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NON-STROPHIC ELEMENTS IN THE *ORESTEIA*[1]

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Though the musical form in which the choral odes of Greek tragedy were cast was largely strophic, i.e., aa/bb/ . . . nn, there are several odes which contain non-strophic elements or in some cases consist totally of a non-strophic form.[2] These "irregular" forms are generally recognized and printed as such today, but nineteenth-century editors of tragedy were so devoted to defining the forms of lyric passages and to providing intelligible and accurate readings that they labored mightily to find strophic corresponsion everywhere. The editions of H. L. Ahrens, Hermann, Paley, Blass, and Hartung offer testimony of substantial and excessive textual alterations permitting non-strophic elements to be blended into the construction of odes so that the whole represents a completely strophic pattern.[3] Even today there remains a sufficient amount of uncertainty in regard to the strophic form of individual passages that only recently have editors agreed in naming the non-strophic stanzas at *Ch.* 783 ff. and *Ch.* 935 ff. mesodes,[4] and Page, while repeating the final

[1] I will refer to editions of and commentaries on Aeschylus' plays by the scholars' names; in addition, the following sources mentioned often in this study will be hereafter cited by the author's name only: M. Griffith, *The Authenticity of the Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1977); G. Hermann, *Aeschyli Tragoediae* (Berlin 1859²); R. Hözle, *Zum Aufbau der lyrischen Partien des Aischylos* (diss., Freiburg 1934); W. Jens, *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (Munich 1971); W. Kranz, *Stasimon* (Berlin 1933); O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977); P. Schwarz, *De Ephymniorum apud Aeschylum usu* (diss., Halle 1897); H. Seidler, *De versibus dochmiacis tragicorum Graecorum* (Lipsiae 1811–12).

[2] I omit blocks of anapaests which commonly appear in non-strophic or stichic choral passages; the passages which I will discuss are composed of meters common in strophic lyric.

[3] For example, see the comments of Hermann on *Pers.* 1040–48, *Ch.* 147–51 and 156–58, 770 ff., 923 ff., *PV* 425 ff. and 904–6; Paley on *PV* 920; Tucker in his 1901 edition of the *Ch.*, pp. ciii ff.; and Blass on *Ch.* 783–837; also K. Münschner, "Der Bau der Lieder des Aischylos," *Hermes* 59 (1924) 204–34. For criticism of such artificial symmetries see Schwarz and N. Wecklein, "Über den Bau Aeschyleischer Chorgesänge," *Philologus* 82 (1927) 467–71.

[4] For older and radically different attempts at order in these passages see the texts of Schütz, Bothe, Seidler (405 ff.), Wellauer, E.A.J. Ahrens, and Hermann. Of more recent critics Weil, Wilamowitz, Mazon, Smyth, Ammendola and Groeneboom repeat the lines at

ephymnion in the parodos of the *Supp.*, suppresses those following *Ag.* 1474 and 1566, and the last two possible repetitions in the Binding Song (*Eum.* 366 ff. and 380 ff.).[5] Still there are no general discussions of non-strophic elements as separate forms having certain features in common nor any studies of the usage of such elements by individual playwrights.[6]

It is my thesis that there is evidence within the texts of the plays of Aeschylus, especially within the *Oresteia*, that the playwright purposely created non-strophic structures in order to reinforce through musical form the developing themes of the play. Through examination of the position and function of each non-strophic element in the *Oresteia* I hope to demonstrate consistencies of usage and to define the effects which the dramatist could gain by designing asymetrical odes. While non-strophic forms were written by other Greek tragedians, it is important to focus this initial investigation on Aeschylus' longest unified dramatic work since there are strong indications that the design of Aeschylean choral passages is different from that of Sophocles and Euripides.[7] In addition the *PV* will be excluded since its authorship is under sufficient doubt that evidence derived from it leads only to unsubstantial and highly speculative discussions.

First—as a theoretical construct for this study—there are two basic, yet opposed, hypotheses to explain the usage of non-strophic stanzas, either one of which will provide a function for these seeming irregularities:

Ch. 783 ff. and 935 ff. as ephymnia; Tucker, Murray, Thomson, Untersteiner, Lloyd-Jones, Page, and Young treat them as mesodes.

[5] Canter first repeated the ephymnion after *Supp.* 176; Burney, those in the song at *Ag.* 1448 ff.; and G. C. W. Schneider, those in the Binding Song. Editors have followed Canter in the parodos to the *Supp.*, but broad disagreement still remains over the passages in the *Oresteia*. In twentieth-century editions and translations the ephymnia in the *Ag.* are repeated by Verrall, Wilamowitz, Mazon, and Smyth but not by Sidgwick, Headlam, Murray, Groeneboom, Untersteiner, Fraenkel, Thomson, Lattimore, Page, and Lloyd-Jones, while those in the Binding Song are printed by Verrall, Wilamowitz, Mazon, Smyth, Groeneboom, Untersteiner, Murray, Thomson, and Lattimore but not by Lloyd-Jones or Page. Editors are unanimous in repeating the ephymnion after *Supp.* 175 but this is an easier choice since it comes at the end of the ode and its recurrence cannot disrupt the sense of the song.

[6] There seem to be no definitions of these terms earlier than the Hellenistic period. The technical usage is best explained, although in general terms, by Hephaestion in his *de Poematis* 4.4, 5.3–4, and 7. His definition of ephymnion is supported by Apollonius of Rhodes 2.713 and Callimachus, *Hymn Ap.* 98, although none of these sources explicitly states that the ephymnion should be repeated after each stanza. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *de Comp. Verb.* 19, discusses the relation of an epode to preceding strophic stanzas, but this passage refers only to lyric poetry; again earlier practice shows the correctness of Dionysius' general statements. Thus while Hephaestion does help define the forms and his terms are used by editors, there is no information concerning the function or effect of non-strophic elements in ancient drama.

[7] This is an appropriate subject for a new study; the basic differences are most clearly presented on the chart in Kranz 124–27 and in the chapter by J. Rode, "Das Chorlied," in Jens 85–115. For further discussion see Kranz, *passim*; many relevant sections in the essays collected by Jens; and also Griffith, especially Chapter 3.

