

CORPORALITY IN THE ANCIENT GREEK THEATRE

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EACH PERSON MURDERED in the *Oresteia*, with the exception of Aegisthus, removes a piece of clothing before entering the scene—building to his or her death (Griffith 1988).¹ Most notably, in the *Choephoroi*, having argued for her life in vain, as a last desperate attempt, Clytaemnestra says to Orestes, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσθαι . . . μαστόν, "pity this breast" (896–897). Her words apparently allude to Hecuba's supplication of Hector to reenter the walls of Troy in the *Iliad* (22.79–82). This reminiscence suggests an appeal to Orestes' filial loyalty, but we know from the nurse, Cilissa's earlier speech (*Cho.* 734–765) that she has usurped Clytaemnestra in the role of mother so that Orestes could say with Ion, "I never knew the breast" (Eur. *Ion* 319).² Moreover, there is also an erotic element in Clytaemnestra's plea,³ reminiscent as it is of the incident in the *Little Iliad* in which her sister, Helen disrobes before Menelaus, when he is about to kill her after the Trojan war.⁴

Clytaemnestra's breast is a significant object upon which three distinct and mutually incompatible fields of meaning converge. The Iliadic intertext problematizes our reading of the whole scene, and the erotic and maternal aspects of Clytaemnestra's gesture work at cross-purposes one to the other (Griffith 1995). The present paper addresses the question of whether Clytaemnestra's breast is unique in ancient drama as a polyvalent anatomical symbol, or whether it is closer to the norm.

Jasper Griffin (1980: 1–49) has shown the importance of significant objects in Homer. A small minority of these are anatomical: we have already mentioned Hecuba's breast, and Emmet Robbins (1993) has shown the importance of Achilles' hands in the *Iliad*. But we would expect a much greater use of bodily organs as significant objects in drama, since the body is foregrounded in drama in a

¹ A version of this paper was read at the University of Toronto on 9 February 1996; I wish to thank those present for their stimulating discussion. The material was gathered in the course of preparing a glossary of early Greek anatomical terms. I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their generous support of that project and to the Advisory Research Council of Queen's University for a research travel grant. I am also grateful to Eric Csapo for much helpful advice at all stages of writing and to Gloria D'Ambrosio-Griffith, Charles Segal, and two anonymous referees for *Phoenix* for many improvements to the final version.

² Contrast the infant Moses who was covertly restored to his mother's breast (Ezek. *Ex.* 23–27). Clytaemnestra perhaps preferred to suckle Aegisthus, as the maenads abandon their infants to wet-nurse wild things (Eur. *Bacch.* 699–702). There is a Hamlet-quality to Orestes' feelings for his mother.

³ So Devereux 1976: 203–212 and Zeitlin 1978: 157 = 1996: 96.

⁴ *Ilias Parva* fr. 19 Bernabé, Davies; Stesichorus 201 PMG; Ibyc. 296 PMG; Eur. *Andr.* 629–630; Ar. *Lys.* 155–156. Vase-painters, if they knew of it, ignore the story; Hedreen 1996: 157, with bibliography. For the baring of breasts to achieve acquittal in a legal context, cf. Kowalski 1947.

way that it is not in epic and lyric, because it is in the phrase of H. Huston (1992) "the actor's instrument," the most ready and valuable of all stage-properties,⁵ and because we watch the stories of drama unfold not in the glass of narrative, darkly, but face to face. It would be an interesting experiment, as well as a useful corrective for classicists, who perforce experience the plays in the first instance purely as texts, to watch an ancient play "with the sound turned off" so we could direct our full attention to the wordless discourse of the actors' bodies.⁶ The theatre-audience, too, is physically involved in the dramas.⁷ No wonder, then, that the poets of New Comedy end their plays by instructing the audience in poet-friendly forms of response, bidding them applaud, stretch their limbs, and go (Men. *Dys.* 967; Plaut. *Epid.* epilogue, etc.). For Aeschylus' audience we must envisage a host of veterans very sensitive about war, as we know since they fined Phrynichus for producing *The Sack of Miletus* (Hdt. 6.21.2). These men had friends who wore the red badge of courage and had internalized into their own flesh the unkind cuts of the tragic stage; some small number may even have been amputees, although what with a bloodletting here and some hellebore there, the ancient physician could ensure that almost any wound was fatal (for example, Hdt. 6.114; Soph. *Phil.* 749–750).⁸ Yet the audience's experience is also one of disembodiment. The masks, the wine, the jostling of the crowd induce an ecstasy in which giddy *recepto deo* enthusiasm overcomes the inscape and individuation of mundane haecceity, the dikes of selfhood are breached (cf. Henrichs 1984), the soul congregationalized (Eur. *Bacch.* 75), and a new corporate identity of the whole audience achieved.

So we return to the question: is Clytaemnestra's breast unique as a polyvalent anatomical symbol? I propose to look at this question in five stages. I will consider in turn what seem to me to be the three prerequisites for the semiotic use of the body, namely, an ability to objectify it, a capacity to resolve it mentally into its constituent organs, and a willingness to speak of them. I will then consider the related question of whether there is a semiotics of the *whole* body. Finally, I will turn to the quest for significant use of individual organs, that is, analogues to the Aeschylean scene.

I do not believe that the question of corporality, or what Froma Zeitlin (1991 = 1996: 172–216) in her study of the *Hecuba* calls "the somatics of Dionysiac drama" or what Charles Segal (1985: 13) has called tragedy's "directness of appeal

⁵ Cf. Dingel 1967, which I have not seen.

⁶ This notwithstanding "the displacement of the body by speech" that "tragedy . . . inherits from epic" (Murnaghan 1988: 29).

⁷ As we may be certain even without crediting anecdotes to the effect that the pregnant women miscarried during Aesch. *Eum.* in an early example of reader-response criticism (*Vita* 2.11–12; Calder 1988)—on which, see Tompkins 1980; for its ancient precursors, see Isocr. *Pan.* 200–203—or that the audience arose en masse to lynch him for revealing the mysteries (Heraclides of Pontus fr. 170 Wehrli = T 93b *TGF*; Sutton 1983).

⁸ Counter-examples of men surviving war-wounds: Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.15, *Ages.* 2.13; Dem. 18.67; Plut. *Pel.* 4.5. I derive this list from Lazenby 1991: 102.

to [the] basic level of our corporeal being," has ever been posed in quite these terms: although there are some studies of individual body-parts in specific plays (for example, Leinieks 1975; Flory 1978), most comprehensive discussions of the stagecraft of specific authors, notably Oliver Taplin's (1977) work on Aeschylus and K. B. Frost's (1988) on Menander, confine themselves to the consideration of entrances and exits, yet actors use their bodies for other purposes beside mere locomotion to and from the acting-area.⁹

I

The first prerequisite for the semiotic use of the body, I have said, is an ability to see it as a *Ding an sich*, to conceive of it in its pure thingliness, divorced from the person who inhabits it. This thingliness is apparent most obviously in death, when a person becomes mere meat. In death, the body can be manipulated; one thinks of Orestes using Clytaemnestra's body as a lure in Sophocles *Electra*. The corpse who refuses to be manipulated, as in Aristophanes *Frogs* (172–180), is a comic perversion of this. The body can be mutilated by dogs, birds, the voiceless children of the undefiled, or men, although here epic has the advantage over tragedy, for it can actually show the ritual mutilation of the corpse,¹⁰ but the tragedians were richly inventive in recuperating into the economy of their work gore that cannot actually be staged. The corpse can also be displayed—even in ordinary life—in the laying-out or *πρόθεσις*, whether openly or wrapped in a winding-sheet, in the case of Phaethon still smouldering (Eur. *Phaethon* 214.5 Diggle), sometimes comely (fr. 495.30 Nauck²), sometimes not (Eur. *Her.* 454). So Orestes displays the bodies of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra with the words, ἴδεσθε χώρας τὸν διπλὸν τυραννίδα, "Behold the twin tyrannies of our land" (Aesch. *Cho.* 973), and so the dying Heracles unveils himself with notably similar words (Soph. *Trach.* 107880), and to facilitate the production of these tableaux the stage-engineers devised a special machine, the trolley or ἐκκύκλημα. The display of the corpse implicit in burial and its threatened refusal is the central theme of several plays: Aeschylus *Phrygians*, Sophocles *Antigone*, Euripides *Supplices*, Ennius *Ransoming of Hector*, and was a chronic Sophoclean obsession (*Antigone passim*, *Ajax* 1047–48, *Electra* 1488). Manipulation, mutilation, and display converge in Euripides *Bacchae* when Agave plays ball (cf. διεσφαίριζε, line 1136) with the severed head of Pentheus (1202–15).¹¹

⁹ Taplin 1971 treats a wider range of stage-actions. As a corrective to the narrow focus of Taplin 1977 and Frost 1988, consider Shisler 1945 and Segal 1980–81, who considers the role of the sword in *Ajax*, the robe in *Trachiniae*, the urn in *Electra*, and the bow in *Philoctetes*.

¹⁰ Mutilation by dogs: Aesch. *Sept.* 1015; birds: Aesch. *Ag.* 1474, etc.; fish: Aesch. *Pers.* 577–578. On epic, see Segal 1972.

¹¹ As Bertran de Born uses his own head for a lantern (Dante *Inf.* 28.122), or as the βουκράνιον is set up after a barbecue (Dodds 1960: 226–227 on Eur. *Bacch.* 1214). On the setting up, see Burkert 1983: 5–6. On the dead as spectacle in tragedy, see Whitehorne 1986.

