagging, Cassandra's first inarticulate screams, Orestes' polluted muteness, and the final alternation between holy silence and religious cry that brings the trilogy to a close, the *Oresteia* can be read as a battle for who can speak, who is silenced, who controls the conversation, who is persuaded. Our interest here is in the connection with who is bestial—or who can be categorized and thus treated as such—and who is not. A child is like a beast (βοτόν), the nurse in the *Libation Bearers* reminds us—it is not wise and cannot speak (753, 755). And so Athena marks the conversion, the realignment of the bestial in the Erinyes, by noting their new wisdom and speech: ἆρα φρονοῦσιν γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς / ὁδὸν εὑρίσκειν; (*Eu*. 988-9). This emphasis on 'good speech' that leads to justice is the final image of a war of tongues in the trilogy.[89] In fact, Athena had just insisted (970-2) that she loves the eyes of Peitho because they guide her tongue and mouth (γλῶσσαν καὶ στόμα) in her dealings with the Furies who were rejecting her like an animal (ἀγρίως). Here too is the last appearance of that root for the wild (ἀγρ–) used to describe snares (*Ag*. 1048, *Ch*. 998, *Eu*. 460), capture (*Ag*. 126), and quarry (*Eu*. 148). The Furies are no longer associated with the untamed world of animals. The 'good tongues' have replaced their earlier 'savage teeth'

[88] See Segal (n.1 1981) 52-58 for the disruption of logos in tragedy. Thalman (n.81) 225 makes the important argument that the effective use or a failure to master speech and silence can represent the workings of *dike* and is finally one with the moral issues, and discovers a concern with speech and silence pervading the entire trilogy. He concentrates on the inner psychic entities that make up human activity as central to the major themes, whereas I am here more interested in the external, political links; for a thorough discussion of logos as a psychic/intellectual activity in Aeschylus, see D. Sansone, *Aeschylean Metaphors for Intellectual Activity* (Wiesbaden 1975) 79-92. One of the most illuminating discussions of speech and silence in Greek tragedy remains B.M.W. Knox, 'The Hippolytus of Euripides', *YCS* 13 (1952) 3-31.

[89] *Cf*. Hes. *Op*. 216-17: ὁδὸς δ' ἑτέρηφι παρελθεῖν / κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια.

(ἀγρίαις γνάθοις, *Ch.* 280).[90] The inhuman tongue, notoriously wielded by Clytemnestra against Agamemnon (Cassandra refers to the 'tongue of the cursed bitch', γλῶσσα μισητῆς κυνός, *Ag.* 1228; *cf.* 1399), synonymous with the reciprocal vengeance in the next generation ('let hostile words be paid for with hostile words', ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ / γλῶσσα, *Ch.* 309-310)–the weapon (γλώσσης ματαίας) that just moments ago threatened to destroy the land of Athens (*Eu.* 830)–now becomes the tool for civilization in the mouth not just of Athena, but of the Furies as well.

This is not the place to review all the ramifications of the thematic connection between speech/silence and human/animal that pervades the *Oresteia*. Two dramatic clusters of allusions in the *Agamemnon* can serve as examples of the significance of language to the human or bestial status of the characters. Aegisthus and the chorus exchange insults that revolve around these issues. Aegisthus refers to the chorus as old (1619), slaves (1618), and animals: they are told not to kick against the goads (1624); they will be broken and tamed beasts (1632), and eventually become yoked horses (1640). These threats are interspersed with denigration of the chorus' speech: their words (τάπη) will become cries (κλαυμάτων); their tongues (γλῶσσαν) will be silenced (ἀπὸ φθογγῆς) to be replaced by childish barking (νηπίοις ὑλάγμασιν); in short, their words are empty (ματαίαν γλῶσσαν). The chorus, referring at least partially to themselves, had said that 'some barked silently' (σῖγά τις βαΰ– /ζει, 449-50) at the Atreidae for the loss of life at Troy. Now they are barking at their new leader, and are up to the challenge. Their most direct hit, as we saw before, is their accusation that Aegisthus has taken on the role of woman (1625), and we learn early in the play what value the old men put on a woman's words (483-7). They reject the role of animal, refusing to fawn (προσσαίνειν, 1665), instead calling their new tyrant a boasting cock (ἀλέκτωρ) next to his hen (1671).[91] Clytemnestra, the master speaker herself who now only hopes that men will listen to the words of a woman (λόγος γυναικός, 1661), persuades her lover to stop fighting by repeating his own words: don't pay attention to this empty barking, (ματαίων τῶνδ' ὑλαγμάτων, 1672).