1. *Musical explanation*: the non-strophic elements were a normal part of ancient choral tradition. Epodes, mesodes, and astropha were familiar forms to the Athenian audience and every ephymnion was expected to be repeated regardless of any intrusion into the sense of the ode, just as we repeat the refrain at the end of each stanza of a church hymn even though it may continue the thoughts or themes of some verses better than others.[8] Such forms may even have been marked by special modes of performance; it is possible that astrophic stanzas were traditionally not danced or sung to the accompaniment of the aulos—but there is no evidence on this point.

2. *Theatrical explanation*: the play advanced in a linear, logical direction with each line making sense as a response or reaction to, or development of, the preceding one. In such a structure there is no break in dramatic continuity or characterization at the beginning of an epode, mesode, or astrophic stanza. The choice of non-strophic elements is justified on the basis of dramatic effect, and the need to repeat ephymnia is determined by the contribution of the refrain to the on-going progress of the situation and its dramatic themes.

The explanation on the basis of musical practice nullifies possibilities for meaningful discussion since the ancient world has given us too little information about the forms of its music and the idiosyncracies of dramatic lyric. Thus a critic who adopts this method in discussing non-strophic elements is surrendering himself to the mysteries of a controlling force which is beyond our ken; about all he can offer is the identification of forms. Although one must always admit that this type of explanation may be correct, there is no reason to accept such a position at this moment. The text of Aeschylean drama seems to reveal a continuous development of situation which can be understood as a logically or theatrically correct series of responses of character to character or character to situation.[9] It is

[8] See the discussion of the origin and function of epodes by M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lamentation in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974) 131 ff. Her discussion of the role of such stanzas in tragedy is weakened by some incomplete statements; the stanza at *Supp.* 175 a–f is not necessarily repeated and the Binding Song in the *Eum.* contains further "ephymnia" after the second and third strophes. Further the epodes of tragedy show no necessary refrain characteristics either in meter or in content. Regarding the epode (ephymnion) form in tragedy there is more to be accounted for than her references to seemingly similar forms will explain. As she admits, epodes do occur frequently—but not exclusively—in laments and invocations; in Aeschylean drama *Ag.* 140 ff and 475 ff.; *Ch.* 75 ff.; and *PV* 901 ff. do not occur in such contexts.

[9] Such a statement runs directly counter to the claims of R. D. Dawe, "Inconsistency of Plot and Character in Aeschylus," *PCPhS* 8 (1963) 21–62. His examples, however, are so tightly defined by written language alone that there is little possibility for communication by stage movement, gesture, or delivery. Given our lack of information, modern critics must allow reasonable opportunity for an actor to deliver lines in such a way that they can carry more meaning and implication than the simple presentation of lines as written on the page

as least as reasonable to examine non-strophic lyrics as though they were closely related in form and meaning to the logic of the drama as it is to surrender to the unknown rules of Greek musical custom.

In terms of audience perception a mesode and an epode are parallel forms.[10] They both seem to be a continuation of the lyric which has preceded, but they are balanced by no corresponding stanza; they thus can be perceived as strophes without antistrophes. When they are set in a framework of corresponding strophic stanzas with no clue to the audience that there will be an abrupt ending, they create an expectation which is disappointed. On the basis of a theatrical explanation the audience will know that either a mesode or epode exists only when it realizes that there is no corresponding stanza. The assumption that an epode, coming at the end of a choral ode, would be marked as a closing stanza by the dance movements while a mesode, occurring in the middle of an ode, would not offer a similar opportunity prejudges the issue. The use of all non-strophic stanzas is most adequately discussed on the basis of the text and dramatic design rather than any suppositions from imagined possibilities of staging.

It should be further evident that tragic lyric is built on a different model from Pindar's epinician odes where the audience expects the epode to be

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will allow. Typical is his statement about the stanza at *Ag.* 475 ff.: "Aeschylus has not provided one *word* to motivate the change from belief to unbelief, and although Fraenkel's comment on the conflicting emotions which beset anyone who has had to wait a long time for good news is undoubtedly valid in real life, it would require a hypersensitive audience to perceive, *without being told even in a veiled manner*, that these processes have suddenly taken hold on the chorus as from v. 475" (italics mine). If critics refuse to realize that all dramatic lines were composed to be delivered on stage, not read, then the theater will appear an enfeebled, toothless beast incapable of wit, irony, and ambiguity. On this scene see R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1343–71," *CQ* 4 (1954) 23–30, and my "Lines for Clytemnestra (*Agamemnon* 489–502)," *TAPA* 108 (1978) 259–69. Further Dawe sees inconsistency in uniting the forebodings of the chorus at *Ag.* 975 ff. with their refusal to understand Cassandra and feels that the split chorus at 1347 ff. is not motivated in previous scenes; but see my "The Confused Chorus (*Agamemnon* 975–1034)," *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 336–46, which attempts to understand the movement of the entire scene from 975–1342 as a unit, and again Winnington-Ingram, *ibid.* The limitations of Dawe's view are especially clear when he laments the lack of the promised Phocian accent after *Ch.* 674; undoubtedly delivery could have clarified this aspect of the disguise. It would be too severe to dismiss his perceptive article, because there are fine comments on the *Seven*, the *Ch.* and the *Eum.*; but the instant assumption that all motives and motifs are to be found only if they are directly presented in the words of each scene denies the whole realm of staging—an area in which Aeschylus was deeply interested.

[10] Thus the confusion in terminology between stanzas which are placed in analogous positions. All editors call the stanza at *Ag.* 140 ff. an epode; the stanza at *Pers.* 94 ff. (wherever it is placed) is called an epode by Bothe, Wellauer, E. A. J. Ahrens, Hermann, and Teuffel, but a mesode by Paley, Conradt (Schiller), Groeneboom, Murray, Untersteiner, Italie, and Roussel. What editors have called an ephymnion might just as well be called a mesode when it is not repeated; cf. *Supp.* 162 ff.; *Ag.* 1455 ff. and 1538 ff.; and *Eum.* 354 ff. and 372 ff. Further, a mesode could easily be defined as an ephymnion which is not repeated; e.g., *Ch.* 783 ff. and 935 ff.

repeated after each strophic pair as part of the normal triadic structure. In studying the function of the epode in tragic lyric one should compare all types of non-strophic stanzas without applying names which have association with other lyric genres. The neutral phrase "non-strophic" focusses on the feature which these stanzas have in common, namely their departure from the underlying and normal strophic corresponsion and balance.