But, as Simone Weil (1953: 15–16) notes in connection with the *Iliad*, one does not need to die in order to become a thing. One can become a compromise between a person and a cadaver simply by being subject to the brutal, dehumanizing effects of force. This is all too familiar to the playwrights who worked under the shadow of the Peloponnesian War: theirs is a world in which the Trojan women can be dragged into captivity by their hair and Hector dragged—either once already dead or to his death—by the foot.¹² We see this dehumanizing force at work outside the war-theme plays as well, for example with the crucified Prometheus, when Orestes becomes a breathing corpse (Eur. *Or.* 84; cf. Soph. *Ant.* 1167, *Phil.* 1018, *OC* 110), or in Hippolytus' diatribe against womankind as a "base thing" (κίβδηλον . . . κακόν, Eur. *Hipp.* 616–668; cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 187–195) or Tyndareus' against Orestes as an "abomination" (στύγην' ἐμόν, Eur. *Or.* 480), where the neuter gender of the words has as much invective force as their semantic content. While comedy celebrates the *élan vital*, it nonetheless objectifies the body in its own way, by the Bergsonian ploy of concentrating on the messy mechanics of living: how to cope with bedbugs, what to do with baby in the days before Pampers, or where to get Copaic eels in war-time.¹³ Such quotidian matters are generally out of place in tragedy, although there are exceptions, such as the tragedians' prurient interest in Agamemnon's bathtub.¹⁴

II

The second prerequisite for the use of significant anatomical objects is a culturally conditioned ability to focus on individual organs as discrete entities. As it turns out, this is a capacity that the ancients possessed to an extraordinarily high degree. One of the most obvious features of the ancient Greeks' understanding of the body was their failure, both in their language and in the visual arts, to grasp it as a unit, a point brought home by Bruno Snell (1960: 7). Snell's view has had its critics, notably Robert Renehan (1979), but I still find it enormously suggestive. This conceptual disunity is a specific example of the early Greek capacity for viewing things separately¹⁵—a capacity that contrasts sharply with the tendency of the Old Testament writers to use concepts that are totalities, including within themselves the individual things (Bowman 1960: 70) and that, in the medical

¹² Trojan women dragged by the hair: Aesch. *Sept.* 328–329, *Suppl.* 910; Eur. *IA* 790–792, *Andr.* 402; *ARV*² 189.74; Plaut. *Rud.* 784; Hector dragged postmortally: *Il.* 22.395 (cf. *Il.* 1.591; Plaut. *Rud.* 660); or to his death: Soph. *Ajax* 1030–31, Eur. *Andr.* 399.

¹³ Bedbugs: Ar. *Nub.* 39, 710, *Ran.* 115, 443; toilet-training: *Nub.* 1382–85, *Pax* 1265–66; eels: *Ach.* 881–894, *Lys.* 36, 702, *Vesp.* 510–511, *Pax* 1105; of such is the carnivalesque world of the popular grotesque, which Mikhail Bakhtin locates above all in the works of Rabelais (Edwards 1993). Yet there are also tragic lice (Aesch. *Ag.* 562) as well as maggots, if that is the meaning of Soph. *Phil.* 698.

¹⁴ Duke 1953–54; Seaford 1984. We would associate this interest more with comedy or the novel: cf. Newton 1982.

¹⁵ Perry 1937; these are, after all, the people who brought you the concept of the atom.

sphere, contrasts also with the system of the channels or meridians of qi of ancient Chinese acupuncture, where the interconnectedness of disparate organs is taken as a given (Beinfeld and Korngold 1991: 236–239, 402). We see this mental dismemberment at work in the dedication of anatomical votive offerings (τύποι) at healing sanctuaries, notably at Corinth (van Straten 1981: 105–151), a practice that echoes the offering of separate (animal) limbs in Minoan peak cults (Dietrich 1969: 259–260), and that is still continued in the dedication of ἀφιερώματα in Greek churches.¹⁶ We see it again in the depiction of eyes divorced from other facial features on the black-figure “eye-cups,” the prows of ships (Aesch. *Pers.* 559, *Suppl.* 716), the blazons of shields, and “other things that had to find their way home” (Cook 1972: 87; cf. Boardman 1974: 107). The very concept of mask, so central to Greek theatre, but present in other aspects of ancient life as well, such as the worship of Artemis Orthia at Sparta (Dickins 1929), involves the separation and objectification of a certain part of the body, the face.

The independence of two organs in particular is frequently stressed. One is the uterus. Characters in the plays of the (male) tragedians are clearly uneasy about this organ, either denying its generative power (Aesch. *Eum.* 657–666) or appropriating it to themselves with stories of the “male womb” (Eur. *Bacch.* 527) whereby Zeus brought forth Athena and Dionysus. According to the conception of what James Longrigg (1993: 6–25) has recently called the “rational” period of Greek medicine, exemplified by Hippocrates and Galen, which superceded the supposedly less rational ideas attested in earlier, purely literary texts,¹⁷ hysteria is caused when the womb wanders throughout a woman’s body. The womb wanders, taking on a life of its own,¹⁸ because it is, in effect, a separate animal living parasitically within the woman’s body, ὁκοῖόν τι ζῷον ἐν ζῷῳ, “like some animal inside an animal,” writes Galen’s contemporary, Aretaeus of Cappadocia (2.11 and 6.10 [Hude]). His words are reminiscent of Aristophanes’ Dionysus, whose heart “has crept (καθεῖρπυσεν; cf. ἐρπετόν, “beast”) down into his lower intestine” out of fear (*Ran.* 484–485), and of Plato’s Timaeus, who observes that male genitals are autocratic “like an animal that will not listen to reason” (ὄλον ζῷον ἀνυπήκοον τοῦ λόγου, *Tim.* 91b; cf. Arist. *De motu anim.* 703b). The Greek theory of hysteria is significant for the stage, which, as Mary Lefkowitz (1981: 12–25; cf. Padel 1995: 129–130) has shown, was home to so many hysterics: Io in Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound*, Phaedra in Euripides *Hippolytus*, and the maenads in *Bacchae* (cf. Plaut. *Amph.* 703).

The other is the hand. So independent are hands that in Aeschylean and Plautine parlance they themselves have eyes (Aesch. *Sept.* 554; Plaut. *Asin.* 202—or not, Eur. *Phoen.* 1699)¹⁹ and alternately wake and sleep (Aesch. *Ag.* 1356) and

¹⁶There is an interesting description of these in E. M. Forster’s short-story “The Road from Colonus.” This is to say nothing of reliquaries, which contain this or that tidbit of the local saint.

¹⁷On medical ideas in the tragedians, see Psichari 1908; Miller 1944; Collinge 1962; Ferrini 1978.

¹⁸Cf. Plaut. *Rud.* 558: *dum lingua vivet*, “as long as your tongue is alive.”

¹⁹There is an interesting engraving by Merian published by Théodore de Bry in 1624 and now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which shows a hand with an eye in its palm: Brun 1967: 65.

in Euripidean imagery the hand can even run a race (*Med.* 1244–45). Moreover, the left hand is sister to the right in Plautus' language (*Poen.* 419), which Francesco Della Cortè once suggestively dubbed *corposo* (Salimano 1993: 224). So it is that when Jesus commands that in giving alms, the left hand should not know what the right is doing (*Matthew* 6.3), he may be speaking literally. If hands have eyes, it is only *quid pro quo* that Deianira feel her "eye turn aside its foot" from her rival, Iole (*Soph. Trach.* 549) and that Ennius can speak of "grabbing with the eyes" (*oculis rapere*, fr. XVII.32 Jocelyn). This independence may take subtler forms, like the *Verfremdungseffekt* of Hesiod calling a hand "the five-branched thing" (*Erg.* 742) or Pindar beginning *Olympian* 7 with the image of a betrothal ceremony in which someone takes a cup from "a wealthy hand" and gives it to the groom; Pindar feels under no obligation to say whose this mysterious hand might be, content to let it float derelict and unanchored on the margin of his simile.²⁰

Other organs are also occasionally treated as organisms in their own right. So the phallus is surrealistically depicted by vase-painters now as a bird, now as a horse.²¹ "Homer speaks occasionally of the γαστήρ as if it were an independent being in man 'commanding' him (in hunger)"²² and Cilissa reminds us of the αὐτορπεία of the infant stomach (*Aesch. Cho.* 757). The Persian King's secret agents are called his Eyes, logically enough, of course, but with no implication that they are attached to his head (*Aesch. Pers.* 979; *Ar. Acharn.* 91–92; *Xen. Cyr.* 8.2.10; Autran 1957) and the blind Oedipus too makes use of independent organisms, his daughters, as his eyes and supports (*Soph. OC* 146–147, 848, 866, 1109; Murnaghan 1988: 39). Plautus writes, "My heart waits with bags packed, so, should [my slave] fail to bring my lady home, it can go into exile from my chest" (*Pseud.* 1033–35). This curious body-image is something of a quite different conceptual order from the catachresis that allows a German to call a thimble a "finger-hat" (*Fingerhut*) or a glove a "hand-shoe" (*Handschuh*), or that allowed Hebrew prophets to denounce those "uncircumcised" (ערל) in their lips, hearts, and ears (*Exodus* 6.12; *Leviticus* 26.41; *Jeremiah* 6.10, etc.; cf. *Acts* 7.51). The womb, the hand, and the rest are atavistic survivals from the time when all organs existed independently. According to the (admittedly eccentric) view of Empedocles, in the early stages of evolution there "sprang up many faces without necks, arms wandered without shoulders, unattached, and eyes strayed alone, in need of foreheads" (31 B 57 Diels-Kranz).²³ This theory explains the existence of hybrids, such as the baby Minotaur, described by Euripides as "an infant of mixed form, without purpose" (fr. 472a *TrGF*; Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995: 1.61). It is only in the case of men of understanding, Theognis tells us (1163–64), that the eyes, tongue, ears, and mind "grow in the midst of their breasts" so that a unified whole exists. Another relic of the former independence of the organs is Electra's

²⁰ But see Brown 1984; Verdenius 1987: 1.42.