But the scene which displays the connections between silence and the beast most clearly is Cassandra's appearance in the *Agamemnon*. The prophetess–an unruly conflation of divine (at least when possessed by Apollo), beast, and mortal that foreshadows the Furies–cannot make herself understood and dies the brutal death of an animal.[92] Athena's verbal victory presents the mirror image, as through language she compels the Furies to subordinate the bestial to the good of the city and themselves.

Clytemnestra orders long-silent Cassandra to take her place with the other slaves near the domestic altar (κτησίου βωμοῦ, 1038). The adjective reveals the status of the captured princess, now an acquisition or piece of property–the word is related etymologically to the κτῆνη prophesied by Calchas to be destroyed in front of Troy (see above; Cassandra later says these flocks were victims slain in vain by her father, 1168-9). The chorus notes that Clytemnestra has spoken clearly (λέγουσα...σαφῆ λόγον, 1047) and we have already witnessed her masterly manipulation of Agamemnon with words. Cassandra, caught in fatal nets

[90] Peitho is connected by Athena with the γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον (886). There is no doubt that words can cast spells, and this 'magical' aspect of language has become the subject of much discussion; see most recently, L. McClure, 'Clytemnestra's binding spell (*Agamemnon* 958-74)', *CJ* 92 (1997) 123-40.

[91] The old men also say to Aegisthus, 'Go ahead, fatten up, staining justice' (πρᾶσσε, πιαίνου, μιαίνων τὴν δίκην, 1669). This is usually taken as a response to Aegisthus' threat to starve them (1621, 1642). But the verb is also the word used of fattening animals, so the chorus may well be encouraging Aegisthus to prepare himself to become a sacrifice, since they have just thought of Orestes' return (1667).

[92] S.L. Schein aptly observes that Cassandra is a victim like Iphigenia, the vultures robbed of the nest, the unborn in the hare's womb–and also a Fury like Helen and Clytemnestra; 'The Cassandra scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*', *G&R* 29 (1982) 15.

(μορσίμων ἀγρευμάτων, 1048), should obey—the πειθ– root—is used three times in one verse (1049). Cassandra's continued silence is met by the queen's suggestion that unless her captive possesses some incomprehensible barbarian speech, like a swallow, 'speaking within her *phrenes* I persuade her with my speech' (λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγωι, 1052).[93] Cassandra is in fact caught in the nets of fate, her own bind. She had come to an agreement with Apollo, but she had lied, misused her language (ἐψευσάμην, 1208), and so is doomed for her crime never to persuade anyone of anything (ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, 1212). A slave now, her words are meaningless anyway; but she is also cursed—her power to shape her world with speech has been taken away. She has been reduced to the level of beast even before setting foot in Argos. We are to witness the final stages of that degradation. Her direct silent disobedience, her only option other than immediate capitulation, marks her as human—our species alone can choose whether to speak or not. Yet this silencing also ironically makes her all the more bestial—animals do not speak, as Clytemnestra snipes—and thus all the more an appropriate victim. And she does eventually march off to her sacrifice like the perfect, willing victim (θεηλάτου / βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμόν, 1297-98).

Clytemnestra, on the other hand, has been shown, especially in the carpet scene, to be a master of persuasive rhetoric. She prides herself on her speech—there will be no girlish or womanly impotence in her words or thoughts, she has insisted (277, 348, 592). Still, it is a losing battle—it is not merely the chorus of elders who dismiss a 'woman's rumour', but her husband's first words of greeting after ten years remind her that it is not her place to speak (914-17). She kills him. Good riddance, we mutter with our modern sensibilities, but her fellow conspirator and lover will say the same thing about her (*Ch.* 845-6). She will fail to humble Cassandra, to talk her into submission. She wields the axe (or sword) effectively, but her final failure at persuasion—Orestes carries the weapon this time—will silence her serpentine tongue just as swiftly. Both women are presented as beasts as language fails them.[94]

The chorus continues to juxtapose the two crucial roots (λέγει / πείθου, 1053-54), but Cassandra does not budge from the chariot. Clytemnestra then impatiently insists that the flocks are standing by the fire, ready for sacrifice. There were slaves standing before the altar a minute before; now there are animals to be slaughtered. We can understand Cassandra's hesitation. The queen stoops to absurd lengths as she suggests that Cassandra gesture with a 'barbarian hand' instead of using her voice if she does not understand her speech (λόγον, 1060-61). The chorus says the stranger (ξένη) needs an interpreter since she is like a newly captured animal (θηρός, 1062-63). Clytemnestra will have no more of this—the young girl is obviously possessed, not yet knowing how to bear the bit (χαλινόν, 1066). The chorus reinforces the image, telling

[93] On the connection between φρήν and speech, see S.D. Sullivan, *Aeschylus' Use of Psychological Terminology: Traditional and New* (Montreal 1997) 30-32 and Sansone (n.88). Animals do not have φρένες in Aeschylus, making it impossible for them to have or understand speech. Clytemnestra may be hinting that if Cassandra does not understand, she really is no different than a swallow.