There is also the feeling among some scholars that an epode strongly implies closure or "rounds off" an ode. Yet there is no certain case of such closure in the words of Aeschylean epodes. The only examples of such closing epodes in Sophocles are in late plays at *Electra* 504–15 and *O.C.* 1239–48. In Euripides such epodes become common also in the plays following 420, but there are as well concurrent examples of epodes which do not imply closure; e.g., *Orestes* 1296 ff. (similar to several earlier epodic passages which contain lyric dialogue) and *Bacchae* 556 ff. (which like several other epodes leads to the next scene rather than capping the preceding lyric). The earliest examples of Euripidean closing epodes are *Andromache* 789–801 and *Hecuba* 943–52. Thus the epode seems to become a kind of concluding form to a strophic ode only toward the end of the fifth century, not in the time of Aeschylus.[11]

Ephymnia are lyric units which may echo the meter of the preceding lyric or not, but which are intended to be repeated as a refrain after both strophe and antistrophe; examples of the complete ephymnion-pattern are found in the odes at *Seven* 966 ff., Aesch. *Supp.* 885 ff., Eur. *Ion* 112 ff., *Bacchae* 862 ff. and 977 ff.[12] The audience in the theater would not necessarily be able to identify the ephymnion-form until it realized that the stanza was being repeated. It is possible for the orderly repetition of ephymnia to have a strong effect in adding a more formal, and perhaps religious, tone to an ode;[13] on the other hand, the disruption of such a pattern is striking and reveals immediately to the audience that disorder has entered the musical form.

Finally astrophic lyric passages sung by the chorus do occur sporadically in Aeschylean plays. Such stanzas cannot be distinguished from strophic songs by their meter but are only identifiable to the theater-goer when they

[11] Schmid II. 143 ff. states that the epodic form introduced a separating, static element in the flow which is natural to drama. Kranz (21 f., 115, and 120), in opposition, argues that the epode is a vestige of choral lyric which may always be used in dramatic lyric—but he identifies it as providing an appropriate close for a song, often moving to the personal feelings of the chorus. But while his sense of the origin of the form may be correct, he does not offer an adequate definition of the form as it appears in surviving drama. Often there is a turn to the feelings of the chorus in the epode, but there are at least two occurrences of an epodic close to a song which do not show such a shift in topic or in tone (*Pers.* 1066 ff. and *Ag.* 140 ff.). Cf. also Rode (above, note 7) 98 f.

[12] Examples of *ephymnia rhythmica* (metrical pattern repeated as a refrain, but the words differ) are Aesch. *Supp.* 630 ff., *Ag.* 367 ff., *Heracles* 348 ff.

[13] Such is the tone seen by K. O. Müller, *Aeschylos Eumeniden* (Göttingen 1833) 917 f.; L. Deubner, "Paian," *Neue Jahrb. f.d. klass. Altert.* 43 (1919) 400; and Kranz 131 ff.

offer no corresponding stanza. As such they arouse the expectation of a formally balanced ode but immediately disappoint that expectation.[14]

Our texts have traditionally contained marginal notations identifying these four types of non-strophic forms. I will refer to each stanza by its traditional name, but this study is based on the belief that all of these passages are better identified under the one title, non-strophic stanzas. In the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus it is possible to construct at least three general categories defining the functions of such stanzas:

1. The chorus are interrupted by a character who enters during or intrudes upon the ode; thus the song was intended by the singer to be a formally balanced unit but because of external interruption the chorus are unable to continue their ode to completion.

2. The irregularity in the form characterizes the tense emotional state of the singer; the situation and movement of the chorus will make clear that they are not singing an orderly, balanced ode and there may be a strong signal in the meter that will suggest a more frenzied form—an effect which is reinforced when the chorus are unable to finish their song with an answering antistrophe.

3. The playwright uses an irregular form to unsettle his audience in order to make them concentrate on what is being said, often an inappropriate or inadequate response or explanation in terms of the surrounding scene.

I. NON-STROPHIC STANZAS CREATED BY EXTERNAL INTERRUPTIONS

A. *Ag.* 475–87: an epode in continuing iambic meter which contains the chorus' strong doubts about the fact of Troy's defeat. This song does not come to an obvious conclusion but seems interrupted by the announcement of the Herald's approach. There is a high degree of resolution in the final stanza's iambic meter, and the subject becomes trivial compared to the preceding stanzas. Yet the chorus do continue lyric meters, and on the basis of form the audience should expect an antistrophe since the first stasimon is a highly balanced and unified ode throughout.[15] The interruption of this song is all the more striking when lines 489–502 are assigned to Clytemnestra rather than the Coryphaeus.[16]

[14] J. Rode (above, note 7) 90–103 theorizes that astrophic stanzas are sung to accompany stage action or are mimetic. Thus there might be a clue in the staging that the audience should not expect an antistrophe to such a stanza. The Aeschylean astrophic stanzas would largely support this idea: *Seven* 78 and 848, *Ch.* 152 and *Eum.* 254. In addition, Rode cites several strophic passages where it is possible to conceive of mimetic stage action arising from the singers' emotions and the situation, the most obvious being *Pers.* 548 ff., 633 ff., and 1002 ff. Rode's theory thus seems correct but staging does not necessarily provide sufficient indication to the audience that it should expect a non-strophic stanza.

[15] The most prominent sign of unified musical form is the rhythmical refrain repeated six times.

[16] See my "Lines for Clytemnestra" (above, note 9).