²¹ Dover 1980: 133; Arthur-Katz 1989: 158; Boardman 1992; Kilmer 1993: 193–197.

²² Onians 1951: 88, citing *Od.* 6.133, 18.53–54; cf. 17.473–74.

²³ I use the translation of Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983: 303.

vain²⁴ prosopopoeic wish that her brother's hair might have a voice (Aesch. *Cho.* 195, cf. Shakespeare *King Lear* 3.7.38–39) and Hecuba's more baroque prayer that her arms, hands, hair, and feet could all speak for themselves (Eur. *Hec.* 835–842), a passage in which, in Zeitlin's (1991: 78 = 1996: 204) words, "the coherence of the body's form dissolves and yet reunites, gathering force and intensity along the way."²⁵ We see this, too, in Oedipus' charge that Teiresias is blind in his mind and ears as well as in his eyes (Soph. *OT* 371–372) and in the dying Heracles' address to his hands, arm, chest, and back (*Trach.* 1089–90). Paleontologists might question the specific mechanism of evolution envisaged by Empedocles, but he seems to have captured something of the ontogeny of the individual's own body-image, for "the hand presents itself to us as a sort of micro-organism; the newborn baby marvels at it as he waves it in front of his eyes, without realizing that this gesticulating entity is part of himself."²⁶ One meets this uncanny alterity again in the comboloio-clicking fingers in your typical Greek café.

This separability of the body accounts for the tendency of Greek thought to focus on certain organs. To cite one example, Roger Dawe (1982: 140) has rightly noted that "Greek, from Homer onward, seems to our taste oddly preoccupied with knees and feet," and it is attention to this quirk that lends credibility to the hothouse Hellenism of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, with lines such as, "Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot . . . / And the hooféd heel of a satyr crushes / The chestnut husk at the chestnut root," and to Housman's parodic *Fragment*, with its "Chase into the house a lucky foot . . . I go into the house with heels and speed."

To the divisibility of the body can also be attributed the frequent synecdochic use of organs to represent in a *pars pro toto* fashion the whole person. We see this in the iconography of Greco-Roman religions with Dionysus, who is often depicted as a phallus, Sabazius, who is usually represented in the form of a right hand, and Serapis, usually represented as a foot.²⁷ This synecdochic drive is already at work in literary periphrases of the classical period. Hesiod's Muses call the

²⁴It is in other genres than tragedy that such wishes are fulfilled. Callimachus' *Coma Berenices* (fr. 110 Pfeiffer) is narrated by an actually talking hair.

²⁵Cf. Morris 1992: 220–221. The folktale wish that an inanimate object (a house, the sea, etc.) might take voice is common: see Fraenkel 1950: *ad* Aesch. *Ag.* 37.

²⁶Brun 1967: 10, "La main se présent . . . à nous comme une espèce de micro-organisme; et c'est de lui dont le tout jeune enfant s'émerveille lorsqu'il l'agite devant ses yeux, sans prendre conscience que cet être qui gesticule appartient à lui-même."

²⁷Dionysus: see the black-figure lekythos by the Painter of Athens, ca 490–480 B.C. (*ABV* 505.1) and Oenomaus of Gadara in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 5.36.1–4 (= Oenomaus fr. 13 Mullbach); Sabazius: Hill 1964; Lane 1970; Vermaseren 1983; Serapis: Dow and Upson 1944; Christians are reminded of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus initiated in the 1670s by St Margaret Mary (Bainvel 1924)—I am grateful to Margaret Visser for bringing this parallel to my attention. For the metonymic use of *χεῖρ* for the whole person in tragedy, see Aesch. *Suppl.* 604 (see below, n. 29) and Soph. *Trach.* 898. Simonides 543.17 *PMG* called the baby Perseus "a lovely face" (although the reading has been disputed; see Davison 1952); for C. Marlowe, Helen is "the face that launch'd a thousand ships, And burnt the topless towers of Ilium" (*Dr Faustus* 5.1.97–98).

shepherds who form their audience “mere bellies” (*Theog.* 26)²⁸ We are told that the octogenarian Sophocles successfully defended himself against his son Iophon’s accusation that he was senile by quoting from his work-in-progress, *Oedipus at Colonus* (*FHG* 3.162 = *Vit. Soph.* 13), but one would think that Iophon could have rebutted by quoting the opening of *Antigone*, “Oh common, self-sistered head of Ismene”:²⁹ the girl who mistook her sister for a head would seem no saner than Oliver Sacks’s (1985: 10) man who mistook his wife for a hat. Yet this kind of synecdoche is not uncommon in Greek literature and therefore (dare I suggest?) in the Greek perception of reality. I have argued elsewhere (1990: 100; 1996: 76–81) that by making Oedipus recognize both his own identity as the son of Laius rather than Polybus, and his ontological status as a mortal rather than a god, by belatedly noting the scar upon his feet, Sophocles uses Oedipus’ foot as a synecdoche for himself.³⁰ To take another example, the hair is the most easily detachable organ, and persons expecting to die far from home with no hope of their bodies being returned for burial often send a lock to their loved ones as a stand-in for themselves, as Iphigeneia proposes in Euripides *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (821).³¹

It would, of course, be a mistake to claim that the Greeks were oblivious to the integration of the body’s parts into a unified whole, the more so since we ourselves are apt to see failures of bodily integration where none exists: Nikolai Gogol’s “The Nose” (1969: 474–497) and Philip Roth’s *The Breast* (1972) are modern, not ancient fables.³² Yet even the Greek artists, justly famous for their canon of proportion of the whole body, could proceed in a manner reminiscent of Empedoclean evolution: we are told that Zeuxis used five Crotonian beauties as models for his portrait of Helen, combining the best features of each (*Cic. Inv. rhet.* 2.1–3).

If Greek culture generally dissolves the body by some perceptual *σπαραγμός* into a collection of *disiecta membra* or parliament of essentially independent organs, this is *a fortiori* true of tragedy. For detailed physical description of an entire individual in tragedy, as distinct from a brief comment about the length of hair or colour of arm, we must wait for Chaeremon in the fourth century (Piatkowski 1981). Walter Burkert (1966) has argued for the originally close relationship

²⁸ See parallels collected in West 1966: 162 *ad* 26, to which add *Plut. Mor.* 54b and *Titus* 1.12.

²⁹ This idiom is Homeric (*Il.* 8.281); cf. Barrett 1964: *ad Eur. Hipp.* 651; Carne-Ross 1990; Davidson 1991; Davidson 1986 discusses a periphrasis with “eye.” In a similar manner, Vergil characteristically uses *manus*, “hand,” to refer to the whole self: see Bovie 1964; Sullivan 1968; Heuzé 1985: 21–23. The figure of *pars pro toto* does not always involve the body; so ἄνις, “felloe” is used for “wheel” (*Hdt.* 4.72; *Eur. Hipp.* 1233, *Phaethon* 170 Diggle).

³⁰ Among other discussions of Oedipus’ body, see Leinieks 1975; Pucci 1979; Edmunds 1988.

³¹ Cf. *Aesch. Sept.* 49–51; *Ap. Rhod.* 4.28–30; *Stat. Theb.* 9.901. Desmond Conacher points out to me the modern parallel of carrying a piece of the beloved’s hair in a locket.

³² I owe these references to Timothy Barnes. Matthew Clark rightly suggests to me the relevance of Lacan to the modern sense of self-otherness. Lacanian theory, however, lies well beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

between Greek tragedy and sacrificial ritual, but it is not just *any* sacrifice with which tragedy seems to be linked, but with the oath-sacrifice in which the victim is not merely killed, but dismembered, whence the phrase in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, “to cut a covenant.”³³ I say this because although tragedy, by definition, involves violence, Greek tragedy and to an even greater degree its Senecan successor dissolve and rupture the human body³⁴ in a supererogatory smorgasbord of dismemberments,

Where heads are cut off and eyes are gouged,
Where young boys in all their glory are desexed,
Where justice is mutilation and stoning and groans
Of people in torture spiked through their spines
And stuck on walls (Aesch. *Eum.* 186–190; Lowell 1978: 103)

and this despite Greek propaganda that physical mutilation was an exclusively barbarian excess (for example, Hdt. 3.48, 8.104–106). It is as though the disfigurements outlawed in real-life displays of grief by Solon (Plut. *Sol.* 21–24) were incarnated with redoubled vigour in drama.