[94] D.E. McCoskey briefly examines Cassandra's 'justification' of her slaughter of Cassandra by emphasizing this aspect of 'otherness' and notes that Clytemnestra is similarly endowed with a certain 'foreigness' of expression; '"I, whom she detested so bitterly": slavery and the violent division of women in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', in S. Murnaghan and S.R. Joshel (eds.), *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture* (London/New York 1998) 44-6. The two women may also be linked by their initial long silence on stage. Cassandra is certainly mute for many minutes after entering. The moment of Clytemnestra's first entrance is still debated. If she does appear at 83, as many scholars suggest, even if she departs again at 103 her prolonged speechlessness makes her a sister in silence to Cassandra; see both Taplin (n.54) 280-5 who argues strongly against an early entrance, and the attempted rebuttal by E.H. Pool, 'Clytemnestra's first entrance in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*: analysis of a controversy', *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983) 71-116. The jury is still out: see J.R. March, *The Creative Poet* (*BICS Supplement* 49, London 1987) 81-2 with n.7, for example, for agreement with Pool, and M. Ewans, ed. and trs., *Aischylos: The Oresteia* (London 1995) 132 n.17 for agreement with Taplin on the basis of the pragmatics of a modern production.

Cassandra to take up the yoke for the first time (ζευγόν, 1071; Cassandra herself will later refer to her δούλιον ζυγόν, 1226).

In this introductory exchange, then, the silence of Cassandra labels her a slave, female, stranger, barbarian, madman, and animal–a nice list of Athenian 'others' who were defined at least partially by their lack of legitimate speech.[95] Only the very old and very young are missing from this catalogue of those excluded from full participation in the community, and the chorus represents the silenced elders (548) who compare themselves to children (75). Most of these characteristics will be found again in the Furies, as we have seen.

Cassandra now speaks, but the chorus never completely understands her. This constant confusion (1105, 1112-13, 1177, 1245, 1253) renders Cassandra unheard as well.[96] The old men get glimpses of what she is saying, enough to be amazed at her accuracy, especially since she was raised in a foreign (speaking) city (ἀλλόθρουν πόλιν, 1200; *cf.* 1162). Although sympathetic to the young woman, they apply animal imagery with surprising vigour: she is a keen-scented dog (1093-4; *cf.* 1184-5), a nightingale (1140-5), a beast with bloody fang (1164), a cow marching to sacrifice (1297-8). Cassandra herself says that she is no bird fluttering at a bush; rather, she asks the chorus to bear witness to her dying prophecy (1316-20). Indeed, Clytemnestra later refers to this final lament of Cassandra as the song of a swan (1444-5). The disgusted chorus responds by asserting that Clytemnestra boasts over the corpse like a crow singing a hymn out of tune (unlawfully? ἐκνόμως, 1472-4). Once again the conflation of human and animal, this time with respect to human voice and bestial inarticulateness, leads only to destruction.

So this study of animal imagery in the *Oresteia* draws to a close with the cackling of crows, having begun long ago with the screaming of vultures. Birds were known for their voices, the screeches often compared with human voices, especially barbarian ones.[97] The morally debased persuasion of Clytemnestra, the silence of beasts and the inarticulate cries of the birds in the *Agamemnon* give way to the morally responsible rhetoric of Athena, to the repeated demand for holy silence (εὐφαμεῖτε, *Eu.* 1035, 1042) and echoed call for the cries of ritual terror and joy (ὀλολύξατε, 1043, 1047). The trilogy ends with the sounds of sacrifice, with animals and speech juxtaposed in civic harmony at last. This cry had throughout the three plays been associated with the cycle of vengeance, the slaughter within the house of Atreus. News of Troy's defeat is met by shrieks of joy from Clytemnestra (ἀνωλόλυξα, *Ag.* 587) and the entire town, as she herself insists (ὀλολυγμὸν...ἔλασκον εὐφημοῦντες, 595-6; *cf.* ὀλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα, 28).[98] Cassandra cannot stand the hypocrisy of the 'monstrous woman' seeming to cry out in rejoicing (ἐπωλολύξατο, 1236), having herself summoned the spirit of discord to 'shriek over' the 'sacrifice' of Agamemnon (κατολολυξάτω θύματος, 1118). The chorus rightly believes that Cassandra is calling upon a Fury (1119-20). The chorus in the *Libation Bearers* wishes to chant the ὀλολυγμός at the death of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (*Ch.* 387) and in fact do so right after Clytemnestra is dragged offstage to her death (ἐπολολύξατ', 942).