B. *Ag.* 1455–1550: a potential series of three repeated ephymnia but actually only the second of them is repeated in the manuscripts.[17] The second ephymnion asking what can be appropriately said in lamenting a king slain treacherously and impiously follows well both upon the chorus' questions about the role of heaven in his murder (1481 ff.) and also is appropriate when the chorus speak of the avenger who arises from the father (1507 ff.). There are dislocating elements in the king's murder which make the chorus wonder what kind of statement is appropriate; they could choose to think about the theological implications for their previous beliefs regarding the Trojan expedition or about the divinely-directed vengeance which men exact in payment for a previous death. Significantly each time Clytemnestra replies to a feature of the second ephymnion rather than of the preceding strophic stanza: at 1497 ff. she replies to the elders' accusations of impiety (1493) and treachery from a human agent (1495 f.) and at 1521 ff. she responds directly to their words *aneleutheron* (1518) and *dolioi* (1519). Lines 1455–61 which accuse Helen of many deaths, especially of Agamemnon's, develop directly as a comment on lines 1451 ff. where the chorus praise their kindly king who endured so much because of one woman (Helen) and then was killed by another (Clytemnestra). At 1468 ff. they identify the *daimôn* who works through the agency of women and point out its current embodiment in Clytemnestra; and Clytemnestra immediately congratulates them for their understanding of the *daimôn* in the antistrophe, thus replying to the previous stanza as she did in both occurrences of the second ephymnion. Similarly at 1537 ff. the old men wish that they had perished before seeing their king dead; this follows appropriately upon a strophe which expresses their helplessness (1530–36). And when they conclude at 1548 ff. by asking Clytemnestra whether she will perform the funeral ceremony for Agamemnon, she responds directly that this is no concern of theirs (1551 ff.). If this stanza is repeated at 1567 there is possible internal motivation in the continuation of their discouraged view of the future, but there is no reason for them to repeat their question about the appropriateness and sincerity of Clytemnestra's laments, and she takes no notice of this question in her response to their antistrophe; her *tonde* in 1567 refers directly to their pronouncement in 1560 ff. Thus there is

[17] Several editors try to restore symmetry to this long kommatic scene by repeating each ephymnion; for example, Burney, Blomfeld, Plüss, Wecklein, Verrall, Wilamowitz, Smyth, and Mazon. There is also the attempt, whose guidelines have been given by Hermann (*Elem. Doctr. Met.*, pp. 480 ff.), to find a larger and intricate system of balancing sections uniting the whole interchange; he is followed by Karsten, Weil, Enger, Keck, and Paley. But these structures depend on alterations to the text in the first and third ephymnia which are not acceptable unless one puts all of one's faith into the postulated system.

adequate internal motivation in this scene to support the omission of the repetition of the first and third "ephymnia."[18]

In addition, it is probable that the failure to repeat these stanzas is due to interruptions by Clytemnestra. At 1475 ff. Clytemnestra's words show that she is eager to have the chorus confirm her own structuring of the event, and she could well break in on its words to say: "Now you have corrected your own thought . . . "—especially since 1455–61, if repeated, would state what she least wants to hear and has worked to correct: the linking of Agamemnon's death to the sin of Helen. But she finds no cause to interrupt at 1512 since the chorus at 1507 ff. has to an extent accepted her insistence on the causal role of an *alastor*. Following 1520 as she corrects the chorus' lament concerning the manner in which Agamemnon died, her tone seems more that of a persuader (*out' . . . oimai*); her words in this stanza lack the desperate quality which motivated her to interrupt previously because the chorus is now lamenting the manner of the king's death rather than debating the proper assignment of guilt. Then at 1567 ff. she can be portrayed as interrupting a general summary by responding in a direct tone before the chorus can repeat its ephymnion with questions about who will preside at the funeral. Clytemnestra has good reason to cut short such questions in the interest of her own self-defense. She does not want this hated man to receive a hero's burial; that would undermine her whole position as the cleanser and healer.[19] It is, therefore, probable that the omission of the expected first and third repeated stanzas is motivated by Clytemnestra's willful determination to lead the argument in a direction acceptable to her.[20]

[18] Such was the conclusion of R. Arnoldt, *Der Chor im Agamemnon des Äschylus scenisch erlautert* (diss., Halle 1881); Schwarz 36–47; W. Kranz, "Zwei Lieder des *Agamemnon*," *Hermes* 54 (1919) 312–30; and M. Pohlenz, *Die Griechische Tragödie* (Leipzig and Berlin 1930) vol. ii, 32 f. The first three find that not only reasons of continuity in sense but also the basic mesodic form require such omission. But they are hard pressed to find parallels to this mesodic kommos, and Schwarz is forced to change the text significantly to gain corresponsion between ephymnia *a* and *g*.

[19] One should note that she also mutilates the body (*Ch.* 439), thus showing that she has not yet released all her hatred for her husband and wants to see him further dishonored in burial. Also Fraenkel (on line 1541) points out that the sequence of questions which the chorus ask are in the form associated with a ritual mourning. Clytemnestra wants to stop any such singing on their part so that she can control the burial completely—and thus she understandably interrupts at line 1551 to tell them that such concerns are not properly theirs. See also H. Popp, "Das Amoibaion," in Jens, esp. 242–46.

[20] It is important to note that while there are elements of dialogue between Clytemnestra and the chorus, the stanzas of the chorus do have a consistent direction and unity among themselves which put Clytemnestra on the defensive. Thus in spite of the formal interruptions to their song, the chorus continue developing their thoughts. Cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aischylos Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 198 ff.; Kranz (above, note 18) 315; and Hölzle 37, note 79, and 40 f.

To judge by the full patterns of repeated ephymnia, it is normal for these stanzas to follow both strophe and antistrophe. This scene between the chorus and Clytemnestra would be highly disorienting. It may have been possible for the audience in the theater to realize that they were hearing an ephymnion immediately at 1455 ff. because the anapaestic meter diverges so strongly from that of the strophic stanza. The strophic choral form up to this point in the scene should permit them to expect balanced song; but this expectation is not rewarded at 1475 ff., then it is reinforced at 1513 ff., but then again disappointed at 1567 ff. The chorus seems unable to complete a balanced form as they have done in lengthy odes throughout this play. But there have already been minor elements of asymmetry in their songs at 140 ff. and 475 ff., and the ending of the *Agamemnon* presents a chorus which is pushed into disorder by the death of their king. First the elders are unable to sing the "fourth stasimon" which should probably occur at 1343 ff. because they hear the death cries of the king, and then they break apart into individual speaking roles at 1348 ff. At the end of the play they are not strong enough to mount an effective resistance against Aegisthus' guard and do not even gather as a group for the exodos.[21] The disrupted musical form in their scene with Clytemnestra is, thus, only one part of the disorder which is so evident in the final scenes of the play.