The great period of Attic tragedy is framed, as though by matching bookends, by the only two tragedies of which no-one has ever said οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον (1 T 18 *TrGF*), namely Aeschylus *Bassarids* (fr. 23–25 *TrGF*) and Euripides *Bacchae*, in both of which the main characters, Orpheus and Pentheus, are torn limb-meal by maenads. Medea made good her escape from Colchis by cubing her brother Absyrtus and scattering the fragments into the sea (Pherecydes 3 F 32b *FGrHist*; Sen. *Med.* 129–134); she later diced and stewed Uncle Pelias (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.250). Pentheus repeatedly ignores the warning example of his cousin Actaeon (Eur. *Bacch.* 230, 337–340, 1227, 1291). Although Euripides’ Hippolytus must remain intact enough to be brought onstage for his death-speech, his name, no less than the horrific nature of his fatal crash, suggests that his body is to be thought of as broken into pieces.³⁵ Astyanax has broken bones protruding through his skin after being hurled from the towers of Troy (Eur. *Tro.* 1173–86). We also have the eye-gougings of Oedipus, Thamyras, Polyphemus, Polymestor, and Melanippe,³⁶ the “armpitting” or μασχαλισμός of Agamemnon (Aesch. *Cho.* 439; Soph. *El.*

³³ ὄρκια πιστὰ τέμνειν, *foedus ferire*, (כרת ברית). See *Il.* 3.103–107, 268–313, 19.249–255; *Ar. Lys.* 186; Burkert 1983: 35, n. 3.

³⁴ Christopher Brown reminds me that the gods are usually (although by no means always, cf. *Il.* 5.381–402; *Ar. Ran.* 634; *Apollod. Bibl.* 2.83; *Apul. Met.* 5.23) spared physical afflictions and that they prefer not even to look upon death (Aesch. *Sept.* 217–218; Eur. *Alc.* 22, *Hipp.* 1437–38; Plut. *Ant.* 75.3–4), so that graves must be removed from their precincts (Polyb. 8.30; Paus. 1.43.3) and they can “be called out” (*evocari*) of cities about to fall (Verg. *Aen.* 2.351).

³⁵ So a Homeric warrior does not merely “kill” his enemy; he “breaks asunder his limbs” (λῶσέ οἱ γυῖα): *Il.* 4.469 etc.

³⁶ Soph. *OT* (on which, see Calder 1959), *Thamyras*; Eur. *Cycl.*, *Hec.*; Hdt. 8.116; Xen. *Anab.* 1.9.13; cf. “out, vile jelly!” of Gloucester in *King Lear* 3.7.83, and “O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,” of Samson in Milton, *Samson Agonistes* 80.

445; Kittredge 1885), the impaling and vivisection of Prometheus (Aesch. *PV* 64–65, 1023–24), the glossotomy of Philomela in Sophocles *Tereus* (fr. 581–595 *TrGF*; cf. Plaut. *Mil.* 319, *Aul.* 189, 250, *Amphit.* 556), the foot-amputation begged for by Philoctetes (Soph. *Phil.* 749), the self-mutilation of the race of Amazons (Diod. Sic. 2.45.3),³⁷ who figure prominently in the background of the Hippolytus- and Phaedra-plays of Sophocles and Euripides (cf. Aesch. *Suppl.* 287, *Eum.* 627–628, 685–690, *PV* 723–751),³⁸ the decapitation—perhaps—of Aegisthus in Euripides *Electra*³⁹ and the threatened or offered decapitations of Clytaemnestra, Amphitryon, Eurystheus, Dionysus, Odysseus, and, at one point, the whole Trojan nation.⁴⁰ Decapitation is even proposed by Heracles as a means of suicide—assisted suicide, of course (Soph. *Trach.* 1016; Gildersleeves 1985)! The mother of all lopped heads, so to speak, is the Gorgon's, which made its appearance, apparently, in Euripides *Andromeda* (fr. 114–156 Nauck², esp. fr. 123), and her beheading is a constant leitmotiv of tragic imagery. Michael O'Brien (1964: 17–18, 22) has shown that both Aeschylus (*Cho.* 831–837, etc.) and Euripides (*El.* 459, 468–469, 1221) see Perseus as a prototype for that central tragic figure, Orestes, but we see the same image also of Admetus taking the resurrected but still unrecognized Alcestis into his house (Eur. *Alc.* 1118).⁴¹ They surface in comedy in jokes about circumcision (Ar. *Ach.* 158, *Nub.* 539, *Plut.* 267), a subject unsuitable for tragedy,⁴² or the mutilation of the Herms on the eve of the Sicilian expedition (Thuc. 6.27–29; Andoc. 1; Ar. *Lys.* 1093–94). Entirely lacking from the Greek stage, if we overlook the possibility that the Phrygian of Euripides *Orestes* may be a eunuch, are stories of castration, which falls outside the limits even of comic decorum (cf. Hdt. 8.104–106), and we must wait for Catullus' Attis (63.5) before we find a literature of gelding, although critics of a psychoanalytic bent have a field-day with the tragedians' obsession with blinding.⁴³

A dissolution of the body more thorough than mutilation is suggested by the interpenetration of bodies in myth, such as the siamese-twins, Actorione-Molione (Ibycus 285 *PMG*; Pherecydes 3 F 79b *FGrHist.*), who were, alas, never, to our

³⁷ Here again the iconographic tradition does not corroborate the literary one; see Bothmer 1957 *passim*.

³⁸ Cf. the mutilation of Masistes' wife, Hdt. 9.122; Wolff 1964.

³⁹ Kovacs (1987) disputes the usual view that Orestes decapitates Aegisthus. Cf. *Mark* 6.14–29; Harrison (1916) argues that Salome originally danced *with* (not *for*) the head of John the Baptist.

⁴⁰ Aesch. *Cho.* 883–884, 1047, *Eum.* 592; Eur. *Her.* 320, 939, *Bacch.* 241, *Rhes.* 219–221, 258–259, 586; cf. Phrynichus 3 F 14 *TrGF*; Eur. *IA* 777. Beheading always has a foreign, i.e., Persian, flavour for the Greeks (Aesch. *Pers.* 369–371, *Eum.* 186; Hdt. 7.35.3; Xen. *Anab.* 2.6.1; Hall 1989: 25–26, 205).

⁴¹ Dismemberments culminate in the Roman amphitheatres, where executions were often staged as mythological enactments, with tarred and feathered convicts hurled from platforms à la Icarus and other witty sight gags (Suet. *Nero* 12.2; Coleman 1990).

⁴² It is even suppressed in Ezekiel's *Exagoge*; Jacobsen 1983: 135.

⁴³ See Caldwell 1974. Comedy, too, is obsessed with blinding: for example, Plaut. *Rud.* 659, 731, 759).

knowledge, brought on stage; Castor and Pollux in Euripides *Helen* and *Electra*, who—as antitypes of Polynices and Eteocles (Eur. *Phoen.* 1424)—both divided a single heritage of immortality (Pind. *Nem.* 10.73–90; Robbins 1994: 43); the Graiae in Aeschylus *Phorkides* (fr. 261–262 *TrGF*), who had only a single eye and tooth between them (Pherecydes *FGrHist.* 3 F 11); and Glauke and Creon, who fused together into one promiscuous lump of molten flesh when Medea's home-cooking presented its flambé episode (Eur. *Med.* 1135–1230). The most extreme form of interpenetration of bodies is cannibalism, yet of the three famous cannibals of myth—Lycaon, Tantalus, and Thyestes—only Thyestes is at home in tragedy⁴⁴ (although that other man-eater, Polyphemus, gets his very own satyr-play, and Eumolpus apparently ensures his own consumption by his *captatores* in the pantomimic world of Petronius *Satyricon* [141]).⁴⁵ Indeed, Thyestes joins with Oedipus to offer Aristotle an example for his influential theory of the “tragic flaw” (*Poet.* 1453a7) and the *Thyesteia execratio* (Cic. *Pis.* 43; cf. Hor. *Epod.* 5.86) casts a long shadow on the soap-operatic fortunes of the house of Atreus.

Myth is a veritable sideshow of teratological excess, featuring the many-limbed Argus (cf. *ARV* 874,2), Cerberus, Geryon, the Hecatoncheires, the Hydra, Typhon,⁴⁶ yet these are absent from the stage (perhaps mainly for practical reasons) and, with the notable exception of Euripides *Heracles*, absent also from speech and song, although some figure as shield-emblems of the Seven (Aesch. *Sept.* 493; Eur. *Phoen.* 1115, 1136), and the shapeshifting bogey Empusa manages a couple of appearances in Aristophanes (*Eccl.* 1056–57, *Ran.* 288–295; cf. Achelous in Soph. *Trach.* 1–17). The deformities that the tragedians choose to display are always deficiencies, like so many incarnations of the tragic theme of loss.⁴⁷ The absence of wings, though not ordinarily remarkable in human physiology, is also often felt as a lack in the escapism of—especially Euripidean—choral-song.⁴⁸ Madness, as of Ajax, Heracles, and Pentheus, is not a loss of mind only but also of control over bodily function, and a collapse of purely physical origin is apt to be misattributed to a psychological cause, such as an intervention by Pan, as the nurse suspects of Glauke in Euripides *Medea* (1172).⁴⁹

⁴⁴ We know of lost Thyestes-plays by Sophocles and Euripides as well as the surviving play of Seneca's. A number of minor playwrights also handled the theme.

⁴⁵ On the *Satyricon* as theatre, see Panayotakis 1995; on Eumolpus' will, see Rankin 1969.

⁴⁶ The wonders of myth almost always have an excess of body-parts, but not always; cf. the one-eyed Arimaspians (Aesch. *PV* 803–806).