[95] See H.H. Bacon, *Barbarians in Greek Tragedy* (New Haven 1961) 6-17, H.C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge 1965) 9-23, and especially E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989) 2-20.

[96] Being unheard is the equivalent of being outside of moral consideration. The gods do not hear the wicked man (*Ag.* 396; cf. *Eu.* 558-9). The herald's appearance is contrasted with Clytemnestra's womanly faith in torch signals–he is οὔτ' ἄναυδος (496; *cf.* Iphigenia at 238: βίαι χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδωι μένει). Clytemnestra prays that Agamemnon's speech in Hades not be loud (*Ag.* 1528-9)–he cannot be too dead.

[97] Swallows in particular; see Herodotus 2.54-57, Aristoph. *Birds* 1681, *Frogs* 93, 678 f.

[98] J.T. Sheppard, 'The Prelude of the *Agamemnon*', *CR* 36 (1922) 5-11 compares Clytemnestra's shriek with that of the vultures: 'it was a mother's cry for vengeance'; *cf.* Moreau (n.1) 95.

This ritual cry is clearly tied to the theme of the corrupted sacrifice,[99] but the sound itself is of significance. Associated throughout the trilogy with the old system, it is now to welcome in the new. No doubt we should be heartened at the metamorphosis–the howl is to be at the heart of a community ceremony, not to celebrate a personal vendetta. But we are also reminded that the polis is a compromise, a place where *under the right conditions* we can live fully human lives. It is a difficult balancing act to keep the beast around and yet not let it overwhelm us. We cannot eliminate the beast from inside or around us, so we must keep it in its place. The Furies even at the end of the trilogy are metics, not citizens. They too reside on the margins, not aliens, not Aristophanes' Triballians, yet not Olympian.[100] We rely on speech, persuasion, and reason, yet we cannot eliminate the irrational howl. To live well requires the blessings of the gods, blessings which can only be gained through the shedding of animate blood.

The *Oresteia* ends on an unusually positive note, but it is an optimism in the potential we have to live ordered lives. The structure is in place and came about with great suffering; that is another way to say that it is a daily, difficult struggle to keep the chaos away. Aeschylus was too Greek, too much a student of human nature to believe that the bestial could be either hunted to extinction or allowed to run unchecked. Instead, restrained by the reins of tradition, law, and shame, it must serve the needs of the community even at the expense of the individual. Heraclitus insisted that we must fight for our law as though for the city wall. One keeps us free from the beast within, the other from the enemy without. Contrary to modern romantic and therapeutic visions of human nature, the Greeks knew that culture, not nature, provides our salvation–it is our one chance to limit the damage we do and to live meaningful lives by managing the beast with the bits, curbs, and spurs–all the accoutrements of entanglement–of duties and obligations to something larger than ourselves. Thucydides' tragic accounts of Corcyra and Melos, Euripides' ruined heroines, Plato's unworkable utopia, and Aristotle's degenerative constitutions all suggest that Aeschylus had reason to celebrate–and worry about–the Athenian polis. He, like Aristotle, knew that

> as man is the best of the animals (βέλτιστον τῶν ζώιων) when perfected, so he is the worst when sundered from law and justice (νόμου καὶ δίκης). For unrighteousness (ἀδικία) is most pernicious when possessed of weapons, and man is born possessing weapons for the use of wisdom and virtue, which it is possible to employ entirely for the opposite ends. (*Politics* 1253a, Rackham, tr.)

Man is born with speech, and should he use it to pursue justice, to form a partnership with others in a polis in this search, he exercises that part which most distances him from the beast. But, devoid of virtue, man is the most unholy and savage (ἀγριώτατος) animal of all.

JOHN HEATH

Santa Clara University

[99] Zeitlin (n.31) 507 observes the restoration of the *ololygmos* to its proper function. She also notes the contrast between the previous blasphemy of spilled blood and the truce (that is, poured offerings, σπονδαί, 1044).

[100] Perhaps we should also recall that the Athenian Semnai Theai were strongly and unusually associated with silence, worshipped in complete silence in a cult presided over by the Athenian *genos* of Hesychidae, named after Hesychus, 'the silent one'–that is, there remains something different, something beastly about them even in their most sympathetic guise; see Henrichs (n.76) 43A and A. Henrichs, 'Namenlosigkeit und Euphemismus: Zur Ambivalenz der chthonischen Mächte im attischen Drama', in A. Harder and H. Hofmann (eds.), *Fragmenta Dramatica* (Göttingen 1991) 162-9.