Parallel interruptions causing non-strophic forms can be found also at *Pers.* 673–80, 897–906; *Seven* 848–60 and 989–1004. The basic design is the same: the audience has been led to expect strophic song because of the strophic framework in which the passage falls, but events external to the chorus' intent and justified by motivation appropriate to the situation cause the song to be abruptly abandoned.

II. NON-STROPHIC FORM ARISING FROM THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF THE CHORUS

A. *Eum.* 254–75: the astrophic entrance of the Furies into Athens as they scatter throughout the orchestra seeking Orestes.[22] First the

[21] Compare the endings of *Pers.*, *Supp.*, *Ch.*, and *Eum.*; while the endings of these plays differ among themselves in their structure and nature, they show how commonly a choral song is the proper ending of a drama. All Sophoclean plays end with a choral song except the *Trach.* which ends with a procession including the chorus even though the words are by Hyllus unless the final four lines are given to the chorus.

[22] Bothe and Müller have tried to structure these lines as corresponding strophes, but Wellauer correctly stated that the corresponsions available are fortuitous. Further on this point see the discussions by C. Lachmann, *De Choricis Systematis* (Berlin 1819) 90 ff., and G. Hermann, *De choro Eumenidum Aeschyli Dissertatio Prima* (Lipsiae 1816) and *Opuscula* VI 2.51. In addition, it is possible that the entrance one by one (*sporadên*) mentioned in the *Vita* takes place here, thus ruling out a formal ode by the whole chorus. There are parallels to this type of astrophic entrance by an emotionally charged chorus at *Seven* 78 ff. and *Ajax* 866 ff.

coryphaeus leads them on stage to spoken iambics, then they move around the orchestra to dochmiacs in order to find Orestes. They have been reproached by Clytemnestra, chased from Delphi by Apollo, and have lost their prey.[23] Their entrance gives an impression of chaos, a reflection of the state of Justice before the trial which is to restore order and balance under the reign of Zeus. The disorder of this entrance song is balanced by the formal procession at the end of the play which accompanies the establishment of permanent order.

B. *Ch.* 152–63: the astrophic lament of the chorus which has been requested by Electra.[24] The meter is appropriately iambo-dochmiac to accompany their animated invocation of an avenger.

Seven 78–107 is a similar astrophic stanza. In each of these passages the motivation for the form arises from the distress or excitement of the situation. The passages from the *Eum.* and the *Seven* are entering songs and thus allow even greater area for free movement than a structured song in the orchestra would; thus the initial agitation of the singers is presented as much by musical form as by words immediately during their entrance. In general, astropha accompany mimetic choral action.[25]

III. NON-STROPHIC FORM IMPOSED UPON THE SONG BY THE POET

A. *Ag.* 140–59: an epode continuing the previous dactylic meter and bound to the preceding two stanzas by a repeated refrain-line, but ending when the chorus turn abruptly to the Hymn to Zeus and shift the meter. At lines 154 ff. the chorus sing of the vengeful housekeeper who remains, the personified Wrath who will exact payment for slain children. At this point the real meaning of their refrain-line becomes clear: "Sing sorrow" for the bloody events of the past, but "may the good win out" since they believe that there is a pattern of justice which is being fulfilled under the guidance of Zeus.[26] Then the chorus abandon their thoughts about the implication of Calchas' prophecy for future action and turn to an expression of trust and faith in Zeus.[27] This pattern of covering-over thoughts

[23] The manner of their entrance is probably best indicated by their self-characterization as a pack of hunting dogs on the track of blood at lines 247 ff.

[24] So printed by Lachmann (above, note 22) 92, but still in strophic structure by Hermann and Bothe.

[25] See above, note 14.

[26] This attitude of trust in Zeus' Justice is most explicit in their animal fable (49 ff.), in their prayer to Zeus in thanks for the defeat of Troy (355–84), and in their parable of the lion cub as applied to Helen (681–781).

[27] The delimma which motivates the chorus' Hymn to Zeus is discussed by W. Kranz (above, note 18) 304 ff. and by Verrall in his commentary on *Ag.* 170. But both—and most other critics—assume that the Hymn expresses the firm belief of Aeschylus himself. I would argue that this statement of faith is only one among many attempts by the chorus to rationalize their

about an unhappy future by hopeful words of faith is characteristic of these old men who find themselves unable to bring all the events of the past comfortably into a unified conception of justice. When the chorus first avoided the implications of their characterization of Helen as a promiscuous woman, the change in subject was not especially jolting because it was not accompanied by a change in the meter (67 ff.)[28] The same is true in the final stanza of the parodos where the iambic meter from the preceding stanzas continues throughout the antistrophe at 248 ff.; yet at 255 the chorus avoid speculating on the consequences of Agamemnon's sacrifice by retreating to a faith in a destiny which is beyond their control.[29] But there is a strong break in the meter at 160 ff. showing how forcibly the chorus must thrust away nagging concerns from the past in order to let their faith repose in a high god who cares for mankind. There is no reason that the audience would not expect to hear a second metrically corresponding dactylic antistrophe,[30] but this expectation is unfulfilled. This shift in meter and subject emphasizes the significant and bothersome intellectual leap necessary in making past events conform to a belief in an ordered and harmonious world.

B. *Eum.* 307–96: an ode, the Binding Song, containing a series of three ephymnia, only the first of which is repeated.[31] In each of the three

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dilemma; see the discussion by T. J. Sienkewicz, "Circles, Confusion, and the Chorus of *Agamemnon*," *Eranos* 78 (1980) 133–42.

[28] At this point, Denniston-Page on lines 67 f. assume that the chorus feel trapped in the flow of history and express their resignation; but given their desire to trust in Zeus' beneficial guidance of events in accordance with Justice later in the parodos (160 ff. and 250 ff.), there is more weight in their word *peprômenon* than mere acceptance of a vague course of events. They are expressing their willingness to live with the dispensation of Zeus which they see working itself out in the unavoidable *orgas ateneis* of line 71. If such is the direction of their thoughts, then in spite of the apparent retreat to a folk-saying there is a close connection by characterization throughout the passage from 60–71, a continuity which is reinforced by maintaining the same meter and by locating the sentence break within line 67.