⁴⁷ A further deficiency in satyr-play is the one-eyed Cyclops. In comedy, too, the integrity of the body is challenged, although by humbler afflictions (bed-bugs, pecking birds, etc.).

⁴⁸ Soph. fr. 476 *TrGF*, *OC* 1081; Eur. *Hipp.* 732–751, 1290–93, *Andr.* 861–865, *Hel.* 1478–86, *Bacch.* 402–416. Bellerophon gets a winged horse in Euripides' play, but fails to reach heaven (cf. Ar. *Pax*); Phaethon's flight is also ill-fated. In general, see Padel 1974; Carson 1986: 159–164; MacDowell 1995: 212–216.

⁴⁹ A loss of bodily function can occur without loss of the organ itself. Teiresias is (I believe) the only tragic character to lose his sight while retaining his eyeballs, like Epizelus (Hdt. 6.117), but (temporary) loss of speech is common among those whose vocal organs are intact: we see this in

The body is altogether dispensed with, in theory at least, in that popular dramatic device, the ghost-scene,⁵⁰ where the actor's body must paradoxically represent a disembodied spirit, and with the non-existent ghost of Plautus *Mostellaria*, the non-existent corpse of Sophocles *Electra*,⁵¹ in the "binding song" of Aeschylus *Choephoroi* (306–509, cf. ὕμνος δέσμιος, *Eum.* 306), in which the presence of a dead spirit is suggested rather than shown, and with dreams (for one always dreams a person in Greek). This tendency is counterbalanced by the presence of false bodies, such as the military trophy (for example, Aesch. *Sept.* 277–279; Eur. *Her.* 786–787),⁵² Admetus' waxen statue (Eur. *Alc.* 348–354),⁵³ the εἰδωλα of Argus, Helen, and Dionysus (Aesch. *PV* 567; Eur. *Hel.* 34, *El.* 1280–83, *Bacch.* 293), and the empty clothes by means of which those lost at sea are buried *in absentia* (Eur. *Hel.* 1243; cf. Thuc. 2.34.3). These ersatz substitutes, by their very tawdriness, aggravate rather than assuage the problem of absence, as the eyes of Helen's statues reproach Menelaus in Aeschylus *Agamemnon* (416–419). The same is true of other traces of the absent body, like the footprints of Orestes (Aesch. *Cho.* 164–205; Eur. *El.* 520–584) or the stain of sweat on Hector's shield (Eur. *Tro.* 1197; cf. *Il.* 2.388), and Ares, the gold-changer of bodies, mutates great weighty corpses into a little dust (Aesch. *Ag.* 437–438; cf. Eur. *Suppl.* 1130). The Greeks were familiar with prosthetics, as we know from archaeology (Bliquez 1983) and myth—think of Pelops' ivory shoulder (Pind. *Ol.* 1.27),⁵⁴ but for the mutilated limbs of tragedy no supplement is possible. For all its stylization, there is an essential realism to tragedy, and its victims are not, like Calvino's cloven viscount, comfortably unaware of their deprivation. Likewise the healing wound of the surgeon's scalpel, though known to the tragedians (Aesch. *Ag.* 849), is absent from their plays. Tragedy is all deficit: although it boasts many a death, there is not one nativity.⁵⁵ The only births announced on the tragic stage (though others are described long after the fact) are Electra's claim to have borne a son in Euripides' play (*El.* 652)—and that turns out to be a lie—and the birth to

Hippolytus Kalyptomenus of Euripides, and *Niobe* and *Achilles* of Aeschylus. Most interesting to me, because directly linked to Clytaemnestra's gesture, is the silence of Pylades, broken only to strengthen Orestes' resolution when it falters at the sight of his mother's naked breast (900–902).

⁵⁰ Aesch. *Pers.* 681–842, *Eum.* 94–139; Soph. *Polyxena* (fr. 523 TrGF); see Calder 1966; Eur. *Hec.* 1–58; *Protesilaus* fr. 646a Nauck²; Eupolis *Demoi*; Sen. *Agam., Thy., Tro.*; Pacuvius *Iliona* 1.15–17 Klotz = Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.106.

⁵¹ Sophocles' actor, Polus missed the point in representing Orestes serving as his own pall-bearer (*El.* 758, 1113–14), when he carried an urn containing real ashes—his son's—(Aul. Gell. 6.5), because he supplied the body whose very absence was essential to the meaning of Sophocles' scene.

⁵² Pritchett 1971–91: 2.246–247 quotes with approval the theory of Janssen 1957 that "the trophy is a symbolic representation of an opponent defeated in battle."

⁵³ See Anonymous 1927; Rose 1927; Franco 1984.

⁵⁴ And drama—think of Pentheus' wig (Eur. *Bacch.* 831; Schmoll 1987).

⁵⁵ Contrast the many nativities of lyric-poetry: for example, Pind. *Ol.* 1.26–27, 6.39–47, 7.35–38, *Nem.* 1.35–47.

Melanippe of sons whom she disavows as "monsters born to a cow" (fr. 488 Nauck²).

While tragic anatomy typically involves subtractions, comic anatomy features either multiplication, with titles like *Archilochuses*, *Cheirons*, and *Plutuses*, or twins, object of New Comic interest (cf. Plaut. *Men.*), unseemly additions, such as wasp-stings (Ar. *Vesp. passim*), or the radishes applied as a punishment for adultery (Ar. *Nub.* 1083; Lys. 1.49; Catull. 15.19), or παρὰ προσδοκίαν substitutions, for example the woman who "pulled up her skirt and showed her Phormisius (with reference to the fifth-century politician, apparently remarkable for his hairiness)" in Aristophanes *Ecclesiazusae* (96–97), or Euripides in *Frogs*, who runs the risk of hitting his forehead on a lintel and having his Telephus ooze out (854–855).

Many physical deficiencies were imposed upon the playwrights by convention. Such was the use of mutes (κωφὰ πρόσωπα), and the withholding of speech proved a useful tool for arousing suspense, particularly in the hands of Aeschylus.⁵⁶ The two- (and later) three-actor rule required a sometimes cavalier shuffling around of actors' bodies underneath characters' masks and costumes (in the case of Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* with the roles of Ismene and Theseus each divided between two different actors; Jebb 1907: 7–8) and, especially as the star-system of actors grew and the relative glory of poets waned,⁵⁷ the awareness of the distinction between actor and character, that is to say of the disembodied quality of character, could only have increased, to become openly acknowledged finally in comedy (for example, Plaut. *Poen.* 126). We find the ultimate disembodiment in the "cry from within" that usually accompanies murder in a theatre that refuses to kill its victims onstage.⁵⁸

III

The third and final prerequisite for the use of significant anatomical objects is a willingness to acknowledge and discuss the body. This is something we find in spades in Shakespeare, who seems determined to drag in body-language—to say nothing of bawdy language—everywhere, whether it be relevant or not, with lines such as, "You cram these words into mine ears / Against the stomach of my sense" (*Tempest* 2.1.106–107), "The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail, / And you are stay'd for" (*Hamlet* 1.3.56–57), "Blow winds, and crack your cheeks!"

⁵⁶ Prescott 1936; Betts 1965; Taplin 1972; Stanley-Porter 1973; cf. Parish 1980; Golder 1983; Thalmann 1985.

⁵⁷ By 449 a prize was introduced for acting. At this time, an actor such as Theodorus could insist on speaking first (Arist. *Politics* 1336b28). I mention Polus above (n. 51); we hear, too, of Euripides' leading actor, Molon (Dem. 19.346), and of the hapless Hegelochus, who unwittingly introduced a weasel into Eur. *Or.* 279 (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 303–304).

⁵⁸ Arnott 1982; Hamilton 1987. Not even sacrificial animals can be killed on stage during a play, elaborate plot-developments sometimes being necessary to avoid having this take place: for example, Ar. *Pax* 1017, *Av.* 848, *Ach.* 241; see Arnott 1962: 53–54 and Seaford 1988: 170–171 on Eur. *Cycl.* 345–346.

(*King Lear* 3.2.1), and so on. Here, however, we hit a snag, for in anticipation of the dramatic theorist Antonin Artaud, who denied that he had a mouth (the existence of which would imply the existence, further down the digestive tract, of an anus), the Greek tragedians felt that certain bodily organs were unmentionable or ἀπόρητα. This reticence is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that in Greek epic the “vocabulary for parts of the anatomy is probably richer than in any other language,” as Emily Vermeule (1979: 96) points out. (“Nearly every part,” she adds drily, “is vulnerable.”)

Denys Page (1938: 67) provides an interesting catalogue of these unmentionables.⁵⁹ Some are purely verbal preferences. So, αὐχὴν is used literally of the human neck only three times in the extant corpus (Soph. *Ant.* 1221; Eur. *Hec.* 564, *Phoen.* 1457, interpolated in *Or.* 51), while the synonyms δέρη and, to a lesser degree, τράχηλος are common and even κληίς, “collar-bone,” is not forbidden (Soph. *Trach.* 1035). Again, κεφαλή, “head,” is used in Aeschylus and Sophocles once each in lyrics, in Euripides often in lyrics but never in iambs, while the synonym κάρα is common in both lyric and dialogue in all three authors.⁶⁰

In other cases, what is taboo appears to be the organ itself, not any particular name for it. This is no bowdlerization motivated by sexual prudery,⁶¹ but is usually an animus against organs too small or inert⁶² to have any share in the actor’s art. The foot (used in walking and dancing) and the knee (in kneeling and supplication)⁶³ are often mentioned, as I have said, but σφυρόν, “ankle,” occurs four times in Euripides only (*Alc.* 586, *Phoen.* 26, *IA* 225, *Bacch.* 936), σκέλος, “leg” is twice in Aeschylus, once each in Sophocles and Euripides (Aesch. *PV* 74, *Eum.* 37, Soph. *El.* 753, Eur. *Phoen.* 1400), and μηρός, of the human thigh, three times in Aeschylus (frs. 64, 65, 147 *TrGF*), only once in Euripides (*Andr.* 599). Again, the hands are tremendously expressive. They are the organs of action, of drama, *par excellence* (Fraenkel 1950: 3.639): they may be folded or

⁵⁹ He omits the Aeschylean instances of μηρός, which were brought to my attention by Emmet Robbins. For other violations of παρρησία, see Clay 1982; on taboos in Greek, see Howe 1962.