[29] Thomson seems to have caught the correct sense in 248–57 in maintaining the more general application of the principles. Both Page and Fraenkel feel that the chorus are using generalized language to hint at specific characters in the immediate situation, but this chorus easily seek wider principles toward the end of the first and second stasima (456 ff. and 750 ff.). In each case they begin from a specific situation and end with more broadly applicable statements about the immediate events but also about more general human behavior.

[30] Kranz 130 ff. states that the refrain is a sign of closing but all his examples other than *Ag.* 121 are taken from strophic, symmetrical settings. On the basis of such parallels we might expect a closing at 138. The audience's anticipation of a balancing antistrophe following 159 should be heightened since the repeated rhythmical refrains in the odes at *Supp.* 630 ff. and *Ag.* 367 ff. indicate that balanced song is the norm with refrains (cf. also *Eum.* 1032 ff.). In fact, a refrain repeated an uneven number of times is a unique occurrence in Aeschylean drama.

[31] There seem to be two standard ways to regain lost symmetry in this stasimon. Editors who do not print the received text either repeat all ephymnia leaving the fourth strophic

ephymnia the meter grows increasingly distant from that of the preceding stanza. The most evident sign of asymmetry in the musical form of this ode is the lack of an ephymnion in the final set of strophes. The first ephymnion is repeated after the first antistrophe and in each case it is a suitable addition. At 325 the chorus point to Orestes with the word *tonde* and then sing their hymn over the victim at 328 ff.[32] In the antistrophe the Furies talk of their office and appropriately repeat the hymn in which they perform this duty at 341 ff. In the second strophe they state that they never share a feast with the Olympians and 354–59, introduced by *gar*, explains their special purpose. I find no reason in the text that this stanza could not be repeated after the antistrophe in which they state that Zeus has deemed their blood-spattered group unworthy of his company; but the manuscripts do not show a repetition here.[33] 372–76, however, is disruptive if repeated. Its first occurence is motivated by the mention of the vengeful dancing of their feet; the non-strophic stanza carries this idea further as it talks about the force of the Furies' feet as they jump down upon transgressors (372–76). But then the antistrophe (377–80) moves from this topic to the mist which hovers over the house of the sinner, and no feature of 372–76 makes its repetition a suitable development of this text. The *gar* at 381 introduces a stanza which explains the completeness of the sinner's fall and the pollution described in 377–80.

The audience would first hear in this ode a symmetrical musical beginning, *abab*, then the musical form shows increasing signs of disorder as they hear *cdc efe gg*. The meter of the fourth paeonic introduces each

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pair unadorned (e.g., Schneider, Kirchhoff, Wecklein, Weil, Wilamowitz, Mazon, Smyth, Murray, Untersteiner, Thomson, Groeneboom) or else they reverse the third strophe and ephymnion making the second and third ephymnia into a type of *ephymnia rhythmica* (e.g., Schütz, Wellauer, Dindorf, Hermann, Müller, Sidgwick). The first process merely echoes the desire for symmetry which has dominated previous editors and is being questioned in this paper. The second reflects the same desire but creates an unprecedented mixture of repeated ephymnia, *ephymnia rhythmica*, and unaugmented strophes in the same song—with no explanation for the structure of the ode. In addition, this arrangement injects disorder into the intelligible development of thought from the dancing of their feet (370 f.) to the leap which causes the runner to fall (372 ff.) to the fallen person (377 ff.). Such a structuring of the ode arouses more disorder than my explanation, which seeks to justify the tradition.

[32] They not only identify this section of the stasimon as their song (329), but as Thomson (*Intro.* p. 49) and Alexiou (above, note 8) 134 f. note, the repetitions are the magical element in this song.

[33] Hölzle 94, note 210, argues that this ephymnion should be repeated as a necessary bridge to the third strophe, though not all editors have seen the harshness of the transition which he envisions without the repeat. But, indeed, Hölzle usually defends the repetition of ephymnia, drawing support from such scholars as Schütz, Dindorf, Wilamowitz, and Sidgwick.

non-strophic addition so that the audience can at least come to realize in the opening of each of these stanzas that a separate section is beginning. After the first strophic set and into the second the audience would perceive the pattern of repeated ephymnia, but this sense of formalism is created only to be broken when the repetition is not continued.

The movement in the *Eum.* is from the disordering conflict at Delphi to the organization and cooperation brought onto the stage in the closing scene. The Erinyes start out this play as a sleeping chorus who rouse themselves only to find that the play has left them behind and they must run to catch it. Even in this stasimon, their "cult song," there are continuing signs of their severe disorganization. Since they open this ode stating that they are now going to join themselves into a regular chorus for the first time in the play,[34] there may still be signs of their original disorder which enter into this stasimon. But, in addition, their teaching in this ode stresses the pursuit of bloodshed and suffering. Only in the next ode will they affirm the concept of Justice which underlies and validates their persecution of the wrong-doer. Their doctrine is not incorrect, but it will be voted inappropriate in the case of Orestes by half of the jurors and they themselves will voluntarily alter its more bloodthirsty aspects under Athena's persuasion. The inadequacy of their beliefs as final solutions should make the audience uncomfortable, and the irregular musical form is one way of enhancing this discomfort.

C. *Ch.* 75–83: an epode which continues the iambic meter of the parodos.[35] In this final stanza the subject does shift as the chorus turn from more general statements about needed revenge to their own repressed sorrow and hatred. Throughout this play such personal motives will be covered over by the chorus' appeals to justice, a continuing deception which leads to the unhappy dilemma at the end of the play. Since the courteous and formal greeting of Electra at 84 ff. does not seem to interrupt the song of the chorus, the motivation for the unexpected ending is probably an effect designed by the poet. He disappoints the expectations of his audience to point out the inadequacy and incompleteness of the chorus' reasoning about vengeance, just as discussed above in regard to the Binding Song.

D. *Ch.* 783–837, 935–71: the form of these two odes has proven difficult to establish, yet I hesitantly include them in this section because the perspective provided by this study offers a possible explanation of the

[34] As Paley notes in his comment on lines 297–310: "Hitherto the Furies have acted simply as pursuers, and consequently with all the fitful irregularity of huntresses close upon their prey. Now at length, finding all their efforts baffled, they propose a new method—to take up their position in the usual order at the thymele, and try the effects of a 'binding hymn'."

[35] In fact, the meter of the epode is so close to that of the preceding stanza that Bothe had little trouble in making 67–74 correspond with 75–83.

parallel structures. Two successive stasima contain a series of either ephymnia or mesodes.[36] The meter of these non-strophic stanzas in the second ode is far more closely related to the surrounding lyric than the meters in such stanzas in the first ode.

Text problems are virtually insoluble in 783–837 and readings vary, but recent editors have come to agree that the manuscript offers three strophic pairs with a stanza after each strophe. If this ode contains three sets of repeated ephymnia, then it is a highly balanced ode which rewards handsomely the audience's expectation of order. But if these stanzas are mesodes, then there is a much different effect. The meter of 790–92 seems distinct, though not sufficiently different from the meters of the first strophe to establish it on the basis of meter alone as a separate stanza; only after line 799 would the audience be certain that an element of the previous stanzas is not being repeated. At this point there is also a change in subject as the addressee of the prayer shifts from Zeus to other gods. In the next strophic set the repeated ionic lines introducing 807–11 seem clear enough to set these five lines apart from the strophe; but for the audience there is no corroboration that this is not merely another period within a strophe until line 818. Then the subject changes again from a prayer form to a summary statement and encouragement to Orestes. It may be significant that the chorus pick up the word *ourian* from 814 in *ouriostatan* at 821; this would indicate that no stanza intervened since it would interrupt the continuing metaphor. On the other hand, Wilamowitz has argued that *tote* (819) refers to a moment which cannot be found in antistrophe B but would be a natural reference to the light of freedom at 809 f. This is an overly narrow definition of *tote* which can easily refer to the moment when the whole project for which the god's aid is invoked is completed. In addition, it would be strange to have Apollo invoked twice while Hermes is called upon only once and that in between the prayers to Apollo. In 827–30 the ionic is so dominant and the *aba* structure now sufficiently familiar within this ode that the audience may appreciate the unusual form.[37] But it is important to note that there are no striking disjunctions in the development of the subject or of the meters which would aid the audience in apprehending the design of this ode. The entrance of Aegisthus does not seem to interrupt the words of the chorus— and yet if 827–30 are not repeated, he enters to highly appropriate words.[38]

[36] See above, note 4, for previous editors' opinions.

[37] The only other occasion on which a series of ionics appear in the *Oresteia* occurs at *Ag.* 690 ff.=757 ff., corresponding sections within a strophic structure.

[38] As noted in the defense of a mesodic structure by Schwarz. In general, his arguments for the sequence of stanzas in this ode are strong, but he seems to surrender too easily to the need for symmetry when he seeks to make the third mesode correspond with the first. In

There is even more confusion over the construction of the third stasimon. There is no manuscript evidence for the repetition of 942–45, but the manuscript shows a line almost identical to 961 after line 971, a possible scribal shorthand method to indicate the repetition of 961 ff. Yet editors have found credible alternative explanations for this line, thus making the evidence for repetition at best ambiguous.[39] It seems to me that there is a tendency in this ode to minimize the bloody and vindictive aspects of the murder taking place offstage and to cloak the actual doing of the deed in abstract and metaphorical terms.[40] Thus, Justice and Retribution come while a double lion and double Ares enter the house. This is a cheerful ode urging cries of victory and heralding the new light which is shed on the house. The repetition of 942–45 with its exultant tone after the most vindictive lines in the song: "Justice . . . breathing destructive wrath on her enemies" does not suit this tone. Whether 961 ff. is repeated, I cannot determine; I would prefer to see Orestes interrupt the chorus at line 971, thus providing a close parallel to the scene in the *Ag.* where Clytemnestra interrupts the chorus to present the two corpses.[41] But in neither case can I find a convincing argument which will establish the design of this ode.

It is, however, significant that the non-strophic stanzas in the second stasimon are different in meter from the surrounding strophes while the dochmiacs in the comparable stanzas of the third stasimon carry on the meter of the strophic stanzas. This similarity of meter would make the audience think that the strophe goes from 935–45 or that there is no separate stanza at all. The recognition of the non-repeated component would occur because of the curtailment of the repeated dochmiacs when the antistrophe stops at 952 and the second strophe begins with a slightly varied dochmiac pattern—although even at this point there is a close enough similarity between the metrical form of 942 f. and 953 f. to make

addition, it seems unlikely that the mesode beginning with *su de* would make sense after the antistrophe which is addressed to Orestes alone, as has been noted by Schwarz 47 f.

[39] One should note the difficulties with other wrongly placed lines at 69 f. and 165 as well as the omission at 712–14.

[40] For a discussion of how metaphorical these terms can be seen to be, see the comments of Thomson in the introduction to the 1938 edition, pp. 45 ff., and his notes on lines 935–71. He places too much emphasis on the necessity of interpreting the torch throughout the *Oresteia* narrowly as a mark of Eleusinian religion, but his discussion does illustrate the type of general imagistic language which is being employed in this passage. Such metaphorical thickets are typical of Aeschylus and need not imply references to Eleusinian rite.

[41] There are not many comments on the staging here. Verrall would insert a pause after the ode and then would have a procession enter with the women in changed costumes. Wilamowitz allows time for a crowd to assemble as does Lloyd-Jones, but there is no mention of these "extras" in the text as 980 can refer to the chorus. In addition, Orestes' preoccupation with his own defense is heightened when he is seen to interrupt their song with this speech while the bodies and then the robe are brought from the palace. Cf. Taplin 357 f.

this new beginning unclear. After hearing the *aba* structure three times in the second stasimon, the audience could have been expected easily to identify the same structure in the third stasimon if the poet had only offered a different meter at the beginning of each non-strophic stanza. I can only assume that the poet did not want to aid his spectators in appreciating the structure of the third stasimon and has, therefore, presented two successive odes which are difficult for the audience to organize as it hears them. I am, therefore, inclined to feel that in both odes the poet chose a "mesodic" structure rather than repeated ephymnia to carry on the disruption of the audience's expectations which he began at the end of the parodos. The point is the same: in praying for the justice of Zeus the women of the chorus are really asking for more bloodshed and a continuation of vengeance.[42] Their principles in seeking the final act of justice are so flawed that the poet composed a formally unbalanced pattern which is disorienting for an audience expecting strophic structure. Not only the words but the unusual musical form should make the audience uncomfortable during both of these odes surrounding the murder of Clytemnestra by her son.