⁶⁰ Students of Latin literature would refer such taboos to the concept of “unpoetic words” (Axelson 1945).

⁶¹ The tragedians speak freely of “sperm” (Eur. *Med.* 814), can refer to the penis in the riddle of loosing the foot of the wineskin (Eur. *Med.* 679 with Plut. *Thes.* 3), and of the vagina in the metaphor of the furrow (Aesch. *Sept.* 753–755; Eur. *Med.* 1281, *Phoen.* 18), a metaphor sanctioned by the marriage-formula, παίδων ἐπ’ ἄροτῳ γνησίων: see Brown and Gerber 1993: 197, n. 9; Brown 1995.

⁶² The importance of motion in the body-parts is emphasized by the fact that the feet, eyes, and mouths can all be spoken of as having “joints” (Soph. *OT* 718, 1270; Eur. *Cycl.* 625) and in a striking phrase, the knees and ankles become “the wheel-boxes of the feet” (Aesch. *Sept.* 321).

⁶³ On touching in supplication, cf. suppliant-plays (Aesch. *Supp.*; Eur. *Supp.*, *Herakl.*); see Lattimore 1965: 46–49; Burnett 1971: 78–79; for the word “I supplicate” (γουνούμαι) means literally, “I clasp your knees” (γούνατα; cf. Gould 1973: 76), and in supplicating a person (as opposed to the altar of a god) one does indeed clasp them by the knees (Eur. *Med.* 709–710; Verg. *Aen.* 3.607; Pliny *HN* 11.250; Sen. *Tro.* 691–697, *Med.* 247). One touches the sacrificial animal as one swears an oath (Antiphon 5.12; Aeschin. 1.114; Lycurg. 20; Hdt. 6.68), although in drama this can occur only in messenger-speeches or parodies (Aesch. *Sept.* 43–44; Ar. *Lys.* 201–202).

raised in prayer, stretched out in voting, used to guide the blind or elderly, raised or touching in supplication, a gesture that antedates the human species itself (Morris 1967: 157, 166), cleansed of pollution by washing, or clapped together in pleasure. The right hand is used in giving pledges, and the hand (in tragedy above all) is used to murder.⁶⁴ So it is that hands, as well as arms, which are useful for holding and embracing, are often mentioned, but δάκτυλος, “finger” is not in Aeschylus or Sophocles,⁶⁵ and four times only in Euripides; palms and wrists are also seldom mentioned.⁶⁶ Fingernails *are* mentioned, but only as weapons to scratch the cheeks in grief.⁶⁷ Similarly, shoulders exist for Greek poets mainly to be shadowed by cascading locks of hair (*Hymn Hom.* 2.177–178, 3.450; Archil. fr. 31 West; Eur. *Bacch.* 695).

When we come to faces, we are in the world conjured in the imagination of the audience by the poets’ words. I say this not because of the use of masks, which in the raking light of the Mediterranean sun cast very expressive shadows (Parker 1986: 341), but because of the sheer size of the cavea, which reduced the actors to pinheads in the eyes of the audience. Yet even in this imaginary realm the same sorts of taboo apply. There is frequent mention of eyes and pupils, and even the veins of the eyes and eyeliner are mentioned,⁶⁸ for eyes are bearers of meaning, being cast down in dejection or shame, closed in sleep or death, rolling

⁶⁴ On the role of hands in prayer, see *Il.* 8.345–347, 15.367–376; Eur. *Hipp.* 1190, *IT* 267; *Antike Kunst* 19 (1976) pl. 15. On the hand in voting, see Aesch. *Suppl.* 600–612. On the hand in guiding, see Eur. *Herac.* 727–729, *Her.* 124. On hand-pollution: Aesch. *Eum.* 237, 280, 446; Eur. *Hipp.* 317, *Her.* 1145, *Or.* 1604. The hands must, therefore be washed: Pontius Pilate (*Matthew* 27.24; cf. Ap. Rhod. 4.706), Lady Macbeth (Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 5.1.37). On clapping, see Xen. *Cyr.* 2.2.5. On the giving of the right hand in pledge, see *Il.* 2.340–341; Pythagoras 58 C 6 Diels-Kranz; Eur. *Med.* 21–22 (cf. 469, 899); Soph. *Trach.* 1181, *Phil.* 813; Ar. *Nub.* 81, *Ran.* 754; Xen. *Anab.* 2.4.1, 7.3.1. On the role of hands in cursing, see Cumont 1923. On the role of hands in murder: Neophron 15 F 2.12–13 *TrGF*. Cf. the terms αὐτόχειρ, παλαμναῖος [*< παλάμη*, “palm”], “murderer” (Soph. *Trach.* 1207, *El.* 587), χεῖρωμα, “deed of violence” (Soph. *OT* 560), and ἄρχειν χειρῶν ἀδίκων, “to strike the first blow” (Dem. 47.47). For the specification that it is the left hand used in maleficent magic, see Sen. *Med.* 680, *Oed.* 566–567 (cf. Catull. 12.1, 47.1). Clytaemnestra murders Agamemnon with the *right* hand (Aesch. *Ag.* 1405). A sword or dagger is, of course, wielded by the hand, but poisoning too is associated with the hand, cf. Creusa, who carried her poison in a bracelet on her wrist (Eur. *Ion* 1009).

⁶⁵ Although Aeschylus has δακτυλόδεικτος, “pointed at with the finger” (*Ag.* 1332) and Ion has ἐκπομα δακτυλωτόν, “drinking cup with finger-like handles” (19 F 1.2 *TrGF*).

⁶⁶ Fingers: *Or.* 1432 (parodied in Ar. *Ran.* 1314), *Or.* 1469, *IT* 266, *Bacch.* 709; palms: Aesch. *Suppl.* 865, *PV* 165; Eur. *Or.* 820, *Andr.* 1027; wrists: Eur. *Ion* 891, 1009.

⁶⁷ For example, Aesch. *Cho.* 24–25; Soph. *Ajax* 310; Eur. *El.* 146–149, *Hec.* 655, *Suppl.* 51, 76, *Hel.* 372–374, *Or.* 961; Timoth. *Pers.* 791 (166 *PMG*). Cf. Eur. *Med.* 157, μὴ χαράσσου, “don’t scratch (your cheeks).” Sophocles gives us the striking line, “hand-seizing his hair toothedly with his nails” (κόμην ἀπρίξ ὄνυξι συλλάβων χειρί, *Ajax* 310). ὄνυξ is used in Eur. *El.* 471 of the Sphinx’s claw and in *El.* 840 and *Cycl.* 159 of toenails (cf. *Anth. Pal.* 12.93.10 [Rhianus] and *Anth. Pal.* 9.709.4 [Philippus]). In Seneca the fingernail is used to pluck plants for magic ends (*Med.* 730).

⁶⁸ Veins of eye: λίβος (coni. Casaubon), Aesch. *Ag.* 1428; ῥίζα, Eur. *Her.* 933; eyeliner: στίμμις ὀμματογράφος, *Ion* 19 F 25 *TrGF*; other changes of colour of the eye are symptomatic of insanity: Eur. *Or.* 389; Plaut. *Men.* 828–829.

about in ecstatic, epileptic, and other paranormal states, giving specific kinds of looks, whether modest, fierce, or loving,⁶⁹ being veiled, or shedding tears (itself ambiguously a sign of grief, joy [for example, Soph. *El.* 1231], or mustard-grating [Plaut. *Pseud.* 817–818]); but ὄφρὺς, “eye-brow” is used only half a dozen times in tragedy.⁷⁰ Hair, too, is richly significant. Its tips tingle with fear (Soph. *OC* 1465–66). By being long it signifies a vow, or (in comedy) Spartan sympathies or foppishness, by being crowned it signifies joy, sorrow by being cut, old age by being either grey or absent, or a servile rank by being cropped close or red in colour.⁷¹ Accordingly, hair is often mentioned, but ῥίς, “nose,” which is capable of signifying little more than a bad cold (Eur. *Cycl.* 561; Plaut. *Asin.* 796–798),⁷² is used only once in Sophocles (*Ajax* 918), not at all in Euripides or Aeschylus (who has ῥινηλατεῖν, “to track by scent,” *Ag.* 1185). The mouth and tongue, involved as they are in speech, kissing, and foaming as a sign of poisoning or madness (Eur. *Her.* 934, *Med.* 1173–74, *Bacch.* 1122–23, *Or.* 220, 253) are often mentioned, but ὀδοῦς occurs only once of human teeth (Eur. *Bacch.* 621).⁷³ Some of these silences could simply reflect lack of opportunity. It might be asked, for example, in what circumstances tragedy or heroic myth would mention human teeth, yet a tooth plays a significant role in Sophocles’ friend, Herodotus’ story of Hippias (Hdt. 6.107; Griffith 1994), and gums, mentioned in Clytaemnestra’s appeal to Orestes, which is the starting-point for our discussion, are “a part of the body one normally does not think about” (Murnaghan 1988: 32).