Parallel in function to these passages are the non-strophic stanzas at *Pers.* 94–100, 1066–77, and *Supp.* 112–75.

In six of these passages (*Ag.* 140–59; *Ch.* 75–83, 152–63, 783–837 and 935–71; *Eum.* 254–75, 307–96) the situation itself does not provide adequate motivation for the characters to sing a non-strophic stanza; rather the poet seems to have arranged each scene in order to manipulate the expectations of the audience. There are no indications in the immediately surrounding words that the chorus are aware that they have sung an incomplete form; the singers seem to finish their ode in a way which is satisfactory to them and to the others on the stage, who often make a statement to move the action further into the following scene. At *Ag.* 140 ff. since the chorus break strongly from the preceding meter, form, and thought to continue their song, it could be argued that they are aware of their dangerous and unwelcome statements threatening to Agamemnon and seek to find a new mode of happier potential for their song. But generally each song seems to be a rounded unit to the singers even though it must be felt by the audience as an uncompleted form.

Therefore it is futile to look only in the surrounding scenes for clues to the playwright's reason in designing a non-strophic stanza; rather, just as the audience in the theater sees the action continue to develop, a critic must look at the larger movement of the drama in order to find the inconcinnity between the singers' words and the actions which are

[42] Cf. their previous explicit statements at 75 ff., 121 ff., 160 ff., 267 f., 306–478, and 649 ff.

evolving around them. In each case there is an irony or lack of understanding revealed by the chorus which the poet wants his audience to hear clearly. *Ch.* 75, 783, 935, and *Eum.* 307 all portray a chorus espousing principles which the conclusions of the trilogy will not support (also *Pers.* 94 and *Supp.* 112). Since each of these non-strophic elements occurs in a strophic context, the audience will expect to hear a pattern of balanced responsion. When the form of the song disappoints their expectation, they should experience sufficient dislocation to feel uncomfortable about the words being sung on stage. And by the end of the trilogy it is clear that the words sung in such passages do not reflect the actions which are working to their own conclusions in the episodes. The discomfort which the incomplete form makes the audience feel at these "wrong" or inadequate statements of basic principle joins the patterns of imagery, the development of themes, the conscious and unconscious irony in the words of the characters and the chorus, and the similarities in the events in the *Ag.* and the *Ch.* as strong signals that hidden and inadequately understood forces are at work in the actions of the trilogy.[43]

This is an inventory of the non-strophic lyrics in the *Oresteia*. While there are only two passages in Aeschylean drama (*Pers.* 694 ff. and *Eum.* 307 ff.) that provide indications, slight as they are, in the words of the text that the poet wanted at least some stanzas to be heard as non-strophic or asymmetrical elements,[44] the limited and yet basically consistent usage of such lyric forms offers stronger evidence of such a purpose. And it is probably to be expected that there are instances where I have chosen to assign a passage to one specific category but at the same time have to admit that there are two possible usages; for example, at *Ag.* 475 ff. the rambling thoughts of the chorus are interrupted by the announcement of the messenger's entrance but the undirected shifting from one thought to another without the expected antistrophe does serve to characterize the old men's doubts at this moment. Undoubtedly the poet wrote each scene with proper emphasis on motives and values within the structure of the ongoing drama.

In addition, it should by now be clear that I am not trying to demonstrate that there is never an interruption which occurs after a regular

[43] In the catalogue of "unbalanced" passages in the *Ch.* one should mention the strange order of the strophic stanzas at the section of the kommos following 423. The apparent disorder has motivated attempts to move strophe i; however, if such dislocations are a sign of the faulty theories of the singers throughout the play, then the structure of the kommos provides another example of unsymmetrical musical design.

[44] *Pers.* 694 ff. shows that the chorus are afraid to speak to Darius; *Eum.* 307 ff. reveals the Furies' consciousness that they are for the first time in the play joining themselves into a full-fledged choral ode.

strophic structure.[45] Indeed, as long as a character enters following a choral song—whether it is strophic or not—it would usually be possible for a critic to claim that he can be seen as interrupting the otherwise formal completion of a song and dance pattern even in passages where we have no direct evidence in the words. Further, I willingly admit that there are moments of extreme frenzy or emotional upset within symmetrical strophic structures; one need only imagine the staging of *Pers.* 249–89 or *Eum.* 143–78. And choruses seem to continue singing of principles which are inapplicable even in strophic songs, especially in the *Ag.* and *Ch.*

This inventory of the structure and function of so-called epodes, mesodes, ephymnia, and astropha within individual scenes demonstrates that they should not necessarily be defined or categorized as separate forms in the plays of Aeschylus; in production they seem to operate as one class of non-strophic units. Each form may have a different origin and development, but there is little in their occurrences in Aeschylean drama to show that they carry any traditional limitation on their usage; rather they seem fully absorbed into the larger composition of the dramatic scene. There is such a complete lack of direct information from ancient sources about the precise meaning of these non-strophic units that we should be willing to admit coherent evidence drawn from the texts of fifth-century drama. The argument for Aeschylus' desire to enhance his scenes through the use of appropriate musical forms may rest upon certain assumptions, but it gains strength from the consistency of such usage throughout the *Oresteia* and the customary interest of Aeschylus in using all features of a dramatic production to convey his meaning.[46]

[45] It is arguable that there could be such interruptions at the end of strophic songs following *Seven* 181 and 368; *Supp.* 709 and throughout the scene at 825 ff.; *Eum.* 178; and *PV* 560.

[46] I am grateful for the advice which was so generously offered in the course of this study by H. G. Edinger, C. P. Gardiner, M. Griffith, T. G. Rosenmeyer, Oliver Taplin, and the anonymous referee for *TAPA*.