I might add parenthetically that the same phenomenon of mentioning bodily functions, not for their own sake but for their expressive power, occurs *mutatis mutandis* in Aristophanes, for whom the bowels express contentment one way (*Ach.* 256, *Nub.* 9, 734, *Eq.* 115, *Vesp.* 394, 1305, *Pax* 335) and fear another (*Pax* 176, *Ran.* 179).⁷⁴ The most ithyphallic scene in Aristophanes—the Kinesias and

⁶⁹ Cast down: Eur. *IA* 852; rolling: Aesch. *PV* 882; Soph. *Ajax* 447, *Trach.* 794; Eur. *Med.* 1174, *IT* 308, *Bacch.* 1123; Sen. *Her.* 934–935; modest looks: Theogn. 85–86; Eur. fr. 457 Nauck²; Arist. *Rhet.* 1384a34; Clearchus *apud* Athen. 12.564 (see Brown 1989: 12–13); fierce looks: γοργωπός, etc.; Eur. *Her.* 131–134, 868, 990, 1266, *Ion* 210, *Rhes.* 8; loving looks: Soph. *Trach.* 547–549; Eur. *Hipp.* 525–526, with Barrett’s note; Hes. *Theog.* 910, with West’s note; Pearson 1909.

⁷⁰ Yet the eyebrow, too, is expressive (of anger, by being raised, i.e., supercilious): Schol. Ar. *Vesp.* 655; Post 1961: 101–102.

⁷¹ Votive hair: Aesch. *Cho.* 6; Eur. *Bacch.* 494; Laconizing hair-style: Ar. *Av.* 1282; Hdt. 1.82.8; foppish hair: Ar. *Nub.* 14–15, *Lys.* 561–562, *Vesp.* 466, *Av.* 911, *Plut.* 572; slave’s hair cropped close: Eur. *El.* 108; Ar. *Av.* 911; slave’s hair red in colour: Ter. *Phormio* 51.

⁷² On the nose, see Critchley 1979: 106–114. In other genres, the nose can serve as the seat of anger (for example, *Od.* 12.317; Theoc. 1.18; Herodas 6.37). Compare the similar usage in Biblical Hebrew (*Gen.* 27.45, 49.6–7, etc.). The comic symbol of anger is smoke or a gnat in the eye (Pherecrates 60; Ar. *Lys.* 296–298, 1025–26).

⁷³ This pattern is common also in mutilations; eye-gougings are common in drama, but the cutting-off of ears, so common a theme in folklore (Laomedon’s threat to Poseidon and Apollo [*Il.* 21.450–451], Smerdis and Zopyrus [Hdt. 3.69, 154], Peter and the High-priest’s servant [*Matthew* 26.51], Van Gogh) is absent from tragedy.

⁷⁴ The anus (πωκτός) signifies pathic tendencies by being broad (εὐρύς).

Myrrhine episode of *Lysistrata* (829–953)—is expressive not of unbridled libido but of deep conjugal love.

Other kinds of taboo than mere suppression surround the use of body-language in tragedy. For example, the words for “neck” (αὐχὴν, δέρην, τράχηλος) are often used in the sense of “head,” as “hand” can stand for “arm” and “foot” for “leg” (Powell 1939), and in the topos that we have been considering of a woman baring herself to arouse pity, the word μαστός is regularly used in the singular although both breasts be involved in the gesture (Willink 1989: 171).

Countervailing evidence of willingness to discuss the body is that dramatic verse projects anatomical terms onto the landscape and other tenors of reference,⁷⁵ so that stones become “the bones of earth” (Choerilus 2 F 2–3 *TrGF*; Waern 1951), an isthmus a neck (LSJ s.v. αὐχὴν II.1–3), there are “bearded pines” (ὄψικομαὶ ἐλαταί, Eur. *Alc.* 585–586), black night nurses the stars at her breast (Eur. *El.* 54; Tib. 2.1.87–88) and has the moon for her eye (*Sept.* 390; cf. Soph. *Ant.* 103–104), Dodona has a back (Aesch. *PV* 830), and so on. The most notorious example of this is “the foot of Time” (Eur. *Bacch.* 888, fr. 42 Nauck²; Ar. *Ran.* 100) and the noblest the omphalos at Delphi (Aesch. *Eum.* 40). Yet the converse is never true, and (with the exception of Old Comedy’s inexhaustible imagistic vocabulary for the *pudenda*, Henderson 1991) Greek organs are never given metaphorical names, as for example in Dante’s “lake of the heart” (*Inf.* 1.20, *Rime dubbie* 3.7–9).

So we may conclude that the ancients are willing to objectify, mentally dissect, and discuss the body, and thus the prerequisites have been met for there to be a semiotic system of the body in drama. But does one in fact exist?

IV

Anthony Purdy (1992: 5) has recently admonished that “perhaps the most urgent task for us as critics is to learn how to *read* ‘the body.’” This reading could be accomplished in the most literal way in the case of runaway slaves, who had “F(ugitivus) H(ic) E(st)” tattooed on their foreheads, a punishment threatened in Menander *Samia* (323; Jones 1987), but more commonly and interestingly such haruspication must be carried out on more subtle signs. Reading or ἀνάγνωσις (cf. ἀναγιγνώσκειν, Pind. *Ol.* 10.1 etc.), which is an important, if anachronistic, minor theme in drama,⁷⁶ is closely related to the major dramatic

⁷⁵For example, ὀφθαλμός and ὄμμα can be used metaphorically of anything highly valued: cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 168–169, *Cho.* 934; Soph. *OT* 987; Eur. *Andr.* 406; Pind. *Ol.* 2.10, 6.16. The handles of pitchers and cups are their “ears,” poison has “jaws” (Eur. *Med.* 1201), flame has a “beard” (Aesch. *Ag.* 306), an odour can fly to heaven with outstretched hands or feet (Plaut. *Pseud.* 841–843), etc.

⁷⁶The writing tablet of the heart: Aesch. *Cho.* 450, *Eum.* 275, *PV* 789 etc.; see Pfeiffer 1968: 1.26; Phaedra’s accusatory letter: Eur. *Hipp.* 856–865; the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern letter in Eur. *Sthenoboea*; solitary reading: Eur. fr. 396.6–7 Nauck²; Ar. *Ran.* 52; (seemingly) gratuitous letter-writing: Eur. *IT* 581–592, *IA* 34–37.

element, recognition or ἀναγνώρισις (Cave 1988) in that both ἀνάγνωσις and ἀναγνώρισις are re-cognitions of what is or has become cryptic, enciphered, in code, and one is often recognized by means of a scar or other anatomical token, as Electra identifies Orestes by his footprint and lock of hair, or Lichas spots Encolpius by his penis.⁷⁷ Recognition, in turn, is implicated in the broad categories of error, dramatic irony, and disguise, including ordinary disguises, transvestism, inherent in the theatre of the androgynous Dionysus, wherein male actors played all female roles, concealment and eavesdropping, rejuvenation, and even metamorphosis.⁷⁸

The entire body can be a semiotic carrier of meaning, for it can bear stereotypic signs, or, in other words, be readable. In this category I include signs of the genre, such as the phallus, marker of barbarian slave as opposed to hero (Dover 1968: 222) or of comedy as opposed to tragedy. There are also signs of race, such as the clothed body of an Athenian versus the naked Spartan (Eur. *Andr.* 595–602). There are signs that a character has news to tell: for example, the messenger's feet in Aeschylus *Agamemnon* (494–495), for "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news" (*Isaiah* 52.7 = *Romans* 10.15), or the head of Creon in Sophocles *Oedipus the King* (82–83). Most interesting are the signs of gender whereby tragedy creates of women's roles a theatre of the dispossessed (Boal 1985). Sex is marked by skin-color, because purdah kept women and effeminate men indoors—remember Eteocles' order to the chorus of Theban women to go back home (Aesch. *Sept.* 200–201, 232; Caldwell 1973) and Macaria's apology for the irregularity of showing herself outdoors (Eur. *Heracl.* 474–477; Walcot 1976: 90–91). So women were untanned,⁷⁹ an effect that could, if necessary, be produced artificially by the use as make-up of white lead.⁸⁰ Hence women's bodies, especially their bare feet, but many other organs also are described as "white," "snowy," etc.,⁸¹ and even apart from sun-tans, women's

⁷⁷ Aesch. *Cho.* 164–245; Soph. fr. 451a *TrGF*; Eur. *El.* 520–584, 901; Ar. *Nub.* 534–536; Pet. *Sat.* 105; cf. Plaut. *Poen.* 1073–74.

⁷⁸ Disguise: Dionysus in Eur. *Bacch.*, Ar. *Ran.*, Alcestis in Eur. *Alc.*, and Dolon in Eur. *Rhes.* 208–212; transvestism: Pentheus in Eur. *Bacch.*, Mnesilochus in Ar. *Thesm.*, the women in *Ecl.*; see Gallini 1963, Case 1985, and Caruso 1987; the androgyny of Dionysus: Eur. *Bacch.* 353, 453–458; Jameson 1993; concealment and eavesdropping: Phaedra in Eur. *Hipp.*, Orestes in Eur. *El.*; rejuvenation: Iolaus in Eur. *Heracl.*, Cadmus and Teiresias in *Bacch.* and Peleus—wished for—in *Andr.*; metamorphosis: Io in Aesch. *PV*, Tereus in Soph. *Tereus*, Hecuba in Eur. *Hec.*, Cadmus and Harmonia in *Bacch.* 1354–59 (cf. Ovid *Met.* 13.545–575), Hippo in *Melanippe the Wise*.

⁷⁹ Eur. *Bacch.* 458; Ar. *Nub.* 102 etc.; Eupolis 239; Men. fr. 592 Koerte; Theophr. *Char.* 28.3; Pl. *Resp.* 474e–556d, *Phaedr.* 239c; Lucian *Anach.* 25.

⁸⁰ γιμύθειον = *cerussa*. The use of white lead is confirmed by archaeology; see Caley and Richards 1956: 189. The male equivalent is the use of olive-oil as sun-tan lotion (Ar. *Vesp.* 608). An athlete's trainer is called his ἀλείπτης, "oiler" (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1106b1, etc.).

⁸¹ λευκός, νιφοεῖς, *candidus*. The Latin poets, by contrast, speak of women as having pink and white complexions: see Costa 1973: 78–79 on Sen. *Med.* 99–101. Greek women, too, occasionally used rouge (Ar. *Ecl.* 928–929, *Lys.* 48; Xen. *Oec.* 10.2).

skin was characterized by whiteness, as Hermippus describes the daughters of Proteus as being “rubbed down with white meal like basket-carriers” (fr. 25 *PCG*). The theatrical counterpart to this is the differential use of mask-colour, just as black-figure vase-painters represented women by painting their flesh white, while males’ was black or over-painted red.⁸² Gender is also marked by the *use* of the body: women carry burdens on their heads (Eur. *El.* 108), men on their shoulders (Ar. *Lys.* 254–255, *Plut.* 1198; Hdt. 2.35), women raise two arms in mourning, men one (Havelock 1981: 111), and so forth. Most notably, the topography of the body is structured around the places of death with a marked sexual dimorphism, women dying through neck-injuries and men through wounds in the chest (for example, Eur. *Hec.* 563–568; Loraux 1987: 49).⁸³ We are safe in saying, therefore, that there is a semiotics of the whole body;⁸⁴ but we are left with our original question: can individual organs play symbolic roles?

v

The most obvious way to draw attention to an anatomical symbol would be through gesture. Many anatomical terms mentioned in the plays, as in the *Choephoroi*-passage (896–897), are accompanied by the word “this,” ὅδε, or “such as this,” τοιοῦτος. Where commentators trouble themselves about these adjectives, they are divided over whether they are mere synonyms for the possessive,⁸⁵ or in effect stage-directions for some gesture.⁸⁶ The latter view seems more likely, since in some Greek dialects, at least, “with the category consisting of words meaning parts of the person,” “when no emphasis is laid on the person possessing, the sign of possession is not [normally] expressed.”⁸⁷

Another way of drawing attention to the body is through the catalogue of its parts, an almost erotic (cf. Ovid *Am.* 1.5.17–24) fetishization whereby one laments

⁸² See Taillardat 1962: 166, §314; Westendorf 1968: 10; Boardman 1974: 16, 197–198; Irwin 1974: 112–116; Woodbury 1978: 297 = 1991: 282.

⁸³ See also Fraenkel 1932 = 1964: 1.465–467. So in the Samurai code men killed themselves by seppuku, women by cutting the throat. We find an almost Japanese instance of hara-kiri to save face in Soph. *Ajax* 865.

⁸⁴ The body is also involved in an inner/outer dichotomy, such as blindness and insight in Soph. *OT*, or in his line εἰ σῶμα δοῦλον, ἀλλ’ ὁ νόος ἐλεύθερος, “though my body be a slave, yet my mind is free” (fr. 940 *TrGF*), or the dichotomy of tongue and heart in Eur. *Hipp.* 612, cf. 317; Ar. *Thesm.* 275, *Ran.* 101–102, 1471; Arist. *Rhet.* 1416a28–30, in which the tongue appears as an unruly organ not governed by the mind; see Avery 1968; Woodbury 1988 = 1991: 472–482; or of hand and heart in *Orestes* (1604), or the opposition of name to body in *Helen*; see Solmsen 1934; Kannicht 1969: 1.57–60.

⁸⁵ Denniston 1939: 110 ad Eur. *El.* 490. An interesting case is Eur. *Alc.* 665 where we find ὅδ’ ἐμὲ χεῖρ, where ὅδε cannot be merely possessive without also being pleonastic, but commentators Dale (1954: 105) and Conacher (1988: 183) offer no observations about it.

⁸⁶ Tucker 1901: 199 ad Aesch. *Cho.* 896; Gould 1970: 33 ad Soph. *OT* 140; Ussher 1978: 103 ad Eur. *Cycl.* 335.

⁸⁷ Lobel 1927: lxxx–lxxxii, speaking of Lesbian, more primitive in its use of the article than Attic; cf. Fraenkel 1950: 3.652 ad Aesch. *Ag.* 1385.

the dear departed piece by piece (Eur. *Med.* 1071, *Andr.* 1181, *Tro.* 740–763, 1173–86, *El.* 333–335, *Hec.* 836–840, *IA* 682). It is probable, as P. T. Stevens (1971: 238) suggests, that in pronouncing such laments, the actors indulge in the “pornography of death” in Vermeule’s (1979: 145–177) phrase, and caress the corpse, naming each part as they touch it. This act occurs most strikingly in *Bacchae*, where, if we are to believe Apsines’ account of the missing lines (1329),⁸⁸ Agave “picks up in her hands each one of her son’s limbs and mourns it individually” (*Rhet. Gr.* [ed. Walz] 9.587; cf. *Christus Patiens* 1257, 1311–40, 1466–73). A comparably incongruous aesthetic delight is present in Aeschylus’ image of the sea “blossoming” with corpses (*Ag.* 659).

It is possible that acting-conventions not signalled in the text might make of certain body-parts a symbol. Messenger-scenes, such as that from Sophocles *Oedipus the King* depicted on a calyx-krater by the Capodarso Painter (ca 330 B.C.) now in Syracuse, show a messenger facing the audience and delivering up front, while those onstage react in the background; this for the practical reason that the actor is really speaking to the audience, while his character is supposed to be addressing the other persons on stage. Yet in Attic vases, frontal, face-on portraiture shows the state of the possessed—for example the ecstasy of satyrs and maenads, narcolepsy, death—or of the possessor—mesmerizers, the casters of evil eyes, Gorgons, Dionysus.⁸⁹ Eric Csapo (1993) has suggested, therefore, that the portrayal of the messenger on this vase suggests that he is attempting to put the audience into a sort of trance, a state consonant with the self-forgetfulness we have associated, since Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, with the audience in the Theatre of Dionysus.

Amid the uncertainty of these various indicators, can we discern any other symbols comparable to Clytaemnestra’s breast? I have discovered only two. In terms of plurisignation, perhaps the closest parallel is the head of Pentheus, which serves in turn as a handball (Eur. *Bacch.* 1136), a hunter’s trophy impaled on the thyrsus (1141) and apparently soon to be pegged to the triglyphs of the palace-roof (1215), a Rorschach inkblot in the psychotherapy of Agave by Cadmus (1277–79),⁹⁰ and, finally, the missing piece of the jigsaw-puzzle that was Pentheus (1301).

In terms of metatheatrics of the actors’ transvestism, I think of the eponymous chorus of Aristophanes *Clouds*, of whom the country-bumpkin Strepsiades remarks: “they have noses” (*Nub.* 344). Christopher Brown (1983) has shown that with his comment Strepsiades is pointing out the maleness of the chorus, who are supposed to be beautiful women, “nose” being a euphemism for “penis”

⁸⁸ As I believe that we are; see, however, Barrett 1964: 44, n. 4.

⁸⁹ Laporte 1969: 56; Durand and Frontisi-Ducroux 1982: 93; Korshak 1987; I owe these references to Eric Csapo.

⁹⁰ Devereux 1970: 43; cf. Whitehorne 1986: 66. To complicate things further, ball-playing usually has erotic overtones: *Od.* 6.100; Anacr. 358 *PMG*; Meleager *Anth. Pal.* 5.214 (= *HE* 4268–71); Ap. Rhod. 3.131–144; see *LIMC* III 1.914, 987 and Stuveras 1969: 109.

in, for example, Hipponax (fr. 78.14 West).⁹¹ "The joke," Brown concludes, "lies in pointing out the maleness of the choreutai with a comic reference to the most obvious indicator of sex, as a result of which both the logic of the passage and the dramatic illusion are shattered." Here, if anywhere, we find the actual revelation of a male actor beneath a female character's robes that is so narrowly avoided in *Choephori*.

Yet, if these scenes provide the counterparts to Aeschylus' that we have been seeking, they are obviously distant ones, for the macabre decadence of Agave's Salome floor-show and the absurdity of Strepsiades' doltish display differ *toto caelo* from the unaffected purity and raw power of Clytaemnestra's gesture. The otherwise negative results of this survey confirm, as has been done so often before, the stark inimitability of Aeschylus' tragic art.

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⁹¹ Rosen (1988: 40, n. 41) characterizes Brown's hypothesis as "an attractive though highly speculative explanation."

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